

December 4, 2020

Finding Your Voice: The Importance of Legislative Advocacy

Legislative Advocacy

- WHY
 - Motivation/rationale to engage
- HOW
 - Building relationships
 - Constant contact
- WHAT
 - Policy items
 - Budget requests

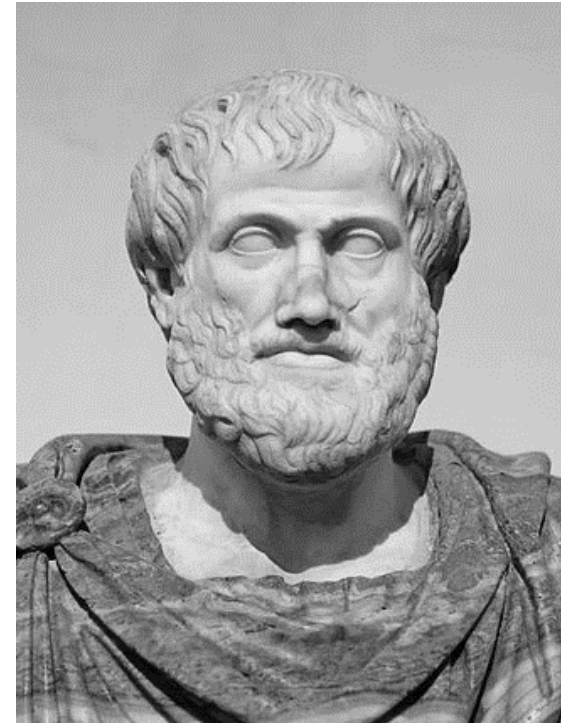
WHY Should I Engage?

Legislative Advocacy: Why Be Engaged?

**If YOU don't advocate for your students,
your district and your staff,
*who will?***

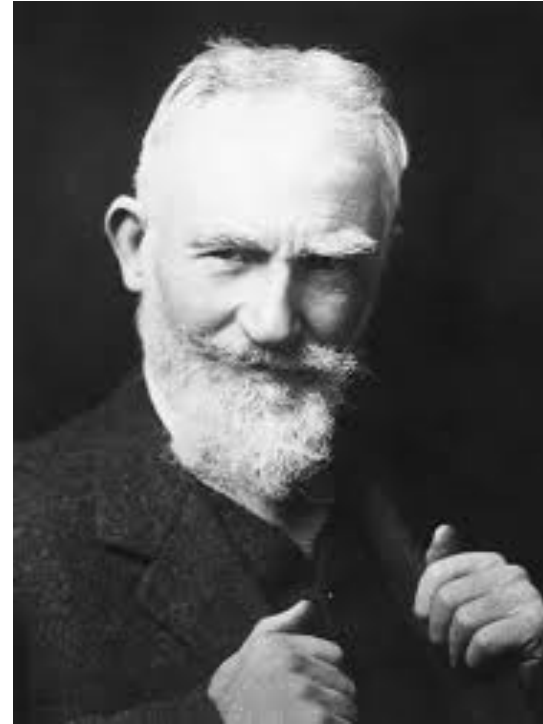
Nature abhors a vacuum

~Aristotle



Nature abhors a vacuum:
whenever people do not know
the truth, they fill the gaps with
conjecture

~George Bernard Shaw



The Importance of Engagement

- You can be sure *someone* WILL speak up—and they may not have the same information, experience or position as you
- You can't let the legislative vacuum be filled with voices that do not reflect your knowledge, experience and opinions

**OH SO YOU'RE A POLITICIAN
WHO HAS
NEVER TAUGHT A CLASS?**

**TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW
SCHOOLS SHOULD BE RUN**

Legislative Engagement

- Your legislators may hold themselves out as education “experts,” but likely have little background in school district issues
- Part of your job as a school administrator is to educate legislators, making sure they understand how their decisions in Olympia affect your school district—your students, your staff, your academic program, your budget, etc.
- Remember, YOU are the education “expert” and a valuable resource to legislators

Legislative Engagement

- WASA will provide you resources, tools and assistance; however, YOU are in a position to **establish trust and credibility** with legislators—so they will go to you for information and advice
- You are also in a position to explain the complexities of public education and your specific needs. And only YOU can **“tell your story.”** Build data to make your case; however, frame your “ask” with a local story; personalize issues with names of students, teachers, school buildings. Stories Stick!

HOW Should I Advocate?

Effective Advocacy

Be informed:

- about the *PROCESS*
- about the *ISSUES*
- about the *PLAYERS*

Be Informed About the *Process*

How a Bill Becomes Law:

aka

“Structured Chaos”



Legislature Home

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Legislature Home

COVID-19 Update: Access to Capitol Campus facilities may be limited during the COVID-19 response. For the latest facilities information, please visit the [Department of Enterprise Services COVID-19 Information](#) page. For general information about the response, please visit the [Washington State Coronavirus Response](#) page.

What's happening on the floor?

The 2020 Regular Session adjourned sine die on March 12, 2020.

The 2021 Regular Session will convene on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Please check the [Committee Schedules](#) website for the most up-to-date information concerning individual committee meeting dates and agendas.

Scheduled hearings and floor sessions: **Today** ▼

Committee	Agenda	Date/Time	Location	Last Updated
JLARC Subcommittee for SAO Performance Audits	Agenda	12/3/2020 10:00 AM		11/25/2020

Highlights

Legislative Hotline: 1.800.562.6000

Governor's Bill Action: Unless specified otherwise in the bill, the enacted bills will go into effect 90 days from the end of the session, which is June 11, 2020.

Let Your Voice Be Heard

[Contact Your Legislators](#)[How to Comment on a Bill](#)

Find

[Laws & Rules](#)[Your District & Legislators](#)[Bills](#)[Member Information / Rosters](#)

Bill Status; Text of a Bill; Amendments



WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE



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Bill Information

Search by Bill Number

BillInitiative

2019-20

Search

Find Specific Text in a Bill

Standard Reports

Common information requested most often

Reports

Prefiled Bills

Retrieve lists of the bills prefiled in the House and Senate. Available in December.

House Introductions (latest) All Intros

Lists the bills to be introduced in the House today.

Senate Introductions (latest) All Intros

Lists the bills to be introduced in the Senate today.

Bill Status Report (formerly Daily Status)

Retrieve a list of all bills and their current status

Advanced Reports

More detailed information used less often

Detailed Legislative Reports

Historical information back to 1991.

Bill Information

Text of a Legislative Document

Bills by Sponsor

Roll Calls on a Bill

Bills In/Out of Committee

Bills By Citation

Committee Schedules/Agendas



WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE





Washington State Legislature

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- What Is RSS
- Legislature Employment Opportunities
- Bill Comments Help
- Member Email Form Help

Main Sections

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Legislature Home > Washington State Legislature > Calendar

Agendas, Schedules, and Calendars

Committee Meeting Agendas, Schedules, and Documents
Committee meetings you may filter by date, chamber, and committee and view by schedule, agenda, or bill.

Calendars

Session Cutoff Calendar Relates calendar dates to legislative days and notes session deadlines for committees and floor action.		
Senate Weekly Meeting Schedules / Floor Schedules Links to weekly PDF files of the Senate schedule.		
Floor Activity Reports Bills currently being debated on the floor in the House and Senate (updated in real time), bills scheduled for floor debate with links to amendments, histories, bill text, and roll call votes.	House	Senate
Bill Introductions Lists all introductions in the current calendar year.	House	Senate
Capitol Campus Activities and Events Calendar of Events on the Capitol Campus (goes to Dept. of Enterprise Services website)		

Be Informed About the *Issues*

- WASA: www.wasa-oly.org
- Education Associations:
 - WASBO: www.wasbo.org
 - WSSDA: www.wssda.org
 - AWSP: www.awsp.org
 - WEA: www.washingtonea.org
 - PTA: www.wastatepta.org
- Education Agencies:
 - OSPI: www.k12.wa.us
 - SBE: www.sbe.wa.gov
 - PESB: www.pesb.wa.gov
- Legislative-related:
 - Legislature Homepage: www.leg.wa.gov
 - Governor's Homepage: www.governor.wa.gov
 - LEAP (Budget info): www.fiscal.wa.gov

2020 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

A PUBLICATION OF THE WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

825 Fifth Avenue SE | Olympia, WA 98501 | 360.943.5717 or 800.859.9272 | www.wasa-oly.org

<https://bit.ly/3dxT7jY>

2020 End of Session Report Includes:

- Comprehensive review of 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget
- Comprehensive review of 2020 Supplemental Capital Budget
- Detailed review of all education-related bills adopted in 2020
- Summary of all education-related bills that died in 2020



2020 Legislative Session Guide

A publication of the Washington Association of School Administrators

Available after Session begins

All issues archived at: www.wasa-oly.org/TWIO



TWIO
This Week In Olympia

WASA Legislative Podcast



Archived Podcasts and Subscription Information:

<https://bit.ly/2QlgWT0>

Be Informed About the *Players*

- Legislators:
 - What District?
 - What Committee assignments?
 - Leadership position?
 - Issues of interest/expertise?
 - Personal information: occupation, social/civic memberships, schools attended, church affiliation, hobbies



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District Finder

Enter your street address (all fields are required) to find your legislative or congressional district.

Street *

City *

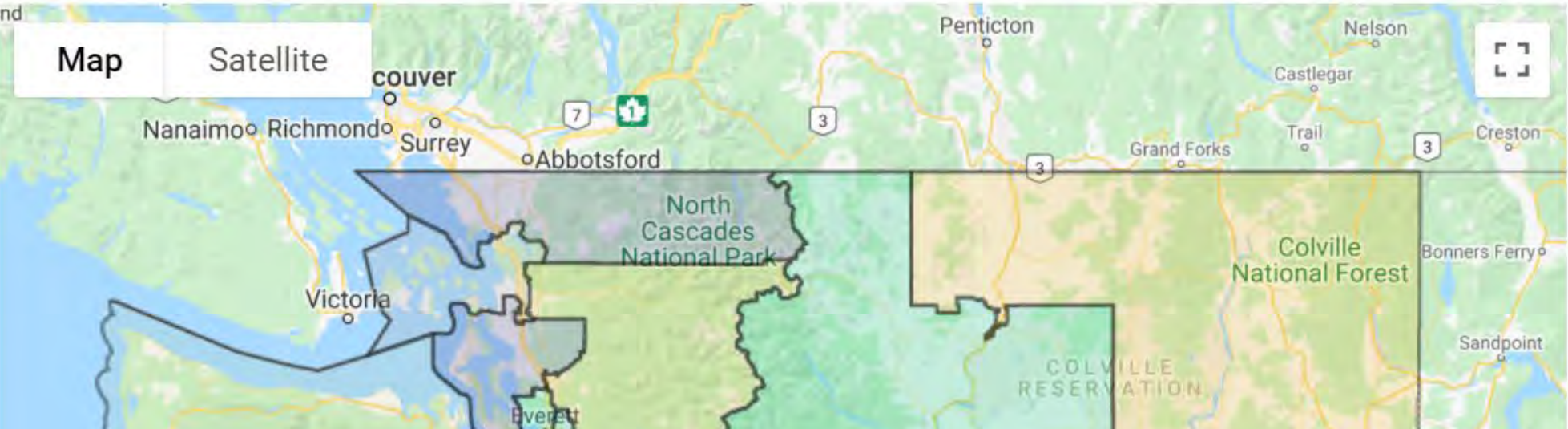
State

Zip *


Find My District

District Type:

Legislative Congressional



Be Informed About the *Players*

- Additional Players in the process:
 - Legislator's personal staff 
 - Committee staff
 - Caucus staff
 - Agency liaisons
 - Lobbyists

How to be Heard in Olympia



How to be Heard in Olympia

- Contacting your legislators
 - Face-to-face (or electronic) meetings
 - Personal letters
 - Phone calls
 - E-mail
 - Public testimony

Meeting with Your Legislator(s)

- Tips:
 - Schedule meeting well in advance
 - Note subject matter and attendees
 - Do your homework (*know the process; issues; and players*)
 - Prepare presentation or outline; select spokesperson
 - Introduce yourself and/or team

Meeting with Your Legislator(s)

- Tips, cont'd:
 - Briefly present your case
 - “just the facts” – avoid emotion
 - note the impacts; use a district example
 - use visuals and prepare supporting data/information
 - Leave time for legislator to speak
 - Leave one-page summary
 - Follow up with written “thank you”
 - re-state your position and provide follow-up information or answers to questions

Writing to Your Legislator(s)

- Tips:
 - Think about your timing
 - Stick to one subject
 - Be brief
 - Be positive; be polite
 - Ask for action – and a response
 - Think about letters from students
 - Avoid form letters
 - Say “thank you”

Phoning Your Legislator(s)

- Tips:
 - Ask for legislator or specific assistant (*know the players*)
 - Name, title, school district
 - Focus on one issue/bill
 - State your position—be prepared to provide rationale for position
 - Ask for your legislator's position

E-mailing Your Legislator(s)

- Tips:
 - See tips for “writing to your legislator(s)”
 - AND -
 - Limit e-mail to very short messages or if timing is crucial
 - Provide your full postal address (address of voter registration)

Public Testimony

- Prior to testifying:
 - Prepare your remarks in writing if possible—provide to Committee staff
 - Be punctual to hearing
 - Use electronic sign-in (via web)
 - Sign in with full name and address
 - Note support or opposition to bill
 - Be mindful of amendments or substitutes to your bill

Public Testimony

- Making your remarks:
 - Introduce yourself; clearly indicate who you're representing, if anyone
 - Be brief and be clear about your position
 - Avoid technical jargon, acronyms
 - Be prepared for questions—but don't answer if you don't know ("I'll get back to you"—AND then follow through)

Additional Tips for Effective Advocacy

- Be prepared
- Be respectful of the office
- Don't argue (although it's OK to respectfully disagree)
- Don't exaggerate
- Give examples
- Follow up

Additional Tips for Effective Advocacy

- Don't assume legislators know more than they do
- Avoid education jargon and acronyms
- Don't be informal
- Avoid information overload
- Make sure you have a specific "ask"
- Say "thank you"—for their time; for their consideration; for their support; or just for their service

Legislative Engagement

RELATIONSHIPS

are key element in effective advocacy!

It is incumbent upon YOU to establish ongoing,
personal relationships with legislators

Legislative Advocacy is not a Spectator Sport—
It is a “*Contact*” Sport

Legislative Advocacy is also a *Team* Sport



While the Superintendent must take the lead,
Don't be a Lone Ranger!

- All administrators should be on your “Advocacy Team.” You should also consider involving principals, teachers, parents—and even students
- You are also encouraged to involve your school directors; as elected officials, they have a direct connection to the community—their perspective is unique and valuable



Legislative Advocacy

Two additional important reminders:

- Advocacy is not a one-time thing, but a year-round effort
 - The best time to establish and build relationships is well-before the Legislative Session begins
- Effective advocacy does NOT have to be hard, time-consuming, or intimidating
 - You must commit to it, however

WHAT am I Advocating For?

WASA 2021 Legislative Platform

Short-term Issues to Address

- Hold the line on K-12 funding—don't go backwards/honor Constitutional commitment
- Avoid “mid-year” reductions
- “No new mandates” (funded or not)
- Support technology/connectivity
- Increase local flexibility
- Clear sideboards on bargaining

Bottom Line Message: “Do No Harm”

WASA 2021 Legislative Platform

Long-term Issues

While K-12 is in “protection” mode, we must remind legislators K-12 has unmet needs

When the economy rebounds, revenues will be available to invest and we must be prepared to quickly pivot

Similar to 2020, we must temper expectations, but urgent we don’t allow our needs to be forgotten—or we will lose momentum and have to start conversations all over again

Long-term Issues

Update Staffing Allocations

- Continues to be a core, fundamental piece of the education funding structure, but continues to contain, outdated unrealistic staffing levels

Provide Consistent/Equitable/Ample Education Resources

- Several components of K-12's new funding structure have exacerbated inequities between districts

Support Capital Facilities

- While not technically Basic Education, facilities remain a core need and state continues to use outdated funding formulas that fail to recognize the true cost of building

Wasa 2021 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

WASA believes that the commitment of resources to the education and welfare of the children of Washington State is an investment in the quality of our future. We believe that effective school leaders initiate and manage change resulting in a system of K–12 education in which all students receive a quality education.

Short-term Needs to Address:

- K-12 Budget
- Mid-year Reductions
- Mandates
- Flexibility
- Technology/Connectivity
- Bargaining

Long-term Needs to Address:

- Staffing Allocations
- Consistent, Equitable, and Ample Education Resources
- Capital Facilities

<https://bit.ly/3fgCnhP>



SCHOOL FUNDING COALITION | Immediate Student Needs

- 2021 priorities address immediate student needs

We believe each and every student needs:

- Stable Support
- Safety
- Access to Learning
- Well-Equipped Staff

Washington's schools and districts continue to have urgent needs that require assistance to ensure all students have equitable access to continuous learning opportunities and programming. Acting on longer-term needs may have to be postponed, given the state's current financial circumstances; however, they must stay at the forefront of policy-makers' minds, as these issues must be addressed as the economy recovers. In addition to long-term issues, we urge the Legislature to immediately address several near-term issues, many of which are a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We also urge the Legislature to refrain from adopting additional mandates during this crisis.

We believe that each and every student needs:

- **Stable Support**
- **Safety**
- **Access to Learning**
- **Well-Equipped Staff**

Stable Support

- Reimburse for unfunded costs associated with COVID-19, beyond what is reimbursed by federal funds, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for students and staff, food service, transportation, and online learning
- Promptly pass through federal funding dedicated for schools without supplanting state funding
- Hold the line on K-12 funding and prevent mid-year budget reductions; any budget reductions deemed necessary must not create or further exacerbate funding inequities between districts and must be tied to an expenditure-mandate that is also eliminated
- Maintain stable support for enrollment and pupil transportation

Safety

- Support funding for staffing and materials to ensure buildings and buses are clean and sanitary
- Train staff in providing trauma-informed instruction that is embedded in the social emotional framework

Access to Learning

- Provide equitable access to technology resources including devices and broadband connectivity
- Ensure resources for individualized needs of all students

Well-Equipped Staff

- Provide professional development for staff about racial literacy, cultural responsiveness, and stereotype threat for purposes of closing persistent opportunity gaps
- Provide professional development for staff so that they can effectively engage students in online learning

The School Funding Coalition represents the voices of nearly 8,000 school district leaders from our state's 295 school districts. We bring a front-line understanding of school district financing and the education funding issues the Legislature continues to grapple with—especially as state budget decisions are contemplated in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. For further information, please contact:

- AEA: Mitch Denning | medenning@comcast.net
- AESD: Melissa Gombosky | melissagombosky@gmail.com
- AWSP: Roz Thompson | roz@awsp.org
- WASA, WASBO, and WSPA: Dan Steele | dsteele@wasa-oly.org
- WSSDA: Marissa Rathbone | m.rathbone@wssda.org



School Funding Coalition Priorities Talking Points

The School Funding Coalition is comprised of seven statewide education associations, representing almost 8,000 school district leaders. In preparation for the 2021 Legislative Session (as well as any potential Special Session called before January), the Coalition developed a [short-list of priorities](#) to support. While each association has their own Legislative Platform, the Coalition's adopted priorities provide a set of issues in which we can come together and speak with one voice.

To assist your advocacy efforts, the Coalition has also created "talking points" for the priorities. The talking points below provide key message points for each priority, along with some additional information which provides further context behind the priorities.

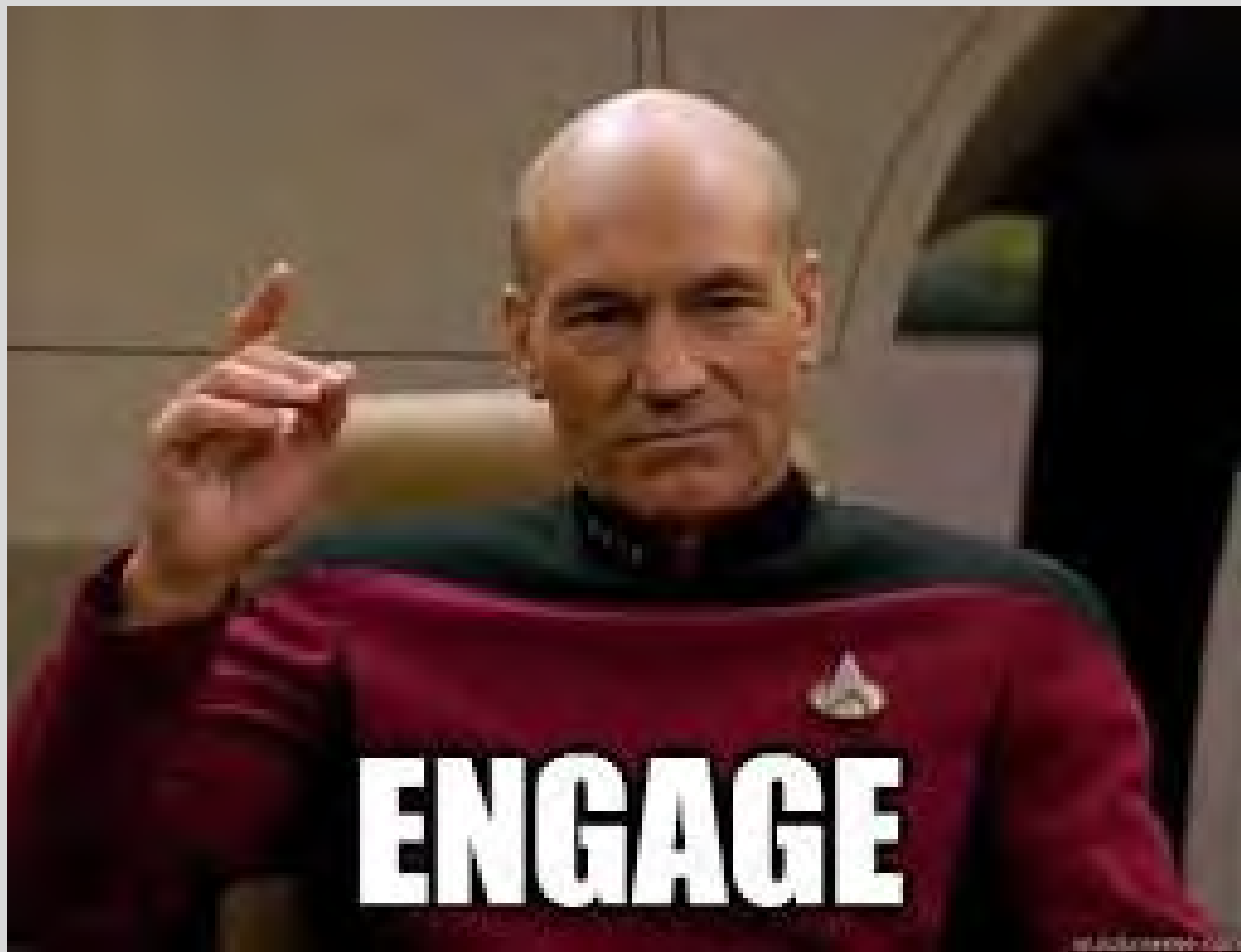
We encourage you—individually and collectively—to use the priorities and talking points to guide your communications with legislators. While the Coalition supports each issue and we will strive to successfully advance each priority, we suggest that you focus on two or three specific issues to discuss as you communicate with your local legislators. Written messages should be short and concise, and in-person, phone or electronic (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) meetings should be narrowly focused. In follow-up messages or meetings, you can provide further support for the priorities discussed, or you can advocate for additional issues. Outlining all of the priorities at once, however, may overwhelm your policymakers—and there is a risk your message will be lost.

Use the talking points to better understand the priorities and to craft supportive arguments. We encourage you not to simply copy the talking points; use your own words and voice so your message is authentic. And add your own "stories" to illuminate the issues. For example, do not just ask for stable pupil transportation funding. Explain the consequences if you lack funding; describe the potential personnel impacts or what services you might have to eliminate. Make the words "real."

School Funding Coalition Priorities: <https://bit.ly/32sRilx>

School Funding Coalition Priorities Talking Points: <https://bit.ly/2Rm0guk>

School Funding Coalition Overview Video: <https://bit.ly/32Vw284>





LEADERSHIP | TRUST | ADVOCACY

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Legislative Advocacy Brown Bag Webinar—Dec 2020