

Bond Steering Committee Handout

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Survey Says. . .

School Public Relations . . a systematic and planned, *two-way* communication between an organization and its internal and external publics.

When to Survey. . .

before making *major* decisions that affect large populations of the community;
on a regular schedule (i.e. annually or biannually) to test general attitudes;
after a failed bond election or strong public outcry on an emotional issue;
only if you are willing to accept the results and act.

examples: attendance rezoning, grade configurations, bond elections, school site selections, new program implementation, school uniforms, food service, etc.

Types of Surveys. . .

informal, unscientific surveys. . .forums and conferences, advisory committees, key communicators, mail surveys, newspaper, radio, TV and magazine surveys and web surveys

formal, scientific surveys. . .systematic, stratified or cluster surveys.

Getting started . . . first decide "*what do we want to know?*"

- method of information collection (ie. budget, resources)
- sampling techniques
- construction & wording of questions
- design of the questionnaire
- handling of results

Cost Factor: the cost depends on the survey method, # of questions, sample size, how the results are collected, etc. Consider all costs: envelopes, paper, postage, data processing, staff time, outside contractor, etc.

Methods of Collection: most common are the personal interview, telephone interview, mailed questionnaire, and drop-off/pick-up questionnaire.

personal interview - high percentage of return, higher chance for correct information, possibility to clarify and obtain additional information. However, this option presents greater costs in time, transportation and personnel. Training of interviewers is essential.

telephone interview - inexpensive, short period of time required, no cost for transportation, minimal training for personnel. However, unlisted phone numbers a problem, some families have no phones, easy to hang-up.

mailed questionnaire - mailing costs cheaper than transportation, increased candor. However, low number of returns, no control over who responds.

drop-off/pick-up questionnaire - high returns in short period, can clarify any misunderstandings, minimal training of personnel. However, it does require volunteers, transportation costs and presents safety concern for interviewers.

Sample Techniques: a sample cannot just be random; it must represent a larger population if it is to be a statistically valid sample.

systematic sample - Everyone is given an equal chance of being selected.

(sample size of 400 can represent plus or minus error of 5% in population of 4,000 or 400,000.)

stratified sample - people are selected as a small-scale model of a larger group.

(100% of registered voter list, but only 25% voted - sample would be made up of 75% non-voters and 25% voters.)

cluster survey - based on previous subdivision of population (like breaking your school district into subdivisions or areas).

Construction & Wording of Questions: survey questions can be open-ended or structured.

- Be as concise and clear as possible - not ambiguous.
- Avoid writing sentences in the negative.
- Avoid two-part questions.
- Use words and language the respondent will understand.
- Avoid leading questions.
- Structure questions to get exactly the information you need.
- Provide even number of responses.
- Test your survey on a small group.

Design of the Questionnaire: (remember . . . the shorter, the better)

Introduction - explain purpose of the survey, who is conducting survey, and instructions for completing the survey.

Body - ask opinion questions - be logical and sequential if necessary.

Conclusion - ask open-ended questions, demographic questions and thank participant.

Handling of Results: consider if surveys will be returned to district or independent source (consider trust factor); announce timeline; and make results public.