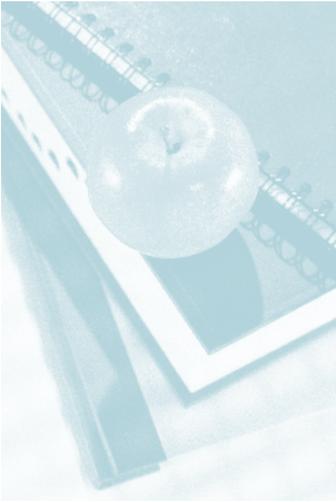


ADVOCACY

A Practical Guide





**Everyone communicates
but not always effectively.**

**Supporters of public education in Alberta
need to communicate effectively at all levels
to make sure their voices are heard.**



Introduction

This guide to advocacy has been written to help teachers and parents communicate effectively with government representatives. The goal of effective advocacy is to instill a better understanding of, and more support for, public education.¹ The audiences are those who make decisions, be they MLAs, school trustees or municipal councillors. Such advocacy is best conducted at the local or constituency level. In every constituency, the main political parties have executives, and working within the parties rather than outside them is valuable. Strategic alliances among groups pursuing the same goals are also valuable.

There are three basic premises in communication:

1. One cannot *not* communicate.
2. Human communication is a multilevel phenomenon.
Communication becomes meaningless if reduced to one level. In all human communication, there are two components—content and process.
3. The message sent is not necessarily the message received.

Remember—the person with whom you are communicating is a human being like you with his or her own feelings, emotions and beliefs.

Every legislator is human, with corresponding strengths and weaknesses. In a problem you will get better results if you treat politicians as human and if you have some prior idea of their strengths and weaknesses.

David King, Minister of Education, 1979–86

If every time you see people you yell and scream at them, would it surprise you to learn that they try to avoid you?

Political lobbyist

¹In Alberta, *public education* refers to public, separate and francophone schools.



What motivates parents to become advocates for public education? The following list is from Bisset School in Edmonton and was compiled at a brainstorming session by parents and community members:

- *Model (walk the talk).*
- *Be open minded.*
- *Teach in a spirit of children first in a supportive manner (character education).*
- *Teach with a passion and a focus (constructivism).
Team spirit working together to help the child—parent teams, teaching teams, student teams—these teams should have a purpose and a direction—children first.*
- *Believe in collective wisdom.*
- *School is like home—safe.*
- *Make meetings fun.*

The following is part of the belief statement of the former Calgary parent group SPEAK:

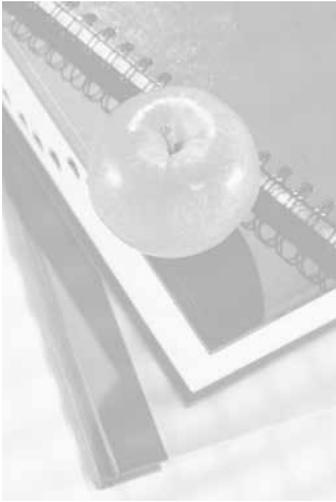
We believe the purpose of public education is to provide the ties that bind Canadians from different cultural, ethnic, religious, economic, and intellectual backgrounds to build a sense of commonality and shared vision. We believe that all education stakeholders have the right to participate in the decision-making process as it affects public education.

—SPEAK (Support Public Education—Act for Kids), Calgary



Techniques for Advocating

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Letter Writing

The first response I received when I wrote to my MLA was a form letter essentially saying “thank you for writing.” I was so annoyed that he had not answered my questions, that I wrote to him again, this time reminding him that I was a voter in his constituency and I expected a response to my questions on education funding. The second response sounded fine until I compared it to one my friend had received from her MLA and the words were identical. So I wrote again asking for his answers to my questions. I am now on my fifth letter and I will keep writing until he answers my questions.

—Retired Calgary teacher



Letter Writing

Letter Writing

Letter writing is a very effective tool for advocacy. Letters can reach people who might otherwise be difficult to reach. Letters can add a touch of formality and importance to an issue.

Letters don't have to be long or fancy; ideally, they shouldn't be longer than a page.

The basic format is as follows:

- Your own address
- The date
- The name, title and address of the person to whom you are writing
- Salutation "Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms" or, in the case of our current minister of tourism, parks and recreation, "Dear Dr Starke" (he holds a doctorate in veterinary medicine)
- First paragraph—the purpose of the letter
- Second paragraph—the situation and the facts
- Third paragraph—what you would like done about it
- Closing—"Yours truly" or "Yours sincerely"
- Your signature
- Your typewritten name
- Your telephone number

MLAs' addresses, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mails are available at www.assembly.ab.ca or from the Alberta Teachers' Association, telephone 780-447-9400 or 1-800-232-7208, fax 780-455-6481, e-mail government@ata.ab.ca.



Letter-Writing Tips

1. There is a debate over typed letters versus handwritten ones. Current technology permits easy reproduction of typed letters; handwritten letters are more personal, but some handwriting is difficult to read. Choose the method with which you are most comfortable.
2. Write the letter in your own words and use information with which you are familiar. In the case of class size, use the numbers in your child's class. If you teach, use the numbers in your own class. If you are talking about school buildings, use your own school or your child's school as an example. You know the facts; nobody can argue with you.
3. Be helpful—don't threaten. (You know how you respond to threatening remarks—by becoming defensive.) Try to suggest solutions, whether they involve limits on class size or more money to upgrade school buildings. Explain how your solutions would benefit your school or your children.
4. Keep a copy of the letter and the response for your records. Like the retired teacher above, you might decide to write a second letter if all you get in response is "Thank you for your letter."
5. Never send original enclosures, only copies. Keep the originals for yourself.
6. A letter to the provincial government requires a stamp. Letters can also be faxed, of course.

Letter Writing—What Not to Do

June 28, 2013

Mr Jeff Johnson
Minister of Learning
424, 10800 97 Avenue NW
Edmonton AB T5K 2B6

Always provide a return address so that the MLA can respond to your letter.

Jeff Johnson is a cabinet minister. He should therefore be addressed as The Honourable Jeff Johnson. He is also minister of education, not minister of learning.

Dear Mr Johnson

I am very upset with your government for not funding education. You are destroying my daughter's life, and I am going to make sure that you are defeated in the next election.

Avoid hyperbole and threats; they weaken your credibility.

My daughter Genevieve has too many other kids in her Grade 2 class. She suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, has peanut allergies and is very religious. She and also her family is therefore upset that you no longer allow the Lord's Prayer to be recited in school. On top of all this, her school is to be closed at the end of this year, and we do not have the money to bus her to another school.

Limit your letter to no more than two or three issues. Avoid criticizing the provincial government on issues, such as food allergies and recitation of the Lord's Prayer, that fall within the jurisdiction of your local school board. Use correct grammar: she and also her family is a plural subject; therefore, the verb should be are.

I want you to address this situation immediately. If you don't, you will no longer have a job after the next election.

Provide a solution to the problem or problems you identify, and ask the MLA to respond to your concerns. Again, avoid threats.

Yours sincerely
Jane Doe
Concerned Parent



Letter Writing—Common Questions

1. *Should I send copies of my letter to cabinet ministers or other government MLAs?*

You should *first* give your own MLA a chance to respond because he or she is your representative. If the answer is unsatisfactory, then you may decide to copy your letter to others. For example, if you send a letter regarding the number of students in your child's class to your own MLA, you may want to copy that letter to the premier, the minister of education or the chair of the Standing Committee on Families and Communities. If you do copy your letter, make sure you indicate the other recipients at the bottom of your letter.

2. *Should I send copies of my letter to opposition MLAs?*

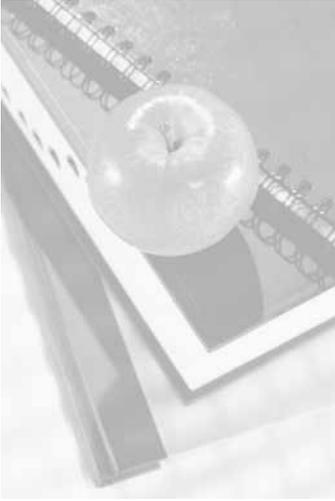
There are two opposing points of view on this issue. The opposition parties would answer "yes" since such letters may well strengthen their position. Government members, on the other hand, may well view the distribution of your letter to opposition MLAs as an attempt to undermine them, hindering your work with government members. You should use your own judgment in deciding whether to copy your letter to opposition MLAs.

3. *How long should I wait for a reply?*

If you receive no reply within three weeks, you should either phone your MLA's office to find out whether he or she received your letter or write again, expressing your concern about not receiving an answer.

4. *What do I do if my MLA is in opposition? How do I get my concerns to government?*

Each of the opposition constituencies has one or more "buddy" MLAs (government MLAs assigned to those constituencies). You could write to your "buddy" MLA, to the president of your local Progressive Conservative constituency association or to the premier or appropriate cabinet minister.



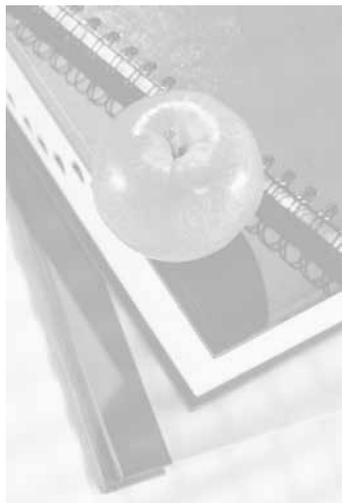
Letter-Writing Campaigns



Letter-Writing Campaigns

There are numerous examples of letter-writing campaigns, usually on very specific issues. On November 24, 1998, then premier Ralph Klein revealed the strength of a letter-writing campaign on ITV (now Global TV) when he said, “Make no mistake about it: we have heard from the public on this. I mean I have a stack of letters here on all the other issues; then I have a stack this high almost daily on Bill 37.”

1. Ask every member of your group and other supportive individuals to write letters to the individual you are seeking to influence.
2. Ask every member of your group to convince a friend with similar concerns to write.
3. Avoid form letters. You want each letter to express the writer’s unique opinions, conveyed in a unique style.
4. Provide a single sheet of letter-writing tips and necessary addresses.
5. Stagger the mailing of the letters so they don’t all arrive on the MLA’s desk the same day.
6. Write about incidents and observations drawn from your own experience—experience counts as much as statistics.
7. Avoid inflammatory remarks.
8. Encourage writers to share their responses to determine if it is necessary for them to write a second time.
9. Include the possibility of sending letters to the local newspaper(s) to reinforce your campaign. For daily papers, having one letter published every day over a period of time is often better than having several letters published on the same day. For weekly newspapers, spread the letters over several issues.
10. Commend as well as criticize.



Telephone / E-mail



Telephone / E-mail

Telephone

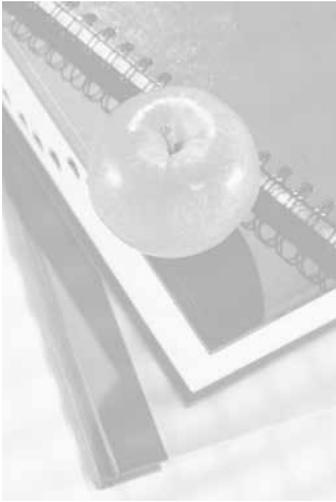
1. Provide all callers with the phone numbers they need. Messages for MLAs can be left at either their legislature office or their constituency office, so both numbers should be provided. If you call the legislature from outside Edmonton, use the toll-free number 310-0000, followed by the number of the MLA you wish to contact. For example, if you wish to contact the minister of education, dial 310-0000, followed by 780-427-5010. If you don't know the MLA's number, visit www.assembly.ab.ca or contact the Alberta Teachers' Association.
2. It is better to leave a message outlining your concerns with a secretary than to expect a return phone call from the MLA. MLAs are very busy people, and returning every phone call would amount to a horrendous task. You can certainly leave a number, usually one at which you can be easily reached (say, at home in the evening), but it might be easier to ask the secretary to record your comments.
3. You may want to make several phone calls, not only to your MLA but also to the premier and the appropriate cabinet minister. The numbers of calls are tallied, at least in the premier's office, so you are adding your voice to the voices of others who have phoned.
4. Make a list of the points you want to cover. Arrange them in a convincing order so that you know exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it.
5. Don't get into an argument with the secretary or the minister's chief of staff. They are not responsible for the government's decisions. However, they may well end up asking you very specific questions you might want to avoid answering. For example, when a former government first announced its deficit reduction plan, the first question callers were asked was whether they believed the government should run a deficit. If they answered "no," then they were recorded as supporting the government's plans, whatever else they had to say.

E-mail

All MLAs publish their e-mail addresses. They can commonly be reached by using the name of their constituency followed by @assembly.ab.ca. For example, the e-mail address of Matt Jeneroux, MLA for Edmonton-South West, is edmonton.southwest@assembly.ab.ca.

The formula does not hold for all MLAs, however, so be sure to consult the most current directory available at www.assembly.ab.ca. For example, the premier can be contacted through a form available at http://alberta.ca/premier_contact.cfm.

Although e-mail is a quick method of communication, a response is not guaranteed. So if you are going to e-mail your MLA, consider keeping your message short and recording when you sent it—such documentation might prove useful at some future date.



Meetings / Delegations

Edmonton Public Teachers Local has established constituency engagement teams that include small groups of teachers who make contact with MLAs on an ongoing basis. Initial meetings include a delegation of teachers representing a diverse set of teacher assignments. Where possible, the teachers are members of the constituency or teach in a school located there.



Meetings / Delegations

Meetings / Delegations

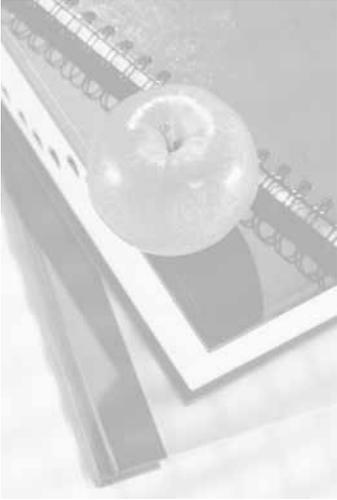
When the legislature is in session, most MLAs are free on Fridays. When the legislature is not in session, they are more likely to be at their constituency office, and it might be appropriate to meet the MLA face to face. Remember that cabinet ministers usually have heavier schedules than backbenchers. Even though a cabinet minister may want to fit you in, time could well be a problem.

There are any number of available options. Individual parents, groups of parents, school councils, individual teachers or principals, and staff can book appointments and arrange to meet the MLA either at his or her constituency office or in the school. Whatever the plan, a number of factors have to be considered:

1. Make an appointment through the constituency office by either phone or letter (mailed or faxed). You can ask for a particular time and place but be prepared to be flexible. Other individuals and groups also want to meet with the MLA, and these meetings need to be slotted in.
2. Decide what issue or issues you wish to discuss with the MLA.
3. If there is more than one issue, prepare an agenda and forward a copy to the MLA, allowing him or her to add to the agenda.
4. If a delegation is meeting with the MLA, decide in advance who will speak on what issues and research the issues as thoroughly as possible.
5. Be on time for the meeting. A short, well-prepared presentation is often much more impressive and effective than a long, rambling one.
6. Don't prolong the meeting beyond the allotted time unless the MLA indicates that he or she wants the discussion to continue.
7. Take charge of the meeting. You asked for it, so discuss your issues. Don't let the MLA dominate the meeting.
8. Give the MLA a chance to speak. Don't resort to ridicule. Treat all questions calmly and seriously.



9. If you did not send the MLA advance material, leave a short summary of your views when you leave—one page is ideal.
10. Send the MLA a thank-you letter after the meeting and offer to meet again in the future or to provide any information that may be needed.
11. Don't let the contact die after one meeting. Try to establish regular, informal meetings or, at least, telephone conversations.



Briefs



Briefs

Briefs

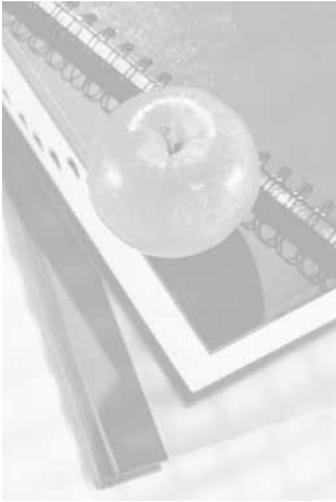
A brief is a written outline of your argument. It should set forth your main concerns and be accompanied by supporting statements. It should also contain recommendations for change. The use of provincewide tours by committees and task forces, especially during the summer months, has presented increased opportunities for schools and school councils to raise issues with MLAs. These efforts to “get out from under the dome and meet the people” are often public relations gestures, but they do provide a forum in which people can publicly express their concerns.

Tips on Writing a Brief

1. Collect all available material and information. Obtain a clear idea of your members’ concerns.
2. Select the basic ideas you want to present—generally not more than three or four. If you have too many, confusion can result.
3. Choose two or three people to research and write the brief.
4. Keep the brief as short as possible. Include all the necessary factual material.
5. Use easily understood words and concise sentences. Do not use flowery adjectives or phrases.
6. Carefully proofread the brief.
7. Use headings to divide the brief:
 - a. Preamble—state background and subject matter
 - b. Statement of problem—explain whom it concerns and why
 - c. Proposed solution—outline comprehensively but state as simply as possible
 - d. Results expected for the community or the cause—be enthusiastic and positive; you are selling an idea
 - e. Budget—if necessary
 - f. Summary of recommendations

Presenting Briefs

1. Be on time for your appointment or the public hearing.
2. Have copies of your brief to leave with your listeners. Leave any necessary background material with them as well.
3. Be prepared to answer questions that may arise.
4. Think about issuing a news release on the meeting to your local media, summarizing the contents of your brief.
5. Indicate that the delegation expects a reply within a reasonable time.
6. Recruit people to attend the meeting.
7. Ask for a report on actions taken as follow-up.
8. Don't let the brief be "filed"—keep in touch by letter, phone or e-mail.
- 9 Report the results of the meeting to the principal or the school council chair.



Petitions

Advice on preparing and distributing petitions from Cathy Staring-Parrish of the former parent group Save Our Schools (SOS) Edmonton:

- *Be specific in the wording.*
- *Use simple language.*
- *Distribute the petition widely.*
- *Ensure that the petition is associated with the parent group and not a political party.*
- *Politicians are a wonderful help and they can do their own distribution of the petition.*

To clarify the point regarding the petition and politicians, we could not have experienced the success that we have with our petition without the opposition MLAs. However, in the beginning there were accusations that we were simply following through on a Liberal plan regarding the petition. Some people seemed to have a real problem with the effort being “too political” if it involved an MLA’s address. As a result, we distributed copies of the petition with our address on them and the Liberal caucus distributed copies with its address on them. We were not aware of further accusations about the politics of the petition.

—December 1999

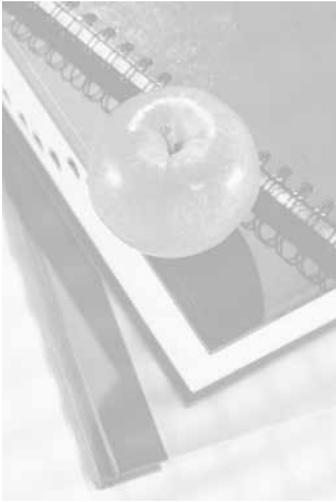


Petitions

There are a number of rules governing petitions that are laid down by the legislature:

1. The petition must be addressed to the legislative assembly—not to the government, a political party or an individual MLA.
2. The “prayer” (what the petition requests) must appear at the top of each page of the petition, and each page must include a notice stating that the name and address of everyone who signs the petition may be made available to the public.
3. The petition must not criticize individuals.
4. The petition must ask for a remedy within the power of the legislative assembly.
5. On issues within the jurisdiction of the government, the petition can only ask the legislative assembly to “urge” the government to act.
6. No petition may be received that asks for an expenditure or charge on the public revenue.
7. The petition must not contain debate or argument.
8. Original copies of all pages must be submitted. Photocopies are not acceptable.
9. The MLA who is presenting the petition does not have to agree with the petition but only authenticate it. MLAs are not obliged to present petitions.
10. The petition can be presented only by a private MLA, not a cabinet minister.
11. Once presented to the legislative assembly, the petition becomes the property of the assembly and cannot be returned.
12. The assembly or the government is not compelled to take action on the petition.

More information on petitions is available from Legal Services/Inter Parliamentary Relations, Legislative Assembly of Alberta, telephone 780-422-4837, fax 780-427-0744, or at www.assembly.ab.ca.



Forums

The organization of the recent forum came out of a ward meeting, alternatively called Council of Councils. The following is an extract from the first meeting of the group:

Periodically, we need to communicate better with each other as parents. The aims of having ward meetings include

- *to meet infrequently, perhaps three times a year;*
- *to reduce the relative isolation in which school councils can often operate;*
- *to provide a forum for sharing concerns about education; and*
- *perhaps to streamline some of the work being done in support of public education.*

*Ray Benton-Evans,
Former Chair, McKernan
School Council, Edmonton*



Forums

Forums

In the fall of 1999, a number of forums were held in Edmonton at which individual parents, school councils and teaching staffs expressed concerns about what had happened to education since the cutbacks of 1993. In most cases, a panel of educators and politicians was given the opportunity to address the meeting briefly, and then the floor was opened to comments and questions from the audience.

Organization

1. Select a date, giving as much warning as possible. Estimate turnout and choose a facility—it is better to underestimate than overestimate the turnout.
2. Decide on format and ensure all panellists know the details.
3. Choose a strong moderator who is aware of the timelines.
4. Consider inviting the media on the basis of whether their attendance will be useful or not.
5. Make sure the date and location of the forum are well publicized.



Conducting a Forum

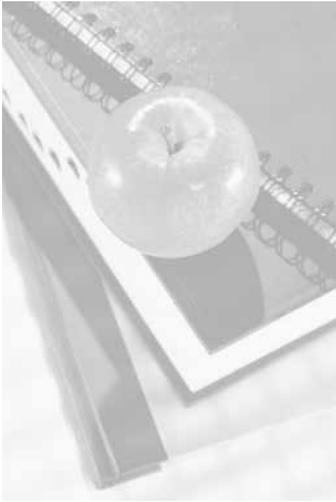
1. Phone the panellists the night before the forum to remind them of the time and place.
2. Get to the location early and double-check seating, refreshments (if any) and sound system. Make sure there is water for the panellists and a stopwatch for the moderator.
3. Greet panellists as they arrive and provide them with nametags.
4. Keep your introductory remarks short—tell the audience the rules and let them know how long the forum will last.
5. Stick as closely as possible to time limits.
6. Don't allow speeches from the floor—insist on questions. Vary the order in which panellists respond whenever possible.
7. Start on time and end on time. Thank panellists and the audience for participating.
8. Allow time for networking, questions and media interviews at the end of the forum.
9. Write thank-you letters to panellists the next day.
10. Circulate a record of the forum to all who attended as soon as possible.

The following thoughts and ideas on organizing a forum come from Kieran Leblanc, former chair of Kate Chegwin School Council in Edmonton.

Some tips based on my experience:

- *I enlisted the support of our community principals and a couple of parents from each of their schools.*
- *Then we determined our theme. (In our case, it was “How much is enough to educate all children well?”)*
- *The theme will probably come out of where the schools perceive the need to be in their communities.*
- *Next we invited the guest speakers—the more notice they have, the better chance that they will come.*
- *Most guest speakers need a written invitation with details of date, time, how long they will have to speak, the topic we would like them to speak on and who the other speakers are.*
- *The agenda will be developed once the speakers have been confirmed.*
- *Press release should be sent out two weeks prior to the forum and then again the day before.*
- *I called each speaker two days before to confirm attendance.*
- *Have a sign-in sheet so that organizers can follow up with the attendees by sending them the results, the minutes of the forum or further meetings/work.*
- *Have someone who can act as emcee for the evening.*
- *Notices of the forum were published in the schools’ newsletters.*
- *Reminder notices were sent home two days prior to the forum with each child in each school.*

I think the biggest challenge of all of this is to EDUCATE THE PARENTS about the crisis that is occurring in our schools. ... The second challenge is to mobilize them to use their voices and whatever tools they have to make the message clear to government. ... Each effort on the part of each individual does make a difference. I found that parents feel quite small and unimportant in terms of making a difference in the “big scheme of things.” It only takes a couple of passionate people, however, to light the fire in a community.



Town Hall Meetings

The former principal of Clara Tyner School in Edmonton tells of his experience with town hall meetings:

Organizing a town hall meeting is an effective way of continuing our campaign of awareness for issues related to public education. A town hall meeting can be organized by contacting your local MLA and discussing his or her views on public education. Once you've engaged your MLA in conversation, suggest hosting a town hall meeting at your school to provide an opportunity for constituents to share their views about public education. You may wish to offer assistance to your MLA in organizing the format of the meeting and inviting a variety of stakeholders. Your school council members may wish to attend along with ATA representatives, members of your local business community and representatives of other school councils.

Cam Colville

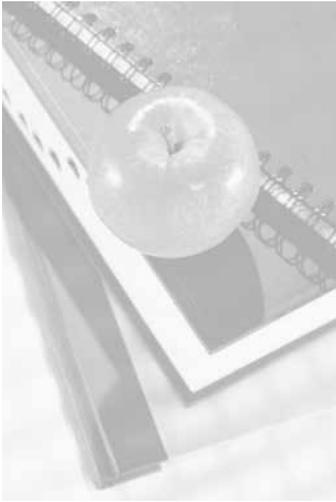


Town Hall Meetings

Town Hall Meetings

A popular way of allowing the public to meet and question their MLA is a town hall meeting. Usually, such meetings are arranged by MLAs to explain what has been happening and what the crucial issues are and to obtain feedback from constituents. However, it may be possible for a group of individuals or a school council to persuade the MLA to hold such a meeting at a school or, if the MLA prefers, in neutral territory to hear the concerns of the school councils in his or her constituency.

The decision to hold such a meeting depends entirely upon the interests of the MLA, but the invitation can be made, and if the MLA accepts, then everything the school can do to make the evening run smoothly should be done. Several of the guidelines for setting up a forum would work at a town hall meeting.



What Others Say About Advocacy

Since we all benefit from a well-educated populace, we all need to be involved in advocating for increased funding and support for public education.

During the year or two that we have been involved in advocacy, we have learned more about

- *funding for education;*
- *how education in Alberta is really underfunded;*
- *the importance of working with all partners in education; and*
- *how teachers, parents and businesses are propping up the system through long hours, volunteering, donations or sponsorships.*

*Neil McPherson,
Lymburn School, Edmonton*



Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Lessons Educators Can Apply to Advocacy

Educators, through their professional knowledge of effective teaching, have particular expertise to apply to advocacy efforts. Indeed, on a certain level, advocacy can be viewed as a form of education. Here are just a few of the teaching skills that apply to effective advocacy:

Effective teaching

- requires building trust over time,
- is personalized,
- employs collaboration (such as cooperative learning),
- involves meeting learners where they are,
- requires a mix of methods,
- seizes “teachable moments,”
- requires solid planning and
- builds in ongoing, authentic assessment of student learning.

Effective advocacy

- requires building trust over time,
- is personalized,
- employs collaboration (such as coalition building),
- involves meeting decision makers where they are,
- requires carefully devised influence activities,
- seizes “windows of influence,”
- requires solid planning and
- builds in periodic assessment of the efficacy of the advocacy initiatives.

—Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development,
Advocacy Kit. Website: www.ascd.org



Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues

ADVOCATE

ADd your VOiCe to the debATE.

What is Advocacy?

An advocate is one who intercedes, pleads or speaks to another.

Advocacy is the action undertaken by a group to bring about positive change in people's lives.

The purpose of advocacy is to assist in securing the rights of one's self or another.

Five Steps in Advocacy

Define the issue.

Determine your position.

Develop an advocacy action plan.

Take action.

Follow up and evaluate.

—Canadian Federation of Junior Leagues, "From Issues to Action: An Advocacy Workshop." Website: www.cfjl.org



Manitoba League for Persons with Disabilities

Ten Tips on Good Advocacy Practices

1. Remember that you, as a citizen, have every right to present your views. Do not be timid or apologetic.
2. Nobody needs more problems. Concentrate on solutions, not problems.
3. Identify the person who has the power to make the changes that you want.
4. Let your target person know what you want them to do.
5. Whenever possible get things in writing.
6. Know your facts.
7. Offer information that could assist the other person in making the desired decisions.
6. Always be courteous and polite.
9. If the approach you are taking is not working, try something else.
10. NEVER GIVE UP! It is the “squeaky wheel” which gets the “grease”!

—Manitoba League of Persons with Disabilities, “Creating Change.”
Website: www.mlpd.mb.ca



Advice from a Former Minister of Education

1. Get to know the legislators—all of them.
2. Get to know the public servants who are the “officers” on the “firing line.”
3. Learn, from both the politicians and the public servants, how their respective environmental systems operate.
4. Keep in touch personally.
5. Don’t just talk (or write)—show.
6. Involve the politician in your plans.
7. Know your rights and stick to them.
8. Form alliances.
9. Document everything.
10. Don’t bluff—if you threaten action you must be prepared to follow through.
11. Get the facts and get them straight.
12. Be confident and act confidently.

—David King, Minister of Education, 1979–86



Lobbying Advice from Former Premier Ralph Klein

Below is a summary of former premier Ralph Klein's "10 Basic Rules of Lobbying," presented in 1991 to the "Winning Women" lobbying seminar in Calgary:

1. **First things first.** Politicians hate surprises. Be prepared to tell their staff what the meeting is about.
2. **Your deadline for the meeting is irrelevant.** Make contact early enough that your date and the minister's "earliest convenience" match. Don't be overly aggressive or you might have to wait longer—politicians need time to do their homework.
3. **Their time is not your time.** Don't assume politicians know nothing on the subject; that is an insult. Use the time to help them with things that might be unknown to them.
4. **The whole crowd is not required.** Keep the group small. Numbers only annoy and threaten, and that can be counterproductive.
5. **Practice, practice, practice.** Be prepared and know what to say.
6. **No wallpaper.** The fewer pieces of paper, the better.
7. **Politicians can read.** Leave written information behind. Don't read to them—stress important points.
8. **20 questions.** Leave a lot of time for questions.
9. **Not done yet.** Don't leave without asking to whom else you should be talking and do talk to them.
10. **The answer will be "no answer."** There will be no commitment on the spot. The best you can say is "We hope to hear from you soon." If the answer is "yes," the politician will contact you; if "no," it will be the staff.



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The Alberta Teachers' Association

11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 2R1

Telephone: 780-447-9400 in Edmonton

1-800-232-7208 from elsewhere in Alberta

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