



Create an Action Plan

The key to successfully organizing your group around a common agenda is to develop an Action Plan that is specific, measurable, achievable and focused directly on your goals.

Your Action Plan should answer the following questions:

- **What?** Decide what actions need to take place step by step. Consider your resources and timeframe for action to achieve measurable results.
- **When?** Develop a timetable for achieving each task and note the tasks on a planning calendar with deadlines; distribute to all members of the coalition.
- **Who?** Assign someone to each task and keep a record of who does what. Also assess who has access to or relationships with key decision-makers.
- **Where?** Decide where activities will take place strategically and where you will meet to monitor progress and plan next steps.
- **How?** Decide how you will be most likely to reach your goals, recruit activists, communicate and maximize resources in the most cost-effective way possible.

The Action Plan is then used to guide the priorities and activities of your group. Refer back to it often to make sure you stay on task.

Where to Start

What you decide to do depends on your audience:

Parents. The Task Force must provide reliable and clear information. Parents need to be educated about the issues. Task Force members must be available to explain and answer questions; one-on-one conversation with other parents is the most effective.

Specific Steps:

- Create an e-mail tree and send regular messages
- Identify and contact parents and other citizens who can contribute to advocacy efforts; those who are involved in media relations professionally can be especially helpful.
- Address PAC/PTO and/or Site Council meetings, as well as senior citizen center and Chamber of Commerce meetings, etc.
- Provide legislative updates in school newsletters.

Teachers. Build relationships with individual teachers and meet with teacher union representatives in your district so you understand each other's issues and concerns.

Legislators. Talk with your legislators about the experiences of your district, for example, how budget cuts have meant elimination of music or art programs, large class sizes, increased athletic fees, etc. Parents should "tell their own stories" about what's happening with their children and the schools their children attend.

Contact your local legislators often to:

- Identify their support for public education.
- Ask to be placed on their e-mail list.
- Ask to be kept informed about crucial meetings and hearings at the Capitol that will affect education legislation.
- Offer to testify.
- Attend legislative and caucus meetings in your legislative district.
- Invite legislative leaders to visit your school and attend Task Force events.

The Public. There are several different things you can do to make sure the public hears your message:

- Write letters to editors, especially to community papers.
- Talk with business leaders in the community about education issues and how they affect your schools.
- Make your school district's financial accountability visible. Ask your school district office for a compilation of budget reductions and fee increases for the last several years. Ask them to put their financial data on the district's Web site.