

Round Robin Discussion on the Secrets to a Winning School Bond/Tax Levy Information Campaign

Indianapolis- The district has had three successful campaigns. We emphasized that the district has managed our facilities well. We also played the poverty card and emphasized the inequality between us and surrounding suburban districts. The district wanted a bond that would fund air conditioning in the schools. A task force was created consisting of key members of the community, parents and church leaders. We had them meet in our schools and they experienced firsthand the need for air conditioning. A speaker's bureau is effective if you target groups, opinion leaders. We also conducted polling of the community. Bond campaign PR services were contracted out. PAC group hosted coffee clatches.

Fort Worth- For our bond measure, a board member called the election bureau and found which polling places have the highest turnout. We stood outside those schools in the area and handed out flyers and polling information. Go where the ducks are.

We also created a slogan called "Straight to Our Classroom," that emphasized that funds would go directly to the classroom. It became part of our campaign focus.

St. Paul- We included nonprofits and the teachers union. And we engaged the business community so they remained neutral. We did internal communication throughout the district. Our get out the vote efforts were huge. All those factors together resulted in success.

Guilford- We are laying the groundwork for our next campaign. Every week we place a positive story about our construction and facilities. One time we brought in kindergarteners to speak at a county commissioners meeting about the need for air conditioning in business. It was effective.

Denver- Many times we don't recognize bonds are part of the political system. In Denver, 80 percent of our parents don't vote so we have to recognize our own audience: business leaders and people who don't vote and target them. Because we are targeting a different audience, PR strategies, materials and tactics need to look different than day-to-day materials.

Orange County- We made it so there was a community interest in seeing better schools. Emphasized that funding was to protect and preserve. We created a community task force who heard from the superintendent and other administrators and they expressed how severe the situation was. Whatever you are going to do, don't ask for too little. Make sure you get enough funding to do the job.