

Opinion: Education reform could have big impact

Publisher's note: *This editorial is from the Dec. 13, 2010, Sacramento Bee.*

The more strong voices there are prodding education bureaucracies to improve results for kids, the better.

That's what makes former D.C. schools chancellor Michelle Rhee's new StudentsFirst venture intriguing. Within one year, she aims to create a 1 million-strong membership organization. Within five years she aims to raise \$1 billion, some of which would be used to influence local school board and state legislative elections, starting in 2012. Ultimately, she's aiming for 10 million members, with people joining for as little as \$5 a month.

Modeled on membership organizations such as AARP, the Sierra Club and the National Rifle Association, Rhee says the StudentsFirst organization launched in Sacramento last week comes out of a couple of things – her experience as D.C. chancellor, with courageous teachers and others telling her that they felt alone in battling the bureaucracy; and from the film, “Waiting for ‘Superman,’ ” which has inspired people to ask her what they can do.

Rhee realized there was no call to action. StudentsFirst seeks to remedy that.

Her four goals are the right ones to draw a broad audience: great teachers, giving parents choices, sending money to programs that work and getting parents more involved.

Read the whole story