

# Guide To Create Your ISD Advocacy Plan



## STEP 1: Develop an Introductory Statement

Share why the school district is developing an advocacy plan, identify the plan authors, and define the timeline for execution.

*Example: The Superintendent and Board of Trustees of [redacted] ISD welcome and invite community stakeholders to partner with the school district to influence state education policy, and will work to model and encourage its community to vote in all elections. By 2026, the school district will have embedded civic engagement and advocacy efforts with support systems within its operations.*



## STEP 2: Write an Advocacy Background Statement

Document the school district's current experience with advocacy, and identify the current state of its advocacy.

Examples:

**Community Engagement & Mobilization** - *[redacted] ISD has a strong relationship with its local community and engages in local advocacy efforts, but is not involved in state level advocacy. Every 5 years, [redacted] ISD has engaged the community in local bond task force efforts that include about 30 community members, and that last for about 6 months. Feedback from the task force indicates some level of frustration over their ability to influence the content of the bond program.*

*Other examples of local advocacy include building relationships with community members through programs like Coffee with the Superintendent, a bond task force committee, and a new [redacted] ISD leadership program with 40 participants.*

**Electoral Engagement** - *The school district provides nonpartisan voting facts for bond and school board elections, but has not provided information for other elections. [redacted] ISD has partnered with [redacted] to host school board candidate forums prior to the local election.*

**Issue Development & Campaigns** - *The board has not engaged in advocacy during the state legislative session yet. However, it does submit resolutions to TASB and attends TASB's grassroots meetings. The superintendent communicates with our State Representative and Senator about the impact of legislation when requested by the legislator. The board does not adopt its own legislative agenda or keep track of key legislation and the local legislative delegation's voting records. The board does not have any experience with federal legislative advocacy.*



### STEP 3: Create an Anchor

**Anchor the plan with the school district's Vision and Mission Statements from its existing strategic plan.**

*Example: Insert the (AE)Legal and BAA(Legal).*

*ISD vision statement. Every school district should have a vision statement per*

*Insert*

*ISD mission statement, if one exists.*



### STEP 4: Identify the Problem

**Reflect on the problem that the school district wants to solve. Consider whether there is a particular legislative action that the district seeks. Or, does the district want to improve its local advocacy?**

*Example:*

*ISD is losing student enrollment through charter school expansion. The enrollment loss becomes revenue loss without the same ability to eliminate the associated cost. Ultimately, the budget pressure of revenue loss results in budget cuts that affect service delivery and community expectations. The community does not understand the impact of charter school expansion upon its school district.*



### STEP 5: Conduct an Advocacy SWOT analysis

**Identify the school district's advocacy strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.**

As a group, utilize Google Jamboard to conduct a SWOT analysis of the organization's community engagement & mobilization, legislator relationships, electoral engagement, issue development & campaigns, and effective communications.

*Insert the conclusions drawn from the SWOT Analysis below. (SWOT = Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)*



## STEP 6: Establish Advocacy Beliefs

### Identify the core advocacy beliefs the superintendent and board of trustees share about local, electoral, and legislative advocacy.

Example: The \_\_\_\_\_ ISD Superintendent and Board of Trustees believe the following about advocacy.

#### Community Engagement & Mobilization:

- We believe that it is important for individual Trustees to visit campuses.
- We believe that it is important for Trustees to belong to and contribute to key community organizations.
- We believe that it is important for the school district to have a relationship with community groups and members of the community.
- We believe that it is important to build valued partnerships.
- We believe that the Board should have a written plan to advocate within the community.
- We believe that the community expects to see the Superintendent and Trustee attend school events, as they are available.
- We believe that It is important for Trustees to understand the needs of teachers.

#### Electoral Engagement

- We believe that it is important for every Trustee and the Superintendent to vote in every election.
- We believe that \_\_\_\_\_ ISD can serve as a nonpartisan resource that our community trusts to provide factual information about every election.
- We believe that all students should learn to participate in elections and know how to register to vote, research candidates, and vote.

#### Legislator Relationships

- We believe that it is important for Trustees and the Superintendent to have a relationship with every Legislator in their local delegation, and their staff.
- We believe that students and community members add value to \_\_\_\_\_ ISD's legislative efforts.
- We believe that it is important to engage the community in \_\_\_\_\_ ISD's legislative efforts.
- We believe that it is important to create a system of legislative advocacy that the Superintendent and Trustees develop together.
- We believe that \_\_\_\_\_ ISD's advocacy system should be sustainable.



## STEP 7: Define Advocacy Goals and Success

**State the school district’s advocacy goals and define success. What do you want to achieve? What does success look like? Develop goals for community engagement & mobilization, legislator relationships, electoral engagement, issue development & campaigns, and effective communications.**

*Example: Issue Development & Campaigns - The ISD Superintendent and Board Trustees want to draw attention to and inform the community about the issues and problems that need legislative action, engage the community in the development of solutions, and coordinate the efforts of the stakeholders to influence legislative action. ISD faces*



## STEP 8: Develop Final Plan

**Write a concise one- to two-page executive summary that gives an overview of the plan. Then add the key messages and content from Steps 1-7 to create the final plan.**

*Example: Background - Advocacy is the act of identifying a problem, seeking a solution for the problem, and building support for both the problem and the solution. Advocacy efforts aim to influence public policy as well as public opinion. ISD is committed to creating an advocacy system that values, informs, and engages the community in these efforts. In addition ISD is committed to modeling and educating the students of ISD about the importance of advocacy.*



## **STEP 9: Adopt the Plan**

**Present the Executive Summary and Advocacy Plan to the school board in a regular meeting for its consideration and adoption. The Board and Superintendent will use this opportunity to publicly discuss the Board's commitment to advocacy, share its intentions with the community, and invite the community to join the effort.**

**Complete this task before the May local election, if possible. If not possible, then consider completing this task by the end of the school year.**