
Stillwater Area Public Schools

2021 Tracking Survey
Summary of Results





INTRODUCTION

Purpose of tracking survey

- Re-test community support for funding options:
 - increase in the District's operating levy
 - additional funding for instructional technology
- Re-test reactions to potential tax increases

Survey outline

- Survey included interviews with 402 registered voters in the Stillwater school district.
- Interviews were completed between June 14th and June 22nd.
- Approximate margin of error is $\pm 4.9\%$.

Who we called

- Interviews included demographic targets intended to provide a representative sample of voters in the district.
- To the extent that any demographic dimension was under- or over-sampled, sample weights were adjusted to compensate.

Who we called *(cont.)*

- Demographic targets included:
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Parent status
 - Voting history
 - Geographic area
- Cell phones and homeownership were tracked, but were not demographic targets.

Survey structure

- Main body of survey consisted of two sections:
Operating and Technology
 - Operating levy section asked about potential changes to student support services and educational programs along with related tax impacts.
 - Technology levy section asked participants to respond to classroom technology upgrades and related tax impacts.

Initial support for increased operating levy

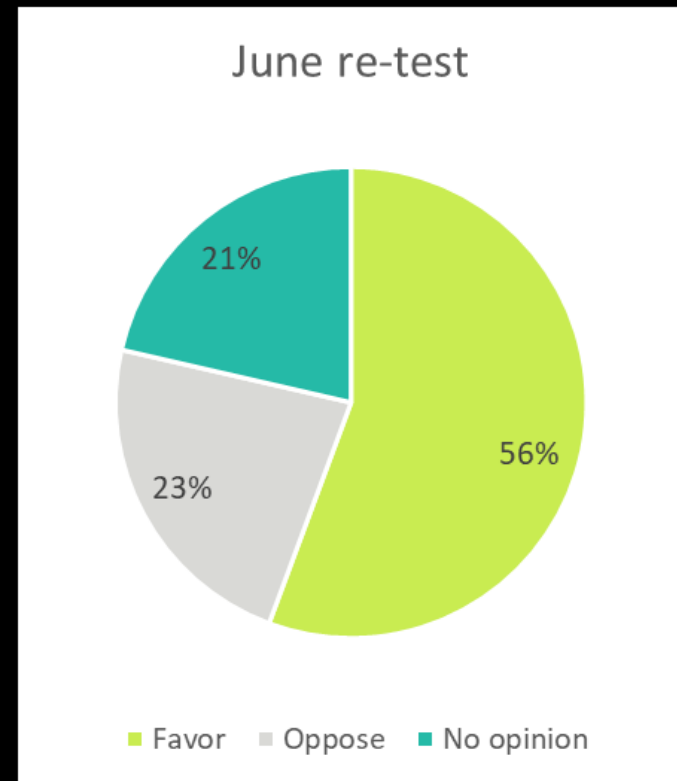
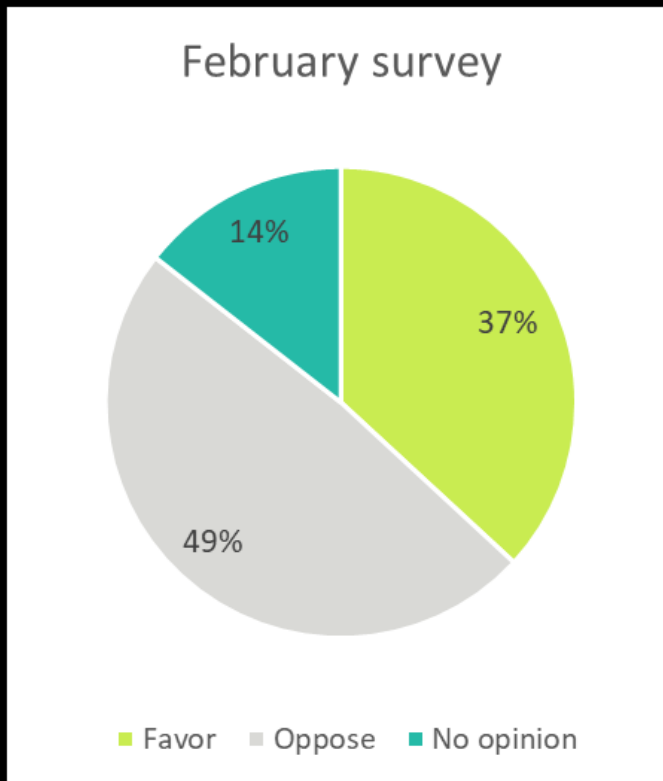
“Stillwater Area Public Schools has an operating levy that will expire at the end of 2021. Without this levy the district would lose \$11-12 million in funding each year.

To avoid more budget cuts and provide additional funding for teaching students, the District may ask voters to replace the expiring levy with a larger levy that would increase annual funding per student.

Based on what you know now, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

OPERATING LEVY

Initial support



Effect of information

- Participants were asked a series of questions about a potential operating levy.
 - The list asked respondents to react to potential changes if the proposed levy were approved.
- Items were presented in random order, to minimize any bias due to their position on the list.



OPERATING LEVY

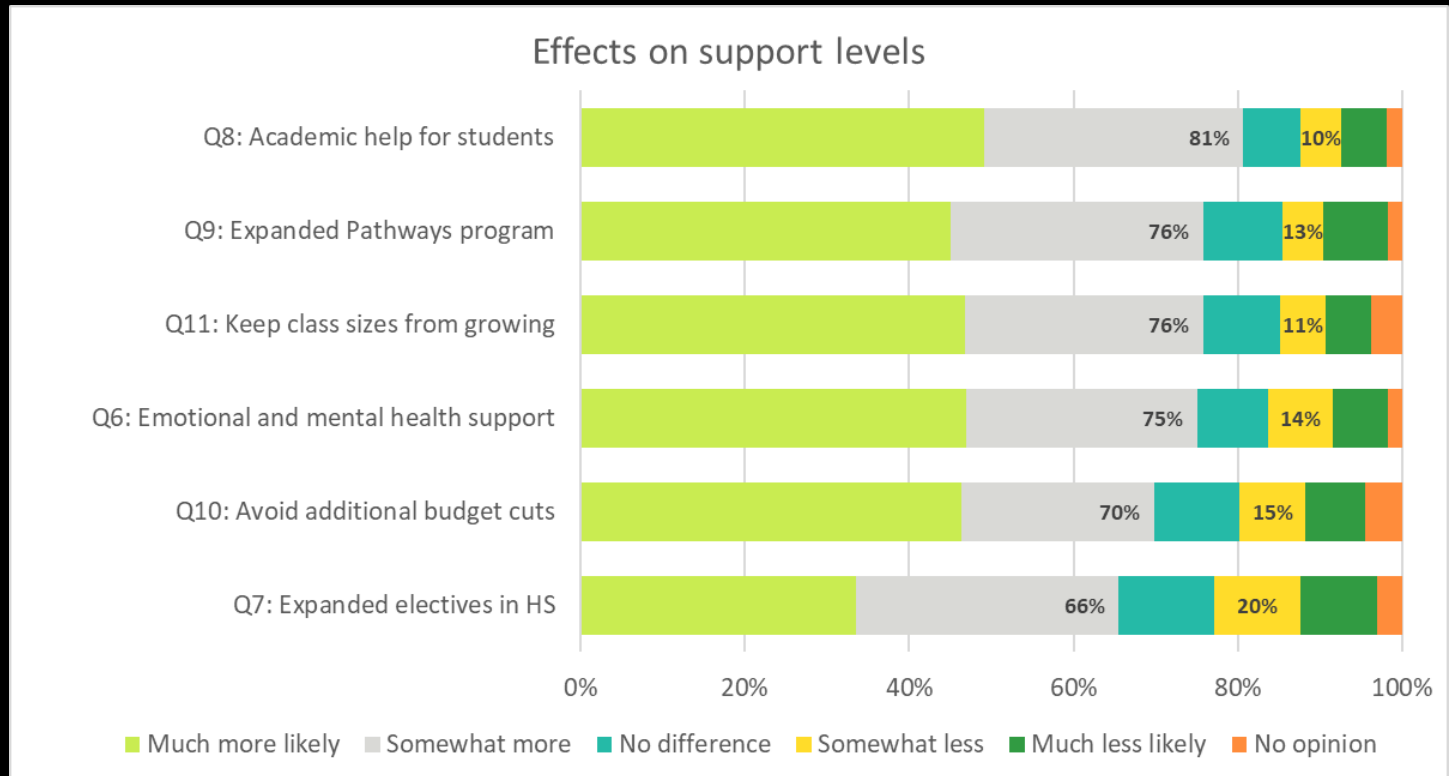
Effect of information

“I am going to read some statements about the proposal to increase the district’s operating levy.

Please tell me whether the information in each statement would make you more likely or less likely to vote for such a proposal.”

OPERATING LEVY

Reaction to impacts



Labels show combined % for more/much more and less/much less.



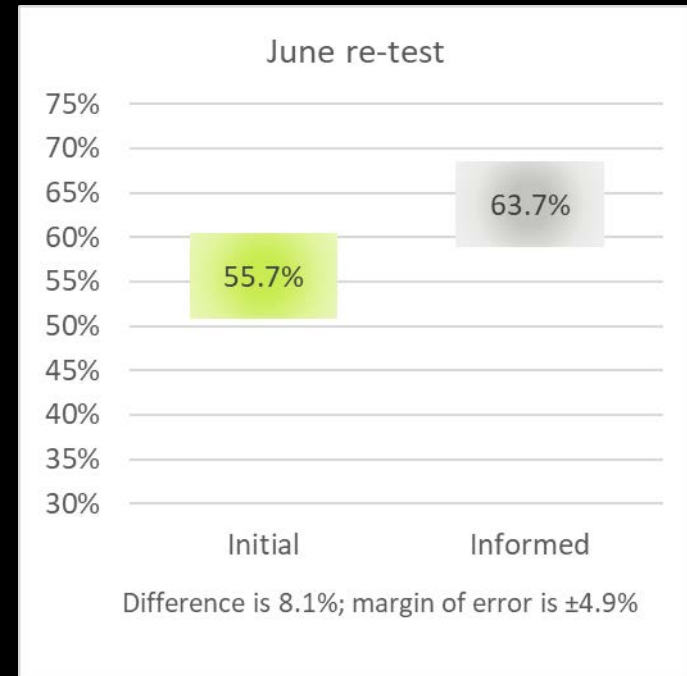
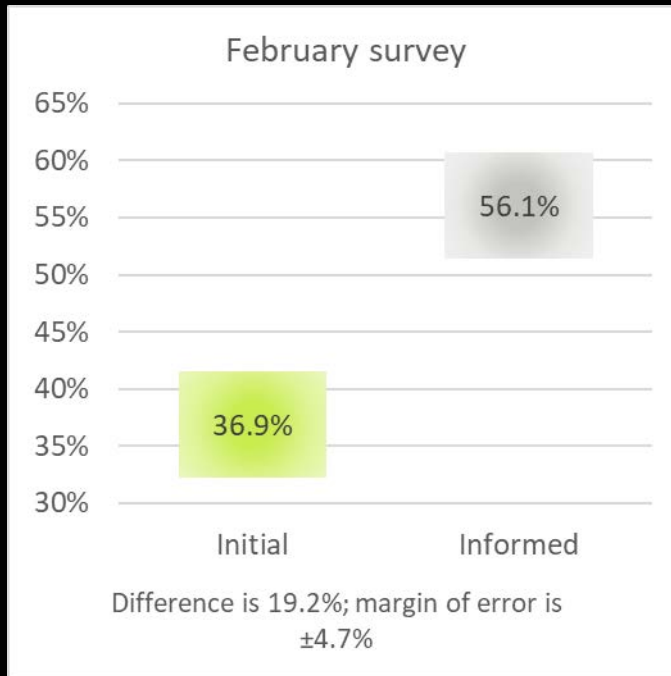
OPERATING LEVY

Informed support

“Now that you have heard more information about the proposal to raise additional funding for the District, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

OPERATING LEVY

Comparison – initial and informed



Both differences are statistically significant.

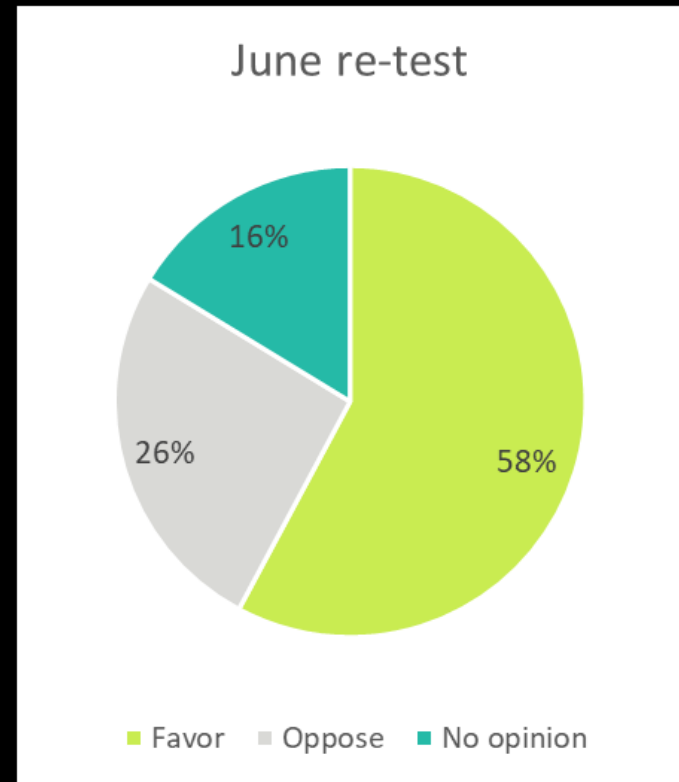
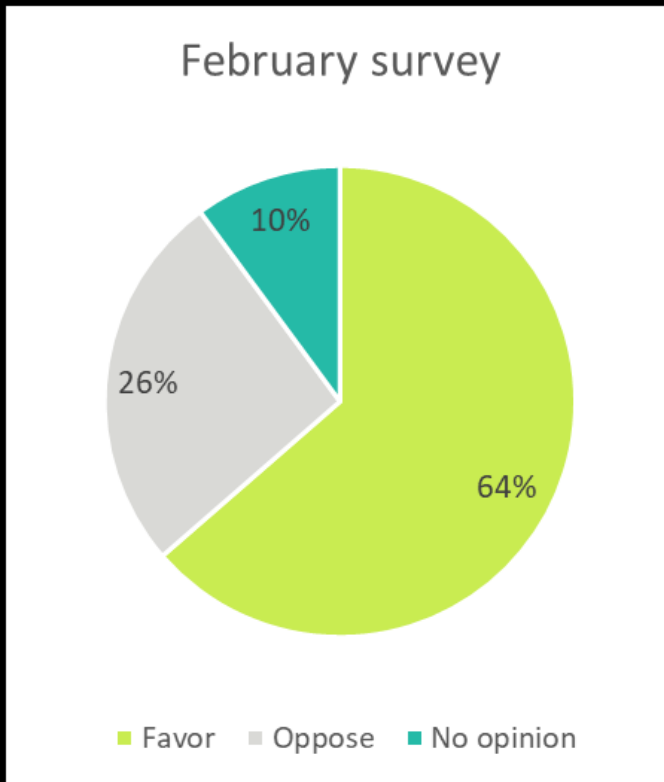
Initial support

“Stillwater Area Public Schools may also seek approval from voters to increase taxes to provide funding for additional technology investments for students and schools.

Based on what you know today, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

TECHNOLOGY LEVY

Initial support

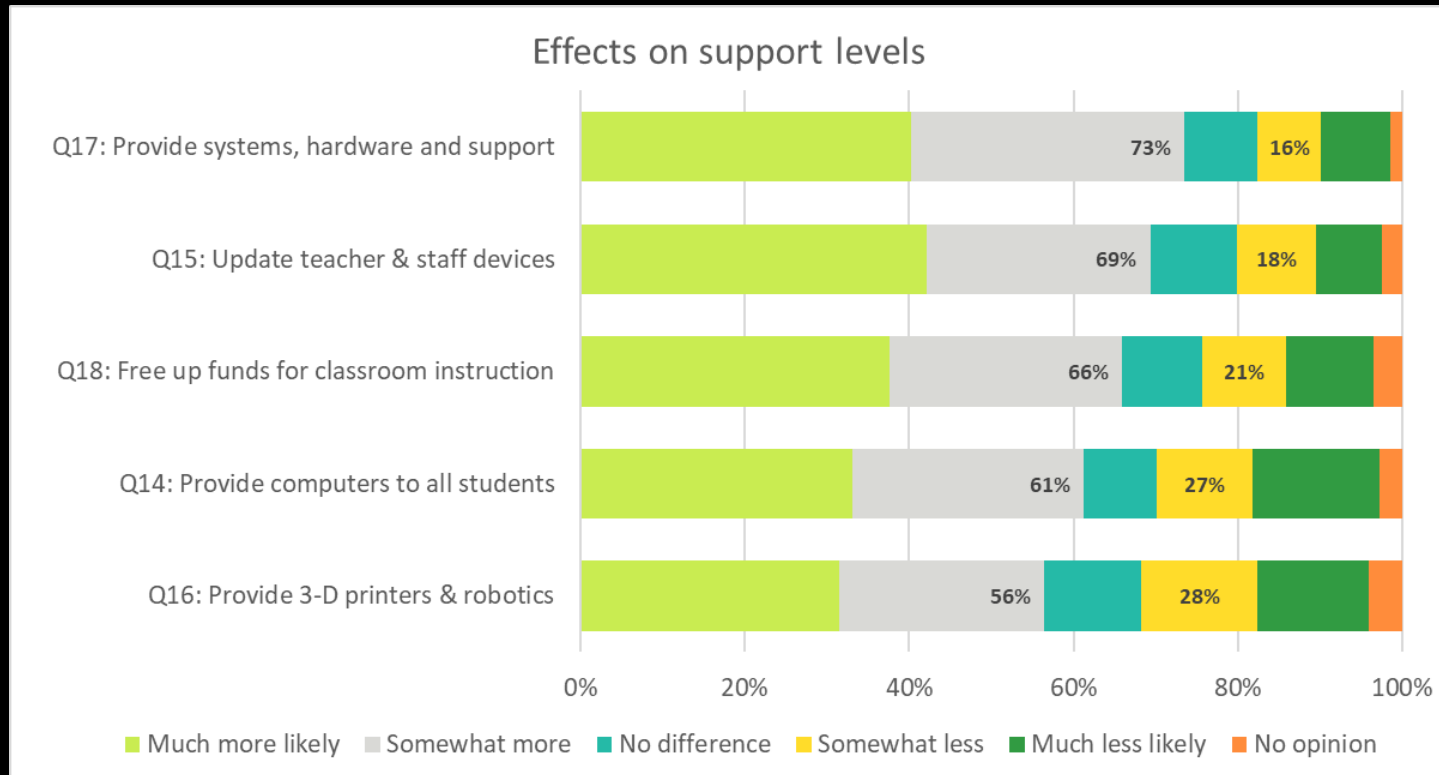


Effect of information

“I'm going to read some statements about some of the technology improvements the district is considering.

For each of these statements, please tell me whether the information would make you more likely or less likely to support the proposal.”

Reaction to impacts



Labels show combined % for more/much more and less/much less.

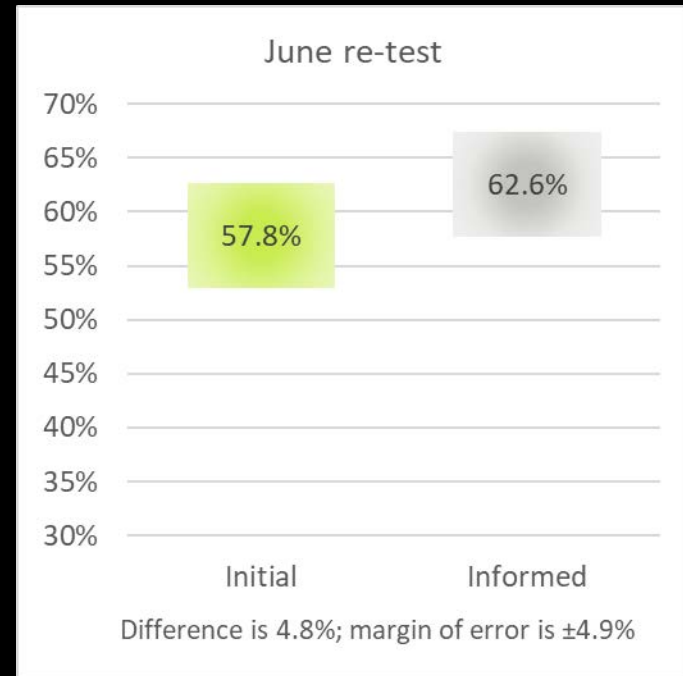
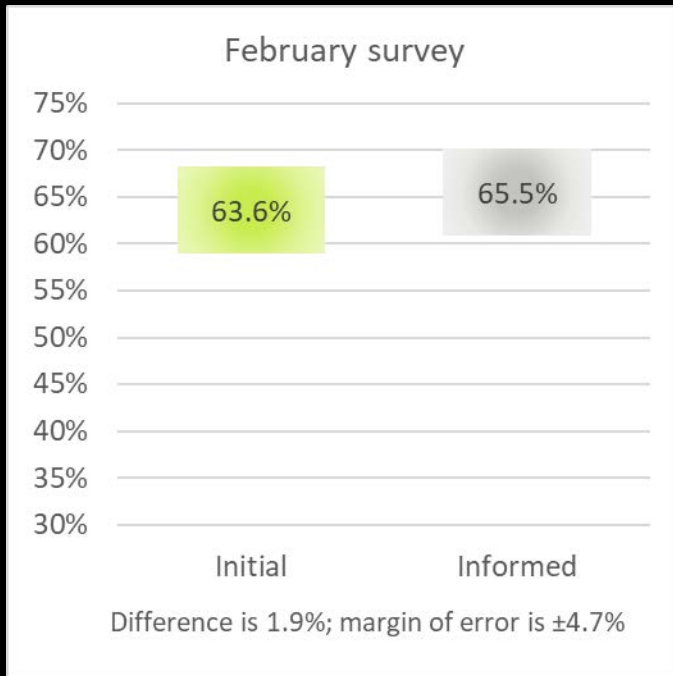


TECHNOLOGY LEVY

Informed support

“Now that you have heard some information about the proposal to fund additional technology in the district, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

Comparison – initial and informed



Differences were not statistically significant.

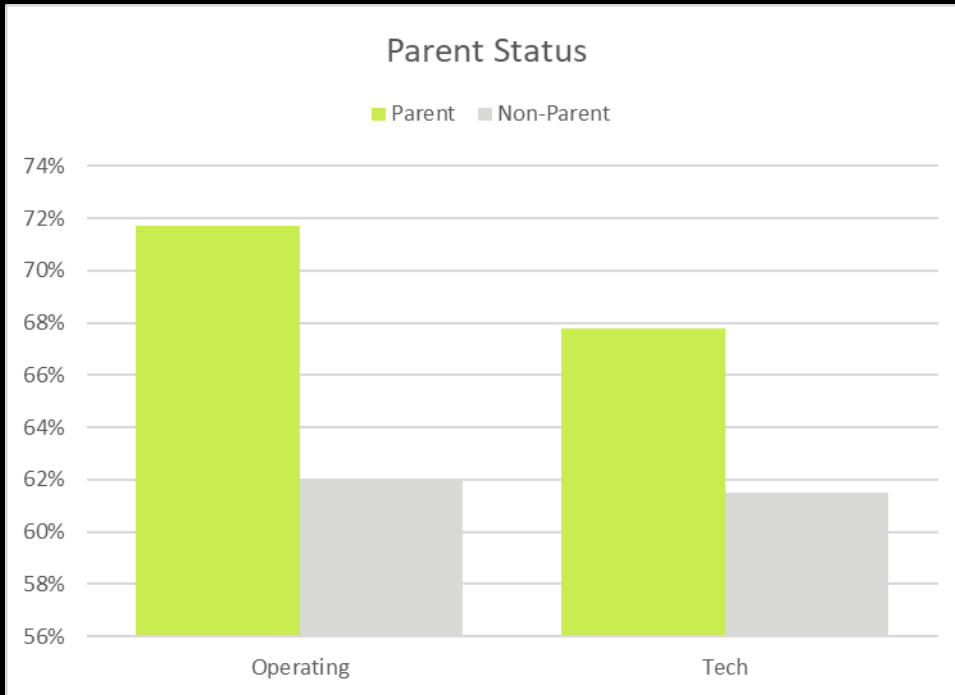


Demographic differences

- The following slides show a quick snapshot of differences in support between demographic groups:
 - Parent status
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Location
 - Homeownership
 - Voting activity
- Charts show level of support after hearing information about each proposal.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Parent status

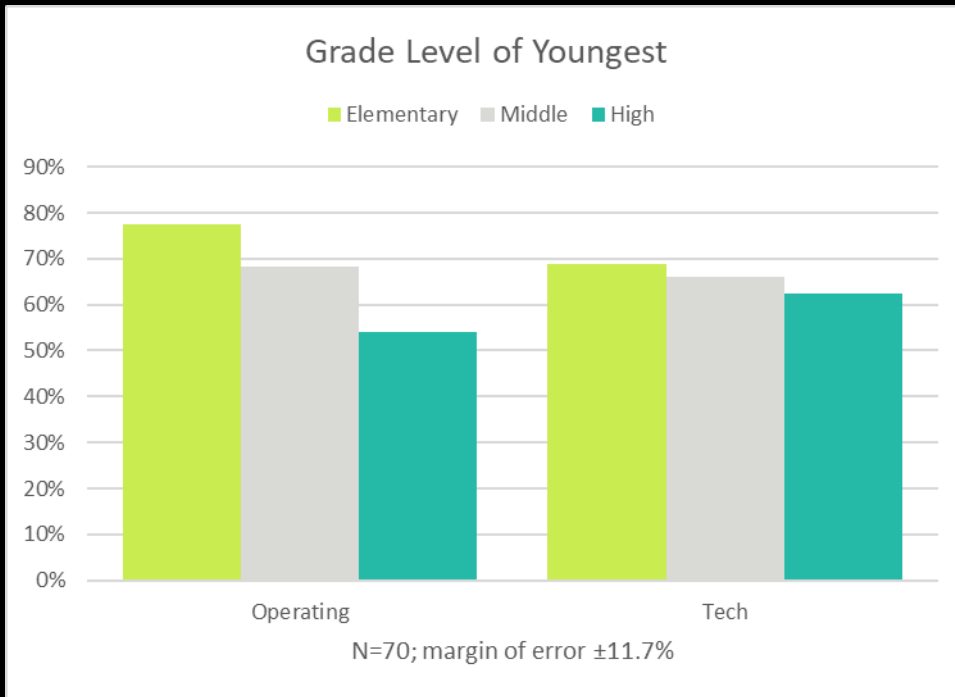


- Significantly lower support for operating and tech levies from non-parents.

- Categories represent parents of current Stillwater students and voters who've never had children in Stillwater schools or whose grown children attended Stillwater schools in the past.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Parent status (cont.)

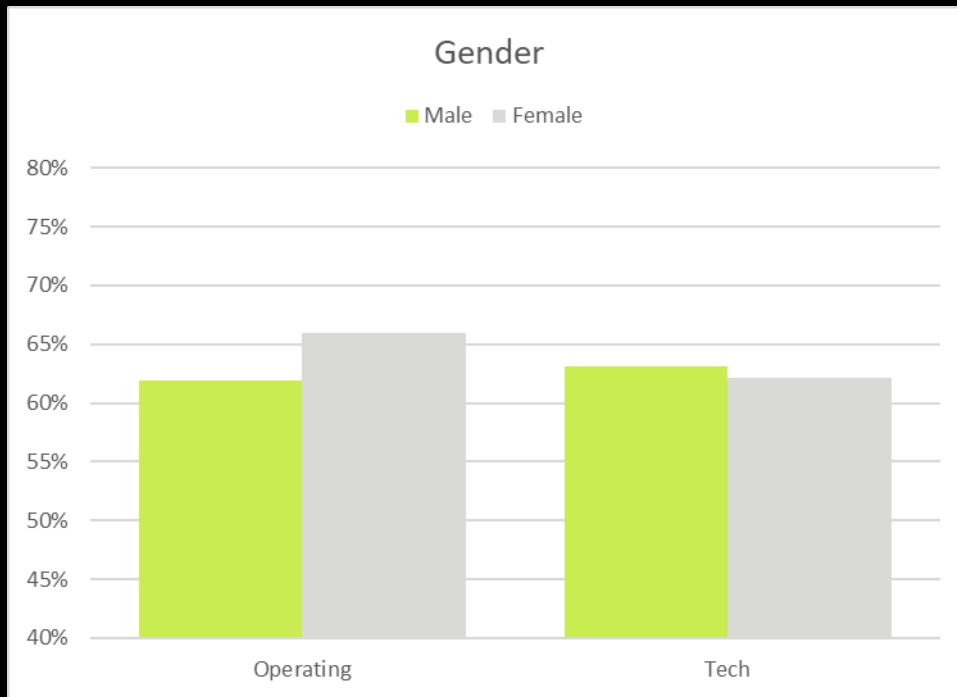


- Support levels highest among those with younger children in school.

The chart above includes only responses from voters with children attending Stillwater Schools.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

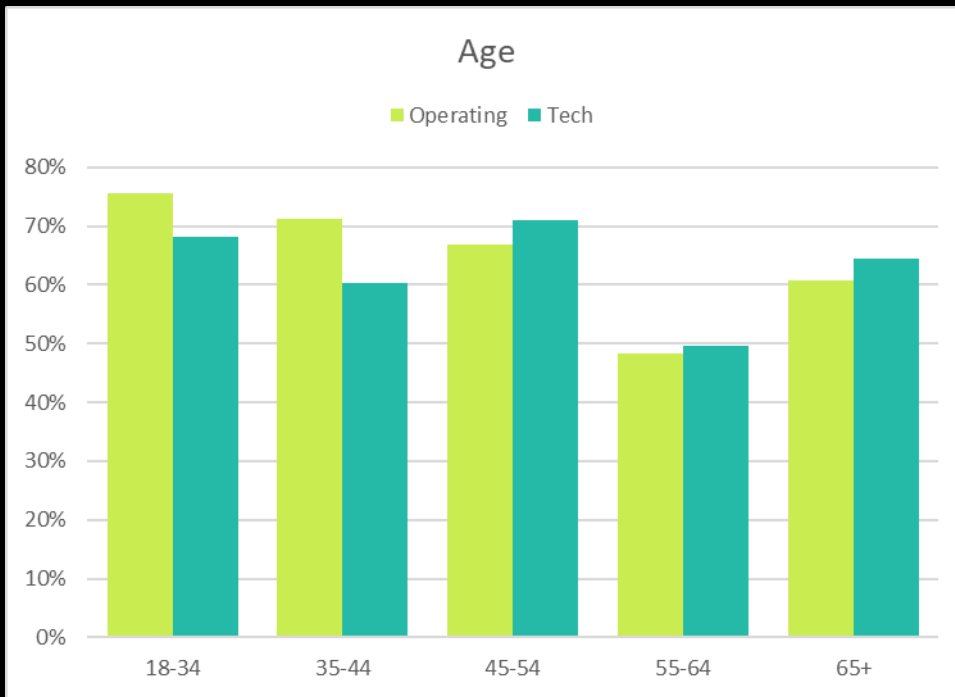
Gender



- No measurable difference in support between men and women.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

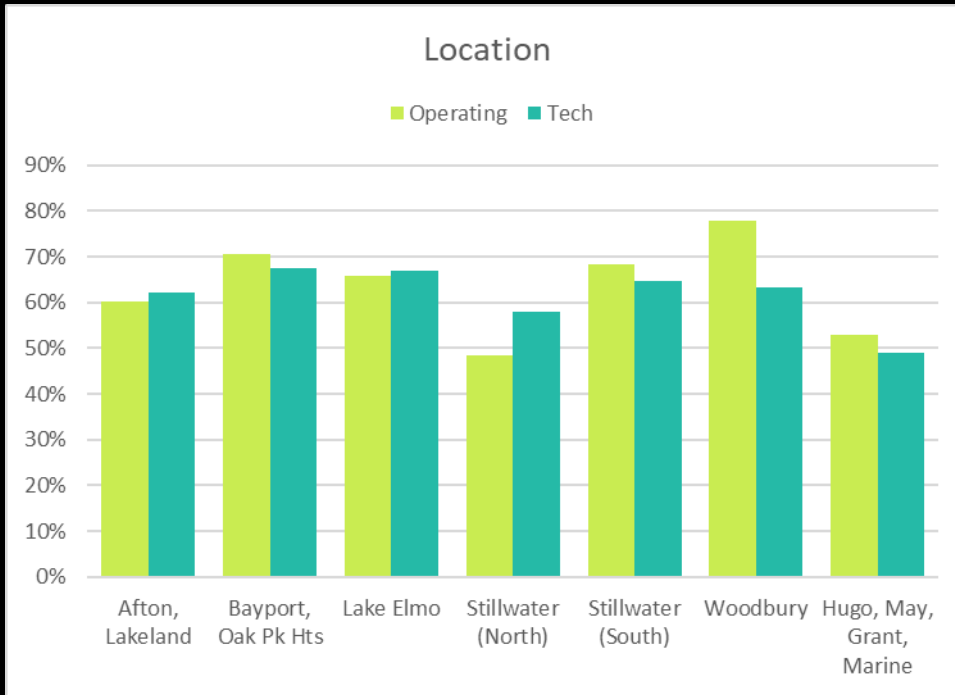
Age



- Good support from younger voters.
- Higher support for tech levy from voters 45-54 years of age.
- Lowest support from voters approaching retirement.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

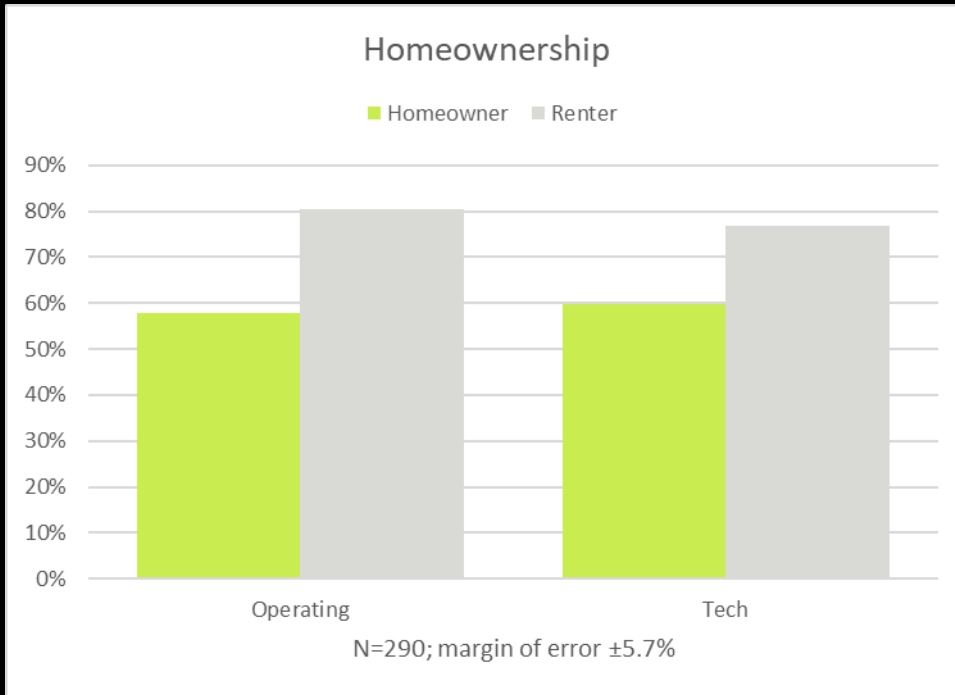
Location



- Lower support from northern Stillwater and areas to the north (Hugo, May, Grant and Marine).

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

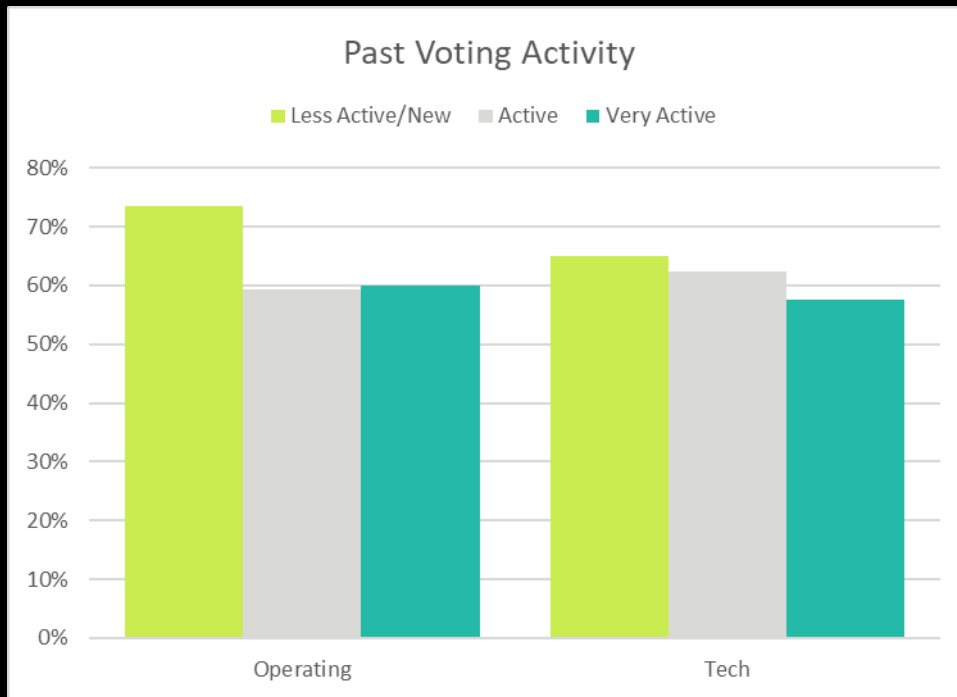
Homeownership



- Strongest support from renters.
- Consistent with long-term observations about property tax sensitivity between owners and renters.

DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES

Past voting activity



- Higher support for operating levy from less active & new voters.
- No measurable difference in support for technology levy.

- Less active/new voters have participated in 0-2 of the past nine elections.
- Very active voters have participated in 6 or more.



Two-question ballot

“Suppose the District put two proposals on the ballot in November.

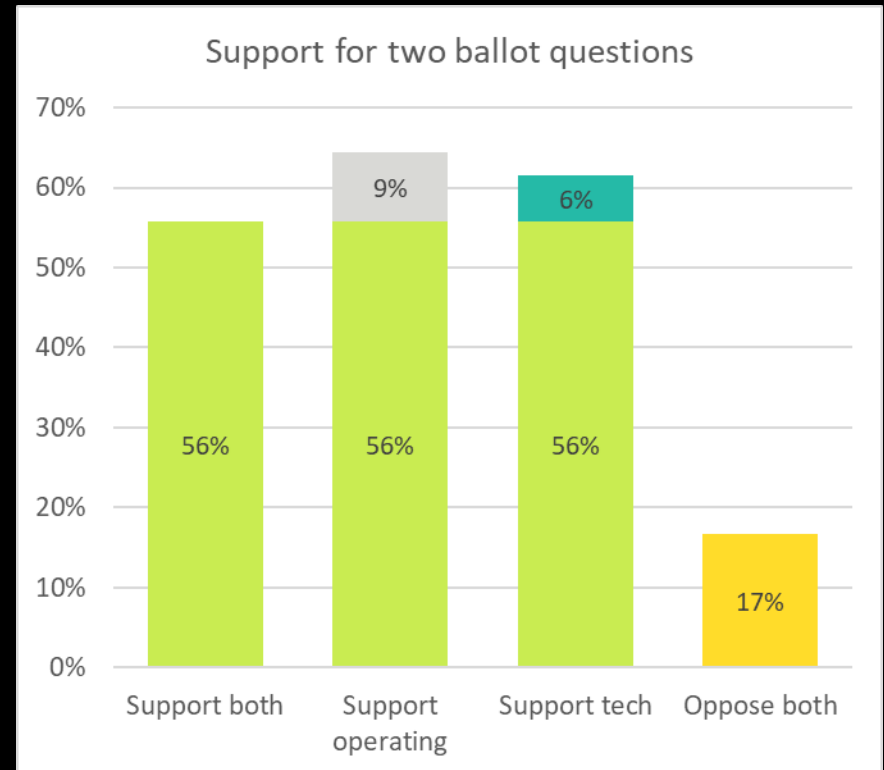
One ballot question would replace the existing operating levy expiring in 2021 with a larger one to avoid more budget cuts and provide additional funding for students and classrooms. The second ballot question would increase funding for technology for students and schools.

Based on what you know now, would you favor or oppose these two proposals?”

TWO-QUESTION BALLOT

Initial support

- Support for both ballot measures is 56%.
- Adding support for operating levy alone (9%) raises support for that question to 65%.
- Adding support for tech levy alone (6%) raises support to 62% for that question.
- Opposition was 17%.
- 13% expressed no opinion.

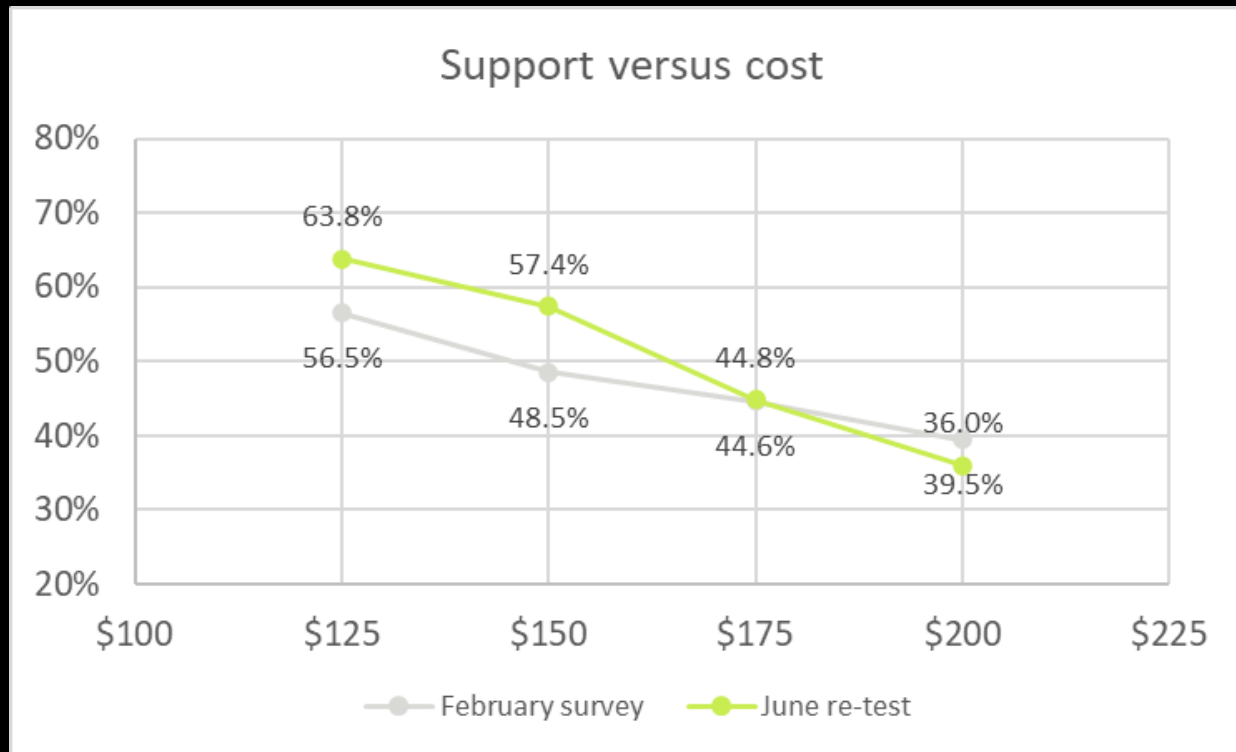




Impact of cost information

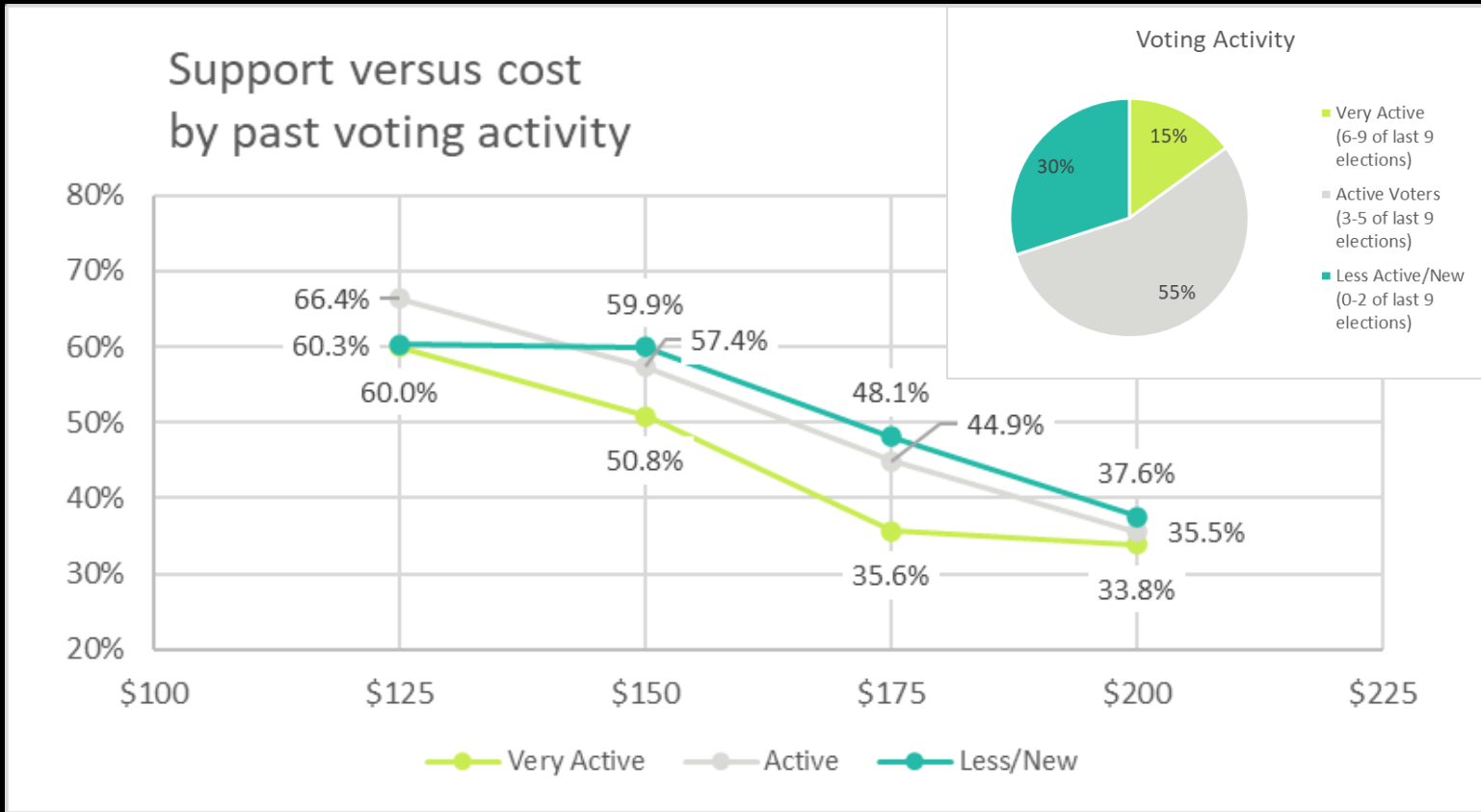
- Participants were asked about four potential property tax increases to fund programs and improvements being considered by the district: \$125, \$150, \$175 and \$200 per year on an average home valued at \$350,000.
- To preclude responses given in anticipation of higher or lower options, dollar values were presented in random order.

Impact of cost information (cont.)



Potential tax impacts tested were \$125, \$150, \$175 and \$200.
February survey did not measure \$125 or \$175 impacts; these values are estimated.

Impact of cost information (cont.)



Findings: support for operating levy

- For increasing operating levy, initial support was 55.7%, compared to 36.9% in February.
- Informed support rose to 63.7%, compared to 56.1% in February.
- Initial support in June was roughly equivalent to informed support in February survey.
- Information about the proposal increased support by 8 points, which is statistically significant.

Findings: operating impacts

- Highest support shown for providing academic support for students needing extra help.
- Lower support for expanded HS electives and avoiding additional budget cuts.
- Negative reaction to each item on the list ranged from 10% to 20%.

Findings: support for technology levy

- Initial support at 57.8%, compared to 63.6% in February.
- Informed support at 62.6%, compared to 65.5% in February.
- June measures are slightly lower than February, but not enough to be significant.
- Information about the proposal did not change support levels.

Findings: technology improvements

- Highest support shown for providing systems, hardware and staff to support teaching.
- Lower support for 3D printers and robotics.
- Negative reaction to each item on the list ranged from 16% to 28%.

Findings: potential tax impacts

- At the time of data collection, a total tax increase of up to \$140 for an average priced home models as feasible (57.1%).
 - Compared to February threshold of \$130, this shows movement in a positive direction for the District.
- Very active voters show less support for tax impacts. Tax tolerance among less active voters is \$150 to \$155 per year.

Findings: two-question ballot

- If proposals for both operating and technology levies are shown on the ballot, survey results estimate 56% support.
 - Support is just over 50% plus margin of error.
- Support would be contingent on voter acceptance of associated tax impacts.

Findings: comparing February and June results

- Support for operating levy increase is considerably higher now than in February.
- Support for technology levy is fairly stable.
 - No measurable difference between surveys nor between initial and informed benchmarks.
- Support for higher taxes has increased from a \$130 annual impact measured in February to \$140 in the current survey.



Thank you!

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**Q1: Increase Operating Referendum Revenue, Q2: \$4.7 million Capital Project Levy
Includes Tax Impact of Brookview Addition Lease Payment, and Reductions in Other Levies**

Ballot Questions	Question 1			Question 2	Brookview Addition Lease (COPs)	Reductions in Other Levies**	Net Change All Questions
	Operating Referendum			Capital Project Levy			
Year Taxes are Payable	2021	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
	Expiring Authority	Renewed Authority	Net Change	New Authority	Sale Results	Existing Levy Authority	
Estimated Adjusted Pupil Units (APU)	9,369.20	9,429.80	60.60				
Revenue per Pupil Unit	-\$1,297.45	\$1,524.64	\$227.19				
Estimated Change in Revenue	-\$12,156,069	\$14,377,041	\$2,220,972	\$4,700,000	\$534,300		

Type of Property	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact		Estimated Change in Annual Tax Payable in 2022*				
Residential Homestead	350,000	-\$365	\$426	61	138	16	-90	125

\$125 per year

* The amounts in the table are based on school district taxes for the Operating Referendum, Capital Project Levy and other debt levies only, and do not include tax levies for other purposes. Tax changes shown above are gross changes, not including the impact of the state Property Tax Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Homestead Credit Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Many owners of homestead property will qualify for a refund, based on their income and total property taxes. This will decrease the net tax increase for many property owners.

** If the proposed ballot questions are approved by voters, the district intends to make reductions in other tax levies payable in 2022, which will result in a net reduction in taxes paid as shown in this column. The intent of these reductions is to offset a portion of the tax increases from the proposed ballot questions.

**Q1: Increase Operating Referendum Revenue, Q2: \$4.7 million Capital Project Levy
Includes Tax Impact of Brookview Addition Lease Payment, and Reductions in Other Levies**

Ballot Questions	Question 1			Question 2	Brookview Addition Lease (COPs)	Reductions in Other Levies**	Net Change All Questions
	Operating Referendum			Capital Project Levy			
Year Taxes are Payable	2021	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
	Expiring Authority	Renewed Authority	Net Change	New Authority	Sale Results	Existing Levy Authority	
Estimated Adjusted Pupil Units (APU)	9,369.20	9,429.80	60.60				
Revenue per Pupil Unit	-\$1,297.45	\$1,607.65	\$310.20				
Estimated Change in Revenue	-\$12,156,069	\$15,159,791	\$3,003,722	\$4,700,000	\$534,300		

Type of Property	Estimated Market Value	Estimated Annual Tax Impact		Estimated Change in Annual Tax Payable in 2022*				
Residential Homestead	350,000	-\$365	\$451	86	138	16	-90	150

\$150 per year

* The amounts in the table are based on school district taxes for the Operating Referendum, Capital Project Levy and other debt levies only, and do not include tax levies for other purposes. Tax changes shown above are gross changes, not including the impact of the state Property Tax Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Homestead Credit Refund ("Circuit Breaker") program. Many owners of homestead property will qualify for a refund, based on their income and total property taxes. This will decrease the net tax increase for many property owners.

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