

All Politics is Local: Connecting with Lawmakers At Home

Election season is officially upon us! In October, Congressional members will be out of session and in their home districts. What does that mean? *Now* is a great time for you to contact your federal policymakers as they return to their home states and districts. The ideas below will help you take advantage of this period—or any times when your legislators are around—to cultivate relationships and become a trusted resource for them and their staffs.

- **Know Your Legislator:** [This link](#) on USA.Gov will help you locate your [federal legislators](#). Follow [this link](#) to look up your state legislators. All members have valuable information on their web pages, including biographical information, voting history, how they voted on previous legislation and committee assignments.
- **Build a Relationship:** Use your elected officials' websites and social media presence to see where they may be speaking while back in your state or district. Look for opportunities to interact in person with your elected officials beyond visiting their offices.
 - Know that scheduling time with officials' staff can be just as valuable. Staff serve as policy area experts and advise legislators on a range of issues. If requesting a meeting with staff, ask to meet with the legislative assistant handling education. Remember that you are an education expert!
- **Consider These Tips:** To make the most of your time with your lawmakers or their staff, follow these tips for successfully communicating your message:
 - **Do Your Homework:** Know your issue and your legislators' respective positions on your issue.
 - **Know Your Message:** Stick to your issue and practice your message. If relevant, share the [Roundtable's national legislative asks](#), or ask your state chapter for state-level legislative asks.
 - **Make It Local:** Use anecdotes and data to tell a personal story from your school or district. Share your experience and resources relating to the issues that matter to you, your school, and your profession.
 - **Be Professional:** Offer your credentials and be considerate of their time.
- **Follow Up:** Follow through makes all the difference! Look for opportunities for further interaction. Consider inviting your elected officials to visit your school when they return home again. These visits provide legislators with a first-hand perspective and also present an opportunity for media attention.
- **Include Your Colleagues:** Remember that there is power in numbers! [Ask your colleagues to join you as an Educator Advocate](#) so they, too, may receive the latest education policy updates and learn about opportunities to take action throughout the year.
- **Get Support:** As a member of the Music Education Policy Roundtable, the advocacy team at NAFME is ready to support you as you prepare for engagements with stakeholders by answering questions, offering feedback, following and sharing your event on social media or providing additional resources. Let us know how we can help!