

Social Media: Tech Levy 2020

WHY?

Highline Public Schools urgently needed a technology levy to fund devices and internet access needed to support our students and staff equitably during distance learning. A strong social media campaign was an important part of our communication strategy--especially in a remote campaign environment.

RESEARCH & PLANNING

Our social media approach relied on opinion research obtained by Strategies 360 in June based on interviews with 450 residents. Almost 80% of residents surveyed believed the district had an obligation to provide students with internet access and computers. Despite a feeling that taxes were already too high, priorities included improving cybersecurity, preparing students for the careers of today, and upgrading aging devices for both students and teachers. Testing determined that an equity message resonated the most.

In addition to personal contacts, we mined social media for posts from staff and families who we could contact to set up professional photos and stories that would help voters understand the need and value of technology funding.

We used a communications timeline prepared by Strategies 360 as a guide and our social media calendar to stay on track.

GOALS

The overall goal of the tech levy social media was to provide information to help voters understand and agree that the district needed the two-year \$32.5 million technology levy. We did this with facts and numbers as well as high quality photos and storytelling.

IMPLEMENTATION & COMMUNICATION

Each social media post spotlighted one or more of the following key messages directly or indirectly:

- ① The technology levy focuses on equity and access for our students.
- ② The levy supports teaching and learning, in classrooms or at home.
- ③ The levy continues our commitment to safety and security.
- ④ The levy does not raise local school taxes.

We employed Canva templates to add facts and data to weekly, and later, almost daily social media posts about the tech levy or voting. The icons were visual reminders of the tech levy key messages.

Regular insta stories using the same template look and icons helped inform and engage our audience; we built up two sets of highlights (Tech Levy I and Tech Levy II).

We morphed a fall series of profiles with the hashtag #OurHighlineStory into stories that underlined the need for a tech levy with the added hashtag #techlevy2020. We married the tech levy information with photos and stories from staff and families who allowed our contract photographer to visit their homes wearing a mask and staying at least 6 feet or more apart.

EVALUATION & SUCCESS

The tech levy was approved at a 73.6 percent approval rate!

While the high rate of approval can be attributed to a number of things, including our paid digital media, the 70+ organic social media series of posts ALSO played an important role. Known faces and their stories increased reach and engagement. The posts kept up a steady drum beat of awareness and trustworthy information. Our digital media consultant boosted some of the posts to great effect.

Examples:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vmcXge8hwacA4PwJr30cqi3lOni4uZmoWIHzkwaWLyI/edit?usp=sharing>