



# Eatontown Public School District

**Referendum Date:** March 14, 2006

**Total Referendum:** \$29,794,988

**Contact:** Norma Tursi, *Business Administrator*

or Jean "Nina" Hoover, *Superintendent* (administrators of record)  
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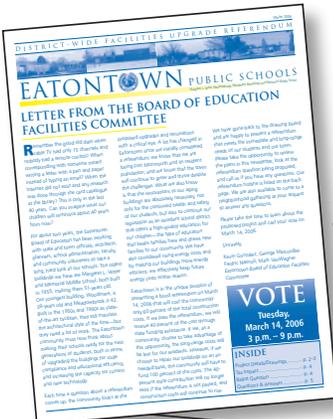
Monmouth  
K-8

Eatontown was faced with a dilemma not found in most school districts. The eventual closing of Fort Monmouth by the U.S. Federal Government would have an impact on school population and the revenue needed to fix the 39- to 51-year old school buildings. Four buildings needed much renovating and upgrading to stay within code compliance and provide a twenty-first century educational environment.

Zander Consulting was asked to help create a message to explain to the community both the necessity of the work to be done in light of the fiscal challenges, and the state funding that would be issued if the referendum passed. The state funding was an anticipated 40 percent or \$11.6 million, which would reduce the cost to the taxpayers to \$18.1 million. Zander Consulting worked closely with the district, the architect, and the bond counsel to illustrate how the referendum would impact local residents' taxes. The goal was to help the community understand the long-range advantages of renovating and upgrading now instead of doing the work in a piecemeal fashion over several years.

Services provided were crafting speaking points for board members and community advocates to take to community group meetings and developing fact sheets. Zander Consulting helped the board to strengthen its media relations and write informational editorials for the local press. Additional services included developing, organizing, printing, and mailing information newsletters; creating updates to the district's web site, setting up an information hotline, and advice on determining open houses and tours to allow a first hand look at the condition of the buildings. Zander Consulting saw that the challenge was to turn around the negative impact of the base closing to recalling that the value placed on an excellent education was a selling point for the community.

A skeptical, but open-minded community passed the referendum by a slim margin.



Winter 2006 newsletter



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