

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

Emily Richmond: Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to our EWA Back to School Webinar, 10 Story Ideas from Veteran Journalists. We're going to get to the great content in just a second but first a couple of pieces of housekeeping. If you have any difficulty during the webinar in the technical side drop an email to Glen Baity. That's G as in George or G as in Glen, B as in boy, A-I-T-Y @ewa.org and he'll try to help.

I just wanted to let you know that all of these PowerPoint presentations will be available to you at the conclusion of the webinar. You don't have to take worry about taking frantic notes. Let's get straight to our content.

With the start of the new school year comes that annual challenge, how do you find fresh ideas on familiar grounds? We're very lucky today to have three veteran journalists joining us to share their ideas; things to watch out for and of course the dos and don'ts of the back to school beat. First off we have Linda Shaw. She is the new named education editor of the Seattle Times after spending more than two decades of the staff reporter. In 2008 she won first place in the beat-reporting category for large newspapers and EWAs newswriting contest and she's also been recognized with the number of other national and regional awards. She spent the 2011-12 school year at the Spencer Fellow at Columbia University.

Linda thanks for joining us. We're ready to hear your ideas.

Linda Shaw: Thank you very much, I'm glad to be here. As Emily said the back to school story can often be a challenge and I'm here to say it doesn't have to be that way. I think it's a good opportunity to really get your coverage off to a good start.

I'll start off with three story ideas. When we think about back to school we often think about what's happening in kindergarten but as we've been doing a lot of reporting recently on a universal pre-K initiative is going to be on the ballot here and it got me thinking about the effective pre-K, the pressure from the bottom as well as the pressure from the top on what kindergarten should be.

I got particularly understanding running across this quote from a kindergarten teacher that's where she talked about being exactly those pressures. It got me thinking about maybe there's some good stories in what kindergarten has become, the pressure from above to become

more like first grade, the pressure from below to also become more academic but in different ways.

I also wondered how children view kindergarten these days when they're not arriving at school for the first time but maybe just going across the hall from a preschool classroom into a kindergarten one, sort of what has kindergarten become. There's been a lot of writing about how kindergarten has become more academic over the years but I haven't seen a lot about what's happened recently as more and more children are in pre-K, more academically oriented pre-K programs and how that has affected pre-school and how kindergarten teachers are adapting to that. That's idea number one.

The second idea is what I'm calling positive punishment which I'm not sure what actually fly as a headline. But I want to preface this by saying that the Seattle Times this year we've had a special project that is a part of shift with something called "The Solutions Journalism Network," a nonprofit out of New York that is dedicated to helping newsrooms report on social on promising practices that try to address social problems as well as just writing about social problems themselves.

This idea stemmed from that perspective on finding and writing rich stories and it's, in our state and I think we're kind of behind. Some of your states maybe further ahead on this but there seems to be a sea change out there in how schools are trying to work with problem behaviors at all levels, elementary, middle and high school. I think there's a lot of rich stories there that could be tight at the beginning of the school year because that's probably when schools and teachers are trying to get to school year started off right and rollout some new approaches to accustomed expectations and new behavior programs.

This is a graph here and I think that it's all levels. There might be ... there are schools and districts here that are working on new, some of those new restorative justice programs as well as programs that prevent behavior problems at the elementary school level. This is from a short story we did this year about a school district in near Seattle that has done away without a school suspensions altogether or is working toward that and has drastically reduce them obviously by doing that with by starting an in-school suspension program where kids do their work with the teacher so they're held responsible for bad behavior but they don't miss out school at the same time.

Moving quickly here, these are ideas more of a typical problem story but in this date and I know in many others this is kind of a story that bridges both higher and lower ed. A lot of students leave high school and intercommunity college and are sort of in limbo because they haven't pass the test or otherwise qualified to start in the actual college classes and have to pay for and take these remedial classes at their, and sometimes using up their scholarships to do so before they even get into credit-bearing courses.

This has been written about in many areas as well, it's sort of the problem I mean the numbers of students that have to take remedial classes that sort of what's new with this one and I've been reading about recently are more and more questions about whether all those students really need remedial classes, are the placement test really identifying students that really need remedial classes or could the students do justice well without them.

I also think there's a question about, to me there's the old questions about what this mean about what the students are learning in high school and then there are lot of efforts at the community college also to find new ... that there's questions about the quality of the remedial classes themselves and do they really help get the students ready for credit bearing courses and I think there are a lot of experiments out there with trying to help students gain college credit and can fill up the holes in their education at the same time. That's idea number three.

Just some general dos and don'ts, back to school again is sometimes it's poor but I think if you think broadly about the kinds of stories that might fit in back to school is just an opportunity to do a good enterprise story that makes sense to run at the start of school. As usual, we all want to think about the general reader, with all our stories not just parents and educators. What would interest them?

As part of the coverage we're starting to experiment here more and more with different relationships with readers, maybe as part of the coverage think about asking readers for help, to share first day of school photos, their first day school memories, and use that in some way as part of the coverage.

As always, look at the broader context behind the changes that schools and districts are making at the beginning of the school year. One quick example, a couple of years ago a Catholic school pitched this story about its new blended learning curriculum, but with a little reporting I

discovered that one goal, one reason, a big reason they were wanting to introduce this new curriculum is because they want to boost their enrollment which was dropping. With a little more reporting I realized that it wasn't just this Catholic school but many urban Catholic schools across the country were struggling and many were closing and it actually wasn't as bad in the Seattle areas it was on other parts of the country.

A story that could have been sort of just a story about a change in curriculum at a Catholic school ended up being a much deeper richer story about the fight for this ... this urban Catholic school is one example of a trend out there. These schools were or essentially fighting to keep their doors open.

Don'ts, some of these are pretty obvious. Obviously, avoid cliché stories. We don't want to write stories that people already know end of as they start reading it. Surprise them. This is a lesson for me, the second one sort of a lesson from experience, don't wait until the last minute because then you'll sort of forced to fall back on sometimes on the cliché or thinly reported stories.

The third is sort of a do and a don't that's also based on part of our experience in doing the socials journalism project this year and that's to ... when you're looking at new problems don't highlight them without closely examining the evidence behind them. If a school and a district is telling you that its research based et cetera, et cetera, find out that that research is. Read it yourself, find what other research says about the program and I think that will help lead to richer stories as well.

I think I've used up my time.

Emily Richmond: Thank you Linda. That was terrific. Before we continue just a reminder to all of the participants if you have a question for one of our presenters you can go ahead and enter it in the chat window in the bottom right-hand side of your screen and we will get to those questions at the conclusion of the presentation, so at any time questions, let us know which presenter you'd like us to indicate, and two, if there's one that you'd like us to direct it other than that you can just enter the questions in the chat window and we'll get to them.

Moving on our next presenter is Jeffrey Solochek. He covers state and local education issues for the Tampa Bay Times with his works since 2000. Jeff has been an education reporter in Wisconsin, Illinois, Texas and

Florida since 1990 after earning his master's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri at Columbia.

Jeff, welcome to the webinar. Thanks for making the time. We're excited to hear your stories?

Jeff Solochek:

Thank you. I just like to say I started off looking at back to school as something that I want to send the photographer to and not do myself. It's a day and what I considered to be an ongoing process of covering education and so things are happening all summer long.

One of the things that would be my first story idea is to visit the issue of common core which we all know is out there but also the teachers who are trying to get ready for it here and everywhere else and what are they doing to actually make their classrooms different, their lessons different. We keep hearing about Common Core politically, we keep hearing about common core in all sorts of ways but there aren't very many times that we hear how our teachers going to implement it in the classroom, what differences they're going to make to the students. How are the parents going to understand it? We've seen those dumb questions out there that Stephen Colbert might like to make fun of. Is that really Common Core, how is this really going to look?

I visited a teacher training just earlier this summer and found this teacher among many and said that she's learning new ways to implement new ways to teach, new ways to not be the lecturer but to be the facilitator in a new way of thinking. That is my first idea that ... and it doesn't have to be just that. It could be anything where you're just trying to look at the ways that the common core is being put into a fact for the people who would actually affects as opposed to the politicians and the talking heads and the complainers.

Another issue that we often see is every year at the beginning of the year there are problems. They're the same problems pretty much year after year, the busses aren't running on time, the books aren't in the classrooms, my kids schedule is not right or we didn't even get one, and rather than just writing that happened let's find out why it happened and what the districts are doing to fix those projects.

Here in Florida we have a school district where the superintendent use to be the supervisor of elections and his idea is that elections comes, you know they're coming and we have to make sure that it runs well. The school district has the first day of school, everybody knows it's coming,

we don't necessarily have to have the buses run late. Here's the lead to the story that I wrote just recently, I don't even think it's been published yet that looks at the whole issue. These are the problems that we had last year, he took a look at it, said, "I can't stand that we're having so many parents called complaining with the same issues. How can we take it the way that we're taking it? Let's fix it. Let's make it better."

He implemented wholesale changes, we're waiting to see how they're going to work this year but it was a proactive stance and it could be on any that you just know. It's back to school, this is the issue that's coming but rather than just worrying about it we're doing something about it.

School is also about kids and we often lose track of the kids I mean and it's not just about them going to learn although it should be sometimes. It's also ... they haven't seen their friends for a long time, they have been getting ready to go back for a while, it's a social event too. What are they wearing, what are they buying, what's the latest this or that that they're going to bring and how does it jive with the policies that are in place, what did the district done to make it harder or easier for them to bring their cellphone to school or to wear that hairstyle that they like.

How are parents getting involved with that of can they afford some of the things that the schools are requiring them to bring? We've seen some of those school requirement lists they're growing. The school districts have less money to spend. Here's a story I did back in 2004 where parents were just out shopping and can't believe some of the things that are on their list, why am buying baby wipes, why do I need to have a, at that time it was fund drive for their computer. Why doesn't the school give me that? That was expensive then. Now, it's \$4 for 32 gigs but those are just some of the issues that are out there that I like to look at so that it's not just boring, not just boring for the readers, not just boring for you as a reported.

I like to look at what's new. We are writing for people who care. I know that Linda mentioned earlier that we're writing not just for those people but let's be honest those are the people who are probably going to pay the closest attention to these types of stories. Let's tell them something new whether it's a new lost, whether it's new policies, new programs, I won't go into those detail as much because they were covered but also the programs that are gone.

I often want to look at why schools pulled something out decide that it wasn't worthy of providing it to the students for another year and asking

them why and seeing what negative effects it might have had and what they are replacing it with.

What I don't like which is probably what you don't like the same stories that you've written over and over again, the things that are clichés, the crying rooms, the clinging kindergarteners, the I'm standing here at the bus ride where the kids are waiting in the dark. If you're going to do profiles, try and find somebody who's not the usual suspect and try not to just follow the talking heads again, the superintendent who woke up at five in the morning to go and make sure that the buses are living, the buses aren't on time, because it's really not about them at all it's about the kids, it's about the parents, it's about the teachers and the people who are in the schools and relying upon the schools.

That's just my way of thinking that we know it's coming, let's do a better job than just showing up and saying what we saw. That's me.

Emily Richmond: Thank you Jeff. That was very helpful. Last but certainly not the least we have Beth Shuster, the education editor of the Los Angeles Times, where she oversees coverage of both K-12 and higher education.

Prior to that Beth was a reporter covering a range of these including education at city hall and colleagues. She was the lead reported on the coverage of 1997 North Hollywood Police Shootout which is one of Pulitzer Prize for breaking news coverage and was part of the team that won a Pulitzer in 1994 for its coverage of the Northridge earthquake.

Before joining the Times, Beth worked at the Daily News of Los Angeles mostly as an education reporter and she's also been a general assignment reporter for the Riverside Press-Enterprise and a reporter in Washington DC for the States News Service.

Beth, we're so glad you're here. You have the floor.

Beth Shuster: Thank you very much. It's hard going third, that was not fair to me (laughter). These other ones were great. Jeff and Linda hit most of these head on really good ideas and really good dos and don'ts. Some of this is going to be repetitive but I'll try not to be.

Back to school, let's do story ideas. Here's the first day of school a couple of years ago. I like that girl's face holding up her teacher's sign.

Common core, Jeff spoke about this. I think that obviously, teachers all around the country are doing things differently. I totally agree with Jeff and Linda, the best stories are campus level stories where teachers and students and parents are talking. It's so much more accessible to our readers than talking about common core from a really theoretical stance.

I suggest that if teachers are still receiving training try and go, sit in on those training sessions, find out from the teachers if they feel prepared, if they're learning the right thing. Do they have the technology that they need? Do they feel like their schools were ready? If your teachers in your schools have already been through this kind of training I would suggest that now is the perfect time to sit in on a master in English class and see and ask what's different. How is it that the changes in their teaching styles and then what kids are learning is going to really boost student achievement? I would talk to people on the ground level, teachers and principals about these changes.

Next, class rules, this little girl crying, studies show that classroom management begins on the very first day of school. An unruly classroom typically means that the teacher hasn't established clear guidelines for students from the first day. What I would do is I would set this up immediately and try to follow an elementary school teacher or to even middle school would be great from the first day as here she sets the rules for the expectations and for the classroom for the year. I would talk to veteran teachers about it, visit different classrooms to compare techniques, look at some research about this because there is a lot out there but I would really focus this on one or two or three teachers.

Next, this story is new story not necessarily having to do with back to school but it's the timing is right for the story I believe. It's in the aftermath of the Vergara lawsuit here in Los Angeles in which the judge rule that California's laws on teacher tenure, dismissal another issues were unconstitutional, other states are not following suit, which we saw this in New York

My questions, why? Who's backing these lawsuits? What does it say about teacher unions, about public perceptions of these unions, about schools? How would ... and here's something that could go directly to sort of a campus level story, how would a lawsuit like this impact your school district? How many teachers are for example let go before they get fired. Are any fired for incompetence in the classroom, how many teachers are rated unsatisfactory? What happens to a poorly performing



teacher in your district? Most important I would suggest is getting data from your school districts on those issues.

Dos and don'ts, Emily I'm going to confess I snuck in some story ideas here and I'm sorry but three wasn't enough for me. Anyway, dos and don'ts, at school board meetings I would suggest that you don't tune out the public comment section. It's often the time when people get up and complain about something or raise an issue or talk about a program and often we as reporters are there for something on the agenda and don't remain or don't stay tuned in for this public comments but I've really found it to be invaluable.

When you're at school early in the year, talk to teachers and principals about summer learning loss. We've heard a lot about this. Over the summer I've gotten tons of emails from people about this. Is it real? Are teachers seeing it? What did they do about it?

Every time you're on a campus for a story, I would say talk to a few more people, look around, stay longer, ask questions, so some more interviews for a longer term feature. I'm sorry some of these stories sound a little bit soft marked. It's not that I'm trying to be ... to talk down to anyone who may already know to do this it's just that I find that in all our daily pressures to produce and to produce for the web and to get in the paper sometimes we're just so in a hurry. The most important thing really is to just take a minute and look around and talk to some more people.

I would say if you ever have a slow day which I don't know if anybody ever really does anymore, follow up with teachers and principals, anybody who helped you last year on a breaking news story or feature, get back in touch with them. Read the teachers' contract. It's a huge document here in LA but there are great story ideas in there.

Stories we're following, we are going to continue our look at a deep dive into technology in the classroom, LA unified made this big pledge to give everyone in the district that 600,000 plus kids, principals and teachers and iPod or some other kind of device, we will continue to look at that. We'll also continue of course to look at appeals on the Vergara tenure dismissal lawsuit which I spoke about earlier. We are looking at teacher evaluations, how much access the public should have. We are currently in litigation with the school district over that, and how this is all working in personnel decisions.

We're also covering a couple of other things I didn't add there which I'll just mention briefly. The whole unaccompanied immigrant story of students coming across the border is going to be big here in California. We're going to try very hard to cover it closely here in Los Angeles. We have a variety story ideas based on that. Someone else mentioned suspension, that's a great one for us. We are continuing to look at how schools are dealing with the policy that was setup last year that really tried to reduce out of school suspensions.

Those are all of mine. Actually, I have one more. There's John Deasy, the superintendent of LA Unified having breakfast in the classroom.

Healthy food, it's big in LA, it's big all over the country, how are cafeteria menu changes playing out? What specifically our students enjoying and not enjoying and how much waste is there.

That is pretty much it for me. That is my contact information.

Emily Richmond:

Good job. As you know some of you did touched on similar themes but from different perspectives and certainly there's no shortage of ideas on common core a certifiably there's no shortage of ideas on common core and there'll be no shortage of demands for those stories. You said it's difficult to go third, I get to for it for those who've been keeping track we promised to 10 stories this is bonus story number 10 and I wanted you to give us some thought to a story perhaps about adult education and the long road back to school.

The sked line you might give to your editor would be what you see on the screen from many adult education students, the first day of classes is coming after a long break of learning in some cases it may have been decades. You should drop by the open house for adult ed, usually that happens at the beginning of the school year where they just invite people to come in and get more information. That's a great opportunity to kind of get a cross section of the adult ed community, who's there? Are they new to town, are they local people who may have dropped out of high school, around the corner a few years before and have decided to come back? Why were they coming back? How are they balancing school with their work-life obligations? Often adult has folks come to their classes directly from work or from caring for their families.

We come to the next slide, here are some of these questions I'd like you to consider. First of all that is how much time and money is your district putting in to adult education?

It may surprise you, in a lot of ways it's a growing area and part because of the recession. Adults needs retraining and new skills and in many cases that's hardest hit group has been [privileged 00:13:27] without a high school diploma. What are they offering right now? What is new? Are they offering a competency-based online programs that are quite retrieval for adult?

Also ask the administrators, what would they have in leadership to offer if they had the money? Is there something on their wish list or something they're pushing for? Had something else to tune the horizon, the new online GED, the graduate equivalency degree. We have a separate EWA webinar that has to tell you all about that if you want to get up speed on that you can find that on [ewa.org](http://ewa.org).

Also what are the public-private partnerships that are supporting Adult Ed? You have to look at Adult Ed within the context of for many of these folks it's an opportunity to get back into the work force. What are the partnerships that are supporting that or the unions offering apprenticeships? Are companies providing any kind of re-training portfolios or incentives portfolios to go back and to finish their high school degree?

We'll jump to the next slide, this is the hidden story in Adult Ed. When you get there you may be surprised to see quite a few young faces. Many, many cities Adult Ed students are actually allowed to enroll as young as 17 provided they have unenrolled on their traditional high school. In many of the cases that I've found when I talked to these students particularly the young women, they have left their traditional high school not because they weren't happy with the classes or not because they weren't happy with the schedule but because there was "too much drama." It was too much happening in the school climate for them to feel safe at school or welcome to school and they just want to get food as quickly as possible.

You're also going to find students that are trying to get food to a degree as quickly as possible because they're working, they'd be happy to contribute to the family's income and of course there may also be some young parents in that community. Be sure to try to track out the interesting story and sometimes often the cliché of the person who's 89 going back to school to get their high school diploma for the first time but there is also the other end of the spectrum, you may be supplied by some of the younger students that you find are winding up on Adult Ed.

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

Those are my story suggestions. We now welcome your questions for the panelist and we have a couple to start right off. The first comes from Debbie Cafaso and she says that she hates clichés like the play unintended, however, editors love them. How do you balance that dichotomy and then the advice or countering the editor who wants the cliché story. One of our panelists wants to take a tackle of that?

Beth Shuster: Editors love clichés, I don't like clichés. I'm constantly taking them out of stories. I think perhaps what editors like is the story that they know. I think it's just a matter of telling the story differently perhaps and maybe that's the cliché. Maybe it's not as you say like the plug, maybe it's just that it's a type of story that is a cliché. Those are stories that editors know. What you need to do is break out that as Jeff was talking about previously about sort of the first day, tell people something they don't know, surprise them. I think that's what you kind of educate your editors too.

Emily Richmond: I think that's a good advice and then just to follow, Linda mentioned that another idea about Adult Ed isn't her area. It's also used by people learning English as a second language and that can open up to a lot of other stories. I think that's a very good point. I found that a lot of adults go back to do English as a second language, a lot of parents decide to do it when their kids reached the teenage stage and they told me the reason they were doing it is because their teenagers would speak English at home and they didn't want their parents to know precisely what they were doing. That's definitely the story.

Linda you mentioned something a crossover story with higher ed.

Linda Shaw: Yes.

Emily Richmond: I wanted to throw out also that the beginning of the school year is a great time to sit down with reporters in your office and that'll do beats and find out what they were doing and have some conversations about where there may be some crossover opportunities. Jeff is that kind of collaboration happening at the Tampa Bay Time?

Jeff Solochek: We talk a lot. We try to because there are sometimes when the school district might be working with the Law Enforcement Academy or when we're talking about school resource officers. Talking to the sheriff's office or the person who cover the sheriff's office is often one area. Our county governments work together and so ye, we try to talk to each other as well as just within our beat we have five or six education reporters and

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

we try to make sure that we don't all duplicate each other's work so that way we're not all writing the same story not knowing that somebody else is doing it.

Emily Richmond: That's probably a good advice and communication with your coworkers will help in the long run and I just think back to school is a great entry point. If you haven't gone across the room to talk to the sports editor or editions reporter, this can be a great opportunity.

A question from Cher Rigor, she wants to know if it's a creative or a cop-out to write a single package of short pieces on everything that's new in the district this fall. How would you guys rate that?

Jerry Solochek: I think it's a good piece. I think it's important because you are writing for people who want to know what's happening, what's different and what's new and that would be useful and it could be all that you do so long as you don't stop covering there.

Emily Richmond: I think that's true and I think it's also important to remember that we don't want to get shaded while we've had to do the story maybe five or six times of the crying kindergartener and the parents looking through the glass door. For those parents, that's maybe the first time they'd ever left the child at school and this is brand new to them so we want to make sure to recognize that there are things that happen every year for a reason. It's part of the school structure and the schedule and I think it's reasonable to say what is new this year and new for the new parents.

A question coming from Guthrie Hubbard. She said that she felt boxed into the team with her editors. They want complication in first day at school narratives and soft classroom teachers and not much out. How can she push to expand the education beat? Linda do you have any advice for her?

Linda Shaw: As we said in the beginning I'm a new editor so most of my experiences is being a reporter and one line that I've used with some of my colleagues often is that the best defenses are good oddness. Giving them really strong story ideas to replace the complication, the soft narratives that really aren't strong stories and like Beth I'm sort of mystified at editors that want to stick to that and I think she's onto something where she's thinking that they want something familiar because I would think that what everyone would want is the strongest, most interesting coverage that is going to attract more readership it isn't going to be the same old stuff.

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

Beth Shuster: I also think that one way to do this is if you're writing about, I mean a soft classroom feature can turn very easily into a kind of a news feature because what you could do is you could talk about, you could use the classroom scene as a way into a story that also has research and data. I think that the reporter could actually do some basing off of these stories like if you're doing a story about a new reading initiative.

I think maybe there's another way to do that story of perhaps the vehicle is a classroom and the new reading book that the second graders are reading but perhaps there's research out there on it, maybe another district has tried it and didn't like it and threw it out, what do the teachers think of it. I think there's a way to kind of harden the story a little bit. Use some data about reading levels and where they've fallen and so I'm not saying just throw out these ideas necessarily but I would say look at ways to harden them and beat them up and you could very easily turn what could be a really soft inside feature into a page one story.

Emily Richmond: I absolutely agree.

Linda Shaw: We absolutely agree and I also think that that also reinforces the need to think about these stories in advance because some of the reporting the Beth is talking about is reporting that you can't do all that in one day, on the first day of school. You need to plan it in advance and figure out what you want to do and do that background research beforehand, that can help harden the story.

Emily Richmond: Right. I think there's a reporter who got in touch with me concerned because their editor wanted them to do a story from the lunch group which is perfectly fine but you should do that within the context of the new USDA Nutritional Standards for public schools. What is the school serving, how does it match up with what the school expectations are, has the district complied with everything that's expected and then also what are kids bringing from home? How does that compared to what the kids are getting from the hotline? There's a lot of ways to sort of toughen up a story that it doesn't just have to be peanut butter and jelly has been replaced by the cheddar's flaming hot chips whatever the way this food crave might be.

Emily Richmond: Yes, I've always wanted to stand at the trashcan and watch what the kids throw out. Now, they're required to put a certain amount of certain things on their plate. What ends up and what do they eat, when is that ends up to the trashcan?

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

Jeff Solochek: I've been in schools where they actually have a box that they put unused, unopened foods so that people who are still hungry because the food is not enough for a big, for a player, they can just go by and take it up.

Emily Richmond: That's an idea and also I was looking into some elements some elementary schools and middle schools that still have recess are experimenting with what they called recess first where the kids are sent to play so they come in hungry and actually eat more of their lunch. They were finding kids who are skipping their food or belching it out or throwing it out so they could hurry to get outside and play because they had such a limited amount of time for recess.

It might be worth checking in your district if any school that are experimenting with the new "recess first" policy.

Beth Shuster: Or not, the other thing about that Emily is that with the pressures that schools are under some are really squeezing recess it's becoming a really, if they have it at all is really important and in fact in California there's a lawsuit right now going on that some parents filed saying that the kids are not meeting because there's like in the education code there is a requirement for how many minutes of PE they should have per 10 days of school. The lawsuit is claiming that many schools are not meeting that.

Emily Richmond: If it helps, these editors help for student for softer features maybe one way to put a twist on that is to pick someone unusual, maybe you've send them spending the day with a brand new teacher, you spend the day with the school nurse or even with the school custodian and find out what it is to keep the building operating. There are a lot of ways to sort of freshen that up and still get a better result on what they want. I do think that sometimes for editors their resistance is not so much to the idea as to the perception of the time that it might take and that it might result in a less copy or copy that comes in late.

I think reporters can really do themselves a favor by getting their copy in on time and tight and clean and I think that helps to build a relationship with an editor where they might give you a little bit more freedom next time to explore and maybe go out in a little of a wider route.

We have time for just ... I think we wrapped about the questions that we had from our attendees. I wanted to thank all of panelists for participating, this has been fantastic. Remember you will be able to get a download of the replay of the webinar as well as access to all of the PowerPoint's. I want to say thanks Jeff Solochek, Tampa Bay Times, Beth

EWA Radio – Episode 9  
Transcript

Shuster Los Angeles Times and Linda Shaw from the Seattle Times for joining us today. Your participation today is really appreciated.

Beth Shuster: Thanks.

Jeff Solocheck: Thank you.

Linda Shaw: Thank you very much.

Emily Richmond: Thanks everyone, we'll see you at the next EWA webinar, remember all of your online resources are at [ewa.org](http://ewa.org) including our past events, webinars, blog post and our topics pages. We have you covered on everything from classroom technology to teacher workforce. Also know that our registration is now open for a higher education seminar which will be in Dallas in September. If you happen to crossover to the higher ed beat you are eligible for scholarship. You can find that information at [ewa.org](http://ewa.org). Thanks everyone and have a great day.