

**FL CEC**



# **Special Education Advocacy Legislative Summit**

Meet!  
Advocate!  
Follow-up!



**BE AN  
ADVOCATE**



# Leading a Virtual Meeting



# Schedule a Meeting with Your Representative



- Make templates your own
- Members have meeting request portals on their official webpages.
- Meeting with staff is equally important.
- Defer to the office to use the platform they prefer
- Be sure to follow up—inboxes are overflowing
- Log your meeting on the Google Doc



# 2

## Plan Ahead of Time

- Review the Issue Briefs.
- Decide which “asks” to emphasize.
- Assign roles.
  - Illustrate a need.
  - Reduce uncertainty.
  - Build a sense of urgency.
  - Tell a story that support your “asks.”
  - Invite questions to further engage with your delegation.
  - Remember: You do not need to be an expert in federal policymaking to be a changemaker.
  - You are expert at what you do everyday in this field.

# Conducting a Meeting

## 3

- While the format is different, the basic rules still apply:
  - Wear professional attire if you will be on camera.
  - Mute your microphone when you are not speaking.
  - Tailor your discussion to the priorities identified by SEALS on the state level
  - Review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting.
  - Introduce your team.
  - Actively facilitate to avoid awkward silences, people talking over each other, etc.
  - Always say thank you at the end of a meeting and promise to follow up.



# Examples of Topic Points for Communicating with Legislators and Staff

- ❑ Seclusion and restraint are highly dangerous interventions that have led to death, injury, and trauma in children
- ❑ In 2009, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) collected at least 20 stories of children who died in restraint. Restraint should not be used when there is no emergency posing a danger to physical safety
- ❑ The most current data from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) reveals that 101,990 students were subjected to seclusion or restraint during the 2017-18 school year. Of the students restrained or secluded, 78 percent were students with disabilities who were disproportionately students who identified as Black/African American and boys.
- ❑ Every child should be safe and protected while in school. Sadly, that is not always the case.

# Examples of Topic Points for Communicating with Legislators and Staff

- ❑ Corporal Punishment for students with disabilities can create lasting injuries and barriers to education. It can also aggravate medical conditions for students with disabilities.
- ❑ Sometimes students are punished for manifestations of their disabilities
- ❑ Corporal Punishment can inflict long lasting physical and mental harm.
- ❑ Studies have shown that the use of corporal punishment can lead to high risk for anxiety, depression, substance abuse, stress, and other mental health concerns.
- ❑ Corporal punishment has been banned in US prisons and military training and animals are protected from the same sort of punishment. Let's protect our students

# Examples of Topic Points for Communicating with Legislators and Staff

- ❑ Having too few teachers of color places both students and teachers at a disadvantage.
- ❑ Racially diverse role models in the classroom benefit all children, regardless of race. Having few teachers of color (or only one, which can often be the case) in a school building can spur feelings of isolation and, subsequently, contribute to teachers of color leaving the profession at a disproportionately higher rate than white teachers.
- ❑ Hire and retain more teachers of color
- ❑ In school year, 2017-2018, there were 416 ESE Teacher Vacancies. In school year 2019-2020, there were 816 ESE Teacher Vacancies.
- ❑ (2018-19): 70 percent of public school teachers were white, yet only 37 percent of students in classrooms were white

# Examples of Topic Points for Communicating with Legislators and Staff

- ❑ In the development of an IEP, decisions must be made regarding where a child spends their school day and how the services are provided.
- ❑ In Florida, schools have been challenged to improve LRE placement practices.
- ❑ The Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE) is an internal assessment required every 3 years in Florida
- ❑ Least restrictive environment (LRE) isn't a place; it's a principle that guides each exceptional student's educational program.

# Share Your Success

- With stakeholders
- Social Media
  - Facebook
  - Twitter
  - Instagram



# Resources

FL CEC: <https://sites.google.com/site/cecspeflorida>

CEC Advocacy: <https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-and-advocacy>

Legislature's Webpage ([www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us))

Governor's Webpage (<http://www.flgov.com/>)

Florida Department of Education's Webpage ([www.fldoe.org](http://www.fldoe.org))

Webcasts of House & Senate Committee Meetings & Floor Sessions  
(<http://www.my.floridahouse.gov/Sections/HouseCalendar/broadcast.aspx>)

State Board of Education Legislative Budget Request Documents:  
(<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19916/urlt/Greenbook.pdf>)

Governor's Recommended Budget Webpage:  
(<http://www.floridaleadsbudget.com/HomeFY22.htm>)

Online Sunshine: ([www.leg.state.fl.us](http://www.leg.state.fl.us))

# Questions

