

Letters to the Editor and Commenting on Published Articles

Everyday, thousands of news items are published online. Legislators tell us that comments and editorials are still the best way to move public opinion. In fact, most legislators have a staffer that is tasked with creating Google alerts and tracking public opinion via new items. You can then make comments on articles and determine which publications are interested in your topic of concern.

What is a Google alert?

A Google alert is an internet tool which will send you an email each day with a list of all the mentions of a specific word or phrase on the internet. By setting up a Google alert, you can simply click through each 'hit' and comment on articles or submit a letter to the editor.

Here is the instructions to set-up a Google

alert: https://support.google.com/alerts/answer/175925?hl=en&ref_topic=28415&rd=1

Some suggested search words and phrases

- "common core"
- "Illinois longitudinal data system"
- "New Illinois Learning Standards"
- name of your school district
- name of your school

Basic suggestions for writing an effective comment or letter to the editor:

- Stick to the facts - other readers will be quick to respond to your entry if it is not factual
- Get to your point quickly - You should state the purpose(s) of writing your item in the first few sentences. The rest of your item should stick to those one or two points and further inform with facts from credible facts.
- Add a personal touch - you should not be afraid to mention why you feel the way you do. People are moved emotionally when you personalize your writing.
- Don't be mean, angry or nasty. Nobody likes a media 'troll'.