



# Action-Oriented Media

Minneapolis Summit 2014



# SFER in the Media

Guest commentary: Common Core is for the common good

John're Trotter  
Dec. 14, 2013

As a graduate of Louisiana public schools, I believe it is time to raise our academic standards. High K-12 standards ensure every child receives a quality education, no matter his or her neighborhood or socioeconomic background. High standards help give children the tools they need to succeed today so they may achieve all of their dreams tomorrow.

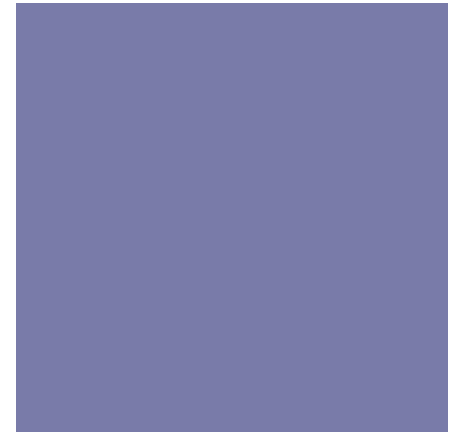
I graduated from a rural high school in Louisiana. I thought was a great school.

**Students Camp on LAUSD Doorstep Demanding Funds for Poor Kids**

By Calvin Ailgot | Tue, Apr 8, 2014 at 5:18 PM

Comments (1)

Like (314) Tweet (40) Pocket (0) Submit





## SFER in the Media

SFER NC received 13 media hits from their Rebuilding the Ladder demonstration at the state house, in addition to placing three op-eds calling for raises to the teacher salary schedule and a more sustainable career ladder. In July, legislators approved a budget that gave raises to teachers earlier in their career.





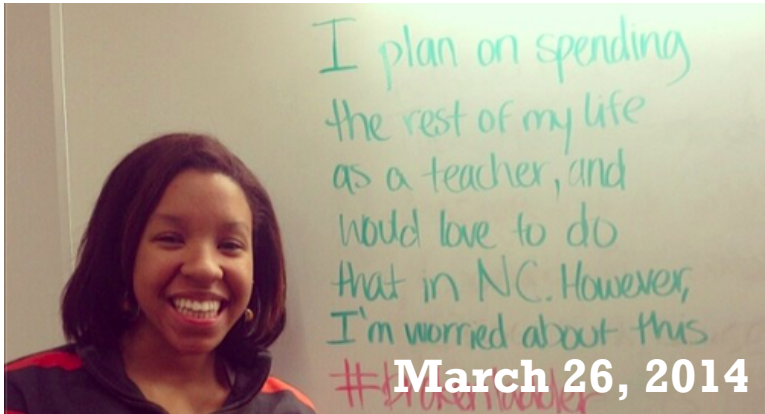
# SFER NC media

SFER North Carolina retweeted  
**Ta-si-a Harris** @tasialogy · Feb 10  
NC teachers deserve more than just higher pay, we need a fundamental change in the way we pay teachers [#brokenladder](#) @PatMcCorryNC

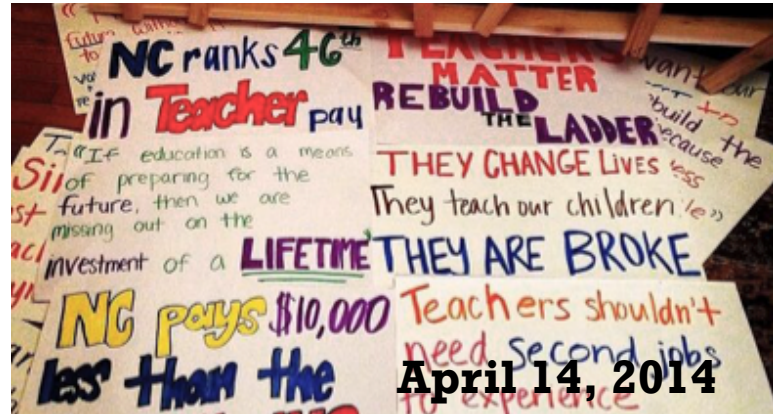
SFER North Carolina retweeted  
**WRAL Gov't Coverage** @NCCapitol · Feb 10  
McCorry: Pay increase "just first step" in plans for NC to invest in teachers. Says state workers also will get raises as budget allows.

SFER North Carolina retweeted  
**Ta-si-a Harris** @tasialogy · Feb 10  
@PatMcCorryNC The profession is more than a paycheck. Give teachers the career they deserve. [#brokenladder](#)

**February 10, 2014**



**March 26, 2014**



**April 14, 2014**



**May 16, 2014**



**August 5, 2014**





**SFER MA  
placed an op-  
ed in the Boston  
Globe and was  
covered by El  
Planeta and  
Univision**



**December 19,  
2013**

**Petition  
delivery media  
coverage:  
March 17, 2014**

**Boston Globe  
op-ed placed:  
March 17, 2014**



## **SFER in the Media**

SFER MA's actions led the legislative education task force committee to push back its deadline on reporting out on H.479/S.225 to improve English language learning programs in Massachusetts's public schools.



# WHY & HOW

North Carolina

Massachusetts





Being Media Ready

# + Requires three things...

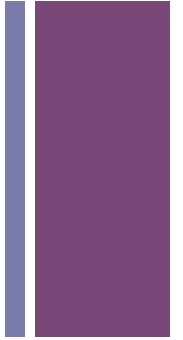
- Be on top of the news (and pop culture)
- Have a plan to respond
- ACT







# What type of news should you be looking at regularly?



- What are your partners, like-minded orgs, dream orgs doing?
- What are your opponents doing?
- What are other folks in the ed reform/social justice/civil rights space doing?
- What is happening in local, state & national politics?
- Online and in social media

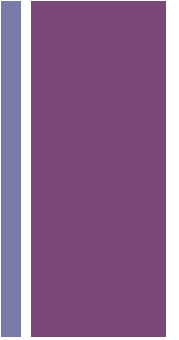


# What's your plan?



- Who's your media point person?
- What's your message?
- Do you have anything prepped?
- Who are you going to contact?

# + ACT!



- Earned media (the best kind of media)
- Place an op-ed
- Social media: #trollpatrol

# + (more of...) How to get coverage!



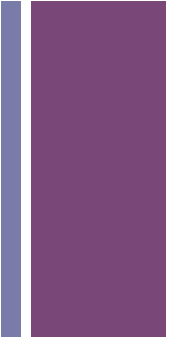
- Establish relationships with reporters
- Tweet at local & statewide reporters who may be interested
- Follow-up post-event: have good visuals & tangible outcomes
- Reporters want a new story—ideally a story with some element of human interest



Key messages

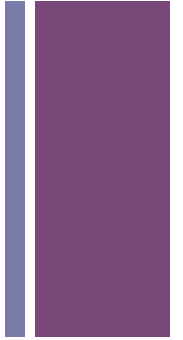


# + Key messages



- Who you are and what you do
- Why do you need to exist and how are you different
- Story of how you came to be

# + Key messages

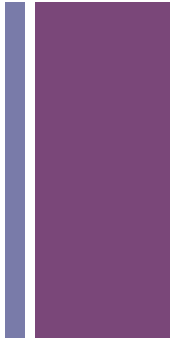


- We are recent k-12 graduates who work to create better schools in our communities
- We are the missing voice in education reform
- SFER started as a campus group on one campus, raising awareness about education inequities. Now, we've grown to a national movement of 75 chapters across 25 states, fighting for better schools in our communities.



High expectations,  
High supports

# + High expectations



Each chapter:

- Holds at least one awareness event per semester that exposes larger student population and/or local community to issues of educational inequity
- Provides student representation at a local or statewide policy-oriented community event at least once a month (school board, town hall)
- Participates in or leads at least one action that drives toward policy change a semester (in line with theory of impact)
- **Receive media coverage in at least one news outlet or publication each year (op-ed in campus paper, action covered in local news, etc.)**

# + High supports

- Student leaders: student coordinators, capacity captains, state captains
- E-organizing team
- National staff
- Resource portal







+

Op-eds



# Constructing Your Op-ed



An Op-ed is an informed commentary on a current issue that aims to persuade an audience to a certain way of thinking and encourages action.

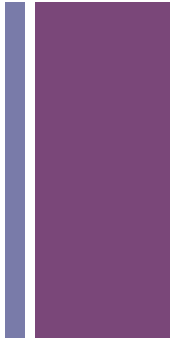


## Examples of op-eds

[Troy Simon in defense of Sci Academy and charters in New Orleans](#)



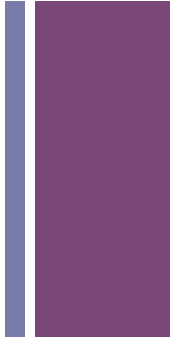
# + Before You Get Started



- Choose a topic for which you have a passion and/or personal connection.
- Decide the tone of your piece. Think about what you want the reader to feel.
- Consider what action you hope the reader will take.
- Research your topic, including other op-eds about your topic, to see what is effective.
- Pull points from your research that may support your argument.

\*Consult Op-ed Development Worksheet in Training Guide Appendix

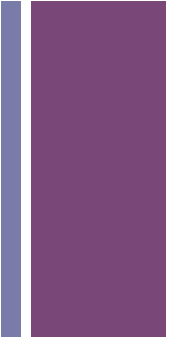
# + Basic Op-ed Structure



- **Lede/Lead:** news hook, engages the reader
- **Thesis:** concisely conveys your stance on an issue
- **Body:** provides evidential support (stats, news reports, quotations) from credible sources
- **Opposition** (optional): rebuts potential criticism of the weaknesses in the argument
- **Call to action:** leaves the audience with a mission of “what to do next”



# + Lead



- “Lately, Sci Academy and other New Orleans public charter schools have been the center of some controversy over their disciplinary policies.”

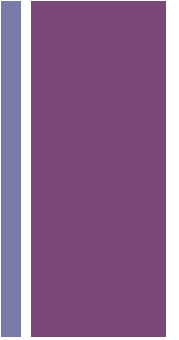


# Crafting a Thesis



- List the broad topic you want to address
- Narrow the focus to something more specific
- Form an opinion or stance. Are you against or in support of your topic?
- Revise this opinion to make an assertion clarified by your preliminary research
  - Introduce information that your average reader may not have already

# + Thesis



- “As a recent alumnus, I can confidently say that my time as a student at Sci Academy was one of the most academically challenging and rewarding experiences I have ever had, and that, without Sci Academy, I never would have made it to college.”



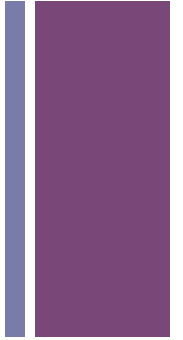
# Check the Strength of Your Thesis



- Is it specific?
- Is it clear?
- Does it take a side?



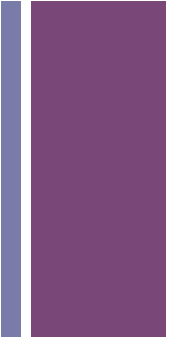
# Body: Putting the Pieces Together



- State your argument (thesis).
- Explain how your subject is personal to you.
  - What led you to this opinion?
- List a few potential points for your supporting arguments
  - Statistics, case studies, current successful examples
- Acknowledge/address your opposition's main argument (optional)



# + Body



- “Before I attended high school, I struggled with illiteracy. I was embarrassed, and so I turned to mischief to hide my difficulty reading. I refused to do my work in class and deflected my teachers' questions whenever they would call on me. Other times I started fights or pretended to sleep until the bell rung. I had mixed feelings about school, because I thought that my teachers had marked me as a failure...”



# Call to Action



- Define a call to action
  - Now that you have informed your readers, what do you want them to do?

“Every student in Louisiana deserves to feel this way; charters like Sci can help make this possible.”



Congratulations! You have your first draft!





# Keys to Getting Published



- Timeliness: what is in the news now?
- Ingenuity: how do you present your story differently?
- Strength of argument: do you have the facts to back it?
- Freshness of opinion: new interpretation of an on-going issue
- Clear writing: do you know what you are fighting for?
- Newsworthiness: why should readers care about your cause? How does it affect them?
- Personalize your connection to the larger issue
- Make a single point well
- Recommend a course of action: name specific resources
- Avoid jargon

# + Dissect the op-ed



- **Asking Minneapolis Public Schools: What are we worth?**
- Lead
- Thesis
- Body
- Call to Action



# Dissect the op-ed



## ■ Lead:

On May 27, Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) presented a budget recommendation for the 2014-2015 school year to the Minneapolis Public Schools Board of Education. On June 10, the Board of Education approved an amended version of this budget, reallocating money to different purposes and departments.



# Dissect the op-ed

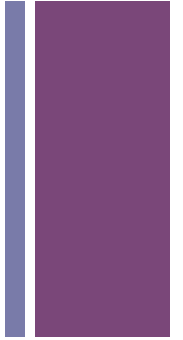


## ■ Thesis

In the current budget, the Office of Black Male Achievement was awarded a paltry \$200,000 out of the total \$774,000,000. That is just over one-fortieth of 1 percent of the overall budget, allocated to serve all black males in a district where African-Americans make up the largest single demographic group at 36 percent of enrollment.



# Dissect the op-ed



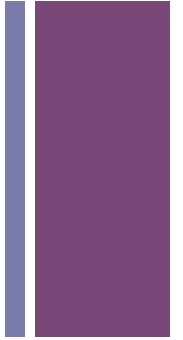
## Body

- I am a black male. I have heard countless times that MPS is going to focus on black male achievement and would establish an office to support black males in MPS.
- In the context of President Barack Obama's 2012 call to action in signing an executive order for Educational Excellence for African Americans...
- Gifted and Talented students





# Dissect the op-ed



## Call to action

- I encourage students, parents, and education allies to ask these pertinent questions: How did these figures get determined? How did MPS prioritize student needs? What specific goals is MPS trying to accomplish with each "bucket" of funds? And, most important, when it comes time to budget next year, what metrics will be used to determine the allocation of funds?
- I encourage the Minneapolis Public Schools to increase funding for the Black Male Achievement, Gifted and Talented, and English Language Learner programs.