You find addresses for individual board members here: <https://www.csd99.org/boe/meet-the-board-of-education>

My sample email to School District 99:

First, I want to thank you for your service to the community. District 99 has been responsible and responsive throughout the pandemic. In addition, when Dr. Thiele participated in the policing forum last summer, he thoroughly impressed me with his comments and empathy regarding systemic racism and the need to ensure that the schools are welcoming for all. In talking with many people after that event about race and our community, it is very clear that the high schools are a welcoming and inclusive environment for students, so thank you for that.

I wanted to address the board regarding some comments made last night, as I had competing meetings. To be clear (and I have no doubt you all know this), Critical Race Theory is a form of legal scholarship that responded to a pervasive ideology that legal decisions were “colorblind.” This should not be controversial in 2021. Other fields then applied certain CRT tenants to their studies, but the theory itself is a law school course. Many scholars felt as though the role of racism and white supremacy in our criminal justice system was ignored, and thus this area of scholarship was made available in graduate level coursework. We all know this racism in our legal system still exists, as we can see from the fact that our prisons are disproportionately made up of more Black and brown individuals than white, and by the many facets of our war on drugs (cannabis is still a Schedule I drug, the mandatory minimums for crack cocaine are far higher than for powder cocaine, etc.). This is why CRT is still a valid field to study.

But just as we do not expect our high school students to take a graduate level psychopharmacology course, we also need to acknowledge that CRT courses are not being taught in high schools. Rather, we are moving towards culturally responsive teaching, which is acknowledging that there are systemic injustices in society, and that we need to be sensitive that different individuals experience the world in different ways due to the intersection of all their identities, whether it be based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or any other difference that gives our world depth. If Black children are old enough to experience racism (as we unfortunately saw when a nine year old was pepper sprayed and violently removed from a Rochester elementary school in February, or in March when a five year old in Maryland left school and body camera video showed officers returning him to the building while screaming at him in his face while he cried, encouraging his mother to physically abuse him), then my five year old daughter, and all my white neighbors, are old enough to discuss the issue and actions we need to take to move towards racial equity to ensure this never happens to anyone else.

I would like to thank you all for your grace, your empathy, and for your work to ensure that all students feel welcome and get a good education. The community at large, while they may not attend meetings, sees the work that goes on, and they value the role of District 99 in our lives. Please continue your good work, and give my thanks to all the staff and volunteers who keep the schools a kind and safe place for all. We could all learn from the lessons of Downers Grove high schools.