



# Theatre Advocacy

## Definition of advocacy

The act of pleading for, supporting, or recommending; active espousal

## Importance of advocacy in Theatre Arts

In today's world of limited budgets and competing curricula and activities, theatre arts teachers must fight to convince their school districts, students, and communities of the importance of theatre arts. The debate over the importance of language programs is prevalent throughout the United States. Theatre Arts must assert the importance of language study as a core subject and a vital part of a student's personal, academic, cognitive, social, and career development. Advocacy can take many forms and can take place on many levels. Here are some examples of how you can become more involved with advocacy.

### Advocacy at the personal level

- Be able to discuss the benefits of taking theatre with anyone, anywhere, anytime
- Put a quote about theatre advocacy on the signature line of your e-mail
- Use social media to connect with organizations, groups, or other people passionate about theatre
- Wear pins, lanyards, etc. or put bumper stickers on your car promoting your theatre or theatre arts in general
- Showcase a positive attitude towards the theatre, and theatre arts in general

## **Advocacy at the class level (students/prospective students)**

- Invite business leaders to the classroom that can showcase the importance of learning theatre arts in specific jobs or careers.
- Invite theatre professionals and practitioners to the classroom.
- Celebrate theatre with festivals, events, and performances.
- Decorate your room and create an inviting, interesting learning environment.
- Make bulletin boards/brochures that indicate why students should take theatre arts.
- Participate in Homecoming and other school events.
- Participate in theatre week and other theatre-specific events.
- Celebrate student successes.
- Publicize student work.
- Start a drama club or sponsor a thespian honor society.
- Advertise theatre on the school website.

## **Advocacy at the school/school district level (including administrators/counselors)**

- Work with administrator(s) to make sure theatre is considered a core subject.
- Work with school counselors to insure that theatre is open to all students.
- Work within schools of your district to ensure a smooth transition for students from one level of study to another.
- Attend school-board meetings.

## **Advocacy at the local level (including parents and community)**

- Take advantage of Open House or Back to School events with brochures, cookies and punch, advocacy videos for parents.
- Create a monthly newsletter to inform parents of upcoming events.
- Invite parents to come to your classroom or to help with classroom events.
- Take a picture of anything/everything and submit articles to the local paper.
- Ask local government officials to sign official proclamations or statements in support of theatre education.
- Invite local officials to come to your classroom.
- Volunteer to speak at local civic organization's meetings.

## **Advocacy at the state level**

- Stay informed about political issues that might affect your job or the status of theatre in your state.
- Sign up for the Mississippi Theatre Association Listserv through the MS Theatre Association by e-mailing [execdir@mta-online.org](mailto:execdir@mta-online.org)
- By becoming a member of the Mississippi Theatre Association, you become an automatic member of the Americans for the Arts Action Fund which gives you information on current art legislation <http://www.artsactionfund.org>
- Become a member of Americans for the Arts for the latest in research for the arts and art legislation <https://www.americansforthearts.org>

- Sign up for the Educational Theatre Association FB Group
- Become an active member in your state theatre associations: Mississippi Theatre Association - [www.mta-online.org](http://www.mta-online.org) and the Mississippi Educational Theatre Association <https://www.schooltheatre.org/membership/chapters/mississippi>
- Become a member of your state's arts education group - Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education <http://www.msartsalliance.com/>
- Become a member of your state's arts commission - Mississippi Arts Commission - <https://arts.ms.gov/>
- Know the name of your state legislators and state senators and how to contact them.
- Seek out opportunities to participate in teacher development and network with other theatre teachers in the state. Visit [Mississippi Theatre Association](#) and [Mississippi Thespians](#) websites to learn more about professional development opportunities.

### **Advocacy at the national level**

- Stay informed about political issues that might affect your job or the status of theatre in the nation.
- Know the names of the congressmen and senators representing MS in Washington DC and how to contact them.
- Use social media to participate in national or regional groups concerned with theatre education and advocacy.
- Become of a member of at least one regional/national organization devoted to theatre or theatre arts/teaching in general.

### **Advocacy for Non-Profits**

- According to the National Council for Non-Profits - "It's not complicated. Really. All you have to do is care about your nonprofit's mission. Most people think that advocacy and lobbying are synonymous. Lobbying is a form of advocacy, but there are so many more ways to advocate for your nonprofit's mission. Browse through our archive of "[Advocacy in Action](#)" stories. At least one story is included in every edition of our free bi-weekly newsletter, [Nonprofit Advocacy Matters](#)."
- By assisting your local non-profit theatres with advocacy efforts, it shows your dedication to theatres arts and the solidarity of theatre artists. The more united the theatre advocacy front, the more that all areas of theatre will benefit.