



Words to avoid

Words to embrace

Education Reform	Education Improvement Education Excellence
Invest in classroom priorities	Class sizes that enable one on one attention
Responsibility means teachers motivating each child	Ensure every teacher has resources, development and support
Providing basic skills and information	Inspire curiosity, imagination and desire to learn
Educational Equity	Committed to the success of every child
Inequality	Living in the right zip code
Individualized instruction	Teachers believe in children Connect with each child
Qualified [on its own]	Qualified, caring and committed
Research driven practices Accountability	Get serious about what works
Measure what matters	Love of learning can't be measured
Meaningful, rigorous evaluations	Testing takes time from learning
College and career ready	Equipped to succeed
Out of school factors Wrap around supports	Community support services like nutrition and health
Effective learning environment	School is where childhood happens

Research Process and How It's Different

Language Analysis

Using **cognitive linguistic analysis**, we deconstructed current language to determine what to test. Much existing language uses abstractions and ineffective jargon, like *education reform* that imply public schools are problematic and fail to spell out the tangible gains for students from our policy preferences.

Focus Groups

We tested our assumptions through 6 focus groups. While participants largely were with us, they're of mixed minds when it comes to the details. They're confused by the complex chatter and we must **draw clear distinctions** between what we believe and what our opponents contend.

Redefining Winning Words

We sought messages that **engage the base, persuade the middle and alienate the opposition**. This ensures we're persuading people to solutions we favor, not activating status quo beliefs. Conventional wisdom measures success by how much of the opposition agree, when we need to isolate the opposition.

Ensuring the Message Will Spread

We had 424 NEA members (356 non-ESP and 68 ESP) rate our messages, to ensure they approve of and will want to use the winning words.