

Recommended Practices to Effectively Engage Your Legislator

- Decide who will accompany you at the meeting with the legislator.
 - Convene the team prior to the visit to agree upon three issues/bills to be discussed. Prior to meeting with the legislator, the issues/bills should be thoroughly discussed by team members to ensure a clear, deep and consistent understanding of what will be discussed.
 - Decide upon the respective roles of team members (e.g., who will open the meeting with the legislator, which item will each member raise for discussion).
 - Assemble packets of information materials to be left with the representative that clearly and concisely highlight your positions and recommendations. It is recommended that you bring two information packets to address the possibility of the representative and a staff member both meeting with you.
- Make an appointment to meet with the legislator. If the legislator is not available on the day of the appointment, remember that staff members play a vital role in policy/position development and that good relationships with legislative staff members are also very important.
- Do your homework: Review the legislator's "bio" information.
 - Look for ways to "connect" with the legislator at the meeting. Are you a constituent? Did you go to the same school? Does the legislator have children who are elementary or secondary school age?
- Be mindful of what you say or discuss in the building where you will meet with the representative. People may overhear what you are saying in hallways, elevators, cafeterias and restrooms.
- Dress professionally and arrive on time for your meeting. Bring your school business cards to leave with the legislator, staff member and/or receptionist.
- During your meeting be engaging, polite and alert.
- At the beginning or at the close of the meeting leave a packet of materials summarizing your positions and recommendations. The packet should also include your contact information in case the legislator or staff member needs additional information or wishes to initiate a meeting with you in the future.
- After your meeting with the legislator, remember to do your follow-up.
 - Send the legislator a short letter to express your appreciation for the meeting and to provide any follow-up information that may have been requested.
 - Please also send a short summary of the meeting to SAANYS Director of Government Relations, James Viola at JViola@saanys.org. The summary should indicate the issues or bills that were discussed along with the comments, concerns or questions raised by the legislator. Thank you and good luck.