



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH LEGISLATORS

- Strive for ongoing, regular communication
- Let your local legislators know how legislative proposals impact your district
- Use real examples when possible, i.e. – your district's cross-subsidy is ...

ESTABLISHING RELATIONSHIPS

- Reach out to legislators early -- before the session or before an issue becomes big -- to talk about the state of your schools.
- Don't assume legislators are education policy or finance experts.
- Communicate regularly during session – ask your legislators which methods of communication they prefer: e-mails, phone calls, meetings in person, school visits during legislative breaks, etc.
- Communicate with your legislators throughout the year. Invite them into your schools to observe innovative programs and activities.

MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS

- Do a relationship inventory to determine existing relationships with legislators (especially newly elected ones) and who can help make solid connections.
- Keep social media positive. Always.
- Give legislators a “heads up” on positive (or negative) news before it is released publicly. Legislators should not hear significant school district news in the media.
- Say THANK YOU in a note, in a Tweet, on your school Facebook page or in a letter to the editor.

VISITING THE CAPITOL? LET AMSD KNOW.

AMSD is available to assist superintendents, board members, district staff and parents in testifying on key issues. Local information and perspectives help legislators understand the impact of their decisions.





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COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

- Share the AMSD platform and your local district needs/give local examples.
- Consistent messaging increases effectiveness. Develop consistent messaging themes for school leadership, school board members, principals and other messengers to deliver to legislators.



- Repeat priorities and needs in different delivery forms (meetings, school tours, e-mails, handouts) and different messengers (superintendent, school board members, leadership staff, parent leaders, etc.)
- If your legislator introduces a bill on your behalf or one your district supports, be available to provide testimony and handouts to support the bill.



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ONGOING COMMUNICATION



- Ask your legislators if they are interested in establishing a regular meeting.
- Your concerns and messages will be better received at the end of session during final budget negotiations if you've established an ongoing rapport/relationship.
- Add legislators and staff to your newsletter and press release distribution.



- Follow what's going on at the Capitol during session through AMSD updates.
- Focus on priorities. Provide clear, concise talking points; don't bombard them with too much information.
- Make sure information is relevant and timely.



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EFFECTIVE TESTIMONY

- Be clear and concise, try to avoid repeating previous testimony.
- State whether you are testifying in support of or in opposition to legislation. Testimony is typically offered on both sides of an issue with proponents speaking first, followed by opposing testimony.
- Give specific examples when possible.
- Know who your audience is: Review the list of committee members.

COMMITTEE LOGISTICS AND RULES



- Legislative committee staff is responsible for setting committee agendas for each hearing and will establish guidelines for testimony and the speaking order of testifiers.
- Work with AMSD staff if you are asked to testify on a specific piece of legislation. AMSD can help you prepare and submit testimony or handouts.
- Know the allotted time you will have in advance and plan on very brief testimony – often only 2-3 minutes.
- Have your testimony prepared in advance.
- Start your testimony when directed by the chair with “Thank you, Madame/Mr. Chair. For the committee record, my name is X and my title is X.”
- Testimony and Q&A should go through the chair of the committee.
- All committee hearings are open to the public and taped.
- If you are asked a question and you don’t know the answer: DON’T GUESS. It is better to say you will research the issue and provide the information to the committee as soon as possible.



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AMSD RESOURCES

- Our presentations and Board of Directors meeting materials are online and available for sharing and discussion after the meeting.
- We share photos and captions of our members engaging at the Capitol on social media and tag our members.
- The Connections newsletter features a member district. Submit a story!
- Our blog features member district stories, events and even positions on issues before the legislature. Submit a post!
- Session information on our web page helps keep member districts informed about the happenings at the Capitol.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Legislative Platform
- Position Papers
- Connections Newsletter
- Blog and Education News
- Contact Resources and Social Media Lists
- Research & Statistics
- Education Reports
- Session Web Page
- Session Briefs
 - Omnibus Bill Summaries
 - Mid-Session and Session Reviews



STAY CONNECTED WITH AMSD

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