



# Building Support for My School District:

Developing Effective Community Campaigns





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# Overview

- Risks presented by new election system
  - Community campaigns explained
  - How would school districts benefit from community campaigns?
  - Developing target audiences, community partners and messaging
  - Project planning and examples
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# New Election System Risks



- Regular Elections: First Tuesday in November of odd numbered years (2021, 2023, etc.)
    - Collateral Damage: Voters upset with another governmental entity on the ballot
    - New voters that do not know or care about education issues
  - Special Elections: Called by a school district and conducted by mail ballot only
    - Bond/Mill Levy Questions isolated from other school board issues such as board elections
    - Paper ballots to “each voter” in your area, including those not otherwise inclined to go to voting locations
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# What is a Community Campaign?

- An organized effort to develop community support for a concept, idea, policy initiative or financial initiative. Examples include:
    - Bond initiatives
    - Support for educational initiatives: programs, facilities, innovations
    - Property tax increases
    - Referendum elections: local taxes, living wage, sports facilities
    - Community support for infrastructure initiatives or development projects
    - Creating goodwill and overall positive perception in your community
  - A community campaign is NOT a candidate-based campaign
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# Why would your school district need a Community Campaign?

- **Develop grassroots support for school initiatives:**
    - **Bond elections**
    - **Education Technology Notes (ETNs)**
    - **Facility improvement/expansion**
    - **New programs or offerings**
  - **Develop support for community initiatives:**
    - **Local economic development**
    - **Municipal/county programs supporting school initiatives**
  - **Enhance community understanding/perception of district performance**
    - **School grade improvement**
    - **New/successful programs or educational offerings**
    - **Supplement or contradict media reports**
    - **Fill void of local coverage of district successes**
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# Target Audiences – Who do we want to reach?



- Parents, students and teachers – develop understanding of and confidence regarding district benefits and programs
  - Residents within district boundaries – develop support for bonds and other community-based initiatives
  - Community leaders – raise awareness of district successes and programs
    - State officials – Governor, Legislators, NMPED Secretary
    - County commissioners
    - City councilors
    - Congressional delegation
    - Other community leaders (non-profits, foundations, volunteer organizations)
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Unique constituencies
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# How do we reach our target audiences?

- Online - online resources can be targeted to a region, city, neighborhood or individual
  - District Website – News, statements, dedicated web pages
  - Social media – e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
  - Digital newsletters/emails
  - Banner ads
  - Social media ads
  - Sponsored content ads
- Video
  - Online video of district successes – possibly generated through district student programs
  - Online video advertisements – professionally produced
  - Local TV/cable ad buys
  - Movie theaters – public service announcements

# How do we reach our target audiences?

- Print media
  - Monthly guest columns by Superintendent or Board President
  - Issuing press releases, announcements, newsletters
  - Print ads in local media – newspaper ads
  - Letters to the editor campaigns
  - Mail program – targeted mail pieces (post cards, letters, info sheets)
- Radio –
  - Monthly radio show or appear as a guest
  - Ads with local radio and streaming music services
- Earned media – generating new stories instead of paying for ads





# Who are your community partners?

Community partners are needed to advance, support and sometimes help fund your initiatives

- Local governments – city and county
- Local chambers of commerce
- Local non-profits
- Unique constituencies
- Other





# What is our message to the community?





- Understand the true opinions of your district in the community
  - Understand opinions of segments of the community
- General rating of the district: How do you feel about the district?
  - What is district doing well? What needs to be improved?
- Is there support for technology or facility improvements?
- Where does your community get its news and information?
- Collect demographic information: age, ethnicity, gender, income, geography, parent, grandparent, no kids in district, etc.
- Result: Identify most persuasive messages and best communication resources





# How do I poll the opinions of my community?



- As the questions directly from segments of your community
    - Survey Monkey or other polling software – typically samples opinions of known people whose email addresses we have (parents, students, community contacts)
    - Paid polling companies – sample a larger universe, more reliable, and more extensive questioning and analysis
    - Phone banking – Staff and/or volunteers call people whose phone numbers we have and ask a set list of questions
  - Unsolicited opinions typically are not representative of the overall opinion of the District/topic
    - Typically only those who strongly favor or oppose call, but they may be a minority of the overall community
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# Sample mail piece





# Sample mail piece

## VOTE ON SAFE PLACES FOR LEARNING



### FUNDING SAFE SCHOOLS

Good, safe learning environments are crucial for our kids' education. Like a house or car, school buildings need regular maintenance. Roofs leak, pavement cracks, and heating and air conditioning need to be replaced. Our local schools are in constant need of repair. Schools must be positive and healthy places for our kids to learn. On February 3<sup>rd</sup> you can vote on the Mill Levy that continues to fund the repair of leaks and cracks, and maintains our classrooms.



### THE MILL LEVY FUNDS SCHOOL SAFETY

The primary election ballot includes a Mill Levy question for Santa Fe Public Schools. The ballot language is below and the funds will impact every school in the District, including charter schools, so that school buildings will continue to be safe places for our kids to learn. The Mill Levy will NOT increase property taxes. And the funds from the Mill Levy will continue to give our students safe and healthy places to learn and succeed.

**The Question:** Shall the Santa Fe Public School District continue to impose a property tax of \$1.50 for residential property and \$1.50 for non-residential property per each \$1,000.00 of net taxable value of property allocated to the Santa Fe Public School District for the property tax years 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020 for the purpose of erecting, remodeling, making additions to, providing equipment for or furnishing public school buildings;<sup>2</sup> payments made pursuant to a financing agreement for the leasing of a building or other real property with an option to purchase for a price that is reduced according to payments made;<sup>3</sup> purchasing or improving public school grounds;<sup>4</sup> administering the projects undertaken pursuant to sections 1 and 3 above, including expenditures for facility maintenance software, project management software, project oversight and district personnel specifically related to administration of projects funded by the Public School Buildings Act provided that expenditures pursuant to this section shall not exceed five percent of the total project cost?

Vote Feb. 3. The Public School Mill Levy will help keep our schools safe for our kids.

# Sample print ad

## VOTE FEB 3

Learn more about how we can keep schools working.



Read more about the SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN and ABQ Journal's Mill Levy opinions and find where to vote on election day at [sfps.info](http://sfps.info)

### The School Mill Levy:

- ✓ Gives our students safe and healthy places to learn and succeed
- ✓ Funds maintenance for ALL schools including Charter Schools
- ✓ Does NOT increase taxes

**VOTE EARLY:** 8am – 5pm  
Weekdays now until JAN. 30

**EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS:**  
SFPS Educational Services Center  
Room A, 610 Alta Vista Street  
Santa Fe Community College  
6401 Richards Avenue, Room 208  
Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk  
102 Grant Avenue

Paid for by Santa Fe Public Schools



# Examples – Banner Ads



That's What's New at  
Alamogordo Public Schools

[More Info](#)

**Jet Fueled  
Careers**



Not Your  
Average  
Classroom

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*Get Career-  
Ready, New at  
Alamogordo  
Public Schools*

[Learn More](#)



# Project Timeline Example

- Month 1
  - Information gathering
  - Develop polling tools (relevant and useful questions)
  - Deployment the polling tool
  - Analyze initial results and develop & deploy initial messaging plan & earned strategy around accomplishments
- Month 2
  - Continue earned media activities
  - Analyze research and feedback
  - Develop program plans – mix and timing of elements
  - Produce and design program elements
- Months 3, 4, 5
  - Fully launch public campaign
  - Continue public campaign program
  - Analyze and assess program elements
  - Adjust program elements as necessary
  - Continue earned media program
- “Shampoo, Rinse, and Repeat”
  - Refine the process, then start again





# Review/Questions

- Community campaigns
  - Benefits for school districts
  - Target audiences, community partners and messaging
  - Project planning and timelines
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