EDTRUST PRESENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIERCE ADVOCACY

A WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES FOR EDUCATORS OF COLOR

Crafting Effective Messaging to Reach Your Target Audience

FEBRUARY 26, 2024
MONDAY
AT 06.00 PM - 07.00 PM ET

REGISTER ON ZOOM

MORE INFORMATION:
@edtrust  @edtrust  www.edtrust.org
While We Wait: Introduce Yourself!

1. What is your name, pronouns, position?
2. Where are you coming from?
3. On a scale of 1-9, how are you feeling today?
Allow us to introduce ourselves:

Communications Manager, Partnerships & Engagement
Former middle school math teacher in Texas

Associate, Partnerships & Engagement
Former early childhood education teacher
Our speakers today:

Qubitah Huddleston
Policy Lead, Equitable School Funding, EdTrust

Shayna Levitan
P-12 Policy Analyst, EdTrust
Whether speaking to policymakers, reporters, or district leaders, knowing your audience is essential when crafting and relaying your message. Teachers can influence and move people to action when they communicate their message clearly and with urgency. In this session, advocates will learn the elements of what creates an effective message, ways to relay this message to a target audience, and leave with their own key messages around an issue topic.

We hope these trainings will allow you to:

1. Build your communications skills & toolkit so you can go back to your school communities with next steps to advocate loudly for your students
2. Help connect you with people and resources to learn more about effective messaging and advocacy
3. Build your confidence and a support system with other like-minded educators to advance equity in education
Norms to keep in mind

- Assume best intentions
- Open mind
- Be present
- Speak your truth
- Listen to understand
- Focus on solutions
AGENDA FOR TODAY

• Introductions (5 mins)
• Elements of Effective Messaging (5 – 10 mins)
• Targeted Advocacy: Ways Effective Messaging Can Have an Impact (5 – 10 mins)
• ARE Case Making Deck Presentation (10-15 mins)
• Create Your Own Messaging (10 mins)
• Wrap up and Next Steps Towards Action (5 mins)
MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

- Know your audience!
- Keep your message simple!
- Make an Emotional Connection!
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE</th>
<th>MAKE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION</th>
<th>KEEP YOUR MESSAGE SIMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Who is your audience?</td>
<td>• Don’t just use statistics. Describe how the work you are doing impacts students</td>
<td>• Your key messages need to be short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Policymakers? District leaders?</td>
<td>• Create an emotional response for the reader. (MAKE THEM CARE)</td>
<td>• They often just need to describe the main idea of your advocacy point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education Advocates?</td>
<td>• Use real stories about the children we serve and highlight the urgency in addressing inequities.</td>
<td>• Easy-to-remember, easy-to-quote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents and families?</td>
<td>• Tell your personal story</td>
<td>• Think of what you would say in a tweet (soundbite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What publication(s)/platform does your audience read/use?</td>
<td>• Why do you care about this issue? Did you have a similar experience being underserved in school?</td>
<td>• Avoid Jargon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Education Week/Seattle Times</td>
<td>• How does this impact you as a parent/teacher/advocate?</td>
<td>• Do not use education speak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Media (age range/demographic)</td>
<td>• Ultimately who are the voices and stories of people on the ground being affected and how can you lift those voices and stories to move people to act</td>
<td>• Use asset-based, accessible language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legislative hearings/school board meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>• What does your audience care about?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Start with what they value (think of power mapping)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Connect their values with your advocacy message</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Developing your Message Triangle:

Key Message Points

What do you want your audience to know?

- Develop a maximum of Three Key Message Points, each with supporting proof.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proof point #1</th>
<th>Proof Point #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Key Message</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Structured specifically for social change and advocacy messages: provides a structure to frame issues in a way that resonates with people’s core values, makes the message personal, and can be tailored to a specific audience.

- Helps identify and home in on 1 core message and 3 supporting, key messages that are compelling, credible, and concise.

- Offers structural focus but is not intended as a script.

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**Your core message is the North Star message you are trying to get across.**

Your 3 key messages should be designed to move your audience toward your objective.
Advocacy Opportunities for Impact

- Blog/Op-Eds
- Letters to the Editor
- Sign on letters
- Emailing your state representatives
- Written/verbal testimony for legislative hearings or school board meetings
- Social Media
- Media Interviews
Example of Targeted Advocacy for Impact

School Board or District Administration

**Board determines the WHAT**

**Governs**

The Board establishes policies and fiscal practices in line with that vision and direction.

- Policymaking
- Budget
- Curriculum, including textbooks

**Administration determines the HOW Manages**

The Administration is responsible for allocating resources and managing the day-to-day operations of the district.

- Practice and procedure
- IEP implementation
- Parent/Family engagement
In this policy, there's a section on Walnut Hills High School that says, "Any student who passes the College Preparatory Test shall be admitted to the College Preparatory program on application for enrollment."

If you don't believe that a test score is the best way to admit students, you should take your proposal outlining different admission to the ____________.
Advocate in Action! Advocacy for Impact
Qubilah Huddleston, Policy Lead Equitable School Funding, EdTrust

- **Op-ed:** How K12 leaders can lobby states to support students beyond ESSER deadline *(District Administration)*
- **Blog:** District Budget Woes Likely Means School Closures: Here’s What Advocates Need to Know *(EdTrust)*
- **Letter to the Editor:** Even equal education funding is not enough *(Washington Post)*
- **Media Interviews:**
  - DCPS proposed budget cuts school funding
  - Report calls on Delaware to update 80-year-old school funding system
So where do I start?

Remember you are the expert! Your experience and advocacy matters as an educator.

1. Find an issue you are passionate about

2. Identify who has the power to create change

3. Develop your key messages

4. Find an opportunity to share and make an impact
Leveraging ARE Casemaking Decks for Advocacy
Shayna Levitan, P-12 Policy Analyst, EdTrust
Learn about the 10 dimensions
The Education Combination paper introduces our framework and outlines each dimension.

Dig deeper
Consider underlying causes of challenges.

Assess strengths & weaknesses
Understand the current state of education resource equity by assessing both Foundations of Excellence & Equitable Access.

Identify decision-makers
Determine WHO should be the target of advocacy efforts.

Make the case
Develop compelling messaging to address resource inequities in your community.
Your voice is important, and a necessary part of conversations on advancing equity in our schools.

• The Alliance for Resource Equity "Casemaking Decks" help you to leverage your story and your community's data to “make the case” for why it is necessary to address existing educational inequities in your community.

• Use these decks as a jumping-off point to further craft, refine, and practice your messaging

• Provides suggested metrics, additional resources, and message templates.
ARE Casemaking Decks Help You...

AVOID THIS:

AND DO THIS:
Developing your Message Triangle:

Key Message Points

- What do you want your audience to know?

- Develop a maximum of Three Key Message Points, each with supporting proof.

1st Key Message

- Proof point #1
- Proof point #2

2nd Key Message

- Proof point #1
- Proof point #2

3rd Key Message

- Proof point #1
- Proof point #2

Message Triangle Fast Facts

- Based on the principle that it is easier to visualize an image than it is to memorize a lot of words.

- Structured specifically for social change and advocacy messages: provides a structure to frame issues in a way that resonates with people's core values, makes the message personal, and can be tailored to a specific audience.

- Helps identify and hone in on 1 core message and 3 supporting, key messages that are compelling, credible, and concise.

- Offers structural focus but is not intended as a script.

Your core message is the North Star message you are trying to get across.

Your 3 key messages should be designed to move your audience toward your objective.
Creating a Message Triangle to Tell Your District’s Story

Review Key Questions
Review the Alliance for Resource Equity’s Key Questions on Positive, Inviting School Climate:

- **Key Question 6.1**: Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?
- **Key Question 6.2**: Does each student have positive relationships with staff and other students?
- **Key Question 6.3**: Does each student have access to effective social-emotional learning opportunities?
- **Key Question 6.4**: Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages families?

Identify your “North Star” or Core Message
Determine what you want to communicate. What is the underlying vision?

- Consider reiterating the Alliance for Resource Equity’s vision:

  Each student has a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment at school, including fair and consistent rules and discipline policies, positive relationships with staff and students that foster belonging, effective social-emotional learning opportunities, and meaningful family engagement that meets students’ needs, so all students can reach high standards and thrive.

Support Messages With Data
Use available data to form 2 messages that outline the problem and its impact or relevance.

- See Appendix A for list of data metrics.
- Prepare a powerful data metric, soundbite, and narrative for your key messages.

Create a Call to Action
The last key message should prompt people to act.

- What action are you requesting from your district?
- What is the most immediate next step?
- What do you want your audience to do?
Start by analyzing metrics (Appendix A) to help answer the key question in the dimension. For instance, looking at the % of suspended/expelled students by school poverty level and by % who are students of color could help determine the answer to Key Question 6.1: “Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?”
**Forming Key Messages 101**

Start by analyzing metrics (Appendix A) to help answer the key question in the dimension. For instance, looking at the % of suspended/expelled students by school poverty level and by % who are students of color could help determine the answer to Key Question 6.1: “Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Question</th>
<th>Data Metric</th>
<th>Data Notes</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 6.1</td>
<td>% of students suspended/expelled by race/ethnicity, special education status, and economic status</td>
<td>NCES data includes suspensions and expulsions. Depending on your district’s context, you could consider them separately or together. For messaging purposes, together is likely easier.</td>
<td>Urban Institute/NCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 6.2</td>
<td>Number of total reported “offenses” (such as incidents of physical fights, sexual assault, or attacks with weapons) by school and scatterplot comparison between rate of incidents by school (x-axis) and proportion of students of color or students from low-income backgrounds attending each school (y-axis).</td>
<td>While there are many factors that contribute to chronic student absences, this measure provides an important snapshot of the strength of relationships and sense of belonging for a student at school.</td>
<td>Urban Institute/NCES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 6.3</td>
<td>% of students that report having access to social-emotional learning opportunities, by race/ethnicity status, school poverty level, and school type (elementary, middle, high).</td>
<td>No federal data sources here. Your district or state may have publicly available student survey data that can help answer this question. Check DOE school report card.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Question 6.4</td>
<td>% of families that report feeling engaged by their school, by race/ethnicity status, school poverty level, and school type (elementary, middle, high).</td>
<td>No federal data sources here. Your district or state may have publicly available family survey data. Consider also looking at the availability of parent responses (including in multiple languages) that are available on school/district websites.</td>
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Forming Key Messages 101

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2. Consider the available data points. What story do they tell? How directly do they speak to the issue? Let’s suppose we learn that Black students and students from low-income backgrounds are suspended and expelled at significantly higher rates than their White and more affluent peers. We can use these data points to inform our key messages.
Forming Key Messages 101

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   Let’s suppose we learn that Black students and students from low-income backgrounds are suspended and expelled at significantly higher rates than their White and more affluent peers. We can use these data points to inform our key messages.

3. Solidify the message.
   - **Key Message 1 identifies the issue:** “Schools with more students of color and students from low-income backgrounds suspend and expel students at higher rates than Whiter, more affluent schools.”
   - **Key Message 2 explains why this matters:** “Stringent discipline policies result in missed learning opportunities and harm students’ sense of belonging in school.”
   - **Key Message 3 advances a call to action:** “Our district must prioritize racially and culturally conscious approaches to discipline instead of continuing to invest in harmful, zero-sum practices.”
Forming Key Messages 101

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Consider the available data points.

What story do they tell? How directly do they speak to the issue?

Let’s suppose we learn that Black students and students from low-income backgrounds are suspended and expelled at significantly higher rates than their White and more affluent peers. We can use these data points to inform our key messages.

Solidify the message.

1. Key Message 1 identifies the issue: “Schools with more students of color and students from low-income backgrounds suspend and expel students at higher rates than Whiter, more affluent schools.”
2. Key Message 2 explains why this matters: “Stringent discipline policies result in missed learning opportunities and harm students’ sense of belonging in school.”
3. Key Message 3 advances a call to action: “Our district must prioritize racially and culturally conscious approaches to discipline instead of continuing to invest in harmful, zero-sum practices.”

Use additional elements to support each of your key messages. For Key Message 1, this could look like:

1. An illustrative data metric: “On average, Black students are suspended and expelled at twice the rate of their White peers in the district, and schools with higher proportions of students from low-income backgrounds have significantly higher rates of suspension/expulsion than more affluent schools.”
2. A punchy soundbite to use for an interview: “Stringent discipline practices disproportionately impact our students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, removing them from the classroom and restricting their ability to receive instruction.”
3. A powerful narrative element: Share an example of how a suspension or expulsion made it harder for a student to catch up on missed instruction.”
District X Example

Key Message 1
Schools with more students of color and students from low-income backgrounds suspend and expel students at higher rates as compared to Whiter, more affluent schools.

DATA METRIC: On average, Black students are suspended and expelled at double the rate of their White peers in the district, and schools with higher proportions of students from low-income backgrounds have significantly higher suspension/expulsion rates than more affluent schools.

SOUNDBITE: “Stringent discipline practices disproportionately impact our students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, removing them from the classroom and restricting their ability to receive instruction.”

NARRATIVE: Share an example of how a suspension or expulsion made it harder for a student to catch up on missed instruction.

Key Message 2
Stringent discipline policies create missed learning opportunities and harm students’ sense of belonging in school.

DATA METRIC: Studies indicate that overuse of strict disciplinary actions can significantly harm students’ academic and psychological development and reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline.

SOUNDBITE: “School safety depends on creating inclusive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging and prioritize positive relationships.”

NARRATIVE: Share how stringent policies have failed to improve a student’s sense of safety and undermined their sense of belonging.

Key Message 3
Our district must prioritize racially and culturally conscious approaches to discipline instead of continuing to invest in harmful, zero-sum practices.

DATA METRIC: When students feel that they belong and are accepted, supported, and connected to their school community, they perform better academically and have better social-emotional and behavioral outcomes.

SOUNDBITE: “Instead of ‘hardening’ our schools, our district must double down on evidence-based policies that are restorative and relationship-focused, which are critical to students’ holistic development and their academic learning.”

NARRATIVE: Ask the district to examine alternative approaches to stringent discipline policies and explore multi-tiered supports.
Message Triangle Checklist

Does your message triangle do ALL of the following?

Alignment with the shared values of your audience?
- Shared values allow the conversation to start from a place of agreement.
- This requires knowing your audience first!

Define the impact?
- Do your supporting facts (data metrics, narratives, soundbites) explain how those shared values are being undermined? Clearly outlining the consequences and inequities helps convey a sense of urgency without exaggerating the problem.

Asset-frame the issue?
- Define the scope of the issue in terms of systems and structures, not students, and avoid defining marginalized communities in deficit-based language.

Highlight the benefits?
- After establishing the issue/problem, explain how your solution SUPPORTS your shared values. Explicitly stating the value helps reaffirm tangible outputs your stakeholder cares about.

Include a call to action?
- A positive vision helps your audience realize what’s possible and recognize the role they play in sparking the change.
Create Your Own Messaging

Let’s put this into practice!

In your zoom breakout rooms you will have 10 mins to:

1. Choose one of these designated Dimensions for Resource Equity (breakout rooms):
   1. Positive & Inviting School Climate
   2. Empowering, Rigorous Content
   3. Teaching Quality & Diversity

2. Draft your main **Core (North Star) Message** along with **your 3 supporting Key Messages**

You can use this time to share with peers and help one another brainstorm!

Questions to guide you:

- Who is my audience? What do they value?
- What story do I want to tell and what message/point do I want to get across? What evidence or research supports this?
- What will move my audience to action?
Advocacy Opportunity Resources

- Blogging 101
- Ed Trust Blog and Op-Ed Guidance
- Community Resources
- Op-Ed Writing Tips & Tricks
- Pitching 101
- Submission & List of Publications

- Blog/Op-Eds/Letter to the Editor
  - Blogging 101
  - Ed Trust Blog and Op-Ed Guidance
  - Community Resources
  - Op-Ed Writing Tips & Tricks
  - Pitching 101
  - Submission & List of Publications

- Written/Verbal Testimonials
  - Ballotpedia: Who Represente Me? (Federal and State Level)
  - About School Board & Local Governance Tips and Template for Oral/Written Testimony

- Letters/Emails to Representatives
  - Ballotpedia: Who Represente Me? (Federal and State Level)
  - ALA: Sample Letter to Elected Officials
  - ACLU: Writing Your Elected Representatives
  - NASFAA: State Advocacy Letter Template

- Social Media/Interviews
  - How to Build a Winning Social Media Strategy for Advocacy
  - Social Media 101: Using Social Media to Advocate and Influence Policy
  - ALA: Preparing for all kinds of interviews
  - Tips for giving a media interview

- Other Opportunities
  - Find an issue or organization that aligns with your advocacy and check to see if they have campaigns you can support and join:
    - NEA Campaigns
    - United Against Book Bans
  - Checkout Toolkits to support campaigns:
    - United Against Book Bans
10-minute Timer
Share Outs & Resources!

Making the Case for Dimensions of Resource Equity:

- ARE Casemaking Deck: School Funding
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Teaching Quality & Diversity
- ARE Casemaking Deck: School Leadership Quality & Diversity
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Empowering, Rigorous Content
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Instructional Time & Attention
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Positive & Inviting School Climate
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Student Supports & Interventions
- ARE Casemaking Deck: High-quality Early Learning
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Learning-Ready Facilities
- ARE Casemaking Deck: Diverse Classrooms & Schools
Wrap-up & Next Steps:

So what’s next?

• Identify an issue in your school community you are extremely passionate about and identify opportunities to share your messages while remembering to ground in stories, data/evidence, and have a solutions-oriented call to action!
OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

Interested in writing a blog for our EdTrust “Why I Teach, Where I Teach” series? Email us!

• aramirez@edtrust.org and zealy@edtrust.org

We want to highlight and amplify educators for Teacher Appreciation Week in May and would love for you to share your story and journey as an educator!
EdResearch for Action are launching an advisory board that will engage 25 people working at the school and system level to share their perspectives with EdResearch brief authors and staff members and directly contribute to the research brief creation process. Our goal for this advisory board is to empower practitioners who are often left out of traditional research processes to actively shape and refine education research, ultimately creating more inclusive, relevant, and impactful education initiatives.

What this consists of:

• Board members will actively engage in brainstorm workshops alongside researchers to identify key components that the briefs should cover and provide valuable insights.

• Throughout the process, board members will offer ongoing advice, ensuring that the research aligns with their practical experiences. They will play a crucial role in reviewing the completed research briefs, assessing their relevance and feasibility to their own work, and providing essential feedback.

• APPLICATION HERE: Our application is open now to individuals who could bring their unique perspectives to the board.
EDTRUST OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

Your Voice is Needed!

We would love your thoughts on censorship in your state. [https://forms.office.com/r/qgU7pinTxm](https://forms.office.com/r/qgU7pinTxm)
NEXT TRAINING SESSION: *How to Be an Effective Media Spokesperson*
Monday March 25 (6-7PM ET)

Registration Link: [https://edtrust.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqc-6trT8rG9ET1kRxVM0u-LvJ_bMgooOv](https://edtrust.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqc-6trT8rG9ET1kRxVM0u-LvJ_bMgooOv)

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