

1. Introduce yourself and your family and where you live.

My name is []. I'm from Marshfield and I live in your district. I'm the parent of a teen with significant disabilities including [....]. Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today so I can share some of my ideas about our next state budget.

2. Briefly explain the issue or problem that concerns you.

My son is one of the almost 15% of students throughout Wisconsin who receive and depend on special education programming at his public school. Currently, the state of WI covers less than 30% of special education costs so local school districts do not have enough money to provide the services that our children need to learn. From talking to other parents, I understand that there are big differences in the special education services students receive depending on where they go to school – that is just not right. All students should have access to the special ed services they need, regardless of where they live.

3. Share a personal story or experience about how the issue or problem is affecting your life.

My son has qualified for special ed services since he was in kindergarten and this has been his lifeline to learning how to read and being part of his classes. Our school district, like so many, struggle to pay for the extra staffing and other supports he needs to make academic progress and thrive as a young man. Without enough staffing and the extra help, I worry he won't be able to reach his goal of attending technical college and having the career he dreams about. Every year, we need to advocate for the services that are part of his IEP (Individual Education Program) because our district can't afford to cover these costs.

4. Explain what you think needs to be done to fix this issue or problem (*this is your "Ask"*).

As you consider funding priorities for our next state budget in early 2025, it is critically important that our state fully funds special education. This will make a huge difference in my son's life and in the lives of so many students in our state.

5. Ask if the legislator can support your issue. This investment in our schools and specifically in covering special education costs will allow local districts to afford better services and programming for ALL students. Can you support this critical investment in our kids and their future?

6. Thank them for their time and share contact information.

I appreciate you taking the time to meet with me. Can I give you my email and telephone number so you can get in touch with me? I'd be interested in following up in a few weeks. If you have questions, Family Voices can also follow up with you to answer your questions.