



ADVOCACY DAY 2019

Investing in
Student
Potential

WASHINGTON CAN give every learner what they need, when they need it.

Thank you for advocating for our children!

Our coalition hopes this guide will support your advocacy for an education system that provides all children a safe, supported, challenging, and learning-friendly environment.

Your advocacy is critically important for our children, our communities, and our legislators. Today, your work will help educate legislators so they can make well-informed decisions for students across the state.

Before: Be prepared

- ✓ Read the “five finger” discussion guide and the Message Map.
- ✓ Identify ONE or at most two messages that resonate the most for you and your experiences.
- ✓ Practice combining the messages that feel the best for you with the “five finger” discussion guide structure – but don’t over-practice. YOU DON’T HAVE TO MEMORIZE EVERY DETAIL – instead, focus on talking from the heart about what matters the most to you.
- ✓ Study the legislator profiles provided in your packet, and identify things you have in common with the representatives you’ll be talking to.

During: Relax, connect, and keep it simple

- ✓ Remember that your conversation will help the representative make well-informed decisions for our students.
- ✓ Smile, and thank them for working for Washington state.
- ✓ If it's a House member, call them "Representative _____"; if you're meeting a member of the Senate, be sure to call them "Senator _____."
- ✓ Try to emphasize a personal connection or similarity to the legislator early in the conversation. For example:
 - "Like you, Senator Smith, I have two sons who are the light of my life. Both have special education needs, and like every parent, I want to make sure they have the support they need to succeed and thrive."
 - Or, "I'm from Wenatchee too, and I feel lucky to know that one of our own is representing our district in Olympia. It makes me hope that you'll remember my daughter Sara, who was born and raised in Wenatchee and who loves school even though they recently had to eliminate the position of her favorite special education aide ..."
- ✓ Be the credible information source they need – never hedge on facts, and if you don't know the answer to a question, tell the legislator you'll get back to them with the best information you can find.
- ✓ Don't dilute your message or confuse your legislator on your priorities. Your last point should be what you want them to do.
- ✓ Ask them if they have any questions, or how you can help their work on supporting special education in Olympia.

After: Prepare for next time

- ✓ Immediately after the meeting, take a few notes on the conversation – was the legislator interested? Distracted? Did they ask any questions? Did they reveal any personal connection to our issue? Share any information you gather with a coalition steering committee member.
- ✓ Keep in touch. Just like our kids don't learn something the first time we teach it, most people don't change their mind during the first conversation. It will take multiple conversations to turn a legislator into a special education champion, but it will never happen if we don't have that first conversation.
- ✓ Make sure the legislator receives invitations to special events in your community, and remind the legislator and their staff that attending the event will be a great way to meet with constituents.

Five Finger Discussion Guide

Five message must-haves for meetings with legislators:



Five Finger Discussion Guide

Five message must-haves for meetings with legislators:

1. Who I am

2. Who I represent

3. My concern

4. Why this matters

5. What I want them to do

Washington's Legislative Process

98 Representatives
2 per district

49 Senators
1 per district



start here

Bill introduced in the House



Bill introduced in the Senate



Introduction / First Reading

Leaders assign the bill to a policy committee

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Policy Committee:

Public Hearing



Executive Session

Committee leaders decide whether to hold a hearing on the bill; once heard, they decide again if the committee will vote to pass the bill to the next committee

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House policy committees include: Education; Human Services & Early Learning; and College & Workforce Development.

Senate policy committees include: Early Learning & K-12 Education; Higher Education & Workforce Development; and Human Services, Reentry, & Rehabilitation.

Appropriations Committee

If the bill requires significant financial appropriations, once passed out of committee it moves to a fiscal committee

Ways & Means Committee

Rules Committee

If the fiscal committee passes the bill, they refer it to the Rules Committee where it stays until leadership schedules to hear it on the floor of the Senate or House. Bills without significant financial appropriations can move directly from their policy committee to Rules.

Rules Committee

House Floor

If the bill passes on the floor of its house of origin, it then gets sent to the policy committee of the opposite house for a hearing

Senate Floor

Governor



When a bill has passed both the House and the Senate, it is then sent to the Governor to be signed into law.