

2017 Back-to-School Talking Points for Family Outreach

These talking points will help you highlight the good things happening in public schools that may otherwise go unnoticed—to showcase what we’re calling “the secret life of public schools.” Based on polling on what parents want in their children’s schools, they incorporate key words and concepts that resonate with families, including “challenging,” “opportunities,” “quality teachers” and “fairness.”

To use these talking points most effectively, personalize them to your community. Provide examples and highlight exciting accomplishments—examples might be 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 your back-to-school communications with the families of the children you serve.

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

Great things are happening in our public schools.

- **We are challenging your children to reach their full potential**, so they are prepared for jobs and life in the future.
- **We are using technology to individualize and advance learning** in ways we never could before, giving teachers real-time information on what each child needs and giving students the opportunity to go deep into areas of interest.
- **We are actively engaging students in their learning**, making sure they develop the skills and habits to be lifelong learners while building a foundation of basic content knowledge and skills.

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 prepare students for the jobs of the future.**
- **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 the importance of both academic content and skills like communication, creativity and problem-solving.

Our schools provide students with a range of exciting opportunities.

- **Our well-prepared, high-quality teachers work** with parents and families to challenge each child appropriately and to help all students achieve.
- **We offer 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.**
- Recognizing the unique talents and needs that each student brings (including and beyond academic needs), **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.**

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

- **We need our families**—and the greater community—**to show that we value teachers**, which includes supporting efforts to give them the resources (such as time for professional learning and updated textbooks and other materials) they need to help all students succeed.
- **We need families' help** to ensure children come to school happy, healthy and ready to learn and to communicate with the school when challenges arise regarding or impacting their children's learning.
- **We need our families and community to ask 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.