



ROBOTICS EDUCATION &
COMPETITION FOUNDATION

SUMMIT

| ROBOTICS PROGRAMS |

Advocacy: Building Relationships That Fund Robotics

How coaches, Event Partners, and students can get involved and what it can achieve for your program

Meet Your Presenters

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Discussion Topics

1. What Is Advocacy?

It starts with relationships, not politics

2. Getting Started

Small steps, done consistently, can build lasting support

3. What Advocacy Efforts Have Accomplished

Real results from Michigan, Alabama, and Arkansas

4. Discussion

What you've already tried and what's next

01

What Is Advocacy?

At its core, advocacy is about relationships, relationships, relationships.

You're Already an Advocate

You negotiate every day

Asking for a larger classroom, permission for competitions, or a schedule change all use the same skills.

You already know how to make an ask

Advocacy just points that same skill set toward the people who fund and support STEM.

The target changes, the approach doesn't

School board members, legislators, and funders all respond to a relationship and a clear, reasonable ask.





What Can You Advocate For?

Funding

State or local dollars for robotics teams and STEM programs.

Access

Requiring hands-on CTE experiences for students.

Exposure

Making sure every student sees STEM before they graduate.



Relationships, Relationships, Relationships

Every funding win and every policy change starts with someone who already trusts you.

Know the Process to Affect the Process

Know who decides

Executive, legislative, and local school board roles differ. You need to know which one controls what you're asking for.

Start local

Local relationships with administrators and board members are often the fastest path to a visible win.

Then build up

State legislators and funders are easier to reach once you've built a track record locally.



02

Getting Started

Small steps, sent consistently, build lasting support.

Three Small Steps

1

Invite them

Bring school administrators, board members, or elected officials to your events.

2

Stay in touch

Send updates when your team has success — a win, an award, a milestone.

3

Make them a fan

Treat funders and officials like season-ticket holders for your program, not one-time guests.



The Newsletter That Built a Program

One teacher, one habit

A yearly newsletter to past funders, parents, and community members recapping the season.

Consistency built the relationship

Year after year, the update itself became the relationship touchpoint.

The result: funding and goodwill

It led to renewed yearly funding and goodwill that made every future ask easier.

Small Wins Add Up

Advocacy doesn't start with a bill signing

Local support compounds long before you ever see a state-level win.

More funding

One administrator relationship can open doors to district STEM budget lines or grant matches.

More space

A board member who's seen your team compete says yes more easily to gym or cafeteria access.

More volunteers

Parents and community members who feel like fans refer other parents, mentors, and judges.





Build Your Own Advocacy Habit

Start with one relationship

Pick one local decision-maker to invite this season.

Put a recurring reminder on your calendar

A season-end update takes twenty minutes and pays off for years.

Loop in your team

Let students write thank-you notes or share their own story as it's more powerful coming from them.

Take It Further With SASA

National Advocacy Conference (NAC)

Hosted annually by the Student Association for STEM Advocacy — the flagship event for training students, coaches, and EPs in advocacy skills.

State Advocacy Conferences

Last year's states included Illinois, Virginia, Pennsylvania, California, New York, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, and Florida.

New dates are coming soon

Watch mysasa.org in the coming weeks for the next National and state conference dates.





Discussion: What Have You Already Tried?

Have you invited an official or administrator to an event before?

What happened?

Have you sent updates to funders, parents, or your community?

What's stopped you from starting?

03

What Advocacy Has Won

Three real state-level wins that started with relationships like these.

Real Results

Michigan — Section 99H

A state school-aid line item funding robotics grants for districts and nonpublic schools — renewed through 2027-28 via sustained advocacy.

Arkansas — SB391

A newly signed law creating a state robotics grant program for public and private school teams — preceded by student Legislation Day visits.

Alabama — AMSTI Robotics Grant

A state-funded ALSDE grant of up to \$3,500 per district, with a dedicated carve-out for elementary robotics programs.

The Common Thread

It started with a relationship

Every one of these wins traces back to a legislator, board member, or administrator who had already met a team.

Students made the case

In each state, students themselves were part of the ask — not just adults advocating on their behalf.

It took more than one year

These are the result of sustained, repeated advocacy, not a single visit.



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Open Discussion

What advocacy efforts has your team already been part of?

THANK YOU

Every relationship you build
today is a future win for your
program.

