**DEVELOPING STRATEGIC MESSAGES IN YOUR DISTRICT**

## **RESEARCH PHASE: Understanding Your District’s Current Landscape**

* How is my school district currently funding environmental literacy initiatives?
* Who are the key decision-makers I should connect with to understand their vision?
* What is the timeline for developing my school district’s budget, and where can I provide input?
* What is my school board’s regular meeting schedule?
* What is the process for getting on a school board meeting agenda? (notice periods, prerequisites)

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| **Identifying Local Leaders and Core Partners** |
| School Board Members | Superintendent and District Leaders | County/Local Leaders | Other Decision-Makers |
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## **STRATEGIC OUTREACH PLANNING**

Identify one local leader strategically positioned to help you advance environmental literacy funding. Consider someone you know personally, have met at an event, or who has a track record of supporting environmental education. Review the questions below as you begin crafting your key messages and a timeline for engagement.

### **Building Relationships**

* What is your current relationship status with this leader?
* What can you do to initiate, cultivate, or deepen the relationship?
* Who in your community could help broker a new relationship?

### **Creating Relevant Connections**

* How will you connect your ask to the leader’s values and interests?
* What compelling data points will reinforce your message?
* What stories can you share that demonstrate impact?
* What opportunities exist to deepen this leader’s connection to environmental literacy? (program visits, introductions to influential partners)
* Who else in the district is working on this issue and could support your outreach?

### **Defining Your Request**

* What specifically are you seeking to change or promote related to funding?
* How can you validate this need with other school district leaders?
* When is the optimal time to begin these conversations in relation to the budget process?

## **CRAFTING YOUR MESSAGE**

### **Key Elements for Effective Communication**

 You’ll want to construct a clear, tight “ask” and bring it to life with local, personalized anecdotes.

* **Community Issue**: What environmental literacy challenge are you addressing?
* **Urgency**: Why must action be taken now?
* **Impact**: Who benefits from environmental literacy initiatives?
* **Solution**: How does environmental education address the identified issue?
* **Value Proposition**: Why is your approach cost-effective or valuable?
* **Evidence**: What local stories or statistics strengthen your case?
* **Action Plan**: Which district leaders are essential to implementing your solution?

### **Format Selection**

Choose the most appropriate format for your context:

* Verbal pitch
* Introductory email
* One-page summary
* Op-ed article
* Presentation materials