

## **FREMONT UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

### **Measure E: Investing in Students, Schools and Community**

#### **WHAT WAS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR ENTRY?**

The Fremont Unified School District (FUSD) is a high performing district serving more than 35,000 students. FUSD's mission is to provide equitable opportunities that educate, challenge, and inspire students of all ages, talents, and ability levels while preparing each with the skills required to adapt and succeed in an ever-changing world.

On June 3, 2014, Fremont voters passed Measure E, a \$650 million school facilities bond to address aging schools and overcrowding through modernization and new construction.

*Measure E: Investing in Students, Schools and Community* is the communications and community engagement plan developed to keep the community informed, to generate excitement about the seen—and more importantly—the “unseen” or infrastructure projects and how this benefits the district, schools, teachers, staff and community; to address concerns and mitigate any community complaints, and to celebrate the successes in order to reinforce the importance of continued investment in the Fremont Unified School District.

The first year after passage, FUSD's Measure E communications team researched and developed a communications plan (with simultaneous implementation of a few key strategies) to immediately address any community misperceptions, strengthen relationships and community support, and the creation of informational templates, such as newsletters, press releases “boiler plate” language, and key messaging.

Year two (July 1, 2015-June 30, 2016) focused on implementation of the plan, including ongoing review in order to refine, enhance and address the changing environment and needs of the District.

With new classroom buildings planned for multiple sites, including a 12-classroom math and science building at Irvington High School and technology infrastructure upgrades and 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment planned for all schools, we asked ourselves: What role can students play in determining our facilities needs, and in celebrating our successes? How can we, in keeping with our mission to “educate, inspire, and challenge”, involve students in a rich learning experience?

And, how can we turn the construction site into a living lab?

Below is a list of activities in which students played a central role:

Irvington High School New Construction

Oct 2015 – installed construction webcam

Nov 2015 - Girls-in-STEM Club build model crane / physics on site construction "lab"

Dec 2015 - 162 physics students visit construction “lab” / Q&A with team  
Jan 2016 - construction site physics lesson <https://vimeo.com/148410126>  
June 2016 - physics classes tour new building prior to summer break/fall occupancy

Warm Springs Elementary Groundbreaking  
January 25, 2016 – Students write and perform a new construction song  
<https://vimeo.com/148410126>

Azevada Elementary Ribbon Cutting  
September 29, 2016 - Student speaker; performance <https://vimeo.com/141074491>

Mattos Elementary Ribbon Cutting  
September 30 2016 - Student speaker; student artwork <https://vimeo.com/141180961>

## HOW DID YOU USE RESEARCH AND PLANNING TO DEVELOP THE PROJECT?

We **held meetings** and solicited input with various stakeholders:

- District Departments, including Facilities, Maintenance & Operations, Curriculum & Instruction, Nutrition Services, Special Education, etc.
- Site Construction Committees, which included principals, department chairs, teachers, classified, parents, students
- Program Management and Construction Management Firms and Architects

Key to our student engagement work is the passion and leadership of principals, teachers and club advisors at the schools. Instead of focusing on any construction inconveniences that might take place during the school year, FUSD staff focused on the educational opportunities the construction presented.

We conducted a **marketing and communications review of existing FUSD and site specific communications methods** (e.g. annual reports, newsletters, website, presentations), as well as any annual site and district wide events (back-to-school nights, open house, PTA meetings, district forums, graduation and promotion ceremonies, etc.) in order to develop a calendar where visuals, story boards, and information about the Measure E program may be exhibited, distributed.

We **developed a draft marketing and communications plan** that includes recommendations, potential goals and objectives, audiences, and an action plan for implementation. This plan is continuously reviewed and refined, in order to meet any changing developments, new facilities needs identified, or opportunities. For example, the new buildings at Azevada Elementary School (4 general classrooms), Mattos Elementary School (2 general classrooms and 2 science labs), Irvington High School (12 classrooms), and Warm Springs Elementary School (12 classrooms) were not part of the original project list developed prior to the passage of Measure E, but high priority projects implemented to address dramatic enrollment growth projections.

An illustration of a new opportunity to engage students and foster hands-on learning occurred when we learned that Irvington High School had a Girls-in-STEM Club. One of the advisors worked with the students to build a model crane similar to the one used to raise the walls of the new building, incorporate use of the live webcam into the physics classroom instruction, and work with the project team (construction and project management firms, architects, contractors and communications) to provide on-site teaching and learning for the students.

### **WHO WAS THE TARGET AUDIENCE?**

A strategic community engagement plan identifies all stakeholders and focuses on a **realistic list of prioritized and targeted audiences**. The audience for any communication will fall into one of two categories, **internal** or **external**, and often both. The purpose of the communication and the strategy used will vary, depending on need.

Stakeholder groups and audiences are comprised of those who can take direct action, as well as “influencers.” When developing the messages for the intended audiences, it is important to note any biases, preferences, and self-interest, they might bring to the communication process. We want our influencers to communicate the accurate, factual information, and to be ambassadors for the Bond Measure E Program. In keeping with our mission, our best influencers will be our students and teachers, as they benefit directly from the Measure E Bond Program.

### **WHAT MEASURABLE GOALS WERE SET?**

- Increased traffic to the Measure E web page and sign-ups for the e-news
- Robust attendance at all Measure E events
- Increased engagement of students, teachers, and greater community
- Continued community support of District’s goals and objectives

It is important to note that for this particular project, the focus is on student engagement.

### **WHAT DID THE PROJECT ACCOMPLISH AND HOW DID YOU EVALUATE ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN MEETING STATED GOALS?**

Every Measure E groundbreaking celebration (groundbreakings and ribbon cuttings) has had strong student participation, both on the program and in attendance.

At Azevada, Mattos and Warm Springs Elementary School:

- Students at Azevada Elementary served on a playground committee to help identify features of a new playground
- All three schools had student speakers on their programs (ribbon cuttings at Azevada and Mattos, and a groundbreaking at Warm Springs Elementary School)
- Mattos students made posters, many with a science theme, to honor the construction of their new classroom and science lab building

- Warm Springs students met during their lunchtime to write a song commemorating the building of their school's new 12-classroom building, and rehearse, which they presented during the groundbreaking

At Irvington High School:

- The Girls-in-STEM Club (approximately 15 members) built a model crane similar to the one used on the construction site, learning everything from axles to I-beams, collets to O-rings, and connectors to platform brackets; and more importantly, critical thinking skills, cooperation and teambuilding. Club members have offered to make future presentations at elementary schools when their campuses begin construction of new buildings, and a second FUSD high school (which is receiving a new classroom building in the future) is in conversation with the Irvington Girls-in-STEM Club in order to start its own club.
- Five physics classes and more than 162 Irvington High School students took their learning out into the field when their physics teacher Henry Fung arranged for his students to visit the construction site of 12-classroom building. Students met with program and construction managers, project engineers, architects, and others, who presented on the project and answered questions about the project and various careers in the field.
- Fifty Irvington High School seniors toured the building prior to graduation and before completion, including one of the student newspaper reporters.
- Students have signed up for Measure e-news (although we don't know the number of students, as the form does not require affiliations when subscribing)

#### **WHAT IS YOUR SIZE OF DISTRICT/ORGANIZATION?**

The Fremont Unified School District (FUSD) serves more than 35,000 students and employs 3,000 teachers and staff.

#### **WHAT WAS YOUR PROJECT'S TOTAL BUDGET?**

An estimated 50% (or **\$42,605**) expended on activities increasing student engagement, out of \$85,210 spent for Measure E communications services. Additional in-kind contributions from the construction, architectural, and program management firms supported the work, with teachers' curriculum and instruction covered through their existing contract.

#### **PRESS RELEASES, NEWSLETTERS, PROGRAMS (partial list)**

[Azevada Ribbon Cutting Program](#)

[Mattos Ribbon Cutting Program](#)

[Students explore math, science and technology through creation of new classroom](#)

[Measure E Newsletter, February 2016](#)

[Measure E Newsletter, Summer 2016](#)