



National Coalition For Literacy

Advocacy and Public Policy Procedures

Approved 12-15-10

The National Coalition for Literacy (NCL) will adhere to the following procedures with regard to advocacy and developing, adopting, and forwarding federal public policy positions.

1. General

NCL's advocacy efforts are led by the Advocacy Chair, who is appointed from among the Board of Directors by the President. The Advocacy Chair serves for one year, which may be renewed upon mutual consent with the President. If desired, Co-chairs may be appointed from among the Membership, at least one of whom must be a member of the Board of Directors.

From time to time NCL may employ consultants to assist with advocacy and public policy work. These consultants will be accountable to the Board, who will have ultimate responsibility for their oversight. However, the Board may delegate the day-to-day supervision of such consultants to the Advocacy Chair. The Advocacy Chair will conduct meetings on a regular basis to discuss matters of advocacy and public policy. These meetings will be open to all Members.

2. Positions

NCL strives to reach consensus when developing its public policy positions. The Advocacy Chair will work with interested Members to develop new public policy positions as needed through a regular meeting or via a task force. In developing its positions, NCL will adhere to the following guidelines:

- A. Public policy positions should address basic principles and issues that are of likely interest and concern to the majority of NCL Members. The President has the discretion to determine how long deliberation is needed to develop public policy positions. If the Hill or Administration requests more detailed follow up positions, the Advocacy Chair will decide whether this is a task of NCL or if it should be referred to specific NCL Members who have expertise in the requested area to then issue their own response in follow up to the request.
- B. When the Advocacy Chair puts a proposed public policy position forth for consideration, it will be put to a single vote of the Membership for approval by consensus, after an appropriate period for deliberation and feedback by Members determined by the Advocacy Chair in consultation with the President. Consensus will be verified by vote. Members will have five days in which to vote, unless time is of the essence, in which case the Advocacy Chair, in consultation with the President, may, in his/her discretion, call for a vote in less than five days. Abstentions and non-votes will be recorded but will not count against the tally. When a position receives consensus, it will become an official public policy position of NCL.
 - a. If, after a vote, consensus cannot be achieved, the President, in his/her discretion, may ask the Advocacy Chair to redraft and resubmit the proposal for a follow up vote in order to achieve consensus, or he/she may declare that consensus cannot be achieved. The President has the sole discretion to determine when and whether consensus cannot be achieved.
- C. As noted above, if consensus is achieved, then the position will be formally adopted by NCL. All Members will be expected to support the position and refrain from taking any public policy positions that are in conflict with it until and unless it is replaced by a new position, or it is withdrawn. All Members of the Coalition are free to advance their own policy positions on any matter about which NCL has not adopted a position.



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- D. If a position fails to achieve consensus, Members are encouraged to advance the position as Members of the Coalition using the following process:
 - a. A Member or a group of Members may advance the issue by preparing a sign-on letter in support of the position.
 - b. Other Members may choose to sign on to the letter.
 - c. Positions that have majority support among NCL Members may be promoted with the heading "The undersigned Members of the National Coalition for Literacy support the following public policy position..." Such a letter or statement will not be positioned on NCL official letterhead. NCL Members who do not sign on will not be expected to support these public policy positions in their advocacy efforts.
 - d. In addition, sign-on letters, constructed by Members which have received majority support from Members may be included in materials prepared by the Advocacy Chair for Members of Congress or other policymakers, at his/her discretion. In doing so, the Advocacy Chair will note that these are not consensus positions of the Coalition. Electronic copies of these letters will be made available on the NCL Web site.
- E. Other than the activities referred to in section (D)(d) above, NCL will not use its resources to move such positions forward. Instead, it will be incumbent upon those Members supporting that position to do so.
- F. All Members will respect the decisions of other Members to opt in or out of non-consensus positions.

3. Strategy and Tactics

The NCL works to foster collaboration among its Members in terms of advocacy strategy and tactics to further mutual goals. To that end, the Advocacy Chair works with interested Member and the Board (and any consultants, as needed) to develop and implement advocacy strategies and tactics that advance NCL's policy agenda (e.g. letters, meetings, action alerts, etc.). Members are also encouraged to share information and ideas on strategy and tactics in the spirit of collaboration. However, it is the discretion of the Advocacy Chair, in consultation with the President, to determine which advocacy strategy and tactics are appropriate and feasible given NCL's time and resource constraints. Strategies and tactics (e.g. the text of a letter) are not put to a vote for Member approval.

4. Disputes and noncompliance

As noted above, all Members will be expected to support official NCL positions and refrain from taking any public policy positions that are in conflict with those positions. Members who believe that another Member is taking a public policy position that is in conflict with one of NCL's official positions should notify the Advocacy Chair, who will bring the matter to the Board for resolution.

In the event of a dispute over the administration of any of these procedures the NCL President will be consulted. The President will consult with the Board as needed for resolution.