



TEXAS GRASSROOTS STRATEGY

ABSTRACT

The Texas Charter Revolution grassroots program aims to create a mobile army of informed and passionate public charter school advocates across the state of Texas.

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Operations Manual

Table of Contents

Advocacy Toolkit

- Texas Charter Revolution Overview
- Advocacy Calendar
- Online Parent Letter: English and Spanish
- Contacting your elected Officials: Sample Letter of Invitation
- Curriculum (DRAFT)
- Public Charter School 101 (PPT): English and Spanish

TCSA Organizing Strategy

- Training Levels/ Types
- Regional Coalitions
- Grassroots Rubric

Grassroots Activities Year round

Advocacy

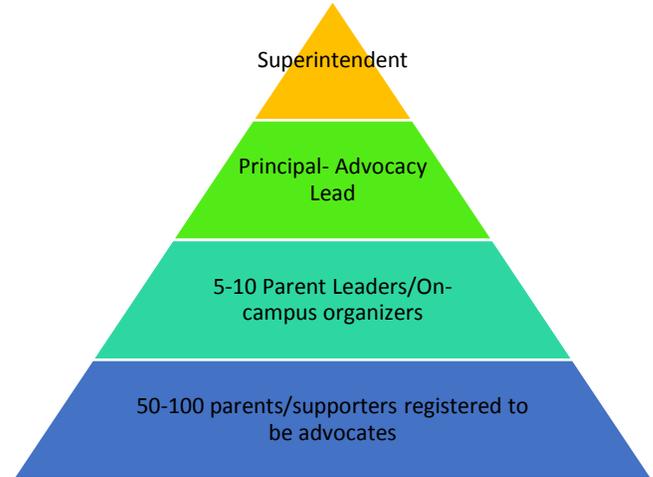
Toolkit

Texas Charter Revolution Overview

The Texas Charter Revolution grassroots program aims to create a mobile army of informed and passionate public charter school advocates across the state of Texas.

Mission: Our goal is to influence pro public charter school policy by connecting key decision makers to parents/supporters. Our goals are accomplished by:

- I. Giving parents a voice
- II. Empowering parents/supporters to engage with their elected officials
- III. Building a robust volunteer organization to lead local grassroots efforts.



Vision: On campus organizers made up of school staff and parents build capacity by identifying other parents who are invested in their child's education. As a result of this work we will:

- I. Identify parents/supporters who want to share their story to raise awareness on of the impact public charter schools have on their child.
- II. Drive the narrative, whether through traditional or social media, and have a positive impact on conversations about charter schools.

Structure: This program is built through a campus-based plan with a regional infrastructure for support that includes:

- Trained on-campus organizers
- Ongoing, bilingual, educational campus trainings for families and school staff to stay updated on local and state issues impacting public charter schools
- In-depth regional leadership training/outreach process to assist family involvement in local and state issues impacting public charter schools
- Development of a regional Charter School Council of parents/supporters

Action Menu Item:

- Share personal stories to recruit other parents
- Attend/Host Public Charter School 101s
- Write Letters to the Editor or Op-Eds
- Contact lawmakers (calling/emailing)
- Digitally organize- amplifying public charter school message online (facebook/twitter)
- Parent led school tours
- Attend city council/state town halls
- Testify in front of lawmakers at hearings
- District office visits

Grassroots Advocacy Calendar: Legislative Engagement



/TXCharterRevolution



@TCSANews



txcharterschools.org/speak-out

Month	Activities and Opportunities
August	+Write a letter to your Elected Officials inviting them to -Ribbon-Cutting -Back to school celebrations -Parent Orientation
	Grassroots: Host Public Charter School 101(s)
September	+Invite elected officials to tour a campus
	Grassroots: Invite parent advocates identified through charter 101s to participate in tour
October	+Invite elected officials to -Fall Festival -Sporting events +Texas Charter Schools Association Conference October 3
	Grassroots: Continue to develop your parent advocates to grow your parent advocate army
November	*November 8 th : General Election Day +School leader send letter of congratulations to new or re-elected officials. +Invite legislator to: -Participate in a government class -Read to an elementary class -Fall Festival/School Event
	Grassroots: Help host legislative sendoffs with regional lawmakers and neighboring charter schools
December	+Invite legislator to : -Winter Festival
January	*State Legislative Session begins (Every 2 years, 2017 85 th Legislative Session)
January -June	Grassroots: Engage in TCSA's #TXCharterRevolution Campaigns
February	+Invite legislator to : -Judge an academic fair
March	*Primary Elections +Invite legislator to: - School Open House
April	+Invite legislator to : - Spring Festival
April 26	Grassroots: Legislative Rally at the Capitol- Plan to recruit and engage parent leaders to attend and visit legislative offices.
May	*Primary Runoff Elections +Invite Legislators to: -Celebration event for National Charter Schools Week -Speak at graduation

Throughout the school year

- +Invite elected officials to tour a campus
- +Identify parent/teacher leaders leading events to invite lawmakers

Online Advocacy Parent Letter: English

[Charter School Letterhead]

Month XX, 2016

RE: Register to Receive Important Charter School Updates

Dear Parent,

Throughout the year, we engage with lawmakers to educate them on the benefits of charter schools. Ultimately, **lawmakers need to hear from you – *their constituent* - on why XYZ CHARTER is important to your child** so that they support pro-charter school policies.

Sign up today for important updates through the Texas Charter Schools Association: <http://www.txcharterschools.org/speak-out/start-here/>. By signing up you will receive important information and opportunities to get involved on charter school issues impacting your child and charter school students across the state.

Get involved – get engaged! All Texas children and families deserve an opportunity to have access to the best public school that fits their needs.

Sincerely,

[Principal/CEO Signature]

Online Advocacy Parent Letter: Spanish

[Charter School Letterhead]

Mes XX, 2016

RE: Regístrese para recibir actualizaciones importantes sobre las escuelas charter

Estimado Padre,

Durante el año nos dedicamos a educar a legisladores sobre los beneficios de escuelas públicas charter. Los legisladores necesitan oír de usted – su constituyente – sobre porque su escuela charter (school name) es importante para su estudiante para que ellos puedan apoyar pólizas que benefician a las escuelas charter

Inscríbese hoy para actualizaciones importantes a través de la Asociación de escuelas Charter de Texas: <http://www.txcharterschools.org/speak-out/start-here/>. Registrándose usted recibirá información importante y oportunidades para involucrarse en asuntos que afectan a sus alumnos de escuela pública charter y otros estudiantes en escuelas charter en todo el estado.

¡Involúcrese! Todos los niños de Texas y sus familias merecen la oportunidad de tener acceso a la mejor escuela pública que cumpla a sus necesidades.

Sinceramente,

[Principal/CEO Signature]

Contacting your elected Officials: Sample Letter of Invitation

The Honorable (First, Last Name)
Texas House of Representatives (or Texas Senate)
District Office Address

Dear (Representative or Senator) Last Name:

On behalf of the XXXX students and families at (Name of School) I'm pleased to invite you to (name of event i.e open house, parent forum, advancement ceremony, etc.) on (date and time of event). This event will provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the mission of our school, meet some of our dedicated staff, students, and parents, as well as demonstrate your support for public education. We anticipate more than XXX joining us and know the event will be more successful with your participation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions regarding the schedule or for additional information about (name of school or campus). I can be reached directly at (phone number and email). We look forward to welcoming you on campus.

Sincerely,

(Signature of school campus leader, board chair, or host of the event)

Grassroots Advocacy Curriculum Toolkit

Introduction Classes

- **Objective:**
 1. Inform parent leaders on basic public charter 101 school facts and school success
 2. Identify parent leaders
 3. Guide parents in crafting their story of self

- **Materials: Public Charter Schools 101 + Story of Self+ School success slides**
 - This class will be for parents that are interested in promoting charter schools but are not comfortable reaching out to the community. Followers.
 - Class instruction will include:
 - Backgrounds of charter schools
 - Why charter schools are important
 - The future of charter schools
 - How to talk to friends and family about the importance of charter schools (Public school choice)

- **Agenda**
 - I. Public Charter School 101
 - II. Story of self-
 - III. Get Active NOW – sign up for Parent Advocate Leadership training

Intermediate Classes

- **Objective:**
 1. Develop Parent leadership, connectors and potential leaders.
 2. Inform parent leaders about advocacy strategies (finding your first follower, letter writing, participating in rallies, hosting elected officials)

- **Materials: Public Charter Schools 101 + Story of Self + TX Charter Revolution Webpage/social media walk through, + Content on Advocacy Activity and Impact (definitions for municipal, state gov.; list of activities**
 - This class is for parents that want to advocate within the community but will be limited in the time and effort put forward. Connectors
 - Class instruction will include:
 - All Introduction class content
 - Opportunity to tour campus(es) or other charter schools to see the charter movement in action
 - How to seek and apply for volunteer opportunities to support charter schools (Public school choice)
 - How grassroots advocacy efforts work
 - Training on how to advocate within the community and with community leaders
 - Training on how to properly craft messages to send to the community and its leaders (letter template to elected officials
 - Their own personal stories how the Charter school has improved the lives of their children

Advanced Classes

- **Objective:**
 1. Build sustainable parent leadership
 2. Parents will be able to sit down with State Representatives to discuss in depths legislative bills that affect Charter Schools
- **Materials: Public Charter Schools 101 + Story of Self + TX Charter Revolution Webpage/social walk through, + Content on Advocacy Activity and Impact (civic ed; definitions for municipal, state gov.; list of activities + Training for the trainer- how to host your very own charter 101, + policy overview (deep dive into legislative priorities)+ role playing to prepare for EO meetings, SCHOOL LEADER Participation required**
 - This class is for parents that have a strong interest in advocating for charters and will put in significant time and effort to support the cause. Leaders.
 - Class instruction will include:
 - All introduction and intermediate class content
 - Introduction of laws and bills that affect charter schools
 - A thorough look at stats across the state to better understand the current climate of charter schools
 - Opportunities to speak with school leaders to get in-depth knowledge of how charter schools operate
 - Training on how to locate, reach out to local, state and national representatives to advocate
 - Training on how to build coalitions within the community
 - Leadership training to ensure that the parent is able to effectively lead a group of individuals
 - Review the State Representative’s voting record.
 - Review the demographics that each State Representative represents.

Important resources

Advocacy

TCSA Advocacy page (Sign up, Take Action, Find lawmakers, register to vote, and track charter bills)

<http://www.txcharterschools.org/speak-out/>

TCSA Find a Charter and school in legislative districts

<http://www.txcharterschools.org/find-a-charter-school/>

Texas Legislature Online (follow bills, read up on members, and view live broadcasts of committee hearings)

<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

Learn about the State Board of Education and its members

[http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Leadership/State_Board_of_Education/SBOE - State Board of Education/](http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Leadership/State_Board_of_Education/SBOE_-_State_Board_of_Education/)

Visit your municipal city website as well!

Family Engagement

Harvard Family Research Project

<http://www.hfrp.org/>

U.S Department of Education: Family and Community Engagement Resources

<http://www.ed.gov/family-and-community-engagement?src=rn>

TCSA Organizing Strategy

TCSA will develop and support schools who express a desire to engage in grassroots advocacy. The following measures will take place:

1. Begin outreach with charter schools who want to engage in grassroots advocacy.
2. Organize charter schools into regional coalitions
3. Establish a rubric defining a healthy grassroots team at a campus/network level
4. Conduct regional trainings that lead to campus based parent advocacy trainings
 - a. **Step 1:** Regional Coalition Meeting- Building a local grassroots army
 - i. Introduction to TCSA grassroots and resources
 - ii. Audience: Superintendent/CEO- Advocacy Lead/ On-campus organizer, Parent leaders
 - b. **Step 2:** Regional or Network/Campus Specific Training for on-campus-organizers or parent leaders.
 - c. **Step 3:** Support parent leaders/ on-campus organizers to host Public Charter 101 trainings to recruit more parents to engage in grassroots advocacy
 - d. **Step 4:** Implement Action Menu Item (Page 3) with active campuses. Provide ongoing support.

Grassroots Advocacy Engagement Rubric

	Stage 1 <i>Seeds</i>	Stage 2 <i>Water</i>	Stage 3 <i>Roots</i>	Stage 4 <i>Grassroots Ready</i>
School/Campus Leader	This is a priority, and I want our school to participate.	I've identified staff and a parent leader to become involved and am working with TCSA.	I have helped develop school goals and am removing any barriers to action.	I am leading the team of staff and parents, mobilizing both to effect the change we seek.
Staff	I support this work and am ready to integrate this into my priorities.	I understand my role, and am beginning to recruit parents and implement a plan.	I am training staff and parents, and growing our grassroots to meet our target goals.	I am activating our grassroots network to take action in concert with TCSA.
Parents	I am a member of the PTA, PTO, or am ready to help my school.	I am being trained and learning how to help when called upon.	I am encouraging other parents to get involved and am ready to tell my story.	I am emailing, calling, and telling my story in person when activated by my school.
TCSA	We have identified priority legislative districts, and need the involvement of your school.	We are providing the tools, training, and targeting to support the campus plan.	We are supporting school efforts to mobilize and "flex" the grassroots muscle.	We are sending out action alerts, and helping implement local, state, and federal actions.

Grassroots Activities

Activities	Description	Region(s)	Timeline
Parent Advocacy Education: Charter 101, Building Parent Leaders and followers	<p>Developing Parent Leaders to influence public charter school policy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inform parent leaders on basic public charter school facts 2. Identify parent leaders 3. Guide parents in crafting their story of self. <p>Continuing parent engagement as requested by schools. (SEE Curriculum Draft)</p>	Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, RGV, El Paso	August - December
Regional Legislative Send Offs (SEE Grassroots legislative strategy)	Engage with regional delegation of lawmakers. Invite regional lawmakers (House and Senate) to participate in a panel to discuss their legislative priorities as they relate to public education. Public charter school parents have the opportunity to hear from lawmakers and ask questions and share their successful public charter school experiences.	Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, RGV, El Paso	November-December (Legislative Year)
Events for members to engage with families (town halls, roundtables, district visits)	Engage with lawmakers. Invite lawmakers (House and Senate) to participate in conversations with charter school parents in regards to parent legislative priorities related to public charter schools. Public charter school parents have the opportunity to hear from lawmakers and ask questions and share their successful public charter school experiences.	Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, RGV, El Paso	Year-round (interim)

Grassroots Regional Coalitions

City Regional grassroots coalitions: TCSA's grassroots advocacy efforts will build regional grassroots coalitions of charter schools that foster collaboration and sharing of best practices among neighboring schools. This initiative has launched in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and Central Texas. The next regions TCSA will begin to develop include the San Antonio and Houston areas. Future efforts will develop the Rio Grande Valley and West Texas.