



# **Archuleta County School District Survey Key Findings**

*June 2025*

# Methodology

New Bridge Strategy conducted a survey among N=300 Archuleta County School District voters from June 18-28, 2025.

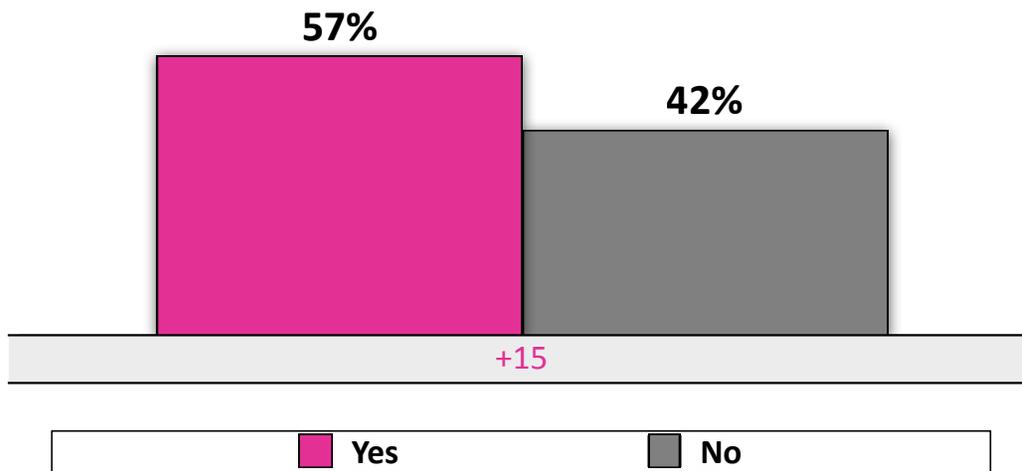
Interviews were conducted via live telephone interviews (both cell phones and landlines) and online via email invitation and text-to-web.

The margin of error is  $\pm 5.66\%$  for the overall sample. The margin of error will vary for sub-groups.



# **Core Perceptions of Archuleta County School District**

# A majority of Archuleta voters have seen, read or heard something about the District in the last few months.



Top Subgroups – “Yes”	
Post-Grad Education	80%
Independents Ages 55+	71%
Democrat Women	69%
Age 55-64	67%
Voted 2021 or 2023	65%

*In the last two or three months, have you seen, read, or heard anything about Archuleta County School District?*

# Those who have heard something about the District in the last few months mention the District's need for new facilities and its financial needs more generally.

**1. Need for new buildings/facilities**

**2. Financial struggles/funding issues**

Graduation ceremonies and activities
Sports and student activities
Staff changes/retirements, staffing concerns
Bullying problems/concerns
Mill levy/bond ballot measures
School board meetings/open seats

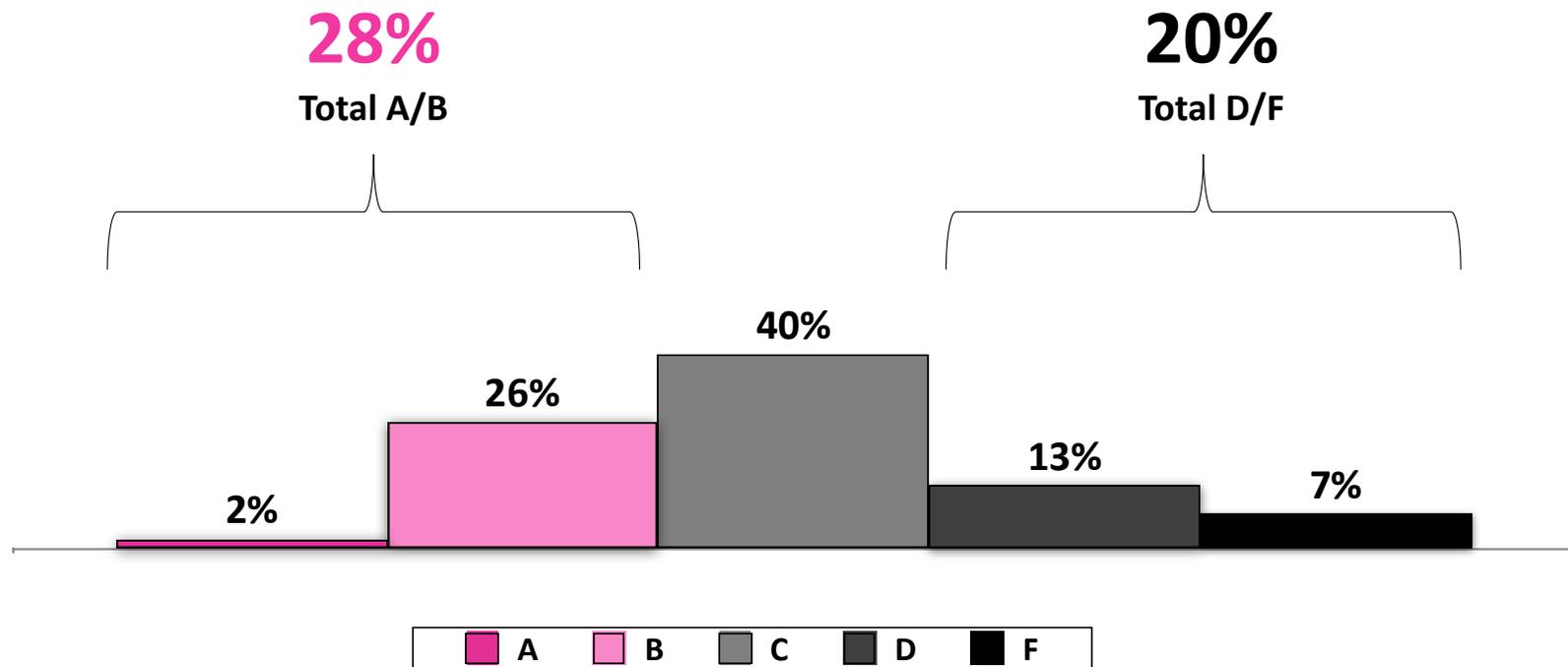
"Nothing but good things, and they need to get a bond up for a new school."  
*Male, Age 65+, DEM*

"The facilities are failing."  
*Female, Age 45-54, GOP*

"Graduation. Sports."  
*Female, Age 55-64, IND*

*What specifically have you seen, read, or heard about Archuleta County School District in the last two or three months?  
Asked of N=175*

## A plurality of voters give the District a “C” grade.



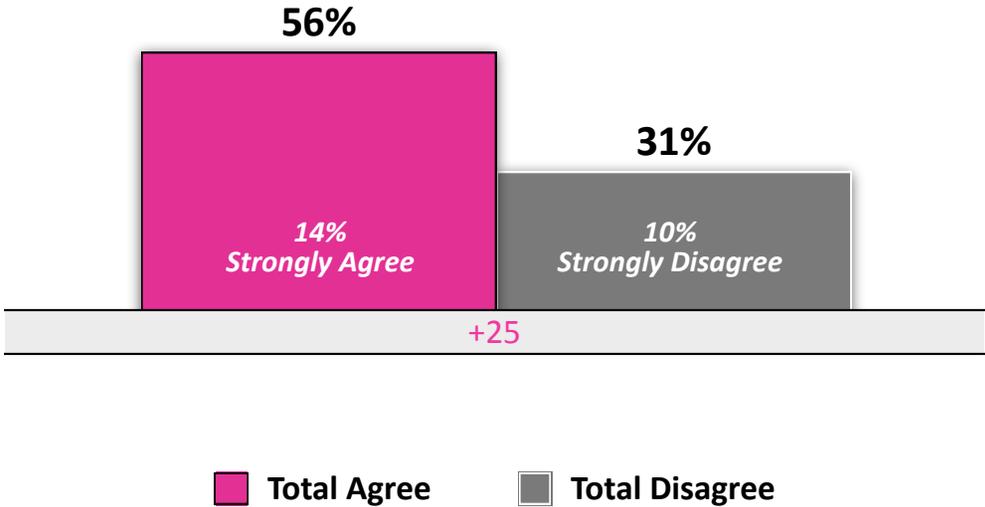
*Students are often given the grades, A, B, C, D and F to rate the quality of their work at school. Suppose the public schools themselves were graded in the same manner. What grade would you give Archuleta County School District?*

**NEW BRIDGE** STRATEGY

# A majority of Archuleta voters agree that the District spends their tax dollars wisely.

*Archuleta County School District spends my tax dollars wisely.*

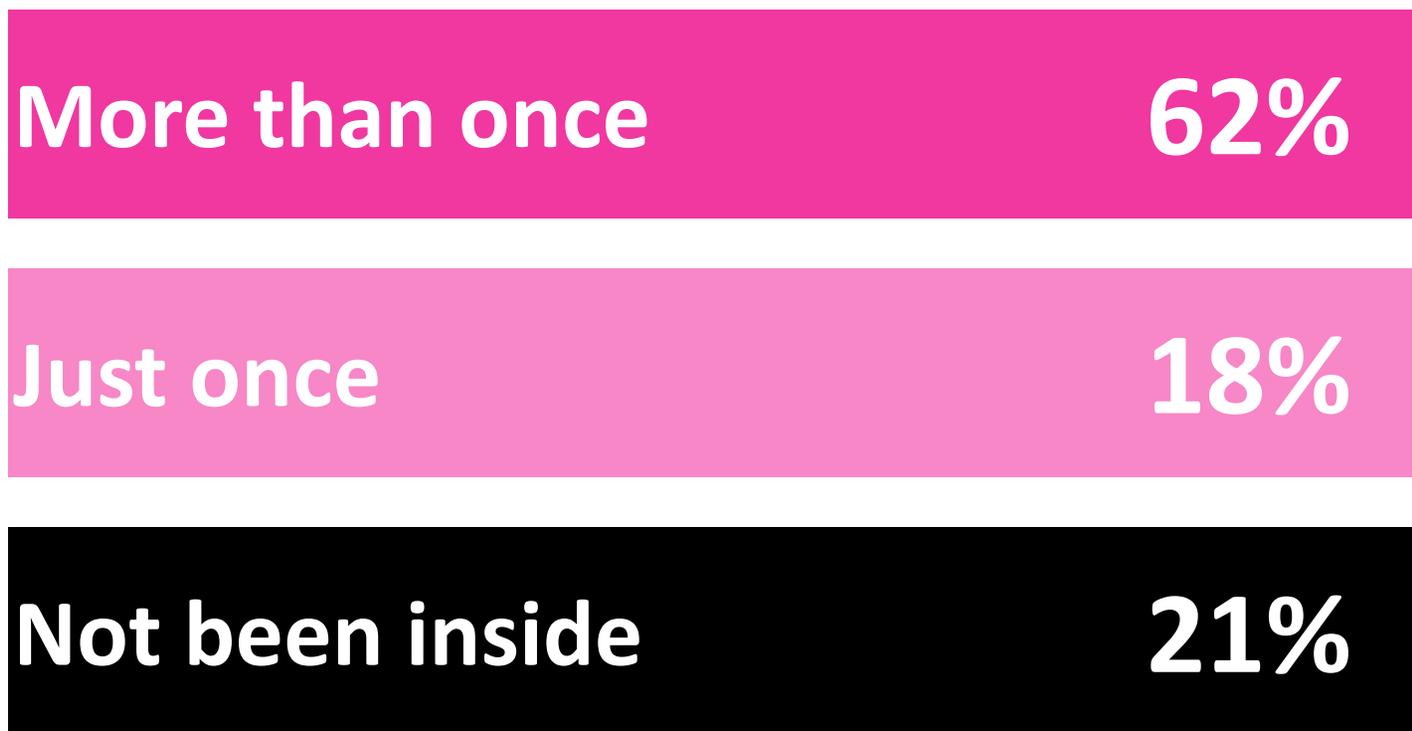
Top Subgroups – “Strongly Agree”	
Democrats	36%
Post Graduate Education	29%
Age 45-54	21%



And do you agree or disagree with the following statement:

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

**More than three-in-five voters have been inside a District school building more than once in the past two years.**



*In the past two years, have you been inside an Archuleta County School District public school building more than once, just once, or have you not been inside an Archuleta County School District public school building?*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**



# Potential Ballot Measure

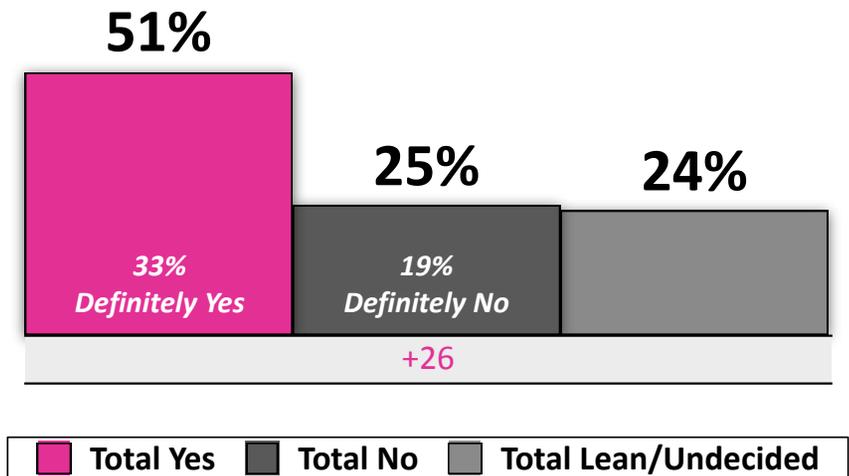
# A bare majority of voters say they would vote yes. A significant portion, one-in-four, say they are unsure.

*There may be a proposal on the ballot in your area in the future. No decision has been made yet as to whether or not the following proposals will be asked of voters. Please read the following proposal carefully as this language is somewhat technical. If the election were being held today would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...*

SHALL ARCHULETA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT #50JT DEBT BE INCREASED \$123 MILLION, WITH A TOTAL REPAYMENT COST OF NOT MORE THAN \$218.2 MILLION (PRINCIPAL AND INTEREST), TO FINANCE CAPITAL ASSETS AND IMPROVEMENTS OF THE DISTRICT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

- ADDRESSING STUDENT AND STAFF SAFETY IN THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL BY BUILDING A NEW K-8 BUILDING;
- AND SHALL THE SPENDING OF THE DEBT PROCEEDS BE MONITORED BY A CITIZEN'S BOND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE;

AND SHALL DISTRICT TAXES BE INCREASED NOT MORE THAN \$8.73 MILLION ANNUALLY TO PAY SUCH DEBT, AND MAY THE MILL LEVY BE IMPOSED IN ANY YEAR WITHOUT LIMITATION AS TO RATE BUT ONLY IN AN AMOUNT SUFFICIENT TO PAY THE PRINCIPAL OF, PREMIUM, IF ANY, AND INTEREST ON SUCH DEBT OR ANY REFUNDING DEBT (OR TO CREATE A RESERVE FOR SUCH PAYMENT); SUCH DEBT TO BE EVIDENCED BY THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS TO BE SOLD IN ONE SERIES OR MORE, FOR A PRICE ABOVE OR BELOW THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF SUCH SERIES, ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND WITH SUCH MATURITIES AS PERMITTED BY LAW, INCLUDING PROVISIONS FOR REDEMPTION OF THE BONDS PRIOR TO MATURITY WITH OR WITHOUT PAYMENT OF THE PREMIUM OF NOT TO EXCEED ONE PERCENT?



# Those who support the proposal see a need for schools to be repaired, updated and safe.

- 1. Schools need repairs/improvements/updates
- 2. Safety concerns for students and staff

Investment in education is important
Support for children/students
Need new school buildings/facilities
Will benefit community
Schools need money/funding
Create a better learning environment

“It is important to keep schools up to date and safe.”  
*Male, Age 18-34, IND*

“The schools need a lot of work to be done, and I think this measure would help.”  
*Female, Age 45-54, GOP*

“Because the schools need to be improved, and when the education is better, schools will be better.”  
*Female, Age 55-64, GOP*

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

**Those who say they would vote no on the proposal are opposed to tax increases generally and express concern that the measure costs too much money.**

- 1. General opposition to increased taxes**
- 2. Amount is too high/costs too much**

Concerns about waste/ mismanagement
Lack of information / unclear language
Poor educational performance/test scores
Government oversight/transparency concerns

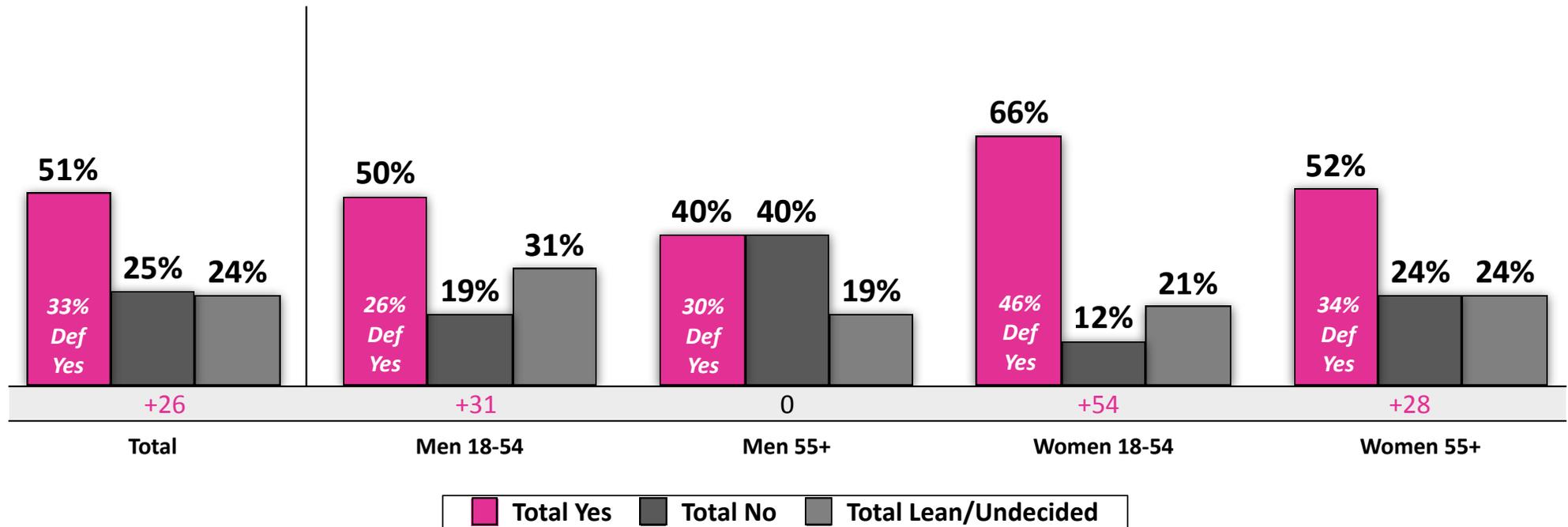
*"Taxes are out of control."  
Female, Age 55-64, IND*

*"Too much waste, not enough results."  
Male, Age 65+, GOP*

*"We won't need any more debt."  
Female, Age 35-44, IND*

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

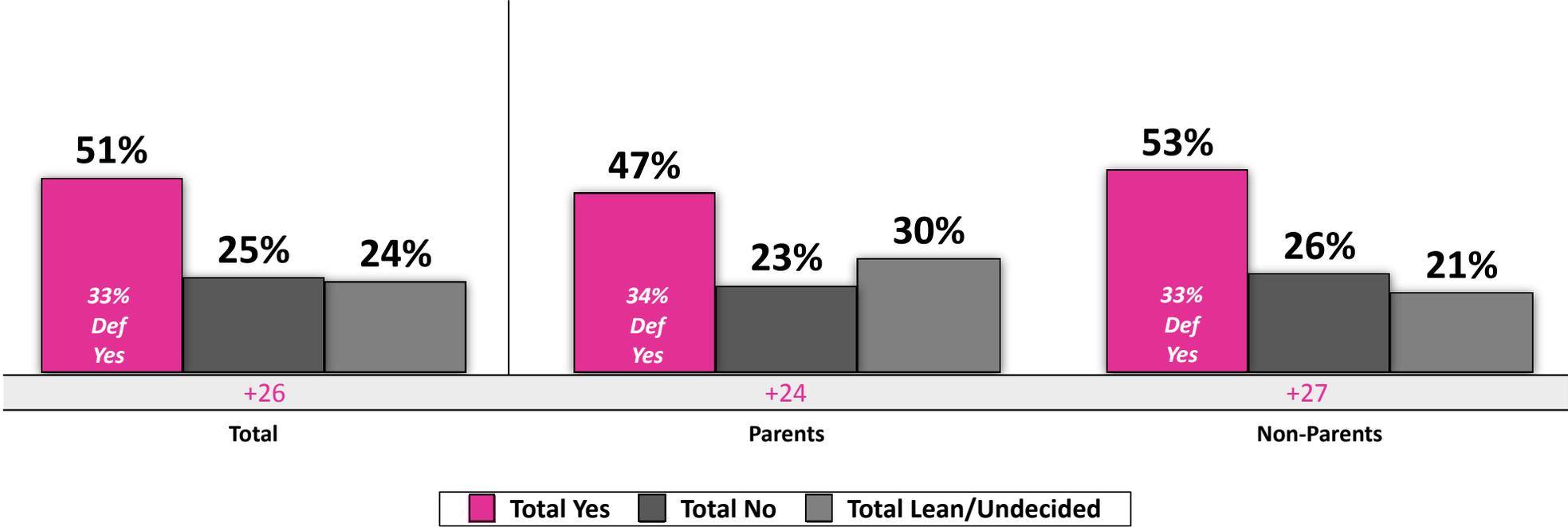
**There is a significant gender and age dynamic, with younger women most supportive.**



*Initial Ballot*

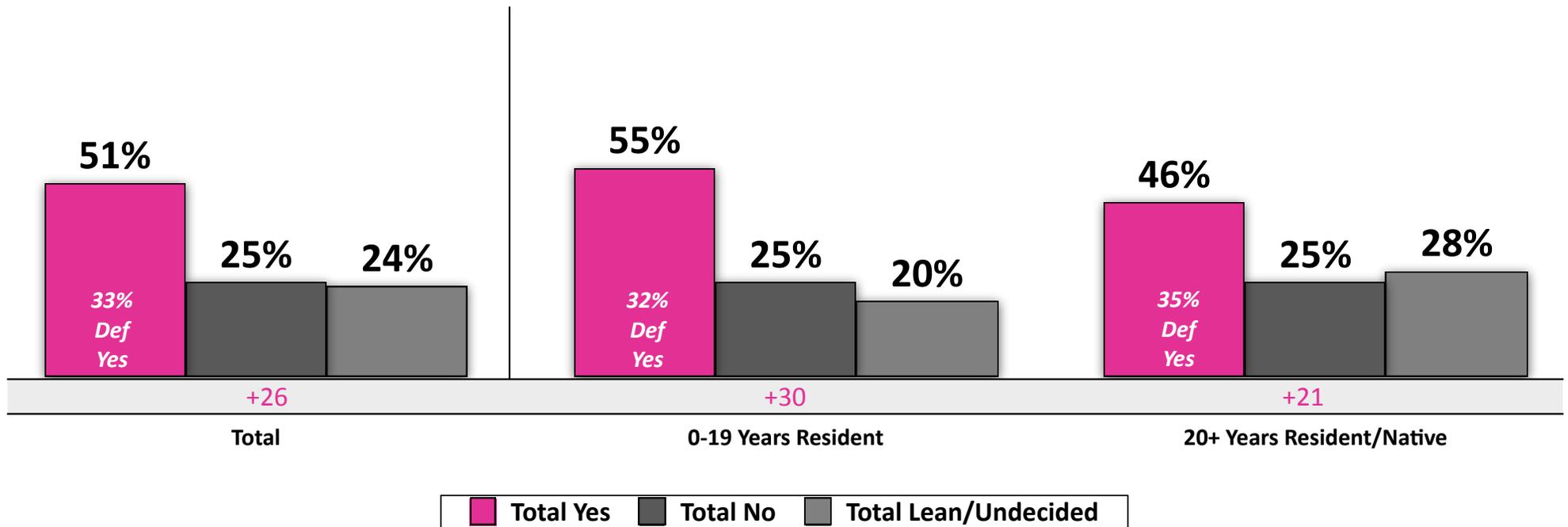
**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

# Nearly one-in-three parents say they are undecided as to how they would vote.



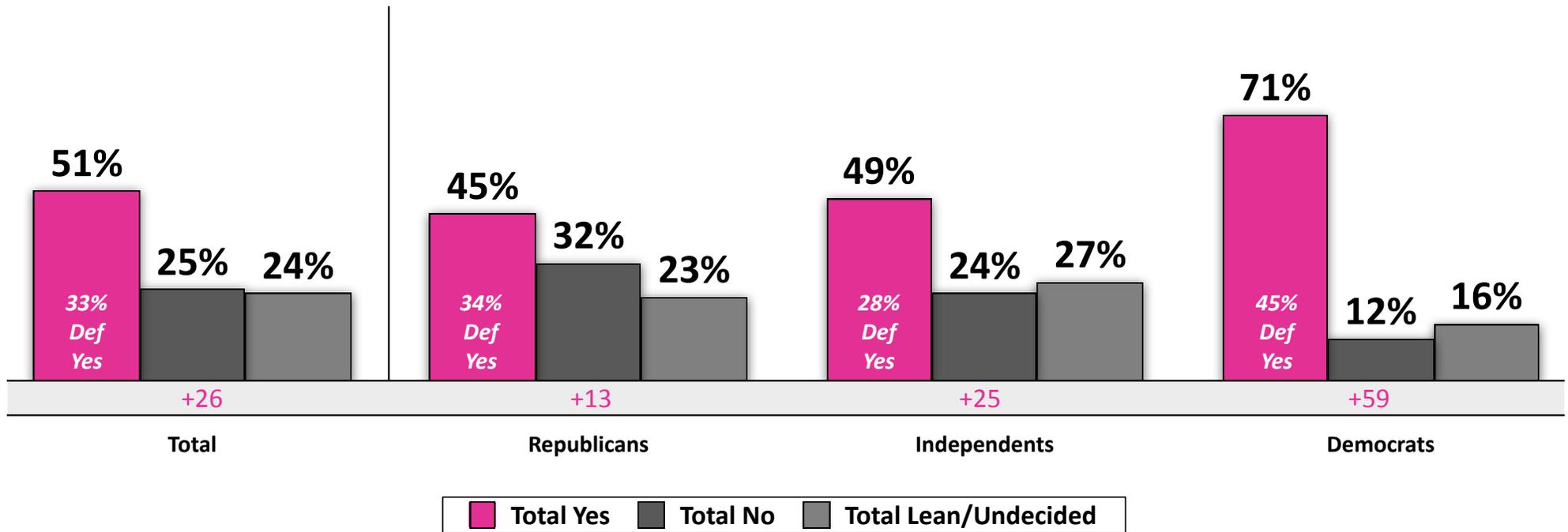
Initial Ballot

# Residents who have lived in the area less than 20 years are more supportive of the proposal than those who have lived in the area longer.



Initial Ballot

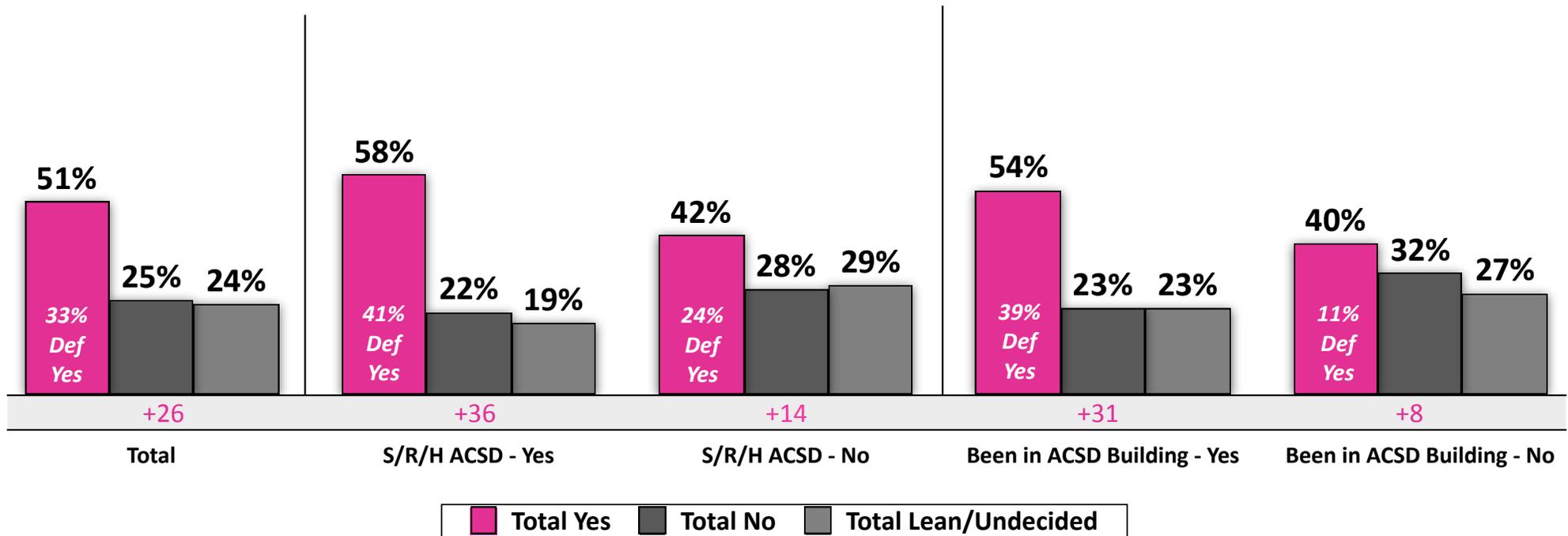
# There is a relationship between support for the measure and party registration.



Initial Ballot

NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY

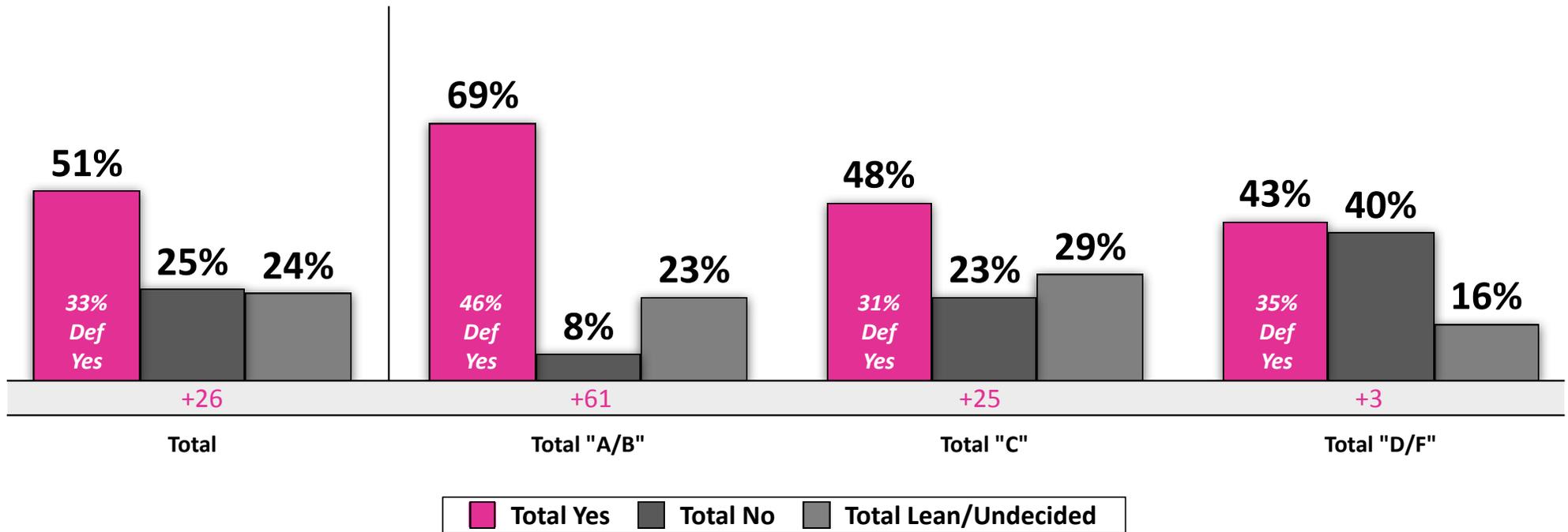
# Voters who have seen, read or heard something about the District recently and those who have been inside of a ACSD building are more supportive than those who have not.



Initial Ballot

**NEW BRIDGE** STRATEGY

# Voters who grade ACSD as a "B" grade or higher are most likely to vote yes for the proposed measure.



Initial Ballot

NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY

## What we did:

Next, we tested the personal financial impact of the potential measure - the *annual* impact *without* the BEST grant, the *annual* impact *including* the BEST grant award, the *monthly* impact *without* the BEST grant, and the *monthly* impact *including* the BEST grant award.

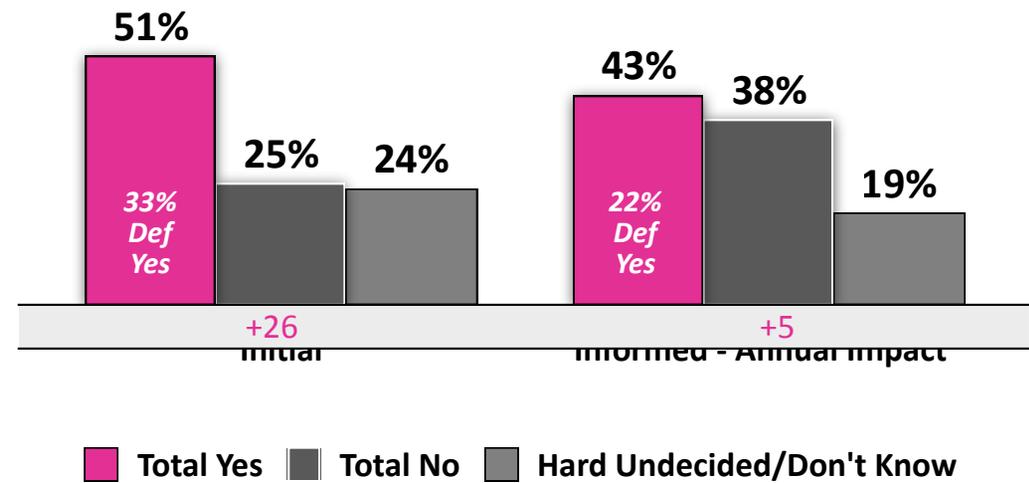
- **Sample A (n=150 voters)** was given the personal financial impact in terms of an *annual* amount (\$108.20 per \$100,000 in home value per year). Voters who said they were undecided or would vote no on the potential measure based on this amount (n=86) were then given information about the BEST grant and the personal financial impact including the BEST grant award (\$61.60 per \$100,000 in home value per year) and asked for their reaction to the lower amount.
- **Sample B (n=150 voters)** was given the personal financial impact in terms of a *monthly* amount (\$9.02 per \$100,000 in home value per month). Voters who said they were undecided or would vote no on the potential measure based on this amount (n=51) were then given information about the BEST grant and the personal financial impact including the BEST grant award (\$5.13 per \$100,000 in home value per month) and asked for their reaction to the lower amount.

The following four slides show the data first among those who saw the annual amounts and then among those who saw the monthly amounts. If voters saw the annual amounts, they did not see the monthly amounts and vice versa.

# After hearing how much the proposal would cost voters annually, support drops below 50%.

*If voters approve this proposal, it would raise taxes per year by approximately \$108.20 per \$100,000 in home value.*

*Knowing that, would you then vote Yes in Support of the Proposal or No against it?*



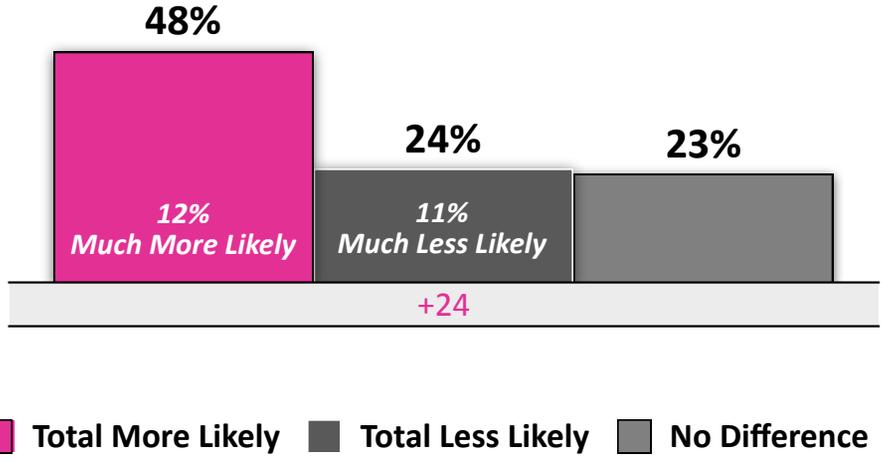
*\*Asked of Sample A, N=150*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

Information about the possibility of a BEST grant from the state makes those who were unsure or said they would vote no after hearing the annual personal financial impact feel more positively.

*If the school district applied for a grant from the state which could help offset the amount of debt the school would incur from \$123,000,000 to \$70,000,000, the proposal would instead raise taxes per year by approximately \$61.60 per \$100,000 in home value.*

*Knowing that, would you be more likely, or less likely to vote yes for the measure, or would it make any difference to you in your vote?*

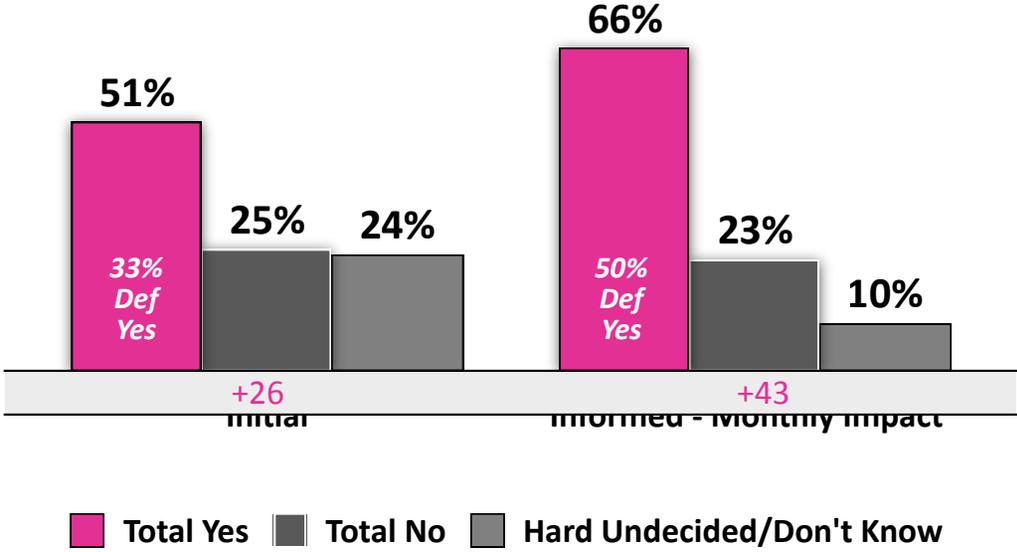


*\*\*Asked of those who were unsure or said they would vote no after hearing the annual impact, N=86*

# Voters find the tax increase more palatable when put in terms of a monthly tax increase. After hearing the monthly impact, support increases.

*If voters approve this proposal, it would raise taxes per month by approximately \$9.02 per \$100,000 in home value.*

*Knowing that, would you then vote Yes in Support of the Proposal or No against it?*

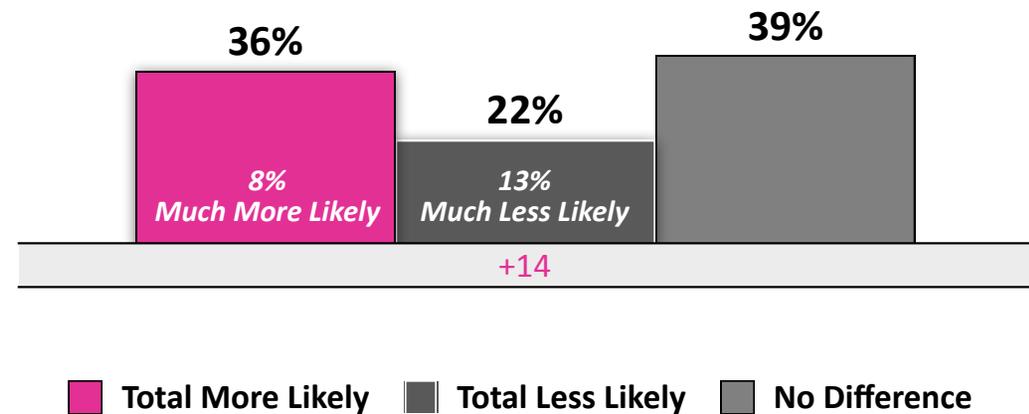


*^Asked of Sample B, N=150*

A plurality of those who were unsure or said they would vote no after hearing the monthly impact say the possibility of securing a BEST grant from the state would make no difference in their decision. Just over one-in-three say it would make them more likely to vote yes.

*If the school district applied for a grant from the state which could help offset the amount of debt the school would incur from \$123,000,000 to \$70,000,000, the proposal would instead raise taxes per year by approximately \$5.13 per \$100,000 in home value.*

*Knowing that, would you be more likely, or less likely to vote yes for the measure, or would it make any difference to you in your vote?*



^^Asked of those who were unsure or said they would vote no after hearing the monthly impact, N=51

**At first blush, half of voters say they would prefer the new school to be built on the Pagosa Springs High School campus**

**On the Pagosa Springs High School campus 50%**

**Uptown near Veterans Memorial Park 21%**

**Make no difference 28%**

*The school district is considering two locations for the proposed K-8 school. One option is to build it on the Pagosa Springs High School campus. The other option is to locate it uptown near Veterans Memorial Park. If this measure passes, would you prefer the school be built...*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

# Voters are split about the location of the school once they learn that over two-thirds of students live uptown near Veterans Memorial Park.

Over two-thirds of students live uptown near Veterans Memorial Park. Knowing that, would you prefer the school be built...

	Initial	Informed
On the Pagosa Springs High School campus	50%	40%
Uptown near Veterans Memorial Park	21%	37%
Make no difference	28%	22%

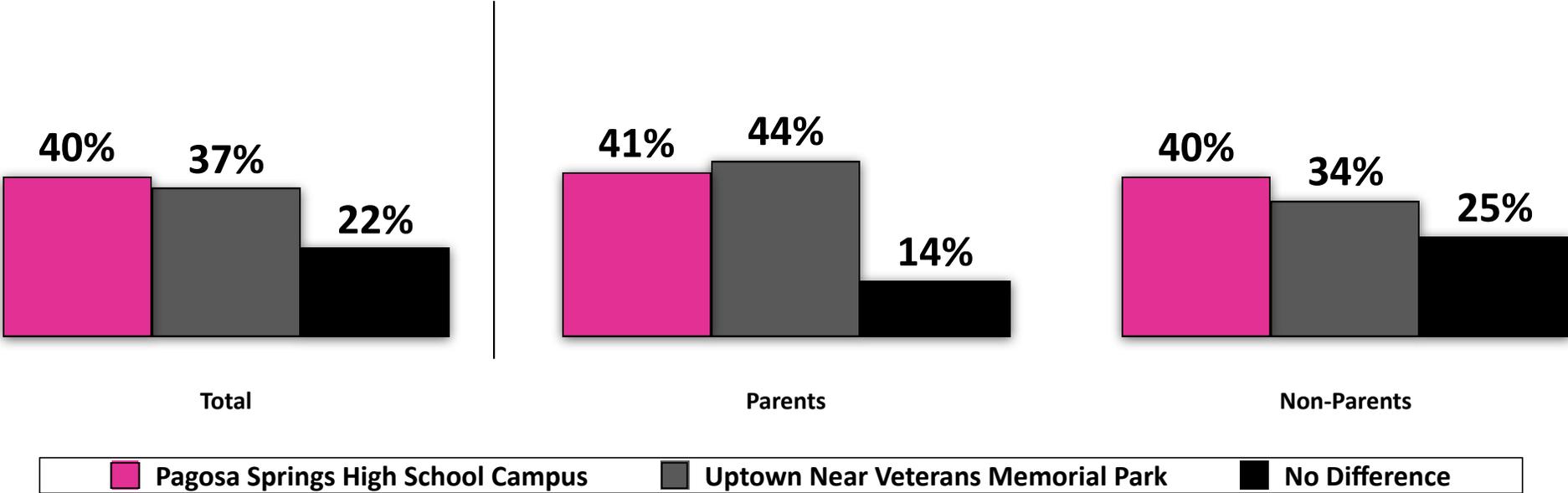
The school

measure passes, would you prefer the school be built...

If this

# Once they learn more, parents show a slight preference for building the new campus near Veterans Memorial Park compared to non-parents.

Over two-thirds of students live uptown near Veterans Memorial Park. Knowing that, would you prefer the school be built...



The school district is considering two locations for the proposed K-8 school. One option is to build it on the Pagosa Springs High School campus. The other option is to locate it uptown near Veterans Memorial Park. If this measure passes, would you prefer the school be built...



# Communicating about the Potential Ballot Measure

## More than seven-in-ten say these items which could potentially be funded by the District with this measure are extremely or very important.

*Funding Proposals Ranked by Extremely / Very Important*

	Extremely Important	Ext/Very Important
Providing the education that today's students will need for tomorrow's jobs and careers^	50%	89%
Providing a high-quality and inviting learning environment^	35%	85%
Improving the safety of students, teachers, and staff by providing a learning environment that has proper lighting, signage, secure entrances and play and athletic areas^	48%	82%
Ensuring all elementary and middle school students, including Pagosa Peak Open School students, benefit from upgrades to classrooms and other necessary equipment^	31%	80%
Providing a high-quality and inviting classroom environment with appropriately sized and located classrooms that promote student learning.*	43%	78%
Offering on-site fields which would be used for playgrounds, recess, sports teams, and other recreation opportunities^	28%	76%
Constructing a regional workforce center to enhance and expand vocational classes^	35%	75%
Ensuring an adequate and comprehensive learning environment.*	37%	74%
Providing adequate space for students and teachers to provide hands-on instruction and ensure the teaching of the necessary skills for twenty-first century jobs*	38%	72%
Improving the safety and security of students, teachers, and staff*	35%	71%

*There are a number of different things which could be funded by the District through a ballot measure proposal. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important is it to you that this particular item be funded by the District. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important to you that that particular item be funded?*

*\*Sample A, N=150 \*\*Sample B, N=150*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

**These proposals fall lower on voters' list of priorities. However, three-in-five still indicate that all except constructing a new athletic field are extremely or very important to fund.**

*Funding Proposals Ranked by Extremely / Very Important*

	Extremely Important	Ext/Very Important
Enhancing classrooms that are flexible spaces for individual and group learning.^	22%	66%
Constructing a career and technical education center to enhance and expand vocational classes.* Improving student safety and reducing injuries by constructing a new athletic field	34%	65%
Offering preschool enrollment to families in our community^	26%	63%
Addressing student, teacher and staff safety in the elementary and middle school by building a new K-8 building.*	23%	60%
Relocating the middle school in our community from Main Street and US 160 to a safer location.*	29%	60%
Providing physical education and team sports facilities and equipment on school grounds to better teach teamwork, cooperation and other important skills.*	27%	59%
Improving student safety and reducing injuries by constructing a new athletic field.*	21%	48%

*There are a number of different things which could be funded by the District through a ballot measure proposal. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important is it to you that this particular item be funded by the District. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important to you that that particular item be funded?*

*\*Sample A, N=150 \*\*Sample B, N=150*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

## Safety, providing a high quality learning environment, and educating for jobs and careers resonates regardless of parent status.

Parents
Improve safety/security – learning environment^ 52%
Providing high quality environment – promote student learning* 49%
Providing high quality learning environment^ 42%
Relocating the middle school – safer location* 42%
Education for tomorrow’s jobs/careers^ 40%

Non-Parents
Education for tomorrow’s jobs/careers^ 54%
Improve safety/security – learning environment^ 46%
Providing space for hands-on instruction* 41%
Providing high quality environment – promote student learning* 41%
Constructing regional workforce center^ 39%

Showing % Extremely Important

*There are a number of different things which could be funded by the District through a ballot measure proposal. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important is it to you that this particular item be funded by the District. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important to you that that particular item be funded?*

\*Sample A, N=150 \*\*Sample B, N=150

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

## Democratic voters are more likely to find these items more intensely important than Republicans or Independents.

GOP
Education for tomorrow's jobs/careers^ 42%
Providing high quality environment – promote student learning* 39%
Constructing regional workforce center^ 34%
Ensuring adequate/comprehensive learning environment* 34%
Relocating the middle school – safer location* 32%

IND
Improve safety/security – learning environment^ 51%
Education for tomorrow's jobs/careers^ 49%
Providing high quality environment – promote student learning* 41%
Improve safety/security* 39%
Providing high quality learning environment^ 38%

DEM
Improve safety/security – learning environment^ 77%
Providing space for hands-on instruction* 76%
Education for tomorrow's jobs/careers^ 71%
Ensuring adequate/comprehensive learning environment* 67%
Constructing regional workforce center^ 65%

Showing % Extremely Important

*There are a number of different things which could be funded by the District through a ballot measure proposal. Knowing that not everything can be equally important, please indicate for each one of the following, how important is it to you that this particular item be funded by the District. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important to you that that particular item be funded?*

\*Sample A, N=150 \*\*Sample B, N=150

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

**All of the statements we tested in support of the measure are rated as compelling by voters. Statements that emphasize student safety in terms of the age of the elementary and middle school buildings as well as the location of both schools rise to the top.**

		<u>% Total Convincing</u>
The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance. The original Pagosa Springs Elementary School building is over 50 years old, and the Pagosa Springs Middle School buildings are over 70 years old. It is no longer practical or cost-effective to modernize them. A new school in our community is the best way to keep students and teachers safe so they can focus on learning at school.^	<b>% Very Convincing</b> 50%	82%
Our original elementary and middle school buildings are well over 50 years old and no longer meet the needs of today's students. We need to plan ahead to provide safe and adequate classrooms for students and attract and retain our best teachers.^	46%	80%
Pick-up and drop-off at Pagosa Springs Elementary School increases traffic congestion in town and can back up onto Highway 160, creating dangerous traffic conditions at the bottom of Putt Hill. A new school in a different location will ease congestion for everyone during the school year and also better protect students and families.*	45%	85%
High-quality preschool sets the foundation for lifelong learning, but right now, too many families in our community don't have access to preschool programs. This measure will add much-needed preschool classrooms, giving more children a strong start while easing the burden on working parents.*	45%	82%
Currently, our middle school students have to cross a busy street just to be outside—a daily safety risk we can fix with a new school that includes an on-site field and outdoor spaces. Supporting this proposal means our kids can be outside safely and enjoy the modern facilities they deserve to learn, grow, and stay healthy.^	45%	77%

Please consider some statements that people have made in support of the school district funding measure. For each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...

\*Asked of Sample A, N=150 ^Asked of Sample B, N=150

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

## These statements also resonate, but aren't quite as powerful.

	<b>% Very Convincing</b>	<b>% Total Convincing</b>
The safety of our students and staff is of the utmost importance. The original Pagosa Springs Elementary School building is over 50 years old, and the Pagosa Springs Middle School buildings are over 70 years old. It is no longer practical or cost-effective to modernize them. A new school in our community with secure entrances and other safety features is the best way to keep students and teachers safe so they can focus on learning at school.*	<b>42%</b>	<b>76%</b>
An updated school building that is healthy, safe, and secure plays an important role in attracting and retaining quality teachers.*	<b>35%</b>	<b>76%</b>
This proposed measure ensures we are taking care of future generations in our community. In Colorado, the state generally does not fund K-12 school buildings, so the only way to provide adequate classrooms for our students is by coming together to do it ourselves with a voter-approved measure.^	<b>35%</b>	<b>71%</b>
This ballot measure will ensure the District is held to strong standards for accountability. It requires an independent audit and the oversight of a citizen committee on all spending.*	<b>34%</b>	<b>73%</b>
Today's classrooms should reflect how students learn best—through flexible, collaborative spaces that support both individualized instruction and a strong sense of community. Our current buildings weren't designed for that and retrofitting them isn't practical or cost-effective. This measure will fund a new school designed to meet the needs of today's learners, helping every student thrive.^	<b>33%</b>	<b>73%</b>

Please consider some statements that people have made in support of the school district funding measure. For each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...

\*Asked of Sample A, N=150 ^Asked of Sample B, N=150

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

**Parents find these support statements more compelling than non-parents. There are also some differences in terms of what statements rise to the top.**

Parents	Non-Parents
Safety of students/staff^ 62%	Pre-K* 46%
Original buildings don't meet needs – plan ahead^ 54%	Cross a busy street^ 45%
Safety of students/staff – secure entrances/ other safety features* 50%	Safety of students/staff^ 45%
Pick-up/drop-off traffic* 50%	Original buildings don't meet needs – plan ahead^ 43%
Voter-approved measure^ 50%	Pick-up/drop-off traffic* 42%

Showing % Very Convincing

*Please consider some statements that people have made in support of the school district funding measure. For each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...*

*\*Asked of Sample A, N=150 ^Asked of Sample B, N=150*

**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

## Safety resonates across party lines.

GOP
Cross a busy street^ 52%
Safety of students/staff^ 42%
Safety of students/staff – secure entrances/ other safety features* 41%
Original buildings don't meet needs – plan ahead^ 41%
Pick-up/drop-off traffic* 39%

IND
Safety of students/staff^ 49%
Pick-up/drop-off traffic* 49%
Original buildings don't meet needs – plan ahead^ 44%
Pre-K* 41%
Voter-approved measure^ 35%

DEM
Pre-K* 75%
Safety of students/staff^ 69%
Safety of students/staff – secure entrances/other safety features* 65%
Original buildings don't meet needs – plan ahead^ 63%
Cross a busy street^ 60%

Showing % Very Convincing

Please consider some statements that people have made in support of the school district funding measure. For each one, please tell me whether that statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote YES, IN FAVOR OF a possible funding measure...

\*Asked of Sample A, N=150 ^Asked of Sample B, N=150

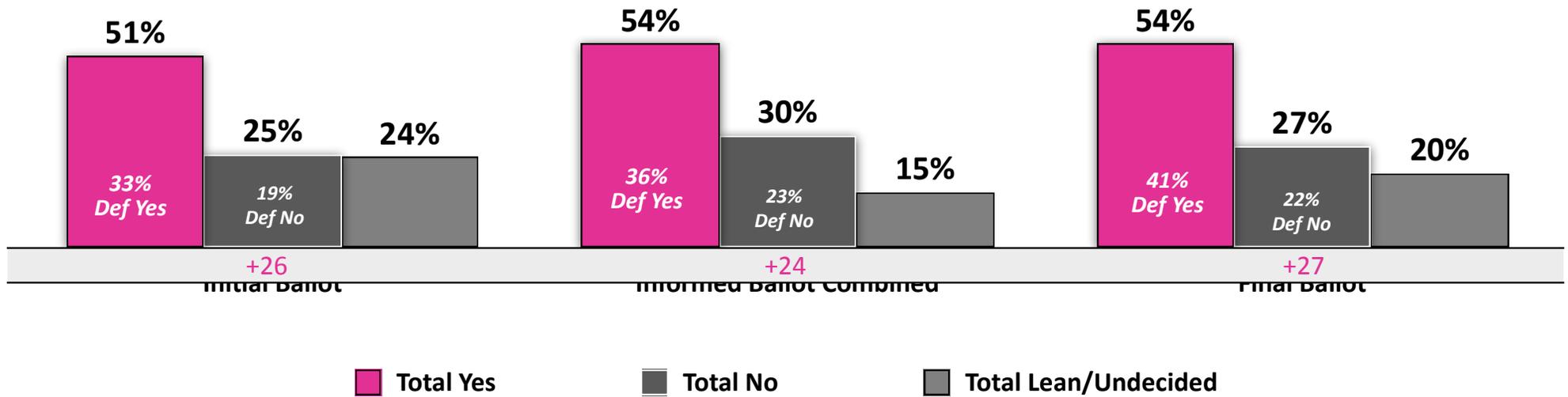
**NEW BRIDGE STRATEGY**

**Only one opposition statement about rising cost of living is compelling to voters as a reason to vote no. The other statements we tested fall flat.**

	<b>% Very Convincing</b>	<b>% Total Convincing</b>
Working families are dealing with rising cost of living from grocery prices to rent - this is just not a good time to be raising taxes.	<b>30%</b>	<b>59%</b>
This is the wrong time to raise taxes given the economic uncertainty around tariffs and state and federal budget cuts.	<b>26%</b>	<b>49%</b>
The money is going towards constructing a new school building, which has little to do with how well a student learns. We need to focus on attracting and retaining good teachers and funding things which will truly help kids.	<b>23%</b>	<b>49%</b>
We cannot trust the District to spend these funds how they say they will.	<b>20%</b>	<b>40%</b>
The District just needs to tighten its belt and do better with what it has.	<b>15%</b>	<b>30%</b>

*Please consider some statements that people have made against the school district funding measure. For each one, please indicate whether the statement is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to vote NO, AGAINST a possible funding measure.*

After learning more, support remains solidly in the low 50's, though a few more say they would definitely vote yes.



*Having heard more please consider this proposal again. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on a proposal that reads as follows...*



# The Bottom Line

# The Bottom Line

- A majority of voters have heard something about the District in the past few months. Those that have heard something mention the need for new buildings/facilities and recognize that the District has been dealing with some financial difficulties. This awareness could potentially be helpful as there is a baseline recognition of these issues, however, it could also be a double-edged sword as voters also perceive the District as struggling and two-in-five give the District a “C” grade. 56 percent trust the District to spend tax dollars wisely.
- The potential measure garners bare majority support on the initial ask. Those who support the proposal see a need for schools to be repaired, updated and safe. Those who say they would vote no on the proposal are opposed to tax increases generally and express concern that the measure costs too much money. A description of the personal financial impact of the measure is better received by voters when it is put in terms of the monthly impact. Learning about the potential impact of the BEST grant results in a more positive impression among undecided or “no” voters.
- Initially, voters prefer that the new school be built on the high school campus. However, once they learn about the location of most students in the District, they are evenly split between the high school campus location and the uptown location.
- Funding items that emphasize education for jobs and careers and student safety rise to the top. Similarly, statements in support of the measure that emphasize student safety in terms of the age of the current school buildings as well as safety with regard to the location of the schools are deemed to be very compelling to voters as reasons to vote yes.
- An opposition statement about the rising cost of living is the only statement we tested against the measure that resonates.
- After learning more, support remains solidly in the low 50’s, though a few more say they would definitely vote yes. So, even though voters tell us that what this measure would fund is important and the statements in support of the measure are compelling, voters don’t move towards a yes vote.



**Lori Weigel**

**Principal**

**[lori@newbridgestrategy.com](mailto:lori@newbridgestrategy.com)**

**303.324.7655**

**Kathryn Hahne**

**Director**

**[kathryn@newbridgestrategy.com](mailto:kathryn@newbridgestrategy.com)**

**703.888.9295**