Making it Real

HELPING LEGISLATORS UNDERSTAND WHAT STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS REALLY NEED

INGSWA Fall Conference
November 7, 2014

Definition

- **ad·vo·cate** *verb* (ad-veh-kāt): to plead in favor of
- **ad·vo·cate** *noun* (ad-veh-keht):
  1. one that pleads the cause of another
  2. One that defends or maintains a cause or proposal
  3. One that supports or promotes the interests of another

Source: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocate

Advocacy Entails…

- Creating change through….
  - Education & awareness
  - Collaboration
  - Clear & consistent messages
  - Factual data of the problem or issue
  - Offering solutions
- Looking to policy makers as potential partners
  - Educating and engaging them in the issue

MCCOY and Advocacy

- Local, state and national
- Partner with coalitions, service providers, youth and community
- Indiana affiliate of Partnership for America's Children
  - National multi-issue advocacy coalition
  - Voices for Indiana's Children virtual network
- Public Policy Committee
- Youth Empowerment Team

MCCOY's Roles in Advocacy

Myths About Advocacy

- Local, state and federal policies do not impact local programming
- Only my administrators can be the "voice" of our agency
- You have to be an expert to talk to policymakers
- You have to be a lobbyist to have an impact on policymakers

Myths about Advocacy

- Other people will speak to the policymakers about this issue
- Non-profit charitable 501(c)(3) organizations and those who work in them are not allowed to do policy work
- Policymakers only listen to the rich, famous or people in their own party

Advocacy vs Lobbying

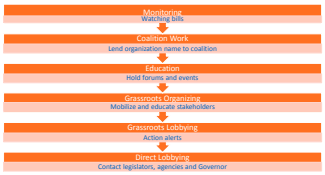
Advocacy

- Education and awareness of broad issues
- Informs about how policy decisions impact service provision
- Does not reference specific legislation

Lobbying

- Direct - Attempting to influence legislators to support or oppose a particular issue or piece of legislation
- Grassroots - A call to action that references specific legislation

Range of Activities



Examples

Advocacy

- Rallies and marches at the Statehouse
- Researching policies and tracking legislation
- Distributing legislative updates ***without*** a call to action
- Encouraging the public to register and vote
- Providing invited testimony to a legislative body
- Informational meetings with legislators
- Letter-writing, e-mail and phone campaigns not associated with specific legislation

Lobbying

- Meeting with legislator to discuss endorsing or opposing specific legislation
- Drafting language for existing or proposed legislation
- Call to Action
  - Organizing a public letter-writing campaign, urging support or opposition of specific legislation
  - Distributing information about specific legislation to members urging communication with legislators
- This also includes all research, planning and preparation involved in deciding to lobby

Quiz! Advocacy vs Lobbying

- Providing testimony at a hearing?
- Sending service statistics to a legislative assistant?
- Inviting your legislator to your school for a tour and asking him to support a change in regulation?
- Hosting a tour of 3 local schools for community leaders and legislators?

Advocacy & School Social Work

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

"Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice."

National Association of Social Workers

NASW Code of Ethics

- Service
  - Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems
- Social Justice
  - Social workers challenge social injustice
- Dignity & Worth of the Person
  - Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person
- Importance of Human Relationships
  - Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships

Advancing social justice on behalf of all, including the disadvantaged, disempowered, or discriminated against

"The social work profession promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance well-being. Utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments."

International Fedeiration of Social workers

Polices Affecting Schools & Students…

…are made every year

- Social/ Emotional/ Relational Behaviors
- Child Safety
- School Discipline and Policy

We have an opportunity to weigh in on what is beneficial or detrimental to the students we serve.

Examples of Recent School Policies – Social/ Emotional/ Relational

- 2010 – SEA316 Dating Violence
- 2011 – HEA1083 Various Criminal Law Matters
- 2011 – SEA4 Suicide Prevention
- 2013 – HEA1423 Anti-Bullying

Examples of Recent School Policies – Child & School Safety

- 2012 - SEA267 Education Concerning Child Abuse
- 2012 - HEA1169 School Discipline
- 2013 – SEA352 School Policies on Gang Activities
- 2013 – SEA1 School Resource Officers
- 2013 - HB1453 Anti-Hazing Policies
- 2014 – SEA85 School Resource Officers
- 2014 – SEA229 Firearm Matters

Examples of Recent School Policies – School Discipline & Policies

- 2011 – HB1307 Parent Service at Schools
- 2012 – HB1326 Student Discipline
- 2012 – HB1260 Absenteeism and Dropouts Reduction
- 2012 – HB1169 School Discipline Study Commission
- 2013 – HEA1169 School Discipline
- 2013 – SEA338 Absenteeism; School Improvement Plans
- 2013 – HB1421 School Discipline
- 2013 – HB1460 School Absenteeism
- 2013 – HB1415 Ineligibility for TANF
- 2014 – HB1287 School Discipline
- 2014 – HEA1319 Education Matters

And So Many More….

Why Get Involved?

- Some of the policies passed were beneficial for schools and students
  - HEA1287 Anti-Bullying
  - SEA267 Education Concerning Child Abuse
- Some of the policies passed will have possible detrimental effects
  - SEA229 Firearm Matters
  - SEA1 School Resource Officers

But how do we influence the outcome?

The Legislative Process

HOW IS A LAW MADE?

Indiana General Assembly

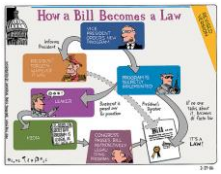
Two Chambers – House of Representatives and State Senate

- House – 100 representatives elected for 2-year terms
  - Speaker of the House presides when in session
- Senate – 50 senators elected for 4-year terms
  - Lieutenant Governor presides when in session, followed by President Pro Tempore

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Timeline

- Session
  - Odd years – Long session; biennial budget
    - January-April
  - Even years – Short session; clean-up
    - January-March
- Interim
  - Study committees examine issues & offer legislative recommendations
    - July-October
- Bill Drafting
  - Bills formed from ideas and recommendations
    - October-December

How a Bill Becomes a Law



http://www.rasnewin.org/archives/bill_h200aa.jpg

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Introduction

Idea Developed
- Suggested to legislator who authors or sponsors bill
- Other lawmakers can co-author bill

→ **Bill Drafted**
- Legislative Services Agency researches and drafts bill in proper technical form

→ **Bill Introduced & Referred to Committee**
- After filing, bill is read for first time
- Speaker or President Pro Tempore assigns to a committee

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Committee Action, Amendments & Votes

Committee Action
- Committee chair schedules bill hearings, open to public
- Legislators hear testimony, debate, offer amendments & vote

→ **Second Reading**
- After committee approval, bill goes to full chamber
- Legislators may offer amendments by majority

→ **Third Reading**
- Original or amended bill is eligible for passage in house of origin
- Bill passes when approve by majority of members
- Senate – 26 of 50
- House – 51 of 100

How a Bill Becomes a Law – Crossover to Second Chamber

Process
- Committee Hearing & Vote
- Second Reading
- Third Reading

Conference Committee
- If chamber of origin disagrees with changes, bill goes to 4-member bipartisan committee

Governor
- If bill passes both chambers, goes to Governor
- Can SIGN, VETO or let become law without signature

Key Times to Influence Legislation

- During interim
  - Testify at interim study committee meetings
  - Meet with legislators to educate on issues
- During bill drafting
  - Help legislator write a bill
  - Educate on the impact of policies
- During session
  - Testify at committee hearings
  - Meet with legislators to educate on issues
  - Lobby legislators to get votes on bills

Strategies

COMMUNICATING YOUR MESSAGES

Before Getting Started

- Understand connection between your school and public policies
- Will your role be within the school or within INSSWA?
- Discuss and clarify positions of school administrators
- Determine what other partners may be advocating on issue

Identifying the Issue

- What is the **issue(s)** or **problem(s)**?
- Why is this issue **important**?
- What are the **facts**?
- Do you have the **time and capability** to take this on?

Learn

- Know who the **decision-makers** are:
  - Champions
  - Allies
  - Fence sitters
  - Mellow opponents
  - Hard-core opponents
- Know what **issues legislators support or oppose**

Collaborate

- Are there other people **concerned** about this issue?
- How can you **work together**?
- What are **potential solutions**?
  - Program solution
  - Policy solution

Strategize

- What activities?
  - Education
  - Advocacy
  - Lobbying
  - Meetings
  - Events
  - Media
  - On-line
  - Phone/letter/e-mail
- **How can you make your case?**

Implementation

- Timeline
- Assign tasks

Framing the Message

- Who is your audience? (which people, what values?)
- What is your goal?
  - Increase awareness
  - Generate support
  - Motivate action
- What information and what format work best for your audience?
- What is the opposing viewpoint(s)?

Questions to Consider

- Are there any laws, rules, policies or pending bills regarding this issue?
  - Are they effective?
- How does this issue impact you personally?
- How would you respond to the opposing viewpoint?

Things to Consider

- Educate policy makers
  - Use **data**
  - Give possible **solutions**
  - Show the **impact** to them and their constituents
  - Share **personal** stories
- Educate the community
  - **Encourage** them to share their stories
  - Show them **how they are affected**
  - Give them **tools** to become advocates

Writing to a Legislator

- Use correct address and salutation
- Type or write your letter clearly
- Use your own words
- Keep message brief and focused
- Be specific about how issue affects you
- Know your facts
- Find out how your legislator voted on this issue of similar issues in the past
- Be persistent
- Say thank you
- Don't use a negative, condescending, threatening, or intimidating tone

Sample Letter from Youth to Legislators

Dear Senator/Representative _____,

Bullying is a critical issue facing youth in our communities today. [insert info about your connection to bullying through your job/first-hand experience with bullying, etc]

Did you know that according to the Centers on Disease Control (CDC) in 2011, Indiana ranked 3rd in the nation in the number of incidences of electronic bullying and bullying on school property? One in four students reported being bullied in school. This is a problem and we must act now to protect youth from the serious and long-lasting consequences of bullying. It's not just a problem for a certain portion of youth – bullying crosses all racial, socio-economic, and religious lines. In fact, youth who are overweight, have food allergies or have other special needs are the fastest growing population of youth being bulled.

I/we would appreciate your attention to the serious issue of bullying. [you can insert a section here about how you can help educate them, offer a tour of your organization/program, talk directly with youth, etc. if you choose].

Thank you for your consideration and for all of the work that you do on behalf of the youth in Indiana.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[organization's/school's name – if you choose]

[city name]

Calling a Legislator

- Start your call by saying, "My name is _____, and I am from _____." End your call by saying "Thank You." (Some offices may ask for your full name and mailing address so they can follow up with you on the issue)
- "Please let the Senator/Representative know that I support/oppose (bill number and title)." For your information, you may want to ask what the legislator's opinion is on the issue
- "I would like to urge him/her to vote for/against this provision because: (give one or two reasons)"
- If you would like to discuss a bill in greater detail with your legislator, ask the staff person taking your opinion to relay your name and telephone number to your policy maker or a legislative staffer and ask that your call be returned.

Meeting with a Legislator

- Keep it short and simple
- Have your facts straight
- Be on time, polite, and patient
- Make the issue personal
- Be a resource
- Before you leave, say thank you again
- Continue the relationship with the legislator (e.g. send a thank you letter)

Providing Testimony

- Address the committee chair and members and introduce yourself:
  - Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 1423. My name is My name is ---- and I am [position] at [organization].
  - Share why this is an important issue for you.
  - Personal story either about yourself or someone you know.
  - Add data or other information that helps make your case.
- Discuss why you feel this bill would help (or hurt) the issue and why you feel legislators should vote in support or opposition.
- Close by saying: thank you for considering this important issue and I hope that you vote in support (or opposition) of this bill. Thank you.
- Committee chair will ask the committee members if they have any questions. Wait for questions – if there are none you can go back to your seat.

Using Social Media

- Legislators are on Facebook and Twitter
  - Follow them, friend them
  - Can learn useful information
- Be aware – if using personal accounts – watch what you say and post!
  - Once it's out there, it's out there.

Who are your Legislators?

- Local – IndyGov Tool http://maps.indy.gov/GovProfile/
- State – AccessIndiana http://maps.indy.gov/GovProfile/
- Federal – GovTrack http://www.govtrack.us/

Advocacy Resources

- MCCOY – www.mccoyouth.org
- Children's Coalition of Indiana – www.childrenscoalitionin.org
- Spark Action – www.sparkaction.org
- Partnership for America's Children – http://partnershipforamericaschildren.org/
- Stand for Children – www.stand.org
- Congress for Kids - www.congressforkids.net
- ICivics – www.icivics.org
- The Center on Congress at Indiana University - congress.indiana.edu

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