



Parental Involvement Advocacy Curriculum Module

Goals:

This session will introduce the school community to advocacy. Specifically, the school team will identify the advocacy needs of the school, home, community and students. Participants will follow a process of categorizing advocacy issues, and prioritizing their relationship to the school community.

Learning Objectives:

1. To identify advocacy needs for the school community
- 2A. To define advocacy
- 2B. To identify the difference between micro v. macro advocacy needs
3. To prioritize advocacy needs as relevant to the school community
4. To learn how to build coalitions to address the school community’s prioritized needs

Objective 1: To identify advocacy needs for the school community

Time: 30 Minutes

10 Minutes - Ice-breaker activity – Business card exercise.

Hand out business size cards. Ask participants to create their personalized business cards. We usually think of only professionals as having business cards, but parents bring important credentials to the table that need to be stated, recognized and validated as on par with the other credentials that may be present in other people’s business cards. Have participants share their business cards and quickly debrief.

20 Minutes- Review where the school is with regard to parental involvement

	Teachers	Parents (Learners)	Subject Matter	Milieu
Teachers				
Learners				
Subject Matter				
Milieu				

Attachment #1 Baconian Table

Baconian Table

The usage of the Francis Bacon Matrix can be used as an intake form, a needs assessment. To pose questions (rather than asserting answers) is consistent with the practical paradigm, giving precedence to situational specific as opposed to highly generalized substantive knowledge. From left to right (row to column), ask the question: what is a teacher's effect on other teachers with regard to parental involvement? Next cell across, then the next row and continue across, etc.... The Baconian table is provided as a handout to be filled out by participants, individually. It is fine not to have all of the boxes filled out. Remember, this is an intake form that will be continuously referenced throughout the curriculum for further assessment and reflection.

Guiding Questions For Facilitator *(Note: Guiding questions are provided as a tool to prepare and facilitate the session. They are not meant to be used as a checklist. Facilitators should be three or four steps ahead of the dialogue, sorting questions touched by participants without being prompted, as well as composing new questions based on participants' contributions and dialogue of the salient issues.)*

Who are we?

You may return to these kinds of questions throughout your strategy development. Consider:

- Who are we? What perspectives and identities do we bring to our work?
- Do we represent someone besides ourselves? If so, what is our accountability to these people?
- What are our sources of power?
- What are our sources of legitimacy and credibility? From the perspective of those we represent? From the decision makers' perspective?
- What risks do we face? What are we afraid of? What might happen if we take action?
- What are our values? Why are we engaged in advocacy? How do we want to work together as a group?

What is the problem?

To better understand the school's parental involvement situation, create as full a picture as possible. Share stories, experiences, and information with others. You might ask yourselves:

- Who does the school's parental involvement situation affect? How? Be as concrete as possible. For example, how large is the affected group relative to the total population? How intensely does the situation affect people's lives? Does the situation affect different groups differently?
- What causes the situation?
- Who is responsible for addressing the situation?
- What are possible solutions?
- What will the impact of these different solutions be on the entire affected group? Subgroups?
- Guiding question: what, if any of these are advocacy needs? Why?

Objective 2A: What is advocacy?**Time: 20 minutes**

5 minutes - Have participants create their own definition of what advocacy is.

5 minutes - Divide participants into small groups and have them discuss and combine their definitions.

5 minutes - Have participants share as a group what their definition of advocacy is and why.

5 minutes, Share your definition of advocacy, have a small discussion addressing the question “what are some key elements of advocacy?” and identify what advocacy is not and how the term is misused or misunderstood.

Advocacy is a set of hands-on technical skills and practices needed to effectively press for change. It is also the foundation of active citizenship, a process through which ordinary people learn to participate in decision making at all levels. Identifying priorities, crafting a strategy, stepping forward, taking action, and achieving results are critical steps to finding one's voice, making oneself heard, and shaping one's future.

The Advocacy and Leadership Center

http://www.iscvt.org/what_we_do/advocacy_and_leadership_center/

Objective 2B: To identify the difference between micro v. macro advocacy needs.**Time: 30 Minutes**

10 minutes - Have participants create a list of the different scenarios in which they have been advocates for either themselves, someone else or a group of people.

1. Things to identify- what motivated you to be an advocate?
2. What specific issue(s) were you trying to address?
3. What methods did you employ to advocate?
4. Were there new skills/knowledge that you had to learn to be an advocate?
5. Were you successful? Define success-

10 minutes - Divide individuals into small groups and have them discuss the above exercise.

5 minutes - Discuss specific issues

5 minutes - Ask the groups to begin to categorize their advocacy experience into two categories: micro and macro.

10 minutes

1. Discuss as a group how the categories were defined.
2. Were there overarching questions, issues, or traits that determine where each issue fits?
3. Identify any tension that resulted from the group exercise. Why is this important?
4. Discuss and relate to the definition presented at the beginning of the exercise between micro v. macro advocacy.
5. Discuss the idea of transcending individual needs and wants in order to be a community advocate.

15 Minute Break

Objective 3: To prioritize advocacy needs as relevant to the school community Time: 60 Minutes

Guiding Questions

What is our vision of change?

Some advocacy efforts do not begin with a vision. It is possible to create a strategy and engage in advocacy without one. However, experience shows that creating a vision - whether at the beginning of an effort or mid-course - can be a significant sustaining force for those working for long-term, transformative change.

With a vision, a group can: Focus and make strategic decisions when faced with turning points or setbacks.

- Identify common ground and build cohesion
- Motivate people who do not yet believe change is possible
- Evaluate alternative solutions
- Identify practices and behaviors that can be enacted in the present
- Imagine a future world that is different for their children and grandchildren
- Call members to action now to build toward changes that may not be realized in their lifetimes
- Bring forth a sense of purpose as a significant sustaining force

What objectives -or piece of our vision- will we focus on?

You may be able to see what you want to create, but your vision may seem so big, so complex - how could one possibly do it all? The key is to focus on one piece of one's vision, one set of objectives.

As you focus, remember that objectives have [multiple dimensions](#): short-term and long-term, outward and inward, and multi-level.

Exercise:

15 minutes -

1. Divide the whole group into smaller groups and hand out flip charts divided into three columns:
Advocacy issues/micro or macro/ why a need?
2. Ask participants to think about the identified school community issues, developed mission statement and set team goals reviewed in objective #1, and how this session has defined advocacy for them.
3. Ask participants to complete worksheet #2 [checklist](#) individually.

4. After completing worksheet #2, ask participants as a group to complete worksheet #2 (flipchart-Attachment #3).
5. Guiding directions, be specific about the advocacy issue, how it is a policy/program need and if it is micro or macro and why.

5 minutes -

1. Have participants switch their worksheet with a different group.
2. Ask new groups to comment on the worksheet given to them and to re-prioritize the worksheet, commenting on the appropriateness of the label of an issue and whether it is an advocacy need as understood by the new group.

5 minutes -

1. Have workgroups switch worksheet again. The new group should comment on the previous group's prioritization and their comments.
2. Again, instruct group to be as specific as possible in why they agree or disagree and to adjust any prioritizations as they see fit.

(Note- This exercise is specifically designed to mock how a bill becomes a law. This allows for a facilitated and short discussion around the political process and how to compromise. The process of prioritizing, having someone else reprioritize your issues and arriving to a compromise and consensus is similar to how a bill goes through the different committees before it arrives to the floor for a debate and a vote).

20 minutes -

Have the groups come together with all the worksheets.
Instruct participants to create a master prioritized list of advocacy needs, with specific information as to why they have prioritized the issues as such and if they are micro or macro.

20 minutes -

Have the group present their master list and why and how they came to the conclusion.
Facilitator leads a discussion on the identified priorities, how they relate to the session, how the process worked for individuals, etc...

Objective 4. To learn how to build coalitions to address the school community’s prioritized needs and begin next steps (action plan). Time: 70 Minutes

Introduction - 5 minutes

Guiding Questions:

To choose a set of objectives, think about which piece of your vision is:

Important enough?

- To build the support and/or active involvement of those affected by the issue? Of potential allies? (For example, is it a priority issue for them? If not, will they at least support your efforts?)
- To engage the general public/community?
- To build toward your vision?

Small enough to achieve in the short-term (six months to two years)?

Many steps, and people's sustained involvement, will be needed to reach your long-term objectives. A small, achievable step that leads to visible, concrete results will give your group a sense of progress and momentum while you build confidence, skills, and support.

An opportunity to build skills and facilitate grassroots empowerment?

Inward objectives are incredibly valuable. By drawing people in and creating opportunities for people to “learn by doing,” an advocacy effort can build its long-term capacity and strengthen and sustain itself in the long run. By investing in “hands-on training” for those directly affected by the issue, advocacy efforts can also begin to shift the power of who can be an “advocate” and who can participate in public debate and problem solving.

Inward objectives also link to outward objectives. By drawing people into the effort, especially those affected by the problem, an advocacy effort broadens its grassroots base and increases its credibility and legitimacy, both to the affected groups and key decision makers.

Define the following terms: 5 minutes

Coalition-

Networks-

Collaboration-

(Note: Definitions are intentionally left for participants to define in order to allow praxis to happen, upon their reflection of the words.)

Diagram/Flow chart of exercise

(Flow Chart Outline Attachment # 4)

Exercise: 40 minutes.

Directions: Divide the group into 3 smaller groups: A, B, C.

Distribute prioritized worksheets from the previous exercise.

Give each group an assign advocacy priority.

Step One: 5 minutes - Have each group address the introductory questions and objectives. Have them develop an issue brief, including who else they need in order to support and achieve their goals.

Step Two: 5 minutes - Have one member from each group rotate. They are charged with communicating, listening and engaging the next group into their priority and vice versa. Have them come up with a course of action and compromises.

Step Three: 5 minutes - Have one more rotation of the original member plus an addition member go to separate groups. They are charged with communicating, listening and engaging the next group into their priority and vice versa. Have them come up with a course of action and compromises. Have the original groups reconvene when done.

Step Four: 15 minutes - Have groups discuss what the members were able to receive from the other groups as far as resources and collaboration as well as what they have promised the other groups to reciprocate. Groups are to discuss their plan of action and write down what they plan to present to the entire group.

20 minutes - Reconvene groups to present their draft coalition plan, facilitate discussion of the process, priorities and actions to next steps.

Evaluation and Close Time: 10 Minutes

5 Minutes: Evaluate the session and learning experience.

5 Minutes: Close up session.

Some of the guiding questions came from the Institute for Sustainable Communities, adopted from *Advocacy for Social Justice: A Global Action and Reflection Guide*, by Kumarian Press.