



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

When does the program officially start?

The NSBA Policy Leadership Cohort will officially begin during the week of Aug. 17, 2026. Programming will kick off with an introductory session, and participants will learn more details during the kickoff meeting.

Most program sessions will be conducted virtually and held monthly. The only in-person component will be the final capstone project and graduation activities, which will take place during the NSBA Advocacy Institute.

What is our expected outcome?

At the conclusion of the NSBA Policy Leadership Cohort, participants will have developed a policy project designed to support a Member of Congress or a U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) office in addressing a complex policy challenge facing the U.S. education system. Participants will present their projects directly to congressional policy staff and USDOE officials, providing actionable recommendations to inform education policy and practice.

How much does the NSBA Policy Leadership Cohort cost to participate?

There is no cost to participate in the NSBA Policy Leadership Cohort.

However, all participants are expected to:

- Complete a capstone project, and present it during the Advocacy Institute. The capstone project is a critical component of the cohort experience and is designed to influence and inform policy decisions at the national level. This work aligns with NSBA's advocacy agenda and its commitment to ensuring school boards have the tools and knowledge needed to make informed policy decisions in their districts.
- Register for and attend the National School Boards Association (NSBA) Advocacy Institute, scheduled for Jan. 31–Feb. 2, 2027, in Washington, D.C. The Institute begins on Sunday, Jan. 31 and programming concludes Monday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. Participants can also spend a day on Capitol Hill visiting their members of Congress on Tuesday, Feb. 2, if they wish.

How much does it cost to attend the NSBA Advocacy Institute?

Registration fees for the Advocacy Institute for Policy Leadership Cohorts will be discounted to \$500. For reference, the registration fee for the previous year's event ranged from \$645 to \$990 per person. Participants should also plan to cover the cost of:

- Hotel accommodations
- Airfare and other travel expenses

Additional information, including the event schedule and registration details, will be shared as it is developed. You can also see the prior year's conference [here](#).

Do I need to be a member of NSBA to participate?

No. However, NSBA offers an individual school board member membership rate of \$150. For more information about NSBA membership, please visit the [NSBA membership page](#).

What if my District is already a district-based member of NSBA or a member of CUBE and I am accepted into the policy cohort?

If your district is already a participating member of NSBA, you as a student of the Policy Leadership Cohort will receive the Advocacy Institute cohort student rate (\$500). This rate will not apply to any other district members that register for the Advocacy Institute.

For more information about NSBA membership, please visit the [NSBA membership page](#).

Will I receive a credential or certificate for participation?

Yes. Participants who successfully complete the program will receive an NSBA Policy Leadership Certificate (Diploma) recognizing their participation and completion of the cohort.

In addition, certain educational sessions at the Advocacy Institute may be eligible for Continuing Education Unit credits in your state.

What is expected of participants?

Participants are expected to:

- Attend monthly virtual cohort sessions.
- Actively engage in discussions and learning activities.
- Complete assignments (no more than 2-3 hours per month).
- Register for NSBA's Advocacy Institute.
- Complete and present the final capstone project as part of the program graduation requirements.

Successful completion of these components will ensure participants receive full recognition for their participation in the cohort.

Please email memberservices@nsba.org if you have any questions.