

Laura D. Testino

Memphis, Tennessee • She/Her • LauraDTestino@gmail.com • @LDTestino

Published by The Commercial Appeal, The New York Times, The Tennessean, The Times-Picayune, The Tuscaloosa News, and USA Today newspapers, as well as Atlanta, Catapult, POLITICO, Teen Vogue, and This Old House magazines

Education reporter • Chalkbeat Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee • March 2023 – Present

Reporter focused on education enterprise, agenda-setting scoops about Tennessee's largest public school district and state-run charter districts

- +Reporting on superintendent search [revealed](#) firm did not follow board's minimum qualification policy, [prompting restart](#)
- +[Scoop](#): Authors' speech, prized George Floyd biography were restricted at high school due to "inaccurate understanding" of national library guidelines. [Prompted national reports](#) of "intrepid" and "precise" work. District is reconsidering book restrictions
- +Compiled and co-analyzed data for [investigation](#) breaking news of draft closure and consolidation plans at Memphis schools
- +Pitched, co-reported [story](#) showing how state laws impacted classroom discussions of deadly school shooting, lawmaker expulsions
- +Regularly engage with readers through daily newsletter, school board texting service. Grew texting audience by 30%

Education reporter, general news contributor • The Commercial Appeal, USA Today Network-Tennessee

Memphis, Tennessee • August 2019 – February 2023

My beat spanned eight public school districts, a four-year university, HBCU, and community college; covered weekly breaking news shifts

- +Reporting about school superintendent's termination [revealed](#) a secret salary increase that boosted buyout, prompting new policies
- +[Frontpage USA Today enterprise reporting](#) about Memphis' response to Tyre Nichols' death resulted from deep, wide source network developed over years of pitching in to general news such as broken interstate bridge, [high-profile](#) shootings, killings
- +Education news scoops with statewide relevance included: delay of school letter grades, a key policy; [analysis](#) of new K-12 funding model [showing](#) that the share of state funds compared to local funds would decrease for most Tennessee counties

Arts, culture reporter • NOLA.com | The Times-Picayune

New Orleans, Louisiana • August 2018 – July 2019

My year-long fellowship role required story production tasks and home and living reporting. Also contributed regular arts coverage, features

- +Identified feature stories that produced high engagement about new make-up business owner, [clothes designer](#), newspaper archivist
- +Carved out sub-beat about Black masking Indians; contributed to coverage during Mardi Gras, festival season, Saints playoff run
- +Co-published two stories with the New York Times as part of its "Cities for Tomorrow" event in New Orleans

Assistant digital editor, producer • This Old House magazine

New York City • January 2017 – July 2018

In addition to writing, balanced social media and user-generated content duties, plus helped manage events and streamline a new CMS system

- +Collaborated with This Old House television talent to create behind-the-scenes multimedia articles of show houses
- +Wrote and produced regularly for site and social media while also contributing front-of-book and feature stories to print magazine

Education • Skills

University of Alabama summa cum laude graduate with B.A. in journalism and B.A. in dance, minor in business

Georgetown University certificate in education finance from the Edunomics Lab in the McCourt School of Public Policy

Skilled in AP Style, Flourish data viz, LexisNexis, PACER and other records systems; television, radio interviews; basic audio, video editing

Free time spent with my dog, in a dance studio, making crafts, people watching from a front porch