

One of the Board of Education's important functions is to serve as an advocate for the District and all of its students, and, more generally, as an advocate for public education and educational excellence and equity. The Board's advocacy role encompasses intra-district and local community responsibilities, and it also extends beyond the District to include regional, state, and even national concerns.

Advocacy activities are attempts to engage and communicate effectively with others. Advocacy activities have varied purposes and include activities that aim to collaborate, promote, influence, persuade, listen, problem-solve, or simply inform.

The Board intends to work with the Superintendent on identifying and implementing advocacy initiatives that foster:

- Student engagement
- Parent engagement
- Staff engagement
- Community engagement
- Institutional engagement (e.g., businesses, other schools, institutions of higher education, etc.)
- Legislative/public policy engagement (e.g., connecting with elected representatives, the Department of Public Instruction, relevant state and federal agencies, other units of local government, etc.)

Notwithstanding that the Board and District will pursue many formal and planned advocacy activities, the Board also recognizes that opportunities for effective advocacy and engagement are presented in many day-to-day interactions and communications. The Board will rely on its individual members and expects all District employees to use both formal activities and informal interactions to build positive and collaborative relationships with the District's various stakeholder groups.

The Board authorizes and encourages the Superintendent and Board President to structure portions of Board meetings as advocacy opportunities, including by showcasing particular student accomplishments, District programs, and District partnerships and by using meeting time to identify and address legislative and other advocacy opportunities. The Board will also consider the extent to which standing or ad hoc committees might be utilized to further the Board's advocacy and engagement goals. For example, the Board may build such goals into a specific charge that is given to one or more committees.

Specifically related to legislative and public policy issues, the Board seeks to both proactively and reactively engage and advocate on behalf of the District and its students with lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials. On matters of common concern, the Board will leverage the resources and activities of interest-based collaborations and of regional and state-wide associations that are pursuing shared interests and objectives.

In the performance of their duties and regardless of their personal views, those individuals who are authorized to act as spokespersons for the express purpose of advocating District interests and Board positions to lawmakers, agency personnel, and other government officials shall convey such interests and positions in a manner that is consistent with any specific or general

direction that has been given by the Board. The authorized spokespersons shall likewise adhere to any limitations on their authority as may be specified by the Board.

In pursuing the Board's legislative and public policy advocacy goals, neither the Board nor any District employee or authorized agent of the Board, while acting in his/her official District capacity, may (1) campaign for or against any particular candidate(s) in an election; (2) use District funds to make contributions to any candidate or political committee; or (3) use any public resources for any other political purpose that is prohibited by law.

Legal References:

Wisconsin Statutes

[Sections 13.61 to 13.65](#)

[state lobbying laws]

[Section 120.13](#)

[a general grant of authority to do all things reasonable to promote the cause of education and a partial list of specific school board powers]

Cross References:

WASB PRG 154 Sample Policy 1

Adoption/Revision Dates:

May 2020