



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

New Election System Risks

- Regular Elections: First Tuesday in November of odd numbered years (2021, 2023, etc.)
 - **New voters** that do not know or care about education issues
 - **Collateral Damage:** Voters upset with another governmental entity on the ballot
 - Voters that only show up for the “**top of the ticket**” (Mayor, etc) and don’t understand or care about education issues
 - “NO” Voters - more polarized than ever & often showing up just to vote against things

New Election System Risks

- 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

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
- A community campaign is NOT a PR campaign, but rather a targeted effort to influence likely voters

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

Target Audiences – Who do we want to reach?

- Parents, students and teachers – develop understanding of and confidence regarding district benefits and programs
- Residents (likely voters) 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/town councilors
 - Congressional delegation
 - Other community leaders (non-profits, foundations, volunteer organizations)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Unique constituencies

How do we reach our target audiences?

- 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
 - Videos of district successes – maybe generated by student programs
 - Online video advertisements – professionally produced
 - Local TV/cable ad buys
 - OTT ad buys - cable cutters – subscriber services: YouTube, Hulu, etc.
 - 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
 - Holding press conferences with key players
 - 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
- Local businesses & business leaders
- 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?

- Ask 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
 - Paid polling companies understand who is likely to show up to vote and ensures your polling sample is accurate, so that you know how to do your Community Campaign (who to target with what message)
 - **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

Direct Mail; Print Ads; Banner Ads

- Everything can – and should be – targeted to your specific universes
- Mail persuasive mail pieces to people anticipated to vote
- Buy print ads in publications your universes are likely to view
- Buy online banner (and social media ads) based on who you want to target
- Target certain messages based on your polling data
- Use the Voter File to efficiently target the audiences you need to
 - Mail directly to the voters
 - Target digital ads based on the voter file
 - Target digital ads based on geography, demographic, gender, etc.

Sample mail piece

VOTE FEBRUARY 3

The Public School Mill Levy will continue to give our kids safe places to learn and keep Santa Fe Schools working.



**VOTE EARLY FROM JAN. 26 THROUGH
JAN. 30, 8 AM - 5 PM**

EARLY VOTING LOCATIONS:

- SFPS Educational Services Center, Room A, 610 Alta Vista Street
- Santa Fe Community College, 6401 Richards Avenue, Room 209
- Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk, 102 Grant Avenue

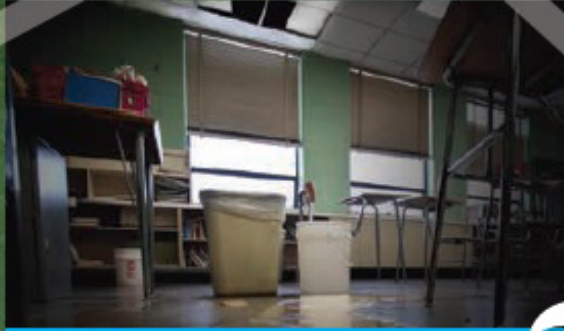
Santa Fe Public Schools
610 Alta Vista
Santa Fe, NM 87505



SFS-13-111

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 3rd 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 of¹ erecting, remodeling, making additions to, providing equipment for or furnishing public school buildings;² 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;³ purchasing or improving public school grounds;⁴ 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

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 209
Office of the Santa Fe County Clerk
102 Grant Avenue

Examples – Banner Ads



That's What's New at
Alamogordo Public Schools

[More Info](#)

Jet Fueled Careers



Not Your
Average
Classroom

*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 of 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

▪ Paid Voter Communications

- 60 days out from election
- Efficiently use your resources as voters are planning on making their decisions, and work your way “backwards”
- The more money you have, the further out you can start your paid communications

▪ “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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