



July 6, 2017

Dear Educator:

In the life cycle of schools, back-to-school is a time of hope and excitement. This communications toolkit is designed to help you harness those feelings and provide leadership to your community, raising visibility of the opportunities you provide to equip all children with the tools and skills they need for future success.

As you are aware, the narrative around education (at least at the national level) seems to indicate disagreement as to the importance of public schools. Actually, the public is generally supportive of public schools, especially their neighborhood public schools. The public wants these schools to teach—and for students to learn—the lessons needed for future success. But we are no longer in the age of basic skills. To gain the public's full support—including the resources you need—you must explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. This toolkit can help.

We call it *[The Secret Life of Public Schools](#)*. That is because we want to let the public in—to help them understand education today, beyond the test scores stressed by politicians and the media, and beyond the image of “the basics” that many have when it comes to what schools are teaching. We want to emphasize how public schools are ensuring that individual children are prepared for their next step.

Whether you serve as a superintendent, teacher, school board member, school counselor, principal, PTA president, education technology director, or in any other role in a school system, this toolkit contains templates you can adapt to your local needs to help spread this message.

Materials include:

- 1) A template letter to parents,
- 2) Sample op-eds,
- 3) Social media postings,
- 4) A short video to introduce the toolkit and its purpose and value, and
- 5) Additional materials for wider distribution.

The data from multiple sources is clear: the public wants its public schools to have the critical resources they need to continue to improve. By building a broader understanding of what it is that schools do every day, you can engage them in the advocacy efforts it will take to ensure that schools get them. You are not isolated or alone in this work. The wider education community is working together to support it. Collectively, we are working to support funding for programs at the national level (such as Medicaid and E-Rate), and coalitions of educators are joining at the state and local level as well.

But success depends on you, telling what is being done. There is no reason why you shouldn't be bragging about what you are doing and how you are doing it.

We look forward to continuing to work with you and your school.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Richard Long'.

Richard Long, Ed.D.  
Executive Director