



Tip Sheet: Community Presentations

One of the challenges in talking about education is that all too often only parents are listening. It's usually much more difficult to connect with the majority of community members who do not currently have children in your schools. Community presentations to groups such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and other clubs is a great way to reach other, often-influential community members. Here are some tips.

Service clubs need speakers: Often the person who is coordinating service club speakers has a hard time finding people. Make a point of reaching out to those who coordinate speakers for various groups and ask to speak.

Keep it brief: Remember people like short, engaging presentations. Keep your presentation light and to the point and most of all, keep it short. Most service club presentations are between 20 and 30 minutes. Leave time for questions.

You are the expert: While everyone in the room will have some experience with public schools, even the most engaged audience will not have a firm understanding of such things as school finance or state or federal educational policy. Keep it light and stick to big themes. Whatever you do, never use educational acronyms or jargon.

Tell stories, make it personal: People like to be entertained and they like stories. Do not be afraid to make points by telling stories but remember, keep it short.

If you use slides, do so sparingly: Power Point slides are great for presentations but all too often speakers use them as a crutch. Make sure that your presentation can stand on its own. Also remember that technology seems to crash the moment presenters are standing in front of a crowded room.

Have a "stump speech": Like any good politician, you should be ready, at a moment's notice to give a 15 to 20 minute speech. Practice this speech so you can do it without notes. For some administrative teams, members will have various "stump speeches" that can be given about various subjects at various clubs and group meetings.

Relax: For some, public speaking is easy, for others, it's a chore. Have fun with it!