

Community Survey Results

Columbus School District

Fall 2019

SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

Our mission is to help educational leaders gather, organize and use data to make strategic decisions.

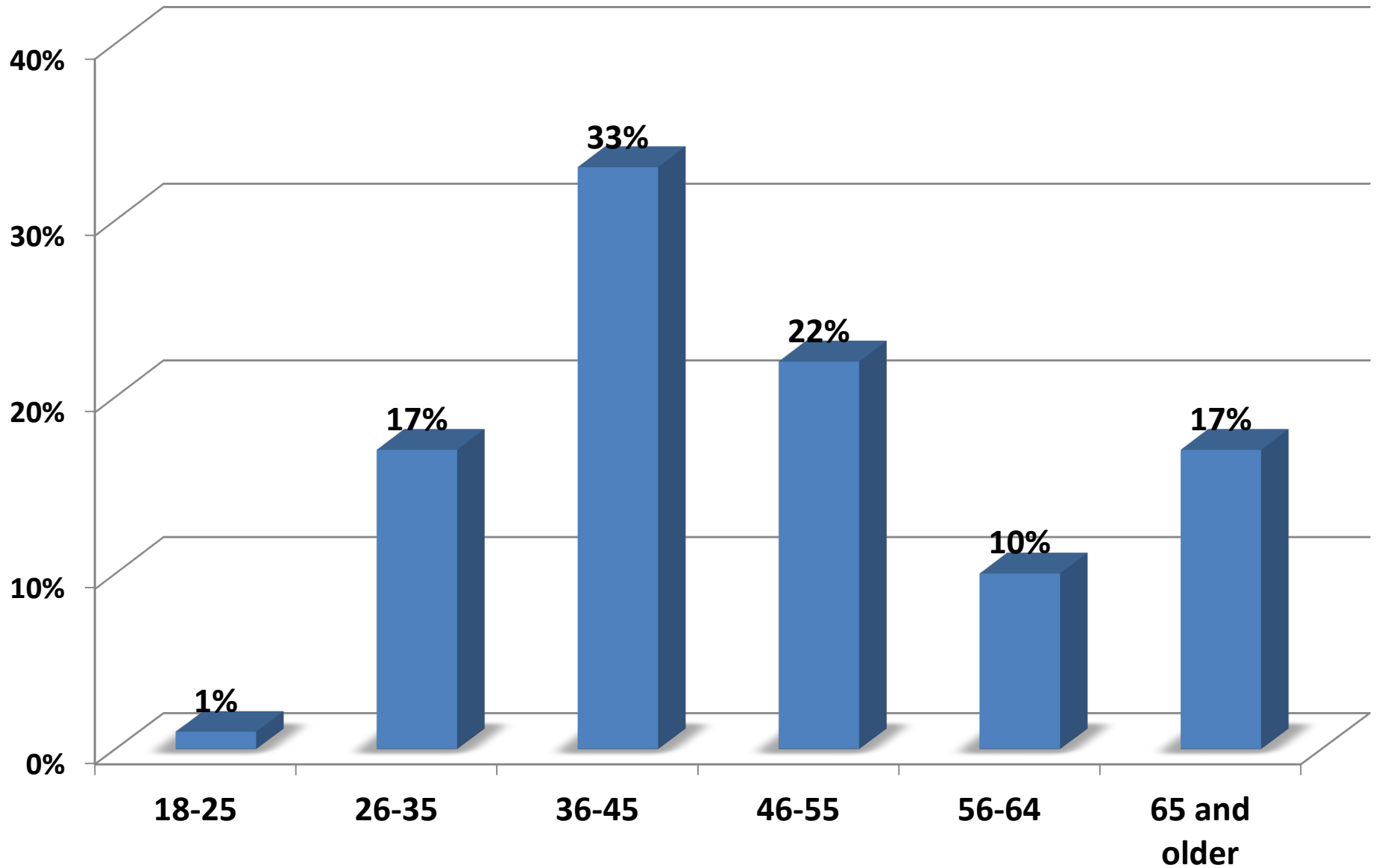
- Founded in 2002 to provide independent and unbiased research
- Conducted over 10,000 surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than 600 districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Summary

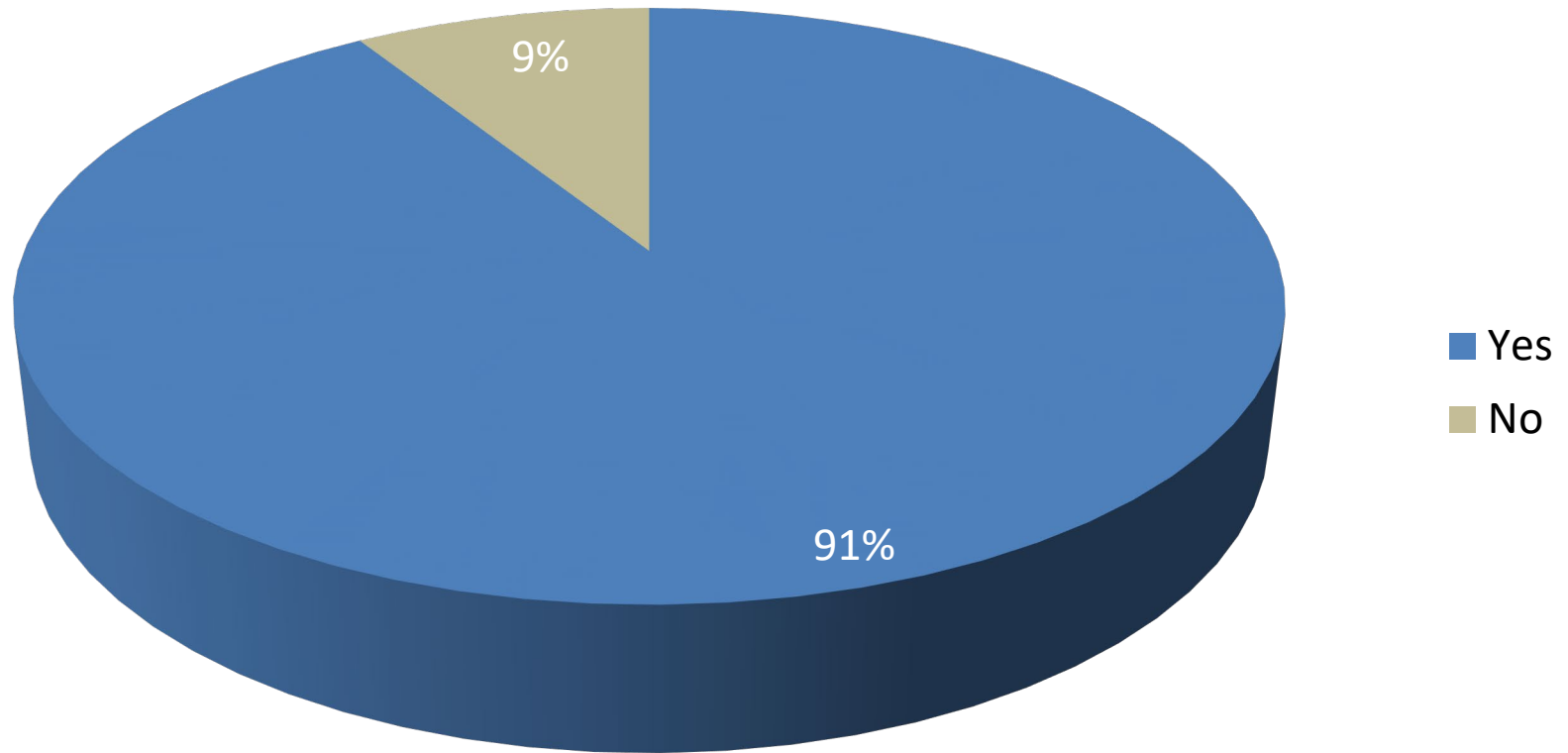
- The survey was conducted in October of 2019.
- Residents within the District were mailed a paper survey. Each survey included a unique survey access code for those who preferred to take the survey online.
- Total responses = 873 (202 paper)
- Participation rate = 24%
- Margin of error = +/- 3.4%

Respondent Information

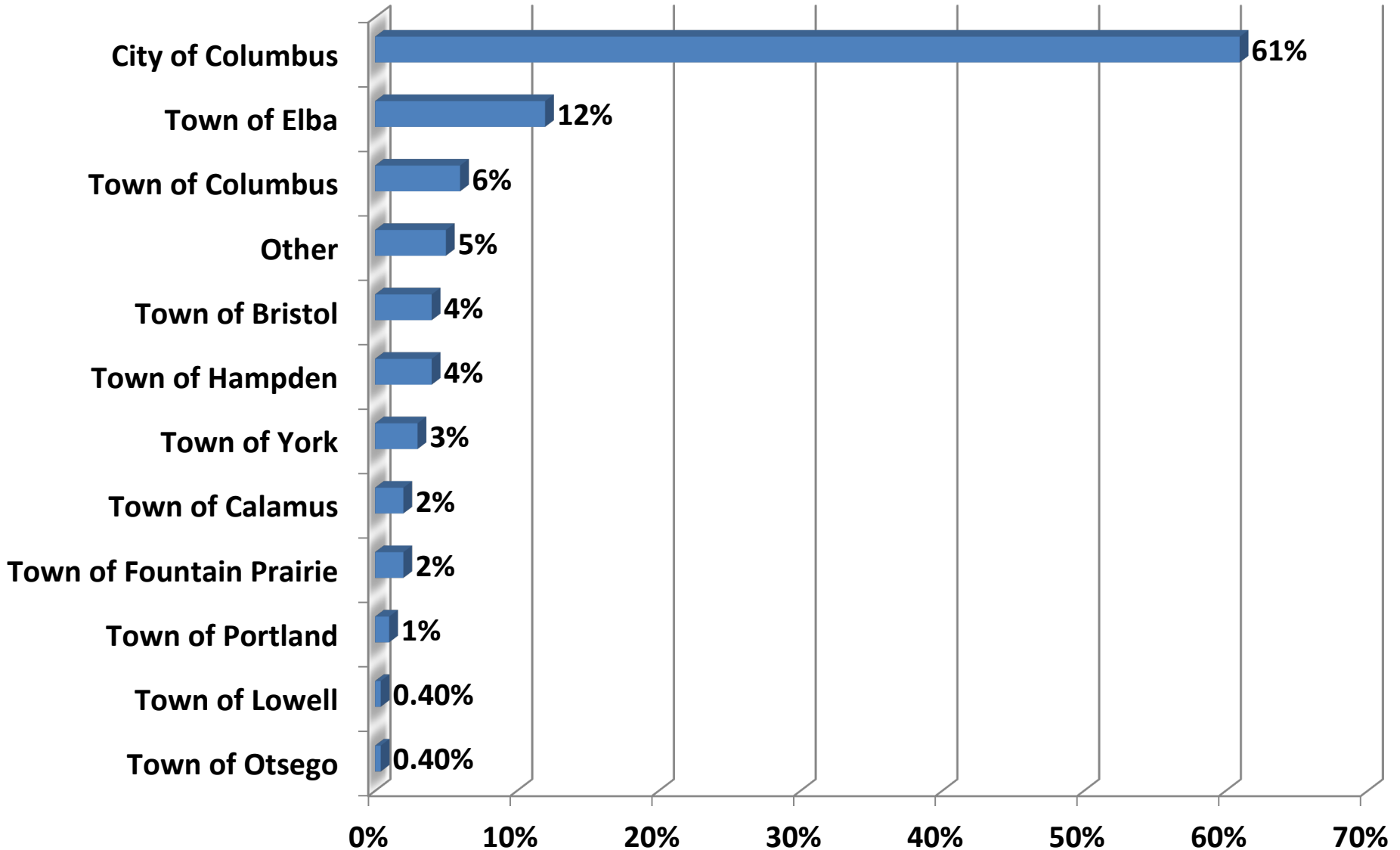
What is your age?



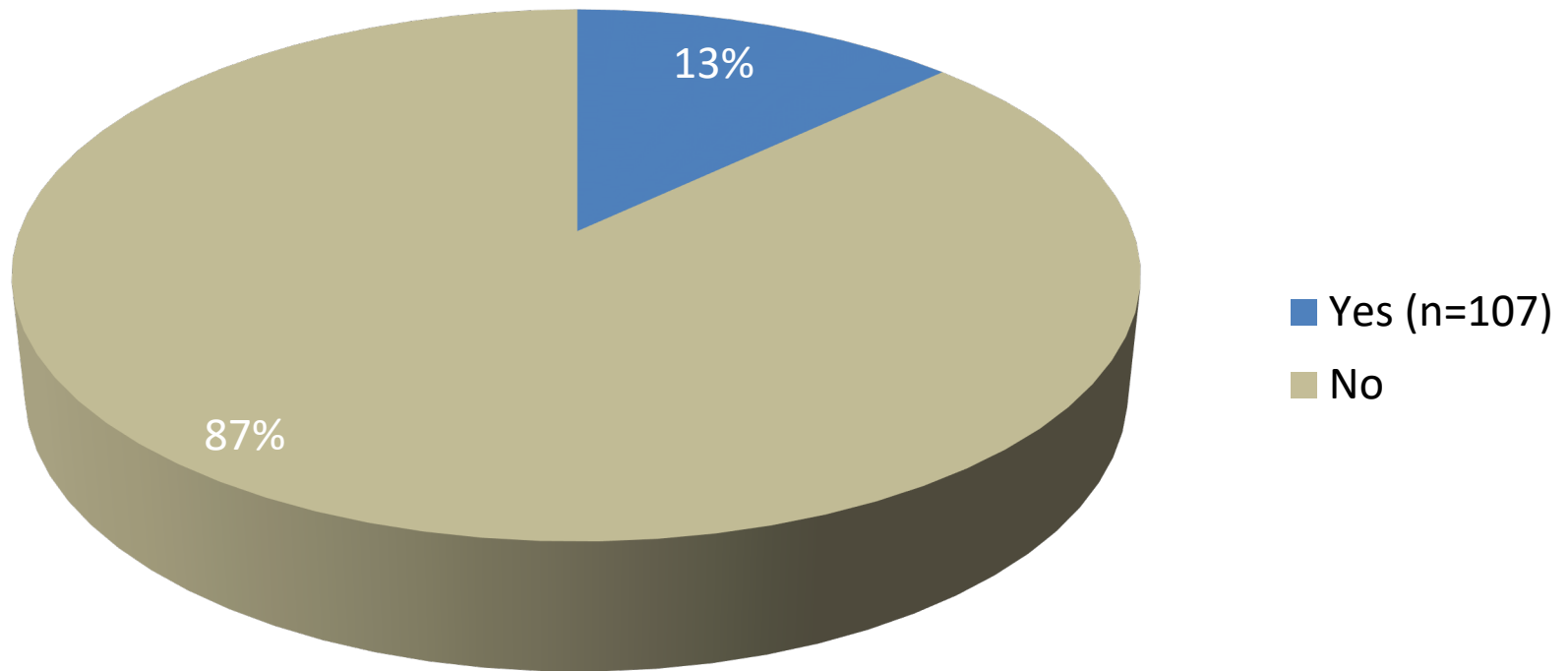
Is this your primary residence in the Columbus School District?



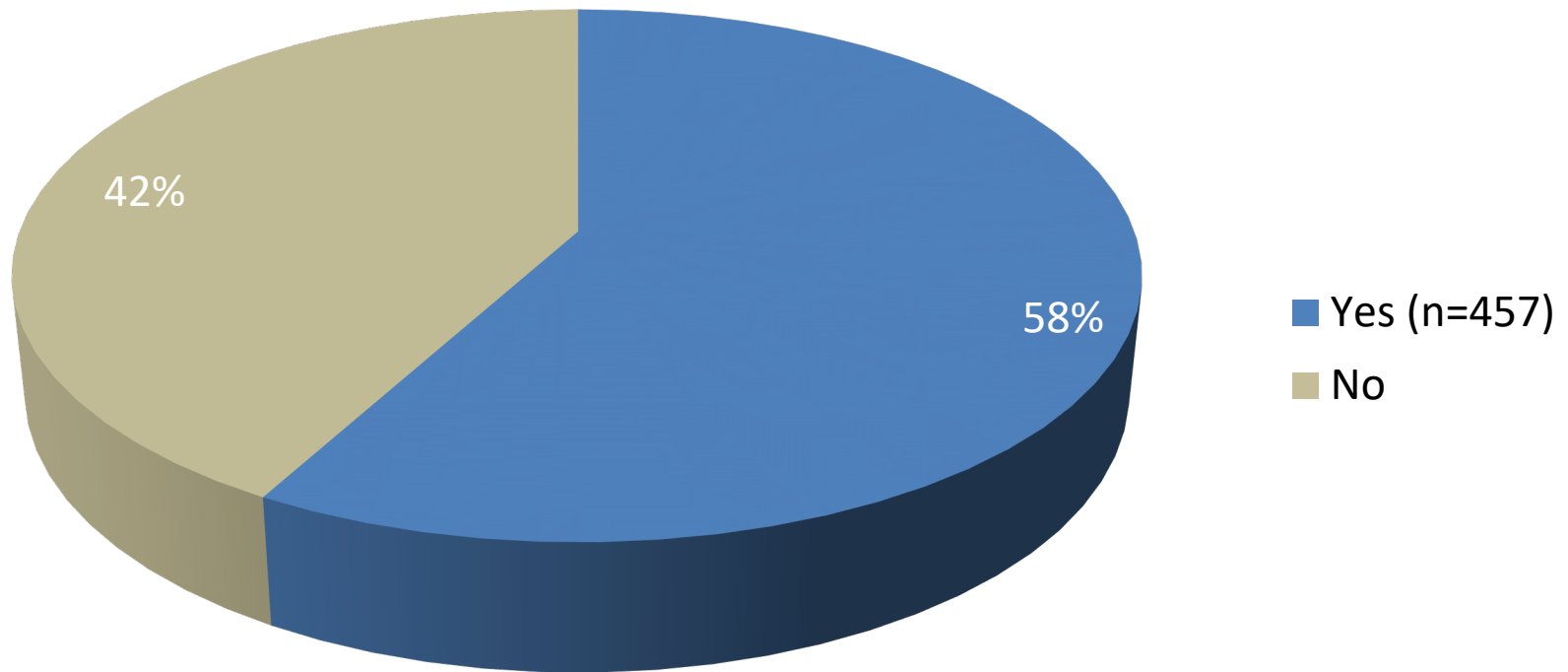
In which municipality do you reside?



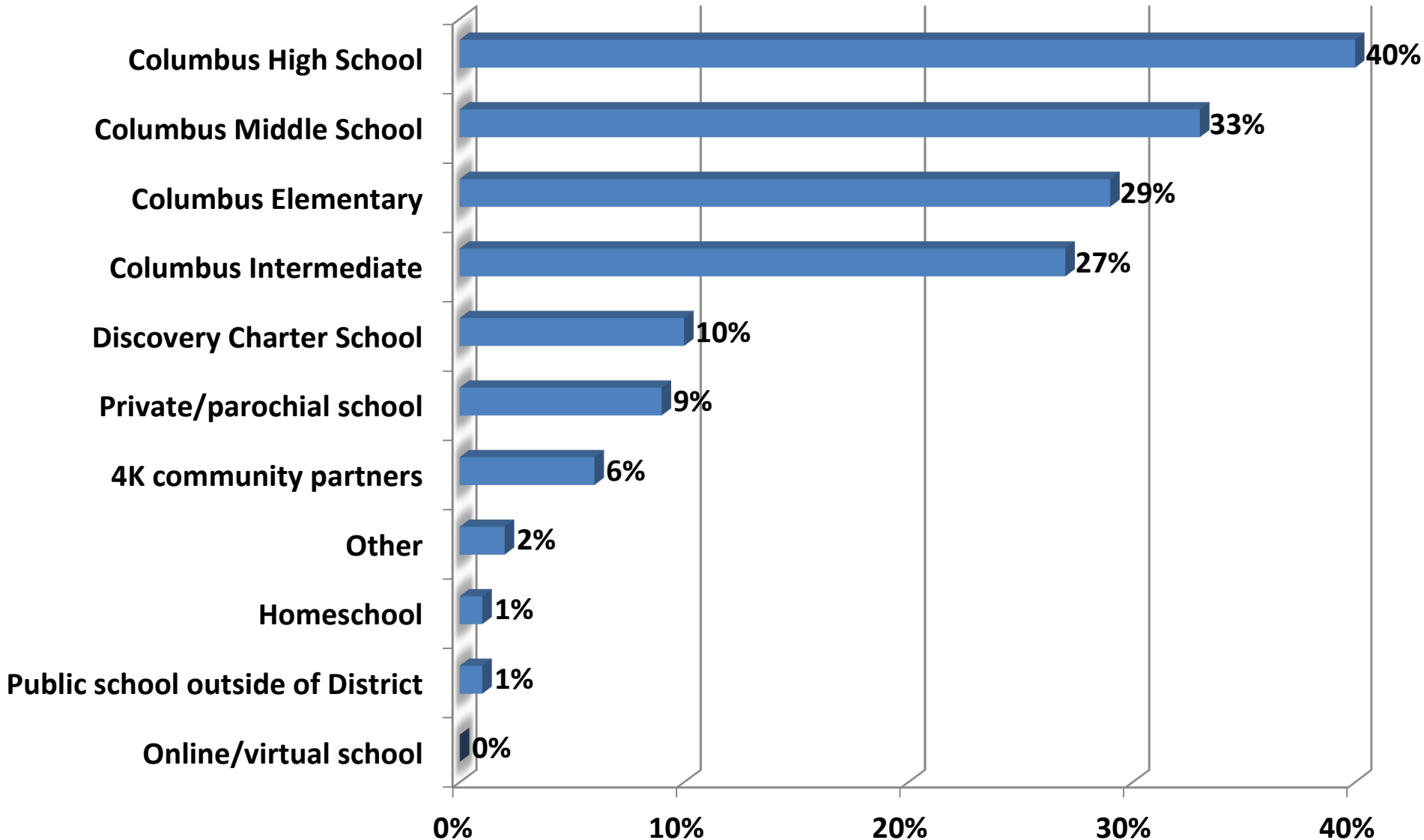
Are you an employee of the Columbus School District?



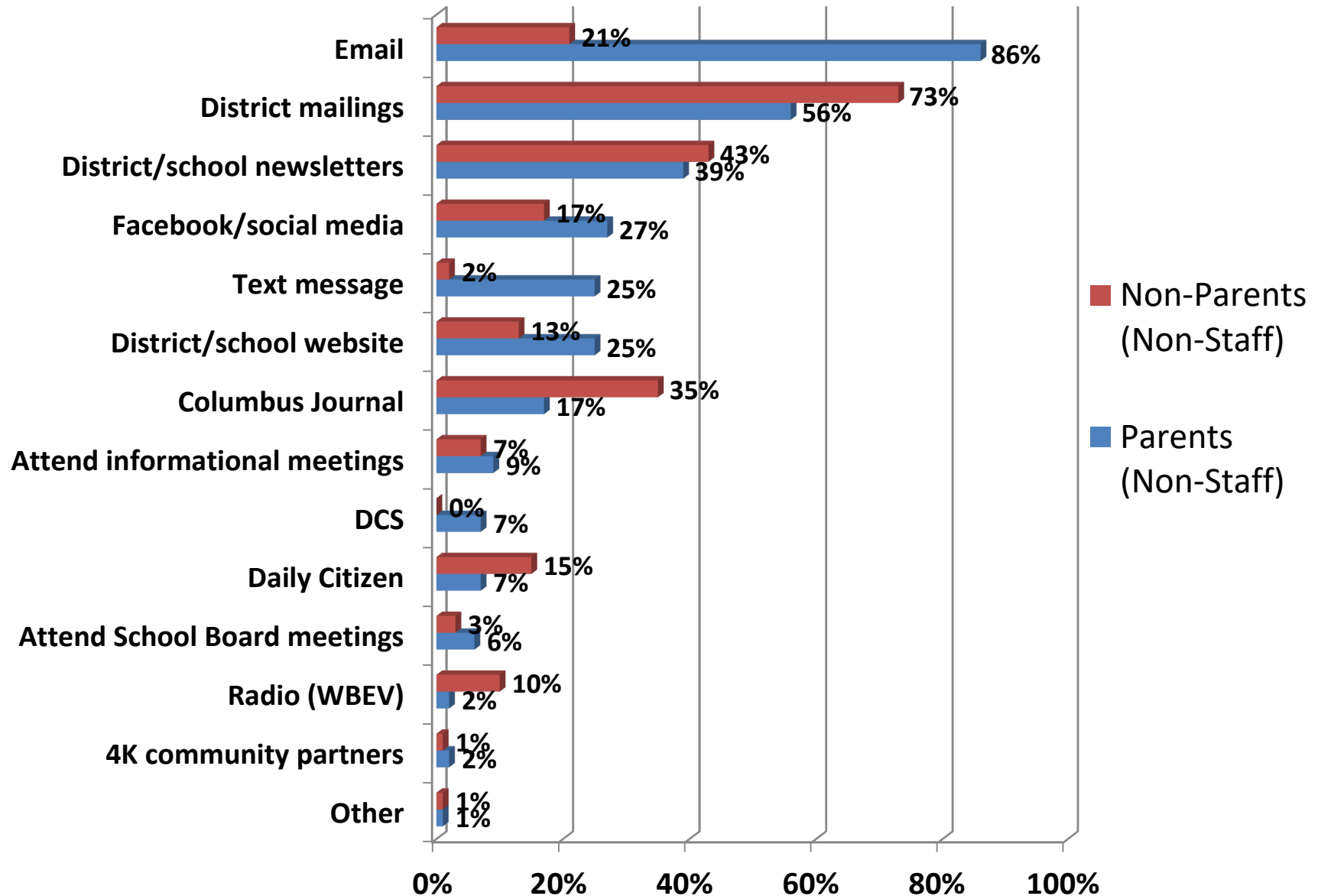
Do you have children attending school in the Columbus School District?



If you have school-aged children, what school(s) do they attend?



How do you like to receive information regarding the Columbus School District?



Planning Background

Bray Architects completed a Facilities Audit in spring 2019, which evaluated the condition of each school, building capacity and educational space adequacy. To read the entire review, please visit www.columbus.k12.wi.us.

During the past six months, the CFAC held eight meetings, totaling more than 22 hours, to review the audit, verify needs and explore long-term solutions that address:

ENROLLMENT GROWTH

- Between 2011 and 2018, the District's student population increased by 17% and currently serves more than 1,300 students.
- Enrollment is projected to grow by another 150 students in the next three years.
- Last year, due to a space shortage at the elementary school, the District moved the 3rd grade to the intermediate/middle school. *Note: 3rd grade at Discovery Charter School remained at the elementary school.*

AGING BUILDINGS

The District recently began updating building systems and roofs at all three schools. Significant progress has been made, but the following needs still exist:

- Upgrade plumbing system components, including piping, valves, bathroom fixtures and hot water systems.
- Improve electrical systems, including expanding interior and exterior emergency lighting, replacing old panels and new lighting.
- Continue replacement of aging heating and ventilation equipment.
- Replace ceilings, flooring and cabinetry that have outlived their useful life.
- Continue replacement of exterior doors and frames that are rusting out
- Make Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) improvements.

EDUCATIONAL INADEQUACIES

Many classrooms lack the flexibility needed for both large- and small-group instruction as well as project-based learning. Renovating the Science and Technical Education classrooms and labs at the intermediate/middle and high schools will provide better hands-on learning opportunities.

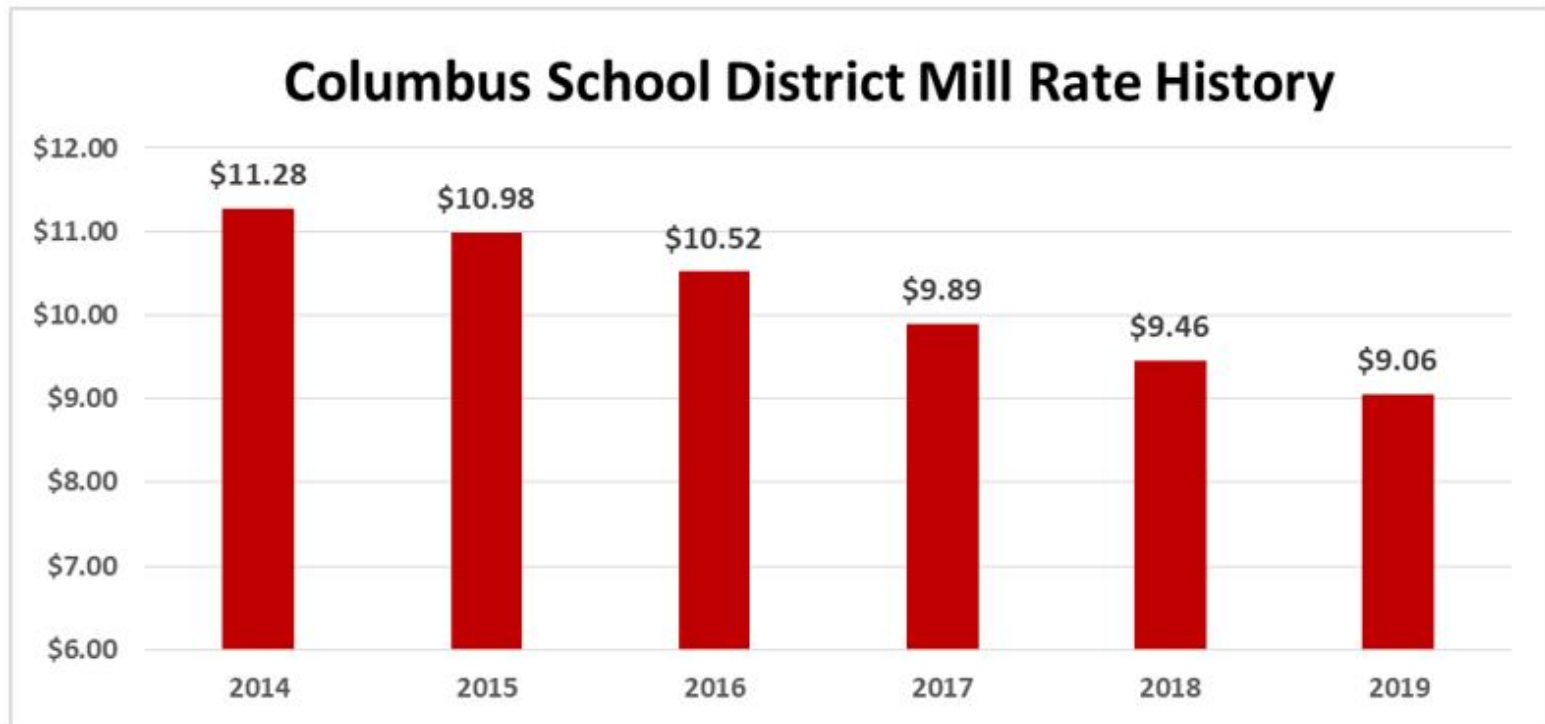
LACK OF ATHLETIC AND PERFORMANCE SPACE

Additional gym space and upgraded locker rooms are needed to meet the demands of physical education classes as well as District and community athletics. In addition, the District currently uses city-owned fields for football, tennis, baseball and softball.

An auditorium is needed to provide dedicated space for fine arts performances, large-group activities and presentations for both the District and community.

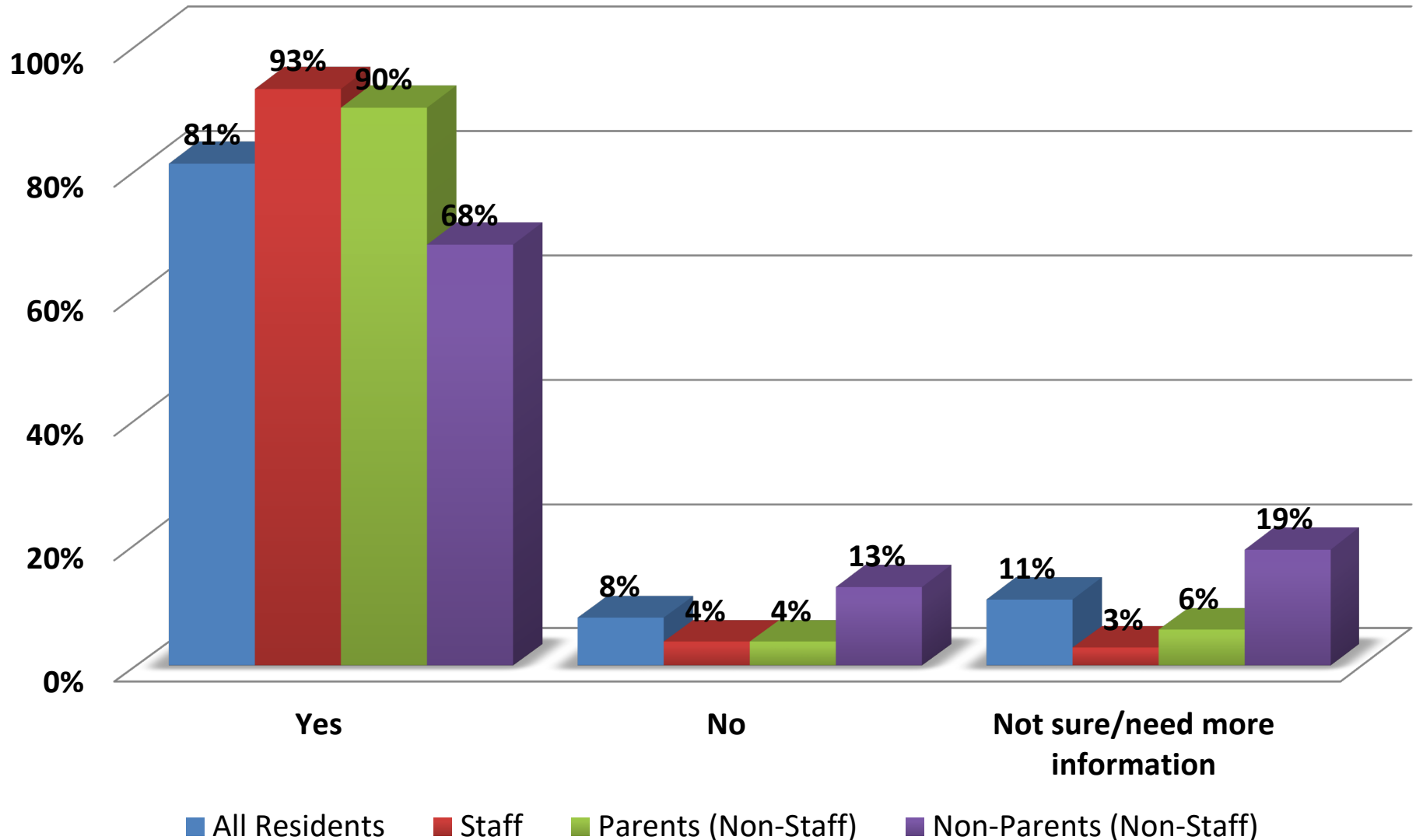
FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Columbus School District is committed to being a good steward of taxpayers' dollars. **Since 2014, the District's mill rate, which is used to calculate property taxes, has decreased by \$2.22 (i.e., \$222 per \$100,000 of property value).** This is the result of not only the completion of payments on past referendum debt, but also a commitment to controlling costs, while still providing high-quality programs and services for our students.



Would you support the District exploring a referendum to update our facilities?

(Columbus School District Residents Only)



Columbus Intermediate/ Middle School

Columbus Intermediate/Middle School was originally built as two separate buildings. In 1964, the two schools were connected by an addition. Over the years, as a space shortage arose at our elementary schools, 4th and 5th grade students were moved into the intermediate/ middle school. Last year, the space shortage required 3rd grade students to also be moved to the school.

Note: 3rd grade at Discovery Charter School remained at the elementary school.



Although the intermediate/middle school has served the District well, portions of the school are more than 100 years old. A significant investment would be needed to address the following issues:

- The main entrance needs to be redesigned to better control visitor access.
- Classroom floors, lighting, ceilings and cabinetry are in need of replacement.
- Cracks in the building exterior require repair.
- Areas of the school do not meet current Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) code requirements.
- Building system components (heating, electrical, plumbing, etc.) need replacement.
- Classrooms and labs designed for hands-on learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Agriculture and Math (STEAM) are needed.
- The gymnasium and cafeteria are outdated and too small to meet school and community needs.

Because of the age and number of expansions, the school is a maze of hallways, creating student circulation issues and inefficient space utilization. Given the large number of load-bearing walls, remodeling options are limited and expensive.

Some community members feel the intermediate/middle school should be updated and maintained, while others don't believe it makes sense to continue to invest in this building.

In order to close this school, several investments would be needed, that could be done in phases over time, to:

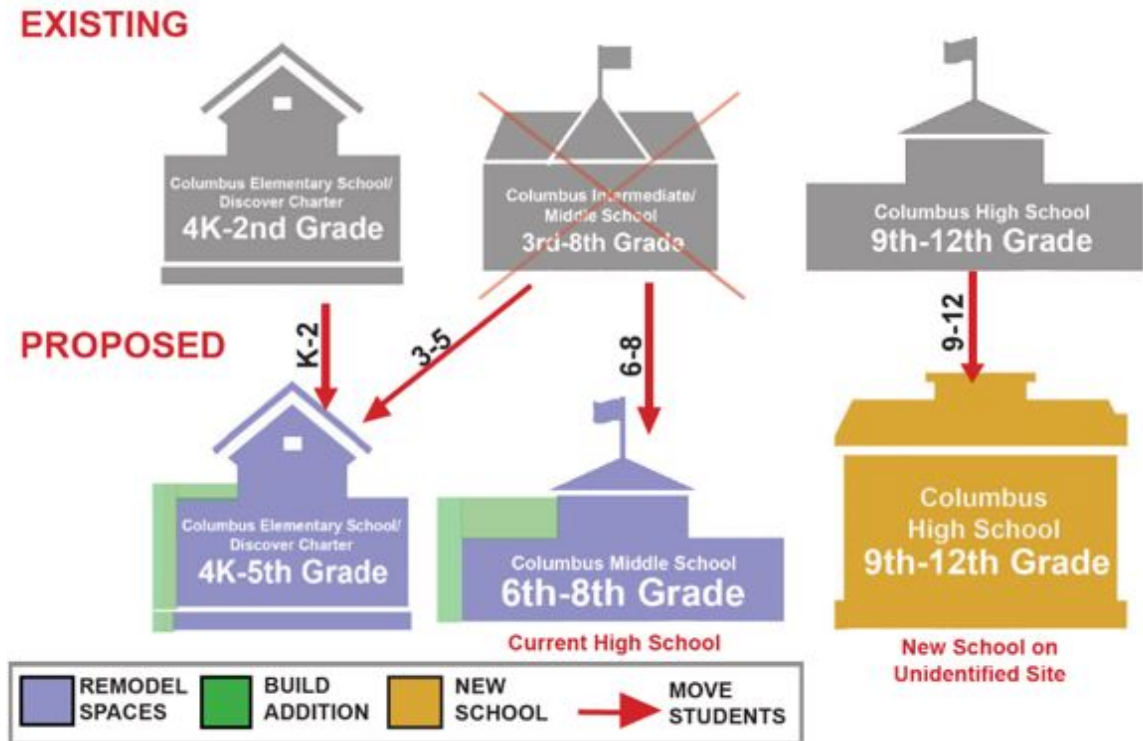
- **Update/add classrooms at Columbus Elementary to serve kindergarten-5th grade**

Est. cost: \$17.5 million

- **Build a new high school** *Est. cost \$39 million*

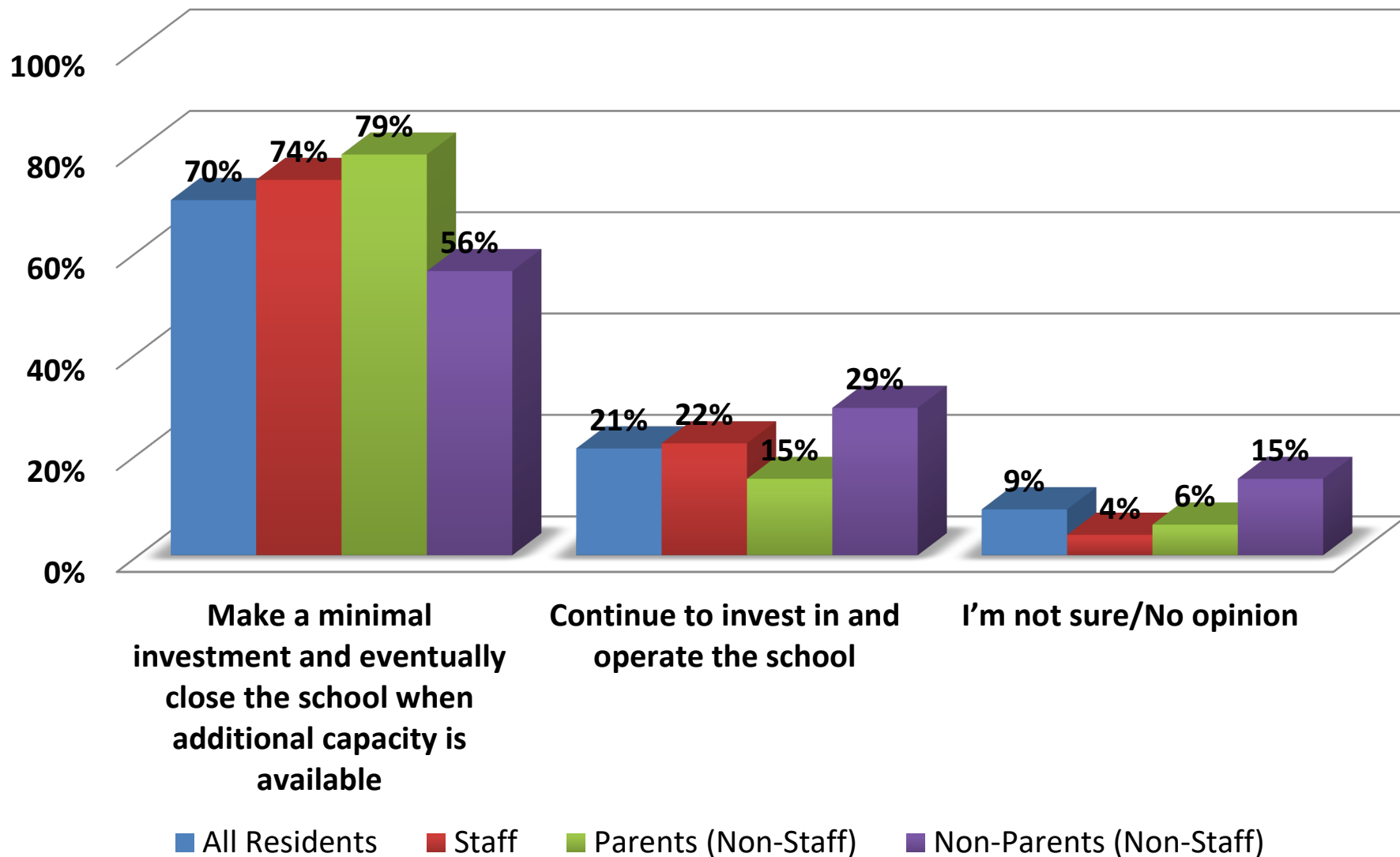
- **Convert the existing high school into a middle school to serve 6-8th grade**

Est. cost: \$8.4 million



In general, what advice would you give regarding Columbus Intermediate/Middle School?

(Columbus School District Residents Only)



What priorities would you place on the following projects at Columbus Intermediate/Middle School?

High (3), Medium (2), Low (1)

Item	All Residents	Staff Residents	Parent Residents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)
Update building systems (heating, electrical, plumbing, etc.) - up to \$2.3 million	2.26	2.33	2.29	2.21
Create a more safe and secure main entrance - \$353,000	2.19	2.09	2.30	2.06
Update existing classrooms and science labs - \$1.2 million	2.17	2.19	2.26	2.04
Repair interior/exterior and address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility - up to \$4.7 million	2.15	2.45	2.20	2.02
Add flexible project/hands-on learning space for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art/Agriculture and Math (STEAM) - \$1.2 million	2.15	1.96	2.26	2.02
Expand cafeteria seating and serving areas - \$137,000	1.95	2.12	2.03	1.81
Improve/expand physical education space (gym and weight room) - \$271,000	1.80	1.98	1.93	1.59

Columbus Elementary/ Discovery Charter School

Columbus Elementary School was built in 1952 to serve students in kindergarten through 5th grade. The school was expanded and renovated in 1995 and 2000. Currently, the school is only large enough to serve kindergarten through 2nd grade, Discovery Charter School and some of the District's pre-kindergarten students.

In addition to the space shortage, the Facilities Audit identified the following issues:

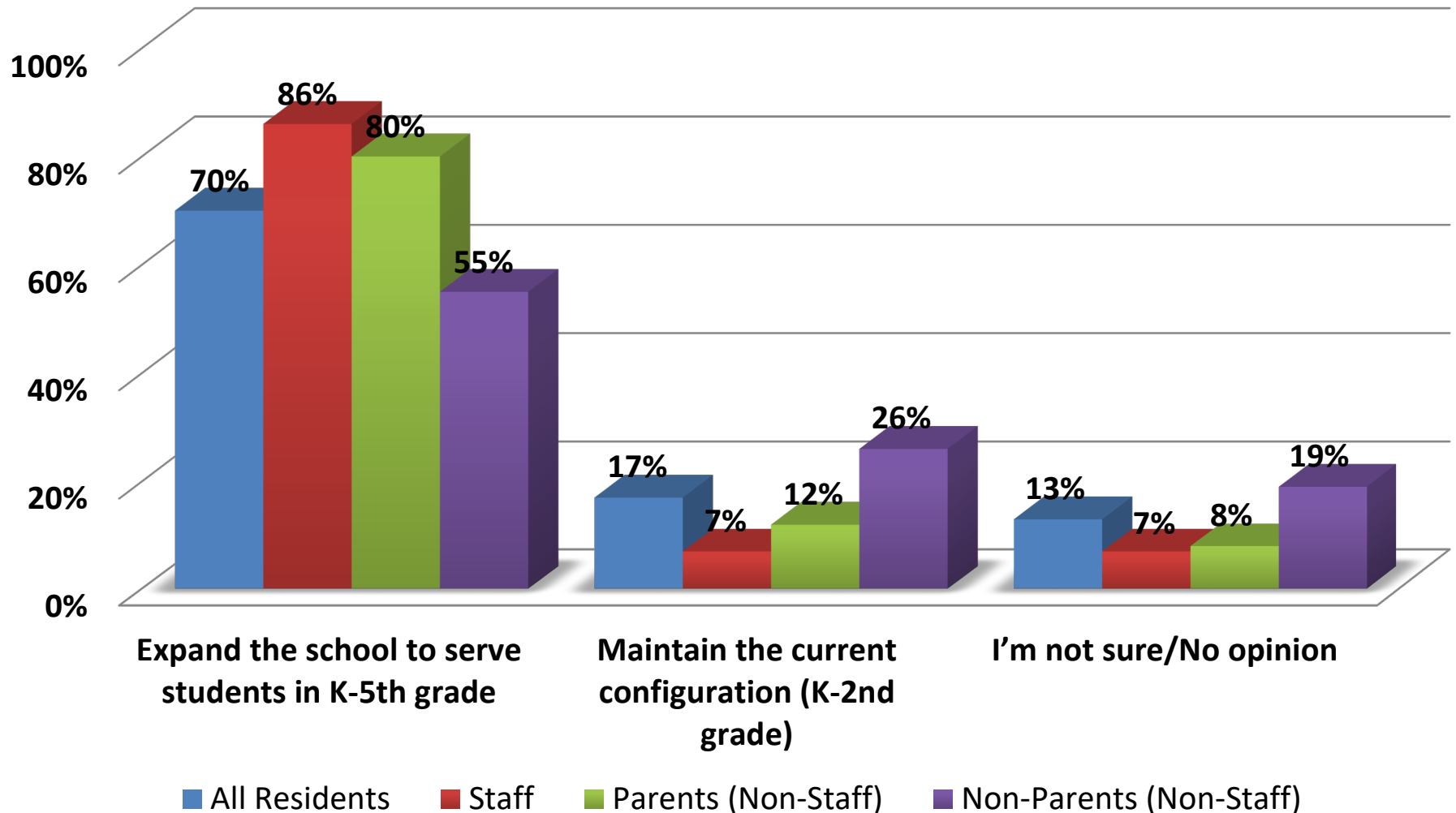
- Classroom lighting and ceiling tile are in need of replacement.
- Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility.
- The school lacks an onsite kitchen and dedicated cafeteria, requiring staff to set up and take down tables daily. This also creates scheduling challenges for physical education, performances and programming.
- There is a need for dedicated special education space.
- The site lacks green space for outdoor education/playgrounds.
- The school lacks collaboration and breakout spaces to support small-group instruction.

The cost to add classrooms/support spaces and renovate existing spaces to serve as a kindergarten through 5th grade school is estimated at \$17.5 million.



What advice would you give regarding the grade configuration at Columbus Elementary/Discovery Charter School?

(Columbus School District Residents Only)



What priorities would you place on the following projects at Columbus Elementary/Discovery Charter School?

High (3), Medium (2), Low (1)

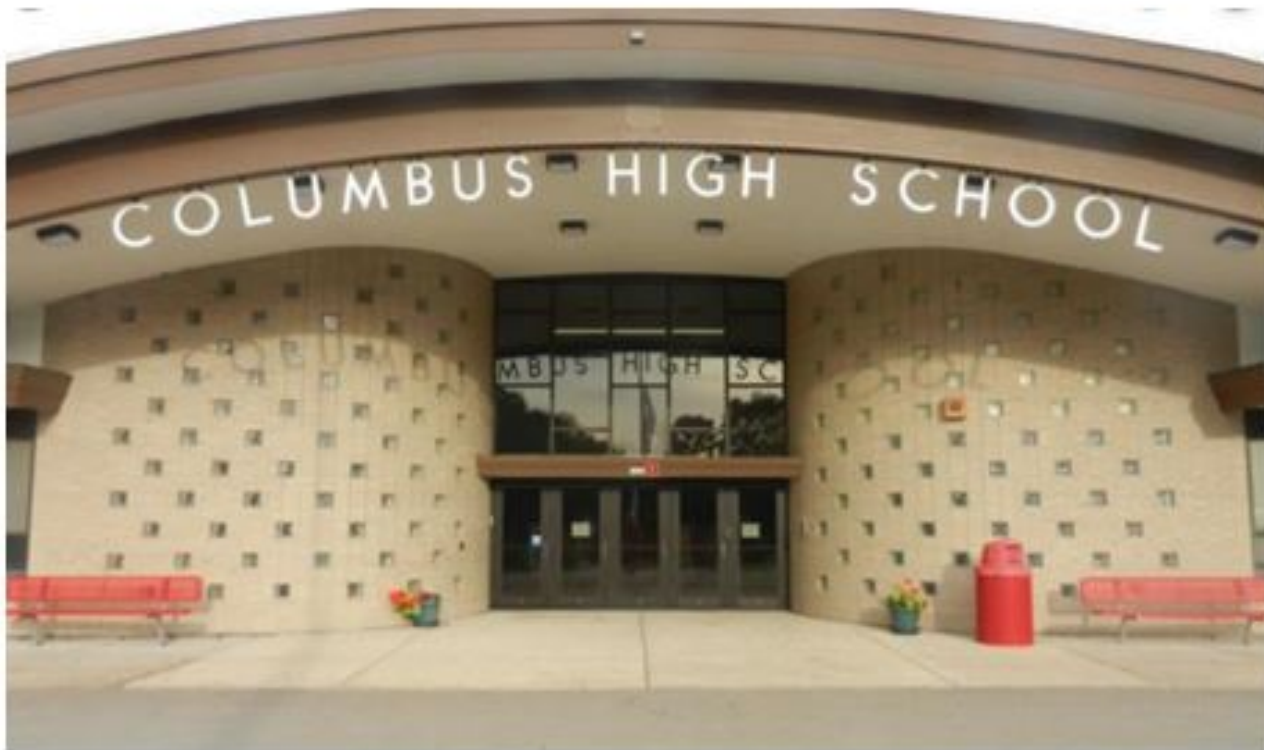
Item	All Residents	Staff Residents	Parent Residents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)
Add 11 classrooms - \$4.12 million	2.50	2.74	2.62	2.27
Add a dedicated kitchen and cafeteria - \$2.06 million	2.37	2.67	2.46	2.18
Update existing classrooms - \$2.2 million	2.29	2.11	2.42	2.15
Add special education space - \$225,000	2.27	2.36	2.37	2.11
Add flexible project/hands-on learning space - \$582,000	2.10	1.95	2.26	1.92
Add gym space - \$1.8 million	2.16	2.51	2.31	1.86
Build outdoor education/playgrounds area - \$950,000	1.86	1.91	1.98	1.67

Columbus High School

Columbus High School was built in 1957, with additions in 1964 and 1980.

The Facilities Audit identified the following issues:

- The site is small, lacking necessary space for athletic practices and competitions.
- Americans with Disabilities (ADA) accessibility.
- Major building system components, including the plumbing, heating/ventilation and electrical systems, are past their service life and need to be replaced.
- Classroom lighting, ceilings and flooring in some support areas are in need of replacement.
- Exterior doors and frames are worn/rusting/energy inefficient and need to be replaced.
- The kitchen is small/outdated and lacks equipment and storage.
- The school lacks an auditorium and needs music department updates.
- Updates are needed to the technology and engineering labs.
- Additional flexible space is needed for small-group instruction and student collaboration.



The following projects would meet the current high school needs and in the future if it becomes an intermediate/middle school.

What priorities would you place on the following projects?

High (3), Medium (2), Low (1)

Item	All Residents	Staff Residents	Parent Residents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)
Update classrooms and labs for Technology, Engineering, Art and Math - \$1.79 million	2.62	2.56	2.72	2.49
Add flexible project/hands-on learning space - \$605,000	2.21	2.09	2.35	2.04
Update/expand kitchen and cafeteria - \$990,000	2.24	2.35	2.37	2.02
Renovate/expand band and choir classrooms - \$1.29 million	2.02	1.95	2.13	1.86
Expand library space - \$1.33 million	1.99	2.04	2.13	1.76
Renovate locker rooms - \$749,000	1.88	2.02	2.00	1.67
Convert existing cafeteria to weight room and fitness center - \$933,000	1.87	2.05	2.04	1.59

Additional Projects

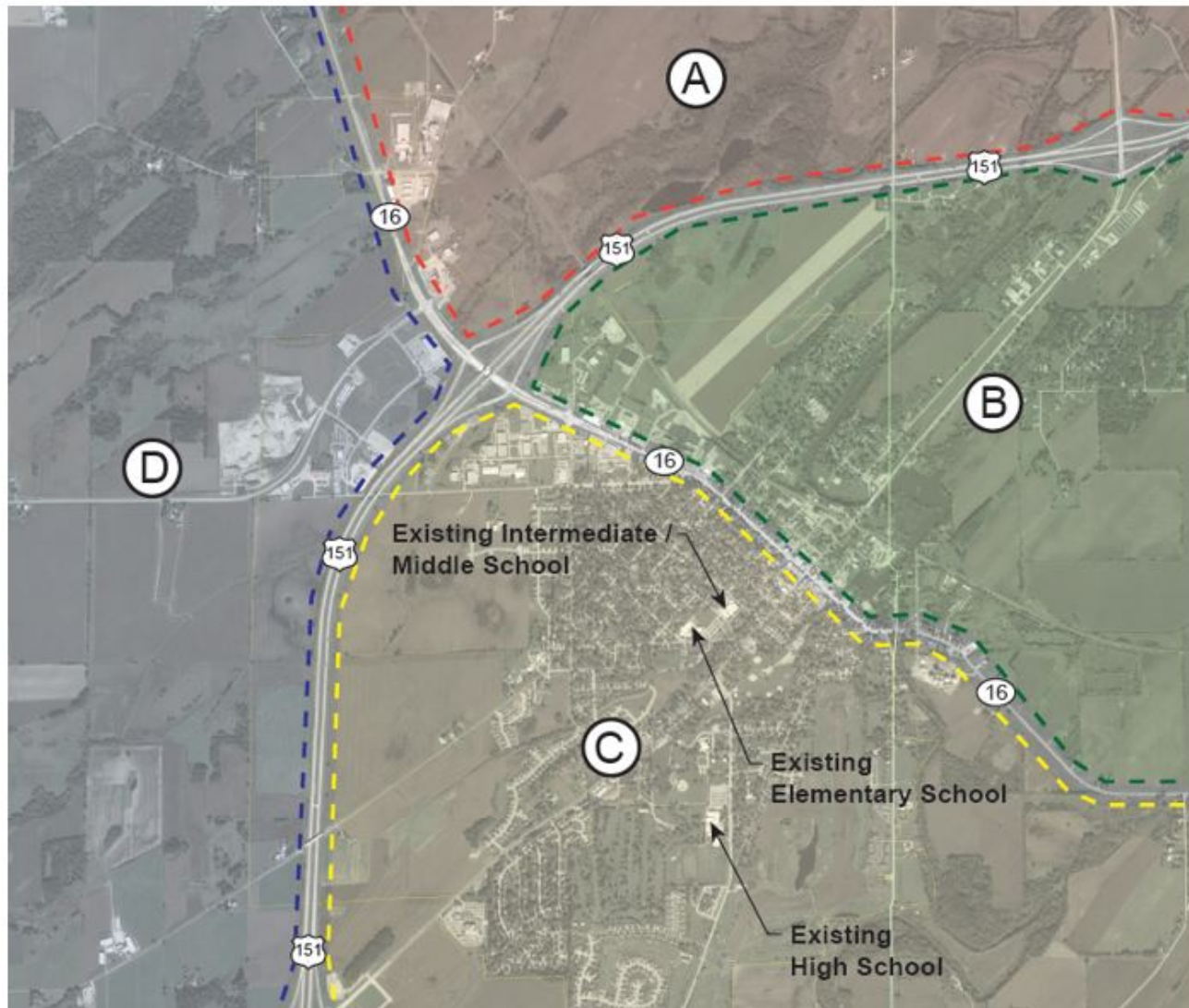
What priorities would you place on the following projects?

High (3), Medium (2), Low (1)

Item	All Residents	Staff Residents	Parent Residents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)
Purchase Land The District could consider purchasing land for a new high school and/or outdoor athletic fields to be built at some point in the future. <i>Est. Cost: Up to \$1 million</i>	2.51	2.59	2.68	2.26
Build an auditorium The District could consider building an auditorium, which could be added to the existing high school or a new high school. This would create a dedicated space for plays, musicals, recitals, concerts, large-group activities or community presentations. Currently, many events are held in the gym, which lacks adequate sound and lighting systems. The gym's already busy schedule limits performance opportunities for students and the community. <i>Est. Cost: Up to \$11 million</i>	2.18	2.40	2.36	1.89
Add Outdoor Athletic Fields The District could consider building a multi-purpose area that could include football/soccer fields, baseball and softball diamond and other practice and competition fields for school, youth and community use. The District would need to purchase land to build these fields. <i>Est. Cost: \$5 million</i>	2.10	2.12	2.34	1.75

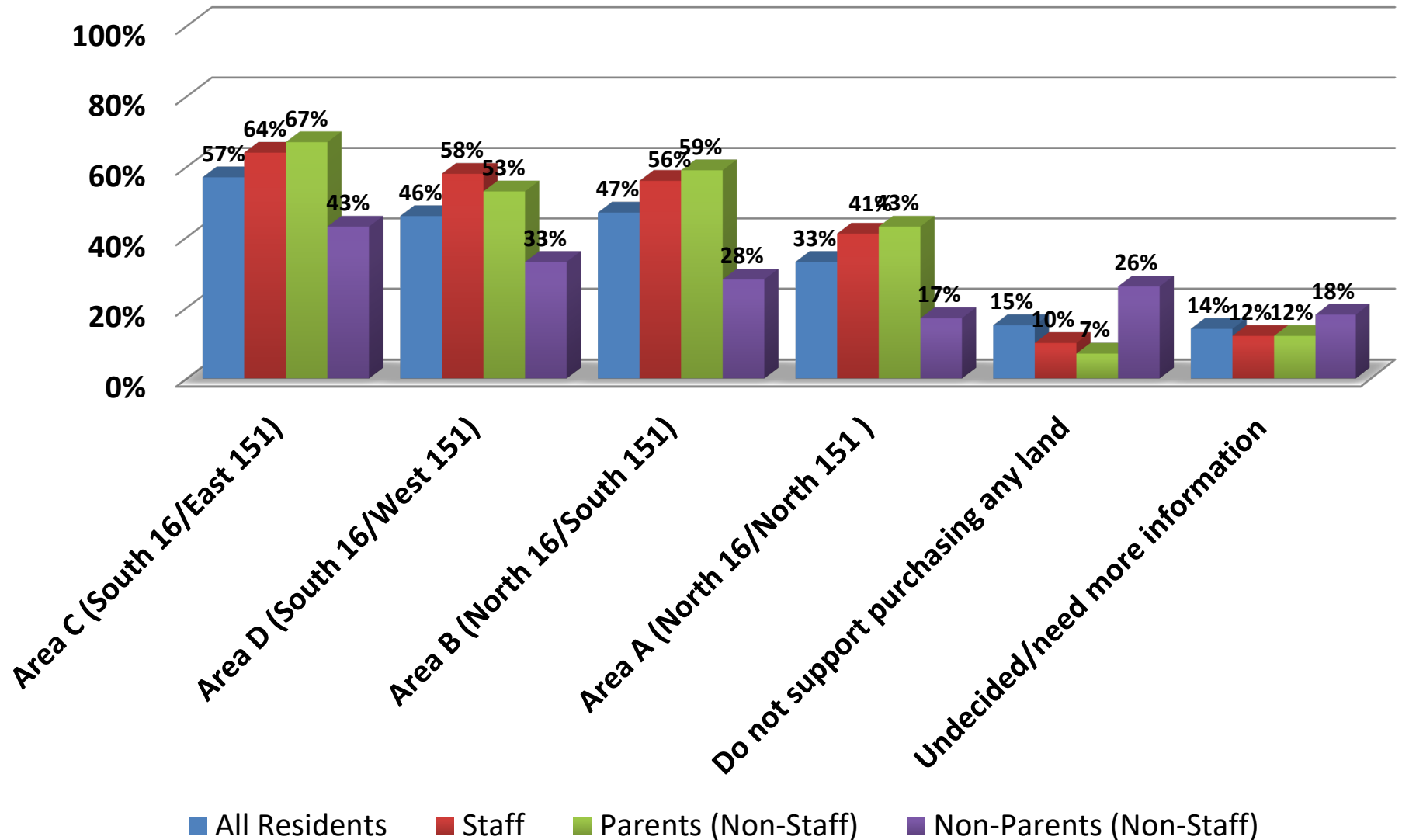
Land Location

If the community supports the purchase of land for a new high school and/or outdoor athletic fields, the District is looking for your input in terms of the best area to search for land based on the map below.



Please select ALL locations, based on the map, that you would support:

(Columbus School District Residents Only)



Funding Support

The cost of all the facility projects identified in this survey could exceed \$70 million, representing a tax impact of \$486 per \$100,000 of property value. Given the cost, the projects would need to be completed in phases, based on the priorities of the community and its willingness to financially support the projects.

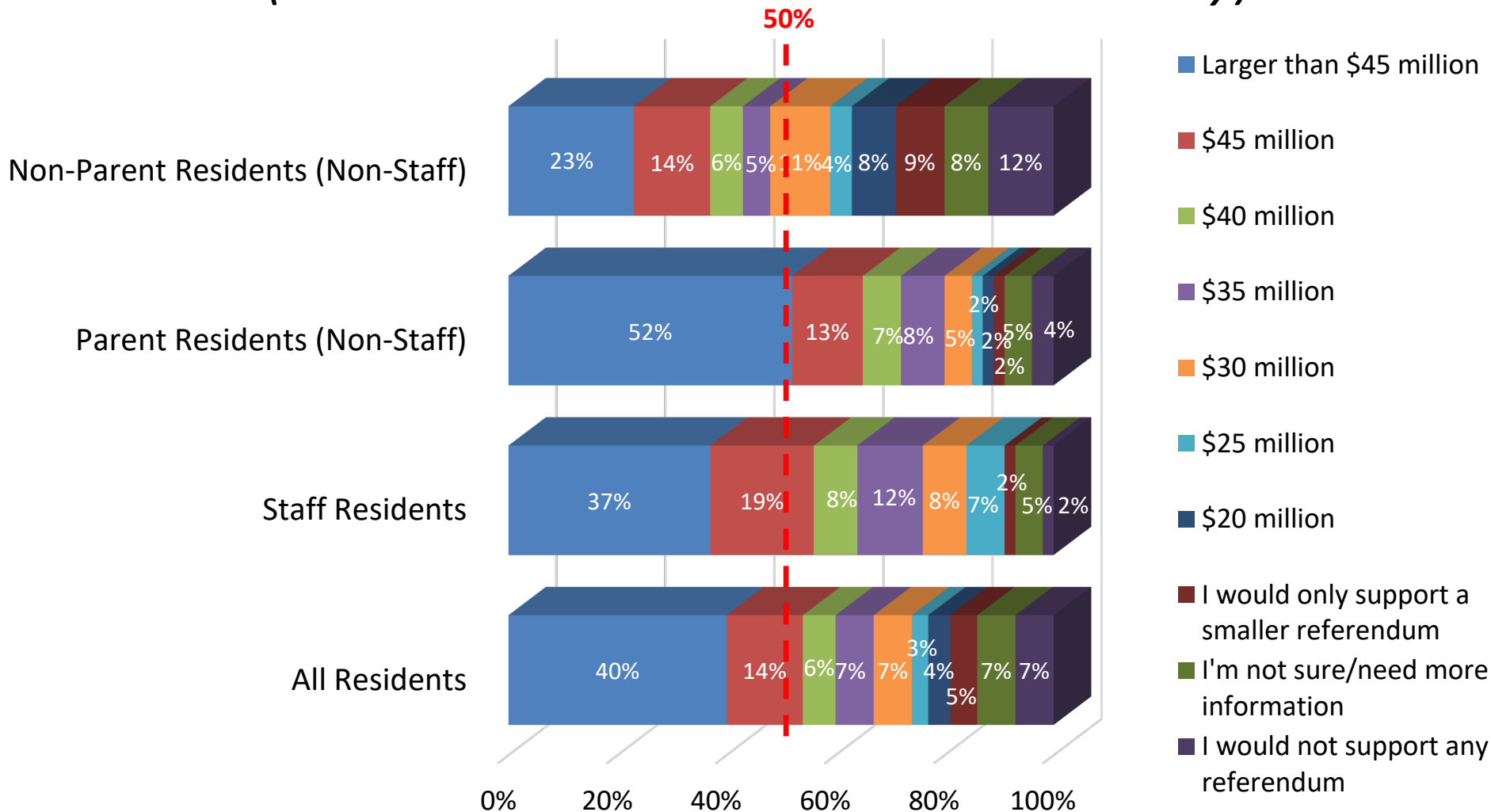
Update Columbus Elementary School	Up to \$17.5 million
Update Columbus Intermediate/Middle School	Up to \$ 8.5 million
Update Columbus High School	Up to \$ 13 million
Build New High School	\$ 39 million
Build an Auditorium	\$ 11 million
Add Outdoor Athletic Fields	\$ 5 million
Buy Land for Future School and/or Athletic Fields	Up to \$ 1 million

The following table shows the tax increase for various referendum amounts. **The District would like to know your level of support for the first phase of the Long Range Facility Plan.**

PROPERTY TAX IMPACT						
Referendum amount	\$20 million	\$25 million	\$30 million	\$35 million	\$40 million	\$45 million
Tax increase per \$100,000 of property value	\$99 per year (\$7.75/month)	\$134 per year (\$11.17/month)	\$176 per year (\$14.67/month)	\$217 per year (\$18.08/month)	\$259 per year (\$21.58/month)	\$300 per year (\$25.00/month)

How much of a tax impact would you support through a referendum, assuming the projects included were acceptable to you?

(Columbus School District Residents Only)



Please Remember

When looking at this report, a large majority (likely 75% of the Columbus community) does not work in the district nor has children attending the district. Therefore, more weighting should be placed on non-parent/non-staff subgroup responses when establishing tax tolerance and project priorities.

What did we learn?

- ✓ A majority of all subgroups and 81% of all respondents encourage the District to explore a referendum.
- ✓ A majority of all subgroups and 70% of all respondents support expanding the elementary school to serve K – 5th grade.
- ✓ A majority of all subgroups and 70% of all respondents recommend making a minimal investment in the current middle school and eventually close the school when additional capacity is available.

What projects should funded through a referendum?

- Update and expand the elementary school
- Determine a time horizon to extend the service life of the middle school. Then make a corresponding, yet minimal investment, to accomplish the goal.
- Update the high school
 - Update classrooms and labs for Technology, Engineering, Art and Math and flexible project/hands-on learning spaces
 - Update/expand kitchen and cafeteria
 - Renovate/expand band and choir classrooms
- Purchase land

How much of an investment is the community willing to support through a referendum?

- A logical target for the capital referendum would be \$30 million or less.

Thank you!



Parent Surveys - Staff Surveys - Student Surveys - Community Surveys
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