

# OUR MESSAGE, YOUR STORY

## Crafting Stories to Persuade in Utah's Tax Restructuring Effort

There is power in collectively sharing a common message. But, an important part of any successful communications effort is developing and telling individual stories to support the collective message.

### **OUR MESSAGE** ABOUT TAX RESTRUCTURING...

BACKGROUND: While revenues for education are up (Education Fund), the state has experienced much slower growth in revenues for other services (General Fund). To address this, the 2019 Legislature created a "Tax Restructuring and Equalization Task Force" charged to study taxes and make recommendations. A primary concern is that many solutions discussed to date could impair the state's ability to grow public education funding.

### THE **UEA SUPPORTS** TAX POLICY SOLUTIONS THAT...

- 1) Grow public education investments in student success
  - Our students need secure, sustainable and growing education revenue sources.
  - We must safeguard resources available for public education as provided by the Utah constitutional guarantee directing income tax to education.
  
- 2) Provide equitable resources for ALL students to learn and thrive
  - All students, regardless of zip code, deserve learning opportunities in safe schools, classes small enough for one-on-one attention and up-to-date learning materials tools.
  - Students cannot learn when they are hungry, stressed or in pain. Families in need should be provided support services like nutrition, counseling and health care.
  
- 3) Allow the state to attract and retain qualified teachers and other school staff
  - We support teaching as a sustainable profession.
  - We must ensure that every educator has the resources, mentoring and support they need to ensure student success.
  - Resources must be provided to address stress factors driving teachers from the profession such as:
    - class sizes well beyond recommended norms for optimal student learning;
    - over-focus on standardized tests;
    - lack of classroom support (counselors, librarians, paraeducators, etc.);
    - increasing student social, emotional and behavior issues; and
    - insufficient mentoring support for educators entering the profession.

## YOUR STORY ABOUT TAX RESTRUCTURING...

Now it's your turn. Utah's tax restructuring effort presents an opportunity for teachers to share personal, student-centered stories. You can use your story in many ways:

- A **blog post** telling how education funding impacts your students
- An **op-ed** explaining why your students need solutions that grow education funding
- A **conversation with your legislator** to gain their support for a fair tax structure
- A **social media post** sharing the un-met needs of at-risk students in your classroom
- A **town hall meeting** comment letting legislators know why their solution must include new funding to adequately and equitably support the needs of ALL students

## WORKSHEET FOR CREATING YOUR STORY:

**GET THEIR ATTENTION** - an attention-grabbing introduction

**WHAT'S THE POINT?** - your main message

**WHAT'S IN IT FOR THEM?** - a persuasive ask