



# Raise YOUR Hand

OUR SCHOOLS!  
OUR SOLUTIONS!



## DAY OF ACTION FOR GREAT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

12 • 9 • 13

DAY OF ACTION MEDIA TIPS TOOLKIT



*Great Public Schools for Every Student*



# 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:

**Miguel Gonzalez**, NEA, Center for Communications

[mgonzalez@nea.org](mailto:mgonzalez@nea.org)

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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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 childrens' 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.**