



As education activists, we should urge our state lawmakers to remain committed to education reforms that will provide our kids what they need to succeed in school and life. Here are some talking points you can use in support of education reform.

However, the most powerful point you can make is to **share your personal story**. Tell your legislators about what's happening with your schools and why we need to pass bold reforms.

Message points in support of education reform

- We're facing the worst budget shortfall in our state's history. The impact will be felt by all of us, and especially our children.
- Although we're facing great challenge, this is an opportunity to take a step back, to look at the big picture, and ask how we can improve our schools.
- This is an opportune time to pass bold education reforms so, when the economy recovers, we will know how to invest every new dollar we can in our schools to increase student achievement.
- The time is now for education reform. Our kids can't wait until this economic crisis is over. They deserve an education system that gets them ready for life. This means every child should graduate from high school ready for college, career or technical education, apprenticeship or work.
- We need bold education reforms that will:
 - **Prepare students for college, work and life:** A high school diploma should mean students are ready to pursue their dreams after high school. We should redefine basic education to include more rigorous high school graduation requirements so kids will take more math, science and art courses in order to learn the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life. By including stronger graduation requirements in basic education, the state would be required to pay for a longer school day and other needed investments.
 - **Prepare every child for kindergarten:** Early learning can change the trajectory of a child's life. The definition of basic education should include early learning for preschool children at risk of not meeting state learning standards. Investing in early learning may be the single best investment we can make in improving overall academic achievement.
 - **Ensure every child has an excellent teacher in the classroom:** To encourage more people, especially diverse candidates, to consider the teaching profession, we should create a new compensation system for the next generation of teachers. We should pay teachers based on their skills and responsibilities in the classroom instead of requiring them to earn master's degrees and PhDs simply to earn a professional level salary.
 - **Make school budgets more transparent:** Parents, educators and policymakers should be able to understand how budgeting decisions can impact student achievement. Instead of complex funding formulas, schools should be funded using a new "model schools" approach based on actual class sizes, teachers, counselors, librarians, etc.
 - **Increase flexibility as well as accountability:** School leaders should have more budgeting flexibility to address the needs of their students. The state should also have the ability to go into chronically failing school districts to provide direction and resources to help turn them around.