

Crafting your story

- Come up with a strong lead. A good lead is timely, relevant and has a “hook” – an angle that will get a reporter’s attention.
- Weak hook: Arts education supporters will gather on Thursday to lobby the school board to keep music in schools.
- Strong hook: Students Plead: Don’t Kill the Music. Student musicians plan to stage a protest on Thursday, piling their instruments in front of ABC Unified School District headquarters to protest cuts to music programs. Why it works: the lead is timely, dramatic and suggests that there will be great photo/television opportunities.
- Look for a personal angle. Arts education programs can yield fascinating personal interest stories that embody important community issues. Is there a teacher in your community who recently won a major award? A student who triumphed through the arts? Just be sure to tie it back to the larger issue in your press release.
- Designate spokespeople and think about visuals. Create some theatre and provide people to talk on camera. If you’re organizing an event, consider having kids present, playing music, or dressed in theatre costumes. Make banners, display artwork – anything to add visual interest that will attract television and photography. Designate media spokespeople in advance. Prep them on the message you want them to convey.
- Avoid cliché and jargon. Remember, you are appealing to a very broad audience who may not be familiar with arts education issues. Break it down for them. Run your press release past a friend or family member. Ask them to repeat back to you what they heard. Did your message come across in an interesting way?

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