



Campaign Academy: Coaching and Leading Winning Campaigns



Pre Academy Handouts

The Campaign Lab is a system of Affiliate Staff, Members, and Leaders networked to build power to win on issues that matter most by building a culture for organizing. A culture for organizing and continually campaigning includes a shared analysis of how to win, issue identification, goal setting, strategic actions, distributed leadership, and data that informs progress. This NEA Center for Organizing training is designed to build skills around coaching all aspects of a campaign cycle.

Lead Contact:

Ellen Holmes
NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support
eholmes@nea.org

Manager:

Kyle Serrette
NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support
kserrette@nea.org

Community Agreements for Our Time

Awareness and Self-Knowledge

This requires self-knowledge and self-awareness. Self-knowledge allows you to see what causes you pain and conflict and enables you to embrace your contradictions and inconsistencies. It allows the space to work on things about yourself that you are not happy with. In turn, self-awareness helps to prevent you from projecting your negative aspects onto other people. Bringing your best self also requires that you have a positive attitude, are willing to deeply explore your perspectives and remain open to the perspectives and experiences of others. While engaging with peers and content, make space for others to engage as well.

Listening for Understanding

Be an active listener. Active listening involves paying full and careful attention to the other person, looking them in the eye, avoiding interruptions, reflecting your understanding, clarifying information, summarizing the other person's perspectives and sharing your own. Remember that most people need time to open up and might not be willing to immediately share their personal stories, hopes, fears and/or concerns.

Being Gracious

Being kind is a vital way of bringing meaning to our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Kindness is about caring genuinely for others around you, wanting the best for them and recognizing in them the same wants, needs, aspirations and even fears that you may have. Being kind and generous allows us to communicate better with others, to be more self-compassionate and to be a positive force in other people's lives. We are gracious when we accept and genuinely work to use the pronouns that others ask us to use. Being gracious includes following best practices to protect the health of this learning community (ex. handwashing, PPE, staying in your room if you are sick).

Staying Engaged

Staying engaged requires you to be morally, emotionally, intellectually and socially involved in the conversation. Staying engaged means that you are listening with curiosity and willing to deepen your understanding. Staying engaged might also require you to sustain the conversation even when it gets uncomfortable or diverted. This means a commitment to keeping your electronic communications to a minimum with folks not present in this learning community. This also means being present for all portions of the learning agenda.

Being Open and Suspending Judgment

Listening with an open mind includes being receptive to the influence of others. You can suspend judgment by becoming aware of preconceived notions and listening to everything someone has to say before jumping to conclusions. Most importantly, suspending judgment also means listening to what the speaker has to say for understanding, not just to determine whether the speaker is right or wrong. This means that we recognize each of us will make mistakes and that we have the capacity to grow. We should expect imperfections.

Saying "I"- tell your truth

Speaking your truth in authentic and courageous conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours requires a willingness to take risks. It means that you will be absolutely honest and candid about your own thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Speaking your truth will require you to speak from the "first person" and use "I" statements.

Lean into Discomfort

Leaning into discomfort will require you to let go of understandings and stereotypes that you may be holding onto in order to move forward. Leaning in means that you will avoid pre-judgment and be open to the kernel of wisdom in each individual's experiences. Leaning into discomfort will require you to sit through moments of embarrassment, confusion, anxiety, and/or fear.

Reaching Empathy

Empathy and compassion allow you to understand the other person's point of view. When you are empathetic, you are more understanding, patient and kind. Expanding your capacity to feel empathy will also allow others to enter your circle of human concern. Sharing, using, and respecting pronouns is a very simple form of empathy.

Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

Expect and accept that there may not be closure. It is not likely that you will resolve your personal understanding about race or another person's racial experience in a single conversation. The more you talk about race or other issues with another person, the more you learn and the more they will learn. Authentic and productive conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours are continuous and always evolving. This means that sometimes we will have unfinished, unexplored, and shortened conversations about some concepts.

**Adapted from "Embracing equity and inclusion", Annie E. Casey Foundation*

What questions do you want to ask about any of the ideas in these agreements?

What additional agreements do you need in order to be a fully participating member of our learning community?

Can you commit to these agreements? If not, what would it take for you to be able to commit?

Self-Assessment of Union Engagement

Assessing my strengths and areas of opportunity for engagement in my Union

What do you know about your Union?

Contract: (Select which best describes you)

- ☐ I know where to locate my local union contract
- ☐ I know some items listed in my local union contract
- ☐ I have a copy of my local union contract; I highlighted and tabbed items related to my role in education
- ☐ I am well-versed in my local union contract, and I often share highlights of the contract with other members to ensure that their rights are being upheld

Local Union Structure: What do you know about the structure of your local union? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I know the various jobs titles that are eligible for membership
- ☐ I know the names of the members who make up the executive team
- ☐ I know the names of several building representatives
- ☐ I know the names of several members in my building or department
- ☐ I know where to find the constitution and by-laws

State Union Structure and Involvement: (select all that apply)

- ☐ I know my regional union council or my local
- ☐ I have attended a meeting with my union council or my local
- ☐ I am a delegate for the state Representative Assembly
- ☐ I hold a position or serve on a committee for my union council or my local
- ☐ I have attended an union conference or local union event this year



How involved are you as a Union member?

Union Engagement: (select the answer that best describes you)

- ☐ I serve in a leadership position, as a building representative or on another committee in my local union
- ☐ I attend regularly local union meetings, trainings, or events
- ☐ I attend at least one local union event this year
- ☐ I have not attended an event; Yet, I read my local union's newsletter or follow social media platforms
- ☐ I pay my dues. However, due to other priorities, I am unable to add much else to my plate right now

Union Activism: (select all that apply)

- ☐ I have helped to plan an event for my local
- ☐ I have led a meeting for members in my local
- ☐ I have learned who the union members and potential members are in my building or department
- ☐ I have had one-on-one conversations with members to discuss concerns in my local
- ☐ I have participated in new member recruitment events in my local
- ☐ I have shared the importance of being a member with at least one other person in my local

Union Organizing (select all that apply)

- ☐ I have worn a button, T-shirt or other insignia to show solidarity with my local
- ☐ I have concerns about my rights or working conditions that I have shared with other colleagues
- ☐ I have attended a small group, community, or board meeting to support my local or an education issue
- ☐ I have or can get at least 5 other people to join me in a meeting to support an issue or event

Political Activism: (select all that apply)

- ☐ I helped with phone banking or canvassing for a political candidate or legislative educational issue
- ☐ I have written letters, emails, attended a rally, or provided testimony on an education related issue
- ☐ I have/ currently donate to the my state or local PAC fund
- ☐ I keep up-to-date with issues and legislation that affect public education
- ☐ I am a registered voter. I vote in the primaries; not only for presidential candidates on the ballot

Self-Assessment of Union Engagement

Assessing my strengths and areas of opportunity for engagement in my Union

Who are you as a Union Leader?

Union Expectations (which best describes why you decided to join your local)

I joined because _____

- ☐ Someone who I knew asked me to join.
- ☐ It's a family thing – everyone in my family understands the power of our collective voice
- ☐ Unions give members voice and collective power.
- ☐ Unions protect workers' rights and provide safe working conditions.
- ☐ Unions are like an insurance plan to keep members from being fired.
- ☐ Everyone was a member in my school district and I did not want to be left out.
- ☐ NEA member benefits would help me save the money that my union dues cost me.

Union Dreams (which best describes what you want out of your future engagement with your local)

I most want to engage in _____

- ☐ Continuing the work that we currently do.
- ☐ Building the base of our membership to include outside partners.
- ☐ Creating local leadership structures that have power enough to drive a local agenda and win.
- ☐ Establishing the practices of coalition across a number of partnerships on a number of issues.

What are your core beliefs?

Core values are the fundamental beliefs of a person or an organization. These guiding principles dictate behavior and can help people understand the difference between right and wrong. These can often be expressed in one or two words. We are taking a moment to consider our core values because they can provide a basis for solidarity in the midst of struggles. (What are some of your core values expressed in one or two words?)

What is your union story?

Now that you have reflected on your beliefs, knowledge and experiences as a union member, take a moment to write a short summary that highlights your story. Why you're a union member? What are your strengths and your goals as an emerging union leader? *(Think of this as your 30-second elevator speech)*

Building Movement Capacity and Structure: Ella Baker and the Civil Rights Movement

By 350.org, [Daniel Hunter](#)

Ella Baker, Art on the Atlanta BeltLine Exhibition in 2018, Atlanta, Georgia. Credit: Thomas Cizauskas, Flickr, CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 DEED



Introduction

Take inspiration from this Civil Rights Movement story about how to build movement capacity and structure. Learn about Ella Baker and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee SNCC.

This article has been sourced from Daniel Hunter's book published by 350.org called [The Climate Resistance Handbook](#). Read below or see Chapter 3 on Growth and pgs 34 – 36. The images have been added by the Commons Library.

Growth

Organisers almost always have an endless list of to-do's. We have so many things to track. Who to call next. When to announce the next campaign. The website needs fixing. There's a conflict in the group that needs addressing. And few things make that list longer than a successful action!

After the action is over, there's a ton more things to plan. More people want to help out. More demands are placed on the organiser.

What makes a good organiser isn't someone who has completed their to-do list. It's someone who can manage that list with grace. It's someone who makes good choices about which things they do next.

And being a good organiser means finding new people to help out with that list. That means we have to develop a structure to grow. We need a way to absorb that energy and turn it into more capacity. Your group might be a formal organisation with a structure, board and funders (like the Brazil campaign). Or it might be a loose network (like the Mongolian youth organisation). Or it might be a few friends (like my anti-styrofoam campaign).

But it needs a way to handle that growth.

Take the US Civil Rights movement, right after the launch of the sit-in movement in February 1960. The campaign kicked off with four black men sitting at a segregated lunch counter. They were violently refused service. Within weeks, the student sit-in movement had grown across the country. Some groups had successes. Some groups faced failure at the hand of brutal mobs. But hundreds of young people, black and white, were joining the sit-ins and experimenting with that campaign model.

This caught the attention of national Civil Rights movement leaders, like Ella Baker. Ella Baker was a long-time organiser who listened to what was happening at the grassroots. She had made her own name for herself, organising campaigns for school reform and civil and women's rights across the US.

She was an organiser in the best sense: following the energy of the people, building up leaders, and always with an attitude of,

If we build strong leaders, we don't need strong organisations. – Ella Baker

She was then working at Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s organisation, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). She alerted Dr. King about the sit-in movement. The young people represented a new energy. They were disciplined and nonviolent, with escalated tactics.

They didn't believe in a single leader, and so they rotated who facilitated meetings. They were bold. They were inspiring and made waves. They injected new energy and urgency into the movement.

They were also chaotic and unorganized. They were unclear on direction and with little relationship to each other. So when Ella Baker convinced Dr. King to pull together a national gathering of the sit-in leaders, some were nervous. They worried they would be taken over by the older and more cautious groups. They knew the mainstream groups expected to be respected.

Dr. King also had to be convinced, because he had his own concerns. The young sit-in leaders benefited enormously from the work he and others had been doing. Those leaders and Civil Rights movement activists had tilled ground for the seeds the sit-in organisers

were planting. Dr. King had made enormous personal sacrifices and made in-roads into previously hostile territory. He knew the sit-in movement couldn't have taken hold without the media attention and allies that his earlier campaigns helped generate. (In fact, sit-ins that had happened years earlier never caught fire.)



Members of the North Carolina Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, shown at the Tottle House lunch counter in Atlanta in 1960, sparked sit-ins across the South. Library of Congress (CC BY-ND 2.0)

Many of the sit-in leaders idolised Dr. King. But others mocked him. They called him “Da Lawd,” and some joked about his careful approach. Dr. King worried that their sense that they had all the answers meant they would not work well with others.

These generational tensions are common dynamics in movements. We can relax when we see it. It happens. When it doesn't become overly personal and mean, it can inspire growth.

The meeting went ahead. Dr. King spoke. Other elders of the movement spoke. The unspoken goal was to organise the young people into Dr. King's organisation, the SCLC. Ella Baker moved beyond just her organisational role. She privately urged the students to develop their own organisation. She sensed their energy would be drained if they followed into the more stodgy SCLC.

She organised leaders in local SCLC chapters to send money and give official (and often unofficial) support to the sit-in organisers. And she spent hours over the nights talking with the sit-in leaders about what kind of movement structure they wanted to build. The sit-in organisers decided on a structure and a name.

They decided not to use the top-down structure of SCLC with its iconic Dr. King. Instead, they would rotate leaders and have everyone present at group meetings (which often meant their meetings ended late into the next morning!). They decided to be the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee — a name now known for winning key legislation to make sure blacks would be allowed to vote and stop vote suppression tactics.

Ella Baker showed some key lessons on being an ally to the movement.

She didn't direct, but she didn't only follow.

She didn't move based on her organisational role, but she listened for what this group of young people wanted to do. She did look ahead and see what they would need before they knew. She organised a chance to get together, protection from being overtaken, resources, and coaching on some of the details. (In her case, she soon quit SCLC and joined up with SNCC.)

But that need to create a structure is important for all movement groups.

About Book

This article is from the [Climate Resistance Handbook](#) which brings together a wealth of learnings from the climate justice movement. It starts with breaking social myths about how social movements win. Then dives into campaign tools and frameworks you can use. It closes with how to grow your group and use creative, impactful actions and tactics. This book is full of stories of climate warriors from around the globe and historical movements. It's filled with practical wisdom and inspiration to make you more effective, more active, and ready for what's next.

Reflection Questions:

- 1. How did Ella Baker's approach to leadership differ from traditional hierarchical models, and what impact did that have on the formation and success of SNCC?**

Consider how her emphasis on grassroots empowerment and rotating leadership shaped the movement's structure and sustainability.

- 2. What are the potential strengths and challenges of decentralized leadership in social movements, as demonstrated by the sit-in organizers?**

Reflect on how the lack of a single leader influenced decision-making, group cohesion, and external perceptions.

- 3. In what ways can established leaders and organizations support emerging movements without overpowering them?**

Think about Ella Baker's role as a bridge between generations and institutions, and how her actions balanced guidance with autonomy.

Ella Baker's Legacy: A Different Model of Leadership

As a community organizer, Ella Baker brought a different style of leadership to the civil rights movement—one that contrasted with the traditional model that celebrated a few charismatic individuals. Baker believed in deemphasizing top organizational figureheads and instead cultivating the abilities of everyday people to collectively join together and take action. She upheld the idea that organizations should be run by those most impacted by the problems the organization is trying to solve.

In a June 12, 2015 article in Colorlines, Barbara Ransby discussed Baker's approach to leadership:

Although she objected to the top-down, predominately male leadership structures that were typical of groups like the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC) and the NAACP in the 1950s and '60s, she realized the necessity for grounded, community-based leader-organizers such as sharecropper Fannie Lou Hamer and Cleveland, Mississippi-based local organizer Amzie Moore. Baker was not against leadership. She was opposed to hierarchical leadership that disempowered the masses and further privileged the already privileged.

When Oprah Winfrey complained that recent protests against police violence lack leadership, she was describing [Martin Luther King's] style of leading, or at least the way in which the King legacy has been most widely branded: the reverend as the strong, all-knowing, slightly imperfect but still not-like-us type of leader.

Baker represented a different leadership tradition altogether. She combined the generic concept of leadership—“a process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”—and a confidence in the wisdom of ordinary people to define their problems and imagine solutions. Baker helped everyday people channel and congeal their collective power to resist oppression and fight for sustainable, transformative change....

That collective effort required leaders who were accountable to one another and were not singular. There were many organizers in groups such as SNCC who modeled Baker's brand of what sociologist Charles Payne has called “group-centered leadership.”

Rather than someone with a fancy title standing at a podium speaking for or to the people, group-centered leaders are at the center of many concentric circles. They strengthen the group, forge consensus and negotiate a way forward. That kind of leadership is impactful, democratic, and, I would argue, more radical and sustainable, than the alternatives.

<https://www.colorlines.com/articles/ella-taught-me-shattering-myth-leaderless-movement>

Another way in which Baker's leadership style contrasted with the norm within many civil rights organizations was her emphasis on valuing the contributions of women. Baker was opinionated and outspoken, even when social norms held that women should be quiet and deferential. At both the SCLC

and NAACP, she protested the fact that formal power rested in the hands of men, who almost exclusively were given top offices, while women were relegated to support roles.

Congressperson John Lewis, himself a prominent civil rights activist, wrote in his memoir *Walking with the Wind*: “Long before people began using the term ‘male chauvinism,’ Ella Baker was describing it and denouncing it in the civil rights movement, and she was right. There were very, very few women getting credit for their work, and even fewer emerged into leadership positions.”

In a January 16, 2017 article for *Time* magazine, journalist Julie Scelfo notes that the prevalence of sexism, even within the movement, may be one reason that Baker is less well-known today than she might be otherwise:

Despite her level of experience and proven track record, [Martin Luther King, Jr.] had difficulty allowing a woman’s decisions to trump his own, and her idea was that the organization should devote its resources more to promoting and enabling its overall mission rather than celebrating a charismatic leader. Wyatt Tee Walker, an early SCLC board member, told the filmmaker Joanne Grant that the ministers’ refusal to follow Baker’s advice was in practice with the era’s norms. “This was before the days of women’s liberation,” he says in the 1981 film [Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker](#)....

Despite Baker’s gifts for leadership and oratory, the SCLC pastors, intent on preserving their patriarchal hierarchy, refused to allow her to share in their prestige.

<https://time.com/4633460/mlk-day-ella-baker/>

Scelfo goes on to discuss another reason why Ella Baker may be less well-known and widely celebrated today than some other civil rights activists:

Baker spent years of her life performing the essential—but far from glamorous—act of listening, a crucial first step in helping beleaguered Blacks develop enough self-worth to demand being treated with dignity in an environment where they had every reason to fear brutality and economic reprisal from their white neighbors. She also understood group dynamics and how to empower people to join forces, a delicate task that involves responding to a wide array of human feelings.

A narrative about this kind of work is inherently less dramatic and far more complicated than, say, the tale of a discreet act of bravery on a bus. But great leaders have recognized for centuries that high emotional intelligence, or the ability to recognize and respond to other people’s feelings, is central to successfully influencing them.

<https://time.com/4633460/mlk-day-ella-baker/>

Baker possessed this type of intelligence and infused it into her approach to organizing. In doing so, she paved the way for many young people and women to grow in their own leadership.

Today, her legacy can be seen in organizations like Black Lives Matter, which promote a “leaderful” and feminist style of organizing. Because of this, Baker not only helped change the world, she changed how people went about changing the world.

Case Study: The "Schools Everyone Deserves" Campaign

I. From Crisis to Coalition: A Story of Power and Purpose

In early spring, the Harmony Public School Board dropped a bombshell: a sweeping austerity plan that would **eliminate 15 social worker positions, increase class sizes, and freeze salaries** for all educators. For many, this felt like the final blow in a district already stretched thin. Teachers whispered in hallways, parents vented on social media, and students worried about losing trusted counselors. The mood was grim.

But inside a modest union office, a new leadership team of **10 determined educators** gathered around a scratched wooden table. They were the newly elected leaders of the **Harmony Public School Educator Union (HPSEU)**, and they knew one thing: **traditional lobbying would fail**. The Board had already made up its mind. If they wanted to win, they needed a new playbook.

A Bold Pivot: From Service to Organizing

The Core Team made a radical decision: **pivot from a “service union” model to an Organizing Model rooted in Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG)**. Instead of framing the fight as a narrow labor dispute, they would **recast it as a moral struggle for “the schools everyone deserves.”**

This shift changed everything. It wasn’t just about paychecks anymore—it was about **students’ futures, community well-being, and educational justice**. The message resonated. Parents, students, and community allies began to see themselves in the fight.

Building the Common Good Coalition

The union launched a **Common Good Coalition**, bringing together:

- **Teachers** who feared losing vital classroom support
- **Parents** worried about overcrowded classrooms
- **Students** who refused to accept cuts to mental health services
- **Community allies** who understood that strong schools mean strong neighborhoods

The coalition didn’t just meet—they organized. They held **listening sessions in church**

basements, town halls in school gyms, and strategy calls late into the night. Each conversation built trust and expanded the circle of commitment.

Escalating Actions: From Conversations to Confrontation

The campaign unfolded like a carefully choreographed dance:

1. **Petition Drives** – Thousands signed on to demand “Schools Everyone Deserves.”
2. **Visibility Actions** – Rallies outside school board meetings, educators in matching shirts, parents holding signs that read “*Cuts Hurt Kids.*”
3. **Community Forums** – Stories of impact shared publicly, shifting the narrative from numbers to human lives.
4. **Mass Mobilization** – A march that drew **over 5,000 people**, a show of force that stripped the Board of its political cover.

Each step tested the union’s capacity and **grew its power exponentially**. The 10-member leadership team mobilized a community **504 times its size**—a feat that stunned even seasoned organizers.

The Turning Point

When the coalition delivered **5,000 signed commitments** to the Board, the message was clear: **reverse the cuts or face a political reckoning**. The Board caved. Social workers stayed. Class sizes held steady. The salary freeze was lifted.

But the victory was bigger than the budget. The campaign **reshaped the power dynamics** in Harmony Public Schools. The union was no longer a service provider—it was a **movement leader**.

Key Outcomes

- **15 social worker positions saved**
 - **Class size increases stopped**
 - **Salary freeze reversed**
 - **5,000+ community members mobilized**
 - **Union transformed into a community power hub**
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II. Organizing Framework and Context

The HPSEU campaign was structured using the core components of the community organizing framework:

Element	Description	Rationale for People Power
Core Mobilization Structure	The Interdependent Leadership Structure : A decentralized, tiered network where the 10-member Core Team recruited and coached key leaders, who then recruited their own teams, enabling exponential growth.	Power is distributed and accountability is personalized, ensuring rapid, deep mobilization across all school sites and the community.
Broad Campaign Goals	Moving beyond the salary freeze (a "bread -and- butter" issue) to demand the restoration of 15 Social Workers and caps on class size (a "common good" issue).	Draws in a wider base of support (parents, students, clergy), exponentially expanding the coalition and the moral weight of the demands.
Theory of Change	The Board only responds to overwhelming public pressure. By demonstrating massive, unified people power , the HPSEU could remove the Board's political support and force concessions.	Focuses all efforts on a measurable target: the number of people willing to take action.

III. Phased Mobilization & Metrics

The campaign's success is defined by the number of people mobilized at each escalating phase, with the core target being **5,000 signed "Pledges to Defend Student Services."**

Phase 1: Internal Commitment (The Spark)

Goal/Milestone	Number of People Mobilized	Power Mechanism	People Power Result
Leadership Team & Building Representative Structure	10 (<i>Leadership Team members</i>) trained to coach and steer the campaign. 150 (<i>Building Representatives, or 10% of the union</i>) recruited as the first tier of organizers.	Established the direct, rapid communication network to the entire union membership.	Mobilization Ratio=10:150
Peak 1: Internal Test	1,380 (<i>92% of union members</i>) participated in "Green for Harmony Day" by signing the initial pledge.	First Victory: Secured a supermajority commitment , validating the internal structure before engaging the public.	Internal Unity=92%

Phase 2: External Coalition (The Multiplier)

Goal/Milestone	Number of People Mobilized	Power Mechanism	People Power Result
Coalition Recruitment	50 (<i>New external organizers</i>) recruited from parent groups, student leagues, and faith - based organizations.	Exponentially expanded the HPSEU's reach into non-union households and political constituencies.	Organizer Base=150 internal+50 external=200
Peak 2: Mass Rally	1,250 (<i>Total attendees, with over 60% being non-union community members</i>) mobilized for the public rally.	Demonstrated the power of the unified Common Good Coalition , showing the Board the community was actively involved.	External Mobilization=750+ community members

Final Phase: The Confrontation (Victory)

Goal/Milestone	Number of People Mobilized	Power Mechanism	People Power Result
Final Commitment	5,042 (<i>Total signed public pledges</i>) collected by the coalition.	Maximum Mandate: Created undeniable, data - backed political	Political Force=5,042 committed stakeholders

		pressure, proving the wide-scale opposition to the cuts.	
Peak 3: Ultimate Leverage	1,410 (<i>94% of members</i>) voted to authorize a strike, backed by the 5,042 community pledges.	Final Victory: The combination of near-unanimous internal unity and overwhelming public commitment removed the Board's political will to sustain the fight, forcing them to capitulate.	The 10-member Core Team successfully leveraged a force 504 times its size to win.

Organizing for Power: The "Schools Everyone Deserves" Campaign

Our core lesson: **Power is not what you have, but what you can mobilize.** The campaign won by strategically increasing the number of people committed to **action** at each stage.

1. The Core Principle:

The Schools Everyone Deserves campaign succeeded because it treated people mobilization as a measurable output, achieving its goal by leveraging a force **504 times the size** of its initial core team.

Success Metric	Result in Campaign	Key Lesson
Mobilization Ratio	10 Core Leaders organized 150 first-tier leaders.	You must invest deeply in training a small percentage of your base

		(10%) to be organizers, not just members.
Internal Unity	Achieved a 92% commitment (1,380 members) on the first test.	High-stakes campaigns require supermajority commitment . Test your internal structure early with low-risk actions (structure tests).
External Multiplier	Over 60% of the mass rally attendees were non-union community members.	Shift the narrative to "Common Good" issues (like social workers) to exponentially expand your base by recruiting <i>their</i> networks (parents, students).
Ultimate Leverage	Used 5,042 public pledges combined with a 94% strike vote .	Power is measurable commitment. The sheer number of committed people removed the opposition's political ability to govern.

2. Phase-by-Phase People Power Results

Exponential power is built in tiers . Never skip a step, as each phase is essential for building capacity for the next.

Phase 1: Internal Commitment (The Spark)

The goal is to move your members from passive recipients of information to active organizers. This requires **one-on-one organizing conversations** led by your core leaders.

Stage	Mobilized Numbers	Action/Outcome	Training Focus
Building Structure	150 Organizers Recruited	Established the Snowflake Structure (direct lines of communication and accountability).	The Ask: Train organizers to ask peers for specific, measurable commitments in a one-on-one conversation.
Internal Test	1,380 Members Committed	Secured a 92% commitment to the first low - risk action ("Green for Harmony Day").	Accountability: Train organizers to map their peers (Yes, No, Maybe) and follow up to move "Maybe" to "Yes."

Phase 2: External Coalition (The Multiplier)

The goal is to expand your organizing base by recruiting constituencies that care about your "Common Good" demands.

Stage	Mobilized Numbers	Action/Outcome	Training Focus
Recruiting Allies	50 New External	Exponential	The Narrative:

	Organizers	Growth: Recruited high-leverage parent, student, and faith leaders.	Train leaders to tell a compelling Story of Us that fuses the union's struggle with the community's needs.
Mass Rally	1,250 People Mobilized	Demonstrated capacity to mobilize the public on a weeknight, putting pressure on the Board.	Logistics: Train teams in specific mobilization roles (phone banking, childcare, transportation) to ensure the 1,250 people actually show up.

Final Phase: The Confrontation

The goal is to translate your mobilized numbers into a political concession.

Stage	Mobilized Numbers	Action/Outcome	Training Focus
Final Commitment	5,042 Pledges Secured	Achieved a final political mandate (pledge count) that the opposition could not dismiss.	The Pledge: Train organizers that the number of signed pledges is the true measure of power , not rally attendance.
Ultimate Leverage	94% Strike	The high vote,	Discipline: Train

	Authorization Vote	combined with the 5,042 pledges, forced the Board to concede, securing the campaign's core goal.	for unwavering unity and discipline in the face of threats, ensuring the commitment (pledge) holds firm during the final negotiation.
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3. Case Study Debrief Questions

Understanding Core Concepts

What does the phrase “Power is not what you have, but what you can mobilize” mean in the context of union organizing?

How did framing demands as Common Good issues change the campaign’s reach and impact?

Analyzing the Case Study

What were the key turning points in the Schools Everyone Deserves campaign that shifted power toward the union?

Why was achieving 92% internal unity before going public critical for success?

How did the coalition with parents, students, and community groups amplify the union’s leverage?

Applying Lessons to Your Context

What steps from the Action Checklist can you implement immediately in your own organizing work?

How can you identify and train 10% of your base as organizers in your district?

What measurable power metric (similar to the 5,000 pledges) could work for your next campaign?

Reflection on Strategy

Which phase—Internal Unity, External Coalition, or Final Confrontation—do you think is most challenging for your local union? Why?

How can you ensure your organizing structure remains strong and accountable during escalation?

4. Team Planning Checklist: Building Your Own People Power

Use these questions to assess your campaign's organizational strength:

1. **Leadership Team:** Do we have a diverse, action-oriented Leadership Team of **5-10 dedicated leaders** ?
2. **Structure Test:** Have we identified and trained **10%** of our base to be organizers?
3. **Measurable Ask:** Does our action (e.g., a petition, a button -wearing day) have a clear goal (e.g., 90% participation) that tests commitment?
4. **Narrative:** Is our primary demand framed as a **Common Good** issue to bring in external partners?
5. **Coalition:** Have we identified and secured the commitment of **50 external leaders** (parents, students, clergy) to mobilize *their* networks?
6. **Power Metric:** What is our final, public measure of commitment (e.g., **5,000 Pledges**)? Do our actions steadily build toward that number?

**BARGAINING
FOR THE
COMMON GOOD
RACIAL
JUSTICE GUIDE**

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary school teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

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California

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New Jersey

NEA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

Karen M. White
Deputy Executive Director

NEA would like to thank the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization/BCG at Rutgers for contributing to the development of this guide. We also want to thank our affiliates, who provided us with many inspiring stories of Bargaining for the Common Good for racial justice demands.

For more information:

Mary Kusler,
Senior Director for Center for Political Action and Advocacy
mkusler@nea.org

Ashley Powell
Creative Services Specialist
apowell@nea.org

Dale Templeton,
Director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy
dtempleton@nea.org

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RESOURCES



Since the 17th Century, our nation's system of public education has been the undisputed foundation of an inclusive democracy, economy, and society. Public school classrooms are where our students first learn how democratic systems of government work, and where they develop an understanding of the principles and practices that will allow them to participate in the operation of the U.S. government.

Unfortunately, when they should be working to strengthen our democracy, some far-right politicians, policymakers and pundits are actively working to dismantle it. Their weapon? Escalated attacks against public education. From attempting to whitewash the nation's history to eliminating the contributions and lived experiences of Black people and communities of color, to maligning and marginalizing LGBTQ+ students and educators, these attacks are only intended to fulfill the self-serving desires of the attackers and their wealthy donors.

Their efforts are rooted in the fertile ground of this sad truth: Inequity is sewn into every social system in our nation. These inequities make their presence known at every schoolhouse door, and in every other element of far too many communities.

With 3 million members, NEA is the nation's largest labor union. As education professionals devoted to ensuring that the nation's 50 million public school students receive the support, access, and opportunities they all need and deserve, we have not—and we will never—allow these unfounded and harmful attacks to go unanswered. We will continue to follow the North Star of our shared vision: to unite not just our members, but the nation to reclaim public education as a common good, as the foundation of our democracy, and then transform it into something it was never designed to be—a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, every one, to succeed in this diverse and interdependent world.

This Bargaining for the Common Good Racial Justice Guide represents a critical step toward the achievement of that vision.

The principles of Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG) are fastened to the belief that just as inequity is woven through the fabric of many communities, the collective bargaining process must have woven through it the unique needs and aspirations of the community that encircles the educators and students whose needs are represented at the bargaining table.

In addition to examples of how NEA state affiliates have bargained for the common good in schools and communities nationwide, this guide contains a roadmap for creating campaigns built from intentional, long-term partnerships between unions and community organizations. It also provides information about how those relationships can help to facilitate bargaining proposals designed to end the systemic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that hamper the progress of far too many students, educators, and public schools.

As parents, educators, and communities, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that every student—Black, White, Brown, Indigenous, or AAPI; students from underserved neighborhoods, LGBTQ+ students, and students who are disabled—all of our students—have the joy, justice and excellence they all need and deserve. Through bargaining for the common good, NEA is transforming that desire into a reality for students, educators, and communities across our nation.



Rebecca S. Pringle

President

National Education Association

PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE GUIDE



INTRODUCTION TO RACIAL JUSTICE CENTERED EDUCATION

National Education Association (NEA) locals across the country are at the forefront of moving strategic demands grounded in racial justice that dismantle historical and pervasive racist structures in education. Locals are building with parents, students, and community partners to fight for a system where all students can thrive no matter their race, gender, or immigration status.

But for years, corporate actors and political players have stood in the way by defunding public schools and privatizing education, disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, implementing hurtful discipline policies that predominantly target students of color, and more recently censoring teachings about racial justice and the histories of Native People, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African populations.

We must unite to take on these challenges. Union members are recognizing their dual roles as both workers and key leaders in their communities. In a changing and stratified economy, we are expanding collective bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns to address the challenges we face as workers, neighbors, and families. **Labor and community organizations are collaborating to advance unified demands that are relevant to both workers and the broader community.** This way of coming together is called Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG).

In 2022 and 2023, we saw the power and energy of BCG in Oakland, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and in growing numbers of states. These campaigns brought community members to the bargaining table with unions and thousands into the streets to take on corporate power and fight for the schools, housing, and cities we all deserve.

How are unions and community groups Bargaining for the Common Good?

At the center of BCG campaigns are intentional, long-term alignments between unions and community organizations advancing racial justice demands. Connecting at all levels starting with membership, they build strong, lasting partnerships based on trust and a shared analysis of the systemic problems we are confronting and the solutions necessary to transform our communities. BCG campaigns are centered around joint community-labor planning that brings diverse partners to the table in union bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns that build power and address the crises we all face. BCG work centers racial justice because we must collectively confront structural racism to create a powerful, unified movement.

Building strong, sustainable relationships is not easy. **Effective BCG campaigns require unions to use the bargaining process as a tool to engage members in their dual identities as workers and community members. Community organizations must also educate its members about unions and how they can bargain together.** Both groups must work to overcome any historic animosity or mistrust to develop a shared framework, from membership to leadership, that sees corporations and the wealthy elite as the perpetrators of injustice in our communities and workplaces.

In this resource guide, you will learn more about what makes a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, along with tools and resources that your local can use to work with partners in your area to run a BCG campaign.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE IS BROKEN UP INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS WITH KEY TAKEAWAYS



SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Explains Bargaining for the Common Good and the framework principles that are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools.

Takeaways:

- We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.
- If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

Provides tools and resources to run a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign through the lens of the five elements of BCG.

Takeaways:

- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in building power in our local unions and communities.
- The five elements of a BCG campaign are:
 - Center racial justice in demands
 - Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign
 - Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits
 - Expose bad actors
 - Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement
- Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create and build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.
- We need to clearly express who the bad actors—the real decision-makers that affect our workplaces and our communities—are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.
- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.

SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

Shares stories of locals succeeding in building people power in their area.

Takeaways:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

Shares links to tools and resources provided in Sections 1-3.

Takeaways:

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language.



PRINCIPLES AND VALUES



BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

With Bargaining for the Common Good, union members partner with the community around a long-term vision for the structural changes they want to see in their communities. Together, they use collective bargaining and advocacy as critical components in a broader campaign to win that change, advance racial equity, and build people power.

Educators partner with parents and community members in order to identify issues and utilize bargaining, or other forms of advocacy, as a vehicle to make demands for the entire community.

In states with collective bargaining, contract negotiations provide an opportunity for educators and their unions to involve the larger school community in the vision they want for their school and neighborhood. Instead of going to the bargaining table alone and isolated in negotiations, unions join together with parents and the community, which builds our power. In states without collective bargaining, unions and community groups align to push for policy changes that require school districts and corporate actors to meet the demands of the community.

When we expand the continuum of bargaining, we build power and go on the offense in order to fight for social and racial justice for our students, schools, communities, and the future.

With Bargaining for the Common Good, we not only fight for better pay and benefits for educators, we also fight for students and communities. When stakeholders come together, they can determine what their community needs. NEA members have successfully used the Bargaining for the Common Good strategy to win:

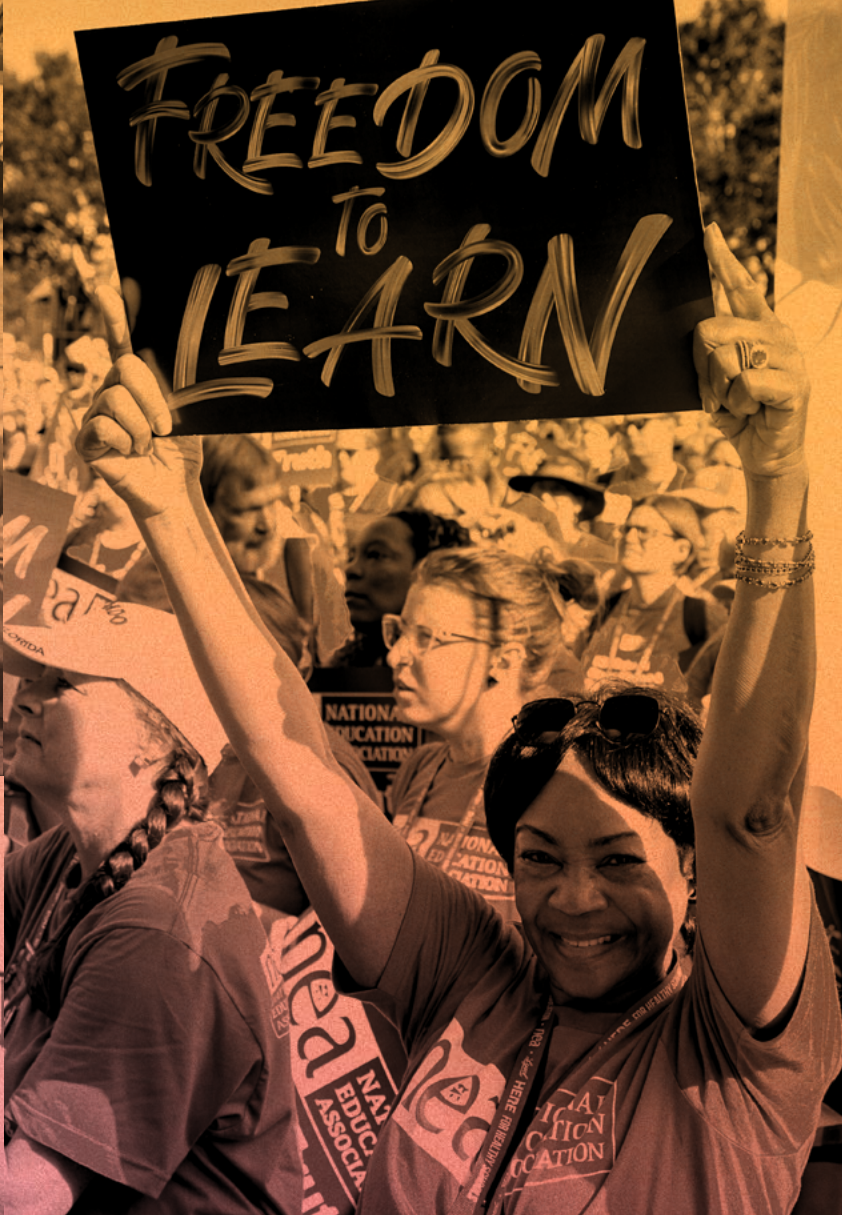
- Less testing
- Smaller class sizes
- Educator recruitment and retention programs
- Equitable school discipline policies
- Mental health support
- More nurses and counselors
- No ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) collaborations
- Implementation of restorative justice
- End random backpack checks
- Institute and/or expand ethnic studies for students

Bargaining for the Common Good works in both areas that have collective bargaining and areas that do not. The mechanics may differ, but the fundamentals are the same.



“In addition to salaries that keep up with inflation and smaller class sizes, Oakland educators held the line for almost seven days on what are known as, ‘common good demands.’ Common-good bargaining refers to agreements that go beyond issues of wages and benefits in an attempt to have a positive impact on the broader community. Under the new tentative contract, the Oakland Unified School District agreed to educators’ demands to utilize unused school buildings for nonprofit housing developments, provide resources for unhoused students, and fund programs such as the Black Thriving Community Schools that would empower Black students with leadership opportunities . . . The groundbreaking common-good demands won in Los Angeles and Oakland are proof that by standing together, educators have the power to effect change outside of normal bread-and-butter issues. Now, students and communities will benefit from the hard work that educators have put in to achieve these victories.

– Cecily Myart-Cruz, President of UTLA and Bargaining for the Common Good Advisory Committee member, “The California Teachers’ Strikes Have a Vital Lesson for the Labor Movement,” The Nation, May 19, 2023.



RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

NEA has a vision for quality public education for every student. We know that institutional and structural racism are barriers to achieving our vision. We will leverage the power and collective voice of our members to end the systematic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that affect our Association, schools, students, and education communities.

It is our belief that these Framework principles are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools:

- Our collective work promotes a vision for public education that advances inclusion, equity, and racial and social justice in our schools, Association, and society.
- Our collective work must dismantle white supremacy, and ensure that bigotry and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin is not part of our Association, classrooms, educational curricula, classroom management, school policies, and discipline practices.
- Our Association and schools must be safe for all students, and free from state-sanctioned, racialized, and gender-based violence. Our work must actively divest from prison cultivation and invest in counselors and positive discipline practices.
- Our work must result in action—programs, campaigns, policies, and capacity-building efforts for local NEA members that dismantle institutional racism now and into the future. Initiatives should create sustainable infrastructures that can continue to create systemic change and hold decision-makers, elected officials, and institutions accountable.
- Our current governance leaders must recruit, engage, and promote leadership by educators of color to share the ladder of opportunity because we are stronger together.
- Programs, campaigns, and projects must be driven by goals that are clearly outlined, tracked, and measured, and that have accountability systems that explicitly promote racial justice.
- Our work must promote education policies, professional practices, and curricula that highlight and honor the histories and cultures of Native People and People of Color.
- We must work to ensure that all students have access to a safe and quality education, regardless of their country of origin or immigration status.
- Our work must promote and support the engagement of students of color and LGBTQ students in shaping policies that directly impact their educational experience and foster safe and inclusive schools.
- We must work to dismantle discipline systems that create the School-to-Prison Pipeline and replace them with practices that encourage inclusion and are free from racial and ethnic bias.

CONNECTING FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

Throughout our history, the NEA has joined in partnership to move policies that would address inequities in education, but we understand now that racial justice in education requires movement beyond racial equity. A lack of movement will keep us at the precipice of doing a lot with limited ability to sustain it.

It will require that:

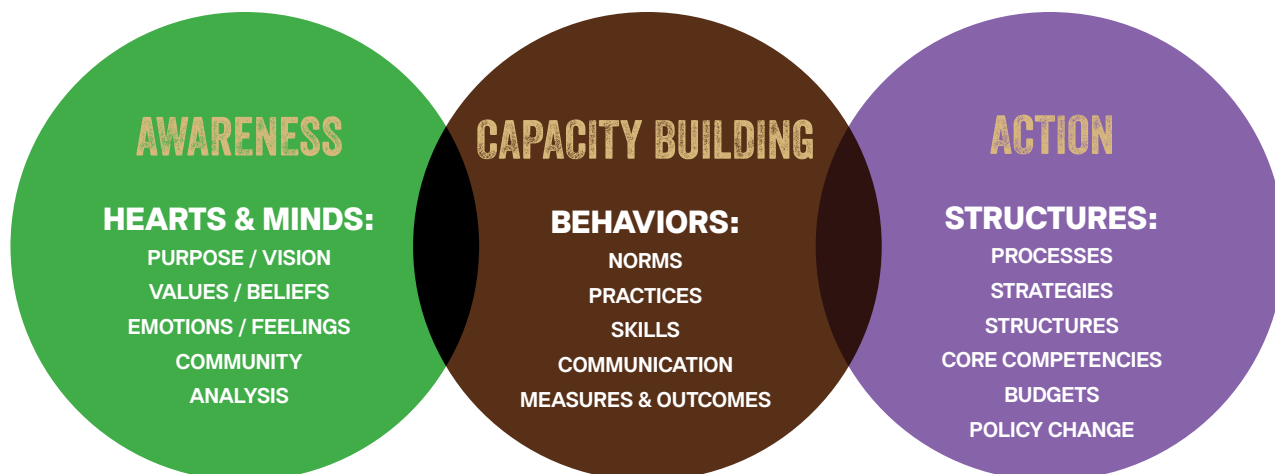
- We have a deep understanding of racial history and the associated trauma and are able to acknowledge the presence of this trauma within current systems, norms, practices, and policies.
- We focus on solutions that will build power (e.g., political, economic, civic, community) for the most sharply impacted communities and people.
- We effectively use racial impact assessment tools and develop racial justice action plans.
- We shift and share power, programs, and resources.
- We adopt anti-racist and racial justice protocols and practices.
- We shift culture and narrative.
- We use data to drive results/impacts.

The NEA Racial Justice in Education Framework was developed in conjunction with the principles and concepts embedded in the “Wheel of Change” model (adapted from the Rockwood Wheel of Change). This Framework centers and guides our systems change work, including our approach and implementation of Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns.

AWARENESS

Goal: Develop and strengthen our collective awareness and understanding of the causes and impacts of systemic (i.e., institutional and structural) racism in education and both the necessity and centrality of racial justice in achieving NEA’s mission.

- Build racial equity awareness and analytical capacity across our Association.
- Foster understanding of key concepts such as systemic (institutional and structural) racism, implicit bias, racial equity, and multiracial systemic solutions.
- Develop shared knowledge and conceptual clarity that supports normalizing explicit and constructive conversations about race.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Goal: Equip and prepare members and leaders with skills to use the strategies to take action to advance racial justice.

- Equip members, leaders, staff, and partners with the skills, tools, strategies, resources and relationships to be effective leaders and advocates in the fight for racial justice in education.
- Develop tools and resources to support organizational and cultural change through policy, practice, and behavior changes.

ACTION

Goal: Equip members and stakeholders with tools and skills to advocate, organize, and mobilize to disrupt institutional racism and advance racial justice in education.

- Engage and activate members, leaders, and stakeholders in on-the-ground efforts to combat institutional racism and advance racial justice.
- Support external organizing efforts to advance changes in our schools and communities.
- Support internal opportunities to implement equitable practices that positively impact the Association's work and promote culture change.

SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

TAKEAWAYS:

- We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.
- If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.

ELEMENTS OF BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

2

CENTER RACIAL JUSTICE IN YOUR DEMANDS

Campaign demands should address the role that employers play in creating and exacerbating structural racism in our communities.

What does it mean to center racial justice demands?

Racial dynamics, disparities, and divisions permeate our society, communities, schools, and classrooms. Systemic racism is so deeply rooted in our history, culture, and institutions that there is no escaping it. Visible or not, the impacts are ever-present. Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice (or racial equity) goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.



To engage in a systems analysis of a racial issue and develop solutions or to test if the campaign demands center racial justice, good discussion questions to have with partners and union members include:

- **Problems:** What racial inequities are you noticing or experiencing? What are the impacts on different racial groups? Who benefits most and who is hurt most?
- **Causes:** What institutions, policies, or practices are causing or contributing to the inequities? What social norms, popular myths, or cultural biases may be contributing?
- **History:** How did things get this way and are things worsening or improving?
- **Solutions:** What solutions could address the root causes and eliminate the inequities? How would different racial groups be impacted by the proposed solutions?
- **Strategies:** What strategies and actions could be used to advance the solutions?
- **Leadership:** Who are the stakeholders most affected by the inequities? Are they involved in naming the issues and solutions? What kinds of active leadership roles could they take to advance the proposed solution?

Source: <https://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>



OTHER TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO ENSURE A DELIBERATE ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGN

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A racial equity impact assessment is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. It provides a guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic. This type of tool can be used to analyze policies and contract language, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions.

Fix L.A. was a community-labor partnership that fought successfully for:

1. The creation of 5,000 jobs, with a commitment to increase access to jobs for Black and Latino/a/x workers.
2. The defeat of proposed concessions for city workers.
3. A commitment from the city to review why it was prioritizing payment of bank fees over funding for critical services.

“Bargaining for racial justice is a radical idea and will not be easily won. It will require concerted direct action targeting the real decision makers in both the public and private sectors that have a vested interest in keeping racial inequities in place.”

- Maurice Weeks and Marilyn Sneiderman, In These Times, “Why Labor and the Movement for Racial Justice Should Work Together”, September 02, 2016.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in winning racial justice demands. Many have generated amazing wins and demands across the country.

This booklet provides concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some are still being fought for.

NEA locals have been at the forefront of winning BCG campaigns. They have identified and won racial justice demands across the country. Demands can be about a range of issues from public health and safety, safe working and learning conditions, academic success, and social and emotional well-being. The list of sample demands includes:

- Acknowledge the pandemic was not experienced equally by all communities and populations, particularly in rural areas and communities of color. Listen and learn how different families handled virtual learning.
- Provide and prioritize housing, food, health, dental, and job services in neighborhood schools because it is a common-sense way to begin to address racial justice issues and the racial inequities they create and exacerbate.
- End attempts to re-segregate our school communities with charters, vouchers, and other privatization schemes that funnel resources away from public schools.
- Ensure school plans for in-person instruction are inclusive and equitable for all educators and students by humanizing learning environments and designing spaces that are situated in the experiences of communities of color, not just through white, cis-hetero, and ableist lenses.
- Ensure adequate time is provided for classroom community-building activities and consider additional staff to allow for the development of restorative practices in schools.
- Prioritize hiring, retaining, and promoting educators of color.

BUILDING YOUR RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM:

Building the right team to make decisions and move this work is critical. Your racial justice campaign team should include a leadership team, organizing/mobilizing team, communications team, political team, and in a collective bargaining campaign, a bargaining team. There should also be team members who lead the research work and legislative/policy development.

- The **leadership team** will direct and oversee the entire campaign. They have a bird's eye view and focus on advancing the campaign forward. They provide the vision and make the tough decisions with input from the rest of the team.
- The **organizing and mobilizing team** is responsible for recruiting impacted people and new partners and mobilizing members and activists. They communicate frequently and engage members and activists in two-way conversations about the campaign's vision, strategy, and action plan.
- The **communications team** drives the internal and external communications. They educate and agitate activists and members, work with the media and develop social media to define the narrative, and build public support.
- The **political team** leads the efforts to build support from elected officials, work with political partners who support the campaign, and hold those who do not accountable.
- The **research team** is responsible for pulling together information, data, and facts to support the campaign. They ensure that any data being shared is sourced legitimately and correctly. They are critical in identifying and building a case around the bad actors.

None of these teams work in silos, they work together. They can be a combination of staff, paid release members, and/or volunteer teams. It may be that the political team is from a community partner group and the research team is from the local union. Either way, the teams should understand their roles and how they interact with each other.

It is important to note that sometimes a team is one or two people depending on resources, size of the local, and staffing capacity. The different teams should develop the racial justice demands and be able to drive the campaign forward through a racial justice lens.

CENTERING LEADERSHIP OF NATIVE PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR:

The term Native People recognizes the first people of this land, having sovereign national and tribal status, as well as a racialized identity. The term People of Color refers to Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African, and Multiracial populations. It isn't enough to have Native People and People of Color activists in the campaigns. Centering means Native People and People of Color have a leading voice, are listened to, trusted, and have decision-making power within the partnership.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY ALLIES AS PARTNERS IN ISSUE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BARGAINING CAMPAIGN:

Bring in community partners on the ground floor and develop issues, goals, and strategies together. Common good is about building long-term community-labor power.



BUILDING LONG-TERM COMMUNITY-LABOR POWER TAKES TIME.

Community building is an integral part of a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move demands forward. It is important to remember that organizing does not end when the contract is settled or the campaign demands are met or won. As shown in the timeline below, before the launch of a campaign, there are a few steps that can take anywhere between six months to a year or more.

COMMUNITY BUILDING IS THE FIRST STEP:

Whether you live in a big city, a suburban town, or a rural community, there are people who care about the same issues and share your values. But to build a sustainable, long-term relationship, work is required upfront. This may include many 1-on-1 meetings, group presentations, follow-up calls, and more follow-up calls, Zoom calls, emails and more follow-up calls. It is not just about building your member list, but also building relationships. What do the leaders care about? Why do they do this work? What problems are their communities facing? What solutions do they see? Where do you share common ground and where do you have differences in your organization?

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

This outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract. Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are about building long-term power and changing the power dynamics in our communities, so it is important to think about the work as multi-year that continues after the contract campaign ends.

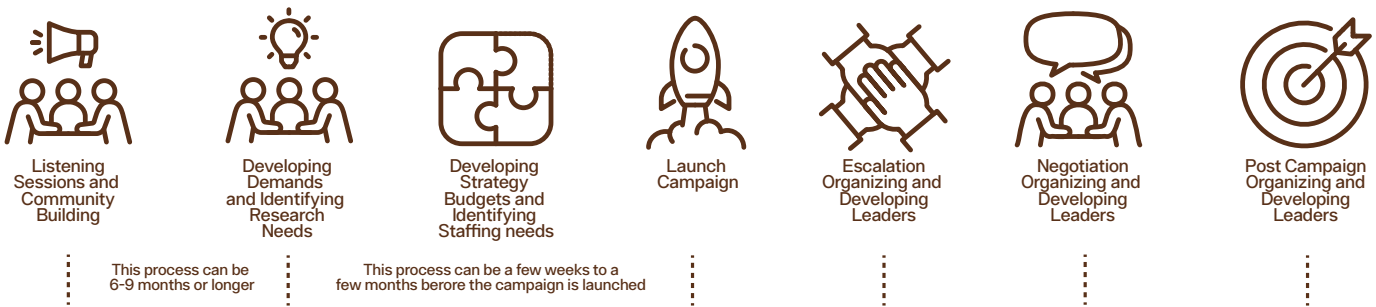
BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool is to help reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy for your organization or union. This will help you assess where to focus your time and resources to build towards developing transformational relationships, running strong campaigns, and winning Common Good demands!

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Community mapping is about learning about your community and identifying resources and important networks and relationships. Community mapping includes:

- Surveying your membership and identifying where you have existing relationships and connections to community leaders, organizations, and networks.
- Developing lists of key contacts/social networks—this is the organizer's network of power.
- Proactively developing relationships with these existing networks and organizations makes it possible to mobilize their resources around a shared campaign.
- Prioritizing and focusing outreach to build relationships with the networks that most deeply represent the community, not just those that are familiar and comfortable.



COMMUNITY LISTENING TOURS:

Listening sessions are helpful to build relationships and understand partners' interests, the problems they see in the community, and potential solutions. Listening sessions can be conducted through one-on-one meetings, community meetings, or surveys.

- **Community Listening Session:** Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn more about the community interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Family Version:** Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Community Version:** Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.
- **Community Survey:** Sample survey developed by the Fix L.A. coalition.
- **Parent Interviewing:** A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs opinions, and resolutions.
- **Parent + Small Biz Organizing Conversation:** Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS AND RANK AND FILE MEMBERS:

These are not transactional “we do this for you and you do that for me” relationships. These are sustainable relationships built on trust, respect, and a shared analysis of the conditions and mutual goals to build people power. It is critical that community and labor develop and build the campaign together from the beginning. These relationships will continue after the campaign, so it is important to start with a solid foundation and build with intentionality. This includes:

CREATING A SHARED VISION:

Working with union and community partners to identify priority issues, solutions, and a vision for the campaign is crucial in creating a shared vision. Union members and community partners understand the problems that they are facing in their workplace and communities and have ideas for solutions. It is important for rank and file members and community activists to assist in identifying priority issues and solutions, including why and how it will benefit workers and the community at large, and the vision for building long-term power.

Watch a webinar that shows how a strong community-labor partnership works in action and wins people power! United Teachers Los Angeles former President Alex Caputo-Pearl; Ruby Gordillo, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Parent, Rudy Gonzalves of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE); Amy Schur of the Alliance of Californians for Community Engagement (ACCE), and other community leaders and parents discuss the strategies and lessons learned from the recent victorious Bargaining for the Common Good campaign and strike.

<https://vimeo.com/319978916>

DEVELOPING A JOINT STRATEGY:

The strategy is your guiding star of how to win the demands. You may choose to launch a corporate campaign, or push the school board to change a policy or a town council to pass legislation, or fight for state funding. All partners must be clear about the pathway to winning and decisions stemming from the strategy. Strategies may need to change if an assessment is made that they are not effective or a campaign may have multiple strategies. For example, a campaign may call on the state legislature to fulfill its constitutional funding requirement for public education and target the corporations that do not pay taxes.

Developing a plan in partnership takes time. There are many decisions to make such as assessments, organizing plans, communications strategies, and more. A written plan is critical to ensure that all stakeholders understand the decisions made, what is happening next, and the campaign progress. Review the following to help develop your campaign plan:

- **Local campaign plan:** A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.
- **Power Mapping Activity:** Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZING PLAN:

Organizing gets people fired up (agitated) and identifies what is at stake so that participants understand how the cause is personally relevant to them and take action. At the beginning of a campaign plan, start with mild actions and escalate. Examples of mild forms of action are collecting petition signatures or wearing a union button at the workplace. Strikes or civil disobedience are bold actions.

- Use the issues that are happening in the BCG campaign to motivate members to take collective action.
- During the life of a BCG campaign, members should be able to articulate why they are taking action and what they hope to achieve before taking action.
- Different tactics will be required to move different targets.
- Evaluate in real time if the actions are helping, hindering, or not effective and why.

Escalation tactics or direct actions are important to any campaign that is designed to build long-term power. The goal of escalation tactics or direct actions goes beyond highlighting the problem and getting media attention. Escalation tactics or direct actions have four key elements:

- **ESCALATE THE CRISIS:** Deliver a message that exposes the crisis. Create the narrative about who is responsible for that crisis—target.
- **ESCALATE THE TARGET:** Expose the target; turn the target toxic. Cost the target resources—votes, money, time, influence, etc.
- **ESCALATE YOUR VOICE:** If the target ignores the tactics/actions, escalate the tension on a specific demand. Force the target to choose between ongoing direct action or meeting the demand.
- **ESCALATE YOUR BASE:** Develop and energize your leaders and base.

“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Possible actions may include:

- Walking out of a meeting en masse
- Speaking to the media
- Calling a meeting of supporters
- Reaching out to parents
- Meeting as a small group
- Striking
- Running a social media profile picture campaign
- Wearing red on Thursdays
- Stickering up
- Circulating a public petition and deliver it to the school board
- Rallying, for example, have staff rally outside school before the start of the school day and walk in together
- Presenting signage and/or protesting in a high-visibility public space
- Red out: staff decorating their rooms in union colors
- Distributing flyers to parents at the school choice fair
- Informational picketing
- Open bargaining
- Setting up lawn signs
- Visiting corporate actors defunding public schools/ supporting charter schools

IDENTIFYING CLEAR ASKS:

Not many people spontaneously get involved. It takes an invitation to participate or an ask for people to take action. Most people will volunteer or donate to a cause that shares their values when asked. In campaigns, the same principles apply. If you can connect to their value systems and the ask is clear and concise, people will get involved. Recruiting activists, rank and file members, and members of the public to join the campaign means having a clear ask and showing why their involvement matters.

Affirm, Answer, and Redirect is a useful organizing tactic when faced with an individual who blocks or objects to the vision of the campaign or action plan.

1. Affirm:

Although you may disagree with the person, or not share their experience, it is important to show that you hear their frustration, and try to understand where they are coming from.

2. Answer:

It is very important to give an honest answer. If you can give them information that responds to their question, or helps them see the issue differently, do it. If you made a mistake, own it. If there is information that you do not know, tell them you will research it and get back to them (and make sure you do).

3. Re-direct:

At the end of the day, the power to win depends on one thing: the involvement of the people—union members and community partners. So look for ways to re-direct their frustration towards participating in a collective project that will help them see that the campaign is powerful (like the next action). Then repeat your ask.

EXPAND THE SCOPE OF BARGAINING BEYOND WAGES AND BENEFITS:

Identify issues that resonate with members, partners, and allies and that impact our communities. Put forth demands that address structural issues, not just symptoms of the problem.

DEVELOP AND DEEPEN LEADERS' SHARED POLITICAL ANALYSIS:

With an intentional approach to developing and deepening leaders' shared political analysis, BCG campaigns move away from short-term mobilization efforts that develop little to no power and instead harness collective power to develop long term and major wins for our schools and communities. This can take form in different ways like short workshops, training sessions, organizing conversations, and more.

Political education should:

- Be grounded in the racial justice demands and explain the racial dynamics that the demands are addressing.
- Articulate a clear connection between Bargaining for the Common Good demands and the problems workers and communities are facing.
- Include space for labor and community partners to share their stories, interests, and lived experiences that build trust and connections across all participants.
- Build activists' confidence and effectiveness in engaging hesitant colleagues and recruiting members of the public to join the campaign.
- Make it clear what is at stake, who the bad actors are, why the target has power, and how the campaign plan will motivate the targets to meet demands.
- Meet people's education level, literacy proficiency, and language needs. It may mean investing in translators and interpreters and/or an experienced popular educator.

EXPOSE THE BAD ACTORS:

Go on offense in your campaign by identifying, exposing, and challenging the real villains; the financial and corporate actors who profit from and increasingly drive policies and actions.

DO THE RESEARCH:

Scarcity politics and financialization of the economy have devastated our communities and schools for decades and driven funding to the one percent. Research to identify who and how divestment happened in your community is key. Groups like LittleSis and Hedge Clippers are good sources to help map out the financial and corporate actors.

Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) called on state and federal elected officials to fund public education through progressive revenue. The MTA and its partners identified 19 billionaires in Massachusetts whose wealth grew while state coffers were depleted during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. They used the data to agitate and gain the public in support of the campaign's three key demands.

source:

<https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/net-worth-of-massachusetts-billionaires.pdf?la=en>

source:

https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/mta_tax_flyer.pdf?la=en

TARGET THE POWER BROKER:

Identify the decision-makers who can meet the demands. Power mapping can help identify and map the power relationships, who influences power brokers, and your groups' relationships to them. Some general questions to start the identification process include:

- Is it a corporate entity and who in the corporation has the power? Is it the CEO of the bank?
- Is it a government entity? Is it one person or a group of decision-makers? Is it the mayor or city council? Is it the school board?
- Where do they get their power? Who is in their circle of influence?
- What do they care about?

POWER MAPPING:

The Power Mapping tool can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.



GENERATE PUBLIC SUPPORT:

Building public support is about agitating the public against the bad actors. Be clear in your messaging as to why the bad actor is responsible. Your communications team can help generate stories for traditional outlets like radio and newspaper. Rank and file members and activists can use social media to build up the campaign. The message and narrative should be clear, concise, and consistent across platforms. The following are samples and guidelines for effective messaging:

- Social media posts and news story highlighting the same message:
 - Seattle Education Association
 - Recess, it's important, does your child get enough of it?
- Campaign websites:
 - San Antonio Alliance, Local 67
 - Reclaim Our Schools LA
 - Higher Education Labor United (HELU).
- Messaging and Media Relations Toolkit: Helps develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources
- Digital Best Practices: For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets

STRENGTHEN INTERNAL ORGANIZING, MEMBERSHIP, AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:

These campaigns must deeply engage the memberships of both unions and community organizations, and there must be opportunities for deep relationship building and joint visioning among the members of the different organizations.

Engaged groups produce transparent, useful, relevant, and frequent member communications, such as printed or electronic newsletters. Most importantly, leaders should be open and transparent, which means producing relevant and frequent updates to keep members engaged and active. You should feel comfortable contacting your state/national affiliate communications department for assistance and best practices.

CONTRACT ACTION TEAM (CAT):

Establish a new internal union network of member activists to engage and activate members using a two-way pipeline of communication. The union's ability to successfully win demands for members and the community depends upon the union's strength and power. Strength and power derive from a solid foundation of organizing union members and community stakeholders that increases activism, engagement, and solidarity.

By creating vital new roles and delegating responsibilities, your local can position itself to build capacity and develop enough power to win demands. It also enables your local to identify new activists and leaders to continue to build on its successes for the future along with a strong and sustainable democratic movement.

STEWARD/MOBILIZER:

Your members, especially your stewards or mobilizers, are crucial to the success of the campaign. This requires continually building the team and communicating with them frequently, so they can organize at their workplace and in their communities. Stewards should have a WhatsApp or Signal group and an email list for their building. They should have a weekly plan of how they will communicate with other members, updates and an action plan for the day or week and an explanation of why the action is important, and a role for the members.

1-ON-1 ORGANIZING MEETINGS:

The heart of organizing is about building relationships, which means 1-on-1 organizing conversations. A strong organizing conversation is not like a chat with a friend or loved one. It's a guided conversation that builds connection, engages people in collective action, and helps develop leaders. When a worksite has good, strong leaders who can educate and move their co-workers into action, it's harder for the boss to pit workers against each other.

10-MINUTE MEETINGS:

A fundamental way to disseminate information and empower leaders at the worksite level is to develop a 10-minute meeting system. Short, concise, and frequent meetings increase attendance. Be sure your 10-minute meetings make time for two-way communication. Campaign updates can easily be broken into basic 10-minute meeting agendas. You can break up complex topics related to contract proposals, legislative initiatives, or policy demands into bite-sized pieces within these meetings. Plus, it allows decentralized conversations and a place for local action-taking/planning for early tactics such as button wearing, petition circulation, etc.

GROUP TEXTS:

Texting is an immediate communication tool for quick updates, reminders, and time-sensitive information sharing, but it does not replace the face time necessary for developing relationships and trust with members and community allies.

Before you send your first text message—remember that there are federal laws that prohibit bulk text messaging. Contact your attorney, as well as your state affiliate or NEA, to learn more about different texting platforms you can use to reach our members and supporters within the law.

WEBSITE/ONLINE RESOURCE:

Creating a landing place for members and allies to reference information can be important for the campaign, but it isn't always necessary. Only use a website if your campaign would benefit from a landing page to publicly post resources or documents. Always add a link or directions for how to take action.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use social media platforms that make sense to our audience—members/potential-members and community supporters. It is also a great tool for producing media during various parts of the campaign. NEA offers local leaders and staff a variety of additional [social media best practices](#).

Tools and Materials:

- [Sample 10-minute meeting agenda](#)
- [1-on-1 Organizing Conversation Guide](#)
- [Build the CAT structure](#)

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

TAKEAWAYS:

- **Bargaining for the Common Good Campaigns are rooted in building people power in our local unions and communities.**
- **The five elements of a BCG campaign are:**
 - **Center racial justice in your demands**
 - **Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign**
 - **Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits**
 - **Expose bad actors**
 - **Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement**
- **Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.**
- **We need to clearly express who the bad actors are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.**
- **Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.**



SUCCESS STORIES

3

SUCCESS STORIES

Columbus, Ohio

The Columbus Education Association (CEA) won an agreement to help address racism and racial disparity. As part of their newest contract, CEA earned professional development opportunities for bargaining unit members in the school board's ongoing Strategic Plan.

Source: <http://www.ceaoio.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/MOU-Re-2021-2022-School-Year-Final-Signed.pdf>

Jefferson County, Colorado

The Jefferson County Education Association fought successfully to implement a staffing and classroom diversity program, including recruiting and retaining staff that reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the student body, and a mentorship program for staff of color. In addition, they formed an Equity Accountability Committee responsible for addressing equity in the district, which would engage the school community.

Source: https://cdns5-ss12.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_627881/File/Print%20Agreement%20JCEA%20Final%2007.2023%20Website.pdf

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) established the Anti-Bias Anti-Racist Educator Development and Support Council, which set up sub-committees specifically tasked with recommending establishing initiatives for recruitment, retention, and development of educators of color and the improvement of district-wide climate and culture. These sub-committees will continue to work to instill a sense of permanency in anti-bias anti-racist initiatives and development.

Source: https://www.mft59.org/files/ugd/bf7435_4a4f8e-50f33e4777a22b23c598e1641e.pdf

St. Paul, Minnesota

Read about how St. Paul teachers, parents, and students organized for the schools their students deserved and won: "Teacher-Community Unionism: A Lesson from St. Paul: How one teachers union brought parents and students into the bargaining process—and won."

Source: <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/teacher-community-unionism-lesson-st-paul>

Seattle, Washington

Following a weeklong strike by more than 6,000 educators of the SEA, a new three-year contract was settled with major wins for both the students and educators of Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Seattle was facing a multitude of systemic problems such as increased class sizes, workload, and staffing cuts; racial inequality of resources and services; unsafe learning and working conditions; unaffordable cost of living for many lower-wage staff; and a looming educator shortage crisis. They established a Joint Task Force for multilingual education and language immersion to improve inclusionary services and student equity and create incentives for teaching.

Source: <https://vimeo.com/208734309>

Sacramento, California

The Sacramento City Teachers Association included parents, business leaders, and community members in their contract negotiations in their bid to make Sac City the destination district in California for students and educators.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBPNX-tajjO>

San Diego, California

In coordination with community partners, parents, and students, the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) identified several bargaining goals with a heavy emphasis on racial justice. To address historical divestment across districts in schools located within communities of color, demands will focus on curriculum, ethnic studies, allocation of resources, educator pipelines, restorative practices, and support for educators and students of color. All these issues run parallel to their advocacy for community schools, staffing, and class size. Bargaining by the local is underway as of summer 2023.

Source: <https://www.sdea.net/2023/04/san-diego-community-schools-coalition-demands-more-after-school-opportunities-in-san-diego-unified/>



SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

TAKEAWAYS:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions but we have to plan and organize.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

RESOURCES

4

RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR RACIAL EQUITY:

Provides discussion questions to have with partners and union members.

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. A guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some have only been introduced.

RACIAL JUSTICE DEMANDS:

List of racial justice demands that local unions and community partners can develop together.

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

Outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool helps organizations or unions reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy.

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Worksheet to map out the community networks of members and activists.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION:

Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn about community interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - FAMILY VERSION:

Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - COMMUNITY VERSION:

Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.

FIX L.A. COMMUNITY SURVEY:

Sample survey to gather information about the community.

PARENT INTERVIEWING:

A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs, opinions, and resolutions.

PARENT (AND SMALL BUSINESS) ORGANIZING CONVERSATION - GUIDE:

Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN PLAN:

A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.

COLORADO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION POWER MAPPING ACTIVITY:

Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association, which can be used to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

POWER MAPPING TOOL:

Can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including the allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.

MESSAGING AND MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT:

Designed to help develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources.

DIGITAL BEST PRACTICES:

For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets.

NEA GUIDE TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS:

1-on-1 organizing conversations guide to help you start recruitment conversations and navigate the tough questions that members and non-members raise.

SAMPLE 10-MINUTE MEETING AGENDA:

Sample worksite meeting agenda to help disseminate information and mobilize workers quickly.

BUILD THE CAT STRUCTURE:

Internal union network of member activists.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES**TAKEAWAYS:**

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language. See next page.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of racial justice language

Understanding the context and historical background that many terms convey is essential to encouraging usage that reflects cultural and racial awareness. Using shared language builds a strong foundation among campaign partners, helps prevent translation issues, and empowers workers and activists to speak with confidence and knowledge.

Sources: [Equity in the Center](#) and [Dismantling Racism Works](#)

Affirmative action – This term describes policies adopted since the 1960s that require “affirmative” (or positive) actions to ensure people of color and women have opportunities equal to those of white men in promotions, salary increases, school admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and representation among vendors in government contracts. Although they have been effective in redressing injustice and discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees, these policies have been attacked because of perceived “reverse discrimination.” The Supreme Court has not ruled all affirmative action unconstitutional, but it has limited the use and ways in which policies can be written and applied. See “Reverse Racism.”

Anti-racism – The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach to oppose individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Civil rights – A group of laws designed to protect various groups against discrimination based on race, sex, religion, age, national origin, and other characteristics. Often used in connection to the civil rights movement, widely recognized as taking place from 1954 to 1968, which included issues and practices such as school desegregation, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, voter registration campaigns, and acts of civil disobedience to protest racial discrimination.

Class – Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups, held in place by attitudes that rank people according to economic status, family lineage, job status, level of education, and other divisions. One’s race can be a major determinant of one’s social or economic class. The variables of race and class, though closely connected, each need distinct attention.

“Colorblind” – A term used to describe the act or practice of disregarding or ignoring racial characteristics, or being uninfluenced by racial prejudice. The concept of colorblindness is often promoted by those who dismiss the importance of race in order to proclaim the end of racism. It presents challenges when discussing diversity, which requires being racially aware, and equity that is focused on fairness for people of all races.

Colorism – Discrimination based on skin color, which often privileges lighter-skinned people within a racial group, positioning people with darker complexions at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. It is an example of how white supremacy can operate amongst the members of a single racial or ethnic group. This form of prejudice often results in reduced opportunities for those who are discriminated against, and numerous studies have revealed differences in life outcomes by complexion.

Cultural appropriation or “misappropriation” – Adoption of elements of a culture that has been subordinated in social, political, and economic status by a different cultural group. It may rely on offensive stereotypes and is insensitive to how the culture of a group has been exploited by the culture in power, often for profit.

Discrimination – Treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion.

Diversity – There are many kinds of diversity, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, and physical or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. See “Equity.”

Equity – Equity means fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). It is also not equality, or “same treatment,” which doesn’t take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account. Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support, and sustain social justice. See “Racial justice.”

Ethnicity – A socially constructed grouping of people based on culture, tribe, language, national heritage, and/or religion. It is often used interchangeably with race and/or national origin but should be considered an overlapping, rather than identical, category. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Hate crime – Criminal acts, motivated by bias, that target victims based on their perceived membership in a certain social group. Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters, or email. Hate crime laws enhance the penalties associated with conduct that is criminal under other laws.

Implicit bias/unconscious bias – Attitudes that unconsciously affect our decisions and actions. People often think of bias as intentional, i.e., someone wanted to say something racist. However, brain science has shown that people are often unaware of their bias, and the concept of implicit bias helps describe a lot of contemporary racist acts that may not be overt or intentional. Implicit bias is just as harmful, so it is important to talk about race explicitly and to take steps to address it. Institutions are composed of individuals whose biases are replicated and then produce systemic inequities. It is possible to interrupt implicit bias by adding steps to decision-making processes that thoughtfully consider and address racial impacts.

Minority/minorities – A term that has historically referred to non-white racial groups, indicating that they were numerically smaller than the dominant white majority. Defining people of color as “minorities” is not recommended because of changing demographics and how it reinforces ideas of inferiority and marginalization of a group of people. Defining people by how they self-identify is often preferable and more respectful. The term “minority” may be needed in specific cases (such as “minority contracting” and “minority-owned businesses”) to reflect data that is collected using those categories. See the term “People of color.”

Mixed race, biracial, multiracial – Generally accepted terms to describe a person who has mixed ancestry of two or more races. Many terms for people of various multiracial backgrounds exist, some of which are pejorative or are no longer used. The U.S. Census first gave the option for a person to identify as belonging to more than one race in 2000, at which time approximately 9 million individuals, or 2.9 percent of the population, self-identified as multiracial.

Multicultural – Involving various cultures in a society, usually with the intent to promote tolerance, inclusion, and equal respect for cultural diversity. Does not include an explicit racial lens. Multiculturalism often focuses on interpersonal interaction and communication between people of different cultures rather than a systemic approach to advance equity.

People of color – Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups, rather than “minorities.” Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white to address racial inequities. While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-white”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

“Post-racial” – A term used to describe a time in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist. Deep racial disparities and divisions exist across our society, and some are even widening. Much like the notion of “colorblindness,” the idea of a “post-racial” society does not acknowledge that racism and inequity sit at the core of many of our nation’s deepest challenges. See “Colorblind.”

Privilege – A set of advantages systemically conferred on a particular person or group of people. White people are racially privileged, even when they are economically underprivileged. Privilege and oppression go hand-in-hand: They are two sides of the same power relationship, and both sides of the equation must be understood and addressed. People can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another. See “Intersectionality” and “White supremacy.”

Race – While often assumed to be a biological classification, based on physical and genetic variation, racial categories do not have a scientific basis. However, the consequences of racial categorization are real, as the ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and racial profiling. How one is racialized is a major determinant of one’s socioeconomic status and life opportunities. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Racial and ethnic categories – System of organizing people into groups based on their identified race and ethnicity, with categories that may change over time. Data is derived from self-identification questions; however, people often do not get to select the categories from which they must choose, making most methods of categorizing and counting highly political and often problematic.

Racial hierarchy – Ranking of different races/ethnic groups, based on physical and perceived characteristics. Racial hierarchy is not a binary of white vs. non-white, but rather a complex system where groups occupy different rungs of political, economic, and cultural power. Racist ideology relies on maintaining hierarchies, even among racial groups.

Racial justice – The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Racial profiling – The discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting people of color for suspicion of crime without evidence of criminal activity, based on their perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion (e.g., “stop-and-frisk”). Racial profiling is ineffective, damages community-police relationships, and is being litigated around the country as a violation of constitutional rights. However, law enforcement authorities at the federal, state, and local levels continue to use racial profiling.

Racial slur – Derogatory, pejorative, or insulting terms for members of a racial or ethnic group. While some slurs, like the “n-word,” are understood as such and are avoided, some slurs are still used in everyday speech, with little understanding of their harm.

Racism – A historically-rooted system of power hierarchies based on race—infused in our institutions, policies, and culture—that benefits white people and hurts people of color. Racism isn’t limited to individual acts of prejudice, either deliberate or accidental. Rather, the most damaging racism is built into systems and institutions that shape our lives. Most coverage of race and racism is not “systematically aware,” meaning that it either focuses on racism at the level of an individuals’ speech or actions (individual-level racism), dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense.

Racist – Describes a person, behavior, or incident that perpetuates racism. Stories of race and racism that focus on personal prejudice (“who’s a racist?”) get a disproportionate share of attention in the media. This reinforces the message that racism is primarily a phenomenon of overt, intentional acts carried out by prejudiced individuals who need correcting and/or shaming and tends to spark debates of limited value about that individual’s character. Media and racial justice advocates should use a systemic lens when producing race-related stories and topics to examine systems, institutional practices, policies, and outcomes.

“Reverse racism” – A concept based on a misunderstanding of what racism is, often used to accuse and attack efforts made to rectify systemic injustices. Every individual can be prejudiced and biased at one time or another toward various people and behaviors, but racism is based on power and systematic oppression. Individual prejudice and systemic racism cannot be equated. Even though some people of color hold powerful positions, white people overwhelmingly hold the most systemic power. The concept of “reverse racism” ignores structural racism, which permeates all dimensions of our society, routinely advantaging white people and disadvantageous to people of color. Structural racism is deeply entrenched and in no danger of being dismantled or “reversed” any time soon.

Stereotype – Characteristics ascribed to a person or groups of people based on generalization and oversimplification that may result in stigmatization and discrimination. Even so-called positive stereotypes (e.g., Asian Americans as “model minorities”) can be harmful due to their limiting nature.

Systemic analysis – A comprehensive examination of the root causes and mechanisms at play that result in patterns. It involves looking beyond individual speech, acts, and practices to the larger structures—organizations, institutions, traditions, and systems of knowledge.

White supremacy – A form of racism centered upon the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that white people should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-white people. While often associated with violence perpetrated by the KKK and other white supremacist groups, it also describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains social, political, historical, and/or industrial white domination.

White supremacy culture – Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture.



