

Get YES Votes

**A Proven Process for Winning
Every School Referendum**

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Introduction

Every school district strives to coordinate a winning referendum. This successful process provides school administrators and their boards of education with the procedures they can follow while preparing a school-community plan of action.

[This blueprint for success is a multi-year process.](#) To maximize its effectiveness, the required actions need to be followed as closely as possible. It is essential that participants give attention to the details in each phase of the process.

Changes in state aid formulas and state/federal legislation can have an impact on referendum timing, ballot language or monetary limitations. None can adversely impact the positive school-community bond that results from carrying out the outreach activities that are presented.

Overview

The School Finance Scene Today

Financing public education is an ongoing and integral relationship between the school system and its many constituents. Every state has its own method for providing state or local funds, yet no state has been able to adequately fund education in the manner necessary to meet expanded student needs. State and Federal regulations are constantly being thrust upon local schools without either entity appropriating sufficient monies to implement these mandates. Schools are faced with severe budget cuts while tax dollars get spent in other areas.

Educators' Choices

In a majority of instances, school administrators and boards of education are relying upon the same basic financial procedures to fund their school system that were in place nearly fifty years ago. That procedure, simply stated is: Go to the voters for additional tax dollars, and if the ballot issue is voted down, cut out more programs, increase class size or reduce capital expenditures. This approach implies that educators are not able to convince voters how badly they need the additional funds.

In contrast to implementing the same basic procedures for generating revenue, the general public has seen fit to make ever-increasing demands on its school system. Nearly every year, some element within the community seeks a new or expanded service from its school system. Community perception is often that educators either reject community requests, or place a high price for the services. Countless ways for a school district to better serve a community can be implemented at little or no cost. Once implemented and the public sees the excellent results, citizens begin to show a desire to support a larger number of enhanced programs.

The Winning Referendum Plan

The successful plan of action presented in this document is a four segment approach.

- Segment one provides the minimal initial key elements that must be in place and practiced before giving consideration to asking the population to approve additional funding.
- Segment two explains how a school district must model the behavior of giving to the community without accepting any reimbursement. These are in the form of school-community partnerships that assist the community, while providing students with excellent academic and leadership opportunities. Donations to support these activities follow specific guidelines.
- Segment three provides a detailed series of steps to be taken in order to identify your “yes” voters. This occurs after segments one and two are firmly in place, and the need for additional funds is apparent. The optimal situation allows the school leaders to have a sufficient number of “yes” voters identified before ballot language is approved.
- Segment four provides the campaign committee with the steps to take in order to get the “yes” voters to the polls or to complete an absentee ballot.

The Appendices allow the administration and the campaign committee to review support material from school districts that have followed most or all of the segments. They also show how school districts can lose elections by attempting to take shortcuts, and how inadequate planning reduces the opportunity to succeed.

“We are in a race between education and catastrophe.” H.G. Wells

How to Order Your Copy

Pricing, ordering and detailed information about Get Yes Votes can be found at:
www.educationbenefits.net/getyesvotes.htm

Contact Information:

Education Benefits
W10381 County Rd D
Holcombe, WI 54745
715.312.0603 ph
810.963.8295 fax
sales@educationbenefits.net
www.educationbenefits.net/getyesvotes.htm