



LEGISLATIVE ACTION TOOLKIT

**STAY UP-TO-DATE ON IMPORTANT ISSUES
THROUGHOUT THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION.**

Visit **advocacy.ista-in.org** for the latest statewide and national news, ISTA updates and calls to action.

You don't have to be an expert to have an impact on the legislative outcome of this session. You only need to be honest, passionate and open. It's okay to say you don't know the answer. But it is imperative that you share YOUR STORY with your legislator.

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LEGISLATIVE INFO AT YOUR FINGERTIPS ON ISTA-IN.ORG

1

Lobbying provides you with the information you need to be an effective communicator with elected officials.

2

Bill Update provides members with information on current bills ISTA is tracking.

3

Legislative Resources gives information about legislators and their district information.

4

Political Action offers voting- and election-related information to enable members to become informed voters.

5

Take Action links members to our advocacy site at advocacy.ista-in.org.

Education News

Concord South Side has new principal

Goshen News

Minutemen as the new principal at Concord's South Side Elementary School. Concord Community School board members Tuesday congratulated Kendall and unanimously approved the hire, effective Friday. Current principal Katy Scukanec will transfer from the South Side Elementary to Concord Intermediate School's Bridge Academy to serve as the student services liaison. She has been the principal at South Side Elementary for 5 1/2 years and prior to that, served as assistant principal for...

BCSC trustees eye bomb threats, taxes and ISTEP+

The Herald-Tribune (Batesville, Ind.)

Roberts wants the head coach to be a BCSC teacher. Classified -- retirement effective at end of 2015-16 school year: Alice Raver, BHS administrative assistant. Transportation -- resignation: Ted Williams, BCSC bus driver; new: Tracy Conley, Dale Jacobs and Edward James, BCSC substitute bus drivers.

Hard work pays off at Valley Grove

The Herald Bulletin

It originated in 1965 when Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Local schools benefit from safety grant

Hendricks County Flyer

Mike Pence recently announced school safety awards of more than \$10 million allocated to 260 local schools and school corporations across Indiana. The majority of the officers will be from the Avon Police Department, but Brownsburg and Danville officers may also be used. The first year, they upgraded the security system by adding a panic button and cameras.

[READ MORE](#) ☺

ISTA Blog

Lawmaker aims to bust unions and divide teachers in name of teacher shortage

ISTA

It's no secret that a long held goal by some is to break teacher unions in

More than 60 Years Teaching, and Still Passionate

ISTA

Many of us choose to retire at 65 and spend time doing what we love, but Beverlie Beck

Are legislators using flawed ISTEP data to expand private school vouchers?

ISTA

Following the controversy and mismanagement of this year's ISTEP, there is a lack

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ISTA ADVOCACY

WWW.ISTA-IN.ORG/ADVOCACY

Our advocacy program will enable you to be informed, as well as make it easy for you to engage with your elected officials. Visit the advocacy page frequently to check on our latest action items, local and national news, and our blog. This tool is designed to be the easiest way for you to be informed and be able to connect on the issues most impacting public education.

TIPS FOR CONTACTING LEGISLATORS

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Understand your issue, and make sure it's a legitimate state concern. Don't contact a state legislator about federal or local issues, but instead, focus on issues where a legislator actually has influence and impact. Whenever possible, cite a specific bill or law as the focus of your communication. The more specific you are, the more impact you will have.

USE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

To address a problem with state government or a possible solution, describe in your own words how this problem affects you or your students and how the solution might help resolve your concerns. If there are possible negative ramifications to your approach, it's best to tell the legislator of those potential problems before the legislator is asked to help resolve the issue. Don't surprise your legislator by giving him or her only half the story.

AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BE TIMELY

Follow the news media or the ISTA blog so you understand when the General Assembly is in session and when it is likely that issues will be addressed. The most effective communication is one which arrives early in the legislative process, preferably at the committee level where most of the work is done on legislation.

NEVER THREATEN

There is no quicker way to ensure your opinion will not count than to threaten legislators with reprisal if they do not vote the way you wish them to vote.

CHOOSE THE BEST WAY TO REACH A LEGISLATOR

Use common sense as to which method is most appropriate. Generally, writing a letter or sending an email is the preferred means of communication. A letter to your own district legislator is more effective than contacting legislators from other parts of the state.

MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP

The best way to get a legislator's attention is to be a friend. It's especially helpful if you contact your legislator from time to time with a good word or some update on your classroom or personal ventures, rather than just contacting your legislator when you have troubles.

CONTACTING LEGISLATORS: PHONE

FIND YOUR LEGISLATOR

Find your legislator via advocacy.ista-in.org. Click “Find Officials” in the top menu bar.

- The switchboard will direct you to the legislative assistant of your legislator.
- Leave a message that specifies the bill(s) in regard to which you are calling, and ask your legislator to call you back.
- Don’t be discouraged if you do not receive a call back. The number of contacts made on a particular bill are tracked by their assistants. That helps them understand what bills have community concern or support.
- If you reach your legislator, follow the instructions on the next page.
- If you do talk to your legislator, please fill out the Legislator Feedback form at <https://ista-in.org/legislator-feedback> to help our Government Relations department learn about what legislators are saying in their own communities.

CALL YOUR LEGISLATOR

House: 317-232-9600 or 800-382-9841
Senate: 317-232-9400 or 800-382-9467

IF YOU REACH YOUR LEGISLATOR:

- Identify yourself by name.
- Explain why you are calling: “I am calling to support/oppose HB____/SB_____.”
- Be polite and concise. Developing one or two brief talking points will focus the content of your message. Too much information may confuse your message.
- Ask your legislator his/her position on this issue. Don’t assume that your legislator has prior knowledge of your issue. Be calm and respectful, and be prepared to educate, using local examples to accentuate your point. If the legislator requires further information, provide it as soon as possible.
- Thank your legislator or the person who took your message for their time and consideration.

CONTACTING LEGISLATORS: LETTERS/EMAILS

TO A STATE SENATOR

The Honorable (Full Name), Indiana Senate
200 W. Washington St., Indiana State Capitol
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2785

TO A STATE REPRESENTATIVE

The Honorable (Full Name), Indiana House
200 W. Washington St., Indiana State Capitol
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2786

SAMPLE LETTER/EMAIL

Dear Representative/Senator (Last Name),

Be specific. Your purpose for writing should be stated in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, be sure to identify its full name and number, e.g. House Bill: HB_____, Senate Bill: SB_____. Try to send your letter while the issue is still alive.

State Your Position. Explain why you support or oppose this particular issue. Keep in mind that local examples concerning the impact of this legislation are very powerful. Be courteous and to the point, keeping your letter focused on one issue.

Ask for a Response. Indicate to your legislator that you would appreciate a reply containing his/her position on the issue. “Sincerely yours” is a proper way to conclude your letter.

Follow Up. If you agree with your legislator’s vote, take the time to let him/her know that. Similarly, if you disagree with his or her vote, inform your legislator.



CONTACTING LEGISLATORS: THIRD HOUSE MEETINGS

- Visit **<https://ista-in.org/local-events>** to see the list of Third House Meetings for your area.
- When you attend a meeting, be polite as you talk to legislators about important issues and bills (if it is not in their committee, they may need to be educated) and their intentions for voting.
- Please fill out the Legislator Feedback form at **<https://ista-in.org/legislator-feedback>** to help our Government Relations department learn about what legislators are saying in their own communities.
- Take pictures of all the educators who attended with you.
- Try to get a picture with your senator or representative.
- Post your pictures to social media, and email them to your UniServ Director for him/her to share with the Government Relations team.

HOW TO CONNECT WITH YOUR LOCAL MEDIA

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

- Tell your personal story related to the bill(s).
- A great place to start is with an email via ISTA Advocacy or information from an ISTA blog.
- Connect your experience to the welfare of your students and the community.
- Work with a group of friends to jointly write a letter or to bounce ideas off of each other and edit one another.

FACEBOOK

- Look for your representatives, senators and local media outlets on Facebook.
- Friend/Follow them.
- Post stories to their pages. Be polite. Remember that a large audience will be reading and responding to your post. Be prepared for less-than-pleasant comments.
- Follow ISTA on Facebook:
www.facebook.com/indianastateteachers.

TWITTER

- Follow ISTA **@ISTAmembers** for timely info on various issues
- Follow local journalists, and tag them in your retweets.

SAMPLE STAND-UP NOTICE

Who: ALL Members

What: Stand-UP Meeting

When: Monday at 3:30 p.m.

Where: Hallway in front of gym

Why: Update on key legislative changes of the week

SAMPLE STAND-UP AGENDA

- Update on legislative developments of the week (5 min)
- Explain the action needed from members (4 min)
- End on a positive note (1 min)

Remember: It's quick and clean. Keep questions to the end.

STAND-UP MEETINGS

10-MINUTE STAND-UP MEETING

- Hold 10 minute Stand-UP meetings to quickly inform members of the latest developments in the legislature.
- Keep it quick and direct. Wait for questions at the end to respect the need for some members to leave after 10 minutes.
- Don't go over time with the presentation of information and the requested action.
- Use this time to encourage your members to be active in protecting their rights.
- Report back to your UniServ Assistant about any meetings you've held and how they went.

Indiana State Teachers Association

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