Advocacy: Building Relationships for Successful Outcomes
Advocacy

- The act or process of advocating or supporting a cause or proposal
- Making a complex issue simple to understand and digest
- Success is dependent on your message and your relationships with your legislators
* Legislators have hundreds of groups asking for something
* Consistency will prevail
* Think outside the box
* Let them know they can reach out to you
Building the Foundation

- It is important to build a solid foundation with your elected officials
- No relationships are built overnight
- Do not get discouraged
- Is there a quicker way to build these relationships?
Legislative relationships are a two-way street
Think of this as building a friendship

Key points
- Always be friendly
- Always be courteous
- Always be understanding
Elements for success

Trustworthiness, make sure you provide information that is:

- Truthful
- Supported and easily checked
- Do your homework!
Don’t be afraid to write or call
Meet personally with staff as well as legislators
Staff set schedules, keep this in mind
Always make an appointment
Be as flexible as you can
There are many ways to foster successful relationships

Public events

- Ground Breakings
- Social Functions
- Grand Openings, Dedications, Parades
More...

- Photo opportunities
- Send holiday greeting cards
- Add them to your newsletter
- Acknowledge awards and accomplishments
- Send newspaper articles
Successful Legislative Meetings

- Prepare in advance what you want to say
- Know the material inside and out
- DO NOT overwhelm them with your knowledge
- You are there as an educator, they are your student
Successful Legislative Meetings...

- Never argue, you might win the battle but loose the war
- Be respectful of their position
- If in disagreement, retreat and circle back
- Always send thank you notes!!!!!
Successful Legislative Meetings...

- Stay focused
- Keep on track
- Be cognizant of *the* time and *their* time
- If time runs out, offer to circle back
How to Prepare

* Have an idea of what you would like to accomplish
* Be realistic on your expectations
* Research your points
* Use current, easy to understand talking points
How to Prepare

- Always have something to hand-out
- Your handouts should use bullet-points when appropriate
- Avoid graphs and charts on your one-pager
- Prepare an “elevator” pitch
How to Prepare

* Role play, role play, role play!
* Practice meetings with friends and family
* Have materials prepared well in advance
* Make them easy to understand
* Have contact information in more than one spot
Let’s Have a Meeting

* Be prepared for:
  * Being impatient
  * Shifting the conversation
  * Challenges
  * Opposition
  * Agreements
Role Play, Let's go!

* Refresher:
  * Introduce yourself, organization
  * Keep on track
  * Be courteous
  * Know your material
  * If you don’t know, tell them so
  * Thank them for their time and ask for a card for follow-up