

Effectively contacting your legislator

Legislators need to hear from their constituents. They are elected to represent you and your neighbors.

Who represents you?

- Every Minnesotan has one representative and one senator who represents the area in which they live.
- Find your legislator with the Minnesota Legislature's tool: ["Who Represents Me?"](#)
- Ideally, legislators will devote the most energy to the issues and needs of their own constituents.

General Tips

- Contact your own legislators. Legislators and their staff are more receptive once they know they're talking to a constituent. Make it clear that you live in their district by sharing your name and address.
- There may be times when contacting other legislators is important too (example: committee member)
- Start early to build relationships with legislators
- Remember you are an education expert, identify yourself and provide your knowledge and experience

Written Contact

- Clearly state if you are a constituent in the opening. Share your name and address.
- Identify the issue at the beginning of your email/letter
- Be short, succinct, and thorough. Reference a specific bill number whenever possible.
- Clearly ask for legislators' support and give examples of the impact on you and your community.
- If you want a reply, specifically ask for one in the closing, "I would love to hear from you" works well

Asking for a meeting

- Contact your legislator's assistant (listed on their [House](#) or [Senate](#) webpage) and share:
 - Your name, address, and phone number
 - The topic that you'd like to talk about
 - At least three available dates/times, at least a week or so out, typically 15-30 min. long
 - Whether you prefer virtually, in-person, and whether in-district or in St. Paul.

In-person/Virtual/Phone Contact

- Identify who you are (constituent), that you're an Education Minnesota member, and tell them about your job and the students you serve but keep it brief.
- Thank the legislator on the front end for taking the time.
- State what legislation/issues you are supporting or opposing. Reference a bill number when possible.
- Share your position and why you are asking them to vote for that position.
- Give them a chance to share their perspective on your issue, listen and ask questions.
- Be respectful and remember legislators may disagree with you
- Share accurate, specific statements and information
- Use time wisely and plan out your remarks
- Ask for concrete action and solicit support from your legislator – "Will you vote yes?"
- Thank them for their time and let them know you plan to stay in touch
- Let them know you and Education Minnesota can be a resource to them
- Follow up with a thank you note/email

