

Power and Community Mapping Guide

If you want to be effective in creating change, you have to know where the power is. In every organization, community, city, or region, there are people and institutions that have the ability to control the environment and/or other entities. To be effective in creating change in your priority regions, you should understand people in your community and their connections and relationships to one another, and identify who has the power to help you realize the change you want to see happen

As you begin to map out power in your region, think about the three sectors of society and how power in each sector impacts the answers to the below questions:

- **Civic – Power of Organized People:** organized constituencies that influence the decision-maker, ex: congregations, advocacy groups, unions, families and civic associations.
- **Private – Power of Organized Money:** business constituencies that weigh in on public policy issues, ex: financial services, energy companies, real estate/development, and manufacturing.
- **Public – Power of Position:** elected officials with power over education decisions (national, state and local) and government agencies.

1. Top Education Policy Issues:

State Level:

[Public Sector] What moved through the state assembly/congress last year? What didn't?

[Civic/Private Sector] Who in the civic and/or private sector groups helped push or kill legislation?

What was controversial, what was successful?

Local City/County Level:

[Public Sector] What did the local school boards, city/county councils or mayors/executives do on issues of education in the past year? What are the upcoming opportunities at the district/city/county council level?

[Public Sector] What is the relationship between [the city/county executive/council, the school board, and the school superintendent? Who has the power in the relationship or what are the power dynamics?

[Public Sector] What did the school district do in the past year? What didn't make it through? What are the upcoming opportunities?

[Public Sector] Who are our local allies/potential allies in education at the city, county, and school board levels?

[Private/Civic Sector] Who in the private and civic sector attends meetings and takes positions on local education issues? What have they advocated for or against? What is their self-interest?

2. How are schools funded?

[Public Sector] Where does the money come from? Who decides how it is distributed? Who has the power to veto and can they line-item veto whole package?

Who has influence over the decision maker(s) who distribute funding?

[Private Sector] Who donates to campaigns of decision-makers or education advocacy organizations?

[Civic sector] Who are organized constituencies that can influence decision-makers. Who turns out to fiscal appropriation meetings? Where do they want to see the money going?

3. Understand Union/District Relationships.

[Civic Sector] Who are the various unions that make an impact on education issues? Who are the teacher unions and who do they work with in public, private and civic sectors?

[Public/Civic Sector] What are the unions' major issues and self-interest in the region? Who do they have power over in the public sector?

What are their recent accomplishments and what is their reputation?

[Public/Civic Sector] How does the district and union work together? When are they aligned, when are they not? Where has there been tension?

[Public Sector] What's the district's self-interest and how has that impacted union relations?

4. How are school district decisions made?

[Public Sector] What is the role of the state and local governments in education decisions? How is it supposed to look? How does it look in actuality?

[Private/Civic Sector] What private and/or civic voices are loudest in these education decisions? What is the self-interest of the civic and/or private voices? What personal relationships might they have with specific district decision-makers?

5. What is working well in the region (education wise)?

What are the bright spots in education in the region? Where are students excelling and why? What does the region do well or what resources do they have to improve outcomes for kids?

[Civic Sector] Who are the major civic players in education in the region? What are their primary issue platforms? Do they lobby, advocate, organize?

[Civic Sector] Where are opportunities for collaboration, where are their potential obstacles in collaboration?