

Effective campaigning as a school or college leader

This is one of a series of advice sheets for members of NEU Leadership - senior leaders in education in membership of the National Education Union. These advice sheets aim to give you advice on your position as an employee, which reflects your particular position as a leader and manager.

You can read other NEU advice and find out more about NEU Leadership, about the NEU's model of ethical leadership in education and about the NEU's Guild Community, which offers you peer support from fellow NEU Leadership members, at neu.org.uk/leadership

Using your role as a leader in your community

As a school or college leader, you occupy a position which can allow you to make your voice heard in support of good causes, whether educational or wider community issues.

NEU Leadership members often ask us for advice and tips on issues to consider when planning a campaign or other intervention of this kind in public discussion. This advice and the attached framework will hopefully help you to use your position effectively.

Planning and conducting your campaign

Collective issues are campaigns, so try to always think of them as such and you can then consider multiple ways to apply pressure to secure the change that you and members desire. This method of thinking provides other avenues of travel other than the obvious tactic of direct negotiation. Negotiation is very important, but employers will not always respond positively to the weight of argument that you may put forward.

Campaigning is another tool that complements direct negotiations and also has the added benefit of attracting members to join in at your workplace or NEU branch. If you as leaders are seen visibly working on issues that matter locally, you are more likely to attract new school and college leaders to join the NEU leadership ranks, which in turn will support your campaign(s).

A campaign plan does not need to be highly sophisticated, but it is useful to know some basics. The NEU has a model template which will aid the thought process on general aims and objectives. You might want to consider:

- The heart of the campaign - what is the issue or issues?
- Number of members affected and the strength of the collective voice?
- Campaign goals - what do you want?
- Who are your opponents and allies?

- What tactics will you use? (member surveys/ballots, leafleting, petitions, demonstrations, lobbies, boycotts, letters, publicity and the consideration and use of industrial action)
- What resources do you have? (members, posters, letters, banners, etc)
- Tasks on a timeline?
- Who is responsible for actions needed?
- Building key networks of organisers that support your campaign's aims and objectives?
- Publicity to be used (other unions, parents, the media, MPs and councillors)?
- What barriers may exist and what is the likely reaction of the employers or government to your campaign?
- The benefits your campaign might achieve, such as growth in leadership members and raising the profile of the NEU Leadership section, demonstrating that we are a respected and influential union.

In need of help and support?

If you need any advice or support as an employee, please contact your workplace NEU rep or contact your local NEU branch or call the NEU AdviceLine at 0345 811 8111 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 7pm) or advice@neu.org.uk

If there is a specific issue not covered in this or other advice sheets which you would like the NEU to look at, or if you simply want to let the union know about something from a leadership perspective as an NEU leadership member, then please contact the NEU's National official (Leadership) Steve Cooper at steve.cooper@neu.org.uk

Goals	Organisational considerations	Other considerations - Allies and opponents?	Targets	Tactics
Demands	Resources	Constituents	Primary targets	Tactics
Long term goals	What we want to achieve - organisational aims	Allies	Secondary targets	
Intermediate goals	Problems to solve - risks	Opponents		
Short term goals				

Task	Who	Deadline

Members are encouraged to link up with each other to gain experience, support and learn from each other. This template can be used for whatever campaign is pressing and of concern to you. Soon you will be effective campaigners.