

# Community Engagement

Ensuring Stakeholder Voice is Heard  
and Set into Action

Murray Marran – Superintendent & CEO, High Prairie  
School Division

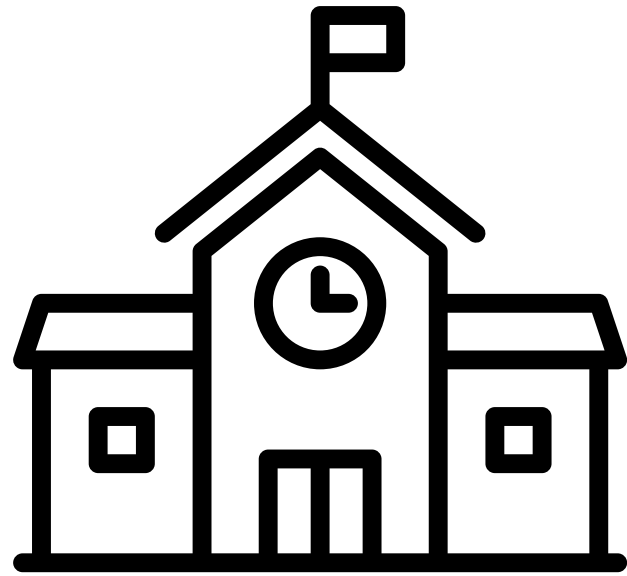
Pamela Heckbert – Deputy Superintendent, High  
Prairie School Division

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# Today's Goals:

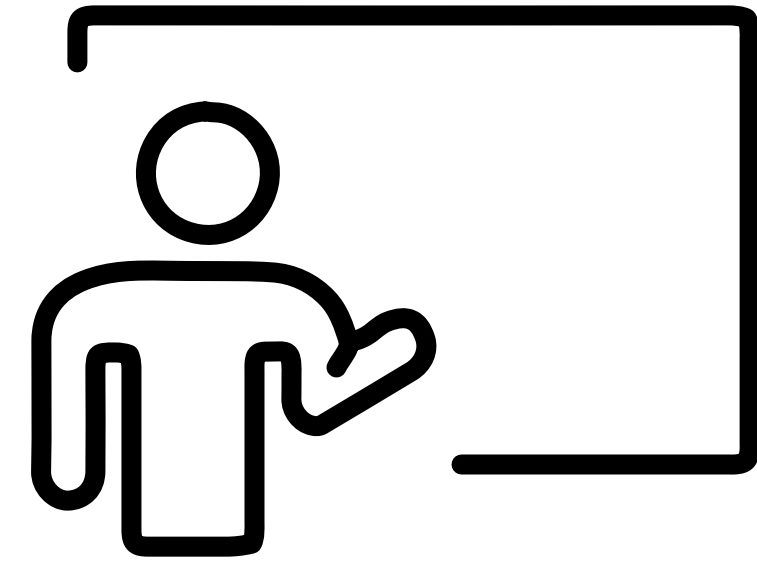
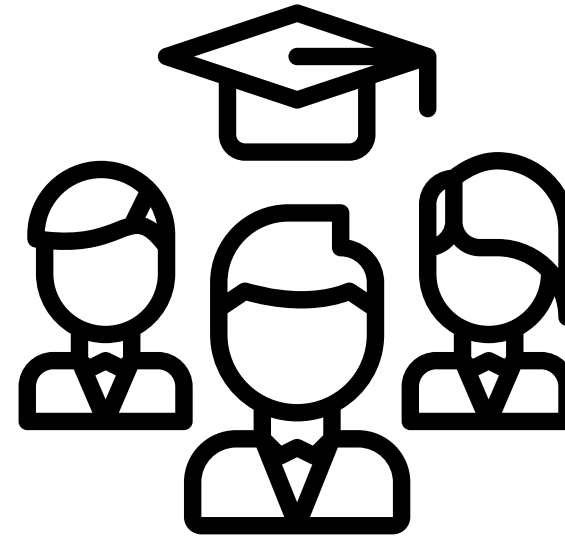
- a. Find cost effective for schools to engage with their community
- b. Remind ourselves of the need to align our engagement both with school goals and Board of Trustees priorities
- c. Understand that there are multiple ways to engage our community
- d. Begin to understand the IAP2 Community Consultation Process

# About Us

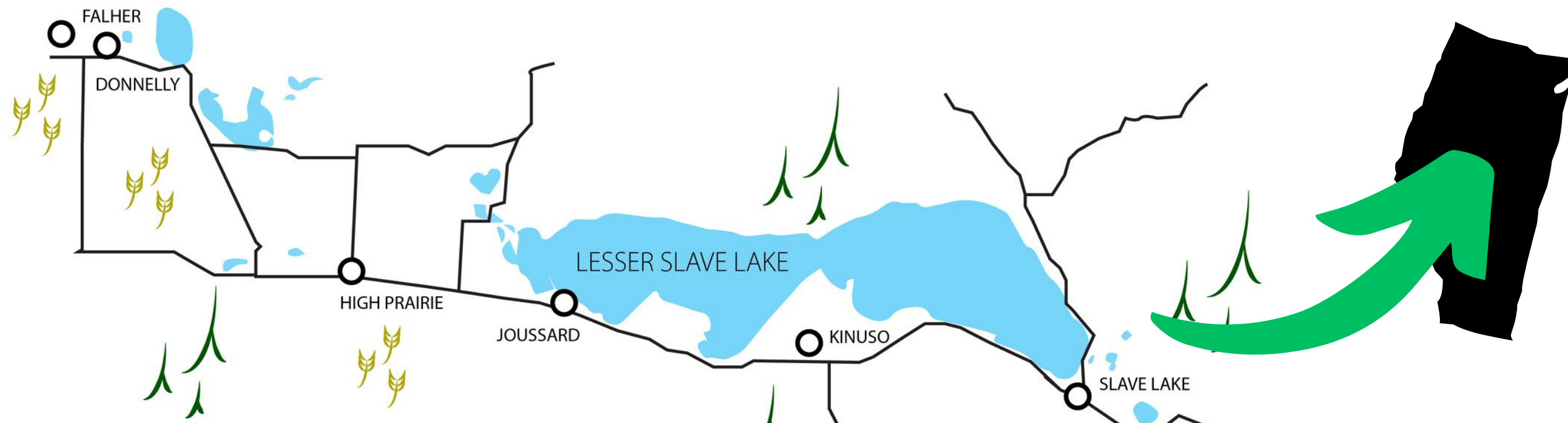


12 Schools

Approximately  
3000 Students



~500 Staff



# Our Board





# Where We Were

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(or, more aptly, where were they?)



Low  
Engagement

Targeted engagement sessions realized very low turnout.



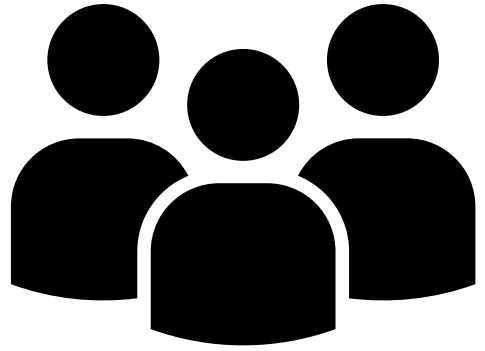
High  
Costs

Costs were very high, more so when looked at on a per person basis.



Limited Data  
and Results

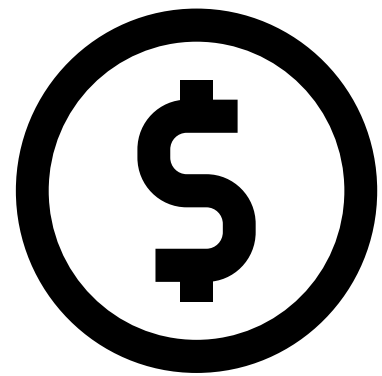
Low attendance garnered limited data and results.



~10-15 people/session/year

## What we tried:

- Newspaper ads
- Radio ads
- Theatre ads
- Emails
- Phone calls
- Text messages
- Door prizes
- Food
- Child care
- Social media
- Website posts
- Flyers
- Posters
- Begging and pleading



**\$3,000 - \$4,000/session**

### **What we bought:**

- Meals for attendees
- Door prizes
- Event facilitators
- Honorariums
- Advertising
- Staffing for group facilitators and recorders
- Travel and subsistence
- Swag
- Stationary/supplies



# Limited engagement/data

## What we gleaned:

- **Low engagement:**
  - large groups left 1 -2
  - voices dominating
  - conversation
- **Apathy:** attendees
  - often provided
  - limited feedback
  - with no depth
- **Information deficit:**
  - apathy and limited
  - sharing = little to no
  - direction



# Board Direction: Reboot the system

1

Meet and exceed the Alberta Education directive to provide assurance with the education system.

2

Build relationships within our school communities to foster openness and participation.

3


Drive positive change in the Division to address the concerns of stakeholders and improve learner success.





# IAP2 training to guide our process:

[www.iap2canada.ca](http://www.iap2canada.ca)

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION 					
	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

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# Table Activity:

At your table (10 mins or so) discuss both your Division's strategic goals or board priorities and your individual school's goals outlined in your school's Education Plan

# What We Did (and how we did it)

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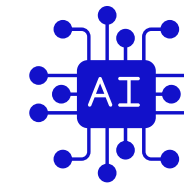
## Targeted Questions

Questions were designed to directly inform strategic planning.



## Focus Groups

Small groups of stakeholders over multiple engagement sessions.



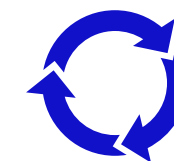
## Artificial Intelligence

Use of AI to record and transcribe focus group dialogue.



## Short Surveys

One-question survey to all parents and all staff via email.



## Closing the Loop

Results and actions taken from engagement sessions shared with all stakeholders.



# Targeted Questions

## Refine, focus, target:

- Refined questions that are clear and can provide meaningful and actionable responses.
- Questions are focused on upcoming strategic planning and trends/concerns in the community.
- Targeted questions from the broad to the narrow.



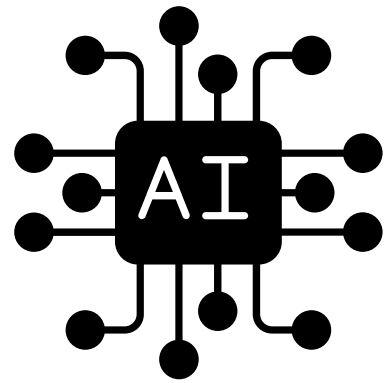


# Focus Groups

## Elevating the voices:

- Small groups of ~6 people per session.
- Limited number of Division staff (we shouldn't outnumber the participants).
- Sessions in every ward in evenings and weekends to accommodate parents.





# Artificial Intelligence

## Resistance is futile:

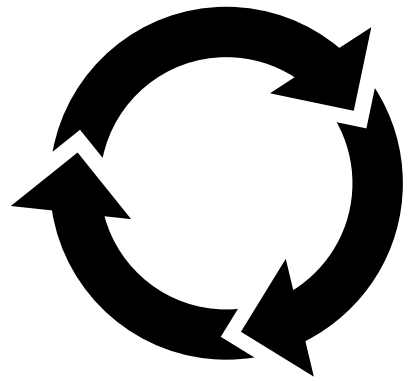
- Using AI to record, transcribe and summarize sessions (Otter.ai).
- Eliminates compounding expenses from former sessions/staffing.
- Provides Trustees with an unbiased summary and a full transcription for reference.



## Short Surveys

Please take a moment to fill out this short survey:

- One question to ask how we could improve our Division.
- Provides those who did not attend any sessions an opportunity to voice concerns.
- Data drives future engagement and emergent trends.



## Closing the Loop

Yes, we did something with what you told us:

- Data directly informed strategic planning –a nice gift to give to your Superintendent 😊
- Letters to all session participants thanking them for their feedback. Demonstrating how their feedback shaped our actions
- Sharing our new Mission, Vision, and Value statements with stakeholders.



## REVISED MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUE STATEMENTS

The High Prairie School Division Board of Trustees has revised the mission and vision statements and core values for the Division. Trustees revised the statements at their strategic planning session using the feedback from everyone who attended one of the engagement sessions at our schools and the responses from our school/division improvement survey. Using this information, they were able to develop the following:

### MISSION

To inspire, lead, and empower success through accountability and resilience, creating a culture of lifelong learning.

### VISION

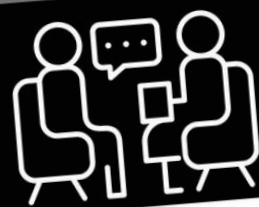
High Prairie School Division will inspire students to learn, lead, and succeed in an ever-changing world.

### CORE VALUES (C-L-E-A-R)

- **Community and Accountability:** Fostering a strong school community where accountability is key.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Creating environments that encourage continuous learning and personal growth and potential.
- **Ethics:** Integrity guides our actions and decisions.
- **Appreciation of Differences:** Cultivating a community that respects and values unique contributions.
- **Resilience:** Embodying strength, adaptability, and conviction, remaining committed to the education and well-being of our school community.



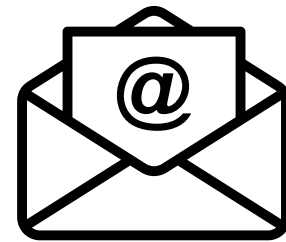
**301**  
SURVEY  
RESPONSES



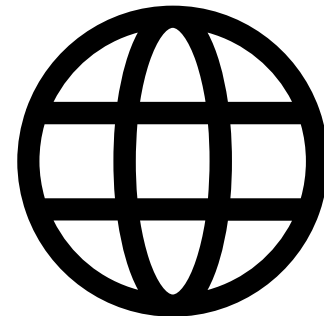
**13**  
ENGAGEMENT  
SESSIONS

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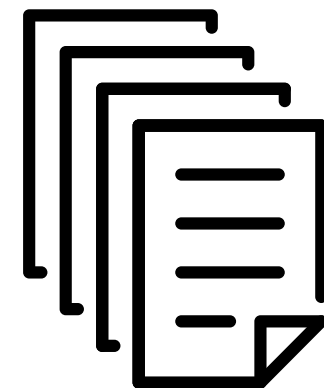
April 2024



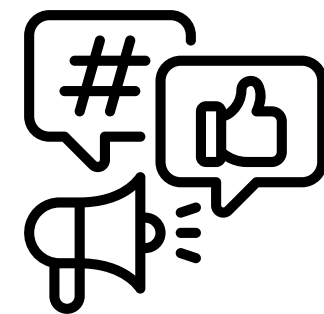
Email



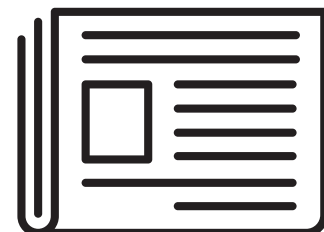
Website



Print



Social Media



Newspaper

1





# FAMILY COMMITMENT STATEMENT

## Rationale



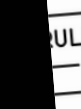



At our Division, we believe that education is a partnership between students, parents or guardians, teachers, and the community. A welcoming, caring, respectful, and safe environment is the foundation for learning and personal growth. This Family Commitment Statement outlines the responsibilities for students and parents in fostering a positive school experience where everyone can succeed.

During our community consultation process in the 2023/2024 school year, our stakeholders overwhelmingly told us that as a community we revisit accountability for school divisions and their employees, but also students and families needed to be part of this accountability process. We reflected this sentiment in the rewriting of our Vision, Mission and Core Values. We now kindly ask students, parents and guardians to join us in this partnership.

**The Education Act (Sections 31 and 32) outlines what student and parent responsibilities are. Our Family Commitment Statement is based on this legislation.**

## Family Commitments

Families play a vital role in a student's success. Both students and parents share responsibilities that contribute to a positive learning environment. By committing, as a family, to these principles, we strengthen the partnership between home and school. These commitments include:

-  **Encouraging your child to attend school regularly:** We know the importance of attendance. You have to be present to learn.
-  **Contributing to the School Community:** Encourage your child to positively contribute to their school community. This could include being a reading buddy or any other helpful role that your child can think of!
-  **Following School Rules:** Support school rules and teachers when speaking with your children. However, feel free to speak about the rules to your child's Teacher and/or your School Administrator.
-  **Respecting Others:** Children learn social behaviour. If we treat our peers aggressively, so will our children. If we show kindness and understanding, they will, too!
-  **Preventing Bullying:** Actively work to prevent, report and not tolerate bullying, both in-person and online. Most bullies have learned bullying outside of school.
-  **Cooperating with Staff:** Work with school staff to support your child's learning and any additional services they may need. Understand we are trying to help.

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September 2024

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# FAMILY COMMITMENT STATEMENT

## Accountability and Actions for Non-Compliance

Our Division believes in mutual accountability between families and the school community to foster a positive learning environment. While we understand that challenges may arise, it is essential that all families adhere to the commitments outlined in this statement to ensure the success and well-being of every student.

In cases where a family is not meeting the commitments, the following steps will be taken to address the situation:

### 1. Designated Contact Person

If a family is found to be consistently non-compliant with their commitments, a single point of contact will be assigned within the school or Division. All further communication between the family and the Division regarding these concerns must go through this designated individual. This step is taken to ensure a structured and consistent approach in resolving the issues and to provide clarity for both the family and school staff.



### 2. Prescribed Methods of Communication

To ensure that communication remains focused and productive, the Division will prescribe specific methods of communication that the family must use when interacting with the designated contact person.

Failure to adhere to these communication protocols may result in further action.



### 3. Escalation of Concerns

If non-compliance continues after the above steps have been implemented, the matter may be escalated

### 4. Rebuilding the Partnership

The Division's primary goal is to restore a positive and collaborative relationship between families and the Division. As part of this process, a resolution plan may be developed in partnership with the family to support their adherence to the Family Commitments and ensure the student's continued success.



September 2024

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# What We Learned

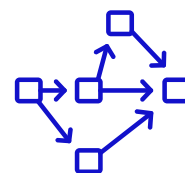
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(we didn't know everything)



**Small groups =  
big results**

Parents' voice was loud and clear - they felt comfortable to share in small groups.



**Vary engagement  
styles**

Keep trying new ways to reach your audience. Adapt to adversity.



**Reminders are  
necessary**

Sending reminders (and the questions) are a must.



**Cost  
Savings**

Fewer tax dollars spent to achieve greater results.





Small groups =  
big results

### Small pebble, big ripples:

- Focus groups allow for each voice to be heard.
- Parents provided more thoughtful feedback (they brought notes!).
- Themes emerged across the Division and were echoed in the survey.

# Survey says...

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## Alberta Education

### Assurance Survey Results

**INCREASED!**

Parental involvement measure details (Percentage of teachers and parents satisfied with parental involvement in decisions about their child's education) the highest they've been since 2020.

**4% Increase**

**Parent rating:**

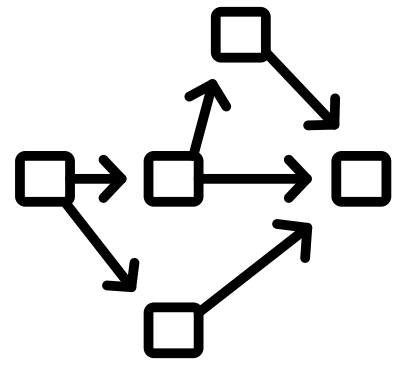
**Excellent**



## Reminders are necessary

### Anyone can be a Forgetful Jones:

- Even with an RSVP and an email, send a reminder the week of the session.
- Include the full set of questions in the reminder. It keeps conversation focused.



## Vary engagement styles

People change. So must our strategies.

- What worked before, may not now.
- This year, we added online town hall - style meetings.
- Surveys, in -person, virtual, and more (look at IAP2 engagement options).



## Cost Savings

### Show me the savings:

- Fewer staff members = less travel and subsistence, overtime, etc.
- No elaborate engagement evening meals.
- Less consumables (swag, door prizes, etc.) with better results.

**From \$3,000 - \$4,000 for 1 session to \$1,500 for 13**



# 2024 ASBA Community Engagement Award

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# QUESTIONS?

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