Talking with Legislators

Face to face

- Identify yourself (name, where you live, where you worked, what your position was in the school system).
- > Identify the piece of legislation or the issue you wish to address.
- Explain the issue and the association's position clearly and concisely.
- Answer any questions a legislator or staff member has as best you can. If you do not know an answer, the legislator/staffer know you will find out the information and ask the best way to get the information s/he requested to him/her.
- Ask for your legislator's position. Offer to send additional information supporting your opinion.
- ➤ If a legislator agrees, thank him/her for the support. If a legislator disagrees, be frank, but not disagreeable.
- Don't forget to listen, as well as speak.
- Thank the legislator/staffer.

On the phone

- You need not speak directly with the lawmaker. Speaking to his/her legislative aide or chief of staff can be effective in getting your point across. Always ask for the name and position of the person to whom you are speaking.
- You can call after hours and leave a voicemail message with your name, the number of the bill or issue, and position.
- > Call 1-800-372-7181 to leave a message for your legislator it counts!

After a meeting in the legislator's office

- Write a note or email to thank the legislator or staffer for his/her time.
- Report the results of your visit to GR staff

Following up with information

If you were asked to send information or offered to do so, work with GR staff to get the information and then share it with the legislator/staffer.

This information was adapted from Lobby Day Team Training developed by the New Jersey Retired Education Association.

