

Session 4

Using Internal and External Structures to Fight Systems of Injustice

TEACHER UNIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

[illegible]

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Honoring This Space

We begin by acknowledging that through a history of colonization and brutality, we currently reside on and are connecting from the traditional lands stewarded by generations of indigenous people.

We honor these indigenous people, all elders, past, present, and emerging. We are called to learn and share these learnings about this tribal history, culture, and contributions that have been suppressed in the telling of the story of what we now call the United States of America.

Community Agreements

1. Share Responsibility for the Success of Each Learning Session

2. Move up, Move back

3. Respect Confidentiality

4. Be Responsible for Building Deep Understanding

- Be timely with your presence, your speaking, and your listening
- Be fully present with speakers, open to new perspectives, and accept challenges
- Place OTHER tech on silent and stay checked-in
- Share using “I” statements
- Connect to your core values and speak from your heart

5. Expect and Accept Imperfection

6. Expect/accept non-closure – Agree to Disagree

Today's Agenda



Today's Agenda
Systems of Injustice

Standardized Testing

Financialization

Privatization

The Push to Dismantle Public Schools

Bringing it All Together

What is THE staff role?

- ❑ What are the types of work Staff people are engaged in that support and cultivate the types of leaders and structures in this book?
- ❑ What changes in your work/expectations would you (and your leader/manager) need to make room for in order to cultivate social justice unionism as presented in this book?



Izaak



The Oppression of Standardized Testing

Standardized Testing



The White Fathers of Standardized Testing

Alfred Binet developed intelligence tests as diagnostic tools to detect learning disabilities.

Carl Brigham, Psychologist and Eugenicist wrote that African Americans were on the low end of the racial, ethnic, and cultural spectrum. Testing, he believed, showed the superiority of “the Nordic race group” and warned of the “promiscuous intermingling” of new immigrants in the American gene pool. The education system he argued was in decline and “will proceed with an accelerating rate as the racial mixture becomes more and more extensive.”

Lewis Terman, of Stamford, relied on Binet’s work to produce today’s standard IQ test, the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Tests. During World War I, these standardized tests helped place 1.5 million soldiers in units segregated by race and by test scores. The tests were scientific yet they remained deeply biased, according to researchers and media reports. In 1917, Terman and a group of colleagues were recruited by the American Psychological Association to help the Army develop group intelligence tests and a group intelligence scale. Army testing during World War I ignited the most rapid expansion of the school testing movement.

"To tell the truth about standardized tests is to tell the story of the eugenicists who created and popularized these tests in the United States more than a century ago. We still think there's something wrong with the kids rather than recognizing there's something wrong with the tests. Standardized tests have become the most effective racist weapon ever devised to objectively degrade Black and Brown minds and legally exclude their bodies from prestigious schools."

-- Ibram X. Kendi

Key Ideas

Since their inception a century ago, standardized tests have been instruments of racism.

Students of color, particularly those from low-income families, have suffered the most from high-stakes testing in U.S. public schools.

The clearest prediction of low test scores in a school is the median property value of homes around

System of Standardized Testing -- RG Pg. 14

Who are the Power Holders?

Who is being oppressed?

How are the unjust policies and systems being used?

What is the overall impact on our society?

How are these injustices linked to the work of your Union?

Jessica



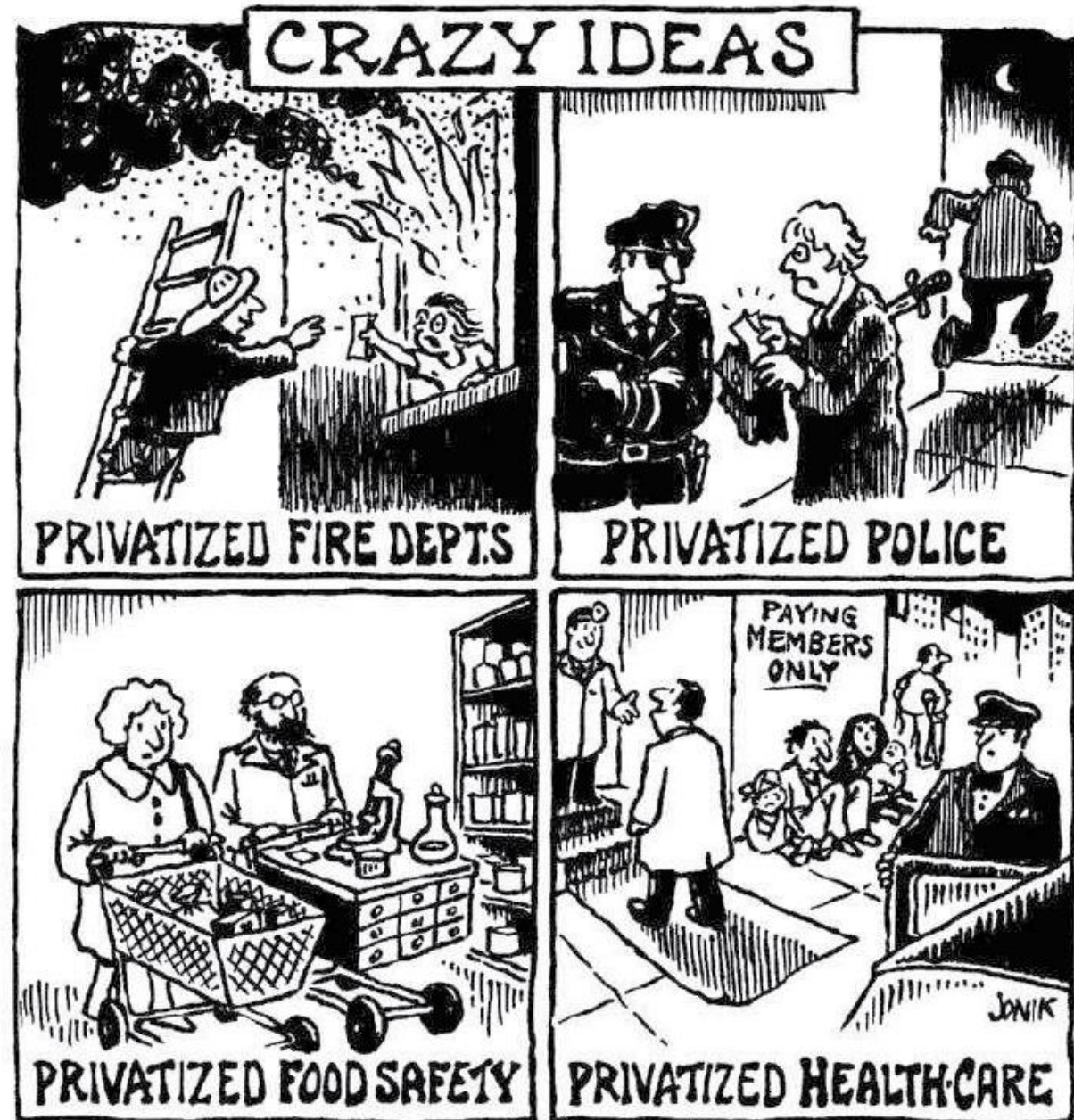
Financialization, Privatization, and the Push to Dismantle Public Schools

RG p. 2-11, 17-24

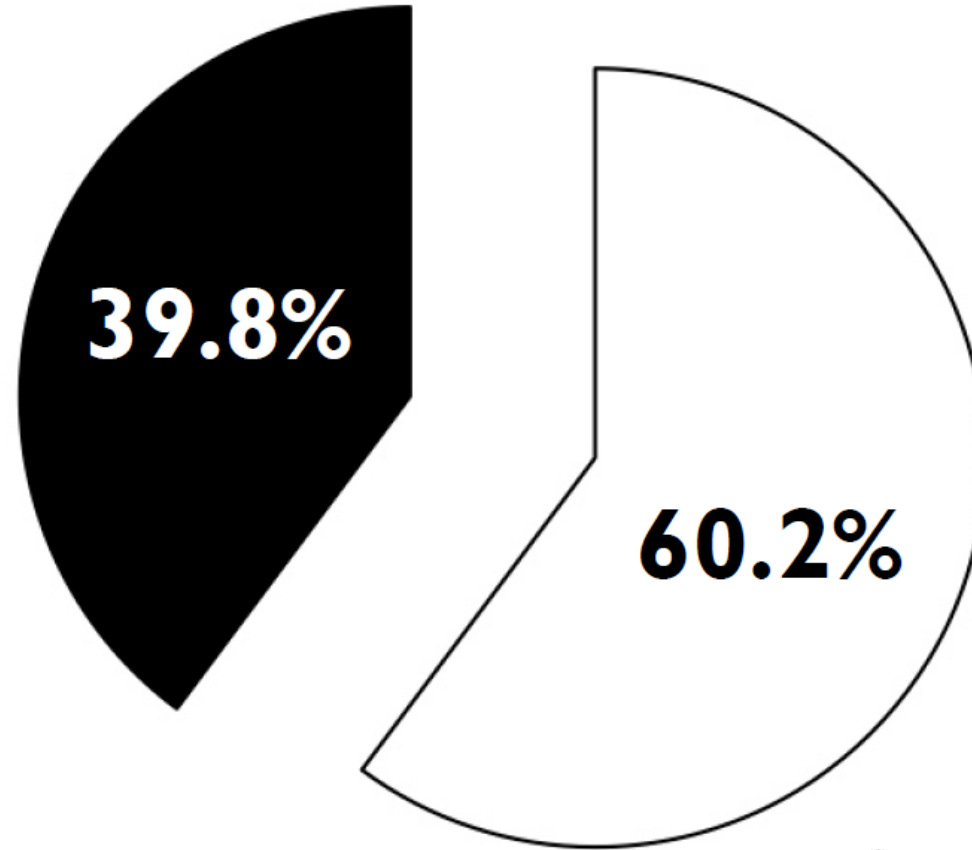
Financialization is a **process whereby financial markets, financial institutions, and financial elites gain greater influence over economic policy and economic outcomes.**

Financialization converts publicly provided goods into privately "financed goods".

Who benefits?



Ownership of Household Wealth in the U.S., 2012



The total net worth of the top 1% = \$21.9 Trillion

The total net worth of the bottom 90% = \$18.4 Trillion

**Bottom
99%**



Key Points

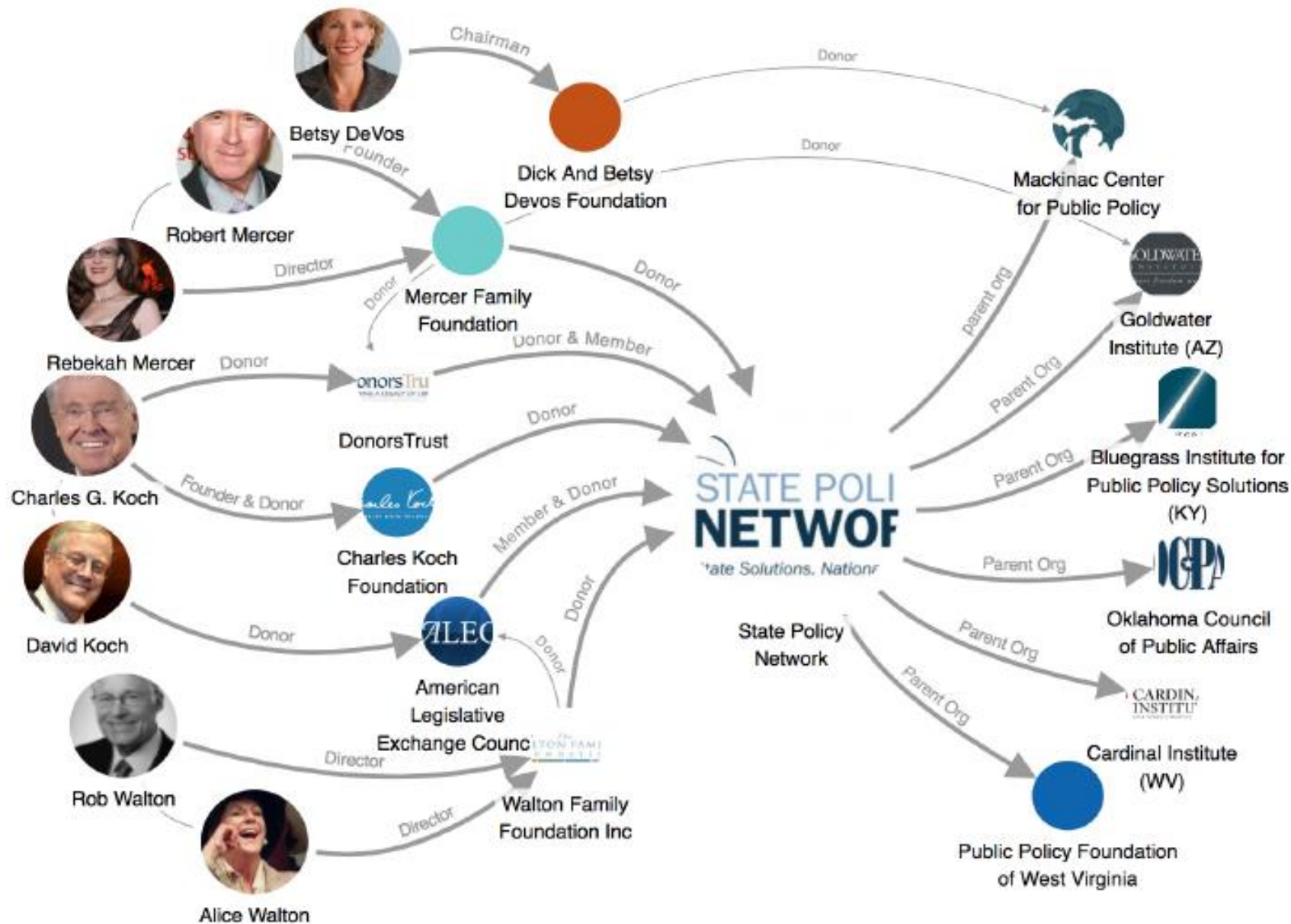


Our system is designed to extract wealth and power from the lower levels of our system and move it to the top.

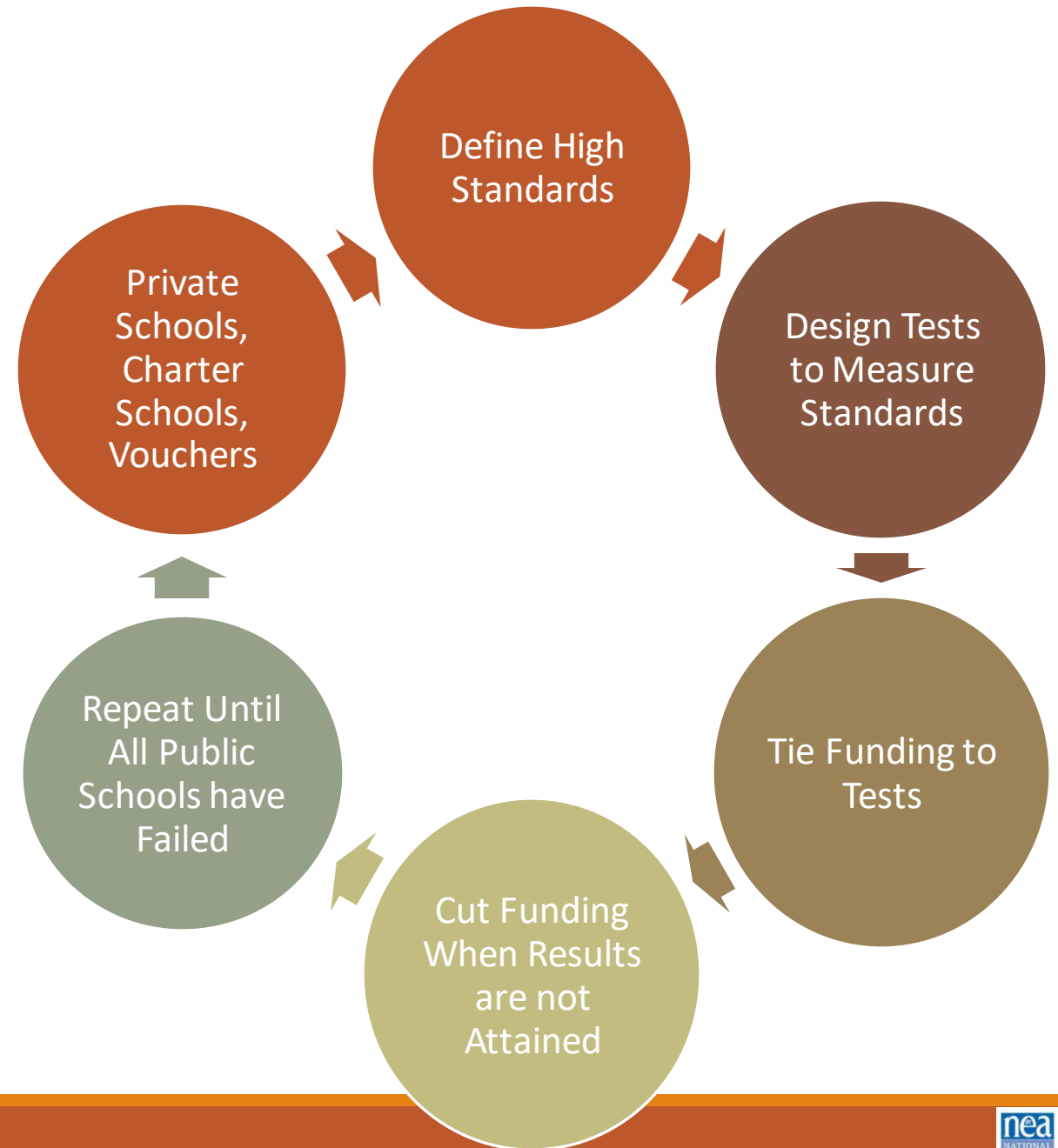
Financialization benefits the wealthiest.

How does a system of structural racism affect school funding?

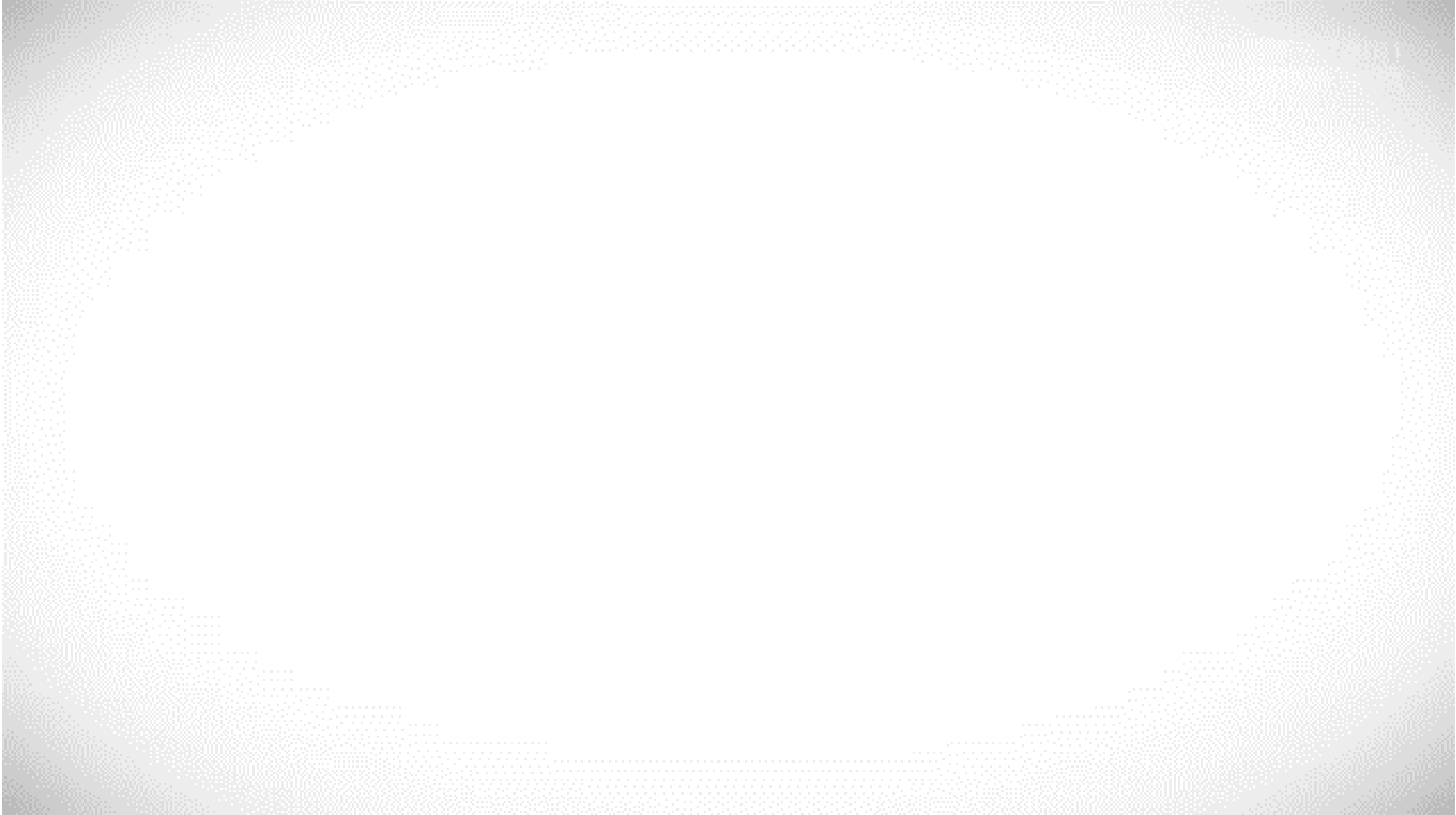




How systems work together to dismantle public schools.



Privatization



POWER

The ability to create, control, and prevent change.



ORGANIZED PEOPLE

+



ORGANIZED MONEY

What is THE staff role?

- ❑ What are the types of work staff people **must engage** in that support and cultivate the types of leaders and structures **that cultivate power-ful Social Justice Unionism**?
- ❑ What changes in your work/expectations would you (and your leader/manager) need to make room for **in order to cultivate social justice unionism** as presented in this book?



What is THE staff role?

- What are the types of work staff people **must engage** in that support and cultivate the types of leaders and structures **that cultivate power-ful Social Justice Unionism?**



Key Points



Power comes from organized money or **organized people**.

It is only by **members organizing members**, with support from staff, that we can work to **combat the systems** seeking to dismantle public education and the public good.

Shelly



Bringing it All Together A Summary of How We Win

Session 1

7 Components of Social Justice Unionism

1. Defend the rights of its members while fighting for the rights and needs of the broader community and students.
2. Recognize that the parents and neighbors of our students are key allies, and build strategic alliances with parents, labor unions, and community groups.
3. Education unions should also work to unite all staff members at a school. They should build ongoing alliances with a wide range of groups, from other public service unions to the broader labor movement, churches, community and social organizations, advocacy groups, and business and political groups that support public schools.
4. Put teachers and others who work in classrooms at the center of school reform agendas, ensuring that they take ownership of reform initiatives.
5. Encourage those who work with children to use methods of instruction and curricula that will promote racial and gender equity, combat racism and prejudice, encourage critical thinking about our society's problems, and nurture an active, reflective citizenry that is committed to real democracy and social and economic justice.
6. Forcefully advocate for a radical restructuring of American education.
7. Aggressively educate and mobilize its membership to fight for social justice in all areas of society.

Bill Fletcher – 34-41

Public Sector Unions play 3 roles:

1. They defend the interests of their members
2. They must look out for the interests of the community (Fletcher indicates that this has almost become cliché)
3. They must defend the public sector (This is readily understood by unions in other nations but not here)



Bill Fletcher – 34-41



This third role is critical right now. Public sector unions need to articulate a coherent and credible defense of the public sector - to explain the role of the public sector and show why any kind of civilized society must have a public sector. I don't think public sector unions do that very well. As a result, they tend to come across as merely defending the interests of their members.

Session 2

Leaders we Need

Leaders – Trusted and respected by their colleagues in ways that cut across communities of workers- is connected by values and influential relationships with mobilizers, activists, and those not yet part of the work. Get people to move their thinking and take action.

Mobilizers – Connected to communities of workers in ways that are influential – can convene their community. Get people excited to act.

Activists – Supportive and willing to act if invited

Why do we run Common Good Campaigns?

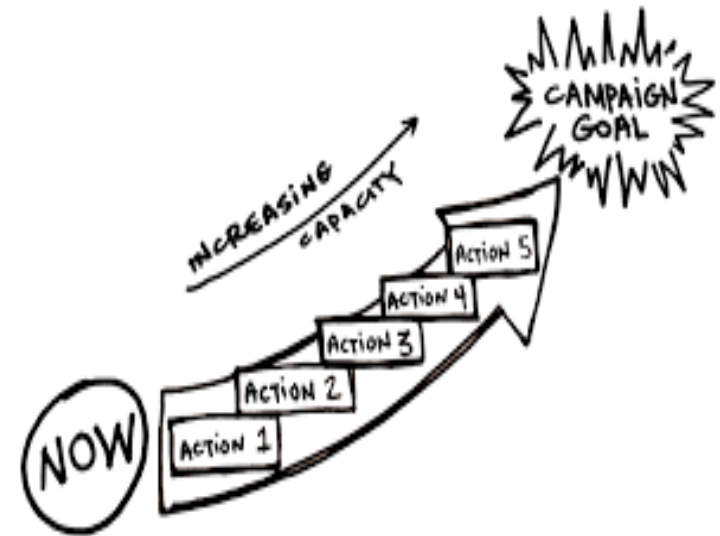
- Builds Power through Leaders and Structures from the bottom up
- This is the best way for us to WIN more for all!
- Unions and community groups share a common powerful opposition, and we need each other in order to win
- Unions win more and community groups win bigger and broader campaigns when we work together in this way



Session 3

Lessons Learned

- ❑ The workers, their energy, and their leadership must be at the front of the campaign
- ❑ Official union leadership and staff must be willing to work with rank and file members AND allow them to have meaningful roles in campaigns
- ❑ Must make space for rank and file to develop as leaders (training, chance to take risks, space to prove)
- ❑ Community-centric approach
- ❑ Democratic organizing (Marshall Ganz and Ella Baker)
- ❑ Gradual escalation of tactics
- ❑ Workers have power



Clubs Don't Do Social Justice Unionism

RG p. 12



Zoom Chat

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Club or Union?

Budgeting	Little or no local funding	Funding used to recognize activists -- stipends, meals	Funding use to recognize activists and also to reach out to members: stickers, buttons, tee shirts, picket signs	Funding used to release activists to do work, to communicate with members, and to open opportunities to the newly active
Roles	A few officers, risk of vacancy	Proliferation of titles and stipends to Presidential allies	Titles and roles generally tied to actual activities; if there's a treasurer, there is a budget; if there's a newsletter chair, there's actually a newsletter	Titles rotate regularly, or are even dropped when no longer needed
Bargaining	No bargaining, or done by a single expert (UD, President)	Small group of the usual folks on the bargaining team that the president trusts	Team represents all major job categories. Criteria is whether or not the president trusts them and they are recognized by members	Team represents all major job categories; criteria is whether they are trusted by the members
Leaders	Volunteers if any	Tends to be the same small group of folks that populate other teams.	Elections are regularly held and there are sometimes contested positions. Leaders can move others to act. However, their focus is on activism and mobilizing instead of term organizing.	Are trusted and respected by members, and there is a healthy election process with a number of good candidates. Leaders routinely deliver on persuading large groups to take public collective action; they and actively seeks other trusted and respected leaders
Advocacy	None, or done by staff and/or local president Used as one of the few justifications to pay dues	Few members may help with advocacy with much support from staff. It is viewed solely as a service to single members.	Intentional identification and training of member advocates. Most low level meetings are conducted entirely by member advocates with support from local president. Most advocacy is still viewed as a service to individuals with some understanding that protecting the work standards are in everyone's interest.	Intentional identification and training of member advocates. Most low level meetings are conducted entirely by member advocates with support from local president. Advocacy is primarily viewed as way to build worker solidarity and ways to exercise collective action in response to poor work standards. Issues to organize around.
Activity	None led by the union, the staff, or by union members. No ownership.	Programs for individual interest with little risk in participating. Led by one person, and focus of change is on personal practice.	Works to have leaders design and lead the program. Focus is on change of relationship with the union.	Organizing the focus is on the solidarity of the group and the work is to apply pressure on a system.

How might you guide a conversation with a leader(s) on:

1. how to fill this out with "realness;"
- and
2. what next-steps to take after completing?

Jessica



Taking you Home

- PDF of slideshows via email:
jessica.minguez@neaalaska.org
- Book kerfluffles:
kmedina@nea.org
- More opportunities:
nea.org/UD-Org-Support