



SAINT PETER SCHOOL BOARD
Study Session
Thursday, May 13, 2021
Saint Peter Middle School-Media Center, 100 Lincoln
Dr. , SAINT PETER, MN 56082
6:30 PM

I. Call Meeting to Order

II. Consideration and Adoption of the Agenda

III. Consider Requests to Speak on the Agenda

IV. Information Items

1. Community Survey Summary of Results

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V. Other

VI. Upcoming Meetings of the School Board Finance Committee

Friday, May 14, 2021

8:00AM

SPHS-Community Room

Regular School Board Meeting

Monday, May 17, 2021

6:30PM

SPCC-Governor's Room

Graduation

Friday, May 28, 2021

6:30PM

SPHS Campus

VII. Adjournment



ADDENDUM

STUDY SESSION
Thursday, May 13, 2021
SPMS-Media Center
6:30PM

IV. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. AGENDA ITEM #1

Subject: Community Survey Summary of Results

Background: In preparation for an Operating Referendum in November, 2021 we have contracted with Bakertilly to complete a community survey. The survey has been completed and representatives from Bakertilly will be presenting the results. Recommendations for setting the referendum amount will be included in the information.

Presentation: Bill Gronseth, Tim Regner, Representatives from Bakertilly

St. Peter Schools

2021 Community Survey Summary of Results





INTRODUCTION

Survey outline

- Survey included interviews with 310 registered voters in the St. Peter school district.
- Interviews were completed between April 22nd and April 27th.
- Approximate margin of error is $\pm 5.5\%$.

Who we called

- Interviews included demographic targets intended to provide a representative sample of voters in the district.
- To the extent that any demographic dimension was significantly under- or over-sampled, sample weights were adjusted to compensate.

Who we called *(cont.)*

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

Survey structure

- Main body of survey asked about potential changes to educational programs and student support services along with related tax impacts.

Initial support for increased operating levy

“In order to provide expanded learning opportunities for students, Saint Peter Schools may ask voters to increase property taxes to provide additional funding for the District.

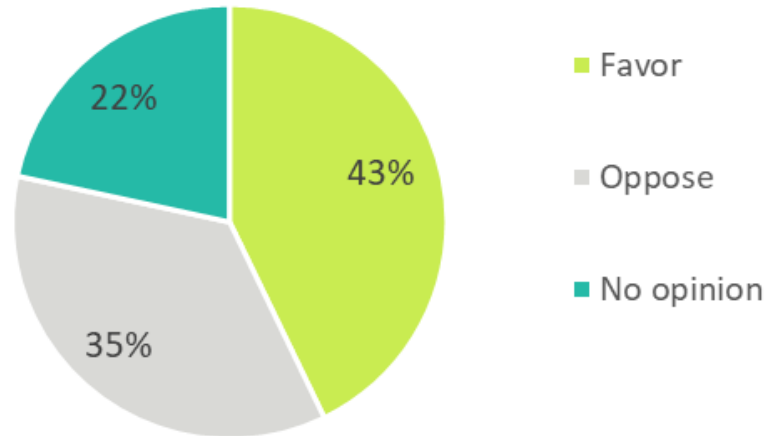
8

Based on what you know now, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

OPERATING LEVY

Initial support

Initial support - increase operating levy



Effect of information

- Participants were asked a series of questions about a potential operating levy.
 - The list asked respondents to react to potential budget impacts and changes to educational programs, student support and classroom staffing if the proposed levy were approved.
- Items were presented in random order, to minimize any bias due to their position on the list.
- Two items were presented in two forms, using different wording to describe details.
 - Half of interviews used one version, and half used the other.

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OPERATING LEVY

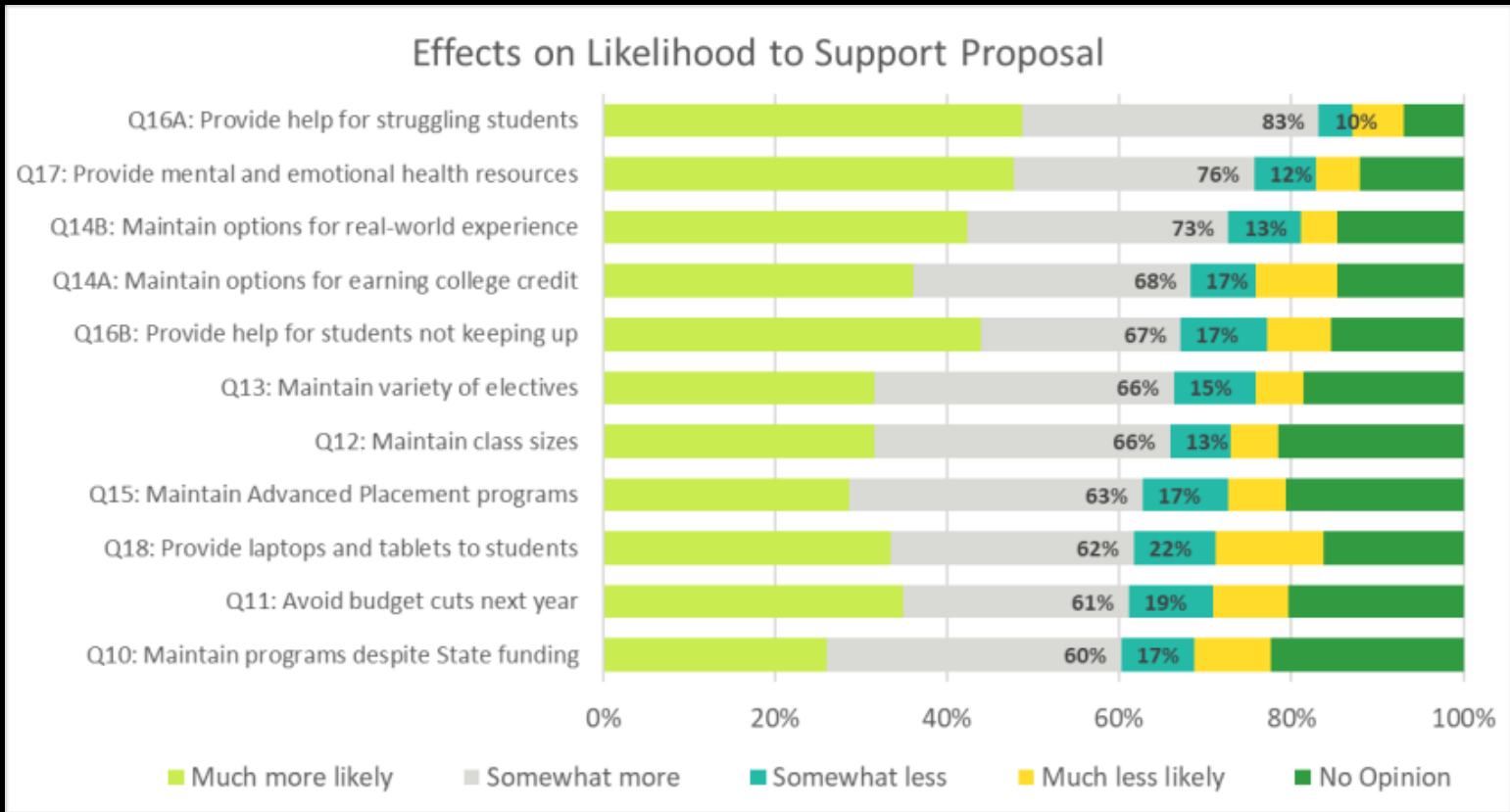
Effect of information

“I am going to read some statements about the proposal to increase the district’s operating levy.

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Please tell me whether the information in each statement would make you more likely or less likely to vote for such a proposal.”

Reaction to impacts



Labels show combined % for more/much more and less/much less.



OPERATING LEVY

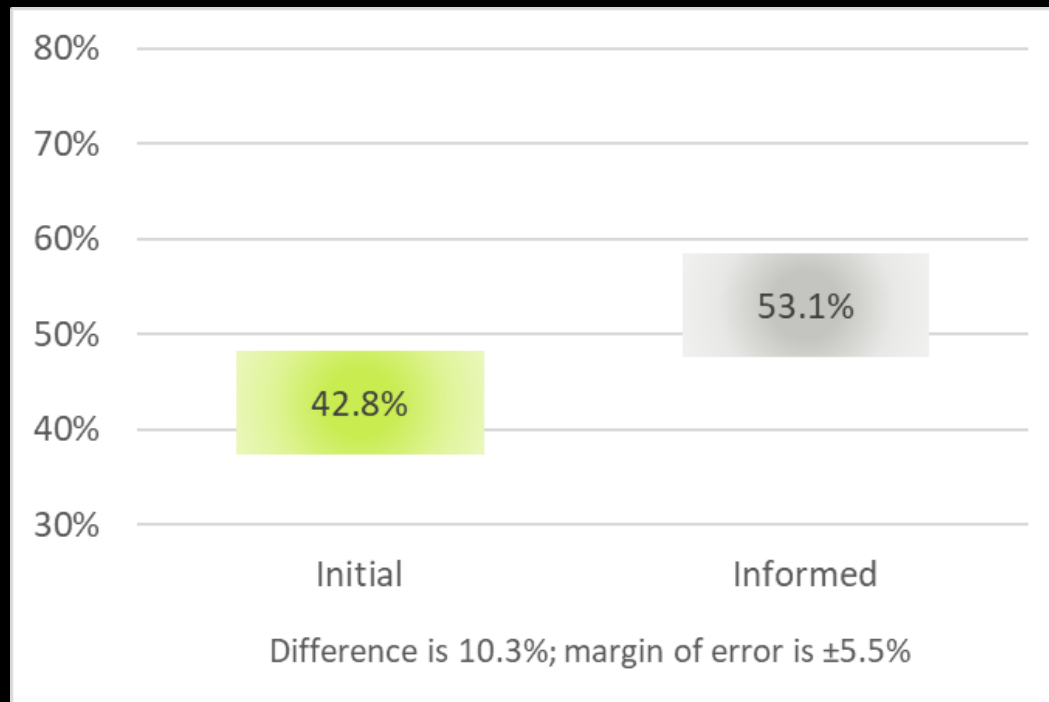
Informed support

“Now that you have heard more information about the proposal to raise additional funding for the District, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”

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OPERATING LEVY

Comparison – initial and informed

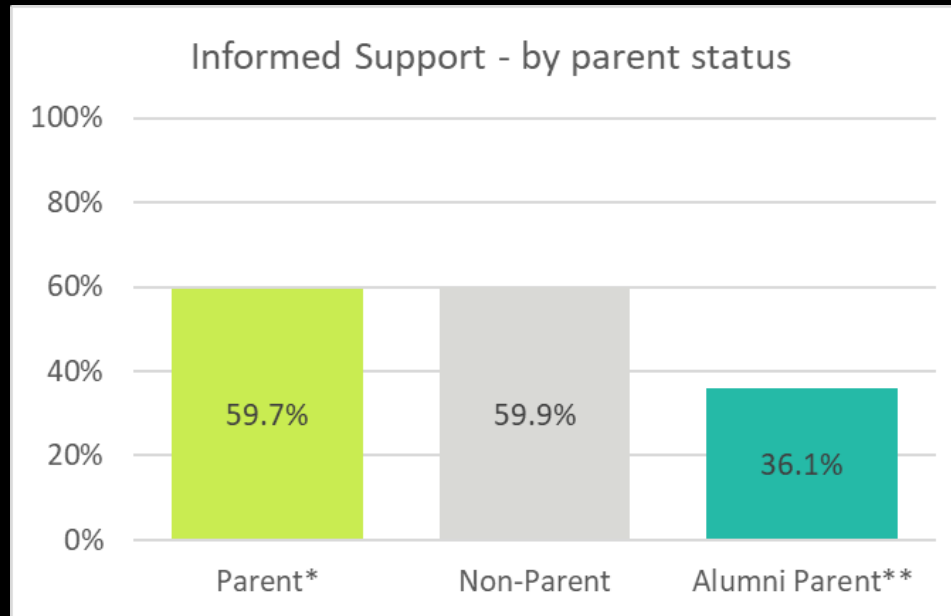


Difference is statistically significant.

Demographic differences

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

Demographic differences *(cont.)*

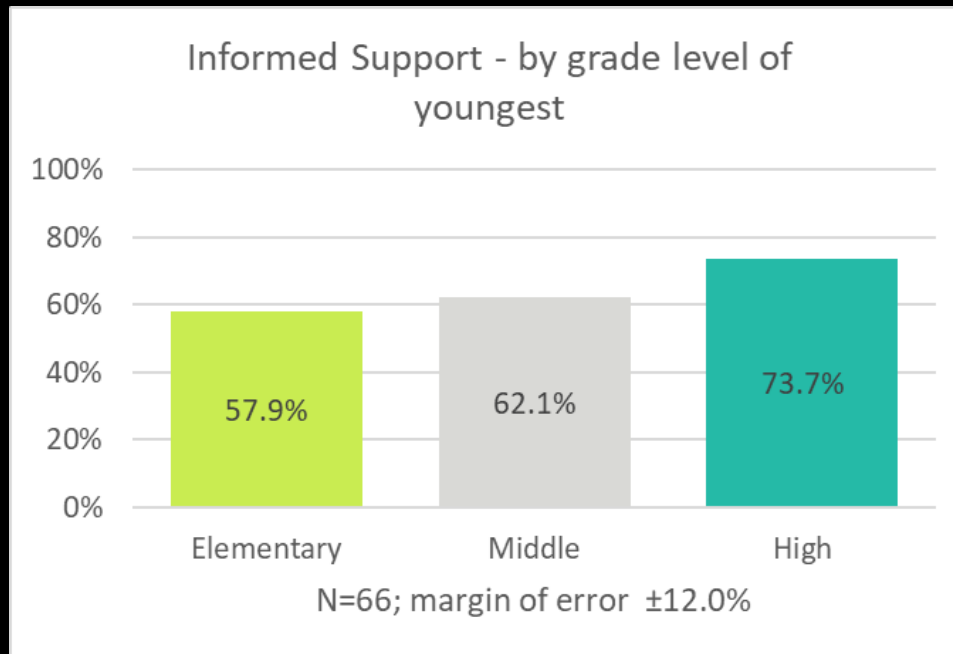


* "Parent" includes respondents with children attending St. Peter Schools.

** "Alumni Parent" includes parents whose grown children attended St. Peter schools in the past.

OPERATING LEVY

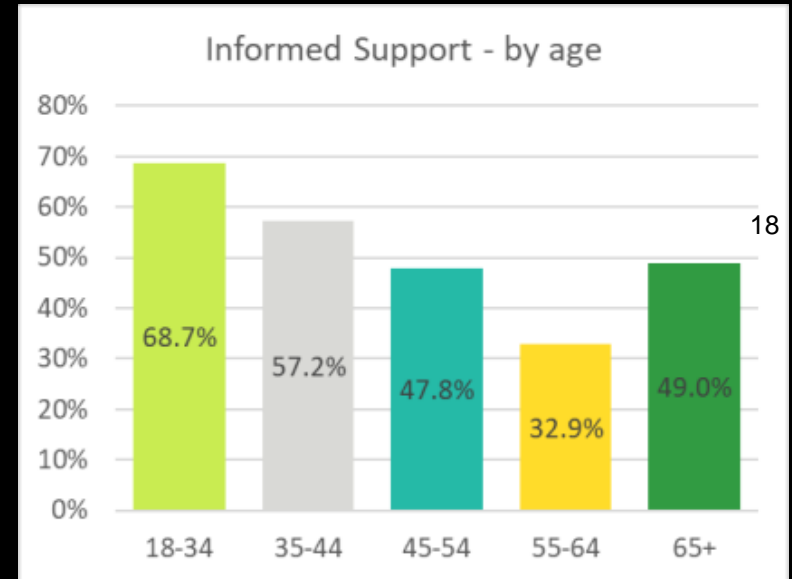
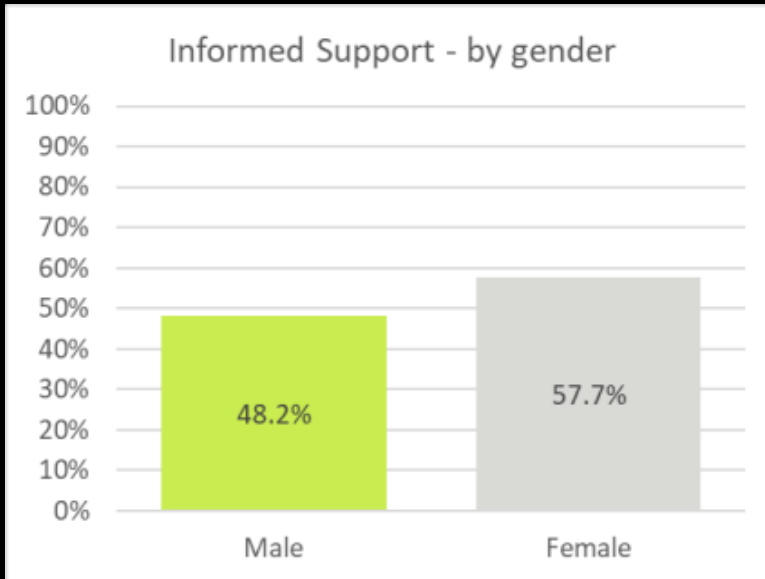
Demographic differences *(cont.)*



The chart above includes only responses from voters with children attending St. Peter Public Schools.

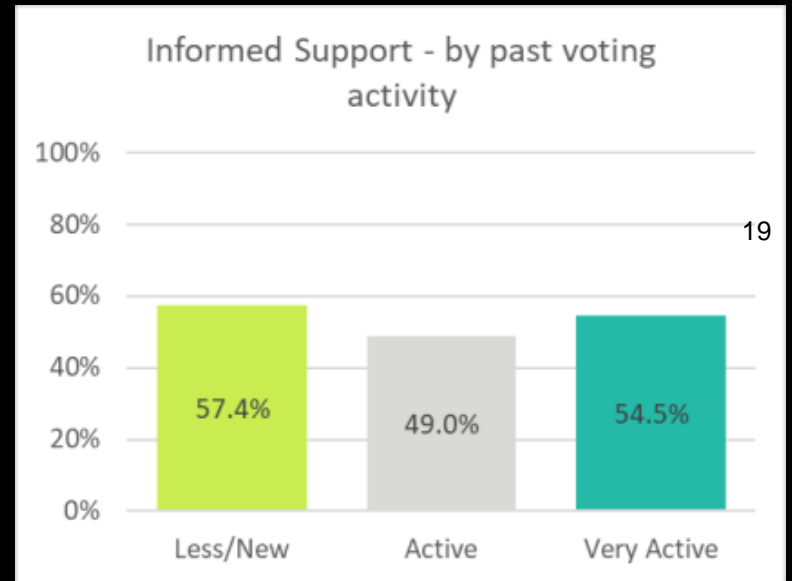
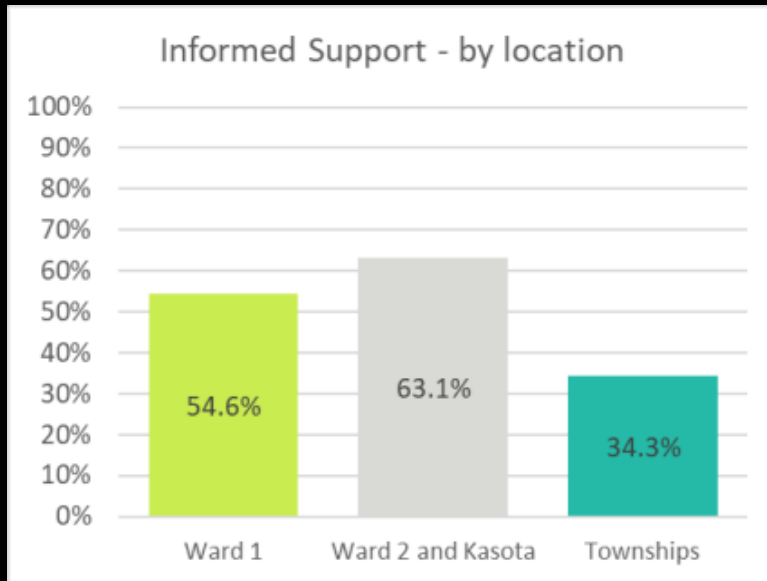
OPERATING LEVY

Demographic differences *(cont.)*



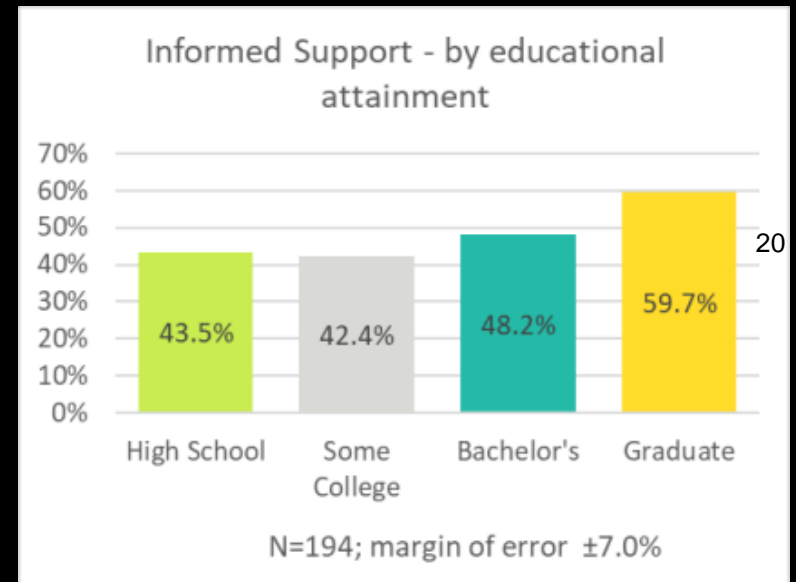
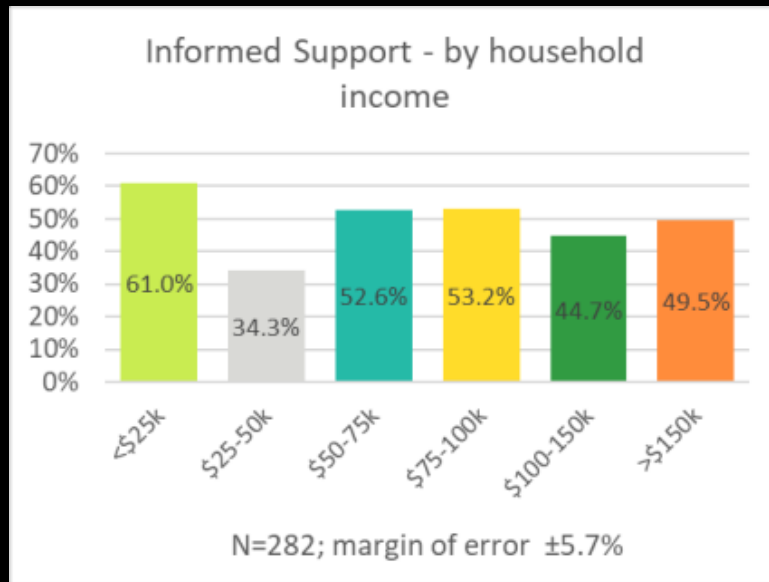
OPERATING LEVY

Demographic differences *(cont.)*



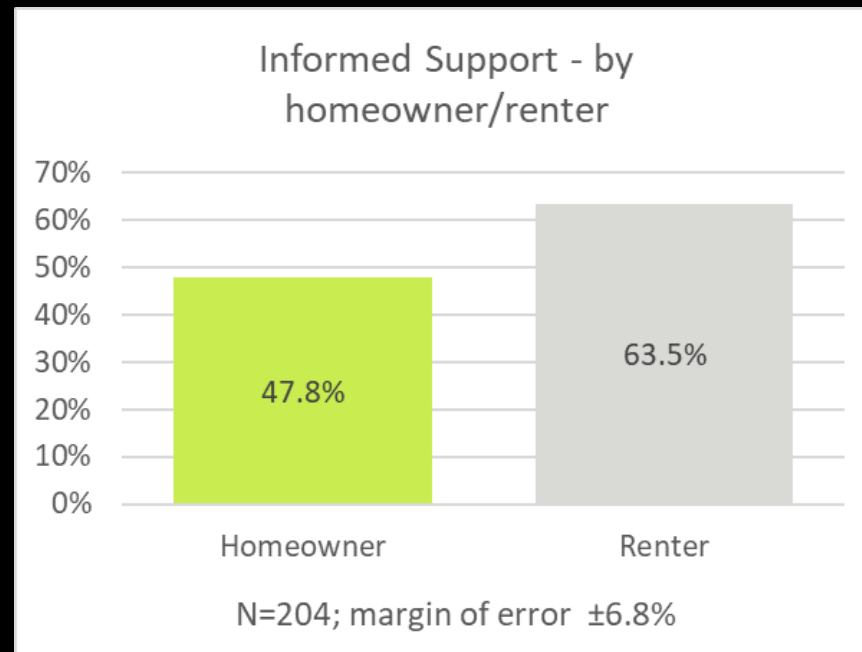
OPERATING LEVY

Demographic differences (cont.)



OPERATING LEVY

Demographic differences *(cont.)*

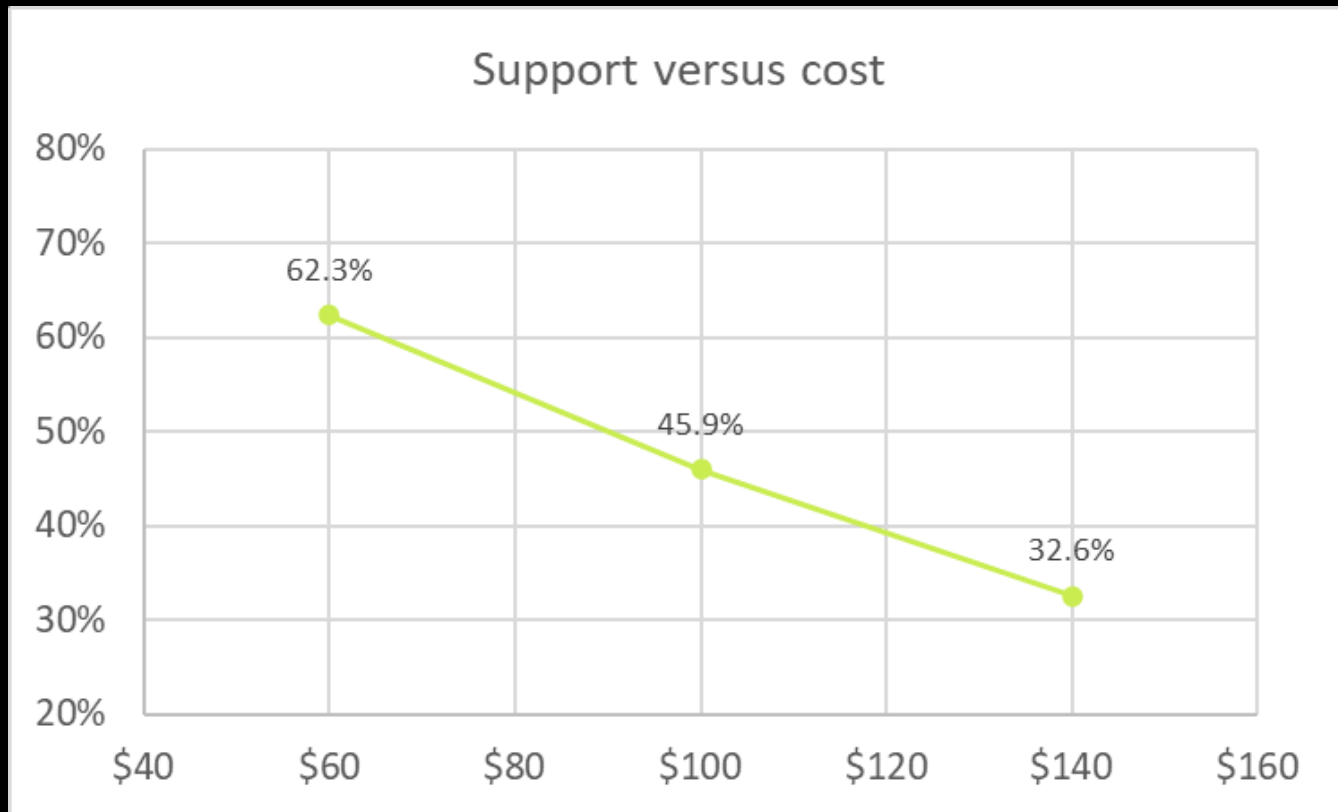


Impact of cost information

- Participants were asked about three potential property tax increases to fund programs: \$60, \$100 and \$140²² per year on an average home valued at \$150,000.
- To preclude responses given in anticipation of higher or lower options, dollar values were presented in random order.

SURVEY RESULTS

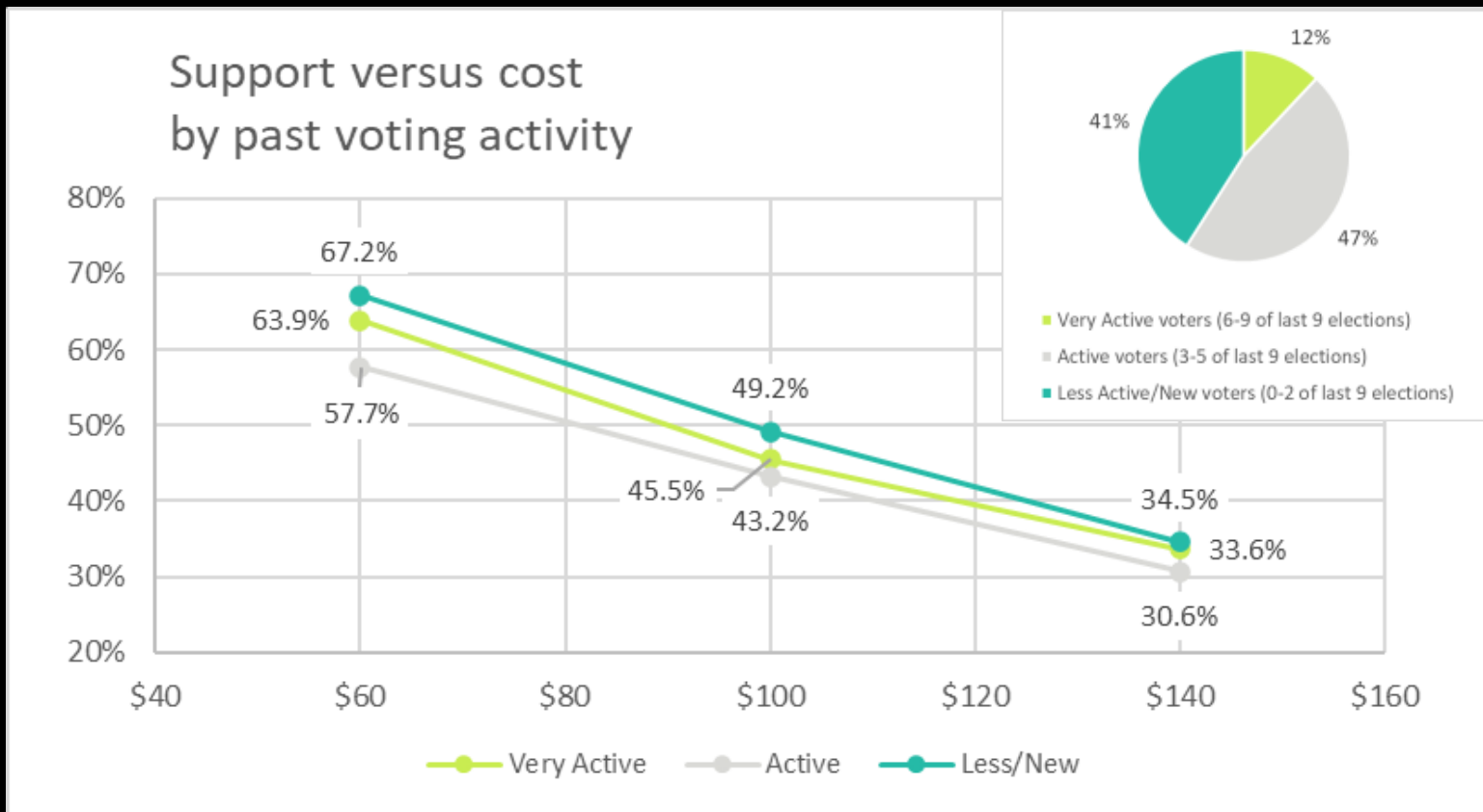
Impact of cost information (cont.)



Potential tax impacts tested were \$60, \$100 and \$140.

SURVEY RESULTS

Impact of cost information (cont.)

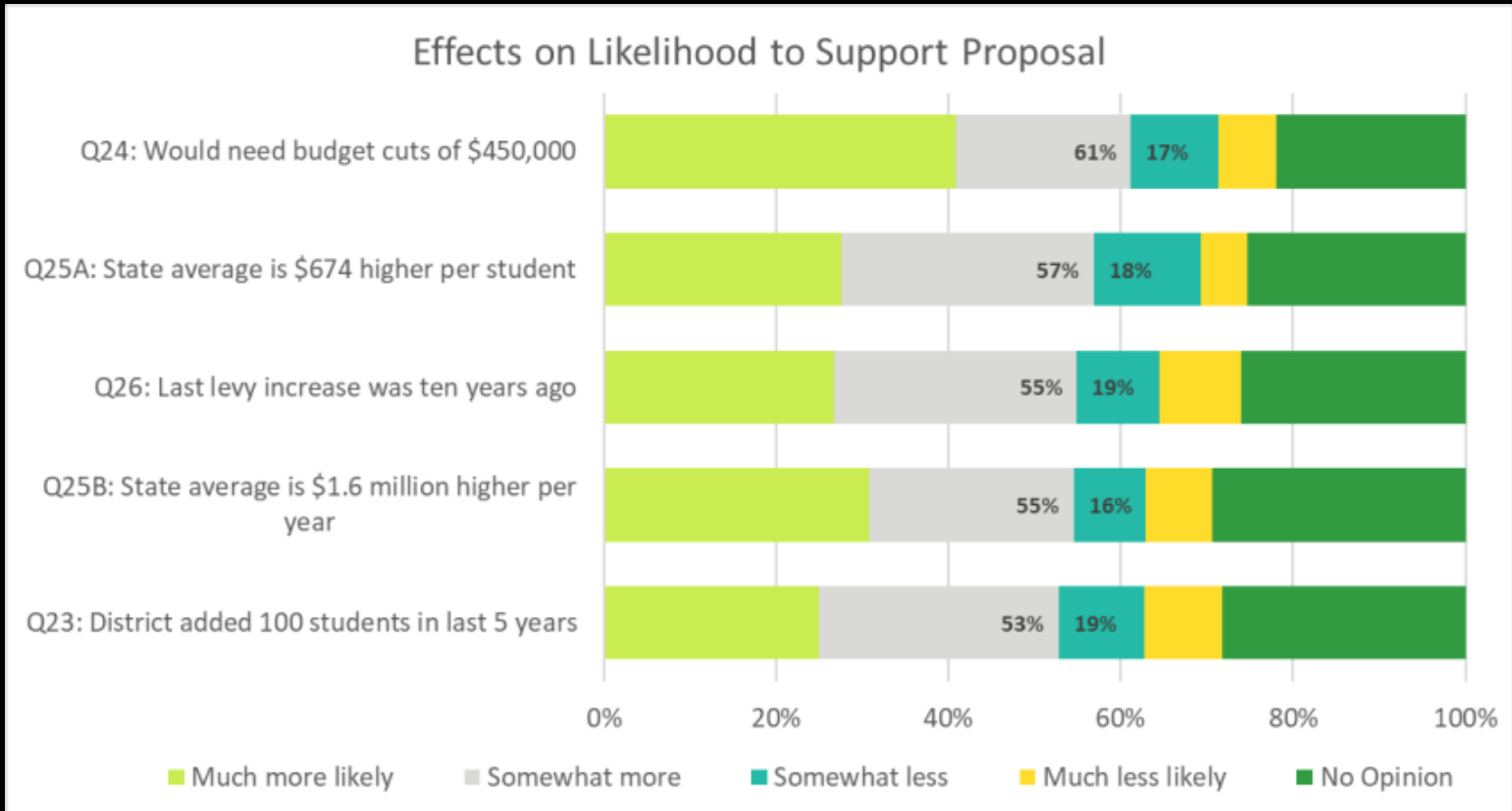




Funding environment

The next few items asked participants to react to statements about the District and its funding.

Reaction to impacts



Labels show combined % for more/much more and less/much less.



Grading the District

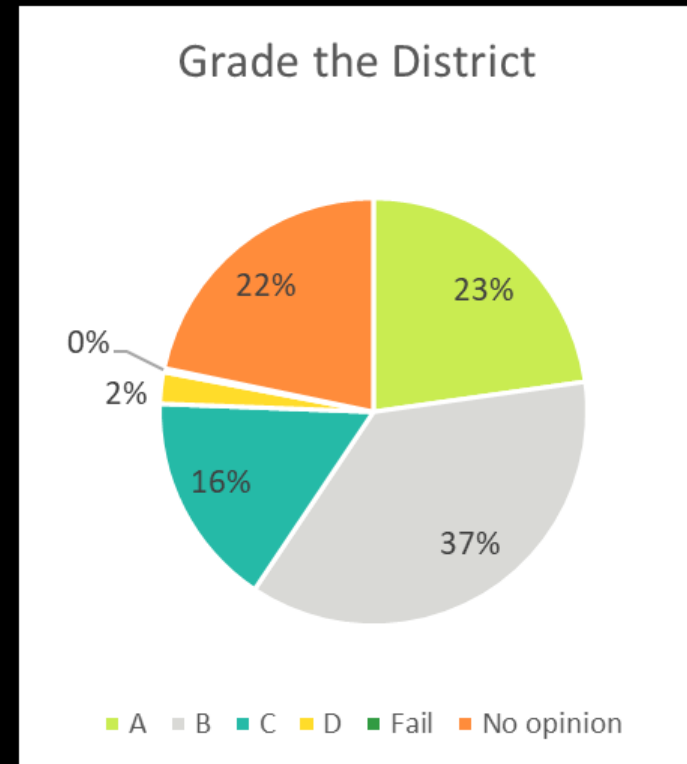
“Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the St. Peter Public Schools were graded in the same way.

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What grade would you give to the public schools here?”

Overall grades

- 59% of respondents give A and B grades to the School District.
- 2% gave D and F grades.
- 22% of participants could not offer a response.



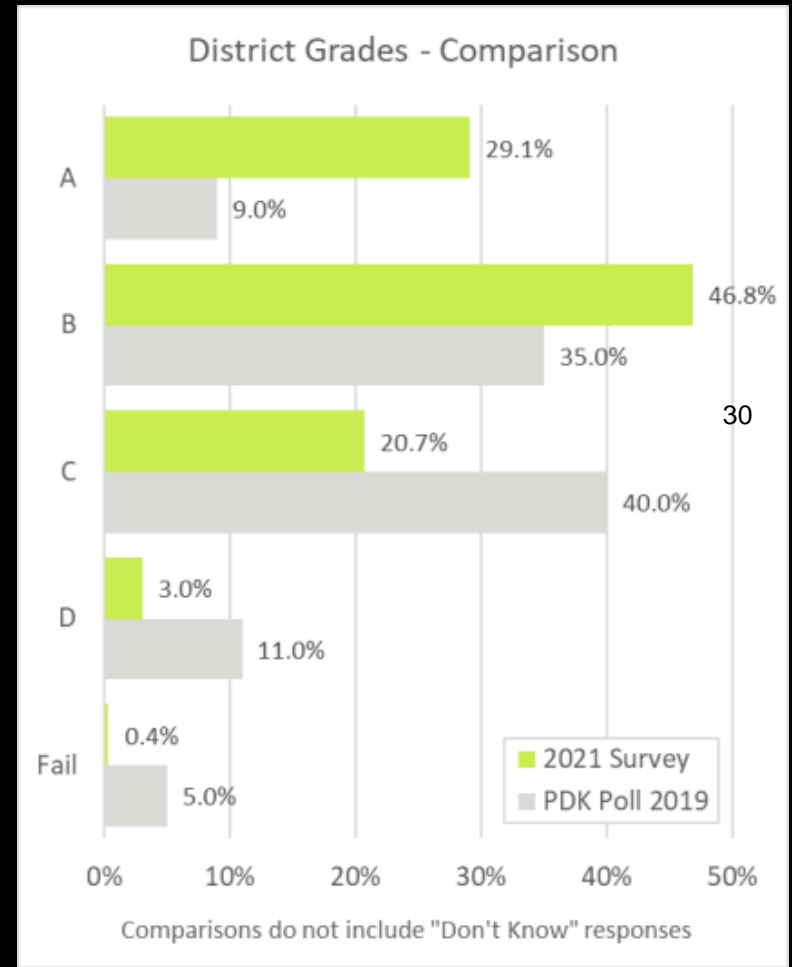
Benchmark grades

- For reference, we compare District grades from current survey against a national benchmark, the PDK *Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools*, conducted in 2019.
- For purposes of comparison between surveys, we do not include “I Don't Know” responses.

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Benchmark grades *(cont.)*

- Very good grades by comparison to national benchmark from PDK.
- Much higher proportion of A and B grades.
- Very low numbers of D and Fail grades.





Community environment

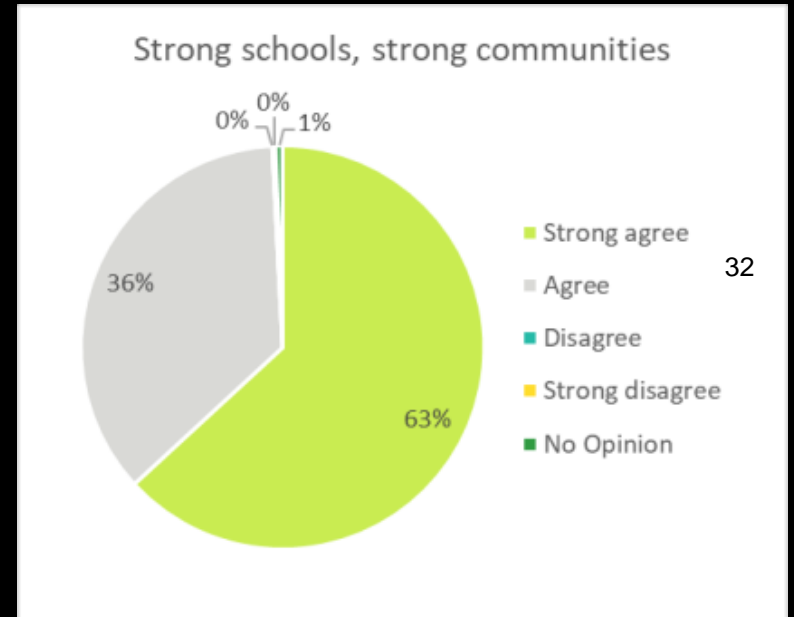
The last few questions asked participants for their level of agreement with several statements about the District and its role in the community.

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Schools and the community

“Strong schools are an important part of a strong community.”

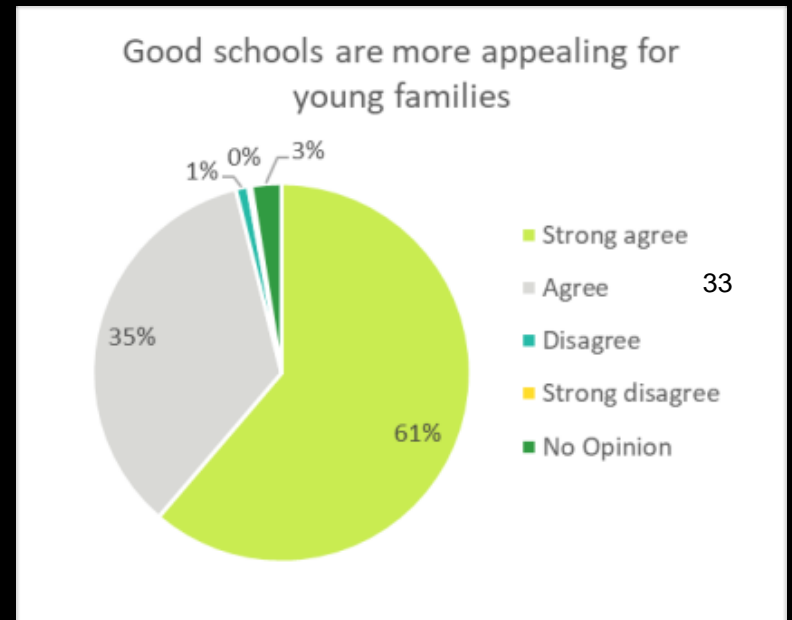
- 99% agree with this statement.



Appeal to young families

“Good quality public schools make our community more appealing to young families.”

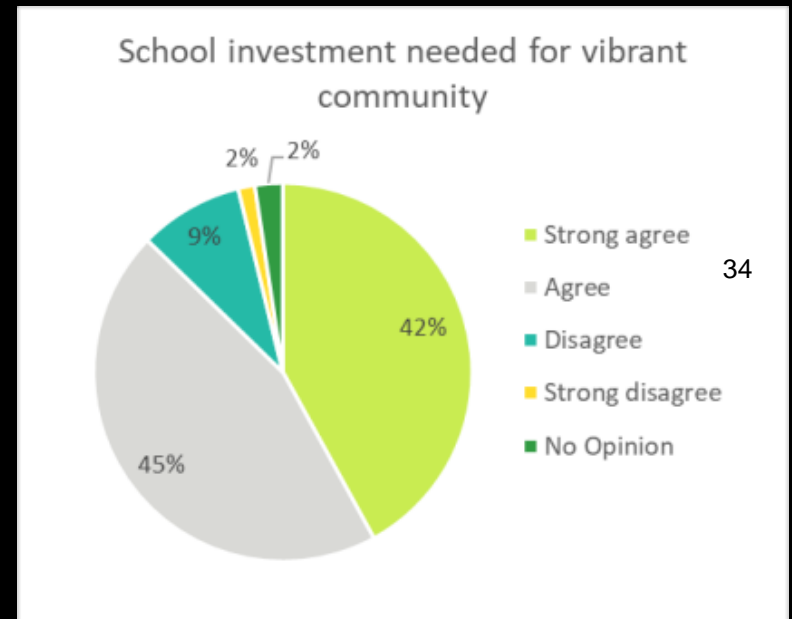
- 96% agree that schools are an attraction for young families.



Investments in schools

“Keeping our community vibrant and healthy will require ongoing investments in the quality of our schools.”

- 87% agree with this statement.

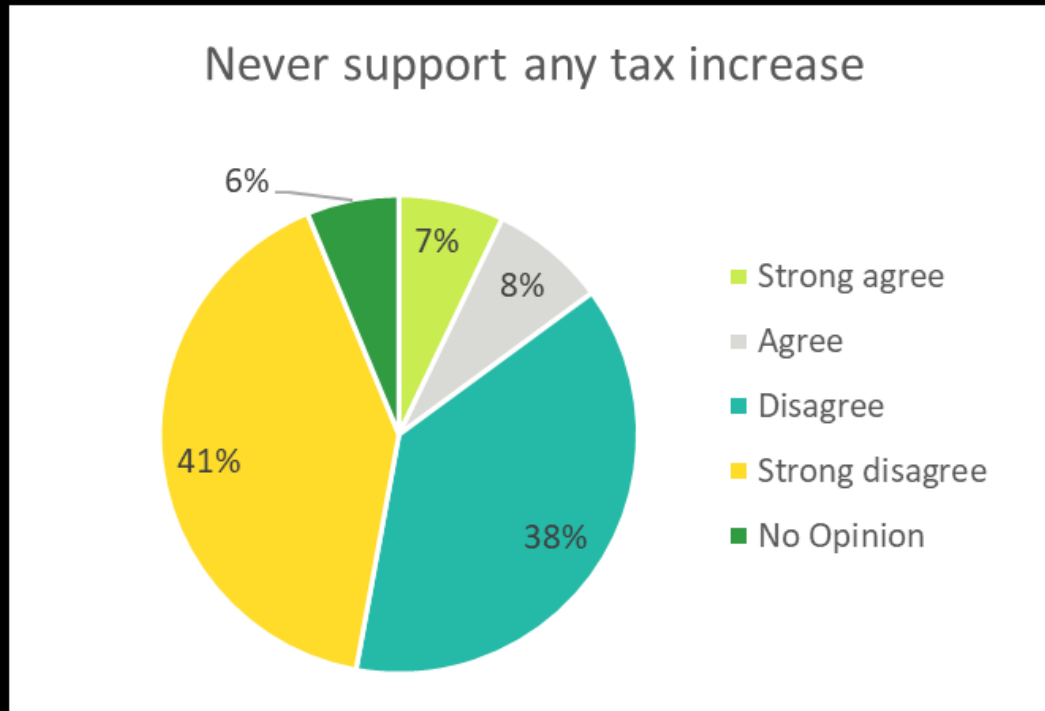


Tax aversion

Participants were asked how much they agreed with the following statement:

“I would never vote for a tax increase, no matter what the amount or how the money raised would be used.”

Tax aversion (cont.)

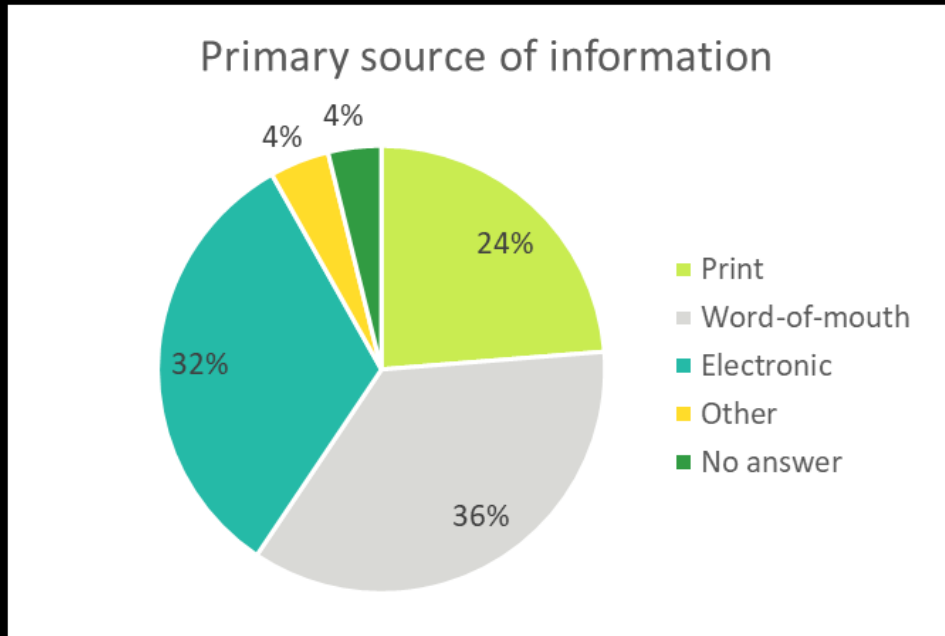


We typically see anti-tax sentiment of 15-25% in our community surveys.
Response of 15% is within common range.

Preferred source of information

- Participants were asked where they got most of their information about the School District.
- First question asked in broad terms: printed materials, word-of-mouth, or electronic sources.³⁷
 - Each group then chose from a list of specific examples in the appropriate category.

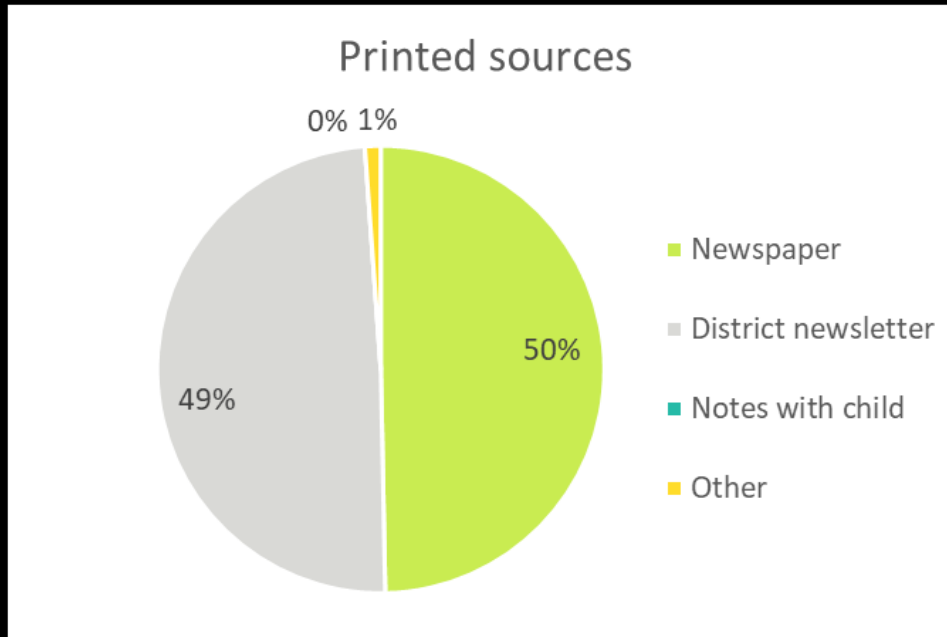
Preferred information source – general



- “Other” responses were primarily from watching school board meetings or using a combination of sources.

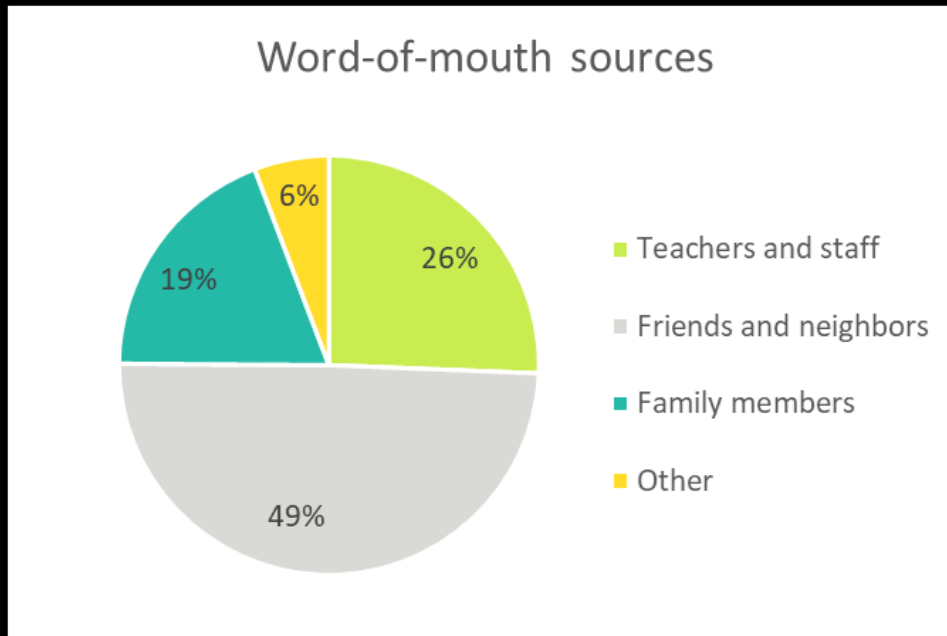
COMMUNICATION

Preferred information source – print sources



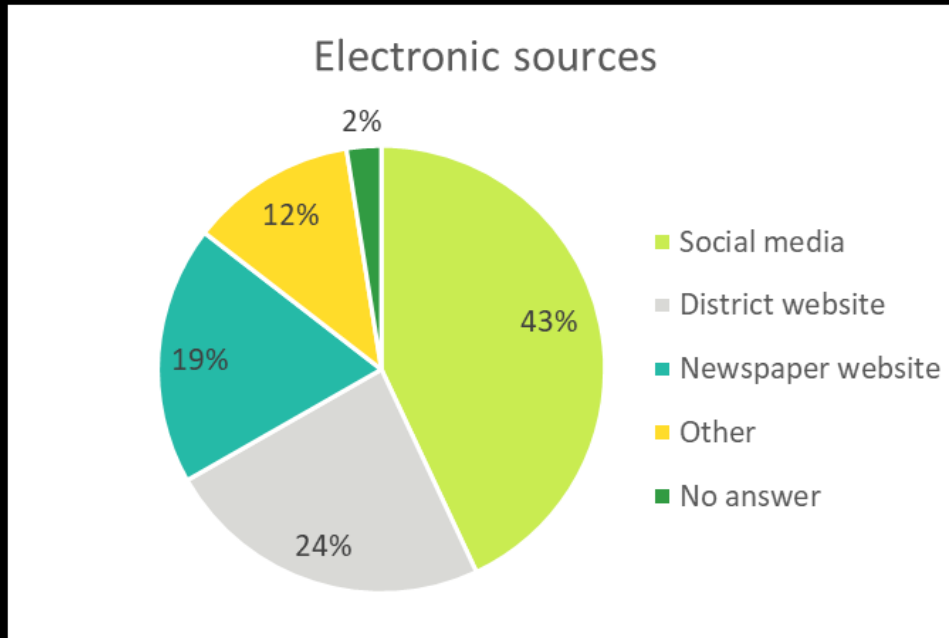
COMMUNICATION

Preferred information source – word-of-mouth



COMMUNICATION

Preferred information source – electronic





SURVEY FINDINGS

Findings: support for operating levy

- Initial support at 42.8%.
- Informed support at 53.1%.
- Information about the proposal changed support by 10.3 points, which is statistically significant.

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Findings: program impacts

- Greatest positive impacts seen from providing academic and mental health support for students.
- Smallest positive impacts from references to budget cuts and State funding shortfalls.
- Negative reaction to each item on the list ranged from 10% to 22%.

Findings: potential tax impacts

- At the time of data collection, support levels rise above margin of error (55.5%) at an impact of \$75 per year.
- Looking at combined Active and Very Active voters, support rises above margin of error at the \$70 impact level.
- Undecided voters were 12-14% of participants at all three impact levels.

Findings: demographic support

- Most demographics showed informed support between 45% and 65%.
- Highest support comes from high school parents, voters under 35 years of age, voters in Ward 2 and Kasota, and renters.
- Lowest support from alumni parents, township residents, voters 55-64, voters making \$25,000 to \$50,000 per year, and voters who did not attend college.

Findings: general environment

- Grades for the District are significantly better than national PDK benchmark, with many more A and B grades.
- Proportion of voters saying they would never support a tax increase for any reason was 15%, which is within our typical polling range over the past several years.



Recommendations

- Responses at this time indicate that an operating levy increase of approximately \$70 for an average homeowner would be feasible.
- Changes in the final ballot proposal and factors such as⁴⁷ local economic conditions and campaign efforts leading up to a future referendum can affect voter support and turnout.



Thank you!

Matthew Stark
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Director
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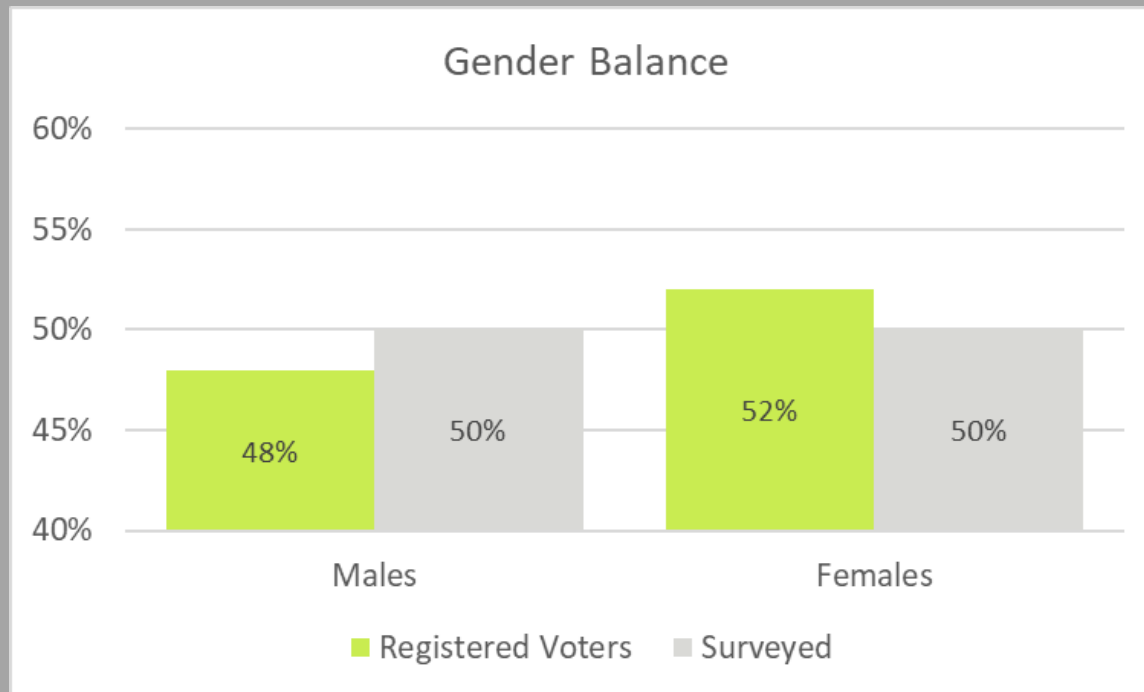
Survey demographics

- The following slides show proportions of total interviews versus targets before any sample weighting was performed.
- After re-balancing, samples were each within 1.0% of targets.
- Cell phones and homeownership were tracked for informational purposes, but were not treated as targets.

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SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

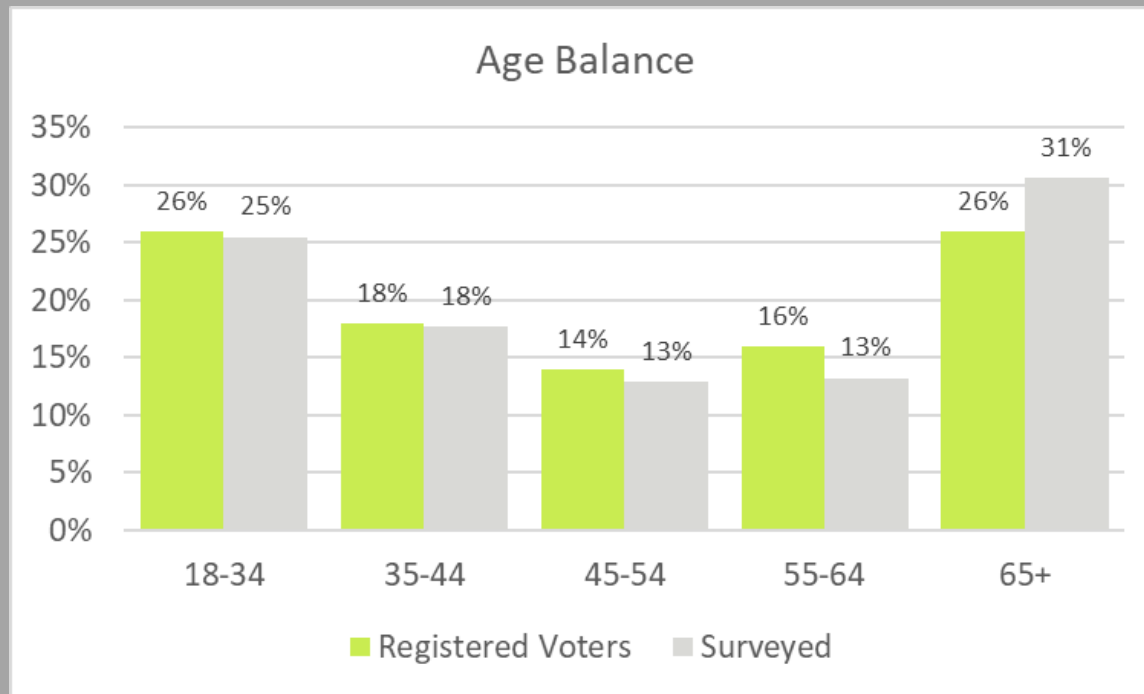
Demographic targets: Gender



50

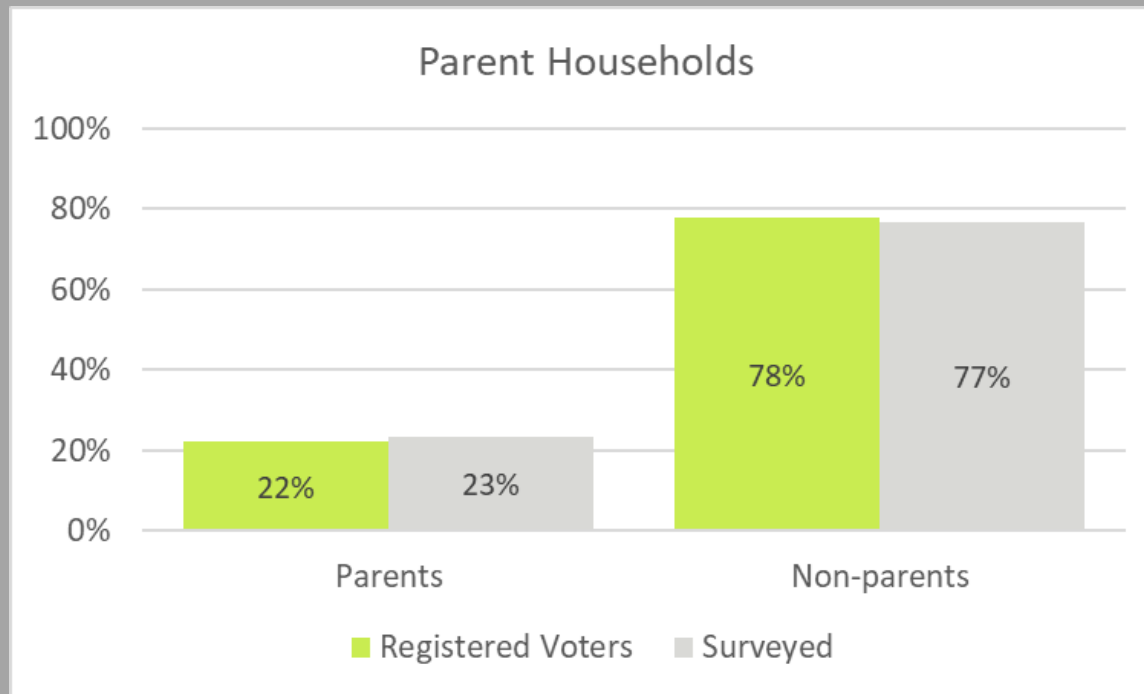
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic targets: Age



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

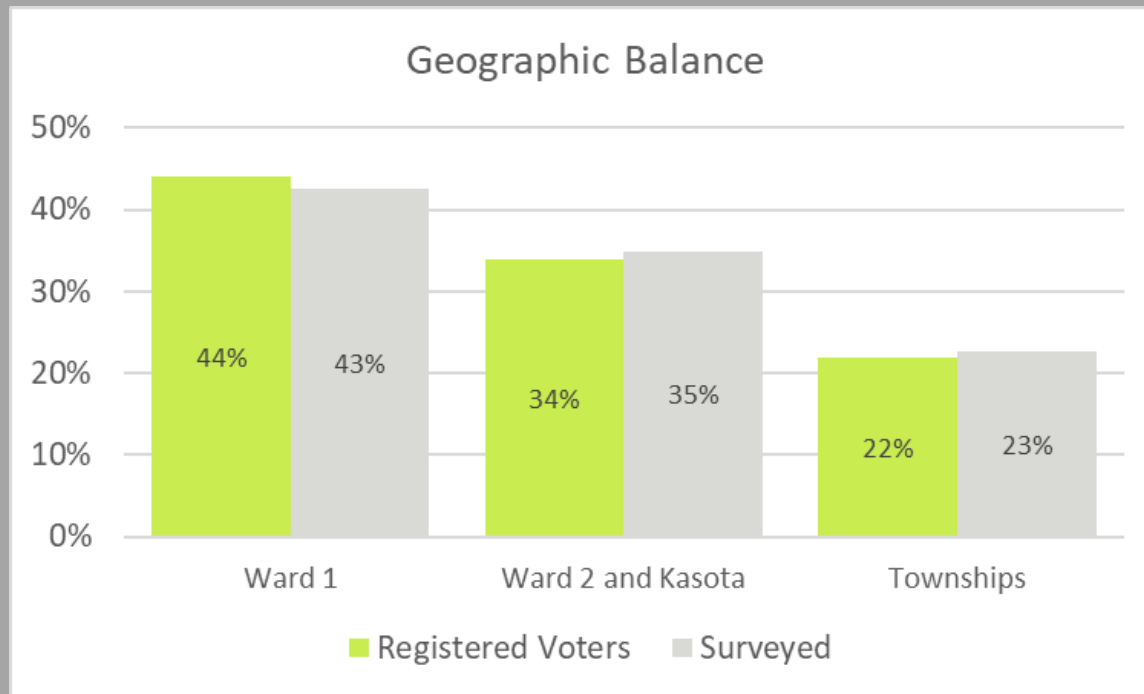
Demographic targets: Parent households



52

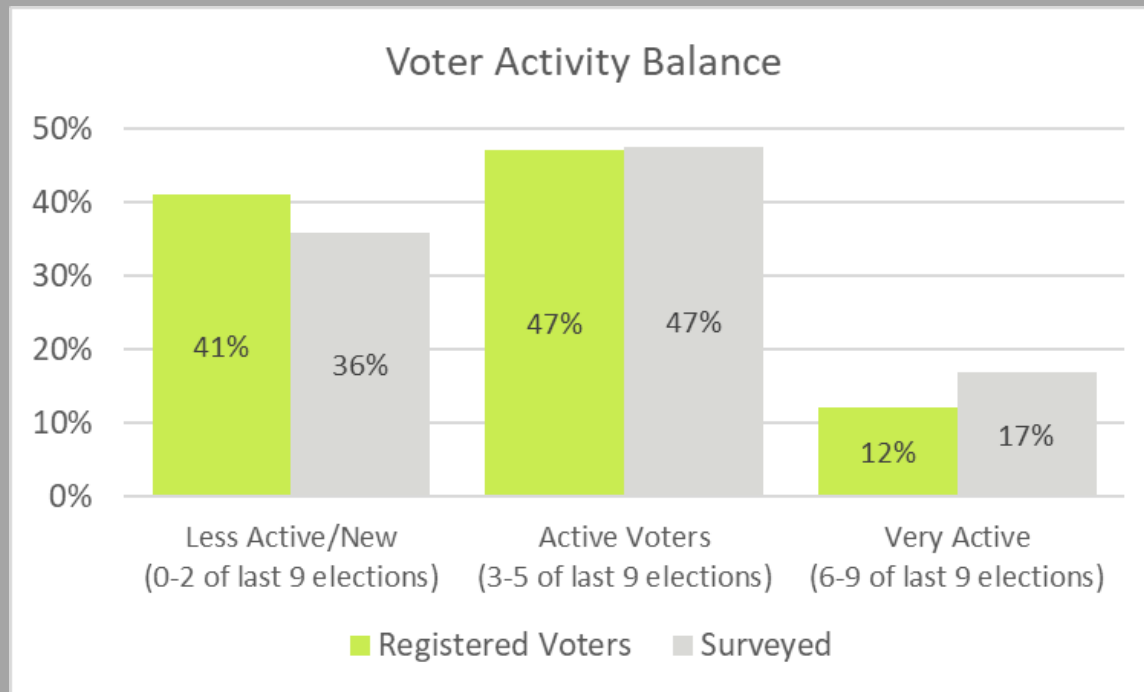
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Supplementary demographics: location



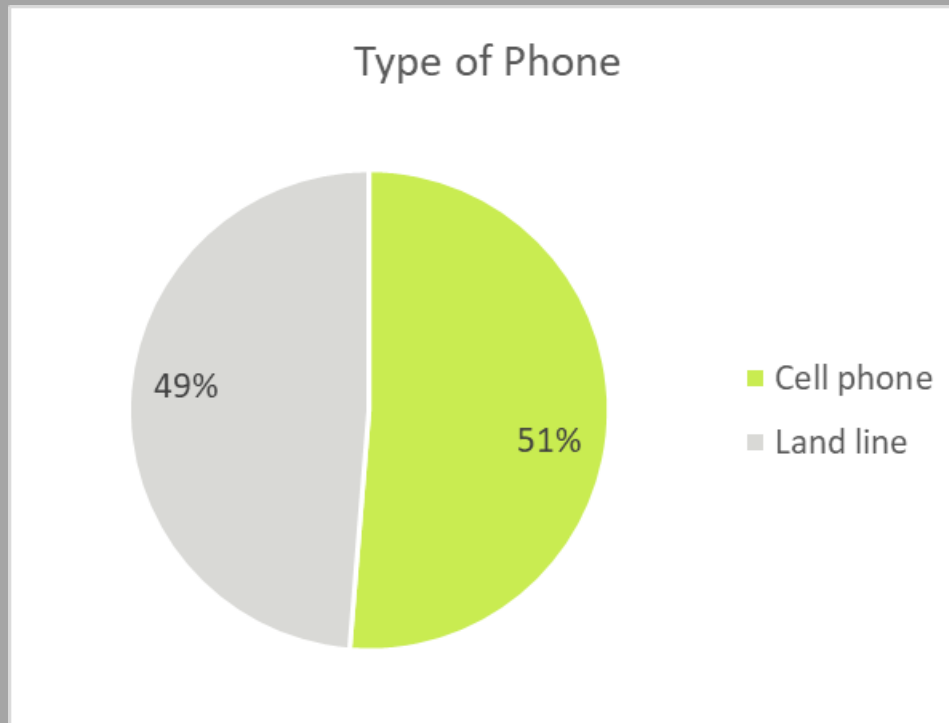
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic targets: Past voting activity



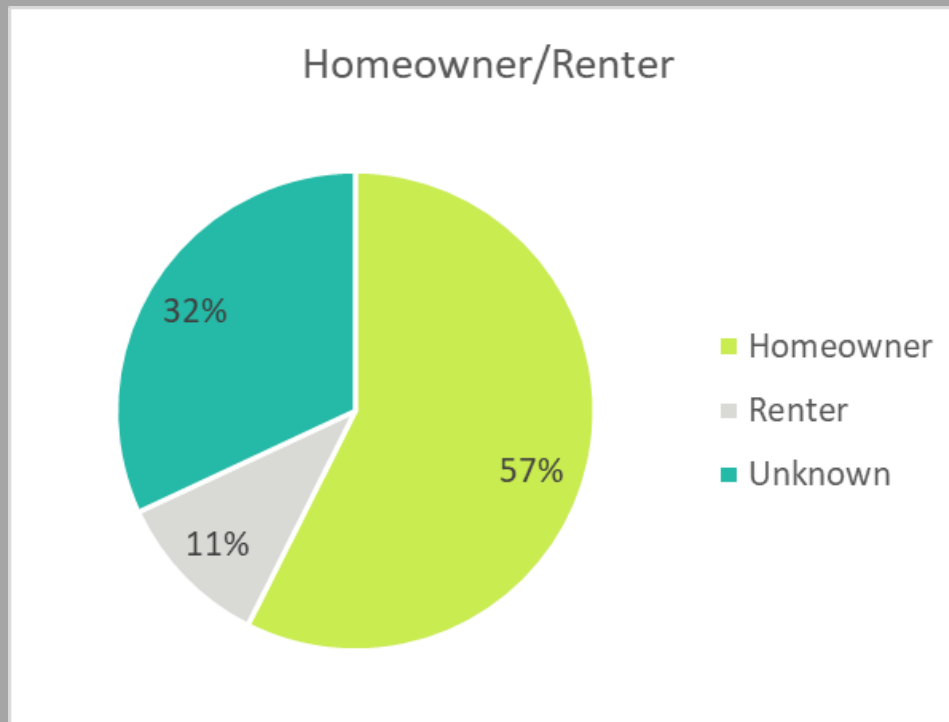
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Supplementary demographics: Survey channel



SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS

Supplementary demographics: Homeowner/renter





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