



Messaging Advice

Defending the freedom for LGBTQ+ students to be themselves

Practical tips for framing our conversations

§ Do assert and lead with the purpose of public education.

§ Do close with a positive, affirming, solutions-oriented message about coming together along shared values and working together for a better future.

§ Avoid explicit partisan finger pointing – use the more general “some politicians” or “some elected officials.”

§ Avoid ceding ground to the political right with parents. Bring parents into the fold by talking about the value of public education and offer solutions to real problems facing students and public education.

TOP-LINE MESSAGE GUIDANCE:

§ No matter who you are, we all want the same: great public schools for every student. We want students to have the freedom to be themselves and pursue their dreams.

§ But today, some politicians are pushing laws that restrict our freedoms, and some are attempting to put students into boxes based on the color of their skin, where they live, or their LGBTQ+ status.

§ They fuel divisions among parents by pushing laws that erase our history, and target and punish educators for doing their jobs. They want to limit what books students can read, and in some cases, exclude students from healthcare, school, and sports.

§ Those who want to divide students rely on a lack of familiarity with LGBTQ+ students to distract us from other very real problems with public education.

§ We are not fooled by their cruel tactics of exclusion and will continue to join parents, students, and educators to make public schools places where we are all free to thrive and support each other for who we are.

§ Educators want to provide every student with an accurate and quality education while some others want to exclude certain kids, denying their schools funding, and excluding people who look like them out of our history books.

§ Instead of attempting to divide communities, we should focus on making sure all students receive the education they deserve, making schools places where children thrive, and where students of all backgrounds have the freedom to learn without fear or intimidation.

§ We know that our public schools work best when parents and educators collaborate on what students need and address the real issues facing our public schools.

§ We need to work together with educators, parents, and elected officials to address the very real issues of teacher shortage, fix teacher pay, and provide all students with the support and opportunities they need to succeed.

Navigating Crisis Communication

General Best Practices

- Monitor the situation and don't make any sudden movements
- Assess escalation frequently
- Don't respond to press inquiries until you have a game plan
- Determine business impact:
 - Who are my audiences? How does this impact them?
 - What is our pain tolerance? How much does this matter?
 - Can this be prevented? Are we already taking the steps?
- Golden rules:
 - Don't answer questions based on speculation
 - Only share what you know
 - The media isn't the only lens through which to tell your story
 - Always set ground rules with reporters if you choose to engage with them
 - Don't repeat a negative
 - Avoid making denials
 - Repetition is reinforcement
 - Know your spokesperson's media ability, and act accordingly (CEA can help)
 - If you have to apologize, do it once

- o Never lie or mislead; never go off the record

*If you begin to face a crisis comms challenge, please reach out to CEA. We have a skilled in-house Communications team that is well-versed in crisis management. We can be a resource, a thought partner, and a sounding board for you.