

How to address your legislator:

When addressing a member of the state legislature use the following protocols:

- Senator: “Senator (last name)”
- Member of the House of Representatives: “Representative (last name)”
- Governor: “Governor (last name)”
- Lt. Governor: “Governor (last name)”
- Speaker of the House: “Mr./Madam Speaker”
- Chairmen or chairwoman “Chairmen (last name), or Madam Chair “(last name)”

Be Personal

- Tell them a little about yourself—where you live, what you do for a living, if you are representing yourself or an organization (your school district, TCEA, or another organization).
- Be sure to tell them that you live in their district (if you do).
- Connect your talking points to your story (how it has impacted students in your school or district).

Provide Data

- If possible provide at least one piece of data that will support your point of view. Don't drown them in data, you can always provide them a short brief on your topic. Select one key piece of data that helps sell your point of view.

Be Focused

- Remember they have only a few minutes to share with you so stay on topic. Also, don't let the legislator change the subject either. Be polite, but be firm.

Be Positive

- Don't be argumentative. You may not agree with the stand your legislator is taking on this particular issue but it is important not to burn any bridges. Little is gained by arguing with your legislator. Keep reminding them how this issue affects the students of your school district.
- Don't be defensive. They may ask tough questions. They are probably asking the questions that will be asked of them. Give them solid information that will help them justify why they should support your issue. Always remember that the legislative process involves compromises, but you always have the right to participate in the process. Just be positive while you firmly state your positions.
- Remember your goal is to have a long-term relationship. You won't always agree with your legislator. You are looking for common ground on the issues in which you are interested.

Make the Ask

- Don't leave without asking them to support your issue. If there is a bill associated with the issue, be specific and ask them to support the bill. You can ask them, "Will you support this legislation?"
- Ask them if they have any questions or need any additional information

End the Meeting

- Don't stay too long
- Thank them for their time and attention

Follow-up

- Send a thank you note and anything else you promised.
- Consider inviting them to your school or school district to let them see students and teachers using technology.