



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 or 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.