The roles and prevalence of communication research in selected southern New Jersey school bond referenda

Paul Dice

Rowan University

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The Roles and Prevalence of Communication
Research in Selected Southern New Jersey
School Bond Referenda

by
Paul Dice
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A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the
Master of Arts Degree
of
The Graduate School
at
Rowan University
May 1, 2002

Approved by ___________________________ Professor

Date Approved 6-18-02
Abstract

Paul Dice 

The Roles and Prevalence of Communication Research in Selected Southern New Jersey School Bond Referenda, 2002 

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin, Public Relations

The purpose of this study was to determine the roles and prevalence of communication research in two successful Southern New Jersey school bond referenda. Both school districts utilized communication research to help them win the support of their communities. The study sought to offer insight into the importance, or lack thereof, of communications research as a tool to be used in assisting school officials to pass their referenda.

This study does not present a “how-to” manual for passing a bond referendum. Rather, it offers insights into how school officials can make use of research to enhance their chances of passing their referenda.

This thesis presents case studies of the two Southern New Jersey school districts. Each district utilized an outside public relations consultant to, among other things, perform telephone surveys of their communities. The author summarizes the survey findings and compares them to the campaign and campaign-related documentation. Two sets of data are then presented: the percentage of documentation content related to the research findings and the roles the research played in the respective referendum campaigns.

The author obtained the documentation for each referendum from the school district and public relations consultant’s files. School officials involved in the referenda were also interviewed.
Mini-Abstract

Paul Dice The Roles and Prevalence of Communication Research in Selected Southern New Jersey School Bond Referenda, 2002

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Donald Bagin, Public Relations

The purpose of this study was to determine the roles and prevalence of communication research in two successful Southern New Jersey school bond referenda. It presents case studies of the two Southern New Jersey school districts, each of which employed communication research during their campaigns. The study sought to offer insight into the importance, or lack thereof, of communication research as a tool to be used in assisting school officials to pass their referenda.
Acknowledgments

I wish to first offer thanks to my wife and soul mate for offering her love and constant support during the writing of this thesis and the whole of my graduate school effort. Without her, my goal of obtaining a master’s degree would never have been realized. Sue, life is an amazing experience with you by my side. I will love you forever and a day.

Next, I offer thanks to my mother for always challenging me to pursue excellence. I am especially grateful for her insights into life and her never-ending love and support. Her gifts of love and wisdom are two of the greatest treasures I will ever know.

I also offer thanks to my mentor in life, Charles Richard Koch, for the wealth of wisdom he imparted to me. I will probably never know why I was so lucky as to be the recipient of his love and guidance. Nonetheless, I am profoundly grateful.

I must also thank my best friend and the sister I never had, Linda Conard. The foundation of the quality of my life is strengthened in large measure by her love.

This thesis is actually my way of expanding on my experiences of being Tony Fulginiti’s student. It was Tony who taught me about communication research and its application to public relations. I chose to write this paper after he shared his professional experiences with me. I’m very grateful for his guidance and influence on my life.

I offer a special thanks to Dr. Donald Bagin for blazing a trail in public relations that was clear enough for me to follow. He has been an amazing source of support and guidance during the writing of this paper and my graduate school endeavors.

Thank you also to Ed Moore for his guidance in the early stages of this paper.
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B.7. January 13, 2000 draft of copy for inclusion in the school newspaper – Eagle Times

B.8. February 18, 2000 “Bond Referendum Update” memorandum

B.9. March 9, 2000 “Bond Referendum Update” memorandum

B.10. Undated “Bond Presentation Script”

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Many public school districts in New Jersey raise money for the repair, renovation and construction of schools and school-related facilities and initiatives through the sale of school bonds.

In the state of New Jersey, Article VIII, Section IV, paragraph 2 of the New Jersey State Constitution permits school districts to finance capital expenditures through the sale of school bonds. Title 18 A, Section 24-30 of the New Jersey Statutes Annotated stipulates that a public majority must indicate their approval of school bonds at annual or special school elections.

The general public, then, plays a deciding role in determining if a school bond will be used to raise money for schools.

The Impact of The School Bond Referenda Process

Many New Jersey school districts rely quite heavily on bonds to fund school initiatives. The state generally provides some aid for a portion of most projects. However, taxpayers still participate in most instances.\(^1\) Table 1 illustrates the split between money paid by taxpayers and the state for selected referenda that passed in December of 2001:

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\(^1\) Taxpayers in the state’s 30 Abbott school districts do not contribute to bond referenda because the state provides those districts with 100 percent aid.
State Funding vs. Money Raised Through Bond Referenda For Selected New Jersey School Districts In December of 2001

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Project Cost</th>
<th>State Grant</th>
<th>Funded Through Bonds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Howell Twp.</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>$46,664,740</td>
<td>$14,258,316</td>
<td>$32,406,424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freehold Twp.</td>
<td>Monmouth</td>
<td>$43,771,272</td>
<td>$12,787,295</td>
<td>$30,983,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayreville</td>
<td>Middlesex</td>
<td>$28,849,000</td>
<td>$6,928,560</td>
<td>$21,920,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newton</td>
<td>Sussex</td>
<td>$13,950,000</td>
<td>$4,503,335</td>
<td>$9,446,665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voorhees Twp.</td>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>$10,698,289</td>
<td>$3,051,047</td>
<td>$7,647,242</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The New Jersey School Boards Association reports that the amount of money sought through bond referendum elections in New Jersey has continuously increased since 1997. The association offers the following:

Annual New Jersey Bond Referenda Campaign Results

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calendar Year</th>
<th># Statewide Elections</th>
<th># Bonds Approved</th>
<th>Percent Approved</th>
<th>Amount Sought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>$ 868 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>$ 894 Million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>63.5*</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>$ 1.2 Billion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>68.66</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>$ 1.3 Billion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Less than whole percentages reflect that certain referenda had more than one question.
As the above data indicates, the referendum process does not always meet with success. A failed election not only means having to put out money for another campaign, but also means making an additional investment in time.

Statewide, New Jersey has a history of multiple bond referenda attempts. The New Jersey School Boards Association reports the following results for the state’s 1999 and 2000 bond elections:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referenda Category</th>
<th>2000 % Passed</th>
<th>1999 % Passed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Referenda</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Attempt</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Attempt</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Attempt</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

And while New Jersey school districts passed 77.2 percent of the bond referenda in 2000, the Southern portion of the state has had more success in recent years. The New Jersey School Boards Association offers the following data:

**New Jersey Bond Referenda Regional Results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Bonds Passed in 2000</th>
<th>Bonds Passed in 1999</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>59.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other states, too, have had problems passing bond referenda. In a study of 19 states, the United States General Accounting Office found that only 54 percent of local school construction bonds had been successful.

**The Need For School Bond Referenda**

The need for repair and renovation of America’s schools, in part, fuels the need for bond referenda. A 1995 United States General Accounting Office report states that $112 billion will be needed to properly repair and upgrade the nation’s schools. In New Jersey, 87 percent of the schools are in need of repairs or upgrades, according to a 1996 United States General Accounting Office report.

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The age of school facilities also drives the need for bond referenda. On average, America’s schools are 42 years old.\(^{10}\)

Technological advances also create demands for raising capital through the sale of bonds. A 1996 United States General Accounting Office\(^ {11}\) report notes the following deficiencies in New Jersey’s schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technical Element</th>
<th>Percent Deficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computers</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networks</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modems</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber Optic Cable</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiring for communications</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increasing enrollment also drives the need for bonds. Enrollment in America’s elementary and secondary schools will reach a high of 44.4 million by 2006.\(^ {12}\) New Jersey’s school enrollment rose from 1.2 million in 1979 to 1.3 million for the year 2000.\(^ {13}\)

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Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to determine the roles and prevalence of communication research in successful school bond referenda in Southern New Jersey school districts. In so doing, the study seeks to offer insight into the importance, or lack thereof, of communication research as a tool to be used by those seeking to pass school bond referenda.

Plan of Study

This study will present a case study analysis of school bond referenda documents from two school districts in Southern New Jersey: Sterling Regional High School and Egg Harbor Township. Each of these districts utilized an outside public relations consulting firm to perform communication research in their campaigns.

Delimitations

The findings of this study will be limited to the two school districts under consideration. The findings, therefore, cannot be generalized to all districts statewide.

The study does not factor in the impact of New Jersey’s Educational Facilities Construction and Finance Act or its Education Improvement and Financing Act on bond referenda.

The study does not evaluate the merits of any individual referendum.

The study does not seek to evaluate the individual performance of people, firms or institutions in any referenda.

The study does not extend to charter, private or parochial schools.
Definition of Terms

**Bond Referendum** – A public election to decide if the qualified voters in a school district authorize the sale of bonds to raise money for repair, renovation, construction or other capital expenditures for school and school-related facilities.

**Bond or School Bond** – A financial instrument sold to the public which offers a return on investment.

**Communication Research** – Quantitative or qualitative information gathering techniques that may or may not be generalizable to a large population. It includes surveys, interviews, focus groups, document searches, data analysis, observation and advisory panels.

**Interview** – A formal research process wherein respondents offer answers to predetermined questions.

**New Jersey Constitution** – A compilation of the fundamental laws of the state of New Jersey.

**New Jersey Statutes Annotated** – Rules, regulations and laws passed by the New Jersey legislature within the confines of the New Jersey constitution.

**Qualified Voters** – Registered New Jersey voters.

**School or Public School** – Primary or secondary learning facilities that do not charge tuition.

**School District** – A regional classification of schools.

**Lines of copy** – The written content of a document. Internal addresses and salutations are not included.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers the literature this researcher found relating to the roles of communication research in the passage of school bond referenda. The information was located using Rowan University’s Campbell Library. The following electronic databases were utilized: ERIC, Education Full Text and ProQuest Digital Dissertations. Information was also located in the library’s on-line card catalog.

The chapter is broken down into two sections: literature that supports communication research, and literature that does not.

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNICATION RESEARCH

The following sections reflect the varying roles communication research played in the literature reviewed:

Determining Community Attitudes and Perceptions – Pre-election

Many school districts research community attitudes and behavior before initiating a referendum election. Stanley\textsuperscript{14} states that administrators should evaluate public opinion and behavior before proposals are placed before the community. Following his lead, Hanbury says, “A politically astute school board will evaluate public opinion well in advance of any attempt to raise taxes.”\textsuperscript{15}

Offering an answer as to why attitudes and opinions should be studied, Bagin and Gallagher state, “Surveys can elicit useful information … Given this information, school officials can plan a campaign that answers the community’s questions and helps eliminate

\textsuperscript{14} Stanley, C. (1980). How To Win Next Time. American School & University, 52 (9), 137.
misinformation." Funk agrees, and goes one step further stating, "Even if your district has extensive information on its voters, however, conducting your own survey of voter attitudes still makes sense."

Taylor, the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction and Bauscher also support the performance of research to determine community perceptions and attitudes before beginning a bond campaign.

Turning to research studies, Kastory and Harrington conclude, "When superintendents and boards do not know the perceptions of voters, polling voters or establishing community committees early in the bond issuance process may provide direction for political efforts." Lode indicates, "Campaign committees should canvass their community ahead of the promotion process to learn of local politics and side issues that may exist in the community."

In their meta-study of school bond referenda, Piele and Hall recommend that education professionals supplement the meta-study's findings with communication research. In their words, "A most useful data source that can provide the school official

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with his own positive/negative voter profile, which will be more accurate than the one developed here, is survey research.\textsuperscript{23}

In his study of South Dakota school bond elections, Holt lists variables affecting the success or failure of school bond referenda.\textsuperscript{24} He draws no direct conclusions regarding research. However, he states, "They [school personnel] should not overlook the importance of obtaining 'hard' evidence as to the attitudes that actually exist within a community when planning their campaigns."\textsuperscript{25}

Moving on to some case studies, a school district in Missouri faced a community that had "overwhelmingly" defeated many referenda. Finally they passed a referendum in 1991. Simpson\textsuperscript{26} states that among the things that made a difference in the successful referendum was the use of research. He reports that the district distributed a questionnaire to determine the community's perceptions about the district before the vote.

Henry studied 42 South Carolina referenda campaigns between 1973 and 1980 to determine why bonds failed and why they passed. She includes surveying a community before a campaign in her list of factors that contribute to success.\textsuperscript{27}

Not all referenda campaigns that use communication research result in success, though. The Swanville School District in Minnesota used a professional polling firm to study how their community felt about their schools during a 1993 referendum. The bond failed. In his study of the vote, however, Lifto comments:

Although the school district contracted with a professional polling firm, the data were not available at the time the board actually passed the election resolution. For that reason, the board was not able to consider the spending and taxing appetite of the district residents or test the support for a particular proposal before scheduling the election and establishing the contents and structure of the ballot.\textsuperscript{28}

Lifto also presents a case study of a 1993 election in the Windville School District in Minnesota. That district also employed a professional polling firm to study how the community felt about their schools and related issues before the election. But according to the school superintendent, “By and large the [survey] information was disregarded. The board did not really use the knowledge.”\textsuperscript{29} Only one out of three questions passed; the two that lost were the most important.

\textit{Determining Community Attitudes and Perceptions – Year round}

The literature offers support for researching community attitudes year round and not just before an election. Bagin and Gallagher warn of the pitfall of communicating with a community only when a school district needs funds. That, they say, will create public distrust. They state that communication efforts should “be conducted on a year-round basis.”\textsuperscript{30} Further, communication research should play a key role in developing an effective communication program.

In a recount of how a school district in Rock Hill, SC, successfully passed a series of bonds, Baker says that it was important for the district to “maintain continuous two-

She further states that the district incorporated opinion polls in their communication programs.

Forde and Goodman offer a recount of a Mississippi school district that used communication research in its community relations program. The program allows community members to voice their opinions. The authors indicate that the program helped the district pass its bond referendum.

**Evaluating Support for the Referendum**

Communication research can also be used to determine if a community will support a referendum. For example, district personnel might administer a phone survey to determine how many “yes” voters they have in the community.

The North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction’s bond referendum manual suggests using a survey to estimate how many people would vote for the bond. In its suggested chronology of events, it states, “One week before the election: ...

Telephone survey is complete. The YES vote has been determined in each precinct.”

With respect to community surveys, Bauscher says, “There are three questions to ask: What do you like about our schools? What would you like to see improved in our district? Speaking as a voter, would you likely vote yes?” Similarly, Campbell states, “A survey of registered voters in your district is essential before you plan strategy for

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your campaign, to help you assess the amount of support you are likely to have and identify the issues which are important to voters.”

White-Pelton reports on a North Dakota school district that “hired an agency to conduct a random telephone survey of 500 people in the community to gauge public sentiment on the facilities use.” Similarly, Surrat recounts that a Florida school district also used a survey to determine if the community would support a 1986 bond referendum. He states, “Trying to assess community support [for the bond], the school board commissioned a telephone attitude survey … The random survey included questions on a wide variety of subjects, and subtly asked whether the voters would support a bond issue.”

Havard’s case study of a bond referendum in the George County (Mississippi) School District demonstrates that school officials are not the only ones who initiate communication research. In this referendum, a George County citizens’ group performed their own non-generalizable phone survey to determine if the community would support the bond. The study was independent of the school district’s activities. The results indicated that the community would support the bond. The citizens’ group used the findings to convince school officials to initiate a bond process. In response, the district proceeded with a referendum. The bond passed.

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And while Wood doesn’t form any conclusions regarding research, he does recommend that “School districts probably should hire an outside consultant or have a district expert who can survey the community to ascertain support levels before a decision to have a general obligation bond election is made.”

Henderson studied whether the campaign strategies identified in the 1960s and 1970s were being used in Colorado school districts in the 1980s. His findings do not address communication research directly. He does, however, recommend that future researchers undertake “a broad-based revisit to school elections to determine the pulse of the public vis-à-vis its willingness to support education through increased taxation.”

**Determining Bond Amounts**

Communication research can be used to determine what amount a community will be willing to pay. And while it can be argued that the needs of the school should, and often do, dictate the bond amount, the reality of how much a community will pay remains a consideration.

“It is essential to evaluate voter behavior, public opinion and the money issue well in advance of any formal move to put a funding proposal before the voters,” says Stanley. Similarly, Hanbury states that before beginning a campaign to raise taxes, “You must discover the answers to two important questions: What can the community afford? And what is the community willing to pay?”

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Weir contends that one of the goals of communication research is "to develop a questionnaire that can yield the data needed by the [school] board and management team to set the dollar amount that will receive favorable voter attention." In like manner, Funk contends, "It is impossible to determine absolute taxation thresholds beyond which the public absolutely will not support a bond issue, yet a good pre-referendum survey can be an excellent indicator of the degree to which taxpayers will support escalating dollar requests." Nehls also agrees, stating that his study shows survey use is predictive of success.

The Elk Grove Unified School District in California found out how important it is to determine what a community is willing to pay before initiating a referendum vote. After failing to pass a 1986 referendum, district personnel chose to survey the community. Among other things, they found that the community was willing to support the referendum up to a certain amount. Their 1986 referendum had exceeded that amount, and the community voted against it. The district put the referendum before the voters again in 1987. This time the bond amount was within the limits that the survey showed the community would support. The 1987 bond passed.

Like Elk Grove, the St. Croix (Wisconsin) School District faced a failed referendum. District officials chose to survey the community. They found that people

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supported the bond but felt the cost was too high. The district lowered the bond amount in a subsequent election. They were successful in the second election.47

Research and Campaign Design

Many people involved in bond referenda consider research results when designing their campaign activities. Walker states, “With the data provided by qualitative research based upon citizen input and public opinion, you can begin to craft appropriate marketing messages and bond referendum campaign strategies.”48 Similarly, Hanbury recommends that school districts “conduct a community awareness survey. A survey can help you determine community attitudes – attitudes you’ll want to consider when developing campaign strategies.”49

The North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction Manual states:

Focus groups and public opinion surveys can help districts plan their public information programs. It’s important to know how the community feels about the facility plan prior to the vote. These processes can often identify side issues and misconceptions that may affect your vote unless they are addressed in your written materials and community presentations.50

Bagin and Gallagher concur that surveys can reveal community misconceptions. They also state that surveys will help determine what kind of campaign to wage. And with that information, campaigns can be designed to effectively address the community’s

needs.\textsuperscript{51} Similarly, Funk states, "you will uncover [using a survey] the issues most important to a critical segment of the voting population …"\textsuperscript{52}

Regarding multiple surveys, Campbell states, "Many districts continue to survey during the final weeks of an election campaign as part of the strategy to identify problems and pinpoint needed election efforts."\textsuperscript{53}

The National School Public Relations Association reports, "Knowing the publics means uncovering voting blocs, researching attitudes toward the school program, and finding out how the publics form their attitudes."\textsuperscript{54} Funk goes a step further, cautioning, "Even if your district has extensive information on its voters, however, conducting your own survey of the voter attitudes still makes sense."\textsuperscript{55}

In their publication on how to successfully market school levies and bonds, Graham, Wise and Bachman assert that an understanding of a community "requires some type of market research, usually in the form of a survey…"\textsuperscript{56}

Case studies specifically supporting the use of research to help develop campaign messages and design are geographically sparse. Studies were found in only four states: Florida, Illinois, Minnesota and Ohio.

Kreiner, O’Callaghan and Moore report that the Olmsted Falls City School District in Ohio used a mail survey to elicit community feedback during a successful

1994 campaign. The questionnaire allowed people to state their opinions and vent frustrations regarding school issues. The district used the survey to uncover sources of contention so that they could be addressed. The authors say that the Olmsted Falls City School District sent questionnaires out to every residence in the community. The goal was to allow community members to state their feelings and offer suggestions.

School officials in another Ohio school district also used communication research to help guide their bond campaign. Knight and Lambert report that a Toledo, OH school district used a survey “to see how well the levy campaign was doing and to figure out what more we needed to do on the campaign to win.”

A Dade County, FL school district passed a $980 million bond in 1988. Research played a pivotal role in the campaign according to Krop. The research helped the district identify target audiences, develop effective campaign messages and determine public opinion. In one example of how the research was helpful, Krop states, “Naturally, we were afraid that retired people living on fixed incomes would oppose new taxes ... But were heartened when our surveys showed that senior citizens would support the bond issue if we convinced them it was needed.”

The three successful Illinois case studies report varying uses and types of research. In their 1988 campaign, Conyers and Frankl “obtained a list of registered voters and called every one of them to elicit opinions about the proposed bond issue. The

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answers determined our marketing strategy." Schanuel discusses a 1989 campaign where a telephone survey was used to pinpoint campaign issues. And though his district passed their referendum, Graves indicates that they did not have enough time and money to perform a voter survey during his district’s 1997 campaign. However, they did hold public forums and focus groups to gain a better understanding of the community’s issues and perspectives. Graves states that:

Your research, in turn, will serve several purposes. The first is to build a solid foundation as to the reason for having a referendum, the second is to arm your volunteers with persuasive reasons to urge taxpayers to vote ‘yes’ at the polls. The final one is to build as airtight a case as possible to thwart opponents.

The two Minnesota cases are similar in that each district held their referendum in 1993, employed professional research firms to survey their communities, and each passed their bond. They differ in the degree to which the districts utilized the survey results, though. The Albertville, MN district used the results to create the foundation for their campaign strategies, reports Lifto. He states that the Charlesville, MN district altered the timing of the election because of the survey results. The survey did not, however, impact the content of the referendum.

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Post-election Analysis

Bagin and Gallagher state that all too often, school districts only research their communities after a bond failure. In his report of the Elk Grove Unified School District in California, Funk offers support for Bagin and Gallagher’s position.

A Seattle, WA school district used a mail survey to determine why absentee voters had voted against a school bond referendum. The research resulted in a recommendation that the district match their campaign messaging in up-coming elections to the information found in the survey. And while the survey was not generalizable to the entire population, Calkins says, “The survey did not – could not – tell us exactly why the absentee voters voted no. But we did learn a great deal about where school people aren’t communicating and where our perceptions of our public image differs from reality.”

Carter cites the example of a colleague that used a self-select mail survey to determine why the school district’s last bond failed. He points out that the district used the results of the survey to alter future campaign strategies.

Utilizing a Research Firm or Trained Personnel

Mathison states that many districts use professional research firms to determine their community’s level of support.

“Enlist professional assistance. Work with a professional organization capable of collecting and processing data,” says Weir. Bagin and Gallagher caution that most

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school administrators are not trained or practiced in communication research and should, therefore, employ expert assistance.\textsuperscript{72}

Regarding surveys, a National School Public Relations Association publication warns, "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."\textsuperscript{73}

In contrast to the advice that professional personnel should perform communication research, Campbell states, "Polling and surveys once thought only possible by professional firms have become in recent years a comparatively common and integral part of most school districts' ongoing communications programs. Surveys frighten a lot of people, but there is really nothing magical about them."\textsuperscript{74}

COUNTER POSITIONS TO RESEARCH

According to the literature, education professionals don't always use communication research when trying to pass school bond referenda. The following case study synopses outline some of the documented successes.

Ross\textsuperscript{75} describes how a Colorado school district passed a referendum by 5,107 to 3,277 in 1982. Among other campaign techniques, they started the campaign early, analyzed past losses, created a citizens' committee and an election task force and targeted the "yes" voters.

In 1987 a Shawnee Mission, Kansas school district successfully passed a $13.5 million tax increase for school operating funds. According to Chopra,76 70 percent of the community voted for the bond. Again in 1987, 59 percent of the community approved a $21.5 million bond for facility improvements. Chopra says that the district’s success came from convincing the community of the need for funds, gathering community support and in giving people ample time to familiarize themselves with the bond issues.

A Princeton, NJ school district passed two bonds in seven years without using communication research. According to Houston, both bonds passed by a 5 to 1 ratio. “I maintain that the critical point in successfully passing a bond issue comes ... when you’re settling on the projects to be completed with bond funds. And in Princeton, it stems directly from involving the community in the process right from the beginning,” states Houston.77

Another school district in New Jersey also passed a bond by a vote of three to two, according to Swalm.78 He reports that the district’s success was due in large measure to a community-based effort. Swalm includes a referendum activity checklist in his article; in that list he includes a recommendation to identify “Other ‘yes’ voters identified by citizens committee, from records and research.”79 He does not elaborate on the reference to “research” or mention research in his article.

Polka provides the details of how a Western New York school district with a history of referendum defeats passed a bond in 1991. “... we were able, because of the

networking and because of bringing in many positive voters, to pass the bond referendum by a vote of 1,166 to 601,” he states.\(^8^0\)

Blanchfield\(^8^1\) reports on a New York school district that needed to quickly pass a referendum because of a roof collapse at an elementary school in 1994. He describes his involvement in the referendum as the district’s school business official. He offers advice on community involvement, finance, opposition and more. The district’s approach, one that did not involve communications research, resulted in the bond passing by a margin of 1,865 to 1,289.

Fielder reports that a Utah school district chose not to survey the community to determine its level of support for a 1994 bond referendum. Their action was prompted by advice from their campaign steering committee that “pesky telephone calls from the district would irritate citizens.”\(^8^2\) He does, however, acknowledge that the district had surveyed the community in regard to the bond referendum 18 months before the election. The district passed the referendum.

A 1989 Virginia bond referendum also passed without research. According to Greig, the district passed the bond with 79.4 percent of the community voting “yes.”\(^8^3\) The school district started the campaign early, involved many community members and emphasized school needs.

Hamel offers an account of how a Virginia school district won a bond referendum in 1981. Sixty and one half percent of the community voted “yes” in that election. “Why was the referendum so successful in the face of these difficulties? There


is no absolute answer … however, a review of some of our campaign features can provide some of the probable reasons,” says Hamel. Among others, those features included a grassroots campaign that involved the community and focused on the district’s needs.

Table 1 recaps the salient points discussed in this section’s case study synopses. The table entries correspond to the order the cases are presented above. References have been re-stated for convenience.

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## Successful School Bond Referenda That Did Not Utilize Communication Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Margin of Success</th>
<th>Case Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>61% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Ross(^ {85} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Kansas</td>
<td>59% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Chopra(^ {86} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 votes between</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Both votes passed</td>
<td>Houston(^ {87} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978 and 1985</td>
<td></td>
<td>five to one.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>The vote passed</td>
<td>Swalm(^ {88} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>three to two.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>65% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Polka(^ {89} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>59% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Blanchfield(^ {90} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Utah</td>
<td>60.5% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Fielder(^ {91} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for one question</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and 62% voted yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>for the other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>question.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>79.4% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Greig(^ {92} )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>60.5% voted “yes”</td>
<td>Hamel(^ {93} )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter one of this study discusses the importance of school bond referenda in New Jersey. Chapter two discusses the related literature. And while it acknowledges that referenda can pass without research, it also points out that many school districts employed research techniques to help them pass their bonds.

This study sought to determine the roles and prevalence of communication research in successful school bond referenda in Southern New Jersey school districts. The study also sought to determine the extent to which the research findings are reflected in the school districts' bond campaigns. In so doing, it sought to offer insight into the importance, or lack thereof, of communication research as a tool to be used in assisting people to pass school bond referenda.

Case Study Analysis

This study presents a case study analysis of the school bond referenda documents from two school districts in Southern New Jersey: Sterling Regional High School and Egg Harbor Township. Each of these districts utilized communication research in their campaigns, and each was successful in passing its referendum.

Information for this study was collected from:

a. ProQuest Digital Dissertations – electronic database accessed through Rowan University’s Campbell Library,

b. ERIC – electronic database accessed through Rowan University’s Campbell Library,
c. Education Full Text – electronic database accessed through Rowan University’s Campbell Library,

d. Publications in general circulation at Rowan University’s Campbell Library,

e. The Communication Institute at Rowan University’s files,

f. The files available from each of the two school districts,

g. School officials interviewed for this study.

Each case study includes:

a. A brief introduction to the district and the referendum under consideration,

b. The results of an in-depth, in-person interview with a school official that related to research. One case study also includes an interview with a public relations contractor who was involved in the communication research for that district. Because the interviews served as much to educate this researcher on the history of the referendum as well as the role of communication research in same, the case study section only outlines the results of the interview results that relate to communication research. Complete copies of the interviews are included in this report’s appendices.

c. A summary of the findings from the communication research. Each finding was assigned a code. The codes were then assigned in varying combinations to each document considered. Listing codes at the end of each document analysis prevents the reader from having to repetitively review the narrative accompanying the findings.
d. A list of research roles identified in the case study. Each research role identified by this author was introduced and codified. The codes were then assigned in varying combinations to each document considered. Listing codes at the end of each document analysis prevents the reader from having to repetitively review the narrative accompanying the roles.

e. A comparative analysis of the research findings/recommendations against each of the districts' campaign elements obtained by this researcher, e.g., correspondence, flyers, posters, media clips, videotape, meeting minutes, etc. Each analysis contains:

i. A brief restatement of its content,

ii. A determination of whether any of the communication research findings and/or recommendations relate to the document content. Content was found to “relate” to the findings and/or recommendations if this researcher reasoned that an action or outcome was sought, or brought about, on the basis of those findings and/or recommendations. To illustrate, take the example of a recommendation that a school district should involve the community in the process of deciding how to address the lack of classroom space in a local high school. If a letter was sent to a community member inviting him/her to join a citizen task force charged with making recommendations to school officials regarding those conditions, the content of the letter relating to the proposed task force would be found to relate to the
recommendation. Similarly, if a newspaper article reported on the actions of that citizen task force, the content regarding the group and its actions would be found to relate to the recommendation. However, if the article also contained a discussion of a defeated prior bond, that content would not be found to relate to the recommendation. Copies of available campaign material, other than media clips, are included in this study’s appendices.

iii. A determination of the research roles reflected in the content –

This researcher considered roles as broad categories of use for the research findings. For example, consider a referendum to replace a badly leaking roof in a high school. Now consider research findings that indicate the public believes the roof is too new to need replacing. If a flier was produced thereafter that highlights the roof’s age and associated problems, the research role would be classified as “Identifying misperceptions and understandings.” In another example, consider a survey that indicates community members will support a bond referendum that costs them an additional $100/yr in taxes to make improvements to a middle school. If a poster was displayed outlining that the cost of the referendum is within that limit, the role of research would be classified as “Identifying what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost.”
iv. For written documents, a count of all the lines of copy found to relate to the research findings/recommendations was made.

v. For videotaped material, every minute of tape was reviewed. The minutes found to relate to the research findings/recommendations were counted.

Each case study concludes with two charts that compile the results of all the documents that were considered. The first chart shows the line item or minute count of the content that relates to the research findings and/or recommendations. A total percentage was then calculated. The second chart shows the research roles determined by this observer and the number of times those roles appear in the documents.
Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Following a case study format, this chapter reports on the roles and prevalence of communication research in two successful school bond referenda: Sterling Regional High School and Egg Harbor Township School District. Both districts are located in Southern New Jersey, and each contracted with Rowan University’s Communication Institute for public relations consulting. The referenda passed in both studies (see Table 7 below).

### Table 7: Referenda Results For Case Studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Vote Date</th>
<th>Questions Within Referenda</th>
<th>Bond Amount</th>
<th>Vote Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sterling Regional</td>
<td>3/9/99</td>
<td>1. Additions and renovations to high school</td>
<td>$5.8 million</td>
<td>1,807 – yes 769 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Athletic facility and performing art improvements</td>
<td>$3.2 million</td>
<td>1,612 – yes 943 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg Harbor Township</td>
<td>3/28/00</td>
<td>1. Repairs and renovations to elementary schools</td>
<td>$18.1 million</td>
<td>2,033 – yes 655 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Additions to high school and elementary school</td>
<td>$16.5 million</td>
<td>1,897 – yes 790 – no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. New elementary school</td>
<td>$21.8 million</td>
<td>1,771 – yes 906 – no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the following two case studies contain the following sections:

- Case study introduction – A brief case overview,
- In-depth interview results that relate to research – Administrators from each school district and a public relations consultant in one instance were interviewed to educate this researcher about the referendum.

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interviews also serve to confirm the district’s use of communication research and how the interviewee perceived the research. Only the interview sections relating to research are included in this section of the case study. Full transcripts are provided in this report’s appendices,

- Communication Research Contract Review and Research Findings – A discussion of the contract(s) for communication research between the school district and the public relations firm. The details of the work to be provided are presented,

- A review of the research roles identified,

- A comparative analysis of the research findings/recommendations against each of the districts’ campaign documents obtained by this researcher, e.g., correspondence, flyers, posters, media clips, videotape, meeting minutes, etc.
STERLING REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL CASE STUDY

Introduction

The Sterling Regional High School is located in Somerdale, NJ. It has three sending districts: Magnolia, Somerdale and Stratford.

In 1998, school officials tried to pass an $11.6 million bond referendum for additions, renovations and upgrades. The vote was held, and defeated, on January 6, 1998; 522 residents voted “yes,” and 1,198 voted “no.”

NOTE: Sterling’s records indicate the vote took place on January 12, 1998. This researcher attributes that discrepancy to the New Jersey School Boards Administration making an incorrect date entry in their records.

Following the defeat, school officials chose to initiate another election. They scheduled the election for March 9, 1999. Sterling personnel retained Rowan University’s Communication Institute to serve as a public relations consultant. This time the bond passed (see Table 7 above).

In-depth Interview Results That Relate to Communication Research

The following are excerpts regarding communication research taken from an interview with Gary Kasprack (see Appendix A.1.), Sterling Regional High School Superintendent. The following numbers correspond to those in the interview transcript. Kasprack’s answers are italicized.

Interview question number “11” – Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum?

- School planning: Dr. Frank Johnson – educational planner.

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• Finance: No.

• Public Relations: *ie communication.*

• Other: *Design Collaborative – architects.*

Interview question number “20” – Was any public opinion research performed?

1998 no; 1999 yes.

• Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? *Absolutely.*

• If public opinion was performed, at what stage of the bond referendum process was it employed?
  
  o  Formative, *Yes.*
  
  o  Monitoring, *Yes.*
  
  o  Evaluative, *No.*

• If public opinion research was used, who performed it? *ie communication – public relations consultants.*

NOTE: The above answers reflect the fact that Rowan University’s Communication Institute subcontracted out certain work to a public relations firm – *ie communication.*

The following are excerpts regarding communication research taken from an interview with Paula Hoffman (see Appendix A.2.). Hoffman served as an independent contractor retained by *ie communication* to perform public relations work during the 1998 and 1999 bond campaigns. The following numbers correspond to those in the interview transcript. Hoffman’s answers are italicized.
Interview question number “2” – Were the public audiences predisposed to passing the referenda?

*The audiences were not predisposed to pass the 3/2/99 referendum. Creation of a task force was critical for success. Its creation was one of the Communication Institute’s first objectives. It had three sub-committees: program, facility and finance. Those sub-committees researched and discussed ways to improve the high school. They collected views from parents, teachers and seniors. Doing so differentiated the 1999 campaign from the one in 1998. Community input was not sought in the 1998 campaign. The task force was well represented by community members. By 1999, the campaign was being driven by community rather than business values and opinions.*

Interview question number “10” – Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum?

- School planning: *Yes. Task Force program sub-committee.*
- Finance: *Yes. Task Force finance sub-committee.*
- Facility: *Yes. Task Force facility sub-committee.*
- Public Relations: *Yes. Rowan University’s Communication Institute.*

Interview question number “18” – Was any public opinion research performed? *Yes.*

- Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? *Yes.*
- If public opinion was performed, at what stage of the bond referendum process was it employed?
  - Formative, *Yes. First survey.*
- Monitoring, Yes. Second survey.
- Evaluative. Interviewer did not note an answer to this question.

If public opinion research was used, who performed it? Rowan University's Communication Institute.

In connection with question “18” above, the following general information was obtained from Ms. Hoffman regarding her understanding of the surveys used in the campaigns:

**FIRST SURVEY**
- Tests community’s information channels (where they receive their information from),
- Tests community’s opinions and values,
- Determines what tax increases the community will bear,
- Tests the referendum plans, e.g., construction or renovation plans,
- Tests community knowledge of referendum issues,
- Tests community’s values, e.g., community’s pride in school system

**SECOND SURVEY**
- Determines current support/non-support,
- Repeats test for community knowledge of referendum issues,
- Repeats community opinion test,
- Determines if campaign messages were received.
Interview question number "21" – Please answer the following questions regarding your campaign strategy(ies) for the bond referenda in #1 above.

“b.” Did you collect information from internal or external audiences that was then used to structure the campaign? Yes. Determined by polling community values.

“i.” Were the following public audiences identified?

- Parents with school age children: Yes. Through first survey.
- Parents of children no longer in school: Yes. Through first survey.
- Parents with pre-school children: Yes. Through first survey.
- Non-parents: Yes. Through first survey.
- Parents of children in private schools: Yes. Through first survey.

**Communication Research Contract Review and Research Findings**

This researcher obtained a contract between Sterling Regional High School and Rowan University’s Communication Institute dated March 30, 1998. It calls for Rowan to have performed a “three-part public relations/information program for Sterling High School culminating in a fall referendum.”98 With regard to research (one of the three functions), Rowan personnel were to determine what happened in the failed 1998 referendum, and how well the people were informed about the bond and the community’s attitudes. They were also to determine what messages worked, and what might work in future, and how best for the board to present its position to the communities.

The contract calls for Rowan personnel to perform two telephone surveys of community members in each of the three communities. One of those surveys was to be

performed one week before the vote in order to project its outcome. Rowan personnel were also to conduct meetings with focus groups.

The research, per the contract, was to form a base line for the task force work that would “empower and involve task force members to create a plan to propose a referendum.” “In essence, these task force members will become a research extension of the school board.”

For the May 4, 1998 telephone survey (The follow-up survey report for the work to have been done a week before the March 9, 1999 vote was never located.) the Communication Institute at Rowan University personnel reported\textsuperscript{99} the following survey characteristics:

- The sample was randomized and stratified,
- The survey had +/- four percent margin of error at the .05 confidence level,
- The survey was performed between May 4, 1998 and May 7, 1998.

The following are selected survey findings and recommendations\textsuperscript{100} from Rowan University’s final survey report. The preceding codes, e.g., “SR1,” “SR2,” etc., will be referred to throughout this case study. Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying the findings and/or recommendations:

SR1 – 68.5% would support a $75/year tax increase,

SR2 – Nearly 25% wanted more information,

SR3 – Improvements/repairs/renovations directly related to the physical facility or academic instruction were favored,

SR4 – Roof, ventilation, air conditioning, windows, doors and science rooms were considered most important,

SR5 – Residents viewed the auditorium as less important than the repairs directly related to the physical facility,

SR6 – Repairs and upgrades to the TV studio and weight room received little support. The community considered them “frills.”

SR7 – Since nearly 25% of the voters wanted more bond information, Rowan University personnel recommended a stronger campaign,

SR8 – Because a base of residents who supported the community existed, Rowan University personnel recommended that community groups should be formed to get campaign messages out. Getting campaign messages out was especially important since many residents did not have children in school,

SR9 – Rowan University personnel recommended separating direct repair and renovation questions from the athletic facility upgrades because the latter were considered “frills,”

SR10 – 78.8% of the community felt class size was an “important” to “very important” item.
The following are additional selected survey findings located in a printout of a PowerPoint presentation prepared by Rowan University. The preceding codes, e.g., “PP1,” “PP2,” etc., will be referred to throughout this case study. Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying the findings:

PP1 – The majority of respondents valued keeping the class size at a maximum of 25 students,

PP2 – The majority of respondents were not going to have children in Sterling High School in the next three years,

PP3 – The majority of respondents felt the physical condition of the building was fair or good,

PP4 – 26% said the tax impact was the number one reason for voting down the last bond,

PP5 – Many respondents desired to be part of the decision-making process,

PP6 – Many respondents felt a distance from the administration and board of education,

PP7 – Most respondents were unaware of the school’s physical problems because they had not been in the building for years,

PP8 – The community was not convinced of the need for the bond,

PP9 – Some respondents felt the failed campaign would have benefited from more parental involvement and increased community awareness and involvement.

Research Roles Identified in the Case Study

This researcher determined that communication research in the Sterling bond referendum was used to:

R1 – Identify the community’s values, e.g., having input in the decision-making process,

R2 – Identify the need for a structured flow of information between the community and the board of education and administration,

R3 – Identify the need to target certain campaign messages,

R4 – Identify what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost,

R5 – Identify community perceptions and beliefs, e.g., perception of the building’s condition, overcrowding, etc,

R6 – Identify the community’s understanding of the issues.

In the document analysis that follows, and if applicable, the “R” codes listed above will be assigned in varying combinations to each document under consideration. Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying each role.

Comparison of Referendum Video Footage to the Research Findings

A nine-minute informational video\textsuperscript{103} was prepared to explain why Sterling High School needs money. Dave Tannenbaum, Sterling High School Principal, narrated it.

The video begins with aerial footage of the building in 1960 vs. 1990. The viewer sees that little has changed during that time.

Next, Tannenbaum points out that the visually appealing exterior conditions of the building and landscape do not reflect the conditions inside. He explains that Sterling lost 11 classrooms to guidance, computer rooms and other areas. He states they will need additional space or they will be forced to stagger sessions and use portable classrooms.

Footage is then shot of the following:

a. Outdated, over-crowded science labs that have never been renovated,
b. Cheerleaders being forced to practice in the halls. They also must practice as late as 11:00 p.m.,
c. The wrestling team having to practice in the cafeteria,
d. The basketball team having to practice as early as 6:00 am and as late as 10:00 pm,
e. An outdated media center,
f. Outdated and poorly functioning heating, air conditioning and ventilation equipment. Tannenbaum points out that the classrooms don’t get enough heat and fresh air,
g. The poor condition of the roof,
h. An outdated cinder track which presents a safety hazard because of a rusty metal lip that protrudes up along the sides,
i. The outdated electrical service.

Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this section of the footage relates to “PP2,” “PP3,” “PP7” and “PP8.” In other words, this section of the videotape relates to the following research findings contained in Rowan University’s report of the telephone survey:
The majority of respondents were not going to have children in Sterling High School in the next 3 years,

The majority of respondents felt the physical condition of the building was fair or good,

Most respondents were unaware of the school’s physical problems because they had not been in the building for years,

The community was not convinced of the need for the bond.

The research codes are explained here to familiarize the reader with their use. Only the codes will be used for the remainder of this paper.

Tannenbaum also discusses the community task force that the school district implemented following the defeat of the 1998 bond. He states that the task force studied the school’s situation, worked with staff and design people and saw outdated science labs, a leaky roof, crowded classrooms and an over-used gym. The task force, he said, was made up of parents, teachers, community leaders and senior citizens. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this section of the videotape relates to “SR2,” “SR7,” “SR8,” “PP5,” “PP6” and “PP9.”

Tannenbaum then outlines the following recommendations that were made by the task force:

a. Referendum question number one – $ 5.8 million:
   i. 6 new science labs,
   ii. 2 new general classrooms,
   iii. Renovate old science labs into classrooms,
   iv. Re-engineer HVAC,
v. Expand media center,

vi. New doors,

vii. New fiber optic hardware.

b. Referendum question number two – $3.2 million:

i. New gym,

ii. Outdoor lights for football field,

iii. Renovate fitness center,

iv. New all-weather track,

v. Band, chorus, drama facilities,

vi. School store,

vii. Fees and furniture.

These recommendations resulted in the following per-household tax impact examples of referendum questions one and two. The home values reflect average home values in the three sending districts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions One and Two</th>
<th>Question One</th>
<th>Question Two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia - $80,000 house:</td>
<td>$28/yr</td>
<td>$45/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerdale - $87,000 house:</td>
<td>$36/yr</td>
<td>$58/yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford - $104,000 house:</td>
<td>$40/yr</td>
<td>$65/yr</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rowan University’s community survey indicates that the community would bear an average annual tax increase of $75/yr. Therefore, the recommended referendum questions reflect what projects the community was willing to support and at what cost. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and
This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.” Like the codes used for Rowan University’s research findings and recommendations, the roles of communication research have also been codified. In this instance, this researcher found that the Sterling videotape provides evidence for all of the research roles. Therefore, all role codes have been referenced in this instance:

R1 – Identify the community’s values, e.g., having input in the decision-making process,

R2 – Identify the need for a structured flow of information between the community and the board of education and administration,

R3 – Identify the need to target certain campaign messages,

R4 – Identify what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost,

R5 – Identify community perceptions and beliefs, e.g., perception of the building’s condition, overcrowding, etc,

R6 – Identify the community’s understanding of the issues.

The codes are explained here to familiarize the reader with their use. Only the codes will be used for the remainder of this paper.

A total of nine minutes of videotape footage was reviewed. Eight and one half of those nine minutes (94.4%) relate to Rowan University’s research findings.
Comparison of General Correspondence to the Research Findings

1. February, 1998 draft letter from Gary Kasprack, school superintendent, to community members regarding the creation of a community group (see Appendix A.3.).
   a. This is a draft of a letter to community members following the January 1998 bond referendum defeat. Kasprack was inviting community members to a meeting to talk about creating a group that would study the school’s needs and make recommendations to the board of education. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP8,” “PP9,” “SR7” and “SR8.”
   b. Eight of 13 lines of copy relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

2. Undated letter of invitation from the board of education president to selected community members (see Appendix A.4.).
   a. The letter discusses the January 12, 1998 bond defeat and the fact that the board of education is beginning another initiative. The board of education president was seeking 18 to 20 residents to serve on a task force that would research school issues and make recommendations regarding change. It explains that the board’s objective is to find solutions that the community will accept. Of the Rowan University research findings and
recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP8,” “PP9,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

b. 27 of 27 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

3. May 7, 1998 letter inviting community members to participate in the then upcoming focus groups (see Appendix A.5.).

a. Rowan University’s Communication Institute sent the letter to selected community members. It invites people to attend focus groups to discuss the school district’s needs. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP8,” “PP9” and “SR7.”

b. 22 of 22 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

4. January 7, 1999 letter from David Tannenbaum, Sterling High School Principal, to selected community members (see Appendix A.6.).

a. The letter is an invitation to a community member who expressed an interest in the bond referendum to participate in the first campaign work session. The letter explains that the invitee will be given the chance to volunteer for specific tasks related to task force activities. The invitee’s help was solicited at a recent school function: “Back to School Night.” The document also outlines the citizen task force’s recommendations to
the board of education regarding structure and cost of the referendum to be put before the voters. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP8,” “PP9,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

b. The document also outlines the recommendations made by the task force. Those recommendations were based on the community’s values and opinions relating to what the bond money would be used for and how much would be spent. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1” and all “SR” codes.

c. 49 of 49 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

5. March 4, 1998 letter from Sterling Education Association to its members (see Appendix A.7.).

a. The document solicits support from the teachers and support staff for the then upcoming bond election. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “SR7.”

b. The document also outlines some of the recommendations made by the task force. Those recommendations factored in the community’s values and opinions relating to what the bond money would be used for. It did not, however, address how much would be spent. Of the Rowan
University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP5,” “PP6” and “SR2” through “SR10.”

c. Ten of 19 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

6. Four-part Information packet handed out to attendees at a September 15, 1998 school function (see Appendix A.8.).


i. This letter advises parents about the Citizens Advisory Task Force, its structure and purpose. It invites them to participate in examining the issues and gives administration and Task Force contact for information. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

ii. Fifteen of 15 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

iii. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

b. Agenda for the evening.

i. The document outlines the night’s task force committee updates and chairperson nominations. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above,
this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

ii. Nine of 10 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

iii. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

c. Copy of first page of the Citizen Task Force bylaws.
   i. The document provides an overview of the task force, including purpose, authority, structure and list of members. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

   ii. 37 of 37 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

   iii. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

d. Copy of 7/9/98 Courier Post article titled “Task force to guide Sterling’s growth.” See number “1” under the “Comparison of Media Clips to the Research Findings” section below for an overview of this document and its relationships to Rowan University's research findings.

7. “Attention Parents!” Flyer (see Appendix A.9.).

   a. This document shows how much additional aid for debt service the state was offering. That aid would have offset a portion of the community’s financial obligation. The flyer states that the then current bond structure would cost the community even less because of the state aid. Of the
Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP4.”

b. The document outlines the recommendations made by the task force, e.g., the two-question bond referendum. Those recommendations factored in the community’s values and opinions relating to what the bond money would be used for and how much would be spent. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR2,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR7,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

c. 35 of 40 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

8. “BOND REFERENDUM VOTE” flier (see Appendix A.10.).
a. This document was sent to remind people of vote times and places. It contains an endorsement by the Sterling Education Association. The document also outlines the recommendations made by the task force, e.g., the two-question bond referendum. Those recommendations factored in the community’s values and opinions relating to what the bond money would be used for and how much would be spent. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR2,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

b. 37 of 40 lines of copy relate to the research findings.
c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

9. Undated informational flyer (see Appendix A.11.).

a. The document shows a pictorial of how Sterling High School looks better on the outside than on the inside, e.g., leaky roof, outdated science labs, failure of HVAC system to maintain reasonable temperatures. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this section of the document section relates to “PP2,” “PP3” and “PP7.”

b. The flyer also recaps the citizen task force creation and shows its recommendations for repairs and upgrades, and how public opinion influenced its actions. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

c. The flier shows the impact of the tax increase on the community. It also references Rowan’s survey research and the community’s willingness to pay an additional $75/yr. It describes the projects, related costs and the format of the referendum questions. The document also addresses the consequences of bond failure. A statement is included to the effect that senior citizens and disabled community members will not be affected by the tax increase. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section
relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

d. 169 of 198 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

10. Undated “question and answer” flyer (see Appendix A.12.).

a. The document discusses what the bond money will be used to fund and what the cost will be. It also discusses the referendum question format and Sterling’s increasing student enrollment. As presented, these matters reflect the community’s opinions and values. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

b. The document explains the involvement of the citizen task force and how its members used public opinion to guide the decision-making process. It also offers an endorsement from the chairman of the citizen task force regarding the need for the referendum. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

c. 223 of 296 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”
11. Reminder to vote card (see Appendix A.13.).
   a. This is an invitation to attend a community meeting to discuss the bond
      and its impact on taxes. The document points out where people can get
      information, including a video presentation of school conditions and
      school tours. It also reminds people when to vote. Of the Rowan
      University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and
      40 above, this document relates to “SR2.”
   b. 27 of 27 lines of copy relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41
      above, this document provides evidence for “R2.”

12. Sterling High School Bond Presentation dated February 25, 1999 (see Appendix
    A.14.).
   a. This document includes a list of task force members’ names. Of the
      Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages
      39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,”
      “SR7” and “SR8.”
   b. The document also illustrates what projects the community would support
      and at what tax level increases according to Rowan University’s
      community survey. It also outlines the two pending bond questions and
      their tax impacts. Of the Rowan University research findings and
      recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section
      relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”
   c. 91 of 91 lines of copy relate to the research findings.
d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. Page two outlines the formation and the work of the community task force and invites people to get involved. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2” and “SR7.”

b. Page two outlines the pending bond questions. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR8,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

c. The document also presents the Rowan University community survey finding that 46% of the community would approve a $75/yr tax increase. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “SR1.”

d. Page two invites community members to tour the facility. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP2,” “PP3,” “PP7” and “PP8.”

e. 87 of 315 lines of copy relate directly to the research findings.

f. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

Fifteen general correspondence documents (two are contained within one
document) were reviewed in total. Of the 1,199 lines of copy reviewed, 846 (70.56%) relate to Rowan University’s research findings.

Comparison of Media Clips to the Research Findings

   a. This article provides an overview of the citizen task force and illustrates the fact that it came into being as a result of the defeated bond. It also outlines the task force’s structure and purpose. The article explains that Rowan University performed a survey on behalf of Sterling High School. It also discusses the survey finding that community members feel they didn’t have any input in the decision-making process during the last referendum. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”
   b. 84 of 87 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

2. October 4, 1998 – Courier Post – “Sterling advised to present scaled-down expansion plan.”
   a. The article outlines the rationale for the task force’s recommendations for a revised referendum. It discusses the scope and cost of the plan. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages

\[^{106}\text{Winter, C. A. (1998, October 4) Sterling advised to present scaled-down expansion plan. Courier-Post, 17A.}\]
39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP1,” “PP4,” “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

b. 73 of 123 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. This article addresses the task force’s internal disagreements over how to structure the referendum scope of work, the cost and the questions to be put before the voters. Some task force members wanted one question, while others, citing Rowan’s research, wanted two. Those who wanted two questions argued that the research indicated the district had a better chance of passing the referendum if the bond items with the most support were separated from the others. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” and “SR2” through “SR10.”

b. 93 of 107 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. This article reflects that the task force presented its findings and recommendations to The Sterling Regional School Board. Of the Rowan

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University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

b. The piece discusses the fact that the bond amount is $2.6 million less than the referendum that was voted down. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP4.”

c. The article also discusses the per-household tax impact of the task force’s proposal and the projects the bond would cover. The two-question referendum format that will be put before the voters is also outlined. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

d. 97 of 97 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

e. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. This article announces that community members will vote on a two-question bond referendum on March 9, 1999. It outlines the questions and the resulting per-household tax impact. The piece also mentions that the proposed referendum is $2 million less than the one that was voted down. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on

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pages 39 and 40 above, this document relates to “PP1,” “PP4” and all “SR” codes.

b. 46 of 46 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

6. February 5, 1999 – Courier Post – “State aid may help Sterling win referendum OK.”

   a. This article discusses that Sterling will be eligible for aid for debt service backing from the State of New Jersey. That backing would defray some of the debt load that citizens would bear. Fifteen percent of the debt that Sterling’s communities would have had to pay for repairs and renovations to the school would be paid for by the state. The piece mentions Rowan’s survey results of the tax increase people are willing to bear and the fact that the proposed bond is $2.6 million less than the referendum that was voted down. It also outlines the proposed bond’s per-household tax impact. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP4.”

   b. The article mentions the details of the two-question bond format that will be put before the community for a vote. It also states that the citizen task force members designed the referendum. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP4,” “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9” and all “SR” codes.

c. 83 of 83 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

d. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “RI” through “R6.”


a. The article discusses how the district is trying to pass a $9 million bond following the defeat of an $11.6 million bond the year before. Further, it references that state aid is expected to offset much of the cost. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP4.”

b. The piece also mentions the task force and how that task force designed a referendum that would be acceptable to the community. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

c. The article also outlines some of the rationale for the bond, e.g., rising enrollment, what projects the bond will fund and what the per-household tax impact was expected to be. It also discusses the two referendum questions that will be put before the voters. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

d. 116 of 116 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

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e. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. A science teacher at Sterling High School urges people to pass the referendum. The letter discusses how the outside of the school makes conditions look better than they really are. He cites decaying gas lines, substandard electrical service and plumbing and heating problems. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP2,” “PP3,” “PP7” and “PP8.”

b. In the same letter, the science teacher acknowledges his “disgust” with taxes, but urges people to think of the financial consequences of not addressing the poor school conditions. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP4.”

c. The letter also outlines the two referendum questions that will be put before the voters. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “SR1,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR7,” “SR8,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

d. 32 of 64 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

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112 Randazzo, J. V. (1999, March 4) Vote ‘Yes-Yes’ for school quality at Sterling [Letter to the Editor]. *Courier-Post.* 15A.
e. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”


a. The article states that the voters passed a two-part, $9 million bond. Question 1, physical repair and upgrades, passed by a margin of 1,807 to 769. Question 2, athletic facilities and performing arts repairs and upgrades, passed by a margin of 1,612 to 943. The piece also discusses the per-household tax impact of both questions, increasing enrollment and state aid for debt service. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP4,” “SR1,” “SR2,” “SR3,” “SR4,” “SR5,” “SR6,” “SR9” and “SR10.”

b. 59 of 73 lines of copy (including title) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

A total of nine media clips were reviewed. Of the 796 lines of copy reviewed, 683 (85.80%) relate to Rowan University’s research findings.

**Comparison of the Task Force Communications and Files with the Research Findings**

“Because there is a solid base of residents who think there is a positive level of community support in the surrounding towns, community groups should be formed to

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work with the school board and administration to help relay information to voters," states the research report\textsuperscript{114} from Rowan University. The importance of this research-based recommendation is reiterated in the interview with Paula Hoffman, public relations subcontractor hired by Rowan University to assist with the Sterling referendum. “Creation of a task force was critical for success. Its creation was one of the Communication Institute’s (Rowan University) first objectives. By March 2, 1999, the campaign was being driven by the community rather than business values and opinions,” states Hoffman (See Appendix A.2., question number 2).

Based on Rowan University’s recommendation, school administrators created a citizen task force to study the needs of the school and offer suggestions for how to address those issues. As such, it can be argued that all of the task force’s activities can be related to research. Nonetheless, the following analysis considers to what extent the task force based their reasoning and actions on the research findings and recommendations from Rowan University.

1. Undated question and answer piece explaining the task force, its creation by the school board, its purpose and makeup (see Appendix A.15.).

   a. This was sent to potential task force members as an enclosure with the letter in #1 above. Its purpose is to answer some of the more commonly asked questions regarding the task force. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9,” “SR2,” “SR7” and “SR8.”

b. 34 of 34 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

2. Task Force Meeting Minutes – October 19, 1998 (see Appendix A.16.).
   a. Rowan University’s Communication Institute prepared the report. Anthony Fulginiti, executive director, served as lead facilitator during the meeting. The meeting began with a review of Rowan’s research findings. The attendees then debated four referendum models that might be put before the voters. The models differed in the bond amount, scope of work and number of questions within each. The following is a brief overview of the models:

   i. Model 1 - $11 million, one question – It is basically the same as the referendum that was voted down in January, 1998.

   ii. Model 2 - $9 million, one question – It is basically Model 1 without certain items that research showed the voters did not strongly support.

   iii. Model 3 - $9 million, two questions:

      1. Question #1 – $5.8 million for:

         a. Two new classrooms.

         b. Upgrades for six science labs.

         c. Library expansion.

         d. Roof and technology.
e. Various upgrades and physical repairs not related to performing arts or athletic facilities.

2. Question #2 – $3.2 million for:
   a. Performing arts upgrades and improvements.
   b. Athletic upgrades and improvements.

   NOTE: voters would not have been able to vote for question #2 without approving question #1.

iv. $5.8 million, one question – Question #1 from model 3.

The report discusses the debate, the process of resolution and the attendees’ decision to proceed with model 3 – the one that research indicated the community would value most. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 39 and 40 above, this document section relates to “PP1,” “PP5,” “PP6,” “PP9” and all “SR” codes.

b. 74 of 74 lines of copy relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 41 above, this document provides evidence for “R1” through “R6.”

Two task force documents were reviewed in total. Of the 108 lines of copy reviewed, 108 (100%) relate to Rowan University’s research findings.

Sterling Case Study Conclusion

A summary of how much all of the Sterling High School bond referendum documentation relates to the communication research performed by Rowan University is shown in Table 8 below.
Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Category</th>
<th>Type of Unit of Analysis Considered</th>
<th>Total Units of Analysis Considered</th>
<th>Units of Analysis Relating to Research</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Videotape Footage</td>
<td>Minutes of videotape</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Videotape</td>
<td>Minutes of videotape</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Correspondence</td>
<td>Lines of copy</td>
<td>1,199</td>
<td>846</td>
<td>70.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Clips</td>
<td>Lines of copy</td>
<td>796</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>85.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Force</td>
<td>Lines of copy</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total general, media and task force</td>
<td>Lines of copy</td>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>1,637</td>
<td>77.84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 above illustrates that the majority, 77.84%, of the document content in Sterling’s bond campaign relates to the research.

As for the roles communication research played in the twenty-seven documents under consideration, six were identified. Table 9 below summarizes those findings.

There is no material difference in the number of times each of the six roles appears in the documentation.
## Frequency Totals of Research Roles Identified

In the Sterling Documentation

### Table 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Document Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the community’s values, e.g., having input in the decision-making process</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the need for a structured flow of information between the community and the board of education and administration</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the need to target certain campaign messages</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify community perceptions and beliefs, e.g., perception of the building’s condition, overcrowding, etc.</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the community’s understanding of the issues.</td>
<td>Videotape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EGG HARBOR TOWNSHIP CASE STUDY

Introduction

Egg Harbor Township is located in Atlantic County, NJ.

Faced with rising enrollment\textsuperscript{115} and the need for repairs and renovations to their facilities, school officials decided to hold a $56.4 million referendum election on March 28, 2000.\textsuperscript{116} The bond passed. According to the New Jersey School Boards Association, these are the results of the referendum:\textsuperscript{117}

- The question on repairs and renovations to three elementary schools passed by a margin of 2,033 to 655.
- The question on additions to the high school and elementary schools passed by a margin of 1,897 to 790.
- The question on building a new elementary school passed by a margin of 1,771 to 906.

School officials contracted with a public relations consultant, Rowan University's Communication Institute,\textsuperscript{118} on October 19, 1999 to help them secure support from the voters. The contract included provisions for communications research to determine public opinion.

In part, school officials contracted with Rowan University because they did not feel the voters were predisposed to passing the bond. According to Dr. Joy Miller,

\textsuperscript{115} Personal interview, Dr. Joy Miller, Egg Harbor Township Assistant School Superintendent, February 25, 2002. Appendix B.1., question 5.f.
\textsuperscript{116} Personal interview, Dr. Joy Miller, Egg Harbor Township Assistant School Superintendent, February 25, 2002. Appendix B.1., questions 1.a.
assistant school superintendent, the voters understood the school district faced a growing population. She did not, however, believe they understood the need for the building projects.\textsuperscript{119}

\textbf{In-depth Interview Results That Relate to Communication Research}

The following are excerpts regarding communication research taken from an interview with Dr. Joy Miller (see Appendix B.1.), Egg Harbor Township School District Assistant School Superintendent. The numbers correspond to those in the interview transcript. Miller’s answers are italicized.

Interview question number “11” – Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum planning, execution, and monitoring or evaluating stages?

\begin{enumerate}
\item School planning: \textit{Dr. White, strategic planning committee. Also, Dr. Miller led parents, community members, staff, and board of education in analyzing the school’s needs.}
\item Finance: \textit{No.}
\item Public Relations: \textit{Rowan University’s Communication Institute.}
\item Other: One architect was used for the population extrapolation. \textit{Another architect was used for the building projects.}
\end{enumerate}

Interview question number “20” – Was any public opinion research performed? \textit{Yes.}

\begin{enumerate}
\item Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? \textit{Yes.}
\end{enumerate}

\textsuperscript{119} Personal interview, Dr. Joy Miller, Egg Harbor Township Assistant School Superintendent, February 25, 2002. Appendix B.1., question 3.
Telephone surveys were performed to identify needs. Focus groups were also performed. A paper survey was published in the Current (local newspaper).

b. If public opinion research was used, who performed it? Rowan University's Communication Institute.

Communication Research Contract Review and Research Findings

Egg Harbor Township School District contracted with Rowan University’s Communication Institute for public relations services. Regarding communication research, the contract stipulates that Rowan personnel would conduct a telephone survey of the community with a margin of error at +/- nine points. The survey was to have a 125-random sample, and elicit knowledge, attitudes (including educational values) and potential behavior of residents on the bond issue.

The contract also stipulates that Rowan personnel will have performed a follow-up survey three-quarters of the way through campaign. This survey was to confirm the community’s retention of messages and to see what the final ‘question and answer’ document should contain.

Rowan’s report for the first survey could not be located in Rowan University or Egg Harbor Township School District’s files. However, this researcher identified the following selected findings for the first survey from other documentation. The preceding codes, e.g., “FS1,” “FS2,” etc., will be referred to throughout this case study. Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying the findings and/or recommendations:

---

FS1 – “73% of residents agreed/strongly agreed with the need for repairs and renovations.”

FS2 – “72% of the community believed that Egg Harbor Township schools are overcrowded.”

FS3 – “Residents preferred a referendum to a lease purchase.”

FS4 – “Residents preferred a three question ballot.”

FS5 – “The survey revealed that a majority of residents preferred to vote on the three issues separately.”

Rowan’s report for the follow-up survey indicates the survey was performed between March 8 and 10, 2000. The survey was used to determine the “knowledge, attitudes and behaviors” of community members regarding the pending $56.4 million referendum, according to Rowan’s report. It used a randomized sample size of 95 and had +/- 5.12 points at the 66 percent confidence level and +/- 10 points at 95 percent confidence level. The following are selected findings for this survey. The preceding codes, e.g., “FUS1,” “FUS2,” etc., will be referred to throughout this case study. Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying the findings and/or recommendations:

124 See Appendix B.2. EHT School Referendum News. p. 4.
FUS1 – The same number of community members were aware of the bond as were not.

FUS2 – 57% were not aware of the three questions that will be on the ballot.

FUS3 – 67% supported question one (Building renovations at four schools).

FUS4 – 68% would have been willing to pay for question one (Building renovations at four schools).

FUS5 – 56% supported question two (Additions to high school and Swift Elementary School).

FUS6 – 55% would have been willing to pay for question two (Additions to high school and Swift Elementary School).

FUS7 – 49% supported question three (new elementary school).

FUS8 – 47% would have been willing to pay for question three.

FUS9 – Six in ten people received the newsletter.

FUS10 – 76% believed the schools were overcrowded.

FUS11 – Two of every 3 residents were aware that the state would pay 46% of the cost of the bond.

FUS12 – 51% would have paid an additional $75/yr in taxes.

FUS13 – 39% would have paid an additional $100/yr in taxes.

FUS14 – 21% would have paid an additional $125/yr in taxes.

FUS15 – 18% would have paid an additional $150/yr in taxes.

FUS16 – 30% believed an elementary school would solve enrollment problems.

FUS17 – Seven in ten intended to vote.
FUS18 – Selected cross-tabulation – “Do you have children who attend Egg Harbor Schools?” was crossed with “Do you support questions One, Two, and Three on the ballot?” After reviewing the findings, Rowan personnel concluded, “A majority of both parent and non-parents support all three questions at this time. However, the undecided vote is important. If they were persuaded to vote no, question two and three could be in trouble. If they vote yes, or do not vote, both questions should pass.”

Research Roles Identified in the Case Study

This researcher determined that communication research in the Egg Harbor Township bond referendum was used to:

RR1 – Identify the need to inform the people that were not aware of bond about its existence.

RR2 – Identify the need to target certain campaign messages.

RR3 – Identify what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost.

RR4 – Identify community beliefs and values, e.g., belief that the schools are overcrowded, and the value of being able to vote for a three-question referendum format, etc.

RR5 – Identify and address the community’s understanding of the issues, or lack thereof, e.g., state aid.

In the document analysis that follows, and if applicable, the “RR” codes listed above will be assigned in varying combinations to each document under consideration.

Using codes will prevent the reader from repetitively reviewing the narrative accompanying each role.

**Comparison of General Correspondence to the Research Findings**

1. Undated flier titled “EHT School Referendum News” (See Appendix B.2.).
   a. This publication focuses entirely on the pending school bond vote. It outlines the questions that will be on the ballot, provides facts and visuals about overcrowding and needed repairs and discusses state aid. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document relates to “FS1,” “FS2,” “FS3,” “FS4,” “FS5” and all “FUS” codes except “FUS9” and “FUS17.”
   b. 494 of 551 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

2. Flier titled “EHT Bond Referendum Facts” (See Appendix B.3.).
   a. This document provides an outline of all three questions, selected survey findings, data to substantiate a growing student enrollment, tax impact scenarios for each question and information on what the State of New Jersey will offer in aid. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FS1,” “FS2,” “FS3,” “FS4,” “FS5,” and all “FUS” codes except “FUS9” and “FUS17.”
   b. 200 of 212 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

3. Publication from the Egg Harbor Township Home and School Association – *Newsletter* – Volume 12, Number 4 (See Appendix B.4.).

   a. This is an undated document published by the school association. Based on the notice of an upcoming February 15, 2000 meeting, it was most likely published in January or early February 2000. It invites members to an informational meeting regarding the bond. It states that Superintendent Kelpsh will be the speaker. The document explains that a public relations firm hired by the board of education performed a survey to determine:

      i. The type of questions that should be on the referendum.

      ii. The phrasing of the questions.

      iii. The number of questions that should be on the ballot.

Further, and based on the survey, there will be up to three questions placed before the voters. It also mentions the growing student population. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FS2,” “FS4,” “FS5,” “FUS1,” “FUS2,” “FUS9” and “FUS10.”

   b. 29 of 106 lines of copy (headers included, but not mailing addresses) relate to the research findings.

   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”
4. Poster titled “Egg Harbor Township School Bond Referendum” (See Appendix B.5.).
   a. The document provides a brief overview of the three questions that will be on the ballot. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FS1,” “FS2,” “FS3,” “FS4,” “FS5,” and all “FUS” codes except “FUS11,” “FUS12,” “FUS13,” “FUS14” and “FUS15”
   b. 18 of 18 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1,” “RR2,” “RR3” and “RR4.”

5. Flier titled “Attention Parents: Important School News” (See Appendix B.6.).
   a. The document announces the pending referendum and invites people to an informational meeting/presentation. Among others, class size and school conditions were to be included in the agenda. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FS3,” “FUS1,” “FUS2,” “FUS9,” “FUS10,” “FUS17” and “FUS18.”
   b. 16 of 17 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1,” “RR2,” “RR4” and “RR5.”
6. January 13, 2000 draft of copy for inclusion in the school newspaper – the *Eagle Times* (See Appendix B.7.).

   a. Tony Fulginiti, executive director of Rowan University’s Communication Institute, sent this document to Dr. Kelpsh. The letter states that the survey resulted in the administration approving a three-question referendum. It then provides a brief overview of the three questions. The document also states that research indicated that residents wanted to vote on the three questions separately. It states the administration will accommodate the public’s wishes. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to all “FS” and “FUS” codes.

   b. 39 of 43 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.

   c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

7. February 18, 2000 “Bond Referendum Update” memorandum (See Appendix B.8.).

   a. Dr. Joy Miller, assistant superintendent, sent this document to the Egg Harbor Township Board of Education. It discusses the training they had scheduled for bond campaign members by the “Fulginiti Group” on public presentations. It also mentions the voter registration drive that will be put into effect. The piece also outlines the edition of the school newspaper, the *Eagle Times*, which will be devoted to the bond referendum. The document has a memo from the faculty advisor for the *Eagle Times*, Ms.
Karen Warner. Ms. Warner states that she and the students that will be involved met with an independent consultant being used by Rowan University, Ms. Paula Hoffman. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FUS1,” “FUS2,” “FUS9,” “FUS11,” “FUS16,” “FUS17” and “FUS18.”

b. 58 of 81 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1,” “RR2,” “RR4” and “RR5.”

8. March 9, 2000 “Bond Referendum Update” memorandum (See Appendix B.9.).

a. This is a memorandum sent to the board of education by Dr. Joy Miller, Egg Harbor Township Schools assistant superintendent. It references a presentation script that was developed for the bond presentation teams. The memorandum has an attached fact sheet outlining the three referendum questions, the scope and cost of work, state aid, selected survey results and a list of consequences if the bond fails. The memorandum also states that Rowan University personnel conducted a follow-up survey. The full results will be published at a later date, but initial findings showed support for the three referendum questions that were to be put before the voters. The document also states that the staff of the Eagle Times (school newspaper) finished the edition dedicated to the referendum. Also, Dr. Miller points out that the district’s plan to circulate
a question and answer document to the voters a few days prior to the vote.
Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on
pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to all “FS” and
“FUS” codes.

b. 228 of 234 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73
above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

9. Undated “Bond Presentation Script” (See Appendix B.10.).

a. This document covers almost all of the details of the three-question bond
referendum. It includes supporting documentation as well, e.g., growing
enrollment figures, and program and safety and health issues. It covers
state aid, the tax impact for each question, Rowan University’s survey
results and a section on consequences should the bond fail. Of the Rowan
University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72
and 73 above, this document section relates to all “FS” and “FUS” codes.
b. 320 of 336 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.
c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73
above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

10. March 12, 2000 “Open Letter to the Residents of Egg Harbor Township” (See
Appendix B.11.).

a. The president of Egg Harbor Township Home & School Association sent
this letter in support of the three-question referendum. It outlines each
question and states that each needs to be passed. However, it does not
discuss the tax impact or cost of the program. It does state that the state will contribute 40% of the cost. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to “FS1,” “FS2,” “FS3,” “FS4,” “FS5,” “FUS1,” “FUS2,” “FUS3,” “FUS5,” “FUS7,” “FUS9,” “FUS10,” “FUS11,” “FUS16,” “FUS17” and “FUS18.”

b. 33 of 45 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”


a. This document is a “Special Bond Referendum Issue” produced by Egg Harbor Township High School students. The editor argues in support of the bond. The articles include information on the new elementary school, the consequences of it being voted down, cites Rowan’s study, and an overview of the three questions that will be put to the voters. It also cites student accounts of why building repairs need to be done. Of the Rowan University research findings and recommendations listed on pages 71, 72 and 73 above, this document section relates to all “FS” and “FUS” codes.

b. 521 of 760 lines of copy (headers included) relate to the research findings.

c. This researcher determined that of the research roles listed on page 73 above, this document provides evidence for “RR1” through “RR5.”

Egg Harbor Township Case Study Conclusion

Eleven general correspondence documents from the Egg harbor Township school bond referendum were reviewed in total. Of the 2,403 lines of copy reviewed, 1,956 (81%) relate to Rowan University's research findings (See Table 10 below).

Prevalence of Research in Egg Harbor Township Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document Category</th>
<th>Total Lines of Copy Considered</th>
<th>Lines of Copy Relating to Research</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Correspondence</td>
<td>2,403</td>
<td>1,956</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the roles communication research played in the eleven documents under consideration, five were identified. Table 11 below summarizes those findings.

Frequency Totals of Research Roles Identified In the Egg Harbor Township Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the need to inform the people that weren't aware of bond about its existence</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the need to target certain campaign messages</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify community beliefs and values, e.g., belief that the schools are overcrowded, and the value of being able to vote for a three-question referendum format, etc.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and address the community's understanding of the issues, or lack thereof, e.g., state aid</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Though there are slight differences in the prevalence of the research roles, the differences are not found to be material.
Chapter Five

SUMMARY

Introduction

This study sought to determine the roles and prevalence of communication research in two successful school bond referenda in Southern New Jersey: Sterling Regional High School and Egg Harbor Township school districts. The study analyzed the campaign documentation associated with Sterling’s March 9, 1999 referendum and Egg Harbor’s March 28, 2000 referendum. In so doing, this researcher sought to offer insight into the importance, or lack thereof, of communication research as a tool to be used by people trying to pass school bond referenda.

Findings

Sterling and Egg Harbor passed their bonds with wide margins. Considering all the votes cast for all questions in each referendum, Sterling’s “yes” votes totaled 67 percent\(^{130}\) and Egg Harbor’s totaled 71 percent\(^{131}\).

The Sterling Regional High School case study indicates that of the 2,103 lines of document copy reviewed, 77.84 percent relate to the communication research performed by Rowan University personnel. The Egg Harbor Township school district findings are somewhat similar. Of the 2,403 lines of document copy reviewed, 81 percent relate to the communication research performed by Rowan University personnel.


Table 12 below recaps and compares the "yes" vote and lines of copy relating to research findings for the Sterling and Egg Harbor bond referenda.

**"Yes" Vote and Lines of Copy Relating to Research Comparison for Sterling and Egg Harbor**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sterling Regional High School</th>
<th>Egg Harbor Township School District</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines of campaign documentation considered</td>
<td>2,103</td>
<td>2,403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lines of campaign documentation relating to communications research</td>
<td>1,637</td>
<td>1,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of lines campaign documentation relating to communications research</td>
<td>77.84%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Yes&quot; vote percentage for all questions in the referendum</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is clearly a high percentage of copy relating to communication research in the campaign documentation for the subject referenda. That finding leads this researcher to believe that school district personnel who have performed communication research, and whose campaign and campaign-related documentation reflect those findings in large measure, stand a better chance of winning their referendum.

Regarding the roles of communication research, the following were identified in the Sterling bond referendum:

- Identifying community values, e.g., having input in the decision-making process.
- Identifying the need for a structured flow of information between the community and the board of education and administration.
- Identifying the need to target certain campaign messages.
- Identifying what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost.
• Identifying community perceptions and beliefs, e.g., perception of the building’s condition, overcrowding, etc.

• Community members’ understanding of the issues.

    Regarding the roles of communication research, the following were identified in the Egg Harbor referendum:

    • Identifying the need to inform the people that were not aware of bond about its existence.
    • Identifying the need to target certain campaign messages.
    • Identifying what the community would support, e.g., bond structure and cost.
    • Identifying community beliefs and values, e.g., belief that the schools are overcrowded, and the value of being able to vote for a three-question referendum format, etc.
    • Identifying the community’s understanding of the issues, or lack thereof, e.g., state aid.

    Both of the above sets of research roles are similar. And stated simply, they offer the following approach to a bond referendum:

1. Use communication research to identify community members’ opinions, values and what they are willing to support.

2. Design a referendum that matches the community members’ feelings and beliefs.

3. Target the community with messages relating to the research.

4. Confirm that the community received the messages.
The following will briefly recap both of the subject bond referenda in light of “1” to “4” above. The following numbers correspond to those in the above outline:

Sterling Regional High School

1. Sterling’s 1998 referendum failed. After that, Sterling administrators used a telephone survey to study the community. The survey revealed that the community would support a bond, but at an amount that was less than that of the failed attempt. Community members also wanted a voice in the decision-making process. The community members also had strong opinions about what improvements they would and would not support.

2. Based on the survey results, Sterling administrators created a citizen task force to research school issues and make recommendations regarding same. That task force was largely made up of community members. It sought input from the community, thereby giving the community a voice in the decision-making process. To provide community members with a chance to select what to support, an important item given the strong feelings for certain projects, the referendum was separated into two questions. The first question listed improvements and renovations that the survey indicated the community most supported. The second question outlined work for which the survey indicated the community had shown less support.

3. Of the campaign and campaign-related documentation, 77.84 percent relates to the survey findings.
4. The follow-up survey report was never located. However, Rowan University’s March 30, 1998\textsuperscript{132} report clearly indicates that a follow-up survey was to have been performed one week before the March 9, 1999 vote. That survey was to have been used, in part, to determine if community members had received and understood the campaign messages.

Egg Harbor Township School District

1. Egg Harbor also utilized surveys to determine public opinion on a variety of matters. While the report for the first of two surveys could not be located, the documentation contains evidence of the findings for the first survey. The findings show that the community wanted to pay for school improvements with a referendum, rather than a lease-purchase agreement. Community members also wanted a three-question referendum format so they could pick and choose what to support. The follow-up survey, among other things, indicates what projects the community would support, and at what increased tax level. It also shows that the majority of community members believed the schools were overcrowded and that the community valued addressing that issue.

2. Guided by the survey results, Egg Harbor Township school officials chose the referendum over the lease-purchase arrangement. They also designed a referendum that had projects in line with the community members’ sentiments, e.g., new school to relieve over-crowding, a bond amount within the guidelines of what the community said it would support, a three-question format so people could pick and choose what to vote for, etc.

3. Of the campaign and campaign-related documentation, 81 percent relates to the survey findings.

4. A follow-up survey was performed between March 8 and March 10, 2000, just under three weeks before the vote. The findings are reported in the case study in Chapter 4. Those findings detail the community members’ understanding of the then-pending bond and what they stated they were willing to support.

Studying the roles of research in the two subject school bonds leads this researcher to believe that school officials stand a better chance of winning their referendum if they match the details of their initiatives with the community members’ values and opinions.

Based on this study, this researcher also believes that school officials and other interested parties can increase their odds of passing a school bond referendum if they use communication research. However, because of the non-generalizable nature of the study’s methodology, it is not possible to state definitively that research is an essential element of a successful element.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

This researcher believes that in order to confirm the value of communication research in the bond referendum process, more studies of referenda that utilized research need to be performed. Studies such as this one, that analyze the impact of research on the campaign process and which derive the research roles in the process, will offer an objective view of the matter.

It is worth noting the importance of time in research such as this. This study was complicated by faded memories and missing referendum material. To avoid becoming an
archeologist who is trying to sift through modern-day clutter in an effort to recreate the past, these studies should be undertaken while the referendum is underway, or shortly after the referendum.

Another study that would yield insight into the importance of research in the referendum process is a comparison of campaign message creation and transmittal of referenda not employing research with those that did use research.
Bibliography


47. Randazzo, J. V. (1999, March 4) Vote ‘Yes-Yes’ for school quality at Sterling [Letter to the Editor]. Courier-Post. 15A.


BOND REFERENDA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

School District: Sterling Regional

Interviewee: Gary Kasprack

Interview Date: 2/9/01

Interviewer: Paul Dice

1. What was the date of your last two referenda?
   a. Date of last referendum: 3/9/99.
   b. Date of referendum before last: 1/6/98.

2. How many votes were held to pass the referenda in #1 above?
   a. Last referendum: One to pass.
   b. Referendum before last: One to fail.

3. Do you feel the voters were pre-disposed to passing the referenda in #1 above? If not, why not? No in 1998; yes in 1999.

4. Were the following audiences predisposed to passing the referenda in #1 above? If not, why not?

5. Regarding your school district’s population, please provide the following demographic information:
a. What percentage are parents with school-age children? **Unsure.**

b. What percentage are non-parents? **Unsure.**

c. What percentage are senior citizens? **Unsure.**

d. What are the mean or median income levels? **Unsure.**

e. What percentage are new residents? **Unsure.**

f. Is there an increasing student population? **Unsure.**

6. Do you feel you had support from local government for the referenda in #1 above? **No for 1998. Very good support in 1999.**

7. Is there a history of community support for education in your school district?

**There is a general feeling of support. However, the publics are inconsistent in budget matters.**

8. Was there a consensus of the board of education to pass the bonds?

**Yes for 1998 and 1999.**

9. Was there a consensus of the administration to pass the bonds?

**Yes for 1998 and 1999.**

10. Were the board of education and the administration in agreement? **No.**

11. Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum?

   a. School planning: **Dr. Frank Johnson, educational planner.**

   b. Finance: **Not applicable.**

   c. Public Relations: **ie communication.**

   d. Other: **Design Collaborative – architects.**

12. Were endorsements from any party outside of the education community sought to support the referenda efforts? **Yes. Various parties.**
a. Who were they from? Not applicable.
b. Were any of the people political figures? Yes.

13. Was there any opposition to the referenda? Yes.
a. Was the opposition organized? No for either bond.
b. Was the opposition effective? No for either bond.

14. Does your community have access to school property? Yes.

15. What does your community use school property for?
Gym, media center, library and more.

16. Please describe your school communications with your community.
Channel 19, newsletter 2 times/year (more during referendum) and the sign in front of the school.

17. Please describe your communications with your staff. Email, memos, regular mail.

18. Do you have a community relation programs? Please describe the program.
No.

19. Was there any controversy over building placement (IF APPLICABLE)?
N/A. The bond was for renovations.

a. Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? Absolutely.
b. If public opinion was performed, at what stage of the bond referendum process was it employed?
1) Formative? Yes.
2) Monitoring? Yes.

3) Evaluative? No.

c. If public opinion research was used, who performed it? ie communication – PR consultants.

21 What was the tax increase amount? Not sure.

22. Was a citizen participation group, e.g., task force, used? Yes.

a. Do you consider citizen participation groups to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? Yes.

b. If used, did the citizen participation group participate in the planning stages of the bond referendum? Yes.

c. If used, was the citizen participation group a diverse make-up? Yes.

d. If used, was the citizen participation group involved in any public opinion research? See research report.

e. If used, did the citizen participation group conduct the get-out-the-vote campaign? Yes.

f. Did the citizen participation group perform presentations to community groups? Yes.

g. Did the citizen participation group have any other roles? Helped determine what was needed. Provided direction to the board of education. Without the citizen participation group, the bond would not have passed.
23. Please answer the following questions regarding your campaign strategy(ies) for the bond referenda in #1 above:

a. Was the focus on children? **More so in 1999 than in 1998.**

b. Did you collect information from internal or external audiences that was then used to structure the campaign? **Yes.**

c. What percentage of the campaign was allocated to betterment of teaching and administrative staff? **Nothing for administration.**

d. Was teacher support sought? **Yes for 1998 and 1999.**

e. Were committees used, e.g., steering, site, finance, structure, etc.? **Citizens’ participation group only.**

f. How was the campaign marketed, e.g., flyers, brochures, information sheets, radio, TV, special events, video, etc.? **Newsletter from board of education, Channel 18 (cable) and Courier Post.**

g. Did the campaign demonstrate a need for additional classroom space? **Yes.**

h. Were students educated on the bond issues? **1998, no. 1999, yes.**

i. Did you or your appointees do any one-on-one campaigning? **None that were planned, though some impromptu discussions took place.**

j. Did your campaign target the following public audiences?

1) Parents w/school age children? **Yes.**

2) Parents of children no longer in school? **Yes.**

3) Parents w/pre-school children? **No, but it did target parents of high school children.**
4) Non-parents? Yes.


k. Did your campaign target the following internal audiences?

1) Teachers? Yes.

2) Administrators? Yes.

3) Board of education members? Yes.

4) Staff? Yes.

5) Students? In part.

24. Did you pursue absentee ballots? Yes, to some extent. It did target graduates away at college.


26. Please answer the following questions regarding your use of media during the campaign:

a. Did you perform any school walk-throughs? Yes, with the Courier Post.


c. Were there any letters to the editor during your campaign? If so, do you consider them to have been supportive or negative toward your campaign?

   In the 1999 campaign, they were a plus.

27. How long did your campaign last? 1.5 to 2 months.

28. What was the time span of your campaign? Not sure.
29. Was the timing of your campaign critical? *March was a critical month for the 1999 campaign.*


31. What were the vote results? *Not sure.*

32. What audiences supported the bond the most? *Parents.*

33. What audiences formed your greatest opposition? *No one single group comprised the opposition.*

34. What would you change in the next election? *Would follow the same format. Get community more involved. Would send messages more from community members, rather than administration or board.*
BOND REFERENDA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
Sterling Regional High School

Interviewer: Paul Dice
Interviewee: Paula Hoffman, independent public relations contractor for ie communication

Interview Date: 11/20/00

Answers are shown in bold

1. Please confirm the dates of the recent bond referenda attempts for Sterling.

   Failed on 1/6/98; passed on 3/2/99. The success on 3/2/99 took two attempts.

2. Were the public audiences predisposed to passing the referenda?

   The audiences were not predisposed to pass the 3/2/99 referendum. Creation of a task force was critical for success. Its creation was one of the Communication Institute’s first objectives. It had three sub-committees: program, facility and finance. Those sub-committees researched and discussed ways to improve the high school. They collected views from parents, teachers and seniors. Doing so differentiated the 1999 campaign from the one in 1998. Community input was not sought in the 1998 campaign. The task force was well represented by community members. By 1999, the campaign was being driven by community, rather than business, values and opinions.
3. Do you feel the following audiences were predisposed to passing the referenda?
   a. Teachers? Yes.
   b. Administrators? Yes.
   c. Board of education members? Yes.
   d. Staff? Yes.
   e. Students? Yes.
   f. Parents? Yes.

4. Regarding the district’s population, please provide the following demographic information: Not discussed in interview. Interviewer decided to discuss same with the school superintendent, Gary Kasprack.

5. Do you feel the district had support from the local government? Yes. Certain political figures, especially the mayor of Somerdale, were very supportive. Their political networks were used to get out the vote.

6. Is there a history of community support in the Sterling district? Not sure.

7. Was there a consensus of the board of education to pass the bond? Yes.

8. Was there a consensus of the administration to pass the bond? Yes.

9. Were the board of education and the administration in agreement with the bond and its provisions? Yes.

10. Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum?
    a. School planning? Yes. Task force program sub-committee.
    b. Finance? Yes. Task force finance sub-committee.
    c. Facility? Yes. Task force facility sub-committee.
11. Were endorsements from any party outside of the education community sought to support the referenda efforts?
   a. If so, from whom? **Municipal government and Courier Post (editorials).**
   b. Were any of the people political figures? **Yes. The mayors of Somerdale and Stratford.**

12. Was there any opposition to the referenda? **Yes.**
   a. Was the opposition organized? **Nothing significant.**
   b. Was the opposition effective? **No.**

13. Does the community have access to school property? **Yes.**

14. Does the community use the school property? **Yes.**

15. Please describe the routine communications with the publics. **No in-house public relations. The school's quarterly newsletter was used in the 1999 campaign.**

16. Does the district have a community relations program? **No.**

17. Was there any controversy over building placement? **Not applicable. The referendum was for improvements and renovations.**

18. Was any public opinion research performed? **Yes.**
   a. Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? **Yes.**
   b. If public opinion was performed, at what stage of the bond referendum process was it employed?
      1) **Formative? Yes, first survey.**
      2) **Monitoring? Yes, second survey.**
3) Evaluative? **Interviewer did not note an answer to this question.**

c. If public opinion research was used, who performed it? **Rowan's Communication Institute.**

Interviewer notes: General information obtained regarding first and second surveys:

**FIRST SURVEY**

- Tests community’s information channels.
- Tests community’s opinions and values.
- Determines tax level increases the community will bear.
- Tests the referendum plans, e.g. construction and renovation.
- Tests community’s knowledge of referendum issues.
- Tests community values, e.g. community’s pride in school system.

**SECOND SURVEY**

- Determines current support/non-support.
- Repeats test for community knowledge of referendum issues.
- Repeats community opinion test.
- Determines if campaign messages were received.

19. What was the tax increase amount? **Not sure.**

20. Was a citizen participation group, e.g. task force, used? **Answered in numbers two and 10 above.**

21. Please answer the following questions regarding your campaign strategy(ies) for the bond referenda in #1 above.
a. Was the focus on children? Yes.

b. Did you collect information from internal or external audience that was then used to structure the campaign? Yes. Information was gathered by polling community values. Public opinion was considered in the decision-making process.

c. What percentage of the campaign was allocated to betterment of teaching and administrative staff? Ms. Hoffman did not offer a percentage. She did, however, indicate that the amount of the referendum attributable to the betterment of teaching and administrative staff was not highlighted in the campaign.

d. Was teacher support sought? Yes. NJEA representative solicited support from resident teachers.

e. Were committees used, e.g. steering, site, finance, structure, etc.? Yes. See numbers two and ten above.

f. How was the campaign marketed, e.g. flyers, brochures, information sheets, radio, TV, special events, video, etc.? Cable, high school web site, Courier Post, Philadelphia Inquirer and the school’s quarterly newsletter. No radio.

g. Did the campaign demonstrate a need for additional classroom space? N/A. The referendum was for renovations.

h. Were students educated on the bond issues? Interviewer did not note an answer to this question.

i. Did the campaign target the following public audiences?
1) Parents w/school age children? Yes. Through first survey.
2) Parents of children no longer in school? Yes. Through first survey.
3) Parents w/pre-school children? Yes. Through first survey.

j. Did your campaign target the following internal audiences?

1) Teachers? Yes.
2) Administrators? Yes.
3) Board of education members? Yes.
4) Staff? Yes.
5) Students? Yes.

22. Were unregistered voters a problem? Answer in number 23 below.
23. Were there any attempts to register voters? Yes, by phone chain.
24. What was the length of the campaign? Six months.
25. Please comment on the timing of the campaign. It was within legal guidelines.

The district did not want the community confusing issues.

26. Was the timing of the campaign critical? The timing was more driven by legal confines. However, the district did not want the vote to coincide with the April municipal tax votes.

27. Do you believe the public understood the referendum issues? Good understanding per second survey.
February, 1998

Dear Community Members,

The Sterling High School Board of Education and administration have a number of concerns about the facility needs of our building. As you are aware, the Sterling High School District recently held a special bond referendum that was defeated. The referendum, if it had been approved, would have authorized the district to build an addition and make renovations to the existing high school building.

The Board of Education would like to again address some of those concerns with the input and direction of the Sterling community.

The process we hope to implement is to form a group of interested and informed community members whose mission will be to recommend to the Board of Education a course of action and recommendations for our facility needs.

Our first meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 30, 1998, 7:30 p.m. in the Sterling High School Media Center. It is hoped that you will join us.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Gary M. Kasprack

GMK:as
On School Board Stationery

Inside Address

Dear----------

The Sterling Regional High School Board of Education is beginning a new decision-making process to solve the high school's program and facility challenges. The process is part of the board's response to the defeated bond referendum last winter.

The board is asking residents of the three sending communities to help them decide how to best solve the facility problems at the high school. The board is forming a community task force of about 18-20 residents to look at all aspects of the issue and recommend a solution the communities will accept.

In seeking the best people to serve on this special and important task force, the board identified you. The board believes you could represent your community, fairly discuss the issues and advise the board on the best solution to the high school situation.

The solution must serve the students--their program and facility needs, the staff's needs to deliver the best program, and the community's needs to provide the best program and facility with minimum tax implications. The attached sketch of the task force's job should answer some of your questions.

We hope you agree to accept your nomination to serve on the task force. We need dedicated residents like you to advise the board on the action it should take. The decisions you and your colleagues reach will affect the lives of students in your community for many years.

Please call Laurann at the board office, 784-3545, to indicate your willingness to serve on this special Sterling Regional Board of Education Task Force on School Facility. The task force will convene for an organizational meeting on Wednesday, June 24, 7:15 pm, in room ---- at the high school. Please respond as soon as possible, but no later than Wednesday, June 17.

Thank you for considering this important service. We look forward to your contribution to your community and its students.

Cordially,

Board of Education President
May 7, 1998

Mr. Steve Whalen
603 Brooke Avenue
Magnolia, NJ 08049

Dear Mr. Whalen:

Because of your knowledge and involvement in your community, you have been selected as a resident who can offer advice on an important issue.

The Sterling Regional School Board is seeking knowledgeable and concerned residents to advise board members about reasons for the bond referendum defeat last January to improve the high school. The board also seeks advice on the next steps it should take.

We're inviting you to join a select focus group discussion in your community about this issue. The focus group will be an informal discussion with us--researchers from the Communication Institute at Rowan University. The Board has asked the Institute to conduct the research.

The focus group should take only about an hour. We'll provide refreshments. You'll join about seven other residents for the discussion.

We need your insights and suggestions. We hope you'll join us on May 19, at the Magnolia Public School, 420 N. Warwick Road, Magnolia at 8 p.m. to participate in the important focus group discussion. It's an opportunity for you to influence the decisions of your School Board. You'll remain anonymous. But your information will help the children of your community and all future Sterling High School students.

Your nomination to join us says much about your civic responsibility and your reputation in your community. Please call Ms. Beschen 256-4379 to confirm that you will attend the focus group discussion. We look forward to meeting you and listening to your ideas and suggestions.

Cordially,
January 7, 1999

Mrs. Janice Schonewolf
1010 Sunset Drive
Somerdale, NJ 08083

Dear Mrs. Schonewolf,

Sterling High School has served us well for thirty-eight years. Now it is in need of renovations to repair aging mechanical systems and expansion to accommodate growing student numbers and today's education programs.

On Back to School night you expressed an interest in our upcoming bond referendum project. On Thursday evening January 14, 1999, at 7:30 PM in the Sterling High School Media Center, Rowan University's Communication Institute invites you to attend the first campaign work session and will detail the $9 million plan and begin the work for an informational campaign. During this meeting, you may volunteer for specific campaign tasks.

The Board of Education last spring asked residents of the three sending communities to help them decide how to solve these problems. The board formed a community task force of eighteen residents to look at all aspects of the issue and recommend a solution the communities will accept.

On December 10, 1998, the Community Task Force committee made the following two-part recommendation to the Board of Education:

Spend $5.8 million to add a new wing with six science labs and two general classrooms; expand the library; upgrade the electrical wiring and the heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems; replace the roof and bring the school into compliance with the federal mandates for handicapped access.

Spend $3.2 million to build a new physical education facility to meet New Jersey's core curriculum standards, that includes a new gym, a fitness center, an exercise center, lights on the football field, an all-weather track, and expand and improve the band and chorus areas.

Thank you for helping with this important service. I look forward to your contribution to your community and students.

Cordially,

David Tannenbaum
Principal

Enc.

Equal Opportunity Employer
Serving the Communities of Laurel Springs, Magnolia, Somerdale and Stratford
Accredited by Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools and by the State of New Jersey
Dear Fellow N.J.E.A. Member,

We need your support for Sterling Regional High School’s Bond referendum on Tuesday, March 9th. As you know, Sterling suffered a stinging defeat in last year’s referendum. Your support at the polls will ensure our success this second time.

Sterling High School consistently provides a competitive education to its students. However, this level of education will be in jeopardy, if we don’t repair and improve our facility now. Our current bond proposal, split into two questions, addresses overcrowding, core curriculum and code issues.

Question #1 includes new science labs, added class space, a larger library, and additional fiber optic technology—improvements to help us, as teachers and support staff, meet our students’ needs. It also includes a new roof and heating, ventilation, electrical and code upgrades. Question #2 asks for a second gymnasium, a new track and improvements to the current physical education and performing arts areas.

Our teaching and support staff, administration, parents, community leaders and students give valuable input into this bond referendum plan. After serious consideration, our Board of Education unanimously agreed with their recommendations.

Our students need your help and your positive vote with this issue. How can we expect the community to support education if we, as teachers and support staff, don’t lead the way?

Keep Sterling competitive. VOTE YES on Tuesday, March 9th from 2 to 9 P.M. at Magnolia Public School, Somerdale Park School and Stratford Yellin School. See you at the polls.

Sincerely,

Linda A. Heuschkel
President
Sterling Education Association
Citizen Task Force

Taking Sterling High School into the 21st Century
STERNING HIGH SCHOOL
CITIZEN TASK FORCE

Agenda – September 15, 1998 – 6:30 PM

* 1. Handout for Back to School Night (September 16)

2. Committee updates
   A. Program (Presentation September 23)
   B. Facility (Meeting September 24, Presentation October 1)
   C. Finance (Meeting October 6?, Presentation October 8)

3. Nominations for Chairperson at September 23rd meeting

4. Other

* Denotes handout
September 16, 1998

Dear Parents:

In late June, 1998, the Citizen Advisory Task Force on Facility Planning was created. Its purpose is to recommend to the Sterling High School Board of Education the most efficient and economical ways to improve Sterling High School.

Three committees (Program, Facility, and Finance) were established and all have devoted many hours researching and discussing how we can best provide a quality education for our children.

As parents of past, present and future Sterling High School students, your input, ideas, and recommendations are valuable. Please join with the Task Force in examining these pertinent issues.

Feel free to contact any Task Force member in person or by phone; or you may contact Mr. David Tannenbaum, Principal of Sterling High School, at 784-1333.

We will do our best to keep you informed of all progress and look forward to seeing you at future meetings.

Help us take Sterling High School into the 21st century.

Sincerely yours,
The Citizen Advisory Task Force
CITIZEN TASK FORCE
STERLING REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Name

The name of this task force shall be "The Citizen Advisory Task Force on Facility Planning, of the Sterling Regional High School Board of Education." (CTF)

Purpose

The task force shall research the necessity and feasibility of expanding the Sterling Regional High School facility. The Board of Education conducted research following the defeat of last winter's referendum and discovered that residents want a part in the decisions affecting their school program and facilities.

The task force will recommend to the Board of Education an appropriate plan to provide appropriate student housing for the desired school program and inspire community support for it.

Authority

The task force shall have the authority to recommend (only) a plan to the Board of Education. The CTF will divide its work in three areas – program (curricular and co-curricular activities), facility (maintenance, renovation and new construction necessary for the program), and finance (acceptable tax for the program and the facility). In sum, the task force's authority is entirely consultative, not deliberative.

Membership

There shall be twenty-one (21) voting members of the task force and these shall include the chairperson and other members. Residents of the three sending communities (Magnolia, Somerdale and Stratford) and one Laurel Springs resident will be voting members of the CTF.

Nonvoting members shall include alternate members, school personnel, resource persons, consultants and media observers. The president of the Board shall appoint the chairperson, the Board shall appoint the members and the chairperson shall appoint all other nonvoting members.

Current Task Force

George Badey
LaVera Davis
John Galezniak
Gail Laird
Barbara Miller
Raymond Murtaugh
Mike Sheridan

Kim Brisbin
Anthony DePrince
Julie Galezniak
Jack Meyers, Sr.
James Mohan
Gary Passanante
Anthony Simone

Kathy Considine
Frank Gagliardi
James Hannold
Jack Meyers, Jr.
Debbie Morris
James Randazzo
Task force to guide Sterling’s growth

The 21-member group will recommend ways to improve the regional high school in Somerdale.

By JENNIFER GONZALEZ
Courier-Post Staff

SOMERDALE — A new task force composed of parents, senior citizens, community leaders and teachers is charged with guiding the Sterling Regional High School District into the future. The 21-member group will recommend the most efficient and economical ways to improve the regional high school in Somerdale. The district also includes students from Stratford, Magnolia and Laurel Springs.

School officials formed the task force last month in response to the overwhelming defeat of an $11.6 million bond referendum in January. The bond would have financed improvements at the high school, including a new roof, science labs, additional classrooms, a library, a gym, and new windows and heating and air conditioning systems.

“The creation of this task force clears the table of past referendum issues and starts the process with a clean slate,” said Superintendent Gary Kasprack.

Research conducted by The Communication Institute at Rowan University pointed to lack of public input in the decision-making process, increased taxes and not enough information as major reasons for the bond’s failure. The institute’s findings also spurred the district to form the task force.

“The telephone survey and focus groups showed us that residents felt the decision to have a school bond referendum vote was a top-down decision,” said Joseph Giambri, school district business administrator. “They felt the school board had made a decision without the input of the residents.”

Task force members will work on one of three committees: facilities, finance or program. Each committee will research issues, reach consensus on an improvement plan and recommend an action plan to the school board in the fall.

The school board will make the final decision on how to improve and renovate the school.

Barbara Miller is one of the many parents who volunteered to join the task force.

“It’s important that my children and all the other children in this community get a good education,” said Miller, whose two daughters attend Sterling. “It will be our job to make sure that the school runs efficiently, the facilities are up to date and our children get what they need.”

Courier Post
July 9, 1998
Attention Parents!

Good News: More State Aid Means Even Lower Tax Impact

For the second time in less than a month, the state gave Sterling Regional High School additional aid for debt service. This means homeowners pay less than previously announced for $9 million of improvements at Sterling proposed in the March 9th bond referendum.

The state increased its aid from 45% to 52% over the 20 year life of the bond cutting the tax impact.

Here is what homeowners can now expect to pay in additional taxes for the bond issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>$22.79</td>
<td>$13.22</td>
<td>$36.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerdale</td>
<td>$29.27</td>
<td>$15.97</td>
<td>$46.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>$32.90</td>
<td>$19.08</td>
<td>$51.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For more information, watch The Sterling Referendum Report daily on Channel 18, at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m., 4 p.m., 6 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.
Decide the quality of your child's high school education.

Vote
Sterling Regional High School Bond Referendum

Tuesday, March 9th
2 p.m. to 9 p.m.
Stratford- Yellin School
Somerdale- Park School
Magnolia- Magnolia Public School

Here's what bond funds will provide for your student:

Question 1-$5.8 million
- a new roof
- 6 new science labs
- additional classrooms
- expanded library
- upgraded electrical to power computers and meet codes
- improved HVAC
- additional fiber optic technology
- current code requirements

Question 2- $3.2 million
- a new gym
- renovations to fitness center and current gym
- new all-weather track
- outdoor lights on the football field
- enlarged performing arts practice/storage area
BOND REFERENDUM VOTE

• 2 P.M. to 9 P.M.
• Tuesday March 9, 1999
• Magnolia Public School, Somerdale Park School, Stratford Yellin School
• Reminder: it is important to remember a quality school system and its facilities have an impact on home and property values in the long run!!
Vote YES for Passing the Bond Referendum

Sterling Education Association
Teachers and Support Staff

*****More information on back*****
Ballot Question No. 1

Costs:

Code Issues: $66,200.00
Environmental / Safety: $800,000.00
Rehabilitation: $1,752,800.00
Additions: $2,090,000.00
Renovations: $145,400.00

TOTAL, (w/ fees and contingency): $5,800,000.00
Ballot Question No. 2

Costs:

Technology:
$50,000.00

Phys. Ed. Additions:
$2,125,500.00

Performing Arts Additions:
$501,500.00

Renovations:
$77,000.00

TOTAL, (w/ fees and contingency):
$3,200,000.00
From the outside, Sterling High School sure looks good. Its sprawling facade, manicured lawns and colorful landscaping might make the community proud. But go inside and you'll see a different picture.

Staff and students hunt for space; make do with outdated science labs; put up with a leaky roof, hot and cold classrooms, and cramped, sub-standard space for physical education and performing arts.

Science has changed dramatically in the past decade. But Sterling's science labs haven't changed in 38 years.

An exposed gas pipe penetrates the room. Out-of-date systems make classrooms unevenly cold and hot.

A winter thermometer shows 62 degrees.

The gym ties our students and sports teams. They need more space to meet the new physical education requirements. Our wrestlers practice on the cafeteria floor and our cheerleaders rehearse in hallways.
On March 9th, Somerdale, Stratford and Magnolia voters will decide how the 38-year-old Sterling High School will enter the next century. Their decision comes in two questions.

The first question proposes a $5.8 million renovation and addition package. The second question proposes a $3.2 million physical education and performing arts improvement and addition package.

The Sterling Board of Education unanimously agreed to present a bond referendum to voters fashioned from a citizen task force recommendation. The task force included 17 residents—parents, senior citizens, teachers, and community leaders from all three sending districts. They worked diligently since June to develop the plan.

The task force studied the condition of the high school and looked at affordable solutions. They interviewed professional builders, designers and educators. They also used public opinion research to design the referendum plan.

Here's a detailed look at each ballot question.

**Question 1** The Renovation/Addition Package proposes spending $5.8 million for:

- New roof
- Six new, fully equipped modern science labs
- Two additional classrooms
- New upgraded HVAC
- Library expansion
- Electrical upgrades
- Safety and handicapped code compliance
- New exterior doors
- Additional fiber optic technology
- Fees and furniture

**Question 2** The Improvement/Addition Package proposes spending $3.2 million for:

- New gymnasium
- Outdoor lights on football field
- Renovations to current fitness center and trainer's area
- New all-weather track
- Bigger performing arts practice/storage areas
- New school store
- Fees and furniture

**Bond Tax Impact Meets Public Opinion Guidelines**

The Task Force based its recommendation for the bond referendum plan on public opinion.

A scientific study conducted by Rowan University last Spring found that 49% of residents in the three sending communities would agree to spend an additional $75 a year in taxes to fix Sterling High School.

As you can see in the chart on the right, the tax impact of this bond proposal is within that limit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Community</th>
<th>Average Property Assessment</th>
<th>Ballot Questions Q1</th>
<th>Q1 &amp; Q2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$36</td>
<td>$57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerdale</td>
<td>87,000</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>104,000</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Residents may vote on question 1 only or on questions 1 and 2. The chart shows the average tax impact of question 1 only and of questions 1 and 2. The bond's life is 20 years.

Surf the web for bond information http://www.sterling.k-12.nj.us. Check out our informational video. Ask at Sterling’s library.
This referendum is about getting an aging building in good enough shape so students get the education they deserve.

Although education has dramatically changed in the past 38 years, the high school hasn’t.

Using only budget funds, we made the repairs and upgrades we could. But the sweeping changes needed for a growing student body demand more.

Our hard working staff and students struggle to keep Sterling competitive. However patchwork solutions can’t keep up with new curriculum requirements and technology advances. Now is the time for residents to modernize their high school.

How long can we claim any status when students expect they’re entering a new century but enter only an old building?

State-of-the-art science labs with advanced technology so students are ready for college/21st century workforce

An end to overcrowded gym classes
and space for state-mandated physical fitness

Relief for overcrowded chorus and band groups, plus storage space

Field lights for night football games and band competition

Handicapped and safety code compliance

A larger library with needed computer stations

Upgraded ventilation and heat in all classrooms

Ample classroom space for our growing population

Additional fiber optic technology

A safer all-weather running track

What happens if the Referendum Fails?

If we don’t fix Sterling’s problems now, they will only get worse.

Consider these consequences:

- Taxpayers will continue to pay for inefficient heat and electricity. They will also pay for endless water and structural damage.
- Lack of classroom space will limit the program. Sterling will lose its reputation and fall far behind surrounding districts.
- Overcrowding might force portable classrooms or staggered sessions.
- Sterling’s science labs will fall farther behind. Students won’t be ready for college classes and technology careers.
- Sports teams will grudgingly practice from 6 in the morning to 10:30 at night.
- Performing arts students will suffer in overcrowded and sub-standard spaces.

No Property Tax Impact

For Seniors and Disabled

This bond referendum will have no property tax impact on many senior citizens and disabled people in our communities. Assembly bill #3, passed into law in 1997, freezes property taxes at ’96/’97 levels for those who meet the state’s financial requirements and apply for a rebate.

Homeowners aged 65 or over and those receiving federal Social Security disability benefits can apply if they meet the following requirements: • total annual income less than $17,918 if single • combined total annual income less than $21,970 if married

For more information about this issue, call 1-800-882-6597.

Watch Channel 18 daily for special news reports about the bond referendum.
See For Yourself...
Sterling High School Building Behind the Times

When was the last time you saw the inside of Sterling High School? Most classrooms haven’t changed and are behind the times. The building has aged and needs repair. Come and see first-hand why the task force and school board decided to fix the school. To take a tour, call 784-3545 or 784-1287.

Register To Vote

To vote on March 9th, you must be registered.

The Camden County Board of Elections requires all voter registration forms to be in its office by Feb. 8th. Pick up forms at the following locations:

- County Store at the Echelon Mall
- Municipal Clerk’s office at each sending district
- Sterling High School Superintendent’s office
- phone 784-1287

U.S. citizens, 18 years or older, who have lived in Camden County for 29 days, can register.

Check Out Our Video

Borrow a video tour of the high school from Sterling’s library in February.

Look at the building yourself to understand the bond referendum issues.

The video also explains the bond’s tax impact on each sending district.
Q: "Who decided which improvements we need?"

A: The referendum you'll vote on March 9th was developed by residents like you. A Citizens Advisory Task Force, with members from each sending district, picked the improvements after studying Sterling's programs and inspecting the building for six months.

The 17-member task force used three committees—Program, Finance and Facility—to explore Sterling's needs.

- Toured the 38 year-old building
- Interviewed teachers, staff and students
- Met building design professionals and studied cost estimates
- Used opinion research from Rowan University to learn what residents wanted to improve and how much they were willing to pay.

The Task Force cut $2 million from the last referendum and advised the board that this plan gave students the most improvements for the least cost.

The Board of Education unanimously agreed.

Q: "The building looks OK. Why does the Task Force say we need to improve it?"

A: Looking at Sterling from a distance, you might think the building is in good condition. But a closer observation reveals serious, possibly even dangerous, problems.

The Task Force specifically found:
Facility problems...
- No more classrooms for a growing student body
- Science labs, 38 years old, behind today's standards
- An overused gym without enough space
- Run-down and overcrowded performing arts areas
- A library too small for today's needs
- An electrical system obsolete for today's technology
- An unsafe narrow outdoor track
- An aged and leaking roof that damages classrooms and hallways
- Classrooms with little or no heat, ventilation, or air conditioning
- Incomplete technology infrastructure

Q: "Why does the Task Force believe Sterling is overcrowded?"

A: Mainly, we've run out of space. Over the years, Sterling lost 11 general classrooms to special education, resource centers, computer labs, a TV studio, and student services—all to meet the changing demands of our society.

Student enrollment is also steadily increasing. In the past three years, our enrollment has grown. (Please see the chart below)

The Task Force cautions that if we add students while subtracting classrooms we get more students in every class, fewer student schedule choices and no new courses.

Q: "How does this bond benefit our students' education?"

A: The improvements give Sterling the right facilities for a competitive education well into the next century. More classroom space, new science labs, a modern library, and improved technology will prepare our students for college and today's job market.

Q: "Give me an example of how the improvements will provide a more competitive education."

A: Larger facilities for physical education and performing arts will improve our students' opportunities to develop athletic and artistic skills. These skills develop creativity, improve decision-making ability, and teach teamwork—traits today's colleges and employers demand.
**Q:** “What will happen if Question One fails?”

**A:** Question One addresses many of the building problems. If voters reject Question One, taxpayers will eventually pay more for the same improvements. Many of the upgrades address safety and overcrowding. A leaky roof, old science labs, unsafe electrical molding, and a lack of classroom space—won’t go away. Sometime, we must fix the building. With today’s low interest rates and high state aid, now seems the most cost-effective time to do the job.

---

**No Property Tax Impact For Seniors and Disabled**

This bond referendum will have no property tax impact on many senior citizens and disabled people in our communities. Assembly bill #3, passed into law in 1997, freezes property taxes at ’96/’97 levels for those who meet the state’s financial requirements and apply for a rebate.

Homeowners aged 65 or over and those receiving federal Social Security disability benefits can apply if they meet the following requirements: total annual income less than $17,918 if single; combined total annual income less than $21,970 if married.

For more information about this issue, call 1-800-882-6597.

---

**Q:** “What will happen if Question Two fails?”

**A:** Question Two addresses the new state curriculum requirements. If voters reject Question Two, Sterling won’t be able to meet those requirements. With the new gym, fitness center renovations, and performing arts additions, Sterling will comply with state criteria.

Rejecting Question Two also forces our sports teams to live with sub-standard conditions. Sterling is one of the last South Jersey schools with a cinder track. It is too narrow, drains poorly creating puddles, and has an exposed metal lip that risks injury to our student athletes.

Outdoor lights on the football field benefit everyone. We’ll save money by not renting lights. Also, Sterling can host evening football games, band competitions, and other community events.

A new gym will finally provide enough space for our six basketball teams, wrestling squad, and cheerleaders—who practice early in the morning and late at night.

---

**Voters Decide on Two Questions March 9th**

**Question 1**

The Renovation/Addition Package proposes spending $5.8 million for:

- New roof
- Six new, fully equipped modern science labs
- Two additional classrooms
- New upgraded HVAC
- Library expansion
- Electrical upgrades
- Safety and handicapped code compliance
- New exterior doors
- Additional fiber optic technology
- Fees and furniture

**Question 2**

The Improvement/Addition Package proposes spending $3.2 million for:

- New gymnasium
- Outdoor lights on football field
- Renovations to current fitness center and trainer’s area
- New all-weather track
- Bigger performing arts practice/storage areas
- New school store
- Fees and furniture

---

**Remember**

This Is a Two-Question Ballot With a Special Provision

You can vote on each question independently. But if the first question does not pass, the second cannot.

This means that the Board of Education cannot issue bonds to pay for the improvements in Question Two, if Question One does not pass.
**New State Aid Lowers Bond Tax For Residents!**

Thanks to new financial aid from the state, residents of Magnolia, Stratford, and Somerdale will get reduced property tax for the proposed $9 million bond referendum.

Sterling school district just learned the state will pay 15 percent more of the district's debt service. That drops the tax impact of the bond.

"The state will increase its contribution to the debt service to 44.79 percent--up from the 30 percent we expected," said Joseph Giambri, Sterling's Business Administrator. "The new money, nearly 15 percent more, is good news because it means less tax for our residents."

If voters approve both questions on the March 9th ballot, here's how the new state aid will lower the tax impact for Magnolia, Somerdale, and Stratford. (See chart in next column)

---

**Q:** "Why do students need larger performing arts areas?"

**A:** Our performing arts areas are below standard and just not big enough to accommodate all our students.

- Our award-winning band and choral students cram themselves into a small, cluttered practice area. They store instruments wherever they find floor space, making walking a hazard.
- Male and female drama students share one dressing area during shows and use a make-shift curtain to separate themselves.
- New state core curriculum standards—rules the district must follow—require: "all students graduating high school must demonstrate originality and skills in the creation, production, and performance of dance, music, theater, or visual arts."
- We can't comply with the law with our present performing arts areas. The standards will stress our already overused facilities.
- The Task Force concluded larger performing arts practice/storage areas allow students to continue extracurricular music and drama and comply with new curriculum standards.

**Q:** "Why does the Task Force recommend a new gym?"

**A:** The gym looks OK because it's well maintained. But it's overused. It isn't big enough to meet the state's new curriculum requirements for health and wellness instruction which requires space for "fitness stations" including weight training and aerobics classes.

The task force inspected the fitness center and trainer's room and found them too small to meet the new state guidelines.

Every day, our seven successful winter-sports teams hunt for practice time. They practice as early as 6:00 a.m. and as late as 10:00 p.m. forcing parents and students to arrive early and stay late. The Task Force believes a second gym solves the problem and allows Sterling to comply with state standards.

---

**Financial Information For Questions 1 & 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sending Community</th>
<th>Avg. Property Assessment</th>
<th>Old tax/yr.</th>
<th>New tax/yr.</th>
<th>New tax/month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
<td>$57</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>$3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somerdale</td>
<td>$87,000</td>
<td>$72</td>
<td>$58</td>
<td>$4.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>$104,000</td>
<td>$71</td>
<td>$65</td>
<td>$5.42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These tax estimates would stay the same for seven years, Giambri said, then decrease slightly during the 20-year life of the bond.

Giambri added more good news--the final tax could be even lower because the bond market has dropped.

"When I calculated the bond's tax impact last fall, I used a 4.75 percent interest rate. But the current rate is 4.25 percent. If that rate holds up after the vote the tax impact could be even lower," Giambri said.
Q: “Is this the best price for the improvements Sterling needs?”

A: According to Gary Passanante, Chairman of the Citizens Advisory Task Force:

“This proposal fixes Sterling’s major problems. No one disagrees that the building needs major improvement. The roof must be replaced. The science labs are old and showing it. We must fix the ventilation system—some classrooms hardly get heat. We must solve the gym space problem and performing arts situation—the new state guidelines leave us no choice.

I believe now is the time to fix these problems. The state has agreed to pay more of our debt than it has in the past. If the referendum fails, voters should consider that the state might change its mind about additional aid before another referendum.”

The Task Force believes it’s time for Sterling to enter the next century with the right building for modern programs and new state requirements. Our students expect their education will make them competent and competitive.

Remember

Vote
March 9th

Polls open from
2 p.m to 9 p.m

Magnolia Public School
Somerdale Park School
Stratford-Yellin School

For More Bond Referendum Information.

• Check out our video daily, on channel 18 at 10 a.m., noon, 2 p.m, 4 p.m, 6 p.m, 8 p.m, and 10 p.m
• Click on our web site http://www.sterling.k12.nj.us
• Call our hotline at 566-4197

Board of Education
Sterling Regional High School
501 S, Warwick Rd.
Somerdale, NJ 08083

Answers to Your Questions Inside
...To Sterling High School
For a Meeting and Tour
Learn how the proposed bond
referendum improvements will affect
our students and your property taxes.

Attend a community meeting on
Thursday, February 25th, 7:30 p.m.,
at Sterling's library.

Vote March 9th.
Polls open from
2 p.m. to 9 p.m.

For More Bond
Referendum Information...

* Visit our website at
  http://www.sterling.k12.nj.us
* Watch a video tour and a bond
  referendum report on Channel 18
daily at 6 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 noon,
4 p.m., 6 p.m., 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.
* See Sterling for yourself. Tour groups
  will leave from the library on
  Thursday, Feb. 25th, 8:30 p.m.
  Tuesday, March 2nd, 7:30 p.m.
  Monday, March 8th, 7:30 p.m.
* Call Sterling’s hotline at 566-4197
  with referendum questions.

Keep this important card on your refrigerator as a reminder.

Board of Education
Sterling Regional High School
501 S. Warwick Rd.
Somerdale, NJ 08083
Sterling High School – Informational Chart
$9 Million Bond Referendum - March 9, 1999

Two Ballot Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question One - $5.8 million</th>
<th>Question Two - $3.2 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms (2)</td>
<td>$170,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classrooms (Science)</td>
<td>$1,620,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code Issues</td>
<td>$66,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Upgrade</td>
<td>$800,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exterior Doors</td>
<td>$90,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Fees/Furnishings</td>
<td>$945,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>$750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Expansion</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Renovations</td>
<td>$145,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>$862,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts Center/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Band Room</td>
<td>$501,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Gym/All-weather Track/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletic Facilities/Lights</td>
<td>$2,125,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*** Renovations/Technology</td>
<td>$127,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Fees</td>
<td>$446,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Fees include:
  Question One: $242,700 for contingency fees
  $250,000 for furnishings
  $402,900 for engineer/architect fees
  $50,000 for reproduction costs
  Question Two: $137,600 for contingency fees
  $30,300 for furnishings
  $228,600 for engineer/architect fees
  $50,000 for reproduction fees

** Includes renovations to the Athletic Trainers area, rooms 5, 108 and 207

*** Includes a fitness center and wrestling room

Tax impact for average assessed home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Magnolia</td>
<td>$27.88</td>
<td>$17.11</td>
<td>$44.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Somerdale</td>
<td>$35.80</td>
<td>$21.97</td>
<td>$57.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stratford</td>
<td>$40.08</td>
<td>$24.59</td>
<td>$64.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Home in Magnolia = $80,000, Somerdale = $87,000, Stratford = $104,800

Media Center
February 25, 1999
7:30 PM
Members of the Sterling Regional High School Citizen Task Force

Mr. George Badey
Mrs. Kim Brisbin
Mrs. Kathy Considine
Mr. Anthony DePrince
Mr. Frank Gagliardi
Mr. John Galezniak
Mrs. Julie Galezniak
Mrs. Gail Laird
Mr. Jack Meyers, Jr.
Mr. Jack Meyers, Sr.
Mrs. Barbara Miller
Mr. James Mohan
Mr. Raymond Murtaugh
Mr. Gary Passanante
Mr. James Randazzo
Mr. Mike Sheridan
Mr. Anthony Simone

Co Chairperson - Finance Committee
CTF Co Chairperson
Co Chairperson - Facility Committee
Chairperson - Program Committee
CTF Chairperson
Co Chairperson - Finance Committee
CTF Co Chairperson

CTF Co Chairperson
Mr. Frank Gagliardi

Election Day - March 9, 1999
2:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

The Communication Institute
Rowan University
Research Findings
+/- 4%
In rank order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Percentage in Favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Roof</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HVAC</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Classrooms</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auditorium</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Windows</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice Gym</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Room</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band Practice Room</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV Studio</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What residents are willing to pay annually by community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Tax</th>
<th>Magnolia</th>
<th>Somerdale</th>
<th>Stratford</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>$75</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 +</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
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Sterling Regional School District
Sending District Tax Preference

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Increase</th>
<th>Percent Favoring</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100 +</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sterling Regional High School Board of Education

Special Task Force on School Facility

What is the purpose of the special Task Force?

The Task Force will recommend to the Board of Education a solution to high school facility issues (possibly including renovation and new construction).

Who will serve on the Task Force?

Only residents of the three sending communities (Somerdale, Magnolia and Stratford) will be voting members of the Task Force. Administrators, business personnel, architects, faculty, staff and other professionals, such as architects, may act as consultants. The board of education may observe the decision-making process.

How will the Task Force conduct its work?

The Task Force will divide its work into four areas—program (curricular and co-curricular activities preferred by residents), facility (maintenance, renovation and new construction necessary for the program), finance (acceptable tax for the program and the facility), and public opinion (residents preferences in program, facility, tax, etc.)

How long will the Task Force work?

The task force itself will decide this after it convenes and learns about the issues. It's possible that the group will begin this summer but do most of its work next fall.

Why is the board conducting this decision-making this way?

The board conducted research following the defeat of the referendum last winter and discovered that residents want a part in decisions affecting their school program and facilities. Although the board has the right and obligation to make those decisions, it has decided to seek the opinion of residents to help it make its final decision.

Who is the Task Force answerable to?

Ultimately, the Task Force reports a recommendation to the school board. The board legally decides what to do about the recommendation. During its deliberations, the Task Force is responsible to the residents and students they represent to make the best educational, programmatic and financial decision possible.

Has a task force been used by a board of education before?

Assembling a task force to help a board of education has been successfully done in many districts. Washington Township schools, for example, successfully used a task force to pass nearly all its major construction projects—most recently, a $50 million bond for a new middle school and additions to the high school.
Sterling High School Facilities Task Force
Meeting Minutes from Monday, October 19, 1998.

submitted by
The Communication Institute at Rowan University

Communication Institute Director Anthony Fulginiti acted as lead facilitator and called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Mr. Fulginiti presented a review of progress to date and a brief refresher of a research study conducted by Rowan of the community during the spring. The research reviewed how much the community said it would spend on improvements and showed what improvements the community would support.

By 6:30 p.m. all 17 committee members were present. Sixteen members were eligible to vote. Kim Brisbin of Laurel Springs was not.

Mr. Fulginiti explained the weighted voting system he planned to use later in the evening and presented the four models created from previous committee presentations from which members would chose. He told members they could create additional models if they wanted.

The models presented included:

Model 1- $11 million: This is almost the exact original proposal which failed in January, minus fees and renovations that have since been completed.

Model 2- $9 million: This includes everything in Model 1 except the administrative renovations, auditorium renovations, TV Studio expansion and new windows.

Model 3- $9 million broken into two questions on the ballot:
  Part 1: The base, is $5.8 million and includes two classrooms; six science labs; code issues; electric upgrades; exterior doors; fees; furnishings; HVAC; library expansion; renovations; roof and technology.
  Part II: The supplemental question, is $3.2 million and includes the band room/choral room expansion; instrument storage; a full size gym ($2.1 million); outdoor lights; track and stadium improvements. This includes a link that assures voters cannot vote for question 2 unless they vote yes for question one.

Model 4- $5.8 million: This includes everything in the base question of model 3 only.

Members debated each model before voting. Members debated the merits of an $11 million bond versus a $9 million bond, but quickly agreed they could get almost everything they needed for $9 million. Mr. Giambri assured the committee that the school could make the renovations it eliminated from the $11 million over time from other sources or annual budgets. For example, the windows could be replaced a few at a time. He suggested that the TV studio and the auditorium renovations may be funded from the interest earned during the first year of the bond issue.

More heated debate occurred concerning the merits of Model 2 and Model 3. A few members, Mr. Mahon and Mr. Murtaugh, felt a two question ballot was unlikely to succeed. They questioned if voters would approve the supplemental question if given the chance to vote no. Mr. Mahon did not want to lose the new gym because of current overcrowding and projected enrollment growth to 1,000 students by the turn of the century.

Mr. Simone and Mr. Passanante said the special interest groups would drive question 2 as well as question 1

At one point, Mr. Frank Gagliardi proposed Model 5 which moved the band and choral improvements to a $6.8 million base question, with a $2.2 million supplemental question including only the gym and other renovations.
Members voted to stop the debate and proceed with the voting. The voting system was weighted with members making first, second and third choices. A first place selection carried 3 points, second place carried 2 points and third place carried one point.

The voting results were:
Model 1 = 12 points
Model 2 = 32 points
Model 3 = 28 points
Model 4 = 0 points
Model 5 = 21 points

Mr. Fulginiti specified that all models needed 40% of total points to proceed. However, no model received that percentage so it was agreed to proceed with a simple majority vote. Model 4 with 0 points was eliminated first. Model 1 was eliminated second. Model 5 was eliminated third. Eliminations were made by majority votes, a show of hands. Members voted between model 2 and model 3 after continued debate. Model three won with 12 votes. Model 3 had 4 votes.

Next, members discussed the merits of presenting both or one proposal to the board. They agreed by majority to propose only model 3. That vote was 10-6. They also agreed by majority to eliminate their previous votes to present the package as a unanimous decision. That vote was 13 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 abstentions.

Finally, the members elected Mr. Passanante as task force chairman, and Anthony Simone and Frank Galgliardi as co-chairs. All accepted their positions. It was agreed that Mr. Passanante will make the final presentation to the board at a special meeting on Dec. 10.

Communication Institute consultants Suzanne Sparks and Rick Alcantara will draft a final report of all the task force’s activities and present it to the chairpersons before Nov. 16.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.
BOND REFERENDA INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

February 25, 2002 interview with Dr. Joy Miller, Assistant Superintendent of the Egg Harbor Township School District. Interviewed by Paul Dice. Dr. Miller’s answers are shown in bold type.

1. What was the date of your last two referenda?
   a. Date of last referendum? 3/28/00.
   b. Date of referendum before last? N/A.

2. How many votes were held to pass the referendum in #1 above?
   a. Last referendum? One.
   b. Referendum before last? N/A.

3. Do you feel the voters were pre-disposed to passing the referendum in #1 above?
   If not, why not? No. They understood a growing school population, but not the need for the building projects. They also wanted a large-school concept when the administration wanted a small-school concept.

4. Were the following audiences predisposed to passing the referendum in #1 above?
   If not, why not?
   a. Teachers? No.
   c. BOE members? No.
   d. Staff? No.
   e. Parents? No.
   f. Students? No.
5. Regarding your school district’s population, please provide the following demographic information:

a. What percentage are parents with school-age children? **Approximately 60% to 70%**.

b. What percentage are non-parents? **10%**.

c. What percentage are senior citizens? **10% to 15%**.

d. What are the mean or median income levels? **$50,000**.

e. What percentage are new residents? **There has been a large influx of students**.

f. Is there an increasing student population? **Yes, 400 students/yr**.

6. Do you feel you had support from local government for the referenda in #1 above? **After the public relations campaign, yes. Not before**.

7. Is there a history of community support for education in your school district? **Nine or ten budgets passed in last 10 years. Seven failed. Currently the community is extremely supportive**.

8. Was there a consensus of the board of education to pass the bond? **Yes**.

9. Was there a consensus of the administration to pass the bond? **Yes**.

10. Were the board of education and the administration in agreement? **Yes**.

11. Were any of the following consultants used in any part of the bond referendum planning, execution, and monitoring or evaluating stages?

   a. School planning? **Dr. White, strategic planning committee. Also, Dr. Miller led parents, community members, staff, and board of education in analyzing the schools needs**.
b. Finance? No.
d. Other: One architect was used for the population extrapolation. Another architect was used for the building projects.

12. Were endorsements from any party outside of the education community sought to support the referendum efforts? If so,
   a. Who were they from? Township committee and Home School Association.
   b. Were any of the people political figures? Yes.

13. Was there any opposition to the referenda?
   a. Was the opposition organized? No.
   b. Was the opposition effective? No. They weren't particularly vocal.

14. Does your community have access to school property? Yes.

15. What does your community use school property for? Athletic fields are used for recreational events. Community members also use the buildings for meetings and adult education classes.

16. Please describe your school communications with your community? Newsletters, monthly letter from the guidance office, monthly calendar of events from principals. The Current (local newspaper) has an education column that the covers district activities. Board of education meets 2 times per month. The community is always welcome to participate.
17. Please describe your communications with your staff. Memorandum, faculty meetings, team meetings with home school association and televised newscasts from students.

18. Do you have a community relations program? Please describe the program. Not through the school district. The public relations position was cut from the 1998-99 budget. The position has not been reinstated.

19. Was there any controversy over building placement? N/A.

20. Was any public opinion research performed? Yes.
   a. Do you consider public opinion research to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? Yes.
   b. If public opinion was performed, at what stage of the bond referendum process was it employed?

      Telephone surveys were performed to identify needs. Focus groups were also performed. A paper survey was published in the Current (local newspaper).
   c. If public opinion research was used, who performed it? Rowan University’s Communication Institute.

21. What was the tax increase amount? Not sure.

22. Was a citizen-participation group, e.g., task force, used? Yes. The strategic planning group referenced in “11.a.” above.
   a. Do you consider citizen participation groups to be an essential part of the bond referendum process? Yes.
b. If used, did the citizen-participation group participate in the planning stages of the bond referendum? Yes.

c. If used, was the citizen-participation group of diverse make-up? Yes.

d. If used, was the citizen-participation group involved in any public opinion research? Only as survey respondents.

e. If used, did the citizen-participation group conduct the get-out-the-vote campaigns? Yes. Home school association made phone calls to community members.

f. Did the citizen-participation group perform presentations to community groups? Yes.

g. Did the citizen-participation group have any other roles? Some drove senior citizens to the voting polls.

23. Please answer the following questions regarding your campaign strategy (ies) for the bond referendum in #1 above.

a. Was the focus on children? Yes. It focused on children and safety.

b. Did you collect information from internal or external audiences that was then used to structure the campaign? Need developed from a business point of view. The campaign, however, reflected community values.

c. What percentage of the campaign was allocated to betterment of teaching and administrative staff? Minimal allocation for staff needs.

d. Was teacher support sought? Yes.

e. Committees used, e.g., steering, site, finance, structure, etc.? The strategic planning committee only.
f. How marketed, e.g., flyers, brochures, information sheets, radio, TV, special events, video, etc.? See file.

g. Demonstrated need for additional classroom space? Yes.

h. Were students educated on the bond issues? Yes. Information was published in the Eagle Times, a student publication.

i. Were the following public audiences identified?

1) Parents w/school age children? Yes.

2) Parents of children no longer in school? Yes.

3) Parents w/pre-school children? Yes.

4) Non-parents? Yes.

5) Parents of children in private schools? Yes

j. Were the internal audiences identified?

1) Teachers? Yes.

2) Administrators? Yes.

3) Board of education members? Yes.

4) Staff? Yes.

5) Students? Yes.

24. Did you pursue absentee ballots? Yes.

25. Did you attempt to register voters? Yes. At the annual school event.

26. Please answer the following questions regarding your use of media during the campaign:

b. What media were used? *Atlantic City Press, Current, Channel 40* (local cable station).

c. Were there any letters to the editor during your campaign? If so, do you consider them to have been supportive or negative toward your campaign?

Yes. Most letters supported the referendum.

27. How long did your campaign last? **6 months.**

28. What was the time span of your campaign? **September, 1999 to March, 2000.**

29. Was the timing of your campaign critical? Yes. Absolutely. The vote took place 2 weeks before the election for the operating budget.

30. Do you believe the public understood the referenda issues? Only after the public relations campaign.

31. What were the vote results? Not sure of specific results. She was certain the vote passed, however.

32. What audiences supported the bond the most? Parents, staff.

33. What audiences formed your greatest opposition? Senior citizens, but not to an extreme.

34. What would you change in the next election? Nothing. Would have Tony Fulginiti, Rowan University’s Executive Director of the Communication Institute, involved in the next election.
Residents vote on three questions to improve, add to district schools.

Egg Harbor Township residents will vote on three major projects to repair schools and provide seats for hundreds of new students in a $56.4 million referendum on March 28.

The projects range from repairs and renovations to a new elementary school. School Board President Carmen Faia calls the vote an important step in the school district’s Education Master Plan.

“All three questions together will bring our aging schools up to today’s standards,” said Faia. “And we must create more seats for our growing enrollment.”

The board and the administration commissioned a district-wide strategic planning committee—made of residents, teachers, and administrators—before deciding on the issue.

Question One: Repairs and Renovations

This question makes major repairs to the three elementary schools and the high school. It addresses health and safety issues.

All four schools get new heating and ventilation systems with air conditioning, new electrical wiring for computer systems, safety and technology upgrades, and Americans with Disabilities Act repairs. The high school will also receive a new roof.

Question Two: Additions

This question solves basic overcrowding problems at Swift Elementary and the High School. But it still needs question three to become truly effective.

The high school additions include 20 classrooms, an expanded gym with a new floor and new locker rooms, a performing arts studio, an expanded and potentially offer a full-day kindergarten.

The school-within-a-school design will separate third and fourth grades. Built near the Intermediate School, the figure-eight pattern will provide natural light.

Each grade has 24 classrooms and administrative support. A two-way stage faces the cafeteria or music rooms. A large multipurpose gym can become a full, 50 ft. by 84 ft. basketball court.

Question Three: New Elementary School

This question relieves overcrowding at the elementary schools with a 1,100-seat, third and fourth grade elementary school. It completes the school board’s master plan to meet the district’s long-term needs and potentially offer a full-day kindergarten.

This year, Egg Harbor Schools enrolled 239 more students than projected. Every elementary school is filled to capacity. Swift school depends on four portable classrooms. New students this year would fill 15 classrooms. By 2003, new enrollment would fill 45 nonexistent classrooms.

Overcrowding Facts

This year, Egg Harbor Schools enrolled 239 more students than projected. Every elementary school is filled to capacity. New students this year would fill 15 classrooms. By 2003, new enrollment would fill 45 nonexistent classrooms.

Board of Education
Carmen Faia, Esq. - President
James Galvin - Vice President
Neil Anderson, Sr. Brian Murphy
Stephen Calabro Leo A. Scarpino
George Dearborn Doris Dilley
Howard Minnichbach

Administration
Dr. Leonard Kelpsh
Superintendent
Dr. Joy Miller
Dr. Philip Heery
Assistant Superintendents
Helen G. Haley, CPA
Business Administrator/Board Secretary
For information, call 609-646-3370
Question 1 - Repairs / Alterations

The first question authorizes repairs and renovations to Davenport, Swift and Slaybaugh Elementary Schools and the High School

What we need. Why we need it.

At all four schools:
* New heating and ventilation systems with air-conditioning

The original boiler at Swift is 43 years old. The high school has individual units in each classroom. These old systems waste money and cause odd temperature swings. Research also shows that hot classrooms stifle learning.

* New electrical, technology and security systems

Finally fix the electrical systems so your students can use their excellent computer capability. Upgrade other technology such as the intercom, clock, voice, video and security systems so students and staff can work safely and efficiently. Recent public school violence speaks of its own need for added security.

* Facilities that conform to Americans with Disabilities Act regulations

These upgrades will help students with physical disabilities get the most from their education. If a school district makes major repairs to an old building, it must make the building conform to the ADA.

At the high school:
* A new roof

The roof leaks into corridors, classrooms and the gymnasium. Water drips onto computer equipment, crumbles ceiling tiles and creates mold in the flooring.

* General upgrades

The 16-year-old carpeting is worn and expensive to clean. The aging auditorium needs new seats and lights. Broken doors make it impossible to “lock down” the building for security. New ceiling tiles will replace worn or damaged ones.

School classrooms if all three questions pass

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Davenport</th>
<th>Slaybaugh</th>
<th>Swift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>* 9 kindergarten</td>
<td>* 10 kindergarten</td>
<td>* 15 classrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 9 first grade</td>
<td>* 10 first grade</td>
<td>* 2 special ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 9 second grade</td>
<td>* 10 second grade</td>
<td>* music room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 2 special ed</td>
<td>* 3 special ed</td>
<td>* art room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* music room</td>
<td>* music room</td>
<td>* computer lab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* art room</td>
<td>* computer lab</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What students, staff and community will get

* Consistent air quality and temperature control: Students and staff perform better in a controlled climate — like most stores, offices and homes. More efficient systems will save money.

* Modern technology: Students will share programs and ideas through television. The new security systems will help officials recognize a threat and “lock down” a building.

* ADA upgrades: Old buildings don’t conform to ADA law. Now students and staff with disabilities can use the buildings properly — such as enter the school, go to the bathroom and get a drink of water.

At the High School: A new roof will prevent leaks. New floor tiles will stand student traffic. Sixteen generations of students have taken a toll.

Survey

"73% of residents agree/strongly agree with repairs and renovations."
Question 2 — Additions to the High School and Swift Elementary

The second question adds classrooms and expands core facilities at the High School and Swift Elementary School.

Additions
What you’ll get.

As you consider this question, remember, by September 2003, with an average of 25 students per classroom, you would enroll enough new students to fill 45 new classrooms.

High School
The question asks you to authorize three additions at the high school.

First Addition
• You’ll add a two-floor, 20-classroom addition with restrooms and a small group instruction room.

Second Addition
You’ll expand the gym and get:
• New larger floor with another teaching station. Moisture rots the old floor and the gym is too small.
• New locker rooms for your men’s and women’s athletic teams. The old locker rooms will become physical education space and visiting team areas.
• Two health classrooms and storage space on the second floor.

Third Addition
• You’ll create a new multi-purpose/performing arts studio and allow the small cafeteria and kitchen to expand — something you need for the growing enrollment.
• You’ll expand and renovate the library media center and add a new television studio, freeing two other rooms for media classes.
• You’ll create two much-needed high-tech physics labs and expand the guidance area near the media center.
• For convenience, you’ll add bathrooms. For security, you’ll get an entrance lobby with an elevator for after-hours admission separate from the main building.

Swift School
You’ll add to the Swift school in two places:

In the rear addition, you’ll build:
• 9 kindergarten classrooms, with individual toilets
• Three first grade classrooms
• An art classroom

At Swift Elementary...
These additions will allow Swift to have only 20 students per class and handle more than 500 students. Swift school will be more like Davenport and Slaybaugh, setting the stage to complete the Master Education Plan in the third question.

• A small group instruction room

In the front addition, you’ll build:
• A modern library media center
• The old library will accommodate a new nurse’s office, something you badly need to properly care for the additional enrollment.

Survey
Residents prefer referendum to lease purchase. 

The school board agreed.
Question 3 — New Elementary School

The third question builds a new 1,100-student elementary school for grades 3 and 4

You’ll need to build a new elementary school to provide classrooms for the large enrollment coming.

Without the new school from Question 3, class sizes would swell and eventually, students may have to split their sessions.

To educate 1,100 students, the new building will use a school-within-a-school concept. This separates the third and fourth grades and treats them as separate programs within the same building. Features include:

• Built near the Intermediate School on a 32-acre plot.
• Separate bus drop off areas. These paved areas double as a hard surface for school events and after-hours parking.
• You’ll prepare playfields and leave an undeveloped nature-study area behind the building.
• The school will use a figure-eight pattern with two inside courtyards. This easy-to-follow design offers the most natural light.
• Two art classrooms open into the courtyards.
• 24 classrooms and support rooms for each grade inside the two-story building.
• The second floor offers two science labs, two computer labs, and two instruction areas near the media center/library.

The instruction areas double as classrooms or staff development rooms, critical for when the state adds new requirements.

• A two-way stage connects two music classrooms and the cafeteria.

For large presentations, the cafeteria becomes the auditorium and the music rooms become dressing or theatrical support rooms.

For small presentations, a partition separates the stage from the cafeteria to face the music rooms.

• The gym offers a large, multipurpose area ideal for a full-sized 50 ft. by 84 ft. basketball court for school or community use.
• One central administration area provides office space for each grade. Students enter through this area.

Survey

72% of the community believes that Egg Harbor Township schools are overcrowded.

The scientific study was conducted by Rowan University. The complete study is available at the Board office.

Residents prefer a three-question ballot.

The school board agreed.

If you add to the Swift school and build this new school, you’ll be able to place all your third and fourth grades in one building and create a program just for them.

The existing three elementary schools become K-2 programs.
The Intermediate School becomes a grade 5-6 program.
The Middle School becomes a grade 7-8 program.
The High School remains a 9-12 program.

The new building will solve your overcrowding problem for the long term. In fact, you will gain enough seats from a combination of Questions 2 & 3 that the Board would have the ability to begin a full-day kindergarten.
Residents of Egg Harbor Township will not have to bear the full tax burden for the three questions.

The state currently contributes a little more than 46% of the cost for each question. The community's share is a little more than 53%.

As you look at the charts below, remember that the community pays only a little more than half. Although the actual total cost of all three questions is $56,400,000, the state will contribute $26,131,868 leaving $30,268,132 as the community’s share.

**NOTE**

The level of state aid could change in the future. There's no guarantee that state aid will stay at 46%. But if the community approves the questions on March 28, the state should continue to pay its share for the life of the bonds.

The Board of Education decided to structure the debt payment to delay the tax impact for this bond. Residents will not see an increase until 2001. Construction will be under way by that time.

**Chart shows cost and taxes for each question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>The state will pay</th>
<th>The community will pay</th>
<th>The tax for a property assessed at $100,000</th>
<th>The tax for a property assessed at $125,000</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$18,100,000</td>
<td>$9,713,709</td>
<td>$39 annual avg.</td>
<td>$50 annual avg.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8,386,291</td>
<td>$7,644,962</td>
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<td>$16,500,000</td>
<td>$8,855,038</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>$7,644,962</td>
<td>$11,699,384</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$5,806,800</td>
<td>$8,267,844</td>
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<td>$8,108,381</td>
<td>$10,502,515</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$8,855,038</td>
<td>$11,699,384</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

For all three questions, at most, you'll pay about $13 a month for a property assessed at $125,000. That's less than two movie tickets.

Because all three questions work together to complete the Board’s long-term solution, consider the tax impact for all three. The tax is based on the value of your property.

- For a property valued at $100,000 the average tax impact for all three questions will be $120 per year or about $10 a month. The tax will last for 25 years.
- For a property valued at $125,000 the average tax impact for all three questions will be $155 per year or about $13 a month. The tax will last for 25 years.
- All three questions will cost $56.4 million, but the state will pay $26,131,868 leaving the community to pay $30,268,132.
With the additions and new construction, the board will have the space to begin a full-day kindergarten if the community wishes it.

These are the facts. The decision will be in your hands on March 28. The Master Education Plan for the district is necessary for the well being of students and residents alike.

If the community does not agree on March 28 to these three questions, problems that are now serious will become critical.

- Your school board will have to take necessary measures to educate the hundreds of new students that will enter your school system.
- If there is an insufficient number of classrooms, students must share rooms.

With these additions and new construction, the board will have the space to begin a full-day kindergarten if the community wishes it.

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- Your school board will have to take necessary measures to educate the hundreds of new students that will enter your school system.
- If there is an insufficient number of classrooms, students must share rooms.

No Property Tax Impact For Seniors and Disabled Who Qualify and Apply

This bond referendum will have no property tax impact on senior citizens and the disabled who qualify and apply for state aid. NJ Assembly bill #3, passed into law in 1997, freezes property taxes at '96/'97 levels, for those who meet the state's financial requirements and apply for a rebate.

Homeowners at least 65 years old or those receiving federal social security disability benefits and meet the following requirements are eligible to apply:

**Single** - Total annual income less than $17,918

**Married** - Combined total annual income less than $21,970

For more information about this issue, call 1-800-882-6597.

**How?**

- Class sizes will grow, probably too large to manage.
- Split sessions are a real option because you'll have to use the limited number of classrooms more than once a day. If that happens, property values will be jeopardized because an excellent school system is the first criteria everyone, parents and nonparents alike, check before they move into a community.

- The wear and tear on the buildings will increase. Systems and structures will be stretched beyond their design and life expectancy.

**Your schools need what these three questions can give them.**

---

**Benefits/Losses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Projected Student Enrollment</th>
<th>8000</th>
<th>7500</th>
<th>7000</th>
<th>6500</th>
<th>6000</th>
<th>5500</th>
<th>5000</th>
<th>4500</th>
<th>4000</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Year)</td>
<td>98/99</td>
<td>99/00</td>
<td>00/01</td>
<td>01/02</td>
<td>02/03</td>
<td>03/04</td>
<td>04/05</td>
<td>05/06</td>
<td>06/07</td>
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<td>6041</td>
<td>6276</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Projected Student Enrollment** (There are no seats for these new students.)

(Red line indicates EHT buildings’ capacity without additions or new construction)

---

**Where to vote on March 28th**

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mark your calendar.

**Districts 1 and 2**
Scullville Fire House - Station 1
1708 M.L.S.P. Rd.

**District 3**
Swift School Library
5 Swift Drive

**District 4**
Scullville Fire House - Station 2
1403 M.S.L.P. Rd.

**District 5**
EHT Municipal Building - Lobby
3515 Bargaintown Rd.

**District 6**
Zion Methodist Church
Community Building
652 Zion Rd.

**District 7**
Painter Union Hall
2116 Ocean Heights Ave.

**District 8**
London Court Community Center
Old Egg Harbor Rd.

**District 9**
Bargaintown Fire House
6550 Mill Rd.

**District 10**
EHT Middle School - Auditorium
4034 Fernwood Ave.

**District 11**
Cardiff Fire House - Station 2
4049 English Creek Ave.

**District 12**
EHT Intermediate School - Comm. Room 25
Adler Ave.

**District 13**
West Atlantic City Fire House
7004 Black Horse Pike

**District 14**
Farmington Fire House
602 Maple Ave.

**District 15**
Davenport School - Main Lobby
2501 Spruce Ave.

**District 16**
PAL Building
2594 Tilton Rd.
B.3.1

**QUESTION ONE**

**RENOVATIONS**

This question repairs and renovates four buildings – the three elementary schools and the high school. There's no new construction in this question.

**At all four schools:**
- New HVAC, including air conditioning.
- New electrical systems to fully use computer capability.
- Upgrades intercom, clock, voice, video and security.
- Conformity to the Americans with Disabilities Act so challenged students can easily use bathrooms, water fountains, and other accommodations.

**At the High School:**
- New roof, exterior door frames, corridor linoleum, auditorium seating and lighting, and ceiling tile in corridors and classrooms.

**Survey**

"73% of residents agree/strongly agree with repairs and renovations."

Rowan University Survey

**QUESTION TWO**

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES**

This question adds seats at the High School and Swift Elementary.

**High School**
- Add 20 classrooms on two floors with restrooms on both floors.
- Add a small group instruction room.
- Expand the gym.
- Build new locker rooms for athletic teams. Convert old locker rooms to physical education and visiting team areas.

**Swift School**
- Add 2 health classrooms, storage and mechanical space.
- Construct a new all purpose, performing arts studio.
- Renovate and expand the cafeteria and kitchen.
- Expand and renovate the media center.
- Add new television studio classroom.
- Renovate two classrooms for media classes.

**Survey**

"72% of the community believe that Egg Harbor Township schools are overcrowded."

Rowan University Survey

**QUESTION THREE**

**NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

This question builds an 1,100-student elementary school for grades 3 and 4. Adopt a school-within-a-school concept – third and fourth graders taught separately in one school.

**The new school will have:**
- 24 classrooms for each of the schools-within-a-school
- 2 science labs and two computer labs
- A double, multi purpose room ideal for a full sized, 50 ft. X 84 ft. basketball court
- 2 art classrooms
- 2 music rooms
- 2 large group instruction areas
- Separate drop off areas for each program
- Playfields and a nature study area
- Figure-eight pattern with 2 inside courtyards
- Central area for administration, with 2 separate entrances

**New Configuration**
- 3 elementary schools become K-2
- New elementary school becomes 3-4
- Intermediate School becomes 5-6
- Middle School becomes 7-8
- High School remains 9-12

The survey also revealed that the public wanted a referendum rather than a lease-purchase. The public also wanted a three-question ballot. The school board agreed with residents.

The scientific study was conducted by Rowan University. The complete study is available at the Board office.
By September 1999, studies said the district would have 5,286 students. Instead, 5,525 students arrived. That’s 239 students over projection.

This year, 369 new students enrolled. That’s about 15 new classroom of students. Studies expect 5,543 students by Sept. 2000. But the district is only a dozen-and-half students short of that right now.

Between 2003-2006, the district should have enrolled an additional 691 students. That impossibly strains the buildings.

**Chart shows cost and taxes for each question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Questions 1, 2 &amp; 3 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repairs and renovations</td>
<td>Additions to the High School and Swift</td>
<td>The new elementary school</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$18,100,000</td>
<td>$16,500,000</td>
<td>$21,800,000</td>
<td>$56,400,000</td>
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<td>$10,100,616</td>
<td>$26,131,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9,713,709</td>
<td>$8,855,038</td>
<td>$11,699,384</td>
<td>$30,268,132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Benefits/Losses**

- Approval of questions 2 and 3, gives the school board the ability to begin a full-day kindergarten.
- If all 3 questions fail, problems become critical.
  - The school board must find space for hundreds of new students.
  - Class sizes will grow.
  - Split sessions are a real option.
  - Property values will be jeopardized.
  - Wear and tear on the buildings will increase.
  - Safety and security issues grow worse.

**State Aid**

The state will contribute 46.3% for each and all questions. The community’s share is 53.6%.

**Monthly Tax**

\[ Q_1 + Q_2 + Q_3 = \]

- $10 monthly tax
- Property assessed at $100,000

- $13 monthly tax
- Property assessed at $125,000

The board will delay the tax impact until 2001, the start of construction.

**Presentations**

March 13 - 7:30 p.m.
High School Library
March 16 - 7 p.m.
Intermediate School BOE Room
March 22 - 10 a.m. and at 7 p.m.
Swift School

**Vote on March 28th**

Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Mark your calendar.

Vote at the same locations as general elections.
MEETING NOTICE

Date & Time: Tuesday, February 15; 7:00 p.m.
Place: E.H.T. High School library
Speaker: Dr. Leonard Kelpsh, Superintendent
Topic: Building Project

From the President:

For more than two years now I have been working with the Board of Education, Administrators and other township residents to develop a building plan for our school district. Our objective has been to meet the needs of our growing population and the requirements mandated for core curriculum while also keeping in mind what the cost will be to the taxpayers.

On Saturday, January 29th at 9am I attended a Board of Education meeting where the Architects presented the schematics of the proposed building plan. The Bond Council was also there and he shared the wording of the referendum to be placed on the ballot for the March 28th public vote of the plan.

There will be three questions on the ballot. All three questions must be passed in order to meet our goals. The Executive Board of the Home & School Association will be meeting on February 13th to discuss the proposal and referendum questions. The last time that the Executive Board discussed the building plan it was $8 million dollars less for the project which was submitted by the Strategic Planning Committee.

The organization will receive a special mailing in the near future as to what will be supported by the Executive Board of the Home & School Association. This mailing will be delivered to our members in time for the referendum vote. The Superintendent has already purchased portable classrooms for this school year and has more budgeted for next year. We need to invest in permanent structures not a temporary band aid. These portable classrooms cost more than $200,000 each.

If you are not familiar with the proposed plan, there will be informational meetings to explain the needs and projects in the upcoming months. These informational meetings will give you first hand information and also answer any questions that you may have. There are several committees meeting this month and will be reporting to the organization at our February 15th meeting. As always, your questions and concerns are welcome at our monthly meeting.

Barbara Szilagyi
SCHOOL BOARD
Chairperson: Chuck Donovan
The first school board meeting of the year 2000 was highlighted by a presentation from the Public Relations firm hired by the Board of Education. The public relations team, who will assist the district in getting the information to the public concerning the upcoming building program, related to the public their findings from a survey they conducted. This survey was to determine what type of questions should be put on the referendum, how they should be phrased, and how many questions there will be presented. From the results of the survey it appears that there will be as many as three questions on the referendum. Another survey will be conducted shortly as a follow up. As soon as the actual questions are formulated I will put them in the next newsletter and discuss each one.

In addition to the presentation from the Public Relations Group a Technology update was given. Distance Learning Labs in the high and middle school were discussed. These labs will allow our students to take courses not offered in the district. Other items discussed were new AP courses in the high school, a $57,000 Grant for Special Needs, and a pilot program to include senior citizens next year. If anyone has questions about the board meeting please call Chuck Donovan at 927-1448.

EDUCATION FAIR 2000
Chairperson: Cheryl Lees
The 11th annual education fair will be held Friday, March 24th, 7 to 9 p.m. and Saturday, March 25th, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Once again projects, videos, demonstrations and live performances representing all of the classrooms in our district, kindergarten to 12th grade, will be on display in the highschool commons area, cafeteria, and auditorium.

Be part of this great event by volunteering your time to transport projects from your child’s school to the highschool and help set up the displays beginning at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, March 24th or helping tear the fair down on Saturday at 2 p.m. and transporting the projects back to their respective schools. This a monumental undertaking but it is worth the effort to see all of the districts schools represented under one roof.

This year the fair’s timing is important as the referendum vote for a new building and upgrades to existing ones will take place only a few weeks later. Turnout has always been tremendous at the fairs in years past and this one should be no exception. If you would like to volunteer your time please contact your child’s school parent club or contact Cheryl Lees at 653-4932.

PROJECT GRADUATION
Co-chairpersons: Lynda Donovan, Maryanne Spiker
Our committee needs your help! Join us as we meet each month to plan, ponder, and finally produce a wonderful evening of fun, entertainment, prizes, music, and special memories for our graduates. Our meetings will be held in the EHTHS library at 7:15 PM on the following dates: Mar. 13, Apr. 10, May 8 & 22, and June 5 & 12. Mark your calendars. This worthwhile event cannot happen without your help and involvement.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT
Chairperson: Bonnie Griffiths
It’s not that far away! Look to the mid-May edition of the E.H.T. Current for full course listings and registration information.

BOWL-A-THON
Co-Chairpersons: Sandi Roberts, Maria Mahoney
The 7th Annual Bowl-a Thon is in full swing. The tentative dates are April 2nd and April 9th. We are looking for fresh faces and new ideas to help pull off a successful scholarship fundraiser. Please contact Maria Mahoney @ 926-0202.
EHT Home & School Association
1999-2000 Officers & Committee Chairpersons

OFFICERS
PRESIDENT- Barbara Szilagyi (927-0629)
1st VP- Mason Tarr (645-0137)
2nd VP- Lori Ward (645-8663)
3rd VP- Pat Hodson (653-8309)
TREASURER- Dinky Ballance (926-1527)
RECORDING SECRETARY- Debbie Pyne (653-1459)
CORRESPONDING SECRETARY- Kathy Zeigenfus (653-8191)
PALIAMENTARIAN-Chuck Donovan (927-1448)

COMMITTEES
BOWL-A-THON- Maria Mahoney (926-0202); Lori Ward (653-8663)
BUDGET - Chuck Donovan (927-1448)
BUILDINGS-Lou DeScioli (927-9221)
BYLAWS- Loretta Sacks (653-6520)
COLLEGE MENTOR- Isao Hoshi
COMMUNICATIONS- Bonnie Griffiths (645-3426)
COMMUNITY RELATIONS- Hector Taverez (927-2719)
EDUCATION FAIR- Cheryl Lees (653-4932)
GRADES K-3- Sandi Roberts (653-2009)
GRADES 4-5-6-Maria Mahoney (926-0202)
GRADES 6-7-8- Laurie Angerman (927-1791)
HIGH SCHOOL- Maryanne Spiker (653-8739)
LEGISLATURE- Ed Purinton (927-0418)
MEMBERSHIP- Maryanne Coggins (927-3766)
PROJECT GRADUATION- Lynda Donovan (927-1448)

PUBLIC RELATIONS-Eileen Rocks (926-8543)
SCHOLARSHIPS- Edy Laverdure (927-0609)
SPECIAL NEEDS- Tom Carty (926-4495)
SUMMER ENRICHMENT- Bonnie Griffiths (645-3426)
TEACHER APPRECIATION- Lorraine Shutz (927-9249)
TECHNOLOGY- HELP WANTED

*OUR OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS YOUR CONCERNS, COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT THEM AT THE PHONE NUMBERS ABOVE.
Egg Harbor Township
School Bond Referendum

- Fix older schools
- Build for a growing population
- Make schools safe, secure and comfortable

Question One

Repair
Three Elementary Schools
The High School

Question Two

Add Classrooms
Swift School
The High School

Question Three

Build
New Elementary School

VOTE
Tuesday, March 28
Polls open 7 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Attention Parents:

Important School News!

Find out how the March 28th school bond referendum affects you and your student in terms of...

Class Size
School Conditions
Educational Programming
Taxes

Please Attend
Informational Meeting/Presentation
Thursday, March 16, 7 p.m.

Where?
Intermediate School
Board of Education Room

See the plans. Hear the facts. Ask questions. Get answers.
Referendum

Board Moves Ahead to Improve School Facilities

The Egg Harbor Township Board of Education approved a three-question ballot for a public referendum on March 28 of this year following a presentation of the results of a community survey at its meeting on January 11.

The survey was conducted by the Communication Institute at Rowan University. Researchers called a random sample of residents and asked their attitudes toward three specific issues.

The referendum on March 28 will ask voters to approve these three issues:

• Alterations and repairs to each of the elementary schools and the high school. The repairs will fix roofs, control air quality and temperature, replace boilers and worn carpeting, and make the schools comply with state regulations for students with disabilities. The cost for these repairs is approximately $15.3 million.

(more)
Referendum -- add-1

- Addition of 20 classrooms to the high school and classrooms and a media center to the Swift School. The cost for these additions is approximately $12.7 million.

- A new 1,100-seat elementary school. The cost for the new school is approximately 21.7 million.

The survey revealed that a majority of residents preferred to vote on the three issues separately. As it did with its decision not to pursue the lease purchase option for the first two issues, the Board again listened to the public and agreed to give Township voters maximum choice at the voting booth.

During the next few weeks, the Board and the administration will conduct an active information campaign to inform all residents of the issues and the benefits each will bring to the students and community.

The Board will mail information to residents' homes, meet with community groups, and take every opportunity to fully explain and justify the improvements.

The Board and the superintendent believe that this is an exciting and progressive development for students, parents and residents. The needed improvements will solve real problems and keep the district on its excellent direction.

# # #
To: Board of Education Members

Re: Bond Referendum Update

Date: February 18, 2000

To keep you informed of our progress concerning the bond referendum campaign, the following information is for your review:

1. Enclosed are copies of the educational specifications for each building project for your files.

2. Gary Bannon met with Tom Miserendino, Educational Specialist, in the NJ Department of Education to review the Ed Specs and Schematic Plans. A meeting report highlights the outcome of this session. Although, Mr. Miserendino requested that the Board "consider" some suggestions, the only "must do" changes involved the addition of kindergarten toilet rooms in both the Davenport and Slaybaugh projects. Therefore, Tuesday evening's board agenda will include a resolution to approve the Ed. Specs. and a resolution to approve the "alternate method" regarding the kindergarten toilet rooms.

3. Throughout the next two weeks, the Fulginiti Group will begin a telephone chain to encourage the parents of new students to the district to register to vote by the February 28th dead-line date. Through our transportation and registrar office, we were able to identify 500-600 new registrants who will be contacted over the next two weeks. We are aggressively promoting a voter registration campaign by sending flyers home to all parents, placing reminders on monthly building calendars; the monthly menu; registration forms in all schools; encouraging our 18 year olds to register; and a reminder in the bond referendum newsletter to be included in the February 24th issue of the Current.
4. On March 3rd, we will be training all campaign team members on a presentation script developed by the Fulginiti Group. During the first three weeks of March, we will be making as many informational presentations to the various community, organizational and parent groups in the township.

5. During the Educational Fair on March 24 and 25, we will be making informational presentations on Friday evening and Saturday similar to the presentation Gary Bannon did for the Board during our recent Saturday Retreat. Gary is going to be a member of our presentation team on both days. This will be a good opportunity for us to reach a significant number of people regarding the bond referendum issues.

6. Our students in the Journalism II class are going to dedicate the next issue of *The Eagle Times* entirely to the Bond Referendum. The attached memorandum from Karen Warner details the scope of their project. *The Eagle Times* will be inserted into the March 16th issue of the *Current*. They’ve done a great job of planning and covering all issues of the Bond Referendum!

7. On March 1st, Brian Dunlevy, Helen, and I will be meeting with Leon Schoffer (he owns the 1/2 acre parcel located on the site of the proposed 3-4 building) to pursue the possibility that he would consider donating the parcel to the district. I'm hopeful . . . .

As the referendum campaign progresses, I will continue to send you update reports.

Enjoy your weekend . . . .

cc: Dr. Leonard Kelpsh, Superintendent
TO: Dr. Miller
FROM: Karen Warner (653-9543)
RE: Student PR for Bond Referendum
DATE: 2-18-00

After meeting with Paula Hoffman, the Journalism II students set up the following articles for the next issue of the *Eagle Times*, to be inserted into the Thursday, March 16 issue of the *EHT Current*.

**New Elementary School**
- **Marissa LaPorte**
  - Marissa will do a feature story highlighting the amenities of the proposed elementary school. We hope to include artist's rendering with this.

**Editor's Column**
- **Jackie Stemple**
  - Jackie will focus on the necessity of passing this referendum in March. (state aid, etc.)

"**A Taxpayer's Perspective...**"
- **Michael Martirone**
  - Michael will interview three citizens from different age brackets who will tell why the referendum is important to each of them.

**Renovations to the Schools**
- **Jim Barnish and Dave Sholler**
  - Students will interview teachers and students from Swift, Slaybaugh, and Davenport schools to show why renovations are needed.

**High School Deficiencies**
- **Sarah Terinoni and Janine Erney**
  - Girls will interview teachers and students about problems which exist specifically in the high school.

**Additions to the Schools**
- **Alexis Plotkin and Sheree Norris**
  - Students will interview teachers and students from Swift, Slaybaugh, Davenport and the high school to show why additions are needed.

"**What If the Referendum Passes?**"
- **Robbie Gill**
  - Robbie will explain the benefits to the community.

"**What If the Referendum Doesn't Pass?**"
- **Stephen Pfifer**
  - Stephen will examine the changes which could occur (such as split sessions) if the referendum does not pass.

"**What's Important to Students?**"
- **Jamie Wilson**
  - Jamie will conduct a "man on the street" type interview with photos to accompany comments highlighting changes students would like to see in the schools (relating to those proposed in bond referendum).

Typesetting and layout will be done by Ms. Warner, Jackie Stemple, LaRissa Perks and Danielle Kemp. Photos will include building deficiencies, crowded conditions, etc.
To: Board of Education Members

Re: Bond Referendum Update

Date: March 9, 2000

Here is additional information for your review concerning the bond referendum campaign:

1. The attached list highlights the major bond referendum presentations that will be made to various organizations and parent groups throughout the next three weeks. Each school has a bond referendum presentation team. Along with the central administration, we have developed a presentation script, a video depicting the major components of the bond referendum, and a power point presentation highlighting the facts of the referendum. Also, the enclosed Bond Referendum Fact Sheet will be handed-out at all of our presentations.

2. The high school journalism class has just completed the next issue of the Eagle Times that is totally dedicated to the bond referendum and will be in the March 16th issue of The Current. A copy of the draft is included in this packet. The students and their advisor, Karen Warner have done an exceptional job of capturing all of the importance of the referendum issues.

3. Throughout this week, the Fulginiti Group conducted a follow-up telephone survey to monitor the effectiveness of our informational campaign activities, to date. A presentation will be made during the March 14th Board Meeting highlighting the results of this survey. But, the initial data indicates that the community is gaining a better understanding, awareness, and support for the referendum issues.
Here is the response regarding support for the three different questions:

Question One - 7 to 1 support the renovations
Question Two - 3 to 1 support the additions in Swift and the High School
Question Three - 2 to 1 support the new school

• Initially, this data indicates a positive trend.

4. A Question and Answer (Q & A) Newsletter regarding the referendum will be included in the March 23rd issue of The Current. This information will answer the most frequently asked questions throughout our campaign. Having this Q & A Newsletter out to the community a few days prior to the March 28th vote will be strategically helpful.

Our campaign is strong, moving forward aggressively, and the result of committed team effort!

Have an enjoyable weekend .....

cc: Dr. Leonard R. Kelpsh, Superintendent
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>Slaybaugh School Play Night/Kindergarten</td>
<td>6:30PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>Intermediate School Choral Concert</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kiwanis Club-Ralph Ridolfino</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 9</td>
<td>Swift School Play Night-Kindergarten</td>
<td>7:00-9:00PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>High School - Booster Clubs</td>
<td>7:30PM</td>
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<td>Location - Library</td>
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<td>March 15</td>
<td>Davenport School-Read &amp; Play Night (Grades 1,2, &amp; 3)</td>
<td>6:30-8:30PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Intermediate-Middle School Parents</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Location-Board Room</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
<td>EHT Planning Board – Gary Bannon &amp; Joy Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20 &amp; 21</td>
<td>Kindergarten Registration</td>
<td>6:00-8:00PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Location-Swift School</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>Swift-Slaybaugh-Davenport Parents</td>
<td>7:00PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Location-Swift</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>NJ Dept. of Education – Gary Bannon &amp; Joy Miller</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 24 &amp; 25</td>
<td>Educational Fair</td>
<td>Friday 7:00-9:00PM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Location-High School</td>
<td>Saturday 10:00-2:00PM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
State of the Schools

The Swift elementary school was built in 1956; Slaybaugh in 1970 with an addition in 1989; and Davenport in 1976. Today, every elementary school is filled to capacity. You have no more room. Swift school has four portable classrooms behind the building. And your district has been ordered by the state to replace them with real classrooms.

Growing Enrollment

By September of 1999, Board of Education studies said you would have 5,286 students. Instead, you started the year with 5,525 students. That’s 239 students over the projection.

You added 369 new students this year. That’s about 15 new classrooms of students. Studies expected 5,543 students this coming September. But you’re only a dozen-and-half students short of that right now. By 2003, you should have 768 more students enrolled. That’s 30 additional classrooms you don’t have.

Program Issues

• In Davenport, art and music are offered on a cart because no room remains.
• In Swift, the library and health area are too small -- there’s no room to expand.
• In Slaybaugh, like the other schools, children with disabilities can’t use the buildings as other students do.
• In the High School, the freshman football team is cramped in a closet.
• In all four schools, expensive computer technology can’t be used because the wiring isn’t appropriate.

Health and Safety Issues
Inside your classrooms and schools, age and wear have caused safety and health problems.

- For example, the HVAC systems in the high school and three elementary schools are old and temperature is uncontrollable.
- The rooms are uncomfortable for proper education.
- Windows leak cold air in winter.
- Doors and worn carpeting must be replaced.
- The high school roof leaks.
- And the 43-year-old boiler in Swift just can't do the job any more.

Three Questions

The Board of Education has proposed that you fix the buildings, improve the programs and solve the overcrowding problem. You will be given a chance to vote on the renovations and new construction.

On March 28, the Board will ask you to approve three separate questions to solve the school problems.

**Question One — Renovations**

The first question authorizes the Board to borrow money to repair and renovate four buildings — the three elementary schools and the high school. There's no new construction in this question.

At all four schools,

- Fix the HVAC, including air conditioning the buildings. There's a lot of research that shows students and staff perform better in a controlled climate — like most of you have in your stores, offices and homes.
- Finally fix the electrical systems so your students can use their computer capability. Upgrade the intercom, clock, voice, video and security so students and staff are secure and get work done.
- Make your buildings conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) so your less fortunate and challenged students can use the buildings properly — like going to the bathroom and getting a drink of water.
• **Davenport** will accommodate 9 kindergarten classrooms, 9 first grade classrooms, and 9 second grade classrooms, a music room, an art room, 2 special ed classrooms and a computer lab adjacent to the library.

• **Slaybaugh** will accommodate 10 kindergarten classrooms, 10 first grade classrooms, 10 second grade classrooms, a music room, an art room, 3 special ed rooms and a computer lab.

• **Swift** will accommodate 15 classrooms, a music room, 2 special ed classrooms and a computer lab.

• **The High School** will get a new roof, new exterior door frames, new corridor carpet, new auditorium seating and lighting and new ceiling tile in the corridors and classrooms.

**Question Two — Additions to the High School and Swift Elementary**

As you consider this question, remember, if you use an average of 25 students per classroom, **by 2006 you would have enrolled enough new students to fill 45 new classrooms.** You need to put them somewhere.

**High School**

• Add 20 classrooms on two floors with restrooms for both men and women on both floors. Add a small group instruction room.

  • Expand the gym and get another teaching classroom and additional storage.

  • Build new locker rooms for your men and women’s athletic teams and convert the old locker rooms to physical education activities and visiting team areas.

• Add two health classrooms, storage and mechanical space.

• Construct a new multi-purpose/performing arts studio.

• Renovate and expand the cafeteria and kitchen.

• Expand and renovate the media center.

• Add a new television studio classroom.

• Renovate two classrooms for media classes.

• Create two much-needed high-tech physics labs and expand the guidance area.

• Add men’s and women’s bathrooms, and for security, a separate entrance lobby with an elevator for after-hours admission.
Swift School

- Add 9 kindergarten classrooms, with individual toilets, also add
- An art classroom
- A small group instruction room
- Three first grade classrooms
- A real library media center, and
- Convert the old library to an expanded area for the nurse and school management

Swift will handle **more than 500 students**, even with class sizes at 20 and will be much more like Davenport and Slaybaugh.

**Question Three — New Elementary School**

- Approve an 1,100-student elementary school for grades 3 and 4. Adopt a **school-within-a-school concept**, and essentially, concentrate on just one grade in each of the two programs in the building — **third graders and fourth graders separately**.

The existing three elementary schools will become K-2 programs. The Intermediate School will become a grade 5-6 program, the Middle School will educate 7th and 8th graders and the high school will remain a 9-12 program.

- 24 classrooms for **each** of the schools-within-a-school, and team support rooms on each side.
- Two science labs and two computer labs next to the media center. The media center will be able to handle the entire school population.
- A double, multipurpose room ideal for a full-sized 50 ft. X 84 ft. basketball court for student and community use.
- Two art classrooms opening to the courtyards.
- Two music classrooms share a two-way facing stage in the middle of the cafeteria.
- Two large group instruction areas, so important to a school, can handle either student instruction or staff development.
- Traffic will come to two separate drop off areas — one for each program in the new building.
• Paved drop-off areas will double as hard surface for school events and added parking for after-hours programs.
• Behind the school, playfields and an undeveloped area for nature study.
• Figure-eight pattern with two inside courtyards. Students get around easily and get maximum light in classrooms and corridors.
• One central administration area, with two separate entrances.

State Aid
The state currently contributes 46.3331% of the cost for each question. The community’s share is 53.6669%.

Taxes
The Board structured the debt payment to delay the tax impact until 2001. The bonds will be sold with a maturity of 25 years.

Question One
Repairs and renovations will cost $18,100,000
The state will pay 8,386,291
The community will pay 9,713,709
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000 $39 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $50 annual average

Question Two
The additions to the High School and Swift will cost $16,500,000
The state will pay 7,644,962
The community will pay 8,855,038
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000 $35 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $45 annual average

Question Three
The new elementary school will cost $21,800,000
The state will pay 10,100,616
The community will pay 11,699,384
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000 $46 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $60 annual average

Tax Summary
The total cost of all three questions is $56,400,000
The state will pay 26,131,868
The community will pay 30,268,132

Although the total cost of all three questions is $56,400,000, the community will pay $30,268,132 of that total if the state-aid percentage remains the same. The state will contribute $26,131,868.

For a property assessed at $100,000, the tax is $120 (annual average) for 25 years for all three questions.
For a property assessed at $125,000, the tax is $155 (annual average) for 25 years for all three questions.

Survey Results
A scientific survey conducted by The Communication Institute at Rowan University revealed that:

- 73% agree/strongly agree with repairs and renovations.
- 56% agree/strongly agree with additions to Swift and the High School.
- 44% agree/strongly agree with building a new elementary school.
- 72% of the community believes that Egg Harbor Township schools are overcrowded.

Benefits/Losses
- With the additions and new construction, the School Board would have the ability to begin a full-day kindergarten program if the community wishes it.

If the community does not agree on March 28 to these three questions, problems that are now serious will become critical.
- Your School Board will have to take necessary measures to educate the hundreds of new students that will enter the school system.
- Class sizes will grow unmanageably.
• Split sessions are a real option.
• Property values will be jeopardized.
• Wear and tear on the buildings will increase.

Vote on March 28
7 a.m to 9 p.m.
Good Day (Evening) Ladies and Gentlemen. I'm __________ from the Egg Harbor Township Public Schools. I'm pleased and grateful to be here today to share with you one of the most important steps your school district has ever taken to provide a quality education for your students.

That step is a vote, or referendum, by you the community, on March 28 to continue your excellent support for your schools. On that date, you'll have a chance to approve facilities to complete an Education Master Plan for the Egg Harbor Township community.

This important step will also affect you, the community. It will improve your quality of life and protect your property value.

I'll (we'll) take only a few minutes of your time.

Here's what we'll share with you:

- **First** -- a description of your school buildings and programs as they are today
- **Second** -- what your schools and students need for the next ten years and how they will benefit if they get it
- **Third** -- information about what your community said it wanted for its students from a scientific survey, and what it will cost you in additional taxes.

**State of the Schools**

First, I'll describe the state of your schools today. As you know, you have three elementary schools, an intermediate school, a middle school, and a high school.

Swift Elementary was built in 1956; Slaybaugh Elementary in 1970 with
an addition in 1989; Davenport Elementary in 1976, and the high school in 1983. Today, every elementary school and the high school is filled to capacity. You have no more room. In fact, Swift school has four portable classrooms behind the building. And you have been ordered by the state to replace them with real classrooms within two years.

Growing Enrollment

Why are your schools so crowded? Because your community continues to grow. More people move in; more houses are built; more students come to school. For example, in September of this school year, in 1999, your Board of Education thought you would have 5,286 students. That's what professional studies predicted. Instead, you started the year with 5,525 students. That's 239 students over the projection. What happened?

Well, you added 369 new students this year. That's about 15 new classrooms of students. And the picture doesn't get better. Studies expected 5,543 students this coming September. But you're only a dozen-and-half students short of that right now.

By the year 2003, you should have 768 more students enrolled. That's 30 additional classrooms you don't have. And between 2003 and 2006 you will have enrolled enough students to fill an additional 45 classrooms. Something drastic will have to give.

Program Issues

Something is already giving.

- In Davenport, art and music are offered on a cart because no room remains.

- In Swift, the library and health area are too small -- there's no room to
expand.

- **In Slaybaugh,** like the other schools, children with disabilities can’t use the buildings as other students do.
- **In the High School,** the freshman football team is cramped in a closet.
- **In all four schools,** expensive computer technology can’t be used because the wiring isn’t appropriate.

**Health and Safety Issues**

Inside your present classrooms and schools, age and wear have caused safety and health problems.

- For example, the HVAC systems in the high school and three elementary schools are old and temperature is uncontrollable.
  - The rooms are uncomfortable for proper education.
  - Windows leak cold air in winter.
  - Doors and worn carpeting must be replaced.
  - The high school roof leaks.
  - And the 43-year-old boiler in Swift just can’t do the job any more.

**Three Questions**

How do you do the right things for the students, the staff and the community? The Board of Education has proposed that you fix the buildings, improve the programs and solve the overcrowding problem. You will be given a chance to vote on renovations and new construction.

On March 28, the Board will ask you to approve three separate questions to solve the school problems. Let’s look at each question — what the bond money will provide, what will improve, and how everyone, including you, will benefit.
QUESTION ONE — RENOVATIONS

When you enter the ballot booth, you’ll see three questions. You’ll be asked to vote on each one separately.

The first question authorizes the Board to repair and renovate four buildings — the three elementary schools and the high school. This question provides no new construction. Here’s what Question One will improve.

• **At all four schools**
  • Fix the HVAC, including air conditioning the buildings. A lot of research shows students and staff perform better in a controlled climate — like most of you have in your stores, offices and homes.
  • Fix the electrical systems so your students can use their computer capability. Upgrade the intercom, clock, voice, video and security so students and staff are secure and get work done.
  • Because you’re repairing the buildings, by law you must make these buildings conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) so your less fortunate and challenged students can use the buildings properly — like going to the bathroom and getting a drink of water.

When these basic repairs and renovations are completed each school will benefit differently.

• **Davenport** will be able to safely and securely accommodate 9 kindergarten classrooms, 9 first grade classrooms, and 9 second grade classrooms, a music room, an art room, 2 special ed classrooms and a computer lab adjacent to the library.
  
• **Slaybaugh** will be able to safely and securely accommodate 10 kindergarten classrooms, 10 first grade classrooms, 10 second grade classrooms, a music room, an art room, 3 special ed rooms and a computer lab.
  
• **Swift** will be able to safely and securely accommodate 15 classrooms, a
music room, 2 special ed classrooms and a computer lab.

- **The High School** will get some additional attention — a new roof, new exterior door frames, new corridor carpet, new auditorium seating and lighting and new ceiling tile in the corridors and classrooms.

That’s the first question on the ballot. It asks you to approve a bond to renovate and repair those four schools without any new construction.

**QUESTION TWO — ADDITIONS TO THE HIGH SCHOOL AND SWIFT ELEMENTARY**

After you’ve voted on the first question, you’ll be asked to consider **new construction to two schools** -- the High School and the Swift Elementary School. As you consider this question, remember, if you use an average of 25 students per classroom, **between 1999 and 2006 you would have enrolled enough new students to fill 70 new classrooms**. That’s more than 8 additional classrooms a year for eight years. You need to put the students somewhere.

**High School**

Here’s what you’ll do at the high school. You’ll authorize three additions.

**First**, you’ll add **20 classrooms on two floors** with restrooms for both floors. You’ll also add a small group instruction room. Your new addition will connect to the existing high school on the west side of the building.

**Second**, you’ll **expand the gym** and get another teaching classroom and additional storage, both of which you need.

- You’ll also build **new locker rooms** for your men and women’s athletic teams and convert the old locker rooms to physical education activities and visiting team areas.
• On the second floor, you’ll add two health classrooms, storage space and space for the mechanics of the building.

Third, you’ll add to the east side of the building. There, you’ll construct a new multi-purpose/performing arts studio. When you do that, you’ll be able to renovate and expand the cafeteria and kitchen — something you’ll have to do for the growing enrollment.

• On the second floor, you can now expand and renovate the media center. When you add a new television studio classroom, you can renovate two other classrooms for media classes.

• In this addition, you’ll be able to take care of other programs as well. You’ll create two much-needed, high-tech physics labs and expand the guidance area near the media center.

• Finally, for convenience, you’ll add men’s and women’s bathrooms, and for security, a separate entrance lobby with an elevator for after-hours admission, without access to the main building.

Swift School

Here’s what you’ll do at the Swift School. You’ll add to the building in two places, the front and the rear.

In the rear addition you’ll build:

• 9 kindergarten classrooms, with individual toilets
• An art classroom
• A small group instruction room
• Three first grade classrooms

In the front addition, you’ll build

• A real media/library center

How will this change the school? Well, the old library will now
accommodate an expanded nurse’s area, something you badly need to properly care for the children’s health and get ready for the additional students that are coming. The rest of the area will be used to manage all the schools’ activities.

These additions will allow you to handle more than 500 students, even if you want class sizes of 20. Now, your Swift school will be much more like your Davenport and Slaybaugh schools.

Keep in mind, when you add to the Swift School, you set the stage to complete the Master Education Plan in the third question of the ballot.

QUESTION THREE — NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

To provide the classrooms necessary for the enrollment that is surely coming and keep the present educational philosophy in the community, you’ll need to build a new elementary school.

This question will ask you to approve an 1,100-student elementary school for grades 3 and 4.

Recall that when you add to Swift, and build this new school, you’ll be able to place all your third and fourth graders in one building and create separate programs just for them.

The existing three elementary schools will become K-2 programs. The Intermediate School will become a grade 5-6 program, the Middle School will educate 7th and 8th graders and the high school will remain a 9-12 program.

This is an important and exciting part of the Education Master Plan. It means your programs, teachers, administration, transportation, parent organizations — everything that makes a school — can now concentrate on just three grades for the elementary schools, and just two grades in the Intermediate School, the Middle School and the new school.
But the new school, in this question, will educate 1,100 students. To do that job, you’ll authorize a school-within-a-school concept, and essentially, concentrate on just one grade in each of the two programs in the building — third graders and fourth graders separately.

Let’s explore the structure of the new elementary school.

You’ll build it on a 32-acre piece of ground near the Intermediate School. By extending the existing road, you can direct traffic to two separate drop off areas — one for each program in the new building.

- The paved, drop-off areas give students a hard surface for school events and parents added parking for after-hours programs.
- Behind the school, you’ll prepare playfields and leave an undeveloped area for nature study.
- The school will be a figure-eight pattern with two inside courtyards. Students will be able to get around easily and get the most light in their classrooms and corridors.
- Inside the two-story building, students will get 24 classrooms for each of the schools-within-a-school, and team support rooms on each side.
- The second floor offers two science labs and two computer labs next to the media center. The media center will be able to handle the entire school population.
- And across the hallway, two large group instruction areas, so important to a school, that can handle either student instruction or staff development. Staff development will be critical to aim for acceptable student scores as the state adds a new subject each year to its testing program.
- The core of the school offers two art classrooms opening to the courtyards.
- Two music classrooms share a two-way facing stage in the
middle of the cafeteria. The cafeteria can be used as an auditorium with the stage in the center for large presentations. During these large presentations, the music rooms could become dressing rooms or theatrical support areas.

- For smaller presentations, each music room shares a part, or all of the stage, for each of the programs (3rd and 4th grades) in the building.

- Also, the core of the building offers a double, multipurpose room ideal for a full-sized 50 ft. X 84 ft. basketball court for student and community use.

- How will staff manage the program? Well, there will be one central administration area, with two separate entrances, but enough space to manage both programs within the building.

Review

That’s the new, 1,100-student elementary school for grades 3-4.

And it completes the Education Master Plan for Egg Harbor Township for the next 10 years.

Let’s review the three questions.

Question One

Question One asks you to renovate your three elementary schools and the high school. You need to consider the age of the buildings, wear and tear, temperature control, safety and security issues.

Question Two

Question Two asks you to add classrooms and special rooms to the Swift School and the High School.

Question Three

Question Three asks you to build a new elementary school.
State Aid

Before we look at the cost of these questions, you need to know how much the state will contribute to reduce the cost of each question and how that aid reduces your tax.

The state currently contributes 46.3331% of the cost for each question. The community’s share is 53.6669%.

That means, when we review the cost of each question, you need to subtract 46% from the cost because the state contributes that share. We’ll do the math for you as we discuss each question.

You should also know that the level of state aid could change in the future. There’s no guarantee that state aid will stay at 46%. But if you approve the questions, and the Board sells bonds to do the work, the state should continue to pay its share for the life of the bonds.

Taxes

Now let’s look at the cost of these three questions. We’ll take them one at a time because that’s the way you’ll vote on them on March 28 -- as separate issues.

As you listen to these numbers, consider a couple of facts. The Board of Education structured the debt payment to delay the tax impact until 2001.

The bonds will be sold with a maturity of 25 years. By the way, the sooner your Board sells the bonds, the better. The rate is excellent right now. The Board will sell the bonds and put the money in the bank to gain interest while the work is being done. State aid and the interest earned will pay the debt payments for the first year and a half.
Question One

Repairs and renovations will cost $18,100,000
The state will pay 8,386,291
The community will pay 9,713,709
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000, $39 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $50 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $150,000 $58 annual average

(Italics — optional to present)

Question Two

The additions to the High School and Swift will cost $16,500,000
The state will pay 7,644,962
The community will pay 8,855,038
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000 $35 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $45 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $150,000 $52 annual average

(Italics — optional to present)

Question Three

The new elementary school will cost $21,800,000
The state will pay 10,100,616
The community will pay 11,699,384
The tax for a property assessed at $100,000 $46 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $125,000 $60 annual average
The tax for a property assessed at $150,000 $69 annual average

(Italics — optional to present)

[* All annual averages are based on a 25-year period.]
Summary

Let's combine the numbers another way.

The total cost of all three questions is $56,400,000
The state will pay 26,131,868
The community will pay 30,268,132

Let's repeat that ... the total cost of all three questions is $56,400,000. The community will pay $30,268,132. That is 53.7% of that total. The state will contribute $26,131,868.

If you own a property assessed at $100,000, it will cost you an average of $120 in taxes annually for 25 years for all three questions. That's $10 monthly.

If you own a property assessed at $125,000, it will cost you an average of $155 in taxes annually for 25 years for all three questions. That's $13 monthly.

Survey Results

A scientific survey conducted by The Communication Institute at Rowan University revealed that:

- 73% agree/strongly agree with repairs and renovations.
- 72% of the community believes that Egg Harbor Township schools are overcrowded.

This study was conducted prior to any presentations like this one. Once residents begin to hear about the shortage of seats, the conditions of the buildings, and the Master Plan for education, the numbers are likely to change.

The complete study is available in the Board office.
Benefits/Losses

- With the additions and new construction, the Board will have the ability to begin a full-day kindergarten if the community wishes it.

These are the facts. The decision will be in your hands on March 28. The Master Education Plan for the district is necessary for the well being of your community -- students and residents alike.

If the community does not agree on March 28 to these three questions, problems that are now serious will become critical.

- Your School Board will have to take necessary measures to educate the hundreds of new students that will enter your school system.

- If there are an insufficient number of classrooms, students will have to share rooms. How?

  - Class sizes will grow unmanageably.

  - Split sessions are a real option because you'll have to use and reuse the limited number of classrooms more than once a day. If that happens, property values will be jeopardized because an excellent school system is the first criteria everyone, parents and nonparents alike, check before they move into a community.

- The wear and tear on the buildings will increase. Systems and structures will be stretched beyond their design and life expectancy.

Your schools need what these three questions can give them.
Final Thoughts

Consider these three questions carefully.

Decide the issues on their merits.

Look at what the state is up to with its proposed facilities law.

Will the state continue aid at the present level for future projects?

Next year, will the state limit what you can build and refuse to fund a classroom if it isn't what the state agrees to?

Will bond prices be the same in the next few years since interest rates are rising?

Will the excellent educational program continue?

Consider these issues.

Vote on March 28.

Talk to your neighbors and friends about them. (Mixed Group - Residents and nonvoting nonresidents)

Thank you for your attention.
Open Letter to the Residents of Egg Harbor Township:

On March 28, 2000 you will have the opportunity to voice your opinion at the polls regarding the upcoming referendum vote.

The Egg Harbor Township Home & School Association has been diligently following all proposals. The Executive Board supports all 3 questions placed on the ballot for the following reasons:

**Question #1: Repairs and Alterations at Swift, Slaybaugh, Davenport & High School.** The older schools are not energy efficient. Over heated classrooms not only hinder learning, but also a breeding ground for germs which effect the students. Upgrades need to be done on the electrical system to accommodate the new computers that we have purchased. This question also addresses increased security in our schools.

At the High School a new roof is desperately needed. Water damage is costing the taxpayers so we need to stop the waste on temporary patches that are not effective and stop putting our children and expensive equipment at risk and do the job right. The 16 year old carpet is worn, and impossible to maintain resulting in health issues.

**Question #2: Additions to the High School and Swift Elementary School.** An addition of 20 classrooms will alleviate the over crowding and accommodate the Freshman class entering this September that breaks the 500 mark with larger classes heading to the High School each year. With increased students the core facilities will need to be enlarged ie. the cafeteria & kitchen, gym and locker rooms and media center. Most importantly is the State Mandated core curriculum can not be met without the addition of high-tech physics labs and performing art studio.

A lot of discussion has taken place on whether it is time to build a new high school. The price of a new high school exceeds the sum of all 3 questions on the referendum and would not correct the entire districts outstanding problems.

**Question #3: New Elementary School.** This school is necessary to alleviate the crowded Davenport, Swift and Slaybaugh Schools. This school would house 1100 3rd and 4th graders from the entire township which would give the students a consistency in learning experiences and allow for space for population growth that are coming from new housing.

It is the feeling of the ESHA Executive Board that all three questions must be passed for the building plan to work. We are confident that the 2 years spent coming up with the proposed plan by the Strategic Planning Committee and adopted by the Board of Education is a viable plan that will accommodate our needs at this time and accommodate the projection of students that are coming. A lot of money is being spent on trailers (these trailers are temporary structures costing $150,000 to $200,000. a piece. The state has a time restraint on
their use). We should be using these monies to build permanent structures for the students of Egg Harbor Township.

A lot of time and money has already been spent on this Building Plan. There is no question about the need, we are a growing community. If this referendum is not passed in March the residents will be faced with another referendum shortly after that. If the residents don't support this plan the 2nd time around the School District is then able to apply to the State and get a building plan that the State would dictate at our expense. Your taxdollars will be effected either way, let's use our plan and not the States. The cost is now 40% reimbursed by the state, that funding may not be an option in the future.

We urge you to vote on March 28th in Support of all 3 questions

OUR CHILDREN ARE OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET...PLEASE SUPPORT THEM

Barbara Sailagyi
President, EHT Home & School Association

cc: Dr. Leonard Kelpsh, Superintendent
Egg Harbor Township Schools