

PARENTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Call to Action 2006: Parent Campaign for Public Schools



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Campaign Goal: Raise the visibility of Public Education as a priority issue for all voters and candidates for office in the 2006 election season.

Parents for Public Schools supports high quality public education opportunities for all children in our communities and in our country. We expect nothing less from our public officials and from candidates for election. We intend to make **public education a top priority** in election campaigns in 2006. We seek to build a *public* for public education and to put the *public* back into public education.

Parents for Public Schools supports the stated purpose of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 that all children are to have ***"...fair and equal opportunity to obtain a high quality education."***

Parents for Public Schools (PPS) supports and advocates for excellent public education opportunities for all children, and for improved public schools to reach that goal. We believe public education is essential to establishing and sustaining our communities and our democracy. PPS members believe that providing excellent public education in our communities is the responsibility of everyone in our communities, including elected officials at all levels of government.

Our ***Call to Action 2006*** is a non-partisan, voter-education effort to make public education a priority issue for all voters as well as for candidates in all election campaigns, no matter their party affiliation and no matter the office they seek. ***Parents for Public Schools*** does not endorse candidates or parties nor do we urge the defeat of any candidate or party. **We vote for public education.** We urge voters to make public education a priority concern in all elections and to urge candidates' active support for public education. Before we cast our ballots we want to know candidates' views on public education and the actions they will take to improve public schools for all. We will work with elected officials to create high-quality public education opportunities for all in our communities.

We ask all voters and candidates:

The following are issues/questions to be raised with voters and candidates in one-on-one discussions and/or in public forums and meetings that are held to discuss issues with voters and candidates. Questions for candidates should begin with the general (“What is your view...”) and followed up with specific questions/issues. These issues and questions could also form the basis for a questionnaire or survey addressed to candidates. (See notes for holding forums and for questionnaires at the end of this section.)

RE: Support for Public Education and Parent Engagement:

1.] Quoting the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** *Statement of Purpose*: “The purpose and intent of this title are to ensure that all children have a fair and equal opportunity for an education,” we ask:

- What is your vision of the public education opportunity that should be available to every child in America? What will you do to accomplish that goal?
- What are your top priorities for improving public education in our community?
- What measures will you support, if elected, to close the achievement gap -- for example:
 - a. To ensure that more underserved children have access to a quality curriculum and qualified teachers?
 - b. To increase graduation rates among the underserved?
 - c. To increase college enrollment for high school graduates?

2.] How would you involve parents more in improving public schools for all children?

- How will you work with parents on a regular basis to ensure that parents and the public are engaged in initiatives to improve public education during your term of office?

3.] Where do your children go to school?

RE: Public School Funding:

1.] What are your views on how much is currently spent on public education and whether it is adequate?

- What changes, if any, would you make to the existing funding structure for our public schools? Or, to funding priorities for our public schools?
- How would you fund improvements to increase academic achievement in our public schools?

2.] Parents for Public Schools believes that high-quality public education is a right for all children, and is a public good to be supported and sustained for our communities and our democracy.

- What are your views on the use of vouchers – public \$ -- to fund non-public schools?

[Follow up question: Will you protect the public nature of our education system and our democratic traditions by *opposing the privatization of public education, specifically by opposing any form of vouchers that can be used to fund non-public schools?*]

Notes:

1.] Suggested **Questionnaire** on public education issues:

The above issues/questions could be adapted for a brief questionnaire/survey to gather candidate views on public education issues. The survey/questionnaire could seek “yes/no” responses and /or allow for comment (narrative responses) from candidates. The survey/questionnaire could be sent to each candidate with a cover letter from the PPS Chapter telling candidates you are surveying all candidates on public education issues and stating the Chapter will make all candidate responses known to its members and beyond, without endorsing any candidate.

To avoid any hint of partisanship or seeming to endorse a candidate, you need to submit your survey/questionnaire to every candidate running for a particular office and you need to report out all responses without editorializing. See pages 7 & 8 of the ***Voter Education Toolbox*** sent to your Chapter as a helpful guide for conducting surveys/questionnaires for your *Call to Action 2006* activities. The **Toolbox** is also available at: www.mncn.org/mpp/doc/voterredtoolbox.pdf

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What you are seeking to do through a questionnaire/survey is to gather candidate's views on public education and to present those unedited views to voters. Voters will express their approval or disapproval through the ballots they cast. Voters, the candidates and our neighbors will be more aware of the importance of public education issues in our communities and country.

If you issue a survey/questionnaire, please share a copy of it with PPS and PPS Chapters.

2.] If you plan to organize a **candidate forum** or to participate in one, we refer you to "A Nonprofit's Guide to Hosting Candidate Forums" – a manual published by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits at www.mncn.org/mpp/doc/guidetoforums.pdf -- for guidance on what nonprofits are permitted to do for that form of voter education.

RESOURCES:

["A Voter's Guide to Public Education Ballot Initiatives and Referenda"](#) – Public Education Network (PEN)

["A Timeline of Public Education in America"](#) – Good Schools Pennsylvania

Givekidsgoodschools.org

Standup.org

[Communities for Quality Education](#)

["Non-profits, Voting & Elections"](#) – Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network

["Advocacy Guide"](#) - ASCD

**Action for Parents and Participants in Call to Action 2006:
Parent Campaign for Public Schools:**

Join your local **Parents for Public Schools** chapter, or **Join** the national Parents for Public Schools organization. Contact for joining either a local chapter or the national organization: www.parents4publicschools.com -- or email at ppschapter@parents4publicschools.com -- or call 1-800-880-1222.