



Connecting with School Administrators and Elected Officials

The National Parents Union welcomes you to the wonderful world of educational advocacy. While you are building your seat at the table and fighting for a high quality education for your child, it's essential to work with school administrators and elected officials. As a reminder, school administrators, school board members and other elected officials are employees that serve the public. It is their responsibility to work with parents as partners in their child's education. Unfortunately, there are times when their priorities and yours aren't aligned. This guide will take you through the steps to reach out and partner with them, and if a partnership isn't possible, this guide will also provide how to launch a campaign in an atmosphere of opposition.

Step One: Identify the Issue

Being clear about the issue you are taking on is the first step. It's important to be very clear about the answers to the following questions:

- What are you wanting to achieve?
- What changes do you want to happen?
- Why do you want this to happen?
- How will this change benefit your child, and the children in your community.
- Is the issue something affecting your child at their school? Is it a district issue?
Statewide issue? Federal Issue

Step Two: Try to Solve the Issue at the Lowest Level Possible

If the issue you are taking on is a school issue, start by reaching out to the school administrator. This may be the school principal, assistant principal or other school administrator.

- ❖ Protocol for first meeting
 - Set a meeting with the administrator and bring your concern to them with the goal of coming to a resolution.

- \During the meeting: be clear about the issue; take notes; be clear about your expectations as a parent; listen to the school administrator with the goal of understanding; ask clarifying questions.
- If you are able to come to a resolution, be clear about next steps, ask for a follow-up meeting, and share contact information.
- If you were not able to come to a resolution, then you will need to elevate your concern. You can ask the administrator who the next person is in their change of command.

Know that it is always your right to speak at a school board meeting or with school board members about issues that you are not able to resolve with school staff.

Step Three: Elevating Your Concern

- ❖ Research your elected officials
 - School/District websites will include the names and contacts of school board members, the Superintendent and their cabinet.
 - All of these leaders exist to serve the community. It is their role to meet with concerned parents and community members.
 - City Leadership
 - Reach out to your Mayor, council people
- ❖ Build a campaign
 - Write letters, and have others write as well
 - Send email
 - Call
 - Use social media
 - Share issues and tag elected officials, school district/school, school leaders, and allies.

If the school administrator and you were not able to partner then it's ti

Resources

Sample opening statement

The purpose of this statement is to engage with school officials, elected officials, and your allies with confidence and as the authority and expert in your child's education.

The guarantee to an equal education has not been fully realized by the local, state, and federal government. In order to fully realize the equal and equitable opportunities our children deserve to a high-quality education, the true authentic voice of us parents must be respected in all aspects of their educations'. This should include but not be limited to major decision-making processes. We the parents are the primary educators of our children and key stakeholders in

any educational environment. During this time of national pandemic crises, decisions about our children’s education and outcomes have been entered into absent our voices. We understand that the educational landscape has shifted and transitioned in a short time span, however that landscape cannot shift without the inclusion of our beliefs, ideas, demands, and voices. Any educational environment absent our voices is an environment that will be absent from our children.

Understanding Educational Language and Terms

Education and other government entities use a lot of acronyms when discussing their field. We have put together a list of education terms that may be used to help you navigate conversations and your advocacy.

- LEA (Local Educational Agency): This is the government agency that provides support to schools. A District is an LEA.
- ED (Department of Education): The federal agency responsible for
- IEP (Individualized Education Plan): for students who are identified as needed special education resources.
- SSC (School Site Council): A group of parents and school staff who are elected to make recommendations to the principal regarding funding and programs.

Education contact resources

Your advocacy plan must include reaching out to elected officials and the gathering of important resources. The following links are provided to support you in finding your elected officials and additional supports/resources.

Title	Link
National Parents Union Family Bill of Rights	https://nationalparentsunion.org/npu-bill-of-rights/
CARES Act Education Stabilization and Discretionary Grants	https://oese.ed.gov/offices/education-stabilization-fund/states-highest-coronavirus-burden/
IDEA	https://sites.ed.gov/idea/ https://sites.ed.gov/idea/statuteregulations/
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title20/cchapter33&edition=prelim https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9805.html
Federal law Section 504	https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html
National School Lunch Program	https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp#:~:text=Feeding%20the%20Future%20with%20Healthy,to%20children%20each%20school%20day
U.S. Department of Agriculture	https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/ffcra-impact-time-limit-abawds https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/child-nutrition-monitoring-nationwide-waiver https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn

Federal Communications Commission	https://www.fcc.gov/about-fcc/fcc-initiatives/bridging-digital-divide-all-americans
For military families	https://www.ed.gov/sites/default/files/dod-ed-mou.pdf
How to contact your state's elected officials	https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials
US Department of Education Frequently Asked Questions	https://www.ed.gov/answers/
State Contact and Information: Contact the department of education, the higher education agency, special education agency and adult education agency in your state.	https://www2.ed.gov/about/contacts/state/index.html
Filing a Complaint with the State Department of Education	http://www.ldonline.org/article/14629/

Templates

The following links are set to VIEW only. These are templates that you can use to model your communications after..

[Government Organizational Flowcharts](#)

[Letter Template & Instructions](#)

[Meeting Request Template](#)

Contacting your LEA officials

Reaching out to your local and state government representatives

Connecting your advocacy to social media

NPU Policy Committee Contacts

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