

From the Playground to Capitol Hill

Your Role as an Advocate
for Public Education

Advocacy is not lobbying

Advocacy according to Webster's Dictionary is
"support of a cause"

An advocate is someone who pleads on
another's behalf

A lobbyist is one who is employed to influence
legislators to introduce or vote for measures
favorable to the interest the lobbyist
represents

Advocacy

- ▶ Determine the issue
- ▶ Identify your target and tactics
- ▶ Develop your message
- ▶ Create a plan
 - Use the media
 - Communicate with decision makers

Identifying target

- ▶ Who will be the focus of your message?
 - Decision-makers
 - Parents
 - Media
 - Public

Research

- ▶ Why is this issue important?
- ▶ Judge the political climate
- ▶ Know both sides of the issue
 - Who are possible allies or possible opponents
 - Know the arguments that can or may be made on both sides

Issues

- ▶ Know what you are talking about
 - Show your passion, but nicely
- ▶ Tell a story
 - Let them know about reality in your community
- ▶ Have some idea of a solution
- ▶ Recognize that your input is very important

Determine the issue

- ▶ Does it advance the mission of public education?
- ▶ What is the impact of the issue?
- ▶ Is it winnable?

Develop Your Plan and Implement

- ▶ Use media
 - Editorial pages
 - Editorial boards
 - Viewpoints
 - Letters to the editor
 - Direct lobbying
 - E-mails, phone calls

REMEMBER YOU ARE NEVER COMPLETELY “OFF THE RECORD”

Develop Your Message

- ▶ Generate interest in the issue or campaign
- ▶ Based on your targeted groups
- ▶ Be persistent and force decision makers to take a position

Take Action

EDITORIALS/LETTERS THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1997



VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

How to be Effective?

- ▶ Get to know your legislator or elected official
 - Get to know the staff
 - Provide information
- ▶ Make sure they know who you are
- ▶ Make sure they know something about your district issues

How?

- ▶ Go to flsenate.gov and/or to myfloridahouse.gov
- ▶ Create an account to track bills
 - You can tag legislation that you want to follow

Check the FSBA website for updates

Contact Info

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Florida School Boards Association

www.fsba.org

Florida Association of District School Superintendents

www.fadss.org