

Tools for Communities

Strengthening America's schools is a responsibility for all of us – not just parents with children in school – because students ill-prepared for life are ill-prepared to lead.

Get others interested in this important cause. Just by talking to people, you can create your own group of citizen activists. Small roots can grow into a significant force for change. Here are some suggested actions to get you started:

Demand – and Work for – High-Quality Schools

Demand and protect a child's right to a high-quality public education. Demand that your elected officials ensure that all children in every state learn the knowledge and skills that prepare them for life. Your voice can be a powerful tool for change that can't be ignored. It's what Strong American Schools is all about.

- **Attend local PTA and school board meetings.** PTA.org can help you and other parents get information about your children's education and the need for improving our schools.
- **Talk to other organizations you belong to.** Employers, faith-based institutions, community groups – what are they are doing to improve schools in your community? Urge them to do more.
- **Organize a letter-writing campaign.** Urge elected officials to support serious education reform. Send letters to the editor of your local paper emphasizing the need to prepare all our young people for college, for a career, for life.
- **Put together a calendar of community events.** Attend those events where you may reach parents and other community members to deliver your message, such as fairs, conferences and school sports events.

Connect with Other Organizations

You are not alone. Here's a list of some larger organizations likely already working for change in your area:

- **Achieve, Inc.:** Created by the nation's governors and business leaders in 1996, Achieve helps states raise academic standards and achievement so that all students graduate ready for college, work and citizenship. www.achieve.org
- **GreatSchools:** GreatSchools is a national, independent nonprofit organization committed to helping parents choose schools, support their children's education and improve schools in their community. www.GreatSchools.net
- **National Council of La Raza:** The largest Latino civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, NCLR works with nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations around the country. www.nclr.org
- **National Urban League:** The National Urban League provides direct services to more than 2 million people nationwide through programs, advocacy and research. It has over 100 local affiliates in 35 states and the District of Columbia. www.nul.org