

Positive Pro Active Advocacy Ideas

1. Start a Facebook page for your organization and have parents and other supporters log in. Make sure that interesting things are posted in a timely manner. Have a parent update it for you.
2. Start a web site (Google is free) and again have a parent update this page with photos of students (make sure you have permission) and timely events along with notices of concerts or exhibits etc.
3. Talk with your principal and superintendent and volunteer to make a short presentation to your school board on the arts and your program. Bring in a few students to make the presentation. Try to do this early in the Fall semester.
4. Make a list of talking points (see below) and find a parent or supporter (or group) who is a leader in your community. Give them these talking points so that they can refer to them during their interactions with school board members and administration.
5. Two good quotes to use are: “We aren’t trying to save the arts; we want to use the arts to save children.” (Hard to argue with!) And, “We don’t teach the arts to make them professionals, or to make them teachers, we teach them the Arts to make them Human!”
6. Start NOW! Decisions are being made daily as the economy and the state budgets change. Be Pro Active and positive. You catch more flies with honey ...

Advocacy Tips

1. All politics are local and your parents are the best source of help for you. Do not go it alone. Get the information to them and let them go to the board at the official meetings and also at the coffee shop etc. Contact outside help through the professional organizations of which you belong. IBA, IAAE, IMEA, ICDA, ISTA etc. Make sure that your local Education Association is aware of the proposed cuts.
2. Use all the information you can find that show the impact of the arts on students. Get information from neighboring districts and also from districts your size but since time is always a factor make the facts personal by pointing out specific examples that pertain to your students! Do you have the yearbook editor/top football player etc. in a performing arts group? Did you have a former art student who has gone on in the visual arts? List who would be hurt by these cuts and be specific ... name names!
3. Remember you were hired to be an advocate for your teaching assignment and discipline. Let the Administration and the Board know that you are advocating for their students in their district. Otherwise it is easy to get sidetracked into making it look like you are only interested in preserving your job. Remember (but don’t say) that this is an administrative choice to make and you should not get pressured into making that choice for them. Do not allow the divide and

- conquer technique to be used to the detriment of your students. The administrators are paid (more than you are) to make these hard decisions and you should not let them off the hook by taking any responsibility for making their decisions easier.
4. Campaign, campaign, campaign as much as possible but always turn it toward the needs and benefits of the students in *your* district.
 5. Remain as positive as possible (wear your game face) as this not only makes you appear more professional but also can make your day go a little smoother in the face of adversity.

Talking points

(These are suggested topics but I am sure that you can find additional ones that are specific to your program and your community including why people should choose to buy a home in your district as opposed to the neighboring areas.)

Hello (Board Members Name)

Did you know that:

The GPA of the HS performing ensembles has been 3.623 for the last three years. The High School GPA is 3.25.

8 full time music staff impact 2,516 students through the arts for 266 hours each week.

There are 160+ public performances each year for an estimated impact on more than 130,000 audience members.

Eight staff members have a combined experience of over 100 years.
7 BA's, 1MA, 1National Board Certification.

Mix the talking points up but cover them all. Be succinct and don't compare to sports or anything else.