

# A QUICK GUIDE TO SUCCESSFUL REFERENDUM PLANNING



An effective referendum campaign requires authentic community engagement. This goes beyond just gathering feedback – it's about harnessing the community's wisdom to shape the future.

True engagement recognizes that discovery is more powerful than persuasion. **Rather than selling a preconceived plan, it starts with a genuine desire to educate, listen, learn, and empower the community.**

This approach acknowledges the community's unique perspective and that informed people can make great decisions. It's not about abandoning expertise, but about collaboratively building a winning campaign with the community at its core.

## THE CAMPAIGN AND THE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Referendum campaign planning is similar to most others with one critical difference, the participants in the planning process transition directly into the referendum campaign. Since these people developed the plan, they are much more committed to seeing it through. The referendum effort is much more effective as the volunteers are much more enthused, dependable, and most importantly, knowledgeable about the plan. They communicate the need for passage of the referendum from a community point of view, not the School District's point of view.

## CAMPAIGN TYPES

Generally, referenda campaigns fall into two categories which typically occur concurrently:

- 1 INFORMATIONAL** Which can be developed and funded by the School District.
- 2 PERSUASIVE** Which cannot be funded or supported by the school district (ex. "Vote Yes"). These funds must be raised privately.

## CAMPAIGN PHASES

Referenda campaigns are typically executed in two phases:

- 1 PLANNING PHASE** Also known as the "quiet" phase, this stage is when funds are raised, organization and strategies are developed, and volunteers are identified.
- 2 PUBLIC PHASE** During this phase the campaign goes public. This typically occurring like a crescendo; quiet at first then widespread toward the end. This phase lasts approximately eight weeks.

## STEERING COMMITTEE AND SUB-COMMITTEES

A strong committee is key to referendum success! The steering committee will consist of general chairperson and subcommittee chairs and should include school board representation and administration. They are responsible for overall strategy and implementation. They also track the progress of all subcommittees.

### SUBCOMMITTEES

**Voter Registration** Organizes deputy registrar training. Develops a plan to target voters and oversees absentee voter efforts.

**Telephone Canvassing** Obtains a voter registration list to identify "YES" voters. Develops script and recruits volunteers to make calls. Records "YES" votes to be used by Poll-watcher committee.

**Door-to-Door Canvassing** Distributes brochures, flyers and other informational material to the community.

**Sign Distribution** Distributes signs to appropriate locations, coordinates its tasks with the Telephone Canvassing committee.

**Marketing** Develops brochures and ads, writes press releases, organizes public presentations & other activities. Develops a website and manages social media.

**Poll-Watcher** Recruits and trains volunteers for poll-watching and making phone calls on election day.

**Finance** Solicits financial contributions. Keeps bank account and files necessary forms with election officials.