

“IF THIS HAPPENS → DO THIS” CHAPERONE DAY-OF SUPPORT GUIDE

You don't need to fix everything. Your job is to keep students supported and moving forward.

IF A STUDENT FREEZES OR FORGETS WHAT TO SAY

→ DO THIS:

- Smile and pause
- Say:

“That’s okay – take your time.”

- Offer a simple prompt:

“Why do you like your school?”

“What’s one thing your school does well?”

If needed:

Move to the next student and return later.

 Notes and scripts are allowed.

IF ONLY ONE OR TWO STUDENTS ARE TALKING

→ DO THIS:

- Gently invite others:
“Would anyone else like to share?”
- Call on a student only if you know they’re comfortable
- Ask for thumbs-up before inviting quieter students

Middle school: active prompting is appropriate
High school: allow space, then invite

IF THE MEETING IS SHORTER THAN EXPECTED

→ DO THIS:

- Prioritize:
 1. Student introductions
 2. One key story
 3. One clear ask
- Skip extra questions
- Close with:
“Thank you for listening to student voices today.”


IF A LEGISLATOR ASKS A QUESTION NO ONE CAN ANSWER

→ DO THIS:

- Normalize it:
- “That’s a great question.”
- Say:

We don’t have that information right now, but we’re happy to follow up.”

- Move back to student experience

 Do not guess or debate.

IF A LEGISLATOR DISAGREES OR PUSHES BACK

→ DO THIS:

- Model respect and calm
- Encourage students to say:
“This has been my experience.”
- Redirect to personal impact

Advocacy ≠ arguing
Advocacy = sharing lived experience

IF STUDENTS GET SILLY, DISTRACTED, OR OFF-TOPIC


→ DO THIS:

- Use a quiet reminder
- Reset expectations briefly
- Refocus:
Let’s make sure everyone gets a chance to speak.”

 **IF THERE IS DOWNTIME OR DELAYS**

→ DO THIS:

- Review talking points
- Practice introductions quietly
- Assign roles:
 - Speaker
 - Timekeeper
 - Note-taker

 **IF STUDENTS SEEM NERVOUS OR OVERWHELMED**

→ DO THIS:

- Normalize nerves:
"It's okay to feel this way."
- Remind them:
"You belong here."
- Encourage deep breaths or quiet moments

 **IF YOU NEED TO CLOSE THE MEETING**

→ DO THIS:

- Thank the legislator
- Ask for support (if not already done)
- Mention follow-up or thank-you notes

 **MOST IMPORTANT REMINDERS**

- Students don't need to be perfect
- Their voices matter
- Your calm presence sets the tone