

Grassroots Advocacy Tips for Schools



School tours – Invite them to your school for a tour. Show them your programs. Introduce them to students, faculty, your employers, and others who can personally attest to the positive impact the schools has on them and the community. Probably nothing is better to educate an elected official on your school, than having them inside the walls of the school seeing it for themselves.

Community events – If your school is hosting a community event on your campus, invite them to it. Or, if your students or staff are attending an event off-campus, invite them as well and let them know how your school is helping the community and their constituents.

Political fundraisers – For better or worse, running for elected office takes financial resources and just about all elected officials have to raise funds for their campaigns. These events can range from high-end receptions that are expensive to attend, to golf tournaments, to lesser expensive events like picnics, pancake breakfasts, chicken barbeques, and many more fun events. Find out what fundraisers your local elected officials may be hosting, determine what events work best for you and your budget, and consider attending.

Employer panels – Host an “Employer Panel” at your school sometime for the elected officials. Employers are critical to a community and often have the ear of elected officials since their businesses help shape the local economy of the elected officials’ district. Bring your employers in for a panel with the elected officials and discuss the local employment needs, how your school is helping to fill them, what future needs may exist, and how the elected official may help.

Seats on Employer Advisory Board – Many schools have “Employer Advisory Boards” or some similar body of officials that advise the school on employment needs and other local community needs moving forward. Some schools offer a seat on these boards to elected officials. What better way for them to know about your school and its contribution to the workforce than to give them a seat on the board. It also gives them personal “buy-in” to help make sure your school remains successful and is a contributing institution to the local community.

Graduation Speaker – Invite elected officials to your graduation speaker at a commencement ceremony. It provides them a chance to get in front of hundreds (some cases thousands) of their constituents in a positive and emotionally-inspiring event. What better way for them to see how well your school benefits the community than for them to see students complete the programs and receive their credential in front of cheering and proud friends and family.

Town halls and forums – Attend some of the elected officials town halls or other free events they host to meet the community. Maybe even offer to host a town hall or free public event for the elected officials at your school.

Letters from school/Student and employer testimonials – When important issues pop up, don’t be afraid to write a letter, email or other correspondence to the elected official. Also, it is suggested to try and incorporate employer and student testimonials when possible in these letters. Hearing directly from the people a career school serve directly (students and employers) will help give credibility to an issue you are advocating on.

Volunteer to help public official – Don’t be afraid to volunteer for an elected official’s campaign efforts. It is a free way to show your support to them and help build a relationship with the official. To win a successful campaign, they often need dozens of volunteers to go door-to-door with them, stuff envelopes, make phone calls, deliver yard signs, and much more. This ‘sweat equity’ put in by volunteer in a campaign is appreciated by elected officials greatly and remembered.

Newsletters – If your school has a newsletter or other communications it sends out on a periodic schedule, see if the elected official wishes to place an article in it about an education issue important to them. Or, see if the elected official has their own newsletter and offer to write a guest column on an education issue important to the community.

Open house – Does your school host an open house. Consider inviting local elected officials. Or, if they are hosting an open house at their office, consider attending.