



Organizing Materials: MCEA Workplace Climate Campaign

Building Reps and Members should refer to the materials in this packet for Union Organizing Activities between Nov. 8th and Dec. 6th.

Campaign Timeline: November 8th – December 6th

1. Draft Letters to Building Admin / MCPS Supervisors.
2. Collect signatures on the letters from colleagues at our worksites.
3. Deliver the letters together with colleagues from our worksites on "RedforEd Delegation Day," an educator action day on Wednesday, December 6th.

Document 1 – Action Letter Template (*in preparation for Dec. 6th RedforEd Delegations*)

Document 2 – Example: Group Action Letter at a Poor Climate School or Worksite

Document 3 – Example: Group Action Letter at a Positive Climate School or Worksite

Document 4 – Commitment Sheet for #RedforEd Delegations (*after your colleagues sign your school / worksite action letter, ask them to make a commitment to deliver it to the administrator as a group*)

Document 5 – [Poor Climate Sites] Organizing Script / Talking Points for Building Reps & Members (*Building Reps and members can use this script to support signature collection for action letters being delivered to administrators / supervisors at poor climate sites*)

Document 6 – [Positive Climate Sites] Organizing Script / Talking Points for Building Reps & Members.

Building Reps and members can use this script to support signature collection for action letters being delivered to administrators / supervisors at poor climate sites

Document 7 – Step-By Step Instructions for Organizing a Successful MCEA Workplace Climate Campaign (Nov 8-Dec 6)

Document 8 – Overcoming Challenging Questions / Affirm, Answer Redirect

Document 1 - Group Action Letter Template (in preparation for Dec. 6th RedforEd Delegations)

Dear [Administrator / Supervisor],

Introduction (State who you are and the purpose of the letter / delegation).

Describe one or more deeply and widely felt climate issues at your school or worksite and explain how the issues impact educators and students. If you are at a positive climate school, you can include any deeply and widely felt county-wide, systematic issues that are not resolvable at the school or worksite level. Whether you are writing the letter from the standpoint of a poor or positive climate school, provide one or more specific examples to support the issues you identify in the letter.

List your specific proposed solutions/ solutions to address the site-based concerns and/or systematic concerns.

Summarize the purpose of the letter and make a specific ask to the administrator. When making the ask, include a timeframe for when the administrator should follow up with you and / or a timeframe for when you will follow up.

Sincerely,
[Educator Signatures]

Document 2 – Example: Group Action Letter at a Poor Climate School or Worksite

Dear Administrator [Administrator / Supervisor],

[Why are we here?]

We, educator members of the [name of school or worksite] community, are writing to bring to your attention concerns that are widely and deeply felt by your staff. We believe that taking immediate action is crucial to creating a positive and supportive environment for both students and educators, and we want to collaborate with you.

[What are the issues?]

The following concerns are deeply and widely felt issues that are impacting our school community:

1. Insufficient support systems for students struggling with social and emotional challenges, leading to academic and behavioral issues. A plan has not been communicated and educators try different techniques, but there isn't a standardized plan.
2. Inadequate communication and collaboration between the administration, teachers, and parents, leading to misunderstandings and a lack of unity within the school community.

[What are the examples?]

1. Instruction time for students is impacted when schools are understaffed, because the necessary support and services are not in place to meet all student learning needs.
2. No standardized plan at the school to address students in distress creates stress in the classroom among educators and students.

[What are the demands / solutions?]

To address these issues and improve the school climate, we propose the following measures:

1. Establishment of a comprehensive support system for students struggling with social and emotional challenges, and a schoolwide behavior plan for students designed by the ILT (including information on access to mental health resources).
2. Full utilization of available channels and collaborative platforms, such as the ILT and staff meetings, to foster transparency, teamwork, and a sense of community among all stakeholders.

[What is the specific ask to the administrator?]

We would like you to consider these proposals and collaborate with us to build a more positive and inclusive school environment. By working together, we can foster an atmosphere that promotes learning, growth, and mutual respect within our school community. Would you be willing to meet with us this week to collaborate on an action plan for our school?

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your swift action and commitment to the well-being and success of our school community.

Sincerely,

[Educator Signatures]

Document 3 – Example: Group Action Letter at a Positive Climate School or Worksite

Dear Administrator [Administrator / Supervisor],

[Why are we here?]

On behalf of the (name school/site) community and with the full support of MCEA, we are reaching out to express our solidarity with the other public schools in Montgomery County that are currently facing challenges with their school climate. We have always taken pride in the positive and collaborative environment we have cultivated at (name school/site) and appreciate your support, collaboration and solutions-oriented approach. Recognizing that not all sites in our county have been as fortunate, we are eager to extend our support and assistance to our fellow educators and students.

[What are the issues?]

We recognize and celebrate our positive climate, however, we are coming together calling on systematic improvements of deeply and widely felt issues that are contributing to the poor morale at many schools/sites, such as the sub shortage and loss of planning and prep time due to providing coverage.

[What are the examples?]

Educators don't have the time to effectively plan for lessons, which impacts the quality of instruction for our students.

Students are not receiving critical services because educators are pulled away to cover.

[What are the demands / solutions?]

We are ready to collaborate on initiatives and programs that can help improve the school climate and systematic problems across the county. We propose the following joint initiatives to demonstrate our solidarity and support for all educators across the county:

1. Training sessions for administrators focused on strategies to improve the school climate and to foster a more inclusive learning environment.
2. Establishing a county-wide task force dedicated to identifying and addressing the root causes of the challenges faced by schools with a poor climate, aiming to implement sustainable solutions for long-term improvement.
3. Implementing financial incentives and other incentives to hire qualified people to staff open positions that are hard to fill within MCPS.

[What is the specific ask to the administrator?]

Our specific ask is that you pass along this letter to central office supervisor(s) within MCPS to request information on how the school system will address the deeply and widely felt systemic problems we are facing in our school communities, including inequitable climate at other schools. We would like to follow up with you in one week to receive any information you obtain from MCPS.

Will you fulfill our ask and follow up with us at our next staff meeting?

Thank you for your time hearing us out, and we look forward to the opportunity to work in collaboration with you to positively impact the lives of students and educators across our county.

Sincerely,

[Educator Signatures]

Document 4 - Commitment Sheet for #RedforEd Delegations (after your colleagues sign your school / worksite action letter, ask them to make a commitment to deliver it to the administrator as a group)

Commitment Sheet:
Group Letter Delivery on MCEA RedforEd Delegation Day (December 6, 2023)

Thank you for taking action by signing our group letter! Will you commit to joining me and other colleagues on Wednesday, December 6th to deliver the letter to our principal / administrator / supervisor?

By signing my name below, I commit to joining my colleagues to deliver our action letter to our school / worksite administrator or supervisor on RedforEd Delegation Day, December 6, 2023, at [insert time and exact location]:

For each person who commits, tear off one statement to give to your colleague as a reminder of their commitment.

I am committed to fighting for the improvement of student learning conditions and educator working conditions at my school / worksite. I am committed to joining my colleagues to deliver our action letter to our school / worksite administrator or supervisor on RedforEd Delegation Day, December 6, 2023, at [insert time and exact location].

I am committed to fighting for the improvement of student learning conditions and educator working conditions at my school / worksite. I am committed to joining my colleagues to deliver our action letter to our school / worksite administrator or supervisor on RedforEd Delegation Day, December 6, 2023, at [insert time and exact location].

I am committed to fighting for the improvement of student learning conditions and educator working conditions at my school / worksite. I am committed to joining my colleagues to deliver our action letter to our school / worksite administrator or supervisor on RedforEd Delegation Day, December 6, 2023, at [insert time and exact location].

*Document 5 – [Poor Climate Sites] Organizing Script / Talking Points for Building Reps & Members
Building Reps and members can use this script to support signature collection for action letters being delivered to administrators / supervisors at poor climate sites.*

Over the last few weeks, Building Representatives and other member leaders within our union have spoken with many educators about the climate-related issues we care about that are deeply and widely felt at MCPS schools and worksites. At our school / worksite, some of the issues we are facing include [insert deeply and widely felt issues].

What are your thoughts on these issues?
Which of them is the most important issue to you?
If you could change one thing, what would it be?

As a union, we are organizing to encourage and empower educator voice at the center of decision-making processes, including directly at our own schools and worksites:

- At the November 8 regional all-member union meetings, we talked about a campaign effort we are working on together as educators at our schools and worksites.
- The campaign is called “Taking Action on Workplace Climate,” and its purpose is to support educators in taking collective action at our individual worksites, and to speak up on issues that go unaddressed by our building administration, supervisors, and / or MCPS administrators at the central office level.

As union members, we all can play a role in making sure we have safe and collaborative schools:

- We can do this by each stepping up to participate in this union campaign. If one person speaks up, MCPS will not take our issues seriously.
- If we all speak up, they are more likely to listen to us.

We drafted a letter to our administration highlighting the concerns we are facing and the solutions we are advocating for, including [list demands / solutions from drafted letter]

To show MCPS that we care about this issue and are willing to take collective action, we are asking all MCEA members to add their name to the letter.

- 1) Will you sign the letter so we can show union solidarity and organize to fight for positive change?
- 2) Thank you for taking action by signing our group letter! Will you commit to joining me and other colleagues to deliver the letter to our administrator / supervisor in person on Wednesday, December 6?
 - a. RedforEd Educator Delegations will be happening at schools and worksites across the county as part of a county-wide day of union action.
- 3) Will you wear **RED** and an MCEA solidarity sticker every Wednesday to build our union culture and solidarity?

Document 6 – [Positive Climate Sites] Organizing Script / Talking Points for Building Reps & Members.
Building Reps and members can use this script to support signature collection for action letters being delivered to administrators / supervisors at poor climate sites.

Over the last few weeks, Building Representatives and other member leaders within our union have spoken with many educators about the climate-related issues we care about that are deeply and widely felt at MCPS schools and worksites. Our school has a positive and collaborative climate; however, there are county-wide, systemic concerns that need to be addressed. Also, there are sites across the county that are not as fortunate as our site. In some cases, our colleagues at other schools and worksites are experiencing a climate of fear, lack of collaboration, and disrespect. The systematic concerns are **[insert deeply and widely felt issues]**.

What are your thoughts on these issues?
Which of them is the most important issue to you?
If you could change one thing, what would it be?

As a union, we are organizing to encourage and empower educator voice at the center of decision-making processes, including decisions about system-wide concerns, as well as at schools and sites that do not have a collaborative and positive climate:

- At the November 8 regional all-member union meetings, we talked about a campaign effort we are working on together as educators at our schools and worksites.
- The campaign is called “Taking Action on Workplace Climate,” and its purpose is to support educators in taking collective action at our individual worksites, and to speak up on issues that go unaddressed by our building administration, supervisors, and / or MCPS administrators at the central office level.

As union members, we all can play a role in making sure we have a safe and collaborative school system across MCPS:

- We can do this by each stepping up to participate in this union campaign. If one person speaks up, MCPS will not take our issues seriously.
- If we all speak up, they are more likely to listen to us.
- We are also serving as a model school for other MCPS administrators to look to as an example for how to foster positive climate schools at sites that are currently experiencing serious climate concerns.

We drafted a letter to our administrator / supervisor to highlight and celebrate the collaborative and positive climate at our school, and to advocate for solutions to system-wide issues we are concerned about. We are asking our administrator / supervisor to pass our letter onto MCPS leadership and support our advocacy for [list demands / solutions from drafted letter]. To show MCPS that we care about this issue and are willing to take collective action, we are asking all MCEA members to add their name to the letter.

1. Will you sign the letter so we can show union solidarity and organize to fight for positive change?
2. Thank you for taking action by signing our group letter! Will you commit to joining me and other colleagues to deliver the letter to our administrator / supervisor in person on Wednesday, December 6?
 - a. RedforEd Educator Delegations will be happening at schools and worksites across the county as part of a county-wide day of union action.
3. Will you wear **RED** and an MCEA solidarity sticker every Wednesday to build our union culture and solidarity?

Document 7 – Step-By Step Instructions for Organizing a Successful MCEA Workplace Climate Campaign (Nov 8-Dec 6)

Step 1 – Schedule a Member Planning Meeting by Wednesday, November 15 *(to Draft the Group Action*

Letter for your School / Worksite and to make an organizing plan for collecting signatures on the letter and commitments for participation in the letter delivery / RedforEd Delegation on Dec. 6)

Planning Meeting Agenda [for Group Action Letter]

- ❑ **Draft your action letter together at the meeting**, within a shareable document.
 - **Set a timeline for when the letter will be finalized** (after collecting additional feedback from members who are not present at the planning meeting) and ready to begin collecting member signatures. Based on the timeline of the Workplace Climate Campaign, we recommend a deadline of by or before Wednesday, November 22.
 - **Agree to a designated point person for incorporating input** from members and sharing the final version to members responsible for signature collection.
 - **Create a group text or email thread (we recommend using personal emails)** to keep everyone involved in the planning process updated.
 - MCEA Support Materials:
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- ❑ **Agree to a process for organizing signature collection**, including designated persons responsible for collecting letter signatures from colleagues (which should occur after the letter is finalized).
 - **Divide your school or worksite membership list** among educators who will be collecting signatures. If you don't have a copy of the membership list for your school, reach out to your assigned UniServ Director.
 - **Agree to days and times for in person, 1-1 member-to-member conversations**, which are the most effective way of organizing colleagues to take action.
 - **Lead 5 and 10-minute meetings at your school / worksite to make a signature ask to a large group of colleagues** and ask them to sign the letter at that time, during the meeting.
 - **Use technology (calls, texts, emails) only when strategic.** Technology is best when making 1-1 asks colleagues with whom you have a preexisting relationship, and with whom you have previously discussed the deeply and widely felt issues the letter addresses.
- ❑ **Review the script / talking points** to prepare for organizing conversations (make it your own!)
 - As you are making asks to members to sign the delegation letter, ask them to sign then and there on the spot.
 - Ask members who sign the letter if they will commit to participating in the Dec. 6 RedforEd Delegation to deliver the letter to the administrator / supervisor.

Step 2 – Schedule a RedforEd Delegation Planning Meeting by Wednesday, November 29 *(to discuss and agree to a plan for letter delivery / RedforEd Delegation coordination at your school/worksite. A RedforEd school/worksite delegation is when a group of educators goes directly to our administrator or supervisor to address concerns by stating [to the administrator/supervisor, in person] the specific concerns and solutions we seek.)*

Planning Meeting Agenda [for RedforEd Delegation Action]

- ❑ **Agree on Delegation Target / Letter Recipient:** the MCPS Principal, Supervisor or Administrator who can make decisions or who can pass the information up the chain of command within MCPS. If the Administrator / Supervisor is not available, who will you deliver the letter to? (Example: Assistant Principal)
- ❑ **Decide on Delegation Timing:** The best time on Wednesday, December 6 to conduct the delegation is to do so at a time when all committed participants are available AND at a time when the Administrator / Supervisor will be available. It is helpful to know your administrator's schedule, so you are not planning for the delegation to take place when they are unavailable.
- ❑ **Decide on Delegation Location:** If you can determine the specific location where your principal will be at the time you plan to carry out the delegation, that will help to answer this question. Have a discussion with your colleagues about the specific location to come to a mutual agreement among those participating in the delivery of the letter.
- ❑ **Decide on Time / Location for Pre-Delegation Meetup:** It is important to have a pre-delegation

meeting time and specific location so that participants can meet a few minutes immediately before the delegation to review the plan and roles.

- ❑ **Confirm Delegation Materials:** Group letter with signatures, camera, #Red for Ed shirts and stickers, and any other materials that could be useful, such as a pen and notebook.

- ❑ **Confirm Member Roles:**

- **Delegation Lead Speaker** [Add Educator Name Here]
 - The person who asks to speak to administration and asks them not to interrupt when others are speaking.
 - This person also keeps the group together to encourage educators who are participating.
- **Educator Testimony** [Add Educator Name Here]
 - This person states the issues and provides examples of their impact on student learning and educator working conditions.
- **Educator Demand / Solution / Timeline** [Add Educator Name Here]
 - States the demand and timeline. For example, “*we are requesting that a meeting be scheduled to discuss the issues and solutions by or before [enter date].*”

- ❑ **Prepare for the Administrator / Supervisor Response:**

- How do you anticipate your administrator will respond?
- What will you do to prepare for possible responses from your administrator?
- It is important to practice the message, including the problem and demands.

Step 3 – Lead a RedforEd Delegation at Your School / Worksite on Wednesday, December 6!

- ❑ Carry out your delegation as planned!
- ❑ Take pictures and send them to your assigned Uniserv Director. Let your Uniserv Director know what support you need.
- ❑ After the delegation, schedule a short debrief with delegation participants:
 - Talk through what went well and what could have gone even better.
 - Discuss ideas for next steps.
 - Contact your assigned Uniserv Director to debrief.

Document 8 – Overcoming Challenging Questions / Affirm, Answer, Redirect

The principal doesn't have the power to address these concerns.

- A. Thanks for sharing. You are right; your administrator or supervisor may not be able to address the systemic problems alone, but they do have the power to support our asks to higher-level MCPS decision makers, which will ensure that MCPS hears we are organizing for change.

I don't have time.

- A. I understand MCPS has many demands that keep your schedule full; however, how will things improve if we don't take action? I know you care about [insert issue]. How will your life be easier if this issue is improved? We can all play a small role and set small, realistic benchmarks. Can you carve out 20 minutes to talk to one or a few of your colleagues about signing the joint letter to administration?

This action is not going to produce results.

- A. I appreciate you sharing your concerns. When we come together as a collective to take action, we can win. There is power in numbers. An example is when we all took action last year by showing up to bargaining, engaging with parents, and conducting an educator sit-in during County Council proceedings. As a result of our collective action, we won the largest salary increase for MCPS educators in recent history! Will you add your name on this joint letter to administration/join us in the #RedforEd delegation?

I am afraid our administration will retaliate.

- A. Thanks for sharing your concern. Why do you feel this way? When there are many of us as a collective who are organizing for change, it will be almost impossible for the administration/MCPS to retaliate. I know this must feel uncomfortable. That is normal when we are organizing for change. When you engage in union activities, you are more protected. What is your most important issue? If we do nothing, we know nothing will change. If we organize, we will make progress on making improvements. Will you add your name to this joint letter to the administration/join us in the #RedforEd delegation?

What if the administrator shuts us down/states these issues are out of their control?

- A. This is a legitimate concern. We will follow through with the original plan, message, and ask. We will not allow them to interrupt us. We will keep going with confidence. The fact that they might shut us down shows they are worried about us using our collective power to organize for real change. If they cannot fix the problem, we will ask them to pass along the message to somebody who can.