



NATIONAL PARENTS UNION

OUR KIDS. OUR VOICE.

K-12 Education

Legislative Advocacy

Toolkit

K-12 Education Legislative Advocacy Toolkit

Type of Toolkit: Parent Legislative Advocacy

NATIONAL PARENTS UNION

<https://nationalparentsunion.org/>

Parents have been fighting for a seat at the decision making table in all aspects of their children's education. Unrelenting parents like ourselves were forced to bring our own chairs while we ensured a role in every decision making process for our children. While doing that we starkly realized how there was no space for us in the key areas of development and progression for our children. Meanwhile we understood that as parents and families our roles should have been considered as key stakeholders when it came to our children's education. Committed to the promise of changing the status quo and education landscape, the National Parents Union has partnered with other national organizations and formed a strong coalition to demand a high quality public education by any means necessary. It has become clear that changing the education landscape for it to best serve our children is not going to come from goodwill or desire from within the education system. The National Parents Union is working with elected officials, other national organizations, policy strategists and practitioners to transform public education through legislation and hold accountability. Instead of reacting to proposed legislation, parents from the National Parents Union are finally an integral voice in crafting the language that will be presented to legislators and decision makers.

As a main focal point of centering and solidifying parent voice and crafting proposed education related legislation, the National Parents Union is providing representative delegates, it's members, and key coalition allies an opportunity to be trained and actively involved in the legislative process from beginning to end. Equipping major stakeholders like parents, families, and community with the ability to lead legislative change on a local, statewide and national level empowers them to have a fortified position of authority and control as a strong voice in the K-12 educational landscape.

Our current legislative agenda is centered around creating and enforcing a high quality, equity infused, public school education as a priority on the state and federal levels. In addition to developing policy and legislation our Delegate Council has received training on influencing, lobbying and holding elected officials accountable from the Penn Hill Group, a respected Washington D.C. educational policy think tank.

To support parents, families, and community leaders to engage with their legislators and elected representatives around the urgency and need for traditionally disadvantaged students to have a high quality public education, the National Parents Union is offering our training in this Advocacy toolkit.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this toolkit is to establish a recommended legislative sequence by which to address the quality of education and the unique challenges faced by parents of color, low-income parents, special needs parents, single mothers and fathers, grandparents, formerly incarcerated parents and parents in recovery. This toolkit seeks to provide a mechanism for the authentic parent voice to be respected, valued and respected, and also provide resources for NPU delegates and members to champion local, state and federal action. Herein the National Parents Union will address best expected practices, offer resources and processes pertaining to K-12 education.

2. Background

The guarantee of an equal education has not been fully realized by the local, state, and federal government and is an age-old problem. In order to fully realize the equal and equitable opportunities to a high-quality education, the true authentic voice of us parents must be respected in all aspects of our children's educations; including but not limited to major decision-making processes. We the parents are the primary educators of our children and key stakeholders in any educational environment. During this time of national pandemic crises, decisions about our children's education have been made absent our voices. We understand that the educational landscape has shifted and transitioned in a short time span, however that landscape cannot continue to shift without the inclusion of our beliefs, ideas, demands, and voices. Any educational environment absent our voices is an environment that should be absent from our children. We have taken extensive steps to create this toolkit, including but not limited to legislative training, national polling, daily community education, and active support by elected officials and funders.

3. Scope

All key (authentic voice of parents and families) and major stakeholders involved in the educational decision making, legislative, and accountability processes.

4. Definitions

National Parents Union	A network of highly effective parent organizations and grassroots activists across the country that are united behind a set of common goals and principles to channel the power of parents. Parents of color, low-income parents, special needs parents, single mothers and fathers, grandparents, formerly incarcerated parents and parents in recovery.
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Definitions of advocate and activist	https://edtrust.org/the-equity-line/educational-justice-which-are-you-an-advocate-ally-or-activist/
local government	the administration of a particular town, county, or district, with representatives elected by those who live there
state government	A state government is the government of a country subdivision in a federal form of government, which shares political power with the federal or national government. ... A state government may have some level of political autonomy or be subject to the direct control of the federal government.
federal government	The federal government of the United States is the national government of the United States, a federal republic in North America, composed of 50 states, a federal district, five major self-governing territories and several island possessions. The Federal Government is composed of three distinct branches: legislative, executive, and judicial, whose powers are vested by the U.S. Constitution in the Congress, the President, and the Federal courts, respectively.
Civil Right	the rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality
LEA	Local Education Agency - A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. School districts and county offices of education are both LEAs.

5. Included in this toolkit

- 5.1 Meeting Request Template
- 5.2 Leave Behind (initial)
- 5.3 Storytelling Worksheet
- 5.4 Meeting Organization Worksheet
- 5.5 Meeting Notes
- 5.6 Government Organization Flowcharts
- 5.7 Leave Behind
- 5.8 Meeting Checklist

6. Resources

Title	Link
National Parents Union	https://nationalparentsunion.org/
Link to find elected official based on zip code	https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials
BACK 2 SCHOOL Toolkit from UNIDOS US	https://www.unidosus.org/campaigns/back2school/

Freedom of Information Act (please check your local governments laws for public records requests)	https://www.foia.gov/faq.html#:~:text=Since%201967%2C%20the%20Freedom%20of,the%20know%20about%20their%20government.
Every Family Votes Campaign	https://nationalparentsunion.org/every-family-votes-campaign/
Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964	https://www.dol.gov/agencies/oasam/civil-rights-center/statutes/civil-rights-act-of-1964#:~:text=In%201964%2C%20Congress%20passed%20Public,hiring%2C%20promoting%2C%20and%20firing. https://www.eeoc.gov/statutes/title-vii-civil-rights-act-1964
Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 ESEA	https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf
IDEA, FAPE, ADA and federal section 504	http://www.ldonline.org/article/6086/ https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/what-is-and-isnt-covered-under-fape https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html
US Codes	https://uscode.house.gov/
The CROWN Act	https://www.thecrownact.com/ https://www.booker.senate.gov/news/press/sen-booker-rep-watson-coleman-re-introduce-the-crown-act
Dyslexia pertinent laws and information	https://dyslexia.yale.edu/resources/accommodations/understanding-the-law/ https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/dyslexia-laws-what-they-are-and-how-they-work https://www.fulcrum-oakland.org/
Students Rights	https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/students-rights/
What is School Choice?	https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice/what-is-school-choice/
NAEP - National Assessment of Educational Progress	https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/covid19.aspx

7. Toolkit History

Revision Date	Author	Description
09-21-2020	Christina Laster Director of Policy & Legislation	Toolkit created
06-10-2021	Christina Laster Director of Policy & Legislation	Items 5.7 & 5.8 revised HQPE as a CR omitted Resources added