

## **High Point Regional School District**

Referendum Date: December 13, 2005 Total Referendum: \$10,239,858 Contact: Dr. John Hannum, Superintendent or Steve Kepnes, Business Administrator (973) 875-7205

In September 2005, voters rejected a referendum proposal to expand and renovate High Point Regional High School. Determined to resolve its overcapacity issues, the district decided to present a second referendum in December.

Zander Consulting began helping the district with its referendum communications program by devising an advertising campaign to generate awareness of and interest in the referendum. This campaign focused on promoting the district's high-quality education and fiscal responsibility. Another tool used to help spread the word about the referendum was the formation of a key communicators group. Open houses and tours were held to show voters the need for expansion. Printed materials such as newsletters, fact sheets, and flyers were created along with a district website.

Rather than presenting voters with a single, comprehensive proposal like the September 2005 referendum, the district decided to reorganize the work into two proposals. Proposal 1 included construction of new classrooms, renovations to existing classrooms, and upgrading several building systems. Proposal 2 called for renovations to the auditorium and refurbishment of the woodshop.

The High Point Regional referendum presented quite a challenge, primarily because there was a large, well-established "vote no" group within the district. Another issue was that two of the five sending communities had school-related questions on the ballot the same day as High Point. This caused confusion for some voters. Adding to that confusion was the fact that the finance period for the bond was restructured in an attempt to lessen the overall financial impact to taxpayers.

Although the project team worked diligently to overcome these difficulties, both questions failed.



