

Guidelines for Meeting with Legislators

Student Leadership Day, February 8, 2022

Meeting with Your Legislators

Students and Advisers/Sponsors are encouraged to schedule meetings with their state representative and state senator while they are in Frankfort for Student Leadership Day. Appointments should be made at least two weeks prior to the event.

Members of the General Assembly enjoy meeting students, and they like to have a photograph taken that can be submitted to the local newspaper. These arrangements all can be made by calling the legislator's Frankfort office (502/564-8100). Legislators have irregular office hours – in the morning they usually have committee meetings, and the General Assembly typically convenes at 2 p.m. – however, they can make arrangements to meet student groups if they have plenty of notice. This is why it is important to call at least two weeks prior to the event. When scheduling a visit, most legislators have their assistants make the appointments. Be prepared to leave a request and await a call back with confirmation. If you don't receive a call back within a couple days, it is appropriate to call back to inquire whether an appointment was scheduled.

They may prefer to meet in their office or at another location, such as the Capitol rotunda or on the Capitol mezzanine. Groups may wish to meet their legislator in that location for a photo opportunity prior to the 2 p.m. start of The General Assembly session. Gallery passes for the session may be obtained from your legislator.

What to Say

Legislators will ask students lots of questions. They want to know what the students are learning and what plans the students have after graduation. Students can speak to legislators plainly – they really do want to know what's going on in the schools and whether the funds and programs they approve are having a positive effect on students, the schools, and the community.

Students are not lobbyists for teacher salaries or school funding. Students can tell what they are studying and what they hope to become after graduation. Will they go to college? Will they go to work? What are their career goals? What do they know about job opportunities?

Students also can tell legislators what may be needed to improve their learning to help them get into college or get a good job.

- Perhaps more modern instructional or training equipment to enhance job opportunity.
- Perhaps more cooperative education or apprenticeship programs for students to obtain real-world work experience while still in school.
- Perhaps the opportunity to use the scholarships you earn through the KEES program to pay for dual credit college courses while you are still in high school.
- Perhaps more opportunities to participate in Student Organization activities to improve leadership skills.

Students can tell legislators the importance of Career and Technical Education (CTE) to them, and how it may have made a difference in staying in school, becoming interested in studying, or working to get better grades.

Be honest. Legislators often are told what people think the legislator wants to hear. Students have an opportunity to answer questions about what is really happening in their school, in their lives, and in their community. Provide answers:

- Directly, look them in the eye;
- Clearly, speak with an assertive voice; and
- Sincerely, tell what you know, and if you don't know the answer just say so – you can find out the answer when you get back to school and include it in ***a polite thank-you note, which should be sent within a week of the visit.***

Follow these simple guidelines, and students will make a successful contact with their legislators. They will take a step on the road to good citizenship. They will learn how to handle another aspect of leadership.

Note to teachers/advisers – although students are not your lobbyists, you can speak up for yourself. One successful strategy: on leaving the office, thank the legislator for his/her time and hand a respectfully worded, one-page summary of requests you wish considered.

LAST AND MOST IMPORTANT – Send a thank you note by February 18, 2022.