



WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN"

DISCUSSION GUIDE & ACTION TIPS

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A LETTER FROM DAVIS GUGGENHEIM AND LESLEY CHILCOTT, FILMMAKERS, WAITING FOR “SUPERMAN”



Thank you for screening WAITING FOR “SUPERMAN” and holding a discussion on the state of education in your community. You are part of a movement inspiring millions of people to take action to help redesign our nation’s public education system.

WAITING FOR “SUPERMAN” is a film that we made for and about kids who are struggling to get a great education and their parents who are doing everything they can to ensure that they get it. As you know, this is a dauntingly complex problem and just as there were a host of factors that led to where our education system is today, there are many different ideas worth examining in order to produce more successful results. Reform will look different in each community, and it will take a variety of actions at all levels of society to make lasting change. Our hope is that the film’s release will be a catalyst to spark important discussions in your community about how we can all work together to improve the situation for the sake of our children and our country’s future.

The WAITING FOR “SUPERMAN” Social Action campaign is focused on four themes that we feel can have a deep impact on the system: celebrating great teachers, ensuring world class standards, exploring innovative school models and raising literacy rates. At waitingforsuperman.com/action, you will find avenues to action and additional resources and information that can help you get involved in your community today. We want the Social Action campaign to be a truly collective engagement platform where everyone can participate. Any real discussion about how to ensure for every child a great education and preparation for life beyond high school needs to include many different points of view and possible solutions. We hope you will join the conversation.

Again, thank you for being a Superhero. It’s possible for every child to have a great education if we all do our part.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE & ACTION TIPS

HOSTING A DISCUSSION AND SPARKING ACTION

WHY HAVE A WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN" DISCUSSION?

Our hope is that the film sparks conversation and action in communities across the country that focus on ensuring that all kids get a great education and are prepared for life beyond high school. Having a discussion about the education issues in your community after watching the film is the perfect way to engage people from all points of view who have an interest in helping kids succeed.

HOW DO WE FIND A THEATER AND SHOWTIME IN OUR AREA?

Visit waitingforsuperman.com for cities and dates, and fandango.com or moviefone.com for local listings. To purchase more than 100 tickets or buy out a theater, visit waitingforsuperman.com/groupsales or email Sarah Carragher: scarragher@participantmedia.com

HOW MUCH TIME SHOULD WE PLAN FOR?

The film is 111 minutes. Plan for your discussion to last about an hour.

WHERE SHOULD WE HOST THE DISCUSSION?

Find a quiet place where you can have a comfortable conversation — a community center, place of business, town hall, or library are just a few suggestions. Ideally the conversation will take place in close proximity of the theater and happen immediately after your group has viewed the film.

WHO SHOULD BE INVITED?

Consider inviting people from different groups, so numerous points of view are included and a well-rounded conversation can take place:

- Youth
- Parents
- Teachers
- Elected Officials
- School Board Members
- Corporate Leaders
- Local Education Reporters
- Union Leaders
- Community Organization Leaders
- Faith Community

WHO LEADS THE DISCUSSION?

Choose one person who will moderate and help to keep the conversation on track. Also assign someone to take notes and collect all attendees' contact information so you can continue to communicate as a group and work on this issue together.

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

A conversation begins with the film, but the priority post-film is to address the issues in your community and hopefully spark action. There are no "right answers." Participants should draw on their own experience, views and beliefs, and respect others for their views. We recommend that before the discussion ends that specific actions are offered (see the WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN" take action handout and visit waitingforsuperman.com/action for additional actions and resources).

HOW TO INTRODUCE THE FILM AND THE SOCIAL ACTION CAMPAIGN

As a parent, educator, concerned citizen, corporate leader, education focused or faith-based organization, each person in your discussion group represents an important part of the conversation about public education in our city. I think we are all in agreement that America's education system is in crisis and we all want to help save it.

WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN" is a filmmaker and parent's perspective on the crisis of public education in America and is directed by Davis Guggenheim, produced by Lesley Chilcott and Participant Media in association with Walden Media and distributed by Paramount Pictures.

The film follows a number of families who are doing everything they can to ensure their kids get a great education.

The film identifies some innovative approaches that are helping kids succeed.

The film hopes to:

- Shine a spotlight on these issues and the importance of great teachers.
- Spark conversation and actions to ensure a great education for all children.
- Galvanize support from not only stakeholders who are dealing with these issues every day, but also the broader public at large, as it will take all of us to mandate change.

The WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN" Social Action campaign is using the film to elevate a national conversation about the urgent need for changes in public education.

The national Social Action campaign will continue beyond the film's release, offering online, grassroots and grasstops community actions in 20+ cities that will mobilize activists, stakeholders and especially the interested public at large to see the movie and call on policy makers, opinion influencers and community leaders to examine actions that ensure that every child gets a great education.

There are four key themes on which the Social Action efforts focus. Each has an online and social media strategy that offers specific engagement opportunities at waitingforsuperman.com/action.

1. Celebrate great teachers
2. Ensure world-class standards
3. Encourage more great schools
4. Raise literacy rates

We hope you will find that the important conversations sparked by this film are vital to the overall debate about solving the crisis in public education, and it is clear that it will take all of us working together to ensure that our children are prepared for high school and beyond. We can all take action to collectively make an impact. Please go to www.waitingforsuperman.com/action to take action and engage in the local campaigns.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE & ACTION TIPS

SAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What issues in the film are relevant to what is happening in our community?

What did you learn from watching the film that you didn't know before?

What are some of the barriers for ensuring that all children in our community receive a high quality education?

What are some examples of great work happening to address education in our community?

What do you believe should be our priority when it comes to improving education in our state? Who is responsible for making that happen?

What is the role of parents and parental involvement in improving public education? How can parents become more involved?

We all know effective teachers can make the greatest difference in a child's education. What steps/actions/strategies are necessary to attract and retain great teachers in our schools?

From a teacher's perspective, what specific kinds of supports and changes are needed to help teachers be as effective as possible, regardless of where they teach?

How can we all collaborate toward better outcomes for all young people?

What might you do, as an individual or through an organization, about this crisis?

How does delivery of student support outside the classroom connect with the film?

What role does the business community play in supporting our public education system?

These sample questions have been gathered from panel discussions that have taken place across the country.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE & ACTION TIPS

TAKE ACTION!

Thank you for joining this discussion. Now, be a Superhero. Together we can ensure that every child gets a great education and is prepared for life beyond high school. There is no single solution to fixing our education system, but there are simple steps you can take today to make a difference in our community.

SUPPORT GREAT TEACHERS

To ensure a great teacher in every classroom, contact your school board and ask them to support and reward great teachers.

waitingforsuperman.com/action.

DEMAND WORLD-CLASS STANDARDS

To better prepare our students for success in college and the workforce, your state must implement the Common Core Standards. These standards define the knowledge and skills students should have within their K-12 education career to give them a world-class education. Send your governor a letter today by going to waitingforsuperman.com/action.

GET LOCAL

You can't change education nationally without acting locally. Get involved in your city: mentor a child, volunteer at your neighborhood school, attend a school board meeting and learn what other ways you can make a difference. Call your local campaign manager. Go to

waitingforsuperman.com/action/get-local.

VOLUNTEER AND MENTOR

Helping a school helps your community. Find volunteer and mentoring opportunities using the maps powered by Bing on our local city pages. Check out what opportunities are available in your city by going to

waitingforsuperman.com/action/get-local.

DONATE

Did you know that on average a teacher spends over \$500 a year on school supplies? And that comes straight from their pocket. Help a teacher out by funding their classroom project at donorschoose.org.

GET INFORMED

You may have struggling schools right in your neighborhood and not even know it. Find local schools on GreatSchools.org, and see how they compare.

JOIN THE DEBATE

No one can argue that the U.S. public education system needs change, but the methods to do so are constantly being debated. Share your opinion at waitingforsuperman.com/action/debate, and learn from others.

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DISCUSSION GUIDE & ACTION TIPS

ABOUT THE FILM

When disaster strikes in America, heroes rush in. We've seen it time and again: when all seems lost, real-life supermen (and women) step up to save the day. But what if, right now, there is a hidden catastrophe spreading quietly, insidiously through our nation's cities, towns and communities — and yet we have the power to stop it? What if our children and their futures were in peril? Who will become a hero now?

From Davis Guggenheim, the Academy Award®-winning director of AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH, comes another stirring, must-see clarion call of our times: WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN", a deeply personal exploration of the current state of public education in the U.S. and how it is affecting our children. Fueled by his conscience and electrified by the possibilities for change, Guggenheim sets off on a probing journey into the lives of five unforgettable kids whose dreams, hopes and untapped potential reveal all that is at stake at this critical moment.

They include Daisy, an L.A. fifth-grader who, no matter what, never gives up on big plans for her future; Francisco, a Bronx first-grader whose mom will do anything to give him a shot at a better life; Anthony, a Washington D.C. fifth-grader in search of a different life from that of the dad he lost to drug addiction; Emily, an eighth-grader in Silicon Valley who fears being permanently stamped as unfit for college; and Bianca, a Harlem kindergartner already aiming, with her single mother's valiant help, to make it against the odds.

In spite of their rousing determination and grit, the shocking reality is that most of film's touching and funny cast of kids will be barred from a chance at what was once taken for granted: a great American education. In addressing these questions through dynamic storytelling, Guggenheim sparks a vital national conversation and introduces us to a group of education reformers currently defying the odds. But when the credits to WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN" roll, the story hasn't ended. It has only just begun — because what Guggenheim reveals is that the superheroes we've been waiting for to save our schools are all around us. In fact, they might just be you and me.

Paramount Vantage and Participant Media present in association with Walden Media an Electric Kinney Films production of a film by Davis Guggenheim, WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN". The film is written by Davis Guggenheim and Billy Kimball. The producer is Lesley Chilcott and the executive producers are Jeff Skoll and Diane Weyermann.