

Advocacy 101



MASCA

Massachusetts School Counselors Association



Massachusetts

School Nurse Organization, Inc.



Advocacy 101



Advocating at the local level

BOB BARDWELL

MARCH 3, 2021

ADVOCACY



[ad-vuh-kuh-see]

Noun

1. the act of pleading for,
supporting, or recommending;
active espousal:

www.dictionary.com

Who do we advocate with?



- Colleagues
- Administrators
- School boards
- Parents/Families
- Community members
- Local media - newspaper, cable station, radio & television
- Community groups – PTA, Rotary, Realtors
- Elected officials/policy makers
- Strangers

What is your elevator speech?



- Describe what you do in 30-60 seconds; 118 if you are in NYC
- Can you succinctly describe the impact you make on student success and achievement?
- Do you have data to share?
- What would you say about your role if you were sitting next to a stranger on a plane?



How do we advocate?



- Talk about what you do
- Demonstrate with data our impact on student success and achievement
- Share our program results with stakeholders
- Go to meetings
- Use social media to inform/motivate others
- Write letters to the editor
- Submit press releases with photo ops
- Invite policy makers to your events



School Services Personnel Coalition *Lobbying Overview*

Tremont Strategies Group

www.tremontstrategies.com

Massachusetts School Counselors Association
Massachusetts School Nurses Organization
Massachusetts School Psychologists Association



Introduction to Tremont Strategies Group

TSG offers a full complement of Federal, Multi-State, and State & Local government relations services. Our work includes legislative and regulatory affairs, procurement and public sector marketing, appropriations representation, and legislative monitoring.



Understanding the Legislative Process

Presented by Savannah Kelleher



Overview

- How does a bill become a law?
- How to make practical efforts to lobby government and affect public policy
- Importance of political activity and advocacy

Who are the key players?

- Administration

- Governor Charlie Baker

- Lt. Governor Karyn Polito

- Secretaries, Commissioners, etc.

- House

- 160 Members

- Each district has 40,000 residents

- Speaker Ronald Mariano (D- Quincy)

- Senate

- 40 Members

- Each district has 163,000 residents

- Senate President, Karen Spilka (D - Ashland)



How does a bill become a law

The legislative process can be long and complicated, but each step in the process serves an important role

Perception of lawmaking:

What we learned...

The Legislative Process

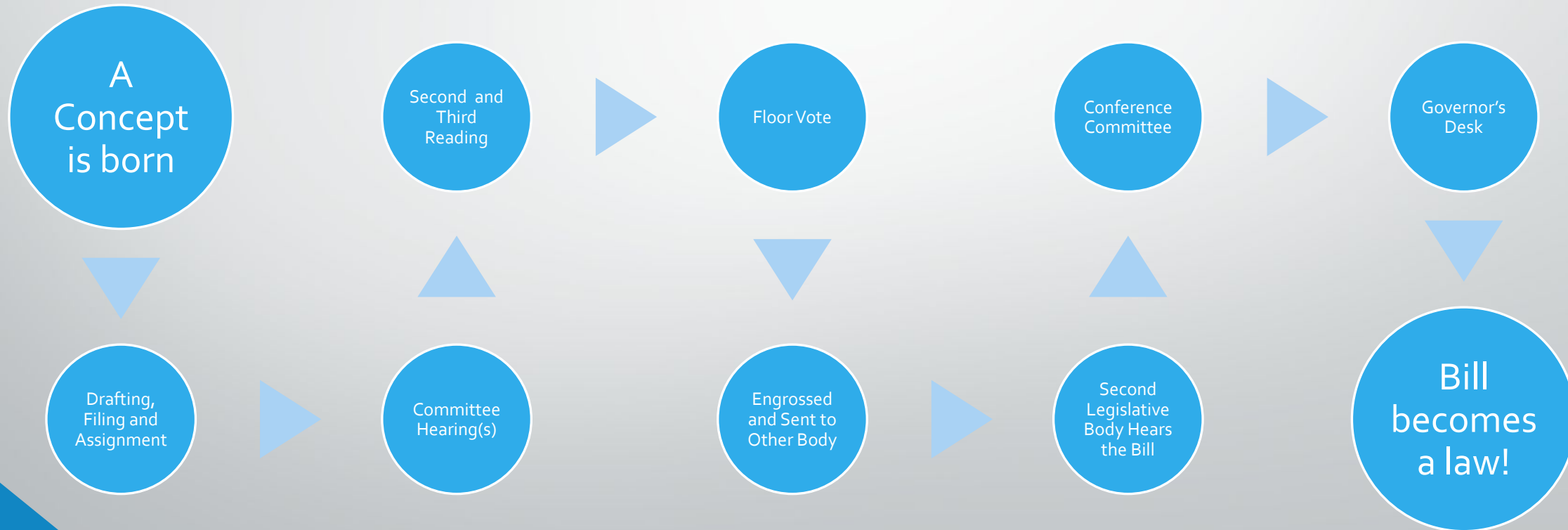


How a Bill becomes a Law

What it can feel like...



The long process toward a bill becoming a law



Important 2021 Dates

- January 6, 2021: Swearing in and Convening of 2020-2021 General Court
- February 19, 2021**: Bill Filing Deadline (late files allowed) **Bill filing deadline extended
- January 27, 2021: Governor's FY22 Budget (H1) filed
- January/February 2021: Rules debated and decided
- Late February/ Early March 2021: Committee Chairs and Leadership announced
- March 2021-February 2022: Hearings on regularly filed legislation
- April/May 2021: House budget filed
- May/June 2021: Senate budget filed
- June-July 2021: Budget due
- November 17, 2021: Last Day of 2021 Formal Sessions
- December 31, 2021: Last Day of 1st Annual Session (2021)



What is Lobbying?

What is lobbying?

- Lobbying – attempting to influence government decisions
- Lobbyist – an individual who represents an organized interest before government
- Grassroots Lobbyist – any person who brings any issue or concern before the government



Who do we lobby in government?

- Legislators and legislative staff
- Executive Branch officials
- Constitutional Officers
- Cabinet members and Commissioners
- Local government officials: Mayors, Selectmen and Alderman, Councilors, School Committee Members and municipal staff

Why do we lobby?

- To influence and bring about change
- It is the best way to communicate directly with policy makers
- To demonstrate support of the issue
- To educate policy makers on specific or technical matters (i.e. legislative or regulatory matters)
- Private sector companies and organizations are often unaware of public sector processes and regulations



Lobbying 2.0

- Lobbying today is transparent, ethical and complicated
- Efforts to move policy forward require the inclusion of grassroots and often public relations campaigns to demonstrate wide support for your issue
- Legislators and policy makers want to hear all sides of an issue and make informed decisions that are reflective and in the best interest of the constituents
- Grassroots organizing and the media can help legislators hear from their constituents

Making your case to legislators -- *do's & don'ts*

DO'S

- **Make it personal** - Talk about why you support the issue
- **Make it local** – Talk about why this would be good for the district and the state
- **Know the facts** – make sure you know the facts on your issue and have numbers that illustrate your points.
- **Make a strong ask** – make an unapologetic ask for support.

DON'TS

- **Try to be an expert** – Know your issue, but don't try to know everything.
- **Make things up** – if a legislator asks you something you don't know, just tell them that you can get back to them
- **Lose control of the agenda** – legislators will often take the conversation to what THEY want to talk about. Respectfully keep the meeting on track.
- **Lose your cool** – these meetings can be frustrating, but never lose your cool.



Your Voices Can Make Change

- Many examples of legislation that was passed because of hundreds of different voices advocating for change
- Elected Officials represent you and want to hear about issues that matter to constituents
- You're the experts on YOUR jobs and know what you need

Questions?

- How do you best advocate with tact? Is data the best way to discuss this without splitting hairs?
- How do we advocate without coming across as “too pushy”?
- What is the ‘key words’ we should use when contacting state representatives?
- How does the Legislature influence school district accreditation standards?
- What should I prepare to say when calling a legislator and who should I expect to speak with?
- One basic way to get started?
- Best ways to contact legislators and government officials?

Connect with us!

Massachusetts School Counselors Association

- The mission of MASCA is to promote excellence in the school counseling profession by advocating for, connecting, supporting, and empowering school counselors in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through leadership, collaboration, and professional development.
- Go to our [website](#) to find out more information about our advocacy efforts!
- Contact: Juliette Coatsworth, juliette.nori@gmail.com

Massachusetts School Nurse Organization

- The mission of MSNO is to promote and advance quality school health services throughout the Commonwealth and promote the rights, interests and professional growth of our members. Members are encouraged to take an active stance in decisions directly impacting school nursing, especially in the legislative, economic and educational areas.
- Go to our [website](#) to find out more information about our advocacy efforts!
- Contact: Jenny Gormley, jmgormley567@gmail.com

Massachusetts School Psychologists Association

- The MSPA is dedicated to promote appropriate mental health and educational services to meet the many and varied needs of children, families and their communities. In order to achieve this aim, the Massachusetts School Psychologists Association advocates for children's needs, informs the public of the value of school psychological services, provides continued professional development and conducts research.
- Go to our [website](#) to find out more information about our advocacy efforts!



Thank You!!

Michael Morris, Partner
Tremont Strategies Group
morris@tremontstrategies.com

Savannah Kelleher, Vice President
Tremont Strategies Group
kelleher@tremontstrategies.com
www.tremontstrategies.com