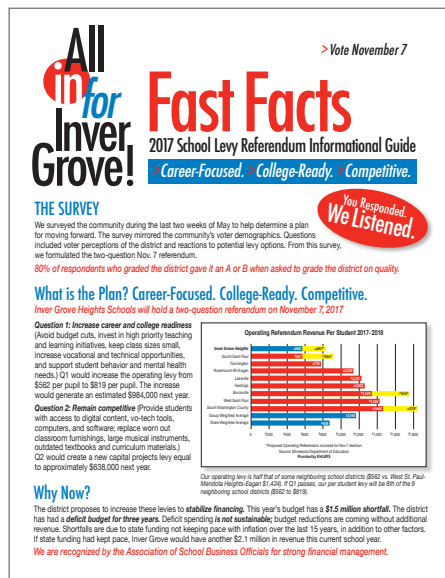
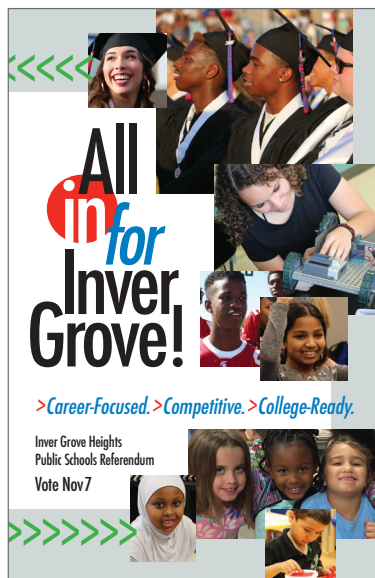


Case Study **Inver Grove Heights Public Schools** All in for Inver Grove!

How MP+G and DehlerPR helped pass an operating levy and capital projects levy in a community with an identity crisis

THE OPPORTUNITY

The November 2017 two-question referendum would increase student career and college readiness by offering more vocational and technical opportunities and addressing student behavior and mental health needs. It would also help the district remain competitive by avoiding budget cuts, investing in high priority teaching and learning initiatives, and keeping class sizes small. The operating levy would increase from **\$562 per pupil** to **\$819 per pupil**, and the capital projects levy would equal **\$638,000 per year**.



Inver Grove district mailer (left) and Fast Facts flyer (right) were part of the informational campaign designed to inform residents about the levy and capital projects referendum.

THE GOAL

Provide information about the bond referendum to as many residents as possible so that most residents report awareness and ability to make an informed decision by Election Day.

A Winning Referendum for Inver Grove Heights Public Schools

*Our referendum was dependent on strong (Herculean!) efforts from the district, from our Yes committee and from our communications consultants. It truly was an 'All In' effort by everyone! **Mary Pat** and **Jeff** set the strategy, the tone, and the pace for our information campaign. We needed their expertise to create the plan, and their time to create all the communications materials needed to get our message out.*

— **Dave Bernhardson, Superintendent**

CLIENT

Inver Grove Heights Schools enrolls more than **3,500** students in grades K-12. The district serves **34,700** residents. A suburb of St. Paul, Inver Grove Heights is home to a variety of businesses and industry and has an unemployment rate that is lower than the state average. The population is **76%** white with growing Hispanic (**10.9%**), Asian (**5.3%**) and African American (**4.3%**) populations. While the community is only **10%** Hispanic, school enrollment is **20%**. Inver Grove Heights is home to several retirement communities and **80%** of residents do not have school-aged children. Economically, the area has some very well-off families as well as students in poverty. The area is politically divided with some very conservative areas.



CLIENT SITUATION

In 2017, Inver Grove Heights Public Schools posed a two-question referendum, operating and capital projects levy. The community is suburban, swing voters, a mix of socio-economics tending toward with a healthy median home value. The community is not cohesive, and has generally been supportive of referenda.

DELIVERABLES

- Campaign management
- Communications strategy
- Tactical implementation plan + timeline
- Key messages
- Campaign theme graphic + tagline
- Marketing materials: print + digital
- Email Marketing campaign
- Social media campaign
- Video
- Referendum Website design + content maintenance
- News releases + newspaper guest columns

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THE PROBLEM

The Inver Grove Heights School District **cut \$1.5 million** from the 2017-2018 budget, and had a deficit budget for three years. Without additional revenue, the district would need to cut the budget by **an additional \$2.8 million** over the next two years.

ALL IN FOR INVER GROVE!

Research results were used to develop a unique strategic communications plan and messages tailored to each audience, and an implementation timeline. In a community without a downtown, and in close proximity to jobs and entertainment throughout the Twin Cities metro area, Inver Grove Heights has a bit of an identity problem. The theme “**All in for Inver Grove!**” encouraged the community to come together to invest in its future.

STRONG RESULTS

Both questions passed! Operating levy with **59% Yes votes**, capital projects with **58% Yes votes**.

At left, Inver Grove Heights Public Schools' 2017 Levy Referendum video brought the needs to life while the district website featured all of the information necessary for voters to become informed about the upcoming election.

ABOUT THE TEAM



MP+G Marketing Solutions, LLC
“Bringing Your Brand to Life!”

MP+G Marketing Solutions provides cost-effective marketing solutions for public school districts. Known for her creative voice and vision, **Mary Pat McNeil** helps school districts tell their unique story and engage their communities by delivering compelling brand strategy and marketing campaigns. MP+G's work has been on the receiving end of several industry awards at the state and national levels. MP+G is a certified, woman-owned business and a Constant Contact Solution Provider.

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Educate. Communicate. Motivate.

DehlerPR helps public school districts maintain and improve their reputation by telling their story and building relationships. As a virtual agency, our group brings clients more value by providing years of experience with high-quality expertise and low overhead. We communicate to educate audiences and motivate them to take action.

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