



HOW TO CONDUCT AN ADVOCACY MEETING

Edtech Advocacy Toolkit

DECEMBER 2019

Purpose of an Advocacy Meeting

Meeting with a policymaker and/or staffer can be a great way to build relationships, become a trusted source of information and get involved in the policymaking process. The process below is specific to engaging federal and state legislators, but can be adapted for members of the state board, state education agency, governor's office, or other types of leaders.

Organizing the Meeting

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

Invite colleagues, who have the experience and expertise necessary to speak about your issue in depth, to participate in the meeting. These individuals could be representatives from your school or district, [ISTE affiliate](#) members, parents or the business community.

WHICH POLICYMAKERS SHOULD I MEET?

Use the United States [Senate](#) and [House](#) websites to find who represents you, your school or your district. When meeting these members of Congress (or their staffers), it is usually helpful when their constituent participates in the meeting.

You may also wish to meet with specific committee members including:

- [Senate Appropriations Committee](#) (and [Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies](#))
- [Senate Budget Committee](#)
- [Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#) (HELP Committee)
- [House Appropriations Committee](#) (and [Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies](#))
- [House Budget Committee](#)
- [House Committee on Education and Labor](#)

You can also meet with [state legislators](#) (or their staffers) who represent you or are part of key committees.

HOW DO I ARRANGE A MEETING?

Call the legislator's office and ask for the name of the staffer who handles education issues. Send that person an email requesting a meeting and suggest a variety of possible meeting times. Be conscientious of the staffer's busy schedule. Include in your request which topics you would like to discuss. Indicate that you would like to meet with the legislator if they are available at that time. The legislator is more likely to join the meeting themselves if a constituent is attending. Even if the legislator is unavailable, staffers play a critical role in collecting information and advising their legislators.

Preparing for the Meeting

Meet with all colleagues who will attend. To ensure that the meeting time is spent as efficiently as possible, develop an agenda, agree on key messaging points, designate the individual who will lead the meeting and determine what others will contribute to the conversation. You may also consider the following:

- Develop a [one-pager](#) that will help guide the conversation. You can also leave behind the one-pager with the legislator or staffer after the meeting.
- Complete the ISTE scavenger hunt for [federal](#) or [state](#) legislators to become more familiar with their interests, experiences and policy goals.

During the Meeting

KEY POINTS TO COMMUNICATE

- Explain who you are (e.g. title, role and school or district) and share business cards.
- Make the purpose of the meeting clear. Are you introducing yourself to the legislator? Are you raising their awareness of a specific issue? Are you asking them to take specific action (e.g. vote for or against a particular bill)?
- Share your stories and connect the details to the interests and goals of legislator (e.g. communicate the importance of edtech in accelerating students' learning, college and career readiness and global competitiveness). See this [ISTE resource](#) for more information on how to best convey these stories.
- Ask what other information you can provide to help the legislator and/or staffer.
- Verbalize your specific ask and leave behind one-pagers that summarize the ask.

OTHER TIPS

- Acknowledge the legislator's previous leadership on education issues.
- Bipartisanship is key. Be respectful if the legislator is from another political party and holds different views than yourself.
- Be respectful of the legislator or staffer's time. Avoid running over the meeting time.

After the Meeting

IMMEDIATE FOLLOW UPS

- Write a thank you email to the legislator or staffer.
- Extend an invitation to visit your school or district to see education technology in action.
- As appropriate, provide the legislator or staffer with updates on the issues discussed.

FUTURE FOLLOW UPS

Legislators regularly hold town hall meetings or other constituent gatherings to hear directly from their constituents. It is important that they hear from you about how digital teaching and learning is impacting students in your school or district. Furthermore, attending these events is a great way to continue sharing your ideas without having to make an official appointment.