

ADVOCACY 101



Public Education Partners

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WHO WE ARE

OUR MISSION:

Public Education Partners leads our community in acting collectively to support, strengthen and advance public education and student achievement in Greenville County Schools.

Our mission is based on five foundational beliefs:

- Public education is fundamental to a democratic, civil and prosperous society.
- Public schools are critical institutions for breaking the cycle of poverty and redressing social inequities.
- Public education is a critical lever for community prosperity and vitality.
- Education reform must be systematic and engage multiple stakeholders to be effective.
- Public engagement, community support and adequate resources are essential to the success of public education.

OUR 2021 ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

TEACHERS

The teacher shortage crisis, exacerbated by recruitment and retention challenges and low teacher morale, must be addressed with urgency if we are to ensure a high-quality teacher in every classroom.

STUDENTS

Student success in the classroom is inextricably linked to the social and emotional support students receive in school, at home, and from the community.

EQUITY

Systemic inequities exist within our public education system and it is time to move beyond platitudes and act to address them.

FUNDING

Adequate and equitable public education funding is required in order for every student to realize their potential as scholars, in the workforce, and as citizens.

GOVERNANCE

An elected school board, accountable to its community, is best-positioned to organize and govern local schools.

EXPECTATIONS

What brings you here today?

What do you hope to learn?

Public education intersects with every major issue facing our community: racism, poverty, mental health, gun safety, affordable housing, LGBTQ+ rights, the carceral system... you name it, public education exposes it.

What issue moves you to act?

A CLOSER LOOK

When you think of advocacy, what comes to mind?

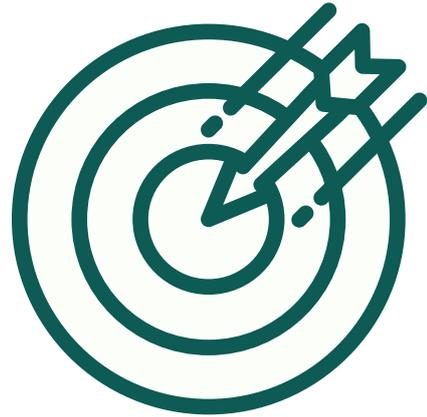
Think of a recent advocacy campaign that moved you:

- What was the goal?
- What was public opinion surrounding the issue?
- Why did you trust this advocacy effort?
- What connected with you?
- Did you take any action due to this effort?
- Did anything change as a result of this advocacy campaign?

THREE STEPS TO WIN

GOAL SETTING

You will need a clearly defined goal that you hope to achieve by your advocacy campaign. Excellent goals reflect good values, the needs of the community, and a vision of a better tomorrow.

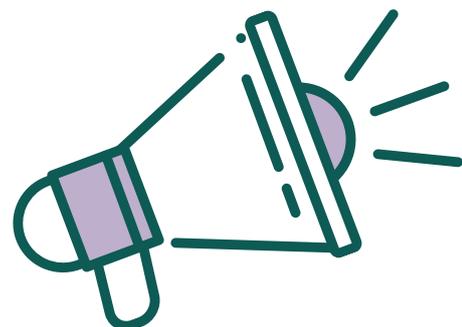


MAPPING

Effective advocacy requires that you know the lay of the land, how the wind is blowing, and the names and networks of your cause's friends and foes. Mapping helps us slow down and make informed decisions about how to effect change.

STRATEGY

You have your goal. You have your map. Now you need to begin your journey. Strategy is how you'll select various tactics to help you accomplish your mission.



GOAL SETTING

Defining your goal is the first important step of your advocacy campaign. Your goal can be big or small, seemingly impossible (dream big!) or right within reach, but it should always be clear. Developing clear guides, listening to your community, and imagining a better world are all starting points for goal setting.

GUIDE Your guides help keep your vision in focus during the journey. These are the guides and principles that control your work, and they are a fertile ground for building support.

- What are your values?
- What values do your community members share?

LISTEN Advocacy goals should always be informed by the community they will impact. At PEP, we believe that those closest to the problem should have the most power in crafting solutions.

- Whose voices have you heard?
- Who might be missing from the conversation?
- Who is usually excluded from the conversation?

IMAGINE Oppression & hardship have a way of limiting our imagination of what is possible. Don't be afraid to dream of a future world that inspires & motivates you.

“What's the world for you if you can't make it up the way you want it?” – Toni Morrison

MAPPING

You've developed your goal, you've marked where you're headed. Now, you need a map for your advocacy goal. Mapping is a process of thinking through existing political climates, public opinion, and power structures that will impact your work.

Maps to consider:

1

LANDSCAPE

Landscape mapping determines the current lay-of-the-land in your community around this issue.

- What is the current public opinion around this issue?
- Who is already working on this issue?
- Who is directly impacted by this issue?

2

POWER

Successful advocates understand power. In addition to knowing the nuts & bolts of government, knowing power also means understanding how people, institutions, & movements either facilitate or hinder positive change.

- Who is able to make change on this issue?
- Who has influence on this issue?
- What is at stake for decision-makers?

3

BASE

No matter what strategies you choose to accomplish your goal, you're going to need people power. There are no shortcuts in building a diverse, large coalition. You'll need to be intentional about expanding your base.

- Who are the champions, the allies, and the opposition?
- How will I persuade others to join me?
- Who are the natural leaders in my community?

STRATEGY

You know your goal. You have your maps. Now, we'll plan how to get to where we're going! Strategies are tactics that can help us redraw more favorable maps by impacting the political landscape, shifting power, and expanding your base. The following list is not exhaustive, but below you'll find some tried & true methods of moving advocacy efforts forward.

<p>LOBBYING</p> <p>POLICY ANALYSIS & PROPOSALS</p> <p>LEGAL ACTION</p>	<p>RESEARCH STUDIES</p> <p>CONFERENCES</p> <p>PUBLIC DEBATES & FORUMS</p>
<p>SIT-INS & OCCUPATIONS</p> <p>NEWSLETTERS</p> <p>SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS</p>	<p>ADVISORY GROUPS</p> <p>LETTERS TO THE EDITOR</p> <p>LETTER/EMAIL WRITING CAMPAIGNS</p>
<p>PETITION DRIVES</p> <p>CANVASSING</p> <p>PHONEBANKING</p>	<p>STRIKES</p> <p>MARCHES</p> <p>BOYCOTTS</p>

You can use innumerable combinations of advocacy tactics. Depending on your goal & maps, some might fit better than others. Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you decide which strategies to employ:

- What do you think would be the hardest strategy to implement effectively into an advocacy campaign?
- What tactics could help change the landscape to be more favorable for your cause?
- What tactics could apply pressure to people & institutions that have decision-making power over your issue?
- What tactics help you continually grow your base of supporters?

WHAT'S A WIN?

Of course, it may seem simple: achieving your goal is your win. Unfortunately, in advocacy work big wins can be rare and almost always hard won (although not impossible)!

Consider other wins: creating public awareness, achieving part of your goal, building a larger coalition. It's critical to recognize the ground you are gaining along the way.

Additionally, you should be clear with yourself about what you're unwilling to sacrifice in your advocacy goal. Before any negotiation with decision-makers, you should know what aspects of your goal you'd be willing to compromise or postpone in order to achieve more central parts of your goal.

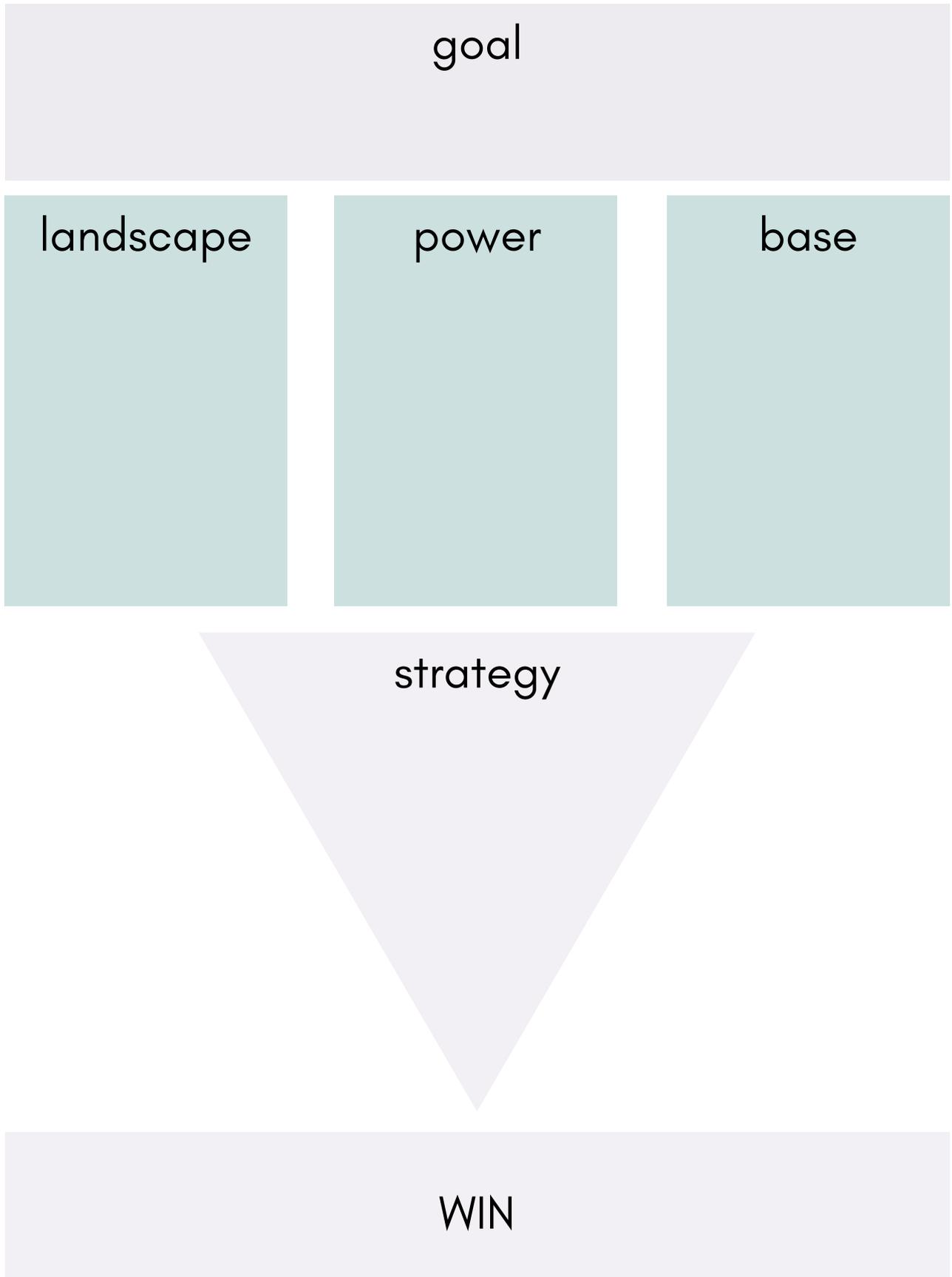
“*If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground, they want rain without thunder and lightening. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. [...]* Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.”

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Good advocacy doesn't just change the world, it changes you.

Undoubtedly, you'll learn more about your own strengths and weaknesses. Celebrate your own personal victories. Along the way, don't forget to make time to rest and take care of yourself.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER



HOW DOES A BILL BECOME A LAW?

A bill cannot become law until it has been read three times on three separate days in each body, has the Great Seal of the State put on it and has been signed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House.

- 1) Bill is **filed** in the House and referred to committee
- 2) The **committee** researches and makes changes to the bill and votes to send it to the full House
- 3) Once the bill **passes in the House**, it is sent to the Senate
- 4) The **Senate will repeat the process** of researching, amending, and voting on the bill
- 5) If the Senate recommends changes, the bill will **go to conference committee** to ensure that both chambers are passing the same language
- 6) When the same version of the bill is passed by both chambers, it is **sent to the governor**
- 7) The governor may **sign the bill into law or veto** the bill
- 8) The General Assembly can **overturn a veto** if 2/3rds of both chambers vote to override the veto

*A bill that originates in the Senate will follow the same process in reverse

Per the South Carolina Legislative Process pamphlet at SCStateHouse.gov

How Does the General Assembly impact education in Greenville County?

The primary way the General Assembly impacts education in Greenville County is through funding.

Every year, the General Assembly must pass a state budget and these appropriations bills determine how much funding each district receives from the state. Budget allocations impact all aspects of school operations and infrastructure, from how much teachers get paid, to how many counselors are available, to the age of the buses on the road.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

The South Carolina Department of Education is the administrative body that implements laws and directs the use of approved funding. The agency is overseen by the State Superintendent of Education, a statewide elected position with a four year term. The Department of Education is part of the Executive Branch but not directly beholden to the Governor as the Superintendent is elected, not appointed.

The State Board of Education is made up of 17 appointed members, with 16 appointed by legislators and 1 by the Governor. The Board has mandated responsibilities as the policy-making body for public education in South Carolina.

According to state law (SC.Code Ann. § 59-5-60), the South Carolina Board of Education has the power to:

- Adopt policies, rules and regulations for the governance of the state's public elementary and secondary schools.
- Annually approve a budget request to be submitted to the Budget and Control Board and to the General Assembly.
- Adopt standards for any phase of education considered necessary to aid in providing adequate educational opportunities and facilities.
- Prescribe and enforce rules for the examination and certification of teachers.
- Grant state teachers' certificates and revoke them for immoral or unprofessional conduct, or evident unfitness for teaching.
- Approve textbooks and other instructional materials.
- Cooperate with the State Superintendent at all times in efforts to constantly improve the state's public education system.

EDUCATION OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

The Education Oversight Committee (EOC) comprises 17 members appointed by legislators & the Governor. The State Superintendent of Education is an ex-officio member. The EOC provides information and analyses of student performance, educational programs and educational funding; information to impact decisions at the state and local level focused on improvement of student achievement; and services and information that encourage public engagement in the success of students and schools as well as continuous improvement of the accountability system.

The committee, which is a legislative agency, works closely with members of the SC General Assembly, providing data and recommendations regarding programs, policies and funding based upon the level of achievement for students, schools, and programs.

OUR LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT IS KEY

Districts administer protocols required by the state, and have a lot of freedom to determine day-to-day operations and policies that impact classrooms and schools. School districts establish curricula, hire personnel, and make decisions about closing, consolidating, or constructing schools.

Greenville County Schools is a unified school district and the largest school district in South Carolina, serving nearly 77,000 students and employing over 10,000 staff. The Greenville County Schools Board of Trustees is a 12 person elected body that provides governance of policies and resources for the district.

As the largest district in the state by far, a strong, organized Greenville County can be a statewide leader in quality public education. Exemplary policies at the district level will allow us to demonstrate value and a model of success that can be adopted statewide.

DR. BURKE ROYSTER, SUPERINTENDENT

wroyster@greenville.k12.sc.us

864-355-8860

DEBI C. BUSH

Area 19 - Term expires 2024
(864) 271-9972 (office)
dbush19@aol.com

SARAH DULIN

Area 27 - Term expires 2024
(843) 814-1181 (cell)
Dulin4GCSBoard@gmail.com

MICHELLE GOODWIN-CALWILE

Area 25 - Term expires 2024
(864) 275-6511 (cell)
mgoodwincalwileD25@gmail.com

LYNDA LEVENTIS-WELLS (Chair)

Area 22 - Term expires 2022
(864) 268-0579 (home)
llwells22@gmail.com

DEREK LEWIS (Secretary)

Area 24 - Term expires 2022
(864) 423-5316 (cell)
derek@lewis4schools.com

ROGER D. MEEK

Area 26 - Term expires 2022
(864) 233-8587 (office)
RdmEEK@bellsouth.net

GLENDIA MORRISON-FAIR

Area 23 - Term expires 2024
(816) 529-3579 (cell)
Gsmf0651@bellsouth.net

ANGIE MOSLEY

Area 21 - Term expires 2024
(864) 630-0500 (cell)
amosleygcs@gmail.com

CHARLES J. (CHUCK) SAYLORS

Area 20 - Term expires 2022
(864) 354-3577 (cell)
chucksaylors@gmail.com

CAROLYN J. STYLES

Area 17 - Term expires 2024
(864) 834-2249 (home)
cvjstyles1@gmail.com

PATRICK L. SUDDUTH

Area 18 - Term expires 2022
(864) 877-0685 (home)
sudduthp@bellsouth.net

LISA H. WELLS (Vice-Chair)

Area 28 - Term expires 2022
(864) 313-1580 (cell)
lisahwells@yahoo.com

SCRIPTS & TIPS

What to include when you are writing or calling elected officials:

- Introduce yourself or the organization you are representing. If possible, make sure to include your address so they know you are a constituent.
- Explain why you are contacting them: *"I am writing to urge you to [support or oppose] [a specific piece of legislation or a general policy]"*
- Explain your position. Use 2-3 specific arguments about the impact of the bill.
- Relate the bill to your legislator's district. Share an anecdote from your unique experience if you have one.
- End with an invitation to share more, and plan to follow up: *"I am happy to be a resource if you need additional information. You may contact me at [contact info]. Thank you for your support."*

DOS & DON'TS

- do build a relationship with your representatives, don't be afraid to follow up
- do work collectively with others; advocacy is more effective with a team (and more fun!)
- do be concise and polite, use proper titles for elected officials
- do use straightforward email subject lines
- do advocate repeatedly! Advocacy isn't a "one & done" project!
- do fact check your sources before you take action
- don't insult, abuse, or threaten those you disagree with
- do not always expect rapid or immediate change

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If you are an employee of Greenville County Schools: you are allowed to advocate! However, there are restrictions on advocating within the workplace:

- do use your personal contact information instead of your GCS contact information when completing **PEP Action Alerts** or engaging in other advocacy activities
- do not engage in advocacy activities during school hours or on school devices
- do encourage your students to be civically engaged
- do not tell students to vote for or support specific candidates or policies

RESOURCES

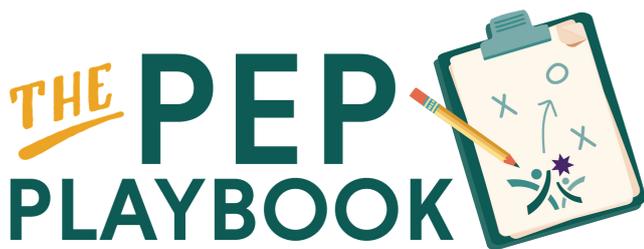


INFORMEDSC.ORG

An easy-to-use tool to explore data and discover facts about K-12 public education in Greenville County & South Carolina brought to you by Public Education Partners.

Get both basic information and details about school districts, schools and demographic groups.

Eight topics are covered: funding, spending, teachers, students, testing, achievement, accountability and agencies.



THE PEP PLAYBOOK

Have you signed up for the PEP Playbook? Our advocacy newsletter is an excellent way to stay informed & take action.

@PEPGREENVILLE



POLICY & ADVOCACY DIRECTOR
LINDSEY JACOBS
LINDSEY@PEPGC.ORG

COMMUNITY ORGANIZER
FARRIS STEELE JOHNSON
FARRIS@PEPGC.ORG