



Your voice is important, and a necessary part of conversations on resource equity. The following slides will help you leverage your story and your community's data to “make the case” for equitable teaching quality and diversity.

The slides are broken down into three sections:

- Issue & Impact
- Building Your Message
- Dismantling Opposition

The next two slides will provide further background information and data on teaching quality and diversity, and its impact on students. Consider utilizing these national trends as important context as you begin to craft your own local message on the slides immediately following these two. This information may also be helpful to refer back to as you consider ways to dismantle opposition, as discussed later in the slide deck.

Teacher quality and diversity are intertwined aims that both fundamentally contribute to a student's success in the classroom, especially for students of color, who often thrive in classrooms led by teachers who share their racial and cultural background.

Teacher quality is the largest in-school factor for student success.¹



Students learn more when teachers hold high expectations of them, deliver strong instruction, assign grade-appropriate work, and encourage active engagement.²



Highly effective teachers change students' life trajectories, making it more likely that students earn higher salaries and save more money for retirement.³

Teacher diversity is beneficial for all students, especially students of color.



Students of color with access to same-race teachers are more likely to graduate from high school, attend school regularly, take advanced courses, and aspire to attend college.⁴



Teaching that recognizes and relates to students' backgrounds leads to improved academic engagement and outcomes.⁵

- Strong, diverse teachers play an indispensable role in students' experiences in school.
- Strong teachers directly contribute to student learning by delivering rigorous and relevant instruction, forming personal relationships with students to meet their distinct needs, and creating a supportive classroom environment that promotes social, emotional, and academic development. Research has consistently demonstrated the impact of strong teachers on a student's success in the classroom and for the rest of their life.
- Having a racially diverse teacher workforce that reflects the student population is a fundamental part of considering what makes for a strong teacher workforce. All students benefit from a teacher workforce that reflects their community. All students benefit when they have access to teachers that look like them and their peers.

Inequitable patterns of teacher distribution and lack of racially inclusive teacher workforces mean that Black and Latino students are more likely to be taught by novice teachers and teachers who do not look like them.

The diversity of the national public school teacher workforce does not reflect the diversity of the student population.



Percentage of students of color in our nation's schools



Percentage of teachers of color in our nation's schools

While students of color make up more than 50% of the K-12 public school student population, teachers of color comprise less than 20% of the teacher workforce.⁶



Many Black and Latino students attend schools without a single teacher who matches their race or ethnicity.⁷



Percentage of schools without a single teacher of color⁸

Novice teachers, who have less experience in the classroom and may be less effective than more experienced teachers, are more likely to teach students of color and students from low-income backgrounds.⁹

In 1 in 4 states, schools with the most Black students have at least **twice as many** novice teachers as schools with the fewest Black students.¹⁰

In more than half of all states, Latino students have more novice teachers than their peers.¹¹

- For many states, the lack of diversity means that most of its students attend schools and districts that do not have a single teacher of color on staff.
- Students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are also more likely to attend schools with larger percentages of uncertified and inexperienced teachers.
- These patterns of teacher distribution undermine the benefits that all students — and especially students of color — experience when they have access to strong teachers that reflect their racial and linguistic diversity.

Making the case for improving **Teacher Quality & Diversity** hinges on effectively communicating their importance, urgency, and connection to your community.

3 Key Elements of Effective Messaging



Keep it simple.

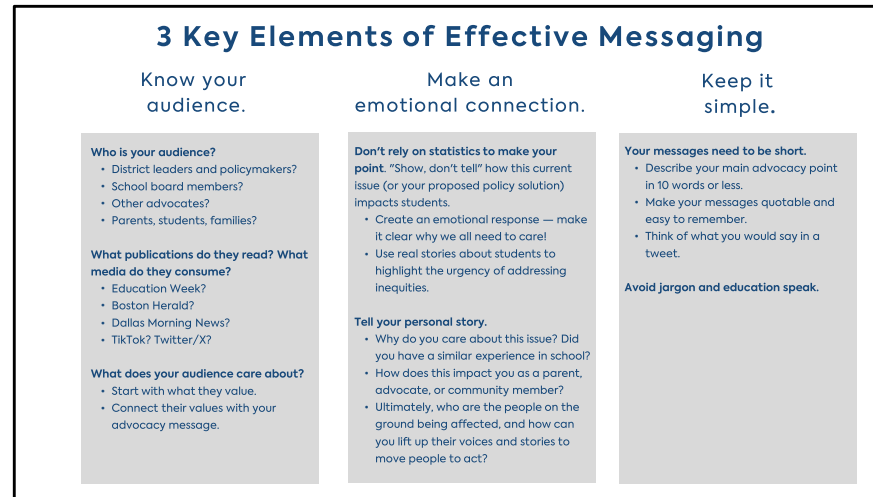


Know your audience.



Make an emotional connection.

The following slides will help you build an effective message to increase teacher quality and diversity in your community. All effective messages have 3 key components. Adhering to these components is by no means easy given the complexity of resource equity work, but the more you can do so, the larger an impact your message is likely to have. These 3 components are: keeping it simple, knowing your audience, and making an emotional connection. The next slide will explain each in more detail.



1. Knowing your Audience

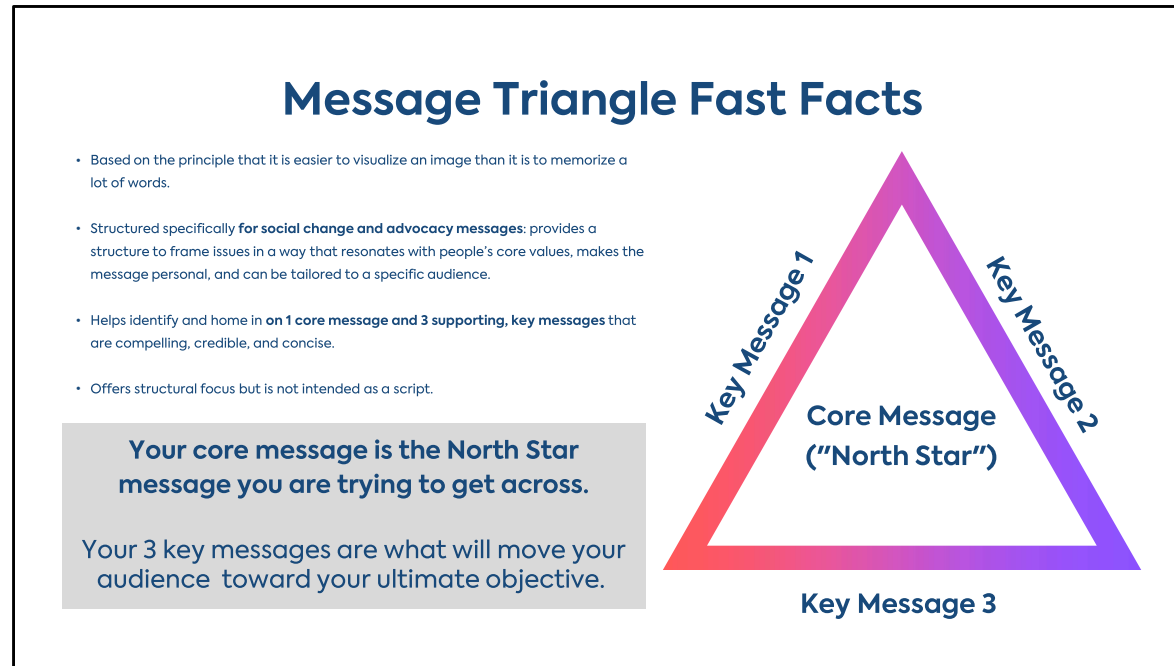
- While it may be tempting to label “everyone” as your audience, the more personalized you can make your message, the more likely it will be to have an impact. Once you’ve identified your specific audience, consider their values or what they care deeply about, keeping in mind that this will likely differ from what you value most. Then, connect your message to your audiences’ values and priorities.
- Once you have your message, share it in places your audience frequents. Look for news outlets that cater to specific stakeholders, or public events your audience attends. Establishing trust is imperative for this strategy to be effective. Your audience will only listen to your message if they a) receive it and b) trust you as a reliable and accurate source of information.

2. Make an Emotional Connection

- People respond to emotion and passion, so use it in your messaging! The more personal and local you can make the issue, the more likely your audience will be to act. Stories are one of the most effective ways to do this. Often the most powerful stories come from the people most affected by the issue itself – in this case children and families. When asking these stakeholders to share their stories, make the process as easy as possible for them by offering training and removing barriers to participation like transportation and childcare. Offering multiple modes through which stakeholders can share their story, such as virtual or written options, is also helpful when feasible.

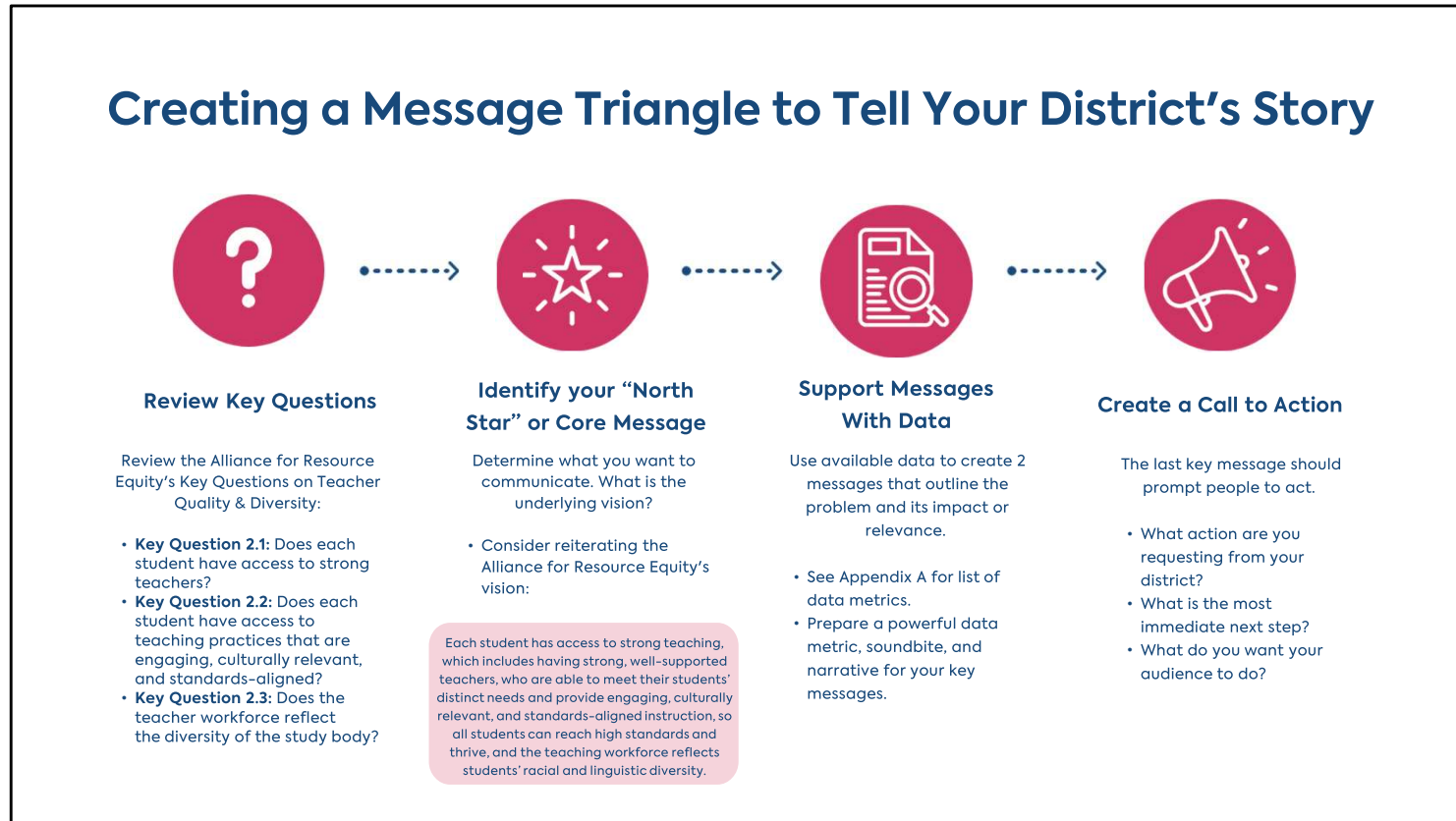
3. Keep It Simple

- Your audience can’t act on your message if they don’t understand what you’re asking of them. Your messaging should be simple, concise, and easy to understand. This means avoiding any language that requires advanced knowledge of the education field and being clear from the start about what you are asking your audience to do. It also means being consistent in your messaging over time and across coalitions to avoid confusing your targets.



The Message Triangle is one useful strategy for structuring your messaging. It distinguishes between two types of messages - “core” and “key” messages, which are outlined below. When building your Message Triangle, use asset framing to ensure you are placing the blame for inequity on systems and structures, instead of students or communities.

- **The Core Message:** The “Core Message” or “North Star” is your main point, goal, or value that you want to communicate to your audience. It drives all other messaging for your audience and is the message that, if nothing else, you want your audience to walk away remembering. If the message triangle is an essay, the core message serves as the essay’s thesis.
- **The Key Messages:** There are three “Key Messages” in every Message Triangle, each of which intentionally build off one another to drive your audience to support and take action towards your main goal (or Core Message).
 - The first Key Message identifies and establishes the issue affecting your community that you want your audience to address. It breaks down the federal, state, and/or local inequity you have identified so that your audience, who will likely not be as well versed on the issue as you, has a full understanding of the topic you will go on to discuss.
 - The second Key Message showcases the impact of this issue, either broadly or on your specific community, and how addressing it will have a positive impact on students in your area. In doing so, the second Key Message demonstrates why your audience should care about the issue you have raised, and why they should act now to address it.
 - The third Key Message is your call to action, prompting your audience to act in service of your goal. It explains exactly what you want your audience to do about the issue you have brought to their attention.



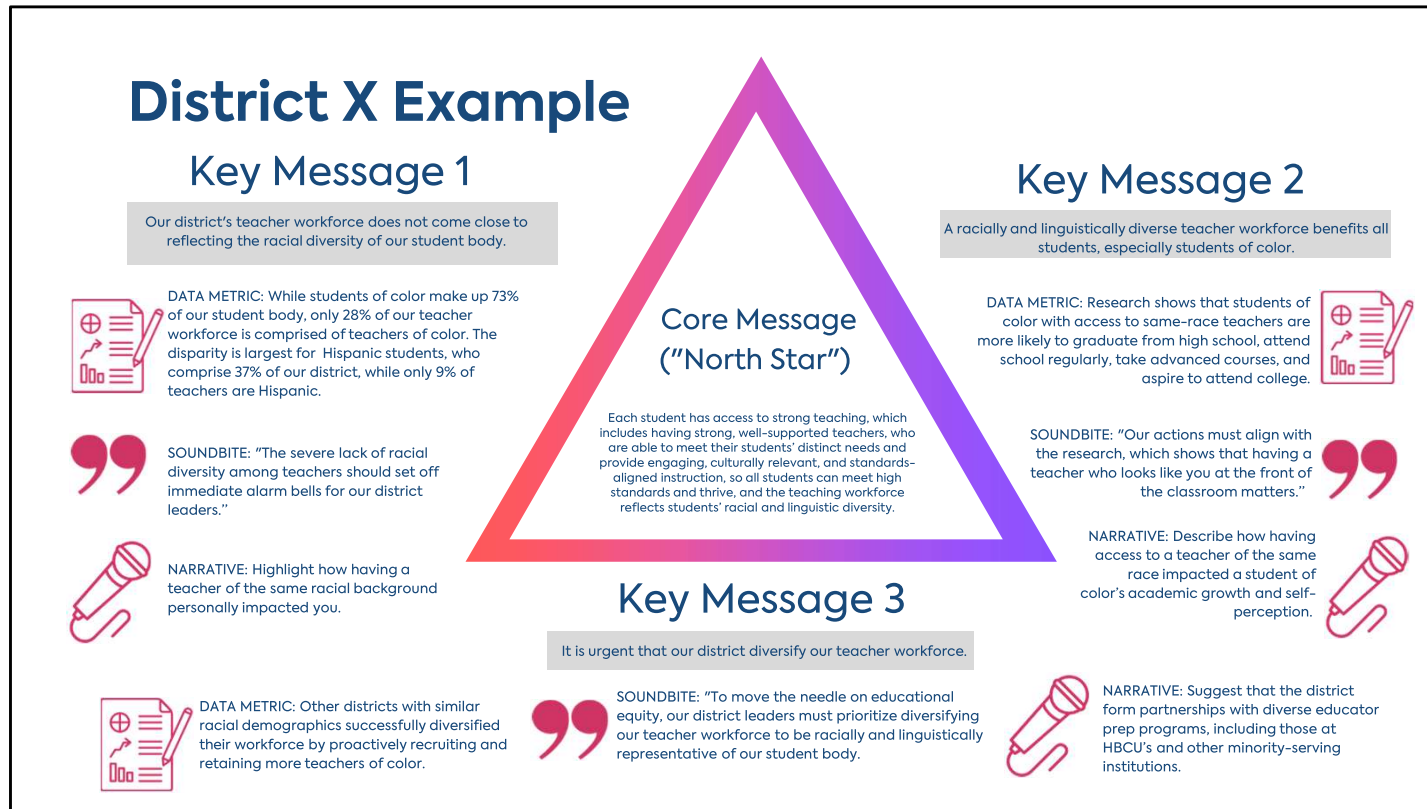
- Now that you know what a Message Triangle is, how do you create one? Start by reviewing the Alliance for Resource Equity's Key Questions on Teacher Quality & Diversity to ensure you have considered all facets of teacher & quality diversity. You can also turn to the Teacher Quality & Diversity Section of the Education Combination (pgs. 11-14) for more information. Then, develop a goal or vision for your work. This overarching vision will become your Core Message – a succinct but comprehensive description of what it is you are advocating for and why.
- You can then move on to developing your Key Messages. To do so, first look at available data, such as your state department of education's District Report Card, in order to develop a thorough understanding of teacher quality & diversity in your community. Appendix A provides additional suggestions for data sources to explore. Then use your findings to craft your first two Key Messages, which define the scope and impact of the problem on your community. Build off these to create your third Key Message – your call to action – which tells your audience what to do in response to the problem you've identified. More information on drafting Key Messages can be found in the following slide.

Forming Key Messages 101

- 1** **Start by analyzing metrics (Appendix A) to help answer the key question in the dimension.**
For instance, comparing the % of teachers of color and the % of students of color, by individual race/ethnicity subgroup could help determine the answer to Key Question 2.3: "Does the teacher workforce reflect student diversity?"
- 2** **Consider the available data points.**
What story do they tell? How directly do they speak to the issue?
Let's suppose we learn that 28% of the district's teachers are people of color, while 73% of students are students of color, and there is a pronounced disparity of Hispanic teachers. **We decide to use these data points to inform our key messages.**
- 3** **Solidify the message.**
 - **Key Message 1 identifies the issue:** Our district's teacher workforce does not reflect the racial diversity of our student body.
 - **Key Message 2 explains why this matters:** A racially and linguistically diverse teacher workforce benefits all students, especially students of color.
 - **Key Message 3 advances a call to action:** Our district must diversify our teacher workforce.
- 4** **Use additional elements to support your key messages.** For Key Message 1, this could look like:
 - **An illustrative data metric:** Although students of color make up 73% of our student body, just 28% of our teachers are people of color. The disparity is especially pronounced for Hispanic students, who comprise 37% of the student body, while Hispanic teachers are only 9% of the teacher workforce.
 - **A punchy soundbite to use for an interview:** The severe lack of racial teacher diversity should set off immediate alarm bells for our district leaders.
 - **A powerful narrative element:** Describe how you personally benefited from having a teacher who shares your racial or ethnic background.

This slide provides an example for the 3rd step from the previous slide: Forming Key Messages. As a reminder, these 3 Key Messages will form each side of your Message Triangle in the end!

- Step 1: First, consult Appendix A in this deck for suggested metrics and data sources that could help inform your message triangle. (You can also utilize district-specific data or materials you may have access to, or if you previously completed the Resource Equity Diagnostic, you could refer back to those data sources.)
- Step 2: Let's imagine that the third metric listed in Appendix A (Key Question 2.3) reveals a significant finding: there's a big difference between the percentage of Hispanic students (37%) and the percentage of Hispanic teachers in the district (9%). Given this, you decide to use this data point to inform your Message Triangle, and later, you can reference it to help illustrate the issue.
- Step 3: It's now time for you to build your message! Now, you can go back and add more detail to each Key Message in the next step.
 - Key Message 1 states the issue: **"Our district's teacher workforce does not reflect the racial and cultural diversity of our student body."**
 - Key Message 2 identifies why the issue presented in the first Key Message matters. It answers the question of why your audience should care about this issue: **"A racially and linguistically diverse teacher workforce benefits all students, and especially students of color."**
 - Key Message 3 presents a call to action to mobilize your audience. It answers the question of what you want my audience to do about it: **"Our district needs to diversify their teacher workforce by prioritizing how to recruit and retain well-qualified Hispanic teachers."**
- Step 4: Return to each Key Message to add some supporting information.
 - Preparing an illustrative data metric, a punchy soundbite (a very brief, catchy statement intended to capture interest of audience and ideal for a media quote), and a powerful narrative element (personal story, anecdote of a child's experience, etc.) can help you be ready when the right opportunities arise to leverage them.
 - See FAQ's (Slide 13) for more information on what makes for a compelling soundbite and effective narrative element.
 - You'll use the data metric, soundbite, and narrative element in the ways that will be most powerful to the specific audience you're engaging with. For instance, you may be likely to use soundbites when engaging with the media, share a personal story when in conversation with other advocates, and a data metric with district leaders.
 - Make sure the data metrics you are preparing are easily understood and explained in a straightforward manner.



- This is an example of a completed Message Triangle on teacher quality & diversity. Notice the presence of a data metric, soundbite, and narrative under each of the key messages presented here. As discussed above, these different methods of communicating can be useful for ensuring your message “lands” with different audiences. It is up to you to determine what method (or combination of methods) will work best for your audience. For example, if you were using the message triangle here to make the case for a more diverse teacher workforce to your school board, you might first present Key Message 1 as a data metric to describe the overall issue to the school board. You might then choose to present Key Message 2 as a narrative to exemplify how the lack of a diverse teacher workforce impacts the experiences of many students in the district, bringing the statistic shared in Key Message 1 into clearer focus with a tangible and personal story with Key Message 2. Finally, you might close with a soundbite for Key Message 3 to leave the school board with a clear call to action that sticks in their minds.
- It is important to note that, while the Message Triangle is a powerful tool for visualizing your goal and all the arguments you can make to get there, it is not prescriptive. We encourage you to view the Message Triangle as a jumping off point; used to further refine your own messaging and tailor it to the needs of your community and the values of your audience.

Message Triangle Checklist

Does your message triangle do ALL of the following?



Align with the shared values of your audience?

- Shared values allow the conversation to start from a place of agreement.
- This requires knowing your audience first!



Define the impact?

- Do your supporting facts (data metrics, narratives, soundbites) explain how those shared values are being undermined? Clearly outlining the consequences and inequities helps convey a sense of urgency without exaggerating the problem.



Asset-frame the issue?

- Define the scope of the issue in terms of systems and structures, not students, and avoid defining marginalized communities using deficit-based language.



Highlight the benefits?

- After establishing the issue/problem, explain how your solution SUPPORTS your shared values. Explicitly stating the value helps reaffirm tangible outputs your stakeholder cares about.



Include a call to action?

- A positive vision helps your audience realize what's possible and recognize the role they play in sparking the change.

- Use this checklist to ensure your message triangle meets all the suggested criteria. Adjust as necessary.
- This is the last step in this section of the deck, Constructing Your Messaging. The next section discusses how to dismantle opposition.
- For more information on asset-based framing, see Slide 13 (FAQs).

Dismantling Opposition and Avoiding Traps

- **Bad information:** Don't repeat the negative, incorrect, or inflammatory language. Instead, find a positive spin in your response and/or calmly correct misinformation before moving to your positive response.
- **Speculation:** Instead of trying to predict the future, reiterate your key message and the information you do know.
- **Irrelevant Question:** Use a bridging statement to connect back to your key message.



- It is inevitable that you will face criticism when presenting your message. The following slides will help you respond to criticism and focus attention back on your message. There are three main types of criticism: Bad Information, Speculation, and Irrelevant Questions. This slide offers best practices when responding to each.
- One tactic that is useful in responding to any type of criticism is bridging statements. These statements create a bridge between the opposition's argument and your own. Their goal is to bring the conversation back to, and therefore reinforce, your own points. When using a bridging statement, it is important to never reiterate the opposing argument. Instead, briefly acknowledge that your opposition's point was shared, before using a bridging statement to connect back to your messaging.

Question/concern that ...	BRIDGING STATEMENT	Your response hits on your key messages in service of core “North Star” message
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distracts from key issue• Introduces dangerous line of opposition• Expresses different mission/goal		
We shouldn't be focusing on the race of our district's teachers when we're experiencing such severe teacher shortages.	While the severity of the shortages in our district is important, it's also important to remember that...	Having a diverse teacher workforce has a huge impact on student opportunities and outcomes. In this way, our students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are currently being underserved by our school system, which may also be contributing to increased discipline referral rates, lower graduation rates, and less access to advanced coursework and college- and career-ready educational opportunities. Part of understanding the severity of teacher shortages is also examining the lack of teachers of color in the teaching pipeline and classroom.
We should be prioritizing the quality of a teacher, not just their race.	I think it would be more accurate to recognize that these two things are not differing or opposing aims.	Teaching quality and diversity are intertwined, inseparable aims. For all students, and especially for students of color, having a quality teacher means having a teacher that looks like them. Teachers of color often hold higher expectations of their students of color. In one study, students with Black teachers scored higher in math and reading and had lower rates of chronic absenteeism, on average, than those assigned to White teachers. Black students assigned black teachers self-reported higher levels of self-efficacy, happiness, and engagement in class compared to Black students assigned a White teacher.
We aren't hiring teachers of color because we can't find any teachers of color to hire.	This highlights why we should be taking a more targeted, proactive approach.	Districts can be taking multiple proactive actions to better recruit and engage with prospective teachers of color. Traditional approaches to teacher recruitment have been shown to be less effective at attracting individuals of color than their White peers, so targeted supports — such as partnerships with HBCUs and other minority-serving educator prep programs, as well as innovative teacher pipeline programs, such as Grow Your Own (GYO) models — are necessary.

This slide identifies some of the opposing narratives you may encounter, and how to use the bridging statement format to bring the conversation back to a place where you can emphasize your own messaging.

- For example, the misguided-yet-popular claim that teacher shortages should prevent action to diversify the district’s workforce is found on the left-most column in this slide. As a suggested response to this opposition, advocates can use the bridging statement in the middle column to first, recognize how shortages may be a legitimate concern, and second, clarify how this cannot supersede other priorities, such as in this case, diversifying the district’s teacher workforce. This bridge allows advocates to then further dismantle the opposing claim that reinforces key messages about the imperative of all students having teachers that look like them (response in right-most column).
- These examples are intended to be representative in nature: they reflect the broad lines of opposition that advocates may often hear when engaging on this issue. However, it’s important to note that opposing narratives might be framed differently as presented on this slide. When this is the case, you may still be able to use a bridging statement and response that is similar to what is presented on this slide. For instance:
 - You may encounter opposition that sounds like: “We don’t have the money in our budget this year to focus on diversifying our teacher workforce, so we just need to focus on hiring new teachers that can effectively teach our students.”
 - While this does not explicitly mention teacher shortages, it expresses a similar core claim: Both opposing narratives **cite a barrier (shortages, budget limitations)** that justifies **de-prioritizing the importance** of a diverse teacher workforce during the hiring process. Therefore, you could use the same general arguments as listed under the first example in this slide, even though the original opposing message is not identical.

FAQ's

- Why does this sample message triangle work?**
 - All key messages connect to one another.
 - Each key message includes a data metric, soundbite, and narrative element.
 - Each element is concise and uses asset-framing.
 - Each key message speaks directly to the core message in center of triangle.
- What if we don't have access to the information we need for the data metrics?**
 - Ask your district to provide the data to you.
 - Use this message triangle to push for better data transparency.
 - In the meantime, rely on national data trends instead.
- What makes for an effective narrative element?**
 - The best story to share is your own!
 - But don't get bogged down by the details. Ask yourself what you are trying to communicate, what emotions you want to evoke, and why this specific issue matters to you.
- What makes for a compelling sound bite?**
 - Define your objectives — what do you want others to remember?
 - Be concise (aim for 10 seconds or less), clear (avoid jargon, acronyms, technical terms), and catchy (consider using a quick story, anecdote, metaphor, etc. to help illustrate your point).
 - Practice! The best sound bites are authentic but not off the cuff.
- What do you mean by asset-framing? How do I do that?**
 - Data doesn't frame itself ... and is susceptible to misinterpretation.
 - This misinterpretation is especially harmful to historically marginalized communities.
 - Key messages should highlight the systems and structures within your district that act as barriers to equitable opportunities and outcomes. This "structure-not-student" approach is known as **asset-framing**.
 - Asset-framing places the responsibility on leaders and systems, emphasizing system-level action and does not blame or fault students.
- How do I use this message triangle?**
 - Make it the backbone of your messaging efforts.
 - Use it to practice, practice, practice articulating the issue.
 - Use it to stay focused on key points, especially when the opposition tries to throw you off course.
 - Use it alongside the Alliance for Resource Equity [diagnostic tool](#) to more thoroughly assess the state of **teacher quality and diversity** in your district, as well as in combination with the [guidebooks](#) to dig deeper into root causes and potential actions.
- What is the Alliance for Resource Equity? How do I learn more?**
 - The Alliance for Resource Equity is a partnership between EdTrust and Education Resource Strategies.
 - We focus on 10 key dimensions of resource equity — providing tools and resources to help advocates and districts work together to consider how resources (people, time, and money) are spent and distributed.
 - Learn more at www.educationresourceequity.org.

We hope this resource acts as either a culmination of – or a jumping off point to – several additional resource equity conversations. Additional resources in the Alliance for Resource Equity toolkit can aid in these discussions:

- Want a primer on what resource equity means?
 - It's important to begin with a solid understanding of why resource equity is a necessary frame to consider how schools are providing supports to all students to learn and thrive. Review the [Education Combination](#) to break it down.
- Not sure which dimension of resource equity should be the focus of your message?
 - Use our [Resource Equity Diagnostic and Tools](#) to identify opportunities in all 10 dimensions of resource equity to improve equity and excellence.
- Not sure who your audience should be to craft your message around?
 - Your audience influences how to effectively develop your message. Use our [Advocating Across Government Guides](#) to help clarify various levels of education authority and governance.
- Not sure what to specifically ask your district (and/or other decisionmakers) in the call to action?
 - Our [Guidebooks](#), specific to each Dimension of Resource Equity, explores underlying causes and the potential actions based on underlying challenges.
 - The dimension-specific Diagnostic Blueprints break down the types of analyses that districts can conduct to learn more about resource equity in their district and includes a DIY Analysis Tool for districts to input and analyze their own data.
 - Propose using the [sample meeting agenda](#) to structure additional conversations with your district about resource equity.
- If you are interested in learning more about asset-based framing, you may find the following resources helpful:
 - [Video series](#) about “The Power of Asset Framing”
 - [Blog](#) about “The Power of Asset-Based Language”
 - [Blog](#) about “Asset Framing: The Harder Data Work”

Endnotes

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Appendix A: Data Resources Chart


Key Question	Data Metric	Data Notes	Data Source
<p>Key Question 2.1 Does each student have access to strong teachers?</p>	<p>% of novice teachers (1-2 years' experience) by school poverty level, by % students of color (or by individual race/ethnicity), and school type (elementary, middle, high).</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>• Urban Institute/NCES</p>
<p>Key Question 2.2 Does each student have access to teaching practices that are engaging, culturally relevant, and standards-aligned?</p>	<p>% of students with positive perceptions of teaching practices by school poverty level, by % students of color (or by individual race/ethnicity), or school type (elementary, middle, high).</p>	<p>No strong public national data sources. Look to district or state websites for any published student survey data on perceptions of instruction.</p>	<p>State DOE District Report Card</p>
<p>Key Question 2.3 Does the teacher workforce reflect student diversity?</p>	<p>Compare % of students of color by individual subgroup with % of teachers of color by individual subgroup, based on local demographics.</p>	<p>To look across many schools, consider creating a scatterplot. Consider bar charts for comparing district to state, or to compare a small handful of schools</p>	<p>State DOE District Report Card</p>


Use this chart to identify data metrics useful to informing your key message(s), in addition to your own knowledge about what is happening in your community. Refer to the slide on how to form key messages for more information.


Appendix B: Message Triangle Worksheet


YOUR DISTRICT: _____

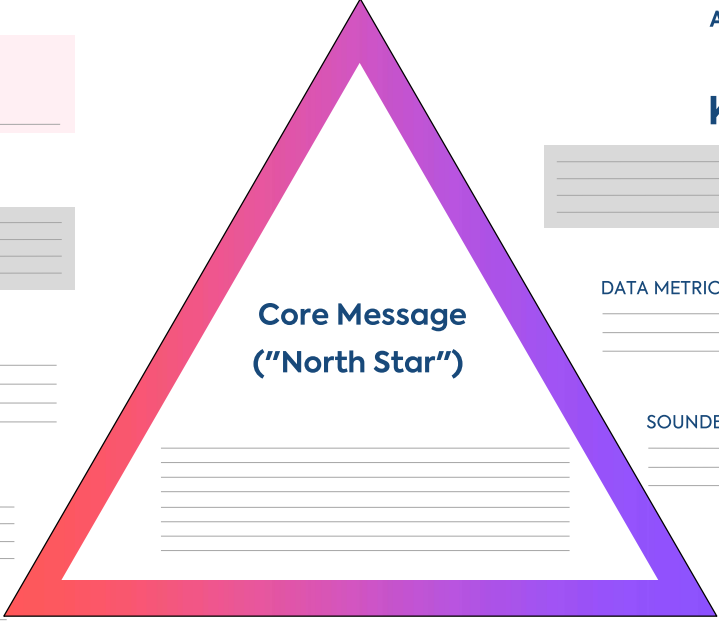
Key Message 1

 DATA METRIC: _____

 SOUNDBITE: _____

 NARRATIVE: _____

 DATA METRIC: _____



**Core Message
("North Star")**


Key Message 3


Key Message 2


DATA METRIC: _____


SOUNDBITE: _____

NARRATIVE: _____









Use this chart to create your own message triangle!