

100% Clean Energy School Districts Campaign

ORGANIZING TOOLKIT



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MOBILIZING FAMILIES FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS



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ORGANIZING TOOLKIT

Acknowledgements

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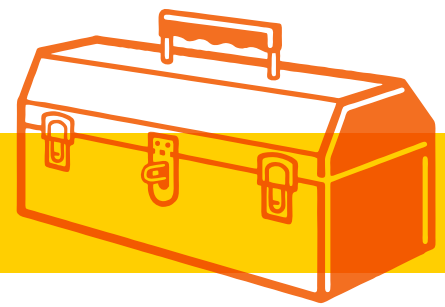
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Welcome to the toolkit



This toolkit is for parents, students, teachers, and others who are interested in helping move school districts toward 100% clean energy. Doing so will help cut carbon pollution, save money that districts can invest back into students and classrooms, benefit student health by improving indoor air quality, and raise the clean energy learning curve of students who will one day be on the frontlines of implementing climate solutions. This toolkit is also for those who believe in the goal of powering our society with 100% clean energy. Making a 100% clean energy future a reality will require champions sparking change in school districts across the country.

This toolkit is designed to be user-friendly. We kick things off with the case for 100% Clean Energy School Districts, and then walk through how to run a successful campaign to move *your* school district to commit to 100% clean energy. At the end, you will find a set of tools to help you move easily through the steps of the campaign.

In addition to this organizing toolkit, our [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) will help you gain deeper knowledge on substantive issues to assist in your campaign.

The 100% Clean Energy School Districts toolkit was created through a collaboration between Sierra Club's Climate Parents and Ready for 100 campaigns, and Generation 180's Solar Schools campaign. We are working together to help our country's schools become fully powered by clean energy. Climate Parents and Ready for 100 are driving advocacy efforts around the country to move school districts to commit to 100% clean energy. Generation 180's Solar Schools campaign is aligning with these efforts by supporting individuals advocating for solar energy in their local schools and districts.

ABOUT SIERRA CLUB'S CLIMATE PARENTS AND READY FOR 100 CAMPAIGNS

Climate Parents is a diverse national movement of parents and families mobilizing for clean energy and climate solutions. We influence leaders to implement policies that protect youth and communities from

the health and climate impacts of burning fossil fuels, among other activities. The Ready for 100 campaign is a movement of people inspiring our leaders to envision healthier communities powered by 100% clean energy. Ready for 100 has moved over 100 cities, from Atlanta to San Diego, to commit to 100% clean energy.

ABOUT OUR 100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL DISTRICTS CAMPAIGN

Sierra Club's Climate Parents and Ready for 100 campaigns are working to transition school districts to 100% clean energy. We're working in collaboration with parents, students, teachers and also clean energy and community allies — including Sierra Club chapters, local groups and the Sierra Student Coalition. We want to get fossil fuels out of schools, and power school buildings with 100% clean, renewable energy. We see this as a way to help young people better understand and embrace clean energy and climate solutions, and also as a way for school districts — many which are under-resourced — to save money on energy that can be invested into students and classrooms. Also, energy efficiency improvements can lead to “healthier buildings” with better indoor air quality, which is linked to higher student performance. Strategically, our campaign focused on the energy used to power, heat and cool school buildings, but there is ample opportunity to focus on school transportation as well.

ABOUT GENERATION 180

[Generation 180](#) is a nonprofit organization committed to spreading energy awareness — the cultural shift driven by individuals and communities who embrace clean energy choices such as solar energy, electric vehicles, LED lighting, and energy efficiency. Generation 180's programs, content, and growing network of volunteer teams advance the energy awareness movement by encouraging individuals and communities to adopt clean energy solutions, such as solar powered schools.

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Now is the Time for 100% Clean Energy School Districts!

WHY NOW?

We can achieve our goal of 100% clean energy if we work together to build it. We know that burning fossil fuels accelerates global warming and pollutes our air and water, which jeopardizes the well-being of young people, communities, and future generations. Momentum toward a clean energy future is building. The cost of renewable energy has been steadily declining and are now on par or more affordable than many conventional generation technologies.¹ With schools nationwide spending \$8 billion per year on energy costs,² the largest expense after personnel, there is now a tremendous opportunity for school districts to save money and balance tight budgets by switching to clean energy.

WHY SCHOOLS?

Schools are major energy consumers and, as such, are an important focal point in the clean energy movement. K-12 public schools in the U.S. manage

two million acres of land and the equivalent of almost half the square footage of all commercial office space.³ Private schools (including religious schools) are not included in this statistic but account for about a third as many students as public schools. The energy used by American K-12 schools is responsible for as much greenhouse gas pollution as 18 coal-fired power plants or 15.4 million cars.⁴ Children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of air pollution, and young people in low-income communities are disproportionately impacted. By transitioning to 100% clean energy, school districts can show tremendous leadership in both nurturing the minds, and protecting the health, of students.

Powering school districts with 100% clean energy will have positive ripple effects in the community, exposing families, local businesses, and government to the health and environmental benefits of using clean energy, and demonstrating



WHY SHIFT SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO 100% CLEAN ENERGY?

Schools Are a Major Consumer of Energy

- K-12 schools spend \$8 billion a year on energy costs nationally, second only to personnel as school districts' biggest expense.⁷
- American K-12 schools consume about 8% of all the energy used in commercial buildings, including as much energy as 43% of all office space nationwide. They emit as much CO₂ as 18 coal-fired power plants and the same amount of greenhouse gases as one in seven passenger cars.⁸

Benefits of 100% Clean Energy

Position school districts as leaders on climate action

- Because young people are particularly vulnerable to both health risks from fossil fuel pollution and climate impacts, school communities are important stakeholders advocating for and benefitting from climate solutions like 100% Clean Energy School Districts.
- Schools can lower their carbon emissions by 30% or more through efficiency measures, and can entirely offset the climate impacts of their energy use by shifting to 100% clean energy.
- If all schools transitioned to 100% clean energy it would have the same climate benefits as taking 1 in every 7 cars off the road.⁹

Improve students' health and academic performance

- Shifting to clean energy improves air quality in surrounding communities.
- Student achievement can be compromised by health effects from poor ventilation, uncomfortable temperatures, inadequate lighting, mold, and noise. Students who already struggle in school are at a particular disadvantage.⁹ Clean energy solutions — such as efficiency and heating and cooling upgrades — can simultaneously address these challenges, creating significantly better conditions for student health and learning.
- These upgrades can also reduce school days missed due to asthma, which causes more than 13 million school absences per year¹¹ and disproportionately impacts low-income youth and children of color.¹²

Save money on energy bills that can be invested in students and classrooms

- Energy efficiency measures alone can save U.S. schools \$2 billion a year, a quarter of all energy costs.¹³
- Solar is cheaper than ever. The cost of solar panels is one-third of what it was just 10 years ago¹⁴ and many financing pathways allow schools to avoid upfront costs.
- Space heating and cooling represent half of all energy use in schools; efficient air-source or geothermal heat pumps can offset significant energy use.
- Money saved can be redirected to academic and enrichment programs, or facility upgrades.

Expand educational opportunities

- On-campus clean energy projects provide exciting real-world, project-based learning opportunities for classes in science, technology, engineering, and math.
- Engaged schools inspire broader community awareness of clean energy solutions.

Create new jobs

- The solar and wind industries employ 476,000 Americans and growing: the solar and wind workforce increased by 35% and 32% respectively in just one year.¹⁵
- 1.9 million Americans have part- or full-time employment in energy efficiency.¹⁶

Enhance community resilience

- According to the American Red Cross, schools are the most common locations for emergency shelter and services. Coupling clean electricity and power storage can help school-based evacuation centers maintain power and heat, expanding their ability to serve communities during the hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters that are becoming more frequent in the era of climate change.

the viability and affordability of clean energy solutions. Within districts, clean energy schools can enhance learning by serving as real-world STEM laboratories for students.

In addition, schools powered by solar energy equipped with battery storage can build community resilience in the era of climate change. Schools often serve as emergency shelters when community members are evacuated from their homes due to floods, wildfires, and other disasters. Ensuring they can independently provide heat and light when grid power is down will help keep families safer in times of crisis.

WHY 100%?

A commitment to 100% clean energy sets a bold and aspirational goal. One hundred percent clean energy is achieved when the amount of clean energy brought into, or generated by, schools within a district equals or exceeds 100% of the annual energy consumed within that school or district. Our campaign defines clean energy as all onsite energy use, including both electricity and fuels used for heating, cooling, and cooking. A goal of “100%” encourages a total transition to clean energy, as opposed to incremental change. It also helps to both ensure that current and future investments and projects align with this long-term vision, and galvanize those responsible for implementation. Dozens of cities and major businesses such as Apple and Google have made 100% commitments. Helping school districts do the same is an important investment in the health and well-being of our youth and our communities.

THE OPPORTUNITY

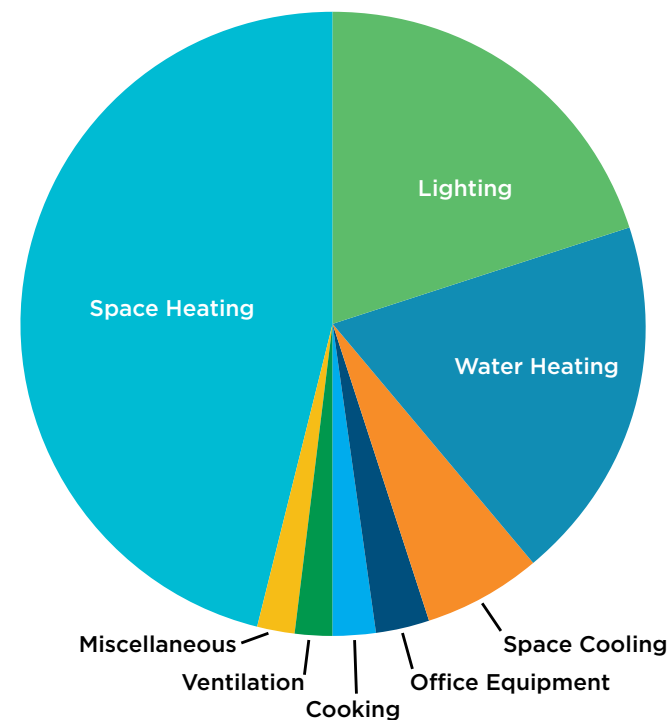
A number of schools and school districts, such as those listed in the box on page 4, have already made the transition to 100% clean energy, and many others are moving towards achieving this goal. A feasibility study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory — the federal lab focused on research, development, and deployment of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies — shows that schools producing enough renewable energy to meet their own consumption needs are viable in every part of the country.⁵

There has been a particularly rapid increase

in school districts' adoption of solar power. In just the last three years, the number of “solar schools” in the United States has increased by almost 50%. Today, almost 5,500 U.S. schools serving about 4 million K-12 students get at least a portion of their power from the sun.⁶ While there has been tremendous growth, only 5 percent of K-12 schools currently use solar energy and other technologies — such as wind power and geothermal heating and cooling technologies — are only just beginning to take root in schools.

Encouraging school boards in communities across the country to make the switch to 100% clean energy requires grassroots action. Students, parents, teachers, principals, superintendents, and other community members all have the power to spark interest, build momentum, and motivate decision makers to transition. This toolkit provides the information and resources individuals need to move schools forward on the path to a clean energy future.

FIGURE 1: Breakdown of Energy Use in K-12 Schools



Source: U.S. Department of Energy data, cited in: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (2011). *Energy Efficiency Programs in K-12 Schools: A Guide to Developing and Implementing Greenhouse Gas Reduction Programs*.

How Does a School District Achieve 100% Clean Energy?

Most school districts will utilize a mix of approaches to achieve 100% clean energy. The pathway can vary significantly from one school district to another, depending on factors such as size of the school district, availability of local financial incentives, existing building infrastructure, and local climate and weather conditions.

For instance, one district may start with energy efficiency improvements, but another may find that the optimal first step is installing solar right away and then investing cost savings from lower energy bills into energy efficiency. One school may opt to install energy efficient air-source heat pumps while another may choose to make the switch to geothermal heating and cooling systems. Our [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) provides detailed steps and helpful resources for the various pathways that school districts can take to implement their clean energy commitments.

Here are some great examples of school district clean energy leadership:

GOING ALL IN



San Francisco Unified School District has set the ambitious target of becoming carbon-neutral by 2040. The school board — which houses 55,600 students in 136 schools — passed a Carbon Neutral Schools Resolution¹⁷ calling for the district to phase out fossil fuel use in that time frame, including a

goal to generate all of its own power onsite by 2050, eliminate all gas usage by 2040, design all new buildings to generate their own power onsite, and a range of other measures such as dramatically reducing the emissions of its vehicle fleet. San Francisco's school district is on track to demonstrate that it's possible to achieve carbon neutrality at little-to-no additional cost. In the 10 years since it launched this initiative, SFUSD has saved over \$16 million in energy costs.¹⁸



SAVING/AVOIDING UPFRONT COSTS WITH POWER PURCHASE AGREEMENTS

The vast majority of solar being installed on schools is through the use of power purchase agreements, or PPA's. These are financial arrangements in which a third-party renewable energy provider owns, installs, maintains and operates a renewable energy system on a school district site. In New York, the Broadalbin-Perth Central School District — serving about 1,800 students in 4 schools — is installing a 2-megawatt solar array

on 10 acres of land as part of an ambitious capital improvement project to modernize classrooms and address district infrastructure needs. The solar array is expected to generate \$5.3 million in savings over 25 years, meet 100% of the District's energy needs, and produce excess renewable electricity that can be sold to the wider community. The District assumed no upfront costs by negotiating a power purchasing agreement. The project will include customized curricula for the district, provided by the developer and based on real-time clean energy data produced by the array.¹⁹



MAKING OUTSIZED IMPACT WITH COMMUNITY SOLAR

Red Wing Public Schools in Minnesota achieved 100% clean energy for its seven schools by installing a 6-megawatt [solar array](#) on a parcel of land they owned adjacent to a school and launching a community solar gardens project. In the first 25 years of the project, Red Wing Public Schools — which serves about 2,800 students in 6 schools — is set to save approximately \$6 million in energy costs and an additional \$1 million in lease revenue from other customers who receive power from the project. The District has also worked with the installer — IPS solar — to develop and implement STEM [curricula](#) tied to the solar project. Several other school districts in Minnesota — such as Annandale, Chisago, St. Cloud, and Columbia Heights School Districts — have achieved 100% clean energy by partnering with community solar projects.²⁰



DESIGNING FROM THE GROUND UP

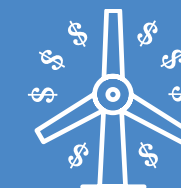
Discovery Elementary School in Arlington, VA, is a new school that was designed to be a net-zero building, one in which all energy consumed is generated onsite. To achieve this, they first minimized energy use intensity — the amount of

energy used in a unit of building volume — by incorporating a range of design elements, including optimal solar orientation and shading, LED lighting, and low-energy landscaping water systems. They also installed solar panels, solar thermal water heating, and geothermal pumps for heating and cooling. The architects were able to build a zero energy school within the district-allocated budget for the project, and it has been consistently producing more clean energy onsite than the building consumes.



INVESTING IN EFFICIENCY

The Council Rock School District in Newtown, PA, created an energy management program in 2005 for its 17 facilities, which house 12,000 students. The District improved its energy performance by 40 percent within a few years, earning it recognition as an Energy Star* leader. Through its energy efficiency actions, the District reduced its annual CO₂ emissions by more than 7,000 metric tons — equivalent to taking 1,300 vehicles off the road — saving the District \$7.1 million over 4 years.²¹



SAVING MONEY WITH COMMUNITY WIND ENERGY

Eldora-New Providence Community Schools, a small school district in Iowa, launched a community wind project in 2002. The District secured \$800,000 in low- and no-interest loans and installed a 750 kilowatt turbine on the grounds of the District's high school. The District negotiated an agreement with their utility company to have their turbine offset their electricity use district-wide, and sell excess power back to the grid. The project has been a success and remains in operation today, generating well over a million kilowatt hours, and saving the District over \$100,000 in utility costs, each year.²²

Clean Energy Financing Solutions

Energy efficiency and renewable energy projects can often help school districts save money right away, and most certainly do so in the long term. While addressing upfront capital investment issues requires some homework, there are many viable financing paths to assist school districts in transitioning to 100% clean energy.

Once a school district is committed to the switch, a designated staff person will typically develop a master plan²³ for financing infrastructure upgrades and renewable energy generation that may include a range of options such as:

- **TRADITIONAL FINANCING THROUGH BONDS** and capital budgets (funds earmarked for facilities maintenance and construction);
- **THIRD-PARTY OWNERSHIP OF SOLAR ENERGY** systems that minimize upfront capital investment by schools;
- **AN ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE CONTRACT** that uses future energy savings to pay for facility upgrades;
- **STATE OR FEDERAL INCENTIVES** through tax credits, deductions, grants, loans, or rebates;
- **UTILITY INCENTIVES** for energy efficiency and bond funding;
- **REVENUE GENERATION** from selling excess clean energy back into the local power grid.

By understanding the financing options, you can help your school system representatives determine the right pathway for your district. As mentioned above, you can learn more by reviewing the [*100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook*](#). For more detail specific to solar financing, see [*Brighter Future: A Study on Solar in U.S. Schools*](#).





Solar canopy at elementary school powers classrooms and provides electric vehicle charging capacity
Photo Credit: Frank Spada

Running a Successful 100% Clean Energy School District Campaign

“The board wants to respond to what the community wants. Much of our [clean energy] action was in response to community interest. There’s a lot of power there.”

— GHITA CARROLL,
Sustainability Coordinator, Boulder Valley School District

This section outlines the steps you can take to run a 100% Clean Energy School District campaign in your community. Once you read through these organizing steps and decide you’d like to run a campaign, the best thing you can do is [contact us](#) so that we can provide you with campaign resources, support your organizing efforts, and connect you with other campaigns we are supporting. We’re launching a five-year initiative to move school districts to 100% clean energy, and our goal is to engage thousands of volunteers at the grassroots level in this effort.

Depending on your existing relationship with your school district — whether you’re a parent, student, teacher, or administrator already interacting with

schools every day, or whether you’re an activist outside the school community excited to see solar on more schools — your approach may be a bit different.

100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL DISTRICT CAMPAIGN: THE BIG PICTURE STRATEGY

The heart of our strategy in moving districts to 100% clean energy hinges on school boards making a formal commitment with a school board resolution. A 100% clean energy resolution sets a clear and aspirational goal while creating a strong mandate for staff to take action. The school board is typically an elected body that will respond to advocacy efforts of parents, students, teachers, and community members. By keeping pressure on your school board members, you can help pass a 100% clean energy resolution.

In many cases, school district decision makers will need grassroots pressure to spark their interest, help them understand the steps to achieving this goal, and maintain momentum throughout the process. In other instances, there may be immediate interest and your engagement will help move things along. Either way, you will want to help craft an approach that aligns with your district’s broader sustainability efforts.

The following four campaign phases provide a framework to successfully move school districts to a 100% clean energy commitment.

- PHASE 1:** Plan and Launch Your Campaign
- PHASE 2:** Build Support
- PHASE 3:** Win a Commitment
- PHASE 4:** Support Implementation

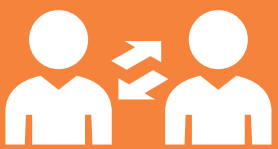
A NOTE FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLS:

If you are interested in helping your private school achieve 100% clean energy, the general organizing principles in this toolkit still apply. You can follow these phases and steps to secure a commitment from the leaders at your school and support your school, or system of independent or religious schools, in meeting that target.




School buildings equipped with all-electric heating and cooling, plus solar, eliminate use of fossil fuels/natural gas
Photo Credit: Frank Spada


PHASE 1: PLAN AND LAUNCH YOUR CAMPAIGN




STEP 1:
Contact Us!




STEP 2:
Build a Core Team



STEP 3:
Gather the Information You Need



STEP 4:
Identify Your Targets



STEP 5:
Make a Power Map of Your Targets and Influencers

PHASE 2: BUILD SUPPORT



STEP 1:
Create a Strategy and Workplan



STEP 2:
Build Your Messaging and Communications Plan




STEP 4:
Meet With Decision-Makers and Key Influencers




STEP 4:
Build Your Base


PHASE 3: WIN A COMMITMENT



STEP 1:
Develop a Draft 100% Clean Energy School Board Resolution




STEP 2:
Build Broad Community Support for Your 100% Clean Energy Resolution




STEP 3:
Pitch the School District & Secure a Commitment


PHASE 4: SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION




STEP 1:
Call for the Creation of an Implementation Team and Plan




STEP 2:
Ensure Accountability Towards Meeting the Target



STEP 3:
Maintain a Communications Bridge to the School Community and Beyond



STEP 4:
Create Opportunities for Classroom Learning about Climate, Clean Energy and STEM



STEP 5:
Leverage the School Board's Commitment Towards Broader Change

PHASE 1: PLAN AND LAUNCH YOUR CAMPAIGN

PHASE 1, STEP 1: CONTACT US!

This toolkit will give you a framework for how your campaign could unfold. We're here to help! In fact, our success depends on building a movement of people interested in moving school districts to 100% clean energy. A great first step is reaching out to us at info@climateparents.org to let us know you are interested in working with your school district, so that we can help provide support and connect you with other grassroots tools.

Sierra Club's Climate Parents and Ready for 100 campaigns are collaborating on 100% Clean Energy School Districts work in cities and towns around the country, and are looking forward to working with you.

We can support local campaigns in the following ways:

- Campaign development and planning;
- Identifying decision makers and influencers that are important for you to build relationships with;
- Support and guidance in developing a 100% Clean Energy School District resolution;
- Skill-building webinars that can assist you with refining your strategy and implementing tactics;
- Organizing and collaboration tools, talking points, sample presentations, and more;
- Guidance in developing a media plan; and
- Connections with other communities who are implementing similar campaigns, to share ideas and lessons learned.

PHASE 1, STEP 2: BUILD A CORE TEAM

Ultimately you want to have lots of people supporting your goal of moving your school district to adopt clean energy. But first you will want to recruit a core team of motivated people who share a vision of 100% Clean Energy School Districts and can work together to turn this vision into a reality. Start by identifying at least four to six people who are committed to taking the necessary steps to see this through from concept to implementation.

Recruit core team members

If you don't already have a team assembled, here are a few ways you could get started:

- Please reach out to us as you begin to plan your campaign at info@climateparents.org. We can connect you to Sierra Club Climate Parents and Ready for 100 volunteers as well as Sierra Club chapters in your area who may want to collaborate.
- Reach out to potential team members one-on-one. If you know of any parents, teachers, student groups, or other leaders who are active on related issues, start there. You can work together to identify other good candidates to recruit. Talk with potential team members individually to better understand their interest in the campaign, familiarity with clean energy issues, availability to participate, and what experience or contacts they have that could be helpful to the process.
- Host an exploratory meeting. You can invite interested people in the school community to attend in whatever way feels best to you. Outreach avenues could include district-wide PTA Councils and events. You could also start by creating a core team at one school in the district and building out from there. Try spreading the word via school websites and listservs, school

Facebook or Instagram pages, newsletters, PTA meetings, student clubs, or tabling at school or district-wide events. Be sure to bring a sign-in sheet or other way to get people's contact information.

Tips for building a core team

- Do what you can to engage diverse stakeholders, including parents, teachers, students, and local clean energy and climate justice advocates. It is important to seek out diverse contributors to ensure that all communities within the school or district are represented in this effort.
- Recruit for a diversity of skill sets, experience, and community connections. There will be a range of roles needed as you advance your campaign — some people will be a good fit for public speaking while others may be more comfortable with graphic design or media calls.
- Have fun with it! Setting a positive and collaborative tone for your work together will get you far.

Hold a kick-off meeting with your core team

- Share why 100% clean energy is important to you and to the school district.
- Identify the benefits to your school district and community. You can reference the benefits on [TOOL #1: 100% Clean Energy School Districts handout](#) at the back of this toolkit.



- Share your vision for the campaign.
- Invite participants to share their own visions and ideas.
- Request that participants commit to attending a more detailed campaign planning session and set a date.
- Assign team members to gather information so you can be prepared to effectively plan your campaign.

Collaborate effectively

Being clear about how your team operates will help develop a shared vision of the campaign and make it easier to welcome and orient new people so they can participate fully. Determine how your team wants to work together by answering some of these questions:

- **REGULAR MEETINGS:** It's important to have regular meetings to develop your plans and to deepen working relationships with your team. Have a well-thought-out agenda, end meetings or calls by agreeing upon next steps, and then check in on the status of those items at the beginning of your next meeting. In-person meetings are helpful, and conference calls can be helpful as well.
- **DECISION MAKING:** How will decisions be made in your group? This guide to [decision making structures](#) can help. Another useful resource for effective group work is Seeds For Change's [guide for meetings](#).
- **ACCOUNTABILITY:** Create a positive culture of accountability. In other words, establish what commitments you are making to the project as well as more day-to-day things like meeting deadlines for completing tasks.
- **GROUND RULES:** What norms do you want to establish for working together? Lay some meeting ground rules together. Many organizations call these "norms." [Here is an example](#), but it's always best to develop your own with your team.
- **COMMUNICATIONS PLATFORMS:** How do you want to communicate with your team between meetings (e.g., email, phone calls, text, or an online communication platform like [Slack](#))?

How often? Teams should aim to be in contact fairly frequently and the core team driving the campaign should be in regular contact to keep things moving forward.

Clarify roles and responsibilities

The agenda for your planning meeting(s) should include figuring out how to divide up roles and responsibilities among your group. Ideally, everyone will contribute based on the unique skills and resources they bring to the team, understanding that each is necessary to adequately develop your campaign plan and reach the ultimate goal. It's important to clearly identify the people who are the "go-to" leaders of the campaign. They will typically be devoting the most time to the effort and should have a big-picture view of the plan and steps being taken.



PHASE 1, STEP 3: GATHER THE INFORMATION YOU NEED

Once you have a core group, you'll need to get a basic lay of the land to understand your school district's energy footprint, existing energy-related activities, and plans for shifting toward clean energy. We can support you in identifying sources of information. There will be plenty of opportunity to engage with experts, who can advise you on specific pathways to achieve 100% clean energy.

Understand the energy landscape

- Read our [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) to learn about pathways to 100% clean energy and related resources.
- Visit your school district's website to see if any sustainability activities are listed and to learn more about them.
- Meet with the district's sustainability director to understand the district's current energy profile and existing energy-related initiatives. You should seek advice on how to approach the campaign and insight into who else is likely to be supportive. If your district doesn't have a formal sustainability director, the facilities manager or another official may play this role on a more informal basis. If not, try and get a meeting with the superintendent. Remember that facilities managers and superintendents are

managing a wide range of interests, and may be more tentative than a sustainability director. Don't be discouraged if this is the case, there are many reasons 100% Clean Energy School Districts make sense beyond sustainability — from saving money to improving indoor air quality. These issues will interest district leaders across the board. Refer to [TOOL #2: Checklist for a first meeting with school district officials](#).

- Determine if there are any available local, state, or federal renewable energy incentives²⁴ available to the school district.
- Find out if your city, county, or state already has a commitment to 100% clean energy or other carbon emissions reduction goals. If your city has a 100% clean energy commitment, your school district campaign can help them achieve that goal and you may find additional support among city staff for your efforts at the school district level. We are happy to provide you with more information regarding 100% clean energy cities.
- Learn more about building [equity in school systems](#). We want to see cost savings from 100% clean energy be invested equitably into youth, and it's essential to understand why this is so important.

Understand the community landscape

In addition to understanding your district's energy landscape, you will also want to get an understanding of the larger community landscape.

- What are the important issues in the district? Many school districts are already invested in sustainability and clean energy efforts, but you'll find that others are less engaged on these issues. In general, school districts are juggling multiple priorities and goals. How can you make your campaign resonate with district priorities (e.g., saving money, alignment with their sustainability plan, etc).

Through conversations with other parents and teachers, meetings with other organizations engaged in the school district, and paying close attention to the news, you'll begin to get a sense of what people care about, and you'll learn how to make an argument for 100% clean energy that aligns with school district priorities.

- Who are the other organizations or individuals active in the district, around sustainability and/or other issues? In developing relationships with potential partner organizations, a good approach is holding one-on-one meetings and listening to community leaders talk about priority issues. Building authentic connections is a key goal. We can help provide guidance about how to reach out to, and build relationships with, diverse partners.
- Sierra Club's Climate Parents program has digital outreach tools that can help you connect with parents and other potentially interested people in your community who can be reached by email, social media and other methods.

 **PHASE 1, STEP 4: IDENTIFY YOUR TARGETS**

An essential step in organizing is identifying your target. Specifically, who is the person or people you're trying to influence? In order to do this, you need to think strategically about which arguments and which messengers, in addition to your core team, will compel your targets to support your 100% Clean Energy School District resolution.

You will learn more about these individuals once you meet with them. But to prepare, there's a lot you can find out through research and conversations with allies. What issues have they championed in the past? What can you learn about their priorities and interests on Linked-In or in news stories?

Primary target: Decision makers

Since your goal is to pass school board resolutions committing the district to 100% clean energy, your primary target is the school board. And once you identify — through preliminary conversations and fact finding — which school board members are fully with you and which you still need to persuade, our primary targets are those you need to move to win. Superintendents may also be primary targets because — depending on the culture of the school board — it's possible that if the superintendent isn't in agreement a proposal can't move forward.

- **SCHOOL BOARD:** When it comes to adopting a 100% clean energy commitment, the school

board is the responsible decisionmaking body. School board members are typically elected rather than appointed, and so are dependent on the support of their constituents. Well-organized stakeholders can be very influential.

- **SUPERINTENDENT:** The superintendent is another key constituent and, as the "CEO" of the school board, is typically responsible for overseeing implementation of decisions. Having the superintendent and assistant superintendent in support of a clean energy vision will likely go a long way in swaying the school board, and conversely, having the broad support of school board members will likely influence the superintendent.

Secondary targets: Influencers

Your secondary targets are those you need to persuade in order to move your primary targets. For instance, school board members who are not clean energy experts may want to hear where their district's sustainability and facilities managers stand on the idea of 100% Clean Energy School Districts. The same is true for the finance staff that would be involved in energy expenditures. It is important to identify all of the key influencers who need to align with the campaign to ensure that the resolution passes at the school board level.

- **SUSTAINABILITY AND ENERGY MANAGERS:** If your school district has sustainability or environment manager or staffperson, they should be your first point of contact. They are important allies of your campaign and will likely be able to help you understand district roles, policies,



PRIMARY TARGETS: DECISION MAKERS

- SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS
- SUPERINTENDENT
- PRINCIPALS (for independent school efforts)

SECONDARY TARGETS: INFLUENCERS

TOP PRIORITY

- FACILITIES DIRECTOR
- SUSTAINABILITY DIRECTOR
- FINANCE STAFF
- PRINCIPALS (for school district efforts)

OTHERS

- PTAs
- STUDENT GROUPS
- PARENTS, PARENT ORGANIZATIONS
- TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT

TERTIARY TARGETS: ADDITIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

- COMMUNITY ENERGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS
- COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS
- MEDIA

- CLEAN ENERGY BUSINESSES AND INVESTORS
- UTILITIES
- OTHER LOCAL CONSTITUENTS, E.G., LABOR UNIONS, FAITH GROUPS, SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

and politics. Ideally, you will have met with the district sustainability and/or facilities director in your information-gathering stage. Make sure you assess their interest and do your best to address any concerns they have early on, as their support will be critical to convincing other decision makers.

- **DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES AND GROUNDS:** In school districts that do not have sustainability directors, superintendents generally delegate energy management to their facilities manager. In these instances, it is likely that the facilities manager or director will be tasked with planning and implementing a clean energy mandate. But even in districts that have sustainability directors, facilities managers will be integrally involved in energy issues.
- **FINANCIAL MANAGER OR BUSINESS OFFICER:** While it's the school board's responsibility to ensure effective management of school resources, school board business officials typically manage the efficient use of resources. As the individual most familiar with the school district's finances, they are important influencers.



PHASE 1, STEP 5: MAKE A POWER MAP OF YOUR TARGETS AND INFLUENCERS

A power map is a visual representation of decision makers and influencers, showing how they are connected. It illustrates influence, opposition, and support, allowing the team to effectively create a path to the goal. You can use [TOOL #4: Power map template for 100% Clean Energy School Districts](#) to get you started.

There are many influencers in your community you can engage in this campaign, including (but not limited to): teachers and staff, PTAs, students and student clubs, local government, individual parents and parent organizations, service organizations, faith groups labor unions, clean energy business, investors and other industry professionals, and utilities. As you do research and build relationships, you'll learn which of these groups are potential allies and which have the ear of the school board. You will also get a sense for who may oppose your efforts. Knowing this is important too, so that you

can develop a strategy to limit their influence.

Here are some good questions to ask as you build your power map, keeping in mind that you will likely be refining it over time as you learn more:

- Who or what influences the decision makers?
- Who in your school or district's administration are supporters?
- Who or what might be a barrier?
- What are the different interest groups in your school or community that have a stake in clean energy?
- Given the importance of expanding equity and inclusion in most school districts, how can you develop a campaign where advocates for equity and justice are meaningfully involved?

The [Sierra Club Organizing Manual](#) has more detailed information about power mapping and community mapping—as well as other aspects of community organizing—if you would like to dive deeper.



PHASE 1 TOOLS (see Tools section):

- **TOOL #1:** 100% Clean Energy School Districts one-pager
- **TOOL #2:** Checklist for a first meeting with school district officials
- **TOOL #3:** Campaign work plan template

PHASE 2: BUILD SUPPORT



PHASE 2, STEP 1: CREATE A STRATEGY AND WORKPLAN

After recruiting your core team, convene in person, by phone, or by videoconference to lay the groundwork for action. In these meetings, you will want to cover the following:

Develop a campaign plan

Once the groundwork is laid for your team, you can start to build your local campaign plan. In your first campaign planning meeting, you should clarify the following:

- CAMPAIGN OUTCOME:** The campaign outcome will be your school board passing a 100% clean energy resolution.
- VISION:** The aspirational description of what you would like your campaign to accomplish in the short and long term future. Work to develop a shared vision of 100% clean, renewable energy for your school district.
- SOCIAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE:** We believe it's essential to root these campaigns in equity and inclusion. Consider how your actions will advance and help sustain a broader movement for both equity and climate action in schools. Some questions you may ask along the way include:
 - How can money saved on energy bills be reinvested into students and classrooms, particularly those with the highest needs?
 - How can student health be improved through energy efficiency investments that improve air quality?
 - How can helping a major energy consumer like your school district catalyze the broader community in the direction of 100% clean energy?

Running schools on clean energy is a meaningful climate solution and can help advance the deeper goal of both climate justice and intergenerational justice, given that carbon pollution and climate impacts disproportionately affect both youth and people of color. See [Sierra Club's Equity and Justice Principles](#) for more information. In addition, as you begin to work in collaboration, it's helpful to review the [Jemez Principles](#) for more insight into working across differences in a manner that fully embraces and promotes equity and inclusion.

- STRATEGY:** The next step in the planning process is determining the path to reach your goal. That path is your strategy, and should include a broad range of opportunities to take action and influence your decision maker, which, in most cases, is your school board. Who are the primary decision makers and what will it take to turn them into champions of clean energy?
- TACTICS:** Tactics are the specific actions you carefully plan along the path to achieve campaign goals and implement your strategy. As a team, determine what messages, actions, events, and people will appeal to, or influence, your energy policy maker.
- CAMPAIGN BENCHMARKS:** Benchmarks are the intermediate wins that build on each other to create measurable momentum toward your goal. What will the campaign accomplish in three months? Six months?
- TIMELINE:** Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign has typically seen city commitments to 100% clean energy take place within 3 months to a year. We anticipate the timeline will vary just as much at the school district level, but in many cases this campaign can be launched and won within 6 months. Once you set a target date for

bringing a resolution to the board, you can start planning backwards to allocate timeframes for the various stages of the campaign.

Now that you have a good sense of what goals and tactics look like, you can use **TOOL #3: Campaign work plan template**. Be sure to fill it out as a team. The template includes a list of proposed campaign benchmarks and actions that you may choose to include. Planning can be challenging, but investing time at the front end of your effort will pay off. The order of the stages may vary according to many factors including your district's familiarity with clean energy, the openness of key district officials to a 100% clean energy resolution, the level of expertise within your core team, and the degree of community support.



PHASE 2, STEP 2: BUILD YOUR MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Once you target decision makers and influencers, you need to develop a communications plan. Creating a comprehensive and detailed campaign communications plan will help hone the message, crystallize the timeline, and cultivate spokespeople. Check out **TOOL #5: Communications plan template** at the back of the toolkit, which will walk you through the process for nailing down your plan.

A compelling organizing narrative will help you successfully connect with your audience about the transition to clean energy. What is the motivational story that connects big campaign goals to the immediate action you are asking people to take? What is a short repeatable slogan that you can use for in-person organizing and social media outreach?

An effective message should communicate the importance of your campaign in a clear, concise, and straightforward way. The communications plan template will help you craft these messages. They should be consistent across all your materials—including your press release, your social media posts, your printed materials, and anything public-facing. We can help you develop your message as well as social media content for milestone moments in the campaign.

In addition to the [communications plan template](#) in our tools, we also recommend that you peruse Sierra Club's [Volunteer and Chapter Communications Handbook](#), which contains a wealth of information and resources you may find useful.



PHASE 2, STEP 3: MEET WITH DECISION-MAKERS AND KEY INFLUENCERS

Create a plan for reaching out to decision makers. The right time to engage district staff and board members will vary. For example, if the district has a sustainability director or an enthusiastic official that you can engage in friendly, exploratory conversation, you could reach out to them earlier in the process when your ideas are not fully baked—as described in Phase 1, Step 3. In other scenarios, you might want to connect with all the experts you can find—including us—and develop a solid plan before reaching out to district officials. As you proceed with these meetings, revise your power map and adjust the strategy based on the information you learn.

There will very likely be issues and concerns to address. For example, there may be facilities managers who are open to 100% clean electricity, but resistant to phasing out gas for heating. Taking decision makers on tours of successful clean energy projects, or sharing video case studies with them, can help assuage concerns.

Once you have a base of support from the community and school experts, the next step is to initiate a dialogue about becoming a 100% Clean Energy School District with your local school board members and superintendent.

If you have successfully built your advocacy base, the decision makers may have already heard about your campaign. Your first encounters should clearly communicate the case for clean energy, but also focus on gaining an understanding of where the decision makers currently stand on the issue. You may start with more informal one-on-one meetings with each board member. Refer to **TOOL #6: Guide for meeting with school board members**. Provide them with the [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) to familiarize them with the pathways

available to affordably transition. Provide any additional materials from your local effort you think would help sway them—such as a draft resolution, fact sheet, case studies of other school districts, or your clean energy assessment.

These meetings will provide you with the opportunity to listen and learn about individual and

HOW DOES TRANSPORTATION FIT INTO A 100% CLEAN ENERGY COMMITMENT?

The transportation of students to and from school is an important piece of a school district's energy picture. While our 100% Clean Energy School Districts campaign is prioritizing onsite energy use, we also want school districts to electrify school bus fleets and promote walk and ride to school programs. Sierra Club's Clean Transportation Program created [this guide](#) to help districts and other public agencies access financial resources to procure electric buses by applying for Volkswagen settlement funds. This is a potential funding stream many are unaware of. Contact us to learn more.

As part of its Carbon-Neutral Schools Resolution, the San Francisco Unified School District, for example, made a commitment that all new district-owned vehicles will be emissions-free, all diesel buses will be powered with renewable diesel by 2020, and all district-owned vehicles will be electric or powered by low-carbon fuels by 2030. Districts across the country are also taking important steps to reduce carbon pollution through initiatives like organized car pooling systems, walk- and bike-to-school programs, expanded access to transit passes for older children, and other measures. As you craft your 100% clean energy resolution, if you are interested in including transportation, please contact us as we're happy to discuss strategies and share what we've learned about clean transportation and schools.

board-level support, their top concerns, and what they will need from you to endorse the transition. You will be more likely to maintain interest if projected costs, financing, and long-term utility savings have been outlined. You may need several meetings with administrators and other support staff to provide information, answer questions, and address concerns.



PHASE 2, STEP 4: BUILD YOUR BASE

As the campaign develops, you'll be building ongoing support and enthusiasm from the school district community and beyond. Ultimately, your outreach strategy will depend on the outcome of the meetings you've held and the information you've collected. After you assess where things stand you can determine where more pressure or support can help.

Now that you have a better sense of what you need, go build it: Through additional one-on-ones, meetings with partner organizations, speaking or tabling at school meetings or events, and other tactics, continue to build support for the campaign. Consider what the school board members need to see (e.g., do they need to see greater support from teachers?), and as much as possible, build your base so that it reflects the concerns and demographics of the school district itself.

In addition, you may have more homework to do on the policy front. Go back to the [Guide](#), do independent research, or get in touch with us if you're having trouble answering questions about policy, technology, or financing.



PHASE 2 TOOLS (see Tools section):

- **TOOL #4:** Power map template for 100% clean energy school district
- **TOOL #5:** Communications plan template
- **TOOL #6:** Guide for meeting with school board members
- [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#)

PHASE 3: WIN A COMMITMENT

PHASE 3, STEP 1: DEVELOP A DRAFT 100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL BOARD RESOLUTION

An essential step in moving your school district to commit to 100% clean energy is the adoption of a resolution by the school board. A resolution formalizes the district's commitment and creates the mandate for implementation. As mentioned earlier, Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign has already moved more than one hundred of cities across the country to take this step, and school districts can too.

TOOL #7: The model 100% clean energy school board resolution contains the core elements we believe should be included in a strong resolution. When you get to the point of crafting a resolution, **please reach out to us.** Sierra Club's Climate Parents and Ready for 100 campaigns are working to build momentum nationally for 100% Clean Energy School Districts, and in order for our efforts to be as strong as possible, the coordination and consistency of content and strength of these resolutions is important.

A strong 100% Clean Energy School District resolution should include the following core elements:

- **CLEAR TARGET DATE:** Identify a target year to achieve a school district commitment. Our goal is for school districts to run on 100% clean electricity by 2030, and to have moved away from fossil fuels for heating, cooling, and cooking by 2040. Having said that, we support more aggressive timetables for smaller districts, or those that have already begun to make strides in transitioning to clean energy.

- **CLEAN AND RENEWABLE RESOURCES ONLY:** This includes carbon-free and pollution-free energy sustainably collected from renewable sources including solar, wind, or geothermal where appropriate. Low-impact, small-scale hydro and some forms of biomass may be included after being evaluated for sustainability and environmental justice implications. Nuclear, or any other forms of carbon-based energy — such as coal, natural gas, or oil — are not considered clean or renewable sources of energy.
- **A TRANSPARENT AND INCLUSIVE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS:** Take steps to ensure that all school community members have an opportunity to participate and keep updated about developments and milestones as plans move forward.
- **CONSIDERATION OF JUSTICE AND EQUITY:** A commitment should help expand equity in your school district. For example, cost savings from transitioning to 100% clean energy can be reinvested into teachers and students, with a focus on closing the opportunity gap in schools.
- **LINK TO EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES:** The shift to clean energy can provide new STEM and sustainability curricula to the schools. Companies offering power purchasing agreements or solar technology for direct purchase often offer these resources to schools. And organizations such as the Center for Green Schools, have excellent online resources.
- **CREATION OF A 100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE:** Create a committee or task force committed to planning and overseeing the implementation of your 100% clean energy resolution.

Strong resolutions could also include:

- **A LOCAL ENERGY GENERATION AND JOB CREATION GOAL:** A goal for how much of the school district's energy needs will be met through locally based renewable power projects, and a commitment to encourage local contractors and suppliers.
- **COMMITMENT TO ADVOCATE MORE BROADLY FOR 100% CLEAN ENERGY AND OTHER CLIMATE SOLUTIONS:** A commitment to advocate for policies or regulations at the state, regional, and/or federal level that aid the school district in their transition and encourage other districts to follow suit. In addition, many school districts adopt pledges to support climate policies protecting young people and communities. This type

of language could be included in your resolution — for example calling on state and federal agencies to implement policies that expand clean energy and cut carbon pollution.



PHASE 3, STEP 2: BUILD BROAD COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR YOUR 100% CLEAN ENERGY RESOLUTION

At this point, the goals of your outreach should include ensuring that supporters attend the school board meeting where the resolution will be voted on. Here are some outreach tactics to consider:

- **REACH OUT ONE-ON-ONE:** lean on the relationships you've already created throughout this campaign. As you get closer to the vote, you may also want to consider phone-banking to invite people to participate.



- **START A PETITION OR SIGN-ON LETTER:** Set a goal for the number of signatures you want to receive to help motivate participation. Your message will become more powerful if you can say that several hundred people have signed your petition, or you can list the support of influential organizations and businesses in the community. Asking for people's email as well as name and signature enables you to build a database of contacts for your campaign. Find a creative and public way to get your signed petitions in front of decision makers. You may ask students to create a giant mural or other creative visuals to bring to a school board meeting, or enlarge a photo of assembled students from multiple schools holding a petition. Sign-on letters, like petitions, enable you to demonstrate broad support. You might put together a letter to board members in support of your campaign and invite clean energy business leaders in your community to sign on. Here you can use [TOOL #8: Sample petition](#). We can help you easily build an effective petition through our online tool, [AddUp](#).
- **LAUNCH A SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN:** Building momentum for your campaign through social media is important. Create a social media presence—typically using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, online parent communities, and Sierra Club digital tools—that communicates your goal. We can be very helpful in providing resources and guidance to support your efforts, and can help amplify your social media communications. Build up your audience by encouraging people to follow you on social media. Then spread the word about meetings and events through your social channels. You can continue to grow by consistently reaching out to solicit shares of your posts. [Sierra Club's Social Media Resource Center](#) can help you learn how to create new channels or pages and learn best social media practices. But the most immediate way to get help and guidance in your overall social media and other digital outreach efforts is to contact us.
- **EARN MEDIA COVERAGE:** Developing a media plan is key to spreading the word about your campaign. In addition to a social media presence, submitting Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds to

the local paper is also a great idea. Organizing rallies and other events to generate media attention is important, especially when the school board is slated to vote on your resolution.

- **STUDENT-LED OUTREACH:** Student leaders are important allies and partners. Student groups can support—or lead—the effort using their own resources like student government resolutions, a presentation at a school assembly, poster, or tabling. In some areas the Sierra Student Coalition is involved in 100% clean energy. We can help make a connection if you want to learn more.



PHASE 3, STEP 3: PITCH THE SCHOOL DISTRICT AND SECURE A COMMITMENT

The overall objective of this campaign is to get your school board to adopt a resolution to commit to powering all operations with 100% clean energy—such as a commitment to 100% clean electricity by 2030, and phasing out all fossil fuels by 2040. The school board will need to vote to approve the resolution, and you'll want to feel confident going into the meeting that you've got the votes required to win. Here are some steps to take to ensure you're on the path to victory.

Steps to passing a school board resolution:

1. **Secure individual support for the goal from each board member.** By this time, you will have likely already met with school districts facilities and sustainability experts to develop a shared vision and plan for 100% clean energy. Now it's time to schedule meetings with individual board members to discuss this plan and demonstrate strong community support. Work with each school board member to address their questions and concerns, and explicitly ask for their commitment to supporting the resolution. Ideally all, or nearly all, of the school board members will pledge their support, but at the very least you'll need to make sure you have the majority of them on board. They may want to add language to, or somehow modify, the resolution. Stay true to the core content of your resolution, but be open to modifications that might improve or expand it. If you amend the resolution, make

sure that all the board members are aware of any changes, and that they remain in support. Please contact us as well, as we may have helpful guidance around suggested changes.

2. **Identify your champions.** Secure one or two board members who agree to be sponsors of the 100% Clean Energy School District resolution, and introduce it to the board.
3. **Address the concerns of potential opponents.** It's possible that you encounter some resistance. If your school district's decision makers or key influencers express opposition to 100% clean energy, openly seek to better understand—and then address—their concerns. Consider who is best positioned to respond to concerns. For example, if the superintendent is worried about energy projects being too expensive, invite an energy services company to share a detailed financial scenario. If they continue to oppose you, make sure you have enough supporters on the board to overcome their opposition.
4. **Introduce the resolution.** It's important to wait to schedule the meeting until you're confident that you have the votes required to win. Once you feel that the majority of school board members are in support, work with the board member(s) you have chosen to introduce the resolution to put it on the agenda of an upcoming meeting, making sure you have enough lead time to get maximum turnout.

Planning for the vote:

1. **Bring vocal and visible community support.** Board members should hear from parents, students, teachers, and other community stakeholders as the vote approaches. If you need to shore up votes, the board members in opposition should be actively asked to support the resolution. This is where petitions, sign-on letters, social media, emails, calls, signs, and stickers and buttons that supporters can wear come in.
2. **Build strong turnout for the vote.** Develop a plan for the day and night of the vote. Pack the board chambers with parents, students, teachers, and community members who support the resolution. Make sure to use all the tools available to you to

drive turn-out (e.g. phone banks, digital outreach, personal invitations, etc). Organize a rally outside beforehand, with lots of supporters and colorful signs.

Select a diverse array of supporters to speak in support of the resolution, and work with them in advance to ensure that your priority messages are communicated. Finally, be sure to invite the media to your rally and the actual board meeting—some local media regularly attend school board meetings, so find out who covers this “beat”. All of this needs to be planned weeks in advance.

3. Stay in close contact with your board

champions. Let the board member(s) who will introduce the resolution know what kind of turnout and testimony your advocacy team is preparing for the night of the vote. It's important for them to know that when they introduce the resolution, they'll have a powerful wave of support behind them.

4. Prepare your media and social media response

plans. Have a press release ready to be sent out after the vote, with quotes from the key stakeholders in your campaign. Be sure to quote a student, a teacher, and a parent at the very least.

The day of the vote:

1. By the day of the vote, all that you've set in motion should be ready to unfold. If you hold a press conference or rally, have your designated speakers and media spokespeople ready. You'll need to have all the logistics in place, such as bullhorns and chant sheets for the rally, talking points for speakers, etc.
2. When the 100% Clean Energy School District item comes up on the agenda, be sure to have a designated spokesperson from your team ready to respond to any questions posed by board members or district staff. Ensure that the school district facilities manager or sustainability director is prepared to favorably represent the resolution and answer any questions that board members may have for staff.
3. Have appointed spokespeople—including students, teachers, and parents—ready to speak



at the meeting and to the media. Work with them in advance on their talking points, covering all of the bases for why 100% Clean Energy School Districts are important.

4. Be ready to share important moments of the hearing and the vote outcome on social media.


After a positive vote:

1. Celebrate! Acknowledge your core team and supporters for their time, energy, and commitment. You might consider hosting an event in the weeks after the vote where you can bring your supporters together to thank them and discuss next steps.
2. Write a letter to the superintendent, school board members, and key district staff to thank them for their support, and to let them know that your advocacy team looks forward to supporting the next phase...implementation!

If the vote doesn't go your way:

1. If, despite your best efforts to line up the votes, things somehow go awry, don't be discouraged. All the time and energy you've spent has built momentum, and it's okay if you need to regroup for one more round.

2. Do your best during the meeting to determine what aspects of the resolution were unacceptable to the board members who opposed it. You can follow up afterwards to get more concrete feedback and guidance from board members as to what needs to change for the resolution to pass.
3. Meet with your team to assess next steps including gathering more data illustrating the benefits of the transition and revising the language of the resolution to appeal to a majority of the voters. We can be helpful here.
4. Develop a plan to re-engage with the board for a future vote.



PHASE 3 TOOLS (see Tools section):

- **TOOL #7:** Model 100% clean energy school board resolution
- **TOOL #8:** Sample petition
- **TOOL #9** Talking points for testimony to the Board of Education
- **Sample presentation and talking points for school board testimony**

PHASE 4: SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION

PHASE 4, STEP 1: CALL FOR THE CREATION OF AN IMPLEMENTATION TEAM AND PLAN

While the resolution is a critical step in achieving public commitment to 100% clean energy, the core team you've been working with and the broader community need to ensure that this promise is delivered. Once the school board passes the resolution, your team can maintain grassroots pressure to see that the transition is a priority and the commitment is honored. At this point it will become clear why it is essential to include the need for an implementation plan in the resolution language. An important step—even if your resolution did not contain implementation language—is to ask for a committee to be established to implement the resolution. Your core team should stay engaged throughout the implementation process, weighing in and seeking representation on the 100% Clean Energy School District implementation team.

PHASE 4, STEP 2: ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY TOWARDS MEETING THE TARGET

A resolution gives the staff authority to move forward. Keep up the momentum for progress in implementing the plan and meeting milestones along the way.

Meet with your clean energy champions on the board, the superintendent, and the facilities director to discuss ways your team and the broader community can support the implementation of clean energy solutions. Your team members should schedule regular meetings with the appropriate facilities representative to support developing the implementation plan and monitoring progress.

Other ways you may be able to help include:

- **PLANNING RESOURCES:** Share resources with district staff. The [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) provides school personnel

and advocates with information on the various pathways to achieving clean energy, financing mechanisms, regulatory requirements, and contracting parameters. By the time you pass the resolution, these officials should be very familiar with it. But once implementation begins, it will become indispensable. The [Let's Go Solar! Guide for Schools](#) is another valuable resource that outlines the steps involved in transitioning to solar energy and provides resources and tips—making it much easier for schools and districts to navigate the process.

- **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT:** Assist where needed in getting necessary information about projects and contractors to help the district meet its clean energy goals.
- **FUNDING SUPPORT:** Support the school district in researching financing options. See the [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#) and [Brighter Future](#) for strong leads.

PHASE 4, STEP 3: MAINTAIN A COMMUNICATIONS BRIDGE TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY AND BEYOND

You can help facilitate ongoing communication between the school district and the school community. Implemented projects present wonderful opportunities to publicize your collective accomplishment towards a healthier future. Collaborate with the school system to have a ribbon cutting for the new infrastructure, inviting elected officials, parents, students, and community leaders to join the celebration. Your achievement can also be used to demonstrate to other communities the power of schools to make positive change. Invite community members and school board leaders from other districts in your region to see your district's transformation and to help drive momentum for the 100% clean energy commitment.



STEP 4: CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CLASSROOM LEARNING ABOUT CLIMATE, CLEAN ENERGY AND STEM

Today’s students are tomorrow’s civic leaders — and implementing a 100% Clean Energy School District campaign creates opportunities for them to grow, learn and lead. Here are some key issues to consider as you move toward implementation:

Classroom learning:

Many states have adopted educational standards that include climate science for K-12 students. What steps can your school district take to ensure that teachers highlight clean energy solutions, including the ones the district is taking to expand renewables and efficiency, and to stop using natural gas? The “why” and the “how” of moving our entire society to 100% clean energy — and for fighting climate change more broadly — can be woven into many subject areas, including: biology, chemistry, physics and even social studies. Leveraging the district’s commitment to 100% clean energy to foster and expand student awareness about climate solutions and clean energy technology is important. Some key institutions and/or organizations where great content is available include: the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), the [Center for Green Schools](#) and the [Alliance for Climate Education](#).

School facilities and structures:

As you work to implement the policy with district sustainability and/or facilities staff, think about opportunities to demonstrate how clean energy technologies deployed on school buildings actually work. Clean energy contractors often provide tools and systems to create clean energy monitoring systems or “dashboards” on campuses across the district that help students understand who energy is being saved or stored. In many cases, an educational component can be included in the contract between the district and an energy vendor/provider. This can help enhance STEM education within the district. Ensuring that the clean technologies are “visible” and working to power school facilities is extremely important — even if that means displaying aerial photos of the panels that are on the rooftops. Ask energy contractors what

type of curriculum and dashboard technology and infrastructure they can offer.

Your district’s commitment to 100% clean energy is a great jumping off point to ensure that students learn about the benefits of 100% clean energy, in their own districts and beyond. Helping students and other stakeholders learn about the operational and technological side of clean energy helps them understand innovation, and the role it can play in addressing societal problems. Learning about how to finance clean energy investments that align with core values, including sustainability and equity, is also key. It’s good to always remember the powerful statement the district has made in adopting its 100% clean energy resolution, and to be creative in thinking of ways to reinforce that commitment among students and staff.



STEP 5: LEVERAGE THE SCHOOL BOARD’S COMMITMENT TOWARDS BROADER CHANGE

100% Clean Energy School Districts can be models for cities, government sectors, and businesses to make the switch, as they represent the larger trend of our entire society moving towards a clean energy future.

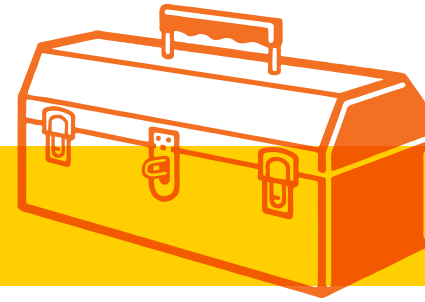
If the city or county within which the school district operates does not yet have a 100% clean energy commitment, your school district’s effort could be the catalyst for a city-wide shift to clean energy.

CONCLUSION

CONGRATULATIONS! You are now on the path towards transforming your school district and community by utilizing 100% clean energy. We are excited about the change we can make together. Wins at the local level will build national momentum towards our vision of one day powering all school districts with clean energy. Together, we can do this!

The tools section that follows includes all those referenced earlier in this toolkit. Find our online version of this toolkit and our individual tools at: climateparents.org/toolkit.

Please connect with us when you’re ready to get started. THANK YOU!



THE TOOLS

TOOL #1:

100% Clean Energy School Districts Fact Sheet

TOOL #2:

Checklist for a First Meeting with School District Officials

TOOL #3:

Campaign Work Plan Template

TOOL #4:

Power Map Template For 100% Clean Energy School District

TOOL #5:

Communications Plan Template

TOOL #6:

Guide for Meeting With School Board Members

TOOL #7:

Model 100% Clean Energy School Board Resolution

TOOL #8:

Sample Petition

TOOL #9:

Talking Points For Testimony to the Board of Education In Support of 100% Clean Energy School District Resolution

TOOL #10:

Checklist for the Run-Up to the Board Vote on the Resolution



100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Move *Your* School District to 100% Clean Energy!

Sierra Club's Climate Parents program is working to move school districts around the country to adopt 100% clean energy. School districts are major energy consumers. Powering them with renewables is a climate solution that benefits kids and communities. This effort builds on the success of Sierra Club's Ready for 100 campaign's momentum in helping more than 100 U.S. cities to commit to 100% clean energy.

Moving school districts to 100% clean energy is important to our kids and communities for many reasons, including: cutting climate pollution, saving districts money, creating STEM learning opportunities and expanding community resiliency.

Schools represent a surprisingly large share of fossil fuel use. According to the U.S. Green Building Council's Center for Green Schools, school districts manage two million acres of land and as much building space as half of the entire commercial office building sector. School districts are a leading consumer of electricity in many municipalities, spending \$8 billion each year on energy costs, school districts' largest expense after personnel. We can help make schools, the heart of our communities, healthy spaces that help put in place the clean energy future our kids deserve.

Shifting American K-12 schools to 100% clean energy would reduce the same amount of climate pollution as taking 1 in every 7 passenger cars off the road.

State and local governments invest more capital in K-12 school facilities than in any other infrastructure sector outside of transportation. Let's seize the opportunity to help steer these investments into schools that run on clean energy!

Take action to support your school district in committing to 100% clean energy. Launch a 100% Clean Energy School District campaign in your community.

WHY 100% CLEAN ENERGY SCHOOL DISTRICTS?

To build the movement and progress forward on climate action, we are working toward the following outcomes:

Invest money saved on energy bills into students and classrooms

- Energy efficiency measures alone can save U.S. schools \$2 billion/year, a quarter of total energy costs.
- The cost of solar panels is one-third of what they were 10 years ago.
- Space heating and cooling represent half of all energy use in schools; efficient air-source or geothermal heat pumps can offset significant energy use.

- Money saved can be redirected to academic and enrichment programs or facility upgrades.

Improve kids' health and academic performance

- Harvard's T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that health effects from mold, poor ventilation, uncomfortable temperatures, inadequate lighting, and noise can undermine achievement and disadvantage students who already struggle in school. Many clean energy solutions can address these challenges.
- Asthma causes more than 13 million school absences per year. Low-income kids and children of color are disproportionately impacted. A shift to clean energy can improve ambient air quality.

Position school districts as leaders on climate action

- Schools can lower their carbon emissions by 30% or more through efficiency measures, and can entirely offset the climate impacts of their energy use by shifting to 100% clean energy.
- Because young people are particularly vulnerable to both health risks from fossil fuel pollution and climate impacts, school communities are important avenues for climate solutions like 100% clean energy school districts.

Expand educational and leadership opportunities

- On-campus clean energy projects provide exciting real-world project-based learning opportunities for classes in science, technology, engineering, and math.
- Schools inspire broader awareness in our communities about clean energy solutions.

Build community resilience

- Schools are a leading go-to for emergency shelter and services. By coupling clean electricity and power storage, schools can maintain power and heat, expanding their ability to serve communities during hurricanes, fires, and other disasters.

Create new jobs

- 60 percent of funds spent on energy efficiency goes to labor, and local suppliers provide half of all energy efficiency equipment available to schools.



CONTACT US!

Sierra Club's Climate Parents program wants to work with you and your school district in making the shift to 100% clean energy.

We can work with you to advance your own local campaign and provide you with the following:

- **100% Clean Energy School Districts Toolkit.** A comprehensive, user-friendly resource complete with templates and tools for advocates who want to move your school district to make a 100% clean energy commitment.
- **100% Clean Energy School District Handbook.** A guide for school district staff detailing the pathways to achieve 100% clean energy.
- **A learning network** of parents and others moving school districts to 100% clean energy around the country.
- **Staff support** and partnership in launching and implementing your campaign.

Please reach out to Lisa Hoyos, the Director of Sierra Club's Climate Parents program at: lisa.hoyos@sierraclub.org or (415) 977-5749. Thank you!

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2101 Webster Street, Suite 1300
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MOBILIZING FAMILIES FOR CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

TOOL #2: Checklist for a First Meeting with School District Officials

INTRODUCTORY TALKING POINTS:

- Introduce yourself and your group, including your relationship to the school district. You might say something like, “I’m working with a group of people interested in supporting a clean energy future in our school district. I’d like to learn more about what our district is doing and discuss how we could support cost-effective and smart energy solutions going forward.” Explain your vision and plan, including why having the school district commit to 100% clean energy is personally important to you.
- Explain your goal of supporting the district in passing a 100% clean energy resolution and the benefits you see. From the district staff’s perspective, the most important points will likely be:
 - Passing the resolution can reduce energy-related costs for school districts, enabling more funds to be directed to other needs such as academics or enrichment programs.
 - Many clean energy solutions contribute to healthier learning environments for students and lead to lower absenteeism.
 - Clean energy school districts alleviate air pollution and climate change, making the community safer for everyone.
 - Emphasize your interest in supporting and collaborating with the district. Share any key data points you have collected, including any known opportunities for the school district to save money while advancing smart energy solutions.
 - There is a growing movement of school districts throughout the country leading the way toward a healthy future for students. See “How Does a School District Achieve 100% Clean Energy” on p. 4 for a range of examples.

KEY QUESTIONS:

- Is improving energy efficiency and/or sourcing clean energy a current objective for the school district? Is it an interest? Why or why not?
- If so, what relevant resolutions, policies, and plans are in place and in the pipeline?
 - What energy conservation or efficiency measures do the schools have in place?
 - Have any equipment or facilities recently been upgraded to improve efficiency?
 - Are there energy saving behavior education programs in place?
 - Has the school district carried out an energy audit?
- How are decisions about energy made? Who makes them?
- What do you see as the main barriers to expanding clean energy solutions within the school district?
- We’d like to better understand the energy picture of the school district. How can we best get information on current energy sources and uses, costs, etc.? More specific questions to answer along the way, if not addressed in this meeting, include the following:
 - What is the district’s current annual energy usage?
 - What is the annual electricity cost for the district?
 - Do you have any more information on how the electricity use breaks down specifically? (e.g., heating and cooling, lighting, appliances, etc.)
 - What is the energy source for heating units at the schools? (e.g., electricity, gas, etc.)
 - Do any of the district’s buildings have solar power or other forms of renewable energy?
 - What is/are the electric utility/ies serving the school district?
 - Is the district participating in any clean power projects offered by the utility company?
- What are the current systems for heating and cooling? How old is this infrastructure? Has the district investigated air-source heat pumps or geothermal heating and cooling?
- What obstacles to achieving 100% clean energy do you see?

TOOL #3: Campaign Work Plan Template

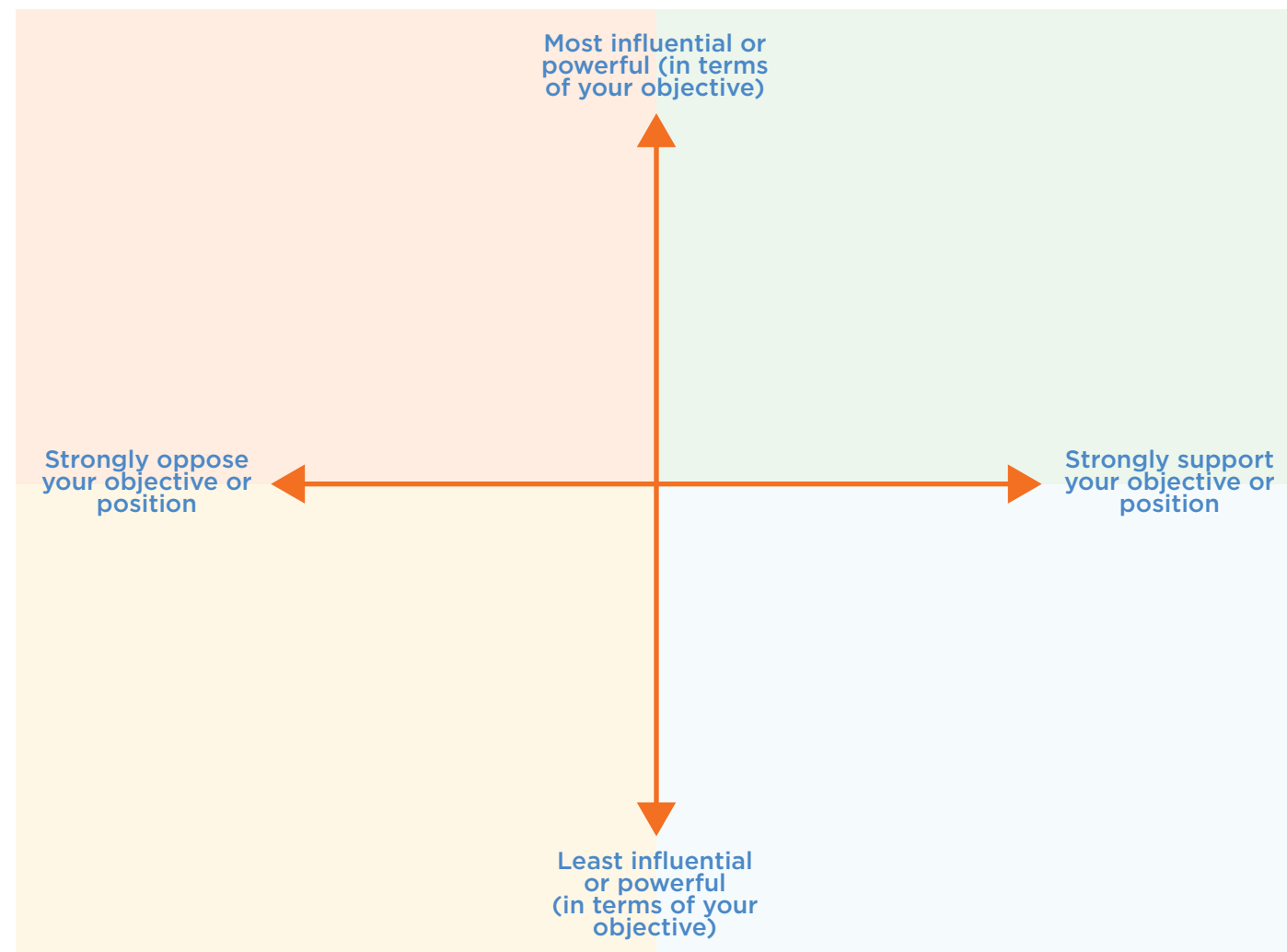
Below is a sample timeline and work plan template. This assumes that your campaign will take between four and six months. Campaign timelines could take more or less time, but it’s good to try to pass your resolution within the time frame of a school year or a calendar year (whichever works best for you and your team) in order to maintain strong momentum.

KEY BENCHMARKS	SAMPLE SPECIFIC ACTION ITEMS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PROPOSED DEADLINE FOR ACHIEVING THIS BENCHMARK
Connection to Climate Parents established	Reach out to info@climateparents.org to tell us about you, your goals, and discuss how we can help	Team leader	Month 1
Core team created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct outreach • Hold a kick-off meeting • Secure commitments 	Team leader	Month 1
Strategy developed and campaign work plan written	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct team meeting(s) • Assign any research needs to team members • Produce campaign plan 	Core team	Month 2
Stakeholder map created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with your team to identify target(s), influencers, and allies, and to discuss how to best reach out to these people 	Core team	Month 2
Communications plan developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with your team to review and complete the plan 	Core team member	Month 2
Meeting with district sustainability director, facilities director, or other appropriate district staff (research their existing energy and sustainability policies first)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a meeting • Develop a clear agenda focused on desired outcomes • Prepare your key content points and questions in writing and in advance 	Liaison from core team	Month 2
Draft resolution crafted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the draft resolution in this toolkit • Reach out to info@climateparents.org for support and guidance • Work closely with your local key stakeholders to finalize 	Core team or core team member	Months 2-4
Community support secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule meetings with PTA, superintendent, and other key leaders as identified in stakeholder map • Implement tactics to help your campaign gain broad visibility and support (e.g., petition) 	Liaison(s) from core team	Months 2-5
Commitment from the majority of board members to support resolution secured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with school board members to see if they will introduce and/or support the 100% clean energy school district resolution for a vote 	Liaison(s) from core team	Month 3 and beyond
Resolution introduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you are confident you have the board votes you need to win, get the resolution placed on the agenda by one of your allies on the board • Prepare key spokespeople to advocate at the meeting • Encourage your supporters to attend meeting • Do a press advisory and release to engage the media 	School board member	Month 5 or 6
Preparation for school board meeting completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rally supporters to attend school board meeting where resolution will be voted on 	Core team	Month 6
Implementation support benchmarks as needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TBD 	TBD	Month 6 onward

TOOL #4: Power Map Template For 100% Clean Energy School District

(adapted from [The Sierra Club Movement Organizing Manual 2016](#))

Below is a simple landscape showing a gradient of those who support or oppose your clean energy school district goal (along the x-axis), and a gradient indicating various levels of influence over the decision (y-axis). Place key stakeholders from the list below, and any others you can identify, on the map. Those in the top left are those you most want to cultivate, while those in the top right are supporters you want to be sure to stay in touch with and keep engaged.



Primary Targets: Decision Makers

- School board members
- School Superintendent
- Principals (for independent school efforts)

Secondary Targets: Influencers

Top Priority Influencers Within the School District Office

- Facilities Director
- Sustainability Director
- Finance staff

Additional Top Priority Influencers

- PTAs
- Students and student clubs
- Teachers and school staff
- Parents and parent organizations
- Local government

Second Priority Influencers

- Community energy, environmental, and environmental justice organizations
- Community organizations
- Media
- Clean energy businesses and investors

Additional Stakeholders

- Clean energy companies, solar, wind, geothermal, and other industry professionals
- Utilities
- Local government
- Other community-based constituencies, including environmental groups, service organizations, labor unions, interfaith groups, etc.

TOOL #5: Communications Plan Template

(modified from the Sierra Club [Volunteer and Chapter Communications Handbook](#))

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN: [Campaign Title]

DATE RANGE:

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS LEAD: [Name]

1. Develop your story.

(a) **FRAME THE ISSUE.** Discuss how you can best connect your 100% Clean Energy School Districts campaign to the public in your area. Tell the story of how moving your school district to 100% clean energy will help students, families, and the broader community, and how it will build momentum for clean energy in cities and towns across the country.

What are news hooks for the issue? It is helpful to have talking points in these three categories to share:

- Your story. Sharing your personal experience (and that of your team members) opens the possibility for supporters and decision makers to discover common values and interests. Talking points related to a personal story should touch upon why you are involved in this effort.
- The “need for change” story. There are many angles that can be taken here. The biggest picture is that we can collectively do the right thing for the health of climate and the health of the community and students by moving to 100% clean energy, and in most cases we can save money that can be better spent on student needs. But there are other benefits. Refer to TOOL #10 for some sample talking points.
- Your district’s solution story. The final element of your narrative is the specific pathway you are trying to develop (and work toward with district officials) to get your school district to 100% clean energy. Convey your vision as well as information about how the district could realistically achieve 100% clean energy.

(b) **CRAFT YOUR MESSAGE.**

- The campaign’s overarching media story;
- Key talking points;
- A repeatable slogan (no more than 10 words).

(c) **IDENTIFY SPOKESPEOPLE.** Who are the best messengers to reach your target audience? Is there diversity among your spokespeople? Are the people most affected by the issue/your campaign the ones represented among your spokespeople?

2. Research and target your media landscape.

Make a media list of contacts at TV and radio stations, newspapers, and online outlets that you want to target. These may include industry press that have covered clean energy and schools, ethnic media, etc. It will also likely involve reaching the school community through tabling, etc. It’s helpful to prioritize the top 10 outlets in which you want coverage.

3. Earn media to build momentum.

The following are general ways to receive coverage, and there are many more that may apply to your campaign. Find the ones that will reach your target audience:

- News Article
- Op-Ed
- Podcasts
- Blogs
- Facebook/Twitter
- Radio News/Talk
- Television News/Talk
- Video production/posting
- Other

4. Hold a press event just before the vote.

Press conferences and rallies will probably focus on the day or night of the vote. Key steps will include:

- Do a media advisory two days before and circulate to their targeted media.
- Follow up with calls to make sure assignment editors are aware of your event — and to inquire whether they plan to attend.
- Ensure that all of your speakers are prepped and that they represent a diverse set of stakeholders. Make sure to include a student.
- Prepare media packets that include a press release and any additional materials you’d like the press to have.
- Line up your media-savvy volunteers to post your event on social media, including images.
- Send a media release after the event that outlines the outcome of the vote and includes quotes from your key leaders.

TOOL #6: Guide for Meeting With School Board Members

1) Introductions

- **Thank the board member for their time.** It's important to kick off this conversation on the right foot. Thanking them for their time and interest should be the first step. Do some background research on the board member and their accomplishments. It's nice to reference things that they have accomplished or care about.
- **Reaffirm the amount of time you have to meet.** Confirm how much time there is for the meeting and adjust if needed to make sure you get your main points in.
- **Team introductions.** Each person can introduce themselves *briefly*, including their connection to the school system and what values or experiences fuel their passion to work for clean energy (e.g., I am a mom of two kids and PTA member in the school system; I am a student who believes in 100% clean energy).
- **School board member introduction.** Ask a question that will allow the elected official to introduce themselves more and to help establish a connection with this person (e.g. "What inspired you to run for the school board?" or "What was your vision for running for the school board?"). Listen to the answer and think about how that applies to your vision for clean energy.

2) Share the vision for advancing clean energy throughout the district

- Explain the vision for clean energy schools and why it is beneficial.
- Acknowledge the progress that has already been made and the benefits to the schools and the students.
- Share why clean energy schools matter to you and your personal interest in this vision.
- Make the case that 100% clean energy is realistic and achievable.
- Talk about the ways that 100% clean energy — coupled with battery storage — can make the entire community more resilient, given that school buildings are the most common sites for evacuation centers.

3) Listen to board member response to the vision

- Welcome feedback, questions, or comments from the board member regarding the issue.
- Ask what is currently under consideration for solar on schools and what their reaction is to it.
- Ask what they would recommend we do to make it easier for you or increase support for this vision. Ask how you can support the board member and partner with them towards this vision.
- If they ask something you can't answer, let them know you'll find out more and follow up.

4) Responding to the board member's needs

- If the board member is supportive of the vision, ask what more they could do to show their support and move the issue forward (e.g., adding this topic to an upcoming school board meeting, speaking at an upcoming local event, connecting you with other potential supporters)
- If the board member needs more convincing, ask what you can do to provide the information that they need (e.g., bringing local experts or solar installers to talk to the board, doing research about an issue of concern, or rallying more community support for the issue).

5) Next steps

- Set up meetings or next steps as needed. Provide contact information for who is following up and clarify expected response time.
- Leave behind supporting materials that you want the board member to have, including a hard copy of the [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#).
- Thank them for their time and attention.

6) Follow-up

- Send a thank you email to the board member that also recaps the meeting.
- Follow through on any next steps discussed and state expected response time.

Tool #7: Model 100% Clean Energy School Board Resolution

You can use this template to create a proposed 100% clean energy resolution for your school board. The resolution can be customized for your district, and we provide a range of core elements you can choose from and/or modify. You may also identify additional rationales specific to your context to include.

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
[SCHOOL DISTRICT]
[LOCATION]
RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, schools, school districts, and cities around the country are making commitments to run on 100% clean energy to improve public health and to help tackle climate change.

WHEREAS, American K-12 schools have an important part to play in reducing carbon pollution from buildings, given that they are major energy consumers, using as much energy as 43% of all office space nationwide.

WHEREAS, a reduction in emissions from dirty energy sources results in tangible improvements in student health and performance, particularly among the most vulnerable.

WHEREAS, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, energy-related expenses fall second only to personnel as the largest expenditures in school district budgets, and resources that can be saved on energy bills can be redirected into students and classrooms.

WHEREAS, school buildings — which are the primary source of emergency shelter during disasters — can be equipped with solar and battery storage to ensure displaced community members have access to heat and light when grid power fails.

WHEREAS, [school district] is dedicated to supporting programs and strategies to make schools climate-safe, energy-efficient living laboratories teaching children to understand STEM concepts through clean energy applications.

WHEREAS, we acknowledge [school district]'s contribution to climate change from onsite sources including from fossil fuels used for heating, [list other uses as appropriate for district, including source of electricity]

WHEREAS, [school district] is committed to principles of equity, justice, and inclusion, and transitioning to 100% clean energy can help advance these goals by a) saving money that can be invested into under-resourced schools, b) helping to address climate change, which disproportionately impacts low-income communities and communities of color, c) creating STEM learning opportunities.

WHEREAS, a 100% Clean Energy School District is one in which the amount of clean energy brought into, or generated by, schools equals or exceeds 100% of the annual energy consumed within that school or district.

WHEREAS, clean energy includes energy derived from wind, solar, geothermal, and wave technology sources that have significant public health benefits associated that can address pressing environmental justice challenges in sensitive communities locally and nationally. "Clean energy" specifically excludes energy derived from fossil fuels, nuclear, incineration of municipal and medical waste, and large-scale future hydroelectric development. Low-impact, small hydropower, and some forms of small-scale biomass may be considered clean energy after being evaluated for public health, sustainability, and environmental justice implications.

WHEREAS [option to insert additional local conditions that this resolution will help address — e.g., utility rates are expected to increase dramatically in the next few years; city or county commitment to climate action, clean air, energy independence, fiscal responsibility, and community health]

WHEREAS [option to insert additional policies and plans the school district has already developed that this

TOOL #9: Talking Points For Testimony to the Board of Education In Support of 100% Clean Energy School District Resolution

The scope of these talking points includes a comprehensive set of arguments. Speakers can touch upon several facts or do a deeper dive on ones they are particularly well-suited to emphasize (e.g., a public health expert may want to focus in the link between energy efficiency upgrades and improved air quality). Over the course of the pro-100% clean energy testimony at the hearing, it will be important for a diverse array of speakers to lift up the following information. Note that more facts substantiating each argument can be found in the body of [Toolkit](#) and [100% Clean Energy School Districts Handbook](#).

1. Overview point

- 100% clean energy school districts are an example of a positive solution with many benefits to students and society.

2. Reinvests money into students and classrooms

- Energy efficiency measures alone can save U.S. schools \$2 billion a year, a quarter of all energy costs.
- Solar is cheaper than ever. The cost of solar panels is one-third of what it was just 10 years ago and financing pathways allow schools to avoid upfront costs.
- Space heating and cooling represent half of all energy use in schools; efficient air-source or geothermal heat pumps can offset significant energy use.
- Money saved can be redirected to academic and enrichment programs or facility upgrades.

3. Positions school districts as leaders on climate action, and builds momentum for their role in being part of the solution

- Because young people are particularly vulnerable to both health risks from fossil fuel pollution and climate impacts, school communities are important avenues for climate solutions like 100% Clean Energy School Districts.
- Schools can lower their carbon emissions by 30% or more through efficiency measures, and can entirely offset the climate impacts of their energy use by shifting to 100% clean energy.
- If all schools transitioned to 100% clean energy it would have the same climate benefits as taking 1 in every 7 cars off the road.
- School districts around the country and individual schools are building momentum in embracing clean energy. Several school districts have already made this commitment, and the percentage of individual schools with solar rose by 47% between 2014 and 2016 alone.

4. Improves students' health and academic performance

- Shifting to clean energy improves air quality in surrounding communities.

- Student achievement can be compromised by health effects from mold, poor ventilation, uncomfortable temperatures, inadequate lighting, and noise. Students who already struggle in school are at a particular disadvantage. Clean energy solutions — such as efficiency and heating and cooling upgrades — can simultaneously address these challenges while creating significantly better conditions for student health and learning.
- These upgrades can also reduce missed school days due to asthma, which causes more than 13 million school absences per year and disproportionately impacts low-income youth and children of color.

5. Expands educational opportunities

- On-campus clean energy projects provide exciting real-world, project-based learning opportunities for classes in science, technology, engineering, and math.
- Engaged schools inspire broader community awareness of clean energy solutions.

6. Enhances community resilience

- According to the American Red Cross, schools are the most common locations for emergency shelter and services. Coupling clean electricity and power storage can help school-based evacuation centers maintain power and heat, expanding their ability to serve communities during the hurricanes, wildfires, and other disasters that are becoming more frequent in the era of climate change.

7. Creates new jobs

- 60 percent of funds for energy efficiency are spent on local labor and the clean energy industry is expanding their workforce.
- The solar and wind industries employ 476,000 Americans and growing: the solar and wind workforce increased by 35% and 32% respectively in just one year. 1.9 million Americans have part- or full-time employment in energy efficiency.

TOOL #10: Checklist for the Run-Up to the Board Vote on the Resolution

The days just before the school board vote on your 100% Clean Energy School District will be busy. This is a checklist of important things to keep in mind as you prepare for the final stretch.

1. RECONNECT WITH YOUR CHAMPIONS.

- Reconnect with the board member(s) who will be introducing the resolution. Make sure you're on the same page about whether you're open to amendments, and how you'll navigate unexpected situations the day of the vote.
- Make sure your board champions know the game plan for the day of the vote. Are they invited to speak at your press conference? Have you asked them for a quote for your press release?

2. CROSS-CHECK TO BE 100% SURE YOU STILL HAVE THE VOTES.

- Connect with all of the board members you tallied up in the "yes" column, and make sure they're still with you.
- If something has shifted and you're coming up shy of the votes you need, go into triage mode to get the vote count back up. If you're not there, consider postponing to another meeting.

3. DO A FINAL PREP CALL OR MEETING WITH YOUR CORE TEAM

- Logistics: Make sure all handouts, press releases, signs, buttons, signs and etc. are printed and ready, and every team member knows their role.
- Spokespeople: Make sure everyone is clear on their role and message, and has their talking points.

4. BE CLEAR ABOUT WHO THE TEAM LEADER IS AT THE BOARD MEETING

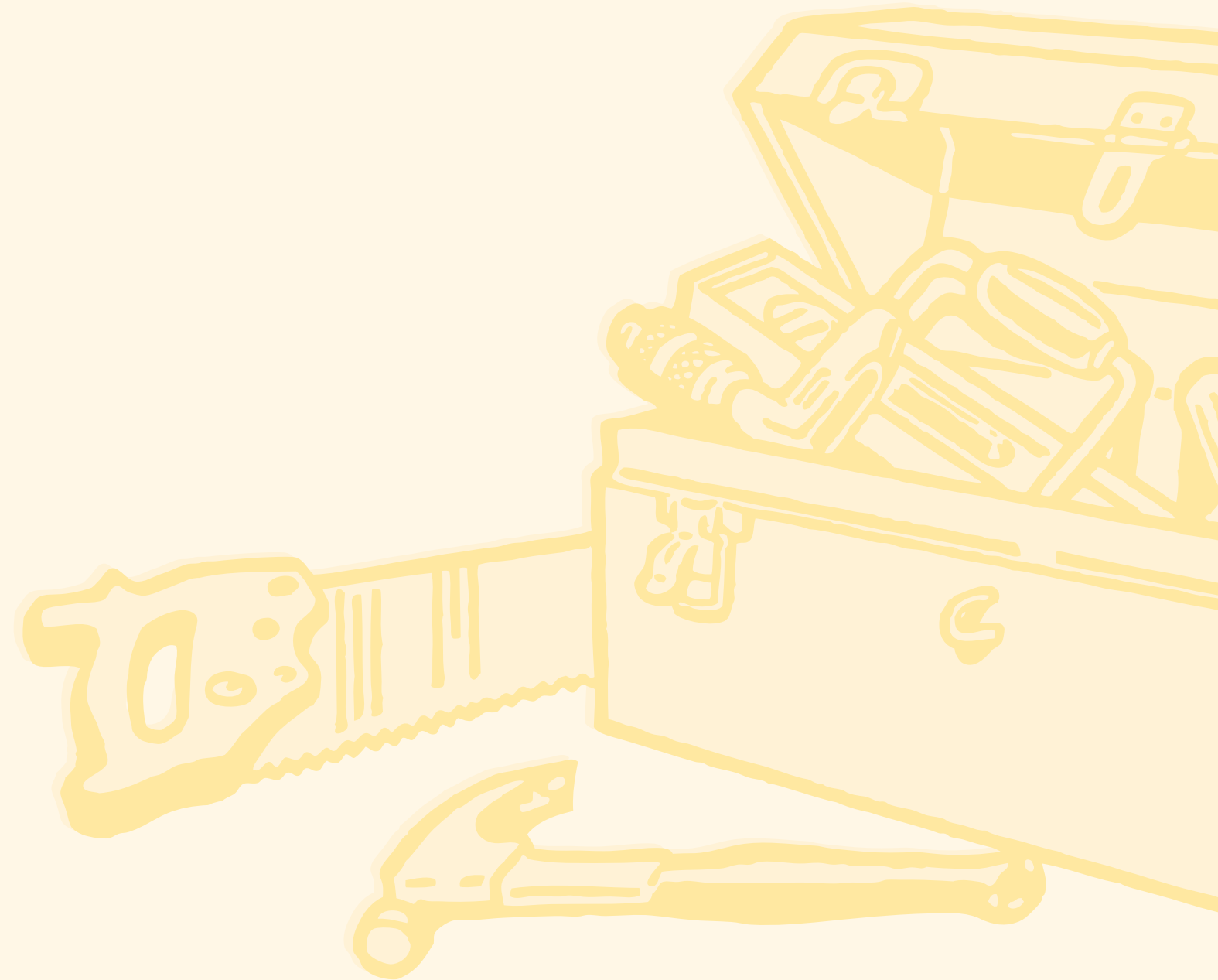
At public meetings where decisions are being made, things can change fast. For example, an amendment can be proposed or a timeline can be pushed back. Be clear about your "day of the vote" decision making process, as well as who is authorized to speak for your group.

5. BE READY TO PUBLICLY DECARE VICTORY:

- Craft a press release in advance with quotes from you board champions and key team leaders, and be ready to distribute it directly after the vote.
- Be ready to share your victory over your social media channels.

NOTES

- 1 Lazard. (2018, November). Lazard's Levelized Cost of Energy Analysis, Version 12.0. Retrieved March 26, 2019, from <https://www.lazard.com/perspective/levelized-cost-of-energy-and-levelized-cost-of-storage-2018/>
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