

ADVOCACY LEARNING INSTITUTE

*PARTNERING WITH PARENTS AS ADVOCATES FOR
THEIR CHILDREN*

February 24, 2010

What is Advocacy?



Icebreaker instructions:

- **Share with people at your table about an instance when you advocated for a community issue**
- Discuss what was common among the stories shared

What is Advocacy?



- **Problem solving**
- **Public Policy (laws, rules, regulations, practices)**
- Public issues
- Influence
- Decision-makers
- Benefits, resources
- Passion

What is Advocacy?

- Actions taken by individuals, groups or organizations on public issues to influence **public policy** (*laws, rules, regulations, practices*) at the local, state, national level to benefit one or more people.

Public Policy



...the combination of basic decisions, commitments, and actions made by those who hold or affect government positions of authority.

Larry N. Gerston

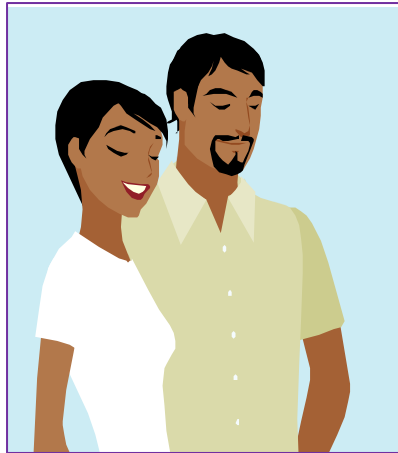
Advocacy and Democracy



- Advocacy is at the core of a democratic society.
- Advocacy is the engine that makes democratic institutions work for the people.

Parent Advocacy

Student/Child



- **Not prepared for Kinder**
- **Underperforming local schools**
- **Not prepared to go to college**

Parent Advocacy

Individual



WHY?

Advocacy



- **Problem affects others**
- **Long-term solution**
- **Benefits the community**
- **Effectiveness**

- **Problem too big to solve by yourself**
- **Authority to address the problem lies on a government institution**

Parent Advocacy Examples



- Mendez Family
- Public School Choice Resolution
- Parent Trigger
- At your local school/community?

Effective Parent Advocacy



1. Knowledge

- Understands the problem/issue
- Understands how the education system works

2. Skills

- Communication
- Analytical skills/Research skills

3. Dispositions

- Courage
- Commitment
- Tolerance

Create the Conditions for Parent Advocacy

1. Create a Welcoming Environment

- Parents have a space to meet and discuss
- Practices & policies are family-friendly
- Staff are responsive to parent concerns
- Bilingual staff or translators are available



Create the Conditions for Parent Advocacy

2. Share Resources

- Provide parents with information on upcoming advocacy campaigns
- Connect parents with advocacy organizations in their community
- Create a monthly newsletter on education issues that impact their children



Create the Conditions for Parent Advocacy

3. Incorporate Advocacy Activities

- Implement advocacy curricula
- Invite advocacy groups to speak with parents
- Engage parents in advisory committees
- Involve parents in decision-making and problem solving

