

Community Survey Results

School District of La Crosse

Fall 2021

SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

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

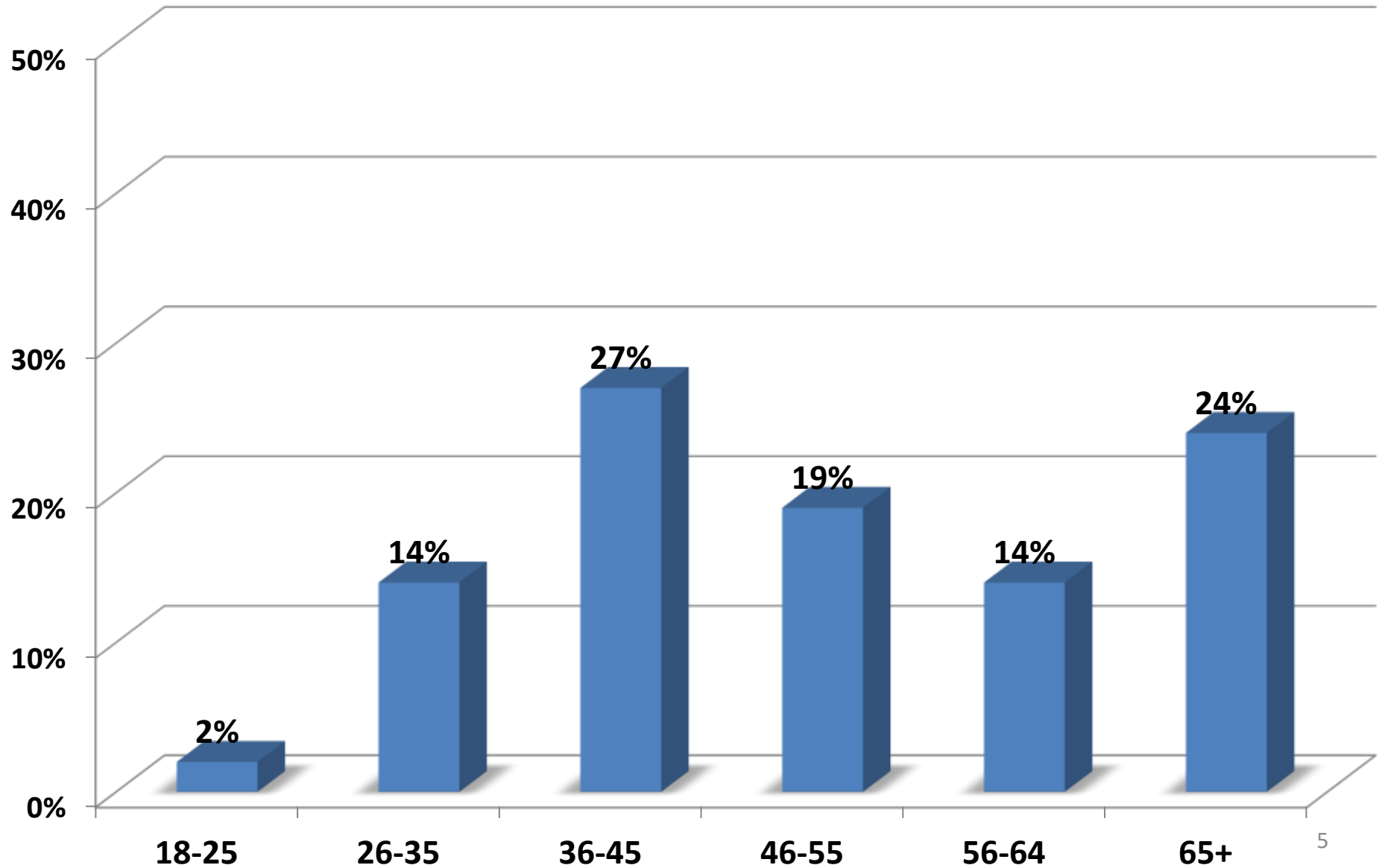
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted more than **10,000** staff, parent, student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **800** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Summary

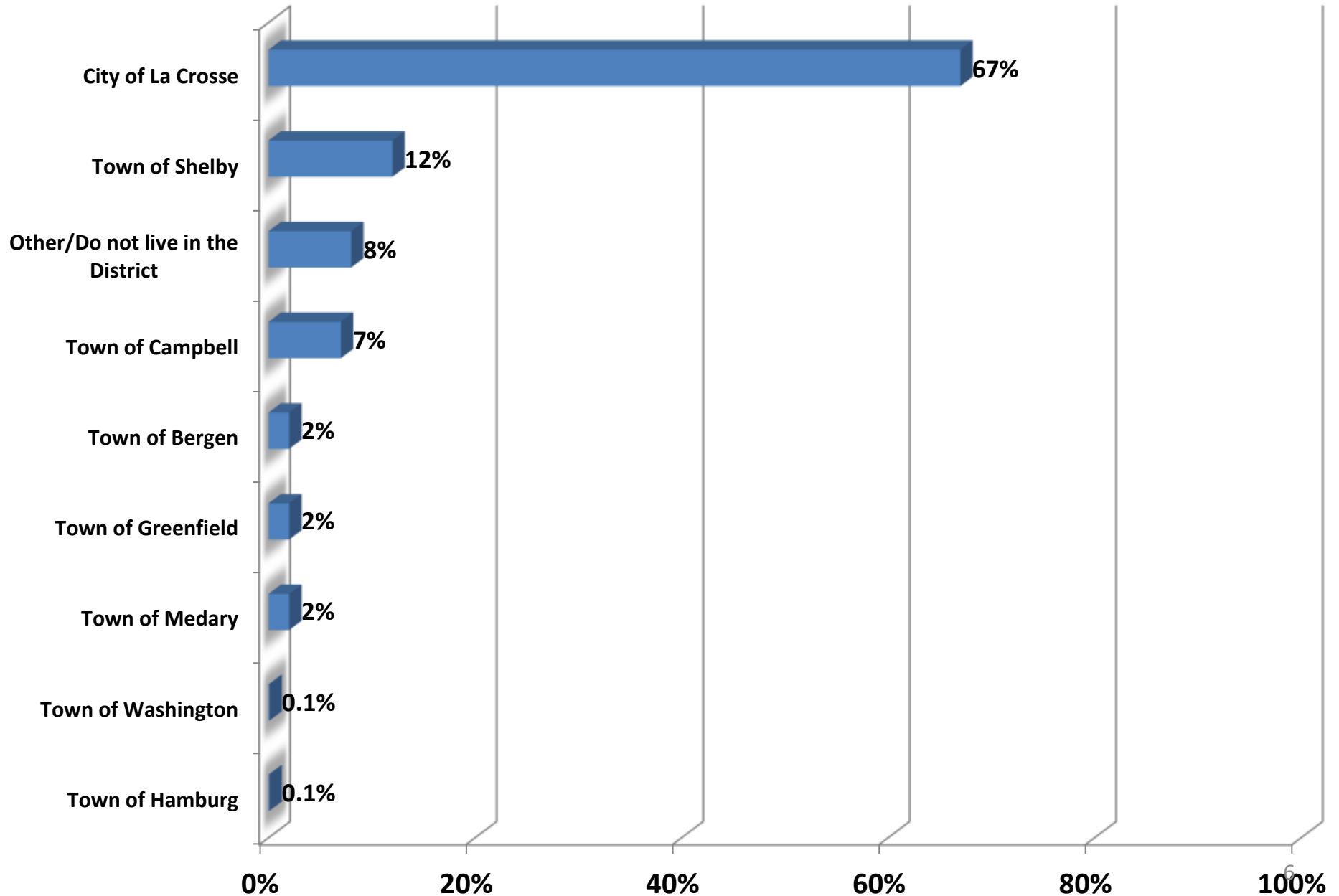
- The survey was conducted in October and November of 2021.
- District residents were mailed a paper survey.
 - Each survey included a unique survey access code for those who preferred to take the survey online.
- Total responses = 4,664 (1,335 paper)
- Response rate: 16.4%
- Margin of error: +/- 1.5%

Respondent Information

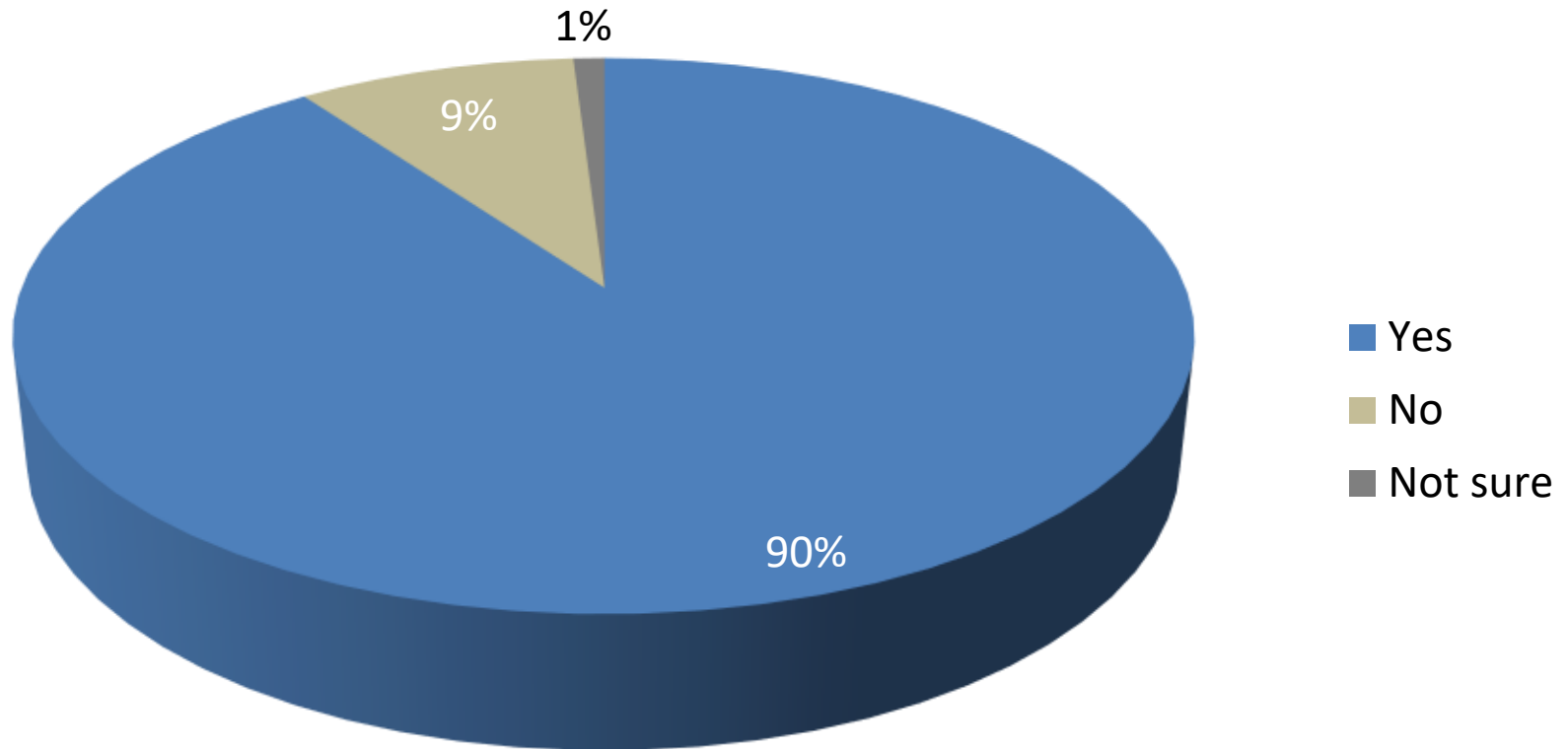
What is your age?



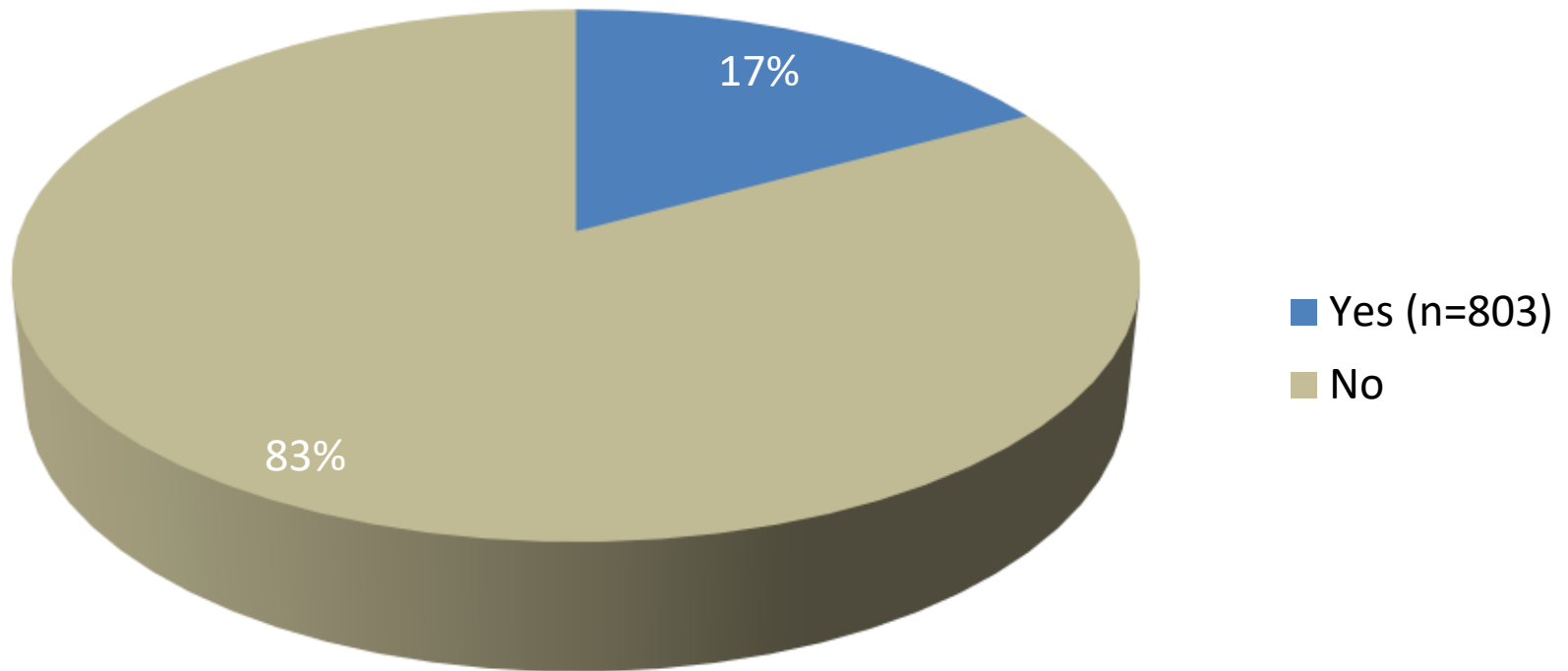
In which municipality do you reside?



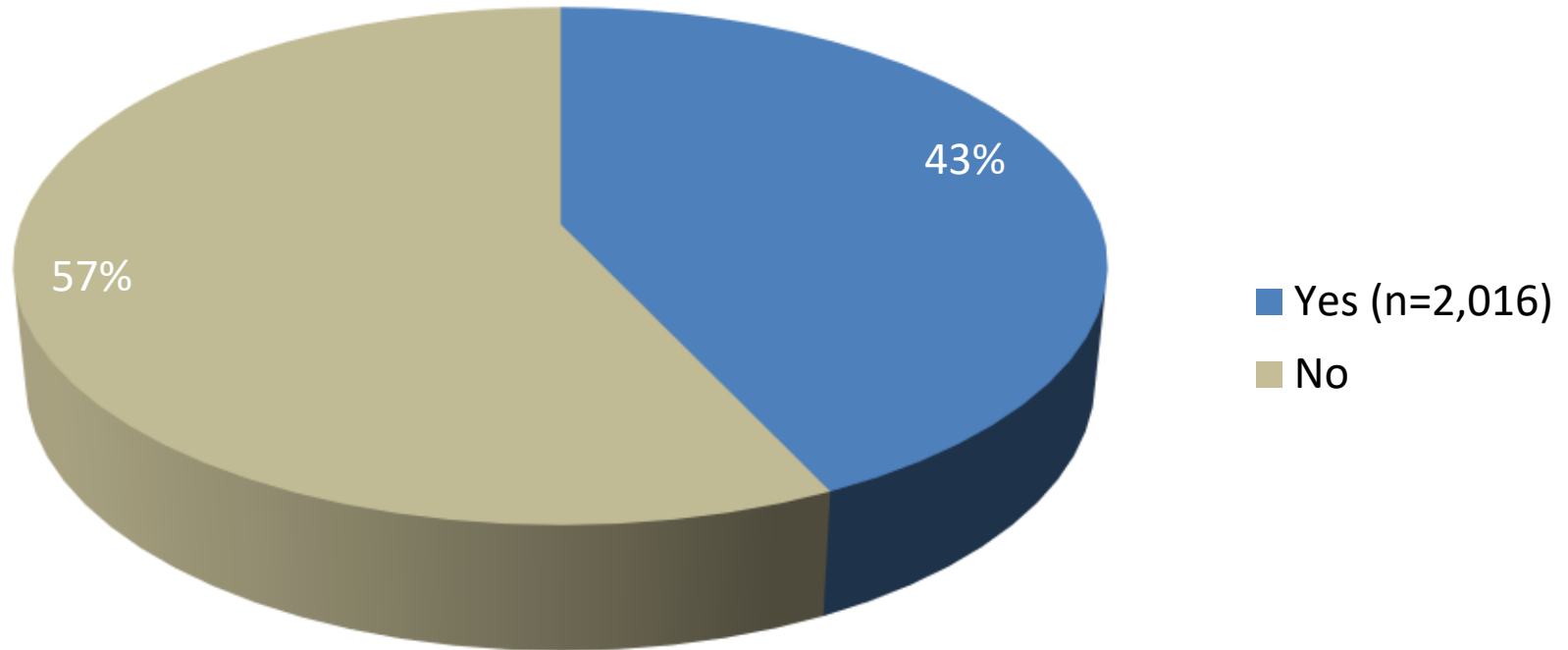
Is your primary residence in the School District of La Crosse?



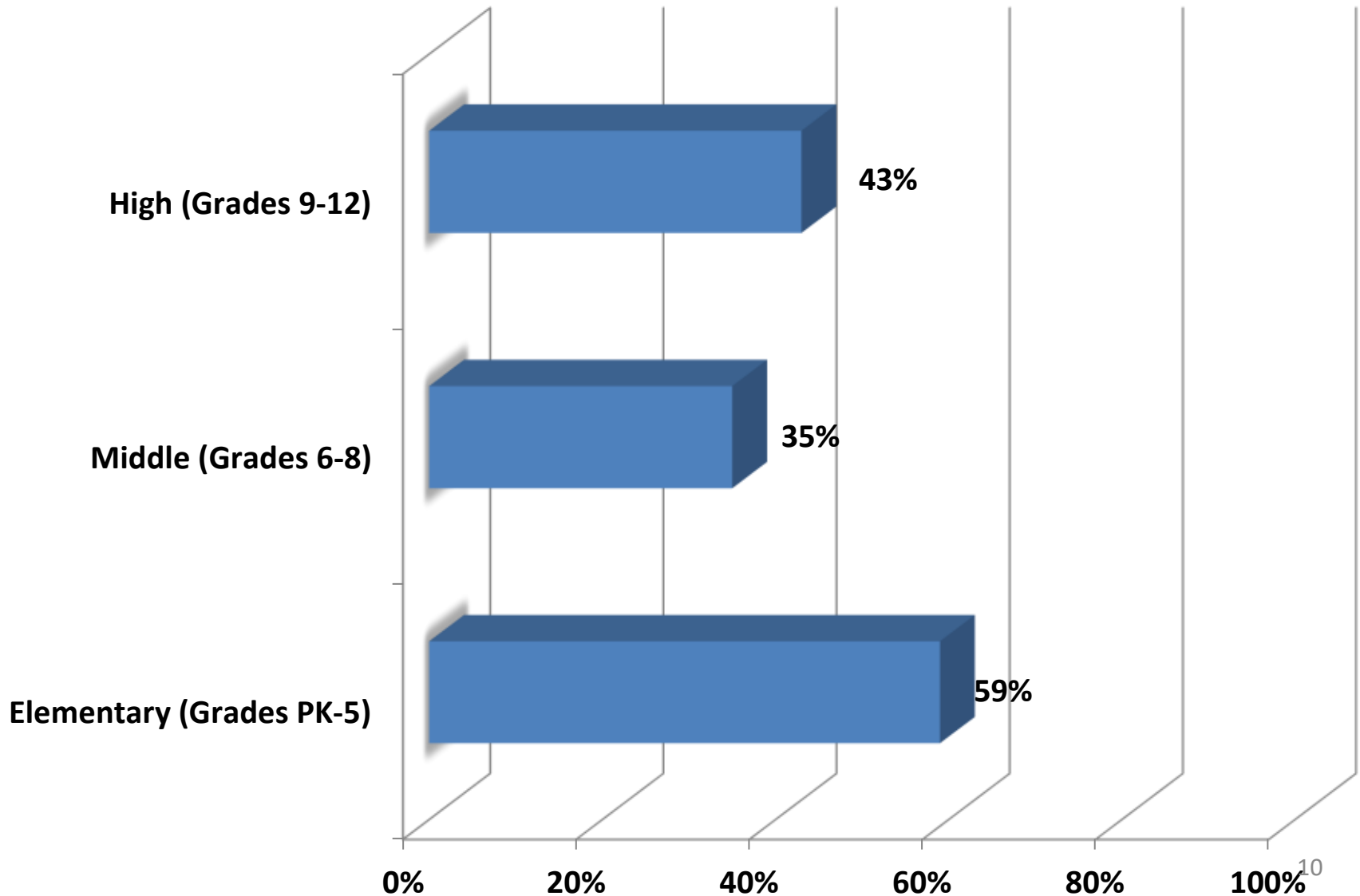
Are you an employee of the School District of La Crosse?



Do you have children attending school in the District?

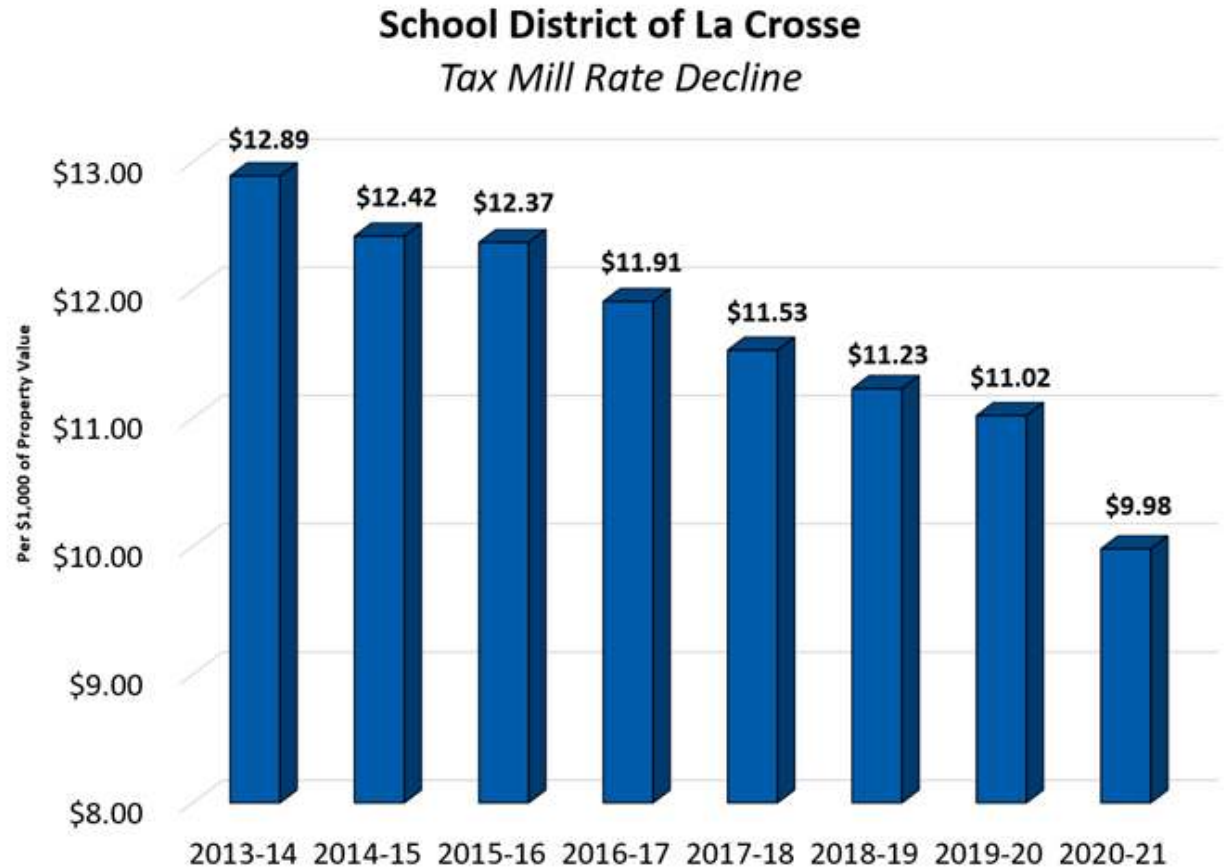


If you do have school-aged children, what grade level are they? *(Select all that apply.)*



Financial Background

The District works very hard to control expenses and make decisions to improve our finances. In fact, our mill rate (which is used to calculate the school district's share of local property taxes) has **dropped by more than 20 percent over the past eight years, saving taxpayers \$291 for each \$100,000 of assessed property value.**



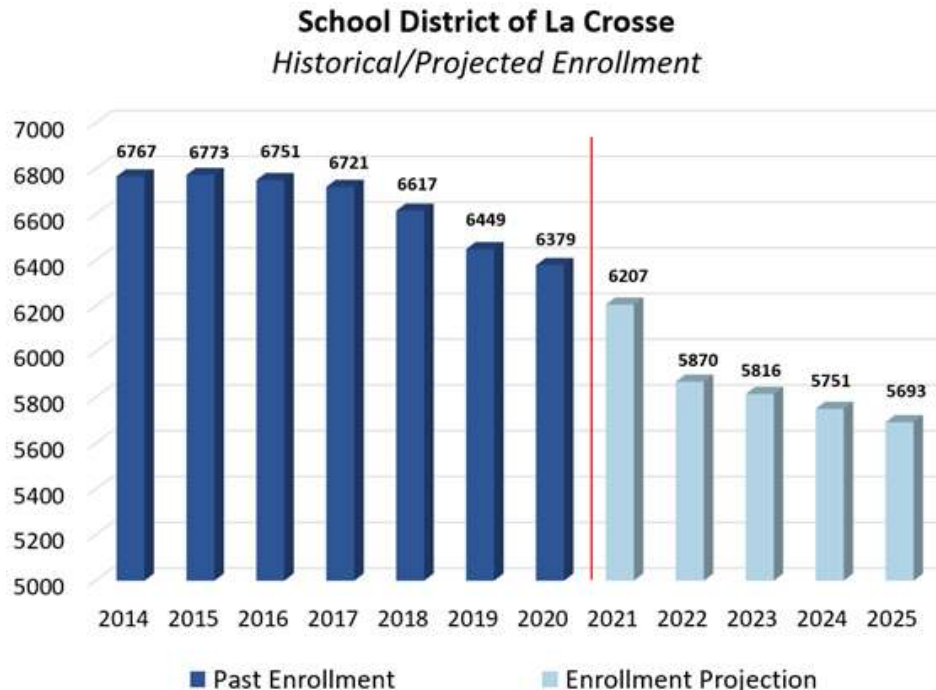
Financial Planning Background

The following sections help explain some of the challenges facing the District.

We have excess capacity.

We currently serve just over 6,000 students in 15 buildings. During the past 20 years, student enrollment has dropped by more than 1,400 students. Based on a recent study, **enrollment will likely continue to decline** for the next ten years.

Additionally, it is not possible to selectively heat and maintain classrooms. **Thus, money is spent on areas that are either not being used or are underutilized.**



Our classrooms and support spaces are outdated.

Teaching and learning have changed significantly since some of our schools were built 80 years ago. These older buildings are difficult to renovate/update. Some issues include:

- Classrooms and labs are too small for both large-group instruction and small-group student collaboration/group work.
- Some schools lack a dedicated cafeteria. In these cases, the gym is used, which requires the daily set-up/take-down of tables and creates scheduling challenges for physical education.
- Dedicated space is needed to better serve students with disabilities.
- Classroom technology does not meet the needs of today's learning standards.

We have difficulty meeting the needs of our high school students.

Having two high schools makes it challenging to provide students equitable access to courses in technical education (“shop”) and athletics (because of site limitations). In addition, Advanced Placement/college prep classes and other electives are sometimes not scheduled when they do not meet minimum class size requirements.

Our buildings are aging.

Regular maintenance helps us extend and sometimes exceed the expected lifespan of our schools. Five of our schools were built before 1940. These older schools are more expensive to maintain, heat, and clean. Many building systems throughout the District (such as heating, electrical, plumbing, roofs, windows, etc.) are inefficient and have reached or exceeded their service life.

In addition, because of the age of many of our buildings, we need updates to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, which would improve access to classrooms, support areas, and restrooms.

We have too many schools.

As seen in the chart below, we are already the smallest district in Wisconsin with two high schools. Similar-sized districts typically have two middle schools. We operate three. Similar districts have seven or fewer elementary schools. We have nine.

Comparisons with Similar Districts in 2019 (before COVID)													
	Elmbrook	Wauwatosa	Stevens Point	Fond du Lac	Neenah	Oak Creek-Franklin	La Crosse	Beloit	West Bend*	Howard-Suamico	DC Everest	Verona	Hudson
Enrollment	7401	7231	7159	7050	6702	6472	6449	6347	6309	6101	6017	5741	5609
High Schools	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Middle Schools	2	2	3	3	2	2	3	4	2	2	2	2	1
Elementary Schools	5	9	9	9	9	7	9	6	5	5	7	4	6
Total	9	13	13	13	12	10	14	11	8	8	10	7	8

*West Bend operates two high schools in one building.

Right-sizing

Right-sizing

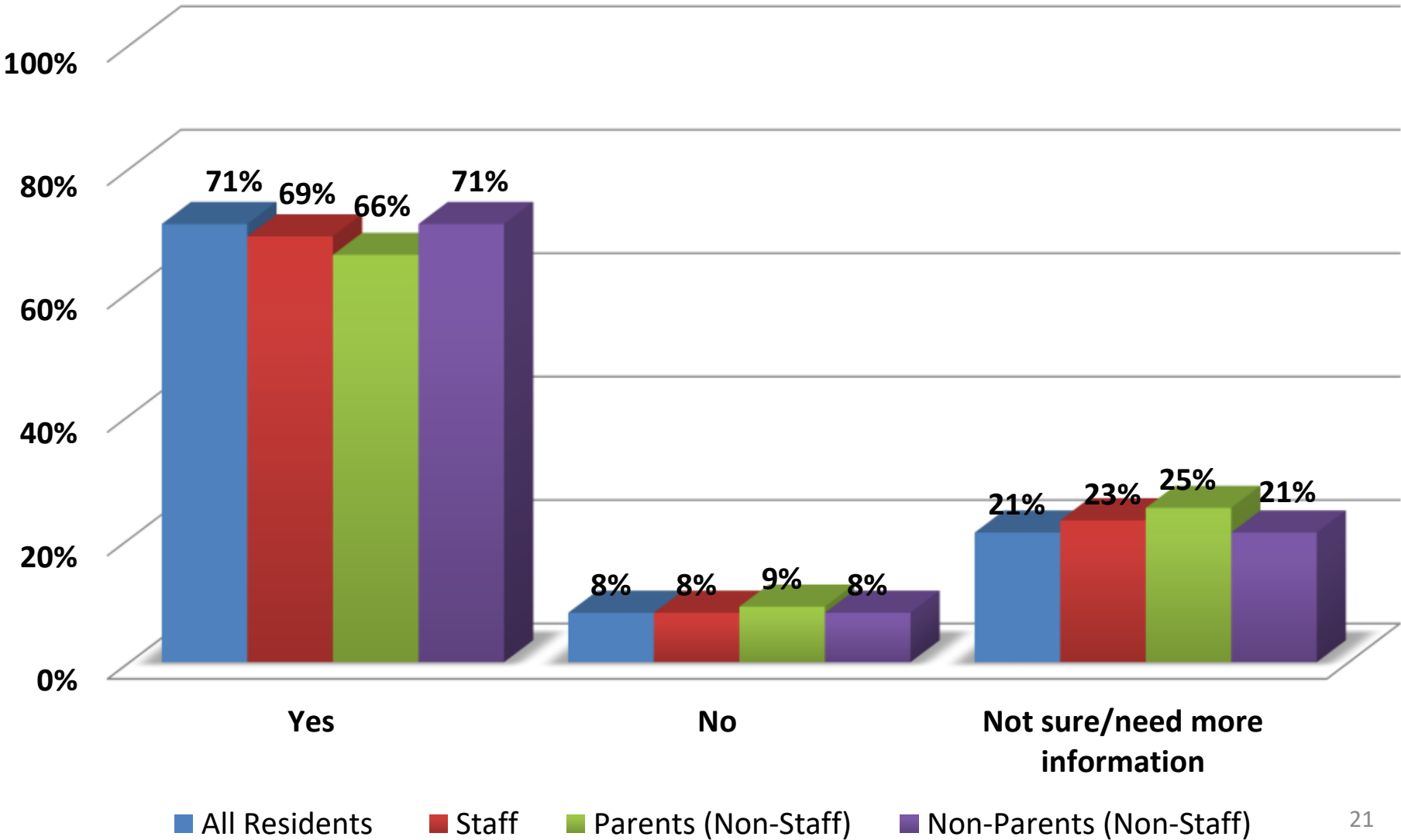
The District believes maintaining all our schools is not a smart use of taxpayers' dollars. To help save money, the District is planning to close the Hogan Administrative Center in the next two years. Longer-term, we would like to develop a facility plan to right-size our District by:

- 1) **Closing buildings:** To reduce operating costs and eliminate future maintenance expenses.
- 2) **Consolidating operations:** To improve efficiencies and provide more opportunities for students.
- 3) **Renovating/building schools:** To create more modern and supportive learning environments.

Please note, if the District pursues the plan as described above, we will maintain the same class size policy.

Would you support a long-range plan to right-size our District based on the actions above?

(School District Residents Only)



Middle School Level

School	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance (\$ millions)
Lincoln	1924 1958, 1973, 1991, 1997	319	484	\$5.1 M
Logan	1939 1957, 1962, 1971, 1979, 1986, 1998	412	758	\$6 M
Longfellow	1939 1946, 1965, 1973, 1997, 2018	523	692	\$7.4 M

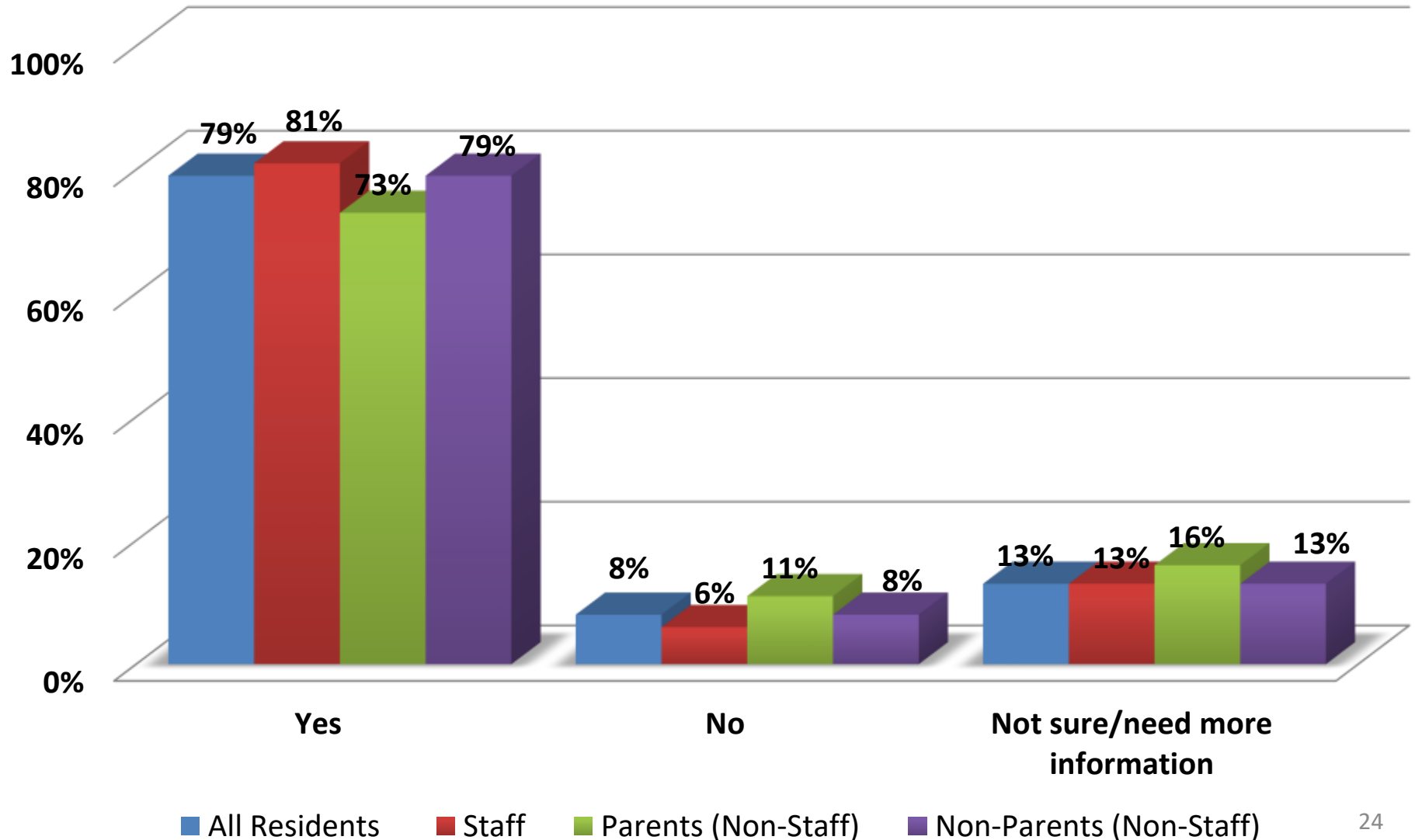
Summary: The middle school level is the most urgent need across the District. Some of these issues include the following:

- Remodeling options with these older buildings are very limited and costly.
- Each site is small, with limited parking and green space. The average site is 4.2 acres, and the recommended size for a middle school is 15 to 20 acres.
- It is more expensive to heat, clean, and maintain three schools, when only two are needed.

Closing one middle school would make it easier to share staff and provide students with more consistent and expanded programming.

Would you support a plan to consolidate from three to two middle schools?

(School District Residents Only)



High School Level

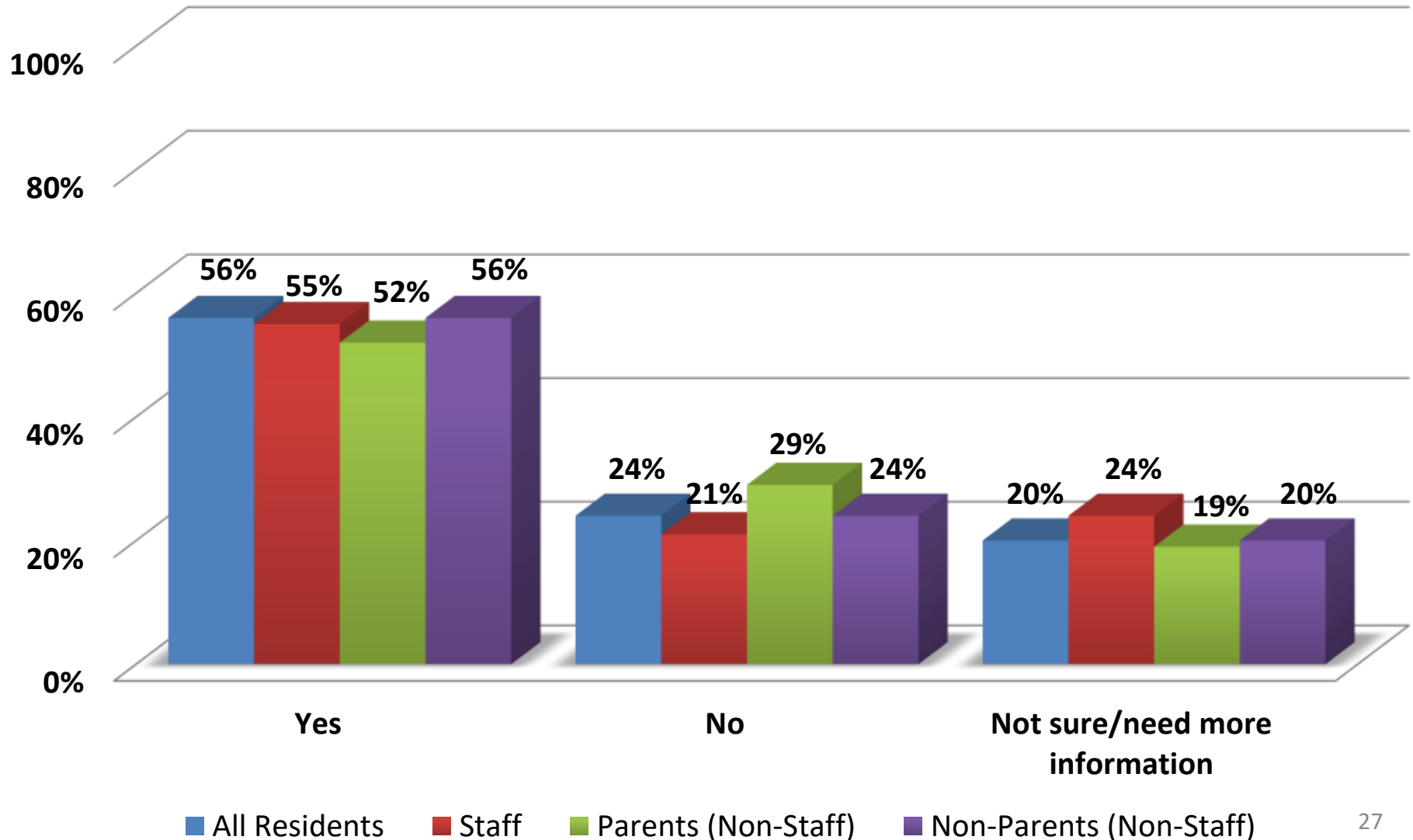
School	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance (\$ millions)
Central	1967 1988, 1996	1020	1560	\$2.9 M
Logan	1979 1987, 1994, 1996, 1997	781	1072	\$3.0 M

Summary: If the community supports right-sizing the District, we will need to decide if we should continue to run two high schools or consolidate to one. If we move to one campus, we would:

- Need to find a centrally located large parcel of land.
- Save money annually, as a result of having one less building to heat, clean, and maintain.
- Be able to convert the Logan and Central buildings into middle schools. This would immediately upgrade the experience for our 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, including better access to career and technical education spaces, music and performance areas, higher quality athletic facilities, and more modern classrooms.
- Be able to provide students expanded access to elective courses and technical education (shop) classes, such as automotive, culinary, agriculture, modern manufacturing, and robotics.
- Be able to provide more equitable access to performance spaces, aquatic centers, and collaborative learning spaces.

Would you support the District exploring consolidating to one high school campus?

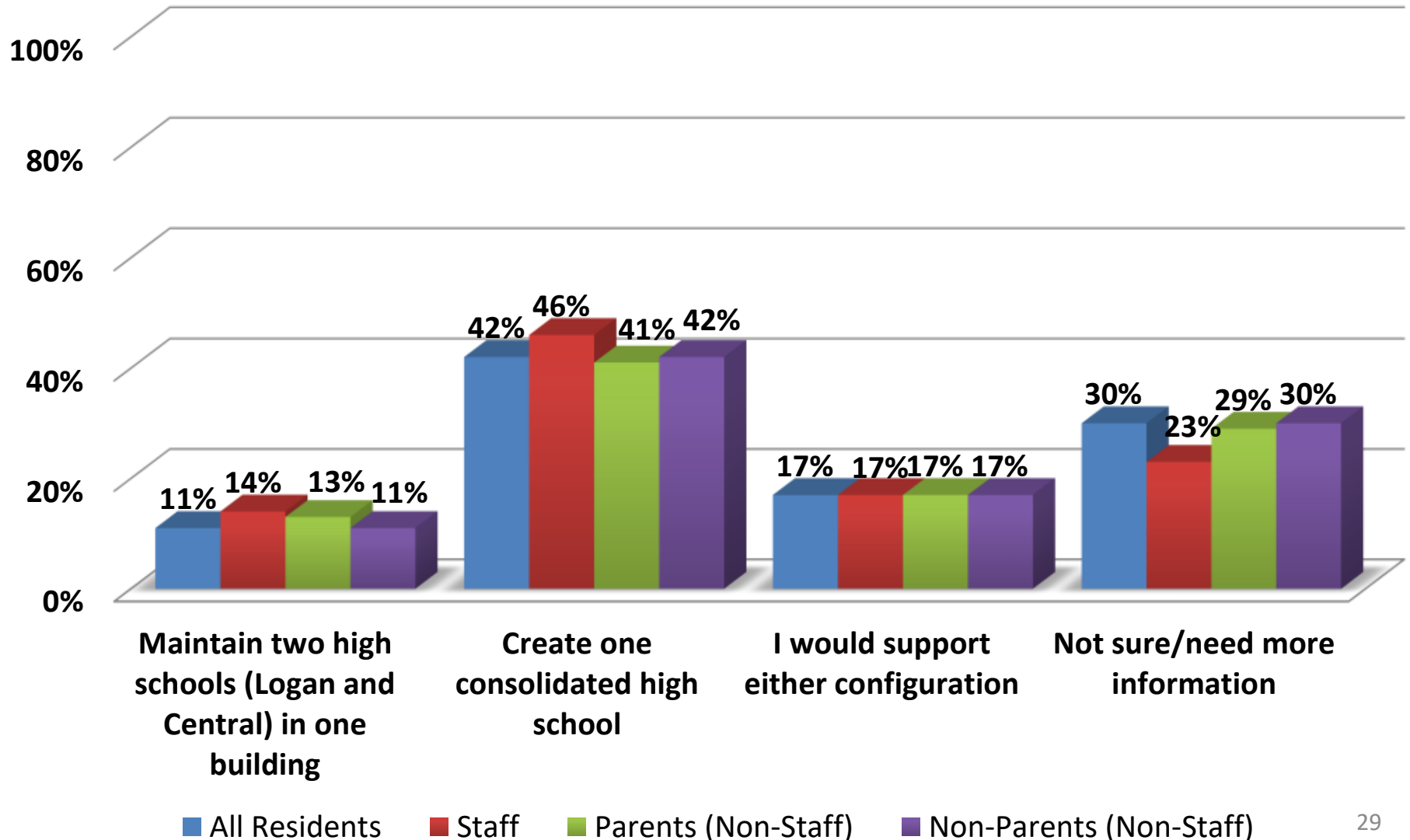
(School District Residents Only)



If a new high school was built, we could maintain our two high school programs with the same names, mascots, and unique identities in one building. This approach would be similar to how the West Bend School District is configured (East and West). These two high schools exist in the same building. Although this option brings its own unique set of challenges, we could maintain two separate athletic programs, while still making more classes available for students and better utilizing specialized areas such as a pool and auditorium.

If the District consolidated to one high school campus, what advice would you give?

(School District Residents Only)



Elementary School Level

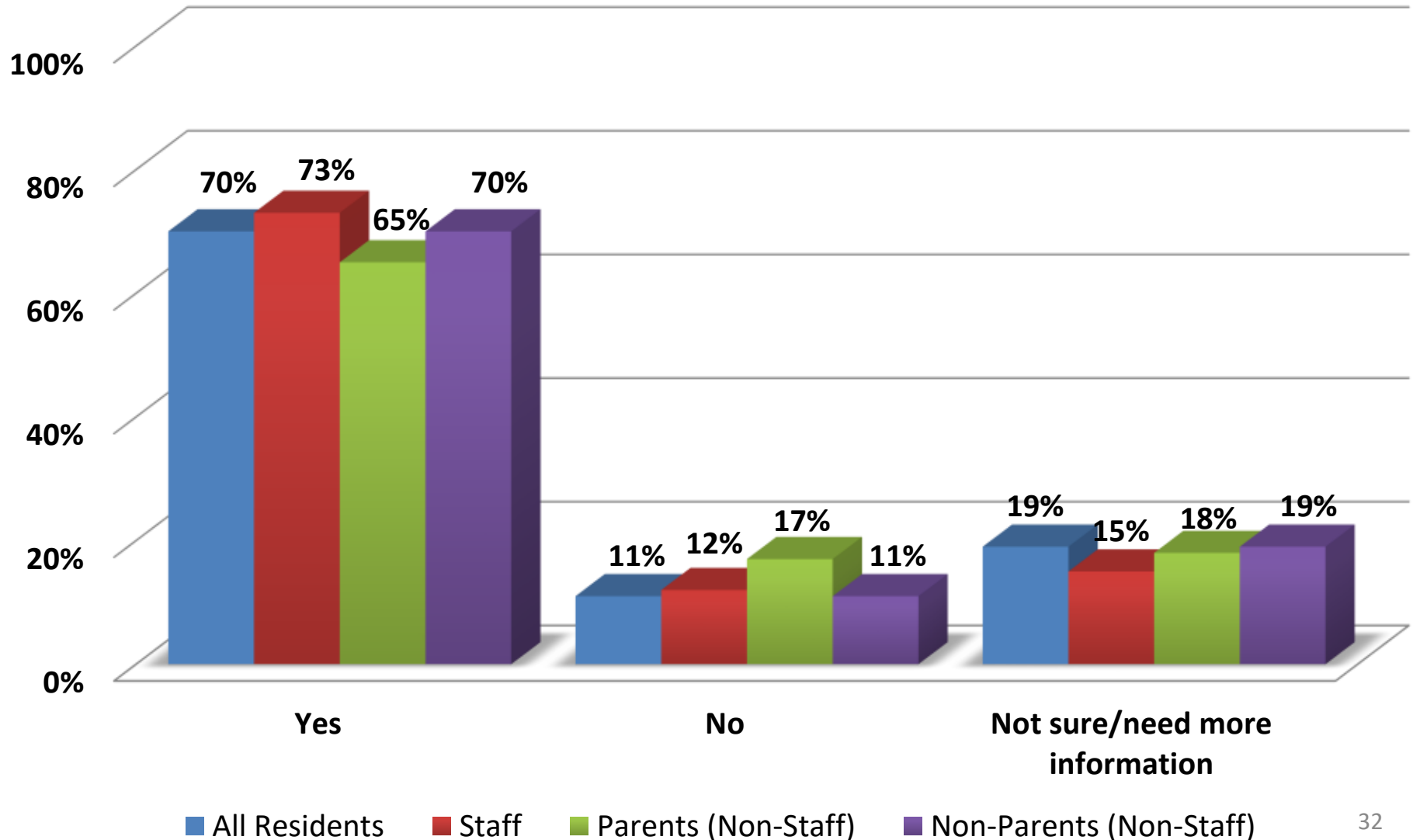
Buildings	Year Built Additions	2020-21 Enrollment	Capacity	Maintenance
Emerson	1939 1956, 1972, 1992, 1993	299	346	\$3.6 M
Hamilton/SOTA I	1961 1984, 2021	290	315	\$1.3 M
Hintgen	1968 1971	285	388	\$2.0 M
North Woods International	1992	320	345	\$1.0 M
Northside/Coulee Montessori	2014	428	525	\$300,000
Southern Bluffs	1992	313	362	\$1.3 M
Spence	1953 1955, 1962, 1973, 1992, 1994	359	385	\$3.4 M
State Road	1957 1959, 1969, 1989	300	293	\$4.0 M
Summit Environmental	1954 1972	289	360	\$1.7 M

Summary: The elementary school level has the following issues:

- Several elementary buildings have very small sites, which limits the ability to separate parent/bus traffic and provide adequate parking and playgrounds.
- These older buildings lack flexible learning environments and specialized areas to serve students with disabilities.
- Because of their age, remodeling options are very limited and costly.
- Gyms and cafeterias are outdated and small and do not support the needs of the schools or community.

Would you support a plan to reduce the number of elementary schools?

(School District Residents Only)



Overall Satisfaction

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

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

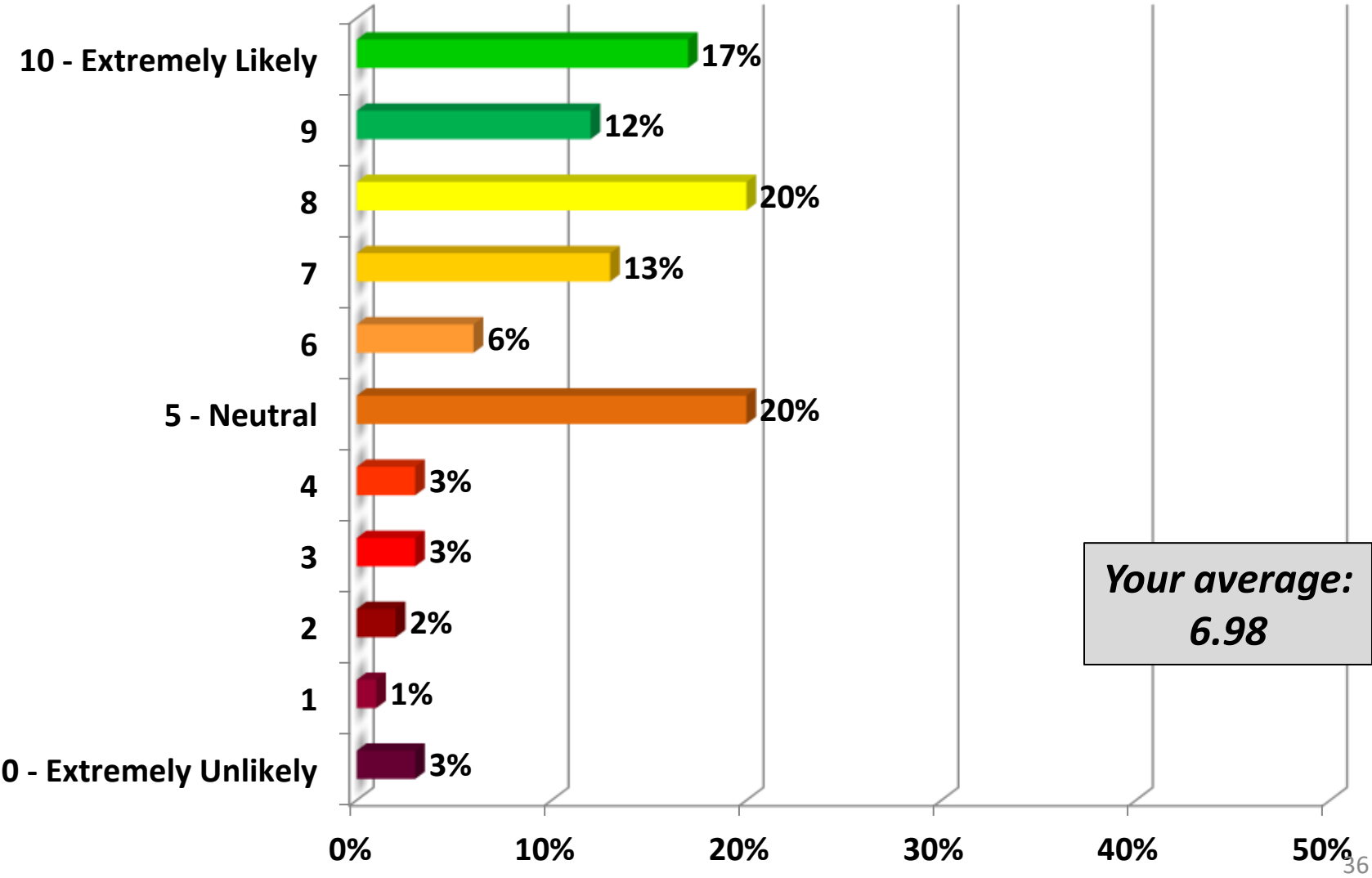
Item	Agree Percent	Average
Delivering a high-quality education	82%	3.08
Keeping the public informed	73%	2.93
Managing funds appropriately	61%	2.66
Building pride in the community	70%	2.87

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)
Delivering a high-quality education	3.18	3.13	3.00
Keeping the public informed	2.94	3.08	2.75
Managing funds appropriately	2.47	2.80	2.64
Building pride in the community	2.81	2.91	2.83

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



Thank you!



Parent Surveys - Staff Surveys - Student Surveys - Community Surveys
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