

Guide to Educating Policymakers

Policymakers at the local, State, and Federal levels are an often overlooked audience for sustainability, but these are the very men and women who are in a position to help develop, support, and sustain programs such as Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS). We, therefore, have an opportunity and obligation to inform and educate policymakers about SS/HS—its mission, its successes, and its outcomes—at both the local and national levels. **This section of the Celebration Kit provides resources, tools, and templates to help you maximize your outreach efforts.**

Steps to Policymaker Education

Policymaker education offers more than a chance for you to inform your elected or appointed officials: It offers the chance to build relationships in which policymakers may turn to you as a trusted source of information. This section provides you with the steps you will want to take to initiate contact with your policymakers, secure a meeting, deliver a strong presentation, and follow up effectively.

Template for Writing to Policymakers

We may live in a world of informal email and text messages, but formal letters to policymakers tell them that you respect their office and are serious about sharing your SS/HS successes. This customizable template can be used to reach policymakers at all levels. It allows you to link your policymaker's priorities with the work of your local initiative, as well as with the Federal initiative's outcomes.

Addressing Letters to Policymakers

By virtue of their public service and office, policymakers have earned the right to be addressed formally and quite specifically in written correspondence, and this resource can help you identify the appropriate way to address your letters to State and Federal policymakers. Your respect for their office will be appreciated.

Factsheet Template for Policymaker Outreach

This customizable factsheet effectively links your own initiative's successes to the broader, national work of SS/HS. It serves as a companion piece to the National Evaluation Team's *The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative: A Legacy of Success* but can be used alone to effectively reach local, State, and Federal policymakers. To make the most of this tool, you will want to work with your evaluator and communication specialist to cull the best data for your specific audience to cast as bright a light as possible on your successes.

Resources for Educating Policymakers

In this section, you will find links to online resources that can support your outreach efforts, including the National Evaluation Team's *The Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative: A Legacy of Success*, and the White House's report on combating violent extremism at the local level—as well as guidance on locating contact information for your elected officials and much more.

For assistance with any of these tools or templates, contact your communication specialist. Our toll-free number is 800-790-2647.