



Public Perceptions of Mercer Island School District

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

September 2025





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Survey Methodology

Strategies 360 conducted a mixed-mode survey of **400 adult residents in Mercer Island School District, Washington.**

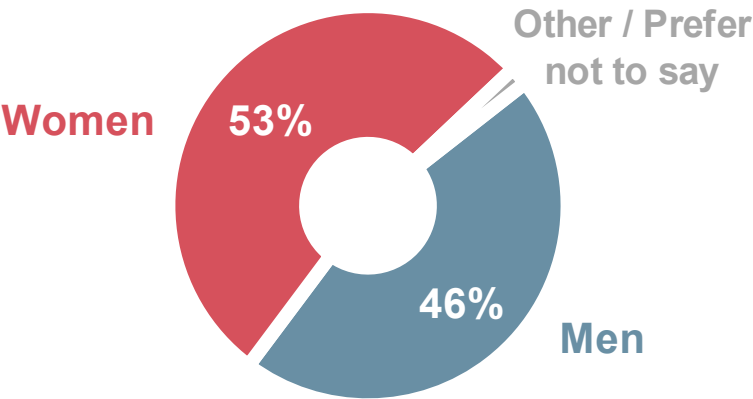
Interviews were conducted **September 15-23, 2025.** A combination of landline, cell phone, and online interviews via SMS text message invitations to web-hosted surveys were used to ensure greater coverage of the population sampled.

The margin of error for a survey of **400** interviews is **± 5 percentage points** at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error is higher for subsamples.

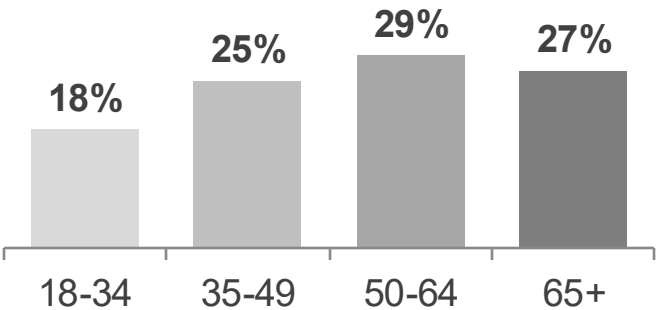
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Mercer Island School District – representative demographics per US Census (n400 interviews)

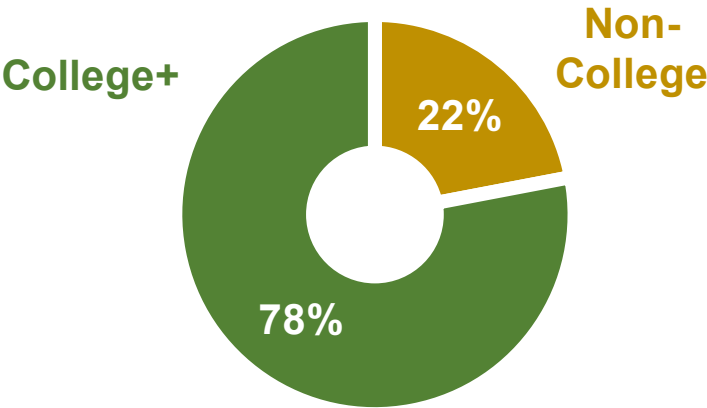
Gender



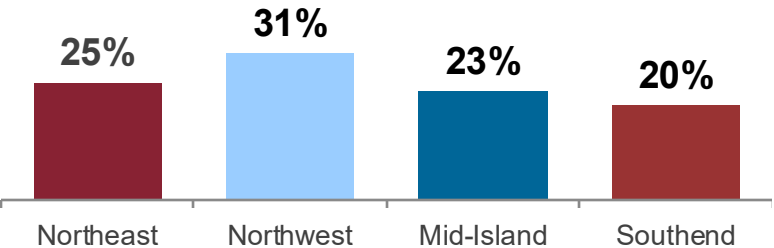
Age



Education



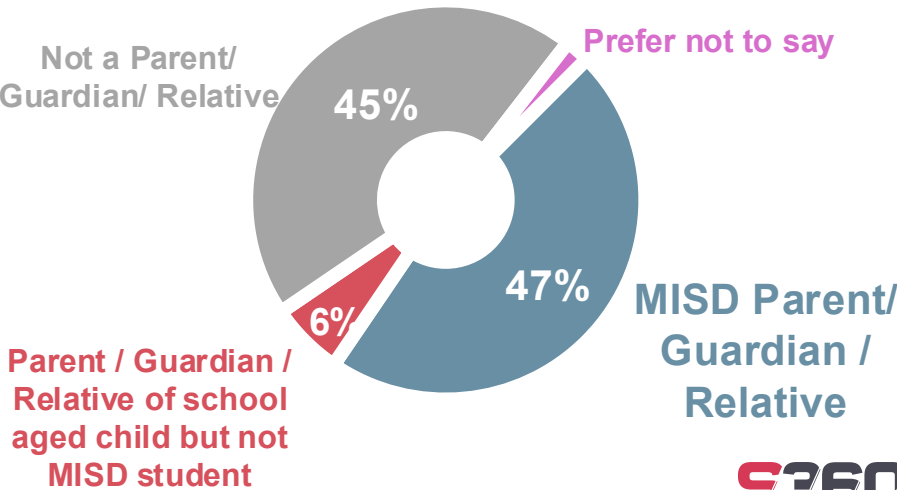
Region



Race

White or Caucasian	63%
AAPI	22%
Mixed race or multi-racial	6%
Hispanic or Latino	2%
Black or African American	1%
Other / Something else / Prefer Not to Say	5%

Parental Status*



Note: Rounding to whole numbers may result in totals not adding to 100.

*Caution: directional data

Mercer Island Regions Map

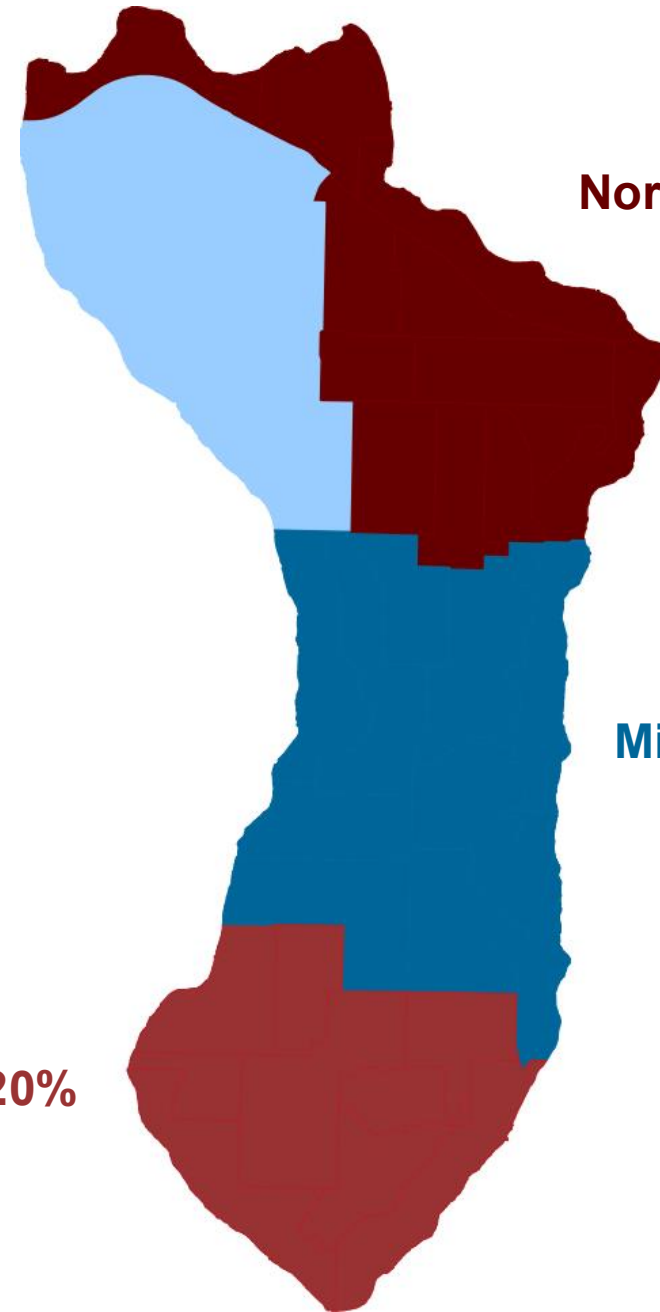
Based on MISD elementary school boundaries, Strategies 360 used on-file voting precinct data to divide survey respondents into four distinct regions.

Northwest: 31%

Northeast: 25%

Mid-Island: 23%

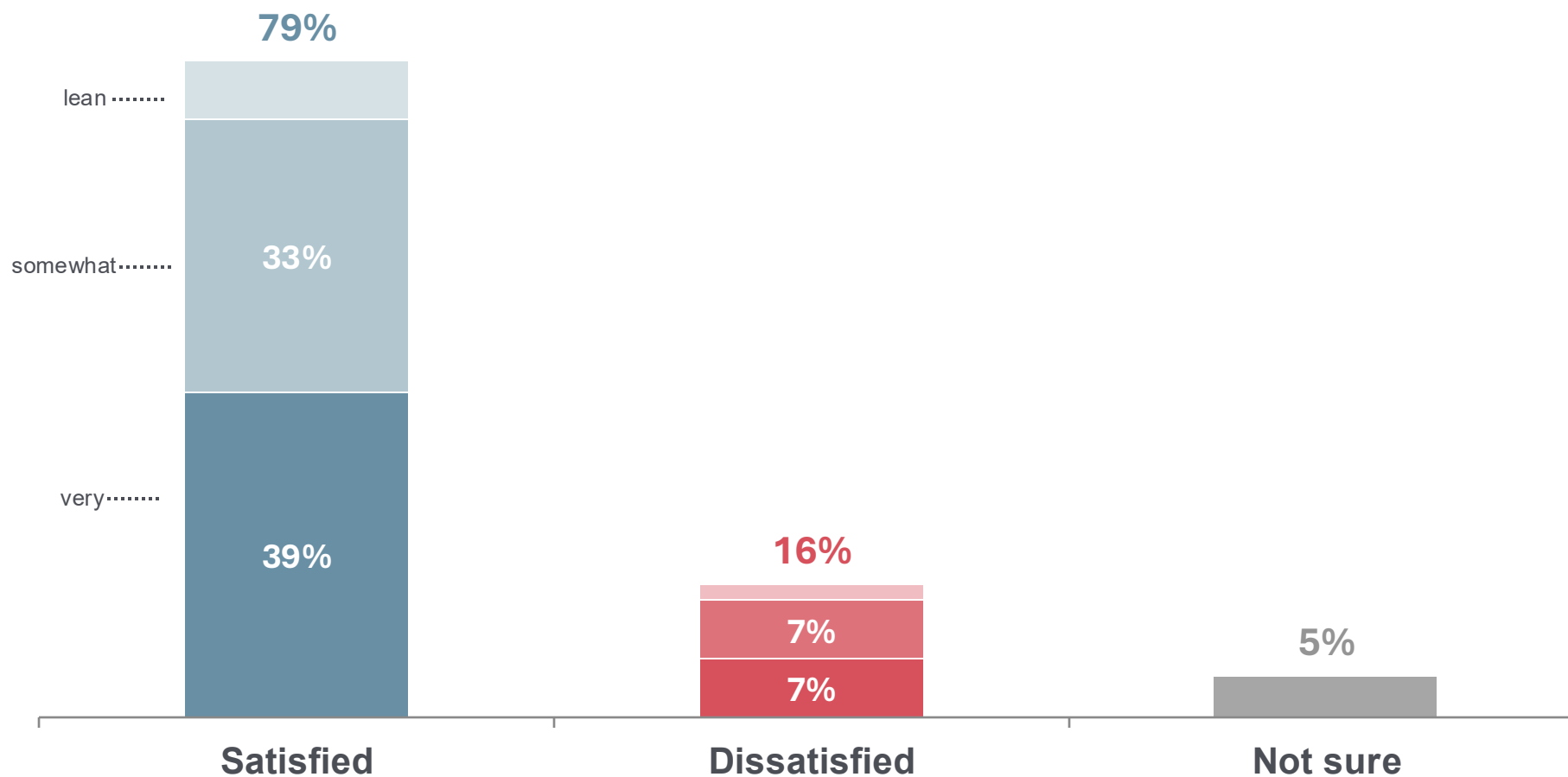
Southend: 20%



PERCEPTIONS OF MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

Residents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of education on Mercer Island.

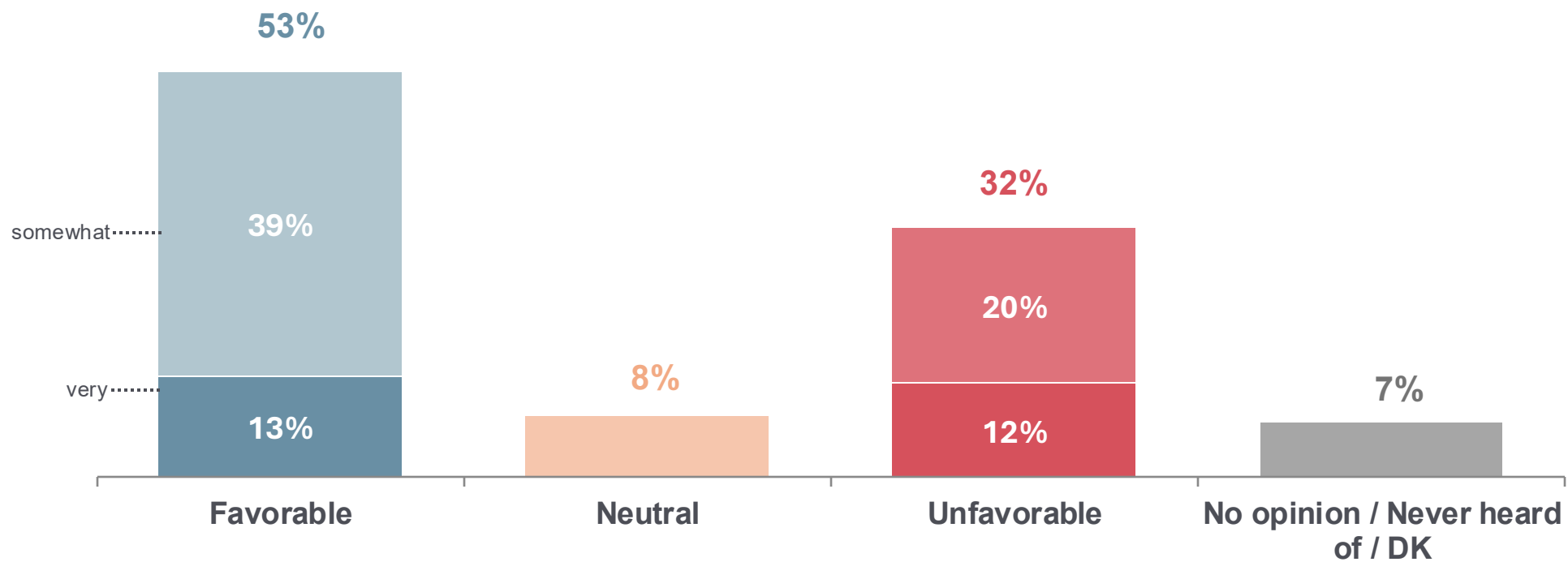
Satisfaction with quality of education in MISD*



*Would you say you are generally (ROTATE) <satisfied> or <dissatisfied> with the quality of education children receive in Mercer Island School District? (PROBE) Is that very <satisfied/dissatisfied> or only somewhat? (PUSH TO CHOOSE) I understand. Would you say you lean more towards satisfied or dissatisfied?

Majority of residents hold a favorable view of MISD School Board.

Opinion of the Mercer Island School Board*

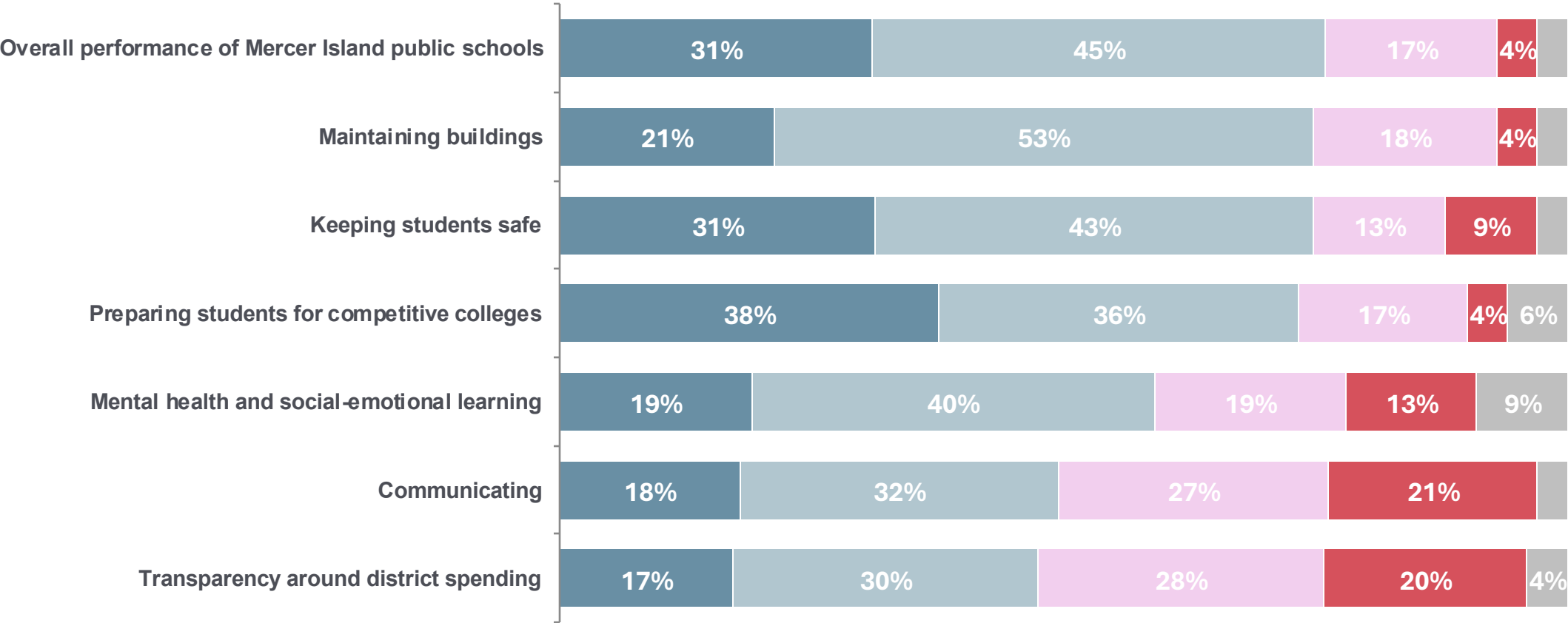


MISD receives positive reviews from resident in most specific performance areas, except communication and transparency where views are mixed.

Mercer Island School District job performance metrics*

excellent job | good job | fair job | poor job | not sure

All Residents: Excl + Good
76%
75%
74%
73%
59%
50%
47%

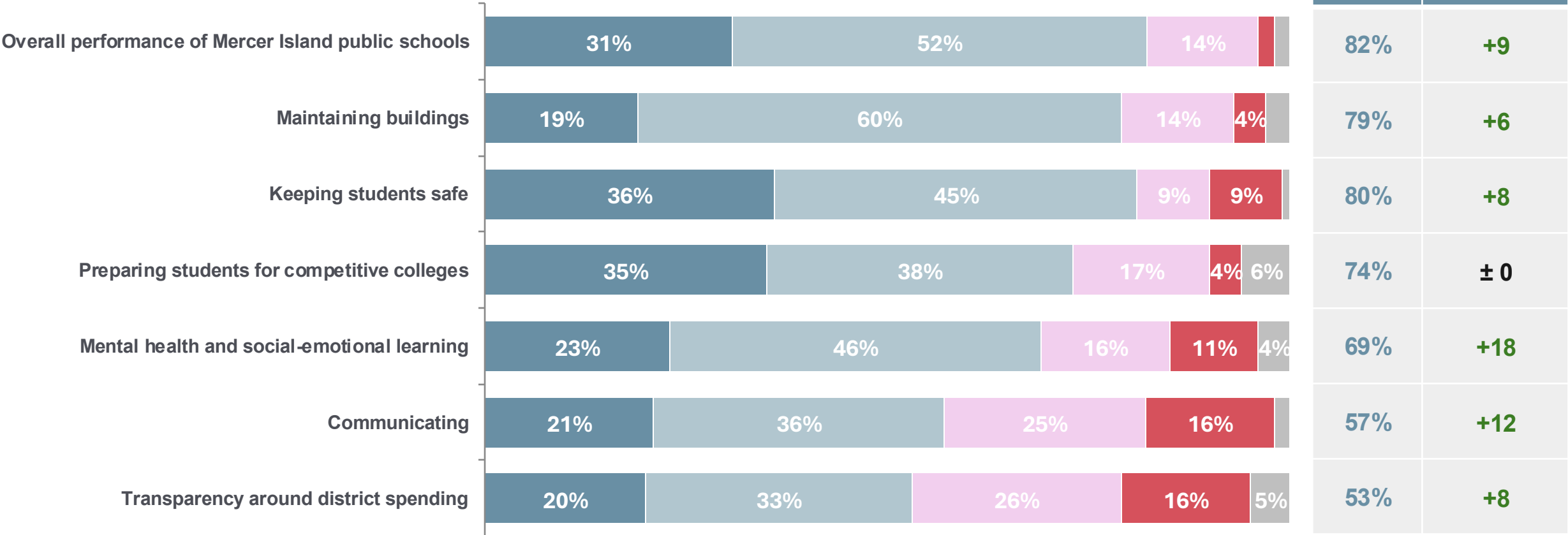


10 *Please rate the job Mercer Island School District is doing in a number of areas. After I read each of the following, please tell me if you believe the school district is doing an excellent job, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job on that item. Here is the first one...

Performance reviews are even more positive when narrowed to only parents, guardians, and relatives of MISD students.

Mercer Island School District job performance metrics among parents, guardians and relatives of MISD Students*

excellent job | good job | fair job | poor job | not sure

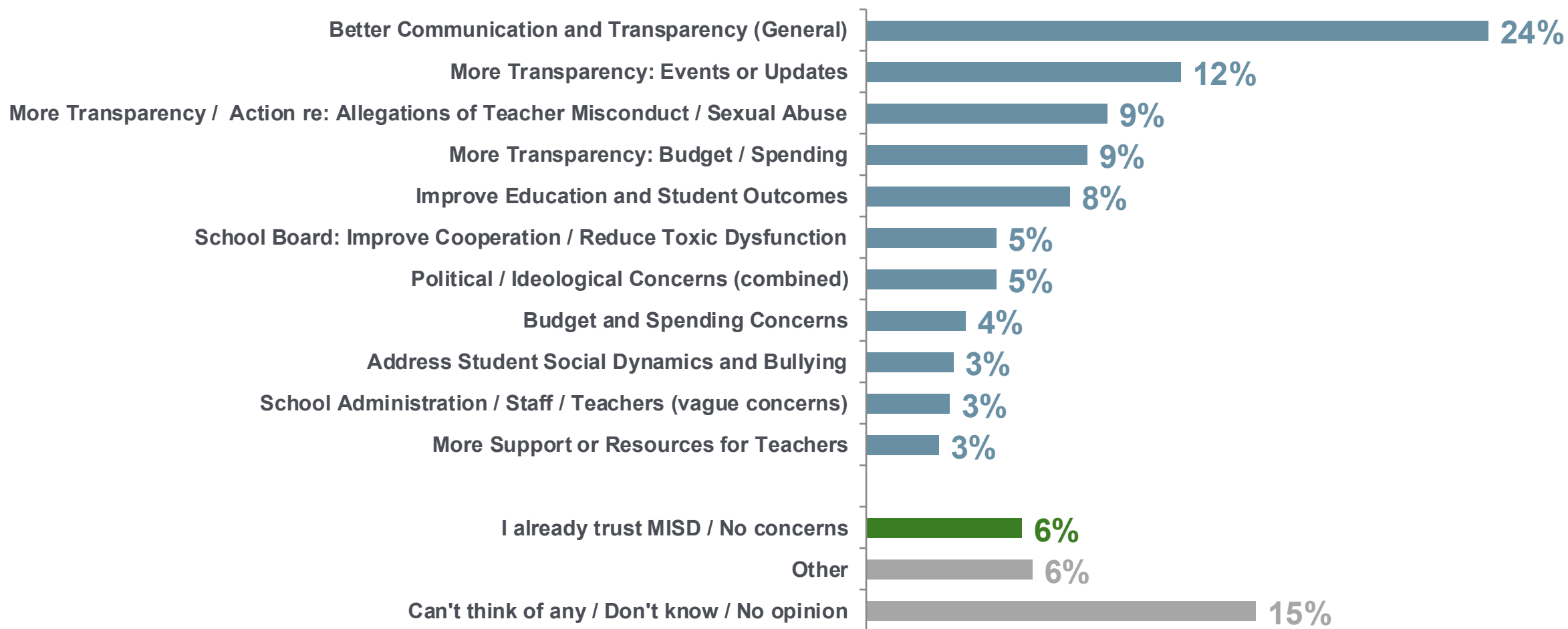


11 *Next I'd like you to rate the job Mercer Island School District is doing in a number of areas. After I read each of the following, please tell me if you believe the school district is doing an excellent job, a good job, a fair job, or a poor job on that item. Here is the first one...

Residents would be more trustful of MISD if there was more communication and transparency through public engagement.

What actions or information would INCREASE YOUR TRUST in Mercer Island School District?

(OPEN ENDED)



FUNDING NEED AND TAX SENSITIVITY

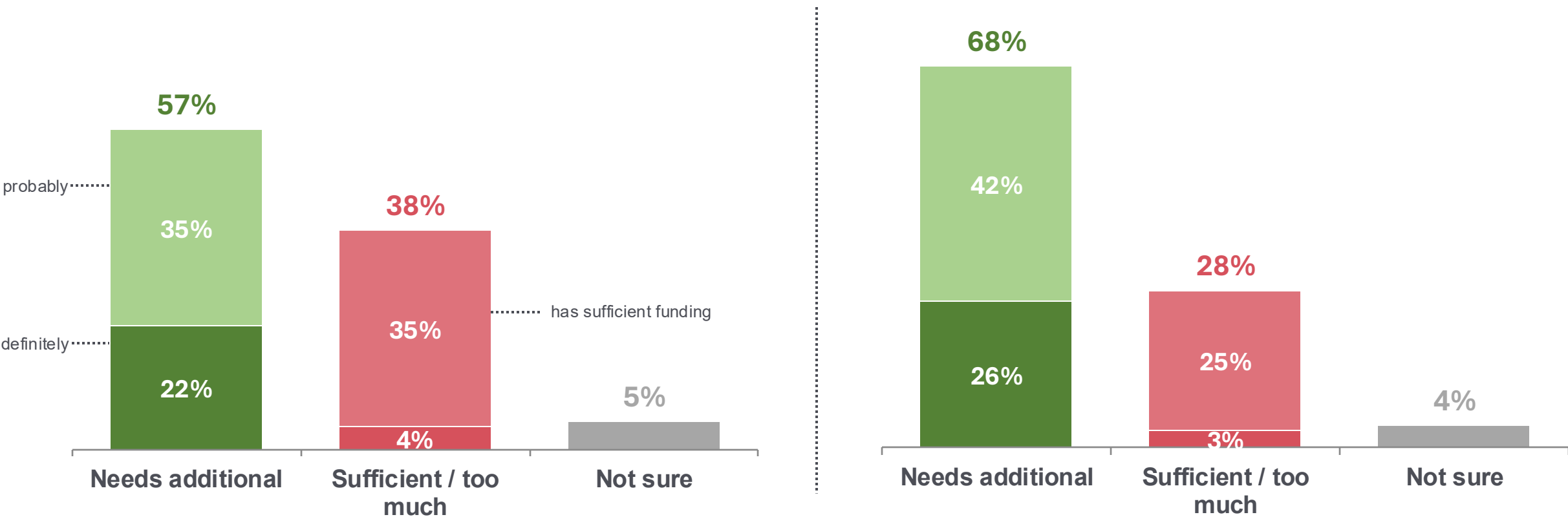


More than half of residents see a need for additional funding for the school district, a group which grows after hearing more information.

Funding Need in Mercer Island School District*

Initial*

After more information**

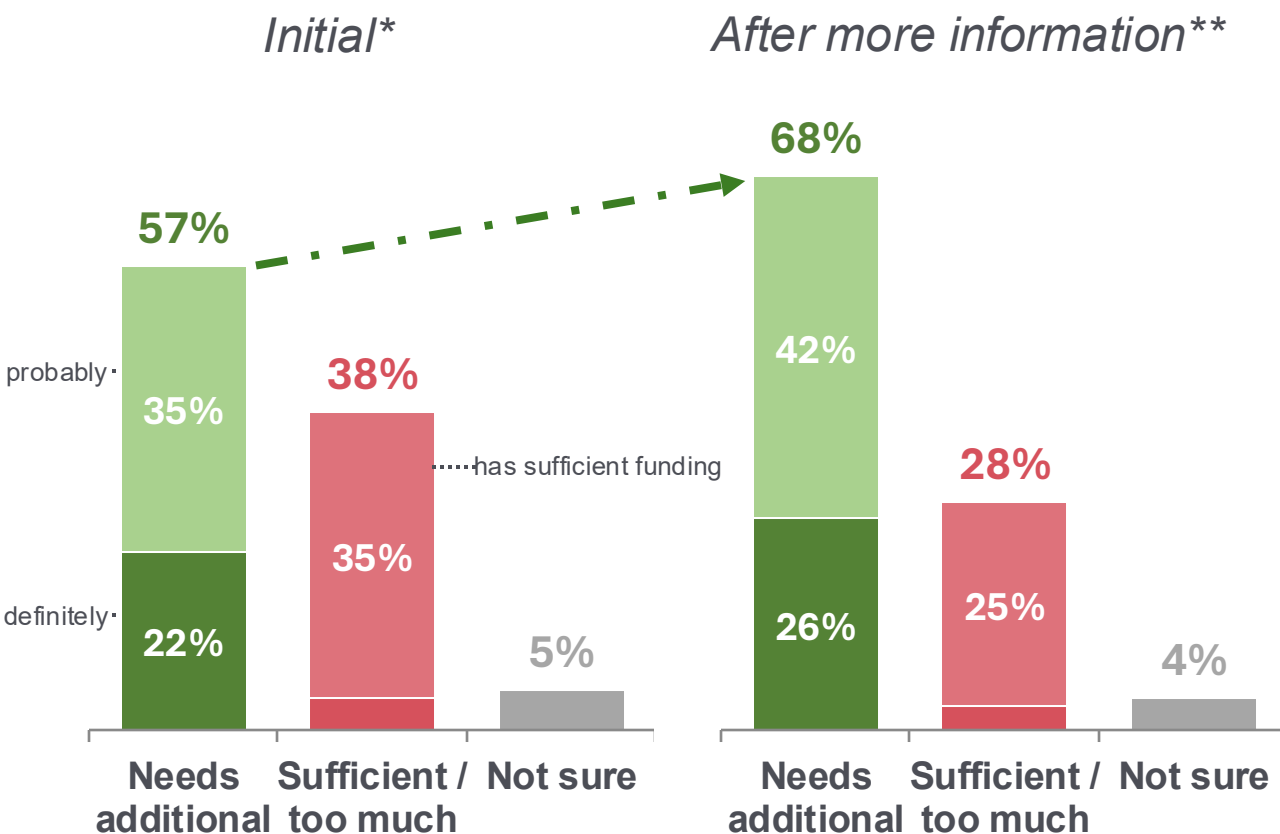


*Which of the following best describes your opinion about education funding in Mercer Island School District? Do you think Mercer Island School District’s schools...

**After hearing more information, let me ask you again, which of the following best describes your opinion about education funding in Mercer Island School District? Do you think Mercer Island School District...

The group of residents who see a need for additional funding grows as more information is shared.

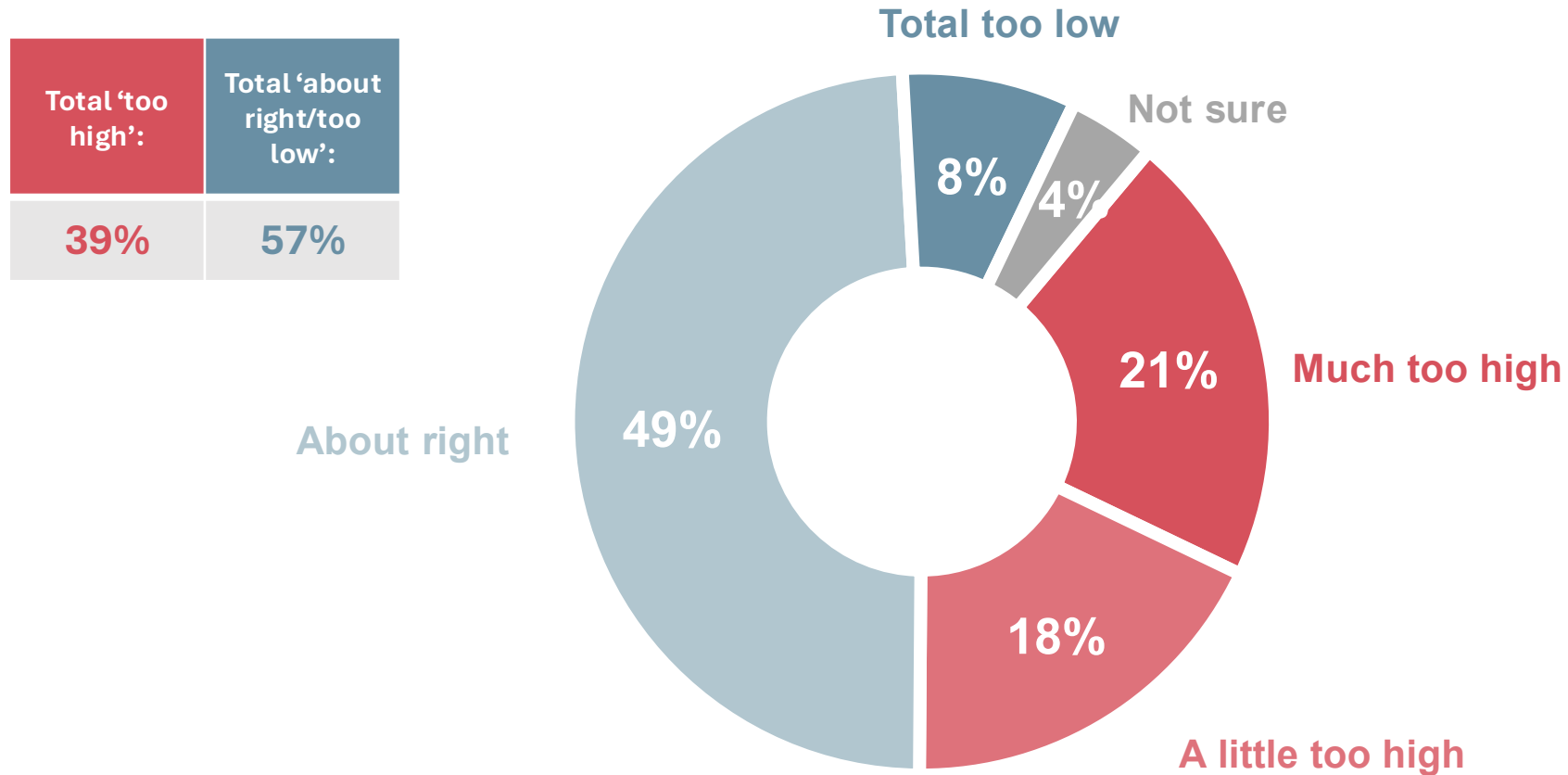
Increase in reported funding need in MISD, from *Initial* to *Final* ask



	Total "Needs Funding" <i>Initial ask</i>	Total "Needs Funding" <i>Final ask</i>	<i>Difference</i>
Total	57%	68%	+12
Northeast	54%	74%	+20
Northwest	56%	68%	+13
Mid-Island	62%	67%	+5
Southend	56%	63%	+7
MISD Parents	63%	77%	+15
Non-Parents	53%	62%	+8
Men	48%	59%	+11
Women	65%	77%	+12
MISD Dads	57%	70%	+13
MISD Moms	69%	85%	+16
Age 18-34	54%	73%	+19
35-49	54%	63%	+9
50-64	56%	67%	+11
65+	61%	71%	+10
Non-College	62%	77%	+15
BA Degree	51%	69%	+18
Postgrad/Advanced Degree	59%	63%	+4

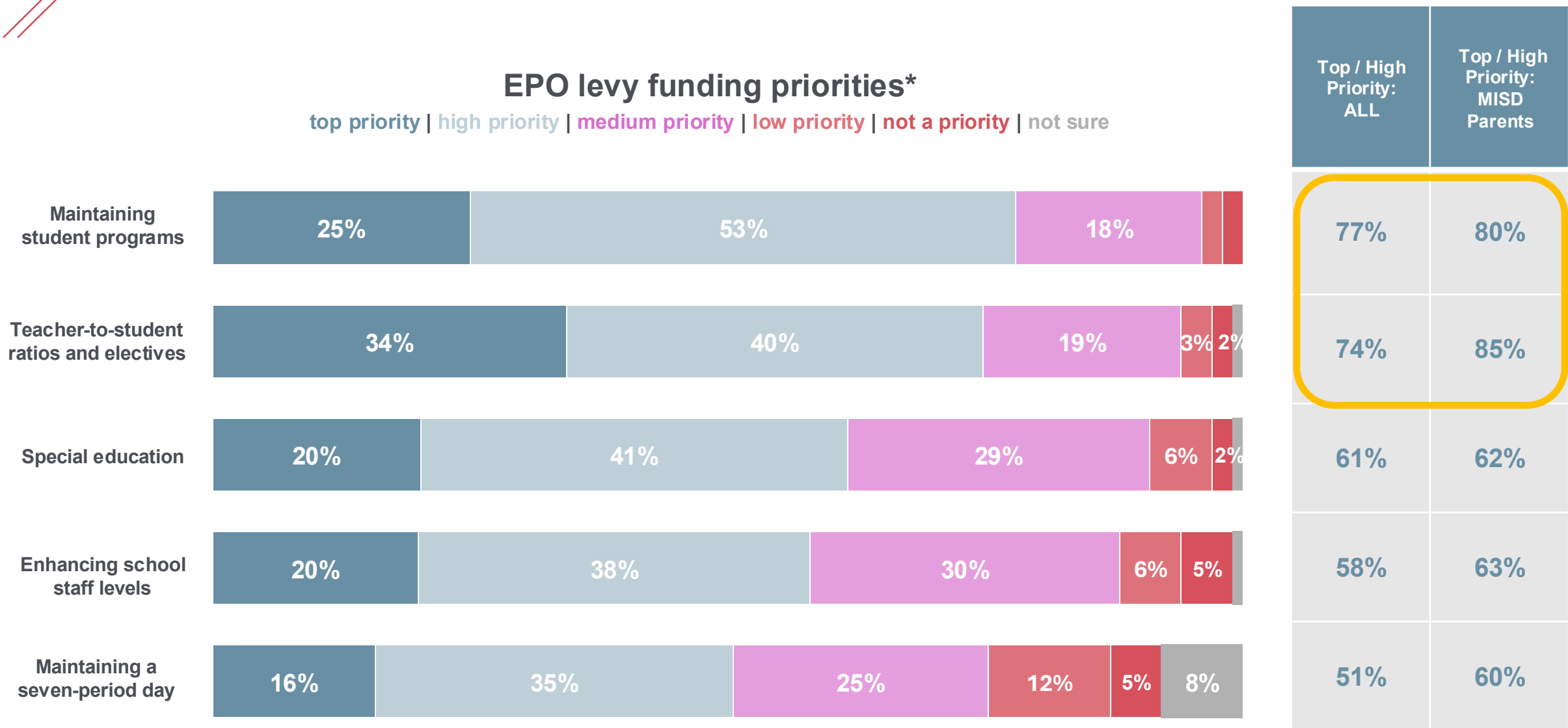
More than half of residents believe the local property taxes are about right or too low relative to the quality of public services. These answer response rates for tax sensitivity are lower than other districts.

MISD residents tax sensitivity*



BOND AND LEVY PRIORITIES

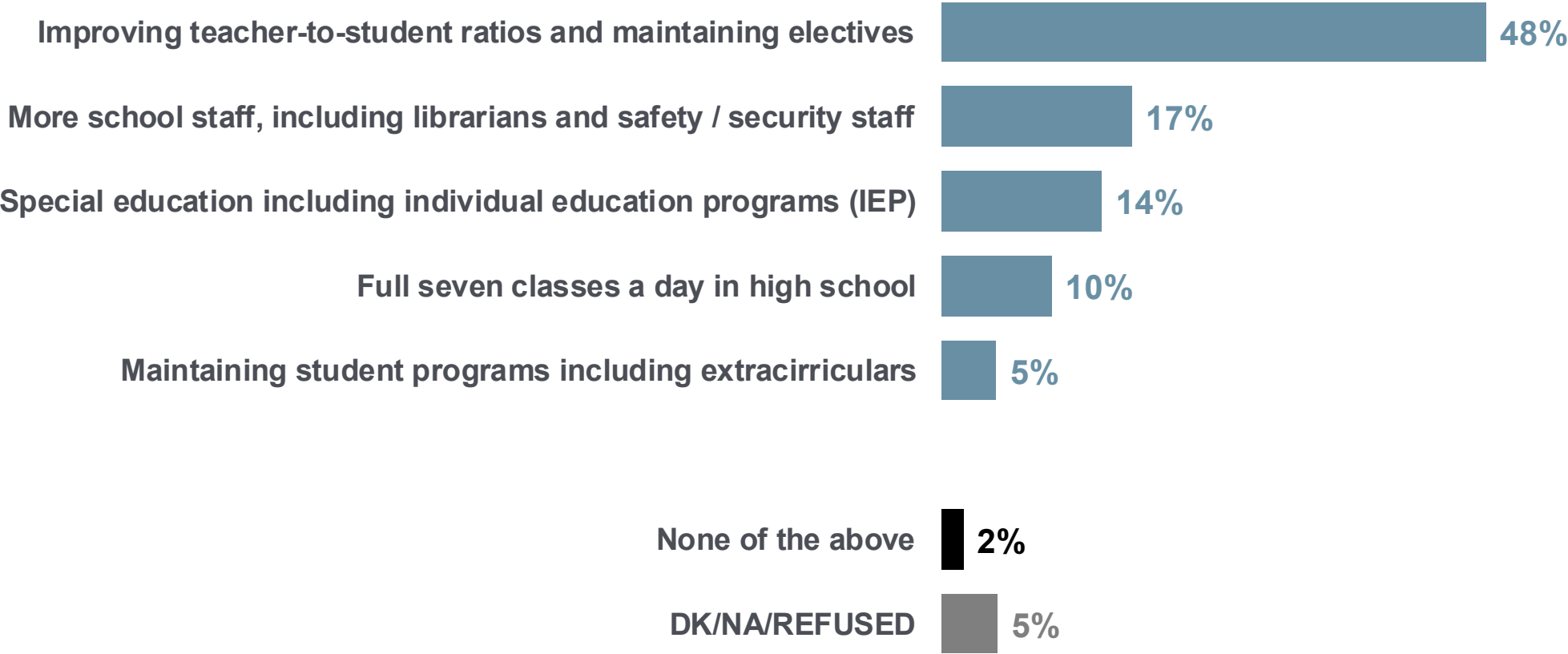
Levy components *centered around students* were seen as highest priority by residents.



18 *Next I'm going to read you some specific items that a school district levy might help fund. Please tell me how big a funding priority you think each of the following is – an absolute top funding priority, a high but not top priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a funding priority at all? Please remember that not everything can be the absolute top priority.

Levy components *centered around students* were seen as highest priority.

Top EPO levy priority – all residents*

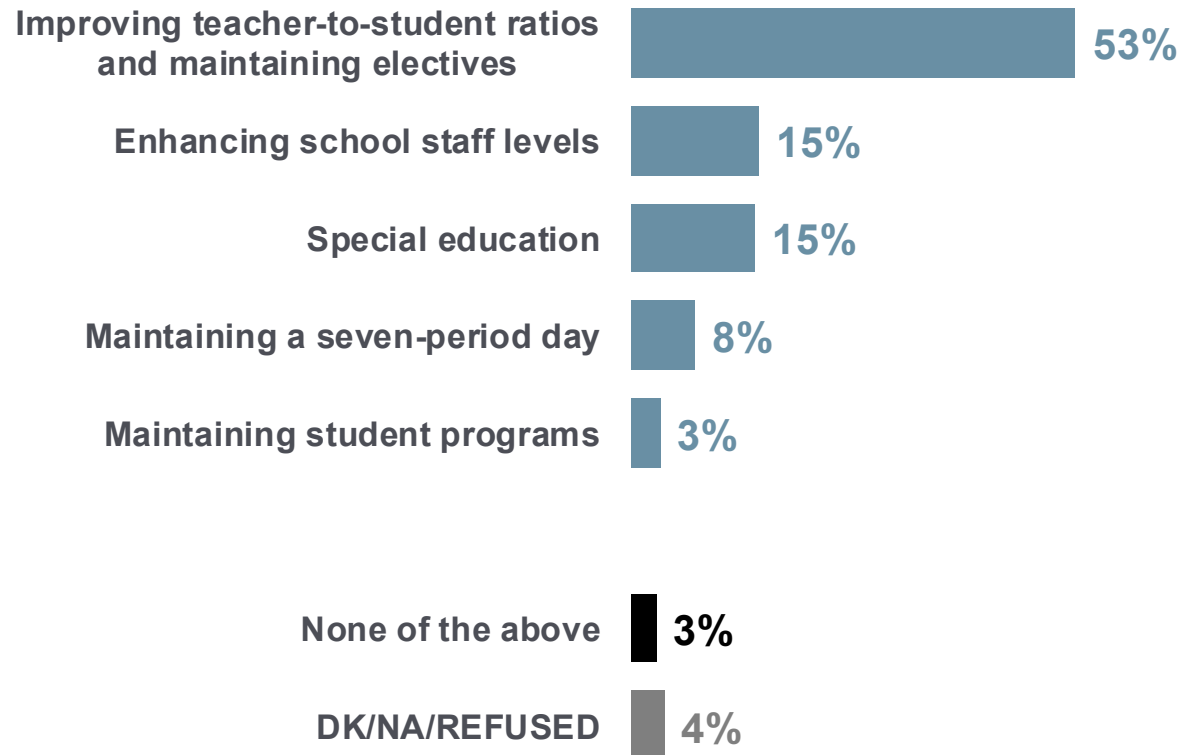


*An educational programs and operations levy run by Mercer Island School District would help fund a number of services. They may all be important, but of the following list, which ONE would you say is most important to prioritize for this funding?

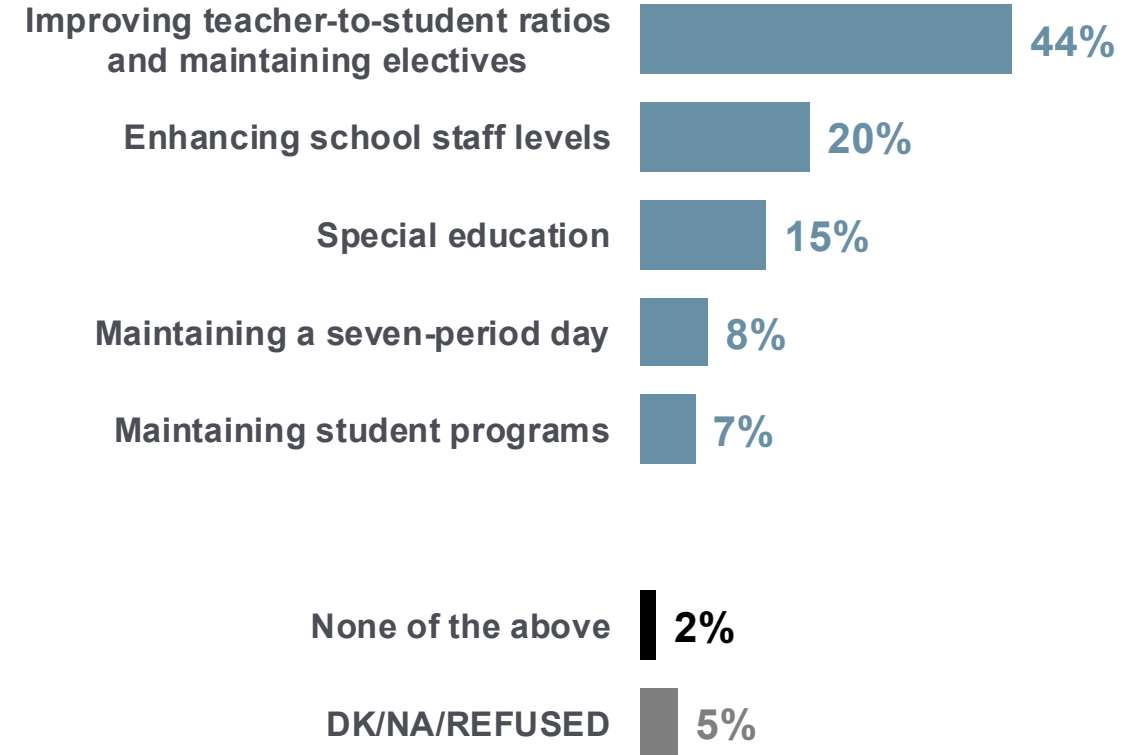
Levy components centered around students were seen as highest priority.

Top EPO levy priority – MISD parents, guardians, or relatives and non-parents*

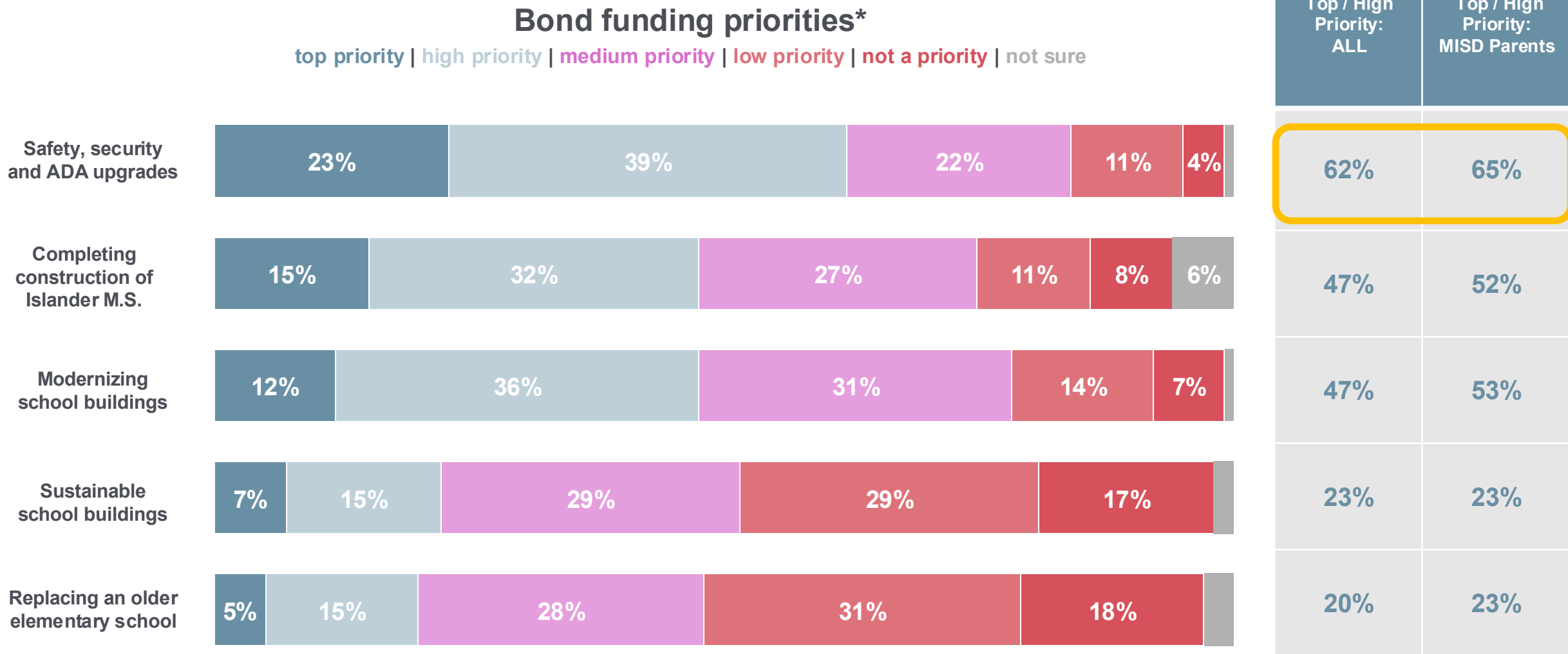
MISD Parents, guardians or relatives



Non-parent residents



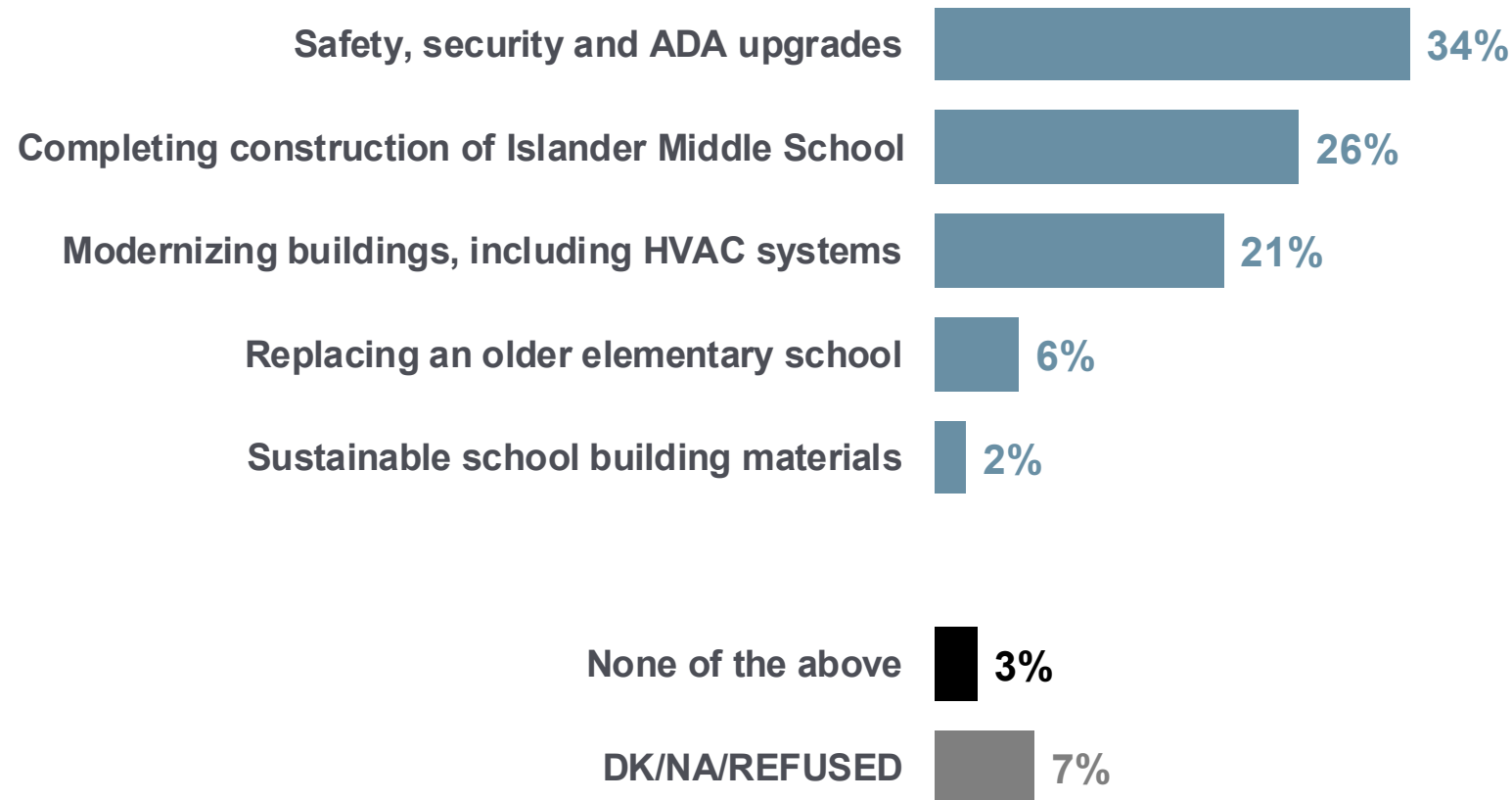
Bond components *emphasizing safety and security* were seen as highest priority.



21
 *Next I'm going to read you some specific items that a bond placed on the ballot by Mercer Island School District might help fund. Please tell me how big a funding priority you think each of the following is – an absolute top funding priority, a high but not top priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a funding priority at all? Please remember that not everything can be the absolute top priority.

Bond components *emphasizing safety and security* were seen as highest priority.

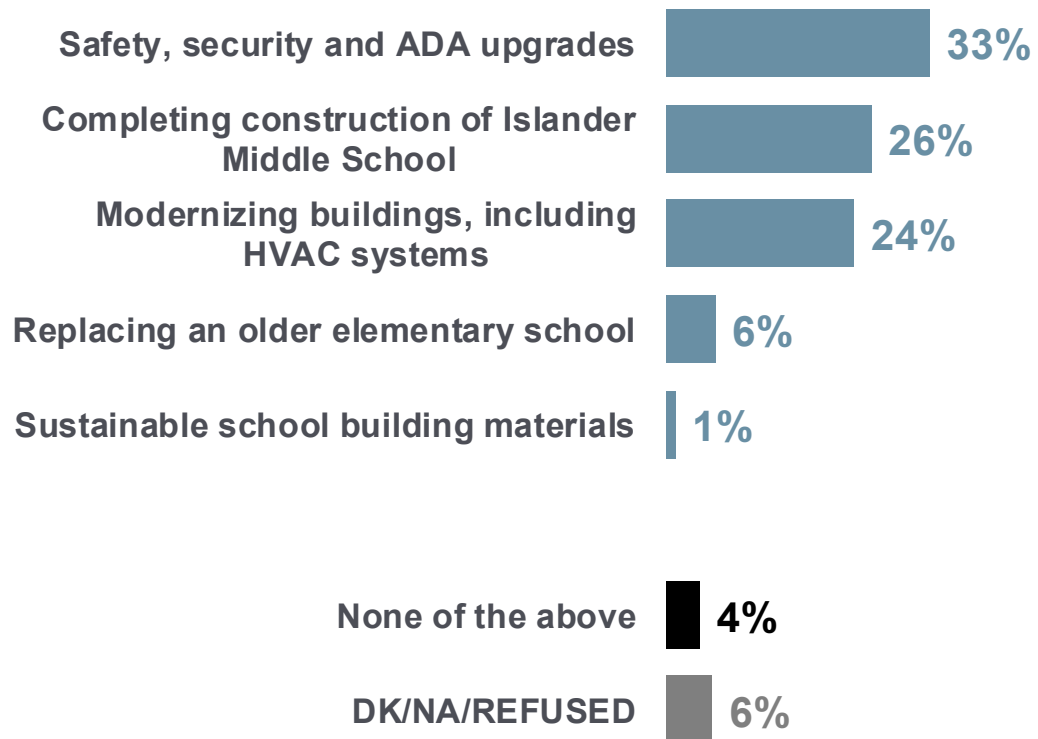
Top bond priority – all residents*



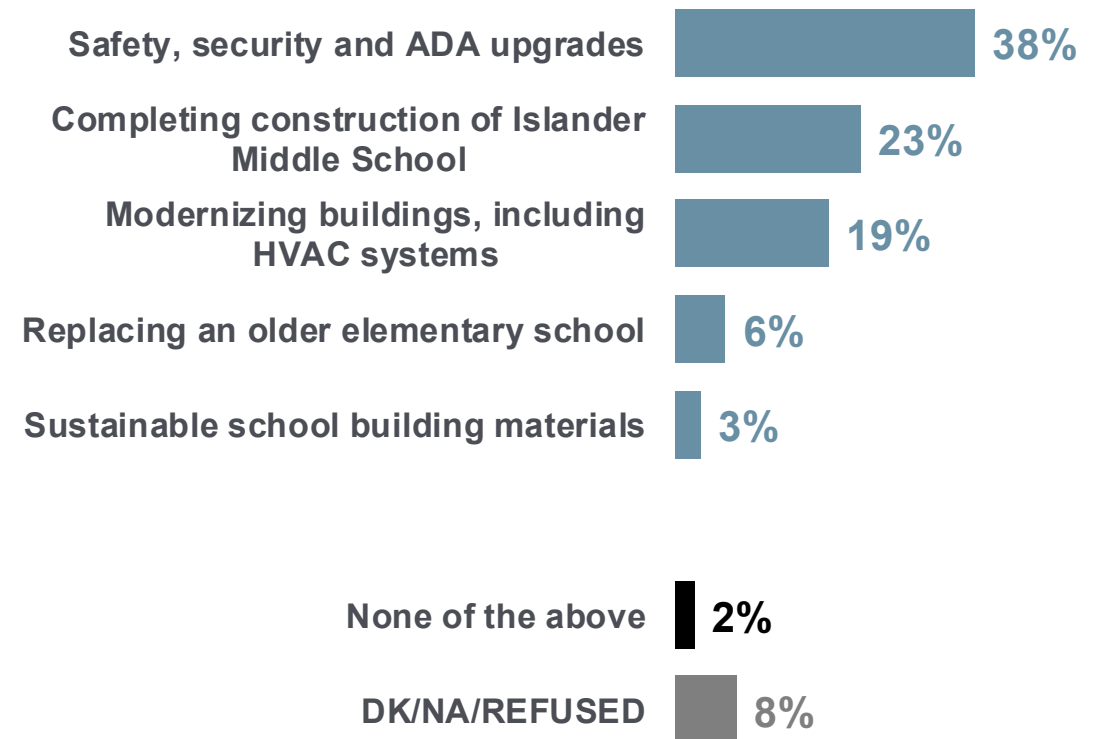
Bond components *emphasizing safety and security* were seen as highest priority.

Top bond priority – MISD parents, guardians, or relatives and non-parents*

MISD Parents, guardians or relatives



Non-parent residents



COMMUNICATION THEMES

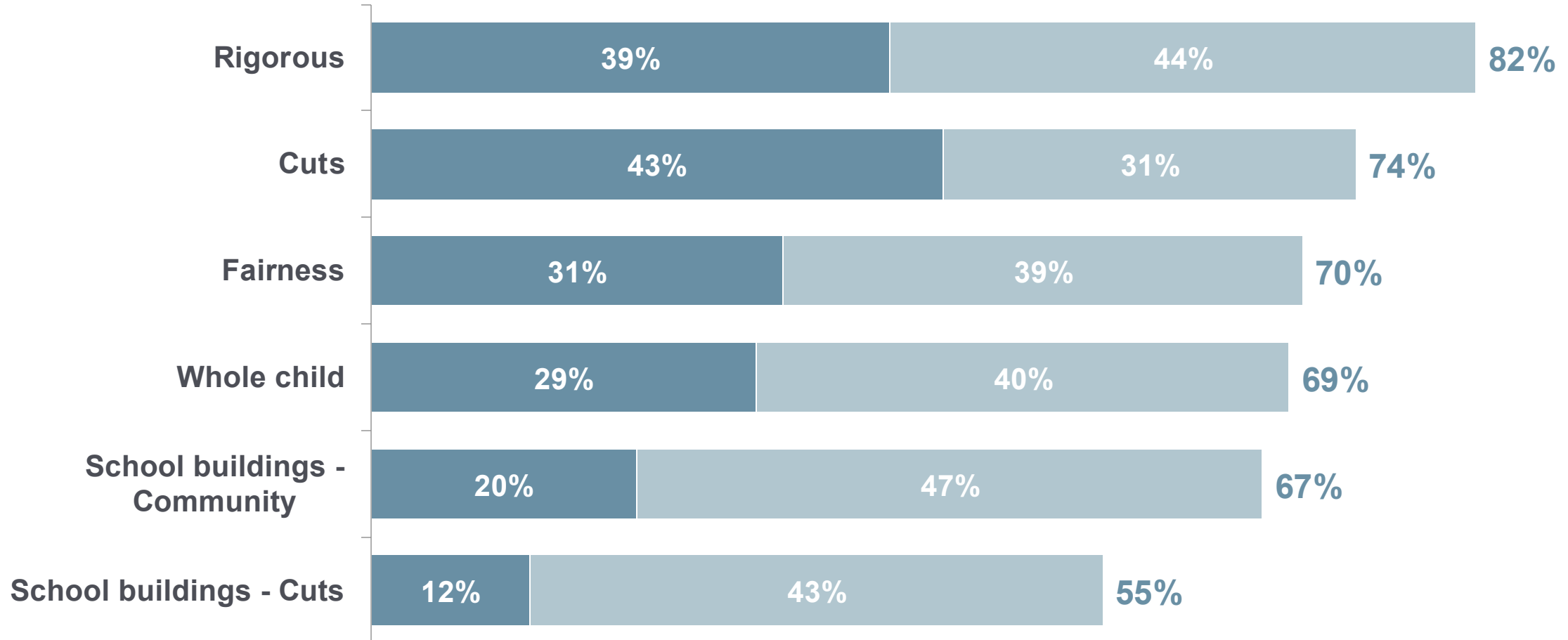
A series of messages about funding were presented to participants:

Label	Message Text
FAIRNESS	All students should be given the same opportunities regardless of their abilities, backgrounds or family's income. These funding measures would be used at every school in the district to ensure all students have equitable access to programs, learning spaces, and opportunities.
SCHOOL BUILDINGS – COMMUNITY	School facilities should foster a sense of community and provide vibrant learning spaces that are aligned to support student excellence. Further funding is needed for facilities, specifically to reunite the middle school campus under one roof, completing campus improvements, and creating a cohesive, secure building.
SCHOOL BUILDINGS – CUTS	Funding would be used to update assembly, performance, and community spaces to match the caliber of student work and improve audience experience. Funding shortfalls have forced the district to only move forward with partial remedies for facility needs, further funding measures are needed to provide the best learning environment for students.
CUTS	Without this funding the district will need to make cuts to staffing and programs like Special Education, athletics, performing arts, and nurses.
WHOLE CHILD	These measures would provide funding to ensure students receive a top-quality education and invest in their mental health and social-emotional-health, creating a positive learning environment so they have every opportunity to grow and thrive.
RIGOROUS	All students learn at different speeds and need individualized attention. The most efficient learners need an extra challenge to maximize their potential and prepare for a fulfilling future. Our schools' learning environments must appropriately challenge students with rigorous academics, so they have every opportunity to grow and thrive.

Mercer Island residents view the district's academic excellence in terms of challenging students to be their best – this message was the most effective along with the threat that cuts posed to academic excellence.

Reasons to increase funding in Mercer Island School District*

very convincing | somewhat convincing



Mercer Island residents view the district's academic excellence in terms of challenging students to be their best – this message was the most effective along with the threat that cuts posed to academic excellence.

Messaging by convincing index

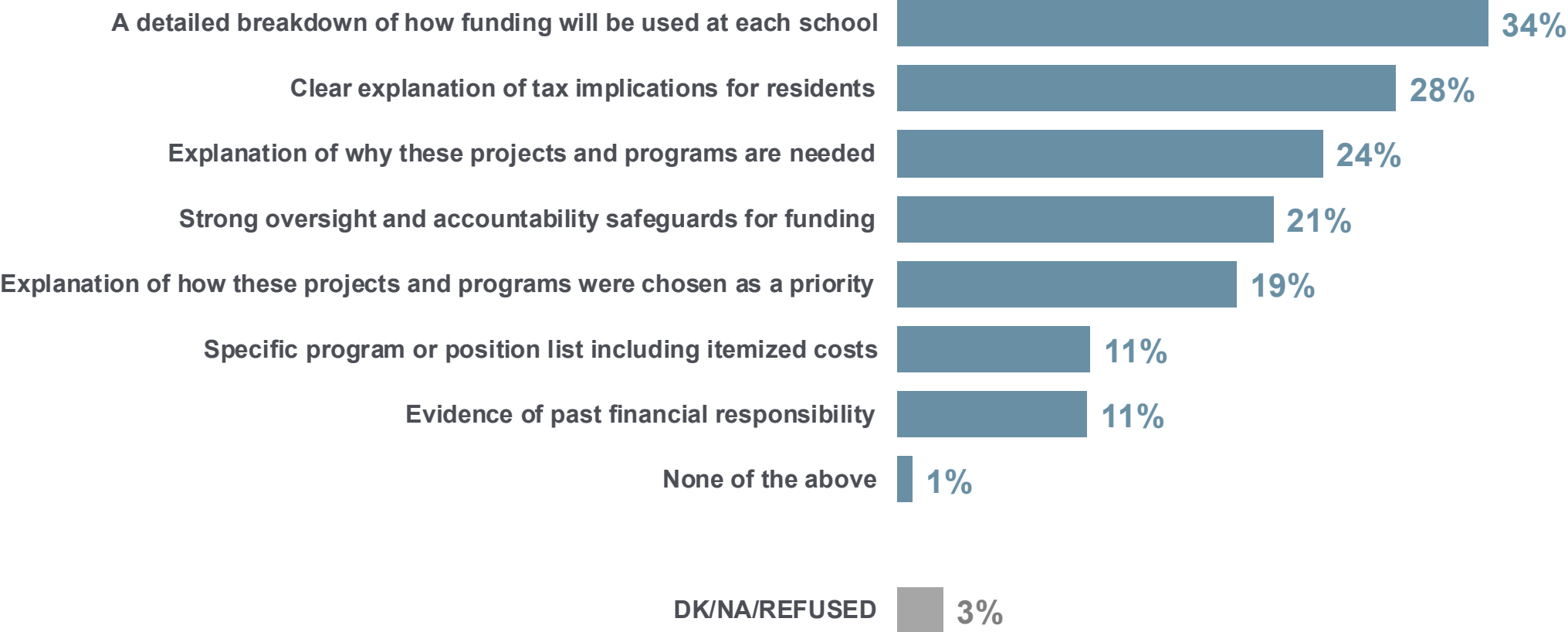
very convincing + very convincing + somewhat convincing

	Total	MISD parents	Non-parents
Top reason	Rigorous 121%	Rigorous 128%	Rigorous 113%
2nd best reason	Cuts 116%	Cuts 127%	Cuts 112%
3rd best reason	Fairness 101%	Fairness 98%	Fairness 110%
4th best reason	Whole Child 98%	Whole Child 94%	Whole Child 106%
5th best reason	School buildings - Community 87%	School buildings - Community 84%	School buildings - Community 90%
6th best reason	School buildings - Cuts 68%	School buildings - Cuts 75%	School buildings - Cuts 64%

Communication should be detailed and involve a sense of empowering through sharing information.

Funding measure details MISD residents are interested in learning more about*

Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%

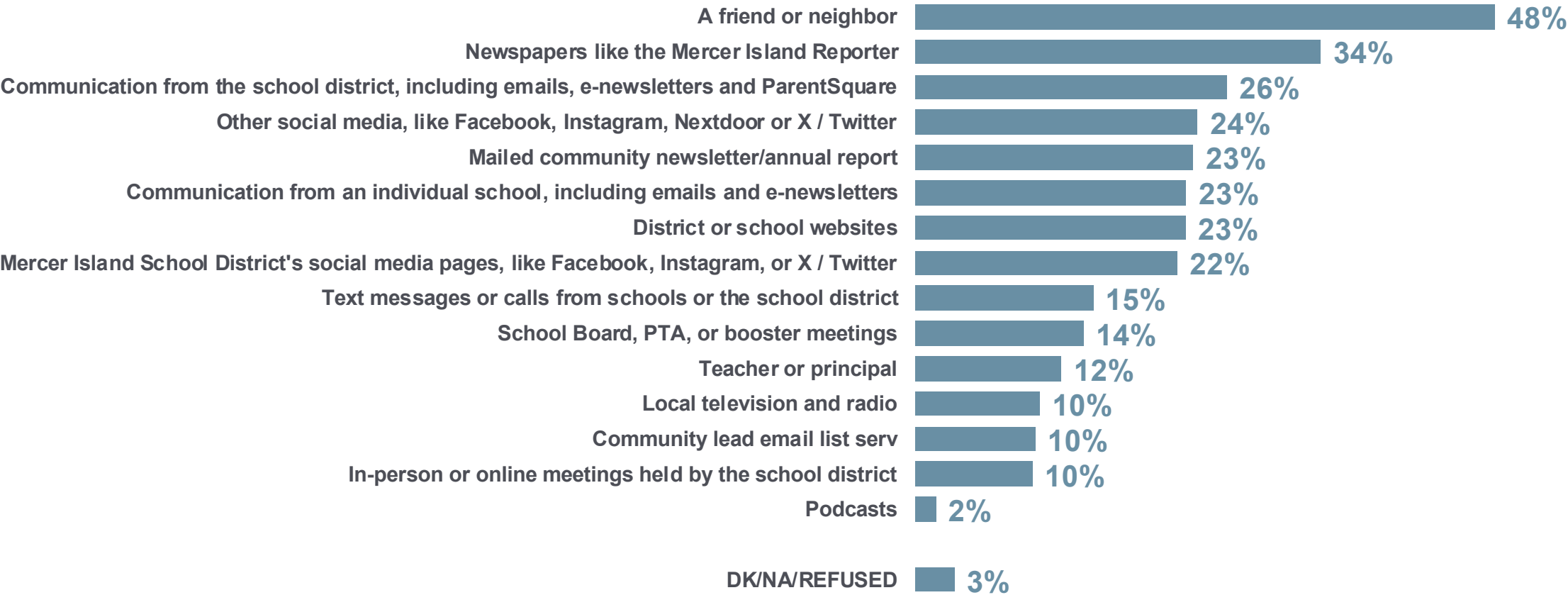


COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Inter-personal communication is especially important along with continued multi-modal public engagement.

News and information sources about MISD*

Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%



Inter-personal communication is especially important along with continued multi-modal public engagement.

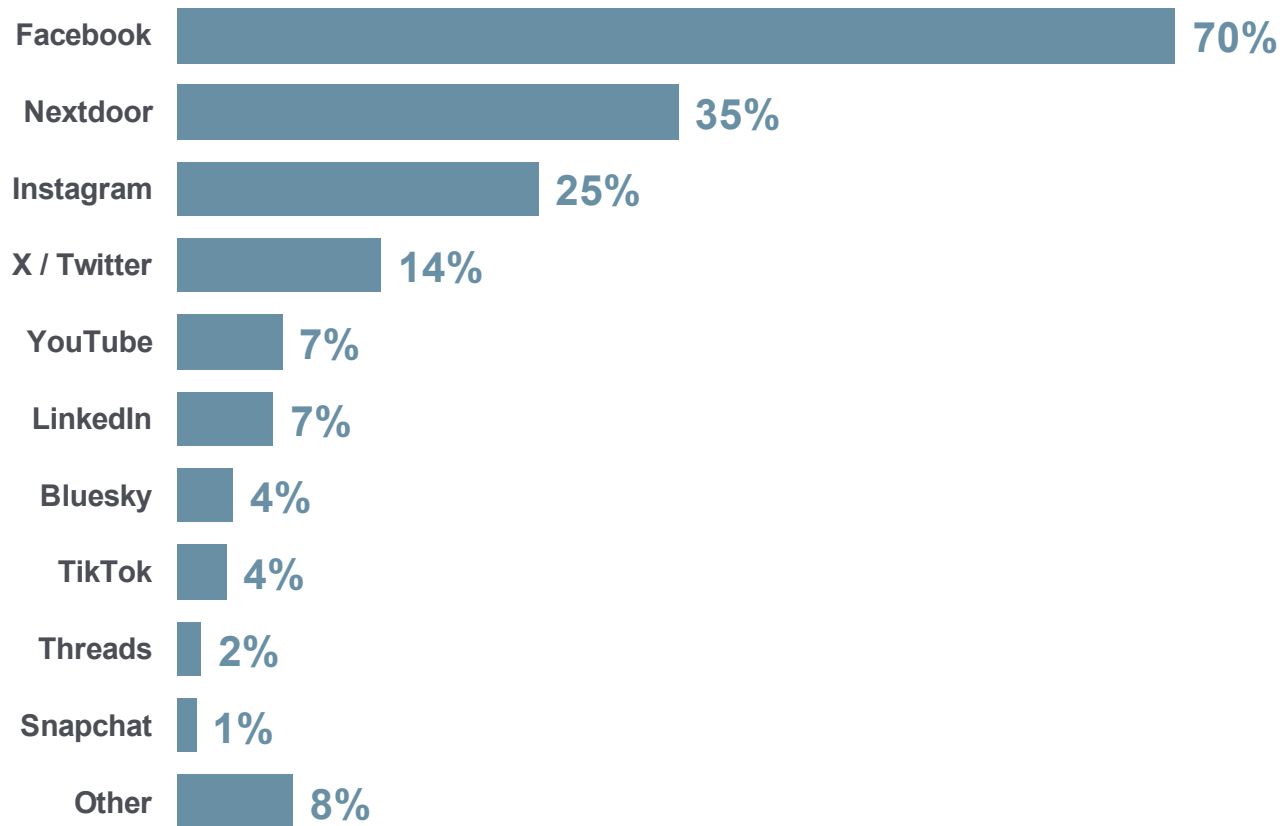
News about MISD by parental status

	Total	MISD parents	Non-parents
A friend or neighbor	48%	48%	50%
Newspapers like the Mercer Island Reporter	34%	30%	38%
Communication from the school district, including emails, e-newsletters and ParentSquare	26%	36%	18%
Other social media, like Facebook, Instagram, Nextdoor or X / Twitter	24%	27%	21%
Mailed community newsletter/annual report	23%	21%	26%
Communication from an individual school, including emails and e-newsletters	23%	38%	10%
District or school websites	23%	32%	16%
Mercer Island School District's social media pages, like Facebook, Instagram, or X / Twitter	22%	24%	17%
Text messages or calls from schools or the school district	15%	29%	2%
School Board, PTA, or booster meetings	14%	21%	7%
Teacher or principal	12%	19%	7%
Local television and radio	10%	5%	14%
Community lead email list serv	10%	13%	8%
In-person or online meetings held by the school district	10%	14%	6%
Podcasts	2%	2%	2%
DK/NA/REFUSED	3%	3%	3%

Meta platforms and Nextdoor were most visited social media sites among residents who use social media for attaining information on the school district.

Social media preferences (N = 141)*

Multiple responses accepted; total does not add to 100%





STRATEGIC FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Residents are satisfied with the quality of education overall and with performance of their neighborhood school and prioritize components of a funding measure that are closest proximity to students (classes, more teachers, safety).
- Sustainability and an elementary school replacement are the lowest priorities for residents.
- Residents are predominantly getting information about the district from channels the district does not own or manage. Ensure you have a strategy to get information to these channels as well as building out the district's outreach.
- Communicating with specificity and consistency matters.
- Make clear connections between levy-funded programs and student success.
- Link potential projects, programs, and positions to prioritized components and themes.



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