

Improve Your School: What to Advocate For

Use this when you “Make a Plan” - See the [Organizer’s Packet](#), page 8, for more



How can school and district administrators change our communities and schools to better offer students what they need and support their success? Here are a few ideas that you can advocate for with your school and district administrators:



School Teachers and Staff:

- **Communities help hire staff:** Write job descriptions/hiring materials in collaboration with parents, students, and school staff (e.g. principals, teachers, counselors, custodians), and involve parents and students in interviews
- **Community helps train staff:** Create a training program for new hires that includes conversations with families, students, and leaders; and make peer/community mentorship mandatory for new hires to make sure new staff are supported and integrated into the community
- **Content and “culture” training:** Offer additional professional development and training for staff around content and culture that includes families, students, and other school community members
- **Hire new staff:** Hire new staff, like counselors, social workers, bilingual teachers, special education educators, coaches, family engagement coordinators, internship coordinators, college and career advisors, and health professionals (nurses, psychiatrists, nutritionists)



New and Different Learning Opportunities for Students:

- **More and different classes:** Add additional courses to the schedule for all students (e.g. performing and visual arts, psychology, civics, coding/computer programming, economics, sexual health)
- **High-level classes:** Offer and support student access to advanced coursework, such as online college credit courses or Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- **Internships, field-trips:** Connect with community businesses or nonprofit organizations to offer internship opportunities or off-site educational experiences (field trips to museums, factories, aquariums, libraries, etc.)

School Improvement Strategies: What to Advocate For



School Culture:

- **Introduce positive discipline practices:** Implement Restorative Justice practices or [Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports \(PBIS\)](#), and connect students with mental health professionals, counselors, and mentors
- **Reduce harmful discipline practices:** Reduce out-of-school suspensions and expulsions and/or reduce police presence in schools
- **Community events, councils, and leadership:** Create more meaningful opportunities to bring school communities together in person



Student Health:

- **Better school breakfast and lunch programs:** Advocate for more nutritious and better tasting food for kids.
- **Recess and outdoor play:** Provide more time for recess, upgrade your school playground (check out Kaboom! for help at [kaboom.org](#)), or advocate for more afterschool activities that support all students — no matter their ability or gender.



What Else?

School improvement is not one-size-fits-all, and the best thing you can do to support your child is to advocate for what you care about.

If you are looking for materials to share with your community, check out these great resources:

[Evidence for ESSA](#) is a website with math and reading programs rated according to how well they work! [evidenceforessa.org](#)

[The Dignity in Schools Campaign](#) has resources for improving discipline policies at your school [dignityinschools.org/take-action](#)

[Community Schools](#) are a great way to begin linking efforts and growing your resources. Learn more at [learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/community-schools-effective-school-improvement-report](#), and check out the [infographic](#)



Check out our [Template: Letter to Decision-Makers](#) for what to say or write when you get in touch!

Add your Own!

- What would you like to change about your school?
- What programs, classes, or committees would you like to be involved in?
- What does your school do well? Can it grow or be available to more students/families/staff?

