

Idaho Public Charter School Summit

Grassroots Legislative & Communications Training Session

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOLS MUST HAVE A VOICE IN THE 2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Objective: *Raise awareness of public charter schools and education choice; Advocate policies that support education choice and allow public charter schools to thrive; Make public charter schools a critical "political" issue that matters to elected officials; Be a player in the political arena.*

Mark Your Calendar & Attend These Important Upcoming Events:

- February 15, 2006 – Idaho's Public Charter School Day at the Legislature

Key Messages -- "It really is about the children"

- Education choice – parents are in charge of their children's education; We pay taxes, and we care about our kids' future.
- Empowering parents – Idaho law provides for choice, and parents are voting with their feet when it comes to public charter schools
- Local Control – Public charter schools are the best kind of local control, where parents are actively engaged at all levels of their public charter school.
- Idaho needs the leadership and vision to take our children's education into the 21st Century.
- It really is about the children -- We expect our elected officials to make it work! Don't play politics with our children's education and future.

Key Audiences

- Governor Kempthorne
- Legislators (Your District Legislators, Education Committees, Leadership)
- State Board of Education
- State Public Charter School Commission
- Media & Your Community

Specific Actions for Supporters to Take:

Goal - Build a personal relationship with your legislator now and stay in touch throughout the legislative session (and throughout the year)

During the Legislative Session:

- Stay in touch with your legislators (call, e-mail, fax, write, meet with in person)
- Attend education committee meetings, key votes and events
- Public Charter School Day at the Legislature – A PRIORITY
- Charter School Open Houses – all legislators / Showcase to Education Committees

Year Round Communications:

- Write Letters to the editor, guest opinions, editorial boards statewide
- Communicate with legislators, the Governor, State Board of Education
- Speak Out -- Speaking Venues - Community service organizations

Get Organized:

- Build a grassroots communications network for each public charter school (Action Alerts by e-mail, phone tree, regular meetings – what ever works!)
- Pay attention -- Stay engaged; involve others at your school, in your family, in your community.
- Build a Coalition – coordinate messages, activities, strategy with others public charter schools, and others who support school choice.

Long Term Political Objectives:

- Organize a viable association/advocacy group in support of school choice - be a long term player
- Support legislators who support your issues, volunteer in their campaigns with your time and money.
- Change local school boards – elect pro-charter/pro school choice candidates