

A Lesson Plan: Integrating Business Classroom Curriculum with Politics



Robin M. Albrecht

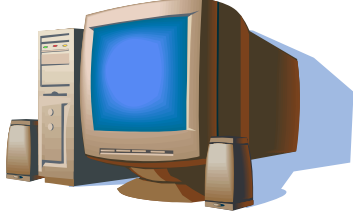
Business and Information Technology

Osborn High School

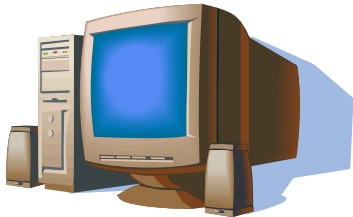
CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATOR LETTER ASSIGNMENT

Create an original letterhead using a table and a graphic. Make it look professional. It will bear your name as student and the Osbourn High School address. Size down your first column to fit the graphic. Remove the lines after you are finished creating it. (You may leave the bottom border if you desire.)

Example: *(before)*

| | |
|---|--|
|  | Osbourn High School ATTN:Robin Albrecht, Business and Information Technology 9005 Tudor Lane Manassas, VA 20110 |
|---|--|

(after lines are removed and bottom border is changed)



**Osbourn High School
ATTN: Robin Albrecht, -- Business and
Information Technology
9005 Tudor Lane
Manassas, VA 20110**

Letter

Write a letter to your Legislator. (See attached for the address.) Start with the dateline a triple space below your letterhead, four returns, the address of the Legislator, two returns, the salutation (Don't forget to use a colon!), and at least three paragraphs. Explain that you are writing because you are concerned about funding for different aspects of public education. (See attached sheet for factual information.) Explain the importance of meeting SOL's, No Child Left Behind as well as Yearly Adequate Progress, however, the skills learned with the Career and Technical Programs are critical. Remind them that public education is critical to our future. Be sure to use an appropriate closing. After you print, sign your name in the space provided with a black pen.

Envelope

Prepare an envelope. Be sure to refer to the USPS mail guidelines (<http://new.usps.com/cgi-bin/uspsbv/scripts/content.jsp?B=mailing101&D=17509>) for the proper addressing of the envelope (what size font, etc. READ THIS!). Use the same computer graphic you used on your letterhead with your return address and enter the barcode below the mailing address. Use the information at the top of this page for your return address.

Note

Proofread carefully and turn in the letter folded appropriately and placed in the envelope. Do not seal the envelope. When these are handed back, you may revise/reprint the letter and mail them. If a response is received before the end of school, you will get bonus points.

No Child Left Behind/Yearly Adequate Progress

STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability

No Child Left Behind is designed to change the culture of America's schools by closing the achievement gap, offering more flexibility, giving parents more options, and teaching students based on what works.

Under the act's accountability provisions, states must describe how they will close the achievement gap and make sure all students, including those who are disadvantaged, achieve academic proficiency. They must produce annual state and school district report cards that inform parents and communities about state and school progress. Schools that do not make progress must provide supplemental services, such as free tutoring or after-school assistance; take corrective actions; and, if still not making adequate yearly progress after five years, make dramatic changes to the way the school is run.

PROVEN METHODS

Proven Methods

No Child Left Behind puts special emphasis on determining what educational programs and practices have been proven effective through rigorous scientific research. Federal funding is targeted to support these programs and teaching methods that work to improve student learning and achievement.

Reading programs are an example. *No Child Left Behind* supports scientifically based reading instruction programs in the early grades under the new Reading First program and in preschool under the new Early Reading First program. Funds are available to help teachers strengthen current skills and gain new ones in effective reading instructional techniques.

CHOICES FOR PARENTS

Choices for Parents

"...There is no more powerful advocate for children than a parent armed with information and options."

--U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige

The *No Child Left Behind Act* provides new education options for many families. This federal law allows parents to choose other public schools or take advantage of free tutoring if their child attends a school that needs improvement or is unsafe. The law also supports the growth of more independent charter schools,

funds some services for children in private schools, and provides certain protections for home schooling parents. Finally, it requires that states and local school districts provide information to help parents make informed educational choices for their child.

Yearly Adequate Progress

Holding schools accountable for the performance of all students is a cornerstone of the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act*. Under the new law, this accountability is based on whether or not schools, districts and states are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) towards the goal of bringing 100% of their students at least to academic proficiency by the end of the 2013-14 school year.

Progress in reading/language arts and in mathematics must be shown for all student subgroups, including economically disadvantaged students, limited English proficiency students, students with disabilities, and students in major racial and ethnic groups. Performance on reading and math assessments is the main indicator of whether AYP is being met, but graduation rates and at least one additional indicator for elementary schools (decided on by the state) also must be included.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS AND SENATE BILL 1045

Contact information:

| | |
|---|---|
| Senate ATTN: Senator Charles J. Colgan PO Box 396 Richmond, VA 23218 | House of Delegates ATTN: Delegate Harry J. Parrish PO Box 406 Richmond, VA 23218 |
|---|---|

Career and Technical Education Resource Center -

Add funding of \$0.4 million General Fund in the second year for the Career and Technical Education Resource Center. The Center provides vocational curriculum and resource instructional materials free of charge to all local school divisions in the Commonwealth. The state funding replaces federal funding that is no longer available for the continued operation of the Center.

Sponsors: Delegate Robert Tata, Virginia Beach

Career and Technical Education Industry Certification and Licensure Incentive Fund -

Funding of \$500,000 General Fund to establish an incentive fund for school divisions to seek prorated reimbursement, based on the composite index, for expenditures that paid for the cost of industry certifications and state licensure examinations taken by students and teachers that qualify for verified graduation credit or program approval. (Think of this like an AP test.)

Sponsors: Senator Frank Wagner, Virginia Beach
Delegate Paul Councill, Franklin

Career and Technical Education Equipment -

Provide \$1.3 million General Fund in the second year for school divisions to purchase secondary vocational-technical equipment. Action will increase the current base allocation from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for every school division, with the additional funding distributed on the basis of enrollment in career and technical courses. Amendment raises total state funding from \$0.7 million to \$2.0 million to help public school Career and Technical Education programs keep pace with the equipment changes in the modern workplace. (Things that this would include would be computers with a larger capability, software, tablet PC's, PDA's, digital cameras, and updated technology across the board.)

Sponsors: Senate Finance Committee: Senator Thomas Norment, Williamsburg
Senator Kenneth Stolle, Virginia Beach
House Appropriations: Delegate Phillip Hamilton, Newport News

<http://legis.state.va.us/>

Legislative Letter Revisions – 1st rough draft

- ☞ Add date line if you do not have one.
- ☞ Add inside address if you do not have one.
- ☞ Re-check spacing.
- ☞ Decide on the punctuation. Open or closed? Pick one!
- ☞ Salutation: Dear Senator Colgan
- ☞ Revisit the closing. Use a proper/appropriate one and then do the correct spacing.
- ☞ Try to remember, your thoughts need to make sense and flow with each other. We all might not be the best writers, but we need to make sense!

1st paragraph:

- ☞ Name
- ☞ Year in school
- ☞ Name of school
- ☞ Location of school
- ☞ Courses that you have taken that relate to the legislation: Business, Family and Consumer Science, Drafting, Wood Tech, Cosmetology, etc.

2nd paragraph:

- ☞ Express concern about funding.
- ☞ How does it potentially impact you? Give an example.
- ☞ Select one of the proposed pieces of legislation. Identify it and explain why it is important to support this.

3rd paragraph:

- ☞ Express your understanding of No Child Left Behind, APY, and SOL. However, look at the entire picture and how it impacts you and your education.

4th paragraph:

- ☞ Conclude your thoughts.
- ☞ Thank them for their consideration.

Legislative Letter Revisions – 2ndst rough draft

- ☞ Add date line if you do not have one.
- ☞ Add inside address if you do not have one.
- ☞ Re-check spacing.
- ☞ Decide on the punctuation. Open or closed? Pick one!
- ☞ Salutation: Dear Senator Colgan
- ☞ Revisit the closing. Use a proper/appropriate one and then do the correct spacing.
- ☞ Home address and city under your name
- ☞ Try to remember, your thoughts need to make sense and flow with each other. We all might not be the best writers, but we need to make sense!

1st paragraph:

- ☞ Name
- ☞ Year in school
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- ☞ Express concern about funding.
- ☞ How does it potentially impact you? Give an example.
- ☞ Select one of the proposed pieces of legislation. Identify it and explain why it is important to support this.

3rd paragraph:

- ☞ Express your understanding of No Child Left Behind, APY, and SOL. However, look at the entire picture and how it impacts you and your education.

4th paragraph:

- ☞ Conclude your thoughts.
- ☞ Thank them for their consideration.

Print a clean copy and then sign the letter in black ink. Next, we need to create the envelope!

Legislative Letter Revisions – Final Document

- ☞ Date line
- ☞ Inside address/Make sure it is the proper one for the proper legislator.
- ☞ Re-check spacing.
- ☞ Punctuation. Open or closed?
- ☞ Salutation: Dear Senator Colgan / Dear Delegate Parrish

1st paragraph:

- ☞ Name
- ☞ Year in school
- ☞ Name of school
- ☞ Location of school
- ☞ Courses that you have taken that relate to the legislation: Business, Family and Consumer Science, Drafting, Wood Tech, Cosmetology, etc.

2nd paragraph:

- ☞ Express concern about funding.
- ☞ How does it potentially impact you? Give an example.
Select one of the proposed pieces of legislation. Identify it and explain why it is important to support this.

3rd paragraph:

- ☞ Express your understanding of *No Child Left Behind*, APY, and SOL. However, look at the entire picture and how it impacts you and your education. If you are confused with what you are saying it is best you don't say it.

4th paragraph:

- ☞ Conclude your thoughts.
- ☞ Thank them for their consideration.

Closing

- ☞ Use a proper/appropriate one and then do the correct spacing.
- ☞ Home address and city under your name
- ☞ Try to remember, your thoughts need to make sense and flow with each other. We all might not be the best writers, but we need to make sense!

Print a clean copy and then sign the letter in black ink. Next, we need to create the envelope! Remember, you are to print two copies of each letter. One set goes to Albrecht for final grading, one goes to Senator Colgan and one to Delegate Parrish. They are in the mailbox today!

SENATE OF VIRGINIA

CHARLES J. COLGAN
29- SENATORIAL DISTRICT
PART OF PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY,
CITIES OF MANASSAS AND MANASSAS PARK
10677 AVIATION LANE
MANASSAS, VIRGINIA 20110-2701



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
COMMERCE AND LABOR ANANCE
GENERAL LAWS
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
RULES

March 7, 2005

**Miss Brittany Randolph
8813 Gather Avenue
Manassas, VA 20110**

Dear Brittany:

I received a number of letters from students at Osbourn High School concerning funding for our Public School System, especially in the area of Career and Technical Education. This year, I thought the General Assembly did a good job of providing state funding for our Public School System. It is my opinion that it is still far less than what we should be doing.

For those localities located in Northern Virginia, the state provides about one-third of the cost to educate each student. Many counties receive as much as two-thirds of the cost to educate each student. However, it should be kept in mind that these localities provide much less in local funds than we in Manassas, Manassas Park, and Prince William County do.

This year, we provided a 3% raise for our teachers. On a statewide basis, they are still paid below the national average. We must try to get their salaries up to a point where they are paid above the national average. Virginia should be satisfied with nothing less.

Thank you for your interest and your support for education funding. Most of societies' problems can be solved by an educated society.

Sincerely yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CJ Colgan", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Charles J. Colgan

CJC:pw

BRITTANY RANDOLPH



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
HOUSE OF DELEGATES
RICHMOND

HARRY J. PARRISH
8898 BOND COURT
MANASSAS, VIRGINIA 20110-4327

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS-
FINANCE (CHAIRMAN)
COMMERCE AND LABOR RULES

11TH DISTRICT

March 8, 2005

Miss Brittany Randolph
8813 Cather Avenue
Manassas, VA 20110

Dear Brittany:

Thank you for your letter expressing concerns that the high cost of remediation classes, which are being held as a result of requirements for No Child Left Behind, AYP, and SOL, has caused the funding for career and technical classes to be neglected. If that is the case, then your local School Board has made that decision, based on what they perceive as prioritization of their funds.

The Virginia House of Delegates and Senate have always been supportive of public education. Funding for education represents over one-third of the Commonwealth's general fund operating budget. In the 2004 session of the General Assembly, we appropriated the largest-ever increase for education --\$1.4 billion in new funding. Also, as we worked our way through the recessionary times of the past several years, the only state program whose funding was not cut was that of public education.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the budget legislation which the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates passed on February 27 provides for an additional \$800,000 for support and for Career and Technical Education equipment statewide. This funding would increase the current annual amount for equipment from \$700,000 up to \$1.5 million.

Each school division in the state will receive a base allocation of \$2000, with the remainder of the funding distributed on the basis of student enrollment in secondary vocational-technical courses. These state funds for equipment must be used to supplement, not supplant, any funds currently provided for secondary vocational-technical equipment within the locality.

Another amendment appropriates \$400,000 beginning July 1 for the regional Career and Technical Education Resource Center in Henrico County to provide vocational curriculum and resource instructional materials to school divisions throughout Virginia at no charge.