

2008 FCCLA/FCS Day at the Iowa State Capitol Adviser, Member, and Educator Information Guide

Wednesday, February 20 is the joint 2008 FCCLA/FCS Day at the State Capitol. This event is open to FCCLA members, FCS secondary and collegiate students, and FCS educators. This day gives us an opportunity to come to the statehouse while the Iowa General Assembly is in session. It is our best opportunity to inform state legislators (in person!) of the value of FCCLA and our Family and Consumer Sciences programs. **The purpose of the day is to showcase the leadership accomplishments, service projects completed, and content delivered by FCCLA chapters and FCS programs across the state.** Legislators rely heavily on the viewpoints expressed by their local constituents when they make important decisions regarding education issues. By coming to Des Moines and actively participating in a full day of observing and meeting your state legislators, you can be an effective voice for FCCLA and FCS. A visit to the Capitol also offers us an opportunity to view first-hand our state government in action and to learn about the lawmaking process. The importance of your participation can not be over emphasized in regard to its potential impact on the future of FCS Education in Iowa. You are highly encouraged to participate in this **exciting day of hands-on activities.** **NOTE: This is NOT a day for you to “sit and get” information from others. (In fact, there are very few places to sit, so be sure to wear comfortable shoes!)** **This day is for you to SHARE your FCCLA/FCS accomplishments with your legislators and to NETWORK with other chapters and groups.**

- **Tentative Agenda**

- 9:30-10:00 a.m. Arrive and Set Up Displays in our assigned location:
Capitol—1st Floor Rotunda—All Wings
(Bring your own card table and appropriate, *ironed* table covering/skirt. FYI: There is NO wireless network in the rotunda and very few, accessible electrical outlets.)
- 10:00-11:15 a.m. Guided Tour of the Capitol (Meet at Guides' Station, 1st Floor at 9:50 a.m.)
(Group reservations have been arranged for all chapters at no charge.)
- 10:40-10:55 a.m. Photo Opportunity (requested) with Gov. Chet Culver, Room 109
State officers and ONE representative from each chapter/group.
Arrive outside Room 109 no later than 10:30 a.m.
- 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Congregate in WEST Wing (by the Ship Model) for
 - Conversations with a Representative/Senator
 - Explanation of Call Slips by Adam Schwery, FCCLA State President
 - Lunch catered by In-The-Bag Corporate Cuisine
- 1:00-2:45 p.m. Visit with your Senators and Representatives
(by previously arranged appointment or by using on-site call slips)

Photo Opportunity available in the SOUTH Wing (by the Doll Case)— Invite your senator or representative there for a photo. Press release and photo to be provided at no charge to you.

Observe Proceedings of the Senate and House in the Galleries
- 2:45-3:00 p.m. Remove Displays and Adjourn for the Day
- 3:00 Travel Home, Shop, or Participate in Other Activities Planned by
Chapter Adviser/FCS Educator

- **Bad Weather**

In case of bad weather, each local chapter adviser/educator should consult their school principal and/or superintendent to determine whether the chapter/group can travel to Des Moines as planned. Unfortunately, no meal refunds will be possible.

- **Parking Directions**

A map with visitor parking lots identified at the State Capitol can be printed from the following website:
<http://das.gse.iowa.gov/images/parking3.pdf>

Allow plenty of time to arrive, park, and go through security (on the ground floor) prior to the start of the day's scheduled activities. The less you have with you (things in your pockets, handbags, tote bags, etc.) the faster you will get through security.

- **Dress**

State officers should plan to wear the official uniform. Other FCCLA members and FCS students are required to dress professionally. ***The new FCCLA red polo shirt with black slacks or skirt is appropriate, with black dress shoes.*** Other professional dress includes the following:

For Males – Business suit with collared dress shirt and necktie; OR sport coat, dress pants, collared shirt and necktie; OR dress pants, collared shirt and necktie. All the above should be worn with dress shoes and socks.

For Females – Business suit or business pantsuit; OR skirt or dress slacks with blouse or sweater; OR tailored dress. All of the above should be worn with dress shoes.

Tennis shoes, t-shirts, sweatshirts, jeans and athletic pants are NOT appropriate attire.

Wear COMFORTABLE SHOES—this is NOT the time to break in new shoes or to wear high heels—just ask those who did last year! They had the blisters to prove it, so trust us on this one. ☺.

- **Contact Your Legislators In Advance**

Contact your legislators NOW to set up appointments to talk with them in person on February 20. By scheduling appointments in advance, members and advisers are more likely to receive at least a few minutes of undivided attention from local legislators. Senators and Representatives are usually more than happy to accommodate “folks from back home”, especially student groups. Some may make time for an official photograph with your chapter/group. We will designate a Photo Opportunity location and will provide a free photo and press release to each chapter for local publicity purposes.

It is best to make the initial contact with your legislators by phone. If you don’t know the names of the legislators from your area, use the following website to locate them: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/asp/Legislators/LegislatorInfo.aspx>.

To contact your legislators, call: The Iowa Senate 515-281-3371
 The Iowa House 515-281-3221

If you receive a busy signal, keep trying. The switchboards handle many calls each day from Iowans just like you. Many legislators now have voice mail, so you can leave a message if you aren’t successful in talking directly with your legislators.

Explain who you are and why you’re calling. Express your excitement about your upcoming visit to the Capitol and request a time to meet with them. Practice what you’re going to say BEFORE you call. For example:

“Hello, Senator/Representative _____. This is _____. I’m a student at _____ School. I’ll be visiting the State Capitol on February 20 with other Family and Consumer Sciences students from my school. We would very much like to meet with you during our visit. We are all members of FCCLA, the career and technical student organization associated with family and consumer sciences programs in Iowa. We would like to share with you how our service learning projects with this group have strengthened our leadership skills. Our chapter adviser, Mrs./Mr. _____ will be attending with us. Would you be available between 1 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 20 for a short time to visit with our chapter members and to have your photograph taken with us? Thank you for your consideration of our request.....”

Remember: If leaving a voice message, be sure to leave your school’s/group’s phone number so the legislator or member of his/her staff can return your call.

After initial contact is made by phone, it is nice to follow up with an e-mail or letter as well.

- **Meeting Face-to-Face with Your Legislators**

It may be necessary for you to notify the legislator of your arrival outside the appropriate chamber by sending a message to the House or Senate floor. You can do this by completing a Call Slip. Officials outside each chamber can help you with this.

A sign will be provided to each registered chapter, school, or organization upon arrival at the Capitol. Depending on the number of groups visiting the Capitol each day, the rotunda area often becomes very crowded. The sign will help your legislators more easily locate and identify you when they come outside the chamber to meet with you.

To be a successful advocate for FCCLA/FCS, remember the following:

- Be Familiar with our Legislative Process. An easy way to do that is to visit the following website to print out a word search, take a quiz, or learn how a bill becomes a law: <http://www.legis.state.ia.us/Educational.html>. This site provides links to lots of great resources about Iowa's General Assembly.
- Be On Time – Members of the legislature are very busy, so don't be late for a scheduled appointment.
- Be Professional – Put your leadership skills to work. Speak clearly and establish eye contact during your visit. **Decide who the spokesperson(s) for your chapter/school/organization will be, but be sure that EVERYONE is prepared to say something about their specific involvement in FCCLA/FCS.** After an initial greeting and introduction by your spokesperson, legislators will often ask other participants questions like "How are you involved in FCCLA/FCS?", "What skills have you developed as a result of being an FCCLA member/FCS student?", "What's the best thing about FCCLA/FCS?", "Why should I support FCCLA/FCS?", "What difference does FCCLA/FCS make in your school?", etc.
- Be Prepared – **Practice what you're going to say.** For example:

"Thank you Senator/Representative _____ for taking time from your busy schedule to visit with us today. I'm _____, President/Other Officer/Member of the _____ FCCLA chapter (FCS program/organization). As you may know, FCCLA stands for Family, Career and Community Leaders of America. We have _____ members in our chapter and _____ of them are here today. We represent _____ students who are taking Family and Consumer Sciences classes at our school. Through our classes and FCCLA, we've been able to make a difference in our school, families, and community. For example, this year we've _____." (Share some of your most successful service learning projects. Be specific. Concentrate on leadership development, career skills, community service and family emphasis. **Stay away from references to "cooking and sewing."**)

"I attended the National/State/District FCCLA Meeting last year and competed in the competitive STAR events. I won a gold/silver/bronze medal with my Power of One/Child Care/Public Speaking/etc. presentation which focused on _____. It was an awesome experience."

- Be Positive and Brief – Remember to share your FCCLA/FCS experiences as concisely as possible.
- Remember to Say Thank You – Thank your legislator for his or her time, and for their continued support of FCCLA and Family and Consumer Sciences programs through state funding for education. Invite him/her to visit your school to learn more about the difference FCCLA/FCS makes in their district.

• **Viewing in the Galleries**

Those who wish to visit the viewing gallery of the House or Senate chambers should inform the staff outside the galleries and notify them of the number of members in their group. It may be necessary to wait 10-15 minutes to observe lawmakers in action.

You are reminded that important state business is being conducted in each chamber. All visitors to the galleries must remain seated and quiet and may not applaud. Visitors are not allowed to lean on the gallery railing from the first row. Applause, hisses or other noises in the gallery or in the lobbies during any speech or legislative proceeding shall be promptly suppressed, and you may be asked to leave the gallery.

• **Cameras Inside the Capitol**

The public may take photographs from the galleries at any time. However, the use of flash bulbs or any other artificial lighting is prohibited.

• **Final Thoughts**

Groups must remain quiet and orderly as they wait in the rotunda outside the chambers and meeting rooms. Remember the Capitol is a professional workplace where important state business is being conducted.

Take advantage of the opportunity to network with other FCCLA members/FCS students and colleagues from across the state as much as you can during the day. Have lunch with other groups. Talk about projects that you each do in your schools/communities.

• **Local PR**

Duplicate this information for your administrators to let them know about this important day of educational opportunities. After your participation, share your experience by writing an article for the school paper and local newspaper. A sample press release will be provided to help you with this follow-up activity.