

MCDP MESSAGING NOTES

MESSAGE FRAME:

- What you say & what you don't say
- What you want people to remember
- DON'T – rely on data, long explanations (Dems do too much of this)
- DO – elicit a strong emotion (remember this!)

Example of an effective message frame: **CRT** (how Republicans have used it)
No explanation, just tapping into the emotion that there's an effort underfoot to blame white people, to discriminate against them. Emotion = fear/anger
Goes to bigger narrative of white people not getting a fair shake.
Reflects their values of maintaining a patriarchal society.

Dems response has been? Explaining. Trying to change the frame instead of creating one that reflects their values. ***I would have preferred a response about not treating our teenagers like snowflakes. They're expected to go to war at 18, they can handle a truthful course in history, doesn't need to be sugarcoated.

Problem: CRT has become a positive frame against inclusion & equity. DO NOT try to change a positive frame.

Avoid the term. EXAMPLE: school choice. We're not against choice. We're against taking money from public schools and giving it to private & religious schools that can pick & choose which students they accept.

Come at it sideways. EXAMPLE: defund the police. Instead, show examples of neighborhood neglect & how targeted interventions/funding would help the neighborhood. Don't go after a profession (you're going after people). Go after the problems within the profession. **making it easier for police chiefs to hold officers accountable.

EDUCATION MESSAGING:

***THIS is where Dems have the advantage.

THE ENVIRONMENT:

- Teacher shortage crisis
- Worst-in-nation pay for teachers
- Overcrowded classrooms

- Underfunding of special education, career & technical education & extracurriculars
- Falling behind the goals we set for our state with the Education Progress Meter
- \$5.3 billion surplus

SOS POLLING (November):

- CRT is a nothingburger (**Dawn noted more recent polling shows this has changed)
- Local control means nothing – all politics are national
- Property taxes not high on their minds (probably because housing prices are through the roof)
- Agree – not enough funding for schools & teacher pay too low
- Popular: increase funding, fix failing schools, reduce class size, better pay for teachers
- Extracurriculars poll very high, as does career & technical education
- Inclusion & diversity polls low
- Don't bad mouth charter schools

TEACHER SHORTAGE/LOW TEACHER PAY:

EXAMPLE OF COMMON (BAD) SOCIAL MEDIA POST:

“AZ teachers are 49th in pay, meanwhile, the state is sitting on a \$5.3 billion surplus, and Republicans want to give it all away in tax cuts.”

- Too much data
- Doesn't say what Dems want

BETTER TWEET:

“Teachers are over regulated and underpaid and leaving AZ classrooms in droves. Democrats will make hiring and retaining quality teachers their top priority.”

- Data supports but isn't the main point
- Says what Dems want

BEST TWEET:

“The Republican war on public education means Arizona students can't compete. Overregulation and worst-in-nation-pay has teachers fleeing the classroom and students losing out on extracurriculars and college prep courses. Only Democrats have a plan to make Arizona students top in class.”

- Mostly emotion

- Says what Dems will do
- Loaded key phrases
 - War on public education
 - Can't compete
 - Overregulation (of teachers & curriculum)
 - Worst-in-nation pay
 - Losing out
 - Dems have a plan

OTHER EXAMPLES:

Catherine Sigmon
@csigmon

I can't re-post this too often. Why aren't we adequately funding community schools and essential services? Because we already give more than half of revenues back to special interests & corporations.

Arizona General Fund Budget vs. Tax Cuts & Credits
11/2019

Total General Fund budget in FY 2021: \$12,739,847,900

Total tax cuts & credits in FY 2021: \$21,823,289,587

TAX CUTS & CREDITS: 62.9%

Category	Percentage
K-12 Education (ADE)	17.0%
AHCCCS / DHS	5.8%
Corrections	3.7%
Universities	2.6%
Economic Security	2.4%
Child Safety	1.2%
DPS	0.8%
SFB	0.8%
Other Agencies	2.7%

www.CEBV.us
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT BEYOND VOTING

Sources: Joint Legislative Budget Committee Staff, Appropriations Report, August 2021; Arizona Dept. of Revenue, "The Revenue Impact of Arizona's Tax Expenditures, FY 2021"

2:13 PM · Apr 27, 2022 · Twitter Web App

BETTER POST:

- Get rid of all the small print & numbers!
- Graph: What AZ Funds vs. What AZ Gives Away to Wealthy Special Interests
- Quote: Why can't AZ schools compete? Because Republicans chose wealthy special interests instead of AZ students.

AZ CENTRAL HEADLINE: *20,000 Arizona teachers could retire today. We don't have 20,000 replacements*

HOW TO RESPOND:

“We’re in crisis mode, and Republicans want to make things worse by banning books and making it easier to sue teachers. Only Democrats have a plan to (make our students the best and the brightest) – (to make AZ schools competitive again).”

“While Republicans are focused on banning books and suing teachers, Democrats want our students to be the best and the brightest.”

COMMON THEME

Republicans make it worse. Democrats make it better.

SURPLUS/TAX CUTS:

- Tax cut = handout/giveaway for the wealthy (special interest friends)
- Flat tax = largest tax giveaway for the wealthy in AZ history

“Arizona is sitting on \$5.3 billion surplus. But instead of using the money to make Arizona students competitive again, greedy Republicans want to give another handout to their wealthy special interest pals.”

“Democrats choose investments in people. Republicans choose handouts for their wealthy friends.”

“Democrats want to make AZ students competitive again. Republicans only care about handouts for their wealthy pals.”

CRITICAL RACE THEORY:

DON'T say CRT.

DO make it about over-regulation and the dumbing down of our kids.

- OVER-REGULATION = if Republican bills pass, students lose out on college prep courses (AP classes).
- DUMB-DOWN = banning books, treating teenagers like fragile snowflakes.

“Republicans want to dumb down our kids. Democrats want students who can think critically and be competitive with students across the nation and around the world.”

“Democrats won't settle for last place.”

“Republicans don’t care if our students lose out to kids in Boston or China, while Dems want them to win.”

“Unlike Republicans, Democrats won’t settle for last place.” -- over a graphic showing us failing behind.

EMOTION:

- Republicans are content letting other states & nations win the education race.
- They want Arizona’s students to lose.
- Republicans created this mess, and they’ve done nothing to clean it up.

VOUCHERS:

- DON’T talk about choice. Or charter schools.
- DO say vouchers are used for private & religious schools that pick and choose which students they accept.
- DO say vouchers have no accountability.
- DO say
 - Vouchers do not fix public schools,
 - Keep teachers in classrooms,
 - Change our state’s last-in-nation funding.
- DO say “we must fund our public schools first.”

SCHOOL BOARD RACES:

- DON’T talk about local control.
- DON’T bother with property values
- DON’T use the words “inclusion or equity”

- DO talk about over-regulation – politicians at the Capitol who are making the teacher shortage crisis worse. New laws leading to more teachers fleeing the profession & students missing out on advanced classes and career and technical education.
- DO talk about heavy-handed tactics to politicize public education, which hurts everyone, especially our students.
- DO talk about competition and the importance that AZ students not “lose out” to students in Boston or in China.
- DO talk about a well-rounded education/choice within schools. We should not “teach to the test.” Not every child needs to be an engineer or a doctor. We need plumbers and artists and cabinet makers. We need extracurriculars and career and technical education. Individuality and creativity made our universities the most sought after in the world. By offering choices within our public schools (by funding programs within our schools), we can make them the best in the nation.

Key Phrases:

- Get the politicians out of our classrooms
- Let teachers teach
- Teachers are not the enemy
- Creativity vs test-taking
- Doing what's in the best interest of students – Students First
- Making our schools competitive
- Not losing out

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

- DON'T specifically target Allister Adel or make this into a race about one person (until after the primary)
- DON'T say Defund the Police. Best not to say anything at all about the police – come at it sideways.
- DO talk about accountability
- DO talk about independence
- DO talk about integrity

“For far too long, the Maricopa County Attorney’s office has been led by corrupt and incompetent politicians. A disbarred former county attorney. Numerous ethics scandals. Victims who never received their day in court. It’s time for independent (accountable) (honest) leadership. It’s time for Julie Gunnigle.”

ELECTION RESULTS:

“It’s the County Attorney’s job to respect the rule of law and the will of the people. Undermining the election undermines (the rule of law) (the will of the people).”

“We don’t need a county attorney beholden to (radical insurrectionists) (Donald Trump). We need...honest/independent.”

GANG CHARGES/PHOENIX PD:

“The county attorney doesn’t work for the police, they work for the people.”

“The county attorney works WITH the police, but FOR the people.”

“This is yet another example of what can happen when the county attorney’s office lacks independence.”

“Scandal has been a hallmark of the past three Republicans elected to this office. It’s time to elect someone who will make the office boring and bring back integrity.”

“Prosecutors must work with the police, but they do not work FOR them. Their job is to seek the truth and exact justice for Maricopa County residents.”

REFORMS:

I’m not convinced this needs to be a talking point. Would rather the party focus its efforts on rooting out corruption, especially with crime on the rise and people feeling anxious about safety.

RACHEL MITCHELL:

- DON’T get into the specifics of the Kavanaugh case.
- DON’T use Kavanaugh’s name.
- DO highlight her lack of independence and integrity.

EXAMPLE:

“Rachel Mitchell puts politics over policy.”

“Mitchell was hired to provide congressional Republicans talking points.”

“She was used by congressional Republicans in a nasty confirmation hearing. What else will she do to appease her party?”

“We need an independent voice for the people, not another political pawn.”

GENERAL TURNOUT

Must do 2 important things in every message:

1. Show how Republicans are making things worse for Arizonans
2. Convince them that Democrats will make it better (can’t show them because Dems aren’t in power)

EXAMPLES:

“Republicans cater to the rich and the radicals. Democrats cater to the people.”

“Republicans want to destroy/weaken our democracy and our institutions. Democrats want to strengthen it.”

“Democrats want to make government work for the people. Republicans want to destroy it.”

AT THE DOOR:

- Acknowledge frustrations and pivot
- Draw a mental picture of what’s missing – when I was in public school vs right now – teachers were older/experienced, we went on field trips, we had access to fruits & vegetables (this is what I see in my family/my school), we didn’t have to pay to participate in or fundraise for sports.
- Make it personal