

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 040 500

EA 002 894

AUTHOR Hamilton, Carolyn Copen; And Others  
TITLE School District Campaign Planner: A Guide to Successful Finance Elections.  
INSTITUTION National School Public Relations Association, Washington, D.C.  
PUB DATE 69  
NOTE 105p.  
AVAILABLE FROM National School Public Relations Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036 (NEA Stock No. 411-12364, \$14.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.50 HC Not Available from EDRS.  
DESCRIPTORS Case Studies, \*Citizen Participation, \*Educational Finance, \*Guides, Mass Media, Public Opinion, \*School Budget Elections, \*Voting

ABSTRACT

As a guide for those concerned with presenting the financial needs of the schools to the voting public, general research findings in the art of campaigning for school funds are summarized. Techniques, tools, and practices that have been used with success are reported, as well as the importance of understanding the attitudes of voters toward school spending. Specific components of a successful campaign are described, including early citizen involvement, timing of the election, choice of the campaign coordinator, use of community groups, and use of communications media. A campaign checklist, an organizational plan, and a resource list of 36 articles, reports, books, and monographs are also provided. A review of school budget elections held in 24 cities across the nation lists four primary factors for each election (total school enrollment, total population of community or district, type of campaign, and amount of money sought) describes the campaign conducted for each, and tells whether the effort was successful. (JK)

ED040500

*School District*

# Campaign Planner



A GUIDE TO  
SUCCESSFUL FINANCE  
ELECTIONS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION  
& WELFARE

OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED  
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR  
ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF  
VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECES-  
SARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDU-  
CATION POSITION OR POLICY

EA 002 894

National School Public Relations Association  
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036

PROCESS WITH MICROFICHE AND  
PUBLISHER'S PRICES. MICRO-  
FICHE REPRODUCTION ONLY.

**School District Campaign Planner:  
A Guide to Successful Finance Elections**

Copyright 1969  
National School Public Relations Association  
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20036

*All Rights Reserved.* Printed in the United States of America. This book or parts thereof may not be reproduced in any form without written permission of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 77-99174

NEA Stock No. 411-12364

\$14

Permission to reproduce this copyrighted work has been granted to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) and to the organization operating under contract with the Office of Education to reproduce documents included in the ERIC system by means of microfiche only, but this right is not conferred to any users of the microfiche received from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service. Further reproduction of any part requires permission of the copyright owner.

# Contents

## Section I: Challenges of the Campaign

<b>Chapter 1: Scarce Stuff—The Long Green</b> .....	9
School districts, rarely flush, find it increasingly hard to make ends meet . . . causes complex . . . taxpayers, frustrated on many other fronts, take out resentment by voting down school issues . . . teachers demanding higher salaries . . . parochial schools, strapped financially, face closings . . . education costs more and everybody wants more of it . . . welfare and other services in big cities siphon off school moneys . . . archaic state laws inhibit local school financing . . . old-style campaigns just won't work anymore.	
<b>Chapter 2: What Do We Know About the Public?</b> .....	13
The five "publics" that exist in every school district . . . how each is apt to vote on school issues . . . how to get the potential "yes" voter to the polls while winning over his uncommitted neighbor . . . pros and cons of large vs. small voter turnout . . . how to pitch the campaign psychologically . . . what opinion polls can and cannot do.	
<b>Chapter 3: The Components of a Campaign</b> .....	19
Community pride in local schools . . . early involvement of citizens, especially opinion-makers . . . uniting the school board . . . steering away from doubletalk, false promises . . . timing, a crucial factor . . . need for extensive analysis of past defeats . . . how to recruit, train, and use citizen committees . . . role of teachers and students . . . budgeting the campaign . . . planning and producing promotional materials . . . radio and TV . . . face-to-face contacts . . . block meetings . . . kaffeeklatsch, door-to-door, and telephone campaigns.	
<b>Section II: Campaign Tools, Troops, and Timetable</b>	
<b>Chapter 4: Look Back Before You Leap</b> .....	29
The pre-campaign checklist to analyze potential strengths and weaknesses . . . avoiding "surprise" election announcements . . . picking right moment to announce decision to go to the polls . . . initial news release . . . how to field questions at the news conference.	
<b>Chapter 5: Getting Under Way: People and Plans</b> .....	32
Recruiting lay leadership . . . thinking through the blueprint for action . . . typical organization chart . . . campaign timetable . . . strategies and budgets . . . steering committee agenda . . . training workers and keeping all hands informed.	
<b>Chapter 6: Spreading the Word</b> .....	37
The speakers bureau . . . training articulate spokesmen . . . the prepared script . . . high quality audiovisual aids . . . sample filmstrip narration . . . basic fact brochure . . . winning individual and group endorsements . . . garnering newspaper, radio, and television coverage for campaign . . . paid advertising . . . writing the campaign news releases.	
<b>Chapter 7: Tying Up Loose Ends</b> .....	46
Ensuring voter registration . . . telephone and door-to-door canvass of "yes" voters . . . sample scripts for canvassers . . . the kaffeeklatsch . . . thanking the workers . . . post-campaign review session and analysis of voting patterns . . . planning maintenance of campaign files for future reference . . . resource and reference books for the school finance campaigner.	

### **Section III: Campaign Profiles**

- Chapter 8: Los Angeles, California** ..... 53  
Blitz campaign launched in "almost impossible climate" . . . fund-raising campaign breakfasts . . . massive telephone and door-to-door coverage . . . publicity stunts . . . early involvement of more than 60,000 parents and teachers . . . savvy speakers bureaus . . . failure laid to widespread taxpayers' revolt, white backlash, geography, resentment over state failure to give support.
- Chapter 9: Baltimore County, Maryland** ..... 56  
Campaign group forms year in advance . . . nine-minute filmstrip proves key tool . . . narrated by PTA speakers bureau members, it is exposed in 200 presentations in five weeks . . . 40-page speakers kit provides up-to-date information on school district operation.
- Chapter 10: Fairfax County, Virginia** ..... 59  
"Keep Pace" campaign for school construction and modernization . . . May date chosen when school issue is only item on ballot . . . heavy citizen responsibility . . . post-campaign analysis calls for truth squads in future to monitor and rebut last-minute attacks.
- Chapter 11: Portland, Oregon** ..... 61  
Business leaders spark "Vote Yes for Kids" campaign . . . 10 business executives loaned full-time for last three weeks of campaign . . . 100 individual neighborhood committees of private citizens work on campaign after year of groundwork and planning . . . high school students sell buttons with legend: "Fite Ignorantz—Yes for 4" and distribute more than 130,000 pieces of literature.
- Chapter 12: Albuquerque, New Mexico** ..... 63  
Held nine days before Christmas in wake of first teacher walkout . . . campaign stresses deteriorating schools . . . all-out support of Chamber of Commerce . . . university students campaign door-to-door and handbill fans at capacity crowd basketball games.
- Chapter 13: San Antonio (Texas) Independent School District** ..... 66  
Major studies by PTA and blue-ribbon citizens committee pinpoint school needs . . . teams of teachers and principals trained in color slide presentation reach 70 civic organizations . . . superintendent briefs student journalists at press conference . . . one faculty develops campaign comic book to be carried home by elementary school students . . . television statement explains issues in Spanish to large local Mexican-American population.
- Chapter 14: Clark County, Nevada** ..... 68  
Target population is parents, prospective parents, school district employees . . . teacher organizations help to register voters, disseminate material, get out the vote . . . PTA contacts 400 leaders of power structure . . . opposition rises from taxpayers group on grounds funds asked are too high and from NAACP on grounds funds will be used to desegregate rather than integrate schools . . . campaigners forced to clarify these issues.
- Chapter 15: Akron, Ohio** ..... 70  
Theme of "59,000 Reasons for Better Schools and a Better Akron" puts focus on children and ties in with other groups working for community improvement . . . high school students form 59'er Club, call at homes of undecided voters . . . "cluster counseling" sessions are held midway in campaign with lay advisers in each neighborhood to pool thinking . . . cluster "crisis caucuses" are convened few days before vote . . . letters go to every voter . . . mail poll measures cross section voter attitude . . . outdoor billboards, yard signs widely used . . . eight brochures, each for a different audience, are developed.
- Chapter 16: Charleston, West Virginia** ..... 73  
Campaign complicated by first property reappraisal in 30 years, a school bus driver strike, teacher militancy . . . central office staff stays deliberately in background . . . publicity emphasis is put on local citizen activities and involvement.

<b>Chapter 17: Stockton, California</b> .....	<b>75</b>
Concentrates on potential "yes" voters . . . early endorsement campaign yields 5,000 signers . . . three contacts made with each "yes" voter . . . teacher association helps develop tax proposal and becomes very active in campaign . . . rumors rise that new buses will be used to promote integration . . . soft-sell campaign costing only \$2,500.	
<b>Chapter 18: Highline School District, Seattle, Washington</b> .....	<b>77</b>
Survey of "negative" precincts of last campaign reveals growing resentment toward school levies but not toward schools . . . suburbanites feel they pay more taxes than city dwellers . . . basic campaign message reduced to simplest form . . . future of 32,000 children at stake . . . every means used to take this message to voters.	
<b>Chapter 19: Warren, Michigan</b> .....	<b>80</b>
150-member Citizens Advisory Council studies school situation . . . recommends amounts for bond and millage campaigns . . . study creates "believers" before campaign ever starts . . . citizens do all speaking chores, organizing of kaffeeklatsches, etc. . . . support of churches is strong, thanks to long-time shared time schooling plans . . . Saturday election gives all chance to vote.	
<b>Chapter 20: Youngstown, Ohio</b> .....	<b>82</b>
After six campaign defeats, Youngstown schools close for five weeks to tune of nationwide publicity including satire on TV's "Laugh-In" program . . . large local business assigns its advertising department to campaign . . . newspaper puts top talent news team on coverage . . . one writer does 46-part series . . . 10 special TV programs are aired . . . previously hostile or neutral labor union, religious, and political forces are mobilized . . . realtors, building contractors give time, money . . . 11,000 people pledge support . . . campaigners learn need for great flexibility when many different groups are involved . . . to listen more and talk less . . . to make no promises or commitments that cannot be kept.	
<b>Chapter 21: Montebello, California</b> .....	<b>84</b>
Candid exposure of school situation decided on following six-month study by lay committee called INTERCOMS . . . publicizes unsafe school buildings, threat of half-day sessions . . . voters told exactly how new money will be used . . . all organizations, even those known to be hostile, are approached . . . elementary schools used as neighborhood campaign centers . . . promotional materials and broadcasts prepared in English and Spanish.	
<b>Chapter 22: Kenosha, Wisconsin</b> .....	<b>86</b>
Following one defeat, campaigners have only six weeks to organize community support for another push . . . citizen support group called KIDS (Kenoshans Interested in Developing Schools) pay for newspaper ads and supplements . . . opposition comes from local labor unions . . . negative factor was strong local familiarity with labor-management bargaining process in which neither side expects first offer to be accepted . . . conclusion after defeat was that the campaign needed more time, did not get out the crucial "yes" vote of parents.	
<b>Chapter 23: Parkway School District, St. Louis County, Missouri</b> .....	<b>88</b>
Annual proposition tailored to be tolerable to both parents and childless, more conservative residents . . . Committee of 100 is formed of citizens and local people, including newspaper publisher . . . all parents personally contacted by one of their neighbors . . . slide presentations prepared by professional advertising men and narrated by local TV personality.	
<b>Chapter 24: San Mateo, California</b> .....	<b>91</b>
Community resentment simmers over closing of some schools deemed unsafe, so-called building "fills," and school board's stand on integrated learning . . . campaign concentrates on areas of strength—school neighborhoods that would benefit most and with a past history of supporting school measures . . . PTA block organization is carried out . . . factual evidence is provided to taxpayers showing it would cost more to vote "no" than to vote "yes" . . . poll by Junior Chamber of Commerce provides subtle aid.	

<b>Chapter 25: Grand Prairie (Texas) Independent School District</b> .....	<b>94</b>
Daily newspaper runs one article per week during three months before election day . . . superintendent, board members, other administrators hit all PTA's of the city for the first meeting of the year . . . September 7 chosen as the election date because of great citizen interest in schools during the back-to-school period.	
<b>Chapter 26: Bellingham, Washington</b> .....	<b>96</b>
Election follows year of extreme austerity for schools . . . chairman of campaign is officer of largest local industry . . . theme is "We Need Your Help," a plea from children . . . citizens do all the work, with teachers and school administrators staying behind the scenes . . . volunteer professionals prepare ads and brochures . . . citizens committee makes periodic reports on progress at six school board meetings widely covered by press, radio, and TV . . . Junior Chamber of Commerce "Burma Shave" signs prove big hit.	
<b>Chapter 27: Santa Cruz (California) High School District</b> .....	<b>98</b>
Teacher chairs citizens committee campaign . . . much work done by teacher association . . . poll shows that many issues assumed to be highly controversial were really not at all . . . conference of 35 community leaders results in guidebook describing techniques and procedures to be used . . . each elementary school is campaign unit . . . senior citizens are brought to schools . . . students speak at retirement homes and mobile home parks.	
<b>Chapter 28: Bloomington, Illinois</b> .....	<b>100</b>
Previous defeats had caused austerity adjustments . . . superintendent frank about further cuts . . . "Invest in Learning" is slogan adopted by Citizens Referendum Committee, chaired by local insurance executive . . . analysis of past defeats shows small voter turnout, so efforts focus on getting 10,000 voters to polls . . . 15 local businessmen armed with prepared speeches and fact sheets hit community speaking trail . . . 700 involved directly in campaign . . . every registered voter contacted at least once . . . funds raised through soliciting financial institutions . . . victory credited to "positive, honest" approach.	
<b>Chapter 29: Hertford County, Winton, North Carolina</b> .....	<b>103</b>
Faced by desegregation decree, campaign shows voters that transition will be easier to accomplish in two new high schools rather than existing plants . . . also promotes information about more courses and extracurricular activities for students . . . extensive direct voter contact helps counteract blasts from anti-integration and anti-tax groups.	
<b>Chapter 30: Reynoldsburg, Ohio</b> .....	<b>105</b>
Campaign advisory group called CARE (Citizens Association for Reynoldsburg Education) is formed and CARE becomes campaign theme . . . superintendent directs campaign . . . series of 58 coffees held in suburban communities one month before election for CARE spokesmen to explain issues . . . one newspaper carries special school "Question Box" . . . elementary school principals are focal points for neighborhood organization, coordination of coffees, identification of citizen talent and trouble spots.	
<b>Chapter 31: Ada, Oklahoma</b> .....	<b>107</b>
Widely publicized architectural plans for new high school provide tangible evidence for public to see where money would go . . . plans used in slides, filmstrips, overlays . . . scale model is displayed at downtown locations . . . student council and National Honor Society members (who had been included in planning the building) take active part in campaign.	
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>108</b>

**SECTION I**  
**Challenges**  
**of the Campaign**

## 1. Scarce Stuff—The Long Green

Run schools with wooden nickels? Some school boards and their administrators feel this may be expected of them next. Surrounded on all sides by groups demanding various kinds of "power," school leaders find their own serious power shortage to be one of *Greenpower*. And the fiscal bind seems to be growing tighter.

Strangely, school districts can go broke or limp along at a survival level even in a booming economy. School systems like Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, and Los Angeles, all in the same year, issued distress warnings that because of a shortage of dollars they might have to lay off thousands of teachers and other employees.

School districts can close down entirely because of lack of funds. After voters turned down six school levies over a two-year period, school doors at Youngstown, Ohio, were shut for more than five weeks, a nationally publicized action which had jolting reality.

Schools have gone through an era in which sizable majority bond issues and tax levies generally were approved when submitted to the voters. The school needs were obvious. More births, more students, more teachers, more school buildings—all required more money. In recent times, this has become a recurring tale to weary taxpayers. They have reacted by turning thumbs down increasingly on school finance issues all over the country.

Perhaps, unfortunately, the school finance story no longer is a simple fable about a busy stork.

There are many new angles which must be reckoned with. Here are some:

- Education costs have risen to the point where they constitute one of the most expensive single items in state and local government budgets. Inflation has been but one of the reasons for the mushrooming costs. "It costs more to amuse a young man today than it did to educate his father in 1930," said U.S. Senator Alan Cranston of California, in describing the situation.

- Schools are expected to "do more" than ever before. Education has been touted increasingly in recent years as the best cure for the gamut of the nation's economic and social ills, individual and collective. It is proclaimed as a cure, preventative, or reliever, for poverty, bigotry, racism, drug and cigarette addiction. Sidney P. Marland Jr., president of the Institute for Educational Development, has observed that schools are being saddled with a mandate of cradle-to-the-grave services with the expectancy of compensating for past failures of both schools and society.

- New educational programs and teaching technologies are expensive. Remedial and specialized classes for the handicapped, technical and vocational education are far costlier than conventional classes of instruction. The modern learning media of TV, films, computers, models, machines, and tapes involve stiffer budget requirements.

- School systems in cities wracked by metropolitan "overburden" have to compete for dollars against a host of other expensive and necessary services including law and order, decent transportation, health and hospital care, housing, and clean air and water.

- Teachers are demanding—and getting—long overdue salary increases and expensive fringe benefits for their services. Even those most sympathetic to teachers' advances fear that the newly negotiated pay raises will drain dollars from school treasuries needed for smaller classes, more services and instructional materials, and better maintenance. The coming of teacher aides to the educational scene also is increasing salary costs.

- The property tax, which has been the traditional major source of educational funds, no longer is where the money is. When 85 percent of the people lived on farms and when farms provided most of the nation's property value, it was proper to place the burden of school support upon the source of productivity. Joseph W. Still, author of *Science and Education at the Crossroads*, has pointed out that most houses today are simply homes, completely divorced from productivity. Furthermore, a large percentage of homes are owned by persons over 45 whose children have been educated. Now the retirement years become their central concern. "Undoubtedly a very high percentage of the over-45 population votes against school bond issues because the property tax already threatens their homes. . .," Still observed.

- Catholic education changes have a bearing upon public school financing. With the worsening fiscal plight of parochial education has come the closing of sizable numbers of schools and a shifting of students to public school classes. Catholic school enrollment, off two-thirds of a million students from its peak, has dropped to five million. Some Catholic educators forecast an ultimate enrollment of only two million pupils.

- Federal school funds in most school districts constitute a thin greenback veneer to be used for special programs and services which have been predetermined by Congress. Wide publicity about increased federal money and new programs, according to some school officials, has given many taxpayers a very inflated impression of the actual extent of this support.

- New communities, gleaming factories and shopping centers in once-rural areas slashed by multi-lane expressways, traveled by a restless, highly mobile population, have profoundly altered traditional patterns of community attitudes and decision-making, and individual family living.

The picture of voters resisting requests for more money for schools while simultaneously demanding more and better services seems to be illogical. This is only partly so.

John Q. Taxpayer in recent years has been subjected to federal, state, and local tax increases. In many instances, he has been relieved of the money, directly or indirectly, without his advice, understanding, or consent.

The most convenient, meaningful way for John Q. to vent his frustration is when he enters the voting booth to vote on a school tax issue.

He can use the occasion to register his displeasure even if his unhappiness concerns some other issues. There has been publicized "backlash" voting where the displeasure involved community programs for minority groups, "forced bussing," student disruptions, and college campus violence.

Voters can also be unhappy about the quality of the education program itself. The dissatisfaction is not necessarily limited to ghetto area schools or those in neighborhoods where college admission is the passionate concern. Well educated, knowledgeable parents exist in large numbers these days.

Dean Luverne Cunningham of Ohio State University says voters today are asking more intelligent, tougher questions about schools than formerly, and school officials "have an obligation to answer them creatively and truthfully before expecting voters to open their purses."

For years, says Cunningham, "schoolmen have said the more you spend, the better education your child will get, but there have been meager quantitative data to support this."

There is the illusion in many school districts that voters are much better

informed about schools than actually may be the case. Some administrators also cherish the illusion that a minimum of information helps to assure a minimum of opposition, resulting in positive school support based upon solid voter confidence.

This kind of support turns out frequently to be composed of thin air. Voters also are easily disposed to clutch at side issues to justify negative voting. These issues can range from program "frills" and "lavish" construction to dissatisfaction about reading methods or sex education programs.

Nevertheless, there have been enough campaign successes, despite uninformed citizens and inept campaigning, that it is easy for school officials to misjudge their communities. "We had 17 school campaigns in a row, every one successful," recalled a superintendent. "Then came that 18th. We really took a beating!"

On the other hand, technical problems and rigid, archaic legal provisions in some states governing passage of school finance issues have made successes difficult even with the best of campaigns and school community relations. The fact that a majority of voters approves a school issue in some states means nothing. Extra majorities are required. At Seattle, Washington, 59 percent of the voters registered their approval of a levy. This was one percent less than required. The levy would have meant an additional \$29.5 million, some 28 percent of the general operations budget.

Many arguments and plans have been advanced for significant general federal assistance for public schools for many reasons, the most important of which is the fact that the federal government siphons off most of the available tax money. Similarly, strong pleas have been made for increased state financial support for public schools.

The outlook for major financial breakthroughs at national or state levels, however, was dim as the decade of the 1960's drew to a close. State treasuries were far from flush, and there was great reluctance to increase state taxes further. The federal budget for many programs, including edu-

cation, was trimmed, and there was preoccupation with war, peace, and inflation.

It seemed rather clear that, for the foreseeable future, schools would have to continue to rely upon the local citizen to ante up support for his schools—a local citizen who may be dissatisfied, frustrated, angry, fearful of the future, and fed to the teeth with taxes—or more probably all of these.

To reach this citizen, to win his attention, and to gain his understanding and consent requires a communications plan and school finance campaign as sophisticated in approach as a contemporary political drive or merchandising program, based upon sound attitude research, sales planning, and persuasion.

Even with all of this, the campaign may not succeed. The Los Angeles City Schools, for example, have carried out superb campaigns and have received impressive voter majorities. But a recent campaign, despite the smooth organization, all-out media support, and tremendous effort, failed to make the grade.

At another time or place, many of the strategies and clever ideas sparked by Los Angeles might be successful—and so a full description of this Los Angeles campaign, and 23 profiles of other actual campaigns, are included in this book. They were conducted by small, medium, and large districts in many sections of the nation and under varying conditions.

One of the major lessons offered by these campaign profiles is that campaigns are different. They have their similarities and their differences. Some were massive, comprehensive, and high pressure in execution. Some were almost casual.

This handbook summarizes some of the important general research findings in the art of school campaigning. It also reports upon successful campaign techniques, tools, and practices which have been used with considerable success.

One of the characteristics of a good campaign is that it has some sparkle. It is easy to regard some of the clever aspects of a campaign as "gimmicks" but they frequently

are deceptive to the outsider. They often reflect careful strategic planning for a given situation rather than injecting a spontaneous bright idea that happened along.

You'll find examples of these in the handbook campaign profiles—like the statistical proof provided voters at San Mateo that a “no” vote was more costly than a “yes” vote; San Antonio's press conference for student journalists to brief them on the campaign for the benefit of their high school newspaper clientele; Bellingham's “Burma Shave” style signs prepared and posted by the Junior Chamber of Commerce; Portland's

use of loaned executives from business; the Akron “59er Club” of high school students which tied in with the campaign slogan: “59,000 Reasons for Better Schools and a Better Akron”; the unique selection of a teacher as head of a citizen committee at Santa Cruz; and many others.

This handbook is written for the increasing numbers of school board members, administrators, citizen leaders, and teachers who may be called upon sometime in the near future to help plan and carry out a school finance campaign. Best wishes for a winner!

## 2. What Do We Know About the Public?

One thing that school campaigners have learned from many trips to the polls is that public reaction is not easy to predict. In fact, many old assumptions fall by the wayside when educators take an in-depth look at district voters. They find that the citizenry is a changing, often perplexing body whose pulse requires constant checking if the schools are to be in tune with current interests and concerns. Almost overnight a rural countryside can change to tract houses; a soaring new high rise apartment (childless) can replace an established block of homes.

It is not unusual to encounter a stunned school board and superintendent reeling from a decisive defeat of a finance proposal after years of unbroken easy success at the polls. Suddenly, it seems to them, the nature of their community has been altered. Methods of communicating which apparently were satisfactory in the past seem to be ineffective.

A postmortem survey of the defeat may disclose to the sorrowful campaigners that the voters were really not rebelling against the proposal so much as recording their displeasure about some other activity, perhaps not directly related to the ballot issue. An unpopular board decision on athletic matters or rumors about a currently sensitive subject such as racial balance in the classroom could be hidden issues. Parental dissatisfaction with shortened lunch periods or longer bus rides may have been the decisive loss factor. In one small city, long lunch periods were blamed for the defeat. Downtown merchants did not want teachers and youngsters in the stores at midday.

In a summary of six-years' research into school-community relations for Stanford University and the U.S. Office of Education, Richard F. Carter and William R. Odell described the voices of the electorate as being "often frustrated and protesting" because they are uninvolved in the educational policy-making processes.

Carter and Odell described the actions of the frustrated public this way:

These citizens must speak when they can. And the occasional opportunities they do have must serve as chances to voice their opinions on whatever issue is important to them—not necessarily the issue which is presented for their approval. Thus, for example, when a sample of registered voters was asked in a previous study what information they wanted during a bond issue campaign (related only to building plans), they most often wanted information on the curriculum.

In the earlier study, *Voters and Their Schools*, researcher Carter found that almost one-half of the voters interviewed felt the only say they had in school matters was the act of voting. One-fourth felt that school officials don't care what the voters think and more than two-fifths believed educational policy was too complicated for them to understand.

Yet, the facts of life are that, periodically, the schools must go to the voters for approval of present policies and plans for the future as embodied in a tax referendum or bond issue. The burden of knowing the voter's attitude, informing him and winning his approval at campaign time falls squarely

upon leaders of the school district and its supporters. Lack of a sound year-round program of school-community relations and communications makes the finance campaign much more difficult.

### **Knowing the Public**

The most cursory glance at a community reveals several identifiable groups within the public as a whole. Each has its own particular attitudes and interests in the schools. In-depth research would identify an amazing array of groups and subgroups. The most obvious divisions are parents, school employees, and others.

School public relations executives who recognize the divisions of interest and varying attitudes often refer to the "publics" within the district; they stress that no one massive audience exists for school communications. The way to communicate with a "public" composed of enthusiastic parents of elementary students is unlikely to be the same as for a "public" segment composed of citizens living on retirement incomes and having no current contact with the schools.

Researchers who have studied school campaigns invariably recommend that school leaders study their electorates in a systematic way. They find that estimates made off the cuff by board members and superintendents are too often erroneous.

Knowing the publics means uncovering voting blocs, researching attitudes toward the school program, and finding out how the publics form their attitudes. This is applied political science as practiced by politicians and successful campaigners.

While the community which enjoys a highly supportive public can afford some margin of error in knowing community attitudes, fewer and fewer districts have such a built-in winning vote. Warner Bloomberg Jr., a specialist in urban affairs, noted at a National Education Association school finance conference that there are few "stable aggregates or groups of individuals having a high degree of consensus about what is important, what needs to be done, and how

resources should be allocated. Such publics apparently emerge during the process of issue development and resolution, and fragment or fade away subsequently."

Fortunately, research indicates that attitudes and even attitudinal characteristics can be changed—if those who would change them or reinforce them recognize the attitudes and aim their messages effectively. Many times a school issue is approved by the voters after repeated rejections. Although poor campaigns often are the cause for early defeats, obviously some of the subsequent wins confirm that attitudes have been changed.

### **Attitude Characteristics**

Recent research has helped the school campaigner to be more definitive about the components of the general public. Research efforts have begun to zero in on the reasons for public apathy and to identify the factors which play a significant part in determining citizen attitudes.

The massive Stanford University-U.S. Office of Education research project, for example, involved a study of thousands of interviews and added to the store of knowledge about the community-school relationship. Researchers Carter and Odell found significant evidence to describe the citizen's interest in the schools as that of a consumer. That is, he evaluates the schools in terms of the product—the children, not in terms of policy or program.

Looking at five of the "publics" existing in any district, the researchers identified characteristics of group attitudes. Those characteristics having a bearing on campaign planning are:

The parent of children now in the public schools generally is optimistic about education, views local schools favorably and takes pride in them.

The parent whose children are no longer in school tends to show little interest in school matters and regards taxes to be burdensome. As a group, these parents do not favor greater investments in ed-

ucation and do not participate in school affairs. However, they vote often in school elections.

The young parent with preschool children is not the most frequent parent-voter and attends school events infrequently. This parent tends to be apprehensive about educational quality. He talks about school affairs with nonschool people. He favors investments that improve the future educational product since his children are not yet in school.

The nonparent shows some interest in the schools but does not participate actively. He sees benefits for society as a whole from education and sometimes belongs to adult groups which he considers to be interested in education. He uses the mass media for information about schools.

The parent of children in private schools sees fewer benefits from public education and considers the newspaper as quite useful in getting more information about the schools.

In an earlier study of the men and women who do go to the polls in school elections, Odell and Carter found, among others, these characteristics:

The most accurate picture of the voter's values for education can be drawn from the amount of or lack of participation in school affairs.

The voter's evaluation of the schools and of school costs and his pride in the school are most closely associated with his voting and voting favorably.

The campaign influences the voter's evaluation of the community and his perception of immediate awards from the schools but the effect is transitory.

The most favorable voter is a new resident of the community, the parent of a school-age child, and is employed in skilled, clerical, or sales work.

The most unfavorable voter is the young voter without children who is a long-time resident of the community and is engaged in a professional or technical occupation.

The newspaper and personal talks with friends are the channels of school infor-

mation used by most voters. Voters would prefer to talk directly with someone representing the schools.

The "yes" voter is more likely to have read school bulletins and to have heard speeches by school representatives.

The voters' attention to school communications is determined by his existing attitudes. Said the researchers: "There is nothing to indicate that communications have any lasting effect on attitudes other than to reinforce those already held."

When the voter participates in school affairs he usually sees himself in the role of a parent. If he does not participate, he sees school personnel as the active participants. He rarely sees himself participating in the role of taxpayer.

The voter wants to know more about the schools—how they are run, the curriculum and teaching methods. He is not nearly as interested in school finances.

When voters talk about a bond issue proposal, they do so in more general terms than either school people or the newspapers.

The voter who expresses an interest in knowing more about the school is no more likely to vote or to vote "yes" in the election.

Looking at voters and nonvoters in three Oregon communities, Dale P. Parnell found that about one-half of the supportive citizens went to the polls; about one-third of those who did not support the schools were voters, and only one-fourth of those who voted were neutral.

Parnell found the voter to be the citizen who was somewhat satisfied with his influence in school affairs. He tended to discuss school matters most often and became active in school issues.

This brief summary of some findings about the psychological attitudes of voters and nonvoters indicates that many of the campaign strategies currently used by school districts seem much more sophisticated than in former years.

Many veteran campaigners emphasize that the best basic tactic is to identify the "yes" voter and concentrate efforts to get him to the polls. This is probably the most fundamental guideline in the rulebook for political campaigns. Such a basic campaign premise is supported by a host of auxiliary efforts including information brochures, endorsements by community groups, and mass media promotion.

It is easy to conclude that credit for the success of many school campaigns should go to such tangible features as bumper stickers, newspaper advertisements, and folders. There have been occasions when an advertisement or booklet carried such an impact that it actually sold merchandise off the shelves or resulted in some large-scale desired response. Most of the time, however, success depends more upon the results of overall planning, organization, and strategy than it does upon any single component—just like a football team.

Some campaign strategists are diverted from their main mission by devoting too much attention to troublesome minority voting blocs. One of the big concerns in many communities, for example, is winning the support of retired persons. Higher taxes of any kind constitute a threat to retired persons living on fixed incomes. They comprise a fast-growing segment of the population and appear to pose a great challenge to the school campaigner. But how much effort should a campaign concentrate in this area as compared with others?

Not long ago a high school bond issue passed by a handsome margin in an Arizona district where many retired persons reside. Many of the school elections held on the same day in Arizona and other states failed miserably. The superintendent with the victorious school campaign was asked for his success secret.

"I didn't concentrate on the retired people," he said. "Many of them had their minds made up anyway. I concentrated on young mothers—the ones with kids moving up toward high school. I met with them at the elementary schools. They went home and

talked with their husbands and we got our bond issue."

In many communities, about 20 to 30 percent of the voters can be counted upon to vote for almost any school issue on the ballot, according to those who have studied many campaigns. On the other hand, 20 to 30 percent most certainly will vote against the issue.

The basic strategy of the campaign in these communities is to make certain first that the supportive group is identified, informed, and goes to the polls on election day. The big job, however, is to reach the neutrals, the citizens who might vote either way or not at all.

Typically, the successful campaign is one which gets the largest possible number of the supportive voters to the polls and also wins a sizable chunk of the uncommitted bloc.

Even though a campaign may concentrate much of its effort upon the neutrals, considerable attention must be given to the supportive bloc. From this latter group can come much of the strength and impetus needed to capture the support of the neutrals. It is even possible to lose the obvious "yes" votes through neglect or inept campaigning. Some school issues go down to horribly lopsided defeats because, for some reason, that wonderful die-hard bloc of ordinarily positive supporters was neglected or spurned.

There has been much discussion and controversy among school campaigners about whether chances for success are best with a small voter turnout or a large one on election day.

Obviously, whether small or large is most desirable depends entirely upon the type of voter who goes to the polls on election day. Some school issues have been slaughtered when there was a small vote; many have been overwhelmingly successful. But the same is true of large votes.

The superintendent of a rural county system in a mountainous state said his school board always set its elections in January. "It invariably snows and only those who are the strongest supporters, usually

parents, come to the school buildings where the voting takes place," he explained.

Statistics indicating that light votes are healthy ones for school issues reflect situations where the campaigners have been able to dominate the voting with "yes" votes. School boards in many states are able to hold bond and tax elections on special voting days rather than at primary or general elections. A special election day, however, is absolutely no guarantee of success. A victory with a small vote implies that the bulk of the supportive "yes" votes actually gets to the polls and that most of the neutrals and nonsupportive "no" voters will not come out to vote.

A school issue voted upon at a primary election day can be more risky, in some instances, than going before a larger vote at a general election. If the primary is one of limited interest to voters, some superintendents say, most of those who come to the polls will do so because of their political party interests and they will be disposed to vote negatively on any issue on the ballot.

A New Jersey survey of school budget elections indicates that a small voter turnout can reduce the chances for success because the confirmed negative voters loom as a much larger bloc unless offset by a crackerjack school campaign. The small vote assumes that an effective school campaign will be carried out; often this is not the case.

### **Positive or Negative Pitch?**

One of the controversies in which school campaign planners frequently get involved is the basic strategy approach of a fundamental or positive approach. There have been campaigns aimed at shaming voters into support. There have been alarmist "SOS—Save Our Schools" campaigns. There have been threatening campaigns—"Vote YES or We'll Close the Schools." On the other hand, there have been many more positive appeal campaigns, some of which suggest that the schools already are excellent but need to be made just a little bit better.

Most campaigners favor the positive,

forward-looking campaign because it is sounder from the standpoint of sales psychology. "After serving in many kinds of communities," said one superintendent, "I'm convinced that the public wants to back a winner. They don't want to pour more money into a bad school situation. You don't punish the voter and ask for his vote at the same time."

A 16-page booklet proposing a new school building to be financed by a bond issue in a Midwestern community is said to be a major reason why the issue was rejected. The existing building was in horribly bad condition. This the brochure pointed out graphically in words and photos for the first 12 of the 16 pages. So much public shame and defensiveness was aroused that readers paid little attention to the few pages describing the proposed new building.

If the financial condition of a school district is such that loss of a financing proposal will mandate a cutback in services, campaigners are confronted with a serious situation.

Unless the community is fully aware of the critical nature of the district's condition and there is clear understanding of what services will be involved if reductions or eliminations are required, a campaign can backfire with enough explosive force to rip a community apart. Long before the period of the active campaign the facts and alternatives should be well known.

Too often school boards and superintendents assume that everyone in a district has been informed and clearly understands all implications simply because one or two news stories appear in a newspaper about actions taken at a school board meeting.

"We really didn't know," too often is the comment citizens make to school officials after the proposal has been voted down and the cutbacks are being discussed. And they may be speaking truthfully, if the campaigners underestimated their work.

Sometimes cutbacks in programs are challenged as not being defensible or as being retaliatory. The school board is in trouble if the charges are true. It is in trouble also if there is widespread community doubt. If

cutbacks have been threatened but are not made, a school board has already created a problem for the next campaign group.

### **How To Know Your Public**

No school board or administration will know its public if all of the time is spent talking and not listening to the public. Too often school officials find that this leads to giving the public one kind of information while the public wants to know something else.

The public, of course, does make itself heard on the day a vote is taken on a finance proposal, but it is dangerous living to be unaware of public thinking before that day.

Many avenues of communication to and from the schools can be and are used if school leaders willingly use them. Every successful politician maintains and uses extensive informal and formal "pipelines" for this purpose.

The most sophisticated type of "feedback" device used by politicians and institutions is the periodic opinion or attitude poll. Polling can be a dangerous plaything in the hands of amateurs, however. A badly handled poll can arouse more public ire than information. A badly constructed questionnaire can elicit misinformation.

For the campaign committee which has financial resources available, a professionally executed poll is a good buy. Universities sometimes have highly competent researchers who can design a poll for school districts. Many communities have market research firms which are competent in this area. It is possible, sometimes, to "piggy-back" on a poll being conducted for someone else and get public opinion on a few questions at a nominal cost.

William M. Allen, a public relations official writing in *Illinois Education*, warned about the hazards of polling:

Scientific opinion research is a recognized and valuable tool, but bad research is much worse than no research at all; and most of the questionnaires used by school districts are amateurish, slanted, and unscientific. Basing a campaign on such poor research is dangerous. Unless the school district can afford competent professional research or has such people in the community who are willing to donate their services, opinion research should not be undertaken.

There are many less formal ways to measure opinion which are available to all districts. The school board, if it is broadly representative of the community, represents one obvious avenue. School-related groups, such as study committees, parent-teacher association units, and other education-supporting groups can be helpful in keeping the school informed. Rural delivery mailmen in one school district turned out to be extremely accurate estimators of voter attitudes in several campaigns.

The soundest way to know community opinion is to develop a conscious, continuing means of knowing the public. It is not possible to do this when contacts are limited to one or two segments of the public. One leading school district periodically involves citizens in every section of the community in planned small group discussions of various aspects of the educational program. Suggestions for improvements which come from the sessions form the basis of school board discussions and the setting of priorities. The school board, thus, is provided with a sound, defensible basis for the development of financial proposals for the improvement of the educational program.

### 3. The Components of a Campaign

A campaign to win taxpayer approval of a proposal to spend funds for schools is pinpointed to one date—the day the voters go to the polls. What causes voters to make their decisions, however, often is remote from the campaign itself. Ideally, the campaign is but an extension of an on-going, year-round, public relations program. The campaign which is not backed up by a continuing program to keep the public informed about its schools and involved in their improvement is always highly speculative. Many top administrators with campaign success records contend that a good school campaign really begins two years or more before election day.

The active successful campaign may be only six to eight weeks in length. The visible part is somewhat deceptive. It has been preceded by a long period, perhaps months, of organization and planning. The publicity, organization action, and similar components of the campaign operate only during the last two to three weeks of the action period.

The primary objective of all campaigns is to win. School finance campaigns may not be partisan but they are definitely a political phenomenon. As is true for campaigns for public office, there is little reason to go into a campaign without the determination to win. Winning school campaigns stress the importance of undertaking such ventures with a positive attitude. Voters, as has been pointed out, are attracted to confidence but may tend to disapprove apologists and defensive campaigns.

Evaluators of many successful campaigns point to "community pride" in the education system as being a major positive factor. It cannot be created by a campaign but it can be reinforced. A good campaign

should bring community and schools closer together in the attainment of common goals and strengthen the bonds of understanding upon which continued school support may hinge.

The campaign methods outlined here reflect current opinions and counsel about components of successful campaigns. The most important lesson of campaigning is that there is no recognized plan which "works" in every situation. Each campaign is a tailor-made creation. Each campaign leadership group must decide for itself the best organization plan and the strategies which are feasible. The elements and principles described in this book are frequently used in winning campaigns. They are not necessarily used identically in every campaign because communities and voters are different.

#### ***Early Citizen Involvement***

The true beginning of the campaign frequently precedes by many months the board's formal decision to seek additional school dollars. Too many campaigns have been lost before waged because of abrupt decisions. A good many winning campaigns are preceded by a thorough study of school needs, priorities, and economic conditions. All segments of the staff and community are involved. The study not only provides the board with thoughtful citizen thinking but also creates the nucleus of broad-based support should the board decide to go to the polls. Such a study project, of course, calls for good preparation and management.

Prior to any final decision by the board, top school administrators often seek out the opinions of those members of the community who are often designated as the "opinion

makers." These include the editors of local newspapers and other news media, whose interest and support can be vital in a campaign. These include others in business, labor, the professions, and other governmental units who have their fingers on the public pulse. Many times these early contacts have avoided or minimized later campaign opposition.

### **A United Board**

Nothing can be more harmful to a school finance proposal than a divided board of education. One dissenting vote on the board is an open invitation for individuals or groups to actively oppose the proposal. Disagreements over the size of the money request or the use of the money should be ironed out before the board decides to go to the voters. There have been some campaigns which were successful despite a defecting board member, but such a situation makes for immediate and longer term difficulty.

A split board is only one form of opposition which can be fatal to school campaigns. If there is divided opinion about a proposal among PTA groups, this can be as harmful as a split board. Sometimes a proposal can alienate many voters because of genuine or imagined consequences of approval at the polls.

In one community, a stubborn school board and an unyielding group of downtown merchants divided a community and deprived children of a modern high school for almost a decade because of a dispute over the site of the building. The merchants wanted a downtown location; the board was determined to construct the building on the edge of the city. The proposed bond issue went on the ballot seven times before it finally was approved.

An important bond issue in a fast-growing school district almost failed because of negative inter-city votes. Residents in the older sections of the community had become weary of being asked to approve bonds which were used to construct fine new buildings on the city's fringe, while the older

central buildings became more ancient and dilapidated. A wise school board and superintendent incorporated widespread provisions for modernization and replacement of older buildings in subsequent bond issues.

On the other hand, school boards probably never will experience a time when everyone is happy about a proposed school issue. A sound program should not be abandoned by the board because there is some opposition. One school board, for example, was persuaded to break up a bond issue proposal into seven components to be voted upon singly as the price of avoiding the opposition of one group of influential citizens. The board agreed to this do-it-yourself-kit type arrangement for voters. The voters reacted by voting down all of the parts.

When the decision has been made, the school board should make its announcement to the press and school employees in a clearly defined statement of the need and the reasons for presenting the proposal. This first announcement should be honest and stripped of double-talk. Any distortions or false promises can abort the campaign and also come back to haunt future campaigns.

### **Timing the Election**

One poll of superintendents indicated that school bond elections are more likely to pass if held in September, October, or November. Some conditions prevail in the fall which could give general support to this view. There are many who say, however, that the best time to hold an election is when it can be won.

In addition to some of the factors examined earlier which can have some bearing upon the time to hold a school election, there are local factors which deserve far greater consideration than the month of the year. If, for example, many incomes in a community had been depressed by strikes or layoffs, it would not be appropriate to trot out a massive school bond proposal. School issues have lost simply because they were being voted upon at the same time as highly contro-

versial nonschool issues and voters reacted negatively to all proposals.

Sometimes psychological association with other tax expenditures or issues is said to be harmful. Some campaigners avoid periods around income tax filing time and the mailing of property tax notices.

Even though school boards in many states have every freedom in the selection of an election day, there can be risk of criticism of unnecessary costs for the taxpayers if the election is to be held on a special day rather than on a primary or general election date.

Perhaps more important than other considerations is whether the election date has been set far enough in advance to permit for adequate planning and organization of an effective campaign. Many a campaign has been severely handicapped because a board of education made a snap decision to hold an election on short notice. Wise boards request advance study of the time requirements for the campaign, as well as the date for the election before making any decision.

### **How Much Campaign?**

A school finance campaign is a mixture of time, resources, and talent involving many people. It is not without cost. Usually state law prohibits the use of public funds for campaign purposes. It will draw heavily upon the energies and time of top-level staff members and can involve a majority of school personnel in some phase of the activities.

At the beginning, school leaders must decide in general how extensive the campaign will be and what basic strategies are to be employed. The amount of campaign effort may be determined by a number of factors. Among them: the general attitude of the community toward its schools, comparative size of issue, the extent of opposition or apathy, the history of voting on school and other issues, the recent record of turnout at school elections held on similar dates, whether it is a special election or general, and the nature of other issues to be voted upon at the polls.

One medium-sized school district in the Midwest elected to conduct virtually no campaign because a survey, designed for feedback of community attitudes, revealed a high level of public agreement with school proposals. The issue won, but the decision had been made on the basis of solid information about the community. In many other cases, when such voter attitudes were judged by hunch, the issues have lost.

### **The Second Time Campaign**

If the campaign is to be the resubmission of a previous failure, school leaders should make every effort to find out what went wrong the first time.

"A defeat at the polls over money matters usually goes deeper than dollars and cents," said Superintendent Frank C. Meyer of the Xenia, Ohio, schools. "It often reflects deep community concern over the ways the schools are being run. And when defeat catches you completely by surprise, it means you're sleeping at the switch."

Researching the real reasons for a previous defeat is obligatory for the sincere board of education. The time, effort, and other contributions of campaign volunteers demand that the school leadership does its part to make that contribution worthwhile—and to assure support for the next attempt.

A veteran observer of school-community relations advises the school leadership to go over the defeated issue on a precinct-by-precinct basis—the same kind of analysis made by professional campaigners, win or lose. In addition, he advises the leaders of the district to take a look at the district, painful as the questions may be. Is the board truly representative of the community? Does the parent-teacher association leadership represent the entire spectrum of economic and community interests? Did a minority of the district electorate vote? Why?

And, of course, the board needs to ask itself if the tax proposal was realistic in view of economic conditions.

## **The Role of Citizens**

A good omen for success at the polls is evidence that men and women of the community are willing to give their time and effort to help the schools improve. When asked to name the one factor which contributed most to the success of a campaign, superintendents time and again cite citizen committees. Probably thousands of citizens are involved in school campaigns each year. The burden of finding these men and women in the community, employing them effectively, and providing guidance falls upon the leadership of the school district. The task is much easier, of course, if there is a continuing practice of using citizen advisory committees to aid the schools.

The first step in recruitment of a representative lay campaign committee is selection of a steering group. This committee should include respected leaders in the community. Much advance informal contact work usually is involved. Those who accept the board's invitation to this leadership post should be briefed thoroughly on the campaign issues, the role of citizen committees in the school structure, and the legal responsibilities and limitations of the board of education. A poorly informed citizen body is certainly operating under a handicap and is not being fairly treated by the schools.

Boards frequently ask two people to co-chair the steering committee because it relieves the sizable burden on one citizen. The steering committee often provides the chairmen and cochairmen of the campaign subcommittees.

In many campaigns the total citizens committee eventually includes scores, even hundreds of persons. The smaller steering committee is essential as a planning and policy group and as the starting point for citizen participation. It should be small enough to meet occasionally. It usually includes chairmen of various campaign subcommittees.

One reason why so many superintendents speak highly of the citizen committee effort in campaigns is that some of these "amateur politicians" become tremendously

skillful in various aspects of school campaigns as the result of their experience. In fact, they look forward to being asked to take part. In one large city district, for example, the board and administrative staff regard one woman to be a vital key to overall development of parent campaign groups at the school building level. Years ago she first got involved in a school campaign as a PTA committee member. Her children have long since graduated from the schools, but she continues as an important volunteer campaign leader whenever the school district goes to the polls.

The steering committee becomes involved in the development of basic aspects of the campaign, including budget-making and fund-raising, publicity, speakers bureau and endorsement activities, special contacts, and the get-out-the-vote organization.

## **The Campaign Coordinator**

Very few campaigns actually have been completely carried out by citizens committees—or any kind of committee, for that matter. Every campaign must have an executive director who can coordinate the plan, see that work gets performed and time schedules are met, make the operational decisions required day after day, and handle countless little emergencies.

In a school campaign, the coordinator quite often is the superintendent. He may handle much of the administrative work through an assistant or the school-community relations director.

The top administrator has close liaison with the school board, the school staff, the citizens committee, and the community. He ordinarily is probably the most logical choice for coordinator also because of his position of school system leadership.

For example, elementary school attendance areas typically are the unit of organization in a school campaign. If organization and communication work are to take place in such a unit, the elementary school principal is looked to as the unit campaign coordinator. His leadership and liaison work

with school, parent, and neighborhood groups, plus his continuous link with the superintendent and central campaign organization, make possible the carrying out of plans of the steering committee. This existing, recognized administrative organization gives school campaigns a tremendous advantage.

Most citizen campaign workers are able to devote only part of their time and talents to the work of a campaign. They are unable to assume some of the responsibilities involved in campaigns because they have other jobs and responsibilities which demand their attention. One of the major tasks of campaign direction is to determine realistically what functions can best be performed and most appropriately be performed by the various citizen volunteers, parent and civic groups, staff members, and others.

It is important also that the citizen committee chairman or co-chairmen and the campaign coordinator have a clear understanding of their respective roles. There have been cases where the coordinator viewed the chairman as being a kind of figurehead; there have been others where the chairman came to regard himself as both mastermind of strategy and manager of every technical detail. A clear understanding of roles from the start, plus very close communication throughout the campaign, should avoid this hazard.

### ***Use of Community Groups***

Parent-teacher associations are one of the most valuable community resources in finance campaigns. The membership is interested in improved schools and is familiar with the school processes. Civic groups such as the League of Women Voters, the Junior Chamber of Commerce and its auxiliary also often provide skill and manpower for campaign activities. One of the earmarks of recent successful campaigns has been the massive involvement of citizens in the campaign itself.

Many districts also seek and publicize the formal endorsement of finance issues by

leading civic groups, the parochial school leaders, governmental officers and agencies, and labor groups. This activity usually is tied in with the operation of the speakers bureau. Publicizing the endorsements, of course, is as important as obtaining them.

### ***Involving School Employees***

Schools over the years have been advised not to use school employees to spearhead campaigns because their salaries often are at issue in the campaign. Unfortunately this has been sometimes interpreted to mean that teachers and other employees should not be involved at all, except for a financial contribution to the campaign. The district which does not use the resources of its employees and their associations is overlooking a major source of talent and manpower.

Support of the financial proposal should be sought at an early stage from the teacher organization and other school employee groups. These groups should be as well informed as citizen groups about the reasons for submitting a finance proposal and the benefits it offers. School employees are looked to by friends and neighbors as a source of authoritative information about campaigns.

The era of school employee collective negotiations and bargaining has mandated a new dimension of employee group responsibility in school finance campaigns. In many instances, the only way that gains in salary and improvements in other working conditions bargained for can finally be realized will be via voter approval at the polls of proposals to raise school operating taxes.

Achieving these association and union goals will require the assumption of far more employee organization involvement in campaigns than in past years. Leaders of employee groups will have to develop great expertise and capabilities in all aspects of school finance campaign development. It is likely that many school boards will seek more and more campaign involvement and support from employee groups.

In addition to contributing financially to

school campaigns, employee groups will be expected to supply executive staff help in the coordination of some campaign activities as well as the time and talents of members in active assignments.

### **Use of Students**

While students are usually pictured prominently in promotional materials for a campaign, they are seen far less frequently as messengers in the campaign. There is a real danger of public reaction if elementary youngsters, in particular, are used as captive runners for campaign literature or other purposes. Opponents can charge that children are "being used." Considered acceptable by many schools, however, is student distribution of literature which promotes the registration of voters, lists polling places, or reminds voters that an election is to be held.

Some districts have found high school students to be avid supporters of school finance proposals. These young people, on a voluntary basis or as a group project, have provided much leg work for campaigns.

The decision about use of students in the campaign should be made by school officials. All campaigners at district and building levels should be informed of the decision.

Students quite often take part in activities which are independent of the campaign but are of great help in demonstrating the value of good schools. Student exhibits and demonstrations of academic skills are presented in a variety of ways.

### **Finances for the Campaign**

What funds are available? In one middle-sized industrial city district, it has become a practice for school-related groups, such as the PTA, to allocate a part of each year's budget to campaign expenses. This district, which spends approximately \$17,000 in a typical campaign, tries to keep all major civic organizations continually aware of the need for campaign funds.

As a group, or on a voluntary basis, school employee groups make financial con-

tributions to many campaigns. Some citizen campaign groups invite all organizations and individuals to make some contribution, even though it may be small in many cases. Certainly not unknown as a source of funds are talent shows and community social functions.

### **Budget Development**

Absence of a good campaign budget can mean chaos. The assistance of the school public relations officer or a citizen volunteer familiar with publications and media advertising will be invaluable here. Planners of political campaigns also can be consulted about the nature of costs to be budgeted.

The budget should contain a careful estimate of all costs involved in the production and distribution of printed materials, audiovisuals, and advertising. Expensive services and materials may be donated by interested individuals but certain costs such as postage are unavoidable.

Newspaper, radio, and television advertising and billboards cost money. Even when space or time is provided as a public service, photographs or art work used in the preparation of the advertising can take dollars from the total budget.

Perhaps more than other components of the school campaign, the amount of printed promotion and media advertising required will affect the budget.

For later reporting purposes, a careful record should be maintained of all actual expenditures during the campaign.

### **Identification of Campaign Funds**

In most states, the laws explicitly prohibit the use of public funds to promote votes for a public issue. Even if public funds may be used under state law, public resentment can arise over their use in campaigns. If non-public funds are used, criticism can be forestalled by citing the source. Every piece of printed promotion or media advertising should carry the name of the group which sponsored

it. The law often requires this identification plus the name of the chairman or secretary.

### **Promotional Materials**

While researchers are not willing to say the pen is the mightiest instrument in a finance campaign, certainly few districts would conduct a campaign without printed materials. Research does show an important contributory role for the mass of brochures, posters, flyers, newsletters, and ads used by school district campaigners. Good materials inform, explain, persuade, and impart a psychological impression favorable to the issue.

The first rule of writing copy for all campaign materials should be: Get the best writing you can in terms the laymen can understand. Or, as one school information director said, keep campaign materials simple, but not simpleminded.

How do you know your copy is good? A professional campaign consulting firm advises pretesting of campaign copy on individuals of varying social and economic backgrounds.

Frequently included in school finance campaigns are:

*A fact sheet for all campaign workers.* The question and answer format is easy to read—and human curiosity will compel the person who reads a question to continue on to the answer.

*An informational brochure for general distribution,* stressing the benefits to be gained from the proposal. Campaign brochures range from the very slick professional publication to mimeographed sheets. The ruling consideration may be the amount of money available, but school campaigners should also consider the effect of the brochures' appearance on the voter. In a district suffering under low economic conditions, voters might resent an obviously expensive publication. In a district with a concentration of well educated, high-income voters, an elaborate publication may reinforce community pride in quality schools. One campaign group silenced criticism that too much money had been spent on

campaign literature by printing brochures on brown "butcher" wrapping paper.

*Posters and store window displays.* Money and the willingness of community businesses to display campaign materials are ruling factors here. Some districts find outdoor advertisers willing to donate billboard space.

*Door knob hangers, milk bottle tags, grocery bag stuffers.* Local businessmen are the key to good distribution of these reminders to the public that an issue is on the ballot.

*Newspaper advertisements and supplements.* This is basic in most campaigns. Newspaper advertising departments, advertising agencies, or PR firms usually prepare the copy and layout. Some budgets are stretched by getting community groups or firms to sponsor the advertisements. Some firms also will devote part of a regular ad to promote a school issue.

### **Using Radio and Television**

Spot advertisements on local radio and television stations, like newspaper advertising space, can be expensive. Some stations may provide public service time. What a broadcasting station is willing or able to do may depend upon whether there is organized opposition. Many stations offer nonpaid air opportunities such as a locally produced show on which a representative of the school might appear as a guest during the campaign. School officials who are good speakers and capable of handling often irrelevant questions with tact and patience can reach a new audience on these shows. Many stations also now take editorial positions on public issues. This activity, plus news operations, requires that electronic media be given the attention of campaigners.

Copy for radio and TV spots must be effective. There is no time for long explanations or obscurity. This is a specialized field and the campaign organization should seek out competent assistance.

## **Person-to-Person Campaigning**

More and more school campaigns are devoting a major effort to organizing a drive which will bring the maximum number of voters into face-to-face or at least voice-to-voice contact. Successful campaigners and voter attitude researchers indicate the validity of this strategy. Main emphasis in these drives, aside from the greater impact of direct communication, is identification of the "yes" vote and the necessary organization follow-through to bring that vote to the polls.

Among the methods used to reach the public in one-to-one relationships or in small groups are:

**Block Meetings.** The first step is identification of a parent in each block or similar well defined small area who will assume responsibility for bringing her neighbors together. A favored type of meeting is the daytime or evening kaffeeklatsch which offers informality, a chance for talks among neighbors, and a direct face-to-face source of information.

Campaign leaders will need to provide the parent-leaders involved with specific instructions for making the most effective use of the meeting and for follow-up with neighbors unable to attend. This type of meeting is used widely as an informal method to identify "yes" votes.

**Door-to-Door.** An older campaign fixture is the program to have a parent make a brief visit to an assigned list of homes in the neighborhood. Again, instructions and training are needed to give the parent guidance in handling this visit. Rudeness or inadvertent oversell can offend persons and lose votes.

**Telephone Canvass.** The telephone appears to be used increasingly in school campaigns. Few homes today are without one. As an efficient communication device, the telephone enables the caller to speak with many more people in a given space of time than would be possible in door-to-door visits. Weather also is not a hazard. In addition, a telephone call is less disruptive for the voter than a visit.

School campaigners use telephone canvasses to inform citizens about the campaign issue, to stimulate "yes" voters to go to the polls, and to offer transportation or baby-sitter services. The canvass calls for a high degree of organization and a corps of volunteers. Sometimes a central office is set up for making calls; in others, volunteers are asked to do the calling from their own homes. Either way, volunteers need careful briefing.

**Speakers Bureau.** Campaign workers, board members, teachers, and administration staff members are used to staff speakers bureaus. The prime requisite is that the speakers be able to present the issues well. Civic and social groups in the community are the target areas. Back-up materials such as filmstrips, slides, motion pictures, and flip charts are helpful.

## **For the Record**

Every campaign, win or lose, is a learning experience for campaigners. When the election results are in, the campaign leaders should not overlook the opportunity to assess each campaign element. A history of the campaign, with copies of all memos, instruction sheets, letters, and advertisements used can be an invaluable reference for planning the next one.

A poll of workers in the campaign to secure their evaluations and suggestions can reveal strengths and weaknesses in the organization.

Of course, some effort to express appreciation to the campaign workers is obligatory—a dinner, letter, or certificate presentation.

This chapter has reviewed some of the most commonly used components in the school district finance campaign. The precise way in which they are employed or modified differs from district to district, as do the costs of staging campaigns. No two campaigns are ever identical. The next section discusses these components on a "how-to-do-it" basis.

## SECTION I:

# Campaign Tools, Troops, and Timetable

## 4. Look Back Before You Leap

Before that first public commitment is made to go to the polls, the administration and board should take a hard look at the road behind, the present situation, and the resources needed for the campaign. The assessment of "where we stand" can reveal potential strengths as well as weakness. A

candid review may dictate preliminary problems which must first be solved. The district whose leaders can easily answer all these questions has the foundation laid for planning its campaign—or is aware that the district should wait until it is better prepared.

### **Pre-Campaign Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Have citizen groups and staff been genuinely involved in developing priorities for school improvement during the past year?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Is this generally known in the community?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has the school leadership surveyed community attitudes toward the schools?  
If so, what are the significant attitudes toward:  
    general services of the schools? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the quality of the instructional program? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the teachers? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the nonteaching staff? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the board? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the administration? \_\_\_\_\_  
    the cost of education? \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has the school leadership surveyed the economic conditions in the community?
- \_\_\_\_\_ What is the most significant factor now affecting ability to pay for quality schools?  
    low employment rates \_\_\_\_\_  
    resistance to taxation in general \_\_\_\_\_  
    large population on fixed income \_\_\_\_\_  
    good year in major crop or industry \_\_\_\_\_  
    other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school system have a continuous public relations program which is adequately and competently staffed?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has the public school leadership maintained a dialogue with parochial school interests about the needs of education?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have all public schools support groups (PTA's, Booster Clubs, etc.) been involved in discussions about current school needs?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Are the local news media well informed about school problems and supportive of school goals?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have key individuals and groups most influential in public policy matters been identified?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have influential groups or individuals most likely to be in opposition to school aims been identified?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has the school leadership made an analysis of reasons for success or failure of past school and other local election issues?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Has the leadership kept abreast of reasons for success or failure of finance issues in neighboring communities?
- \_\_\_\_\_ Does the school district maintain accurate and easy-to-use data on all school operations, including pupil holding power, teacher turnover, population growth, and projections?

### **Before the Decision**

If recommendations of students of finance campaign practices are followed, the first public indication of a proposed school tax increase will not be the school board's decision to go to the polls but rather those factors which led the board to its decision.

If the decision was based on the findings of a staff study, citizen review, or a comprehensive professional evaluation of the schools, the submission of that report should have been publicized much earlier. The electorate already feels more and more removed from the decision-making processes of government. Surprise announcements can arouse antagonisms. Failure to report in advance about studies of school problems, such as the board seeking the assistance of advisory citizen groups or others, can amount to more than negligence. It can be fatal.

The formal presentation of the advisory group's study and recommendations to the school board can be the climax to many press releases and articles preliminary to any school board decision for action.

### **Announcing the Decision To Go to the Polls**

The board's action on a decision to go to the polls should be made under the most favorable circumstances. A straightforward news release on the decision should be available for the press in attendance at the meeting and for delivery to other news media.

Ideally, the resulting news story should include the words "by unanimous vote."

News copy should include supportive data on the need, but it should not be loaded with educational jargon or figures. Back-up data sheets are helpful. The information must be presented in good, clear English.

Be sure the news release is completely honest. Any kind of minor error can come back to haunt the campaign.

Metropolitan area districts may want to hold a press conference. The spokesman for the schools, whether superintendent or board member, should be well prepared to answer the questions. It is unfair and unwise, for example, to set a member of the board adrift in a sea of seasoned reporters without a member of the administrative staff at his elbow to help with figures, statistics, and technical details. Let the board member know why the staff member is present to help him.

Every question should be answered as completely as possible. The good reporter will want to know more about his subject than he will include in his story. He has to understand much of the technical material himself in order to make his story intelligible to his readers.

The school-prepared release should tell the full story. Don't forget to publish the news story in school system publications and to submit copies to editors of school organization newsletters.

(See the sample news release.)

Smithville Public Schools  
184 South Main Street  
Joe Burnis, Public Information Officer  
Telephone—ME 1-2000

For Release After 8 p.m., Wednesday  
September 3

**SCHOOL BOARD UNANIMOUSLY  
APPROVES \$20 MILLION BOND PROPOSAL**

Smithville, September 3—A \$20 million bond program which will provide Smithville Schools with 400 new classrooms and eliminate overcrowding has been unanimously approved by the Board of Education.

The bond issue will appear on the November 6 general election ballot.

Superintendent F. O. Brown said the new construction and renovation program follows closely the recommendations of the 104-member Citizens Advisory Committee and a staff review of building needs. The Advisory Committee report was submitted to the Board of Education in August. It strongly urged immediate attention to building needs.

Major benefits from the bond proposal were outlined by Superintendent Brown as:

1. Elimination of double sessions caused by overcrowding at all elementary schools.
2. Sufficient classroom space to meet a projected enrollment increase of 2,000 new students in the next five years.
3. Remodeling of classrooms in older buildings.
4. Lowering the number of children housed in each elementary school classroom.

A two-thirds vote of approval by district residents will be needed to pass the bond issue.

Theodore Jenkins, president of the Board, commented that the proposed building program would meet the most pressing needs for adequate facilities for Smithville's 20,000 students. He noted that the Citizens Advisory Committee had given top priority to all the plans included in the bond proposal.

Editor: Please see attached list for breakdown of all building improvements contained in the bond proposal.

## 5. Getting Under Way: People and Plans

A citizen steering committee for the school campaign should include a cross section of the community's respected leaders, men and women recognized for an ability to "get things done" in civic affairs, and those with special organization and communication talents.

Members of civic organizations with a record of school interest and influence in the community are prime candidates. They should ordinarily be invited as individuals, not as representatives of those organizations, if the campaign committee is to be autonomous. They also should be persons who are able to give necessary participation to the committee.

There is some reluctance about making the campaign assignment the responsibility of an existing group. Superintendents who frown upon this method note that the school district has little control over the policies and practices of the group, that performance can be inadequate because the membership may not be capable of handling the added assignment, and there may be built-in problems of coordination with other groups in the school and community.

A committee recruited for the express purpose of winning a school finance issue has the advantage of a clean slate for developing strategies and for winning the support of the community.

It is not impossible, of course, for the district PTA or the teachers association to conduct a winning campaign. This has been done. Such a campaign, however, does not provide the comprehensive community in-

volvement viewed as more desirable by many campaigners.

Appointment of the chairman or co-chairmen obviously deserves careful consideration. These individuals must have the time to devote to a campaign and the ability to work with others. They should first be approached informally. When there is an indication that these leaders will accept, a formal invitation should be extended.

Good sources of citizens committee nominees are building principals, particularly the elementary principals, who should be familiar with recognized leaders among neighborhood parents. One school district asked parents to return a signed statement if they were interested in becoming supporters of a citizens campaign committee. The district received more acceptances than the total number of "yes" votes in a previous defeat.

Development of a citizens committee involves much more than calling a meeting of organization representatives and passing out a sheet for volunteers to sign up for specific jobs. There must be some advance thinking about organization tasks and form. Some committee functions, as has been suggested, call for members with unusual skills and experience. Identifying and organizing talent is the big task. At the same time, one of the hazards of forming a committee is overlooking some individual or organization when an invitation should have been extended. Campaign groups also can continue on to the next campaign only if there is an influx of new workers.

While the size of the large committee can be flexible, depending on the task to be accomplished and the size of the community, the steering committee or executive committee must be a workable group which can meet frequently and on short notice.

The steering committee usually includes the chairmen for subcommittees assigned special tasks—such as the publicity committee, the fund-raising committee, the “get-out-the-vote” committee, and others.

### The Organizational Plan

Heart of the campaign will be the organization plan—a blueprint for action. In the time span of a typical campaign there is little margin for changing major tactics or for adding new components. A well thought out, detailed plan is essential. If the campaign strategy is to involve large numbers of citizens and workers, need for a detailed plan is absolutely necessary. Each per-

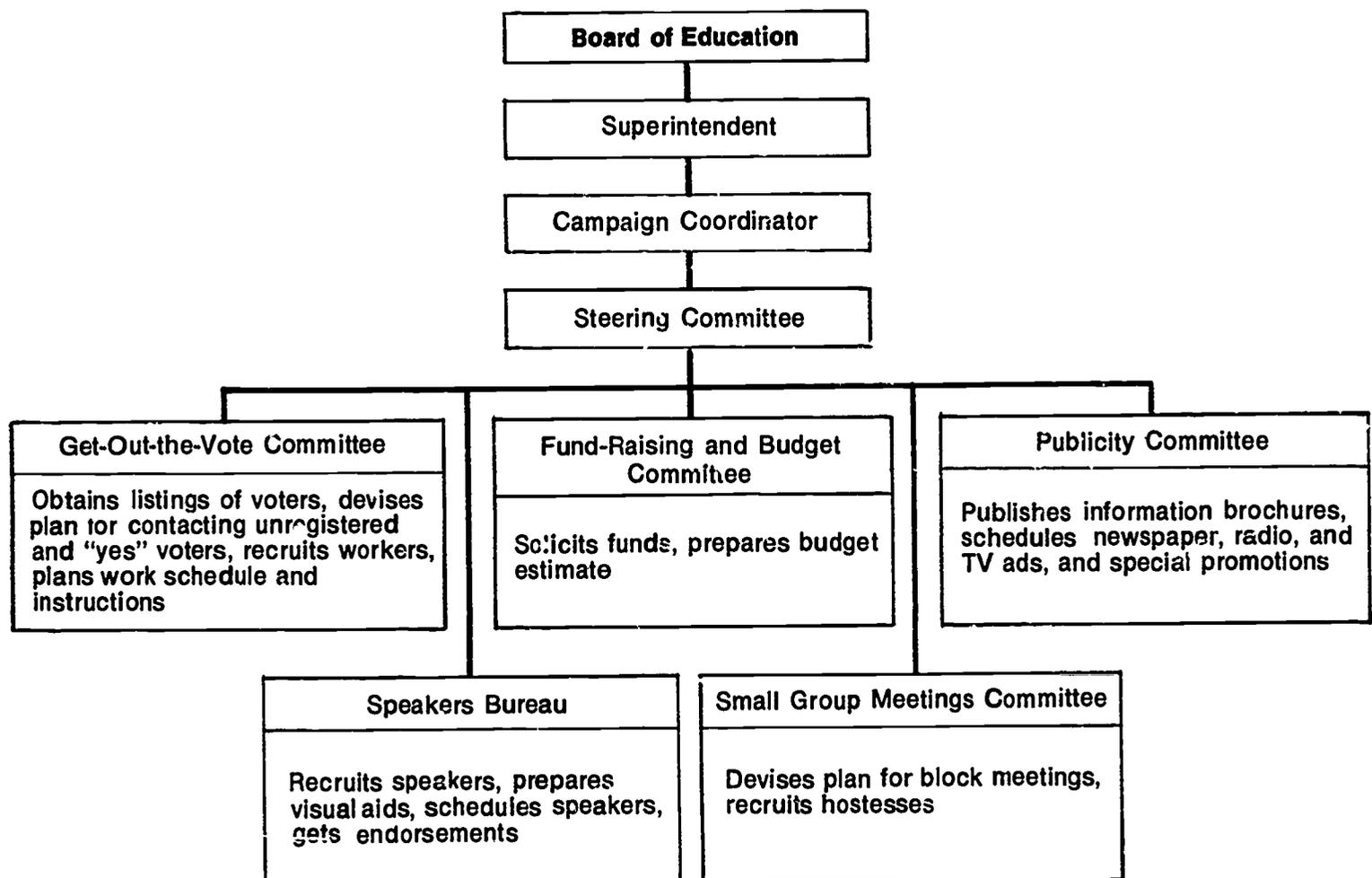
son and committee in a massive campaign must know exact expectations and relationships.

School district officers are in the best position to outline the draft campaign plan. They usually submit it to the campaign steering committee for further discussion and for suggestions. Some school districts form a planning committee within the staff which makes recommendations for an organization plan to the campaign committee. By the time the full committee is organized, however, the plan should be developed enough to enable the group to start work immediately.

If the district is a large one, the campaign plan will provide for organizational units such as elementary attendance areas or election wards and large divisions, with coordinators or chairmen assigned supervisory responsibility for activities in that area.

A typical organization chart looks like the one given here.

**Organization Chart**



### **The Steering Committee Starts To Work**

The first major task of the steering committee will be to set the timetable, determine the organization of the campaign, and assign major responsibilities. Typically, the committee will have the advantage of a proposed plan developed by the administrative staff.

The committee will need to find answers to questions such as:

What are the major strategy considerations of the campaign?

What are the prospects of an adequate budget?

Will there be available enough parents and others to meet requirements of the campaign organization? Who are they and how can they be reached?

What will be the nature of subcommittee work?

What will be the role of the school staff?

Note the content of the agenda of a steering committee's first meeting which follows.

#### **Steering Committee Agenda (First Meeting)**

- I. Brief background on the finance proposal--superintendent or administration representative
- II. Introduction of Citizens Committee chairman (co-chairmen)
- III. Introduction of school staff member (PR director) designated to work with Citizens Committee as campaign coordinator
- IV. Decisions to be made:
  - A. Chairmen of subcommittees
    1. Fund Raising and Budget
    2. Publicity
    3. Speakers Bureau
    4. Small Group Meetings
    5. Get-Out-the-Vote
  - B. Name of the committee (Note: avoid the word "campaign" in selecting the committee name)
  - C. Suggestions for campaign theme
    - "Invest in Learning"
    - "Keep Pace"
    - "Vote K.I.D.S." (Keep Improving District Schools)
    - "S.O.S." (Save Our Schools)
    - "We Care"
  - D. Timetable for campaign activities
  - E. Schedule of reports from subcommittee
    - Suggestion: weekly Saturday morning breakfast meetings of all subcommittee chairmen until election day
  - F. Involvement of school personnel (staff, employees, students)
  - G. Clerical resources available to the committee
  - H. Development of instructions for campaign workers
  - I. Date of next meeting

### **Campaign Timetable**

The timetable for a campaign using many typical elements might read like this--

*April*

Board names Citizen Advisory Commit-

tee to study present school program and immediate needs

*May*

Committee organizes and begins study

*June*

Community attitude survey conducted by University Bureau of Social Research

*August*

Final report and recommendations by Citizens Advisory Committee

Board and staff begin study of recommendations

PTA's and school employee groups contacted for pledges of support in campaign activities.

*September 3*

Board announces decision to seek additional operating funds

Board appoints campaign Steering Committee and chairman

*September 8*

First meeting of the Steering Committee

Superintendent interprets findings of attitude poll and suggests strategies

Principals asked to nominate campaign workers

Fund-Raising Committee contacts major school organizations, civic groups for contributions

Publicity Committee outlines promotion campaign, tentatively schedules advertising

Training materials prepared for campaign leaders and workers

Speeches are written

*September 15*

Speakers Bureau Committee recruits speakers; contacts local organizations

Small Group Meetings Committee recruits block hostesses

Publicity Committee completes promotion plans on basis of budget

Training sessions held for campaign workers

Get-Out-the-Vote Committee begins work with principals in high priority areas

*September 22*

Preparation of information brochures and other printed materials

*October 4*

Brochure printed; distribution begins

*October 7*

Speakers Bureau begins engagements

Kaffeeklatsches held

*October 20*

Posters and other promotion pieces distributed

Telephone canvass to identify "Yes" vote

*October 24*

Newspaper ads and radio and TV spots begin

*November 5*

Election Day

Telephone follow-up, transportation, baby-sitter operations

*November 8*

Letters of appreciation to all campaign workers

*November 15*

Report meeting of campaign

*December 15*

Campaign records completed

**Informing and Training Campaign Workers**

Campaign volunteers deserve a comprehensive explanation of what will be expected of them. A variety of kinds of workshops may be held, depending upon the nature of the assignments. At a typical workshop, a campaign official will explain the general outline of a campaign, introduce committee leaders responsible for the particular activity, explain the assignment, and answer questions from the citizens. This also is an opportunity for the campaigners to get suggestions from the workers.

Campaign worker manuals are a key publication in most campaigns. Frequently included are:

- A fact sheet about the proposal

- Facts about the school system
- Reviews of community attitude surveys
- Past election results, often on a precinct-by-precinct count
- Legal requirements for passage.

Usually manuals are not elaborate productions; often they are simply mimeographed sheets stapled together. Some districts provide portfolio binders which have pockets for insertion of materials to be distributed later. This type of binder enables the district to insert previous district publications of varying sizes such as brochures, pocket-size fact books, and other materials. Specialized worker publications include instructions for house-to-house, telephone, transportation, and other groups, as well as speech and endorsement materials for the Speakers Bureau.

Campaign fact sheets are often the worker's most valuable tool. Assuming it is easy to understand, the fact sheet enables the worker to talk intelligently about the cause he is promoting no matter what his role may be in the campaign. Questions frequently answered in fact sheets are:

- What is the school issue on the ballot?
- Why is it necessary?
- Who can vote? Where? When?
- How much will the tax increase cost

the average resident? (Translate this figure into cents per month or year.)

- How much total revenue will be raised?
- How will the revenue be spent?
- Where can more information be obtained?

Few laymen are truly acquainted with the sources of education funds. It is often worthwhile to present a brief description of how the schools are financed.

A campaign organization that involves hundreds of citizens, teachers, principals, central staff personnel, and the board of education must have some systematic means of communication during the periods of intensive activity, as well as during the planning stage. Mimeographed newsletters and memos usually are circulated to leaders and active members of the campaign organization.

There is a vital morale function also involved in these publications. Campaign workers respond to news of progress and activity. Without enthusiasm and vigor, a campaign goes into a decline.

A less formal communication method, but an equally effective one in smaller campaigns, is the reporting session with campaign leaders. One group held weekly Saturday morning breakfast meetings. Reports were expected weekly from all chairmen.

## 6. Spreading the Word

Campaigners may choose between a wide variety of communications tools for reaching the target publics. The trick is to select those that will work best for the particular community, will fit campaign aims, can be produced by available talent and resources, and won't break the budget. Some campaign-tested tools for spreading the word include the following:

### **Speakers Bureau**

Research findings show that voters would like to talk with school personnel about school matters. Too often they do not get such an opportunity. In some districts, many adults have no contact with anyone who holds a position in the schools.

This is one reason why a school campaign Speakers Bureau usually is highly important. The secret of an effective Bureau is development of an operational plan in advance in order to move promptly. All civic, social, religious, fraternal, and labor organizations in the community are solicited by letter, phone, or direct contact for speaking dates.

Details must be secured about speech requirements for a given meeting and then matched with a suitable speaker. His report about organization reaction must be obtained.

Speakers may be drawn from the Citizens Committee, the school staff, and the board of education. The important consideration is that the individuals chosen be articulate, informed spokesmen. A script is a necessity although many speakers may want to

individualize it to match their speaking styles. A training-briefing session is a "must," especially to explain visual aids which may be used.

Filmstrips, slides, or flip charts add some assurance that all presentations will be of uniform quality. In some campaigns, a sound slide-film or motion picture is used. The speaker answers questions and describes in detail the benefits for a given area.

Script writers should remember that audiences will differ and that a stock speech might be varied slightly for the composition of the audience. It has been found that men generally talk about school costs, administration, building needs, curriculum, and sports. Women talk more about special programs and services, students, and events. Recognition of these interests could lead the writer to develop variations on the basic campaign pitch.

Speeches of varied lengths also are needed. Some organizations plan their programs a year in advance but will permit a campaign speaker a few minutes. This can be long enough, especially if an endorsement is obtained.

Question-and-answer periods at the conclusion of the prepared speech will give voters the chance to take an active part in getting more information about the schools. If the speaker is a layman unaccompanied by a school official, he should know where to refer questions he cannot answer.

Speakers should also be provided with informational brochures or fact sheets for distribution to their listeners.

A report form which the speaker can complete at the conclusion of each engagement will help campaign officers keep tab on activities. The form might include the name of the organization, size of the audience, reactions or comments, and information about an endorsement.

When Speakers Bureau dates are obtained, the matter of a possible endorsement of the school issue should be discussed. Some organizations have their executive bodies consider and act upon endorsements. In others, endorsements are passed upon at general meetings.

The speaker should be advised in advance about the value of endorsements and, in each instance, what he should do about seeking an expression of endorsement.

Endorsements, of course, are worthless unless well publicized—at the time they are given, later as summaries of group endorsements, and in advertisements or folders.

### **Audiovisual Aids**

Audiovisual aids have become stock items in many campaigns. The range is from professionally produced movies to flip charts. Production should be placed in the hands of someone who knows the technical pitfalls—school-community relations or audiovisual director on the school staff, volunteers from advertising or art agencies, or commercial firms.

Well prepared audiovisual aids can be a valuable back-up for every member of the campaign who is asked to tell the school story. But they must be done competently or not at all. Two decades of television have made all audiences quality-conscious about audiovisuals. Resources and equipment available will determine the kinds of aids employed and the extent of their use. Among the possibilities are:

*Flip Charts.* A series of posters mounted like an oversized tablet, preferably on heavy poster stock. If the backing is heavy enough, the charts can stand like a tent on a table. The speaker can "flip" each sheet as he makes the appropriate

point. Easels usually are used. Charts are best for small groups. They are relatively inexpensive to produce and, if well done, can be as effective as any other aid. Remarks can be condensed or extended. The room does not need to be darkened.

*Slides.* Easily handled and stored, slides offer a great amount of flexibility in telling the school story. Individually mounted, they may be rearranged; frames may be repeated to emphasize certain points. Slides demand a projector and a speaker who knows the operation, or he must have a good helper. Sound has been added to some presentations via tape recorder.

*Filmstrips.* Continuity of the story is assured on filmstrips. Individual slides cannot get lost. After the initial investment, cost of duplication is small—cheaper than slides if enough copies are required. Narration for the filmstrips, like slides, can be reproduced on magnetic tape, or a speaker may read from a text cued to the strip.

*Transparencies and Overhead Projectors.* Easy-to-prepare transparencies are one of the simplest aids to produce. Lettering, drawings, charts are transferred to plastic or acetate sheets. The overhead projector allows showing in normal lighting situations. The speaker may point to features on the transparency while it is being projected or may add overlays with detailed information. This aid is good for small- and medium-sized groups.

*Motion Pictures.* Although they can tell the story dramatically, motion pictures require far more time, resources, and money than other audiovisual aids. Their production is best left to professionals. For the campaign organization which has the funds, movies assure uniformity in campaign presentations and give an added touch of interest to the overall promotion. The coming of film cartridges and self-contained projectors also add a new dimension to campaigns.

Some basic points to remember—

Keep charts and graphs simple. Aim at easy sight comprehension. Use little

written material. Keep any lettering big enough to be easily read.

The spoken words for each visual presentation, whether an on-the-spot speaker's voice or prerecorded tape, should be kept short. The audience will grow bored if it must wait too long for the change of visuals.

Use cartoon drawings or photographs to enliven charts, graphs, or listing of

statistics, if such data must be presented in that form.

Keep the focus on children and education.

So that the speaker can coordinate his message with the visuals, provide him with a script which gives cues. The opening of this filmstrip script is an example—

### SCHOOL BONDS LOS ANGELES UNIFIED DISTRICT

The following narration is only a suggested one presented as a guide for the general format and for your pacing as a bond speaker. Your presentation of this strip should be in your own style and will certainly vary according to the size and makeup of the audience. In essence, the strip reminds the viewer of the values of education, describes the pressures on modern schools, and in a general way explains the financing of new construction through school bonds. The basic information about the June 7 bond issue is up to you.

In order to show this filmstrip you will need a standard single frame filmstrip projector like the school's Viewlex. For a good image size (40 x 40 inch screen minimum), you should have at least 15 feet between projector and screen.

#### FRAME

1. Canyon School
  - A. Oldest school in Los Angeles
2. Open calculus book
3. IBM machine and operator
4. Classroom

#### NARRATION

1. Schools are not what they used to be. Their evolution from simple buildings like this one has been in response to many pressures from a world of increasing complication. What are some of these pressures?
2. One is information. . . . In the last 50 years our schools have been charged with teaching an explosion of information. Today's student must learn more than ever before, yet master each step of the foundation of knowledge.
3. The knowledge explosion has stimulated radical new production methods and has led to a tremendous extension of man's engineering capacity. And as each technical advance solves one step, it creates more questions, stimulates more answers . . . more knowledge.
4. A basic purpose of our schools has not changed. Students must receive a thorough education in the basic skills. However, new knowledge and the application of these skills at lower grade levels force

5. Drafting room

6. Crowds of students

constant revision in teaching techniques. New instructional aids and flexible, efficient buildings are vital to the modern teacher's more complex role.

5. Many classrooms at the junior and senior high level must be constructed on a specialized plan. Drafting, science laboratories, industrial shops, and others underscore the need for specific designs impossible to create in conventional classrooms.

6. Another great pressure on our schools is the number of students. There are over 780,000 students enrolled in the Los Angeles Unified District. We have more students than the entire population of San Francisco.

### **Telling the Story in Print and Pictures**

Despite the great values of the person-to-person approach, the printed word is very much an essential campaign tool. It is the back-up for all communication activities—and in some instances must be a mainstay of the campaign.

A fact brochure is regarded as the absolute minimum of publications in most campaigns. More often there are many kinds of printed promotions—newspaper supplements; posters for store and restaurant windows, buses, and billboards; doorknob hangers; grocery bag stuffers; and inserts for school and industry publications.

It is unnecessary for every campaign to produce every possible type of printed material, obviously. What is produced should depend upon best promotional opportunities available in keeping with the overall strategy and the budget.

Veteran campaigners offer these tips for preparing campaign publications:

Concentrate upon three or four basic points about the finance proposal.

Make the appeal positive. Don't limit the appeal to parents. Emphasize the benefits for children and the community's future.

Translate costs into terms anyone can understand. In explaining a tax increase to voters, the Mesa, Arizona, Public Schools use

these comparisons: "For the owner of a \$15,000 home, this will mean a tax increase of 43 cents per month . . . approximately the same as a package of cigarettes or a line of bowling, and averages less than the cost of one hour of baby-sitting time."

Pretest the copy on a cross section of potential readers.

Art work and printing should be of good quality. If the citizens are expected to take pride in their schools, they should also be able to take pride in the appearance of materials in support of the schools. At the same time, do not make them look lavish.

Get professional help in the design of promotional materials. There's no substitute for good design. Campaign materials must compete with the advertisements and literature which bombard the average citizen daily. A large part of today's promotional materials are designed by the professional for maximum attention-getting. Make certain, however, that the designer clearly understands the campaign objectives. A bizarre, inappropriate design wins no votes.

Use excellent photographs only and use them wisely. Take advantage of the subject matter—kids.

If professional help is absolutely unavailable, at least get the printer's help in planning. Some things to remember:

Don't choose a fancy type just because it is different. Script type and sans serif type faces are difficult to read as body type. Regular type faces such as those used in newspapers and most magazines are highest in readability.

Be careful about using any color of ink other than black for the text of a brochure. Light-color inks are almost impossible to read.

Don't use a second color just for the sake of having a splash of color. A second color often means a second run through the press. When a second color is a part of a good design, however, it is worth the cost.

Make full identification of the sponsor as required by state election laws.

#### **Distribution of Brochure**

Before you start the design of an information brochure, know how it will be distributed. For example, if it is to be mailed without envelopes, leave space for the mailing address and return address. Postage can be an expensive item in distribution. Ways to cut cost are best discussed with the local postmaster.

A main method of distribution will probably be door-to-door work. But be sure to warn against placing any materials in mailboxes. This is a federal violation.

Most important is the overall plan for distribution and use of printed materials. Bumper stickers are a waste of money if they do not get on bumpers. Leaflets for stuffing in grocery bags should never be printed unless supermarket managers have agreed to the distribution.

#### **Endorsements**

One way to let the community know the extent of public support for the finance proposal is the use of group and individual endorsements. A special subcommittee of the campaign committee may be assigned the responsibility for seeking endorsements. Or the responsibility can be handled through the publicity committee in coordination with the speakers bureau.

A systematic means of recording the endorsements is essential if they are to be used in campaign publicity. Usually a form is developed which is signed by the group official. Sometimes this is stated briefly on a postal card to be mailed in.

The endorsing group should be asked to publicize its endorsement among the membership, through its own newsletters or other publications. The campaign committee should always seek to make maximum use of the endorsements.

At San Leandro, California, the following form was used for individual endorsements:

#### **ENDORSEMENT**

I believe that public education is a primary responsibility of every community and that an educational level appropriate to the needs of our community, state, and nation must be maintained.

I further believe that the proposed tax increase authorization for the San Leandro Schools is essential to avoid lowering educational standards for San Leandro's boys and girls.

I therefore endorse this measure to be voted on at the April 9, 1968, election and urge all San Leandro voters to Save Our Schools by voting "Yes."

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Address)

At Los Angeles, California, this resolution form was used for group endorsements:

Endorsement by Organization

RESOLUTION  
IN SUPPORT OF THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL BOND PROPOSITION "S"  
TO BE VOTED ON JUNE 7, 1966

WHEREAS, the \_\_\_\_\_ strongly believes

(please print name of organization)

that the education of each boy and girl is a prime determinant affecting the welfare of this community and nation; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles Unified School District is charged with the responsibility of providing such a basic education for our children; and

WHEREAS, the area served by the Los Angeles Unified School District has experienced an increase in pupil population unsurpassed by any large school system and will continue to face an average enrollment increase of 25,000 pupils each year; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles Unified School District aims to provide through public support an individualized education in modern classrooms and functional school plants for the pupils of its school community; and

WHEREAS, additions of classrooms and related instructional facilities are absolutely necessary if the school district is to remove 50,000 pupils from double, short, and extended-day sessions; and

WHEREAS, the Unified District may expect that 175,000 students will be on short or irregular schedules by 1970 if the bond issue fails; and

WHEREAS, the Los Angeles Unified School District has practiced efficient, long-term planning of schools to ensure quality educational facilities at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayer; and

WHEREAS, the retirement of previous bond issues and steady increase in assessed valuation reduces the increase in cost to the taxpayer to approximately one-half cent in the tax rate for each year of the construction program;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members and officers of \_\_\_\_\_ do support School Bond Proposition "S" on the June 7 election ballot and urge all citizens to vote YES for this school construction issue.

SIGNED BY:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Position

\_\_\_\_\_  
Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
City

\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Newspaper Publicity**

One of the earliest contacts in the school campaign should be the newspaper editor. Hopefully, he was contacted before the campaign started—back at the time the board was considering making a proposal. Newspaper publishers and editors are opinion-makers. Their cooperation is highly important.

Long before the publicity campaign actually gets under way, campaign leaders also should schedule a meeting with editors and education writers to discuss information aspects of the campaign.

If there are two or more newspapers, both should receive a share of any paid advertising, and support should be sought from both. In addition, any special interest papers, such as the labor, foreign, and religious press, wield substantial influence with certain segments of the community.

The publicity committee should consider three main avenues of newspaper information: advertisements, news and feature stories, and editorials.

Paid advertising depends on the state of the budget. It should be concentrated in the week or two before the election. An effective ad need not cover a full page. Frequent smaller ads can also pique interest and be used in different sections of the newspaper.

In some districts, local businesses are willing to add a line about the school finance proposal in their ads. Community groups sometimes buy advertising space for the proposal. In one district, high school students pooled their money to buy a newspaper ad.

Be sure that the source of funds is identified in paid newspaper advertising as required by law.

The newspaper is interested in news—and any campaign activities which are newsworthy should be the subject of news releases. Almost any activity involving community people is worth consideration. Newspaper editors know that names are news; people are interested in what their neighbors are doing.

Newspapers cannot use everything that is submitted; the decision depends upon many editorial factors. The campaign leaders should try to keep a flow of information going to the newspapers.

No effort should be spared to inform the newspaper editor about the issues involved in the campaign. Be sure that he knows the schools will appreciate an editorial in support of the finance issue. Sometimes, if an editor cannot endorse the issue, he can be persuaded to keep the editorial page neutral rather than actually opposing the issue formally.

In contacting newspaper editors and reporters, remember they face daily deadlines in their work. Know those deadlines and respect them. Get news releases to them well in advance of deadlines. Don't call when workloads are heaviest—just before press time.

Similar understandings must be observed in working with the management and personnel of television and radio stations.

## **Writing Campaign News Releases**

The news release is the written tool for relaying information about the finance proposal and campaign activities to the community's newspapers, radio and television stations. Campaign events which can be the subject of releases include:

The board's decision to place a finance proposal on the ballot.

Appointment of the chairmen and members of the campaign steering committee.

Feature stories about educational problems to be relieved.

Comparable solutions achieved by similar issues approved in other communities.

Identifying proposed school progress with other community progress (e.g., recent new housing tracts, shopping centers, factories, etc.).

Comparison story on increased costs—books, pencils, fuel, paperclips, etc.

Story on upgrading of trained staff (e.g., current degree level vs. 20 years ago, etc.).

Any large group meetings of the committee and other groups in support of the proposal.

Endorsements of the proposal—either in periodic releases on the number of endorsers or in single releases on each group's endorsement. (This decision should depend on the number of potential endorsers.)

Appearances by members of the Speakers Bureau before community organizations.

The formal expression of appreciation to campaign workers when the campaign is finished.

Basic guidelines for preparing the release are:

Type the release double-spaced on one side only of 8½" x 11" white paper (or on preprinted news release stock if the committee or district has designed a special letterhead for release).

Leave ample margins at the top, sides, and bottom of the page for the news editor's markings and notations.

At the top of the first page list the name of the organization, its address, name of the officer who can be contacted for more information, and his telephone number.

Give the time at which the story can be released. If it can be used immediately, type in the top right-hand corner: "For Immediate Release." If the story should not be published before a certain hour, note the time after which it may be used. For example: "For Release after 8 p.m., Tuesday, April 3."

If the story continues to a second page, note at the bottom of the first page that there is more. Most often the word "more" is centered in the bottom margin. The second page should note that it is a continuation and should identify again the submitting organization's name.

### **Radio and Television Publicity**

For the district which has nearby radio and television stations, these media can be a major source for disseminating campaign information in news and entertainment programs and in paid advertising.

Talk first with the station managers about ways in which the broadcast media can be used effectively. They may be your source for invitations to participate in talk shows, panel discussions, or other use of "public service" and news time. They will also be able to give you suggestions for the best use of paid advertising time.

Ways in which TV and radio can be cooperative in the campaign effort may depend upon a variety of circumstances and conditions. What a station is willing or able to do, for example, may be affected by the presence of organized campaign opposition.

If a station has an audience residing over a large geographic area which includes many communities, the station management may be reluctant to boost a school issue for a single district. In some areas, like the Puget Sound area of Washington State, school districts having elections on the same date treat radio and TV as a cooperative campaign venture.

A good starting point in seeking radio or TV assistance is to review your proposal and its benefits and objectives with the station manager and request editorial support. Some stations prepare editorials as a regular daily feature; others editorialize occasionally. Many stations also reprint their editorials for distribution to key community leaders.

In addition to the station manager, there are at least five key persons on the station staff who can help campaigners. They include the program director who is in charge of programs originated locally, the public service director, the news director, the publicity director, and the advertising manager. More than one job may be handled by a staff member on smaller stations.

If you are seeking nonpaid public service time, be prepared to offer an idea or two

of your own. It is unreasonable to expect a station to supply not only the time and facilities but all the ideas as well.

Before approaching a station to seek help, take the trouble to study its program style. Some stations, especially in the radio field, try to appeal to special audiences of listeners—youth, farm, urban, nationality, or ethnic group.

In TV and radio, time is all important. Material written for either radio or television demands an eye on the clock. Only one or two main points can be driven home in the short span of a spot announcement. For example, only 35 to 40 words can be spoken in a 20-second commercial.

Some tips when using local radio and television:

Ask station personnel for guidelines in

preparing “slides” or other visual art to be used in conjunction with commercials. Often the station will prefer to prepare the slide from your copy or art.

Publicize the television and radio information to your own campaign organization. Workers like the identification with efforts which receive wide publicity.

Publicize in staff communications the campaign representatives who have guest appearances on programs. Radio and TV media will appreciate your efforts to increase audiences.

Make sure school guests on TV or radio programs present a good image. Put your best man or woman forward.

Don't forget, when generating ideas for the air that education is first of all about children and the future.

## 7. Tying Up Loose Ends

In more and more campaigns, the final stages represent an all-out effort to identify the committee voter and get him to the polls on election day. Strategies vary from a fine-tooth combing of each precinct to rather casually organized visits to parents' homes.

Some of the basic procedures:

*Registration of voters.* Strangely, school campaigns have been lost because school officials made no effort to see whether patrons were registered to vote. In fast-growing young communities, the very persons most likely to vote favorably on school issues often become lost votes because they fail to register. Young married couples, with or without children, often become so pre-occupied with other affairs that they fail to register to vote.

Wise campaigners these days make every effort to see that there is a registration check long before the deadline to register. Sometimes this canvass is conducted by the PTA, Junior Chamber of Commerce, or similar group. The school system joins in the campaign to urge that parents register. This campaign often is held far in advance of the regular school campaign.

*Telephone identification of favorable voters.* A complete telephone canvass is conducted of all registered voters prior to election day. Workers have a printed checklist for noting "yes" voters, "no" voters, and the undecided. "Yes" voters are reminded to vote; babysitting and transportation services are offered. In those states where their presence is legal, poll watchers report voter arrivals to the campaign headquarters. Follow-up calls are made to "yes" voters who have not gone to the polls.

In addition to the assigned list of names and telephone numbers, the school campaign caller should have a basic prepared script and instructions for referring voter queries to a school official.

Several school districts report that local businesses have provided banks of telephones and office space for the canvassers. One superintendent spent the canvassing day on the telephone talking with those "no" voters who indicated they would like more information. He averaged six to seven conversations an hour.

Often school districts tally the "yes" and "no" responses for an advance picture of losing and winning precincts. Supporting parents are often asked to contact "no" voters in their immediate neighborhoods, on an informal basis, to discuss school needs. Many campaigners believe that a "no" vote is best left alone. One survey found that, when the final results were in, that the "yes" votes had shown up at the polls and the "no" votes were far fewer than had been anticipated from the tally.

*Door-to-door identification of the favorable voter.* Parents and other school campaigners are given a list of homes in the neighborhood. Purpose is the same as the telephone canvass—to identify the registered voter, to leave information about the finance proposal, and to report the response of each voter to campaign headquarters. Information gleaned this way is used for follow-up on election day.

*Group Meetings.* The kaffeeklatsch is another vehicle used to identify the "yes" vote. Hostesses are asked to submit names, addresses, and telephone numbers of guests who indicate they intend to vote "yes."

Each of these methods requires a high level of organization for maximum effectiveness. Workers must be trained carefully about how to approach voters and how to relay information to campaign headquarters. Some districts use the ward and precinct divisions of the community as the basis for organization with a "ward captain" assuming the responsibility for supervising canvass work.

One district assigned precinct workers a quota of "yes" votes, based on past precinct votes on school issues. Voting patterns were recognized and no effort was wasted

in trying to break the precinct pattern. However, a total increase in each precinct was accepted as a goal.

The ward-precinct pattern more often is adapted to the elementary school area when it is the unit of the campaign organization.

Even the kaffeeklatsch deserves a systematic plan of organization if it is to do more than be an informal method of stimulating conversations about the finance issue. Hostesses should know exactly what is expected of them and how their activity is related to the total campaign picture.

#### Sample Script and Instructions for Door-to-Door Volunteers

Good evening. We are volunteer members of the Smithville Schools Committee. We would like to remind you of the school election on Tuesday, November 5. Some very important new services will be available to our children if this election is successful. I would like to leave this folder with you. It explains just what this proposal means.

If you have any further questions after reading the folder, please call the number listed.

Thank you very much and good evening.

#### Hints for Door-to-Door Volunteers

Be sure to wear identifying citizens committee tag or ribbon.

Familiarize yourself with the question and answer fact sheet so you will know if you have the answer to questions your neighbor may ask. If you do not have the answer, refer again to the school telephone number.

Do not leave literature if there is no answer to your call. Do not place any literature in mailboxes. Please contact the home again if there is no answer.

Do be pleasant and positive in your approach.

Do not time your visits at the dinner hour.

Dress simply and in good taste.

---

#### Suggested Script for Telephone Poll of Registered Voters

I am \_\_\_\_\_, a volunteer worker for the Smithville Schools Committee. May I talk with you for a minute? We are surveying Smithville voters regarding their opinion on the upcoming election. May I ask you two or three questions?

1. Are you planning to vote on election day?
2. Have you made up your mind at this time or are you undecided about how to vote on the school tax proposal?

If the answer is "Undecided"

I know the Smithville schools need your support. Without more money, some school programs will be curtailed. It is important that we keep

the good programs we have. We hope that you will vote to support the schools on November 5. Thank you for your time. (Check response on voter list.)

If the answer is "Decided"

Would you say you were in favor or against the tax proposal at this time? (Check response on voter list.)

If the answer is "Against"

Thank you for your time.

If the answer is "For"

Your "yes" vote and your active support with your neighbors are really needed. We would like to call you again on election day with a brief reminder to vote. Thank you for your support.

Hints to Telephone Callers:

Always identify yourself at once by your name.

Speak in a pleasant, unhurried voice. Read from the above script or use variations that fit your speaking style. Do not vary the message.

Don't engage in long conversations or arguments. Do give information as you can on registration requirements, provisions for transportation, or baby-sitting services.

Do refer questions about the tax proposal to the school officer in charge of public information.

### **Thanking the Workers**

When the election results are in, the campaign job is not completed. Many citizens will have joined with the school staff and board to improve educational opportunities. Win or lose, campaign leaders must be appreciative of the effort and recognize it. Too often when an issue loses, there is temptation by a disappointed superintendent or board president to be critical of citizens in press statements. Campaign workers, especially, and supporting voters become seriously offended, and rightfully so. Letters of thanks to all citizens are worth the time and effort. Also, there will be other campaigns and campaigners will be needed. School employees who were engaged in activities beyond their regular duties should also receive recognition.

### **Evaluating the Job**

At the conclusion of an active campaign, school officials have a unique opportunity to evaluate the campaign plan while problems and triumphs are still fresh in the

workers' minds. This information is invaluable for preliminary planning of the next campaign.

A questionnaire or other evaluation form for campaign workers, especially those who held posts of responsibility, can reveal flaws in organization, handicaps to effective operation, and improvement suggestions.

#### Questions which might be asked:

Were training and instructions adequate? How could they be improved?

Were informational materials provided by the schools helpful in answering questions?

Was the chain of command or organization clear to the worker? Did he receive help when he needed it?

What additional materials would have made the campaign worker's chore easier?

Would the worker participate in campaign activities in the future if asked?

Quite often superintendents hold an extensive review session with principals and others involved in the campaign to appraise

many aspects of organization and distribution which are highly important to the success of a campaign but do not concern most workers.

Campaign leaders should also be making an analysis of voting patterns. If special techniques were attempted to get a larger percentage of "yes" voters in a given precinct, to what degree did this succeed? How did voters react in the section where a large number of apartment houses had been erected since the previous school election? Did the actual vote confirm the speculation that voters in the newly annexed section of the community would tend to vote negatively?

Files containing a chronology of campaign activities and sample copies of all letters, memos, bulletins, instruction and fact sheets are very important for future planning. This type of information would include all advertising and publicity samples, advertising schedules and rates, sources and costs of art work, photos, printing, etc.

Occasionally there will be some money remaining in the campaign fund. This is not

necessarily an indication of poor planning. Some campaign experts believe that some balance should be uncommitted right up to the day of election in order to meet emergencies. One of the most distressing events to take place in school campaigns is to have organized, financed opposition appear at the last moment with paid advertising designed to torpedo the school proposal. When such an action is unanticipated, a campaign group can find itself in a helpless situation. However, if funds are quickly available, the opposing effort can usually be offset by immediate action.

In some school districts, the leftover campaign funds are held over for initial expenses in the next campaign. In others, the money is contributed to some worthy education-connected activity. In one campaign, the balance was returned on a pro rata basis to the main contributors. This made a shocking but favorable impact upon the heads of the business firms in the community which had been contributors.

---

### **The Campaigner's Bookshelf**

Resources and reference books which should be on the shelf of the school officer responsible for finance campaigns:

Allen, William W. "School Bond Issues and Tax Referenda." *Illinois Education* 56: 257-59; February 1968.

American School and University. "How To Manage a Successful Bond Issue." *American School and University* 41: 55-57; March 1969.

Bryant, Barbara E. "Get the Taxpayers on Your Team." *School Management* 12: 41-45; November 1968.

Buskin, Martin. "Problem: What To Do When a Tax-Conscious Community Turns Down Two Tax Increase Proposals in Two Years." *School Management* 11: 81, 83; June 1967.

California Teachers Association and California Association of School Administrators. *Results of Tax and Bond Elections in California School Districts, 1967-68.*

Burlingame: California Teachers Association, 1968. 25 pp.

Carter, Boyd, and DeVries, Ted. "Ten Commandments of Successful School Tax Campaigns." *Clearing House* 42: 210-12; December 1967.

Carter, Richard F. *Voters and Their Schools.* Stanford, Calif.: Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1960. 311 pp.

Carter, Richard F., and Odell, William R. *The Structure and Process of School-Community Relations: A Summary.* Stanford, Calif.: Institute for Communication Research, Stanford University, 1966. Volume V, 109 pp.

Carter, Richard F., and Savard, William G. *Influence of Voter Turnout on School Bond and Tax Elections.* U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Cooperative Research Monograph No. 5. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961. 31 pp.

- Cooper, Lloyd G. "No Communication: Bond Bid Fails." *American School Board Journal* 155: 18-20; July 1967.
- Crosby, Otis A. "How To Prepare Winning Bond Issues." *Nation's Schools* 81: 81, 82, 84; April 1968.
- Dapper, Gloria. *Public Relations for Educators*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1964. 152 pp.
- Dapper, Gloria, and Carter, Barbara. *A Guide for School Board Members*. New York: Follett Publishing Co., 1966. 170 pp.
- Hodnett, Edward. *Effective Presentations: How To Present Facts, Figures, and Ideas Successfully*. West Nyack, N.Y.: Parker Publishing Co., 1967. 225 pp.
- Lesly, Philip. *Public Relations Handbook*. Third edition. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967. 940 pp.
- Levine, Howard, and Levine, Carol. *Effective Public Relations for Community Groups*. New York: Association Press, 1969. 192 pp.
- McCloskey, Gordon. *Education and Public Understanding*. Second edition. New York: Harper & Row, 1967. 622 pp.
- Masotti, Louis H. *Education and Politics in Suburbia*. Cleveland: Western Reserve University Press, 1967. 172 pp.
- Mayer, Frank C. "How To Find Out Why the Voters Said No." *School Management* 11: 78, 79, 82, 83, 86; October 1967.
- Mogin, H. "Audiovisual Role in School Bond Referendums." *Audiovisual Instructor* 12: 712; September 1967.
- National Education Association, Division of Press, Radio, and Television Relations. *School Finance Campaign Handbook for Education Associations*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1969. 59 pp.
- National School Public Relations Association. *Public Relations Gold Mine, Volume 10*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1968. 64 pp.
- National School Public Relations Association. *Public Relations Gold Mine, Volume 9*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1967. 64 pp.
- National School Public Relations Association. *Public Relations Gold Mine, Volume 8*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1966. 64 pp.
- National School Public Relations Association. *The Schools and the Press*. Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1965. 112 pp.
- National School Public Relations Association. *Trends in School Public Relations* newsletter. Monthly, September-July. Washington, D.C.: the Association.
- Olson, Leroy G. "Two Approaches Help Schools Get the Financing They Need." *Nation's Schools* 78: 62-64; September 1966.
- Panas, Jerold P., and Stabile, Robert S. "Districts Win Bond Issues the Hard Way." *Nation's Schools* 79: 75-78; May 1967.
- Prentice-Hall Editorial Staff. *School Executive's Guide*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1964. 1,141 pp.
- School Management. "How Not To Lose a Bond Issue." *School Management* 10: 80-82; October 1966.
- School Management. "How Hard Are You Trying?" *School Management* 13: 62-69; January 1969.
- Shields, Hannah. "San Mateo Reverses Nine Years of Bond Defeats." *Nation's Schools* 81: 77, 79; May 1968.
- Staley, David. *An Analysis of Tax Levy Defeats in Six Oregon School Districts*. Eugene: Oregon School Study Council, University of Oregon, 1964. 13 pp.
- Sumption, Merle R., and Engstrom, Yvonne. *School-Community Relations: A New Approach*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966. 219 pp.
- Weiner, Harold N. "Art of Fund Raising." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 42: 289-92; November 1967.
- Zipser, B. A. "Why Are So Many School Referendums Defeated?" *School Musician* 40: 68-69; October 1968.

**SECTION III:**  
**Campaign Profiles**

## 8. Los Angeles, California

Fund-raising pancake breakfasts. A telephone blitz reaching nearly a million voters in one week. A follow-up doorbell-ringing effort by 18,000 campaign workers to nail down the votes by all those who had said they might cast "yes" ballots.

All this to pass a school bond issue? Yes, and more, including publicity stunts such as gathering 50 kindergarten children clad in "Class of '81" shirts to touch down small shovels to the earth to break ground for a new school.

Los Angeles City Schools began planning a stunning all-out campaign to pass a bond issue of \$289 million in November 1968, gathered unprecedented support from parents and teachers, raised a hefty campaign coffer, netted enormous publicity from the media—and on April 1, 1969, lost heart-breakingly.

Some close observers read the decisive "thumbs down" by Los Angeles voters on the bond issue and two tax measures as a "white backlash" against recent rumblings in inner city non-Caucasian schools. But others pointed to the fact that black city councilman Thomas Bradley was given a sizable lead over other candidates in the mayoralty primary—and on the same ballots which doomed the school measures.

Los Angeles Superintendent Jack P. Crowther analyzed the results strictly in terms of a "taxpayer's revolt." He declared that it was a clear mandate to the California legislature to lift the fiscal burden of burgeoning school costs from local landholders to give it a wider base. Los Angeles currently pays approximately 70 percent of its

**Total school enrollment: 830,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 3.5 million**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$289 million plus 2 tax proposals**

own school bill, while the state pays about 30 percent. Crowther thinks this state subsidy should be hiked to 50 percent.

The district embraces 710 square miles of the most varied real estate: endless middle-class housing tracts and apartment developments in the San Fernando Valley; black ghettos like Watts; Mexican-American barrios (neighborhoods); and movie-star-studded enclaves of wealth like Bel-Air and Brentwood. The district's 3.5 million people live in Los Angeles proper and several other incorporated cities. About 45 percent are minority-group members and about 1.5 million were registered voters entitled to pass on the bond issue.

This varied population has given the district varied educational complaints—all of which, directly or indirectly, became issues in the school bond campaign. Many whites were reacting angrily to rowdy black student demonstrations. Negroes and Mexican-Americans were grumbling about the quality of education in their neighborhood schools and seeking more local control. Teachers were unhappy about the large school bureaucracy.

To these problems were added two others: the bond issue had to be approved by two-thirds of the voters to pass (California is one of 12 states requiring more than a 50 percent-plus-one majority for such issues). And the bond issue was listed on the ballot with two tax proposals of the sort that had been defeated earlier.

One proposal was to lift the maximum property tax that could be levied to pay the schools' general operating expenses by \$1.55 per \$100 of assessed valuation. Since the ceiling is now \$2.65, that would have been a boost of almost 58 percent. The other proposal was to increase by 10 cents per \$100 the maximum tax to support the Los Angeles Junior College District which is now run by the same board of education that runs the school district.

The district has the authority to levy a special tax for "special purposes," such as making interest and amortization payments on bonds, so the bond issue could have proceeded, even if the tax proposals were defeated (they needed only a simple majority to pass). But in the minds of both educators and voters, the bond issue and the tax proposals made up a single program to raise new money for the schools, with the bond issue by far the biggest part of the program.

Putting all these problems together faced the district's educators with as tough a task in winning voter approval as any in the country. So they mounted a campaign with many of the trappings—though not quite the financing—of a major political election drive.

Formally there were two campaigns, although they were separated by a very thin line and some of the same people were active in both. By law, the school district itself can't spend tax money to urge people to vote yes; it can conduct only an "informational" drive to tell the public what the money will pay for. This program was headed by Richard Cooper, a high school principal.

The "vote-yes" drive was run by a voluntary citizens committee and a hired ad agency which prepared pamphlets, billboard and radio advertising. Cooper, although he did not work directly in this campaign, helped plan the strategy, and other school officials and employees worked on it on weekends and after school.

The campaign began in November in what one school official described as "an almost impossible climate." Voter opinion

seemed to have turned decisively against bonds generally and school bonds specifically. Los Angeles voters had just defeated a \$2.5 billion rapid-transit issue and had contributed to the defeat of a \$250 million state-wide college-building bond issue.

Cooper decided at the start to decentralize the campaign as much as possible. He began by involving parents and teachers at each school in planning how prospective funds from the bond issue and tax boosts should be spent—a job that school principals and administrators usually would do at downtown headquarters. His aim was to win over at the outset two groups of critics: parents who had been demanding more local control of schools, and teachers who were threatening to withhold support unless they were given a voice in how to spend the money to be raised.

On November 25, classroom instruction ended early throughout the district and nearly 60,000 parents and teachers gathered in more than 600 schools to draw up spending priorities, district-wide and in each school. Some of the results were surprising. Cooper, for instance, said he had thought "salaries would emerge as the teachers' most important priority." Instead the teachers fought successfully for more teacher aides to reduce their paperwork load, more remedial reading instruction, air-conditioning and soundproofing the classrooms.

The next step was to raise money to get the vote-yes campaign started. The district had budgeted \$96,000 for its "informational" campaign, but the \$125,000 deemed essential for the vote-yes drive had to be raised independently. One way of doing this in the past had been to put pressure on teachers to contribute, but Cooper decided against that approach. "When I was a teacher, I always resented the fact that I was told I had to give money for a campaign," he said.

Instead he advocated a small-town fund-raising technique—the \$1-a-plate pancake breakfast. Some 90,000 tickets were sold—about as many in ghetto as in white middle-class areas—and the affair netted \$65,000. Lists of the pancake-eaters later

proved a rich source of leads for volunteers who conducted the campaign-closing telephone blitz and follow-up doorbell-ringing visits to voters.

To conduct the information campaign, Cooper established eight centers around the district, each operated by a group of principals. Each principal's group, in turn, set up its own campaign committee and speakers bureau, using both school personnel and parents. Eight separate "bond books" were printed too, each detailing what a specific area stood to get from the \$289 million bond proceeds. In past campaigns, all the information was packed into one big book, but some school officials felt this practice encouraged each area to compare what it would get with what others would get—and conclude it was being shortchanged.

The vote-yes campaign ran into some of the usual problems of political campaigns. For example, after the pancake breakfasts, contributions came in late, and the ad agency couldn't buy as much radio time as it wanted. Late contributions were used to buy newspaper ads, which the agency considered less effective since "we were trying to reach

the people less literate and informed than those who read the papers." There was some criticism too, of the "crisis" theme used by the agency which pointed out that if the issues were defeated, the number of students on half-day sessions would rise, class size would increase, various programs would be eliminated, etc.

Some schoolmen were pessimistic throughout the campaign because the timing of the election was "abominable"—coming as it did close to April 15 when taxpayers are likely to feel particularly resentful and during the spring vacation period when many school employees and parents are out of town. "Hold the election in late August or early September, after parents have had three months of their kids," said one who held this view, "and we could pass any bond and tax issue."

But, retorted another official, "any time is bad for a school bond election."

Compiled from dispatches to the *Wall Street Journal* by James E. Bylin, and to *The Christian Science Monitor* by Curtis J. Sitomer.

## 9. Baltimore County, Maryland

Baltimore County, Maryland, which borders Baltimore City on three sides, is a political subdivision separate from the city. Maryland has 24 school systems, one for the city and one each for the 23 counties. Baltimore County with its 610 square miles of land is a combination rural-suburban-industrial-commercial community, with a diversified economy. More than 123,000 pupils from kindergarten through 12th grade were enrolled in Baltimore County Schools in 1968-69.

The first bond issues were voted on in 1956 when the voters also approved a charter form of government and a change in the procedure for issuing bonds. All bond issues must be approved by the voters at biennial general elections.

From the point of view of the board of education, three types of bond issues relate directly to education. In addition to those for school construction, the department of recreation and parks shares with schools the cost of real estate for school building sites. (The school buildings and grounds are used day and night the year around for education or recreation.) The third bond concern of the board is money for community college construction; the same individuals serve as board of education members and also as trustees for the colleges.

On November 5, 1968, the voters approved all seven questions on the ballot including \$16 million for schools, \$3 million for recreation and parks, and \$2 million for community colleges. In 1956, the favorable vote on school construction was 6.33 to 1. The percentage gradually decreased until

**Total school enrollment: 123,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 618,000**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$16 million**

1964 when the favorable vote was only 2.5 to 1. In 1966 a concerted effort reversed the trend with a vote of 2.89 to 1 in favor. The 1968 effort produced a vote of 3.21 to 1, which was the best since 1960.

There has been excellent cooperation between the school system, PTA Council, and the Teachers Association in campaign planning and execution. A group is formed to organize and campaign, frequently as early as January in the year of the vote. The group devotes its attention to a planning of about 22 items. Each one is discussed and responsibilities are assigned. Items requiring expenditure of funds are assumed by the PTA Council. Typically, the planning check list and assignments looks like this:

1. Speaker's kit to be updated and published—board of education
2. Single page fact sheet to be distributed by PTA Council—preparation by PTA and board of education
3. Flyer of sample ballot to be developed by PTA
4. Volunteers to distribute sample ballots—Teachers Association and PTA
5. Design and obtain campaign buttons—Teachers Association and PTA
6. Design and obtain badge for poll workers—Teachers Association and PTA
7. Radio and television programs and spot announcements—board of education

8. Investigate possibility of posters for shopping centers—PTA
9. Clearinghouse for PTA Speakers Bureau—PTA and board of education
10. Regular bulletin of PTA Council—distribution by PTA
11. Information to representative assembly—Teachers Association
12. September bond issue dinner meeting—PTA
13. Discussion of bond issue at all principals meetings—board of education
14. Get both political parties to put OK on sample ballot—PTA and board of education
15. School system community newsletter distribution—board of education
16. Inserts for church bulletin—Teachers Association
17. Mailing list of all church groups—Teachers Association
18. Speaking dates for service clubs—board of education and PTA
19. New school literature—board of education
20. Preparation of displays for meetings—Teachers Association and PTA
21. Stories and releases for press—board of education
22. Filmstrip and tape recording—PTA and board of education.

Experience has shown that large committee meetings are unproductive. Subcommittees and individuals function and report back to a steering committee which coordinates the campaign. A time schedule is arranged but deadlines always seem to be achieved with great difficulty.

Plans call for everything to be ready by the time school opens in September; actually some of the items just make it by the deadline of late September. At that time there is a "kick-off" dinner meeting sponsored by the PTA Council. It is held in one of the high schools and attended by all school principals, all PTA presidents, board of education members, the superintendent and central staff members, PTA Council officers and committee chairmen, and repre-

sentatives from the Teachers Association. A capacity crowd, limited to 450, attended the dinner and the meeting in the auditorium which followed.

At this meeting there was a "preview showing" of a new filmstrip and tape recording, literature and supplies were distributed, and plans explained to the leaders who would implement the campaign.

In 1966, a filmstrip was made from colored slides. The script was narrated by the superintendent and recorded. A uniform presentation to all PTA's and 100 civic and service groups thus was possible. Each school has filmstrip projectors and tape recorders. The filmstrip makes it impossible for slides to get lost or out of sequence. It was felt that the 18-minute presentation, however, was too long.

It was decided to limit the length of the 1968 presentation to nine minutes. The shorter presentation allowed an opportunity to insert the bond issue into programs of organizations which didn't want to devote a whole evening to the school bond issue. The script was narrated by a well known local radio announcer whose voice was instantly recognized by audiences. The cost of materials used in the making of the filmstrip and its 30 copies was assumed by the PTA Council.

The filmstrip was a key tool in the 1968 campaign. An experienced member of the PTA Speakers Bureau would introduce the filmstrip and be available to answer questions from the audience. A 40-page speaker's kit, giving accurate, up-to-date information about the school district, is prepared by the board of education every two years. Answers to nearly any question which might be asked from the floor of a meeting could be found in the kit. All speakers and principals received a copy ahead of time. Care was taken to provide an experienced person to operate the filmstrip projector and tape recorder at each presentation. At least one practice run in the school auditorium or where the meeting was to be held was mandatory to assure against projection difficulties.

The schedule of more than 200 presentations in a five-week period required the usual close cooperation between the PTA Council and the school system.

For the first time in 1968, one of the two major political parties used the back of its sample ballot to urge the voters to support all the local bond issues.

Radio and television programs were presented to inform the public of the needs of the school system. Spot announcements

were also prepared by the board of education. News stories and releases were carried by daily and weekly papers.

Ten days after the election the results of the absentee ballots were made known. At that time a news release was issued in which Superintendent William S. Sartorius thanked the voters, the workers, and the news media for their support.

—Philip R. Stoer

## 10. Fairfax County, Virginia

Referendums financing school construction programs have become an established way of life in affluent, suburban Fairfax County, Virginia, the state's most school building-minded system—a classroom a day—located 20 miles from Washington, D.C. In May 1968, Fairfax County voters approved by an almost 2 to 1 majority the largest single capital improvement program—\$67 million—in the school system's history. The May bond referendum was the seventh straight time since 1950 that citizens of this 400-square mile historic county supported a concerted building program. Total authorization during the 18-year period represents a \$224.9 million taxpayer commitment and investment in physical facilities. Elections took place in 1950, 1953, 1955, 1960, 1963, 1965, and 1968.

As early as September 1967, during a long-range planning session on future school requirements, the school board requested the administration to investigate construction needs through 1968 and into the next decade. After considerable discussion, the board finally adopted a basic three-year proposal (and bypassed a five-year plan, estimated to cost \$100 million). The administration was directed to work up cost comparisons between present and proposed school designs, study newer trends in construction, prepare site estimates in terms of dollars and acreage required, and propose classroom additions at "vintage 1950" schools.

During the board planning meetings that followed, it became clear that the district, one of the nation's 20 largest school systems, would add a new dimension to the

**Total school enrollment:** 122,954  
**Total population of community or district:** 439,200  
**Type of campaign:** Bond issue / Building  
**Amount of money sought:** \$67 million

spring campaign. This was an ambitious long-range plan to renovate and modernize *all* of its approximately 100 "older" facilities, at a rate of about 10 a year for the first three years, carrying the remainder of this program over to future bond issues to eventual completion.

By successful passage of a \$58.5 million bond issue in 1965, the board had been able to keep its pledge to provide a full day of instruction for all students and to accommodate some 8,000 kindergartners starting in 1968-69. It had provided the space to add such new programs as special education, Head Start, step-up language arts, and elementary school music.

"Keep Pace," then, became the slogan for this campaign. In addition to constructing 15 new schools, the board proposed to modernize 30 elementary schools. It proposed to convert two older, smaller high schools (grades 9-12) into intermediate schools (grades 7-8) and expand the plants currently occupied by the latter into high schools. Total requirements: new construction, \$32.8 million; modernization, \$23.5 million; other improvements (sites, equipment, etc.), \$10.7 million.

The main reasons for selecting a May voting day (such referenda are set by court order in Virginia) and the components of the proposal on the ballot involved were: (1) May election approval of a new issue would provide "lead time" and advanced

planning time for a three-year period beginning 1969-70 for elementary construction and a five-year period for secondary construction, even though bonds would not be sold until funds were actually required; (2) construction and renovations would involve all areas of the county and therefore have wide voter appeal both for new subdivisions and for established communities which could benefit by modernization; (3) it would be the only item on the ballot at the May election as opposed to November 5, with Presidential and Congressional choices and three already scheduled bond proposals.

Despite rain, the largest number of voters ever for a Fairfax County school bond referendum in a special election—22,000—verified these contentions, 14,312 voting yes, 7,701, no.

The school board relied on a committee named "Citizens for School Bonds, 1968," to carry the message. Psychologically, this approach works well for Fairfax County because it emphasizes citizen responsibility and participation and affords residents an opportunity to take part actively in school affairs. Although formally organized on March 3 (the election was May 28), the Committee's work concentrated on the six weeks leading up to the election, mainly because the final amount of the issue was not determined until April 10.

Most valuable contributions of the citizens committee were these: It contained a cross-sampling of organizational strength including the County Council of PTA's, Chamber of Commerce, clergy, Federation of Citizens' Associations, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, Fairfax Education Association, and representatives of both major political par-

ties. It prepared and distributed "A Matter of Facts," a brochure mailed to all residents, news releases, and other related informational items. It organized a Speakers Bureau involving 31 people who made 100 appearances. It raised funds from local businesses and industries covering the cost of its operational expenses. It organized "get-out-the-vote," door-to-door campaigns in selected precincts (the issue carried in 105 of the county's 126 precincts). It solicited and received seven countywide organizational endorsements plus editorial support by virtually all local news media.

Campaign evaluations produced these ideas:

- Plan wider direct distribution of the board's official bond brochure (although 4,000 were printed, more could have been used effectively through citizens' outlets).
- Use more bumper strips (either one for every 10 cars, or none, and if cost is a problem, print cardboard strips that can be taped to rear windows on inside).
- Prepare two take-home letters from the school board to parents (the first informing them about voter registration deadline and the second similar to that used in 1968 but detailing where and when voting takes place).
- Have a "truth squad" to monitor radio broadcasts in order to detect and offset any anti-bond campaign waged at the last minute and to challenge any misrepresentations.
- Consider reprints of newspaper editorials for last minute use in shopping centers and the door-to-door canvass.

--Ross Tucker

## 11. Portland, Oregon

A massive campaign by more than 2,000 Portland business, professional, educational, and PTA leaders paid off on May 28, 1968, when voters approved a nearly \$10 million increase in the tax base for the Portland public schools. With more than 150,000 persons voting in the election, the school district carried with a 55 percent "Yes" vote.

Funds derived from the increase were used to partially restore cuts made in the district's 1967 budget with loss of two special levies. After those defeats, the district was forced to get by with 320 fewer employees than it had requested and vital programs and services were cut.

Business leaders, headed by the presidents of the city's two large electric utility companies, along with citizens and school patrons, spearheaded a fund raising drive which raised more than \$63,000 to pay the costs of the advertising and promotion campaign on behalf of the measure. The major campaign effort kept to a single, simple theme—"Vote Yes for Kids," and all advertising and brochures carried this message.

The increase in school tax base is the first one voted by Portlanders since 1956. District officials offered the measure to provide the stability of an adequate tax base to facilitate long-range planning. Campaign leaders also used scientific research and poll taking in both campaign strategy and tactics. The whole campaign was based on findings of a public opinion survey taken for January. Another survey—on voting intentions—was taken just a week before the election.

More than 100 individual neighborhood committees of private citizens worked on the

**Total school enrollment: 79,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 420,000**  
**Type of campaign: Tax base increase**  
**Amount of money sought: \$9.875 million**

campaign. The district was divided into five areas (following the normal divisions of the territories assigned the elementary area directors), and area committees of citizens were in charge of these local committee activities. In addition, an executive committee of business and professional leaders, plus a steering committee of various campaign division leaders, provided leadership. In the final four weeks of the campaign, business provided loaned executives to work full time on the campaign. A downtown headquarters was operated similar to those used in regular political campaigns. A board member, Robert Ridgley, vice-chairman, served as campaign director, with assistance by various Portland school staff members. The whole campaign was conducted by the district's public information department.

Campaigners not only bucked a tough antiproperty tax climate statewide, but also overcame an active campaign against the measure. The campaign group waged such an aggressive battle that it came back from a 45 percent "Yes" to 55 percent "No" poll report in January to the 55 percent "Yes" to 45 percent "No" vote victory in May.

District campaigners employed every modern sophisticated campaign device in what proved to be a three-month period of intensified campaigning. More than a year of groundwork and planning, however, went into the campaign. The district's public information department developed a campaign

"bible" complete with deadlines and an organizational chart which put the entire campaign in a package.

Mass meetings of campaign workers were held and materials were distributed at these sessions. In order to extend citizen participation to something more than legwork or agreement to support the effort, fund raising drives were conducted in all of the school neighborhoods. Campaign buttons saying "Vote Yes for Kids," more than 50,000 of them, were sold and given away. High school students sold buttons which said simply, "Fite Ignorantz—Yes for 4."

Students helped in other ways. They participated in downtown street corner distribution of materials, helped distribute more than 130,000 pieces of literature door-to-door, made phone calls, and wrote stories which appeared in student newspapers. All of this was on a voluntary basis.

A major factor making the campaign a success was utilization of a technique long used by United Good Neighbor organizations—the loaned executives.

Business leaders were so concerned about the success of the measure that they pledged the full-time use of 10 loaned executives for the final three weeks of the campaign. These men served as key men in each of the campaign divisions, worked out of the downtown headquarters, and generally served as troubleshooters.

Hundreds of speeches were made, most of these by business leaders and other citizens. School district employees also had a role. They served as resource persons for

coffee hours, organized building committees, and distributed materials. On a voluntary basis, they also contributed funds to the campaign war chest.

What were the key factors in the success of the campaign?

1. An appealing theme.
2. Widespread use of media—paid and unpaid. Meetings were held with media representatives and a continuous flow of information about the schools and campaign was provided.
3. Use of loaned executives.
4. Coordination and leadership—an inspired board representative and the funneling of all campaign activities through the public information department.
5. Simple and direct materials.
6. Total involvement of the entire community—ethnic, religious, social, political, and parental.
7. Widespread participation in fund raising.
8. Widespread use of yard signs, street signs, and business signs.

In terms of spending the advertising dollar, the Portland district found that radio offered a relatively inexpensive way of getting information out. Television spots were purchased and used extensively as well as newspaper advertisements. The major departure in the newspaper advertising was use of the individual endorsement picture and statement from citizens. It proved most effective.

—John H. Nellor

## 12. Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Total school enrollment: 78,300**

**Total population of community or district: 325,000**

**Type of campaign: State income surtax**

**Amount of money sought:**

**43% surcharge on state income tax (estimated to produce \$3.1 million)**

An unusual school operating fund levy—an emergency 43 percent surcharge on 1968 state income taxes—was submitted to voters in Albuquerque in December 1968. In a turnout which quadrupled the previous record vote for a special school election, voters approved the surtax by a 21,855 to 14,334 margin.

Although Albuquerque voters have consistently supported school bond issues (19 issues in 19 years, each by favorable votes of 80 percent or more), school officials had serious doubts about their ability to gain approval of the income surtax. The electorate was an unknown quantity, since the surtax question would be the first in New Mexico history involving a local option for school district operational funds. Previous experience had been restricted to property owners voting on bond issue questions.

Timing of the election, fixed by wording of the surtax enabling act, could not have been worse. It had to be held nine days before Christmas, when the last thing people would want to think about would be a tax question; and it came less than a month after (1) substantially increased property tax notices for 1968 were mailed, (2) the city government made a sizable hike in water and sewer rates, and (3) announcement that assessed valuation rates on property in the county would be doubled from 16 percent to 33 percent in 1969.

Officials also knew there would be strong resistance to an income surtax. People were already paying a 10 percent federal income tax surcharge, and the basic state income tax for 1968 had been raised also. Finally, there was no withholding provision—the voters were being asked to pay a lump-sum income tax surcharge.

Background of the election was also controversial. The surtax enabling act was passed at a stormy special session of the state legislature as a direct result of the first teacher walkout in Albuquerque's history. Although any New Mexico county could have used the law, only Bernalillo County (Albuquerque) elected to do so, and many people viewed the surtax as "another soak-the-Albuquerque-taxpayer" measure.

For all these reasons, campaign strategy got careful attention. It was decided the campaign should stress (1) the critical deterioration of the Albuquerque schools, which had made large staff and service cuts in 1968 because of operating fund cutbacks; (2) the effect of this substandard school quality on the city's industrial recruitment and general economic health; (3) the emergency, once-only nature of the surtax; (4) the immediate quality impact which the \$3.1 million surtax resource would make on the school system; and (5) the necessity to show the state legislature that citizens were concerned

enough about their schools to approve tax increases.

The major campaign targets were identified as the city's business and professional leaders, school system employees, and parents of public school children.

The full scale, active support of the Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce was the key to success. After hearing school officials detail the deteriorating condition of the school system, the Chamber pledged its full support. That support included designing and printing 50,000 campaign brochures, organizing a high powered speakers bureau of top community leaders, and making the services of the Chamber's public relations agency available to the school system's public information director.

A citizens committee was organized to consider the questions of what level surtax should be asked (up to 50 percent was permitted in the law) and how the funds should be allocated. The committee identified four priority needs, estimated the dollars needed, and recommended a 43 percent surtax be asked. If approved, the surtax funds would (1) hire 100 additional teachers, (2) purchase a large amount of instructional materials and equipment, (3) take care of the most critical school building maintenance needs, and (4) give every employee of the school district a one-time 5 percent cost-of-living salary adjustment.

Campaign coordination was in the hands of a small group which included the speakers bureau chairman, Chamber executive secretary, school public information director, member of the Chamber public relations agency, and presidents of the county PTA Council, classroom teacher association, and school principals association.

Every civic, service, business, professional, and PTA organization in the county was contacted and urged to use a surtax speaker and the campaign brochures. Literally hundreds of groups heard the presentation.

The school information director and Chamber PR representative worked with the press and broadcast media. Response was

excellent. Nearly every TV and radio interview program used surtax speakers. Many stations used one- to five-minute surtax support messages from community leaders. All the daily and weekly newspapers gave extensive coverage to the school needs and the surtax campaign, and all strongly endorsed passage of the surtax early in the campaign. The morning *Journal* devoted large sections of its popular "Action Line" question-answer feature to the surtax and carried the feature on page one daily. The afternoon *Tribune* sought support statements from community leaders, and carried them on page one.

Public endorsements were solicited, and many were received and widely publicized: Bernalillo County PTA Council, Albuquerque City Commission, the state superintendent of public instruction, the Archbishop of the Santa Fe diocese, League of Women Voters, Junior League, International Association of Machinists, League of United Latin American Citizens, Albuquerque Classroom Teachers Association, American Federation of Teachers, and many civic and service clubs.

Other media used included:

- School system's weekly *Staff Newsletter* and monthly external *APS Journal*.
- A systemwide message to the school employees from Superintendent Robert L. Chisholm via the school system's FM radio station.
- A hard-hitting superintendent's annual report, issued as an eight-page tabloid newspaper supplement in both daily newspapers. Entitled "A Time for Concern," the report was frank about substandard conditions of the school system. It was issued one week before election.
- A special employee bulletin issued by the management of the city's largest employer, the 8,000-member Sandia Corporation, urging them to vote "yes" for the good of the community.
- A two-page "Special APS Report" car-

ried home by elementary students the Friday before election. It detailed school needs, what the surtax would accomplish, what it would cost, and listed election information and polling places.

- Door-to-door and telephone campaigns by individual PTA units and by University of New Mexico students,

who also handbilled fans at two capacity-crowd University of New Mexico basketball games.

- Special "open house" activities at schools being used as polling places on election day, to attract parents to school.

—Dave Smoker

### 13. San Antonio (Texas) Independent School District

The San Antonio Independent School District received voter approval January 27, 1968, to launch a mammoth building program aimed at providing some 700 new classrooms within five years. By a vote of more than 2 to 1, property owners in the SAISD passed the proposed \$35 million bond issue *and* voted to increase the ceiling of the property tax rate for school operations from \$1.25 per \$100 valuation to the statutory maximum of \$1.50. A record 14,000 voters went to the polls despite a slow, steady, day-long rain. The bond proposition carried 9,770 to 4,211 while the tax-ceiling increase carried 9,787 to 4,627.

A year before, at a time when most of the money from the previous bond election—\$14 million in 1963—had been used, the San Antonio Council of Parents and Teachers conducted a year-long study of school district needs. Their recommendations included some \$40 million worth of plant construction and renovation for the 77,000-pupil district.

In October 1967—four months prior to the election—a blue-ribbon committee of citizens appointed by the board of education made a further study of school district needs with the specific objective in mind of recommending bond requirements. In December, following an extensive study and two chartered bus trips throughout the district, the committee submitted recommendations to the board of education totaling some \$35 million and including an increase in the property tax rate for operations to

**Total school enrollment: 77,000**

**Total population of community or district: 500,000**

**Type of campaign: Bond issue and increase in rate ceiling for operating taxes**

**Amount of money sought: \$35 million for bonds; ceiling of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation for operating taxes**

the state legal limit of \$1.50 per \$100 valuation.

The board of education concurred and called the election for January 27. Several coordinated actions then began to take place.

Sets of color slide presentations were developed showing justification for the election. Teams of teachers, principals, and other administrators were briefed and trained to use the slides at various speaking engagements set up by the speakers bureau of the San Antonio Administrators and Supervisors Association. More than 70 civic organizations were addressed by 36 school people using color slides, posters and charts, and handout material.

As each civic group was addressed by a speaking team, a resolution endorsing passage of the election was solicited. A news story was issued if such a resolution was passed.

A student press conference was called, at which Superintendent Oscar E. Miller briefed the district's nine high school journalism instructors, student editors, and student council leaders, pointing out plans for their particular schools as well as general needs districtwide. Each high school newspaper subsequently carried news stories, diagrams, and editorials explaining the election.

All principals—more than 100—met before the Christmas holidays and were briefed by Superintendent Miller and a team of school administrators. Each principal was

given an information packet explaining the proposal in detail. Armed with this information, principals returned to their schools and conducted pre-election faculty meetings aimed at making each teacher fully aware of the importance and implications of the upcoming election.

Early in January, a special issue of the district's monthly newsletter, *Our Schools*, was distributed to all school employees, and to about 35,000 homes of secondary school students.

A comic type booklet—conceived and designed by one school's faculty—was published and distributed to an equal number of homes of elementary school students.

A districtwide bond rally was scheduled for January 19 in the city's auditorium. Plans called for involvement by teachers, leading citizens, PTA, and school administrators. However, because of violent weather, the rally had to be cancelled and could not be rescheduled prior to the election.

The city's Spanish-language television station offered 15 minute public service programs on two successive Saturdays preceding election day. Mexican-American citizens and school teachers explained to the massive

Spanish-speaking community the reasons for the election.

A special 30-minute bond issue program also was presented over the education television station. The program included the slide presentation used by the speakers bureau and a panel discussion by the superintendent, board members, PTA, and leading citizens.

Paid advertising was placed in the city's three daily papers just prior to the election. The ad was a question-and-answer type, designed to answer key questions and to encourage voters to go to the polls.

In addition, small, twofold promotion cards were printed identifying basic election facts, names of members of the citizens committee, and key points in the building proposal and tax-ceiling increase. These cards were carried by school people, PTA, and citizens as handouts for their friends.

The successful 1968 election continued a pattern established more than 25 years ago whereby citizens of the school district have provided the financial means for their school system through support of four bond and tax elections.

—K. Darrell West

## 14. Clark County, Nevada

On May 21, 1968, a special election was held to submit a \$59.5 million school bond referendum which would allow the district to plan a five- to six-year program to build, furnish, and equip 14 elementary schools, 6 junior high schools, 2 high schools, and 95 classroom additions as well as to provide for a continuing renovation program to existing schools. The referendum passed with approximately 56 percent of those voting favoring it.

This district was consolidated from individual township districts into a county system in 1956. At that time, the school enrollment was approximately 12,000 students; it has increased to almost 68,000 students. This rapidly growing district encompasses 8,000 square miles with approximately 90 percent of the county's population located in the metropolitan Las Vegas area. Although two other school bond issues totaling \$48 million had been successful in the previous six years, the steady influx of people created a need both to provide additional space and also to allot enough financial support to enable long-range planning to insure completion of facilities with efficiency.

It was decided to hold a special election in the spring rather than wait for the regular election in the fall. The year that could be saved in school construction time by a spring election was essential if the population growth accelerated as anticipated.

The major thrust of the campaign was directed toward a target population of parents, prospective parents of school children, and school district employees. With the

**Total school enrollment: 67,265**  
**Total population of community or district: 321,723**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$59.5 million**

board setting policy and the central office administration coordinating the campaign, the school principals, teachers, and school PTA's composed the basic leadership unit.

The basic strategies for the campaign were established by the superintendent and his cabinet. After three in-depth sessions, the commitment, logic, and content were established. From this point a general dissemination process was established. Individual administrators had specific responsibilities and plans of action. A timetable and overall plan assured that all areas were covered and that all plans were executed. Status reports and results were communicated to the superintendent's administrative cabinet.

The theme at the school level stressed "get out and vote." All principals worked in conjunction with their PTA's and with the teachers and teachers organizations to register voters and get out the vote and to disseminate basic campaign materials, which included:

- A fact sheet which answered questions on what the election was for, when it was to be held, how the money was to be spent, and why it was needed.
- Significant figures on the Clark County Schools, such as growth and growth predictions, births, enrollments in various grades, and available student housing.

- A question and answer sheet with the questions most frequently asked and factual answers.
- A campaign brochure listing significant facts and pertinent statistics.

The principals prepared individual building plans and telephone campaigns, all of which were communicated to the central office.

At the central office level, the necessity of reporting the facts to the community was the essence of all activity. As well as preparing the basic campaign materials, periodic news releases were submitted to the newspapers throughout the campaign. A special film and accompanying tape were prepared for use by the speakers bureau. Professional organizations of certified and classified employees were presented information and encouraged to establish a program to see that all employees were registered to vote. Civic organizations were consulted. The PTA Council not only conducted an exhaustive voter registration campaign but also contacted more than 400 leaders of the community power structure.

From the beginning, the community basically supported the bond referendum from the standpoint of need, but much controversy ensued regarding the total dollar amount of the bond issue. And, during the campaign, two strong opposition groups became evident—the Nevada Taxpayers' Association and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The Nevada Taxpayers' Association strongly urged citizens to vote "No," contending the amount of the issue was too large. In an extensive opposition campaign, the Association aimed criticism at fiscal responsibility, efficient use of facilities, enrollment projections, etc. Although it admitted

the need for additional student housing, a "No" vote was urged, suggesting that less money was needed. Misrepresentation of the facts was a main concern of the school campaign group. All news releases and radio, television, and public presentations were followed carefully so that the district could clarify statements made by the taxpayers group.

The NAACP opposed the referendum on the issue of integration, contending that passage of the bonds would enable the construction of schools in areas which would desegregate rather than integrate the schools. Court action was taken against the district. Although the trial date was originally scheduled prior to the election, it was postponed until after the election. (Subsequently, all action to prevent the district's use of the approved bond funds was dismissed by the judge.)

As the campaign drew to a close, radio and television campaign advertisements were stepped up with board members, the superintendent, and prominent citizens stating the need for bond issue. The superintendent and a board member also appeared on a radio program in which the public could telephone in questions to be answered on the program. The night before the election, one-half hour television programs were shown on each of the three major channels, in which the facts and the need were emphasized and in which misrepresentation of facts was clarified. The superintendent, several board members, the PTA Council president, and local citizens participated in the program.

Aside from the need for additional facilities, the success of the campaign was attributed to the large segment of voters who were made aware of the facts, particularly those in the target population—parents and district employees.

—Carol Pifer

## 15. Akron, Ohio

Akron, Ohio, an industrial community of 300,000, is the rubber center of the world and an important trucking capital. It is lower than average in cost per pupil, in tax evaluation, and tax rate among the state's eight large cities. The average tax rate in Ohio cities since 1958 has increased 51 percent; in Akron, 19.06 percent.

On November 5, 1968, the electorate voted 8 additional mills for operational purposes by a 60 percent majority. However, the increase of 8 mill's exceeded the amount which voters were accustomed to expect. The last school levy increase, voted in 1962, brought 4.18 mills. This was renewed in 1965.

Key members of the administrative staff made an extensive budget study over a six-month period. Their analysis led to a recommendation of the added 8 mills. This was reviewed and endorsed by committees of the Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, real estate board, teachers association, civic groups such as League of Women Voters, and leading members of the clergy.

A Citizens School Committee was named. Its members represented community leadership in business, industry, labor, civic organizations, women's groups, teachers, professional organizations, PTA, clergy, and other groups.

The superintendent assumed chairmanship of the campaign, directing a coordinating committee of five key staff members. They assumed responsibility in five areas: media, professional staff, students, lay community, and noncertificated staff. Each of the five had an assistant. A liaison person

**Total school enrollment: 58,900**  
**Total population of community or district: 300,000**  
**Type of campaign: Operating levy**  
**Amount of money sought: 8 mills (\$7.5 million)**

was named to serve as a link between the coordinating committee and principal of each high school district.

The PTA Council appointed a levy committee with a general chairman and a chairman for each of the high school district neighborhood areas. The senior high principal and the liaison person met with the PTA chairman and the principals of each of the "feed-in" elementary and junior high schools in their district to spearhead campaign activity.

Each school principal named a lay advisory committee of 10 to 20 business, labor, civic, and religious leaders in the school neighborhood area.

The campaign was financed by contributions from organizations of teachers, administrators, school secretaries, maintenance and transportation employees, PTA, Chamber of Commerce, and other miscellaneous gifts.

The theme: "59,000 Reasons for Better Schools and a Better Akron." (School enrollment is 59,000.) The "59,000" put the focus of the campaign on the children. The "Better Akron" tied school efforts with those of other groups working toward community improvement.

Organization activities included:

- Meetings with clergy by neighborhood.
- Meetings with lay advisory committees by neighborhood.

- Speakers Bureau to contact organizations and provide speakers from students, staff, and community.
- Provision of a slide presentation with coordinated taped commentary for use before groups.
- Organization of elementary school PTA mothers to visit the home of every registered voter (identified by card), to leave brochures and ask for support, and to report voter reaction.
- A letter mailed to the home of every voter who was not at home when house-to-house calls were made. The letter began, "We called to see you but you were not at home. . . ."
- A 59'er Club organized with a membership of selected students from each high school. These students called at the homes of people who had seemed "undecided" when visited by the PTA house-to-house campaigners. They left different literature and again asked for support.
- "Cluster counseling" sessions with lay advisers in each neighborhood midway in the campaign to pool thinking about progress and identify problem areas.
- Poll taken by mail to measure cross-section voter attitudes.
- Cluster "crisis caucuses" in each neighborhood a few days before voting to communicate poll results and areas of concern.

Media included:

- Billboards: "59,000 Reasons for Better Schools and a Better Akron." Boards went up October 1. On October 15, the phrase "and a Better Akron" was covered over with a new strip to read "Vote for Issue 8."
- Bumper stickers: "Better Schools and a Better Akron."
- Lapel buttons: "59,000 Reasons." These prompted the question "reasons for what?" and permitted the answer "Better Schools and a Better Akron."
- 59'er member buttons: "59'ers for Better Schools."
- Newspaper ads: endorsements by leading citizens; statements by school board members; childlike drawings of children's faces with "Better Schools Make for a Better Akron—Please Help Us."
- Posters: drawings of children's faces with the message "Better Schools Make for a Better Akron—Please Help Us—Vote for Issue 8."
- Yard signs: "Better Schools for a Better Akron."
- Brochures for house-to-house campaign: photographs of all phases of the school program, and a brief message.
- An instructional booklet, "59,000 Reasons," with information about school programs, school finances, school needs, tax terms.
- Brochures (each directed toward a different group):
  - Factors Affecting School Finance
  - What Does a Mill Mean to Me?
  - Educational Opportunities To Close Culture Gaps
  - Looking Beyond the School Levy
  - The New Look in Learning
  - Private, Parochial, and Public Schools
  - What Does a Vote for Issue 8 Mean?
  - Teachers Assess Educational Change
- Envelope stuffers: included by banks and department stores in their regular statements.
- Question and answer sheets on school finance.
- Mail "slugs" for postage meters in banks and department stores reading "Better Schools for a Better Akron."
- Radio spot announcements.
- A few television programs: round-table discussions by superintendent and community leaders.

In three campaigns Akron has used effectively a sign (11" x 17") which folds horizontally to 5½" x 17". It is printed on both sides.

In the 1968 campaign it read: "Better Schools and a Better Akron." It is fitted over a bent coathanger. The hook of the coathanger is straightened to be inserted into the ground. The coathangers are bent by junior high students. The elementary students distribute them on a given day and display them on lawns—their own, neighbors', and relatives'. These arouse a lot of community comment.

Post-election evaluation indicates that the chief factors in the success of the campaign were:

Emphasis on children, and on relationship of schools to community.

An honest presentation of all the facts of school program, school needs, and school costs.

Talking directly with the people, group by group, school neighborhood by school neighborhood, parents, neighborhood leaders, staff, clergy, ethnic

groups, civic organizations, women's groups; keeping groups small to permit questions, answers, and discussion; approaching the meeting to ask advice as well as "sell" your own message; listening to the advice.

Getting the backing of organized groups such as Chamber of Commerce, AFL-CIO, Council of Churches, Ministerial Alliance, Catholic clergy, Jewish community, Real Estate Board, etc.

Keeping sensitive to attitude changes during the campaign by poll, "cluster counseling," etc.

Keeping publicity simple so one theme is repeated again and again.

Timing publicity so there is gradual acceleration and the "peak" does not come too soon.

Involving as broad as possible a segment of students, parents, staff, and community.

—Conrad Ott

## 16. Charleston, West Virginia

Would you believe a successful school election held without a lot of fanfare—despite the first property reappraisal in 30 years, a strike of school bus drivers, and at a time when the school climate appeared to be at low ebb? The Kanawha County (West Virginia) School System placed a special 100 percent excess levy renewal before the voters at the primary election, May 14, 1968. It was approved by a 70 percent majority. (In West Virginia, an “excess” levy is a tax levied against property in excess of the normal amount levied by constitutional law. State law permits “excess” levies up to 100 percent of the regular levy when approved by a 60 percent affirmative vote.)

The Kanawha County system serves an area of 913 square miles, and includes Charleston, the state capital, and its suburbs in addition to other communities ranging from small cities to rural villages. A county unit district, it includes 111 elementary, 22 junior high, and 12 senior high schools housing some 55,000 students.

Several extenuating circumstances existed which placed renewal of the levy in a category other than automatic. For example, Kanawha County was the last county in the state to undertake a mandated property re-evaluation. Property owners were suddenly faced with a 30 percent increase in property assessments.

County residents had just approved (December 16, 1967) a \$9 million bond issue needed to supplement a \$22.9 million bond issue, approved in 1965, in order to complete a countywide school construction program endangered by inflation and rising costs. During that bond campaign, school officials successfully erased critics' cries of mismanagement and poor planning.

**Total school enrollment: 55,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 255,000**  
**Type of campaign: Excess levy**  
**Amount of money sought: \$6.8 million annually for five years**

Because of the reevaluation and the resultant increase in operating funds (\$3.1 million), the county board had approved and made public a record school budget which included an increase in the superintendent's salary. This caused adverse press attention and rumblings of dissatisfaction about the school system as symbolized by the administration.

Teacher militancy also appeared on the scene. Faculty groups had been told that their day was coming as soon as reappraisal became effective. Having accepted token raises for the previous five years and in anticipation of really great advances (especially in light of the previously announced raise for the superintendent), teacher groups became outspoken as school officials prepared the record budget.

The school bus drivers, noting the budgeted raises for professional employees, made known their dissatisfaction with the budget provisions for them and asked for more. Their request was denied and the drivers struck. The strike, which began on April 22, lasted a full week. The fact that a school levy or bond issue had never been successful, at least within memorable history, in West Virginia when submitted at a general or primary election was also cause for concern. Because of the recency of the December 1967 bond election and the new property reevaluation, the school board chose to break precedent and schedule the renewal for the primary election. The board felt that the new

budget provided desirable improvements which could be capitalized upon better in the spring than in the fall. Also, the Board wanted to take advantage of the interest and support for schools which had been generated in the bond campaign.

These factors weighed heavily in determining the campaign plan and implementation. Superintendent Walter F. Snyder said: "From the outset we foresaw the possibility of a protest vote and planned accordingly. Kanawha County residents have always wanted good schools. We sought only to direct their attention to continued progress toward that end."

The campaign was built upon extensive citizen participation requiring people "to get involved." A two-phase campaign was planned. The first phase, a kind of soft sell approach, was designed to maintain and reinforce the usual fine citizen attitude toward schools in general and children in particular.

This included newspaper and broadcast coverage emphasizing school programs, pupil services, special education programs, and student activities. The intent was to put the spotlight on the obvious results of the school program. Three nonpromotional publications were used. A descriptive elementary school booklet was distributed about six weeks prior to the election. This was followed by brochures depicting pupil services and adult and vocational education.

The second, simultaneous phase was promotional and designed to mobilize citizens to action. All kinds of civic, cultural, community, and social groups were contacted and asked to support and promote the levy.

Teachers served in information liaison roles between community groups and the school. After reaching accord with the teachers on budget provisions, teachers served enthusiastically. Special organizational meetings were held in local school areas between teachers and central office staff members to tailor local plans to a specific area and re-emphasize the basic message.

Similar meetings were held with PTA's and other community groups. Principals, teachers, PTA officials, and concerned lay

people directed these sessions. The apparent absence of central office staff members in campaign activities was deliberate. The campaign emphasis was upon local citizen activity and involvement. Special guidebooks were prepared to aid group leaders in preparing and implementing their plans.

The campaign had no formal slogans or symbols. There was no commercial advertising. The issue was taken to the people by the people. The campaign thus became "the people's campaign." Local organizations quickly mobilized. Several local groups took it upon themselves to endorse the issue and reported their support to news media. Five Junior Chamber of Commerce groups combined in a countywide effort and held press conferences, prepared posters, and distributed flyers.

A countywide citizens advisory committee was formed and joined forces with the county PTA council in order to complement the promotion at the local level and to coordinate and reinforce the primary message: that recent improvements built into the school program could not continue without the special school levy. The budget provided many tangibles, including free secondary textbooks, and eliminated student fees for supplies.

It was imperative also to get across two important messages to the voters: (1) the levy was not a new tax, and (2) the approaching rise in taxes would be the result of reappraisal and not because of the levy . . . but that added money realized through the new evaluation would be necessary to maintain the improved school program. Three promotional flyers, each designed to reinforce the basic message, were distributed by citizen groups in weekly sequence. A fourth flyer, an election day reminder, was passed out by volunteer workers at the polls.

Editorial support was received from both Charleston dailies and the five county weeklies. Both area television stations also presented supporting editorial opinions. And four major industries gave plugs in their house organs.

—David C. Smith

## 17. Stockton, California

Voters of Stockton Unified School District approved a 45 cent increase in the district's basic tax rate at a special election on Tuesday, February 20, 1968. The final tally was 9,623 to 6,885, or a 58.3 percent "yes" vote. Approval of the proposal increased the basic operating tax rate of the district from \$3.05 to \$3.50 for a period of three years. This was the fourth consecutive, successful override tax election held in the district since 1957.

Stockton Unified School District is located in the northern part of California's San Joaquin Valley. The district has 43 schools, enrolling more than 32,500 pupils in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is not a wealthy district; taxable wealth per pupil in average daily attendance runs about 30 percent below state average.

Included in the \$3.05 basic tax rate in 1968-69 was an 85 cent override tax approved by voters in 1965. This override was approved for only three years and was scheduled to expire at the end of the school year. Continuation of this override, therefore, was contingent upon passage of the proposal to further increase the basic operating tax. Loss of the election would have resulted in a decrease of more than \$2 million in local funds, or about 10 percent of the district's budget. Drastic reductions in personnel and services would have been required during the 1968-69 school year to balance the budget.

At the outset, the campaign leadership decided to concentrate most of the effort on those people considered to be potential "yes" voters—school district employees, parents, and others in the community who have consistently supported public schools. The strategy was to accomplish these things: (1) to get as many of these people registered as possible,

**Total school enrollment: 32,500**  
**Total population of community or district: 150,000**  
**Type of campaign: Override tax**  
**Amount of money sought:**  
45¢ increase (\$3.05 to \$3.50)

(2) to get them informed, and (3) to get them to the polls.

The first step was to obtain and furnish up-to-date lists of registered voters to all schools. Each principal organized a committee of parents and staff members to check the lists for the purpose of discovering those potential "yes" voters who were not registered. At least one person in each school was deputized as a registrar to make it convenient for parents and district employees to register. Parents who were not registered were contacted by phone or by letter and asked to register. During a relatively short campaign, the schools registered more than 600 people. Their names were added to the "yes" voter lists for later follow-up.

The next major job was to get information to school employees and to parents. A background information booklet was developed and distributed to certificated and classified employees and to campaign committee members in every school attendance area. Public meetings were scheduled at all schools, usually under auspices of the PTA, for the purpose of presenting the proposal. Also scheduled were small group meetings to thoroughly inform certificated and classified personnel about the proposal.

In conjunction with these community and staff meetings, an endorsement campaign was conducted. More than 5,000 people signed individual endorsement cards. Endorsements were obtained from such groups as the PTA, the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Merchants Association, the League of Women Voters, and most of the

major labor union locals. These endorsements provided material for several news stories for release to the newspapers, and to radio and television stations.

At least three contacts were made with every identified potential "yes" voter. Each principal, in cooperation with his PTA president or campaign committee chairman, developed a personal letter to be mailed to "yes" voters in his attendance district. This was followed by a brochure developed by the districtwide campaign committee and mailed the week before election. Finally, a telephone call was made to each "yes" voter just before election day. Many teachers volunteered to call parents of children in their classes. Campaign committee members at each school also helped with the phoning.

The Stockton Teachers Association (STA) probably was more active in this campaign than in any school district campaign in recent history. STA leaders, including the executive secretary, were invited to assist in the development of the tax proposal before it was recommended to the board of education. The Association organized a campaign committee to work cooperatively with the district committee. This group developed informational materials to supplement those produced by the school district, requested each member to contact at least six friends to encourage their support, and conducted a phone campaign of its own the day before election. The STA also provided transportation to the polls, served as poll watchers, and contributed a major share of the funds contributed to the campaign.

Less than \$2,500 was spent. Most of this

was for postage on the personal letters from principals and the brochure mailed only to those registered voters identified as potential "yes" voters. Every registered voter in the district received the "official arguments for the override tax proposal" along with the sample ballot. No money was spent on newspaper, radio, or television advertising. No posters or bumper stickers were used in the campaign. Excellent support was given in both the editorial and news columns of the *Stockton Daily Record* and the *Stockton News*. Support also came from all local radio stations and from KOVR-Channel 13.

Although there was no organized opposition to the override tax proposal, the San Joaquin County Taxpayers Association did officially take a stand against it. However, there was no active campaign in opposition. It was necessary to overcome a rumor that spread throughout that some of the funds would be used to purchase buses for use in achieving integration. This rumor started early enough in the campaign so that it could be overcome by denials by the board of education and the administration.

A major success factor was the decision at the beginning to concentrate efforts almost entirely upon potential "yes" voters. District after district recently in California had been spending large sums of money on unsuccessful, "full-blown" media-based campaigns. The limited, "soft-sell" direct contact Stockton campaign strategy was severely criticized by many people just before election day. The result confirmed the validity of the strategy.

—John W. Adamson

## 18. Highline School District, Seattle, Washington

The Highline School District, fourth largest in Washington, is Seattle's major suburb. In Boeing's "back yard," it was one of the fastest growing districts in the nation for several years. Recently it has felt the impact of a new industrial boom. The enrollment, now nearly 32,000, is expected to peak at 35,000 to 40,000. On November 7, 1967, voters approved a levy yielding \$5 million by a 79.4 percent favorable vote.

The industrial firms which employ many Highline area residents are not located in the district—hence do not share the property tax burden for Highline schools. Like many predominantly residential suburban communities, the Highline district has a relatively low tax potential per child.

The state provides about one-half the cost of school operations, and, in Highline's case, all other sources, including a 14 mill automatic property tax, provide another 25 percent. This means that one-fourth of the budget revenues must be raised through a special levy.

In Washington State, school financing is hampered by a tax ceiling constitutional amendment—a product of the Depression of the thirties. Special levies must be approved by a 60 percent majority. They can be for only one year's duration; thus "excess" levies have become annual necessities.

In spite of these and other restrictions, the record of voter support in the Highline district over the past 25 years has been excellent—until November 1966. True, the levy measure did receive nearly 59 percent "yes" votes—enough for a resounding vic-

**Total school enrollment: 32,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 150,000**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$5 million**

tory in most states—but nevertheless this meant a defeat in Washington. And in Highline, it represented a drop of 20 percent for the annual vote of confidence received in previous years.

This profile is intended primarily to present an analysis of the changing Highline voting pattern and to describe what was done about it in subsequent school election campaigns.

School leaders asked *why* this sharp drop in support. Was there growing opposition to school policies, or were there other reasons? A color-coded map showed clearly which precincts were primarily responsible for bringing down the district's average. It was decided that a survey of these "negative" precincts should be made before the next campaign was launched. The results could be helpful not only for promoting the January second-try election but also for the campaign which would be necessary for the next levy election in November 1967.

Alex Edelstein of the University of Washington assisted in planning and organizing a house-to-house survey. He helped develop an open-end questionnaire to measure attitudes. Those interviewed were asked about various issues that had been on the November 1966 ballot, including a proposal to give municipalities more state aid, a measure to repeal Washington State's "Blue Laws," and one which would give retired persons an exemption on their property tax. They were not asked how they voted;

rather, "We're interested in your opinion as to why people voted 'yes' or 'no' on these issues."

Responses were carefully tabulated and cross checked. A general interpretation indicated, among other things, the following attitudes:

1. There is a growing resentment toward the school levy (higher taxes)—but not toward the schools per se. Typical comment: "Oh sure, I know there are lots of kids and schools are important, but do 'they' have to keep coming back and raising my property taxes every year? There must be some other way."
2. The suburban area voter is becoming increasingly aware of the widening discrepancy between his property tax and that on a comparable urban home. People with higher valuation homes generally seem to recognize that this is the price of suburban living. But the family in the little house without a view doesn't feel that it should have to pay a premium just to live outside the city.
3. Generally, persons of higher education levels tend to support the levy. They are better informed and are less likely to cite erroneous data to justify a no vote.
4. This leads to the problem of informing the public—and this matter also was covered in the survey. Interestingly, a very high percentage of suburban residents now rely on television as their major source of information on public issues. Many place it above daily newspapers. Brochures and other printed literature influenced more voters than did the local weeklies.

It was apparent that this suburban school district was at a greater disadvantage than was realized, in the availability of information media.

Armed with these and other data, the school staff members responsible for the levy campaign organization determined to chart a different course of action. Briefly, these were the major actions:

More stress was placed on local level,

school-by-school organization, with a greater number of "volunteer" citizen workers recruited in every area.

An intensive door-to-door campaign was agreed upon. Training sessions were held for "doorbell ringers."

Literature spelled out more clearly the consequences of a levy failure.

Considerable radio and TV time was purchased, for the first time. Radio spots were aimed to catch the thousands of Boeing workers on their way to and from work. TV spots, produced jointly with other school districts in the area, followed a central theme: There was no alternative to supporting the school levies.

Space was purchased in the two Seattle daily papers by the Highline Citizens for Schools.

Students were involved more actively. (In news statements, special appearances before audiences, fund-raising, distribution of posters and literature, etc. Their Saturday parade in support of the levy was even covered by TV.)

Greater effort was made to get news coverage in all media. It was emphasized that hundreds of volunteer citizens were working in support of the levy.

The greatest stress was on *children*; technical details were provided to those who asked.

The active support of civic groups, churches, and community organizations was enlisted.

Funds were raised through several avenues—including the teachers association. Commercial firms were solicited for the first time, with gratifying results. (This was a much costlier campaign than in previous years.)

The problem: reaching 45,000 homes in a sprawling suburban community that does not have its own daily newspaper, radio station, or television station.

More than 2,000 citizen volunteers (mostly mothers) were recruited to go door to door (in the rain, as it turned out). The Boeing Company cooperated by urging employees to support the school measure. Highline district representatives made statements

for radio and TV as well as for daily and weekly papers.

Elementary school principals and PTA leaders must be credited for the effectiveness of the local-level organization. Secondary schools assumed much of the responsibility for putting up signs, contacting stores, and selling "Vote Schools" buttons to help raise funds.

The result? The same levy proposition that earlier had received only a 58.51 percent majority was approved in January 1967 by a whopping 86.5 percent—the highest of any major district in the state.

Essentially the same campaign pattern

was followed for the levy proposal submitted in November 1967. It received a 79.4 percent majority—again one of the highest in the state.

This profile does not attempt to detail the complex campaign organization. The major objectives were relatively simple:

1. Reduce the basic message to its simplest form, i.e., one fourth of the budget and the future of 32,000 children were at stake.
2. Deliver the message to voters—even if it meant actually placing it in their hands.

—Robert A. Sethre

## 19. Warren, Michigan

On Saturday, April 6, 1968, Warren Consolidated Schools voters destroyed three school election myths: *never* hold an April election because of the April 15 federal income tax deadline, *never* hold an election on Saturday because of a large voter turnout, and *never* use students.

The ballot contained four proposals, two for school construction bonds and two for operational millage. The bonds totalled \$25.3 million; the 12 operating mills included a renewal of five and an increase of seven. All four proposals carried, with the "squeaker" being the proposal to add seven mills for operation. It passed by 138 votes out of approximately 12,000 cast. The other three won handily.

The win at the polls, historically, should not have been considered to be significant. Warren Consolidated residents since 1960 had supported necessary building programs by passing five bonding issues totaling \$66 million and had either renewed or passed additional supporting operating millage three times. Since the school district was organized in 1941, voters approved 24 of its 26 money requests.

What made the election significant was that all four finance issues were approved when the majority of other school issues since January 1, 1968, were being defeated elsewhere throughout the area and state.

Paul K. Cousino, school superintendent since the school district was consolidated in 1941, is the first to admit that there's no magic involved in winning school elections.

**Total school enrollment: 30,000**

**Total population of community or district: 90,000**

**Type of campaign: Bond issue and operational millage**

**Amount of money sought:**

**\$25.3 million bond issue; renewal of 5 mills plus increase of 7 mills for total of 12 mills for operation**

"The key to our wins is a Citizens Advisory Council," said Superintendent Cousino, who explained that Warren Consolidated's C.A.C. is no "Blue Ribbon Committee" whose charge is merely to approve a "canned package."

"We have a sophisticated, articulate citizenry which welcomes responsibility," he said, "so we put them to work studying the district's needs cooperatively with the administration."

The 150-member Council, composed of two representatives from each civic, service, fraternal, homeowner, and parent-teacher organization within the school community, first met in early November 1967 to start planning the April 6, 1968, election.

"Council members, after a thorough study of the total needs of the school district, recommended to the board of education the specific amounts of the bond and millage proposals," explained Cousino.

"This way we had 150 believers before we even started the first day of campaigning. All of them have spouses or friends, so the number immediately doubled to 300 and kept increasing," he added.

The superintendent emphasized that the Citizens Advisory Committee formed its conclusions with no school board prompting as to millage amounts and that all the informa-

tion about the district was open to the group, not just the information which would throw a favorable light on the school district.

Warren Consolidated, growing at a rate of 3,000 additional students each year, has the advantage of easily explained needs through growth alone. New schools and new additions to existing buildings have been opened each year. Personnel administrators know they must find 250 to 300 additional teachers each year.

The Citizens Advisory Council or the board of education decision on a tax rate or bond proposal for the voters is only half the battle. The other half lies in the campaigning. Warren Consolidated, in the four weeks leading up to the April 6 election day, used every means at its disposal to inform the public.

The campaign included newsletters, press conferences, an answering service, block organizations, kaffeeklatsches, and even the enlistment of students into the campaigning forces *within their own homes*.

The school district scheduled innumerable kaffeeklatsches at all hours of the day and evening. Citizens Advisory Council members who volunteered for the citizens speakers bureau were tapped to cover 90 percent of these meetings.

"We felt confident in sending out any of these citizen members to explain the millage to the rest of the voters," said Cousino. "Board members and administrators just couldn't do all of the things the average citizen could, as far as attending meetings and kaffeeklatsches, because the people would naturally assume, and correctly, that we were favorable toward the millage. But the average citizen doesn't have to be. There's much more impact with him discussing the millage than one of us."

Intensive block organizations were utilized in which volunteer mothers canvassed their neighborhoods to identify the "yes" vote and distribute information.

Because the election was held on a Saturday, the school staff of 1,800 was freer to participate, and no one had a good legitimate excuse not to vote.

Large voter turnouts in some districts may bring in the single residents and older people whose children are grown and who, as a result, are more apt to vote against millage increases. Warren Consolidated voters, however, are mostly young parents who are greatly interested in the quality of education.

Cousino said that district unity was stressed throughout the campaign. Since 1965 Warren Consolidated has enjoyed a shared-time program with the many parochial schools in the 60 percent Roman Catholic community.

"Members of all faiths met three years ago and decided we should adopt such a plan," he said. "Since then, parochial students have been permitted to use nursing and special education facilities and bus services even before state law made such services mandatory. It is not surprising that all the parochial schools and churches backed the millage and bond proposals. We have to work together."

With a present student enrollment of 30,000, the Warren Consolidated Schools are expected to continue to grow until the student population levels off at 50,000 during the 1977-78 school year.

"Faced with continual growth year after year," said the superintendent, "we feel we'll have to go to the voters at least every two years with another bond issue and either a millage renewal or increase, so we have to keep our citizens interested and, more importantly, *involved*."

Warren Consolidated is Michigan's sixth largest school district and has a state equalized valuation of \$16,700 behind each child. Its total millage is 33.61 of which 25.61 mills goes into school operation.

—Merle Loch

## 20. Youngstown, Ohio

What do you do differently after six straight levy campaign defeats? On the seventh try, May 6, 1969, Youngstown, Ohio, voters approved a 12-mill operating levy by a 57% majority. In previous elections, starting in 1966, favorable percentages had been as follows: 29%, 35%, 43%, 41%, 37%, and 48%. According to one school leader who was deeply involved in all seven campaigns, the most vital lesson was this: "We learned that you can't overcampaign. There was a time when we thought this was possible. But it isn't. We had to pound, pound, pound."

There were differences in the seventh campaign, however. Youngstown had become shaken after five weeks of closed schools between late November and the end of 1968. Yet the big attention given the situation outside Youngstown, especially by national media, appeared to be what galvanized the local leadership effort. Especially devastating was the awarding to Youngstown of the satiric "flying fickle finger of fate" award by the Rowan and Martin *Laugh-In* TV show (NBC-TV).

The Youngstown Sheet and Tube Co. practically assigned its advertising department to the campaign. The *Youngstown Vindicator*, which had vowed in a front-page New Year's resolution "not to rest until a levy is passed," assigned a top talent news team to the effort. Radio-TV phases of the campaign covered a four-week period and much of the time and talent was contributed.

So many major groups volunteered that the central planning function was more one of coordination rather than direction. Board president Abe Harshman spent much of his time throughout the campaign as a volunteer over-all leader. He had lots of help.

A girl at a rally suggested wearing a red armband as a campaign symbol and "Join the

**Total school enrollment: 27,200**

**Total population of community or district: 167,000**

**Type of campaign: Operating levy**

**Amount of money sought:  
12 additional mills**

Armband" became the slogan. Hostile labor leaders, credited with being influential in previous defeats because of their opposition or silence, yielded to a proposal that union members be allowed "freedom to decide" how they would vote. Previously, Roman Catholic parishioners had been accused of failing to follow the urging of the church hierarchy to support the levy. In the seventh campaign, a parochial laymen's organization was among the most active groups. Realtors took a day off from regular duties in order to make door-to-door calls and distribute levy promotion literature. Building contractors and unions contributed \$10,000 for campaign promotion.

There also had been meticulous advance work by the school board and administration. Exhaustive open hearings on the proposed budget were held in seven different locations. Every item was discussed. Depth interviews (three per day) were held with all principals over a two-month period to get their evaluations, ideas, and detailed information about each school attendance area.

The campaign promotion was culminated with an 11-page newspaper advertisement containing the names of 11,000 persons who had pledged to support the campaign.

The structure of the seventh campaign differed from the previous six in fundamental ways. This was due to the fact that many community groups and individuals, in a rather spontaneous fashion, were determined to be campaign activists. In many cases, they had their own ideas about the nature of their participation.

To capitalize upon such enthusiastic determination to be involved, it was necessary

to resort to a much less formal campaign organization. Accommodations and adjustments in planning had to be made so that the strong multifaceted participation could be preserved. Earlier campaigns were far simpler to coordinate.

In some instances, community groups wanted to carry out campaign actions without budgetary considerations. There were ideas proposed which appeared to be unworkable. "Thank God, we were flexible and able to accept suggestions that we felt might not be successful, but were," said one campaign official.

The experience of the long succession of campaigns also made it clear that no campaign should be planned without thought for possible subsequent campaigns. Misjudgments and strategic errors of earlier campaigns came back to haunt those responsible for coordinating later campaigns. A key campaigner observed: "We learned to listen more and talk less; that actions speak louder than words; and, above all, that no promises or commitments should be made that cannot be kept."

Exhaustive advance preparations were made in anticipation of the seventh campaign. There was strong awareness of a "credibility gap" as far as many voter segments were concerned. There was distrust of "the Establishment."

A comprehensive study was made of voting records in previous school elections. The long interviews with principals produced invaluable community area information.

There was full recognition that the political structure of the community could not be divorced from a school campaign. Many consultations were held with political figures, some of whom had been hostile and gave only lip service to previous campaigns. They gradually became active in the seventh campaign. Political leaders spoke for the levy at ward meetings which were participated in by school officials. Both political parties endorsed the levy. Contrary to many previous political campaigns, this one became an occasion for boosting the school issue rather than slighting it.

The school board appropriation hearings

were designed to build confidence and understanding about the fiscal policy of the school operation. Audiovisual techniques were used in the presentations. Public participation was promoted.

An opinion poll was conducted by Youngstown State University students and financed by the Youngstown Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Parent-Teacher Association Council assumed responsibility for carrying out a door-to-door information operation throughout the city and planned the establishment of distribution centers for campaign materials. Clergymen of all faiths organized a committee which carried out an election day "get out the vote" drive as its major activity.

There were earlier gripes that school employees had not been active enough. In the seventh campaign there was plenty of visibility. A coordinating school committee, made up of representatives of all school employee groups, met weekly. It prepared specific direction procedures for each school, assured smooth-running internal unity, and generated promotion ideas. Teachers contacted all parents. A variety of open house activities brought parents into the schools. All school visitors were invited to sign campaign support pledge forms. Original campaign posters were produced.

Radio and television stations, like the community groups, did their own "thing" by initiating much of their campaign involvement. The *Youngstown Vindicator* viewed the "school story" as material for both daily spot news and features. An assistant city editor did a masterful series of articles on the financing of the schools. Another writer did a 46-part series, a story about every school in the Youngstown system.

Ten special TV programs supplemented the system's own weekly program. There were countless taped interview spots with students. There were 24 paid advertisements in the *Vindicator* plus others in special interest or area newspapers, bumper stickers, 40 outdoor billboards, and an advertisement in every city bus.

--Esther Joyce

## 21. Montebello, California

By a remarkably high 82.5 percent, voters in the Montebello (California) Unified School District approved \$16.9 million in school bonds on February 6, 1968, at a time when elections throughout the state were being beaten back in record numbers. A turnout of 37 percent of the registered voters responded and all precincts carried. The approval was not for bonds alone, but for sweeping changes in the configuration of the educational program. This success came after two previous attempts to obtain passage of less than half this amount had failed and another bond election was rescinded due to an obvious lack of community support.

On July 1, 1966, a new superintendent brought a fresh approach to solving accumulated problems, a new way to look at lingering dilemmas. A surge of new power and a feeling of cooperation began to unite the school community as it had not been united for some time.

Extremely accurate pupil enrollment predictions had been warning that restrictive half-day sessions were in the offing for many elementary children, particularly at the primary level, unless new classrooms were provided. Every means was used by the board of trustees to convince the community of this eventual-ty.

Suddenly, it seemed, half-day sessions were upon the children of the district. This helped to focus community attention on the problem of lack of facilities. There was also the growing urgency to replace or renovate schools built prior to a severe earthquake in Southern California in March 1933. There were six of these potentially hazardous buildings housing 5,000 students. Legal requirements demanded that these buildings be

**Total school enrollment: 26,000**  
**Total population of community or district: 118,000**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$16.9 million**

made safe or replaced, with increased liability placed upon board members.

The board had to decide whether it should attempt a bond campaign which would not stress how potentially unsafe the buildings were, or to tell the full story candidly, risking possible hysteria and reaction. The decision was to lay it on the line. This decision, in retrospect, appears to have been a wise one.

Pupil population at the secondary schools had crept up to high overloads, although one high school, paradoxically, remained too small to sustain a comprehensive curriculum. Creation of a third high school and balancing of pupil population among all the schools appeared to be a necessity.

To involve the school community as completely as possible in seeking solutions to all these problems, the board and superintendent appointed a committee of laymen, one from each school attendance area, to study the facilities, conditions, and needs of all schools to educate the present and future pupil populations.

This 27-member committee, called INTERCOMS for intercommunity communicators, began a six-month study of every school, every problem, and every site. Because it was composed of representatives from every section of the community and the findings were given wide and continuous coverage, parents and patrons began to understand more clearly the severity of the problems thwarting the board.

Convinced that growth of the district would cause greater problems if bold action was not soon taken, the committee recommended \$16.9 million as the minimum required to provide classrooms, safe schools, and the best educational program for an estimated 29,000 students by 1974-75.

The plans called for a minimum of new land and a maximum use of present holdings. A change was recommended in the grade organization, from 6-3-3 to 4-4-4, to make this possible. Because maintenance had lagged far behind, plans included the renovation of every school in the district.

To the extent possible, voter information told exactly how and where the bond money would be used. Every school building would benefit.

INTERCOMS recommended in October 1967 that the bond election be held on February 6, 1968. The board accepted the recommendation and appointed four committees working under a planning committee to carry out the campaign. The committees were: Finance (Campaign and Budget) Committee, Publicity (Community Relations) Committee, Advisory (Administration and Supervision) Committee, and Speakers (Group Endorsements) Committee.

One of the first decisions made by the planning committee was that no person or group was to be excluded from involvement in the campaign. Even previously hostile organizations were approached and had the seriousness of the situation explained to leaders. Although these groups did not publicly support the issue, they also did not actively oppose the election.

An intensive voter registration drive aimed at the widest possible voter turnout began immediately, utilizing messages in both Spanish and English.

An industrial council, extremely protec-

tive of the low tax rate which had been cited as attractive for industry, received a thorough presentation of building problems from the superintendent. This group responded by offering to match funds raised in the community for the information campaign to the extent of \$5,000. The teacher organizations, PTA, and many others, joined to raise approximately \$8,000, bringing the total to \$13,000.

Students took an increasingly active role in the campaign, fully aware that the schools had been inadequate and overcrowded, with some being potentially dangerous. Many expressed concern for younger brothers and sisters who were or would be attending those same schools.

Each elementary school became a unit of campaign activities with a strong effort being made to involve citizens of each individual school area deeply in the campaign. The secondary schools supported the elementary feeder schools.

Speakers were equipped with brochures and colorful charts. Endorsements were obtained from every possible individual and group. These appeared in paid newspaper ads over a period of several weeks prior to the election.

The brochures, pamphlets, cards, placards, and buttons were printed in colors common to the school district, green and school bus yellow. Four commercial sound trucks cruised the school district carrying support messages in Spanish and English.

Use of radio and television was extensive and included both paid spots and program participation.

No organized opposition developed. This was credited to the extensive involvement of the community in planning, discussing, and recommending. Every major newspaper serving the area endorsed the bond issue.

—James B. Gabrielson

## 22. Kenosha, Wisconsin

An \$8.1 million bond referendum was placed before the voters of the unified district on March 5, 1968. It was a uniquely new experience for the voters. The district includes the city of Kenosha and the towns of Pleasant Prairie and Somers.

This was the first bond referendum to be offered for public approval in this area since the unified district came into being about July 1, 1967. Prior to that time a joint district was in operation for two years, with fiscal dependence upon a control board, composed of the Kenosha City Council and the two town board chairmen. (Before 1965, the area was served by the City of Kenosha School District and 13 common school districts.) The joint district control board set the school tax levy and approved all school bond requests. Prior to 1967, all bonds for school purposes were sold as general obligation bonds of the city, and no more than \$3.5 million in bonds for school purposes were sold in any one year.

The \$8.1 million referendum, which included a new junior high, two new elementary schools, remodeling and additions to three existing schools (a senior high, a junior high, and an elementary school), and future school sites, was defeated by the public by a 13,136 to 5,793 vote.

A subsequent April 2 referendum for \$3.75 million, including a new junior high and one new elementary school, passed 12,096 to 10,052. This involved a concentrated campaign period of only two weeks.

Before setting the \$8.1 million figure, the school board appointed, in November 1967, a Citizens Advisory Committee to study future building needs. This committee was given a five-year school administration proposal, involving three separate bond issues (1968, 1971, and 1974) to bring the district's building program up to date. The administration's suggested bond issue for

**Total school enrollment: 20,304**  
**Total population of community or district: 95,000**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issues**  
**Amount of money sought: \$8.1 million and \$3.75 million**

April 1968 was \$16 million, including a third new high school, more extensive redevelopment of an existing high school, three new elementary schools, and more future school sites.

The citizens committee held six general meetings in addition to subcommittee sessions and on January 15, 1968, recommended to the board a two-stage bond issue of \$13 million, including a March 1968 referendum of \$7.1 million (with only one new elementary school) and a 1969 referendum for \$6 million for a third high school.

The citizens committee, representing a cross section of the community, felt that these were attainable goals for the present. The citizens group did not feel that it had sufficient time to study school building needs beyond this point. The March primary election was suggested by the committee as being a more favorable date. The school board, on January 17, approved an \$8.1 million referendum including an additional new elementary school by a 5 to 2 vote.

This left a period of slightly more than six weeks to organize community support for a bond issue, which represented half the amount which the school administration had recommended as being immediately necessary, more than twice the amount which the community had previously supported for school building in one year, and also \$1 million more than the recommendations of the citizens advisory committee.

A presentation of bond referendum information was developed for board and administration representatives involving 20 sets of visual aids (transparencies used with an overhead projector) and a standard script. During the four weeks prior to the March

election, this presentation was made to 52 separate local groups (PTA's, service organizations, etc.) reaching a total audience of 3,275 persons. A citizen support group called KIDS (Kenoshans Interested in Developing Schools) was organized and was primarily responsible for paid newspaper ads and a special supplement to the *Kenosha News* explaining the need for the referendum.

Both the *News*, which is the only local daily, and the *Kenosha Labor*, a weekly publication, editorially supported the referendum and devoted appropriate space to referendum information.

The area's only local AM radio station devoted public service and news programming to the issue including a three-hour debate just prior to the election.

Organized opposition to the referendum came from the local taxpayers organization and the labor union, representing the community's largest industry with some 10,000 employees.

Attempts were made through the PTA's to set up block worker organizations to develop a grass roots understanding of the referendum.

Both local teacher organizations, the Kenosha Education Association and Kenosha Teachers Union, supported the referendum and assisted in getting information on voter registration and school needs to their members. Similar information was distributed to PTA's.

The general theme of the campaign was that the amount needed was the bare minimum required to catch up with present overcrowding and to prepare for conservative enrollment increases in the near future.

Major public reaction against the referendum seemed to center around the \$2.5 million included for the remodeling of Bradford High School which would provide space for only 90 additional students. Major campaign emphasis was that the amount was necessary to provide full high school facilities for 2,000 students who were housed in separate buildings in the downtown area, one of which dated back to 1891.

Other noticeable reactions were against the amount of the total package and its effect on the local tax rate. Detailed information was developed for the KIDS group on the low monthly cost to an average home owner in the area, and such information was included in all presentations.

Another nagging factor, apparent but hard to pin down, was strong local familiarity with the labor-management bargaining process in which neither side expects its first offer will be accepted by the other.

If any one factor worked against voter acceptance of the entire package, it was the time necessary to acquaint the community with the entire need. The campaign did not get out the "yes" vote of those persons most directly concerned with the problems, the parents of the 20,000 youngsters in the school system.

The bond referendum did result in one of the highest March primary turnouts in local election history. The "no" vote was consistently high throughout the city's precincts and in the townships.

One of the major conclusions in the campaign analysis was that more citizen involvement is necessary with sufficient time to develop support. Grass roots support—neighbor talking to neighbor—is required to build the public understanding and acceptance of the total issue needed for approval.

Passage of a smaller successful April referendum carried out with only two weeks of concentrated campaign activity does not obviate the need for more detailed long-range planning and participation, in the opinion of the campaign planners. Major emphasis in the April referendum was on short daily news releases stressing individual aspects of the issues involved and a complete distribution of a facts sheet on the referendum by school children prior to the election.

A bright spot of the March referendum campaign was the creation of the KIDS group, not only for the catchy name, but because it provided a nucleus for the April election and for future bond referenda.

—R. R. McGuire

## 23. Parkway School District, St. Louis County, Missouri

Parkway, a young suburban district growing at the rapid rate of 2,500-3,000 pupils a year, submits a bond issue and tax levy to its voters each year at a special school election. The legal limit on bonded indebtedness of a school district in Missouri is 10 percent of its assessed property valuation. Assessment in St. Louis County is placed at about one-third of the market value of the property.

A two-thirds majority is required for school bonds and tax levies in Parkway. The district must pass bonds early each year to begin construction of schools needed by September of the same year. Early passage of the tax levy permits the district to compete favorably in teacher recruitment, an important item in a fast-growing district.

The February 3, 1968, election proposals were based on an anticipated enrollment in 1968-69 of 16,700 pupils, a professional staff of 750, and the operation of 20 schools. The building program designed to meet these needs included six major projects: the first phase of a second senior high school, an addition which would double the capacity of a one-year-old junior high school, three new half-sized elementary schools, and the second half of another elementary school. Cost of entire building program, including purchase of sites for future schools, amounted to \$4.8 million, or \$1.5 million more than the district's bonding capacity would allow. The board of education proposed a \$3.32 million bond issue and a school tax levy of \$4.95 per \$100 assessed valuation to satisfy budgetary requirements for 1968-69, an increase of 60 cents.

**Total school enrollment: 14,006**

**Total population of community or district: 70,000**

**Type of campaign: Tax levy and bond issue**

**Amount of money sought: Tax levy of \$4.95 per \$100 assessed property valuation (approximately 1/3 market value); \$3.32 million bond issue**

**RESULT:** The bond issue carried by a 73.7 percent majority, the teachers' levy by 69.1 percent, and the building levy by 68.8 percent. Of 18,473 registered voters, some 35 percent participated in this election.

Residents of the district have had a good record of passing annual bond issues and nominal tax increases since the formation of the district in 1954. However, a special 80-cent building levy proposed early in 1965 was twice defeated before voters finally approved a 55-cent levy in May. The delay caused in starting construction of the second senior high school necessitated an extended 11-hour school day at the senior high school during 1967-68, the first such experience for Parkway.

The board of education, in planning for some 15 years of rapid growth in the 65 square mile district, has conscientiously sought to reach a reasonable balance between educational program and cost. The annual proposals of the board are designed, therefore, to be tolerable to parents who expect a high quality program and also tolerable to residents who do not have children in the public schools and who have a highly conservative attitude toward school costs.

Because of its tax defeats in 1965 and a widespread pattern of tax resistance in the neighboring 24 districts in St. Louis County, the Parkway board had grave concerns about the success of the 1968 proposals. Following is a brief chronological resume of the campaign activities:

A committee was appointed by the board of education to reactivate the citizens Committee of One Hundred which had promoted the special school elections for the past several years. Members of the group consisted of representatives from all segments of the school community, board members, administration, principals, teachers, and lay people. The publisher of a large weekly newspaper was also included.

The ad hoc committee elected a general chairman for the Committee of One Hundred and contributed names of persons who should be invited to serve. School principals were also asked to recommend names of parents known to be active school supporters. The new general chairman, a utility company executive, recruited from these lists a local chairman for each school. He also appointed a publicity committee chairman and a speakers bureau chairman. A meeting of the 15 local school chairmen, the 15 school principals, members of the board and the administration, and chairmen of the publicity committee and speakers bureau was held early in December.

After the election issues had been thoroughly discussed, the following campaign strategy was adopted:

A short but intensive informational campaign would be conducted during the last three weeks in January, preceding the February 3 election. The Saturday election date was selected because many fathers of Parkway pupils travel during the week. Although all residents of the district would receive ample information on the election, the Committee of One Hundred would direct a personal, "emotional" appeal to parents only. All parents listed as registered voters would be personally contacted by a neighbor shortly before the election. A strong "get out the vote" force would be mobilized to call every registered parent on election day. A slide presentation would be prepared for showing at school and community gatherings during January, to be accompanied in each case by a speaker.

The publicity committee whipped into action during December and, with the help

and coordination of the director of public information for the district, produced the following materials:

- A publicity timetable, outlining deadline dates and events of campaign.
- Background information on the special school election—a mimeographed brochure with printed cover which was furnished to all employees, Committee of One Hundred members, newspapers, and community leaders.
- A printed general information brochure to be mailed to parents only.
- A 15-minute colored slide presentation written, staged, and photographed by professional advertising men living in the district and narrated by a local radio and television personality.
- A suggested letter for all PTA presidents to mail home to parents.
- Model of a letter for the Citizens Advisory Council chairman to mail to neighbors—with space for a personalized note.
- A carry-home flyer the day before the election, entitled "Pop and Mom Quiz."
- A mimeographed neighborhood workers guide, with instructions and reminders.

In addition, the director of public information prepared the January bulletin which is mailed to all district residents. This contained a sample ballot and complete information on election details. Newspaper releases were mailed at regular intervals following the January 2 meeting of the board of education at which time the special election was called.

The publicity committee had all materials ready for distribution on January 4, the date of the only general meeting of the Committee of One Hundred. After this meeting, the neighborhood groups went into action, recruiting more help as needed and organizing canvassers to cover their areas. Junior high school workers were given names of those parents who had no elementary school children, and senior high school workers were assigned parents who had no other children in school.

Principals kept in close contact with the school election chairmen. The public information department served as the headquarters of the entire campaign effort. The general chairman of the Committee of One Hundred communicated regularly with the school chairmen, the publicity committee, and the speakers bureau. As the result of his contact, the metropolitan evening paper, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, published an editorial supporting the proposals of the Parkway board of education.

The ultimate success of the election, which resulted in the highest tax rate to be approved by voters of any district in St. Louis County in 1968, was due to many factors.

The extended day at the senior high school undoubtedly played a part. So did the fact that many new residents have moved from other parts of the country where taxes are also high. However, one factor cannot be overlooked: the high caliber of the citizens who were selected to lead this campaign and the high degree of devotion and hard work which they brought to the effort. They were the type of people who relish meeting the competition and have established a pattern of success in meeting the challenges of business. When they directed this kind of determination to the school campaign, they concentrated a great deal of talent and energy on a winning effort.

—Geraldine Gritts

## 24. San Mateo, California

San Mateo school officials put before the voters a \$10.1 million school bond issue on March 7, 1967, with something less than ardent enthusiasm and high optimism. Residents of the San Mateo City School District had rejected four earlier bond proposals and had not approved a bond issue since 1958. Moreover, a general tax revolt was in high gear throughout the state; voters simply balked at the prospect of adding anything more to their tax bill for any purpose. Yet voters approved the bond issue by a 75 percent favorable vote, with more than 44 percent of the registered voters going to the polls.

The school district had its own special set of problems, each one chipping away at possible support for new school bonds. Among the chief problem areas were:

Continued resentment over the September 1966 closing of 22 classrooms, including one complete school, when a structural survey found the school buildings unsafe under the state's Field Act earthquake standards.

Reluctance, mostly on the part of veteran residents, to provide two new schools for children in the Foster City area, a new Bayside development which many "mainland" residents refused to recognize as an integral part of the city.

Failure to recognize the strong educational arguments in favor of the 11 large group instruction rooms provided for in the bond issue, which some voters regarded as unnecessary "frills."

Adoption by the board of education of an integrated learning policy calling for efforts to end de facto segregation at two elementary schools, with minority and community groups urging rapid implementation of the policy.

**Total school enrollment: 12,800**

**Total population of community or district: 90,500**

**Type of campaign: Bond issue**

**Amount of money sought: \$10.161 million**

Two weeks before the election, in a move that was described then as "madness" and, in retrospect, "raw courage," the board of education and administration took a first step toward integration by transferring 45 minority students from Negro-majority schools to ten other schools in the district.

The campaign organization itself was unique only in that it included both a broadside approach directed to every voter, and a more intensive campaign geared to every parent in the school district. It also utilized the considerable talents of the area's most effective political campaign director who mapped out every detail with the assistance of a volunteer executive committee, most of whom were veterans of previous school bond efforts.

Early in January, the campaign organization began to take shape. Initially, it was agreed to concentrate heavily on the "areas of strength," the school neighborhoods that would benefit most from the school bonds and had a past history of supporting school measures.

Responsibility for this crucial phase of the campaign rested with the PTA organization at each of the 23 schools in the district. Each PTA president appointed team captains who recruited block workers responsible for contacting nine other assigned parents. The initial contact was made ten days before the election, as each block worker talked to her assigned parents and left with them a basic brochure explaining the issues involved. The block workers also noted which parents expressed opposition to the bond

issue. Only those inclined to be favorable would be contacted again and reminded to vote on election day.

The day before the election, the 700 block workers also distributed doorbell hangers, again reminding parents to vote, at the homes of parents considered favorable toward the bond issue. The military precision with which the entire block worker's phase of the campaign was carried out was considered the single most important factor leading to the success at the polls.

Meanwhile, back at campaign headquarters, other campaign materials were developed. The most appealing were 750 red and black posters and 2,000 bumper stickers urging citizens to VOTE YES FOR K.I.D.S., a catchy acronym standing for Keep Improving District Schools (an idea borrowed from a 1966 Detroit school election). In addition, 27,000 detailed brochures were mailed out to every San Mateo householder, besides the 12,000 distributed by block workers. Nearly 40,000 "Dear Friend" postcards were mailed out by teachers, organizations, and a special campaign committee. Twelve thousand doorbell hangers were distributed. Eighteen hundred dollars' worth of newspaper advertising was purchased for the final week. A speakers bureau gave a total of 40 talks before local civic, religious, and fraternal organizations. Individual and organizational endorsements were obtained, including those of both local newspapers, the Chamber of Commerce, Board of Realtors, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

The fundamental message of the campaign was spelled out by District Superintendent Harold R. DePue in a 16-page Fact Book on School Housing Needs distributed to the speakers bureau, team captains, and the campaign committee.

The factual material for every key campaign worker answered forcefully and precisely the many questions raised over a period of several years about the tax rate, the allocation of school funds, how the bond

money was used, the growth of student population, why certain school buildings were no longer educationally or economically efficient or structurally safe.

The administration and the K.I.D.S. campaign committee provided the local newspapers with a steady stream of news and feature articles. One issue of the district's monthly publication, *Intercom*, was devoted to the flexible, creative educational possibilities that would be made available by construction of the large group instruction rooms.

The major thrust of the publicity was:

More than 1,000 San Mateo school children—37 classrooms of students—were being transported to school by bus because of lack of classrooms at their neighborhood schools.

Every available classroom space, including libraries, an auditorium, and faculty rooms, had been converted to classroom use.

Pupil enrollment, at a record high, was increasing at the rate of one classroom of students per month.

School bonding is the most equitable and economical method of financing building improvements because it spreads the tax burden to those residents whose children would be using the schools 25 years hence.

The only alternatives to passage of the bond issue would be more bussing of students, larger class sizes, double sessions, and ultimately, higher building costs.

Probably the most telling argument of all was statistical proof that a "no" vote on the school bonds would cost the taxpayers *more* than a "yes" vote. The district provided factual evidence that if the bonds failed, it would cost taxpayers up to \$18.84 more per year in bussing, portable classrooms, and other makeshift measures than it would cost if they approved the bonds.

One unusual device, which subtly aided the campaign, used in the last weeks of the

campaign, was a poll conducted by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and sent to every householder in the school district. The poll presented the school bond argument as it would appear on the ballot, asked residents how they would vote on the school bonds, and solicited their comments. The results were not publicly released until after the election, but it revealed that of the 2,700 citizens who responded (10 percent of those polled), more than 2,000 intended to vote "yes." The poll had not only predicted the outcome of the election within one percentage point; it provided those who opposed the bonds a chance to express their views. Apparently, having once spoken, many opponents stayed home on election day.

Block workers on election day called their assigned parents to remind them to vote. From 9 a.m. to 8 p.m., a corps of some 80 housewives and business and professional men manned a telephone bank of 20 phones, calling from precinct lists of nonparents in the district. More than 4,500 calls were made during the 11-hour period. At 8 p.m. the polls closed, the phone bank shut down, and weary campaigners gathered at the administration offices of the school district to await the results. They were sure of only one thing: No effort had been spared, no campaign detail had been overlooked. Experienced political observers agreed they had never seen a school bond campaign to equal this one.

—Mrs. Hannah Shields

## 25. Grand Prairie (Texas) Independent School District

**Total school enrollment: 10,650**  
**Total population of community  
or district: 51,500**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$6 million**

On September 7, 1968, residents of Grand Prairie were asked to approve a \$6 million bond issue to finance expenditures for new construction and capital outlay items. This was the first bond issue of any size in the school district's recent history. An \$800,000 bond issue had been passed by the voters in 1966; of 811 persons casting votes, 774 voted for and 37 against for a 20-1 majority.

The school district had been a "budget balance" school district. All new construction and capital outlay items were paid for out of the school construction fund and other sources of revenue. This type of pay-as-you-go plan worked fine when the system was smaller, but a mushrooming city and student population necessitated a change.

A continuation of this old system would have placed an additional burden on local property taxes so the bond route was selected to build two new elementary schools, an area vocational school, classroom additions to existing facilities and remodeling of older structures, and a second high school.

Voters approved by a 5½ to 1 margin the proposed \$6 million bond issue. Final tabulations showed 1,313 votes cast with 1,112 for and 201 against. This represented a 26 percent voter turnout of the 5,000 eligible voters in the community and a substantial voter increase over the previous 1966 election.

In July, the daily newspaper began featuring an article a week about the proposed

bond issue and the advantages of this type of school financing. Frequency of these articles and other related materials was increased during the month of August. The editor, a former teacher, featured articles on: how school funds are managed and spent, need for additional classroom space due to student growth, need for extra funds to attract and hold good teachers, inflation and rising costs of education, the relatively low tax rate, cost of new course offerings and program expansions, outstanding or new features of the proposed new elementary schools (team teaching, air-conditioning, carpeting, covered play areas), and editorials openly endorsing the bond proposal.

Information material was sent to county newspapers and a local weekly shoppers guide that features a news section. Area radio stations also received short eight-second "squibs" urging the local citizenry to vote. Two television stations featured some very brief messages and also urged voters to go out and cast their ballots. One of these programs was an early morning children's television show with a large audience of children and "captive" mothers. All of the messages were "neutral" in that they simply urged the people to vote.

Local civic clubs supported the schools in the press. Many of their leaders and other business and professional people took out a full page ad urging everyone to vote for the bond issue. The school district also used its bimonthly newsletter, *The School Report*, to

inform, interpret, and explain all phases of the bond program.

Posters and placards placed in the windows of downtown merchants also urged the voters to vote for the bond issue. These had a "hard sell" approach and were used several days just prior to the election.

Due to widespread community interest in the proposed bond election, the school board of trustees voted to hold its regular July meeting in the high school auditorium. This allowed the superintendent of schools to interpret the school system's present and projected financial needs and student growth to all interested citizens. Members of the board and the school administration urged everyone to attend.

During August the superintendent interpreted the new proposals, projections, and needs to practically all of the local civic and professional clubs at luncheon meetings. He used a set of 2 x 2 slides and a series of charts to better illustrate his presentations to these groups. He also presented to each club member a booklet of financial facts and figures about the schools when he concluded his talk.

In September, the board voted to postpone its regularly scheduled meeting to allow each member to speak or participate in several of the first PTA meetings of the

year. These meetings were held on the Thursday just prior to the bond election on Saturday, September 7. The superintendent and other members of the administrative staff also took part in PTA meetings held the same night. All speakers urged parents to vote for the proposal to avoid pupil overcrowding in the schools. The speakers also made wide use of visual aids (slides and charts) which graphically illustrated the needs for financing schools by the bond issue method. All speakers continually emphasized the fact that this method would place less burden on the taxpayer's pocketbook than the previous method.

The September 7 date was selected by the board of trustees and superintendent because most parents and citizens would have education and opening activities of a new school year fresh on their minds. In addition, it was also felt that the particular weekend would be an excellent one for voters remaining in the city. Labor Day had been observed the previous weekend.

Each voter, as he left his polling place was given a bumper sticker entitled—"I *HAVE VOTED* in the school bond election *TODAY, HAVE YOU?*" This helped to give visibility to the campaign on election day.

—Don Agnew

## 26. Bellingham, Washington

The Bellingham Public Schools experienced a year of austerity in 1968 due to the loss of a maintenance and operations special levy election in the spring for the school year 1968-69. The certificated staff of 452 was reduced by 52. Thirty-eight classified positions were eliminated. High school students were limited to four subjects. Expenditures for books, supplies, and equipment were drastically reduced; some interscholastic sports were cut. New instructional fees were charged. Bellingham gained statewide recognition as the only district of its size (enrollment: 9,200), or larger, which lost a special levy election in a state where about 90 percent of the children attend school in districts which approve special levies annually.

The levy was presented at special elections in February and April gaining a 48 percent favorable vote the first time and a 58 percent favorable vote the second. (A 60 percent favorable vote is required, however, and only two excess levy elections are allowed in any one tax year.) Both issues were for 25.8 excess mills.

An excess levy of 28.5 mills was submitted at the general election on November 5, 1968, and passed with a favorable majority of 62.2 percent.

The school board appointed a chairman for the Citizens School Finance Advisory Committee in August 1968. The chairman was the technical director of the largest local industry, which also is the largest local taxpayer. The charge to the chairman was to select a blue ribbon group to study school financing problems and needs, to recommend appropriate special election action, and to spearhead a campaign for passage of the issue.

**Total school enrollment: 9,200**  
**Total population of community or district: 43,000**  
**Type of campaign:**  
Excess millage—operations  
**Amount of money sought:**  
\$1.781 million

The committee had representatives from industry, banking, business, professions, higher education, labor, and the PTA. The chairman selected representative members without school board or administration intervention. The first meetings of the committee were held in early September.

The seriousness of the situation was no longer news. Students and their parents discovered that proposed cuts were not "hollow threats" when school opened. Heavy press coverage had been given to the tremendous financial problems of the school district.

"We opened the books," said Superintendent Gordon Carter, "and the committee was convinced of the severity of the problem." The committee decided to place the levy issue on the November general election ballot since Washington law requires a voter turnout equal to 40 percent of the voters in the last general election to validate special levy elections. Such a turnout would be difficult to get following the presidential election.

The committee reported a decision of the special levy date early in September but recommended the amount of the levy later in the month after additional study.

There was general agreement that the two previous election campaigns were the "best yet" with a canned tape-slide presentation, a speakers bureau, expensive newspaper display advertising, radio spots, more than 300 coffee parties, newspaper "question

box," and total media editorial support. But the issue lost.

There seemed to be some feeling that the promotion of the levy campaign of recent years had become almost too "glossy." The committee was divided on a "quiet" campaign vs. a "hard-hitting" campaign. All members agreed that editorial support of the local daily newspaper was paramount. "We know that the editorial support of the daily newspaper won't guarantee victory," said Superintendent Carter, "but we're equally convinced that lack of editorial support spells doom."

Soon after the election date was announced, but before the announcement of the amount of the levy, a two-hour briefing of the editor of the daily was held. The invitation for the briefing was made by the chairman of the committee, who was assisted by the school board chairman, the superintendent of schools, and the director of school information services. Editorial support for the issue was the strongest in the history of levy elections in the community.

The theme of the election became "We Need Your Help" as a plea from the children of the community. The committee members accepted responsibility for subcommittees to develop a speakers bureau, design and place display advertising, prepare a flyer and plan for its distribution, arrange financing, and provide a public information telephone center. All organizational aspects were developed in cooperation with the district director of school information services who served in an advisory capacity and attended all meetings of the committee.

It was decided that teachers and school administrators would take no regular active part in the campaign except in an advisory or information capacity. The education association and PTA provided most of the campaign funds.

Highlights of the campaign included the appearance of speakers before a broad spec-

trum of groups, four large newspaper display ads designed by a local volunteer professional, a simple but hard-hitting flyer designed by another volunteer professional and printed free of charge by a member of the committee. Another committee member organized a sign preparation and posting crew. Radio spot preparation was a responsibility of the director of school information services. The campaign activities were compressed into a two-week period in order to be "heard" above the din of the political activities of the general election.

Three campaign activities seemed to have unique qualities. One was the decision to report progress of the citizens committee at school board meetings. Six consecutive board meeting reports were made and received heavy press and radio coverage.

Secondly, there was student involvement. The flyer prepared by the committee was delivered to each householder on Halloween by high school students. Advance press coverage paved the way and no "incidents" developed. High school student leaders also made "personal appeal" radio spots.

The greatest attention getter was a large number of "Burma Shave" type signs prepared and posted by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. These signs added some lightness to a deadly serious problem. Examples:

Big Surprise  
Open Your Lids  
In Our Classrooms  
Wall to Wall Kids  
Vote Schools

Johnny Can't Read  
Mary Can't Write  
Doggone Classrooms  
Fit Too Tight  
Vote Schools

—James G. Roberts

## 27. Santa Cruz (California) High School District

On four consecutive trips to the polls, Santa Cruz voters declared firmly that they would not continue or increase their taxes for the operation of the high school district. The tax rate, having fallen back to the minimum permitted by law, produced an austerity program shocking to the board and faculty.

On February 20, 1968, a fifth election was held. The turnout of voters was the largest at a Santa Cruz special election. On a proposal to increase the high school tax rate to \$1.32 per \$100 (as compared with the \$1.15 one-time rate which had dropped to 85 cents), voters gave 53 percent approval. They also voted to continue an existing elementary school rate by an even larger margin.

The election victory was attributed to a number of factors not ordinarily found in many school finance campaigns, although the general strategy and tactics may be similar.

Would you believe—a teacher as citizen committee campaign chairman? Much of the precinct work, neighborhood activity, fund solicitation, and get-out-the-vote work directed by officers of the Classroom Teachers Association (CTA)?

An opinion poll, conducted by the University of California, indicated strong support for the school board and favored opening of a new high school. Almost 47 percent said they would vote for an increase in the high school tax. The latter indication was not regarded as being too significant, for in previous school elections the proposals had

**Total school enrollment: 8,000**

**Total population of community or district: 50,000**

**Type of campaign: Tax override for additional operating funds**

**Amount of money sought:**

Increase high school tax rate to \$1.32 per \$100 from 85¢; renewal of elementary tax rate

yielded about 45 percent favorable support. Perhaps more significantly, the poll showed that many issues assumed by community leaders to be highly controversial really were not at all.

Three months before the election date, the school district board of trustees asked teacher Norman Walters to serve as chairman of a "Citizens for Better Schools Committee." Walters, former Santa Cruz mayor, member of the city council, and a past president of CTA, accepted.

The citizens group opened its own full-time headquarters office, manned by volunteer help. The CTA, which had been involved with the school administration and board in the development of the financial proposal, had also pledged all-out support in the campaign.

Much of the effectiveness of the campaign, however, stemmed from very early preliminary planning based upon the strategy that victory depended upon producing a larger than normal voter turnout—with the full organizational effort concentrated upon the objective of making certain that as many of the additional voters as possible be positive supporters. This would require: (1) direct campaign involvement of large numbers of persons in order to have manpower for the huge task of identifying and getting to the polls the larger number of "yes" voters,

and (2) a clear and precise plan of action with detailed instructions for every activity and worker.

Two weeks following the appointment of the campaign chairman, the school board sponsored an all-day conference of 35 community leaders to discuss ideas for the best ways in which to present the school issue to the public. The suggestions were helpful in developing the campaign road map.

This guide appeared in the form of an 18-page mimeographed document called *The Winning Side* which was completed by the end of December. Although it was described as a "skeleton" guide, it did a remarkably detailed job of describing the techniques and procedures to be used in the campaign, including the organization chart, description of committee functions, and tentative timetable for the campaign.

In mid-January a campaign rally was held at the civic auditorium. It was carefully planned to dramatize widespread organizational support for the school issue and to stretch the campaign organization. The campaign chairman advised his fellow school employees that attendance should be a top priority matter. Superintendent Denny Morrissey asked each principal to enlist non-educators as campaign workers, a number at least double the number of school employees in his building. More than 700 persons attended the rally.

Each elementary school became a campaign organization unit. Boundaries were adjusted to conform to voting precinct lines. Each school committee was headed by co-chairmen: the principal and a citizen. Each committee also included junior and senior

high school representatives and their citizen counterparts. Other specified categories on the building committee included PTA leaders, labor representatives, senior citizen, high school representative, church representative, youth service representative, etc.

Earlier, the CTA had conducted a highly successful voter registration drive. These and other voters became the main target of the campaign. Each school committee was given a specific objective: a quota of "yes" votes in its precinct which would be large enough to assure victory on election day. The quotas were based upon an analysis of past voting records.

Heavy use was made of telephone calls to contact and identify the "yes" voters. Careful records were kept and reporting procedures were efficient. More general activities included presentations before organizations, neighborhood kaffeeklatsches, bringing senior citizens into schools as visitors, student academic presentations at retirement homes and in mobile home parks, newspaper feature stories about the secondary education program, etc.

The precinct organization operation was headed up by two CTA officers. Well briefed campaign workers who served as poll watchers were at the election places on February 20. They were armed with lists of "yes" voters. Starting shortly after noon, they began to phone periodically to headquarters the names of "yes" persons who had voted. A telephone committee then began to call the "yes" voters who had not yet voted. This procedure was continued until the polls closed.

## 28. Bloomington, Illinois

On March 17, 1967, voters in this central Illinois community agreed to make a sizable investment in their public schools—an investment which would increase their property taxes by slightly over 30 percent. Included in the “investment package” were two propositions:

1. A 40-cent increase in the educational tax rate to provide additional funds to meet a current deficit, to raise the teachers' salary schedule, and to purchase needed supplies and equipment.
2. A \$5.3 million building bond issue to construct a new triple K-6 elementary school and to build major additions to the high school and one elementary school.

Both propositions carried by more than 1,000 votes—something quite unusual for Bloomington.

Enrollment in this rather stable community had increased nearly 2,000 (or 37 percent) in a decade, while the total population had increased only 11 percent. The age characteristics of the city's population were changing. The problems of increased pupil numbers, coupled with expanded curricula, had caused a strain on school facilities and finances for quite some time.

Reluctance of taxpayers to increase local taxes was quite evident with the defeat of both a building bond issue and an education fund increase in February 1963. A 12-cent educational tax rate was resubmitted two months later and it passed—the first increase since 1955. This amount was not sufficient to meet the financial crisis.

**Total school enrollment: 7,215**

**Total population of community or district: 37,791**

**Type of campaign: Bond issue and educational tax rate**

**Amount of money sought:**

**\$5.3 million bond issue and 40¢ increase in educational tax rate**

The need for additional school facilities was still unsolved. At a special election held in May 1964, voters were again asked to approve a building issue. Voters rejected the bond issue a second time. It was quite clear that Bloomington was experiencing a general resistance to any kind of tax increase.

During the 1966-67 school year the financial needs continued to increase. The defeat of the building issue had created a major pupil housing problem. The junior high school was tremendously overcrowded. It was necessary to transport elementary pupils from one attendance area to another to ease overcrowding. The matter was made even worse by the fact that teachers could not be recruited under the existing salary schedule.

The school district had a budgeted deficit of \$160,000 for the 1966-67 school year. The entire outlook was bleak. “We were facing educational and financial disaster in our schools,” recalled Superintendent Fred C. McDavid. “We had to choose whether we wanted to continue to have good schools with average classroom enrollments and taught by well prepared teachers, or schools of ever decreasing quality.”

Obtaining the necessary funds would not be easy. Bloomington voters would be asked in the spring of 1967 (just before tax bills arrived) to increase their property taxes by 54 cents per \$100 of assessed valua-

tion. This was a sizable increase by most standards—and the largest single tax increase in Bloomington's history.

At a meeting of the School Advisory Council (a group of 40 local citizens) on November 22, Superintendent McDavid spoke with great frankness about the financial condition of the school district. If additional funds were not provided and new classrooms built, he said, it would be necessary to curtail the educational program and it would be impossible to offer badly needed services such as libraries, lunchrooms, bus transportation, and certain specialized instruction. Beginning in September, it would be necessary to eliminate kindergarten as well as some advanced and accelerated classes. The junior high school would have to operate on a split-shift basis. Adult education and summer school would have to be curtailed—if not eliminated. The elementary class size probably would have to be increased.

The persons who attended the meeting agreed unanimously to work for passage of the tax increase. It was decided that the membership of the Advisory Council should be expanded and a new group, the Citizens Referendum Committee, be formed. The Committee would help promote public understanding of the issues through a factual presentation of the problem. The school system's director of school-community relations was asked to serve as campaign director. "Invest in Learning" was selected as the slogan for the campaign.

The referendum committee was appointed and a local insurance executive was named general chairman. Small work groups were formed and given special assignments—publicity and promotion, speakers bureau, get-out-the-vote activities, and finance. Nothing about the campaign's efforts was hit-or-miss. Activities were charted so that all members knew what to do and when to do it.

A review of former school election votes indicated that few had produced any large number of voters—possibly a weakness of former campaigns. There also appeared to

be a "hard core" of opposition to school tax issues. The number of "no" voters remained fairly constant, 3,000 to 4,000, and it was doubtful if it could be changed regardless of the total number of votes cast. It was apparent that chances of winning a school issue would dwindle as the size of the vote declined. While getting a large voter turnout would not assure success on March 17, it appeared to be the best course to follow.

All campaign activities were organized around the goal—get 10,000 voters to the polls. "We did not worry about how a voter would mark his ballot," said the superintendent, "only that he would vote."

Get-out-the-vote committees were organized in the 12 elementary attendance areas. More than 30 coffee sessions and public meetings were held. Two weeks before the vote, parents canvassed the school district distributing copies of a leaflet entitled, "Don't Cheat Our Kids Out of Good Schools!" The material included a general explanation of the school issues and a slogan button. The "Invest in Learning" button was an attempt to hold public interest until voting day. When a person asked what the button was for, the wearer went into a short explanation of the school issues. He then asked the person to wear a button and to vote on March 17. The button proved to be a worthwhile gimmick; 10,000-plus were distributed.

The local newspaper carried a series of six articles explaining the need for the school issues and cost figures for the tax package. Several editorials supporting the tax increase were carried by the local radio station and newspaper. The general public supported the issues in "letters to the editor" and on "question-and-answer" radio programs.

Members of the speakers bureau visited most of the civic, social, and service organizations in the community. The 15 local businessmen turned school spokesmen were armed with a prepared speech and a fact sheet. Each speaker, in his own way, did a tremendous job of selling the need for additional school funds.

Paid advertising included three partial-

page advertisements in the daily newspaper and spot announcements on two local radio stations. All of the advertisements encouraged a "Vote To Decide the Future of Your Schools."

Three days before the election, a "question-and-answer" leaflet and a copy of the printed ballot were included in a mailing sent to all residents in the community. Both printed pieces urged a "yes" vote and were paid for by the Citizens Referendum Committee.

On March 16, the junior high school students hung "doorknob" hangers at all residences. This information piece listed a few facts about the need for the tax increase and a reminder to vote the next day.

All campaign activities centered in the elementary attendance areas on election day. Poll watchers worked at each school, recording the names of people as they voted. Starting at 11 a.m., people who had not voted were telephoned and reminded that this was election day and that their vote was needed.

Most of the funds for the campaign were raised through a solicitation of financial institutions in the community. A total of \$1,650 was collected and used to promote a "yes" vote. Regular school funds were used to inform the public about the issues and to encourage voting on March 17.

Two systemwide meetings were held to discuss the tax issues with school staff members. Periodic bulletins helped to keep all employees informed and a part of the activities.

Nearly 700 people were involved directly in the campaign. By election day, every

registered voter had been contacted—at least once—either in person or by mail. Members of the referendum committee were kept informed about campaign activities through a series of progress reports.

Although the number of votes cast was short of the 10,000 goal, both issues carried by comfortable margins. The overwhelming support at the polls can be attributed, to a large degree, to four major factors:

1. There was a well thought out plan for the campaign. Activities and promotional materials were charted in advance and used according to an established time schedule.
2. Adequate financial backing was available, when needed, to accomplish the goals of the campaign.
3. A large number of local citizens and school staff members were involved directly in the planning and campaign activities.
4. A positive and honest approach was used in presenting the school needs and the tax increase to the voters.

Like most school issues, there are no magic answers as to why the tax increase won. Nothing done in the campaign was earthshaking. "We do feel that careful planning and hard work were most responsible for success," said Superintendent McDavid. "Not getting the voter turnout we wanted was disappointing; however, campaigners did have something definite to work toward—and work they did."

—Ronald Blake

## 29. Hertford County, Winton, North Carolina

The Hertford County Board of Education submitted a proposal to citizens of the county for a \$2 million bond issue to help finance the building of two new high schools. The proposal focused attention upon the overcrowded, inadequate facilities which necessitated the use of substandard classrooms and mobile units. An additional factor was that the proposal involved the shifting of students under a desegregation formula. Hertford County is a rural county.

The district department of school planning, after a careful survey of the schools, recommended to the board of education that the two high schools be constructed for grades 9-12 to accommodate all students and suggested that the schools be located near the two centers of the heaviest populated areas of the county.

The first problem which confronted the board was to convince citizens that a school bond issue would not necessarily increase present tax rates on property. The superintendent and representatives from his office met with PTA's and various county organizations and explained the possibility that the bond issue might not affect present tax levies. It was disclosed that industrial construction under way in the county was in the amount of \$35 million and other contemplated construction would greatly increase the present tax valuation. An additional million dollar-plus per year valuation increase was due to normal growth in the county.

**Total school enrollment: 6,709**  
**Total population of community or district: 26,000**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$2 million**

A special referendum was held on July 13, 1968, to reach a decision. The voters decided, by a 3 to 1 vote, in favor of the bond issue.

The success of the bond issue was attributed partly to the nature of the points of view set forth in the general appeal to citizens of the county and the timing of the campaign. Some of the strong points of appeal included:

- The transition from a dual school system to a unitary system would be more easily accomplished in the two new schools than in the existing school plants.
- More courses would be available, especially in vocational education, art, music, science, and language.
- There would be greater opportunities for students to participate in extra-curricular activities.
- The substandard classrooms would be discontinued and mobile units sold. The remaining classrooms at each of the existing schools would be utilized to provide adequate instructional space for the elementary grades.

The theme selected for the campaign contributed much to the success of the bond issue. "Vote for the Bond Issue To Provide Your Child Adequate Educational Facilities" offered an attractive appeal to citizens

interested in quality education for their children.

The campaign organization involved widespread door-to-door contacts throughout the county. An explanation of the bond issue was presented and a basic fact sheet in question-and-answer format was distributed.

In the light of organized opposition which included the distribution of literature by anti-integration forces and antitax groups, the extensive direct voter contact work prob-

ably was quite significant in determining the outcome.

The county's news media supported the bond issue and gave wide area publicity to the pros and cons and stressed the high appeal to adequate educational facilities for Hertford County children. Radio announcements, sponsored by interested organizations, helped to fully publicize the bond issue.

—I. A. Battle

### 30. Reynoldsburg, Ohio

Three school finance issues were submitted simultaneously: (1) added 5.8 mill property tax general operating levy, (2) .6 mill bond issue to build joint district vocational high school, (3) 1.4 mill levy for operation of joint vocational high school. Election date: May 3, 1966 (statewide primary election). All three issues were passed by the voters with the 5.8 mill levy receiving the largest margin of approval, 1,999 to 969. Enrollment in this fast-growing suburban community located east of Columbus, Ohio, had increased from 1,000 to 5,000 in a decade, with continued growth at the rate of 10 classrooms per year.

One year earlier, in May 1965, voters of the school district gave some indication of their opposition to increased local school taxes after a long period during which school finance issues were favorably treated. They defeated a proposed \$890,000 school bond issue. It was resubmitted in November and passed by a narrow margin.

At a special election held one month later in December 1965, the school board submitted three school levies to the voters. In addition to a 4 mill property tax increase for general operating purposes, voters also were asked to approve two issues required to establish a joint high school with four other school districts. The joint vocational issues were a .6 mill bond issue and a 1.4 mill operating levy. Voters soundly rejected all three issues.

"We put on our normal campaign each time," said Supt. Robert Heischman, "but it obviously was not enough. There was

**Total school enrollment: 4,700**

**Total population of community or district: 12,000**

**Type of campaign: Operating levy and bond issue**

**Amount of money sought:**

5.8 mill property tax—general operating levy; .6 mill bond issue for building program; 1.4 mills for operation

strong voter resistance to any increase in taxes."

The defeat of the general levy created tremendous financial problems for the school board. Building maintenance was reduced. Elementary students were charged \$1 each for classroom supplies. A cutback was ordered in school bus services. The buses were kept rolling by a citizen fund solicitation which netted \$2,000.

The school district finished the year with a deficit of \$24,000, making it mandatory for the school board to put a financing issue before the voters at the May 3 election. The matter was made more acute by the need to hire additional teachers and to keep the salary schedule competitive. The amount of the proposed general levy increase had to be raised to 5.8 mills. This, plus resubmission of the joint vocational high school issues, meant that Reynoldsburg voters would be asked in May to increase their taxes by 7.8 mills.

"We knew it would take a tremendous campaign to pass the entire package," said Heischman. "We also knew that we would have to start from scratch to build a new campaign organization." He contacted some of the residents, professional men in public relations and advertising work, and solicited their suggestions. One of them sent him a comprehensive memo which the superinten-

dent later developed into the basic strategy and organization of the campaign.

At a general meeting of PTA, service club, and ministerial association leaders, plus invited business and professional people, held on March 8, Heischman spoke with great frankness about the financial condition of the school district. If the May levy failed to pass, he said, the board would have to make serious cutbacks in the educational program and services. Beginning in September, it would be necessary to eliminate kindergarten as well as special teachers for art, music, and physical education. Bus service would be greatly reduced also if the levy was turned down by the voters.

The 40 persons who attended the meeting said they wanted to help. A campaign advisory group was formed called CARE (Citizens Association for Reynoldsburg Education). CARE also became the campaign theme. Heischman served as campaign director and got help wherever he could.

First shot in the campaign—which had dramatic results—was taken with the objective of establishing an identity for the newly established association in the minds of Reynoldsburg residents. A brief explanation of CARE, and what it intended to do, was sent home with each student. Space was provided for parents to endorse the organization. “We were amazed,” recalled the superintendent. “More than 1,500 parents endorsed the committee. This was double the number who had voted in favor of the 4 mill levy in December!”

Probably the most effective technique used was a series of coffees held in the suburban community during April. Parents were asked to invite friends and neighbors to evening sessions in homes. Members of the CARE committee explained in great detail the need for the 7.8 mill package. In addition, speakers were also sent to the April meetings of community service clubs.

The neighborhood coffee sessions and other face-to-face and door-to-door activities were backed up by an intensive information

campaign in the two local weekly newspapers (both of which ultimately supported the three issues editorially).

One of the newspapers carried a special school “Question Box” feature which invited residents to submit questions about the school system. An additional feature, carried on the front page under the title “Why You Should Care,” explained the need for the issues.

Paid advertising included two full-page advertisements and one half-page. One of the advertisements carried endorsements of leading Reynoldsburg business, civic, and professional leaders. In addition to general information, the advertisements served to support the efforts of the campaign workers.

One leaflet produced for the campaign was a simple “question and answer” presentation about the issues. It was distributed at the coffee sessions; two weeks before election day it was left at all homes.

A second leaflet, which was “hard sell” for the proposals and designed to stimulate voters to get to the polls, was distributed door-to-door one week before the election.

About 300 citizens were engaged directly in the campaign. Fifty-eight coffee sessions were held. Every known civic, social, and service organization in the community was contacted.

The most significant key to the success of this campaign organization, however, was the elementary school principal. He was the focal point for getting the neighborhood organization established, coordinating the coffee sessions, handling the planning and logistics involved in the distribution of brochures, identifying citizen talent for the campaign, and identifying trouble spots.

The campaigners were particularly pleased to learn on the day following the election that they had won approval of the largest school millage increase on the ballot anywhere in the state.

—William E. Henry

## 31. Ada, Oklahoma

Ada is a rather stable community in southeastern Oklahoma. The school district has an enrollment of approximately 2,700 students. The tax base of the district was, at the time of the bond election, \$14 million. It was decided by the board of education to propose a \$1.2 million bond issue for the purpose of constructing a new high school building. The building which housed the high school had been constructed in 1929. Thoughts had been given originally to remodeling. It was later decided, however, that a new building in a new location would be the soundest thing to do. This involved the risk of having to cope with an additional negative element in the campaign. The bond election was held May 9, 1967. The issue, which raised the tax rate by 12 mills, was approved by a vote of 1,223 to 692. The percentage of approval was 64 percent.

The strategy for passing the bond issue entailed a campaign of four distinct phases. First, it was decided to engage architects to plan the new building prior to the bond election. This would make it possible to convey to the voters a clear picture of the way in which their money would be invested. The architects provided slides and overlays of the construction features for the campaign.

These materials were used in the development of the campaign presentations.

A second major area of effort in the campaign was to secure the support of the local news media—radio, newspaper, and television. These media supported the issue editorially as well as providing public service space for the campaign, representing an important factor in the success of the campaign.

The third phase involved presenting as much information as possible to all civic clubs including the PTA and the League of Women Voters. This was done through open forum type meetings during which the superintendent discussed the new building plans and the educational program which would be possible in a new building. Filmstrips,

**Total school enrollment: 2,699**  
**Total population of community or district: 14,300**  
**Type of campaign: Bond issue**  
**Amount of money sought: \$1.2 million**

slides, and overlays were used at these meetings.

A scale model of the proposed building, produced by the architects, was displayed at prominent locations in the downtown area. Photographs of the model were used on television and in the press. The actuality suggested by the model was important in building voter support.

A fourth approach was the involvement of interested students. Care had to be taken in this area that opponents of the issue did not accuse the schools of exploiting the children. On a strictly voluntary basis, the Student Council and National Honor Society members sought an active part. Their contribution to the campaign was to distribute information materials to the public at large. The cost of preparing 5,000 copies was borne by the PTA Council. The students went door to door in certain areas of the town with the material. Student interest and willingness to help had been aroused at an early stage by including them in the planning sessions for the building. Many were convinced that they were partly responsible for the educational potential of the building and for the passing of the bond issue. Interestingly, most of the hard-working youngsters of this campaign were seniors who would never attend classes in the new building but who expressed a desire to improve the community in which they lived.

There were probably 150 citizens of the community, both adult and youth, who were actively involved in carrying out the election campaign. The most significant aspect of this campaign, in the opinion of the planners, was the involvement of many citizens.

--Max D. Skelton

## Acknowledgments

The manuscript for the *School District Campaign Planner* was written and edited by Carolyn Copen Hamilton, Columbus, Ohio; Robert Olds, director, National School Public Relations Association Center for Communication Studies, Santa Barbara, California; and Beatrice M. Gudridge of BG Communication Services, Rockville, Maryland.

Campaign profiles were contributed by the following persons: John W. Adamson, administrative assistant, Stockton (California) Unified Schools; Don Agnew, director, information and research, Grand Prairie (Texas) Independent Schools; I. A. Battle, ESEA director, Hertford County Board of Education, Winton, North Carolina; Ronald Blake, director of school-community relations, Bloomington (Illinois) Public Schools; James B. Gabrielson, supervisor, information services, Montebello (California) Unified Schools; Geraldine Gritts, director of public information, Parkway School District, Chesterfield, Missouri; William Henry, director of information services, Ohio Education Association, Columbus; Esther M. Joyce, supervisor of publications, radio, and television, Board of Education, Youngstown, Ohio; Merle H. Loch, assistant to the superintendent for public relations, Warren (Michigan) Consolidated Schools; Richard R. McGuire, public information officer, Kenosha (Wisconsin) Unified School District.

Also, John H. Nellor, director of public information, Portland (Oregon) Public Schools; Conrad C. Ott, superintendent, Akron (Ohio) Public Schools; Carol Pifer, Clark County (Nevada) Public Schools; James G. Roberts, director of school information services, Bellingham (Washington) Public Schools; Robert A. Sethre, administrative assistant, Highline School District, Seattle, Washington; Hannah Shields, coordinator of public information, San Mateo (California) City School District; Max D. Skelton, superintendent, Ada (Oklahoma) City Schools; David C. Smith, director of public information, Kanawha County Schools, Charleston, West Virginia; David E. Smoker, director of public information and publications, Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools; Philip R. Stoer, specialist, educational information, Board of Education of Baltimore County, Towson, Maryland; Ross N. Tucker, director, school-community relations, Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools; and K. Darrell West, public information officer, San Antonio (Texas) Independent Schools.