



Visiting Members of Congress in District Offices

Thursday, July 14 at 12:00 – 1:30 pm EDT



Logistical Items

- Q&A
 - We will have plenty of time to answer your questions
 - Submit questions either in Q&A box or via email: govrelations@aera.net
- Resources cited throughout
 - AERA Advocacy Toolkit
 - <http://cqrcengage.com/aeraedresearch/AERAAdvocacyToolkit>



The Big Picture

Shared goal:

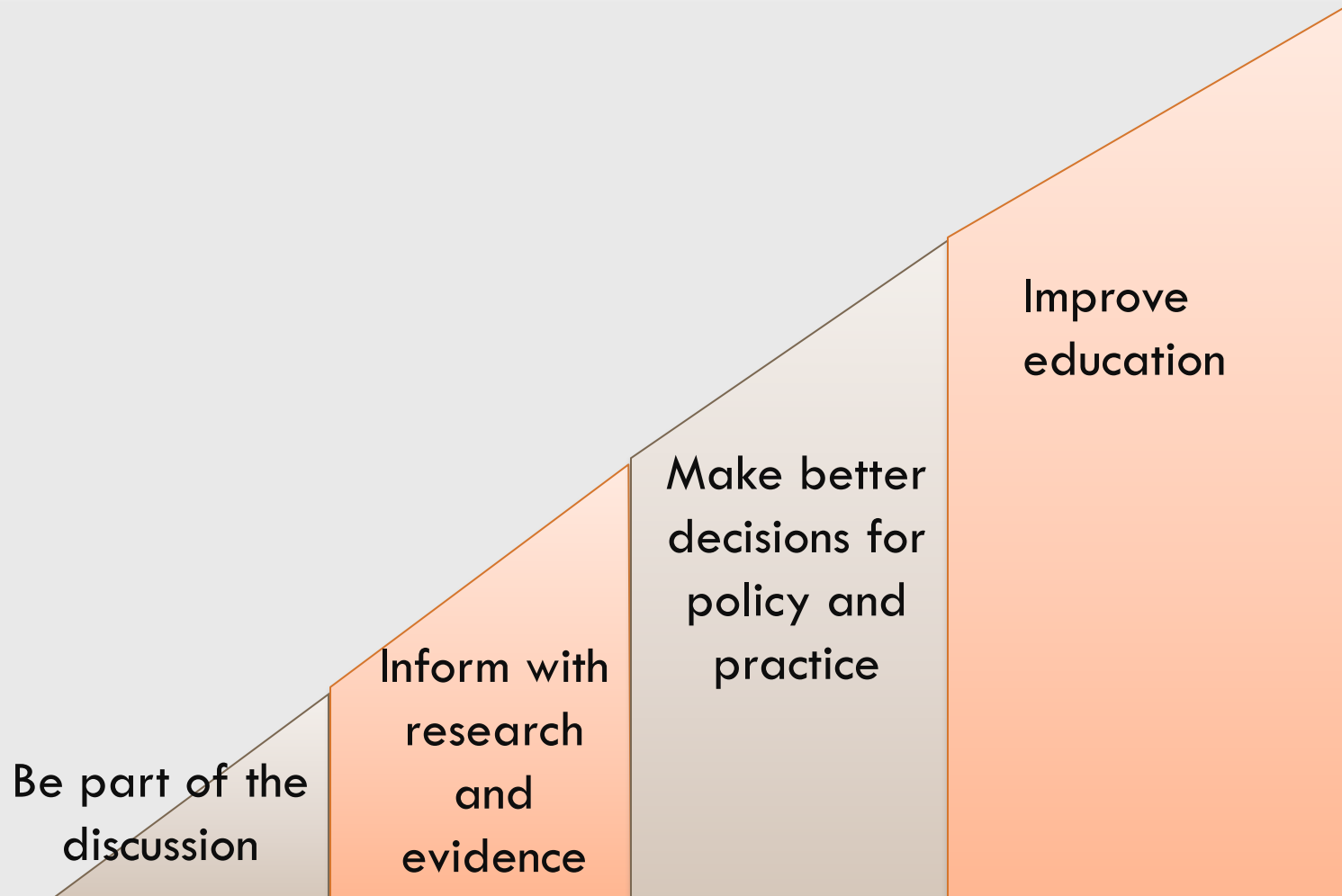
To improve the quality of education for all students based on knowledge and evidence

To accomplish this goal, move from three-legged stool to a more integrated foundation of building blocks





Supporting the Shared Goal





Overview of Webinar

- Why Visit Your Member of Congress?
- When and Who to Visit
- How to Prepare
- What to Say
- Resources
- Following Up



AERA Government Relations

- AERA Government Relations program has three primary goals:
 - Support federal funding for education research
 - Safeguard the integrity of education research and statistics
 - Advance the field of education research

AERA does not usually take positions on specific education policies like vouchers or teacher preparation guidelines.



AERA and Members of Congress





AERA Government Relations

AERA advances education research on Capitol Hill in a variety of ways:

- Bringing AERA members to meet with congressional staff
- Showcasing AERA members' federally-funded research
- Sponsoring congressional briefings
- Submitting written testimony
- Commenting on legislation
- Working with science and education coalitions



AERA Government Relations

The most effective way to build support for education research is for Members of Congress to understand and value education research and to connect education research to their district.



Why Visit?

- Demonstrate the value of education research
- Convince offices that of all the compelling things to fund, education research is at the top of the list



Why Visit?

- Congressional offices hear from everybody on every issue all the time. We need to make sure that the voices of education researchers are in the mix.
- Offices greatly value constituent communications.
 - Legislative staffers track constituent correspondences.
 - Offices gauge voter opinion based on what they are hearing from their constituents.
 - Congressional offices take pride in the accomplishments of their constituents.



Why Visit?

- Opportunity to hear directly from the Member about their goals, concerns and questions
- Establish yourself as a resource
- Offer AERA as a resource

When and Who to Visit



- When – July 18 – September 5
- Who – Your Representative and your two Senators
 - Of your three Members of congress, start with your elected official most interested in education or R and D.
 - Try to meet with the Member themselves – they will very likely be joined by a staff member.
 - If meeting with the Member is out of the question, ask if the staffer who covers education or R and D policy for the Member will be in the district during the summer recess.



When and Who to Visit

Scheduling a Meeting

- Bring a colleague, perhaps a local practitioner or someone who works with a local school, public agency, or educational organization.
- Call and ask for the email address for the scheduler.
- Email meeting request. We have provided a sample.



How to Prepare

- Get to know your Members of Congress.
 - What committees are they on?
 - What are their priorities and interests?
 - What do you see in recent press releases?
 - What legislation have they introduced?
 - What have you seen in the local headlines?
- Let your University Government Relations professionals know that you will be visiting your Members of Congress.



How to Prepare

Connect your Work to Education Issues on Capitol Hill

- Higher Education Act (HEA) – Next big education bill up for reauthorization
- Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – Enacted in December 2015
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) – Introduced in the House in July 2015
- Strengthening Education Through Research Act (SETRA) – Passed in the Senate waiting for consideration in the House
- Reauthorization of the National Science Foundation (COMPETES) – Passed in the House, and by Senate Committee



How to Prepare

Connect Education Research to the District

- Share with Members of Congress how much federal education research funding goes to universities in their district
- State how education research is relevant to all levels of education – elementary, secondary, and post secondary



How to Prepare

Think about the Meeting from Their Perspective

- Members hear about all of the problems, try to be part of the solution – avoid adding to their to do list.
- Members will most value your work for the practical relevance.
- Members are the stewards of tax payer dollars, make it easy for them to justify why they should spend money on research over all of the other priorities – give them talking points.



How to Prepare

Share with them Your Experiences with the Federal Agencies Funding Education Research (IES, NSF and NICHD)

- Focus on any positive interactions with the federal agencies.
 - Have you served on a review panel?
 - Interactions with a program officer?



How to Prepare

Developing Your Message

- Develop a couple of sentences to capture the key finding of your work.
- Describe how education research improves outcomes, advances science, informs policy.
- Connect research to benefits to students and educators in tangible ways.
- Relate research to Member's interests, district or state, and committee or subcommittee assignments.
- Is your talking point repeatable? Be memorable.
- Mention sources of federal support and federally-funded datasets used in research, training, or evaluation activities.
- Avoid scientific jargon and discussions involving research methodology (unless asked).



How to Prepare

Bring Something to Leave Behind

- Fact sheet summarizing an article (2-4 pages)
- Newspaper article where you were cited as an expert
- An op-ed or letter to the editor
- News release about your research
- Even university swag



What to Say

Meeting Overview

- Thank Members for meeting with you and anything specific that you might know.
- Ask about their education priorities.
- Share examples of interesting research activities and advances, illustrating how your research findings are being applied and improving student education outcomes in the district.
- State your support for federal agencies funding education research.
- Offer to be a resource.



General Guidance for Congressional Meetings

- Listen. Members are accustomed to being the ones doing the impressing. This is our opportunity to learn what they think and how they think.
- Be positive. When you meet with a Member, they want it to be friendly whether or not you disagree on issues.
- Understand that Members take numerous meetings each day, and every group tries to make their case. Recognize Member and staff time constraints and remain flexible.



General Guidance for Congressional Meetings

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Do not be afraid to say you do not know the answer to a question. This can provide a nice opportunity to follow up.
- Being a “sage on the stage” versus a “guide on the side”
- Try not to focus on all of the problems, think about how to be part of the solution.



Support Federal Funding for Education Research

Prioritize funding for federal agencies supporting education research in Fiscal Year 2017.

Requested funding levels for FY 2017:

- Institute for Education Sciences - \$728 million
- National Science Foundation - \$8 billion
- National Institutes of Health - at least \$34.5 billion



Support Federal Funding for Education Research

Status of Appropriations bills

National Science Foundation Education and Human Resources Directorate

FY 2016 - \$880 million

FY 2017 House - \$880 million

FY 2017 Senate - \$880 million

Institute of Education Sciences

FY 2016 - \$618 million

FY 2017 House - \$536 million

FY 2017 Senate - \$612 million

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development

FY 2016 - \$1.34 billion

FY 2017 House - \$1.37 billion

FY 2017 Senate - \$1.4 billion



Resources

All resources are available at [AERA's Advocacy Toolkit](#)

- Handbook for education research advocacy
 - Step-by-step guide to meeting in the district
 - Sample meeting request
 - Meeting script
 - Leave behind materials
 - AERA budget priorities
 - Agency fact sheets
 - Sample thank you note
 - Meeting notes form
 - Sample site visit request
- AERA Highlights



Institute of Education Sciences FY 2017 Proposals (in millions \$)

	FY 2016 (enacted)	FY 17 President Request	FY 17 Senate (passed committee)	FY 17 House (passed committee)
IES Total	618	694	612	536
Research, Development, and Dissemination	195	209	190	154
Statistics	112	125	112	103
Regional Educational Laboratories	54	54	54	54
Research in Special Education	54	54	54	49
Special Education Studies and Evaluation	11	13	11	11
Statewide Data Systems	35	81	35	27
Assessment	157	157	156	137



Following Up

- Send thank you emails.
- Look to see if the Member is hosting any town halls or public events.
- Think about how you can continue this relationship. Consider inviting the Member of Congress or staff to the University for an event or to speak to your class.
- Take a moment to write about your meeting and share any follow up items with me or Christy at govrelations@aera.net.



Q & A





Contact Information

Juliane Baron, Director of Government Relations
202.238.3222 or jbaron@aera.net

Christy Talbot, Program Associate
202.238.3221 or ctalbot@aera.net



Thank You!

