

**EPIC ▪ MRA**

4710 W. Saginaw Highway  
Suite 2C  
Lansing, MI 48917  
P: 517-886-0860  
F: 517-886-9176  
E: [info@epicmra.com](mailto:info@epicmra.com)  
W: [www.epicmra.com](http://www.epicmra.com)

# **Grand Haven Area Public Schools Survey on a Future Bond Proposal**

## **Executive Summary and Demographic Analysis**

### **Report**

- Educational
- Political
- Industrial
- Consumer
  
- Market
- Research
- Analysis

**June 2022**

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## METHODOLOGY

**EPIC ▪ MRA** administered live telephone interviews with 300 registered voters who reside and pay taxes within the taxable boundaries of the Grand Haven Area Public School District. The interviews were conducted using live operator telephone interviewers, with 60 percent of all interviews conducted via cell phone. The interviews were conducted from May 23<sup>rd</sup> through May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Respondents were included in the sample if they confirmed that they reside in the Grand Haven Area Public School District, voted in the November 2020 election for President, voted in the 2018 November election for Governor, voted in both or were too young to vote in either, and said they are very certain to, somewhat certain to, or will likely vote, in the November 2022 general election.

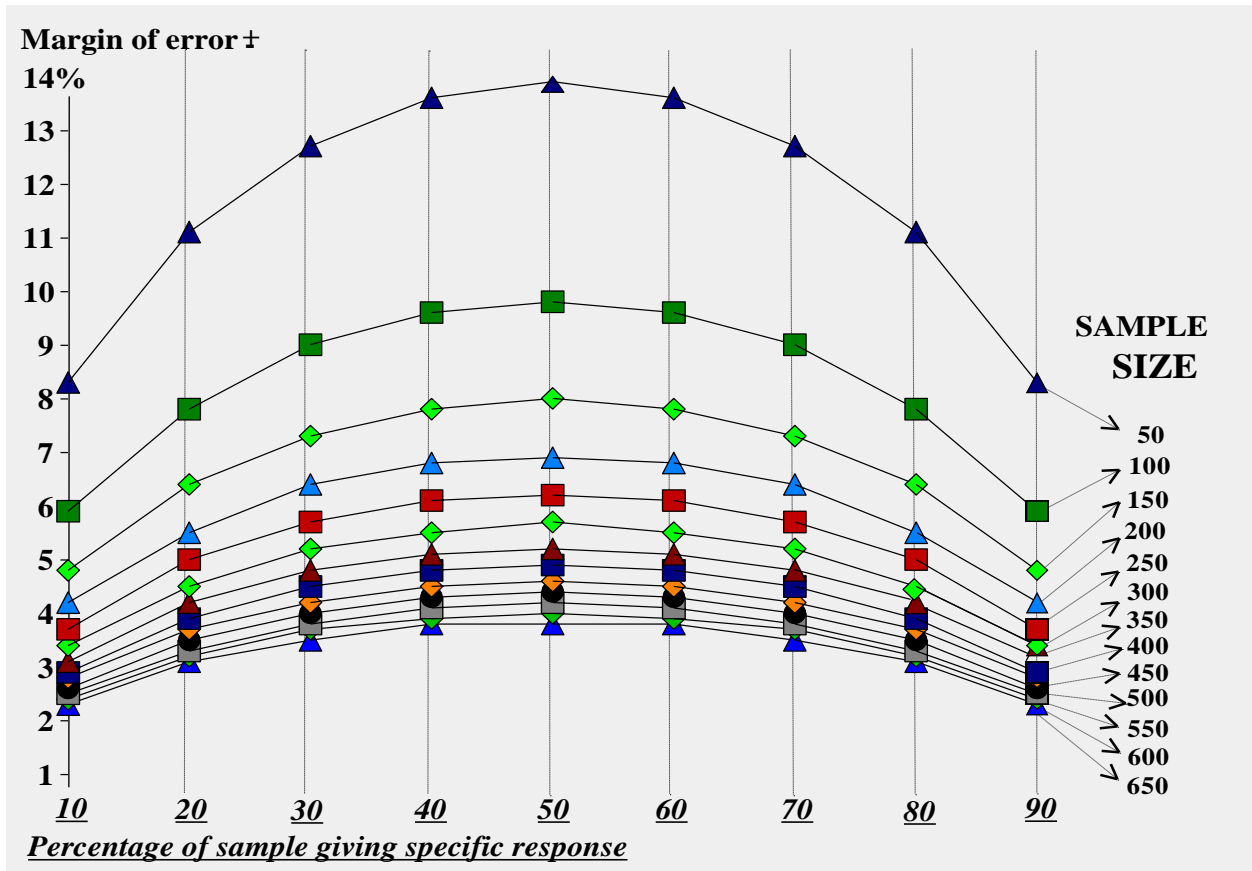
Respondents for the interviews were randomly selected from records of registered voter households that have a history of voting in November general elections for president or governor and have commercially available telephone numbers. The sample was stratified so that every geographic area of the district was represented in the sample according to its contribution to the average of past November gubernatorial elections.

Generally, in interpreting survey results, all surveys are subject to error; that is, the results of the survey may differ from that which would have been obtained if the entire population was interviewed. Sampling error depends on the total number of respondents asked a specific question. The table on the next page represents the sampling error for different percentage distributions of responses based on sample sizes.

For example, when survey respondents were asked if they support or oppose purchasing music instruments for the district's music programs at a cost of \$3 million (Q.20), 50 percent of all 300 respondents said that they strongly support this improvement. As indicated in the chart that follows, this percentage would have a sampling error of plus or minus 5.7 points; meaning that with repeated sampling, it is very likely (95 out of every 100 times), that the percentage for the entire population would fall between 44.3 percent and 55.7 percent, hence 50 percent  $\pm$ 5.7 points.

SAMPLING ERROR BY PERCENTAGE (AT 95 IN 100 CONFIDENCE LEVEL)

SAMPLE SIZE	<i>Percentage of sample giving specific response</i>								
	<u>10</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>90</u>
<b>700</b>	2.2	3.0	3.3	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.2
<b>650</b>	2.3	3.1	3.5	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.1	2.3
<b>600</b>	2.4	3.2	3.7	3.9	4	3.9	3.7	3.2	2.4
<b>550</b>	2.5	3.3	3.8	4.1	4.2	4.1	3.8	3.3	2.5
<b>500</b>	2.6	3.5	4	4.3	4.4	4.3	4	3.5	2.6
<b>450</b>	2.8	3.7	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.2	3.7	2.8
<b>400</b>	2.9	3.9	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.8	4.5	3.9	2.9
<b>350</b>	3.1	4.2	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.2	3.1
<b>300</b>	3.4	4.5	5.2	5.5	5.7	5.5	5.2	4.5	3.4
<b>250</b>	3.7	5	5.7	6.1	6.2	6.1	5.7	5	3.7
<b>200</b>	4.2	5.5	6.4	6.8	6.9	6.8	6.4	5.5	4.2
<b>150</b>	4.8	6.4	7.3	7.8	8	7.8	7.3	6.4	4.8
<b>100</b>	5.9	7.8	9	9.6	9.8	9.6	9	7.8	5.9
<b>50</b>	8.3	11.1	12.7	13.6	13.9	13.6	12.7	11.1	8.3



## KEY FINDINGS

- A 36% plurality of respondents said that over the past few years, the quality of a kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education offered by the Grand Haven Area Public Schools “stayed about the same,” 13% said it “improved,” 16% said it had “gotten worse,” with a somewhat high 35% saying they were “undecided.”
- A 38% plurality of respondents said that compared to surrounding local public school districts, the quality of education provided by Grand Haven Area Public Schools was “about the same,” 36% said it was “better,” 6% said it was “worse,” with 20% “undecided.”
- A 70% solid majority of respondents offered a positive rating for the job done by the Grand Haven Public Schools in providing a quality kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education to its students, including 28% “excellent” and 42% “pretty good,” 15% offering a negative rating of “just fair” (11%) or “poor” (4%), with 15% “undecided.”
- A 41% plurality of respondents said Grand Haven Public Schools has “about the right amount” of state and local funding to provide a quality education for its students, 33% said there is “too little funding,” 8% said there is “too much funding,” with 18% “undecided.”
- A 67% solid majority of respondents said school taxes in Grand Haven Area Public Schools are “about right,” with only 18% saying school taxes are “too high,” 6% “too low,” and 9% “undecided.”
- A 46% plurality of respondents offered a positive rating (11% “excellent”) for the job done by Grand Haven Public Schools managing district finances, with 27% offering a negative rating and 27% “undecided.”
- An 80% solid majority of respondents offered a positive rating for the condition of schools, other buildings, facilities, property, and grounds owned by Grand Haven Area Public Schools (30% “excellent”).

- On the first test of a \$145.3 million bond proposal, respondents were told it would fund the construction of a new middle school to replace the existing one built in the 1950's, a new multipurpose facility at Grand Haven High School, secure entryways through school offices, upgrades to computers and classroom learning technology, improvements to mechanical, heating, cooling and plumbing systems, bus replacement, the purchase of new music instruments, restroom renovations, playground improvements at the elementary schools and intermediate school, and several other needed improvements. To repay the bonds, existing bonded debt would be consolidated, and the repayment period extended by 20 years. However, the bond proposal WOULD NOT require an increase in the current tax rate levied for schools of 4.20 mills. A 75% majority of respondents said they would vote "yes" including 68% directly voting "yes," and another 7% who were undecided at first, but when pressed said they lean toward voting "yes."
- Among the 18% of respondents who said they would vote "no," the top reasons cited for doing so included: "wasteful district spending/distrusts the district" (19%); "will not improve the quality of education/programs offered/wrong priorities" (14%); "need more detailed information" (13%); "improvements are not needed/facilities fine as is/in good condition" (9%); "too much money/trying to do too much at once" (7%); "taxes are too high/always asking for more/taxes will still increase" (6%); and "teaching liberalism/CRT/woke agenda" (6%).
- Fourteen detailed descriptions of proposed improvements were read, and respondents were asked if they supported or opposed each one, whether it was strongly or somewhat.
  - The improvement with the greatest support, at 88% (67% strong support), was "The heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical systems would be replaced throughout the district buildings at a cost of approximately \$12 million."
  - Second-most supported, at 87% (69% strong support), was "The deteriorating roof at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$4.5 million."

- Third, also at 87% (64% strong support), was “Twenty school buses that have outlived their useful life would be replaced, as would the transportation pole barn, at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million.”
- Fourth, at 86% (46% strong support), is “Worn corridor wall tiles that can no longer be repaired would be replaced in the elementary schools and the High School at a cost of approximately \$2 million.”
- Fifth, at 85% (69% strong support), was “The main entrance at all elementary schools and Central High School would be redesigned and remodeled to require visitors to enter buildings through school offices and not be able to enter directly into classrooms or other areas of each school, at a cost of approximately \$5.5 million.”
- Sixth, at 83% (62% strong support), was “Restroom renovations and upgrades would be made throughout all buildings where existing facilities are outdated and badly in need of repair, at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million.”
- Seventh, at 75% (56% strong support), was “Computers and classroom learning technology, updated cabling, and Wi-Fi would be upgraded throughout the district at a cost of just under \$15 million.”
- Eighth, at 70% (50% strong support), was “Music instruments would be purchased for the district’s music programs at a cost of approximately \$3 million.”
- Ninth, also at 70% (47% strong support), was “Playground equipment at all elementary schools and Central High School would be upgraded with safer, more modern equipment at a cost of approximately \$4 million.”
- Tenth, also at 70% (45% strong support), was “Lakeshore Middle School, first built in the 1950’s as a high school, has become nearly as costly to renovate as it would be to build a new school. A new middle school would be built on existing school-owned property off Lincoln Street, at a cost of approximately \$68 million, with the current middle school continued to be used until the new building has been completed.”

- Eleventh, at 61% (27% strong support) was “Classroom carpeting at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million.”
  - Twelfth, at 60% support (27% strong support) was “Cabinets and casework would be replaced at all elementary schools and the High School at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million.”
  - Thirteenth, at 56% support (30% strong support), 39% opposed (24% strongly opposed), was “A new multipurpose facility would be built for additional practice and gathering space to be used by all students for sports, marching band, clubs, and the community at a cost of approximately \$15 million.”
  - Fourteenth, at 44% support (19% strong support), 49% opposed (31% strongly opposed), was “Tennis courts at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$2 million.”
- Respondents were asked what should be done with the existing middle school should a new one be constructed. A 47% plurality said it should be sold, 32% said it should be kept and continue to be used by the district, 4% volunteered that a new middle school should not be built, and 17% were “undecided.”
  - After hearing about the specific improvements that could be funded with a \$145.3 million bond proposal, a 78% majority of respondents said they would vote “yes” on the bond proposal, including 71% who would directly vote “yes” and another 7% who were undecided, but when pressed said they lean toward voting “yes.” Another 18% said they would vote “no,” with 4% “undecided.”
  - Top reasons cited for voting “no” after the final, informed vote on the bond proposal included: “wasteful district spending/distrusts the district” (22%); “too much money/trying to do too much at once” (20%); “will not improve the quality of education/programs offered/wrong priorities” (12%); “need more detailed information (8%); and “taxes too high/always asking for more/taxes will still increase” (7%).



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The results of this survey are very encouraging and point to the likely success of the bond proposal, assuming that there is an effective effort to communicate with district voters. If there is not an effective communications effort, even though the survey results are strong, the proposal *could* fall short of earning voter approval.

On the initial, cold test of a \$145.3 million bond proposal, a 75 percent solid majority of district voters said they would vote “yes,” including 68 percent who would directly vote “yes.” Another 7 percent were undecided at first, but when pressed, said they lean toward voting “yes.” These undecided voters who lean toward voting “yes” cannot always be counted on to actually vote “yes” on election day.

The fact that the \$145.3 million bond proposal would NOT require an increase in the millage rate above the current rate of 4.20 mills is obviously a strong influence on district voters, notwithstanding the fact that the repayment period being extended by 20 years. It will be important to continually emphasize the fact that voter approval of the bond proposal would get \$145.3 million in school improvements - including a badly needed new middle school and other essential improvements - without requiring an increase in taxes to repay the bonds.

Survey respondents then heard descriptions of 14 improvements that could be funded by the bond proposal and asked if they supported or opposed each one. Support for improvements described ranged from a high of 88 percent to a low of 44 percent, with 6 improvements ranging from 83 percent to 88 percent, 4 items supported by 70 percent and 75 percent, 2 items ranging from 60 to 61 percent, 1 improvement at 56 percent, with 1 item, tennis court improvements, only earning 44 percent support.

Replacing tennis courts was opposed by a 49 to 44 percent plurality, including 31 percent strongly opposed and 19 percent strongly supportive. A new multipurpose facility, costing \$15 million, was supported by a 56 percent majority, including 30 percent strong support, with 39 opposed, including 24 percent strongly opposed.

Strongest support was for replacing heating, cooling, plumbing and electrical systems; replacing the roof at the High School; replacing buses; replacing worn corridor wall tiles in elementary schools and the High School; redesigning the main entrances to all elementary schools and Central High School to require visitors to enter buildings through school offices;

renovating school restrooms; and upgrading computers and classroom technology, cabling, and Wi-Fi throughout the district.

After hearing about the 14 proposed improvements that could be included in a bond proposal, a revote showed increased support with 78 percent saying they would vote “yes” (up 3 points), and 71 percent directly voting “yes” (also up 3 points), with 18 percent voting “no” (unchanged), and 4 percent “undecided” (down 3 points). It is worth noting that support increased for the bond proposal, even though there were four specific improvements that had less support than the direct, hard “yes” vote support on the first question.

Experience shows that “no” voters are usually much more motivated to participate in elections than “yes” voters, or they are more likely to stay on the ballot and vote “no” in a higher turnout general election, such as the upcoming November election when the offices of Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General and elections for Congress and State Legislature are on the ballot. That is why it is desirable to see a direct “yes” vote in the mid-to-upper 50’s as a percentage of the total vote to assume that voter approval is likely. This typical motivation-to-vote disparity between yes and no voters is an important reason why recording a direct “yes” vote majority of 68 percent shows that the election can be won, if an effective communications effort can be waged with district voters, and voters who are supportive of the bond proposal can be persuaded to either turn out and vote if held in a May election next year or stay on the ballot if the bond proposal is placed on the November general election.

That raises the question of which election shows the greatest level of support for the bond proposal? Among November general election voters, a 72 percent majority of very certain voters said they would vote “yes,” including a 67 percent direct, hard vote, with 95 percent of likely voters supporting the bond proposal, including an 80 percent direct, hard vote “yes.” If the bond proposal is on the November general election, the district is unlikely to have a significant impact on voter turnout, except encouraging strong district supporters to vote, if they might not have otherwise participated in the election for governor.

Among likely May 2023 election voters, all the time May voters would support the bond proposal by a total of 67 percent, including a 62 percent direct, hard “yes” vote, with another 5 percent leaning toward voting “yes.” A 76 percent majority of most of the time or half the time voters would support the bond proposal (if you can convince them to participate in the election), including a 68 percent direct, hard “yes” vote, with another 8 percent leaning toward voting

“yes.” Among some of the time, or never voters, an 84 percent solid majority would vote “yes” if you can persuade them to participate, including a 76 percent direct, hard “yes” vote, with another 8 percent leaning toward voting “yes.”

If ultimately considering the May 2023 election, there exists significantly less support among all the time voters, and although there is much more support among less frequent voters, the challenge would be to get voters to the polls. It is easier to get voters who are going to the polls anyway to remember to stay on the ballot until they vote on the bond proposal than it is to convince voters to actually go to the polls or vote by absentee ballot. Therefore, it appears advantageous to place the proposal on the upcoming November ballot in the Governor’s election. It appears certainly *possible* to earn support for the bond proposal in either election, but the November 2022 election would seem to be the better option.

After the initial, cold question on a \$145.3 million bond proposal, the top reasons cited by the 18 percent of respondents (54 out of 300 respondents) that would oppose the proposal for voting “no” on the proposal included: “wasteful district spending/distrusts the district” (cited by 19%); “will not improve the quality of education” (14%); “need more detailed information” (13%); “improvements not needed/facilities fine as is/in good condition” (9%); “too much money/trying to do too much at once” (7%); “taxes are too high/always asking for more money/taxes will still increase” (6%); “teaching liberalism/CRT/‘woke’ agenda” (6%). It will be very important to stress the fact in order to get \$145.3 million in school improvements, including a new middle school, it will not require an increase in the millage rate above current levels.

After the second question following the description of the list of improvements and asking respondents if they supported or opposed each feature of the bond proposal, the top reasons cited by the 18 percent of respondents (52 out of 300 respondents) that would oppose the proposal for voting “no” on the proposal included: “wasteful district spending/distrusts the district” (22%); “too much money/trying to do too much at once” (20%); “will not improve the quality of education” (12%); “need more detailed information” (8%); “taxes are too high/always asking for more money/taxes will still increase” (7%); “wish list items” (5%); and “economy is poor/inflation/recession concerns” (5%).

In other findings in the survey, when asked if the quality of a kindergarten provided by Grand Haven Area Public Schools has improved, gotten worse, or remained about the same, 36 percent of respondents said it “remained about the same”, 13 percent said it had “improved”, 16 percent said it had “gotten worse”, with a rather large 35 percent of respondents “undecided”. The responses to this question could have been heavily influenced by the public reaction to the COVID crisis over the past two or more years and the actions that schools took to address it.

Among all parents, 17 percent said education quality had “improved”, 23 percent said it had “gotten worse”, 41 percent said it “remained about the same”, and 19 percent were “undecided.” Parents who send their children to Grand Haven Area Public Schools said had “improved” by 21 percent, “gotten worse” by 20 percent, “remained about the same” by 47 percent, with 12 percent “undecided.” Among non-parents, 11 percent said it had “improved”, 13 percent said “gotten worse”, 33 percent said “remained about the same”, with a very large 42 percent “undecided.”

When asked if compared to surrounding local public-school districts, the quality of education provided by Grand Haven Area Public Schools is better, worse, or about the same, 38 percent of respondents said, “about the same”, 36 percent said “better”, 6 percent said “worse”, with 20 percent “undecided.” This question too, could have been influenced by the COVID crisis.

Among all parents, 36 percent said “better”, 8 percent said “worse”, 36 percent said “about the same”, and 19 percent were “undecided.” Parents who send their children to Grand Haven Area Public Schools said “better” by 42 percent, “worse” by only 4 percent, “about the same” by 36 percent, with 12 percent “undecided.” Among non-parents, 36 percent said “better”, 5 percent said “worse”, 38 percent said “about the same”, with 20 percent “undecided.”

When respondents were asked how they would rate the job done by Grand Haven Area Public Schools providing a quality kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education, a solid 70 percent majority offered a positive rating of “excellent” (28%) or “pretty good” (42%), 15 percent offered a negative rating of “just fair” (11%) or “poor” (4%), with 15 percent “undecided”.

Among all parents, 70 percent offered a positive rating, 20 percent offered a negative rating, with 10 percent “undecided.” Among parents who send their children to Grand Haven Area Public Schools, 81 percent offered a positive rating, 15 percent offered a negative rating,

with 4 percent “undecided.” Among non-parents, 70 percent offered a positive rating, 13 percent offered a negative rating, with 17 percent “undecided.”

When asked if Grand Haven Area Public Schools has too much, too little, or about the right amount of state and local funding needed to provide a quality education, 8 percent of respondents said the district receives “too much” funding, 33 percent said “too little” funding, 41 percent said “about the right amount” of funding, with 18 percent “undecided.” In most school districts, the percentage saying there is too little funding is usually a much stronger plurality, if not a majority, meaning Grand Haven Area Public Schools is lower on this measure than most other school districts surveyed.

Among all parents, 13 percent said “too much” funding, 38 percent said “too little” funding, 36 percent said “about the right” amount, with 14 percent “undecided.” Parents who send their children to Grand Haven Area Public Schools said, “too much” by 12 percent, “too little” by 46 percent, “about the right amount” by 31 percent, with 11 percent “undecided.” Among non-parents, 6 percent said “too much”, 31 percent said “too little”, 42 percent said “about the right amount”, with 21 percent “undecided.” It is unusual for parents to say by higher percentages than non-parents that the school district has too much funding. That suggests that the district should stress the fact that any additional funding provided with federal money is intended to help school districts recover from the impact of the COVID crisis, and once that money is spent, public schools will once again be underfunded as in the past.

When asked if the taxes paid to fund a kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education is too high, too low, or about right for what respondents receive in educational services, only 18 percent said taxes are “too high” (8 percent much too high), 67 percent said “about right”, 6 percent said “too low”, with 9 percent “undecided.” In school district surveys, a too high percentage in the high teens or low 20’s as a percentage is generally seen as the ideal level of concern about school taxes. With only 18 percent of respondents saying taxes are “too high”, that is indeed an ideal level, meaning that more than 70 percent of voters would be receptive to a tax related ballot proposal, especially if they support the purpose(s) of the proposal.

Among all parents, 24 percent said taxes are “too high”, 64 percent said “about right”, with 12 percent saying, “too low” or “undecided.” Among parents who send their children to Grand Haven Area Public Schools, 19 percent said taxes are “too high”, 67 percent said “about

right”, and 14 percent said, “too low” or “undecided.” Among non-parents, 16 percent said “too high”, 68 percent said “about right”, and 16 percent said, “too low” or “undecided.”

A 46 percent plurality offered a positive job rating for the job done by Grand Haven Area Public Schools in managing district finances (11 percent “excellent”), 27 percent offered a negative rating (12 percent “poor”), with 27 percent “undecided.” To have a positive rating on managing finances that is 24 points lower than the 70 percent job rating offered for providing a quality education suggests that there are significant concerns about district financial management. Also, it is important to note that “wasteful district spending/distrusts the district” was the top reason cited for voting no on the bond proposal. To the extent possible, it would make sense in a district communications plan to communicate examples of sound financial decisions that were made in managing district finances, and if other research reveals voter concerns about district spending, to address those concerns in any communications efforts.

When asked to rate the condition of the schools, other buildings, facilities, properties, and grounds owned and operated by Grand Haven Area Public Schools, an overwhelming 80 percent majority offered a positive rating (30 percent “excellent”), 11 percent offered a negative rating (3 percent “poor”), with 9 percent “undecided.” All parents offered a positive rating of 72 percent, parents of Grand Haven Area students offered a positive rating of 77 percent, and non-parents offered a positive rating of 84 percent for the condition of schools and facilities.

This high number of respondents offering a positive rating for the condition of facilities suggests that any communications strategy in trying to discuss the need for improvements should focus on the idea that just as you cannot judge a book by its cover, you cannot judge the condition of school buildings and facilities by the way schools look just from the outside when driving by. It will be necessary to show what needs to be done in addressing the infrastructure needs of the school buildings and district facilities. Developing a video presentation and slide presentation that shows what needs to be fixed would be helpful in showing not only parents, but all voters, what needs to be fixed or improved that may not be evident when district facilities are viewed from the outside.

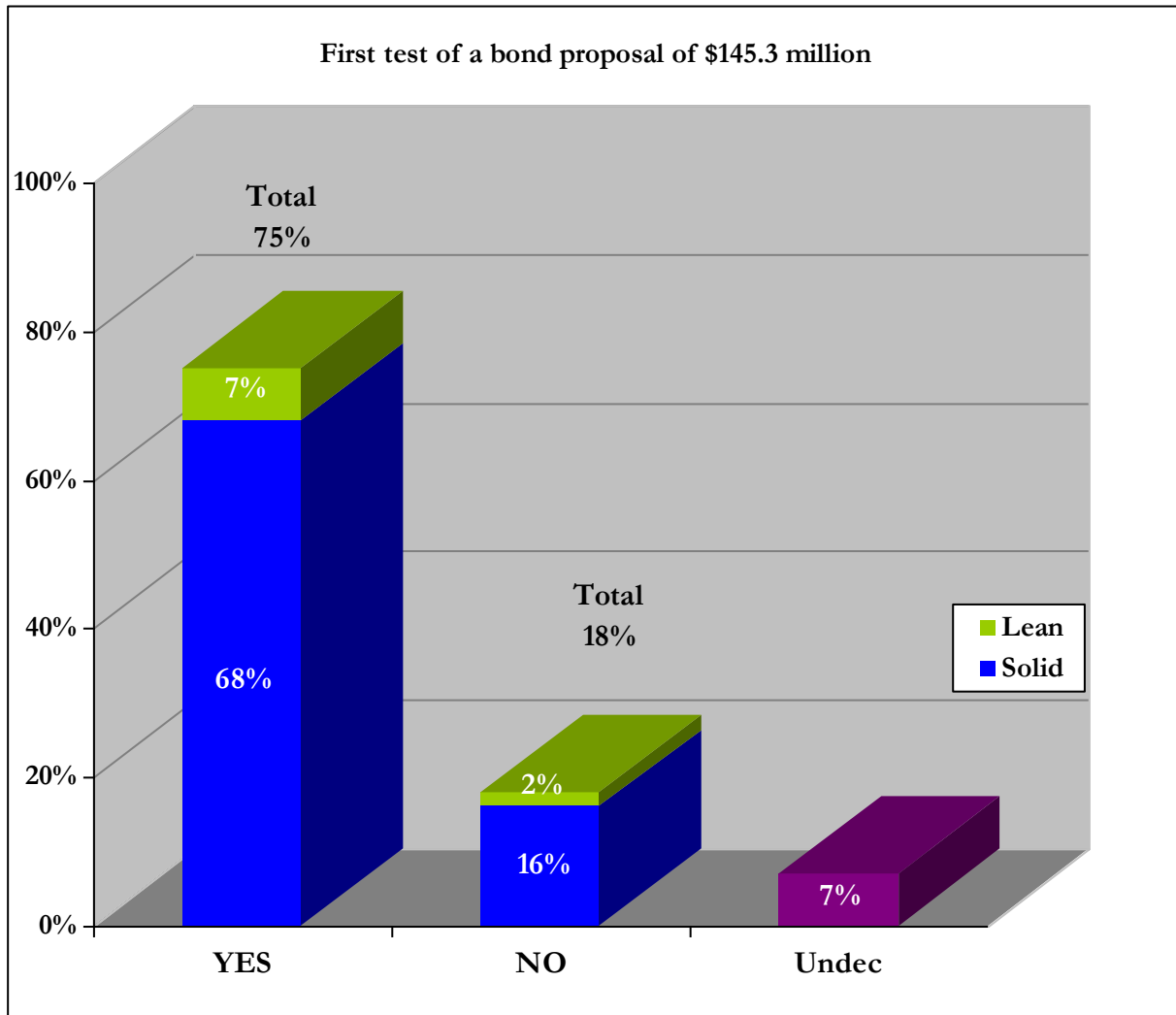
Of note, all respondents were asked *if* a new middle school is supported by the community (which it is), which of two statements would best describe what should be done with the existing Lakeshore Middle School property. A 47 percent solid plurality of respondents said it should be sold, 32 percent said it should be kept and continue to be used by the district, 4 percent volunteered that a new middle school should not be built, with 17 percent “undecided.”

Among all parents, 47 percent said it should be sold, 30 percent said it should be kept and used, 3 percent volunteered that a new middle school should not be built, with 20 percent “undecided.” Among parents with children in Grand Haven Area Public Schools, 49 percent said it should be sold, 29 percent said keep it and use it, 4 percent said a new middle school should not be built, and 18 percent were “undecided.” Among non-parents, 47 percent said it should be sold, 33 percent said keep it and use it, 5 percent said a new middle school should not be built, and 16 percent were “undecided.”

## MORE DETAILED SURVEY ANALYSIS

### First “vote today” test

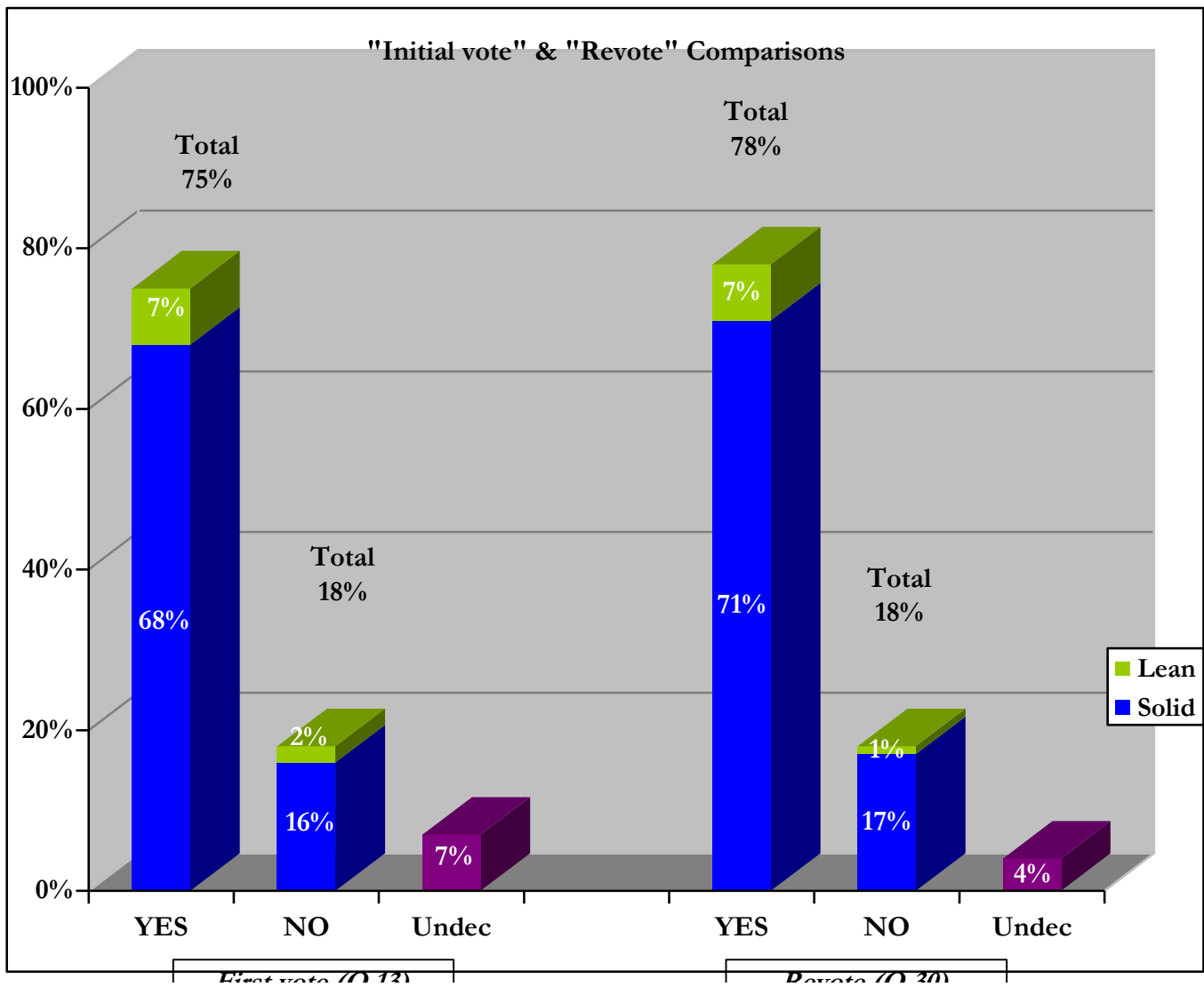
On the first “vote today” test of a future bond proposal of \$145.3 million to fund improvements and upgrades to Grand Haven Area Public Schools, a 75 percent to 18 percent majority of respondents said they would vote “yes,” with the direct “yes” vote (without “leaners”) of 68 percent.





### Hearing about specific improvements shows slight increase in support

After hearing a description of 14 areas of potential improvement, a revote on a bond proposal of \$145.3 million actually showed a 3 point increase in direct “yes” support, and a 3 point increase in the total “yes” votes. A 78 percent majority of respondents (up 3 points) would vote “yes,” including 71 percent who would directly vote “yes” (up 3 points), with 18 percent voting “no” (unchanged), including 17 percent who would directly vote “no” (up 1 point), with 4 percent “undecided” (down 3 points).



## Demographic breakouts of the 1st and 2nd “vote” results

The following table shows the total “yes” and “no” vote percentages (including leaners) on the first test of a bond proposal of \$145.3 million, broken down by demographic segment, followed by the results of the second test, conducted after respondents heard more detailed information about the specific improvements that could be funded, with the third column showing “yes” vote movement from the first to second question: (small sample size = \*)

	1 <sup>ST</sup> TEST		2 <sup>ND</sup> TEST		MOVE TO
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>YES</u>
<b>\$145.3 million bond</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>+3%</b>
<b>District-Wide Results</b>					
Geographical area:					
49417	74%	19%	77%	19%	+3%
Other areas	79%	17%	84%	13%	+5%
Voted in past General elections:					
Only voted in one election*	86%	8%	87%	7%	+1%
Voted in both elections	73%	20%	77%	19%	+4%
Very certain to vote in Nov	72%	20%	76%	19%	+4%
Smwt certain/Likely to vote*	95%	2%	93%	2%	-2%
Votes at the polls	73%	22%	76%	21%	+3%
Votes by absentee	77%	14%	81%	13%	+4%
Votes in May school elections:					
All the time	67%	26%	70%	25%	+3%
Most/half the time	76%	16%	81%	14%	+5%
Some/Never	84%	11%	86%	13%	+2%
Educ quality over past few years:					
Improved*	87%	11%	94%	2%	+7%
Worse	42%	48%	46%	51%	+4%
About the same	82%	14%	83%	12%	+1%
Undecided	80%	11%	84%	13%	+4%
Educ quality compared to others:					
Better	84%	12%	85%	10%	+1%
Worse*	39%	55%	50%	50%	+11%
About the same	75%	17%	79%	17%	+4%
Undecided	69%	19%	74%	21%	+5%

<b>\$145.3 million bond</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> TEST</b>		<b>2<sup>ND</sup> TEST</b>		<b>MOVE TO</b>
	<b><u>YES</u></b>	<b><u>NO</u></b>	<b><u>YES</u></b>	<b><u>NO</u></b>	
<b>District-Wide Results</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>+3%</b>
<b>Rating schools on education:</b>					
Positive -- Excel/Good	82%	12%	83%	12%	+1%
Negative -- Fair/Poor*	47%	48%	53%	47%	+6%
Undecided*	70%	16%	85%	12%	+15%
<b>Opinion of School Funding:</b>					
Too much*	38%	58%	34%	63%	-4%
About right	68%	23%	72%	24%	+4%
Too low	95%	5%	100%	0%	+5%
Undecided	72%	12%	82%	11%	+10%
<b>Opinion of School Taxes:</b>					
Too high	46%	49%	51%	46%	+5%
About right	83%	12%	85%	11%	+2%
Too low*	100%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Undecided*	55%	11%	82%	11%	+17%
<b>Job rating on managing finances:</b>					
Positive -- Excel/Good	87%	9%	86%	8%	-1%
Negative -- Fair/Poor	58%	35%	61%	37%	+3%
Undecided	73%	16%	83%	13%	+10%
<b>Rating condition of facilities:</b>					
Positive -- Excel/Good	76%	17%	80%	17%	+4%
Negative -- Fair/Poor*	74%	26%	77%	23%	+3%
Undecided*	72%	15%	63%	18%	-9%
<b>Children:</b>					
Has school age children	74%	24%	77%	21%	+3%
No school age children	76%	15%	79%	16%	+3%
<b>Children attend which schools:</b>					
GHAPS	77%	22%	81%	16%	+4%
Other schools*	66%	30%	66%	34%	0%
<b>Age groups:</b>					
Age 18-34	83%	9%	88%	9%	+5%
Age 35-49	78%	19%	84%	16%	+6%
Age 50-64	74%	19%	78%	19%	+4%
Age 65 & older	70%	23%	69%	23%	-1%

<b>\$145.3 million bond District-Wide Results</b>	<b>1<sup>ST</sup> TEST</b>		<b>2<sup>ND</sup> TEST</b>		<b>MOVE TO</b>
	<b><u>YES</u></b>	<b><u>NO</u></b>	<b><u>YES</u></b>	<b><u>NO</u></b>	<b><u>YES</u></b>
	<b>75%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>+3%</b>
<b>Education:</b>					
High School or less*	76%	24%	71%	23%	-5%
Post HS Technical	75%	16%	81%	14%	+6%
College	75%	18%	79%	17%	+4%
<b>Income:</b>					
Incomes under \$50K*	85%	15%	89%	7%	+4%
Incomes of \$50K-\$75K	78%	18%	80%	20%	+2%
Incomes of \$75K-\$100K	75%	15%	82%	17%	+7%
Incomes over \$100K	76%	19%	80%	18%	+4%
<b>Gender:</b>					
Men	69%	24%	75%	22%	+6%
Women	81%	13%	82%	13%	+1%
<b>Age range:</b>					
Age 18-49	80%	14%	86%	13%	+6%
Age 50 and over	72%	21%	74%	21%	+2%
<b>Gender and age:</b>					
Men under age 50	79%	15%	87%	13%	+8%
Men aged 50 and over	62%	30%	67%	29%	+5%
Women under age 50	81%	14%	84%	13%	+3%
Women aged 50 and over	81%	12%	80%	13%	-1%

<b>Proposed bond improvements ranked from highest to lowest percentage support</b>	<b>STR SUP</b>	<b>TOT SUP</b>	<b>TOT OPP</b>	<b>STR OPP</b>
The heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical systems would be replaced throughout district buildings where needed at a cost of approximately \$12 million.	67%	88%	8%	4%
The deteriorating roof at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$4.5 million.	69%	87%	9%	4%
Twenty school buses that have outlived their useful life would be replaced, as would the transportation pole barn, at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million.	64%	87%	9%	6%
Worn corridor wall tiles that can no longer be repaired would be replaced in the elementary schools and the High School at a cost of approximately \$2 million.	46%	86%	10%	3%
The main entrances at all elementary schools and Central High School would be redesigned and remodeled to require visitors to enter buildings through school offices and not be able to enter directly into classrooms or other areas of each school, at a cost of approximately \$5.5 million.	69%	85%	10%	5%
Restroom renovations and upgrades would be made throughout all buildings where existing facilities are outdated and badly in need of repair, at a cost of approximately \$2.5 million.	62%	83%	12%	5%
Computers and classroom learning technology, updated cabling, and Wi-Fi would be upgraded throughout the district at a cost of just under \$15 million.	56%	75%	20%	9%
Music instruments would be purchased for the district's music programs at a cost of approximately \$3 million.	50%	70%	26%	15%
Playground equipment at all elementary schools and Central High School would be upgraded with safer, more modern equipment at a cost of approximately \$4 million.	47%	70%	26%	11%
Lakeshore Middle School, first built in the 1950's as a high school, has become nearly as costly to renovate as it would be to build a new school. A new middle school would be built on existing school-owned property off Lincoln Street, at cost of approximately \$68 million, with the current middle school continued to be used until the new building has been completed.	45%	70%	24%	13%
Classroom carpeting at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million.	27%	61%	31%	17%
Cabinets and casework would be replaced at all elementary schools and the High School at a cost of approximately \$3.5 million.	27%	60%	32%	15%
A new multipurpose facility would be built for additional practice and gathering space to be used by all students for sports, marching band, clubs, and the community at a cost of approximately \$15 million.	30%	56%	39%	24%
Tennis courts at the High School would be replaced at a cost of approximately \$2 million.	19%	44%	49%	31%

In looking at these proposed improvements, in the order of support, replacing heating, cooling, plumbing, and electrical systems throughout the district is supported by 89% of all parents, 87% of non-parents and 91% of parents with students attending GHAPS.

The replacement of the roof at the high school is supported by all parents by 87%, non-parents by 87%, and parents of students attending GHAPS.

Replacing buses and the transportation pole barn is supported by 85% of all parents, 87% of non-parents and 88% of parents who send their children to GHAPS.

Replacing worn wall tiles in the elementary schools and the High School is supported by 86% of all parents, 86% of non-parents, and 87% of parents who send their children to GHAPS.

Redesigning the main entrances at all elementary schools and Central High School is supported by 86% of all parents, 83% of non-parents, and 85% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Restroom renovations at all buildings is supported by 80% of all parents, 84% of non-parents, and 84% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Updating computers and classroom learning technology is supported by 73% of all parents, 77% of non-parents, and 77% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Purchasing music instruments is supported by 75% of all parents, 68% of non-parents, and 78% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Upgrading playground equipment at elementary schools and Central High School is supported by 67% of all parents, 71% of non-parents, and 69% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Building a new middle school is supported by 76% of all parents, 67% of non-parents, and 80% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Replacing carpeting at the High School is supported by 65% of all parents, 60% of non-parents, and 66% of parents with children at GHAPS.

Replacing cabinets and casework at all elementary schools and the High School is supported by 64% of all parents, 58% of non-parents, and 63% of parents of children at GHAPS.

Building a new multi-purpose facility Community Center is supported by 59% of all parents, 54% of non-parents, and 60% of parents with children at GHAPS.

Replacing tennis courts at the High School is supported by a narrow 51% to 45% majority of all parents, opposed by a 51% to 41% majority of non-parents, and supported by a 56% majority of parents of children at GHAPS.

### Wasteful district spending/distrust the top reason for “no” vote

After the initial, cold vote on a \$145.3 million bond proposal, “No” voters were asked, in an open-ended question, to describe the main reason for their “no” vote. The responses were:

**N=54**

- 19% Wasteful district spending practices/Distrust the district
- 14% Will not improve the quality of education/programs offered/Wrong priorities
- 13% Need more detailed information
- 9% Improvements are not needed/Facilities fine as is/in good condition
- 7% Too much money/Trying to do too much at once
- 6% Taxes are too high/Always asking for more/Taxes will still increase
- 6% Teaching liberalism/CRT/“Woke” agenda
- 3% “Wish List” items
- 3% Economy is poor/Inflation/Recession concerns
- 3% Have no children that attend GHAPS/Will not benefit me
- 2% Against the construction of a new Middle School
- 2% Could use federal COVID funds
- 2% School security should be a priority
- 1% Administration/School Board infighting
- 1% District is adequately funded/Money is not needed
- 2% Other (*less than 1% each*)
- 7% Undecided/Refused

After the final vote after hearing about improvements that could be made, “No” voters were again asked, in an open-ended question, to describe the main reason for their “no” vote.

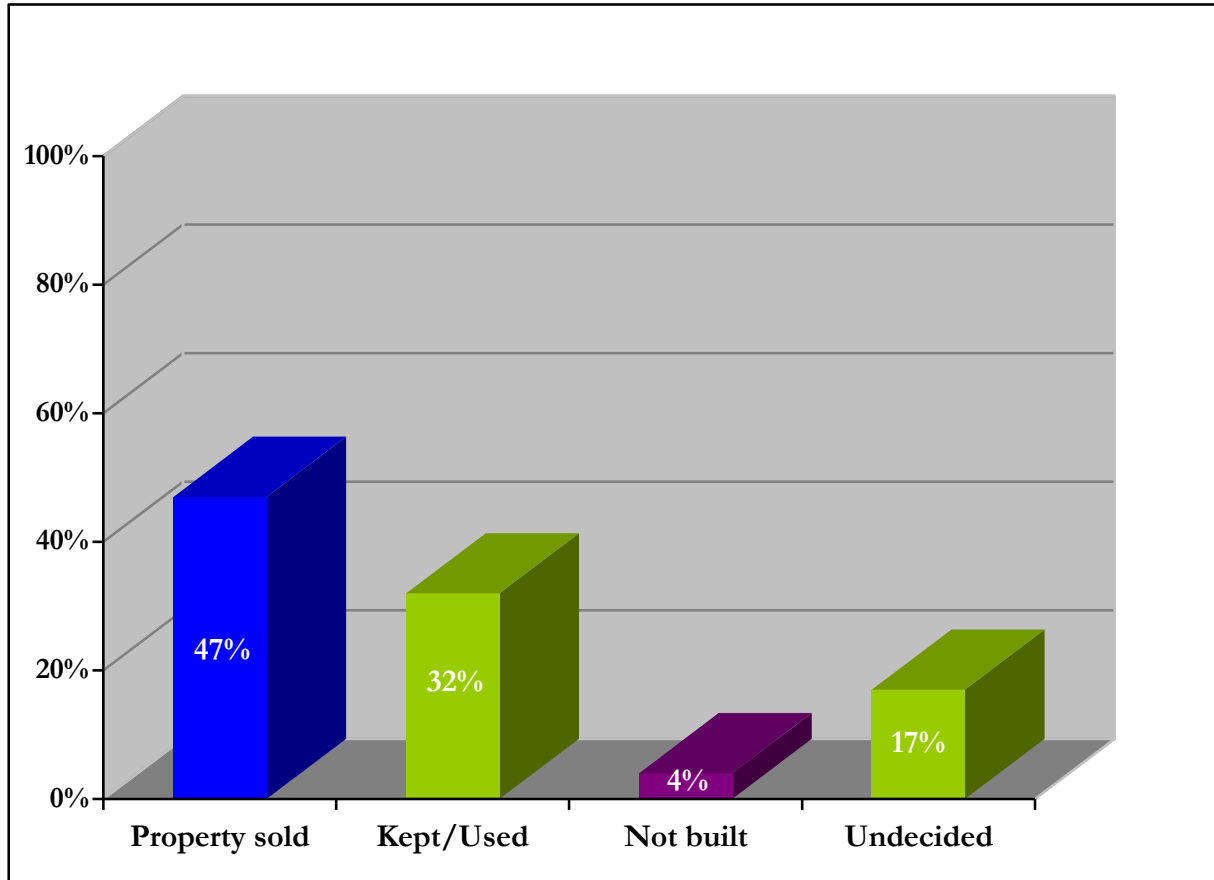
The responses were

**N=52**

- 22% Wasteful district spending practices – Distrust the district
- 20% Too much money – Trying to do too much at once
- 12% Will not improve the quality of education/programs offered – Wrong priorities
- 8% Need more detailed information
- 7% Taxes are too high – Always asking for more – Taxes will still increase
- 5% “Wish List” items
- 5% Economy is poor – Inflation – Recession concerns
- 4% District is adequately funded – Money is not needed
- 3% Against the extension of bonded debt
- 2% Against the construction of a new Middle School
- 2% Have no children that attend GHAPS – Will not benefit me
- 2% Improvements are not needed – Facilities fine as is/in good condition
- Other (*less than 1% each*)
- 8% Undecided/Refused

**Nearly 50 percent say sell existing Lakeshore Middle School property**

All respondents were asked “If the construction of a new middle school is supported by the community, which of the following statements best describes what you think should be done with the existing Lakeshore Middle School property?” The responses were:



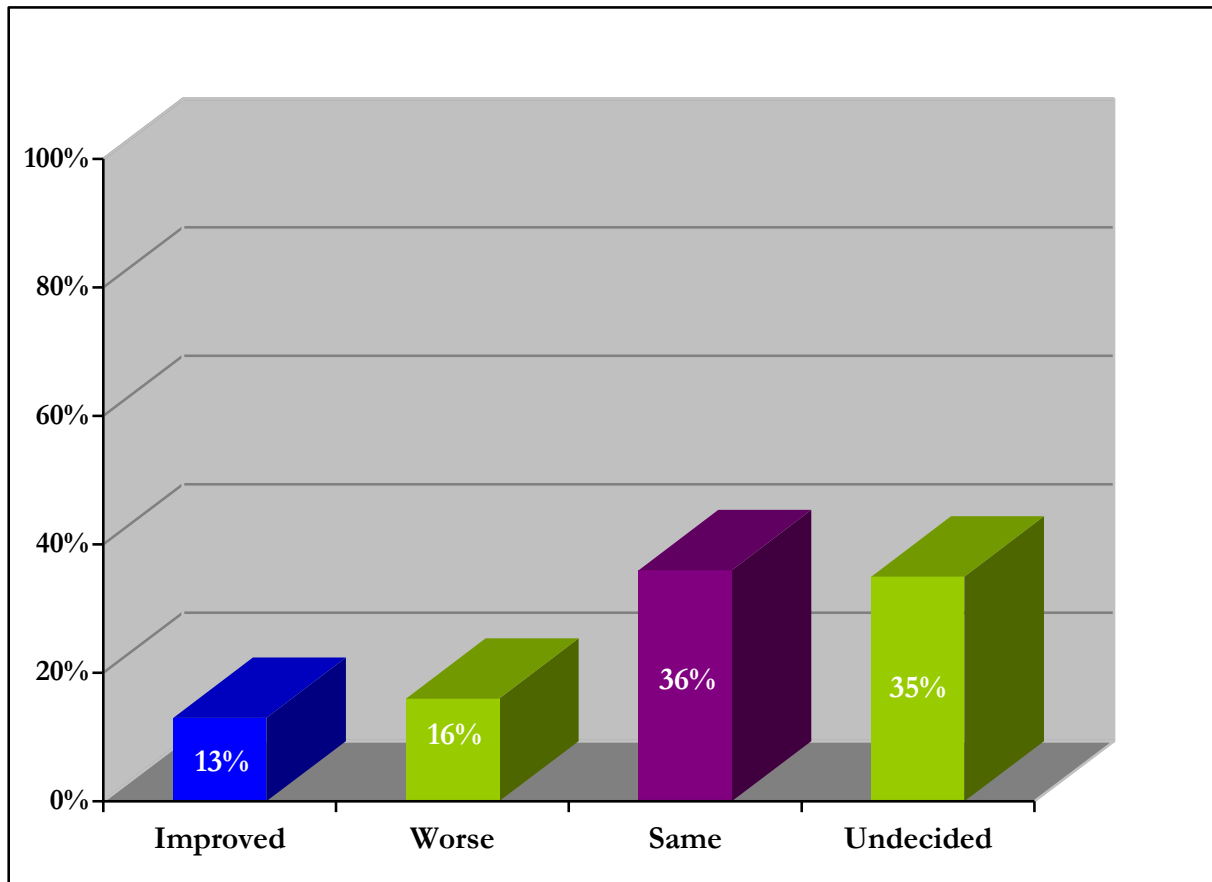
<u>All</u>		<u>All Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
47%	It should be sold	47%	47%
32%	Kept and used	30%	33%
4%	Not built ( <i>volunteered</i> )	3%	5%
17%	Undecided/refused	20%	16%



Among respondents who said the property should be sold, 76% said they would vote “yes” on the initial, cold asking, and 84% would vote “yes” on the final asking. Among respondents who said it should be kept and used, 81% would vote “yes” on the initial question and 84% would vote “yes” on the final question. Among undecided respondents, 76% would vote “yes” on the first question and 71% would vote “yes” on the final question.

**More than 7-in-10 undecided or say education quality the same over past few years**

All respondents were asked if over the past few years, the quality of the kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education provided by Grand Haven Area Public Schools has “improved, gotten worse or remained about the same.” The responses were:



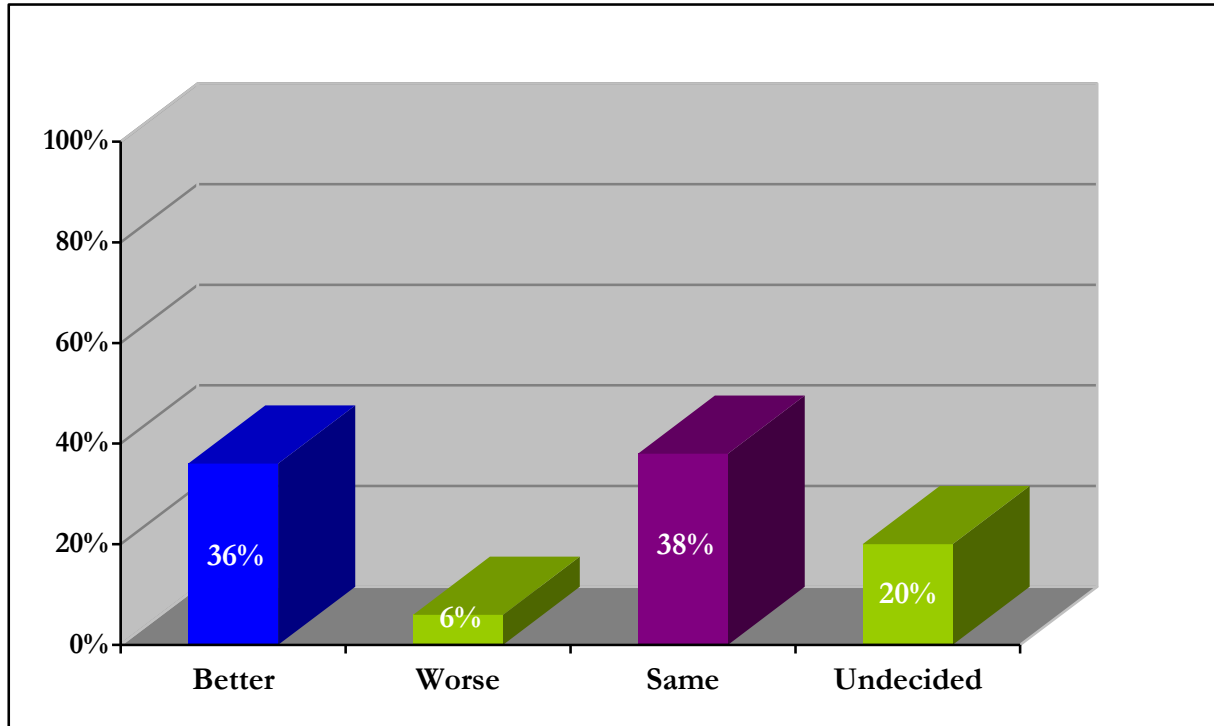
	<u>All</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
13% Improved	17%	11%	
16% Worse	23%	13%	
36% Stayed about the same	41%	33%	
35% Undecided/refused	19%	42%	

The ideal ratio of “improved” over “gotten worse” in school district surveys has always been considered 2-to-1. Grand Haven Area Public Schools survey results show a higher percentage of respondents saying education quality has gotten worse than improved, with the highest percentage of respondents saying education quality is the same or undecided. As noted earlier, responses to this question could have been influenced by a changing public reaction to the COVID crisis.

Among respondents who said education quality improved (small sample), 87% voted “yes” on the initial cold question and 94% voted “yes” on the final question after information about improvements. Among those who said education quality had gotten worse, 48% to 42% voted “no” on the first cold question and 51% to 46% voted “no” on the final question after information. Among respondents who said education quality is about the same, 82% would vote “yes” on the first question and 83% would vote “yes” on the final question. Finally, among respondents who were “undecided,” 80% would vote “yes” on the first question and 84% would vote “yes” on the final question.

**Nearly 4-in-10 said education quality about the same as surrounding school districts**

All respondents were asked if, compared to surrounding local public-school districts, if the quality of education provided by Grand Haven Area Public Schools is “better,” “worse” or “about the same.” The responses were:



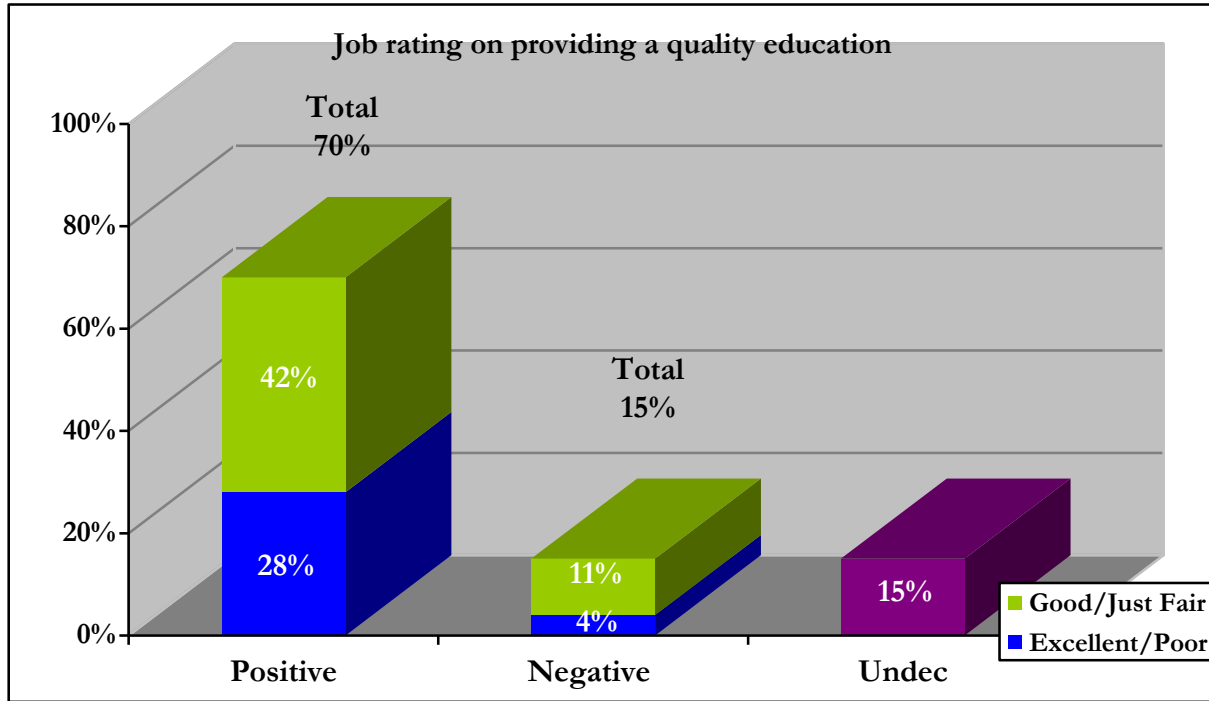
<u>All</u>		<u>All Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
36%	Better	36%	36%
6%	Worse	8%	5%
38%	About the same	36%	38%
20%	Undecided/refused	20%	21%

The ideal ratio of “better” over worse is also generally seen to be 2-to-1 and having 36 percent of respondents saying Grand Haven Area Public Schools are better than surrounding local public-school districts, with 6 percent saying they are worse, yields a ratio of 6-to-1. Such a ratio of better over worse is considered an excellent rating for the district.

Among respondents who said education quality is “better” than surrounding school districts, 84% voted “yes” on the initial cold question and 85% voted “yes” on the final question after information. Among respondents who said education quality is “worse” than surrounding school districts, a 55% to 39% majority voted “no” on the initial cold question and there was a 50% to 50% tie on the final question. Among respondents who said education quality is “about the same” as surrounding school districts, 75% would vote “yes” on the first question and 79% would vote “yes” on the final question. Among respondents who were “undecided,” a 69% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and 74% would vote “yes” on the final question.

**A 7-in-10 majority offers positive job rating providing a quality education**

When respondents were asked to rate the job Grand Haven Area Public Schools has done providing a quality kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade education, with either a “positive” rating of “excellent” or “pretty good,” or a “negative” rating of “just fair” or “poor,” the responses were:



<u>All</u>		<u>All Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
28%	Excellent	----	----
42%	Pretty good	----	----
<b>70%</b>	<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>70%</b>
11%	Just fair	----	----
4%	Poor	----	----
<b>15%</b>	<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>13%</b>
15%	Undecided/refused	10%	17%

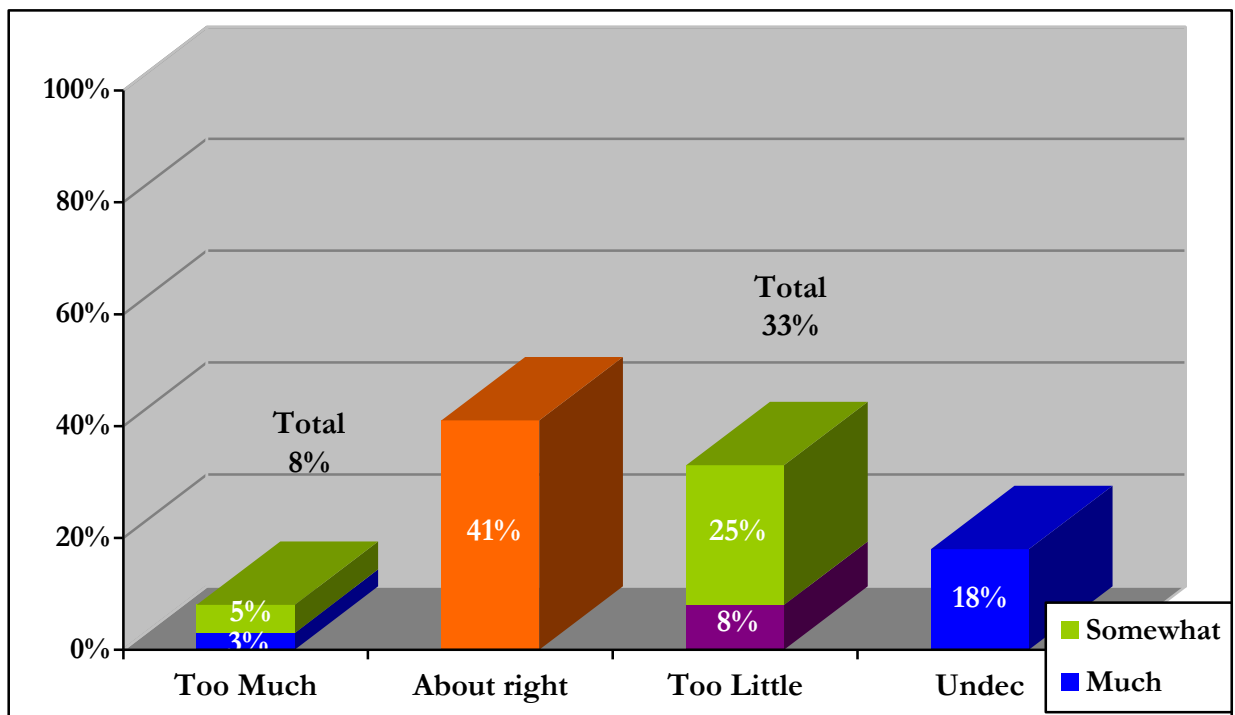
A 70% positive job rating for providing a quality education is much higher than the average job rating found in other school districts surveyed, which often rates about 60% or less.

Among survey respondents who offered a positive job rating for providing a quality education, an 82% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and 83% would vote “yes” on the final question. Among respondents who offered a negative job rating for providing a quality

education, a 48% to 47% plurality would vote “no” on the first question and a 53% to 47% narrow majority would vote “yes” on the final question. Among respondents who were “undecided,” a 70% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and 85% would vote “yes” on the final question.

**Just over 4-in-10 say GHAPS has about the right amount of funding**

All respondents were asked, “overall, including all state and local funds, do you think Grand Haven Area Public Schools has too much, too little, or about the right amount of funding it needs to provide a quality education to its students?” The responses were:



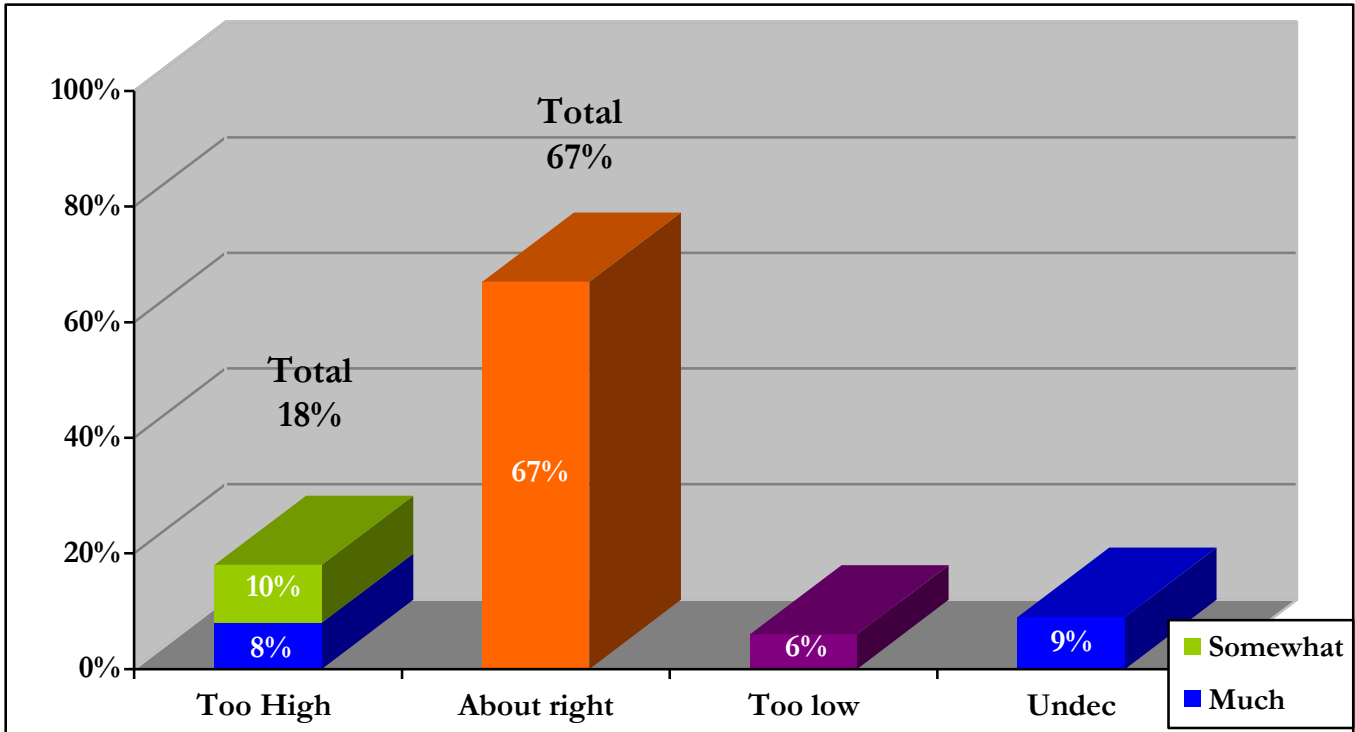
<u>All</u>		<u>All Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
3%	Much too much funding	---	---
5%	Smwt too much funding	---	---
<b>8%</b>	<b>TOTAL TOO MUCH</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>
41%	About the right amount	36%	42%
25%	Smwt too little funding	---	---
8%	Much too little funding	---	---
<b>33%</b>	<b>TOTAL TOO LITTLE</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>31%</b>
18%	Undecided/refused	14%	21%

Most respondents in other school districts surveyed by EPIC ▪ MRA indicate by the highest percentage response that there is “too little funding,” and in many districts the “too little” percentage has been a majority. The highest response for Grand Haven Area Public Schools, was “about the right amount of funding” at 41%, which is 8 points higher than the “too little” response of 33%, with only 8% saying there is “too much funding” and 18% “undecided.” Usually, the percentage of respondents saying there is “too little funding” is much higher than those who said there is “about the right amount.”

Among respondents who said there is “too much funding” (very small subsample), a 58% to 38% majority would vote “no” on the first question and a 63% to 34% majority would vote “no” on the final question. Among respondents who said there is “about the right amount” of school funding, a 68% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and a 72% majority would vote “yes” on the final question. Among respondents who said there is “too little funding,” 95% would vote “yes” on the initial question and 96% would vote “yes” on the final question after information. Among “undecided” voters, a 72% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and 82% would vote “no” on the final question.

### Less than 2-in-10 say school taxes are too high

When asked if the state and local taxes paid to fund a kindergarten through a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education was “too high,” “too low” or “about right,” 18 percent said school taxes are “too high” (8% said “much too high”) in Grand Haven Area Public Schools, 67% said taxes were “about right,” 6% said they are “too low,” and 9% were “undecided.”



<u>All</u>		<u>All</u> <u>Parents</u>	<u>Non-</u> <u>Parents</u>
8%	Much too high	----	----
10%	Somewhat too high	----	----
<b>18%</b>	<b>TOTAL TOO HIGH</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>16%</b>
67%	About right	64%	68%
6%	Too low	7%	8%
9%	Undecided/refused	5%	8%

Experience on this question shows that the optimal level of concern about school taxes being “too high” to be in the high teens to the low-to mid-20’s as a percentage. When the “too high” concern is at that level, voters are generally very receptive to tax related ballot proposal, if they are supportive of the purpose(s) of the proposal. When the “too high” percentage exceeds 30 percent, it becomes significantly more difficult to garner support for a tax proposal, and when the

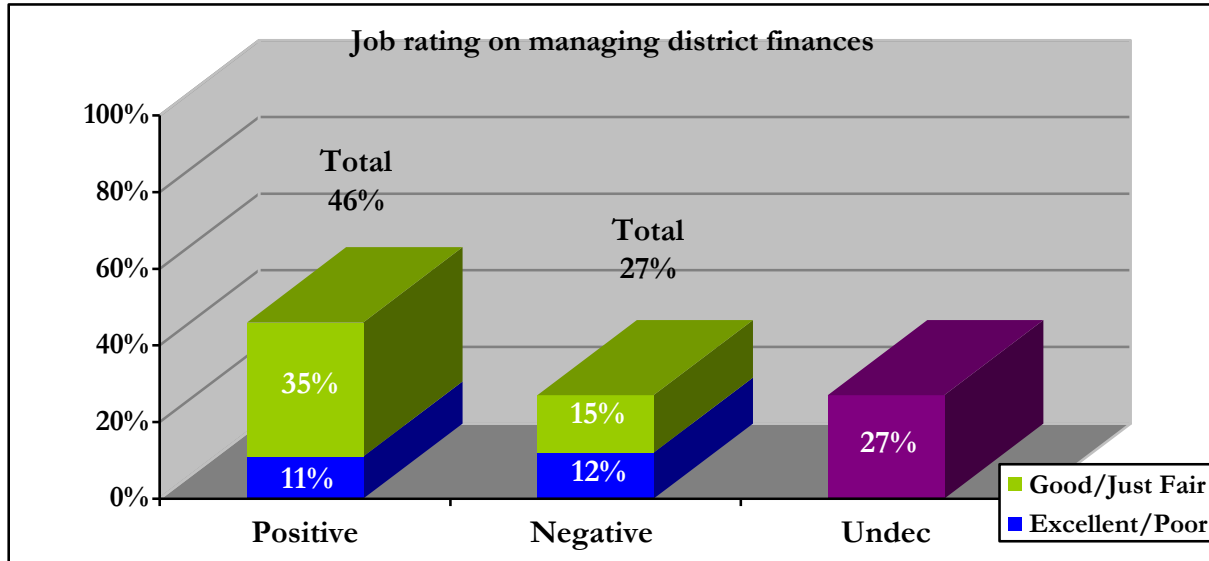


level exceeds 40 percent, voter approval becomes extremely difficult and often impossible to achieve. With 18% of respondents saying taxes are “too high,” it is at the lower level of the ideal range.

Not surprisingly, voters who think taxes are “too high” say they would vote “no” by a narrow 49% to 46% plurality on the first question, and vote “yes” by a narrow 51% to 46% majority on the final question after hearing information. Respondents who said school taxes are “about right” would vote “yes” by 83% on the first question and vote “yes” by 85% on the final question. Among the very small sample of respondents who said taxes are “too low,” 100% voted “yes” on both questions. And among the small sample of undecided voters on the tax question, a 55% to 11% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and a 76% majority would vote “yes” on the final question.

### Narrow plurality offers positive job rating for managing district finances

When respondents were asked to rate the job Grand Haven Area Public Schools has done managing district finances, with either a “positive” rating of “excellent” or “pretty good,” or a “negative” rating of “just fair” or “poor,” the responses were:



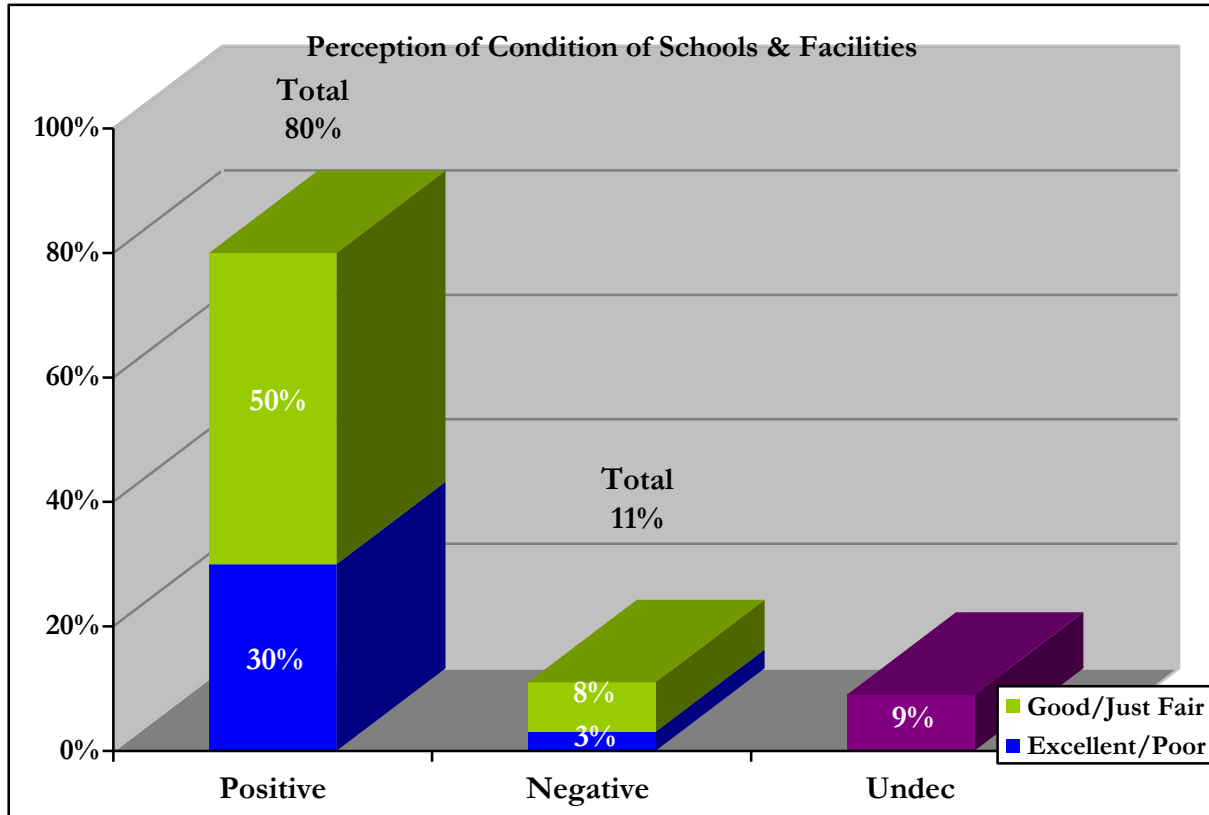
<u>All</u>		<u>All</u> <u>Parents</u>	<u>Non-</u> <u>Parents</u>
11%	Excellent	----	----
35%	Pretty good	----	----
<b>46%</b>	<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>52%</b>
15%	Just fair	----	----
12%	Poor	----	----
<b>27%</b>	<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>22%</b>
27%	Undecided/refused	32%	26%

It is important to note that there is a significant gap of 24 points between the positive job rating for the district in providing a quality education at 70%, and the positive rating for managing district finances, at 46%. This gap indicates that voters have significant concerns about district financial management, and it is noted that the top reason cited for voting “no” on the bond proposal centered around wasteful spending and a distrust of the district. It may make sense to conduct focus group research among voters intending to vote “no” or who offer a negative rating for managing finances, to try to determine what decisions or actions are influencing voters to offer a much lower rating on managing finances.

Among survey respondents who offered a positive job rating for managing finances, an 87% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and an 86 % majority would vote “yes” on the final question. Among respondents who offered a negative rating on managing finances, a 58% to 35% majority would vote “yes” on the initial question, and 61% to 37% would vote “yes” on the final question. Finally, among voters who were “undecided” about managing finances, a 73% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and 83% would vote “yes” on the final question.

**4-in-5 offer a positive rating on the condition of school buildings and facilities**

When asked, “overall, how would you rate the condition of the existing schools, other buildings, facilities, property, and grounds owned and operated by Grand Haven Area Public Schools – would you offer a positive rating of excellent or pretty good, or a negative rating of just fair or poor?” the responses were:



<u>All</u>		<u>Parents</u>	<u>Non-Parents</u>
30%	Excellent	----	----
50%	Pretty good	----	----
<b>80%</b>	<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>84%</b>
3%	Just fair	----	----
8%	Poor	----	----
<b>11%</b>	<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>6%</b>
9%	Undecided/refused	8%	10%

With a rating of the condition of schools and facilities at 80% positive, it will be necessary to show district voters what needs to be fixed. Just as you cannot judge a book by its cover, you cannot judge school buildings and facilities by the way they may look from the

outside when driving by. Since voters cannot see what problems exist, such as roofs or boilers that need to be replaced, it will be important to show - visually - district residents what problems need to be addressed. A visual presentation by video or power point could show what needs to be improved, what the finished product would look like, and how these improvements will improve educational programs and offerings for students.

Among voters who offered a positive rating of the condition of buildings and facilities, a 76% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and an 80% majority would vote “yes” on the final question. Among votes who offered a negative rating (small sample), a 74% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and a 77% majority would vote “yes” on the final question. Finally, among respondents who were undecided about rating the condition of facilities (small subsample), a 72% majority would vote “yes” on the first question and a 63% majority would vote “yes” on the final question.

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