

# Framing Social Media



Community schools are transforming the role public schools can play in communities. Emphasizing this when communicating to the public is an effective way to counter the prevailing fatalism around education reform. FrameWorks research found that to improve the public's sense of efficacy—the belief that we, as a society, can tackle tough problems together—communicators should provide an aspirational example of community schools, highlighting their innovative yet pragmatic nature. Community schools offer a clear and compelling remodeling of public education.

Below are several examples of how to apply this recommendation through social media. These examples are inspired by the documentary film series, *On the Rise: Cincinnati's Community Learning Centers*, produced by Media Sutra and the Partnership for the Future of Learning. Framing can be applied to all forms of communications, even within a 240-character limit.

## Facebook Post


**Facebook Account**  
October 3, 2019

#CommunitySchools are many things: They are responsive to community needs, reflective of community strengths, and committed to equity. They are also **inventive, challenging us** to expand our ideas of what a public school can be. This new film series from @future4learning and @MediaSutra brings you into some of Cincinnati's Community Learning Centers, where an **unconventional approach to public education is remodeling** schools and empowering communities: <https://bit.ly/37ym0Kn>

The highlighted words and phrases cue the “aspirational” frame.


Remember the “remodeling” metaphor from the Core Story of Education work as a productive way to talk about reform.

## Tweets

 **Twitter Account** @TwitterAccount

Community schools reimagine what public schools can be. See how Lower Price Hill literally pushes the boundaries of its schools in our new video series: <https://bit.ly/2QLmaYL> “You can’t have a successful school and not have a successful neighborhood, and vice-versa.”

The highlighted words and phrases cue the “aspirational” frame.

 **Twitter Account** @TwitterAccount

Offering access to ESL classes, housing information, and even legal services, the Roberts Welcome Center at Roberts Elementary School shows just how innovative—and effective—#communityschools can be: <https://bit.ly/2qxNWgZ> #Future4Learning

## Tips on Framing for Social Media

Even small language choices can have a significant and measurable effect on how the public thinks about and understands social issues. Meaningful issue engagement on social media is not just about spreading messages or measuring impact through clicks, views, and shares. It’s about spreading the right messages in the right way. Framing works best when we do it consistently, regularly, and across our communications channels. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

### 1. Begin with Why

People go to social media to get information. It’s a powerful tool for helping the public better understand complex issues, and a great opportunity for you to foster greater understanding of why your work matters. Even posts as mundane as announcing an event can be an opportunity to build this understanding:

- **Instead of this ...** *Our very own @executivedirector offered insight into our #issue on this exciting panel: <http://samplelink>*
- **Try this ...** *This <http://samplelink> gave us lots to think about. @executivedirector: “We need the talents of all to be available to our communities.”*



One of your main goals as communicators, regardless of platform, is to give the public a new way of thinking about education in broad terms: why it matters and what is at stake. Even with character limits, meaningful issue engagement is important and absolutely possible.

## **2. Widen the Lens**

The public currently tends to understand education outcomes in individualistic ways, which is why it is so important for advocates to broaden understanding and help the public connect the dots to systemic factors and solutions. When people understand any issue as an individual problem, they may feel critical or compassionate, or both, but they won't see policies and programs as solutions, so they won't see how they can play a role in moving them along.

Take the SCOTUS *Montana v. Espinoza* case, for example: Espinoza is a person with family who needs supports, and advocates for privatization use this as justification for a path that will harm many others. The case is incredibly personal to the plaintiff and their story is important, *and* as with all Supreme Court cases, it stands to affect many more people than the plaintiff. The case is also personal to all who need thriving neighborhood public schools to be an option.

Make sure your social media presence consistently invigorates consideration of policies, programs, social structures, and community as part of the solution.

## **3. Use Visuals Strategically**

Images should always reinforce—not undermine—any language you are using. Images of individuals are likely to reinforce individualistic understandings of education. For example, rather than showing decontextualized children, consider images that show contexts and relationships.

Ask yourself: “Are we choosing language and images that actively break down problematic ways of thinking, contributing to a reframing of the issue?” Or, conversely, “Are we saying things or showing images that *don't* challenge unproductive ways of thinking, or might even reinforce problematic ways of understanding?”