



# ADVOCACY CHECKLIST: *A Game Plan for 2011*

Successful, effective advocacy is not a one-shot activity. Rather, it's all about communicating a strong message and developing relationships with your local media, community leaders and elected officials over a period of time. Your advocacy efforts make a difference, and help CSBA become a stronger voice for education in Sacramento and Washington, D.C. That's why CSBA created this checklist to highlight ongoing outreach opportunities. Please keep CSBA's Governmental Relations staff informed of your advocacy efforts or contact us if you need assistance.

## **DECEMBER:**

- Build a list of key reporters covering education/opinion/politics/etc. at your local media outlets and make introductory phone calls.
- Call your legislators and ask them what their legislative priorities are and what legislation they intend to introduce in 2011.
- If you aren't currently receiving CSBA's *Action Alerts* via e-mail, contact Cherise Revell ([crevell@csba.org](mailto:crevell@csba.org)) to activate your subscription.

## **JANUARY:**

- Review your board's policy on advocacy activities and media relations. If a policy doesn't exist, consider adopting board policies or a year-long "action plan" to define expectations and responsibilities. Foster a "culture of advocacy" by emphasizing that advocacy is every board member's responsibility.
- Review key messages and talking points provided on CSBA's Web site regarding the governor's 2011-12 budget proposal. Call your local reporters and explain the impacts this budget will have on your schools.
- Keep legislative issues on board agendas, especially during January-May board meetings when the legislature is in session.
- Listen to the Governor's State of the State Address ([www.gov.ca.gov](http://www.gov.ca.gov)).
- Watch CSBA's Forecast Webcast and be educated on key education issues by reading CSBA's budget advisories following the release of the Governor's proposed 2011-12 budget.

## **FEBRUARY:**

- Attend NSBA's Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, D.C. on February 6 – 8, 2011. Register for the conference at <http://www.csba.org/LegislationAndLegal/Legislation/FRNConference.aspx>.
- Meet with your legislator and/or staff at the district office to discuss how the Governor's proposed 2011-12 budget will affect your local schools.
- Write and send an op-ed to your local newspaper addressing the effects that the proposed state budget will have on your schools.
- Network with local government and civic groups; explain key education issues and legislative needs to your local chamber of commerce, rotary and other civic groups, labor interests and parent groups.
- Send clippings of local newspaper articles and letters to the editor to legislators to keep them informed and connected.



## **MARCH:**

- If your district/county is facing major cuts or layoffs this year, be proactive by providing the local media with your key messages early. Make an appointment to meet with your newspaper's editorial board and explain the impacts budget cuts are having on your district/county.
- Register for CSBA's Legislative Action Conference and encourage other board members to attend.

## **APRIL:**

- Draft and send a letter to the editor to key print publications in your area explaining the current condition of schools in your district/county due to decreased school funding.
- Join your local CAST (County Association of School Trustees) and make an effort to attend all CAST meetings and report on legislative issues.
- Meet local candidates running for the Assembly/Senate and let them know about the state of your schools. Ask them what their priorities are and how they intend to protect education and students.

## **MAY:**

- Read CSBA's analysis of the Governor's May Revision to the 2011-12 budget.
- Utilize the relationships you have built with local media. Call reporters and ask if you can answer questions or provide input on the effect the May budget revision will have on schools in your area. Also, let local reporters and community members know that you will be in Sacramento to advocate for your schools and community.
- Prepare for and attend the CSBA Legislative Action Conference to advocate for schools and students. Send a follow-up letter summarizing your discussion and add supplemental information (if requested).

## **JUNE:**

- Invite your legislators to a school board meeting when your budget is being discussed and finalized.
- The state budget will be one of the most hotly debated items in the Legislature. Keep yourself informed by reading CSBA's budget updates and participating in advocacy efforts coordinated by CSBA.
- Be persistent! Continue checking in with reporters and let them know you're a resource as news arises around the state budget. Check back with CSBA for updated talking points.

## **JULY:**

- Don't let your local media forget about the dire budget struggles your schools face just because it's summer break. Stay in touch with reporters and update them what to expect in the coming months when school is back in session.
- Get to know your legislators by attending local legislative forums and meet-and-greets in their hometowns.



## **AUGUST:**

- Draft and send an op-ed and press release to all local media painting a picture of what schools will look like when they start back up. How have the budget cuts affected your district/county? What differences will students and parents notice when they return to school?
- Reconnect with civic and community groups. Keep them abreast of local education issues and challenges. This reinforces the notion that education is a community interest that concerns all citizens.
- While Congress is on summer recess, schedule a meeting with your representative at the district office.
- For the state legislature, August 31 is the last day of session and final recess begins on adjournment. Follow-up with legislators; hold them accountable for bad votes and thank them for good votes on education-related matters.

## **SEPTEMBER:**

- Watch CSBA's Back-to-School Webcast and be informed of upcoming critical issues and follow back up with reporters to inform them of these issues.

## **OCTOBER:**

- Help your legislators visualize school needs! Invite them to a local school board meeting, a regional meeting of neighboring boards, back-to-school nights or other important school events.

## **NOVEMBER:**

- Make sure to vote on November 2.
- Talk to your state legislator about their legislative agenda for 2012 and legislative issues that affect your schools.

## **DECEMBER:**

- Attend CSBA's Annual Education Conference in San Diego and attend the Legislative Network Luncheon.
- Draft a press release, in preparation for media inquiries, to explain the value and investment of attending CSBA's Annual Education Conference. List the tools, information and opportunities you compiled during the conference and present your findings to the board upon your return.
- Evaluate your board's advocacy activities and plan for the following year.

