

# Workshop Resources

FRAMEWORK FOR EMPOWERMENT		
I WANT +	I CAN =	I WILL
<p>Content: Teach the facts - Science and Impacts</p> <p>Strategy: keep it interactive, attached to solutions, and balanced.</p>	<p>Content: Analyze how other students have acted on climate change; create action plan <sup>1</sup></p> <p>Strategy: Use film or real kids, guide thinking with templates</p>	<p>Content: Implement action plan (research, outreach, plan, organize, act, celebrate!)</p> <p>Strategy: Student led, connect to what is already going on, celebrate</p>

## Website for Passing Climate Action Resolutions

- [Schools for Climate Action](#)

## Websites for Climate Change Education and Student Empowerment

- [Alliance for Climate Education \(ACE\)](#)    [Young Voices for the Planet](#)
- [CLEAN Network](#)
- [Climate Generation](#)

## Local Groups to contact if students show a particular interest

- Air quality: [Group Against Smog and Pollution \(GASP\)](#)
- Creating green spaces: [Grounded Strategies](#)
- Creating green buildings: [Green Building Alliance](#)
- Food sustainability: [Grow Pittsburgh](#)
- Plastic reduction: [Pittsburghers Against Single Use Plastic](#)
- Video/film advocacy: [Sustainability Pioneers](#)
- Protest/Striking: [Fridays for the Future Pittsburgh](#)
- Education: [Communitopia](#)



7334 Burton St, Pittsburgh, PA 15218  
Communitopia.org

## How to Pass a District-level Climate Action Resolution

### 1. Send an email to your school board

#### **Sample email:**

*Dear Pittsburgh Public School Board and Superintendent Hamlet:*

*Thank you for your service on the board and as Superintendent. I believe strong public schools are vital to our democracy, so I appreciate your work and leadership. I was a public school teacher for 10 years and currently work as the Director of Education for a local nonprofit called Communitopia, which is working to slow the effects of climate change and create healthier communities. I deliver climate change workshops to environmental justice communities throughout Allegheny County and will be working with students at Brashear High School to create a Climate Action Plan on Oct. 7th and 8th, 2019.*

*It is my belief that climate change is a generational justice and social justice issue. While climate change impacts all people, it disproportionately impacts all young people and all future generations as well as people of color and people in poverty, thereby exacerbating existing inequities and limiting equality of opportunity, which is a foundational aspiration for PPS and modern America.*

*Because climate change is one of the greatest issues facing our current and future students, and because school boards have the unique role of enacting policy that protects youth, I come to you with my request. I'm requesting that Pittsburgh Public School Board joins the national movement to speak up for climate action to protect current and future students by passing a climate action resolution.*

*More than 100 education sector organizations (including at least 57 [school boards](#)) in California, Colorado, New York, Virginia, Ohio, New Mexico, Oregon, North Carolina, Washington, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Texas, Arizona, and DC have recently passed strong non-partisan climate change resolutions. The National Black Council of School Board Members passed this [climate action resolution](#) in February, 2019 and the National Hispanic Council of School Board Members passed the same resolution in August, 2019. The California Association of School Psychologists passed this [resolution in March](#). [Student councils and student leaders](#) are also speaking up: 27 student councils in 6 states have passed climate action resolutions. Local [PTA chapters](#), [teachers' unions](#), and [community college boards](#) are also starting to pass climate action resolutions.*

*As you've probably read in the news, Woodland Hills School Board, right here in Allegheny County, was the first in the state to pass a strong climate action resolution last July, 2019. I've attached a copy for your reference. Would you please consider such a resolution for our district? If so, here's a link to the [Schools for Climate Action website](#), which is a non-partisan, grassroots, all-volunteer, youth-adult campaign leading the movement. I would be happy to meet with you to discuss this in detail.*

*Thanks again for your time and energy making great schools for kids in our community. Please feel free to email if you have any questions or want more information.*

*Sincerely,*

Environmental Justice and Student Empowerment in the Classroom

Climate Action Summit | Presented by Katie Modic | 10/30/2019  
katie@communitopia.org



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## 2. For Educators, have your students send letters attached to your email

### **Sample student letter:**

Katie Modic  
7334 Burton St.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15218

Oct 30, 2019

Woodland Hills School District  
504 Jones  
North Braddock, PA 15104

Dear Woodland Hills School Board Members:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am \_\_\_\_ years old and I attend \_\_\_\_\_ School. Thank you for all of the hard work and the time you put into being our school board member.

I am writing you because I am very concerned about the threat climate change poses on my future. I'm especially concerned about

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I know you're working hard to implement policy that protects and nourishes children. That is why I am asking you to speak up for climate action to protect me and my fellow students.

Please consider passing a Climate Action Resolution to slow climate change and show leaders at every level they should protect current and future children.

Sincerely,

## 3. Follow up your email and letters by making a public statement at a school board meeting

### **Sample Outline for creating a statement:**

*Above all, be 100% positive and respectful and keep it short (1-2 minutes)*

- 1. Identify yourself and your connection to the school district (student/age & grade, constituent, live in the district...).**
  - a. Ex: My name is Levi McGraw-Sapp and I'm 13 years old. I'm an 8th grader at Woodland Hills High School.
  - b. Ex. My name is Katie Modic. I am an educator, parent of 2 school-aged children, and a member of Schools for Climate Action.
- 2. Thank the board for something specific about the school district. Acknowledge their work and their service to the community.**
  - a. Ex. Thank you for opening your facilities to the community. As a soccer player, I love being able to come play here.
  - b. Ex. Thank you for your time and commitment as a school board member.
- 3. Mention who you are speaking up for:**
  - a. Ex: I am here today to speak up for my generation and future generations of students.
  - b. Ex: I am speaking up for my 2 children, Henry and Louis.
  - c. Ex: I am speaking up for my 6th grade students who are worried about climate change.
- 4. State purpose/mission:**
  - a. Ex: I am here today to empower you to speak up for climate action to protect current and future students. I hope you consider and pass a strong climate action resolution.
- 5. Mention why a resolution is so important**
  - a. Ex: This is critical as climate change disproportionately affects youth.
  - b. Ex: My fellow students and I don't currently have any curriculum or classes on climate change, and that will negatively impact our futures both because we won't be able to accurately anticipate the local impacts but also because we won't have a competitive edge on creating solutions.
- 6. Encourage them to pass a climate change resolution like the one Woodland Hills School District passed**
  - a. Ex: Please consider passing a strong climate action resolution like the one passed by the Woodland Hills School District in July, 2019.
- 7. Thank them again**

### **Sample student statement:**

Hi, my name is Levi McGraw-Sapp. I'm 13 years old, and I attend Woodland Hills High School. First I want to thank you for your service on the board. I'm here tonight because I believe that Climate Change is a generational justice issue because my generation and those to come will bear the greatest burden, although we are least responsible for its cause. On a happier note, more and more elected officials are speaking out. In the past year 57 school boards across the country have passed resolutions calling climate change a children's issue, including one passed in Woodland Hills in July, 2019. I am here to encourage you to do so as well. School Board members are the only publicly elected officials who have a singular focus on the well-being of children and future generations, so your voices are the strongest when you speak up for us. Please consider passing a strong climate action resolution on behalf of me and my generation. Thank you.



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***Sample constituent statement:***

Thank you for your work on behalf of our community. I especially appreciate your rigorous AP program, which my own children benefit from. My name is Katie Modic. I'm a mother, a career educator, and currently work as the Coordinator of Educational Initiatives for a local nonprofit, Communitopia. I recently had the pleasure to work with an 8th grade group of students at your middle school.

I'm here tonight because I believe climate change is a generational justice issue as it disproportionately affects young people and places an enormous burden on their shoulders. It is our job as leaders in the education sector to nurture, develop and prepare our youth for the future. Being silent on climate change undermines the very work we're doing. Additionally, as mandated reporters we must speak up if we suspect abuse or neglect. Not acting on climate change, which is putting students in harms way, is a form of neglect.

Therefore, the students and I are here to encourage you to take action and speak up for them by creating a climate action resolution. Such a resolution can directly slow the effects of climate change through lowering district greenhouse gas emissions and also influence political will to act. If you pass a resolution it will send a message to our elected leaders at a state and federal level that climate change is a children's issue and that leaders at every level can and should speak out to protect current and future generations.

To date 57 school boards in numerous states have passed such resolutions. This past July Woodland Hills School District passed the first resolution in PA! The education sector is no longer willing to be silent on this issue which so directly threatens the very youth we aim to serve. Please consider passing a strong climate action resolution to ensure a brighter future for our youth.

Thank you

\*For more excellent resources check out [Schools for Climate Action](#)



# Environmental Review Checklist

**Directions:** The Environmental Review Checklist is a tool for understanding the current environmental situation in your school. It will inform your Action Plan and help you set priorities to make your school more climate friendly.

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS	
A. Do a majority of students know what climate change is and that it's creating problems around the world?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Have students used a carbon calculator to determine their personal carbon footprint or the carbon footprint of the school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Has the school ever hosted a Climate Change Assembly?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Do students and staff in the school talk about climate change in an informal setting?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Do students know what greenhouse gases are and that they contribute to an increase in global temperatures?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
ENERGY	
A. Are most lights turned off when no one is in the classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. More than 10% of the teachers have personal appliances, i.e. refrigerators, microwaves	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Do students and/or staff frequently complain about the temperature inside the building?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Are classroom appliances shut off and unplugged when not in use? I.e. classroom computers, pencil sharpeners, projectors, lab equipment, lamps, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Do students know what type of energy is used to supply the school with energy? I.e. coal, oil, natural gas, wind, solar, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
TRANSPORTATION	
A. Are students encouraged to walk/bike and/or carpool to school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Do students have enough safe places for bikes to be locked up?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school have an idling policy?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Is the area around the school safe for walking/biking to school?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Are the school busses burning diesel fuel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
CONSUMPTION AND WASTE	

A. Does the campus have a recycling program?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Is the school paper (used for worksheets, etc.) made from at least 30% post-consumer materials?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does your school have a place to compost school lunch waste?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Do you know who your trash and recycling hauler is?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does the school communicate with the school community (parents, teachers, students) by electronic means only?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>SCHOOL GROUNDS</b>	
A. Does the school have a garden?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Do students use the school grounds as an outdoor learning classroom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school have a natural observation area or gathering area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Would you say the trees and other vegetation cover a quarter or more of the school grounds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
E. Does your school use a sustainable approach to maintaining the school grounds?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>SUSTAINABLE FOOD</b>	
A. Do the majority of students understand the difference between processed and fresh foods?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
B. Do the majority of students know where their food comes from?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school get any of its food from a sustainable source?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
C. Does the school know its average number of students who eat in the cafeteria per week?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
D. Does the school district and/or school have a wellness committee?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

*\*Adapted from the National Wildlife Federation Eco-Schools USA Environmental Review Checklist*

### Guiding Questions:

**What area(s) have the most NO answers? This may be your priority area!**

**Are there any environmental groups/initiatives already happening at your school? If so, list them below:**