

These talking points are meant for use with either national or local media. There are three sections, the first two are for national media. We suggest that when we speak with local reporters, we say that we have local issues and a nationally coordinated campaign. We would begin with our local talking points and then move to the national ones.

SHORTEST STATEMENT OF OUR MESSAGE:

What we are doing here today at _____ is happening all across this country... 200 towns and cities, 2,000 public schools. What it represents is the fight for the soul of American public education. Our slogan is The Public Schools ALL Students deserve that means first and foremost, for Black and Brown and poor students for whom the promise of public education has never been realized and it means all students, not just a few.

Together, parents and students and educators are walking in to reclaim their schools from the charter industry and the testing craze and from unequal, inadequate funding.

TOP-LINE NATIONAL TALKING POINTS FOR OCTOBER 6TH

1. WE WANT LONG-OVERDUE INVESTMENT IN THE SCHOOLS THAT SERVE BLACK AND BROWN COMMUNITIES. THIS IS BASIC RACIAL JUSTICE:

The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS), a coalition of ten national community organizations and two teachers unions, is coordinating Walk-Ins at 2,000 public schools in over 200 cities, with 100,000 participants, to call for much needed and long overdue investment in the public schools that serve black and brown communities.

2. WE WANT THE NEXT PRESIDENT TO CLOSE THE WALL ST. BILLIONAIRE TAX LOOPHOLES THAT ROB OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MONEY THEY NEED TO EDUCATE OUR CHILDREN WELL:

In this presidential election year, the candidates of both parties are calling for the closing of tax loopholes that benefit Wall St. billionaires while helping to starve our schools of the resources needed to support the public schools all our children deserve. We call on whomever our next president is to ensure that much of the money gained from closing these loopholes is used to provide our kids with expert and experienced teachers, a rich and challenging curriculum, small class sizes that permit more one-on-one learning, and end to harsh discipline and jail-like school environments, and the health care and social services they need to succeed.

3. WE WANT MONEY FOR PUBLIC “SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS” AND AN END TO SIPHONING AWAY RESOURCES TO CHARTER SCHOOLS:

When public schools are well-funded, they work well. The 5,000 public “sustainable community schools” in cities around the country provide a world-class education. We want more of them rather than an expansion of charter schools that siphon money away, resist accountability, and so often refuse to enroll or push out students with special needs, while performing on average no better, and often worse than, the under-funded public schools in our cities.

TALKING POINTS IN ANSWER TO REPORTERS' QUESTIONS OR TO RAISE IN LONGER CONVERSATIONS WITH NATIONAL AND LOCAL REPORTERS:

Who we are

- » Today, teachers, parents, students and community members are walking in at 2,000 schools in over 200 cities. We are expecting up to 100,000 people to participate, making this the largest mobilization in support of public education in recent history. We believe that taking action together will lead to positive change.
- » This action is coordinated by the Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools (AROS), a coalition of coalition of ten national community organizations and teachers unions.
- » For too long, schools in black and brown communities have been deprived of the funds needed to provide our children with expert and experienced teachers, a rich and challenging curriculum, small class sizes that permit more one-on-one learning, and the health care and social services they need to succeed.

Our Demands

- » We are walking in to demand long overdue investment in the public schools that serve black and brown children. Only adequate funding is just and equitable funding.
- » Too many black and brown children and communities do not have the resources we know they need to do well. Their schools must be able to provide them with the education that all our children deserve, an education that prepares them for a bright future.

On Community Schools

- » Public “sustainable community schools” like the 5,000 operating now in cities around the country can provide the world-class education that we want for our children. They demonstrate that when public schools are well-enough funded, they work very well.
- » Public “sustainable community schools” provide what our children need to succeed through:
 - expansive, culturally relevant curriculums
 - appropriate evaluations of student and teacher performance rather than excessive, high-stakes testing
 - restorative disciplinary practices rather than suspensions, expulsions and jail-like atmospheres
 - counseling and health care services that support learning
 - an atmosphere that encourages parent and community involvement rather than state takeovers and other means of eliminating local control.
- » We demand an end to treating black and brown children like criminals. Schools that impose rigid behavior codes on children — like silent lunch periods and humiliating punishments for minor infractions — are not educating students for a productive future. They are criminalizing children. We must instead invest in constructive and restorative approaches to discipline and school cultures, like those created by public “sustainable community schools” that are respectful and focused on learning.

Charter Schools

- » Even if we ignore the fact that charter schools, on average, achieve no better results than our badly funded public schools, and even if we overlook the growing number of instances in which charter operators have committed massive fraud with the taxpayer money they've received, you can't build a national educational system based on schools that depend for much of their support on donors from Wall Street — the financial services/management consulting/venture capital industries — subsidized by taxpayers.
- » While some charter schools do a good job, many are run by incompetent or unscrupulous profit-seekers who also sometimes even take over the better charter schools. Other charters spend vast sums on consultants who are paid many times the salaries of classroom teachers who, in any event, are not paid adequately and who receive only a fraction of the support they need to succeed.
- » Charter schools avoid and resist public accountability for the taxpayer money they receive. They claim to be public schools when they ask for money but claim they are private schools and therefore unaccountable when they are asked to justify how they spend, and the results they achieve with, the public money they receive.
- » Charters siphon money away from the public schools that serve black and brown children. On top of that, they routinely refuse to enroll students with special needs and push out students who encounter difficulties once enrolled.

On Investment

- » Our schools and communities have been starved of the resources we know they need--billions more than they currently receive.
- » We can get that money from making the very wealthy and corporations pay their fair share. Wall St. billionaires continue to benefit from tax loopholes that rob our schools of much of the money they need. We have to close those loopholes and make sure much of the money gained goes to the most underfunded public schools.
- » You can't buy good teachers, good school buildings, much-needed support services on the cheap. Our children and our country's future prosperity depend on making adequate and equitable funding of schools that serve black and brown children a top priority. The resources are there if the political will is also.

Presidential Moment

- » Neither candidate has given enough attention to the issue of public education other than to speak in broad generalities and repeat the oft-quoted statistics on our losses in international rankings
- » While our tax status limits us from endorsing any candidate, we are clear that we need a president who has a commitment to making major investments in public schools, particularly those serving black and brown children whose schools have been badly underfunded for decades. This requires political will and courage.
 - We also need a president who will stop siphoning more taxpayer money away from public schools and into charter schools.