



Ten Principles of Advocacy

Consider yourself an expert information source. Elected officials have limited time, staff and many competing issues to deal with every day. They cannot be as well informed as those actually implementing or witnessing the programs. You can fill their information gap and be their "expert."

Always tell the truth. Make your word impeccable.

Know who is on your side. This is your strength. The elected official will want to know this.

Know who is not on your side. The elected official will want to know who stands against your issue. Anticipate the opposition arguments and provide the answers and the rebuttals.

Make the elected official aware of any personal connections you may have. If you have friends, relatives, or colleagues in common with an elected official let them know. This is how we connect with one another.

Admit you don't know something. It gives you a reason to follow-up with the official after you have researched an answer.

Be specific. Tell the official what you want. Ask them directly. Expect a direct answer in response.

Follow-up. The elected official should be held accountable for any statements they make to you. Find out if the official took action. Then thank them for any action they took and make your next request.

Don't "burn bridges." It is easy to get emotional about these issues. Don't lose it. Your enemies today may be your allies tomorrow. Always leave your dealings with elected officials on positive terms. You will be back.

You are the boss. You should be courteous but not intimidated. Elected officials work for you.

For more information go to www.afterschoolalliance.org.