



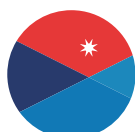
Framing Tip

Show the Positive Effects of Investing in Public Education

Public education, like other public institutions such as our parks and libraries, is a fundamental public good. And like those other institutions, our public education system requires strong investments to ensure they thrive and are available to all.

While different types of funding exist to support public education, it is not equitably distributed, leaving some communities and children under-resourced and disadvantaged. This reality and the disparate outcomes that follow make equitable funding a key component of centering racial justice within an updated, remodeled public education system. To help members of the public better understand the significance and positive effects of investing in public education and to overcome fatalism, advocates should take care to illustrate what that looks like with clear, concrete examples. Examples make solutions visible and help explain how the problem of inequitable or misdirected funding happens, while encouraging a collective sense that something can be done.

Examples make for great talking points, which can then be applied to all types of communications materials, including an “elevator speech.” These short blurbs help communicators readily share about their advocacy work.



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**Changing the Narrative on Public Education:
A Communications Toolkit**

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Elevator Speech

Before

All kids deserve to go to great schools, no matter where they live, no matter what they look like, no matter how much money their family has. Right now, wealthy areas with high property taxes get to soak up all of the available funding. That's not fair. Students from less wealthy communities lose out – on a high quality education and on future opportunities. Inequities continue despite there being resources available. We cannot continue ...

It is also important to be mindful of how unproductive cultural models can be further problematized by harmful perceptions of race, particularly when talking about Black and Brown communities. “Inner-City Pathology” as a cultural model leaves some members of the public to hold faulty assumptions about willpower, choice, and values. This leads to an assumption that those with means earned their position due to personal will, skill, and good choices. Racial inequality is misperceived as a personal shortcoming or because of individual decision-making versus historical, structural, and systemic factors.

... thinking zero sum. And we cannot continue the narrative that there are limited resources and that's why Black and Brown kids don't have updated facilities to learn in or enough counselors and librarians. It's simply not true. So what can be done about this inequality? Greater investments need to be made.

Framing policy issues and inequality around fairness can cue up multiple unproductive models, including individualism, more specifically self-makingness, or the sense that a person or community's ultimate success depends on their character, effort, and willpower; and zero-sum thinking, that for one group to gain something, another group has to lose.

By not offering examples of what fair and equal funding looks like, audiences are left to draw their own conclusions or remain fatalistic, believing nothing can be done to address inequality.

After

Our region does better when high-quality public education and learning opportunities are available to all of our students. When some kids have to learn from overused and outdated textbooks while others are learning in state-of-the-art technology labs, we are deepening inequity and that has implications for all of us and our shared future. Before we expect children to have equal academic outcomes, we have to ensure their schools are ...

If your communications are attempting to make an equity argument, consider starting off with the tested value, *Fairness Across Places*. It helps elevate a belief that all children deserve the opportunity to learn no matter where they live, but it also helps set up how and why that's not currently happening, redirecting people away from default thinking that individuals, including communities, are responsible for their own circumstances and outcomes.

This opening also taps into a *collective action* frame, redirecting people from separate fates thinking. This is also helpful in communications around race and equity.

... funded equitably. That means supplementing current funding sources, such as state and local taxes, with other models; and also considering the unique needs that different schools have and adjusting funding accordingly. For example, programs like Title I were created to offer additional support for schools where the majority of its students live in poverty. Diversified funding would make it possible for students to have all of the resources...

... and supports they need to thrive in and outside of school. More funding means more counselors, more opportunities to implement restorative practices, and of course, up-to-date learning tools. Past policies and decision-making have unfortunately built inequality into our school system. However, that doesn't mean our past has to forever dictate our children's present or future.

Follow the value with an illustration of the problem that is preventing that value from being realized.

To learn more about equitable funding, and examples of the positive outcomes of such a shift, read [Confronting the Education Debt](#), a report from The Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools. Also watch [Better Days Are Coming](#) and [A ROSe in LA](#) about students' fight for fair and equitable funding for their schools. Both films were directed by Manauvaskar Kublall of [Media Sutra](#), and created in collaboration with the [Partnership for the Future of Learning](#).