

## **Keep It Flying! Japanese Language Program Advocacy**

**by Jessica Haxhi**

The attached PowerPoint presentation may be used by any educator interested in helping others to advocate for his or her Japanese language program.

### How to use this PowerPoint:

Presenter Notes for each slide are included in this document. You may also read them below each slide on your computer, in the “Notes” section. If you are using a projector or other second monitor during your presentation, you may be able to set up the PowerPoint for “Presenter View” in which you can see the Notes section on your screen, but your participants will only see the main PowerPoint. Go to “Slide Show” and “Set Up Slide Show” in PowerPoint and click the box next to “Show Presenter View” to learn more. There are also a few slides hyperlinked within this PowerPoint. For each of these, click on the small blue box on the slide that says “BACK TO MAIN” to return to where you were in the presentation. Please note that, most of the time, it will take you to the next slide, because that would be the next point in the presentation. Specific instructions are included in the presenter notes for each page. You might want to practice clicking on the hyperlinks to see how they interact with your computer. If you have internet access, there are also some optional internet hyperlinks.

### How to use the Notes section:

Throughout the Notes section, notes for the presenter that should NOT be said aloud will be written in *italics* when you view it through PowerPoint. In this document, they are also written in blue. Subject headings that also appear on the slide are underlined.

### What to bring:

Copies of the “Agenda for Participants” or, if you wish, slides 1-17 printed in Handout view with lines next to each, 3 per slide.

Copies of the “2 Minute Advocacy” pages, if you wish to use them.

If you have extra time, some large paper for recording participant responses to various questions that you ask them and markers.

### Involving the participants:

This presentation includes optional questions to help the participants brainstorm their own ideas. If you have a longer time for the presentation, it is helpful to ask these questions. It helps participants to think about how many great things they are already doing and to share new ideas with each other.

You can brainstorm the answers to these questions in the whole group, or you can ask them to pair off

and discuss each with a partner or small group. There is also an optional “2 Minute Advocacy” section at the end in which participants can practice advocacy and share their experiences. These types of sharing sessions are always more effective than just a lecture-type presentation.

Timing:

This presentation could take up to 4 hours, using all of the brainstorming and sharing time.

This presentation could take as little as 75 minutes, if done primarily in lecture format, as written.

One final note:

While this presentation includes many suggestions, please feel free to add your own experiences and expertise. No one, including the creator of this presentation, has all the answers. We work as a team to improve Japanese language learning and advocacy efforts. *Gambarimasho!*

## Presenter Notes

### **Slide 1: Keep It Flying: Japanese Language Program Advocacy**

Welcome to this presentation.

*Tell a little bit about yourself. For a small group, ask each person to say where he or she teaches, what grade level and any question he or she might want answered today, if you have time.*

*For a large group, ask the participants the following questions, if applicable, and ask them to raise their hands.*

- How many of you are teachers?
- How many are Japanese teachers?
- How many of you are administrators? Something else?
- What levels do you teach at? (raise hands as you say different levels)
- How long has your program been in place? (perhaps each person could just say)
- What are some of your advocacy concerns? (perhaps each person could say one thing, or you could call on people who raise their hands.)

Hopefully, we will be able to answer many of your questions today, either through the content of this presentation, or by sharing with each other. Let me ask you a little bit more now about why you are here.

*[Click to go to next slide.](#)*

## Slide 2: Why are you here?

*The questions on this slide are a great way to get people thinking about and motivated for advocacy work. It will help you to see their level of commitment to their programs and to language learning in general. You can do this brainstorming orally, or, if you have more time, you can write what the audience says on a flipchart at the front of the room. You may want to pre-write the questions on two flipchart pages.*

I'd like to ask you a little bit about "Why you are here?" in terms of why you are a Japanese language teacher and what you believe about language teaching. Why should people learn other languages?

*To prompt more responses, you can also ask all or some of the following questions:*

- Why did you learn your second language?
- Why are you glad you speak another language?
- How does speaking another language help your thinking?
- How does speaking another language help your understanding of other cultures?
- How does speaking another language help you to understand other world languages?
- Why would you want your child to learn more than one language?

*After the discussion, click on the "Why should people learn other languages" square to hyperlink to the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language's list of "What the Research Shows" about world language learning. If you cannot link to the internet, print the list off the website at <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4524>. You can read it to the audience, have them read it silently, or tell them to visit the website for further information. On the website, each statement is also a hyperlink to a summary of the research that supports that statement.*

Now, let's talk about Japanese language specifically. "Why should people learn Japanese?"

*To prompt more responses, you may also ask:*

- What makes Japanese unique?
- What aspects of Japanese culture are popular in the United States?
- What aspects of Japanese language are especially interesting?
- What is Japan's importance in the world?
- How are native Japanese speakers received in Japan? In Japanese business?

*After the discussion, click on the "Why should people learn Japanese?" square to hyperlink directly to the Japan Foundation's list of the "Top 10 Reasons to Learn Japanese." If you cannot link to the internet, print the list off of the website at \_\_\_\_\_ and refer the participants to it.*

If we want to convince others that learning a language is valuable and learning Japanese is valuable, then we need to practice "advocacy." But what is advocacy?

*Click to go to next slide.*

### Slide 3: What is advocacy?

In Japanese, we often refer to advocacy as “*suishinkatsudou*.” [Click to show advocacy kanji.](#)

Interestingly, this is the same word we use to talk about the propulsion of an airplane. [Click to show propulsion kanji.](#)

If we imagine that a Japanese language program is an “airplane,” then advocacy is what is providing the “propulsion” or “*suishin*.”

Advocacy is actually the propeller for the “airplane” which is our program. [Click to show propeller kanji.](#)

It is a simple, yet fun way to think about how important advocacy is to long-term program success. We will use this metaphor throughout the presentation as a way to visualize the importance of advocacy.

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

## Slide 4: “Starting Up” a New Program

Starting a new program involves a different type of program advocacy. It is essential to create the highest quality program possible. Only high-quality programs survive in the long term. A budget of both time and funds will be required to undertake program start-up properly.

The following steps lead to success during this stage....

[Click to show each of the following:](#)

Collect data: Use surveys and committees to make sure that parents, administrators, and teachers have a say in program design.

Educate Stakeholders: Teach parents, students, administrators, and other teachers about the benefits of language learning, the benefits of learning Japanese, and the goals of the proposed Japanese program. For a list of resources to share with stakeholders, try the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language’s list of “What the Research Shows” about world language learning, as listed in your resources. Also, check the Japan Foundation Advocacy Kit resources list online.

Hire Quality Teachers: It is best to use a committee of current teachers and administrators for hiring. Look for teachers who have both language expertise and experience with the grade levels being taught. Experience with American students also helps teachers to be successful.

Schedule Sensibly: Make sure that the schedule is feasible for the teacher. It is tempting to over-schedule a teacher of Japanese for multiple levels and many periods per day, but each level requires ample preparation to be sure that classes are successful. Remember that program quality is the ultimate goal.

Write Curriculum: The curriculum should be based on the national Standards for Foreign Language Learning, the state world language standards, and the local curriculum. The teacher should be involved in this process and advised by other world language teachers. It is also helpful to have some parents and administrators involved in looking at drafts of the curriculum. In the best case scenario, curriculum writing is finished when the program begins.

Gather Materials: When the curriculum is written, textbook and materials decisions can be made. Most experienced teachers would agree that it is best to buy as little as possible at first (perhaps just the textbook and related items for the high school), and then see what you need as the program grows and you use the textbook or other materials.

[Click to go to next slide.](#)

## Slide 5: Take Off!

Now, your program is ready to “take off.” This is the most exciting stage of a new program. This is when you focus on:

[\*Click to make airplane move.\*](#)

Media coverage: Make sure the media knows about your new program and has accurate information about your program. See the Japan Foundation Advocacy Kit website to learn how to create a press release. Always check with your administrators before talking with the media directly.

[\*Click to make airplane move.\*](#)

Great events: Events that involve students, parents, other teachers, administrators, and the community create interest in the program. Try having a festival, Sushi Night, Origami Night, Anime Night, or Japan Trip to create lots of excitement!

[\*Click to make airplane move.\*](#)

Student recruiting: If students have a choice of languages, you will have to convince them that Japanese is worth taking. You might try sitting at a lunch table and doing origami or writing students names in *katakana*, or letting students write *kanji* with a brush. Others might respond to an Anime Club. Talk to students to find out why would want to take Japanese. They will tell you!

[\*Click to make airplane move.\*](#)

Information stream: Keep information “flowing” out to all stakeholders. Create a Japanese program newsletter and website, and update information regularly. Make sure students know what they will learn and how it would benefit them as well.

[\*Click to go to next slide.\*](#)

## Slide 6: Keep It “In the Air”

Now comes the most challenging stage of a Japanese program: maintaining interest and excitement for the long term.

[\*Click to show the airplane.\*](#)

As with an airplane, the propeller must keep turning for the plane to fly. If the propulsion stops, it will glide for awhile, but it will slowly come down to the ground.

Let’s talk about the type of propulsion (advocacy) that it takes for keep a program “in the air.”

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles



## Slide 7: To Whom Should I Advocate?

There are a number of different stakeholders who require slightly different advocacy efforts. In a sense, we can think of these as our “customers.” They are...

*[Click to show each of the following:](#)*

Students: These are your most important customers. They must love your program.

Parents: If their children love your program and are learning, parents will support you when you need it.

Colleagues: These are the other language teachers, guidance counselors, and the teachers of other subject areas. Their support is essential.

Administrators: These are the principals, vice principals, supervisors, and superintendents. They make crucial decisions about your schedule, your budget, and the continuance of your program.

Board of Education: Not all school districts have this body or call it by this name, but, in many districts, this is a group of community members that makes final decisions about program funding and school budgets.

Community: This refers to the community-at-large, including local businesses, media, and people living in the area. Community support can be a powerful reason not to cut it; community dislike of a program can be the death of it.

The key to communicating with all of these stakeholders is INFORMATION.

*[Click to show “Information.”](#)*

We must always make sure that everyone has accurate information about our programs. During the next slides, we will look at specific advocacy ideas for each one of these stakeholders and how to get accurate information to them in the best way possible.

## Slide 8: Advocating to Students

The students are our most important “customers.” The best way to advocate to them is to be a great teacher. This slide talks about the things that we can do in the classroom to stay a great teacher.

*Click to show the information box.*

The information that our students need is to know why, what, and how much they are learning. What does that mean to you? *Wait for participant responses, and then continue.*

Students can discuss the “why” of learning Japanese in class, or we can give them fact sheets about the importance of Japan in the world, such as those from the Japan Foundation’s Advocacy Kit Resources. We share “what” they are learning by showing them the objectives for the year, for each unit, and even for each lesson with students in grades 6-12. We can show them “how much” they are learning by giving regular progress reports, having students self-assess, using rubrics each unit, and having conversations with them about their learning.

Other things we can do to be a great teacher are the things you are probably doing already:

*Click to show each of the following:*

Create high-quality lessons: We all know what it feels like when the students enjoy a lesson and are learning. We are most successful when we speak in Japanese most of the time, use lots of visuals, and have students engaged in pair and group work practice. *If you have time in this presentation, ask the participants:* What are some of the other things that make a lesson “high quality”?

Take them on trips and hold cultural events: A trip to Japan is the most effective advocacy you can do for a program. Students can use their Japanese, learn more about the culture, and experience the hospitality of Japanese people. You can even bring parents. Other trips include going to museums and Japanese restaurants. Events include festivals, celebrations, sushi-making parties, Origami Nights, National Honor Society nights, etc.

Talk about school events in your lessons: We know how excited kids are about football games, Prom night, the 100<sup>th</sup> day of school (in elementary), etc. When we relate our lessons to these events, students are more motivated to use Japanese to express their feelings about them. When students travel to Japan, they will be better prepared to talk about their interests, as well.

Use “pop” culture in your lessons: As we all know, *anime* is the reason for many of our student recruitment lately. There is plenty of other Japanese pop culture, music, and games (even Kanji!) that we can use to make Japanese relevant to the age group we teach.

Know their interests: This is related to the previous two points. When we teach about topics that students are interested in, they enjoy class and want to speak Japanese. You may have the entire

cheerleading squad in your class, or many members of the basketball team, or the chess club. It is worth it to take the time to find readings, pictures from Japan, and or even pen pals who could relate to their interests.

Know their learning styles: There are many learning styles and personality indicators through which you can learn about your students. You may have heard of the Gregorc Style Delineator, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Multiple Intelligences Theory, or True Colors. Find the ones that appeal to you and suit your age group and use them to find out more about your students. Much of the time, you will find that their learning styles and personalities are different from yours; therefore, we must think from a different perspective as we plan learning activities for them.

Use technology: Technology can be used to connect with students in new and exciting ways that other teachers are not yet trying – thereby making your class the most exciting one of the day. We can use hardware such as mp3 players, interactive whiteboards, digital voice recorders, video cameras, cell phones, and even Nintendo DS games for language learning. The creative use of PowerPoint presentations, YouTube videos, store websites, whiteboard games, online games, E-pals, video editing software, recording software, and other media can greatly enhance our Japanese classes and the ability of our students to see Japanese used in real-world contexts.

Survey them: Students are rarely asked how they feel about a class, before the college level. Even young students can complete a survey asking them about Japanese class. These data can be saved and collated. We will discuss how to use these data later in the presentation.

*[Click on the “survey them” button to see samples of both K-8 and 9-12 surveys.](#)*

Survey notes: With younger students, it helps to read each line item. With students in grades 6-8, you may want to add items from the 9-12 survey sample. Please note that all of these surveys are available in Microsoft Word format on the Japan Foundation Advocacy Kit website.

*[NOTE: When you click “Back to Main,” you will be on the next slide.](#)*

## Slide 9: Advocating to Students, Part 2

Part two of advocating to students is finding ways to better ourselves as teachers. This slide talks about ways we can keep ourselves current and energized for teaching.

*If you have time, you can ask participants for a few responses before continuing:*

*Ask, "What do you do to learn about being a better teacher?" Wait for responses.*

*Ask, "What do you do to keep yourself energized and ready to teach?" Wait for responses.*

*Click to show each of the following:*

Read about teaching: There are Japan Foundation publications, NCJLT's Oshirase, the ATJ Newsletter, the ACTFL publications and daily email "Smartbrief," newsletters and journals of your local regional teaching organizations, and other teaching journals such as ASCD.

Observe other teachers: Don't limit yourself to Japanese teachers or even to world language teachers. You can learn something from excellent teachers of every subject.

Attend conferences: These are the very best opportunities for learning about current best practices in teaching. They may seem expensive, but they are worth it! You will feel energized and ready to teach. Again, don't limit yourself to Japanese sessions. We can learn something from teachers of every language. It is more important to find the best presenters to attend – so ask other teachers for recommendations.

Take classes: A quick class in "PowerPoint for Educators" or a Special Education class might be just what you need to re-energize your teaching.

Get language training: If you don't speak Japanese well enough to conduct the class almost entirely in Japanese, get the training or the practice you need to feel more confident. Plus, being a "student" again will help you to reflect on why you love Japanese language and culture. It also gives you the chance to see things from your students' perspective. If you are a native Japanese teacher, you might want to sit in on a Spanish or other language class at your school.

Participate in listservs: These are the best way to get immediate answers to your teaching questions. On "senseionline," Japanese teachers worldwide will respond to your questions. You can also ask questions on Twitter. Reading the daily discussion also gives you refreshing new ideas.

Videotape yourself teaching: There is nothing more instructive than watching yourself teach. You can see your own patterns for calling on students, speaking in English, using difficult language, etc. If you can stand it, it is very interesting!

Take breaks: Teaching is an exhausting profession. It is essential to take time for yourself. Do yoga, meditate, etc. It is possible to work on your teaching job 24 hours a day, but you'll be a better teacher if you are well-rested in both mind and body.

As we think about the concept of “advocating” to students, keep in mind – especially in a high school and college situation, students know which teachers are the “best.” While some of those teachers might be considered the “easy” ones, most of them are teachers who connect with students and help them to learn a lot and feel successful.

[\*Click to go to next slide.\*](#)

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

## Slide 10: Advocating to Parents

Parents are your next biggest “customers” in terms of advocacy. If parents love your program, they will support you both in your work with their child and if your program is ever in danger. It helps to think of them as your “partners” in the education of the students.

*If time, ask* “Have you had any challenging issues with parents? What would you do differently if you had the chance to do it over again?”

*Click to show the information box.*

The information that parents need is to know why, what, and how much their child is learning.

*If time in the presentation, ask* “What are some ways that you involve parents?”

*Click to show each of the following:*

Show them how much their child knows: We send report cards and maybe progress reports, but how do we show parents how much their children can DO in Japanese? The more they see their children using Japanese, the more amazed they will be. This can be done through suggesting trips to a Japanese-speaking restaurant, sending a DVD or CD of their child speaking Japanese, or, even better, organizing a trip to Japan.

Send program newsletters: Even parents of older students like to learn more about what their children are learning. You can include a class calendar, Japanese restaurant reviews, lists of websites, etc.

Maintain a website/email list: You can achieve the same type of information flow by maintaining a website and/or email list for students and parents. You can see some examples of program websites as listed on the resources page. *If you have internet access, click on the “Maintain a website/email list” words to go to the Japanese program website of the Maloney Japanese Program in CT. We use this wiki to help parents and students to see what we are working on currently. On the main page, if you click to go to our other website, you can see where we store our curriculum, program philosophy, frequently asked questions page, and other more permanent information.*

Let them help with homework: American parents often worry that they can’t help with Japanese homework because they aren’t familiar with the language. You can involve them in homework by having the students teach their parents something and asking the parent to sign off that the child taught them well. You can post pronunciation guides on a “Wikispaces” website that they can go over with younger children (see the Maloney Japanese site for an example).

Invite them to classes: One of the easiest ways to show parents how much Japanese their students can speak is to invite them to a regular Japanese class. The only thing you have to prepare is a class schedule to send home ahead of time and a short summary of the unit that you are currently working on to hand out when parents arrive. It is great to do this during “Discover Languages” month in February.

Invite them to events: Large events create lots of interest in your program and are often the most memorable part of a Japanese program. Hold a summer festival, New Year’s Shinnenkai, etc. You can

also invite parents to small events, such as when students make presentations, read Haiku they have written, or put on a skit that they have created.

Invite them to lunch: At Maloney Magnet School in Connecticut, teachers invite students and parents to a “Lunch with the Senseis” at a local Japanese restaurant on the weekend. The teachers make a reservation with the restaurant for up to 50 people, and then take reservations from the students and parents. Participants pay for themselves and provide their own transportation, but it is a great way to interact with parents and students in an informal environment. If your Japanese restaurant speaks Japanese, students can also show off their language skills.

Be a community member: The more you are a part of the school and town community, the more you become an essential part of the school.

Remember – he/she’s their “baby”: If you have children, you know what it feels like to worry about how your child is doing in school. As teachers, we have the very difficult job of telling parents when their children are not doing well. If you begin talking to parents when children ARE doing well, such as a quick introduction phone call at the beginning of the year, they will trust you more if you need to call for other reasons. When you do call, keep the discussion around the student’s work, have all of your rubrics and grades ready, and emphasize that your main goal is to help the student achieve.

Survey them: Some parents liked to be asked for their opinions and will give you excellent ideas for your program. Think about your parents as you design a survey: if they use their email often, design a free survey up to a certain number of questions at [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). If they have limited access to computers, you can still use an online service, but you can also print paper copies to send home. Design your questions carefully to elicit feedback that could be used to show levels of involvement and to determine which activities parents liked the best. You might wish to use other types of questions if your purposes are different. [Click on the “survey them” words to show examples of K-8 and 9-12 Parent Surveys. There are four slides of surveys.](#)

Survey notes: If you give parents and students the chance to also be entered in a raffle for various prizes, it helps in getting responses back. As you create surveys for parents especially, think carefully about what responses you wish to receive. If you use negative language, you will get negative answers. For example, don’t ask “what don’t you like about the Japanese program?” Instead, ask if they would like to see any changes to the program. Also, include answers that you will be able to respond to in terms of your future actions. If you can never take students to Japan, don’t include “Japan Trip” as one of the choices. Participants, please note: Special notes to teachers are in blue: be sure to read and remove before using this survey. Teachers wishing to use this survey can download it as a Microsoft Word document at the Japan Foundation Advocacy Kit website.

[When you click “Back to Main” you will be on the next slide.](#)



## Slide 11: Advocating to Colleagues

*Ask*, “Why should we advocate to colleagues? How can they affect our programs?”

*After participants respond, click to show the Information Box:*

Our colleagues need to know why Japanese is an important language to learn. The emphasis should be on the positive points about learning Japanese, not on comparing it to other languages or trying to argue that Japanese is “better” to learn. They also need to know the details of your program, such as minutes per week and curricular goals, especially if it is a K-8 program. Finally, they need to know how you are supporting them and their positions, either through content lessons in Japanese, by helping out the school, or by being a good friend and colleague. How do we make this happen?

*Click to show each of the following:*

Share program newsletters: The same newsletter you give to parents can be shared with colleagues.

Leave kids quiet/Help kids be on time: For K-8 teachers, be sure you end class with something soothing and quiet. Homeroom teachers don’t like picking up a noisy class. For high school teachers, end on time so that students are on time to their next class.

Support their content area, and tell them: If you are doing history, math, poetry, or other content-area subject matter in your classes, find a way to show your colleagues in that area, such as sharing student work or asking for their help on a specific point. Or...

Suggest Interdisciplinary Projects: Many schools encourage teachers to work together on interdisciplinary projects. You could work with a history, language arts, and art teacher on a Hiroshima project using “Sadako and the 1,000 Paper Cranes.” You could work with a science teacher to look at earthquakes, typhoons, and tsunamis in Japan.

Ask for their advice: If you are having a challenge with a teaching method or with a particular student, don’t be afraid to ask for advice. Teachers in other subject areas often help each other out.

Share ideas, articles, lessons: If you find a great science article about Japan, share it with a science teacher. If there is a Japanese exhibit at the local museum, post it in the teacher’s room.

Invite them to events: If the class makes sushi, invite some colleagues to eat it for lunch. If you hold a big event, colleagues will appreciate a pretty formal invitation.

Be a team player: You will hear this a few times during this presentation, but, whenever possible, say “yes.” If your colleagues need help with something, try to say “yes.” If you see them working hard for Prom Night, maybe ask if you can help out. The more of a team player you are with your colleagues, the more they will support your program and you as a colleague.

Survey them: You can create a survey asking for their advice about your program. Just as with parents, you can use an online survey or a paper survey, depending on how technologically oriented they are.

*Click on the “survey them” words for an example. NOTE: When you click “Back to Main” you will be on the next slide.*



## Slide 12: Advocating to Administrators

Administrator support is a key component of a successful Japanese program. An administrator by his or herself may or may not be able to make budget-cutting decisions in your district, but he or she does make the decisions that determine your daily experience at school. Administrators can affect changes in your schedule, your duties, and the overall perception of your program by others by their praise of it. What information do your administrators need to have?

[Click to show information box.](#)

They need to know what students will learn and are learning. They also need to be kept abreast of why Japanese is important to learn AND why language learning in general is important. Finally, they need to see how you support the school as a whole.

[Click to show each of the following:](#)

Share program newsletters and websites: These help to show administrators both what you are teaching and how well you are communicating it to students and parents. It also probably makes you unique from other subject areas in the school in that not all subject areas send parent newsletters! Administrators also need to see how hard you work on your website. If you make big changes, you can email it to them. Also, ask to be linked to the main school website.

Show them what students learn: This can be in the form of your curriculum document (which they may guide you in creating) and maybe a curriculum map. You can also show them how much students are learning in more subtle ways: by having students perform in Japanese at school events, stop by their office to perform a quick role-play, or even do some simple translating for them if Japanese visitors come.

Share language research: Watch for new research about language learning, articles about the need for Japanese language speakers, or even job searches for Japanese language teachers. Share these with your administrators (and parents and students too!).

Communicate appropriately: Most administrators are very busy, all day. Your administrator might have certain times of day that are better to talk than others, such as before school starts or after it ends. Many administrators now prefer email communication. Ask other teachers what the best way is to communicate with your administrator. If you must speak in person, consider asking for an appointment to do so.

Invite them to events: – especially if you take a trip to Japan! Of course, they also should not only be invited, but well aware of any large or even small events you are planning for your program. At the events, be sure to recognize them by announcing their name and thanking them for their support.

Say “yes”: This may sound silly, but administrators appreciate positive teachers. If they ask you to do something that you are able to do (help out at the prom, proctor a mid-term, etc.), it is always best to say “yes.” Of course, there are times when you must say no due to other responsibilities, but the more you say “yes,” the more your administrator will feel that you are... [Click to go to next.](#)

Indispensible to the school: In order to be an “indispensible” member of the school, you must do more than just your Japanese program. Perhaps you coach a sport, help with yearbook, make a website for the school, work on academic committees, or run the yearly Christmas party for the staff. When you help the school in ways outside of your classroom, everyone begins to think, “we can’t do without that teacher here!”

Survey them: Administrators need to be included in the yearly surveys that you do for parents, students, and colleagues. You will establish yourself as a uniquely reflective and motivated teacher with these surveys. No other subject area asks the administrators, “What do you think of my program?” yearly. As you create your surveys, think about how the questions will help administrators to think about how your program is valued. For example, ask them if they hear parents and students talking about your program in positive ways.

*Click on the “survey them” words for an example.*

*NOTE: When you click “Back to Main” you will be on the next slide.*

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

## Slide 13: Advocating to the Board of Education

Your school district may have a governing body that makes most of the major budgeting and final curricular decisions. It might be called the “Board of Education” or something similar. In some areas, the members of the Board of Education are elected officials; in others, they are appointed. Since every area is different, it is a good idea to get to know how your governing body works, and how you can best advocate to them. In many cases, it requires us to “be political.”

[\*Click to show the Information Box.\*](#)

Board members need their information in the form of a collation (or snapshot) of everything you share with administrators, parents, and students. They need data and research in a format that is succinct and easy to interpret. They also need to have a sense that your program is successful and valued by the community. In order to get them this information, we...

[\*Click to show each of the following:\*](#)

Communicate appropriately: It is very important to understand the process for communicating with your Board of Education. In some towns, you can email them directly. In other towns, there is a secretary through which all written correspondence must go. In all cases, you should check with your administrator before you contact them. Communicating in a way that is too informal can be a big mistake. Once you know the process, you can open the flow of information to them.

Know their politics: In this sense, politics might mean political party, or it just might mean determining which projects are most important to which members of the Board. Often, you can watch meetings of your Board of Education on local television. You are also often allowed to attend public Board meetings. You will quickly learn which members support which types of projects. You can also get a feel for how the Board as a whole makes decisions. If it is always about money, then you will have to emphasize what a great “deal” the Japanese program is for your school. If it is about keeping up with nearby school districts, then you can emphasize what those districts have for world language programs in your information to the Board.

Present information succinctly: These Boards are asked to read hundreds of pages of information each month. When you prepare something for them, make it brief and powerful. If you must present to them in person, try to send documentation (such as research articles or data charts) a week or two ahead of time, then pass out only a summary page for them to look at while you speak. As with all presentations, visuals, such as pictures, video of students speaking Japanese, or colored charts, are also very effective.

Share program newsletters and websites: Keep the flow of information to them at all times, using the communication process that your school district allows.

Show them what students learn: If you are allowed, send students to perform at a Board meeting, or send them DVDs of your students acting out a skit or performing at a poetry contest. If your students ever receive awards (Haiku Contest, NCJLT’s *Nengajou* Contest, Japan Bowl, etc.), ask your administrator if you can send an announcement to the Board.

Be ready to share language research: As you find new research on language learning, keep a file so that you are ready if you need to justify your program. If you have the time, it helps to write short summaries for yourself so that you can quickly collate the information into “sound bites” to hand out or to quote to Board members.

Invite them to events: – especially to Japan! As with administrators, if a Board Member attends an event, be sure to recognize him/her with an introduction and a thank you.

Keep yearly survey data: As you create your surveys, keep in mind the need to be able to compare data over time. Save the yearly data so that if a Board member asks you how successful your program is, you can show them the data.

*Click on the words “Keep yearly survey data” to show two slides of examples. Click to go to the second slide. You may want to ask participants, “What are some other areas that could provide longitudinal data?”*

*NOTE: When you click on the “Back to Main” box, you will be on the next slide.*

## Slide 14: Advocating to the Community

The “community” refers to the members of town or city where your school is located. While it may seem like a lot to consider advocating to them, their support can be crucial in a crisis situation. An influential businessperson, local community leader, or politician can have a lot of influence on your Board of Education. Then again, you could exhaust yourself trying to think of ways to advocate Japanese language, Japanese culture, or language learning in general in the community. In order to maximize your efforts, you have to “be strategic.”

*Click to show Information Box:*

The information that the community needs is to know why learning Japanese is important, your program details (such as minutes per week and curricular goals), and the successes and recognition that your program brings to the community. Getting this kind of information to a large community requires...

*Click to show each of the following:*

Understanding media relations: Your school district may have a policy that states how you can interact with the media. Sometimes, you need permission from your superintendent or principal in order to grant interviews for local newspaper or television. We need to be sure to find this information out. If you want to send announcements to the media, such as an award your student received or an event that you are holding, you can use a set format called a “press release.” Your school district may have a template it uses, or you can refer to the one at the Japan Foundation’s Advocacy Kit website.

Presenting information succinctly: For all the same reasons you must do so for the Board of Education. Reporters are very busy and, as you know, love quick phrases or quotes called “sound bites.” We must think about the best way to express the success of our programs in as few words as possible. If you are allowed to talk directly with the media, or if they contact you about your program, you should be ready to...

*Now click the next three:*

Share program newsletters and websites

Be ready to share language research

Keep yearly survey data: summarized as you would for the Board of Education.

Reaching out to community centers: There are many great service projects that you can do with local community centers, such as organizing a Taiko drum performance, teaching origami or sushi making at a senior center, or presenting a slide show of a trip to Japan at the local library. The students can be the main organizers and workers at the event. Be sure to get media coverage as well!

Inviting them to events: any event you can. Some local newspapers will go into classrooms for events as small as a sushi-making party. If you are taking students to Japan, send a picture to the local newspaper after your return.

Be a constant advocate: Sometimes, we get asked questions about our program when we are in the supermarket line, at a doctor’s office, etc. As difficult as it may be, we always have to be positive and

ready to talk about the program. You never know what influence that person might have within the community.

*If time, you could now do the exercise called "2 Minute Advocacy" using the sheet included at the end of your Presenter Notes. This concept was originally conceived by Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D., of Brigham Young University.*

*Directions: Give each participant a copy of the 2 Minute Advocacy paper. Ask each to find a partner and role-play the first dialogue for two minutes (or they can choose one randomly). After two minutes is up, tell participants to move to the next dialogue. When finished, you can ask participants to talk about the experience and comment on what they discussed. This activity can take from 15-35 minutes.*

The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles

## Slide 15: How Will I Do It All?

You may feel exhausted just listening to this presentation. How will we do it all? It helps to rethink the distribution of your job responsibilities.

[Click to show chart.](#)

If we think of our jobs as...

60% of our time is spent teaching. This is shown in light blue.

20% of our time is spent planning lessons and making materials. This is shown in red.

10% of our time is spent doing administrative duties such as correcting papers, doing school duties, or filling out forms. This is shown in orange.

10% of our time should be spent preparing for advocacy and advocating our programs: making newsletters, reading articles, updating your website, etc. This is shown in dark blue.

In the end, advocacy is just as important as correcting students' papers. Advocacy is just as important as being ready for class the next day. Just as with airplanes, every part of a program works together to keep it "in the air."

[Click to show airplane.](#)

## Slide 16: Program in Crisis

*Airplane will come across slide automatically. Talk as airplane is coming down...*

What do you do if, despite your hard work and effort, your program is in trouble? There might be discussions of cutting teachers, cutting minutes, cutting the budget, or even of cutting the program entirely. If you have been advocating for your program all along, you will be ready to handle this. There are still many positive steps you can take to save a “Program in Crisis.”

*Click to show each of the following:*

Get the facts: Find out exactly what is happening and what is at stake from your administrator or someone you can trust. Do NOT listen to any rumors in your school or even in local newspaper articles. Focus only on the immediate problem, and not any other worries or complaints you may have.

Research your options: Find out what you are allowed to do in terms of defending your program. Be very careful, because now is the time when you must follow all the rules about communicating appropriately with your administrator, the Board of Education, the media, and even parents.

Students: Are you allowed to mention the issue to them? Can you ask them to attend a Board of Education meeting?

Parents: Can you send a letter to parents telling them of the crisis? Can you talk informally to parents? Can you ask parents to attend a Board of Education meeting?

Administrators: Can you set a time to meet with your principal to state your case? Can you prepare something written for him/her?

Board of Education: Can you make a presentation at a Board meeting? Can you send something written to the Board?

Community: If the newspaper contacts you, can you talk with them or do you need permission from your administrator?

Establish a timeline: Find out what the timeline is for the decision to be made about your program. There is probably an administrator or Board of Education meeting about it. Set deadlines for yourself for accomplishing certain goals such as gathering data, preparing your presentation, sending information to the Board ahead of time, etc.

Gather your data: Collate the results of all of your parent and student surveys if you haven’t already. Gather together the research on positive reasons for learning foreign languages in general, and Japanese specifically. Make sure your curriculum is in a format that you could share if asked. Brainstorm all of the positive effects the program has had on the school and students (special events, participation in National Honor Society, etc.) to be included in your presentation or correspondence.

Gather your supporters: If you are allowed, draft a letter to tell parents and students what is happening, stating only the facts of the situation and when the final decision will be made. If you are not allowed to send



something in writing, it may be okay to talk in person to a few parents and tell them the facts. Parents have a lot of influence over what happens at a Board meeting if they attend in large numbers. You should contact your local world languages supervisor, state world languages consultant, regional Japanese teachers' organization, and the National Council of Japanese Language Teachers. Also, you can try writing to local politicians, clearly stating your case in a positive way and asking for them to help the program continue. If any of these people can attend a Board meeting with you, it could help your case.

State your case: Make a presentation about your program to whoever will listen—the board, the superintendent, your principal, etc. The presentation should include a summary of the positive data about the program, ways in the program has been successful, samples of student work or comments, and even future plans for the program. Try to avoid personal references about your need for this position and be as polite as possible. Stick to the facts. The handout that you give with the presentation should be a one-page outline that is easy to read quickly. You may also gather articles and send data charts, but try to send them ahead of time. Most Boards of Education will receive reading materials a week before the meeting. Check with your school administrator.

Take the “high road”: We must stay positive, professional, and factual during a program crisis. While at home, we might feel sad, worried, or stressed, but we must remain professional while at school. Try not to be involved in gossip or conjecture about what is happening. If you feel that the “attack” on your program is coming from a particular person or group, try to remain polite and professional with them. You will be happier with yourself afterward if you take the “high road” and don’t get involved with some of the meanness that can surround school politics, and, chances are, people who know you will come to your defense and help you to get right back “in the air.”

[Click to show airplane taking off.](#)

## Slide 17: Keep It Flying

[Click to show box.](#)

Every part of an airplane must work together to keep the airplane in the air, but the propeller pulls the airplane forward. Without it, the airplane will continue to glide for awhile, but it will eventually come down to the ground.

Every part of a Japanese program must work together to keep the program going. Like the propeller, though, we can relax on advocacy for a little while and keep our programs going, but eventually, without advocacy efforts, the program will eventually come “down” to the ground.

[Click to show next box.](#)

With strong, constant advocacy efforts, we can keep our programs “flying” for a very long time.

[Click to go to next slide.](#)

## Slide 18: Flying is Done Largely with the Imagination

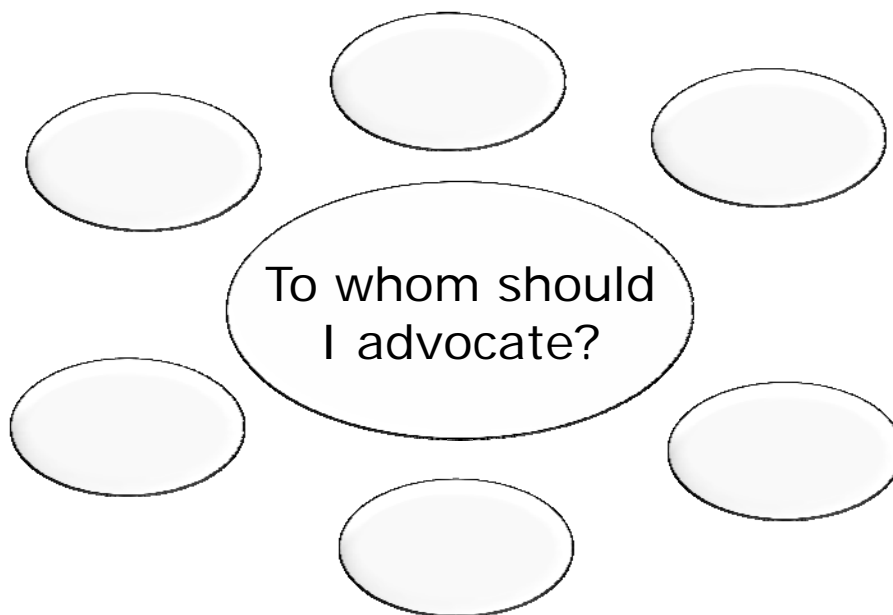
Flying an airplane is an art, as “flying” a program is an art. Use your imagination, work together, and enjoy!

*This is the end of the presentation. Subsequent slides were those hyperlinked to during the presentation.*

# Keep It Flying! Japanese Language Program Advocacy

## AGENDA FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Why are you here?
  - a. Why should people learn other languages?
  - b. Why should people learn Japanese?
2. What is advocacy?
3. "Starting up" a new program
4. Take Off!
5. Keep it "in the air"



6.

7. Advocating to Students

8. Advocating to Parents

9. Advocating to Administrators

10. Advocating to Colleagues

11. Advocating to the Board of Education

12. Advocating to the Community

13. How will I do it all?

14. Keep it “Flying”

## 2-Minute Advocacy

This is an optional activity for practicing advocacy in spontaneous situations. With a partner, act out one of these “2-Minute Advocacy” scenarios. Your facilitator will tell you when two minutes is finished. Then, try another one.

1. You are having coffee in the teachers’ room. A teacher whom you don’t have a chance to talk to often says, “How is the Japanese program going? Do you think kids really can use Japanese around here?” One of you plays the teacher; one of you plays yourself.
2. You are in the school lunch line. A student says to you, “Aren’t you the Japanese teacher? I always watch anime, but I bet Japanese is too difficult for me.” One of you plays the students; one of you plays yourself.
3. You are asked to attend a parent-teacher organization meeting (PTO, PTA, etc.) to talk about the Prom Committee you are on. While you are there, a parent at the donut table asks you if you think her child should take Japanese class. She hasn’t done well in other language classes, but she is really interested in Japan. One of you plays the parent; one of you plays yourself.
4. At a retirement party, you are seated at a table with your principal. During dinner, the conversation turns to the Japanese program. Other people at the table ask you how the program is going. You respond, keeping in mind that your principal is sitting with you. One of you plays yourself as your partner listens to your response from the perspective of both the principal and the others at the table.
5. You are in line at the grocery store. The person behind you notices that you are buying lots of Japanese products. He tells you that he has done a lot of business with Japan through his local company. What would you say to him? One of you plays the businessperson; one of you plays yourself.

*This concept was originally conceived by Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D., of Brigham Young University.*