



## Tip Sheet: Working with the Media

Getting stories placed on your local newspaper, being a source for reporters and helping to shape or correct stories, is a terrific way to ensure that your messages get out to community members.

**Pitching stories:** Have great news to share or a newsworthy school or district event? The best way to pitch reporters is often just to send your local reporter an email. In your email, explain to the reporter why readers, listeners or viewers will be interested and what makes it “newsworthy.”

Keep your message short and include information that will allow the reporter to write a story including your contact information. Do not get frustrated if the media doesn’t always cover your news. Keep trying.

**Submitting articles:** Another way to spread news is to submit an article. The best way to do this is to contact the editor of your local newspaper and ask if they will accept an article about the topic of your choosing. Ask for a word count and do not go over. Finally, make sure to meet all deadlines.

**Being a great source:** Are you a source for your local reporters? If not, you should be. Always return media calls as quickly as possible and remember these rules of media engagement.

Being “on the record” means that everything you say to a reporter can be quoted. Being “on background” means that they can use everything you provide them for their story and the information will be attributed to you but you won’t be quoted. It’s often easiest to ask to be on background as you provide information.

**Interview like a pro:** When working with the media know exactly what you are going to say and when to stop talking. Use talking points.

**Remember this!** Remember that reporters, even those who cover education every day, do not have nearly the level of understanding of education that you do. Always provide reporters with the information they ask for and the information they should have asked for. Often, these are two different things.