

# MPP LOBBY/MEETING KIT



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# PART A

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

### INTRODUCTION

Every great policy change starts with a conversation. *You* have the opportunity to bring your voice, experiences, and the needs of your school community directly to the people who shape Ontario’s laws and budgets. Your story – and the stories of the students you serve – can help inspire action and create real change.

This kit will guide you through the process of how to meet and have meaningful conversations with members of provincial parliament (MPPs). This kit will help you:

- Schedule and prepare to meet with your MPP.
- Identify the key messages that matter most to you.
- Understand how government decisions impact your school or community.
- Guide you in making specific requests (“asks”).

As you review these materials, please remember that you can always contact the Government Relations and Public Affairs (GRPA) department at OECTA Provincial Office for further assistance. Additional information about GRPA is included in a later section.

### WHAT IS LOBBYING?

Lobbying is the process of communicating with elected officials – through letters, conversations, meetings, or other engagement – to build relationships, express concerns, or advocate for change. As Catholic teachers, we lobby to advocate for our students, fellow teachers, and Ontario’s publicly funded education system, as well as to fight for a better Ontario for our communities and for all Ontarians. In a democratic society, lobbying is a powerful tool for civic engagement.

Formal lobbying often includes specific policy or legislative requests. Meetings with MPPs also provide opportunities to highlight the positive work happening in our publicly funded Catholic schools.

While there are many ways to engage in the lobbying process, one of the most important and impactful is face-to-face meetings.

# PART A

## WHO DO WE LOBBY?

We lobby MPPs who represent ridings across Ontario. These MPPs belong to political parties (Progressive Conservative, NDP, Liberal, Green, etc.) or who may sit at Queen’s Park as an independent.

Local units should aim to establish and maintain relationships with all local MPPs, government and opposition parties alike – or at minimum, open a line of communication with their constituency office.

It is important to remember that advocacy is not just about demanding change – it is also about building relationships. Strong relationships allow for timely and meaningful conversations on key issues, legislative developments, and community concerns. A good relationship makes it easier to pick up the phone or send an email when it matters most.

## WHY DO WE LOBBY?

We lobby government MPPs – particularly those in the governing Progressive Conservative party – to influence government decision-making. We also engage opposition MPPs, who can amplify our concerns and apply political pressure.

By meeting with local MPPs, we can present clear priorities, share evidence-based insights, and identify policy solutions that will benefit students, Catholic teachers, and our wider communities. Our goal is to contribute constructively to the legislative process and to ensure that Catholic teachers’ perspectives are represented at Queen’s Park.

# PART B

## MEETING YOUR LOCAL MPP

### GETTING A MEETING

#### ▶ **First Meeting or Ongoing Relationship?**

If this is your first meeting, focus on building a rapport and relationship.

#### ▶ **Finding Your MPP**

Search online ([Legislative Assembly of Ontario website](#)) to find your MPP and their contact details.

#### ▶ **Requesting a Meeting**

Email or call your MPP's constituency office directly. If you do not hear back within three business days, follow up with a phone call. Fridays are typically "constituency days" for MPPs. See the [Parliamentary Calendar](#) for constituency weeks and check their constituency website for their office hours.

#### ▶ **Scheduling**

Be polite and respectful when speaking with constituency office staff. They often manage the MPP's calendar and are important allies. Ask how long the meeting will be and confirm logistics.

#### ▶ **Persistence Pays Off**

You may need to follow up more than once. Do not be discouraged – stay professional and persistent.

*Tip: for your first meeting, consider attending with another union or community group that already has a relationship with the MPP. You can follow up with a solo meeting later.*

### PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

▶ Before your first meeting, research the MPP's party affiliation, public statements, and background. Identify potential shared values or experiences (e.g., attended Catholic school).

▶ Consider bringing a colleague and establish roles before the meeting:

- **Lead / Timekeeper** – who will direct the meeting and keep it on track (meetings typically last only 30 minutes)?
- **Spokesperson** – who will be doing most of the talking?
- **Notetaker** – someone who can take notes while the others speak. Let the MPP know beforehand that you will be taking notes.
- **Watching the MPP's Reactions** – designate someone to watch the MPP's reactions and non-verbal cues (i.e.: body language, tone, etc.).
- **Photographer** – to request and take a photo (with permission).

# PART B

- ▶ **Clarify the purpose of the meeting:** to introduce yourself, those with you, and your issue(s).
- ▶ **Limit your agenda** to two or three key issues.
- ▶ **Make notes in advance**, craft and highlight **key talking points**, and **do your research** and review any relevant news, documents, or other information pertinent to your subject, so you are informed and prepared to answer potential questions.
- ▶ **Anticipate possible objections** and prepare respectful counterpoints.
- ▶ **Share a personal or local story** to make an emotional connection. Do not mention names or other identifying information in your story.
- ▶ **Bring OECTA publications** and handouts to leave behind.

*Tips: whether it is your first or tenth meeting, your goal is always relationship-building. Open, honest dialogue fosters long-term advocacy success.*

*Do not forget to craft key talking points and to bring them with you to the meeting.*

## DURING THE MEETING

- ▶ **Be respectful and professional** when introducing yourself and your guest(s).
- ▶ Ask about the role of any staff member in the meeting: are they the MPP's Chief of Staff, Legislative Assistant, or Constituency Assistant?
- ▶ **Be direct** – state the meeting's purpose clearly and succinctly.
- ▶ Politicians often like to talk. Politely guide the conversation with lines like: "I know your time is valuable, and I want to ensure we get to the key reason I'm here..."
- ▶ **Be an active listener** – observe both what the MPP is saying and their body language. You will not know what argument will make the most impact unless you find out what their concerns are.
- ▶ **Share personal or local stories** to illustrate your concerns – without naming individuals or providing identifying information (see the storytelling tips in this package). Talk to them like you would a neighbour.
- ▶ **Keep your stories focused.** Avoid overwhelming with too many details.
- ▶ **Stick to your top two or three issues**, using the provided talking points and local examples.
- ▶ **Speak to solutions, not just problems.** Be sure to correct factually wrong information, but avoid confrontation or argument.
- ▶ **Leave time for the MPP to ask questions.**
- ▶ **Speak clearly**, using plain language. Avoid education jargon and acronyms.
- ▶ **Be explicit about your "ask"** and explain how you will follow up.

*Do not forget to take notes – or bring someone with you to take notes. It is vital that any commitments are recorded.*

# PART B

## *What to Ask Your MPP Depends on Their Role:*

- ▶ **Cabinet Minister:** ask them to raise the issue at Cabinet.
- ▶ **Governing Party MPP:** ask them to bring it up in caucus.
- ▶ **Opposition/Independent MPP:** ask them to raise it during Question Period or with the media.

## CONCLUDING THE MEETING

- ▶ **Reiterate your main messages and key ask(s).** Leave a fact sheet with them on the issues you discussed (if available).
- ▶ **Repeat back any commitments** they have made to you and confirm how they will take action.
- ▶ **Offer to follow up** with more information, if needed or requested.
- ▶ **Thank the MPP for their time.** Ask for a follow-up meeting or check-in.
- ▶ Invite them to attend a school or community event.
- ▶ **Take a photo** (with permission) and post it to your local OECTA unit social media channels. Tag OECTA Provincial on:
  - **Twitter/X** – [@OECTAProv](#)
  - **Instagram** – [@Catholic\\_Teachers](#)
  - **Facebook** – [@OECTA](#)
  - **Bluesky** – [@CatholicTeachers](#)

*Tip: political staff are often present and play a crucial role. They may become your main point of contact for future communications. Be sure they have your contact info – leave a business card if available.*

# PART C

## FOLLOW-UP

- ▶ Complete the [OECTA MPP Meeting Report Form](#) and send it to GRPA staff ([GovernmentRelations@catholicteachers.ca](mailto:GovernmentRelations@catholicteachers.ca)). We want to hear from you!
- ▶ Send a thank-you note or email to the MPP within a day of the meeting. Reference key discussion points and any agreed actions.
- ▶ Debrief with your local executive, political action committee, and collective bargaining committee/team.
- ▶ File your notes for future reference.
- ▶ Monitor local media for related articles or developments and share with GRPA staff when appropriate.

### WHEN MEETINGS ARE DIFFICULT

Disagreements may arise. Stay focused and respectful. Listen carefully, note objections, and reflect afterward. These experiences can offer insight into the MPP's priorities or their party's stance.

### IF YOU CANNOT GET A MEETING

If repeated efforts to secure a meeting are unsuccessful, contact the GRPA department for support.

# PART D

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- ▶ [Talking Points and Key Asks \(Three Issues\)](#)
- ▶ Takeaway Handouts for MPPs ([Key Issues](#) and [Bill 33](#))
- ▶ [Storytelling Framework](#)
- ▶ [About OECTA](#)
- ▶ Thank-you [Email](#) and [Letter](#) Template
- ▶ [About Bill 33](#)
- ▶ [MPP Reporting Form](#)

# PART E

## ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (GRPA) DEPARTMENT

The GRPA department at OECTA Provincial Office is here to support you every step of the way. Contact us anytime for help with planning, messaging, follow-up, or strategy.

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