

The Busy Teacher's Guide to Advocacy

You are a busy educator, so let's cut to the chase! You want to make things better for your students and for music education. View advocacy as an investment – a little effort now can pay off later.

Advocacy Techniques That Fit into Your Schedule

1. Make an email list of important people – local elected officials, your rep. and senator, district leadership, and school board.
 2. As your concert approaches, invite them via email. Reserve seats. Let them speak for a moment. Find a creative way to promote your cause while they are there.
 3. When something good happens, send a brief email to them. Spread the good news. Do this 3-4 times a year minimum.
 4. Invite other classes into your room for “mini-concerts,” especially before Winter/Summer Break when other teachers need to fill time. Get other teachers and staff on your side.
 5. Hold a concert/event where you briefly teach the audience part of your curriculum!
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Step 1: Pick Your Goal

What would help your students succeed, make your job easier, or improve the field in general? Pick a goal. Be very specific. Specificity and simplicity is key.

My students/my school needs: _____ by the date of _____

Step 2: Find Your People

You need people to make this happen. You need people to fill 2 roles: people to stand with you and people who have power. Brainstorm names. Ask them for concrete deliverables.

People to help me: _____

Step 3: Make Your Ask

Once you know specifically what you need, and you have a coalition of people to help, it's time to execute. Here are some ideas:

- Ask parents to send emails to the school board/district leadership. Provide parents with a basic template, then ask them to write about why the ask will help their kids.
 - Get a trusted parent to spearhead organizing the other parents.
- Schedule a phone call with someone in the district who has some power to make changes.
- Invite a legislator or other official to your concerts or classroom. Show off what's great, then ask for what you need.
- Start a shared list of what your fellow colleagues need too. Involve each other. Delegate tasks.

Step 4: Be Persistent and Kind

It takes time. You don't have to spend hours, but it will take months or years. Plant the seed now. Do something once a month. In the future, your students will be glad you did.

Questions? Contact Andrew Burk at andrewburk01@gmail.com