

PLANNING GUIDE**3****Students Take Action****Working to Change School Policies**

Some Project Citizen student groups described in your book were concerned about school policies that they considered unwise. In one school, for example, the amount of break time was cut. In response to this unpopular policy, students carefully researched and gathered support to try to convince school leaders to change the policy.

Are there any school or school board policies that teachers, parents, and students would like to see changed in your schools? Follow the steps below to identify an unpopular policy, research it, and formulate a public policy solution.



1. Brainstorm with your classmates and teacher possibly unwise school policies or decisions. Investigate these by researching online and interviewing family members and teachers on their opinions on each issue. Ask yourself the following questions:
 - Which school policies do the most people seem unhappy with?
 - Which problem poses the biggest problem for students? Why?
 - Which issue could we most likely solve given the influence we have?
 - What support could we get (for example, from school board members or parents' associations)?
2. In small groups, compare your preliminary research findings and weigh the issues. Then, as a class, come to a consensus on the school policy you think your class will be best able to improve and address.
3. As a class, decide on a plan of action. Identify the goals you hope to achieve, most importantly improving the quality of education for students and their learning environment. Find out what is currently being done, if anything, to overturn or address the policy.
4. Under your teacher's guidance, work with group members to interview experts in the school district, as well as the people who are directly affected by the policy. Meet with members of the local media and provide them with solid facts about why you are undertaking this project and what you hope to accomplish.
5. Participate in a class discussion on what information needs to be put into the hands of school board members, and how. Then work in small groups to organize all of the information you have gathered in a complete report. Also, create a display that visually explains why the existing policy is a problem and your class's public policy solution.
6. Ask to present at an upcoming school board meeting. Along with your report and display, present statements from parents and teachers, as well as statistics. Explain to the group how this issue affects the present and future education of students.