



Parents and families have the power to change the conversation and politics around education reform and innovation. Without a robust national parent movement that defines a K-12 agenda, unites others behind it and influences and is a visible force in national education policy conversations, we will not see the change we need for our families.

Over the past decade, Keri Rodrigues, with Massachusetts Parents United, and Alma Marquez, with La Comadre and the Los Angeles Parents Union, have inspired, empowered and helped organize thousands of parents in California and Massachusetts to become powerful voices on the issues that affect their families. As the result of their powerful work, parents in Massachusetts and California we have changed the course of elections, influenced legislation and shifted the public narrative about educational equity among parents, politicians and media.

Now we are ready to take our work nationally by launching the National Parents Union. The National Parents Union is heeding the call to organize otherwise independent and uncoordinated parent organizing efforts into a national voice and movement to ensure that key education issues are included in the 2020 Presidential cycle, education is not sacrificed by either party and education reformers are not demonized.

There are three primary reasons now is the right moment to scale our efforts:

1. As politics leading up to the 2020 election cycle heats up, the time has come for leadership to forge a path forward and create space for a robust campaign to put education at the top of the list of our national priorities. In a campaign cycle that will see a focus on grassroots organizing and messaging, parents are well-positioned to force this issue among the nation's leading politicians.
2. Across the nation, dozens of organizations are building strong pockets of parent power. But there is a huge need to organize these groups on the ground to create an effective,

strategic, coordinated national movement of families to push for the change our children need during the 2020 election and beyond. We will provide technical and strategic support to groups nationally in a way that will amplify and deepen all of our empowerment and advocacy efforts. Some struggle to find inspiration and direction, families across the country are coming together to focus the education reform movement on what really matters: excellence in education for our children.

3. In the same manner that teacher strikes and mobilization are commanding headlines, we have a vision of having parent rallies and mobilizations in the spotlight, redirecting the conversation from one about adults to one about students. The teacher unions currently have no countervailing force. We envision the National Parents Union as being able to take on the unions in the national and regional media, and eventually on the ground in advocacy fights.

What is the National Parents Union?

National Parents Union is a network of highly-effective parent organizations and grassroots activists across the country that come together to unite behind a set of common goals and principles to channel the power of parents. Our family advocates improve the quality of life for children across the United States and define the education conversation in the 2020 election cycle.

NPU puts children and families at the center of education politics and policy. With delegates representing each of the 50 states, NPU disrupts the traditional role of parent voice in policy spaces and develop a new narrative that is inclusive of families from a wide variety of intersectional perspectives.

For the first time ever, parents of color, low-income parents, special needs parents, single mothers and fathers, grandparents, formerly incarcerated parents, and parents in recovery will join traditionally represented parent voices to join a vibrant coalition. A coalition that puts the best interest of our children at the center of education policy conversations on a national level.

National Parents Union empowers local organizations through skills building, direct organizational infrastructure assistance, and professional development to support local leadership and enhance effective grassroots efforts to build parent voice.

Some of this work is already happening informally through our individual networks. On any given day we are fielding questions and messages from our counterparts across the country about strategy and operations. We see a significant need for a national body that provides centralized technical assistance and encouragement and also harnesses the collective power of our efforts in important national fights where teachers unions have a monopoly on the conversation.

Statement of values:

National Parents Union believes:

- Our children must be unapologetically at the center of our agenda and every decision.
- There can be no excellence without equity in education for all children.
- There can be no excellence without the transformation our education system to disrupt generational institutional racism to refocus on providing high quality education for all of our children.
- There can be no excellence without parents and families at the table in developing policies.
- There can be no excellence without parents developing a powerful political advocacy voice in order to refocus our national priorities back to effective policies that strengthen families.
- There can be no excellence without giving parents and families the skills, resources and ability to share best practices in order to impact change on the local and national level.

Our mission is to support parents who have lived experience and are authentic voices, advocates and organizers who are engaging, educating and empowering families, neighborhood by neighborhood across the United States.

Parents trust and expect that education is the great equalizer and school systems of every type must be held accountable for meeting the promise of education for all students -- that each student has equitable access to opportunity to launch into a successful future.

What the NPU Will Do in Year One:

In our first year, the National Parents Union will engage our network of highly effective grassroots organizations and activists with a focus on the 2020 Presidential cycle and beyond. Actions include:

Member Development - Building Our Organization and Brand Within the Education Community

- Continued recruitment of the most effective organizations and activists.
- Strategic convening with organizations representing as many states as possible with grassroots leadership vote on the NPU Education Action Agenda.
- Develop reciprocal affiliate relationships with allied organizations through rapid-response, grassroots level organizing, communications and strategic support.
- Create peer-group networks and communications tools to provide collaboration between affiliate members.

Communications - Using 2020 cycle as a platform to show what National Parents Union is capable of by taking advantage of the media.

- Launch aggressive communications strategy (earned and owned national, local, ethnic and social media) to position NPU as the organization representing parent interests in Election 2020. Use offensive and defensive strategies to redirect the conversation from one about adults to one about students.

- Implement a data collection strategy to include surveys of key candidates and political leaders, and surveys of parents, to serve as a model for education issues in the national media.
- Identify and engage key allies including elected officials, partnership organizations, civil rights organizations, surrogates including former Secretaries of Education and other former Elected Officials including former Presidents.
- Develop a robust NPU Advisory Board with representation from a broad group of allied organizations in education, politics and policy.
- Roll out of NPU Education Action Agenda to define the Education K-12 debate in the 2020 Presidential cycle.
- Rapid response ground-level organizing to influence and engage candidates in key states by coordinating parent teams to host events, house parties and populating local events with support from a national team of seasoned NPU leaders.
- Rapid response grassroots Communications Team to focus on expanding our digital communications footprint and impact across the country as we push out key messaging.

Building the NPU for the Future

- Fundraising for sustainable success.
- Implementing a strategy to engage a broad group of supporters as allies and partners.
- Increasing our ability to support affiliates on the local level.

Addendum A:

National Parent Union List of Advisors: (in-information)

Andy Stern - President Emeritus, SEIU

John King - President/CEO - EdTrust

Shavar Jeffries - Democrats for Education Reform

Founding National Parents Union Council Members: (in-information)

Keri Rodrigues

Founder, Massachusetts Parents United/President, National Parents Union
Boston, Massachusetts

Alma Vivian Marquez

Founder, La Comadre/Secretary-Treasurer, National Parents Union
Los Angeles, California

Gwen Samuel

Founder, President, Connecticut Parents Union
Hartford, Connecticut

Sarah Carpenter

Founder, The Memphis Lift
Memphis, Tennessee

Chris Stewart

Founder, Wayfinder Foundation, Citizen Ed
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Seth Saavedra

New Mexico Education
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Sharif El-Mekki

The Fellowship: Black Male Educators for Social Justice & the Center for Black Educator
Development
Principal of Mastery Charter School, Shoemaker Campus
Philadelphia, PA

Vesia Hawkins

Volume and Light
Nashville, Tennessee

Charles Cole, III

Founder & Executive Director, Energy Convertors
Oakland, California

Marisol Quevedo Rerucha
UNIDOS US
San Diego, California

Addendum B: Potential Timeline of Events:

NPU National Delegate Convening: July 11-13th, 2019

- Three-day convening of NPU Founding Parent Council members.
- Vote and ratification of the National Parents Union formation, Parent Bill of Rights and official launch the national campaign.

Launch of the NPU2020 Key State Strategy

The selection of 4-6 states targeted to launch an aggressive, rapid response ground campaign based on the following conditions and context:

- **Potential for parent power on the ground**
- **A ripe policy environment conducive to education reform efforts**
- **Political viability/leverage as an early caucus/swing state**

National Presidential Debate, Primary and Caucus Schedule (as follows):

June 2019	NBC News Debate/NPU FB Live Event
July 2019	CNN Debate/NPU FB Live Event
August 2019	Television Debate/NPU TV Forum
September 2019	Television Debate/NPU FB Live Event
October 2019	Television Debate/NPU FB Live Event
November 2019	Television Debate/Television Spot
January 2020	Television Debate All Candidates signed on the Parent Action Agenda
February 2020	Iowa Caucus New Hampshire Nevada South Carolina
March 2020	Alabama California Massachusetts Minnesota North Carolina Oklahoma Tennessee Texas Vermont Virginia Louisiana Hawaii Idaho Michigan Mississippi Missouri

Ohio
Arizona
Florida
Illinois

*National Debate

April 2020
Wisconsin
Connecticut
Delaware
Maryland
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island

*National Debate

May 2020
Indiana
Nebraska
West Virginia
Arkansas
Kentucky
Oregon
Washington

June 2020
Montana
New Jersey
New Mexico
South Dakota
Puerto Rico
Washington, DC

Additional organizing dates to follow.

Strategy also to be defined by other key states including areas where education reform must be highlighted and protected, where teacher strikes are looming or where the strikes have emboldened anti-reform debate. Examples of these states include California, Virginia and Colorado.

- Rapid response via national media outlets with a constant, weekly push to include parent voice, perspective and priorities in election discussions during the presidential debates, caucuses and primaries.
- Aggressive earned media strategy incorporating highly trained NPU Parent Council Members and powerful surrogates as ambassadors of the NPU message.

- Applying pressure to ALL 2020 candidates to sign on the NPU Education Action Pledge reflective of the core beliefs as agreed upon by the NPU delegates.

Addendum C:

The National Parents Union Leadership

**Keri Rodrigues Lorenzo (Massachusetts Parents United/Massachusetts)
and Alma Vivian Marquez (La Comadre/California).**

About Keri Rodrigues Lorenzo:

Keri Rodrigues, is Matthew, Miles and David’s mom—together they are an awesome family that lives in Massachusetts. Keri is founder and Mom-in-Chief of Massachusetts Parents United, the largest urban parent advocacy organization in the Commonwealth reaching more than 200,000 families across Massachusetts.

Following her own difficult experience in the Massachusetts public school system and receiving her GED from Boston Public Schools, Keri was not surprised when she struggled navigating the education system with her own children. Knowing that schools were not adequately meeting the needs of students and parents, she turned her focus to education reform, eventually helping other families across the Commonwealth identify and use their voice, and place kids at the center of the education discussion.

Called, “arguably the most successful – parent organizer in education advocacy today,” Keri began her career as an award-winning journalist and radio broadcaster. She has been recognized nationally and internationally for her political reporting and as a host of a popular daily political talk show and newspaper column. Armed with this experience and success, Keri continued her career in advocacy as a long-time labor activist, communicator and organizer with the world’s largest local labor union, 1199SEIU, leading major campaigns across the country. She has also worked as a senior advisor on dozens of nonprofit, ballot-issue and political organizing campaigns across both locally and nationally.

Keri sits on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s “Influence 100” advisory group to transform the pipeline to education leadership to be more reflective of the composition of the Commonwealth as well as the Superintendent Rubric Refinement Project.

Keri’s impact extends beyond Massachusetts Parents United as an elected member of the Massachusetts Democratic State Committee, serving on the Executive Committee of the Ethnic Council of the Democratic National Committee and the advisory board of Democrats for Education Reform.

About Alma Vivian Marquez:

Alma Vivian Marquez is a Los Angeles Unified School District survivor and Miquitzli’s mom, a college student and graduate of Alliance-ESAT Charter High. Alma is Founder of Del Sol Group, a communications and public affairs firm, has over 20 years of experience in finding solutions to complex problems and a vast network of allies nationally. She also is the Founder of La Comadre, a network of powerful Latina women using their collective influence to demand excellence in education. A highly regarded strategist and public affairs expert, Alma’s ability to envision and implement winning strategies has earned her a reputation as a game changer.

As Vice President of External and Government Affairs for Green Dot Public Schools, she led political and community engagement efforts that grew Green Dot from 4 schools to 18 and the first two turn-around school projects in LAUSD's history in Watts and South LA. Alma led efforts for the Political Action Committee for the Small Schools Alliance making education the mainstay of the Los Angeles Mayoral Race of 2005. This was pivotal for creating the pro-education reform powerbase that still exists in Los Angeles.

Alma co-founded the Los Angeles Parent Union (LAPU) which grew into 12 chapters, the largest of which had 4,000 members. She created the strategy, parent organizing curriculum, trained thousands of parents and led community actions including the March of the Parents to demand excellent schools.

Alma served as the CA Latino Vote Director for President Obama's 2008 campaign, where she developed innovative Latino Voter strategies including the "Obama Nos Llama," the first ever interstate Latino campaign within a Presidential campaign. Alma is a graduate of East Los Angeles College and Occidental College. She earned her Masters in Urban Planning with emphasis on Social Policy from UCLA. Alma is a Board Member of Great Schools, the leading non-profit providing data for parents about schools and a national policy council member for Ed-Loc, which is committed to elevating the voices, leadership and influence of people of color in education.