



# Berlin Area School District

Community Survey Report

December 19, 2022

# Contents



**Background Info**



**Survey/Respondent  
Information**



**Results & Analysis**



**Wrap-up/Questions**





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

- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **900** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

# Berlin Area School District Community Survey Process



Households within the District were mailed a paper survey.  
Respondents could:

**1)** Fill out the paper survey and return directly to School Perceptions

or

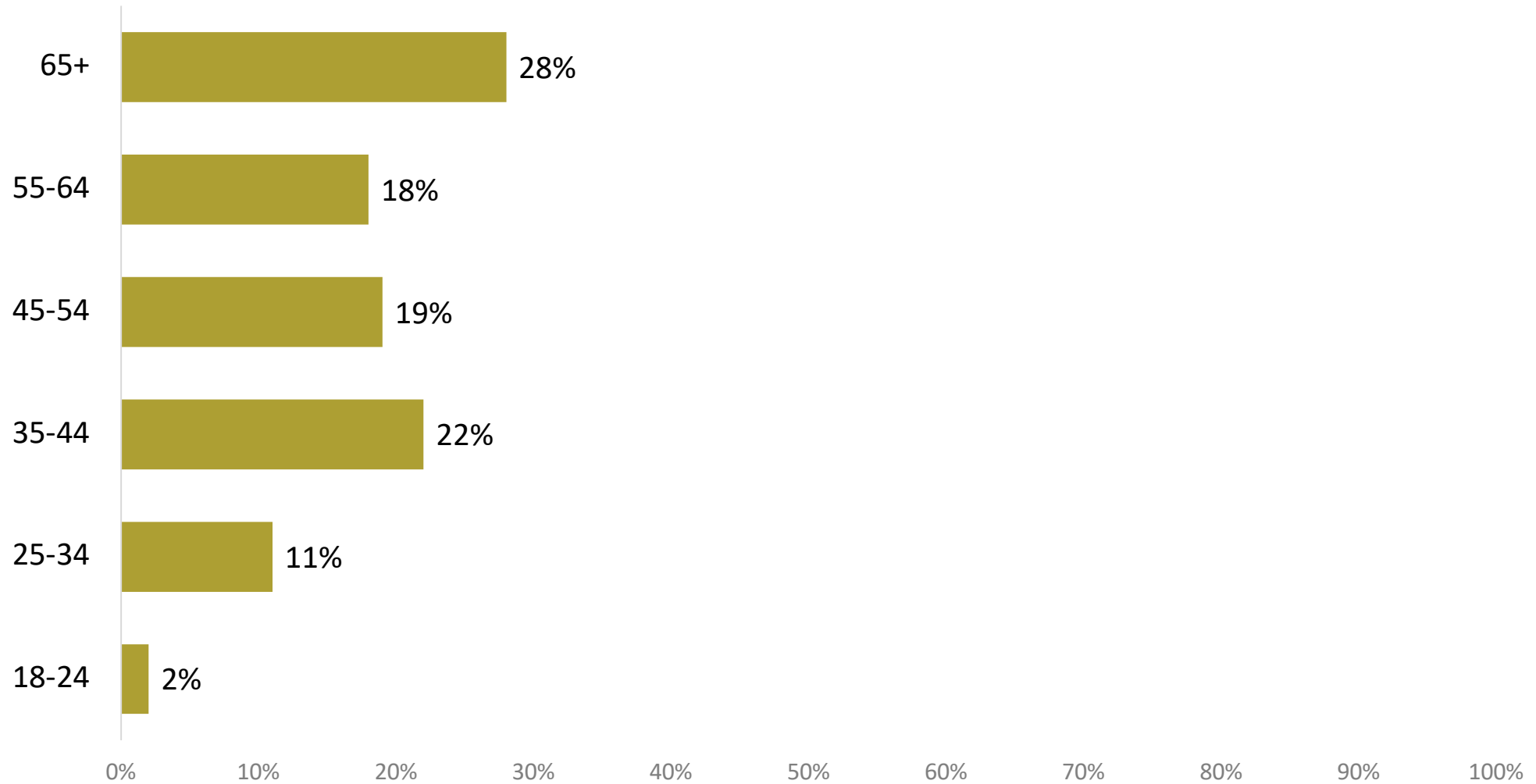
**2)** Take the survey online with a one-time-use code

# Survey Information

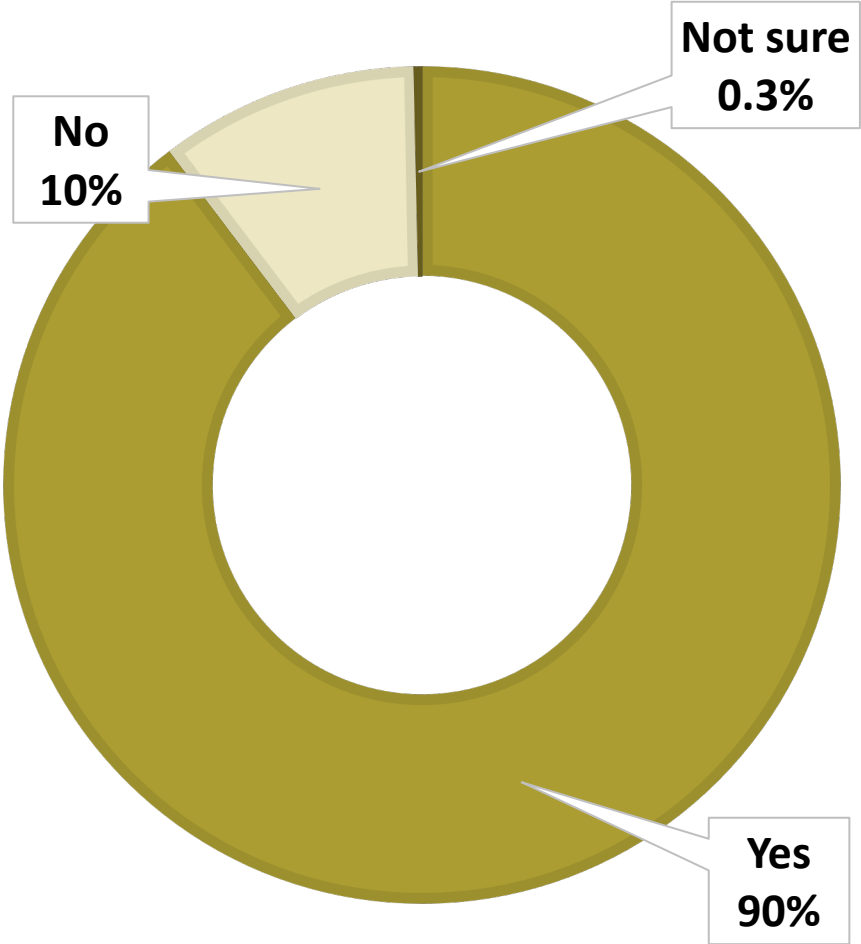


- Survey deadline **December 5, 2022**
- **631** total respondents
- Margin of error **+/- 3.98%**

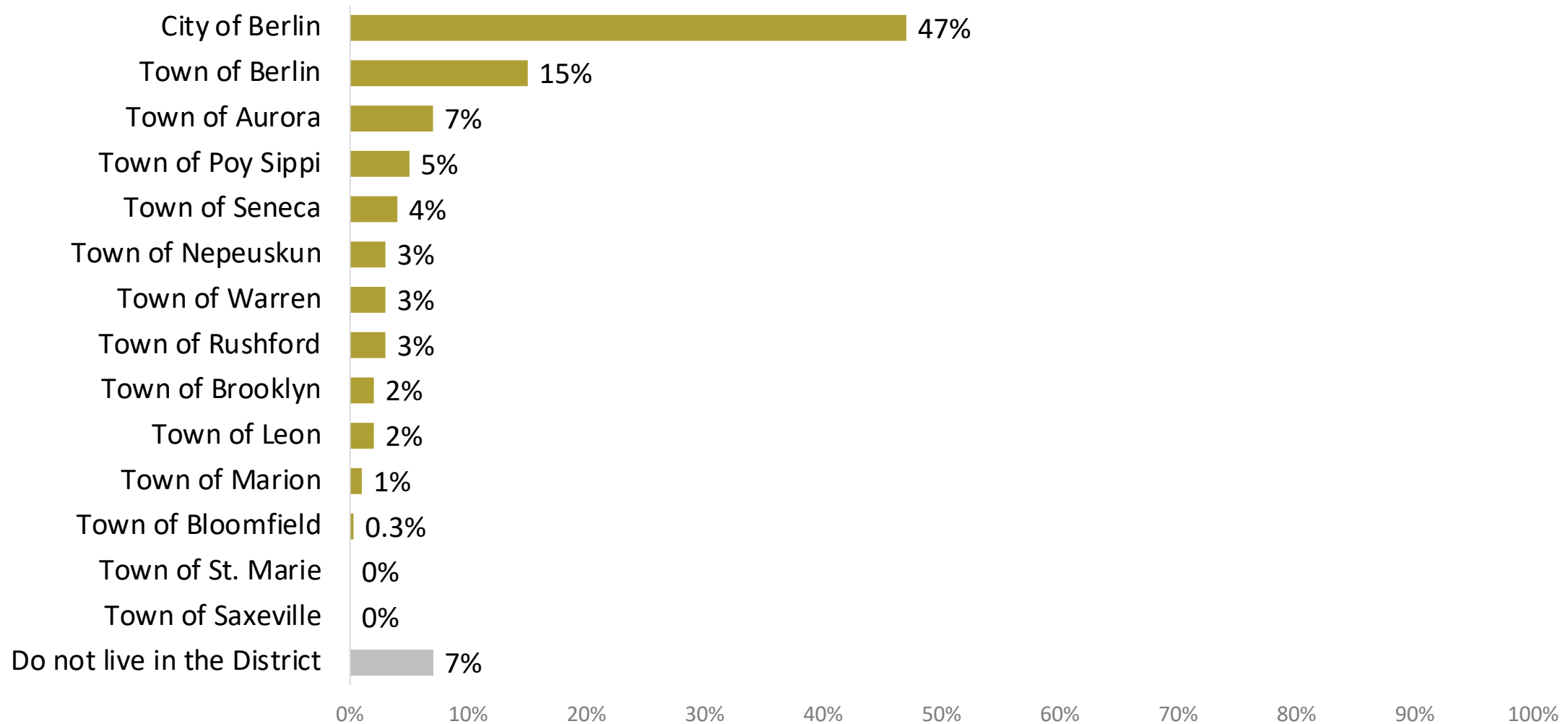
# What is your age?



# Is your primary residence in the Berlin Area School District?



# In which municipality do you live?

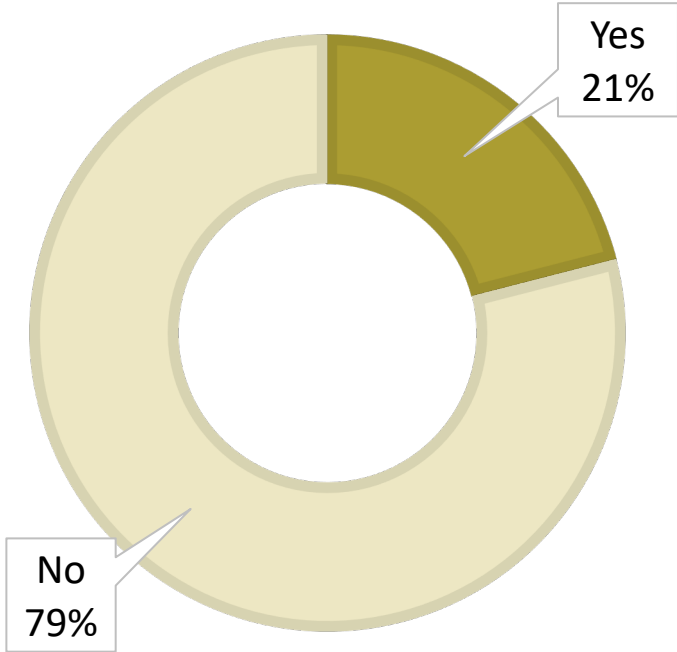




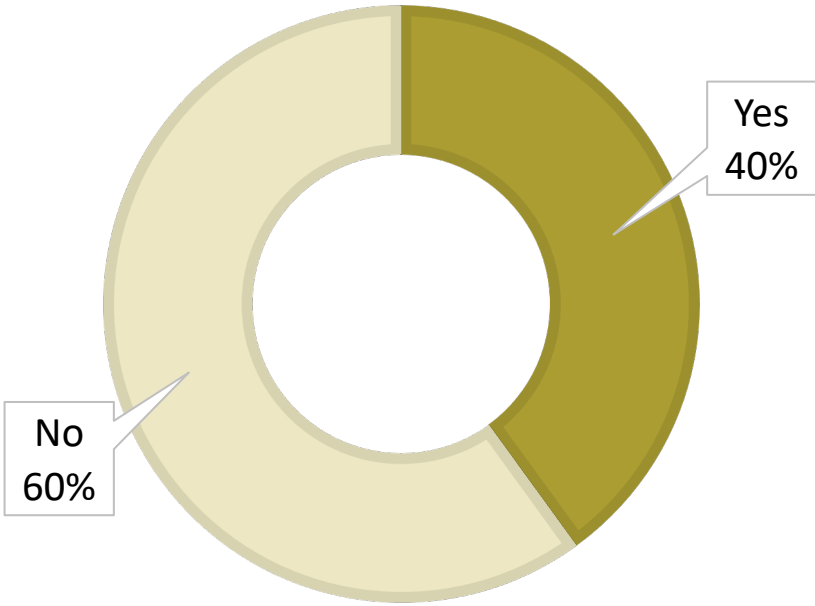
# Respondent Information



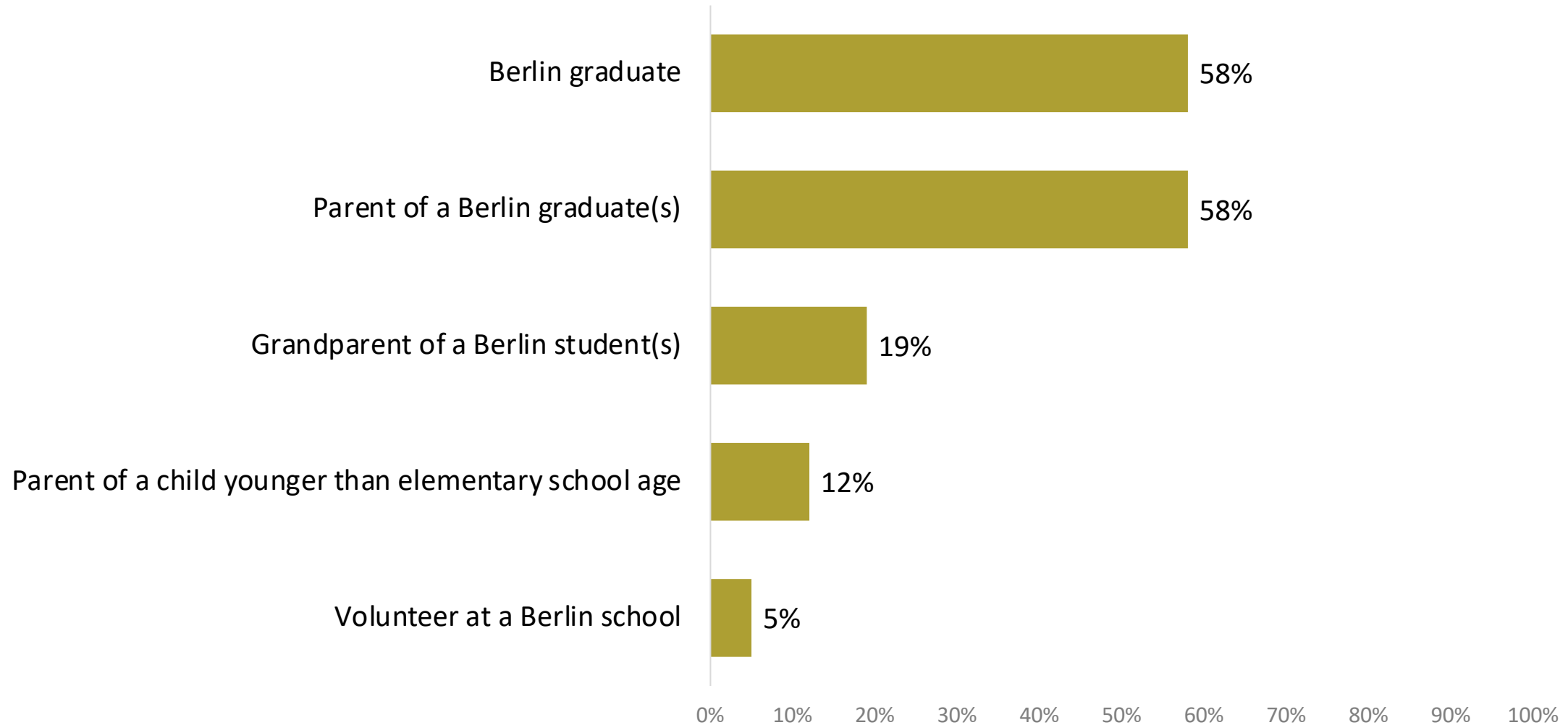
Are you an employee of the Berlin Area School District?



Do you have children attending a school in the District?

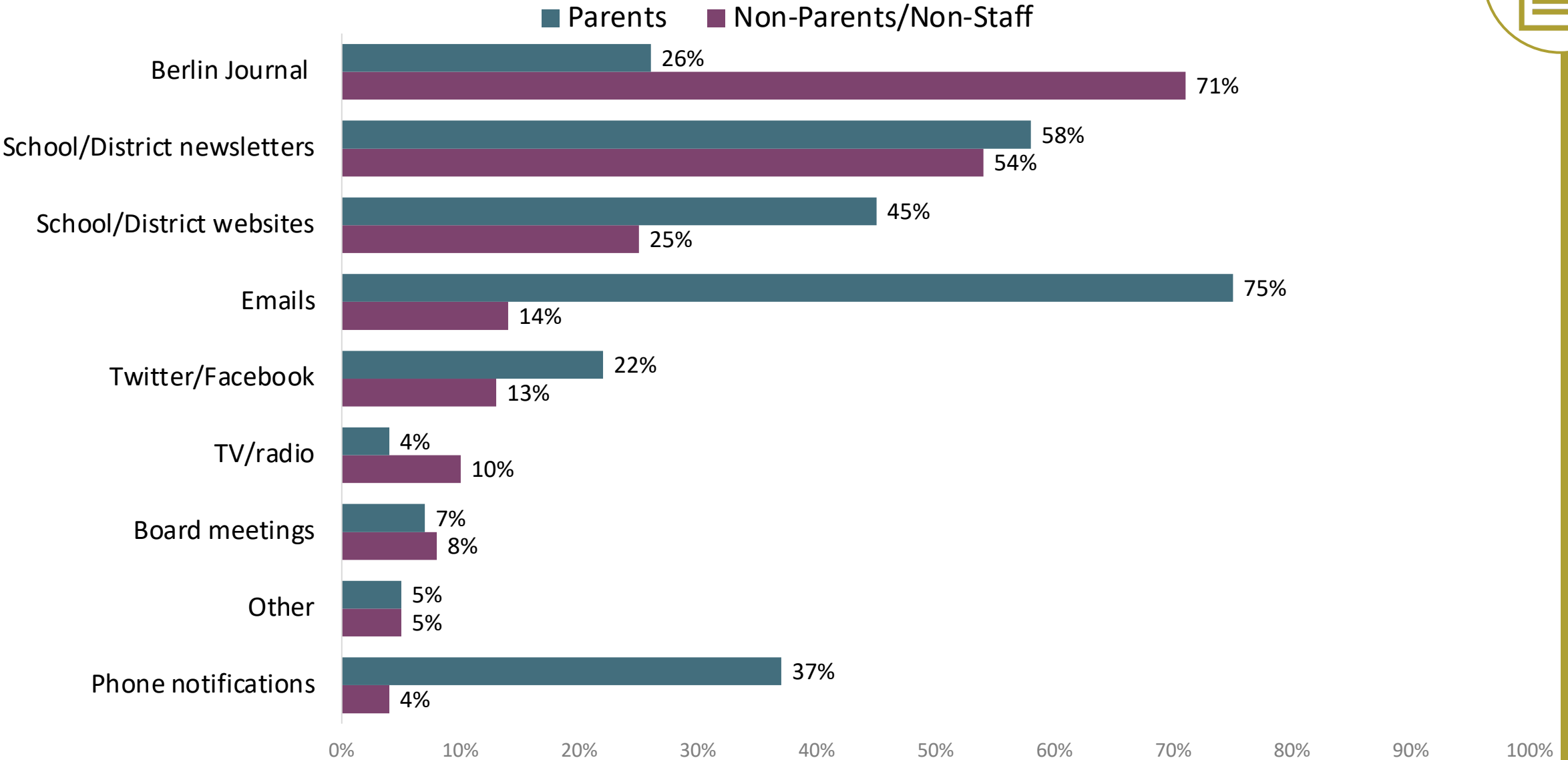


# Please mark ALL OTHER relationships you have with the Berlin Area School District:



# How do you like to receive school/District information?

*(Select all that apply.)*



# Local Funding Sources



There are two types of referendums school districts use to request additional funding.

A **capital referendum** asks voters to approve issuing debt (taking out a loan) to pay for major building projects, such as renovations or new construction. ***Berlin Area voters supported this type of referendum to build the high school in 1993 and to build the middle school in 2013.***

An **operational referendum** asks voters to approve funding above the annual revenue limit to maintain class sizes, programs, and student services. Funds secured are used within the year they are received. ***The Berlin Area School District has never pursued this type of referendum.*** In the last 20 years, more than 300 districts across the state (approximately 73%) have pursued this type of referendum.

# Operational Challenges



**There are several financial challenges facing the Berlin Area School District.**

- Rural school districts like ours lack predictable, sustainable funding.
- For the past two years, we have not received any additional state funding on a per-student basis.
- We received federal ESSER funding (COVID-19 relief) that helped us balance recent budgets. However, this funding is ending.

# Operational Challenges



**Without any increase in state funding, the budget deficit will grow to more than \$14 million over the next five years.** Therefore, the Board of Education is asking our community to consider an operational referendum. **If approved, the money would be used to address our most pressing needs:**

- ✓ Recruiting/Retaining Quality Staff: This has become a significant challenge due to the statewide teacher and support staff shortages.
- ✓ Paying for increasing costs: This includes utilities, insurance, transportation, fuel, and technology.
- ✓ Supporting students: Addressing learning gaps and mental health needs.

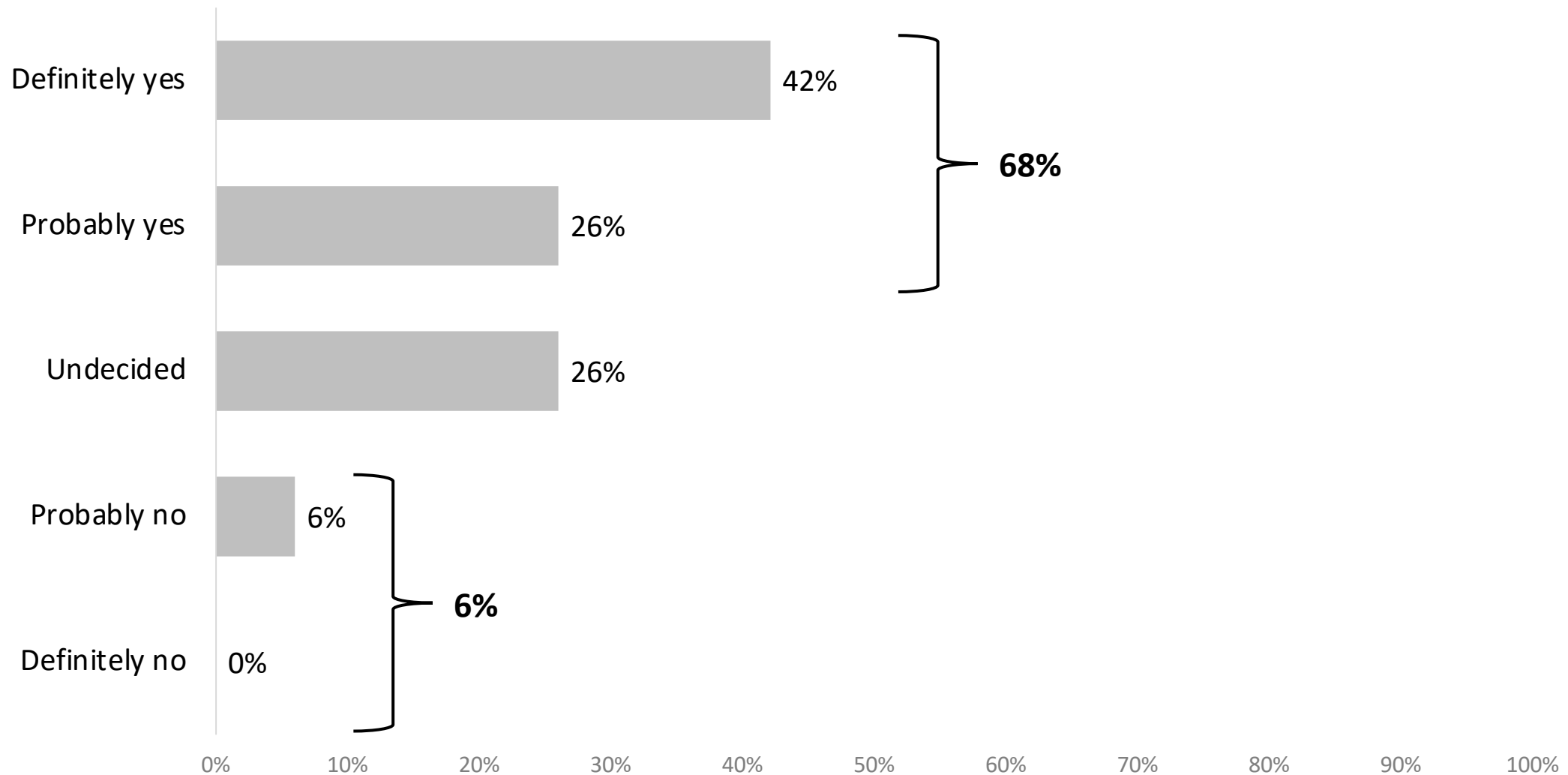
The District has been able to maintain a consistent property tax mill rate over the past five years. This practice has allowed us to pay debt early and reduce interest expenses.



# Results & Analysis

# Would you support a \$2.5 million operational referendum to maintain most programs and services for each of the next five years?

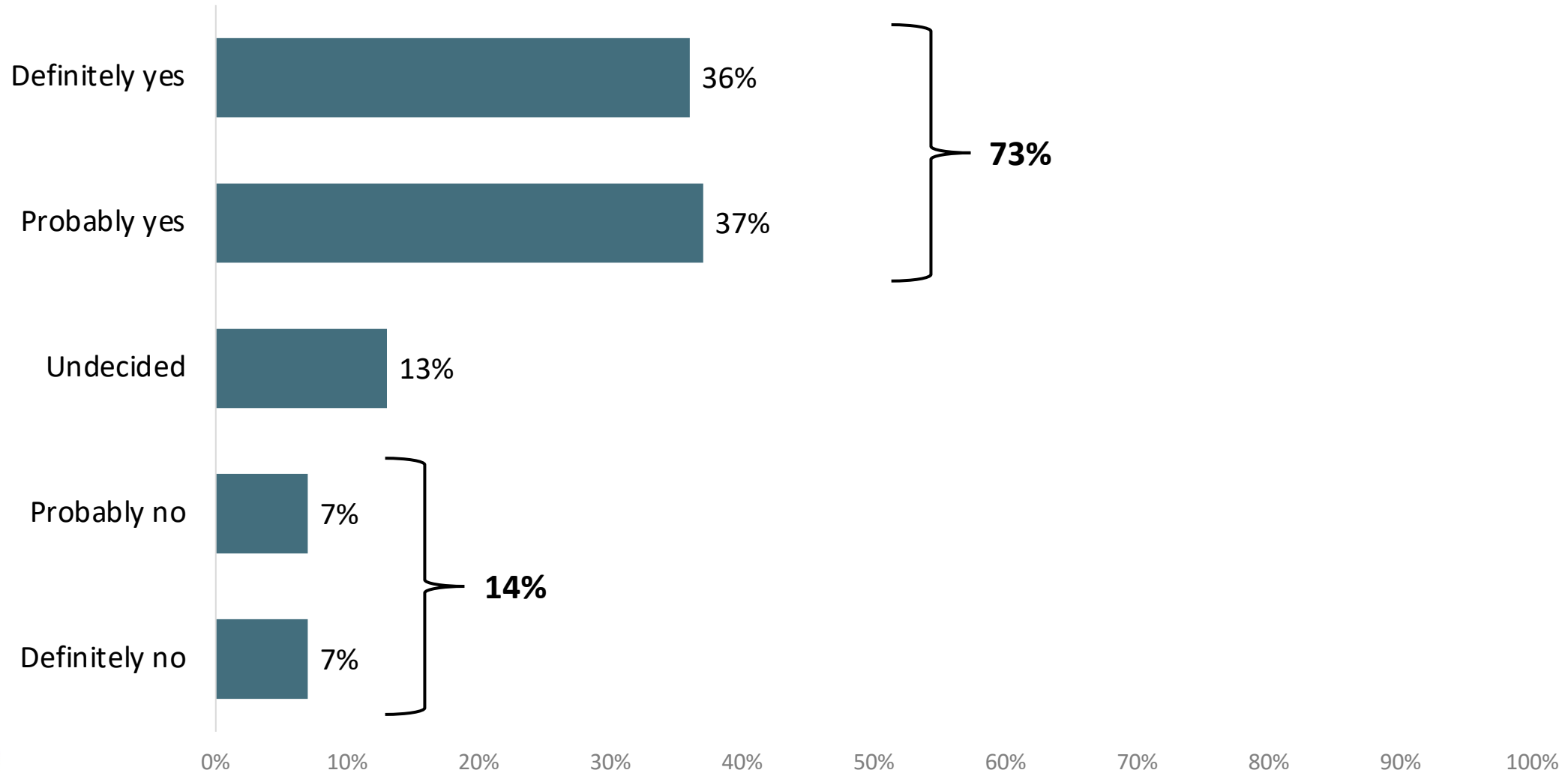
Staff (Residents)





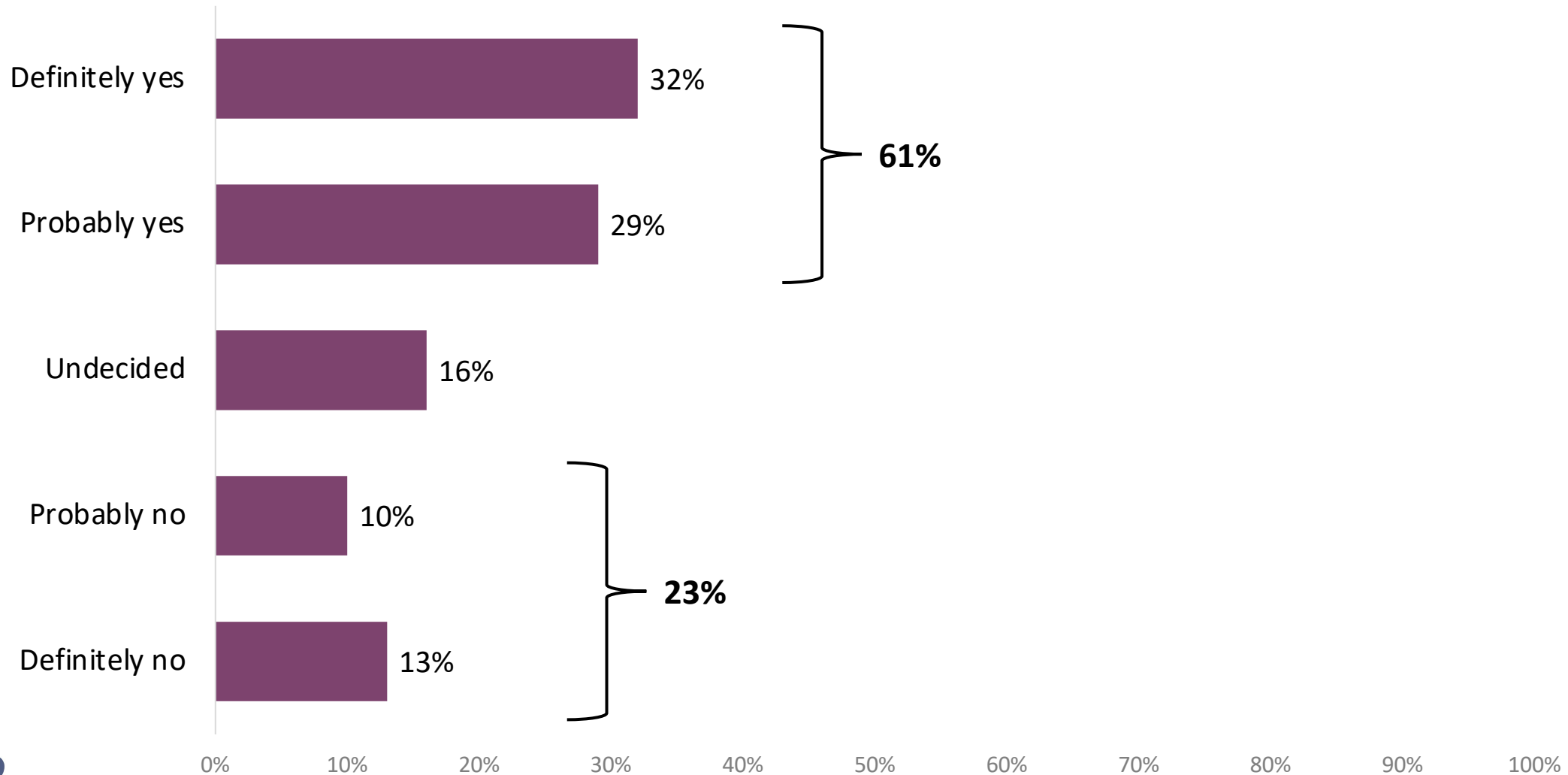
# Would you support a \$2.5 million operational referendum to maintain most programs and services for each of the next five years?

Parent/Caregiver (Residents)

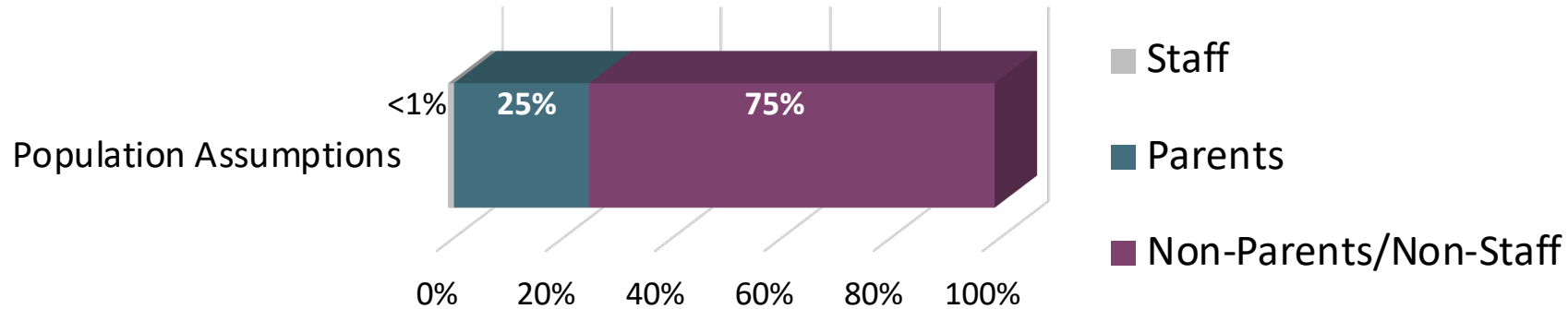


# Would you support a \$2.5 million operational referendum to maintain most programs and services for each of the next five years?

Non-Parent/Non-Staff (Residents)



# Would the \$2.5 million operational referendum to maintain most programs and services be supported?



Weighted support for “Yes”:

$$0.25 (73\%) + 0.75 (61\%) = \underline{\underline{64\%}}$$

# Facility Planning: Highest Priority Projects



Earlier this spring, Performance Services conducted a thorough assessment at each school to evaluate the educational adequacy and condition of the major building systems. Based on this study, the District developed a plan to address the **highest priority needs**.

# Facility Planning: Highest Priority Projects



## **Clay Lamberton Elementary is our oldest school, built in 1962.**

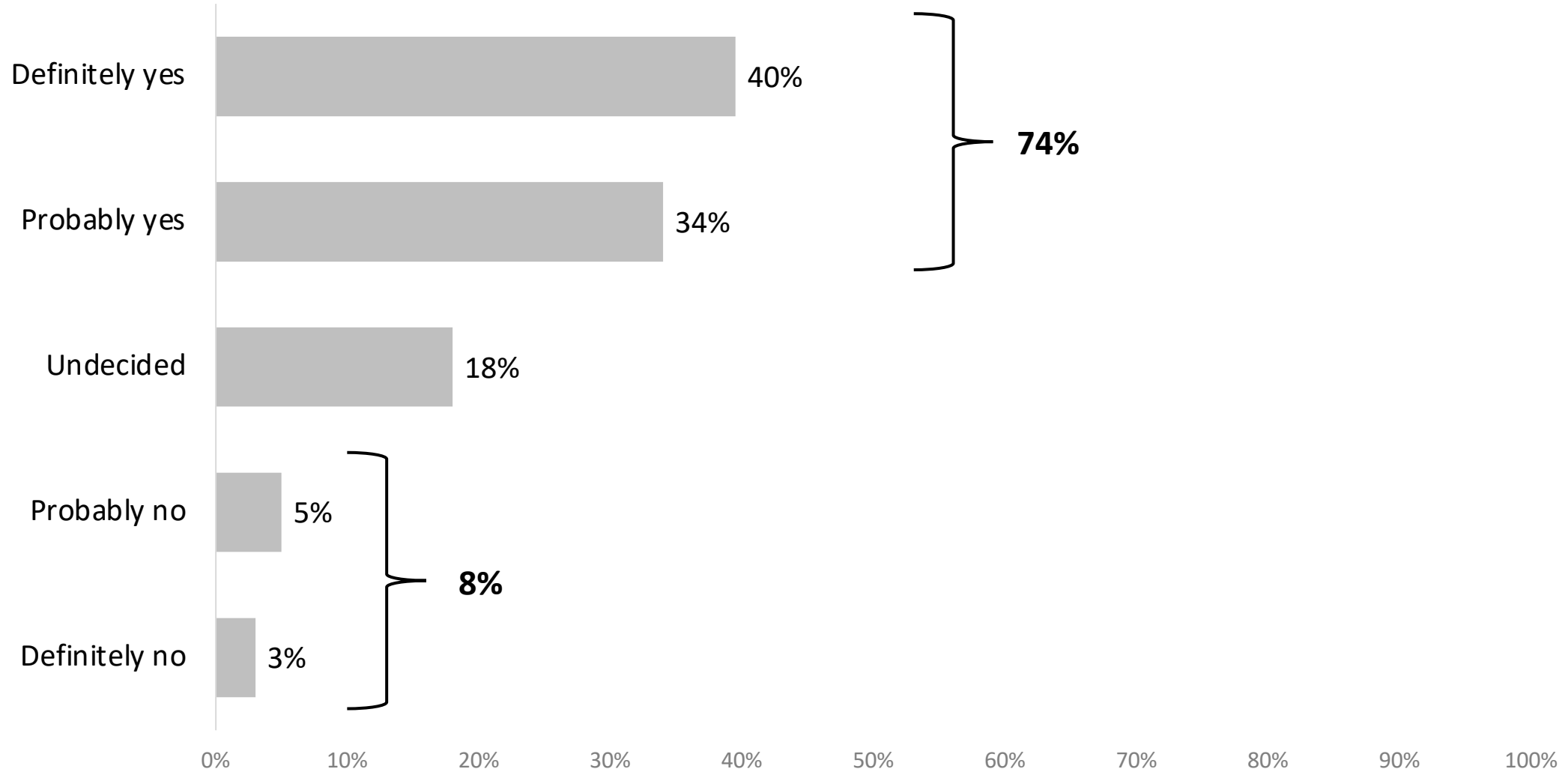
- ✓ Replace the heating system, which is inefficient and requires ongoing costly repairs.
- ✓ Add air conditioning to improve air quality and create a better learning environment.
- ✓ Rebuild playground structures to improve safety and accessibility.
- ✓ Renovate restrooms to reduce maintenance costs and improve accessibility.
- ✓ Remodel/expand the cafeteria to reduce the number of lunch periods.
- ✓ Create a large-group area for instruction and meetings.
- ✓ Replace worn-out classroom and hallway flooring.

## **District-wide**

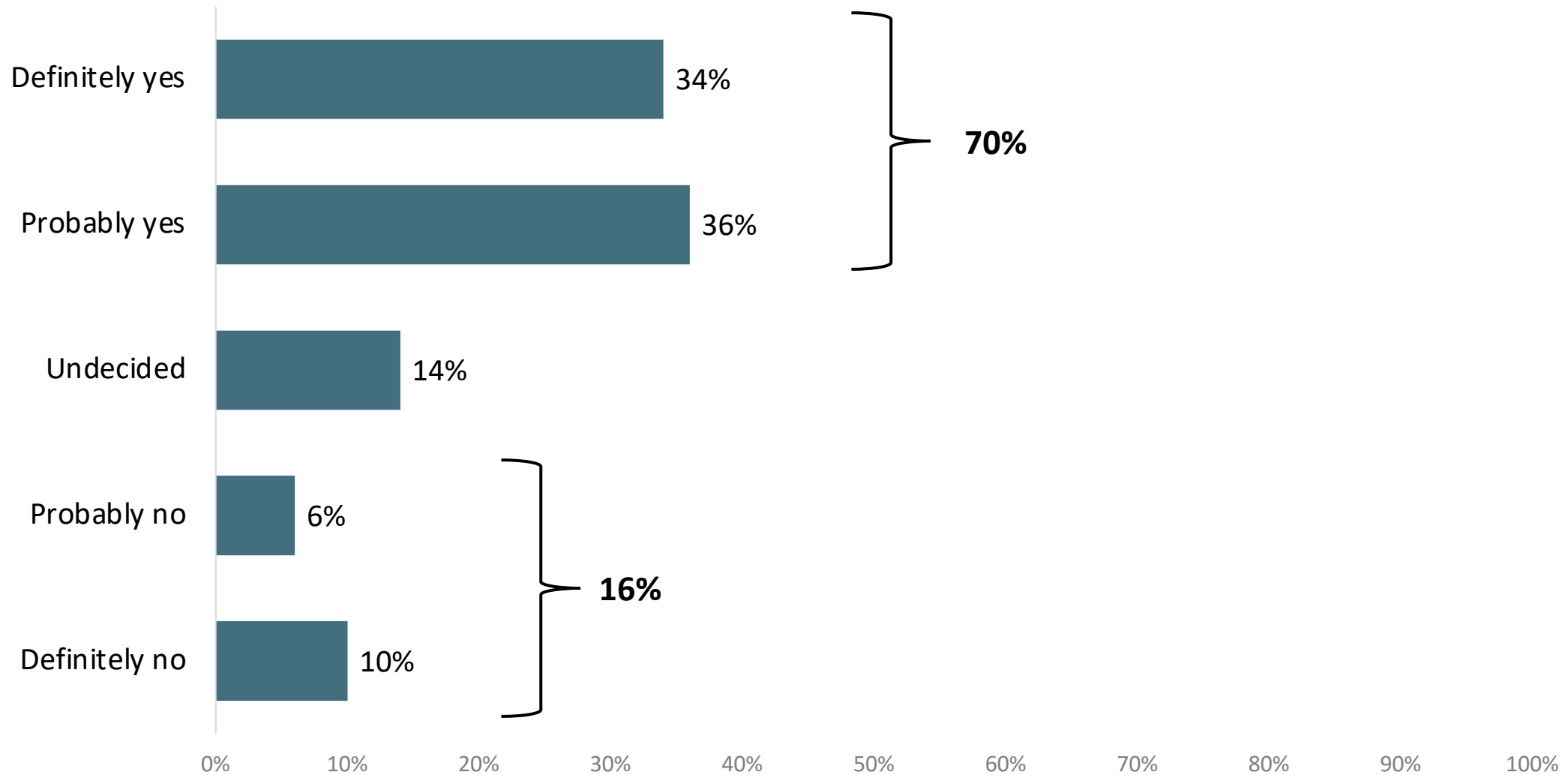
- ✓ Reconfigure traffic flow to better separate pedestrians and vehicles to improve safety.
- ✓ Replace the high school auditorium's lighting and sound systems that are failing.
- ✓ Upgrade security camera systems to improve student safety.
- ✓ Replace high school classroom and hallway flooring where needed.

Berlin area voters would need to support a capital referendum to pay for these projects. This type of referendum allows a district to issue debt (i.e., take out a loan) and would be financed over 20 years.

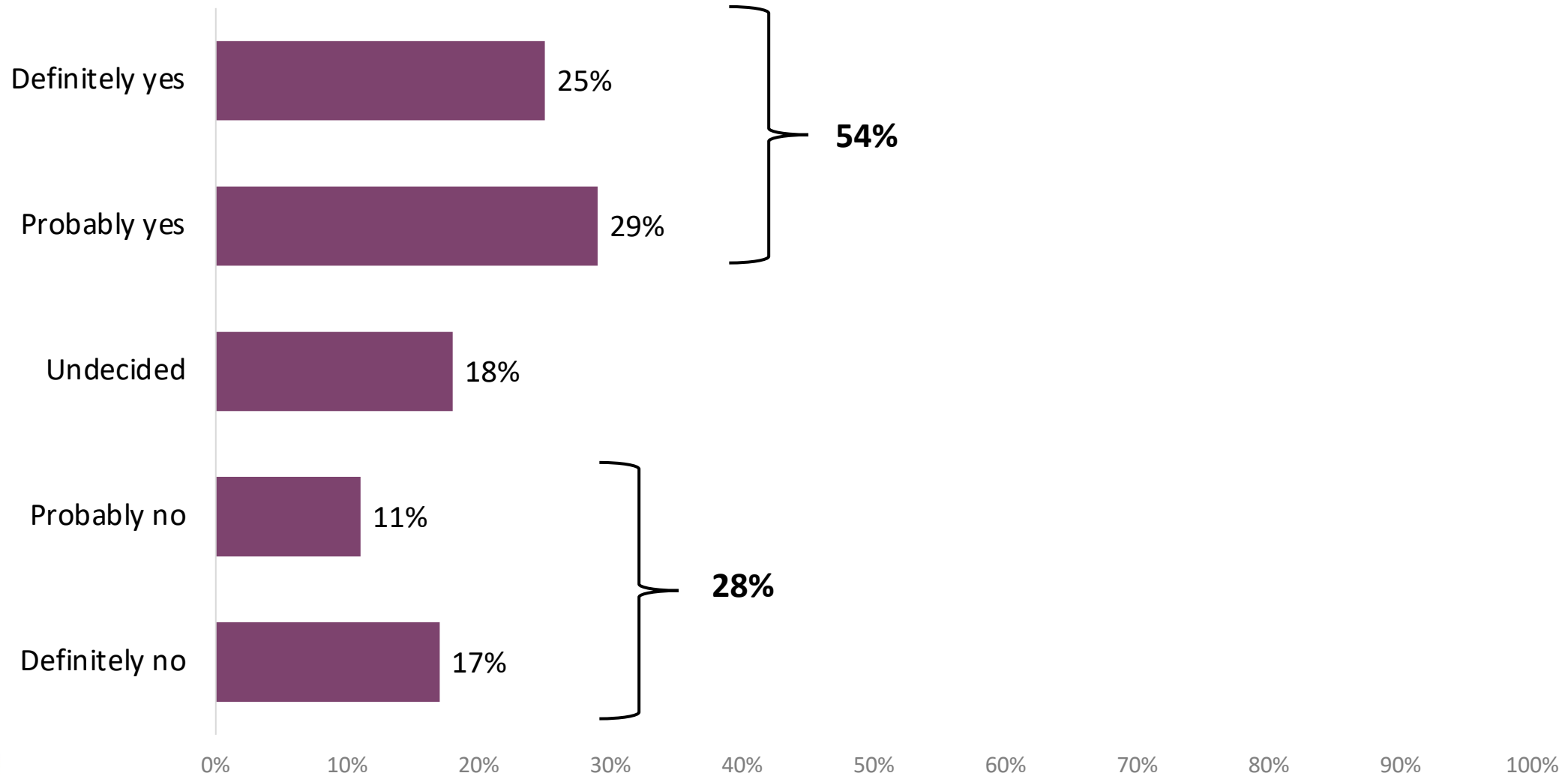
# Would you support a \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects? Staff (Residents)



# Would you support a \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects? Parent/Caregiver (Residents)

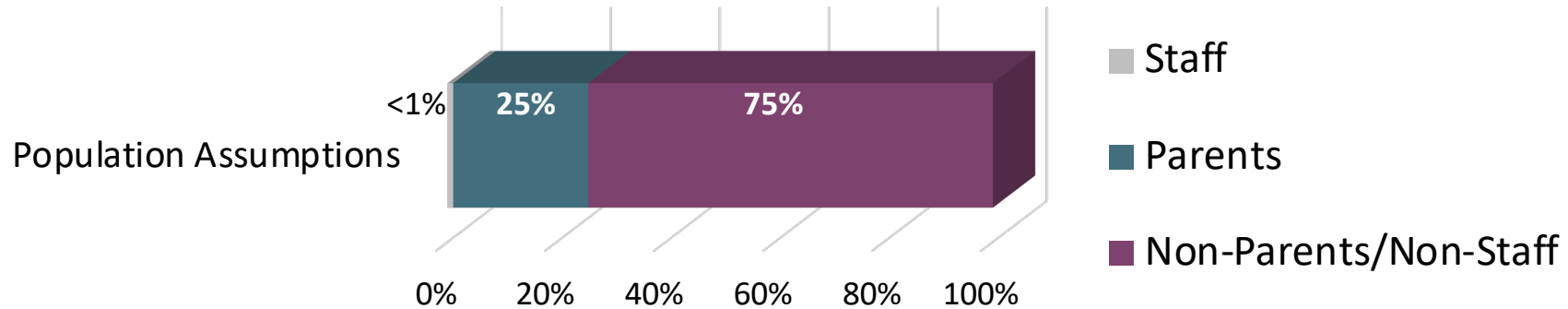


# Would you support a \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects? Non-Parent/Non-Staff (Residents)





# Would the \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects be supported?



Weighted support for “Yes”:

$$0.25 (70\%) + 0.75 (54\%) = \underline{\underline{58\%}}$$

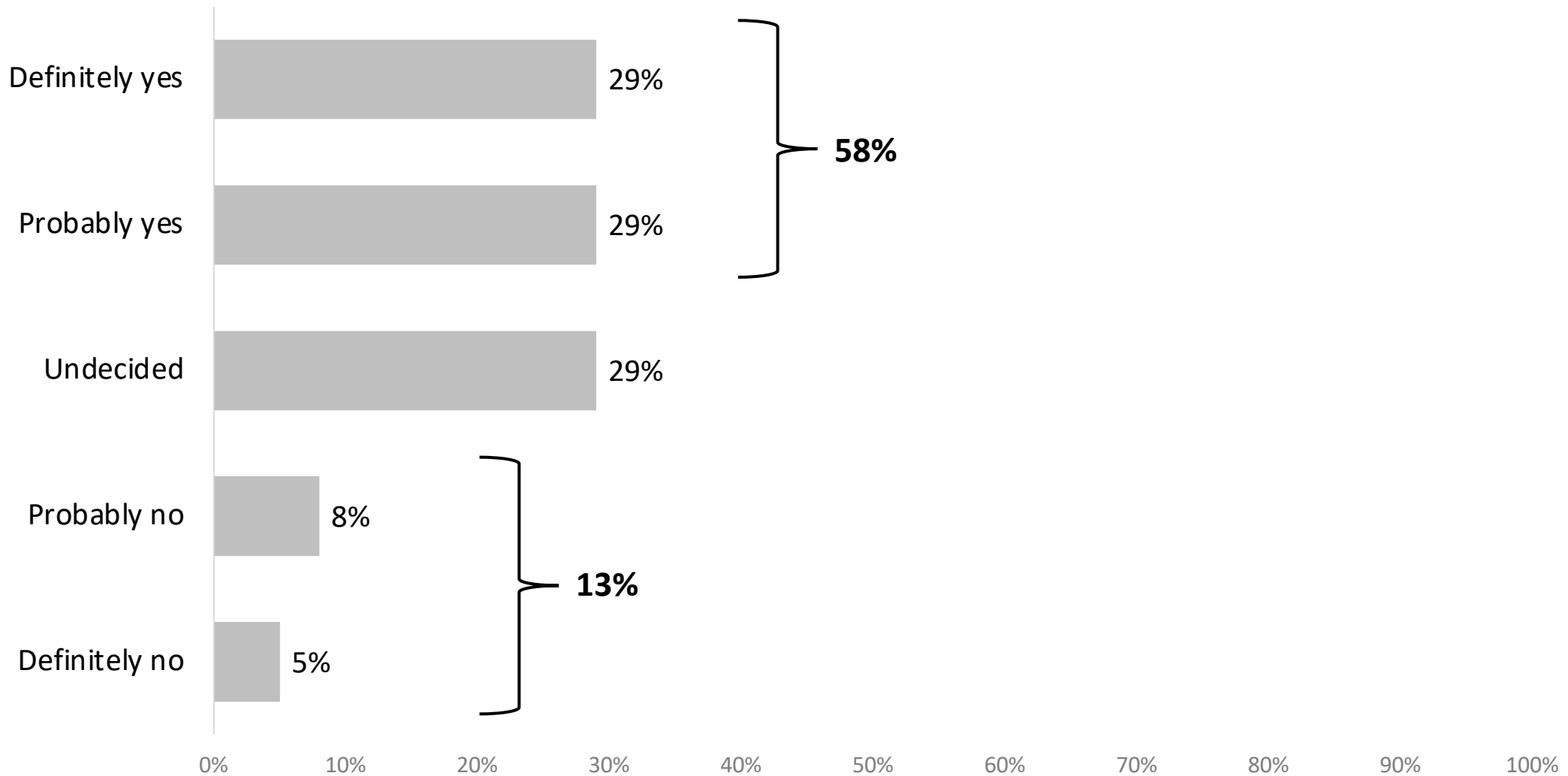
# Facility Planning: Additional Projects



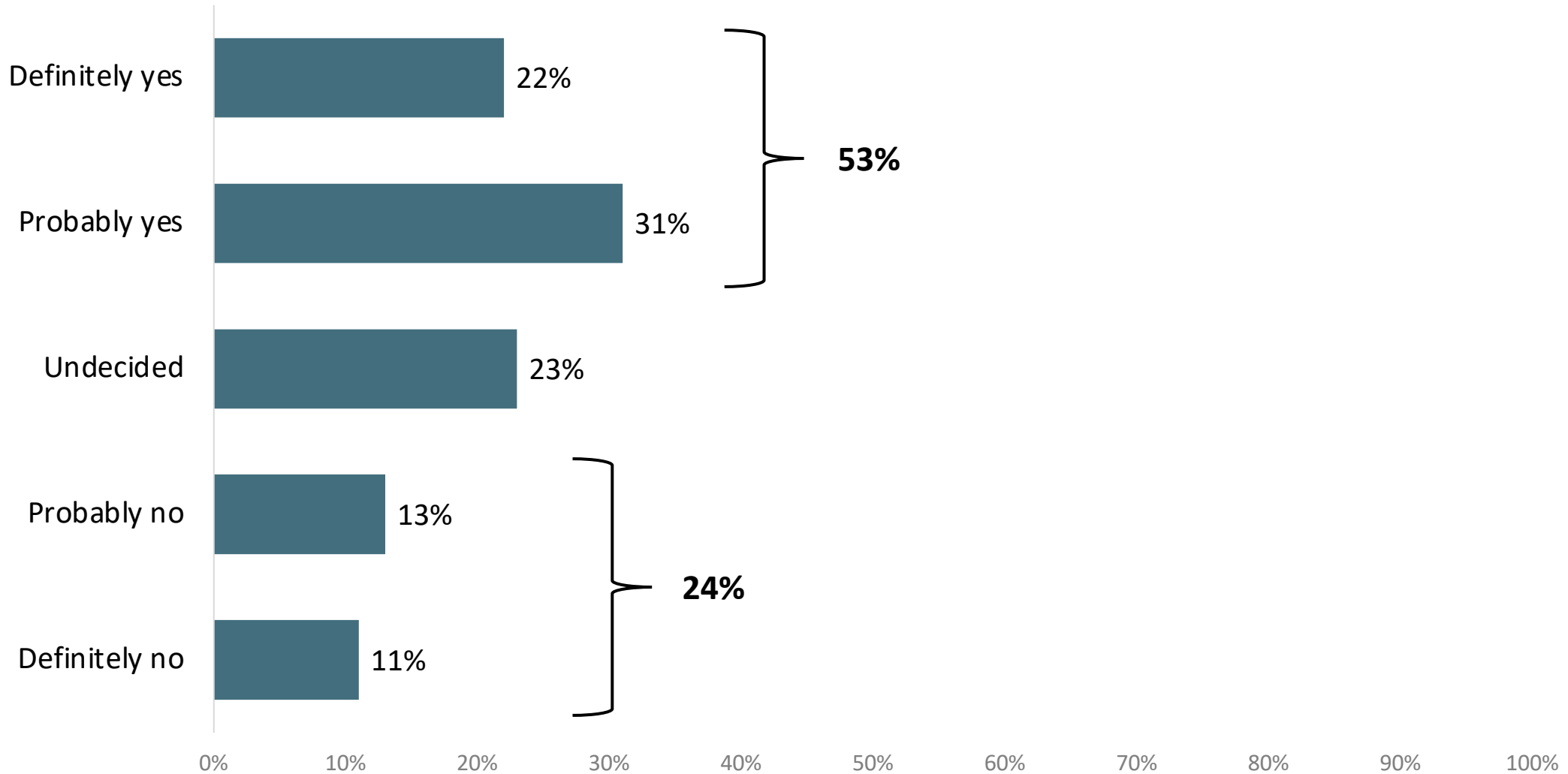
In addition to the **highest priority projects** identified on the previous page, the facilities referendum could be expanded to:

- ✓ Remodel the elementary/high school libraries and create student collaboration areas.
- ✓ Replace the high school's heating and cooling equipment with more energy-efficient units.
- ✓ Repair or replace the oldest roofing sections, windows, and doors across the District as needed.
- ✓ Upgrade electrical and data network/wiring across the District to improve reliability.
- ✓ Replace remaining fluorescent lighting with energy-efficient LEDs at the high school.
- ✓ Install LED lights at the athletic fields.
- ✓ Replace the elevator at the elementary school.
- ✓ Create exterior public access to the fitness center at the middle school.

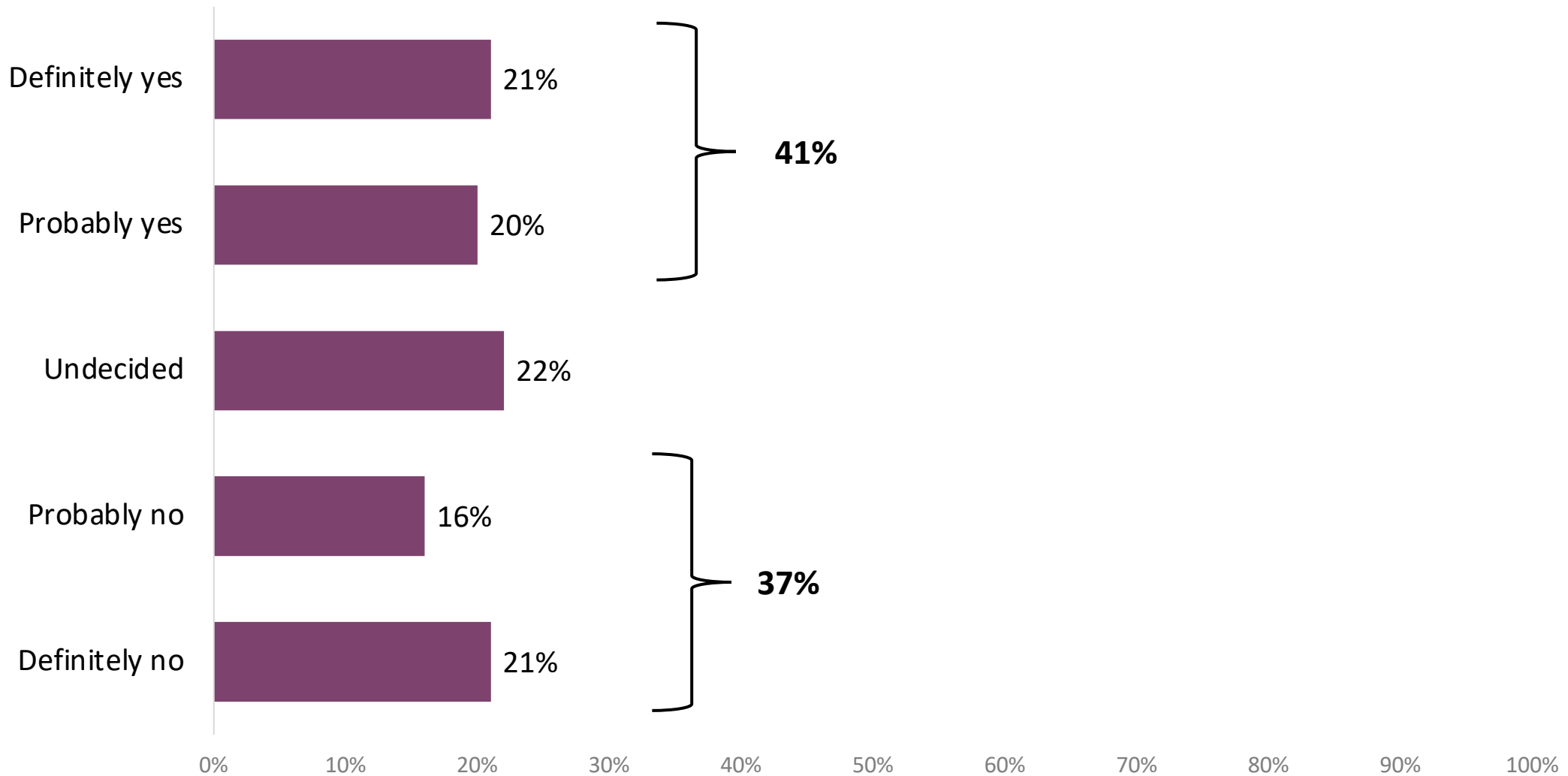
# Would you support a referendum for a total of \$30 million to pay for the additional projects? Staff (Residents)



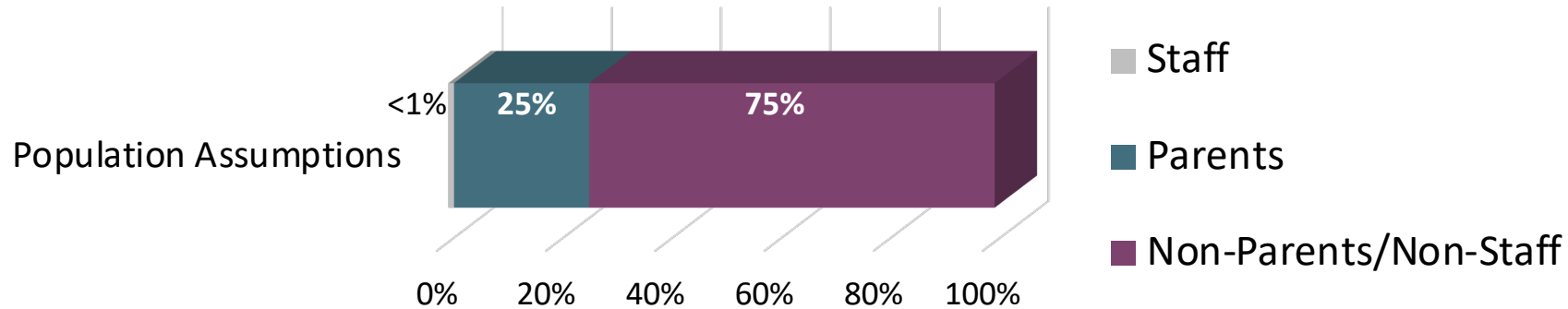
# Would you support a referendum for a total of \$30 million to pay for the additional projects? Parent/Caregiver (Residents)



# Would you support a referendum for a total of \$30 million to pay for the additional projects? Non-Parent/Non-Staff (Residents)



# Would a \$30 million to pay for the additional projects by supported?



Weighted support for “Yes”:

$$0.25 (53\%) + 0.75 (41\%) = \underline{\underline{44\%}}$$

# Planning



Like most other school districts across Wisconsin, our district has experienced declining student enrollment. During the past 10 years, enrollment has dropped by more than 15% (270 students). Because state funding is tied to enrollment, the fewer students we have, the less money we receive. In response, we need to develop a growth mindset.

**The Berlin Area School District wants to be the “district of choice” when:**

- ✓ Parents are choosing where to send their children to school
- ✓ A new family moves to the area
- ✓ A great teacher is looking for a job
- ✓ A business is looking to relocate or expand

# How is the District doing in the following areas?

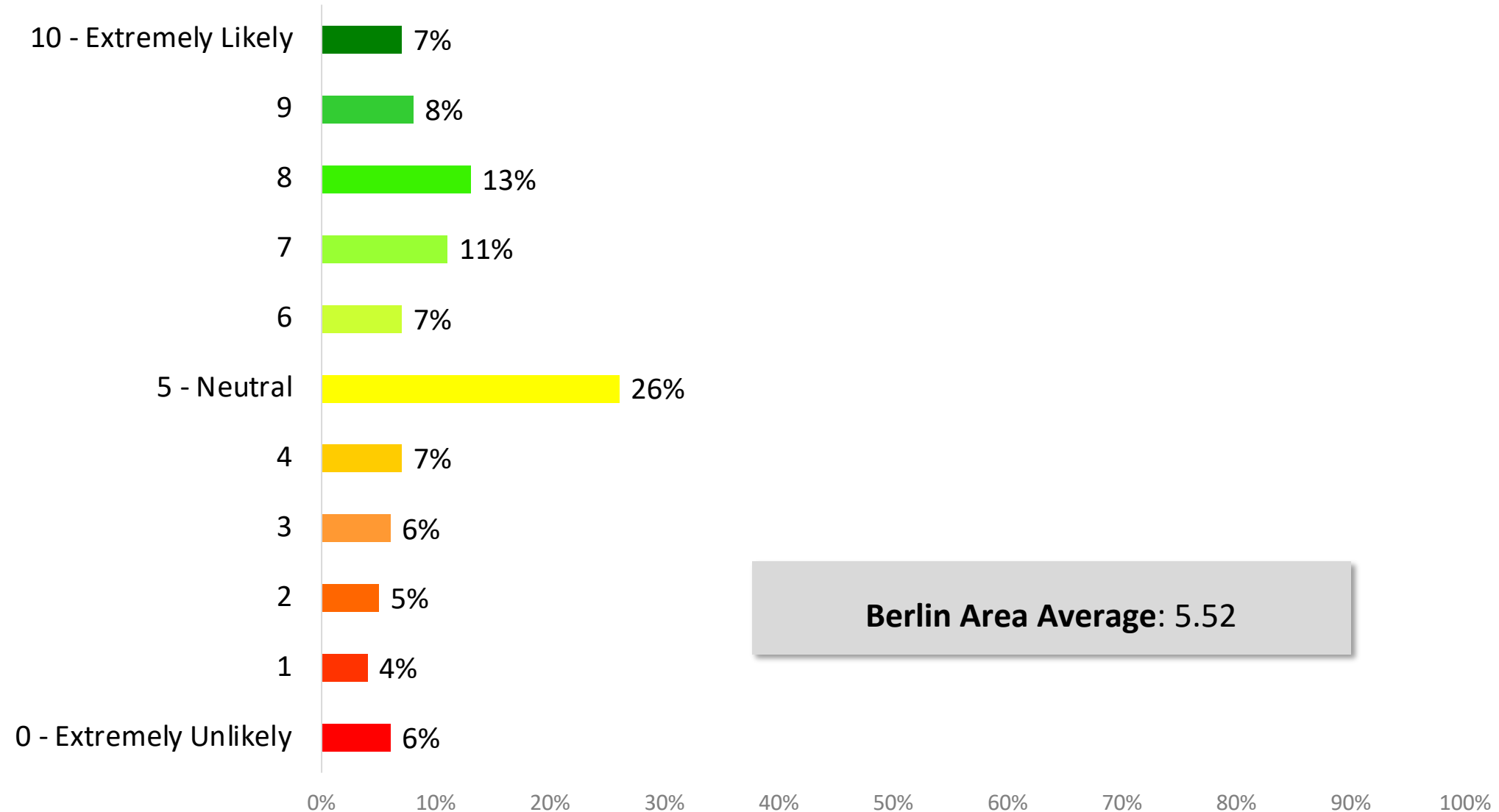
*Great (4), Good (3), Fair (2), Poor (1)*



Item	Staff	Parents	Non-Parents/Non-Staff
Delivering a high-quality education	3.18	2.55	2.50
Keeping the public informed	2.94	2.67	2.46
Managing funds appropriately	2.68	2.51	2.49
Building pride in the community	2.59	2.51	2.58



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



# What did we learn?



- If a \$2.5 million operational referendum for each of the next five years were held today, it would likely be supported.
- If a \$20 million referendum to pay for the highest priority projects were held today, it would likely be supported.
- If a \$30 million referendum to pay for the additional projects were held today, it would not be supported.





# Questions or Comments?





**Thank you!**

