

CALLING LEGISLATORS

Call or email your legislator when time is of the essence or a call-to action alert has been issued by the WASB.

- Prepare for your phone call ahead of time.
- If you are calling in regard to a specific piece of legislation, make sure you know the bill number and/or name. Create one or two talking points or key messages to focus the content of your message.
- If you are calling a state legislator, ask to speak with your legislator directly. If he or she is not available, either leave a message to have your phone call returned or ask to speak with the appropriate staff member.
- If you are calling a member of Congress, don't expect to be able to speak with him or her directly. Rather, ask for the staff member who handles education issues.
- Explain why you are calling: "I am calling to support Assembly Bill 144 regarding the Sept. 1 start date." Be polite and concise.
- Ask your legislator his or her position on the issue, but don't assume that your legislator has prior knowledge of the issue. Be calm and respectful, and be prepared to educate, using local examples and stories to accentuate your point.
- Request a written response to your phone call if you spoke with a staff person.
- If you are speaking with a staff member, write down his or her name for future reference.
- Thank the person who took the phone call for his time and consideration. In any communication, identify yourself by name and school board.

WRITING TO LEGISLATORS

Individually written letters make a greater impression on a legislator than mass-generated form letters. When time is of the essence, send an email to your legislator.

- Be specific. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, be sure to identify its number and topic, i.e. Senate Bill 121 regarding teacher evaluations.
- Clearly state your position. Explain why you support or oppose this particular issue. Keep in mind that local examples concerning the impact of this legislation are very powerful. Be courteous and to the point, keeping your letter focused on one issue.
- Ask for a response. Indicate to your legislator that you would appreciate a reply containing his or her position on the issue.
- Follow up. If you agree with your legislator's vote, take the time to let him or her know. Similarly, if you disagree with his or her vote, inform your legislator politely.
- If communicating with a member of Congress, use email, fax your letter or send it by regular mail to a district office. Sending regular mail to a congressional office in Washington, D.C. is not recommended. Due to extensive security measures, letters can take weeks or even months to reach the recipient.