



The Case for Ongoing Surveys

10 Reasons to Survey Between Elections

A Banach, Banach & Cassidy Insights Report

If you could know one thing about your community right now, what would it be?

Maybe it is how parents feel about the new schedule. Maybe it is whether residents would support a bond next year. Maybe it is what people are saying about the district that no one is saying to you.

Most districts cannot answer that question today. They survey once, right before an election, and then go quiet for years. By the time they ask again, the community has changed, and no one noticed.

Ongoing surveys close that gap. A short survey, repeated on a regular schedule, gives district leaders a steady read on the community. Here are ten reasons to make it a habit.

Ten Reasons to Survey Between Elections

1. It catches problems and rumors before they go public

Concerns start small. A few parents talk. A post gets shared. A story takes hold. A regular survey surfaces these issues while they are still fixable. You learn what people are hearing and what they believe. That lets you correct the record early, instead of meeting it for the first time at a packed board meeting.

2. It fills the blind spot between elections

Most districts only survey right before an ask. Years can pass with no read on the community. Families move in and out. Staff turns over. Opinions shift. An ongoing survey keeps you informed during the years when no one else is asking.

3. It shows the trend, not just a snapshot

One survey tells you where things stand. Repeated surveys tell you which direction things are moving. Is trust rising or falling? Is the grade the community gives you going up or down? The trend line tells you whether your communication is working.

4. It hears the people who never show up

The people at board meetings are not the whole community. Long-term residents without children in school often make up 75 percent of a district. They rarely attend meetings. They do

vote. A survey reaches them where they are and gives them a voice the district would otherwise miss.

5. It gives the board evidence, not anecdotes

Board members hear from the loudest voices. That is not the same as hearing from the community. Independent survey data backs budget and program decisions with facts. It protects the board when a vocal few claim to speak for everyone.

6. It gives new superintendents and boards a starting point

A new superintendent inherits a community they do not yet know. New board members face the same problem. Without data, they guess. An existing survey gives them an objective baseline on day one. They know what the community values, what it questions, and where trust stands.

7. It builds goodwill just by asking

People notice when they are asked. Regular check-ins signal that the district is listening. That earns trust on its own, regardless of what the data shows. The promise that comes with it is simple. If you ask for opinions, share what you heard and act on it.

8. It tests the message before you spend on it

Every newsletter, mailer, and web post costs time and money. A survey shows which words resonate with families and which fall flat. It shows which topics need to be addressed head-on. You find out before the message goes to print, not after.

9. It protects your communication capital

Much of the outbound communication districts produce doesn't land because no one checked what the community wanted to hear. Surveys are the inbound half of communication. They keep newsletters, websites, and other outbound communication on target, so the district does not waste its communication capital.

10. It walks you into the next bond or millage ahead

Most campaigns start from zero. The district scrambles to learn where support is soft and what messaging will move people. A district that surveys between elections already knows. It walks into the next bond or millage ahead, not even.

From “We Think” to “We Know”

Every district runs on assumptions about its community. Some are right. Some are years out of date. Ongoing surveys replace gut feel and the vocal minority with a real read on the whole community. Every decision, and the next campaign, rests on solid ground.

Where to Start

An ongoing survey only works if people trust it. That means the district should not run it alone. Residents answer more candidly when a neutral third party asks the questions. The board gets results no one can dismiss as self-serving.

Banach, Banach & Cassidy manages the full process for you:

- Designs a short survey built around your district's questions
- Reaches staff, parents, and the residents who never come to meetings
- Collects and analyzes every response
- Delivers a clear report with findings and recommendations
- Repeats the survey each year and tracks the trend

The core questions stay the same each year, so you can compare results. A few questions change to reflect what the district needs to know now.

Your staff stays focused on students. You get the answers.

The first step is small. It is a conversation about what you want to know about your community.

***Banach, Banach & Cassidy does everything
that has anything to do with communication.***

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