



# Tips for Winning a School Board Vote



There are three stages that are key to winning a school board vote: building your base, getting a school board member to sponsor your measure, and mobilizing your base.

## **Building your Base**

### Identify key allies

For example: parent groups, non-profits, community organizations, environmental/social justice groups, food security groups. Groups that have influence over the school board are particularly important.

### Become articulate and educated about the issue

Be able to answer questions that come up during your organizing. Create an information packet about your issue (irradiation) – both fact sheets and studies, that you can distribute to community groups, parents, students. Make it concise, urgent, and local. (Public Citizen has a packet of information that you can use parts of. You can download the kit or any of our reports or fact sheets at [www.safelunch.org](http://www.safelunch.org) or [www.foodirradiation.org](http://www.foodirradiation.org))

### Have one-on-one conversations with the target allies you identified

Give them a tangible way to support your issue:

- sign a petition
- sign-on to a support letter
- write letters to the school board members
- outreach to their membership  
(if they are an organization or have access to e-mail lists)
- attend a meeting
- submit letters to the editor
- work with you on a long-term basis to win this campaign

### Reach out to parents and school board member constituents

Go to various meetings and events and talk with people. Have a petition or a post card for individuals to sign so you can have their contact information.

Ideas for outreach: PTA meetings, parents groups, attendees at events and fairs, people who shop at food co-ops or natural food stores.

## **Identifying School Board Members**

Once you have community support, then begin the process of targeting the school board. Schedule meetings with school board members to find a sponsor for your resolution and make sure to bring representatives from groups who support you.

## **Mobilizing your Base**

Put pressure on school board members from the community base you have built.

Ideas:

- Letter writing
- Phone calls
- Rallies
- Submit letters to the editor

Continue outreach and education to groups and individuals

Ideas:

- Table at events
- Have house parties
- Put on informational workshops sponsored by organizations working with you
- Have information out at food co-ops and natural food stores
- Attend community events and passing out literature
- Health Fairs
- Environment/Earth Day Fairs

Mobilization efforts leading up to school board vote

Develop a timeline with your sponsoring board member with mobilization efforts leading up to the school board vote.

Ideas:

- Delegation Visits
- Letter writing, emails, phone calls
- Contacting Media – letters to the editor, media stunts, op-ed pieces, etc.
- Demonstrations
- Gifts to the school board

### **Tips to Keep in Mind**

- Make sure you have something tangible for individuals or groups can do to support your campaign, such as signing a petition or a letter or attending a meeting.
- Always have a way to collect people's contact info, so that you can recruit them for events and demonstrations later.
- Encourage individuals and groups to take on pieces of the campaign, rather than doing everything yourself – people are more likely to work on an issue if they feel they have ownership over it.
- Make the issue relevant to people's lives and cultures.
- When talking to the media, focus on personal stories as much as on the facts of the issues.
- Tie your issue into events happening locally and in the media.