

Elmbrook Schools

Community Survey Report

May 12, 2026

SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

Contents



Background Info



Survey/Respondent Information



Results & Analysis



Wrap-up/Questions

SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS
Measuring what matters

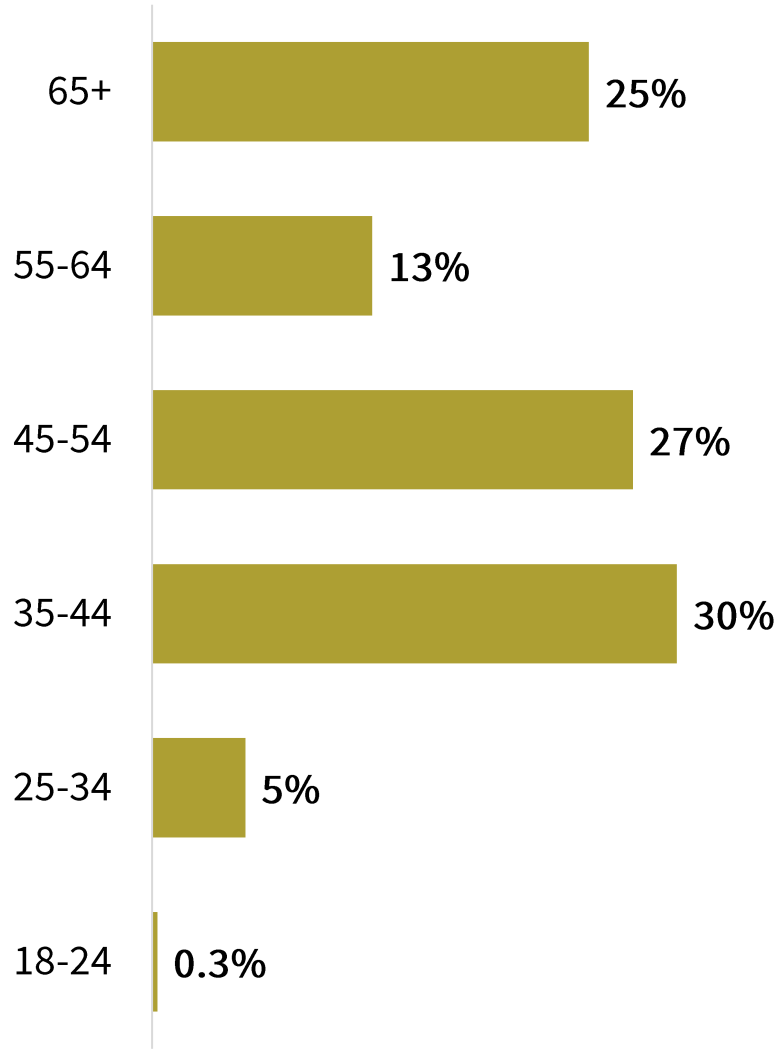
Our mission is to help educational leaders gather, organize, and use data to make strategic decisions.

- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **3 million** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **1,400** school districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

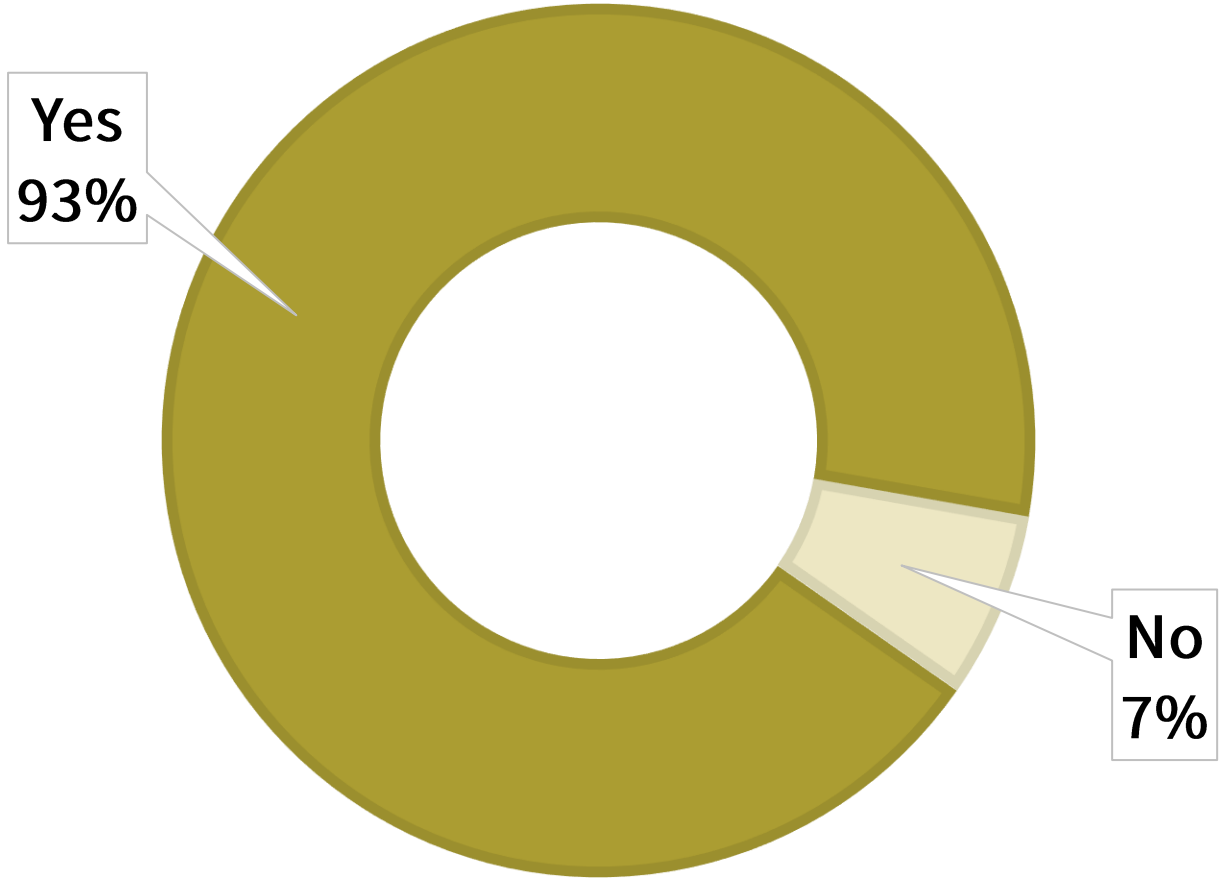
Survey Information

- April 30, 2026 survey deadline
- 2,915 respondents
- 15.4% response rate
- +/- 1.85% statistical margin of error

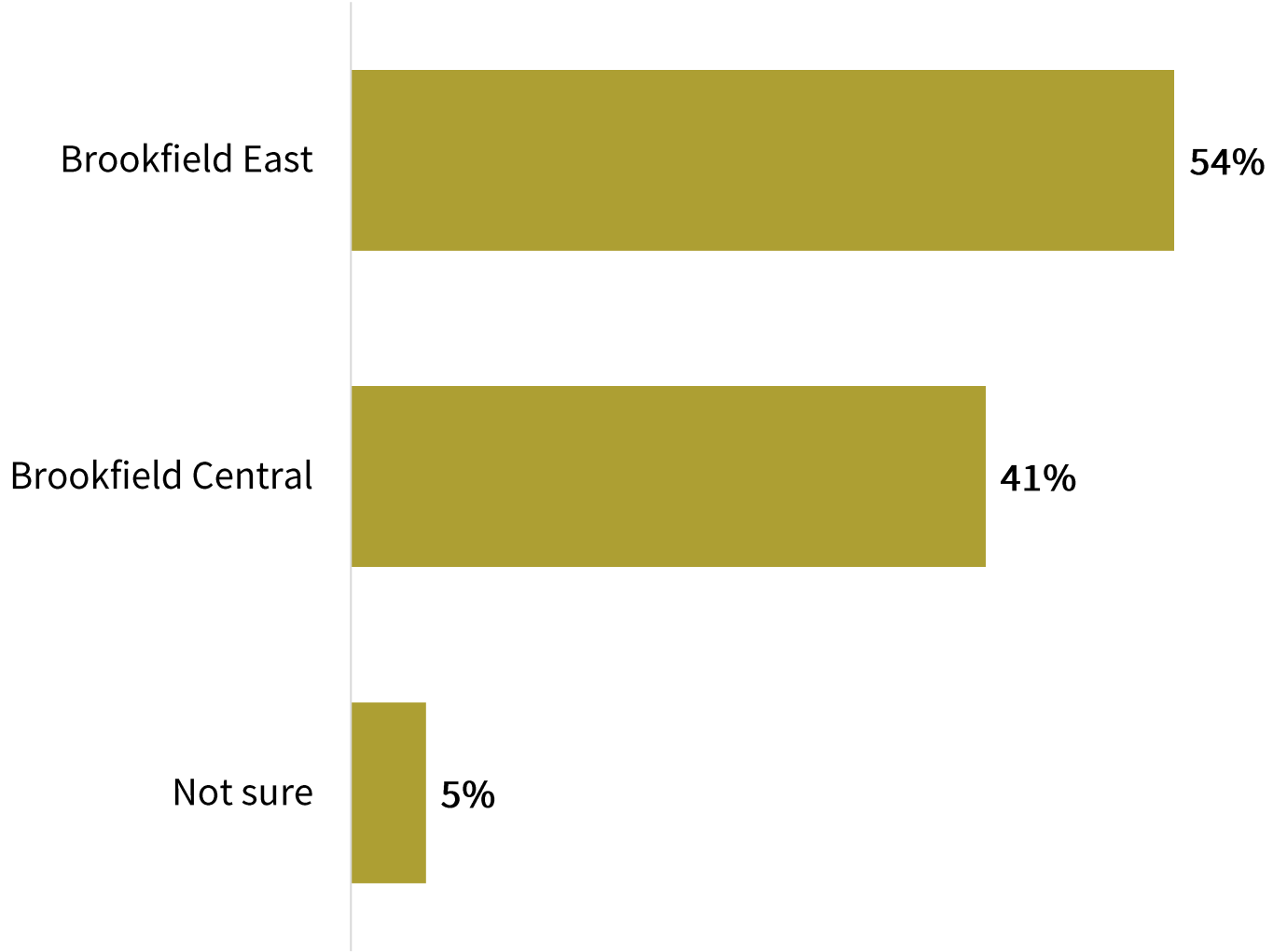
What is your age?



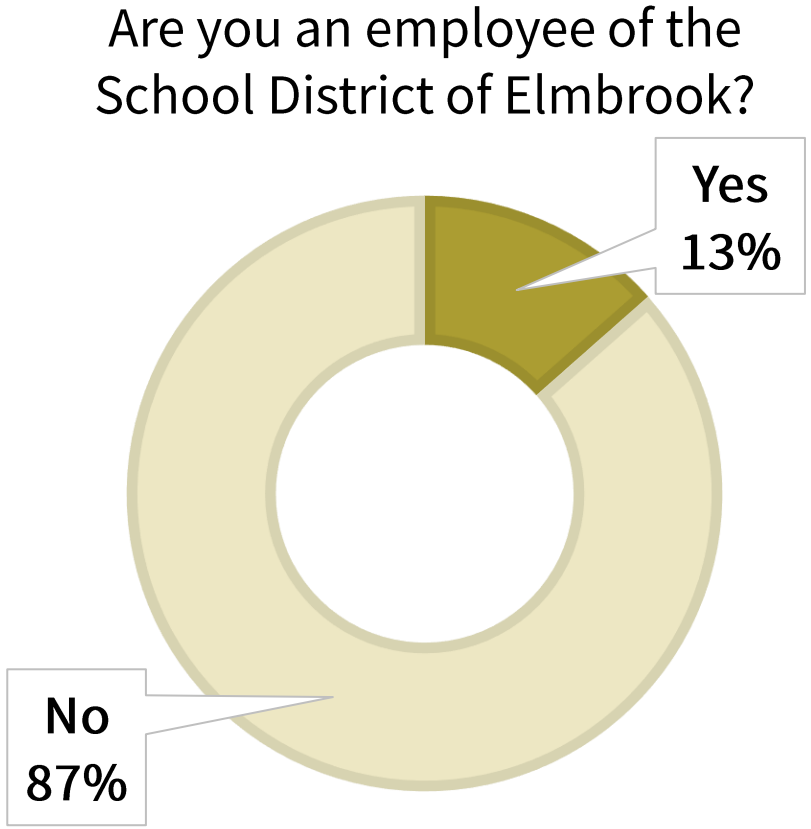
Is your primary residence in the School District of Elmbrook?



In which high school attendance area do you live?

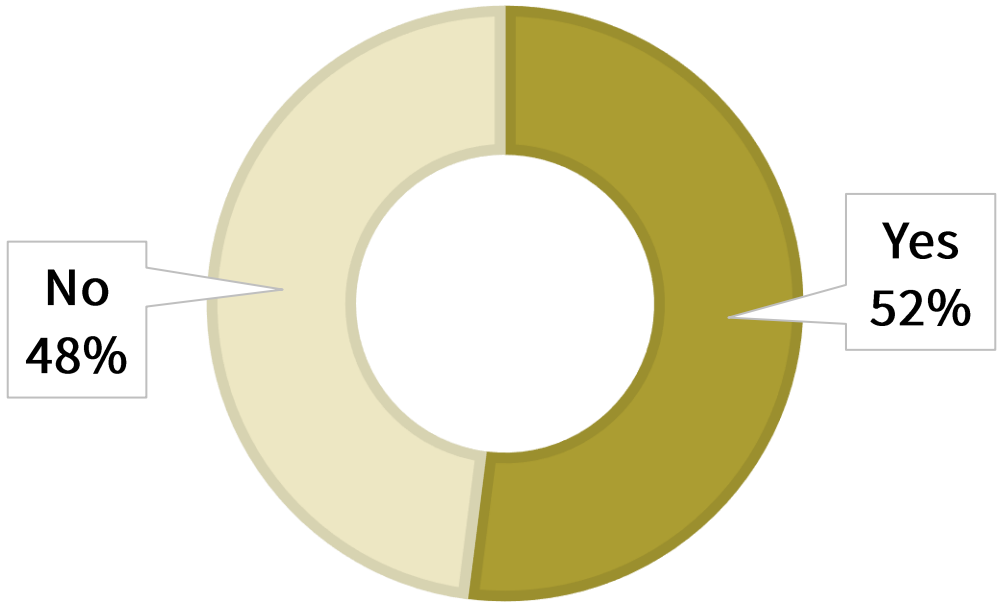


Respondent Information

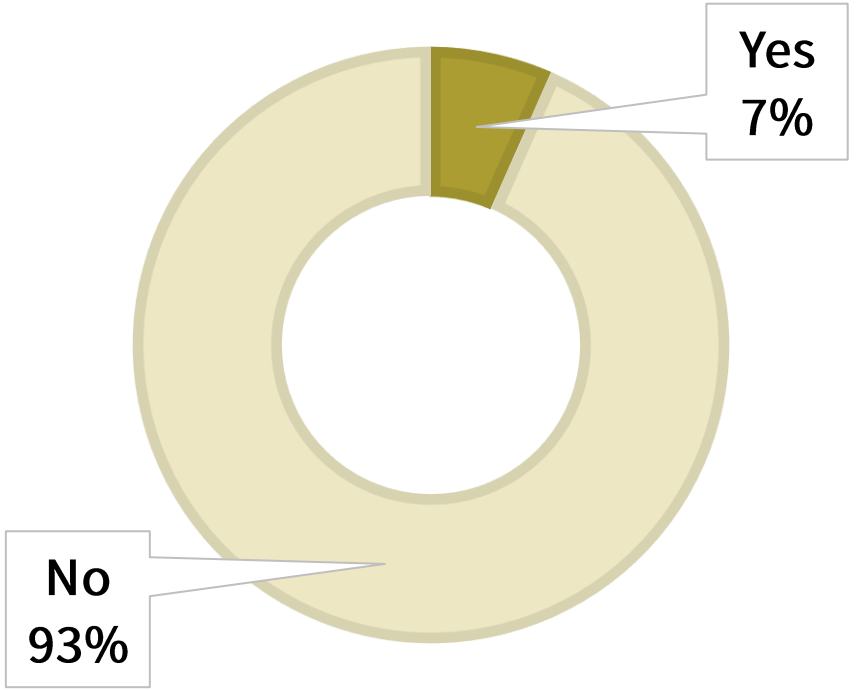


Respondent Information

Do you have a child(ren) who attends one of our Elmbrook Schools?



Do you have a child(ren) who attends a private or parochial school(s)?



Financial Background

In 2008, the Elmbrook community supported a **$62.1 million referendum** to make major updates at both high schools.

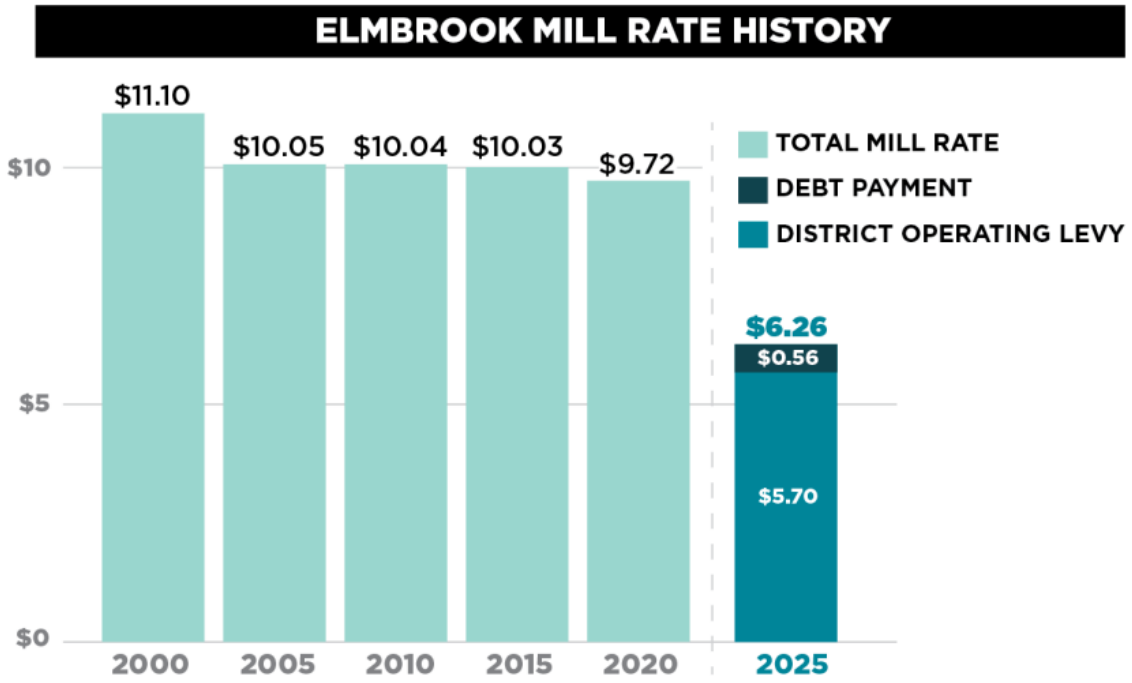
Since then, we have taken a disciplined financial approach.

- **We have no deferred maintenance** because we have spent more than $100 million from our annual operating budgets to maintain and repair our schools.
- **We have not asked voters to consider another referendum** since 2008, unlike 96% of the other school districts in Wisconsin.
- **The District has earned an Aaa Bond Rating**, the highest possible rating, which helps keep our borrowing costs low.
- **We have saved approximately $3 million in interest costs** by refinancing our 2008 referendum debt.

A Unique Opportunity Ahead

In 2028, the debt from the high school referendum will be fully paid off.

- If the community approves a new building referendum, the District could reinvest up to $85 million in facility upgrades without increasing the debt portion of the school property tax mill rate, which includes both principal and interest.
- If the community does not approve the referendum, Elmbrook's school property tax mill rate will decrease by $0.56 (the debt portion of the mill rate).



Facility Planning Background

Last summer, the Board of Education began working with consultants to study the academic, security, and maintenance needs at each school. After evaluating various options, including building new schools, we determined that renovating our schools was most cost-effective.

Over the past few months, the Board drafted a plan to guide the investments needed at each school over the next 20 years. We are now asking our community to evaluate two different funding strategies.



Facility Planning Background

The draft plan would be supported by two funding strategies.

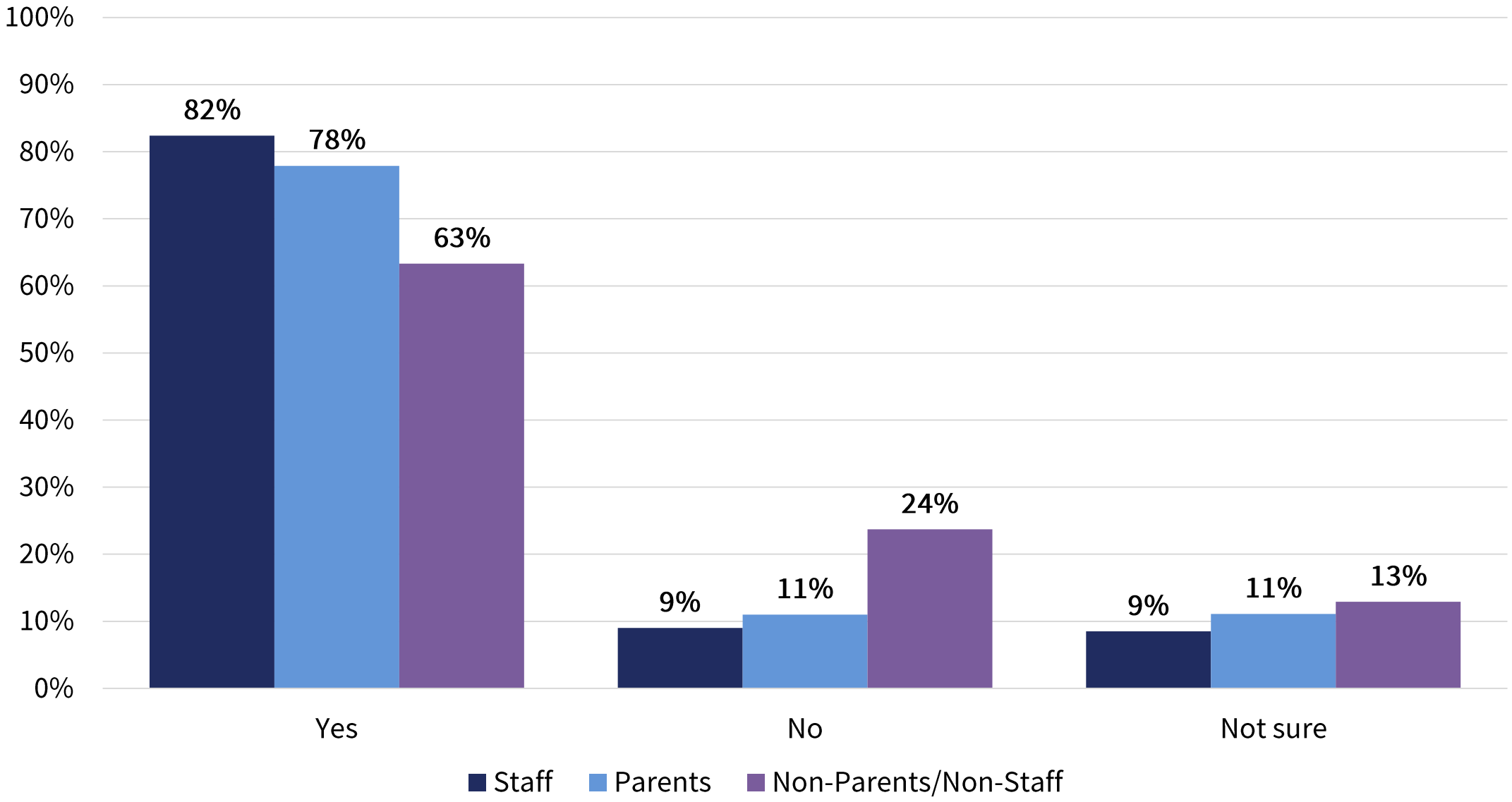
1. Ongoing building maintenance would be paid for through the annual operating budget.
Over the next ten years, the District would spend **$71 million** on regular maintenance, including repairing and replacing:

- Major building systems (HVAC, plumbing, and electrical)
- Roofs and parking lots
- Windows and doors
- Athletic fields
- Security cameras and monitoring systems

2. Renovating the District's four oldest schools would be paid for by a voter-approved referendum.
Major renovations are too expensive to be paid for through the annual operating budget. Because of this, the District would need to ask voters to approve a capital (building) referendum to fund these larger projects. The estimated cost of these renovations is **$100 million**. Specific project details are provided on the following page.

The State of Wisconsin created the building referendum as the vehicle for local voters to decide if larger facility investments like this should be made.

Would you support Elmbrook Schools exploring a building referendum at this time?



Four School Comprehensive Renovation Plan

As part of the District's facility planning process, the following projects were identified as the highest-priority needs. These schools were built between 1958 and 1969, and many parts of the buildings no longer meet today's educational, safety, and accessibility standards.

Pilgrim Park Middle School

BUILT IN 1958

2025 ENROLLMENT: 915 students

Project Estimate: $52 Million

PRIORITIZED NEEDS:

- Light renovation in all classrooms (replace ceiling tiles and flooring, update lighting, and paint)
- Address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility issues in the music and gym areas
- Expand the gym to accommodate three simultaneous classes due to growing enrollment
- Update robotics, woods, art, and technology classrooms to meet curriculum standards
- Improve traffic flow on Pilgrim Parkway and reduce congestion around the school site

Tonawanda Elementary School

BUILT IN 1969

2025 ENROLLMENT: 518 students

Project Estimate: $33 Million

PRIORITIZED NEEDS:

- Replace the open-concept layout with classroom walls to improve student focus and safety
- Expand classroom sizes to meet current District space standards
- Redesign parts of the building to align with current District security standards

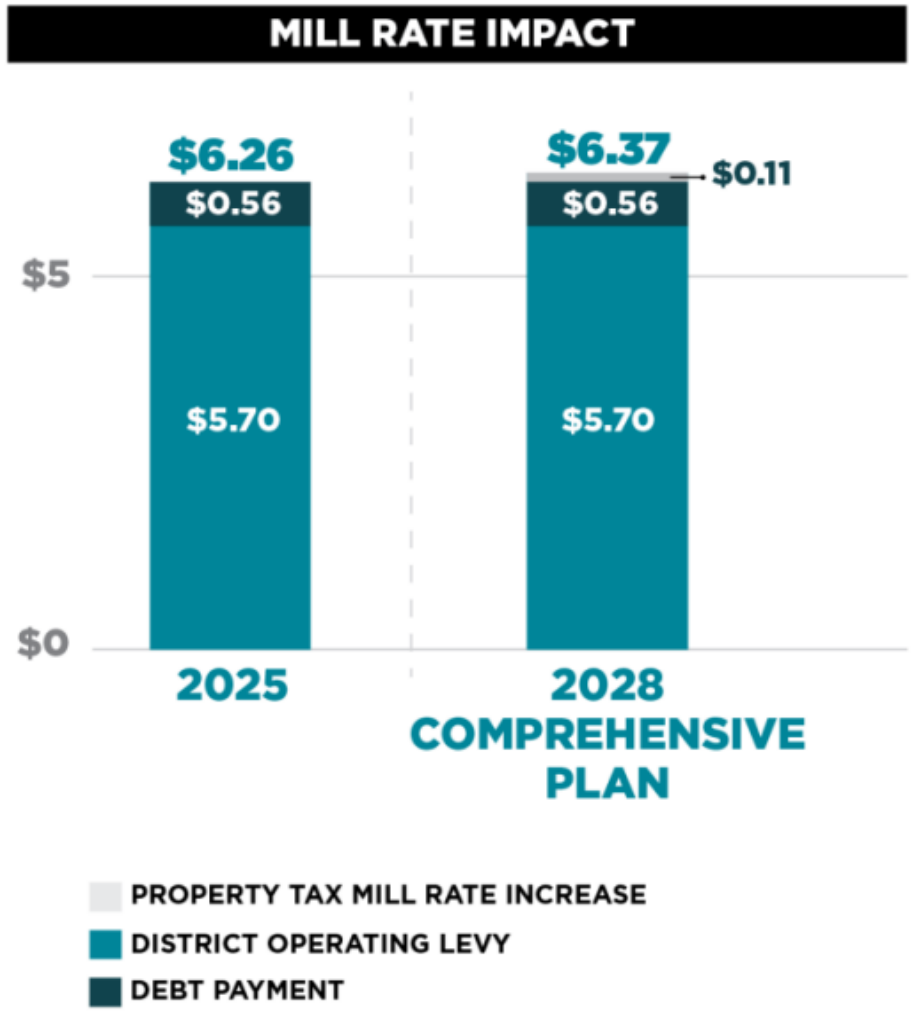
Funding the Four-School Comprehensive Plan

It would cost $100 million to fully fund the plan on the previous page. If Elmbrook voters approved a $100 million referendum, the property tax mill rate would increase by $0.11. This represents a tax increase of $11 per $100,000 of property value over the current level.

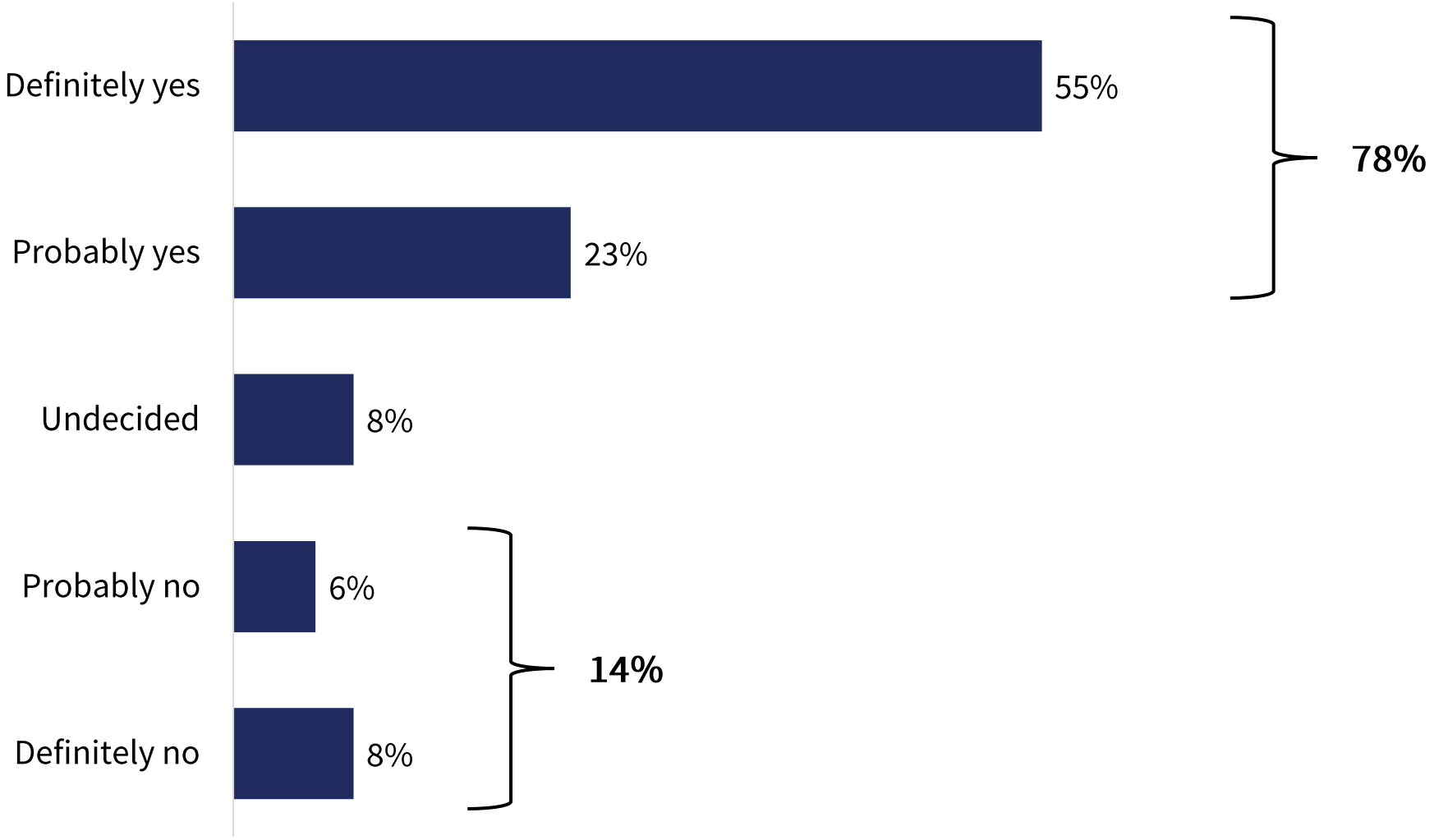
The average home in our District is valued at approximately $600,000. Voter approval would increase the property taxes on that home by $66 for each of the next 20 years.

Notes About These Estimates

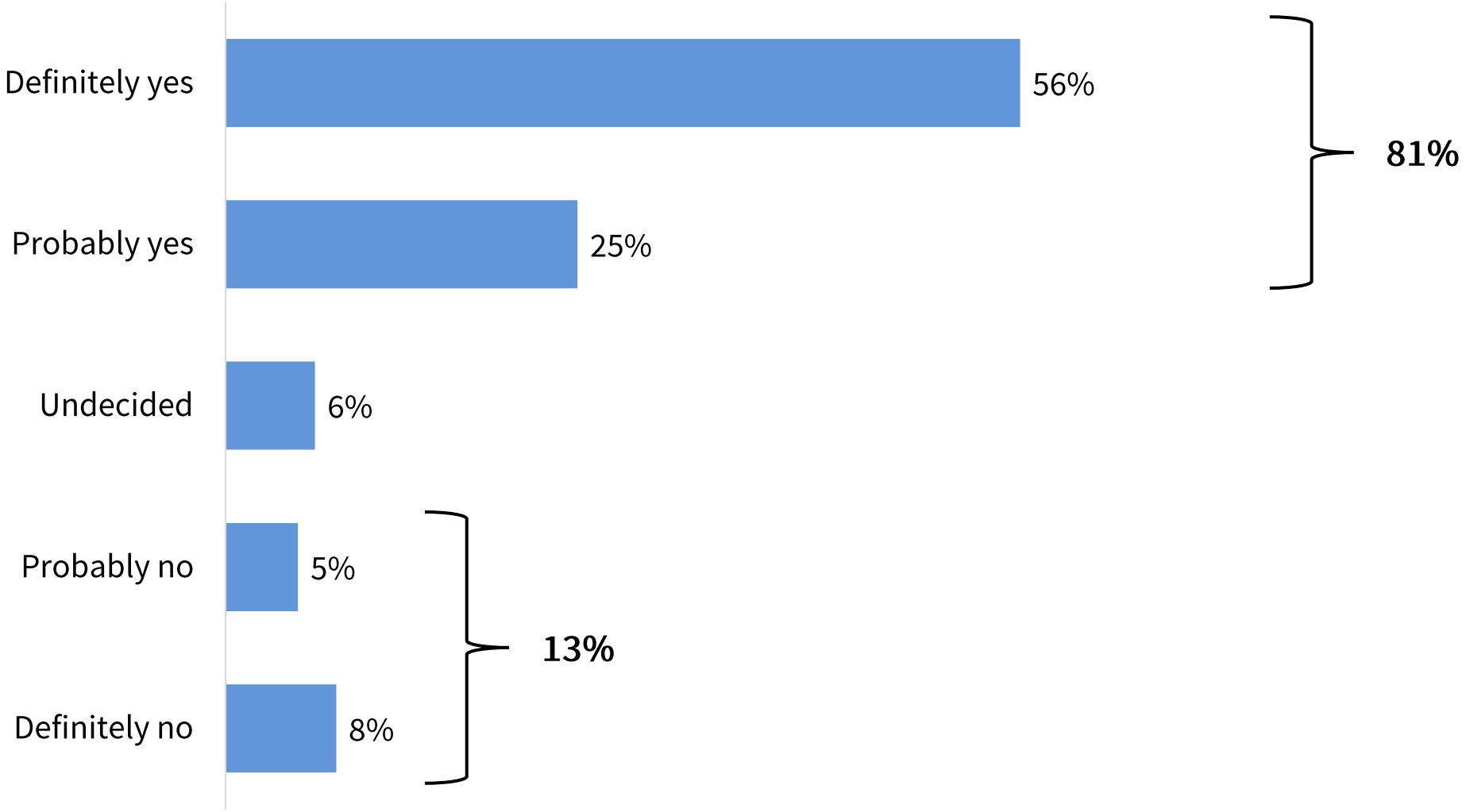
- The calculations include both principal and interest.
- The estimates assume issuing 20-year bonds at a conservative interest rate between 5.00% and 5.25%.



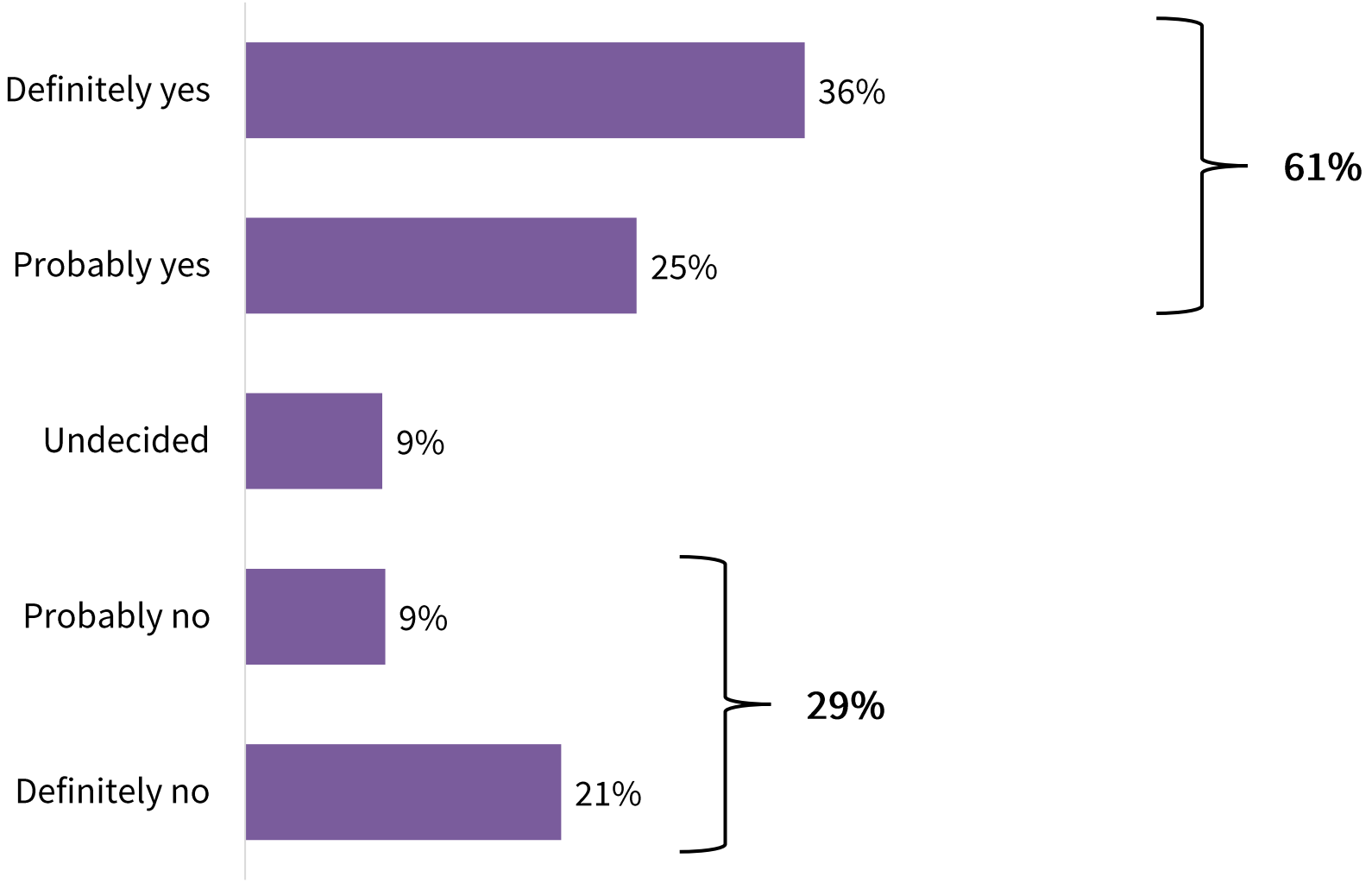
Would you support a $100 million capital/building referendum to fully fund the comprehensive plan? (*Staff Residents*)



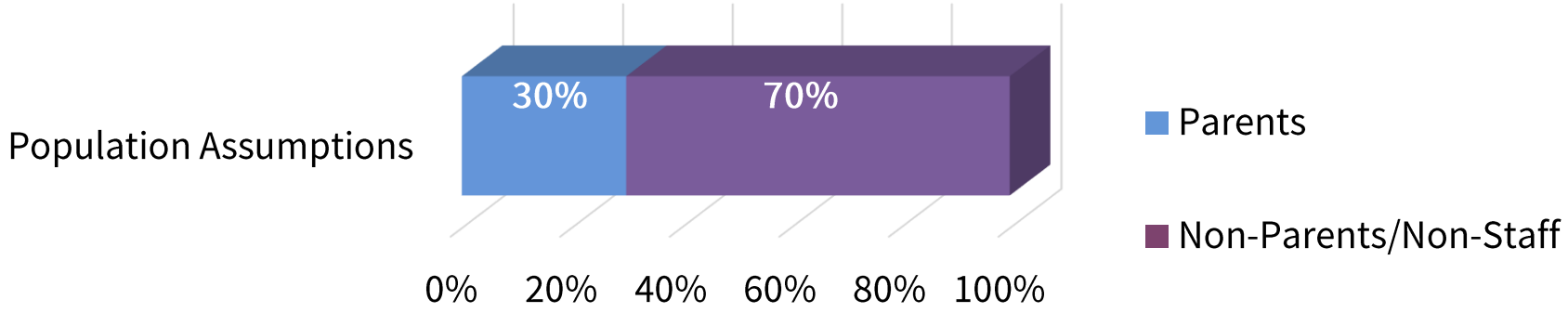
Would you support a $100 million capital/building referendum to fully fund the comprehensive plan? (*Parent Residents*)



Would you support a $100 million capital/building referendum to fully fund the comprehensive plan? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



Additional Analysis: $100 million building referendum



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes:*

0.30 (81%) + 0.70 (61%) = **67.0%**

Funding the Two-School Plan

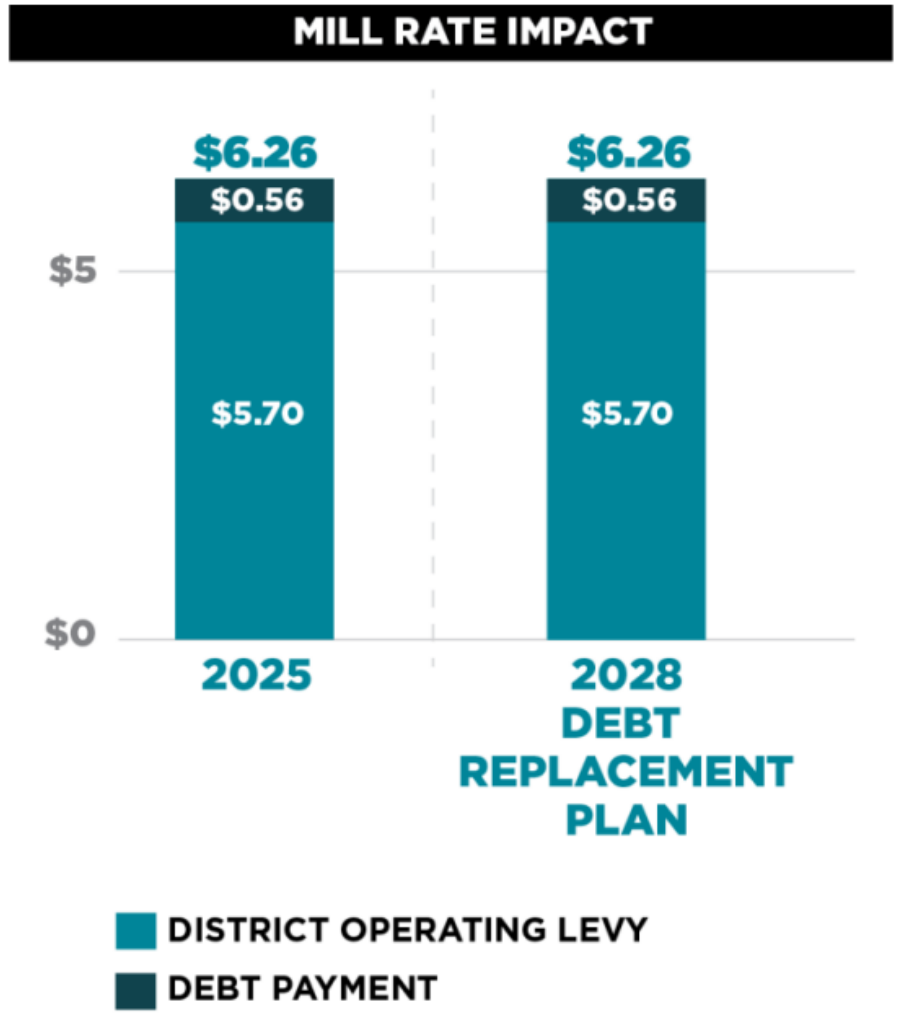
The Board of Education developed another option for community feedback. This option is designed to maintain the current debt portion of property taxes by replacing the retiring debt. It would still require Elmbrook voters to approve an $85 million referendum.

For an average home in our community, valued at $600,000, support for this plan would keep the debt payment portion of a homeowner's property taxes at the current level ($336) for the next 20 years.

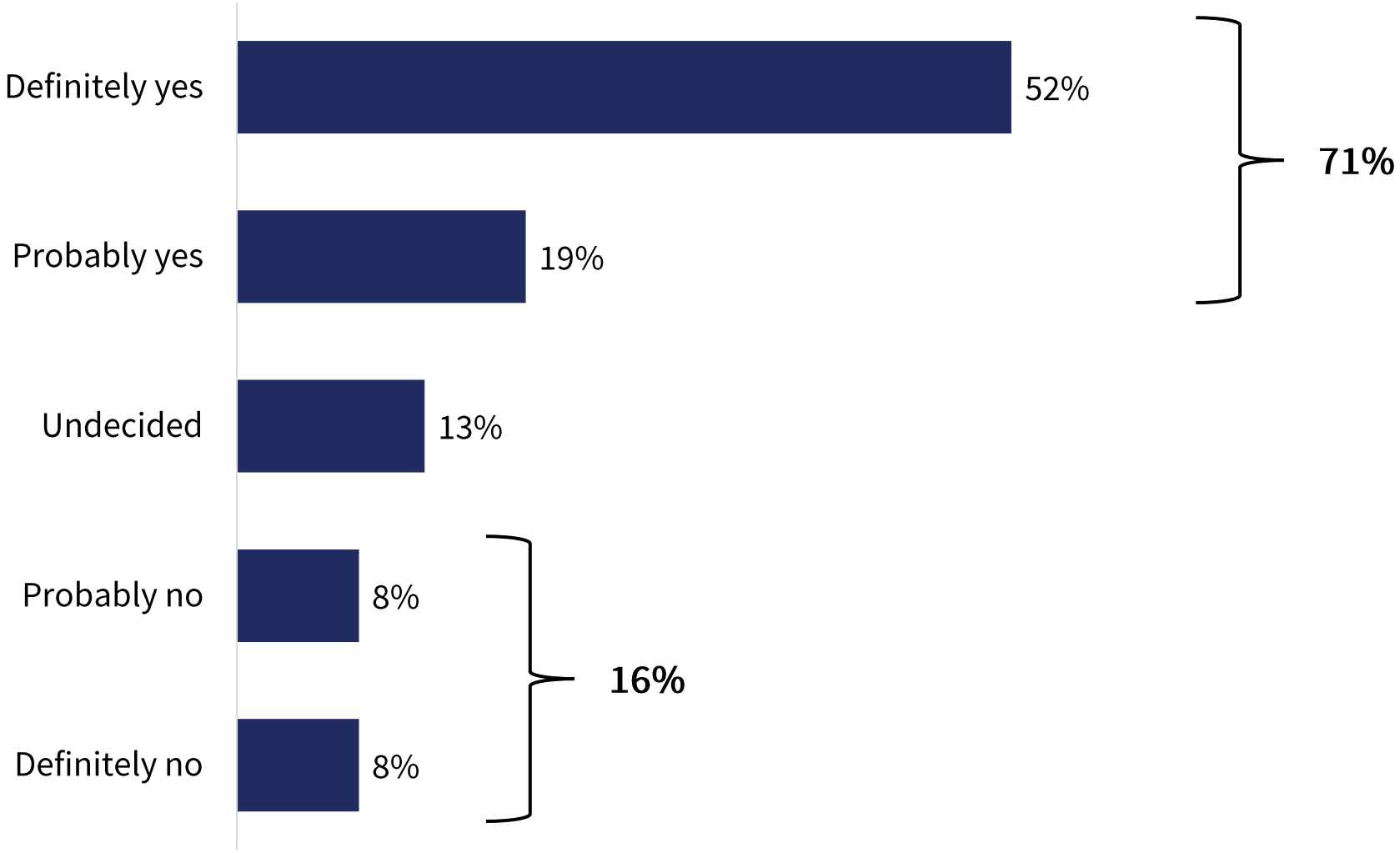
This approach would only allow the District to renovate:

- ✓ Pilgrim Park Middle School
- ✓ Tonawanda Elementary School

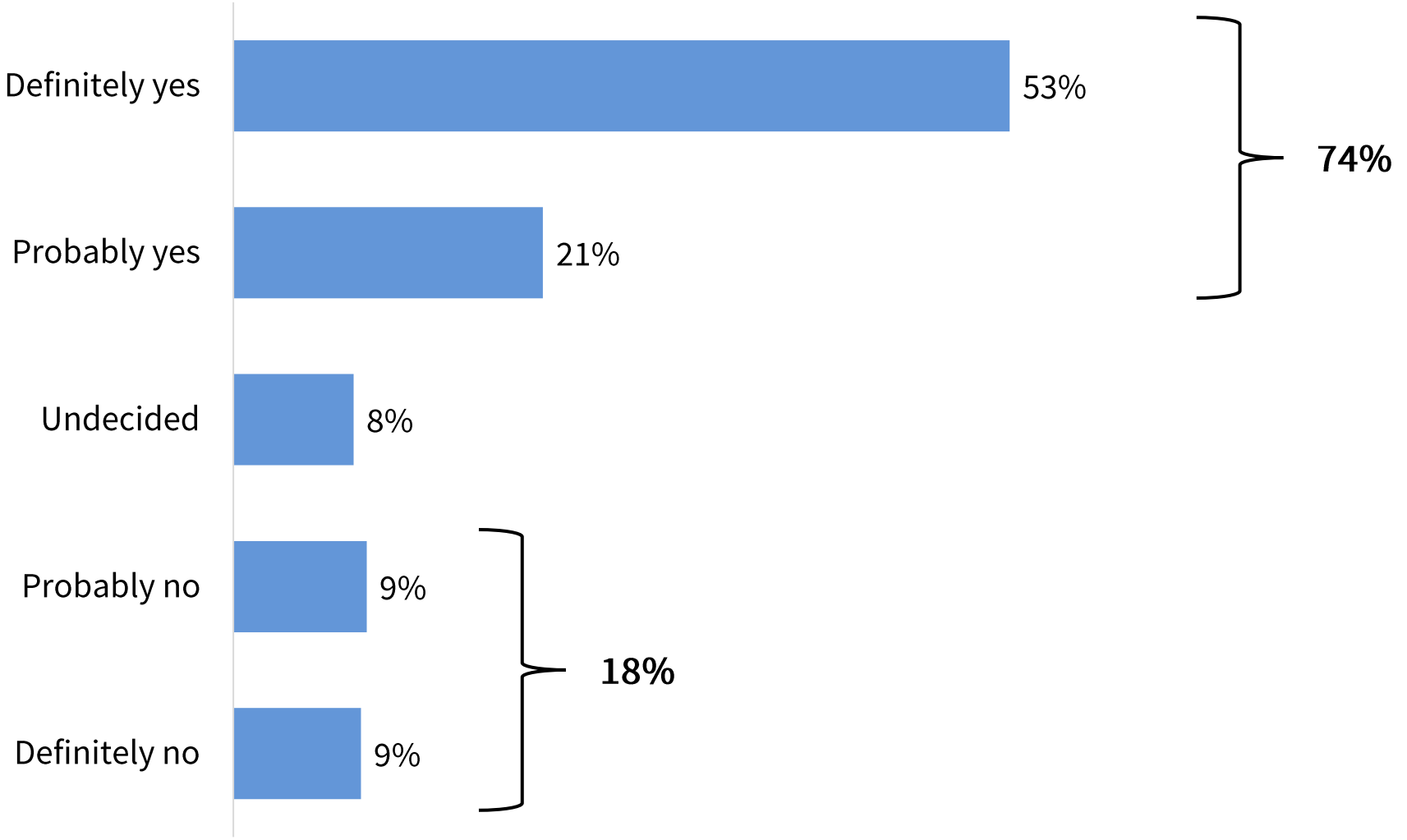
Swanson Elementary School and Wisconsin Hills Middle School projects could not be completed at this time without re-prioritizing maintenance projects or identifying additional operating budget dollars.



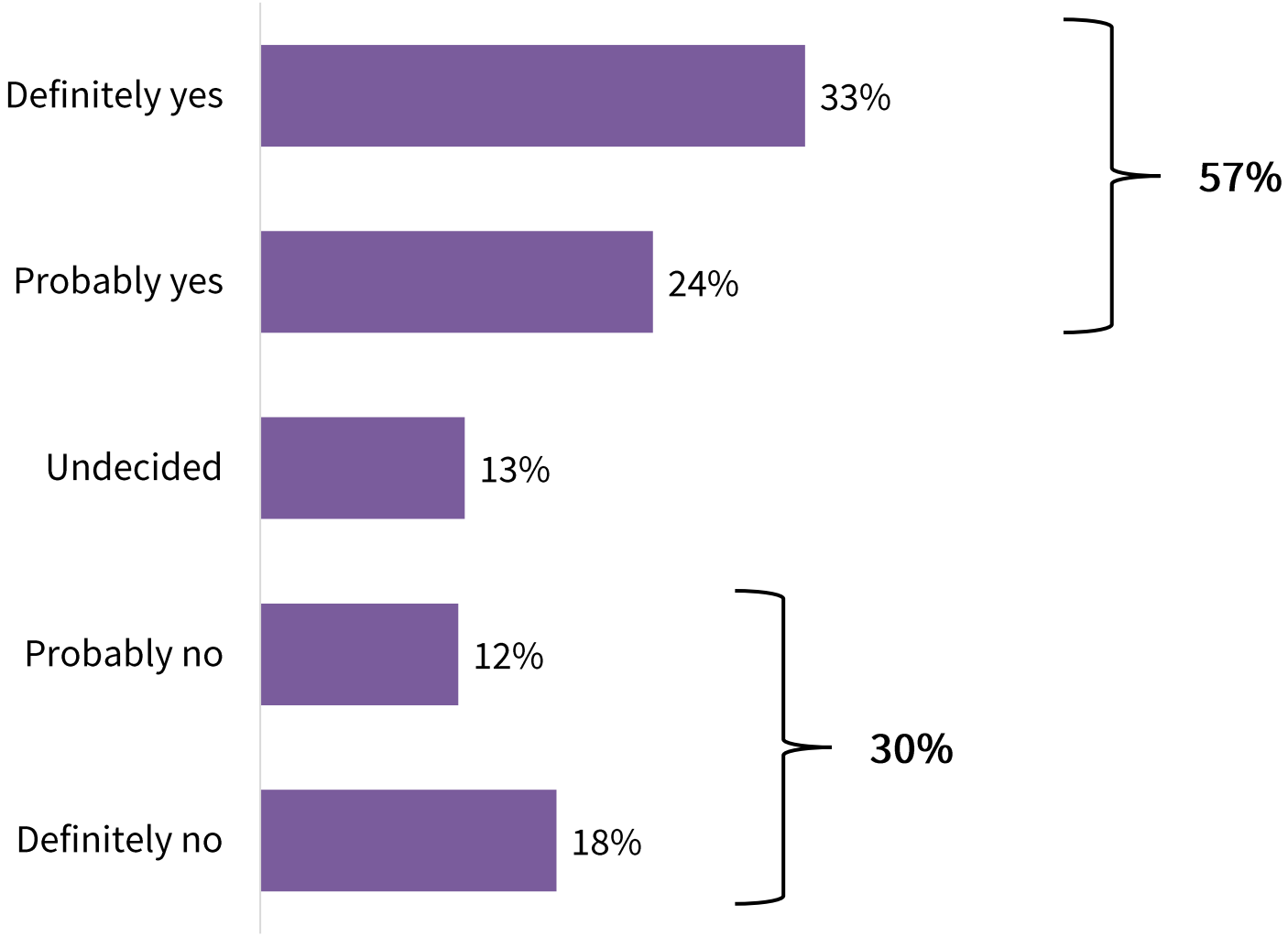
Would you support an $85 million capital/building referendum to fund the debt replacement plan? (*Staff Residents*)



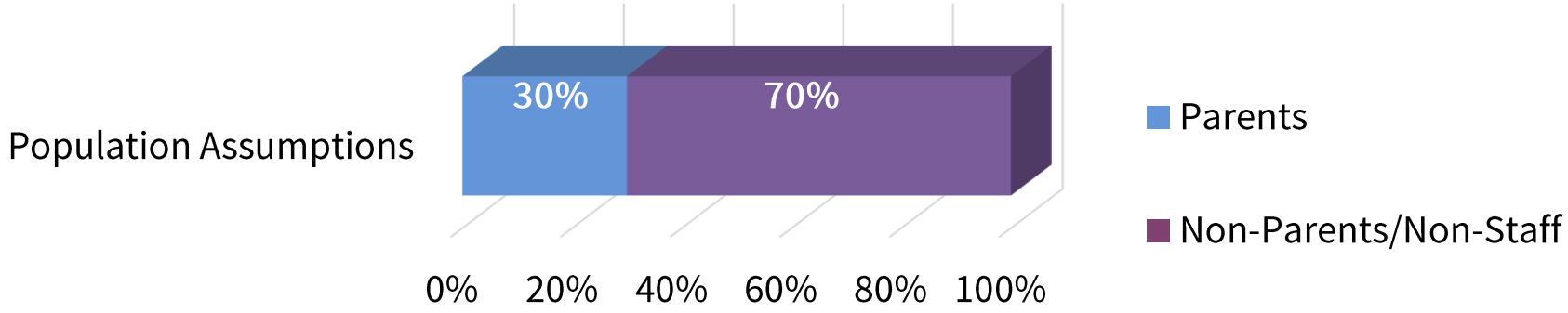
Would you support an $85 million capital/building referendum to fund the debt replacement plan? (*Parent Residents*)



Would you support an $85 million capital/building referendum to fund the debt replacement plan? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



Additional Analysis: $85 million building referendum



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes:*

0.30 (74%) + 0.70 (57%) = **62.1%**

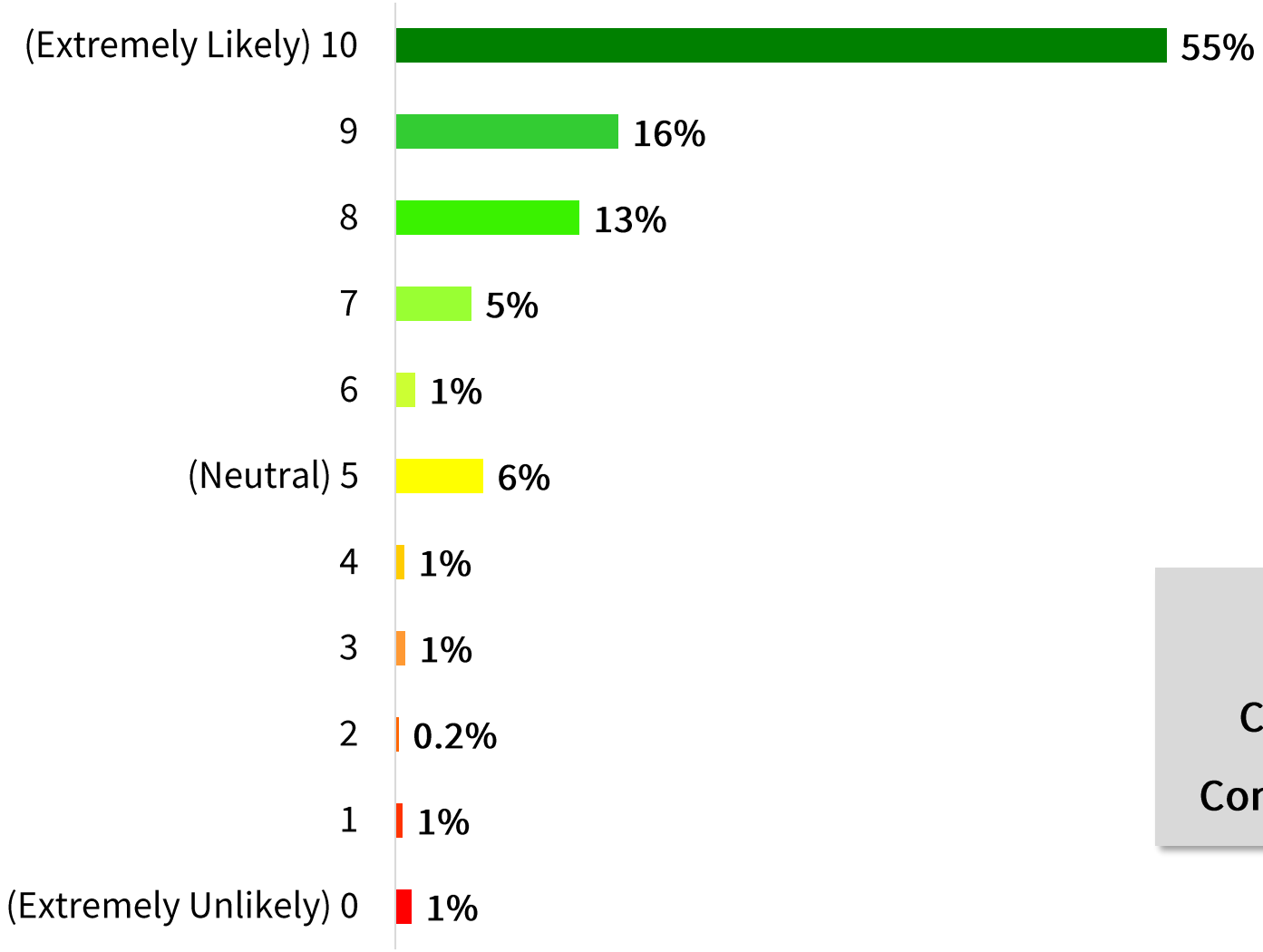
How is the District doing in each of the following areas? *Great = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1*

Item	Staff	Parents	Non-Parents/ Non-Staff
Delivering a high-quality education	3.76	3.69	3.59
Keeping the public informed	3.41	3.38	3.07
Managing funds appropriately	3.50	3.40	3.13
Building pride in the community	3.55	3.51	3.40

How is the District doing in each of the following areas? *Great = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1*

Item	Percent *"Great"* or *"Good"*	Score	Comparison Percentile
Delivering a high-quality education	96%	3.67	99th
Keeping the public informed	84%	3.27	95th
Managing funds appropriately	85%	3.32	99th
Building pride in the community	90%	3.47	99th

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



Elmbrook Score: 8.78

Comparison Score: 7.34

Comparison Percentile: 99th



262.644.4300 | schoolperceptions.com