

Chicano Students Walk Out for Racial Equality in Kingsville, Texas 1969

- [U.S. Civil Rights Movement \(1950s-1960s\)](#) [1]
- [\(mainly or initiated by\) people of color](#) [2]
- [\(mainly or initiated by\) student participants](#) [3]
- [local community or neighborhood-level campaign](#) [4]

- [U.S. Civil Rights Movement \(1950s-1960s\)](#)

Timing

April 14

1969

to:

April 24

1969

Location and Goals

Country:

United States

Location City/State/Province:

Kingsville, Texas

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

Bilingual and bicultural education programs, the right to speak spanish at school without harassment, more Mexican-American books in the school library, more Mexican American teachers, and a ban on teachers preaching their own political views in the classroom.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 051. Walk-outs

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 038. Marches
- 051. Walk-outs

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 051. Walk-outs

Methods in 4th segment:

- 007. Slogans, caricatures, and symbols
- 051. Walk-outs

Methods in 5th segment:

- 034. Vigils
- 038. Marches
- 051. Walk-outs

Methods in 6th segment:

- 034. Vigils

Notes on Methods:

Walk-outs from schools are effective because the schools receive funding only for those students in attendance.

Segment Length:

1.66 days

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Human Rights

National/Ethnic Identity

Group characterization:

- Chicano Students at the A&I University and Kingsville Public Schools

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

MAYO (Mexican-American Youth Organization), A&I Students

Partners:

Students at other Kingsville ISD schools

External allies:

12 Latina Women

Involvement of social elites:

not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Chicano A&I Students
- Chicano Gillet Junior High School Students
- MAYO organizers

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

Groups in 5th Segment:

Groups in 6th Segment:

- 110 Kingsville ISD students and dropouts
- supporters (neighborhood residents)

Segment Length:

1.66 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

Texas Education Agency, Kingsville School Board

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

none

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

No repressive violence

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

0.5 points out of 1 point

Growth:

2 points out of 3 points

Total points:

2.5 out of 10 points

Notes on outcomes:

Although this campaign was not successful in achieving its specific demands, the later national efforts of the Chicano movement, to which this campaign belongs, were successful.

During the Civil Rights Movement, Mexican-Americans struggled for equal rights all across the Southwest in America. In Texas, campaigns for racial equality were led primarily by organizations like La Raza (the Resistance), MAYO (Mexican-American Youth Organization), PASSO (Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations), and the Brown Berets. These organizations struggled for equal rights and privileges

for Mexican-Americans in all facets of society.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, young MAYO activists, as a part of the Chicano Movement, enacted numerous school walk-outs for better, more racially inclusive education policies. On 28 February 1969, Chicano students at Kingsville, Texas' A&I University staged a walk-out for improved conditions in the Mexican-American parts of town. Twenty students participated, demanding "development of a park at The Plaza for public use, paved streets in the Mexican American barrios and maintenance of a drainage ditch on the city's northside." Although these demands were not even considered by public officials, students at Kingsville's Gillett Junior High School took up the strike in April of the same year with a new list of demands. They wanted bilingual and bicultural education programs, the right to speak Spanish at school without harassment, more Mexican-American books in the school library, more Mexican American teachers, and a ban on teachers preaching their own political views in the classroom.

A&I students provided Gillett Junior High School students with the research they needed to present their case as viable, and helped to organize the junior high school students. First, the students presented their case to school officials. When this did not garner the results they sought, they began organizing a walk-out. Seventy-five organizers from MAYO and A&I organized 200 students in preparation for a walk-out.

On 14 April 1969, about 75 students gathered across the street from Gillett Junior High School and boycotted class. On the second day, between 70 and 80 students convened at a hamburger stand near school and marched to the school district's administrative offices, where they picketed. They shouted phrases like "Viva la Raza!" and "Viva MAYO!" and carried signs with statements such as "We Dare to Care about Education" in both English and Spanish. On the third day, between 50 and 60 protesters stood across the street from the school and shouted to students to cross the street and join them during passing period. Around 12 students did so. School administrators threatened all protesting students with suspension. Additionally, twelve Latina women gathered and stood silently outside of the school that day to demonstrate their dissent.

MAYO and A&I organizers then planned a combined walk-out with local schools. They began at Gillett Junior High School and planned to march to Memorial Junior High School. As they walked, they grew in number, reaching 110 marchers, comprising 56 minors and 54 legal adults, before police intervened. Sixteen policemen took every marcher into custody on charges of disrupting the peace and unlawful assembly.

By 5:00 p.m., almost all of the students had been released either to

parents or “to their own person,” but several students were kept overnight in the jail. Four hundred supporters held silent vigil outside of the jail that night for the students being held overnight. The minors were set to be released without bond, but several of the students who were over 17 years old paid \$50 bail. This campaign in Kingsville, Texas ended then, with the Gillett Junior High principal stating that things were “back to normal,” solidifying the failure of the campaign.

However, MAYO and other Chicano organizations carried out several other walk-outs through the end of 1969 and the early 1970s, with varying degrees of success. Walk-outs began on 22 April 1969 in the South Texas city of Edcouch-Elsa, and later in Crystal City (<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/chicano-students-strike-equalit...> [5]). The walk-outs in Kingsville influenced later walk-outs in neighboring Robstown, Texas, where students walked out in protests of staff and curriculum insufficiencies very similar to those in Kingsville. Additionally, on September 16, 1970, Kingsville A&I students joined the National Chicano Walkout, marching from their Student Union to the Kleberg County Courthouse.

Research Notes

Influences:

MAYO and other Chicano organizations carried out several other walk-outs through the end of 1969 and the early 1970s, with varying degrees of success. Walk-outs began on April 22, 1969 in the South Texas city of Edcouch-Elsa, and later in Crystal City (<http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/chicano-students-strike-equalit...> [5]). The walk-outs in Kingsville influenced later walk-outs in neighboring Robstown, Texas, where students walked out in protests of staff and curriculum insufficiencies very similar to those in Kingsville. Additionally, on September 16, 1970, Kingsville A&I students joined the National Chicano Walkout, marching from their Student Union to the Kleberg County Courthouse.

Sources:

Acosta, Teresa P. 2010. “POLITICAL ASSOCIATION OF SPANISH-SPEAKING ORGANIZATIONS.” Texas State Historical Association. Retrieved May 9, 2015 (<http://web.archive.org/web/20150509185842/https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/vep01>).

Perez, Nicole D. 2011. “The Kingsville Walk Out — Texas A&I And The Chicano Movement.” Alice Echo-News Journal. Retrieved May 9, 2015 (http://www.alicetx.com/news/article_5d64622e-3196-583b-9947-f2a3d0422e49.html).

South Texas Rabble Rousers. 2014. “1969: Student Walkouts At Texas A&I University and Robstown High School.” South Texas Rabble Rousers History Project. Retrieved May 9, 2015 (<http://web.archive.org/web/20150509185618/https://southtexasrabblerrousers.wordpress.com/2014/04/16/1969-student-walkouts-at-texas-ai-and-robstown-high-school/>).

Pollack, Andrew. n.d. "The Struggle For Chicano Liberation." The Struggle for Chicano Liberation. Retrieved May 9, 2015
(<http://web.archive.org/web/20150509190203/https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/document/swp-us/chicanlib2.htm>).

Anon. 1969. "75 Students Strike At Kingsville High School." Corpus Christi Caller Times, April 14, pp. 1–1.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Beatriz Grace Baker 08/02/2015

[Back to top](#)

A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

Copyright Swarthmore College.

[Creative Commons License](#)

Global Nonviolent Action Database is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).

Original website design and artwork created by [Daniel Hunter](#).

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>.

Registered users can [login](#) to the website.

Source URL (retrieved on 10/26/2020 - 18:24): <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/chicano-students-walk-out-racial-equality-kingsville-texas-1969>

Links:

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/wave-campaigns/us-civil-rights-movement-1950s-1960s>

[2] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-people-color>

[3] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-student-participants>

[4] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/local-community-or-neighborhood-level-campaign>

[5] <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/chicano-students-strike-equality-education-crystal-city-texas-1969-1970>