

PARENT TOOLKIT · GUIDE

How to start a district parent group

Three to five committed parents in one district is enough to start. Most successful groups pick one clear goal, stay respectful, and keep showing up. This guide walks through the first three months.

Step 1: Find your first few people (weeks 1 to 2)

- Post in your local Oregon Screen-Free Parenting group, or ask a few parents you already know at school.
- Look for a mix: parents from different schools and grades, and ideally a current or retired teacher.
- Keep advocacy in its own space. Create a separate chat or group, such as "[District] Parents for Hands-On Learning," so playdate and community groups stay friendly.

Step 2: Learn the landscape (weeks 2 to 4)

- Read your district's technology policy (usually IIBGA) and its technology plan.
- Search the [Oregon student data privacy database](#) for the apps your district uses.
- Find the board meeting schedule, the public comment rules, and when the budget and curriculum adoptions happen.
- Each parent sends the teacher letter to their own child's teacher, then compares notes.
- File a public records request if you need contracts or usage data.

Step 3: Hold your first meeting (week 4)

Keep it to 60 minutes. Suggested agenda:

1. Introductions: why each person is here (10 minutes)
2. What we've learned so far (15 minutes)
3. Pick one goal for the next six months (20 minutes)
4. Assign roles and next steps (10 minutes)
5. Set the next meeting date (5 minutes)

Step 4: Pick one goal

Choose one goal the board could realistically act on in six months. Good first goals:

- The district publishes a list of apps on student devices and screen time by grade.
- The board directs a screen-time review, like Lake Oswego's.
- The district forms a technology advisory group with parents and teachers.

Step 5: Assign roles

Role	What they do
Coordinator	Runs meetings, tracks next steps, keeps the group on its one goal
Researcher	Gathers local facts and matches them to the research briefs
Records lead	Files and tracks public records requests
Communications	Runs the group chat, email list, and petition; drafts letters to the editor
Board meeting lead	Tracks agendas, signs people up to speak, coaches speakers

One person can hold two roles at first.

Step 6: Build relationships

- Meet with teachers and the local teachers' union early. Ask what they need. In Bend-La Pine, the teachers' union president said the April 2026 resolution's content was generally fine but wished the union had been asked for feedback.
- Ask one board member for a coffee meeting. Listen more than you talk.
- Thank staff publicly when the district makes progress.

Step 7: Act (months 2 to 3)

- Run the parent survey and share the results.
- Launch a petition with a delivery date.
- Speak at two or three board meetings in a row, a different parent each time, with the same ask.

Avoiding burnout

- Meet monthly, not weekly. Use a group chat for quick updates in between.
- Rotate who speaks at meetings.
- Celebrate small wins, like a board member asking a follow-up question.
- It's fine to step back for a season. Change in a district usually takes a year or more.

Stay connected

- Become an Oregon Screen-Free Parenting district contact to get new templates and connect with parents in other districts.
- Other groups doing similar work in Oregon: [OR Unplugged](#) and [Schools Beyond Screens](#), which has a Portland chapter.