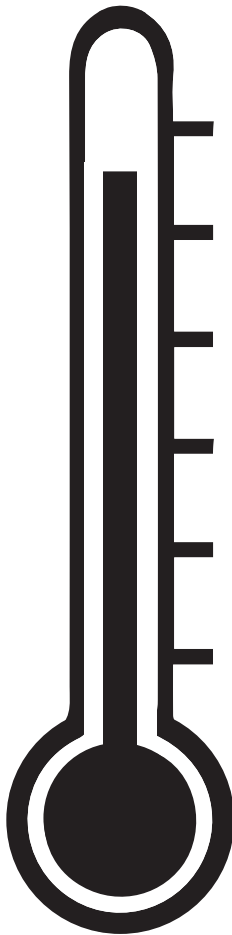




TURN UP THE HEAT: ACTION THERMOMETER

One way to visualize escalating tactics is to arrange them on a thermometer, with each action “hotter” than the last. For instance, here are the steps a group of New Haven teachers took to solve the mold problem at their school, beginning from the bottom of the thermometer:



- Enjoyed their victory
- Walked out of a meeting en masse
- Spoke to the media
- Pulled a publicity stunt
- Called a meeting of supporters
- Used the result to formulate specific demands, with deadlines
- Filed an information request
- Reached out to parents
- Published a newsletter
- Formed a grievance committee
- Developed a communication network
- Conducted a health survey
- Gathered signatures on a grievance
- Defined their issue: air quality
- Met as a small group

In many cases a survey would be the lowest-intensity task, the one to start with. But in this case teachers were already fired up about the mold issue, and the initial group had no trouble getting them to sign a group grievance.

When the teachers walked out on the superintendent, it showed how far they had come. Their escalating campaign had built up their sense of the justice of their cause, and they were not afraid.

