

Referenda Success with ICS: The Story Behind the Numbers

K-12 school districts need advocates to guide them through the complex process of passing referenda. ICS team members have worked with and for school districts on referenda for more than 50 years, striving to help students, staff, and communities come together to resolve facility-related and educational programming needs.

With ICS as a trusted partner and advocate, school bond referendum efforts have a 21% higher passage rate based on election cycles from the past two years. In November 2018, ICS had an 88% success rate with districts overall, and the success rate for the past two years is 66%. Rural districts make up a vast majority of these successes. In the past decade, ICS has supported over 60 Minnesota school districts in securing \$1.7 billion in voter-approved funds. For all referenda, ICS has a 75% success rate within two tries. Political climates vary throughout the state, and ICS meets challenges through continued stakeholder engagement. (These statistics are based on election results posted by the Minnesota School Boards Association).

ICS has helped secure \$1.7 billion in voter-approved funds for Minnesota school districts in the past decade. These projects mean facilities will have the ability to provide a great education to students for many generations to come. Prior to merging with Foster, Jacobs, & Johnson (FJJ) in 2017, ICS had a track record of school referenda success, but since then, our team has tripled its referenda workload across Minnesota. Our merger meant joining forces, expanding geographic reach, and building off cumulative experience.

“Through our process, we impact the communities we live, work and play in,” says Pat Overom, Principal of ICS. “We change people’s lives and families with what we do.” Pat plays a crucial role in several referenda every year, and he possesses a deep understanding of the Minnesota Department of Education process, with a successful background in presenting proposal materials for approved review. In his role, he listens and collaborates with all stakeholders to drive community-supported solutions.

ICS works with each district to formulate and present an informational campaign and communicate it to the voters and project stakeholders within the district. District representatives collaborate with the ICS team to create the critical informational brochure of facts and information for distributing to the public as part of this informational campaign. This campaign incorporates feedback received from the listening process. The ICS listening process ensures that the campaign is a true reflection of the community’s priorities. Members of ICS staff, trained in marketing and graphic design, provide districts with the necessary resources to develop microsites, flyers, social media campaigns, and more. Our process includes a comprehensive listening process, stakeholder engagement and all the other necessary components of effectively communicating the proposed solution.

By the end of 2019, ICS will have worked with 17 Minnesota school districts over the course of the year, with referenda totaling over \$400 million in voter-approved funds. How can ICS help you in 2019 and beyond? Contact Pat Overom at PatO@ics-consult.com or Dave Bergeron at Dave.Bergeron@ics-consult.com to learn more about what we can do for your facilities.