



TSTA Local Political Organizing Manual

"A plan must be in writing. Otherwise, it's just an idea."

This brief "manual" was developed as a very basic guide for preparing a local political action. TSTA Public Affairs is available upon request to work with locals and provide training to help develop your plan and put it into action.

The Purpose of Political Involvement:

Elections Have Consequences

As state budget cuts and policy decisions are pushed down to local school boards, the importance of local political action becomes even more important. When the local school board is elected, our working conditions and the quality of education is on the line. Participation in school board elections provides an opportunity to build coalitions with parents, community organizations and local officeholders. Elections do have consequences, and when we win elections, we can determine exactly what those consequences will be.

Developing a Political Organizing Plan (POP)

Build a Political Action Team

- Identify members to serve on Political Action Team, including: local officers and Board members, AR's, TSTA PAC contributors, both professional and ESP members, members who have demonstrated interest in political action and school board policies, etc.



- Choose Team Members whose skills enable them to Manage Specific Tasks:
 - **Data collection and management** – accurate data is an absolute necessity for communication, volunteer management, and get out the vote activities. **The local should have a member who is responsible for data management.**
 - **Communications** – **The local should have a communications coordinator and identify a spokesperson** to carry out a clearly defined communications effort
 - **Volunteer Recruitment and Management** – requires a volunteer coordinator and a plan
 - **Campaign Activities and Timeline** - Canvassing, calls, Hustle and public events must be part of a timeline that makes best use of volunteers and communications/message opportunities

Define Campaign Objective and Targets, then Plan Accordingly

- Elect a School Board majority: protect friendly incumbents/win challenges or open seats = majority
- How many votes can local deliver? Analyze voting strength of local membership (review member voting history in VAN and/or from data available from county elections office or ISD)



PAC Campaign Mail and Other Support

Public Affairs will need several things from the local before it can begin planning PAC support either with PAC mail, robo-calls, or push cards for a local's endorsed candidate.

- Candidate Name, mailing address, phone and email address.
- District Number or Place Number (at-large) for which the candidate is running.
- A high quality photo or the candidates website/Facebook page where a photo can be located.
- A complete bio for the candidate with list of qualifications and experience qualifying the candidate for a position on the school board.
- **Keeping it legal: please remember dues money cannot be used for political purposes outside your local membership. Any "in-kind" or "direct expenditures" must be reported to the Ethics Commission, so all communications outside TSTA membership must go through the Center for Public Affairs so that the proper reports can be submitted reflecting PAC support to the campaign. Members can volunteer with a campaign and use materials and lists provided by the candidate/campaign.**

Volunteers Matter/In Lieu of PAC Support

Volunteer activities and collective action demonstrate a collective "will" that helps define the power of the local. In a campaign context, volunteers lend credibility and community support to the candidate and help build coalitions. Planning and following the "do's and don'ts" will result in more effective volunteer efforts by planning tasks and recruiting and assigning volunteers accordingly

- What is the specific task? When does it begin and end?
- How many people and how much time does it take to do the task?



- Make sure you have something for volunteers to do (if not, they won't come back).
- Pick the most important activities and match volunteers with activities they can do.
- Make it fun and avoid overwhelming and burning volunteers out on less important activities.

GOTV - Turning Out the Vote

- Use data to identify target audience and volunteers to do the tasks.
- Utilize the early voting period as a long election day.
- Voter Contact - Door to door canvass, phone banks, Hustle and Mobilize can be used to turnout members.
- Coordinate all GOTV contact – flyers, mail, phone, social media and person to person contacts - to reinforce each other with the same message to emphasize the importance of voting.
- Educate members about the voting process. Provide voting information – polling place locations, times, instructions –for both early voting and Election Day. This is especially true for new registrants.
- Volunteer, VOTE and stay in touch with winning candidates after the election.

After the campaign:

- Meet with and congratulate candidate, and provide quantifiable information showing the role the local played in her/his election.
- Find a "positive" way to secure commitments made by the candidate – e.g., a celebration with the local, a membership meeting, etc., then attend school board meetings and maintain relationships.