

HOW TO WRITE A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Share with your community how lawmakers are supporting (or not supporting) public education.

Why do it?

Letters to the editor allow individuals to share with their community an opinion of how lawmakers' actions in Harrisburg are supporting (or not supporting) public schools in the communities they represent.

Legislators care deeply about how their constituents perceive them and pay close attention to what is in their local papers. Letters to the editor are a critical tool in holding lawmakers accountable for the role they play in supporting (or not supporting) public education.

Talking points about state funding for schools

- Pennsylvania ranks 44th in the nation in terms of state share for funding K-12 education.
- When state funding is inadequate, school districts are over reliant on property taxes to fund schools.
- For many years, communities have paid higher local taxes and schools districts have made deep cuts as a result of inadequate state funding.
- The current system hurts children and communities. Lawmakers must come together to support adequate and equitable funding for PA's public schools.

A sample letter to the editor

Dear Editor,

I am writing because at my local school, kindergarten was cut from full-day to half-day. This puts a financial burden on my family that we were not anticipating. In addition, I am afraid that my child will not be as prepared for grade school with half-day kindergarten as she would have been with full-day. I feel our local lawmakers need to understand that education, especially early education, is an important and necessary investment in our community, our future workforce, and our economy as a whole. I most strongly urge Representative X and Senator X to support additional funding for our local public schools and additional revenue in the state budget to pay for this funding. Our community can't raise enough local revenue to provide children the opportunities they need and deserve. We need Harrisburg to do its fair share and fund our schools.

A Few Tips:

- **Be brief and to the point.**

A letter to the editor should be 250-300 words. An op-ed is a longer piece. These can usually be up to 750 words. If you are planning to write an op-ed it is useful to contact the editorial page editor to verify the maximum length they will accept.

- **Include your information.**

Make sure to include your name, address, email and phone number. The newspaper will contact you to confirm who you are.

- **Tell a story.**

Tell the story of something that has happened in your community or schools and describe the impact this has had. What has been lost or cut? How has this impacted children, your family or individuals in your community?

- **Be kind and highlight the impact.**

You may not agree with your legislator's actions or votes. However, avoid the temptation to attack him/her. Highlighting the impact that his/her decision has on your local community is the best way to hold lawmakers accountable for their actions in Harrisburg.

