



RYSE CAMPUS CLIMATE CHALLENGE HIGH SCHOOL GUIDE

Students and young people have always been at the forefront of movements for social and environmental change. One does not have to search long to find examples throughout history of students leading movements for change. Students were on the front lines protesting the Vietnam War, demanding for divestment from companies that supported the Apartheid government of South Africa and even ending sweatshop labor for many companies. Our generation faces a new challenge: global climate change. As students, we occupy a unique position, while many of us are still too young to vote it is our collective voice, our passion, unwavering optimism and belief in a better future that will ensure the solutions to global climate change will come to fruition.

We have all the tools necessary to solve climate change:

- Today- we can get a quarter of our energy from wind and solar. In fact, to provide 20% of the nation's electricity only 0.6% of the land of the lower 48 states would have to be developed with wind turbines.
- Today- we can make cars that get over 100 miles to the gallon, yet the average car in the U.S. only gets 20 miles to the gallon.
- Today- Cities like Portland have already reduced their global warming pollution down to safe levels and get 100% of their energy from wind and solar power.
- All we need is you! This toolkit is designed to give you all the resource you need to become part of the movement for justice and clean energy.

Goals:

The Goals for the Campus Climate Challenge are threefold:

- 1.** The long term goal is to reduce the country's global warming pollution to zero. In the short term this means getting your schools administration or your school district to **adopt global warming solutions** that will be implemented next year. As your school joins with over 500 other schools in the challenge, the long term goal becomes more possible.
- 2. Inspire and educate** students, teachers, and staff at your school about their responsibility and ability to stop global warming. Ideally, global warming and its solutions will become a topic in every class and discipline.
- 3. Promote your work in your own community.** It is crucial that you engage with the public, use your work on campus to pressure key decision makers i.e. government officials. Publicize what your victories and what you are doing to local media outlets. This is a great way for you to spark the imagination of your community, to inspire them to strive to be green and reduce their own negative climate impact.

Getting Organized:

Get together: Assemble a challenge team, of three or more committed students and if possible a teacher who can help you navigate the bureaucracy of your school's administration. Register your Challenge team at www.campusclimatechallenge.org. Remember to mark RYSE as your support organization- this way we can track your successes. Keep reading this toolkit, as it will help you put together a detailed campaign plan. Also, contact us anytime with any questions. We would love to help you. You can email Levana at levana@ran.org.

Research: In order to change the system you have to understand it. Research your school's existing policies. What kind of energy practices does your school have in place? Check to see if your school or community has done a greenhouse gas inventory. If not you will want to conduct one yourself. The most helpful resource we know of for conducting a greenhouse gas inventory is

through the Environmental Protection Agency.

Visit their website:

<http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/school.html>

and download the EPA's Climate CHange Emission Calculator Kit (Climate CHECK) (WinZip or Excel spreadsheet, 3.4 MB)

This will tell you where your school is wasting the most energy. And prepare you for figuring out where you can make reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Does your school have a bus system that could be changed to hybrid, efficient, or alternative fuel vehicle fleets?

Are there new building projects that are planned or in need of renovation?

Has your school attempted to increase energy efficiency?

Does your school purchase clean energy from its utility provider?

Does your school effectively recycle materials?

Share your findings:

We recommend you write up a simple report about your findings and share it with as many people at school as you can. If you have a school paper, write an article with your findings in it. Ask all the science teachers to share it with their classes. Talk with people about it and see if others want to join you to work to reduce your school's emissions.

Decide your goals:

We stated the Campus Climate Challenge goals above, but what are your group's goals for the year? What does your group want to achieve by next month or by next semester or trimester? How about by next week? Your goals should be clearly communicated and everyone in your group should agree on them. As your group grows and matures your goals will become more concrete. It is essential that you keep coming back to your goals, as this will help you maintain focus and direction. As you go along, we recommend Listing your goals and the tasks necessary to achieve each one with the date things should be done by, and who will do what.

Decide your ask:

What are you asking for? Are you asking that the school get fifty percent of their energy for renewable sources within the next five years? Are you requesting that your transportation vehicles be upgraded to more fuel efficient ones? What do you want to get your school to commit to?

It is a good idea to start by asking for things that your administration will be willing and able to implement by the next year. Avoiding complicated "asks" from your administration will ensure that you end the year with a solid victory that will allow you build the momentum for the next year. Taking this approach will make it more likely that your school will take more ambitious steps in the future. This doesn't mean that you should not support efforts on the part of your school to undertake more comprehensive and complete efforts, including carbon inventories or carbon committees. We simply recommend that you prioritize shorter term asks to keep the momentum going.

Review your options. What is a realistic goal for your school? If your school does not own any cars, asking for a “green fleet” wouldn’t make sense. Below is a brief summary of potential “asks”:

Renewable Energy:

To get as much of your school’s electricity as possible from renewable sources, either from purchasing renewable energy from the local utility or by generating more energy on-campus from on-site solar panels and or wind turbines.

Conservation/Efficiency:

A conservation/efficiency policy can be as simple as of turning off all your school’s computers at night, replacing all lighting with compact florescent bulbs, purchasing more efficient appliances, etc. This method can be the most cost

Transportation:

Decrease the usage of fossil fuel powered transportation. Upgrade your school’s vehicles to more fuel efficient ones. Encourage the use of buses and carpools.

Get feedback on your ask: After you have thought about the different ask options, you and your group should set up a meeting with the people at your school whose support you will need to get the policy you are asking for. The people may include your school’s facilities director, your Principal, the Student body Government and other student groups.

Your first meeting is a great way to test the feasibility of your ask. Your first meeting should follow this format:

- Introduce the Campus Climate Challenge
- Introduce what you are interested in pushing for
- Look for answers to the following question
 - What has already been done or being planned for?
 - What are the major obstacles to the your proposals?
 - What are the budgetary constraints?
 - What are people most likely to see happen?

From there listen and get advice about what you should be advocating for. It may be that your school is already willing to adopt comprehensive environmental policies. Keep an open mind; you never know where you might find potential allies. This meeting should allow you to have a clear understanding of the type of policy you should advocate for and the best strategy to achieve your desired ends.

Submit your ask: At this point you have done all the hard work, now it's about submitting your proposal to the right people. Ideally you should submit your proposal with a cover letter to the person or people responsible for making the decision. You might not be able to submit your ask to the person directly in charge, but your objective should be to give it to the person closest to the ultimate decision maker.

Once you have submitted your ask you should set up a meeting with the decision maker. In the meeting, introduce the Campus Climate Challenge and your goals for your school.