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**PONCA CITIZENS GROUP INNOVATES WITH A WEBSITE:  
HOW TO BEAT A BOND ISSUE BEFORE IT REALLY GETS STARTED**

A group of voters and taxpayers in Ponca, Neb., on the northeast tip of the state, have created their own website with information on a school spending ballot measure they believe is coming but which they don't support.

Come see: [www.abcscommittee.org](http://www.abcscommittee.org)

The group reports that the last attempted bond issue in Ponca would have cost taxpayers \$51,000 per student, compared to an average in comparable Midwestern districts of around \$20,000. The district has sustained some declining enrollment, dropping to 193 students in Grades 7-12 this school year, according to district figures. In response to these factors, the group is calling for other strategies, including consolidating with two other small nearby districts, rather than strapping taxpayers with a \$10 million debt they don't feel is necessary to still provide kids with a quality education.

You have to commend them for their common-sense approach to community involvement. All you really have to do to drive a better dialog about school spending is to create a new website – an inexpensive move – and supply people with the facts instead of the self-interested schmooze so often dished out by the educrats, and at taxpayer expense to boot.

How one could wish such a simple defense maneuver had been in place when the Omaha Public Schools was seeking its \$254 million bond issue a few years ago, and Westside was running all those tax-lid levy override elections. Perhaps this is a precursor to future bond battles in which, for once, taxpayers and voters will have a fighting chance in the propaganda war.

Ponca is in between bonds right now; the last one lost, and the next one is in the "community discussion" stage.

It's no surprise, but quite a delight, to learn that Paul R. Dorr of Ocheyedan, Iowa, who was a consultant to a similar citizens' group on the successful opposition to the subsequent \$100 million bond proposal by the Omaha Public Schools a few years ago, is advising the Ponca group.

Dorr can be contacted at (712) 758-3660. He does a fabulous job.

Here's a quote he gives in public speeches; people come up to him afterwards and remark, "How can people NOT hire you after hearing this?"

**The Public School Monopoly**

by Erminie King Wright

"Whenever more pressure is needed than a school board can exert to provide a huge sum for an extravagant building program, the school administration organizes and trains a 'Citizens Committee' composed of prominent but naïve citizens. This committee does the bidding of the school administration (under gentle guidance, of course) in making speeches and otherwise coercing an unsuspecting public into approving such bonded indebtedness as the schoolmen want. This has been a standard and nationwide procedure since 1950, and the indebtedness of every local government bears witness to the success of the carefully devised system. The local news media always lends full support, free of charge: and against these cooperating pressures the unorganized taxpayers do not have a chance!"

Well, that could change, if more Poncas and Paul Dorrs get crackin'.

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