

Gaining Town Meeting Approval

Without community support, even the most desperately needed project does not go forward. Because a substantial portion of the work of Flansburgh Associates is in the "public sector", we can be of assistance to the Town of Reading in obtaining community support. By working closely with our clients in the critical bond issue phase of projects, we have achieved a 97% success rate in obtaining bond issue passage in New England.

In every community, the issues are slightly different. The presentation of the school building issues must be tailored to fit the individual community. We have helped our clients in the following ways:

- **Developing a comprehensive community relations program.**
- **Develop targeted election materials and tools in the form of flyers, brochures, etc.**
- **Prepare press releases of specific issues – relaying the need, schedule and cost of the proposed project to local newspapers.**
- **Produce slide and video presentations that document the existing conditions and deferred maintenance in the school(s) for use at various community group meetings.**
- **Give presentations to community service groups, parent-teacher organizations, neighborhood associations, and local business organizations.**
- **Produce models, perspectives and presentation plans for display in the library, city offices and other public facilities of the proposed building project(s).**

However, even if every community has special needs, there are certain universal themes that are important:

Effectively Documenting the Need

Finding an effective, graphic way of illustrating overcrowding and future town growth as it impacts the school system's capacity.

Illustrating the Cost Effective Solutions

The school expenditure is often a community's largest capital appropriation. The cost-effective nature of the investment must be clear.

Documenting the Value Added Benefits to the Community

Renovation of Reading's Memorial High School will benefit the town in numerous ways, both directly and indirectly. Excellent school facilities and a progressive school program will benefit the image of your community and increase the value of your citizens' property.

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Below are a few **examples** of recent school projects where Flansburgh Associates' active involvement has helped the Building Committee, the school administration and the city/town to convince the community of the need and benefit of a proposed educational project.

In Stoneham, Massachusetts

We worked closely with the Stoneham Building Committee to provide a comprehensive community relations plan to educate the Town about the elementary school revitalization plan. Our plan focused on weekly articles to the local newspaper about the issues and need for the schools; bi-weekly informational meetings at each school; the design of a series of informational flyers mailed to the community; and the development of graphic presentation materials for Town Meeting. This effort led to a successful \$35 million override vote, which was the first override to be approved in the history of the Town.

In Fairhaven, Massachusetts

We are worked with the Fairhaven Public Schools to gain Town passage of an \$18 million debt exclusion for expansion and renovation of the existing Fairhaven High School. Our community relation's activities included the design of a brochure describing the school project, presentations to various community groups and many meetings with the School Governance. The project received a unanimous vote by the Representative Town Meeting members at the May election.

In Lawrence, Massachusetts

We have worked with four School Administrations and four different mayors over the past 15 years to obtain bond support for four Pre-K-8 schools and a new high school. The most recent projects, the two new K-8 schools and a new high school, are currently in design and under construction, respectively.

In Salem, Massachusetts

Our firm's work with the Building Committee led to the successful authorization of a \$40 million school expansion and renovation program completed in 1995 and a \$50 million program now underway involving renovations and additions to two existing schools, construction of two new elementary schools and renovations to the existing Salem High School.

In summary, Flansburgh Associates understands not only educational design and construction, but also the intensity of effort and commitment needed to support a public school project requiring Town Meeting approval.

We believe that working closely with you to help win community approval is part of our professional responsibility for the success of your project.