

Five End-of-the-Year Advocacy Strategies to Consider Before Walking Out the Door

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Summer vacation looms. Amidst the busy end of the school year where you finalize grades, and test every marker, cull the quarter inch oil pastels from the bin, and either cheer or bemoan next year's art budget, advocacy can feel like the farthest thing on your mind. However, you can take time as the school year closes to end on a high note and set yourself up for success for the 2026-27 school year. In this newsletter article we suggest five advocacy strategies to consider about before you exit your classroom for summer vacation:



1. Evaluate student learning: For your own benefit and for next year's students:

Administration and parents know who the effective teachers are in the district. Assuring your place on this list is advocacy. Take the time to be reflective in your practices. Identify lessons that were successful and exceeded your expectations. Be ready to build on these successes while also instituting any needed changes to fill in gaps and to improve learning. Your September self will thank you for the notes you leave yourself now. This is also a time to reflect on how you have highlighted student learning via assessment. Make sure students are aware of their own learning and can express their growth to others. Your own teaching practice comes full circle in June allowing you to highlight your curriculum using a key language structure valued by administrators ([Embracing Assessment as Advocacy](#)).

2. Final pushout of newsletter, social media, school website posts: Since the art show is a major advocacy effort on its own, our other communication efforts often fall by the wayside in late spring. But the end of the school year is a moment to come full circle and ensure that you have documentation of the show, the accomplishments, the awards and the acceptances that often come with Art Show season. Take a moment to make one final push in the arena preferred by you and your district—be it the school website or social media account, your art program newsletter, etc. The final photos, kudos, and thank yous build support within your school community—especially with parents and principals. One or two highly visible efforts can make a big difference (not to mention can overlap and coincide with your end-of-year self-evaluation and reflections or updates to your own portfolios/websites).

3. Community Support-Budget: Each year we monitor the budget process as it is prepared, proposed, and voted on. While the budget does not provide a full picture of the support for the arts in your community it does provide insight into the financial health of the district and the district's priorities. By reflecting on the budget process and the outcome, you can identify ways to strengthen community support for the arts. Highlighting artistic success in community newspapers, pennysavers, community social media pages, local coffee shops, and community libraries extend the success and importance of the art program in your district beyond school walls. Also consider community needs. Community-engaged learning and service opportunities provide students to build empathy, interpersonal, and socio-emotional communication skills while also making art visible outside of the classroom. (For guidance on setting boundaries when extending out to the community refer to [When Saying No is Advocacy](#).)

4. Committees and leadership for school/district initiatives for next year: District initiatives, leadership positions, and committee work are often decided or formed at the end of the year and/or over the summer. This work is often based upon stakeholder and state initiatives. What occurs each spring partially determines your teaching load and your budget—due to program outcomes and how you intersect with them to create program visibility. Initiatives, working groups, and committees present leadership opportunities for you as a teacher but also assure that the voice of visual arts

is heard and represented. So often we bemoan, “but they just don’t understand what we do!” But how can they if we do not teach stakeholders and constituents about what we do and make our voices heard beyond our classroom walls? A current example is *Portrait of a Graduate*. As part of *New York Inspires*, *Portrait of a Graduate* seeks to transform education in New York State by focusing holistically on six key attributes: Academic Preparation, Creative Innovation, Critical Thinking, Effective Communication, Global Citizenry, and Reflective and Future Focused Mindsets. Will you be part of this work? Take time to learn and engage in conversations in your district plans. The following resources will be helpful:

- NY Inspires,
- Portrait of a Graduate
- PLAN Pilot,
- NYS Portrait of a Graduate & Inquiry-Based Learning in PreK–Grade 5 hybrid webinar and
- NYS’s Educational Assessment Strategy



5. Revitalize your own art practice: Before you close the door to this school year, set a personal art goal for the summer. Personal obligations may mean this is a small goal, one 4” x 6” inch sketch a week, experimenting with a new media, or participation in a local plein air art experience. Keep in mind that “putting your toes in the grass” so to speak, and new art experiences, that allow you to seek out art and conversation revitalize your practice. Improve your ability and strengthen your advocacy efforts by being an active participant as an artist. Be ready to share your experiences with your students in the fall.

Even though the sunshine beckons and the end of the school year is a uniquely exhausting time, end this school year with the knowledge that you are an advocate through your strong teaching, community building, leadership, and example. Before you shift focus and mindset, implement these strategies and walk out the door with the knowledge that you have already started your advocacy efforts for the next school year.

References

Nolte-Yupari, S. T. & Savage, V. (2025). Embracing assessment as advocacy, *NYSATA News* (54, 4), 15-17.

Nolte-Yupari, S. T. & Savage, V. (2024). When Saying No is Advocacy, *NYSATA News* (53, 3), 11.

New York State Education Department. (2026, May) *Frequently Asked Questions Related to the New York State Graduation Measures Initiative*. <https://www.nysed.gov/grad-measures/frequently-asked-questions-related-new-york-state-graduation-measures-initiative>.

Call for Book Reviews

Editors of the *NYSATA News* invite members to contribute book reviews for upcoming editions. Whether you read for pleasure, seek inspiration, or aim to enhance your instructional practice, we welcome your reviews of education and art themed books. These selections can be fiction or nonfiction, ranging from relaxing, enjoyable reads to challenging, educational works.

Guidelines for Submitting Reviews

When writing your review, begin by explaining why you chose the book. Provide a brief description of the book’s theme and share your thoughts on why others might benefit from or enjoy reading your selection.

Submission Details

- Book reviews should be concise and easy to read, staying under 300 words.
- Include a photo of the book in .JPG format, at least 5 x 7 inches.
- Send your review to nysatanews@nysata.org.
- The deadline for submissions is Aug 10, but early submissions are encouraged.
- Selected reviews will be published in the fall edition of the *NYSATA News*.

