

How-To Guide for Media Contact – Focus Day 2009

A vital aspect of our lobbying efforts on Focus Day will be to earn widespread media coverage. It is important that we leverage our efforts towards a visible event into hundreds or thousands of additional exposures to the message we deliver.

WSPTA will send out press releases to the major traditional media outlets, but PTA is relying on you to make contacts in your local community with the local newspapers and radio stations, as well as you PTA newsletters and websites. We are also asking you to think outside the traditional mainstream media to contact local bloggers and to use your social networking sites like Facebook, LinkedIn, and MySpace to publicize this event, both before and after.

1. **Alert the Media:** You will find a sample media press release to use on the WSPTA website, under the Focus Day page's "How-To Guides". Look in your local paper to find the contact info for the reporter who is responsible for covering local interest stories. About one week before Focus Day, e-mail the media advisory, customized with your name and phone number and, of course, any details about your local unit's plans for participation in Focus Day (maybe you are planning a carpool send-off party or have filled a bus with citizen advocates eager to rally on the steps; maybe you have some compelling stories about school funding and how the current broken system hurts your district, etc). Local newspapers are often seeking new material, a local angle, and a fresh "hook" on which they can base a story, and your activity could be what they are seeking.
2. **Follow-up:** Once you have sent the media advisory, follow up in a few days with a phone call, confirming that the media advisory was received and offering to answer any questions the reporter may have. If you do not know the answer, feel free to say so, and that you will find out and get back to them.
3. **Post-event Press Release and Follow-up:** Immediately after Focus Day, State PTA will issue a sample press release for use. You may do the same process of customization for local, relevant details and contact info. Again, you'll want to customize it with details of the event from your perspective, any photos, names of participants, a quote or two from attendees of their impressions, etc. Then follow up with your contact to confirm that it was received and offer to answer any questions. Remember to get a blurb into your PTA newsletter and/or website as well.
4. **Share:** If you took photos or video, upload them to a public directory or other outlet (i.e., Flickr, YouTube) and then promote that outlet to your friends and local unit members. Tell your story on your Facebook, MySpace, or LinkedIn page.

Good media coverage will allow us to build momentum and energy for our issues, and amplify and repeat our message. We appreciate your help with accomplishing these goals.

**Your Local Unit's media effort WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE
in this legislative session!**

Thank you!

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