


<b>Subject:</b>  Comprehensive Master Plan Community Survey	<b>Attachment:</b>  Preparatory Information/Community Survey
<b>Category:</b>  Presentations	<b>Type of Board Consideration:</b> Information      Consent      Action
	<b>Approved for Consideration:</b>  _____ Francisco C. Rodriguez, Ph.D. Superintendent/president

**BACKGROUND**

Based upon a presentation to the Board of Trustees on October 18, 2011, the board supported the administration contracting with a polling company (FM3) and The Lew Edwards Group to conduct a comprehensive master plan community survey for a potential November 2012 general obligation bond. Contracts were consummated, the board ratified those contracts in November 2011, and the polling took place in December.

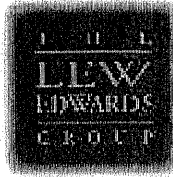
**STATUS**

Catherine Lew of The Lew Edwards Group and John Fairbank of FM3 polling will review the results of the feasibility polling and the recommended next steps the board should consider. These next steps, as described as Phase III of the process leading to a potential November 2012 general obligation bond, would include:

- Develop internal and external communications programs to inform/engage stakeholders and the community
- Conduct message trainings for the key district communicators
- Consult with bond counsel and FM3, as needed
- Initiate planning for nonpartisan student voter registration and engagement activities
- Formation of the bond implementation team (underwriters, bond counsel, etc.)

**RECOMMENDATION**

Information only, no action required.



To: MiraCosta Board of Trustees  
Dr. Francisco Rodriguez, Superintendent/President

Fr: Lew Edwards Group and FM3 Research

Date: January 18, 2012

Re: Preparatory Information/Community Survey

The following is some preparatory background as requested by the Board preceding our presentation of January 24<sup>th</sup>.

LEG's analysis of the survey conducted by FM3 Research from December 7 – 12, 2011 shows that a \$538 million bond is definitely viable in November 2012, provided that there is consensus among stakeholders and a focused Bond Planning and Public Information program to inform and engage the community.

#### **ELECTION FEASIBILITY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In the initial ballot question, *The MiraCosta Community College Classroom Repair and Job Training Measure* receives 64% support when combining all "definite, probable and lean" yes's and settles at 62% on the third ballot ask, above the Margin of Error (MOE) of +/- 3.6%.

Considering the current economy and competition for taxpayer dollars, LEG recommends the following:

- a. The District must be extremely disciplined about utilizing informational outreach to address specific community priorities and interests.
- b. Plan for a potential November 2012 bond measure and conduct a tracking survey immediately following the final District-sponsored informational mailer that will be issued right after the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, to assess any changes or consistency in bond viability.

CATHERINE V. LEW, ESQ. LLOYD A. EDWARDS  
5454 Broadway, Oakland CA 94618 Post Office Box 21215, Oakland CA 94620  
Tel. (510) 594-0224 Fax (510) 420-0734 www.lewedwardsgroup.com

- c. Invest the financial resources necessary in the public information program necessary to raise awareness about the District's needs and engage the community.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

- 63% of respondents believe the State to be on the Wrong Track, while only 26% believe their local community is. 89% of respondents are much more/somewhat more likely to support the Measure once they understand that *"all funds stay in MiraCosta College District and CANNOT be taken by Sacramento."*
- *Approval Ratings & Awareness:* The more respondents are aware of MiraCosta College, the more likely they are to support your Measure.
- *College Funding Needs and Budget Concerns:* 74% of respondents believe community colleges in California have a great/some need for additional funding, with 67% agreeing when asked specifically about MiraCosta.

### **OVERALL BOND AMOUNT AND TAX TOLERANCE**

There is no statistical difference between support for a \$538 million bond (64%), a \$398 million bond (63%), and a \$248 million bond (64%). LEG recommends proceeding with planning for a \$538 million bond. Further, LEG recommends structuring the bond to keep tax amounts closer to \$10 per 100,000 if possible.

### **IMPORTANCE OF FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY**

Strong fiscal accountability is vital to the success of any measure. With regard to the bond, respondents are specifically interested in the following fiscal features:

1. *Requiring that all funds stay in MiraCosta CCD and cannot be taken by Sacramento (89%)*
2. *Ensuring that all funds and decisions are locally controlled (88%)*
3. *Requiring all expenditures to be subject to annual, independent audits (85%)*
4. *Requiring the creation of an independent committee of citizens to review all expenditures (72%)*

### **BOND PRIORITIES – Broad Themes are More Interesting to Respondents than actual Projects**

#### **Affordable, Low-Cost Education**

- *"The cost of attending a public university in California has risen to as much as six times that of attending a community college. As a result, more local students are relying on MiraCosta College at a savings of as much as \$35,000 on their way to a four-year degree. Passing this measure increases opportunities for local students to earn college credits, certifications, and job skills at a reasonable price."* (80%)

### **Transfer to 4-year Universities**

- "Passing this bond will provide needed classroom space and improved course offerings to give local high school graduates and returning students the opportunity to finish required courses and improve their grades so that they can successfully transfer to a Cal State University or UC school." (80%)

(For San Elijo area residents)

- "To fulfill the College's commitment to improving local student college transfer rates to four-year universities, this measure will provide the needed classroom space, improved course offerings, and help the College turn the San Elijo Campus in Cardiff into a Transfer focused Academy. This will provide local high school graduates and returning students the resources necessary to easily transfer to a Cal State University or UC school." (77%)

### **Support for Veterans**

- "MiraCosta College currently has almost 800 Military Veterans and more than 300 currently active military attending classes. Many of them are returning from War Zones and face a host of challenges, including post-traumatic stress disorder and permanent disabilities. This Measure will upgrade and expand Veteran services and facilities dedicated to ensuring that the growing number of returning service members receive the support they need to complete their education and enter the civilian workforce." (79%)

### **BOND PROJECTS**

Your community is interested in the following bond funding priorities, though they are less interested in the specifics and more interested in the global mission as described above.

#### **Technology Upgrades**

1. Updating outdated electrical systems and wiring for computer technology and internet access (68%)
2. Purchasing and upgrading equipment, including computers and technology, used for job training and retraining programs (64%)
3. Upgrading career and vocational classrooms, labs and equipment to provide students with opportunities to learn job skills (63%)
4. Upgrading technology and facilities to improve and expand on-line classes for local students (63%)

#### **Science – Health and Nursing**

5. Expanding science, health-related careers, bio-technology, nursing and technical job training programs. (64%)
6. Updating science and computer labs (64%)
7. Eliminating the two-year waiting list for the nursing program (64%)

8. Expanding health care training to those who plan on taking care of our aging local population (64%)

#### **Basic Facility Improvements**

9. Improving support facilities for Veterans (65%)
10. Meeting handicap accessibility requirements (64%)

### **RECOMMENDED APPROACH**

#### **Key Considerations**

- LEG recommends a minimum of three informational mailers prior to Board placement of the measure on the ballot, and a tracking survey to re-assess viability.
- A public outreach/engagement program featuring students and professors as messengers talking about the role of the College in providing job training and accessible education in today's economy should be implemented.

#### **Consistent Use of Key Messages & Message Control**

Communications should be centralized to a pre-selected, designated team of messengers and message discipline imposed to ensure that well-prepared spokespeople are utilized in the public arena. Your nonpartisan, District-funded Public Information Program will include the following communications components:

- Immediate updates with Internal Stakeholders on the status of planning;
- Personal meetings with community Opinion Leaders and internal Stakeholders to build awareness of the needs and update them on next steps;
- Meetings with local Mayors, Business Leaders, Editorial Boards and news outlets;
- A series of District mailings to external Opinion Leaders and internal Stakeholders to update and educate on the measure;
- A series of nonpartisan, informational mailings to inform and educate the community-at-large; and
- An informational Speakers Bureau to key community organizations throughout the District.

<p align="center"><b>Recommended November 2012 Election Timeline</b>  <b>MiraCosta CCD Bond Measure Planning</b>  The following is a recommended timetable.  <i>Identifies only those activities that can legally be implemented by the District.</i></p>	
NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Field Public Opinion Survey</li> <li>✓ Analyze Survey Results &amp; Assess Feasibility</li> </ul>
JANUARY – FEBRUARY 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Present Strategic Assessment, Poll Results and Recommendations</li> <li>☐ Reach Consensus on Next Steps</li> </ul> <p><b>FOCUS ON INTERNAL FOUNDATION-BUILDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Conduct internal Stakeholder/Board Briefings and presentations</li> <li>☐ Refine Communications Plan</li> <li>☐ Recommend District Information Budget</li> <li>☐ Refine Database of external Opinion Leaders</li> <li>☐ Refine Bond Expenditure Plan with input from community survey</li> </ul>
FEB – MARCH 2012	<p><b>INITIATE UPDATES TO EXTERNAL COMMUNITY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☐ Continue internal Stakeholder meetings/briefings as needed</li> <li>☐ Issue external Opinion Leader Letter #1</li> <li>☐ Develop external Speakers' Bureau Hit list</li> <li>☐ Develop Speakers' Bureau Training Materials, Conduct Training</li> <li>☐ Issue Internal Faculty/Employee/Stakeholder E-Update</li> <li>☐ Brainstorm external Bond Advisory Committee members and issue invitations to join committee</li> <li>☐ Launch external Speakers' Bureau (District) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o The District will begin delivering presentations throughout the District to community organizations to discuss the current needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>☐ Continue to refine Bond Plan specifics</li> <li>☐ Implement Earned Media</li> <li>☐ Issue Bond Advisory Group Meeting Invitations and convene initial meeting</li> </ul>

<p>MARCH/APRIL 2012</p>	<p><b>LAUNCH BROAD-BASED EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS, CONTINUE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Convene first meeting of Bond Advisory Committee</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue external Speakers' Bureau deployment</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess email/internet databases</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Issue Internal Faculty/Employee/Stakeholder E-Update on bond planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement informational mailer #1</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement Opinion Leader letter #2</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue to refine Bond Plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement Earned Media</li> </ul>
<p>MAY/JUNE 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Community Bond Advisory Group Meeting #2</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Issue Internal Faculty/Employee/Stakeholder E-Update on bond planning</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement informational mailer #2</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continue external Speakers' Bureau outreach efforts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement Earned Media</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize Bond Plan specifics</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to draft all resolution and voter hand-book materials (June)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare for Board Presentation</li> </ul>
<p>JULY 2012</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Implement informational mailer #3 after 4<sup>th</sup> of July</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct Tracking Survey for feasibility after 4<sup>th</sup> of July, following Mailer #3</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Finalize all voter handbook materials</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct Final Community Bond Advisory Group Meeting</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> If feasible, Board acts to place Bond on November 2012 ballot</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Mail final Opinion Leader Letter</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work transfers to a non-College sponsored volunteer campaign committee for all partisan activities</li> </ul>