



## Organizing a Meeting & Campaign Planning

Tips on how to prepare for a meeting with a Board member

### MEETING WITH A BOARD MEMBER HOW-TO:

1. Request assistance from RACC and your other networks to organize a small group of parents and students (3-5).
2. Organize an in-person or phone meeting to plan an agenda and roles for the meeting.
3. Set up a meeting with your district's Board Member. Ask to hold the meeting in the district.
4. Prepare your talking points. Some key points to include will be:
  - Thank the board for their commitment to arts education over the past ten years.
  - Let them know that all children deserve a high-quality and complete education and that arts education is a key part of that.
  - Tell them a personal story about what arts education has meant for you and your child.
  - Ask them where they stand on the issue and what we can do to further make our case.
5. Bring any relevant materials. These might include a copy of the District's arts education policy, a letter, or some samples of student artwork.
6. Depending on how much time you have, take the time to ask questions of your Board member. Do they have any experience with arts education? What are some of the options they are looking at right now as they prepare to make cuts.

### Campaign Planning

This area provides an overview of elements of the campaign story, tips on planning, schedule information, and definitions of roles.

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## CAMPAIGN STORY

A good campaign story is just that – the story of your campaign. We want people to go on an emotional journey with you – feeling the depth of the problem, the excitement of the solution, and the motivation to be a part of it.

Having a concise and compelling campaign story is critical to every part of the campaign process – recruiting new volunteers, coalition members, getting media coverage, and advocating to decision-makers.

Be ready with different versions – the 2 minute version, the 5 minute version, and the extended version. Different situations will call for different versions. For example, a media call will require a very short version, a presentation to a potential coalition partner may take a little longer, and a coffee meeting with a board member could allow enough time to go into detail.

## ELEMENTS OF THE CAMPAIGN STORY

**Context** – What is the background that led you to choose your current campaign?

**Challenge** – What is the challenge that you are currently facing with your issue? Start big and broad and bring it down to specifics. Example: Big – Public education system not producing as competitive a workforce as other global economies. High drop out rate locally. Specific – Our school district only has xx amount of Arts teachers to xx amount of students.

**Solution** – Again, think broad and get more specific. Think of every possible solution. Big solution – Arts Education for every child to help foster a sense of self-discipline and expression. Specific – hire a full-time arts coordinator for the district and allocate 5% of budget to arts ed. Having a well-defined solution is the foundation upon which your advocacy will be built. Advocacy should always be solution-oriented and positive.

**Objective** – Here is where you start to build the actual work you'll do. Out of the wealth of solutions you've thought of, you want to pick a specific objective. Things to consider.

- The objective allows you to have a unified vision and focus, and quantify your work

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- When setting your objective, consider the lay-of-the-land of the District – climate, players, competing priorities
- Is it realistic/feasible? What resources will it take?
- Is it challenging enough to compel involvement and enable leadership development and group building?

**Strategies** – These are the methods by which you will realize your objective. More than one strategy is best, but too many will be less effective. Aim for 2-4. Also consider your human resources in choosing campaign strategies. Example – educate Board members on the importance of Arts Ed infrastructure, demonstrate overwhelming public support for the arts initiative or position, build a diverse coalition of community stakeholder groups.

**Tactics** – these are the specific to-dos within each strategy. If the strategy is to educate the Board, the tactics could be to do a survey, and/or a forum event. Be specific. It's not enough to say "Hold a forum event" but rather "get 50 attendees to a forum event" Then you can plan where you'll find those 50 people.

## TIPS ON CAMPAIGN PLANNING

- Set goals for every piece. There is the overall goal of the campaign, but each strategy and tactic should have specific goals as well to guide our work.
- Think about the lay-of-the-land in the District. Who are the players, what are the competing priorities, what's the political and social climate, what is the current state of the Arts Ed program and how did it come to be that way?
- Make sure all goals are feasible – if you can't think of specific tactics to get you to your goal, it may be worth revisiting
- Be specific! Don't just say "get media coverage" but rather "get 5 letters-to-the-editor printed and one feature story"
- Make sure there is a story to every piece of the campaign. Why did you choose these goals? How are the specific tactics you chose going to help us win? Make sure there are no arbitrary goals or numbers.
- Keep it positive! Advocacy is about solutions. it can be easy to fall into the habit of belaboring the problem and using anger to rally people. It's not enough to understand the problem. Proposing specific solutions and approaching a campaign with positivity is key to success.

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## PUT THE PLAN INTO A TIMELINE

Now that you have your story, the next step is to plan it into a timeline.

### Tips

- Plan Backward from Goals and set Dates
- Use benchmark goals to track progress and keep the group motivated
- Set times to check in your plan and goals and make sure we're on track. Make adjustments where necessary
- Extract priorities from the plan

## CAMPAIGN ROLES

In order to execute your campaign most effectively, it is best to divide the work up into specific roles. This also enables you to build leaders and get more people involved.

### How to Create Meaningful Roles

- Keep leadership development and individual learning in mind – is the role challenging enough while still being realistic for 1 person?
- Does the role capitalize on a person's skills, experiences and interests while still offering them room to grow and learn?
- Is it clear how the role fits into the overall campaign, and with whom that person will be working and how?
- Make sure the role has its own specific goals and timeline

*(RACC acknowledges much of this Advocacy Tool Kit and information is inspired from Arts for LA)*

## Additional Resources

[The Nonprofit Association of Oregon](#)