

For the Common Good

Through member advocacy and bargaining for the common good, educators, parents and communities come together to build stronger, more productive learning environments for our students.

Through negotiating collectively, we help to secure the opportunities our students need and deserve, including well-resourced public schools. By coming together, we can ensure that our schools are addressing the needs of our students, our communities, and our educators.

These are our values:

- We work hard to create a better future for the next generation. By making sure we can come together to negotiate the terms of our work and the learning conditions for our students, we create better schools and classrooms.
- Through negotiating collectively, we can advocate for what our students need, such as safe schools, inviting classrooms and class sizes that enable teachers to connect one-on-one with each student.
- It takes a team, where we have each other's backs, to educate our students. And it also takes a team to make sure we have good school and working conditions for ourselves and our students.
- We negotiate collectively to ensure our students have the tools, time to learn and support they require—including nutrition, health care and after-school programs for those who need them.
- We also negotiate collectively to ensure that we, as professionals, have the resources, mentoring and support we must have to do our jobs well, because that's how we can ensure the success of our students.

When we negotiate for the common good:

- We transform unenforceable campaign promises into enforceable contractual agreements.
- We help our children and strengthen our communities.
- Our collective voice cannot be ignored.

For the Common Good

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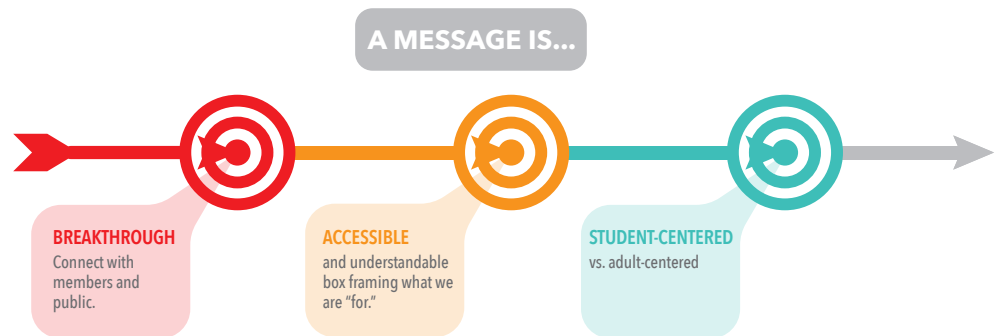
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Kid-centered, Educator Approved: Crafting a Message to Win!

A message is an articulation of our goals and values. It's the way we explain and connect our initiatives to audiences that we need to act, believe and support that work. Because our students' learning conditions are our educators' working conditions, our messages must always champion our support for each students' basic right to a great public school filled with educators who get the respect and compensation due all professionals.



A Message IS

- ...tip of the spear to connect with members and public and break through!
- ...accessible and understandable box—or triangle—to frame what we are "for"
- ...student-centered vs. adult focused

A Message is NOT

- ...catchy, slogan, jingle or tagline
- ..."dumbing down" of an issue
- ...a script

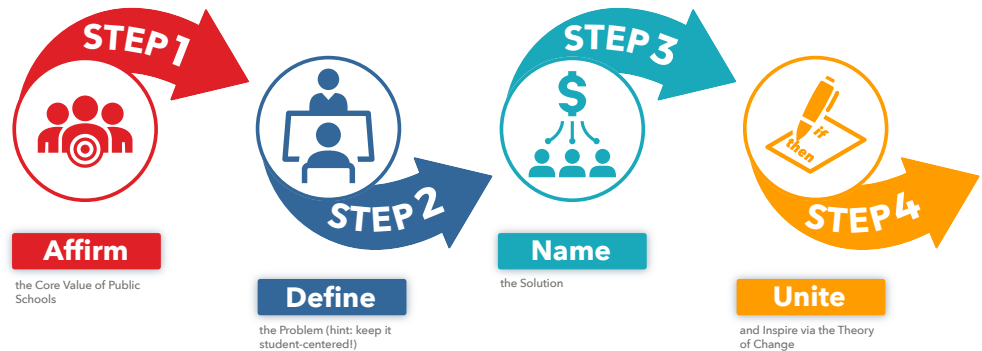
Message DON'Ts

- Be defensive
- Over-clarify
- Get lost in the complexity

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Craft a winning message in 4 steps!

Think about your audience, put yourself in their shoes: Don't assume they care—**make** them care, avoid education jargon, tell stories about real people, focus on impact, not process. Never overestimate knowledge or interest of audience, Act human—**show** empathy.



STEP 1

STEP ONE: Affirm the Core Value of Public Schools

- Lead with the personal: Inspiring students' natural curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn
- Then the societal: critical to ensuring opportunity, maintaining democracy, and essential to competing in 21st century
- Then the role of educators: educators can connect with each child, discover his/her passions, and unlock his/her potential

STEP 2

STEP TWO: Define the Problem (hint: keep it student-centered!)

- Too much focus on standardized tests take up valuable time for learning
- Promoting a love of learning is more important than a test score
- Large classes allow students to slip through the cracks and drop out or graduate unprepared
- Schools in poorer communities lack funding and resources needed to teach our children well—success should not depend on ZIP code

STEP 3

STEP THREE: Name the Solution

- All students deserve fully funded schools that allow educators to connect one-on-one with students
- Well-resourced schools, educators and community support services like nutrition and health for students who need it most
- Classrooms that emphasize curiosity and one-on-one instruction, rather than testing, to inspire students' lifelong love of learning
- Curriculum and standards that encourage critical thinking and creativity

STEP 4

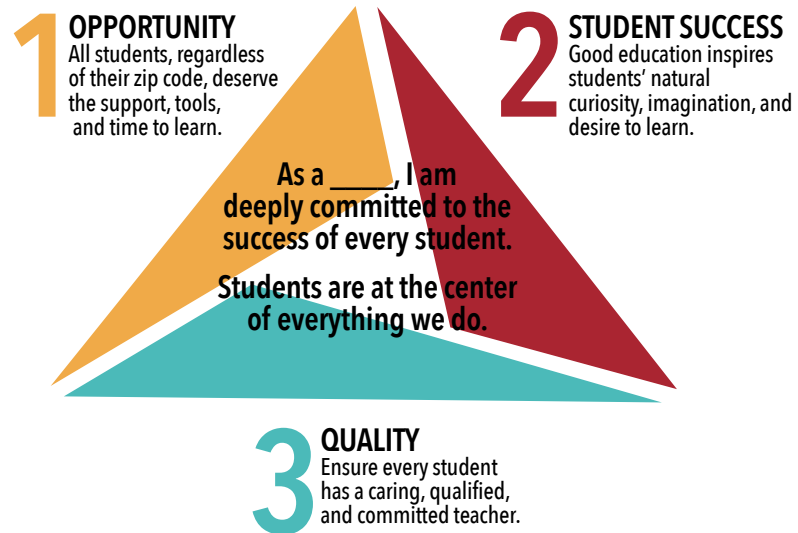
STEP FOUR: Unite and Inspire via the Theory of Change

- A theory of change points to the success that will result from action. It forms the basis for planning, implementation and evaluation
- In short, it's "If X... then Y..."
- IF educators act, ESSA can reduce the number of standardized tests and separate tests from high-stakes accountability systems, THEN we'll get the time and freedom to focus on what matters most: educating our students.
 - "IF we stand up to politicians and special interests THEN we can put an end to the attacks on public education and our profession."

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Use the NEA Message Frame

NEA's message frame is based on extensive research and has shown to speak to supporters, move persuadable and potentially alienate the opposition.



SIDE 1: OPPORTUNITY

All students, regardless of their zip code, deserve the support, tools, & time to learn.

- The chances your child has for success should not depend on winning a charter lottery, affording private school, or living in the right zip code.
- If we're serious about every child's future, let's get serious about doing what works. This means resourcing all schools so students have the support and education support professionals they need, more one-on-one attention, inviting classrooms, and a well-rounded curriculum.
- All students deserve learning opportunities that begin by age 4, safe schools, classes small enough for one-on-one attention and modern [tools/textbooks.]
- All schools should provide community support services like nutrition, health & after school programs for students who need it.
- Resourced public schools that are desirable places to be and learn are our best bet for setting every student in America off toward a great future.

SIDE 2: STUDENT SUCCESS

Good education inspires students' natural curiosity, imagination, and desire to learn.

- Good education inspires students' natural curiosity, imagination, and love of learning. Schools that nurture these values today are growing tomorrow's inventors, thinkers, artists, and leaders.
- As a _____, we set high expectations for all students. Students must learn writing, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through reading, math, history, and science. We encourage creativity through a well-rounded education that includes arts, PE, and music.
- Basic skills are part of the equation but as _____ we also inspire students' natural curiosity and desire to learn. Of all the things we teach our kids, the most important is love of learning.
- School is a place where discovery [childhood] happens.

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- No bubble test can measure a kid's curiosity. So much happens at school that shapes our children's tomorrows, and therefore we must instill a love of learning, foster creativity, and teach critical thinking skills.

SIDE 3: QUALITY

Ensure every student has a caring, qualified, committed teacher.

- Ask educators (or Me or Teachers or _____) why I/they work in schools and most will respond instantly: they believe in children.
- Education isn't just a job, it's a calling. As a _____, I strive to connect with each child, discover his passions, and unlock her potential.
- We must ensure each educator ("professional", or "Teacher", etc.) has the resources, mentoring, and support every professional needs.
- We must create a learning environment with class sizes that enable teachers (or me) to connect one-on-one with each student.
- As trusted professionals, educators (or teachers or I am_) are best equipped to make school and classroom decisions to ensure student success.
- We support approaches that ensure anyone who becomes a teacher enters the classroom ready to reach, teach, and inspire.

NEA MESSAGE FRAME

OPPORTUNITY

- ✓ Gaps
- ✓ Curriculum & Standards
- ✓ Resources
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Local Decision Making
- ✓ School Discipline
- ✓ School Facility (physical plant)
- ✓ Support Services
- ✓ Nutrition & Health

STUDENT SUCCESS

- ✓ Curriculum & Standards
- ✓ Testing
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Staffing
- ✓ School Discipline
- ✓ Early Childhood Ed
- ✓ 21st Century Skills
- ✓ Critical Thinking
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Problem Solving

QUALITY

- ✓ Tenure
- ✓ Salary & Benefits
- ✓ Professional Development
- ✓ Residency & Training
- ✓ Peer Review
- ✓ Retention
- ✓ Teacher Prep



No matter the issue, all messages should lead back to the NEA Message frame

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STOP



Gut check your message!

- Language speaks to “Me” and “My Own”
- Specific with examples
- For example:
 - If parents, talk about “your child”
 - If voters, talk about “your schools”/“our schools”
 - If legislators, talk about “your voters”
 - If prospective members, talk about “your benefits” or “your working conditions”

BONUS



REPLACE	EMBRACE
Education reform	Education improvement/excellence
Measure what matters; rigorous, meaningful evaluations	Love of learning; testing takes time from learning
Invest in classroom priorities	Class sizes that enable one-on-one interaction
Educational equity	Committed to the success of every child
Foundation for student learning; providing basic skills and information	Inspiring natural curiosity, imagination and desire to learn
Inequality	Living in the right zip code
Out of school factors; wrap-around services	Community support services like health and nutrition
Training and professional development	Ensure every educator has development, resources and support

Union contract, collective bargaining	Negotiated contract, negotiate collectively
All/every/always	Some/many/most/often
CEOs do X, bosses are X	A few powerful interests, a handful get richer
Collective action	Coming together in union
Joining a union	Joining in union, standing together in union
Labor union(s), public employee union(s)	Union(s) of working people
Group, group of people	Team, team of people
Workers	Working people, working families
Need a raise, better wages and benefits	Fair return on work, make a good living and have a good life

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Messaging Priorities Tips to succeed

- 1** Lead with values like fairness, family and freedom. Co-opting opposition frames isn't just possible, it's potent.
- 2** Don't lead with or belabor problems. Present solutions, talk about the future and evoke aspirations. Anchor to a well-established good - rather than seeking purely to eliminate a bad.
- 3** Tie collective bargaining and action to the integral role of working people in our communities and country.
- 4** Speak to what humans need for themselves and their families, not simply what they "produce," nor what the economy desires.
- 5** Avoid absolutes both in terms of condemning all bosses or rich people and lauding all working people.
- 6** Give people agency in "coming" or "standing together" as a "team." Don't imply "the union" is a third party, acting for people.
- 7** Emphasize transformational benefits like improving future workplaces not merely transactional gains like current wages and benefits.
- 8** Tap into prevailing sentiment of the economy "out of balance" against working people without making harms so dire that change seems impossible.
- 9** NEW: Talk about people joining together for the common-good.

Putting it all together - tested message that work:

The statements below have been tested and have proven to be the most effective when talking to parents and the public around potential negotiations or bargaining efforts.

Future

America is a nation of strivers. Most of us work hard to create a better future for ourselves and the next generation. And we believe that people who work for a living, ought to earn a living. Something is wrong when millions of Americans are working hard and can't make ends meet. We must join forces to make sure that working people can make a good living and have a good life. By making sure anyone who wants to come together and negotiate the terms of their work has that right recognized, we create better workplaces for ourselves and those that follow. United, we make America work.

Working Families

Everyone knows - family comes first. Whether it's for an elderly parent, a spouse just laid-off or a child who depends on you, being there and providing for those you love isn't negotiable. By protecting anyone's right to stand together, we can secure working conditions that let us spend time with our families while earning enough to support them. We need to eliminate the obstacles put in place that keep us from being able to negotiate about our work and enact standards that value families. Working people deserve to make more than a good living; we deserve to have a good life.

Teamwork - More Perfect Union

It takes a team, where we have each other's backs, to get our country and economy moving forward. That's why we need to come together for a fair return on work, which includes benefits and paid time to be home when our families need us. But today, a few powerful people get even richer from profits we produce, requiring the rest of us to do more with less. By acting as a team, we can change the rules so working Americans can win. What makes America great is our belief in working together toward a more perfect union.

Freedom at Work

In America, we value our freedom. And CEOs are free to negotiate their salaries, benefits and bonuses. Working people deserve the very same freedom: to negotiate the return for the hard work we put in. Working people make up the backbone of our nation, that's why our voices need to be heard and our ideas about improving our own work ought to matter. Those of us doing the work are the ones who know the job inside and out. By coming together, we can set standards that say - people who work for a living, should earn a living. And the people doing the work ought to have the freedom of a say in how it gets done and who benefits from it.

Digital 101

Introduction to Digital

For a long time, our primary way of communicating with members was direct and one-way. These one-way communication methods, like radio, TV, and public relations, allowed us to only broadcast information to audiences, without getting valuable feedback and ideas for improvement.

With the advent of digital and social media, we now have more direct lines of access to our members, and vice versa. Digital platforms are an important tool in our communication toolbox – a tool to be used in concert with offline organizing. Our union’s future will always depend on the personal connections our leadership and staff have to their educators, union members, and their community. With digital integrated into your communications strategy, you can develop deeper relationships, identify new supporters and prospective members, and scale your mobilization efforts where you may otherwise not have a physical presence.

Start with Storytelling

Your digital program should be a storytelling program, full of content that serves a purpose. Compelling stories should be used to form a relationship with your audience and educate them about your key issues. In order to create a clear narrative, think about organizing your content into themes, like human interest stories, education content around key issues, or policy content around legislative moments. Tap into your audience’s emotions. Good storytelling is all about creating an emotional response from your audience. Emotion – more than reason – drives action. The best digital content:

- Tells a story
- Is visually interesting
- Is tailored for each platform
- Is consumable and shareable
- Communicates a theory of change that motivates people to take action

Digital Goal-Setting

Any digital plan should have a clear goal or intended outcome in mind. Before you write an email, set an ad budget, or name a campaign, answer these five questions:

1. Who do you want to reach?
2. What story do you want to tell them?
3. What do you need them to do?
4. What content do you have or need to create?
5. When do you need to see results by?

Digital Best Practices

Follow these best practices to ensure that your digital content is compelling and effective with your audience.

1. **Be conversational.** The tone coming from your website, email, and social channels should align with the way our association speaks about students and public education. You are the face and voice of your affiliate, so when writing for different channels, consider the spirit of your members, students, and community. Remember that on social media, you are next to posts about weddings and babies – social media is the space to be even more personable, entertaining, or relatable than other channels, like a press release or news media.
2. **Communicate regularly.** Be timely. Is there a new school board budget coming up for a vote? News about how recent efforts have reduced the time students spend on testing versus learning? Stay on top of education-related news at the local, state, and national level. Make sure your digital community is the first to know about relevant issues through your channels.
3. **Consider your objective.** Before sharing a post or sending an email, consider what point you are trying to make, what value you are providing, and what action you want your online community to take.
4. **Be thumb-stopping.** It's hard to grab and hold someone's attention online. With your content, be sure to lead with an attention-grabbing phrase. Be concise; boil down your key points to fit within individual posts, rather than asking people to click to read more.
5. **Show, don't tell.** The importance of visual media on social channels is undeniable. Visual media will catch readers' eyes, making it more likely for them to take a moment to read your post. Visual content, like images, videos, graphics, and links, should make up a majority what you share.
6. **Invite participation and action.** User-generated content – photos or text posted by users on social media sites – can play a big role in successful social media channels. Encouraging user-generated content tells your audience that you are interested in hearing their voices. Prompt participation by asking for personal stories or reactions to your content.



A Closer Look at Facebook

Facebook is a platform to foster community and generate action. Make your members feel connected to one another by sharing human-interest stories: how others just like them are overcoming challenges, doing incredible things, and creating a better world. Facebook also drives calls to action, whether that's commenting, signing a petition, or even donating.

- **Make it digestible.** Content like lists, short captions, and photos are more likely to grab a followers' attention. Dense text can often be overlooked. Vary your content types; include a mix of images, articles, actions, graphics, and discussion prompts. Because of Facebook's algorithm, always add content directly to the Facebook (e.g. upload a video vs. posting a link to YouTube) to maximize potential reach.
- **Create a dialogue.** Facebook creates an ecosystem for conversation. Use commenting features like linked comment threads, longer form text boxes, and multimedia within comments to generate thoughtful discussion.
- **Learn about your audience.** Using Facebook's Insights feature, you can figure out

which posts received the most clicks, likes, comments, shares, and overall engagement. Insights will also tell you the demographic breakdown of your followers, the times your followers are most often online, and other data that can help you tailor your content and posting schedule. Replicate and test successful content types, times of day for posting, and more.

- **Balance quality and quantity.** Post 1-2 times on Facebook per day. If something noteworthy occurs, posting more than once a day is fine. Facebook uses an algorithm to determine which posts are seen and when. To make sure your posts are getting in front of your audience, maintain a consistent schedule. Posting too frequently will cause your posts to compete for attention with one another.



A Closer Look at Twitter

Twitter is a peer-to-peer broadcasting platform, where like-minded organizations, journalists, and enthusiasts are looking to connect with each other and have conversations around key topics. Use Twitter to increase visibility for your mission.

- **Connect on a professional level.** Share knowledge unique to you – break news around your association’s efforts and share your point of view on relevant current events. Use the platform to connect with journalists and network with others who are contributing to public education conversations, either locally or at the state or national level.
- **Use hashtags to your advantage.** Hashtags classify and connect related social posts on certain topics. Use hashtags to start a conversation, respond to participants, or join a conversation. For example, #DearBetsy was a popular conversation thread during the DeVos confirmation hearing; #EdChat is the national hashtag used most frequently to discuss education issues. Using hashtags like these will help people who are interested in these topics discover your tweets and your account. Don’t go overboard, though. While tweets with hashtags receive more engagement than tweets without hashtags, engagement drops when two or more hashtags are added to a tweet.
- **Vary your posting times.** Tweet when your audience is likely to be checking their Twitter streams. Try commuting hours, during lunch hours, and even on the weekend. When to tweet which content will depend on who you are trying to reach. Journalists and political staffers are on Twitter during work hours, while members are more likely to check Twitter outside of school hours. Tweet at different hours of the day (and night) to learn when your audience is most receptive. Tweets get buried in users’ streams fairly quickly, so aim to post consistently to keep your channel active.
- **Links increase retweets.** Tweets that contain links receive higher retweet rates than tweets without links. While Twitter is not a primary channel for converting action, think of links like a social media currency: ideas are shared in exchange for favorites, retweets, or even thoughtful discourse. Twitter users are searching for knowledge to absorb and share. Links are the primary means of doing just that.



A Closer Look at Instagram

Instagram is a mobile-based, visual-first platform used to share images, videos, and stories with a community of followers. Instagram rewards engaging and interesting photos and videos above all else. Because it’s hard to drive action off of Instagram, use this channel to build a closer relationship with your supporters by sharing visuals that show the people behind the union – the names, faces, and stories of members, supporters, communities, and students, and the actions they are taking.



- **Focus on the image.** More than any other social platform, Instagram is all about visual media. It does not have to be a professional-level image to perform well. Your content should be authentic. Aim to capture the emotion of a moment, story of a person, or feeling of an event. Captions should complement an image and help explain a story. Whenever possible, keep copy short to avoid having a reader click to read a longer caption.
- **Use hashtags to increase visibility.** Hashtags help classify and collect content on like topics. They also provide an opportunity to reach supporters who are not following your feed. You can create new hashtags for specific campaigns, like #DearBetsy, which was used during Betsy DeVos's confirmation hearing. Or, use hashtags to take part in existing conversations, like #DreamActNow or #EdChat. Using hashtags will help people who are interested in these topics discover your content and your account. Don't go overboard; keep it to 3 - 4 hashtags max per post.
- **Tell a story.** Instagram's Stories feature allows you to post photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. Users view Stories posts in a sequence, making it a great place to weave together pieces of content to create a compelling narrative. Instagram Stories can be used to cover a live event, like a rally or meeting, or to dive into a topic that might be too complex for a single Instagram post. Mix up using photos and videos to keep your story compelling. Layer copy, hashtags, and location tags on top of photos to help explain your story.



A Closer Look at Pinterest

Pinterest is a social media platform that allows users to bookmark and share content in the same way you might add magazine clippings to a pin board. While Pinterest is less widely used than other social channels, it's a very popular channel with teachers, who use the channel to find and save valuable classroom resources. Pinterest is primarily used to find and share creative ideas and is an ideal space for our members and potential members to connect with the union as a valuable resource in the profession; it is usually not an ideal space for explicitly political content.

- **Set up unique boards.** Pinterest allows you to organize content onto different category "boards." These boards allow you to cluster like content together. Boards can be created for different topics, like Classroom Behavior Tips or topics that your affiliate might be focused on, like Justice and Equality in the Classroom. Create a set of boards that work for the content you will be sharing.
- **Curate your content.** Once you have boards created, add content – or pins – to your boards. You can do this by searching Pinterest for content related to your topic and saving those pins to your own board. While searching for relevant content, you can also find other users to follow. Their content will populate in your home feed. You can also add content from around the internet directly to your own Pinterest boards. Add a "pin it" button to your web browser. This button will allow you to save content from other websites directly to Pinterest.



A Closer Look at Email

Email is one of the most effective channels for getting people to take action, whether that's turning people out for an event or gathering petition signatures. Email can also be used to educate supporters on key issues, share moving stories that create community, and open a two-way conversation with members. Because of the ability to engage and motivate sup-

porters, email should be an integral part of any digital campaign.

- **Focus on the basics.** One of the most important factors of email is driving someone to open an email. When creating an email program, focus on compelling subject lines – something intriguing that will get supporters to open. You should also pay attention to the email sender name. Is there a leader in your affiliate who people know well? Use their name to help increase open rates.
- **Keep it friendly.** Keep it brief. When writing emails, avoid language that is overly formal or stuffy. Email, just like other digital channels, is casual in nature. Your email tone should match that style, while remaining professional. Be concise; use only the amount of space needed to make your point. People have short attention spans, so make sure you hit your key points early on.
- **Make your ask.** Make your asks bold and prominent. Bold and underline links so they stand out in the email copy. Don't bury your ask – make sure it's prominently placed in your emails so readers don't have to search for what you want them to do. Don't just ask once; make your ask twice (or three times!) in each email.
- **Explain your theory of change.** A theory of change is an explanation of how you will turn the resources you have into the power you need to change what you want. Readers want to know how and why the action you are asking them to take will create change, and how what you are asking them to do is credibly going to help reach a goal. Make sure to articulate your theory of change. This doesn't have to be in the format of an if/then statement, but make your ask clear and believable.

Measuring the success of your digital program is a fundamental part to running a smart and effective program. By measuring your success, you can see what works well, and adjust what does not. Reviewing measurement data will also allow you to determine how to best spend your time in future campaigns.

In reviewing metrics, it's important to focus on the right data – data that maps back to specific objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs). When looking at data, avoid vanity metrics – those data points that look good on the surface, but don't tell you about how people are engaging with your content. Vanity metrics include things like total list size or impressions. Instead, focus on the metrics that tell the real story. These include:

- Audience Growth: How many people you reach.
- Engagement: How your content activates and inspires users.
- Amplification: How well your content is being promoted and shared.
- Conversion: How effective your content is at getting people to take action.

Audience Growth: As you execute your digital program, it's important to grow your audience. The bigger your audience, the more potential there is of people seeing your content, engaging with your content, or taking action off of your content. These are numbers that should be monitored for growth over time. Key metrics to look at include:

- Facebook: Followers
- Twitter: Followers
- Instagram: Followers
- Pinterest: Reach
- Email: List growth

Engagement: Engagement rates are the best way to measure the overall quality and effectiveness of your social content. They look at how people are liking, commenting, or sharing your content. Engagement numbers can be calculated on a per-post basis, or in aggregate over a period of time for each channel. Engagement metrics to look at include:

- Facebook: Engagement rate
- Twitter: Engagement rate
- Instagram: Engagement rate
- Email: Click-through rate

Amplification: Amplification metrics give you an understanding of the reach and awareness of your content. People who are deeply engaged with your content are more likely to share or repost your content, helping to grow your audience over time. The metrics to look at include:

- Facebook: Shares
- Twitter: Retweet rate
- Pinterest: Repins

Conversion: Any time the goal of your content is to drive people off of a social platform to take an action, the key measure of success is conversion rate. Whether driving email sign-ups, phone calls, or petition signatures, measure success by looking at how well you're able to convert people to take your action.

- **For email**, conversion rate can be calculated by measuring the number of people who complete a desired action, and dividing this by EITHER the total number of recipients or the total number of unique clicks. Conversion is calculated differently depending on the platform you're using for your mass mailer.
- You can also use **Google Analytics** to measure website conversions. By setting up Goals in Google Analytics, you can measure how well your site fulfills your target objectives. A goal represents a completed activity, called a conversion. An example of a goal is submitting contact information on a form. Having properly configured goals allows Google Analytics to report on critical information, such as the number of conversions and the conversion rate for your site.

Glossary of Terms

Theory of Change

A theory of change is an explanation of how you will turn the resources you have into the power you need to create the change you want. Readers want to know how and why the action you are asking them to take will create change.

Hashtag

A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the “#” sign. #Hashtags are a simple way to mark the topic (or topics) of social media messages and make them discoverable to people with shared interests. On most social networks, clicking a hashtag will reveal all the public and recently published messages that also contain that hashtag.

Retweet

A reposted or forwarded message on Twitter.

Instagram Story

Instagram Story is a way of sharing photos and videos with your followers. Stories disappear from your profile after 24 hours, unless you add it as a highlight to your profile. To share a photo or video to your story using the Instagram app, tap in the top left of your screen or swipe right from anywhere in Feed.

Conversion Rate

How many people convert on an action, divided by the number of people asked to take the action. This rate gives you a sense of how well people are engaging with your ask.

Vanity Metrics

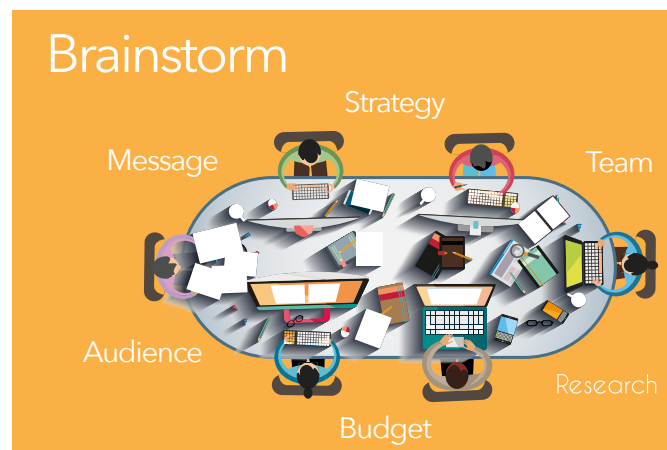
Vanity Metrics are data points that give you a surface-level view of your digital media performance, but don't provide an accurate view of how people are engaging with your content. Vanity metrics include things like total list size or impressions. Instead, focus on the metrics that tell the real story.

Tips for Successful Videos

Using video to tell your story can be both powerful and strategic. We know that people love to watch videos. But with more than 300 hours of video uploaded to YouTube every minute, there's a lot of competition out there! How do you make sure your message is heard among the noise? Try to keep some of these tips in mind the next time you're planning to shoot a video.

Before you shoot even a second of video, sit down and do some soul searching.

- **Is video the best tool for your message?** Video is often used because it can be, not because it should be. Use video for its strengths. Video is excellent at things like action, emotion and detail. It's unlikely that viewers will stick around for videos that are just about numbers, trainings and meetings.
- **What is your specific message?** Depending on the length of the video, you should have one to three messages, at most, for maximum impact. Don't use video to try to tell every single thing.
- **Who is your audience?** Be specific and target the audience accordingly.
- **What do you want your audience to do?** Are you informing people, inspiring them, or calling them to act? If it's a call to action, include the ask at the end of the video with links to make it easier for the viewer to fulfill your request.
- **What is your plan to get people to watch the video?** Set aside money for advertising, work with partners to promote the video, and prepare your website and landing page to host the video and handle any increased traffic.



Tips for Successful Videos

Use these tips to make your videos compelling.

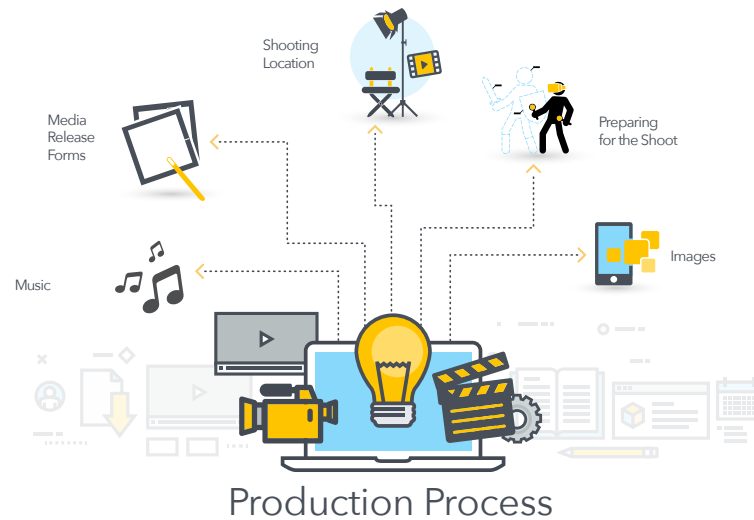
- **Keep it short!** Sixty to 90 seconds is the ideal length. Any longer and people will lose interest.
- **Keep it simple!** Don't clutter your video with multiple messages. Avoid education jargon. Don't assume your viewer has in-depth knowledge of the subject matter. Use the NEA's National Message Guide for assistance in getting your points across.
- **Keep it personal!** Facts don't convince people, stories do. Tell a compelling story and people will want to watch it. Use interview clips to convey emotion or an opinion, not rattle off a list of facts and statistics.
- **Keep the viewer's attention!** Put your best video and sound up front to grab the viewer. After you hook them, proceed to a brief introduction of the topic and characters and then build to a climax, challenge or issue that needs to be overcome. Finally, reveal the resolution and call to action.
- **Keep it interesting!** Talking heads are boring. Use multiple cameras to get different angles during the interview. Shoot compelling b-roll, which is the supplemental or alternative footage that accompanies the interviews. And use graphics and music in the edit, but be sure they are royalty-free and clear for use to avoid any legal or copyright issues.
- **Keep it clean!** Great pictures aren't enough to keep a viewer engaged. You must also have great sound. Make sure you use an external microphone for any interviews or hire an audio person. Shoot the interview in space that is free from noise and echoes. Also, use a tripod to keep your video stable and distraction-free.
- **Keep it student-focused!** We are an association of educators, and that means students are at the center of everything we do. Whatever the message of your video, make sure it connects to students.



Tips for Successful Videos

Your video plan should include ways to reach people watching on their mobile phones.

- If there's a social media component to your viewership plan, make sure you are producing a product that sticks to that platform's designated run times for video.
- Place the words on the screen if people are talking, so viewers can follow along. Many people watch videos on their phones without sound. Be careful that your font size is not too big, too small, or distracting. Make it easy to reach the most people.
- Avoid flashy swish pans and zooms, which look horrible on mobile phones.
- Test the video by watching it on your phone before you release it broadly.
- If you're shooting video on your phone, you still need an external microphone and tripod or something to stabilize the device. Lastly, be sure to shoot holding the phone horizontally, not vertically. A vertical shoot will give you unsightly black spaces on either side of the video.



Media Relations 101

Media relations is an opportunity to advocate for our students and profession in a bigger more impactful way. Consider it another mobilization tool, one that helps us reach members, parents, elected officials and the community.

The good news is because educators are consistently ranked among the highest-respected professionals, we're both a source and a (RE)source for the media. But media outreach isn't what it used to be. Today's newsrooms are smaller than ever. Budgets are dwindling. Reporters are expected to produce more stories, cover more beats, maintain a social media presence—and, sometimes, produce their own video and keep a blog, too. The best way to break through the noise and clutter journalists face regularly is to demonstrate respect for their time by being intentional about when and how you reach out.

Here are some basics:

I. Get to know your media landscape.

MAINSTREAM outlets will largely take a “straight news” reporting approach—but stay on top of recent coverage to get the best sense of where the outlet leans on your issues. Caution: “straight news” does not always mean fair and accurate.

FRIENDLY outlets include progressive or left-leaning publications or websites like Think-Progress or, usually, your local alt-weekly. Attribution rules and interview best practices still stand for interviews with these outlets. A pro of these types of outlets? Friendly reporters who don't need convincing on the basics.

NICHE media covers a distinct, narrow topic, and generally does so with an insider or technical tone. This can include industry press like pedagogy journals, education-specific trade publications, or parenting blogs. Niche reporters generally gravitate towards a higher level of detail and tend to write more in-depth stories that are tailored for a very specific—rather than more general—audience.

OPPOSITION media—like national Fox News, the Wall Street Journal, the 74, or decidedly right-wing media—is an uphill battle. When talking to opposition media, stick to your practiced, core messaging and don't get distracted or flustered. Most of the time, it's actually not worth pro-actively engaging with these outlets (chances are your pitch will be skewed and distorted to fit their agendas), but if they show up to a public event, you can't avoid them. NEVER turn them away or kick them out, unless they're being disruptive.

II. Build your media list

In addition to education reporters, your press list should include reporters who cover areas aka “beats” related to our issues—e.g., politics or policy, legal or courts, parenting and/or family, including features and human interest, culture or social issues or opinion. Identifying and categorizing all outlets and reporters by beat is how you tailor your pitch. For example, use policy research and language when talking to political and state house reporters. Include details on legal precedent and specific cases and complaints when reaching out to legal or court reporters. Provide a human-interest angle by having a compelling spokesperson when pitching local general-assignment reporters.

And don't forget about local “opinion leaders” like hometown paper columnists and editorial boards. If they are sympathetic to your cause, they can be important targets to influence and share your side of the story.



What's your Super 7??

Local press outreach has a simple foundation in seven general types of outlets present in just about every local media market.

Start your press list by identifying the email and phone number for the news/assignment desks at your market's outlets below. Round out the list with names of news/assignment editors and reporters who cover the appropriate beats.

- 1) Top print newspaper(s) and/or online news aggregator
- 2) Local ABC affiliate
- 3) Local NBC affiliate
- 4) Local CBS affiliate
- 5) Local Fox affiliate
- 6) Local/state AP bureau
- 7) NPR and/or local talk radio

III. Craft your pitch

Pitching—presenting a story idea, spokesperson, or perspective—to a reporter is as much an art as it is a science. Here are four ways to get your pitch to the top of the pile!

1. Define your goal and audience
 - Who are you ultimately trying to reach?
 - Where do they get their news?
 - What are you trying to accomplish?

2. Get to know your targets
 - What have your target reporters written already?
 - Why should they care now, based on what they've paid attention to before?
 - Does your target know who you are?
3. Think like an editor, but like a campaign director
 - Is your story timely?
 - Is your story newsworthy?
 - Is your story well supported?
4. Be in the news cycle
 - Does a narrative exist that you can tap into, either by being timely or adding nuance or a different perspective?
 - Are you responding fast enough?
 - Are you credible on the issue/angle?
 - Are you well connected and well informed?

IV. Outreach the right medium, the right way

Different stories appeal to different types of media. For instance, the needs and interests of print reporters are different than those of TV producers or radio hosts—so modify your outreach accordingly.

Television

- Local television reporters and producers have a small window (usually under a minute) to tell a visual story. When pitching television, keep the narrative arc of your story succinct and clear.
- Television reporters and producers are drawn to visuals for stories, so highlight those elements in your pitch. For example, when pitching a rally you're organizing to a local broadcast station, include details like how many people are gathering for the rally, information about protest signs or creative displays, and biographical information on any speakers.
- Generally speaking, don't call assignment editors more than two days in advance.
- If you're calling the day ahead of your event, call between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. (but not in the hour before a noon broadcast).
- On the day of your event, call the assignment desk early to make sure you're on their schedule.

Radio

- Like TV reporters, radio reporters have limited time to tell a compelling story. Keep messaging succinct and clear and balance broad strokes with important differentiating details.
- Radio reporters have similar needs to print reporters, but you'll want to coordinate to ensure they're able to capture necessary sound recordings. That can mean getting their recorders near the microphone during a speaking program or having a quiet space to the side of an event or rally where they can conduct one-on-one interviews.
- Call assignment desks early and because schedules can vary, research the best time for contacting individual reporters.
- If the reporter is not available for the event, offer taped interviews.

Online/Print

- Print media outlets and their reporters are always looking for a compelling narrative arc for their stories. What's the conflict, who are the primary actors, what interesting factors are involved, and how does the story impact people's lives?
- When dealing with a reporter for a traditional print outlet (like your local newspaper), remember that online coverage doesn't guarantee your story will be included in the final printed edition.
- Don't forget about regular blogs your local paper hosts online when targeting reporters and crafting pitches.
- Call a print newsroom between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when reporters are at their desks and not yet working against an afternoon or evening deadline.
- When pursuing local print or online media coverage, always have a specific local interest—whether that's local spokespeople or compelling detail of specific local impact.
- If you're pitching an event, pitch at least one day before, though calling two days before is fine if you send a reminder email or call to confirm the morning of your event.

V. Be prepared with the right materials

There are a few basic press materials that you should get familiar with to maintain your credibility with reporters and deliver the information in a way that's most likely to be used and remembered.

Talking points: Before big interviews or press events, prepare a set of basic talking points. These should include the messages you want to get across and the evidence or stories you're using to convey those messages. They should fit on one page and be formatted in short, simple sentences. Don't have more than five to ten talking points, or you'll significantly reduce the chance you'll remember your most important points.

Media advisory: An invitation to an event; keep it short; include the who, what, when, where, and why of the event; provide context and contact information

Press release: Provide the details of the story you want written; summarize and supplement reporting for the journalist; lead with the good stuff; don't forget your boilerplate (a short, standard "about" sentence or two describing your organization)

Statement: The quote you'd want reporters to include in their story about breaking news; keep it short; include links or bullet points on any necessary context, especially on previous work related to the topic of the statement

Opeds: Be timely and have a lively tone; tailor your message to your audience; be strategic about your byline; know the outlet's guidelines & limits; check recent opeds run by the outlet to make sure you're not repeating a similar argument

Letters to the editor: Present a single counterpoint to problematic reporting or commentary; letter should only be 2-3 sentences; best when used as rapid response, within one or two days of the initial report you're responding to.

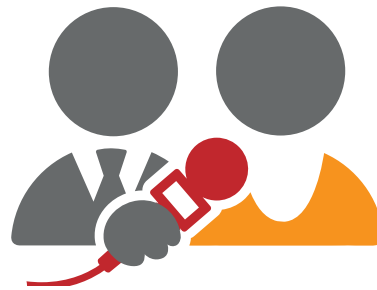
MEDIA RELATIONS 2.0: Building Meaningful Relationships with Reporters

Building meaningful relationships with reporters will increase your ability to provide crucial background information and land stories at important moments. Reporters are busy, so you need to walk the fine line between being a presence in their research and reporting without being distracting or unreasonably demanding.

Here are a few simple ways to help position yourself as a valuable source without alienating reporters:

- Control access to reporters. Identify who on your team is going to interface with reporters, and limit that role to one or two people whenever possible. This will help keep your message consistent and will limit the possibility for crossed wires.
- Make sure your relationship isn't entirely transactional. If you're cold-calling or cold-emailing a reporter only when you want them to write a story, chances are you're not going to get many stories. Identify your primary targets and make sure you're in semi-regular contact with them, even when you're not pitching a specific story for coverage.
- Standardize your primary spokespeople. Develop a core stable of spokespeople so that you can cultivate relationships with reporters and develop a voice. Having a new spokesperson for every pitch will likely lessen your credibility, as a reporter will need to be convinced of each person's credentials with every pitch. Your spokespeople may be different than the people regularly interfacing with press.
- Follow their work closely. Make sure you know what reporters have worked on recently so that you don't wind up pitching them a story they already wrote. Get a sense of what interests them and what angles their coverage takes, and then include related details in your pitches [SUGGEST HYPERLINK to "Media Relations 101"] so that you're more likely to pique the reporter's interest.
- Meet in person. Meeting in person and having a conversation about something new that you're working on or what you've got coming up can help hook a reporter and increase the odds that reporters will proactively come to you as a source. Try to schedule coffee or lunch or a meeting during downtimes, like just before a legislative session or late in the week. Be flexible with a reporter's schedule and recognize that the reporter might have to cancel last minute depending on coverage needs and deadlines.
- Be a resource and help them do their jobs. Stay on top of new research, maintain a responsive message, and be open to having conversations on background when asked, without expecting to be quoted or directly sourced in a piece. Remember that a reporter's credibility is on the line with every story he or she writes, so take care to make sure the information you relay during interviews is accurate. With reporters, lost trust is hard to get back.

Media Relations 2.0 – Building Meaningful Relationships with Reporters



PRO TIPS: When talking with a reporter, either over coffee on background or over the phone on the record, keep the following in mind:

- Never make anything up. If you don't know the answer to a question—especially if you're not doing a live broadcast spot—offer to get back to the reporter with the information.
- Remember: It's your job to deliver your message, not necessarily answer the reporter's question.[SUGGEST HYPERLINK to "Bridge and Pivot"]
- Avoid insider jargon or acronyms that only your team and allies know.
- Reinforce your message with statistics, stories, and sound bites.
- When on the record, especially with radio or television reporters, speak in short sentences with pauses in between statements. Avoid compound constructions with multiple clauses.
- Repeat, repeat, repeat your core message(s).
- Practice succinctly delivering your message before your interview.
- Prepare answers for—and practice responding to—tough questions you can anticipate ahead of your interview or conversation.
- Don't talk to fill silence.
- Don't think that overwhelming subject mastery is necessary to be effective.

MEDIA RELATIONS 2.0: Navigate Interviews Like a Pro

Building on the basics of media relations [SUGGEST HYPERLINK TO “Media Relations 101”], taking your media outreach to the next level means mastering the art of the interview. In trying to tell a compelling story, media tend to build in elements of:

- Simplicity (especially TV and radio)
- Change—better or worse
- Conflict, drama, tension
- Proximity (local angle)
- Wrongdoing
- Feel-good themes
- Timeliness

Interviews are one way they look to incorporate these elements. So in addition to having a winning message [SUGGEST HYPERLINK to “Crafting A Message that Wins!”], you must also fortify your interview skills. Doing so means our voices are heard, no matter the circumstance, no matter the story. So even when a story is slanted or negative, it’s clear to see the Association speaking up for students, the profession, and public education.

Here’s how you navigate interviews like a pro.

Media calls: What to do

- Tell them you are going into a meeting and you need to call them back.
- Before hanging up, start interviewing them!
 - Ask them what they’re working on, specifically the angle.
 - Get their deadline.
- Contact your local/state affiliate for guidance.
- Do your research.
 - Is this a legitimate media outlet? Are they “friendly”?
 - What stories has the reporter recently done?
 - Does your local/state affiliate or NEA have a position? Don’t forget Association web sites!
 - Do you have talking points based on the NEA message frame? [SUGGEST HYPERLINK TO “Crafting A Message that Wins!”]

Before the interview:

- Determine whether or not you should do the interview.
- Are you the right person?
- Who is the best spokesperson for this particular issue area?
- Who is best to represent your workplace or organization?
- Anticipate and prepare for questions.
- Have water handy.
- Use your smart phone to record your interviews.
- You have a record of what you actually said.
- You’ll learn from your experience and it will help you in future interviews.

MEDIA RELATIONS 2.0: Navigate Interviews Like a Pro

Nail the interview

- Communicate to audiences, not reporters.
- Get across the points you think are important regardless of the question [SUGGEST HYPERLINK to “Bridge and Pivot”].
- Feel free to ask questions to reporter.
- Pause before you speak if necessary to collect your thoughts.
- Stick to what you know (don’t lie or guess).
- Don’t let emotion rule your response.
- In person? Give materials.
- Not in person? Use your notes.

Message **DON'Ts**

- Be defensive
- Over-clarify
- Get lost in the complexity

Know the Top 11 common reporter techniques

Be ready for ways reporters can trip you up and prevent you from delivering your message!

- Hypothetical
- Not the Expert
- False Facts
- Phantom Authority
- Dart Thrower
- Machine Gun
- The Interrupter
- Paraphrase
- Negative Questions
- A or B
- Silence



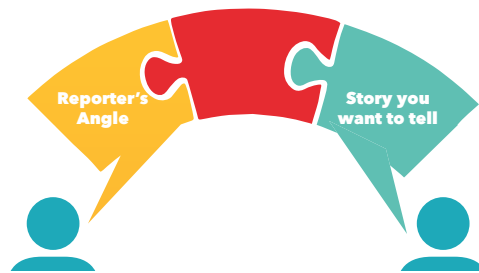
Put Yourself in the Audience’s Shoes
Don’t assume they care—make them care.
Avoid education jargon.
Tell stories about real people.
Focus on impact, not process.
Never overestimate knowledge or interest of audience.
Act human—show empathy.

MEDIA RELATIONS 2.0: Bridge and Pivot

Even the most well-intentioned reporter has an angle. Sometimes it's on par, sometimes it's in conflict with our goals. Linking the two is the art of bridging. Also referred to as pivoting, the concept is the path **between the story they want to tell and the message you want to deliver**. It's not rocket science, but nor is it easy as pie. It's an art and skill that once honed, will prove valuable in a host of situations—including media relations.

Five Principles for Pivoting

1. It is the opposition's job to say bad things about you. Don't do it for them.
2. DO NOT go in reverse. The opposition gave the "negative"... it's very important to move forward.
3. Move over to your message using a bridge.
4. Pivot: Answer the question you want to answer.
5. Restate and redefine the line of questioning using bridges.



Pivot to Safer Ground: 18 Phrases for Bridging Between Their Bad Question and Your Right Message

The bottom line is...

What I really want your viewers/readers/listeners to remember is...

The best part about this issue is...

Three key points are...

We really need to stay focused on the main point which is...

That's a good point, but I think your audience would be interested in knowing that...

While _____ is certainly important, don't forget that _____ is...

That's an important point because...

What's important to remember, however, is...

What I really want to talk with you about is...

What's most important here is...

Typically, here's what happens...

Before we get off on that topic, let me add...

That's not my area of expertise, but I can tell you...

I see your point, but let me add...

Look, the bottom line is...

Here's what our members/educators are doing about that...