



Instructions and Template for ISTE State Affiliates to Develop a Public Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan

Advocacy Toolkit

This document will help state affiliates brainstorm about how to become more involved in state-level advocacy and create a plan to get it done. Whether you hope to hold a student technology showcase, educate policymakers on important issues or champion specific legislation, this exercise will energize and focus your advocacy agenda for the coming year.

In order for your state affiliate to create a well thought out Public Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan, ISTE recommends creating a group to work on this project. This group can include members of your state affiliate board, advocacy committee and other interested members. This group's job is to discuss policy priorities and potential advocacy activities and draft a Public Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan for the state affiliate. Ideally, this group should arrange to meet for a one- to two-day session. Prior to the session, you should create an agenda to guide your deliberations and activities. Below you will find a step-by-step guide to creating your Public Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan to ensure your voices carry in your state.

Step 1.

Answer the question: "Why state advocacy?"

To move forward, it is crucial to have a conversation and answer the question "why state advocacy?" Why is it important to raise visibility about digital learning in your state and to educate policymakers on key issues facing schools, educators and students today and into the future? How can your state affiliate make a difference and impact public policy decisions in your state?

Step 2.

List affiliate's previous and current advocacy work

It is important to review the advocacy work that the affiliate has already undertaken. How did the affiliate get started in advocacy? How has the affiliate grown the advocacy program? What activities worked well? What didn't work that well? What can we build upon?

Step 3.

Review the Arizona Technology Education Association's (AzTEA) policy statement and advocacy plan

To help you get started and give you an idea of what your final product might look like, review AzTEA's Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan.

Step 4.

Brainstorm possible key policy issues for your state affiliate to address

What digital learning policy issues are most important to your state? Where can your state affiliate make the greatest impact? Possible policy issues your state affiliate may want to consider, but are not limited to, include:

- Broadband connectivity
- Professional learning opportunities
- 1-1 Initiatives/BYOD programs
- Digital textbooks/open educational resources
- STEM
- Online learning

Step 5.

Review ISTE's model state legislation

ISTE has developed model state legislation that can be tailored by individual states to meet their specific education technology goals and prepare for both daily digital learning and online assessments. The legislation creates a state formula grant program that provides funds to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to support infrastructure (including devices, software, networking) and professional development for digital learning.

Step 6.

Brainstorm possible advocacy activities

- What advocacy activities could your state affiliate undertake to advance your policy goals in the key issue areas most important to you? Possible advocacy activities might include, but are not limited to: establishing an affiliate advocacy committee
- Presenting an annual advocacy/advocate award
- Holding a policy/advocacy session at your annual affiliate conference
- Hosting an advocacy booth at your annual affiliate conference
- Holding a student technology showcase at a school, community center or the state capital

- Collaborating with other education organizations to hold an event, promote legislation or other similar activities
- Inviting state legislators to school visits to see ed tech in action
- Meeting with state legislators and staff at the capital and/or district offices
- Modifying the ISTE developed state legislation and advancing it in your state Legislature
- Tracking and/or influencing state budget/appropriations legislation
- Meeting with key policymakers and staff at the state department of education or other critical administrative agencies
- Working with local nonprofits and/or the local business community to promote and support ed tech
- Writing letters to the editor or op-ed pieces for local media
- Conducting a social media campaign
- Encouraging members to run for school board

Step 7.

List other organizations that your state affiliate may partner with to achieve policy goals

There is strength in numbers! Partnering with other organizations, such as schools boards, superintendents, chambers of commerce and others, can amplify your message on the importance of ed tech. List organizations your affiliate is currently working with and those that could be key partners to advance your policy agenda.

Step 8.

Research the key education and appropriations legislators in your state

It is important to know who the key decision-makers are in your state Legislature on education and funding (also known as appropriations) issues. Take a quick look at your state Legislature's website and create a list of the legislators who are on the House and Senate Education and Appropriations Committees. Note party affiliation, district, any leadership position the member may hold and any connection to education the member may have such a previous career as an educator or prior service on an education task force.

Step 9.

Research recent education technology legislation introduced in the state legislature.

It is critical to understand what – if any – education technology related legislation has been introduced and/or passed recently in the state Legislature. This will help you understand if there has been a lot of activity on these issues, which types of bills have been successful, which have not and which members have championed and led on ed tech legislation in the past. You can go to your state Legislature’s website and do a quick search for education technology-related legislation that was introduced in past and current legislative sessions.

Step 10.

Create your state affiliate public policy statement and advocacy plan.

Below is a template to use as you develop your State Affiliate Public Policy Statement and Advocacy Plan. You may want use the AzTEA policy document as a reference.

Policy Issues

Review the policy issues that you brainstormed in Step 3 and agree on your top-tier policy issues (no more than four). Write a short paragraph about each policy issue that explains why your affiliate believes this issue is important.

Policy Goals

Based on the key policy issues you have identified, what are your goals for each of those issues?

Advocacy Activities

Based on the key policy issues you have identified and the general goals you have set, what advocacy activities will help you achieve those goals?

Put Your Plan Into Action & Make Your Voices Carry!

Remember, ISTE is here to help and support your work.