

Huntington Union Council PTA's Student Advocacy Program

PTA is the oldest and largest non-profit child advocacy association in America. The goal of HUC PTA's Student Advocacy Program is to promote the engagement and collaboration of high school students and policymakers in decisions affecting K-12 education. It is designed to develop informed student advocates who realize their civic responsibility and ability to effect change. Students will experience "real world" advocacy in the public sector.

The Student Advocacy Program is an educational training experience. The program is open to sophomores, juniors and seniors at HBUHSD schools. Participation will be determined by each participating high school, relying on PTA representatives, school staff and administration to complete the process. Students must submit an application with a short essay on their experiences as well as why they want to advocate on behalf of education. In an effort to keep our numbers manageable, a maximum of 10 students from each high school will be selected. The selection process will be completed by the end of January.

Beginning in February, selected students will attend a series of 4 evening meetings covering a variety of topics. The four sessions will be held on Wednesday evenings from 6:30-8 pm. Each session will have a panel of HBUHSD administrators, board members, principals & teachers to impart information and answer students' questions. The topics will cover education finance in California, academic issues (incl. STEM/STEAM, Common Core & collaborative learning, career/technical education), student wellness (including school safety, anxiety, zero period & sleep, extracurriculars, & multi-tiered support services). A moderator will facilitate the panel discussion and questions from the students. The fourth session will be dedicated to training for how to be an effective advocacy advocate. The goal of the evening meetings is to educate students on issues affecting education locally and to give them a chance to discuss issues facing their respective schools and formulate their areas of interest on behalf of which they will advocate.

Each participant will also be asked to meet independently with a teacher, an administrator or a counselor at their school to discuss issues that are affecting their school site. Students will then select an issue that is of interest to him or her and be asked to perform his or her advocacy action in the appropriate forum. Students may advocate as a group or individually. The students will then reconvene at the fifth and final evening session in mid-April to give a 3-5 minute oral report to program panelists, school board members and other invited guests on their advocacy efforts. Upon completion of their advocacy reports, students will receive a certificate of completion of the program.