



Advocating for School Funding

Competency

Educator takes a leadership role at the school, district, state, and/or national level and advocates for increased funding for public schools.

Key Method

Educator analyzes funding sources and budgetary decisions and then develops a plan to advocate for a specific funding need.

Method Components

Advancing Teacher Quality and Student Success

In pursuit of their commitment to advancing teacher quality and student success, educators across the country are raising our voices together for our students, for our schools and for ourselves as educators. Education advocacy and social justice advocacy go hand in hand.

Educators enter the profession because they love teaching and because they have an unwavering belief in their students. Yet, the sad truth is that many teachers aren't earning enough to make ends meet and finding it harder and harder to support their families. To make matters worse, the pay gap between educators and other professionals is vast and growing, forcing many educators out of the profession and creating a teacher shortage crisis that threatens our students and communities.

Students benefit from educators who know them by name, know their community and have a say in the policies that govern and fund their schools.



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The current landscape of education requires that teacher leaders, across a wide spectrum of experience, participate in the changes and transformations that are necessary. Teacher leadership is no longer optional. Just as excellent teachers approach their practice from an array of perspectives and with many talents, teacher leadership requires many individuals' strengths and interests, coming together for the benefit of students and the profession.

InTASC Standard 10: Leadership and Collaboration

The InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards shares that treating teaching as a solo act is counter to what we know about effective teaching today. Just as collaboration among learners improves student learning, we know that collaboration among teachers improves practice. The core teaching standards require teachers to

- Open their practice to observation and feedback (transparency);
- Participate in ongoing, embedded professional learning where teachers engage in collective inquiry to improve practice;
- Participate actively as a team member in decision-making processes that include building a shared vision and supportive culture, identifying common goals, and monitoring progress toward those goals;
- Work with and share responsibility with colleagues, administrators, and school leaders as they work together to improve student learning and teacher working conditions;
- Engage in efforts to build a shared vision and supportive culture within a school or learning environment;
- Establish mutual expectations and ongoing communication with families; and.
- Involve the community in meeting common goals (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, page 5).

School Funding

Understanding school funding is a goal that anyone advocating for public schools should strive for. By analyzing budgetary decisions and following money trails you will begin to understand your school systems priorities, relationships and values from a much different perspective than you may be used to. When analyzing district and state budgets you may find many areas where the decisions being made do not align with the stated mission and vision of the organization. You may also find alternate sources of funding that go unused year after year. Both of these situations create opportunities for public school advocates to gain funding for much needed resources or programs that support student success.

According to a research report conducted by the Urban Institute (2017),



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“States are a focal point for policy discussions around school funding, as they set policies that direct billions of dollars in state funding and potentially affect decisions by school districts about how to raise and use local revenue. School funding policy has long been a contentious issue in state capitals, a fact that remains today as policymakers in red states, such as Kansas, and blue states, such as Connecticut, enact or consider major reforms to how they fund schools. State policy on school funding is complicated both because of the ways the policies are designed and because districts can respond in ways that may counteract state policymakers’ goals.”

In order to develop a successful advocacy plan for school funding you will need to consider the following:

Analyzing School or District Budgets

The following questions can help guide your analysis:

- Where do the different types of funding come from? (Grants, federal funds, Title money, local funds, donations...)
- What are the requirements for how the money is used?
- Who makes budgetary decisions?
- What is the process for making decisions about funding allocation?
- What are the various “pots” of money (maintenance and operations, capital, buildings)
- What is my state, district and/or school's budget process?
- How does lack of school funding impact marginalized communities disproportionately?
- What explicit or implicit biases inform budgetary decisions?

Decision Maker Roles

Who in your state, district and/or school makes the final decisions about what money is accepted and how money is spent? Some possibilities are:

- District administrators
- School Administrators
- School board members
- Every state legislator whose constituents live within school boundaries.
- The Governor
- U.S. Representatives whose constituents live within school boundaries.
- U.S. Senators

Types of Communication

Methods of communications may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Email
- Phone calls
- Attend board meetings
- Attend school leadership meetings



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- Meet with elected officials
- Letter writing campaigns

Definitions:

- M&O: maintenance and operations, funding that is devoted to personnel.
- Capital: funding that is devoted to items like books, computers, desks; anything that is not personnel or buildings.
- Building: funding that is devoted to building new buildings or substantially renovating old ones.
- ADM: Average daily membership, which is the attendance of a schools on the 100th day. This number determines per/pupil funding.
- ESA: empowerment scholarship account, state funding that is assigned to a student that moves with the student to pay for private school or home school resources. See link in resource section.
- STO: student tuition organization, individual and corporate tax credits that are directed to a private school.
- Tax credit: money that is offset against a liability, in this case, a state tax liability. See link in resources section.
- Soft Capital: money given or allocated to schools that is not ongoing and thus can't be used for personnel.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Baker, Bruce D., and Sean P. Corcoran. 2012. "The Stealth Inequities of School Funding: How State and Local School Finance Systems Perpetuate Inequitable Student Spending." Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.
<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/education-k-12/reports/2012/09/19/38189/the-stealth-inequities-of-school-funding/>

Chingos, M. M., & Blagg, K. (2017, November). Making Sense of State School Funding Policy - Urban Institute. Retrieved June, 2019, from
https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/94961/making-sense-of-state-school-funding-policy_0.pdf

Chingos, Matthew M., and Kristin Blagg. 2017. "Do Poor Kids Get Their Fair Share of School Funding?" Washington, DC: Urban Institute.
<https://www.urban.org/research/publication/do-poor-kids-get-their-fair-share-school-funding>

Weston, Margaret. 2013. "Adjusted Weighted Pupil Funding for Concentrated Poverty in California Schools." Center for Poverty Research University of California, Davis.



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<https://poverty.ucdavis.edu/policy-brief/adjusting-weighted-pupil-funding-concentrated-poverty-california-schools>

Resources

[Economic Policy Institute](#)

[School Finance External Guidelines | Arizona Department of Education](#)

[Arizona's Budget Process](#)

[Your taxes: How do Arizona school tax-credit programs work?](#)

[Striking Teachers Won But Are School Funding Gains Sustainable and Equitable](#)

[A year after the teacher walkout, a timeline of Arizona's #RedforEd movement](#)

[Advocating for Change](#)

[Teacher Leadership Institute](#)

NEA Leadership Competencies

[Leadership Competencies | NEA](#)

Download PDFs for all Domains from this page

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.



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Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(600-800 words)

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. What is the demographic and socioeconomic makeup of your community?
2. Does your district and/or school budget align with the stated mission and vision? Why or Why not?
3. What student needs are underfunded or not funded at all?
4. What impact does this lack of funding have on student success?
5. How are educational funding decisions made in your school district and state?
6. For this micro-credential are you focussing on a school funding issue or a district funding issue?
7. What do you hope to accomplish by completing this micro-credential?

Passing: Response answers all questions completely and thoughtfully. Responses provide reasonable and accurate information based on available resources and clearly explains the needs of both the teachers and students. Educator includes a learning goal that describes what they hope to gain from earning this micro-credential.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credentials please submit the following **five artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Budget Analysis

Submit 1-3 page a summary (spreadsheet or table with or without pictures) of your school or district's budget and respond to the following questions:

(300-500 words)

- Where do the different types of funding come from? (Grants, federal funds, Title money, local funds, donations...)
- What are the requirements for how each of the different buckets of money are used?
- Are there grants that focus on the needs of specific groups?
- What are the various "pots" of money (maintenance and operations, capital, buildings)
- What does the way the money is allocated tell you about the priorities and values of the school or district? Does this align with the mission and vision or the organization? why or why not?
- What are underfunded or not funded needs that you will be advocating for?



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- Where will you propose the funding comes from? Is there a pot of money not being used? Is there another area that can be cut back?

Artifact 2: Budget Process

(300-600 words)

1. Explain or draw a diagram of your school or district's budget decisions are made then respond to the following questions:
 - Who are the decision makers?
 - Who are the stakeholders?
 - Are the stakeholders involved and/or represented in the process? If yes, how?
 - How effective is this process?
 - Is the final budget one that supports student success for all students?
 - Are there any conflicts of interest or conflicting priorities that affect the final budget?
 - Does the budget align with the school or district's mission and vision? Why or why not?

Artifact 3: Lists of Stakeholders and Decision Makers

Create and submit the following lists:

1. A list of at least 5 different stakeholder groups and 1 or two people in each group that you can reach out to. Use nicknames or initials to protect identities.
2. A list of at least 5 decision makers. Include their job title and or role. Use nicknames or initials to protect identities.

Artifact 4: Propaganda

1. Create and submit a visual aid (pamphlet or flyer, infographic...) or a series of social media posts, that educate and encourage stakeholders in advocating for school funding needs. Your artifact needs to include:
 - A clear and concise message
 - Relevant facts, data and/or statistics that inform the readers
 - A call to action
2. (100-200 words)Describe how and to whom you will distribute this.

Artifact 5: Advocacy

1. (100-200 words) Write and submit a short paragraph that states clearly and succinctly what it is you would like to see happen and why. Share this message by reaching out to:
 - At least 5 stakeholders from at least 5 different groups
 - At least 2 decision makers.
2. Keep and Submit a contact log with:
 - Who you contacted (use nicknames or initials to protect identities.)
 - Date of contact
 - Type of contact



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- Purpose for contact
- Outcome of contact

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Budget Analysis	<p>Summary of School or district budget is organized in a way that makes it easy to understand</p> <p>All questions are answered completely and thoughtfully</p>	<p>Summary of School or district budget may not be organized or easy to understand</p> <p>All questions may not be answered completely and/or thoughtfully</p>	<p>Summary of School or district budget is not organized</p> <p>All questions are not answered</p>
Artifact 2: Budget Process	<p>Process is explained in pictures and/or words and is easy to understand</p> <p>All questions are answered completely and thoughtfully</p>	<p>Process is explained in pictures and/or words</p> <p>All questions may not be answered completely and/or thoughtfully</p>	<p>Process is not explained</p> <p>All questions are not answered</p>
Artifact 3: Lists of Stakeholder s and Decision Makers	<p>Lists include:</p> <p>At least 5 different stakeholder groups and</p> <p>1 or 2 people in each stakeholder group</p>	<p>Lists are missing some of the following:</p> <p>At least 5 different stakeholder groups and</p> <p>1 or 2 people in each stakeholder group</p>	<p>Lists are missing most of the following:</p> <p>At least 5 different stakeholder groups and</p> <p>1 or 2 people in each stakeholder group</p>



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	At least 5 decision makers that includes their job title and or role.	At least 5 decision makers that includes their job title and or role.	At least 5 decision makers that includes their job title and or role.
Artifact 4: Propaganda	<p>Message is clearly framed and communicated</p> <p>Includes relevant facts, data and/or statistics that inform the readers</p> <p>Includes a call to action</p> <p>Submission includes a description of how and to whom you will distribute the artifact</p>	<p>Message is not clearly stated</p> <p>Message may be too long</p> <p>Relevant facts, data and/or statistics that inform the readers may be missing</p> <p>May not include a call to action</p> <p>Submission may be missing a description of how and to whom you will distribute the artifact</p>	<p>Message is clearly framed and communicated</p> <p>Includes relevant facts, data and/or statistics that inform the readers</p> <p>Includes a call to action</p> <p>Submission includes a description of how and to whom you will distribute the artifact</p>
Artifact 5: Advocacy	<p>Message is clear and succinct</p> <p>Message includes what is needed AND why it is needed</p> <p>Message can be used by any stakeholder</p> <p>Contact Log has at least 7 entries (5 stakeholders and 2 decision makers)</p> <p>Contact log includes all of the following:</p>	<p>Message not clear or succinct</p> <p>Message may not include what is needed OR why it is needed</p> <p>Message is not usable by some stakeholders</p> <p>Contact Log has less than 7 entries or does not include at least 5 stakeholders and 2 decision makers</p>	<p>Message is not clear or succinct</p> <p>Message does not include what is needed OR why it is needed</p> <p>Message can be used by any stakeholder</p> <p>Contact Log has only 1 or 2 entries</p> <p>Contact log is missing most of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Who you contacted -Date of contact -Type of contact -Purpose for contact -Outcome of contact



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	-Who you contacted -Date of contact -Type of contact -Purpose for contact -Outcome of contact	Contact log is missing some of the following: -Who you contacted -Date of contact -Type of contact -Purpose for contact -Outcome of contact	
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Part 3 Reflection

(400 words)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please answer the following reflective questions. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. What did you learn about funding and/or advocating for funding that surprised you?
2. How will you use your new knowledge and/or experiences to benefit your students?
3. How do you plan to continue your advocacy for increased funding?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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