

Mount Horeb Area School District

Community Survey Report

Spring 2022



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 **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **850** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

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Our Process



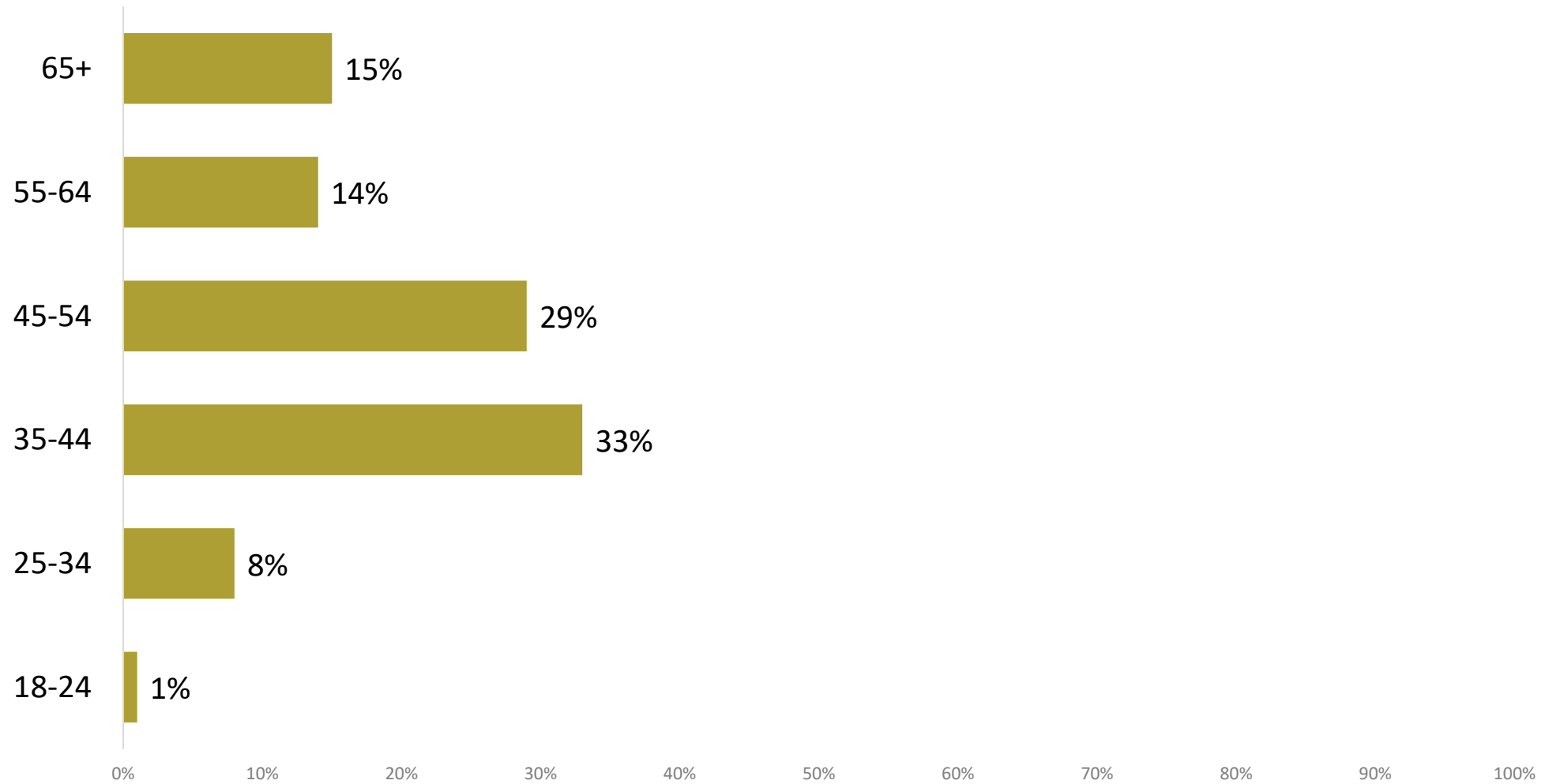
- Households within the District were mailed a paper survey.
 - 1) Fill out the paper survey and return directly to School Perceptions
 - 2) Use the access code to take the survey online

Survey Information



- (May-June 2022) survey window
- (1,609) total respondents
- (28%) response rate
- (+/- 2.49%) margin of error

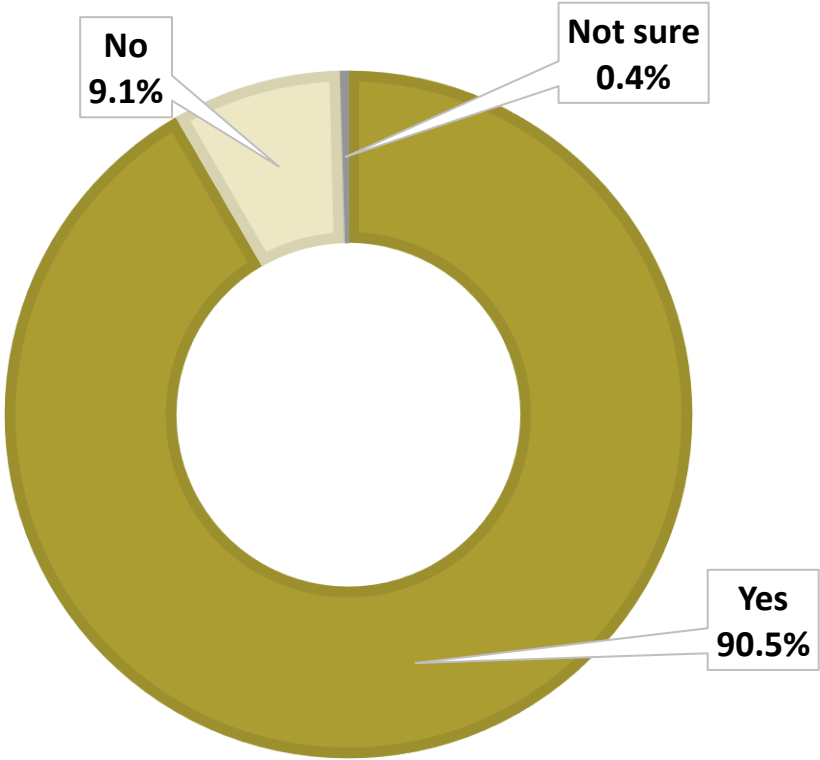
What is your age?



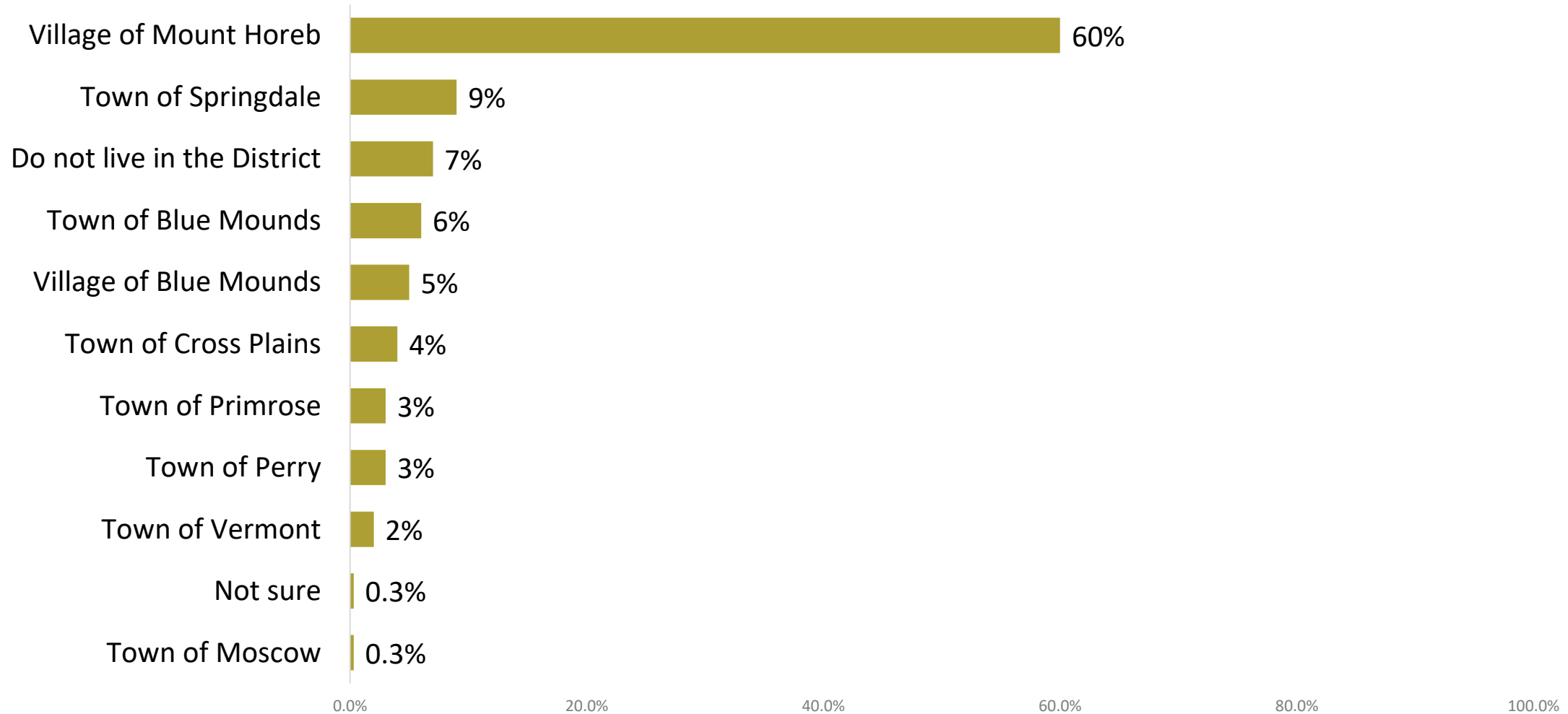
Respondent Information



Is your primary residence in the Mount Horeb Area School District?



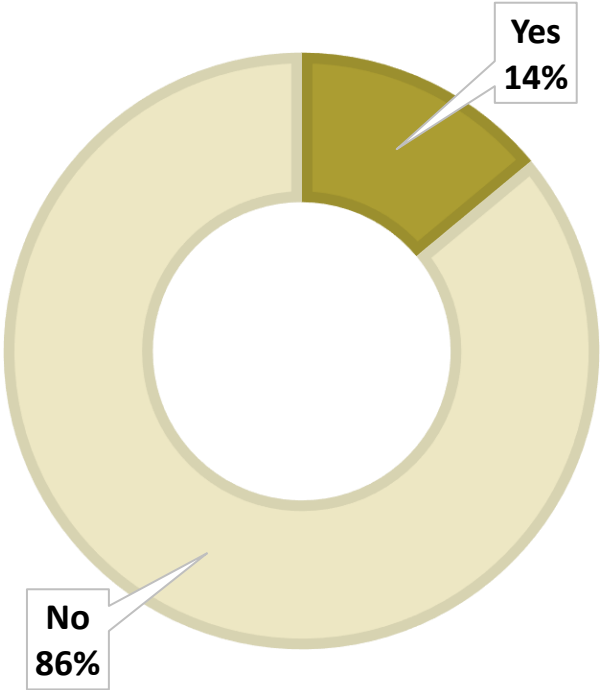
In which municipality do you live?



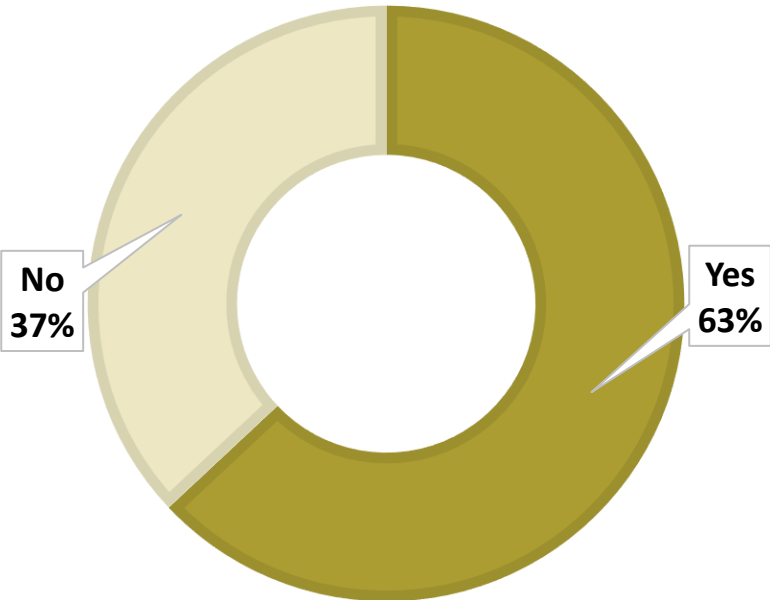
Respondent Information



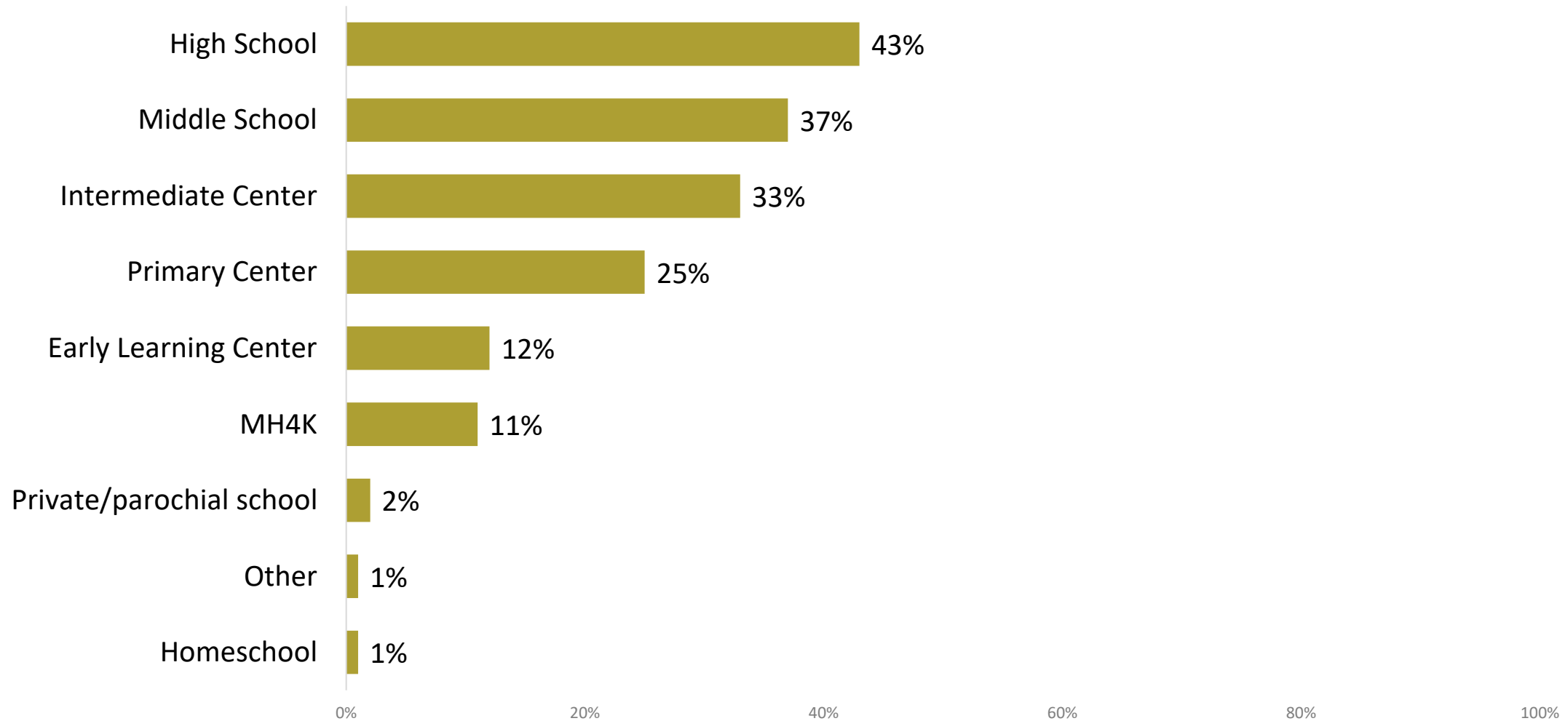
Are you an employee of the District?



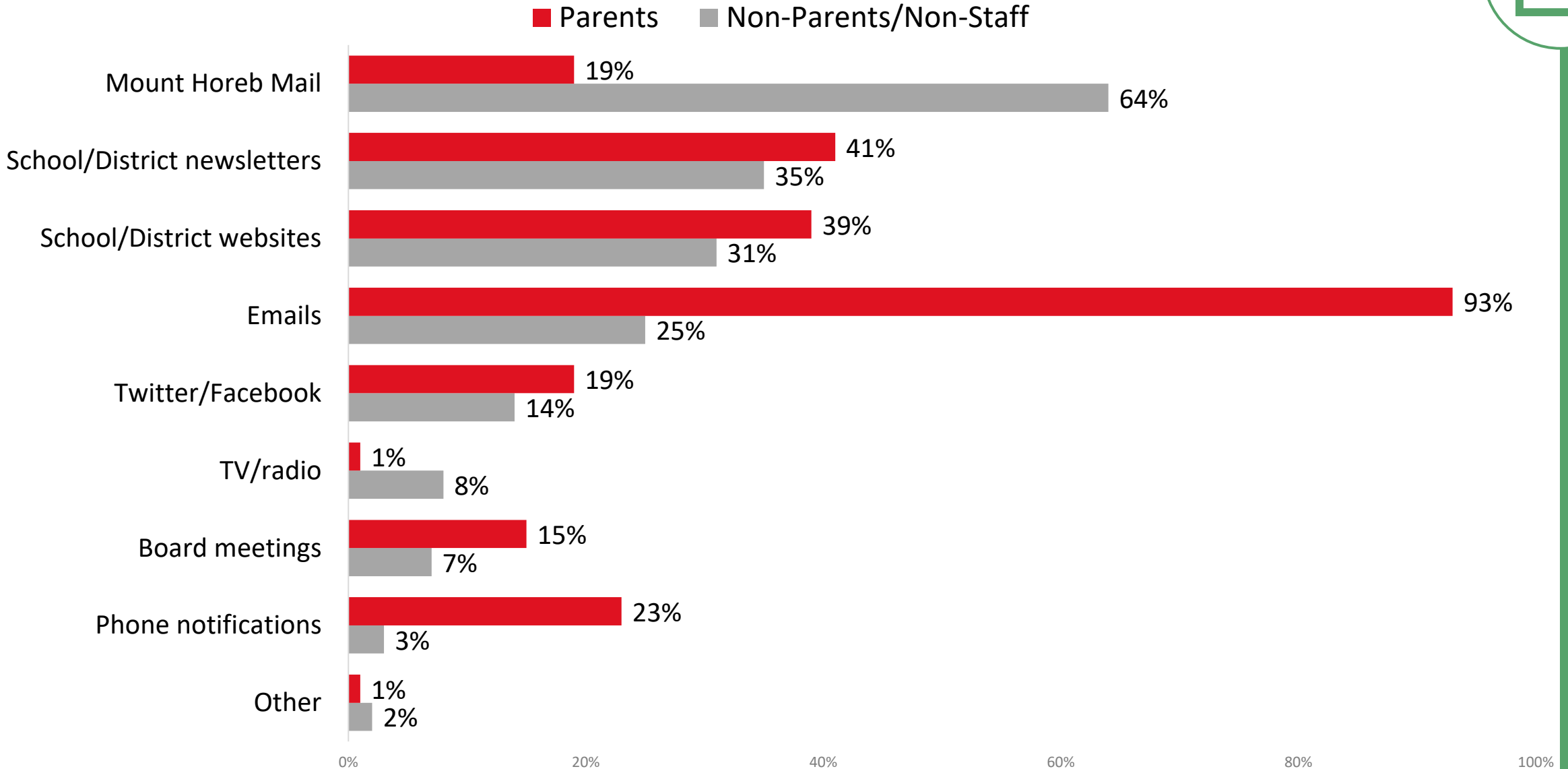
Do you have children attending a school in the District?



If you have school-aged children, what school(s) do they attend? *(Mark all that apply.)*



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



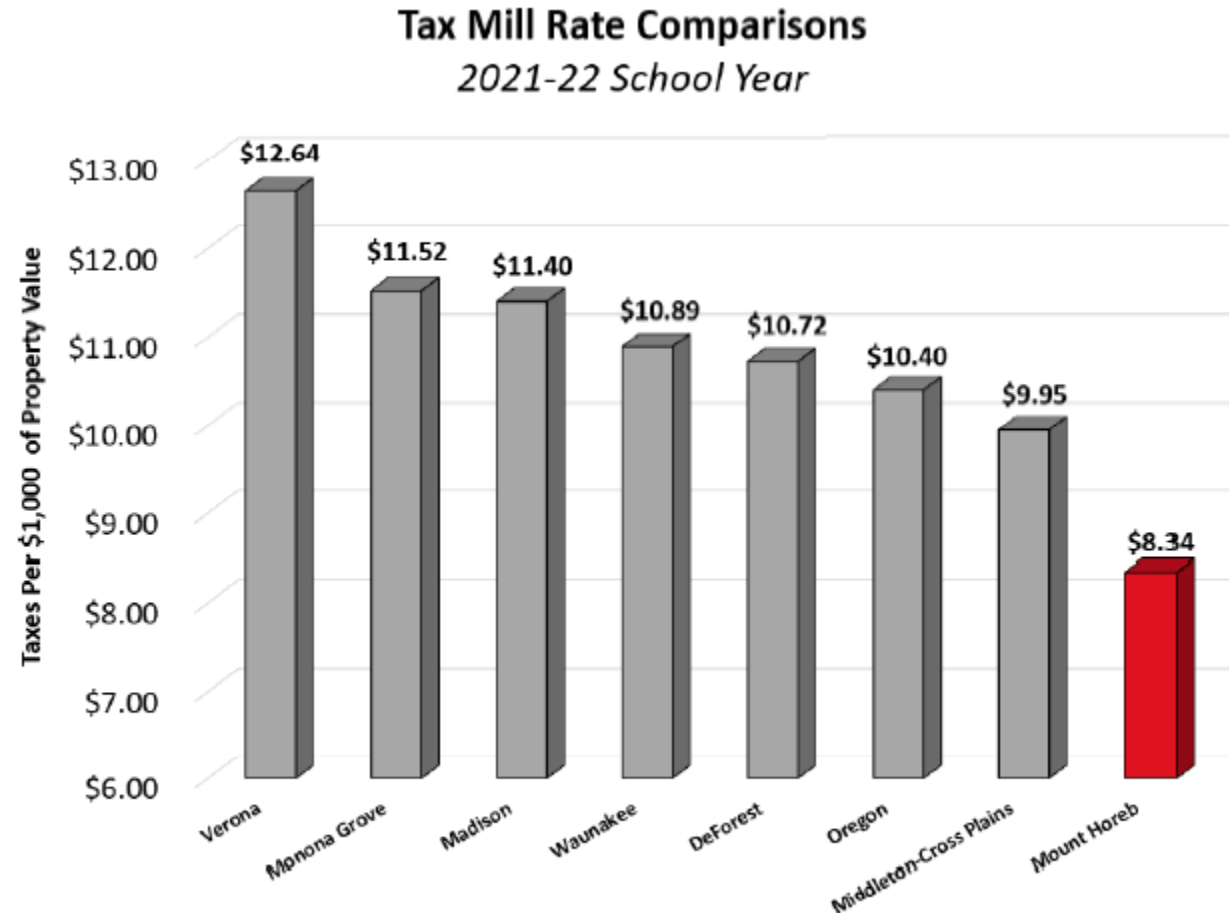
Background Information



How are we doing financially?

The District works hard to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

- We paid our referendum debt early, which saves interest payments.
- Our mill rate (which is used to calculate a school district's share of local property taxes) has **dropped by more than 20 percent** since the 2017-18 school year.



As seen in the chart above, we now have the lowest mill rate among our Dane County comparisons.

Financial Background



There are two types of referenda school districts in Wisconsin can pursue.

1. **Operational:** This ballot question asks voters to approve additional funding above the annual revenue limit to maintain class sizes, programs, and student services. Funds secured are used within the year they are received. *The District has not requested this type of funding since 1999.*
2. **Capital:** This ballot question asks voters to approve a district issuing debt to pay for major building projects, such as renovations or new buildings. Like a home mortgage, a capital referendum is typically financed over an extended period, often 20 years. *Voters approved this type of referendum in 2017 to pay for our high school and middle school updates.*

Are referendums common?

In the last ten years, about 350 districts across the state (about 83%) have passed referendums to help with ongoing budget challenges and update facilities. In our region alone, 82% of school districts (those in CESA 2) have supported a referendum.

Operational Challenges: Base Plan



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Operational Challenges: Base Plan



State funding has not kept up with increasing costs. In fact, we did not receive any additional state funding on a per-student basis this school year and will not next year either.

We have received federal ESSER funding (COVID-19 relief) that helped us provide additional academic and support services such as counseling, social work, and school psychology. However, this funding will soon end.

The Board of Education is exploring an operational referendum to increase funding on an ongoing/recurring basis to address our most pressing needs. If approved, beginning in the 2023-24 school year, the money would be used to:

- ✓ **Attract and retain quality staff:** This has become a significant challenge due to the statewide labor shortages. Our staff salaries and benefits are not competitive with other Dane County school districts. Consequently, we are losing high-quality staff members to other area school districts and businesses.
- ✓ **Maintain current programs and services:** To offer a high-quality education for all students.
- ✓ **Pay for increasing costs:** Such as transportation, utilities, and technology.

Operational Challenges: Base Plan (cont'd)



Question

- Would you support a projected \$4.47 million operational referendum to fund the items identified above?

Notes

- Representing an estimated annual tax increase of \$55* per \$100,000 of property value every year.
- * The estimated mill rates are calculated based on local property values, state funding, and student enrollment.

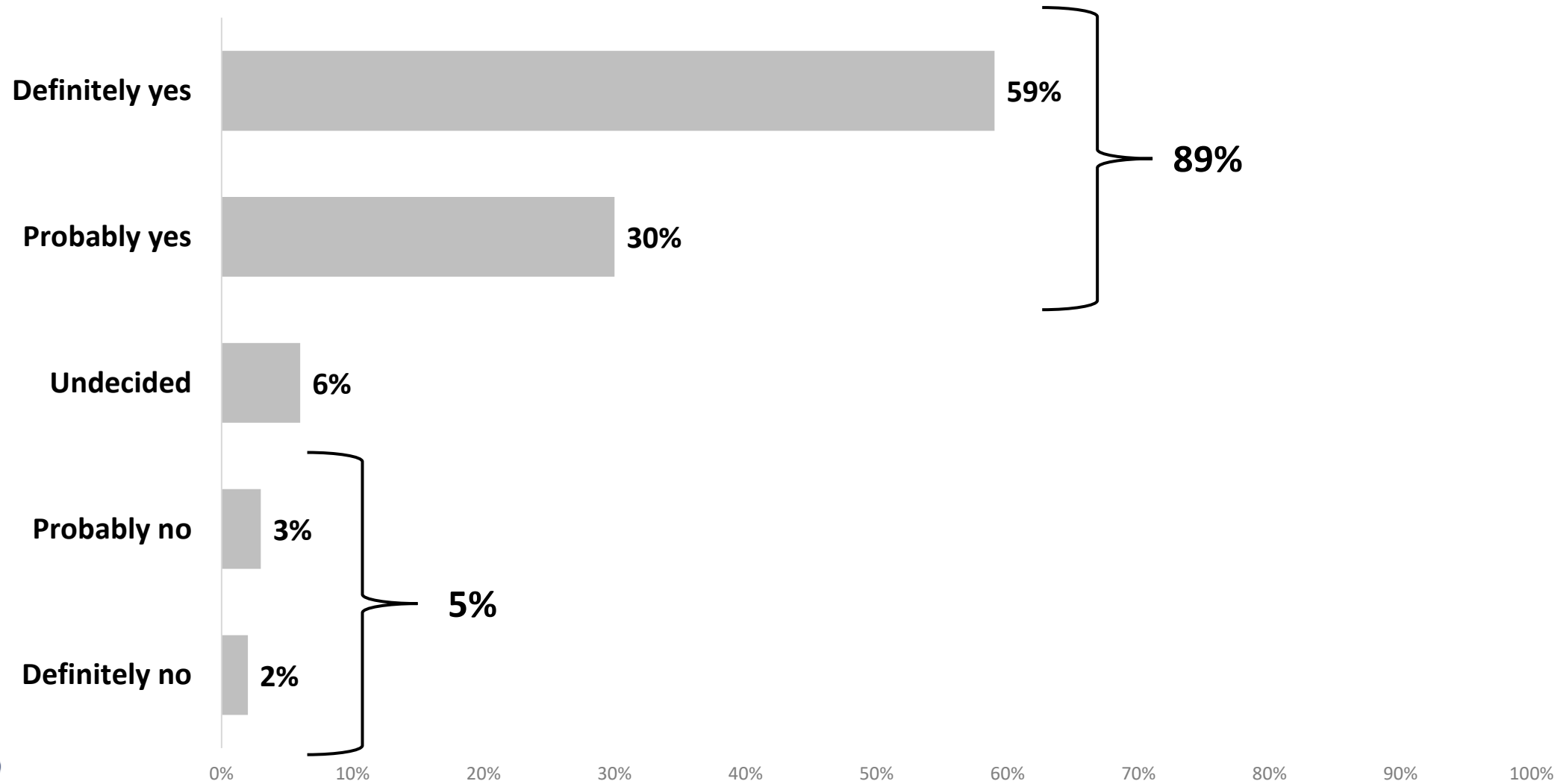
Scale

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

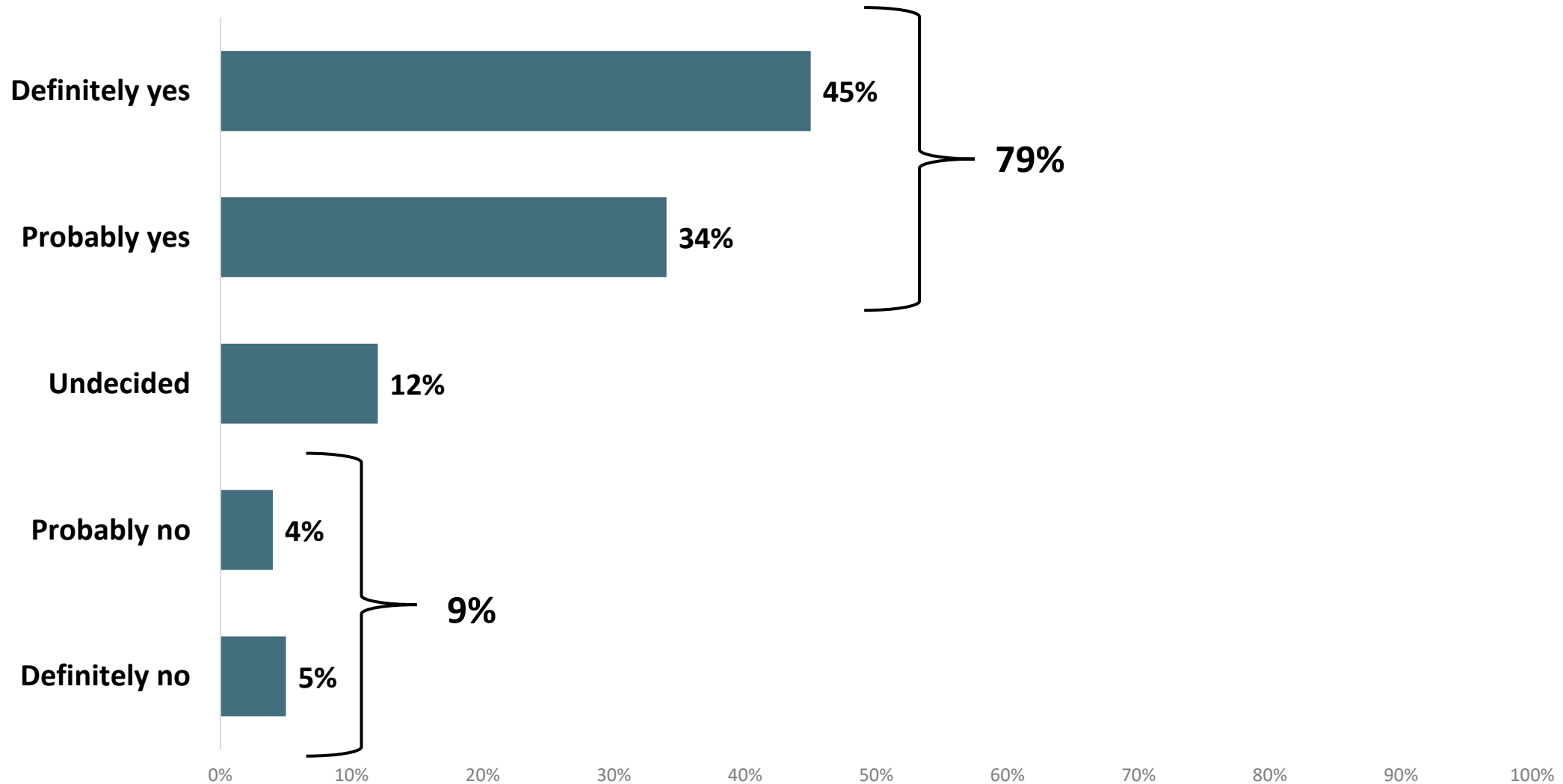


Results & Analysis

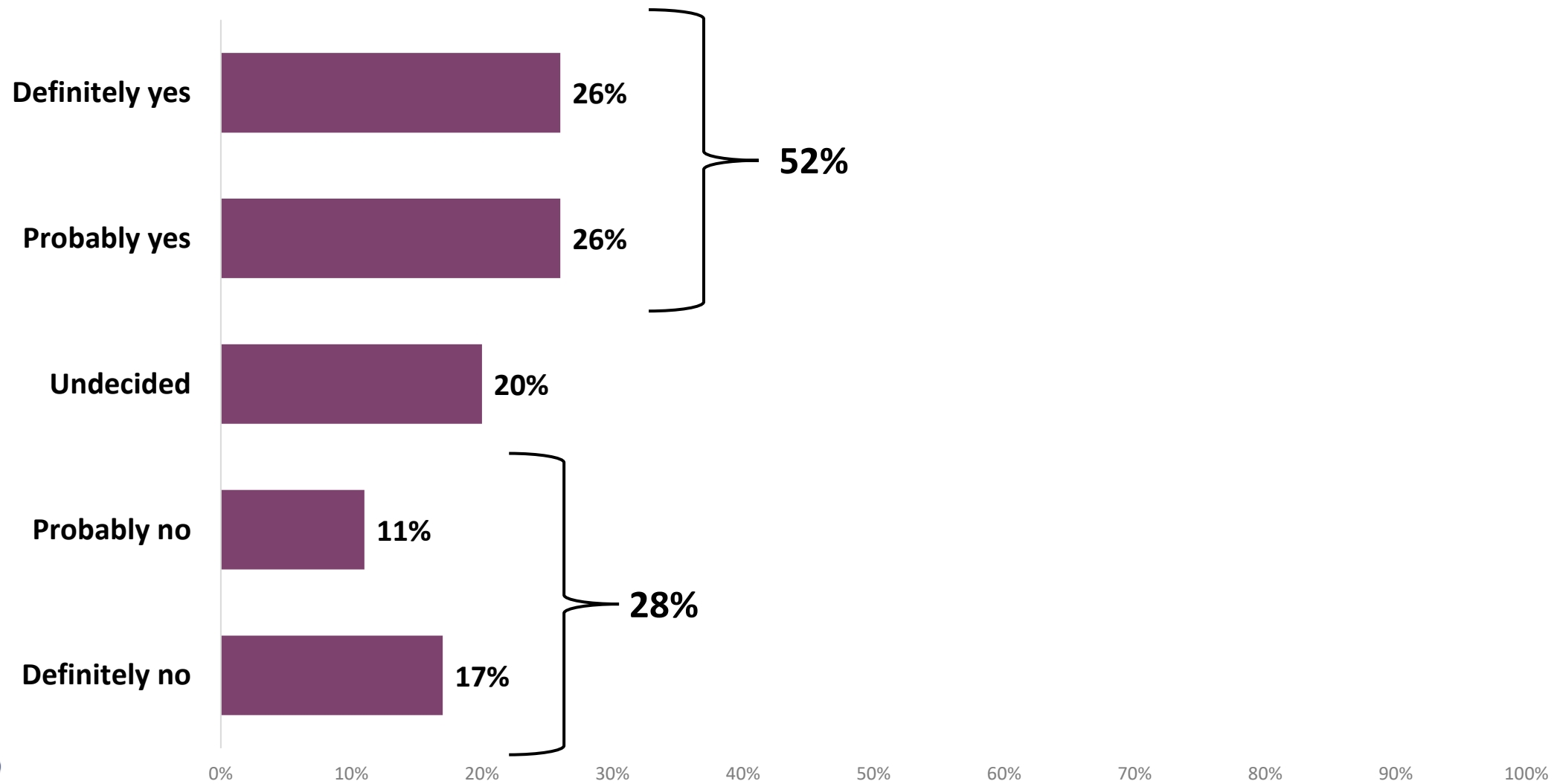
Base Plan: Staff Residents



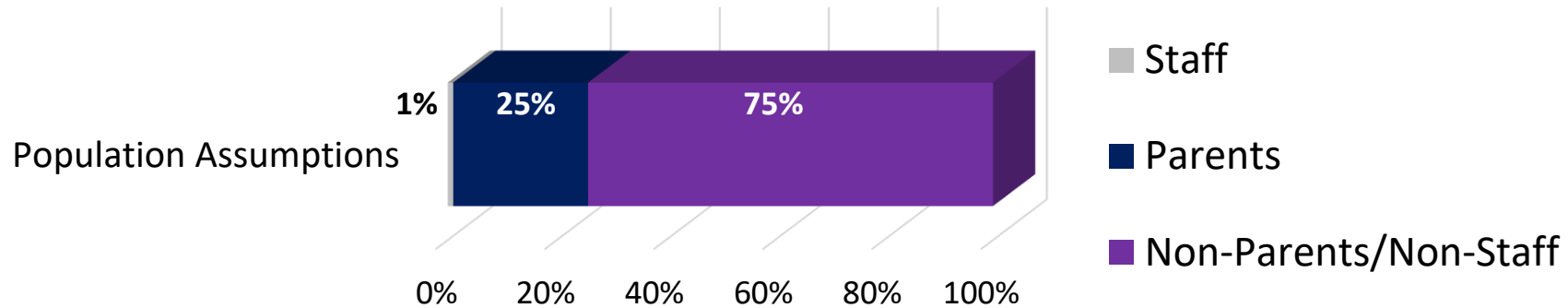
Base Plan: Parent/Caregiver Residents



Base Plan: Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents



Base Plan: Weighted Support



Weighted support for base plan operational referendum:
 $0.75 (52\%) + 0.25 (79\%) = \underline{\underline{58.8\%}}$

Additional Funding Options



In addition to funding the Base Plan, two other initiatives could also be funded through an operational referendum.

Maintain One-Time Federal Funding for Student Academic Supports

The District would like to secure an additional \$350,000 per year to maintain the services provided through federal pandemic relief dollars. This would include math and reading/literacy staff for struggling students and a teacher for English-language learners.

Student Support Services

The District would like to secure an additional \$850,000 per year to hire additional staff, including a reading/writing teacher, a second teacher for our advanced learners' program, two additional social workers, and technology support staff.

Additional Funding Options (cont'd)



Question

- Would you support expanding the Base Plan referendum by \$350,000 to maintain student academic supports?

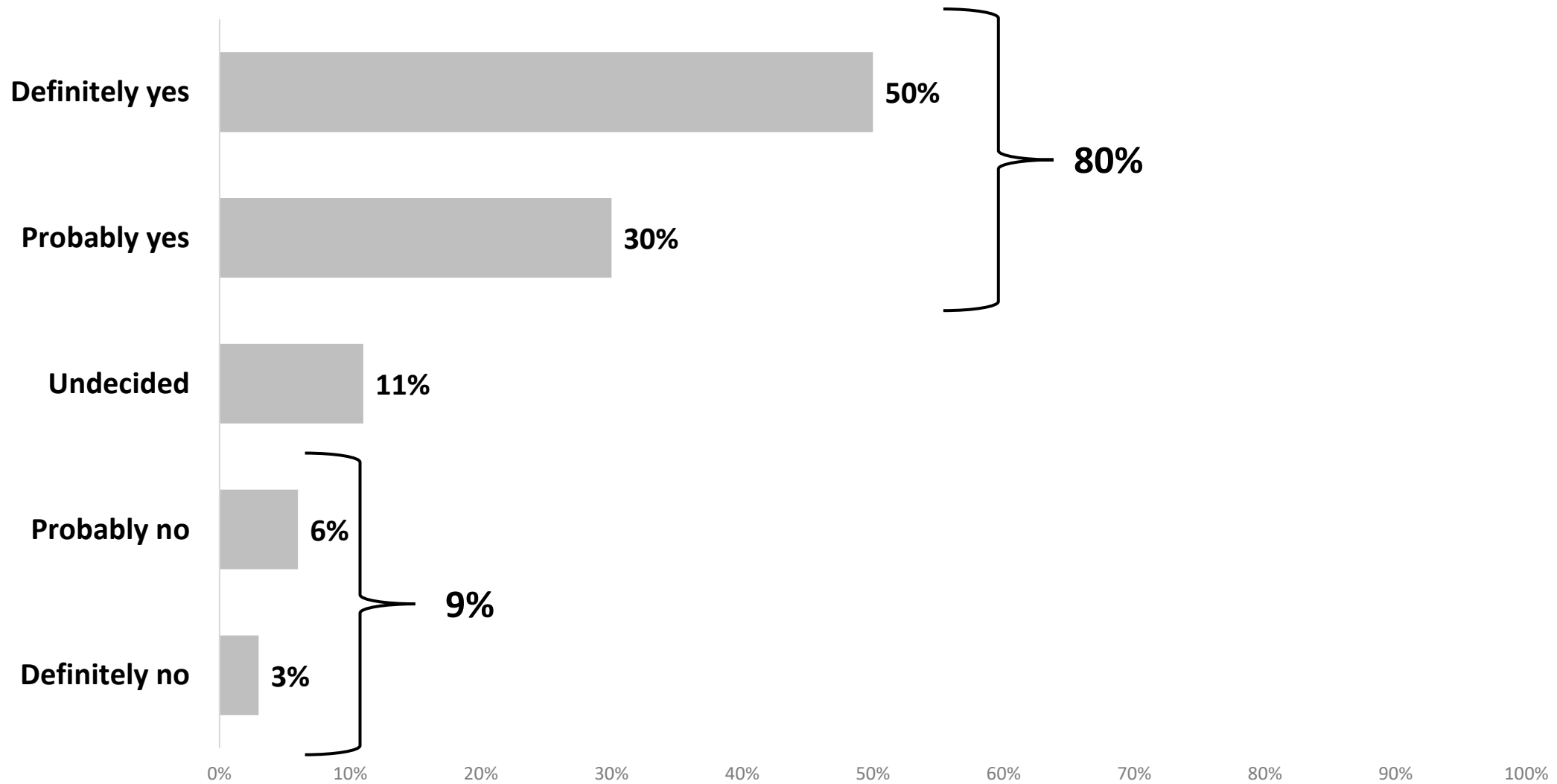
Notes

- Representing an estimated annual tax increase of \$20* per \$100,000 of property value every year.
- * The estimated mill rates are calculated based on local property values, state funding, and student enrollment.

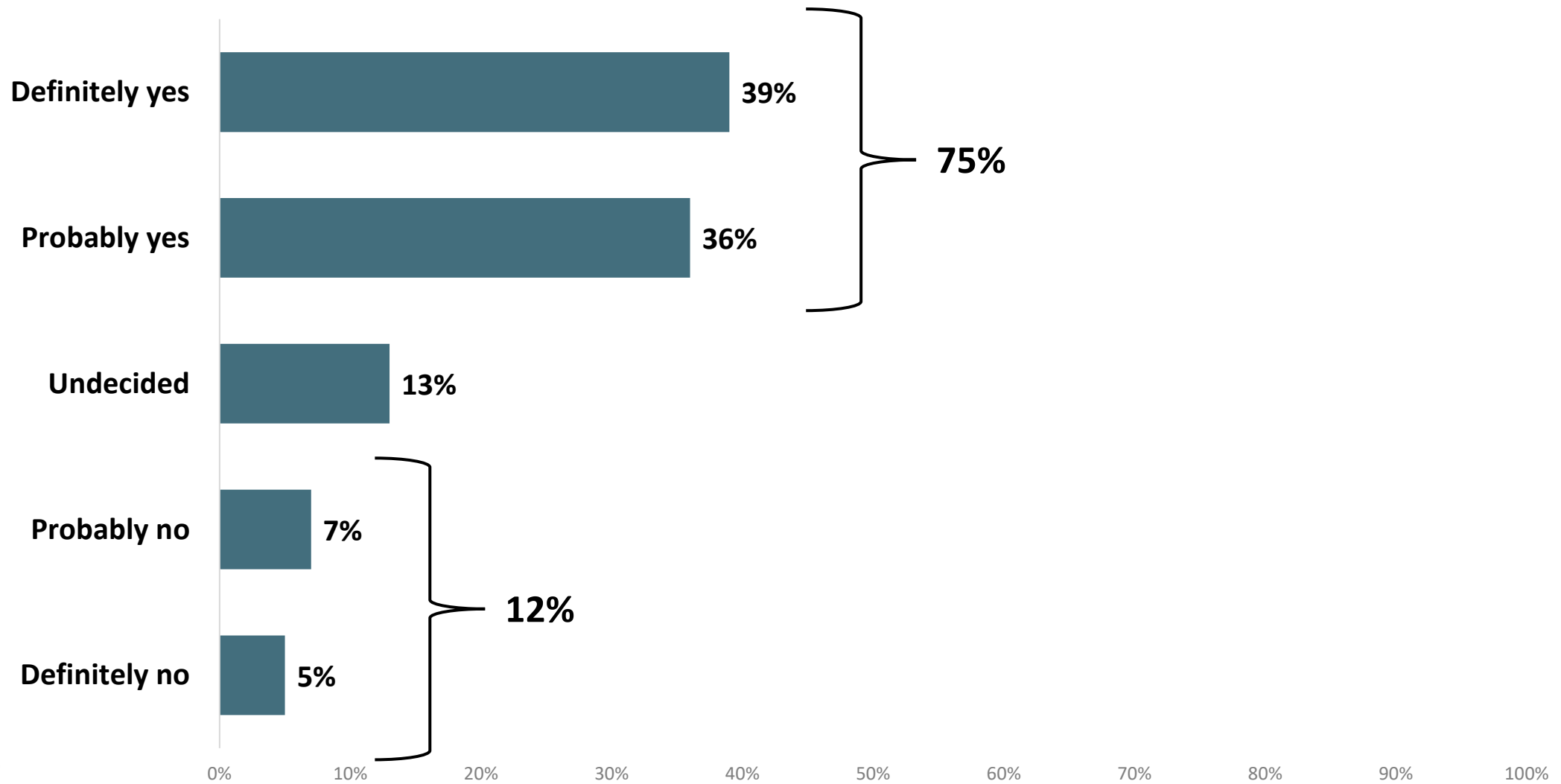
Scale

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

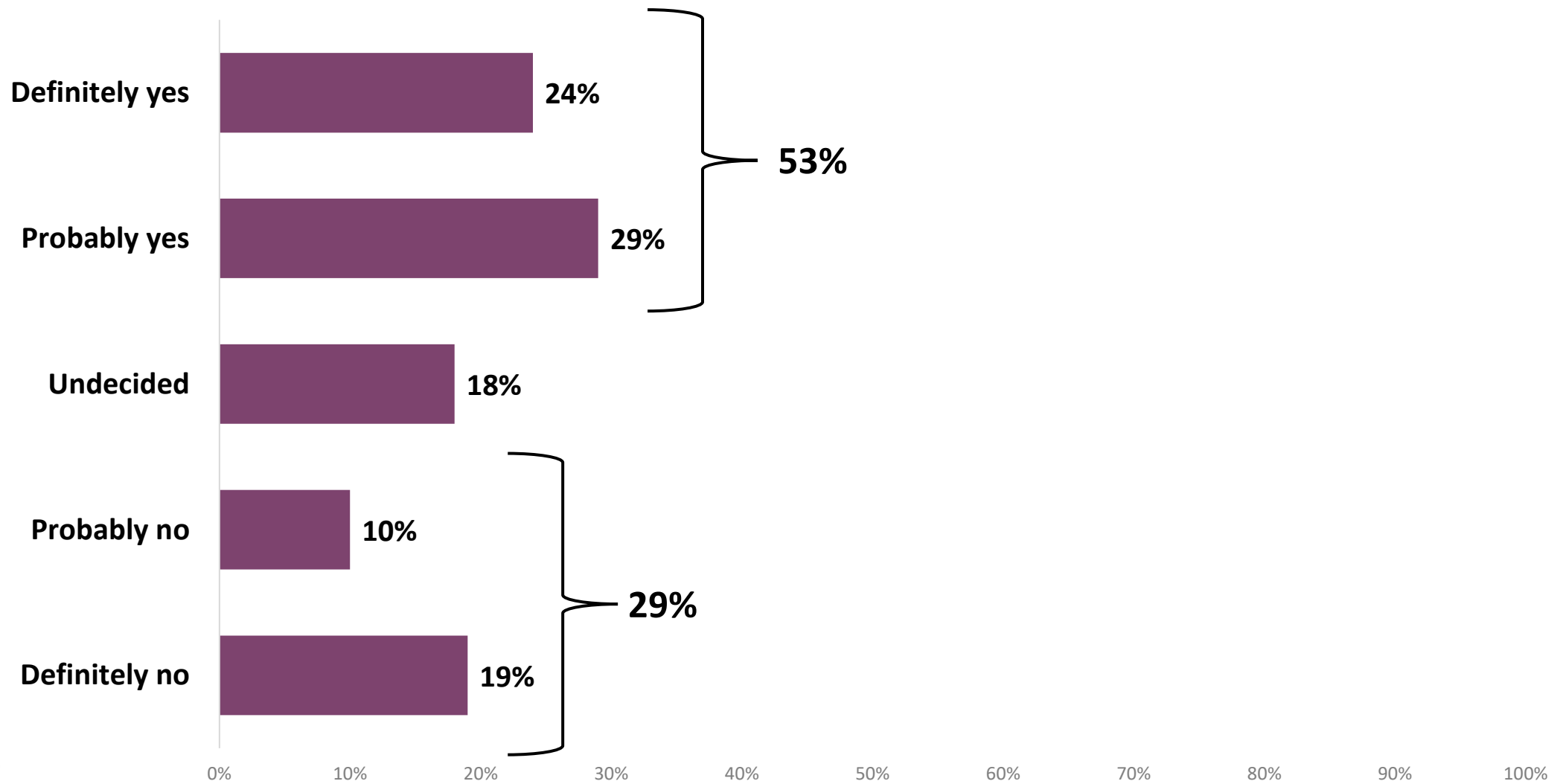
Student Academic Supports: Staff Residents



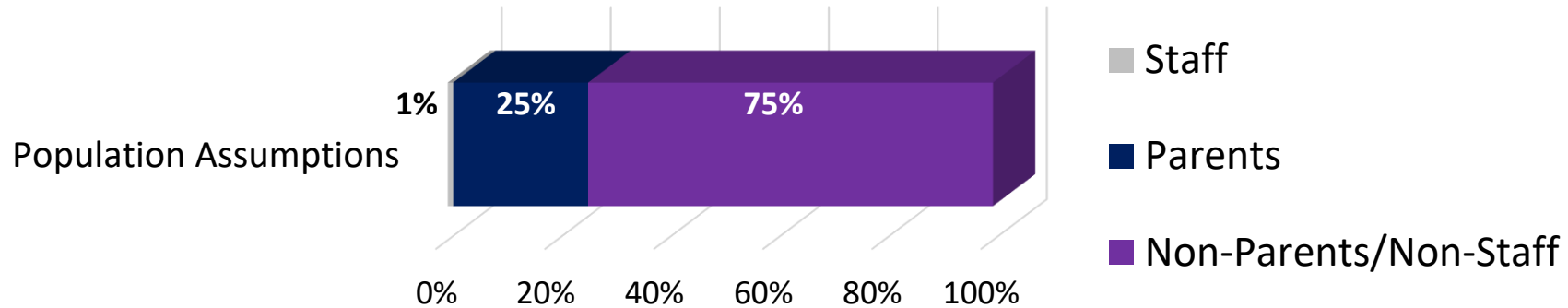
Student Academic Supports: Parent/Caregiver Residents



Student Academic Supports: Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents



Base Plan: Weighted Support



Weighted support for student academic supports expansion:
 $0.75 (53\%) + 0.25 (75\%) = \underline{\underline{58.5\%}}$

Additional Funding Options (cont'd)



Question

- Would you support expanding the Base Plan referendum by \$850,000 to fund the student support services?

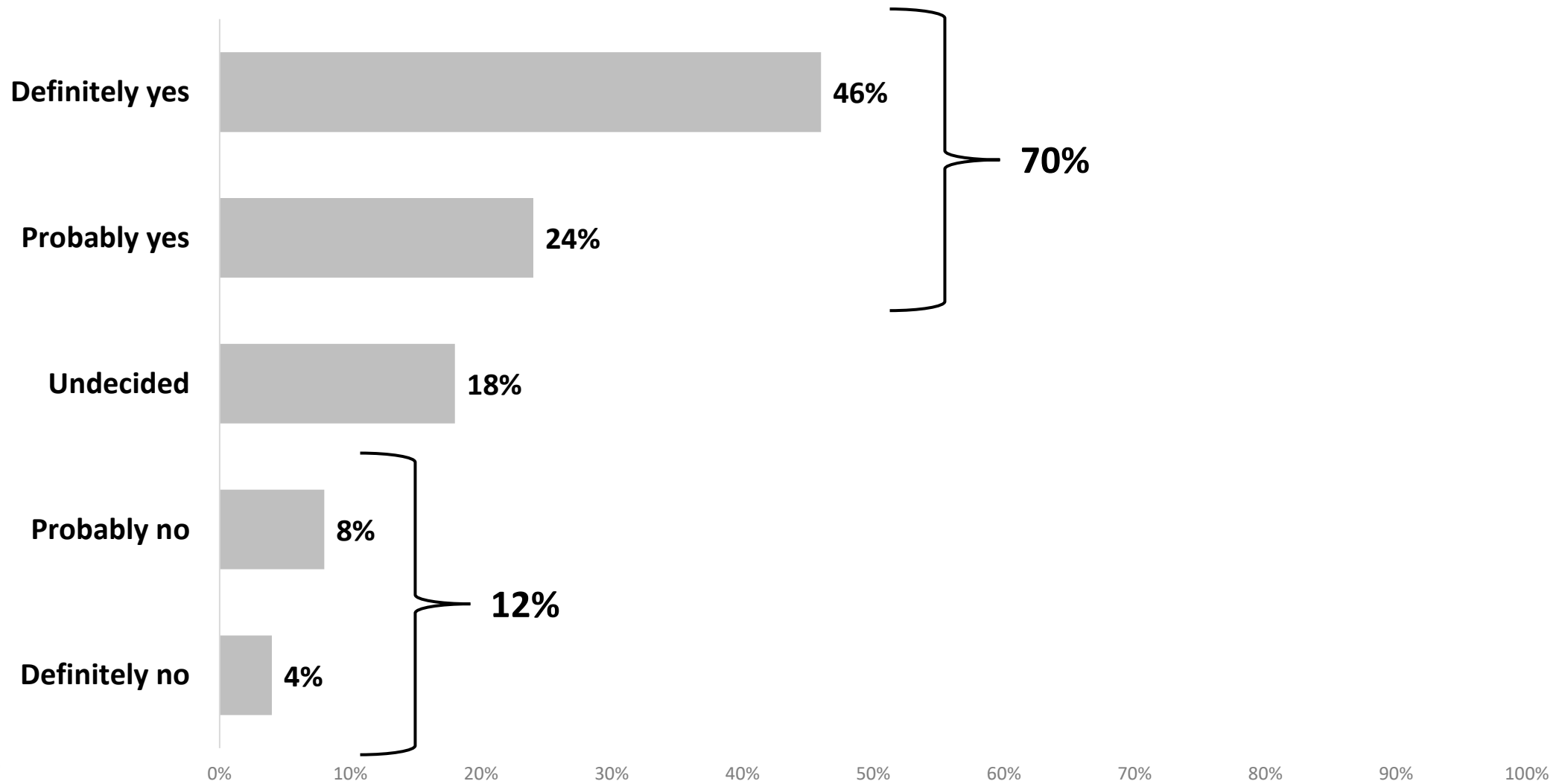
Notes

- Representing an estimated annual tax increase of \$48* per \$100,000 of property value every year.
- * The estimated mill rates are calculated based on local property values, state funding, and student enrollment.

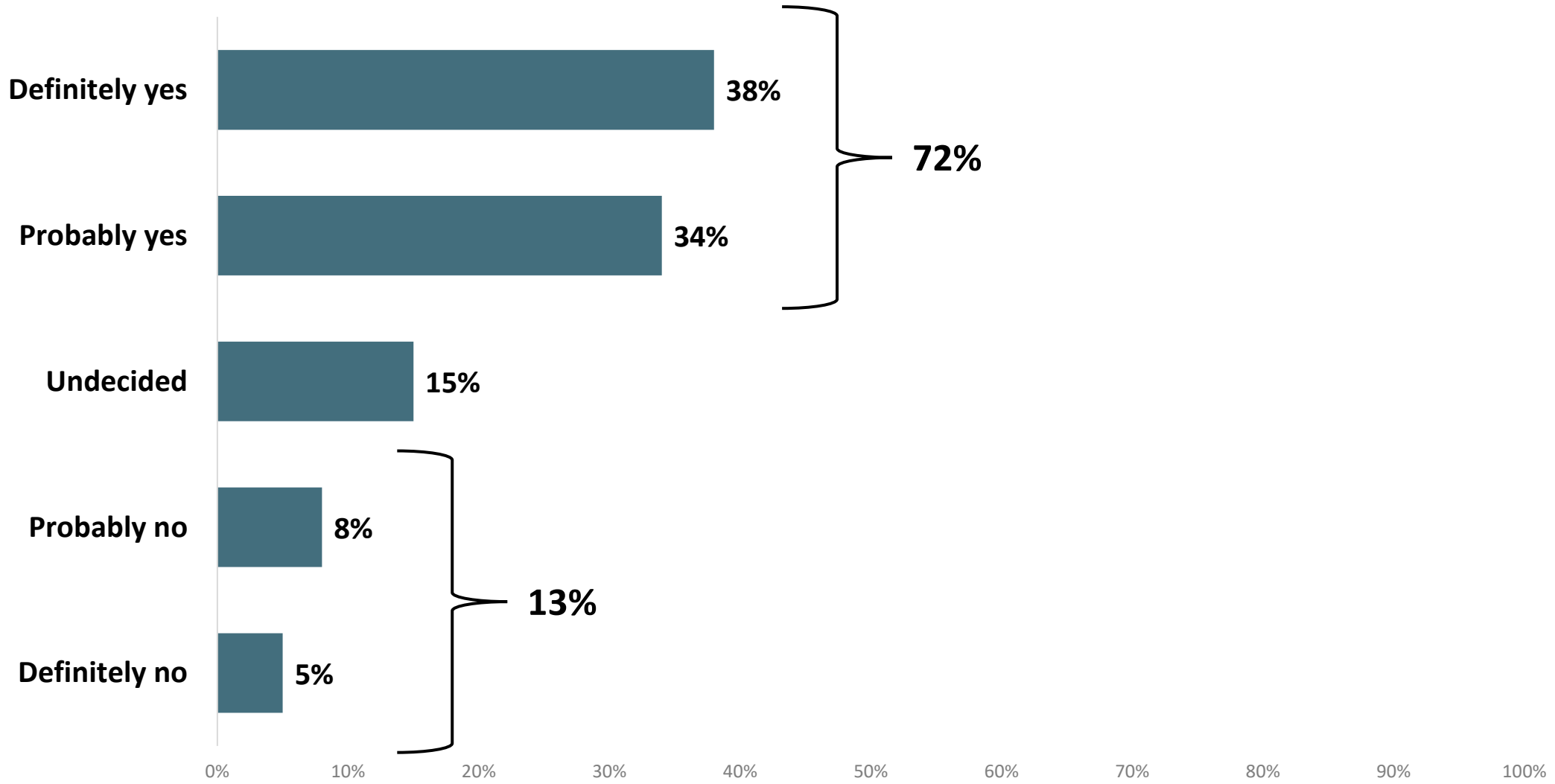
Scale

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

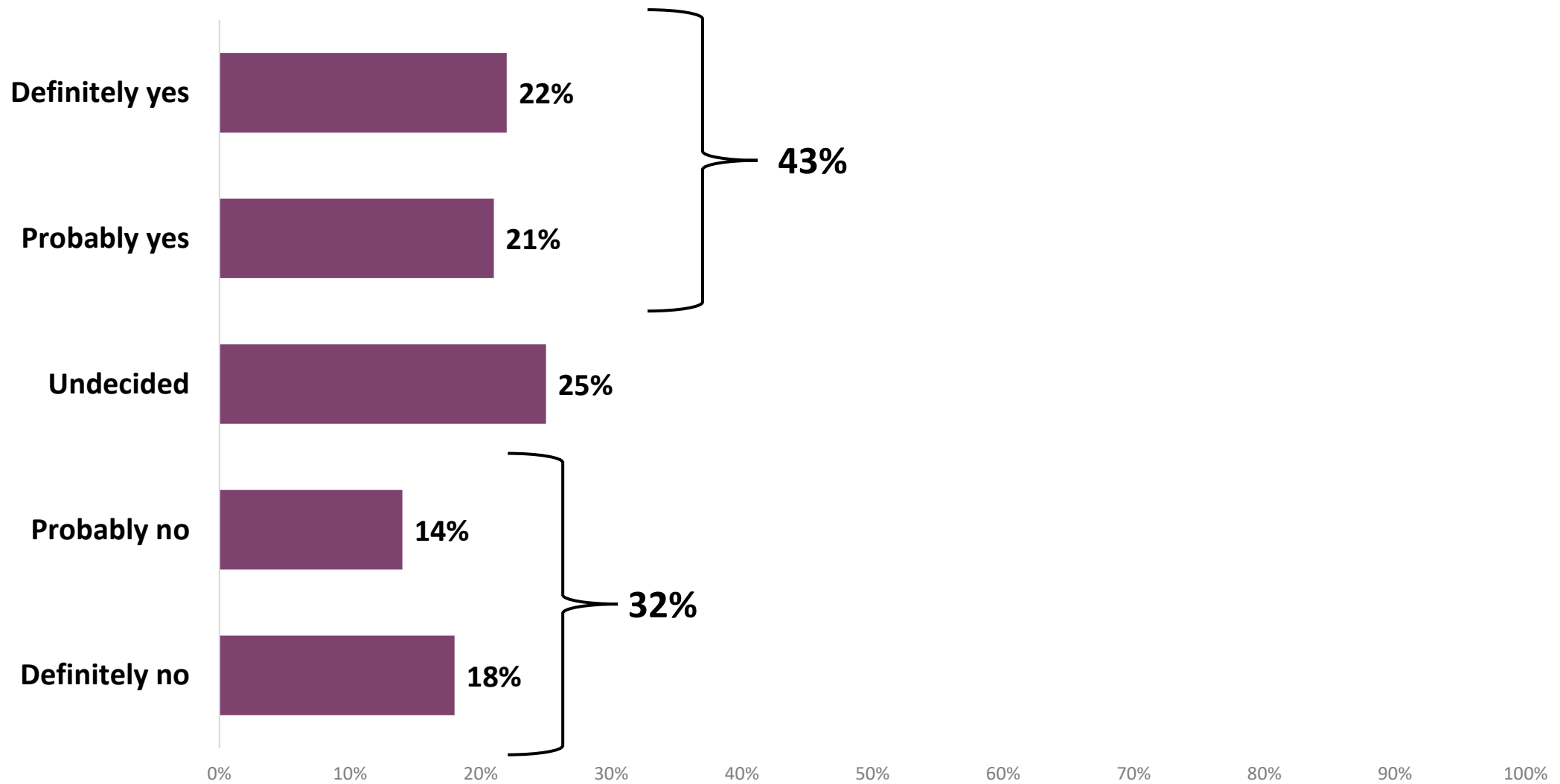
Student Support Services: Staff Residents



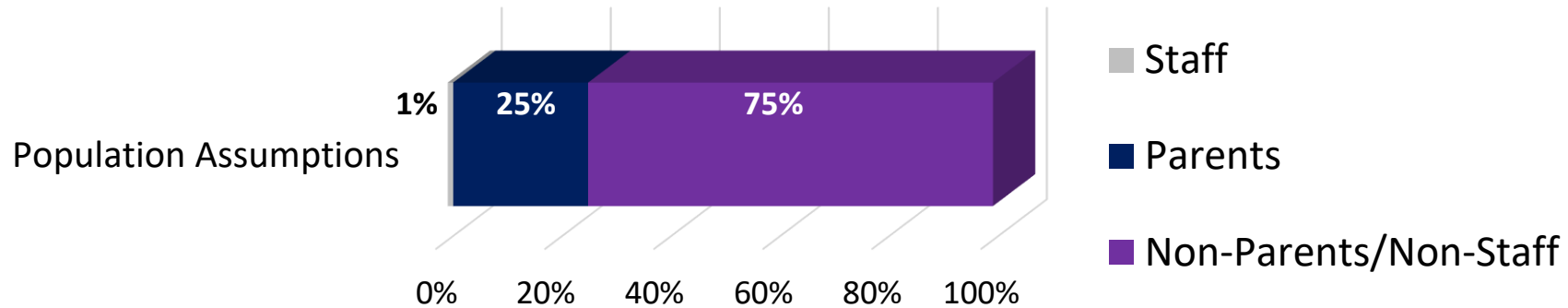
Student Support Services: Parent/Caregiver Residents



Student Support Services: Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents



Base Plan: Weighted Support



Weighted support for student support services expansion:
 $0.75 (43\%) + 0.25 (72\%) = \underline{\underline{50.2\%}}$

Facility Planning



Early Learning Center (ELC)

Grades: Kindergarten

Built: 1967 with renovations in 1995, 2001, 2014, and 2019

Some of the most pressing issues in the District are at the ELC and are summarized below:

- Most of the **roof** needs to be replaced.
- Major **building systems** (ventilation, heating, and plumbing) are original to the building, have exceeded their service life, and result in ongoing costly repairs.
- **Classrooms** are too small, lack storage, and do not have air conditioning.
- The building lacks space for confidential **school-family meetings**.
- Lunch is served in the **gym**, creating scheduling challenges and requiring daily setup and takedown of tables.
- Updates are needed to the **building's exterior** (including siding, lighting, and soffits).
- The **fire panel** needs to be replaced.
- **Cabinetry/countertops** are original to the building and are worn.
- **Floors** need to be replaced.
- Surfaces such as **parking lots, playgrounds, and sidewalks** are cracked and need to be repaired/resurfaced.
- Areas of the building do not comply with **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)** regulations.

Facility Planning (cont'd)



We are at a crossroads. Some community members believe we should continue to invest in the ELC. Others believe it makes more sense to build a new school. With that in mind, we developed two options for your feedback.

Option 1 – Close the Early Learning Center and add onto or near the Primary Center

This option would build classrooms onto or near the Primary Center and allow for better utilization of staff. The current ELC would be sold or repurposed. *Estimated cost: \$19-23 million*

Option 2 – Renovate and expand the current Early Learning Center

This option would keep the current building in use. It would be renovated and expanded to address the above needs. *Estimated cost: \$9-13 million*

Facility Planning (cont'd)



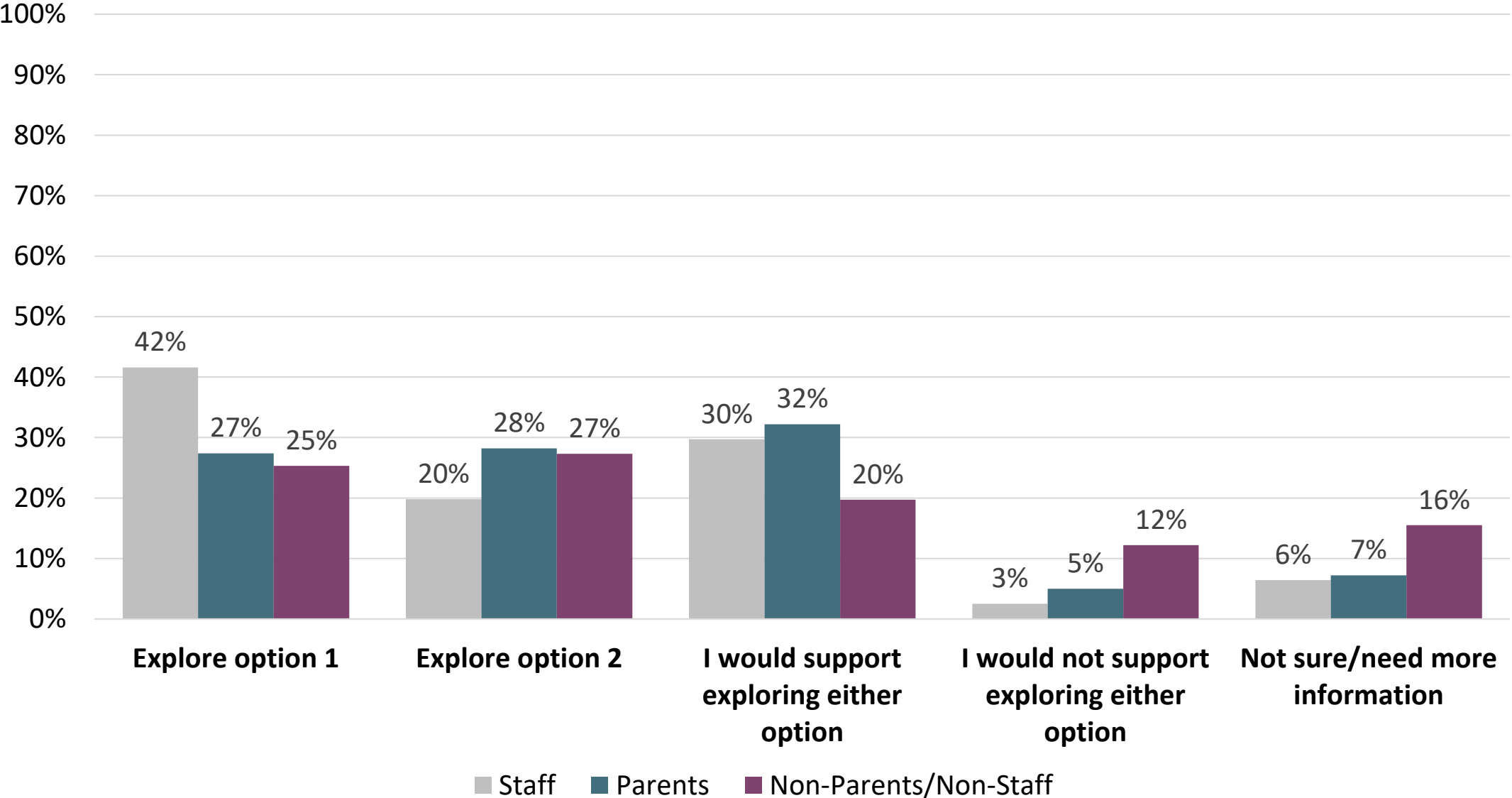
Question

- What advice would you give to the District?

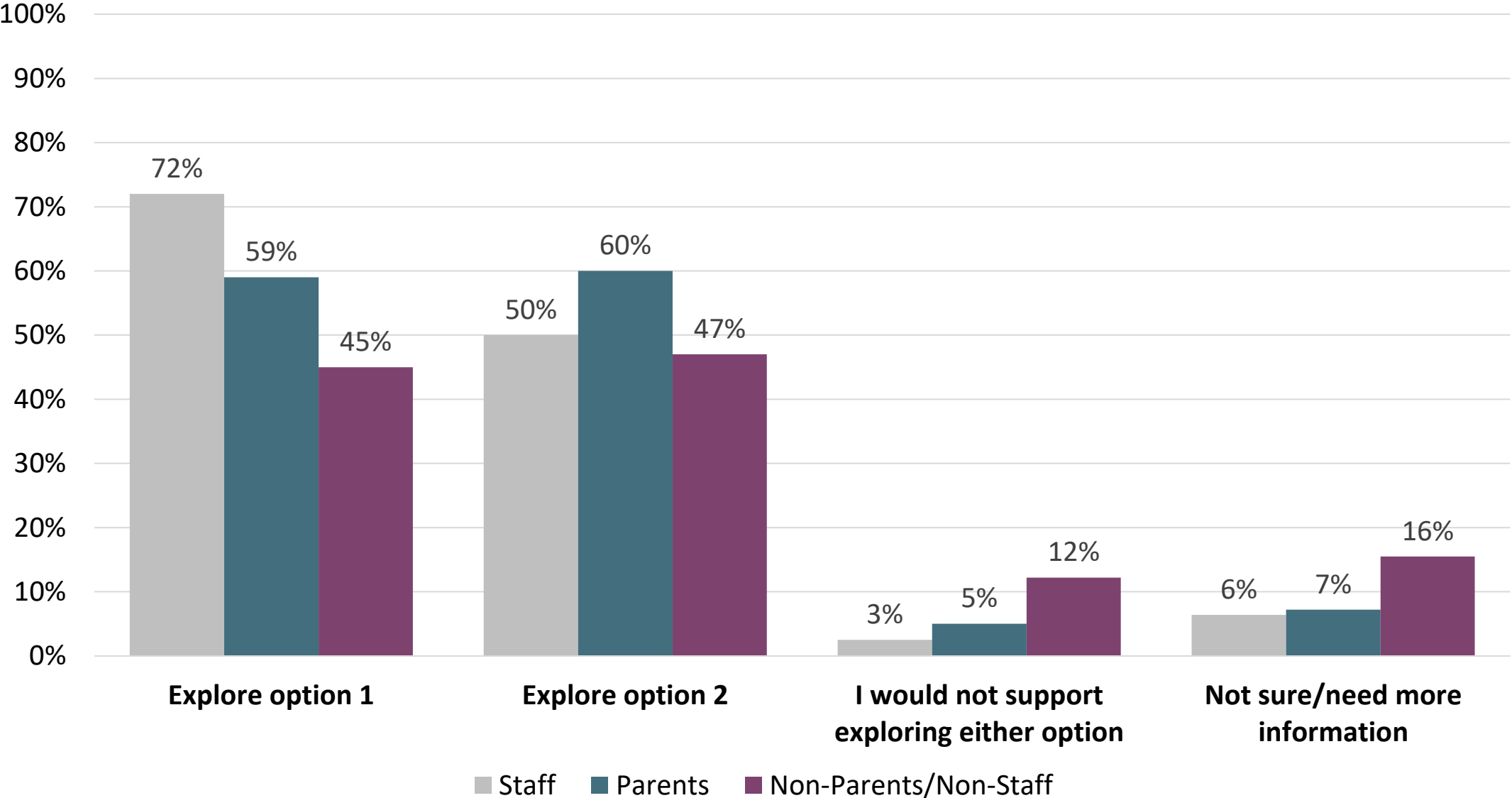
Scale

- Explore option 1
- Explore option 2
- I would support exploring either option
- I would not support exploring either option
- Not sure/need more information

ELC Advice (All Respondents)



ELC Advice (All Respondents)



Facility Planning



In addition to the Early Learning Center, we have identified other facility challenges.

Question

- What priority would you place on the following [*building/school*] projects?

Scale

Please use this scale when responding to the following items.

High: Address immediately

Medium: Important, but address in a future project

Low: Not a priority, do not address in the near future



The averages on the following slide are calculated based on the following weight:

High = 3

Medium = 2

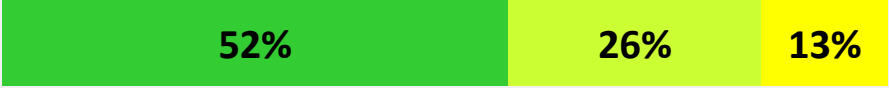

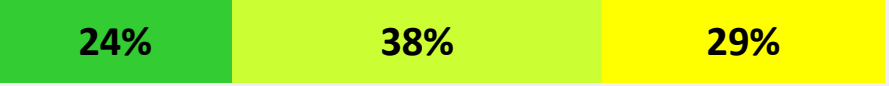
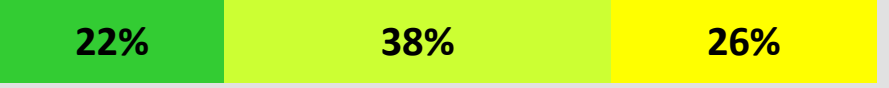
Low = 1

Respondents that marked *Not sure* were not included in the calculation.

Therefore, if everyone one chose *High*, the Priority Score = 3.0. If everyone chose *Low*, the Priority Score = 1.0.

Primary Center



Relocating the District's technology/data center out of the basement		Priority Score = 2.43
Repairing floors, as needed		Priority Score = 2.01
Replacing playground equipment and repairing surrounding surfaces		Priority Score = 1.95
Repairing the building's exterior, including brickwork/masonry and foundation		Priority Score = 1.95

■ High ■ Medium ■ Low

Intermediate Center



Updating major building systems and software controls	<p>49% 32% 11%</p>	Priority Score = 2.41
Creating additional space for student services offices and confidential family-school meetings	<p>24% 38% 30%</p>	Priority Score = 1.94
Replacing carpeting/floors original to the building	<p>17% 46% 28%</p>	Priority Score = 1.88
Replacing playground equipment and repairing surrounding surfaces	<p>18% 35% 37%</p>	Priority Score = 1.79
Reducing noise levels and improving acoustics in the gym and cafeteria	<p>11% 28% 51%</p>	Priority Score = 1.56

■ High
 ■ Medium
 ■ Low

Middle School

■ High ■ Medium ■ Low



<p>Adding classrooms to address current capacity challenges and provide space for projected growth</p>	<p>47% 32% 12%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.38</i></p>
<p>Replacing windows and doors/frames</p>	<p>45% 31% 17%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.30</i></p>
<p>Expanding space for increased participating in the music program</p>	<p>40% 35% 17%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.25</i></p>
<p>Renovating/expanding the CTE area</p>	<p>37% 41% 14%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.25</i></p>
<p>Updating restrooms</p>	<p>32% 37% 23%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.10</i></p>
<p>Expanding the cafeteria</p>	<p>26% 41% 25%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 2.00</i></p>
<p>Creating additional space for student services offices and confidential family-school meetings</p>	<p>21% 37% 34%</p>	<p><i>Priority Score = 1.87</i></p>

High School



Exploring a partnership with the Village to build an indoor pool for school/community use		Priority Score = 2.17
Adding gym/fieldhouse space		Priority Score = 2.02
Updating the track and field area		Priority Score = 1.83
Expanding the theater		Priority Score = 1.78
Renovating the stage and backstage theater areas		Priority Score = 1.76
Updating the outdoor athletic areas for school/community use		Priority Score = 1.73

■ High
 ■ Medium
 ■ Low

Top 10 Priorities



Building	Item	Priority Score
PC	Relocating the District's technology/data center out of the basement	2.43
IC	Updating major building systems and software controls	2.41
MS	Adding classrooms to address current capacity challenges and provide space for projected growth	2.38
MS	Replacing windows and doors/frames	2.30
MS	Expanding space for increased participating in the music program	2.25
MS	Renovating/expanding the CTE area	2.25
HS	Exploring a partnership with the Village to build an indoor pool for school/community use	2.17
MS	Updating restrooms	2.10
HS	Adding gym/fieldhouse space	2.02
PC	Repairing floors, as needed	2.01

Bottom 10 Priorities



Building	Item	Priority Score
IC	Reducing noise levels and improving acoustics in the gym and cafeteria	1.56
HS	Updating the outdoor athletic areas for school/community use	1.73
HS	Renovating the stage and backstage theater areas	1.76
HS	Expanding the theater	1.78
IC	Replacing playground equipment and repairing surrounding surfaces	1.79
HS	Updating the track and field area	1.83
MS	Creating additional space for student services offices and confidential family-school meetings	1.87
IC	Replacing carpeting/floors original to the building	1.88
IC	Creating additional space for student services offices and confidential family-school meetings	1.94
PC	Replacing playground equipment and repairing surrounding surfaces	1.95

What did we learn? (Operations)

- The base plan to fund the operational needs of the District was supported by a majority of the three subgroups.
- Respondents expressed less support to expand the base plan, including additional funding for student support services.



What did we learn? (Facilities)



- Respondents are very closely split between two ELC options. Relatively few respondents do not support either option.
- Based on the priority scores, there is justification to form a facilities steering committee to study:
 - What projects should be included in a capital plan?
 - What will these projects cost?
 - When should a potential capital referendum take place?





Questions or Comments?





Thank you!

