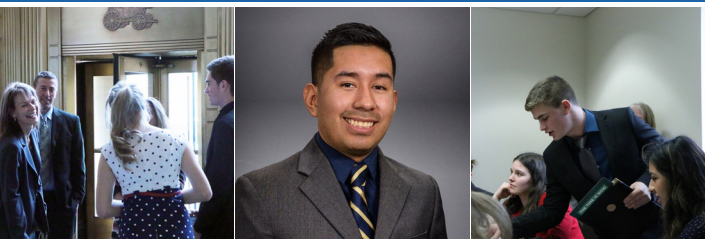


ADVOCACY



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS

Guide to Education Advocacy





DEAR COLLEAGUES,

School board service is about creating a better future for students, and often times that future is impacted by decisions at the state Capitol and in Washington, D.C. That's why we are asking each of you to make your voice heard with our lawmakers at the state and federal levels. When school board members speak, people listen. You understand what it means to balance competing priorities. You feel the classroom impact when funding shrinks or paperwork grows. In short, you understand in detail the challenges of providing public education.

Your expertise makes you a valuable ally for legislators and other government leaders. So does your experience as an elected representative. Like our legislators and our governor, you carry the profound responsibility of serving constituents. All of this gives you a shared connection, which you can build on to become an effective advocate for students. What students need is that extra step from you. Stay informed about education issues. Personally contact the legislators who represent your students and renew those contacts on a regular basis. Never stop sharing your ideas. Never stop asking how you can help lawmakers make the right decisions for students.

Most of all, never forget that the Oregon School Boards Association is your ally in contacting lawmakers, as it has been for more than 70 years. OSBA resources such as this handbook are plentiful and free. OSBA staff members are knowledgeable and eager to assist. We would love to hear your voice, and we stand ready to help you share it in the halls of government.

Sincerely,

OSBA's Legislative Services Department

TOP 5 CHECKLIST

1. GET INFORMED *page 6*

My State Senator

My State Representative

2. CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS *page 8*

CONTACTED DURING INTERIM:

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

CONTACTED DURING SESSION:

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

CONTACTED DURING SESSION:

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

(date) _____ phone email letter in person

3. SHARE INFORMATION

page 10

Action *(date & description)*

Action *(date & description)*

Action *(date & description)*

4. INVITE & INVOLVE *page 11*

Action *(date & description)*

Action *(date & description)*

5. COME TO SALEM *page 12*

Trips to Salem *(date & description)*

- Attend the **OSBA/COSA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**
- **FOLLOW UP WITH OSBA**
Let the OSBA Legislative Services staff know about your conversations with legislators and what responses you receive.

STEP 1 / GET INFORMED

THE FIRST STEP in effective advocacy is to get informed. It is important that you, as an advocate, understand the issues and are comfortable with your knowledge of them. Thorough preparation will make you a more confident and successful advocate.

There are many resources available to help you build your knowledge base. Your starting point should be the OSBA website's legislative and advocacy topics, where you will find a wealth of information:

- OSBA's Legislative Policies and Priorities
- Tips for becoming a better advocate
- Track legislation and read daily updates during session
- Legislative Highlights

The Legislature's website, www.oregonlegislature.gov, also provides valuable information:

- Know your legislative leaders
- Read biographies of your legislators
- Sign up for Capitol E-subscribe
- Listen to or watch legislative hearings, live or archived
- Track legislation
<https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/201911>

KNOW YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS

YOU CAN FIND contact information for your legislators at the state legislature website, www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html

STATE SENATOR

Name _____

District No. _____

Phone _____

Email _____

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____

District No. _____

Phone _____

Email _____

U.S. SENATOR

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Name _____

Phone _____

Email _____

STEP 2 /

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

WORK TOGETHER as a board to build relationships with legislators. Although you can work individually with legislators, the best chance of accomplishing your goals is to work with your fellow board members to establish district priorities and advocate for them together. The entire board may not agree completely on every issue, but you will build more credibility and be more effective if you speak with one voice rather than at cross-purposes. Involving others from your district or community also adds to your message's strength. Specific knowledge about your district is essential. The information you provide must be understandable, accurate, persuasive and prepared.

BY REGULARLY CONTACTING your legislators and developing a relationship with them, you will be able to influence their decision-making process on education issues. You can use email, write letters or make telephone calls. Contact your legislators prior to a legislative session to introduce yourself and develop a relationship.

Don't make your first call to your legislators during a legislative session. First, establish a relationship. Then, when you call about an issue during a legislative session, your legislator will be more willing to consider your point of view. Make a friend before you need one!

WHEN YOU CALL DURING THE INTERIM:

- Give your name, title and the name of the school board on which you serve.
- Don't be surprised if you have to schedule a time to speak with the legislator; remember, many legislators have full-time jobs during the interim.
- Focus your conversation on one or two top priorities, remembering that your immediate goal is to introduce yourself and offer yourself as a resource for the legislator on education issues.

WHEN YOU CALL DURING A LEGISLATIVE SESSION:

- Ask to speak with the senator or representative, but be prepared to discuss your issue with a legislative assistant.
- Give your name, title and the name of the school board on which you serve.
- Focus your call on ONE issue or bill and, if possible, identify the bill by number; briefly state what position you want the legislator to take and be prepared to offer your rationale based on local impact.
- Always ask what position your legislator will be taking on the bill or issue.
- Share with OSBA Legislative Services staff what you learn about legislators' positions on issues.

STEP 3 / **SHARE** **INFORMATION**

THE NEXT STEP in effective advocacy is to share the information you have gained with your board, your neighbors and your community. No one is more qualified than you to talk about your school district and what is going on within it.

- **FORMALIZE** legislative advocacy on your board by creating a standing agenda item for legislative updates. Use this time to update your board and — by extension — your community, on issues of legislative importance. Report on your contacts with legislators and encourage the rest of your board to make similar contacts.
- **APPOINT** members of your board as liaisons to local governments (i.e., city or county councils and commissions) to further engage your community leaders by providing education updates and promoting advocacy opportunities.
- **ASK** to speak to civic and community groups on issues of importance to education. As school board members, you are community leaders, and you can have great influence on your communities' attitudes.
- **USE** local media to promote public education and funding for public schools. Talk to the local newspaper's education reporter to help her or him understand your district and education in general. Meet with the editorial board to encourage a bolder position on the vital role public education plays in your community. Strong relationships with local media representatives mean they know they can rely on you as a resource for education stories.
- Finally, write a guest opinion for the newspaper to convey your message to a broader audience.

STEP 4 /

INVITE AND INVOLVE YOUR COMMUNITY

ONE EFFECTIVE LOCAL activity is arranging opportunities for your district to be highlighted as the center of your community. With more than two-thirds of Oregon’s population lacking any formal connection to the public schools in their communities, it is vitally important that we continue to introduce ourselves to our public, including our legislative leaders.

- Invite your legislators and members of the public to visit your schools or to a “taxpayer open house” that highlights successful programs in your district. Arrange for legislators to tour one or more schools to showcase your district’s achievements and successes. Be sure to call or email media representatives in advance and prominently thank your legislators for coming to the school.
- One of the hardest activities — but potentially the most effective — is building and activating a local coalition focused on public schools and school funding. This can be done in several ways, including working with organizations like Oregon PTA or Stand for Children or developing your own method. You can form a coalition with neighboring communities and with other groups in your community. Be sure to invite local leaders to be involved; the broader the coalition, the more powerful it is — but also more difficult to maintain.

STEP 5 /

COME TO SALEM

AS A WAY to culminate your advocacy efforts and help ensure a successful legislative session for issues affecting public education, go to Salem to help lobby your legislators.

- **SCHEDULE A TIME** for your board, administrators or both to travel to Salem to meet with your legislators and push for sustained investment in education and other education priorities.
- **ATTEND THE OSBA/COSA** Legislative Conference (biennial). This face-to-face lobbying event has proven successful in raising the profile of public education in the Legislature. During the conference, you receive training on public education priorities that prepares you for a day of meeting with your legislators in the Capitol. Schedule a time for your board, administration or both to travel to Salem to meet with your legislators.

FOLLOW UP WITH OSBA

LET US KNOW how your conversations go whenever you talk with your legislators and arrange to meet with us when you are in Salem.

OSBA

800-578-6722 | 503-588-2800

Lori Sattenspiel

Legislative Services director
lsattenspiel@osba.org

Richard Donovan

Legislative Services specialist
rdonovan@osba.org

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION

WHEN CONTACTING YOUR

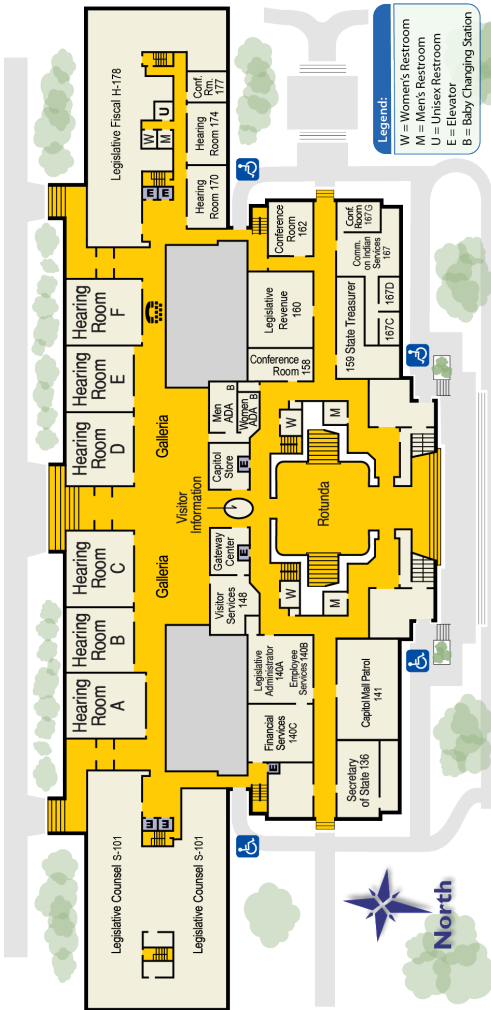
legislators, always:

- **IDENTIFY YOURSELF.** Make sure the legislator understands who you are and which school district, education service district or community college you represent.
- **BE BRIEF.** Get to the point quickly, and be specific.
- **USE A LOCAL ANGLE.** Explaining how a bill will positively or negatively affect local schools can be very persuasive. Remember that you're not only the legislator's constituent, you are also a fellow elected official.
- **THANK LEGISLATORS** for meeting with you and for their support or consideration, even if they are against you. You may need their vote in the future on another matter.



MAPS

Below is a map of the first floor of the Capitol. Many legislators' offices are on the second and third floors of the building. Crossing between wings on upper floors may require you to go through the visitor's gallery.



Please refer to the floor plans online for specific information and other floors.

https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/citizen_engagement/Pages/capitolMaps.aspx

OFFICES

Governor **Kate Brown**

PHYSICAL ADDRESS Somerville Building
775 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

MAILING ADDRESS Office of the Governor
900 Court St. NE, Ste. 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction **Colt Gill**

255 Capitol St. NE
Salem, OR 97310-0203
503-373-0036

State Senators

Senator *[Name of State Senator]*

State Capitol, S-# *[Office number]*
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1187 or 800-332-2313
sen.firstnamelastname@state.or.us

State Representatives

Representative *[Name of State Representative]*

State Capitol, H-# *[Office number]*
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1187 or 800-332-2313
rep.firstnamelastname@state.or.us

PARKING

Oregon School Boards Association members can park in the Local Government Center parking lot on the corner of Court and 12th, NE. Come to the fourth floor to get a permit.

VISITOR SERVICES (Kiosk area) in the State Capitol has parking information: 503-986-1388

KEY DATES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- Oregon Legislative Assembly convenes and lasts up to 160 days in odd years and 35 days in even years
- National School Boards Association's Advocacy Institute, Washington, D.C.

FEBRUARY *odd years*

- Final date for governor to release budget
- OSBA/COSA Legislative Conference, Salem, Oregon
- March quarterly revenue forecast expected (*mid-February*)

MID-MARCH *odd years*

- Joint Committee on Ways and Means co-chair budget expected

APRIL

- National School Boards Association Annual Conference

MID-MAY *odd years*

- June quarterly revenue forecast expected

JUNE

- Traditional target for legislative session to adjourn

NOVEMBER

- Oregon General Election
- OSBA Annual Convention, Portland

DECEMBER

- Governor releases budget

NOTES



NOTES

OSBA'S VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

VISION

Oregon will provide adequate and stable funding for its public schools, creating every opportunity for strong student success and equitable outcomes.

MISSION

OSBA is dedicated to improving student success and education equity through advocacy, leadership and service to Oregon public school boards.

GOALS

OSBA will continue to advocate for comprehensive, stable funding reform to include cost containment and accountability measures that achieve the QEM.

OSBA will build the capacity of school boards to make data-driven decisions designed to measurably close the opportunity gap and improve graduation rates by June 2021.

OSBA will, based on information from the 2018-19 assessment, modify as needed the current comprehensive research-based professional development program designed to meet the needs of local school boards.

OSBA THANKS the Georgia School Boards Association for letting us use and build upon their Building Relationships with Legislators publication.

The Oregon School Boards Association
is dedicated to improving student
success and education equity through
advocacy, leadership and service to
Oregon public school boards.



📍 1201 Court St. NE Ste 400, Salem, OR 97301

☎ 503-588-2800 | 800-578-OSBA

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