



HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

How To Set Up Meetings with Students, Teachers, Guidance Counselors, School Nurses, or School Leaders

1. Craft a universal pitch, which you'll use as a base for crafting a more detailed pitch when seeking a meeting with students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders. A step-by-step guide for creating a universal and school-specific pitch can be found in the [section below](#).
2. Using a service such as [Google Maps](#), identify the schools in your area and create a list of schools you'd like to visit.
3. For each school you'd like to visit, explore their website and take note of factors such as the grade levels taught at the school, student demographics, academic programs, and anything else that stands out. Try to get a sense of what each school values the most and what their brand is. What types of things are missing from their website that you'd like to see (e.g., content about careers in occupational and environmental health and safety [OEHS]; goals the school has related to OEHS; how the school is working to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors). Write these things down and take them with you when you visit each school.
4. Craft a more detailed pitch for each school you'd like to visit, using your universal pitch as a base. Information on how to craft a detailed pitch can be found in the [section below](#).
5. Contact each school and request a meeting with the school principal or a teacher, using your detailed pitch for each school as a script or talking points. A step-by-step guide for contacting schools can be found in the [section below](#).
6. Confirm the date and time of each meeting.
7. Hold the meetings.
8. Continue the conversation and deepen your relationships by following up after each meeting by sending a Thank You email that includes helpful resources and any action items that can be immediately completed. Be sure to list other medium and longer-term action items or ideas that arose during or after your meeting.

9. Share your experiences with Mark Ames at mames@aiha.org and with AIHA's I Am IH in Schools team, as well as your Local Section. You can email everyone all at once if you like.

Crafting Your Pitch

Before contacting a school, make sure you have your pitch ready. Your pitch is your purpose for seeking a meeting with students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders. You'll use your pitch as a script or talking points when requesting a meeting.

There are two pitches you should create:

1. Your universal pitch.
2. Your more detailed, school-specific pitch.

Universal Pitch

Your universal pitch is the core reason why you'd like to meet with students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders. Examples include:

- Encouraging students to pursue careers in OEHS.
- Helping students stay safe in their communities and at after-school or summer/winter jobs.
- Improving the learning and working conditions of schools.

You'll want your pitch to include two key elements: A problem and a solution. Here's an example:

"Hi, my name is Alex. I'm a nearby resident working in the field of occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS). It's a deeply rewarding career where I get to help protect the health and safety of people in our community. The average starting salary is \$58,300, and in just 10 years, the average salary goes to \$113,600. We need more people in my profession, and since I live near your school, I figured I'd reach out and see if I can meet with some students about pursuing a career in OEHS, including local opportunities to get involved right away. I'd also like to share my own story of how I got into the profession. What are the next steps for meeting with students in your school?"

School-Specific Pitch and Presentation Prep

When you're crafting your school-specific pitch and presentation for a meeting with students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders, you have options. You can deliver a high-level presentation on OEHS, focusing on your story, the type of work that you and others in your profession perform, and how the profession is deeply rewarding.

Alternatively, you could tailor your presentation to fit with what's currently being taught in the class you're visiting. That requires a bit more research, but it might be easier to secure time to meet with students, since time is limited and teachers have a lot of content to cover with their students. Anything you can do to frame your meeting request as something that adds to what students are already doing, rather than an irrelevant distraction that takes time away from other things, will help build your relationships with teachers and make it more likely you'll land meetings.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Crafting Your School-Specific Pitch and Presentation

The number one question you want to ask yourself when preparing for a meeting with students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders is:

- What would I like to discuss?

Next, answer the following questions:

- Why would you like to discuss those topics?
- What are your goals for your presentation?
- What would "success" look like?
- What do I need to happen to be successful? How can I influence the outcome?

Write down your answers to each of these questions.

Scenarios

The environment plays a big role in your presentations. There are two types of scenarios you'll likely present in:

- 1) An auditorium filled with students, likely from multiple classes or grade levels.
- 2) A classroom.

Presentations delivered in an auditorium tend to be higher level, however, they can also be used for a larger demonstration of OEHS-related products or techniques, similar to what you'd see on the trade show floor at AIHce EXP.

Presentations delivered in a classroom can be high-level, involving your own journey into OEHS, but they can also feature activities that engage students and fit within the curriculum of the class you're visiting.

Resources for Higher-Level Presentations

If you opt to deliver a high-level presentation, focusing more on the OEHS profession and your own journey, rather than fitting into educational requirements, AIHA has a treasure trove of resources, most of which can be found at:

- <https://www.oehscareers.org/>
 - This is AIHA's OEHS careers website, featuring content specific to students, teachers, guidance counselors, and more.
- <https://www.aiha.org/ih-careers/discover-industrial-hygiene/i-am-ih>
 - This is AIHA's I Am IH suite of resources, featuring award-winning content that includes videos, online comic books, and even a free-to-play IH video game.

Resources for More In-Depth Presentations

When you've decided to deliver a more in-depth presentation, AIHA has you covered with several key resources, including:

- <https://www.aiha.org/get-involved/safety-matters-center>
 - This is AIHA's Safety Matters Center, which features content focused on helping students stay safe on the job by teaching them how to identify, mitigate, and respond to OEHS hazards. This is a great set of resources to help students build vital OEHS-related skills.
- <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/talkingsafety/default.html>
 - This is NIOSH's Youth@Work – Talking Safety program. This program includes State-specific curriculum designed to help reduce occupational injuries and illness among youth.

Since this is a more in-depth presentation, you'll want to answer a few additional questions. These require a bit more research, but you'll come out of it with a much better appreciation of the pressures students, teachers, guidance counselors, school nurses, or school leaders face, which may help you understand how your presentation meets their needs and goals.

The in-depth questions you'll want to answer include:

- How does the content of your presentation fit into the district's and State's educational requirements?

- What are the State’s and district’s educational requirements? Note that depending on where you live, there might be multiple school districts nearby, each with potentially different educational requirements. You’ll want to research what’s required in each school district you plan on visiting.
 - Researching educational requirements can be daunting; use these [key resources](#) to make it less scary and maybe even fun.
- What is the profile of the school? Take note of factors such as:
 - Location
 - Demographics
 - Academic programs

How to Identify, Contact, and Set Up Visits to Schools Where You Live

Before contacting a school, make sure you have your pitch ready. Your pitch is your purpose for seeking a meeting with students, teachers, guidance counselors, or school leaders. The [section above](#) outlines how to craft your pitch.

1. Search for schools in your area using a service such as [Google Maps](#).
2. Use Microsoft Word or a similar tool to make a list of the schools you’d like to visit.
3. Visit each school’s website and look for a school visitor policy.
 - a. The school visitor policy will often direct you to contact the school’s principal to request access to the school and make arrangements to meet with students.
 - i. Note: If the school’s website doesn’t list a visitor policy or you’re just having trouble finding it, call or email the school principal and they’ll help you out.
 - b. Before contacting the principal, it’s a good idea to research the school, its classes, and teachers.
 - c. The principal will likely ask you to coordinate with a teacher and may facilitate an introduction.

- i. If you already have a connection with a teacher whose class you'd like to meet with, then request assistance from that teacher in scheduling a visit with their students, keeping in mind that approval from the principal to visit the school may still be required.
- 4. Before contacting a principal or teacher, consider what you'd like to discuss with students, and how it fits into their educational requirements. Research educational requirements using these [key resources](#).

Tips for Meeting with Teachers

- Understand their challenges, pressures, goals, and expertise. The challenges that teachers face include:
 - Student performance and widening achievement gaps as students, teachers, and educational institutions recover from the pandemic.
 - The capacity to teach a large number of subjects in a relatively short period of time. If they are at capacity (which many of them are), where can teachers get the support they need? Perhaps AIHA members can help...
 - Addressing violence and disruptive behavior.
 - Pressures from parents/guardians.
 - Time for professional development. In addition to teaching students, teachers themselves need to be taught. Where will they get this professional development and where will they find the time and funding for it?
- Set the tone of the meeting, focusing on collaboration and building a strong relationship (we're all on the same team and have similar or the same goals).
- Clearly convey why you'd like to meet with their students, including your goals and how your presentation might fit into educational requirements or school programs.
- Key resource: <https://www.oehscareers.org/aiha-guidance-counselors>

Tips for Meeting with School Guidance Counselors

- Focus on your own story and journey into OEHS.
- Highlight how rewarding the OEHS profession is:

- OEHS professionals protect the health and safety of workers and communities.
- The average starting salary of an OEHS professional is \$58,300, and in just 10 years, the average salary goes to \$113,600.
- Discuss the many interesting job sites and types of an OEHS professional. AIHA's online comic books, free-to-play video game, and videos are a great way to discuss these topics. You can find those resources at <https://www.aiha.org/ih-careers/discover-industrial-hygiene/i-am-ih>
- Highlight the college career and post-college path of an OEHS professional.
- Provide examples of opportunities for students to become immediately involved in OEHS, including mentorships, internships, apprenticeships, local jobs, and AIHA Local Sections.
- Key resource: <https://www.oehscareers.org/aiha-guidance-counselors>

Tips for Meeting with School Principals or Vice Principals

- Understand their challenges, pressures, goals, and expertise. The challenges that school leaders face include:
 - Keeping schools open amidst threats such as infectious diseases and school violence.
 - Improving student performance as we emerge from the pandemic.
 - Attending to the mental health needs of students and staff.
 - Addressing staffing shortages by attracting and retaining high-quality teachers and other school personnel.
 - Addressing staff who seek to undermine decisions.
 - Promoting a healthy, safe, and welcoming school culture.
 - Managing the school's budget.
 - Managing school building operations and maintenance needs.
- Come prepared with knowledge of the school, district, and State.

- Highlight the impact of your profession in the community.
- Come with ideas for how students, teachers, and parents could get involved with OEHS.
- Be prepared to talk about how to improve the learning and working conditions of schools.

Tips for Meeting with School Nurses

- Discuss how medical professionals and practitioners are connected within the overall OEHS landscape.
- Although it could be somewhat unfamiliar for school nurses, it may be helpful to identify the links between OEHS initiatives, student and school worker health and well-being, and potential medical surveillance programs/requirements in industry and construction, etc.
- Discuss the influence of the built environment on student and worker health, safety, and learning/performance.

Key Resources

School & District Navigator

<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolmap/>

An easy-to-use map-based search tool for identifying school districts and schools in your area.

National Center for Education Statistics

<https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/>

Use this to find basic information about a school, such as its address, phone number, website, grade span, total students, students per grade, and student demographics.

Education Demographic and Geographic Estimates

<https://nces.ed.gov/programs/edge/acsdashboard>

Use this to find beautiful infographics about school districts, including total population, median household income, total households, households with broadband internet, languages spoken at home, percentages of families with income below the poverty level, the educational attainment of parents whose children attend public school, how the district compares to the rest of the State and nation, and more.