



# 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.



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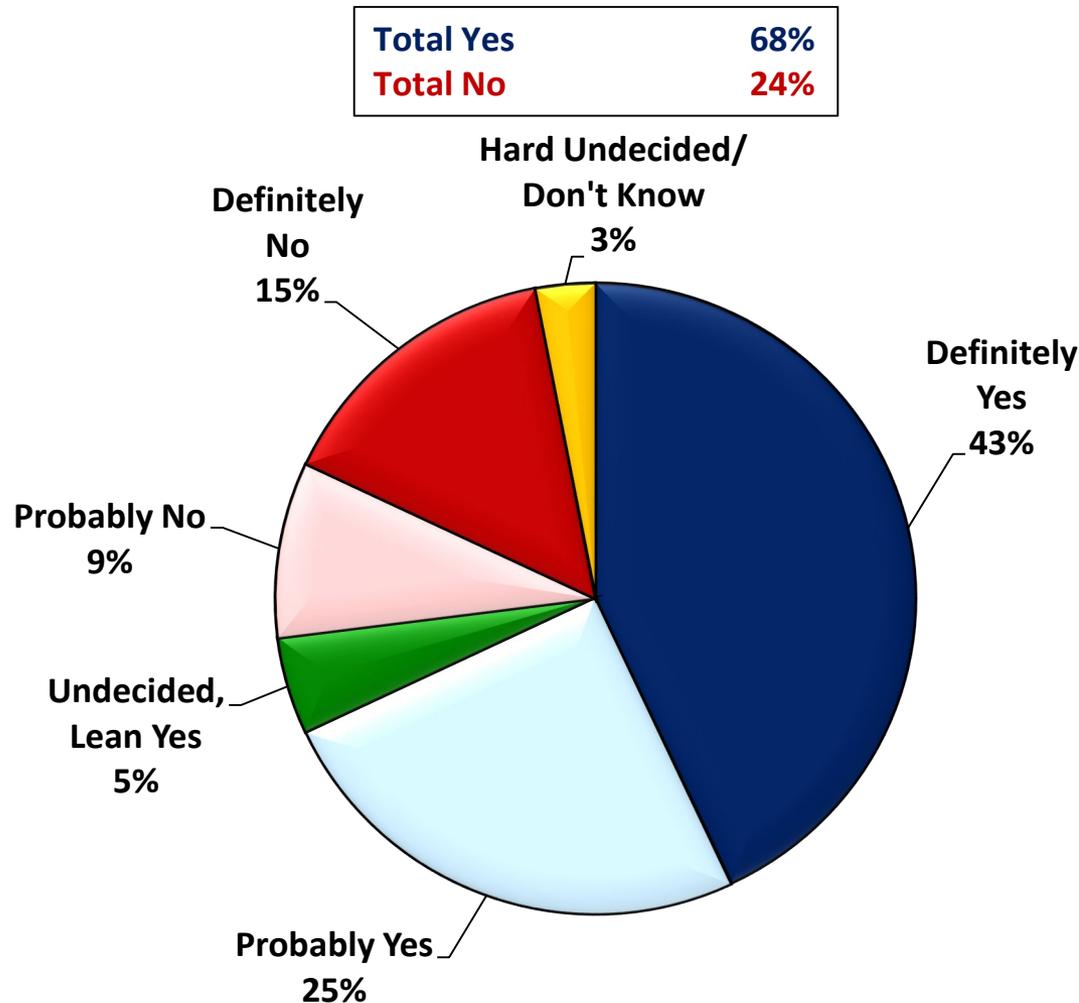
# The Ballot Measure

# 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?”***

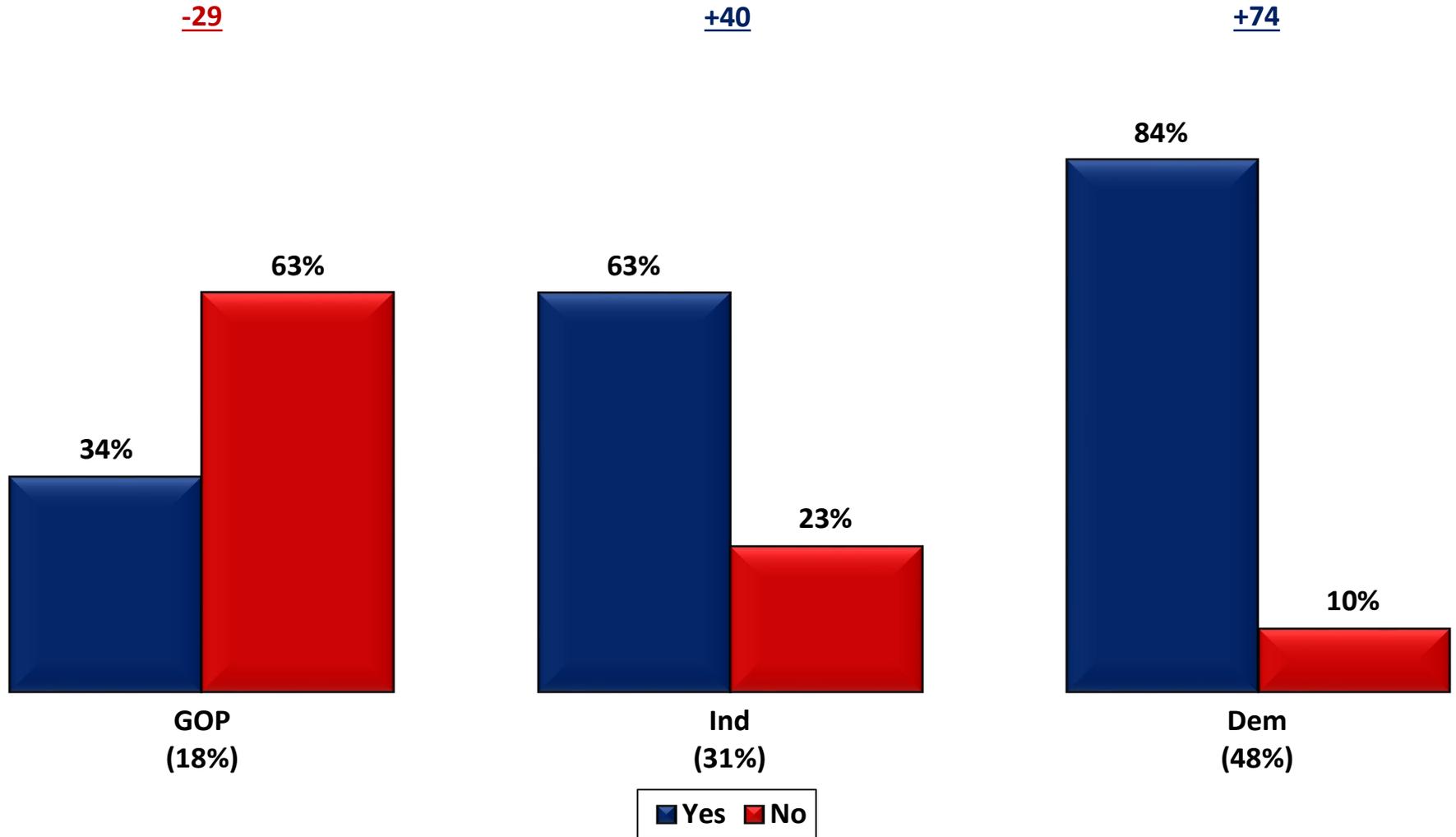
# Nearly 70% of Joliet voters are in favor of the ballot measure. Intensity of support is also very high.

*"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."*



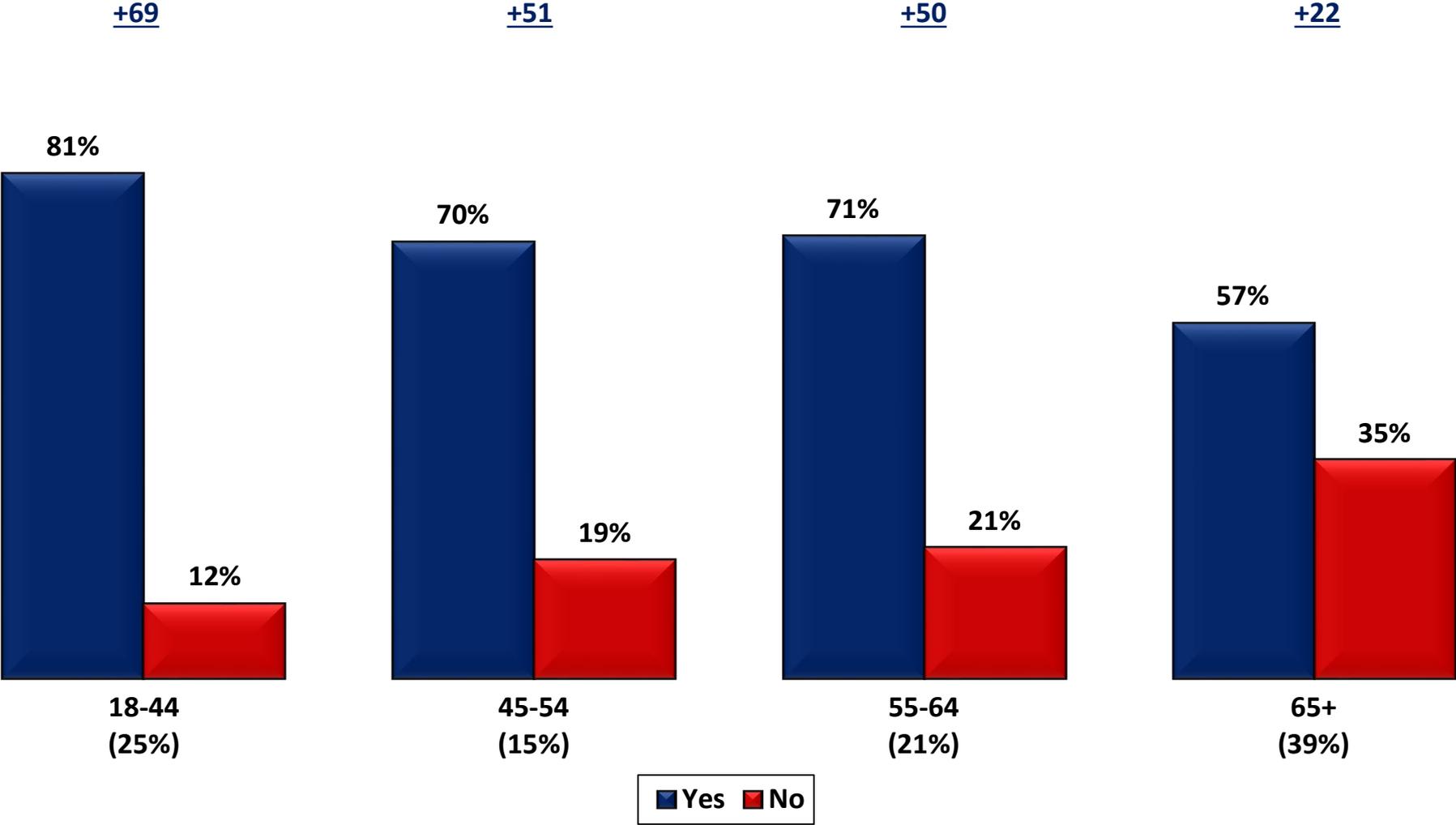
# The overall ballot support is largely driven by Democrats, but more than 60% of Independents favor it, too.

*Ballot Measure by Party*



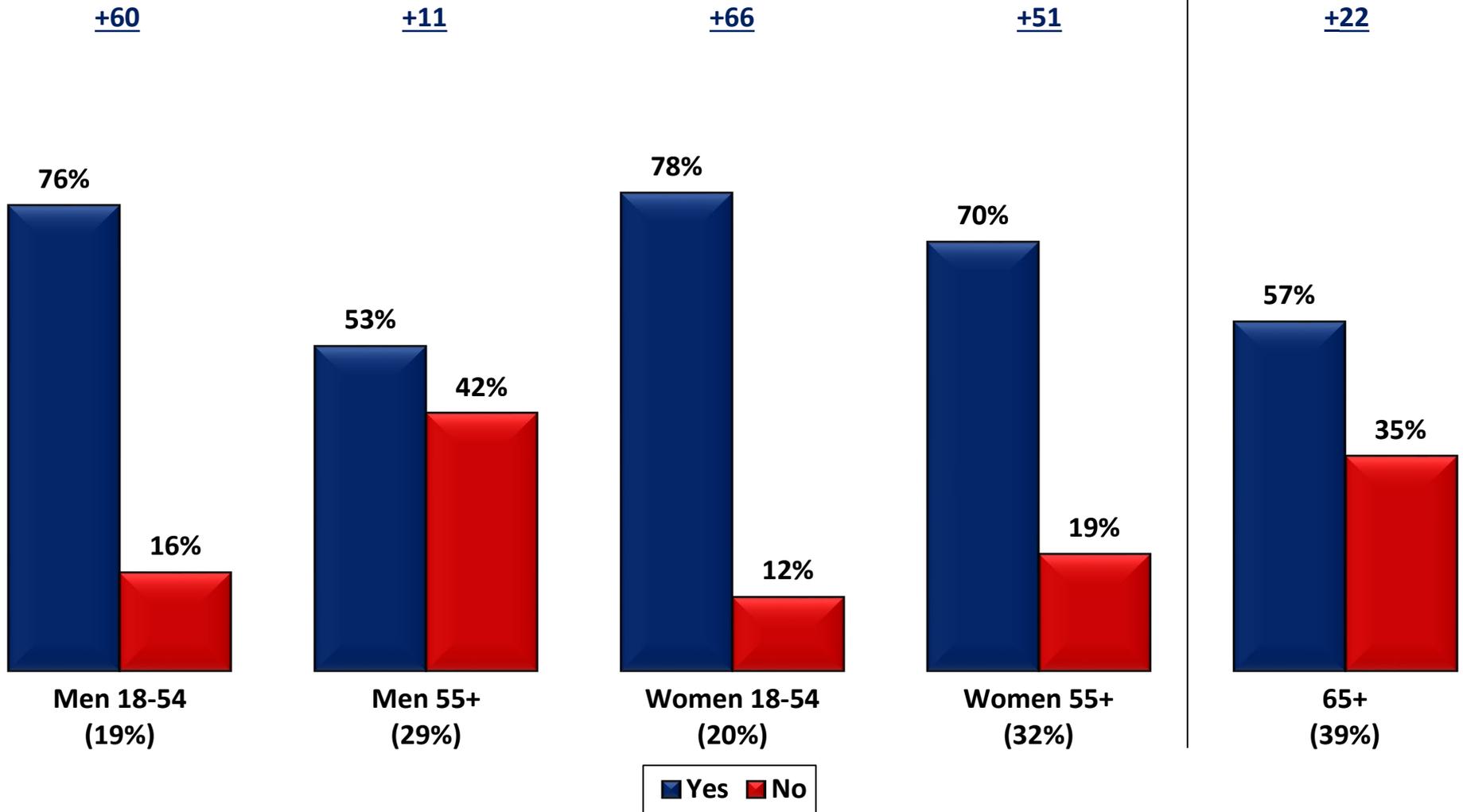
# Younger voters are most likely to back the measure.

*Ballot Measure by Age*



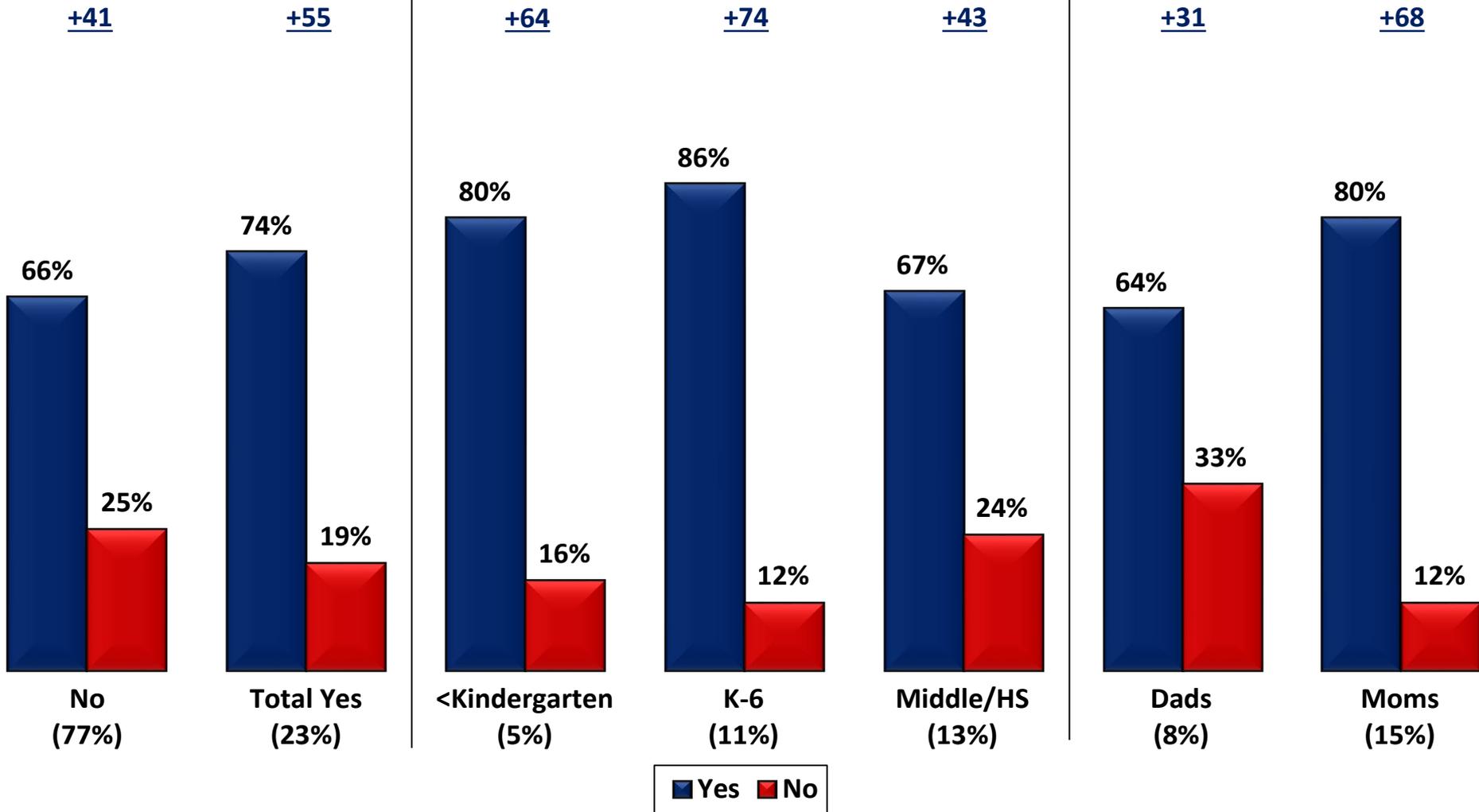
# There is a gender gap among older voters, as older women are more likely to support the plan than older men.

*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?”*

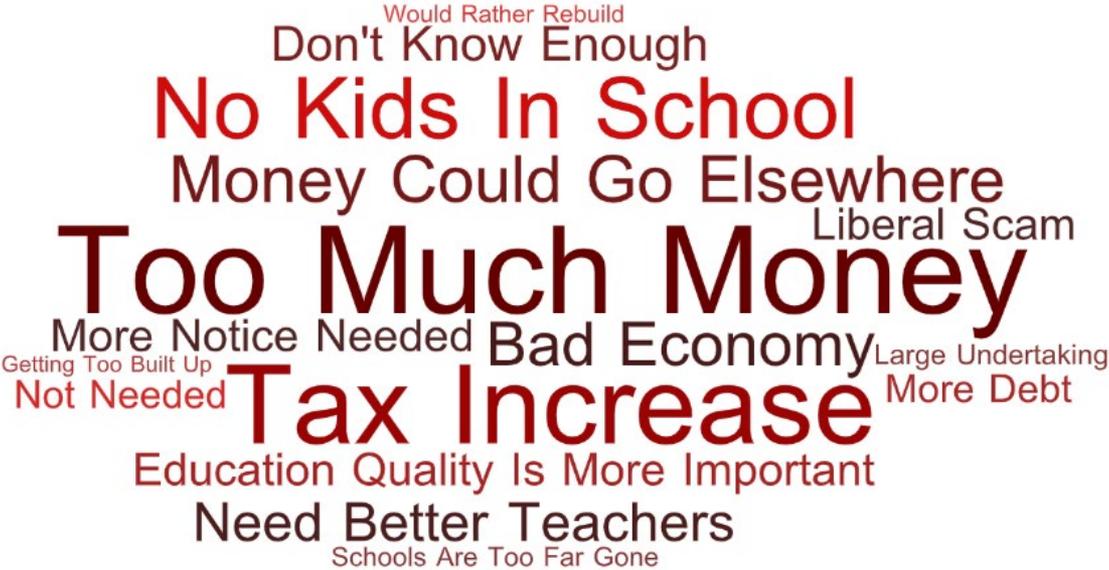


**(Among 68% Yes)**

|                      |     |                             |     |                         |    |                          |    |
|----------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|-------------------------|----|--------------------------|----|
| 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 increase taxes, and that the funding should go elsewhere.

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



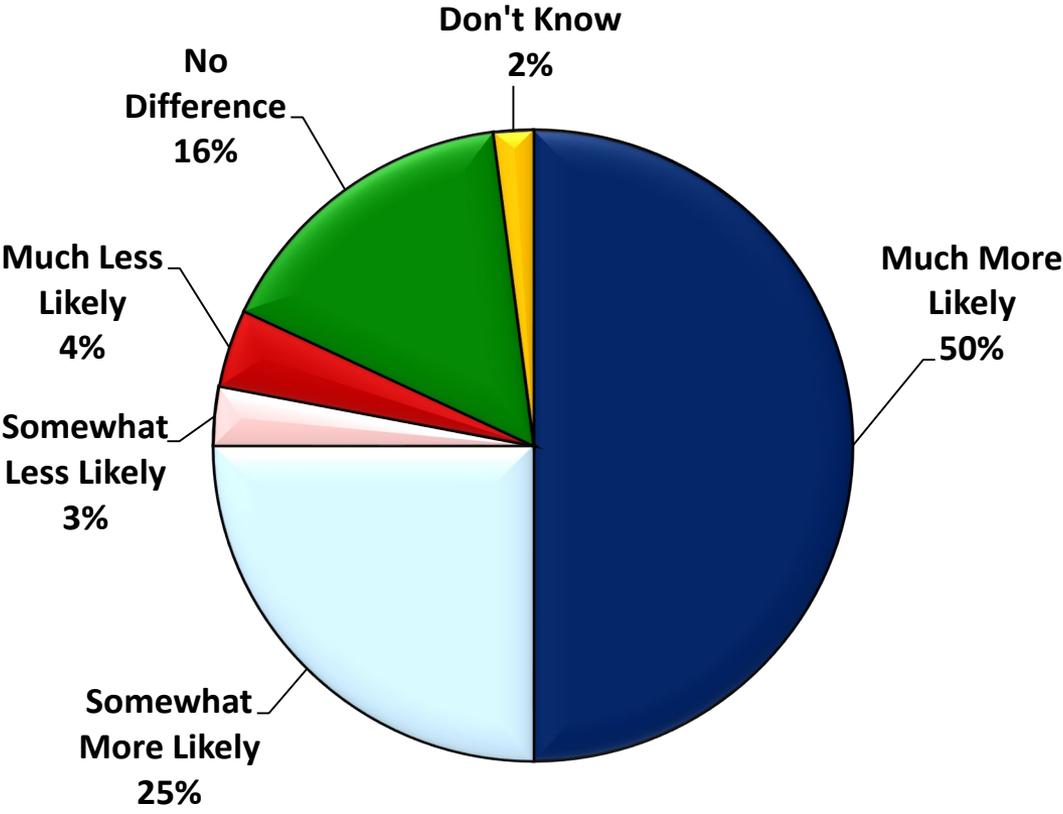
**(Among 24% No)**

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

# 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.”*

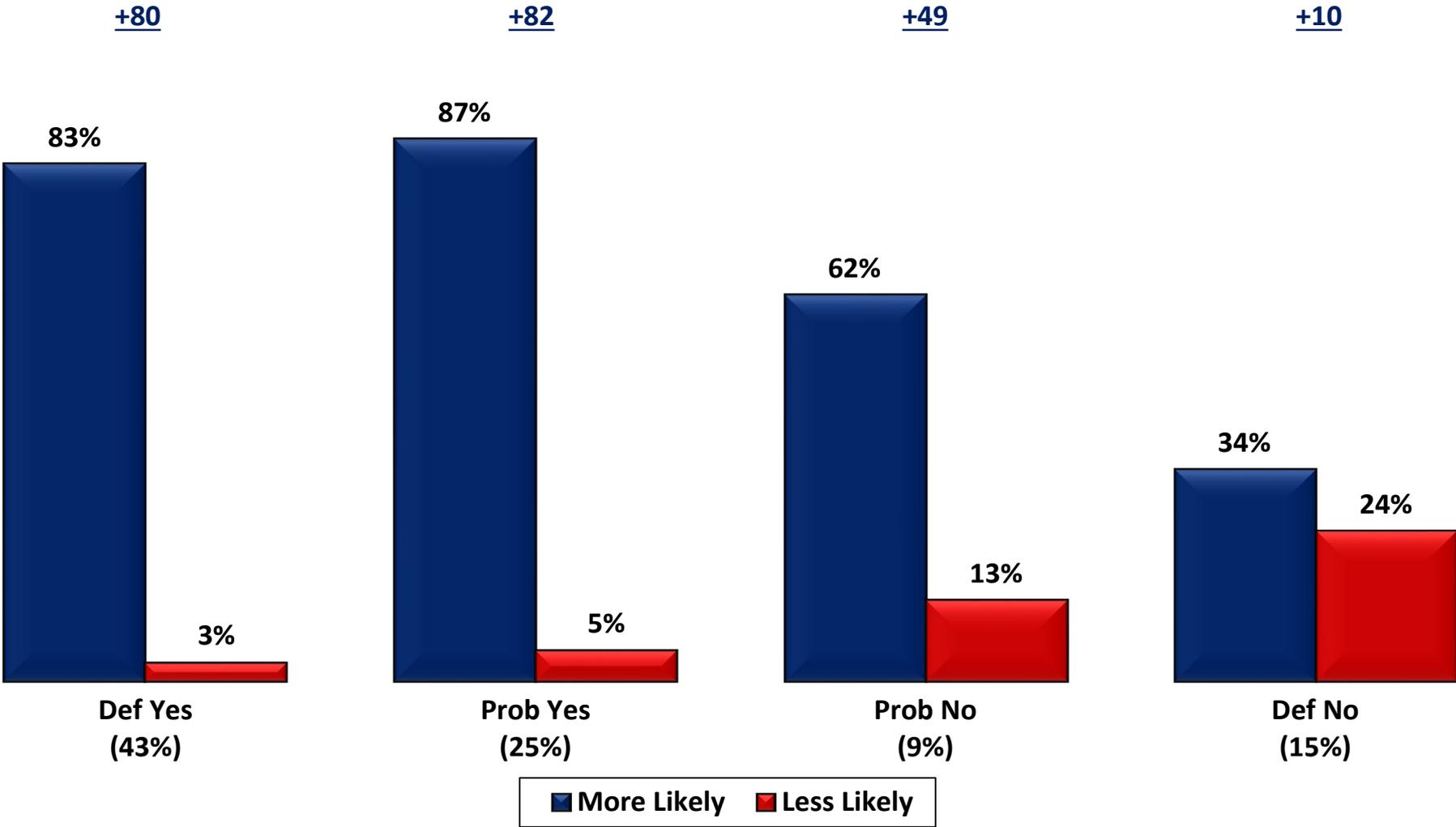
|                   |      |
|-------------------|------|
| Total More Likely | 74%* |
| Total Less Likely | 8%*  |



\*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*



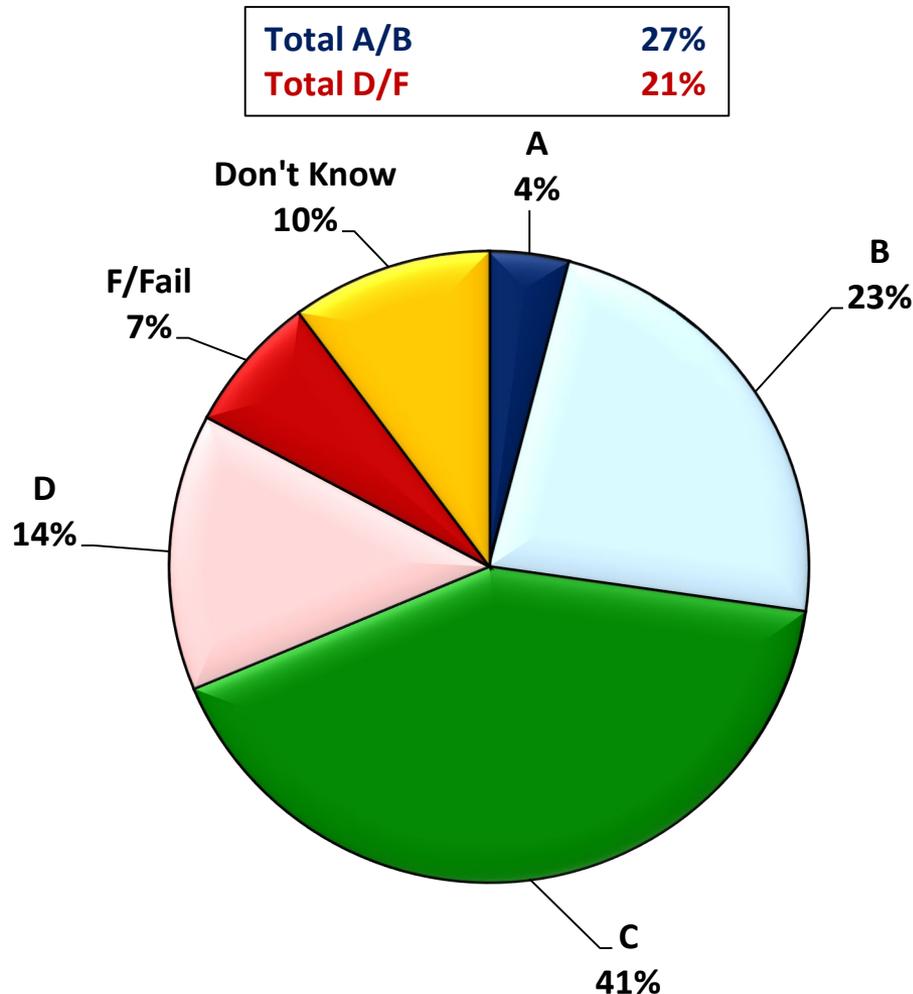


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# The School District

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

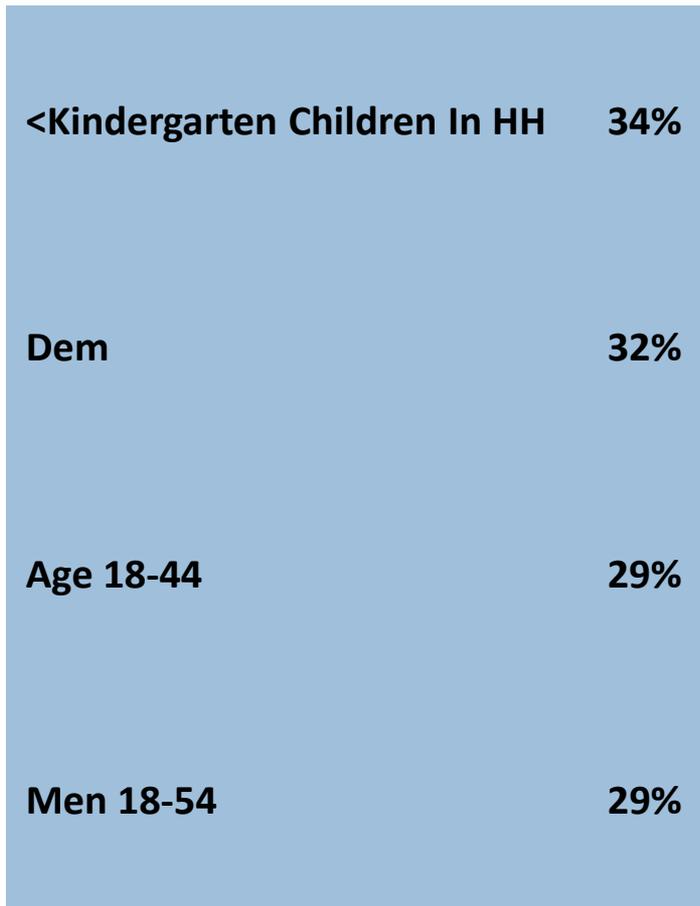
*“Schools often use the letters A, B, C, D or F for Fail to grade students. Suppose you had the opportunity to grade the District 86 schools, what grade would you give them - A, B, C, D or F for fail?”*



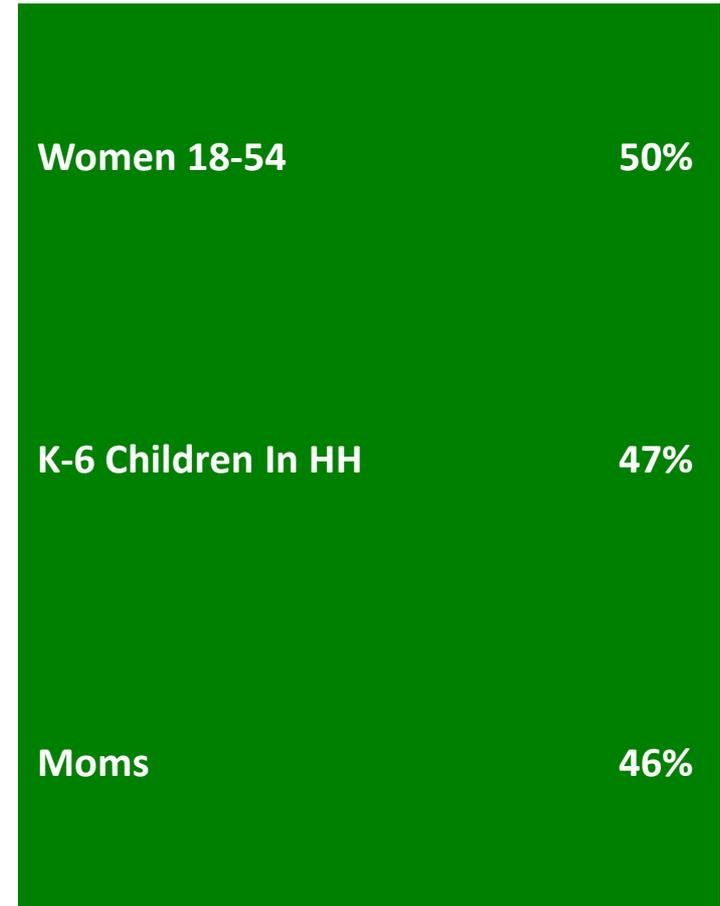
# Younger voters and those with younger children are most likely give the school average or slightly above average ratings.

## Grading District 86 School

### Top Groups – B (23%)



### Top Groups – C (41%)



**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%**

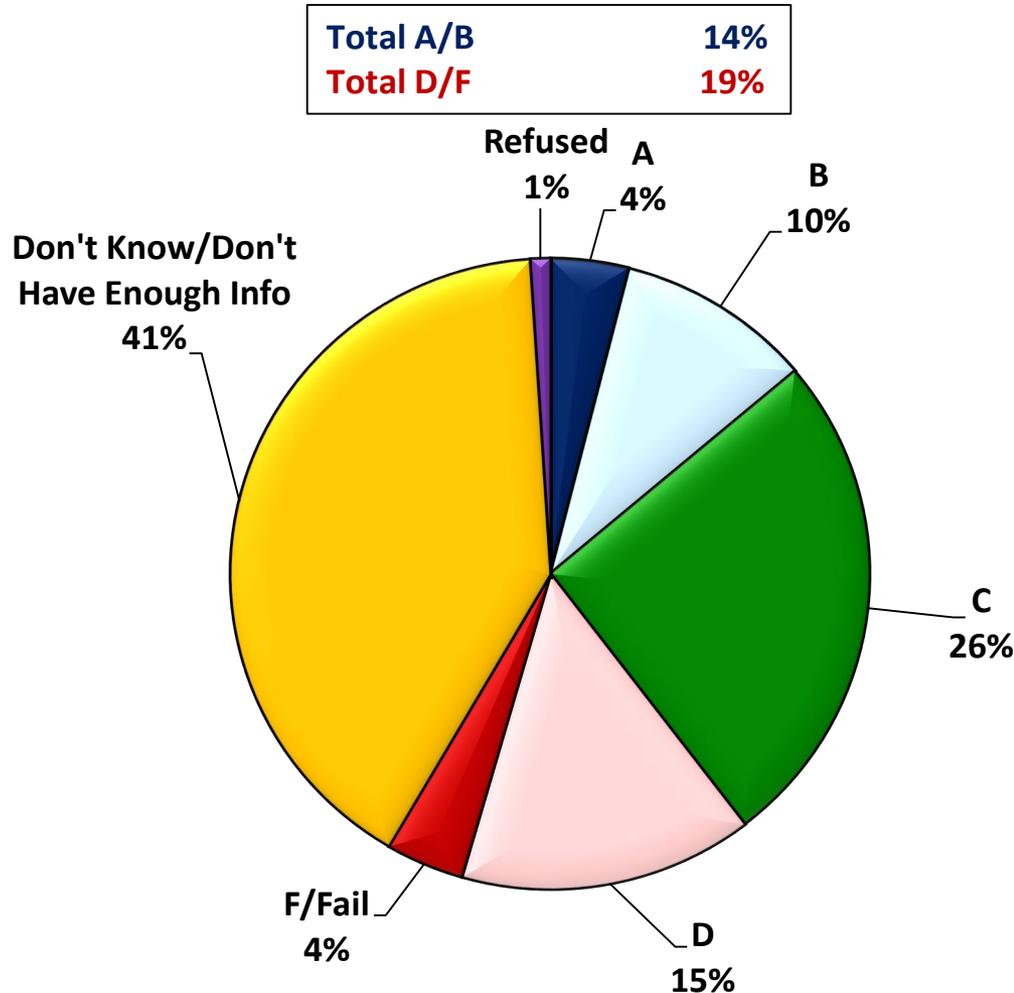
*Not As Good*

**13%**

*Don't Know/Refused*

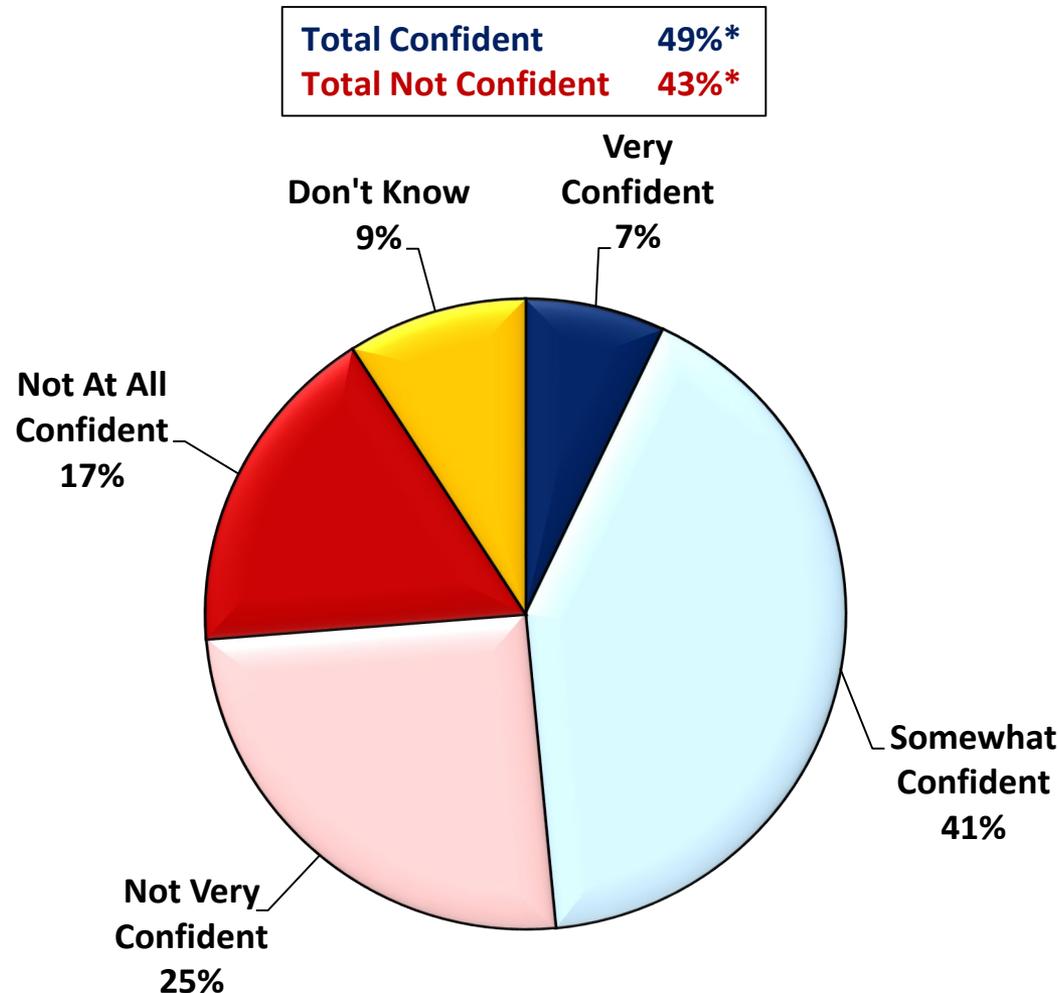
# Most voters don't know enough about the school building conditions to grade them.

*“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.

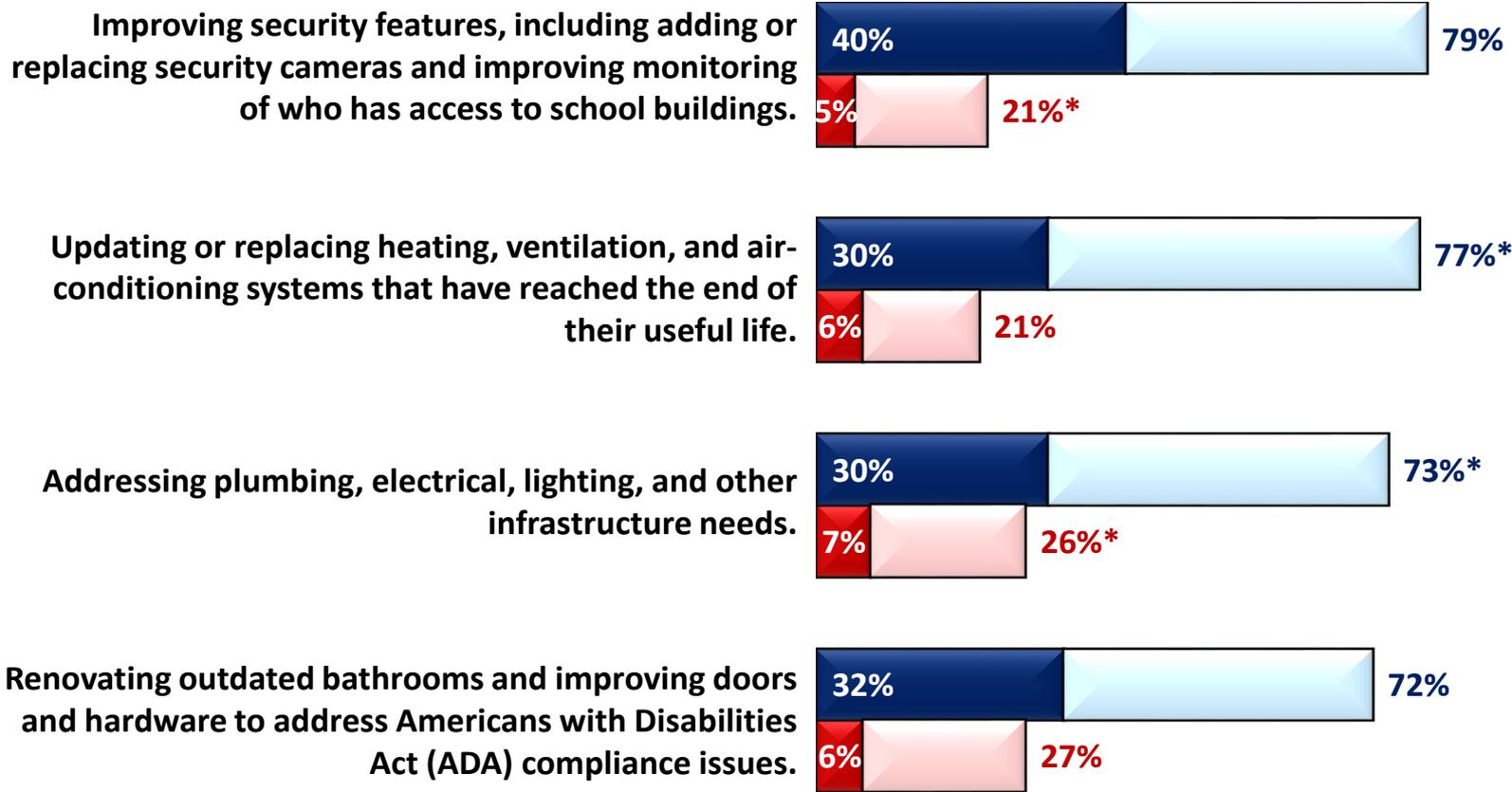


# Funding Options

# 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**



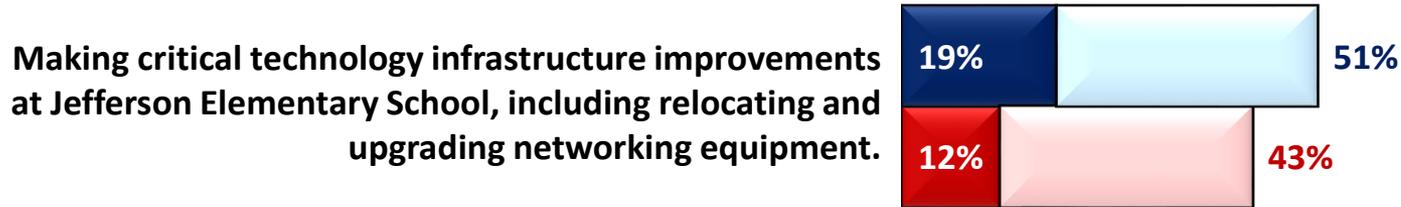
■ Extremely Important  
 ■ Extremely/Very Important  
 ■ Not Very Important  
 ■ Not Very/Somewhat Important

\*Denotes Rounding.

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

*“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

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

*“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.

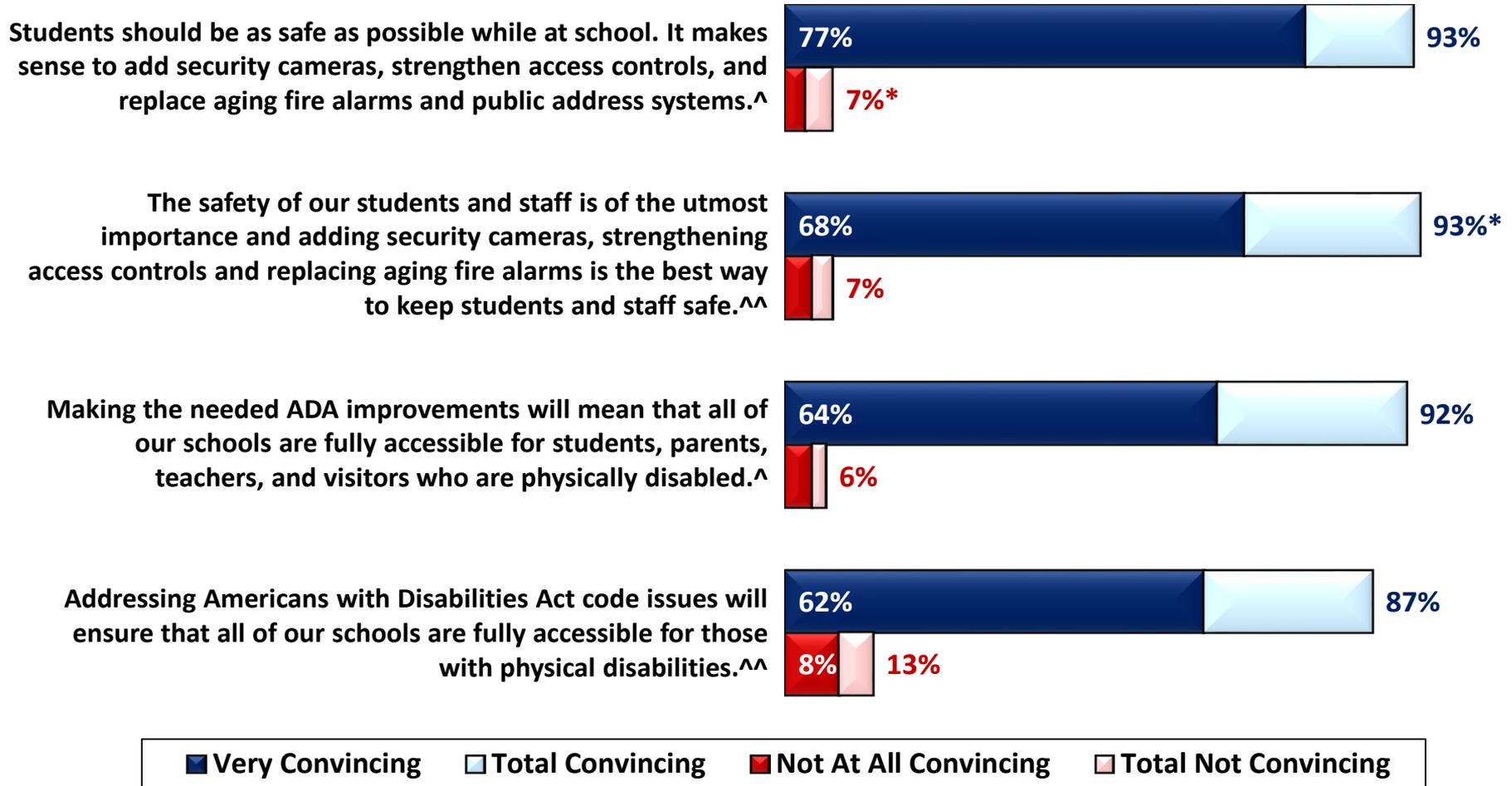


# Message Testing

# 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**

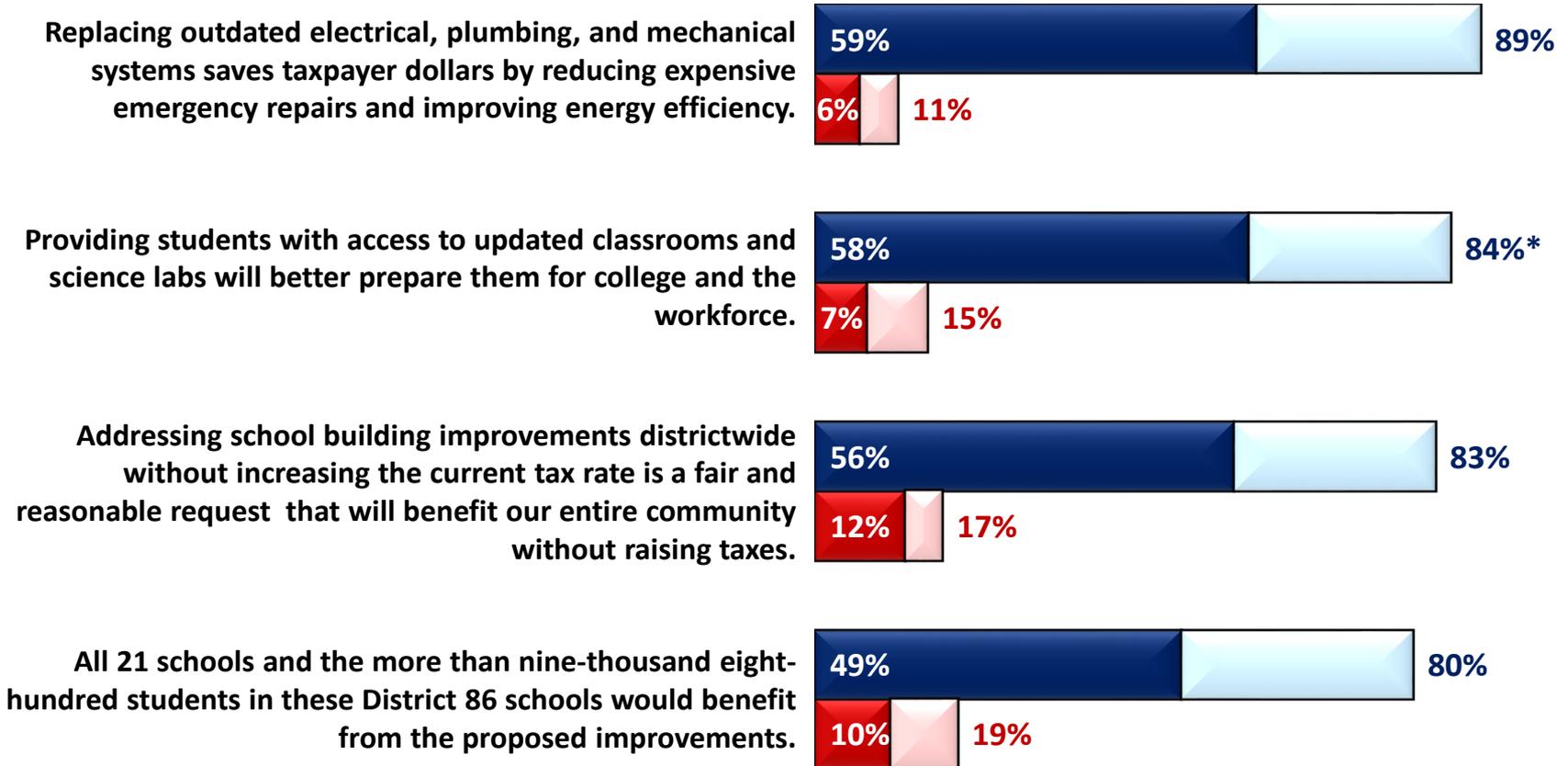


\*Denotes Rounding; <sup>^</sup>Split Sample A, N=153; <sup>^^</sup>Split Sample B, N=147.

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

*"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

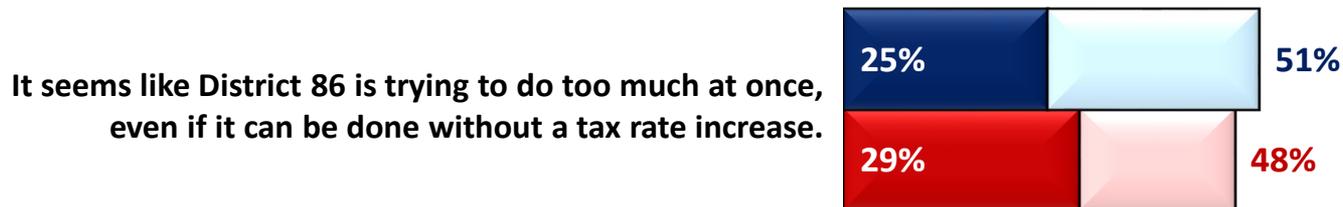
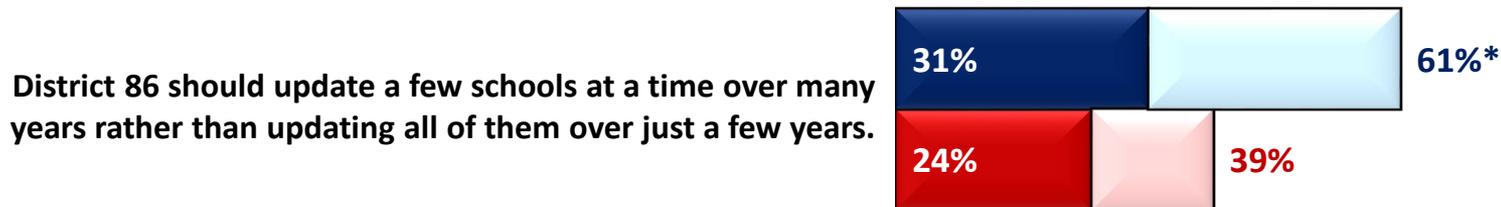
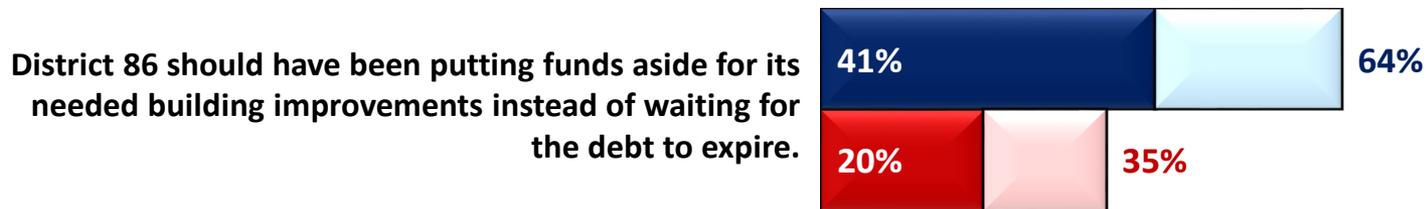


\*Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147.

# 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**

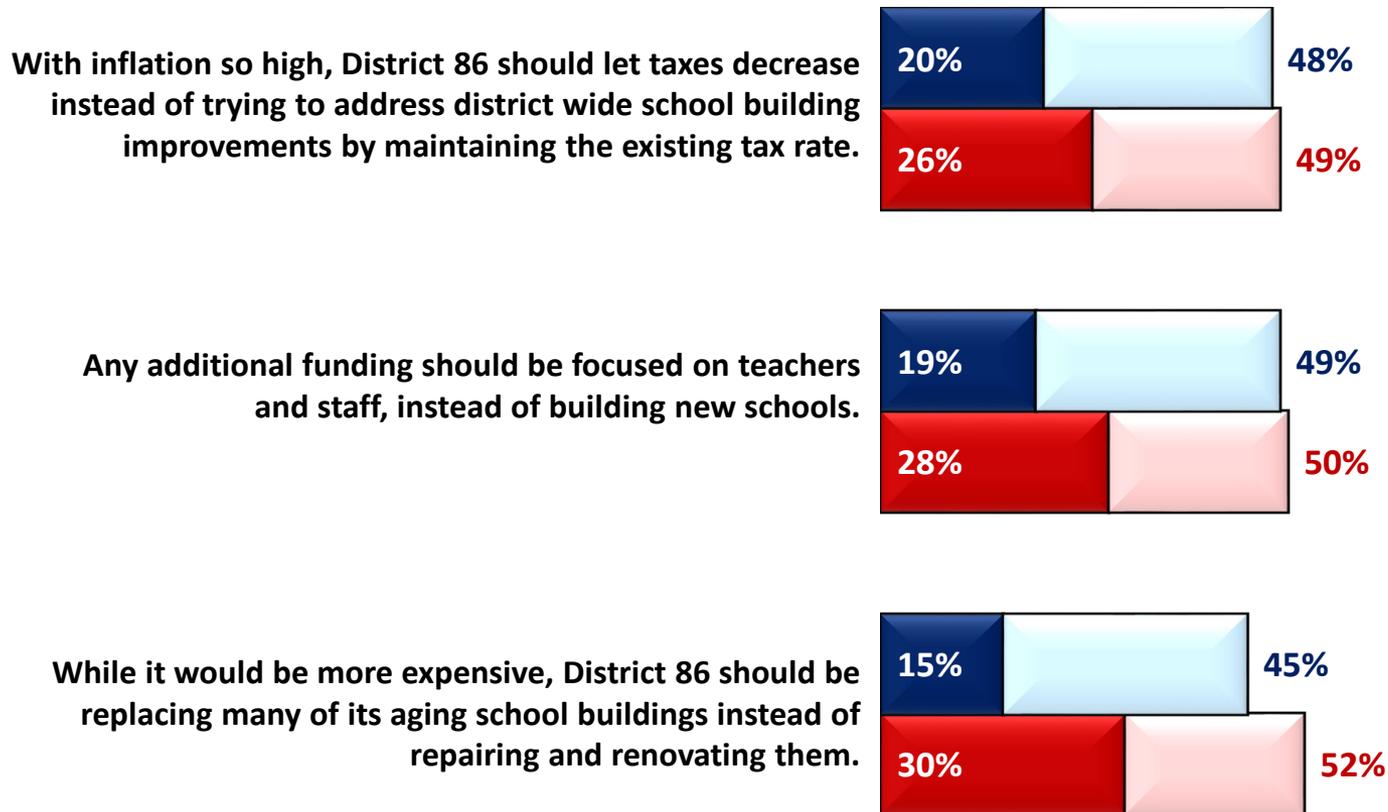


\*Denotes Rounding.

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

*"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**



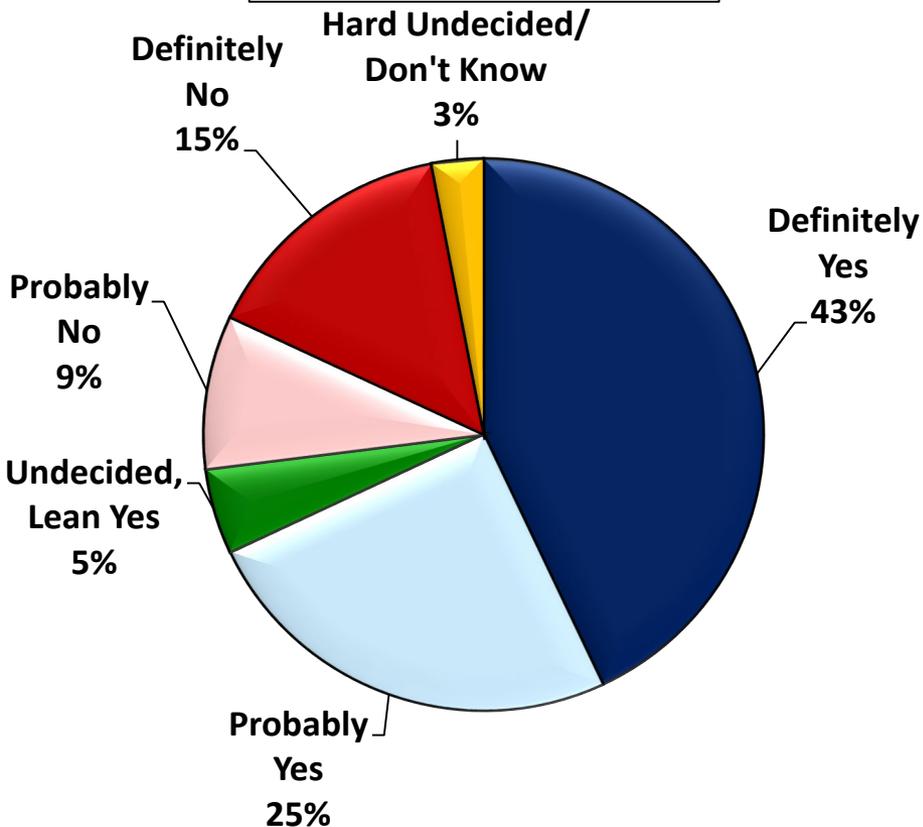
■ Very Convincing   
 ■ Total Convincing   
 ■ Not At All Convincing   
 ■ Total Not Convincing

# 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?”*

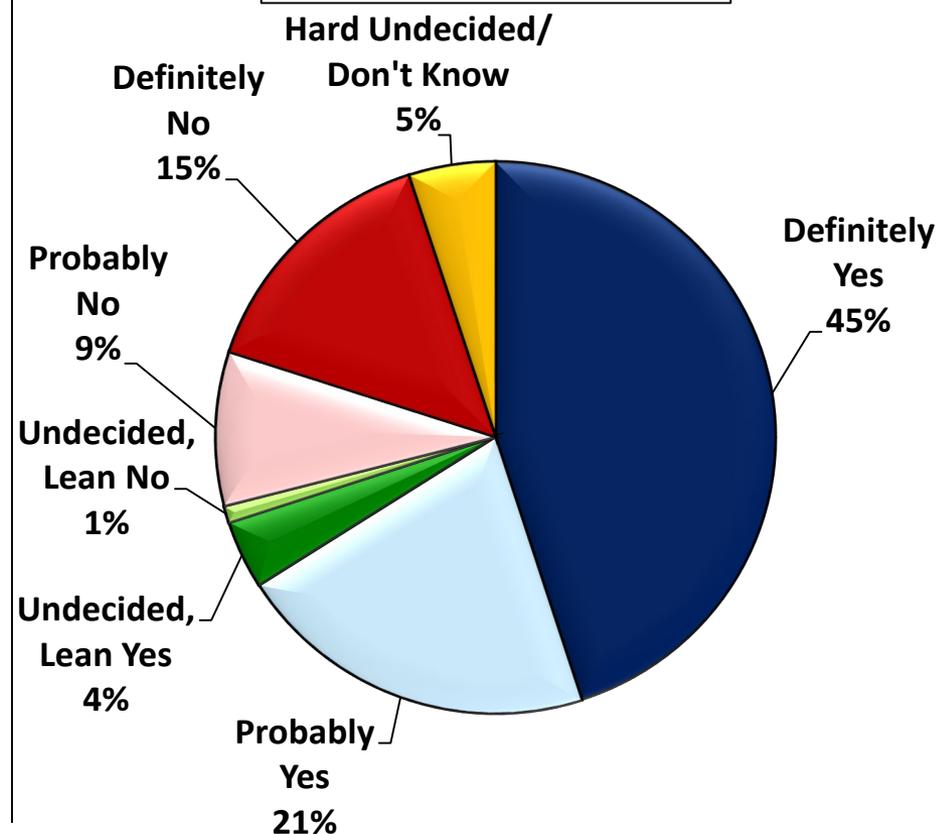
*Initial*

|           |     |
|-----------|-----|
| Total Yes | 68% |
| Total No  | 24% |



*Informed*

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Total Yes | 65%* |
| Total No  | 24%  |



\*Denotes Rounding.



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# 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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