

# Advocacy in Action:

## TIPS & TECHNIQUES

### Action verbs of Advocacy

By

**Karen J. Dowd**

**Executive Director, Florida AHPERD**

Professionals in health and physical education are action-oriented people who know that this generation of children and many adults are in jeopardy. We are all familiar with the issues – a serious percentage of our citizens face health risks such as overweight, obesity, physical inactivity, diabetes, heart disease, and other lifestyle related maladies. We also know that this is no time to be an advocacy spectator, but rather that each of us must become an action-oriented advocacy participant. Thus, to properly address the health crises of this century requires each of us to step forward and do our fair share, and just as we would if we came upon an emergency, we would take action.

Our advocacy can be local, statewide or even on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. One such national event is the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) ‘Speak Out Day’, March 16-17, 2011 in Washington, D.C. Consider these action verbs as a possible framework for participation in ‘Speak Out Day’ or advocacy initiatives at your local or state level: connect, engage, impact, invest.

**Connect** is ‘to establish a rapport or relationship; relate’. (Merriam-Webster) Take the steps necessary to connect to the profession and disciplines through professional membership; meet colleagues who share your concerns; identify coalitions or initiatives that

address areas of crisis or concern; consider issues from all angles and vantage points; and, learn the essential language and methods of cause-related advocacy.

**Engage** is ‘to hold the attention of; to induce to participate’. (Merriam-Webster) When professionals opt to ‘engage’ they might participate in activities such as a rally in support of a policy or concept; financially support organizations that advocate for issues of importance; sign-on as a supporter of an initiative or action; submit a letter of support of or in opposition to an action or plan; contact political representatives about a matter of concern. Note that to ‘engage’ takes one’s action to a more involved level than initially ‘connecting’.

**Impact** is ‘to have a direct effect on or impinge on someone or something.’ (Merriam-Webster) To impact is to move the action levels to a state of exerting influence on persons, programs, policies, events. In terms of advocacy, the quality of our teaching is impactful; we influence decision-makers with letters, e-mails and face to face visits; our individual and group efforts impact the collective effort; we learn to use materials, resources and skills to effect or sustain change, and we recognize that effective advocacy is a ‘journey, not a day trip’.

**Invest** is ‘to involve or engage especially emotionally or to make use of for future benefits or advantages’.

(Merriam-Webster) Cause-related success relies on those with a steady voice and a fact pattern of long term dedication and active participation. To take strong action steps on behalf of issues and to vigorously advocate over a significant span of time is to reach the state of ‘investment’. Those who fully invest in advocacy initiatives will be able to look back at the struggles and toil someday and see improvements.

Just as in emergency situations we decide if and how we will help, each of us must determine how involved in advocacy efforts we will become. Currently, a small percentage of our professionals take an active role in advocacy outside of their inner circle. Let’s look ahead and consider what kind of progress we could make, if:

- Every state, district and national association sent at least one or more advocates to the NASPE ‘Speak Out Day’ in 2011, (yield of 60+ advocates) and/or if
- Every state association funded one-half of one percent of its members to the ‘Speak Out Day’ in 2011, (yield approximately 150 advocates) and/or if
- Every AAHPERD member in a crucial one-week span of time sent a personally written letter of advocacy to his/her Congressperson on behalf of physical education and health education (yield of 18,500 letters)
- Every AAHPERD and state association member contributed \$50 to

AAHPERD advocacy efforts (yield of approximately \$2M) and/or if

- Every state association could encourage an average of 10 parents of K-12 aged students to travel to Washington, D.C. and advocate during the NASPE 'Speak Out Day' (yield of approximately 500 parent, taxpaying advocates) and/or if
- Every AAHPERD and state association member were to secure one (1) medical doctor to write a personal advocacy letter about the importance and benefits of quality health and physical education for every child in America (yield of approximately 50,000 powerful letters of support) and/or if
- Every national, district and state association campaigned to get an average of 100 parents of K-12 aged students to write a personal advocacy letter to members of the Congressional Education Committees (yield of 6000 letters of support) and/or if
- Every working professional or student majors in our disciplines took one (1) new, powerful and positive advocacy step each year to support the issues and initiatives that define the impact our profession has on children, young people and adults in this country (yield – priceless!)

Hopefully you will consider taking advocacy thoughts and ideas to the action level during the 2011 'Speak Out Day' in Washington, D.C., or in your own state. By doing so, you might get to look back at the end of your career and say, "I was there and advocated with my colleagues that day and we made a difference for the next generation".

# Strategies

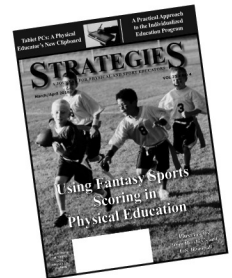
## Also Available Online!

On-line subscriptions are now available for *Strategies*. As part of this new benefit, issues will be posted for all on-line subscribers back to the 2006 volume year.



**More Options now Available to Libraries**

- Print
- Online
- Print and Online



**Contact AAHPERD Subscriptions at 800-213-7193 x493 to upgrade your subscription today!**



A global view of sport and physical education that combines an online and face-to-face approach to learning

This blended learning approach gives the opportunity to all individuals and organizations involved in physical education and sport to register free to the Sports Media Open Campus. The Open Campus is a web-based learning content management system that allows educators and coaches to create their own online physical education and sport courses. They can assemble, package and redistribute instructional content, easily retrieve, and import content. Visit <http://www.sports-media.org/atutoreng.htm> for more information.

Home page: <http://www.sports-media.org>.

### Advertiser Index

MilkPEP .....	inside front cover
Acadia Consulting .....	3
Speed Stacks .....	3
National University .....	13
Advanced Fitness.....	17
Polar.....	38