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Editor's note: In conjunction with OSBA's Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference in Salem on Feb. 5, these are the last two in a series of articles on how districts passed bond campaigns.

Learn from the Winners: Reynolds finds first time bond can be charm

**Reynolds School District
May 2015 construction bond
\$125 million
52.0 percent approval**

For years, the Reynolds School District saw its first and second attempts to pass bonds fail, only to succeed on the third try.

"Our history was so steeped in 'third time is the charm' that we were told to go out and kind of try the first time and then try harder with subsequent elections," said district Communications Director Andrea Watson. "(But) each effort is a tremendous amount of work, and you don't want people to sit on the sidelines until the third try."

By early 2015, it had been 15 years since the district had passed a bond measure. Since then, the community had changed, there were new volunteers and voters, the need for the projects was clear, and the district had the rare opportunity to pass a measure that would not raise current tax rates.

For this bond effort, the district changed course and found success the first time out.

To counter the past failure and victory cycle, the district decided to go all in to win on the first try. The campaign consultant developed a plan that covered all bases, and volunteers stepped up to work on voter outreach activities and fundraising for a much bigger campaign budget than they had ever had.

The comprehensive approach wasn't cheap – the district spent about \$135,000 for community outreach, engagement and information (not including advocacy spending by an outside committee). The campaign plan

OSBA's Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference deadline nears

Time is running out. Registration will close Jan. 29 for OSBA's Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference, being held this year on Feb. 5 in Salem.

The biennial conference is designed to help districts plan facilities, define and communicate bond costs to voters, and strategize tactics for effective campaigns.

Featured speakers include Oregon Secretary of State Jeanne Atkins, and state Sen. Richard Devlin. Alana Cox of the Secretary of State's Office will offer guidance on the do's and don'ts of state election law.

New this year is a workshop on school construction contract basics, with speakers from Ball Janik LLP. The firm's attorneys have also collaborated with OSBA staff on a new school construction contract manual that will be provided to conference attendees.

Attendees will also hear from:

- Melissa Martin of Public Affairs Counsel on demographics and messaging strategies
- Gloria Zacharias of the state Business Development Department on seismic grants

In addition, the one-day conference includes the popular "Learn from the Winners" panel, in which representatives of the Reynolds, St. Paul and Woodburn school districts will outline how they successfully campaigned for bond measures.

A variety of partners will also be on hand to share expertise in passing bonds and levies.

Registration information can be found at www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Bonds_Ballots_and_Buildings-2016.aspx



included professionally designed mailings, canvasses, community feedback opportunities, voter identification, personal communication with patrons who shared negative views in the media or who asked to be removed from the mailing list, and a combination of districtwide and targeted voter outreach.

The measure won narrowly, by a total of 297 votes.

“I am convinced that if we had left one piece out of our plan, we would not have won,” Watson said.

At the consultant’s recommendation, the district and campaign communicated with voters nine different times to allow the message to resonate. The strategy seemed to work. During canvasses, voters said they were aware of the measure.

Personal contact was a key strategy. Early on, the district built a neighborhood mailing list that included the 100 closest addresses at every facility. That list received every mailing, even if those residents were not registered voters.

“Our belief was that the people closest to the school would have more of a vested interest,” Watson said. “We think that’s one of the reasons we got high participation in the engagement process.”

The other tactics were standard campaign outreach: presentations to every possible parent and community group, unanimous board approval, listening to the community, focusing on contacting perfect and nearly perfect voters who vote in every or almost every election, reaching out to senior citizens, crafting messages based on survey data and building support with a strong volunteer base.

Watson said the extra campaign expense was worth it.

“We have never won our first try,” Watson said. “We did a lot of things right. It didn’t just happen overnight. When people think about the money, think about the cost of losing.”

Watch the video featuring Andrea Watson, Reynolds School District communications director:
www.osba.org/~media/Files/Event%20Materials/BBB/2016/LFTW-Reynolds-mp4.mp4

Learn from the Winners: Woodburn retools after narrow loss

**Woodburn School District
May 2015 construction bond
\$65 million
54.5 percent approval**

Historically, Woodburn schools have enjoyed good community support. Voters have approved a capital bond measure for new facilities or improvements roughly every 10 to 20 years.

A May 2009 proposal for \$94 million was soundly defeated, however, gaining just 31.6 percent of votes in

favor. In 2014, with the appointment of longtime Woodburn teacher and administrator Chuck Ransom as superintendent and an opportunity to replace an expiring bond, the district asked the community to weigh in on a new measure.

The first step was to build a strong team and a good plan.

“We brought in support from outside,” Ransom said. “We spent a lot of effort getting cost estimates and a complete assessment of facilities.”

The district also needed to whittle down the project list, with a goal of reaching \$65 million. The final projects fell into categories for increased capacity and long-term facility upgrades.

Outside supporters were a key part of the 2014 effort. A team of 40 to 60 committee members provided early work to shape the bond, and many remained active in advocacy efforts that operated independently of the district.

The effort barely fell short. In May 2014, the district lost by 37 votes.

“After the election, multiple people came out and said if they had known it was going to be that close, they would have voted,” Ransom said.

Two good things came out of that loss, starting with increased communication efforts. Secondly, community supporters were galvanized to pass the bond on the next attempt.

“There was a groundswell of support, especially from people who hadn’t voted,” Ransom said.

The district decided to try again a year later, in May 2015. After checking in with the community, the district left the projects unchanged for the second attempt.

The “what” didn’t change, but the “why” did.

“We decided that providing information to the community by talking about how dire things are is not a good strategy,” Ransom said.

Instead, the focus was on the vision for Woodburn schools. Campaigners shared positive messages, such as achievement results and the district’s successful graduation rates.

This positive message strategy was also effective at engaging the district’s important senior voters. A significant number of people from local retirement communities joined the volunteer community effort.

In the second attempt, the result was a win, with 54.5 percent of the vote. Ransom, whose first two years on the job were during the two bond campaigns, said he learned a lot, including that “Any little thing helps.”

“People are not unsupportive of schools,” he said. “They were just busy and beaten down by previous losses.”

Listen to a few words from Woodburn School District Superintendent Chuck Ransom:
www.osba.org/~media/Files/Event%20Materials/BBB/2016/LFTW-Woodburn-mp4.mp4

Promise update: David Douglas video on early learning will debut

A brand-new video highlighting the early learning wing at Earl Boyles Elementary in Portland is scheduled to debut Jan. 28.

Boyles is in the David Douglas School District, which is pioneering the use of pre-kindergarten programs to teach children during formative learning years. The district reaches more than 100 3- and 4-year-olds at Boyles, and also this school year opened a pre-K classroom at Cherry Park Elementary.

The Richard C. Alexander Learning Wing at Boyles operates in partnership with Head Start and Multnomah County. The school also has a neighborhood center that allows parents and families to gather for events.

The new video will debut on “The Promise of Oregon” website at www.promiseoregon.org.



The David Douglas video is one of four planned videos showcasing cutting-edge programs – science, technology, engineering and

mathematics (STEM), career and technical education (CTE), the arts and more – that support students in reaching their potential. The other videos will debut later in 2016.

During its first year, the Promise campaign celebrated the accomplishments of Oregon students and helped galvanize support for increased funding for public schools. Legislators ultimately settled on a State School Fund figure of \$7.4 billion for 2015-17 – up \$850 million from the last biennium.

In the Loop

Oregon has opportunity to shape ESSA accountability

The reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB)/Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) in December was and continues to be very big news. It is eight years overdue. The conversations since December both nationally and at the state level have focused on what the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will mean for public education in the years to come. We will be leaving behind a system with the potential to label every school “failing” and one that prescribed nationally defined methods of school improvement. While there are some clearly defined changes in the new law, there are also a lot of unanswered



Betsy Miller-Jones
Executive Director

Learn more from the winners

Bond campaigns can be risky for school districts. They test public trust, and require sound planning and community involvement to succeed. Unless they engage the community, a cycle of failure can result. They also require a lot of work by district staff, board members and school supporters.

Board members are a really important part of the campaign process. Watch "A message to school board members" with Valerie Tewksbury, Campaign Chair, Citizens for Safe Reynolds Schools, explaining how board members can help:

www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Bonds_Ballots_and_Buildings-2016.aspx?page=custom1

Hear more about districts’ stories of success at the Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference on Feb. 5.



questions. Some of them will be answered by U.S. Department of Education (USDE) rulemaking over the next year. Other questions will be answered here in Oregon at the state level and by local districts.

We have the opportunity in Oregon to collaborate on creating a system of accountability that addresses the needs of students, educators, school boards and the state, providing meaningful information at all levels. This does not mean throwing out high standards and summative assessments tied to the standards adopted by the state. In fact, ESSA continues to require annual assessments for grades 3 through 8 in reading and mathematics, and once in grades 9-12. Science testing will occur at least once during grades 3-5, 6-9 and 11-12. ESSA encourages states to develop richer assessments utilizing multiple measures. These may include portfolios and projects. The accountability system will be designed by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) together with local school districts and education partners. Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) will no longer be part of the process. The requirement for 95 percent participation of all eligible students in assessments remains in place; what that will mean with our new opt-out law remains to be seen.

The authorization period of the new law is fiscal years 2017-20. New state plans and accountability systems must be in place for the 2017-18 school year. The existing state plans and waivers in Oregon go through Aug. 1, 2016. After that, we are in limbo for a year, until the new systems take effect. The USDE will be releasing rules in October 2016. In effect, we have 18 months to plan, although the details coming out in October 2016 could significantly impact our plans.

Other major changes from NCLB include the elimination of state waivers, School Improvement Grants (SIG), prescriptive school interventions, highly qualified teacher mandates and a greatly curtailed role of the secretary of education related to testing, evaluations and standards. Key provisions of the school improvement process include the requirement of states to identify the bottom 5 percent of schools in the states, and high schools with graduation rates below 67 percent and under-performing subgroups. The state will approve district improvement plans and set goals and exit criteria. Title I SIG grants will be replaced with Title I school set-aside funds, increasing by 3 percentage points to 7 percent.

Although ESSA no longer requires test scores be a part of teacher evaluations, Oregon law still requires it be a component of evaluation.

Join OSBA for a webinar on Feb. 2

www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Webinar-Reauthorization%20of%20ESEA-ESSA-2016-02-02.aspx) for further information and discussion of these issues. We will be working with ODE and education partners across the state to find answers and design significantly better accountability systems for Oregon. Stay informed and let us know how you would like to see Oregon improve standards and accountability so that all students in Oregon can reach their full potential. As a board member, standards and accountability are important tools for you to make sure you are leading your district in a direction that prepares your students for all of our futures.



OSBA welcomes new officers, Board and LPC members

With a new year comes a new slate of officers on OSBA's Board of Directors, headed by President **Doug Nelson** of the High Desert Education Service District (ESD).

Joining Dr. Nelson as officers are **Betty Reynolds** (West Linn-Wilsonville School District), president-elect; **LeeAnn Larsen** (Beaverton SD), vice president; **Don Cruise** (Philomath SD), secretary-treasurer; and **Dave Krumbein** (Pendleton SD), past president. The officers officially took their posts on Jan. 1.

Dr. Nelson brings a wealth of educational experience to the position, having served as superintendent of Bend-La Pine schools from 2000 to 2008, and superintendent of Pullman, Wash., schools for 11 years before that.

Six new members also joined the 19-member OSBA Board effective Jan. 1, after being elected to two-year terms. They are **Kevin Cassidy**, Baker SD; **Cheri Helt**, Bend-La Pine SD; **Hank Perry**, Douglas ESD; **Kaye Jones**, Jefferson SD; **Francisco Acosta, Jr.**, Multnomah ESD; and **Paul Anthony**, Portland Public Schools.

Elections for the Legislative Policy Committee (LPC) also resulted in the following individuals winning one-year terms: **Andrew Bryan**, Baker SD; **Jill O'Donnell**, Klamath County SD; **Dawn Watson**, Phoenix-Talent SD; **Rose Wilde**, Lane ESD; **Ron Adams**, Clackamas Community College; **Liz Hartman**, Lake Oswego SD; **Jake Gibbs**, Oakland SD; **David Dowrie**, Linn Benton Lincoln ESD; **Chris Brantley**, Salem-Keizer SD; **Kim Strelchun**, Hillsboro SD; **Fred Marble**, Forest Grove SD; **James Trujillo**, Parkrose SD; **Amy Kohnstamm**, Portland Public Schools; and **Kent Zook**, Gresham-Barlow SD.

The LPC, which consists of the OSBA Board's voting members as well as 19 representatives from 14 regions statewide, meets periodically to establish OSBA's legislative priorities.

No candidates filed for LPC positions 2 (Gorge region), 3 (Central region), 12 (Marion region) or 13 (Yamhill/Polk region). The OSBA Board filled these positions by appointment at the November 2015 Board of Directors meeting. In addition, no candidate filed for LPC position 14 (North Coast region). The OSBA Board filled this position by appointment at a December 2015 conference call meeting.

Appointed to the LPC were: **Dean McAllister**, North Wasco County SD; **Tim Carpenter**, Redmond SD; **Betsy Earls**, Chemeketa CC (Position 12, Marion region); **Trina Comerford**, Perrydale SD; and **Becky Tymchuk**, Beaverton SD.

Labor and employment workshops approaching soon

Time is running out to register for OSBA's annual Labor and Employment Regional Workshops, being held in February at six locations around Oregon.

The workshops are designed for board members, superintendents, presidents, human resource directors and business managers.

Discussion issues include Senate Bill 454 (the new sick-leave law), marijuana in the workplace, bargaining trends, an update on court and arbitration decisions and recent legislative impacts.

Meetings run from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. and include dinner. Dates and sites are:

- Feb. 2 – Baker
- Feb. 3 – Pendleton
- Feb. 4 – Redmond
- Feb. 8 – Coos Bay
- Feb. 10 – Eugene
- Feb. 18 – Hillsboro

For more information and to register, please visit www.osba.org/Calendar/Events/Labor_and_Employment_Regional-2016.aspx

PACE offers new special education behavior management training

The Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) (www.crisisprevention.com/Specialties/Nonviolent-Crisis-Intervention) training program, developed by the Crisis Prevention Institute, is embraced worldwide as a highly effective special education behavior management system for organizations committed to providing high-quality care and services in a respectful and safe environment.



This interactive training program provides staff with an effective framework for decision-making and problem-solving to prevent, de-escalate

and safely respond to disruptive and/or assaultive behavior. Non-verbal to verbal communication strategies, as well as physical intervention strategies, are taught and practiced during this program.

PACE is now offering NCI training to member schools at no charge. For scheduling information, please contact PACE Loss Control at 800-285-5461 or losscontrol@sdao.com.

Online TELL Oregon survey will open Feb. 1

Starting Feb. 1, the 2016 TELL (teaching, empowering, leading and learning) Oregon survey will be open to all licensed school-based Oregon educators to complete before the end of the month.

This is Oregon's second year of participating in the nationally developed survey, which is online and anonymous. It is administered by the New Teacher Center, in partnership with the Chief Education Office, the Oregon Department of Education, and educational organizations such as OSBA, the Confederation of Oregon School Administrators and the Oregon Education Association.

Use of these data by school boards can help address critical aspects of the conditions for teaching and learning in local districts and schools. Gov. Kate Brown encourages widespread participation.

"We want to hear from you," Brown said. "When the time comes, please share your perspective to help us ensure that we can best support you, and set the stage for success for Oregon students."

For more information about the TELL Oregon survey, and to track individual response rates by school, please visit www.telloregon.org.

Upcoming OSBA Events

School Board Recognition Month

January 1-31, 2016

Webinar - SB 454 Sick Leave Bill: What Does it Mean?

January 21, 2016

Webinar - Reauthorization of ESEA/ESSA: What Does it Mean?

February 2, 2016

OSBA Labor and Employment Regional Workshops

February 2-18, 2016

OSBA Bonds, Ballots and Buildings Conference

February 5, 2016

Webinar - Short Legislative Session Update

February 16, 2016

Webinar – Oregon Rising

March 7, 2016

76th Annual NSBA Conference, Boston, MA

April 9-11, 2016