



# Effectively Communicating with your State Legislator

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# Keys to Communicating

- ❖ Know your audience
- ❖ Use terms your audience will understand
- ❖ Just the facts
- ❖ Short and sweet
- ❖ Personalize the message
- ❖ The messenger matters – you are the school finance experts!



# Know Your Audience

- ❖ Find background information on the legislator you are contacting. Good things to know include:
  - their political affiliation.
  - the district they represent.
  - legislative committees they serve on and issues they champion at the state legislature.
  - their connection to the community.



# Use Terms Your Audience Will Understand

- ❖ Keep it simple -- you may know the details of an issue, but the legislators may not be as knowledgeable.
- ❖ Stay away from jargon or technical details that distract from the issue you are trying to discuss.
- ❖ Localize the issue – show them why it's important to your community and school district.
- ❖ Spell out acronyms (i.e. UFARS).



# Just the Facts

- ❖ Legislators like to get solid facts about an issue.
- ❖ Make sure the facts are accurate.
- ❖ Localize the facts to show what's happening in your school district.



# Short and Sweet

- ❖ Whether it's by email, phone call or a personal meeting, keep it short.
- ❖ Get to the point about your request.
- ❖ Provide facts and district information to support your request.
- ❖ Thank them for their time and be available for any questions.



# Ways to Communicate with your State Legislator

- ❖ Personal visits with legislators in their district.
- ❖ Attend legislative town meetings.
- ❖ Personal visits at the state capitol.
- ❖ Personal phone calls.
- ❖ Mailed letters.
- ❖ Emails.



# Tips for Contacting and Meeting with Legislators

- ❖ Introduce yourself, your connection to their district and the issue you are contacting them about.
- ❖ Let them know your personal thoughts and experience on the issue. Show them the impact on their district.
- ❖ Provide background information to help educate legislators on your issue.
- ❖ Ask for specific action to be taken.
- ❖ It's ok if you don't know the answer to a question – offer to get them more information later.



# Tips for Contacting and Meeting ....continued

- ❖ Be respectful and thank them. Follow up with a thank you letter and reminder about your meeting.
- ❖ Make efforts to connect throughout the year. By doing this, you become a reliable source of information and a connection to what's happening in their district.



# Questions?

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