



Hudson  
K-12

# Secaucus School District

Referendum Date: December 10, 2013  
Total Referendum: \$27,400,000

Secaucus was experiencing a sharp rise in student enrollment. As a prime location for families that wanted or needed to be in close proximity to New York City, Secaucus was booming. As a result, classrooms were coming close to exceeding the student functional capacity and a need for a dedicated middle school was quickly becoming a necessity.

The district had plans drawn for a overhaul of the middle/high school with new classrooms, upgraded technology, dedicated science and technology classrooms, an upgraded gymnasium, increasing security systems, and repurposing existing rooms. The \$27.4 million referendum vote was scheduled for December 2013.

Secaucus School District has a reputation of fiscal responsibility. The district had a long history of defeated referendums dating back to the 1970s so the Board was optimistic, but worked diligently to get the word out. The referendum was publicly supported by the town mayor and council as being a positive step forward for the district's students. Plans were in place to pay down existing bonds in tandem with the referendum to keep the tax impact low.

**Zander Consulting LLC was called in to ensure that the messaging by both the district and the town's elected officials was consistent.** By having the messaging stream through one source, the collaborative efforts gave the residents the sense that the whole community was in concert with the educational needs of the town's students.

Working with DiCara Rubino Architects and Zander Consulting, the district distributed comprehensive fact sheets to allow the voters to understand the components of the referendum. Letters to the editor were ghost-written by the firm and signed by opinion leaders in the community. Public meetings were conducted to allow the residents to have the questions answered and to illustrate the new construction and renovations. Newsletters were mailed to all the residents in the town to publicize important dates and polling places. Every effort was made to educate the public about the referendum in a condensed time frame.

The referendum passed by a wide-margin.



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