



Raise YOUR Hand

OUR SCHOOLS!
OUR SOLUTIONS!



DAY OF ACTION FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

12 • 9 • 13

DAY OF ACTION TOOLKIT



Great Public Schools for Every Student



A CALL TO ACTION!

Our schools belong to all of us:

the students who learn in them, the parents who support them, the educators and staff who work in them and the communities that they anchor. On December 9, educators across the country will join parents, students, and community leaders to hold local actions that demand direct involvement in decisions that affect community public schools.

We are raising our hands and saying enough to over-crowded classrooms, teaching to the test and inadequate resources for our students.

We are saying no to politicians and CEOs telling us how to run our schools. We are saying no to slashing budgets and shortchanging our kids.

We are saying YES to great public schools in every neighborhood, YES to investing in our children's future, YES to reducing class sizes. We are saying YES to educator, parent, and community partnerships that focus on what's good for students. We are saying YES to solutions that work.

We call on our communities, and commit the power of the organizations that we represent, to pursue these principles in our schools, districts and states. Let's join together on December 9 to raise our hands for our schools!

The National Day of Action Toolkit on the following pages will show you how you can raise your hand and join in on the action.

National Partners

Alliance for Educational Justice (AEJ)
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
Annenberg Institute for School Reform
Gamaliel Network
Journey for Justice Alliance (JJJ)
Leadership Center for the Common Good
National Education Association (NEA)
National Opportunity to Learn Campaign
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)



DAY OF ACTION FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2013

WHAT IS THE DAY OF ACTION?

On December 9th, educators, parents, community organizations, and students are joining forces around the country to ensure quality public schools that are community led and student centered. Click here to see the current list of actions or join us and register an event: www.EdVotes.org/OurSchools

WHAT WILL IT ACCOMPLISH?

The day of action will...

- ▶ Signal the emergence of a national movement of parents, educators and students united by a vision of public schools where local solutions and student-centered approaches are recognized and are favored over top-down strategies that don't benefit all students.
- ▶ Begin to create a national echo chamber for our vision and narrative.
- ▶ Support ongoing local work and issues by connecting them to a national movement.

WHERE WILL THE DAY OF ACTION OCCUR?

The National Day of Action events will happen wherever educators, parents, and students have come to the realization that they cannot win for our students without the other. Actions are being planned in rural settings and in urban areas.

For more information and organizing support, contact:

James Conlon

NEA, Center for Organizing

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202-300-6341



Messages & Sample Events

DAY OF ACTION FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS • MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

MESSAGE / EVENT	IDEAS FOR VISUALS
We are saying YES to teaching kids to be critical thinkers; NO to teaching them to fill bubble tests.	Copies of standardized tests, pics of parents/ teachers writing messages on the test forms
We are saying YES to reducing class sizes; NO to cutting school budgets and allowing kids to fall through the cracks.	40 desks crowded together in public square
We are saying YES to investing in our children's future; NO to corporate tax breaks and underfunded schools.	Red wagons, apples, symbols of public education
We are saying YES to ensuring every child has a quality teacher; NO to replacing teachers with computer screens and ESPs with private companies.	Zombie March: "Don't turn our kids into zombies"
We are saying YES to working together to ensure our children receive a quality education; NO to CEOs who want to profit from the education marketplace.	People in suits with fake dollars pinned to them
We are saying YES to investing in our children's future; NO to shortchanging our kids on education.	Everyone holds a desk calendar with "180" written on it to symbolize need for 180 day calendar (outside target legislator office)
We are saying YES to early childhood education; NO to losing an entire generation that won't get a second chance.	Teddy bears with diplomas
We are saying YES to investing in our children's future; NO to shortchanging our kids on education.	Partner with community group for coat drive for students at Title 1 school. Boxes with "invest in students" written on them



HOW TO PLAN A GREAT EVENT

**DAY OF ACTION FOR
GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**
MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

Whether you have been organizing for years or have never hosted a house party, here is a simple guide to get you started on planning your next action or event. Go through the steps and you'll be on your way to planning a creative, engaging, and powerful action.

(Also be sure to check out these other items in the **Day of Action toolkit**: Powerpoint on the Day of Action, and Sample event ideas and messages)

1. BRING TOGETHER A TEAM

Whether it's just you and a friend or a group of 10, it's helpful to have collaborators to share the work. With your team, discuss the goals for your event, who you want to make sure is present, how you'd like to run the event in the most exciting and appropriate way for your community, and how you plan to follow up.

2. DEFINE YOUR GOAL

Why do you want to hold an event? What is the purpose of your event? Write down the purpose in one to two sentences. Establishing a specific goal in the beginning stages will guide you during the planning and execution process. Do you want to:

- ▶ Identify and organize community members that support your cause?
- ▶ Spread the word and energize your peers to take action?
- ▶ Push lawmakers and community leaders on a specific issue?

Map out what you want to accomplish, not just how many people you want to attend. Visualize what success looks like for your event. What will be the top three action items that you want your attendees to learn at the event or act on after the event?

Then, make adjustments. As you plan and execute your event, look back at your goals to make sure that your event will meet those goals. If your goals need to be adjusted, discuss adjustments with your planning team.



HOW TO PLAN A GREAT EVENT

3. FIGURE OUT THE DETAILS

Look for cosponsors. Invite your friends, neighbors, and local organizations to assist in sponsoring and organizing the action. Think outside the box about who to reach out to - maybe a local church, mosque, synagogue, activist group, sports team, university, or arts cooperative would be interested in getting involved.

Pick a time and place. The location and time can make or break your event. When choosing a date, location, and time of day, think about your audience. Picking a centralized, easily accessible location and a convenient time is critical to your event's success.

Put it online. Make sure to post the details of your event at the NEA campaign page on ActionNetwork.org, so that people can easily find and link to your event!

Figure out the logistics. Depending on the size of your event, think through what resources and supplies you will need the day of the event and whether it will require any volunteers. Assign volunteers to coordinate each major task - Make sure you have any necessary equipment, snacks, drinks, handouts, sign-up sheets, and that everyone knows their roles during the event. Think of any roles that you might need volunteers for - such as note-taker, spokesperson, photographer, sign-up sheet coordinator, snack captain, etc.

Gauge interest. Make a few calls or text some of your potential attendees and run the place and time of the event by them. Make sure you ask whether they know of any conflicts before moving forward and what they anticipate the response from your target audience would be. If they are excited, move forward. If not, consider their feedback before taking the next steps.

4. SPREAD THE WORD

Find participants. Invite people at least two weeks beforehand, and continue to remind them about your event a week out and the day before. Word of mouth, phone calls, and texting are great ways to invite the people that you already know. To spread the word to people outside your immediate circle, try using the Action Network's easy tools to promote your event on Facebook and twitter. Ask friendly organizations to email their contact list.

Invite local officials. If you want your actions to have as big an impact as possible, reach out to our local, regional, and national leaders. Invite your local mayor, governor, or representative. You never know who might be willing to show up and be a champion for education.

Tell the media. It's important to contact local, state, and national media to make sure they report on your action. Think about what print, radio, television, and blogs you'd want to have cover your event, and start getting in touch now! Check out our media coverage guide for more details.



HOW TO PLAN A GREAT EVENT

5. TAKE ACTION – HAVE THEM USE A SIGN-IN SHEET!

This is the fun part. The specific details of your event are up to you. But whatever you do, make sure to have fun, connect with people, and use the energy from your event to keep moving forward.

Take pictures and videos. Photos and videos help tell your story and communicate your message to community members and decision-makers. They can dramatically increase the impact of your event. But make sure your attendees tell you that it's fine with them if you take their picture.

Have a next step. Build off the positive energy and momentum created from your event to continue engaging everyone. You might want to have a follow-up action item that attendees can do at home to stay engaged. Make sure everyone has a clear idea of the next step and how this event fits into the larger movement.

6. FOLLOW UP

Just because your event is over doesn't mean you're done! The follow up is an important part of the event planning process. Evaluate the success of the event and think about what you could have done differently, so if you plan a future event, you can do so more efficiently. Have attendees sign in so you can invite them to future events.

Connect with attendees soon after the event and see whether they have completed any follow-up actions. Also ask them for feedback on the event and ideas for next time.

Thank your volunteers. Whether people brought food, recruited attendees, hung up flyers around town, gave you and your event a shout-out on Facebook, or stayed afterwards to help clean up—anyone that helped you through the process—make sure to thank them.

For more information and organizing support, contact:

James Conlon, NEA, Center for Organizing

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202-300-6341



MEDIA TIPS

DAY OF ACTION FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

A good relationship with your community's media is critical to the success of your action. Building relationships means contacting producers, editors, and reporters at your local cable television shows, radio talk shows, newspapers, and magazines.

Your persistent media relations efforts will generate local and regional print and broadcast publicity. You can successfully deliver your local message by crafting an effective strategy. Sometimes that means "out-of-the-box" thinking—perhaps something with an unconventional news hook.

Here are some guidelines - tailor these ideas to best fit your needs. For example, your action may not require a full press kit, but any action is likely to benefit from a good news release!

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

- ▶ Get to know your local education reporter. General news goes to a "city desk" or an assignment editor.
- ▶ Compile a list of newspapers, broadcast stations, and other news outlets in your community. Think about the following:
 - Weeklies
 - Community bulletins
 - Business newspapers
 - College papers
 - Special audience newspapers
 - Religious organization newsletters
 - Magazines
 - Cable and public access stations
 - Community Web sites with bulletin boards or ads
- ▶ Gather details about the media outlets you plan on targeting, including:
 - First and last names of proper contacts (news editors, assignment editors, and community affairs reporters)
 - Email addresses
 - Phone and fax numbers
 - Deadline information
 - Photography requirements
 - Policies



MEDIA TIPS

- Be a media resource. When you hear of a newsworthy story, inform your contacts, even if it is not about this specific event.
- Provide information upon request. If you don't know the answer, try to find out and respond to the request as soon as you can. It's okay to say, "I don't know the answer, but I'd be happy to find out and get back to you as soon as possible."
- Respect and honor reporters' deadlines. Understand it's a 24/7 news world. You are competing for time and attention.
- Make your "pitch" brief and highlight the most pertinent information about your activity.
- Do not call reporters inquiring as to whether they received your fax.

MEDIA OUTREACH IDEAS

- On the day of your event, send a press release to media contacts. The release should provide a detailed picture of the event and background information.
- Pitch local education reporters—both print and broadcast—a story on your local action and offer interviews with your spokespeople.
- Arrange photo opportunities with local dignitaries and/or public figures who participate in your action. Tailor your media alert to provide media with a heads up about the photo opportunity.
- Submit an article to your community newspapers or organization's newsletter detailing your action.
- Tailor the sample press release for college audiences and send it to a local college or university's campus newspaper.

WRITING A PRESS RELEASE

A press release communicates the details and important information associated with your event and/or activity. It also informs readers what the event or issue is, why your news is important, who is involved or making a statement, and how readers can get more information.

Because reporters receive hundreds of press releases every day, your release should cut through the clutter. Catch the attention of busy readers. Be simple, concise, and factual. Here are some tips on writing a press release:

- Print the press release on your Association's letterhead.
- Press releases answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why, and how. Present the information in descending order of importance.
- The last paragraph typically includes a statement about your group.
- Keep it short. In general, a news release should not be longer than two pages.
- Use wide margins (1 to 1.5 inches on both sides) in order for media readers to edit.
- Avoid self-serving comments and phrases, unsubstantiated opinions, and superlatives associated with marketing a product.



MEDIA TIPS

- If announcements are being made or opinions are expressed, they should be attributed to the person who is saying them.
- Ensure the release is grammatically correct. Double-check spelling.
- After your story appears in your local paper, city magazine, community newspaper, or newsletter, send a copy of the story to your state affiliate communications office.

DISTRIBUTING YOUR PRESS RELEASE

Follow these guidelines to ensure a successful distribution of your press release:

- Send an accompanying “fact sheet” to provide context for your release. NOTE: If you send attachments, itemize them at the end of the release. (View sample fact sheets)
- Send a photograph with your release if it’s appropriate.
- Don’t send your release to more than one editor per publication. Determine in advance who will receive it.
- Send the release to several media outlets.
- Know the deadline and publishing or broadcasting schedules of your local media outlets in order for you to distribute your release or event in a timely manner.
- In addition to the media, keep other people informed such as legislators, members of boards, business people, civic and religious leaders, and local associations.
- Do not fax more than two pages unless requested.
- Don’t be disappointed if your press release does not result in coverage. The media did, in fact, receive the information that may influence when and how they cover subsequent stories.

DEVELOPING A PRESS KIT

A press kit provides reporters with comprehensive background information about your campaign and the activities you may be planning. A press kit is generally comprised of the following elements:

- A folder to hold all the press materials. Press kit folders usually include the organization’s logo on the cover.
- A news release announcing the newsworthy details of your event or activity. The news release highlights why the reporter should cover your story. (View writing a news release tips and sample news releases)
- Fact sheets to provide more thorough background information about your celebration and school or organization. Fact sheets help put your releases into context. (View sample fact sheets)
- Biographies of your spokesperson(s) to familiarize reporters with your experts.
- Brochures or other promotional materials that help provide more details about your event or activity.



MEDIA TIPS

- Other elements to consider include one-page documents that:
- Explain the nature and extent of involvement or partnerships with the community (including schools, businesses, foundations, nonprofits, social service agencies, community-based organizations, and civic groups).
- Highlight your efforts to help students achieve, including approaches, tangible goals, and ways to get involved.
- Provide a sample of anecdotes (with quotes) from teachers, other school staff (secretaries, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, custodians, principals, and the superintendent), substitute educators, school board members, and parents. These quotes should highlight their participation and involvement in your event/activity.

For more information and organizing support, contact:

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202-822-7758



SOCIAL MEDIA TACTICS

What's an effective way to boost the conversation around the Day of Action and encourage participation? Social media!

First and foremost, memorize the hashtag and use it frequently.

#OurSchools

To promote the Day of Action prior to December 9th,
here are some suggested posts and tweets.

FACEBOOK

Our schools belong to all of us: the students who learn in them, the parents who support them, the educators and staff who work in them and the communities that they anchor. That's why we will join together on December 9th to demand direct involvement in the decisions that affect our schools. Learn more at www.edvotes.org/ourschools.
<Download the graphic promoting the Day of Action>

On December 9th, raise your hand and say YES to great public schools in every neighborhood! Join us for the National Day of Action for Great Public Schools.
<link to www.edvotes.org/ourschools>

Raise your hand for our schools, our solutions! Educators, parents, students and community leaders across the country will be taking action on December 9th. Find an event in your area or learn how to host your own.
<link to www.edvotes.org/ourschools>

Demand more for America's students than the current market-driven reforms that proliferate rather than address inequity. Raise your hand on December 9th for our schools, our solutions. Get all the info at www.edvotes.org/ourschools.
<Download the graphic promoting the Day of Action>

Share if you are going to raise your hand on December 9th and demand direct involvement in the decisions that affect our schools! Here's how you can do that: www.edvotes.org/ourschools.
<Download the graphic promoting the Day of Action>

Who: Educators, students, parents and community partners

What: Day of Action for Great Public Schools

When: Monday, December 9th

Where: EVERYWHERE! Find events at www.edvotes.org/ourschools



TWITTER

Raise your hand on Dec 9 and say YES to great public schools in every neighborhood! www.edvotes.org/ourschools for all the info **#OurSchools**

Join us Dec 9 and demand direct involvement in decisions that affect **#OurSchools**. Events and more: <http://bit.ly/187V3wf>

We're taking action on Dec 9 for **#OurSchools**. Will you join us? <http://bit.ly/187V3wf>
<Download the graphic promoting the Day of Action>

RT if you are going to raise your hand and take action for **#OurSchools** on Dec 9! <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#Education**

Let's see what happens when educators, parents, students, community partners join forces for **#OurSchools** Dec 9 <http://bit.ly/187V3wf>

Power in numbers on Dec 9 <http://bit.ly/187V3wf>
Join us for the Day of Action for Great Public Schools **#OurSchools #ReclaimPublicEd**

Join the chorus on Dec 9. Find out how at www.edvotes.org/ourschools **#OurSchools**
<Download the graphic promoting the Day of Action>

..... Suggested posts and tweets to use on December 9th

FACEBOOK

Today is the National Day of Action for Great Public Schools, the day educators, parents, community organizations and students are joining forces around the country to ensure quality public schools that are community-led and student-centered. It's not too late to join an event. *<link to www.edvotes.org/ourschools>*

Take action today! Sign on and share to reclaim the promise, our schools, our solutions.
<link to Principles that Unite Us <http://bit.ly/1gBH81C>>

Raise your hand to stand up for America's students rather than market-driven reforms that don't address inequity and join others who are taking action today to strengthen public education. *<link to www.edvotes.org/ourschools>*

Share if you are going to raise your hand today and demand direct involvement in the decisions that affect our schools! *<link to www.edvotes.org/ourschools>*

We know our students and we know what works best for their education. On this National Day of Action, tell us, what is your vision for great public schools?

A call to action: Corporate-style reforms that disregard our voices, and attempt to impose a system of winners and losers must end. None of our children deserve to be collateral damage. Sign on and share!
<link to Principles that Unite Us <http://bit.ly/1gBH81C>>



TWITTER

Today is the National Day of Action for Great Public Schools! It's not too late to join an event <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

Today is the day to raise your hand and say YES to great public schools in ALL neighborhoods. Join us <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

We are saying YES to investing in our children's future; NO to corporate tax breaks, underfunded schools <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

We are saying YES to teaching kids to be critical thinkers; NO to teaching them to fill bubble tests <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

We are saying YES to educator, parent, and community partnerships that focus on what's good for students <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

Are you on Instagram? You can show your participation in the Day of Action there, too. Post a photo of yourself raising your hand, and explain why in the caption.

Examples: Today is a National Day of Action for Great Public Schools. I'm raising my hand and saying YES to investing in our children's future. **#OurSchools**

I'm joining fellow educators, parents, students and community partners across the country for today's National Day of Action to demand direct involvement in the decisions that affect our schools. **#OurSchools**

Sign on to reclaim the promise of public **#Education** as our nation's gateway to social justice <http://bit.ly/1gBH81C> **#OurSchools**

RT to stand up for America's students rather than market-driven reforms that don't address inequity <http://bit.ly/187V3wf> **#OurSchools**

On this Day of Action we want to know, what is your vision for great public schools? **#OurSchools**

We know what's best for our students. Use the Day of Action to demand OUR solutions for **#OurSchools** <http://bit.ly/1gBH81C> **#ReclaimPublicEd**

Can't make a Day of Action for Great Public Schools event today? That's ok, participate virtually: <http://bit.ly/1gBH81C> **#OurSchools**

And on all social media, don't forget to thank everyone for their participation and remind them the work will continue past December 9th.

Please follow the Twitter handles below for more Day of Action tweets:

[@EdVotes](https://twitter.com/EdVotes)

[@NEAToday](https://twitter.com/NEAToday)

[@NEAMedia](https://twitter.com/NEAMedia)

And "like" us on Facebook

Speak Up for Education and Kids and NEA Today.



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DAY OF ACTION

FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

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On **December 9th** educators will join parents, students and community leaders across the country to hold local actions that demand their direct involvement in decisions that impact public schools. In communities across the country, these key stakeholders are demanding more for America's students than the current market-driven reforms that proliferate rather than address inequity. Rather than corporate takeover, our communities are demanding that those who know our students best devise and implement community-driven solutions to decrease opportunity gaps in American education.

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Goals for the Day of Action

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- 1 Unite as Educators:** Parents, educators and students unite around a vision of public schools where local solutions and student-centered approaches are favored over top-down strategies that don't benefit all students.
 - 2 Unify our Voice:** Begin to create a national echo chamber for our vision and narrative.
 - 3 Create a Movement:** Support ongoing local work and issues by connecting them to a national movement.
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www.EdVotes.org/OurSchools

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 **Download Your Day of Action Toolkit!**

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 **Register Your Event**