

# Who Affects Policy in Education?

Use this handout as a background or meeting material for community members who are looking to better understand the governing structures that support their schools.

## U.S. Administration

- **Who:** The U.S. Department of Education, Congress
- **Access Point:** The [U.S. Department of Education](#) is responsible for the correct implementation of ESSA. You can contact the Department at (800) 872-5327 (multiple languages) or by asking a question at [answers.ed.gov](#). You can also write to, visit, or call your representatives to express your opinion about new legislation. Find their contact information at [house.gov/representatives](#) and [senate.gov](#).

## State Administration

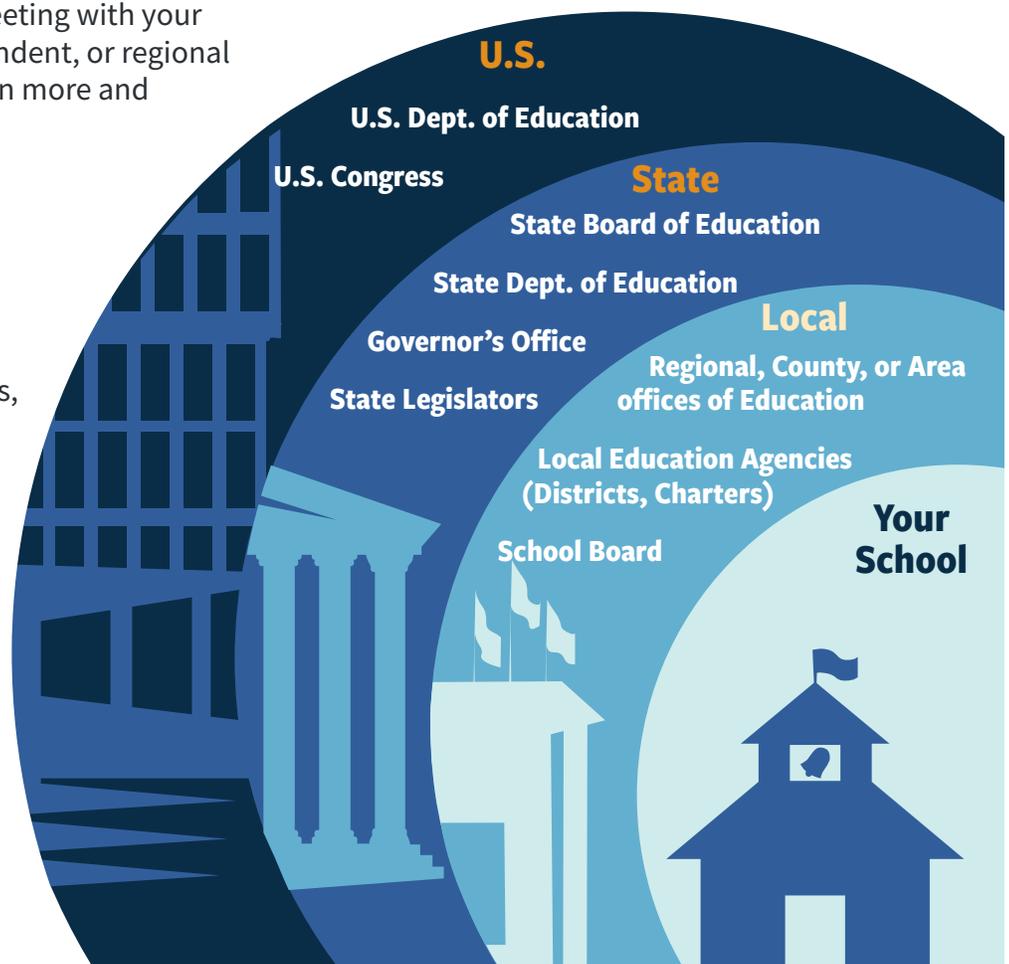
- **Who:** State Department of Education, Office of Public Instruction, Board of Education, Governor's office, and state legislators (state Senate and House of Representatives).
- **Access Point:** Call, write, or visit your state representatives to learn more and express your opinion. Attend town halls, open meetings, and listening sessions hosted by state leaders.

## Local Administration

- **Who:** Regional, county, or area offices of education → Local education Agencies (e.g. districts) → Schools
- **Access Point:** Request a meeting with your principal, district superintendent, or regional office representative to learn more and express your opinion.

## Charter Schools, Networks, and "Authorizers"

- **Who:** Charter school leaders, national charter networks, Charter Management Organizations (CMOs), and state charter authorizers
- **Access Point:** Get in touch with the principal or leadership team at the charter school via email, on the phone, or in-person, or contact an authorizer (found on your state agency website) or national office.



# Education Governance: Who Affects Policy in Education?

## Advocates, Professional Associations, and Business Leaders

- **Who:** State and local research, nonprofit (e.g. community-based or civil-rights organizations), and/or representative associations (e.g. PTA or teachers' union).
- **Access Point:** Advocates are often more involved in policy than you might expect, particularly in research and evaluation of local success and providing recommendations to policy leaders. You can inform these efforts by setting up meetings with organization leaders to learn more about what they do, share your stories, and push for action.

### Check out these resources for more:

Public Impact's [building family and community demand for dramatic change in schools and resources](#) from The National Center for Family and Community Connections with Schools at [sedl.org](#)

NNPS' [School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action](#)

## Alternative Education Leadership

- **Who:** District leaders, for-profit companies, contractors, or non-profit public health centers that run alternative education programs for struggling students (such as those who have been expelled).
- **Access Point:** Start by meeting with the school's principal or leadership team. State and district leaders are most often in charge of contracts with alternative education leaders and can impact decisions about which schools are available to students and what services can be expected at each school.

## Philanthropy and Grant-Making Organizations

- **Who:** State and local foundations
- **Access Point:** Community organizations are often funded by philanthropic organizations. Working with philanthropic leaders to improve outcomes, consolidate or collaborate with other local grantees, and better align out-of-school services with on-site services in schools can be an effective way to build up community advocacy and have an impact on education.



Check out our [Template: Letter to Decision-Makers](#) for what to say or write when you get in touch!

1. What is the issue/question that you want to talk more about?
2. What level of governance will help to solve your issue/question?
3. Who is one person or office that you will contact to help you with this issue/question? How will you contact them? Is there someone who can help you, like a peer organizer, or other trusted ally?



**(Organizers!** Make sure to provide contact information for local advocates, your local school board or district office, etc.)