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**Legislative 101**

**ERNESTINE MONDRAGON  
POLICY MATTERS**

**ADAMS 12 FIVE STAR SCHOOLS  
NOVEMBER 18, 2016**

# Policy and Legislation

- Colorado Legislature is in session from Jan – May
- There are 100 legislators; 35 Senators and 65 Representatives
- Close to 500 bills are introduced each year
- Each Legislator can introduce 5 bills
- To pass a bill requires 33, 18 & 1



# Role of the Joint Budget Committee



In Colorado, the Governor initiates a budget proposal delivered on November 1. Colorado, has a strong legislative budget process. The General Assembly's permanent fiscal & budget review agency, the Joint Budget Committee (JBC), writes the annual appropriations bill - called the Long Bill - for the operation of the state government. The JBC also oversees the school finance act and makes the final decision on how much the Legislature will spend on K-12 education each year.

The JBC has 6 members, and this year the committee is split 3-3.

*Statutes charge the Joint Budget Committee with analyzing the management, operations, programs, and fiscal needs of the departments of state government. The state Constitution requires a balanced budget. The Committee holds hearings and reviews the executive budget requests for each state agency & institution.*

# Role of a Legislative Consultant



- There are 178 school districts in the state
- CASE, CASB & CEA are the membership organizations representing schools & teachers
- Each year, over 100 bills are introduced that impact school districts
- The School Finance Act is the most significant bill of the session
- In the Gov's budget request, K-12 education represents 36% of General Fund spending (the largest of any Department)
- The stakes are high for school districts

# Communicating with Elected Officials



- **Know your audience**
- **Where does the legislator/congressional member come from – rural or urban?**
- **What is his or her profession?**
- **Personal issue areas and style – direct or soft approach**
- **Examine all costs**
- **Number of constituents impacted**

# Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!



**Why is this so important?**

- **Key to success in the political arena**
- **Trust**
- **Education of elected officials & networking**
- **Majority party rules the chambers & committee assignments**

# Cultivating Personal Relationships



[dreamstime.com](http://dreamstime.com)

- Do not only communicate when you need something
- Take time outside of work to build the relationship
- Ask how you can help the member
- Call/email your legislator
- Attend town hall meetings
- Be sure to say THANK YOU!
- Personal hand written thank you notes go a long way.

# Things to Remember



## **When meeting with an elected official:**

- ◆ Be courteous
- ◆ Be on time
- ◆ Be concise
- ◆ Distill information into layman's terms
- ◆ Use humor
- ◆ Pay attention to your audience
- ◆ Do your best to answer all of their questions
- ◆ If you don't know, say you don't know
- ◆ Know the opposing argument



# Important Calendar Events



- **JBC staff briefings & Department hearings for CDE are scheduled for December 7<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup>**
- **December 20 Revenue Forecast**
- **Legislative Session begins on January 11, 2017**
- **March 20 Revenue Forecast**

# Thank You!

