



STEP

3

3

Build Your Action Plan

Once you have a problem, a solution, and the policy players, it's time to make an action plan. You need to figure out what has to be done, who will do it, and when it should be done. Below is an example of an action plan. Remember, it may take many steps and lots of time to make a policy change.

Sample Action Plan

Problem: No place for physical activity

Policy Solution: Keep the school gym open on weekends

STEPS	WHO DOES IT	BY WHEN
1) Find out who can decide to keep the gym open on weekends.	Terrell	October 1st
2) Do a survey to find out who would use the gym on weekends and what activities they would like to do there.	Veronica, Maria, Peter, Marcus	October 15th
3) Meet with the principal about keeping the gym open.	Beth, Terrell, Raul, Ashley	October 25th
4) Write a letter to the Parent Group asking for their help with this project.	Maria	November 14th
5) Give a presentation to the school board. Ask that they write a policy allowing the gym to be open on weekends.	Raul, Ashley, Tamika	December 1st
6) Have a group meeting to discuss what worked and what didn't work during the gym project.	All group members	December 12th

There are many tools that you can use in your Action Plan. For example, you can:

- Do a student survey
- Write letters
- Make phone calls
- Make presentations
- Work with the media

Now let's see how to do each of those things!



Student Survey

One really important step in the policy game is to gather the thoughts and feelings of other students. You can do this with a survey.

Ask your friends and classmates what they think. How do they feel about the problem and solution that your group has identified? Do they have other ideas to solve the problem?

You'll be doing more than just collecting information. You'll begin building support and you might even get more students to help you!



How To Do a Student Survey

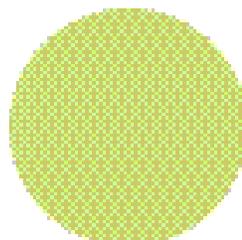
- Write your survey. Keep it short. Ask no more than five or six questions.
- Hand out your survey, then have your classmates fill it out and give it back to you.

-OR-

Ask classmates the survey questions, have them tell you their answers, and then you write down the answers.

- Make sure you survey different groups of students, not just your friends!

Take a look at the survey on the next page. It was written by a group of students at Fontana High School in Fontana, California. You can use this survey or make your own.





Student Survey

SCHOOL: _____

SEMESTER: _____

YEAR: _____

We want to know your thoughts and opinions about food and physical activity. Please answer these questions to the best of your knowledge. Thank you for your cooperation and please return your survey to _____.



Please Tell Us About Yourself

I am: _____Female_____Male

My grade is: _____Freshman_____Sophomore_____Junior_____Senior

1) Do you think the cafeteria and lunch carts sell the types of foods you like to eat at school?
Yes/No

2) Do you think the types of foods sold at school are healthy?
Yes/No

3) What types of healthy foods would you like to see sold on campus?

4) If after-school physical activities were available, would you participate?
Yes/No

If you would not participate, why not? Check all that apply.

Transportation

Work

Not Interested

Other, please describe _____

Depends on the type of activity

5) If there were other after-school physical activities, what type of physical activities would you like?

Dance Class

Swimming

Walking

Aerobics

Hiking

Others, please describe _____

Thank you for your help with this survey.





Student Survey

Collecting information helps you find out how other students feel about these issues. Here's what students at Fontana High School found out with their survey.



The Survey Says...

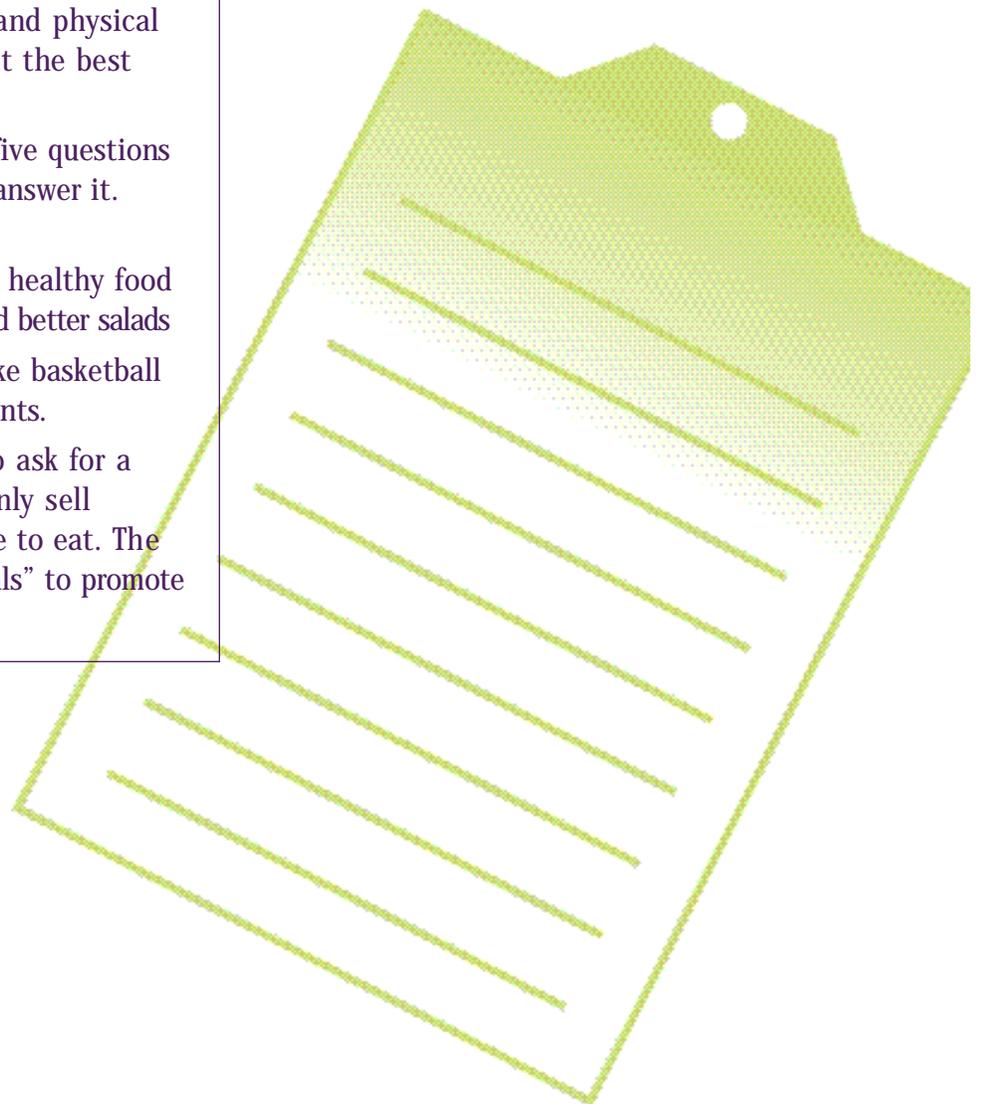
A group of Fontana High School students in California wanted to find out what other students thought about healthy eating and physical activity. The group decided that the best thing to do was a survey.

The group wrote a survey with five questions and then found 58 students to answer it.

Results of the survey showed:

- Students wanted to see more healthy food choices on campus like fruit and better salads
- Students wanted activities like basketball and tennis open for all students.

The group used these results to ask for a healthy food cart that would only sell healthy items that students like to eat. The group is also making “infomercials” to promote physical activity on campus.





Letters, Calls, Presentations and the Media

A major part of your Action Plan will involve telling people about your problem and solution. There are lots of different ways to do this.



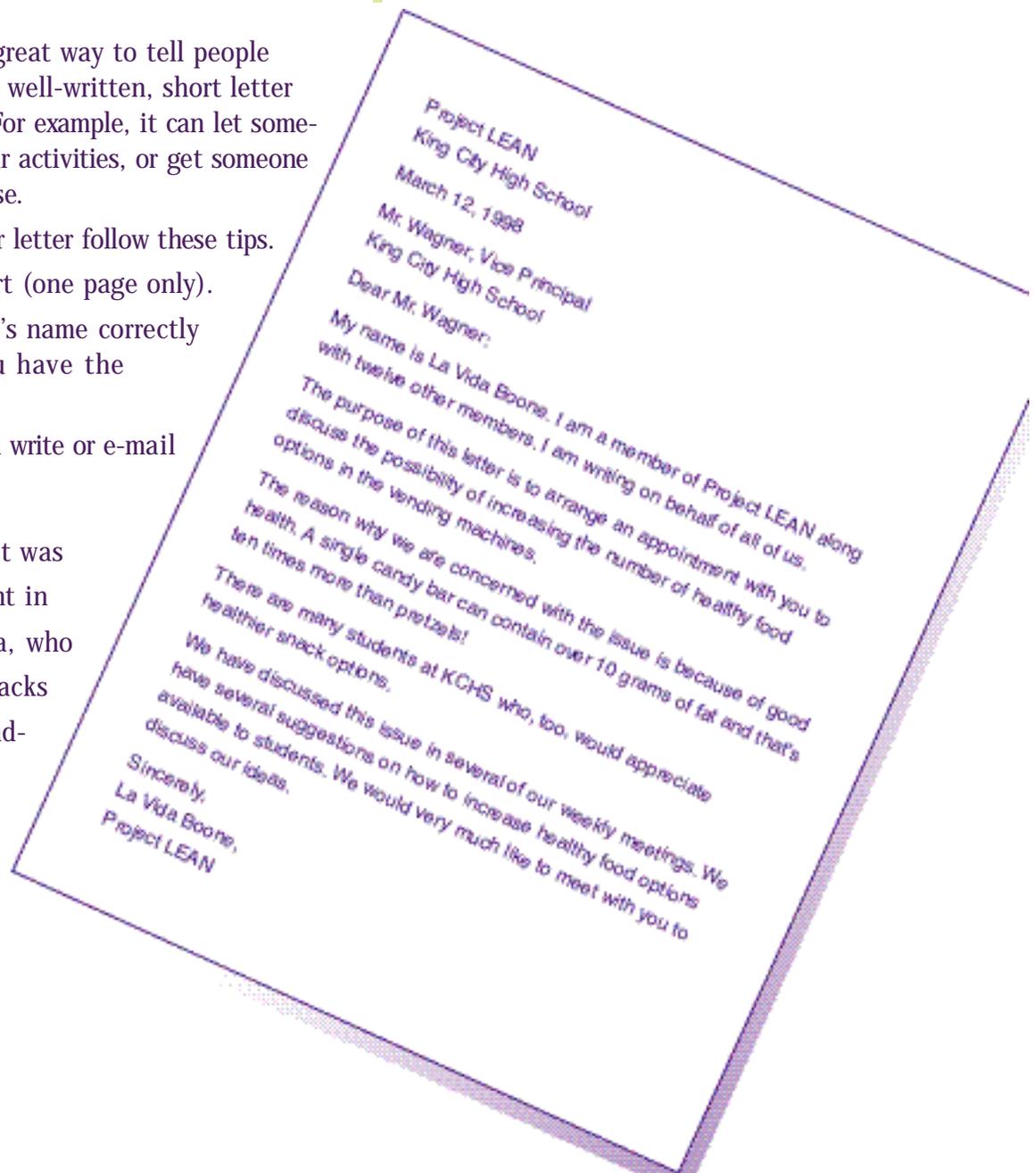
Letter Writing

Letter writing is a great way to tell people about your ideas. A well-written, short letter can do big things. For example, it can let someone know about your activities, or get someone to support your cause.

When you write your letter follow these tips.

- 1) Keep letters short (one page only).
- 2) Spell the person's name correctly and make sure you have the right address.
- 3) It is okay to hand write or e-mail letters.

Here is a letter that was written by a student in King City, California, who wanted healthy snacks in her school's vending machines.





Letter Guide

Use this Letter Guide to help you write your letter.



Your name
School name
Organization or club
School address
School City, State, Zip Code
Date

Name of person you are writing to
Title of person you are writing to
Street address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear (Name of person you are writing to):

My name is (your name). I am a (your age)-year-old student at (your school name). I live in (name of your city or town).
(Explain why you are writing in one or two sentences.)

(Explain why you care about the problem. Use your most interesting facts and shocking statistics. This paragraph can be about three to five sentences.)

(Explain what you are asking for, such as a vote to adopt your policy.)

Sincerely,
(Your signature)
(Your name)





Phone Calls

How would you like to talk on the phone and have it count as hard work? The telephone is an important tool in the policy game. A simple phone call can help you get information or it can give you the chance to tell your ideas and share your facts with a policy player.

When you make a phone call, follow these tips.

- 1) Fill out a copy of the phone guide.
- 2) Get permission to use the phones—whether you are calling from school or home.
- 3) When someone on the other end of the line picks up, always introduce yourself by giving your name, grade, and school.
- 4) If the person you are calling is not there, ask what time he or she will be back. Write down the time a call back then.
- 5) If you need to leave a message, make sure to leave your name, grade, school, phone number, the best time to call you back, and a short message about why you are calling. Most times, your call will be returned. If not, don't be afraid to call back as many times as it takes. Just be polite.
- 6) Have paper and a pencil handy for note taking.
- 7) While you have your contact person on the phone, get the correct spelling of his/her name, title, mailing address, and phone number.
- 8) Say thank you before saying good bye.





Phone Guide

Fill out this Phone Guide before you make your calls.



Contact Information

Contact name:

Contact title:

Contact organization:

Contact phone number:

Contact address:

Hello, may I please speak to (contact name)_____?

My name is_____and I am in_____grade at_____school.

I am calling to speak with you about...

Why you are calling. What you want to say or ask:

Notes. Write down what your contact tells you:

Thank you very much, good bye.



Your Information

Sometimes your contact will ask for more information about you. Fill out the section below so that you have the information handy.

Name of your school:

Your organization or club:

School address:

School fax number:

School phone number:

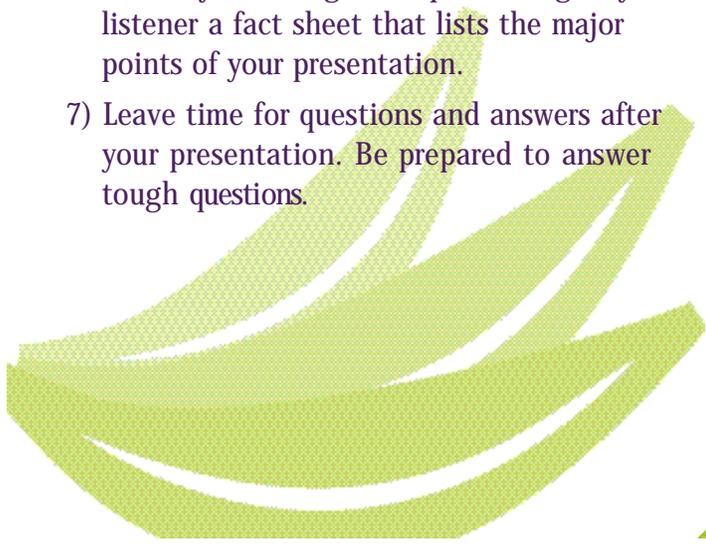




Presentations

Making a presentation is the third way you can tell people about your problem and solution. You can make a presentation to a large group of people, or you can talk at a small meeting with just one or two people.

When you make a presentation, follow these presentation tips.

- 1) Keep it short and simple. State your problem, a few facts and figures, and your solution. Emphasize two to three points you want your listeners to remember.
 - 2) Write your presentation and practice it until you feel comfortable. Practice in front of friends or family members.
 - 3) Make your presentation interesting. Tell a story about why you want to eat healthier and be more physically active. Give shocking facts, or show an interesting chart or picture. For example, tell a short story about a family member who has had a heart attack.
 - 4) Talk about how your solution will benefit the listener, not just how it will benefit you and your friends.
 - 5) You will probably be nervous. Most people are when they make presentations. Just be yourself.
 - 6) To really make a good impression, give your listener a fact sheet that lists the major points of your presentation.
 - 7) Leave time for questions and answers after your presentation. Be prepared to answer tough questions.
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HERE ARE SOME TOUGH QUESTIONS THAT PEOPLE MAY ASK YOU

Q: Students might not buy the healthy foods. How can food service take a chance on losing money?

A: First, let's ask the students which healthy foods they will buy. Then we can do a taste test to see which healthy choices the students like the most. Next, we can have a three month trial period. During this time, food service will sell healthy foods and promote these foods so students know they are available. We can encourage students to buy the healthy foods. At the end of three months, we can see if the healthy foods sold well.

Q: How can we keep the gym open after school? The school insurance won't cover this.

A: We can find out how much it will cost to change the insurance. We can talk to the insurance company about giving us a break or we can ask the school board to spend the extra money so students have a safe place to be physically active. We can ask parent groups to help us with this project.

Q: How can we put different foods in the vending machines? That is the vending machine company's decision.

A: We can work with the vending machine company. We can tell the vending machine company that students want some healthy snacks. We'll give them our survey results which show how many students will buy healthy snacks. We'll tell the vending machine company the types of healthy snacks we like and ask them to stock at least two of these in the vending machines.

Working with the Media

Sometimes you need to tell lots of people about your problem and solution. The media may be your answer!

What is the media?

It's where you get your news. Media includes newspapers, magazines, newsletters, radio, and TV. It can even include a poster hanging in your school or a morning bulletin announcement at school.

Will the media listen to your ideas?

Yes. Reporters love to do stories about teens, especially smart, young adults working to improve things. Making news will help you build support for your ideas. It may even help recruit a principal or school board member to your team. The media can inform the community about your problem and solution. The media can also report on the great changes you and your team made at your school. Let's say that the athletic director agrees to allow students to use the soccer fields on weekends. You could ask the local TV station to do a news segment on how students and the school are working together to keep teens healthy and active. A group of students at Zoe Barnum High School in Eureka, California, wrote a press release about a community walking event. Here's what happened:

COME JOIN US

When Zoe Barnum students decided to hold a community walk to get more people physically active, they decided they needed the help of the media. Students wanted the media to tell people when and where the event was happening, and that physical activity was important for everyone.

They decided the best way to get the media's attention was with a press release.

It worked! Before the event, local radio stations and the local newspaper announced the walking event. On the day of the event, all three of the local TV stations did stories on the event and the students.

How do you work with the media?

Find the phone numbers and addresses in the phone book. Call the newspapers, radio and TV stations to ask which reporters cover health and education. Put all of the names, phone and fax numbers, and addresses you find on your Media Contact List.

■ Write a Letter to the Editor.

Newspapers print letters to the editor. These letters express opinions about issues that affect the community. Your letter should describe how the problem has affected your life. You can find the editor's name and address on the editorial page of the newspaper.

■ Write a Press Release.

A press release is a written description of a news story or event. Reporters like events. Create an event at your school to attract reporters. You could hold a debate, or give a presentation to the school board. Make sure to invite the media. You could also invite a reporter to have lunch with you in the school cafeteria.

A press releases should be short and to the point—no more than two pages. It's best to type a press release. Make sure reporters know your press release is written by teenagers. They will be much more interested in your story. You should fax or mail a copy of your press release to all of the reporters on your media contact list, then telephone them to make sure they received it.

After you get media coverage, remember to get a copy of the newspaper article, or a recording of the TV or radio story. You can use the copies the next time you contact a decision-maker.

Sample Press Release

Use the Sample Press Release as a guide when you write your own press release.

For Immediate Release

Date: October 30, 1998

Contact: Gail Ramirez
Student, North High School
(555) 555-5555

What: Three students from North High School will make a presentation to the school board about the lack of healthy foods available at school. The students will describe the findings of a school survey and will present the school board with creative ways to sell healthy foods at school.

Who: Three tenth graders will make the presentation to the school board.

When: The school board meeting will be held on Tuesday, November 17th at 7:00 p.m. The student presentation is scheduled for 7:20 p.m.

Where: The school board meeting will be held at:
Town Hall, first floor meeting room
35 Taylor Road
North Hills, California

Details: Students at North High School are worried about their health. They want to eat healthy foods, but all they find at school is fast food, chips and soda. These students are mobilizing to change school policy to assure that healthy foods such as fruit and yogurt become part of the school menu.




Media Contact list

Use this worksheet to list newspapers and television and radio stations in your school and community.



NAME	NEWSPAPER OR STATION	ADDRESS	PHONE AND FAX #	NOTES



