



## **HOW TO ENGAGE YOUR SCHOOL BOARD AND ADVOCATE FOR THE USE OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

You can use the guide below to help you prepare to speak at a school board meeting. While it may be daunting at first, by preparing your thoughts and following the notes below, you will be successful. You can also reach out to your MAE UniServ Director for additional information and support.

Thanks to the collective voice of thousands of educators, the Mississippi Legislature has approved an additional \$100 million to fund schools. Based on the 2022-23 student enrollment data provided by the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), the extra \$100 million translates to approximately \$227 per student. As educators and school staff, we engage with students and parents every day and it's our responsibility to ensure that this funding is spent effectively.

This guide is meant to provide a few recommendations on engaging your local School Board:

### **How to find your official school district website and locate the school board section.**

If you're having trouble finding it, use a search engine and type in the name of your school district followed by "school board". Check the school board's calendar for upcoming meetings and important dates related to budget allocation and decision-making.

### **How to register to speak at a regular school board meeting**

Register to speak at a regular school board meeting if you want to voice your concerns or recommendations regarding the allocation of the additional \$100 million funding. Look for the "Citizen Participation" or a similar option on the school board website, and then register for the meeting. If you're unable to attend in person, check if your district allows video testimonies and register in advance if necessary.

### **How to talk to your school board**

Make sure to time your remarks to the allotted speaking time, which is usually limited to a few minutes. Prepare your statement in advance, and practice it to make sure it is clear and concise. Communicate your concerns and recommendations clearly and directly to the school board members. We recommend that you request that your school board and Superintendent work directly with your local Association on how to best allocate this funding. Tell them why you care and how the additional funding can have a significant impact on the educational experience of the students. Work with your UniServ Director to receive and review the data collected from MAE's surveys. You can use this data to support the information you share with your school board.

### **Questions to ask local district stakeholders to help you prepare**

- What are the upcoming issues the school board will be debating and discussing with regards to the allocation of additional funding?
- How will information about the allocation of the funding be communicated to the public?
- When will public engagement sessions be held, and how will those be communicated?
- How were policies determined to be in the best interest of the students?
- How much was allocated to consultant services, and where can I see their contract?
- Where and how will school board meeting minutes be shared?

***Remember, your voice matters, and together as an Association, you can make a significant impact on the educational experience of our students.***