

ADVOCACY FOR EDUCATORS

Teaching with CLASS® Podcast
Season 3 Episode 8
Guest: Jake Stewart



In this episode of the Teaching with CLASS podcast, Jake Stewart discusses the importance of advocacy for educators, how to navigate the advocacy space, and the impact of educator voices in shaping educational policy.

Key Take Aways

+ Definition of Advocacy:

- Advocacy can be divided into formal (interacting with policymakers, writing letters, etc.) and informal (casual conversations that educate and inform your network about educational issues).
- Both forms of advocacy are valuable; informal advocacy can often lead to powerful change.

+ The Importance of Your Voice:

- Educators play a crucial role in advocacy. Policymakers want to hear from those directly involved in teaching.
- Your lived experiences as an educator serve as valuable data in discussions about educational policies.

+ Making Advocacy Manageable:

- Break down advocacy into manageable steps. Set small goals, such as committing to one action before and one action after upcoming midterms.
- Consider using social media to share your experiences or to raise awareness about educational issues.

+ Timing and Opportunity For Advocacy:

- Anytime is a good time to advocate, but some moments are strategic (e.g., during election seasons, during town halls).
- Special alerts from advocacy organizations can guide when to take action for maximum impact.

+ Addressing Fears and Concerns:

- If worried about the repercussions of advocacy, it's crucial to understand your rights and the policies of your workplace.
- Consider consulting with trusted administrators or colleagues before publicly raising concerns or sharing experiences.

+ Current Issues In Education:

- Be aware of federal and state-level developments affecting education funding and policy, such as the recent history of Child Care and Development Block Grants (CCDBG) and Head Start funding.
- Monitor upcoming legislation impacting the resources available for early childhood education.

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+ Call To Action:

- A call to all educators to lend their voices to support advocacy efforts, emphasizing that their input can significantly influence policy decisions.
- Educators deserve the necessary support and resources to thrive, which in turn benefits the students they serve.

Next Steps for Educators

- 1. Take Action:** Choose one or two actionable steps to engage in advocacy before and after the midterm elections. This could include:
 - Participating in town hall meetings.
 - Writing or calling your local representatives.
 - Engaging in discussions with your network about educational issues.
- 2. Stay Informed:** Keep track of educational policies, funding initiatives, and advocacy alerts from organizations like NAEYC.
- 3. Engage Your Community:** Encourage conversations with peers, parents, and community members about the importance of early childhood education and the challenges faced in the classroom.
- 4. Reflect on Self-Care:** Recognize that advocating for better conditions and resources is a crucial aspect of self-care, benefiting both educators and their students.

Every educator has the power to influence educational policy through their voice. By taking action and engaging in advocacy, you are not just championing your needs—you're also supporting the collective needs of students, families, and the broader education community.

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