

## What is a House Meeting?

An in-person gathering of 8-12 people, usually lasting 60-90 minutes, with the purpose of building or deepening public relationships and establishing a common vision for action together.

## Why do House Meetings?

- **To build trust and relationships amongst members of a school community**  
Moving the group from a list to a team  
Strengthening networks to turn out an education constituency
- **To identify leaders who can help build the movement**  
Continuing to identify new leaders who want to work together  
Making progress toward building power to act for educational equity.
- **To surface issues that are important in our community**  
Identifying common interests and passions  
Identifying issue areas for potential research and action
- **To establish a common understanding of how the group can work together.**

## Whom to invite to a house meeting?

- People who care about the school and education in the community: parents, teachers, staff, neighbors, community leaders, etc.
- People who have diverse constituencies.

## General Format of Introductory House Meeting:

1. **Introduction and Context:** “We are launching an initiative to work together on improving opportunities for education in our school community. This is new, different, and exciting, and we have invited you here tonight to talk about it. But first we want to take the time to get to know each other and hear each other’s stories about the things we would want to change for the better. We will then engage in a conversation about the similarities we hear, and then talk about next steps to reach even more community members so we can share with them this new vision and build the power of organized people we need to accomplish effective public action.”
2. **Rounds Question 1:** “What is the story you tell to illustrate why education is so important to you and your family?” (Host models a well-crafted 2 minute story, and asks each member to keep their story to two minutes).
3. **Rounds Question 2:** “What one thing you would want to change that would help children in this community get a better education? If you were sitting down with the policy-maker who had power to make this change, what story would you tell that explains why it is so important that this change be made?”
4. **Discussion of themes**
5. **Conclusion/Next Steps:** “We’ve heard a lot of compelling stories this evening, and a lot of potential issues for action. In order to build the power we need to act on any of these, we



need the engagement of all of the different stakeholders in our community. Our only way of engaging them is for you to reach out to them and organize a house meeting like this one. By \_\_\_\_, we hope to engage \_\_\_\_ people in these conversations. On \_\_\_\_, we will invite everyone who attended a house meeting to participate in a forum where we will prioritize issues for action. With the hundreds of people engaged in this process, we will move into action to make a difference for kids in our community. We can only get there with your leadership. Thank you for coming tonight, and for agreeing to host a house meeting like this one with the community members you know.”

### **House Meeting Facilitation Tips**

- Be on the lookout for talent and engagement among the participants.
- Don't let anyone dominate the conversation (including yourself)
- Politely ask for permission to interrupt before the conversation starts, don't be afraid to do so
- Get people to tell stories, not just voice complaints, opinions, or abstract issues.
- Encourage people to ask one another questions (e.g. what do you think of Mrs. Garcia's story?).

### **After Your House Meeting**

- Send thank you cards or emails to attendees.
- Set up individual meetings with the attendees who stood out the most.
- Follow up with those who agree to host house meetings, and offer to walk them through the planning process.
- Keep record of everyone who attended so you can follow up with them when LEE moves into an action phase.