



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Advocacy Commission Charge.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>ATE Core Values .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Why Advocate? .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Reasons for “Doing Advocacy”.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Myths and Realities .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Where do I start? .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Top 10 Tips for Advocacy</b>	
<b>Who are the stakeholders? .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Who are the policy makers? .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Who makes the rules about that issue? .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>State Boards of Education (Standards Board) .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>How to introduce ATE including who we are and what we do .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>How to use students and other stakeholders .....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>How to work with your employer .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>How to reach out to press - releases, Letters to Editor .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>How to gather information about issues .....</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>How to process issues to create talking points .....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>How to organize events .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Encouraging Pre-Service Teachers and P-16 Colleagues.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>to Advocate</b>	
<b>How to Encourage Professional Colleagues in .....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Collaboration/Coalitions</b>	

<b>How to monitor and evaluate .....</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Resources and Templates .....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Appendix A Advocacy Scenarios.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Appendix B Sample Materials for Advocating .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix C Sample Power Points .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix D Web Teaser .....</b>	<b>62</b>

## Introduction

Advocate: *noun* a person who supports or recommends a particular cause or

policy: *verb* to publicly recommend or support:

Advocacy: any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others

As the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) moves into its next century, it is critical that we improve our efforts to advocate for educators, educator preparation, learners at all levels, as well as children and families. We must be advocates for education at all levels. This handbook is designed to provide members with the tools essential to effective advocacy. Advocacy is not a new concept to us as educators, but it is needed now more than at any time in ATE's history. The attacks on education have become stronger and more persistent in the past decade. As the attacks grow stronger, ATE must be willing to take policy positions that reflect our core values. We must be more active at the local, state, and national levels.

There is strength in numbers, and grassroots advocacy is probably the most powerful form of advocacy because it brings together so many voices. It is also the most diverse and flexible form of advocacy. Although arriving at a common message and vision can be challenging, most educators are altruistic by nature and ready to work together to improve the quality of educator preparation and education in general. The goal is to establish a sense of responsibility for the profession, unite diverse talents, mobilize resources to solve problems, and provide a voice for the ATE community and for those whom we serve.

The first task of the Advocacy Commission, appointed by then President Judy Beck, was to develop a clear and well-documented statement of the Association's Core Values. President Beck's charge to the Commission is included in the Handbook. The ATE Board of Directors has been involved in the discussion and the final statement is included in the Handbook.

The Advocacy Commission discussed the key question "Why Advocate?" "Including a focus on reasons for "Doing Advocacy." The complexities of advocacy are also discussed and provide members with ideas for effective advocacy at all levels. The

table of contents offers advocacy activities that members can choose to begin and continue advocacy efforts.

The appendices include additional information and several scenarios that help clarify the ideas presented in the Handbook. These scenarios can also be useful in training sessions.

Finally, we need to thank the members of the Advocacy Commission for their dedication and hard work to this endeavor.

James L. Alouf      Ann C. Shelly

Co-Chairs

Advocacy Commission

2021-2022 Members: Patricia Swails, Tom Conway, Christian Legler, Honora Walls,  
Patricia Tate

Ex Officio members: Judy Beck, Alisa Chapman

The ATE Commission on Advocacy  
Appointed by Judy Beck, ATE President 2020-2021

Co-Chairs: Ann Shelly and Jim Alouf

Members: Pat Swails, Christina Ellis, Tom Conway, Christian Legler, Phillip Bernhardt

Ex Officio members: Judy Beck, Alisa Chapman

ATE is beginning their second century at a pivotal moment in time. In 2019, all 50 states presented legislation that would impact K-16 education. In 2020, that number is already at 29 and 380+ pieces of legislation. The time to act is now!

Citizens are more powerful than they realize when it comes to influencing members of Congress. A study conducted by the Congressional Management Foundation discovered constituent visits to the Washington, D.C., office (97%) and to the district/state office (94%) have “some” or “a lot” of influence on an undecided member of Congress.

However, advocacy doesn't always mean trying to change the regulations and laws, but working towards a resolution. A Member can educate the public about the important role that having a diverse educator pipeline plays in improving their lives. This education can take place in the form of conversations with family, friends and colleagues about education issues and the importance of advocacy. You also can use your social media platforms or submit op-eds and letters to the editor to your local newspapers to highlight key education issues and priorities.

The commission will work toward the following:

- 1) Development of an advocacy guidebook for State Units
- 2) Updating the ATE policy framework relating to advocacy
- 3) Other deliverables that may come about as a result of the organic discussion of the group

The Advocacy Commission will also serve as an arm of the Strategic Planning process that ATE is engaging in over the next several years.

## ATE Commission on Advocacy Core Values of the Association

The ATE 2022 Core Values represents a synthesis of ATE values based on both foundational resolutions of the past and current educational contexts. Resolutions from which core values are drawn are noted and focus on issues and contexts related to education. Core values drive ATE resolutions. Reference to the resolutions may be found in brackets and, in some cases, may be a general statement on the position framework indicated by page number.

### Core Values of ATE

1. ATE supports and disseminates evidence-based research on quality teaching and learning, educator preparation and teacher leadership, including professional development activities for educators as they progress in their careers.
  - Work toward the integration of professional preparation for educators into career-long professional development involving sound theory and effective practices at all stages [F] from p. 3.
  - ATE supports the work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards [91-1].
  - ATE supports the development and application of certification requirements and standards that ensure all beginning educators demonstrate both minimal basic skill competence and minimal professional expertise. [86-3]
  - Foster the strong and balanced preparation of educators in subject matter content, foundational studies, multicultural and multilingual education, and sound pedagogical practice at all levels of the professional development continuum [H] from [97-2]. [95-1][10-2]
2. ATE members develop and disseminate evidence-based research on exemplary clinical practice.
  - Promote, initiate, and engage in quality educator preparation program development and research [D] from p.3
  - ATE will articulate and defend best practices related to program development, educator preparation programs, and program approval. (12-1b)

3. ATE promotes equity and excellence for all learners at all levels by maintaining quality standards for both teacher educators and for educator preparation. [position frwk #1 - Develop quality programs to prepare educators]

Foster the strong and balanced preparation of educators in subject matter content, foundational studies, multicultural and multilingual education, and sound pedagogical practice at all levels of the professional development continuum [H] from [97-2]. [95-1] [10-2]

- ATE supports preparation of educators who hold high expectations for children and who are prepared to meet the needs of children in diverse classrooms. [93.7]
- ATE supports the concept and practice of inclusive education, including policies, standards, and practices encouraging educator preparation programs to include instruction designed to improve candidates' knowledge and skills in working with students who have special needs. [10-2]

4. ATE collaborates with partner organizations to share research findings and to develop position statements that promote and advocate for the education profession.

- ATE supports the formation of an ATE/AACTE coordinating council to work together on issues of common concern and present a united institutional voice and individual voice to policymakers where appropriate. [95-2].
- ATE reaffirms support for collaborative efforts among educator preparation institutions, educators' organizations, school districts, and other concerned groups [84-2]
- ATE supports working with other education and child advocacy groups to promote the general well of children, youth and families. [93-3]
- ATE supports local, state, and federal incentives for teaching in high needs districts [F-IA -page 1]

5. ATE supports and advocates for diversity at all levels of education by encouraging culturally responsive/ sustaining teaching practices to provide equitable access for all students. We promote a proactive educational approach to teaching that supports the understanding of all cultural groups.

ATE reaffirms support of diversity in education. [92-1]

- ATE supports the recruitment of a diverse teaching force that reflects the diversity in contemporary society.
- ATE supports the concept and practice of inclusive school. [95-1]
- ATE supports the development of anti-racism practices, programs, and/or modules within educator preparation programs that will enable future and current



educators and school administrators to most effectively contribute to the society in which they perform professionally. [21-1] [22-1]

6. ATE supports and advocates for diversity within its membership by actively engaging teacher educators of color, members of marginalized groups, and differently abled persons.

- ATE reaffirms support of diversity in education. [92-1]
- ATE supports the rights and responsibilities of underserved persons in educational institutions and settings.
- ATE supports the recruitment of a diverse teaching force that reflects the diversity in contemporary society.
- ATE supports the development of anti-racism practices, programs, and/or modules within educator preparation programs that will enable future and current educators and school administrators to most effectively contribute to the society in which they perform professionally. [21-1] [22-1]

7. ATE advocates for equitable funding for education at the local, state, and federal levels as part of its vision to promote quality education for all learners.

- Equity in education is a top priority [85-2] from p. 2
- ATE believes the federal government should provide full funding for the costs necessary to educate refugee students. [81-5]
- ATE believes school districts are responsible for securing fully qualified educators by offering salaries which are sufficiently competitive [82-2, p. 1] ●
- ATE supports funding educators' work with refugee and illegal alien students. [82-6]
- ATE encourages current financial support levels for national educational programming. [20-5]

8. ATE informs policy makers at all levels about quality research and evaluation that addresses the issues impacting professional educators.

- ATE supports the formation of an ATE/AACTE coordinating council to work together on issues of common concern and present a united institutional voice and individual voice to policymakers where appropriate. [95-2] from p. 6. e ATE needs to closely monitor significant educational legislation [83-2] from p.6.
- ATE supports recruitment of a diverse teaching force that reflects the diversity in contemporary society. [F- IA -p. 1]

9. ATE promotes professional development and leadership opportunities that support members in their professional roles and in their roles as advocates for the profession.

- ATE reaffirms support for collaborative efforts among educator preparation institutions, educators' organizations, school districts, and other concerned groups. [84-2]
- ATE promotes equity and excellence for all learners at all levels by maintaining quality standards for both teacher educators and for educator preparation. ●
- ATE supports working with other education and child advocacy groups to promote the general well-being of children and youth. [93-3]

10. ATE supports and advocates for democratic values as a necessary component of education.

- ATE encourages the creation of school climates that are supportive of all family patterns. [82-11]
- ATE supports the involvement of parents and other caregivers in their children's education. [93-1]
- Leaders in the educational community should evaluate the federal government's role in educator preparation. [81-6]

In summary, the Advocacy Commission was created by ATE President Judy Beck with the support of the ATE Board of Directors. The charge to the commission stated the following: updating the ATE policy framework relating to advocacy based upon ATE's beliefs, values, and mission.

Vision: ATE promotes advocacy, equity, leadership, and professionalism for teacher educators in all settings and supports quality education for all learners at all levels.

Mission: ATE, as an individual membership organization, promotes quality educator preparation through both exemplary clinical practice and research.

### ATE Statement on Social Justice

ATE stands with communities of color to eliminate racial injustice and critically examine the role of systemic racism within our education system and in our schools. We value and advocate for the lives of marginalized groups, which include all racial and cultural minorities representing students, educators and faculty.

The subcommittee charged with implementing the update also utilized ATE's Vision, Mission, and Statement on Social Justice, along with the existing position framework to create a new statement of the Core Values of the Association. In addition, the commission subcommittee utilized ATE resolutions passed by the Delegate Assembly from the position framework and from current resolutions to document the core value statements. Reference to the resolutions may be found in brackets and, in some cases, may be a general statement on the position framework indicated by page number.

This statement of ATE's Core Values is important to the work of the Association as we advocate on behalf of educator preparation, teacher educators, educators, and students. The statement of core values is a starting point for discussion and debate among the Board of Directors, the membership, and policy makers as the Association seeks to influence decision-makers and gain recognition as a leader in education at all levels of government.

As a part of the Advocacy Handbook, it is also a guide for members to influence state and local education policy and offer policy guidance to state and regional units within ATE.

## **Why Advocate?**

**Be a voice!** Educators can no longer be silent. It is vital, in a chaotic and divisive political climate, to speak out and advocate for learners, teachers, and teacher education. Advocacy has many purposes: to foster change, to influence policy makers through information, to inform the public, to support and protect students and educators, and help solve many other societal needs.

### **Children matter, schools matter, communities matter, our problems and concerns**

**matter.** As educators, we have a unique perspective and knowledge to identify implications and inform decisions affecting children, schools, and communities.

Wherever change needs to occur, advocacy has a role to play.

**What is Advocacy?** Advocacy is the *active* support of an idea, issue, or cause using effective strategies that influence the opinions and decisions of people and organizations. The aims of advocacy are to create or change policies, laws, regulations; distribution of resources; or other decisions that affect people's lives and to ensure that such decisions lead to improvement and implementation.

Advocacy refers to the efforts of an individual or group to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert the interests, desires, needs and rights of oneself or other persons.

**An advocate is:** supportive, an active listener, a sounding board, an activist, a caretaker, an information/fact provider, a connector, or liaison with other resources, creative, a co-strategist, non-judgmental, and compassionate. The advocate is someone who can research and share information; someone who can help outline

options and maintain issue focus and importance. The most effective advocate is factual, focuses on one issue, is clear and brief, establishes rapport through personal and relevant messages, and is courteous and honest.

The advocate's best attribute is skillful communication. Effective advocacy succinctly describes the issue, provides evidence, identifies best plan of action in concrete terms, and maintains direct contact with stakeholders.

An advocate is not: a lobbyist, an investigator, judge or jury, the decision-maker, the expert, or a rigid idealist. A lobbyist provides legislative intelligence, policy insights, research statistics, and salesmanship strategies that can help inform effective advocacy activities. The lobbyist can be an ally for the advocate when the goals coincide.

## **Reasons for “Doing Advocacy”**

### **Many issues affect students and educators:**

1. Issues within your institution related to education curriculum, resources, or stances on wider issues.
2. Issues in your state related to licensure, program approval, entry-year programs, or matriculation requirements.
3. Issues at the national level that impact teacher education, as well as P-16 education.
4. Issues with accreditation agencies.
5. Issues affecting curriculum requirements.
6. Any issue affecting educator preparation.
7. Any issue affecting the P-12 community, students, and parents.
8. Any issue affecting distribution of federal, state, or local funds.

## **Myths and Realities**

### **1. Voters need to “be somebody” to meet with their elected official.**

Find out when your legislator is in town and drop by for a chat or to leave information.

The legislator’s staff can be just as influential and are often the information gatekeepers.

Invite your legislator to campus or to meet for a cup of coffee and talk about your issue.

Most legislators will say yes, especially if the issue is framed as a problem important to the legislator and you as a voter.

### **2. Advocacy campaigns don’t matter**

Advocacy campaigns matter now more than ever. In today’s culture of the loudest voice gets the most notice (and the most public acceptance), advocates have power in numbers. Educators collaborating and forging coalitions are more likely to get an audience with policy makers. Campaigns begin by establishing goals and objectives, then collecting evidence and distributing it to stakeholders. A multi-person advocacy group is able to maintain communication contacts, keeping the issue in front of the decision maker.

### **3. All you need is a good lobbyist**

Good lobbyists can make a big difference by opening doors and defining targets to help your advocacy strategy, but their position has drawbacks. The lobbyist reputation is not necessarily positive, being known as having a vested (and financial) interest in whatever issue is in question. The advocate does not have this reputation and can approach decision makers in an open manner, thereby having a message that is more apt to be heard and accepted.

**4. If you contact the decision maker too often, your voice will be ignored.** Be aware that issues tend to resolve themselves over time. Remember, there is strength in numbers. The “numbers” can refer to participants but also to letters, phone calls, or in-person visits. Keeping the issue in front of the decision maker courteously has the best chance of getting attention – and action. As educators, we know about well-intended, but misguided policies with unintended consequences can affect students, parents, and educators. A multi-pronged strategy (letter writing, phone calls, texts, marches, and results of surveys and petitions, can be the most effective.

**5. Nobody cares about what voters think**

The elected official cares. Constituents have the ear of their elected officials but showing them that their voters care about your issue is critical and can mean the difference between support or opposition by the official.

**6. Advocacy is only done by professionals**

Educators have a unique perspective on issues concerning P-20 education. Passion, patience, and commitment outweighs professional skills. Drafting a clear message, focusing on one issue, and presenting the message in a direct and courteous manner can be accomplished by the non-professional. Many educators are afraid of advocacy because, traditionally, we have not been prepared to do advocacy. Remember, if we are not at the table, we will be on the menu!



## **Where do I start?**

### **Top 10 Tips for Advocacy**

1. Develop a passionate advocacy team.
2. Determine the resources that are available to your team.
3. Craft a clear, concise, and effective message.
4. Develop plans which includes short- and long-range goals.
5. Network and build partnerships with other organizations who are advocating on the same issues.
6. Know the perspectives of your stakeholders.
7. Cultivate relationships with government officials and staffers by keeping them informed and recognized.
8. Communicate clearly and regularly with stakeholders.
9. Be persistent, but patient in regard to the time that it will take to get things done.
10. Utilize a variety of media for communicating with stakeholders and government officials.

## **Who are the stakeholders?**

When advocating for a policy or issues, you need to know the people that are interested in your organization or educational setting. Some stakeholders may have more vested interest in the outcomes of a policy decision (e.g., a teacher preparation program or local school district). In general, stakeholders are any of the following, when thinking of teacher education:

- State Legislators and those that are assigned to the committee that oversees educational policies.
- Your state executive branch – Governor’s Office, State Secretary of Education, State Board of Education.
- Your local community members, which includes parents of school-aged children.
- Teacher Preparation Programs
- Students enrolled in teacher certification programs.
- Local, state, and national organizations (e.g., ATE).

As you will find, the end goal is to make sure all our educational settings have quality teachers and leaders; however, the stakeholders above may have various agendas. It is always important to research about the various people involved on a particular issue.

## **Who are the policy makers?**

The policymakers will include your local, state, and national political office holders (e.g., state representative, state senator, a mayor, U.S. Senator, etc.). Most people will realize that they need to engage these politicians to advance an educational policy item.

In addition to these elected officials, there are also state and national organizations that try to influence policy. It is important to be familiar with these groups, because elected officials will sometimes follow the talking points of a group in designing educational legislation/policy. The National Council of Teacher Quality (NCTQ) is an organization that has created policy agendas to be used by elected officials. Their viewpoint on teacher preparation is rather different from ATE or AACTE on what makes a quality program. Having a good perspective on political standpoints of national organizations is important in knowing how the group is trying to influence educational policy.

## **Who makes the rules about that issue?**

The field of education is so broad and has so many stakeholders that it can be difficult to sort out who is actually making the rules for any particular issue. It is important to know who is “in charge” since the wrong target can lead to wasted effort. The following questions can help you target your efforts more efficiently.

1. Is the issue at hand a matter of law? If it is, then the legislature is your primary focus. Check to see what committee is responsible for that issue. It is not always evident on the surface. For example, a curriculum issue may be logically in an education committee, but it may be directed elsewhere. In one instance, an anti-critical race theory bill was directed to the State and Local Government Committee.
2. Is the issue one of interpretation of previous legislation? Look to see who makes the “rules” that interpret the law. It might be the state board of education, or it might be a bureaucratic group that makes the rules.
3. Is it state policy? Often the state board of education (by whatever name it is called) will be the group that sets policy. In some cases, the superintendent of public instruction (by whatever name she/he is called) may have policy making power.
4. Is the issue one of local policy? Local boards of education may have the right to make policy or may be given that power. One example was an amendment to legislation that gave the local authorities to make a decision without much consultation with teachers, administrators, or the public (i.e., parents).
5. Who “does” policy in your state? It is good to talk with the State and Local Boards of Education. It is good to talk with legislators and get their views. It is also important to talk with teacher groups, parent groups, and with higher education groups (not just teacher educators).

## **State Boards of Education (Standards Board)**

Many states have created professional standards boards to intentionally oversee educator preparation programs. Standards were developed, assessment systems were created, and curriculum was revised. State expectations were formalized. All this work was completed by educators, both P-12 and college/university.

Today, the trend is to subsume the professional standards boards under the state Department of Education or dissolve them in favor of a state Board of Education. The state Board of Education is usually composed of state administrators, businesspersons, and maybe a few educators. These policy makers believe they know all about education because they experienced school; they don't always understand that education has changed – tremendously! This group needs to be engaged tactfully and respectfully. And advocacy activities may be more challenging when working with non-educators.

Preparation is mandatory with any advocacy activity but is critical when dealing with policy makers. Meetings will be short, and testimony time allotment is shorter. Create a short list of bulleted talking points to leave with board members. Organize the bullets from the general to the specific. Consider the following:

1. Identify the specific issue, its consequences, and their implications.
2. Identify stakeholders for possible collaboration or for forming a coalition. Create Action Alerts to maintain communication.
3. Identify the rules/laws that govern the issue. The rules are often more problematic than the law.
4. Identify ALL the policy makers. Do the research to understand their affiliations, expertise, and voting record.

Candidate performance data, employer and completer survey results, and candidate testimony are powerful strategies for conveying your message. Know your audience and prepare accordingly.

## **How to introduce ATE including who we are and what we do**

Brevity is key when introducing ATE and the organization's stance on an issue with policy makers. This includes written communication, as well as face-to-face interactions. ATE advocates should begin introductions by stating who we are and what we do...

"The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) is dedicated to the improvement of teacher education. We do this by developing quality programs to prepare teachers, tackle issues and practices related to the preparation and professional development of teachers and create opportunities for the professional and personal growth of its members."

Whoever is advocating should explain ATE's stance on the issue. If time allows, provide support for the issue with data and background information. Next, the advocate(s) should discuss how the policymaker(s) can help with the issue. Finally, it is important to express appreciation to the policymaker(s) for their time and try to establish a timeline for follow up communication.

Use the ATE Core Values and the position statements that ATE has posted when it is appropriate to the issue at hand. This adds weight and helps make the organization known!

## **How to use students and other stakeholders**

When engaging your elected officials in dialogue about teacher education, you will want to have students from your program participate in meeting with these politicians. There are state chapters that hold Teacher Education Day at their state capitol. On these days, it is an opportunity for students and other non-elected stakeholders to gather and speak about the importance of having quality teacher preparation programs. It is also a chance to discuss improvements and things that may not be working so well. By adding your voice to the dialogue, you can have influence over its outcomes. It is better to be part of the conversation, as opposed to the conversations having an impact on you after the fact, if you did not participate.

## How to work with your employer

One of the most often expressed fears about doing advocacy is the concern that your employer will be upset by your open advocacy. There are several ways to deal with this issue:

1. Be up front with your immediate superior (Dean, Department Chair, Provost, Superintendent, Principal) about the issue and what you plan to do. No one likes to be blind-sided especially in the case of volatile issues.
2. When you are writing or speaking, be very clear who you are speaking for. Generally, it is best to say that you are speaking for yourself as a professional not as a representative of any institution.
3. Use research and published materials to support your stand. Use data as much as possible. The more clearly and concisely you support your stand the more likely it is that you will be listened to *as a professional*.
4. If you are speaking for an organization (**State** ATE, other state groups), state that clearly. The Association of Teacher Educators (national) has position statements and policy initiatives that may help inform your work. Always check with groups before you speak as a representative.
5. Check to see if your organization has a person who serves as a legislative liaison or lobbyist. Get to know them!
6. Remember that you, as a citizen and as a professional, have the right to speak up on issues.



## **How to reach out to press - Releases, Letters to Editor**

The media can be extremely helpful in conveying the advocate's message to a larger audience. Traditional media outlets, such as television, radio, and newspapers, are still viable, useful, and low-cost means of reaching the public. Cultivate relationships with the media. Establishing rapport is critical, and becoming a valuable resource is most effective to creating positive relationships. Send reporters talking points, data, tips, and research. Familiarize them with ATE and your unit's mission, vision, and charge.

The most used strategy in working with the press is the letter to the editor. It is probably the least intimidating form of communication with the media. Letters can focus on a wide variety of topics. Editors are interested in publishing letters that focus on community issues, so P-16 education and educator preparation are relevant topics. Be concise and avoid "educanese", our jargon and alphabet soup of acronyms. Newspapers are written to the six-grade reading level. Write in a logical or chronological manner; a bulleted list draws attention. Include concrete examples where appropriate, especially when dealing with consequences of policies or legislation.

Create news and invite media coverage. Campus activities are worthy of news. Activities that focus on candidates, candidates working with students, and educators working with community and school partners are appealing to the press. Other activities, such as receiving a grant award, sharing a petition, or inviting to a march, are of community interest. Have talking points prepared for an interview or printed for distribution.

Host a panel forum focused on current issues and invite the media. This strategy can be implemented on campus, at a P-12 venue, or at a conference. Panels of teacher educators, P-12 teachers and administrators, candidates, students, policy makers or other "experts" are powerful vehicles for sharing information. Distribute three or four questions to the panelists and familiarize them with the format (order of speakers, time allotments, etc.) prior to the forum.

Be prepared to capitalize on breaking news. Release a statement to the press related to a current education news story within a day or two. This strategy is powerful when dealing with policy or legislation issues. This strategy requires the advocate to

stay current with pending legislation at the local, state, and federal levels or with community issues. A position statement can be prepared ahead of time in generic form and edited to fit the breaking news.

Create a Consumer Guide focusing on the current issue. Distributing consumer guides to the general public increases the probability of your issues being discussed at a wide variety of venues using a common language. Send a copy to the press.

Train a spokesperson. Have at least one person who is comfortable taking interviews and keep them prepared with relevant talking points.

## **How to gather information about issues**

This is what we do best. We are researchers and learners. The key is to use those skills as you prepare to begin advocacy.

Have you defined the issue clearly? This is the major first step in gathering information...you need to know what to look for as you explore resources.

Always begin with factual information. Make sure your definitions are non-partisan and correct. Look up the topic in as many resources as possible. Wikipedia has its uses and does a Google search. In essence, you are preparing a brief. Facts matter.

Have you gathered as much data related to the issue as possible? Make sure you use data that is both current and relevant. Do you need teacher candidate performance data? Check with the state Department of Education, the Board of Regents-Department of Higher Education. Also look for data that the federal government gathers. Do you need information and data about teachers, students, families? The state gathers more data than you can anticipate. Just be sure that you check for current and relevant data.

In many cases, issues begin as political issues. Do you know and understand the rationale given for the issue? What might be the political roots of an issue? Are there special issue groups that might have sparked the issue? If there is a liberal/conservative focus or political party identification? It is critical to be aware of this and to frame your response in cooler and more factual/data-based ways.

Use the local newspapers and news broadcasts to “take the temperature” of the issue and to be certain that you can make your stance clear. Often, responding to hot topics can be difficult but it is harder if you were not aware that the issue was volatile in a particular way.

## **How to process issues to create talking points**

When developing talking points to present to your local and state elected officials, you want to make sure they are succinct and provide potential solutions and not just why a policy or procedure does not work. Remember, you will most likely have a better chance of engaging the official by reaching out to the legislative aides who work in their office.

You will want to keep your talking points to one page, but, if need be, two at most. These summary items should bring in your national organization's (e.g., ATE) viewpoint on the issue. You will want to acknowledge work or viewpoints of the elected official that is involved on the educational policy item. You will also want to offer counter viewpoints to groups that may offer the other side to your issue. For example, you may be against having scripted reading programs, but there are organizations that argue for these programs (e.g., The Science of Reading). Take the time to research all viewpoints and perspectives on the issue, when creating your talking points.

## **How to organize events (day on the square, on campus, in districts, community events, on-line events)**

First, find out the schedule of the body you want to address. When is the legislature in town? When do committees meet? Are the calendar dates or days you need to avoid or to seek out?

Second, be clear on who you will want to reach? If you are focusing on an issue, what senators or representatives are likely to be involved? Knowing when appropriate people are available is critical in your planning. If you are taking that first step of introducing your organization and you to your target population, have you made sure all of that population will be reached?

State Legislatures are often the target of special days. See the appendix for a sample of training and talking points. Be sure you provide orientation and training for participants. It is helpful to work out talking points prior to the day.

Communication: Be liberal with your communication. Let everyone you know what you are planning and what you hope will happen. Check and recheck appointments and gatherings. People forget or get over-committed.

Publicity: When you plan an event (whatever the event is), plan the publicity. Before the event, use Facebook and other platforms like Twitter to get the word out. Take pictures! Use them to get attention and to give credit to those who have met with you.

Special case: On-line events can be a very powerful tool in your advocacy work. This is a way to reach people that limits their time commitments and provides a sound platform for your efforts. See the notes about publicity and communication! Also, check what platforms your contacts are most likely to use. Most are similar and relatively easy to use. Prepare carefully and have clear talking points.

## **Encouraging Pre-Service Teachers and P-16 Colleagues to Advocate**

### **Create a sense of responsibility for the profession**

- Present issue readings
- In-class discussion of current issues and events

### **Create Position Statements**

- Exchange statements for feedback
- Send statements to representatives and/or members

### **Develop informational documents**

- What are the issues of greatest importance in your field?
- Why should other people care?
- What data supports your cause?
- How does your issue support student learning?
- Keep it positive

### **Reduce Fear**

- Bring in local reps to talk with students
- Start small
- Make advocacy a daily task

### **Source:**

Smith, T., Ellis, C., Beck, J., Nichols, J., & Petrosky, P. H. (2018).  
Being and Teaching Advocacy: Teaching Ourselves and Future Teachers to be  
Advocates for Students and Education

## **How to Encourage Professional Colleagues in Collaboration/Coalitions**

Communication is, perhaps, the greatest skill the advocate has to offer. When collaborating with colleagues and building coalitions to achieve a united voice, listening is the most positive way to foster trust, rapport, and a successful collaboration. Listening is the critical link that allows greater understanding among colleagues and conveys the respect necessary to build clear, two-way communication.

Creating a successful collaboration or coalition can take time, and a series of meetings is often needed before advocacy activities can begin. Organization is the key to success when working with a group of colleagues. If the group is large, sub-groups may need to be created.

Identifying the topic and setting parameters is the critical first step when engaging colleagues. Concentrate on developing a clear message with relevant talking points. Exchange statements for feedback and revise accordingly.

Next, identify available resources. These resources can include materials, funds, people, and energy. Concentrate on feasibility.

Next, identify barriers that exist and strategies to eliminate them. This step may not be linear as barriers may not be evident at first look.

Finally, develop a timeline complete with objectives, benchmarks, and responsibilities collaboratively. Monitor progress, and adjust activities as needed.

And celebrate successes!

## How to monitor and evaluate (Example: Through SMART Goals)

### SMART Goals for Advocates

#### What Makes a Goal SMART?

Sometimes advocates have the tendency to focus on tactics more than strategy, but it does not matter how interesting or loud a tactic is if it is not effective in helping you reach your advocacy goals. When doing any strategic planning for public interest, one of the first steps should always be developing a goal or set of SMART goals, that is to say they are:

- **Specific:** A goal should be specific enough so that you can properly focus your resources and increase the chances of your goal being reached.
- **Measurable:** Can you develop indicators or specific criteria that allow you to measure the progress made towards the goal(s)?
- **Attainable:** Can the goal(s) be attained using the resources you have or that are available to you?
- **Relevant:** Ultimately, all your goals should be in line with you or your organization's mission AND serve the ATE members' interest.
- **Time-bound:** In most forms of advocacy, goals should have specific deadlines or a target date of completion.

#### Tips for Developing SMART Goals

- Effective advocacy is often a waiting game, one of laying groundwork and then seizing opportunities when they appear.
- Do your homework: Be sure you are well-versed in political procedures and processes and that you take the time to do your own background research on the issue you are working on. Read news articles, source materials, blogs, commentary, Congressional hearings and statements. In addition, be sure to do research on the backgrounds of the allies and policymakers.

Adapted from "[Public Interest Advocacy Primer](#)" \_ (c) by [Public Knowledge](#) is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0



## Resources and Templates

- Communication templates: Letters to editor, legislators, news outlets, press releases, etc. meeting follow-up  
Be sure to check the policies that local papers have about Letters to the Editor. Look for opportunities for “OpEd” longer pieces.
- Contact information for legislators and their aides, membership lists
  - Go to the state legislative pages (eg. Ohio Senate is [www.ohiosenate.gov](http://www.ohiosenate.gov)).  
The members, their districts, contact information, committee assignments are all listed.
- Website links
  - Legiscan
  - Gongwer
  - Legislative Offices
  - AACTE (Institutional members)
  - Local Newspapers
  - Congressional “papers”
  - LinkedIn
  - Resistbot
- Scenarios for practice and training
  - (see Appendix A for sample situations that can be used for training and for information)
- Debate/discussion/presentation skills
- Social media  
Facebook, Instagram, Twitter  
Check what formats the people you want to influence are likely to use (older folks may not use any of the current formats)

Be aware that phone calls are counted. Know that faxes are read. Letters sent by email are read as are “real” letters.

- Sample Ohio Day on the Square materials (See Appendix B)
- Sample Annual Teacher Education Day (PACTE) (See Appendix B)
- PowerPoint from Legislative and Governmental Relations (See Appendix C)
- PowerPoint from Alouf and Shelly (ATE) (See Appendix C)

## APPENDICES



**Appendix A Advocacy Scenarios**

**Appendix B Sample Materials for Advocating**

**Appendix C Sample Power Points**

**Appendix D Web Teaser**

## WHO ARE OUR ALLIES?

In this scenario, the state supreme court, over 25 years ago, declared the funding of public education in the state was unconstitutional. Since that time, the court has reaffirmed that position. A number of proposed solutions have been promoted over the intervening years. This year, two legislators worked with superintendents and others to develop a new funding system. Bills were introduced in both the House and Senate to make major changes in the entire funding system.

The two legislators, one Senator and one Representative, have reached out for support. The two teachers unions have been supportive but not particularly assertive. The state school administrators have been very vocal in support. Two of the very conservative organizations have mobilized in support of school voucher and/or choice plans and funding for them.

Testimony has been given in both the Senate education committee and the House education committee. As teacher educators, we have to make a decision about testimony and whether or not to become active in this debate.

One element of the decision-making has to do with the issue of allies for this and other education related issues. As a result of the pandemic in 2020 that is continuing into 2021, there are issues of licensure that have come to the surface. Testing, background checks, field experiences and internships have all been disrupted. Some of the accommodations have been bureaucratic but some have been the subject of legislation.

The role of a "small" group (i.e. teacher educators) in the big issues and the need for allies as we deal with the issues that directly impact on our programs and candidates are the basic questions that we have been dealing with?

The groups, for example:

- Legislators
- School administrators and their organizations (currently including five separate groups and one collaborative group)

- Teachers (two major teacher organizations)
- Higher education (writ large and including public and private colleges and universities)
- Special interest groups (conservative and liberal, school choice and voucher groups)
- Parents and parent groups

## When Legislation is Introduced

Across the United States, our guidelines for teacher certification are controlled by an individual state. Many of the states have departments of education that develop policies and regulations based on the laws passed by that state's legislative body. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 passed by the United States Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush found many state governments and departments of education having to rethink their PK-20 programs. One area that received focused was teacher certification and the requirements to become a teacher. For this scenario, we will focus on the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

In 2007, Pennsylvania changed their early childhood grade spans, N-3 and K-6, to new span of PreK-4. The rationale was that teachers would gain the early childhood perspective/focus for those teaching in K-4 grades. A Middle Level certification was established to span grades 4 – 8 with candidates selecting a concentration in a content area. The problem with these changes were apparent to those in higher education, but the assembly only partially considered those voices. One issue was the loss of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade in the certification of elementary teachers. In Pennsylvania, many districts have buildings with grades K-5 or K-8 for their configuration. Superintendents and Principals reached out to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for guidance, because they were missing certified 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers for their buildings. PDE was able to create a 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade add-on to one's PreK-4 initial certification through testing. This in turn has had a negative impact on the number of candidates seeking middle level certification, since there is a secondary certification of grades 7 – 12.

To study this issue, the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania established a Joint State Government Commission (JSGC) to review legislation from *ACT 82 of 2018*, which had an impact upon special education certification in PA. To acquire a special education certification, a candidate first earns their Pre-K-4 initial certificate and with a program of study in special education can then add-on the certification of Pre-K-8 (there is also a 7-12 special education certificate). For the purposes of advocacy, let us take a closer look at *ACT 82*.

The legislation (House Bill No. 1386) was introduced by Representative Kristin Phillips-Hill (Republican) from York County. She is now a state senator representing the 28<sup>th</sup> Senate district of Pennsylvania. Prior to entering politics, she had served on

the Dallastown Area School Board. With an eye on becoming a state senator, Representative Phillips-Hill needed to build up her legislative contributions. With a background in school politics and knowing how the grade span changes impacted her local area, she introduced legislation that would change the grade spans back to the original spans, prior to the 2007 change. Why you may ask? It stems from the disconnect between theory and practice and concerns from school administrators. From the JSGC (2019) report, we read:

Another superintendent stated that the previous K-6 certification bands, gave the districts a lot more flexibility, particularly when they wanted to make staffing changes down the road. According to this superintendent, the PreK-4 certification 'handcuffed school districts in the future.' In his hiring for the previous year, as a result, he had tried to hire a balance out of his applicant pool of those with newer certification and those with the grandfathered certification (p. 65).

With these concerns in mind, the legislation was introduced, but with that came a public period of hearings and advocacy in action.

Teacher preparation programs in Pennsylvania are primarily found at institutions of higher education (IHE). The faculty of these programs are trained in theory, but also have the practical experience of being a classroom teacher. The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators (PAC-TE) is an organization that focuses primarily on teacher preparation in the Commonwealth. The organization has an established Government Relations Committee (GRC) that is led by PAC-TE's president-elect. They attend meetings of the State Board of Education, and dialogue with members of PDE. The time an effort to create a collegial relationship between PDE and PAC-TE is so important and especially so, when new legislation is introduced (i.e., House Bill 1386). The impact of grade span changes for programs at colleges and universities is both time consuming (e.g., university curriculum committees) and financial (marketing of programs). By attending the regional meetings and speaking for the best interests of teacher candidates, the organization was able to avoid a major change to all grade spans. The one change that did go through (special education) does have many benefits for candidates and of course some drawbacks.

This scenario is very similar to how it plays out in other states. When state representatives and senators introduced education legislation, it often happens close to an election cycle. There are many reasons why this happens, but primarily, it is to run on a comprehensive platform that must address the education of children. To not be caught unaware, it behooves those in the profession to be actively involved with their state and national associations. Additionally, one will want to pay attention to local concerns that sometimes bubble up to become a state level issue, as was the case presented here. One suggestion for keeping on top of the legislative process is to sign up for daily/weekly digests with your state education committees. Even though many bills do not make it out of committee, it is always good to be aware of what may move forward and to understand its impact upon teacher preparation. Advocacy does not have to be reactive, but instead, you can be proactive with this level of activity. You can reach out and provide your expertise and knowledge to members of those committees in addition to those that represent you in your state's legislative body.

## School Funding

The state approved using state funds (vouchers) to support charter, independent, and religious P-12 schools under its School Choice initiative. The funds were taken from the allotment to public P-12 schools. The school funding formula listed in the state code was revised to support the initiative. The result was a double standard for receiving school funding – public schools were required to link funding to standardized testing outcomes, the other schools did not have to meet the requirement.

Coalition for Public Education: How to create a coalition with membership from lobbyists, education-related permanent members, annual membership for any interested person as an advocacy group.



## Advocacy Scenario

The state subsumed the Professional Standards Board under the state Department of Education. It then created a state Board of Education composed of businesspersons, community agency representatives, a few P-12 administrators/teachers, and a few university/college representatives, hand-picked by the governor and superintendent of public instruction.

The state Board of Education then created a new licensure framework for P-12 teachers, aides, and administrators. It was claimed the new licensure rule would help school districts to ease a teacher and administrator shortage. When the rule was published for public comment, the provisions included:

1. Anyone with an associate degree in a content area could receive an emergency teaching permit if they were enrolled in a preparation program,
2. Anyone with a bachelor's degree (in any area) could receive a principal's license,
3. Anyone with a master's degree (in any area) could receive a superintendent's license.

The P-20 community had learned in other dealings with the state superintendent and board that public comment would not be taken into consideration. After attending a mandatory meeting called by the state superintendent, it was decided to form a coalition among the different P-20 groups to address issues and concerns. The strategy was to create a united voice addressing concrete implications of the proposed rule.

The coalition was composed of the state presidents of the school board association, superintendents' association, principals association, teachers associations and unions, special educator association, association of teacher educators unit, association of colleges of teacher education unit, parents-teachers association, Head Start administrators, and a number of community agencies relevant to quality educator preparation.

The coalition held a series of meetings over the period of two months that outlined goals, objectives, and activities which were divided among the members. Members of each constituency assisted coalition members with tasks such as disseminating information (letters to the editor, state representatives, state senators, etc.). The


coalition held town hall meetings across the state to discuss the implications of the proposed rule. Bullet points with rationale statements were created to assist the public to understand the contents of the proposed rule. Television and radio stations covered the story as well (there was no social media at the time). The result was a position statement and call for action signed by all coalition members delivered to the superintendent of public instruction and state board, accompanied by a presentation of the document at the final hearing of public comment. The proposed rule was revised to eliminate the three most egregious points listed above in favor of the licensing requirements in place for teachers, principals, and superintendents.

**Appendix B: Sample Materials for Advocating**



## Day on the Square

May 15, 2019



Sponsored by:  
Advocacy Committee  
OACTE

1

### Purpose

- Get acquainted with legislators—use WOO (“Winning Others Over” strategies)—not a “lobby” day
- Provide information about current initiatives and educational issues as related to higher education
- Offer a signal to state leaders that educator preparation faculty are a committed constituency
- Use collective efforts to demonstrate improvements and successes in preparing high-quality educators
- Advocate for education legislation that supports our vision for comprehensive, high quality educator preparation

2

### Learn about your state legislators

- Who are your Senators? House Representatives?
- What is their party affiliation?
- What are their committee assignments?
- To what issues do they have a special interest in or commitment?

Note: If you do not have a legislative appointment, join another group that has scheduled one.

3

### What to expect

1. Introduce yourself, your institution, and OACTE
2. Refer to OACTE Legislative Platform Key Points-
  - OACTE Input on Educator Preparation Program Requirements and Policies
  - Policies that Foster Partnerships between EPPs and P-12 Districts
  - Sensible Approaches to Alternative Teacher Licensure
  - Stability of ODE Policies - Licensing, P-12 Curriculum and Instruction
3. Share positive stories of your institution, OACTE handout on retention, SUEP/OAPCTE handout on economic impact
4. Talk about areas of common ground, such as K-12 testing, school funding, preparing teachers in high-needs areas, opioid abuse and trauma-informed care

4

### For a Successful Meeting: Do...

- Say thank you!
- Respect their time: be on time, prepared and flexible
- Stay on message: be clear and concise
- Make it clear that you are asking for support for strong teacher quality provisions in legislation.
- Include a local story: provide facts, figures and anecdotes
- Build a relationship with staff: become a resource
- Leave information behind (OACTE Legislative Platform and Brochure; Data on retention/economic impact)
- Follow up: send a thank you letter immediately after the meeting & complete the survey

5

### Don't ...

- Be late or show disappointment if your meeting turns out to be with a staff person instead of a Member
- Assume staffers know all about the role of Colleges of Education and how legislation affects you and the students you serve
- Get off message - it's easy to “play the name game” or discuss the weather and lose valuable meeting time
- Use threats
- Forget to leave information behind
- Forget to follow up with a thank you letter and complete the Day on the Square evaluation

6



March 29, 2017

## The Ohio Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (OACTE)

### **Ohio Teacher Preparation: Adding Value to Ohio**

*In response to an increasingly competitive, global, 21<sup>st</sup> century marketplace, Ohio teacher preparation programs have united in a collective effort to prepare professional teachers for a changing world that is driven by knowledgeable, innovative, well-informed and responsible citizens. In such a world, human capital is the most prized resource and its development a national priority. Ohio teacher preparation programs are verified through the national Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) that ensures positive impact on P-12 learners. CAEP Standards focus on 1) content and pedagogical knowledge; 2) clinical partnerships and practice; 3) candidate quality, recruitment and selectivity; 4) positive program impact; and 5) quality assurance and continuous improvement. To meet these challenges, teacher educators are building strong partnerships with schools and communities to promote an innovative, clinical model of teacher preparation. Integral to this approach are intensive clinical experiences that are enhanced by thoughtful reflection and informed by meaningful coursework. Clinically-based teacher preparation is a performance-based, outcomes-driven approach that is adding value in the state of Ohio by:*

### **Ensuring that Our Graduates are Ready to be Successful in the Classroom on Day One**

New teachers need to enter their classrooms with the knowledge and skills needed to be successful from day one. Teacher preparation programs ensure their readiness by:

- Screening candidates and measuring their progress along the way through performance assessments, evaluations by supervising teachers, and other benchmark indicators of quality teaching.
- Observing candidates in P-12 classrooms as they instruct students (including English Learners and students with disabilities) and assessing their impact on student learning through student artifacts.
- Ensuring candidates can positively impact P-12 student learning and manage classroom behavior by providing strategies and opportunities to put them into practice.
- Providing a capstone performance assessment that safeguards competency and transition to a Resident Educator Program.
- Ensuring mastery of content knowledge by requiring rigorous coursework.
- Ensuring that all candidates are skilled in the teaching of reading.
- Aligning the curriculum of teacher preparation with Ohio Learning Standards for College and Career Readiness.

### **Strengthening Communities**

Teacher preparation supports both the educational development and the physical, mental and economic well-being of its youth thus strengthening communities by:

- Preparing teacher candidates to share in a community's concerns and passion for addressing rapid social changes and persistent problems affecting P-12 learners.
- Preparing teacher candidates to collaborate and learn with others so that teaching practice is continually improved.
- Providing community intensive and culturally responsive opportunities for clinical practice which enable teacher candidates to develop knowledge of community values and resources, learners, classrooms, and schools.
- Recruiting diverse and talented individuals into the teaching profession to strengthen community confidence in teachers and their ability to relate to the diversity of P-12 learners.

### **Meeting State and Local Needs**

Teacher preparation programs meet Ohio's need for responsible citizens and a globally competitive workforce by:

- Preparing candidates for high needs schools and subject areas.
- Shifting to a co-teaching, extended model of student teaching which increases instructional capacity.
- Supporting the professional development of classroom teachers.
- Challenging candidates to become globally-minded, innovative role models for P-12 learners.
- Implementing continuous improvement processes that maintain Ohio's position as a national leader in teacher preparation.
- Bringing prominence to Ohio by leading the nation in innovative approaches to teacher preparation.
- Tracking program completers through the first four years of teaching to gauge the impact of our preparation programs.



## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Teacher Education Day

### Tips for Visiting Legislators:

1. Clearly introduce yourself and treat the front office staff with great positivity and respect.
  - a. They are the gatekeepers to further contact with the state representative.
  - b. If you cannot see the rep, leave your card or any info you wish to share.
  - c. If it is the rep you really wish to speak with, ask for a return phone call or meeting. (This worked for me last year.)
  - d. A study by the nonprofit Congressional Management Foundation found that 97 percent of Congressional staffers agreed that in-person visits from constituents influenced their lawmakers. ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org), 5/1/19)
  
2. Do a little homework before hand.
  - a. Find a link or commonality you might have with your legislator. Each legislator has their own official website. Take a look to see how you can build a relationship. <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/>
    - i. Ex. Same hometown, job at some point, topic you agree on, etc.
  
3. When meeting with a staff member or the representative, be aware of your timeframe.
  - a. Be sure to state all you wish to share and don't rush; likewise, don't linger. Show your and their time is valuable.
  - b. Tell YOUR story. The legislators come to understand education and the work we do from their own experiences and roles; be sure to tell your story to educate them from your/our perspective.
  - c. Remember that you are the authority on the subject, so share what you know calmly and positively while making your argument. Remain patient.
    - i. Approximately 2,000 bills are introduced in the House in a two-year session, so education on our perspective is key.
  
4. Once you share the info, be sure to end with your "ask".
  - a. Tell them directly but politely what you want the representative or staff member to know and to do moving forth.
  - b. Provide any contact information and or materials, if necessary.
  
5. Follow up.

- a. Reinforce your visit and your message by following up by making phone calls, writing notes or letters, or dropping an email to your legislators. (I did this last year, and the senator replied to my email.)
- b. Personalized communication methods were more likely to change a member's mind than a professional lobbyist's efforts. ([www.nea.org](http://www.nea.org), 5/1/19)
- c. Keep the representative abreast of updates over time on the topics you discussed to increase or sustain your visibility.

## Supporting what works—Strengthening teacher preparation in PA

**Supporting recruitment to the profession.** PDE has provided data demonstrating the tremendous decrease (over 60%) in individuals completing teacher preparation programs over the last 5 years. In addition, PDE has reported the current and looming shortage in many parts of the state and in content areas including math, science, and special education. School districts across Pennsylvania are filled with thousands of students who have the potential to become very engaging and effective teachers. PK-16 partnerships provide the opportunity to fulfill a very important recruitment function in the context of their relationships. When PK-16 partners can grow and nurture an interest in the teaching profession among high school and middle school students; particularly students of color, several benefits can accrue. First, PK-12 students learn about pathways to teaching before they step foot on a college campus. Second, they begin to develop the habits of mind it takes to be an effective teacher – the love of learning, the importance of life-long learning, and the recognition of the disposition to serve others. Third, they begin to realize the value and benefit to their communities and to American society that teaching provides. When high school students can see their future selves as classroom teachers and school leaders, and they have a better understanding of what the pathway to that future looks like, public education in Pennsylvania is the beneficiary.

**Strengthening traditional teacher preparation programs.** Teaching today’s youth requires a broad base of knowledge across multiple disciplines in addition to a specialized content area focus. General education classes in multiple disciplines provide knowledge that can be interjected into multiple subject areas. For example, courses in art and history provide the base for teachers to place contemporary events in perspective and add richness to content specific disciplines. Teacher preparation programs include course work implementing instructional technology. Four year teacher preparation programs, unlike alternative teacher preparation programs, require such course work in addition to professional teacher education courses.

**Strengthening PA legislation by providing PAC-TE a seat at the table.** When legislation effecting teacher education is discussed at the committee level, please include PAC-TE in the conversation before the initiatives are proposed within the Senate and House of Representatives. A case in point is a year-long residency requirement which can be very beneficial, however, placements for pre-service teacher candidates are difficult to procure for a semester, especially in rural areas in which many state universities and private colleges are located.

## Supporting what works—Strengthening teacher preparation in PA

### **What can legislators do to Support and Strengthen Teacher Preparation in PA?**

PAC-TE asks the legislature to support programs that create a pathway to the classroom for new teachers in order to keep the pipeline of new teachers flowing. One example of this would be loan



forgiveness for teachers who teach in high-need districts. Another example effort would provide incentives and support to students of color to complete teacher preparation programs.

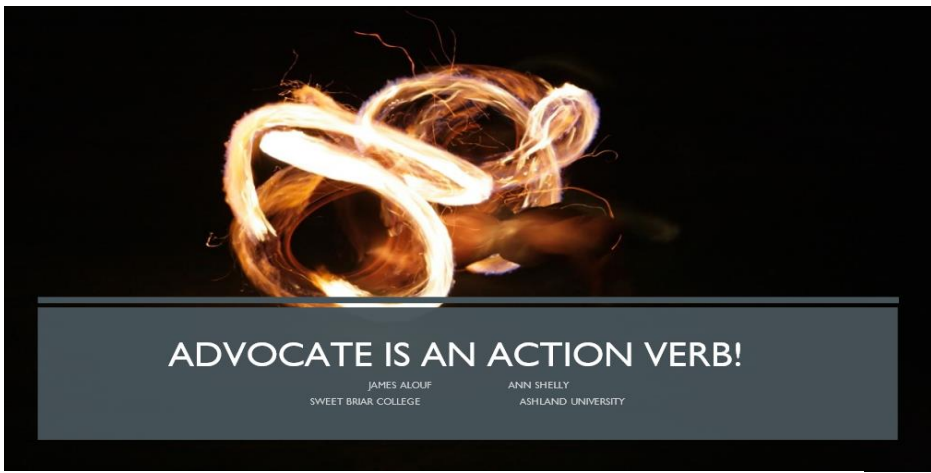
**PAC-TE** asks the legislature to strengthen teacher preparation programs by providing incentives for the most effective K-12 classroom teachers to mentor pre-service teacher candidates throughout the candidate's field placements. Due to state standardized testing in April, many of our K-12 teachers are resistant to mentoring teacher candidates during the spring semester which is the time most pre-service teachers are ready for student teaching.

**PAC-TE** asks the legislature to continue to increase funding at all levels, basic through higher education, in the annual budget.

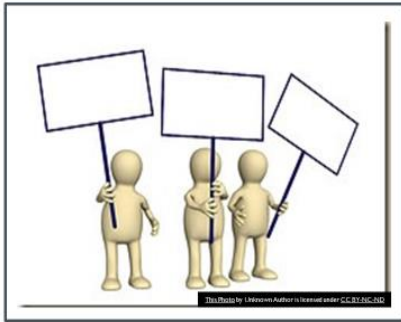
**About PAC-TE.** The Pennsylvania Association of Colleges and Teacher Educators is a nonprofit professional association for all those in Pennsylvania who are engaged in the preparation and development of professional educators. Currently with 88 member institutions (including private, state-owned, and state-supported colleges and universities), 375 institutional representatives, and 164 individual members, PAC-TE is the largest professional organization of teacher educators in Pennsylvania and serves as the primary voice for professional educator preparation programs across the Commonwealth. PAC-TE holds two professional conferences each year—one in Harrisburg in late October for three days, and a one-day meeting in State College in the spring. Members of the General Assembly are always welcome to attend! National teacher education organizations, such as the *Association of Teacher Educators* (ATE) and the *American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education* (AACTE), recognize Pennsylvania's teacher education programs as excellent. From 2005 to 2016, PAC-TE has received twelve unit awards from ATE. For more information about PAC-TE, visit our website at [www.pac-te.org](http://www.pac-te.org).

## Appendix C: Sample Training Power Points





## INTRODUCTION AND GOALS



- Educators can no longer be apolitical. It is vital, in a chaotic and divisive political climate, to speak out and advocate for learners, teachers, and teacher education.
- Our stories!
- We will also review the levels and kinds of advocacy that educators can be involved in and what the nature of advocacy at each level is.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE ADVOCATES

- 1) Self-reflective: Need to have knowledge to share. Need to spend time thinking about their own experience and the experiences of other educators in order to tell their stories effectively.
- 2) Discrete: Need to be able to be open, and confident.
- 3) Honest: Need to be brave enough to give straight information.
- 4) Evidence: Need to explore and investigate issues to support positions and not just shoot from the hip.
- 5) Generosity of Spirit: Help others make connections and offer resources that could be useful.

## KINDS OF AND PLACES FOR ADVOCATING

- Issues within your institution related to education curriculum, resources, stances on wider issues.
- Issues in your state related to licensure, program approval, entry year programs.
- Issues at the national level that impact teacher education, as well as, P-16 education.
- Issues with accreditation agencies.

## WHAT CAN INDIVIDUALS DO



- Letters to the editor can have a surprisingly powerful impact.
- Social media: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and many more vehicles can be used. Resistbot is one example of multiple outlets using one statement.
- Email and text messages can be quick and make a point easily.
- Phone calls: Never out of date, the phone is still a powerful tool.
- Letters to the decision-makers (often hand-delivered).
- Testimony: formal presentations to legislative committees, board meetings, etc.
- Visits to legislators to introduce yourself and your group or to make a specific ask.
- Organization websites with advocacy links.

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Write out your key points. Be clear and concise, whether oral or written
- Know what your "ask" is and why!
- Don't get lost in the "heat of the moment" -- keep to the message.
- Look for allies and reach out to them. Look for things you can support them on as you ask for their help. Many mandated curricula impact educator preparation as well as the schools. Other professional programs in your institution may have issues similar to yours.
- Look for hooks that relate to your audience and bring the issue to life for them. "Your children or grandchildren will be in schools and will work with teachers."
- Work out ways to watch for issues at each level. Professional associations can be a big help at the state and federal level. Institution-alike organizations are another source of information. Use the web to "watch dog" legislation (Gongwer, Legiscan, etc.).
- Find a support group to read your letters, texts, testimony.

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It is critical in times when there is chaos and confusion that we speak out when there are issues that impact the learners with whom we share the educational world. The bottom line (to quote my daughter—a lung cancer survivor) is to “pull up our big kid pants” and just do it!



# Advocating for Candidates, Students, and the Profession: Teacher Educators' Roles

Christina Ellis, Ed.D.

As a representative of the ATE Legislative & Governmental Relations Committee



# Teacher Educators as Advocates

## Get Ready

What is the issue at hand?

Who are the stakeholders that need to be involved?

What rules/laws govern that issue?

Who are the policy makers?

# Get Set



## Create materials

Leave behinds  
Brochures  
Short data



## Organize Events

On campus  
In districts  
In communities  
At conferences



## Meet with Stakeholders

Develop commonalities  
Use professional organizations  
Create Relationships



## Share on social media

Personal accounts  
Professional accounts  
Professional organizations

# Go

Meet with policy makers

Support legislation writing

Host public events

Leverage Relationships



# Cautions

01

Prepare,  
prepare,  
prepare

02

Follow your  
institution's  
rules

03

Be polite  
and  
respectful  
of others

04

Don't  
assume

05

Be truthful

# Create Advocates

Get  
Ready  
Provide  
Information



Get  
Set  
In-class  
activities

#### Create a sense of responsibility for the profession

- Present issue readings
- In-class discussion of current issues and events

#### Create position statements

- Exchange statements for feedback
- Send statements to representatives and/or members

#### Develop informational documents

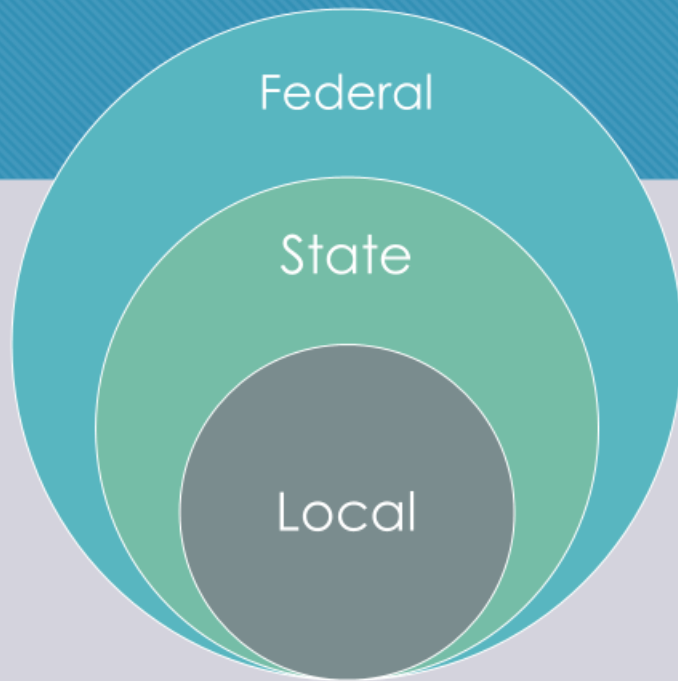
- What are the issues of greatest importance in your field?
- Why should other people care?
- What data supports your cause?
- How does your issue support student learning?
- Keep it positive

#### Reduce fear

- Bring in local reps to talk with students
- Start small
- Make advocacy a daily task

**Go**

Take  
them  
along



**“This was a life-changing experience for me. I’ll be a different teacher and a different person because of this opportunity.”**

**Celina Goehring, Bilingual Teacher Candidate**

**“I’m going home to start working on my dissertation with a whole new outlook on my research. From now on, everything I do will have an advocacy approach. I won’t be able to help it.”**

**Kristi Deitrich, Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate**

**“I’m going to be a completely different type of principal because of my time here. I see my leadership role now in a much larger scope than just my campus—there’s a whole country of kids out there counting on me.”**

**Patricia Horrigan, School Leadership Candidate**

# Discussion

## Discussion Questions

- What issues are currently of importance in your state?
- How have you successfully engaged in previous advocacy efforts?
- What barriers exist to being involved in advocacy efforts?
- What structures or vehicles exist for you to engage in advocacy?
- In what areas do you feel most competent engaging in advocacy?
- How can the L&GR Committee help you in your advocacy efforts?

## Appendix D Web Teaser



## ADVOCACY HANDBOOK



ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS 2022

### Why advocate?

*There is strength in numbers, and grassroots advocacy is probably the most powerful form of advocacy because it brings together so many voices. It is also the most diverse and flexible form of advocacy.*

**Advocacy is not a new concept to us as educators but it is needed now more than at any time in ATE's history. This handbook is designed to provide members with the tools essential to effective advocacy.**

## Why advocate?

Children  
matter.

Schools  
matter.

**Be a voice.**

Teachers  
matter.

Our problems  
and concerns  
matter.

## Where do I start? Top 10 Tips for Advocacy

1. Develop a passionate advocacy team.
2. Determine the resources that are available to your team.
3. Craft a clear, concise, and effective message.
4. Develop plans which includes short- and long-range goals.
5. Network and build partnerships with other organizations.
6. Know the perspectives of your stakeholders.
7. Cultivate relationships with government officials and staffers.
8. Communicate clearly and regularly with stakeholders.
9. Be persistent, but patient.
10. Utilize a variety of media for communicating.



## Introduce ATE: Who we are and what we do

*"The Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) is dedicated to the improvement of teacher education. We do this by developing quality programs to prepare teachers, tackle issues and practices related to the preparation and professional development of teachers and create opportunities for the professional and personal growth of its members."*

The ATE Advocacy Commission has advocacy scenarios, explicit instructions, and fully developed guidelines available to all ATE members. Our advocacy handbook is a comprehensive resource to aid members in developing their own advocacy teams.

Contact us for more information.

**Join us in advocating for our profession today!**