Tips for Visits on Capitol Hill

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*NCTE Literacy Education*

*Advocacy Day*

*March 5, 2015*

Plan your visit carefully.

* Schedule an appointment with the Congressional office: <http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm> and <http://www.house.gov/representatives/>.
* Plot your appointments on the US Capitol map.
* Be prompt to your appointments.
* Be patient awaiting your meeting.
* Be delighted to meet with a staffer.

Be prepared for your meeting.

* Study and practice the “asks” provided by NCTE.
* Combine your asks with a personal education story.
* Know the legislator’s biography and voting history.
* Make a connection to the legislator’s state and/or district.
* Leave behind a one-page fact sheet.

Focus yourself on the meeting.

* Get comfortable with quick and cordial introductions. Smile!
* Exchange business cards.
* Establish a connection through sports, art, alma maters.
* Explain the “asks” and tell your story.
* Have your notes close by.
* Be succinct, enthusiastic, direct, honest, and specific.
* Be authentic: include personal and local stories.
* Listen and be responsive. Ask questions. Be conversational.
* Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know but I’ll find out and get back to you with an answer.”
* Be aware of the time and be brief.
* As the meeting is ending, 1) summarize your main points; 2) offer to follow up with more information; 3) thank them.

After the meeting:

* Jot down notes about main points covered.
* Follow up with any requests for information.
* Fill out a meeting report during the debriefing for the day.
* Write a thank you email to the person with whom you met, reviewing what you said in the meeting and offering your assistance in the future.
* If the Member of Congress takes positive action on one of the “asks,” write to thank her/him.
* Consider thanking them publicly on social media.

Know your NCTE resources.

* NCTE’s Education Policy Platform at <http://www.ncte.org/positions/educpolicy>
* NCTE Position Statements at <http://www.ncte.org/positions>

Find out more about the legislative process and the making of a law.

* Go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/lawsmade.toc.html>
* Track bills and read the Congressional Record on Thomas.gov <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

*As an NCTE member, you are the best, most knowledgeable person to speak out about NCTE’s positions and how those positions look in practice!*

*Talking to your Member of Congress or a congressional staffer is a very effective way to have your message heard.*

Watch your email and  
NCTE’s website for details  
on next year’s  
Literacy Education  
Advocacy Day

<http://www.ncte.org/action>