

HOUSE MEETING TOOLKIT

CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This Toolkit provides you with an overview of how to lead a House Meeting. These are suggestions and outline different options depending on how much time you have, as well as suggested scripts (identified by italicized copy) to help you share important information. But it's up to you what you use – this toolkit exists as a guide and doesn't need to be followed exactly.

- 02** **House Meeting Goals**
Step-by-Step for Leaders

- 03** **Host Welcome**
Suggested script
A House Meeting in five simple steps

- 04** **House Meeting Agenda (1 hour version)**
Icebreaker
Welcome and Introduction
Our Education Blueprint
Discussion of the three Focus Areas
Next steps: Building Our Movement
Closing

- 05** **House Meeting Agenda (2 hour version)**
Welcome and Introduction
Our Education Blueprint
Share our Education Stories
Our Education Framework
Next Steps: Building Our Movement
Call to Action



House Meeting Goals

1. Share the purpose of EmpowerED Birmingham

Refer to the We are EmpowerED Birmingham section of the pamphlet. You can also find more information about EmpowerED Birmingham, including the values and theory of change on the website.

2. Tell people how they can become actively involved

This could be hosting their own House Meeting, joining a Blueprint Design Team or becoming a member of the EmpowerED Birmingham coalition.

3. Instill trust in the process and the coalition's commitment to making changes

The organizations who have signed on are deeply connected to improving education in the community and want House Meeting participants to weigh in on the issues that matter. If we were to accomplish what we set out to do, what would change for kids? Our community? Education?

4. Set forth the parameters that no one strategy is a magic bullet

This is the path that organizations are aligning around and we know that your contributions will strengthen our ability to provide safe space for our children to learn, grow, and thrive.

You can decide on the best space to host your House Meeting. It doesn't have to be in a house, or even in person. All you need is a space - physical or virtual - where you can bring people together and provide an open and safe space for conversation.

Step-by-Step for Leaders

1. If desired, buddy-up with a friend or partner to co-host a meeting.
2. Determine where you want to have your House Meeting, for example will it be in person or virtual? At a home or public space?
3. Determine if you want to coordinate any additional activities at your meeting (i.e. potluck/kids corner/etc).
4. Set the date and time of your house meeting (be mindful of work/school schedules, other community happenings, etc).
5. Send out the invites 7-14 days before the meeting - be sure to include a request for RSVP so you can prepare materials (RSVP's also help to reinforce commitment and increase attendance).
6. Make sure you have all the necessary materials for the House Meeting, for example:
 - Check-in / personal commitment form
 - The link or enough copies of the Guide to EmpowerED Birmingham for all participants
 - Take pictures (tag EmpowerEDBirmingham or #empoweredbirmingham on Facebook or Instagram)
 - If desired, provide food and drinks for attendees
7. Make RSVP reminder calls/texts 2-3 days before the meeting and another on the day of the meeting - be sure these reminders communicate all the necessary meeting details.
8. Hold the House Meeting
9. Enter your reflections into the House Meeting reflection form and share the big picture experience and ideas that came from your conversations with us.
 - Make follow-up calls to each of the attendees to see what they thought about the meeting, follow-up on commitments, get them engaged with the work of the coalition, see if they would be interested in hosting a house meeting sometime, etc.
 - Links can be shared via text or share the QR code below for attendees to access the post-meeting participant survey



Host Welcome

Suggested House Meeting welcome script

Note: For the detailed-agenda click the link in the table of contents.

Thank you so much for joining this house meeting and helping to launch this movement! House meetings have always been a basic foundation of organizing in America – from workers gathering outside of their workplace to unionize, to community members meeting in homes and churches during the Civil Rights movement. House meetings are a proven and effective way to create a larger movement. And we need a movement today!

Frame the problem in the community tied to your mission and purpose.

What if students, families, and community members were the architects of education in their local communities? Every child – regardless of race or zip code – deserves a quality education and a fair shot at success in life. The COVID-19 pandemic not only exposed the flaws in our nation’s educational system, it highlighted even more gaps in that system, with underserved students bearing the brunt of this crisis.

It’s time for a change – a radical shift in how we approach education – to ensure our children have the opportunity to succeed. To get different results we must do things differently. That’s why we’re turning to the community to lead the charge on reimagining the future of education in Birmingham.

Summarize the purpose of the meeting today with a call to action to set stage.

At our house meeting today, along with dozens of other house meetings happening in the next few weeks across the city, we are starting a new movement. We can decide the right priority areas for our children’s education so that they can meet the goals that they set for themselves. We will have a say in how districts spend unprecedented amounts of federal relief funds.

Organizations across the city are embarking on a community design process to bring community members and local leaders together, to discuss what’s working and not, and eventually to create actionable strategic plans that lead to change in education.

The goal is to package your energy, hopes, dreams, and lived experiences into a plan that upon completion, gets submitted for the attention of political leaders, funders, and other decision-makers to gain their investment and commitment to help carry out the reported vision and desires. The community’s collective imagination is far greater than that of a few decision-makers. Transforming our education system will require a shared vision for change. Who better to determine that vision than the people who live, learn, and work in Birmingham.

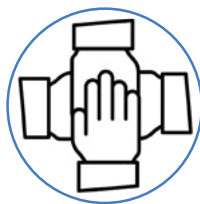
A House Meeting in 5 simple steps



Connect



Understand the problem



Come together



Plan the change



Transform education

House Meeting Agenda

1 Hour Version

This agenda can be used as a reference to guide your one hour meeting and should only be shared in this format with the Host, Timekeeper and Recorder

Icebreaker (5 mins)

Chat with a person near you to answer the question: What inspired you to come here today? Or, what is the name of an important teacher in your life and why is that teacher important to you?

Welcome and Introduction (5 mins)

See Host Welcome section on p3 for a suggested script. Host(s) explain what inspired them to facilitate this meeting.

About Our Education Blueprint (5 mins)

The community's collective imagination is far greater than that of a few decision-makers. Transforming our education system will require a shared vision for change and who better to determine that vision than the people who live, learn and work here.

We are calling on students, parents, and the community at large to join this community-led process in service of our children's education.

Give everyone time to read the We are EmpowerED Birmingham pamphlet.

Discussion on the 3 Focus Areas (40 mins)

Spend some time on each of the three focus areas and discuss the questions found in the "Share with us" section of the guide to EmpowerED Birmingham.

Next Steps: Building Our Movement (3 mins)

We end with POWER - this will not happen without our strong community coming together. We have talked about some pretty cool and creative ideas and identified some people who could help make this a reality. Now, we can't stop here. We need to continue to build our community voice and power. And that takes commitment.

Check-in and personal commitment form:
We know there are different levels of commitment folks bring to the table so please let us know where you're at today. Please leave us with your information and check whether you'd like to 1) stay informed, 2) want to join us, or 3) are willing to lead.

Closing (2 mins)

Provide an opportunity for community members to share a final thought, phrase, or word connected to the purpose of the meeting and/or a call to action. For example:

- *It's been good to be here! Share your benediction, why has it been good to be here today?*
- *Let's stand in a circle. I will begin and we will move to the right. Share one word to describe how you feel leaving this space today.*
- *What is one thing you learned today and will carry with you on this journey together?*

Call to action:

- Ask all attendees to fill out a personal commitment form and the post-House Meeting survey
- Invite attendees to host their own House Meetings
- Invite attendees to get involved in the Blueprint Design process by becoming a Facilitator or joining a Design Team
- Hosts need to complete the reflection survey.

Note: Information from these documents will ensure all your contributions get added to the Education Blueprint.

Links to the above can be found here



House Meeting Agenda

2 Hour Version

This agenda can be used as a reference to guide your two hour meeting and should only be shared in this format with the Host, Timekeeper and Recorder

Welcome and Introduction (15 mins)

Welcome everyone and do a quick round of introductions. See Host Welcome section on p3 for a suggested script.

Introductions (5 mins): Everyone says their name and one word/sentence about what education means to them or what is education supposed to do (host should model keeping it concise)

Review agenda and explain the role of the timekeeper and recorder (10 min.):

Get agreement to keep what's shared confidential, for example: "Thumbs up if you can agree, thumbs sideways if you want to ask a question or add a new agreement."

Explain that the recorder will only take notes during the next part of the agenda (to respect confidentiality)

About our Education Blueprint (5 mins)

Invite people in: share the backstory of EmpowerED Birmingham and how the three focus areas emerged.

What if students, families, and community members were the architects of education in their local communities? Every child – regardless of race or zip code – deserves a quality education and a fair shot at success in life. The COVID-19 pandemic not only exposed the flaws in our nation's educational system, it made that broken system even worse, with underserved students bearing the brunt of this crisis.

It's time for a change – a radical shift in how we approach education – to ensure our children have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond. To get different results we must do things differently. That's why we're turning to the community to lead the charge on reimagining the future of education in ___[insert your city/county/community].

The community's collective imagination is far greater than that of a few decision-makers. Transforming our broken education system will require a shared vision for change and who better to determine that vision than the people who live, learn and work here.

We are calling on students, parents, and the community at large to join this community-led process in service of our children's education.

Brief overview of the blueprint design process. Explain how EmpowerED Birmingham is using House Meetings to learn from your experiences and to ask you what would make those experiences better. Afterwards, the Blueprint Design Teams will take the learnings from the House Meetings to see how we might change or amplify the policies, programs and structures that relate to our focus areas. At the end we are going to see how you would like to help.

Share Our Education Stories (50 mins)

Note: The goal of this section is to create powerful connections between people. Sharing stories will help people link their common experiences and struggles. This is a key part of growing a movement of people who are committed to each other and committed to working together.

Host shares his/her story to model.

Invite everyone to reflect silently on the following questions. (3 mins)

- What experiences and struggles have you or someone you know had related to education?
- Did your education experience help you meet the goals you set for yourself?
- How does this make you feel?

Have everyone go around and share their story (20 mins): Give each person 3 minutes to share their story (if you have more than 12 people at your meeting, you may want to split into smaller groups of 6-9 people)

Have the timekeeper make sure this section takes no more than the allotted time.

As a large group discuss (27 mins):

- What are the connections between our stories?
- What does this tell us about the state of education in our community?
- Is this what the education system should be? What should it be?

Our Education Framework (40 mins)

Note: The goal of this section is to create a shared proposal for how we can radically shift how we approach education – to ensure our children have the opportunity to succeed in college and beyond.

We're looking for creative ideas and honest opinions (it's ok to have differing views).

Share the We are EmpowerED Birmingham pamphlet and point out the three focus areas, allowing participants to respond to each section individually.

Reactions to the three focus areas:

Which focus area do you feel energy around right now?

Reflecting on each of the focus areas, what would make you feel that we have achieved? (What would you like to have access to? What impact would it have on your current experience?)

What have you heard that we should talk more about?

Any questions or ideas that you would like to share?

Next Steps: Building Our Movement (10 mins)

At our house meeting today, along with dozens of other house meetings happening in the next few weeks across the city, we are starting a new movement. We can decide the right priority areas for our children's education so that they can meet the goals that they set for themselves. We will have a say in how districts spend unprecedented amounts of federal relief funds.

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Call to action:

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Links to all the documents can be found here:



Today was just a first step, the hope is that groups will keep meeting. There will be some next steps for groups to participate in, but the more important thing is for local people to stay connected (see if someone else wants to host next time).

STAY INVOLVED

Join a Blueprint Design Team

Blueprint Design Teams are made up of people who live in Birmingham, and who are passionate about seeing Birmingham's young people thrive at school and in their careers. We are looking for Blueprint Design Facilitators who will lead small teams to carry out this vital research and report back – painting a real-time picture of what is working and what is not.

Stay informed via our website or social media

empoweredbirmingham.com

Facebook: [EmpowerEDBirmingham](https://www.facebook.com/empowerEDBirmingham)

Twitter: [@empowerEDBham](https://twitter.com/empowerEDBham)

Instagram: [empoweredbirmingham](https://www.instagram.com/empoweredbirmingham)

EmpowerED Birmingham Coalition Leaders & Members

¡HICA!

A+ Education Partnership

Birmingham Business Alliance

Birmingham Promise

Birmingham Urban League

Black Alabamians for
Education (BA4E)

Breakthrough Birmingham

Central Six Alabama Works!

Elevate Birmingham

Empowerment Alliance

Greater Birmingham Arts

Education Collaborative

Greater Birmingham Ministries

Birmingham Education
Foundation

Learning Little People

MAAVIS

Oak Tree Ministries

Sixth Avenue Baptist

Support Centered Services

The Surge Project

Top Ladies of Distinction

UAB

Urban Impact Inc.

Zeta Phi Beta Sorority Inc