To be successful, DC VOICE needs the participation of community voices across the city: parents and grandparents, school staff, students, community members, foundations, businesses, the faith community, colleges and universities. Please join us in this important work. Together we can strengthen the public voice in public education reform by developing the characteristics listed below.

We need to be:
- Hopeful and informed
- Diverse and unified
- Willing to go to bat for all children
- Responsible and invested
- Respectful and civil
- Engaged in advocacy for school reform

We need to have:
- Knowledge of what good schools look like
- A sense of ownership and obligation
- High expectations and a sense of entitlement
- Information and research on what produces positive results

Finally, we need to:
- Create networks
- Understand which standards can prepare students for employment and post-secondary education
- Believe that all children can, and have a right, to reach high academic standards
- Take action

Call DC VOICE to get on the mailing list for upcoming programs and/or to sign up for an action committee.

(FLAG INFORMATION ON BACK PANEL.)
In the spring of 1998, a group of teachers, parents and other Washingtonians committed to ensuring every child in Washington, DC a high quality public education, met to explore strategies to strengthen the public voice in educational reform. The group received a Ford Foundation grant to establish an education reform collaborative and provide opportunities to learn and work together.

One such opportunity was the use of Systems Thinking to examine the underlying issues that impact education reform efforts. We noted that most DC reform efforts are based on the belief that change comes from the top. However, we concluded that the critical leverage point is the public, and that a stronger, more engaged public yields stronger schools.

We also noted that although DC has a solid core of school and community activists in the city at-large and in most schools, we lack the critical mass needed for effective change. Therefore, DC VOICE developed a three-pronged action plan to ensure that the public, by being organized and informed, can hold both itself and the school system accountable for a top quality education for the children of DC.

"... the long term success of educational reform in the District will depend upon the development and nurturing of a broad, informed, and readily mobilizable indigenous constituency."

— Dr. Jeffrey Henig
George Washington University