



ADVOCACY BASICS: BUILDING & MAINTAINING COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR POLICYMAKERS

- **Advocate as Part of a Statewide Network** – be a financially committed member of the S.C. Arts Alliance -- an informed and active member of our Email Arts Advocacy Network, responding to our Action Alerts, Calls to Action -- sharing the information with friends, colleagues; board members, staff, volunteers, your membership, business and parent leaders; Report responses back to the SCAA;
- **Know the Players - by building long-term relationships:** legislators, principals, school board members, mayors, city and county council members, your congressional delegation, and business leaders;
- **Know the Issues** – not just your issues but those of your policymakers – how your priorities and theirs can impact a mutual agenda;
- **Understand the Process** – how things happen, how laws are made, how the state budget bill and federal appropriations are developed; and the power of YOU;
- **Make that Connection** -- Get to know something about the policymaker -- background, personal interests, experiences and their priorities; then connect the arts to the experiences;
- **Stay Informed** - about state and national issues affecting the arts and education, staying up-to-date about the latest initiatives and research and trends;
- **Be at the Table** when decisions are being made in your local community, school, district, and statewide -- speaking out in support of the arts and the value of “learning in and through the arts”;
- **Become a Trusted Resource** – stay in touch with your policymakers, offering accurate and timely information;
- **Involve Decision-makers** in your classroom, school and community activities; (“in front of the curtain duties”);
- **Form an Advocacy Committee** – within your own organization or school, placing Advocacy on the agenda of your meetings, reporting out what action has been taken on your behalf, and identifying additional advocacy efforts;
- **Make It Personal** - contacts with your legislative delegation can mean leaving a message at their office, emailing, faxing, a handwritten note-card, or even meeting with them in your home district; Other venues might be special events

and town meetings, through the media, such as writing op-ed pieces or letters to the editors, meeting with the editorial board, or testifying at hearings or meetings;

- **Use Other Resources:** the SCAA’s Arts Advocacy Handbook, SCAA Web site, State and S.C. Department of Education Web site; Statewide Associations - SC Education Association, Palmetto State Teachers, Statewide Arts Discipline Organizations; and other partners S.C. Alliance for Arts Education; Americans for the Arts;
- **Participate in National Arts Alerts** – be sure to check out the Legislative Action Center on the SCAA web site, especially for national arts issues and how you can help advocate;
- **On the Run** – Legislators are always running for re-election, even when it isn’t an election year – Use your clout as a voter and a financial contributor to speak out for the arts;
- **Be Visible & Active in the Election Process** – Attend candidate forums, debates, many town hall meetings are now “streamed” and can be viewed on your computer;
- **Keep Up with Media Coverage** – from the “Left” to the “Right”, but think for yourself! Read between the lines. Go to candidate’s web sites. Talk with your friends;
- **Keeping them Honest** – Ask candidates where they stand on policy and funding for the arts and arts education;

THE S. C. BUDGET PROCESS:

- **Various House and Senate Committees meet throughout the year;**
- **Legislative session – January – June;**
- **The Governor’s Executive Budget** comes out in January (agency hearings are in late summer and early fall before the New Year);
- **House begins work on their version of the budget starting with subcommittees of the Ways & Means Committee (HWM);** then goes to the full House Ways & Means Committee; written up and a week later goes to the full House for debate;
- **When the budget is voted out of the House, it moves to the various committees of the Senate Finance Committee (SFC)–** to listen to agency presentations; they make their recommendations to the full Senate Finance Committee,
- **The Senate Finance Committee’s version of the budget then goes to the floor of the full Senate for debate;**

- **If the 2 budget versions differ, then a Conference Committee is formed to work out those differences.** The Conference Committee is made up of 3 House and 3 Senate members – usually including the Chairs of the HWM and the SFC.
- **After both the House and Senate give their approval, the Budget goes to the Governor, who usually has a long list of vetoes.**
- **The vetoes have to be accepted over overridden.**

**PLAN TO ATTEND S. C. ARTS ADVOCACY DAY:
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2010**

- **A Great way to get to know your Legislator** – read all about it when our 2010 Arts Advocacy Handbook goes on line in January or review the 2009 Arts Advocacy Handbook currently on our web site, www.scartsalliance.net;
- **Have lunch with Legislators from your region of the state**
- **Every Legislator is introduced and has the opportunity to speak – and they do!** [50 legislators attended this year]
- **You'll be informed** – information and talking points are sent out in advance; Arts Advocacy Handbook at the SCAA Web site; view the day's proceedings from the House and Senate galleries;
- **Hear from the Legislative Arts Caucus Co-chairs** [84 House members and 39 Senators – 123 members out of 170]
- **Learn What to Expect** – Join the crowd at the Statehouse and attend the Legislative Appreciation Luncheon at the Capital City Club;
- **Attend the SCAA Arts Advocacy Workshop**
- **Enjoy nationally recognized student performances**
- **Plan to visit your Legislator in his/her Columbia office or in your home district;**
- **If you can't come to Columbia on Arts Advocacy Day, participate "at home" by writing, calling, faxing or emailing your Legislator on February 9th;**

ADVOCATING TO LEGISLATORS – BE STRATEGIC:

- **Have a Goal** - what you are trying to achieve
- **Know your Desired Action** - what needs to happen
- **Build Coalitions** – decide who can help lead the way
- **Do your home work** – what information do you need to know

What is Your Key Message?

- **Be Specific** – ask for a specific action
- **Use a personal reference** – to help make the connection
- **Be Informative** – clear examples, statistics
- **Be respectful** (non combative) – a good listener
- **Always say "thank you"** – start off with a "thank you" and finish with a "thank you" – referring to another time of leadership for your cause;

Timing is Everything – Be aware of the environment – locally, statewide, and nationally; perceptions are important too;

MAIN ADVOCACY ISSUES:

- Advocate for stable state funding for the arts
- To continue funding the South Carolina Arts Commission’s Grantmaking Program – for general operating and project support to arts organizations and arts education initiatives across the state;
- \$500,000 from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 (federal stimulus funds) to the state budget for a second year;
- The SCAC was previously funded at \$585,000 each of the prior 3 years
- Preserving the Arts Curricular Innovation Grants Program within the S.C. Department of Education’s budget currently funded \$1,187,571;

SAMPLE LETTERS: WRITING YOUR LEGISLATORS:

DATE

THE HONORABLE _____

SOUTH CAROLINA HOUSE/SENATE

P. O. Box 11867, Columbia, SC 29211 for the House

P. O. Box 142, Columbia, SC 29201 for the Senate

Dear Senator _____ or Dear Representative _____:

I am a constituent – have lived in your district for _____ years

I am a supporter – I gave a contribution to your campaign

I voted for you -- in the primary –

I knew your mother when we taught school together at _____

We go to the same church –

MAKE SOME PERSONAL CONNECTION – IT WILL HELP THEM TO REMEMBER YOU. PERSONALIZE YOUR MESSAGE BY “TELLING YOUR STORY”. STATE YOUR CASE OR YOUR POSITION – OR ASK THE QUESTION – BUT BE SPECIFIC

Please support an increase for _____

Please support _____ legislation because it _____ preserves arts instructional time

Please support (House or Senate) Bill Number _____

Always say “thank you”!

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