Advocacy and Grassroots 101

American Association of School Administrators
Things to Focus on...

• It’s a Marathon, Not a Sprint
• Relationships, Not Just Substance
• Systems, Not Just Meetings and Letters
• Information, Not Just Lobbying
• Putting your School District’s best foot forward
The Legislative Process: How a Bill Becomes a Law

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**House**
- Bill introduced
- Referred to E&L Committee
- House Floor Consideration
- Full House Approves
- Conference Committee
- Full Senate Approves
- Signed by the President

**Senate**
- Bill introduced
- Referred to HELP Committee
- Senate Floor Consideration
- Full Senate Approves
- Conference Committee

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What is Going On?

- Regulations
- Authorizations and Reauthorizations
- Budget/Appropriations
- Hearings/Mark Ups
A Quick Word About Money

• At the federal level there are two processes:
  – **Budget** – where the amount of money to be spent is set.
    • Fight for the maximum amount of $ available for education.
  – **Appropriations** – where individual program funding levels are set.
    • Fight for specific education programs.
How to Move Forward

• Every district must identify issues within federal education policy to weigh in on.
• You can use the AASA Legislative Agenda and policy briefs as a starting point.
• Make sure to use as many local references as possible. Anecdotes!
• Be sure to talk about areas you would like to change and areas that have helped you.
Questions to Think About

• What legislators, staff, and officials come from the areas served by your school district?  
  – Who are their education staff?

• Which of these individuals are also on relevant committees or in leadership positions?  
  – Are there committee staff I should meet?
Teachers and Leaders Have the Best Ideas on How to Improve Schools

Who do you think would have the best ideas about how to improve schools?

- Local Teacher: 53%
- Local school leader: 24%
- Professor: 8%
- Think Tank Researcher: 7%
- Other: 8%
- Included in “Other”
  - Political Candidate: 3%
  - Federal Official: 2%
  - None of the above: 2%
  - Not Sure: 1%

Ipsos/AASA Poll March 2004
Putting the Strategy into Action

Examples:

- DC Meetings
- State/Local Meetings
- National Meetings
- Meeting Invitations
- General Mailing List (Snail mail or email)
- Telephone Calls and Letters
What to Expect in a DC Meeting

• Though a meeting may be with a member, always know things come up.
• Education staffers tend to be young.
• Do not expect meeting rooms. You may meet in the member’s office or even a hallway passage.
• Meetings can range in time from 15 minutes to an hour.
  – Be sure to get in your three main points.
• Follow up with any necessary additional information.
Some Further Wisdom

• Best place to advance education is in a school.
• Invite your legislators and their staff to visit your schools.
  – Best times to meet:
    • President’s Day recess
    • Easter Recess
    • Memorial Day recess
    • August Recess
• Work to establish a strong relationship, especially with the education staffers.
Best Practices?

Let’s take a minute to talk about the experiences that you have had...
Where Do We Go From Here?

• Use your professional organizations, both state and national.
• Make the first call, send the first email.
• Keep issues on the front burner in your communities to help create the dialogue.
• 15 minutes a month (less than 5 minutes a week) is all it takes to place a call or send an email to your Senators and Representative.

There is a long road ahead....
Things to Think About…

• Get involved, make a call, don’t assume that someone else will do it!
• Be prepared to talk about how policies and laws are impacting your district.
• Invite your members into your schools and show them what you are doing.
Any Questions?

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