**Introduction**

*Chapter Goals - After reading this chapter, you will be able to:*

* Understand the audience of this curriculum and see that parent leadership is essential in advocacy efforts for school choice
* Conceptualize the flow of the curriculum and understand its structure

Part I - Thinking About Making a Change

As you dive into this curriculum, we wanted to start with a congratulations. You are taking the initial steps of thinking about making a change in your community. While this is just the beginning, you should be proud of those first steps. In reading this curriculum, you are considering how to make education in your community better for all students.

This curriculum should help you take that thinking/learning and turn it into action. You’ve probably already observed this, but our current education system is not meeting the needs of all students and parents. By starting to think about an advocacy campaign around school choice, you are challenging that status quo and asking questions around how we as a country can do better by our kids.

If you are feeling inspired, that’s great, we are too. This chapter will discuss the audience and the goals of this curriculum. We will go over the scope and structure of the curriculum and point to some additional resources on the EdChoice website that will be helpful. The content of this chapter will help you dive into the curriculum head first.

Part II - The Change Starts With You

This curriculum is intended for people just like you - parents who are supportive of school choice and want to advocate for more quality education options in their community. Maybe you are the only person in your community who believes in the power of school choice? Or maybe there is a large group of other parents who know how quality education options can change the futures of young people across the country and set them up for success.

Regardless of how many people you are working with, or where you are located in the country, this curriculum should be helpful for you as you start thinking about advocating for high quality education options in your community.

We wrote and intended for this curriculum to be applicable to parents who were interested in the cause of school choice. **No background knowledge or information is required**. This curriculum should be helpful for people who’ve never engaged in advocacy for school choice efforts. The ideas will also be relevant and interesting for experienced school choice advocates as well.

The curriculum is also intended to give you the information and the resources to lead an education advocacy campaign for school choice on your own. Besides the text of the curriculum, you will also see a number of resources and templates that should set you up for success as an advocacy leader.

We highly encourage you to review the resources and templates as you make your way through the chapters. You can use the templates and resources in your own work as an advocacy leader - you can also tailor them to fit your needs.

Next, we will provide an overview of the order of the content that appears in the curriculum and preview what is to come.

Part III - Structure and Order

EdChoice has led hundreds of successful school choice advocacy efforts. From that experience, we thought about the essential components of an effective advocacy effort. We thought about the things that many of these successful campaigns and the leaders behind them had in common.

After doing that thinking, we came up with eight topics that are critical to advocacy work, and we’ve dedicated a chapter to each of those chapters. Here is a layout of the chapters that remain ahead:

* **Chapter One: Introduction** (This chapter)
* **Chapter Two: Data and Information**
* **Chapter Three: Setting Goals**
* **Chapter Four: Stakeholder Relationships**
* **Chapter Five: Creating Influence**
* **Chapter Six: Story Telling**
* **Chapter Seven: Parent Engagement**
* **Chapter Eight: Outreach and Events**
* **Chapter Nine: Tips and Advice**

Each chapter has at least one resource or template that should help guide your work. Again, we recommend reviewing each template and resource and using it in your own work.

You will see **Activities** populated throughout the curriculum document. These are opportunities for you to apply the information and learning of the curriculum. During these activities, you will be asked to think about the information in the curriculum within your own contexts. These activities will help deepen learning and should provide some additional clarity on the ideas and concepts discussed.

**Activity**

A great opening activity that you can do with other parents (and practice right now) is a word association activity. What do you think of when you hear the following terms:

* **Word Association Terms**: School, school choice, opportunity, teacher, student need

Doing this word association should help you understand how you (or others) view and approach education. The words that you choose might provide some more context on your experience with the education system. This activity is a great segue into sharing more about yourself and how you got involved with educational choice advocacy.

You can also complete [this opening reflection](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lIiCnONYEgB3B6KqyswqBjSLdjx_F_Z-yF6VUTnLfFE/edit) activity. Feel free to answer these questions by yourself, or ask these questions to other members of your network that you want to engage with your advocacy.

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Every chapter will also have a **Tips and Trick** section**.** These tips and tricks are pieces of advice that we think are particularly important to leading a successful education advocacy campaign. From doing this work for years and supporting hundreds of community leaders across the country, these are a few of the best practices that we wanted to share. They should be helpful and relevant as you start thinking about leading your own advocacy campaign. Chapter 9 has a complete list of these tips and tricks.

Part IV - The Time is Now

While you should be proud of starting to think about improving education in your community, just reading is not going to make the change we need for students. This curriculum will help give you the information, materials, and strategy to improve education and impact the lives of kids and families where you live.

We can’t wait. Every day, students across the country aren’t getting the education they deserve. They are stuck in a system that is failing them, their families, and their community.

You are the type of leader that our communities need. As a parent, you understand the stakes at play. You understand that children, parents, and communities are being let down by the current system.

The time to make a change for school choice is now. We hope that the content in this curriculum only gets you more inspired to make an important change for kids.

Also, know that you are not alone. We at EdChoice are here to support you, in addition to our network of thousands of other parent leaders throughout the country. During the curriculum, we will give you some ways that you connect with our network and get even more help in leading advocacy efforts in your community.

Good luck with your advocacy efforts. We need your leadership on school choice efforts. For too long, the status quo has failed students across this country. In helping expand school choice options for children, you are taking a stand and demanding more for our country’s future leaders.

*We hope that this chapter provided a helpful overview of the curriculum and who it is for - hopefully you are feeling even more excited to begin to lead your advocacy efforts. In the next chapter, we will go over some data and information that is critical to education advocacy work.*