Unite, Inspire, Lead
Our Students, Our Union, Our Future

Creating and Maintaining a Culture of Leadership Through Political Activism

Presenters
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Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions
- Housekeeping
- NEA Leadership Competencies/Strategic Goals
  - Advocacy/Themes & Levels
- Advocate-to-Activist
- Common Definitions, Language & Understandings
- Managing Complex Change
- Organizing Activist Program
- Unite, Inspire & Lead
- A Plan & Taking It Back Home
- Closing Thoughts & Next Steps
- Evaluation
“That’s Me!”
Goal 1: Strong affiliates for educator voice and empowerment

Goal 2: Empowered educators for successful students
NEA Leadership Competency

Advocacy: Level/Theme

**Level 1**  Foundational - Acts as a Political Activist

Theme  Participates in basic campaign actions, including canvassing, petition signing, and e-mail.

**Level 3**  Agenda Driving - Acts as a Political Activist

Theme  Educate and provide information/research to become effective activists involved in a political processes at the level that makes sense for them.
Nea Leadership Competency

Advocacy: Level/Theme

**Level 2**  Mobilizing and Power Building - Leverages Advocacy Practice

Theme  Engages in power mapping and implements high impact and culturally competent advocacy [activist] plans and strategies.

**Level 3**  Agenda Driving - Engages Community Around Issues Supporting Student Learning

Theme  Organizes a collaborative mobilization plan around shared interests of union, educational/ethnic minority communities, and legislative bodies.
NEA Leadership Competency

Advocacy: Level/Theme

**Level 3**  
**Agenda Driving - Interprets /Acts on Social Justice [Equity] Initiatives**

**Theme**  
Analyzes and strengthens alliances with a diverse set of stakeholders to implement, support, evaluate and communicate social justice [and equity] initiatives.

**Level 3**  
**Agenda Driving – Leads Public Education Policy Reform**

**Theme**  
Engages and persuades all stakeholders around shared interests in national, state, and local public education policy and reforms.
Advocate

[noun]: one who speaks or writes in support of another or a cause

[verb]: to advance the support or cause [of public education through social justice and equity]
Advocacy

Advances the cause of public education through social justice and equity and how it benefits all students and members professional needs and rights.
Advocate

[noun]: one who speaks or writes in support of another or a cause

Activist

[adj]: one who takes direct action to achieve a political or social end.
A Definition of Social Justice

Social Justice is a goal –

A vision of society in which:

• Distribution of resources is equitable,

• All members are physically and psychologically safe and secure, and

• Individuals are self-determining and independent.

Great Public Schools for Every Student
Equality is about Sameness

Equality promotes fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing.
It can only work if everyone starts from the same place.

Equity is about Fairness

Equity gives people access to the same opportunities.
Our differences and/or history can create barriers to participation, so we must first insure equity before we can enjoy equality.
Don’t just tell a different version of the same story.
Change The Story!

EQUALITY  EQUITY  LIBERATION
Conventional Wisdom

What do you **Advocate** for?

**Why** be an **activist**?
Managing Complex Change

[Ambrose, 1987]

Vision | Skills | Incentives | Resources | Action Plan | CHANGE

Skills | Incentives | Resources | Action Plan | Confusion

Vision | Incentives | Resources | Action Plan | Anxiety

Vision | Skills | Resources | Action Plan | Gradual Change

Vision | Skills | Incentives | Action Plan | Frustration

Vision | Skills | Incentives | Resources | False Starts
Elements of a Great Diverse Organizing Activist Program

- The Plan
- The Ask
- The Training
- The Growth
- The Culture
Activity: Generating Issues...

Small Group

1. **Select** a Recorder and a Reporter.
2. Divide your chart paper in three equal parts.
3. Label one part “Issues”
4. **Brainstorm** issues your Chapter/Local Association/ Council are currently focusing on.
5. **Recorder:** **Write** responses under the issues column on the chart paper.
Activity: Focus On An Issue

Squaring It Off

1. **Select one issue** to work on at your table group.
2. **Re-write** the issue in the **last column** of the chart paper, in a **complete sentence** including an **action word**.
   [e.g. call, meet with, interview, write, etc.]
3. **Draw** a square around the issue.

"[A] good action verb can be the engine that drives your sentence."
Activity: Identify Barriers

Small Group [2 minutes]

1. Each person writes one barrier to achieving the ‘ideal’ on a post it.
   - One barrier = One post it

2. Place post it in the middle column of the chart paper.
Identify, Organize, Prioritize and Plan It Out . . .

Small Group
1. Identify common themes with the posted barriers
2. Organize [common] themes and group accordingly.
3. Prioritize common themes.
4. Transfer common barriers to an action plan.
Activity [cont’d]

Small Group

1. Post your chart paper.
2. Take a gallery walk.
Elements of a Great Diverse Organizing Activist Program

The Plan

The Ask

The Training

The Growth

The Culture
The Diverse Activist Volunteer Plan

- Identify the purpose for activists (i.e. community, educators/ESP’s, volunteers, families).

- Plan strategic tasks/roles/responsibilities for activists.

- How will activists be recruited?

- How will the plan be evaluated?
How to involve diverse activists.

The ASK

- Connect with Issues, Interests and Values.

- Match responsibility to Capacity, Commitment, Language, and Culturally Relevant.
### IDEOLOGY Driven
- Committed to the particular issue – will work hard, but want the issue out in front all the time.

### SOCIALLY Driven
- Need opportunities to get to know other activists, lead groups or do outreach – work must be fun or they will leave.

### LOYALTY Driven
- Commitment to organization and bring experience to the work – need to be heard, and sometimes don’t want to change.

### OPPORTUNITY Driven
- Looking for opportunities to do and learn new things – can be given risky tasks because they will work hard to grow into them.

### RECOGNITION Driven
- Need proper respect, acknowledgement and support.

### SUCCESS Driven
- Need clear goals, strategies, and milestones – want to know how they fit in, progress to goal, and when to celebrate.
The Training

How to bring diverse member activists onboard!

- Orientation to the campaign/organization.
- Training on the specific skills, (i.e. language, culture, family, zip code) systems.
- Mentoring and feedback on volunteer work.
Retaining Member Activists/Volunteers

√ Be organized!
√ Explain the purpose of the task.
√ Provide training.
√ Be inclusive.
√ Share inside information.
√ Show results
√ Have fun!
The Culture! The Language!

▪ Be inclusive and welcoming.

▪ Cultivate & nurture a grassroots community inclusive of all zip codes.

▪ Give specific and purposeful heartfelt thanks.

▪ Articulate the impact of their work, social justice cause, civic commitment, etc.

▪ Take feedback seriously.

▪ Exude joy, playfulness an passion.
The Growth

How to develop diverse activist leaders.

Skills Training/Coaching

Leadership Development

Commitment

Capacity

Organizing Efforts
Conventional Wisdom

What do you Advocate for?

Why be an activist?
The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:

- **Organizing** a collaborative mobilization plan.  
  [i.e. My Voice Matters! Becoming Political Activists]
- **Engaging** stakeholders around shared interests.
- **Helping** members become more effective activists.
Please complete the evaluation for this session.

“Thank you for coming!”

Please visit the NEA Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment