

BUILDING YOUR RUNWAY

Building a Winning Levy Campaign

WRIGHT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Winning ballot measures for Oregon schools and
communities since 2010

POP QUIZ

What is the most precious resource in campaigns?



Money?



People?



Time?

Hint: it's the one you can't get back.

THE ANSWER

Time

A finite resource. Elections don't move.

SINCE 2015

Our Track Record

Yes, we're humble-bragging a little.

60+

Bond & levy campaigns

~80%

Win rate

~90%

Started more than a year before
the election

The pattern is clear: winners give themselves enough runway.

The Difference a Year Makes

6 MONTHS OUT

Rushed decisions

Stressed team

Skipped steps

Higher risk

Everyone panicking

18+ MONTHS OUT

Thoughtful planning

Happy team

All steps completed

Better outcomes

Confidence

Actually sleeping.

True story: we've seen both. One is way more fun.

So what does it take to build
a winning levy campaign?

REALITY CHECK

Levy campaigns are hard, and different

- 01 Voters aren't conditioned to vote for a levy the way they are for a bond.
 - 02 In an era of declining enrollment, levy conversations are difficult.
 - 03 Passing a bond and a levy, even in the best of times, is one of the hardest things you will ever do.
-

And yet here you all are — because you believe in your district.

But that doesn't mean you don't try to pass one.

Key Ingredients to a Winning Levy Campaign

Fifteen of them, in three acts.

I Lay the groundwork

- 01 Give yourself enough time
- 02 Assemble a great team
- 03 Budget appropriately for the effort
- 04 Prioritize your budget needs
- 05 Make sure your costs are accurate and dialed in
- 06 Do good polling
- 07 Begin early education of the budget and budgeting process

II Shape the measure

- 08 Develop a levy that meets the “sweet spot”
- 09 Consistent and early student and staff engagement
- 10 Engage in robust community input
- 11 A board fully supportive and engaged
- 12 Be flexible on timing, size and content

III Take it to the voters

- 13 Simple, concise and effective messaging
- 14 Excellent district bond communications
- 15 A robust PAC

01

SECTION ONE

Start With a Vision

Every winning levy starts with leadership doing the work.

TRANSPARENCY

Bring the community into your budgeting process



Build a Shared Understanding of District Finances and the Challenges Ahead

Where the money comes from

State formula, local levies, one-time funds — and which of those are shrinking.

Where it goes

Staffing, programs, facilities, obligations the district cannot choose not to pay.

What's coming

Enrollment, costs and the gap between them over the next three to five years.

Your credibility depends on getting this right.

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and jeans, sits on a grey couch in a library. She is surrounded by a group of children of various ages, all sitting on the couch and looking towards her. The background features tall bookshelves filled with books. The scene is dimly lit, with a soft light source from the right.

02 SECTION TWO

Assemble a Great Team

Your campaign is only as strong as the people behind it.

Who's on the Team

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP

-  School board
-  Superintendent
-  CFO
-  Communications director

EXTERNAL PARTNERS

-  Levy communications strategist
-  Counsel
-  Finance firm

A Note on “Going It Alone”

Don't

You need an experienced guide — someone who has run this before and can tell you what the next ninety days look like.



03

SECTION THREE

Budget Appropriately

You have to spend money to make money.

THE #1 MISTAKE WE SEE

Underfunding the campaign effort

Polling isn't optional — it's essential intelligence.

Professional communications pay for themselves.

Grassroots organizing needs resources.

Your levy is \$150M+. Your campaign budget should not be \$5,000.

If you're asking for millions from voters, invest thousands in asking right.

Penny-Wise, Pound-Foolish

SMALL SAVINGS

Skipping polling to save \$20K

Using a free intern for design

No professional help

HUGE LOSSES

Lose a \$50M levy vote

Materials look... free

Learn expensive lessons in real time

Investment, not expense



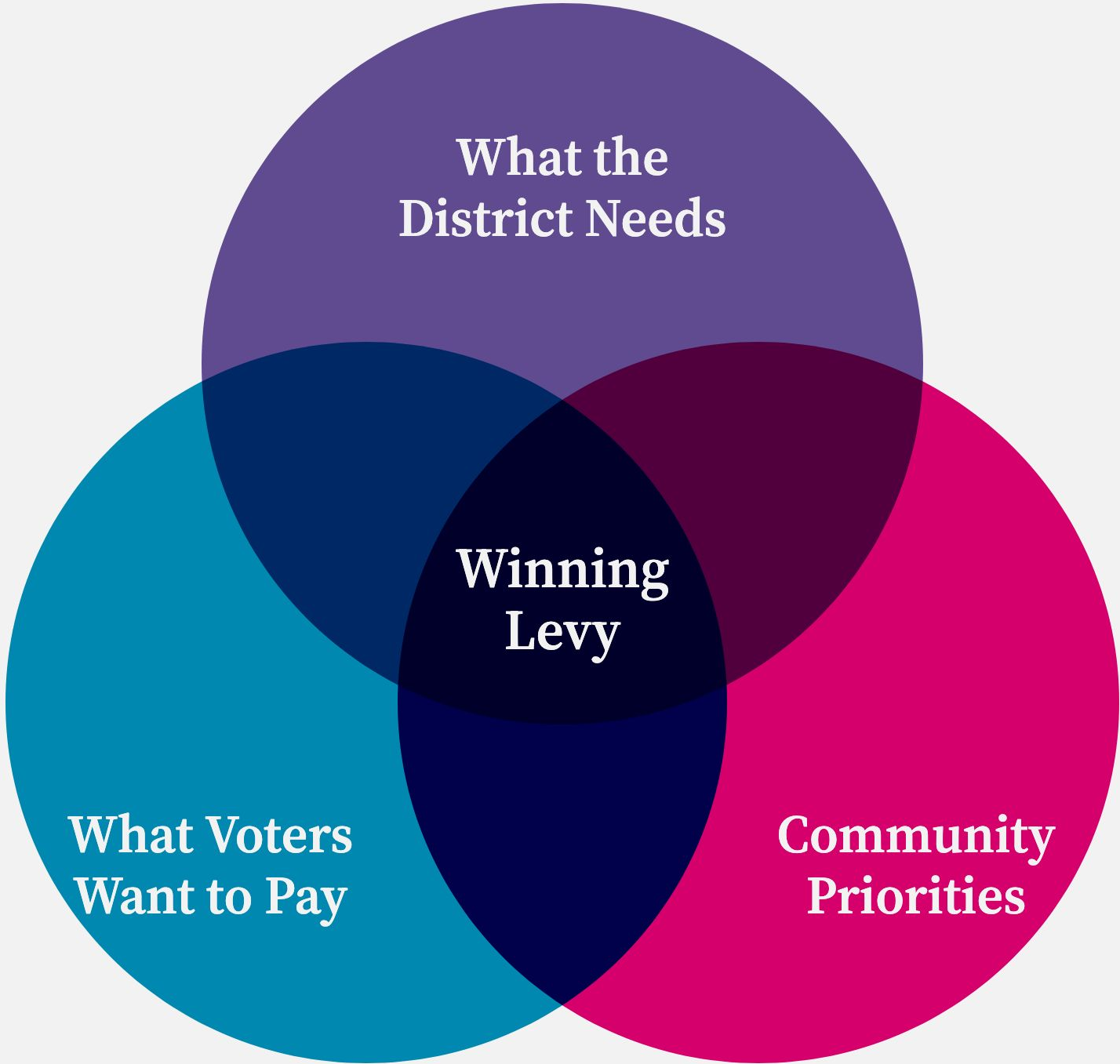
04

SECTION FOUR

A Levy That Meets the “Sweet Spot”

Possibly the most important thing.

Formula for a Winning Levy



What the district needs

The real capital and operating gap, costed and defensible.

What voters want to pay

The rate your polling says holds up under an opposition message.

Community priorities

What people told you they wanted when you asked them first.

Where all three overlap is the only place a levy wins.

A photograph of four children sitting on the floor in a library, surrounded by bookshelves. They are all focused on reading books. The image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay to make the text stand out.

05

SECTION FIVE

Strategic Communications

Think of great levy communications like lasagna.

The Layers

Print collateral

Direct mail

Organic digital

Paid digital

School-based conversations

Local media stories

District-wide communications

Signage

*No single layer is the meal.
The stack is.*

Each layer reaches a different voter,
and each one is thin on its own. Build
them all and the campaign holds
together.

THE PAC

A robust community advocacy group

The district can — and should — only do so much.

The PAC carries the ask: its own name, its own website, its own voice asking people to vote yes.

Everything the district cannot say, the PAC can.

Secure Our Schools

SAME TAX RATE. BETTER SCHOOLS.

→ VOTE YES

Vote YES!

Measure 34-355 our chance to come together as a community to **build a safer, brighter future for our kids today and generations to come.**

A Note About the District & the PAC

DISTRICT

Informs

Explains the need, the cost and the process. Factual, neutral, on the record.

PAC

Advocates

Asks for the vote, raises money, knocks doors, plants the signs.

Parallel tracks, same direction — and they never cross.

The Secret Weapon

Your board.

Elected, known and already trusted in the neighborhoods you need — standing no consultant can buy.

Seven people who can knock on a door and be recognized.



**Dr. Shawn Farrens,
Vice-Chair**

Position 1,
Zone 1 - Term
2023-2027



Kris Howatt

Position 2,
Zone 3 - Term
2023-2027



Brenna Puderbaugh

Position 3,
Zone 2 - Term
2025-2029



**Holly Riegelmann,
Chair**

Position 4, At-
Large - Term
2025-2029



Blake Petersen

Position 5,
Zone 4 - Term
2025-2029



**Heather Coleman-
Cox**

Position 6, At-
Large - Term
2025-2029



Erasto Sedda

Position 7, At-
Large - Term
2023-2027

So, do you really need to do all of this to win?

Yes

Skip steps, and you get a sad election night party.

We've been to both kinds. Trust us on this.

Which Election Should You Choose?

ONE SIMPLE RULE

The best election to target is the one you are ready for.

Then it gets a little more complicated.

01

Turnout

Not just how much, but who shows up.

02

Other measures on the ballot

Competing asks change the arithmetic.

03

Candidates

Who is on the ticket shapes who turns out.

04

Undervote

Voters who skip your measure entirely.

Let's build winning campaigns together

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