

# The Worthy Educator **ED INFLUENCERS**





# The 4 Charges

- 1. Protect public education as an institution***
- 2. Be the voice for all marginalized populations***
- 3. Stand up and stand down as appropriate***
- 4. Build capacity across likeminded communities***



## **Protect Public Education as an Institution**

There is a trend in society to erode the foundations of industrial-era institutions without understanding their value or making the effort to evolve these foundations of society to bring what is still relevant in the digital age. As a cornerstone of a free democratic society, public education is one such institution under attack. In order to continue to ensure that each successive generation is prepared to inherit the future whatever that may look like. The rights and protections afforded by the institution of public education at the federal, state and local levels come with a price tag that should be seen as an investment in our way of life and a promise for future prosperity. For these reasons, educators must be a unified voice advocating for the protection of public education so that it is not dismantled or rendered irrelevant by any interest group.



## **Be the Voice for All Marginalized Populations**

Especially in the last century, laws, policies and agencies have been instituted to ensure that all citizens have the right to a free, quality education in the least restrictive environment for each child. These protections include individualized education plans where appropriate, processes and procedural safeguards that protect individuals from discriminatory practices that prevent them from receiving their education, assessments and evaluations that monitor progress over time, the creation of offices and agencies to administer and enforce these programs, and the oversight of local, state and federal governments in maintaining them. As educators, we are the frontline advocates not only for these safeguards, but for the students who benefit from them, particularly those populations who identify as having special needs and considerations to ensure their access to educational opportunities. These safeguards must not be reduced or removed.





## Communities

This is not work that can be done in silos by isolated special interest groups. All supporters of public education are in this effort together. Begin by bringing together stakeholders within your own local sphere of influence, and then branch out to connect with other interested groups forming at the state, national and global levels who can help you provide a broader, deeper reach as you continue to elevate your message and amplify your voice to reach the decision-makers who hold the laws, policies and purse strings for public education, from your local education agency, to your state office of public education, the federal department of education, congress, the courts and the executive branch. We do not need to worry about any specific group's turf or seniority or power in the work; it is our collective efficacy that will make the difference in protecting and promoting public education for the future.

## Stand Up and Stand Down as Appropriate

Pushing back against attempts to undermine and dismantle public education does not require educators to be openly aggressive or antagonistic. If anything, we must find common ground and build consensus among all stakeholders around what is best for children. That having been said, we can be powerful advocates on behalf of our profession by choosing not to engage in practices that damage public education, to speak and write publicly on behalf of the institution, and to organize with likeminded stakeholders to increase our influence and impact. There is increased capacity in the numbers of people we bring together to actively advocate for public schools and the agencies, legislation, policies, funding and practices that allow them to prepare students to be engaged, contributing citizens as adults. We can no longer afford to simply put our heads down and do the work. We need to thoughtfully and deliberately be a proactive force for all that is right and good about a free quality public education for all.



# Action Steps

- 1.** Attend School Board Meetings  
Get on the agenda and be prepared to speak for the needs and rights of all children and their families in your community, including staffing, funding and implementation of programs that ensure that all students are heard and valued and given a free and appropriate education.



- 3.** Social Media Campaigns  
Use our media kit to help you bring together education stakeholders on the platform of your choice and message and lead discussions on what is at stake and how they can begin to take action to advocate for the protection and fortification of public education at all levels in our society.



- 2.** Letter Writing and Phone Calls  
Organize efforts to contact local, state and federal policymakers and elected representatives and advocate for the protection of the institution of public education through the robust administration of its programs, policies and funding to provide for the needs of each child in each classroom in every community.

- 4.** Hold a Local Town Hall  
Identify your core group of local EDInfluencers and bring them together in a public forum where everyone can discuss how to organize, what you want to accomplish for your community's schools, and the next steps to begin the work and accomplish your goals. Schedule a second meeting before you adjourn.

# IT'S TIME!

For years, special interests competing with public education have been working to erode and eradicate the basic building blocks of the institution for their own reasons and goals.

Throughout our careers, we have had the choice to actively advocate for education in the public and political arenas or simply put our heads down and do the work in front of us that needed to be done. Those of us who chose to speak up became leaders in the effort, and the rest of us silently supported them through our own efforts in classrooms, schools and districts around the country. This is important work, and it should not be diminished simply because we did not choose to be more visible and vocal. Not everyone is comfortable putting themselves out front in the movement, and it is certainly not the reason we got into the profession in the first place. We believe in making a difference in the lives of children in the present and for their future, and we take pride in fulfilling our calling.

The time is past where we can choose to simply stand on the sidelines and allow our friends and colleagues to stand up on our behalf. The forces working to undermine public education now have friends in all three branches of government, and they are positioned to make severe, significant changes in how public schools are funded and run.

Each of us have a moral obligation at this moment in history to stand up and speak up, not as lions on our own, but as a concerted group who understand what is at stake and can speak to the value of public education for everyone.

There is safety in numbers, and becoming an EDInfluencer is a solid first step in connecting with other committed education professionals who are looking for people just like you to help them make the case and get results for today's children and children of the future!



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**I'M AN  
EDINFLUENCER**