

Community Survey Results

School District of Amery

Fall 2021



SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

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

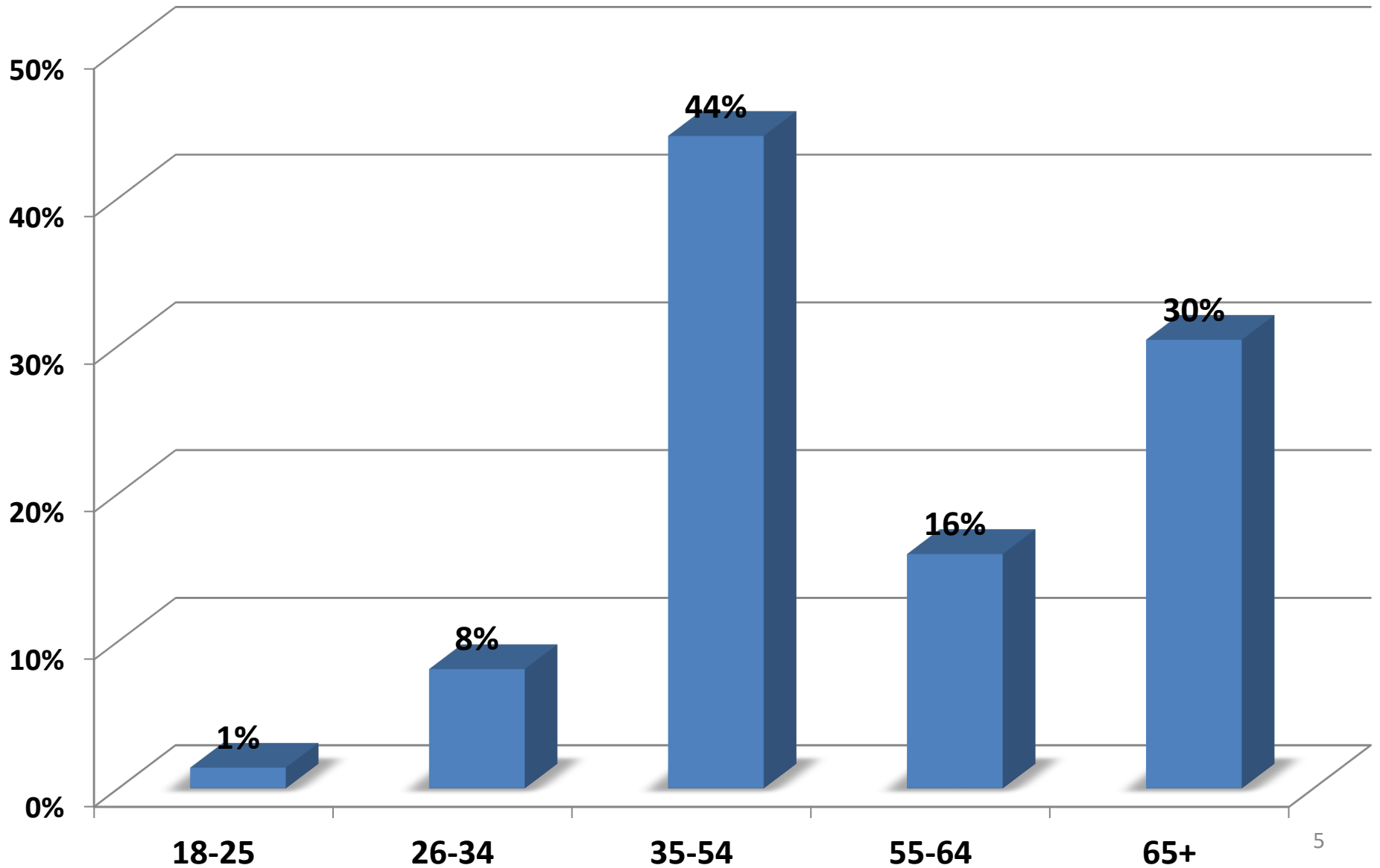
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted more than **10,000** staff, parent, student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **800** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Summary

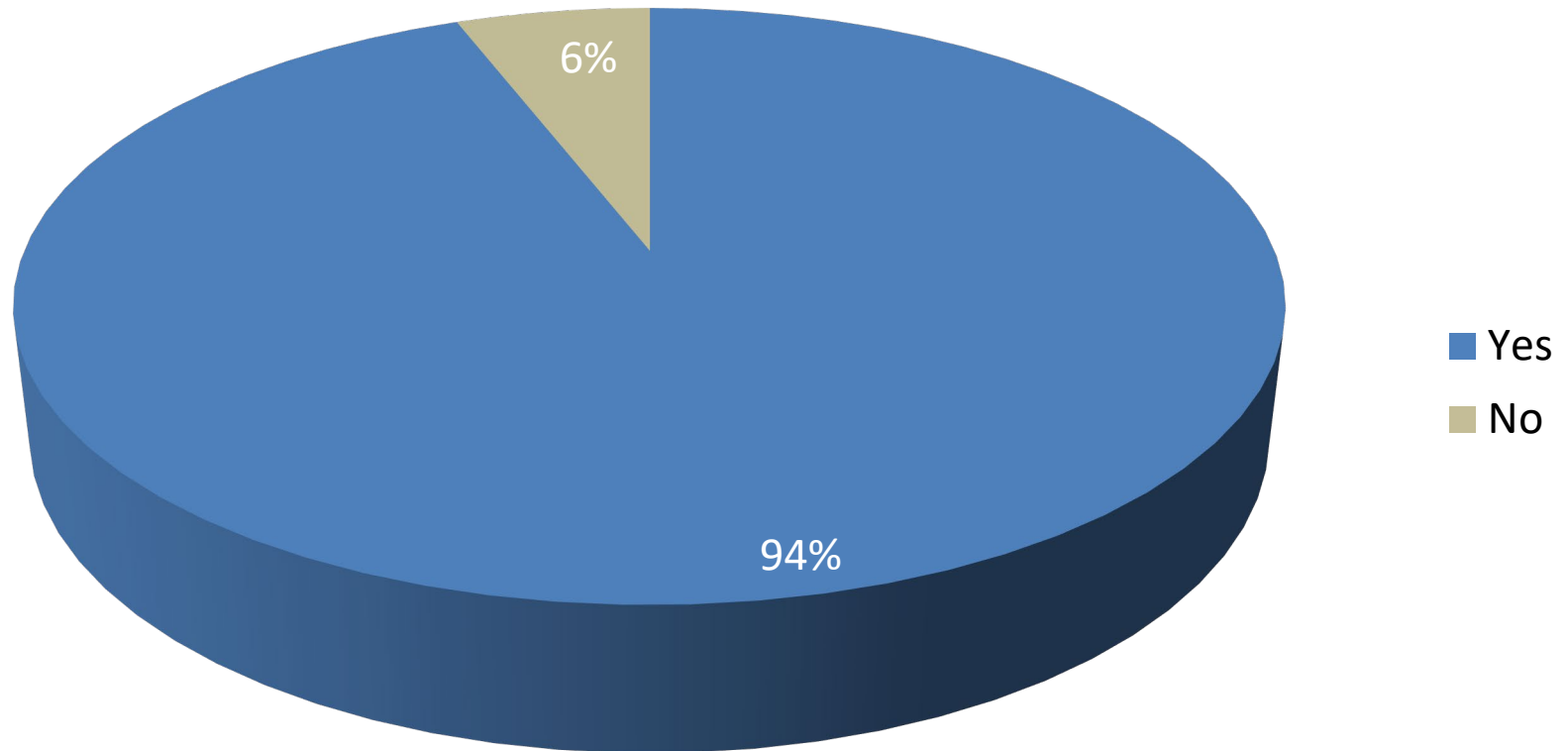
- The survey was conducted in October and November 2021.
- Residents within the District were mailed a paper survey.
 - Each survey included a unique survey access code for those who preferred to take the survey online.
- Total responses = 940 (278 paper)
- Participation rate = 19.6%

Respondent Information

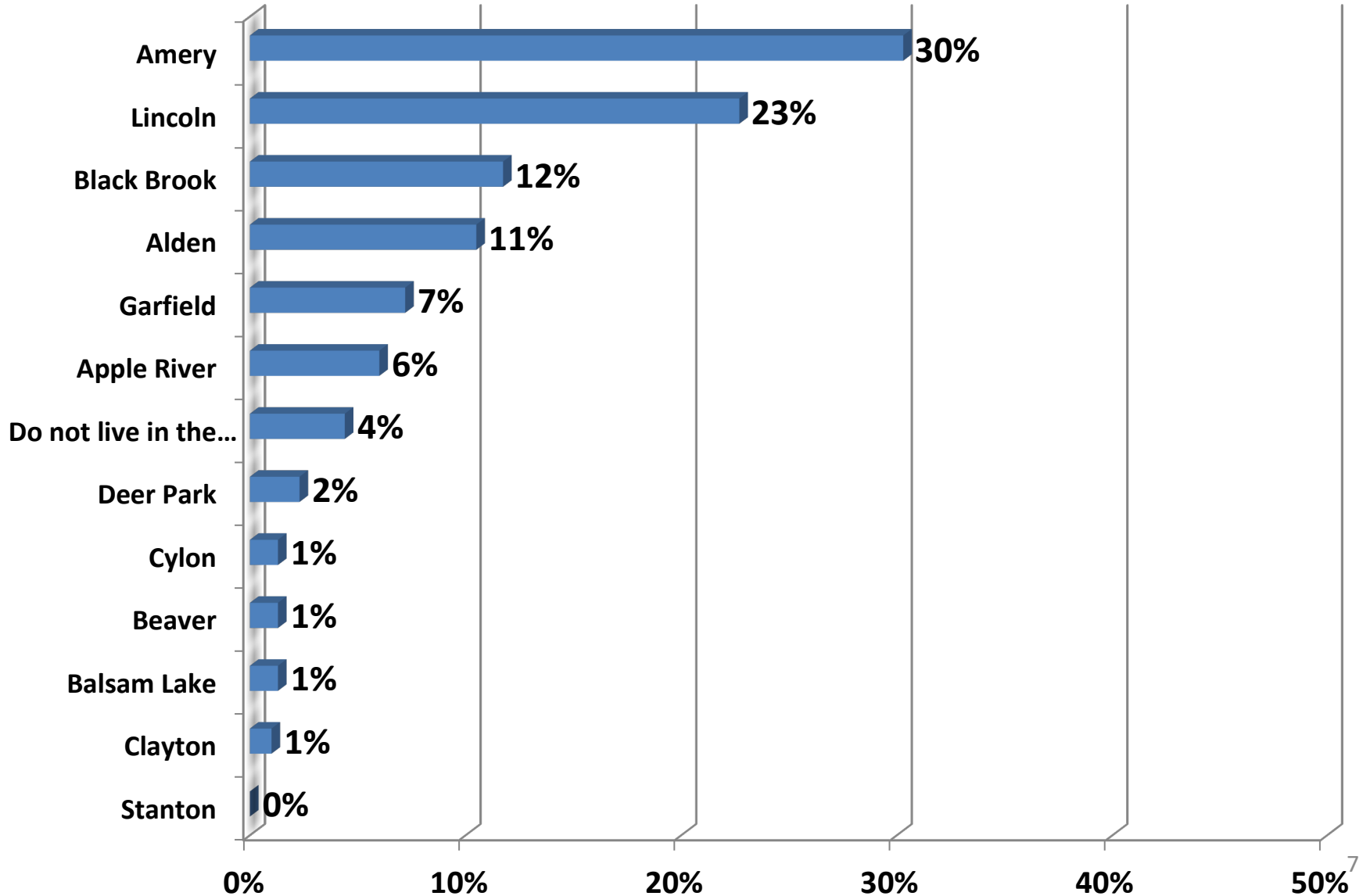
What is your age?



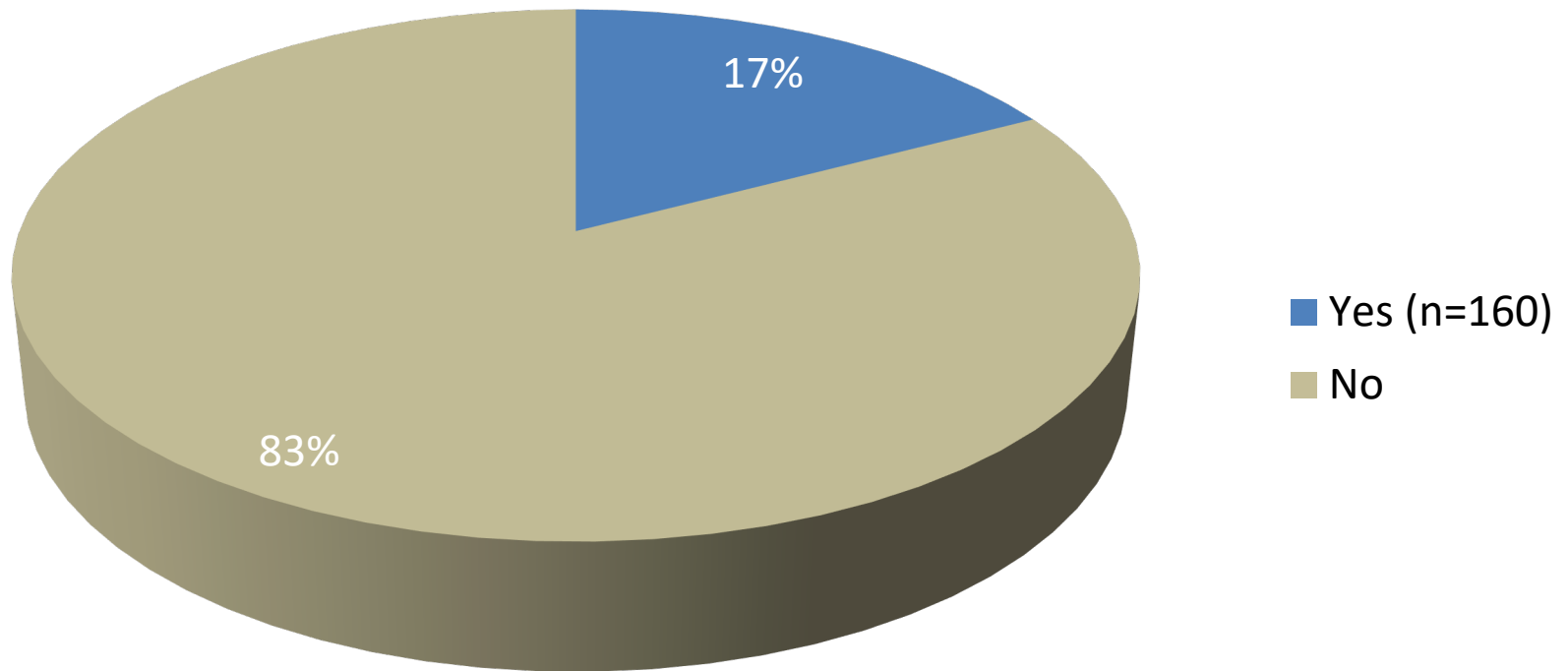
Do you live in the School District of Amery?



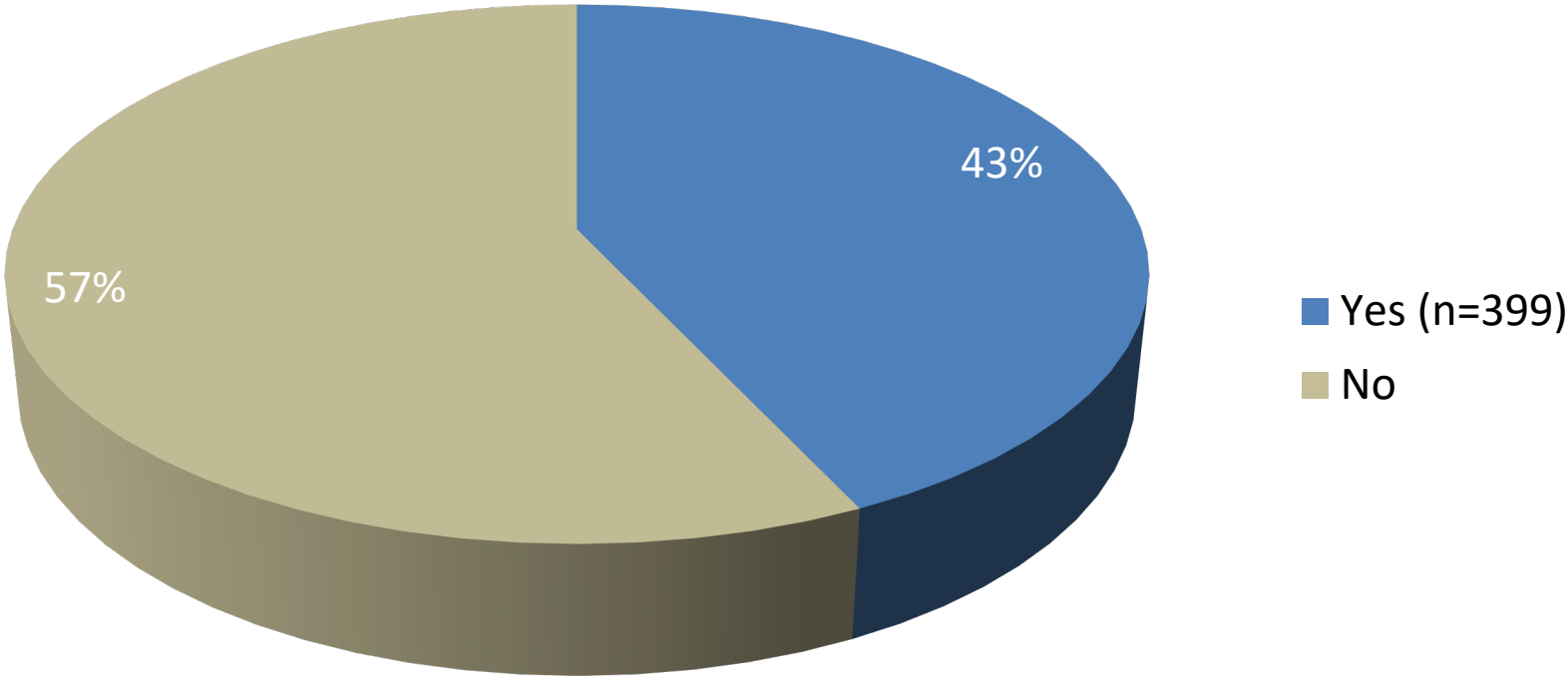
In which municipality do you live?



Are you an employee of the School District of Amery?



Do you have child(ren) attending a School District of Amery school?

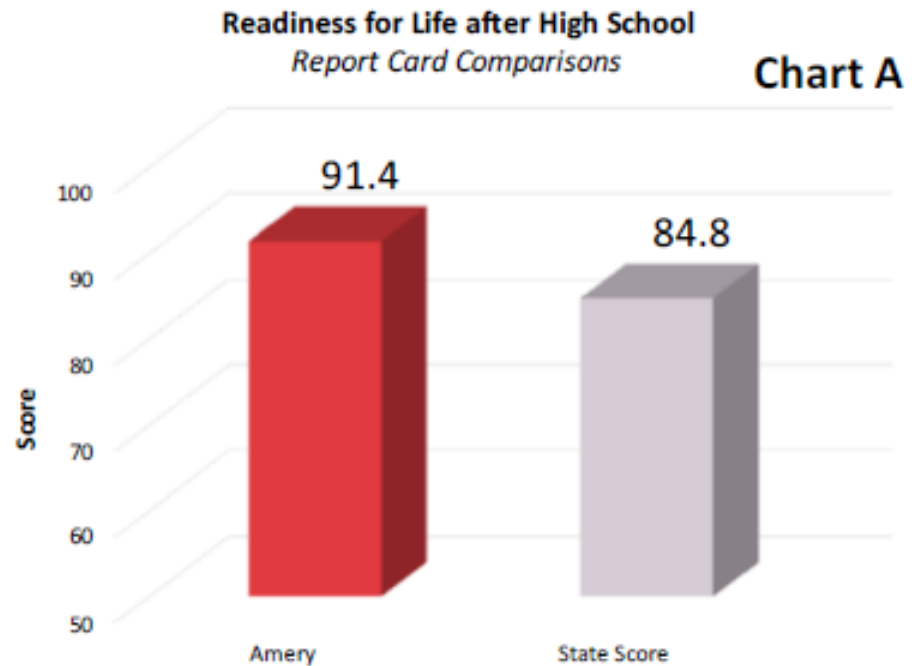


Background Information

How are we doing academically?

The School District of Amery has “***exceeded***” academic expectations on the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) accountability scorecard every year for the past nine years. We are also above the state average in student achievement (which measures performance on state tests in reading and math) and readiness for life after high school (which measures students’ preparation and plans for college and careers).

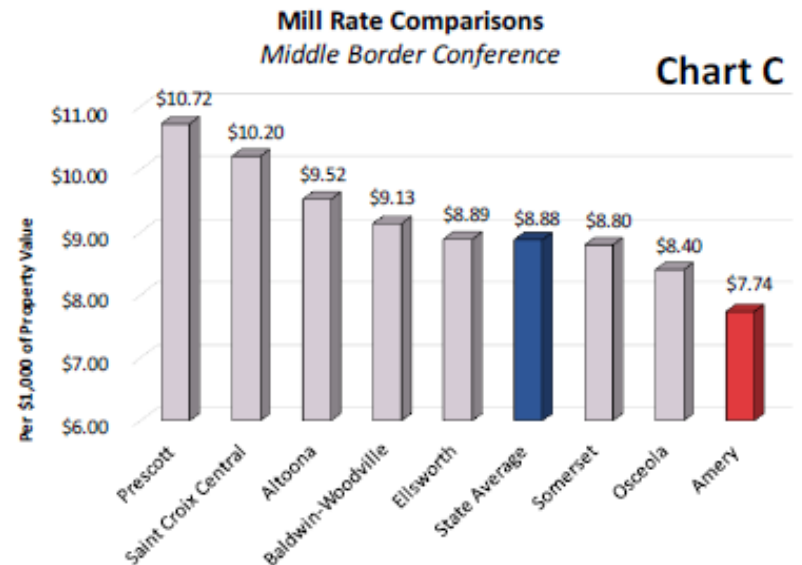
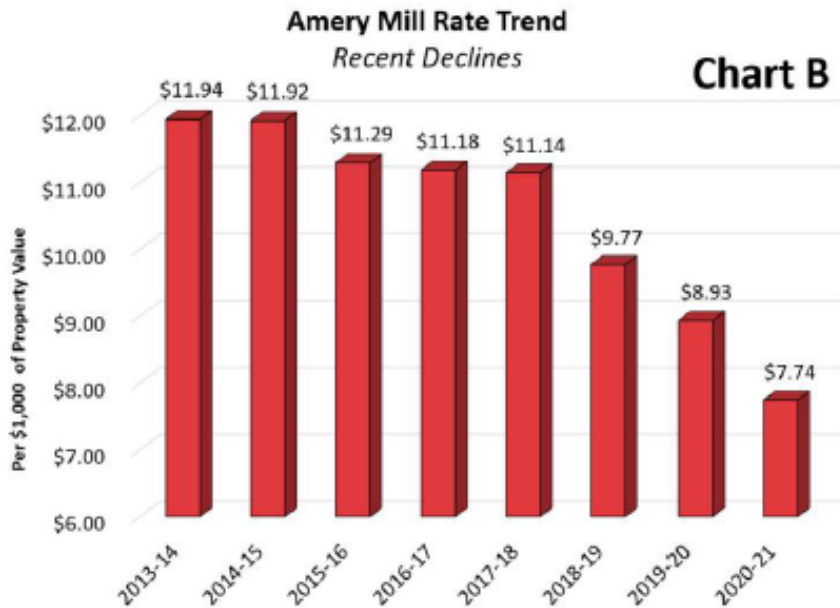
See Chart A to the right.



How are we doing financially?

The School District of Amery works hard to use taxpayer money responsibly, and we are nearly debt free. **For the last seven years, the mill rate (which is used to calculate the school's portion of property taxes) has dropped. This decline of 35% has saved taxpayers a total of \$420 for each \$100,000 of property value. See Chart B below.**

In addition, this makes the District's tax rate **below the state average and the lowest in the Middle Border Conference. See Chart C below.**



We are proud of this rare combination of top academic performance coupled with responsible spending.

Facility Background

Over the last five years, we worked with an outside firm to evaluate the condition of each building and the quality of our learning environments. **Three major themes from that study are summarized below.** (To learn more, please visit www.amerysd.k12.wi.us.)

1. The buildings and grounds need improvements and updates.

- Many building systems (such as heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, etc.) are beyond their service lives and need to be repaired/replaced, especially at the high school.
- Security systems and external doors need to be replaced to improve safety.
- Fire alarms need to be updated at the middle school.
- The brickwork and roofs at all buildings need repair or replacement.
- Many windows and doors need repair or replacement.
- Sections of flooring, ceilings, lighting, and cabinetry are worn out and need to be replaced.
- Parking lots and sidewalks at each building need repair.

2. Many classrooms and labs are outdated.

- Classrooms and labs in the high school (especially the science and agriculture areas) lack appropriate equipment and efficient space to support hands-on learning.
- Areas of the high school tech ed (“shop”), including woods and welding, do not have appropriate ventilation and need electrical upgrades.
- The schools lack spaces designed for students with disabilities.
- The middle and high school band classrooms do not comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations and do not have the appropriate acoustics.

3. Support areas need to be improved.

- The high school cafeteria and kitchen are too small to serve our student body, and equipment needs to be replaced.
- Areas of our schools are not compliant with ADA regulations, including several restrooms.
- The elementary library is too small for student groupwork and lacks access to technology.
- Additional space is needed for fitness equipment for both school and community use.

Because of the significant needs at our high school, some people have asked if the right time is now to construct a new building. However, given the cost of building new (which is estimated to be \$60 to 80 million) and feedback gathered during the community listening sessions, **the Board of Education decided that a new high school is not a realistic option.**

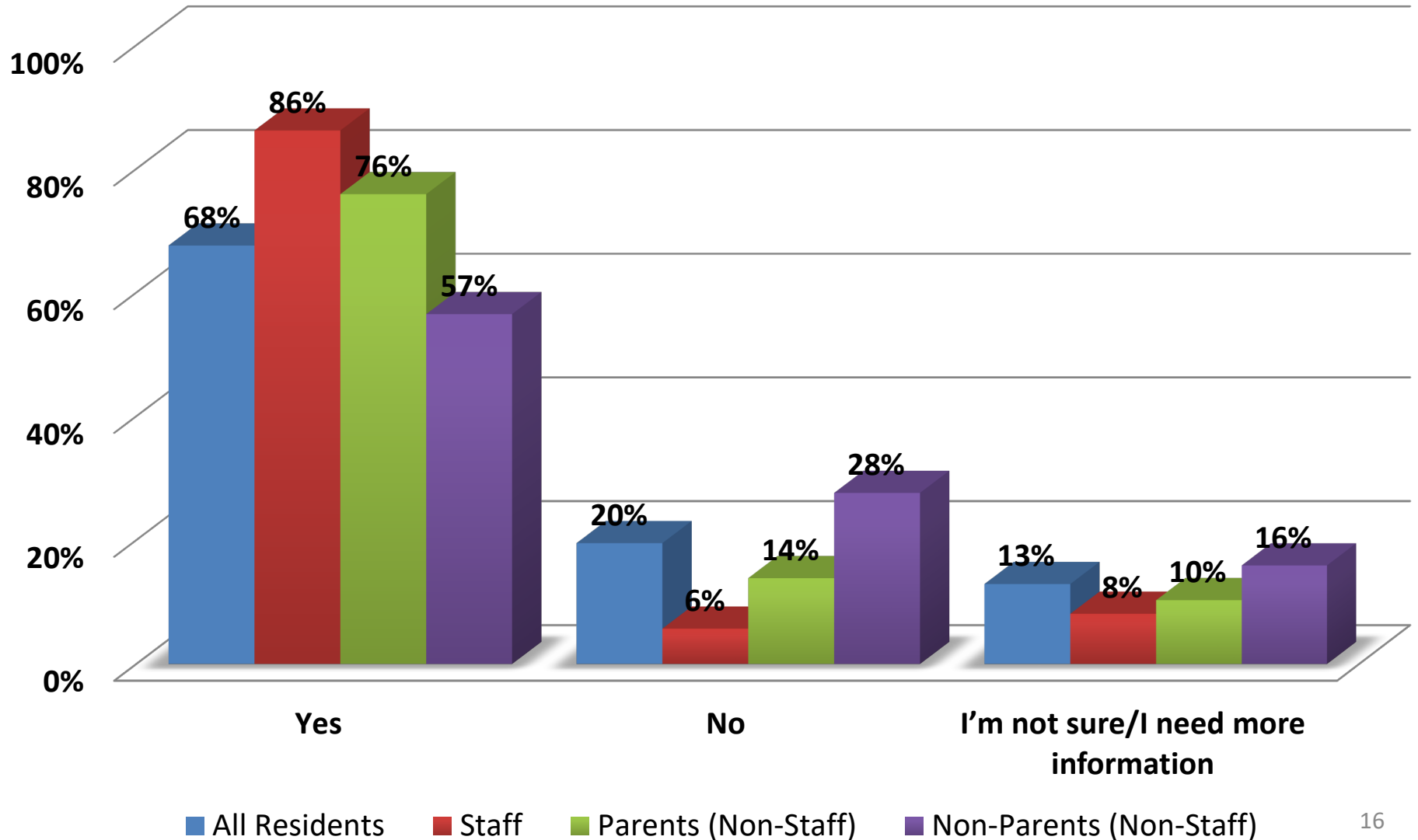
The cost to address the issues above is too large to be covered in our annual budget. Therefore, the District would need to pursue a referendum to pay for these projects.

<p>Would you support the School District of Amery pursuing a referendum to fund the issues identified above?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure/need more information</p>
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Comments/suggestions/questions:

Would you support the School District of Amery pursuing a referendum to fund the issues identified above?

(District Residents Only)



Recommended Plan

If the community supports pursuing a referendum, the District recommends the following plan. This plan was developed using the facility study, as well as the feedback we gathered during the two community listening sessions. The recommended plan includes projects at all four of our school buildings, but the most pressing needs are at the high school, which was built in 1976.

High School Projects

- ✓ Upgrade and remodel classrooms and labs, especially in the science, technology education (“shop”), and agriculture departments.
- ✓ Renovate restrooms and band rooms to comply with ADA regulations.
- ✓ Upgrade safety and security features, including sprinklers.
- ✓ Replace major building systems to improve indoor air quality and energy efficiency.
- ✓ Install a replacement generator to provide power during outages.
- ✓ Improve air circulation and electrical work in the tech ed (“shop”) area.
- ✓ Replace floors, walls, doors, and windows as needed.
- ✓ Replace roof and brick sections as needed.
- ✓ Repair parking lots and sidewalks.

The recommended plan would also include the following projects at our other schools:

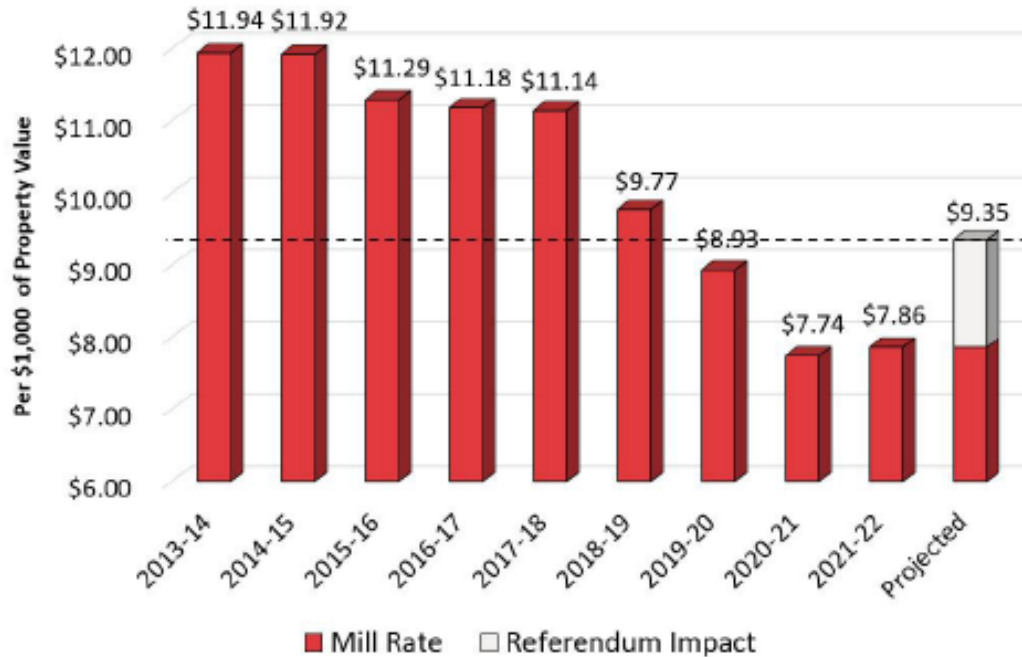
- ✓ Update heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and replace lighting to lower operating costs.
- ✓ Replace floors, doors, walls, lights, ceilings, cabinetry, and windows that have not yet been updated.
- ✓ Replace external doors at the middle school to improve safety.
- ✓ Improve the elementary school library to allow for more student collaboration, technology access, and groupwork.
- ✓ Update/refinish the gym floors at the middle and intermediate schools.
- ✓ Replace roof sections at the intermediate and elementary schools.
- ✓ Repair external brickwork at the intermediate and middle schools.
- ✓ Repair and replace the parking lot at the intermediate school.

Estimated cost of the recommended plan: \$35 million

Funding Support

The School District of Amery would need to secure \$35 million to pay for the recommended plan as described on the previous page. The Board of Education believes now is a good time for the community to consider a referendum because of the District's financial health and near historic low interest rates.

Tax Impact
Recommended Plan



Voter approval of the recommended plan would increase the tax mill rate by \$1.49 over the 2021-22 level. The new mill rate would remain below the 2018-19 level.

Would you support a \$35 million referendum to fund the recommended plan as described on the previous page?

Representing an annual tax increase of \$149 per year (\$12.42 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value. Assumes interest rates between 3.25 and 3.50%.

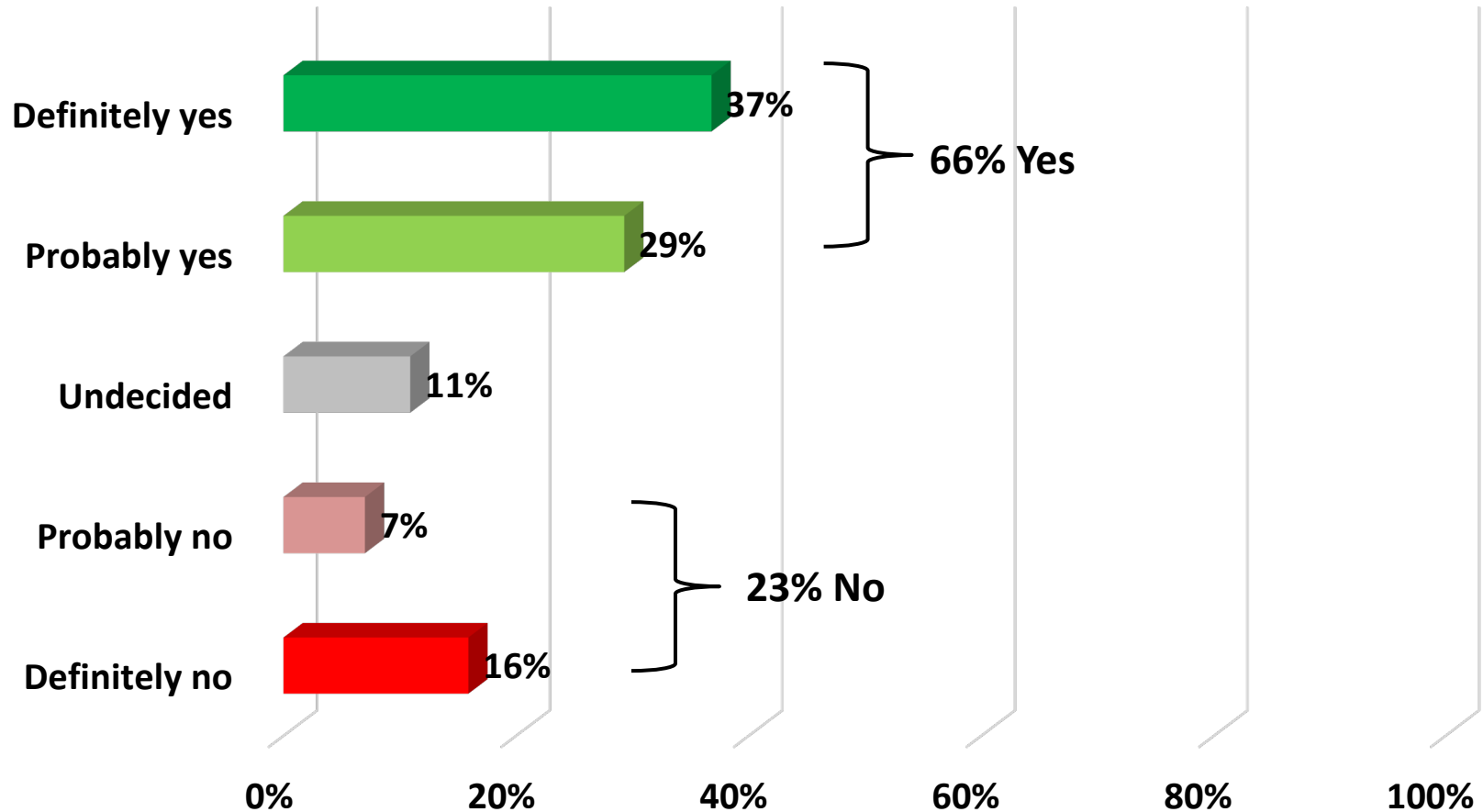
- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Undecided
- Probably no
- Definitely no

Comments/suggestions/questions:

Would you support a \$35 million referendum to fund the recommended plan as described on the previous page?

Representing an annual tax increase of \$149 per year (\$12.42 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value. Assumes interest rates between 3.25 and 3.50%.

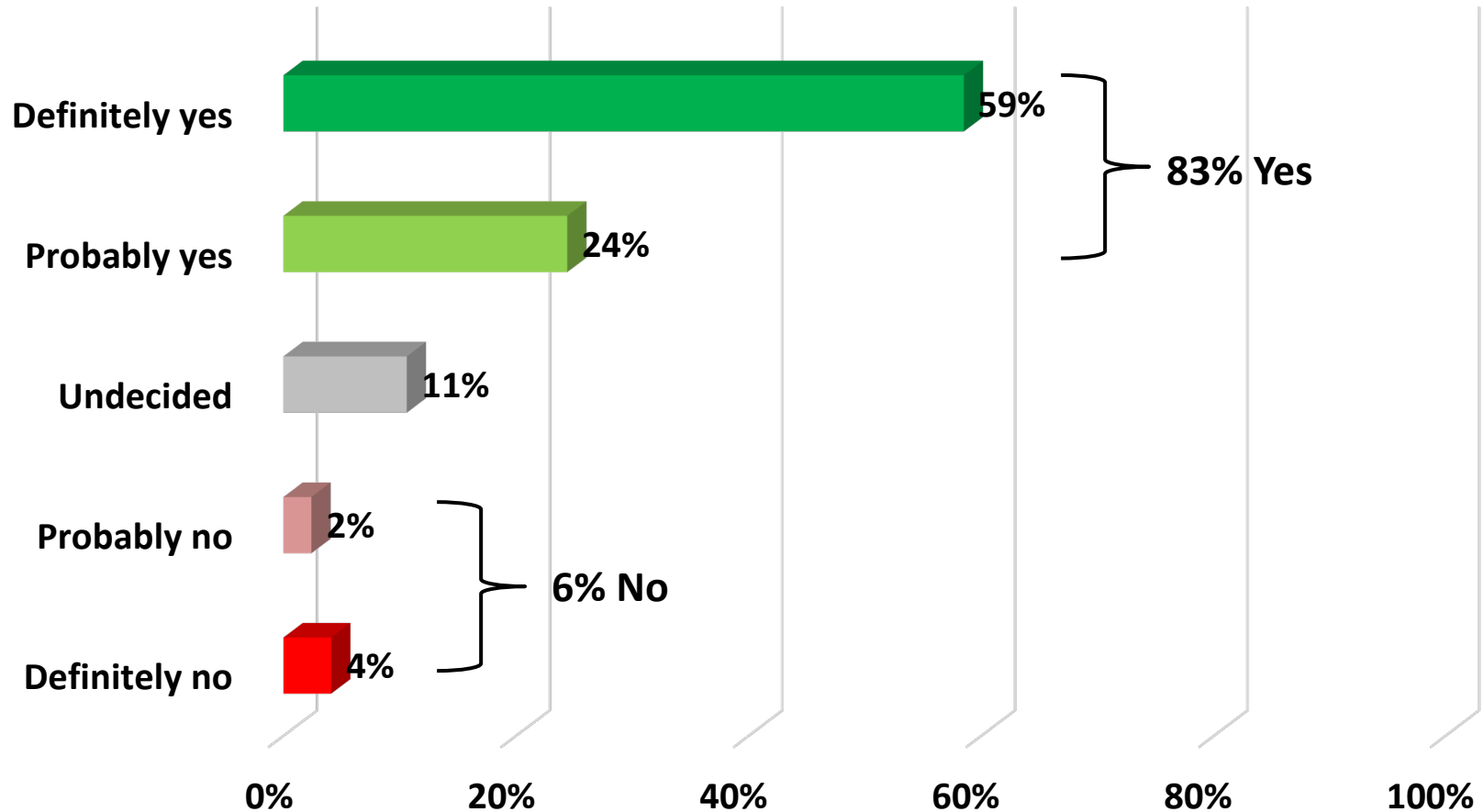
All Residents



Would you support a \$35 million referendum to fund the recommended plan as described on the previous page?

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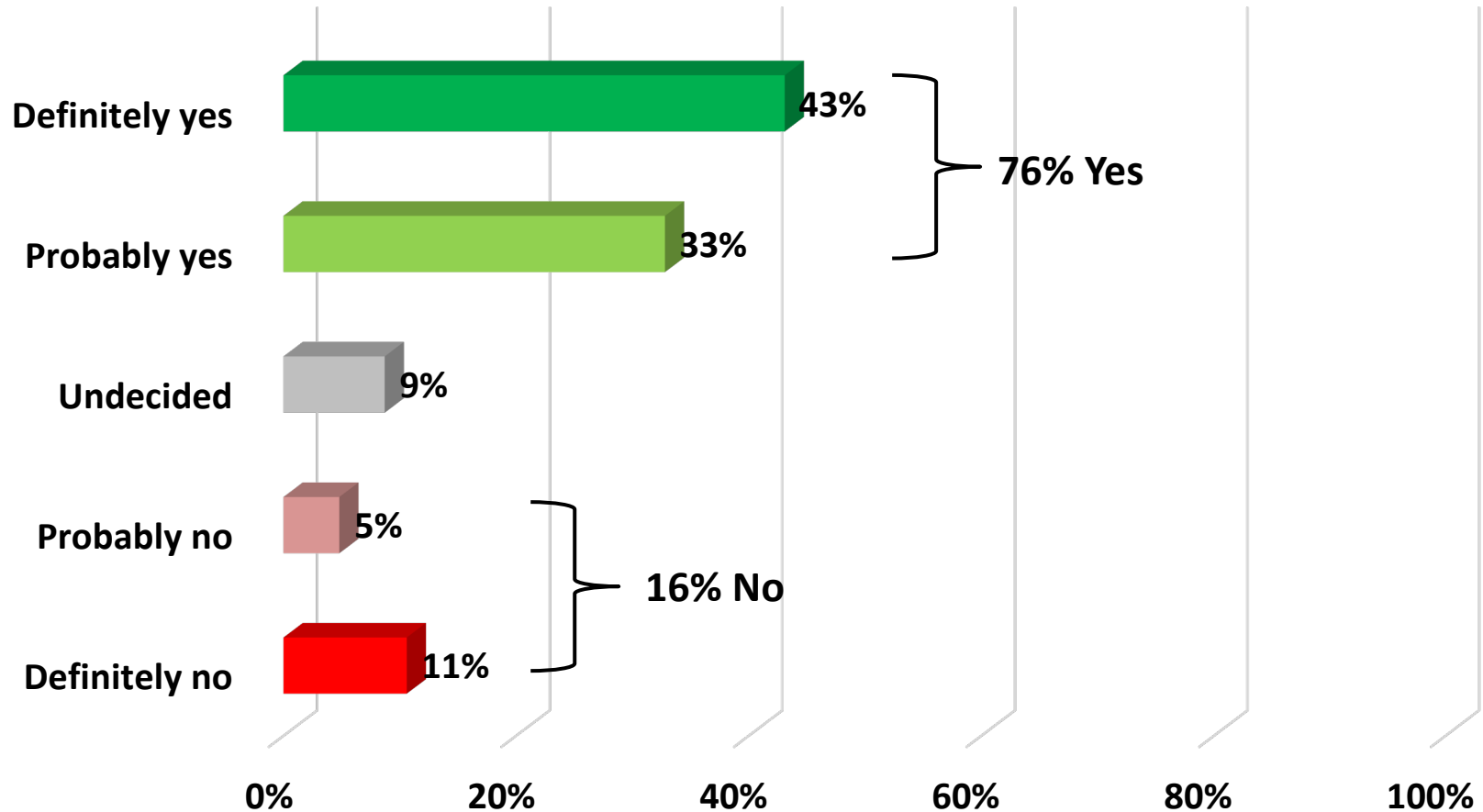
Staff Residents



Would you support a \$35 million referendum to fund the recommended plan as described on the previous page?

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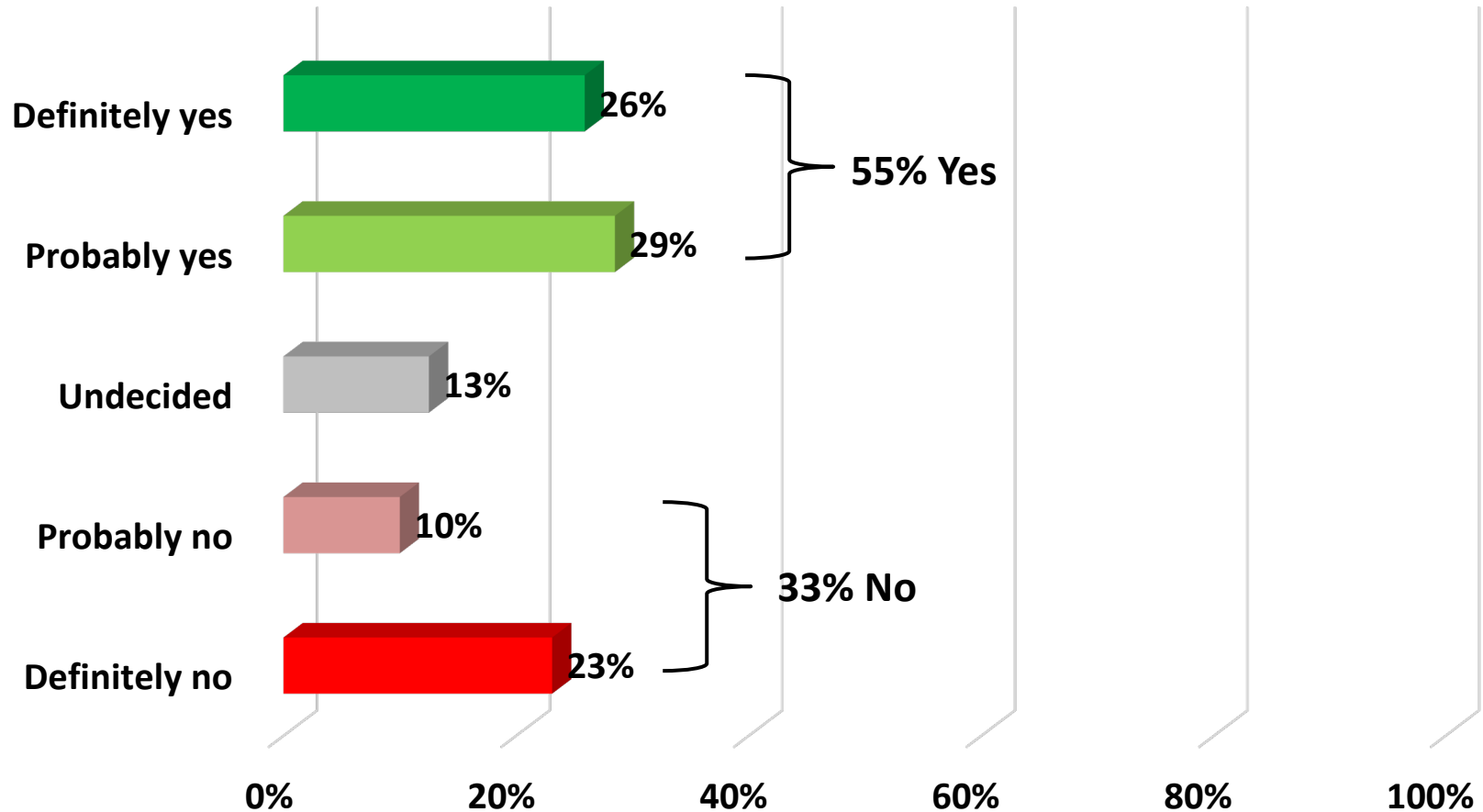
Parent Residents (Non-Staff)



Would you support a \$35 million referendum to fund the recommended plan as described on the previous page?

Representing an annual tax increase of \$149 per year (\$12.42 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value. Assumes interest rates between 3.25 and 3.50%.

Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents



Additional Projects

In addition to the recommended plan, the Board of Education is also asking for your feedback on two other projects that could be included in a facilities referendum.

Early Childhood Center

The District and community are experiencing growing demand for early childhood services/childcare. Families unable to receive these services in Amery may enroll their children in other districts, which could result in significant drops in school enrollment.

Current services could be expanded or relocated to reduce the waiting list and free up needed classroom space at the elementary school. In addition to providing early childhood services/childcare, this center would also provide before- and after-school care for school-age children. It would be designed with age-appropriate learning and active play stations, as well as space to host community education classes.

Estimated cost: \$7 million

Would you support expanding a referendum to build an early childhood center?

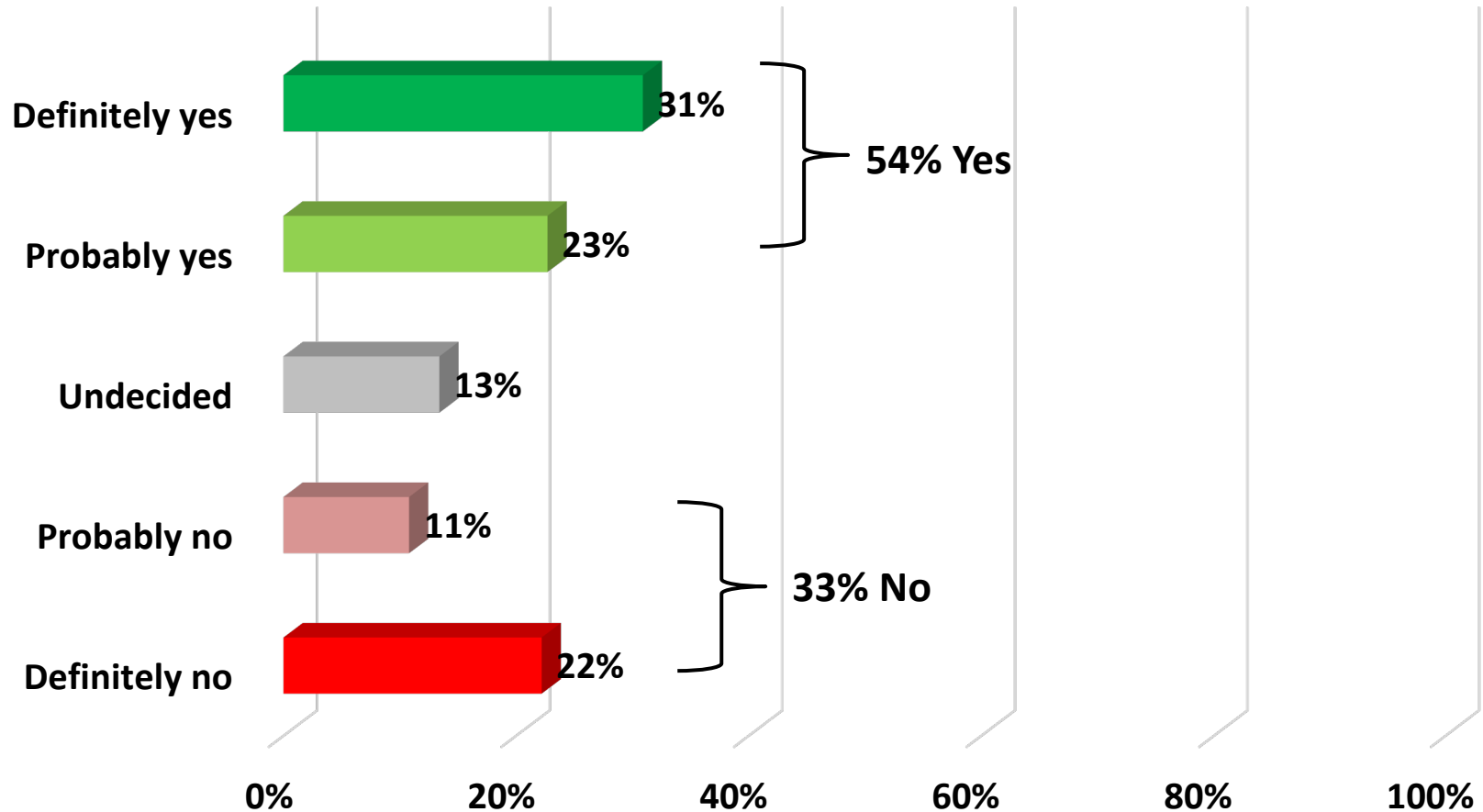
Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value.

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

Would you support expanding a referendum to build an early childhood center?

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value.

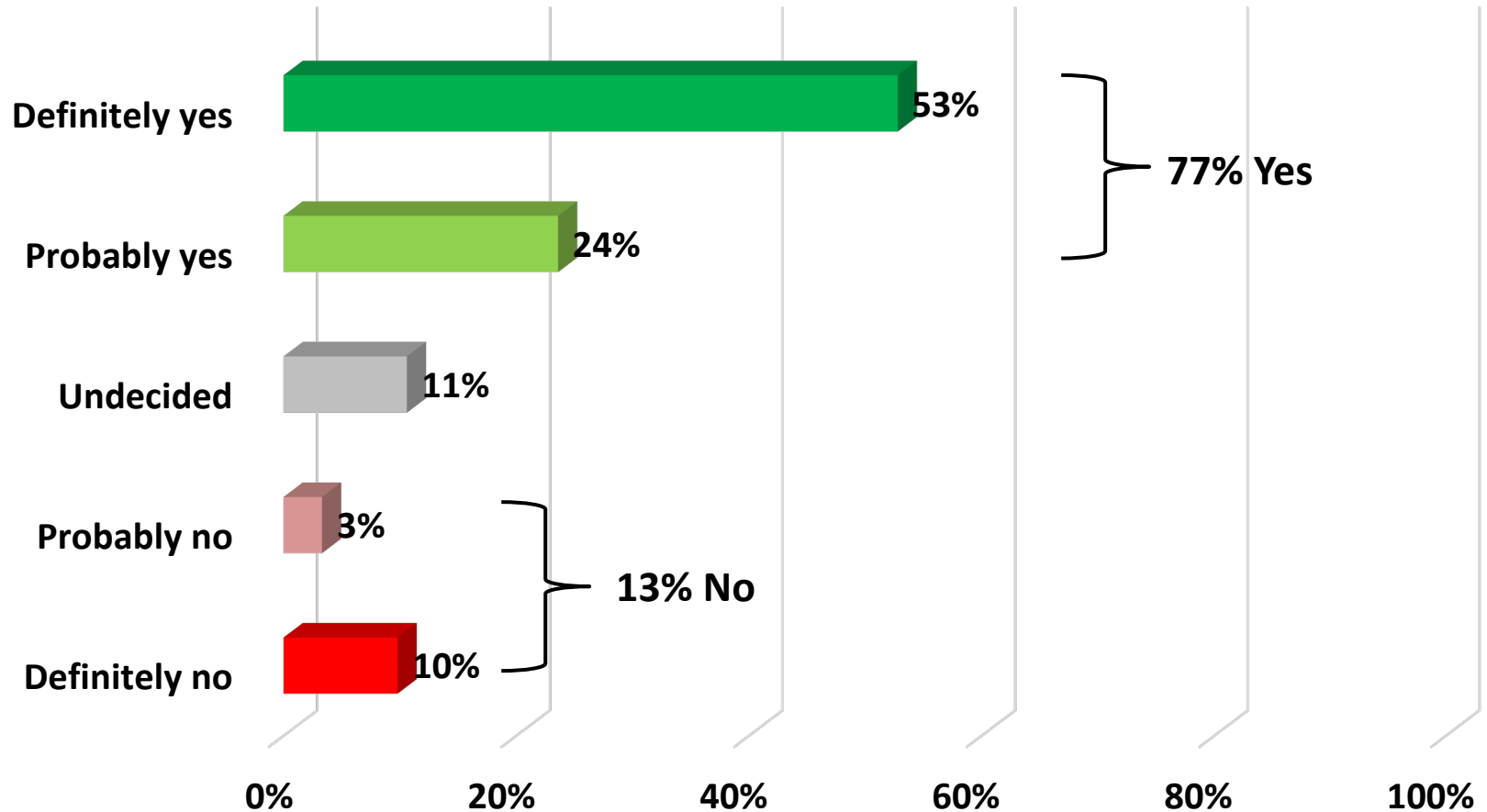
All Residents



Would you support expanding a referendum to build an early childhood center?

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value.

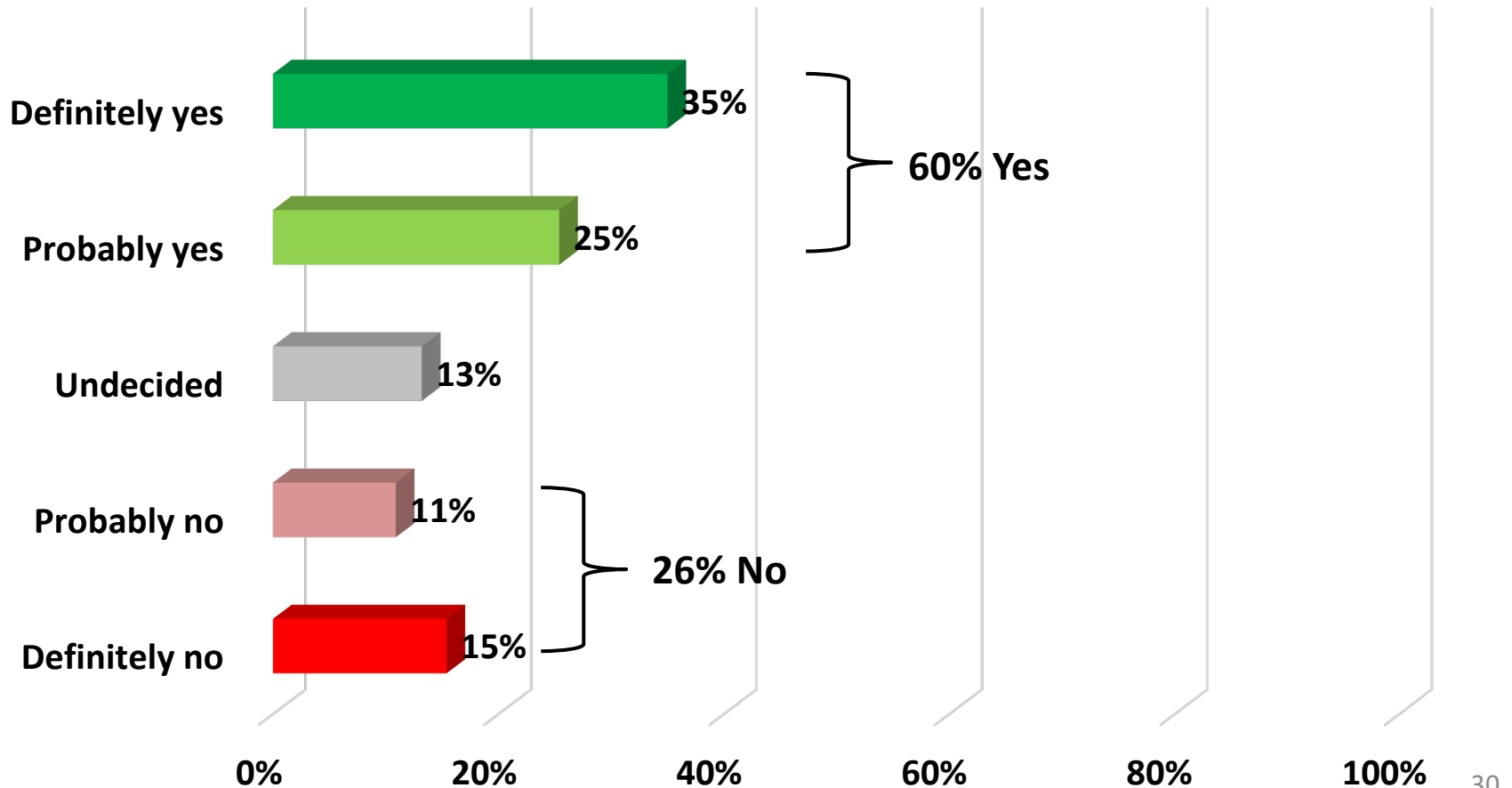
Staff Residents



Would you support expanding a referendum to build an early childhood center?

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value.

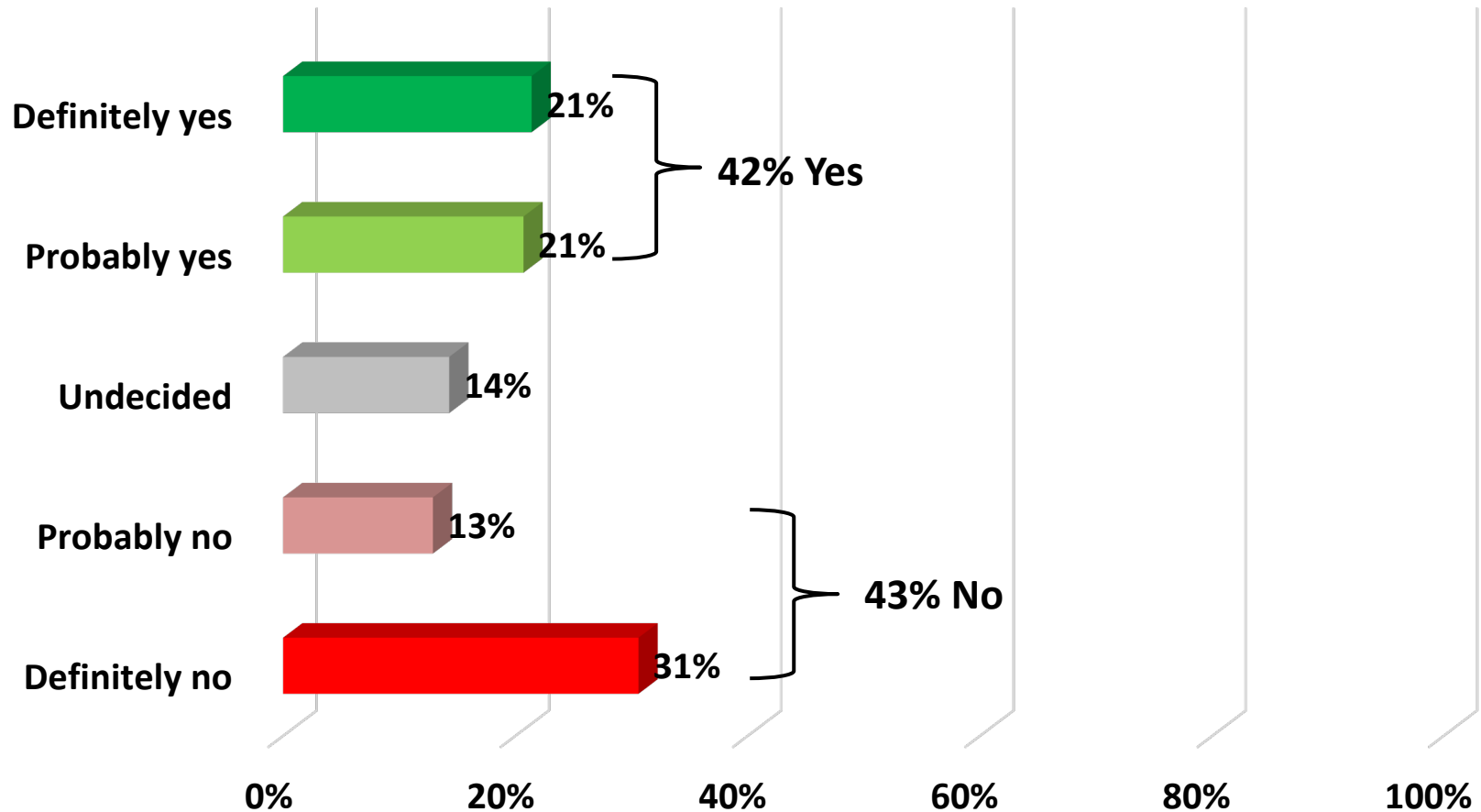
Parent Residents (Non-Staff)



Would you support expanding a referendum to build an early childhood center?

Approval would result in an additional annual tax increase of \$30 per year (\$2.50 per month) for every \$100,000 of property value.

Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents



Swimming Pool

A swimming pool could be added at the Amery school campus for approximately \$12.5 million. To accomplish this, the District would need to create partnerships with local organizations. The pool would be available year-round for both school and community use and be available for physical therapy, swim lessons, exercise classes, and general recreation/fitness.

Please note: In addition to the construction cost, these partnerships would need to secure approximately \$250,000 each year to heat, clean, maintain, and supervise the pool.

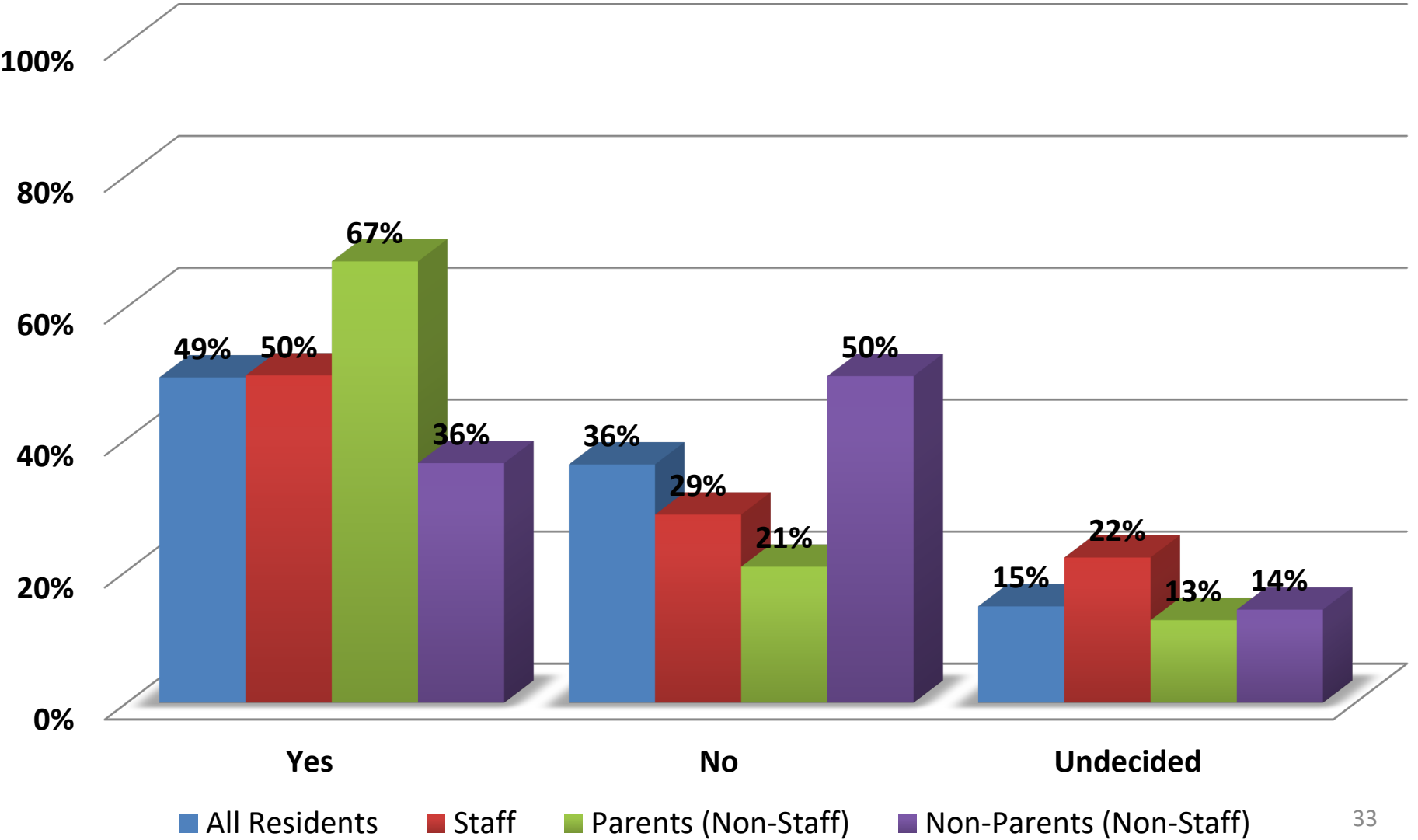
Estimated Cost: \$12.5 million

Would you support the District exploring partnerships over the next year to build a swimming pool?

- Yes
- No
- Undecided

Would you support the District exploring partnerships over the next year to build a swimming pool?

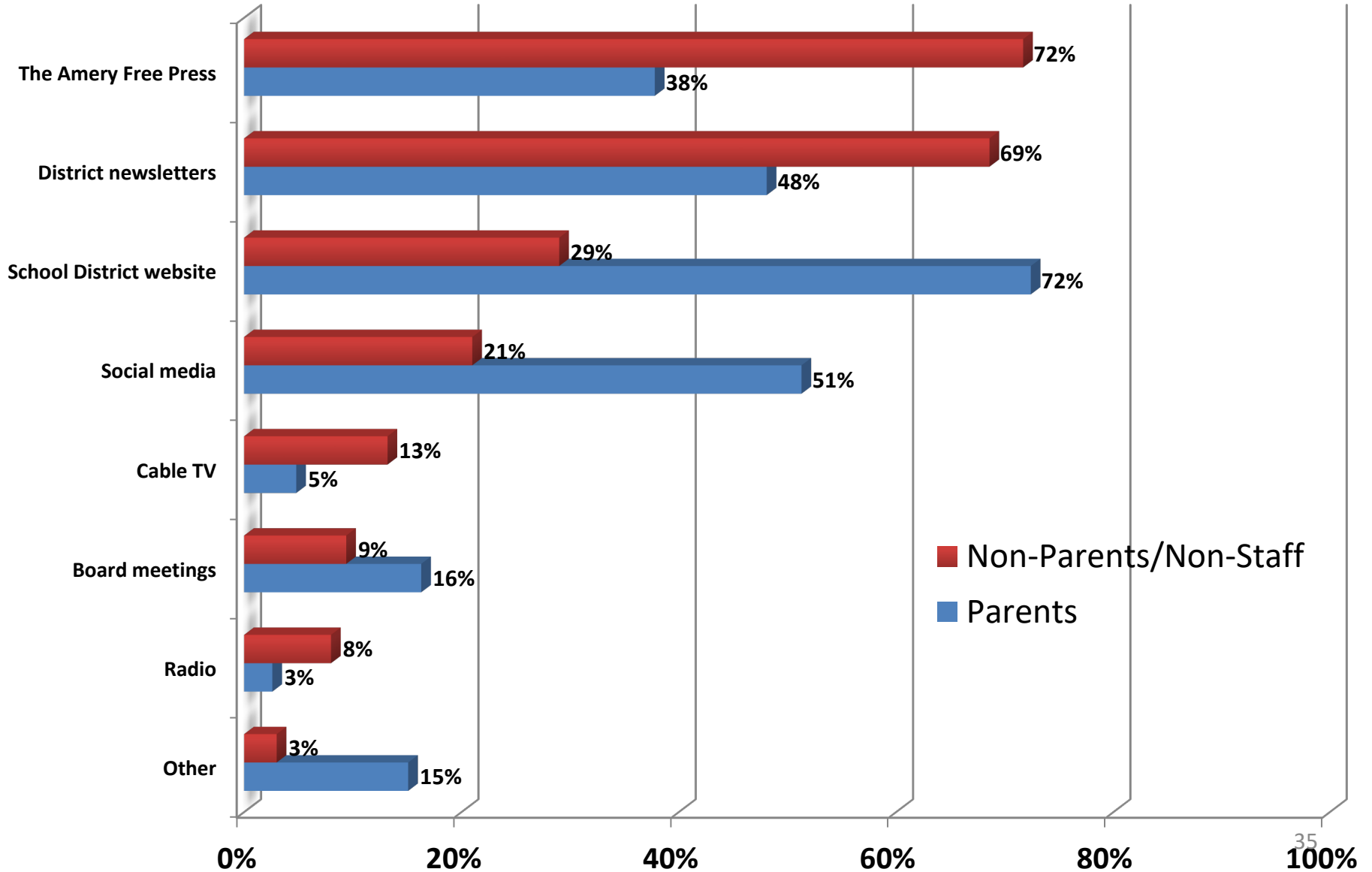
(District Residents Only)



Communication

How do you like to receive school and district information?

(Mark all that apply.)

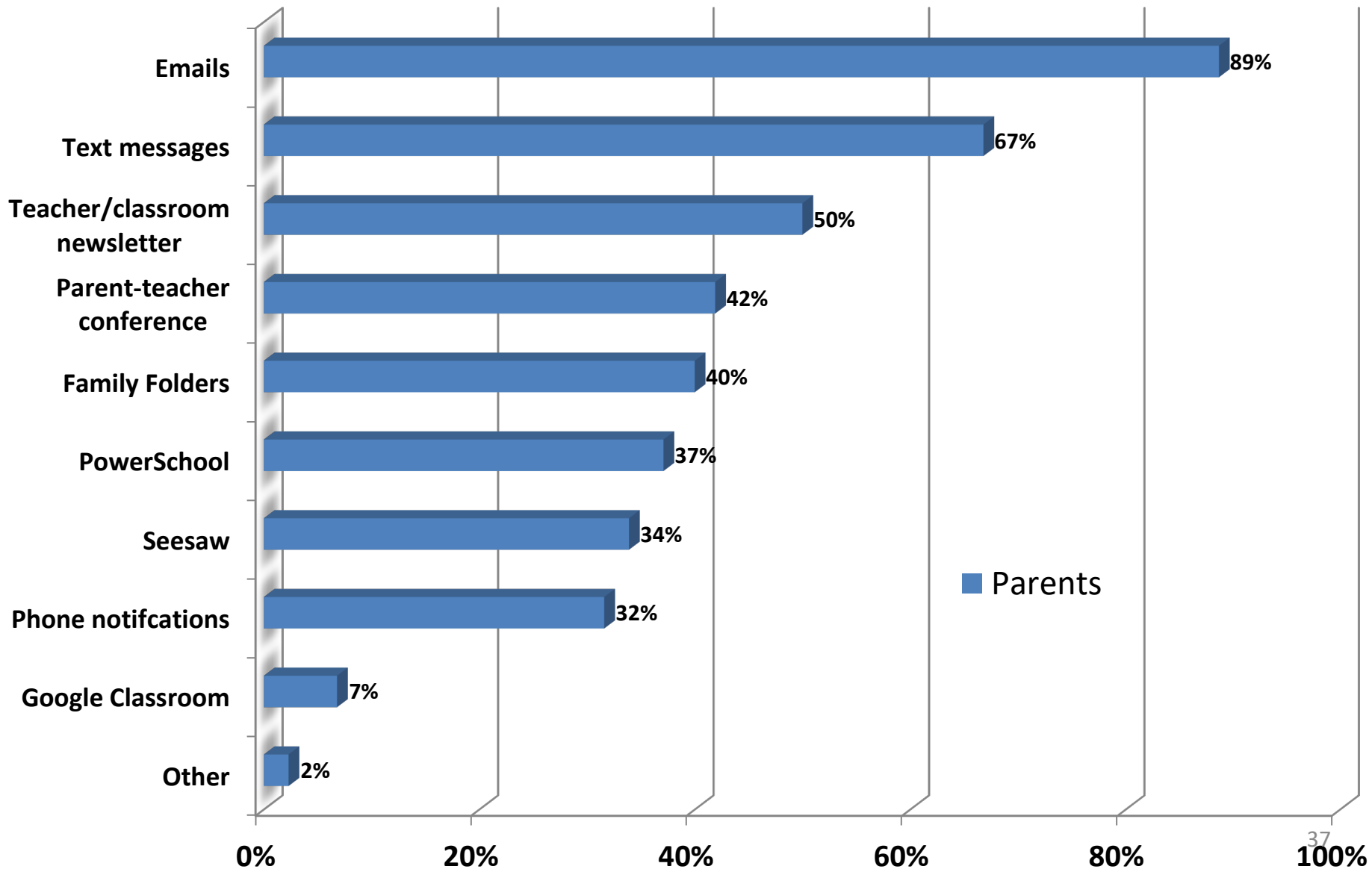


Communication

Parents Only

How do you like to receive school and district information?

(Mark all that apply.)



Overall Satisfaction

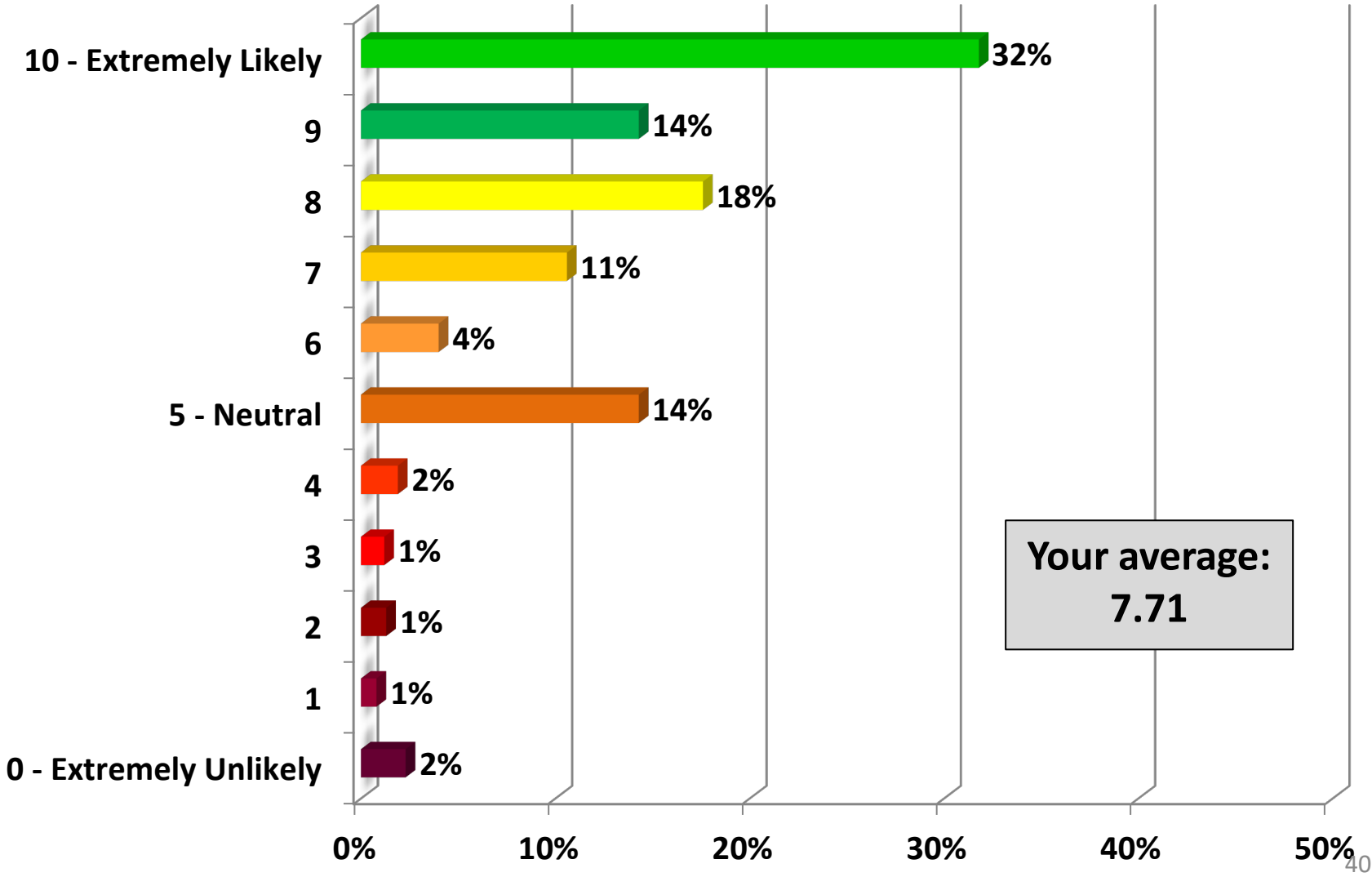
How well are we doing in each of the following areas?

Great (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)

Item	Staff	Parents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parents (Non-Staff)	Percentile Comparison (All Residents)
Delivering a high-quality education.	3.65	3.35	3.26	99 th
Building pride in the community.	3.54	3.19	3.07	81 st
Keeping the public informed.	3.5	3.05	2.78	83 rd
Managing funds appropriately.	3.45	3.06	2.71	70 th 39

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

(All Respondents)



In Review

Would the recommended plan be supported?

- Resident population assumptions:
 - Non-parent/non-staff = 75%
 - Parents = 25%
 - Staff = ~1%
- Of those responding “Definitely yes” or “Probably Yes”
 - $0.75 (55\%) + 0.25 (76\%) = \underline{\mathbf{60.3\%}}$
- Inclusion of 1/3 of “Undecided” respondents:
 - $0.75 (59\%) + 0.25 (79\%) = \underline{\mathbf{64\%}}$

What did we learn?

- A majority of all key subgroups support pursuing a referendum to update the schools.
- A majority of all key subgroups would likely support a referendum to fund the recommended plan.



What did we learn?

- There's support in concept for the early childhood center, but it may be wise to explore the project in a future phase.
- While parents would like the District to explore partnerships to build a pool, the broader community does not share this support.



What did we learn?

- The District scores above average in terms of four main satisfaction indicators (as compared to similar school districts).



Thank you!



Parent Surveys - Staff Surveys - Student Surveys - Community Surveys
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(262) 644-4300