

2017 Back-to-School Talking Points for Community Outreach

Does your community know what's really happening inside its public schools? These talking points will help you highlight the good things that may otherwise go unnoticed—to showcase what we're calling “the secret life of public schools.” Based on polling of the public's views on schooling, these points address key concepts such as future-readiness and supporting public schools.

To use these talking points most effectively, personalize them to your community. Provide examples and highlight exciting accomplishments—such as 1:1 technology programs, expanded access to AP courses or record-high test scores—to back up each point. Use as many or few as you find appropriate as you develop presentations, op-eds and other communications with business, faith and other community leaders and partners; the media; and others this back-to-school season.

[Access supporting materials](#) (such as sample letters and commentaries) that incorporate these talking points. [Get talking points](#) designed to support outreach to families.

Great things are happening in our public schools.

- **We've made progress in many areas.** *Suggestion: share key statistics with the community, making sure to include both basic academic indicators like test scores and graduation rates AND other important measures, like attendance, school climate, technological literacy and family engagement rates.*
- **We are working to close the achievement gap,** helping each and every child reach the high standards required for future success.
- **Our well-prepared, high-quality teachers help all students to achieve.**

We are equipping our students with the tools and skills they need for future success, starting the day they enter school.

- **The rich curriculum we offer**—including and beyond the basics—**will help ensure that no matter what the jobs of the future are, our students will be ready to fill them.**
- **We are helping students safely navigate the complex world of online information,** protecting them and teaching them to protect themselves.
- **We help students apply classroom lessons to the real world,** showing them that both academic content and skills like communication, creativity and problem-solving are important to their future.



Our schools provide students with a range of exciting opportunities to help them reach their full potential.

- **We use technology to individualize and advance learning** in ways we never could before, challenging students to go deep into areas of interest while building a foundation of basic knowledge and skills.
- **We offer academic experiences that ensure all students' needs are met** and that they are prepared for their future. *Suggestion: highlight specific examples such as advanced classes, remediation, group and individual tutoring, enrichment programming, dual enrollment and career activities.*
- In addition to basic core subjects, **students have access to electives, extracurricular activities and other resources (such as libraries and technology) to develop their strengths, interests and talents**, whether in music or other arts, robotics or computer science, career/technical education, foreign language or other areas.

Everyone in our school community—teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, parents, school counselors and more—**plays a critical role in helping students succeed.**

- **Together**, teachers, principals, school counselors, and other **school staff work to create a safe, supportive and welcoming learning community where all students are treated fairly.**
- In addition to meeting the academic needs of all students, **our school offers a wide range of services that support the total child.** *Suggestion: highlight specific examples such as social/emotional supports, career and college counseling and access to physical and mental health resources.*
- **We work with families to make the important decisions that impact their child and the school as a whole**, while also working to ensure no child is disadvantaged based on what is or is not present in their home.

To serve students even more effectively, **our schools and educators need support.**

- **We need our policymakers**—at the local, state and national levels—**to invest in public education and our kids' future**, opposing policies that take money from public schools and give it to private schools, like vouchers, education savings accounts and tuition tax credits.
- **We need our community to show that we value teachers** by supporting efforts to give them the resources (including time for professional learning; updated textbooks and other materials; and safe, modern school buildings) they need to help all students succeed.
- **We need families and the community to help our students come to school happy, healthy and ready to learn.**