

*A Step-by-Step  
Crisis Action  
Plan*

# Beat Privatization

**nea**  
NATIONAL  
EDUCATION  
ASSOCIATION

*Educational Support Personnel*





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# Contents

## BEAT PRIVATIZATION – STEP BY STEP

- The Offensive Action Plan . . . . .1
- When They Define Us, We Lose the Fight . . . . .1
- The 10-Step Action Plan . . . . .2
- Using the Step-By-Step Tool Kit . . . . .2
- Step One** — The First Meeting of Threatened Employees . . . .3
  - Formulate Our Message First . . . . .3
- Step Two** — Develop A Campaign Calendar . . . . .3
  - Spread the Word! . . . . .3
- Step Three** — Establish the Board Watch Committee . . . . .4
  - No Secrets! . . . . .4
- Step Four** — Establish A “Round Table” Committee . . . . .4
  - The Campaign Has Started! . . . . .4
- Step Five** — Employee Data Form/Driver Data Form . . . . .5
  - Remember Our Goal . . . . .5
  - Review the Campaign With the Members . . . . .5
- Step Six** — Compare Our Experience With the Privateer’s . . . .6
  - The Difference is Obvious . . . . .6
- Step Seven** — The Associatios Community Contact Card . . . .6
  - Ask Others for Contacts, Too . . . . .6
- Step Eight** — Communicating With Other School District  
Employees . . . . .7
  - Outreach is Essential . . . . .7
- Step Nine** — Communicating With the Local Community . . . .8
  - Be Prepared for Questions . . . . .8
- Step Ten** — Member Empowerment . . . . .9
  - We Define Ourselves! . . . . .9
- TOOL KIT**
- A. Local Association Event Calendar . . . . .11
- B. Board Watch Reporting Form . . . . .12
- C. Round Table Privateer Survey Form . . . . .13
- D. Sample Employee Data Form . . . . .15
- E. Sample Driver Data Form . . . . .16
- F. Local Association Community Contact Card . . . . .17
- G. 20 Questions to Ask the Board . . . . .18
- H. The Pro & Con Debate: Countering Arguments that  
Support Subcontracting . . . . .19
- I. Camera-ready artwork for campaign buttons . . . . .21



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# Beat Privatization—Step By Step

When a school district is already considering contracting out for services, it's too late to develop a pro-active anti-privatization campaign. The reality is:

## THEY'RE HERE!

Privatization is being discussed by the Board!

## THERE'S NO TIME!

The Local must organize and act immediately!

## TELL US WHAT WORKS!

When it is necessary to react to a **privatization crisis**, *Beat Privatization* provides the tools necessary to organize the reaction into an **Offensive Action Plan** for the Local and the members.

### WHEN THEY DEFINE US, WE LOSE THE FIGHT

**DON'T** accept the Board's rationale for privatizing!

**DON'T** allow the Board to define privatization to the public!

**DON'T** use the Board's privatization terminology!

**DON'T** argue the numbers (\$ cost and \$ savings)!

**DO** define what privatization really means:

The Board of Education says, "Privatization will *save money*."

Actually, privatization will *cut services*.

You can't get the *same* service for less!

You can only get *less* service for less!

## THE OFFENSIVE ACTION PLAN

The Local Association must communicate with three distinct audiences:

1. Local members directly threatened by privatization
2. All other district employees
3. The local community

The Action Plan is based on communication with these audiences in the order listed above. This order of communication will insure that:

- threatened members of the local are involved and contributing in the Action Plan (movers and shakers)
- threatened members are the first to know "what's going on" (shuts down rumors)
- the local will be able to formulate and deliver the most effective message to the community

## **THE TEN-STEP ACTION PLAN**

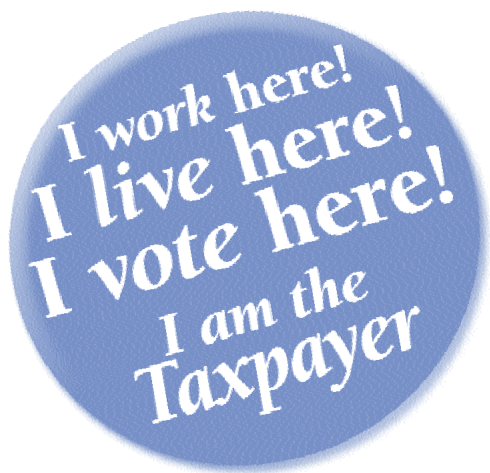
The Offensive Action Plan consists of 10 basic steps:

1. Meet with the Threatened Employees
2. Develop a Campaign Calendar
3. Establish a “Board Watch”
4. Set up a “Round Table Committee” to investigate privateers
5. Collect information on Employee/Driver Data Forms
6. Compare Our Experience with that of the Privateer
7. Gather Community Contact Cards
8. Communicate with Other School District Employees
9. Communicate with the Local Community
10. Member Empowerment

## **USING THE STEP-BY-STEP TOOL KIT**

The **TOOL KIT** is the foundation for everything contained in the Action Plan. These “tools” will provide the direction and continuity necessary for success. They should be modified to fit the local situation. Sample tools included are:

- A. The Local Association Event Calendar
- B. The Board Watch Reporting Form
- C. The Round Table Privateer Survey Form
- D. The School Employee Data Form
- E. The Driver Data Form
- F. Local Association Community Contact Card
- G. 20 Questions to Ask the Board
- H. The Pro & Con Debate: Countering Arguments That Support Privatization (Handout)
- I. Camera-ready artwork for the member empowerment campaign buttons



## STEP ONE

### THE FIRST MEETING OF THREATENED EMPLOYEES

#### FORMULATE OUR MESSAGE FIRST

Avoid the members' initial inclination to pack the next BOE meeting, and/or put an ad in the newspaper.

Be sure to formulate and organize the Local's message first!

The Local President calls a meeting of the threatened members. These members must be allowed to vent inside their Association. LISTEN! After some venting and some "rumor control," announce the formation of the Campaign and establish the Local Offense Committee (LOC).

The LOC should be comprised of three to five individuals who can devote time to the effort. This is a vital component of the campaign and these folks will have a lot to do. Their job includes one primary and several secondary responsibilities:

Develop and implement the Local Action Plan (Campaign) to fight Privatization

- Develop Campaign Calendar (Schedule of Association Events)
- Establish and oversee Board Watch
- Establish and oversee Round Table

## STEP TWO

### DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

#### SPREAD THE WORD!

This Action Plan should reach other employees and the public! Publicize the Event Calendar.

Spread the word that the Association plans to tell the community all about the cuts in service that will occur if the Board of Education passes the motion to privatize.

This tentative schedule of events (*see Sample Tool A*) is created by working backward from the date the Board is expected to act on the motion to privatize. While tentative, the calendar will help members plan ahead. It also will help members recognize the outline of the campaign.

A **Campaign Event** is a local activity that may involve many members, or just a certain few. For example, a Drivers Group may plan an "I Walk the Route" event. At the right time (weekends for instance), drivers "walk" their bus runs and knock on doors of the parents whose kids they drive. They inform parents that in the future, their child's driver will no longer be a public employee, or even a local resident (a cut in service)! The message is that local resident drivers have a stake in the school district and the children they serve.

A meeting of any association committee or group involved in the campaign is also a Campaign Event.

## STEP THREE

### ESTABLISH THE BOARD WATCH COMMITTEE

#### **NO SECRETS!**

The BOE must understand that the Association intends to take our fight to the community!

The **Board Watch Committee** should be comprised of one LOC member, one Association officer, and at least one member of the threatened work category. Additional members up to five would be sufficient. Their mission is to determine the position of each Board of Education member—for or against privatization—and how they may vote on the issue. This Board Watch committee will attend each remaining public Board of Ed. meeting, taking a prominent position (first row of seats).

In order to be prepared for the next Board Meeting, Board Watch should obtain a copy of the agenda and gather as much information as possible about the topics on it.

The committee also should obtain a copy of the minutes of the meeting in which the Board voted to investigate privatization. Which Board Members voted which way? Who brought the idea forward?

The Board Watch Committee should complete the Board Watch form (*see Sample Tool B*), and get all information to the LOC ASAP!

## STEP FOUR

### ESTABLISH A “ROUND TABLE” COMMITTEE

#### **THE CAMPAIGN HAS STARTED!**

Following the general meeting of the threatened employees and the selection of members to the LOC, the Board Watch and the Round Table, the Action Plan has begun and a meeting of Audience 1 (the threatened members) has occurred.

The **Round Table Committee** should be comprised of two or three members willing to investigate privatization in surrounding districts. Their mission is to determine what district has contracted with which privateer (one of those companies may be bidding in your district). What is their track record? Get as much information as possible on each company. Fill out the Privateer Profile (*see Sample Tool C*). If time permits, meet with members and leaders of other district locals. Personal contact usually will increase the amount of information available.



## STEP FIVE EMPLOYEE DATA FORM/DRIVER DATA FORM

### REMEMBER OUR GOAL

The Local Association is gathering information in order to develop a message that will convince the community that privatization does not belong in their public schools. This campaign is not a “Please Save My Job” effort. Rather, it’s a notice of all the cuts in services for the entire community, i.e. students, members, employees, parents and taxpayers. When the Association develops and completes the information gathered through the Employee Data Form, it will be able to put together a comprehensive unified message to bring to the community.

The **Employee Data Form** (see *Sample Tool D*) and/or the **Driver Data Form** (see *Sample Tool E*) are a critical part of your Action Plan.

Every employee in the threatened category should complete this form. This is not busy work! The information requested is not just about their job (tasks and responsibilities), but also about who they are in the community. **This information is vital to the development of the “cuts in service” message.** The LOC should manage the collection of these forms and should carefully insure that each form is entirely completed. The LOC should have each employee add more information where possible.

Note: When completed, the information collected will clearly illustrate for everyone that when services are cut, talent is lost! Local members and the community will also discover who they really are and what they really do.

### CONSTANT COMMUNICATION IS CRITICAL! REVIEW THE CAMPAIGN WITH THE MEMBERS

Since the first meeting the Association has . . .

- Set up the LOC (3 to 5 members): Steering Committee & Event Calendar
- Set up the Board Watch (3 to 5 members): Who will vote which way?
- Set up the Round Table (3 members): What company is bidding? What is the relationship?
- Distributed and collected the Employee Data Form(s): Listed service cuts and developed message

## STEP SIX

### COMPARE OUR EXPERIENCE WITH THAT OF THE PRIVATEER

#### THE DIFFERENCE IS OBVIOUS

When compared with all the work we do, the cuts in services will be more obvious. We now have the information we need to formulate our message to the community. If a newspaper ad is appropriate, we can now select and publicize the unified message we want all to hear.

Next, the LOC will develop a table or chart that compiles and totals the data collected on the Employee Data Forms.

For example, the threatened category of employees has over 246 years of experience! What experience does the privateer have? No one knows! The data may also illustrate that we (district employees) have a number of volunteer firefighters, EMTs, or other valuable community members. These additional skills and services contribute to the job, benefiting the students, the staff, and the community.

#### The Job Specs or Requests for Proposals

The Board usually must prepare and publicize the Job Specs or RFPs (Request for Proposals), clearly listing in detail the work that the privateer must complete. Compare these descriptions with the information compiled from the Employee Data Forms.

## STEP SEVEN

### THE ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CONTACT CARD

#### ASK OTHERS FOR CONTACTS, TOO

While some of the other district employees may not be residents, they may have friends and relatives in the community. They too may favor certain merchants and businesses. They may also want to complete an Association Community Contact Card.

The **Community Contact Card** is the foundation of the Association's connection to the community. This two-part form (*see Sample Tool F*) provides an original page for the member and a card stock copy for the LOC. Each member of the threatened workforce should complete one contact card and return the copy to the LOC by a specified date. The member retains the original.

- Each member will enter the name, address and phone number of at least eight voters in their community — friends, acquaintances, and neighbors.
- “Influential residents” are defined as anyone who influences elections, such as merchants, politicians, community organization leaders, etc.
- The member completing the card should sign the card and add his or her phone number.

The Association Member is responsible for keeping in touch (when necessary) with each of the persons listed on their Contact Card.

This important tool provides the Association with several organizing capabilities:

- Filling out a contact card is a doable task for each Association member and connects them to the campaign.
- The data collected can be entered into a computer database of community supporters. This database is then available for mailings or telephone contact. For example, it can be used as a list of whom to invite to that BOE meeting or other event.
- The data collected is also a personal interactive device for delivering the Associations' "Cut In Service" message.
- This card collection system will also help to establish communication credibility for the association.

Involving the **threatened members (Audience 1)** in every part of the campaign is essential. Personal contact with the community is not only the best system of community and association interaction, it organizes the membership into working as a team in the community. Working in the community allows the threatened members to see the advantages of collective action and a unified message.

## STEP EIGHT

### OUTREACH IS ESSENTIAL

All of these community outreach efforts are extremely important and should not be minimized!

## COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES

The Campaign is running and to date the Local has communicated only with Audience 1 (the threatened members). With the Community Contact Cards completed, and a table of experience and personal community contact information created, the Local is ready to formally contact **Audience 2 (other school employees)**. How will privatization affect their work? How will it change their workday? The Local will ask for their support and their local contacts.

## STEP NINE

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

### BE PREPARED FOR QUESTIONS

In the fight to BEAT PRIVATIZATION, having the information to be able to “answer back” when questions are asked is vital!

After refining the message and developing the most important points, the Local is ready to communicate with **Audience 3 (the local community)**. The LOC can arrange to visit and speak at one or more PTA meetings (these are Calendar Events).

At these meetings, they will explain to parents the **cuts in services that will occur if the Board privatizes**.

If time permits, other community organizations like the NAACP, Lions, Elks, the Jaycees, or the League of Women Voters may also want to hear what’s going on.

### 20 Questions to Ask the Board

These 20 questions (see *Sample Tool G*) are taken from a National School Board Association publication, *Private Options for Public Schools*. These questions are samples of those that may be asked by residents or PTA members at a BOE meeting. The National School Boards Association advises its members that these questions and others should be answered by the local BOE prior to going into any privatization initiative.

When these questions are distributed to PTA and other education support groups, the focus will return to local education concerns. “Privatization is cheaper” will be exposed as the “sham” that it really is! “Cuts in service to the school district” will be revealed as the true consequence of privatization!

### The Pro & Con Debate: Countering Arguments That Support Privatization

This counter-argument fact sheet (see *Sample Tool H*) provides some fundamental position statements against privatization. It will help members approach residents and give them some concise information. This handout should be widely distributed to all audiences and help everyone better understand the total impact of privatization.



## STEP TEN

### WE DEFINE OURSELVES!

Education Support Personnel are unique and valuable contributors to Public Education. We are the Resident Roots of the Neighborhood School. This empowers us!

## MEMBER EMPOWERMENT

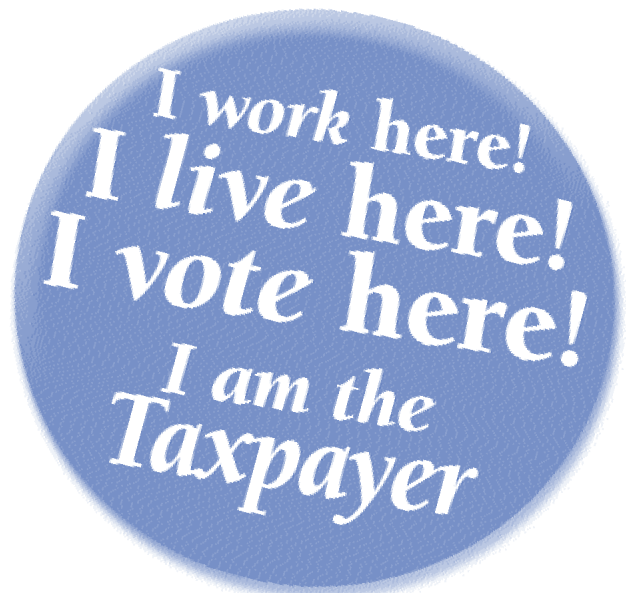
- The Local is now on the Offense!
- The Local has a Unified Message!
- The Local has a Comprehensive Campaign!
- The Local is Organized and Reaching the Community!

### Produce and distribute campaign buttons

A Campaign Button (*See Tool I*) identifies Supporters!

A Campaign Button identifies Residents and Voters!

A Campaign Button empowers and energizes Members!





## LOCAL ASSOCIATION EVENT CALENDAR (SAMPLE)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> 3:30 p.m.– LOC meeting in Drivers Rm. Report of Round Table	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 7:00 p.m.–LOC & Officers meeting at Middle School CRISIS STRATEGY	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 7:00 p.m.–Rumor Control— Meeting of ALL DRIVERS (Aud.#1) H.S. Aud	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> 5:30 p.m.– BRIEF meeting of LOC & Round Table to Aud.#1 (Drivers)	<b>12</b> 7:30 p.m.– Elementary School PTA Meeting—LOC attend, report to Officers	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Officers & LOC organize & prepare "I Walk the Route" campaign	<b>17</b> 6:00 p.m.– Officers & LOC meet ALL Drivers distribute contact cards	<b>18</b> Bd. of Ed. Meeting— Board Watch attend and later report to LOC	<b>19</b> Board Watch contact all BOE members and count vote re: privatization	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 10:00 a.m.– Drivers begin "I Walk the Route" campaign
<b>22</b> Continue campaign (don't start until after 2:00 p.m.)	<b>23</b> First collection of "contact cards" Drivers discuss campaign	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b> 2nd collection of "contact cards" Drivers discuss campaign	<b>26</b> LOC enter contact cards in computer & develop mail and call lists	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> PHONE CHAIN from contact cards Drivers call contacts about Board Meeting	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> BOE Meeting PRIVATIZATION VOTE All attend! PTA speakers				

# BOARD WATCH REPORTING FORM

1. Committee Member's Name & Employment Location:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Date of Meeting:

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Type of Meeting (check one)

- Regular Monthly
- Agenda Meeting
- Work Meeting
- Committee Meeting

4. Board Members in Attendance:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. Administrators Present:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. Press Present/Reporters' Names

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Agenda Available:  Yes  No  
(get two copies)

8. Public Comment Allowed:  Yes  No

9. Board Reports (anything of interest)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. New Business (anything of interest):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Old Business (anything of interest):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. Board Member Comments of Interest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Community Comments of Interest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. Gossip, Tidbits, Whatever, picked up before, during and/or after meeting (ID the source):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Recommendation(s) for Follow-Up to Task Force Chair:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**AFTER-MEETING CHECKLIST:**

1. Send copy of report to LOC
2. Send any agenda, minutes, etc. to LOC
3. Place copies of agenda and minutes in "Board Watch Binder"



## ROUND TABLE PRIVATEER SURVEY FORM

### Company Performance Rating:

What complaints have been made?

By Students \_\_\_\_\_

By Staff \_\_\_\_\_

By Administration \_\_\_\_\_

By Parents \_\_\_\_\_

### Company/Corporate Headquarters:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

### Management:

Name of on-site manager \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

What is the rate of manager turnover? \_\_\_\_\_

### Employees:

1. What is usual employee turnover rate? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the usual rate of absenteeism? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Does company provide any employee training? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the usual rate of on-the-job accidents? \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are proper equipment and supplies provided (including safety equipment)? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Are all positions requiring licenses properly filled? \_\_\_\_\_

**Reliability of Company Sales Pitch:**

1. How did company promote its services to the Board of Ed.? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(please enclose a copy of company promotional brochure)

2. Were bidding regulations and guidelines strictly followed? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What promises were made? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(please enclose a copy of contract between company and Board of Education)

4. Did the work specifications accurately represent the current level of service? \_\_\_\_\_

5. To your knowledge, is any board member or its agent related to or economically connected with the vendor? \_\_\_\_\_

\* Space provided on this survey is NOT intended to limit your response. Please supply additional information by attaching to this form.

THANK YOU.

# SAMPLE EMPLOYEE DATA FORM

### PERSONAL DATA

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

District resident? (circle) Yes No

Total yrs. living in district \_\_\_\_\_

Total yrs. working in district \_\_\_\_\_

Number of accumulated sick days \_\_\_\_\_

Years in pension plan \_\_\_\_\_

### WORK DATA

Work location \_\_\_\_\_

Work phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Hours worked per day \_\_\_\_\_

Assignments (circle)

Elem. MS HS Voc Shuttle Spec. Ed Other

Hourly rate \_\_\_\_\_

Starting time (am/pm) \_\_\_\_\_

Ending time (am/pm) \_\_\_\_\_

Actual working hours per week \_\_\_\_\_

Summer hours per week \_\_\_\_\_

Average hours per month for  
Emergency/Overtime \_\_\_\_\_

### WORK RECORD:

Commendations/Awards received  
*(both job-related & personal/Use reverse side if needed)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Disciplinary Action Taken

Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Nature/type of discipline \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date action taken \_\_\_\_\_

### TRAINING/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS:

*(examples: EMT, computer training, chemical safety, workplace safety, instructional skills, nutrition, etc. Use reverse side if needed)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

### KEY COMMUNITY SERVICES ON JOB:

*(examples: assisting police, reporting fire evacuations, Townwatch, lost children, reporting accidents, etc.)*

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

### ADDITIONAL PERSONAL DATA

Number of children in district: Now \_\_\_\_ Past \_\_\_\_ Number of grandchildren in district \_\_\_\_

List family members employed by the Board (name, position, location) \_\_\_\_\_

List organizations of which you are a member \_\_\_\_\_

List relatives or friends who are community leaders (political/business/civic) \_\_\_\_\_

List any talents/hobbies/special abilities \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE DRIVER DATA FORM

**PERSONAL DATA**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Emergency phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 District resident? (circle) Yes No  
 Total yrs. living in district \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total yrs. working in district \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of accumulated sick days \_\_\_\_\_  
 Years in pension plan \_\_\_\_\_

**WORK DATA**

Work location \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hours worked per day \_\_\_\_\_  
 Assignments (circle)  
 Elem. MS HS Voc Shuttle Spec. Ed Other  
 Hourly rate \_\_\_\_\_  
 Starting time (am/pm) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ending time (am/pm) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Actual working hours per week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Summer hours per week \_\_\_\_\_  
 Average hours per month for  
 Emergency/Overtime \_\_\_\_\_

**DRIVING RECORD:**

No. of accidents on job \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of most recent accident \_\_\_\_\_  
 No. of tickets on job \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date of most recent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Disciplinary action taken by Board  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**WORK RECORD:**

Commendations/Awards received  
*(both job-related & personal/Use reverse side if needed)*  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Disciplinary Action Taken  
 Reason \_\_\_\_\_  
 Nature/type of discipline \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date action taken \_\_\_\_\_

**TRAINING/WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS:**

*(examples: EMT, computer training, chemical safety, workplace safety, instructional skills, nutrition, etc. Use reverse side if needed)*  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**KEY COMMUNITY SERVICES ON JOB:**

*(examples: assisting police, reporting fire evacuations, Townwatch, lost children, reporting accidents, etc.)*  
 1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 2. \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDITIONAL PERSONAL DATA**

Number of children in district: Now \_\_\_\_ Past \_\_\_\_ Number of grandchildren in district \_\_\_\_  
 List family members employed by the Board (name, position, location) \_\_\_\_\_  
 List organizations of which you are a member \_\_\_\_\_  
 List relatives or friends who are community leaders (political/business/civic) \_\_\_\_\_  
 List any talents/hobbies/special abilities \_\_\_\_\_



## LOCAL ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY CONTACT CARD

<b><i>Association Contact Card</i></b>		
<b><i>List influential residents (name, address, phone)</i></b>		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
<b><i>List voting residents (name, address, phone)</i></b>		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
<hr/>		
<b><i>Your Name</i></b>	<b><i>Address</i></b>	<b><i>Phone</i></b>
<hr/>		

\* This can be reproduced as a two-part NCR form — one copy to member, one to the Association

## 20 QUESTIONS TO ASK THE BOARD

1. What expertise does the private sector offer not now found in our schools?
2. What specific academic gains will be achieved as a result of privatizing?
3. How much specific day-to-day control of the privatized operation will the district relinquish to the private sector?
4. What specific problem(s) will be solved by the private sector?
5. Has the Board tried to solve these specific problems?
6. What results came from these attempts at problem solving?
7. What other districts have used the private contractor and now no longer do?
8. What are the reasons for this?
9. What district goals have already been set that the private sector will help achieve?
10. What precisely do you want the private sector to do?
11. How will you know that you have achieved your goals?
12. What guarantee will the private sector give that their lower costs will result in high or higher levels of service?
13. Will you visit other public schools where the private contractors are doing business and ask tough questions?
14. What well-defined private sector contractual agreements have been developed and are on hand in the district that will guarantee the service you are looking for?
15. What district plans exist to monitor private sector services?
16. What district plans exist to evaluate private sector services?
17. Who will do these evaluations?
18. Will the private sector contract have built-in accountability or penalties for failure to perform?
19. What is the private contractor's employee turnover rate in similar public schools?
20. If service improvement is the goal, what has the district done to date to implement programs that manage, train, and equip current school employees more effectively and efficiently?

Source: The National School Board Association, *Private Options for Public Schools*

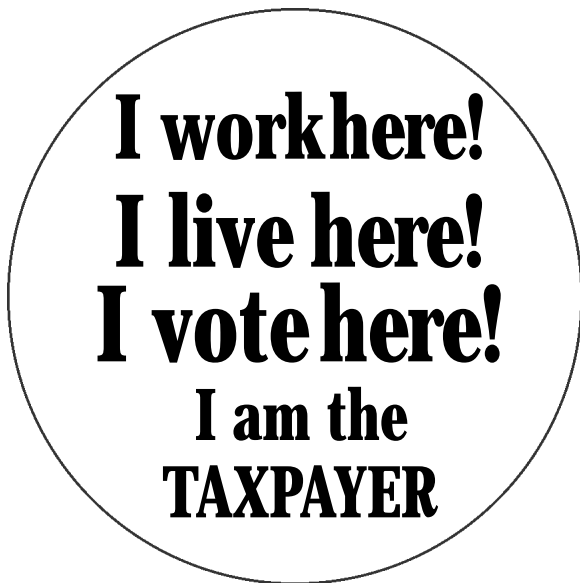
## THE PRO & CON DEBATE COUNTERING ARGUMENTS THAT SUPPORT SUBCONTRACTING

<b>Employer’s Arguments Favoring Subcontracting</b>	<b>Educational Support Personnel’s Counter-arguments</b>
<p>Subcontracting saves MONEY!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Underestimating or “lowballing” of first-year operating costs</b> is common among contractors. Fees for services in subsequent years will increase as the need for profit increases. These increases will exceed inflation.</li> <li>• <b>Costs associated with transferring authority</b> from the local level to private contractors (i.e., legal fees, contracts) <b>are often overlooked</b> when calculating so-called savings.</li> <li>• <b>Training subcontractor’s employees</b> and correcting their mistakes <b>is costly and unanticipated.</b></li> <li>• Boards of education may incur <b>costs associated with contractor employee termination</b>, such as unemployment, severance, accrued sick leave payment.</li> <li>• <b>Subcontracting cuts jobs of local residents</b>, increasing local unemployment and putting less money into the community.</li> <li>• <b>Subcontractors must make a profit</b> and pay taxes. In order to <b>maximize profits</b>, companies look to cut corners, resulting in <b>decreased quality and quantity of services.</b></li> </ul>
<p>Subcontractors provide specialized skills that are unavailable in the public sector.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workers who choose public service tend to be <b>more experienced, skilled, and interested</b> in providing personalized services.</li> <li>• Accommodating the special needs of teachers and students requires <b>flexibility and teamwork. ESP staff are aware that the students’ welfare and education always come first.</b> Private employees of the subcontractor owe their allegiance to the company at any cost, not the district or students.</li> <li>• Little is gained when an <b>additional level of red tape</b>, such as the subcontractor, is placed between the teacher and student and those individuals providing daily support services.</li> </ul>
<p>Subcontractors offer a more flexible—therefore, a more cost-effective—workforce.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local ESP staffers</b> are more sensitive to the needs of students and teachers because they <b>share a common goal</b> of providing an environment where students can grow socially, emotionally, and academically.</li> <li>• Boards frequently fail to provide the subcontractor with a thorough description of the work done by ESP members. <b>Tasks not written into the subcontractor’s contract require additional compensation.</b></li> <li>• Formulating contracts that ensure a Board will get what it wants is extremely difficult. <b>Loopholes that favor the subcontractor, resulting in decreased services for the public, are the outcome of poorly written performance contracts.</b> Frequently, the subtle details of the job are not known by the Board.</li> </ul>

Employer’s Arguments Favoring Subcontracting	Educational Support Personnel’s Counter-arguments
<p>Subcontractors are more accountable because of the threat of competition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Threat of competition ends when the contract is signed.</b></li> <li>• School districts that subcontract frequently sell off valuable equipment at a fraction of its original purchase price. Remaining equipment becomes outdated or poorly maintained. <b>Districts lacking equipment and personnel are not in a position to terminate subcontractors with poor performance.</b> The subcontractor has the upper hand!</li> <li>• Concerns of parents, teachers, and administrators regarding subcontracted employees are difficult to communicate due to the <b>red tape</b> of having to deal with the supervisors representing the subcontractor. <b>Home rule is greatly diminished.</b></li> </ul>
<p>Contracting out allows for rapid initiation of new projects.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A subcontracted employee being paid minimum wage is <b>seldom “rapid to initiate” any project!</b></li> <li>• <b>Quality control</b>, formerly the domain of the local board of education, <b>is diminished.</b> School districts are at the mercy of the subcontractors’ quality standards. These standards may not meet even the minimum previously held by the board.</li> <li>• <b>Additional monitoring training, and supervision by the local district</b> becomes necessary to enforce minimum requirements for performance.</li> </ul>
<p>Contracted employees are more productive because they are not bound by union contracts or by complex hiring-and-firing regulations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuity and teamwork among ESP and teachers is essential in providing a sound educational atmosphere. <b>Inexperienced transient workers with few benefits and receiving minimum wages have little incentive to assist in creating a satisfactory school climate.</b></li> <li>• <b>Subcontractors bring in a revolving door of faceless, nameless employees with low wages, small or nonexistent benefit packages, and substandard working conditions.</b></li> <li>• <b>Subcontracting places all of us at risk, especially the children!</b> STRANGERS IN OUR SCHOOLS ARE HAZARDOUS TO EVERYONE’S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING. Public sector employees (ESP) are subject to background checks that private employers desire to skip in order to keep costs low and maintain a steady stream of employees. Many private sector workers often aren’t on the job long enough for the background check to be completed.</li> <li>• <b>ESP employees are usually local residents or reside in neighboring communities.</b> The dollars they earn directly impact the local economy.</li> <li>• Unions promote jobs and justice, while at the same time, work to improve schools. Studies show that organized workers are more productive and have lower turnover rates.</li> <li>• ESP employees, with the assistance of their unions, bargain for fair wages and benefits and, therefore, are less likely to become dependent on public benefit programs and services.</li> <li>• School districts lose control over the individuals working in schools—with or near students—when they subcontract services and staff.</li> </ul>



<b>Employer’s Arguments Favoring Subcontracting</b>	<b>Educational Support Personnel’s Counter-arguments</b>
<p>Private-sector managers and employees have a strong incentive to perform well (i.e., money, advancement).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advancement of private-sector employees is directly linked to saving money. <b>Cutting costs, minimizing staffing, low wages, and poor quality materials result in substandard services.</b></li> <li>• <b>Private-sector managers and employees are loyal to the subcontractor, not to the school system or the residents</b> who support the funding of the district through their tax dollars.</li> <li>• <b>Private-sector employers have a long history of bribery, kickbacks, and payoffs.</b> Involvement in questionable and illegal practices may be motivated by a desire to expand profits. Corruption is a danger that school districts may face when they become involved with private contractors.</li> <li>• <b>Bankruptcy, financial problems, and lack of equipment may cause contractors to cease or curtail operations.</b> School districts could be left without vital services necessary to provide education to the children of their community. Without their own supplies, equipment, and personnel, boards of education will have a difficult time putting the pieces back together again.</li> </ul>



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