

## Module 1: Advocacy



### GOALS

By the end of this module, participants should be able to understand:

- The rich advocacy history of National PTA.
- The specific niche of grassroots advocacy National PTA holds in comparison to other service-minded organizations.
- The process for turning a problem into a grassroots issue campaign.



### TIME

**Total: 45 minutes**

- Presentation: 35 minutes
- Video: 10 minutes



### OVERVIEW

In this section, participants will learn about the advocacy history of PTA, the various types of service organizations working to improve social issues, and the early stages of launching a grassroots advocacy campaign.



### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Easel paper
- Masking tape
- Dark markers
- Video: PTA Advocacy – A Legacy in Leadership. If your training room has access to wifi you can access the video directly on YouTube: [Youtube.com/watch?v=VPf1\\_ojajlc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VPf1_ojajlc). If you are unsure, you should download the video from PTA's website prior to the training: [PTA.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2720](https://pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2720).



### HANDOUTS

- PowerPoint Printout
- Advocate for PTA
- Strategy Chart Blank
- Strategy Chart Sample



## EQUIPMENT NEEDED

- Easel/flipchart
- If you have elected to develop your own PowerPoint presentation to suit your specific training audience for this module, you will need:
  - Computer with PowerPoint software
  - LCD projector
  - All cords and cable needed to connect computer with LCD projector, and extension cord to connect computer and LCD projector with electrical outlet
  - AV stand or tab (if you will be using PowerPoint in this module)
  - Portable speakers for videos



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## Introduction

### WELCOME TO MODULE 1: ADVOCACY HISTORY



#### SAY

By the end of this module, you should be able to understand:

- The rich advocacy history of National PTA.
- The specific niche of grassroots advocacy National PTA holds in comparison to other service-minded organizations.
- The process for turning a problem into a grassroots issue campaign.



#### ASK

How many of you have met someone who thought PTA was all about bake sales and fundraisers?



#### SAY

Nearly everyone! This is a perception that is absolutely incorrect. National PTA was founded by advocates, and has a strong history of impacting education policy and advocating — NOT fundraising — for children. We are going to kick off this training with a brief video about PTA's history of advocacy, and the concrete improvements now realized for children as a result of our work.



#### PLAY VIDEO:

**PTA Advocacy – A Legacy in Leadership**



#### DISPLAY ON A FLIPCHART OR POWER POINT:

##### **National PTA Public Policy Priorities**

- General education
- Special education
- Early childhood education
- Education funding
- Child health and nutrition
- Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention
- School safety



#### SAY

As you saw in the video, PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. Founded in 1897, PTA has a long, successful history of influencing federal policy to promote the education, health, and well-being of all children — resulting in kindergarten classes, child labor laws, school lunch programs, a juvenile justice system, and strengthened parent-teacher relationships. PTA continues that legacy today by fighting for change under its federal public policy priorities:

*Family engagement and general education* - Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act—No Child Left Behind (ESEA-NCLB) remains a top goal for National PTA, including improvements that prioritize capacity building for the implementation of systemic and sustainable family engagement practices that increase student achievement. In addition, PTA is fighting for improvements to ESEA-NCLB, including access to well-rounded curricula, equity protections for disadvantaged populations, and accountability to parents and the community.

*Special education* - Through the reauthorization of ESEA-NCLB and implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), PTA will continue to advocate to ensure that all students graduate college and are career-ready, that family engagement remains a fundamental principle of IDEA, and that the rights of children with special needs and their parents are fully protected.

*Early childhood education* - PTA supports federal and state incentives for high-quality child care and preschool programs that are affordable and accessible, coordinated at all levels, characterized by high standards for teaching, training, health and safety, and able to incorporate strong family engagement components.

*Education funding* - Federal investment in quality education is critical to our nation's long-term success. PTA supports the need to safeguard vital education investments in all federal deficit reduction efforts, secure dedicated funding for family engagement in Education, increase funding for IDEA, and maintain or increase investments in quality early learning programs.

*Child health and nutrition* - National PTA strongly supports continued implementation of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. This includes implementation of federal guidelines for minimum nutrition standards for all foods sold to students in school; guidance and technical assistance on local wellness policies, and the continued support for improved nutrition standards for meals served as part of the National School Lunch Program.

*Juvenile justice and delinquency prevention* - Protecting the rights of children and youth involved in the justice system continues to be an area of focus for PTA. In 2013, PTA will advocate to ensure that youth who are truant are kept out of secure juvenile corrections facilities by elimination of the Valid Court Order exception to the Deinstitutionalization of Status Offenders Core Requirements in federal legislation. PTA will also work to ensure that Jail Removal and Sight and Sound Separation core protections are extended to all children less than 18 years of age.

*School safety* - School safety is a crucial component of effective learning, and a core tenet of the National PTA. PTA believes that the safety of children and faculty in all school settings is a fundamental right, and has made it the utmost priority for our programmatic and advocacy work. In 2013, PTA will work to support federal programming and policies related to safe routes to school, bullying prevention, and the protection of children from gun violence.

## GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY 101



### DISPLAY ON A FLIPCHART OR POWERPOINT (GRAPHIC)

#### Organizing Forms:

- Service
- Education
- Speaking out for others
- Grassroots



### SAY

We can keep putting Band-Aids over the holes in the dam, but until we repair the dam itself, it will keep leaking. This is where advocacy comes in. Advocacy is required to achieve significant reform in education. This section will introduce the four basic forms of organizing, but our entire training focuses on grassroots advocacy. I want to be clear about what we mean by the term grassroots advocacy in this session because it can have different meanings to different people.

There are many ways to achieve social change, and all have their uses. PTA even utilizes all these forms of social change in our overall advocacy efforts. An example of direct service organizing would be a PTA unit purchasing new computers for a school that cannot afford them. This temporarily addresses the issue today and provides a direct service to students and the school.

A second form is research and education on an issue. PTA produces issue briefs from time to time on pressing education issues, like family engagement or local wellness policies. The purpose is to collect information on a specific topic and educate members and the public on that particular issue.

Thirdly, there is the concept of speaking out on behalf of other people. PTA does this all the time: speaking up for every child with one voice. All of these forms of advocacy are important in their own right, but all are different from the kind of social change that will be the subject of this workshop.

The type of social change we are talking about here is called grassroots advocacy. What we mean by grassroots advocacy is that the people directly affected by a problem take action to win a solution. Here is an example of how grassroots advocacy is different from the other kinds of social change work I just mentioned:

*Suppose that I am living in a community where homelessness is a problem.*

- If I set up a volunteer group to open a soup kitchen or a shelter, that would be an example of a service approach.
- If I studied homelessness and tried to count the number of people without homes and then widely distributed the information, then that is an education approach.

- If I go to city hall and lobby for more shelter beds, that would be speaking out on behalf of others. The people without homes would not necessarily be involved or even know that I was doing it. I would be advocating for others.
- However, if I organize a large number of homeless people to first decide on the solution that they want, and then THEY pressure the city to win it, that would be a grassroots advocacy approach.

The people directly affected by the problem take action to win a solution. They might decide to fight for more shelter beds or they might join together with other groups to make the city allocate money to build affordable housing. The solution can be whatever the group decides. When the people directly affected by a problem take action to solve it, that is what we are calling grassroots advocacy. Grassroots advocacy in this sense is based on the power of the people with the problem to take collective action on their own behalf.



## DISPLAY ON A FLIPCHART OR POWERPOINT

### Three Principles of Grassroots Advocacy:

- Win solid improvements.
- Make people aware of their own power.
- Alter the relationships of power.



### SAY

There are three fundamental principles of grassroots advocacy. First, you want to win concrete improvements in people's lives. We will talk more about how to set short-term, intermediate and long-term goals in the strategy module. You should always have a concrete goal that you are working toward.



### TRAINER NOTE

If you are not conducting the Strategy Module in your training, distribute the "Strategy Charts" (blank and sample) so they will have access to this important resource.



### SAY

Second, you want to make people aware of their own power by achieving these goals. The short term goals are smaller stepping stones, and something to keep your members motivated for the long haul of education reform. And third, you want to alter the relations of power between people and the government by building strong, permanent, local, state and national organizations. PTAs that have participated in this training and used the skills for their issue campaigns have all reported that they have significantly improved their status in the education community. They are now players where they may not have been before.

## MAKING THE LEAP INTO GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY



### SAY

Until now, your PTA may have been involved in a some or all of the different types of advocacy, depending on what you were working on. But for issue campaigns and addressing the underlying causes of the problems in your state, district or school, grassroots advocacy is the most powerful approach. How do you make the leap from plugging that leak to fixing the dam?



### DISPLAY ON A FLIPCHART OR POWERPOINT:

#### Creating your Grassroots Advocacy Campaign

- Step 1 – Identify the problem
- Step 2 – Turn the problem into an issue campaign
- Step 3 – Create your strategy
- Step 4 – Advocate!

*Step 1 - Identify the problem* – What is the problem that your PTA can address? Did your state cut school funding? Did your district cut bus service? Does your school have safety problems during drop-offs or pickups?



### ASK

Can someone provide an example of a problem that your state/local PTA is facing?



### TRAINER NOTE

Get a few examples, and use one problem to walk through this step-by-step process. Look for a problem that all attendees can relate to like school funding cuts.



### SAY

So let's look a little closer at Joe's problem of school funding being cut. If we were solely a service association, we might only do a fundraiser for our school to help close the budget gap. If we were solely an education association, we might only conduct a study that identifies the impacts of funding cuts on students. If we were solely speaking for others, we might only pay for a lobbyist to head to the capital and lobby for more school funding. But we are also a grassroots advocacy association, so we will create an issue campaign that families will rally behind and address for themselves.

*STEP 2 – Turn the problem into an issue campaign by identifying the solution.* In this instance, our campaign might be called the PTA campaign to adequately fund public schools. Taking a look at some of National PTA's policy priorities: the problem of childhood obesity was turned into the issue campaign of improving school lunch nutrition.

So you have your issue, but now is not the time to start your picket lines or meetings with your governor. Any successful campaign needs a plan or a strategy.

*Step 3 – Create your strategy using the Strategy Chart.* Each column of the strategy chart builds upon the last so it is important to work through the columns in order, as best as possible. We have provided you a blank chart that you can use as your template, and a sample strategy that explains each of the components.

*Step 4 – Launch your campaign!* Make sure that you celebrate the small victories along the way to keep your members inspired and energized. Some of these issues are short and some will take years to accomplish — so it is vital to constantly grow your team.



# HANDOUTS

# ADVOCATE WITH PTA



All PTA® members can be advocates.  
In fact, you may be an advocate already.  
If not, become one today!!

## WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

In the context of PTA, advocacy is supporting and speaking up for children—in schools, in communities, and before government bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children.

## ADVOCATING FOR FEDERAL POLICY

PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. Founded in 1897, PTA has a long, successful history of influencing federal policy to promote the education, health, and well-being of all children—resulting in kindergarten classes, child labor laws, school lunch programs, a juvenile justice system, and strengthened parent-teacher relationships. PTA continues that legacy today by fighting for change under its federal public policy priorities:

- Family Engagement in Education
- Opportunity and Equity for all children
- Child Health

## ADVOCATING FOR STATE POLICY

State laws can have a major impact. Involving PTA members in state and local advocacy can play a pivotal role in securing adequate state laws, funding and policy for the education and well-being of our children.

## WAYS TO ADVOCATE

Child advocates work with policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure sound policies that promote the interests of all children. Here are a few ways PTA members can influence policy:

- Educate members of Congress and their staff on PTA's federal public policy priorities.
- Sign up for the PTA Takes Action Network at [www.pta.org/takeaction](http://www.pta.org/takeaction) and respond to action alerts to reach your legislators on important issues and legislation.
- Work with the school to implement a strong family engagement policy, as required by federal law.



- Serve on the school board; attend school board meetings.
- Attend school district meetings on such topics as healthy alternatives in the lunchroom and federal, state, and local budget cuts.
- Work with school leaders and state education officials to implement PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- Write a letter to the editor about the importance of family engagement in education.

## ADVOCACY RESOURCES

Go to [PTA.org/TakeAction](http://PTA.org/TakeAction) for the following resources to help you speak up for federal, state, and local policies that benefit our children:

- **PTA Takes Action Update:** A monthly electronic newsletter about federal legislation affecting families, schools, and communities, plus action alerts that help members make a difference on key issues.
- **PTA Public Policy Agenda:** National PTA's recommendations on key legislation and policies up for consideration by Congress and the Administration.
- **Online Advocacy Toolkit:** How-to's for building relationships with members of Congress, working with the media, and understanding the legislative process.
- **Policy Issue Briefs:** Information on research, best practices and federal legislation related to PTA's public policy priorities. Issue briefs detail the history of the law and PTA's involvement on the issue, explains current provisions in the legislation, and highlights best practices and research in the field.



- **PTA Policy Issue Cards:** Brief synopses of National PTA's positions and key messages on important issues of the day, ranging from education funding to safe school environments.
- **State Laws on Family Engagement in Education:** A reference guide on family engagement provisions within state education laws, intended to help families better advocate for their children at the school and district level, to guide development of legislative reform initiatives by policy makers and advocates, and to support efforts to monitor the implementation of laws already in place.
- **Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI):** Resources to support the adoption and implementation of common core state standards. CCSSI is a voluntary, state-led effort to develop clear, consistent academic standards in English language arts and mathematics.

Through the PTA network, you also have access to advocacy support in the form of training and leadership:

- **Policy workshops & Training of Trainers:** National and state PTA conventions, as well as the National PTA Legislative Conference, offer federal and state policy workshops each year. National PTA also hosts advocacy training of trainers workshops to engage and educate parent advocates at every level, whether on the district, state, or federal level.
- **PTA federal legislative chairs:** these state leaders ensure that all members have information about PTA's federal policy priorities and lead members in speaking on behalf of children and youth. They have relationships with their states' U.S. senators, representatives, and congressional staffers, and coordinate their states' responses to PTA action alerts. To get in touch with your state's federal legislative chair, contact your state PTA office.
- **Legislation Committee:** Appointed by the President of NPPTA, the Legislation Committee serves as an advisory group to the Office of Public Policy and the Board of Directors on key policy and advocacy initiatives.

## JOIN THE PTA TAKES ACTION NETWORK TODAY!

Sign up at [PTA.org/TakeAction](http://PTA.org/TakeAction)



**National PTA**  
everychild.onevoice.®

# MIDWEST ACADEMY STRATEGY CHART

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities. Develop a timeline.

GOALS	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	CONSTITUENTS, Allies & Opponents	TARGETS (Decision Makers)	TACTICS
<p><b>Goals are what we want to WIN!</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the long-term goals of your campaign.</li> <li>State the intermediate goals for this issue campaign. What constitutes victory?</li> </ol> <p><b>How will the campaign:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Win concrete improvements in people's lives?</li> <li>Give people a sense of their own power?</li> <li>Alter the relations of power?</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What short-term or partial victories can you win as steps toward your long-term goal?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the resources that your organization brings to the campaign. Include: money, number of staff, facilities, reputation, canvass, etc.</li> </ol> <p><b>What is the budget, including in-kind contributions, for this campaign?</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the specific things you need to do to develop the campaign and ways in which the campaign will strengthen your organization. Fill in numbers for each.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand leadership group</li> <li>Increase experience of existing leadership</li> <li>Build membership base</li> <li>Expand into new constituencies</li> <li>Develop Issue Campaign Message</li> <li>Develop Media Plan</li> <li>Develop a Fundraising plan – how can you raise money for and through this campaign?</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List the internal (organizational) problems, that must be considered if the campaign is to succeed.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who cares about this issue enough to join or help the organization? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whose problem is it?</li> <li>Into what groups are they already organized?</li> <li>What do they gain if they win?</li> <li>What risks are they taking?</li> <li>What power do they have over the target?</li> </ul> </li> <li>Who are your opponents? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What will your victory cost them?</li> <li>What will they do/spend to oppose you?</li> <li>How strong are they?</li> <li>What power do they have over the target?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Primary Targets</b> A target is always a person. It is never an institution or an elected body. There can be more than one target but each need a separate strategy chart as your relationships of power differs with each target. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who has the power to give you what you want?</li> <li>What power do you have over them?</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Secondary Targets</b> (You don't always have or need secondary targets) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who has power over the people with the power to give you what you want?</li> <li>What power do you have over them (the secondary target)?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For each target, list tactics that each constituent group can best use to put pressure on the target to win your intermediate and/or short-term goals.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tactics must be:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In context</li> <li>Directed at a specific target</li> <li>Backed up by a specific form of power</li> <li>Flexible and creative</li> <li>Make sense to members</li> </ul> <p><b>Tactics include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phone, email, petitions, LTE, OP ED,</li> <li>Media events</li> <li>Actions for information</li> <li>Public Hearings</li> <li>Non-Partisan Voter Registration and Education</li> <li>Non-Partisan GOTV</li> <li>Accountability Sessions</li> <li>Negotiations</li> <li>Elections</li> <li>Law Suits</li> <li>Strikes</li> </ul>

# MIDWEST ACADEMY STRATEGY CHART

After choosing your issue, fill in this chart as a guide to developing strategy. Be specific. List all the possibilities

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>CONSTITUENTS, Allies &amp; Opponents</b>	<b>TARGET(S)</b>	<b>TACTICS</b>