

Case Study



Challenge

The Consortium of Florida Education Foundations realized they had the perfect audience to engage business leaders in conversations concerning Florida K-12 education policy. Their member local education funds had over 1,000 board members state-wide who were all community leaders; many were business leaders. While these were busy people, they had a common passion in their local education foundations; they were volunteering their time and often donating personally. But how to engage them in larger state-wide issues?

Approach

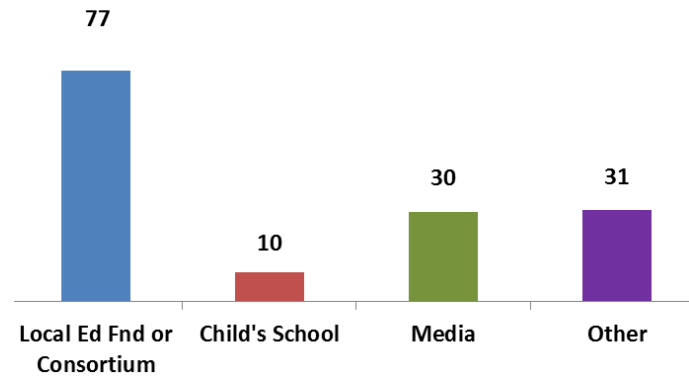
Bill Hoffman & Assoc. helped to craft an engagement strategy which relied heavily on regular topic specific surveys to capture the voices of board members. Each survey was crafted to be two way engagement. In addition to asking questions on a variety of policy issues, they pushed out updated information. This was accomplished via introductory information, links to reading materials, and the resulting survey reports. Reading links and resources were also provided for those board members who wished to delve more deeply into specific topics.

Results

Surveys were conducted over a 4 year period with consistent engagement levels by board members. A wide variety of policy issues were addressed and reported on. This was during the early introduction and initial controversies around adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) nationally. Accurate information was not widely available to community members which generated confusion over the issue. This presented an opportunity to learn how representative business leaders (board members) were getting their information, the veracity of that information, and the evolution of their opinions on CCSS.

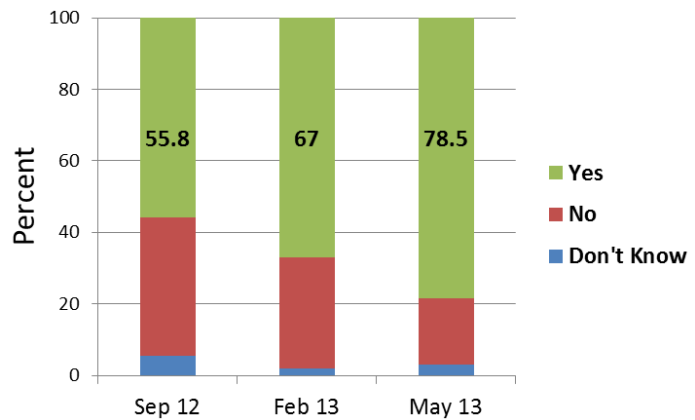
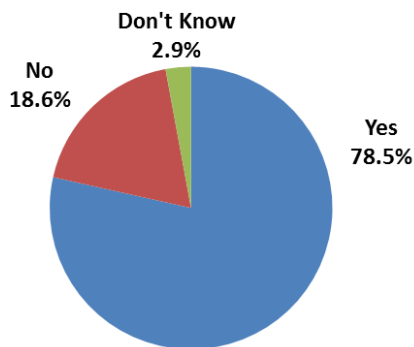
Results of the surveys indicated that the primary source of information on CCSS was their local education fund and the statewide consortium. This was encouraging in that it meant they were likely getting accurate information without the misinformation which was prevalent in the national press.

How Did You Learn of CCSS?



Further survey results compared the growth in awareness of CCSS. Additional research indicated that those who were learning about the CCSS from trusted sources were more likely to have accurate information and be more confident in advocating their opinions.

Awareness of Common Core



After early adoption of CCSS, Florida elected a new governor who brought a distrust of federal initiatives. Even though the CCSS were not a federal initiative, there was a perception that they were being pushed by the USDOE. In part due to a well informed populace and support for higher standards, Florida rolled back CCSS and adopted the Florida Standards. The Florida Standards included all the CCSS plus additional, Florida specific standards. As a result, implementation continues on these higher standards which have the ability to increase college readiness in Florida high school graduates.

Bill Hoffman & Associates, LLC is a Tampa-based consulting firm with national-level independent sector expertise in educational engagement strategies, on profit leadership transitions, and organizational and board development. Bill has senior-level nonprofit management experience in education, having been the president of one of the nation’s top K-12 education foundations; functioned as interim CEO for prominent national and state education and philanthropic associations; and led national, regional and state boards of directors. He is also an adjunct professor at National University, teaching Non-profit Leadership and Board Development. (Sample Survey Results are available upon request)