

HOW TO ORGANIZE A WALKOUT

For Youth Prison Abolition in April 2023 (Exact Date TBD)

BUILD A TEAM

- Planning a walkout is a pretty big undertaking, and nobody can do it alone!
- Find a team of ideally around 4-7 people who are dedicated to the cause and willing to put in the work. This can be simple to do through activist clubs that you're already a part of, or through friends who care about the issue.
- Delegate the tasks below between yourselves—but remember that this will be a collaborative effort and everybody will have to work on all aspects of the project!
    - Before the protest
        - Speech and chant writing (2+ people)
        - Printing and distributing flyers (2+ people)
        - Making Instagram posts (1+ person)
        - Making signs (1+ person)
    - During the protest
        - Directing people where to go (2+ people)
        - Leading the chants and doing speeches (2+ people)
        - Handing out signs (1+ person)

ADVERTISE THE PROTEST

- ***Templates for everything will be provided in the toolkit!***
- **1 month to 2-3 weeks** before the walkout: Prepare the Instagram

    - Make an Instagram account specifically for the walkout OR utilize the preexisting Instagram of an activist club on campus

        - Bio example: “Over 600 kids are being tortured in inhumane conditions through the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. JOIN US for the [date] WALKOUT to SHUT DOWN the 5 youth prisons in Texas!”
            - Link: https://www.texascje.org/finish-the-5
    - Follow as many people from your school as possible
    - The first Instagram post for the walkout should state:
        - Date and time of walkout
        - Location of walkout
        - What it’s for + why it’s important
    - Make other Instagram posts detailing the intricacies of the issue and providing statistics + accounts about what is going on
    - Post these all throughout the month leading up to the walkout, increasing frequency as you get closer to the date (utilize stories and ask people to repost!)
        - Post timeline: A month before, 1 week before, 1 day before (flood everybody’s stories with the post)

- **1 week** before the walkout: Posters, Stories, Flyers
    - Flood people’s Instagram stories with reposts of all the info you’ve been spreading throughout the past month
    - Increase posting frequency as stated above
    - Make posters
        - Print out around 30+ posters
        - Hang them around your school in high-traffic areas (near the stairs, entrances to hallways, doors, etc.)
        - This is when your school administration will find out. Be aware that they may tear down your posters or try to pursue disciplinary action
            - Be discreet about hanging them up so they don’t immediately find out who you are, and if this is not possible, then focus more on flyers
    - Make flyers
        - Print out as many flyers about the issue as possible
            - Should contain information/background about the issue and why it’s important as well as the date, time, and location of the walkout
        - Hand them out to everyone during passing periods and lunch
    - Banner making
        - Consider holding a banner making party the week before the protest in order to spread the word and gather momentum + support for the walkout, and include your fellow classmates who may be interested in helping
        - Try to make at least one larger banner that says something like “#FinishTheFive: Abolish Youth Prisons!” and many smaller signs for people to hold
    - Consider posting to tell people to wear the same color on protest day

- **1 day** before the walkout: Stories, Mini-flyers
    - Flood Instagram stories with the main date/time/location post specifically
    - Spread mini-flyers
        - Print out (preferably hundreds) of mini-flyers (6 per sheet of paper)
        - Catchphrase/name of protest, date, time, location
        - Pass them out to as many people as humanly possible
    - Write protest details on the board in your classrooms (of teachers who are sympathetic to the cause)
    - Contact Austin Liberation with final location and time info so we can forward this to reporters

WRITING SPEECHES/CHANTS

- Plan for 2 or 3 speeches
    - Preferably one mainly describing the issue, one from someone with a personal connection to it, and one calling people to action + raising their energy (after which you can start chanting)
- How to write an effective protest speech
    - Start with an attention grabbing scene/story that illustrates the issue
    - Then, explain the background of the issue (impactful facts and stats)
    - Illustrate the future that we want
    - Inspire people to rise up + explain what we must do to get to that future
        - Finish with some chants
- Sample speech
    - [we will put a sample speech here soon]
- Sample chants (pick around 3-5 to teach people, or do more and hand out some slips)
    - UP UP with education / DOWN DOWN with criminalization
    - We need money for education / Not for jails and incarceration
    - Old Jim Crow, New Jim Crow / The whole damn system's got to go
    - What's outrageous? / Kids in cages!
    - Detention centers? We say no / Solitary's got to go
    - We have nothing to lose but our / CHAINS!
    - Fuck TJJD / For destroying our communities
    - Down with incarceration / We want liberation

PLANNING OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Prepare some signs/banners for people to hold during the protest in advance
    - Banner/sign making parties are a great idea to spread the word, as mentioned before!
- Print out formal brochure that we will send you
    - Will contain QR code about the issue, chant list, intro to the problem, etc. (feel free to print your own as well)

- Larger QR codes to linktree for people to pass around
- Other protest activities: you could plan to bring blank sheets of paper, a ton of markers, and chalk to the protest
    - During the protest: Have people write on the papers and with the chalk (all over school sidewalks) why they support youth prison abolition / why they want their fellow kids to be free
    - This is good for photos for press and gives them an activity to do

THE DAY OF THE PROTEST

Sample Itinerary

- **Morning before protest:** post final updates on Instagram about location, time, etc.
- **30 min or 1 hour before protest: Meet with the whole team**
    - Send half of the team (including speakers, people who need to hand out signs, etc.) outside to set up
        - Figure out a place for speakers to stand; give them megaphones
        - Set up a table with the chalk, markers, blank papers, QR codes, and brochures
    - Send the other part of the team to disperse around the school to direct people where to go
        - One of these people should go find the press who may be coming and direct them outside to where the walkout will be held
    - Delegate specific people to film and take pictures during the event (especially of people holding up signs, chants, speakers)
- **Start of protest: First 10 minutes**
    - Part of the team inside directing people where to go when they start flooding the hallways, make sure they stay quiet and move swiftly
    - Other people should be outside, telling people where to gather, handing out the brochures (that contain the chants, QR code, info etc.), handing out signs and banners to people
- **Start Chants to Raise Energy: 5-10 minutes**
    - Teach everyone the chants by repeating each of them ~3 times
    - Run through the sheet maybe 2x or however long it takes to rile people up
- **Speeches: ~15 minutes max**
    - Run through around 3 of these
    - Make sure to list action items at the end—what can they do right now?
- **Chants: ~10+ minutes**
    - Chants again (do 3x each), run through the sheet as many times as people seem to have the energy + momentum to do
- **Rest of protest: 20+ minutes**
    - After chanting, direct people to protest directors + table with chalk, papers and markers, etc. and ask them to write why they support youth prison abolition
    - Make sure they have the brochures to QR code, action items, etc.

    - Take pictures of as many people as you can who are holding up these papers and their signs
    - Tell them they can go back inside whenever and to do so quietly and calmly
    - Talk to press and give short interviews—be passionate, personal, punchy, and concise with your wording
- **After the protest**
    - Stay back to clean up any mess that may have been made
    - Post pictures of everything that happened
    - Make sure that the Instagram account is filled with information and action items for people who may have joined/learnt about it last minute and want more knowledge about the issue