



Arcadia School District

Community Survey Report

Report created: November 7, 2022

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

- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **900** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Arcadia Community Survey Process



Households within the District were mailed a paper survey.
Respondents could:

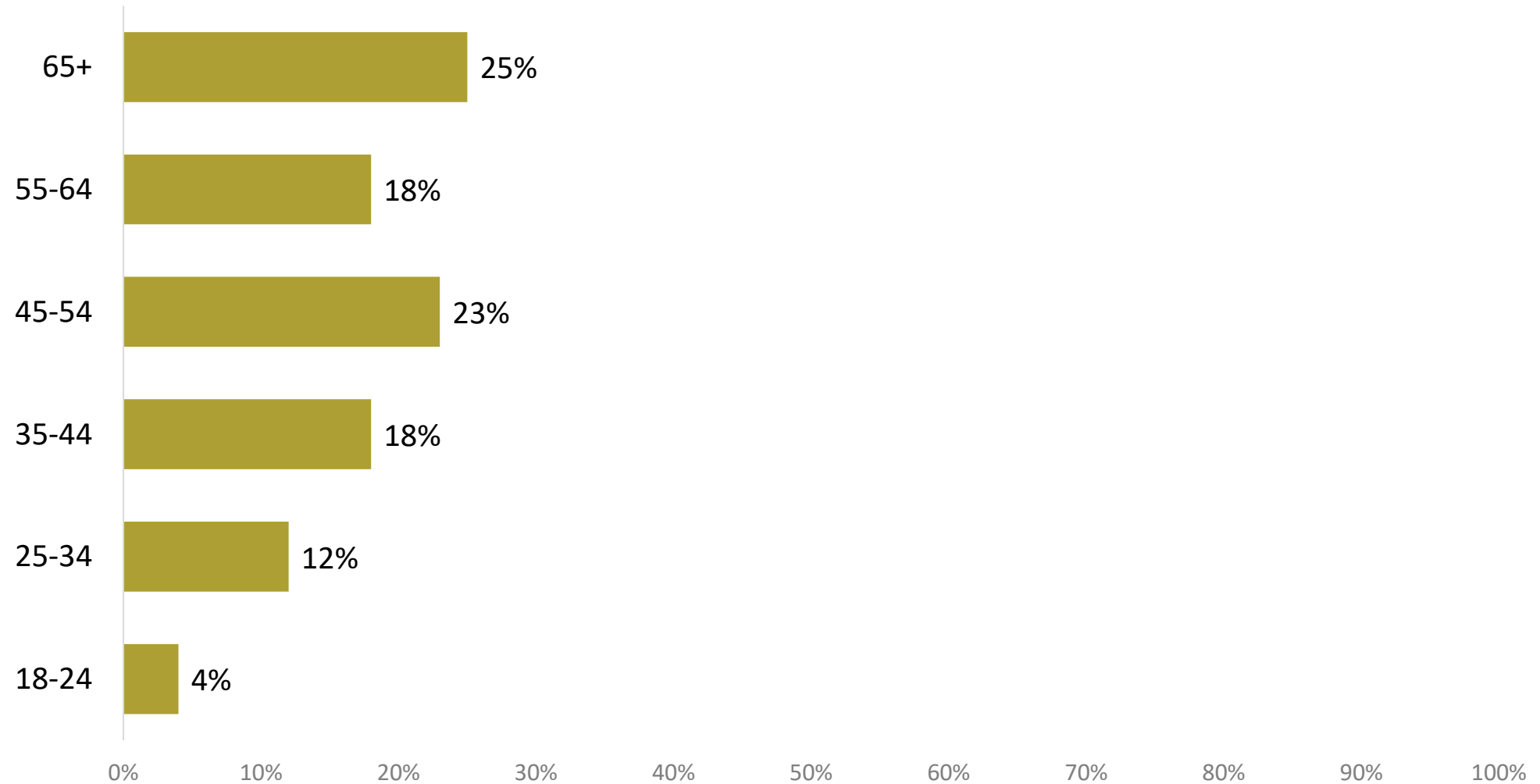
- 1) Fill out the paper survey and return directly to School Perceptions
or
- 2) Take the survey online with a one-time-use code

Survey Information

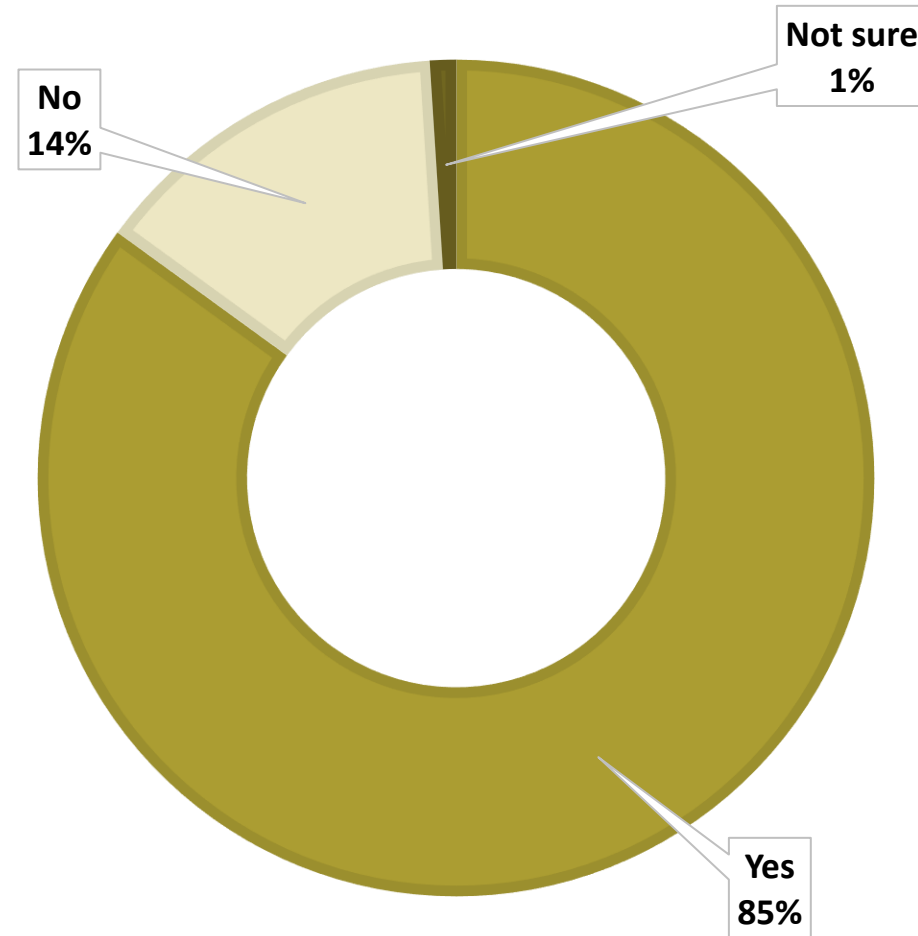


- **October-November 2022** survey window
- **478** total respondents
- **22%** response rate
- **+/- 4.6%** margin of error

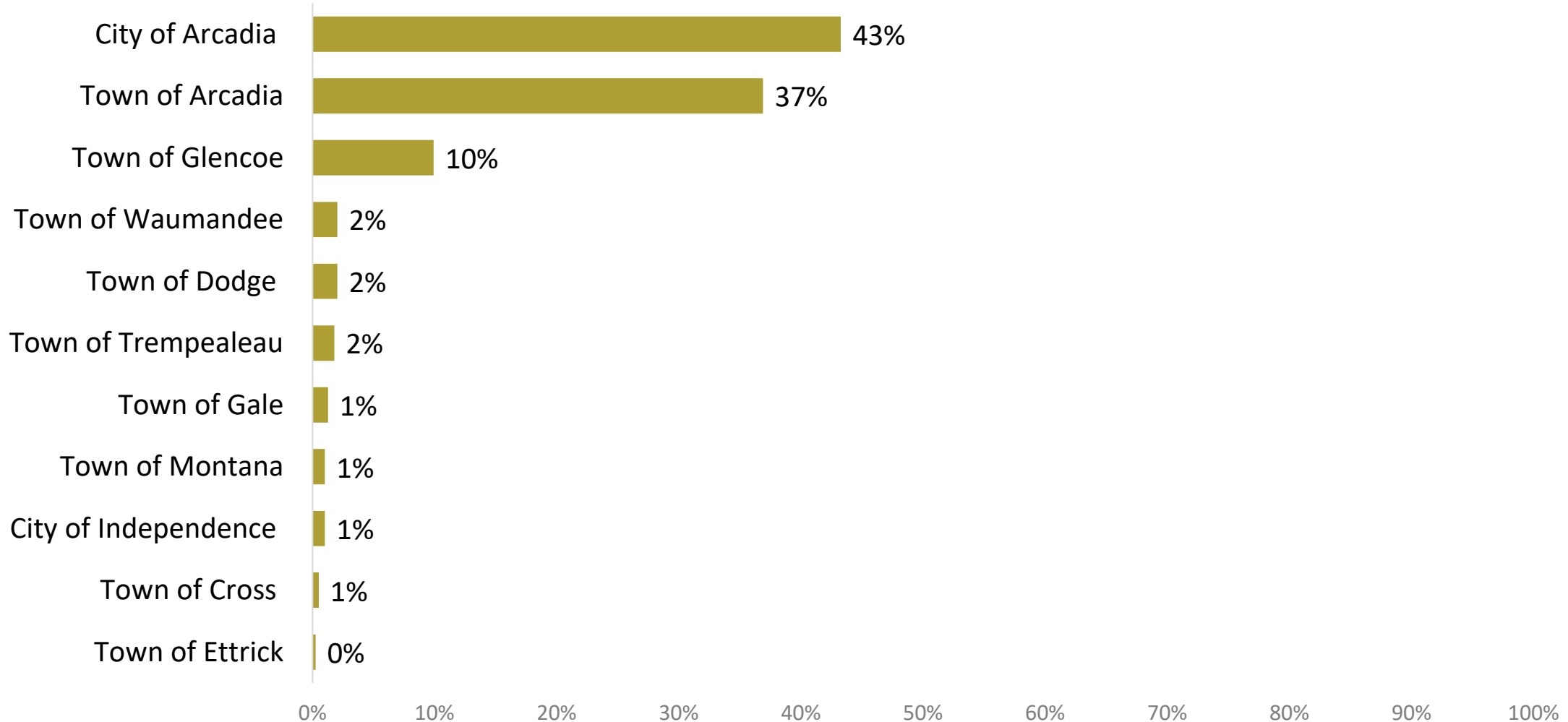
What is your age?



Is your primary residence in the School District of Arcadia?



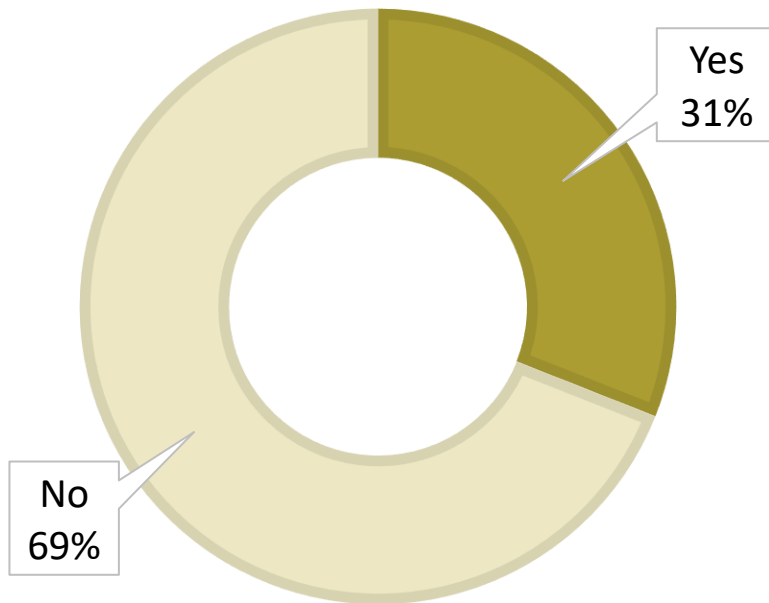
In which municipality do you live?



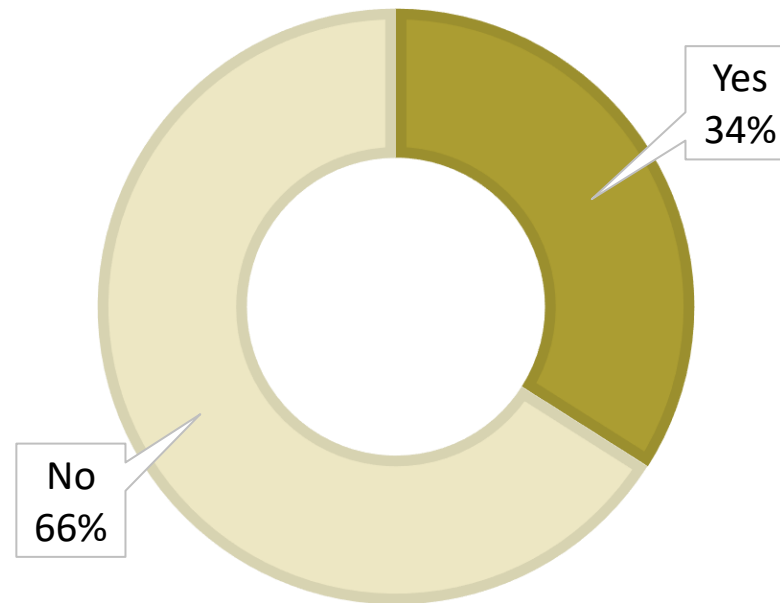
Respondent Information



Are you an employee of the School District of Arcadia?



Do you have children attending a school in the District?



Funding Background



There are two types of referendums voters can approve to provide districts with additional funding:

1. An operational referendum is used to fund daily operations, including programs and services. The District has not pursued this type of funding in over 30 years.
2. A capital (facilities) referendum allows a district to issue debt (take out a loan) to pay for major facility improvements. A capital referendum is typically financed over 20 years.

What are our current tax rates?

Over the last 10 years, our mill rate (which is used to calculate the school's portion of local property taxes) has declined. This occurred even after voters approved a referendum in 2018, which partially funded the Wanek Center.

Funding Background (cont'd)



What are our financial challenges?

- State aid has not kept up with increasing costs (transportation, utilities, and services for special education).
- We have not received any additional state funding on a per-student basis in the past two years.
- The state has not increased the amount of revenue school districts can receive.

What is the District proposing?

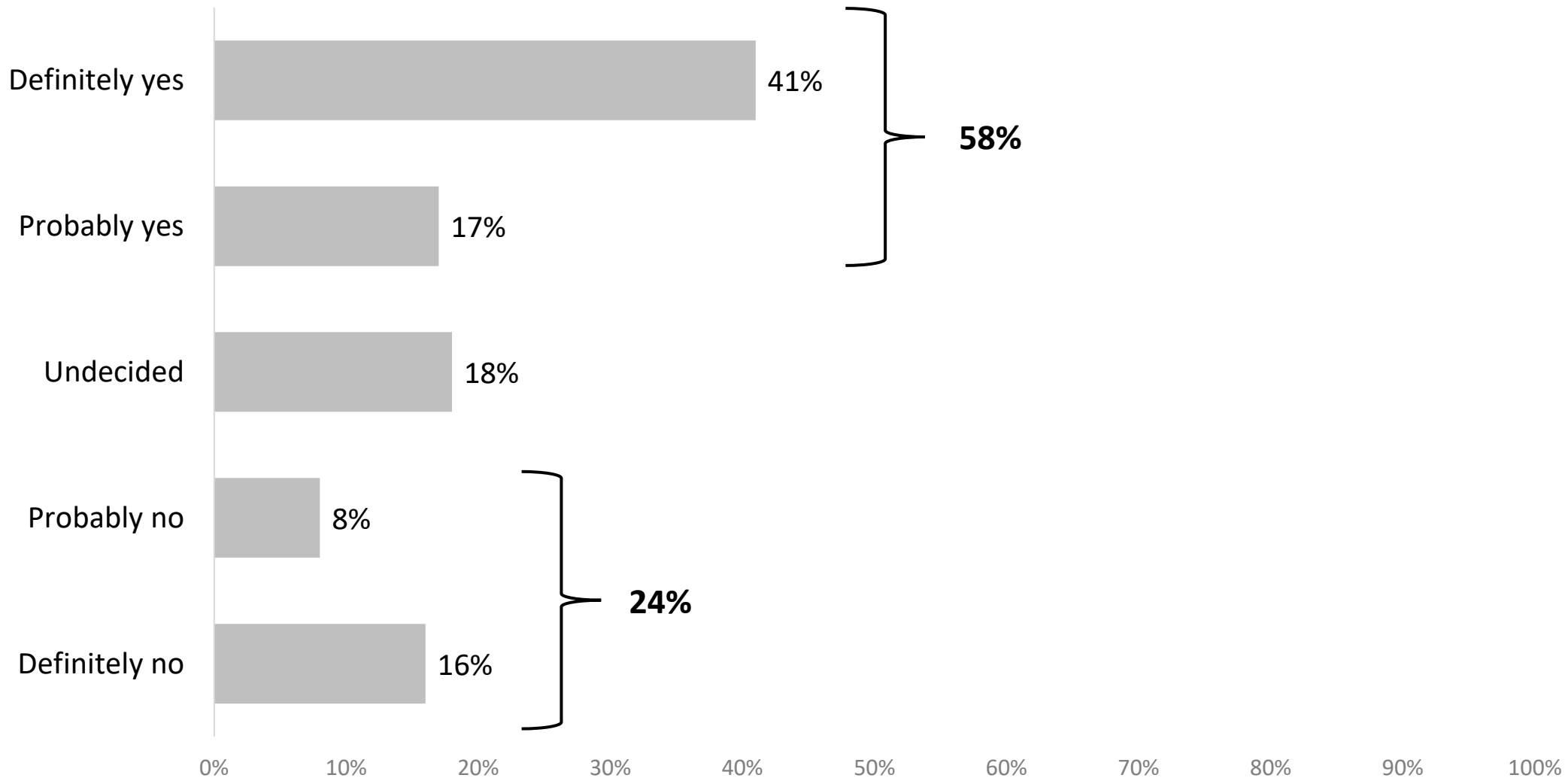
After studying our needs and financial projections, we are asking voters to consider an operational referendum for \$350,000 each year for three years to **maintain current programs and services**.

This would not increase the property tax mill rate over the current level.



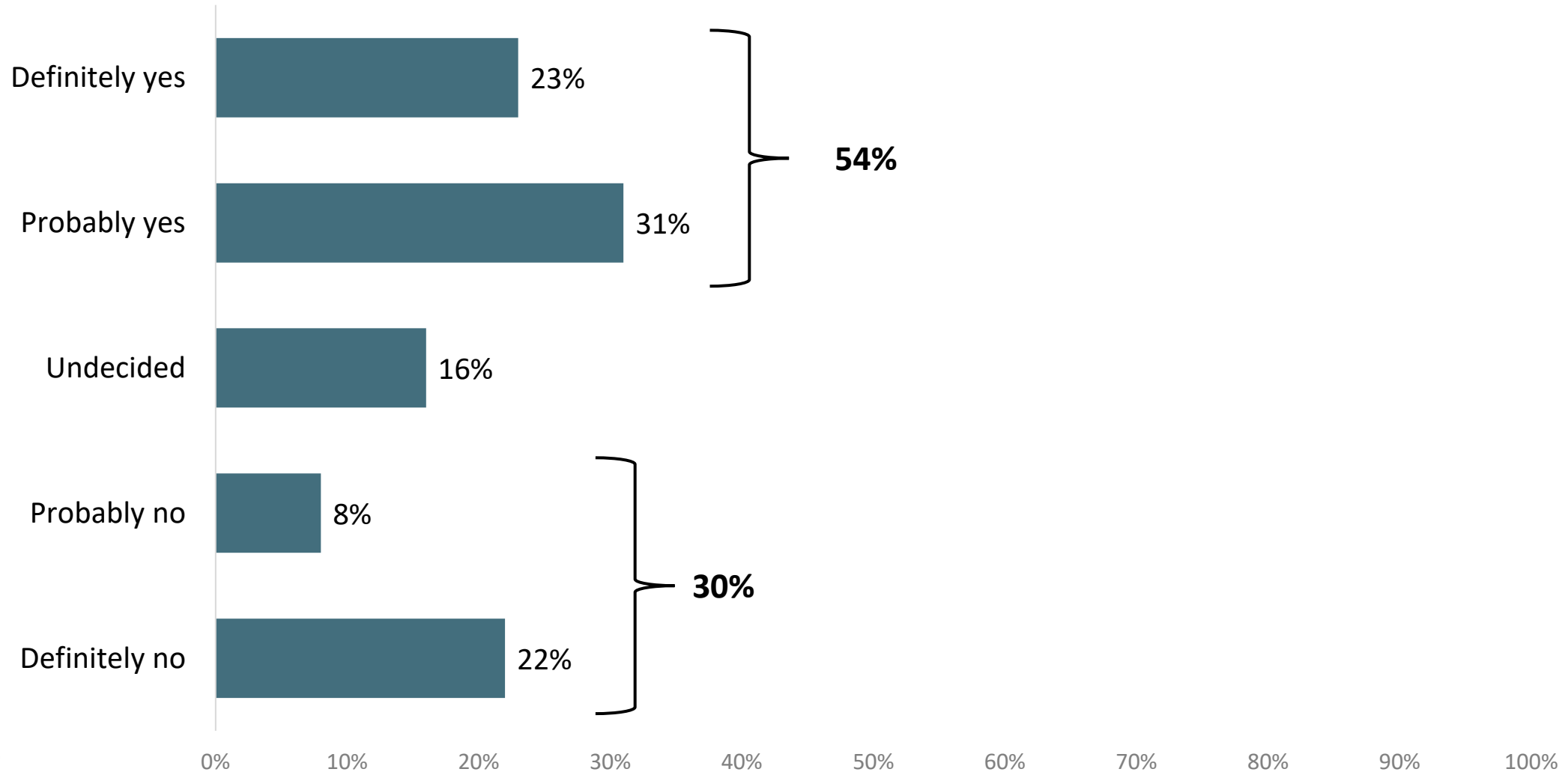
Results & Analysis

Would you support a three-year, \$350,000 operational referendum to maintain current programs and services? (Staff Residents)

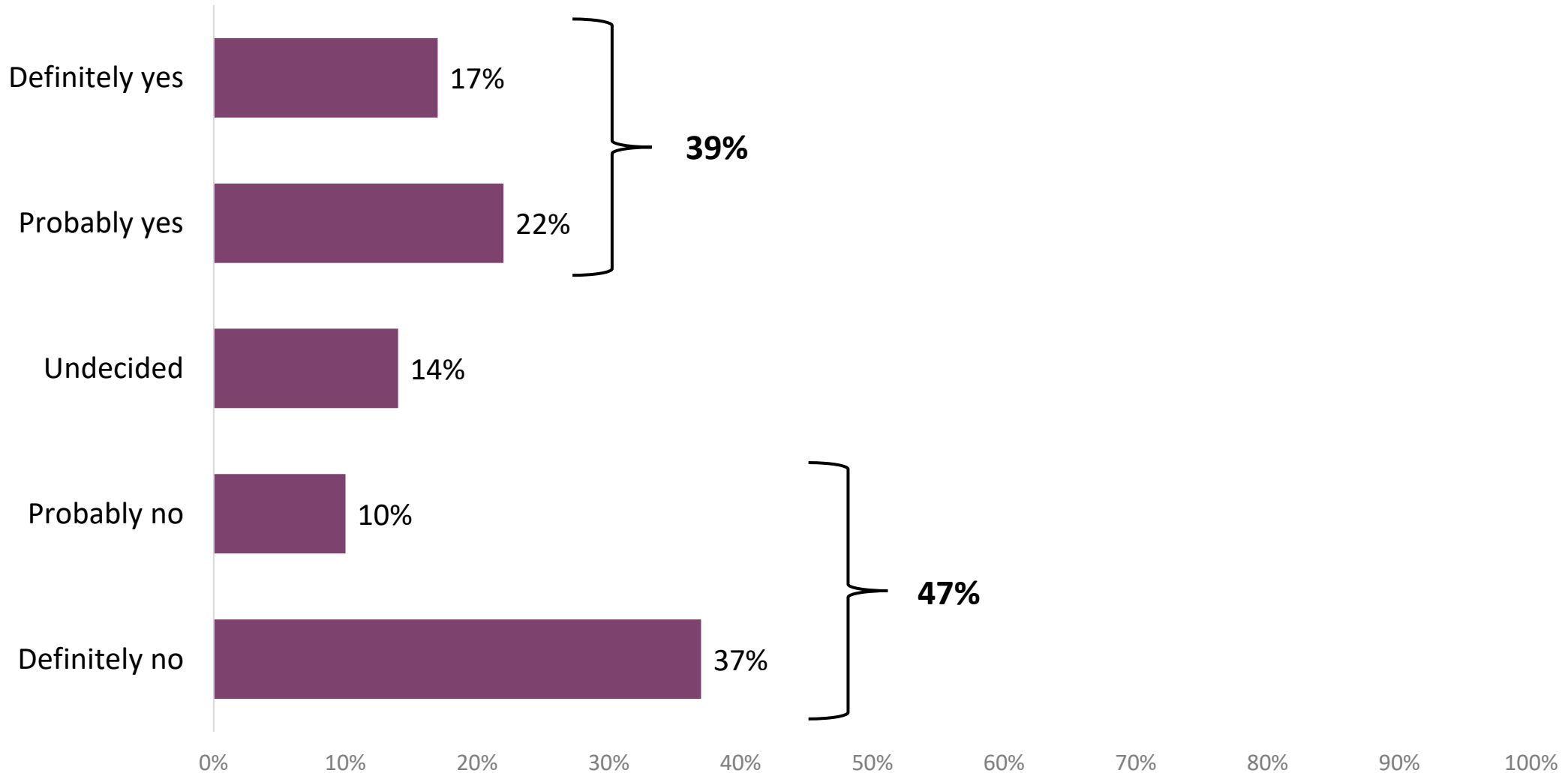


Would you support a three-year, \$350,000 operational referendum to maintain current programs and services?

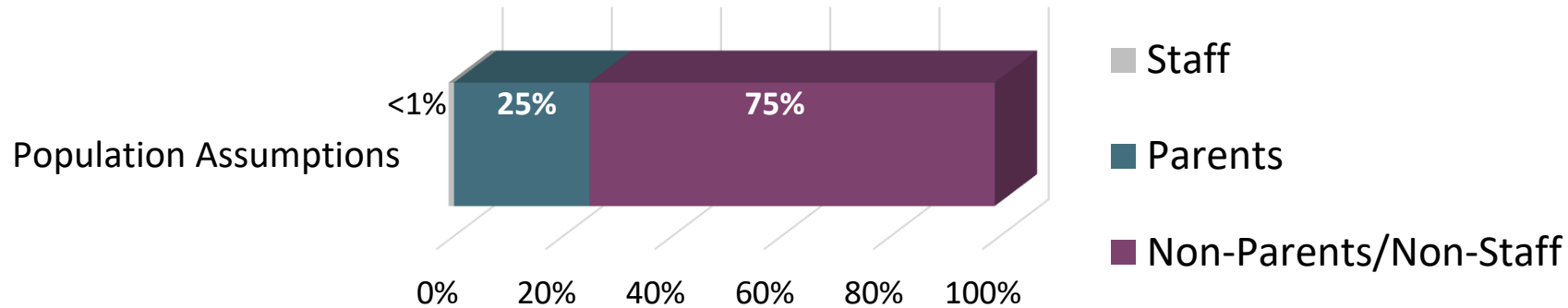
(Parent Residents)



Would you support a three-year, \$350,000 operational referendum to maintain current programs and services? (Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents)



Additional Analysis: Would you support a three-year, \$350,000 operational referendum to maintain current programs and services?



Weighted support:

$$0.25 (54\%) + 0.75 (39\%) = \underline{\mathbf{42.8\%}}$$

Weighted support with 1/3 of Undecided:

$$0.25 (59\%) + 0.75 (43\%) = \underline{\mathbf{47.0\%}}$$

Facility Background



Earlier this year, the District hired an outside firm to assess the condition of our buildings and grounds. Our most urgent needs are at the elementary school. Findings from that assessment are below.

Facility Background (cont'd)



- The elementary site is in a designated floodplain.
- Portions of the elementary building are nearly 110 years old.
- Parts of the heating system are nearly 60 years old and are inefficient.
- Plumbing throughout the building leaks.
- Some restrooms are 60 years old, are outdated, and are not designed for our youngest learners.
- The electrical system needs to be replaced, especially in the 1914 section.



Facility Background (cont'd)



The Board of Education and District leaders studied expanding the downtown elementary site. However, this was not a viable option for several reasons:

- We do not feel it is wise to expand further into a floodplain.
- If we were to expand into the floodplain, it would require a substantial investment to raise the site.
- There is only one entrance/exit into this area, so expansion would make traffic congestion worse.

Recommended Plan



The District recommends constructing a new school at the middle school-high school site. This plan would reconfigure grade levels and allow us to maintain our historic downtown school while providing space for future enrollment growth.

Recommended Plan (cont'd)



Recommended Plan (cont'd)



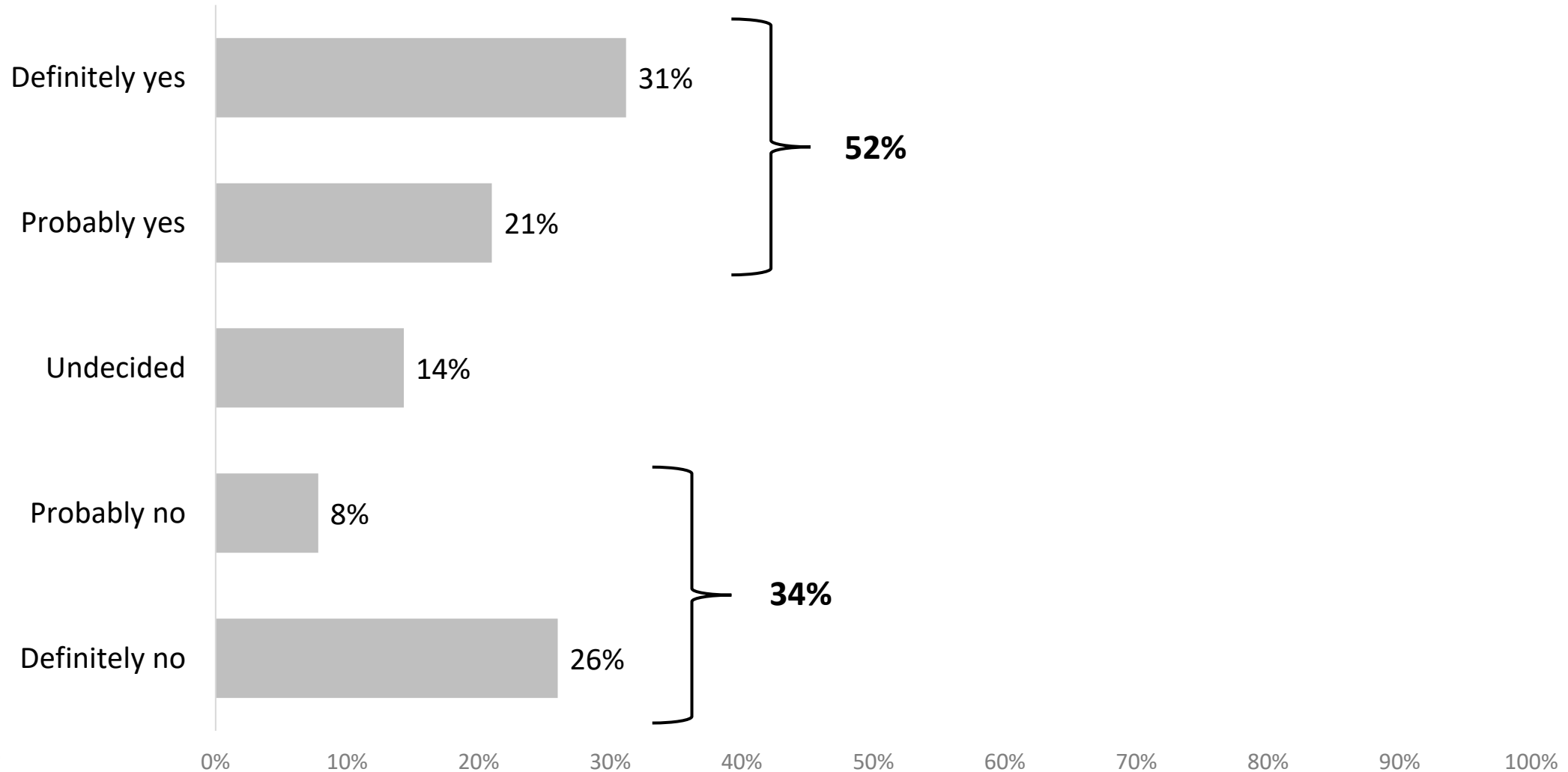
The recommended plan would:

- *Update the elementary school (Grades 4K-2) – \$7.9 million*
 - ✓ Replace major building systems, as needed, throughout the building (heating, ventilation, air conditioning/circulation, plumbing, and electrical).
 - ✓ Update some restrooms.
 - ✓ Convert the lunchroom into a flexible learning/commons space.
 - ✓ Remodel the locker rooms into classrooms.
 - ✓ Demolish the mobile classroom.
 - ✓ Allow for future student enrollment growth.
 - ✓ Reduce traffic congestion.
- *Build an intermediate school (Grades 3-5) – \$31.5 million*
 - ✓ Build classrooms, a gym, a cafeteria/kitchen, and learning support spaces.
 - ✓ Reconfigure traffic flow to ease congestion and improve safety for pedestrians.
 - ✓ Add parking and playground.
 - ✓ Have room to expand, if needed.
- *Reconfigure middle school grade levels to free up space (Grades 6-8)*
 - ✓ This would reduce overcrowding in this building and would not require renovations/updates.

Estimated cost of the recommended plan: \$39.4 million

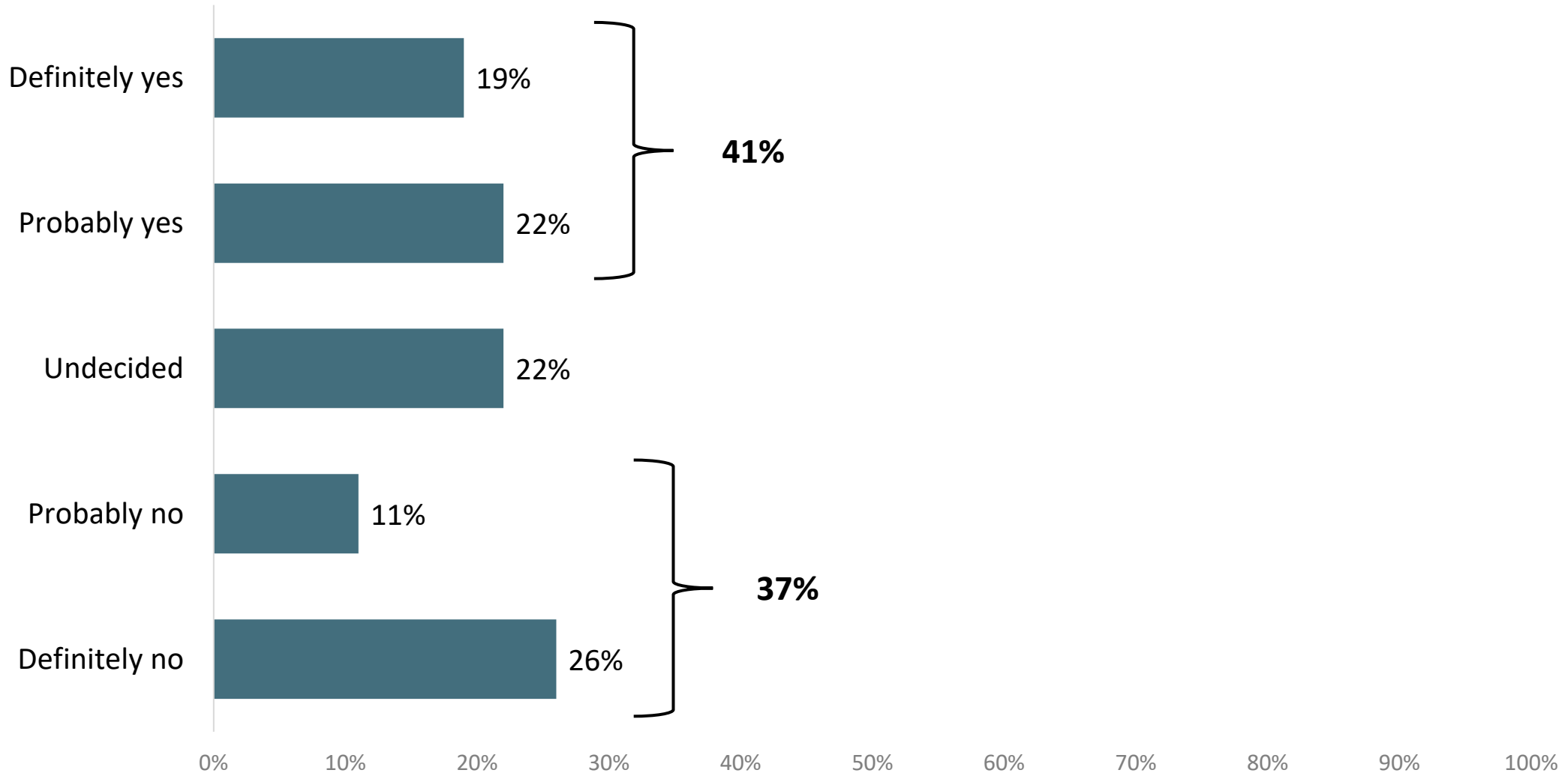
Would you support a \$39.4 million capital referendum to fund the recommended plan?

(Staff Residents)



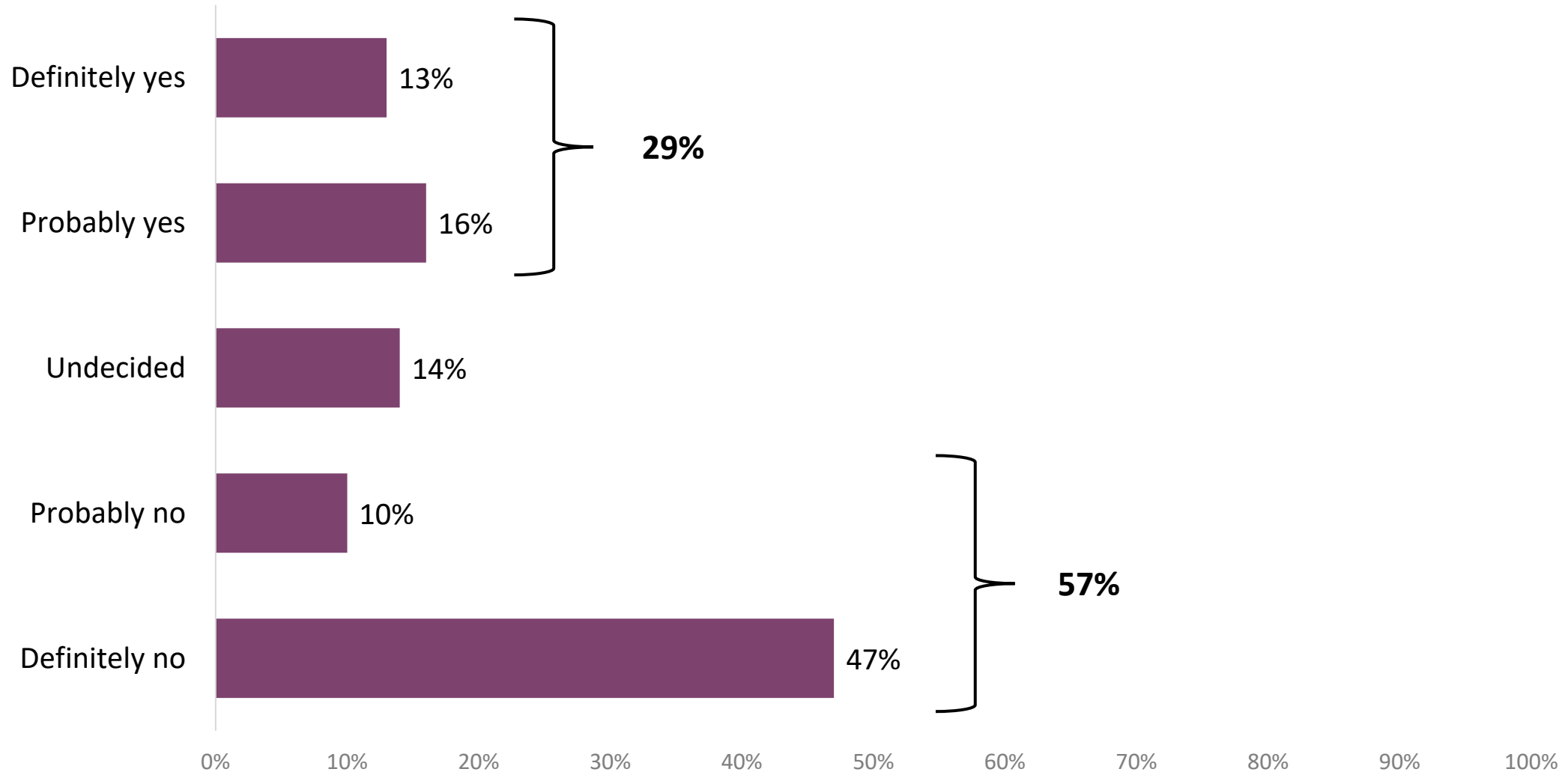
Would you support a \$39.4 million capital referendum to fund the recommended plan?

(Parent Residents)

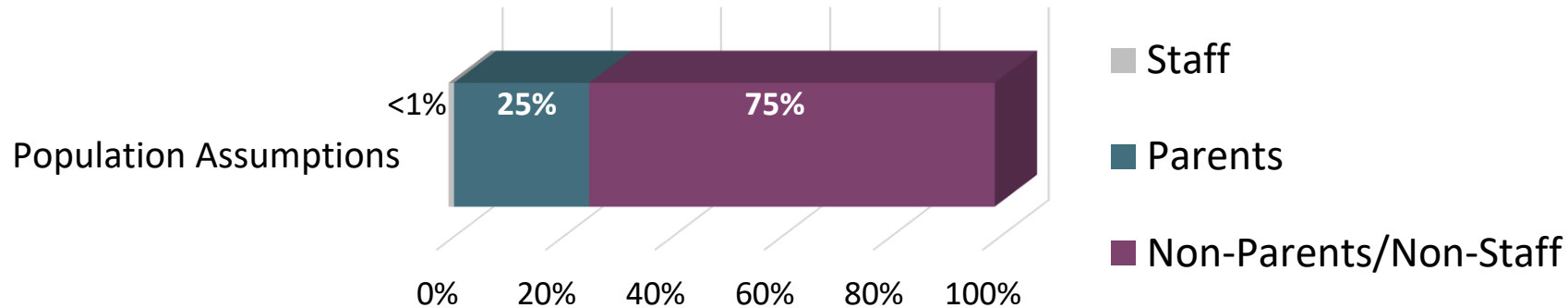


Would you support a \$39.4 million capital referendum to fund the recommended plan?

(Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents)



Additional Analysis: Would you support a \$39.4 million capital referendum to fund the recommended plan?



Weighted support:

$$0.25 (41\%) + 0.75 (29\%) = \underline{\mathbf{32.0\%}}$$

Weighted support with 1/3 of Undecided:

$$0.25 (48\%) + 0.75 (33\%) = \underline{\mathbf{36.8\%}}$$

What did we learn?



Operational question:

- When including 1/3 of Undecided respondents, the 50% threshold is within the margin of error.
- The District could consider taking the operational referendum to ballot and allowing voters the final call.

Facilities question:

- If held today, the recommended plan as described in the survey would likely not be supported by voters.





Questions or Comments?





Thank you!

