



Tomah Area School District

Community Survey Report

June 17, 2024

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**Survey/Respondent
Information**



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



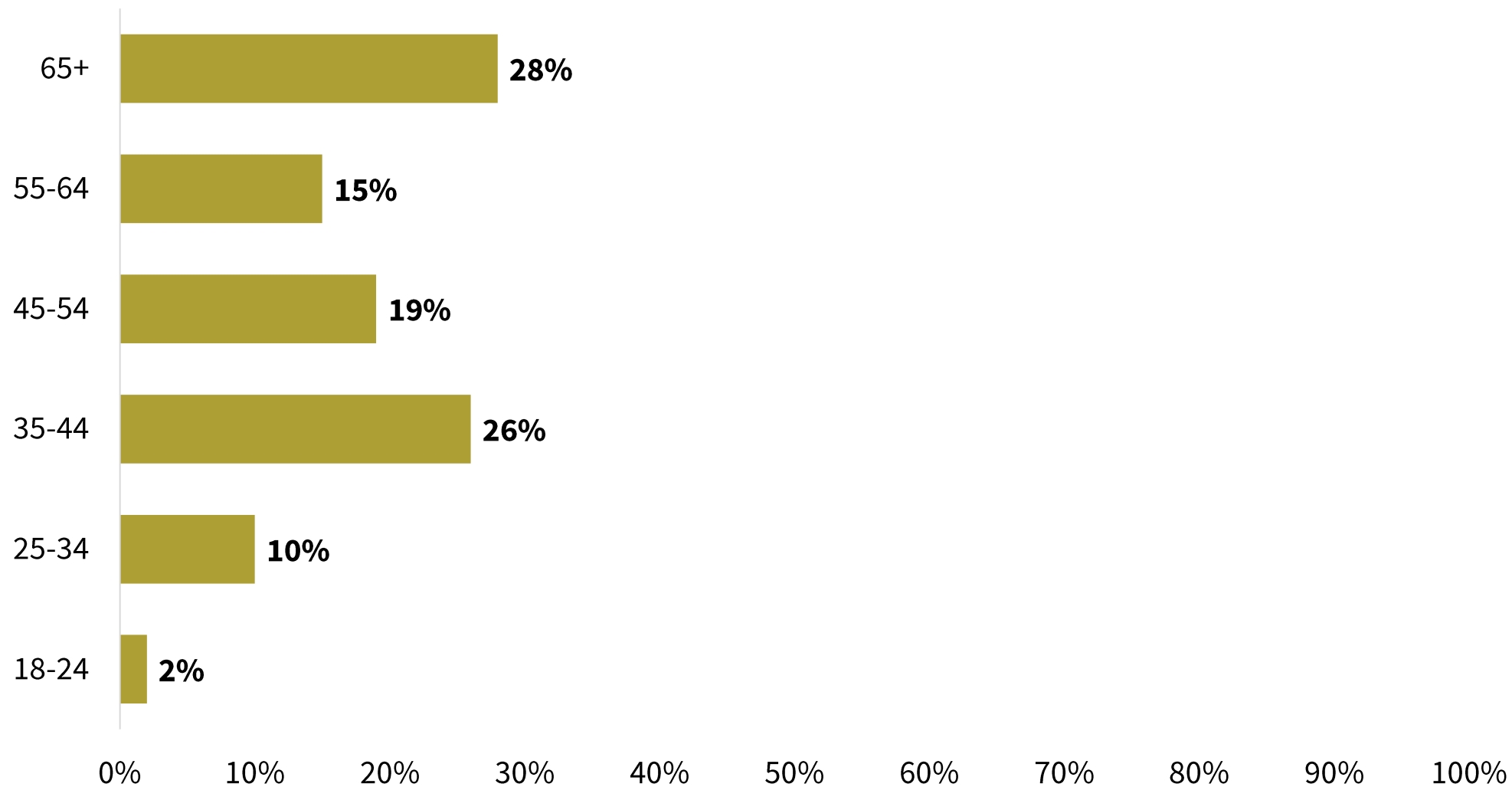
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **900** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Information

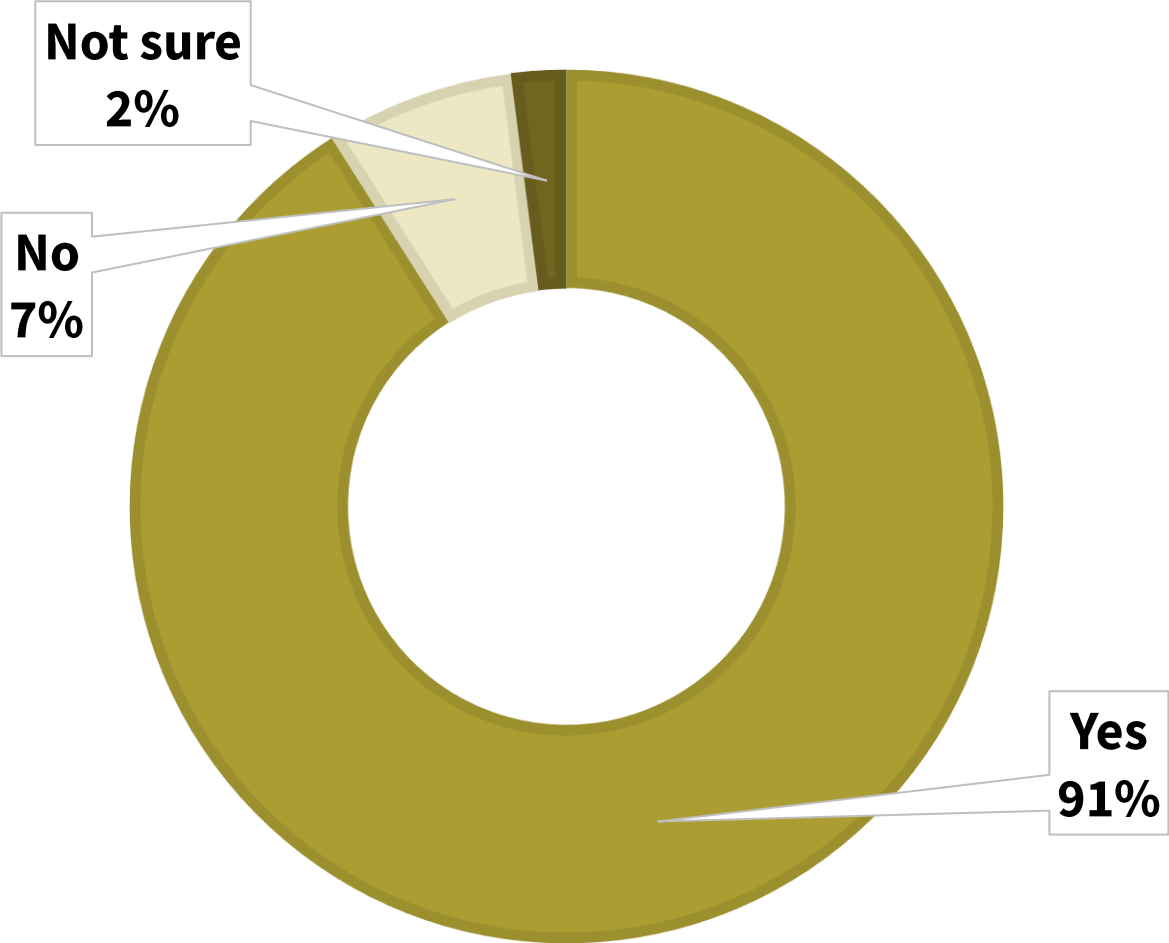
- **May 24, 2024** survey deadline
- **1,798** total respondents
 - The most of any of the four community surveys done
- **17%** response rate
- **+/- 2.36%** statistical margin of error



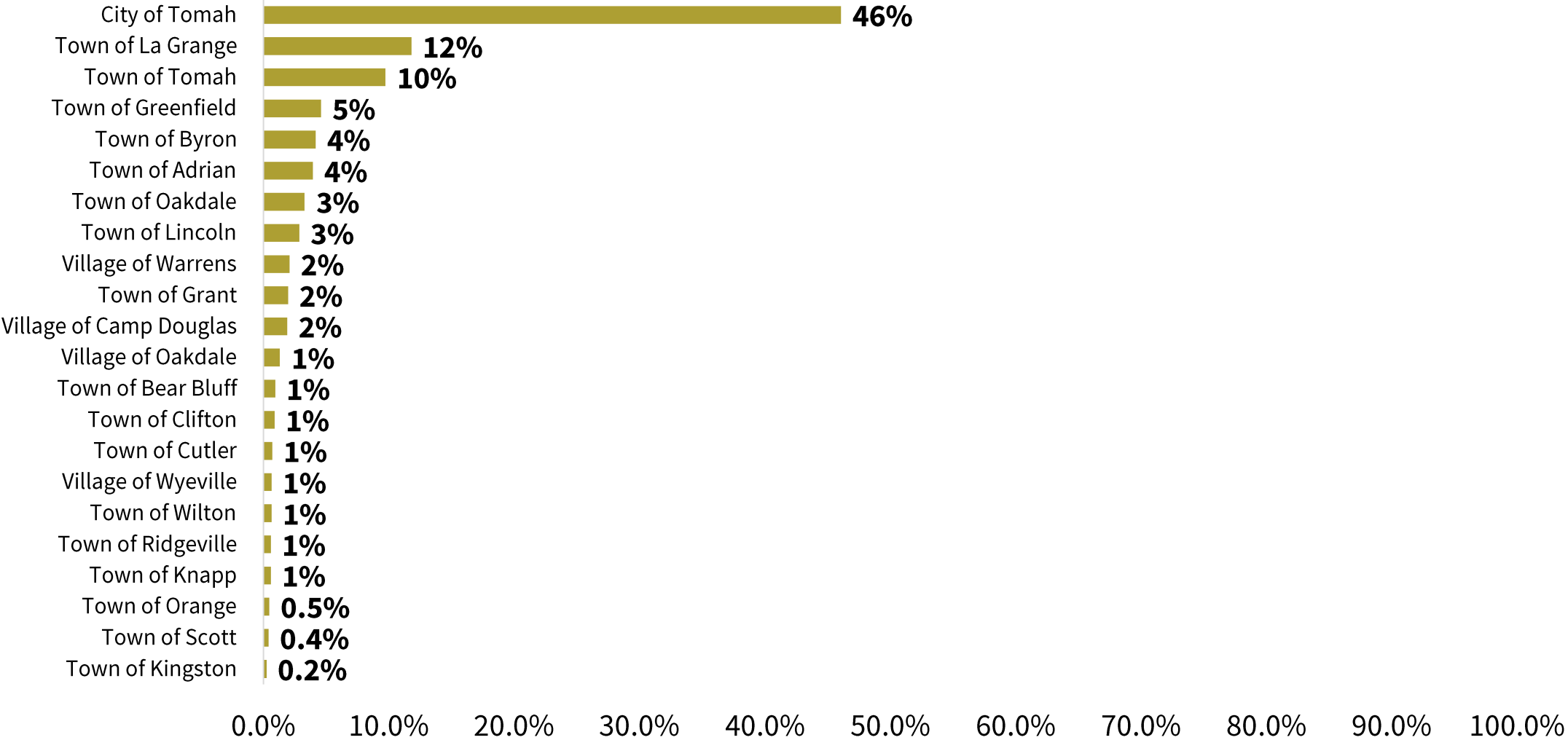
What is your age?



Is your primary residence in the Tomah Area School District?



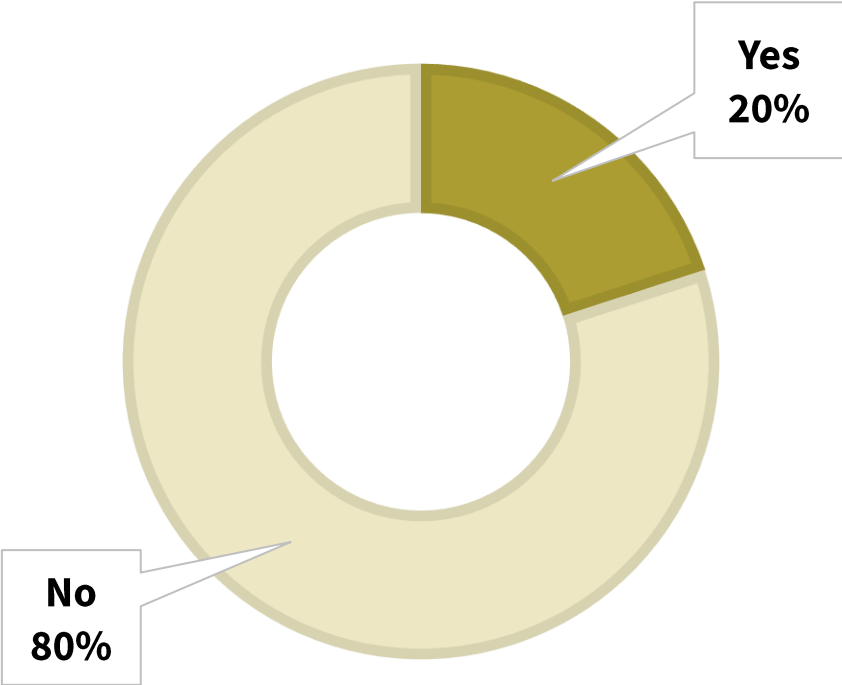
In which municipality do you live?



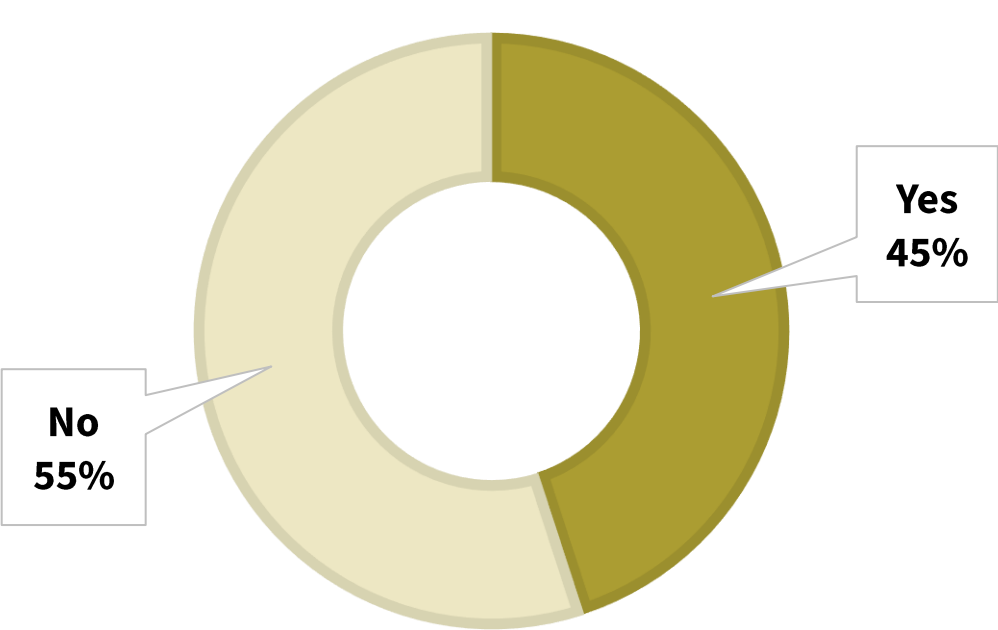
Respondent Information



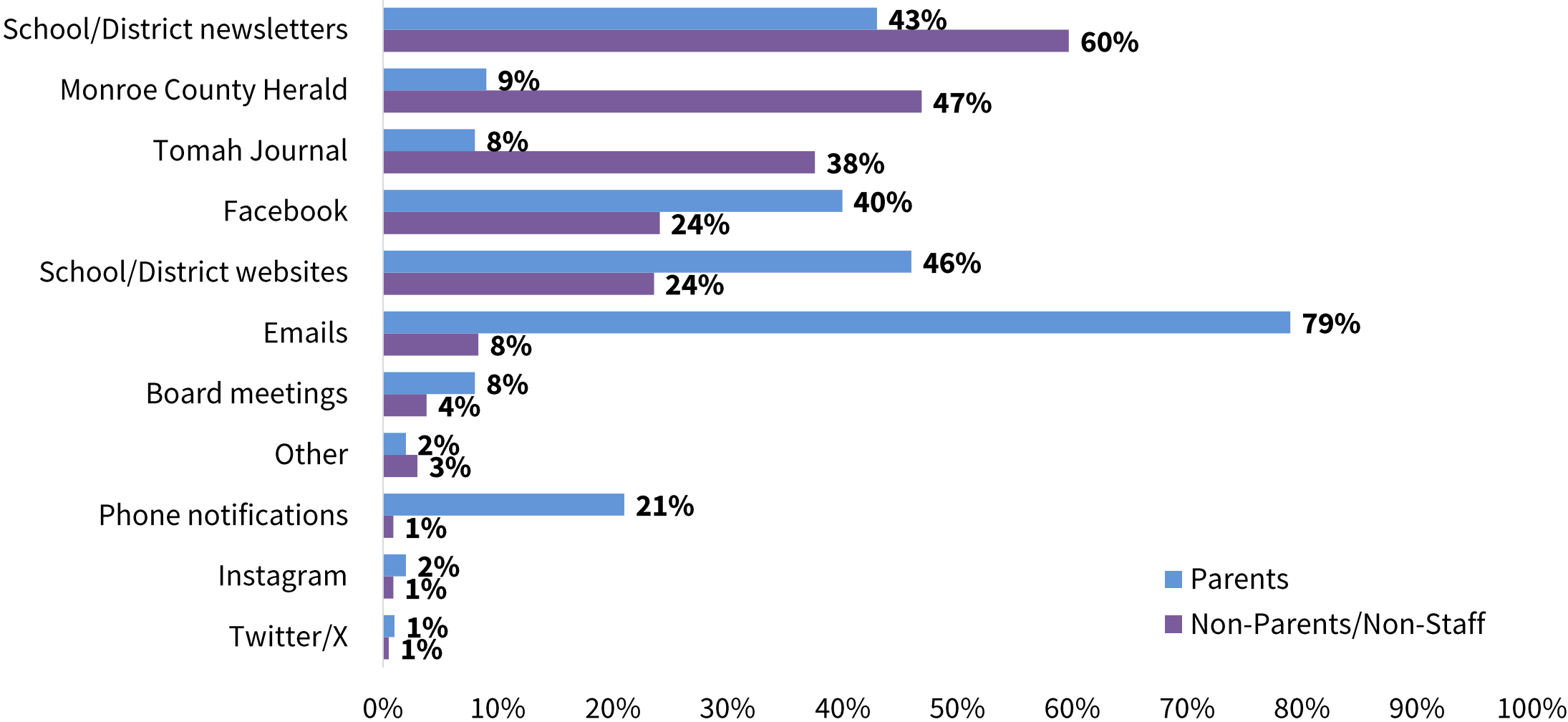
Are you an employee of the Tomah Area School District?



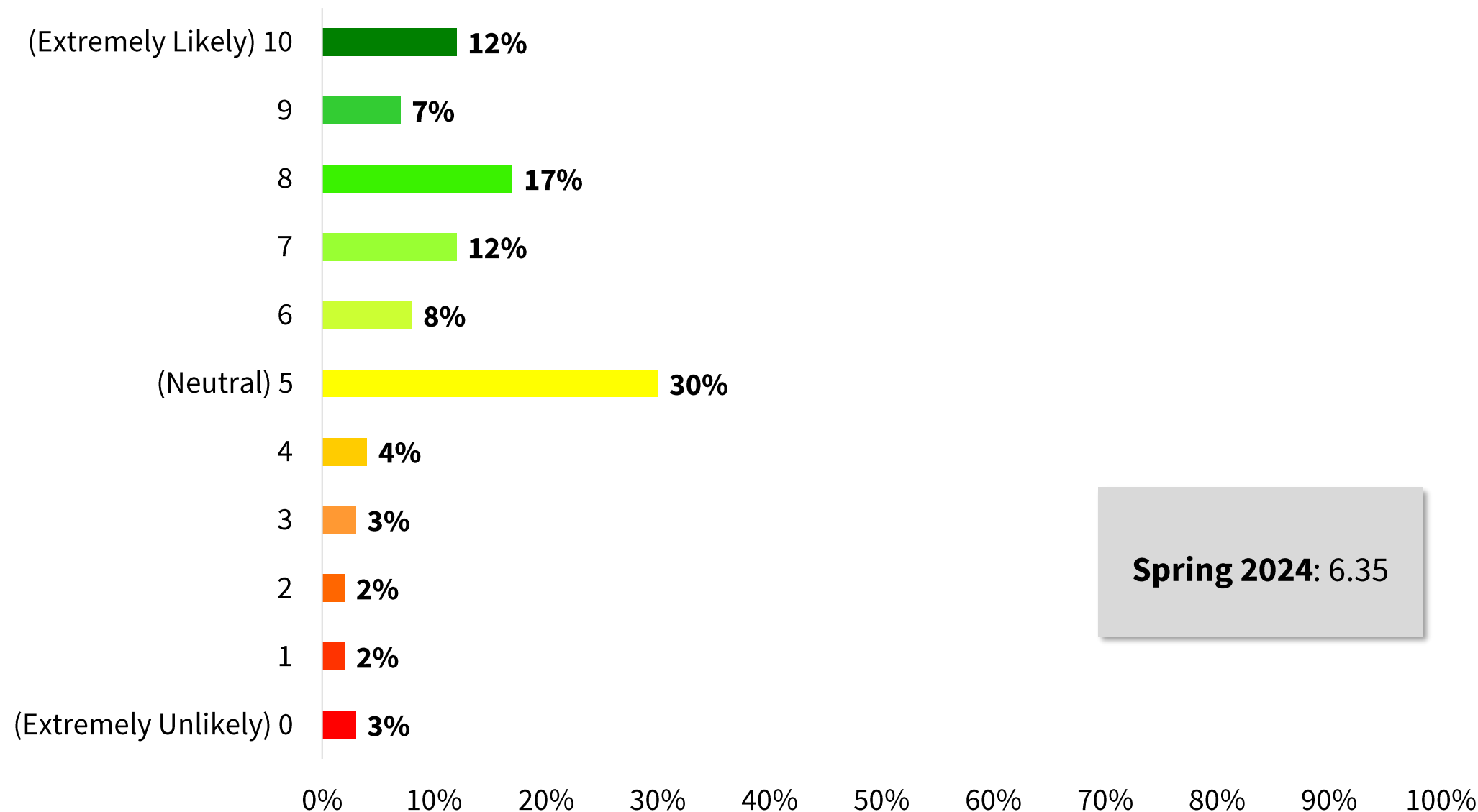
Do you have children attending a school in the District?



How do you like to receive school/District information? (Select all that apply.)



On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely would you be to recommend the District to a friend or family member?



Facility Options



In 2021, the District conducted a community-wide survey to gather input on a potential plan to address many of the facility issues. That plan was not supported by a majority of respondents. We acknowledge and respect the community's decision.

This leaves us at a crossroads. We need to determine how to make future facility investments.

Funding Support



We would only move forward with whatever option the community supports. The District is recommending Option 2 (which includes building a new high school) as the best long-term plan for the following reasons:

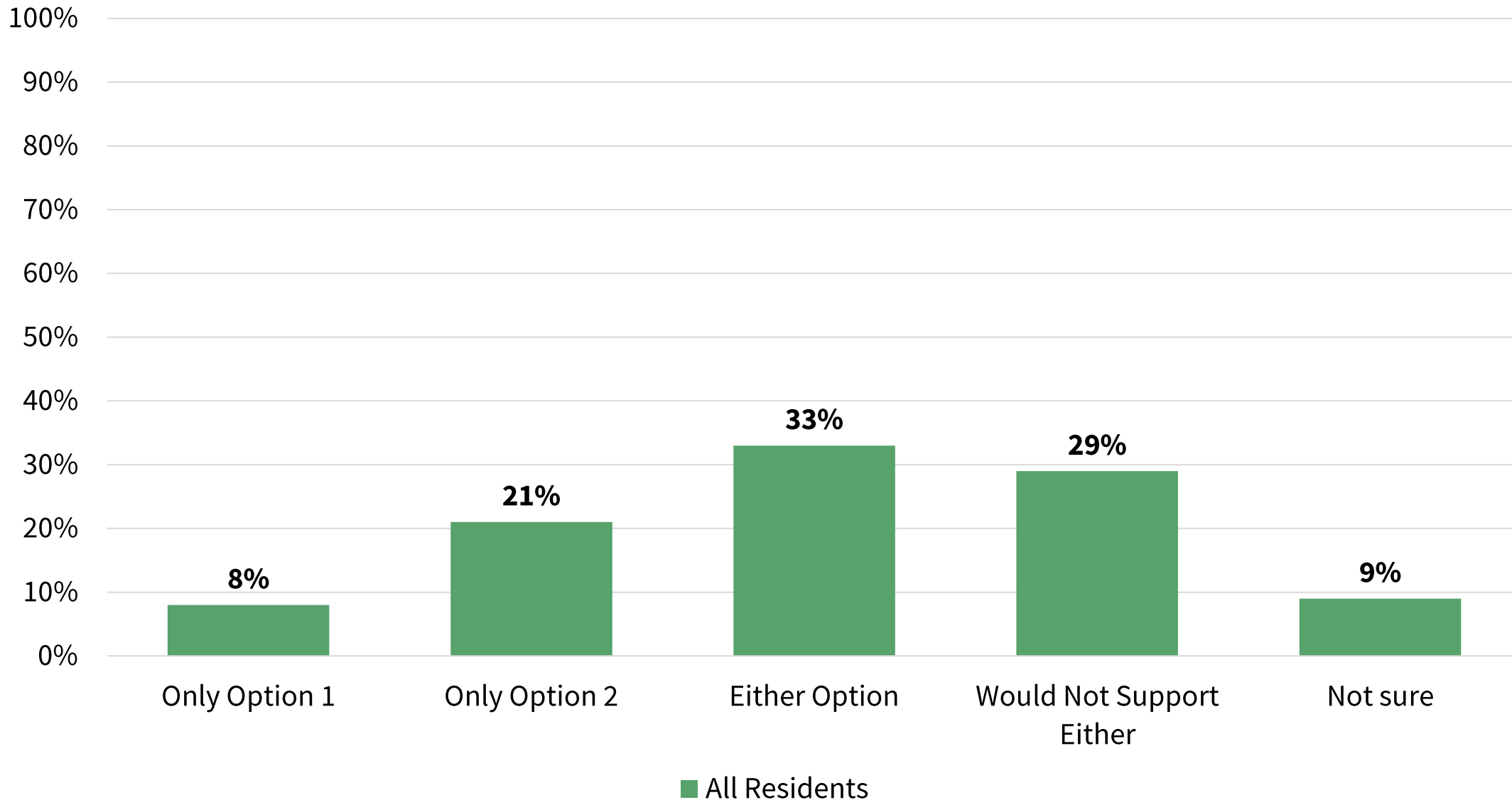
- It saves more money over the long term (fewer buildings to maintain and operate).
- The middle school site is currently too small to support programming, especially if we move fifth-grade students to that school.
- All students across the District will benefit because they will have additional classroom space.
- It creates more equitable academic opportunities between schools.

Funding for either option would free up money to address building system needs across the District.

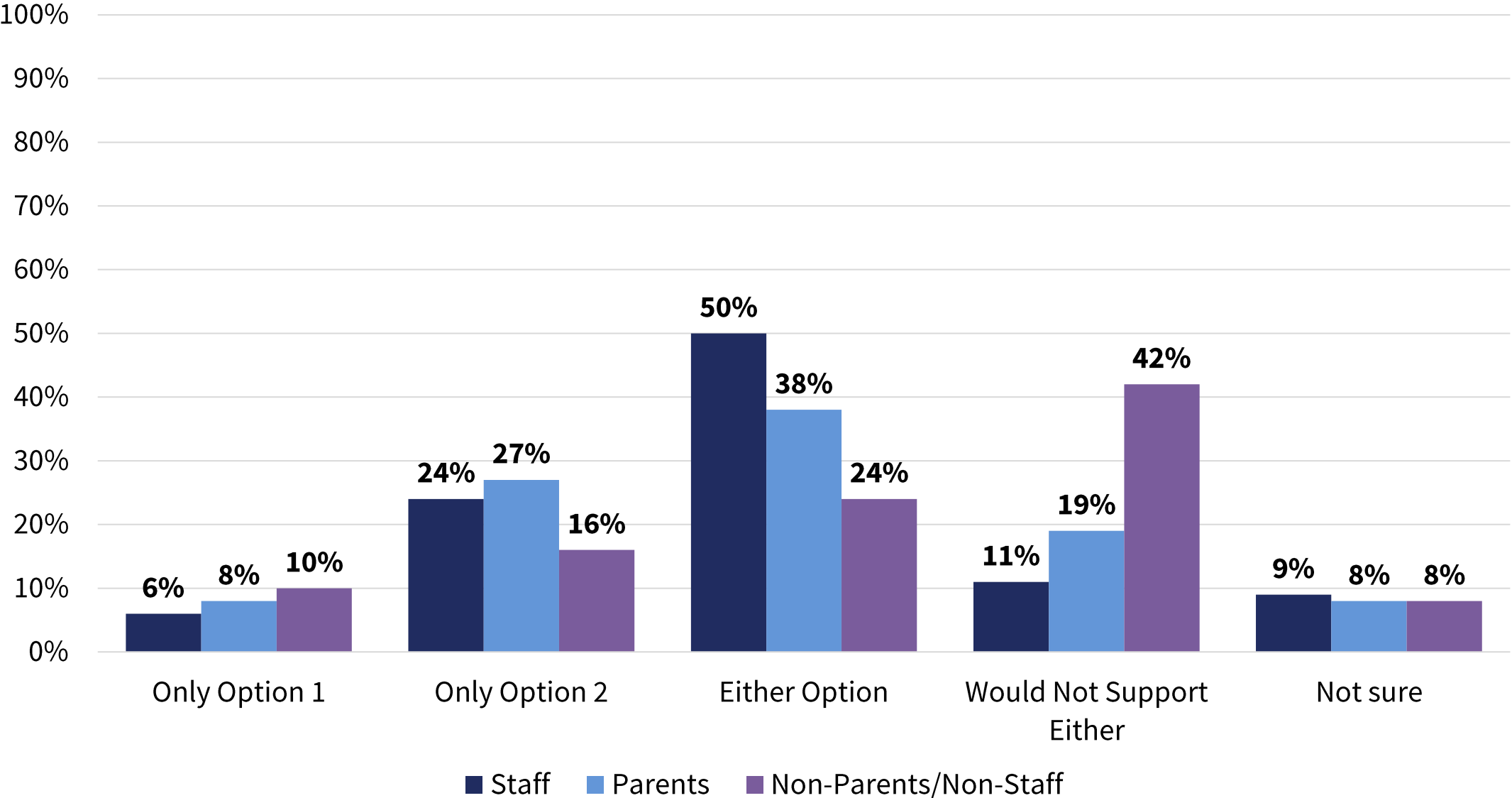
To pay for the projects, voters would need to approve a capital (facility) referendum. This type of referendum allows the District to take out a loan (issue debt). Unlike nearly 80% of schools in Wisconsin, Tomah has not pursued this type of funding since 2006.

	Option 1	Option 2
Main Project Scope	Middle and high school renovations	New high school
Total Cost	\$120.7 million	\$177.3 million
Estimated Tax Increase Per \$100,000 of Property Value	\$236 per year	\$298 per year

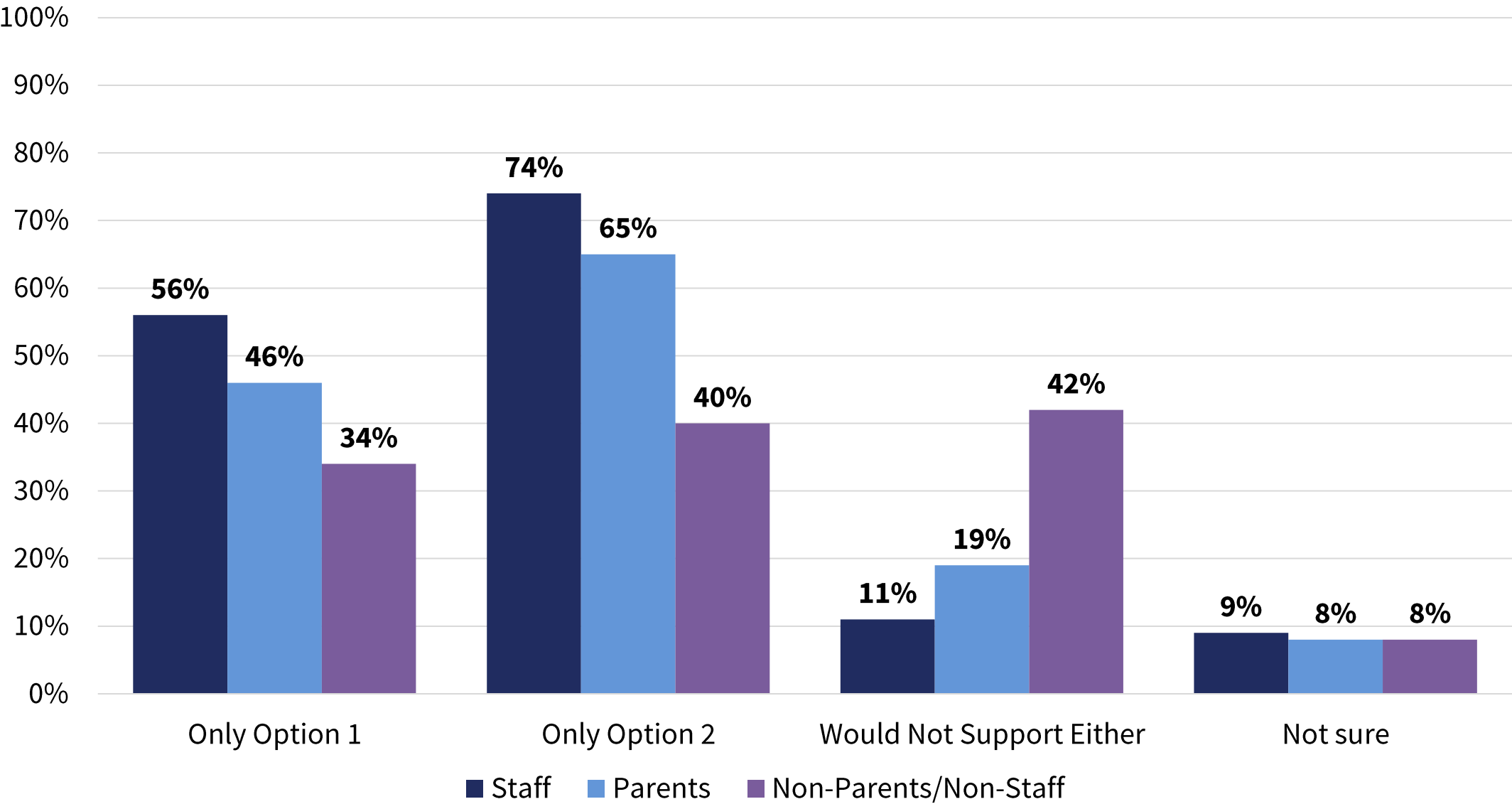
Which option(s) would you support through a referendum? (Residents Only)



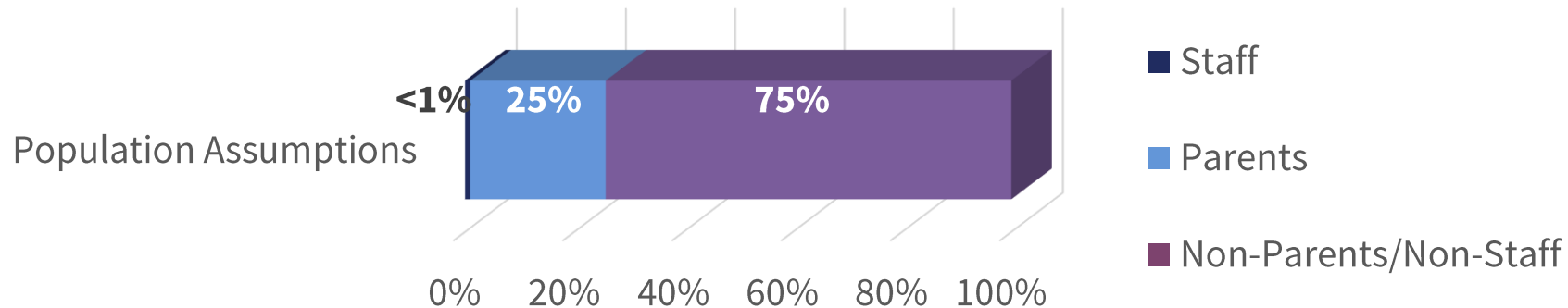
Which option(s) would you support through a referendum? *(Residents Only)*



Which option(s) would you support through a referendum? *(Residents Only)*



Additional Analysis: Facility options



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

Option 1: $0.25 (46\%) + 0.75 (34\%) = \underline{\mathbf{37.0\%}}$

Option 2: $0.25 (65\%) + 0.75 (40\%) = \underline{\mathbf{46.3\%}}$

Additional High School Projects



If the community supports building a new high school, the following projects could be completed at the same time. This would create construction efficiencies and be less expensive than separate projects in the future.

Outdoor Competition Athletic Fields

Funding for Option 2 does not include building outdoor athletic facilities for varsity games (only practice fields). Instead, the District would continue to use the fields at the current high school.

Estimated cost: \$8.5 million

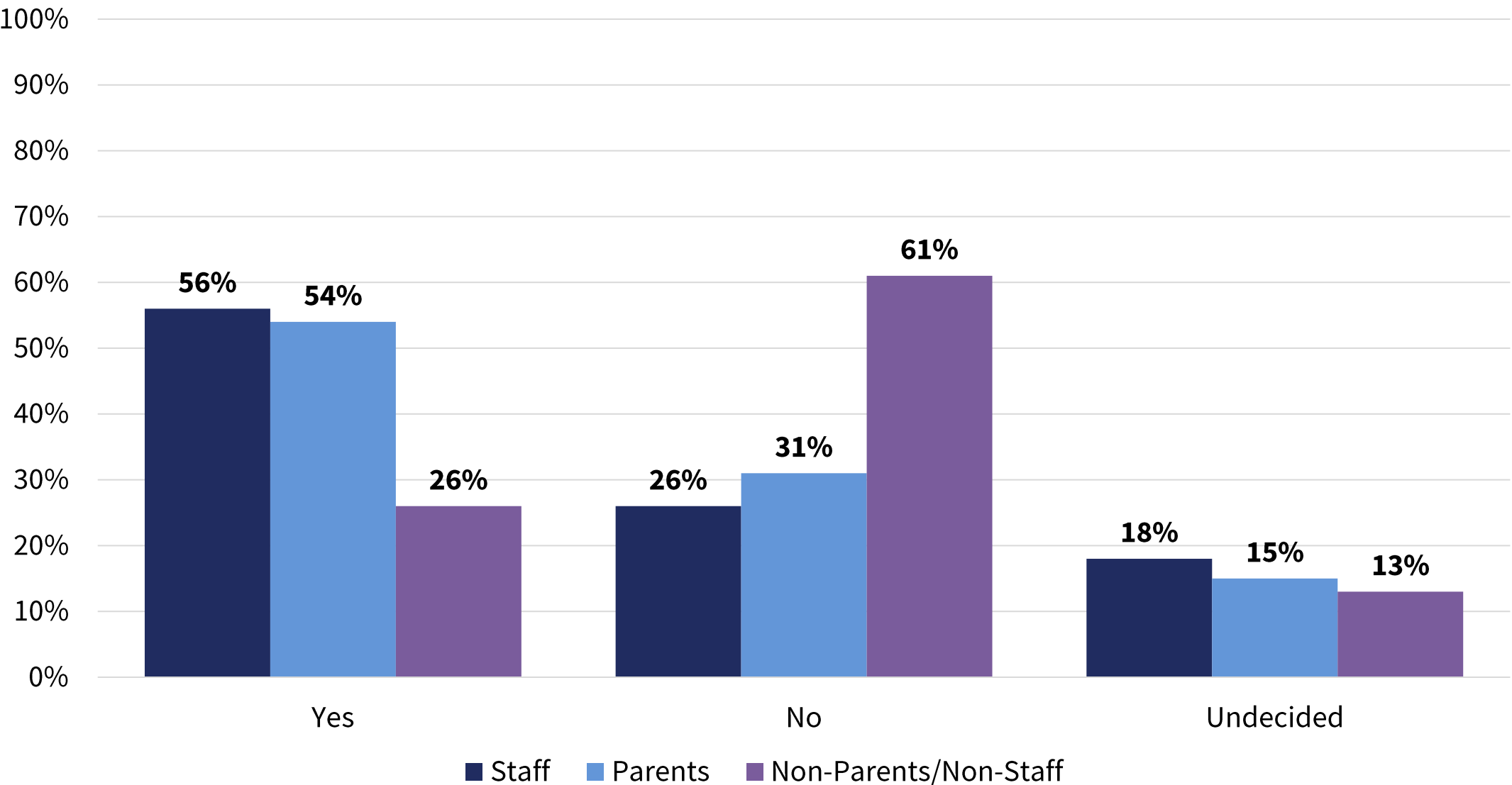
Swimming Pool

The Tomah Area School District does not have a pool. One could be built at a new high school, providing community access and the possibility of having a swim & dive team. A pool costs approximately \$250,000 per year to heat, clean, and maintain. To cover this cost, the District would need to secure additional funding from an operational referendum.

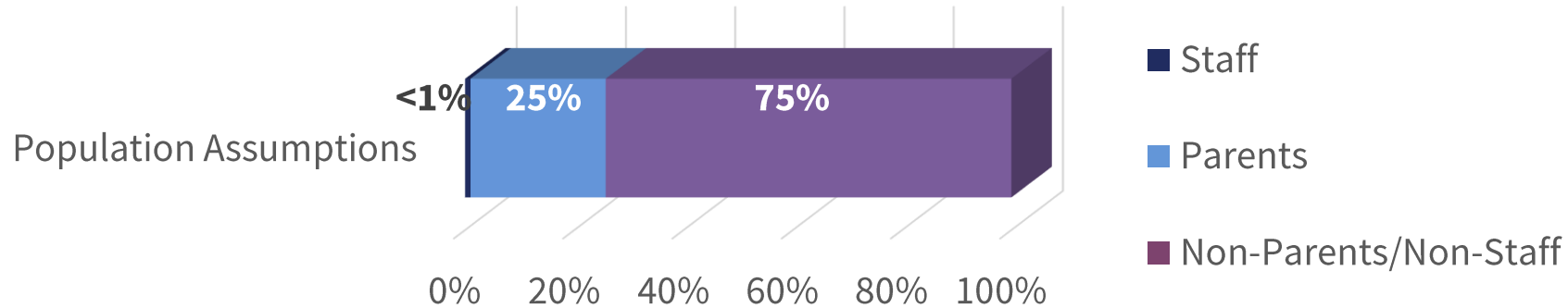
Estimated cost: \$21.0 million

Would you support expanding a referendum by \$8.5 million to build outdoor competition athletic fields at a new high school? (*Staff Residents*)

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$14 for every \$100,000 of property value.



Additional Analysis: Outdoor competition athletic fields

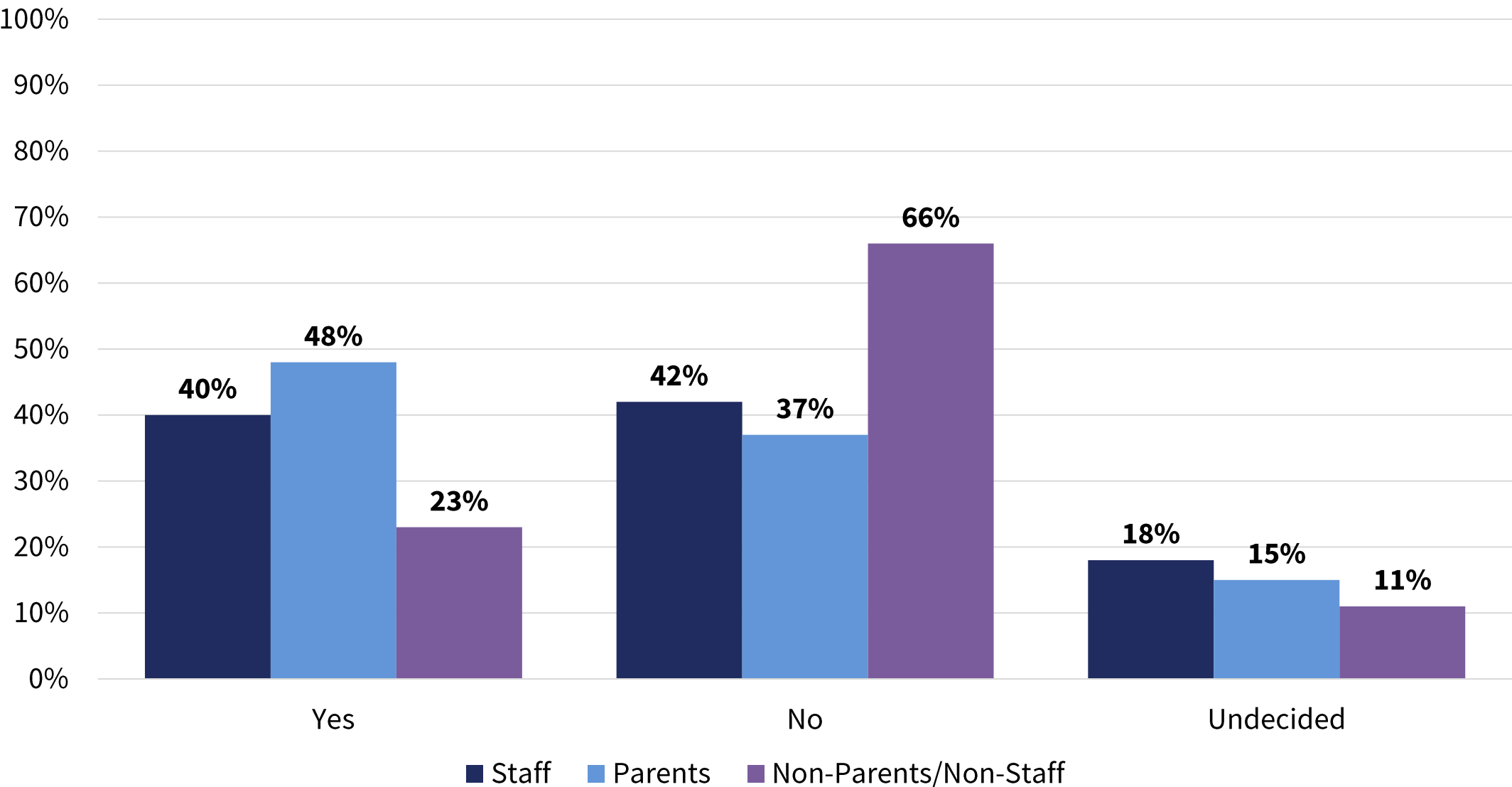


Weighted support for *Yes*:

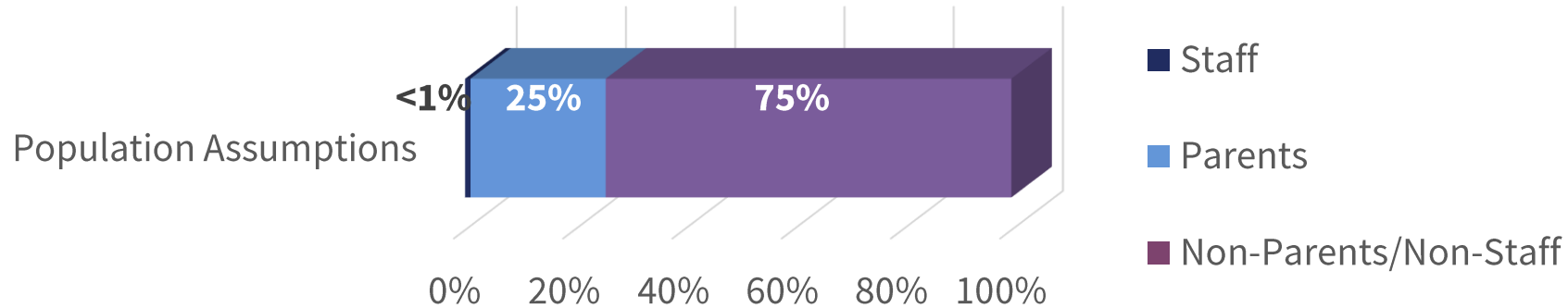
$$0.25 (54\%) + 0.75 (26\%) = \underline{\underline{33.0\%}}$$

Would you support expanding a referendum by \$21.0 million to build a swimming pool at a new high school? (*Staff Residents*)

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$35 for every \$100,000 of property value.



Additional Analysis: Swimming pool



Weighted support for *Yes*:

$$0.25 (48\%) + 0.75 (23\%) = \underline{\underline{29.3\%}}$$

What did we learn?

- A referendum for facility option 1 (renovations) would not likely be supported by voters.
- A referendum for facility option 2 (new high school) is closer but does not reach majority support (46.3% weighted).
- Neither athletic fields nor a pool would be supported by voters at this time.

Next steps:

- Based on the amount of weighted support and the statistical margin of error, the Board could consider taking a referendum to ballot for a new HS at a reduced scope.
- In general, referendum support tends to increase as project costs/tax impacts decrease.





SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

Measuring what matters

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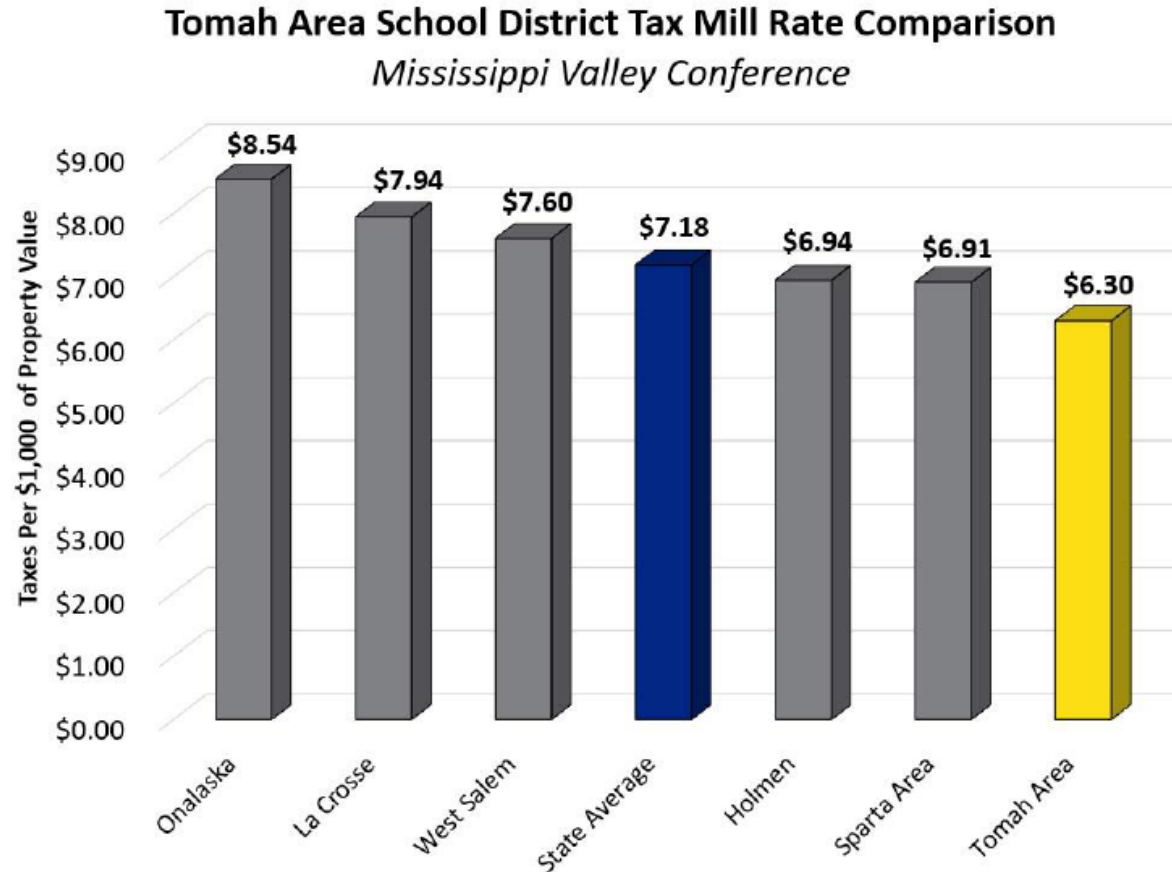
Appendix



Financial Background

The District's share of local property taxes is calculated using a mill rate.

- This tax rate has declined over the past 12 years and is consistently below the state average.
- The tax mill rate is the lowest in the Mississippi Valley Conference.
- The Tomah Area School District is debt free.



Facility Challenges



A comprehensive facility assessment showed that many school sites are too small and landlocked. In addition, many schools lack adequate classrooms and support areas, but there is not enough space to expand the buildings to address capacity issues. Other categories of issues include:

- **Building Systems:** Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; heating, ventilation, and cooling systems; lighting; and interior/exterior building conditions
- **Capacity:** How full the buildings are based on student enrollment, academic program needs, and current building standards

Facility Challenges (cont'd)



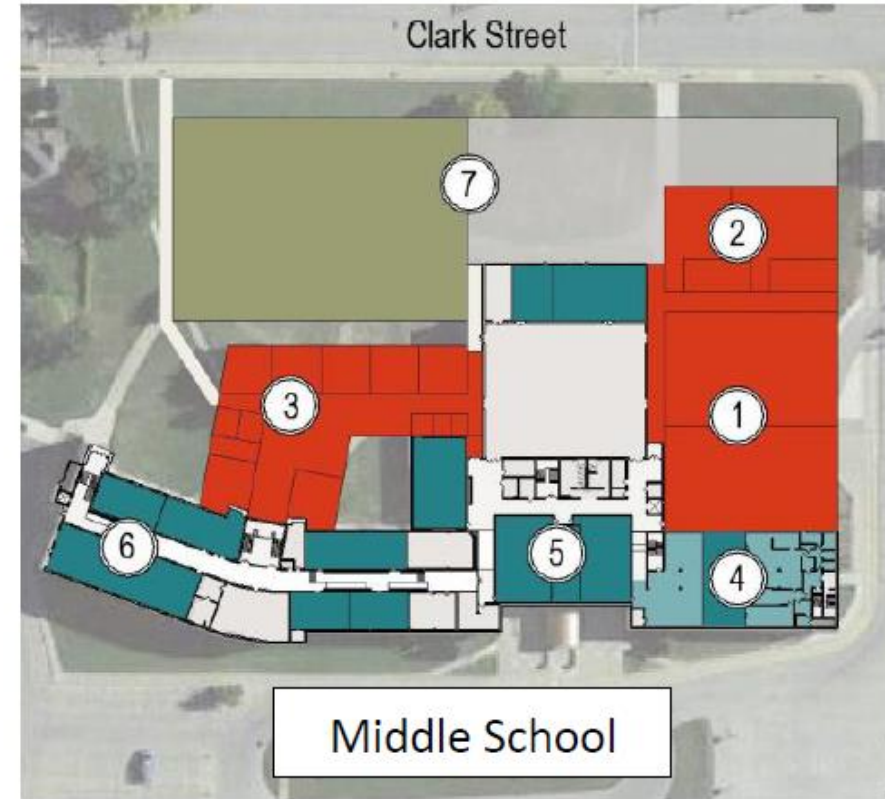
	Year built	Building systems	Capacity	Areas that do not meet academic/community needs
High School	1964	Poor	At capacity	Woods, ag, metals, automotive, tech ed, band, music, gym, classroom support areas
Middle School	1944	Fair	Over capacity	Gym, cafeteria, auditorium, music, band, tech ed, special education, classroom support areas
Miller Elementary	1957	Poor	Over capacity	Small-group instruction areas, music, art, offices
Camp Douglas Elementary	1990	Fair	At capacity	Special education classrooms, art, music, reading/math support areas, small-group instruction areas
LaGrange Elementary	1989	Fair	Over capacity	Special education classrooms, music, and small-group instruction areas
Lemonweir Elementary	1959	Poor	At capacity	Cafeteria, special education, small-group instruction areas
Oakdale Elementary	1957	Fair	At capacity	Music, art, reading/math support areas, small-group instruction areas
Warrens Elementary	1940	Poor	At capacity	Music, art, classroom support areas, small-group instruction areas
Wyeville Elementary	1959	Poor	At capacity	Music, art, classroom support areas, small-group instruction areas
Robert Kupper	1979	Fair	Below capacity	N/A
Tomah Area Montessori	Unknown	Poor	Over capacity	Gym, music, art, cafeteria, kitchen, classroom support areas, small-group instruction areas

Facility Option 1

Option 1:

Middle School:

- ① Cafeteria and gym
- ② Band and choir classroom
- ③ Classrooms, special education, and small-group instruction area
- ④ Kitchen and serving area
- ⑤ Locker room
- ⑥ Tech ed ("shop")
- ⑦ Playground improvements



Plan Key:

- Existing
- Renovation
- New Construction



Facility Option 1 (cont'd)

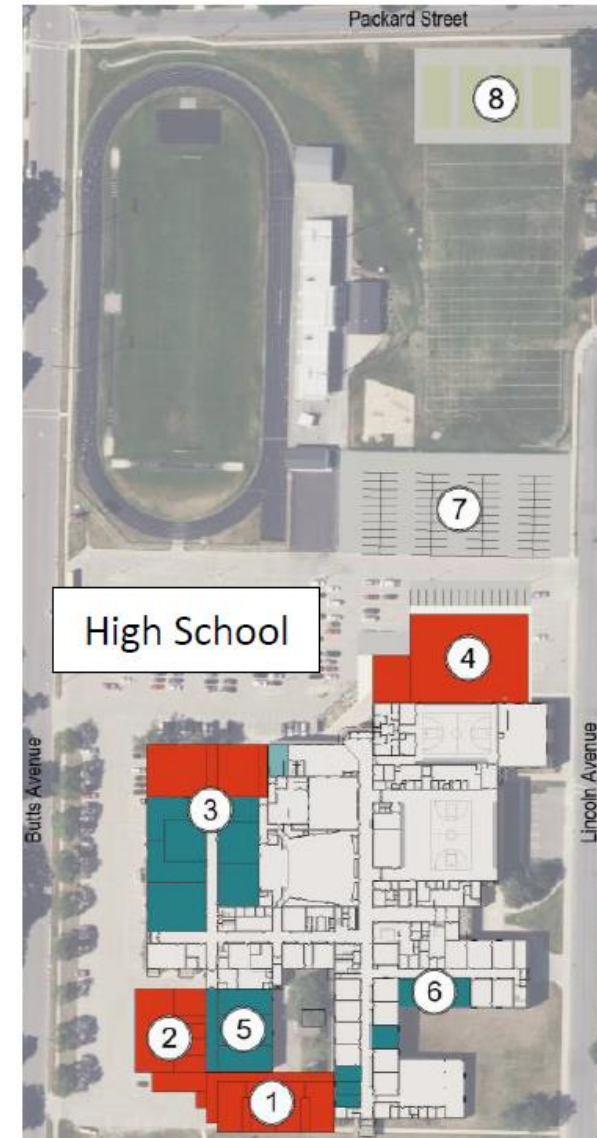
High School:

- ① Classrooms, art, and family & consumer science
- ② Tech ed (auto shop)
- ③ Band, choir, and tech ed (woods, metals, and welding)
- ④ Two-court gym
- ⑤ Agriculture science labs
- ⑥ Classroom renovations to support small-group instruction
- ⑦ Parking lot expansion
- ⑧ Tennis courts for physical education, the middle school, and the community

This option would also:

- ✓ Seek to sell the **District Office**, **Robert Kupper Learning Center**, and **Tomah Area Montessori School** buildings. This would save money over the long-term by not having to operate and maintain these buildings.

Estimated cost for option 1: \$120.7 million



Facility Option 2

Option 2:

This option would build a new high school. The site is not yet finalized. However, the District is searching for potential properties near the existing high school. The new school would include:

- ✓ Capacity to serve up to 1,100 students in grades 9-12
- ✓ Classrooms and labs for career & tech ed and STEM courses
- ✓ Flexible spaces for student performances and collaboration
- ✓ An 800-seat performing arts center
- ✓ A three-court gym and fitness area for students and community use
- ✓ Proper separation of pedestrians and vehicle/bus traffic and additional parking
- ✓ Energy-efficient systems and natural lighting
- ✓ Practice fields and track



Facility Option 2 (cont'd)



Other projects in this option are included in the chart below:

Current Use	 High School Grades 9-12	 Middle School Grades 6-8	 Additional Facilities
Proposed Use	 Repurpose high school into middle school for grades 5-8	 Elementary	 Additional Facilities
Project Scope	Minor classroom renovations	Updates for elementary and districtwide programming	Close and seek to sell Miller, Lemonweir, TAMS, Robert Kupper, and District Office

In addition, La Grange would be the “in-town” school to serve early childhood, four-year-old kindergarten, five-year-old kindergarten, and the Montessori program.

By consolidating facilities, the District could avoid spending about \$14 million in operational and maintenance costs over the next 10 years.

Estimated cost for option 2: \$177.3 million