

Making a Plan for the May 4th Walk-In

The power of the walk-in comes from educators, parents, students and community members all walking in to school together. That means working together from the start to plan the walk-in. Use the steps and questions below to guide your planning for the walk-in on May 4.

Contact jtang@btu.org or visit www.reclaimourschools.org for more resources.

1. Choose your schools based on this suggested criteria:

- Strong participation in Sticker Fridays and other actions
- Active BTU members
- Existing relationships with parents and students
- Urgent issues
- Deep school pride

2. Organize a school-site meeting(s) with educators, parents and community members to plan the walk-in:

- Identify the goal for the walk-in.
- Choose themes and the message.
- Develop an outreach plan that includes member-to-member conversations.
- Create the May 4 program and schedule (see sample provided).
- Develop the overall turnout plan, which includes follow-up to remind and confirm people who said “yes” or “maybe” they will attend.

3. Recruit union members at each school:

- Call a work-site meeting and announce the walk-in.
- Join a union webinar or meeting to hear what other schools are doing for their walk-ins.
- Put fliers on the school bulletin board and in educators’ mailboxes.
- Through one-on-one conversations, ask members to attend the action and sign commitment cards.
- Use the cards to keep track of which members join the action and to record conversations in the union database.
- Sign members up to help plan the event and delegate roles for outreach.
- Enlist support from former or retired educators who may still have close ties to the school.

4. Recruit parents, community members and students:

- Reach out to your parent/student school-based organization leadership. (i.e. parent and student councils.)
- Ask each educator to identify and call five parents to personally invite them to the walk-in.
- Involve the front office staff, since they often interact with visitors more frequently and may be able to share a flyer or provide details about the walk-in.
- Engage school volunteers. Invite them to help plan the walk-in and ask them to circulate information to their friends and families.
- Think about other groups that are connected to the school, like the Boys and Girls Club, Kiwanis Club, etc., and contact them to explain the event and enlist their support.
- Leaflet before and after school hours with fliers and either sign-up sheets or commitment cards.
- Make presentations at community events such as meetings of neighborhood associations and places of worship, and at education-related events.

- Spread the word during school-sponsored activities, like athletic events, open houses, performances and cultural nights.
- Canvass the neighborhood and knock on doors to explain the action and ask people to participate.
- Set up a coffee chat with the principal for May 4, so parents are welcomed for a deeper conversation after the walk-in.
- Use existing parent-teacher conferences and meetings to promote the May 4 walk-in.

THE SCIENCE OF NUMBERS: Not all who say they'll come will come!

During the planning meeting(s) at the school site, set a goal for the number of people you want to attend and work backward to see if your goal is achievable.

For example, if you want **25** people to attend:

- About 40 people will need to say yes (since some may not show up).
- Reach out to about 80 people, because about 50 percent of those you talk to will likely say yes.

To get 25 participants, you need to reach 80 people!

Don't rely heavily on emails or flyers. Put more energy into having conversations so you can build deeper connections with those who care about the school! Create an outreach plan that aims to connect with three times the number of people you want to attend the walk-in.

5. Think about the actual program for May 4:

- Identify speakers for the walk-in. Make sure they include representative voices from students, parents, educators and other community members.
- How can the walk-in become more newsworthy? Are there any mascots, local celebrities or elected officials that could attract media?
 - i. If you need help attracting media, let us know
- What presentations can help make the day a success? Is there a report, student-inspired artwork or a music group that can generate excitement or emphasize your message?
- Are there additional needs like coffee, donuts or a sign-making station?
- Who's responsible for photography, social media, helping reporters, etc.?
- Make a list of details and assign someone to each detail!
- Make sure you have sign-in sheets so you can stay in touch with everyone who attends.

6. Post-May 4 Steps:

- Send thank-you notes to all walk-in participants and organizers.
- Collect turnout numbers, photos and media clips to send to the AFT and AROS (Send them to jtang@btu.org and we will compile them to send to AFT and AROS.)
- Reconvene the planning committee to assess what worked well, what could be improved, and key lessons for moving forward with your campaign.
- What's the next action in your campaign? How will you recruit walk-in participants to join it? Can you announce the next action on May 4?