

CHAPERONE START GUIDE: ADVOCACY DAY AT THE STATE CAPITOL

Thank you for serving as a chaperone for Advocacy Day. Your role is critical to helping students feel confident, prepared, and supported as they share their voices with policymakers. You do not need to be a policy expert. Your job is to facilitate, encourage, and keep students grounded throughout the day.

What is Advocacy Day?

Advocacy Day is an opportunity for students to:

- Share their personal experiences in public charter schools
- Practice civic engagement in a real-world setting
- Meet legislators and explain why their education matters

Success is not about debating policy – it's about students telling their stories respectfully and confidently.

Your role as a chaperone

You are a:

- Facilitator - help students use the materials and stay on track
- Coach - encourage participation and calm nerves
- Guide - manage schedule, time, and group dynamics

You are not expected to:

- Speak for students
- Answer policy questions on their behalf
- Have all the answers

If a question comes up that no one can answer, it's okay to say:
"That's a great question – we'll follow up."



What students should be prepared to do

Before Advocacy Day, students should:

- Understand what advocacy is (sharing their story to create change)
- Be able to introduce themselves/share:
 - Why their charter school matters to them
 - One key message or challenge
 - A simple "ask" for legislators

Middle school students may rely more on notes or scripts.

High school students may speak more conversationally.

Both are appropriate.

How Much Prep Time Is Needed?

Use what fits your schedule:

- 20 minutes: Review advocacy basics + practice introductions
- 45 minutes: Complete worksheets + practice stories
- 90 minutes: Full preparation, role-play, and reflection

You are responsible for ensuring that your students are prepared for Advocacy Day.

During Meetings with Legislators

- Encourage students to speak first
- Help manage time so multiple students can participate
- Step in only if students need support or redirection
- Model respectful listening – even if there's disagreement

If a student freezes, gently prompt or move to the next speaker.

After Meetings

- Help students write thank-you notes
- Lead a short reflection:
 - What went well?
 - What surprised you?
 - Why does student voice matter?

Advocacy is a process – today is just the beginning.



Final Reminder

Students don't need to be perfect.
They need to be heard.

Your support helps make that possible. Thank you for being here.