

Community Focus Statement F: Provide quality education opportunities at all levels.

Action Statement F.2: Investigate the declining enrollment and quality of public schools for the mountain communities through community organizing and involvement that fosters dialogue and collaboration with the local schools.

F2

Benchmark: Crest Forest, Hilltop, and Lake Arrowhead Community public schools retain students and provide a high quality education for students of all abilities.

Champion: Volunteer group or person or can be identified by the community

Estimated Cost: \$10,000



The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of national, state, and local organizations that bond schools with community resources in order to positively impact educational opportunities for children. Photo source: [The Coalition for Community Schools](#)

The decline in attendance at public schools can be the result of any number of issues. Some are specific to the school itself, such as lack of funding or older materials. Other issues are reflective of regional impacts like an increase in private schools or a decline in local jobs which forces families to relocate. Poorly performing school systems can have a negative impact on the local economy by driving out families who see better educational opportunities in other areas. Further, students who graduate from underperforming schools can do so ill prepared for success at a university or struggle to find higher-wage employment. This negative impact on the labor force can potentially deter companies from investing in the area due to a restricted employment pool.

Communities with concerns about school performance can engage in grassroots school improvement or community organizing programs. These programs are initiated by community members and parents in order to facilitate widespread change, as opposed to class- or student-specific change. Grassroots school programs focus on equity issues. They are often effective at gathering community support and focus on collaboration and negotiation between stakeholders, including parents, schools, community institutions, and public officials. Focus areas for community groups looking to improve their existing school systems include:

- Identifying policy and system changes relating to poor school performance.
- Bringing together community stakeholders.
- Identifying underutilized resources and connections that could effect change.
- Focusing on widespread changes as opposed to class- or student-specific changes.

It is important to remember that this is often a slow and continuous process that bases much of its success on momentum. It is important that the issue be addressed at a community level and not just by the parents of current students.



Action	Action Leader	Timeline	Resources
1. Rim of the World Unified School District reaches out to volunteers from different communities interested in serving on a coalition to investigate the declining enrollment of public schools.	Champion with Rim of the World Unified School District	Month 1 - 4	Rim of the World Unified School District http://www.rimsd.k12.ca.us/
2. A leader is selected to chair the Coalition.	Rim of the World Coalition	Month 4	Harvard Family Research Project- Transforming Schools Through Community Organizing http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/transforming-schools-through-community-organizing-a-research-review Great Schools – How we rate http://www.greatschools.org/about/ratings.page
3. Organize a town hall meeting for community members to share innovative ideas on how to improve enrollment numbers and education quality. Host other outreach events as necessary, involving youth.	Rim of the World Coalition	Month 6	
4. Synthesize outreach information, to establish programs to address school district issues.	Rim of the World Coalition	Month 6 - 10	
5. Annually, reach out to parents and students at the end of each academic year to receive feedback about new programs and revisit innovative solutions.	Rim of the World Coalition	Annually	