ADVOCACY 101: A Guide to Legislative Advocacy in New York State
Presented by: Kathleen Digan, NYSSBA Governmental Relations Representative
New York State Government:
Know the Players

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Know the Players

Executive Chamber

- Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
- Secretary to the Governor Melissa DeRosa
- Counsel to the Governor Alphonso David
- Director of the Budget Robert Mujica
- Director of State Operations Jamie Rubin
- Deputy Secretary of Education - Vacant
Know the Players

New York State Senate

• Senate Majority Leader John Flanagan
• Senate Democratic Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
• Senate IDC Leader Jeffrey Klein
• Education Committee Chair Senator Carl Marcellino

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New York State Assembly

- Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
- Assembly Republican Leader Brian Kolb
- Education Committee Chair Assemblymember Catherine Nolan
Know the Players

New York State Education Department

• Commissioner of Education MaryEllen Elia
• Chancellor of the Board of Regents Betty Rosa
  ▪ The Board of Regents has 17 members elected by the State Legislature
Know the Process: Legislative
Know the Process: Legislative

• The legislative session begins in January and ends in late June

• The Governor forecasts his budget and legislative priorities in the annual State of the State address
  ▪ Traditionally first Wednesday after the first Monday of January
  ▪ This practice has changed recently under Governor Cuomo

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Know the Process: Legislative

- Bills are introduced before, during and after legislative session
- Once a bill is introduced, it is delivered to the appropriate committees based on content
- Bills must be reported out of committee to get to the floor for a vote
  - Committee chairs set the agendas
Know the Process: Legislative

- Bills may be referred to more than one committee, these are called committees of dual reference
  - In the Assembly, all bills must go through the committee process to be considered on the floor
  - In the Senate, leadership has the option to “discharge” the bill for a vote, in which case the bill must pass through the rules committee before it comes to the floor

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Know the Process: Legislative

• Once a bill reaches the floor or “calendar” it is still not guaranteed a vote
  ▪ If debate is requested it must be placed on a debate list in the Assembly or the active list in the Senate to move forward
  ▪ Leadership controls this process
• Both houses must pass identical versions
Know the Process: Legislative

• Bills must then be signed or vetoed by the Governor, this can take months to occur
  ▪ Bills are sent up to the Governor by the house that passed the legislation first
Know the Process: Budget
Know the Process: Budget

• When the legislative session ends the budget process begins again
• From July through October, all agencies develop budget plans
• From October through December the Governor’s Office and the Division of Budget work on the next year’s Executive Budget proposal
Know the Process: Budget

- Executive Budget is traditionally released after the State of the State
  - Second Tuesday after the start of session
  - Except after gubernatorial election years it is on or before the first day of February
- Legislative budget hearings begin after the Executive Budget proposal is released
Know the Process: Budget

- Both the Senate and the Assembly lay out their budget proposals in their one house budget bills and/or resolutions by early to mid March.
- Legislative Conference Committees then convene.
- Final budget must be passed and signed into law by April 1st or there are consequences...
Know the Process: Budget

**Consequences of a late budget**

- Legislators will not receive paychecks
- The Governor can insert his Executive Budget proposals into budget extender bills
- Government can shut down
Know the Process: Regulatory
Know the Process: Regulatory

• Once a bill is signed it may require a state agency to issue rules and regulations
  ▪ The agency is determined by the statue
  ▪ Generally school district matters are handled by the State Education Department, but not always
Know the Process: Regulatory

Step 1: Agency Writes Proposed Regulation
- Prepares regulatory impact statement
- Regulation is published on the state register and sent out for public comment
Know the Process: Regulatory

- **Step 2: Public Comment Period**
  - Public comment is either a minimum of 45 or 60 days.
  - This is the time period that the public can weigh in with their concerns or suggestions on the proposed regulations.
  - The agencies review these comments and if substantial changes are needed to the regulations another 30 day comment period will occur.
  - In some cases a public hearing may occur.
Know the Process: Regulatory

• Step 3: Regulations Adopted
  - Following the public comment period the agency adopts the final rule
  - Full text of the regulation is filed with the Department of State
Know the Process: Regulatory

• When regulations are issued through the State Education Department they must receive final approval by the Board of Regents.

• The Board of Regents are responsible for the general supervision of all education activities in New York.
KNOW THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT
Know the Political Environment

Factors that influence decision making

- Voters
- Advocacy
- Special Interests
- Timing
- Media
- Current Events
- Crisis
Know the Political Environment

**Education Players**

- New York State Parent Teacher Association
- New York State School Boards Association
- New York State United Teachers
- New York State Council of School Superintendents
- Conference of Big 5
- New York State Association of School Business Officials
- School Administrators Association of New York State
Know the Political Environment

Other groups to consider

• Seniors
• Veterans
• State employees
• Other elected officials
• Other interest groups
• Donors
KNOW HOW TO ADVOCATE
Know How to Advocate

**Relationships Building**
- Be proactive not reactive
- Build real relationships
  - Invite electeds to your school
  - Mail electeds school newsletters
  - Provide them updates
  - Reminders
- Leverage your network
- Build coalitions and partnerships
Know How to Advocate

Contact your legislators:

• In person meetings
• Letters
• E-mails
• Phone calls
• Social Media
• Attend town halls
Know How to Advocate

Successful Meetings:

• Be prepared
• Be respectful, but firm
• Have an ask
• Offer a solution
• Acknowledge the other side and know their positions
• Don’t argue
• Follow up and follow through
• Thank you notes
Know How to Advocate

**Successful Meetings: The Story of Right**

Have the *right* meeting, at the *right* time, with the *right* people, making the *right* ask.
Any Questions?
Contact NYSSBA Governmental Relations

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