Adapting to the New School Election Landscape:
How will the community support our district bonds and initiatives?

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Geno Zamora, Esq.
Nicholas A. Govea, Esq.

ORTIZ & ZAMORA
Attorneys at Law, LLC

Overview

- Review of election changes for school boards

- Community campaigns explained

- How would school districts benefit from community campaigns?

- Developing target audiences, community partners and messaging

- Project planning and examples

2018 HB 98 NMSBA Briefing Sheet

- Allows single election day, uniform process for non-partisan elections
  - school districts, community colleges, soil and water conservation districts, water and sanitation districts, etc.
  - First Tuesday in November of odd numbered years (2019, 2021, etc.)
  - Current board member's term extends until December of that year
  - New terms start January 1 after election
- Special elections held by mailed ballot only
- "[D]efinition to 'Vacancy in office' as when a board member moves out of area they were elected or appointed to represent.'

Statutory Language – Regular Election

- A regular election shall be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of each odd-numbered year
  - Municipalities, schools, community colleges, special districts
- Regular election may have bond questions
- Election shall be nonpartisan, without party or slate

Statutory Language – Special Elections

- Special Election Act Revisions:
  - A special election called by a school district shall be conducted by mail ballot
  - Ballot mailed to each voter 28 days before election day, postage pre-paid
  - School District pays all of the County's costs associated with the special election
    - School District may not be reimbursed the costs by a non-governmental entity

Community Campaign

- An organized effort to develop community support for a concept, idea, policy initiative or financial initiative. Examples include:
    - Bond initiatives
    - Support for educational initiatives: programs, facilities, innovations
    - Property tax increases
    - Referendum elections: local taxes, living wage, sports facilities
    - Community support for infrastructure initiatives or development projects

- A community campaign is NOT a candidate-based campaign

Why would your school district need a Community Campaign?

- Develop grassroots support for school initiatives:
    - Bond elections
    - Education Technology Notes (ETNs)
    - Facility improvement/expansion
    - New programs or offerings

- Develop support for community initiatives:
    - Local economic development
    - Municipal/county programs supporting school initiatives

- Enhance community understanding/perception of district performance
    - School grade improvement
    - New/successful programs or educational offerings
    - Supplement or contradict media reports
    - Fill void of local coverage of district successes

Target Audiences – Who do we want to reach?

- Parents, students and teachers – develop understanding of and confidence regarding district benefits and programs

- Residents within district boundaries – develop support for bonds and other community-based initiatives

- Community leaders – raise awareness of district successes and programs
  - State officials – Governor, Legislators, NMPED Secretary
  - County commissioners
  - City councilors
  - Congressional delegation

- Chambers of Commerce

- Unique constituencies

How do we reach our target audiences?

- Print media
  - Mail program – targeted mail pieces (post cards, letters, info sheets)
  - Print ads in local media – newspaper ads

- Video
  - Online video of district successes – possibly generated through district programs
  - Video advertisements – professionally produced
  - Local TV/cable ad buys
  - Movie theaters

- Online - online resources can be targeted to a region, city, neighborhood or individual
  - Banner ads
  - Video ads
  - Social media ads
  - Sponsored content ads

- Radio – local radio and streaming music services

- Earned media – generating new stories, letters to the editor, authored news pieces, radio interviews
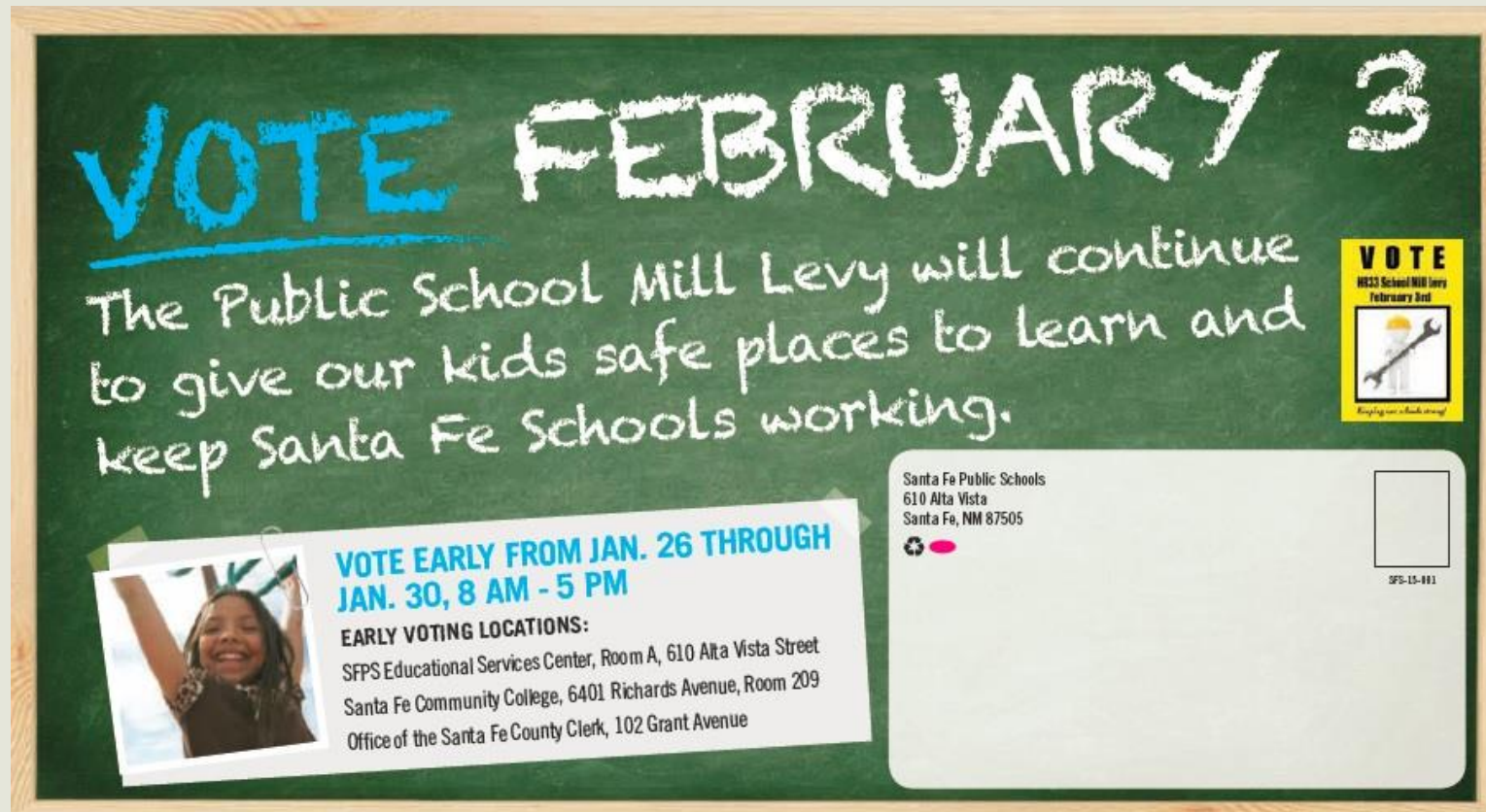
Who are your community partners?

Community partners are needed to advance, support and sometimes help fund your initiatives

- Local governments – city and county

- Local chambers of commerce

- Local non-profits

- Unique constituencies

- Other

What is our message to the community?

- Understand the <u>true</u> opinions of your district in the community
  - Understand opinions of segments of the community

- General rating of the district: How do you feel about the district?
  - What is district doing well?
  - What needs to be improved?

- Is there support for technology or facility improvements?

- Where does your community get its news and information?

- Result: Identify most persuasive message and best communication resources

Sample mail piece

Sample print ad

Examples – Banner Ads

Project Timeline Example

- Month 1
  - Information gathering
  - Development of public opinion research tools
  - Deployment of research tools
  - Develop & deploy initial messaging plan & earned strategy around accomplishments

- Month 2
  - Continued earned media activities
  - Analyze research
  - Develop program plans
  - Produce and design program elements

- Months 3, 4, 5
  - Launch public campaign
  - Continue public campaign program
  - Analyze and assess program elements
  - Adjust program elements as necessary
  - Continue earned media program

Review/Questions

- New school district election laws

- Community campaigns

- Benefits for school districts

- Target audiences, community partners and messaging

- Project planning

Geno Zamora, Esq.

geno@ortiz-zamora.com

(505) 986-2900

Nicholas A. Govea, Esq.

nicholas@ortiz-zamora.com

(505) 986-2900

ORTIZ & ZAMORA

Attorneys at Law, LLC