

A GUIDE TO BETTER SCHOOLS

through better school boards



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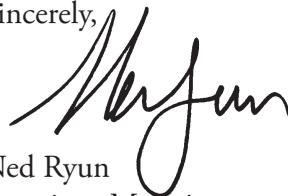
INTRODUCTION

It has been nearly two hundred years since Alexis de Tocqueville wrote his classic *Democracy in America*, but his words and insights still hold true today. Early in that work, Tocqueville praises local government at the town and county levels. He knew that local self-government is the foundation of a free republican government, and that the vibrancy of local governments strengthens the nation as a whole. But for local government to work effectively, the citizens must be knowledgeable and engaged.

Our goal is for this guide to be a gateway to ideas and information—to introduce people to what a school board is, how it works, and potential reform ideas that can bring about positive change. We hope that you will consider running for a seat on your local school board. At the very least, we hope that you will build a relationship with your school board members, advocate for reform where it is needed, and hold them accountable. I hope that this manual will be an encouragement for people to become involved and engage in a very important role on their local school boards.

We as a country do have a serious problem when it comes to our K-12 education system, and reforming it will be a challenge. But as Tocqueville wrote: “The greatness of America lies not in being more enlightened than any other nation, but rather in her ability to repair her faults.”

Sincerely,

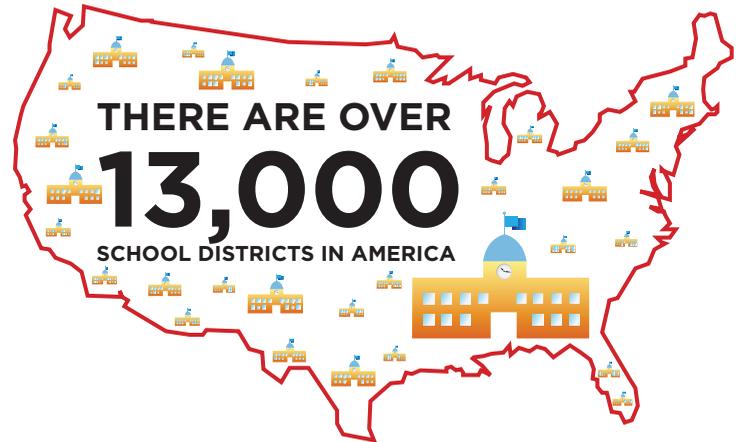
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ned Ryun". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping "N" and "R".

Ned Ryun
American Majority

OVERVIEW

One of the most basic forms of local government is the school board. There are over 13,000 school districts in America, with roughly 90,000 school board members. These members oversee the K-12 education of about 50 million students.

According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the United States is spending nearly \$520 billion on public elementary and secondary education per fiscal year.¹ That breaks down to a median expenditure of over \$10,000 per student, with some districts spending well over that amount.² National test scores should reflect these expenditures, but they don't appear to.



We are struggling to keep ground as a nation. American students face formidable competition from their international peers, particularly in math and the sciences. In the latest round of tests from the Program for International Student Assessment, coordinated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, U.S. students were ranked below average in mathematics and only average in science literacy in comparison with students in other countries.³ Domestically, we have seen only modest gains in student achievement. Nine- and 13-year-olds have made a little progress in reading and mathematics over the past 40 years, but scores for 17-year-olds have remained almost completely stagnant.⁴

Despite these lackluster results, we have continued to pour taxpayer funds into the public education system without adequately addressing ways to *improve* that system. And since ***money doesn't directly translate into achievement***, we must change our approach. We have allowed our education system to become a monopoly, and yet we know that in the real world, competition produces better results. We must bring competition to American education to enact change: reforming the education system must be a priority for all people, regardless of party affiliation. It's time to spend our education dollars more effectively, and use viable alternative education solutions to help our children succeed.

Protecting the status quo will not produce a quality education for America's students. Our goal must be to improve the system with real solutions and strategic reforms. Our future largely depends on the bold choices we make *today* in how we educate the coming generation. And the local school board plays a crucial role in that process.

What we need

for our school boards are more people dedicated to seeing the system work for the students. If we want America to continue to be a great nation, then we need to focus on how we might best empower our children to succeed in the future.

WHY SCHOOL BOARDS MATTER

The majority of the thousands of school boards in our nation are governed by elected school boards. The local school board is the body that provides the essential link between the public—the citizens who both entrust their children to the educational system and pay taxes to support it—and the system itself, including the principals, teachers, and administrators who run it. As the Wisconsin State School Boards Association pointed out, “There is hardly a single agency of government which is more a function of local control than the school board.”

It is a privilege to serve on the local school board, but it is also a serious responsibility. The school board sets academic and policy goals for the district and works with the appropriate parties to accomplish them. It also manages the education budget, oversees school personnel (including teachers, administrators, facility managers, and subcontractors) and serves as an advocate for students. More specifically, the local school board’s responsibilities include:

- Managing and approving the district budget, which includes setting levies (many citizens are surprised to learn that their local board establishes approximately 55 to 60 percent of their personal property tax bill)
- Hiring and working with the district superintendent
- Approving teacher salaries
- Monitoring student achievement
- Tracking district enrollment and attendance
- Setting the academic calendar
- Overseeing school personnel
- Overseeing student services
- Reviewing and approving curricula
- Managing student transportation
- Ensuring local schools comply with federal and state academic standards
- Approving facility maintenance and construction
- Negotiating subcontractor agreements
- Providing parents and members of the community a voice into the education of local students (a vitally important but often overlooked aspect of the job)

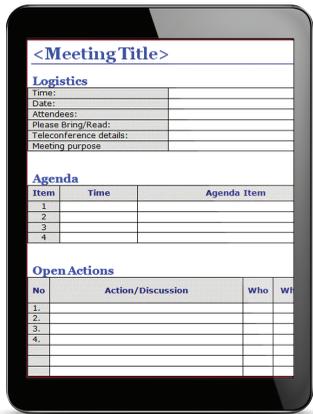
While a handful of school boards are appointed, the vast majority is popularly elected. Because school board members are the only elected members of the local educational system, they have a tremendous responsibility in charting the course of the system and determining the quality of education students receive.

Structure – Local school boards generally have five to nine members who serve two- to four-year terms. Urban school districts are usually divided into subsections, each with its own representative on the school board, while members in smaller districts tend to serve at large. Boards generally appoint two of their members to serve as board president and vice president. The board is also aided by a clerk and a treasurer who are not members of the board.

The school board has the power to form committees of three types:

- **Standing** – Standing committees are permanent bodies. The board’s most important standing committee is the budget or finance committee, which reviews the annual budget for the board to approve, monitors expenses throughout the year, proposes alternative or more efficient use of funds, etc. Other standing committees might include a curriculum committee, a legislative committee for drafting key legislative positions to present to state representatives and senators, an insurance committee (for school property, for example), and a committee for monitoring student achievement.
 - **Special** – Special committees are temporary bodies created to study or address a particular issue or topic.
 - **Advisory** – Advisory committees, which are composed of interested citizens rather than board members, offer input or recommendations to the board on a given topic, such as school health or after-school activities for children.
- Committees meet at various intervals throughout the year, depending on their assigned areas of responsibility. Committees cannot make binding decisions; they may only present recommendations to the board.

School boards meet on a regular schedule, usually monthly or bimonthly. All meetings are open to the public except when the board is in executive session (a members-only gathering for discussion of board-confidential business). In recent years, many school boards have made an effort to publicize meetings through local public television channels or by live streaming on the Internet. The board sets aside some time at each meeting for public comment, which may include participation by students, parents, or other citizens. Anyone wishing to comment at a board meeting must usually notify the clerk ahead of time and submit his or her comments in writing. The president of the board presides over the public comment period to ensure order.

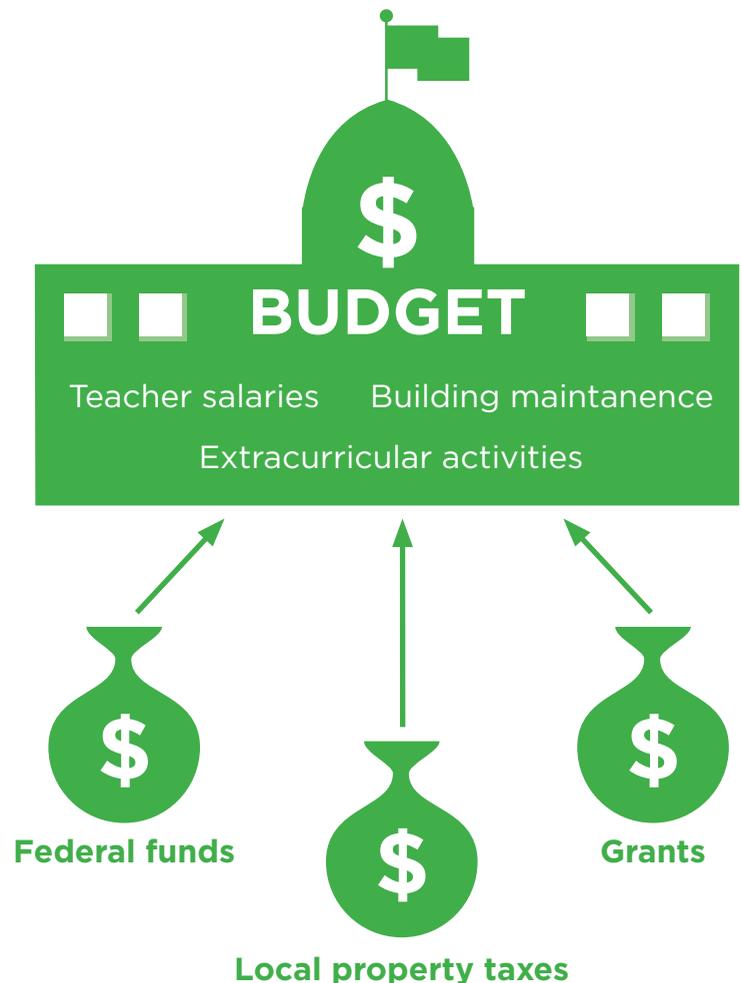


The school board clerk takes minutes of each meeting and makes them available to the public uploading electronic versions online. Many school boards now have their own websites and use them to give updates on board activities, and provide links to meeting minutes and agendas, the board policy manual, meeting schedules, and other relevant information.

The Superintendent – Usually contracted by the school board, the superintendent is the chief administrator and oversees all the schools in the district. The superintendent’s job is sometimes likened to that of a CEO—he or she manages all aspects of school district business. The superintendent is responsible for implementing all directives handed down by the school board and for accomplishing the board’s long- and short-term goals for the district.

The superintendent has direct oversight of the school principals within the district as well as food service directors, facility and operation managers, administrative personnel, and other staff. He or she also oversees enrollment, curriculum development, and other matters directly relating to teachers and students. The superintendent regularly reports to the board on district activities, and once a year gives a presentation to the board on the district’s overall status, and makes budget recommendations. The board, however, has final say in all matters relating to the superintendent’s authority, and it must approve any of the superintendent’s recommendations before they can take effect.

Budget – Administering the local education budget is one of the school board’s most significant responsibilities. The size of the budget depends on the size of the district, the number of schools, and local enrollment numbers. The education budget includes everything from teacher salaries to building maintenance to extracurricular activities for students. This budget is usually funded through a mixture of state funds, federal funds, local property taxes, and grants from institutions. At the beginning of the fiscal year, the board determines how much money it will need to meet district goals and operational costs for the coming year. Many school boards have to submit their budget to another governing body, such as a county commission, for approval. The two boards usually then must collaborate to determine the fine points of funding the budget.



OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFORM

For many years, the U.S. public education system was largely shielded from the influence of market competition. Recently however, the public has given more and more attention on how to introduce healthy competition and incentives into the public education system to produce high-achieving students, reward excellent teachers, and more fully equip America's children for success in a competitive global economy. What are some ways to encourage healthy competition in our school system that will help our students excel? And what role can the local school board play in this process?

There are many tools available to you as a school board member as you look for ways to make the public education system more beneficial for students. Here are three areas where exciting reforms are already happening:

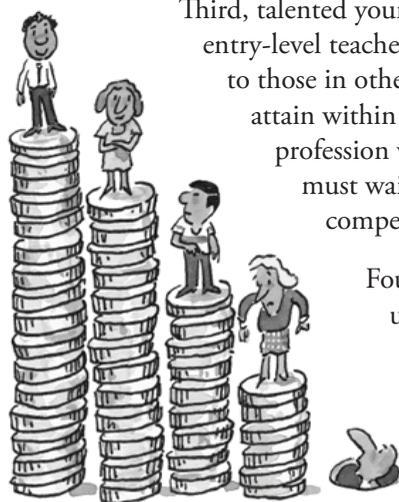
1. Merit-Based Teacher Pay – We can all agree that teachers should be duly compensated for their work. We entrust our children to them five days a week, and we count on them to help mold the minds of the next generation. However, the entrenched system of seniority-based pay—held in place by collective bargaining agreements between school boards and teacher unions—can sometimes prevent districts from compensating teachers fairly.

First, a seniority-based system makes it difficult for school leaders to reward truly excellent teachers. A teacher who produces average or poor results but who has been in the system for several years will automatically make more money than a teacher with fewer years of experience, even if he or she produces outstanding results in students. Scholar Frederick M. Hess sums it up this way: “While, on the whole, teachers may not be underpaid, those who excel, those working in tough circumstances, and those with critical skills are clearly shortchanged. The flip side is that mediocre teachers are overpaid, sometimes substantially.”⁵

Second, a seniority-based system automatically gives preference to senior teachers when it comes to teaching assignments. Because many districts do not offer extra pay for difficult jobs, such as teaching in a low-income or inner city school, many experienced teachers naturally choose to serve in more stable environments or in schools with good reputations. This becomes a problem when inexperienced teachers are automatically assigned to the students most in need of a highly qualified instructor. Districts could help remedy this problem if they were allowed to offer “hardship pay”—extra compensation for particularly difficult jobs.

Third, talented young people have diminished incentive to enter a seniority-based profession. While entry-level teachers, particularly those with only a bachelor's degree, earn salaries comparable to those in other professions, they must wait decades to make up the wages that their peers attain within a few years. “Doctors and lawyers reap the full rewards of competence in their profession within 10 years of entrance,” writes Jacob Vigdor of Duke University. “Teachers must wait three times that long, even though evidence suggests that they become fully competent in their profession just as quickly.”⁶

Fourth, a seniority-based system cannot adequately fill teacher vacancies. Many union contracts make it difficult for schools to raise salary offers for hard-to-fill teacher slots (such as in mathematics and special education). Frederick M. Hess and Coby Loup, in their survey of the nation's 50 largest school districts, reported that the labor agreements in over 60 percent of those districts forbade extra compensation for teachers in shortage subjects.⁷



While, on the whole, teachers may not be underpaid, those who excel, those working in tough circumstances, and those with critical skills are clearly shortchanged. The flip side is that mediocre teachers are overpaid, sometimes substantially.

—Frederick M. Hess

The problems associated with seniority-based pay have finally prompted a few states to experiment with merit-pay (or pay-for-performance) methods. Some of these programs focus on rewarding teachers for student achievement, but others also provide incentives for teachers to assume more responsibilities and develop professionally. Some initiatives reward all the teachers in a school that meets certain benchmarks.

Merit pay is steadily gaining support, even across political aisles and in some teacher associations. People are beginning to realize that incentives really do produce results, and, in the end, make for happier teachers *and* students.

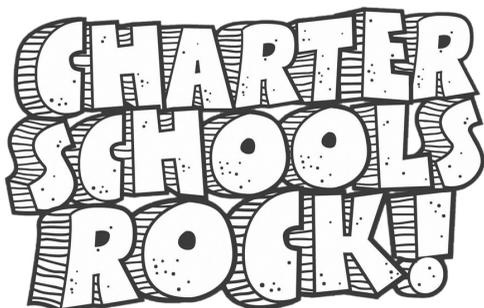
2. Collective Bargaining Agreements – A collective bargaining agreement is a contract between a school district and the local teachers union specifying the terms by which teachers will work for the public school system. A typical agreement stipulates salaries and salary schedules, leave time, grounds for termination, disciplinary action, hours worked, and rules regarding transfers. In most districts, the collective agreement is the result of a professional council that consists of administrators, union representatives, and the district superintendent.

While it is important for teachers and other school personnel to enjoy the same privileges and protections as any other worker, collective bargaining agreements can become so stringent that they hamstring school leaders who need to make important decisions. If a school is desperate to fill an empty science-teacher slot, for example, the principal is prohibited from raising the salary offer to attract gifted candidates. In many states, a principal cannot dismiss (or sometimes even discipline) a teacher who routinely fails in his or her responsibilities. In fact, it can be such a painful and laborious process—full of expense and litigation—to dismiss a single instructor that many administrators have found it more expedient to simply transfer a poor teacher to another school. This solution, sometimes referred to as the “dance of the lemons,” is really no solution at all—it just hands the problem to someone else.

Recently, a handful of states have waged high-profile battles over what can and can't be negotiated as part of the collective bargaining process. Some legislatures have also passed “right to work” laws, which protect workers from being required to join a union or from having to pay fees for refusing membership. It is the responsibility of school board members to know the collective bargaining laws of their state, particularly as they pertain to teachers. When negotiating with teacher unions, know what you are able to do and not do according to the laws of your district or state. Insist on clear contractual language, and support your superintendent and school principals as they try to make decisions that most benefit students.

3. School Choice – School choice provides options to families on where their children can get a solid education. There are various forms of school choice; some of the more prominent types are discussed below.

Charter Schools: One of the most significant players in school choice today is the charter school. The charter school movement arose as parents and teachers became increasingly concerned about the quality of traditional public schools and began to seek a way to make improvements. In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to create a law allowing for charter schools. Since that time, all but a few states have passed similar legislation.⁸ Today, 2 million students are enrolled in over 5,000 charter schools across the country, according to the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.⁹



Charter schools are public schools operated by independent parties. As such, they are largely free of the rules and regulations that weigh upon traditional public schools. Charter schools are public in the sense that they offer free tuition, have an open admissions policy, and are funded at least partially by taxpayer funds. Charter school students must also take government-mandated tests and meet federal standards.



One of the first full-fledged pay-for-performance initiatives was Minnesota's Quality Compensation Program, or “Q Comp.” Passed in 2005, Q Comp not only provides incentives for teachers to improve student performance but also encourages professional development by rewarding teachers for taking on various leadership roles within their schools. Schools in 60 districts across Minnesota have opted into the voluntary program thus far.



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Charter schools differ from district-run schools in management and operation. A charter school, as the name implies, holds its authority by a charter. The charter or “performance contract” is an agreement between the school and the local charter school authorizer. In the charter, the school founders outline school governance, the budget, personnel policies, curriculum, academic goals, and an accountability plan. A typical charter is good for three to five years, after which the school must seek reauthorization. This timeline provides a strong incentive for charter schools to not only achieve academic success but also back it up with statistics from their school. A charter school may be founded or sponsored by a group of parents or interested citizens, by a nonprofit, or even by a business. The founding group must complete a rigorous application process with the local charter-granting authority. Depending on the district, this may be the local school board, the state board of education, a university or college, a nonprofit, or an independent board established for the purpose of chartering. The authorizing entity is responsible for reviewing the charter school proposal and, if the charter is granted, for holding the school accountable to the terms of the charter. If a charter school fails to meet the established benchmarks, the authorizer may revoke the charter and close the school. This system is in marked contrast to a traditional public school, which usually receives *more* funding when it fails to meet benchmarks.

Although charter schools are eligible to receive state and federal funds, the amount given is determined by enrollment, and the schools usually receive less per-pupil than traditional public schools. In addition, in several states charter schools are responsible for finding and maintaining their own facilities. Consequently, many charter schools raise additional funds from individuals and interested organizations.

Charter schools have several potential advantages over the traditional public school structure:

- **Mission-oriented.** Charter schools are often inspired by a particular mission or need. Many schools have been founded to serve low-income and minority students who were being underserved by overburdened public schools.
- **Responsive to community needs.** Because charter schools are often founded by a group of parents or interested citizens, they sometimes have a better grasp of, and ability to meet, the needs of the community. For instance, a particular geographic area might have the incentive to train students in a specific vocation or discipline. The Memphis Academy of Health Sciences (MAHS) Middle and High School, one of the first charter schools in Tennessee, instructs students with a special focus in the health sciences. This has potential to bring economic benefit to the Memphis area, which has become a hub for health science research, and it prepares students for successful careers.
- **Provides incentives to teachers.** Because charter schools are typically free from union regulation, they are often in a better position than public schools to offer incentives to attract talented and aspiring teachers.
- **Built-in incentives for excellence.** Charter schools have an incentive to compete for students because, as researchers Matthew Ladner and Arwynn Mattix point out, they do not raise taxes: “All public funds provided [to charter schools] come on a per-student basis, meaning that charter schools must gain the confidence of parents in order to receive funding.” In fact, research shows that the presence of a charter school can actually help improve the scores of public schools in the same or a nearby district because it inserts the missing element of competition.¹⁰
- **Strong accountability structure.** Charter schools must meet the same academic requirements as traditional public schools but with fewer resources. Charter schools are accountable for producing the level of student achievement set forth in their charters or they face possible closure.

Charter schools provide more options for students, parents, and teachers; they bring educational diversity to communities and strengthen the local academic environment. School boards can support charter schools by demanding excellence from them. Support rigorous review of charter applications, but cut red tape. Resist and remove caps, which limit the growth of charter schools within a state. Encourage more funding for successful charter schools and encourage grants for promising start-ups.

Vouchers: The voucher is one of more controversial policies in the school-choice debate. Voucher or scholarship programs essentially return tax money to parents so that they can choose to send their child to a private school. Vouchers are usually made available to low-income and minority families, who otherwise would be unable to send their children to a better school. Some teachers, administrators, and policymakers argue that vouchers leach badly needed funds away from public schools. Others object that parents are allowed to use vouchers to send their children to religious private schools, and that this violates the separation between Church and State (though the Supreme Court has ruled in favor of vouchers on this issue). But vouchers can go a long way toward enabling some of the neediest students to attend the schools best suited to their needs.



Vouchers can be especially helpful to parents of special-needs or learning-disabled students, who often have a difficult time finding satisfactory educational programs or environments for their children. The McKay Scholarship voucher program in Florida, for instance, offers scholarships that enable parents to send a special-needs child to another school (public or private) if it offers services more tailored to their child's needs.

Surveys over the last several years have shown increasing public support for vouchers, particularly from ethnic minorities, who stand to gain the most from voucher programs. According to a 2012 survey by the Hoover Institution's *Education Next* and Harvard's Program on Education Policy and Governance, 50 percent of all respondents voiced support for the concept behind school vouchers. When the responses were broken down by race, 73 percent of African Americans and 74 percent of Hispanics supported the concept, compared to 41 percent of Whites.¹¹

Tuition tax credits: Tuition or scholarship tax credits usually get more of a public hearing than vouchers. Several states allow individuals and corporations to make tax-deductible contributions to scholarship programs. A "personal-use" credit is also offered in some states, allowing families below a certain income to deduct a portion of their child's school expenses from their taxes.



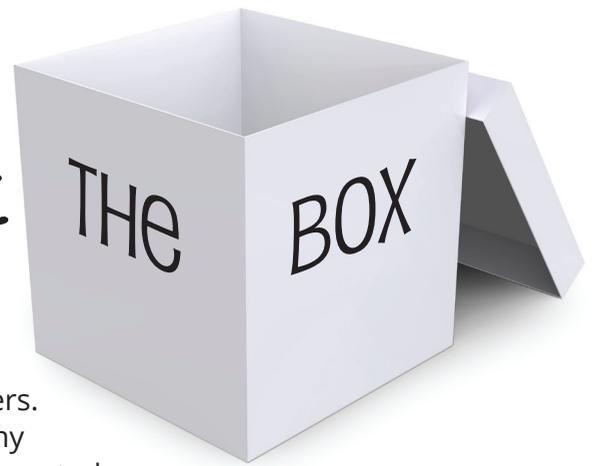
Alternative channels of quality education: Virtual schools, home schools, magnet schools—all have potential to provide students with an excellent education. Any of these options might be beneficial to students who travel, students with special education needs, children with parents in the military, etc. Students have different needs and learning styles, and they often benefit from different modes of instruction. Instead of viewing these options as a threat to the public school system, think about ways to incorporate alternative education options, seek to understand the reasons for choosing these alternatives, and look for ways that various groups can come together.

Finding ways to involve these students in extra-curricular activities and possibly even select classes not only brings people together, it exposes students and families to different perspectives and enriches the community. Not to mention giving more people an incentive to be involved in local education issues.

Overall, school choice strengthens public schools and the entire educational system not only by inserting competition into the mix, but also by ensuring that students' needs are met and that the system is equipped with the proper resources to educate all of our students. By supporting school choice and appropriate alternatives to public schooling, school boards strengthen the fabric of the whole community.

THINKING OUTSIDE

THE BOX



There are many different ways that a school board can improve the education system for both students and teachers. As a concerned citizen who pays taxes and realizes that many of tomorrow's leaders are being educated today, you have a vested interest in holding your school board accountable and being an advocate for issues that will increase the quality of the education in your local public schools. Take a creative approach to looking for solutions to some of the problems school boards often face. Here's a list of possibilities to consider:



Shift the date of school board elections – Many states hold school board elections separate from the general election, usually in the spring. This contributes to the notoriously low voter turnout—sometimes below 15 or even 10 percent—that has plagued school-board elections for years. Consequently, special interest groups who take an active interest in board elections, such as teacher unions, have a disproportionate impact on elections. Some states have launched initiatives to shift the date of school board elections to coincide with the November general election, and several of these have succeeded.

Investigate the contracting out of non-instructional services – In some cases, a school district can save hundreds of dollars per student by outsourcing school support services. While a school board should do adequate research upfront to determine the true value of outsourcing a particular service, this option should always be on the table.

Take an active approach to curriculum – Curriculum is locally controlled in some states, giving the school board legal authority over what is used in the classroom. Take an active interest in the materials your students are learning from. Look at the data for your district and state. Where do students need to improve? What are they not being taught that they would benefit from (for example, certain kinds of vocational training)? Are they being offered the most effective curricula? Schools boards can have great influence in these decisions.



Give alternative teacher organizations access to your district – There are a growing number of associations offering teachers an alternative to union membership. The Association of American Educators (AAE), for instance, provides its members with liability insurance, legal protection, certification assistance, teacher scholarships and classroom grants, and resources for professional development. Members agree to a code of ethics that delineates expected professional conduct. School boards should be open to such alternative teacher associations and allow them the same access to district communication channels that unions have.



Encourage online transparency for the school district – One of the needs in reforming the education system is financial transparency and a basic accounting for every dollar spent by the local district. School districts should create solid line-item budgets and make them available online, along with the school district check register. The taxpayers who fund the system have a right to know how their dollars are being spent.

Run for School Board – If you are involved in your community and have an interest in seeing the public school system do the very best it can for the students it serves, you should consider running for a seat on the school board. School board elections are often low-turnout and low-budget, and they are a great way to bring new people into the local political system while having a big impact. Whether or not you have ever even been involved in a political campaign, there are plenty of resources and training materials available through American Majority and other like-minded organizations that can help you get started.

Encourage community involvement – As you serve on the school board, talk to your neighbors, to parents, to local business owners. Encourage newspaper and television journalists to cover your meetings; be willing to grant interviews; keep the public informed on board actions when appropriate. Get the community interested and involved in providing the best education for their children at the best value.



Keep up with the Common Core debate – Common Core standards have recently become a hotly debated issue among educators, school administrators, politicians, and the public. First introduced in 2008, federal grants were given to states that pledged to implement the standards, and 48 states have done so. At this point, 45 of them are set to begin using elements of the new system in the coming months. The expressed purpose of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS) is to protect and maximize the education available to children from the time they enter the system in preschool until they graduate high school. What the organizations behind Common Core aren't addressing are the serious concerns about federally mandated educational standards, the cost incurred by states, privacy concerns, or a host of other issues.

The Department of Education has proposed an extensive database that collects every homework assignment and assessment for academic consideration. Potential future capabilities of this database system include: monitoring emotional reactions via facial recognition cameras, pressure-reading computer mice, and even posture analysis seats. An iris-scanning identification system for students was already implemented in one Florida community, mistakenly without advance parental notification.

Because implementation of the initiative requires funding from state legislatures, there are still various opportunities to impact if or how Common Core Standards are implemented in your community. But the time to speak out is not when a sudden “surprise” element of the program comes to light. Staying on top of the latest information and the future plans for the program is the most effective way to protect your students’ privacy and their education. Local school board members should be actively involved in the Common Core discussion at the state and local level, and stay aware of how such legislation will affect the students and teachers in their districts. School boards will be held responsible for implementing any standards handed down from the state and will thus have to resolve any challenges or difficulties that result.

CONCLUSION

True and lasting reform begins at the local level. Our country needs engaged, knowledgeable citizens who are willing to make a difference, and the local school board is a great place to start. For information about how to put together an effective campaign for school board (or other local office), read American Majority's Campaign Manual and other resources. Whether you run for your school board or simply participate in local dialogue as a concerned parent or citizen, we hope you carefully consider all the ways in which you are able to make a difference for our children, our communities, and nation.

ENDNOTES

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6. Jacob Vigdor, "Scrap the Sacrosanct Salary Schedule," *Education Next*, Fall 2008, 38.
7. Frederick M. Hess and Coby Loup, *The Leadership Limbo: Teacher Labor Agreements in America's Fifty Largest School Districts* (Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute, February 2008), 24.
8. "Charter School Law," The Center for Education Reform, <http://www.edreform.com/issues/choice-charter-schools/laws-legislation/>.
9. "Charter Schools 101: The Most Frequently Asked Questions," National Alliance for Public Charter Schools, <http://www.publiccharters.org/About-Charter-Schools/Frequently-Asked-Questions.aspx>.
10. Matthew Ladner and Arwynn Mattix, "Fortune Favors the Bold: Reforms for Results in K-12 Education," Goldwater Institute Policy Report No. 225, July 2, 2008, 5, 9–10.
11. Figures represent responses to the question "A proposal has been made that would give low-income families with children in public schools a wider choice, by allowing them to enroll their children in private school instead, with government helping to pay the tuition. Would you favor or oppose this proposal?" Education Next-PEPG Survey 2012 results accessed at http://educationnext.org/files/EN_PEPG_Survey_2012_Tables1.pdf. Results discussed in "Reform Agenda Gains Strength," by William Howell, Martin West, and Paul Peterson, *Education Next*, Winter 2013, accessed at <http://educationnext.org/reform-agenda-gains-strength/>.

American Majority Overview

Our mission is to provide the training and resources necessary for local candidates and activists to be effective. Check out the resources section on AmericanMajority.org for links and downloads to each of the items mentioned below.

Manuals

American Majority provides training manuals for candidates and activists, including the Campaign Manual, Effectivism Manual, Public Speaking Manual, Blogging for Freedom Manual, and Facebook and Twitter guides. You can also find guides to working with your city council, county commission and state legislature. To download, visit AmericanMajority.org/resources.

Vote Goal Worksheets

American Majority also provides supplemental guides on specific subject areas. The Vote Goal worksheet is designed to make it easy to break down your precinct using previous election data to determine your targeted precincts.

Pamphlets

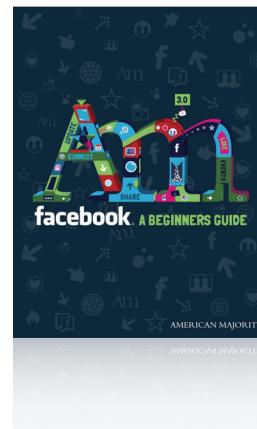
In tribute to the pamphleteers of the American Revolution, we are reviving this art form to educate and inspire a new generation. Topics in the first seven pamphlets have included America's rich heritage, rule of law, an appeal to justice, and self-government. Pamphlets are also available in Spanish.

Podcasts

Our podcast series is available at AmericanMajority.org and on iTunes.com. Podcasts include a 21-part series on running for office, a 5-part series on effective activism, a 31-part series on the history of the Constitutional Convention, and a new series, "Days of Revolution," which chronicles the days leading up to the American Revolution.

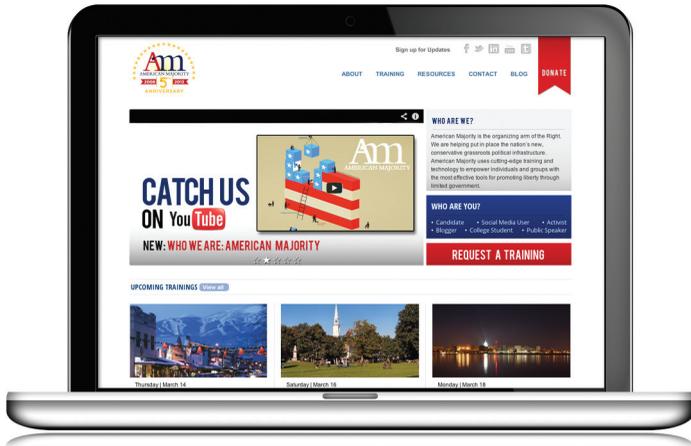
Facebook and Twitter Guides

We have developed comprehensive guides to Facebook and Twitter, as well as created an archive of online resources geared toward ensuring American Majority trained candidates and activists are the most effective online. Everything is available via link and download from American Majority's website under social media resources.



Connecting with American Majority

American Majority has several means of connecting with you as you begin to use with social media. Utilize the American Majority website as a tool for getting started and as a resource as your projects develop.



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