

How to Become an Advocate

CTE plays an important role in student achievement and workforce and economic development. Population growth, rapid changes and new education issues present both challenges and opportunities for CTE. CTAT is committed to representing the crucial and timely issues facing the CTE community and its students. Student success data provides decision makers with the most convincing evidence of CTE's value.

In order to protect funding and increase awareness of the benefits of CTE, CTAT Areas are encouraged to showcase their programs with organized tours for lawmakers. Utilize resources to help work through regional and/or state regulatory issues as they arise and plan your course of action.

● Attend the annual ACTE National Policy Seminar to stay up-to-date on federal issues facing CTE and take an active role by meeting one-on-one with federal lawmakers from Texas.

Challenge



Plan

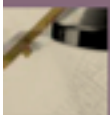


Action

“CTAT's legislative involvement and informed, persistent efforts to enlighten political leaders on the importance of CTE for students has and will continue to be the focus of our organization.”

Carol Francis, CTE Counselor
Killeen ISD

Voice



A common goal and shared vision ensure a united purpose.



Defining the Problem

What is the issue? (Circle one.)

- | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------|
| Regulation | Agency Implementation | District Implementation | Funding |
| State Law | Federal Law | Accountability | Other |

1. Please describe the issue in detail, citing specific legislation by number.

What is the cause? (Circle one.)

- | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Mandate | Insufficient Resources | Insufficient Time | Budget Cuts |
| New Bill/Law | Expired Bill/Law | Accountability | Don't Know |

2. Try to pinpoint the cause of the issue, citing specific legislation by number.

What is your desired outcome?

- Mandate Change
- More Funding
- More Time to Implement
- New Bill/Law
- Revised Bill/Law
- District Policy Change
- Agency Task Force
- CTAT Task Force

3. Describe what you would like to see happen. If you would like the language of a specific bill or law to change, please cite the original legislation and state how you would like it revised.

What is your rationale? Example: How will your solution address broader needs?



Identifying your Audiences

AUDIENCE <i>WHO ARE THE PEOPLE WE NEED TO REACH?</i>	WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE IN YOUR AREA?	WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?	WHO INFLUENCES THIS AUDIENCE? <i>WHO DO THEY LISTEN TO?</i>	PRIORITY RANKING <i>a. Must reach to achieve goal</i> <i>b. Need to reach to achieve goal</i> <i>c. Helpful but not immediately necessary</i>
Policymakers		How does the goal meet community and constituency expectations? Is the goal fiscally responsible?	Their staff Constituents	
Parents		How does the goal support or create opportunity for student success?	Other parents Teachers	
Business leaders		How does the goal provide value to local and state businesses?	Peers Community leaders Clients	
Community Partners		How does the goal serve the community?		
Voters		How does the goal benefit me in the short and long term? Is the goal a good use of public resources?	Peers Community leaders Students	

Designing a Plan of Action

Launching an effective advocacy action takes time, patience and preparation. CTAT has collected some resources and action options for you to consider.

Direct

- Write a letter
- Make a phone call
- Meet with lawmaker

Enlist

- Liaison with local industry
- Contact Your CTAT Division Rep

Tell Your Story

- Write success stories
- Host lawmaker at district
- Give public testimony

Be Prepared

Before you begin any advocacy activity, be sure to do your research. ACTE publishes very effective advocacy tools for you to use and refer to when advocating for CTE. Many resources are included in this kit on pages [#]. Please also refer to these online resources:

- <http://www.acteonline.org/keyissues.aspx> - Washington policy-related activities
- <http://www.acteonline.org/ctepolicywatchblog.aspx> - Current national CTE issues
- <http://capwiz.com/acte/home> - Search by zip code for lawmakers, issues & media
- <http://www.acteonline.org/clearinghouse.aspx> - Multi-pronged national research source

Stay up to date with Texas policy and subscribe to a TEA curriculum listserv:

- Go to <http://miller.tea.state.tx.us/list/>
- Click on “Select a List” for the pop-up menu of listserv names
- Scroll down, select an area such as “ELA-Reading”, and click on “Join the List”
- Enter your e-mail address and your name
- A confirmation e-mail will be sent to the e-mail address listed
- Respond to the confirmation e-mail with “OK”



Readiness

Corresponding with Lawmakers

*Together we can put
students on the path to
unique and rewarding
21st century careers.*

Writing a Letter

The letter is the most popular choice of communication with a congressional office. If you decide to write a letter, this list of helpful suggestions will improve the effectiveness of the letter:

1. State your purpose for writing in the first paragraph of the letter. If your letter pertains to a specific piece of legislation, identify it accordingly.
2. Be courteous, to the point, and include key information, using examples to support your position.
3. Address only one issue in each letter; and, if possible, keep the letter to one page.

Addressing Correspondence:

To a Senator

The Honorable (full name)
__[Rm.#]__[Senate Office Building]
United States Senate
Washington, DC [Zip Code]

To a US Representative

The Honorable (full name)
__[Rm.#]__[House Office Building]
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

To a Texas Representative

The Honorable (full name)
__[Rm.#]__[Capitol Office Building]
P.O. Box
Austin, TX [Zip Code]

To a Chair of a Committee

Dear Mr. Chairman or Madam Chairwoman:

Making a Phone Call

Remember that telephone calls are usually taken by a staff member, not the elected official. Ask to speak with the aide who handles the issue about which you wish to comment, typically an education aide.

After identifying yourself, tell the aide you would like to leave a brief message, such as: "Please tell Senator/ Representative (Name) that I support/oppose (specific legislation)."

You will also want to state reasons for your support or opposition to the bill. Ask for your senators' or representative's position on the bill. You may also request a written response to your telephone call.

Writing an Email

Summarize your views in the subject line. Make it short and efficient, for example: "YES ON S. 2." Whether consciously or subconsciously, staffers will always see the subject line in their e-mail windows.

Keep content short. Limit your message to a few paragraphs. E-mail is designed for quick messages, not lengthy discussion. It's best to use bulleted points, as in a fact sheet. Otherwise, the same rules hold true as with letters:

- Use appropriate address and salutation.
- Be positive.
- Establish yourself as a resource.
- Ask for a reply.



Readiness

Meeting with Lawmakers

5 Key Visit Tips

The best way to ensure your message gets heard is to schedule a one-on-one meeting with your senator or representative in his/her office. ACTE has posted a how-to video on ACTE's Action Center:

<http://www.acteonline.org/content.aspx?id=2662>

Vital Visitation Tips

- Schedule your appointment in advance and be flexible. Be as open as possible to alternative dates.
- Craft your message and do your research to support your argument. Your meeting will be very short (10-15 minutes is typical) so you must deliver succinct, factual points. Anticipate the competition, but define why your request is critical.
- Be prompt and relevant. Bring handouts specific to your purpose.
- Answer questions truthfully.
- Follow up. Obtain the contact information for the policymaker and his/her staff member who works on education and workforce issues. Send a thank you note to each and answer any questions that arise during your meeting.

Public Testimony

Prepare Your Written Statement

Briefly introduce yourself. Tell who you are, how many people you represent, how many people you serve, and successes you have had. Acknowledge your appreciation to the panel. This should take no more than one or two paragraphs.

State your goal and outline your major points. In a few sentences, tell the committee or panel what you hope to accomplish in your statement. Be brief.

Talk about the problem. Begin by discussing the problems that CTE is solving. This helps cast you in the role of a problem solver not simply representing a vested self-interest. Relate the problem to your state, district, and community.

Talk about current efforts to resolve the problem. Describe solutions that are being tried or considered. Explain why the efforts are insufficient or how they can improve.

List your specific, concise recommendations.

Focus on what the policymaking body can do to help solve the problem at hand.

Delivering Your Oral Statement

Make eye contact. 1) separate your pages, removing clips and staples; 2) use large type and double-space your text, triple-spacing between paragraphs; 3) leave a two-inch margin at the bottom of the page so your head won't tilt down too far; and 4) don't carry a sentence to the next page.

Be succinct. Don't run out of time before you have gotten to the point of your testimony. Before your scheduled time, ask what the time limits are, and practice accordingly, leaving time for questions.

Focus on the specific issue of the hearing. Make sure your comments are relevant. Don't spend time describing your qualifications or programs, but don't assume your audience knows everything about this issue and its implications for CTE.

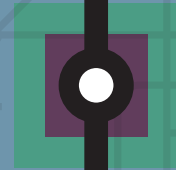
Follow up. Write a thank you note to each policymaker present in appreciation for the opportunity to testify, and provide additional information supporting your cause. Also, ask for support on your issue. Thank you letters published in the local papers are a great incentive to a public official to invite you to testify again.





www.ctat.org

Recruiting Stakeholders



CTAT Division Representatives

As a CTAT member, you not only have an Area Representative on the CTAT Board of Directors, you also have a Division Representative reflecting your interests to the CTAT Leadership. Division Representatives survey their members periodically for issues that might require action and submit a report to help determine an annual Policy Agenda. Contact your Division Representative or CTAT staff should you encounter an issue you feel should be considered for action or professional development.

Guidance	Administration	Tech Prep
Counselor	Funding	Accountability
Training	Mandates	Alignment
Graduation	Teacher	Articulation
Requirements	Certification	

Industry Stakeholders

CTE stakeholders know it's good business sense to support CTE in Texas. One of the best ways to convince lawmakers to do so is to recruit stakeholders from industry.

Russell Newman, Inc.

"The state must continue to award college credit for Business Computer Information Systems courses so that high school graduates enter post-secondary education fully qualified to be innovative, employable leaders in their fields of study."



David Martino, Former President/CEO Russell Newman, Inc.

Bell Helicopter Textron, Inc.

"Continued funding for industry-backed CTE programs will expand students' ties to successful business partnerships. With more program support from industry, students will be at an advantage to give back to their communities through high skill, high wage jobs."



Rudy C. Lopez, Vice President-Contracts Bell Helicopter Textron Inc.

Sally Beauty Holdings

"Developing well-funded technical training for high school students can provide a viable option for post graduation success. Full certification credit should be awarded to students who obtain workforce-ready skills sets before graduating from high school."

Wayne Henderson, Senior Executive



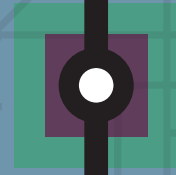
Sally Beauty Holdings

American Airlines

"Dallas ISD interns inspire our employees with their energy, curiosity, passion and willingness to work. This program has been so successful we have employed some of the interns when they graduate from high school. I highly recommend that businesses get involved and take advantage of quality programs like this."



Brad Mayne, President/CEO American Airlines Center



Success Stories

Relating real success achieved by the makers of tomorrow's global economy puts your issue in perspective like no other advocacy tool. Once you identify the who, what, where, how and why of your districts' success stories, you're halfway to a very effective leverage tool. If lawmakers see what's at stake for students in Texas, they will be more inclined to see the value in avoiding cuts to CTE.

CTAT would like to post your student success stories on our website. If you have a story that illustrates student benefit from CTE programs of study, please send a sketch to bailey@ctat.org.

Anecdotal Exercise

Creating a Student Success story is a great exercise to prepare you for advocacy conversations. Many of your district's achievements may be overlooked, so thinking through the small but wide reaching victories won in recent memory can help you identify what aspects of your program are most vital to the community and to students.

Campus Tours

10 STEPS to a successful legislative tour of your campus:



1. GET PERMISSION

Before you begin any planning, get permission from school officials. Keep everyone informed.

2. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

Decide what highlights the policymaker needs to see. Select the most important features.

3. DEVELOP A DRAFT AGENDA

Your tour should include a concise introduction and an organized tour

of the school in session.

4. INVITE POLICYMAKERS Fax or mail a brief letter to the policymaker at his or her local office at least six weeks before the scheduled date. Briefly introduce yourself, your program, and state the purpose of the letter. Explain why you would like the official to visit your program. Include the date, time, location, others invited, whether the media will be invited, what activities are planned for the visit.

5. FOLLOW UP WITH THE SCHEDULER Contact the policymakers's scheduler 7 to 10 days after initial. Make an effort to be flexible.

6. DETERMINE PRESS ACTIVITIES Work with the policymaker's to determine appropriate press activities. Send a press release to the local media inviting them to attend and follow up. If you are unable to have the media present, send local media a follow-up summary and a photograph. Contact Bailey Morrison at 512-288-8666 if you need help.

7. CONDUCT THE TOUR Distribute promotional material. Make sure that your name, address and phone number are on every document so staff can contact you later. Let the policymaker know the scope of the program: how many people you serve and what impact the program has the community, local businesses and the economy. Explain why continued funding for CTE is important to students, jobseekers and businesses in the area.

8. INCLUDE SUPPORTERS Have business supporters present to help you make the case.

9. MAKE YOUR PITCH Emphasize how additional resources could benefit students. Ask the policymaker to support your programs through increased funding and effective policies. Be specific if current legislation is pending.

10. FOLLOW UP Send thank you letters to the policymaker and staff who attended, reiterating need for funding and effective policies. Include copies of press coverage and a photo of the policymaker with students as a reminder of CTE's impact.

Source: www.acteonline.org