

# STAND WITH CALHOUN

BREVARD COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

2700 JUDGE FRAN JAMIESON WAY VIERA, FL

SEPTEMBER 23<sup>RD</sup> 2025



see!

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# MEET TEAM SEE

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*Youth-led. Data-driven. Future-focused.*

We are building a statewide movement to transform the 2026 midterms by focusing on school boards. They are winnable, youth-centered, locally grounded, and uniquely positioned to create change across every level of government.

SEE Alliance is one of the largest youth-led political movements in the country. We are a multigenerational, data-driven organizing force led by young people and built to win lasting change across Florida, starting at the school board. We've organized with high school and college students in over 50 of Florida's 67 school districts. We've shifted school board dynamics in some of the most politically challenging counties in Florida by organizing communities, informing voters, and holding elected officials accountable—all while remaining nonpartisan, grassroots, and grounded in community coalitions.

Our strategy is both proactive and responsive. We build long-term infrastructure to shift power while responding in real time to the political threats facing students, educators, and schools.

We don't just show up. We resource youth organizers across the state with training, data, communications support, and political strategy.

We provide the infrastructure needed for community coalitions to lead powerful campaigns in their districts. Whether it's helping students prepare testimony, coordinating legal and press responses, bringing national media to local fights, organizing full-scale rallies, running strategy sessions, or building statewide narrative pressure, we are there every step of the way.

# THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM

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What's happening in Brevard is not isolated. It is a test, and part of a growing pattern across Florida where school boards are being used to punish inclusive educators, silence students, and push political agendas into classrooms.

Ms. Melissa Calhoun is a respected Brevard County teacher who created a safe, affirming learning environment. When she used a student's preferred name, she was not given guidance, support, or even a warning. The Brevard County School Board chose to not renew her contract even when The State of Florida Education Practices Commission made the decision to clear her to continue to teach.

The Board made a very clear They could have responded with conversation or clarity. Instead, they escalated.

This same board allowed a teacher charged with providing alcohol to minors to return to the classroom. Ms. Calhoun is was removed for showing care and the boards own political agenda.

That contradiction tells us everything. This is not about rules or safety. It is about targeting inclusive teachers and using legality as political cover.

# THE LARGER PROBLEM

## A. NATIONAL CONTEXT

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The attacks on Florida's school boards didn't start here. They were part of a national strategy.

Over the last several years, extremist groups across the country have begun targeting school boards as entry points to broader political power. Organizations like Moms for Liberty, Moms for America, and national organizations have poured resources into local races. Their goals have not been to improve education, it has been to control the narrative and weaponize public schools for political and financial gain.

This strategy is designed to operate quietly. School board races often fly under the radar. They tend to have low turnout, limited press coverage, and little accountability; leaving school boards vulnerable to infiltration. That makes them easy to flip and difficult to challenge.

Once elected, extremist board members quickly move to reshape policy and suppress opposition. In many districts, they have banned books, censored curriculum, attacked LGBTQ+ students, and punished educators who resist their agenda. These takeovers are fast, coordinated, and deeply disruptive to both schools and communities.

But this strategy has a weakness. It depends on no one watching, and no one organizing in response. Our latest data shows that when communities organize early and consistently around school boards, they win. They protect teachers. They shift narratives. And they expose the political agendas that extremists are trying to hide.

We're using that data to drive a different strategy in Florida. One that is proactive, long-term, and designed to flip power at the place it's being misused most: the school board.

# THE LARGER PROBLEM

## B. STATEWIDE CONTEXT

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Florida has become ground zero for this national strategy. And in 2022, it escalated dramatically.

That year, Governor Ron DeSantis issued first-time endorsements in dozens of local school board races. His team worked closely with extremist groups to fund messaging, deploy canvassers, and push voter outreach across the state. What had once been quiet, low-turnout elections became hyper-political battlegrounds.

Extremist candidates were elevated, moderate voices were drowned out, and fear-based messaging became the norm. Many No-Party-Affiliation (NPA) voters didn't even realize they could vote in school board races. NPA turnout sat around 26 percent, while voters who did participate were overwhelmed by high-volume misinformation and partisan mailers.

Once in power, these DeSantis-backed candidates pushed policies that restricted how race, identity, and history could be taught in schools. They launched attacks on LGBTQ+ students and targeted inclusive educators. Public schools became arenas for political spectacle rather than spaces for safety and learning.

This strategy succeeded in flipping dozens of seats. But it also activated a new wave of resistance. Students, parents, and community organizers across Florida began showing up to school board meetings, launching local campaigns, and calling out the hypocrisy.

We've tracked it all. Our data shows that consistent, local school board organizing has the power to shift elections, reframe the conversation, and block the extremist playbook from advancing any further. That is the path forward. We are building a movement to take back Florida's school boards by 2026—starting with communities that are already fighting back.

# THE LARGER PROBLEM

## C. LOCAL CONTEXT

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Brevard County is not an outlier. It is one of the clearest examples of how this strategy plays out on the ground.

In 2022, DeSantis made his educational agenda very clear and targeted Brevard. Three of the five current board members, Megan Wright, Gene Trent, and Katie Campbell, were elected with support from extremist networks. Their campaigns were strategic, coordinated, and fueled by the same messaging seen across the state: fear, control, and censorship.

The results were immediate. Book bans were introduced. Curriculum restrictions were passed. A public comment policy designed to silence dissent was implemented and later ruled unconstitutional in court. Teachers began resigning. Students felt silenced. The district changed almost overnight.

### Here is the current board:

- **Megan Wright (2022–2026):** Consistently supports censorship and extremist talking points
- **Gene Trent (2022–2026):** Known for pushing aggressive disciplinary actions against “non-compliant” educators
- **Matt Susin (2024–2028):** Board Chair. Dismisses student mental health concerns and consolidates top-down control
- **John Thomas (2024–2028):** Generally votes with the majority. Recently backed cuts to diversity-focused programming
- **Katie Campbell (2022–2026):** Sometimes expresses concern but rarely breaks with the board majority

# THE LARGER PROBLEM

## C. LOCAL CONTEXT

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This culture of retaliation has been reinforced at the administrative level. Superintendent Mark Rendell, appointed in 2023, has remained closely aligned with the board majority. He has supported their most controversial decisions and refused to publicly defend inclusive educators under pressure. His silence has not been neutral. It has allowed this crisis to grow.

Mr. Rendell has also blatantly flip flopped his stances on how to handle Ms. Calhoun's case depending on what was the most politically beneficial approach.

But Brevard is not defined by this board.

Students, educators, parents, and neighbors are organizing. They are launching walkouts, hosting strategy sessions, attending meetings, organizing townhalls, and building real coalitions. What is happening in Brevard is no longer just a warning, it is a model for resistance.

We know this approach works. Community-rooted school board organizing can shift elections, change the narrative, and restore public trust in local leadership. This isn't a theory. It's a strategy that has already shown results.



# THE PROBLEMS WE SHOULD BE SOLVING

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Across Florida and right here in Brevard County, students, educators, and families are living through a public education crisis. These aren't abstract debates. They're the lived reality of classrooms that are underfunded, over-policed, and politically manipulated.

## **1. A Teacher Shortage That's Becoming a Collapse**

Teachers are leaving in droves. They are underpaid, disrespected, overwhelmed, and often directly targeted by the very people in charge. As educators burn out or are forced out, students are left with overcrowded classrooms, fewer trusted adults, and declining academic support. The crisis is here, and it's getting worse under this board.

## **2. Censorship That Silences Students and Educators**

Across Florida, teachers are afraid to speak the truth. Laws and policies have banned books, whitewashed history, and erased identity from the curriculum. Educators are being punished for teaching honestly. Students are learning to self-censor in the one place they should feel safe to ask hard questions.

## **3. A Mental Health Crisis with No Support**

Student mental health is deteriorating. From pandemic trauma to economic instability and online harassment, young people are carrying more than any generation before them. But school boards have cut counselors, social workers, and mental health staff. School boards are leaving students to navigate crisis alone and educators to carry the emotional burden without support.

# THE PROBLEMS WE SHOULD BE SOLVING

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## **4. Real Violence in Schools Ignored or Exploited**

School shootings are no longer rare. Students in Florida and across the country are forced to practice lockdown drills, navigate real threats, and live with daily fear. Instead of investing in evidence-based safety measures or prevention strategies, school boards are focused on optics: arming teachers, increasing surveillance, or politicizing tragedy. Meanwhile, students and faculty still don't feel safe.

## **5. A Culture of Surveillance and Criminalization**

Rather than supporting students, many school districts have invested in surveillance systems and police presence. Students of color, disabled students, and LGBTQ+ students are disproportionately punished, suspended, and criminalized. Instead of creating safety through care and resources, school boards have doubled down on punishment and control.

## **6. A Board Focused on Headlines, Not Helping**

The Brevard County School Board spends more time managing their media image than addressing the actual needs of their schools. Instead of confronting the teacher shortage, the mental health crisis, or the threat of real violence, they've prioritized culture war theatrics, PR stunts, and decisions designed to please donors and think tanks, not protect students.

# THE SOLUTION

## A. WHY SCHOOL BOARD ORGANIZING WORKS

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School boards shape what's taught in classrooms, which books stay on shelves, how students are protected, and whose stories get told. But they're more than that.

Instead of spreading our time and resources thin, we concentrate on school boards because:

### **1. The Impact is immediate**

Of all forms of government, school boards are where real people can make the most direct impact, through public comment, organizing, and elections.

### **2. They're the frontlines of the education crisis**

Censorship, attacks on LGBTQ+ youth, and efforts to dismantle public education all begin here. We show up where the harm starts. As power and resources flow down from the federal DOE, school boards have unprecedented influence over the state of public education.

### **3. They build real civic power**

Data shows that organizing around school boards drives engagement in other forms of government, turnout in local elections rises, and people stay involved longer.

### **4. They bring people together**

School boards are one of the last civic spaces where people, across political lines, still gather to debate, collaborate, and act on shared values.

### **5. They develop lifelong leaders**

When students get involved here, they don't stop. They vote. They run. They lead. This is how we grow a movement.

# THE SOLUTION

## B. HOW WE USE IT TO DEFEND MS. CALHOUN

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The Brevard County School Board created the conflict with Ms. Calhoun. They chose not to renew her contract even though she acted with care, followed her conscience, and protected her students.

This harm came from the board. So our pressure is staying here. We are not letting this decision go unanswered. We are organizing locally to make it impossible to ignore. That includes public comment, media coverage, rally turnout, and continued attendance at board meetings with clear demands.

The board still has the ability to reverse course. They can reinstate her, issue a public statement acknowledging the harm, and adopt protections for inclusive educators moving forward. These are not extreme asks. They are the bare minimum for a district that claims to serve students.

We are also escalating to the State Board of Education, which has the power to interfere with certification and credentials. But we will not be distracted from where this started. We are organizing pressure at the state level while keeping the spotlight where it belongs, on the people who created this crisis and still have the power to resolve it. The longer this board ignores the community, the more clear it becomes that these politicians do not belong on the Brevard county school board.

When we show up locally and speak consistently, we control the narrative. We make sure this moment is not swept away. We keep it visible where it matters most.

# THE SOLUTION

## C. HOW WE USE IT TO TRANSFORM BREVARD

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The fight to defend Ms. Calhoun is essential. It also reflects a larger crisis that is affecting students, educators, and entire communities across Brevard.

We are building a long-term campaign to change the conditions that made her removal possible and to ensure that public education in Brevard is guided by care, inclusion, and accountability. This will not be a candidate-centered campaign. It will be rooted in the needs of the community and shaped by people who are ready to lead.

From now through November 2026, we will maintain a strong, organized presence. We will show up to every board meeting, track every vote, document every decision, and keep pressure on those in power. We are training organizers, growing coalitions, and building the infrastructure needed for real change.

This campaign will expand over time. It will include data-driven voter outreach, community-led town halls, strategic advertising, school-based organizing, and clear policy proposals that reflect the voices of those most affected.

All of this is part of Midterms on Our Terms, a youth-led, statewide strategy to transform Florida's school boards by 2026. School board races are often overlooked, but they are winnable and highly strategic. These positions control public funding, shape school policy, and influence how entire communities operate.

When we organize at the school board level, we do not just respond to harm. We build a new vision for what education and democracy can look like.

# SCHOOL BOARDS 101

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## **What is a School Board?**

A school board is the official governing body of a public school district. In Florida, every school district has a school board that makes major decisions about how the district operates. These boards control budgets, policies, and the overall direction of public education in their area. Their decisions directly impact students, teachers, families, and communities. School boards exist to represent the public in school governance. They are responsible for ensuring that local schools are run effectively, legally, and in alignment with community values.

## **How Many Members Are on a School Board?**

Most school boards in Florida have five members, although some larger districts have seven or nine. The number depends on the size and charter of the district.

## **How Are School Board Members Chosen?**

School board members are elected by local voters and serve four-year terms. Elections are nonpartisan by law, meaning candidates do not run under a political party label on the ballot. In some districts, members are elected at-large, meaning by the entire county's voters. In others, members represent geographic districts and are elected only by voters within that area.

## **What Do School Boards Actually Do?**

- Setting district policy, including curriculum standards, school safety rules, student discipline policies, and graduation requirements
- Hiring and evaluating the Superintendent, who oversees daily operations of schools
- Approving or rejecting educational materials, including textbooks, library books, and classroom resources
- Adopting the district budget and allocating public funds
- Managing contracts, employee policies, and facility use

# SCHOOL BOARDS 101

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Their decisions shape everything from what students are taught to how school discipline is handled to what extracurricular programs are available.

## **How Much Money Do School Boards Oversee?**

School boards manage enormous public budgets. The average Florida school district budget ranges from \$300 million to over \$4 billion, depending on district size. For example, a mid-size county like Brevard County may have a school district budget around \$1.5 billion. A large district like Miami-Dade manages a budget of over \$5 billion. The school board is responsible for deciding how that money is spent—on teacher salaries, transportation, classroom materials, security, nutrition, technology, and more.

## **What Is the Role of the Superintendent?**

The Superintendent is the top administrative officer for the school district. They manage all district departments, staff, and schools on a day-to-day basis. The Superintendent:

- Implements policies set by the school board
- Recommends policy changes and budgets to the board
- Hires and supervises district-level staff and school principals
- Serves as the public face of the school system

While the Superintendent runs the district's operations, they work for the board. The school board hires, evaluates, renews, or terminates the Superintendent's contract.

# SCHOOL BOARDS 101

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## **What Is the Relationship Between the School Board and the Superintendent?**

The relationship is similar to that between a board of directors and a CEO. The school board sets the vision, policies, and budget. The Superintendent executes those decisions and manages the system. The board is the ultimate authority. The Superintendent carries out their directives. Superintendents do not vote or set policy. They advise, implement, and report back.

## **How Do School Board Meetings Work?**

School board meetings are held regularly, typically every two to four weeks. They are open to the public and follow a structured agenda. Each meeting usually includes:

- Presentations and reports from the Superintendent and staff
- Public comment periods for community members
- Votes on policies, budgets, personnel changes, contracts, and more

Board members vote on motions, and majority rules. Their votes are final unless challenged legally.

## **Are School Board Decisions Legally Binding?**

Yes. School boards have legal authority granted by state law and are considered a local government agency. Their decisions have the force of law within the district, as long as they do not conflict with state or federal law.

## **Do School Board Members Get Paid?**

In Florida, school board members are paid. The exact salary varies by district size, but it is typically between \$35,000 and \$47,000 per year. These salaries are set by the state and adjusted based on district population.



# BREVARD SCHOOL BOARD

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The Brevard County School Board is made up of five elected members. Since 2022, it has been dominated by a extremist majority that prioritizes partisan agendas over student safety, educator support, and academic freedom.

Here's who currently holds power:

## **Megan Wright (District 1, Term: 2022–2026)**

Wright consistently aligns with policies pushed by Governor DeSantis and groups like Moms for Liberty. She supported restricting public comment and voted in favor of removing inclusive educational content from classrooms.

## **Gene Trent (District 2, Term: 2022–2026)**

Trent has pushed for harsh disciplinary measures against teachers viewed as “non-compliant.” He backed the decision to not renew Ms. Calhoun’s contract and has supported previous removals with similar political undertones.

## **Katy Campbell (District 5, Term: 2022–2026)**

While Campbell has occasionally voiced concern about the politicization of school governance, she has rarely voted against the extremist majority. She supported limiting access to student health resources and censoring curriculum.

## **Matt Susin (District 4, Term: 2024–2028)**

As Board Chair, Susin has led with a top-down style that sidelines student voices and dismisses mental health concerns. He has used his position to drive culture war narratives and consolidate control over the board’s direction.

# BREVARD SCHOOL BOARD

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## **John Thomas (District 3, Term: 2024–2028)**

Thomas generally votes in line with the majority. He recently supported policies that reduce diversity programming; however, Mr. Thomas has been the *only* board member that has tried to stand up for and reinstate Ms. Calhoun.

Together, this board has passed policies that censor classroom materials, remove protections for LGBTQ+ students, punish teachers for affirming student identity, and ignore the rising mental health crisis facing young people in Brevard.

## **Superintendent Mark Rendell**

Appointed in 2023, Superintendent Mark Rendell has consistently aligned with the board majority. Rather than serving as a check or independent advocate for students and educators, he has supported controversial board decisions and failed to publicly defend teachers targeted by political retaliation.

His silence and complacency have allowed this board's most harmful policies to move forward without challenge. While his role is administrative, his influence on school culture, staff morale, and district response to public concern is significant.

# TODAY'S STRATEGY

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## **This is not just a moment. It's a strategic intervention.**

Everything we're doing today is part of a coordinated effort to pressure the school board, amplify our demands, and grow the long-term power we need to protect our schools. From preparation to messaging to media, this is a campaign action.

## **Our Messaging + Internal Discipline**

- Speak with clarity and calmness. Passion matters, but our power is in being grounded.
- Do not argue with board members or opponents. Let our consistency and coordination speak louder.
- Support each other. Whether you're speaking or sitting in solidarity, your presence matters. Hold a sign!

## **Visual + Sign Strategy**

Hold signs that are bold, readable, and clear. Some effective messages:

- "Reinstate Ms. Calhoun"
- "Students Before Politics"
- "Protect your teachers"
- "Stop attacking educators"
- "Stop the political agendas"

## **De-Escalation Strategy**

We are not here to argue or escalate. We are here to apply organized pressure. If someone tries to provoke you, whether it's a board member, a security guard, or another attendee, do not engage. Stay grounded. Stay calm. Step back, breathe, and refocus on why you're here. Call in a SEE Team member. Our power comes from our discipline. Our strength comes from our unity. We do not need to match their energy. We set our own.

# TODAY'S STRATEGY

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## Social Media Plan

Help us amplify this beyond the room.

- Take a photo or short video while in line, during the rally, or after public comment
- Tag us at @seeourpower on Instagram, Twitter/X, or TikTok
- Use the hashtag #StandWithCalhoun
- Share why you showed up, what you witnessed, or what you want others to understand
- SEE Alliance will repost and amplify every tagged post to push our narrative further

## Thursday's Debrief | Sep. 25<sup>th</sup> | 7:30 PM

We will host a virtual debrief tomorrow to reflect on the board meeting and regroup on Brevards strategy:

- What went down during the meeting
- What needs to happen next
- **Brevard's movement timeline**

*Debrief details will be shared via Signal.*

## Why This Matters

Today's action sets a new standard for how this board is allowed to operate. It's about sending a message that we are coordinated, we are paying attention, and we are not going away.

We are showing up with intention. We are speaking with one voice. And we are continuing to build something that lasts and transforms the Brevard County School Board.

# DE-ESCALATION & TONE

## DE-ESCALATION GUIDANCE FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

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At the past board meetings, multiple speakers have been cut off or redirected when they brought up Ms. Calhoun's dismissal. Based on that experience, we expect similar pushback during the September 23rd meeting. If this happens to you, stay calm and stick to your message. Here's how to handle it:

**Stay calm and speak clearly.** Don't raise your voice or argue. If a board member interrupts or questions your relevance, stay grounded and keep going. Let your prepared remarks do the work.

**Reassert your relevance calmly.** If challenged, use a respectful phrase to connect your comment back to the agenda item. Examples:

*"Respectfully, this comment is relevant to agenda item F-3 Instructional Staff Recommendations. While the item doesn't include Ms. Calhoun, it should, and as a concerned community member i want to ensure that this board doesn't handle these new staff members the same way that it's mishandled Ms. Calhoun, a dedicated and high performing educator, that's why I'm raising it."*

or

*"I understand Ms. Calhoun isn't named in the item, but it covers instructional staff, and given that classrooms are being filled with substitutes, I'm offering an educator that should be reinstated for the benefit of our district climate and students."*

**Focus on shared values.** You are most persuasive when you speak to student well-being, fairness, and clarity; not personalities or politics.

*Close respectfully - even if cut off. Thank the board to keep the tone constructive and to show you came in good faith. Remember we are speaking not just to the board members, but the broader Brevard community! Your speech may be a new viewers first impression.*

# DE-ESCALATION & TONE:

## OVERALL TONE

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### **Respectful communication is key to effective advocacy.**

When we engage with board members respectfully, we increase the likelihood of them listening and considering our points. Resorting to disrespectful language not only diminishes the efficacy of our arguments, but also sends a message to the larger audience that we are unruly and unworthy of respect.

#### **1. Use calm, neutral language**

- Avoid inflammatory words like "outrageous," "corrupt," or "disgusting."
- *Example: instead of "This is a terrible decision," you could say, "This decision raises significant concerns for many in the community."*

#### **2. Speak from personal experience**

- Personal stories are harder to argue with and feel less confrontational.
- *Example: "As a parent of a 7th grader, I've seen..."*

#### **3. Frame concerns as shared values**

- Link your point to common goals like student success, safety, fairness, or transparency.

#### **4. Use "I" statements, not "you" statements**

- This keeps things personal rather than confrontational.
- *Example: instead of "You are ignoring..." you could say, "I'm concerned this decision might..."*

#### **5. Do not speak out of turn**

- To keep the board meeting moving, it's important to minimize the amount of time that is taken by public disruptions.

#### **6. Address Board Members Respectfully**

- The use of inflammatory language and name-calling towards board members undermines message and credibility.

# AGENDA TALKING POINTS & CORE PHRASES

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## F-3 Instructional Staff Recommendations:

- **The state has already cleared Ms. Calhoun to teach**
  - She has met every requirement, paid her fines, and regained her credentials. The only barrier left is this school board, making her continued exclusion purely political.
- **The Brevard County School Board is punishing a qualified educator**
  - At a time of severe teacher shortages, the board is refusing to reinstate someone the state says is ready to return. That choice directly harms students and the culture of Brevard Public Schools.
- **Her removal exposes how vague standards are being weaponized**
  - Instead of supporting teachers, the board is exploiting undefined rules to intimidate and silence them. If it can happen to her, it can happen to anyone. This creates a ripple affect.
- **This board is choosing politics over classrooms**
  - By blocking Ms. Calhoun, they're telling families that culture wars matter more than filling classrooms with experienced and qualified educators.

## **Requested Actions**

- *Reinstate Ms. Calhoun immediately. The state has cleared her, and the only holdup is these board members personal political agendas.*
- *End the practice of using discipline as a weapon against teachers who don't fall in line.*
- *Adopt clear, transparent standards so no educator can ever be arbitrarily punished again.*
- *Prove to parents and students that the board values learning more than loyalty tests.*

# NON-AGENDA TALKING POINTS

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## A Breakdown in Trust Between the Board and the Community

- **Framing:** Increased tensions at the Board meetings show that trust between the School Board and the community is fractured. Families feel ignored, students feel silenced, and many in the public feel that decisions that have been made are exclusively for political theatre.
- **Talking Point:** The Board must rebuild trust by modeling the respect and transparency we expect in our schools. That means listening to families, protecting space for public input, and working with, not against, the community. The Board sets the tone for the district. Right now, that tone is conflict.

## Teacher Shortages

- **Framing:** Brevard's teacher shortage is no longer a future concern, It's a current collapse. Vacancies remain across critical subjects like math, science, and ESE. Educators are underpaid, disrespected, and overwhelmed, and district leadership is failing to address it. Recent policies and punitive decisions, such as that with Ms Calhoun, have only deepened the crisis.
- **Talking Point:** The Board must prioritize recruiting and retaining qualified educators by improving pay, classroom support, and working conditions. Punitive actions like Ms. Calhoun's dismissal and tighter restrictions on adjunct hiring under send the wrong message to current and future teachers. This Board must stop pushing good educators out and start bringing them in. The message that this board has sent to Brevard educators, is that any one of them can be treated as badly as the board members have treated Ms. Calhoun.



# NON-AGENDA TALKING POINTS

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## A Board Focused on Headlines, Not Helping

- **Framing:** From book bans to culture war policies, this Board has made headlines, but not progress. While real problems pile up: teacher vacancies, low morale, student mental health, leadership is focused on media attention, not meaningful action.
- **Talking Point:** The Board must shift its priorities from PR to problem-solving. It's time to stop chasing controversy and start addressing the real needs of students, families, and staff. This community wants action, not theater.

## Censorship That Silences Students and Educators

- **Framing:** Florida's laws and this district's policies have created an environment of fear in classrooms. Book bans, vague mandates, and retaliation against teachers have led to self-censorship by educators and confusion for students. This climate stifles honest education and undermines trust.
- **Talking Point:** Students deserve access to diverse, accurate information and teachers deserve clarity and protection when doing their jobs. The Board must ensure transparency in book review processes, safeguard academic freedom, and protect teachers from politically motivated punishment. Ms. Calhoun's removal is a warning of what happens when censorship trumps trust.

# EXAMPLE COMMENTS

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## **2-Minute Version (A):**

Good evening, board members.

I want to address Item F-3, Instructional Staff Recommendations; specifically the case of Ms. Calhoun.

The state of Florida has already cleared Ms. Calhoun to teach. She paid her fines, is working to check every box, and her credentials have been restored. At this point, the only thing keeping her out of the classroom is this board's refusal to reinstate her. That is not about accountability. That is about politics.

At a time when Brevard schools are struggling with teacher shortages, it makes no sense to sideline a qualified, experienced educator who the state itself has deemed ready to return. Every day this board delays, students lose access to a teacher who could be supporting them in the classroom right now.

The truth is this: the standards being used here are vague, inconsistent, and weaponized. If it can happen to Ms. Calhoun, it can happen to any teacher who falls out of political favor. That is unfair to educators, and it's damaging to students.

You have a choice tonight. You can either keep punishing a teacher who has already met every requirement set before her, or you can send a clear message that Brevard values classrooms over culture wars. Reinstate Ms. Calhoun. Let her do the work she has already proven she is qualified and ready to do.

Thank you.

*Frame the comments in your own words, speak from your own personal experience, background, or profession. You're going to crush it!*

# YOU'RE MORE THAN READY!

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**WE'VE GOT A GOAL!**  
**WE'VE GOT A PLAN!**  
**WE'VE GOT ONE ANOTHER!**  
**WE'VE GOT THIS!**