

HELPFUL HINTS FOR FORMING A GROUP

Recognize that each member of your group may have different intensities of interest in changing what is happening, as well as different levels of interest in the various subjects of concern. There is a place for everyone, regardless of where they fit in. Respect the differences, and use them each to their best advantage.

Ask each member of the group to state in a few sentences what is of greatest concern to them, what they hope to accomplish, and what they need to learn to effectively do that.

Have a list of skills or interests important to getting the task underway, and find out who is willing and able to actively participate.

Some people enjoy reading. Use them to read some of the books identified as helpful, and report back to group.

Some people are good with data bases. Use them to compile information reported by others so it doesn't get lost or forgotten. Use them to schedule tasks and send out reminders to others in the group of school board meetings, dates your congressional representative is in town, dates decisions will be made on textbooks for the upcoming year, and the like.

Some people are excellent using social media. Use them to contact family, friends, and others who are concerned about their kids, letting them know of the actions your group is making. Also make them responsible for sending in updates to the dibsonyourkids.com website. That information can be very helpful and encouraging to others.

The leader should ensure that all voices get heard. Some people are reluctant to speak out. It may be that they are simply shy, they may think they are the only one who feels the way they do, they may think they have nothing to offer. Every voice has value. If there is a silent spot or two in the group, not just the leader, but *everyone in the group* should be sensitive to that, and try to bring all into the discussion.

Recognize that you are there to work together to accomplish a purpose. Not everyone will agree with everything. However, it should be agreed at the outset that if the majority of the group decides on a certain path, all will get on board and do their part.

Perceptions of what an individual thinks or believes can be wrong, but they can be as devastating to the health of the group as fact (which may be entirely different.) If there is any question about matters that could affect the effectiveness of the group, it is better to get it asked and answered.