

SCHOOL ACCESS RESOURCE TOOLKIT

NATIONAL EDUCATION RELATIONSHIPS SUBCOMMITTEE



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

CONTENTS

SCHOOL ACCESS	3
What Is School Access?	3
What Is the School Access Law?	3
What Is a Tiered Response?	4
Proven Practices for Building Relationships	4
Best Practices in School Access Issues	5
School Access Legislation in States	6
RESOURCES	8
Strategic Action for Contacting Legislators	8
Face-to-Face Individual Visits With Your Legislator	9
Calling Your Legislator	10
Writing Your Legislator	11
Emailing Your Legislator	12
Contacting the Governor and Executive Branch Officials	12
Media Relations	13
What You Can Do	13
Talking Points—Why Scouting?	14
Quick Reference Guide—Helpful Websites	15
My “School Access Bill” Worksheet	16

WORKING TOGETHER TO GAIN SCHOOL ACCESS!

School access takes many forms. It may be the ability to send home a message with students who are prospective Cub Scouts. It may be the opportunity to present a Scout Talk to prospective Cub Scouts. It may be a matter of requesting the use of a school facility. In the following pages, you will learn what the law says about school access, what a tiered response is, proven practices for building relationships with school personnel, examples of how to respond to school access issues, and information about why and how to get a school access bill passed through your state's legislation process.

Links to the complete texts of the laws are located in the Resources section under **BSA School Access–Related Sites on page 15.**



WHAT IS A TIERED RESPONSE?

A tiered response is a sequenced and measured approach to dealing with a challenge. This kind of response involves understanding the needs of all stakeholders and beginning the relationship not by immediately pulling out the “big guns” but by building a relationship, grounded in mutual understanding and respect, among the stakeholders. The tiered response process offers a sequenced set of actions that attempt to address an access issue at the level closest to the event—typically at the unit level.

In terms of Scouting’s access to schools, the tiered response is applied by handling various school access issues first by unit leaders, then by district volunteers and professional staff, and finally through resources available at the council level.

PROVEN PRACTICES FOR BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Building a working relationship between school personnel and the local Scouting community is the first step in a tiered response. A positive relationship, grounded in shared values and respectful of the role the school staff serves in the organization, is the first thing Scouters need to appreciate and act on. As a complement to the appreciation for schools and school staff, helping school staff and leadership understand what Scouting does for young people is of value as well: Commitment to meeting the needs of youth is shared by both constituencies.

A paradigm shift in how we think about schools is desirable as we consider access issues specifically and our relationship with schools generally. Rather than thinking of schools as service providers for Scouting (i.e., a source of children and a meeting place) it is helpful to consider schools as clients who would gain much from supporting the services Scouting provides. As stated previously, schools and Scouting have much in common and have a shared mission to offer programming that benefits children. In Scouting, we have a specific instructional methodology that serves the needs of children in a way that is different from what schools do. It is far better for schools to think of us as partners in helping them meet their youth development goals than to see us in competition with one another. Additional ideas to improve school relationships can be found in the BSA’s Membership Committee Guide.

PROVEN PRACTICES AT THE UNIT LEVEL

Adopt-a-School

The BSA’s nationwide Adopt-a-School program offers a comprehensive undertaking that connects Scouting packs, troops, and crews with schools in their communities. Scouting participants work, within clearly defined guidelines, with school administrations and offer the volunteer services that most efficiently meet their schools’ needs. Each unit offers its partner school a minimum commitment of one year, building a meaningful relationship and leading to improvement in the school.

For information on the BSA’s Adopt-a-School initiative, visit <https://adoptaschool.scouting.org>.

Parent Teacher Association Support

Reaching out directly to PTA-type organizations to provide volunteers for school fairs and carnivals has been helpful in building relationships between Scouting and school support and advocacy groups such as this one. In numerous cases, generous and freely provided service resulted in PTAs serving as chartered organizations for Cub Scout packs.

Teacher and School Staff Relationships

Scouting is often a mystery to school staff and personnel. Reaching out to these individuals is not only a courtesy to show appreciation for services rendered but also a part of building positive, long-term relationships. Following are a few successful examples of ways relationships have been started and sustained:

- School staff pinewood derby: Cub Scout packs that meet at schools provide teachers and other staff members with pinewood derby kits. Teachers are invited to race their cars in a special heat reserved for school staff members.
- Popcorn: Cub Scout packs that meet at the school budget for gifts of popcorn for teachers to show their support and build connections.
- Teacher expertise: Den leaders reach out to teachers for their expertise as it pertains to Cub Scout and Webelos advancement opportunities. Art teachers and science teachers have knowledge about and passion for their disciplines, so they are usually happy to share what they know with an interested audience.

Organization or Club Day

Many PTAs host a meeting before the start of the school year at which all school-related organizations are offered a forum to showcase their programs to parents and children. Scouting units are a natural fit for an event such as this. If such an event does not exist, pack leadership can take the lead in scheduling such an event and providing Scouting service to support the endeavor.

PROVEN PRACTICES AT THE DISTRICT AND COUNCIL LEVELS

Board and District Relationships

To a great extent, a council's success is grounded in the quality of its executive board and district committee membership. An effective board affects the amount of money that is raised, the quality of the staff leadership that is hired, the membership of the council, and the resources that can be harnessed. School district leadership already shares a variety of characteristics with Scouting leadership. Involving school district administrators and school board members (to include state school boards associations) helps to develop and sustain relationships with Scouting. The use of the BSA's Fretwell Outstanding Educator and North Star Awards provides tools to recognize those in the community who support Scouting's initiatives, and that recognition can be a helpful first step in recruiting for future board membership and volunteer leadership.

For information about the Fretwell Outstanding Educator Award, see:

http://scoutingwire.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/522-05918_EKFretwell_Guide.pdf.

For information about the North Star Award, see:

www.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/North_Star_Award.pdf.

Board of Review Service

The signature youth award of the Boy Scouts of America, the Eagle Scout Award, requires a board of review at the conclusion of the recognition process. Inviting school district leadership to participate in these boards on a consistent basis provides an excellent opportunity to profile the good that Scouting provides for youth and the community.

In one community, Scouting's access to schools was denied for a period, but eventually the administration reversed that decision and resumed its support for Scouting. A principal involved as a board of review participant was highly impressed by an Eagle candidate who had formerly attended her school. She invited the new Eagle Scout to come to her school and talk to all boys in the school about what he had accomplished in Scouting and the adventures he had experienced.

Training

Part of effective communication is providing opportunities for participants in school access circumstances to learn about school policies and about BSA interaction with schools. Providing training at every level—unit, district, and council—is key to minimizing misunderstandings and unintentional misconstructions. Informal communication, including the mentoring of new volunteers, among unit volunteers is very effective. More formal opportunities, sponsored at the district and council level by membership committees and training volunteers, provide important information about state, school board, and school laws and policies. More training means better understanding of the relationships that exist and could exist between schools and the BSA.

BEST PRACTICES IN SCHOOL ACCESS ISSUES

Many local school access issues are, at their core, essentially communications issues. Some tested approaches for building relationships at the unit level—with its ongoing challenges—are presented for adoption and adaptation to local customs in **School Access Challenges: A Tiered Response to Building Relationships**.

SCHOOL ACCESS LEGISLATION IN STATES

The Legislation

Appropriate access to schools is among the most important elements of the BSA's outreach to youth. Currently, two federal statutes govern school access by the BSA. These are: the Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations Act, 36 USC §§30901-30908 (the "Patriotic Act") and the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act, 20 USC 7905 (the "Access Act"), which was part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

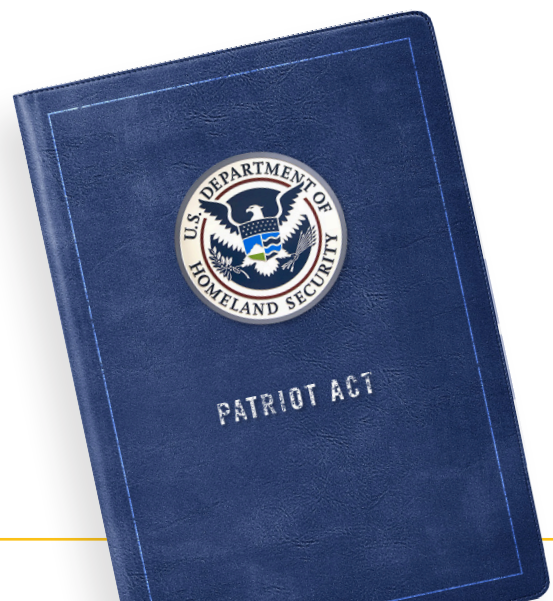
The Patriotic Act establishes the BSA as a patriotic organization domiciled in the District of Columbia. The act specifies the purposes of the BSA, including, "to promote ... the ability of boys to do things for themselves and others ... to teach them patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues. ..."

The Access Act applies to public elementary and secondary schools, local educational agencies, and state educational agencies that receive federal funds made available through the Department of Education. None that provide an opportunity for outside youth or community groups to meet on school premises or in school facilities is permitted to discriminate against or deny equal access and a fair opportunity to meet to any group officially affiliated with the BSA or other patriotic organization.

While these statutes collectively guarantee BSA units the right to meet at schools if that right is given to any other organization, and on the same terms and conditions as are imposed on other organizations, that may not be sufficient to provide school access to BSA units. For instance, BSA units can be denied school access because all non-school organizations are banned. Within a council or a state with multiple school boards, inconsistent school board policies may result in very different school access opportunities, depending on the school district or the county. Inconsistent policies mean that children in some school districts may be deterred from joining the Scouting programs that could benefit them and the communities in which they live.

Recognizing that patchwork access to schools can be a deterrent and disadvantage to children's participation in Scouting, Scouters in various states have taken the initiative to change state law to provide greater access to the BSA as a patriotic organization. These efforts are being supported by the BSA's National Education Relationships Subcommittee. A proposed state law like this is referred to as "patriotic school access law." Each state has a different legal structure addressing education, so each access law will be different. However, the purpose is the same: to direct school boards and other relevant state agencies to provide school access to youth-oriented community organizations like the BSA. An example of one of these state laws, from Virginia, states:

"Local school boards shall ... provide reasonable and appropriate access to school property to youth-oriented, community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America and Girl Scouts of the USA, and their volunteers and staff, to distribute and provide instructional materials in order to encourage participation in such organizations and their activities. Any such access provided during the school day shall not conflict with instructional time. Such access may also include after-school sponsored activities such as 'Back to School' events, where it can be reasonably accommodated."



Important Considerations With Respect to Legislative Efforts

State law changes affect many people and many constituencies and must be undertaken with careful planning and sensitivity to community and state relationships. Scouters interested in pursuing a patriotic school access law should do so only in an effort coordinated with the leaders of councils in the particular state: Council and volunteer relationships with state legislators and agencies are developed over many years and must be engaged with sensitivity; disparate voices must be heard and considered. In addition, educational efforts relating to the benefit of the legislation must be prepared and coordinated. In states with more than one council, the leadership of each affected council should be apprised of the intended effort and given the opportunity to bring their insights and resources to the effort. Moreover, careful consideration by leadership must be given to prospective sponsors of the legislation and who should contact those prospective sponsors.

Strategic collaboration will be the key to success. Part of the approach should be to use Scouting networks (state legislators may have been Scouts or are currently Scouters) and like-minded community organizations (National Eagle Scout Association, Rotary, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, etc.) to build an alliance to support a patriotic school access law. Broad and strong alliances are vital in achieving public policy success.

In conjunction with legislative efforts through their state legislatures, Scouters can pursue school access policies via their respective state's school board associations. If desired, volunteers can use the previous Virginia school access state law¹ as an example of suggested wording for school board access policies.

Steps to Take

If you would like to participate in an effort in your state to provide statewide access to schools through a patriotic school access law, here are the steps you should follow:

- Visit the Education Relationships webpage at <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/education-relationships> to check the status of your state's current school access legislation. If your state has existing law, no further action is

required. If your state doesn't have the law or legislation is currently pending, please continue with the following steps.

- After you talk to the educational relationships point of contact, you'll need to reach out to your council leadership (Scout executive, president, etc.) to discuss your concern and the opportunities to enact legislation. Your council leadership may ask you to provide leadership and coordination to the effort or to participate in a coordinated effort. **Do not undertake an effort on your own.**
- Council leadership considering a state school boards association and/or legislative effort to adopt a patriotic school access law should contact the leadership of other councils in the state to discuss the effort, as well as apprise regional BSA leadership and the educational relationships point of contact of the pending initiative. **School access legislation should be addressed by the region and/or council, not the district team.**
- Leadership of state councils should select a state point of contact and notify all concerned of that selection.
- Regional leadership should also have a point of contact who can track and provide the status of school access legislation to councils within the region.
- Work together, wisely and carefully, to build alliances to support, to provide information about, and to encourage passage of a patriotic school access law.

¹ HB 942 School boards; reasonable access by certain youth groups.



RESOURCES

STRATEGIC ACTION FOR CONTACTING LEGISLATORS

Lawmakers want to hear from their constituents.

Lawmakers also need to hear from others outside of their districts to gauge the widespread concern of an issue. Respectfully remind them that even though you do not live in their district, their actions on issues that affect you make you their constituent also.

Elected officials do not like to deal with controversial issues. If they see a grassroots swell of opposition to a bill, they will try to avoid addressing that issue with a public vote.

GUIDELINE FOR CONTACTING LEGISLATURES REGARDING ISSUES

1. *Contact Your District's Elected Officials (and Find a Sponsor)*

Your voter registration card will show your districts for county, state, and federal offices. For state bills, your local state representative and senator need to be contacted early and often. The purpose of contacting your district's elected official is that they will serve as a sponsor for the bill. If your district elected official is not interested in sponsoring the bill, use previously identified alliance partner(s) and network(s) to secure an appropriate legislative sponsor(s), preferably cross-party and multi-geographical.

2. *Contact Committee Members*

As a bill moves through the process, it is heard by different House and Senate committees. Call your state's bill tracking service, the sponsor's office, or the committee offices to get current information on the next step in the process and hearing dates and times.

3. *Contact Newly Elected Members*

Children and family issues have been around for years, and professional and volunteer Scouters have worked hard to educate, make friends with, and gain support from incumbent members who are sympathetic to Boy Scouts of America issues and who will continue to work with us. It is those newly elected members who need to

hear about the benefits of Scouting more than any other. You can find a list of newly elected members by calling your state clerk's office.

4. *Contact Governor, President, and Speaker*

These three positions are the most powerful in the state because the Senate president and House speaker are not only the leaders of their chambers but also the lead person of their party. They have the power to direct issues that they want promoted or killed. The governor is the one to either sign or veto a bill that has passed both chambers. Governors are sensitive to their constituents as well, though their decisions are not quite as dependent on public sentiment as individual legislators. These leaders do not want to deal with highly controversial issues either. Don't forget to contact the individuals in these three positions when you write or call. They are key to the process and can make or break the passage of a bill with a phone call.

EFFECTIVE METHODS FOR CONTACTING LEGISLATORS:

1. *Face-to-Face Individual Visits*
2. *Telephone Calls*
3. *Handwritten Letters*
4. *Emails*



Reprinted with permission Florida Nurses Association (2009). Legislative Resource Toolkit [Booklet]. Orlando, FL: Florida Nurses Foundation.



FACE-TO-FACE INDIVIDUAL VISITS WITH YOUR LEGISLATOR

GUIDELINES FOR PERSONAL VISITS

1. Plan Ahead – Be Flexible!

Call the member's office to make an appointment. Expect to wait anywhere from a few days to two weeks to see the member in person. When calling for the appointment, tell the scheduler the purpose of the visit—including the title and number of the bill (if you know it)—and the amount of time you think you'll need. Remember, the more time you need, the longer you'll be waiting to get the appointment.

2. Convey Time Sensitivity

If the purpose of your visit is time-sensitive—e.g., the bill is scheduled for a vote within days—politely explain the urgency to the scheduler. If the personal visit cannot be scheduled in time, leave a telephone message or send an email. If the legislator cannot meet with you, ask to meet with a senior member of the legislator's staff—never underestimate the power of the legislator's staff!

3. A Scout Is Friendly – Don't Be Rude or Threatening, EVER

Just like letters and phone messages, being rude or threatening in requesting, or even demanding, a meeting, is a surefire way to be ignored.

4. Arrive on Time

Arrive for your appointment on time, but be patient if the member is not on time, even if the meeting needs to be rescheduled. Try to remember the demands placed on members during session as they work through hundreds of bills!

5. Be Prepared – Prepare Your Presentation

Prepare your presentation to be brief, concise, and accurate. Don't tell the member every detail you may know about the issue; keep it basic—be specific about the bill's benefits to your community. Offer more information if they are interested, but don't insist that they know all there is to know. Also, ensure you know a few things about the legislator prior to visiting them; they may have been in Scouting or are currently a volunteer Scouter.

6. A Scout Is Truthful – Show Interest

Show that you are interested in the member's perspective and, if they disagree, that you respect their right to do so. Offer information to counter their opposing views without becoming argumentative. However, if you don't know the answer, there is no shame in admitting it. Promise to get back with the information, and then be sure to follow through.

7. Understand the Legislative Process – Ask for Assistance or Support

Understand how a bill becomes a law. Just like you would in a letter, request specific assistance or support for your position. If you leave with their commitment, great! If you leave without a commitment, try to find out what additional information they need to make a decision.

8. Thank the Member

Thank the members for their time when you leave their offices, and follow up with a thank-you note. If you received a commitment, thank them for that as well.

9. Follow Up

After the member acts or votes, send a note to (hopefully) thank them for their favorable action. If the member did not act or vote as you had hoped, send a note reminding the member of your interest and seek to keep the lines of communication open for the future.



CALLING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Your goal when calling legislators is to provide the key pieces of information they need: your name, your city and county (it helps to leave your full address, but it is most important to let the office know that you are a constituent), your occupation, the reason for your call (stated in a few words), any bill number or title (if available), and your position on the issue.

Staff assistants answer most calls to a legislator's office. Since others will be trying to reach your legislator as well, you may not get through the first time you try. Call back or try a different time of day if the line is busy.

When your call is answered, ask to speak with the person who handles children and family legislation for the legislator. If that person is not available, leave your message with whoever can speak with you.

Tips for Telephoning Your Legislators

- Call at a reasonable hour.
- Leave a message if the legislator is unavailable. The legislator's secretary will normally answer the phone.
- Know the bill number and title you are calling about. Legislatures consider hundreds of bills each year, and it is necessary to refer to the bill by its number when calling.
- Organize the points you want to cover and be brief. Legislators are very busy and can't afford to spend long periods of time on the telephone.
- Call the state capitol's switchboard if you can't find the direct number of your legislator. Give the switchboard operator the name of the legislator you want to speak with, and you will be connected.

SAMPLE CALL TO LEGISLATOR

“

Hello, this is (INSERT YOUR NAME HERE), and I am a Scouter/Scout staff with (INSERT YOUR COUNCIL AND CITY HERE). I would like to talk to someone about a children, youth, and family issue.

I am calling because I want to let Sen./Rep. (INSERT NAME HERE) know that I am concerned about equal access to public school facilities for patriotic organizations (i.e., Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, etc.).

It is critical the senator/representative (SUPPORT) any legislative action that provides patriotic organizations access to public school facilities because (INSERT REASON HERE—Give one to three very brief reasons, such as “Scouting encourages youth to achieve a deeper appreciation for service to others in their communities,” or “Scouting promotes activities that lead to personal responsibility and high self-esteem.”) Many Scouting youth, Scouters, and Scouting staff share my concern regarding this.

My name, address, phone number, and/or email address are (INSERT HERE). Please make sure that the senator/representative knows that I (SUPPORT) patriotic organizations having access to public school facilities. Thank you for your time.

”





WRITING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Legislators take note of all letters from their constituents, but many say they devote the most attention to letters that are original and thoughtful (not forms or letters that are mass-produced).

It is important to clearly identify your subject matter and viewpoint, perhaps by making a key statement in a single paragraph or using bold or underline for emphasis. Letters provide the opportunity to say more than you might be able to say during a brief telephone call, but you do not want your message to become lost because you are raising too many topics in the letter.

Therefore, please create your own letter using the ideas suggested to you. Letters and other correspondences from a local perspective carry much greater weight with legislators than a standard form letter.

Tips for Writing Your Legislators

- Use their names. Do not send letters addressed to “Senator” or “Representative” from “District XX.”
- Use proper form of address and salutation on the letter and envelope (i.e., The Honorable Jane Doe, or Sen. Jane Doe).
- Clearly identify the issue or the bill you are writing about by its title and bill number to avoid any confusion.
- Make the letter timely.
- Make the letter accurate and sincere. Relate your concern as a personal one when possible, give reasons for your position, and tell how the bill or issue will impact you and others.
- Ask for specific assistance or support of your position.
- Individual letters are preferable. Double-check the letter to make sure it is legible, professional, and well-written.
- Always include your mailing address, telephone number, and email address for a response. Make sure your return address is on the envelope.

- Don’t be rude or threatening—EVER! Threatening letters go directly into the wastebasket.
- After the requested action, a letter to say “thank you” is always appreciated.

SAMPLE LETTER TO LEGISLATOR

Dr. Joe Scouter
1910 Scout Lane
Austin, TX 78739

February 11, 2017

The Honorable William Boyce
P.O. Box 1906
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Rep. Boyce:

As a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America and a registered voter living in your district, I see how important the Scouting program is to our community.

The Boy Scouts of America promotes, through chartered and like-minded organizations, the ability for boys and girls to do things for themselves and others, their training in Scoutcraft, and the development of their patriotism, courage, self-reliance, and kindred virtues. Unfortunately, my fellow volunteers and I are finding it more challenging to gain access to public school facilities to share the benefits of Scouting with school-aged students. This lack of access is contrary to the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act).

I urge you and your colleagues to support legislation that provides patriotic organizations equal access to public school facilities.

Thank you for your help with this important issue. Texas Scouters are working hard to support responsible children, youth, and family legislation.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joe Scouter



EMAILING YOUR LEGISLATOR

Email has changed the way we communicate and in many ways has replaced other forms of communication, such as phone calls or handwritten letters. This technological tool is fast, cheap, and efficient. However, because it is a fast and relatively informal means of communication, many legislators view it as less credible than other methods. If you use email to communicate with your legislator, you should do so in the context of an ongoing relationship in which you use other methods as the foundation of your communication.

To construct an email with impact, follow these steps:

1. *State that you are a constituent in the subject line.*

For example—Subject: Message from a constituent on xyz issue. Most legislators have their staff sort and respond to their email, and this strategy will increase the likelihood that your message is read.

2. *State your request concisely.*

View your message as different from a traditional letter. Email is less formal and much briefer than traditional written communication. Construct your message accordingly—keep it concise and short.

3. *Provide personal examples and local context.*

Use similar principles as those in letter writing but in a more concise format. If you are sending a generic email written by a group of which you are a part, insert personal examples in the message.

4. *Persuade a like-minded friend, family member, or colleague to send an email as well.*

Quantity is critical. Legislators pay attention to issues when they believe that many of their constituents care about an issue. One email is not convincing.

5. *Report your email.*

If the email is initiated by an organization, ask if they want you to report your email. Some groups can monitor responses electronically without your having to report, but most will want you to let them know. If you persuaded a friend, let them know that your friend will be reporting as well. Make sure that your friend follows through.

6. *Follow up.*

Because the impact of email varies widely from legislator to legislator, be sure that you are using other methods to communicate with your legislator. Follow your email with a phone call, handwritten letter, or visit.

7. *Communicate more than once.*

As with all other forms of communication, view your email as part of an ongoing relationship. Keep in touch and tune in to your legislators and their positions on the issue.

Contacting the Governor and Executive Branch Officials

The information provided about contacting a legislator by telephone or letter is applicable to contacting the governor's office or an executive branch official as well. We all are "constituents" of the executive branch. Your message may be about a policy or proposed rule rather than about a vote on proposed legislation, but the process is the same: Identify who you are, your occupation, the subject matter you are calling or writing about, and your opinion in a brief and persuasive manner.

MEDIA RELATIONS

We obtain a lot of our information from the news media—the internet, newspapers, television, magazines, and radio. What the general public knows about something is usually based on what people receive from some combination of those news media. The news media influence the political process directly. How people react to politicians—and how politicians vote on issues—is directly related to what appears in the news media.

Media Interest Helps Scouting Meet Goals By:

- Making sure that our messages are heard by people who influence policy.
- Enhancing the image of Scouting as one of the largest youth development programs in the United States.
- Helping the public become better informed about the individual and community benefits of Scouting.

You are not expected to become a media expert. But with a basic understanding of how the media works and how you can work with the media, you can significantly influence public opinion in your community. The media is inherently interested in children, youth, and family policies. They want to know not just what legislation is being passed but what the new legislation means to people in your local area. Youth and family policies will continue to be a topic of interest for the foreseeable future.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Read and View the News Media

Make a list of all the news media in your area that, in your view, are influential. This will include newspapers, television stations, and radio stations. Monitor the list of media. This means reading the stories that involve children, and youth and family issues, and watching and listening to radio and television news and talk shows when youth and family topics arise.

Call Radio and TV Talk Shows

Talk shows are becoming more and more important in influencing the political debate. National talk shows are certainly important, but so are local talk shows in your area. These shows frequently address important national and local issues such as youth and family programs. Policymakers are greatly influenced

by the debate emanating from these shows. We strongly encourage you to:

- Be aware of the radio and TV talk shows in your area that deal with youth and family issues.
- Listen to these shows when you can.
- Call the talk show when youth and family issues are discussed. Identify yourself as a professional or volunteer Scouter and espouse the benefits of the Scouting program.

Write Letters to the Editor

Every newspaper has a “letters to the editor” section on the editorial page. This page provides an opportunity to express your point of view on stories that appear in the newspaper or on issues of the day. The editors of the newspaper will be especially interested in your reaction to their editorials.

The Boy Scouts of America encourages you to write letters to the editor. Such letters should be short (no more than 350 words) and should state, in the first sentence, what the letter is responding to.

For example, you may say, “In your editorial on Dec. 15, 2017, on ‘City Youth Programs,’ you said ...” or “In your news article, ‘Gov. Powell Encourages Community Based Programs (Page A7, Dec. 14, 2017),’ Gov. Powell said ...” Then, state your reaction to the statement and express your point of view.

We also encourage you to urge other Scouts and/or Scouters to write letters to the editor. The more they appear, the better for our efforts in educating the public about the educational benefits of Scouting.

One Final Point: Local newspapers, even big ones, like the local angle. If you can use local examples of how particular policies will affect youth and family issues in your community, it will increase the chances of your story being published.

TALKING POINTS—WHY SCOUTING?

MISSION OF THE BSA

“... prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.”

AIMS OF SCOUTING

Character Development, Citizenship Training, Personal Fitness, Leadership

SCOUT LAW

Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean, Reverent

SCOUTING PROGRAMS

- Cub Scouting (boys/girls ages 6-10): Cub Scouting is a yearlong program offering fun and challenging activities that aim to promote character development and personal fitness.
- Boy Scouting (boys/girls ages 11-17 in 2019): Boy Scouting is an outdoor program designed to develop character, citizenship, and fitness.
- Venturing (young men and women ages 14-20): The purpose of Venturing is to provide young people the experiences to help them mature and become responsible and caring adults.
- Exploring/Learning For Life (young men and women ages 14-20): Exploring serves young people by providing hands-on experiences in career fields.
- Learning for Life (grades 1-12) is a nationally recognized coeducational in-school program. The program provides educators with lesson plans and resources to teach students positive personal values, ethical decision-making, employability skills, and healthy living skills while building confidence, motivation, and self-esteem.

BENEFITS OF SCOUTING

- Scouting belongs to the World Organization of the Scout Movement, which advocates “fun with a purpose, directed toward helping boys and girls become happy, healthy, useful citizens.”
- Scouting complements the school and the family, filling needs not met by either. Scouting develops self-knowledge and the desire to explore, to discover, and to want to know. Scouts discover the world beyond the classroom, tapping the skills of others to learn and to become well-rounded people. Scouting provides opportunities to add value and application to academic experiences that are part of the school’s curriculum.
- Scouting is open to all without distinction of origin, race, class, or creed, provided that the person voluntarily adheres to Scouting’s principles. Scouting will provide experiences that will help prepare our youth for their future.
- Scouting provides youth with an opportunity to try new things, provide service to others, build self-confidence, and reinforce ethical standards.
- Scouting benefits the individual for their lifetime.



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE—HELPFUL WEBSITES

LEGISLATIVE/GOVERNMENT SITES

- CONGRESS.GOV—State Legislature Websites:
www.congress.gov/state-legislature-websites
- Common Cause—Find Your Representatives:
www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/
- StateScape—Legislative and Regulatory Tracking:
statescape.com
- USA.gov—How to Contact Your Elected Officials:
www.usa.gov/elected-officials
- National School Boards Association:
www.nsba.org/services/state-association-services

BSA SCHOOL ACCESS—RELATED SITES

- Title 36, United States Code, “Patriotic and National Observances, Ceremonies, and Organizations”:
www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ225/pdf/PLAW-105publ225.pdf
- No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, “Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act”:
www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/ocr/boyscouts.html
- BSA Education Relationships webpage, with schools access list, sample legislation language, materials, and points of contact:
<https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/new-unit-development/education-relationships>

MEDIA WEBSITES

- ABC News: www.abcnews.com
- CBS News: www.cbsnews.com
- CNN: www.cnn.com
- C-SPAN: www.c-span.org
- FOX News: www.foxnews.com
- NBC News: www.nbcnews.com
- NPR: www.npr.org



MY “SCHOOL ACCESS BILL” WORKSHEET

IMPORTANT DATES

Session Begins _____

Session Ends _____

BILL TO TRACK

Bill Number _____

Bill Title _____

MY LEGISLATORS

State Senator Name _____

Capitol Office Phone _____

Local Office _____

State Representative Name _____

Capitol Office Phone _____

Local Office _____

COMMITTEES

My Senator's
Committees _____

My Representative's
Committees _____

OTHER IMPORTANT CONTACTS

State Legislature Help Desk Phone _____

Clerk's Office Phone _____

State Bill Tracking Service Phone _____

Speaker of the House Name _____

Phone _____

Senate President Name _____

Phone _____

Secretary of the Senate Name _____

Phone _____

Governor's Office Name _____

Phone _____