



How to Let Your Local Media Know about Letters to the Next President 2.0

Your local newspaper, radio or TV station may jump at the chance to do a story on what your students are doing for Letters to the Next President 2.0 (L2P 2.0).

And it's another great way to get students even more excited about the project!

Think about it. Civic-minded teens creating letters about issues that matter most to them? Future voters eager to express their views and get involved? That sounds like a welcome respite from an election season packed with divisive commentary and polarizing debates.

So, don't be shy about spreading the word about L2P2.0. In all honesty, your community will probably appreciate the change of pace.

Here's how to reach out to your local media about Letters to the Next President 2.0:

- 1. Connect with others at your school** who are doing the project before reaching out to local media. The more classrooms involved, the better the story. If you are the only one at your school doing L2P2.0, don't worry. You should still reach out.
- 2. Go as local as possible.** Target the media outlets that are most closely connected to your area. Think local TV news and the town newspaper, not CNN and the New York Times. If you are in a big city, reach out to larger local outlets but also connect with neighborhood newspapers or websites.
- 3. Contact reporters directly if you can.** Once you have a list of media outlets, go on the website and find out who their education reporter is. If they don't have an education reporter listed, look for a community reporter, local news reporter, or reporter who covers your town. You can also call the newspaper or station and ask to talk to whoever covers education. NOTE: It's best to reach out to a reporter directly, even if there is a "news tips" or "story idea" submission form, email address or phone number listed. BUT, if you can't get anyone on the phone or their direct email, then use those channels. Reach out at least twice!

4. **Pitch your story!** Which means simply explaining to the reporter what the project is all about. Be prepared to tell them the basics as clearly as possible and share your enthusiasm for L2P2.0.

5. **Don't wait to reach out!** Most media outlets would rather cover an event or project in progress, which will give them a chance to photograph or film students as they create their letters. Reach out early in order to give them time to fit the story into their schedule.

Suggested pitching language:

Introduction: My name is _____, and I'm calling/writing to tell you about an election-related story I think people in our community would love to learn about, especially given all the negative election news out there. Our students at _____ (your school) are involved in a national election project focused on issues that matter most to them. As a teacher, I'm excited about this project because _____. My students are excited about it because _____

What is L2P2.0?: In this project, called Letters to the Next President 2.0, students write or create letters about an issue they care about. The letters will be delivered to the next president, and they are also published on a website alongside letters from students all over the country.

Why is this important? Most of our students can't vote, but they are very aware of the election and care about issues that affect us all. This project allows them to make their voices heard on a national platform as well as learn more about what other students like them around the country are thinking.

What are students doing? Our students are focusing on a wide variety of issues such as (list 3-4 topics) and creating videos/written letters/infographics/whatever you are doing. This is an opportunity not only to learn more about the election but also practice important technology skills.

Wrap up: What questions can I answer for you about the project? Would you be interested in visiting our school and seeing the project in action?

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