

WINNING SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS 2025



PARTICIPANT HANDOUTS

Organizers must distinguish between worksite and local political campaigns, with school board elections having a significant impact on public school employees. To win, they need to develop strong leaders and build relationships with external groups, while also mobilizing voters and finding candidates, using member engagement plans, and exploring best practices.

The NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support in partnership with the NEA Campaigns and Elections department created a training designed to build participants' understanding of political campaigns that increases the power and organizing capacity of their locals and community. Participants will deepen their understanding of campaign planning, candidate recruitment, coalition building, PAC fundraising, member engagement, voter contact, and messaging.

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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-knowledge 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.

Listening for Understanding

Be an active listener. Active listening involves paying full and careful attention to the other person, looking him or her 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 utilizing your sick leave when ill for in-person events and not putting the health of this learning community at risk.

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.

Seeking Discomfort

Leaning in to 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 in to 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?

DAY 1 HANDOUTS



re:power
@repowerorg

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No one:

Not a single solitary individual soul:

Organizers: We need a spreadsheet.

January 12, 2025

How Abortion Won in Arizona

Maria Esch



Maria Esch, researcher for the Alternative Unionism Project at the Center for Work and Democracy dives deep into the local efforts to pass Proposition 139 in Arizona during the 2024 election.

This article is a part of [Left Out: The Missing Election](#) narratives, a collection of unreported histories by publications inside of the Movement Media Alliance.

The Copper State turned red in November 2024.

After swinging blue in 2020, Arizonans sent our Electoral College votes to former President Donald Trump once again. But while Arizonans voted for a candidate who has taken credit for the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*, we also voted overwhelmingly in support of Proposition 139, the Arizona for Abortion Access ballot initiative. Prop 139 passed with 62% of the vote (417,427 more votes than Vice President Kamala Harris received here) and carried all but two of Arizona's 15 counties, enshrining the right to provide and receive abortion care in our state constitution.

Six other states also passed measures protecting abortion rights, but Arizona's expansive win is notable in context of the stressful legal battle here after the *Dobbs* decision overturned *Roe* and let states dictate abortion rights.

In April 2024, Arizona Supreme Court justices voted to uphold a near-total, Civil War-era abortion ban. By September, the 1864 law had been repealed by the state legislature, and the state returned to its (still restrictive) 15-week rule on abortion.

For Arizonans, this whiplash between rights and their revocation was sparking more than frustration—people were angry. In the face of the (thankfully never formally implemented) 1864 abortion ban, many people like me were confronted with the reality of a world in which our bodies had become a battleground for political maneuvering without our consent. As the Arizona for Abortion Access Act shifted from an idea to a campaign, I got to hear Arizonans' feelings around abortion and bodily autonomy directly. During signature collection, voters approached me to make sure their names were down in support; during door knocking, folks showed bravery and vulnerability in telling me their own stories. This campaign experience brought people into policy.

That's a testament to the care and intentionality of Healthcare Rising Arizona, one of the organizations that launched the campaign. Healthcare Rising is a membership based, nonpartisan organization backed by Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West that seeks to improve the Arizona healthcare landscape through direct action and legislation. Specifically, it focuses on creating and supporting citizen-driven ballot initiatives to get the job done.

Healthcare Rising's wins in the past eight years include an increased minimum wage and a cap on medical debt interest rates in Arizona. When asked about the healthcare landscape in Arizona after the 2022 election (which followed on the heels of Dobbs), Healthcare Rising members cited abortion as a major cause for consternation. In response, the Arizona for Abortion Access Act was born. The strongest possible protection for reproductive rights required a full-blown constitutional amendment, which meant the campaign would need to collect more than 383,923 valid signatures—just to get on the ballot.

During my tenure at the Center for Work and Democracy at Arizona State University, our team has engaged extensively with the question of whether ballot initiatives are an effective avenue for working-class mobility. A 2022 report from the center, "Majority Rules: The Battle for Ballot Initiatives," shows that initiatives supporting egalitarian policies—policies that win resources, rights and protections for ordinary people—win more than 60% of the time. Within those egalitarian initiatives, the ones focusing on economic redistribution win a whopping 75% of the time.

Egalitarian policies are popular across red and blue states alike. When it comes down to the raw data untainted by partisanship, Americans overwhelmingly vote to support policies that support them.

As a volunteer organizer for Arizona for Abortion Access, fresh onto the political organizing scene, I was fascinated to see how these data points were put into action during the campaign. From the jump, Healthcare Rising was insistent that organizers for the abortion ballot initiative carry out a nonpartisan campaign. The group's background data reflected that both Republicans and Democrats were interested in protecting abortion rights in Arizona, and that messaging tied to the Democratic Party would only serve to alienate right-wing voters. Because party alliances don't always map to policy preferences, Healthcare Rising wanted language and ideas that resonated with people across party lines.

In Arizona, home to Wild West sentiments that frown upon government interference, the angle of messaging was clear: To pass this progressive, pro-choice policy, organizers would have to find common ground between progressive and conservative voters. In the case of abortion, the issues at stake of privacy and individual freedom aligned with Republican skepticism about big government.

When training to collect signatures for the ballot initiative, the organizers in charge—a mix of older women who organized for abortion access in the 1970s and younger women passionate and primed to take on organizing in our current political landscape—wanted us to lean into a few specific talking points. Signature collectors were invited to talk about the potential consequences of an abortion ban in Arizona, yes, but even more so we were encouraged to stress the idea that medical decisions should be between patients and providers, not politicians. We were asked to leave partisan affiliations behind (a number of organizers tried to campaign for Harris while canvassing for 139 and were kindly, but promptly, shut down).

While many of the volunteers had stories of intense confrontation during their efforts collecting signatures in the blistering Arizona heat, my time was surprisingly frictionless. (In fairness, I was primarily posted up in the air conditioning at one of my favorite dive bars in downtown Phoenix.) Not only were folks open to signing my petitions, they were the ones tapping my shoulder to make sure they got the chance to sign. People cited reasons for signing that ranged from "of course women should be able to get abortions" to "my girlfriend

would kick my ass if I didn't sign" to "I don't want the government to know any of my business." In short, the messaging that Healthcare Rising proposed was resonating extremely well.

Our signature collection had already been fully underway in April 2024, when the Supreme Court upheld the 1864 ban, and the news of that decision made a big difference. People were flocking in droves to help combat the archaic law, and petition circulators were primed to meet them with consistent, cross-aisle talking points and signature sheets in hand throughout Arizona. (As an Arizona resident, I rarely got through my weekly errands without running into volunteers asking me to sign.

In total, we collected a record 823,685 signatures—meaning roughly one in five Arizona voters signed onto the Arizona for Abortion Access Act before it even hit the ballot. That's not to say the campaign was easy. Organizers spent countless hours researching and meticulously crafting the language of the proposition before even announcing the campaign. Volunteers of all ages and all across the state spent hundreds of hours standing outside of grocery stores, libraries and local businesses—in temperatures well over 110 degrees—to garner support. Many faced shouts, swears and prayers from opponents of the proposition, but they remained undeterred. When it was finally time to turn in the hundreds of thousands of signatures at the state Capitol, we came face to face with bomb threats, police dogs and opponents insistent on documenting each and every box as it was unloaded and counted. And even after the signatures were turned in, the campaign continued. By late summer, organizers were preparing for the last leg of the campaign: the road to Election Day.

On my first day of canvassing, in October 2024, I was really nervous. Going to new and unfamiliar neighborhoods in the Sun Valley, with its huge and widely dispersed population, is intimidating. There were certainly trials—dogs lunging at us out of open windows while their owners yelled through the storm door for us to go away, gentlemen trying to school us on why we were "so misguided" in our opinions—but, by the end of that day, I felt more invigorated than anything. We were only able to speak with folks at about half of the doors we knocked, and a handful were less than friendly, but the majority of the people we interacted with were comfortable hearing us out and even supportive.

To someone familiar with politics but new to organizing, it was truly a marvel to see how the campaign for Proposition 139 in Arizona translated to success at the polls. While the election night event for 139 was still exceedingly stressful with the results of the presidential election looming in the background, the energy in the room was surprisingly relaxed. Even when that first major drop of votes showed almost two-thirds of voters in support of the Arizona for Abortion Access Act, folks smiled and hugged, but few tears were shed. The moment was big, but no one was shocked.

Between my first time collecting signatures and our last canvassing outing, two days before Election Day, I truly think I was able to reestablish a faith in my broader community. In a society hell-bent on preserving individualism, community connections like talking to your neighbors can sometimes feel like a lost art. But volunteering with Healthcare Rising Arizona and the Arizona for Abortion Access team showed me that finding a friendly face is easier when organizing is approached as relationship building.

This campaign worked because it was never about political maneuvering; it was about coming to the table to talk to people with respect about an issue that impacts so many of us so intimately.

Day 1 Discussion: The Forge article, “How Abortion Won in Arizona”

You will be part of a group discussion using this article please read it prior to attending and record your thinking about the following questions.

Questions	Your Reflections
Why are ballot initiatives so successful?	
What issues should we be tapping into for our school board election?	
Is it helpful or harmful when school board elections become partisan? Why?	
How can we transform our school board organizing to be more relational?	
What is the best idea from this article that you want to share with the group?	

School Board Campaign Planning Template

*Internal planning document for Staff & Governance

Step 1: Map your school board, community & local

Mapping your School Board:

District/Seat	Term Expires	School Board Member Name	Ally, Neutral, or Opponent?	Other relevant information

What seats/districts will you focus on? What seats will help you build or strengthen your majority?

Local Association Mapping:

- Organization Capacity

Building/Committee	Rep/Chair	% Active	% PAC	% Cell	% Email

- Communication Tools

Tool	Administrator(s)	# of Subscribers/Likes/etc.

- Engaging Your Leadership

How will we engage the candidate on our policy priorities and the campaign work we are doing? Who will be the primary point of contact?

What roles for member leaders will we have on the campaign? How will we recruit them?
How will we communicate/update each other?
How will we celebrate and create community?

- How are decisions made? Is it spelled out in our constitution & bylaws?

Who is on the interview team? How are they chosen?
How are recommendations approved?
How are budget decisions made?

- Legal: Consult with your Government Relations Department ASAP

Do we have PAC money? How do we access it? How can we spend it? What are the contribution limits? Who does the reporting?

Do we have dues money committed for member communication? If not, is there a crisis fund or re-appropriation of budget line item we can use?

What are the coordination rules?

What authority lines do we need to use?

Do we need a lawyer to approve items/literature we create?

Are there certain vendors we have to use?

Community Mapping:

- Make a list of all the organizations and influencers that care about your public schools and/or work on local elections.

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- Take that list and put them on that X Y axis (template provided)
- Think about group's assets (email lists, PACs, etc) and ability to get involved in elections (tax status).

Group Name	Group Assets and Tax Status

- What groups and influencers will you try to form coalition with? Why?

Group Name	Why form a coalition with them?

Step 2: Goal Setting

Election Data & Vote Goal: Make sure to use data from the past 3 elections cycles for similar electoral years. For example, if the election is taking place during a presidential election cycle, you want to pull data from other presidential election years.

Year	Turnout	Registration	Turnout %

Formula to calculate your Vote Goal:

Step 1. Election Year Turnout % = Total Votes Cast / Total Voter Registration

Step 2. Projected Turnout % = Sum of Previous Election Year Turnout % / Number of Elections

Step 3. Projected Voter Turnout= Current Voter Registration x Projected Turnout %

Step 4. Vote goal for two candidates*= Expected Voter Turnout x .52

Vote Goal for three candidates*= Projected Voter Turnout/3+1

***viable candidates, add 5% cushion**

- **Vote Goals:**
 - Candidate X
 - Candidate Y

Member Voting History:

***contact your state affiliate GR department on how to access this data**

Year	General/Primary	% Members Voted

Members that live in District:

***contact your state affiliate GR department on how to access this data**

District	Members from Local	Members from other Locals	Retirees

Internal Goals:

- _____ new volunteers
- _____% of members voting
- Increase PAC fundraising by_____

Step 3: Campaign Message

Message: Why does this election matter to voters? Why does this election matter to members*?

What message structure will we use (triangle, tully box, RCN)

*these may not be the same messages

Step 4: Vote Contact Tactics

How will we talk to voters? How will we talk to our members?

Tactic Examples: Canvassing, phone banking, direct mail, handwritten letters/postcards, texting, paid digital ads, 10-minute building blitzes, worksite one-on-ones, and organic social media posts

Tactic	Date	Target Audience	What is being communicated?	When is it being communicated?	Who is responsible?

Step 5: Budget

Budget: *make sure you consult with your state affiliate GR department to make sure you are spending money and reporting correctly

Item	Description	Dues/PAC	Cost

Step 6: Timeline

Important Dates (plug these dates into the timeline below or google calendar/template of your choice):

- Candidate Filing Deadline
- Primary Election Day (include early voting, mail ballot requests/return deadlines)
- General Election Day (include early voting, mail ballot requests/return deadline)

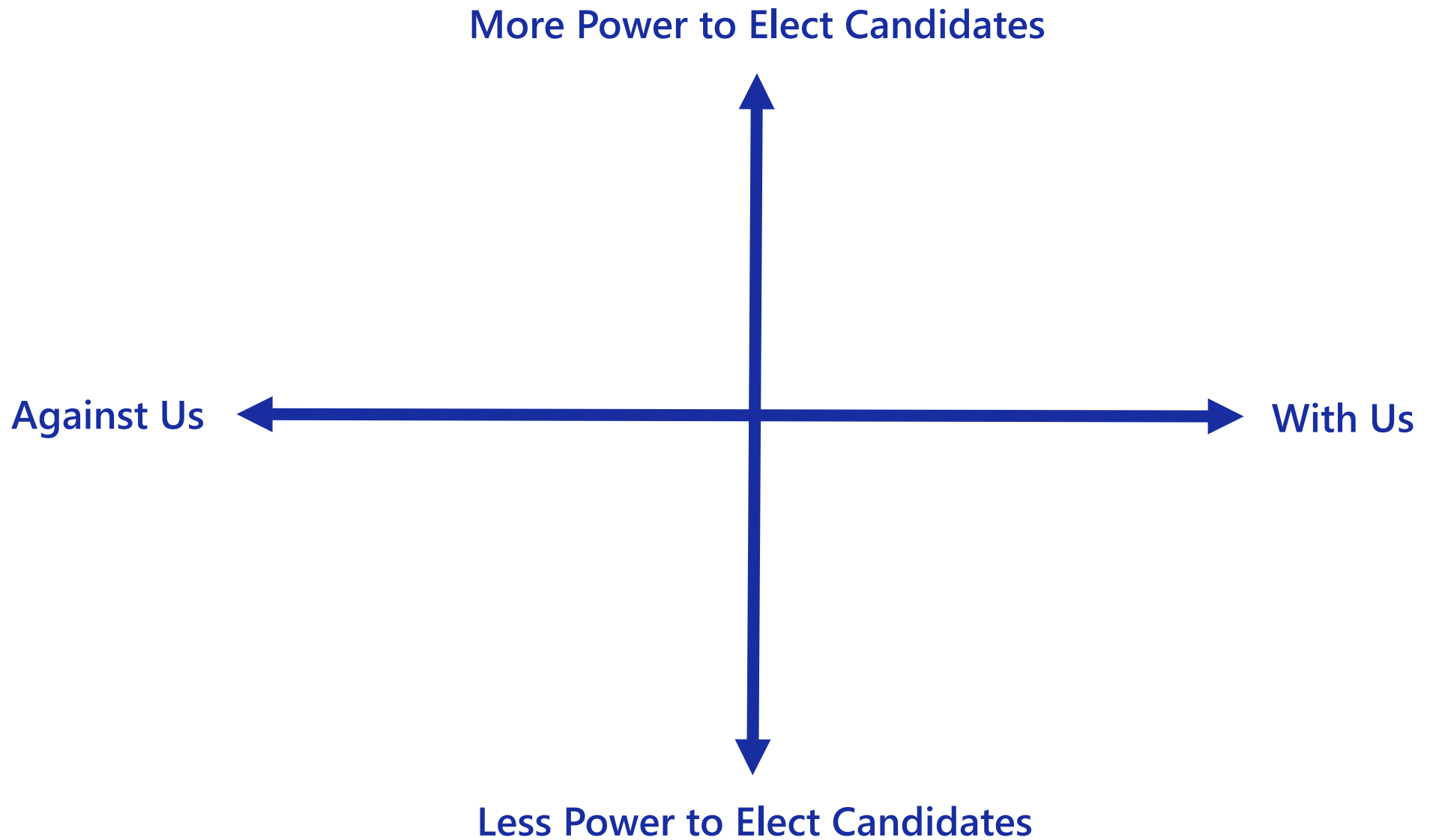
- Holidays/school breaks
- Popular community events
- Candidate Recommendation Process Interviews/Votes etc.
- Recommendation announcements to members/public
- Monthly Building Rep Meetings
- Association events that are good opportunities to talk to members about election or recruit volunteers
- Events/activities you have promised candidates to turn members out for

Timeline:

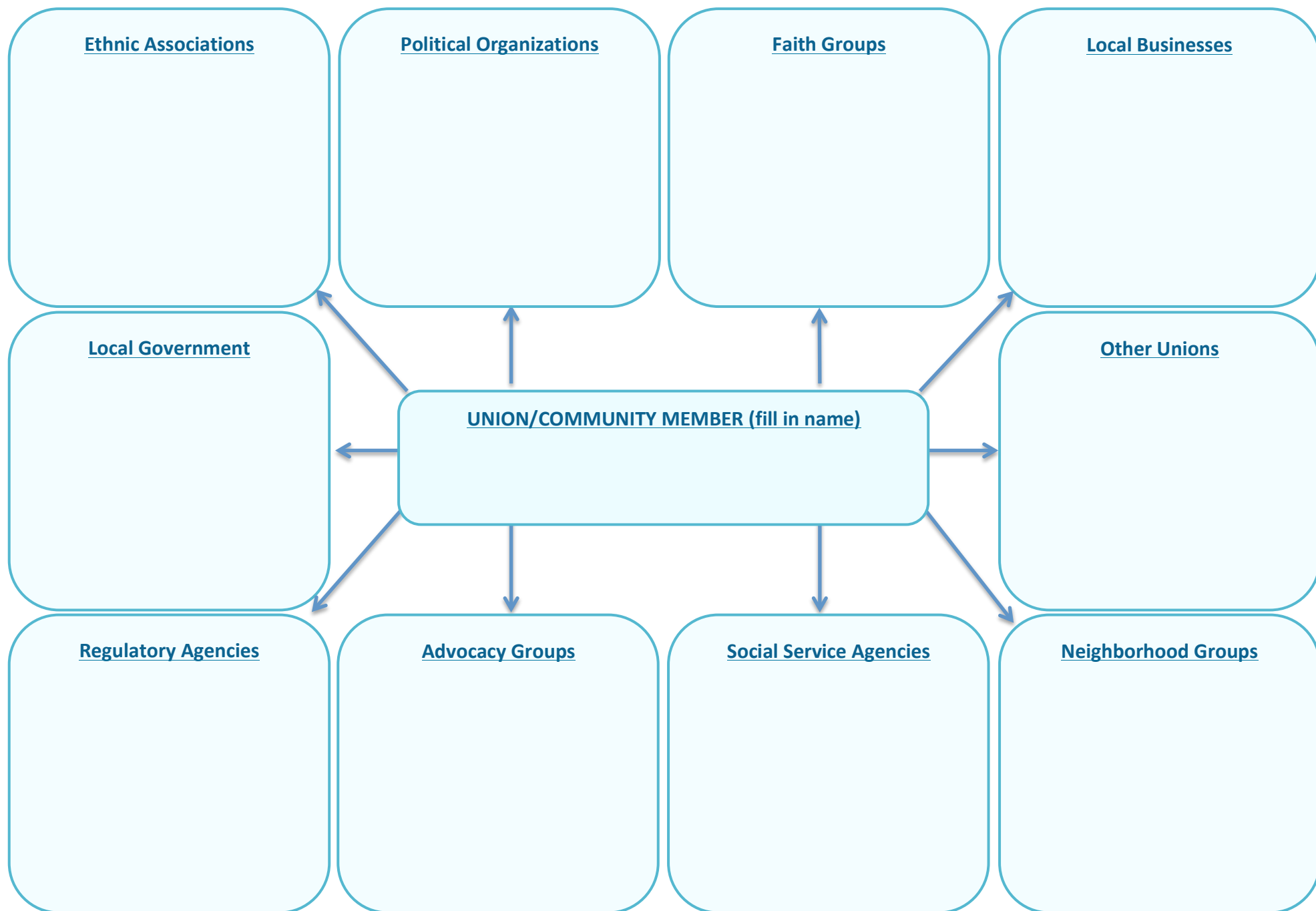
Month	Activity and Dates within Each Month
April	
May	
June	
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	



EDUCATION VOTES



COMMUNITY MAPPING WORKSHEET





Message Guidance: Navigating the Political Environment on Education Issues

Background: Political Environment on Education Issues

Public education has become an increasingly high-profile political issue. As we saw in the 2022 and 2023 elections where the vast majority of pro-public education candidates won up and down the ballot, pro-public education candidates must be clear and firm about their values and proactively run on a positive, solutions-oriented vision for our public schools and students, which addresses the real challenges facing students, educators, parents, and schools.

As extensive opinion research has shown, parents and voters are focused on the real issues facing students and public schools, not the rightwing culture wars that some politicians have tried to elevate over the past months and years.

That is why pro-public education candidates should proactively communicate with parents and voters about strengthening public schools, addressing educator shortages, getting students the one-on-one attention they deserve, expanding school-based mental health services to support students, and keeping our students safe in the classroom.

In this memo, we offer both responsive and proactive message guidance to help neutralize false attacks and communicate a positive message about meeting the challenges facing our students.

Message Guidance:

Do: Lead with solutions: Parents and voters understand the biggest challenges facing America's students and our public schools are: 1) getting students the one-on-one support they need, 2) addressing educator shortages, 3) ensuring students have the mental health services they need, 3) focusing on students learning the real world skills they need to be successful in life, and 4) keeping students safe from gun violence in schools. They want candidates to address these issues, and when they do, they reject the politicians trying to bring political culture wars into schools.

Do: Directly respond before pivoting: Opinion research shows that right-wing attacks on public schools are only effective in a vacuum and that most parents and voters disagree with these extreme attacks, especially after they've heard a positive vision for education. It is most effective to directly respond to the attack in the manner laid out below, forcefully and with clear values, before pivoting to the actual, top-priority issues facing our students and the solutions that parents and voters are looking for.

Do: Be clear and specific about the right-wing radical agenda: Name specific books or subjects that they have sought to ban. It is incredibly powerful to cite how some want to stop students from learning about slavery, the Trail of Tears, and important figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Anne Frank, when that is spelled out clearly and explicitly.

Do: Remind people that parents and educators are united for student success: While some politicians try to drive a wedge between parents and educators, voters understand that parents and educators are united in their desire to see every student succeed. In every community across the nation, parents and

educators are working together to build stronger public schools and create opportunities for students. Research consistently shows that educators (teachers and education support professionals) are among the most trusted and respected people in every community.

Don't: Use their terms: Avoid repeating or using terms like “critical race theory,” “CRT,” or “grooming” which have been co-opted and distorted by the far-right as catch-all, culture war dog whistles. Don't try to debate what CRT is or is not or whether it is or is not taught in K-12 schools. Instead of debating the terms, say what you are for and against plainly and clearly, without jargon.

Don't: Be afraid of this debate: While there is no need to directly debate or elevate the political operatives or astroturf groups pushing the right-wing culture wars, extensive opinion research has shown that the way pro-public education candidates can lose this debate is by ignoring it. The right-wing talking points on these issues only work in a vacuum. For parents and voters, silence on education issues is taken as indifference to students' well-being and future. That is why pro-public education candidates should proactively lay out their vision on education, and – if attacked – directly and forcefully respond before pivoting to the solutions for the real issues facing public schools.

Key Talking Points:

Positive Top Line:

- Most of us want the same thing – strong, quality, welcoming public schools that give every student the freedom to reach their potential. All students - Black and white, Native and newcomer, Hispanic and Asian from rural, suburban and urban communities alike – should have the opportunity to learn and succeed.
- In every community across [America/State], parents and educators are coming together to support students and schools. Their goal is to make sure that our schools have the necessary resources and staff to provide students with safe, healthy environments and the individualized attention that they need.
- [Candidate name] is focused on getting all students the support they need to thrive.
 - o [He/She/They] are partnering with parents and educators to expand learning opportunities for students,
 - o Ensuring that students have access to the mental health supports they need and are learning the real-world skills they need to be successful, and
 - o Addressing educator shortages by demanding that there are enough talented and dedicated staff in schools so that students have the support that they need to learn and thrive.
- [Candidate name] knows that there are too many mass shootings in our schools, which is why [He/She/They] prioritize the safety of students and [are/is] working to keep weapons of war out of our schools and off our streets.
- And [Candidate name] knows that our public school educators are some of the most trusted and respected people in every community. [He/She/They] knows that to attract and retain the best teachers and education support professionals to support students, we need to pay our educators like the professionals they are and give them the respect they deserve.

- [He/She/They] trust parents and educators to work together to make education decisions rather than politicians who have never set foot in a classroom and who mandate one-size-fits-all approaches.
- [He/She/They] are working to strengthen our public schools to ensure our students are learning the skills they need to be successful in their careers, college, and lives. That means expanding instruction in practical skills and technical training. And it means investing in our community colleges and higher education institutions to ensure all students can learn the skills they need to enter the career field of their dreams.

Contrast Top Line:

- As Americans, most of us want the same thing – strong public schools that give every student the freedom to reach their potential. All students - Black and white, Native and newcomer, Hispanic and Asian, rural, suburban and urban alike – should have the opportunity to succeed.
- Sadly, rather than working to strengthen our public schools or helping educators and parents get our students the support they need, [Opponent name/“some power-hungry politicians”] is/are attacking our public schools, taking away opportunities for students to learn, and even trying to discriminate against some children in our community.
- We won’t let a handful of extremist politicians divide and distract us from what our students need to reach their full potential: an inspiring and age-appropriate curriculum that prepares each and every one of them for their future.
- [He/she/they] ignore the needs of students, parents, and educators and instead try to distract voters by dragging right-wing culture wars into our community’s classrooms, just when our students need our support the most.
- [He/She/They] are using our most vulnerable students as political pawns and attacking our educators as they try to privatize our public schools.
 - o Rather than working to keep our students and educators safe, [he/she/they] have fought to ban books about MLK and the Holocaust and whitewash our history,
 - o Rather than keeping weapons of war out of our classrooms and off our streets, [he/she/they] are driving passionate educators out of the profession, and
 - o Rather than working to solve the educator shortages, [he/she/they] are attacking LGBTQ+ students and educators.
- Students, parents, and educators deserve better. They need partners, not partisans. They need solutions, not strife.

Response to Right-wing Attacks:

- There are some things every student should learn about, like the Trail of Tears, slavery, and important figures like Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, and Anne Frank.
- Our children deserve to learn accurate, age-appropriate lessons about America, from our greatest triumphs to our darkest moments. That includes slavery and how racism affects us today.
- Parents and educators agree that all our students deserve to learn the good and the bad about our history so we can learn from the past and come together for a better future. Students miss out when we allow politicians like [opponent’s name] to whitewash our history.

- Instead of addressing the real issues our students and schools are facing, [opponent name/"some politicians"] is pushing their extreme political agenda into our public schools.
- [Opponent name/"some politicians"] wants to ban books and punish teachers, allowing them to be sued or fined, just for doing their job.
- Unlike some politicians, [candidate name] has listened to parents and educators, and understands the real issues that our students are facing. [He/She/They] knows that our local public schools work best when parents and teachers come together to collaborate on what children need.
- That is why [Candidate name] is focused on getting all students the support they need to thrive. [He/She/They] has partnered with parents and educators to expand learning opportunities for students. [Candidate name] is working to help solve the educator shortages with full-time, passionate teachers and education support professionals, while also expanding mental health support for students. This will help make sure that every student can have the individualized attention that they need to learn and thrive in school.

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EDUCATION VOTES

CAMPAIGN MESSAGE STRUCTURE

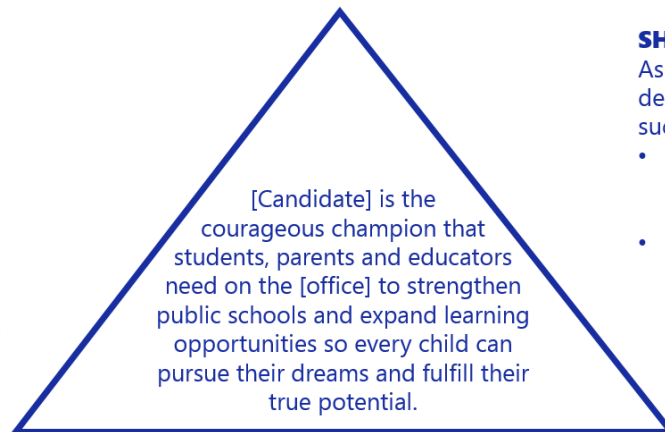
Below are three of the most widely use tools to structure your campaign message

Message Triangle:

COURAGE TO LEAD

No matter what we look like, where we come from or where we live, we want all our students to have access to safe, quality public schools. [County/School District] needs a [office] with the courage to lead on comprehensive solutions to the big problems we face.

- [Insert problems district is facing]



SHARES OUR VALUES

As a _____, [Candidate] is deeply committed to the success of every student.

- [Sentence about Candidate's background]
- [Sentence about Candidate's accomplishments]

CHAMPION FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

[Candidate] is running on a strong education platform:

- [Insert education platform solutions]

Tully Box:

WHAT WE SAY ABOUT OURSELVES:

"You can count on the Union's Candidate to fight for increased educator pay & lower class sizes.. They know our schools & have the expertise we need."

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT THEMSELVES:

"The other candidate brings people together to get things done for students & educators. Look at our record. "

WHAT WE ARE SAYING ABOUT THEM:

"The other candidate won't be on your side when it really matters. They don't look for innovative solutions. We need new leadership and new ideas."

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING ABOUT US:

"The Union Recommended Candidate's plans aren't realistic. We don't have that funding available. You need someone with experience on the school board."

Race Class Narrative:

- Open with shared values that name (and/or show) race.
- Name villains, their motivation, and how they use strategic racism and scapegoating to divide and distract us while they harm us all.
- Uplift victories and/or everyday collective actions that solve problem(s).
- Describe a vision for what will change that includes everyone coming together to achieve it.
- Insert a specific call to action.

Example:

"From Up North to Milwaukee's northside, we marched, protested and turned out in record numbers to vote and pick the leaders that we trusted to fund our public neighborhood schools. We see through politicians who spread lies, refuse to govern in our interests, and pass laws to silence our voices based on where we live and what we look like. That's why we are coming together to elect leaders who'll deliver the fully funded public schools that all our families need and deserve. Join us on Election Day to elect X to help deliver for our communities."



COALITION BUILDING

Joining with other unions, organizations, or political parties can bring our school board campaigns more resources, influence, and power. Below are important questions to consider before joining in coalition with others:

- What is the overall objective of the coalition?
- Will there be a sign-on document that outlines the values, priorities, and principles of the coalition?
- Will the coalition become a legal, independent body that requires legal documents? Does tax status prevent us from working on certain activities together?
- What will coalition members share? Research? Information? Polling? Canvass IDs?
- Will the coalition primarily inform the public or its membership? How will we present ourselves in the media?
- How will the coalition raise money?
- How will we work together and make decisions?
- How will each organization add to the group? What resources will they provide?

Joining with others has advantages and drawbacks that you will need to weigh carefully.

ADVANTAGES TO COALITION BUILDING	DISADVANTAGES TO COALITION BUILDING
You are able to accomplish more by splitting turf and pieces of the campaign.	You may have to compromise to find common ground and reach consensus.
You will have more diverse stakeholders that represent the community.	You have less power over message and tactical decisions.
You can build partnerships that last past the election cycle and learn new skills.	The victory will not just be yours and you may be tied to negative aspects that may arise from your partners' activities.



EDUCATION VOTES

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT CHECKLIST

STRATEGY

- ☐ Is it the “right” district?
- ☐ Are they viable? Will they gain support of community?
- ☐ Is it an open seat or are they running against opponent?

PERSONAL STORY

- ☐ Why them?
- ☐ Why this race?
- ☐ Why now?

DRIVE

- ☐ Do they want to win?
- ☐ Will they raise money?
- ☐ Will they take assistance?
- ☐ Will they work hard?

RESILIENCE

- ☐ Will they take attacks personally?
- ☐ Do they have growth mindset?
- ☐ Will they keep pushing when it gets hard?

VALUES

- ☐ Will they fight for what our members need?

- ☐ Will our members support them?
- ☐ Will they not support all of our issues?
- ☐ Do they have ties to problematic organizations or individuals?
- ☐ Have they made or received contributions to problematic organizations or elected officials?

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

- ☐ Are they active in the union?
- ☐ Are they involved in other organizations?
- ☐ What issues matter to them?
- ☐ What potential groups should they be networking with?

DIVERSITY

- ☐ Do we have reflective democracy?
- ☐ How can I make intentional efforts to recruit BIPOC & LGBTQ+ candidates?



EDUCATION VOTES

HOW TO HAVE A PERSUASIVE RECRUITMENT CONVERSATION WITH A POTENTIAL CANDIDATE

I. BENEFITS OF RUNNING

"This is your chance to take a stand for [issue they're passionate about]. You could change_____ if you were elected."

II. WHY THEY ARE QUALIFIED

"You are the best person to hold that office, and our community needs you. You've been educator for____years and active in_____. You have what it takes to run a campaign and be an effective legislator."

"You don't have to be a political mastermind to run for office! In fact, almost every elected official started as a normal person who was passionate about their community. The important thing is to be able to speak authentically about what you care about, and you're great at that!"

III. ROADMAP TO VICTORY

a. What it will take to win

"You'll file your paperwork to run for office at the Board of Elections by this deadline to run_____. They can walk you through reporting and what you will need to have in place.

"The primary (if applicable) is____. Last election, _____ voters voted in this election. Election Day is____. You'll need _____ votes to win."

"You'll need to raise in the ballpark of \$_____. That will pay for campaign literature to go door-to-door (or farmer's markets, forums etc.), yard signs, direct mail and digital advertising."

"NEA has a free candidate training called "See Educators Run" available for member to learn the nuts and bolts of winning a campaign."

b. Time Commitment

"I will be honest, this will take up most of your time till Election Day. Your weekends and evenings will need to be spent talking to voters."

c. How the union could help if they are endorsed

"Our state affiliate/local does _____ for recommended candidates. I can't promise anything because we need to go through the correct channels and processes, but I would definitely be one of your biggest supporters and I know our members would love to see an educator elected in this office."

IV. Follow-up

a. Recruit others to call them

Make sure to ask other community/union leaders to make persuasive calls to your prospective candidate.

b. Set-up a check-in

Set-up a check-in time after they have thought about and talked to their family.

c. Get them involved in other organizations

If now is not the right time for them to run, but they are interested in running in the future - mention other organizations they should get involved in now.



EDUCATION **VOTES**

CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT: OVERCOMING TOUGH OBJECTIONS

Running for office is a big step, and it's not for everyone. However, you'll find that a lot of members just need more information or some reassurance that they'll have the support they need to feel secure. Here are some common talking points for concerns they may have.

Time Concerns

"You're right, this is a big time commitment. You're going to have to spend a lot of time on the phone, attending meetings, or on the road. You should definitely talk it over with your family and get 100% buy-in from them.

Family Concerns

You'd be surprised at how much time you actually spend at home/with your family. Also, a campaign is a great experience for kids. You'll be teaching them about democracy and to fight for causes they believe in. Can I set up a call/coffee/dinner with **[elected official you know + their partner]** so you can hear their experience?

Fundraising Concerns

"Well, it looks like **[incumbent]** raised X last cycle, and Y the previous cycle. I think you can match or even exceed that. I understand that sounds intimidating, but we can get you a sample fundraising plan and training to help you meet these goals."

Professional Concerns

"We should look at our contract or talk to our UniServ Director to see if there are any issues with you holding this office. A well-run campaign can boost your profile and build your network, and our school district should want someone with your experience in this seat."

Local Board of Education Sample Candidate Questionnaire

CANDIDATE: _____

OFFICE SOUGHT: _____

CAMPAIGN ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER(S): _____

EMAIL: _____

WEBSITE: _____

I confirm that the responses provided here are my official positions in seeking local office and I understand that DE reserves the right to share my responses with members and interested parties.

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE: _____ DATE SUBMITTED: _____

Candidates: To be considered for a recommendation, you must indicate your response to each of the questions. Clarifications, explanations, and other information may be attached, but please be certain to clearly indicate the questions(s) to which you refer. Please return your completed and signed questionnaire to (email) or (physical address) by (deadline here)

Education Funding

Background points:

[list any relevant budget and funding information]

1. Please provide your general and specific thoughts on how the county can address the unmet needs facing our schools. Detail how you would prioritize aid for education in your budget deliberations.
2. There is considerable room for improvement in addressing educator recruitment and retention. Class sizes have increased because of cost-cutting measures and/or due to hiring freezes, layoffs, and retirements. Many support personnel positions have been eliminated. How will you address critical concerns with educator recruitment and retention?

Public Funding for Private Schools

Background points:

[list any relevant information on vouchers]

3. As a Board member, are you in favor of allocating public funding to home and privately schooled students?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

Evaluations

Background points:

[list any relevant information on evaluations and testing]

4. Do you support or oppose local autonomy to develop evaluation systems in compliance with statute and regulation?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

5. Do you support or oppose efforts to overturn school districts mutually agreed upon, statutorily compliant evaluation models in pursuit of one-size-fits-all models developed by federal and state agencies, rather than local education agencies?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

Collective Bargaining

Background points:

[list any relevant information on bargaining]

6. Do you support or oppose public education employees' rights to bargain collectively?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

7. How familiar are you with our [local union] contract?

_____ Familiar

_____ Unfamiliar

Additional Comments:

8. What changes, if any, would you like to see? And how would you honor the negotiated agreement, especially in tight fiscal times?

Continuing Impact of the Pandemic

Background points:

[list any relevant information on the impacts of the pandemic]

9. How will you address increased needs for mental health supports for students and educators in the wake of the pandemic?

10. The pandemic further illuminated the immediate need for reliable, affordable access to technology for all students and educators. How would you propose to eliminate the digital divide?

Racial and Social Justice

Background points:

[list any relevant information on racial and social justice initiatives]

11. Our Local Association supports honesty in education. To encourage critical thinking, we believe educators should have professional autonomy and should be afforded the deference to teach the truth in their classrooms, schools, and districts. Do you support or oppose this position?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

12. How will you support diversity, equity, and inclusion for all students throughout the district? What specific policies do you support whose goals are focused on providing equitable access, opportunities, resources, and supports?

Community Schools

Background points:

[list any relevant information on community schools]

13. Do you support or oppose local efforts to create and support community schools?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

Parental Involvement and Public Support

Background points:

[list any relevant information on parent involvement efforts]

14. As a Board member, what would you do to increase parental involvement and public support for our public schools and educators?

Privatization

Background points:

[list any relevant information on outsourcing]

15. As a Board member, are you in favor of contracting out custodial, cafeteria, and maintenance services rather than have those services provided by Board of Education employees?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

Virtual Learning

Background points:

[list any relevant information on virtual learning]

16. Do you support or oppose the creation of virtual schools that are independent of local school boards?

_____ Support

_____ Oppose

Additional Comments:

17. What allowances or guardrails would you like to see implemented related to virtual learning options?

Essay Question

What are the top three things you would like to accomplish in the next four years if you are elected to the Board?



EDUCATION VOTES

School Board Interview Questions

1. If elected, what are your top three priorities?
2. In your view, what challenges do you see the children in our school district facing as they work to be successful in our schools?
3. What considerations are most important when drafting and finalizing the budget?
4. As a Board member, would you support and advocate for lower class sizes? Do you believe that a mandatory Board guideline should be adopted?
5. As a member of the Board, how will you foster a positive relationship between the Board and the union?
6. As a member of the Board of Education, how will you incorporate the expertise of educators throughout the school district when you are making decisions about the school system?
7. Please share an overview of your campaign, including your key endorsements, fundraising, and campaign plan, and why you believe you will be a competitive candidate?



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE ENDORSEMENT LETTER

[Use your letterhead or stick this in body of email]

[Date]

[Address of candidate here]

Dear [Candidate Name],

Congratulations! Based on the recommendation of the [Local] Interview Committee and the concurrence of the [any governing body that had to approve like local Board of Directors], the [Local] recommends your candidacy for [Office] during the [year] elections.

Attached you will find our logo you may use in your promotional materials. Please note this logo cannot be modified and is only for use during this election cycle.

I will be in touch soon to schedule a planning meeting to discuss how [Local] can assist with your campaign efforts.

Best wishes and good luck on your campaign.

Sincerely,

[name]
President



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE TALKING POINTS FOR POST-INTERVIEW PHONE CALLS

For candidates you are recommending:

- Congratulate
- Will re-evaluate endorsements after primary and be in touch (if applicable)
- (Name of governance leader or staff person) is going to connect soon on how we can plug in their campaign, remind them we have to work through our governance structure on plan approval as well
- If they ask about PAC money, tell them we are saving it for voter contact and in process of getting budget approved and working with our vendors

For candidates you are not recommending:

- Hard decision with so many great candidates (if applicable)
- Will re-evaluate endorsements after primary (if applicable)
- When we have member running, our members have expectation to support educators (if applicable)
- We have limited resources and have to focus on certain districts/races
- No matter what happens we know you will support educators and want to keep communication lines open
- Wish them good luck

Candidate Recommendation Exercise

Your group will be holding a candidate interview with the challenging scenario below. You will have 10 minutes to start your interview and get through as many questions as you can. Use your prep time to decide if there are any strategies the local made before the interview to have a smooth, transparent process. Make sure to share this “pre-interview work” that happened when you present. Your group should decide your agenda for interview, questions, and roles. Make sure more than your Chair is speaking. Extra points will be awarded for creativity.

Group 1: You are interviewing first-time candidate Dr. Chatty Cathy who is running for School Board for an open seat. She has her PhD in Public Policy and has 2 kids in the school system. She has a large personality and gets offended easily. It is tough to get a word in once she starts talking and she tends to gossip about other local elected officials. She has a well-financed campaign and the local Red, Wine, & Blue group has become her core group of volunteers. She is running against 5 other candidates and is seen as the leader in this race.

Group 2: You are interviewing a first-time candidate Big Momma Liber- tay that is running against a friendly incumbent for School Board that your local endorsed in the last election. Big Momma does not want your endorsement. She is openly hostile and is using the interview to create content for her blog. She has a local Moms for Liberty chapter that are her primary volunteers and has received donations from the 1776 PAC.

Group 3: You are interviewing the most progressive person in your very conservative school district. Bernita Saunders has run for school board 15 times and has never finished in the top 2. She is on the right side of all of your issues, but refuses to campaign or raise money. Your members love her because she always gives fiery speeches at the budget hearing advocating for higher wages. She has been endorsed in all 15 elections by the previous Local Presidents & GR Chairs because they felt they had to endorse in every election. She is married to your UniServ Director.

DAY 2 HANDOUTS

I need you to vote.

- just do it

- I am so tired and
have endured so
much



HOW TO MAKE A PAC ASK

There isn't a "one size fits all" script to ask a member to do anything. However, there is a tested formula that we use for most organizing conversations. Below is an outline to ask your members to contribute to the PAC either in a one-on-one conversation or in a 10-minute meeting.

- **Frame Problem:** Politicians make decisions about our students, jobs and future.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "Our funding, curriculum, and paychecks are governed by the politicians we elect. The sad reality is many politicians have no idea of the struggles we go through, have never stepped foot into our school, or know what our students really need to succeed. I need to talk to you right now about standing up for education and our profession."
- **Discover Issue:** Find out what they care about or want to see changed.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "If we had a politician stuck in the elevator - what would you tell them needs to change in our public schools?"
- **Agitate Around Targets:** Polarize around elections.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "Educators can't rely on politicians to make all of the right choices when it comes to our profession and students' success (or refer to issues member mentioned). The best part about having jobs that are dependent on decisions by elected officials is that we can always elect and un-elect them. Elections have consequences."
- **Explain Solution:** We need to keep building our power. We build power two ways – organizing our money and organizing our people to elect pro-public education candidates and hold them accountable.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "If we return to that elevator with that politician and you and I asked for (refer to issue) - would they listen to us? What if we had thousands of educators with us? What if our members had run their own campaign to contact voters and they were there? What if we had a strong independent political action fund that could train and run our own members for office? Would they listen to us then?"
- **Take Action:** I need you to put your money where your mouth is.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "Elections are the primary way we contest for power. If we're serious about fixing what's broken in public education (refer to issues they mentioned) - we need to contribute to our political action fund (PAC) so we have resources to run our own independent campaigns and get more educators elected. Most members are giving \$5 per pay period to make a difference."
- **Ask:** Make a direct and confident ask with a specific \$ amount. Avoid passive language.
 - **Sample Talking Point** – "Can I count on you to give \$5 per pay period and join the Political Action Committee? Here is the form to join today."



EDUCATION VOTES

OVERCOMING PAC TOUGH OBJECTIONS

Every NEA member who wants a great public should be signing up to build our political voice by joining our Political Action Committee (PAC). Below are some common objections with suggestions on how to respond.

MEMBER'S RESPONSE

"Can I just write a check?"

"I can't afford it."

"I don't like payroll deductions in my check/monthly charges." on debt/credit card."

"I'm a Republican. Doesn't this money go to the Democrats?"

"I have to think about it."

"Politicians are all the same. It's all money and power games. They don't listen to real people."

BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE'S RESPONSE

"Our members make a long-term commitment b/c our public schools need pro-public education politicians from the White House to the School Board. By building a stable PAC of monthly contributors, we can continue to fund our organization with no outside money. That's why we ask members to sign-up on payroll deduction/recurring. It stabilizes our PAC and gives us ability to plan more strategically."

"We can't afford not to. Our PAC is how we bargain stronger contracts and pass good public policy. The stronger our PAC is, the more power we have."

"Almost all of our members pay their dues this way. It's easier and saves time so we don't go around and collect cash. It's also much safer than collecting cash and checks and frees our time so we can do more organizing."

"No. Our PAC isn't about parties, it's about public education pure and simple. We only endorse candidates who stand with us. Right now, we're being attacked by the left and the right. We have no permanent enemies or friends, just permanent interest to protect our public schools."

"What is holding you back? I thought you wanted see change (refer to issue they care about)? We'll never make those changes unless we begin the fight, right? The first step is joining the PAC."

"You're right. They only listen to organized voters and funders. That's what we are trying to do with our PAC. The stakes are too high for us to stand on the sidelines. If we're not at the table, we're on the menu."



AHUY: DEVELOPING A RAP

The acronym “AHUY” is a helpful shorthand for what it takes to move someone to act: **A**nger, **H**ope, **U**rgency, and **Y**ou.

1. Opening: Introduce yourself and ask a question to get the other person talking about a workplace issue. *How will you strike up the conversation?*

2. Anger: “There is an injustice. We have to fix this.” Tap into righteous anger at the injustice and create determination to do something about it. *What questions will you ask to learn how the issue affects this person?*

3. Hope: “Change is possible. We can fix this. Here’s our plan.” Inspire hope by conveying a clear, credible, worthwhile plan and sharing why you feel hopeful. *What are the steps we need to take together?*

4. Urgency: “Now is the time. We can’t wait any longer.” *What will happen if you don’t act?*

5. You: “You can make a difference. Your participation matters.” *Why is this person’s support critical? What concrete action are you asking them to take?*



EDUCATION VOTES

Sample Costs for Election

*estimates based on past campaigns, price may go up/down based on your voter universe, labor printer, lit size, match to voter file, and media market

ITEM	COST
Direct Mail	\$1-1.50 per piece
Predictive Dialer	\$.04 per call, \$.02 per voicemail
Yard Signs	\$4-5 per sign
Digital Ad	Production Cost \$1-4k Placement Ratio 7k voters/\$4k
Texts to Voters (need to set-up account, cannot use NEA hustle)	\$.02 -\$.18 per text
Paid Canvass using a consultant	6 weeks, 11k knocks, 168 canvass shifts = \$133k
Bottled water	\$.50
Clipboard	\$1.50
Voter record (if in-kindling turf to a candidate)	\$.06 per record (\$.01 for printed page)
Doorhanger	\$.75-1.00 per piece
T-shirt (soft, USA/Union made)	\$10-15 per shirt



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE ISSUE ID SCRIPT

Hi, can I speak to (Voter Name)?

Hi (Voter name), my name is (Your Name) and I'm a volunteer with [Candidate Name] running for School Board. How are you doing? (respond appropriately)

We're out knocking doors in our neighborhood to find out about what issues matter most to voters in our school community.

[Issue Ask] What are some concerns you have about our schools?

(Actively listen to their concerns and respond appropriately: if you know your candidate's stance, share that with the voter; if not, proceed ahead)

[If can't name concern/unsure, use personal example or continue] Personally, I'm really worried about the funding our public schools get. I really like [Candidate Name's] promise that [he/she/they] will work to invest in our schools, pay teachers for their hard work, and expand educational support for our children.

Here's some quick information about [Candidate Name]. [Insert biographical information]

[His/Her/Their] priorities if elected are to: [Insert priorities]

Can we count on you to vote for [Candidate Name] for School Board?

If Yes: Great. [Insert important information about when/how to vote, and yard sign or volunteer ask if applicable].

If No: Thank you, have a great day.

If Unsure: Here's some more literature about [Candidate Name]. I hope you consider [her/him/them] for School Board.



COMMUNICATING WITH MEMBERS

Tactics for communicating with members fall into three categories:

1. Direct contact with members (most targeted and impactful)
2. Small group contact
3. Mass communications (least targeted and impactful)

How you plan to communicate with member matters, especially for the success of recruiting volunteers to help your candidate. Mass communications, while easy to reach many people, may not do the trick if you need members to attend an event or sign a petition. Instead, layering your approach is a smarter way. For example, a building visit to educate members on an issue and learn about their priorities can be followed with conversations during building rep meetings about key events and texting to make sure those interested turn out.

Direct contact with members

- One on one conversations
- Building visits (to educate on issues)
- Phone calls
- Canvassing member doors
- Home visits
- Direct texting with interaction (such as Hustle)

Small group contact

- Building rep meetings
- Board meetings
- Association events

Mass communications

- Blast emails
- Blast texting (such as Remind)
- Social Media – Face Book posts, twitter, etc.; paid or unpaid
- Newsletters
- Mailers/postcards/letters
- Robocalls

Tactic	Pros	Cons
Direct Communication One on one	More personal Inexpensive Most effective Can get an immediate response Builds capacity for the association	Requires more volunteers Time-consuming Can be intimidating to volunteers Difficult to monitor
Direct Communication Groups	More personal Inexpensive Effective Can get an immediate response Builds capacity for the association Requires fewer volunteers Less time-consuming	Less personal Can be intimidating to volunteers Requires members to come to you
Telephone	Uses personal contact Requires fewer volunteers Takes less time More easily measured Can get an immediate response Can be centralized to one location	Less personal Requires accurate phone numbers Must have access to a bank of phones or computers Reaching some members may be difficult Fewer people answering phones Prevalence of caller ID may make it more likely callers only reach voice mail Requires more resources
Direct Mail/Print	Requires few volunteers Can contact large number of members	Can be expensive Impersonal Easily ignored/ no guarantee of response
E- mail/ Texting/ Electronic	More effective than direct mail, with younger members Inexpensive Requires little time or resources Can be done immediately Some tools allow for easy back and forth	Can be easily ignored Need members' personal contact info Generally, cannot be done on school e-mail Some people are wary of spam and may delete any message from a sender they don't know No guarantee of a response Impersonal

DAY 3 HANDOUTS



Bradley Whitford

@BradleyWhitford



Elections are parentheses, not periods. Don't agonize. Organize.

10:11 PM · Nov 2, 2021



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

Media Advisory Template

[Insert your organization's letterhead]

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: [your name]

[Title]

[Phone number]

[Email address]

[Event Name]

WHAT: [what is the event?]

WHEN: [date]

WHERE: [location]

[Include a brief overview of your organization or committee.]

###



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

Contact: ____, (email); (tel):

(Date)

Educators recommend candidate name; (mention some outstanding characteristic)

(City, State): Today the __ Education Association, representing (number of) public school educators in (community)—enthusiastically recommended (candidate name) for (office).

"Our students and community need leadership committed to the promise that every student in (community) have the opportunity to attend a strong public school where they have the support, learning opportunity, and passionate educators they need to grow into their full brilliance," said (Local) President _____. "Candidate name shares the values, the vision, ... etc, etc."

"I'm proud to receive this recommendation from (local) educators, who are doing the hard work each and every day to educate our children," said candidate name.

"Together we can"

(paragraph on candidate's background)

Educators are inspired by candidate name's vision for our schools. Candidate name has/intends ... characteristics/policy plans.

Candidate name values the union's recommendation. Educators plan to mobilize for candidate name (your organizing plans i.e. "at polling places across (state)" or "in upcoming precinct walks")

###



EDUCATION VOTES

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

≡ SECTIONS Q SEARCH

Capital Gazette

School board pick

I am a teacher at Chesapeake Bay Middle School and I am certain the best choice for the Board of Education in District 3 is Ken Baughman. In my experience as a teacher, I have seen the effects of increased poverty and trauma in our schools.

Baughman, a retired teacher, has been deeply invested in public schools and knows the issues. He devoted his life to teaching in classrooms across the county, fighting for the needs of our children, and lobbying for the needs of educators. Not only does he bring his past experience to the position, but he has current graduates and grandkids in the system. He understands the current needs that exist from decades of underfunding schools.

He will fight to expand pre-k and vocational programs, improve support for struggling learners and mental health services. As an educator, he will work to get educators living wages to retain and recruit the best. We need to stop the drain of teachers who leave the profession after just a few years.

Nearly half leave before their third year, and more than half work two jobs to support themselves.

I know that an election may seem a small detail during this coronavirus pandemic, but the reality is that strong schools, led by a supportive Board of Education, are important to recovering from the pandemic and always. Make sure you vote when your ballot comes in the mail. Remember to return it by June 2.

JAMIE SMITH

Memo on Educator Salary Policy Proposal

To: Steuart Pittman
From: MSEA
Cc: Richard Benfer and Bill Jones, TAAAC

The Maryland State Education Association (MSEA) and the Teachers Association of Anne Arundel County (TAAAC) are excited to work with the Pittman Campaign to bring pro-public education leadership to the Anne Arundel County Executive Office. It has been a rough few years under the Schuh Administration—with disrespectful remarks and damaging budgets—but we are energized by your comments about the importance of teacher pay and your background as a community organizer.

We believe teacher salary can be a key issue in this campaign. At a time when teacher pay is a growing national concern, Anne Arundel is punching far below its weight compared to other Maryland counties. Despite having the state's fourth highest median household income, Anne Arundel ranks 11th in the state for average teacher salary at \$64,474. To put that in perspective, Allegany County—with a median household income less than half of Anne Arundel's—has an average teacher salary of \$64,036.

Each of Anne Arundel's neighbors—Baltimore, Calvert, Howard, and Prince George's Counties—has more competitive salaries. That means Anne Arundel is at a disadvantage in recruiting and retaining talented teachers, a crucial aspect of building a top-flight education system. Studies show that teachers are the single greatest in-school factor for student performance.

Voters understand this reality and are concerned about their schools. Our polling shows that Anne Arundel voters, when asked what they want elected officials to focus on, pick schools first (23%), even over jobs and the economy (19%), crime (16%), and taxes (12%). And when asked how to improve schools, more voters named increased teacher salaries as a top priority than any other policy idea.

We believe making teacher pay a priority in the campaign will deliver two key benefits:

1. It creates a defining difference between your campaign and Schuh's on the most important policy issue in the campaign. This presents an opportunity for you to solidify standing as the public education alternative to Schuh's anti-public education record.
2. It will motivate and activate TAAAC's base supporters to knock on doors and make phone calls as volunteers on your campaign.

TAAAC members are frustrated and demoralized after missing more than five step increases in their negotiated contract. They need a champion with a specific plan to fix those broken promises.

That's why we are proposing a plan to catch all certified educators in Anne Arundel public schools up by 2022 (the FY2013 budget). Under this plan, for each of your budgets in your first term, you would work with the County Council to fund step increases for all educators AND an additional step increase for every educator who is still behind on their salary schedule. In the fourth year, any remaining educators who need a second extra step to catch up would get one as well. According to our estimates, this would ensure every Anne Arundel certified educator is being paid what the county promised under our contract.

While we are still working on exact calculations, we do have some preliminary cost estimates:

Year	Educators Getting Extra Step(s)	Percent on Step	Cost of Extra Step(s)
FY2020	4,677	51.3%	\$7,095,004
FY2021	3,306	61.9%	\$4,979,024
FY2022	2,549	80.0%	\$3,914,879
FY2023	1,825	100.0%	\$5,142,324

This plan can be funded through state funding without increasing county taxes. New Education Trust Fund dollars—generated through casino gaming—are projected to come to Anne Arundel starting in FY2020:

FY2020: \$8.3 million

FY2021: \$16.5 million

FY2022: \$24.8 million

FY2023: \$33.1 million

This is just part of the new money that could be directed to Anne Arundel after the state adopts a new funding formula as recommended by the Kirwan Commission. An adequacy report commissioned by the state revealed that Anne Arundel public schools are underfunded by the state by about \$40 million every year (it says the county underfunds schools by \$250 million). While the Kirwan formula funding is expected to be phased in gradually over the next decade, we can expect state funding to grow by the tens of millions during this four-year plan.

While much of this funding will be necessary for the teacher salary increases, we also support the prioritization of attaining living wages for our education support professionals. Our certified educators would not be able to do their jobs without the public service of clerical, building service, and food workers, and without bus drivers, technicians, paraeducators, school nurses, and health assistants. The Department of Legislative Services estimates that it would cost \$24.7 million a year to fund living wages for all ESP in the county, and we believe that could be funded mostly through new state funding and phased in over three years.

Year	Education Trust Fund Dollars	Plan Cost	Teacher Salaries	ESP Living Wages
FY2020	\$8.3 M	\$7.1 M	\$7,095,004	\$0
FY2021	\$16.5 M	\$17.5 M	\$4,979,024	\$12,481,000

FY2022	\$24.8 M	\$22.5 M	\$3,914,879	\$18,604,000
FY2023	\$33.1 M	\$29.9 M	\$5,142,324	\$24,708,000

While increased state funding covers the cost of extra steps and ESP living wages, there will be other investments needed in schools to make up the funding shortage identified in the Kirwan Commission. Additionally, just covering the typical step increases for certified educators every year typically costs about \$15.5 million. This is where the county should be dipping into its capacity to afford additional investments in schools. Fortunately, we can avoid talking about raising taxes by instead pointing to the tax breaks given to developers as an example of funding cuts that can be repurposed for public education.

We have developed a draft message framework to effectively communicate this plan. We are happy to discuss the policy and messaging behind teacher salary increases and look forward to getting into more details so we can create a public platform that is both credible and inspiring to the public and our members.



SEE *Educators* RUN

Learn how to run for office and win.



You don't need to be a political mastermind to get elected. Our See Educators Run program trains educators to create and promote a pro-public education platform and connect with voters who share our passion for strong public schools. Participants will learn from NEA experts and top political consultants to help develop the confidence and skills needed to run a successful campaign.

Members will learn:

- How to prepare to become a candidate for office
- How to communicate effectively with voters
- Policy talking points to use on the campaign trail
- Fundraising basics
- Tips for recruiting volunteers and running a field operation
- The nuts and bolts of running a campaign

APPLY TODAY BY VISITING [NEA.ORG/SER](https://nea.org/ser)



2025 Training Schedule

- April 4 – 6, Philadelphia, PA (Application Deadline Sunday, February 16)
- June 20 – 22, Des Moines, IA (Application Deadline Sunday, May 4)
- Aug 1 – 3, Denver, CO (Application Deadline Sunday, June 8)

* If approved, your state affiliate covers travel and NEA covers food and lodging expenses