



Competencies and Outcomes

Module 5: Advocating for Policy

Description: Let's level up our proficiency in policymaking! Policy is set by elected officials and the staff of branches of government at the local, state and federal levels, and it impacts everything from the length of the school day to curriculum and instruction to hiring, salary and benefits. As an education professional, you need to be engaged in the policymaking taking place around education! In this module, you will learn the basics and the intangibles of building relationships that help influence and advance public education for the future.

Published: August 7, 2025

Competencies

This module aligns with the following NEA Leadership Competencies:

Advocacy

- Utilizes best practices in advocacy and political efforts
- Interprets and acts on racial and social justice initiatives
- Leads public education policy reform
- Acts as a political advocate
- Makes strategic plans that are data driven and uses analysis and metrics to achieve key advocacy and political goals

Communication

- Develops individual communication approach and style to fit appropriate audience
- Acts as an effective speaker
- Effectively uses current media (print, broadcast, online, social media) to communicate

Governance and Leadership

- Establishes and maintains collaborative and effective relationships
- Sets strategic objectives to guide long-term goals and priorities

Leading our Professions

- Supports professional excellence and builds capacity for continual improvement and learning to ensure the success of all students
- Advocates for policies and strategies that positively impact our professions and the learning of all students

Organizing

- Utilizes best practices, technologies, and methods that through experience and research have led to successful organizing outcomes

Builds and maintains meaningful community partnerships
Engages in collective action to identify and address pivotal issues

Social and Emotional Intelligence

Understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and contexts

Strategy and Fiscal Health

Utilizes data and analyzes trends to inform decision-making

Earning Criteria

Earning this badge indicates that the learner completed Module 5: Advocating for Policy of The Worthy Educator EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential and is certified to have the understandings, skills and dispositions to successfully serve as an advocate for the education profession.

Evidence

The learner was assessed on advocacy core competencies through self-assessment and reflection on thirteen activities verifying the role of the educator as an influencer and advocate for what is best for children and for the profession in a democratic society.

Earning Criteria

Recipients must complete the earning criteria to earn this badge:

1. Identifying and downloading their local district board policy manual for future access and reference.
2. Selecting the policy domain that most aligns with their professional expertise for their advocate focus.
3. Interview a member of their local school board to learn more about current priorities and opportunities for impact and reporting their findings and resulting action items.
4. Identify and communicate a specific policy priority with next steps for advocating for it with stakeholders and decisionmakers.

Evidence is verified and approved by authorized leaders of The Worthy Educator to ensure the integrity and quality of these requirements are met.

Skills

Recipients of this badge demonstrate these skills:

Researching local programs, funding and services allocated to students

Communicating education priorities to local school and elected leaders

Prioritizing policies and practices they want to champion as an advocate

Alignment

This badge is aligned with the [Leadership Competencies](#) of the [National Education Association](#).

Pathways

This module supports these educator advocacy pathways:

Professional Development and Skill-Building

Direct Instruction: learning education policy and advocacy can equip educators with the knowledge and skills to effectively advocate for change says jobsineducation.com.

Advocacy Training: learning about the legislative process, how to communicate their message effectively, and how to build relationships with policymakers.

Building Relationships and Coalitions

Stakeholder Communication: effective communication with parents, community members, and other stakeholders to build support for advocacy efforts.

Networking: joining and forming coalitions with other educators, parents, and community members to amplify their voices and increase their influence.

Amplifying Voices and Sharing Stories

Personal Narratives: sharing stories to help decision-makers understand the impact of policies and practices on students and educators.

Research: using data to support advocacy for positions, policies and legislation.

Direct Engagement with Decision-Makers

Legislators: contact state and federal representatives to express their views on education-related legislation.

Local Government: engaging with local government officials on issues like funding, resources, and community partnerships can also be impactful.

Advocate for Change: make direct communication with decision-makers, create public awareness, and engage the community in support for what is best for children.

Focusing on Specific Issues

Identify Key Issues: adopt positions on specific issues to advocate for policies and practices that support optimal outcomes for public education and the students it serves.

Develop a Clear Message: crafting concise messaging that resonates with stakeholders and influences decisionmakers

Resources

Boughton, Heather & Kerr, Sara: Harnessing the Power of Evidence-Based Policymaking

published January 2023

https://nasbe.nyc3.digitaloceanspaces.com/2023/01/Boughton-Kerr_Jan-2023-Standard.pdf

Brennan, Patrick: Unlocking Advocacy: The Critical Role Teachers Can Play in Shaping Education Policy

Updated April 10, 2024

<https://ace-ed.org/unlocking-advocacy-the-critical-role-teachers-can-play-in-shaping-education-policy/>

Cohen, Marc: Perspectives on Advocating for Policy [VIDEO 14:47]

Original content exclusively recorded for The Worthy Educator

Colón, Rosemary: Teachers as Advocates: You can do it too! [VIDEO 31:59]

Published March 20, 2024

<https://youtu.be/1oBiNW7gjcU?si=fhB8uaLPPv-UpEk4>

Evidence Advocacy Center: State Education Agencies and Policymakers Curated Resources Menu Accessed

Published August 4, 2025

<https://evidenceadvocacycenter.org/state-education-agencies-and-policy-makers-resources-menu/>

Griffith, David: How You Can Impact Policy [VIDEO 15:24]

Original content exclusively recorded for The Worthy Educator

Hendrickson, Corrine: My Advocacy Journey: The Power of Early Educators to Change Policy

Published October 11, 2022

<https://cscce.berkeley.edu/blog/my-advocacy-journey-the-power-of-early-educators-to-change-policy/>

Human Rights Campaign Foundation: School Boards Matter: A Guide to Effectively Advocating at The School Board Level

Published January 31, 2025

<https://hrc-prod-requests.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/welcoming-schools/documents/School-Boards-Matter-Guide.pdf>

Jaiswal, Nina: Guide for Educators: Navigating Policy and Advocating Change

Published March 5, 2024

<https://jobsineducation.com/blog/navigating-education-policy-and-advocacy/>

Milo: All You Need to Know About Policy in Education

Accessed August 4, 2025

<https://www.notion4teachers.com/blog/policy-in-education>

National Council of Teachers of English: Advocating for Change in the Classroom: School Boards

Published September 30, 2024

<https://ncte.org/blog/2024/09/advocating-change-classroom-school-boards/>

Smith, Debbie: How to Become an Education Advocate

Published January 7, 2025

<https://www.curriculumassociates.com/blog/how-to-become-an-education-advocate>

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

The following are submitted to the module discussion board for engagement and evaluation:

- I. Where is your local school district's school board policy manual housed? How can the public access it online?

Find your school board's district policy manual and download it locally for your access and reference as an EDInfluencer.

Whether you are able to download the policy manual or not, be sure to also bookmark it on your browser so that you can quickly find it online, when necessary for reference and updates.

Look over the different sections of the manual. Which domain or domains are of particular interest to you? Why?

Share your policy interests in our EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential Incubator discussion group.

- II. School Board policy consists of a number of standard domains, including Administration, Finance, Operations (Facilities), Personnel, Students, Curriculum and Instruction, and Community Relations.

Based on your interests and experience, which policy manual domain is your area of expertise? The section on which you can best speak to the needs of stakeholders and how they can best be addressed?

Propose an original piece of legislation that will address the current needs and best interests of public education, in response to the current state of federal and state agencies administering funding, policies and programs that impact your local schools.

Create an outline of the domain of your choose, including:

- a. The name of the domain as it is listed in your local board manual
- b. The functions it addresses in running your local schools
- c. Your background that informs this area of school board policy
- d. What is managed well in local policy
- e. What you would like to see improved or addressed

When it is complete, share it in our EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential Incubator discussion group.

- III. School board members are everyday members of your community, too.

Reach out to one or more members of your local school board and schedule a time to meet with them and learn more about their work leading your district.

Craft a short list of questions you want to ask to learn more about the governance and management of your district. Possible questions may include:

- a. Why did you want to serve on our local school board?
- b. What are the ways you want to have impact on our schools?

- c. Why did you want to serve on our local school board?
- d. What are the ways you want to have impact on our schools?
- e. What are the current action items the board is working on?
- f. How can I support you in getting things done for students?
- g. What would you like to know from an educator's perspective?

Summarize your answers after you have time to debrief from your meeting, and share it in our EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential Incubator discussion group.

IV. Policy Priority Pick

Identify one education policy issue that matters to you and your students.

Choose ONE way to submit:

Option 1: Written Note

A few bullet points that answer:

- What policy issue matters to you and your students?
- How does it affect your classroom?
- Who makes decisions about this issue?
- Where do you get information about it?

Option 2: Video Chat

A 2-minute video where you:

- Explain a policy issue that matters to you
- Describe how it affects your students
- Mention who makes decisions about this issue

Option 3: Policy Planner

A checklist or graphic organizer that:

- Outlines steps for your policy priority
- Presents prompts or examples for each step
- Includes a rating scale for the user to assess their success at each step

Share your ideas using the form of expression of your choice to our EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential Incubator to share it with likeminded Worthy Educators!

Rubric

Worthy Educator EDInfluencer Advocacy Microcredential Rubric

Criteria	3 Outstanding	2 Adequate	1 Needs Improvement
Voice	A compelling introduction Grabs the reader's attention Relates personal perspective Appeals to stakeholder perspective Offers personal experience and expertise Utilizes an inclusive, professional tone Elevates the narrative on education Confident expression of ideas	A clear introduction Addresses the reader directly Present educator credentials Maintains a consistent tone Avoids blame and polarizing statements Smooth use of syntax and semantics	Uses first-person voice Succinctly states ideas Relates personal opinion Leaves the reader wanting more elaboration
Persuasiveness	Clarity of the purpose of the piece Shows awareness of audience Evidences expertise and credibility Presents solid data and evidence Uses logic and reason Appeals to emotion and experience Makes the case effectively Influences the reader to take action	Directly states premise Shows audience awareness Logical flow of ideas Cites professional experience Espouses personal priorities Makes clear closing statement	Speaks on own behalf Straightforward presentation of ideas Unconvincing presentation Didactic tone
Organization	Begins with clear thesis statement Effective use of language Ideas are logically sequenced Builds to a call to action Creates a satisfying conclusion Documents references cited Adherence to technical conventions Clean formatting	Clean introduction Clear expression of ideas Well-developed structure Documents references cited Technically consistent Clean formatting	Underdeveloped thesis States thoughts in isolation Meets minimum requirements of assignment Technical errors
Substance	High interest topic Relevant to current issues in education Viable treatment of the topic References reliable sources Indicates desired course of action Enlists the support of stakeholders Outlines next steps Describes desired outcome	Knowledgeable on the topic References current events Appeals to popular sentiment Cites personal aspirations Outlines options for action Brings discussion to satisfying conclusion	Surface-level treatment of ideas Uses lists rather than sentences Promotes personal agenda Lacks connection to future
Vision	Makes the case for future needs Universally relevant message Explains what is at stake Outlines consequences of inaction Paints a credible picture Provides clarity and detail Builds a bridge from the present Invites others to help build out the vision	Makes the case for change Connects with the reader Speaks in the present tense Describes possibilities Inspires hope and aspiration Invites others to join in the vision	Describes current circumstances Asks questions without providing answers Reactive rather than proactive Unclear next steps