

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



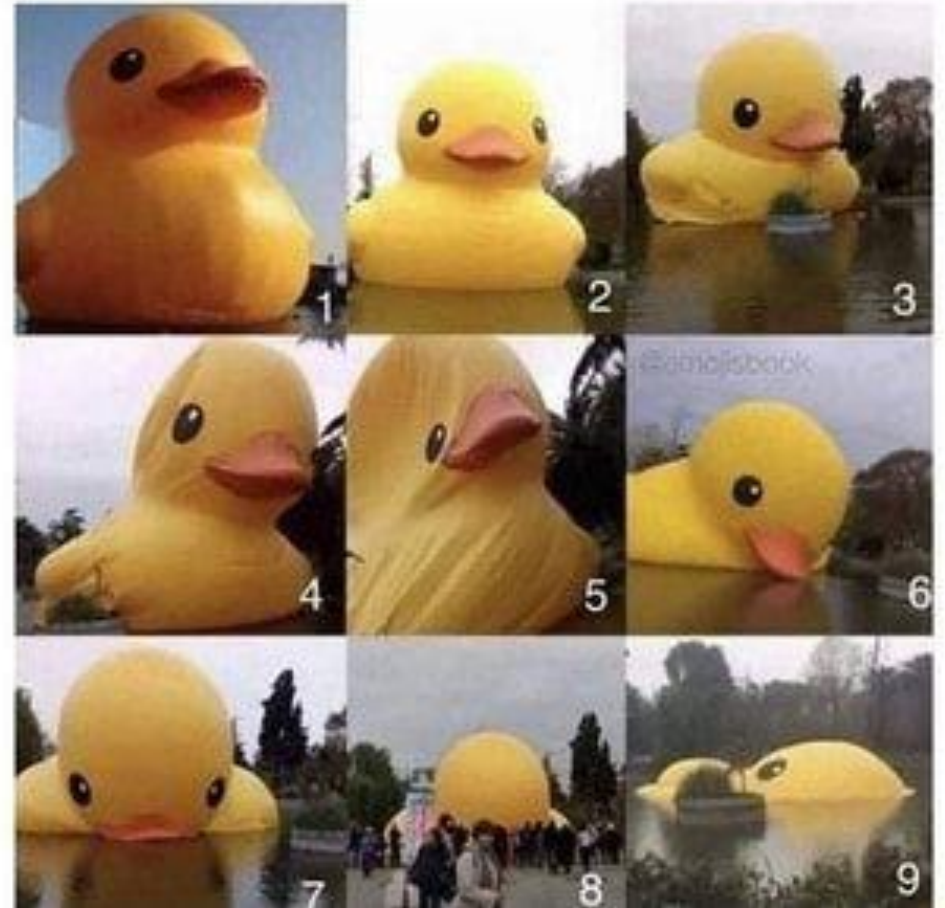
www.edtrust.org

Icebreaker QUESTION

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?

On a 1-9 rubber duck scale, how are things going 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:



Qubilah Huddleston

Policy Lead, Equitable School Funding, EdTrust



Shayna Levitan

P-12 Policy Analyst, EdTrust

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



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)**

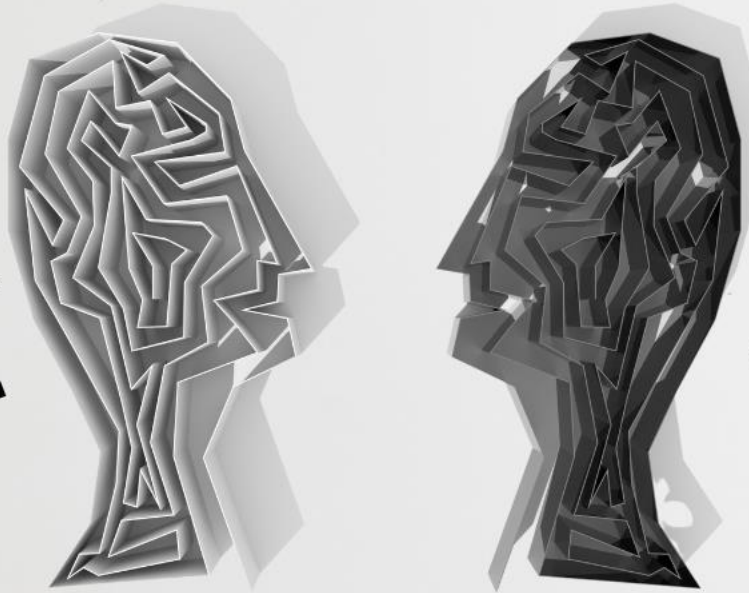


MESSAGING PRINCIPLES

Know your audience!

Keep your message simple!

Make an Emotional Connection!



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

- Who is your audience?
 - Policymakers? District leaders?
 - Education Advocates?
 - Parents and families?
- What publication(s)/platform does your audience read/use?
 - Education Week/Seattle Times
 - Social Media (age range/demographic)
 - Legislative hearings/school board meetings
- 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/teacher/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 key messages need to be short
 - They often just need to describe the main idea of your advocacy point.
 - Easy-to-remember, easy-to-quote
 - Think of what you would say in a tweet (soundbite)
- Avoid Jargon
 - Do not use education speak
 - Use asset-based, accessible language

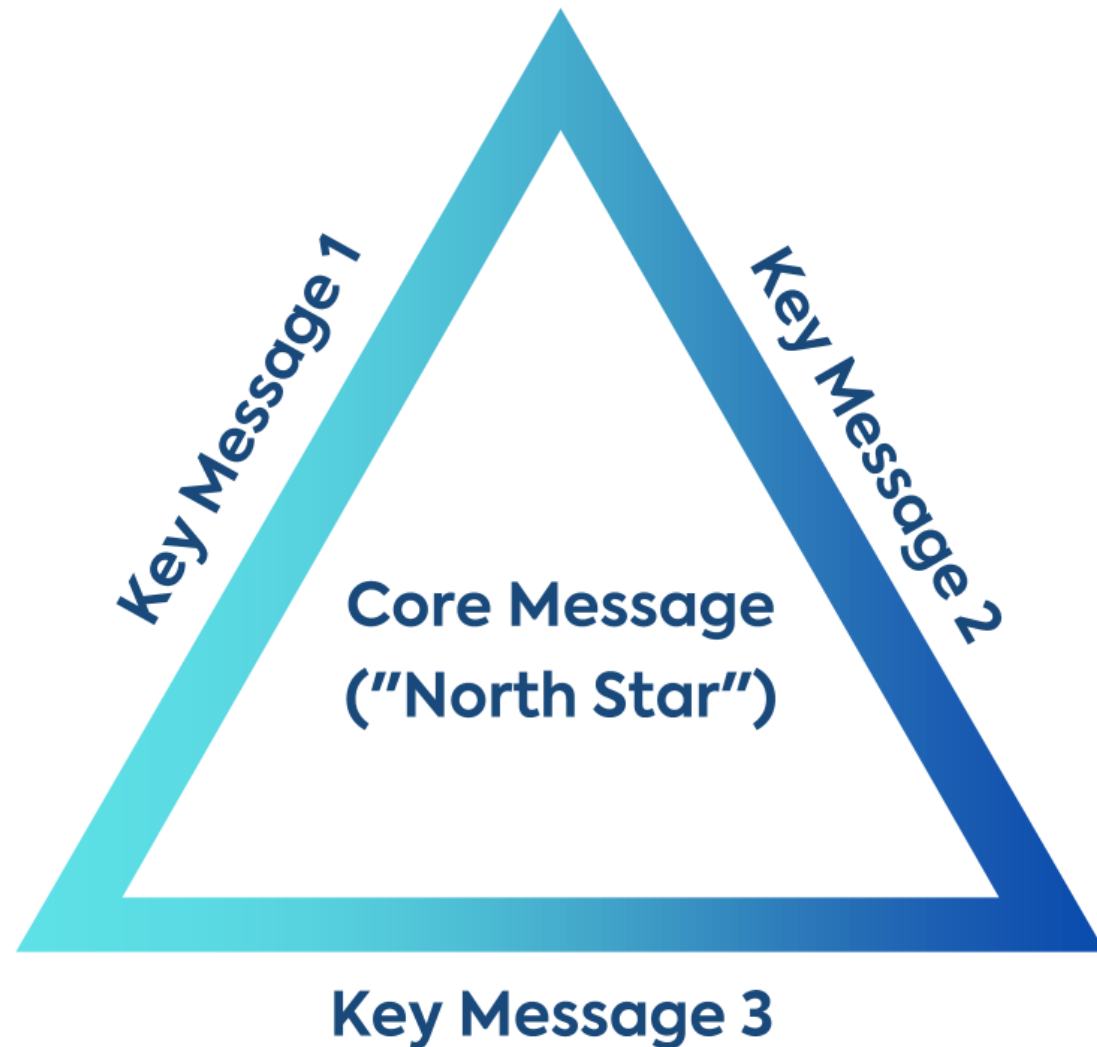


Message Triangle Fast Facts

- 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 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.

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

EXAMPLE : CPS Board Policy 511.2 governs high school enrollment



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

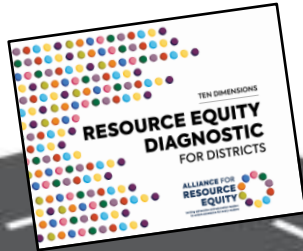


Alliance for Resource Equity Toolkit



Learn about the 10 dimensions

The Education Combination paper introduces our framework and outlines each dimension.



Assess strengths & weaknesses

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



Dig deeper
Consider underlying causes of challenges.

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.



Leveraging ARE Casemaking Decks

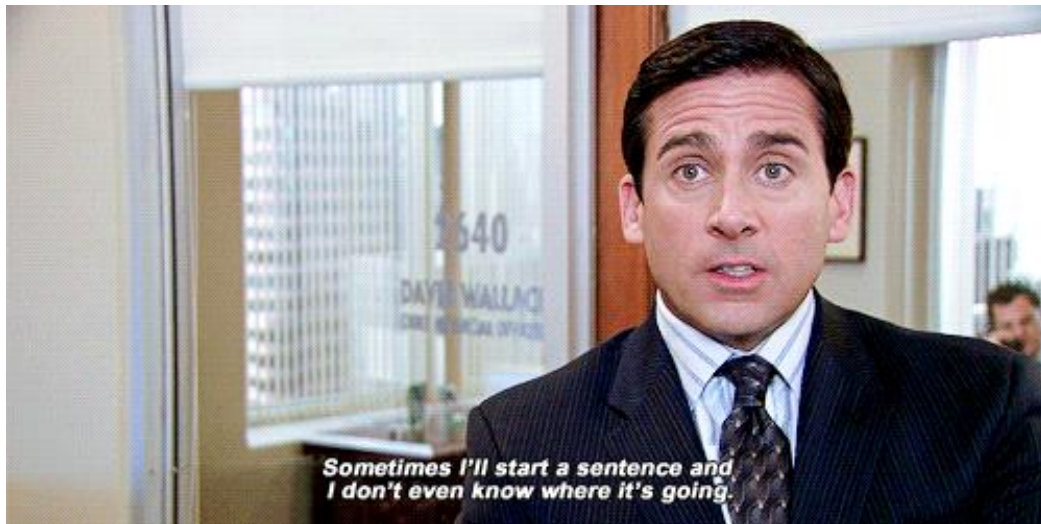
Your voice is important, and a necessary part of conversations on advancing equity in our schools.

- 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:

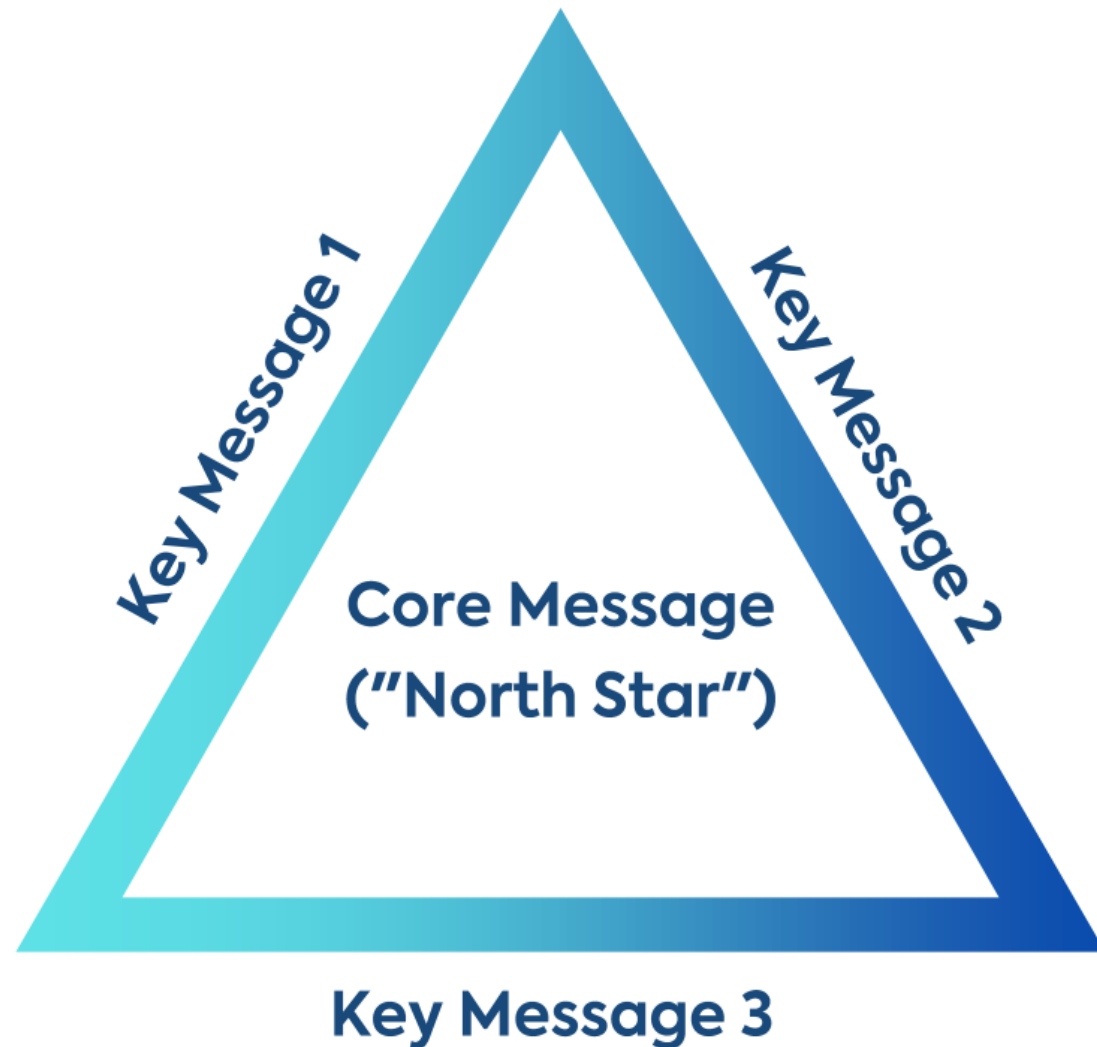


Message Triangle Fast Facts

- 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 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.

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?

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?”**

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?”**

Appendix A: Data Resources Chart

Key Question	Data Metric	Data Notes	Data Source
<p>Key Question 6.1 Does each student experience a safe school with transparent, culturally sensitive, and consistently enforced rules and discipline policies?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> % of students suspended/expelled by race/ethnicity, special education status, and economic status % of students subject to seclusion or restraint, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, special education status, and economic status. Number of sworn law enforcement officers and security guards present in schools, and scatterplot comparison between FTE (x-axis) and proportion of students of color, students with disabilities, and students from low-income-backgrounds attending each school (y-axis). 	<p>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.</p>	<p>Urban Institute/NCES</p>
<p>Key Question 6.2 Does each student have positive relationships with staff and other students?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of total reported “offenses” (such as incidents of physical fights, sexual assault, or attacks with weapon) 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). Number of total reported incidents of bullying/harassment by school, disaggregated by proportion of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, and school type (elementary, middle, high). Number of chronically absent students by school, and scatterplot that compares rates of chronic absenteeism (x-axis) by proportion of students of color or students from low-income backgrounds (y-axis). 	<p>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.</p>	<p>Urban Institute/NCES</p>
<p>Key Question 6.3 Does each student have access to effective social-emotional learning opportunities?</p>	<p>% of students that report having access to social-emotional learning opportunities, and the quality of these opportunities, by race/ethnicity status, school poverty level, and school type (elementary, middle, high).</p>	<p>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.</p>	
<p>Key Question 6.4 Does each student attend a school that actively and meaningfully engages with families?</p>	<p>% of families that report feeling engaged by their school, by racial/ethnic status, school poverty level, and school type (elementary, middle, high).</p>	<p>No federal data sources here. Your district or state may have publicly available family survey data. Consider also looking at the availability of parent resources (including in multiple languages) that are available on school/district websites.</p>	

For Key Questions 6.3 and 6.4, there are no strong federally-maintained data sources. Rely more heavily on your own personal experiences, general knowledge, and popular news sources to help fill out the gaps in data. While this lack of data may lead to only an imperfect data metric in your message triangle, it may still be sufficient in surfacing foundational information and lines of inquiry where a key message becomes clear.



Forming Key Messages 101

1

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?”**

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

1

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?”**

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.**

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

1

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?”**

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.**

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.”

4

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

- **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.”
- **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.”
- **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.



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")

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.

Key Message 3

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

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.



Message Triangle Checklist

Does your message triangle do ALL of the following?



Align 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

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](#)
- Checkout Toolkits to support campaigns:
 - [United Against Book Bans](#)

10-minute Timer



10:00

A digital timer display showing the time 10:00. The numbers are white with a black outline and a slight shadow, set against a vibrant, multi-colored background of overlapping diamond shapes in shades of yellow, orange, red, purple, and green.

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 & Intervntions](#)
- [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!



SCAN ME

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!



Our “Why I Teach Where I Teach” series asks educators in high-need schools to share what has attracted (and kept) them in the challenging environments they’re in. They share important stories and experiences that should remind us all of the power of strong school leadership, a network of supportive colleagues, and the genuine opportunity to have a say in schoolwide decisions. Listen up! They’re teaching us.



OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATORS:

[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>




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

- Follow us on socials!

- Instagram: @edtrust
- Twitter: @edtrust
- FB: <https://www.facebook.com/edtrust>
- LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/education-trust/>









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  @edtrust  www.edtrust.org