



# Getting Started Guide

Are you new here? Are you an old chapter trying to figure out what your SFER Chapter should be doing? Whatever you find yourself coming from, this guide should help you understand what it's going to take for you to be a nationally recognized chapter at Students for Education Reform and how to make real changes within your community. Certainly these are first steps, but if you're willing to take that first step, we will be there to support you, all along the way.

New and interested chapters, let's start here. Everyone else can move to the **Chapter Day-to-Day**.

## First Steps

### 1. Identify Executive Board

- To be a nationally recognized chapter you need to have 3 executive board members. This includes your chapter leader. Reach out to your network or identify individuals who are passionate about education and creating equity in a space that perpetuates inequity. These people should have the desire to make real change, and the commitment to get things done.

### 2. Find Members

- To be a nationally recognized chapter you need to have 5 members. These people are the future of your chapter and are equally as important in creating change in your community. Reach out to your network or identify individuals who are passionate about education and creating equity in a space that perpetuates inequity. These people should have the desire to make real change and the commitment to get things done (notice a trend?).

### 3. Identify Faculty Advisor

- Attempt to find a faculty advisor who comes from the social sciences, who understands education reform, who is social justice oriented, and who is supportive of SFER's mission. This does not always equate to finding a faculty member from the Education Department on your campus – and it's totally ok if they aren't! If you find yourself struggling to find a faculty advisor, find a faculty member who is willing to give you the autonomy to get stuff done.

### 4. Register your Chapter on Campus

- Once you've taken the above first steps you'll be just about ready to register your chapter as an official student organization. You may need a constitution to complete your campus registration. If that is the case you should reach out to national to receive a template. Don't spend too much time thinking about the structure of your organization. The important thing here is that you find quality student leaders who are willing to speak up, take action, and get things done.

### 5. Identify your Awareness Campaign

- What are you going to spend the majority of your semester raising awareness around? School choice? Teacher Pay? School funding formulas? Leadership Autonomy? Think about what issues are creating inequity in your community.

## **Chapter Day-to-Day**

Alright, now that we've gotten first steps out of the way, and for those of you that skipped ahead, the below should paint a picture of the type of things that SFER chapters should be doing and need to be doing to be nationally recognized.

What should my chapter be doing throughout the year?

### **1. Attend School Board Meetings**

- You and your members should attend school board meetings. This is the best way to see the types of issues that are discussed in your community as well as the relationships that exist amongst prominent influencers. It also creates a space for you to begin using your voice and shaping the landscape in your community.

### **2. Plan actions and events that raise awareness around educational inequities and their associated policies within your community.**

- You should be planning events that coalesce to your yearlong awareness campaign at the chapter or coalition level.
- Plan a campus demonstration, a demonstration at city hall or at the legislature. Plan a panel discussion or forum. Create a social media campaign that engages peers on your campus but shares their story in the media-sphere.

### **3. Recruitment events and strategies.**

- The campus events that you plan are opportunities to recruit...when new faces show up have members connect with these individuals and have your members ask people to come with them to a school board meeting, or ask them to attend a chapter meeting. Whatever your ask is, if you can connect with someone and feel that they might be a good fit in your chapter, you should leave your conversation from them with an ask of some kind.
- Certainly it can be challenging to recruit new members, in terms of intentional and explicit recruitment events - such as tableting, flyering, etc, -consider holding these events in areas of campus where you can find representative students of the community. Finding voices and passionate individuals that come from the communities that you working for will help improve the quality and power of your campaigns. Recruiting in places where you might find social justice oriented majors and departments are also great places to recruit. Often times these individuals have the passion and conviction to make radical changes in a system that continues to perpetuate inequity. Additional places to consider recruiting could be the Black Student Union, Multicultural Center, Women's Center, or LGBTQ center...to name a few.
- No matter where or how you recruit, remember to be intentional! Your chapter will be better served by 5 great student leaders who you have displayed quality leadership traits, and who are committed to action better than 20 members who simply want to talk about policy. Get to know the people you recruit. Go to coffee with them...have them share their story and why they care about education