



Case Study


DIGITAL STRATEGY & CAMPAIGNING

Themes: campaign strategy, messaging, email and social media strategy, earned media

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Overview

In October of 2018, Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) launched its first campaign: The School Girls Deserve (SGD). It was an intergenerational campaign that called on the Department of Education (DOE), local government and communities to create schools that center racial and gender equity and to foster a supportive school climate. In NYC, 1 in 3 public school students experiences sexual harassment in school. The School Girls Deserve Campaign was launched as a response to sexual violence in NYC schools, which disproportionately affects Black cis and trans girls and gender non-conforming and non-binary (TGNC/NB) youth of color.

The campaign called for the City Council to hire seven new Title IX Coordinators. Title IX Coordinators are one of the few resources students and their families have to address sexual harassment in schools. In New York City however, where there are 1.1 million students across 1,800 schools, there is only 1 Title IX Coordinator.



A GGE youth activist speaks at City Hall

The Challenges: Internal and External

While GGE has existed for nearly two decades, the organization had focused most of its attention on a robust direct-service offering. Policy and campaigning were new muscles, and only a minor investment had been made in marketing or communications infrastructure. Restrictions on budget and human power were significant challenges.

Externally, there was an extremely limited public discourse about the unique struggles of Black girls and TGNC/NB youth of color. The campaign needed to not only educate the stakeholders who could hire the Title IX coordinators, but needed to convince the adults allies (educators, school officials, and parents/guardians) that dress codes were often sexist, punitive, and shame-inducing. We needed to shift the culture in the nation's largest school district.

Campaign Goals

1) Ensure equal protection for young people in NYC schools through the enhancement of Title IX. SGD demanded New York City to baseline funding for seven full-time Title IX Coordinators at every DOE Borough/Citywide Office; and

2) Create a citywide dress code that celebrates diverse cultures, body diversity and gender expression.

Girls of color and TGNC youth are disproportionately disciplined for dress code violations. Yet, the DOE does not currently have a universal dress code policy. Girls and TGNC youth report missing out on class time because of discriminatory dress codes and unfair enforcement.

3) Internally we also had goals to build our base and experiment with a variety of tactics, as this was GGE's first campaign.



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Strategy

The experiences of Black girls and TGNC/NB youth of color in NYC public schools were effectively unknown to most and ignored by many who did know. It was crucial to build awareness through a storytelling-driven campaign centering youth activists who were willing to share their lived experiences. We targeted stakeholders within the Department of Education, key members of the New York City Council, young people and their adult allies with our communications.

As the communications and digital strategy lead, I over saw all storytelling aspects of the campaign: I developed and executed an email and social-media campaign to build awareness, worked alongside my colleagues to develop a narrative that centered youth voices, prepped staff and trained youth for media and speaking engagements, managed press communications and drafted op-eds. I also designed all related materials.



Campaign poster for rallies and in-person activations

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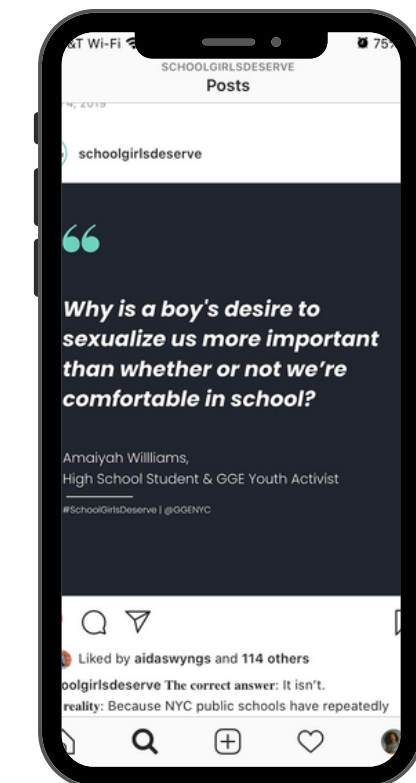
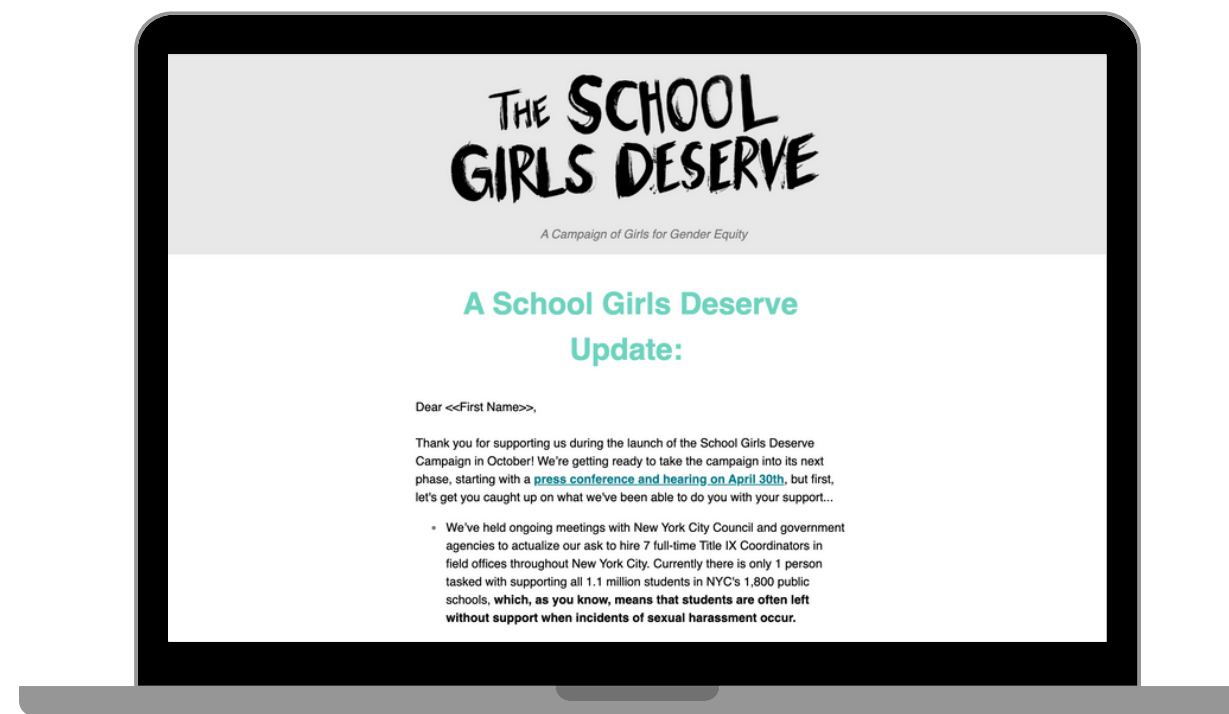
Tactics & Assets

- Campaign microsite
- Email campaign
- Social-media campaign and online activations (Dedicated campaign IG account, #SchoolGirlsDeserve, twitter storm, mini education campaigns, Title IX twitter chat, live coverage of press conferences, etc)
- Digital Toolkit ([link](#))
- Scripts for activations to call and email campaign stakeholders ([email template](#) & [phone script](#))
- Recorded testimony
- Printed education materials, rally posters, etc.

Campaign Microsite ([link](#))

Email Campaign

Social Media ([link](#))



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Results

- Earned media and op-eds in Essence, TeenVogue, Unladylike Podcast, CBS, and NY1 and a variety of local publications.
- Email campaign had a 28.4% average open rate - nearly two times our organizational average - and a 3.7% average click-through rate compared to the 2.7% organizational average
- Built a School Girls Deserve base of over 50 girls, over 500 individual supporters, and 16 youth development, gender equity and anti-violence partner organizations.
- We won our primary ask: The City and NYC Council included \$857,000 in their baseline (permanent) funding to hire 7 additional Title IX Coordinators.



At the Next Level...

I pitched multiple additional strategies for the School Girls Deserve Campaign, but ultimately they were outside of our budget and timeline:

- A dedicated microsite that could house campaign messaging, toolkit, and educational resources, as well as a call to action
- Video campaign with 1-2 minute videos of young people giving testimony
- Peer-to-peer or broadcast messaging SMS tool
- Corporate sponsorship
- Team of volunteer campaign supporters dedicated to mobilizing parents who were a part of key strategic groups (PTA, etc.)
- Pop-up exhibition: A three-day curated showcase centering a photo exhibition of the SGD campaign youth activists and their testimonies; a gallery opening-style evening including a panel discussion with youth activists and Brittany Brathwaiteat; at least one interactive SGD Campaign immersion station
- Milestone and goals block party for the youth organizers and their community members






Thank You!

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