

Winning on Election Day

(APPLIES ONLY TO SITUATIONS WHERE MASTER PLAN HAS NOT YET BEEN DONE)

From time to time, almost every school district must "go public" in quest of capital funds to be used for construction of new schools or for additions and alterations to existing facilities. Because they seek experienced and capable assistance in preparing for successful bond elections, a number of school districts have called upon the services of **LKA Partners, Inc.** to work with them in this essential task. As educational facilities consultants, we have been providing bond program promotion issue assistance to clients since our founding in 1966. From our experience and background, we know that constituents are most likely to support bond efforts when effective planning has taken place.

Community Involvement = Community Acceptance

A "yes vote" will only occur if the School District has done its homework and presents its case to the voters in a convincing and understandable way. We've found that if members of the community are involved in the formulation of what they consider to be the best plan to address the School District's needs, the chances for success are very good. Utilizing influential citizens that are part of the process to present the proposals to their friends and neighbors is the final piece.

Consistently, a great deal of "people involvement" is essential to successfully promote a bond program. Among the various community interests involved are citizens, parents, local business owners, school board members, school administration, teachers, the district's legal counsel and fiscal advisor, and others. The talents within each constituency are applied to the total effort at the points where they are most useful. We help the District organize its teams and schedule their efforts. We also interject the subtle success strategies learned through experience with a variety of bond elections in differing geographic, political, and historical environments.

While each pre-bond election promotion program is specially designed by LKA to respond to the specific needs of the school district, a total program is likely to have the components listed in the following outline. LKA's position in the program is that of a coordinator, professional advisor, and an experienced producer of the necessary documentation and tools. We are the source of ideas and, sometimes, we play the part of the "devil's advocate", asking the really tough questions we know will be raised before the election. The depth of our involvement in each step varies, depending upon the available time and talents of others involved in the effort.

A brief outline of the several steps typically involved in a total bond election program is as follows:

STEP 1 - MOBILIZATION FOR TOTAL PROGRAM

- A. Establish the scope and strategy for the total pre-bond election effort.
- B. Prepare and execute a written agreement between the School District and LKA Partners, Inc. for our professional services.
- C. Organize the General Steering Committee
 1. Citizen Representative(s)
 2. School District Representative(s)
 3. Legal Counsel
 4. Bonding Consultant
 5. Owner's Representative (could be District employee)
 6. LKA Partners, Inc. representative
- D. Prepare a preliminary Master Time Schedule.

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STEP 2 – PREPARE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN – PROVE THE NEED

This step will involve the preparation of a Facilities Master Plan. While the depth of the Master Plan will vary depending upon the size of the District, the complexity of the situation, and other factors, the Master Plan document will very likely contain the following information:

- A. Determine the School District's total need for facilities as generated by present and projected future:
 - 1. Programs
 - 2. Policies
 - 3. Population
 - 4. Other factors

- B. Gauge the ability of existing facilities to meet the facility needs established in the preceding section, based upon:
 - 1. Structural obsolescence (including safety)
 - 2. Educational obsolescence
 - 3. Appropriateness of location
 - 4. Student capacity
 - 5. Other factors

- C. Determine the need for new or renovated facilities
 - 1. Compare need (A above) against ability of existing facilities to meet the need (B above) to determine the extent of facility short-fall.

- D. Develop Concept Solutions
 - 1. Prepare alternative scenarios showing feasible options to provide required new or renovated facilities, including a variety of new building configurations, alterations, additions, and the like. Each scenario will describe the construction project scope, time schedule, estimated cost, etc. of each alternative facility recommendation.
 - 2. Consider short and long range solutions

- E. Define the District's financial capacity
 - 1. Short range
 - 2. Long range

- F. Select the best construction program and describe it in increased depth

- G. Formally approve the Facilities Master Plan document and set the course of future actions

A special team will be mobilized for the Master Planning report, including vocal patrons, parents, teachers, district staff, and community leaders. There will also be a special time schedule which must be coordinated with the Master Time Schedule.

STEP 3 - PREPARE FOR BOND ELECTION

- A. Mobilization
 - 1. Name a Public Information Program steering committee
 - 2. Prepare a time schedule, which is coordinated with the Master Time Schedule

- B. Review bond election legal requirements including:
 - 1. "Notice of Intent to Hold Election" preparation and submittal to County Clerk
 - 2. Certification of Ballot Question requires Board action in public meeting environment. Commit to hold election, approve language of the bond question, set formal dates, etc.

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3. Prepare and place in proper publications the Notice of Registration, Notice of Election, and other mandated notices
 4. Refine the message to persuasively communicate the need.
- C. Public Information Program
1. Prepare communications tools, which may include:
 - a. Presentations for large audiences (audio-visual)
 - b. Presentations for small audiences (flipbooks)
 - c. Social Media content
 - (1) Facebook
 - (2) Twitter
 - (3) Blogs
 - d. Speakers' Aid books
 - e. Handouts and mailers
 - (1) Fact sheet
 - (2) Questions and answers folder
 - f. Posters, marquees, billboards, others
 2. Organize presenter/resource person teams
 - a. Select people
 - b. Train people
 3. Arrange central checkout point for presenters' materials
 4. Meetings
 - a. Select targeted groups, which may include:
 - (1) PTO/PTA
 - (2) Neighborhood leaders
 - (3) Service clubs
 - (4) General public
 - (5) Special interest groups (teachers, senior citizens, local business owners etc.)
 - (6) Others
 - b. Select meeting places
 - c. Prepare a meeting master schedule (update as required)
 - d. Match presenters to audiences
 - e. Distribute posters
 - f. Make presentations
 5. Distribution (Handouts)
 - a. Fact sheets at all meetings
 - b. Fact sheets and questions / answers mailer, distributed by mail, social media and/or hand delivered

STEP 4 - MEDIA RELATIONS

The media must be kept in a fully current position. Relationships with the media must be open and cooperative.

- A. Press conference (the audio-visual presentation should be made to the media at the very beginning of the concentrated public information period before the bond election)
- B. Press releases (as desired by the media)
- C. Seed editorial support and plant them early

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STEP 5 - BOND ELECTION

- A. Hold telephone campaign to encourage constituents to vote
 - 1. Identify “yes”, “no” and “maybe” voters. Concentrate on turning “maybe” votes into “yes” votes. Center efforts on getting “yes” voters to the polls.
- B. Transport voters to the polls
- C. Arrange for poll watchers
 - 1. Utilize poll watchers to ensure that all individuals identified as potential “yes” voters actually make it to the polls.
- D. Celebration

LKA Partners Inc. will assist with preparing the marketing tools necessary to have a cohesive, focused campaign and to make sure all messages contain the same facts, figures and information. We are ready to become engaged and bring our expertise to assist in developing a strong bond-election strategy that will result in a “Yes” vote for your Bond Election.