

## Letter-to-the-Editor Writing

- How-To
  - Keep it short – just a paragraph. Look up to see if the paper your submitting to has a word limit. Usually about 150 words.
  - Make sure your issue is timely. Some papers require printed LTEs be in response to a recent article.
  - Be clever
  - Pick one point to focus on. If we're writing about Board members being strong on Arts Ed, pick one reason why you think it's important.
  - Use a specific fact or figure to add weight to your message whenever possible
  - Convey genuine emotion and use personal experience when relevant, but don't exaggerate or go over-the-top
- Outline
  - State the problem/topic and why you are concerned
  - Describe the problem in a way that relates it to the reader. This is where a fact could be helpful
  - Propose your solution
  - Wrap-up restating why this is important. The more personal, the better
- Get it printed
  - Look on-line to find out how your publication accepts LTEs. Most accept them through webforms or emails.
  - Papers don't like it when you submit to more than one paper.
  - Include your full name, address, and contact info when you submit.
  - Follow up with the editor. It will drastically increase the likelihood that it gets printed

### Sample LTE – Printed in LA Times 7/26/09

Re "Rewriting the 3 Rs," Editorial, July 20

I hope you didn't mean that parents should have a voice in the schools only on "safe passage to and from campus ... after-school programs or specialized curricula such as arts instruction." These are obviously parental concerns.

But parents are most concerned with the content and quality of the basic education that their children receive, and they must be included in that planning and execution. We cannot leave it only to the educational "experts."

My experience serving as a parent with a teaching background on a school/community advisory council demonstrated that some school administrators are reluctant to require more than rote learning without student reasoning to avoid a possible drop in test scores.

Dick Littlestone

Pacific Palisades