

## Tips for Influencing Legislators

As we approach the 2023 Indiana General Assembly legislative session, we want to continue to communicate ways for you the help IASP increase our legislative footprint around the state. Below are some tips that you can use to help improve your ability to influence the legislators that represent you and your school community.

### **1. Get to them early.**

This suggestion is twofold; 1) BEFORE the session begins in January is the best time to reach out and be able to connect with them. Once they get going in January with the session, their schedules are often filled. Contact them during the summer, when both you and they have more down time. Offer to have them come to your school while it is quiet! 2) It's easier to influence a legislator on an issue BEFORE they publicly take a stand on the issue. Once they have done that publicly, it is difficult for them to reverse course. Become familiar with our 2023 Legislative Platform (published after our November Board of Directors meeting) and our 2023 Legislative Priorities (also available in November) and reach out to your legislators to discuss these issues.

### **2. Use “real life” stories.**

Talk to your legislators about how education policy affects you, your students and your school community. We need to make it personal for them. Don't underestimate the power of anecdotal evidence. When legislators can identify on a personal level, it becomes important. Especially when it involves their constituents...those who elect them to their positions. Also, legislators love hearing from children. Feel free to include students in your conversations. Let the legislators hear from students in regard to how education policy affects them!

### **3. Be in it for the long haul.**

You have to invest in building a long term relationship with your legislators. It's not always easy and it will take an intentional effort. Learn about their background. Invite them to your building. Invite them to be the “Principal for a Day.” Ask them to be a guest speaker at a school program. Volunteer to be an “expert” for them in regard to education policy. Communicate frequently through email or regular mail. Be intentional about “thanking them” when they do support education in a positive way.

### **4. Leverage IASP.**

Identify yourself as a member of IASP. Let them know that our association has 3,300+ members and that we are active across the state in educational advocacy. Numbers talk to legislators. The bigger we become, the more our voice is organized, the more influence we can have in the state of Indiana!