



Morris  
K-8

# Lincoln Park Board of Education

Referendum Date: April 17, 2007

Total Referendum: \$2,100,000

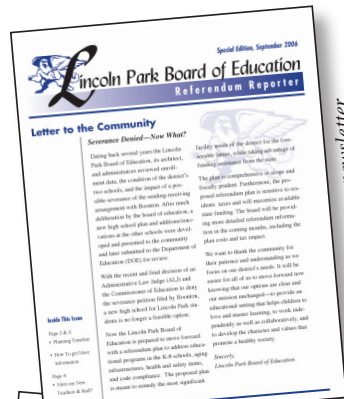
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Lincoln Park School District has had its share of issues with which to contend. Boonton High School tried to sever its sending-receiving relationship with the district and lost an appeal at the appellate level. Had they won, Lincoln Park would have had to build a high school. The municipality was completing its new administrative complex and the residents were unsure of the tax impact. Faced with school buildings that needed upgrades and renovations and a skeptical public, Lincoln Park School District asked Zander Consulting to develop strategic communications plans to present the facts on the developments of the last seven years.

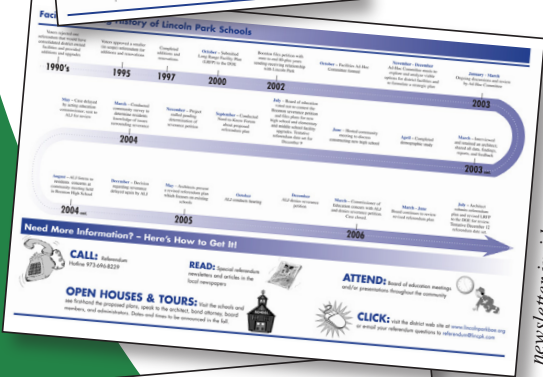
Zander Consulting realized that the residents of Lincoln Park were concerned about many issues. Compounding these issues was the fact that very few of the parents were registered to vote and those that were registered did not exercise their right to vote in previous district elections. The \$8.9 million referendum presented to the public in December 2006 was defeated. The challenge was to inform the residents of the facts and to encourage community engagement.

Zander Consulting worked with the district and key communicators in the borough to look at the real issues, inform the voters of the board's subsequent actions, and to generate a voter outreach effort. Zander Consulting recommended that the district team with the League of Women Voters to step up efforts to register nonvoters. Newsletters, web pages, open houses, tours, and a referendum hotline were offered to let the public know how the board planned on tackling aging school buildings.

The district compromised and made substantial cuts to the original referendum so that it included only the basics. Based on positive, transparent communications, residents developed a new confidence and realized that the board of education was offering just what the district needed to give their children a safe and healthy building and meet the state standards for education. The \$2.1 million referendum was passed, along with the annual budget, in April 2007.



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