



Talking Points and Tips for Speaking With Your Legislators

Please remember to be polite and calm. When we get angry, they dismiss our concerns. Find common ground. Tell your story about how our public schools serve children and our communities. Here are some issues to discuss.

Current bills/issues:

SB 255 - This bill was introduced and set aside for the next legislative session. It would put all “school choice” (remember and remind them that schools choose, not families) under an umbrella of Fund Students First grants. If this happens, emphasize the need for accountability for all schools or homeschoolers that take public funding. Ask your legislators their views on this. Read more [here](#) about what has been happening in Arizona where they already have universal vouchers/ESAs.

SB 1 - We agree with more supports for literacy, but **no** mandatory retention. Yes to funding professional development, literacy coaches, summer school, etc. Let Science of Reading (a bill passed last session) work first. Research shows retention does not produce good outcomes for kids. The professionals and families should decide what is best for individual children. Tell your story here.

SB 270 - Charter Schools should not receive public school referendum dollars. Public schools pass referenda to fill funding gaps that are exacerbated by Indiana’s “school choice” policy. All schools accepting public funds should be required to meet and report the same academic, operational and accountability requirements, adhere to legal standards and be held to the same equal access and public access requirements. Taking referendum dollars from public schools and giving them to privately managed charter schools that don’t have to play by the same rules is irresponsible and unacceptable. Push for state board of accounts being the auditor for all schools that take public funds.

“Eyes on Education” - The Indiana Attorney General’s office has launched a new dashboard to feed conspiracy theories, stir up controversy and fuel lawsuits about public schools. The portal is for people to log complaints of real examples of objectionable curriculum, policies or programs. Allegations are not being properly vetted and this is yet another attack which undermines trust in our public schools and teachers. Read more [here](#).

Make it personal. Tell stories about why you love/support public schools are important to tell.

Many rural school districts are the largest employer in their area and, despite not having voucher schools nearby to “choose”, are negatively affected by a loss of funding over the last two decades. Urban schools are constantly fighting for students and funding because of charters and vouchers – which is a distraction from the work that needs to be done. Should any child lose in this so-called competition for excellent schools?

Find out what your school district has lost in the past 5 years due to vouchers [here](#). This is an “opportunity cost”. If the money that went to vouchers were put back in the funding formula and given to your public schools, this is how much you would be working with in order to best serve your students, staff and teachers. Remind them that voucher schools do not have to serve all kids. Talk about some of the needs of the students in your schools.