

MESSAGING

Telling your story.

Telling a personal story helps people connect to an issue, often more effectively than rhetoric. When communicating via letters to the editor, media interviews, group presentations, or one-on-one, speaking from personal experience or telling your story makes the issue more memorable and relatable.

Four elements to include when communicating:

Story of Me – Why do you care about the issue, your story

Story of Us – Why your audience should care, how they can relate

Story of Now – Why it is urgent to *do* something in light of your shared experiences.

Call to Action – What can we do today to make a difference?

Example:

I am a single mom with two children attending public schools. When the recession began, I saw resources dwindle in my children's schools. Extracurricular activities were cancelled, and quality teachers left and were replaced by long term substitutes. My experience was not unique, the district is facing a 700 teacher shortage and is struggling to provide resources to all public school children.

Last session, we saw an effort to restore desperately needed funding to public schools, but also we also saw the passage of SB 302, a school voucher program that unconstitutionally diverts public school funds to private schools and other private expenditures. This program could undermine efforts to improve educational opportunities for all Nevada children.

We need strong public schools for my children and the other 460,000 students attending Nevada's public schools. Public school parents need to stand together and support efforts to ensure public school funds stay in public schools, and every child, not just a select few can afford private schools, have an opportunity to succeed.

Understanding the topic to be a better communicator.

Since strong public education is fundamental and integral to communities, there are several messages to consider when thinking about how vouchers or education finance reform issues connect to your story. Having a clear, accurate message is key. Below are some overarching messages and themes to ensure audiences understand why the topic is critically important to you, and why it should matter to them.

Educate Nevada Now, powered by The Rogers Foundation

Below are some messages about Nevada's new voucher bill.

- SB 302, or the Education Savings Account bill, permits vouchers of at least \$5,100 per student to be diverted directly out of funds apportioned for public schools, for use in private schools or for other private expenditures.
- The only eligibility requirement for receiving the voucher is proof that a student attended at least one public school class for 100 consecutive school days prior to applying (and the Treasurer's regulation exempt Kindergarten and military students from this requirement).
- SB 302 utilizes funds that are *constitutionally protected* and specifically earmarked for public education and diverts that funding to private schooling and other non-public education expenses.
- Our schools are already vastly underfunded and lacking vital resources, and the voucher program will make public school budgets unstable, unpredictable and unfair, undermining programs and services, especially for disadvantaged children.
- Because there is no income limit to be eligible under SB 302, and most private schools are unaffordable even with the voucher subsidy, affluent families who can already afford to send their children to private schools and have made that choice, will be able to use vouchers to subsidize the cost of private and religious schooling. Not surprisingly, most voucher applicants in Nevada are from wealthier zip codes.
- Despite taking public funds, private schools will not be held to the same accountability measures and standards as public schools – such as teacher credential requirements, performance measures, and other academic and curricular requirements.
- Public schools must take students as they come, and are protected by law from discrimination, where as private schools may discriminate and deny admission to students who are poor, academically at-risk, LGBTQ, or otherwise do not fit the culture of the school. Under SB 302, taxpayers could be funding discriminatory schools.