

Advocacy in Action:

TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Putting the Advocacy Puzzle Together

By:

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Advocacy is a responsibility of all current and future professionals. Unless we step up to become advocates, our schools may never change; or policy-makers will make decisions without important information that only we can provide. Still many professionals are puzzled at how they can be a good advocate. The most important thing all of us can do is to develop an advocacy plan. In order to create an advocacy plan, you must address the following questions:

- WHAT are you advocating for and WHY?
- WHAT do you hope to achieve?
- WHOM must you influence in order to reach your goals?
- HOW, WHERE and WHEN can you most effectively shape decision-makers' attitudes?

You must be clear on what you are advocating for and **WHAT** needs to be defined specifically. For example, if you want to advocate for quality physical education programs, you need to narrow your focus: "I will be an advocate for quality physical education programs in my school district."

You also need to be passionate about the **WHAT** and have a **WHY**. In order for you to fight for something, you must believe in it and convince others to believe in it with you. Being able to

give a reason why you are passionate about this issue will help you accomplish your plan. Identifying a problem that needs to be addressed can also provide the **WHY**. You may have evidence or data that will help support your **WHY**.



A second **WHAT** helps you further narrow your focus to address **WHAT** you hope to achieve. To do this, you need to state at least one goal you would like to accomplish. Make sure the goal is measurable.



For example: My district will have at least one professional development workshop next year, which will address how to develop a quality physical education program.

The next piece of the puzzle is to decide **WHO** you need to influence to accomplish your goal. Identifying your primary target audience will help you focus your strategies on the movers and shakers that make the decisions.



For example: the superintendent, the assistant superintendent of instruction and/or the District Professional Development Planning Committee.

Developing a Strategy and Timeline



The **HOW** will list specific things that need to be completed in order to accomplish your stated goal. The list will include all steps that need to be taken to influence the decision makers.

You must also include where the strategy will occur. Narrowing the focus down to exactly **WHERE** is very important.

For example:

1. Write a letter to the local superintendent and assistant superintendent of instruction to share the need of having a professional development workshop on quality physical education programs, and request the name of the chair of the planning committee.
2. Contact the chair of the committee to request the workshop and offer suggestions for speakers or presentation topics.
3. Offer the chair assistance in finding a place to hold the workshop and other management issues.
4. Promote the workshop throughout the district.

ADVOCACY PLAN

- **WHAT** am I passionate about? _____
- **WHY** am I passionate for this cause? _____
- **What is one goal** that would I like to see accomplished? _____
- **WHO** must I influence in order to accomplish this goal? _____

STRATEGY & TIMELINE

(How and When)

How I will accomplish my goal:

When I will accomplish my goal:

5. After the completion of the workshop, send an evaluation to all participants requesting suggestions for other workshops or follow-up sessions.

We all live on deadlines. Stating **WHEN** the tasks will be accomplished will help you complete all of the strategies needed in order to have a successful plan. Be sure to be realistic in



developing your timeline. Think ahead to all the logistics and people that need

to be addressed when designing your plan.

For example:

1. Write the letter by Jan.15th.
2. Contact the chair by Feb.15th.
3. Help the chair between February and May.
4. Promote the workshop in August
5. Complete the workshop in September and follow up immediately with evaluations.

Putting it all Together

Having an advocacy plan helps put all

of the pieces of the puzzle together. If we are going to be successful advocates for our profession and make a difference, all current and future professionals need to create a new advocacy plan each year.



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