

May Day ISEA School Walk-In Event Toolkit

What are school walk-ins?

Walk-ins are a type of collective action to show the power of the people who make success in our public schools and communities possible. They are positive actions that build solidarity and relationships.

During school walk-ins, educators, parents, students, neighbors, and community supporters gather in front of their school 15-30 minutes before the school day begins.

Rally and listen to a few speakers discuss what you want for your school, and then staff walk into the school together. Walk-ins can celebrate your school, collaborate with school officials, or protest harmful school conditions and policies.

Why May 1st? It's International Workers Day! This is part of a National Day of Action, with NEA members and allies from around the county gathering to make a powerful statement about what's important to our community: strong public schools where students, no matter their background, can succeed.

Plan your local walk-in



Set a time and location for your walk-in: We encourage all buildings to participate, but those with strong building reps and community relationships are ideal if your district can't hold walk-ins at every building. We recommend setting your walk-in start time to 20-30 minutes before your contract hours. Find a specified location outside your buildings for people to meet.



Create an event link: Add your event to NEA's Mobilize tool. This link will create an event link for you to manage RSVPs. Add your event here: www.mobilize.us/nea/c/may-1-day-of-action/event/create/. Follow these step-by-step instructions.

1. Event title – enter “School Name ISEA Walk-In.”
2. Event type – select Visibility Event.
3. Description – add, “Our local educators are hosting a National Day of Action in honor of International Workers Day on Thursday, May 1st. We are planning a local walk-in where we meet before school in solidarity and share the importance of public education.”
4. Visibility – set to public.
5. Location and Time – enter building and date/time.
6. The remaining items on the form are optional and can be skipped.
7. Finalize the event at the bottom with Facebook, Google, or email.



Draft an agenda for your walk-in: (10 to 15 minutes)

1. Arrive at school at the designated meeting location(s) and sign in.
2. Welcome everyone and do introductions if needed.
3. Explain the importance of May Day and why we are holding walk-ins today.
4. Share the provided messages and local data about federal programs and their importance to public education and the local district.
5. Ask attendees to take action by contacting elected officials and asking them to stop dismantling essential federal programs.
6. Hold signs, wave, and greet people going into school.
7. Staff only walk-in to the school building in solidarity.



Create homemade signs: “We Support Public Education,” “We Love Our Public Schools,” “Honk for Your Public School,” “Students Are Our Priority,” etc.



What to wear: Encourage attendees to show solidarity by selecting one color to wear for the event. School colors, your local association or ISEA gear, or Red for Ed – anything works!



Invitations: Invite your colleagues, potential members, friends, family, and community supporters! Sample draft invitations to share with colleagues and allies on the next page.

SAMPLE Invite to Association Members

Dear ____ Members,

Our local association is participating in a National Day of Action in honor of International Workers Day on Thursday, May 1st. We are hosting a local walk-in where we meet before school in solidarity and share the importance of public education. Find details below!

WHAT: Join fellow educators in a National Day of Action.

WHEN: Thursday, May 1, before school begins at ____.

WHERE: (Designated location) outside 20-30 minutes before contract hours start.

WHY: We support our public schools.

WEAR: (Insert your color choice here.)

WALK-IN: Staff-only walk-in to the school in solidarity.

RSVP: (Place the RSVP link from the NEA mobilize website here.)

SAMPLE Invite to friends, family, potential members and community supporters

Dear Friends,

Our local educators are hosting a National Day of Action in honor of International Workers Day on Thursday, May 1st. We are planning a local walk-in where we meet before school in solidarity and share the importance of public education. We want to involve friends, family, parents, and community supporters! Find details below.

WHAT: Join educators in a National Day of Action.

WHEN: Thursday, May 1, before school begins at ____.

WHERE: Outside _____ school building(s).

WHY: We support our public schools.

WEAR: (Insert your color choice here.)

WALK-IN: For the safety of our students, only staff will walk-in to the school building.

RSVP: (Place the RSVP link from the NEA mobilize website here.)

Sample Planning Calendar

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Sat. | Sun. |
|--|--|--|---|---|-----------|-----------|
| 14 ISEA Local Leader Zoom. | 15 Identify school site organizers. | 16 Select speakers. Select school sites. Inform administration. Create RSVP link. | 17 Outreach to members, potential members, community supporters, and parents to participate. | 18 Finalize and prep speakers. Find someone to snap photos and someone to help with sign-in. | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 Reminder calls, emails & texts. | 23 | 24 Reminder calls, emails & texts. Create posters with positive messages for people to hold. | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 Reminder calls, emails, texts to build turnout. | 29 Confirm speakers. Someone to take photos. Sign-in volunteers. | 30 Reminders to RSVPs. | 1 WALK-INS Share photos, media and highlights w/ ISEA. | 2 Send follow up to attendees: Thank supporters and send action links. | 3 | 4 |

Sample Script on Dismantling the US Department of Education

Every School is Impacted.

Good morning. Thank you for gathering with us on International Workers Day!

We stand here united by a fundamental belief that our children deserve the best possible future. That future is built on the foundation of strong, well-funded public schools which are the cornerstone of our republic.

Together, we must act urgently to protect our students and our families. We cannot afford to stand idly by as threats to dismantle the Department of Education and steal opportunities from our communities are made.

The Department of Education is not a bureaucratic abstraction but a lifeline to schools in Iowa and across the country. For instance, it provides over \$800 million in essential support to all 325 school districts across the state, ensuring that every child, regardless of background or ability, has access to an education that unlocks their potential. **Go here for Iowa-specific federal school funding information:** www.nea.org/resource-library/how-much-funding-does-my-public-school-get-federal-government

Dismantling the Department of Education means more than just defunding programs. It means removing the support systems that educate and protect our most vulnerable. It means leaving families fearful and anxious and communities reeling. Many of our public schools in Iowa cannot fill in the support gaps, and our local communities may not recover. The US Department of Education ensures that all students are treated fairly by law.

Ninety percent of all students and 95% of students with disabilities rely on our public schools. Federal funding provides essential support, enabling special education students to receive specialized services, such as individualized instruction, therapy, and accommodations—costs that typically exceed what a local school district can afford. Iowa's public schools have been underfunded for over a decade and need specific and targeted funding for support.

The proposed cuts are not just a threat but a looming disaster that will affect our rural and smaller schools the most. Our local schools know what we need to succeed, and this information drives the US Department of Education's support.

We cannot allow this to happen. But we are not powerless. We must stand together, united in our resolve, to protect our public schools, defend our students, and secure a brighter future for all. Act now. Contact your Member of Congress and let them know how vital these programs are to the health and well-being of our children here at home.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment, for joining us today, and for being an integral part of supporting all our students. Your support is invaluable.

Sample Script on Cuts to Medicaid

Every School is Impacted.

Thank you for standing in solidarity with educators and public school supporters across the country today.

Proposed cuts to the country's Medicaid program directly impact Iowa's students, families, and communities. Medicaid is not just a health care program; it's an educational lifeline. It supports essential school-based services that benefit every student, from healthcare to the critical work in our schools of professionals like nurses, psychologists, and audiologists.

Let's look at the facts: studies show that children with Medicaid coverage miss fewer school days, are likelier to attend college, and earn more as adults. It's an investment in their future and our collective future.

Medicaid is the fourth-largest funding stream for our K-12 public schools. It covers nearly 80 million Americans and Iowa's HawkI program, including 38 million children and 1 in 10 education support professionals. And for students with disabilities, Medicaid provides \$7.5 billion annually nationwide for essential services like physical therapy, transportation, and specialized equipment. **Go here for Medicaid coverage by school district:** <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2025/03/17/medicaid-chip-coverage-in-iowa-school-districts-2019-2023/>

Slashing federal Medicaid support isn't about saving money; it's about shifting the burden to states struggling to meet their legal obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Remember, Congress promised to cover 40% of special education costs—currently at less than 12%.

These cuts would be devastating in rural districts, especially in Iowa, where Medicaid covers a larger share of children and schools are outsized in providing healthcare. Rural communities already face healthcare provider shortages and hospital closures.

With 80 million Americans relying on Medicaid, including over half of our public school students, cuts to this program would impact every community in Iowa.

We cannot allow this to happen. But we are not powerless. We must stand together to protect Medicaid, our children, and the future of our public schools. Contact your elected officials, stand firm for our students, and let them know we support all our students, not just some of them.

Thank you for joining us today. Your presence is appreciated; it's crucial. You are an integral part of supporting our local public school community.

Sign-In to Your May Day Walk-In Event Here:



Stay Engaged and Take Action!

Thank you for joining our National Day of Action.
Use NEA's Advocacy Resources to support our schools,
students, and our profession!

Sign up for NEA updates:

Text "Action" to 48744

**Contact your
elected officials:**

