



2025 G.O. BOND CAMPAIGN

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT CAMPAIGN

ANKENY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

RESEARCH

The 2025 General Obligation Bond campaign began with listening. In preparation for a **November 4, 2025 referendum**, the district conducted **pre-election polling to measure** community understanding, priorities, and likelihood of support.

GO Bond Polling Results

Survey questions tested sentiment around career readiness, athletic and fine arts upgrades, property tax stability, and overall favorability of a bond proposal. Results **revealed**:

- Strong community interest in preparing students for postsecondary education and careers
- High value placed on maintaining the existing \$2.59 debt service levy
- A need for clearer communication regarding cost, scope, and long-term impact
- Interest in expanded high-demand career pathways, particularly health sciences and STEM

Additionally, voter trends were examined, as the district has kept [historical election data on all school financial elections](#). We also reviewed the voter file from the Secretary of State's office, which informed the number of registered voters and the number of voters in each political party, as well as the number of voters who historically voted in city and school elections.

Research clearly identified the target audience:

- Parents of current and future students
- District staff
- Residents without school-aged children
- Community business leaders
- Undecided voters concerned about taxes

The intended outcome was measurable and specific:

1. Achieve 70% voter approval
2. Recruit 100+ ambassadors
3. Reach at least 75% of households digitally.

PLANNING

The communications plan was intentionally layered, strategic, and compliant with Iowa Code §68A.505. We planned a phased approach to the campaign, that began 10 months before the election. [G.O. Bond Tactics Plan](#)

Phase One: Foundation Building

The first phase encompassed our research and listening tour, which help cement our awareness campaign strategy and reinforced which messaging was most impactful with our target audiences. During the Foundation Building phase, we also planned to develop the bulk of the collateral that would be needed during the election.

Phase Two: Awareness Campaign

In compliance with State of Iowa laws, the district was required to collect 3,324 petition signatures to put the measure on the ballot. As a result, petition collection served as the campaign's awareness phase. The petition signatures allowed the district to begin engaging with voters and raising awareness of the need for a general obligation bond. A structured protocol and community event schedule ensured consistent presence at high-traffic community events.

Phase Three: Conversion Campaign

In the third phase, the district worked to progress our target audience from a stage of awareness to a stage of informed voters. In addition to planned use of traditional communication vehicles, a heavy emphasis was placed on grassroots organization and in-person events, allowing voters to engage with district administrators and supporters of the project in real-time.

Phase Four: Get-Out-The-Vote

The final phase of the campaign intended to strategically drive voters to the polls. Strategic marketing tactics and messaging was crafted to communicate the importance of the election and its impact on the school district.

Communication Vehicles

- The communications plan strategically integrated:
- Grassroots organizing (forums, coffees, farmers markets, Summerfest)
- Earned media (press releases, media kits, interviews, op-eds, podcasts)
- Print materials (flyers, poster boards, yard signs, brochures)
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- Videos and architectural renderings
- Email newsletters
- Website with QR codes
- Talking points and presentation decks

The planning phase ensured clarity of purpose, defined audiences, and consistent brand identity.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation was disciplined, coordinated, and community centered.

Community Engagement

To achieve our goal of 100+ bond ambassadors, the district leveraged School Board members, building leaders, district leaders, Ambassadors were trained with talking points and compliance guidance, and we met with them regularly to arm them with information and address any



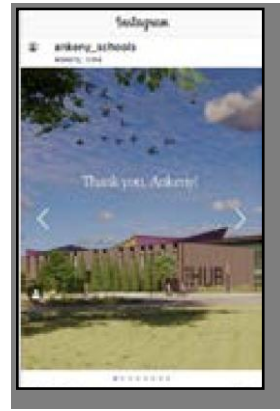
concerns. Leveraging the bond ambassadors, we built out a plan to both bring the community together via forums, and to meet the community where they were through tabling at key events. This strategy carried throughout the campaign, beginning with petition collection and culminating with the Get-Out-The-Vote efforts.

Bond Ambassadors were assigned signature targets and equipped with toolkits. Booths were staffed at Summerfest, Farmers Markets, school events, and community gatherings. Principals presented monthly to staff and parents and key events, such as Meet the Teacher nights.

Communication Tactics

Digital communication amplified in-person outreach:

- Short explainer videos about the Innovative Hub ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#), [Example 4](#))
- Info packets breaking down tax rates and key information ([Example](#))
- FAQ posts addressing polling concerns
- Podcast interviews with administrators and partners ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))
- Leveraging social media for storytelling and general **voter engagement**
- Utilizing media relationships to **cover key announcements** and campaign milestones ([Example 1](#), [Example 2](#), [Example 3](#))



EVALUATION

Following the election, results were analyzed alongside campaign goals. ([Post-Election Readout](#))

1. While we did not achieve 70% voter approval, we did surpass the required 60%+1 threshold of votes for the bond to be approved, garnering 62.7% or 9,523 yes votes. Upon analyzing election results and voter trends, our key takeaways were:
 - A need to be approved, garnering 62.7% or 9,523 yes votes. Upon analyzing election results and
 - A need to convert voters in precincts that house some of the district's oldest buildings. While there is no hard data to tie the age of our buildings to the voter results, anecdotally, it came up often throughout the campaign and was a critique of the overall plan.
 - A need to convert low income voters. The precincts in which we lost the most yes votes, indicates that we did not successfully convince low-income voters that the projects would ultimately benefit them without causing undue financial burden.
 - A need to convert precincts outside of Ankeny-proper.
 - While not every precinct reached the required 60% threshold, we did note that we were not below 50% approval in any precinct. This suggests strong support for the projects overall.
2. We were able to successfully recruit 91 bond ambassadors to support our efforts, and **most importantly, collected nearly 4,000 petition signatures to place the measure on the ballot**. Of our brand ambassadors, more than two-thirds of these ambassadors were district employees. For future efforts, we plan to recruit a larger number of external supporters.
3. Combined communication efforts suggest we more than surpassed our goal of reaching 75% of households digitally. Website engagement was steady and substantive. Bond-specific pages generated 8,337 views, and the Innovative Hub pages added another 4,468 views — more than 12,800 total visits. Visitors spent nearly two minutes on the Innovative Hub pages, signaling thoughtful review of detailed information, and 41 seconds on the G.O. Bond pages, indicating focused interest.



Organic social media significantly expanded our reach:

- **Facebook:** 28 posts averaged 4,147 people per post, totaling more than 116,000 impressions.
- **Instagram:** 20 posts averaged 1,110 reach per post, totaling 22,200 impressions.
- **LinkedIn:** 20 posts averaged 383 reach per post, totaling 7,660 impressions.
- **District website stories:** 11 stories generated 1,980 total views.

These platforms ensured repeated exposure across key audience segments, reinforcing awareness throughout the campaign window.

Video and audio content added depth to the messaging:

- 10 YouTube videos averaged 464 views each (4,640 total views).
- 5 podcast episodes averaged 128 downloads each (640 total downloads).

This allowed families and community members to engage with information in formats that fit their preferences.

Paid digital advertising efficiently extended our reach:

- Google Ads delivered 8,300 impressions and 1,310 clicks at an average cost of \$0.33 per click.
- Social ads generated 55,202 impressions and 1,194 clicks at \$0.44 per click.

Together, these campaigns provided more than 63,000 additional targeted impressions and drove over 2,500 direct clicks to bond information.

Direct mail reinforced digital efforts, with 35,789 pieces distributed and 1,187 tracked clicks, bridging traditional outreach with online engagement. Finally, our team supported these digital efforts with **85 in-person events and presentations and secured 18 media placements, ensuring consistent message** amplification across channels. In short, this was a layered, coordinated approach that garnered **a combined 169,732 people who engaged with our content** as some point during the campaign. High visibility, **consistent messaging, and measurable engagement across platforms demonstrate a comprehensive communication effort that successfully penetrated the community and** supported our goal of broad household awareness.