



SAA Evidence-Based Policy Agenda & Local Advocacy Model Design:

The Rationale for Changing Our Approach

SAA is fundamentally changing its approach to advocacy. Why?

- ▶ We see a tipping point inside the Capitol on education policy development
- ▶ Policy and Regulatory environment for public education is deteriorating
 - ▶ Diminishing numbers/influence of pro-public education legislators
 - ▶ Increasingly, education policy development based on ideology, not evidence raise
- ▶ Imperative to raise the academic bar for all students & close achievement gaps
- ▶ We need to change the conversation, expand our influence in order to achieve the preferred outcomes for children

Changing the Conversation – How?

- ▶ Develop Evidence-Based Policy Agenda
- ▶ Communicate the Importance of that Agenda
- ▶ Communicate “The Value of Public Education”
- ▶ A More Effective Advocacy Model Focused at the Local Level

Evidence-Based Policy Agenda – Process

- ▶ SAA Policy Research & Development Team
- ▶ Partnership with Wisconsin Center for Education Research
- ▶ Policy Framework – Michael Fullan: Right drivers for whole system education reform
- ▶ R&D Team convened in April 2014
- ▶ Surveyed SAA membership for final input to agenda, August 2014
- ▶ SAA Legislative Committee adopts legislative agenda, October 2014

Evidence-Based Policy Agenda – Highlights

- ▶ Students Ready to Learn
- ▶ Supporting Excellence in Teaching & Leading
- ▶ Innovation
- ▶ Finance & Stewardship

Students Ready to Learn - Early Learning Opportunities

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ Wisconsin's 4K and YoungStar programs are the foundation for providing high-quality early learning opportunities for all Wisconsin school children

- ▶ *SAA Recommendations:*

- ▶ Wisconsin must commit to a comprehensive preschool policy
- ▶ Provide universal access to 4K
- ▶ Strengthen funding for quality care incentives, WI Shares program

Students Ready to Learn - Children's Mental Health

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ Too many WI children have unmet mental health needs leading to negative consequences for those children, their families and their communities

- ▶ *SAA Recommendation:*

- ▶ Adopt a School-Linked Mental Health Grant Program modeled after Minnesota to provide grant funds for start-up, services for uninsured kids, agency coordination

Supporting Excellence in Teaching & Leading - Educator Preparation

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ There is a conflict between two key factors
- ▶ While more rigorous, selective educator prep = improved student outcomes
- ▶ Current incentives do not entice “best & brightest” to enter, remain in education

- ▶ *SAA Recommendation:*

- ▶ Commission to focus on recruitment/retention & educator training programs

Supporting Excellence in Teaching & Leading - Educator Effectiveness

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ Teaching quality is the most important school factor influencing achievement
- ▶ School leaders will need additional support to meet the new EE demands

- ▶ *SAA Recommendations:*

- ▶ Continue state funding for implementation
- ▶ Address capacity issues while maintaining quality, fidelity
- ▶ Monitor emerging research from other states

Supporting Excellence in Teaching & Learning - Instructional Technology

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ Many WI school districts face significant connectivity and affordability gaps

- ▶ *SAA Recommendation:*

- ▶ TEACH 2.0 Proposal – Funding in Four Key Areas
- ▶ Available, Affordable Broadband
- ▶ Hardware & Infrastructure
- ▶ Access to Digital Learning
- ▶ Educator Training & Re-training
- ▶ Focus on Block Grants, Competitive Grants, Flexibility

Innovation

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ Overall, US Spends 3% of Total Expenditures on R&D
- ▶ However, Education Spends Just 0.2% on R&D

- ▶ *SAA Recommendations:*

- ▶ WI Must Develop a PK-12 Educational Innovation Strategy
- ▶ Five-year Grants for Districts to Pilot Promising Innovations Related to:
 - ▶ Personalized Learning
 - ▶ Evidence-Based School Calendars
 - ▶ Other Promising Innovations Based on Sound Theory of Action

Finance & Stewardship

- ▶ *Evidence Demonstrates:*

- ▶ High spending does not necessarily correlate to high achievement
- ▶ However, you can't pretend that adequate funding doesn't matter either
- ▶ WI Ranking in Per Pupil Spending – From 12th in 2003-04 to 21st in 2011-12
- ▶ K-12 School Aids as % of State Budget is at a 20-Year Low – 32.4%

Finance & Stewardship

- ▶ *SAA Recommendations:*

- ▶ Perfect School Finance System Is “Elusive” . . . No “Magic Bullet”
- ▶ Index School Revenue Limits to Inflation
- ▶ Support Fair Funding for Our Future
- ▶ Address Vincent vs. Voight – Funding for High Needs Students
- ▶ Increase pupil transportation funding

Proactive Advocacy Strategy

- ▶ Changing the nature of the dialogue about education in Wisconsin
- ▶ Focus on three things
 - ▶ Statewide public engagement strategy on the value of public education
 - ▶ Statewide public engagement strategy on evidence-based policy agenda
 - ▶ Local advocacy model

The Value of Public Education

- ▶ Citizens generally believe in public education. We simply need to re-engage them in understanding why public education is important.
 - ▶ Developing good citizens, democratic participation
 - ▶ Economy, quality workforce
 - ▶ The heart of our communities
 - ▶ Socialization of students from different race, culture, background
 - ▶ What is at stake if public schools are permanently weakened, abandoned?

Evidence-Based Policy Agenda

- ▶ The launch of the SAA Agenda occurred on November 19, 2014
- ▶ This event served as the launching point for our efforts during the current legislative session
 - ▶ We encouraged leaders to follow up with reporters in their area
 - ▶ We encouraged leaders to share the SAA Agenda with parents, community leaders and your board members.
 - ▶ We asked leaders to do what each could in their district to help capture the imagination of community members

Local Advocacy Model

- ▶ Engaging people in appreciating the value of public education takes place in and outside the State Capitol. We need to look inward and then build outward for greater influence.
- ▶ SAA represents > 3,000 influential education/community leaders
- ▶ We need to engage SAA leaders in a systematic way – more efficient, effective use of resources
- ▶ Organize around the district administrative team and the leadership of the Superintendent
- ▶ Plan as a team to engage community and legislators

Local Advocacy Model

- ▶ Variety of potential team member activities
 - ▶ Speak at local service club
 - ▶ Engage your local media
 - ▶ Building relationships through chamber of commerce
 - ▶ Using social media to convey positive school news
 - ▶ Building relationships with legislators
 - ▶ Engage parents, staff, retired educators
- ▶ SAA provides training, talking points, other resources
- ▶ We see tremendous long-term value in building on local influence

Local Advocacy Model

- ▶ According to professional standards of educational leaders, advocating for the children they serve is an important aspect of the job
- ▶ Advocacy should be a regular part of every administrative team meeting and district planning process
- ▶ The strategy is to work consistently with the team and to maintain regular activity over time
- ▶ This is a long-term strategy that will take time to build

