

Grass Roots Organizing



Saving California Communities: Next Steps
2nd Annual Davis Conference on Government Reform

Our Roots

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□ San Francisco Unified School District

- 55,000 students
- 3,800 teachers
- 140 schools
- 28% ELL
- 55% Free & reduced lunch
- **Facing \$113M shortfall over 2 years**, 20% of school budget



□ Sherman Elementary School

- 425 students, K-5
- 40% ELL, 50% Free and reduced lunch
- "Active" PTA
- Good communication from administrator to parents on crisis
- Fall '09 facing elimination of teachers, library, PE, art AND larger class size

First Action: What Can We Do?

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□ 6 Moms in a Room + 1 Teacher Idea = A Town Hall

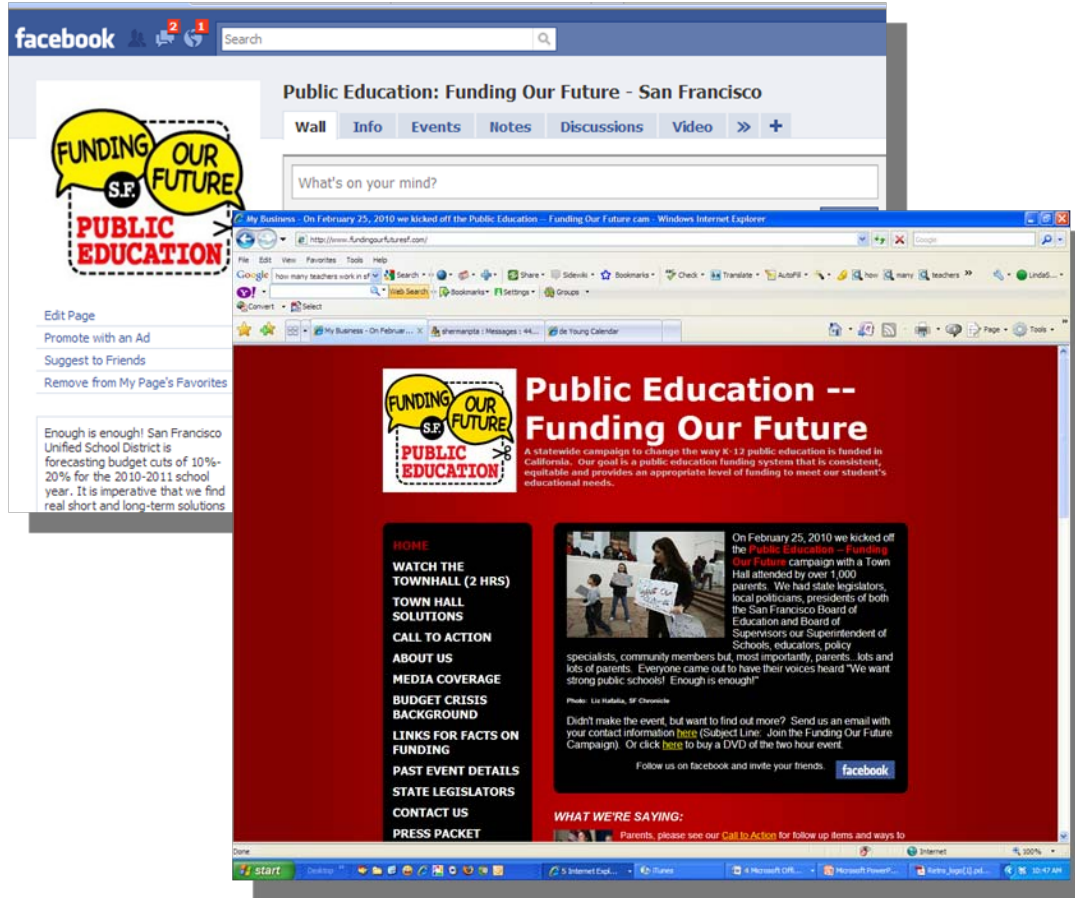
Public Education – Funding Our Future



- Wanted solution-oriented dialogue
- Invite anyone who could help solve the \$113M problem
 - Panel of city and state legislators, Board of Education, Superintendent, business, non-profit
- Focus on “Funding” issue
- Broad range of city parents and 100 schools represented

Getting the Word Out: Every Way We Could

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- Facebook
- Website
- Email to Friends and Friends of Friends
- School District “school loop”
- Many Partner Organizations and Non-profits
- Toolkits with Postcards, Flyers translated in three languages, mail text, newsletter stories, media and school meetings

Town Hall: What We Got

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- Attended by 1,200 parents and supporters!
- Leaders came together:
 - ▣ State and City Legislators
 - ▣ Education
 - ▣ Business
 - ▣ Non-profit
- Media coverage encouraging more discussion

Town Hall: What We Didn't Get

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The Answer

What We Learned

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- **Many issues in Education and California Governance**
 - PTA fundraising won't dig us out
 - Local parcel taxes won't dig us out
 - Cutting "administrative" overhead wouldn't dig us out
 - Foundation support couldn't meet the need

- **Heart of the problem is need for STATE change**

- **AND together, parents, friends, neighbors, grandparents, can put pressure on our legislators and our policy-makers for that change –**
 - WE can create the political will for change**

What's Our Plan

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- Since the Town Hall -- many discussions about ways to mobilize Californians to fight for K-12 Public Education
- No one group was solely focused on Public Education with the same goals and desired outcome, so...

Educate Our State

- **Mission: A parent-led, statewide campaign to reform K-12 public education in California.**
- **Our goal is to have the highest quality public education system with well-managed funding that is consistent, equitable, and appropriate to meet all student's needs.**



Our Approach

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- **Unite voices** of parents across California
 - ▣ Using social networking, coalition building, etc.
- **Educate the broader public** on the problems facing K-12 Public Education system in California and why change is critical
- **Coalesce** around a common set of reforms
- **Working together** demand change

Connecting

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Parents Connected Through..

▣ “A friend”

- Oakland
- Piedmont
- Lafayette
- Marin
- Los Angeles

▣ “A friend of a friend”

- Redwood City
- Cupertino
- Burbank

▣ A “cold call”

- Los Angeles – Wonderland PTA
- Temecula

... And other groups we’ve connected with

- ▣ Bay Area Council
- ▣ California PTA
- ▣ Citizen Hope
- ▣ EdSource
- ▣ PICO, San Francisco Organizing Project
- ▣ PPIC
- ▣ Parents for Public Schools
- ▣ Parent Revolution
- ▣ Public Advocates
- ▣ San Francisco Alliance
- ▣ San Francisco Ed Fund
- ▣ Saving California Communities
- ▣ Silicon Valley Leadership Group

Still Learning...

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- Effective “organizing” and collaboration with groups around the state
- No one has the answer
- How to raise the volume

www.EducateOurState.org