

# A Guide to Community Schools State & Local Outreach

**Your State Legislatures need to hear from you so that they know how impactful Community Schools has been for your school, students, families, and community!**

A key strategy to ensure your State Legislature continues or begins to support Community Schools and is to reach out to your State Representatives and Senators to share the positive impact of Community Schools in their districts. Outreach is most effective when it highlights the stories of staff, students, families, and community partners, alongside quantitative evidence.

To make the process of reaching out to your elected officials as easy as possible, we've provided **two** templates, one for a phone call and one for an email message, to use when you contact them. We encourage you to personalize the message so that they know how current or potential state dollars have made a difference in the lives of your students.

We've also provided an FAQ (below) to help address any questions or concerns that you might have about the process, a guide to hosting a virtual meeting with an elected official, guidance on inviting an elected official to a site visit, and a messaging guide to help your phone call or email be well-received, no matter the recipient.

We truly appreciate your partnership in helping to advocate for Community Schools!

Warmly,  
*The IEL Policy Team*

# FAQs:

**Q: How do I find my elected official's phone number or email address?**

- A: You can search by your address or zip code on [commoncause.org](http://commoncause.org). This will give you the contact information for your federal, state, and local officials.

**Q: Is writing to your state legislators considered lobbying?**

- A: No, writing to your state legislators is not lobbying, it's advocacy. To be considered lobbying, you have to ask a official to vote a specific way on a specific bill. In this case, you are advocating for the member to support Community Schools funding, whether that be a existing program or general support. You are asking your state legislators to ensure that a program and funding stream is supported, not urging a position on a specific bill.

**Q: Which is better, emailing or calling?**

- A: Both! You should reach out in any way you are most comfortable. Calling is great for when you only have a few minutes, and emailing is perfect if you have a lot you want to share with your elected officials.

**Q: Will I be speaking or corresponding directly with my state legislator?**

- A: Most likely, no. If you call, chances are you will be leaving a voicemail. If anyone answers the phone or responds to your email, it will be a staffer. However, if you do want to speak to your elected official, you can always request a meeting with them.

# Phone Call Script Example:

*\*This is a sample script of what to say when calling state legislators. You can personalize or adapt this script as needed. You will most likely be leaving a voicemail, but in the event you speak with a person in the office, you can use the same template.*

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_ (town/school district/school). I am calling to ask \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of elected official) to support funding opportunities for Community Schools.

With our current funding, we have \_\_\_\_\_ (list examples of how the current funding streams have made a positive impact in your school or community). We need \_\_\_\_\_ (name of your state) to continue to fund opportunities for Community Schools to keep making these positive changes for our students, families, and community.

For example, without this funding \_\_\_\_\_ (cite an example of something that will no longer happen or a negative consequence of no longer being able to employ the Community School strategy [e.g. attendance rates, academic outcomes, etc.]).

However, with additional funding, \_\_\_\_\_ (list 1-2 examples of different opportunities or services you would be able to provide/supplement with additional funding).

Please support opportunities for Community Schools, so that my school can continue to thrive and better serve our students and community.

Thank you.



# Email Template Example:

*\*This is a template of what to write when emailing state legislators. You can personalize or adapt this template as needed.*

**Subject Line:** Please Fund and Support Opportunities for Community Schools

Hello,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_ (town/school district/school). I am writing to you today to ask for your continued support of funding opportunities for Community Schools.

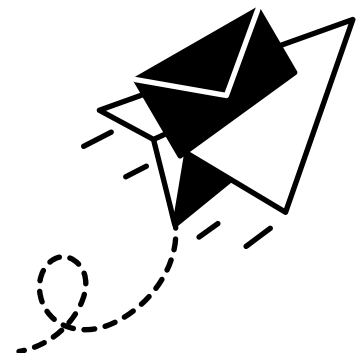
With our current funding, we have \_\_\_\_\_ (list examples of how the current funding streams have made a positive impact in your school or community). We need \_\_\_\_\_ (name of your state) to continue to fund opportunities for Community Schools to keep making these positive changes for our students, families, and community.

Community Schools are a federally recognized evidence-based strategy where public schools actively engage parents and students in designing opportunities for better learning and a better life. Years of evidence point to the positive impacts Community Schools have had on academics, family engagement, community development, collaborative leadership, and return-on investment in communities across the country. Community Schools are an effective strategy to coordinate and align school and community resources to increase family and community engagement for students' success while also addressing urgent student, family, and community needs.

However, with additional funding, \_\_\_\_\_ (list 1-2 examples of different opportunities you would be able to provide/supplement with additional funding).

Please support opportunities for Community Schools, so that my school can continue to thrive and better serve our students and community.

Thank you,  
(Your name)



# A Guide to Legislator Meetings:

One great way to build strong relationships with your state legislators and their staffers is by organizing a virtual or in-person meetings. This is efficient in cultivating an open line of communication in advocating for Community Schools funding and more. The guide below will provide a step-by-step on how to get in contact with the right staffer, how to organize a call, and best practice tips.

## Who Do I Contact My Member?

- Find your state legislators using [commoncause.org](http://commoncause.org)
  - Find the staffer that works on Education, or the best point of contact for legislative staff. There may not be one listed.
  - Due to the difference in staffing for legislators between the federal, state, and local level, you may be able to get in contact with the legislator.
- **How to Ask the Office:**
    - If you can't find the staffer's name, call your state legislator's office. When you call, you can use a template like below:

**Hello! My name is \_\_, from \_\_\_\_.  
I am looking to get in contact with  
your education staffer to discuss our  
Community Schools work in \_\_\_\_.  
Could you please provide me with  
their name and email address?**

# Emailing a Legislative Staffer:

*When emailing the staffer, you can use the template below:*

Hello \_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, from \_\_\_\_\_ (town/school district/school). I'd like to request a meeting with you to discuss \_\_\_\_\_ (name of Community School).

Our Community School has made a huge difference in the lives of students, families, and our community. Through this model, we have been able to \_\_\_\_\_ (briefly state your major wins/areas of improvement/academic accomplishments).

During this meeting, we'd love to share the successes and stories from our schools - including \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. hearing from our students, Coordinators, etc.). We are hoping to connect during \_\_\_\_\_ (preferred week or month), depending on your availability.

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We would be honored to meet with you and share how this program continues to make a difference in our community. Thank you for your time and consideration—I look forward to hearing from you.

Thank you,  
(Your name)

# Structuring Your Meeting:

When preparing for your meeting, we encourage you to inform your IEL Regional Director for coalition efforts. Legislators are looking for both **quantitative** and **qualitative** evidence of impact of Community Schools, especially stories.

You should send an invite for a 30-minute meeting.

- **Potential Strategies:**

- **Storytelling:** Inviting a student or Coordinator to discuss how CS has benefited them. (Staffers LOVE hearing from students! Just make sure they practice before they have the meeting)
- **Agenda-setting:** Write yourself a flexible internal agenda that has short bullets on points you know you want to make.
- **Partnership:** Be sure to note that if they have any additional questions about your program, would like your help to get in touch with other nearby CS, or to pass along more stories, that you would be happy to. Just noting this here, since this will help in keeping the door open for collaboration or further communication.

- **Follow up:**

- This is just a friendly reminder to follow up either the next day or during that week, thanking them for their time, and noting any information they asked for.

## Virtual Hill Meeting FAQs:

**Q: What should I mention when discussing funding levels?**

- A: When discussing funding, ask for “highest funding possible.”

**Q: What is the difference between Advocacy and Lobbying?**

- A: If you are concerned about the difference between advocacy & lobbying, you can refer to this [website](#), and the IEL Everyone: An Advocate Webinar on [Understanding the Federal Budget](#).