**Tips and Tricks**

*Chapter Goals - After reading this chapter, you will be able to:*

* *Review the tips and tricks establish throughout the EdChoice parent curriculum*

Throughout this curriculum, we have provided tips and tricks for running a successful advocacy campaign on a school choice issue in your community. In this chapter, we have pulled all of those tips and tricks for you to review.

1. **Make sure you are staying current on education news and trends in your community**.

This could start with using [the EdChoice Dashboard](https://www.edchoice.org/school-choice-in-america-dashboard-scia/) to get a general sense of what the school choice landscape looks like in your community. You should continue to get updates on the developing education news in your community. You can start with your local paper. If the paper has an education reporter, they could be a great person to follow on Twitter. Oftentimes, even more localized papers, community newsletters, and blogs will cover education issues - make sure you start following these publications.

1. **Limit the number of goals for your advocacy work (2-3 goals is a great number)**.

You might have a tendency to create a number of different goals - there are a lot of things that could improve about our education system.If you set too many goals, you will get overwhelmed, and it will be difficult to fulfill any of your goals with fidelity. Instead, really focus on 2-3 goals that will drive your work. This will allow you to focus your work as an advocate on the goals that you have identified.

1. **We highly recommend tracking your conversations.**

You don’t have to create an elaborate system for tracking all of the conversations that you have; a simple spreadsheet or journal works great. At a minimum, tracking your conversations will allow you to keep everything straight. It will help you not forget any meetings and see how busy your week is. Additionally, if you track your conversations, it will be easier to follow our guidance around building relationships with stakeholders. It will be easier to do your research and know your goal going into each conversation. Additionally, it will be much easier to make sure you are completing the necessary follow-up after each conversation. Follow-up is critical - it shows that you are responsible and dedicated to the cause of school choice. A conversation tracker will make quality follow-up that much easier.

1. **Don’t underestimate the power of an introduction**.

When you are meeting with a variety of different stakeholders and you are thinking about the goal of a meeting or a possible next step from a conversation, an introduction is a great answer. If you are consistently and strategically introducing people to one another, you should have a steady stream of new people that you are meeting. This will help you build influence. If you are looking to connect with a well known leader, you might ask someone in their network for an introduction. While we don’t recommend starting the conversation by asking someone for an introduction to a local leader, once you develop a relationship with someone, asking for a recommendation in that person’s network is a great ask. Acknowledging the power of the introduction will help you build influence and improve the power of your own network.

1. **It’s a great idea to have a few different versions of your story.**

Each version of your story can have a particular focus and audience. One version can focus on how you helped your children navigate the education system - that version could be for other parents. Another version of your story could focus on why you got involved in your current advocacy effort and you can tell this story when you are trying to recruit others to join your advocacy efforts. Strong storytellers have a few different versions of their general story and they know when to use that story.

1. **It can also be helpful to write a synthesis of your conversation series.**

A synthesis is where you pull the different themes, stories, experiences, and values that you heard in your conversation series and discuss them in a document. While this will require an investment of time on the frontend, this document will be helpful as you try to further engage parents. It will be your guide for bringing in more parents to your advocacy effort.

1. **Be very careful when committing to a reoccuring event.**

As you have probably already figured out from reading this chapter, planning and executing events is a ton of work. When you are committing to a recurring event, you will have to go through this rigorous planning and execution process multiple times. Additionally, it can be difficult for people to commit to attending a recurring event. As you plan more and more events, it can be difficult to find new speakers, repeatedly secure a venue for an event, and afford the cost of food and other necessitirs. Unless you have a team of people who are willing to support and divide the responsibilities of planning an event, we recommend focusing on one time events that achieve a specific goal.

**Activity**

As you finish reading this curriculum, think about:

* What do you still want to learn about advocacy? About school choice? Who or what can you go to get this information?
* What are your next steps? How are you going to continue the momentum that you created by reading this curriculum?

*We hope these tips and tricks are helpful as you start planning your advocacy effort for a school choice effort. These tips and tricks were recommendations that we thought were particularly important. They should be very applicable to your work and should position you well as a rising advocacy leader.*