

Bite-sized School Board Advocacy

School Boards create policies and set budget priorities for superintendents and school district staff to implement.

Influencing School Boards to recognize the importance of and need for arts in the curriculum will result in direction to superintendents to include the arts in school district budgets.

Step 1-Sign up for good "Alerts."

Subscribe to ArtsEdWashington's eNews at

www.artsedwashington.org

It provides regular information about actions you're likely to care about as well as tools and resources to help you take action.

Connect with Washington State Arts Alliance www.wsartsalliance.com to get sample messages and be notified when your help is needed.

Step 2-Visit Your School Board

School Districts can be found through Google (enter School Board and your district). Use the information to contact school boards, see their calendar of meetings and learn the rules for participating (most allow comment at the start of every meeting).

Find the date of the next meeting and assemble a group to attend with you. See next page for a sample speech.

Step 3-Advertise your issue

Anytime you are at a school board meeting (at a formal meeting, a

candidates forum, or Town Hall Meeting), wear or carry something (a conspicuous badge, a folder, or bag) that identifies you with your issue.

Bold lettering on a neon background will be seen even from a distance (e.g., ART /S EDUCATION, or ARTS for EVERY STUDENT). Board directors will quickly realize those badges mean there's an organized group that cares about arts education, and has its members in the audience.

Follow up by Phone or Email

Mention the issue in the subject line, refer to your visit to their meeting, re-state clearly what you want the School Board to do, and be sure to put your home address so they know that you live in their District. Keep it short and to the point.

Finding telephone numbers and/or email addresses is easy: just go to the website for your school district, and look for a link to the School Board.

It is our responsibility as arts education advocates to ensure that School Board directors have the information they need to address these issues.

Here are five ideas for fitting school board advocacy into busy lives. They spring from one simple fact:

ADVOCACY JUST MEANS SPEAKING UP

Step 4-Help others visit & make contact

Make cards with the School Board's regular meeting dates and location. Include the website, telephone numbers, and emails of your school board directors. Add your own logo, website, or PTA name. Make up a supply, and give them to everyone you encounter: PTA members, friends, neighbors, extended family etc. You and they should pledge to attend School Board meetings monthly and make one call or email every week to advance your issue.

Step 5. Talk to Others

Mention the issues and funding concerns at every opportunity. Talk to anybody who will listen: at a PTA meeting, in a grocery store line, waiting for the street light to change, after services on Sunday.... Get your key issues on other voters' radar.

Prepare a "60-Second Speech," ready for any occasion when you might get to talk to a school district decision-maker.

Here's an example:

Use your name and where you live (Hi, I'm _____, and I live in your District.)

Mention your group and the number of members or people served in the Director's area or School District. (I'm on the board of _____ Elementary PTA; we support a school in your District and we have xx members...)

Say what you want to call to their attention

(I'm very concerned about adequate funding for arts education programs...)

Say what you'd like them to do (Please vote for arts funding in the School District budget...)

Give them something in writing that includes how to contact you/ your group. (I'd be glad to answer any questions you might have; meanwhile, here's some basic information about how important the arts are in a complete education.)

Visit www.artsedwashington.org to access the latest research.