

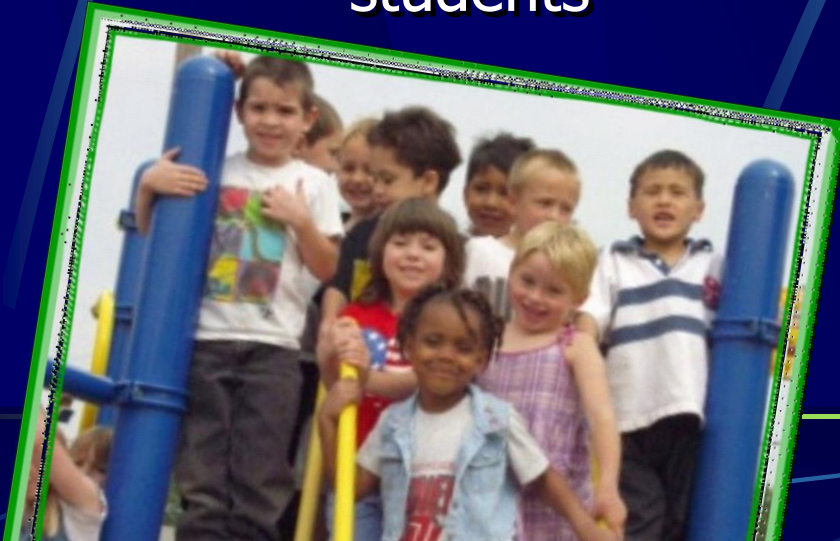
Putting the Back in Community Public Education

Midwest Regional Public Finance Conference – February 18, 2011



Wichita Public Schools – Who We Are

- **50,033 students in 2010-11**
 - Highest enrollment since mid 70s
- **Richly diverse student body**
 - Three primary ethnic groups: Caucasian, Hispanic and African American
 - 88+ languages spoken in the homes of our students



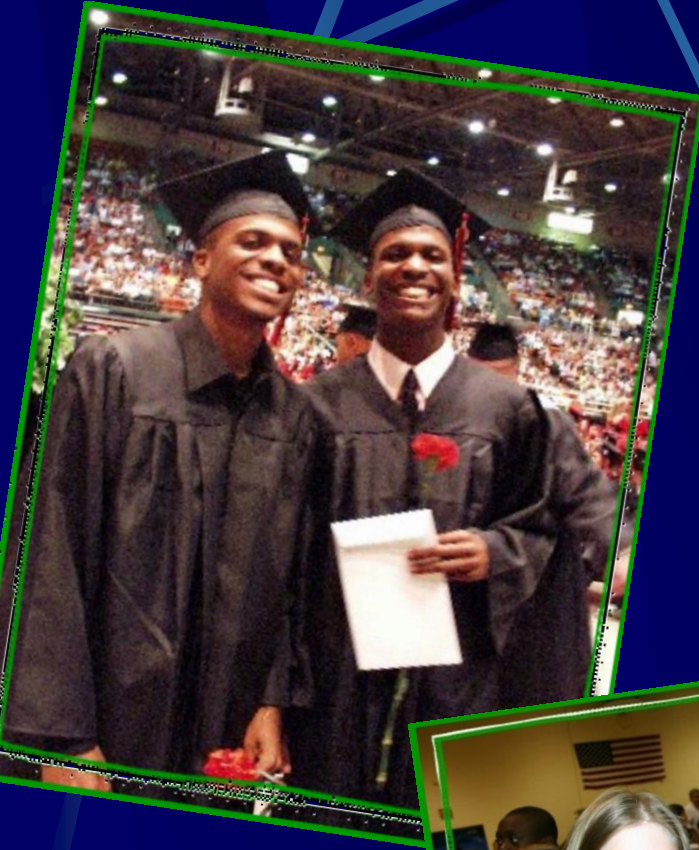
- **94 schools + 7 program options**

Major Economic Engine

- **3rd largest employer in the Wichita MSA**
 - Approximately 6,770 FTEs/
over 9,000 people
- **Significant business operation**
 - 8.5 million square feet of buildings
 - 1,805 acres of school grounds
 - \$632 million annual budget
 - \$38 million monthly payroll
 - \$12.5 million monthly vendor payments



Today's Plan



- **Establishing community partnerships to accomplish public goals**

- How to create meaningful partnerships
- Identifying key stakeholders
- Strategies for success



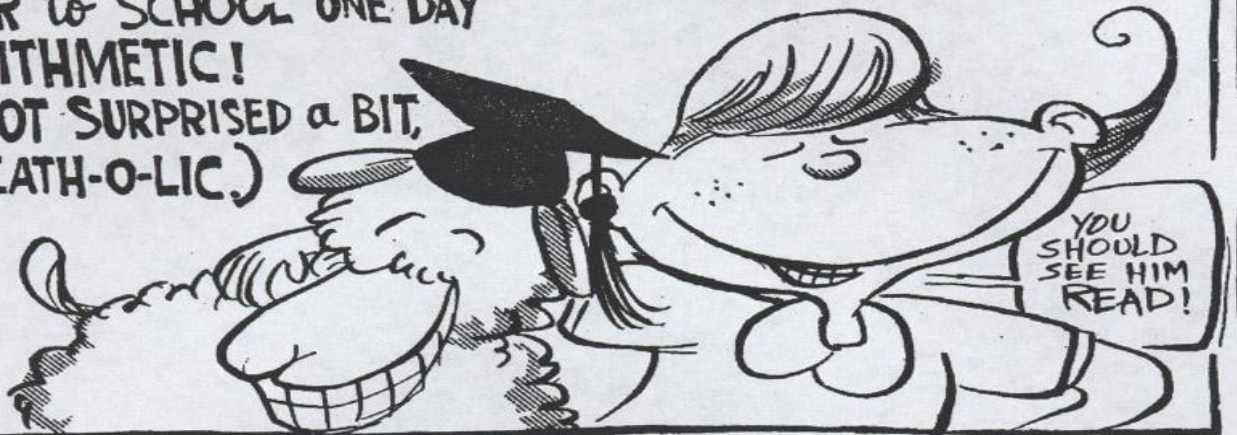
The Environment—Late 90's

CROWSON'S VIEW

MARY HAD a LITTLE LAMB
IT'S FLEECE WAS WHITE AS SNOW
AND EVERYWHERE THAT MARY WENT
THE LAMB WAS SURE TO GO...

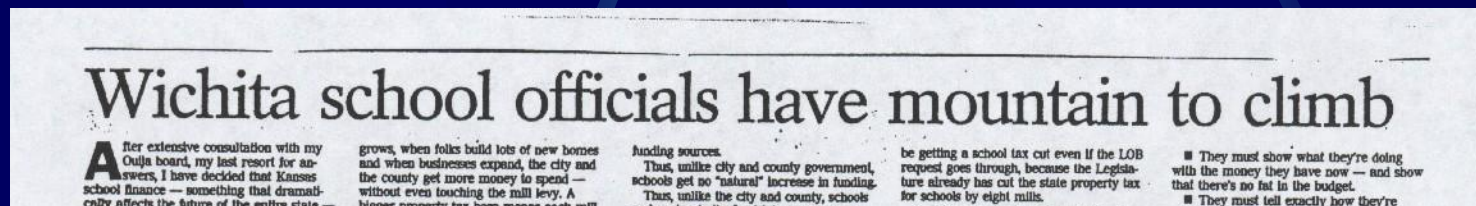
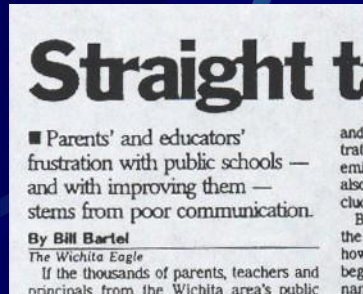


IT FOLLOWED HER to SCHOOL ONE DAY
AND LEARNED ARITHMETIC!
YOU'RE PROB'LY NOT SURPRISED a BIT,
(THE SCHOOL WAS CATH-O-LIC.)



Community Expectations

- Open communication, improving student achievement, safe schools, opportunities for involvement
- BOE commitment started before Superintendent was hired



Getting Started – First Actions

- **Change the conversation**
- **Acknowledge that we don't have enough involvement in our schools**
 - Must put "public" back in our urban district
 - Rebuild trust
- **Our responsibility/obligation to focus on inviting the community to be involved**

"All institutions live or die by public opinion."

James Tolley, former VP public affairs, Chrysler



Keys to Success

- **Board/Superintendent relations**
 - If you're not working in concert, you're in deep trouble
- **Willingness to listen--to the good, the bad**
- **Consistent messages**
- **Driven by data**
- **A lot of energy**
- **Deliberate communication is essential**

Target Audiences

•Communication priority

- Tell our story with key messages

"This is who we are, what we think about ourselves, what we want to do and why we deserve your support!"

•Who mattered then (and still does today!)

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| -BOE | -Teachers/staff |
| -Realtors | -Media |
| -Business | -Parents |
| -Students | -Minority communities |
| -Senior citizens/retirees | -Civic clubs/organizations |
| -Lawmakers | |

Successful Strategies/Actions

- **Provide meaningful opportunities for community to talk, district to listen**

- Realtor, civic club conversations
- Listening sessions proven to reveal key opinions/trends for action (boundaries, bond issue, student achievement, parent meetings)
- Frequent interaction with employee groups

District
seeks
citizen

Next step

key to create better Wichita schools
ough it seemed like the end of a at large — t

School chief
is looking for
more input

Schools seek input on boundaries

Successful Strategies/Actions

- **Pursue strong media relationships**
- **Invite community IN to our schools**
- **Provide the information stakeholders want, in an accessible format**
- **Challenge inaccuracies and misrepresentations**
- **Involve stakeholders, allow THEM to make things happen**
- **Priority on internal/staff communications**

Return on Investment !

- **Passage of the two largest facilities bond issues in Kansas history**
- **Increased in volunteerism/partnerships**
- **Enrollment remains strong**
- **Major school boundary changes supported by community (more coming in next 2 years)**
- **Financial support of schools**

MOST IMPORTANT

Increased student achievement



Summary of Lessons Learned

- Change the conversation
- **Credibility is key**
- Deliberate communications is essential
- **Data must be part of all decisions**
- Make it personal
- **Celebrate success**
- Develop key messages, get everyone on board
- AND...

When all is said and done, it's really all about relationships

Wichita Public Schools

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Call if you need additional information!

