



Community Information Session

Potential AASD Referendum - Survey Results

December 17, 2025



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

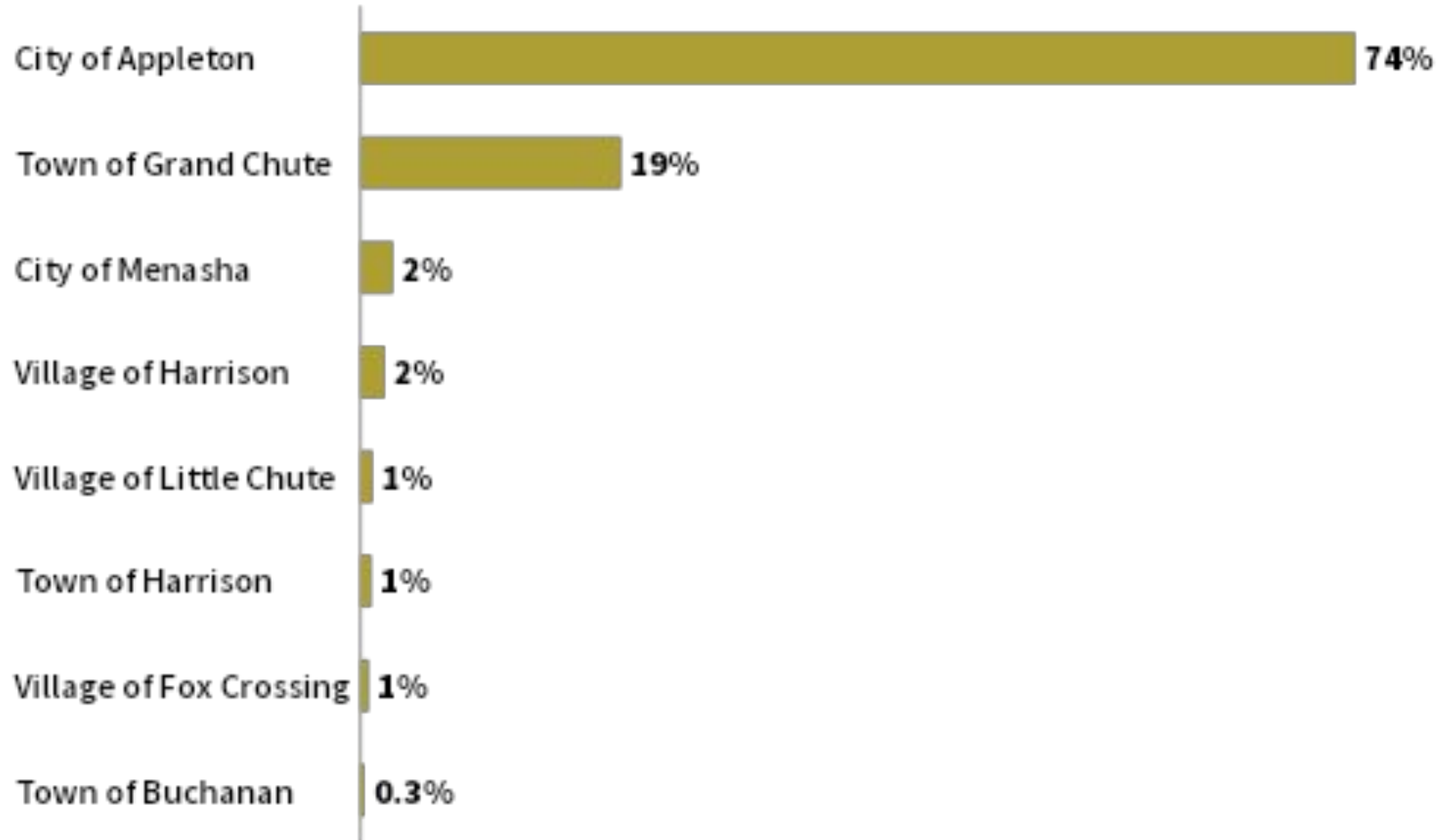
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **3 million** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **1,300** school districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Information

- **November 26, 2025** survey deadline
- **7,379** respondents (*5,592 in 2022*)
- **17%** response rate
- **+/- 1.16%** statistical margin of error



In which municipality do you live?



Respondent Information

- Staff residents = 738
- Parent residents = 2,025
- Non-parent/non-staff residents = 3,903



Financial Challenges



- Based on the most recent data, AASD is the 6th largest school district in the state but ranks **near the bottom** in per-student funding among the state’s 15 largest school districts (see the chart to the right). **As a result, AASD has less money to pay for student services and academic programs.**
- **AASD supports a growing number of students with disabilities/special needs, students living in poverty, and students learning English.** At the same time, we need to maintain smaller class sizes and pay for certain programming, such as career and technical education (“shop”) and Advanced Placement (AP) classes.
- The state limits the amount of funding AASD is allowed to receive. The amount used to be adjusted for inflation, but the state stopped adjusting this in 2009. **If this had not ended, AASD would have an additional \$53.5 million this year (or \$3,573 more for every student).**

Funding Per Student	
<i>(2023-24)</i>	
Milwaukee (Highest)	\$24,682
Madison	\$22,296
Green Bay	\$19,624
Sun Prairie	\$19,477
Middleton-Cross Plains	\$19,021
Racine	\$18,661
Oshkosh Area	\$18,585
Wausau	\$18,466
Large District Average	\$18,462
Janesville	\$17,689
West Allis-West Milwaukee	\$16,675
Kenosha	\$16,544
Eau Claire	\$16,466
Sheboygan	\$16,408
Appleton	\$16,208
Waukesha (lowest)	\$16,126

Financial Challenges

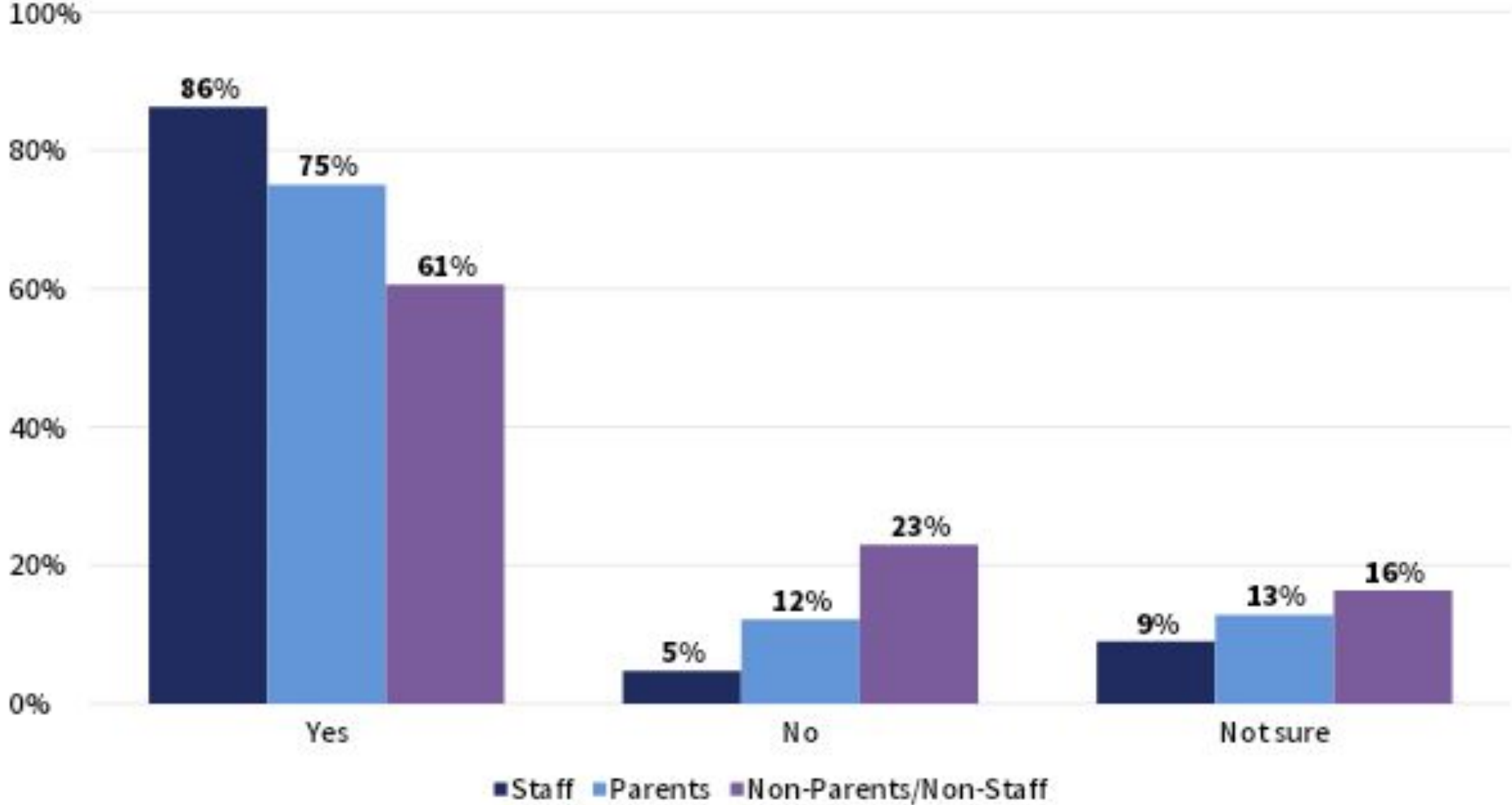
To help balance the budget, AASD has made substantial cuts in recent years, including closing a school, reducing building/department budgets, cutting/consolidating staff positions, and changing employee benefits. **Even with these efforts, AASD has a \$13 million budget shortfall this year.**

This problem is not unique to AASD: **87% of Wisconsin school districts have asked voters to approve an operational referendum.** This type of referendum is different than the capital/building referendum voters passed in 2022. Those construction funds cannot be used to pay for daily operations.

*Districts are closing schools, cutting staff, and/or going to a referendum



Would you support AASD pursuing an operational referendum to help address the budget shortfall?



Operational Funding Options



Option 1: An **\$11 million referendum** would increase funding by \$791 per student but would not balance next year's budget. It would also require:

- Cutting another \$2 million from the budget.
- Reducing programs/services and increasing class sizes.

This would increase taxes by an estimated \$7 per \$100,000 of property value for the next 4 years.

Option 2: A **\$13 million referendum** would increase funding by \$935 per student and:

- Address the current budget deficit but would not balance the budget in 3 to 4 years.
- Maintain most programs and services.

This would increase taxes by an estimated \$22 per \$100,000 of property value for the next 4 years.

Operational Funding Options



Option 3: A **\$15 million referendum** would increase funding by \$1,079 per student and:

- Address the projected budget deficits for the next 4 years.
- Maintain all current programs and services.
- Increase supports for students with mental health challenges and those living in poverty.

This would increase taxes by an estimated \$37 per \$100,000 of property value for the next 4 years.

Option 4: A **\$17 million referendum** would increase funding by \$1,223 per student and:

- Pay for everything in option 3.
- Expand programs and services to better prepare students for life and careers.
- Improve teacher to student ratios.

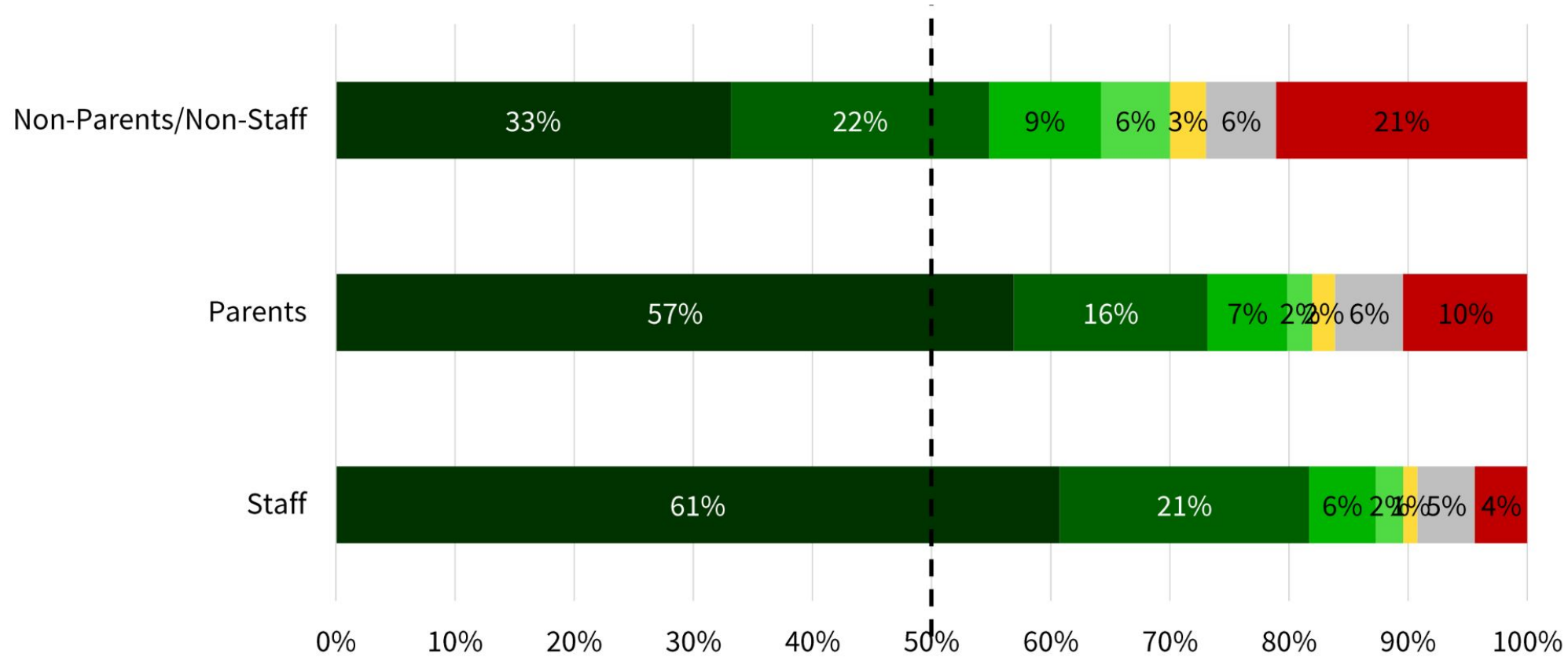
This would increase taxes by an estimated \$52 per \$100,000 of property value for the next 4 years.

Operational Funding Options



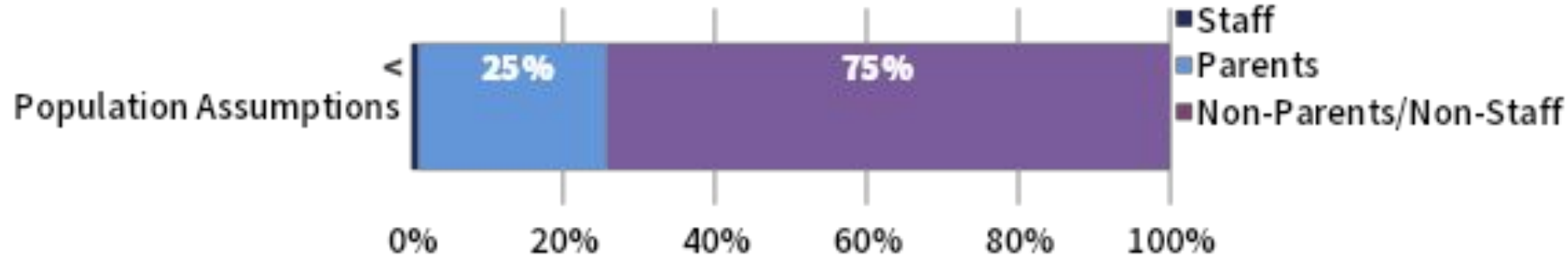
Funding Per Student	
<i>Current/Potential</i>	
Milwaukee (Highest)	\$24,682
Madison	\$22,296
Green Bay	\$19,624
Sun Prairie	\$19,477
Middleton-Cross Plains	\$19,021
Racine	\$18,661
Oshkosh	\$18,585
Wausau	\$18,466
Large District Average	\$18,462
Janesville	\$17,689
Appleton Option 4	\$17,431
Appleton Option 3	\$17,287
Appleton Option 2	\$17,143
Appleton Option 1	\$16,999
West Allis-West Milwaukee	\$16,675
Kenosha	\$16,544
Eau Claire	\$16,466
Sheboygan	\$16,408
Appleton Current	\$16,208
Waukesha (lowest)	\$16,126

Which referendum amount would you support?



■ \$17M ■ \$15M ■ \$13M ■ \$11M ■ Smaller referendum ■ Not sure/need more information ■ No referendum

Additional Analysis: Operational Referendum Support



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

$$\text{\$17M: } 0.25 (57\%) + 0.75 (33\%) = \text{39.0\%}$$

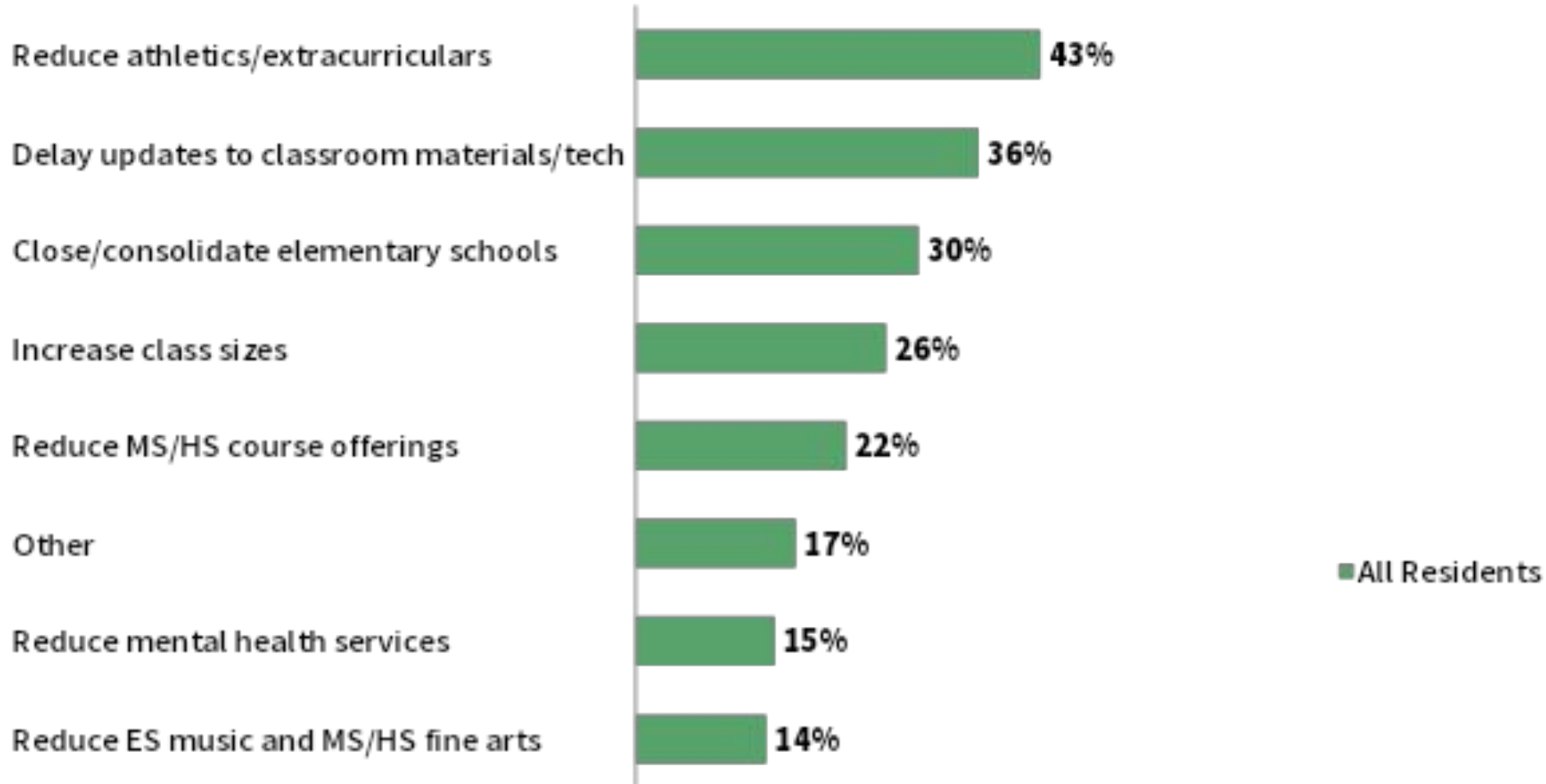
$$\text{\$15M: } 0.25 (73\%) + 0.75 (55\%) = \text{59.5\%}$$

$$\text{\$13M: } 0.25 (80\%) + 0.75 (64\%) = \text{68.0\%}$$

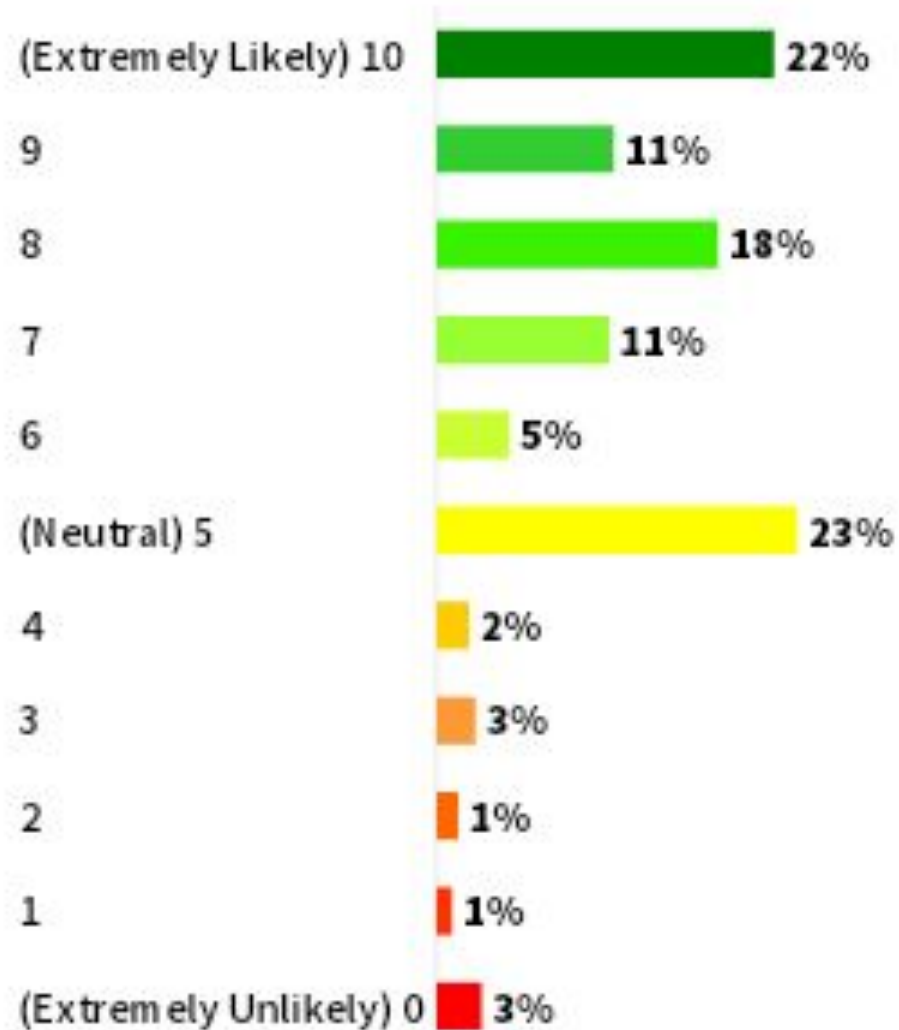
$$\text{\$11M: } 0.25 (82\%) + 0.75 (70\%) = \text{73.0\%}$$

$$\text{Smaller: } 0.25 (84\%) + 0.75 (73\%) = \text{75.8\%}$$

Cost-Cutting Options



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



AASD Score: 7.06
Comparison Score: 6.82



Questions?

What was the 2025 AASD tax levy increase?

- AASD - 7.9%
- Private Schools - 12.1%
- Combined - 8.3%

Three major factors in higher property taxes:

1. State aid is frozen for two years
2. Private school voucher increases
3. Residential property assessments

What tax amount does the AASD control?

\$82,171,571

- \$48,494,853 State revenue limit
- \$9,303,208 Private school vouchers
- \$2,460,000 Capital projects
- \$18,574,510 Debt
- \$3,339,000 Community Services

2025 Property Tax Bills

$$\frac{\text{Total Estimated Fair Market Value}}{\text{Total Value of AASD Property}} \times \text{AASD tax amount}$$
$$\frac{\$300,000}{\$13,000,000,000} = .00002308 = .002308\% \times \$82,171,571$$

\$6.09 per \$1,000 property

Questions?