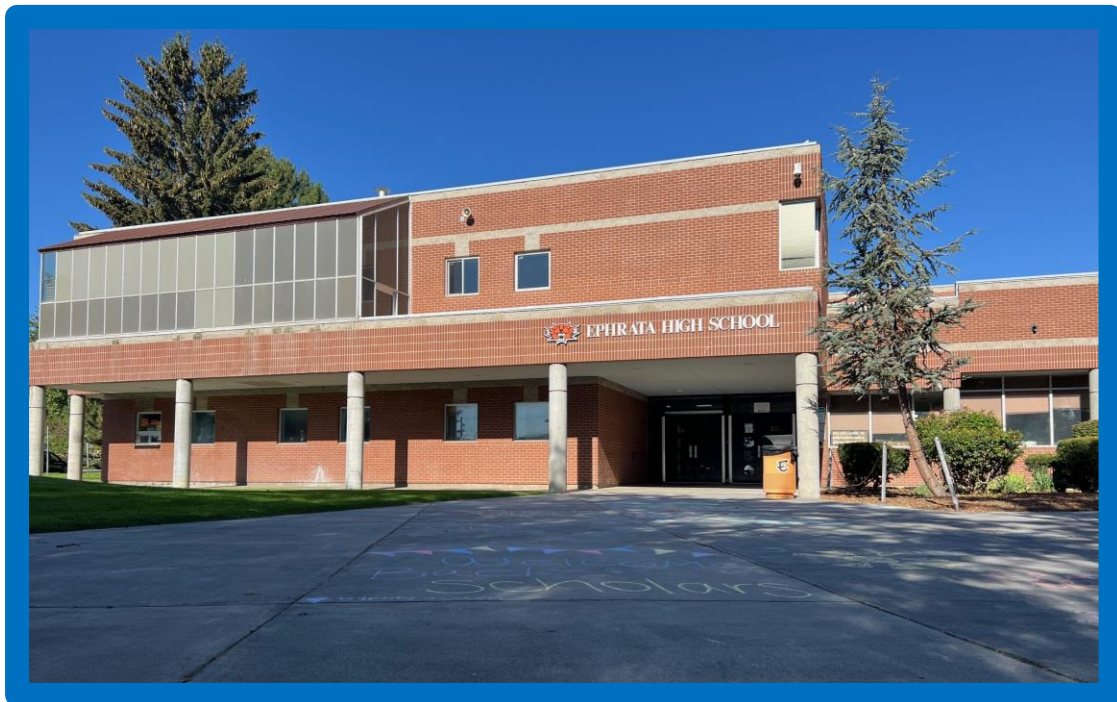


CRITICAL DATA STRATEGIES, LLC

Overall Market Study Summary and Insights for Ephrata School District

March 2025



Critical Data Strategies, LLC
620 South Washington Street
Spokane, Washington 99204
CRITICAL-DATA.COM



Introduction

Ephrata School District desired to gather opinions and input from parents/guardians, district residents and leaders within the community to understand their perceptions, concerns, and to identify issues most important as the district continues to grow.

In response to the above, Critical Data, a 38-year-old Spokane, Washington based specialized market research and planning firm, developed and completed a Community Market Study. This study consisted of the **completion of 387 total interviews** within the community:

- Completing interviews with **251 parents and guardians** who reside within the Ephrata School District, including families with elementary, middle, and high school students currently attending schools within the district.
- Completing interviews with **120 community residents** who do not currently have students registered in schools within the Ephrata School District.
- Completing executive interviews with **16 key business and community leaders** identified by Ephrata School District who work within the district.
- Of these surveys and interviews, 20 were completed in Spanish.

Interviews were completed utilizing both one-on-one executive telephone interviews as well as a customized AI online chat survey tool allowing respondents to participate via use of their cell phone, laptop/computer, or tablet/notebook.

This report contains the findings from each area of study as well as overall study conclusions.

Summary and Conclusions

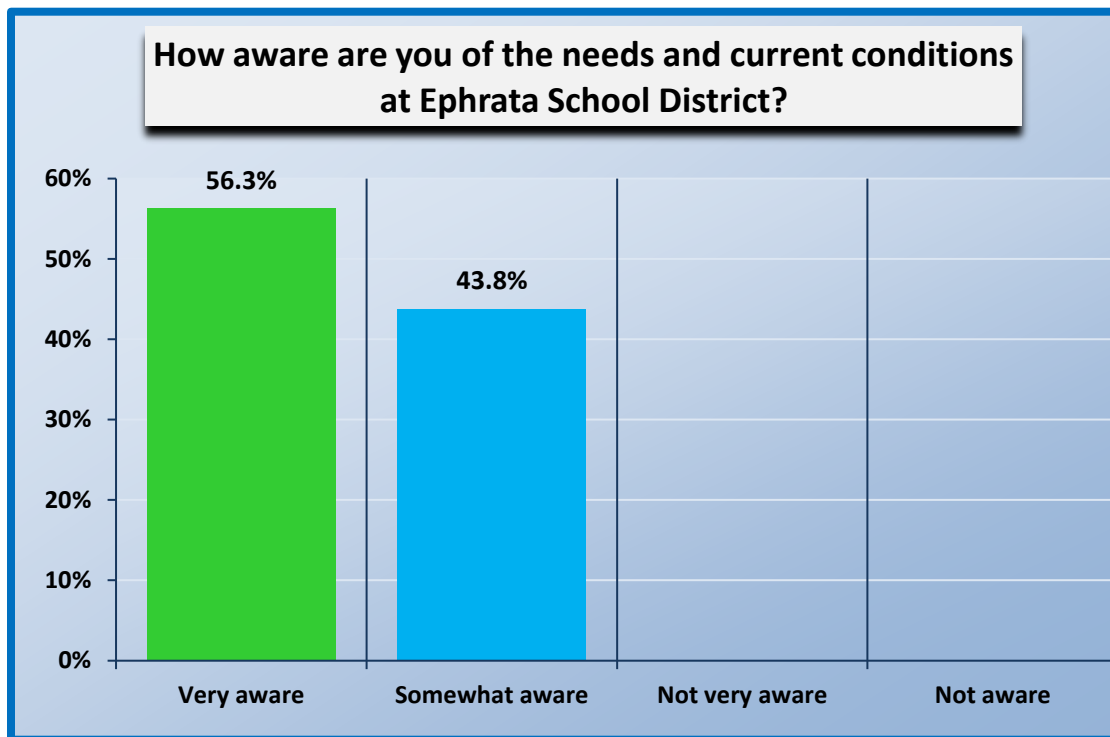
Community Leader Interviews

- From a list provided to us by Ephrata School District, Critical Data completed scheduled one-on-one executive style telephone interviews with 16 community leaders within the Ephrata Community.

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Arturo Mayo	Unidos Nueva Alianza Foundation & Migrant/Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee
Bruce Reim	Mayor
Charles Flynn	EHS ASB President
Eric Homer	Clear Risk Solutions
Eric Koch	Police Chief
Kathleen Allstot	Retired/Former City Councilperson
Kevin Burgess	County Commissioner
Marichuy Alvizar	Unidos Nueva Alianza Foundation (UNA)
Mike Donovan	Ephrata Senior Center Chairperson
Mike Scellick	Ephrata Athletic Club / Local Historian
Pam Leseman	Pita Pit
Randy Bracht	Former Reporter
RJ Fronsman	AAU Leadership
Sheryl Dotson	Owner, The Bookery Café
Ty Ehrman	Grant PUD Chief Customer Officer
Yuritzi Chavez	Owner, Heavenly Roofing

(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- 37.5% of these leaders currently have children enrolled in schools in the Ephrata School District.
- 56.3% of the leaders interviewed are very aware and 43.8% are somewhat aware of current issues facing the district such as decreasing enrollment, funding issues, and facility issues. Thus, all leaders interviewed have a level of awareness of issues facing the district.

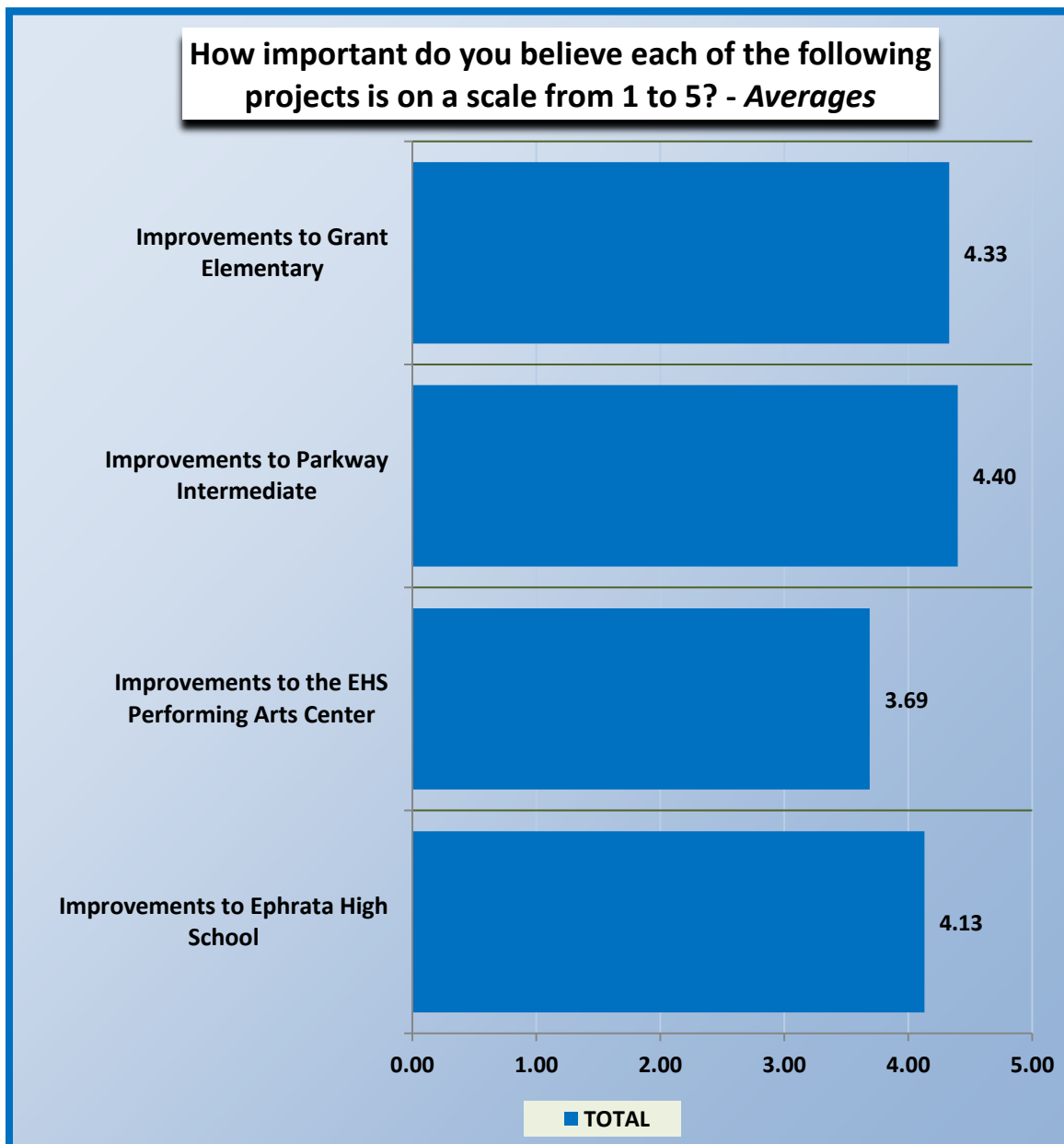


- Leaders were asked what they see as the district's greatest current needs. While a number of issues were raised, the most mentioned needs were:
 - Update/replace Grant and Parkway schools
 - Need for work at the high school
 - Need for more room/open areas for students

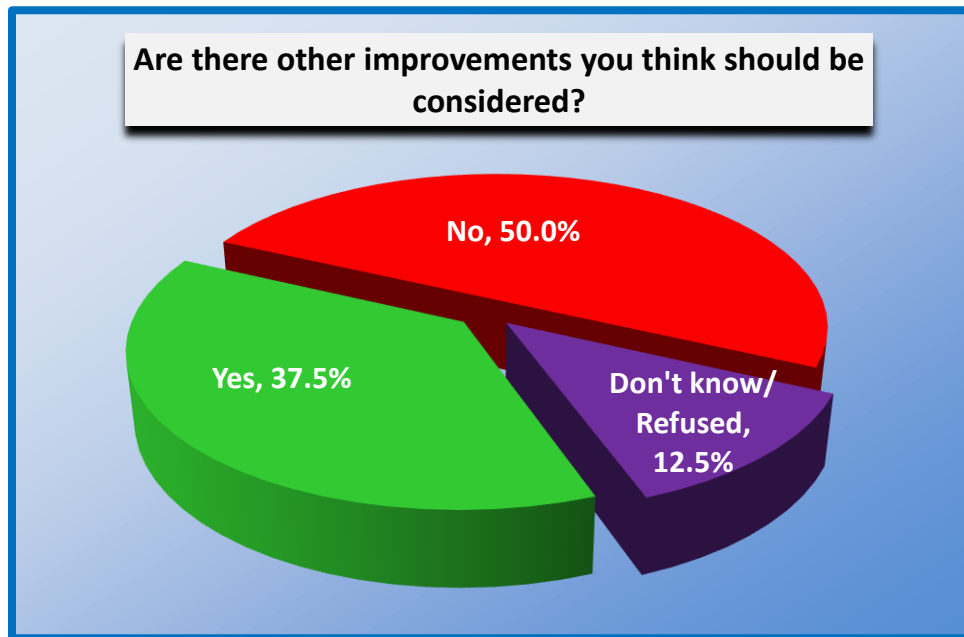


(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- Leaders were provided with four district improvement projects, then asked to rate each in its overall importance on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important). It is important to note that leaders rated all four projects as important:
 - Making improvements to Parkway Intermediate 4.40
 - Making improvements to Grant Elementary 4.33
 - Making improvements to Ephrata High School 4.13
 - Making improvements to EHS Performing Arts Center 3.69



(Community Leader Interviews continued)



4a). If 'Yes,' What other improvements do you think should be considered?

Q4 RESPONSE	RESPONSE
Yes	Build sport fields so our kids won't have to travel all the time.
Yes	Extracurricular activities should be considered. The gym is too small for bigger or larger events, there is a lack of seating, and it's not big enough to host tournaments. We lack gym space. There has been no improvement to the gyms, and the performing
Yes	Get the kids out of the portables, get them out. I think that is only at Grant, probably.
Yes	I think issues with enough room in each classroom, more teaches, and less students in each classroom.
Yes	Parking issues should be looked at, and the tennis courts are in bad condition.
Yes	We probably need some help with the transportation barn, since there is not a lot of space for safety.

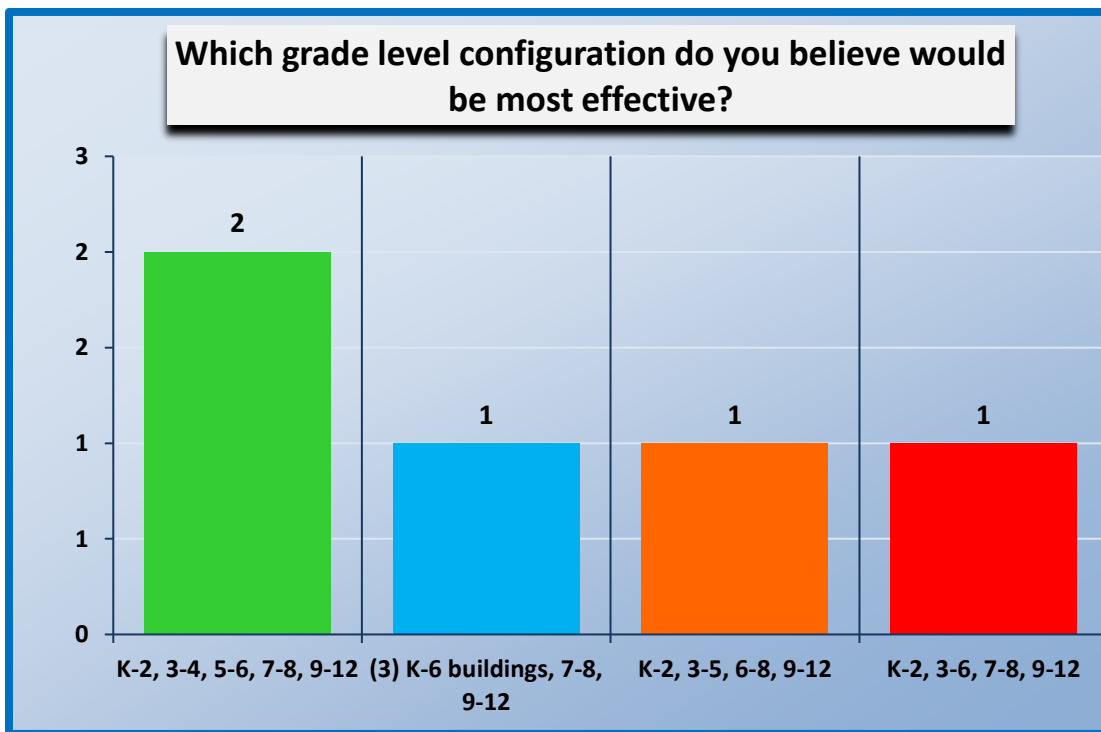
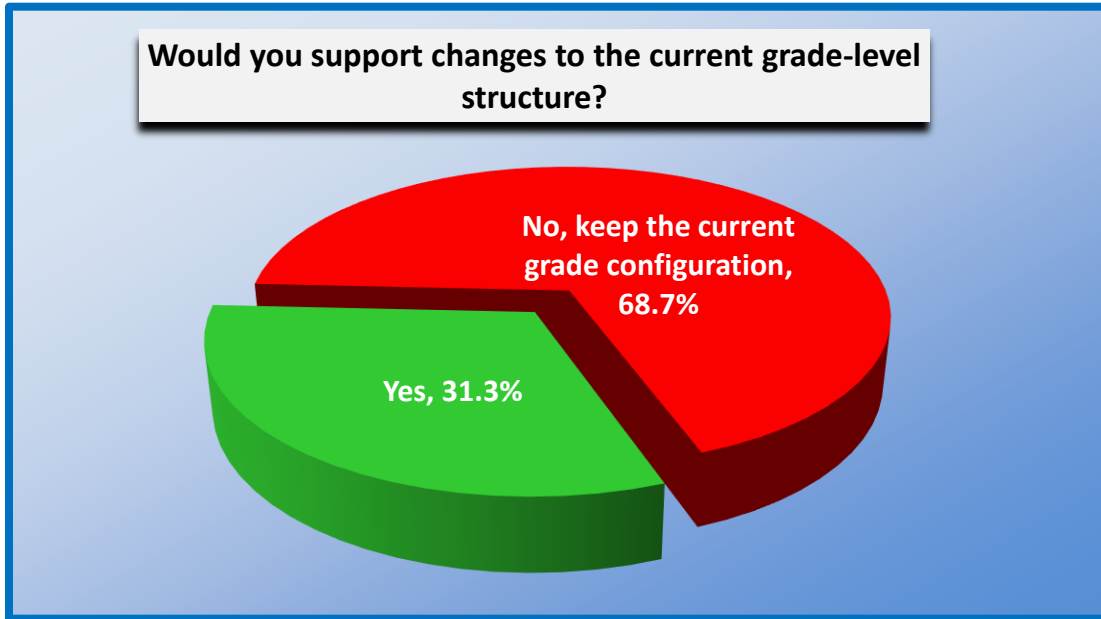
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Q4 RESPONSE	RESPONSE
Don't know/Refused	The schools are outdated.
No	I think they need to finish what is started.
No	I think what they have on their plate right now is good.
No	Safety and security issues.



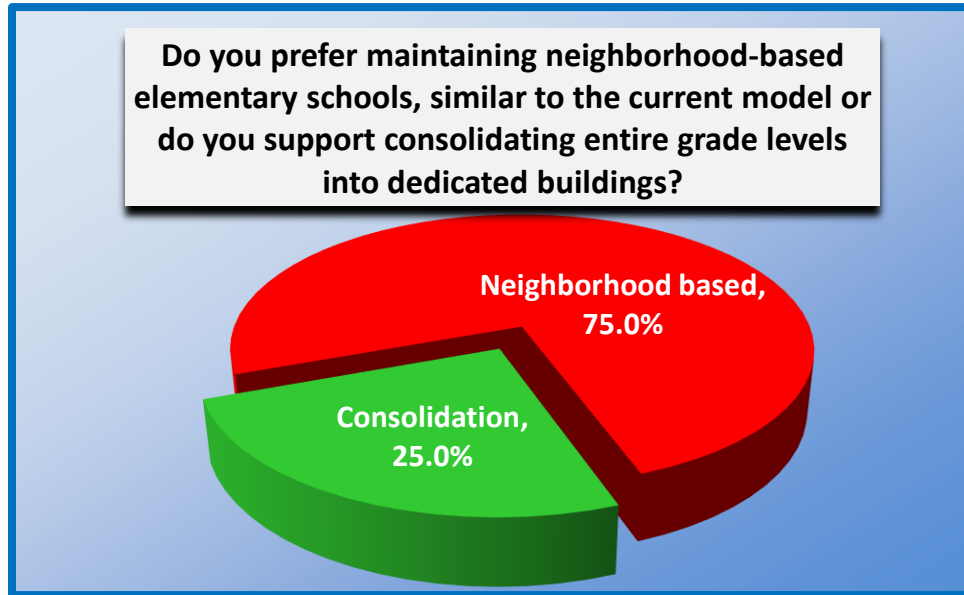
(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- Community leaders interviewed were asked if they support changes to the current grade-level structure. 68.7% are in favor of retaining the current grade configuration.

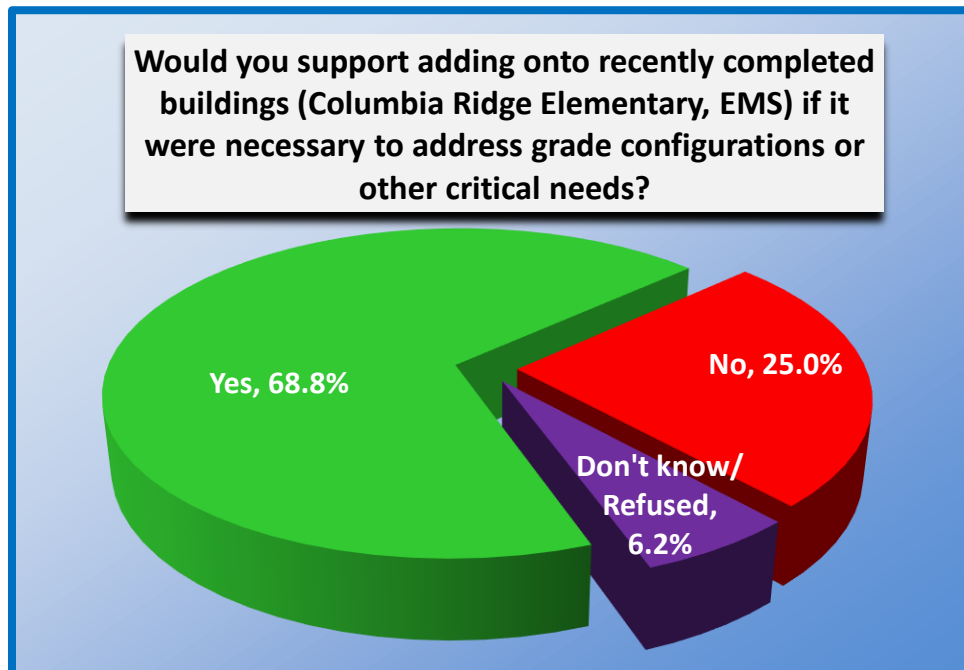


(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- Community leaders were asked if they support neighborhood-based elementary schools similar to the current model or consolidating entire grade levels into dedicated buildings. 75.0% responded that they favor neighborhood-based schools.



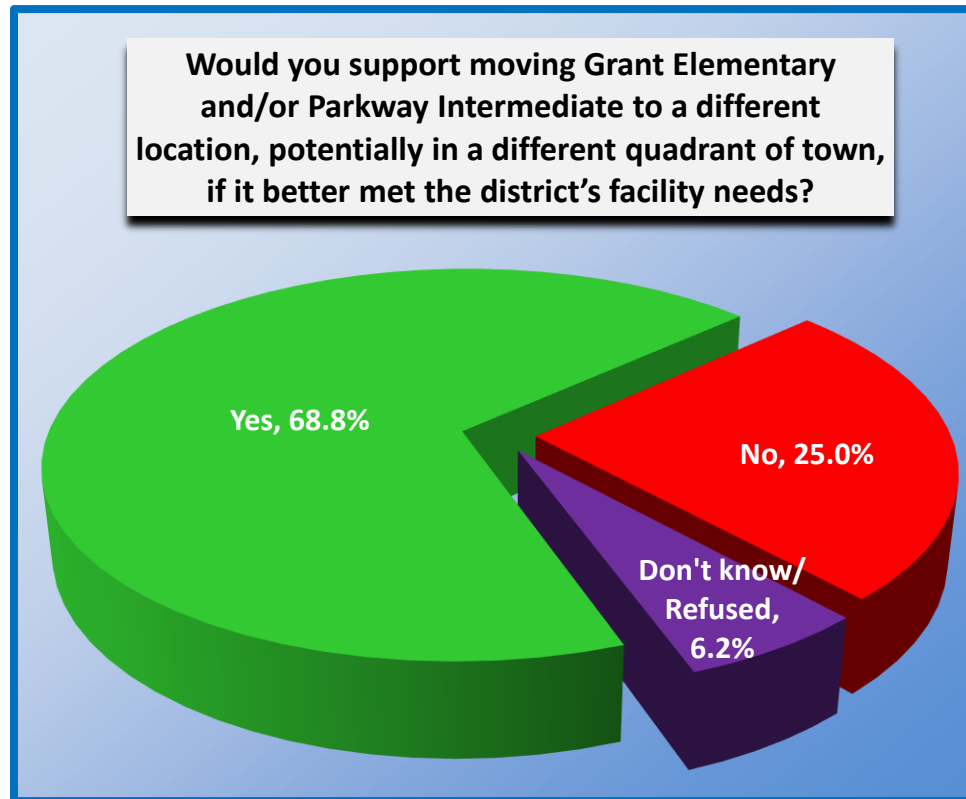
- 68.8% of leaders support adding onto recently completed buildings if it were necessary to address grade configurations or other critical needs.





(Community Leader Interviews continued)

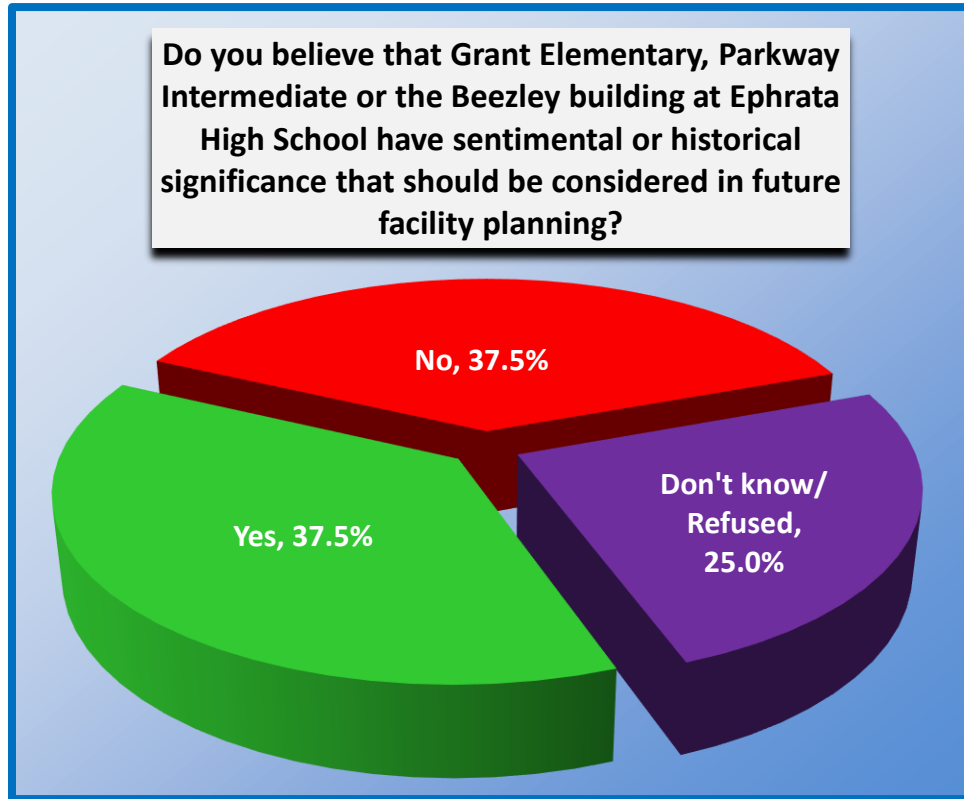
- 68.8% of the leaders surveyed support moving Grant Elementary and/or Parkway Intermediate to a different location – even to a different part of town – if it better met the district’s facility needs.





(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- Leaders were evenly split as to whether Grant Elementary, Parkway Intermediate, or the Beezley Building have sentimental or historical significance.

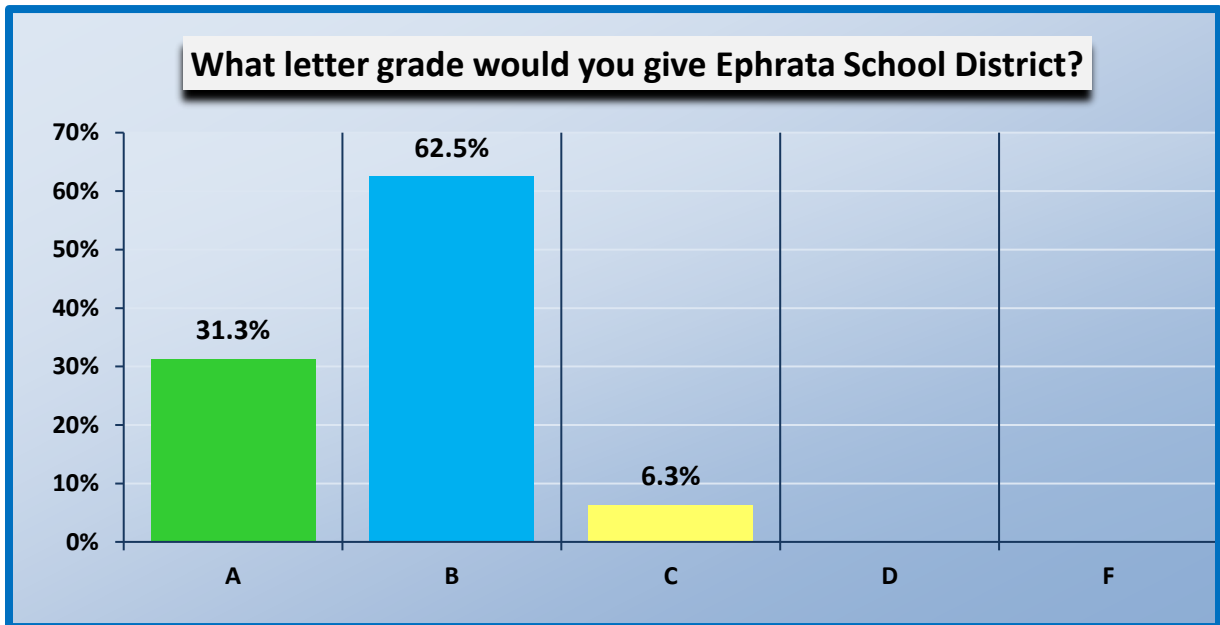




(Community Leader Interviews continued)

- The community leaders interviewed were asked to provide a letter grade for the Ephrata School District. 31.3% or 5 leaders graded the district an “A”, and 10 leaders or 62.5% offered a “B” grade. No one graded the district a “D” or “F.”

RESPONSE	TIMES MENTIONED	PERCENTAGES
A	5	31.3%
B	10	62.5%
C	1	6.3%
D	0	0.0%
F	0	0.0%
TOTAL	16	100%



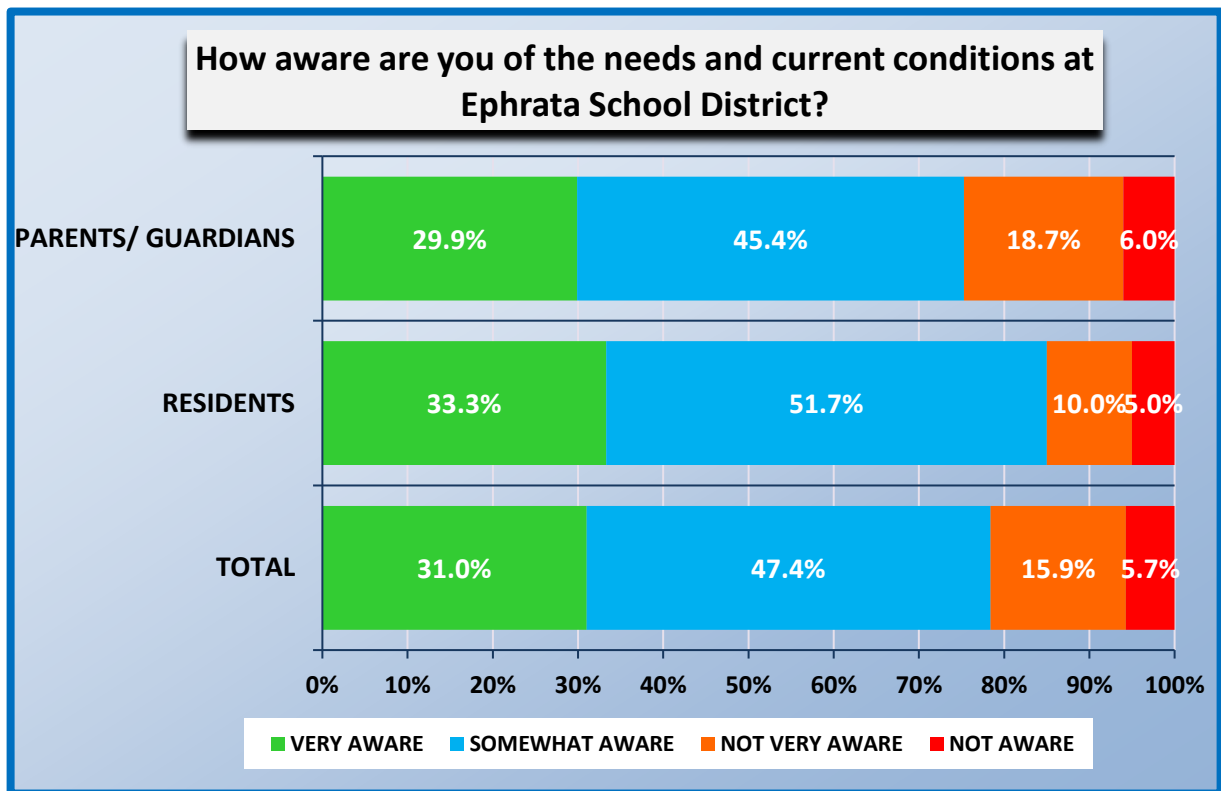
“I want them to know that I am grateful to live in a community where pride in the community and the schools is high. The schools do a great job, the district supports the schools and does great work in our community. I just want to thank them for doing that work especially in this environment today. People seem to see the bad but rarely see the good and I just want the district to know that people see the good.”

- Ephrata Community Leader

Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews

Critical Data completed customized AI online chat surveys with **251** parents and guardians who have children in and reside within the Ephrata School District, and also with **120** residents who live within the Ephrata School District boundary area. Of those interviews, **20** (5.4%) were completed in Spanish.

- 75.3% of the parents or guardians interviewed are very aware (29.9%) or somewhat aware (45.4%) of current issues facing the district such as decreasing enrollment, funding issues, and facility issues. 24.7% or one parent in four stated that they are not very aware or not aware at all of these issues.
- Non-parent residents surveyed within the district have a higher level of awareness of these issues. 33.3% are very aware and 51.7% are somewhat aware of the issues facing the district. Thus, 85.0% have some level of awareness, which is very high compared to other community residents in similar surveys.



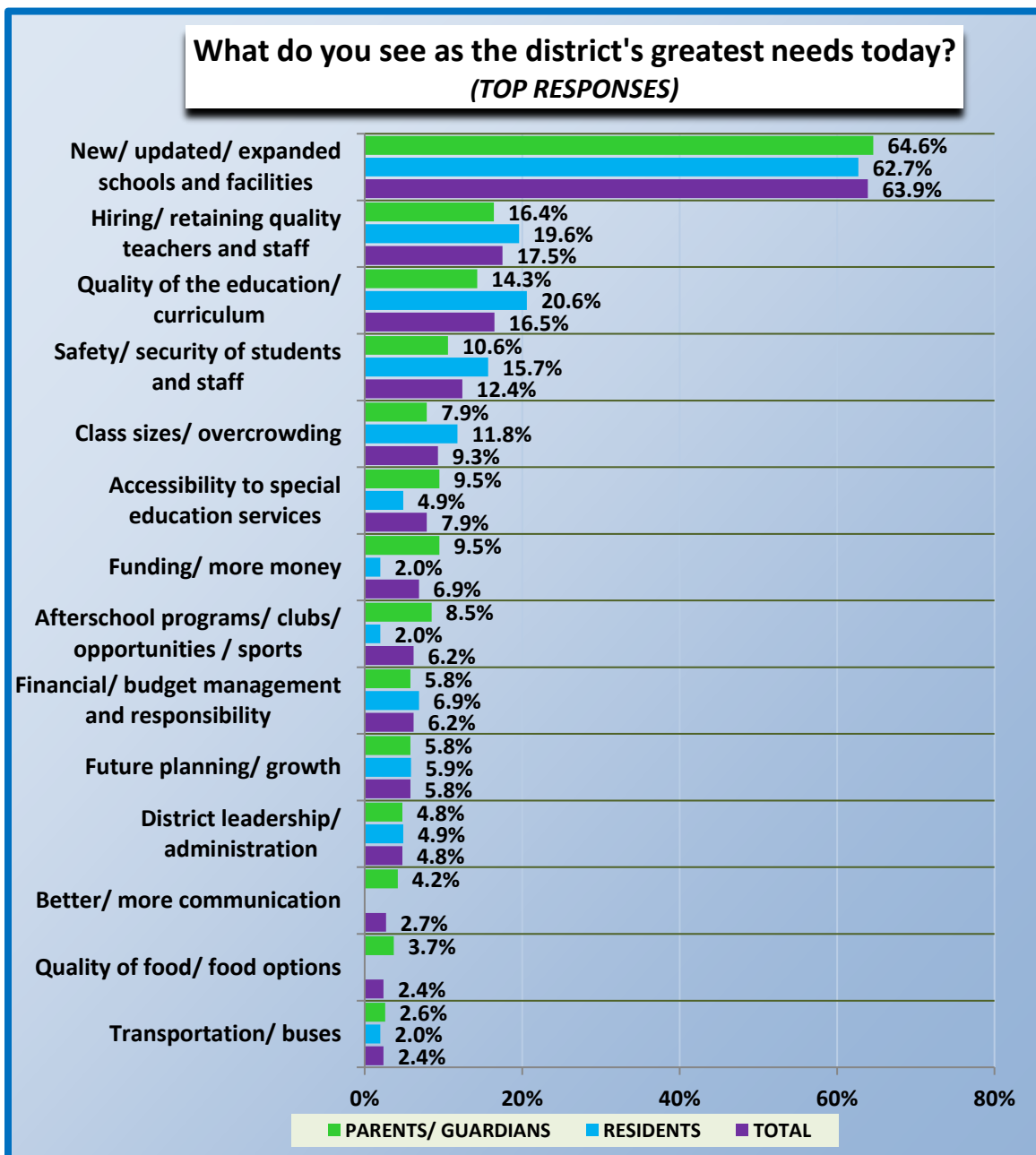


(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

- Parents/guardians and district residents were asked to identify the district's greatest needs. Of the numerous needs identified, the top three needs identified by each group are shown below:

PARENTS/ GUARDIANS	
New/updated schools/facilities	64.6%
Hiring quality teachers/staff	16.4%
Quality education/curriculum	14.3%

RESIDENTS	
New/updated schools/facilities	62.7%
Quality education/curriculum	20.6%
Hiring quality teachers/staff	19.6%



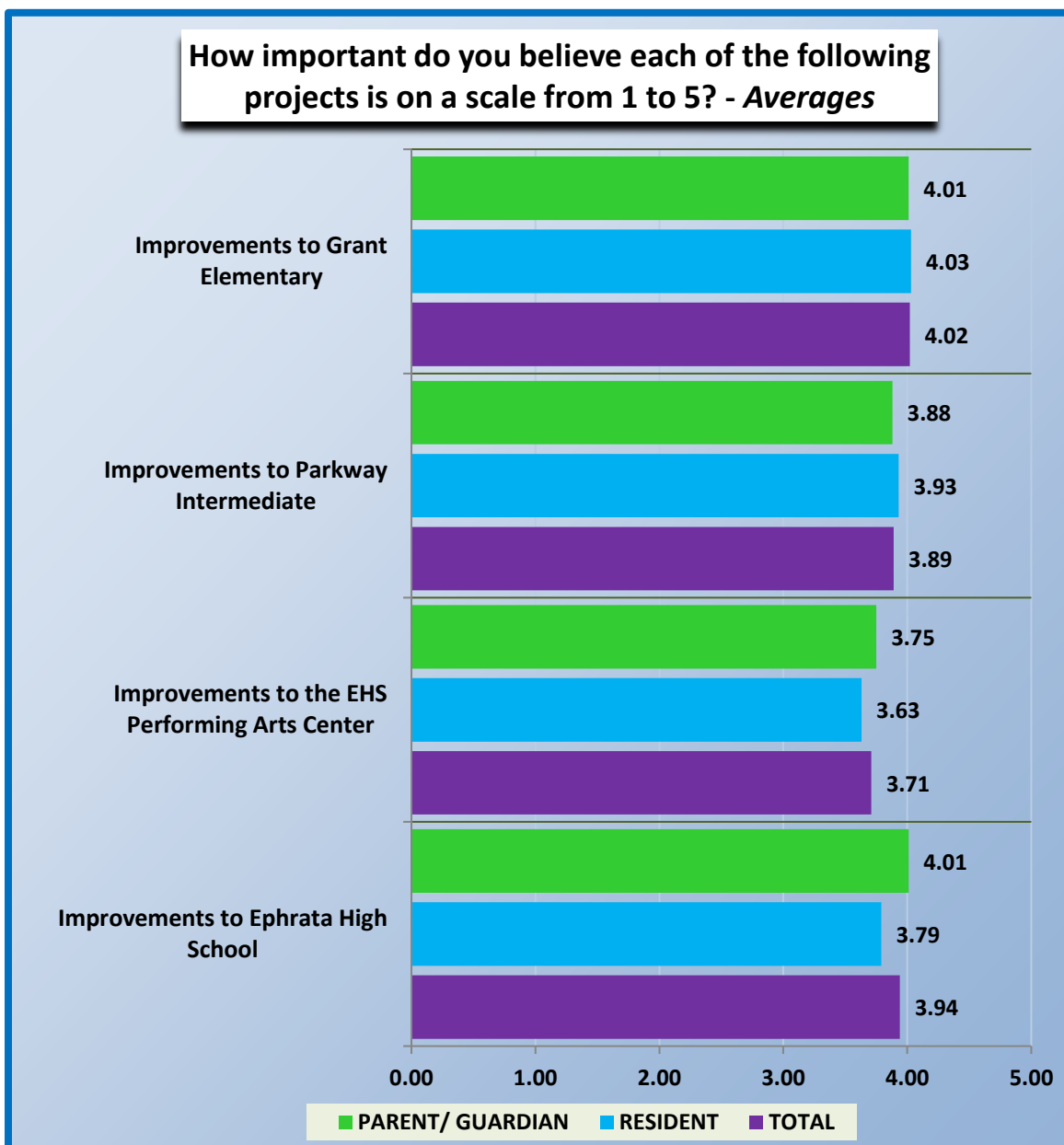


(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

- Respondents were provided with four district improvement projects, then asked to rate each in its overall importance on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (extremely important).

PARENTS/ GUARDIANS	
Grant Elementary	4.01
Ephrata High School	4.01
Parkway Intermediate	3.88
EHS Performing Arts Center	3.75

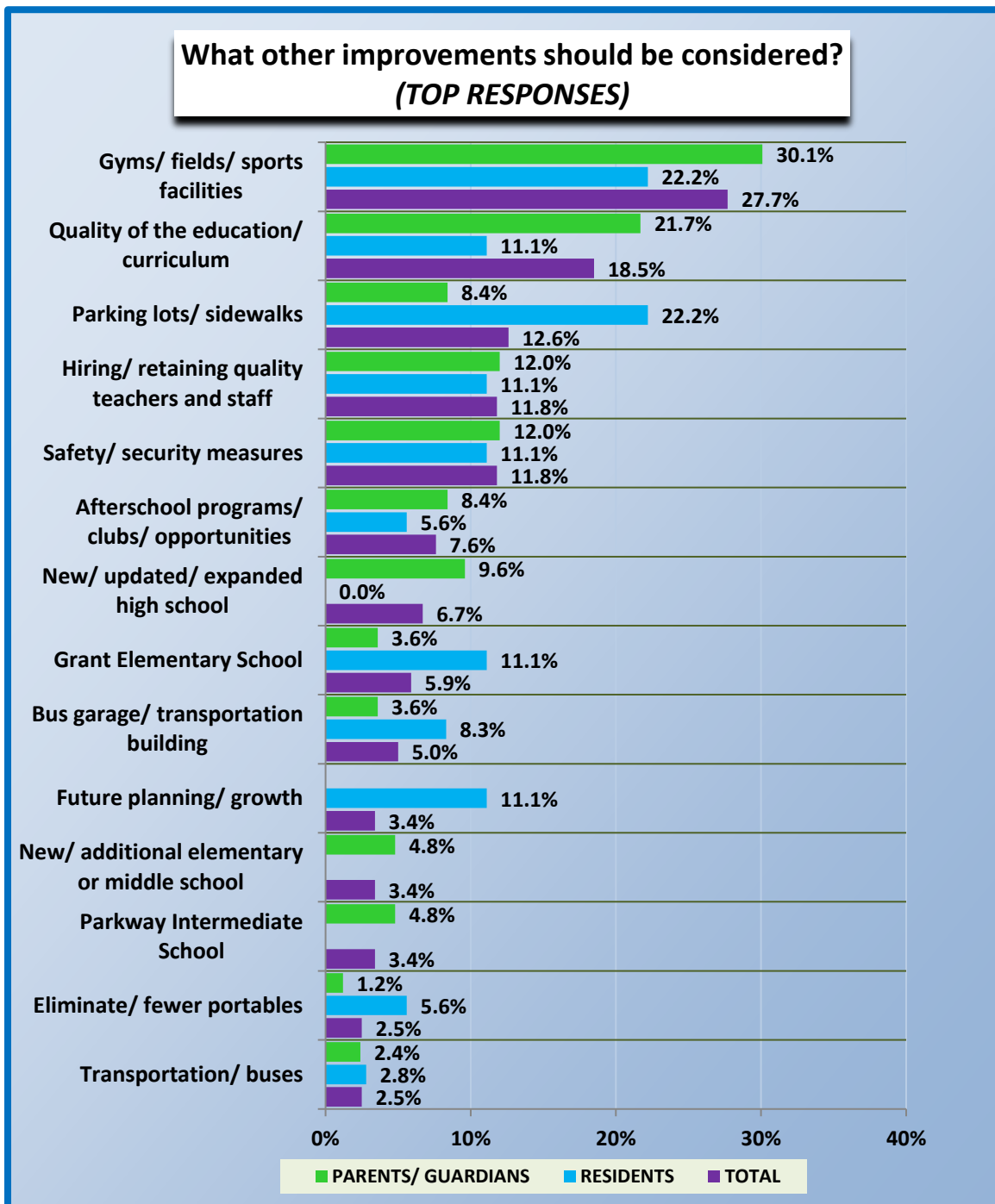
RESIDENTS	
Grant Elementary	4.03
Parkway Intermediate	3.93
Ephrata High School	3.79
EHS Performing Arts Center	3.63





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

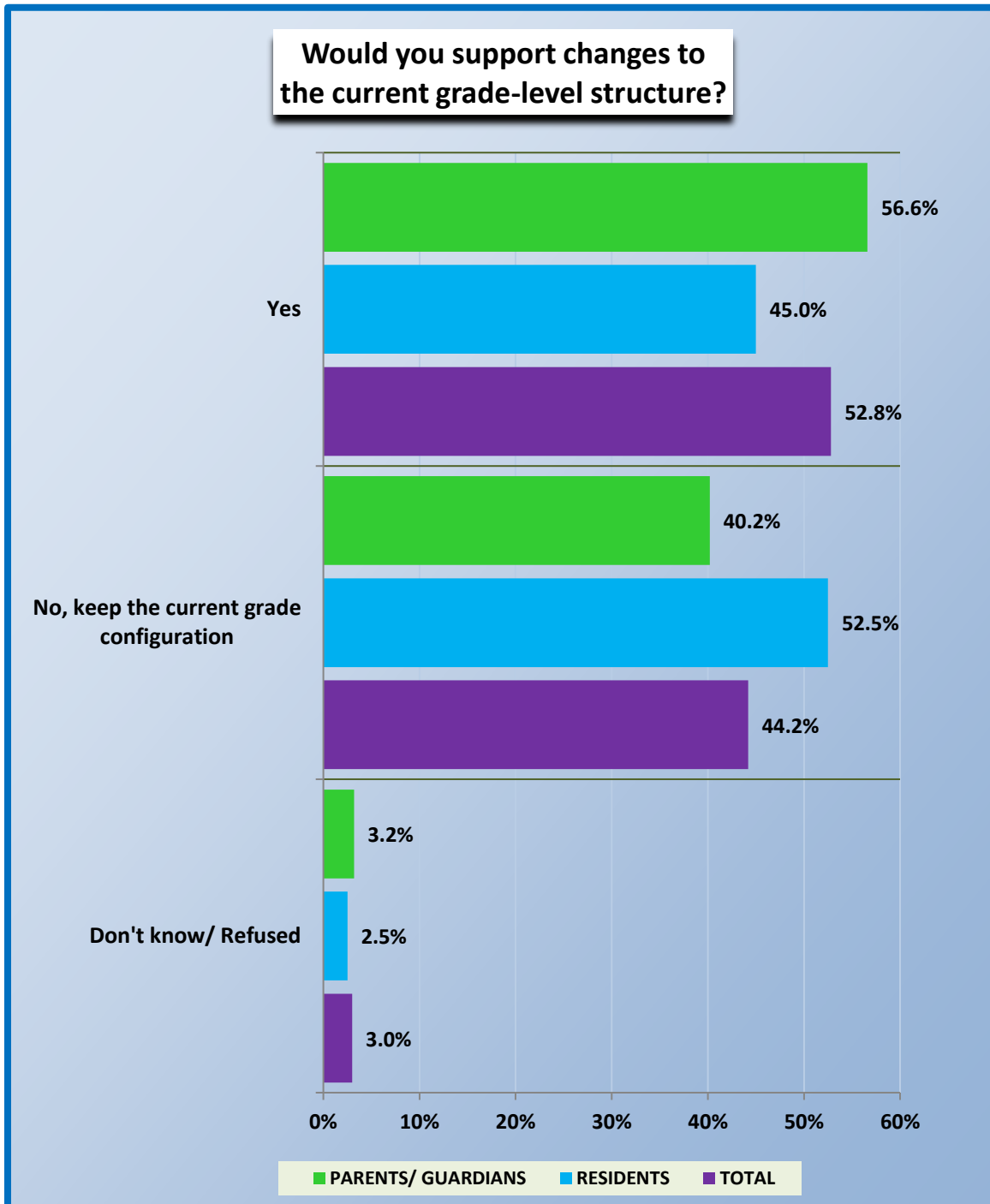
- 30.2% of all respondents mentioned other improvements they feel are needed:
 - 30.1% of parents/guardians and 22.2% of residents feel additional gyms/fields/sports facilities are a major need. 21.7% of parents/guardians mentioned the quality of education/curriculum as a major need while 22.2% of residents mentioned improvements to parking lots and sidewalks.





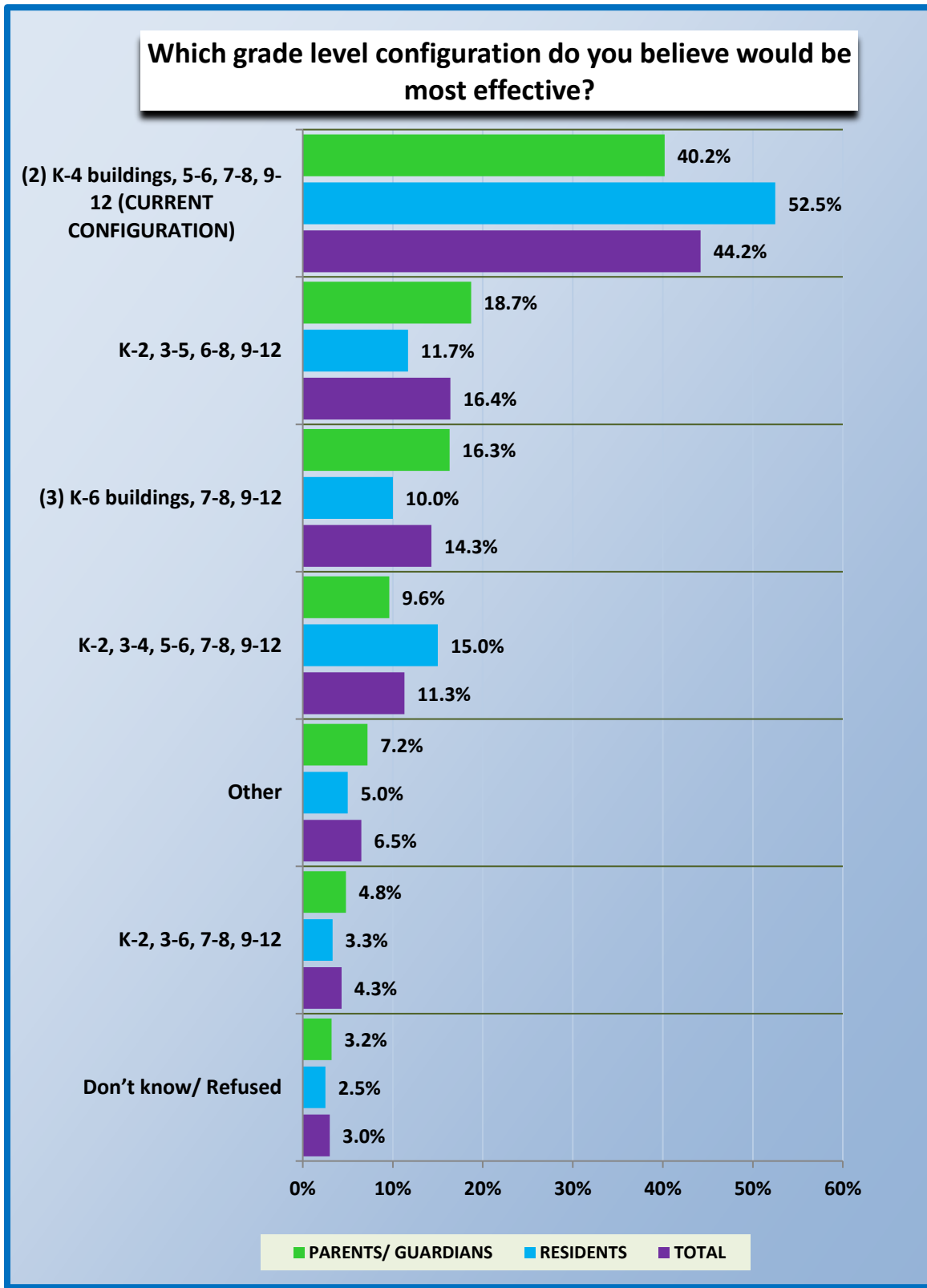
(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

- Parents/guardians and residents are split regarding adjusting grade levels. 56.6% of parents/guardians are in favor of supporting changes to the current grade level structure while 40.2% want to keep the current configuration.
- While 45.0% of residents support changes to the structure, 52.5% do not.





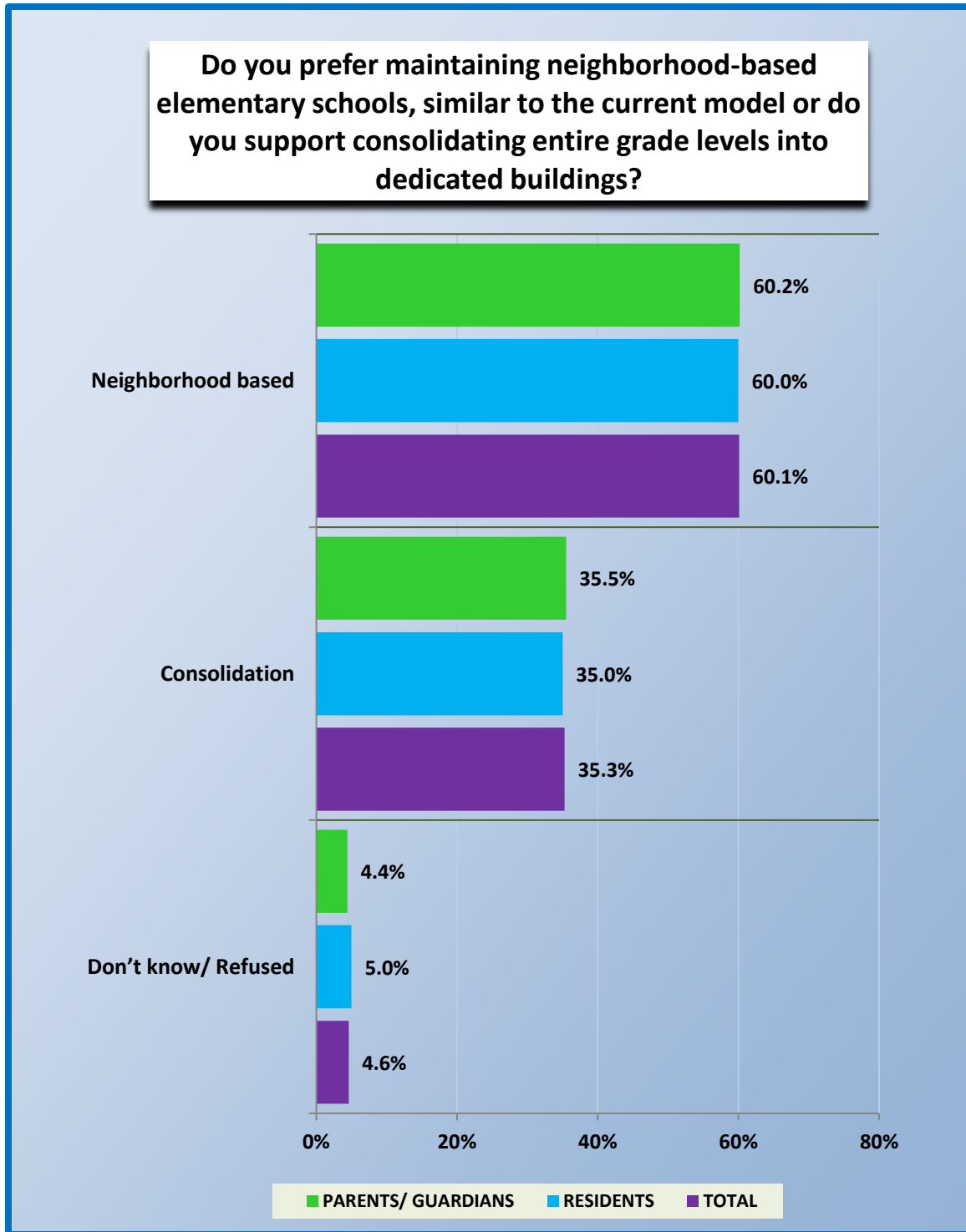
(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

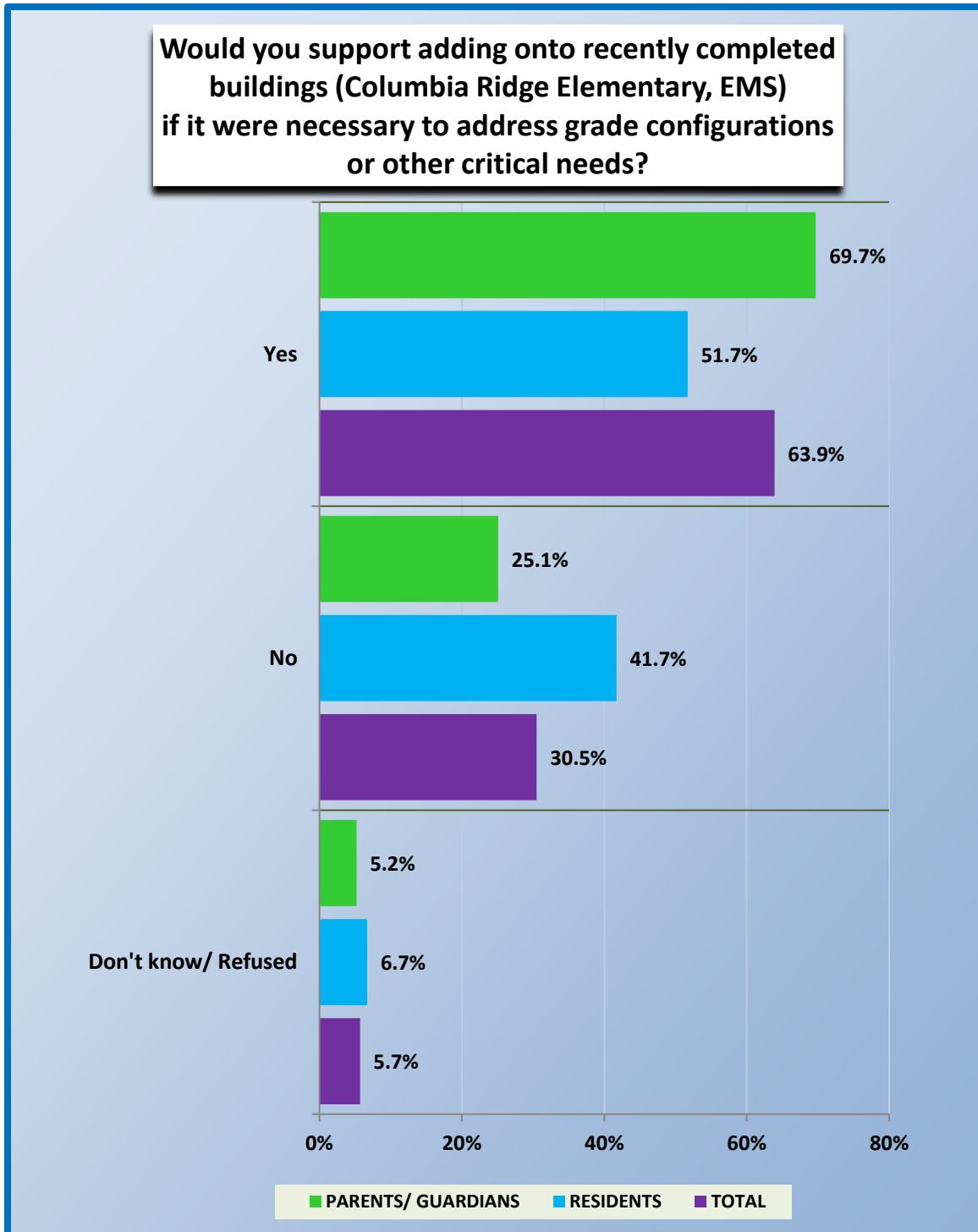
- Overwhelmingly, 60% of both parents/guardians and area residents prefer maintaining neighborhood-based elementary schools.





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

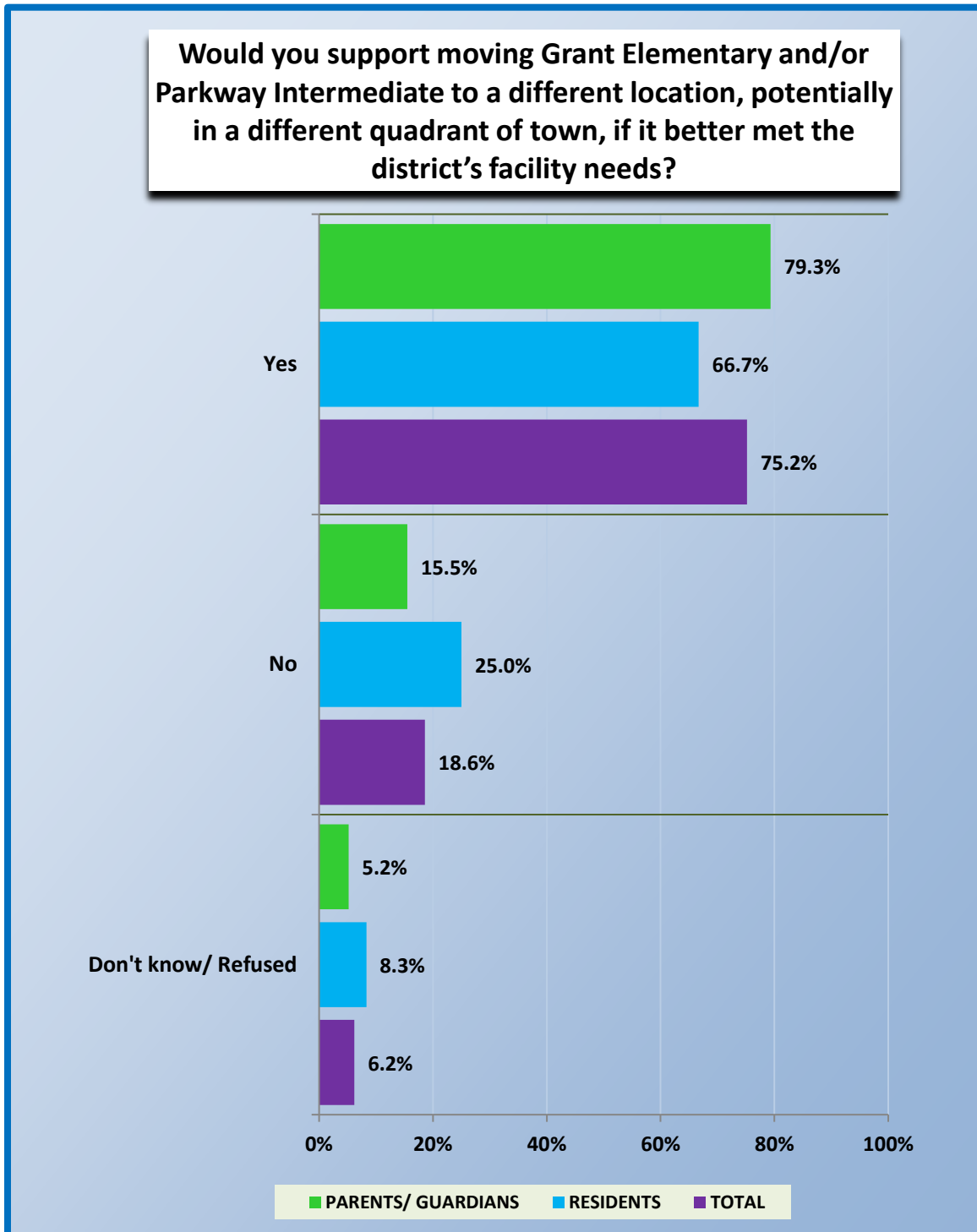
- Parents/guardians (69.7%) and residents (51.7%) are both supportive of adding on to recently completed buildings if it were necessary to address grade configurations and other needs.





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

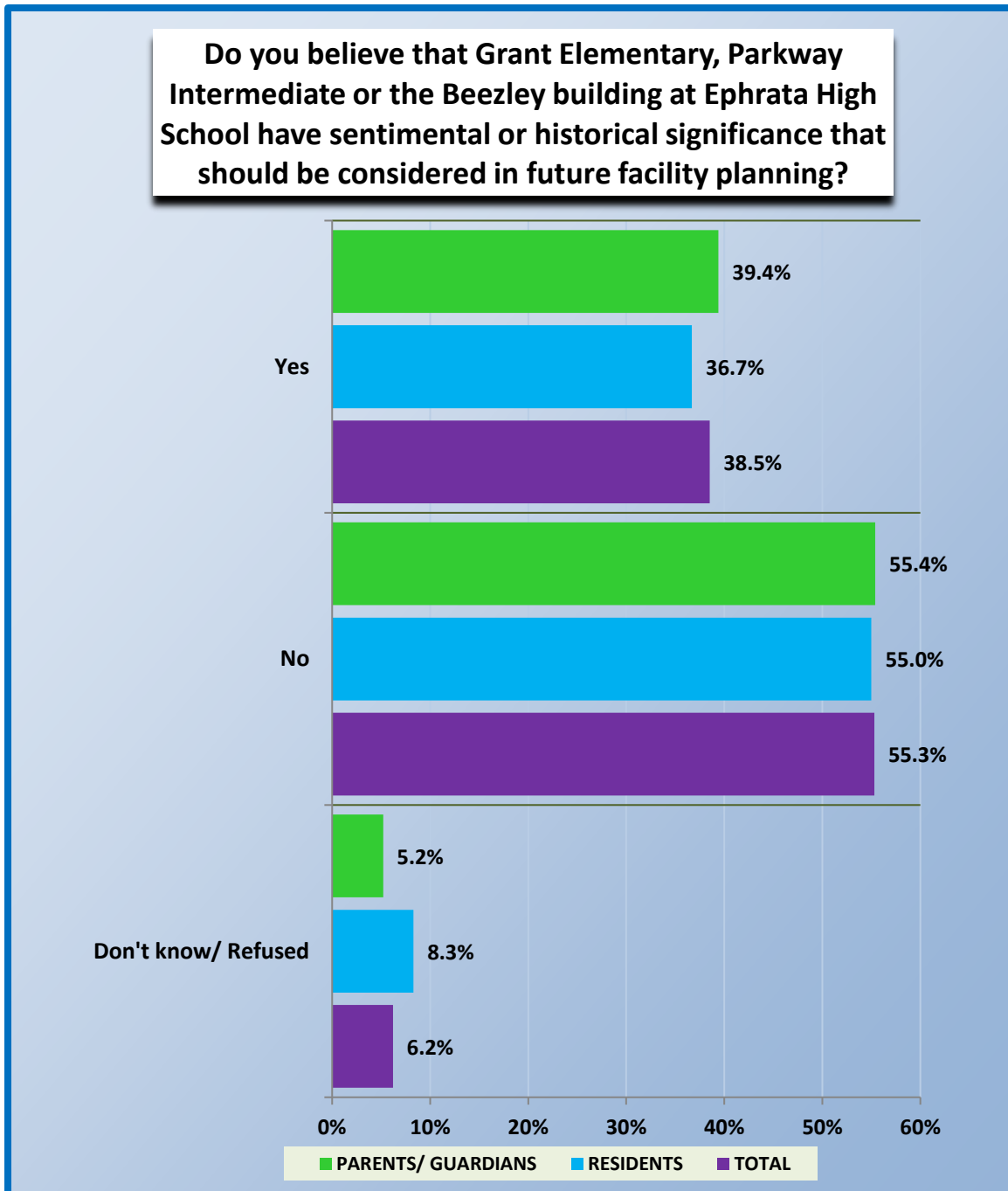
- Both area residents (66.7%) and parents/guardians (79.3%) are strongly supportive in moving Grant Elementary and/or Parkway Intermediate to different parts of town if it better meets the needs of the district.





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

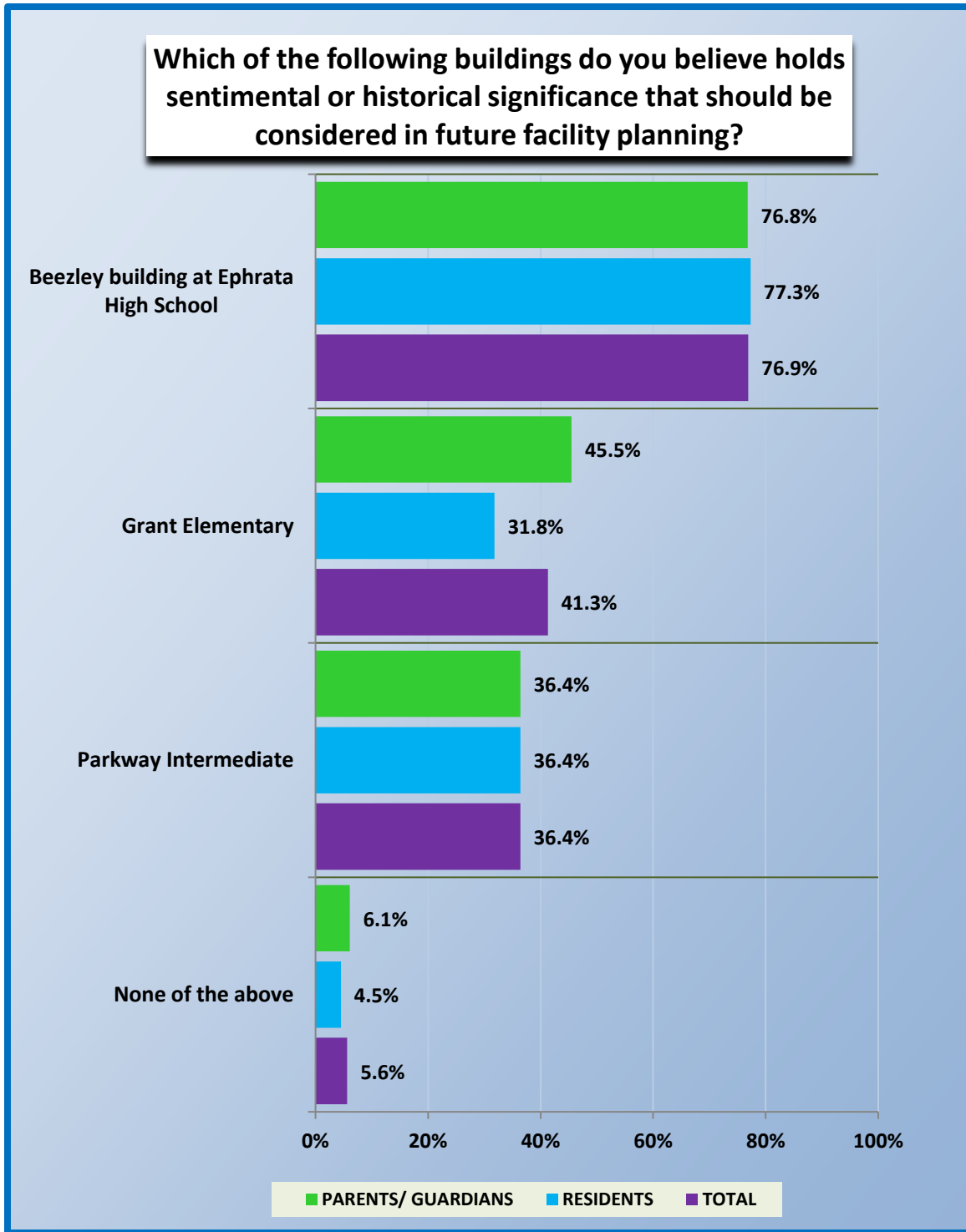
- The majority of both the residents and the parents/guardians do not believe that Grant Elementary, Parkway Intermediate, or the Beezley Building at the high school have sentimental or historical significance that should be considered in future planning. That said, 39.4% of parents/guardians and 36.7% of residents feel that there is historical or sentimental value to be considered.





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

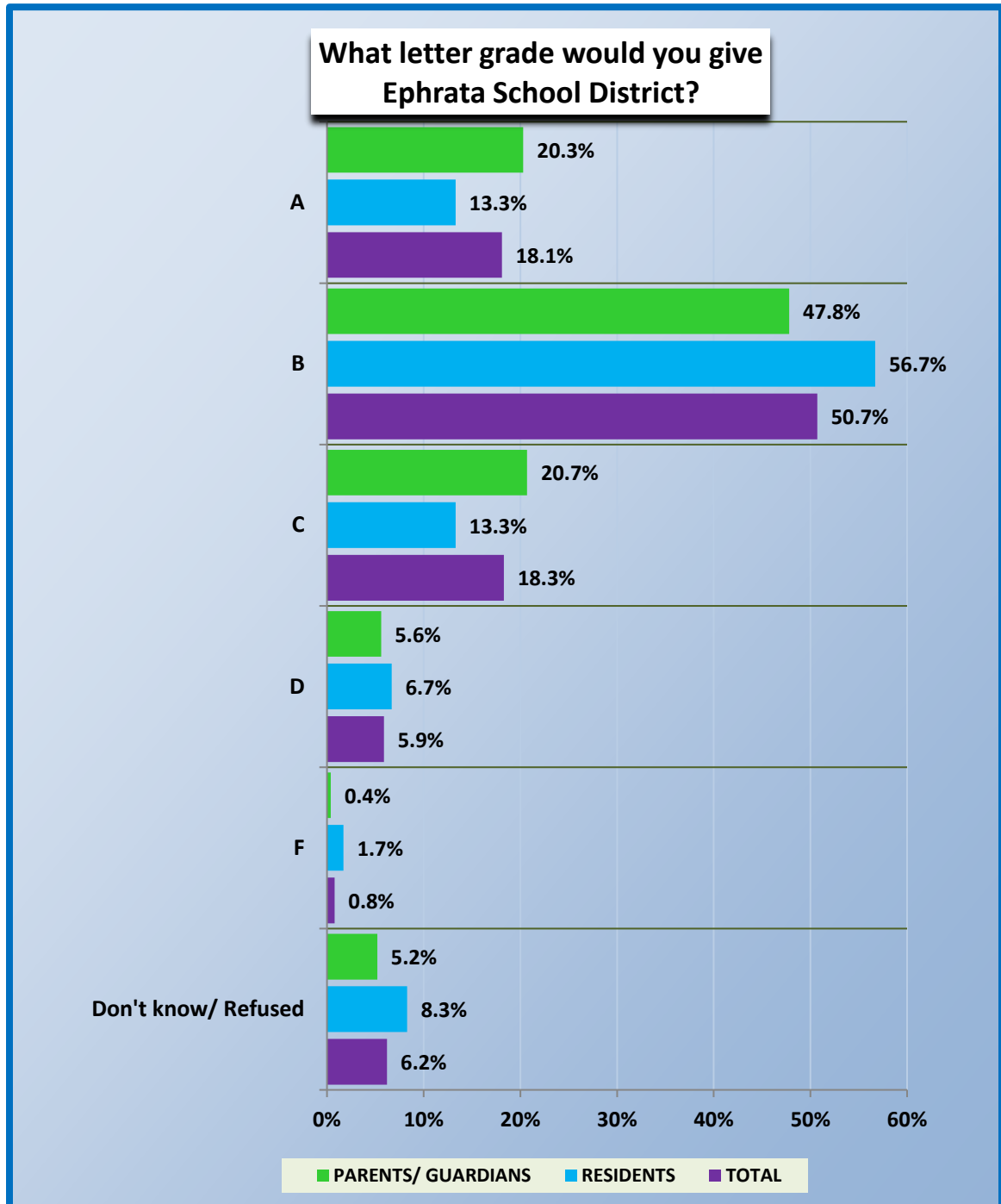
- Of those feeling that there is value, 76.8% of parents and 77.3% of residents feel that the Beezley building holds significance.





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

- All respondents were asked to provide a letter grade based on how they feel the district is doing. The majority of both groups graded the district a 'B.'
- In fact, 68.1% of parents/guardians and 70% of area residents graded the district an 'A' or a 'B.'





(Parent/Guardian & Community Resident Interviews continued)

“My children are happy at school here at Grant Elementary and Ephrata High School. They have excellent teachers. The schools deserve to be supported to help our children in every way they need in order to become great leaders.”

- Ephrata School District Parent/Guardian

“When considering gym remodeling and expansion, please consider the community's youth sports needs. Gyms need to support current thriving EHS and EMS sports contests as well as youth sports activities that bring in significant tourism dollars to our community. Considerations should include crowd bleacher capacity, team seating, storage, dedicated athletic entrances.”

- Ephrata School District Parent/Guardian



Final Summary Comments

- Overall, all groups surveyed have a strong level of awareness of the issues facing the district. As important, community leaders, parents/guardians and area residents appear to be in sync regarding the most important issues and what needs to be accomplished.
- The top need as voiced by leaders, parents/guardians and area residents is for new/updated/expanded schools and facilities. This is viewed as the largest and most significant need. It is exceedingly rare that parents/guardians, residents, and leaders all are in agreement as to the primary issue(s) facing a school district.
- Nearly one in four parents/guardians have a lack of awareness of needs and issues within the district. Development and implementation of ongoing processes to increase awareness is critically important.
- Another area where all three groups agree is in a preference to maintain neighborhood-based elementary schools. If this becomes the district's preference it is important to communicate that you listened to and heard these groups' comments on this issue.
- All groups are supportive in adding onto recently completed buildings if deemed necessary and all strongly feel that moving Grant Elementary and/or Parkway Intermediate to a different area of town if it better meets the district's and the community's needs makes sense.
- Based on all areas of study it seems that there is a good level of support for the school district and its objectives within the community. Continued transparency from the district in its communications to all groups within the community will strengthen that bond that exists.