

12 Ways School Leaders Can Connect with Lawmakers

Looking to share what is happening in your local school district with your locally elected officials? Following are some suggestions for engagement opportunities:

1. Invite lawmakers to speak at school events: “state of the school” events, ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new or renovated facilities, professional development days for teachers, career day for students, etc.
2. Invite lawmakers to local community meetings and offer to provide introductions: Rotary and various county meetings, PTA/PTO events, local chamber gatherings, etc.
3. If your lawmakers changed due to legislative redistricting in 2021, coordinate a “meet-and-greet” in the newly drawn legislative district so that school leaders in the new district and the new legislator(s) have the opportunity to get to know each other.
4. Host regular coffee meetings with lawmakers and other school leaders in your area to discuss the state of your school districts. Highlight accomplishments and talk about those areas in need of improvement. Share local workforce needs, demographic changes, and other important information about the school district.
5. Host regular breakfast, lunch, or coffee meetings for area school leaders and legislators during the interim between legislative sessions to link regional efforts and build momentum for the upcoming legislative session.
6. Employ the “buddy system” for introducing new school leaders to lawmakers.
7. Highlight legislative successes from the 2021 legislative session and special sessions (e.g., the CTE school finance fix, or the continuation of Individual Graduation Committees) in district and campus newsletters.
8. Post positive tweets on public education matters happening in your school district and/or tweets thanking your lawmakers for their efforts on behalf of public education and students. Tag your lawmakers in the posts.
9. Attend local fundraisers and other events for candidates. Offer to introduce your legislators to attendees or to the group if you can make a more formal introduction.
10. Invite locally elected lawmakers to a school board meeting. Ask the lawmakers to share what is on the horizon for the upcoming legislative session and/or to provide a legislative wrap-up when the session ends.
11. Invite locally elected lawmakers to participate in principal- or superintendent-for-the-day programs.
12. Build and foster relationships with legislative staff who handle public education matters for your legislators. Invite staff to local events and offer to introduce those staffers to other school leaders and community leaders.