



# SCHOOL ADVOCACY 101

The bureaucracy of a school board might be intimidating and seem impenetrable. Don't let that stop you from creating change within your school. Here are some tips for how to go about transitioning your school to clean energy.

## STEP 1

Before you determine the how, you must determine the why? Why is the transition to clean energy important for your school specifically?

- Research the history of your community. What environmental activism has occurred in the past, and what campaigns are occurring in the present? This is important to keep in mind and local activists can be key figures in helping your campaign.
- Understand the environmental concerns in your area. Are there any potentially harmful infrastructural elements such as highways, factories, or energy facilities? Have there been any climate-related disasters in recent years? How does the climate crisis affect your community?
- Who has power and who doesn't? Who in your community has the power to promote change (such as politicians, landowners, etc.), and who is most disadvantaged in your community?

## STEP 2

The Green Schools leadership team is here to support you! They are a great resource to aid you in your mission to transition your school to clean energy. Fill out [this form](#) to set up a one-on-one meeting with a Green Schools member or reach out to [info@greenschoolscampaign.org](mailto:info@greenschoolscampaign.org).

## STEP 3

The following is based on resources created by the Green Schools Campaign; to learn more check out their website at [www.greenschoolsnow.org](http://www.greenschoolsnow.org).

Gather a group of students and adults who are also interested in environmental activism and clean energy.

- Some great places to start include social media posts and reaching out to environmentally-centered clubs, like-minded peers, and local organizations.
- Share GSC resources/pamphlets on why clean energy is important.
- Power Mapping: gather adult allies who can help you reach your goals.
  - Allies "inside the system," such as administrators or teachers.
    - **Tip:** the PTA and the teacher's union could be important campaigning resources.
  - Allies outside of school, like parents, local activists, or a Climate Reality Leader.
- There is power in numbers, so the main goal is to gather as many people as possible. Perhaps start a petition so that even those who cannot commit a huge amount of time can still be involved.

## STEP 4

Create a campaign plan.

Before going to the school board, you and your team should have a strong idea of what exactly you are asking for and how you will go about doing so. A campaign plan will consist of the following elements:

- **Goals & Demands:** the general gist is to transition schools to 100% clean energy by 2030, but there will be more specific demands based on the status quo of each school district.
- **Targets:** Identify important decision-makers in your area. These will be the people who you will need to convince to make the change to clean energy. Every school district is different, depending on population and location, so make sure to complete background research on how your location's department of education functions. Common key players include:
  - School administration (principal, deans).
  - In some regions, the chancellor or superintendent.
  - The school board, often composed of 3-7 members.
    - Look into what role members of your school board play in your community. They may have different priorities that you can consider. Consider looking at their internet presence for an idea of what their political views are.
- **Audience:** Determine who in your community might be for and against your campaign.
- **Resources:** this can include time, people, technology, etc. Advocacy communications to elected officials may be covered by lobbying rules. Take a moment to look up the lobbying rules for your local school district, municipality, and state.

## STEP 5

Once a decision has been made regarding a clean energy transition, then you must consider implementation. A transition to clean energy can seem like a large undertaking, so it's important to always have an open dialogue with who will be carrying out the implementation. People to consider speaking with include:

- Your school's facilities manager.
- If relevant, your school's sustainability director or sustainability task force.

**Remember:** successful campaigns don't occur within a month, or often even a year! Staying committed, patient, and flexible is key.

Reach out to [info@greenschoolscampaign.org](mailto:info@greenschoolscampaign.org) for more.