

Red 4 Ed

A Quick How To

Why Red 4 Ed?

For most of the last decade, North Carolina's public schools have faced an unrelenting attack by forces wishing to privatize our public schools. This has resulted in lower salaries, less benefits, fewer rights, limits to essential resources and personnel, and the public shaming that comes with test scores and "school grades." In addition to making it harder to give our students what they deserve, it has demoralized educators and driven them from the profession. That is part of the privatizers' goal. If we can't keep educators for longer than 5 years, our students won't get their needs met and educators will never have any power.

In response to these attacks, most educators:

- Leave the profession
- Lose hope/embrace cynicism/complain
- Close their doors and turn inward

These actions make a ton of sense given the challenges privatizers are heaping onto what is already the most difficult job on the planet. But all of them are individual actions, and none of them will change our circumstances.

The antidote, then, is to take the responsibility/risk to open our doors, find one another, support one another, and work collectively to solve our problems.

What is Red 4 Ed?

Every Wednesday, educators and the supporters of public schools across the state wear red to show their solidarity with one another and proudly proclaim their support for public schools.

In Charlotte, we use Red 4 Ed as an organizing opportunity and a team-building exercise. Each week, school communities across the district:

- Gather before or after school hours
- Take a photo of their red-wearing group
- Post the photo to the **Charlotte-Mecklenburg Association of Educators Group** page on Facebook and the **CMS Advocacy for Public Schools Facebook Group Page**
- Use #red4ed
- Try to encourage their communities to "like" the photo

The school with the most "likes" on the Tuesday evening after is rewarded with a hot Krispy Kreme delivery on Wednesday.

How to Red 4 Ed?

Any of the following steps can be carried out by an individual, but we encourage leaders to build teams that ask others to take on responsibilities. More hands make for lighter work, and there is less risk of the work stopping when one individual can't carry the weight.

The work is very simple:

1. Make a plan, on your own or with a team, to pick a date for your Red 4 Ed
2. Spread the word through emails/flyers/in person check ins/social media among your co-workers by the end of the day on the Monday before your event (if not earlier). People may need time to plan their outfits. Give people:
 - A brief description of why we are doing it
 - To build community and show support for public schools

- A specific time and place to meet
- 3. Remind people the day before through email/in person check ins/social media
- 4. Remind people the day of through emails/in person check ins/intercom announcements
- 5. Gather at the designated time and place
- 6. Take a photo or series of photos
- 7. Post the photo(s) to the CMS Advocacy for Public Schools page on Facebook and the CMAE Group page on FB with #red4ed
- 8. Tag co-workers, friends, and supporters and ask them to "like" the photo
- 9. Check out, and support, the efforts of other schools across the district
- 10. Wait to find out if we are delivering you donuts the next week

The most important part is to make the picture happen, but we encourage you to be creative here. Sometimes we will provide a focus/theme, and sometimes you can make your own. The goal is to build a weekly Red 4 Ed gathering into the culture of your building. Once you have been consistent enough, you will have much less reminding of people to do in order to make it happen.

Conclusion and Things to Consider

We need to be able to organize our schools and mobilize our co-workers if we are going to win the schools that our students deserve. Gathering our teams every week is practice. If you can regularly get your co-workers to wear red and post together, not only will the morale improve in the building, but you will be one step closer to the kinds of building cultures that we need.

Please be intentionally inclusive in your photos. This effort is not reserved for CMAE members, not should it be reserved for certain social groups in a building. The goal is full participation and the improved morale of the whole school. Look at your photos to see who is there and who is missing. Work to make sure everyone feels like Red 4 Ed is for them.

Also, please remember that the School Board has issued a resolution defending our rights to Free Speech as educators. We are allowed to talk about issues that matter to us. That said, please be respectful and avoid unnecessary antagonisms when possible.

We learn to organize, like everything else, through practice.

Red 4 Ed is one way to practice and create better conditions for ourselves and our co-workers at the same time. Please let us know if you are having any trouble or need support.