West Lafayette Community School Corporation

2023 Community Survey
Summary of Results

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Survey outline

- Survey included interviews with 400 registered voters residing within the school corporation boundaries.
- Interviews were completed between August 21st and September 2nd.
- Survey included 35 questions; average interview length was 10 minutes.
- Approximate margin of error is ±4.8%.

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Who we called

- The interview process included demographic targets intended to provide a representative sample of voters residing in the school corporation.
- To the extent that any demographic dimension was under- or over-sampled, sample weights were adjusted to compensate.

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Who we called *(cont.)*

- Demographic targets included:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Parent status
  - Voting history
- Cell phones and homeownership were tracked but were not demographic targets.

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Survey structure

- The main body of the survey was split into two sections:
  - The first section measured opinions about the school corporation, its performance and its standing in the community.
  - The second section asked about a potential renewal of the school corporation's referendum funding, including impacts of funding on schools and programs.
- Additional questions asked how people received information regarding the school corporation.
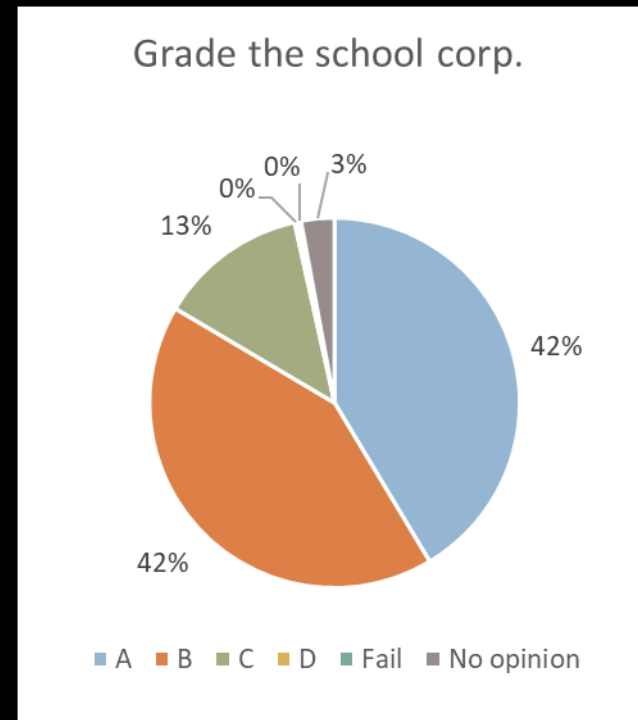
Grading the school corporation

"Students are often given the grades of
A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work.
Suppose the public schools themselves, in your
community, were graded in the same way.

What grade would you give to the
public schools in West Lafayette?"

Grading the school corporation *(cont.)*

- 84% of participants gave the school corporation a grade of A or B.

- Less than 1% gave grades of D or Fail.

- 3% had no response to offer.

Grade the school corp.

- A
- B
- C
- D
- Fail
- No opinion

42%
42%
13%
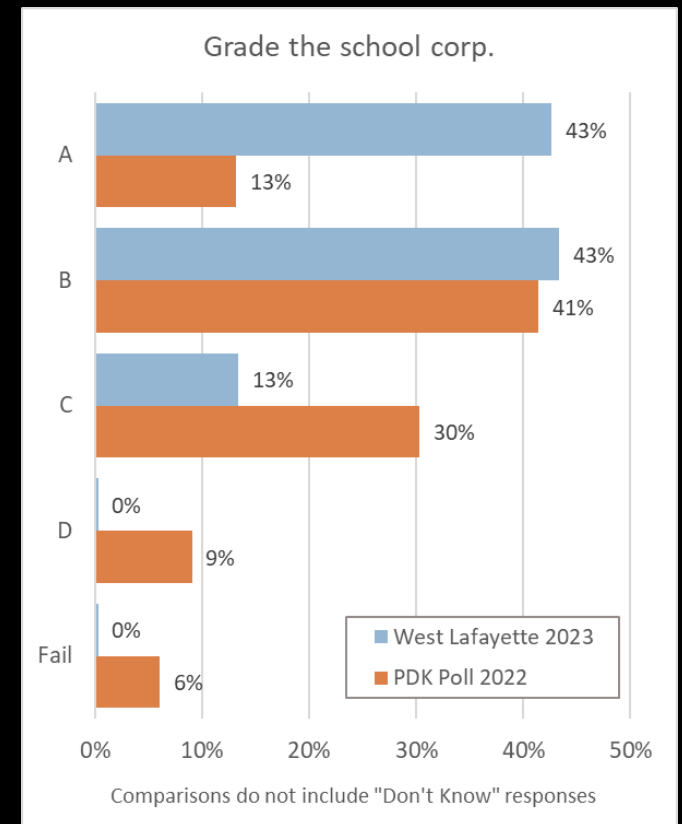0%
0%
3%

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Benchmark comparisons

- For reference, we compare the community's grades from the current survey against a national benchmark.

- National benchmark is the *PDK Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools,* conducted in 2022.

- For purposes of comparison between surveys, we do not include "I Don't Know" responses.

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Benchmark comparisons *(cont.)*

- Overall grades were better than national benchmark.
- Many more A grades given to West Lafayette; fewer grades of C, D and Fail.

Grade the school corp.

	West Lafayette 2023	PDK Poll 2022
A	43%	13%
B	43%	41%
C	13%	30%
D	0%	9%
Fail	0%	6%

Comparisons do not include "Don't Know" responses

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Basis of grade

- Respondents were asked for the basis of the grade they gave to the school corporation.
- Six options were presented.

Basis of grade *(cont.)*

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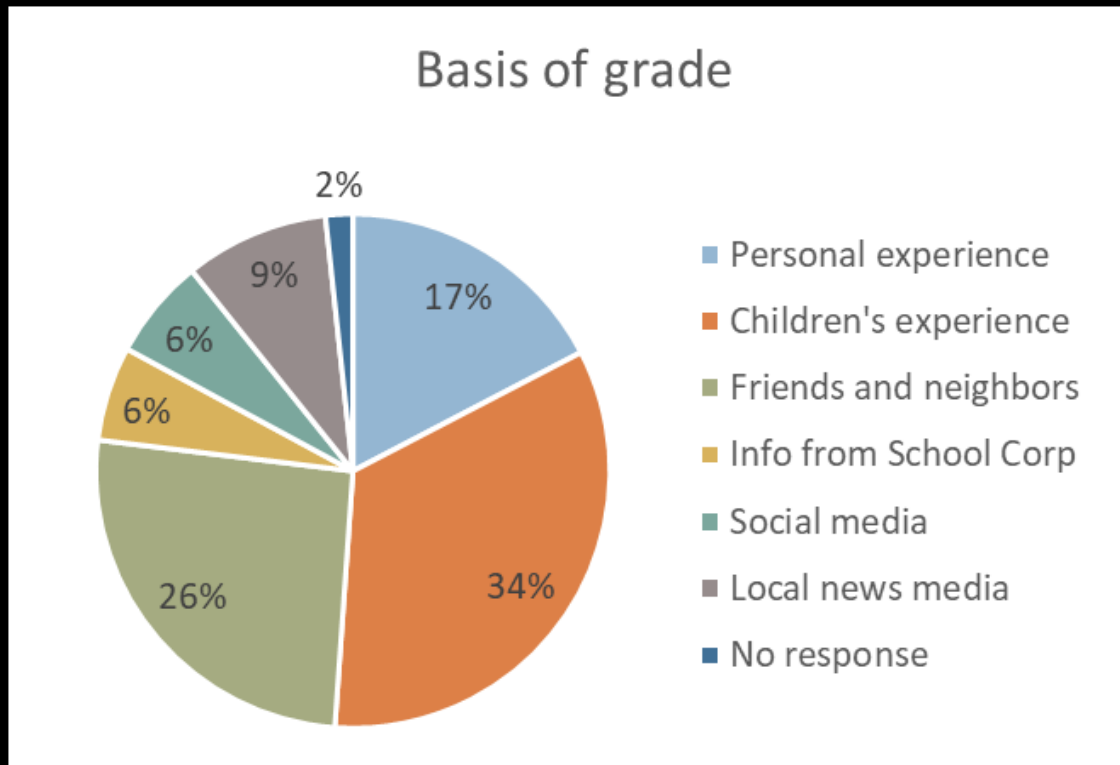
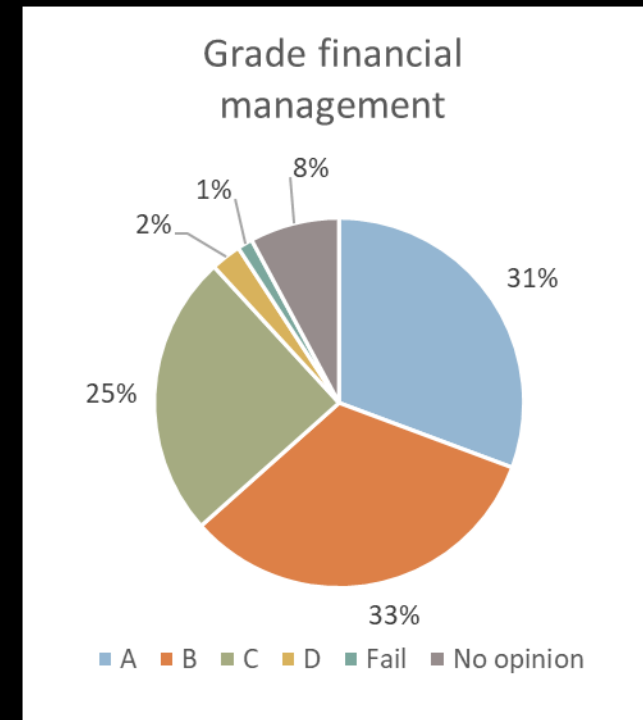# Grades for financial management

- After the overall grade was given, participants were asked to grade the school corporation's financial management.

Grades for financial management *(cont.)*

- 64% gave A and B grades to the school corporation's financial management.
- 3% gave D or Fail grades.
- 8% did not have an opinion to offer.

Grade financial management

A 31%, B 33%, C 25%, D 2%, Fail 1%, No opinion 8%

Legend: A, B, C, D, Fail, No opinion

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# Community perceptions of the school corporation

- Early in the survey, participants were asked to react to general statements about the school corporation.

- Statements covered how well the school corporation serves its students, trust in staff and Trustees, and its role in the community.

- Respondents were asked for their level of agreement with each statement.
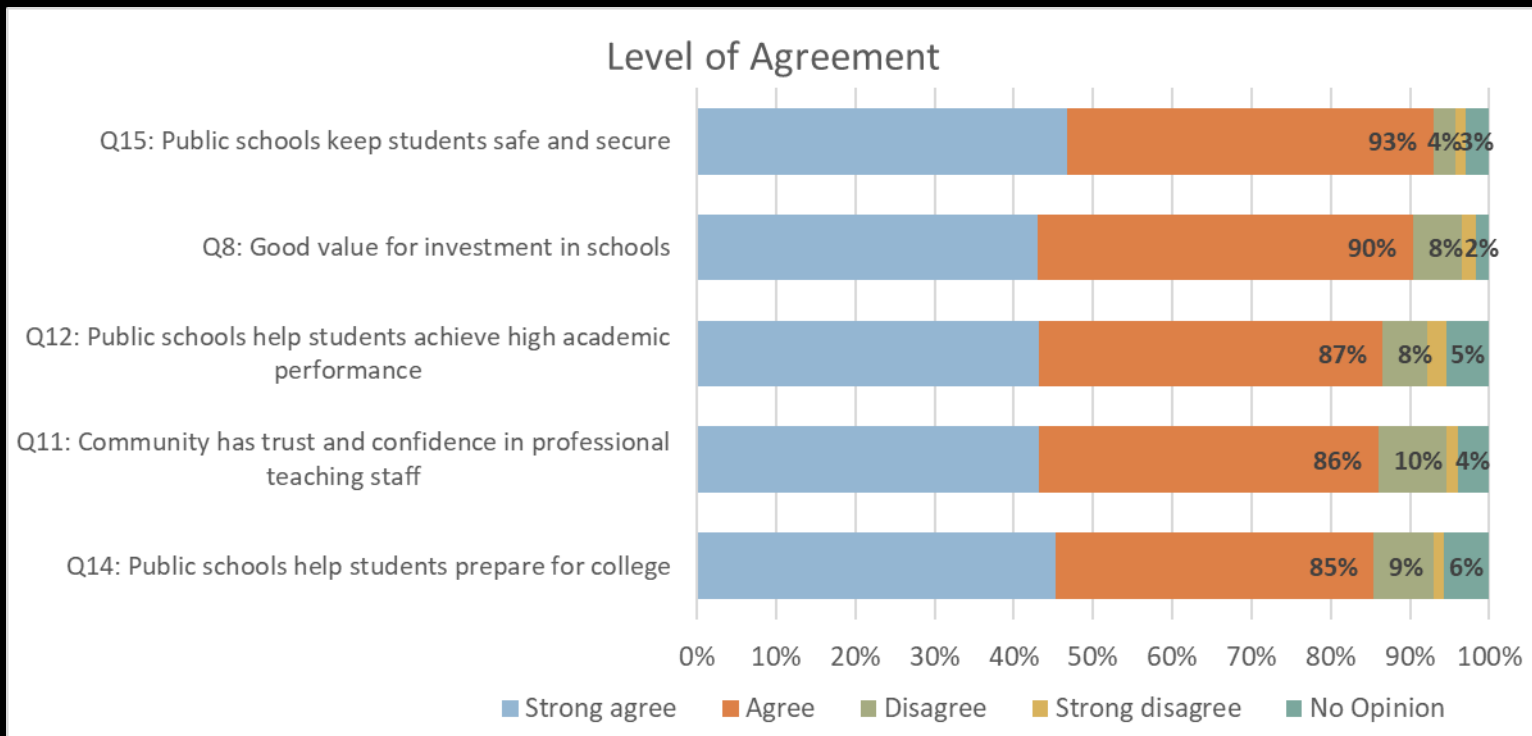
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Community perceptions *(cont.)*

Level of Agreement

Labels show combined % for agree/strongly agree, disagree/strongly disagree, and no opinion.

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Community perceptions *(cont.)*

Labels show combined % for agree/strongly agree, disagree/strongly disagree, and no opinion.

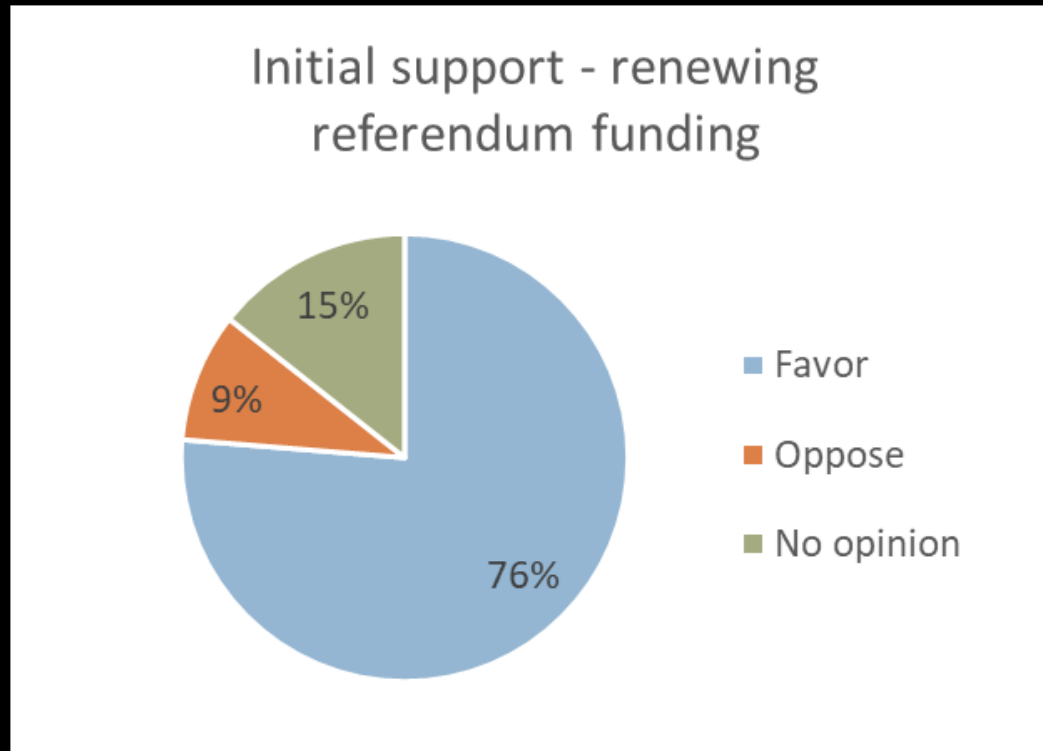The Morris Leatherman Company
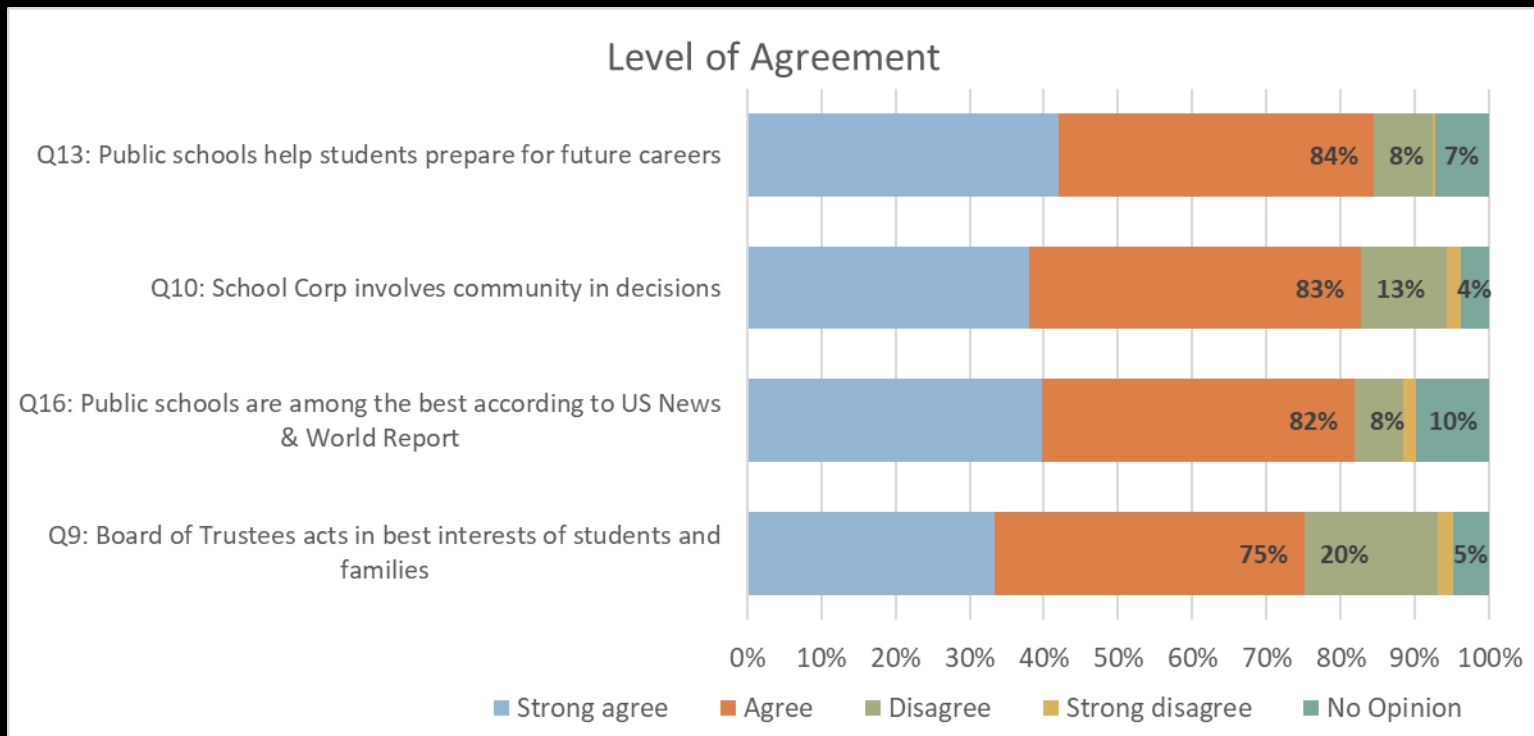
Initial support for renewal

"In November of this year, registered voters living within the boundaries of the West Lafayette school corporation will have an opportunity to vote on a proposed 8-year renewal of the current referendum originally approved by voters in 2010.

This referendum currently generates approximately $7.2 million each school year or 18% of the approved budget to support students, teachers, classroom programs and operating expenditures.

Based on what you know now, would you favor or oppose this proposal?"

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Initial support

Initial support - renewing referendum funding

- Favor 76%
- Oppose 9%
- No opinion 15%

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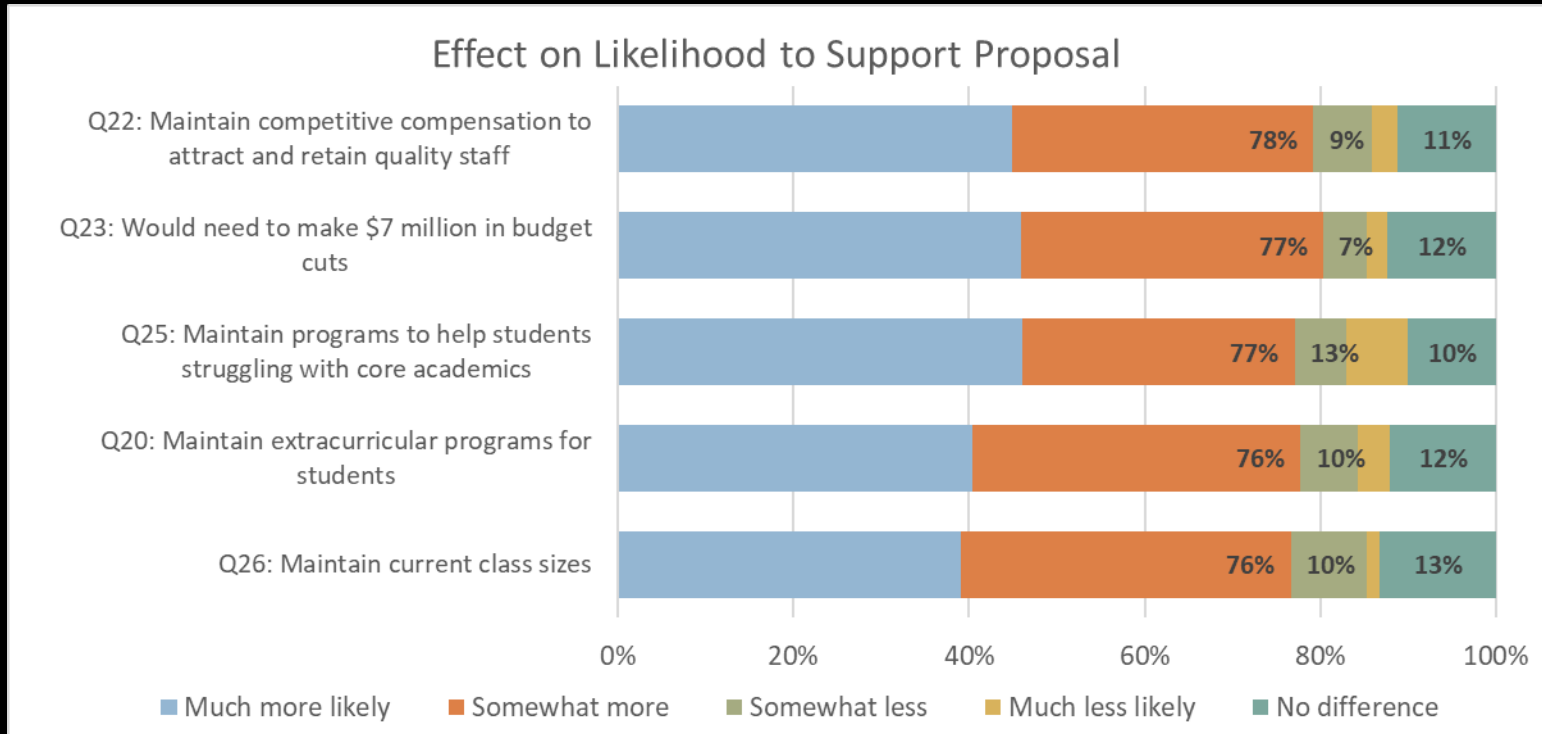
Effect of information

- Participants were asked to react to a series of statements about the levy's potential impacts on programs and classrooms.
- Nine items were presented in random order to minimize any bias due to their position on the list.
- One item was divided into similar questions, with half of participants responding to each version.
  - Due to the smaller sample size, the margin of error for the split-sample questions is ±6.9%.

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Effect of information *(cont.)*

"I am going to read some statements about how funding from a renewal of the school corporation's referendum would be spent.
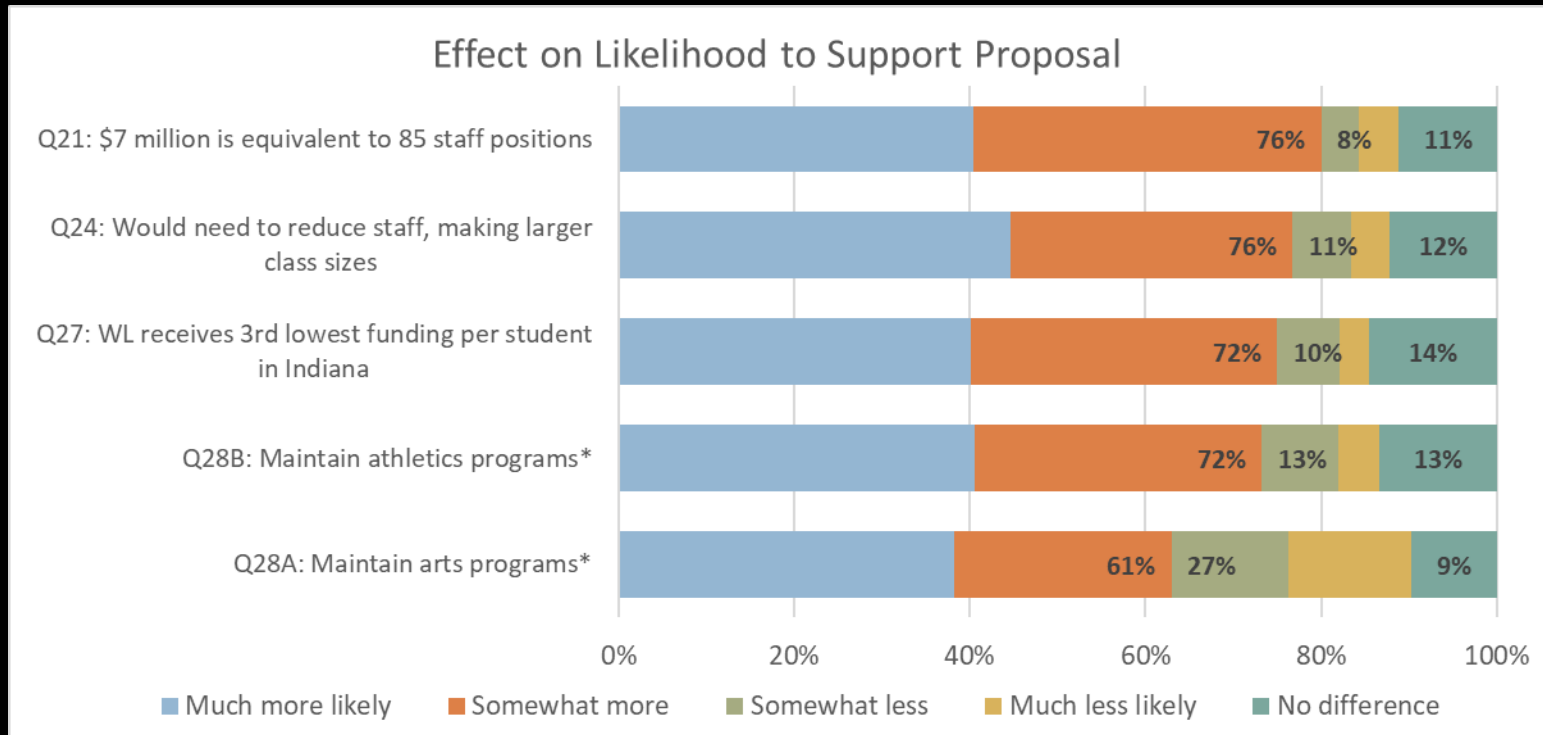
For each statement, please tell me whether the information would make you much more likely, somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, or much less likely to support the proposal."

Reaction to impacts

Effect on Likelihood to Support Proposal

Question	Much more likely / Somewhat more	Somewhat less	Much less likely / No difference
Q22: Maintain competitive compensation to attract and retain quality staff	78%	9%	11%
Q23: Would need to make $7 million in budget cuts	77%	7%	12%
Q25: Maintain programs to help students struggling with core academics	77%	13%	10%
Q20: Maintain extracurricular programs for students	76%	10%	12%
Q26: Maintain current class sizes	76%	10%	13%

Legend: ■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more ■ Somewhat less ■ Much less likely ■ No difference

Labels show combined % for more/much more likely, less/much less likely, and no difference. Q14A and Q14B were each asked in half the interviews; margin of error is ±6.9% for these elements.
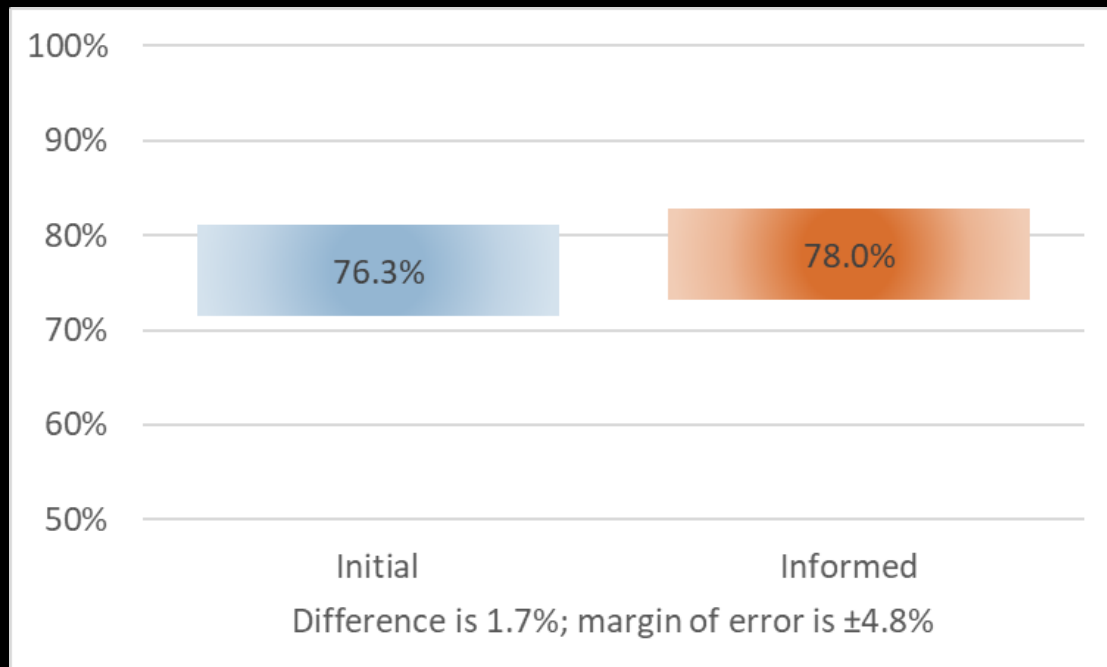
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Reaction to impacts *(cont.)*

Effect on Likelihood to Support Proposal

Question	76% / 72% / 61% combined more	Somewhat less	Much less / No difference
Q21: $7 million is equivalent to 85 staff positions	76%	8%	11%
Q24: Would need to reduce staff, making larger class sizes	76%	11%	12%
Q27: WL receives 3rd lowest funding per student in Indiana	72%	10%	14%
Q28B: Maintain athletics programs*	72%	13%	13%
Q28A: Maintain arts programs*	61%	27%	9%

Legend: ■ Much more likely ■ Somewhat more ■ Somewhat less ■ Much less likely ■ No difference

Labels show combined % for more/much more likely, less/much less likely, and no difference.
Q28A and Q28B were each asked in half the interviews with a ±6.9% margin of error.

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Informed support

"Now that you have heard more information about the proposal to renew the West Lafayette referendum for an additional eight years, do you favor or oppose this proposal?"

Comparison – initial and informed

Difference is 1.7%; margin of error is ±4.8%

Difference is not statistically significant.

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Demographic differences

- The following slides show a quick snapshot of differences in support between demographic groups:
  - Parent status
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Voting activity
  - Income
  - Education
  - Homeownership
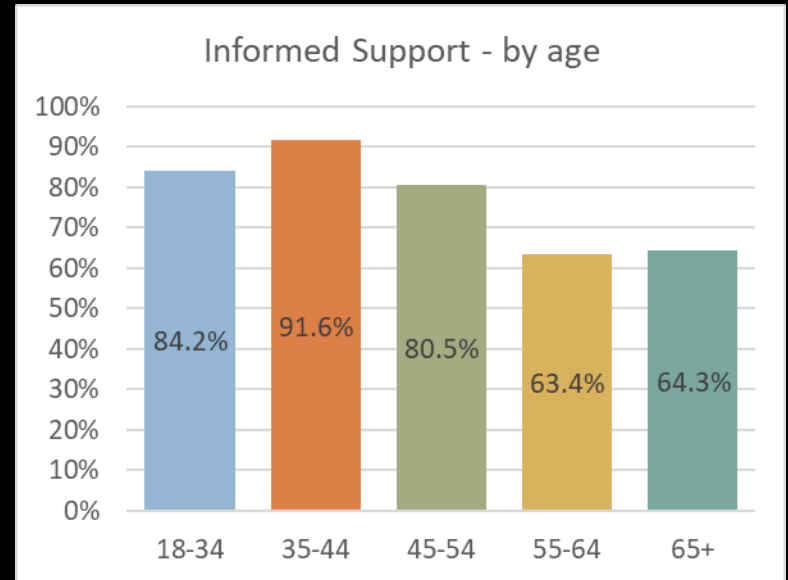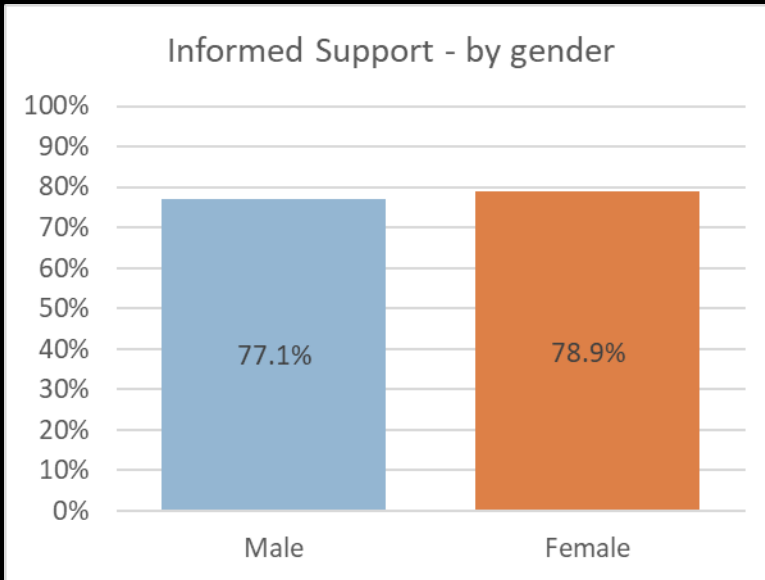- Charts show level of support after hearing information about each proposal.

Demographic differences *(cont.)*

Informed Support - by parent status

Parent*: 80.9%
Non-Parent: 77.6%
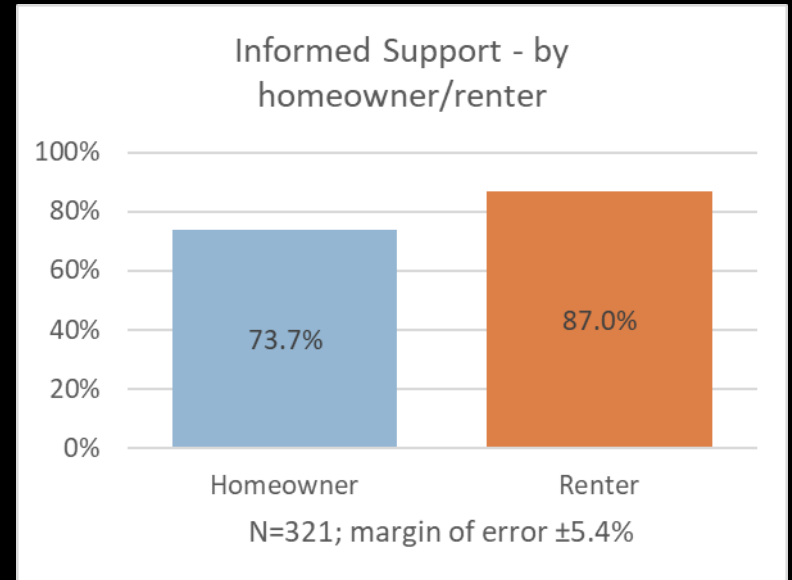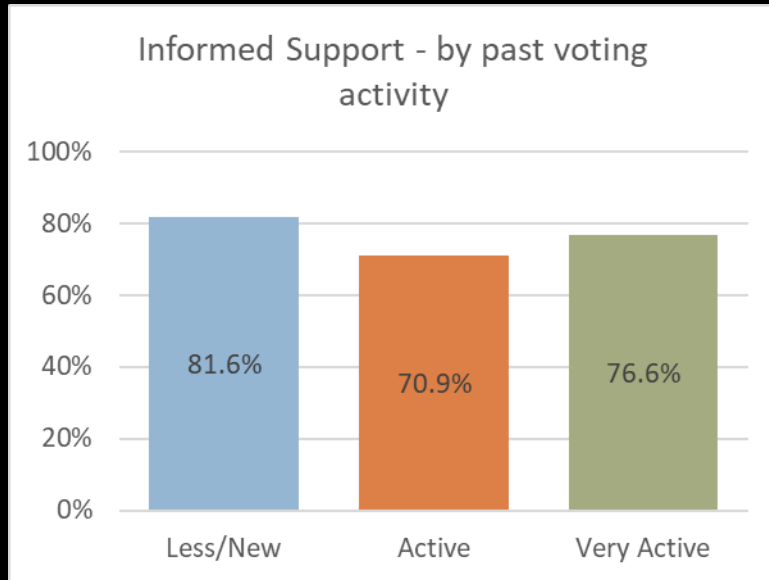Alumni Parent**: 76.6%
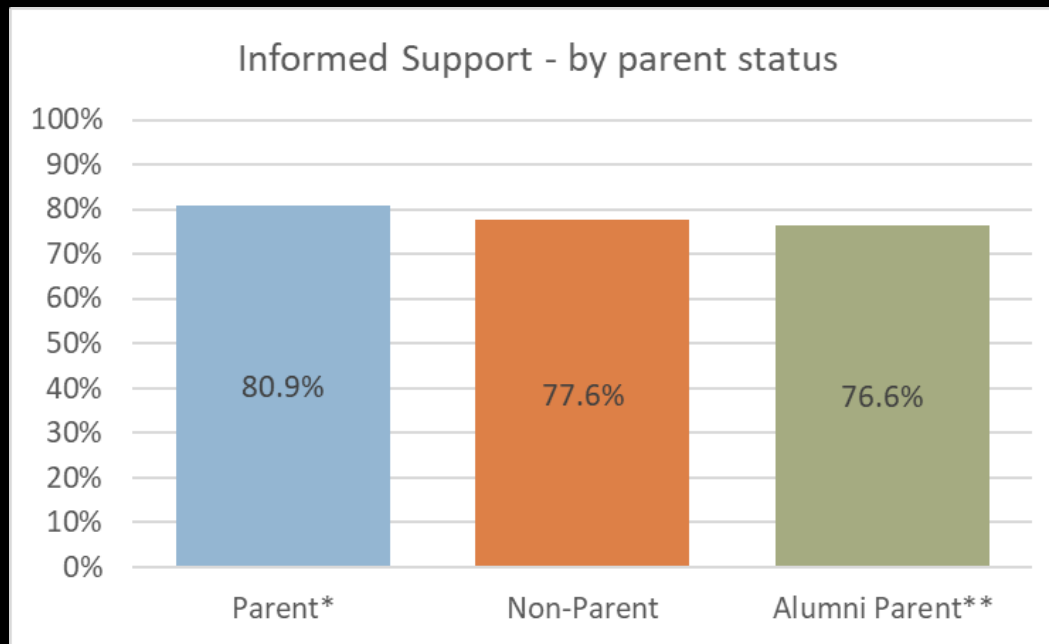
*   "Parent" includes respondents with children attending West Lafayette schools.
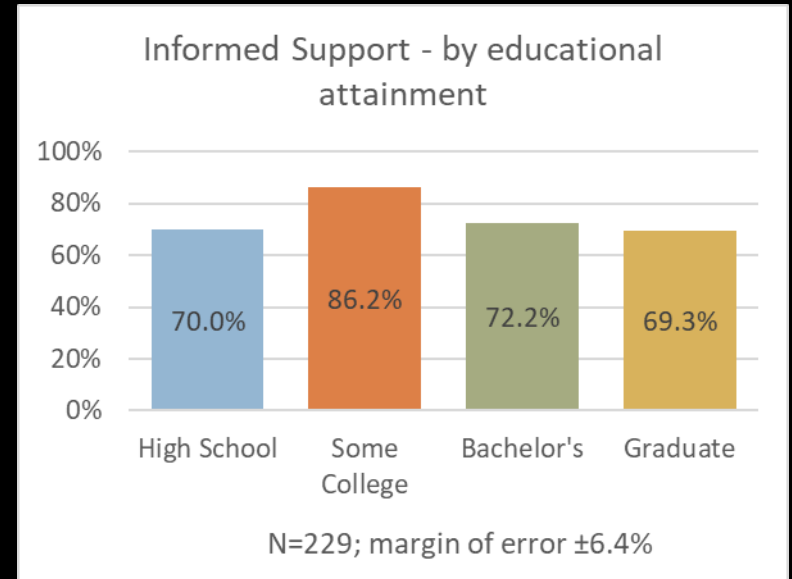** "Alumni Parent" includes parents whose grown children attended West Lafayette schools in the past.
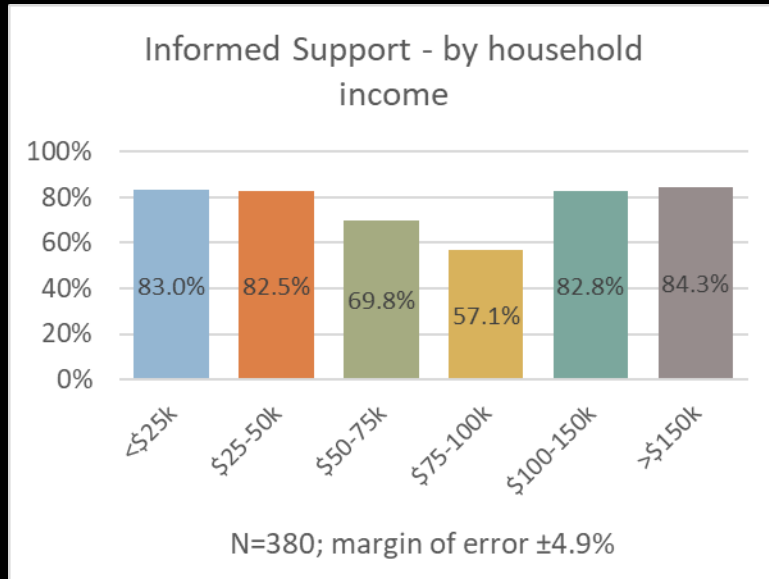
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Demographic differences *(cont.)*

Informed Support - by gender

	Male	Female
	77.1%	78.9%

Informed Support - by age

18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+
84.2%	91.6%	80.5%	63.4%	64.3%

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Demographic differences *(cont.)*

Informed Support - by past voting activity

- Less/New: 81.6%
- Active: 70.9%
- Very Active: 76.6%

Informed Support - by homeowner/renter

- Homeowner: 73.7%
- Renter: 87.0%

N=321; margin of error ±5.4%

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Demographic differences *(cont.)*

Informed Support - by household income
N=380; margin of error ±4.9%

<$25k	$25-50k	$50-75k	$75-100k	$100-150k	>$150k
83.0%	82.5%	69.8%	57.1%	82.8%	84.3%

Informed Support - by educational attainment
N=229; margin of error ±6.4%

High School	Some College	Bachelor's	Graduate
70.0%	86.2%	72.2%	69.3%

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Impact of cost information

"Let me add one additional fact:

Renewing the current referendum for an additional 8 years will keep this funding stream at the same property tax rate as it has been for the last 13 years.

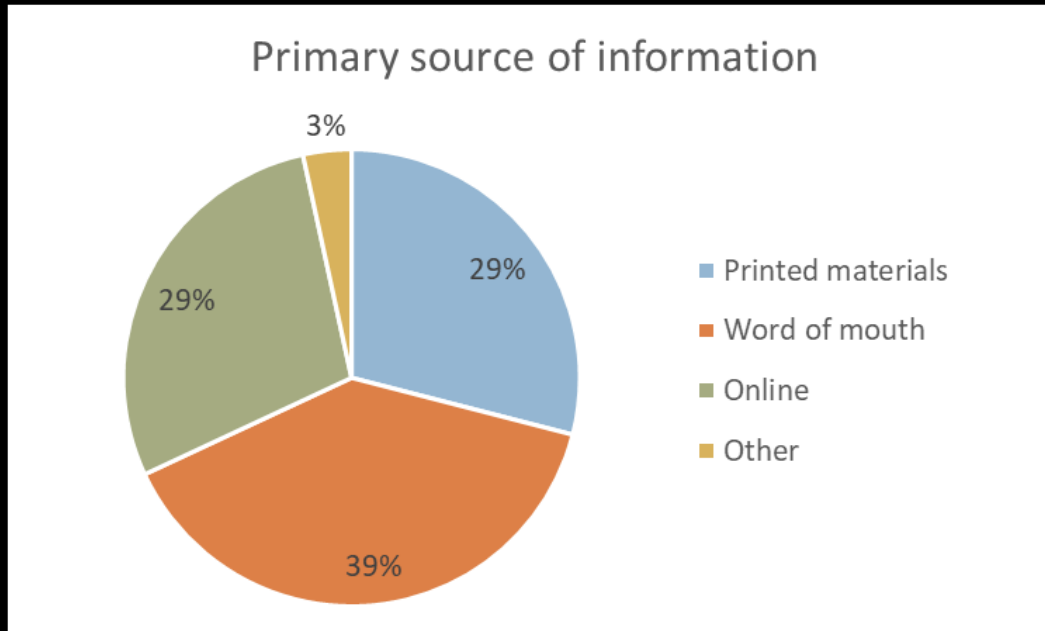Knowing that, do you support or oppose renewal of the existing referendum?"

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Comparison – support levels
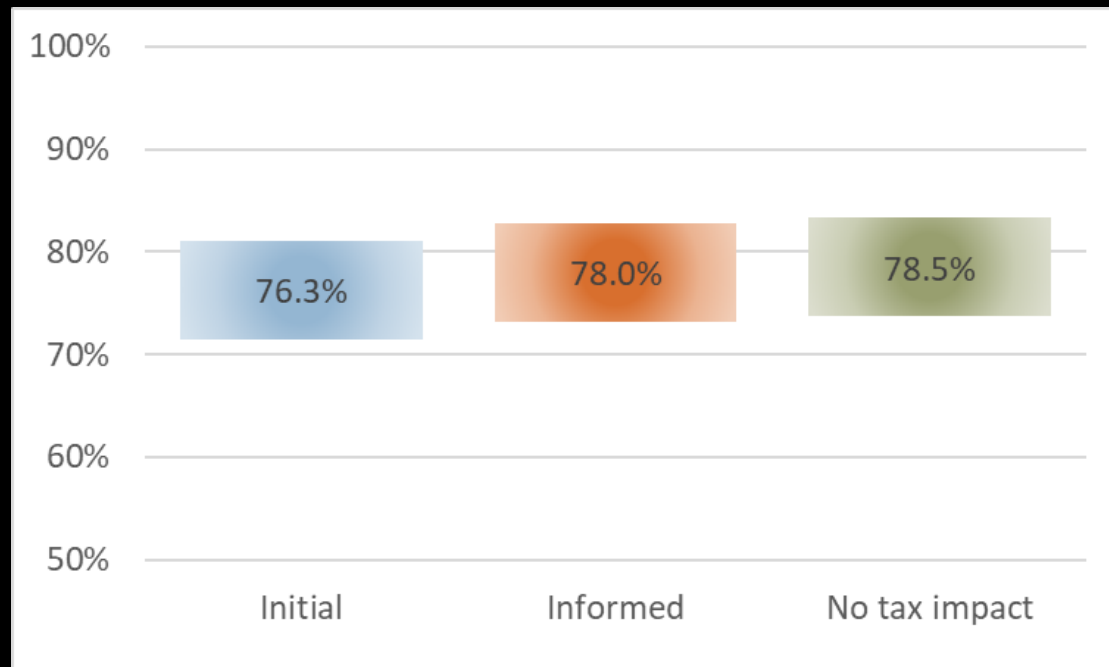
Differences are not statistically significant.

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Communications

- At the end of the survey, interviewers asked where respondents got most of their information about the school corporation.

- First question asked in broad terms: printed materials, word-of-mouth, or electronic sources.

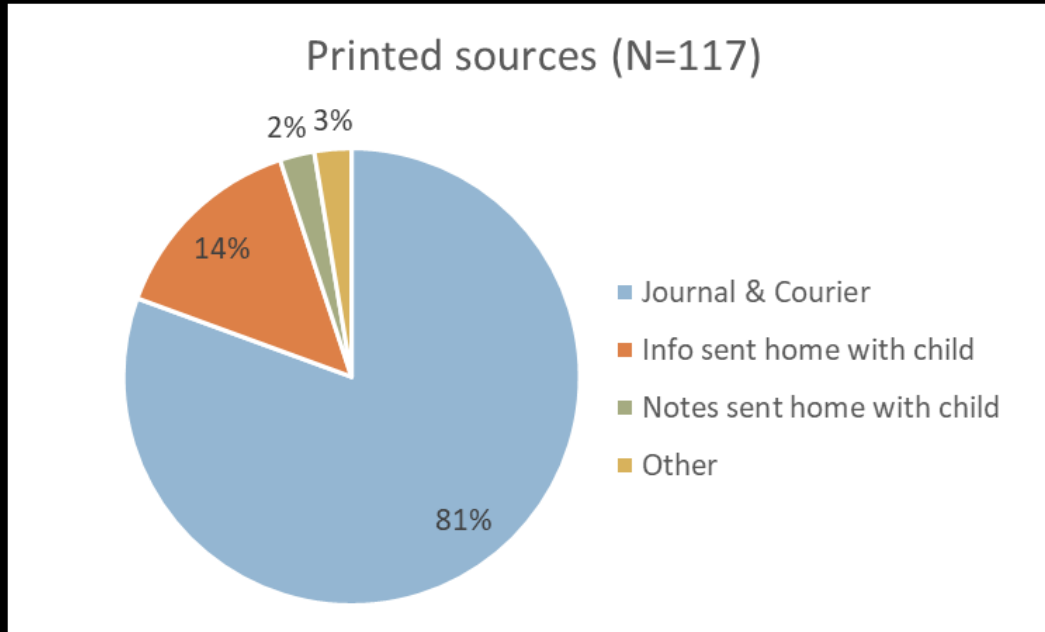 - Each group then chose from a list of specific examples in the appropriate category.

Primary information source – general

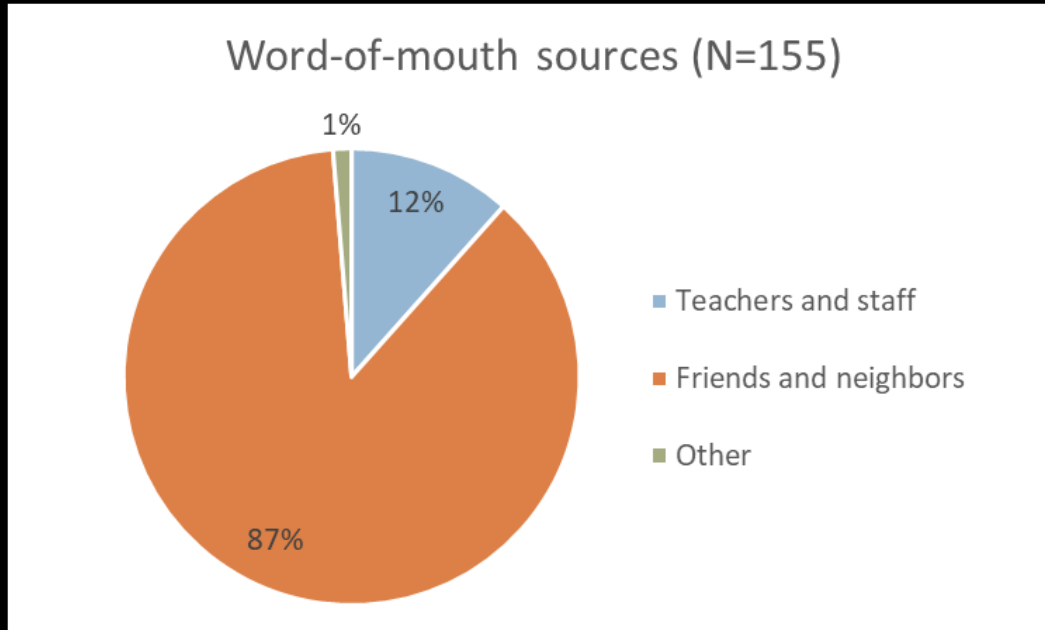**Primary source of information**

- 3%
- 29% — Printed materials
- 29% — Online
- 39% — Word of mouth
- Other

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Primary information source – print sources

Printed sources (N=117)

- Journal & Courier — 81%
- Info sent home with child — 14%
- Notes sent home with child — 2%
- Other — 3%

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Primary information source – word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth sources (N=155)

- Teachers and staff
- Friends and neighbors
- Other

12%
1%
87%

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Primary information source – electronic

Electronic sources (N=115)

- School website — 50%
- Social media — 36%
- Local radio website — 1%
- Local newspaper website — 5%
- E-mail — 7%
- Other — 1%
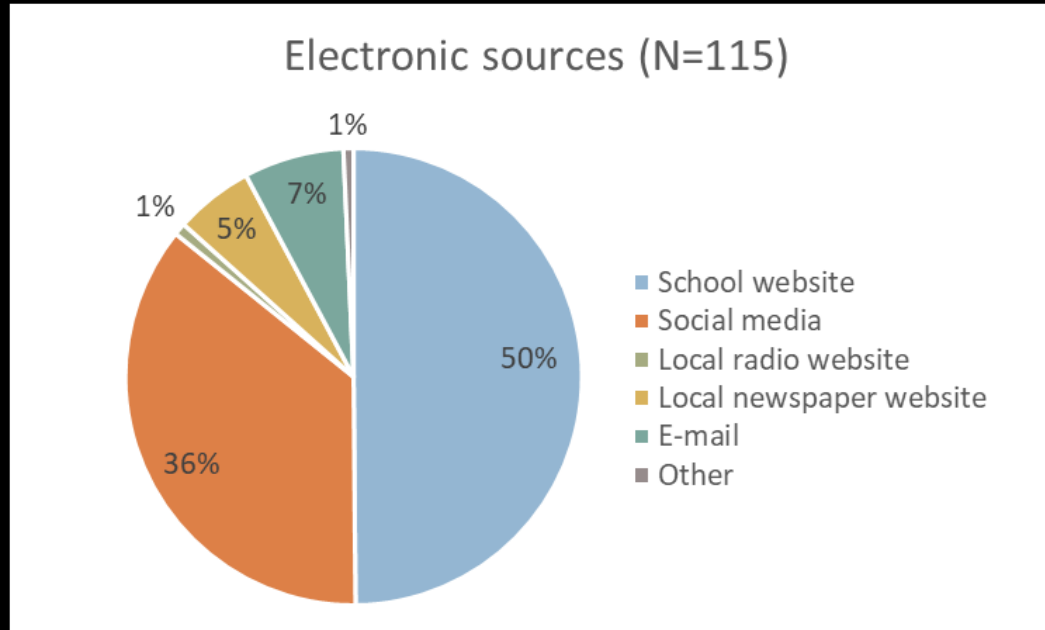
Participants who responded with "social media" were divided between Facebook (53%) and Twitter/X (35%). Other social media sites received 3 or fewer responses each.

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Findings: referendum renewal

- Initial support for proposal was 76.3%.

- Informed support was 78.0%.

- Information about the proposal increased support by 1.7 percentage points.

  - Difference is not statistically significant.

- Support after hearing no change in tax rate was 78.5%.

  - Difference is not statistically significant

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Findings: referendum impacts

- Positive impacts ranged from 78% to 61%.

- Negative impacts ranged from 7% to 27%.

- Greatest positive impacts seen from competitive compensation and avoiding $7 million in budget cuts.

- Relatively smaller positive impacts from maintaining arts and athletics programs and from comparison of per-student funding.

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Findings: demographic support

- Highest support for renewal comes from voters 35-44 years of age and renters.

- Lowest support from voters over 55 years of age, and households with annual income between $75,000 and $100,000.

Findings: grading the school corporation

- 84% gave A and B grades to the school corporation; less than 1% gave D or Fail grades.

- Grades were much better than national benchmark.

- 64% gave A and B grades to the financial management of the school corporation.

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Findings: community perceptions

- Agreement with statements ranged from 93% to 75%.

- Disagreement ranged from 4% to 20%.

- Highest level of agreement expressed for student safety and good value for investments in schools.

- Belief that the Board of Trustees makes decisions in the best interest of students and their families was slightly lower when compared to other statements, but still at 75% agreement.

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Findings: communications

- Participants were split when it came to primary sources for their information about the school corporation.
  - 39% rely on word-of-mouth sources, while printed and electronic sources each received 29% of responses.
- District has limited control over accuracy and content of face-to-face and social media communications.

Thank you!

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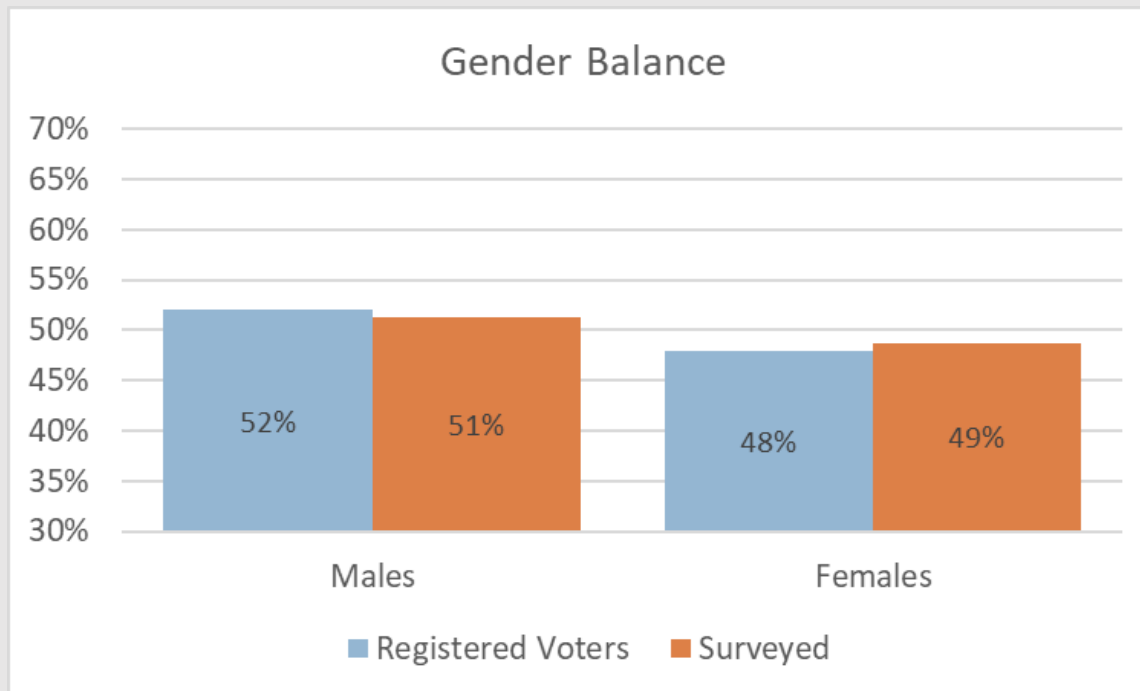
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Survey demographics

- The following slides show proportions of total interviews versus targets before any sample weighting was performed.
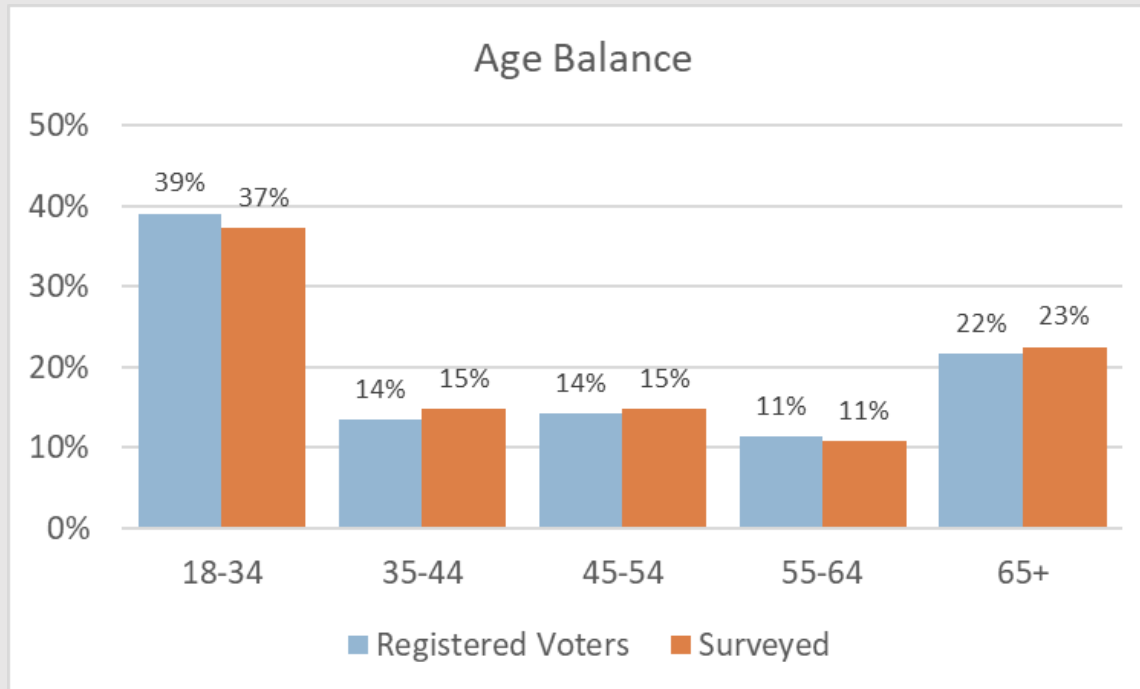- After re-balancing, samples were each within 2% of targets.
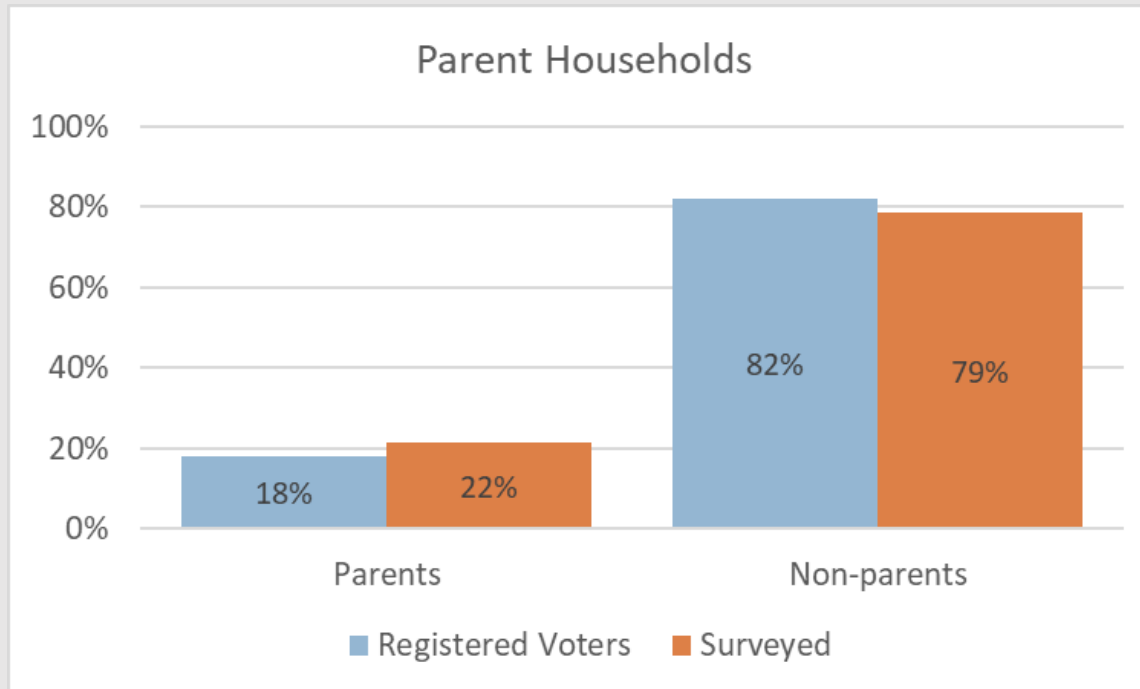
Demographic targets: Gender

Gender Balance

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Demographic targets: Age

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Demographic targets: Parent households

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Demographic targets: Past voting activity

Voter Activity Balance

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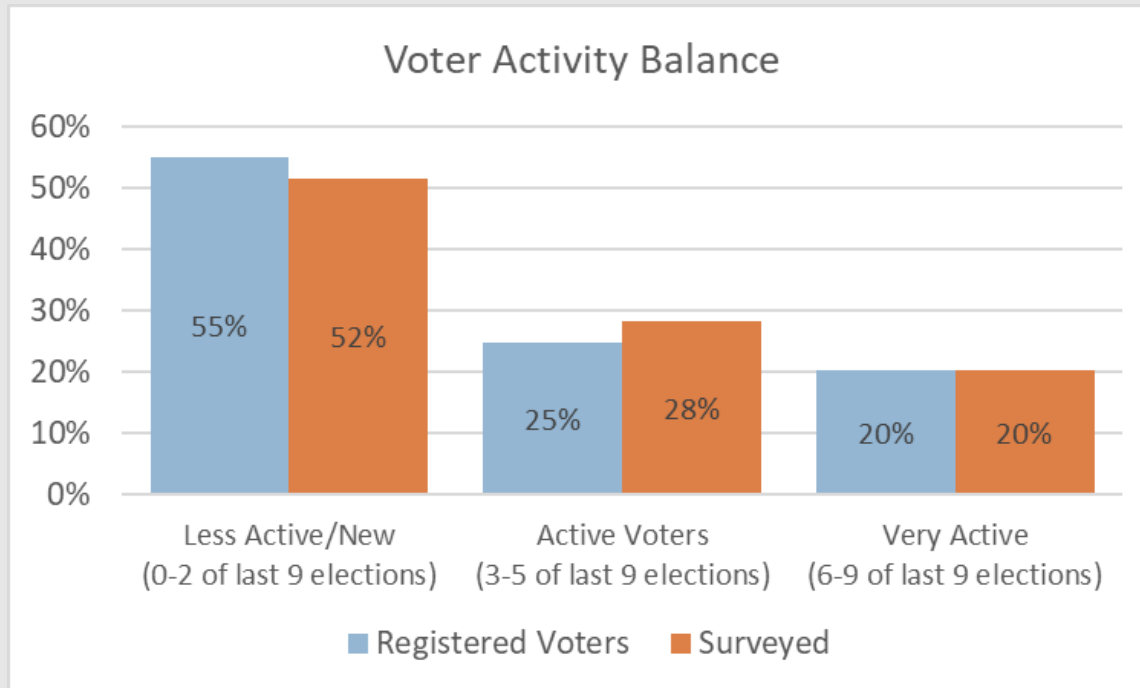
Supplementary demographics: Survey channel

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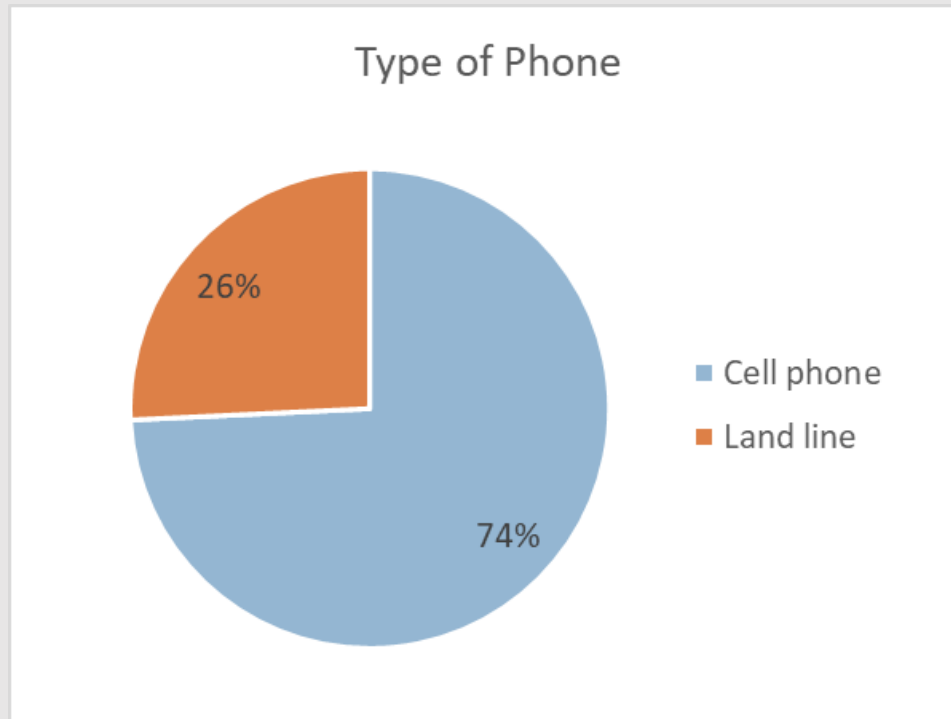
Supplementary demographics: Homeowner/renter

Homeowner/Renter

- Homeowner
- Renter
- Unknown

52%
28%
20%

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