

# HIGHGROUND

PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONSULTANTS

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Cathy Moody, Director of Purchasing & Procurement, Prescott Unified School District

**FR:** Paul Bentz, Sr. Vice President, Research & Strategy, HighGround, Inc.

**RE:** Community Research and Communications & Marketing Review

**DT:** December 16, 2025

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit a proposal for community research and communications and marketing review services for the Prescott Unified School District. For nearly three decades, HighGround has played an integral role in many of the most significant public policy efforts in Arizona. Our team has a solid track record of successful public affairs work that reflects our unique ability among Arizona firms to manage challenging political and public policy issues in various environments.

The firm provides its clients with a success-oriented, diverse team of media, public, business and government affairs experts. We specialize in dealing with complex issues on behalf of clients that face challenges or seek opportunities on a variety of governmental and public affairs levels. Many of these issues involve interfacing with local, county, state, and federal government entities, strengthening business relationships, developing diverse coalitions, and crafting thoughtful media strategies.

Over the past several years, our team has provided similar services to many local school districts and education institutions. This proposal is aimed at helping the Prescott Unified School District save money, time, and ultimately, make an educated decision about the best course of action regarding an election for school funding. As we have discussed, we have competitively bid these services under a proposal submitted to 1GPA for RFP# 22-06PV and they are available via the cooperative contract:

**Commodity/Contract Title: Public Affairs & Government Relations Consulting**  
**Contractor/Vendor: HighGround, Inc.**

Nothing in this proposal should be construed as advocacy (which cannot be done at taxpayer expense) and our team will maintain strict adherence to activities that are permitted under election law. We believe that we can assist Prescott Unified School District through three main strategic initiatives:

- 1. Demographic Research**
- 2. Community Survey**
- 3. Communications and Marketing Consulting**

HighGround will provide research, public opinion gathering, messaging and marketing assessment and other related services. Services may include but are not limited to working with Prescott

## Community Research and Communications & Marketing Review

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Unified School District to review relevant data, generate accurate and unbiased data, craft messages and strategies, implement timelines with outreach and accountability, and provide regular updates on our efforts.

### 1. Demographic Research

At the direction of Prescott Unified School District, HighGround can perform an assessment of the District's demographics to better inform future Bond and Override election strategies. This information will include:

- Comprehensive review of prior election outcomes.
- Assessment of demographic characteristics within the District.
- Evaluation of voter file data particularly of parents and employees in the District.
- Review of early voting behavior and high-efficacy voter lists.

The Demographics Assessment would be a one-time fee of \$5,000.

### 2. Community Survey

In consultation with Prescott Unified School District, HighGround would develop a community survey of likely voters that would explore any of the following areas:

- Polling to identify priorities by demographic areas.
- Test perception of the district and the direction of education.
- Test messengers and credibility.
- Test awareness of education needs, funding options, and general impressions regarding positive/negative reception, community satisfaction, and service.
- Explore several messages for and against education including growth, economic development, and student safety.

The survey costs include crafting the survey, conducting the calls, and providing topline and cross-tabulated results. The length of the survey and the number of people in the sample audience has the greatest an impact on its overall cost and the instrument and the associated costs are always approved by the client before it is executed. We can provide some estimates based on survey length and amount of the sample that can provide helpful guidelines. However, each survey would be quoted to give direct costs based on the actual length and types of questions that are asked. Number of questions is considered but is not as strong of an indicator as length.

The timeline following approval will be approximately 7-10 days based on available field time, calling time, and compilation of data. Survey results will include topline that highlight the main results of the survey, cross-tabulations that examine specific demographics, and an in-depth survey presentation available for briefings of interested parties.

<b>Public opinion survey estimate (N=400 sample)</b>	
5 minutes	\$10,000
10 minutes	\$15,200
15 minutes	\$20,000

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### 3. Communications and Marketing Consulting

The HighGround team has decades of national and local media, messaging and public relations experience. With the changing landscape of public education and the shift in public perception, our team can help the district ensure that your communications and marketing efforts are as targeted and effective as possible. Using the survey data, we can provide an in-depth assessment of your current communications and marketing capacity as well as provide recommendations on ways to be more effective.

While we recognize the request for a one-time assessment of your current activities, we believe that an ongoing engagement with the staff and development team would be necessary if a bond or override election is currently in the planning stages.

Collaborating with staff and the development team, we would develop a messaging and communications plan to correlate with the general marketing plan and public engagement process (and the election as well should you choose to proceed). We will work with all team members to ensure that everyone is using the same messaging and focused on improving public awareness. As part of this effort, our team will perform the following tasks:

- Develop consistent talking points.
- Create a branded effort focused on key issues.
- Develop bridge messaging regarding difficult topics.
- Create and implement a free media editorial calendar that includes op-ed submissions, media events, and community messaging.
- Develop social media strategies to improve engagement.
- Explore additional communication strategies including email blasts, texts, phone calls, and internet ads which may be available to increase awareness.

We recommend a six-month retainer at the cost of \$4,500 per month to help implement recommendations and ensure all communications are strategic and on-message given the results of the polling.

#### Additional information

Unit prices and total costs are included in this proposal – the demographic assessment and survey costs are issued as one-time invoices. Consulting is billed monthly. The proposed prices are the final price, with all applicable taxes already factored in. Payment for all invoices is Net 15 – Net 30 is available upon request. This quote is valid for 45 days.