

# The Need for Improved Facilities

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## Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

### Performance Indicators

The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- The environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
- Communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
- There is an ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
- Public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
- Lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community
- The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities

### Scenario

The Thousand Oaks School District presently had 2,350 students in grades K-12 and was located in a rural Midwestern state. The district was growing at about 2% annually for the past eight years. This growth was beginning to cause over crowding in three of the four attendance centers and three of the buildings were not air conditioned. Dr. Jane Ashley was in her first year as superintendent in the district and the board had mentioned to her on several occasions, including when she was interviewed, that they would like to improve their facilities. They had put a \$10,000,000 bond issue on the ballot the year before she was employed and it was defeated. This was the first time anyone could remember a tax issue or bond issue ever being defeated in the district.

The bond issue election was held at a time when the previous superintendent's contract had not been renewed and he and the board had not been getting along for two or more years. In addition several of the big farmers in the district had openly opposed the bond issue and worked against it. Also, two of the county commissioners lived in the district and were opposed. They had been elected to their positions on a "no new taxes" platform and were against any proposal that would raise property taxes. The bond issue was to replace the oldest elementary school building in the district and to provide additions to two other buildings. It also included air conditioning the three buildings that were not air conditioned. After meeting with district personnel, studying the facilities, and looking at enrollment trends and projections, Dr. Ashley was in agreement that they needed to look at improving their facilities, but she had to come up with a plan that would result in a successful election in the face of the previously stated opposition.

## **Assignment**

- How should Dr. Ashley proceed in developing a plan to have a successful bond issue election.
- Who should be involved in assessing the specific facility needs for the district and how should these people be selected?
- Suggest a process to be used in assessing the specific facility needs for the district.
- What are some good strategies for getting out a positive vote for a bond issue?
- How should Dr. Ashley address the opposition groups to possibly change their mind or at least persuade them not to work against passage of the issue?

# Instructor Notes and Scoring Guide For The Need for Improved Facilities

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## Instructor Notes

One suggested activity is to divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students and have them discuss the scenario. They are then to reach a consensus on the answers to the questions at the end of case study and explain their rationale for the answers to the class. The instructor should then facilitate a discussion of each group's responses. Another approach to this case study could be an individual paper addressing the questions at the end of the case with the students presenting their responses to the entire class for discussion.

## Scoring Guide

**2 point response.** The response includes a proposal to put together a broad based group of stakeholders from the school community and the community at large to assess the facility needs of the district. The proposal suggests the size of the group and the specific type of stakeholders that should be included in the group, including representatives of the farmers and the county commissioners. The proposal suggests the process to be used in assessing the facility needs, some specific strategies for getting out the positive vote, and for getting those opposed not to work against the bond issue.

**1 point response.** The response includes a proposal for a committee of school personnel to look at the previous proposal to see if it meets the needs of the district and to plan for the upcoming bond issue.

**0 point response.** The response is that the superintendent adopts the facility assessment from the previous bond issue to develop the proposal for this bond issue. The central office staff develops the promotion materials and involves very few people from the school community or the community at large.

## References

Castaldi, B. (1994). *Educational facilities: Planning, modernization, and management*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Council for Educational Facility Planners International

<http://www.cefpi.org/>

American Planning Association

<http://www.planning.org>

Success Link

<http://successlink.org/>

Carleton and Associates - *Consultants on School Bond Issues*

<http://www.lynks.com/cholt/hp2.htm>

Article by Paige Hewitt, Houston Chronicle

<http://www.magellan-k12.com/graphics/pdf/Chroniclearticle.pdf>

## **Pilot Test**

This case study was piloted in a masters level class "Foundations of Educational Administration." The comments from the students were favorable and there were no recommendations for change.