

**ARTS
NOW**

**LOCAL
ADVOCACY
TOOLKIT**

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

FOR SUCCESSFUL ADVOCACY

Social media is an important tool to help you connect with your school and district leaders, news outlets and community members by tagging them in your posts. To get started, pick a platform that you feel comfortable on and that highlights your content – Twitter is best for information sharing and conversation, Facebook is well-suited to storytelling, and Instagram is ideal for photos and videos. Whatever platform you use, keep it simple: Focus on one message, target your audiences and include images.

TWITTER:

- Join a conversation, follow people who are in the know, who support you, and who you want to learn from.
- Do not create your own hashtags, instead join others that put your tweet into a larger context. You want your tweets to be pulled into other feeds.
 - *Examples of hashtags: #ArtsEd, #ArtsEquity, #ArtsMatter*
 - *You can also tag accounts such as @GavinNewsom, @CADeptofEd, as well as @TonyThurmond*
- Dig into your region and city and see what hashtags your community or city is using so you can enter conversations that are happening in a timely matter.

INSTAGRAM:

- Instrumental in sharing student work (with appropriate permissions!) and sharing resources with students.
- Tag community members, arts organizations, etc. to encourage others to utilize your content.

FACEBOOK:

- Ideal for calls to action, great place to share other people's content.
- Support an organization with more followers and share their relevant content.
- Leverage each other's community.



Helena Brantley @RedPencilPR · Mar 13

Replying to @rs_sparks @ShelfAwareness and 4 others

I am one of many parents in **#Alameda** trading texts about plans for next 3 weeks. Our **school Board** has emergency mtg today. most think schools will close until April 1. Bookstores + libraries were 1 understand need for plans c + d.



Change The Name of Dixie District @NewNameFor... · Apr 16, 2019

We agree! **Join** us tonight for the **school board meeting**. It starts at 6pm at 380 Nova Albion Way. It's time to **#LoseTheLostCause** in **#Marin #California**.



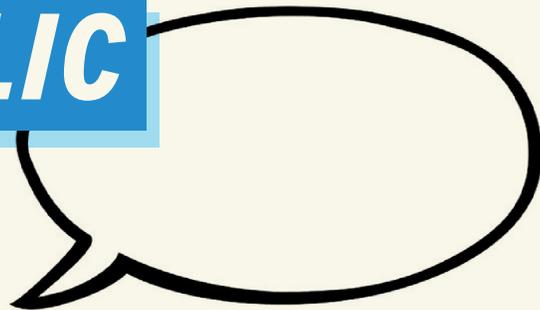
Rep. Jared Huffman @JaredHuffman · Apr 15, 2019

US House candidate, CA-2

Replying to @NewNameForDixie

If they were making fun of you in Red Bluff a century-and-a-half ago, it's probably a good idea to change the name.

EFFECTIVE PUBLIC COMMENT



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PRESENTATION

- Focus on personal stories and personal impact.
- Utilize storytelling techniques and build to an “ask” at the end of your speech
- Include a data snapshot—one or two statistics or research findings—that supports your comments.
- Link your comments directly to the goals articulated by the district in the Local Control Accountability Plan or other strategic priorities document. Borrow the language of these plans to frame your comments to the school board.

BEFORE THE MEETING:

- Research the public comment rules and operating norms on your district website – you may need to sign up to speak prior to the start of in-person meetings and/or register for new online public comment protocols.
- Email board members to provide background on your presentation topic and, if you know there is a board member particularly supportive of the arts, ask that member if you can count on them to agendize the topic after your public comment.
- Coordinate multiple speakers who will make public comment on the same topic and coordinate your messaging if possible.
- Practice reading your comments aloud at least once before the meeting to make sure you can finish within the allotted time (usually 2-3 minutes).

DURING THE MEETING:

- Listen to the presentations that come before so that you do not repeat the exact same messages.
- Don't just read from a piece of paper, try to speak conversationally and be sure to make eye contact with board members.

AFTER THE MEETING:

- Send a follow up email to board members that summarizes your comments and clearly states your request.



As a result of the statewide ‘Safer-at-Home’ order, school board meetings have moved to virtual platforms.

The virtual meeting format could limit public access due to lack of computers or internet service.

Every district is handling the public comment differently in the virtual space so check the district website for new rules regarding public comment.

PUBLIC COMMENT **TALKING POINTS**

The talking points below can be used as a starting point for an effective 3-minute public comment at a school board meeting. In order to maximize impact, advocates should link their comments directly to the goals articulated by the district in the Local Control Accountability Plan or other strategic priorities document. Borrow the language of these plans to frame public comment to the school board. For example, if a district is focused on closing the achievement gap, an advocate should explain how the arts are an effective strategy to achieve this goal.

Research consistently shows that the arts play an integral part in the health and well-being of children. In particular, students are experiencing everything from obstacles to learning, increased homelessness, food shortages and increased mental health challenges as a result of this pandemic. Our students, communities and economy need to heal, and arts education is necessary to the solution.

Multiple research studies show **arts education not only decreases feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation, but also positively impacts all-around academic performance.** Students with an arts education are:

- 5 times more likely to stay in school,
- 3 times more likely to get a bachelor's degree, and
- 4 times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement.

Especially important during this time of trauma and upheaval, students need to develop self-management and self-discipline, interpersonal and relationship skills, and self-expression. Numerous studies show the arts support the development of all of these essential skills.

California's creative economy generates 2.7 million jobs. If we do not provide students access to arts education, we sideline millions of young people soon to enter the workforce and endanger the future of the world's fifth-largest economy.

We know the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 will translate into hard decisions for the state of California and its schools. If budget cuts are unavoidable, we would like to ensure that reductions to the arts are not disproportionate to other state mandated disciplines.

ENGAGING YOUTH VOICE IN ADVOCACY

Students are critical partners in advocacy. Youth-driven student advocacy and adult partnerships can create further pathways for change by:

- *Identifying key issues from those directly impacted by the public education system;*
- *Fostering intergenerational learning;*
- *Building a shared strategy between all stakeholders working towards a common goal;*
- *Implementing a shared strategy in a united way; therefore,*
- *Creating meaningful change in communities driven by the students impacted by education reform.*

PROMISING PRACTICES

• REACHING OUT

Think about young people in your life who are interested in advocacy and local groups of students engaging in civic action. Teachers are also a great resource to get connected to diverse groups of students with varying experiences in school, extracurricular activities and academics. Once you get connected to students, ask them what platforms are most accessible - text, messenger, or social media might be better than email.

• BE SOLUTIONS-ORIENTED

Work with young people to have solution-oriented discussions about the problems they face in their school environment. The partnership should be focused on fostering creative approaches, increasing awareness and ensuring equitable representation to strengthen students' experiences in schools.

• BRIDGE THE EMPATHY GAP

Students do not want to be viewed as lesser or treated like the “other.” Meaningful engagement is empathizing with the student experience while seeing students as partners who can provide valuable insights and information. This includes being treated as professionals who can propose valuable solutions to issues that directly affect them.

• EQUAL PARTNERSHIPS BUILT ON TRUST

Adult and student relationships are built on trust. For meaningful partnerships to occur, recognizing that students are experts in their own experiences in school is essential. When both parties trust each other and believe that the other is acting with the best intentions, both adults and students will feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and using their voices.

[Insert logo(s) here]

[Date]

[Address]

Dear [School Board Member NAME],

We are here to help. As parents, students, arts education organizations and leaders [specify], we commit to support the [location] school board in navigating how best to support our students' learning and mental health during [location's] recovery. Students are at the center of this crisis – facing everything from obstacles to learning, increased homelessness, food shortages and increased mental health challenges. Our students and economy need to heal, and arts education is critical to the solution.

We know the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 will translate into hard decisions for you in the months ahead. Whether through virtual or physical classrooms, providing a comprehensive arts education is integral, and state mandated, for our students.

The arts are key to the healing, learning and resiliency of our students. If cuts are unavoidable, we would like to ensure that reductions to the arts are not disproportionate to other state mandated disciplines. We continue to offer our support and partnership, and to stand in solidarity with students, parents and teachers as they navigate this difficult time.

[Blurb about organization/advocacy efforts if relevant]

As we imagine what the future holds, there are a few things that we can confidently say. The arts will be fundamental in addressing the needs of our students and families affected by the traumatic experiences unfolding. [I, We, Organization] [is/are] ready and committed to advocate for our students' access to the arts they need and deserve. Together we can ensure that our students have the tools necessary to navigate the challenging times ahead and are prepared for a dynamic 21st century workforce.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Arts are Here to Help [Your Community's] Students

The effects of COVID-19 reverberate through all of our lives, as communities across our state, and nation, suffer devastating consequences. Our students are at the center of this crisis – facing everything from obstacles to learning, increased homelessness, food shortages and increased mental health challenges. **Our students and community need to heal, and arts education is necessary to the solution.**

We know the economic devastation caused by COVID-19 is translating to hard decisions for our schools. Whether through virtual or physical classrooms, providing a comprehensive arts education is required by the California Education Code and integral to both the academic and overall success of our students.

Multiple studies show **arts education not only decreases feelings of anxiety, depression, and isolation, but also positively impacts all-around academic performance.** The arts are essential to our students as they process their present and futures.

[We suggest you personalize a section based on the threat level to your community]

- **If you know that the arts are threatened by cuts, communicate cuts and actionable items so community members can join you**
- **If you don't know yet what the cuts are, make it clear that arts are critical and should not be cut disproportionately**
- **Include examples of students/teachers/community members using the arts during Safer at Home order**
- **Include photos and/or images (with appropriate permissions)**

Decisions about how to ensure all students receive the arts education they need and deserve happens at the local level and you, the voter, have the power to make your voice heard. I encourage you to join me in expressing support for our students' learning at our local school board meetings. The California Alliance for Arts Education is providing a toolkit with helpful resources for getting involved and it is free on their website: artsed411.org. Now is the time for our community to make our values clear and make sure the next generation is not left behind.

***Refer to Alliance's Talking Points for additional content**