



**Minnesota Parents Alliance**  
RECLAIMING OUR SCHOOLS

As we approach a new school year, Minnesota parents have an exciting opportunity to come alongside their children and play a more active role in their educational experience. With every parent who commits themselves to becoming more engaged, involved and invested in their child's education and school community, the K-12 system is improved and strengthened.

Most parents are familiar with the "the 3 R's" in education – reading, writing and arithmetic. But Minnesota Parents Alliance is also focusing on a second set of "R's"!

Our goals are to:

**R**eignite parents' interest and desire to become active participants in their child's education and their local school community

**R**ebuild trust between parents and teachers and develop close parent-teacher relationships that drive positive student outcomes

**R**eturn public education in Minnesota to one of the top K-12 systems in the nation

We believe that the best way to achieve these "3 R's" is by educating and empowering parents to engage constructively, consistently and confidently.

Parents are the solution to creating a brighter future for Minnesota students and getting involved is as easy as **ABC!**



# A

## Approach with positivity

As you engage with teachers, staff and district leaders, do so in a way that invites cooperation and inspires other parents to do the same. Adopt and share the perspective that the challenge to improve our K-12 system and create a brighter future for education in Minnesota is **an opportunity to embrace and engage with, not a battle to be fought and won.**

Few people are interested in fighting culture war issues with their friends and neighbors, but most people want to be part of an effort to strengthen our K-12 system and deliver the educational environment and experience that Minnesota students deserve. Be aware of how your interactions, questions, and tone may be received by the people you are addressing and how that will impact your ability to achieve your desired outcome.

Most districts appreciate when parents use the appropriate “chain of command” to address their concerns. Start with your child’s teacher. If you are unable to resolve your concerns, then pursue a conversation with the administration and school board. Rarely should your first step be raising your concerns during public comment at the district’s monthly meeting.

Be respectful and strategic in your engagement. Consider that the vast majority of people serving in our K-12 system are there because they care about students, you may not always agree on the best ways to do that, so make sure you focus your concerns and criticisms on policies and practices, not people.



# B

## Build Relationships

The single most influential factor in student success is a strong parent-teacher partnership. When trust exists between parents, teachers and district leadership; students, families and teachers thrive. Make it a priority to open the lines of communication and build relationships with the educators and administrators in your child's life. Connect with your child's teacher(s) early and often.

Reach out to the building principal and the district superintendent. Send an email introducing yourself or ask for a brief introductory meeting. You can also do the same with school board members and legislators in your district. If issues arise, those individuals will already know you and your commitment to being an involved, constructive partner.

Use every opportunity to get to know other parents in your school community and be a connector. Introduce parents you know to one another. If you have a good relationship with administrators or local and state leaders, encourage other parents to reach out to those individuals as well.

Building and uniting, not tearing down and dividing, is the only way to create positive change in our school communities. Identify common ground and shared values among the majority of parents in your community, look for opportunities to build on those and encourage leaders in your school community to do the same.

[The mission statement for public schools in Minnesota](#) lays out a clear purpose and vision for our K-12 system. This language can serve as an effective tool to unify stakeholders and center your engagement and advocacy on reasonable, focused initiatives that drive positive student outcomes.



# C

## Communicate Constructively, Create Community, Commit and be Consistent

Inspire others with your communication style. **Be fact-based and solutions-oriented**. When you express your concerns, whether to your student's teacher, an administrator or the school board, make sure you have all the facts, provide specific examples, be calm, kind and clear about what your expectations are to solve the problem.

Plan to **join or create a community of parents who share your concerns**. As we embark into a new era of education where parents are awakening to the importance of being more involved and invested in their child's education, every parent has an opportunity be a model for what constructive, cooperative, effective involvement looks like. Your engagement in your school community reflects the entire "parent movement", and building a successful movement is a process of addition. Our goal is for more parents to get involved and most people will only be inclined to do so if they see parent involvement as a force for unity and positive change in their school community.

Changes may not happen overnight, but with committed, consistent, constructive engagement from organized, well-informed parents, we can and will return public education in Minnesota to one of the top performing K-12 systems in the nation. It is happening already and you can be part of a success story in the making! Stay on the high road, stay focused on a long-term vision and represent this mighty movement well!

To support you, we will be providing a series of **parent info sheets** throughout the year that will include practical, effective suggestions for ensuring that your student has a safe and successful school year and that your engagement influences and affects positive changes in your district. You can sign up to receive our emails, follow our social media and learn more at: [www.minnesotaparents.org](http://www.minnesotaparents.org)

