



Waunakee Community School District

Community Survey Report

May 18, 2026

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

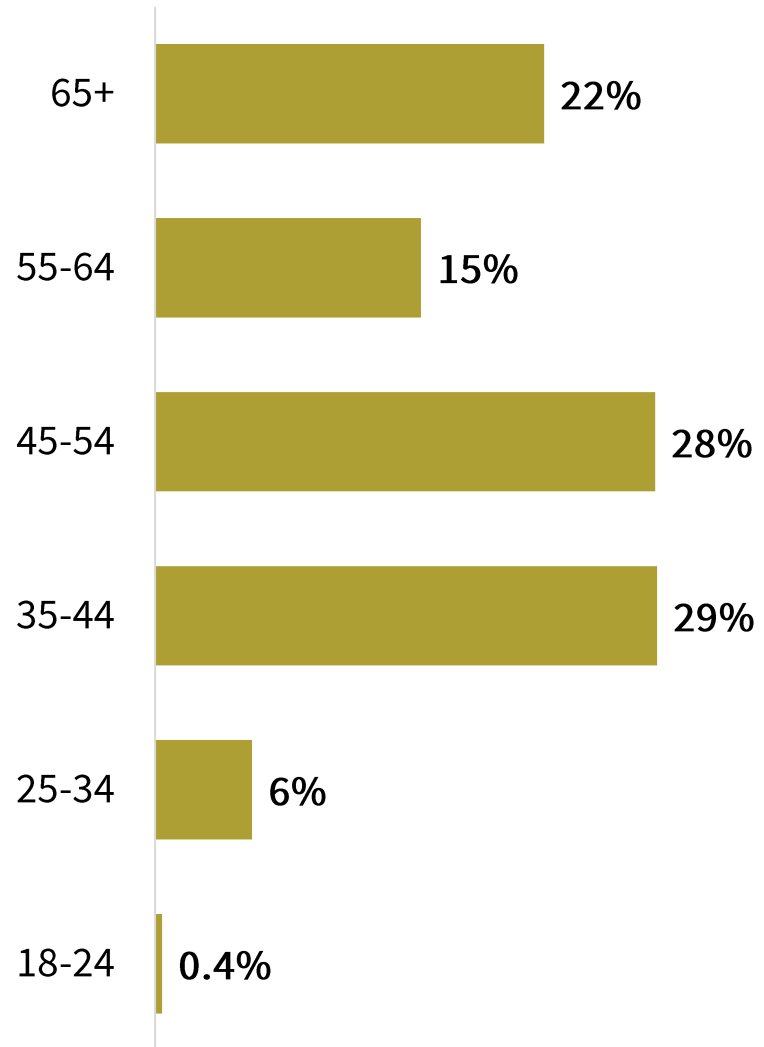
- Founded in 2002 to provide independent research
- Conducted over 3 million staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than 1,400 school districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Information

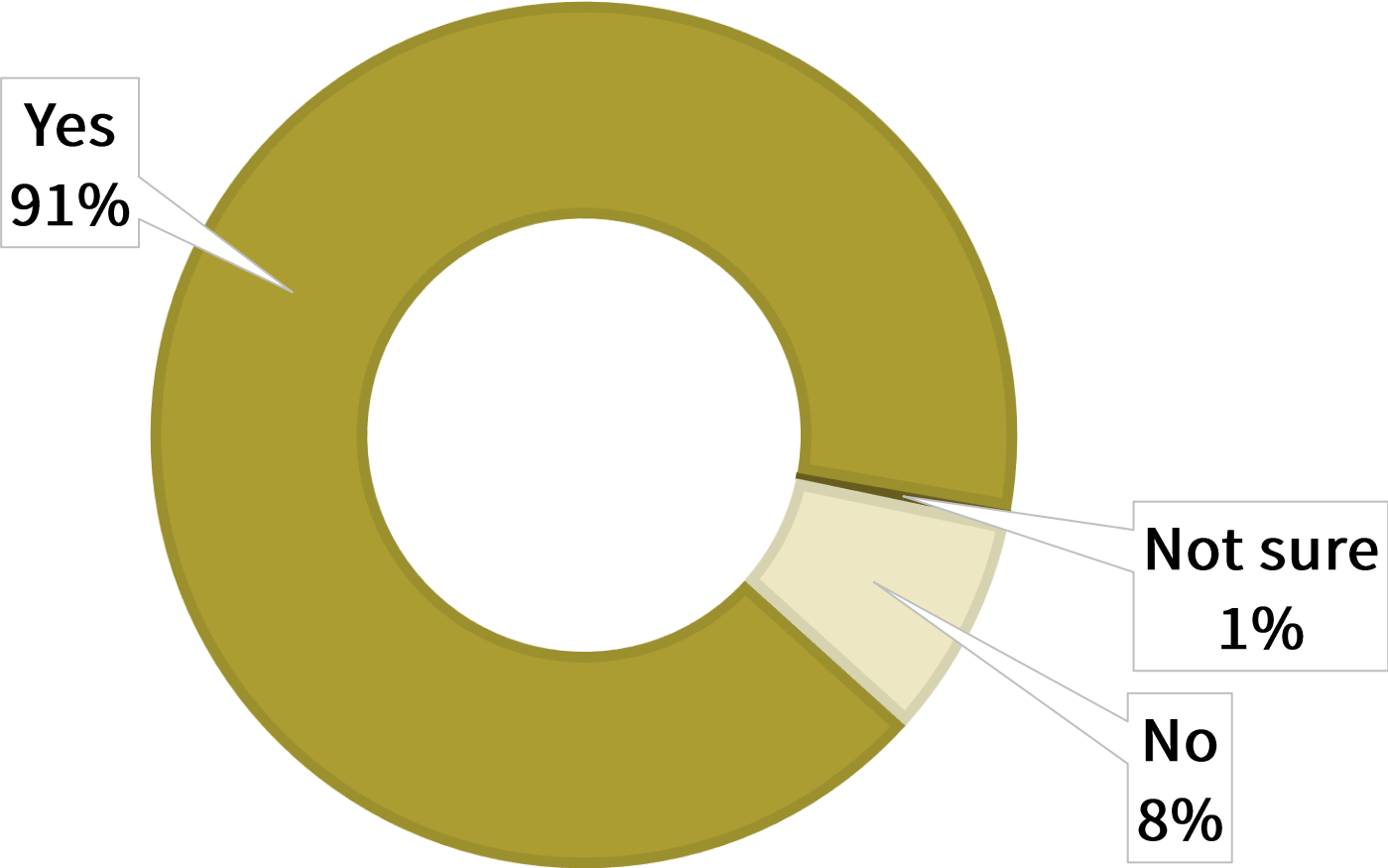
- April 27, 2026 survey deadline
- 1,822 respondents
- 19% response rate
- +/- 2.34% statistical margin of error



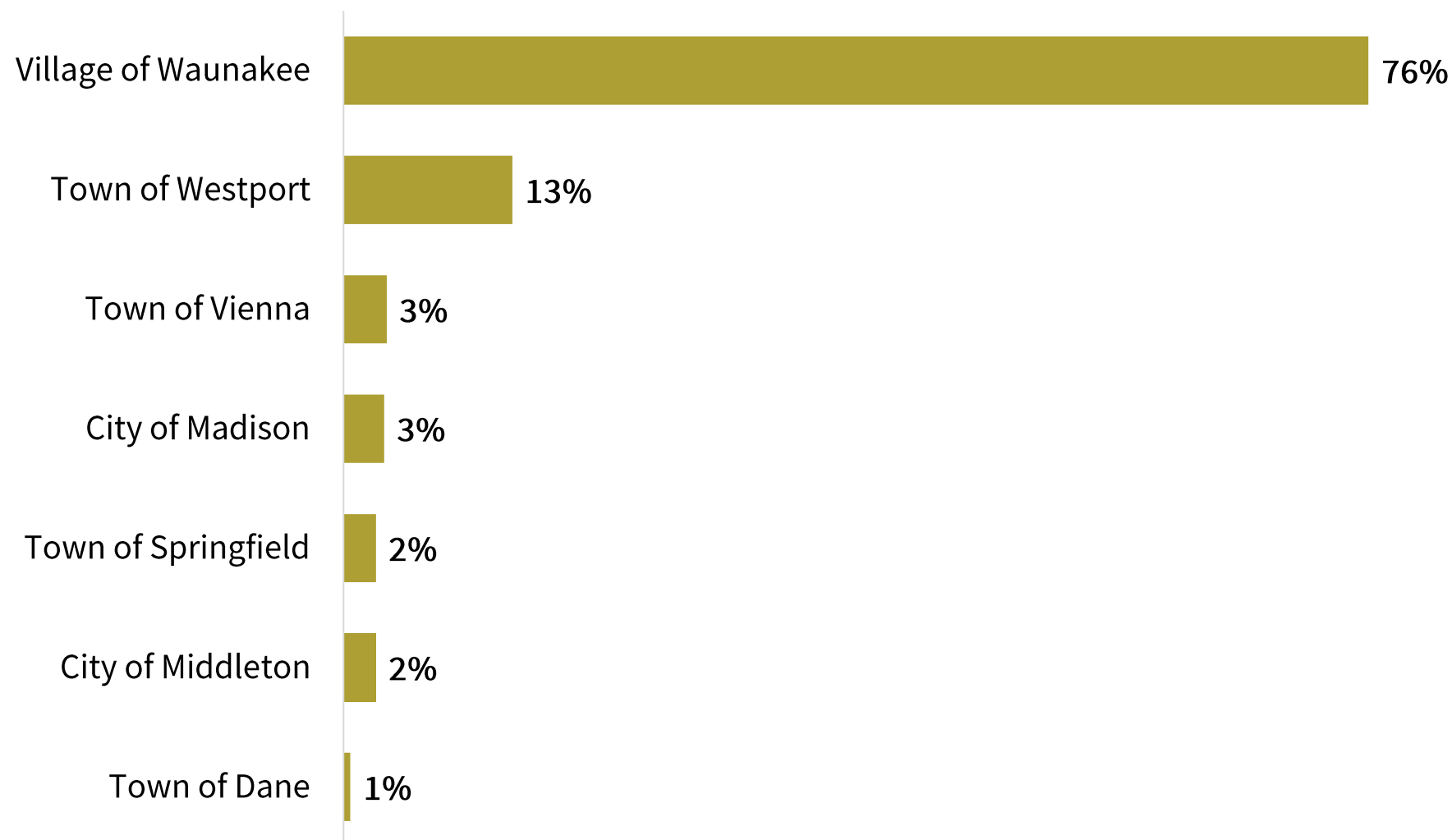
What is your age?



Do you live in the Waunakee Community School District?



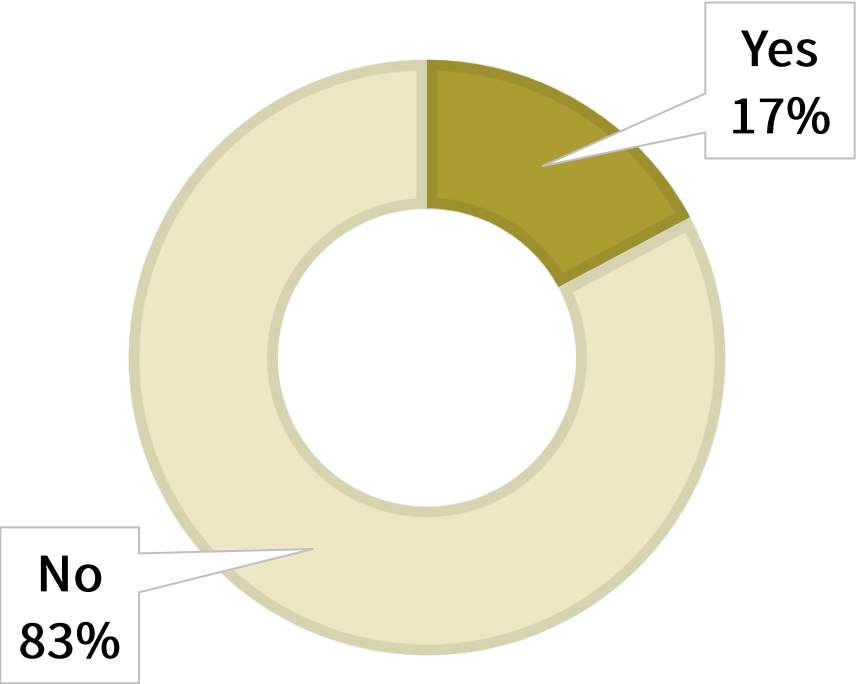
In which municipality do you live?



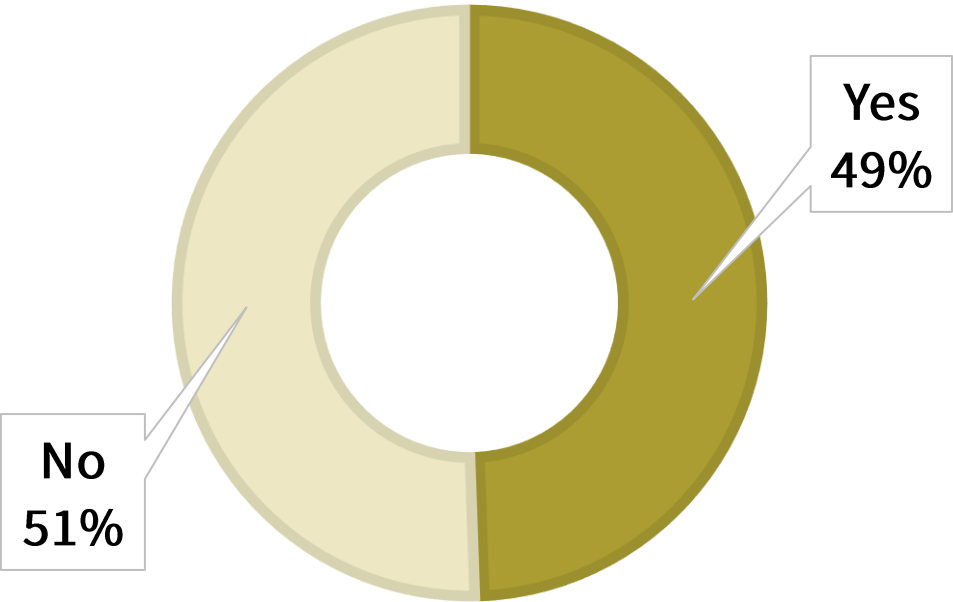
Respondent Information



Are you an employee of the District?



Do you have children attending a school in the District?



Financial Challenges



- Wisconsin law limits how much funding a school district can receive from state aid and local property taxes. The limit used to keep up with the rate of inflation. However, the state stopped making that adjustment in 2009. **If that had continued, Waunakee schools would have approximately \$15.5 million in additional funds this year (\$3,573 more per student).**
- At the same time, the cost of operating schools (including staffing, transportation, utilities, and student services) has continued to rise.
- Adding to these challenges, next year, \$2 million of funding approved by Waunakee-area voters will expire. These funds helped offset increasing costs and pay our staff more competitively with neighboring school districts.
- According to the most recent Department of Public Instruction (DPI) data, Waunakee has the **second lowest spending per student** among our Dane County peers.

School District	Per-Student Spending
Verona	\$19,476
Middleton-Cross Plains	\$17,160
Sun Prairie	\$16,966
Monona Grove	\$16,860
Regional Average	\$16,839
Stoughton	\$16,605
Mount Horeb	\$16,461
Oregon	\$16,398
Waunakee	\$16,106
DeForest	\$15,515

Financial Challenges

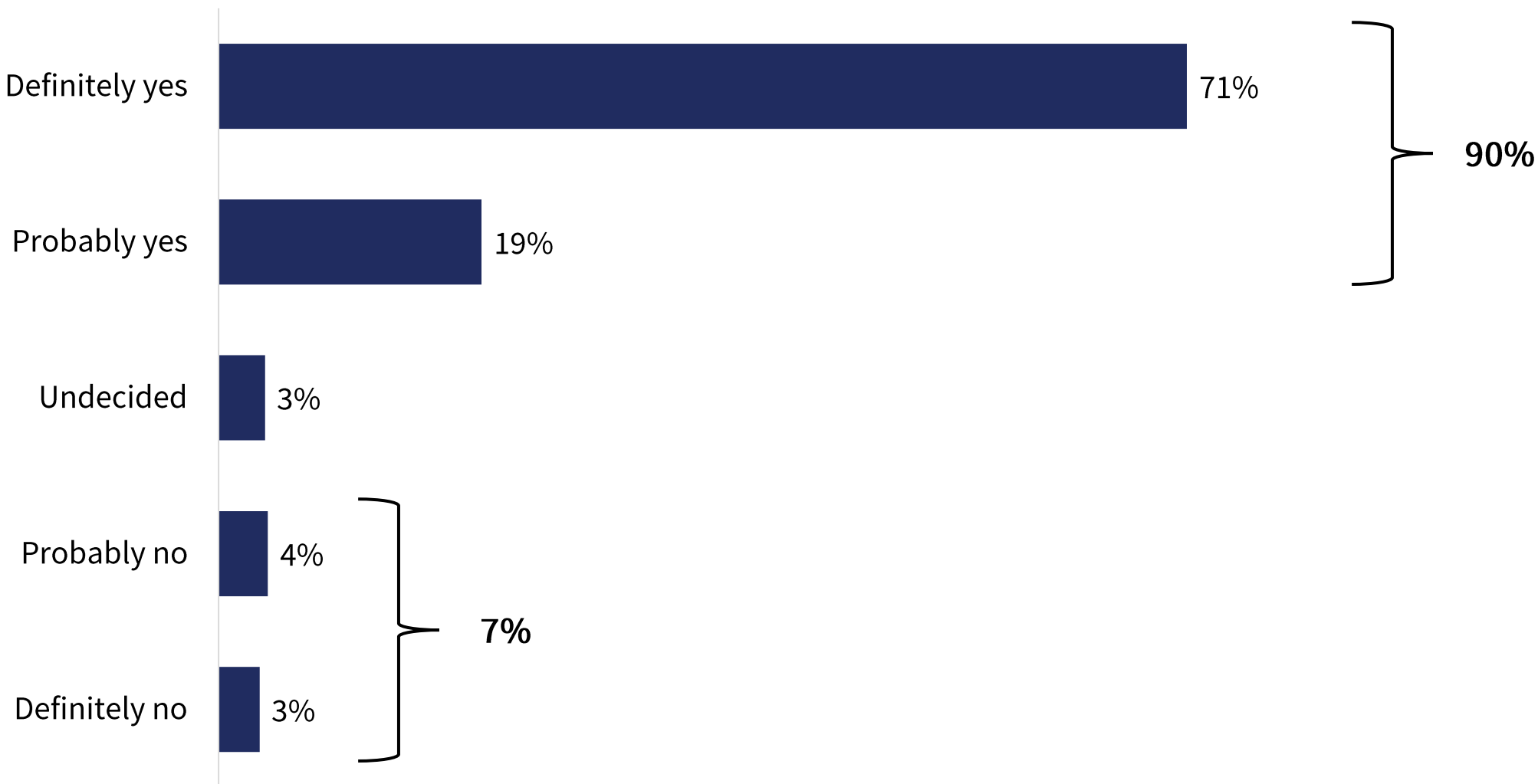


We are not alone in facing these problems. Over the last 15 years, 72% of Wisconsin school districts have asked their voters for additional funding through an operational referendum.

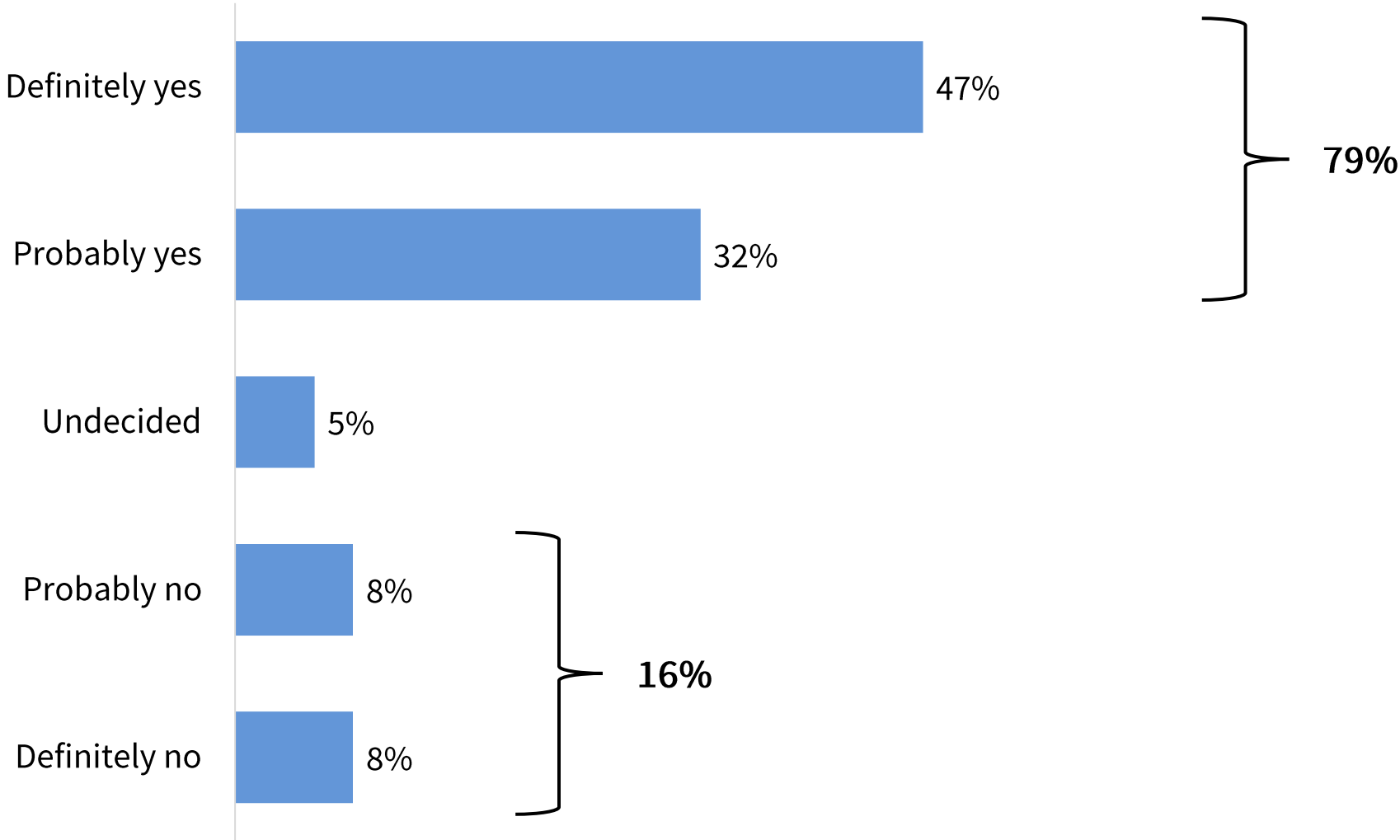
The District is asking voters to consider renewing our operational referendum at a slightly higher rate (\$2.1 million more each year for four years).



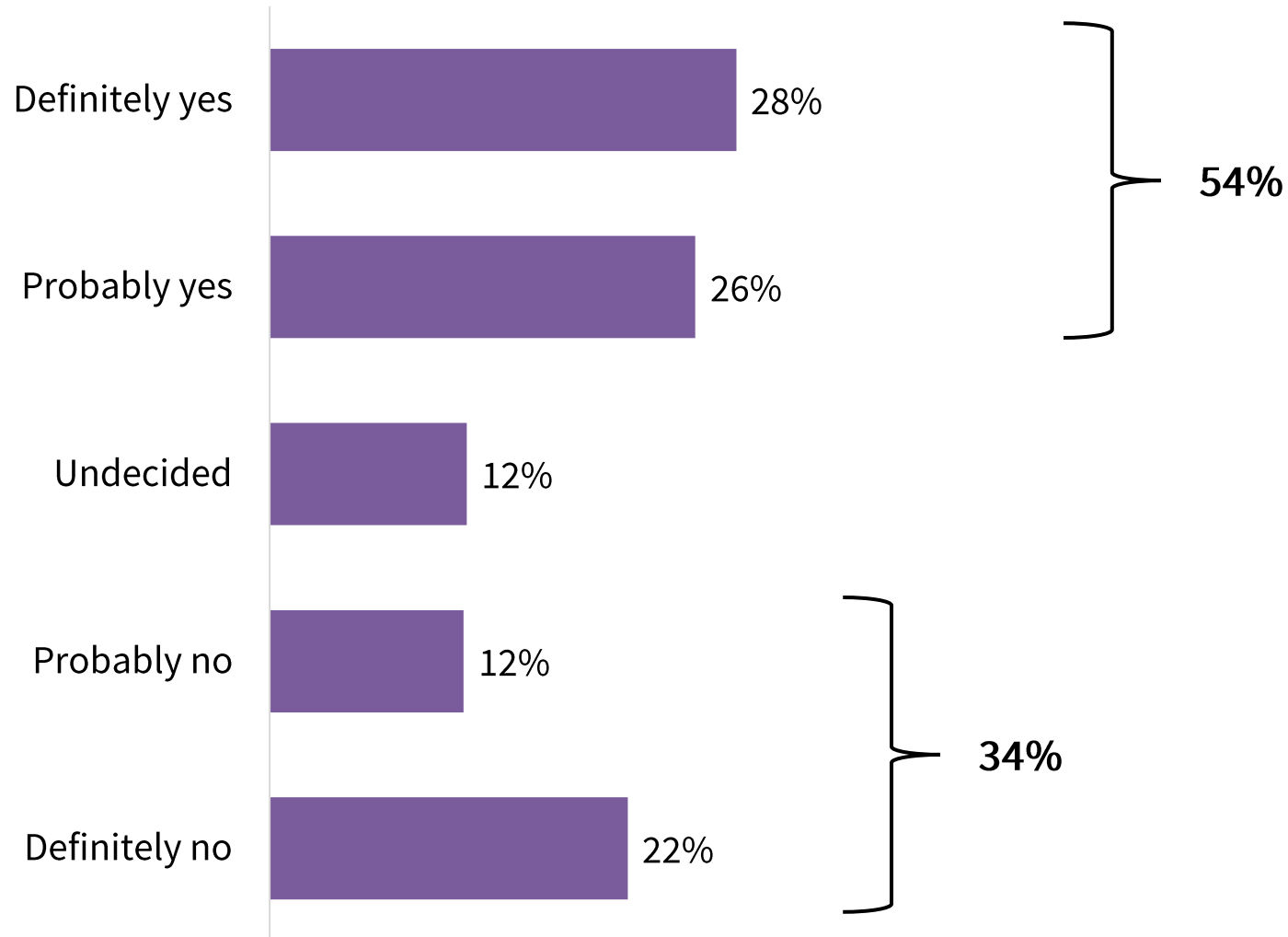
Would you support renewing the operational referendum at a rate of \$2.1 million per year for four years? (*Staff Residents*)



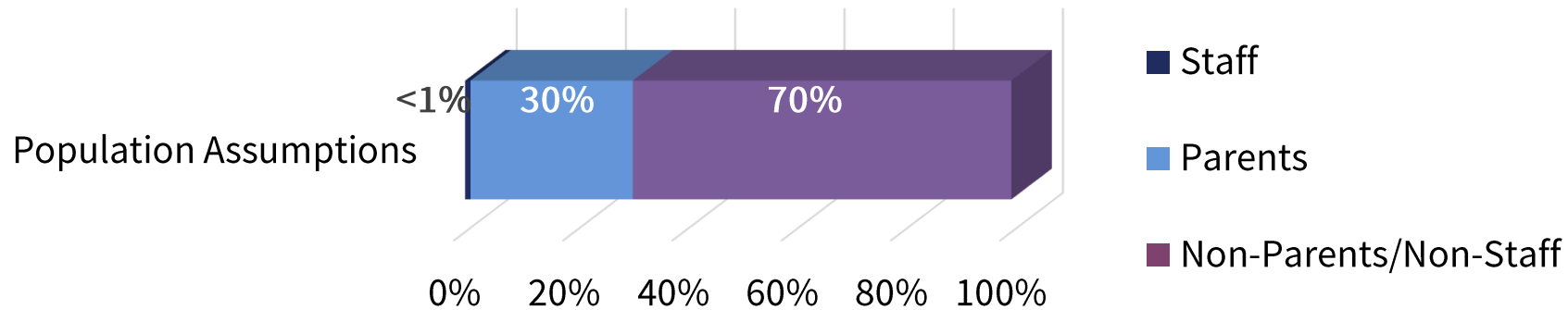
Would you support renewing the operational referendum at a rate of \$2.1 million per year for four years? (*Parent Residents*)



Would you support renewing the operational referendum at a rate of \$2.1 million per year for four years? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



Additional Analysis: Operational referendum renewal

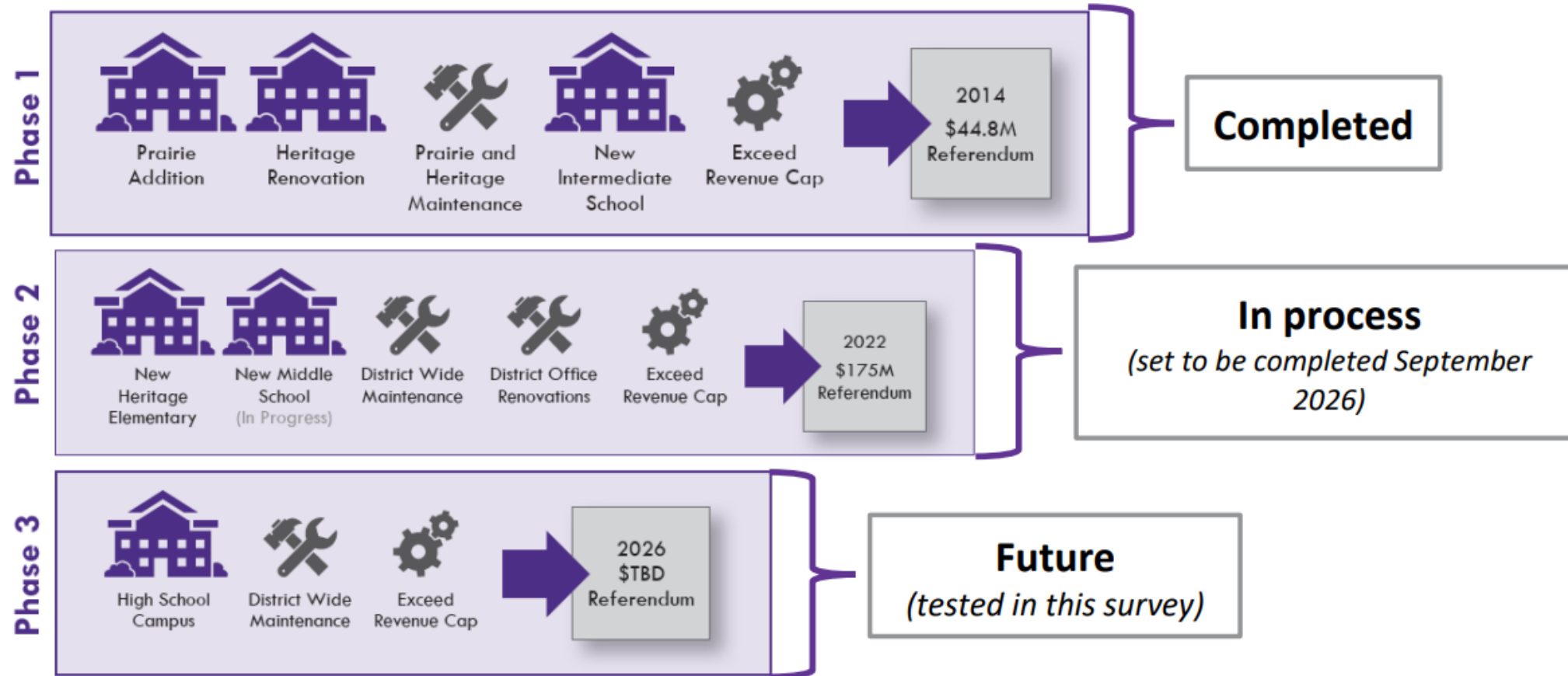


Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

$$0.30 (79\%) + 0.70 (54\%) = \underline{\underline{61.5\%}}$$

Long-Range Facility Plan

Planning began in 2010. The three phases were as follows:



Potential Facility Projects

If the community supports exploring a capital referendum in November 2026, we will need your input on the plan below. The project includes demolishing most of the 1971 portion of the high school, a section from 1994, and the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) and building a new wing(s) on that site. More specifically, the high school plan would:

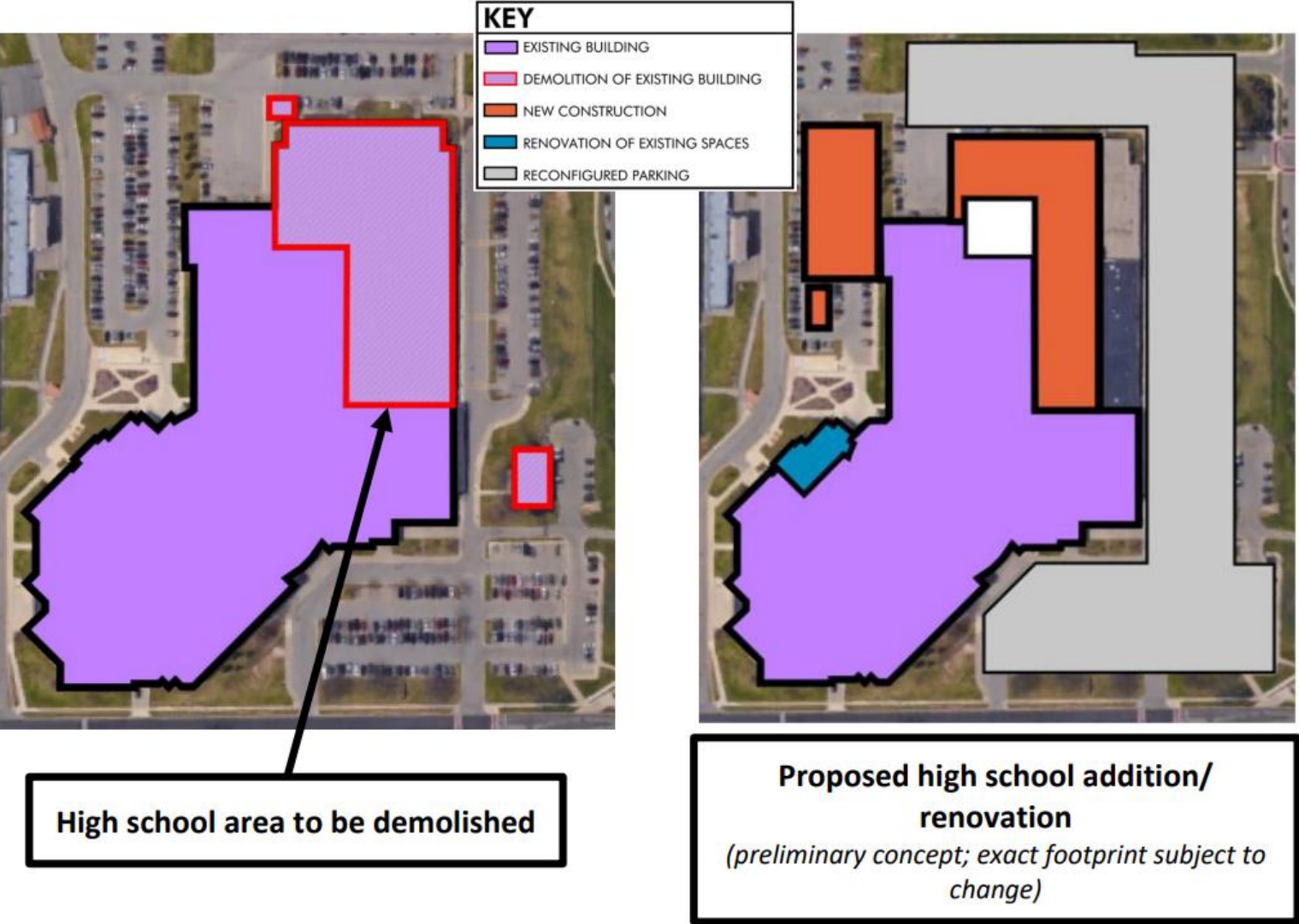
- **Improve safety and security:** Reduce the number of exterior entrances, better compartmentalize the building so visitors can only access designated areas, and combine student parking lots to better separate pedestrian and vehicle traffic.
- **Expand and modernize learning spaces:** Build new science labs and classrooms so every teacher has a dedicated classroom, add flexible spaces for both small- and large-group instruction, and relocate the library to provide natural light and improved student collaboration areas.
- **Improve student and activity spaces:** Expand cafeteria seating to reduce congestion and noise; construct two outdoor athletic team centers near the fields with changing areas, restrooms, athletic training space, and severe weather shelter; and turf the varsity baseball and softball fields to match comparable schools in the area.
- **Update major building systems:** Upgrade HVAC systems with more efficient geothermal technology (these systems are eligible for rebates, just like the \$1.2 million we received from the federal government for Heritage Elementary).

In addition to the projects above, the plan would also build new locker rooms and high school fitness and weight room areas in the existing middle school building.

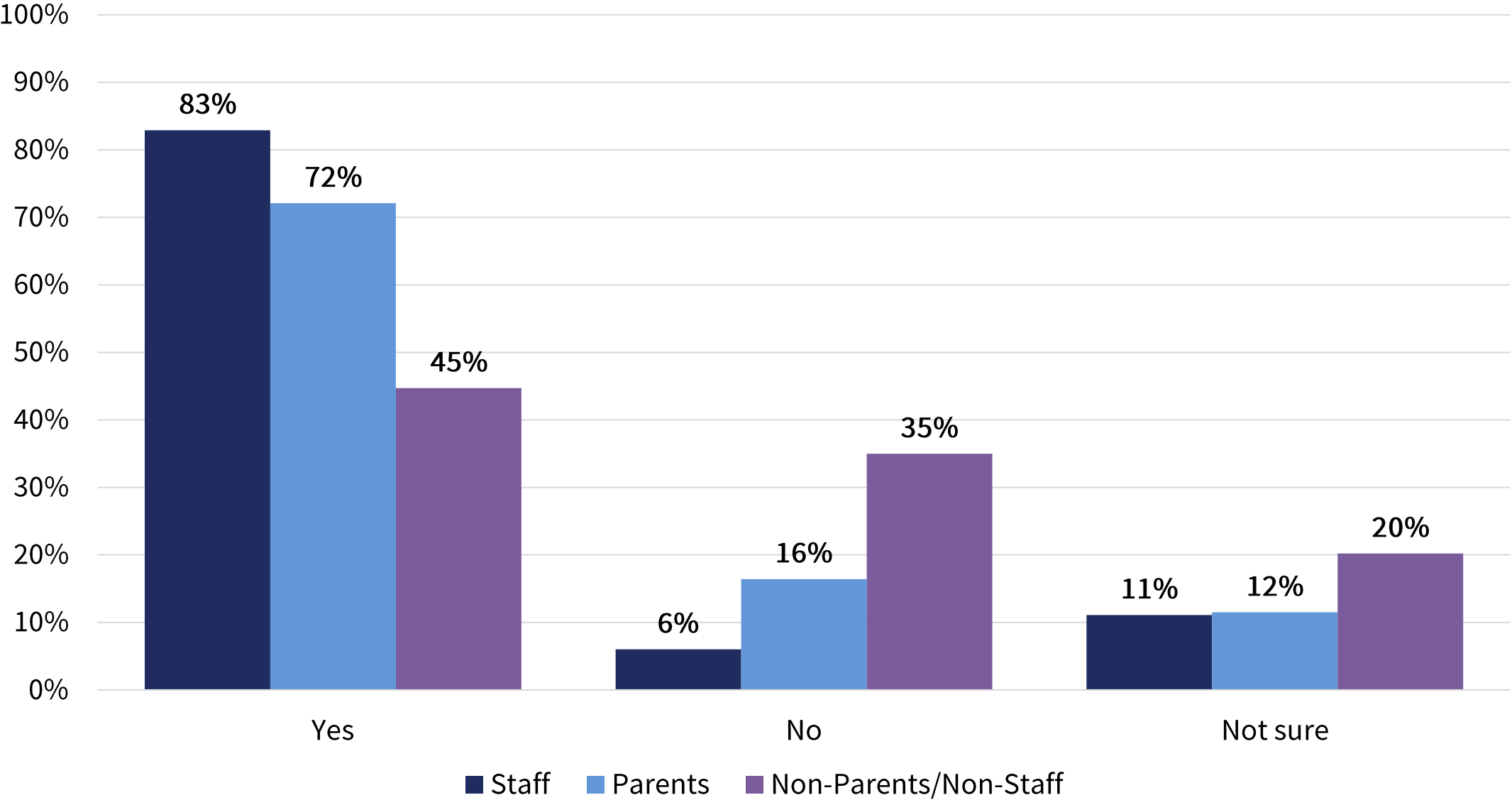
Estimated cost: \$105 million



Potential Facility Projects



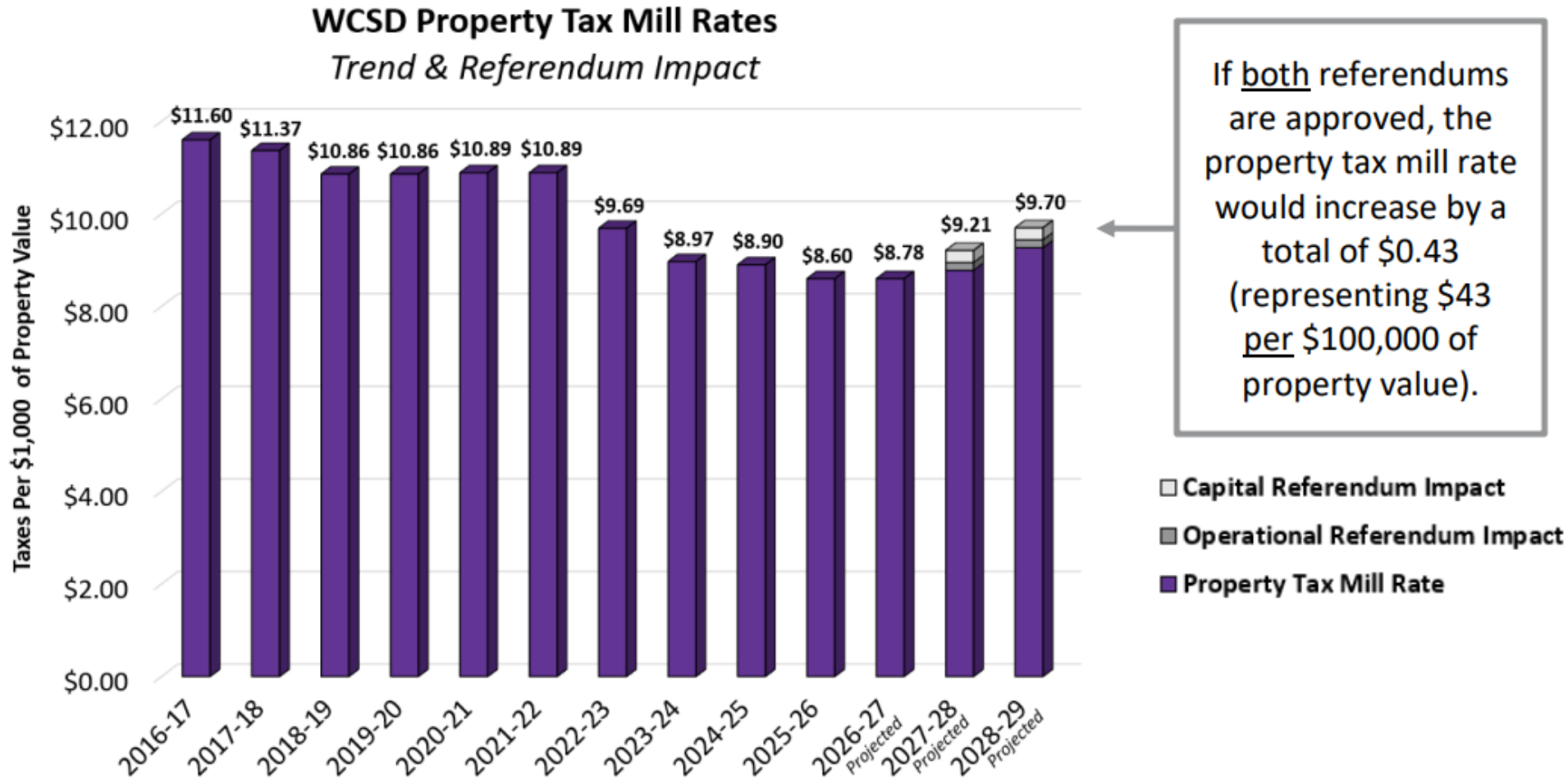
Should the District pursue a capital/building referendum in November 2026?



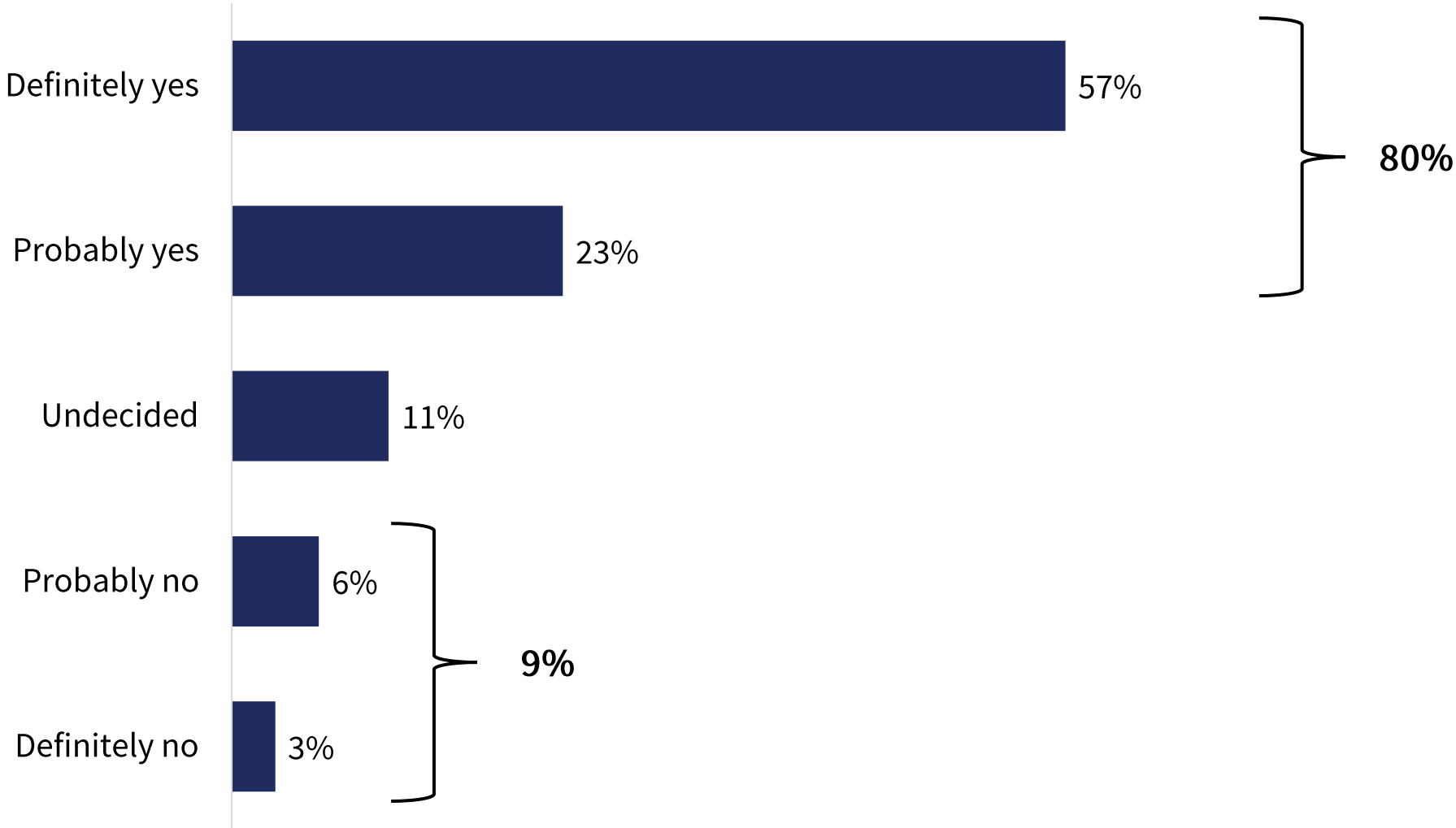
Facility Plan Funding Support



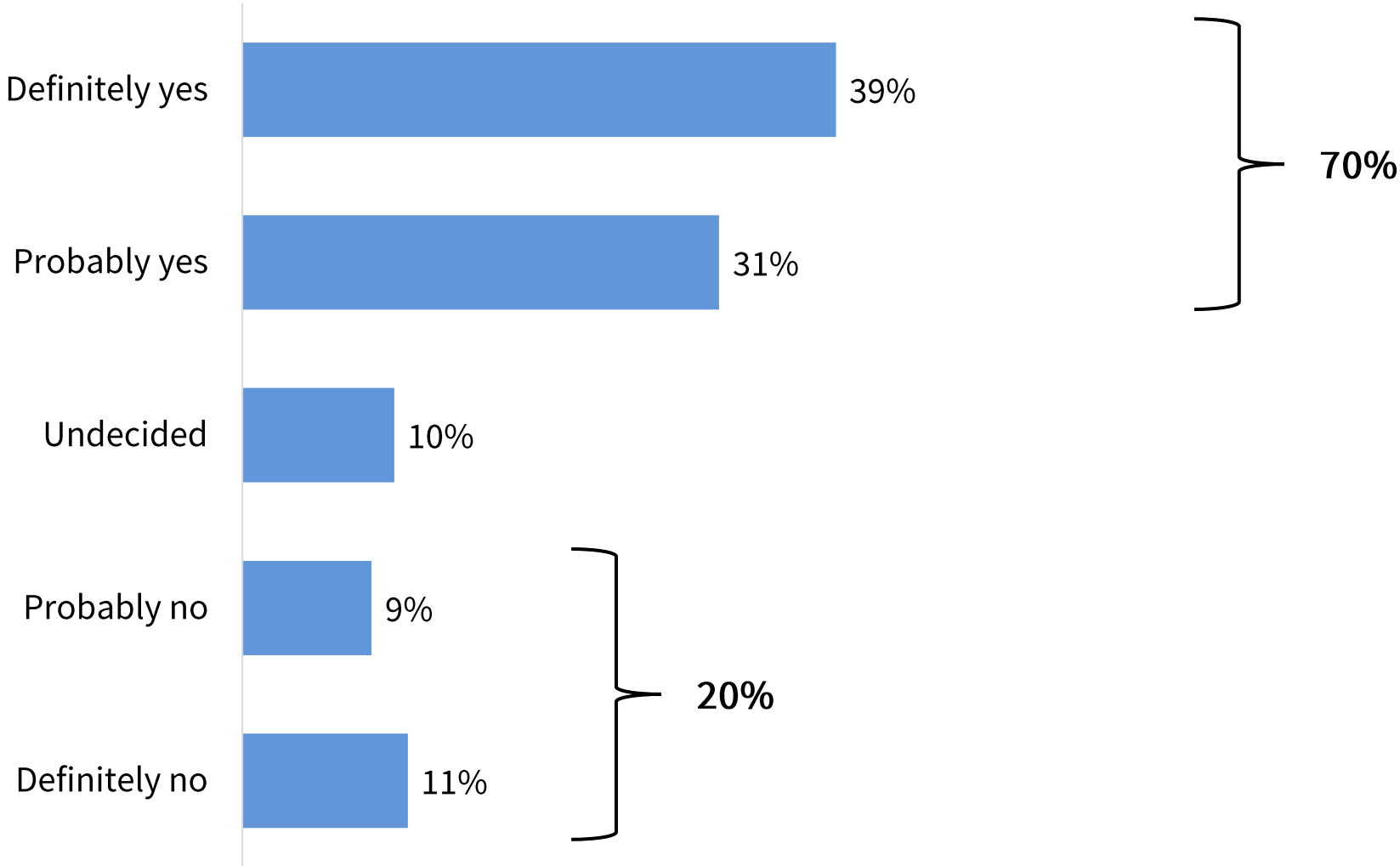
The tax impacts to pay for both the operational and capital referendums are shown in the chart below. Financing assumes a 20-year bond with interest rates at 4%.



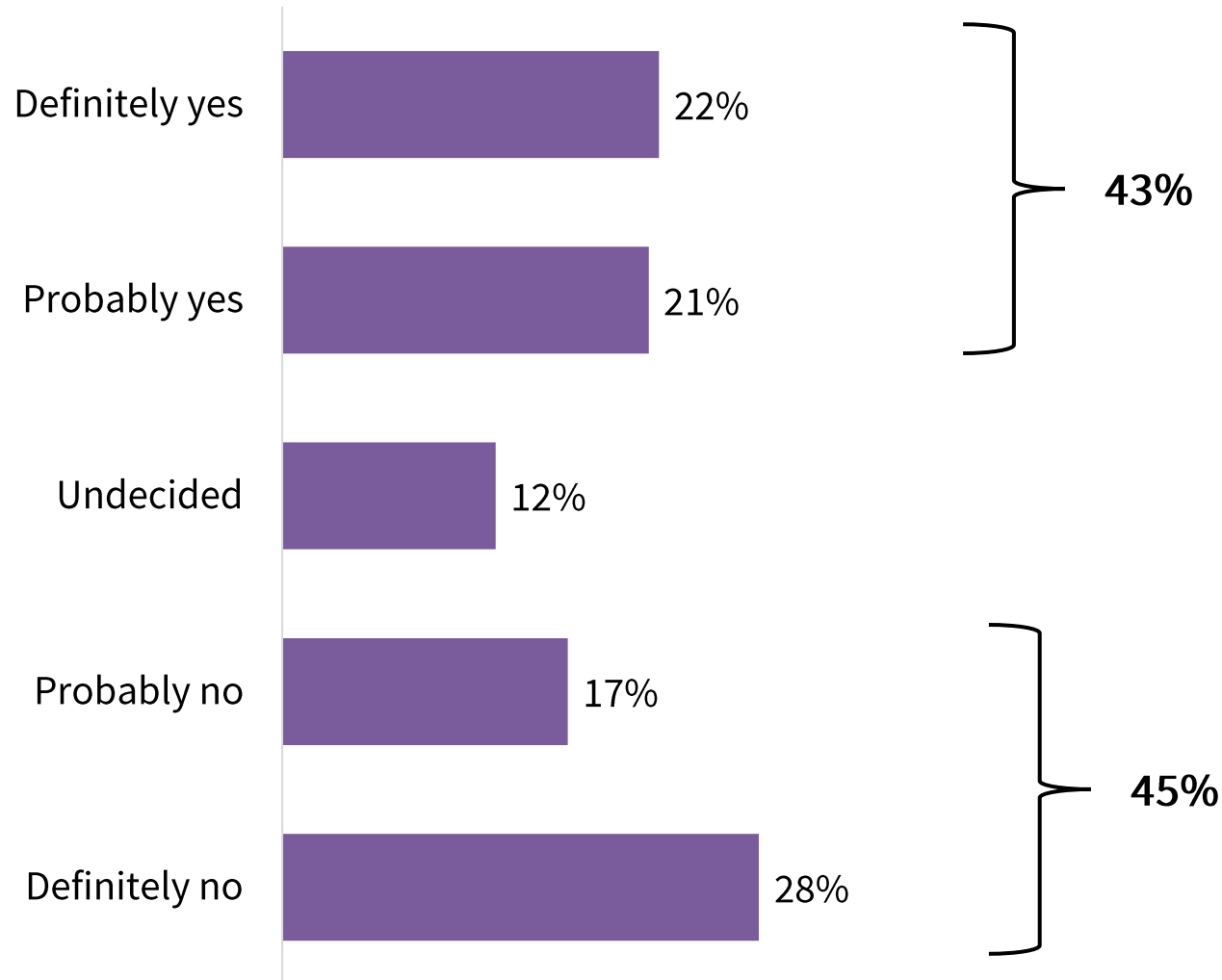
Would you support a \$105 million capital/building referendum to pay for the facility plan? (*Staff Residents*)



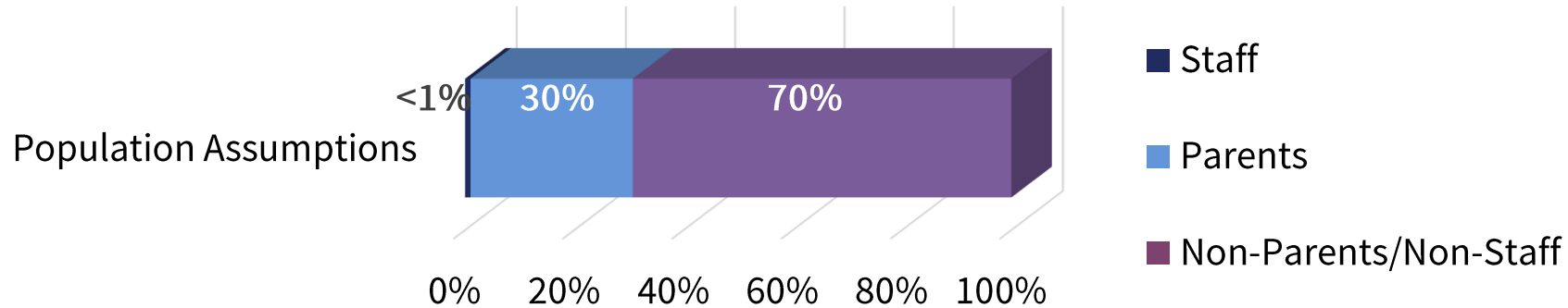
Would you support a \$105 million capital/building referendum to pay for the facility plan? (*Parent Residents*)



Would you support a \$105 million capital/building referendum to pay for the facility plan? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



Additional Analysis: \$105 million capital/building referendum



Weighted support for *Definitely yes and Probably yes*:

$$0.30 (70\%) + 0.70 (43\%) = \underline{\underline{51.1\%}}$$

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	3.69	3.44	3.38
Keeping the public informed	3.43	3.28	2.93
Managing funds appropriately	3.33	2.99	2.73
Building pride in the community	3.42	3.27	3.27

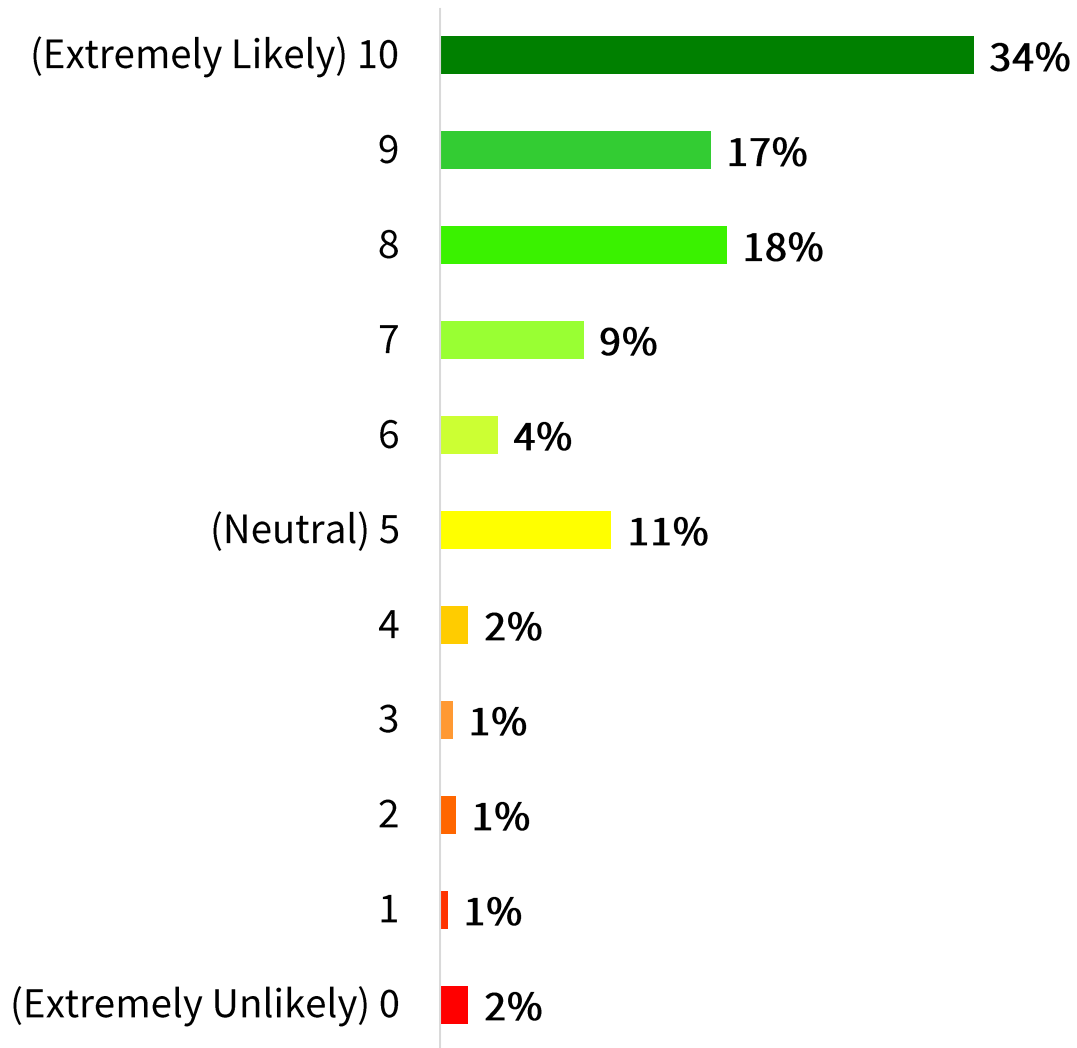
How is the District doing in each of the following areas?

Great = 4, Good = 3, Fair = 2, Poor = 1



Item	Percent “Great” or “Good”	Average	Comparison Percentile
Delivering a high-quality education	92%	3.47	95 th
Keeping the public informed	82%	3.18	87 th
Managing funds appropriately	72%	2.97	84 th
Building pride in the community	86%	3.30	87 th

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



Waunakee Score: 8.02
Comparison Score: 7.27
Comparison Percentile: 87th



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