

# Making Sure the CTE Message is Heard Loud and Clear!

**Focusing Advocacy in an Effective Way**

Natalie Wise, Pappas & Associates

Greg Lestini, Bricker & Eckler

# Overview

- Knowing the Legislature
- Developing your advocacy message
- Building a grassroots strategy
- Implementing your advocacy plan
- Questions for the participants

# Knowing the Legislature: Relevant House and Senate Members

- o Majority and Minority Caucus Leadership
- o House and Senate Finance Committees
- o House and Senate Education Committees
- o Staff are often the first access points to legislators

# The Ohio General Assembly

- o The Ohio Constitution provides for a bicameral General Assembly with 99 House members and 33 Senate members.
- o Ohio's laws can be amended, deleted, or added to - through a legislative process.
- o Over a thousand bills are introduced each legislative session, but only 10 to 15% actually become law.

# The Legislative Process (1)

- o The legislative process starts when a legislator has an idea for a new law, and requests it be drafted into a bill by the Legislative Service Commission (LSC).
- o Legislators also draft bills at the request of citizens and advocacy organizations.
- o The bill is given first consideration when it is numbered by the chamber's clerk and introduced.

# Legislative Process (2)

- o The bill then moves to the Reference Committee where the bill may be assigned to a standing committee.
- o Once assigned to a standing committee, a bill must receive at least one hearing.
- o At its first hearing, the legislator whom presented the bill will be asked to provide sponsor testimony.

# Legislative Process (3)

- Committee hearings provide an opportunity for legislators and the public to debate the content of the bill.
- The public is invited to testify at scheduled committee hearings in favor, in opposition, or as an interested party of the bill.
- If the bill is passed out of committee favorably, it proceeds to Rules Committee.
- Third consideration occurs when it reaches the House or Senate Floor for debate and a vote of the full assembly.

# Legislative Process (4)

- If the bill is approved, it moves to the other chamber, where the same legislative procedure begins all over again.
- If members of the House and Senate cannot agree on the exact same language of a piece of legislation, a conference committee may be convened to work through the differences.
- If the House and Senate concur with any changes made during the legislative process, the bill is passed and presented to the Governor for his consideration. He may sign it into law, reject the legislation with a veto, or take no action at all.

# The Budget Bill – Am. Sub. H.B. 153

- o Reduces funding for local governments by \$633 million over two years.
- o Eliminates \$779 million for schools.
- o Allows for the privatization of several state functions.
- o Transforms the state's Medicaid program.

# What's Next:

- o Talk of another budget bill next year.
- o Changes to the state's school funding formula.
- o Lawmakers expect to tweak rather than overhaul the budget they just passed.

# Developing Your Message

- o A strong, unified, and consistent message moves legislators towards a legislative action.
- o Establish a message the OACTE can deliver with one voice.
- o Ask yourself this question as you organize your message:
  - o What action do I want the legislator to take?

# How Does Grassroots Advocacy fit into how Policy is Made?

- o Legislators react to how their constituencies respond to an issue.
- o The goal for your grassroots efforts is to dictate the response you seek from the legislator.
- o The more they realize voters in their districts are aware of an issue the more they are likely to vote one way or another on a bill.

# Implementing Your Advocacy Plan

- o Schedule meetings in your legislator's Columbus office.
- o Schedule district office meetings.
- o Set school meetings and tours at which you show:
  - o Technology and equipment paid with weighted funding
  - o Employer partnerships
  - o CTE programs that offer students a wide range of options after high school
- o Establish yourself as the point person for CTE with your legislator.

# Questions

- o What are some grassroots activities you do at your school?
- o How do you involve traditional and non-traditional students in advocacy?
- o What is your message? What is your “ask”?
- o If you were the legislator, what would you want to hear in order to make decisions/take a position?
- o What role should Ohio ACTE take?