

Won your election? Celebrate! Evaluate! Keep your community informed.

Congratulations! Thanks to all your hard work, your students will have the classrooms and facilities they need for learning!!!

Now its time to evaluate your success so that you'll have an historical base to begin with the next time you go to the polls. And, if OSBA calls you to do a session at Bonds and Ballots January 25-26, 2007, you'll be prepared.

SO... As you total up the "yes" votes and have the superintendent sign personalized notes to all the volunteers that helped with your successful effort, please take time now, or very soon, to evaluate your information and advocacy campaigns. We've provided the following is a check list for doing that evaluation:

- ◆ **Begin by saying Thank You.** Your goal is to say, "*Thank you for making this possible*" not only to all your volunteers but also to the community. Use your reader boards to say "Thank you Voters!" If your advocacy committee still has money, consider running an ad in the newspaper.

- ◆ **Compile a complete election record by organizing all election material into an election file or notebook for your historical records. In this file include:**
 - All of the data from your original election survey as well as any post election survey results.
 - Every piece of material that was developed for the election — information and advocacy — from both the district and building levels.
 - Any feedback that volunteer callers received that could help your district improve its total PR program in the year ahead.
 - Copies of any scripts, videos or other materials developed for the campaign.
 - A CD with the bond information that was posted on the district's Web site or that captures what an advocacy committee Website included, if you had one.
 - All newspaper clippings that related to your election, including letters to the editor and advertisements.
 - Copies of all news releases, newsletters, memos and other materials developed at the district or local building level.
 - Copies of any materials that were developed by groups who opposed the election.
 - A summary written by the election coordinator or liaison, including his/her impressions of the election. Make sure the summary notes what worked, what didn't work and what should be included or excluded from another campaign.
 - Reports or summaries from election committee members and building principals with their evaluations of the election and suggestions for future elections.

- ◆ **Compile a political analysis of the election precinct by precinct, showing:**
 - The total "yes" and "no" votes,
 - The percentage of "yes" votes to the total votes cast in the precinct,
 - The percentage of "yes" votes cast in each precinct as related to the total "yes" votes cast in the election, and
 - The percentage of "yes" votes cast in each precinct as related to the number of potential "yes" votes the campaign identified in that precinct.

- ◆ **Compose your election summary statement so that it gives you an historical reference point.**

- Ask yourself: What has this particular election shown about community support and identification of problem areas to address and publics to involve? This summary is a blueprint for your public relations plan of action. It will help you identify areas for emphasis in the months ahead to sustain the support demonstrated in the election.
 - Make a separate summary report of the negative concerns identified during the election process. Develop plans to address these concerns from a building-level viewpoint as well as for the district as a whole. Now is the time to address your “no” voters’ concerns and to start efforts to build trust through public engagement and involvement.
- ◆ **Develop a plan for keeping election workers — parents, students, staff and community members — involved in a follow-up to your election efforts:**
- If you approved a bond, follow the tips for communicating progress to tell voters what you are doing with bond funds and what community support means to the education of children.
 - If you approved operating funds, issue announcements about how these funds are providing smaller class sizes, helping the district keep and recruit good teachers (including improving salaries), buying additional instructional materials, or upgrading maintenance of school buildings and grounds.
 - Look to the future: summarize what the study of the election vote shows, precinct by precinct. If the margin of victory is low and the “no” vote in the community has continued to grow over the past several years, carefully analyze and take steps to increase your odds in the next election. If the data reveal problems with certain age groups or in certain parts of your district, develop a carefully targeted plan to address these specific concerns.

Communicate work in progress

Communicating about the projects funded by a voter-approved bond measure is just as important as getting the funding measure passed. How you keep your community informed and involved will be your base of support for any future projects or financial requests that require voter approval. Here’s a checklist to follow in making the most of your communication with your community about your building and improvement projects.

- If you run a thank you newspaper ad, or on your Web site, or in your next newsletter, in addition to thanking voters for their support, include a timeline for when projects will be completed. Ask key community groups like the Chamber of Commerce or Realtors to include your thank you and timeline in their newsletters. And, indicate what the timeline will be in your thanks to your mailing list of key communicators and referendum campaign volunteers.
- Appoint a Project Oversight Advisory Committee. Include key representatives from the district facilities committee, someone who is well known and trusted from the construction trades, someone known to be critical about how public tax dollars are spent as well as staff or parent representatives from the buildings or attendance areas where work is being done. Keep in mind that the best building or attendance area representative may be a custodian. Also be sure there is a board member liaison and that the district office provides secretarial and administrative support.
- The advisory committee’s job is to monitor project progress to be sure projects are completed on time and within budget and, if changes are required, committee members are informed and understand the changes’ impacts on project costs and timelines. Committee members also have a responsibility to keep their constituents informed about the projects and their progress.
- Put up large signs at project sites that say, “Your tax dollars at work for (*District name*) Schools’ (number) students.” Describe the project in five to seven words and include the completion date. (Your contractor and/or architect may be willing to do this for you, as long as their company names are included.)
- Publish regularly a one- or two-page construction update to post on your Web site and to

circulate to staff, parents and key community groups and members. If you publish regular staff and community newsletters this report can be included in those publications. Just make sure the format is designed to make the report stand out.

- On your district Web site, be sure to establish a place where visitors can get regular updates and see photographs of project progress as well as view the plans and read Project Oversight Advisory Committee minutes. You may even have the technology to include a video cam so that visitors can actually watch progress on a major school construction project.
- Provide regular updates from the building representative to the Project Oversight Advisory Committee for use in building newsletters.
- Plan a community celebration and open house when a project is complete. Make a special effort to get civic leaders, senior citizens and other “non-parent” groups into your schools to see the completed work. Make sure all staff have the opportunity to see what’s been done. Ask your Project Oversight Advisory Committee to plan and host these events.
- Find ways on a regular, ongoing basis to encourage community members to make use of your school facilities. If you don’t already offer these opportunities consider: community school classes; after hours community use of computer labs as well as swimming pools, gyms and meeting spaces; special invitations to senior citizens (over age 55) inviting them to participate in school activities.
- Consider instituting quarterly tours of the district for business representatives, community leaders and non-parents to show off your facilities and discuss the business of running schools. Be sure the tour includes a lunch prepared by students or with students.