

Legislative Advocacy Protocol

Contacting legislators by mail or by e-mail:

- * Letters are the preferred method of communication by the majority of legislators.
- * Address letters to Senators and Representatives by beginning with "The Honorable (full name)"; the body of the letter can begin with "Dear Senator (full name):" or "Dear Representative (full name):"
- * Include your name, address, the date, your phone number, and e-mail address at the top of the letter.
- * Identify yourself as a constituent in the first paragraph.
- * Be specific - identify a specific piece of legislation (e.g., Senate Bill 100) in the first paragraph.
- * Keep your letter succinct and to the point - mention only one issue per letter.
- * Provide research statistics and brief personal anecdotes to support your points.
- * Keep the tone of the letter friendly and appreciative.
- * Follow-up your letter with a phone call 1-2 weeks later. When calling, you may need to speak with the staff person who handles educational issues and legislation.

When visiting a Legislator:

- * Appointments can be scheduled through the local or central office.
- * When attempting to schedule an appointment with the legislator or staff person assigned to educational issues, ask to speak with the appointment secretary or scheduler.
- * Identify yourself as a constituent and be clear about your purpose. In the event that the legislator is unavailable, this will help to determine an appropriate staff member who can address your concerns.
- * Plan your visit in advance. Keep your conversation friendly, positive, and appreciative. Limit your visits to 20-30 minutes. Bring relevant research and documents to support your position.
- * Follow-up your visit with a personal letter of thanks and an offer to provide additional information, if needed, relative to critical issues under consideration.