

## *Things to say*

*Here's a checklist of twelve things that advocates should consider as part of a meeting with their target audience. Each one can make the difference between a successful and failed ask, whether you are making a request to save a class or a job, or simply trying to grow an already well-supported program.*

## **Do**

1. Know exactly what you want—your “ask”
2. Have your own story
3. Know your audience
4. Know your facts and figures
5. Have a core elevator speech
6. Be respectful of your audience and their time
7. Persuade—don't argue
8. Be prepared for pushback
9. Make your ask before you leave!
10. Leave something behind
11. Evaluate your efforts
12. Try, try again

## ***A dozen things you shouldn't say***

*It's easy to get caught up in an emotional argument when you feel so strongly about something. Theatre education is no exception. But your target audience—administrators, legislators, and other decision-makers—are going to respond more positively to a well-organized presentation that is grounded in the kind of information suggested in the Do's listed above. To wit, here's a dozen things you shouldn't say in an advocacy pitch:*

- 1.** You can't cut my program or my job—I belong to the union.
- 2.** You're doing this because I didn't give your daughter the lead in *Millie* last year.
- 3.** You had plenty of money last year for new football uniforms.
- 4.** My kids need me.
- 5.** We've already paid for the rights to shows next year.
- 6.** Everybody likes our program.
- 7.** Our program is a lot of fun—it gives students a break from academics.
- 8.** My kids will drop out if we don't have a theatre program.
- 9.** If you came to the shows you would understand what we do.
- 10.** You've been trying to get rid of our program for years.
- 11.** I know you don't like some of the shows we produce, but you can't make everybody happy.
- 12.** I work fourteen hours a day and I don't understand why anyone would think our theatre kids aren't important.