

Launching a Not In Our School Campaign

A Guide to Student-Led Assemblies



A **Not In Our School campaign** is a long-term student-led effort to prevent and address bullying and intolerance in a school. A **student-led assembly** is an excellent way to launch a Not In Our School (NIOS) campaign. This guide provides examples of activities and resources that can be adapted to any school, grades K-12.

The assembly should incorporate the following NIOS core principles:

- **Students take the lead:** Students plan and execute the assembly.
- **Bullying and intolerance are addressed:** Students determine the issues at their school; issues are explained and defined.
- **Students are taught to be upstanders:** Upstander is both defined and modeled through a skit.
- **Identity safe school environments are fostered:** Students design their own pledge to create kind and accepting environments. An administrator informs the students of policies to protect student safety and that he/she has their backs.
- **The whole community is involved:** Students invite their school administrators and community members to participate. Solutions are shared and linked to the overall school mission and values.

Sample 40-Minute Assembly Schedule (also see attached Powerpoint)

- Welcome
- Watch short Not In Our School Video, “Keep Your Head Up”
 - *Video available at www.niot.org/nios-video/keep-your-head-stand-bullying*
- Share bullying and intolerance definitions
- Share site data, if available
- Define “Upstander”
- Perform student skit
- Message from administrator
- Message from community group
- Lead students in a call to action, either by chanting “Not In Our School” and a pledge, or something more specific to your school.

Steps for organizing your assembly

1. Get your group started

Follow the first few steps of the Not In Our School Campaign Quick Start Guide.

<http://www.niot.org/nios/quickstart>

- **Identify student leaders.** Find leaders who represent different groups at your school. Be sure your leadership group is diverse ethnically, socially and in terms of interests (athletes, artists, etc.) and student grade levels.
- **Learn best practices from other schools.** Watch Not In Our School videos about what students have done in other schools.
<http://www.niot.org/nios/videos>
- **Assess issues at the school.** Use existing data, surveys, or focus groups to find out what the biggest issues with bullying and intolerance are at your school. Cyberbullying? Cliques? Homophobic teasing? Issues vary from one school to another.

2. Planning

Bring your student group together to set the assembly agenda and divide up the tasks. Set up a schedule for planning meetings.

You might consider having several planning teams, including:

- Inviting the guests
- Assembly narration
- Powerpoint and technology
- Skit planning
- Publicity and decorations

3. Logistics

- **Set the date and time.** This is complicated in a busy school schedule. Give yourselves plenty of time for planning, at least three weeks.
- **Choose your location.** Make sure there is a sound system and video projection in the room.
- **One assembly or several?** Will you be able to get the whole school into one assembly? Or will you have to repeat the assembly?

4. The Narration

NIOS developed an assembly narration with two student narrators. Review the text and adapt the narration to highlight the issues at your school. No matter what the issues are, the idea of being an upstander and a call to action are very important messages in the assembly. Be sure to provide definitions of key words and concepts.

5. Invite the Principal to Participate

Meet with the principal to discuss his or her role in the assembly. Let the principal know that it is a small part, but important.

Students need to know this is very serious for the school and that the principal has their backs when it comes to bullying and intolerance. They also need to know the principal and other administrators are accessible when they have a problem.

The principal needs to remind the students of school policies and procedures when it comes to bullying. That includes reporting mechanisms, the consequences of bullying, and the fact that students need to speak up and be upstanders. Remind students that a snitch is someone who speaks out to get someone in trouble and an upstander speaks up to be sure someone does not get hurt.

Go over the principal's role and ask if he or she wants to add one to two slides (maximum) to the Powerpoint.

6. The Powerpoint

NIOS provides a simple Powerpoint to use for the assembly. While a Powerpoint is not required, it provides a focal point for definitions of keywords—like bullying and upstander—and helps with the flow. Adapt and change the Powerpoint to fit your needs.

Be sure the person operating the slideshow knows the assembly agenda. Have a tech person on hand for any problems with Powerpoint or the sound system.

7. The Skit

NIOS developed two skits, one for elementary and another for middle and high school students which focus on how to be an upstander in the face of bullying. Feel free to have students adapt or write their own versions of the skit. Practice the skit so students can perform it from memory. Work on staging and projecting voices so that the audience can see and hear.

We asked students to test the NIOT skits. One group of students adapted the skit in their own video. A group of elementary students added parts to the skit to include more students. Find the videos here:

<http://www.niot.org/nios-video/bully-story>

<http://www.niot.org/nios-video/not-our-school-launch-assembly>

8. Featured Community Guest

Discuss whom from the community might be invited to help with the assembly. Bringing in a guest shows community support of the ideas. It is not a requirement,

but helps to bring excitement and power to your message. Brainstorm. Potential individuals or groups might include:

- Musicians
- Artists
- Fire fighters
- Animal rescue groups or dog trainers
- Local celebrities (radio personalities comedians, actors, etc.)
- Athletes
- Local service clubs
- College students

Choose an individual or group who cares about youth and your issues. Invite them via email, letter, or telephone.

Work with your guest in advance to plan a 10-minute presentation. Have them share stories from their lives, sing a song, or even perform their own skit. The goal is to send a message of kindness, that it is not OK to bully, tease, negatively stereotype, or exclude others.

As an example, at two Oakland elementary schools, a local Harley Davidson Club helped with the NIOS assemblies. See the film here:

<http://www.niot.org/blog/not-our-school-messages-disney-bikers-against-bullying>

9. Call to Action through a Pledge and Share Your NIOS Campaign's Next Steps

At the assembly, you will be making a call to action. Plan how you will share that call to action with the other students. Let them know some of your future plans. These plans do not need to be finalized, but give students the sense that this is an ongoing, school-wide effort.

Leaders can write a pledge or use one the school already has developed. Students can all repeat the pledge verbally in the assembly or sign a pledge during or after the assembly. Students can chant "Not In Our School," a message of unity that bullying and intolerance are not welcome in your school.

View two videos that have sample pledges:

<http://www.niot.org/nios-video/friday-night-light-against-bullying-marshalltown-iowa>

<http://www.niot.org/nios-video/lancaster-ca-city-unites-end-school-bullying>

<http://www.niot.org/nios-video/students-map-bully-zones-create-safer-school>

10. Publicity and Decorations

This assembly is a launch for an ongoing NIOS campaign.

- **Decorate the halls and the auditorium.** Create Not In Our School banners and posters with other campaign messages. Make it festive.
- **Recruit student artists.** Invite students or ask the art teacher to recruit students to participate in making posters and banners.
- **Reach out to the media.** Invite local radio, newspaper, and television media to cover the event.

11. Document the Assembly and Follow Up

Take photos and videos. Write an article for the school or local paper. Write thank you notes to everyone who helped, including the community participants and the principal. Community groups love hearing from the students who attended the assembly.

Not In Our School would also love to share your assembly with other schools across the country. Contact us at info@niot.org.

12. Celebrate and Evaluate Your Efforts and Plan Next Steps of Your NIOS Campaign

Bring your team together to reflect on what worked and what could be improved. Celebrate your accomplishments.