

Reclaim Our Schools

Stop Federal Education Cuts

The federal government is proposing to cut \$12 billion from K-12 public schools across the country. Recently, public pressure helped reverse \$6.8 billion in previously planned cuts to schools. Now, more cuts are being proposed, and we must act to protect critical funding for our students.

Tell your members of Congress: Let our kids learn! No cuts to public schools! Your elected officials can oppose these reductions. They'll be in their districts during the August recess—this is a key opportunity to meet with them or their staff to advocate for your schools. Below is a guide to help you plan a successful meeting. For additional support or information, contact amimarie@strongflschools.com

A Step-by-Step Guide to Host Successful Advocacy Visits

1. Who are you meeting with? *

- a. What is their current position?
 - i. Member of Congress (MOC)
 1. Senator
 2. House Representatives
- b. Have they been supportive of public education in the past?
 - i. Have they supported school vouchers?
 - ii. Have they supported education budget/programs
- c. Are they a Committee Chair or hold any other powerful position?

* [Use this tool](#) to determine what the impacts will be in your district

2. Making the Appointment

- a. Start scheduling your visit immediately. MOC will be available during August recess and it's a key opportunity. Give yourself time to recruit and organize the visit)
- b. When calling the local office, ask to speak with the scheduler
- c. Make it clear that the group will be constituents and you want to meet with the MOC (If they ask how many people, tell them you will let them know prior to the meeting.) If the MOC isn't available, ask to speak to the **education staff or policy aid, not interns.**
- d. Oftentimes scheduling a visit is hard. Offices can be unresponsive. **Continue to call, email and in some cases, go to their office and**

schedule an appointment in person! Be persistent

- e. Call and confirm the appointment a few days before the meeting.

3. Recruit constituents, participants for the meeting

- a. Recruit constituents to go to the visit from your contacts in the community. Call through petition lists, any postcards, sign up sheets from meetings, PTA/PTO etc.
- b. Be prepared before making phone calls by creating talking points and/or a phone script with all the details.
 - i. Who are you meeting with? Why is it important? Why should they join?
 - ii. Talking points and more info [here](#)
 - iii. Attendees to the advocacy visit must be available to come to both the actual advocacy visit and be able to meet an hour before the actual visit. They also must be willing and able to attend the “Planning meeting” so they are up to date on the issue, our ask and plan their role, if any, in the meeting.

4. The Planning Meeting

- a. Schedule a convenient time and place for the planning meeting
- b. Have everyone introduce themselves
- c. Discuss the issue at hand and our goals for these visits
- d. Review who the MOC is, and any meaningful history
- e. Review with your team the basics of advocacy
- f. Review or create the agenda for the advocacy visit ([Sample agenda](#))
- g. Include demands around the appropriation process:
 - i. Refuse any budget that includes cuts to public schools!
- h. [Review techniques elected officials](#) use to derail a meeting and create a plan with the facilitator
- i. Decide who will take what part on the agenda
- j. Plan logistics, where the meeting is, confirm time, and where you will all meet an hour before the visit.

5. The Pre-Meeting, just before the visit

- a. Review the Agenda
- b. Be sure everyone understands the demands
- c. Be sure everyone knows their piece of the agenda & [role](#)
- d. Remind the group that other issues should not be raised unless the team has planned them.
- e. Quickly [Review techniques elected officials](#) use to derail a meeting and create a plan with the facilitator and keep those in mind during your meeting and plan accordingly

6. During the Visit

- a. Follow the Agenda

- b. Remember to be aware of techniques that the legislator may use to avoid demands ([See attached tip sheet](#))
- c. Make sure the facilitators keep control of the meeting
 - i. Ensure everyone has time to speak, but doesn't go over
 - ii. Make sure you've made your ask
 - iii. Make sure the MOC or representative doesn't derail the meeting
- d. Make your asks and record responses
- e. Have a member of the group take notes of the entire meeting, putting special emphasis on any follow up needed.

7. Follow Up

- a. Discuss the visit with the team; did you all hear the same thing?
 - i. What did the MOC or office commit to?
 - ii. Was the tone supportive (is this a champion) or someone we'll have to sway?
 - iii. Are there any pending commitments or actions we need to take action on?
- b. Divide follow up tasks among willing participants
 - i. Who will make sure a Thank You letter is sent that reminds the MOC about what he/she committed to and what we ask of them?
 - ii. Was there any information the MOC requested that should be sent?
 - iii. Will the notetaker type up notes and share with your base?
 - iv. Includes turning what you learned into a strategy
- c. What's the next pressure point on the MOC so you can continue to advocate for your schools!
- d. **Tell us about it! Email amimarie@strongflschools.com and share how it went.**

Congratulations – you've just done a successful Advocacy Visit!