



# Monroe County School Boards Association

## Effective Advocacy

MCSBA's mission is to support public school leaders as they strive to provide an equitable education for all students. Effective advocacy helps to support that mission and promote the value of public education.

Our Legislative Committee annually prioritizes educational concerns that are consistent across all member districts. Together, we raise awareness of the issues and work collaboratively with State and Federal officials to impact change.

MCSBA Legislative Committee members serve as liaisons to their Board of Education. It is their responsibility to share information and keep fellow Board members apprised of legislative business.

### Groundwork for effective advocacy:

#### **1. Focus**

- a. Determine membership priorities. Narrow the focus to the top 3-4 areas to concentrate on. A limited agenda allows a focus of energy and more likelihood of success.
- b. Ensure priorities are *group* priorities. MCSBA develops position papers and talking points to represent the collective group. It's imperative that the association have a unified voice.

#### **2. Data**

- a. Do your homework. Collect data, understand all aspects of the issue, and be prepared to defend your position.
- b. Use specific examples of the impact on our local school districts.
- c. Research legislators and legislation related to the issue prior to an engagement.
- d. Offer possible solutions to improve the outcome of the situation for all member districts.
- e. Adequacy in funding is always a priority. Be sure to include financial implications when possible.

#### **3. Statements**

- a. In the Fall, the MCSBA legislative committee reviews current position papers and makes updates as necessary.
- b. Position papers are shared with State and Federal officials at advocacy events throughout the school year. They are the foundation of all MCSBA advocacy efforts.
- c. School board members must be prepared to adapt to new issues that arise throughout the school year. The association may write a memorandum of support to share with government officials on time sensitive matters.

- d. Be clear, concise, and correct with information when sharing with constituents and/or legislators.

#### **4. Relationships**

- a. Building and maintaining collaborative relationships with government officials is essential to success in MCSBA advocacy work.
- b. Public education relies heavily on strategic partnerships rooted by a mutual interest in student achievement.
- c. When applicable, identify groups who share your goal. Multiple stakeholder groups working together helps draw attention to a cause. (ex. Teacher's Union, PTA, Town Board)
- d. Different perspectives with a shared vision have a greater likelihood of success.
- e. Knowing who your representatives are and what they are involved in is critical.

[Legislative Districts representing MCSBA Member Districts](#)

#### **5. Legislative Visits**

- a. Contact legislator office staff to schedule an appointment.
- b. Assemble a team of MCSBA members to represent the association at the meeting
- c. Prepare talking points in advance. Include sponsored legislation to support initiatives if applicable. Offer recommendations to problems or concerns.
- d. Prepare folders with pertinent information to give to the representative. Include MCSBA position papers, MCSBA publications, and contact information.
- e. Identify a facilitator and notetaker in advance.
- f. Be on time. Wear proper identification. Dress to impress.
- g. Begin with introductions and affiliations.
- h. Always be respectful and polite.
- i. Keep focus on predetermined discussion points.
- j. Offer to follow up with further data if needed.
- k. Be courteous of their time.
- l. Follow up with a summary and appreciation, including any requested information.

#### **6. Stay informed**

- a. Keep up to date on legislative activity at all levels. Maintain relationships and keep conversations open to new partnerships in support of public education.