

## SCHOOL BOARD ADVOCACY

One of the School Board's important functions is to serve as an advocate for the District and all of its students, and, more generally, as an advocate for public education and educational excellence. The Board's advocacy role encompasses intra-district and local community responsibilities, and it also extends beyond the District to include regional, state, and even national concerns.

Advocacy activities are attempts to engage and communicate effectively with others. Advocacy activities have varied purposes and include activities that aim to collaborate, promote, influence, persuade, listen, problem-solve, or simply inform.

The Board intends to work with the District Superintendent on identifying and implementing advocacy initiatives that foster:

- Student engagement
- Parent engagement
- Staff engagement
- Community engagement
- Institutional engagement (e.g., businesses, other schools, institutions of higher education, etc.)
- Legislative/public policy engagement (e.g., connecting with elected representatives, the Department of Public Instruction, relevant state and federal agencies, other units of local government, etc.)

The Board encourages the District Superintendent and Board President to structure portions of Board meetings as advocacy opportunities, such as showcasing particular student accomplishments, District programs, and District partnerships and by using meeting time to identify and address legislative and other advocacy opportunities. The Board will also consider the extent to which ad hoc committees might be utilized to further the Board's advocacy and engagement goals.

Specifically related to legislative and public policy issues, the Board seeks to both proactively and reactively engage and advocate on behalf of the District and its students with lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials. On matters of common concern, the Board will leverage the resources and activities of interest-based collaborations and of regional and state-wide associations that are pursuing shared interests and objectives.

All Board members are encouraged to engage in advocacy efforts. Any positions communicated should represent those approved by the Board. If not approved, Board members should clarify that the positions are their own.

Periodically, the board may authorize an individual board member, in addition to the board president, to act as spokesperson for the express purpose of advocating District interests and Board positions to lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials. The authorized spokesperson shall convey such interests and positions in a manner that are consistent with any specific or general direction that

has been given by the Board. The authorized spokesperson shall adhere to any limitations on their authority as may be specified by the Board.

In pursuing the Board's legislative and public policy advocacy goals, the Board may not (1) campaign for or against any particular candidate(s) in an election; (2) use District funds to make contributions to any candidate or political committee; or (3) use any public resources for any other political purpose that is prohibited by law.

**Cross References:** Board Member Authority and Responsibility, 161  
Meetings of the School Board, 170  
Agenda Preparation and Dissemination, 171.2  
GC 2, 3, and 7

**Legal References:** Wisconsin State Statutes: 13.61 to 13.65; Section 120.13

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