**How to Form a Parent Coalition For Your School District**

Arlington Parent Coalition

August 2019

As the LGBTQ industry pushes aggressively forward in its determination to indoctrinate K-12 school children with sexual ideologies that are unacceptable to many parents, school officials, and citizens, it is imperative that concerned people band together, network with other like-minded groups, and develop strategies to push back on these social-engineering agendas. When parents in Arlington (VA) discovered that transgender policies were being surreptitiously created and implemented in Arlington Public Schools, they established the Arlington Parent Coalition (APC), a diverse group of parents and citizens who organized and worked to get all voices heard by the school administration. APC did so via the following strategy.

**Create a Core Leadership Group**

APC began with five parents around a dining room table. If you already know of two or three other people who are concerned about the direction your schools are taking, you have a place to start. We don’t recommend you form a coalition with only one leader at the helm, as the work will overwhelm and the loneliness of being in opposition to the flood of culture can be both exhausting and depressing. We all need brothers- and sisters-in-arms.

**Set Your Goals**

Decide what your group intends to accomplish. APC began with the mission to persuade Arlington Public Schools to scuttle or postpone for one year the Transgender Student policy they sought to pass during that school year. APC also fought to get certain unacceptable clauses taken out of the policy and put other more reasonable items in. We chose to do so by focusing on just two issues: parents’ rights and girls’ protections. After some successes, but ultimately failing to stop the policy moving forward, APC redefined its goals.

APC’s redefined mission moving forward is to engage with school leadership regarding the growing research and data that reveal the extensive harm this ideology perpetrates, and to encourage parents to exercise their right to protect their children from exposure to objectionable curriculum and ideology. APS will also support and network with other parents and citizens around the nation who are fighting this battle in their districts.

**Establish a Website & Email Account**

Email accounts are easy enough to come by, and you’ll want to have one for your organization as opposed to using anyone’s personal account. It is possible to keep your names hidden from the public eye, and it may be advantageous to do so until your coalition is firmly established. Setting up a website is imperative, because that will be the central hub for others to get information from you and to reach out to your group for help or to offer help. Hopefully someone in your core leadership will have the tech skills to set up your website. If not, consider hiring someone to set it up for you. APC took advantage of the very user-friendly [Wix](http://www.wix.com) interface, and the parent who set it up previously had some minimal blogging & website experience. You can see APC’s website [here](https://arlingtonparentcoa.wixsite.com/arlingtonparentcoa), and you are free to copy its structure and content as much (or as little) as you like.

APC has one member of the core leadership who manages the website and another member who manages the email account, but access to the website and email accounts should be shared with at least one other core leadership member. In APC the whole core leadership team has the logins and passwords for the accounts. If something happens to the account manager(s), access to the accounts will not be lost.

Images are invaluable for your website, and they will draw readers’ interest about your content. You can get great free-use, no-royalty images from [Pixabay](http://www.pixabay.com). Take care if you use your own photos with people in them. You must have permission to use someone else’s image (referring either to a photo someone else snapped, or someone else’s likeness in a photo). If you’re not positive you have permission to use a photo or a likeness of another person (such as a group of kids playing at the park where the children’s faces are identifiable), don’t do it.

**Develop a Strategy to Engage Your Administration & Community**

The first task APC undertook was organizing parents to attend the APS school board members’ open office hours. We set up a [Sign-Up Genius](http://www.signupgenius.com) and provided talking points for parents who wanted to help but weren’t sure what to say to school board members. We tried to make sure parents went in groups, and in the beginning one of the APC core leadership members made sure to attend every open office hour with other parents.

Next we followed and attended all school board meetings, and organized parents to speak during open comment times. When more parents began to join APC and asked how they could help we delegated monitoring and managing school board meetings to a parent volunteer. He helped parents prepare their comments, alerted APC to relevant actions from the board and changes to the schedule/agenda, and has been an invaluable manager of APC’s relationship to the school board.

We sought meetings with all members of the administration (superintendent, assistant superintendent, supervisors, etc.) who were on the committees that were working on the transgender policies, invited APC members to join us, and then communicated information from those meetings to the growing APC membership. Having a [blog](https://arlingtonparentcoa.wixsite.com/arlingtonparentcoa/blog) connected to our website has been an important means of disseminating information quickly.

Some members of the APC leadership also submitted pieces to the media, took interviews with media, and began to speak at events like political parties’ monthly meetings. Be aware, however, that speaking or writing publicly does reveal one’s name to the public. The first time a local news outlet contacted APC via the website to ask for an interview APC declined, because none of the leadership were yet in the public eye, and APC was still forming its goals and strategies. We felt we were unprepared to make a statement at that time. After an APC leadership member placed an op-ed in the Washington Post, however, that member’s identity became public, and she was able to develop more contacts and presence with media and public organizations. Later other members began to do the same. At present some APC leadership are publicly known while others have chosen to keep their identities private. That is a very personal decision, with consequences either way, and no one should ever feel compelled by others either to go public or stay invisible. Both are useful and potentially troublesome for different reasons.

**Network With Other Groups & Individuals**

Getting guidance from parents in neighboring districts who were already fighting these policies was invaluable to establishing the APC. Learning from activists who had experience circumvented a lot of floundering and on-the-job training.

APC also plugged into several organizations in other districts nation-wide. You can see some of these groups listed under [Connections](https://arlingtonparentcoa.wixsite.com/arlingtonparentcoa/connections) on the APC website.

**Develop Your Membership**

Make sure you have clear and easy avenues for parents to reach out to your organization, and to receive confirmation that they’ve been heard. The APC website’s [contact form](https://arlingtonparentcoa.wixsite.com/arlingtonparentcoa/contact-apc) is placed on several pages, and anyone who submits a contact form receives an automated response from APC.

The person who manages the APC email account is astoundingly organized, and places all contacts into one of three groups: Members, Not-Trusted, and Uncertain. Members are those contacts who we know are in agreement with us on this issue. We invite these people to meetings, and share with them all the information we obtain on their behalf. The Not-Trusted group are those we know have a perspective on this issue that differs from ours. A number of local transgender activists have signed up for the APC website and/or contacted us via our email account in order—we suppose—to keep an eye on us and learn what our plans and strategies are. We do not reject anyone’s membership request—it is our hope that reason, science, and facts would eventually win over those who have been deceived by the radical LGBTQ industry—but we do not want to share our most sensitive information with those people. Contacts who cannot be confirmed either way are placed in the Uncertain group, and we parse out information to them carefully.

**Hold Membership Meetings**

While the APC core leadership is in almost daily contact, and meets frequently, APC holds larger membership meetings sporadically. Membership meetings are paramount, both to keep members engaged and to share information and strategies in both directions.

However, membership meetings must be tightly controlled. We invite only trusted contacts, and we ask that they do not forward or share information about the meeting with anyone else. If they know of another parent who would like to attend, we ask that they direct that parent to APC, or give APC that parent’s contact info. Then we do a little spy work: If no one in the core leadership knows the contact, we ask the wider community of leaders (those who have stepped up and been very active, such as the father who manages school board issues) if anyone can vouch for the new contact. If not, we’ll check with the larger membership. If a trusted member vouches for a new member, we consider that new member safe, and will invite them to the meeting. We maintain an invitation list and require RSVPs. At one meeting a man showed up at the door who was not on our list and could not explain how or from whom he found out about the meeting. We turned him away and discovered later that he was indeed someone whose perspective differed greatly from ours.

We hold meetings in public spaces that would be comfortable for anyone to attend. We have intentionally avoided churches, because we have Muslim, Buddhist, as well as atheist members. We do not recommend utilizing a free venue, like a room at the public library, because meetings in those spaces must be announced to the public and open to the public. In order to control who comes we rent rooms at places like county rec facilities. As APC is run by volunteers and not (yet) an IRS-recognized non-profit we do not have a fundraising arm nor much of a budget. We pass around a bag at meetings to ask for donations to cover the cost of renting the room. Our leadership has many times paid for things (like FOIA requests and room rentals) out of pocket.

We hope this serves as an adequate starting place for you as you begin to establish your own organization. APC is always available to consult with you and share anything we’ve learned about fighting transgender ideology in our schools. Thank you for stepping up to defend our nation’s children, and we look forward to working alongside you to again make American’s public schools partners with parents and safe places for every student.

Yours in the battle,

The Arlington Parent Coalition

<http://www.arlingtonparentcoalition.org>

mailto:arlingtonparentcoalition@gmail.com?subject=Forming a Parent Coalition