

Everyday Advocacy

Navigating the System to Make Your Voice Heard

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Weber School District
Board of Education

Utah PTA Convention Everyday Advocacy

May

2026

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Introduction

What is Advocacy?

- Active support, plea, or recommendation of a cause or policy.
- Goal: Influence decisions in political, economic, and social institutions.
- Purpose: Ensure voices are heard, rights are protected, and systemic changes are made.

Types of Advocacy

Self-Advocacy: Speaking up for your own needs and rights.

Individual: Speaking up for one or two specific people.

Systemic: Changing policies, laws, or rules to benefit large groups.

Chain of Advocacy

Student
↓
Parent

Student
↓
Teacher

Parent
↓
Teacher
↓
School Administrator
↓
District Administrator
↓
Superintendent

Parent
↓
School Board Member
↓
Legislator

School Board: Duties & Obligations

01. Nonpartisan, locally elected body representing the community
02. Sets general direction and district expectations
03. Establishes vision, goals, and priorities
04. Oversees the strategic plan

Statutory Responsibilities

01. Hires and evaluates the Superintendent and Business Administrator
02. Develops and revises district policies
03. Approves a balanced budget aligned with district goals
04. Fulfills other state-mandated roles, i.e., School-LAND Trust plans, PBIS

Good board member:

- Listens to constituents and shares concerns with the board
- Educates the community on the proper resolution process
- Remains accessible to the community
- Works through the Superintendent to address issues

Superintendent's role:

- Chief Executive: Overall management of programs, operations, and staff
- Implementation: Executes policies set by the Board
- Accountability: Ensures the district meets educational goals
- Day to day running of the district

Example: recent staffing issues in our district

ADVOCACY SCENARIO #1

Your school district is seeing a decline in enrollment. Your district staffs elementary classes according to a district-specific student to teacher ratio. Because of declining enrollment, several teachers in your school have been displaced. One of the displaced teachers at your schools is a school favorite kindergarten teacher. What can you do to advocate for this favorite teacher to keep his/her job at your school?

SCENARIO #2

Your district recently re-evaluated school bus route and found hundreds of students riding the bus who live in the walk zone. Your neighborhood received notice that your students will no longer be able to ride the bus to school. Although you live within the 1.5 mile range, you feel like the road those students will have to cross to get to school is dangerous (lacks sidewalks, stop signs). What do you do?

SCENARIO #3

Your district is building a new elementary school. This will impact the boundaries of several surrounding schools. The district has recommended a boundary that would move your neighborhood to a different school. Your neighborhood is right across from your elementary school but your students have to cross a very busy street. What would you do?

SCENARIO #4

Your district has started a closure study for your neighborhood elementary school. They are citing low enrollment at your school as well as costs associated with an aging building. There is a newer elementary close by that's only at 50% enrollment. Your school community is upset at the idea of closing your school. What do you do?

SCENARIO #5

Your junior high was rebuilt several years ago. The district kept the gymnasium from the old school building and it is now a stand-alone gym next to the junior high. The old gym is facing a need for expensive repairs. The school district wants to tear down the old gym. Your community is upset because the gym is used by the community and you don't agree with the reasons for tearing it down. What do you do?

Scenario Review

- What level of the advocacy chain did you work with?
- What data or facts do you need to be effective?
- What are your action steps?
- What is your intended outcome?
- What if your intended outcome isn't achieved?

Legislative Change

State Advocacy

Find Your Legislator

Create good relationships with your house representative and state senator. Attend a town hall. Send them a text.

Case Study #1

SB 75 - Educator Salary Adjustment

Senator Mussleman

Successfully added school nurses to the list of educators eligible for salary adjustments.

Case Study #2

SB 269 - School Board Meeting Notification

Senator Weiler

Proposed changing board agenda notice from 72 hours to 24 hours.

Q & A

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