

EDUCATION JUSTICE ADVOCACY IN TENNESSEE

POWER MAPPING

Last updated: Feb 2, 2023

BACKGROUND: This resource was developed to grow Tennesseans' capacity to "power map," or identify who has power to influence a specific issue. The power map will help advocates identify potential champions for the issue-focused campaign and focus strategy overall. Power mapping can be used to advance legislative advocacy, as well as other advocacy tactics including grassroots or local advocacy campaigns.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF POWER¹:

Power Over	Traditional sense of power (e.g. public officials, superintendents, school board members)
Power With	Shared power (grows out of relationships as advocates bring individuals, groups, or organizations together on a specific issue/goal)
Power To	Collective power (advocates' unique potentials to contribute to a larger movement for change)
Power Within	Individual sense of power (individuals' belief in their capacity to understand their strengths in making a difference)

CONTEXT GATHERING:

1. **Gather** everyone who will be working on the issue, particularly those impacted by the issue, to gather as much background as you can. *If you complete the power map alone, it will still be a valuable tool to understand power and to shape your campaign and advocacy strategy.*
2. **Identify** a specific issue and desired interim outcome.
3. **Research & discuss** context on the issue:

¹ VeneKlasen, L., & Miller, V. (2007). *A new weave of power, people & politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation*. Warwickshire: Practical Action Publishing. Chapter 3 on Power and Empowerment, retrieved from https://justassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2007/08/new_weave_en_ch3.pdf



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- a. Political and social landscape:
 - Is this issue being discussed in the news? If so, what is the narrative on the issue? Whose voices are included and missing?
 - Has this issue come up in legislation or policy before in Tennessee or another state? If yes, how was the issue discussed or what was the result?
 - Is there a [window of opportunity](#)?
 - Is your idea politically viable?
 - Who are the current champions or opponents on this issue?
- b. Status of issue:
 - Where is this issue in the legislative/policymaking process? Are there important dates coming up that shape the advocacy timeline?
- c. Power on this issue:
 - Who holds power over, with, to, and within related to the issue?
 - Resource: [Guide to Public Offices](#)
- d. Choose a target decision-maker:
 - Identify a target who aligns with you and can influence others on the issue
 - Who has decision-making power specific to your issue?
 - Has anyone been vocal on the issue or related issues before?
- e. Research your target:
 - Uncover personal or professional connections. If you do not have any, research who they are connected to. Who can you reach out to that can influence the decision-maker?
 - Who influences this target?
 - What different roles of influence do they hold?
 - Who do they know in your community?

4. Reflect

- a. Given context and potential targets, what opportunities are there in your issue campaign?
- b. Prepare to map players on this issue who are both with you and against you based on varying levels of influence

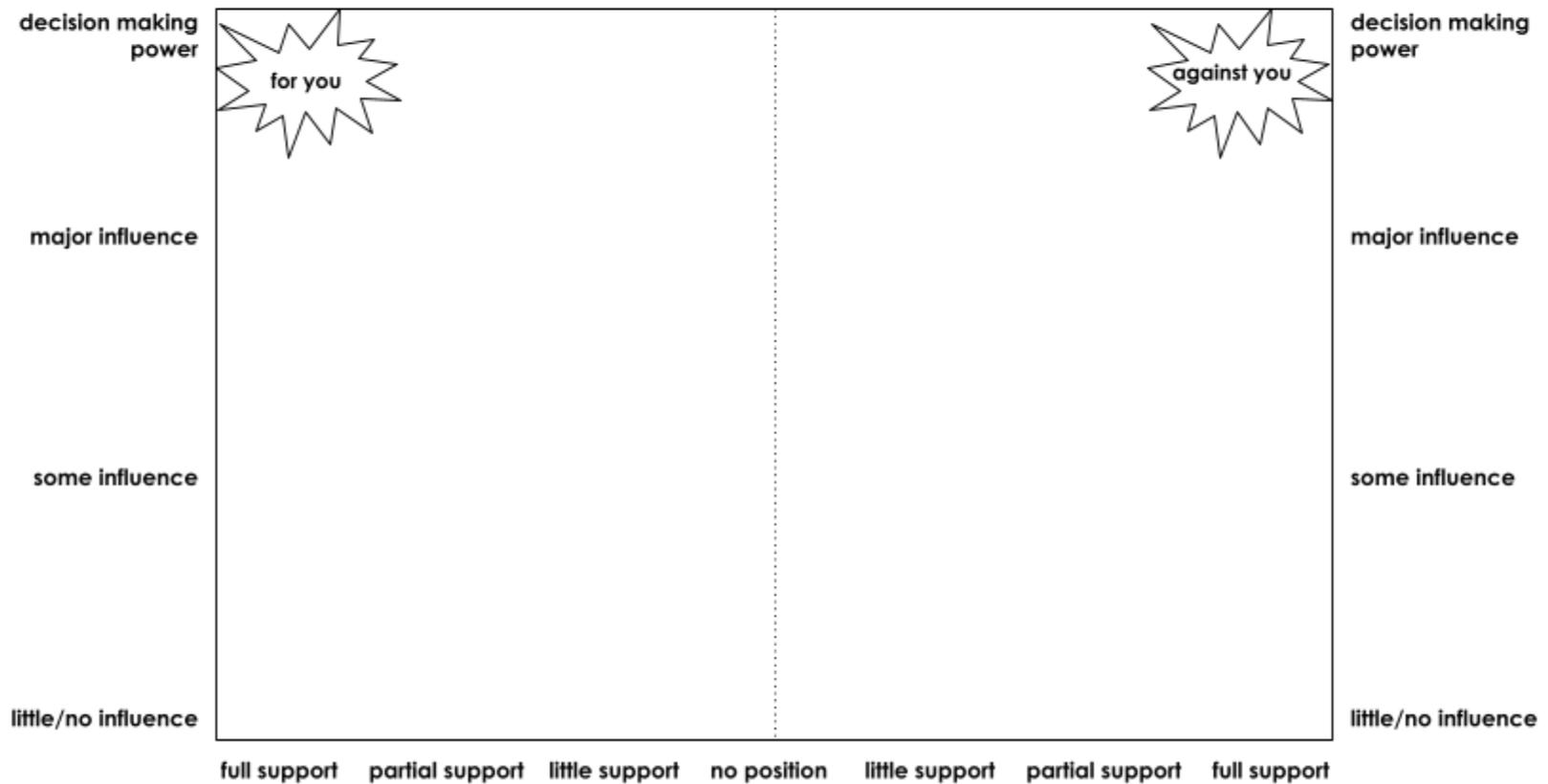


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MAP THE POWER: Use your notes from the context gathering phase to map power based on both the degree of power individuals or groups have and where they fall in terms of alignment. The template is adapted from the Center for Nonprofit Management [power map resource](#) and includes a downloadable template.

Download the full resolution power map [here](#)

POWER MAP TEMPLATE





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ADDITIONAL POWER MAP TEMPLATES:

- Spectrum of Allies ([abbreviated explanation](#) and [full length explanation](#)) from 350.org
 - [Blank Template](#) to Copy and Fill In
- [Power-Mapping Activity](#) from 350.org
- [Introduction to Power Mapping](#) from Center for Nonprofit Management
- [Power Mapping & Analysis](#) from The Commons Social Change Library
- Midwest Academy [Strategy Chart](#) to Copy and Fill In