



# Joliet School District 86 Feasibility Survey

Key findings from a survey of 300 registered voters, conducted January 3-8, 2023.

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Project #230010



# Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a survey conducted in Joliet School District 86, Illinois. The survey was completed January 3-8, 2023 among 300 registered voters, and has a margin of error of  $\pm 5.66\%$ .

Jim Hobart was the principal researcher on this project. Torie Bolger was the project director, and Katie Connolly provided analytical support.



# The Ballot Measure

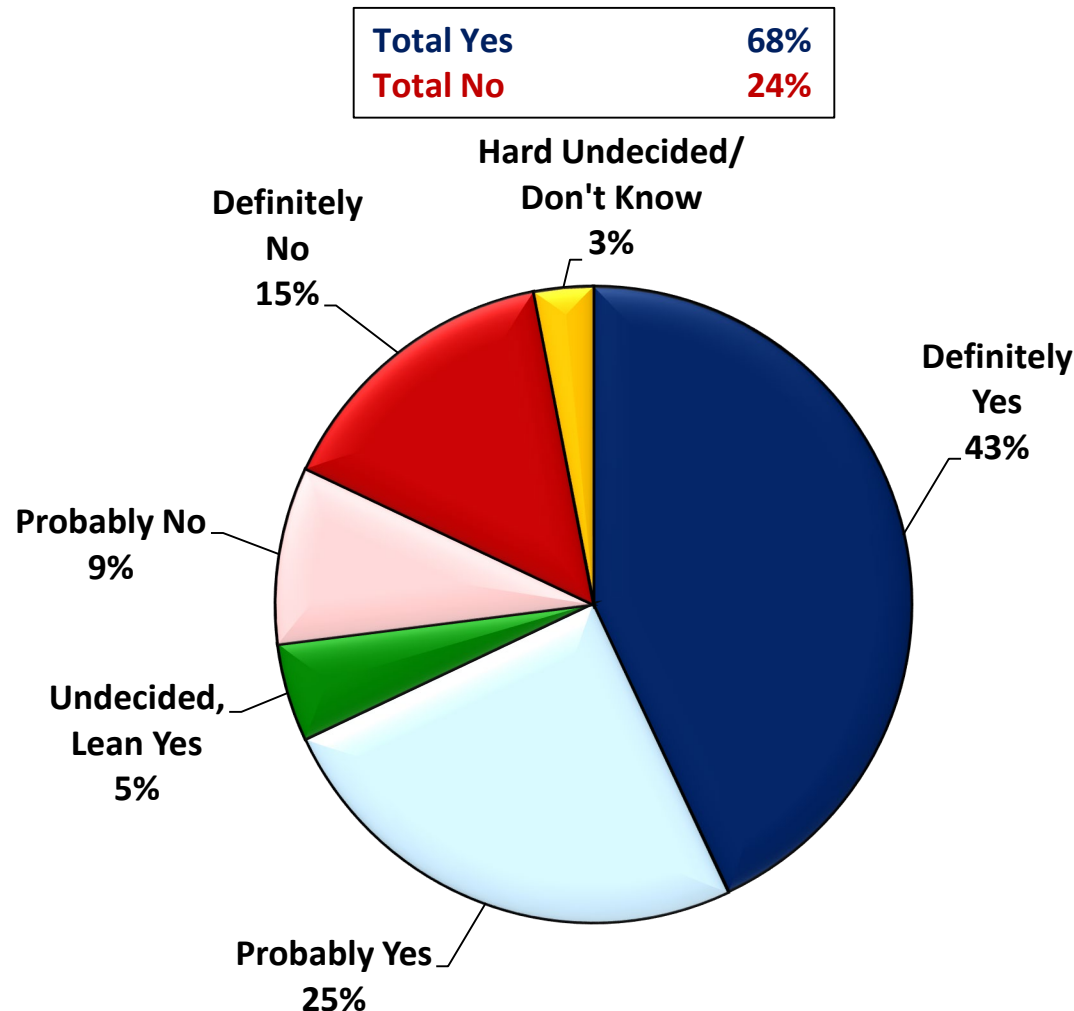
# The Ballot Measure

***“Shall the Board of School Inspectors of Joliet School District Number 86, Will County, Illinois, alter, repair and equip existing school buildings, including but not limited to improving safety and security, replacing roofs, plumbing, electrical and HVAC systems, renovating science labs, classrooms and other instructional spaces, installing certain Americans with Disabilities Act compliance measures and updating technology infrastructure; build and equip two school buildings to replace the Hufford Junior High School and Gompers Junior High School Buildings; build and equip an addition to the Jefferson Elementary School Building; improve sites; and issue bonds of said School District to the amount of ninety-nine million five hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?”***



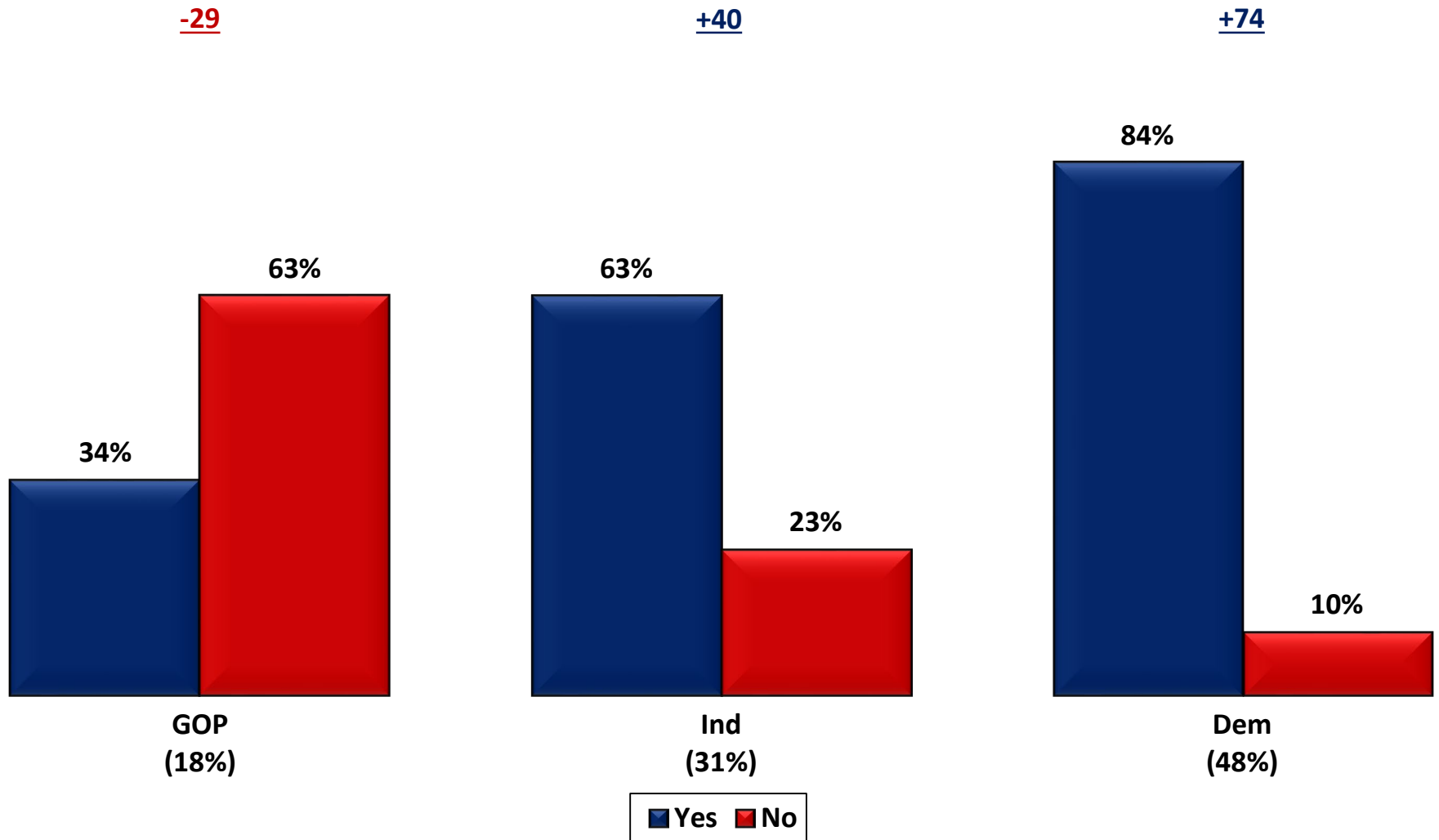
# Nearly 70% of Joliet voters are in favor of the ballot measure. Intensity of support is also very high.

*"I am going to read you a ballot measure that voters in your area may be asked to consider in the future. When I'm finished, tell me how you would vote if the election were being held today."*



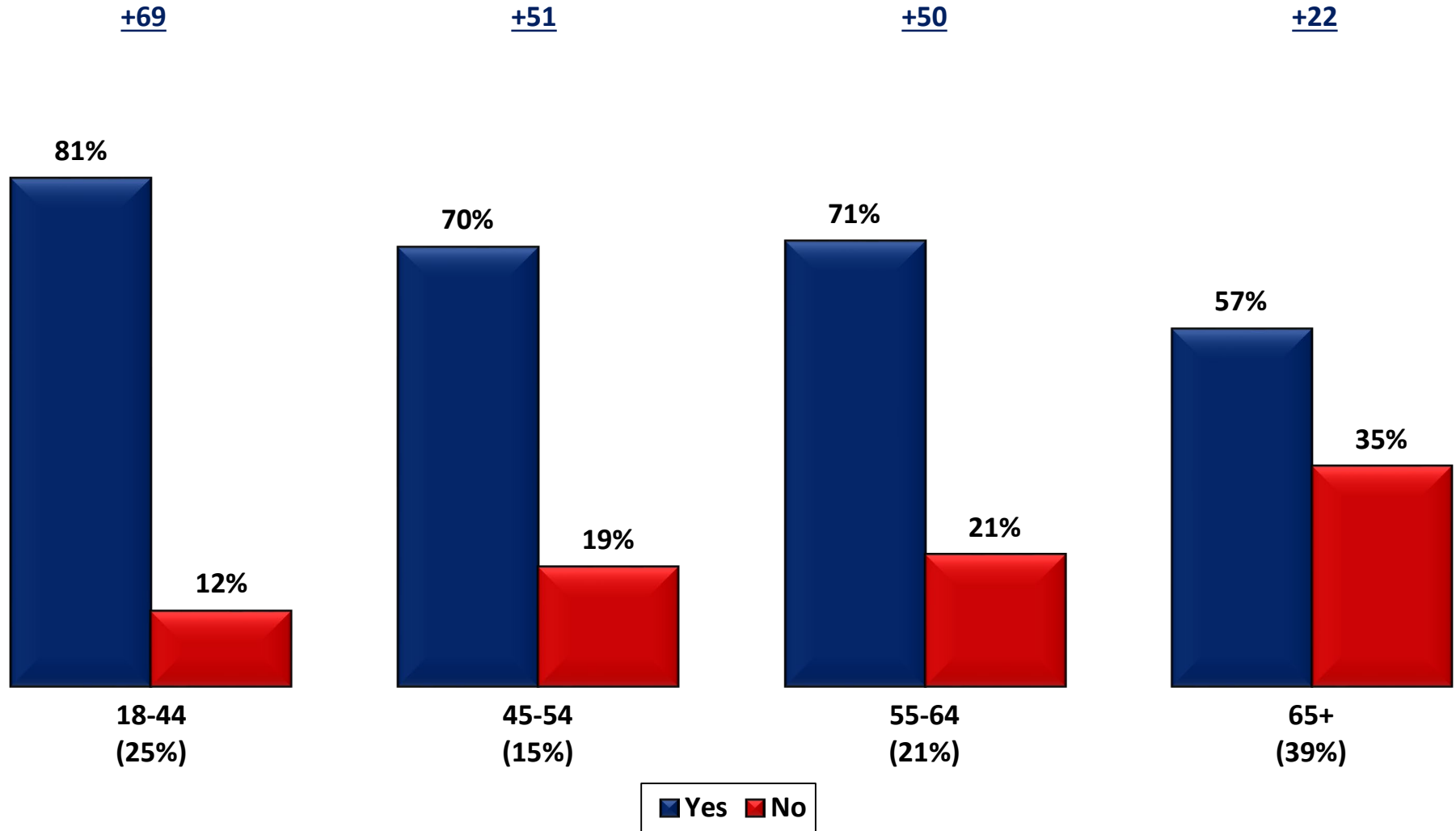
The overall ballot support is largely driven by Democrats, but more than 60% of Independents favor it, too.

*Ballot Measure by Party*



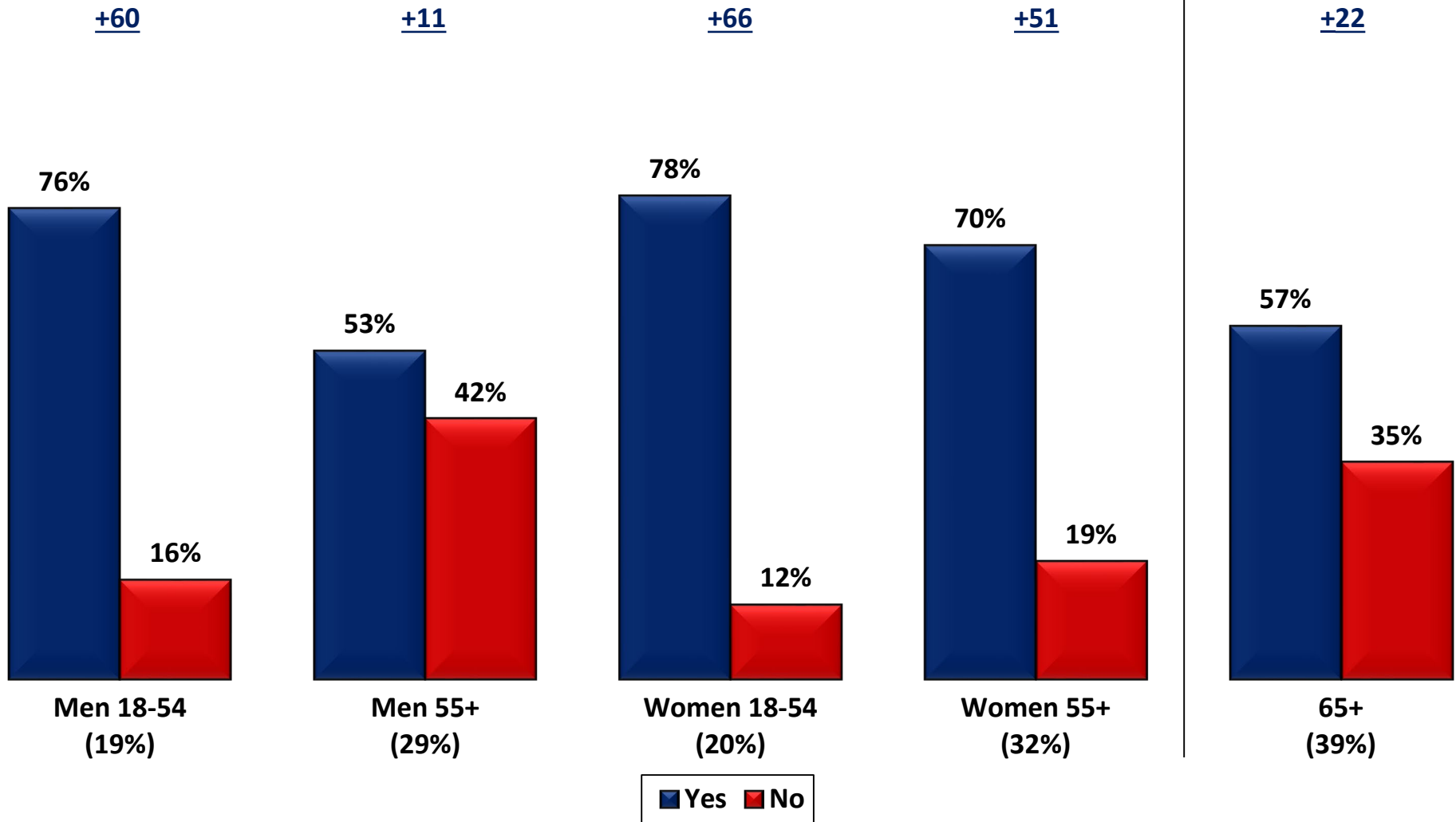
# Younger voters are most likely to back the measure.

*Ballot Measure by Age*



# There is a gender gap among older voters, as older women are more likely to support the plan than older men.

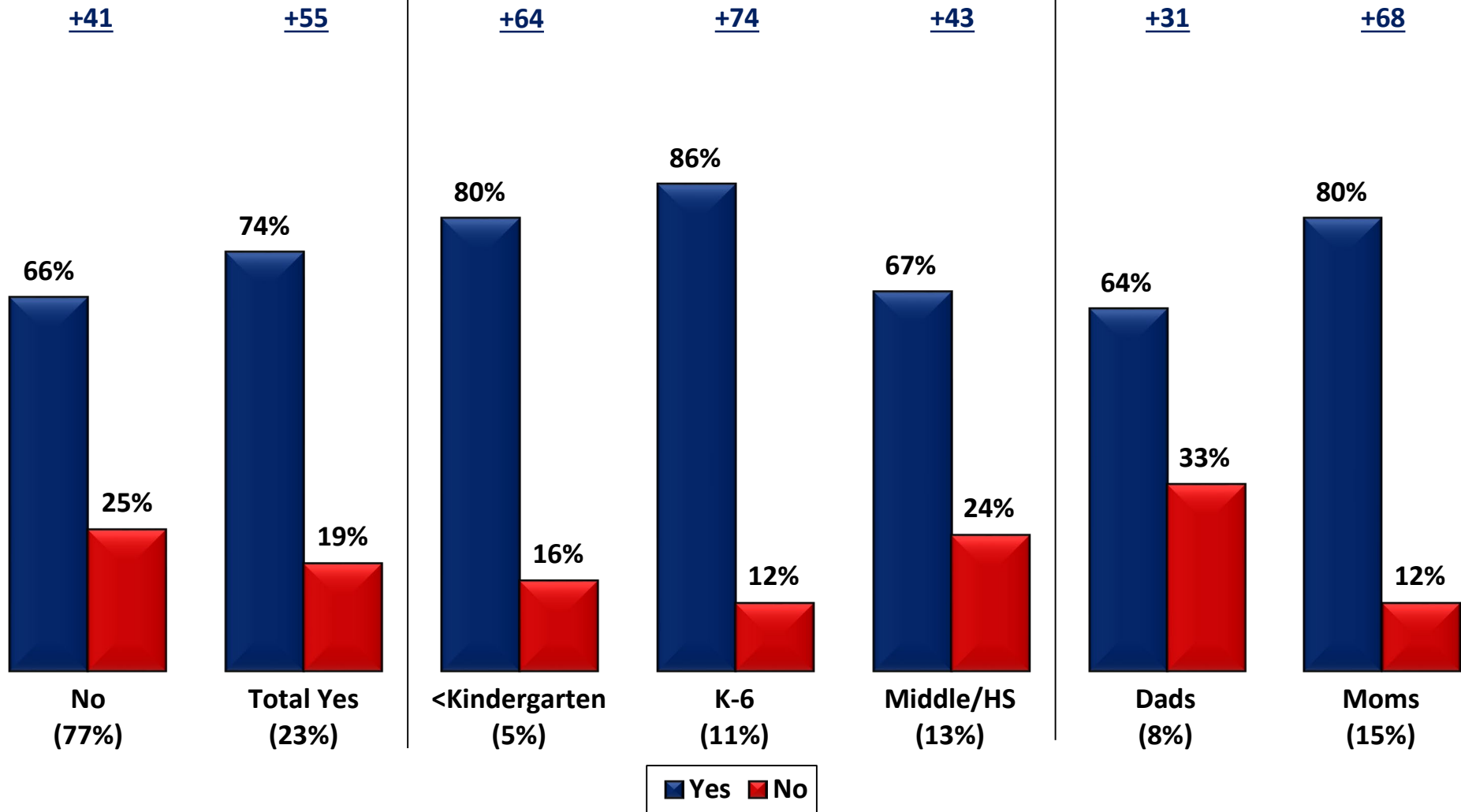
*Ballot Measure by Gender/Age + Seniors*





# Even those without children and those with older children back the measure.

*Ballot Measure by Children In HH + Parents*



# Voters say they support the proposal because it benefits the kids, increases safety, and the updates are needed.

*“What are the one or two main reasons why you would vote yes on this proposal?”*

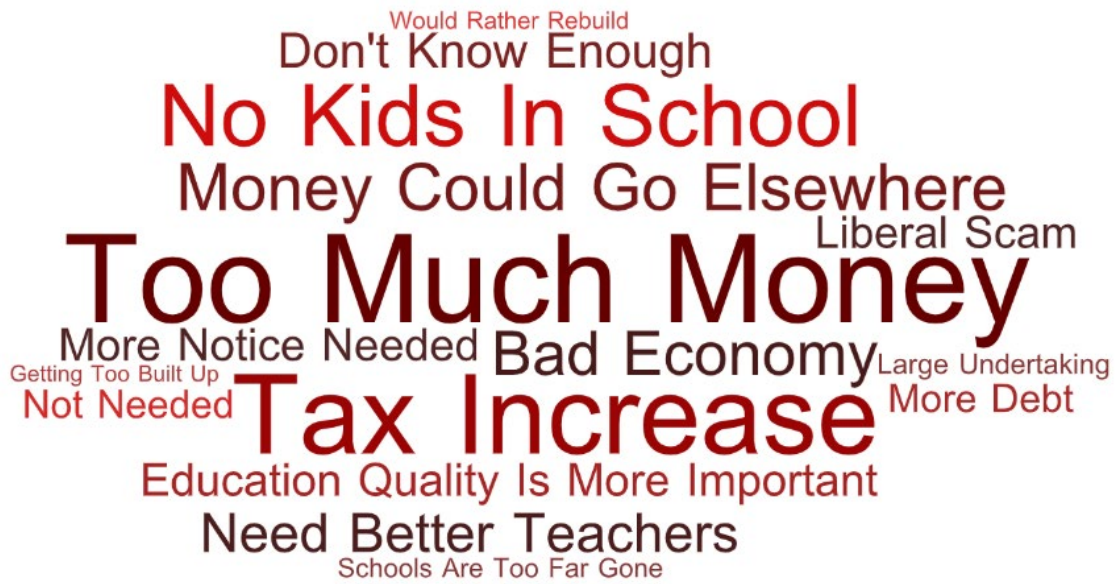


**(Among 68% Yes)**

Good For The Kids	19%	ADA	10%	Kids/Grandkids Go There	6%	Security	4%
Safety	16%	Updated Technology	8%	Building Maintenance	6%	Cleanliness	4%
Schools Are Outdated	16%	Better Learning Environment	7%	Current/Former Teacher	4%	Air Conditioning	3%
Needed	12%	Extra Space	6%	Good For Community	4%	Improves School District	3%
Good Improvements	11%	Education Is Important	6%	Good Use Of Funding	4%		

Those against the proposal say it costs too much money, will increases taxes, and that the funding should go elsewhere.

*“What are the one or two main reasons why you would vote no on this proposal?”*



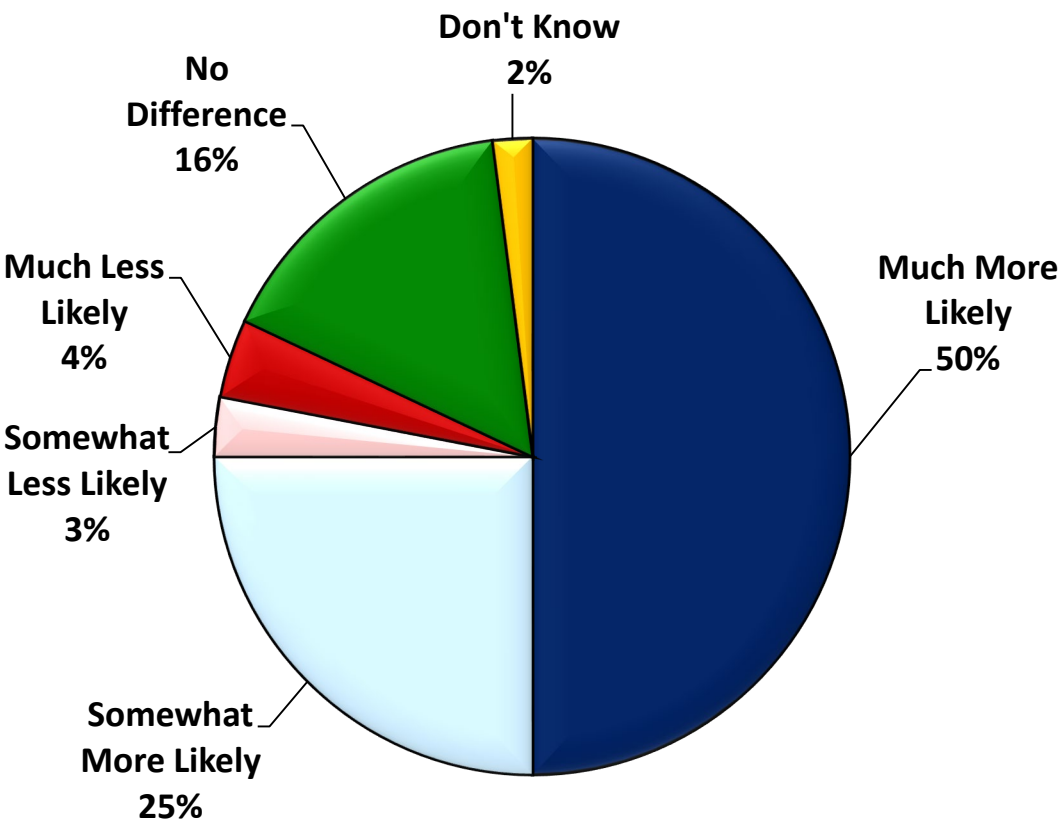
*(Among 24% No)*

Too Much Money	24%	Education Quality Is More Important	11%	More Notice Needed	5%	Not Needed	3%
Tax Increase	24%	Need Better Teachers	8%	Schools Are Too Far Gone	5%	Large Undertaking	3%
Money Could Go Elsewhere	11%	Don't Know Enough	8%	Liberal Scam	5%	More Debt	3%
No Kids In School	11%	Bad Economy	5%	Would Rather Rebuild	5%	Getting Too Built Up	3%

# Voters are very receptive to the measure after learning the improvements could be funded without increasing the current tax rate.

*“Would you be more likely or less likely to vote yes, in favor of this measure if you learned that, because District 86 has debt that is expiring, the proposed ninety-nine point five million dollars for school building and site improvements could be funded without increasing the current tax rate.”*

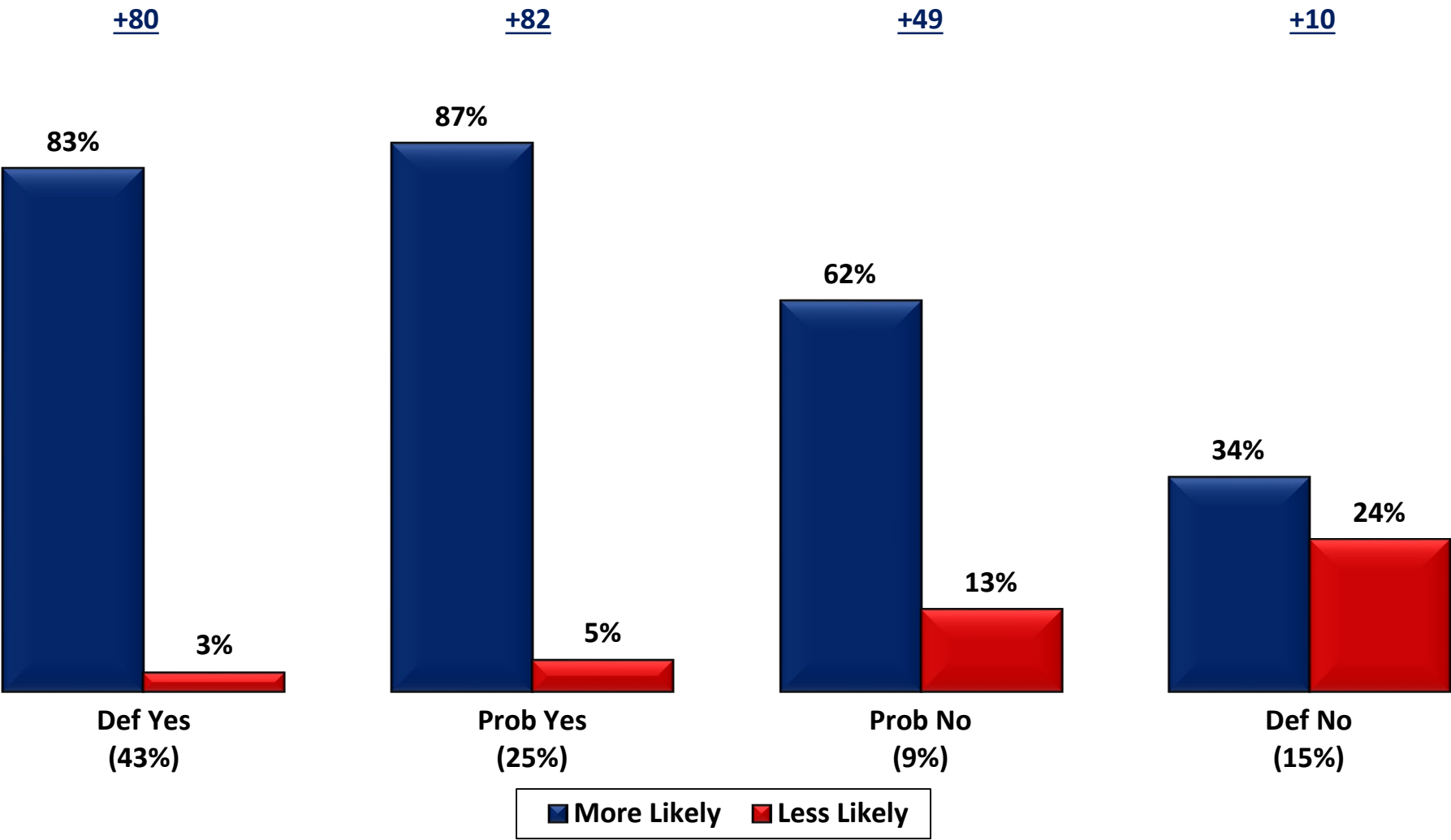
Total More Likely	74%*
Total Less Likely	8%*



\*Denotes Rounding.

# Learning the current tax rate would not increase is effective for locking in the “prob yes” voters and flipping the “prob no” ones.

*Learning Improvements Could Be Funded Without Increasing Taxes by Initial Referendum*

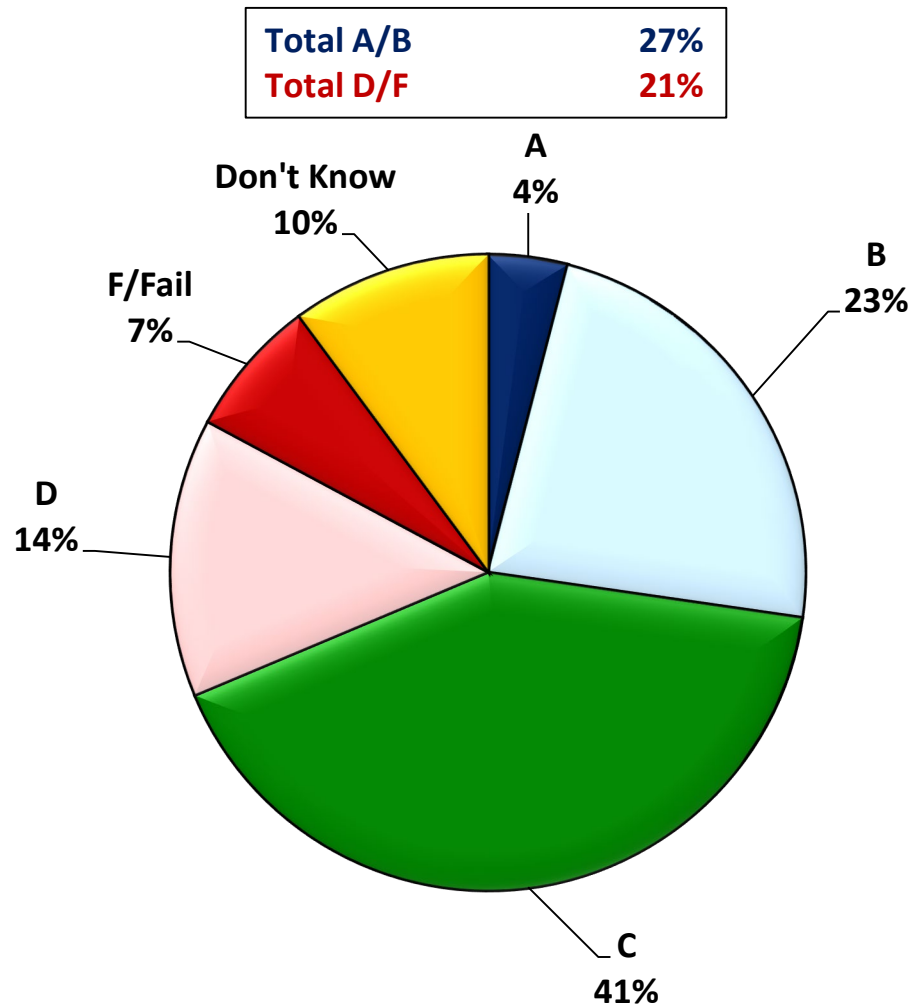




# The School District

# Most voters polled give District 86 schools a C grade. Only 27% of voters would give them an A or B.

*"Schools often use the letters A, B, C, D or F for Fail to grade students. Suppose you had the opportunity to grade the District 86 schools, what grade would you give them - A, B, C, D or F for fail?"*





# Younger voters and those with younger children are most likely give the school average or slightly above average ratings.

## Grading District 86 School

### Top Groups – B (23%)

<Kindergarten Children In HH	34%
Dem	32%
Age 18-44	29%
Men 18-54	29%

### Top Groups – C (41%)

Women 18-54	50%
K-6 Children In HH	47%
Moms	46%

**A plurality of voters think the District 86 schools are about the same as schools in other parts of the state, but more than a third of voters think they are not as good.**

*“Would you say that the schools in District 86 are better than, about the same, or not as good as schools in other parts of the state?”*

**9%**

***Better***

**42%**

***About The Same***

**36%**

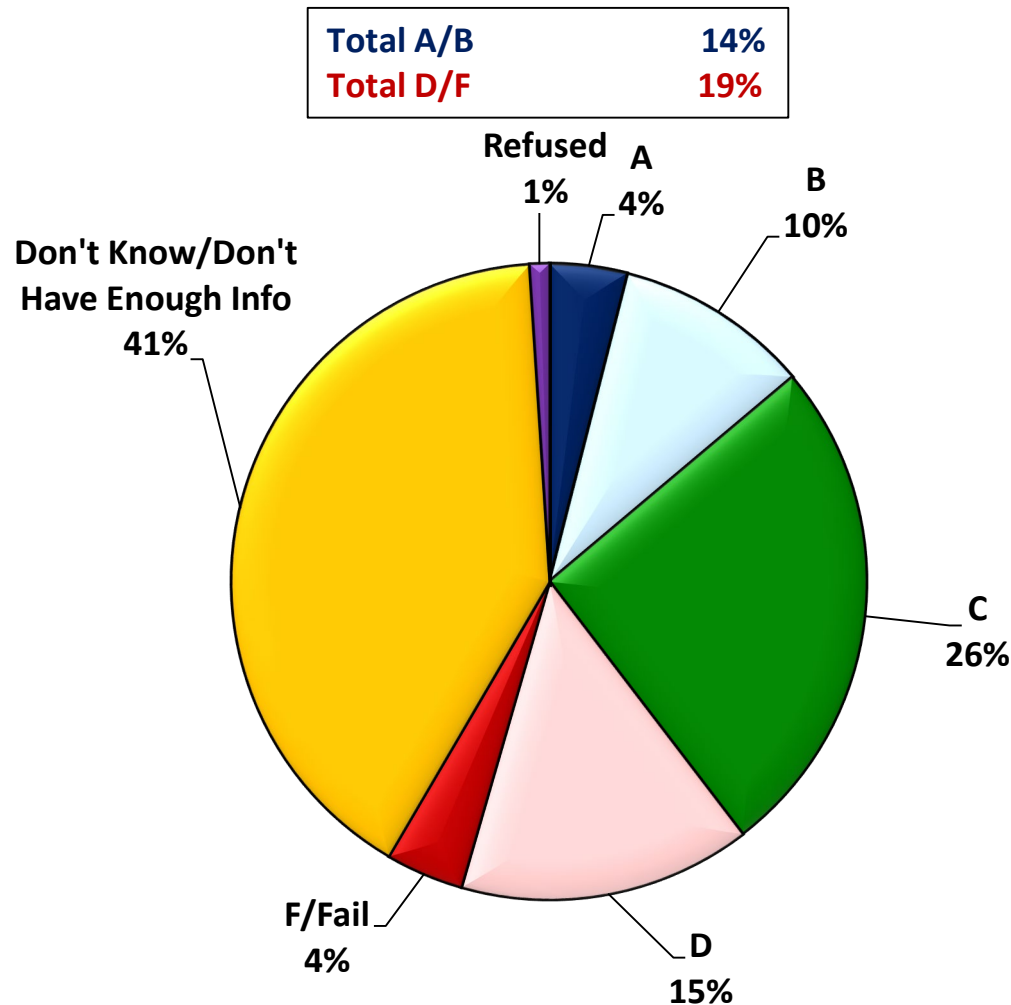
***Not As Good***

**13%**

***Don't Know/Refused***

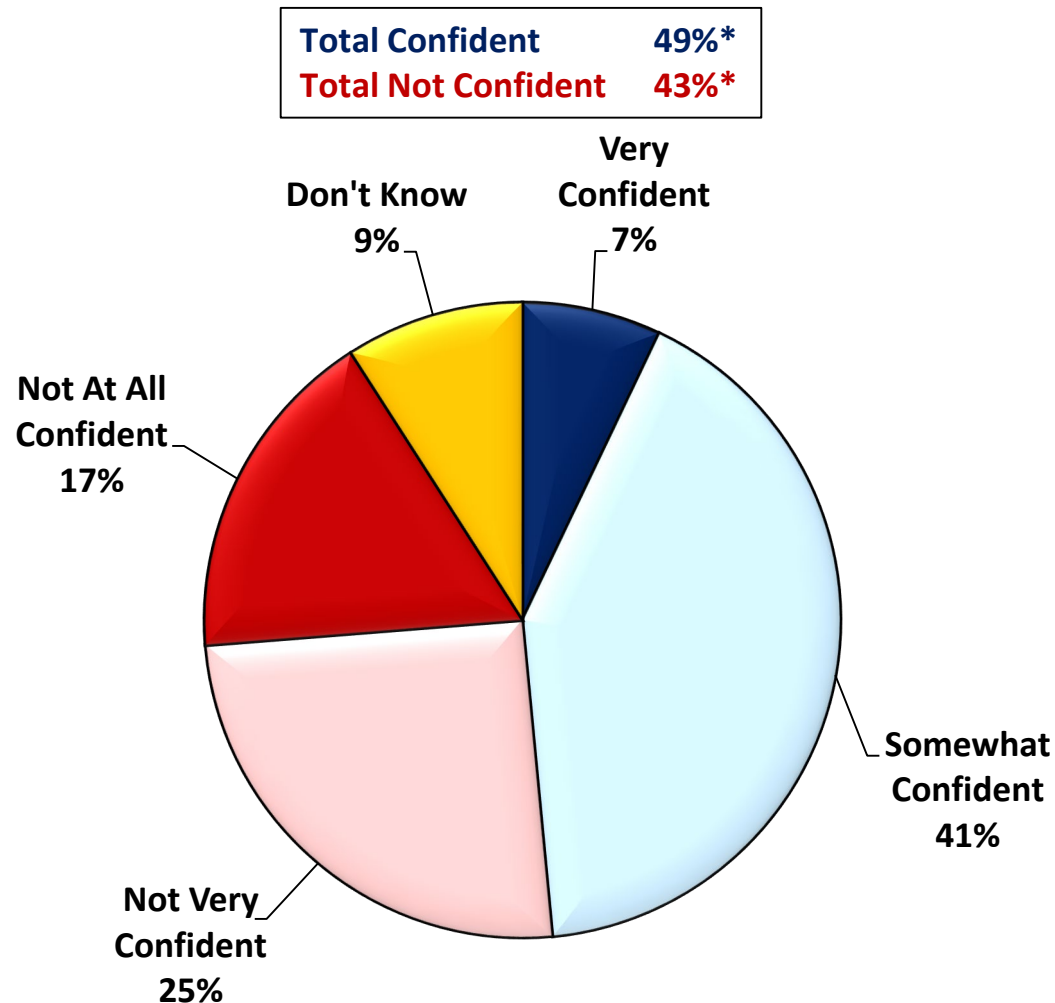
# Most voters don't know enough about the school building conditions to grade them.

*"What if you were to grade the condition of District 86 buildings and facilities, what grade would you give those schools - A, B, C, D or F for fail, or do you not have enough information to evaluate?"*



# Joliet voters are split on whether they are confident or not that District 86 can manage taxpayer money wisely.

*"How confident would you say you are that District 86 is at managing taxpayer money wisely? Would you say you are..."*



\*Denotes Rounding.

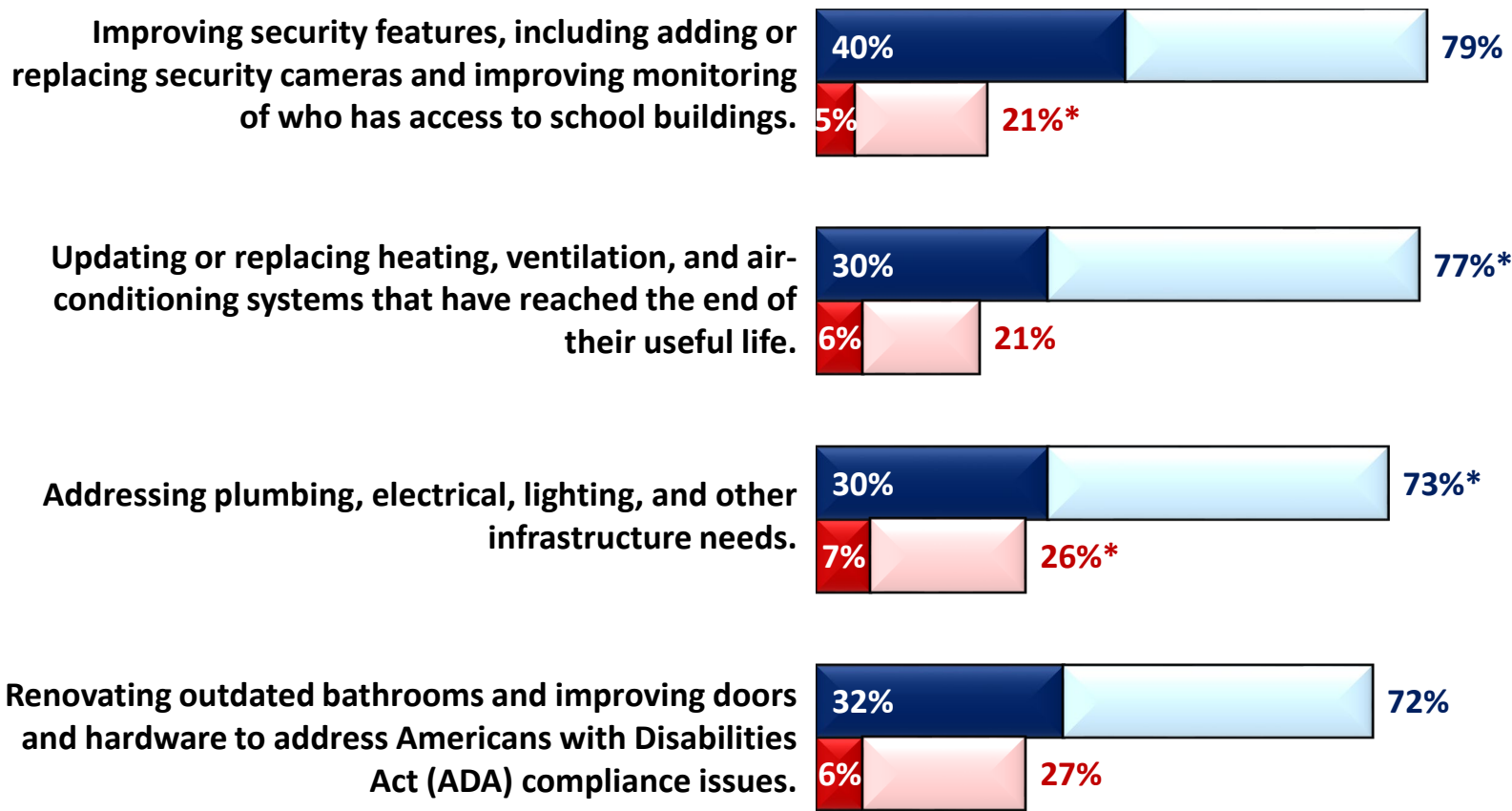


# Funding Options

# Increasing security, updating HVAC systems, and addressing infrastructure needs are the top funding priorities for voters.

*"I am going to read you some specific items which could be funded by District 86 if they had additional funding from a bond referendum. Keeping in mind that it is difficult for everything to be equally important, please tell me how important each one of these is to you personally. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not very important to ensure funding is dedicated to that purpose?"*

**Ranked by % Extremely/Very Important**



■ Extremely Important   ■ Extremely/Very Important   ■ Not Very Important   ■ Not Very/Somewhat Important

*\*Denotes Rounding.*

# Exterior building improvements and technology infrastructure improvements are also important.

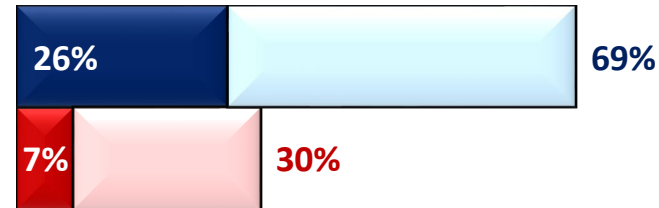
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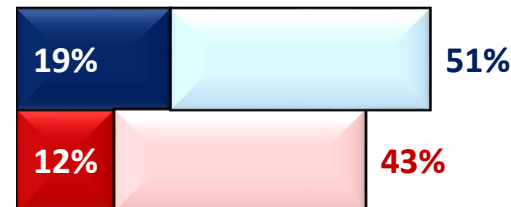
*Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not very important to ensure funding is dedicated to that purpose?"*

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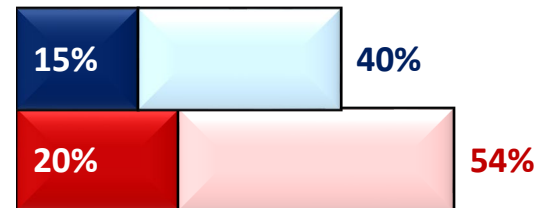
**Making exterior building improvements, including repairing or replacing aging roofs and windows.**



**Making critical technology infrastructure improvements at Jefferson Elementary School, including relocating and upgrading networking equipment.**



**Adding four new classrooms and a new multipurpose/ gymnasium space at Jefferson Elementary School.**



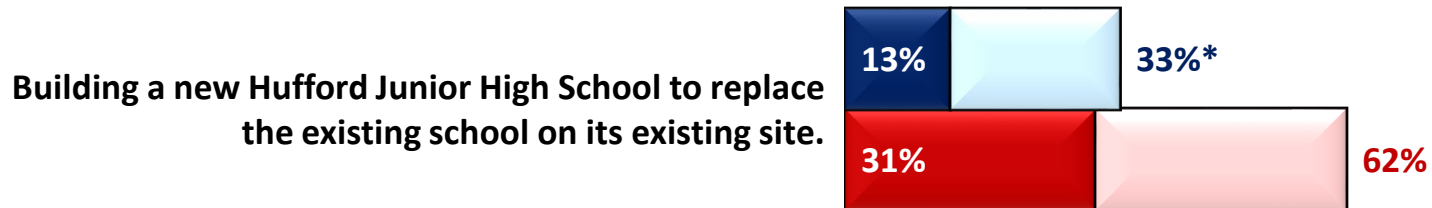
■ Extremely Important   ■ Extremely/Very Important   ■ Not Very Important   ■ Not Very/Somewhat Important



# Repairing parking lots/other outdoor amenities and building new schools are less significant.

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# Message Testing

# The top messages focus on student safety and ADA improvements.

*"I am going to read you some statements that people have made IN FAVOR OF increasing funding for District 86 in order to fund facility improvements. After I read each one, please tell me whether the statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to increase funding."*

**Ranked by % Very Convincing**

Students should be as safe as possible while at school. It makes sense to add security cameras, strengthen access controls, and replace aging fire alarms and public address systems.^



The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance and adding security cameras, strengthening access controls and replacing aging fire alarms is the best way to keep students and staff safe.^^



Making the needed ADA improvements will mean that all of our schools are fully accessible for students, parents, teachers, and visitors who are physically disabled.^



Addressing Americans with Disabilities Act code issues will ensure that all of our schools are fully accessible for those with physical disabilities.^^



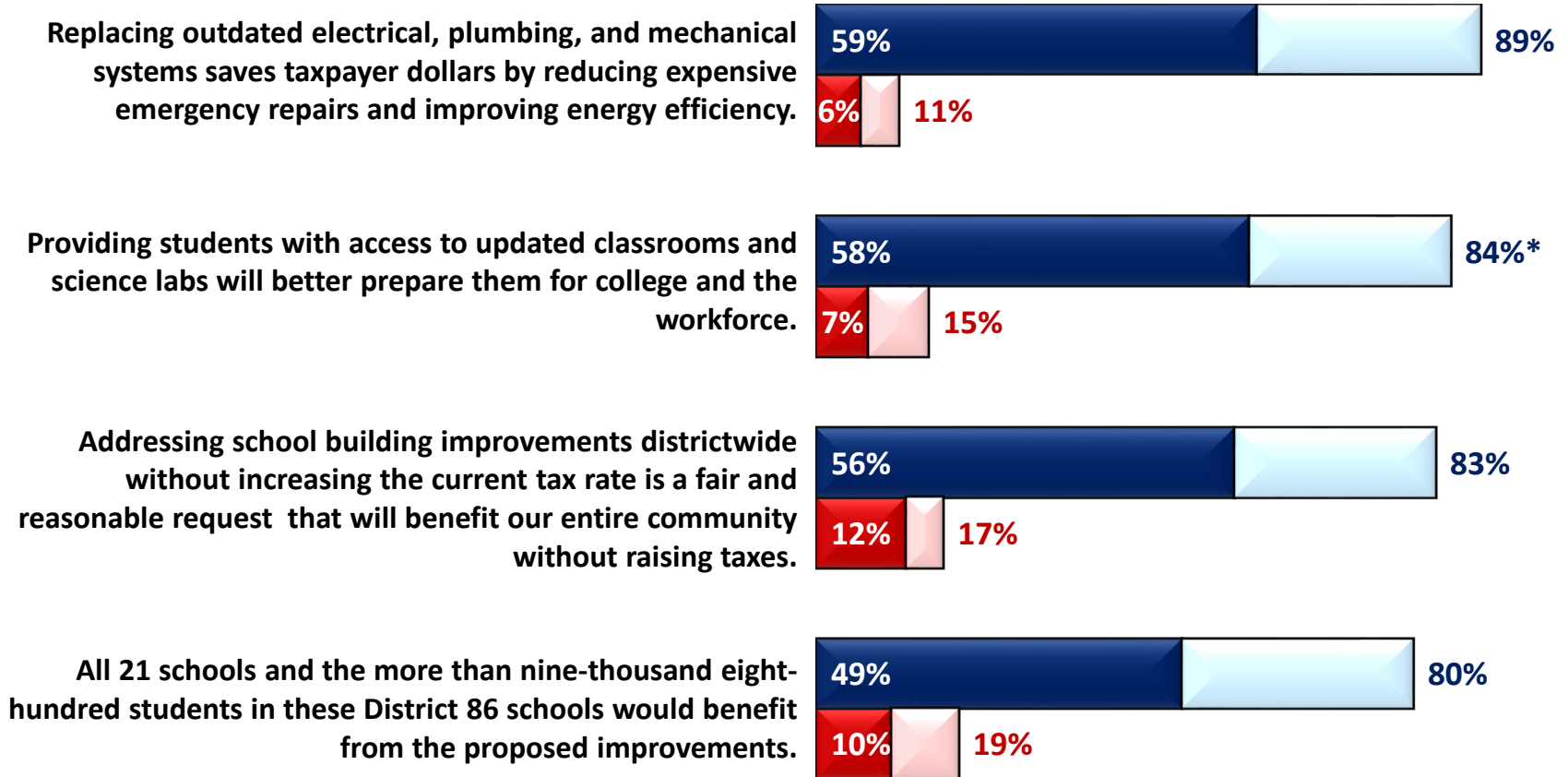
■ Very Convincing    □ Total Convincing    ■ Not At All Convincing    □ Total Not Convincing

\*Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147.

# Messages on infrastructure, college/workforce preparation, not increasing taxes, and the number of students affected are also persuasive.

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## Ranked by % Very Convincing



■ Very Convincing   ■ Total Convincing   ■ Not At All Convincing   ■ Total Not Convincing

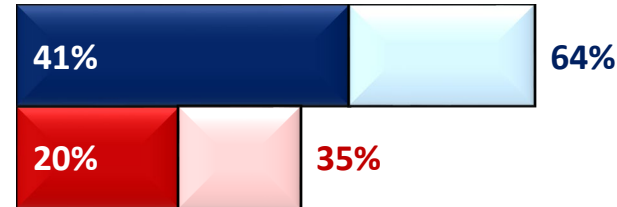
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# The top messages against the proposal say the district should have been more proactive and should update schools a few at a time.

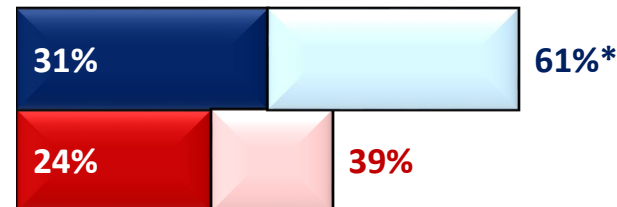
*"I am going to read you some statements that people have made AGAINST increasing funding for District 86 in order to fund facility improvements. After I read each one, please tell me whether the statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing as a reason to oppose increasing funding."*

## Ranked by % Very Convincing

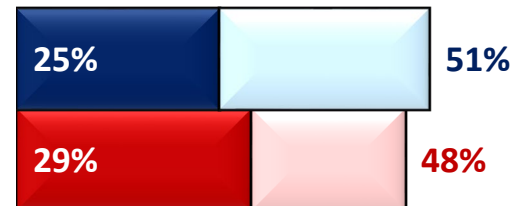
District 86 should have been putting funds aside for its needed building improvements instead of waiting for the debt to expire.



District 86 should update a few schools at a time over many years rather than updating all of them over just a few years.



It seems like District 86 is trying to do too much at once, even if it can be done without a tax rate increase.



■ Very Convincing   ■ Total Convincing   ■ Not At All Convincing   ■ Total Not Convincing

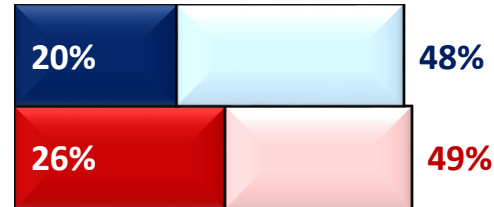
\*Denotes Rounding.

# Messages on lowering taxes vs. fixing schools, focusing funding on teachers, and replacing the schools completely are not very convincing.

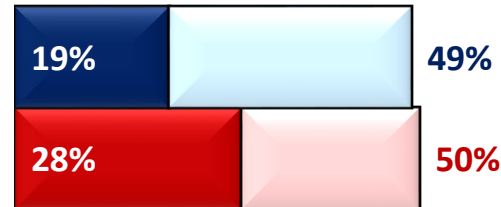
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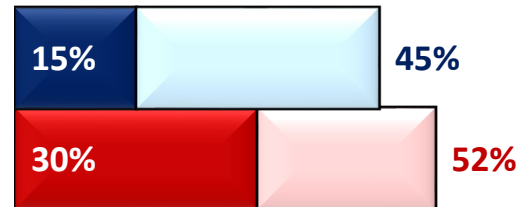
With inflation so high, District 86 should let taxes decrease instead of trying to address district wide school building improvements by maintaining the existing tax rate.



Any additional funding should be focused on teachers and staff, instead of building new schools.



While it would be more expensive, District 86 should be replacing many of its aging school buildings instead of repairing and renovating them.

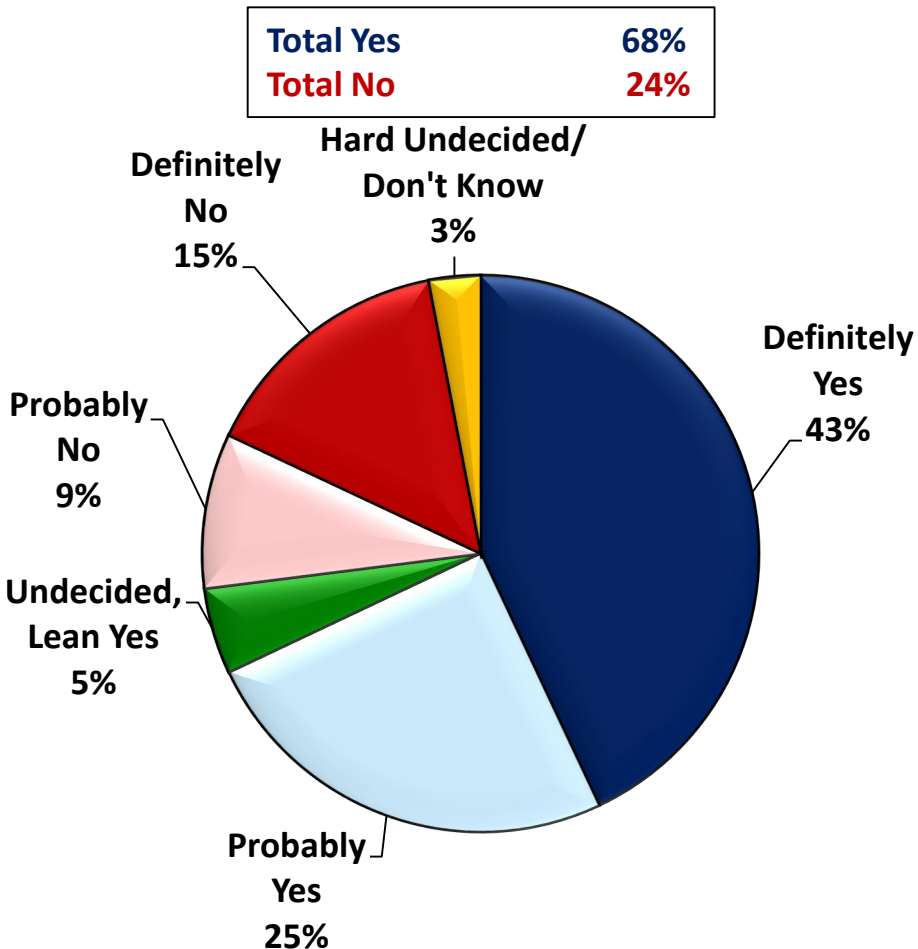


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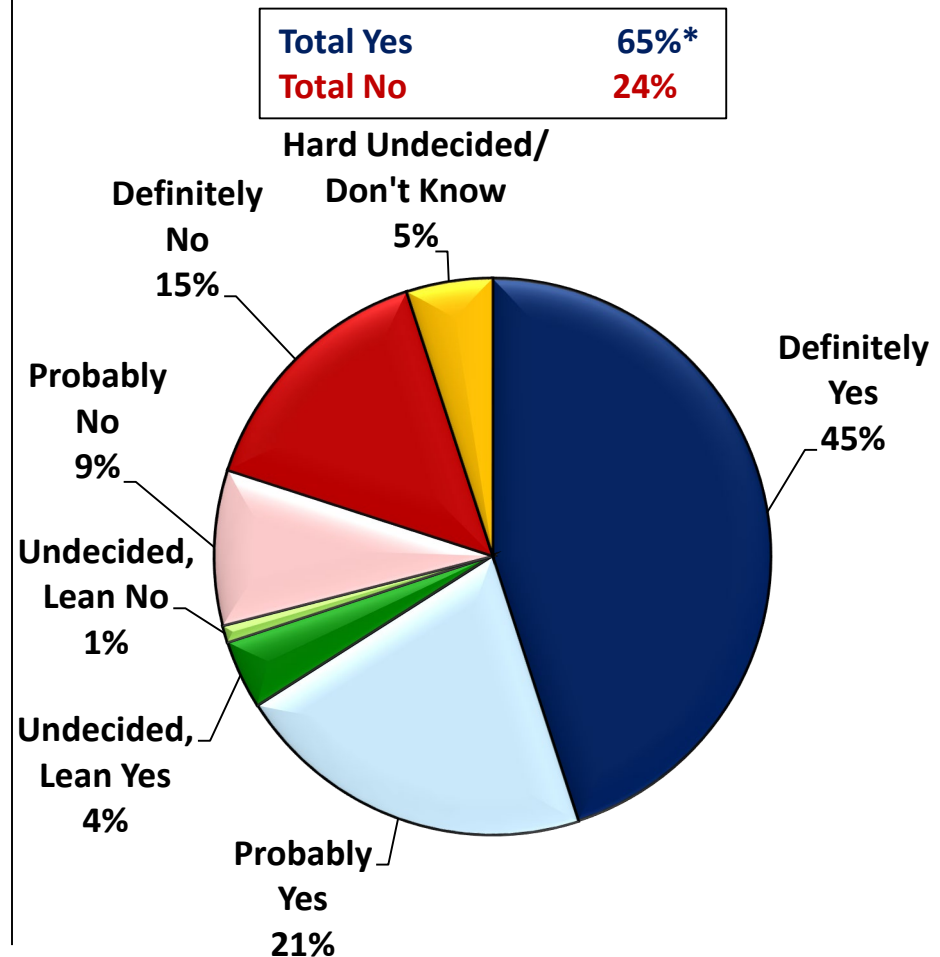
# The ballot remains relatively unchanged after voters learn more about the measure.

*"Now that you have heard some more information, if the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO?"*

*Initial*



*Informed*



\*Denotes Rounding.





# The Bottom Line

# THE BOTTOM LINE

- The potential ballot measure starts out in very strong position, with more than 65% saying they would vote yes, including 43% who say they would definitely vote yes.
- Learning that the measure would NOT increase the current tax rate increases support among both probably yes and probably no voters.
- Support is strongest with younger voters/parents, so an effort to turnout these voters in an off-year April election will be extremely important.
- The top funding priority for voters is improving security features, followed by addressing infrastructure needs.
- The top statements in support that we tested are also focused on security. Statements centered on ADA improvements also resonate with voters.

For more information about this presentation or about  
Public Opinion Strategies, please give us a call.

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*Turning Questions Into Answers*

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