



CHECKLIST: PREPARING TO ADVOCATE FOR ARTS EDUCATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL IN THE EVENT OF FUNDING, STAFFING OR PROGRAM CUTS

- ✓ Know the facts. Assemble data to document your case.
- ✓ Understand the timeline. When will decisions be made?
- ✓ Identify the decisionmakers. Who is your primary target? (School board? Superintendent? Principal?)
- ✓ Assemble a coalition (or at least a kitchen cabinet) of teachers, parents, arts-related businesses, arts nonprofits, community & business leaders.
- ✓ Agree on a message. And stick to it. What are you asking for?
- ✓ Be prepared with solutions. What will your coalition offer that will help solve the issue?
- ✓ Agree on campaign tactics. Choose the one(s) that will be most effective.
 - School board presentation
 - Letter writing campaign
 - Engage local leaders as champions
 - Op-ed in local newspaper
 - Traditional and social media outreach
 - Authentic student voices
- ✓ Match key messengers with tactics (e.g., booster parents to present at school board meeting)
- ✓ Over-communicate with your coalition members. Be inclusive.
- ✓ Be positive and polite. Acknowledge everyone's hard work and difficult decisions.
- ✓ Be gracious. Thank everyone.
- ✓ Remember this is long game. It is not about gamesmanship or hostile demands. Your advocacy concerns may be urgent and immediate, but the relationships you build will serve you well into the future, regardless of short-term outcome.