



Community Engagement Using Online Tools

A New Way to Listen

OSBA Conference, November 11, 2011

Workshop Agenda

Situation

Challenge

Campaign
Plan

Approach

How Helped
Board and
Administrators

What's Ahead



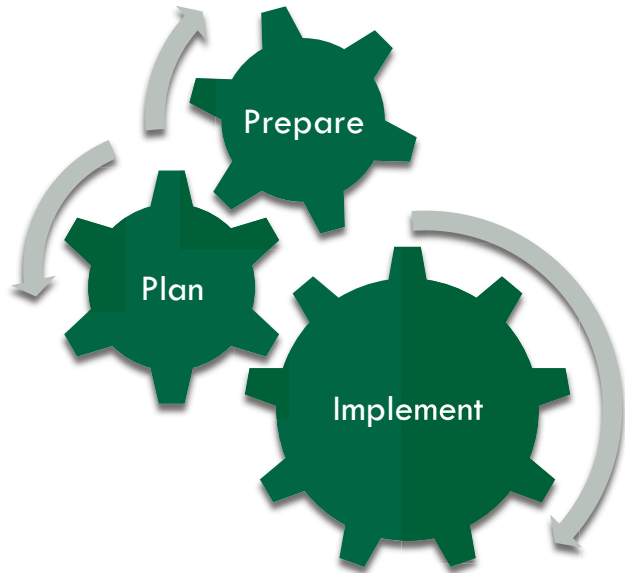
Situation/Needs of Administration

- ❑ Limited stakeholders
- ❑ Needed a budget with broad community support
- ❑ Wanted to include everyone's priorities
- ❑ Needed to increase community confidence in regards to district's handling of money

Situation/Needs of the Board

- Wanted input on what constituents expected from elected leaders
- Needed a new way to connect the dots
- Invested in a credible process that generated:
 - Quality Information
 - Allowed for community engagement (input)
 - Shared the facts (output)
- Achieved more confidence in board member voting.

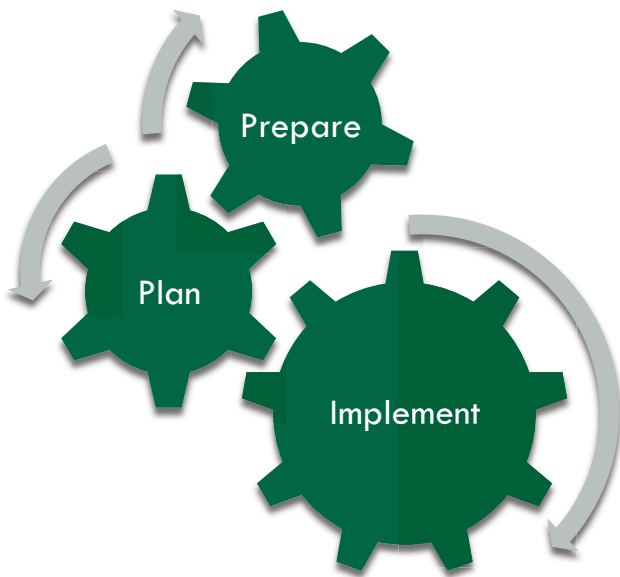
Reynolds Tomorrow Goals



- ❑ Engage broader public to assist district in budget decision-making
- ❑ Move beyond usual suspects and traditional public meetings
- ❑ Create sustainable public engagement legacies
- ❑ Build a record of trust, transparency, plain speaking

A Campaign to Engage and Listen

Fully integrated
campaign



- ❑ Created campaign budget
- ❑ Developed core messaging and themes – internal and external
- ❑ Branded campaign with unique identity and Website



Reynolds Tomorrow

Tough Choices: Smart Decisions

About Us

[Uncertainties](#)

[Hard Choices](#)

[Our Experiences](#)

GET
INVOLVED

We have a new way of listening:

During the coming months, we'll conduct an unprecedented outreach effort to make the budget realities and the choices they are driving, clear. Then we'll use new online technology tools to listen to our community's many and diverse voices.

Our effort is called "Reynolds Tomorrow: Tough Choices – Smart Decisions."

The timeline is:

- December 2010: We are posting background information and launching this website.
- January 2011: The public may come to this site and register to participate in an online survey. Other forms of public opinion research also will be used. Watch for details.
- February 2011: Survey results will be posted for all to view and the Board to analyze as part of its budget-decision process.
- Spring 2011: Additional online questions may be posed to the public as more information is known about funding and preferred program options.



Our District's goal is to make smart decisions based on as much feedback as possible from a diverse community.



Reynolds Tomorrow

Tough Choices: Smart Decisions

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GET
INVOLVED

We face budget uncertainties:

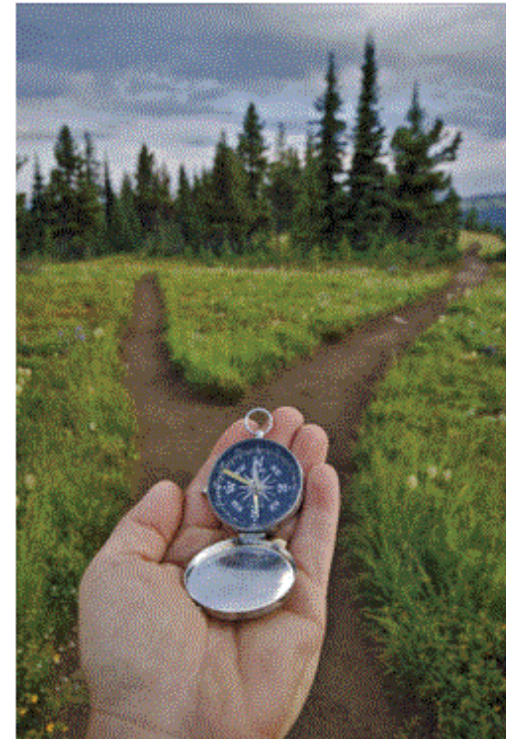
The budget decisions facing the Reynolds School Board – and every school district in Oregon – are stark and uncomfortable. We must and will make responsible decisions.

At this date, the District cannot predict how much state aid will be available for the 2011-2012 budget year, starting in July 2011. The State of Oregon is facing a \$3.5 billion revenue shortfall, based on the latest quarterly economic forecast in November 2010.

The latest numbers indicate the state will not have to make any more cuts to schools or other state programs in the current two-year budget, The Oregonian noted in a November 20 story "However, the budget gap for the next two years has widened again, to nearly \$3.5 billion, after forecasters estimated a drop of about \$272 million from what they had projected for 2011-13," the story stated.

The picture for the next fiscal year (2011-2012) has not come into full focus. If our state allocation next year holds constant, the District may have to eliminate at least \$6 million from the current operating budget. This reduction is the result of rising mandatory fixed costs.

The reductions may go deeper if state revenues do not stabilize. For every \$100 million lost to the over all state K-12 budget, the District loses approximately \$1 million from its general



Campaign Elements

Fully integrated
campaign



- ❑ Identified and created collateral
- ❑ Non-stop promotion using free and/or inexpensive tactics
- ❑ Practiced teamwork, transparency and problem anticipation every day using rolling project calendar

Communications Plan - Internal

- ❑ Communicate goals and expectations to building leaders and staff
- ❑ Collect email addresses
- ❑ Distribute information – meetings/events and newsletters
- ❑ Keep staff informed at each step and repeat information frequently
- ❑ Share results

Communications Plan - External

- ❑ Single-purpose website was critical
- ❑ Pre-media work: informal meetings, phone calls, emails
- ❑ Formal releases throughout the process
- ❑ Personal invitations to participate
- ❑ Use of free or low cost options

Free/Low Cost Options

- Banners in visible community locations
- Signs at board meetings (broadcast on local public access)
- Posters and signs
- Reader Boards
- Autodialer
- Website – single use and district
- Report card stuffers
- Table Tents
- Facebook/Twitter advertising and posts
- Church newsletters and email blasts
- Web links from City Websites

Times changed



Online Research: Keys to Success

Multiple sources of emails



Assure quality



Maintain transparency

Maintain Transparency

- ❑ Brand all communication
- ❑ Provide contact information on all communication
- ❑ Thank participants
- ❑ Share results



Participation from 9,043 emails

- ❑ Average time to complete:
 - ❑ 12 minutes
- ❑ 929 Completed surveys
 - ❑ 75% parents
 - ❑ 24% no children in school
 - ❑ 1% students
- ❑ Average age: 45 years
 - ❑ 19% 18 to 34 years
 - ❑ 36% 35 to 44 years
 - ❑ 26% 45 to 55 years
 - ❑ 19% 55+ years
- ❑ Ethnically diverse
 - ❑ 10% native language at home
- ❑ Geographically dispersed
 - ❑ All areas participated
- ❑ Community and District
 - ❑ 15% employees
 - ❑ 85% community

Metric of Engagement



**59,153 contacts
were made in less than
eight (8) weeks.**

Program Helped Administration

- ▣ Develop a budget that had support
- ▣ Select strategic investments
- ▣ Address staff and community concerns

Program Helped Board

- ▣ Hear more voices
- ▣ Educate the community on issues
- ▣ Make sense of complex problems
- ▣ Focus decision-making
- ▣ Learn what we didn't understand

Reynolds Tomorrow – What's Ahead

- Moving forward
 - Set us up to probe more deeply on important issues
 - We have additional questions and we see value in continuing to ask the same panel for input
 - Exciting to have opportunities to better engage the entire community
 - Tools we can use: email list, branding items, single purpose website
 - Explore other groups to or uses for a similar survey

Question & Answers

