



Advocacy Tip Sheet

It is important to develop a good relationship with your legislators and their staffs to help them understand Career and Technical Education (CTE). Legislators care about what their constituents are concerned about and your advocacy efforts could make a difference in their legislative decisions. As CTE experts, you are in the best position to educate your legislator and their staff on the issues that are most critical to the CTE community. Here are some effective tips for advocating at the state level.

Start close to home: While you may be able to meet with staff when you are in Richmond, it is also important to develop a relationship with your delegate's and senator's staffs in their hometown or district.

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Plan ahead: Identify yourself and your organization when you schedule your meeting in advance. Staff is very happy to meet with constituents, but is very busy and appointments are better than "cold calls."

Do your homework: Research your legislator and his/her background by looking at his/her web site. Find out which committees he/she serves on and what bills he/she has introduced. Background information is available on the Virginia General Assembly Web site at <http://viriniageneralassembly.gov/index.php>.

The Ask: Be specific about what action you would like your legislator to take. If you are advocating for a specific bill, then reference the bill number or title. Be concise in your written and verbal communication.

Provide information: Leave something behind, such as a fact sheet on specific bills or a newspaper article relevant to the delegate's or senator's hometown or district.

Stay in touch: Continue the relationship after the visit with a thank you note and follow up phone calls and emails when appropriate. Send staffers newspaper clippings of student or school success. Share newsletters. Invite the legislator and staff to tour your programs.

Report back: Update VACTE on your visit and the progress you made.

Stay involved: Attend town hall meetings in your district. Sign up for your delegate's and senator's newsletters, and subscribe to their listservs.

*For further information, please contact
Dr. Brenda D. Long
Phone 540-760-2504
brendalong73@gmail.com*

