

Connect with a policy maker: Go to the Iowa Legislative Website and look up your senator/Representative <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find> Do one (or more) of several things:

1. Send them a thank you note for their service. Let them know their job is tough and you can empathize. Ask them to support an increase in the state cost per pupil no lower than 4%. Check out the UEN web page for recent <http://www.uen-ia.org/legislation.htm> call to action on school aid for talking points.
2. Sign up to get their newsletter.
3. Click on their name, go to their website or do a Google search and see what you can learn about their educational background or experience.
4. Send them an email or letter asking a question about education. (Could be as simple as "how do you best like to get information about how the issues before you may impact your schools?")

Writing your legislator: Personal, thoughtful letters have a considerable impact.

- Focus on one issue or bill per letter and identify the bill, if known, by name and number.
- Express your point of view, explain why your legislator should support it, be brief and courteous.
- Briefly explain the local impact of the legislation – just the facts.
- Request that your legislators take a specific position on the bill. If you want their support, you may want to ask them to cosponsor the bill or to vote for its passage,
- Ask for a response from your legislator.
- When writing an individual letter, use your signature and personal letterhead and state your role. If it is a collective letter consider who signs, what letterhead and why.
- Make sure your return address is on the letter (envelopes often get lost) so that your legislator can respond.

For the fastest response to letters, address them to:

The Honorable [Full Name] or State Representative / Dear Representative [Last Name]
State Senator
State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319
Dear Senator [Last Name]:

E-mailing your legislator is also an option for shorter or time-sensitive messages. Because of the volume of e-mails legislators receive, however, yours may be retrieved by a staff member or accidentally deleted and never seen by your legislator. A hard copy letter mailed is by far your best choice, but you can print and mail a copy of your email to ensure it gets noticed.

Refer to the Legislative web site www.legis.state.ia.us legislators' interim and regular session snail mail and e-mail addresses and phone numbers and committee assignments.

Letter Outline: Introduction during Interim:

Date, 2016

Honorable (*legislator name*)
(*street address*)
(*city, Iowa #####*)

Dear ("Senator" or "Representative")(last name):

Before the beginning of the next legislative session, I would like to arrange a time to sit down and talk about our school district (or get to know you and provide information on educational issues important to you.)

(*Second paragraph: subject of the visit such as : – how our students are learning, how we dedicate our budget to improving quality teaching, and to answer any questions your legislator may have, or just to make an introduction and connect them with names and numbers to call in the district when considering a vote on education policy.*)

Please let me know what might be a good time to get together. Perhaps we could meet for coffee at _____. I can be reached at (*area code*) ###-####.

Or invite the legislator to a board meeting or other event: The (*your school district*) Board of Directors would like you to participate at our ("*open house*," "*legislative forum*," "*student awards program*," *etc.*). We feel our district has a lot to offer our students and we'd like you to come and see for yourself the good things that are happening at the (*your school district*). We strive to provide educational programming that constantly challenges our students and improves their achievement levels.

Please let me know if you will be able to attend. I can be reached at (*area code*) ###-####.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership for Iowa's students.

Sincerely,

(*your name*)

Title
(*your school district*)

Sample letter about equity (Transportation or District Cost Per Pupil)

Look to the inequities toolkit on the ISFIS web page here

<http://www.isfis.net/Legislative>

Date, 2016

Honorable (*legislator name*)

(*street address*)

(*city, Iowa #####*)

Dear ("Senator" or "Representative")(last name):

I know your job is difficult and there are many competing priorities for state resources. I want to share with you why transportation and per pupil equity in the formula should be the highest among your list of priorities:

- Children are our future. We have a moral obligation to give them our best effort at a world class education.
- Some children in Iowa have a higher level of support, not by any ill intent, but just because of history and geography. With some districts paying for transportation costs in excess of \$1,000 per student enrolled, that directly lowers the resources available for teachers, textbooks and educational opportunities. The district cost per pupil inequity in the formula has been around for a long time, but with our district receiving less per pupil than some of our neighboring districts, I believe this is unfair and needs to be corrected.
- These inequities will take resources to fix. We didn't grow into these overnight and won't get out of them quickly, but I encourage you to take an action to begin correcting them now.

(*Second paragraph: what do you want them to do*) Meanwhile, all schools need adequate and timely funding. Please do your very best to support the most you can for our students.

Thank you so much for listening to my concerns and I look forward to your response. I can be reached at (*area code*) ###-#### if you'd like to talk in person.

Thank you for your consideration and leadership for Iowa's students.

Sincerely,

(*your name*)

Title

(*your school district*)