

## Mentor a Decision Maker

The Mentor a Decision Maker program is a strategy to help PTA members become effective advocates for their school districts. The goal of the program is to help each member develop a meaningful relationship with one of the decision makers who represents your school district. Below are steps for implementing the Mentor a Decision Maker program in your school district:

1. **Select a decision maker to mentor.** On a Council level, each PTA selects a decision maker. The president or advocacy chair asks members or local units to volunteer to “adopt” one of the decision makers who represents the school district. In this document, “decision makers” includes: school board trustees, state representatives and senators, members of the State Board of Education, members of Congress, and any other decision maker who impacts school districts. A member assumes responsibility for choosing only one decision maker, so that the advocacy responsibility is not overly burdensome.
2. **Initiate a relationship with the chosen decision maker:**
  - a. Meet with the chosen decision maker to get to know one another, without discussing too many issues on education;
  - b. Provide the decision maker and their staff with basic facts about your school district, preferably in written format which their staff can retain for future reference; and,
  - c. Send a short thank you note, offering to serve as a resource to the decision maker and their staff on education.
3. **Build a relationship with the decision maker:**
  - a. Invite the decision maker to back-to-school events; meetings and other events; allow the decision maker to address the audience;
  - b. Meet regularly with the decision maker to discuss how various laws are affecting your school and,
  - c. Share with the chosen decision maker Texas PTA’s legislative priorities when it is published and discuss additional legislative issues that your district may have identified.
4. **Share contact information with the chosen decision maker.** So that the decision maker can contact their member liaison for guidance on the local impact of pending legislation.
5. **Communicate with the chosen decision maker on a timely basis.** Before the decision maker votes on pending legislation/rules, the member responsible for that decision maker should make contact via phone or email to explain the impact legislation/rules would have on the school district and to request that the chosen decision maker vote for/against the legislation, accordingly.
6. **Recognize and thank the chosen decision maker.** Periodically, members should recognize and thank their chosen decision maker with a personal letter, in their PTA newsletter or Facebook page, or a small reception for the work they have done on behalf of children in the district.

