

EDTRUST PRESENTS:

COMMUNICATIONS FOR FIERCE ADVOCACY

A WEBINAR TRAINING SERIES FOR
EDUCATORS OF COLOR

How to Be an Effective Media Spokesperson



MARCH 25, 2024
MONDAY



AT 06.00 PM
- 07.00 PM ET



REGISTER ON ZOOM



MORE INFORMATION:



@edtrust



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www.edtrust.org

Icebreaker QUESTION

While We Wait: Introduce Yourself!

1. What is your name, pronouns, position?
2. Where are you coming from?
3. What is a good recent TV show/movie you've watched?



Norms to keep in mind:



- ▶ **Assume best intentions**
- ▶ **Be present & keep open mind**
- ▶ **Speak your truth**
- ▶ **Listen to understand**
- ▶ **Focus on solutions**
- ▶ **Celebrate Successes**

Meeting Goals

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



Stipends Available for Teachers!

Great news! EdTrust has available funds/stipends available to educators who are putting their advocacy and learning into practice! Whether around literacy or the need to stop book bans, you all as teacher leaders and advocates are on the frontlines pushing for change for students and their school communities.

Requirements to qualify for the \$150 stipend:

- **Attend and fully engage in at least 2-3 “Communications for Fierce Advocacy” webinar sessions** (monthly Jan-May)
- **Show proof of application of learning** in one of the following ways:
 - Written published piece (blog, op-ed, letter to editor)
 - Sharing testimony at a school board meeting
 - Advocating and engaging through social media in some capacity
 - Participating in a media interview/sharing with reporters
 - Informing research and policy
 - Advocating at the capital

Those who earn stipends will be notified by end of May on a first-come first-served basis from when evidence of learning is shared.



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 mock reporter for today:



Carolyn Phenicie

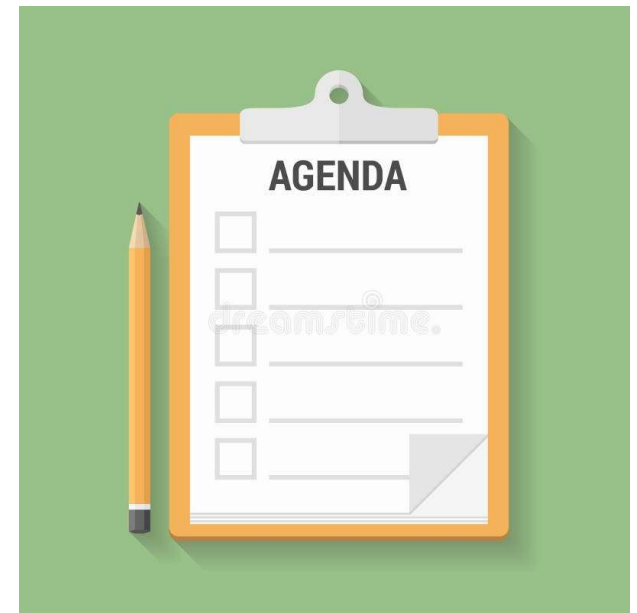
Assistant Communications Director P-12, EdTrust

Carolyn leads media strategy, press outreach and engagement for the P-12 team. Before joining EdTrust, Carolyn was the press secretary at the Council of Chief State School Officers, where she managed media relations and publications for the Council and led media outreach for the National Teacher of the Year program. She previously worked as a journalist, covering federal K-12 policy as part of the founding team at The 74 and covering federal K-12, higher education and workforce issues for Congressional Quarterly – Roll Call.

Carolyn holds a bachelor's degree from American University and a master's degree from the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism.

AGENDA FOR TODAY

- **Introductions** (5 mins)
- **Conquering the Media Interview** (10-15 mins)
- **Spokesperson Panel** (10 mins)
- **Mock Interviews** (25 mins)
- **Wrap up and Next Steps Towards Action** (5 mins)



Media Interviews as an Avenue for Advocacy

Media interviews serve as an avenue for you as an educator to:

- **Share what is actually happening in the classroom and your experience as an educator of color**
- **Bring issues and solutions to the forefront that impact your school community to a broader audience's attention**
- **Shift the narrative that may be misconstrued or put in a deficit framing in media**
- **Advocate for change by calling out inequities at a district, state, or national level**

Media training is a skill teachers can learn to help to make our voices heard.

It's also helpful in many situations where teachers have to communicate outside the classroom....

Job interviews

Community forums

School board meetings

Thanksgiving dinner with that one relative....

Pretty much any situation that leaves teachers tongue-tied or frustrated.

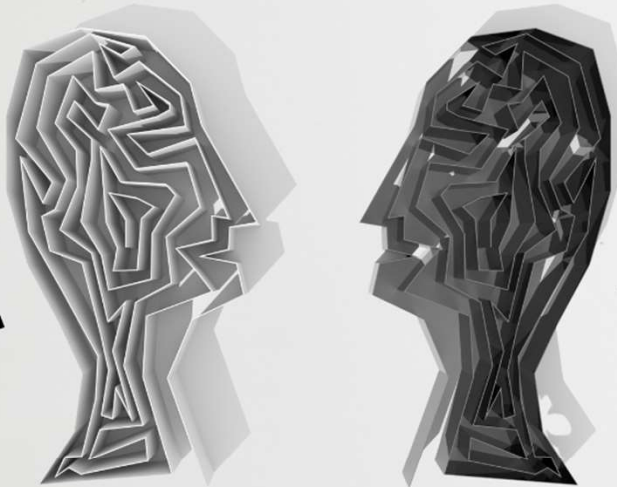


MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

Know your audience!

Keep your message simple!

Make an Emotional Connection!



WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

- **Who is your audience?**
 - Policymakers? Teachers?
 - Education Advocates?
 - Parents and families?
- **What publications does your audience read?**
 - Education Week
 - The Boston Herald
 - The Dallas Morning News
 - Seattle Times
- **What does your audience care about?**
 - Start with what they value (think of power mapping)
 - Connect their values with your advocacy message



MAKE AN EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

- **Don't just use statistics. Describe how the work you are doing impacts students**
 - Create an emotional response for the reader. (MAKE THEM CARE)
- **Use real stories about the children we serve and highlight the urgency in addressing inequities.**
- **Tell your personal story**
 - Why do you care about this issue? Did you have a similar experience being underserved in school?
 - How does this impact you as a parent/advocate?
 - 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



KEEP YOUR MESSAGE SIMPLE

- **Your messages need to be short**
 - They often need to be no longer than ten words, that describe the main idea of your advocacy point.
 - Easy-to-remember, easy-to-quote
 - Think of what you would say in a tweet
- **Avoid Jargon**
 - Do not use education speak when talking to reporters.



Developing your Message Triangle: *Key Message Points*

What do you want your audience to know?

Develop a Core Message with a maximum of 3 Key Message Points, each with supporting proof.

Core Message: *States your value/belief. Main guiding message.*

Example: *All students deserve a physically safe and emotionally supportive school environment*

1st Key Message	Defines the issue you want to address in your community Story, Sound Bite, Statistic
2nd Key Message	Shares the impact it has on students and communities Story, Sound Bite, Statistic
3rd Key Message	Call to action. What do you want your audience to do Story, Sound Bite, Statistic

Key Message Triangle



District X Example

Key Message 1

In our district, students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are being suspended and expelled at higher rates compared to White, more affluent peers



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.



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.

Core Message ("North Star")

all students deserve a physically safe and emotionally supportive environment at school that includes fair and consistent rules and discipline policies

Key Message 2

Harsh 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

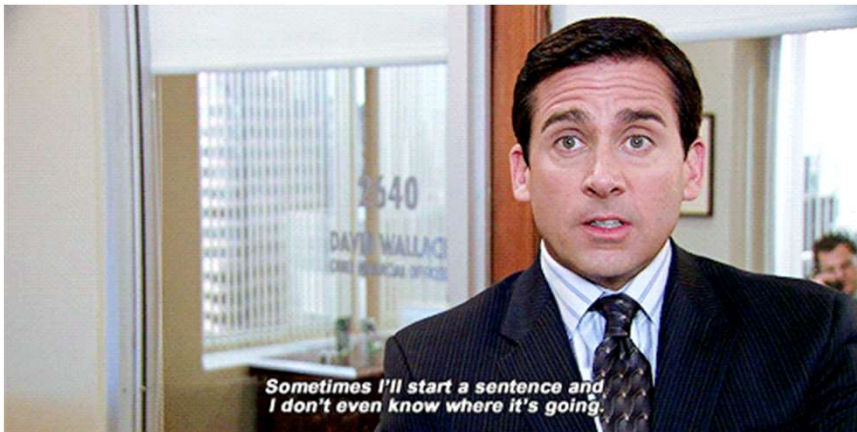
our district must prioritize racially and culturally conscious approaches to discipline, rather than continue to invest in harmful, zero-sum policies that do not directly address the root of the problem

CONQUERING THE MEDIA INTERVIEW



For any interview you want to...

AVOID THIS:



AND DO THIS:



An interview...

Is about practice...

- Practice, using your message triangle in front of colleagues, friends or family.
- Speak out loud
- Bring energy... smile, move around, etc.



...and redirection

- Imagine likely questions
 - How do you respond and refocus them back to your main points?
- Pause. Ask yourself: “What is the reporter really asking?”
 - Reporters may ask you off-topic questions or try to get you to say something you don’t want to say. Practice redirecting...

Pivoting & Expecting the Unexpected

- **Bad information:** Don't repeat negative, incorrect, or inflammatory language. Instead, find a positive spin in your response and/or calmly correct misinformation before moving to your positive response.
- **Speculation:** Instead of trying to predict the future, reiterate the information you know and your key message.
- **Irrelevant Question:** Use a bridging statement to connect back to your key message.



Question/concern that ...

- Distracts from key issue
- Introduces dangerous line of opposition
- Expresses different mission/goal

BRIDGING STATEMENT

Your response, which hits on your key messages in service of core "North Star" message

"I find the more important issue to be..." "Let me emphasize again..." "What matters most in this situation is this: ..."
"What I've said comes down to this..." "And that reminds me..." "Here's the real problem..."
"I think it would be more accurate (or correct) to say..." "It all boils down to this..."
"While ___ is important, it's also important to remember that..." "Before we leave this subject, I need to add..."

Spokespeople in Action!

Advocates in the media shifting the narrative

Our speakers today are:

Kristen Hengtgen, Ph.D., Senior Analyst P-12 Policy, EdTrust

- **Bio:** Kristen is a senior analyst on the P-12 policy team. She focuses on policies and practices that advocate for educational equity and increased access to and success in rigorous, culturally sustaining coursework that prepares students of color and students from low-income backgrounds for college, career, and beyond. Prior to joining Ed Trust, Kristen worked as senior researcher at the Florida College Access Network, where she collaborated with state partners to promote college access and attainment for all Floridians, and especially first-generation college students, adult learners, and students from low-income backgrounds. She has also worked as an academic advisor at Indiana University.



Sandra Perez, Higher Ed Research Analyst, EdTrust

- **Bio:** Sandra is a higher education research analyst who researches various topics, such as accessibility and cost of attendance. She also analyzes large data sets and creates easy-to-read data visualizations. Prior to joining EdTrust, she aided in research at San Diego Mesa College through focus groups, surveying students, and helping implement bills. During the pandemic, Sandra assisted the California Community College system by transcribing the Chancellor's statewide emergency meetings and making them available to Guided Pathways leaders around the state. As a native of San Diego, California, Sandra holds a degree in Mathematics and Scientific Computation from the University of California Davis.



Mock Interview Time

Let's put this into practice!

We will now practice answering and responding to interview questions posed to you by your friendly reporters, where they will provide helpful feedback and answer any questions you may have along the way

We will have about 20-25 mins



Things to keep in mind:

- It is okay to not have an immediate response (remember this is practice)
- Always come back to your main talking points (core and key messages)
- Don't be afraid to share examples or highlight your own story
- Remember you drive the interview where you want it to go
- Keep it short & simple

Top Tips for Media Engagement

Remember you **DRIVE** the conversation!

1. Establish relationships with reporters
 - Have google alerts on your issues
 - Know who is reporting on what issue, and what their angle is
 - Follow reporters and engage with them on social media
 - Email them when they write a story that aligns with your mission
2. Be available when they call
3. Deliver key messages no matter what
4. Prepare, prepare, prepare: have the facts, anecdotes, and personal stories and back them with examples
5. Off the record (means the reporter cannot or should not publicly share that information): no such thing
6. “No Comment”: makes it look like you have something to hide
7. Off the cuff (not prepared in advanced): you’re risking an outrageous verbal faux pas



“I believe luck is preparation meeting opportunity. If you hadn’t been prepared when the opportunity came along, you wouldn’t have been lucky.”
— Oprah Winfrey

TAKE A BOW. Thank you for engaging!

Resources to Nail the Interview:

- **ALA:** [Preparing for all kinds of interviews](#)
- [Tips for giving a media interview](#)
- [Controlling a Media Interview](#) (Public Strategies)
- [Media Advocacy Tools](#) (Community Catalyst)
- [Interviewing Like a Pro](#)
- [Working with the Media](#) (National PTA)



Wrap-up & Next Steps:

- **So what's next?**
 - **Build relationships with your local reporters**
 - Write a blog/op-ed for a media outlet
 - Tweet at them or retweet them
 - Reach out to grab coffee
 - **Identify an opportunity to be a spokesperson**
 - *ProPublica is building a network of educators, students, parents and other experts to help guide our reporting about education. Take a few minutes to join the source network and share what you know:*
<https://www.propublica.org/getinvolved/help-propublica-report-on-education>



OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

EdSurge is accepting applications for the fourth cohort of its fellowship program. EdSurge editors work closely with fellows, amplifying authentic voices from the field about issues that really matter. The process of writing, editing and publishing a story is a unique and exciting professional growth opportunity, and an EdSurge editor works with each fellow every step of the way. This opportunity is open to individuals who are currently full-time, school-based K-12 educators (e.g., classroom teachers, instructional coaches, counselors, librarians, etc.) or school leaders (e.g., principals).

Interested in learning more? Review the [Fellowship FAQ](#) or reach out to fellowship@edsurge.com with any other questions you might have.

Link: <https://www.edsurge.com/research/guides/edsurge-voices-of-change-writing-fellowship>



EDTRUST OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

Listening Session with Educators!

EdTrust is interested in hearing from leaders of color who are, or have been, teachers on their **thoughts regarding through-year assessments**.

Through-year assessments are a relatively new approach to statewide assessments which aim to replace traditional end-of-year summative assessments. Instead of a single comprehensive test taken by all students in a state, through-year assessments are a series of shorter assessments taken throughout the year which are directly tied to the work students have completed over that “semester”. The goal of this type of statewide assessment system is to provide more timely information to teachers about what a student knows/needs additional support with while ensuring state assessments are more connected to the immediate work students are completing in school.

EdTrust is interested in hearing from leaders of color regarding their initial reactions to this type of assessment system, and any concerns they may have about its adoption. EdTrust would also like to gauge leaders' ideas for specific considerations that states should keep in mind to ensure such a system is equitable for students.

EdTrust will use the insights from this listening session to inform the research and advocacy strategy on this issue moving forward.

If you are interested in participating in this listening session, please fill out this form by **Monday, April 8th**, and we will reach out with more information. **Compensation for participants may be provided.**



Please Join Us!

EDTRUST OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

Your Voice is Needed!

We would love your thoughts on censorship
in your state.

<https://forms.office.com/r/qgU7pinTxm>




NEXT TRAINING SESSION: *How to Leverage Your Social Media for Advocacy* Monday April 15 (6-7PM ET)

Registration Link: https://edtrust.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYtduqsqj4uHdJ07uVnfh1TBv_SKOL-IYXn

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