

Communication

Writing an Effective Letter

- Use proper form for addressing elected and appointed officials.
- Identify yourself as a teacher assistant and a member of the North Carolina Association of Teacher Assistants.
- Stick to one issue and refer to the specific legislation by bill number and short title. State the status of the bill.
- Be brief and to the point. State what you want from the legislator and ask for a response.
- Support your position with facts and be courteous.
- Should the legislation pass, follow up with a thank you letter.



Addressing an Elected Official

NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATORS
(SENATOR OR REPRESENTATIVE)

The Honorable _____
State Legislative Building
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 2760

Dear Senator/Representative _____:

E-Mailing Legislators

<http://www.ncleg.net/>

- Each legislator's e-mail address is listed under each member's individual information.
- If time is short, an e-mail is appropriate although not always the most effective means of communicating. However, large numbers of e-mails can make a difference!!
- Follow the guidelines for writing legislators when sending emails. Be concise and state how you want the legislator to vote.
- Include your telephone number.

Calling Legislators

The main number for the NC General Assembly is 919-733-4111.

- Ask to speak directly to the legislator.
- Identify that you are a teacher assistant and a member of the North Carolina Association of Teacher Assistants.
- Be brief and state the purpose of the call.
- State the bill number, title and the bill's current status.
- State how you want the legislator to vote.
- Express your appreciation if the legislator's position on a bill is supportive. If the legislator is undecided, offer to provide more information on the subject.
- Send a follow-up letter restating what you discussed on the phone and the legislator's position on the issue as you understood it.
- Be sure to express appreciation for their time.

NCATA Legislative Committee

How to Be An Effective Advocate and Communicator



2007-2008

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Many Voices. One Message.

Information adapted from:

2007-2008 Legislative Lobbying Manual of the NC School Boards Association

The North Carolina General Assembly Website

California School Boards Association



Become an “Expert”

- **Be informed.** Know the issues. Visit the North Carolina General Assembly, Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina School Boards Association, and NCATA websites. Read the newspaper. Attend local and district association meetings. Attend school board meetings.
- **Be outgoing.** Build relationships with people and groups. Gain support for our issues.
- **Be persistent, yet patient.** Some issues will resolve quickly while others will take years.
- **Be consistent.** Keep in touch with people who have the power to effect change.

Work with Your Legislator

- **Get to know your legislator.** Contact him/her and staff on key issues that matter to teacher assistants.
- **Invite your legislator** on a tour of your school and to spend some time with you at work.
- **Inform your legislator.** Send your legislator’s district office news releases and newsletters spotlighting the important role of assistants in the educational system.
- **Become familiar to your legislator.** Attend local meetings held by the legislator. Research him/her and find out where they stand on education issues.
- **Thank legislators** and their staff in writing for their help. Staff can be an important link and advocate to your legislator.

Don’t Forget the Media

Don’t forget that legislators rely on the media for information and as an indicator of public opinion.

- Write letters to the editor.
- Invite the media to events involving teacher assistants.
- Find out who the local education reporter is and keep them informed of issues concerning teacher assistants.
- Mail newspaper articles concerning teacher assistants to your legislator.



Your local media can be a valuable resource for