

School Rep Climate Strike Organizing Guide

About

On September 20, three days before the UN Climate Summit in NYC, young people and adults will strike all across the US and world to demand transformative action be taken to address the climate crisis.

The strikes on the 20th will launch us into a week of global climate action to publicly call on world leaders and, here in the US, elected officials to take the action needed to save our futures, and to send a clear message that come Election Day 2020, we will take the climate fight to the ballot boxes.

This strike is our opportunity to grow the climate movement in this country and to invite even more people to join us. We have just over ten years to turn things around and our world needs each of us to step up and take action to save our futures.

This guide has been created to help walk you, as a school rep, through organizing your school to participate in the climate strike near you. Your job is to get students at your school to attend the strike, through coordination, outreach, and promotion. You can also do a walkout the day of the strike if you so choose.

Thank you for helping to organize, and if you have questions that you don't get answered by this document, please feel free to email info@strikewithus.org.

Website and Socials

- [StrikeWithUs.org](https://strikewithus.org)
- Instagram:
- Twitter:
- Facebook:

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Joining the Climate Strike

1. Gather Your Team

Organizing is not always easy and, in most cases, shouldn't be done alone. The best way to find people will be to reach out to any environmental clubs that may exist at your school. If your school does not have any groups, reach out to other students and adults at your school that you think may be interested in helping you. Here are some different ideas:

- **Use instagram/snapchat:** Make a poll on your instagram story asking if anyone is interested in helping organize, or ask people to swipe up on instagram or snapchat if they want to get involved
- **Post in student facebook groups:** If your school has a student section on facebook, post a message saying you're looking for people to help. Or post in different clubs you're in, especially if they're social justice/politics/activism focused
- **Ask teachers:** Go up to teachers that you feel comfortable will support the cause and ask if they know of any students who would be interested/good at organizing. Don't be afraid to reach out to people you don't know!

Once you have your team (it could range in size, depending on the size of your school and number of people interested), create a group chat and schedule a time/place to meet.

A note on teachers: While teachers can be a great resource to help out with organizing your school, it is important to remember that public schools operate under Department of Education rules and thus cannot publicize events outside of school, especially those regarding skipping school. However, some teachers might let you announce to your class that a climate strike is happening on September 20, and that they should attend/get involved in organizing.

2. Make Your Plan

Once you have a team put together, the immediate next step is to make a **timeline** of everything that will need to get done. A timeline will ensure you are staying on track and keeping all the tasks organized. Timelines will vary school to school, especially depending on when your school starts, but we recommend starting to plan at a month before the strike (the last week in August). Here is a general example:

Week	To be accomplished
<p>1. August 25-31</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather your team ● Build a tentative timeline (can be adjusted later) ● Optional: Find an artist at your school to make a cool school-specific drawing that can be used for your social media posts/flyers
<p>2. September 1-7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get social media visuals in order. They won't be posted until later, BUT they should be prepared and ready to go when it's time. (see: <i>Social Media Visuals & Toolkit</i>) ● Design flyers. Again, they will be distributed later but should be all ready to print. (see: <i>Outreach and Crowdbuilding</i>) ● Towards the end of the week, begin posting on social media! (see: <i>Posting on Social Media</i>) <p><i>If your school is having a walkout that leads to the strike:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine when students will be walking out of school and your school's policy on this. (see: <i>Determining the time & place of the walkout</i>) ● Figure out the exact route you will be taking to get to the location of the strike from your school (see: <i>Figuring out your route</i>) ● Contact your school administration (see: <i>Speaking with administration</i>)
<p>3. September 8-14</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post every day for the next 12 days on your social media. Make sure that you get as many people as possible to do the same. ● Distribute flyers that have information on the strike ● Tell everyone you see throughout the week about the climate strike and refer them to your social media posts for more information.
<p>4. September 15-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post several times a day on your social media about the strike and get everyone you know to do the same.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Confirm the route of travel for your school to the strike.● Optional: Have a sign-making party where people can come and make posters and signs for the strike● Friday, September 20: DAY OF THE STRIKE!
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3. Sort Out Logistics

IF YOUR SCHOOL IS STRIKING ALL DAY

Transportation

If your school is striking the entire day and students aren't going to school at all, you'll need to figure out transportation to the strike if it's far away. Buses and carpools are the best way, have everyone meet at a certain location the morning of the strike (not on school grounds) and everyone can go together. If you can walk, you should!

Speaking with administration

Even though you may not be walking out in the middle of school, it is still important to have a conversation with them about the strike so they are aware of why so many students are missing school. Tell them why you are striking and inform them there will be other schools in the area participating in this as well. Try to set up a policy with them so students aren't in trouble if they skip school, such as having parents call their children in.

IF YOUR SCHOOL IS WALKING OUT

Figuring out your route

If you're doing a walkout, you'll need to plan out exactly how you're going to get from your school to the strike near you. If it's walking, know exactly which blocks you'll be walking on. If it's by public transportation, know what buses/trains you're taking and at what stops. When you speak with your administration, they will want to know these details.

Determining the time & place of the walkout

Once you have your march route, you have to decide what time students should gather to walkout and where you should all meet. It makes the most sense to have students gather at a central place such as the school's lobby, auditorium, or gym after a certain period. It makes things more complicated if you have people walk out in the middle of class.

For example: "Everyone please meet in the lobby after 3rd period to walk out"

Speaking with administration

It may seem daunting to approach your school administration with a request to walk out of school, but it's not bad at all if you follow a certain procedure and are well-prepared. Here's a list of tips and tricks to help this part go as smoothly as possible:

- Email your administration on a Thursday or Friday and request to meet with them the following Monday or Tuesday. It's best to email multiple administrators at once such as your principal, assistant/vice principal, and dean(s). There is an example format at the end of this section. Don't be afraid to copy and paste this and just fill in the blanks!
- Try to meet with them during your lunch period or free period.
- Bring all the members of your team to the meeting if possible. If not, don't worry!
- Come into the meeting with all the details of the march route and the time and location of the walkout written out on paper.
- Be prepared to talk about the importance of climate change and the exact purpose/goal of striking (see: link to "Introduction to Climate Change and Striking").
- Speak respectfully and verbally acknowledge that the administrators are sacrificing their time and energy to help you. Be thankful to them!
- Subtly imply that the walkout is happening no matter what, but that you want the administration to be fully aware and help make it as safe as possible.
- If, after your initial email or your initial meeting they're not following up or giving you answers, don't be afraid to send them another email, requesting that they follow up.

EXAMPLE EMAIL

Subject: **[City name]** Youth Climate Strike

Dear **[insert name(s) of administrators]**,

I hope you had a good start to the school year.

I'm writing you about a huge protest that's going to take place in **[city here]** this month which I would like **[insert school name]** to be a part of. On Friday, September 20, schools and youth across the district, the city, the country, and the world are walking out to call attention to the irresponsible lack of attention and legislation regarding climate change.

The climate crisis is the biggest issue we are facing, and if the people in power don't start acknowledging that, we are literally doomed. The main idea of the protest is to show that we, the generation that has the potential to be the largest voting bloc, are passionate about climate change and doing everything in our power to slow its impact.

One of the many strikes happening on September 20 will be located at **[location of nearest strike]**, where groups of students from over **[x number of schools from your area]** schools are expected to congregate.

My peers and I are incredibly passionate about our environment, and there is already talk of there being a walkout at **[insert school name]**. If this happens, which I truly hope it will, I want it to be in the safest way possible, as I am positive you do, too. I am working with several other students to organize this walkout, and we already have a detailed proposal to present to you about how it would play out. It would be great if I, along with the students I'm working with, can schedule a meeting with **[one or both/all of]** you this Monday or Tuesday (ASAP) to organize this and ensure its safety.

Thank you so much for your time, and please let me know what I can do to provide you with more information!

Warm regards,
[insert name]
[insert grade]
[insert homeroom # if applicable]

NOTE ON SCHOOLS TAKING DISCIPLINARY ACTION

If your administration threatens students with disciplinary action, that doesn't necessarily mean you should halt your plans. If this happens, before you respond to them, reach out to your local ACLU for help. They will work with you to ensure that everything is happening in a legal way and that your rights as a student are protected.

If you are not sure how to reach out to your ACLU, email us at info@strikewithus.org and we will do our best to help you!

4. Social Media Visuals & Toolkit

Posting on social media promoting the walkout is important throughout the entire process. We will be providing you with Instagram story and Instagram feed post templates that will already have the graphics and formatting; all you have to do is fill out the information specific to your school. You also can design your own art and graphics!!

The folder for all of the social media content is [HERE](#).

Hashtags to use

#ClimateStrike

#StrikeWithUs

Emoji:



Sample posts

- On September 20, the youth strike back! I am proud to join youth across the world in demanding lawmakers take action to combat climate change. strikewithus.org
#ClimateStrike #StrikeWithUs
- We, the students of [insert school here], are attending the [city here] #ClimateStrike because decades of inaction have left us with 10 years to change the trajectory of the worst effects of climate change. #ClimateStrike #StrikeWithUs
- My school, [insert school here] will be joining youth across the world in striking to demand lawmakers take legislative action against climate change. #ClimateStrike #StrikeWithUs
- We are at a crossroads on climate. Will you choose money and power, or will you choose us: the youth? #StrikeWithUs on September 20 #ClimateStrike
- On September 20, [insert school here] is attending the [city here] #ClimateStrike to demand climate action. #StrikeWithUs
- Climate change is the biggest threat to the future of our lives, country, and world. We at [insert school here] are attending the [city here] #ClimateStrike on September 20 to demand legislative action to combat climate change #StrikeWithUs
- September 20 begins a new phase of the fight for environmental justice and action. My school, [insert school name here] is attending the [city here] #ClimateStrike to demand a more secure future. #StrikeWithUs

5. Outreach and Crowd Building

Now that you've done all the logistical planning, it's time to outreach and crowd build. Here's a list of things you can do to maximize the number of students that attend:

- **Post, post, POST!** Use the social media graphics provided, as well as the sample posts, and post on every platform. Tell your friends and others you know to repost to spread the word even faster and further.
- **Make flyers to pass around school.** Use the climate strike graphics or design your own. Some teachers and administrators may not be okay with you distributing flyers in school

due to the fact that they technically encourage people to skip school. Public schools especially could get in trouble with the DOE for that. If you can't hand them out in school, do it outside, off school property, before and after school as students are coming and leaving!

→ **Word of mouth!** Word of mouth is the most important tool you have and you should be spreading the word every chance you get. Go up to students, including ones you don't know, in the hallways, cafeteria, gym, and your classes and tell them about the strike. If they seem interested, tell them to tell everyone THEY know about it. Ask your teachers if you may make an announcement about the strike in front of your classes. Never stop talking about it!

6. Getting Ready for the Big Day

Look out for information from your nearest climate strike organizers. They should be posting more details about the day of the strike as it approaches. If they don't, reach out to them and ask. Students from your school will probably want to know specifics, and it will increase the chance they participate.

In the days leading up to the strike, make sure you are sending constant reminders for people to attend through posts, texts, and social media DMs. Individual outreach always helps with crowd building so if you have the time, remind people one-on-one.

As mentioned in the timeline, you also may want to hold sign-making activities after school or during lunch and bring materials for students to make signs for the walk out. This is also a great way to reach more people.

7. #ClimateStrike Day!

WOOOO! The day of the #ClimateStrike Day is finally here! There are still things you will need to do on the day-of, and it's very important to stay as organized as possible. However, don't be so busy that you miss the results of all your hard work.

Livestream: Livestreaming your event on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter is an easy way to reach even more people. Make sure to caption the video with a brief explanation of your strike and capture the most exciting parts (speeches, singing, etc). Also, make sure your friends and family share it!

Take Pictures: If there are no pics, did it even happen? Make sure to take a BUNCH of pictures of your event (and post them!). Capture any speakers, any exciting artwork, and at least one great photo of your own walkout.

Share Your Story! Post on social media! People are excited by what you're doing and want to hear from you! Post your pictures from the day and take pride in your hard organizing work.

Celebrate! You just did an AMAZING thing! Congratulations! Make sure to celebrate all of your hard work after your strike.