# Building Coalitions that Change the Balance of Power

Dountonia S. Batts, Executive Director/Organizer
David Greene, Vice President
Charity Scott, Executive Director/Organizer - Elect

# Overview

- Terminology, Concepts, Infrastructure
- Goals and Information Sharing
- Strategic Interactions with Power Players
- Open Discussion - Rationale, Advantages and Challenges

# Terminology

- "A coalition is a union of people and/or organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific problem."

- Leadership is accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve purpose in the face of uncertainty.

- Organizing is leadership that enables people to turn the resources they have into the power they need to make the change they want.

Cohen L, Baer N, Satterwhite P. Developing effective coalitions: an eight step guide. In: Wurzbach ME, ed. *Community Health Education & Promotion: A Guide to Program Design and Evaluation.* 2nd ed. Gaithersburg, MD: Aspen Publishers Inc; 2002:144-161.

# Concepts

- Informal Coalition – a lead organization or person deliberately reaching out to various stakeholder groups, sharing information or contacts, usually includes a perceived consensus among the participants.

- Formal Coalition – involves people and organizations banding together to develop common ground and influence policy under a formalized structure.

# Why are coalitions necessary?

○ Pool and leverage resources to maximize the impact of your efforts

○ Increase community understanding of community needs and maximize community assets

○ Promote community-wide change through coordination and diversity of participants

○ Create a sustainable impact and change

References: Alter C, Hage J. Organizations Working Together. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, Inc; 1993.
Berkowitz B. Collaboration for health improvement: models for state, community and academic partnerships. Journal of Public Health Management and Practice 2000;6(1):67-72.
Butterfoss F, Goodman R, Wandersman A. Community coalitions for prevention and health promotion: factors predicting satisfaction, participation, and planning. Health Education Quarterly 1996;23(1):65-79.
Green L, Daniel M, Novick L. Partnerships and coalitions for community based research. Public Health Reports 2001;116(1 Suppl):20-30.
Nelson J, Rashid H, Galvin V, Essien J, Levine L. Public/private partners: key factors in creating a strategic alliance for community health. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 1999; 16(3 Suppl):94-102.

# Coalition Life-Cycle

- **Stage 1 – Setting the Foundation**
  - ☐ Purpose
  - ☐ Vision
  - ☐ Mission
  - ☐ Goals
  - ☐ Bylaws
  - ☐ Articles of Incorporation

# Coalition Life-Cycle

- **Stage 2 – Planning**
  - ☐ Strategies to pursue, including lobbying for new legislation, participating in elections, and talking to media.
  - ☐ Establish basic arguments and messaging
  - ☐ Articulate an integrated plan with timeline, objectives, funding, budget, etc.

# Coalition Life-Cycle

- **Stage 3 – Doing the Work**
  - ☐ Work the plan
  - ☐ Use multiple tactics and activities
  - ☐ Ensure a mechanism for feedback and evaluation
  - ☐ Review implementation strategies to ensure alignment with desired outcomes

# Coalition Life-Cycle

- **Stage 4 – Renew or Disband: What's Next?**

  - ☐ The goals of coalitions shift over time, and coalitions do not last forever.

  - ☐ Goal achieved – shift focus

  - ☐ Goal achieved – disband

  - ☐ Goal not achieved – keep working, stay focused

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Issues in IPS

- A narrative pushed by district and special interest groups that does not match reality
- Lack of Transparency
- Fast moving policy changes
- Special interest groups successfully pushing their agenda
- Policies causing disruption and chaos of the learning environment
- Referenda confusion

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Ideal Set Up

- Compile articles and data to then be a resource of information for the community

- Create policy briefs on issues facing the district to provide an alternative to what special interest groups are pushing

- Attend all district related meetings take notes and live streaming un recorded meetings

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Realistic Set-Up

We are all volunteers, with jobs, kids and lives.

- Compile articles and data to then be a resource of information for the community-NOT a systematic process
- ~~Create policy briefs on issues facing the district to provide an alternative to what special interest groups are pushing~~
- Attend ~~all~~ most district related meetings take notes and live streaming un recorded meetings

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Successes

- **Exposing questionable policies and procedures**
  - Attending school board and district related meetings,
    - Taking notes and livestreaming.
- **Sharing information**
  - Via Facebook to the wider community, and Google Groups to members
    - Messaging--connecting concrete district situations, with the wider issue of community voices/ democracy being undermined.

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Successes

- **Pressuring the district**
  - Pointing to specific policy decisions made by the district and making clear the changes that would have made the decision or process more transparent and inclusive of community voices.
  - Asking difficult, fact based questions to push for more transparency of process and information.

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Successes

- **Pressuring the district**
  - Having members speak at board meetings to push back against rhetoric of the district, which is far removed from the realities of students, staff and families.
  - Writing op-eds to ask publicly for more information, and expose inadequate transparency of policies and processes.

# Goals and Information Sharing IPSCC: Successes

- We are being taken seriously by
  - The district—private meetings and personal contact information
  - And the media—asked to be interviewed and give our perspective

# Strategic Interactions with Power Players

- **Reasons to recruit Faith-based leaders:**
  - Access to resources that will be needed
  - Access to influencers
  - Example, Pastors for Texas Children www.pastorsfortexaschildren.com

# Strategic Interactions with Power Players

Duties for the Faith-based Community:

- Outreach & educate public officials at all levels of government
  - State Government
  - City Government
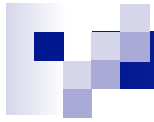  - School Board

# Strategic Interactions with Power Players

- Outreach & educate the Faith-based & non faith-based community
- Outreach & educate the Business Community
  - Key businesses
  - Chamber of Commerce

# Strategic Interactions with Power Players

Challenges:

- Staying connected

- Competition with opposing views

- Media Access

- Measuring effectiveness

# Discussion Time

- Rationale
- Advantages
- Challenges

# Contact Information

**IPS Community Coalition**

Email: IPSCommunityCoalition@gmail.com

Phone: 317.970.4786

Facebook: @IPSCommunityCoalition

Twitter: @IPS_CC