All Candidate Townhall Meeting

An all candidate townhall meeting will give teachers, parents and other voters the opportunity to interact with candidates.

Here are some tips for planning an all candidate townhall meeting:

1. **Select a date and time**. Ensure that no other major community events are scheduled for that date and time. Estimate attendance and check the availability of potential facilities. Ensure that the facility is wheelchair accessible. Book it.

2. **Stream it**. Explore the option of live streaming the event for those who are unable to attend in person.

3. **Extend invitations to the candidates as soon as the election is called**. Obtain firm commitments if possible and make sure you provide guidelines about what is expected from the candidates.

4. **Book an impartial moderator**. Often journalists are willing to perform this kind of service. Other moderators include radio hosts and well-known community members.

5. I**nvite parent councils**. In some areas, parent councils alone may constitute a sizable audience.

6. **Promote the event**. Radio stations will generally publicize the townhall as a public service announcement. Newspaper editors may also donate space. Don't forget to use social media to spread the word.

7. **Plant some questions**. Arrange for teachers and parents to ask questions on priority issues. This will help keep the forum moving during lags in discussion.

8. **Broaden the discussion**. When drafting questions, think of what interests your whole audience. Questions of interest only to teachers are best handled through questionnaires.

9. **Notify the media**. Issue an advisory to the media about a week in advance. Follow up with telephone calls a day or two before the forum.

10. **Stay on track**. Ensure that candidates stick to their time limits for introductory remarks. Give candidates a 30-second or one-minute warning before their time elapses.

11. **Closing remarks**. Conclude the forum by allowing each candidate a short closing statement. Reverse the order in which candidates delivered their introductory remarks. It's important to start on time, and end on time.