

Strategies to Increase Public Support for Bond Measures

In this report, Hanover Research examines best practices in increasing public support during school bond election campaigns. Our discussion of these practices is supplemented by case studies of five school districts that have recently passed bond issues that failed to receive majority support in a previous bond election.

Introduction

Successful school bond issue elections are critical for district officials seeking to make improvements to aging, outdated, or over-capacity school buildings. However, research suggests that the percentage of passing bond measures in American school districts declined from 75 percent in 1960 to 35 percent in 1989,¹ and that districts continue to struggle to win support for their bond issues due, in large part, to the recent economic recession. These trends indicate that citizens who are already feeling the burden of stagnant salaries and job loss are paying increasing attention to ballot measures that include provisions for increased tax rates, and are demanding adequate, detailed justification for any new capital building or renovation projects.

Despite the troubled economic situation in the United States, many school districts are in need of urgent funds to replace old, deteriorating buildings. According to a 1998 report by the National Center for Education Statistics (the most recent report available), the average age of school buildings in the U.S. is 42 years old.² The NCES further notes that over half of American public schools are “obsolete and [contain] environmental hazards,”³ further illustrating the need for community-based funding to support capital projects. Still, in light of the recent economic downturn, the question remains: how can district administrators convince the public to support tax increases to fund improvements to educational facilities?

In this report, Hanover Research examines best practices in increasing public support for school district bond measures. In the first section, we discuss factors—such as community demographics, project costs, and project types—that can significantly influence the likelihood that a bond issue will receive community approval. In this section, we also discuss measures that district administrators can take to increase public awareness of and support for school improvements. These findings are then supplemented by the case studies that constitute the second section of this report. These case studies profile five school districts that have recently passed bond issues that were initially defeated by voters in order to provide further insight into the steps that can be taken to ensure bond election success.

The key findings from our research are presented on the following page.

¹ Theobald, N. and Meier, K. 2002. “The Politics of School Finance: Passing School Bonds.” Paper presented at the annual National Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 25-28, 2002. P. 2. <http://teep.tamu.edu/pubs/bonds.pdf>

² “Data & Statistics: School Building Statistics.” The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities. <http://www.ncef.org/ds/statistics.cfm#>

³ “How Old are America’s Public Schools?” January, 1999. The National Center for Education Statistics. <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/frss/publications/1999048/>

Key Findings

- ❖ In order to garner public support for bond issues, district officials must adequately demonstrate a substantial need. Generally, this need can be expressed in terms of number of outdated school facilities, figures demonstrating overcrowding, high student-to-teacher ratios, or high maintenance/renovation costs. Voters may be more willing to support initiatives that address teacher-to-student ratios, as this topic often arises during national and state-level governmental elections.
- ❖ Voters are more likely to support bond issues from which they stand to benefit directly. Therefore, districts should consider ways in which they can increase the beneficiaries from their bond issues. For instance, districts can allow community organizations access to proposed new school buildings outside of school hours, or can allow public access to newly-constructed gymnasiums or athletic fields.
- ❖ Large districts are generally less likely to approve bond measures than smaller districts, again due to the fact that the immediate impact of capital projects is less likely to be felt by all members of a large district. For this reason, it is essential that districts educate the community on the long-term and widespread benefits of bond issues to increase the likelihood that even those citizens who may not directly benefit from the measures will support the proposed projects.
- ❖ Research suggests that voters are less likely to approve bond issues that include projects perceived as being “non-essential.” Such projects may include those pertaining to the arts or athletics. Indeed, many of the districts profiled in this report saw success with previously-rejected bond issues only once such projects were removed from the referenda.
- ❖ Districts should actively involve community leaders in every step of a bond election campaign. Research shows that citizens are more likely to be influenced by neighbors or friends than by elected school board officials or district administrators. Therefore, campaigns which are led by prominent community members are often more successful than campaigns driven primarily by the school board or other school officials.
- ❖ The most common method for increasing voter support among the districts profiled in this report was to decrease the funding amount requested in the bond issue. Often, districts accomplished this by excluding projects related to arts, athletics, or, to a lesser extent, technology from the revised version of the bond. Districts also found success through increasing community involvement and outreach in between bond elections.

Literature Review: Increasing Support for Bond Measures

In this section, we examine measures that school districts can take to increase support for bond issues. We begin our discussion by detailing factors—such as district demographics and project types—that can contribute to or detract from bond issue success. This part of our discussion focuses on issues that district administrators should consider when creating a bond proposal as well as the types of funding requests that are generally perceived favorably by community members. We then examine specific campaign components that have been demonstrated to be effective in securing public support for bond measures, including campaign committees, media coordinators, and flyers and brochures designed to highlight the potential benefits of the bond within both schools and communities. Our discussion of measures that can increase public support for school district bonds will be supplemented by the profiles that comprise Section Two of this report.

Considerations for Bond Election Campaigns

Recognizing the importance of successful bond elections to school districts, many state departments of education and other governmental organizations have developed recommendations designed to be used by districts to garner public support for their bond election campaigns. While no two sets of recommendations are the same, there are several common themes that recur throughout materials compiled by educational organizations. Specifically, these organizations typically suggest that school districts take the following considerations into account when developing bond election campaigns:

- ❖ **Needs:** Districts should be able to clearly articulate their specific needs, and should further ensure that these needs “reflect community priorities and are based on research.”⁴
- ❖ **Costs/Resource Assessment:** Districts should “know exactly what financial resources are currently available to address the need” and should further take measures to determine whether “a bond, tax, or other resource would be most appropriate to the need.”⁵
- ❖ **District Demographics:** Districts should understand the demographic characteristics of their community, and should be prepared to address specific issues that may arise as a result of these data.
- ❖ **Types of Projects:** Research shows that certain types of projects are more likely to be funded than others. Districts should take these findings into consideration, especially when proposing bonds that have previously lost elections.

⁴ “Supporting Schools, Vote by Vote: Lessons from November’s Winners.” Winter, 2007. *Focus on Critical Issues*. Oregon School Boards Association. P. 1.

<http://www.osba.org/~media/Files/Publications/Critical%20Issues/cielections.ashx>

⁵ “Checklists and Step-by-Step Instructions for Successful School Bond Elections in New Mexico.” May 23, 2010. New Mexico Public School Facilities Authority. P. ii. <http://www.nmpsfa.org/index.html>

The above considerations will be discussed in greater detail in the following subsections. Additionally, this portion of our report includes a brief note regarding the ways in which voting format (e.g. poll-voting or vote-by-mail) can potentially influence voter response.

District and Community Needs

The timely, appropriate communication of a district's needs to the voting public can play a large role in determining whether or not a district's bond election will be successful. According to the New Mexico Public School Facilities Authority (NMPSFA), school districts should provide their local communities with:⁶

- ❖ An honest and transparent presentation of how the district sees its facility needs;
- ❖ A description of how the district intends to address those needs;
- ❖ An estimate of the cost of addressing those needs; and
- ❖ A proposal of how the district intends to pay for the solutions to those needs.

Needs can be measured and assessed in a variety of ways. In their paper presented at the National Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association, Nick Theobald and Kenneth Meier suggest that need can be demonstrated through data which illustrate “run down school buildings, overcrowded schools, [and] teacher shortages,” as well as through variables such as class size and building maintenance costs.⁷ Specifically, Theobald and Meier found that **voters are particularly sensitive to data which illustrate large class sizes**, likely due to the prevalence of this topic in state and national debates on education policy.⁸ For this reason, districts that support their needs assessments with data indicating large class sizes often have a better chance of securing public support for bonds than districts that already have relatively low teacher-to-student ratios.

Districts that are unable to demonstrate need through variables such as classroom size or overcrowding typically use variables such as maintenance or renovation costs to demonstrate a significant area of need. The literature surrounding the degree to which voters are willing to support maintenance/renovation or building projects is somewhat mixed. In their review of bonds proposed by Texas school districts, for instance, Theobald and Meier found that “increases in maintenance expenditures decreases the likelihood of success” in securing bond approval.⁹ However, the authors also note that this negative correlation may, in fact, be related to districts' past success in securing bonds; in other words, districts that have historically had minimal success passing bond issues may have higher maintenance costs due to lack

⁶ Taken with slight modifications from: “Checklists and Step-by-Step Instructions...” Op. Cit., 2.

⁷ Theobald, N. and Meier, K. 2002. “The Politics of School Finance: Passing School Bonds.” Paper presented at the annual National Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. April 25-28, 2002. P. 3. <http://teep.tamu.edu/pubs/bonds.pdf>

⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁹ Ibid., 10.

of funding than districts that have successfully won past bond elections. Indeed, our research suggests that bonds for maintenance and/or building costs can be successful if the district is able to **demonstrate how such projects will save the district and the surrounding community money** in the long run. A school district in Adrian, Oregon, for instance, won its first bond in over thirty years for the construction of a school building by successfully demonstrating that repairs to an ailing K-8 school building would cost approximately the same as the proposed construction.¹⁰

Finally, research also suggests that **“increasing the beneficiaries of projects can increase the likelihood of bond acceptance.”**¹¹ This is especially important for school districts, who often must solicit votes from citizens who do not have school-aged children, and who therefore do not stand to directly benefit from any improvements to school buildings or technologies. For such bonds, it is important for districts to demonstrate the positive impact school improvements can have on the surrounding community. For instance, improved facilities may attract more families to the region, which may in turn boost the regional economy. Similarly, district administrators can also demonstrate how new or improved facilities might be useful to community groups or organizations that have access to these facilities after school hours. By demonstrating the far-reaching effects of school improvements, district administrators can in turn secure support from voting citizens who may not otherwise be inclined to approve such measures.

Costs/Resource Assessment

Once a district’s needs are identified, district administrators should determine how best to fund the projects that will address them. Again, the district should be as transparent and forthcoming as possible throughout this process, and should involve the community at every step along the way. Additionally, districts should be sensitive to the financial impact of their proposed bonds, especially in light of the current economic recession. Theobald and Meier argue that the financial impact of bonds can be considered in terms of the following three variables:¹²

- ❖ **Per-Pupil Amount of Bond:** Bonds with a high ratio of funds per student are less likely to be passed than bonds with low per-pupil amounts.¹³
- ❖ **Tax Rates:** Districts with pre-existing high tax rates may not be as willing to support increases in taxes to support school bonds.
- ❖ **District Debt:** If districts spend a significant portion of their budget paying off debt, voters may not be willing to approve a tax increase that would expand this portion of the budget.

¹⁰ “Supporting Schools.” Op. Cit., 2.

¹¹ Bondo, M. “Put it to the Voter: Issues in School Bond Referenda.” University of South Carolina.
<http://www.ipspr.sc.edu/publication/Bond%20Referenda2.pdf>

¹² Theobald, N. and Meier, K. Op. Cit., 4.

¹³ Ibid., 8.

Additionally, districts should take their community's overall bonding capacity into account when considering the amount of the proposed bond. The NMPSFA notes that a district's bonding capacity is primarily measured in terms of the total assessed value of property in the district.¹⁴ In theory, **the higher a district's total assessed property value, the more likely citizens are to have the resources to pay for bonds.** This hypothesis was corroborated by Theobald and Meier, who found that "district resources, in the form of property value, is positively associated with [the] success" of district bond issues.¹⁵ Likely this is due to the fact that **districts with high property tax values require smaller tax increases** to pay for bonds than districts with low overall property values.

District Demographics

When assessing the likelihood of success in a bond election, district administrators should also consider district demographics, as the size and composition of a community can significantly influence citizens' attitudes toward bond issues. Typically, this demographic issue can best be explained as a matter of self interest, i.e. to what degree are specific demographic subgroups personally invested in the district's educational system?

Senior citizens (age 65 and over), for instance, may be less likely to support educational bond issues as they generally do not have children in the school system. As one researcher explains, seniors may also be less willing to support educational upgrades and improvements as existing structures were adequate when they were in school, and should therefore be "good enough" for a new generation of students.¹⁶ Additionally, this subgroup of citizens "may be more sensitive to higher property taxes due to living on a fixed income."¹⁷ Further, as is the case with general elections, this subgroup may be **more likely to vote than younger generations**, and therefore can potentially have a negative impact on a bond campaign. We note, however, that the literature surrounding population age and the passage of school district referenda is mixed, with approximately equal numbers of existing studies demonstrating positive or negative correlations between age and bond success rates.¹⁸ Therefore, although district administrators should consider the age of the general population a factor when assessing the potential success of a bond issue, age should not be the primary or sole demographic indicator examined.

¹⁴ "Checklist and Step-by-Step Instructions..." Op. Cit., 21.

¹⁵ Theobald, N. and Meier, K. Op. Cit., 9.

¹⁶ Holt, C. 2009. "School Bond Success: A Strategy for Building America's Schools." Rowman & Littlefield Education. P. 14.
<http://books.google.com/books?id=eTYzFV5HLH0C&printsec=frontcover&vq=demographics#v=onepage&q=demographics&f=false>

¹⁷ Bondo, M. Op. Cit., 3.

¹⁸ Ibid., 3-4.

Minority status may also impact whether or not a citizen is likely to vote in favor of school bonds. Little literature exists that details the correlation—if any—between the racial diversity of a population and the passage of school bonds. Theobald and Meier found that racial distance (a calculation which subtracts the percentage of white students within the district from the percentage of the voting age population who are white) is not a reliable indicator of bond success.¹⁹ Therefore, districts with racially diverse populations may be equally as likely to secure voter approval for bonds as districts with racially homogeneous populations. However, in his recent book *School Bond Success: A Strategy for Building America's Schools*, Carleton Holt suggests that “if a prominent individual from a minority segment of the population comes out in opposition to the referendum, one can probably assume opposition from that segment of the community.”²⁰ This finding again highlights the importance of effectively communicating the benefits of school bonds to *all* members of the community, to ensure that all citizen subgroups understand how school upgrades and improvements will impact them and their families.

The overall socioeconomic status of students within the community may also impact the degree to which citizens are willing to support school bond issues. Theobald and Meier found that **the higher the percentage of low income students in a district, the higher the likelihood of bond success.**²¹ These researchers posit that this correlation is due to the fact that the schools in these districts are able to demonstrate a great need due to historical lack of financial resources, and can therefore more easily persuade voters to approve tax increases to pay for much-needed renovations and upgrades.

Finally, we note that the overall size of a district often impacts the likelihood of school bond success. Generally, **citizens in larger districts are less likely to realize the immediate benefits of school construction or improvement projects** as these projects are often localized in one area of the district. For instance, a district comprising three cities may solicit funding from the entire district to fund school upgrades in one city that will not have any immediate benefit for citizens in the other two cities. For this reason, administrators in larger districts will have to take additional measures to illustrate the long-term benefits of its projects (such as reduced pupil-to-teacher ratios, economic benefits, etc.) in order to secure district-wide support.

Types of Projects

Generally, the types of projects that citizens are willing to support will depend largely on the variables described above, such as the degree to which a district can illustrate need, the cost of bonds to support this need, and the demographic composition of the community. However, research suggests that some types of renovations, upgrades, and other improvements are more likely to gain widespread community

¹⁹ Theobald, N. and Meier, K. Op. Cit., 10.

²⁰ Holt, C. Op. Cit., 75.

²¹ Theobald, N. and Meier, K. Op. Cit., 9.

support than others. At the 2011 annual meeting of the Association for Education Finance and Policy, Alex Bowers presented research that found that “bonds directed at spending on school facilities renovation and debt refinancing” were often received favorably by voters (winning passage approximately 80 percent of the time) while **bond measures in support of “athletics- and arts-focused measures” did not fare so well** (passage rates of around 60 percent).²² This finding supports research by Ron Zimmer et al. who recently found that “there is some evidence that voters are less likely to support band/art equipment [...] which may not be seen as core functions of educating students.”²³ Indeed, many bond issues that lack initial public support can eventually be successful if “non-essential” items are removed from the proposal. For instance, Sherwood School District in Oregon eliminated a new stadium and performing arts facility and a swimming pool expansion from their bond proposal in order to secure community support for \$98 million in essential school construction funding.²⁴

Although voters may be more willing to support projects seen as “essential” rather than projects that support extracurricular or supplemental activities, most researchers note that public support often depends largely on the degree to which district administrators can demonstrate *need*. In a subsequent subsection, we explore tactics school districts can use to communicate information about proposed bonds to the community, and in turn increase the likelihood of securing significant community support.

Note on Voting Format

Little information is available regarding the ways in which voting format can influence election results. Indeed, nothing in the literature, bond referenda, articles, or school district websites examined for this report indicated that voting format has any bearing on the final outcome of bond elections. However, in 2008, the nonprofit, nonpartisan citizen’s lobbying organization Common Cause published an election reform brief detailing best practices for vote-by-mail (VBM) elections. In this brief, the organization states that VBM elections “**can increase turnout by four to five percentage points** in general elections and significantly more in local or off-year elections.”²⁵ The organization states that this finding is likely due to the fact that voting by mail is more convenient for many citizens, especially those who work

²² Cavanagh, S. March 29, 2011. “What Kinds of School Bond Measures Win Big at Ballot Box?” *Education Week Blog*. http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/state_edwatch/2011/03/what_kinds_of_school_bond_measures_win_at_ballot_box.html

²³ Zimmer, R. et al. March 4, 2011. “What Types of School Capital Projects are Voters Willing to Support?” *Public Budgeting & Finance*. 31: 37-35. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1540-5850.2011.00973.x/full>

²⁴ “Supporting Schools.” Op. Cit., 21.

²⁵ “Getting it Straight for 2008: What we Know about Vote by Mail Elections and How to Conduct them Well.” January, 2008. Common Cause. P. 1. <http://www.commoncause.org/atf/cf/%7Bfb3c17e2-cdd1-4df6-92be-bd4429893665%7D/WHAT%20WE%20KNOW%20ABOUT%20VOTE%20BY%20MAIL.PDF>

during polling hours, are ill or disabled, are out of town during elections, or are otherwise inconvenienced by traffic, location, or weather.²⁶

While increasing the number of voters may be seen as a positive outcome of VBM for many elections, it is possible that this increase may negatively affect the outcome of school bond elections. Many researchers, including Mark Bondo, note that **“increased turnout reduc[es] the likelihood of passing local referenda.”**²⁷ Therefore, voting formats such as VBM which make it easier for those opposed to bond measures to vote may actually reduce school districts’ chances for success in bond elections. However, we note that this finding is based only on the limited available literature surrounding the effect of voting formats on election outcomes, and should be interpreted with caution.

Effective Bond Election Campaign Strategies

Citizen involvement is the most frequently-cited component of effective bond election campaigns. By actively coordinating with and reaching out to community members, administrators can increase awareness of district needs and encourage supportive citizens to vote on Election Day. Frequently, measures used to increase community involvement in bond election campaigns fall into the following two broad categories:

- ❖ **Committees:** These can include steering committees responsible for identifying areas of need and community action committees responsible for increasing the percentage of “yes” voters.
- ❖ **Media Campaign:** Includes brochures and newsletters distributed to community residents designed to increase awareness about the bond election.

Each of these categories is discussed in turn below. Additionally, the Public Schools of North Carolina State Board of Education has published a comprehensive document detailing timeframes for key campaign activities. For reference, this timeline is reproduced in Appendix A of this report.

Committees

In 2006, Carleton Holt et al. published a study intended to “determine the perceived most influential factors that led to two successful school bond referendums in one rural mid-size school district.”²⁸ As part of this study, the researchers asked 140 participants—including representatives from the district’s board of education, administration, faculty, staff, parents, and patrons—to rank-order a list of

²⁶ Ibid., 3.

²⁷ Bondo, M. Op. Cit., 6.

²⁸ Holt, C. et al. Winter, 2006. “School Bond Success: An Exploratory Case Study.” *The Rural Educator*. P. 1. http://www.ruraleducator.net/archive/27-2/27-2_Holt.pdf

“recommended activities in priority of significance to the passage of” the two bonds.²⁹ Of the eleven activities appearing on the list, **the activity most often ranked number one was “the board and administrators [established] a diverse community task force or facility study committee,”** which was chosen by 49 participants. According to survey participants, this committee was successful largely because it was comprised of a “diverse group” of “ordinary people” who presented a unanimous front that elicited trust in the proposed bond measures while also listening and responding to the concerns of the community.³⁰

This finding highlights the need for active community involvement in successful bond election campaigns. Often, public involvement during the planning stages of bond elections can lead to increased support toward the end of the campaigning process. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, for instance, suggests that districts should solicit “as much community involvement” as possible during the initial developmental phases of their plans. The department goes on to note that “many districts establish community task forces to study building needs, review existing reports and make recommendations to the board concerning the building program,” and that people involved in these task forces often go on to “become powerful voices for the referendum.”³¹ In addition to participating in the research phase of the bond election campaign process, these committees can also poll citizens and provide valuable feedback to district administrators regarding bond measures that the community is likely to support. This strategy can be particularly useful when districts are trying to pass a previously-failed bond issue, when feedback regarding unsupported measures can help districts identify areas within the bond that can be scaled back to generate additional community support.

The Department of Public Instruction additionally notes that community-based steering committees should be the primary entities responsible for overseeing bond election campaigns. Importantly, most of the literature surrounding bond election campaigns agrees that **community leaders—not district administrators—should be the primary advocates of the campaign.** Oftentimes, citizens may distrust the district school board or other officials, and may therefore be more inclined to question these parties’ motives in applying for a bond. When campaigns are led by community members, however, voters may be more inclined to view projects as potentially beneficial to the entire community. Additionally, voters may be more likely to ask questions and educate themselves about the key issues in the campaign when it is led by their neighbors and other respected community members.

Community leaders should also play an instrumental role in securing “yes” votes in the election. Several sources note that the **most important part of bond election**

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁰ Ibid., 16.

³¹ “Planning Successful Bond Campaigns.” Public Schools of North Carolina. P. 5.
<http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org/pubs/SuccessfulBondCamp.pdf>

campaigns is “getting ‘yes’ voters to vote.”³² In fact, in the Holt et al. study, “spending resources and time to get ‘yes’ voters to the polls rather than spending resources and time trying to change people’s minds” was ranked fifth of the eleven activities stakeholders perceived to be contributing factors to successful bond elections. The following figure details the ways in which community leaders can best assist with this cause.

Figure 1.1: Community-Based Strategies for Increasing “Yes” Votes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Voter Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community volunteers should assist with the recruitment of the 18-year-old vote, as well as the registration of newcomers to the community and potential bond supporters who are not yet registered to vote. ❖ Absentee Ballots <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ College-age students may be particularly sensitive to bond issues concerning the schools from which they have recently graduated. Community volunteers should therefore actively seek support from these community members. ❖ Telephone Reminders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Particularly important during the last few days of the campaign, community volunteers should contact potential “yes” voters the day before and the day of the vote. ❖ Door-to-Door Canvassing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Voters are more inclined to listen to the opinions of their neighbors. Therefore, community volunteers should actively canvas their neighborhood in order to solicit “yes” votes from their neighborhoods. ❖ Direct Mail <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Volunteers should be sure to send out mail reminders to all potential “yes” voters to be received the day before the vote takes place.
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Source: The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction.³³

Media Campaign

In addition to the measures discussed above, school districts should also have active media campaigns designed to further educate citizens about proposed bond issues and the impact these projects will have on the community. Often, media campaigns are headed by a media coordinator who is typically responsible for the following:³⁴

- ❖ The writing and developing of the overall advertising or promotional campaign (with input from key stakeholders);
- ❖ The writing and designing of brochures, fliers, news releases, slide presentations, billboards, and advertisements carrying out the designated campaign theme; and

³² “Supporting Schools.” Op. Cit., 1.

³³ Reproduced with slight modifications from: “Planning Successful Bond Campaigns.” Op. Cit., 9-10.

³⁴ Ibid., 7.

- ❖ Working closely with the steering or other committees to relay a common message and address any potential campaign problems.

In Holt et al.'s survey of community and school representatives, disseminating information focused on the benefits of proposed bonds for children and the community was the second-most frequently-cited activity contributing to bond passage. Voters, notes the NC Department of Public Instruction, typically tend to support issues they understand.³⁵ For this reason, it is important that district administrators, media coordinators, and community volunteers take steps to ensure that voters are as educated as possible about the issues surrounding proposed bonds. Importantly, many researchers note that **all information provided to potential voters should be based solely on extensive research** (often conducted by the steering committee or other community-based advisory committee).³⁶ All claims regarding district needs or potential benefits of school improvements should be supported by facts uncovered during the research phase of the campaign process. Additionally, the media campaign should generally target and focus on increasing the number of “yes” voters rather than trying to change the minds of citizens who have already decided to vote “no.” In this way, the district will be able to focus its resources on encouraging “yes” voters to vote on Election Day instead of on engaging in heated battles with the opposition.

Successful media campaigns target potential voters through several different mediums. Generally, information can be disseminated through radio or television spots, local newspaper articles, brochures, flyers, or newsletters. Increasingly, districts are also turning to social media—such as Facebook or Twitter—to increase public awareness about bond issues. For instance, in October of 2010, residents of Oxford, Mississippi voted on a \$30 million bond referendum designed to generate funds for much-needed school improvements. The media campaign in support of the referendum included a public forum designed to educate citizens about the crucial issues addressed by the bond, several Letters to the Editor appearing in the local newspaper,³⁷ and a Facebook page which included information about the bond and encouraged citizens to vote.³⁸ This media campaign significantly contributed to the successful passage of the bond issue, which was passed by a 68.5 percent majority.³⁹

Finally, we note that media campaigns should be designed to continue even after the successful passage of a bond. The public should be **continually updated on the district's progress toward bond measures** in order to sustain the relationships and

³⁵ “Planning Successful Bond Campaigns.” Op. Cit., 5.

³⁶ “Supporting Schools.” Op. Cit., 1.

³⁷ “School Bond Referendum.” *The Oxford Eagle*. <http://oxfordeagle.com/tag/school-bond-referendum/>

³⁸ “Oxford School District Bond Referendum.” <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Oxford-School-District-Bond-Referendum/104849689575778?sk=info>

³⁹ Simerville, M. October 27, 2010. “Oxford School District Bond Passes.” *The Daily Mississippian*. <http://thedmonline.com/article/oxford-school-district-bond-passes>

trust built during the campaign. Strategies that continue to build trust relationships between the district and voters include publically announcing “when and where bond related construction is taking place” and issuing project updates via newsletters, radio or TV spots, or newspapers.⁴⁰ These continual updates will help maintain public interest and investment in district schools, and will help to ensure future support for school bond issues.

⁴⁰ Bondo, M. Op. Cit., 7.

Bond Election Case Studies

In this section, we present five profiles of school districts that have recently won bond elections for measures that had been defeated in previous elections. For each profile, we present information regarding steps district administrators took to increase public support for the bond issue, including revisions to projects included in the bond and changes in the overall election campaign strategy. The five profiled districts include:

- ❖ **Rye City School District** (Rye, New York)
- ❖ **Woodmore Local Schools** (Elmore, Ohio)
- ❖ **South-Western City Schools** (Grove City, Ohio)
- ❖ **Selah School District** (Selah, Washington)
- ❖ **Pequot Lakes School District** (Pequot Lakes, Minnesota)

Districts are profiled in order of bond passage date. The most recent bond issue was passed on March 13th, 2012 by voters in the Rye City School District.

Rye City School District

Figure 2.1: Key Campaign Facts

Date of Initial Bond Election	December 13 th , 2011
Amount of Initial Bond	\$19.9 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Initial Election	46%
Date of Winning Bond Election	March 13 th , 2012
Amount of Winning Bond	\$16.3 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Winning Election	64%
Purpose of Bond	Allows for the construction of ten new classrooms to mitigate overcrowding in the district’s middle school/high school building.

Source: *The Rye Sound Shore Review*, 2012.⁴¹

Initial Bond Election

In December of 2011, Rye City school officials proposed a \$19.9 million bond designed to create additional space in the district’s middle/high school to compensate for overcrowding. The following elements were included in the district’s Capital Project Review:⁴²

⁴¹ Falcone, C. March 15, 2012. “School Bond Easily Passes Test on Second Try.” *The Rye Sound Shore Review*. http://www.myryesoundshore.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2309:school-bond-easily-passes-test-on-second-try&catid=34:news&Itemid=53

⁴² “District Capital Planning Status Update.” January 24, 2012. Rye City School District. P. 4. <http://www.myrye.com/2012RyeBOE/bond3-12KSQ1-24-12.pdf>

- ❖ Construction of 12 new science labs
- ❖ Removal of portable classrooms
- ❖ Conversion of 7 science rooms to 11 general classrooms
- ❖ Renovation of 7 bathrooms
- ❖ Renovation of high school boys and girls locker rooms
- ❖ Renovation of the high school guidance suite
- ❖ Renovation of the middle school nursing office
- ❖ MEP upgrades
- ❖ Code and SED upgrades
- ❖ Power upgrades for 9 renovated classrooms

Those opposed to this bond—namely, the Committee for Strong Sustainable Schools—argued that the district’s plan would cause taxes to increase by 33 percent over the next five years, and would further cause a 66 percent increase in district debt.⁴³ Additionally, the opposition argued that the district had approximately \$15.9 million in reserves, some of which could fund many of the projects proposed in the bond.⁴⁴

Ultimately, the bond was defeated by a margin of 46 to 54 percent in an election with a 35 percent voter turnout—the second-largest voter turnout in district history.⁴⁵

Winning Bond Election Campaign

In response to concerns raised by the opposition during the initial bond election campaign, district officials made several revisions to the original bond issue. Specifically, the revised issue **excluded bathroom and locker room renovations, nurse and guidance suite renovations, and MEP upgrades.**⁴⁶ Additionally, the district reduced the number of converted science classrooms from eleven to nine. According to the district, these revisions to the original issue stripped the project down to its “core elements,” and allowed for a \$3.6 million reduction in the amount of the bond.⁴⁷

District administrators also addressed concerns that the district was not adequately drawing upon its reserves **by allocating \$2 million in reserves to reduce tax rates** for 2012-13 and \$500,000 in reserves to pay for one-time facility upgrades.⁴⁸ Under the revised bond issue, the district also stated plans to use \$2.5 million in reserves to fund projects in 2013-14, a \$500,000 increase from reserves used during the 2011-12 school year.⁴⁹

⁴³ Falcone, C. December 1, 2011. “Committee Forms with Goal of Stomping Out School Bond Proposal.” *The Rye Sound Shore Review*.

http://www.myryesoundshore.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2070:committee-forms-with-goal-of-stomping-out-school-bond-proposal&catid=34:news&Itemid=53

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Falcone, C. March 15, 2012. Op. Cit.

⁴⁶ “District Capital Planning Status Update.” Op. Cit., 2.

⁴⁷ “A Capital Project Primer through Frequently Asked Questions.” The Rye City School District. P. 1.

<http://www.myrye.com/2012RyeBOE/bond3-12QArevised.pdf>

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Falcone, C. March 15, 2012. Op. Cit.

Finally, the district actively distributed literature detailing the components of the new bond issue in the months between the first and second bond elections. For instance, the district sent mailings to all Rye citizens which included information regarding changes the school board made to the original bond issue, consequences (such as increased class sizes) of not creating additional classrooms for students, and information about where, when, and how citizens could vote in the bond election.⁵⁰ The district also distributed a [Capital Project Primer](#) and a [Capital Project Status Update](#) both designed to answer questions about the bond issue and highlight the ways in which the district had responded to feedback after the initial bond election.

On March 13, 2012, the district's bond issue passed by a margin of 64 to 36 percent in an election with a 31 percent voter turnout.⁵¹

Woodmore Local Schools

Figure 2.2: Key Campaign Facts

Date of Initial Bond Election	November 8, 2011
Amount of Initial Bond	\$7.45 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Initial Election	46%
Date of Winning Bond Election	March 6 th , 2012
Amount of Winning Bond	\$5.43 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Winning Election	56%
Purpose of Bond	To construct a new K-8 elementary school building.

Source: *Port Clinton News Herald*, 2012.⁵²

Initial Bond Election

In 2011, the Ohio School Facilities Commission placed Woodmore's elementary school building and the junior high wing of its high school building on a list of Ohio school buildings in urgent need of new structures. According to district superintendent John Fernbaugh, simple renovations to existing structures were not feasible as “repairs [were] too costly to justify renovations.”⁵³ Because of the urgent need for new facilities, the Ohio School Facilities Commission agreed to provide funding for 32 percent of the project—or \$7 million—if local taxpayers agreed to pass levies to pay for the remaining cost. In November of 2011, the district proposed a \$7.45 million bond that would fund not only the construction of a new K-8 school building, but also the construction of a new performing arts facility to be built where

⁵⁰ “Addressing the Enrollment Crunch.” The Rye City School District. *Focus on Excellence*. <http://www.myrye.com/2012RyeBOE/bond3-12RyeBondNL2-27.pdf>

⁵¹ Falcone, C. March 15, 2012. Op. Cit.

⁵² Carson, D. March 3, 2012. “Woodmore Heads Back to Polls.” *Port Clinton News Herald*. <http://www.portclintonnewsheald.com/article/20120303/NEWS01/203030307/Woodmore-heads-back-polls>

⁵³ Nitz, C. “Use it or Lose it: Woodmore School District Asks for Voters’ Support on Bond Levy for New Facilities.” *Window to T\Woodmore*. http://www.woodmore.k12.oh.us/pdfs/Sept_2011.pdf

the existing middle school wing was located.⁵⁴ The bond issue was defeated by a margin of 46 to 54 percent on November 8th.

Winning Bond Election Campaign

In December of 2011, the Woodmore school board held a public forum to decide how to proceed with its bond election campaign. During this forum, the district agreed to **take the performing arts project out of the bond issue**, reducing the total amount of the bond from \$7.45 million to \$5.43 million.⁵⁵ However, the district superintendent stressed that although the auditorium was removed from the revised bond, the school board would revisit the issue in 2013 or 2014, as the construction of the auditorium was deemed a “necessity” by school officials.⁵⁶

To promote its revised bond issue, the district “put out three different brochures to voters via mail” and also campaigned through social media and public forums.⁵⁷ On March 6th, 2012, voters approved the bond issue by a margin of 56 to 44 percent; construction will begin on the new building within the next two years.⁵⁸

South-Western City Schools

Figure 2.3: Key Campaign Facts

Date of Initial Bond Election	November 4, 2008
Amount of Initial Bond	\$262 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Initial Election	Unknown
Date of Winning Bond Election	March 6 th , 2012
Amount of Winning Bond	\$148 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Winning Election	61%
Purpose of Bond	Provide funds for the construction of one new high school and 13 elementary schools, and to make renovations to two additional elementary schools.

Source: *The Columbus Dispatch*.^{59 60}

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Carson, D. December 7, 2011. “Woodmore Going Back to Voters with Bond Issue.” *The News-Messenger*. <http://www.thenews-messenger.com/article/20111207/NEWS03/112070302/Woodmore-going-back-voters-bond-issue>

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Carson, D. March 3, 2012. Op. Cit.

⁵⁸ Carson, D. March 7, 2012. “Woodmore Bond Issue for New Building Passes.” *The News-Messenger*. <http://www.thenews-messenger.com/article/20120307/NEWS03/203070324/Woodmore-bond-issue-new-building-passes>

⁵⁹ Boss, C. November 8, 2011. “Bonds Would Build New Schools in South-Western District.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2011/11/08/bonds-would-build-new-schools.html>

⁶⁰ Boss, C. March 6, 2012. “South-Western Gets Money for School Buildings.” *The Columbus Dispatch*. <http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/03/06/south-western-bond-issue.html>

Initial Bond Election

In 2008, the Ohio School Facilities Commission offered to provide South-Western City Schools with \$206 million to partially fund the construction of 18 new buildings, the demolition of 21 buildings, and the renovation of 12 buildings. These funds would also partially help to cover the cost of additions to existing buildings.⁶¹ In order to receive these funds, however, the district would have to convince voters to approve a \$262 million bond issue which would cover the remaining costs associated with the projects. For taxpayers, this could mean an additional \$378 per year per \$100,000 in home value, all of which would be new taxes.

The bond issue was defeated on November 4, 2008.

Winning Bond Election Campaign

In 2012, the Ohio School Facilities Commission again approved \$120 million in funds to help improve the district's aging school buildings by constructing 13 new elementary schools, renovating two additional elementary schools, and replacing the district's oldest high school.⁶² In order to receive this funding, however, voters had to approve a \$148 "no new millage" bond to supplement state funding. Unlike the previous bond issue, this **revised measure would not raise taxes**. Instead, "the district [would] keep its current collection rate on an older bond issue."⁶³

As part of its campaign, the district devoted a section of its website to disseminating information about the bond issue. This collection of information included links to newspaper stories about the bond election, the exact language that was to appear on the March 6th ballot, frequently asked questions, and a superintendent's newsletter advocating for voter support. Additionally, the website provided a [Fact Sheet](#) in three languages: English, Spanish, and Somali.⁶⁴ Finally, the district also kept voters informed through posts on its active Facebook and Twitter pages.

On March 6th, 2012, voters approved the district's bond issue by a margin of 61 to 49 percent.

⁶¹ Boss, C. September 9, 2008. "South-Western Schools: Tax Won't be Fully Collected." *Ohio Black Alliance for Educational Options*. http://ohio.baeco.org/?news_section_id=1&news_id=1268

⁶² "What is Issue 8?" South-Western City Schools. P. 1.
http://www.swcs.k12.oh.us/Home/AboutSWCS/Issue8_BallotSlimJim.pdf

⁶³ Boss, C. November 8, 2011. Op. Cit.

⁶⁴ "Issue 8: What, Why & How: Building Value for our Future." South-Western City School District.
<http://www.swcs.k12.oh.us/Home/AboutSWCS/OSFCProject.htm>

Selah School District

Figure 2.4: Key Campaign Facts

Date of Previous Bond Elections	February and April of 2011
Amount of Previous Bonds	\$39.9 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Previous Elections	58% (February) and 52% (April)
Date of Winning Bond Election	February 14 th , 2012
Amount of Winning Bond	\$30.5 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Winning Election	66%
Purpose of Bond	Funds will go toward the construction of a new junior high school and renovations at other schools.

Source: *The Yakima Herald*, 2012.⁶⁵

Previous Bond Elections

In 2011, the Selah School District proposed a \$39.9 million bond issue designed to fund improvements to area schools. Specifically, the bond issue detailed the following projects:⁶⁶

- ❖ Construction of a new junior high school to serve students in grades 6-8
- ❖ Construction of eight new classrooms, an auxiliary gymnasium, and a multi-purpose auditorium/performing arts center at the district’s high school
- ❖ Various improvements to the high school to accommodate 9th grade students
- ❖ Construction of a bus/parent load zone and various parking improvements at the district’s elementary school
- ❖ Various technology improvements across all district schools.

Additionally, district officials also sought \$19.2 million from the state in matching funds to finance the proposed projects. If the bonds had passed, property taxes would have been raised 79 cents per \$1,000 in valuation so that taxpayers would have paid \$1.98 in tax levies for every \$1,000 in property valuation starting in 2012.⁶⁷ However, voters failed to approve the bond issue in both February and April of 2011 when the ballot measure failed to obtain the necessary 60 percent supermajority vote. When asked why they thought the bond issue was unsuccessful, school officials blamed the economic recession, noting that “fewer people supported the bond because money keeps getting tighter for many families.”⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Catchpole, D. and Ferolito, P. February 14, 2012. “Selah Bond Measure Passes on Third Try; Naches Measure Failing.” *The Yakima Herald*. <http://www.yakima-herald.com/stories/2012/02/14/voters-will-weigh-in-on-school-bonds-levies-today>

⁶⁶ “Selah School Bond – What You May Not Know.” April 12, 2011. *Yakima Valley Business Journal*. <http://www.yvbj.com/news/2011/04/12/selah-school-bond---what-you-may-not-know.html>

⁶⁷ Johnston, M. April 25, 2011. “Selah Considers School Bond Again.” *The Daily Record*. http://www.dailyrecordnews.com/selah-considers-school-bond-again/article_0d65817e-6f69-11e0-94b4-001cc4c002e0.html

⁶⁸ Simms, R. April 27, 2011. “Selah Schools: ‘Bond Failed Because of Bad Economy.’” *KIMATV.com*. <http://www.kimatv.com/news/local/120826749.html>

Winning Bond Election Campaign

Between the April 2011 and the February 2012 bond elections, the Selah School District held two public forums to gather feedback from voters. Based on this feedback, the district decided to scale back its proposal by **dropping the high school auditorium** (replaced by a performance cafeteria at the junior high school), the technology upgrades at the district's high and elementary schools, and the parking improvements at the elementary school. Further, the district extended the length of the bond to 25 years (from 21) in order to reduce the immediate financial impact on voters.⁶⁹ As a result of these changes, the tax amount per \$1,000 in property valuation went from \$1.98 to \$1.23—the same rate currently in effect for district citizens.⁷⁰ When the bond issue passed by a 66 percent majority in February of 2012, the bond projects also qualified for \$18 million in state matching funds.

In order to promote its bond issue, the district provided community residents with a [brochure](#) and a [FAQ sheet](#) dedicated to explaining the projects associated with the bond. These documents clearly delineated the urgent need for new and improved facilities within the district, as well as the financial impact these projects would have on residents. The bond FAQ sheet also included information regarding how the 2012 and 2011 proposals differed by reinforcing the district's commitment to listening and responding to voter feedback. Finally, both documents also included information about voter registration, as well as the timeframe for the vote (which was conducted by mail). However, a February 2012 article published in the *Yakima Herald* suggests that **it was the above revisions to the bond that had the biggest impact on the outcome of the election**. In the article, district superintendent Steve Chestnut noted that these revisions were “critical” to the successful passage of the bond.⁷¹ A citizen interviewed for the same article echoed this sentiment, saying that the district's willingness to compromise with voters significantly contributed to the passage of the bond issue.

Pequot Lakes School District

Figure 2.5: Key Campaign Facts

Date of Initial Bond Election	June 8, 2010
Amount of Initial Bond	\$33.2 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Initial Election	43%
Date of Winning Bond Election	February 8, 2011
Amount of Winning Bond	\$33.2 million
Percent “Yes” Voters in Winning Election	60%
Purpose of Bond	Upgrades and additions to existing facilities.

Source: *Lake County Echo/Pine River Journal*, 2011.⁷²

⁶⁹ “Facility Bond Frequently Asked Questions.” January 3, 2012. Selah School District. P. 1.
http://www.selah.k12.wa.us/ADM/Publ/News_Updates/Bond%20FAQ.pdf

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Catchpole, D. and Ferolito, P. Op. Cit.

⁷² Anderson, K. February 9, 2011. “School referendum Passes on Second Try,” *pineandlakes.com*.
http://www.pineandlakes.com/stories/020911/localnews_20110209002.shtml

Initial Bond Election

In June of 2010, the Pequot Lakes School District proposed a \$33.2 million bond that would fund several additions and upgrades to existing school facilities. The bond issue included the following projects:⁷³

❖ **Elementary School Projects**

- Construct additions to the existing elementary school to accommodate pre-K students.
- Add one additional kindergarten classroom to the facility
- Move fifth-grade students to the middle/high school and repurpose vacated spaces for elementary school students
- Construct additional parking and secure play areas
- Make improvements to site drainage, play fields, and site storage issues

❖ **Middle/High School Projects**

- Construct additional space for fifth grade students
- Construct new space for a Media Center and the District Office
- Construct new additions to the high school portion of the building to accommodate new science classrooms, labs, and physical education spaces
- Perform various maintenance tasks and facility enhancements to better facilitate learning
- Renovate various outdoor sites such as parking lots, sidewalks, athletic fields, and tracks

The bond issue, which was slated to be paid over 23.5 years, ultimately did not pass in the initial election by a margin of 43 to 67 percent.

Winning Bond Election Campaign

When district officials decided to hold another bond election in 2011, they did not make any changes to the original bond projects. Instead, they focused their efforts on educating the public about the need for the projects detailed in the bond issue. Strategies the district took to educate citizens include holding multiple public forums and creating an “informational committee” responsible for meeting with community groups and individuals to discuss the bond referendum.⁷⁴ Additionally, community members started a “Vote Yes!” campaign that maintained an active Facebook page dedicated to keeping members informed about upcoming information sessions and voting times. According to district superintendent Rick Linnell, public perception

⁷³ “Proposal for Review and Comment.” October 21, 2010. Pequot Lakes School District. P. 10.
<http://pequotlakes.k12.mn.us/userfiles/file/Proposal%20for%20Review%20&%20Comment%2010-21-10.pdf>

⁷⁴ Anderson, K. December 1, 2010. “Bond Referendum Scheduled Feb. 8 for Pequot Lakes School District.” *pineandlakes.com*. http://www.pineandlakes.com/stories/120110/localnews_20101201002.shtml

regarding the bond was positively affected once the district “presented information in a much better way so it could be better understood.”⁷⁵ Additionally, Linnell noted that **teachers, board members, administration representatives, and parents all played a crucial role in securing bond passage**, again highlighting the importance of community involvement in successful bond election campaigns.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Appendix A: Bond Election Campaign Timeline⁷⁶

Three Months Prior To Election:

- ❖ Media committee drafts and submits a campaign budget to the finance committee.
- ❖ Finance committee begins raising the funds necessary to defray the cost of the promotional items for the referendum.
- ❖ Media committee has close to completion all copy, art work, slides, etc. for the production of promotional items.
- ❖ Community leaders quietly begin contacting prominent leaders in the community, opinion makers, and local politicians, seeking their support. They also assist in scheduling of the slide presentation in their various communities. Schedule the slide presentation no earlier than five weeks before the vote, with maximum exposure the week prior to the vote.
- ❖ Explanation of the building program, its purpose, what it will mean to children, etc. is provided to each professional and support staff person. Ideally, these groups have already had an opportunity to be involved in the planning of the building program. Various meetings may be needed to accomplish this task. For the next three months, information concerning the building program is carried in the district newsletter. Follow-up meetings need to be held with these same groups as you draw closer to the election date. School district employees are crucial to your referendum. Make sure they are kept informed.
- ❖ Each school's referendum committee develops its plan to promote the referendum. The principal of each school is in charge of this effort. In the high schools, the youth and the school's committee work together.
- ❖ The "get out the vote" committee begins organizing at the precinct level. Computer registration tapes need to be ordered, the telephone survey is developed, phone numbers are plugged into the voter sheets and volunteers are recruited. These activities are accomplished quietly, without drawing attention to the campaign.
- ❖ Voter registration is underway.

Two Months Prior To Election:

- ❖ The steering committee approves all campaign promotional items. The items are in the process of being produced.
- ❖ Each school submits a plan for its referendum activities to the overall school committee for approval.
- ❖ Copies of the slide presentation or video tape are ready for showing and speakers receive appropriate training.
- ❖ Phone numbers continue to be plugged into voter registration lists. (This is a time-consuming effort.)
- ❖ The finance committee completes the fund-raising drive.

⁷⁶ "Planning Successful Bond Campaigns." North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. P. 11-14.
<http://www.schoolclearinghouse.org/pubs/SuccessfulBondCamp.pdf>

Five Weeks Prior To Election:

- ❖ The slide presentation begins in the community. Remember to schedule maximum exposure during the last two weeks of the campaign.
- ❖ Press day is held for all local media representatives, high school newspaper editors, local college newspaper editors, etc.
- ❖ Specific assignments are made and training begins for persons involved in the “get out the vote” drive.
- ❖ The media plan is finalized and an accurate timetable established concerning the dissemination of appropriate promotional items (bumper stickers, campaign buttons, fliers, yard signs, etc.).
- ❖ Revise paid media schedule to reflect the funds that were raised.

Four Weeks Prior To Election:

- ❖ Citizens on the media committee contact local businesses and ask if their changeable-copy signs can be used the week prior to the election. The signs carry the referendum slogan, etc.
- ❖ Advertisers in local papers are contacted and asked if a copy of the referendum logo can be dropped into their already existing advertising copy the week prior to the election. Permission must be received from the newspaper prior to contacting advertisers. Signed permission slips are obtained from each advertiser before inserting logo.
- ❖ If radio spots are used, they should be written and taped. The decision to use radio spots should be weighed carefully. Spots do not begin playing until three or four days prior to the campaign, unless you are facing strong opposition.
- ❖ Newspaper ads are designed and the placement schedule is discussed with appropriate papers.

Three Weeks Prior To Election:

- ❖ Breakfast for opinion leaders is held at all schools in the district (slide presentation is shown).
- ❖ A meeting is scheduled with the ministerial association.
- ❖ Open houses for the public begin in all schools. Designate specific nights and show slide presentation.
- ❖ Careful evaluation of the locations for the showing of the presentation is made. Contacts are made in those areas targeted as YES precincts not receiving saturation.

Two Weeks Prior To Election:

- ❖ Begin your telephone survey. The survey must be completed during this week. Make sure your callers have been thoroughly trained.
- ❖ Direct mailing is sent to all ministers in the county, with a bulletin insert attached to the letter. Ministers are requested to print the bulletin insert in their programs (insert is actually an announcement).
- ❖ Sample ballots are distributed to appropriate groups.

- ❖ The results from your telephone survey (your YES vote) are being typed, precinct by precinct.

One Week before Election:

- ❖ Campaign buttons can be worn.
- ❖ Billboards can be posted. Weigh carefully whether you want to post boards.
- ❖ Changeable-copy signs are up.
- ❖ Posters in stores are on display.
- ❖ Yard signs are up.
- ❖ Ads in newspapers begin appearing. Build to maximum exposure on election day.
- ❖ Undecided voters get a special mailing signed by an opinion leader in the community.
- ❖ Telephone survey is complete. The YES vote has been determined in each precinct.
- ❖ Radio spots can begin. Frequency will build and peak on day of the election.
- ❖ Telephone banks are established.
- ❖ Transportation system is organized.
- ❖ Precinct workers are trained.

Night Prior To Vote:

- ❖ Telephone calls are made to all identified YES voters urging them to vote.
- ❖ Transportation services, etc. are offered and times for pick-up are scheduled.

Day of Vote:

- ❖ “Get out the vote” drive is in full swing.
- ❖ Reminder calls are made to YES voters who have not voted.

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