

# ADVOCACY: FORUM TIMELINE

## 60-90 Days Before Forum

- Identify date for the forum. Factors to be considered could include whether you want to hold the forum just before early voting starts or just before election day. Try to find out if any other organizations are hosting forums.
- Secure a location to hold the forum and reserve the room or building. Ask whether there will be someone there to open and close the facility such as a custodian. Find out who will be setting up the tables, chairs, podium, and microphones.
- Secure a neutral person to be the moderator for the evening. After that person has agreed, make sure they add the forum date to their calendar. Send the moderator a confirmation letter.

## 45 Days Before Forum

- Solicit questions from PTA members and community members who have an interest in public education.
- Set up a meeting time to finalize which questions will be asked.
- Send an invitation letter to each candidate containing the format for the forum, candidate biographical information, and a place to check yes or no that he/she will be attending the forum.
- Email a letter to the principal or the venue's point person confirming equipment arrangements.

## 30 Days Before Forum

- Hold a meeting(s) to finalize questions. Designate who will be the two or three timekeepers (one to operate the stopwatch, one to hold the yellow banner, and one to hold the red banner). Designate who will act as host for the evening and introduce the moderator. The moderator can introduce the candidates. Designate who will act as ushers/pages to greet people at the door and hand out the candidate biographical data sheet, as well as to hand out and collect the index cards for the questions from the audience portion of the evening.
- Send out media releases to newspapers and radio and television stations informing them of the date, time, and location of the forum. Ask them to publicize as much as possible. Utilize email and other social media to spread the word about the event.
- Mail out 15 questions to the candidates and perhaps a newspaper reporter that regularly covers your school district.

## 7 Days Before Forum

- Send reminder email.
- Gather up the following needed items: stopwatch, yellow and red banners, bottles of water for candidates and moderator, index cards and pencils, and name place cards for each candidate and the moderator.

## Day of the Forum

- Send reminder email.
- Get room or facility ready, including making sure microphones are working properly.
- Provide bottled waters for candidates.
- Arrive an hour before the forum is scheduled to ensure that the facility and equipment are appropriately placed. Lay out name place cards, bottles of water, index cards, and pencils.

## After Forum

- Help clean up the room. Thank the custodian.
- Send thank-you letters to the moderator, the candidates who participated, the principal or venue contact, and the custodian.
- Send a thank-you letter to all volunteers who assisted.