

Preparing for TEPSA'S Advocacy Day

Planning for Advocacy Day

- Learn who represents you in the Texas Senate and House. Be sure to look up by your school and home addresses.
- Review TEPSA's Legislative Priorities and the Legislative Positions. We will distribute these during our visits. Be prepared to discuss these priorities and provide specific examples from your school.
- Dress professionally and bring plenty of your business cards. Wear your school name tag. We will also have name tags at the office for your visit. Make sure you include your preferred phone number and/or email address so legislators can contact you for follow-up questions.

If You Want to Schedule an Appointment

- While it isn't necessary to schedule an appointment with your elected official, you may feel more comfortable doing so. Contact the Austin office of the Texas Senate and/or House member who represents you. Ask to speak with the scheduler to set up a meeting with your elected official or the education staff member between 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., Thursday, February 9. Meetings with staff members typically yield more timely information and present additional opportunities to share knowledge and data about your school and community.

Advocacy Day at the Capitol

- Be prepared to meet with a staff member instead of the legislator, even if you've scheduled a meeting. If you meet with someone other than the education staff member, be prepared to educate him/her and begin to develop a positive working relationship.
- When you introduce yourself, mention your school, community, and that you are a member of the Texas Elementary Principals and Supervisors Association.
- Be friendly and share news from home. Quickly develop rapport and try to get your message across in the first few minutes of your meeting.
- Ask the legislator or staff member to be more specific in their responses about ways in which they "support education."
- Offer yourself as a district resource to the legislator and the education staff member. Be sure to indicate a phone number and email on your business card.
- Invite the legislator and staff member to visit your school. Let them know that you will publicize the meeting. If they visit, notify the town paper and/or your school information office.
- Have your photo taken with the legislator if possible. Staff members may also enjoy having their photo with you and sometimes you can use social media to advertise their legislative involvement. Send photos to TEPSA and to your local media when you return home.

Following Up

- Take notes to share with TEPSA staff during the debrief session. Indicate any follow-up that is needed.
- Send a thank you note to the legislator and the staff member. Reiterate key points and add any other relevant information you may have. Repeat your invitation for a school visit and follow up with the legislator's local office. Staff members rely on educators from their home district to provide resources, materials, and general updates on the status of education in the district. Include a copy of any photos that appear in your local paper.