



Cedar Rapids Community School District

Community Survey Report

May 13, 2024

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.



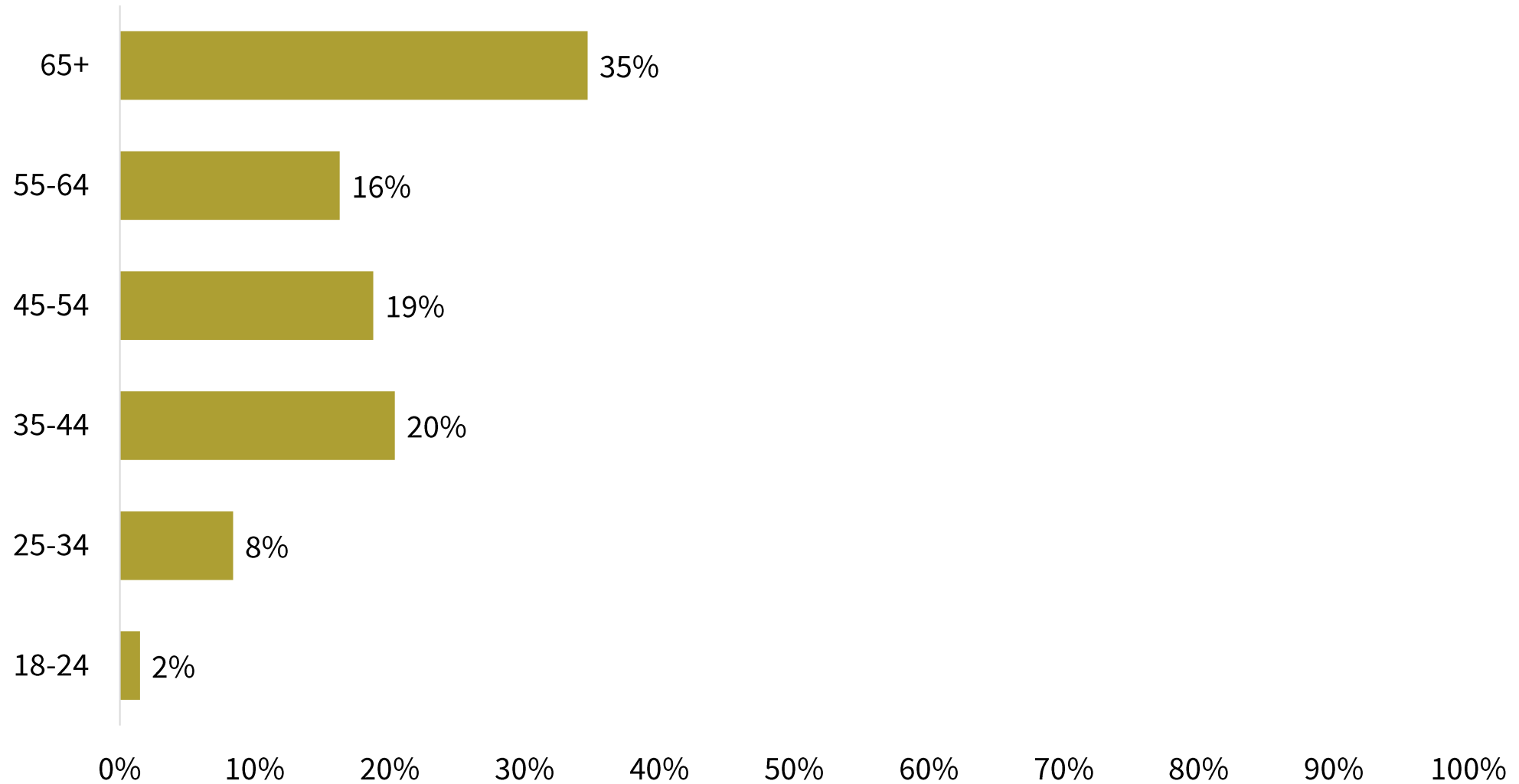
- Founded in **2002** to provide independent research
- Conducted over **10,000** staff, parent, and student, and community surveys for school improvement
- Helped more than **900** districts navigate the strategic planning and referendum planning process

Survey Information

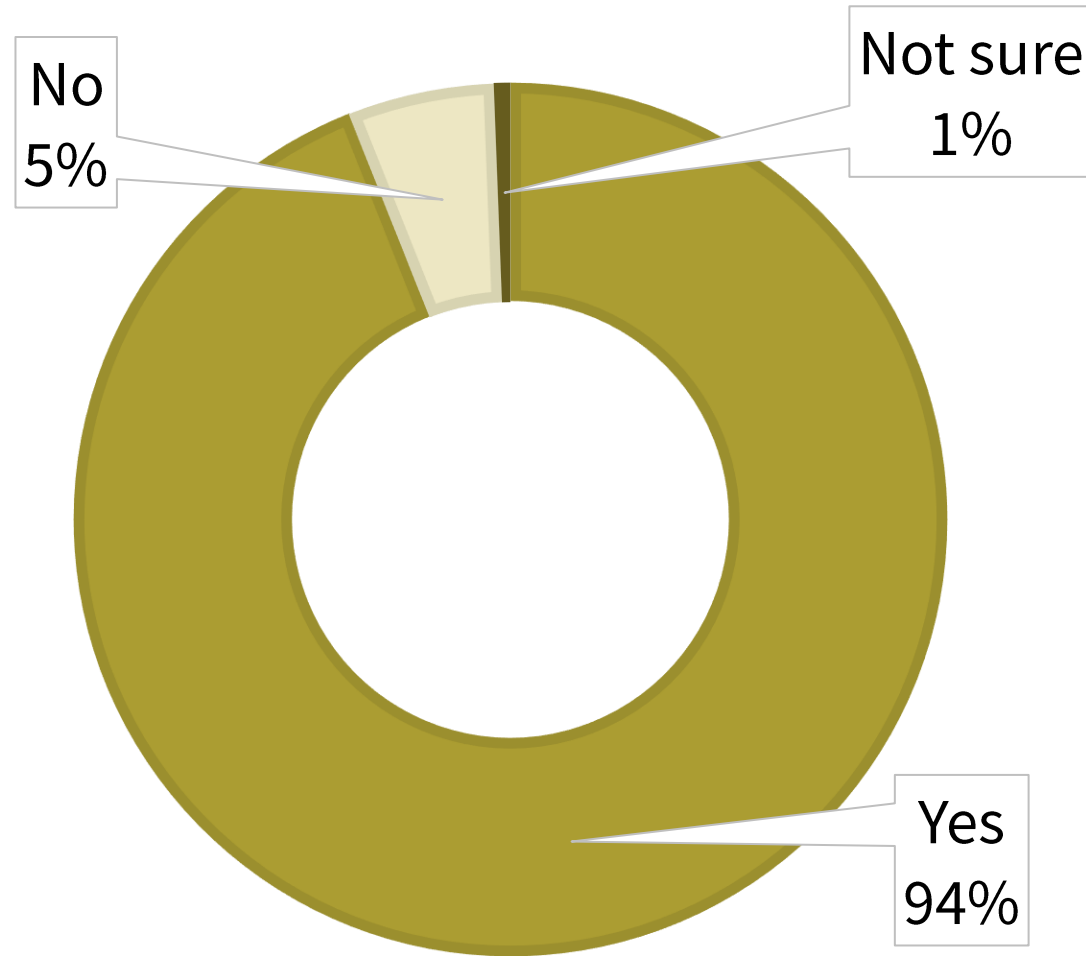
- **April 22, 2024** survey deadline
- **9,043** total respondents
- **+/- 1.05%** statistical margin of error



What is your age?



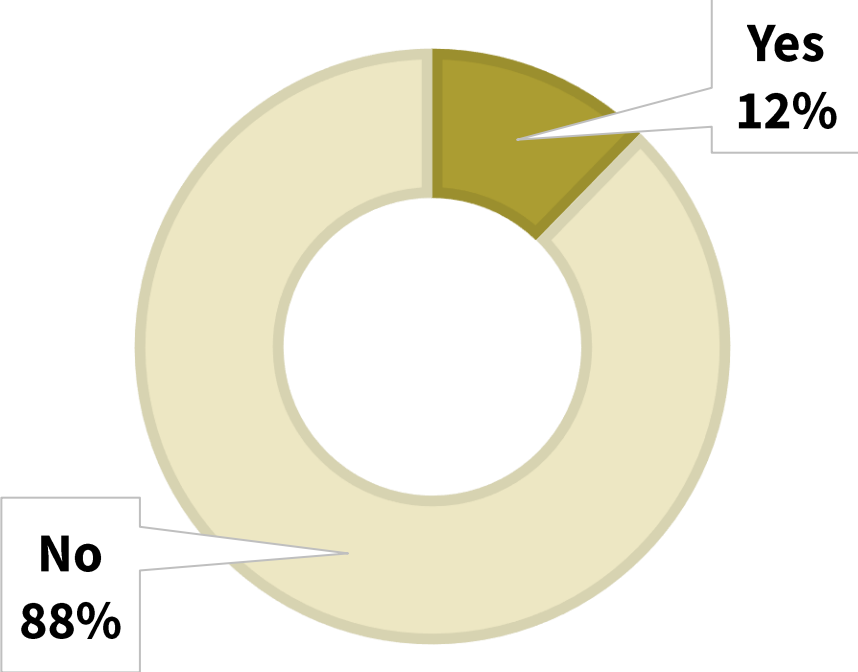
Is your primary residence in the Cedar Rapids Community School District?



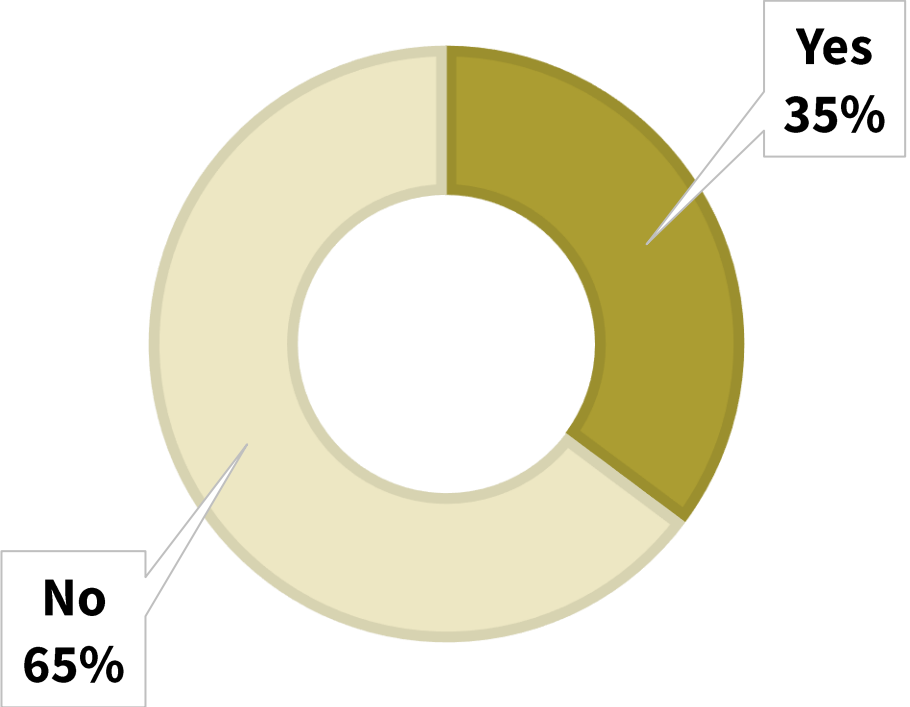
Respondent Information



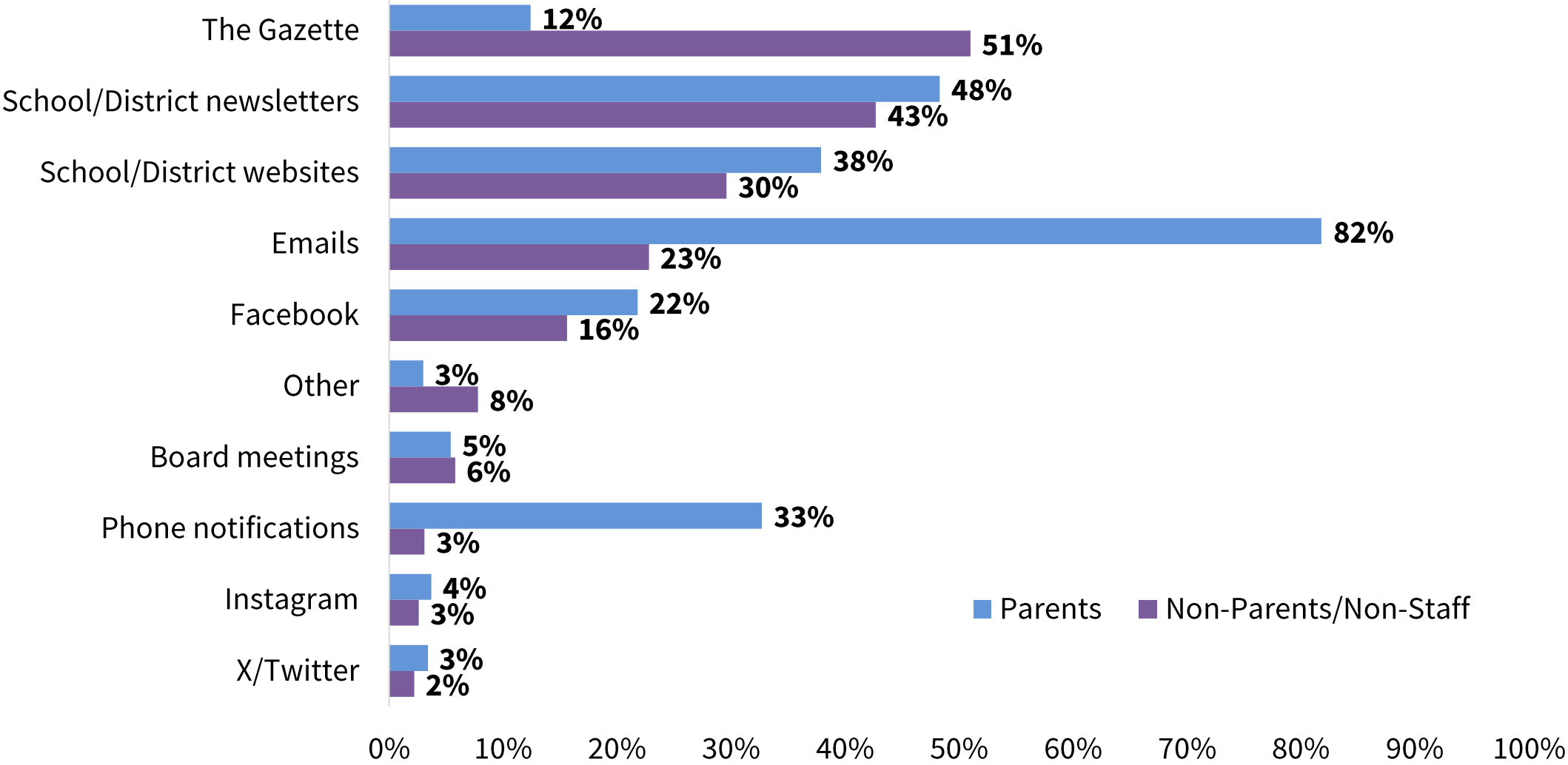
Are you an employee of the Cedar Rapids Community School District?



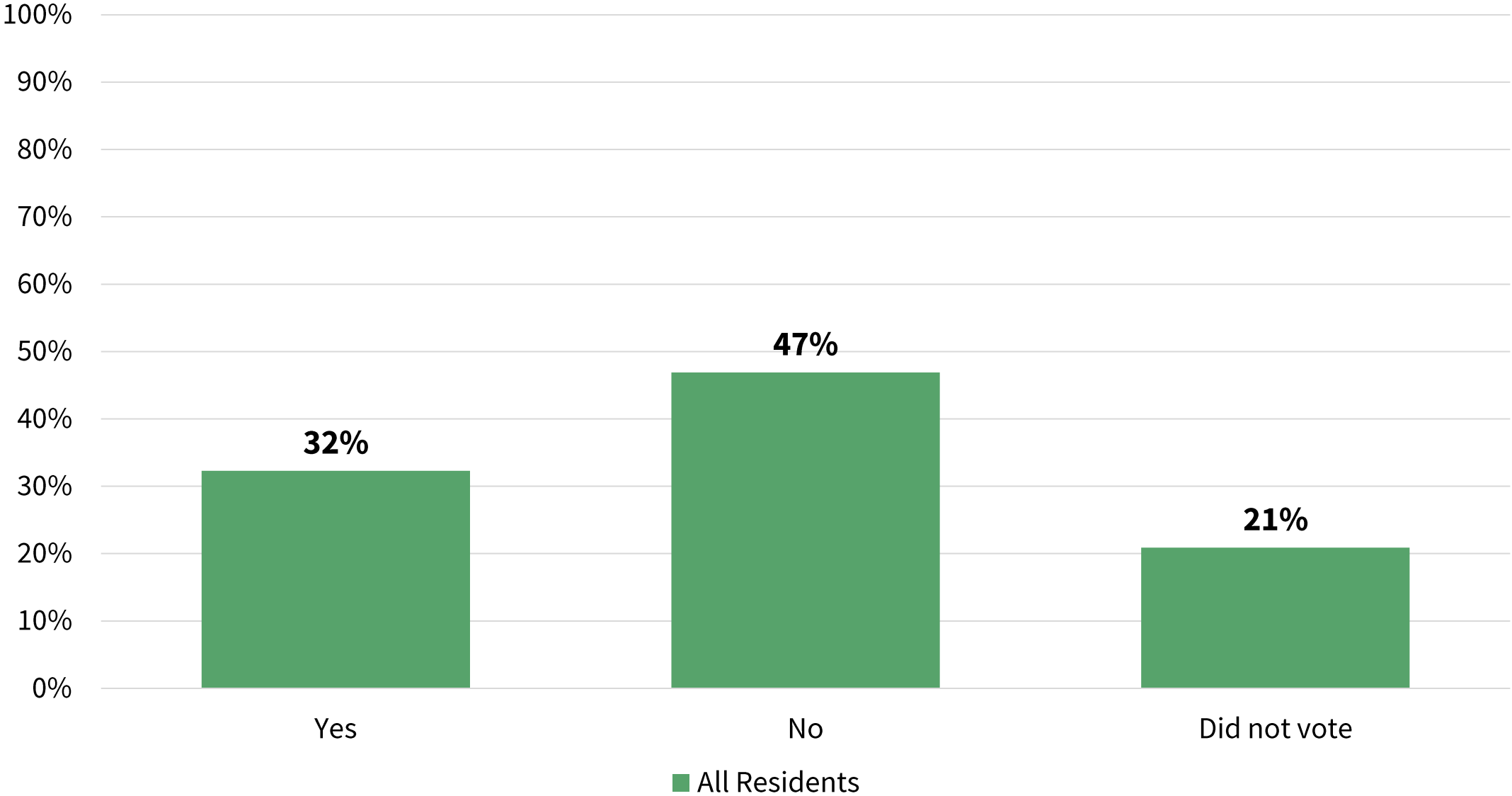
Do you have children attending a school in the District?



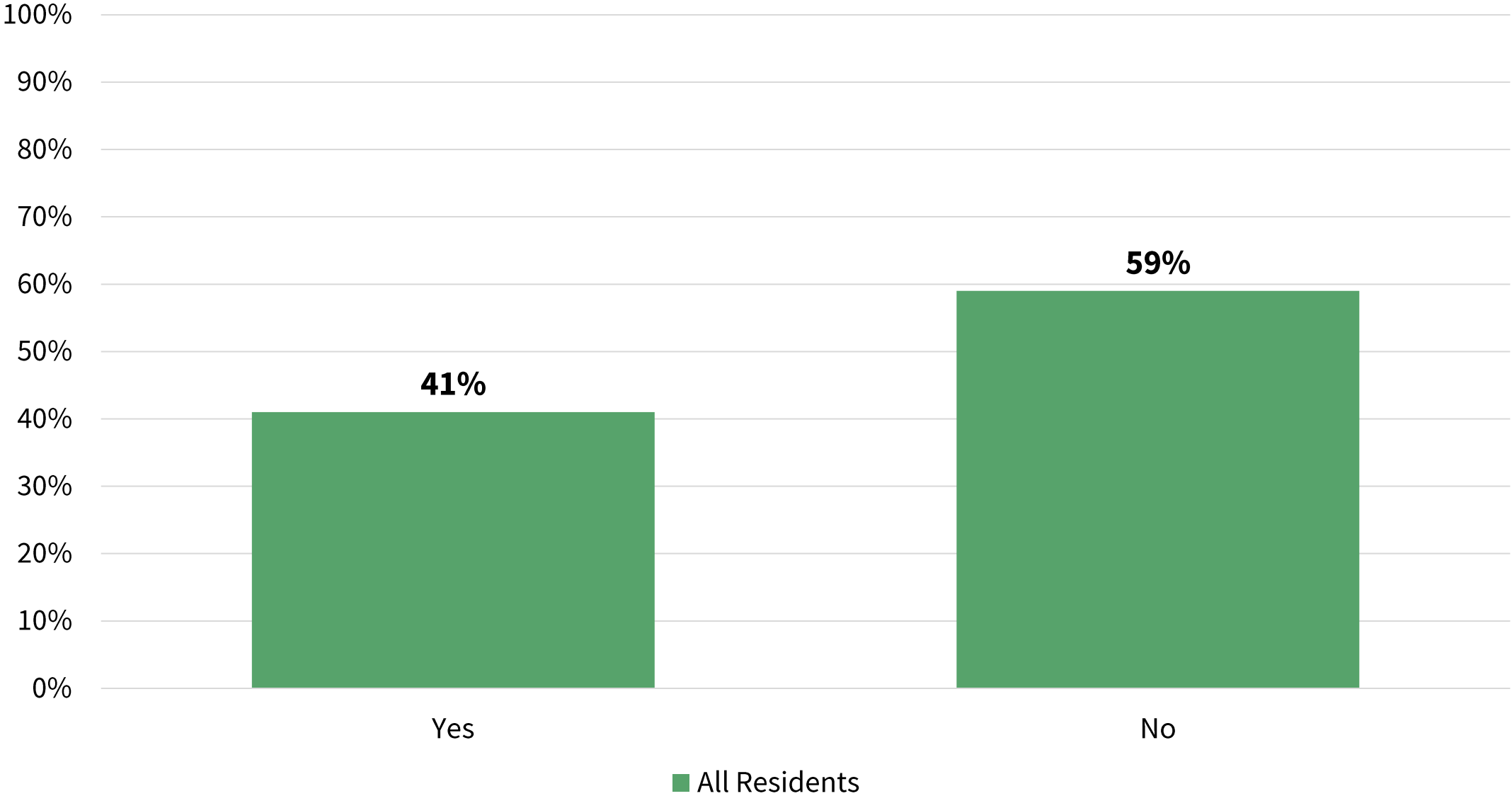
How do you like to receive school/District information?



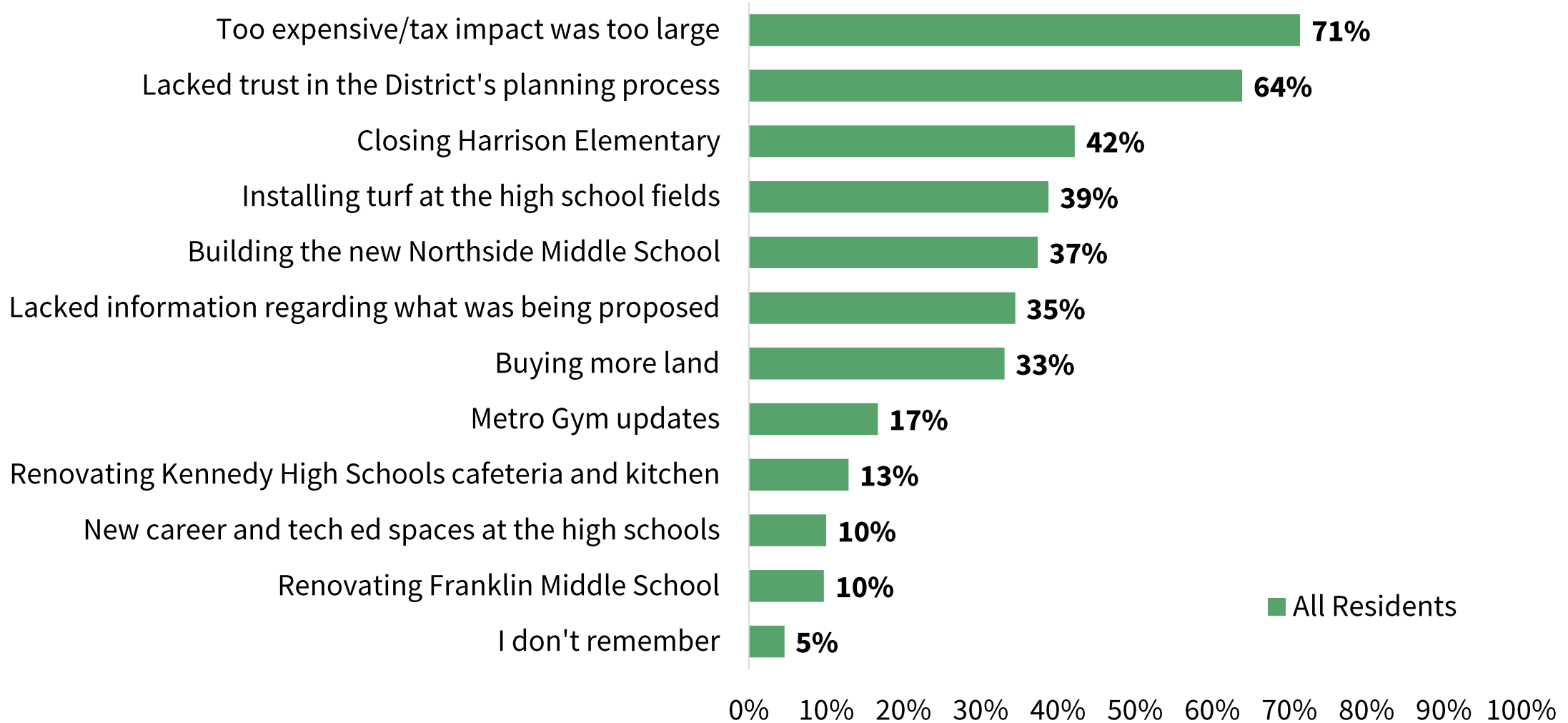
How did you vote on the \$220 million school bond referendum in November 2023?



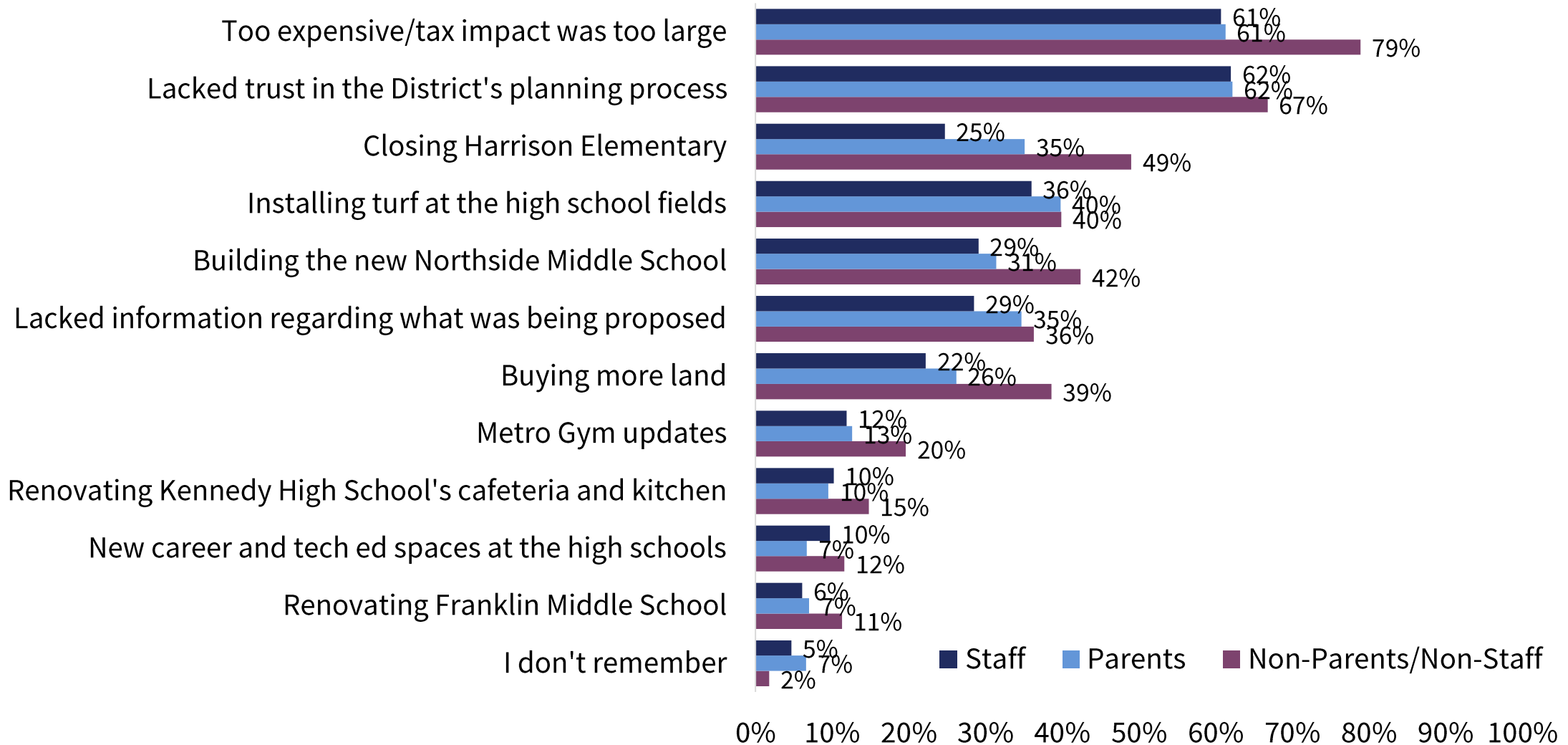
How did you vote on the \$220 million school bond referendum in November 2023? (of those who voted)



If you voted “No,” what were the primary reasons?



If you voted “No,” what were the primary reasons?



Funding Sources

Physical Plant & Equipment Levy (PPEL)

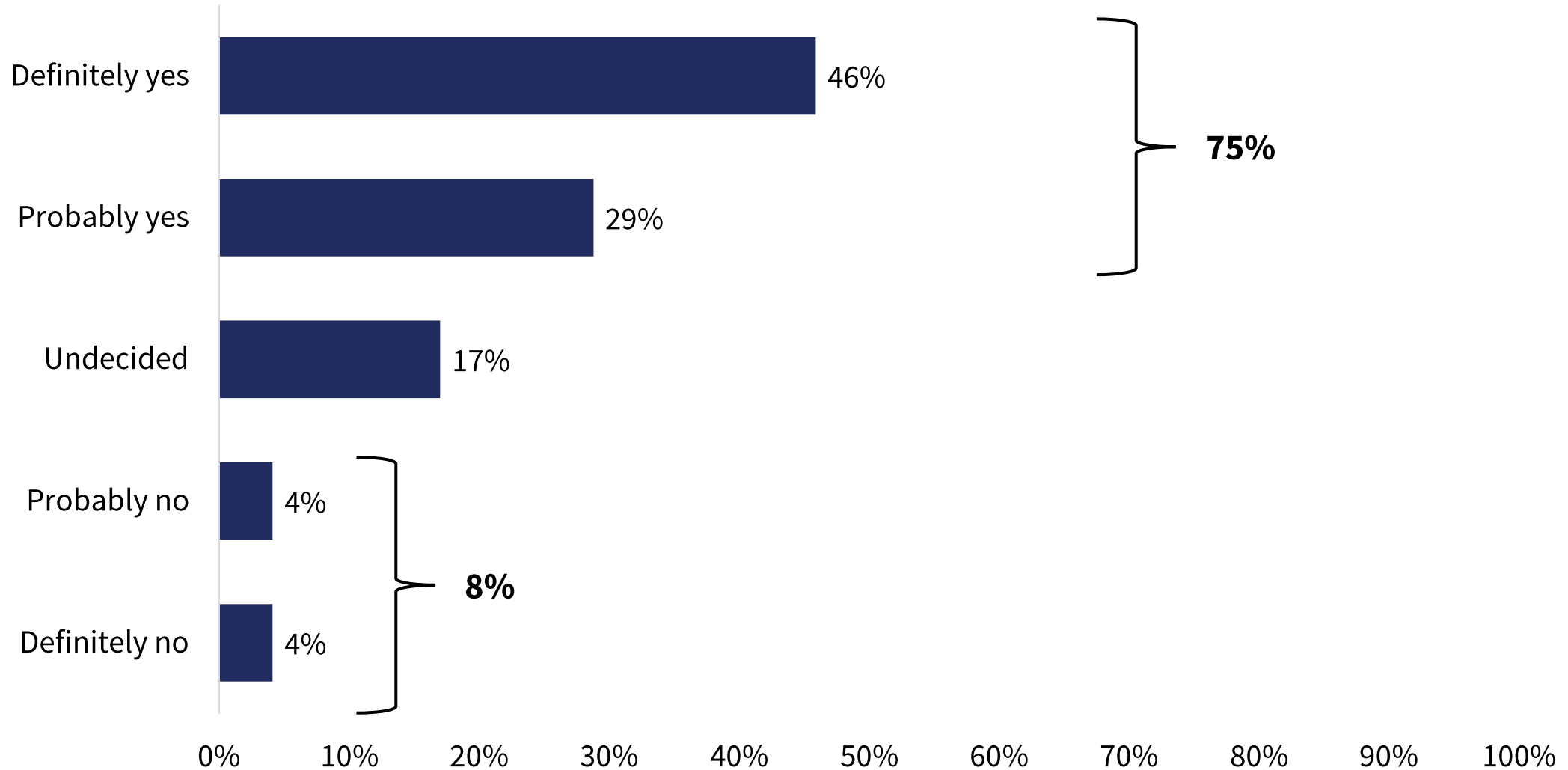
The Cedar Rapids Community School District utilizes different funding sources to maintain facilities, including PPEL (Physical Plant & Equipment Levy). For the last 50 years, local voters have approved PPEL funding. In September, we will ask voters to consider renewing this type of funding.

PPEL funding can be used to:

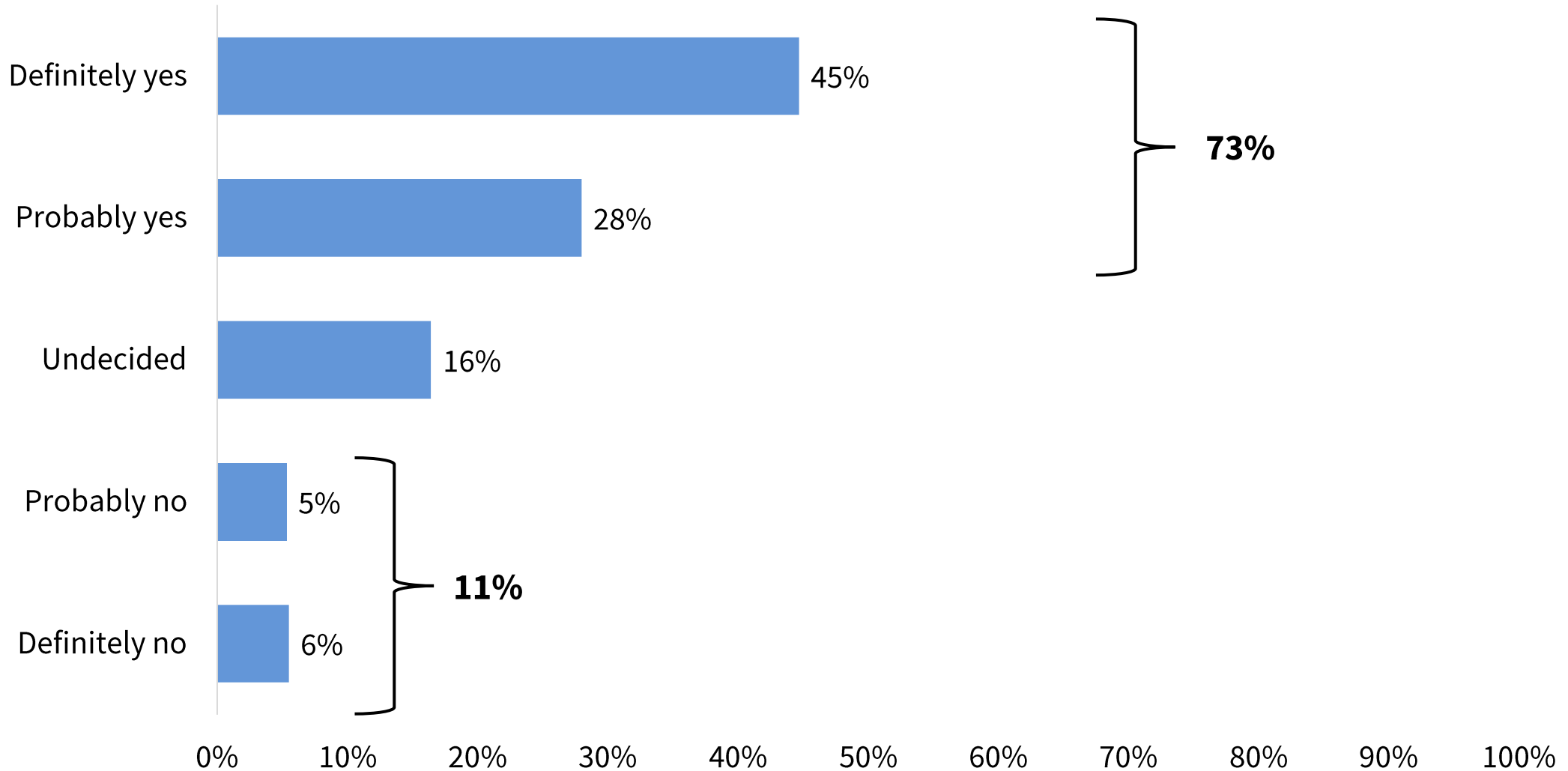
- Improve buildings and grounds or buy land.
- Update technology and transportation.
- Install energy conservation/efficiency projects.
- Respond to natural disasters.



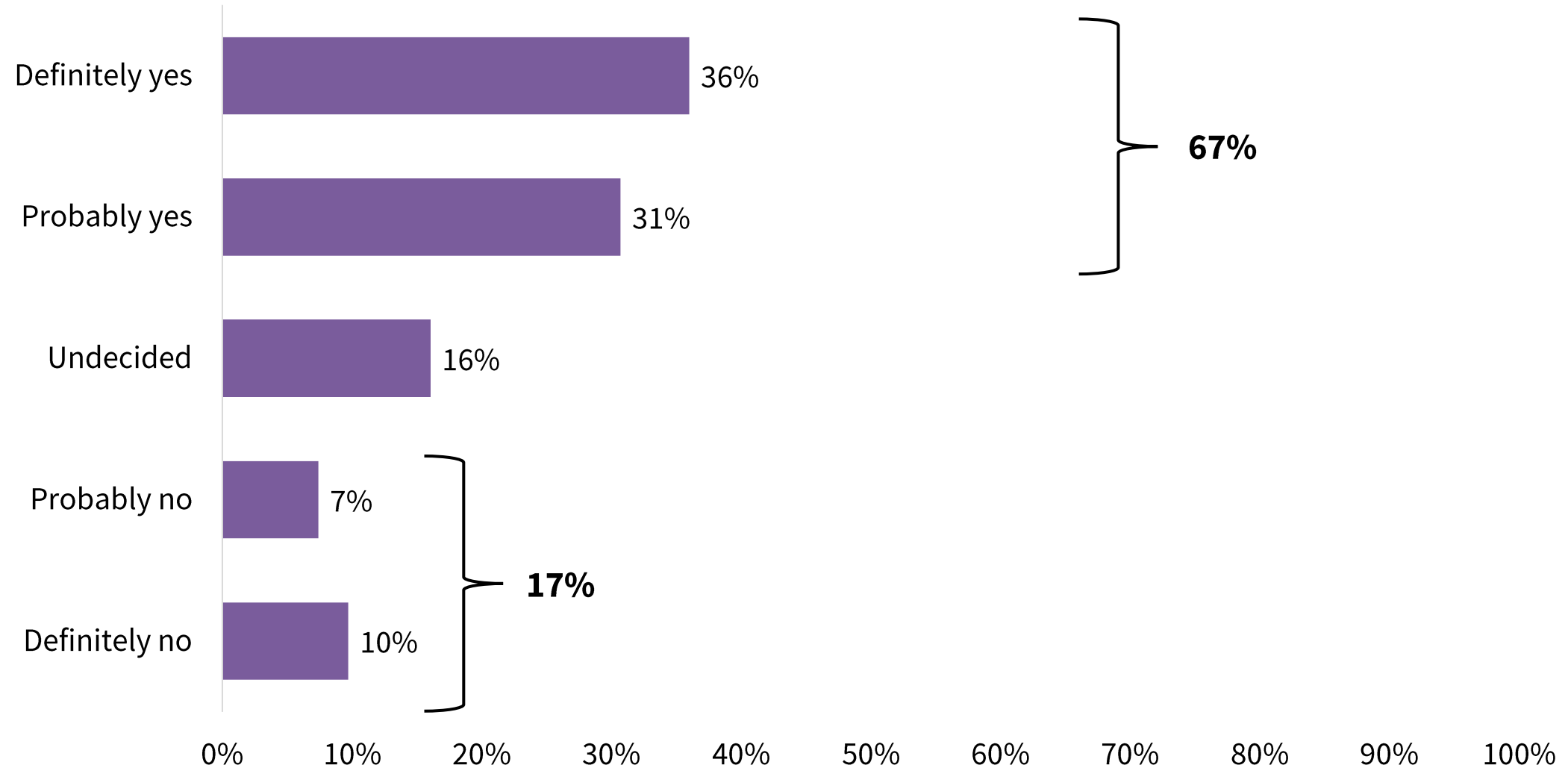
Would you support renewing the Physical Plant & Equipment Levy for an additional ten years? (*Staff Residents*)



Would you support renewing the Physical Plant & Equipment Levy for an additional ten years? (*Parent Residents*)



Would you support renewing the Physical Plant & Equipment Levy for an additional ten years? (*Non-Parent/Non-Staff Residents*)



Background Information

Bond Referendum

Many facility projects are too expensive to pay for in the annual budget, even with PPEL funding. Therefore, many schools in Iowa pursue a bond referendum. To secure this type of funding, at least 60% of voters must approve the plan.

The bond would be financed over many years (typically 20). This is the type of funding voters did not support in November 2023.



Facility Challenges

Some of the most pressing issues facing Cedar Rapids schools include:

Aging Buildings:

- 74% of our schools were built before 1970. On average, our buildings are over 68 years old.
- Many major building systems (such as heating, ventilation, electrical, plumbing, roofs, windows, etc.) have exceeded their service life and are failing. Replacement parts are difficult to find or no longer made, making repairs more expensive.
- Updates are needed to address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations to improve access to classrooms, support areas, and restrooms.



Facility Challenges



Outdated Classrooms and Labs:

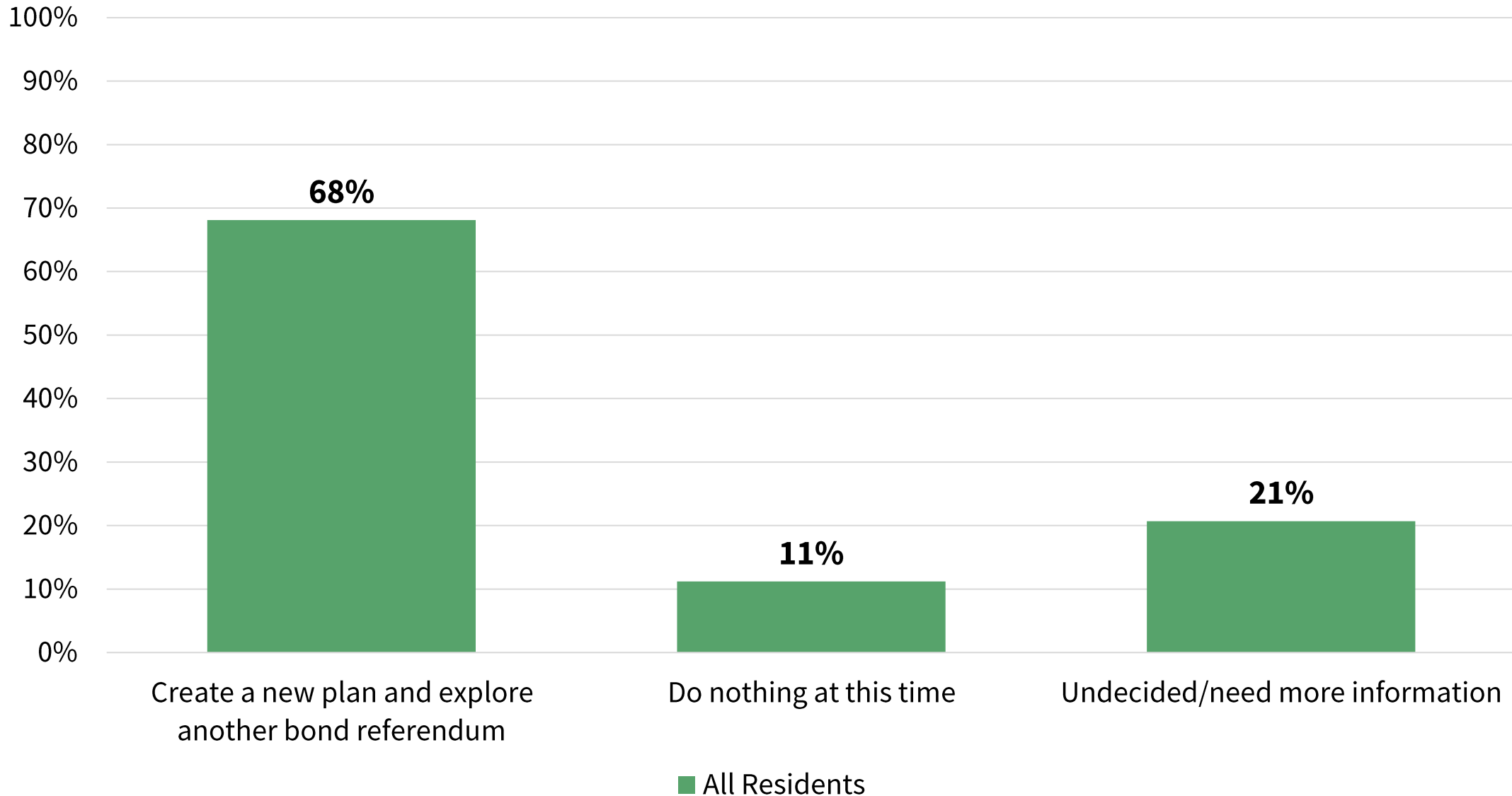
- The middle/high school classrooms and labs are too small and lack modern equipment to properly prepare students for jobs in our area.
- Some schools lack a dedicated cafeteria. In these cases, the gym is used, which requires the daily set-up/take-down of tables and creates scheduling challenges for physical education.
- Teaching and learning have changed significantly since some of our schools were built. Older schools are difficult to renovate/update because of their layout, the number of load-bearing walls, and site size.
- Most schools lack areas designed for hands-on learning, student collaboration, and small-group instruction.
- Dedicated space is needed to better serve students with disabilities.

Excess Space:

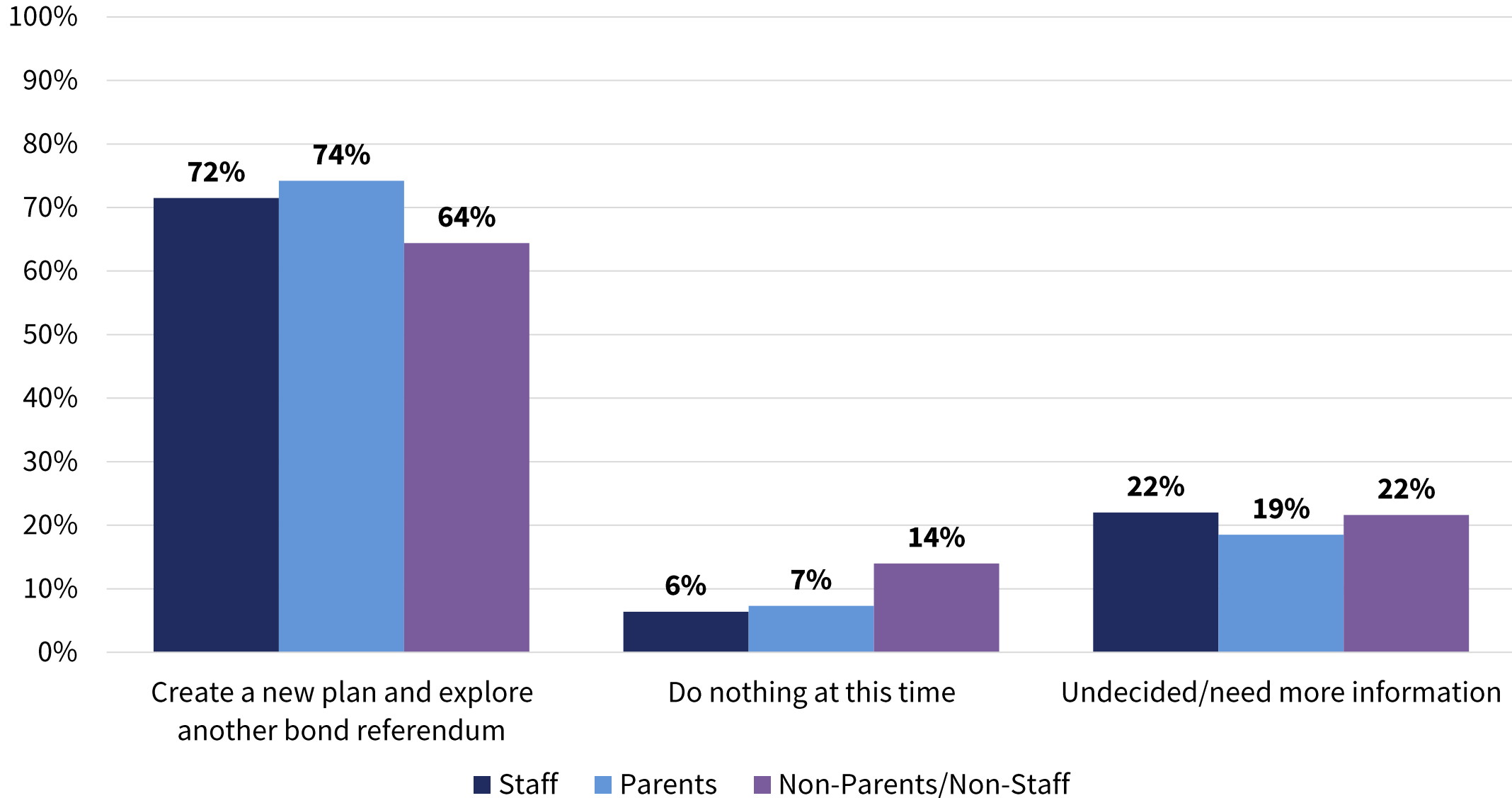
- There is a substantial amount of under-used space in our buildings. For instance, six of our middle schools are at 60% student capacity.
- It is not possible to selectively heat and maintain classrooms. Thus, money is spent on areas that students and staff do not regularly use.

The cost to address the issues above is too expensive to be paid for from PPEL funding.

What advice would you give the District?



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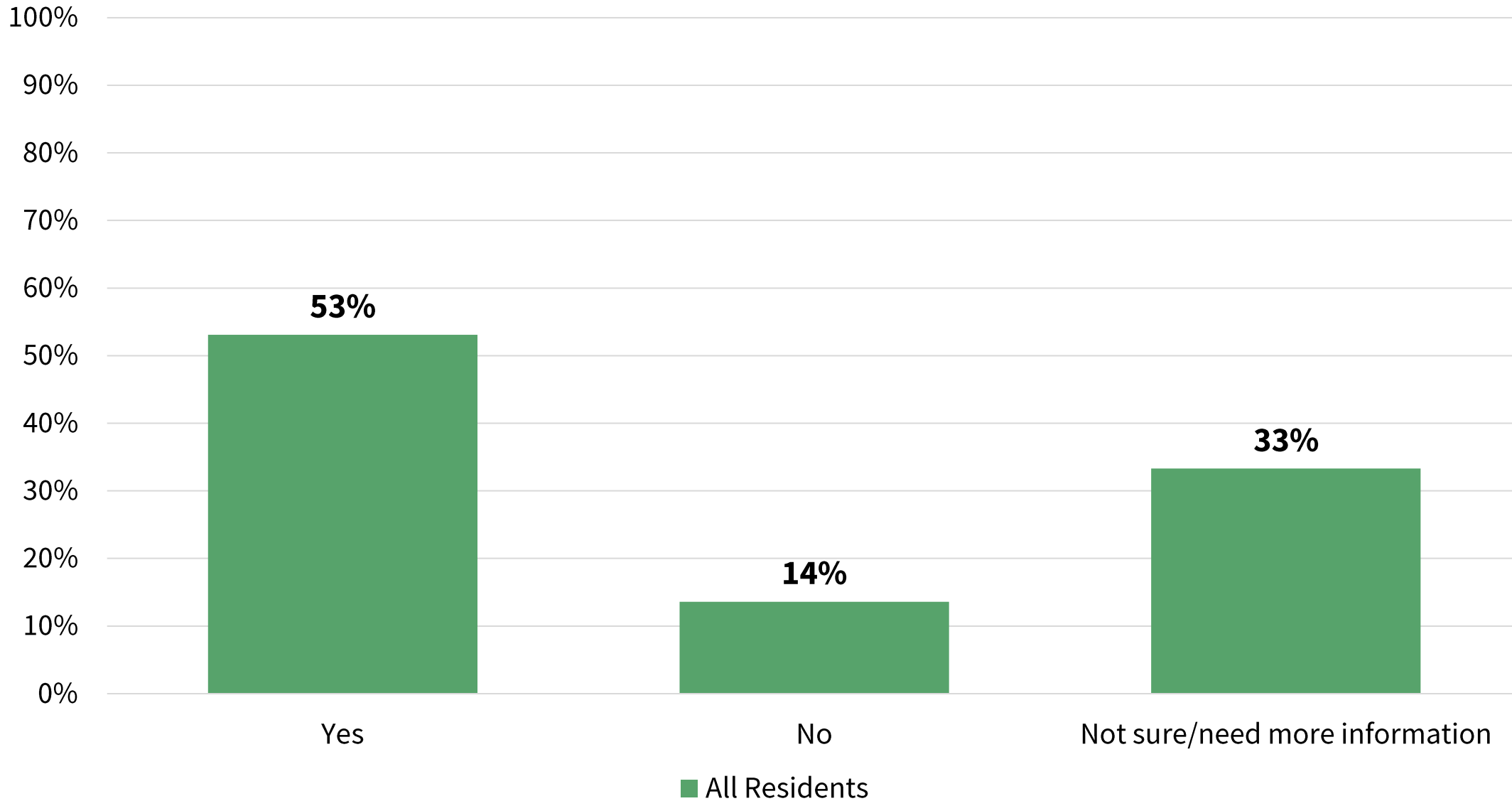
Right-sizing

The District believes that continuing to maintain all our schools is not a responsible use of taxpayers' dollars. We would like to pursue a plan to right-size our district by:

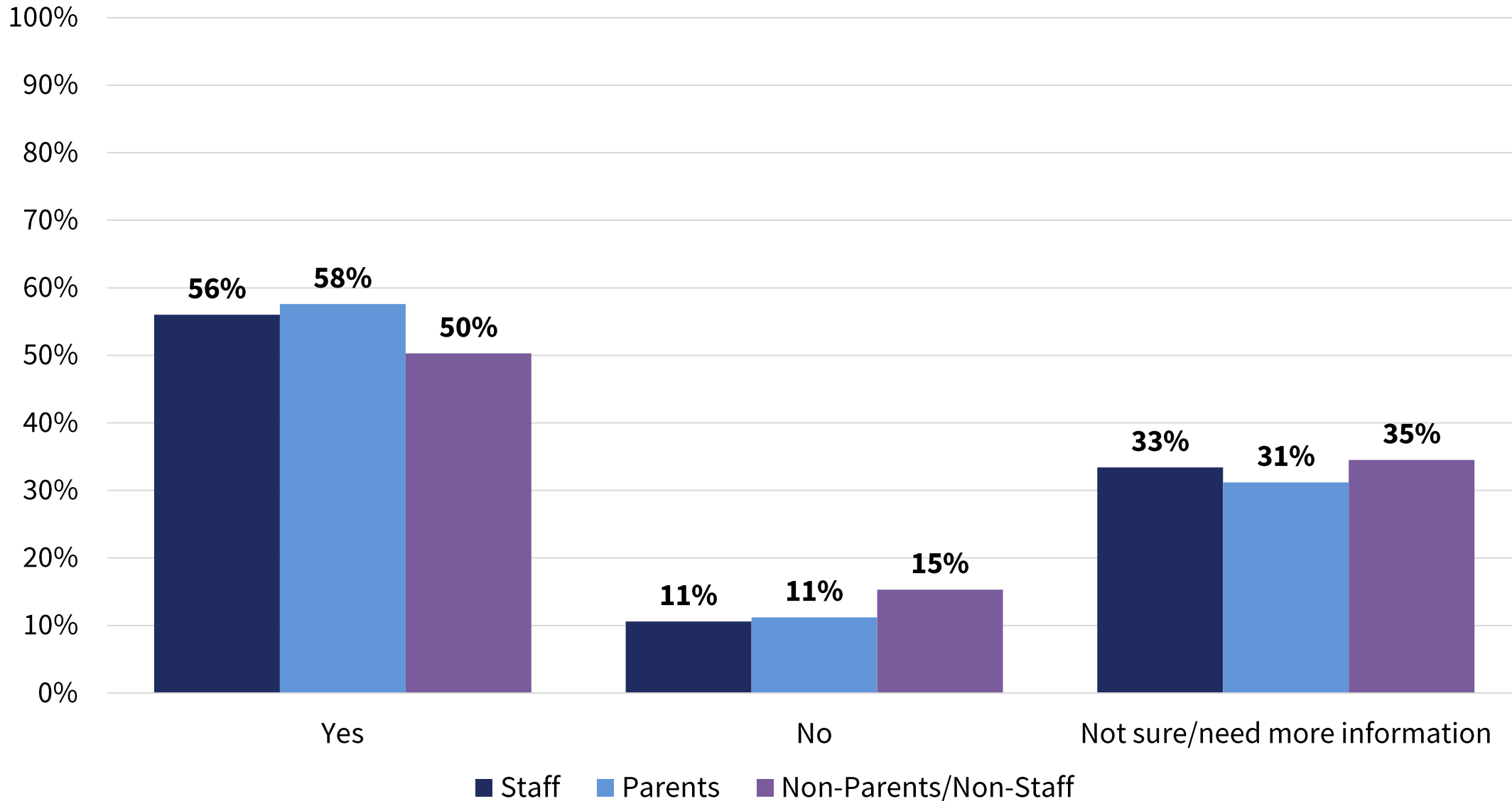
- 1) **Closing buildings:** To reduce operating costs and eliminate future maintenance expenses.
- 2) **Consolidating operations:** To improve efficiencies and provide more opportunities for students.
- 3) **Renovating/building schools:** To create more modern and supportive learning environments.



Would you support a long-range plan to right-size our district?



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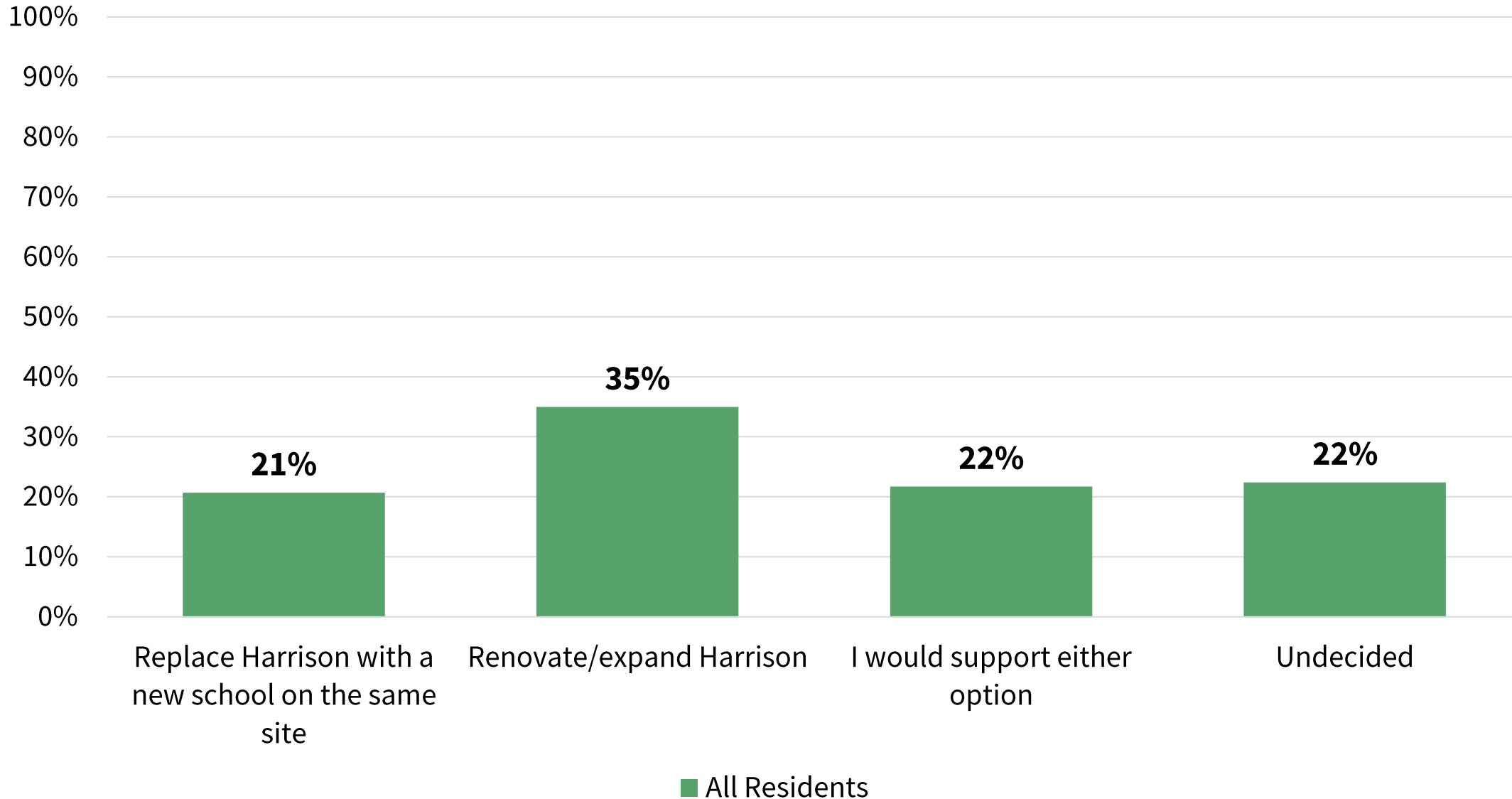
Harrison Elementary School



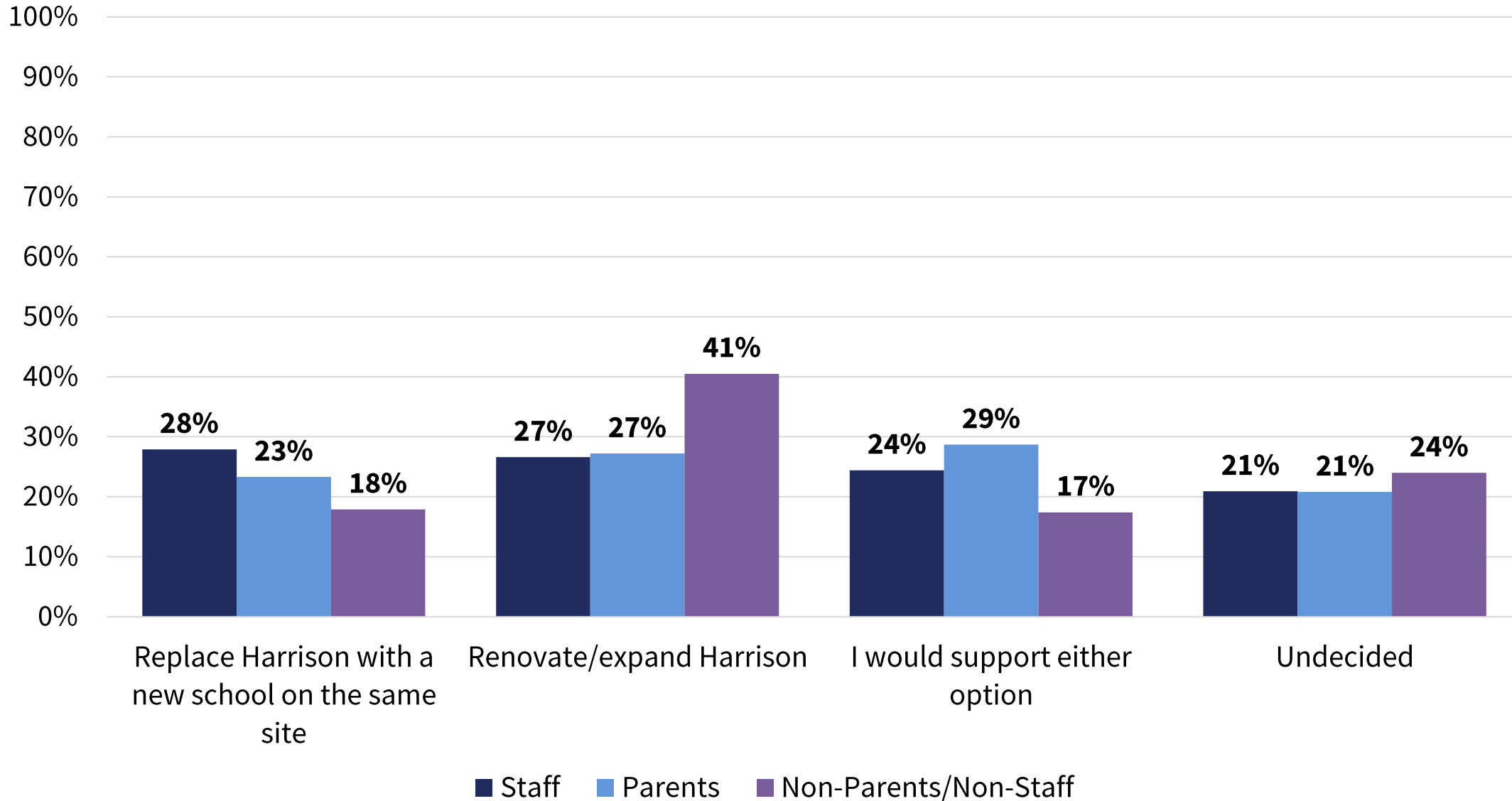
Last year, the Board of Education voted to right-size Madison and Harrison elementary schools by having students from both schools attend a new elementary on the Harrison site.

Because of the significant needs of both Madison (built in 1960) and Harrison (built in 1929), the District recommended closing both schools and replacing Harrison with a new school on the same site. The other option would be to renovate and expand Harrison Elementary.

What advice would you give regarding Harrison Elementary?



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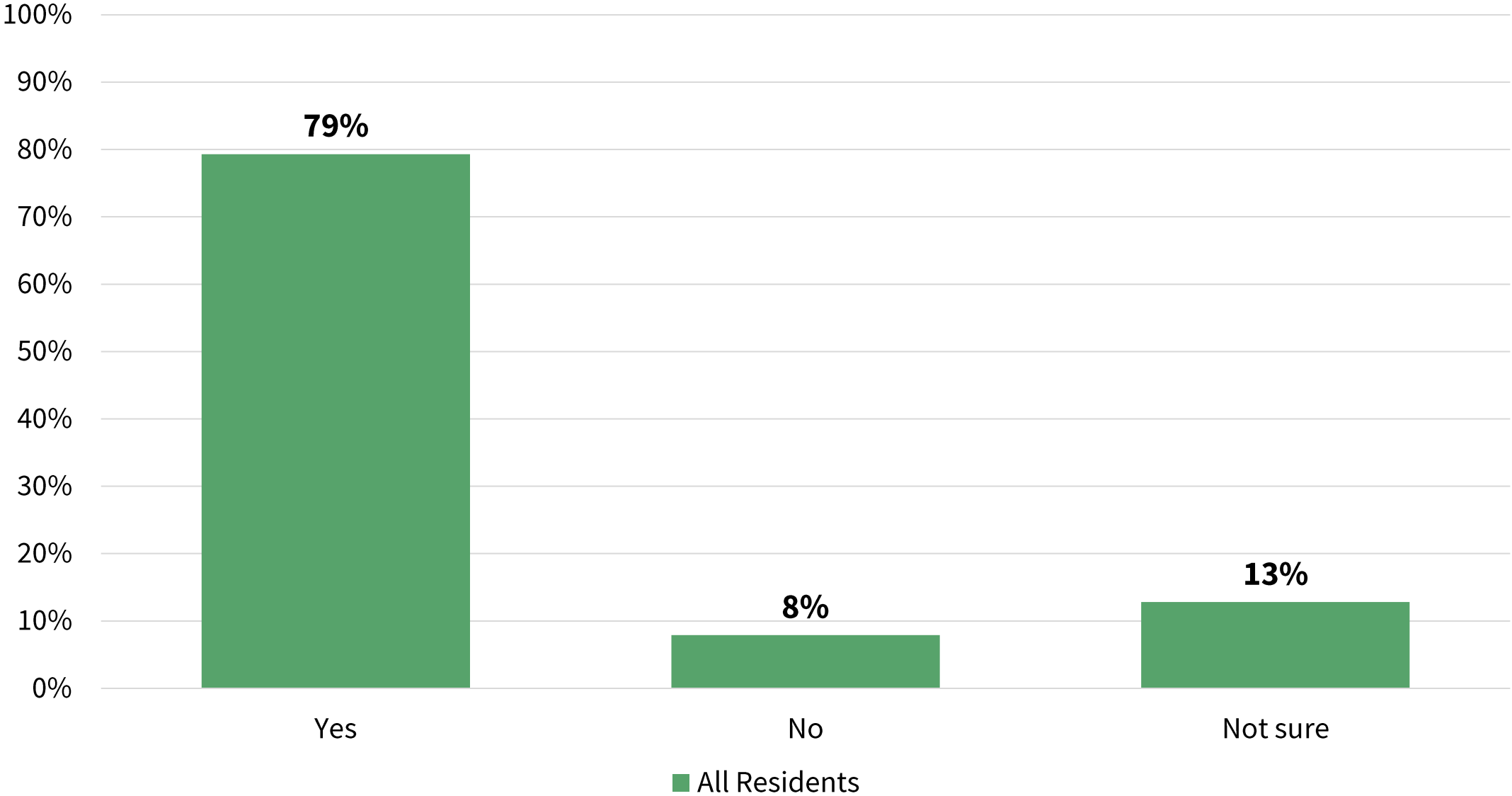
Career & College Connected Learning

One pillar of the District's facility plan is updating traditional "shop" classrooms into college and career connected classrooms and labs. These improvements will better prepare students with the skills and experiences they need to be successful after high school. Unfortunately, many schools lack the space and equipment to do this.

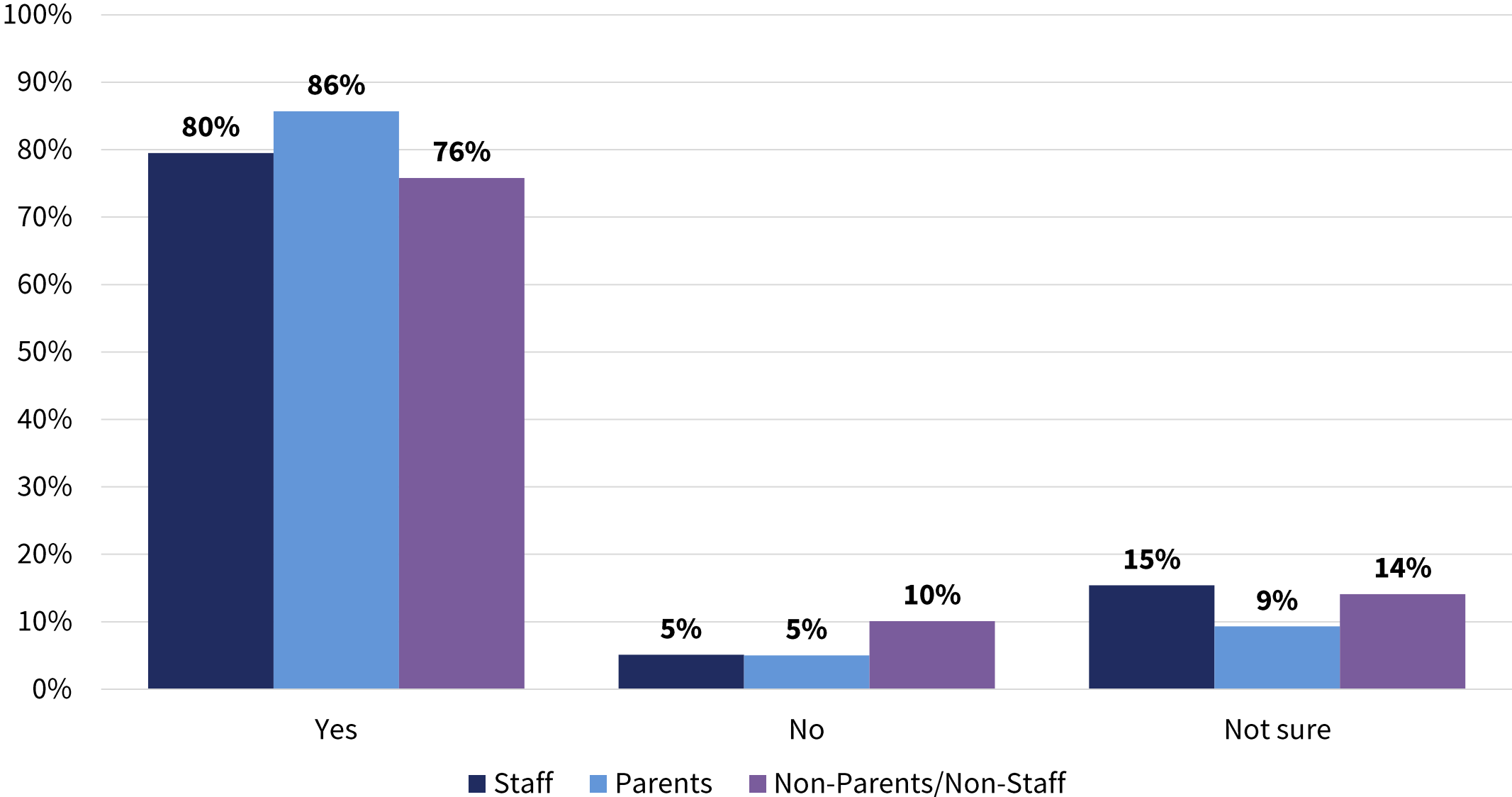
To help develop a plan, District leaders have been working closely with local community and business partners. Ultimately, our goal is to increase the number of students who take these types of courses.



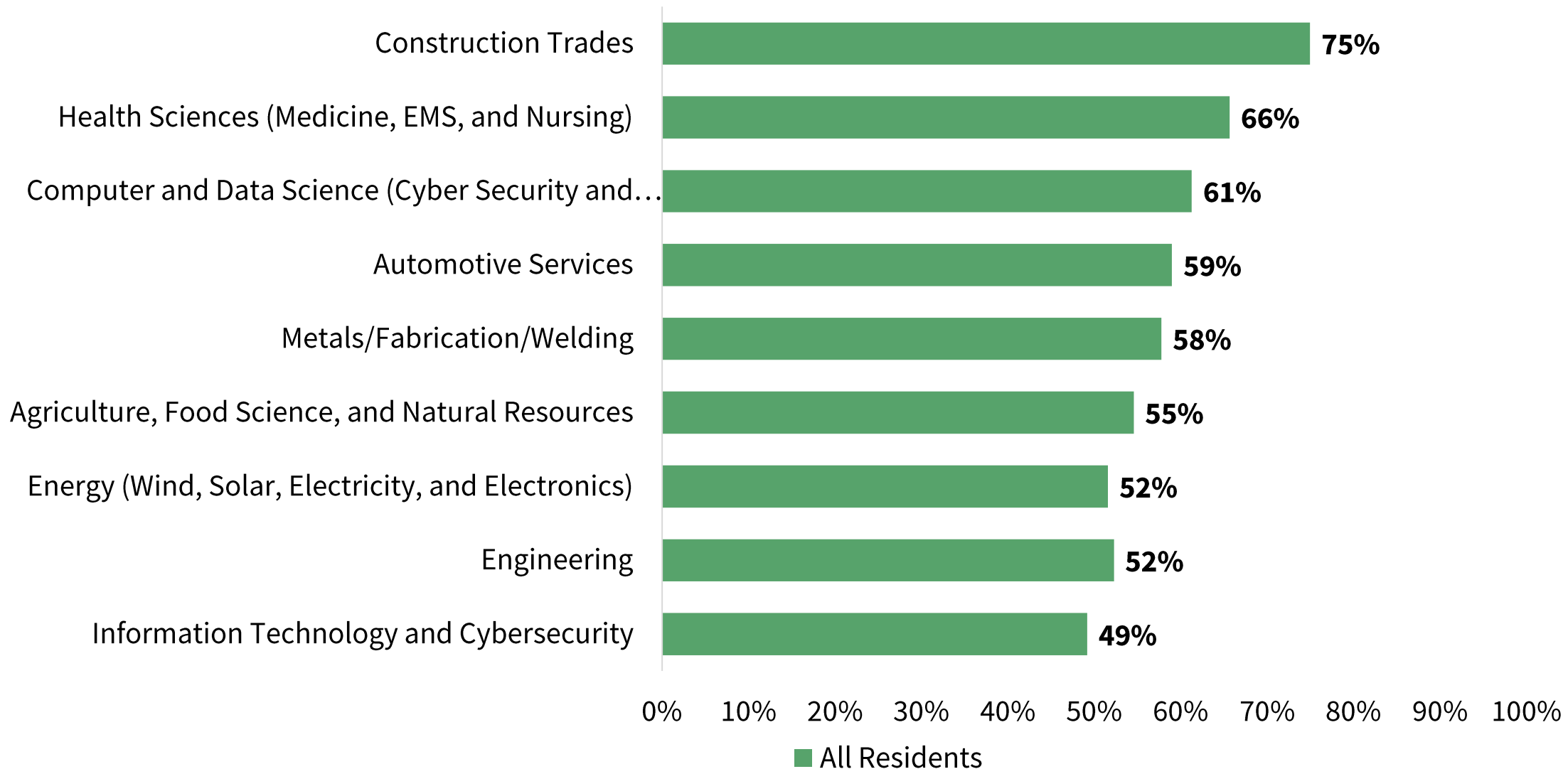
Do you support expanding courses and training in college and career connected learning courses?



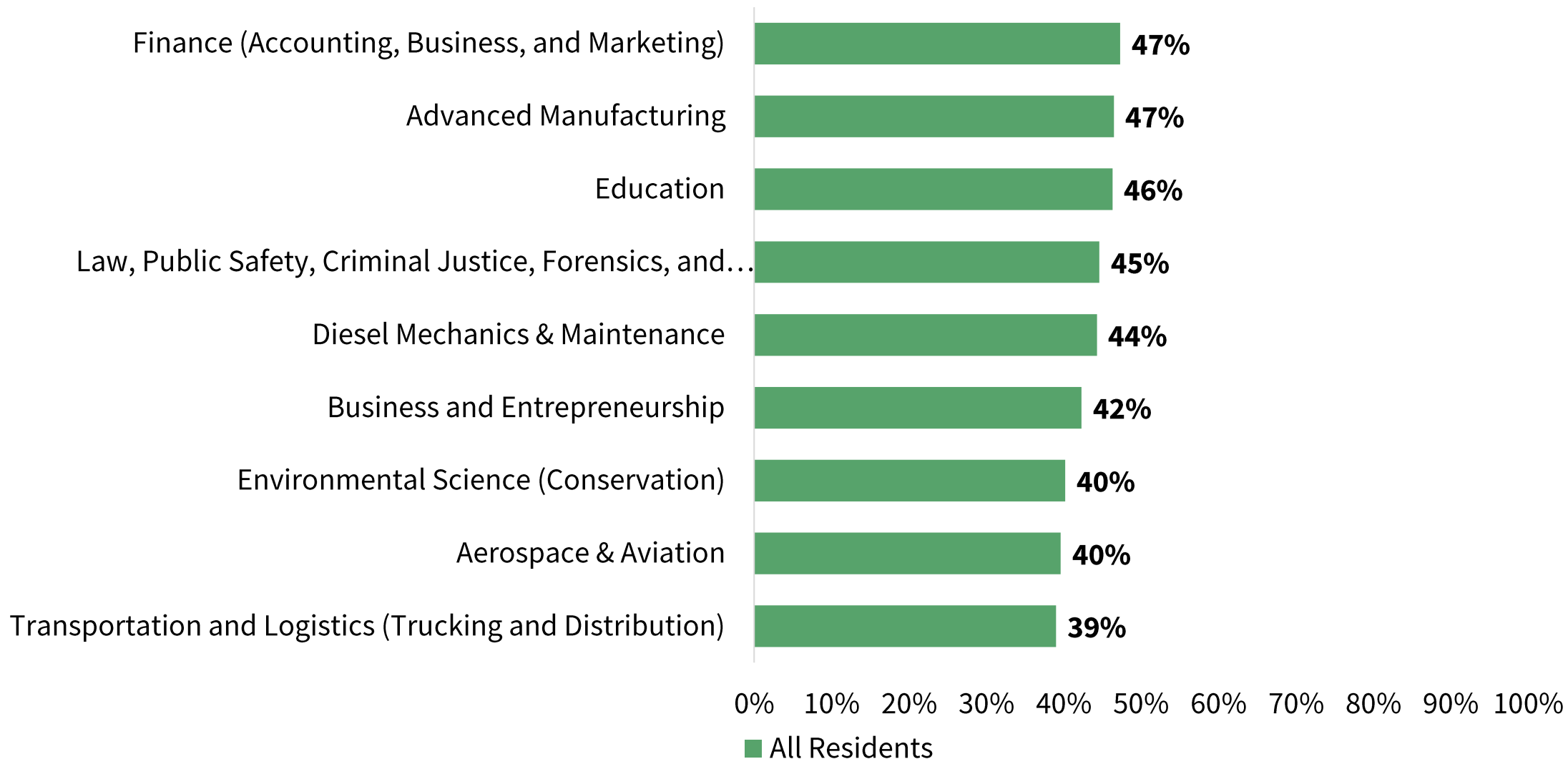
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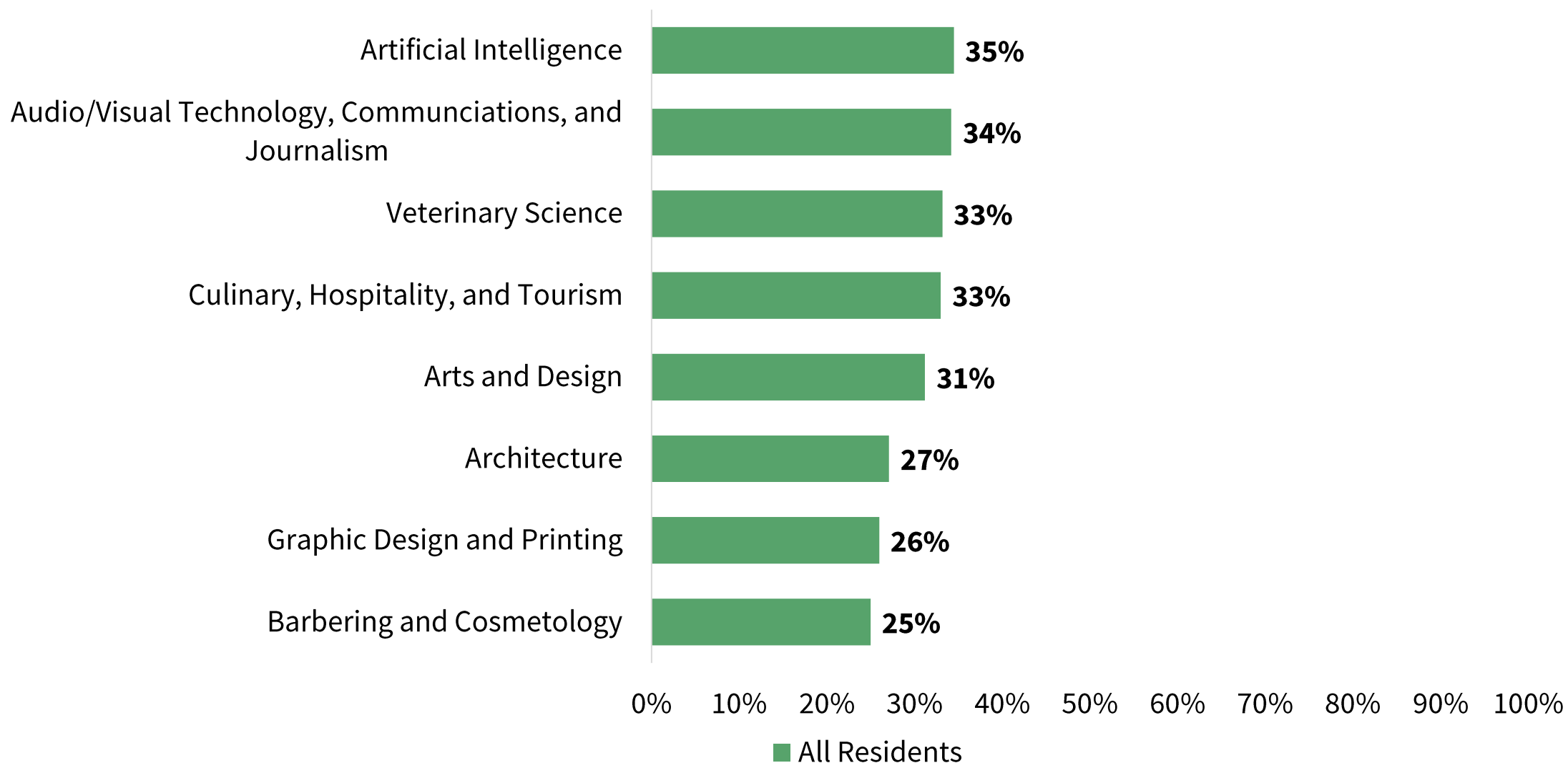
We want to ensure what we offer students aligns with our community's expectations. In what career pathways do you believe we should expand educational programming for students?



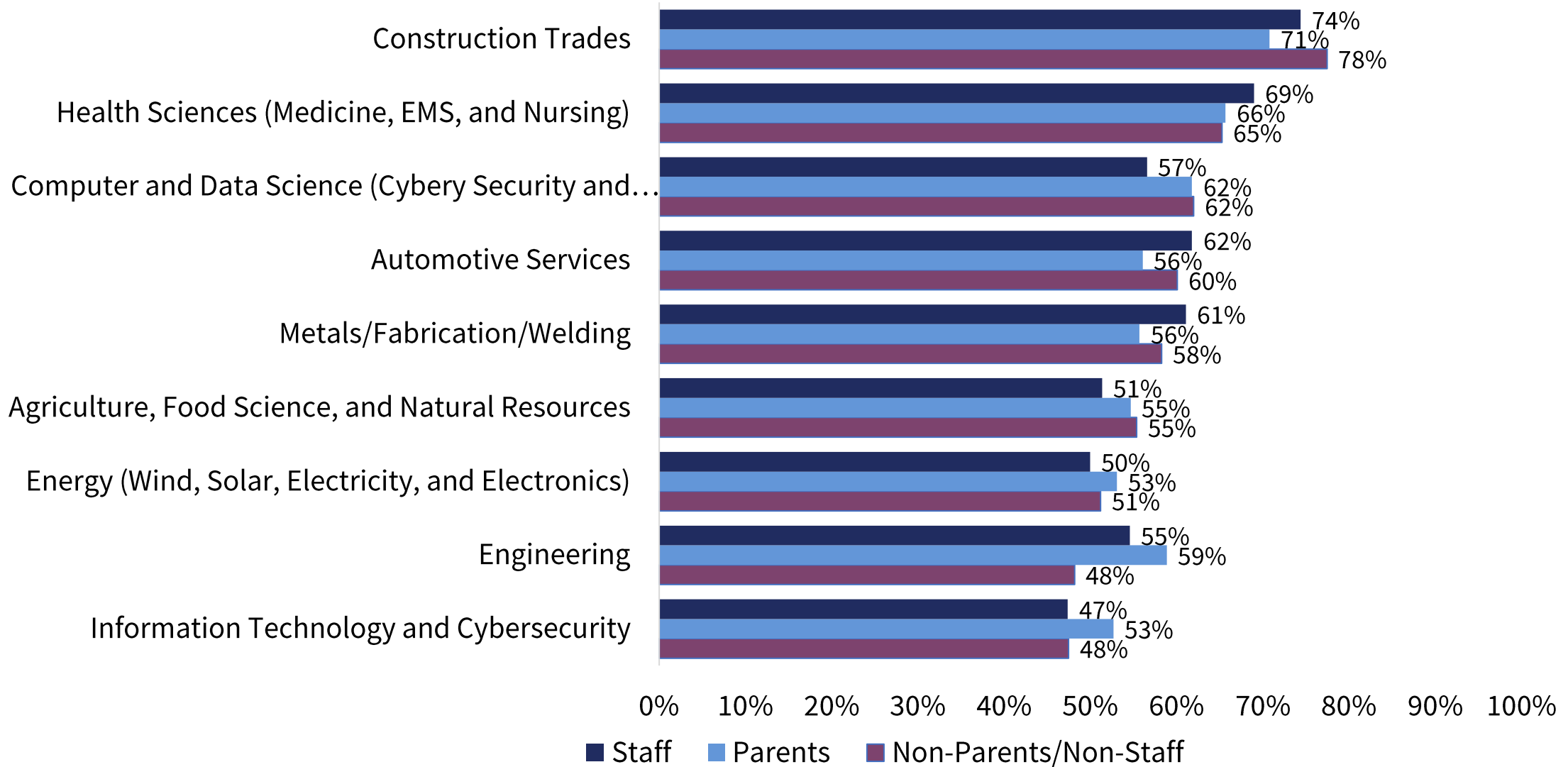
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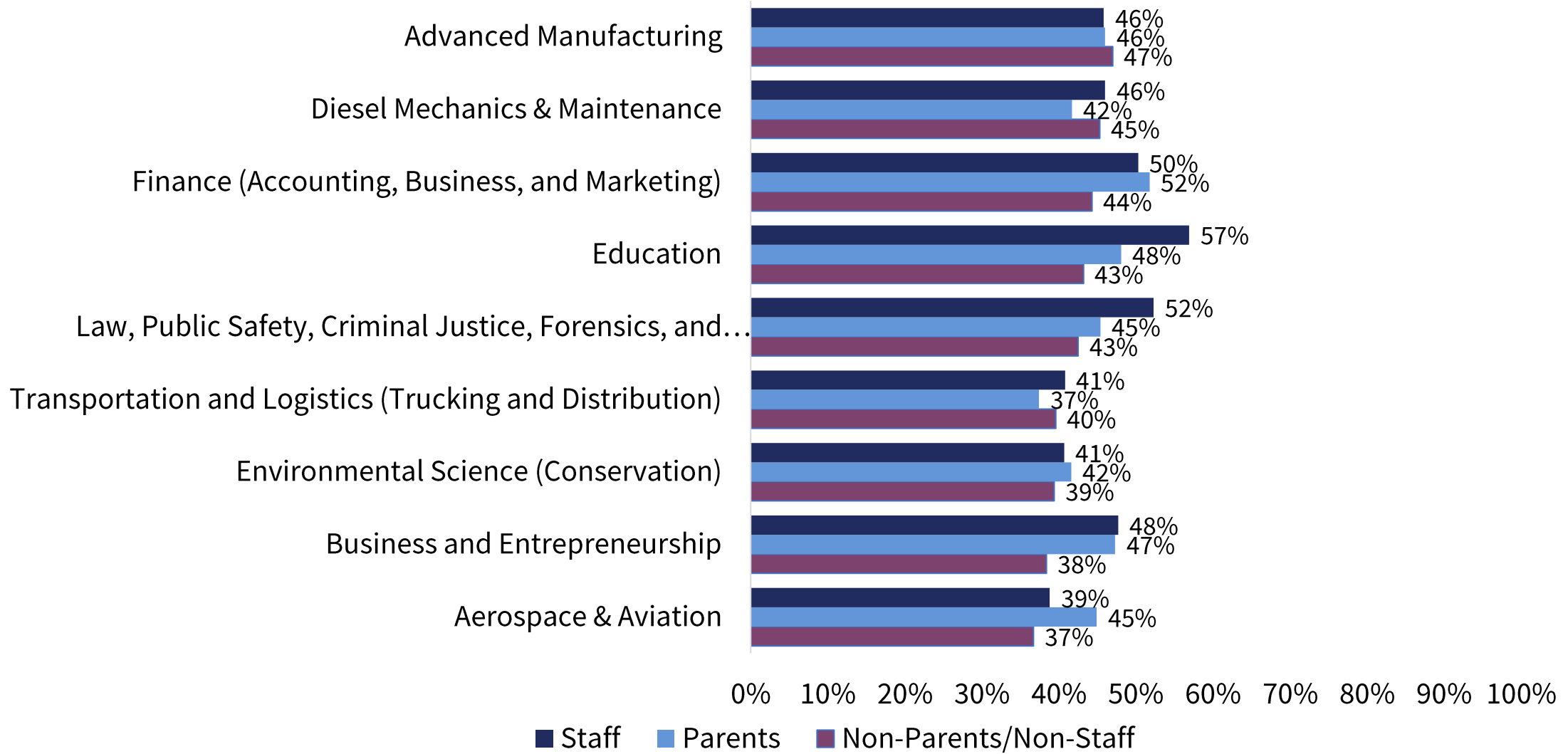
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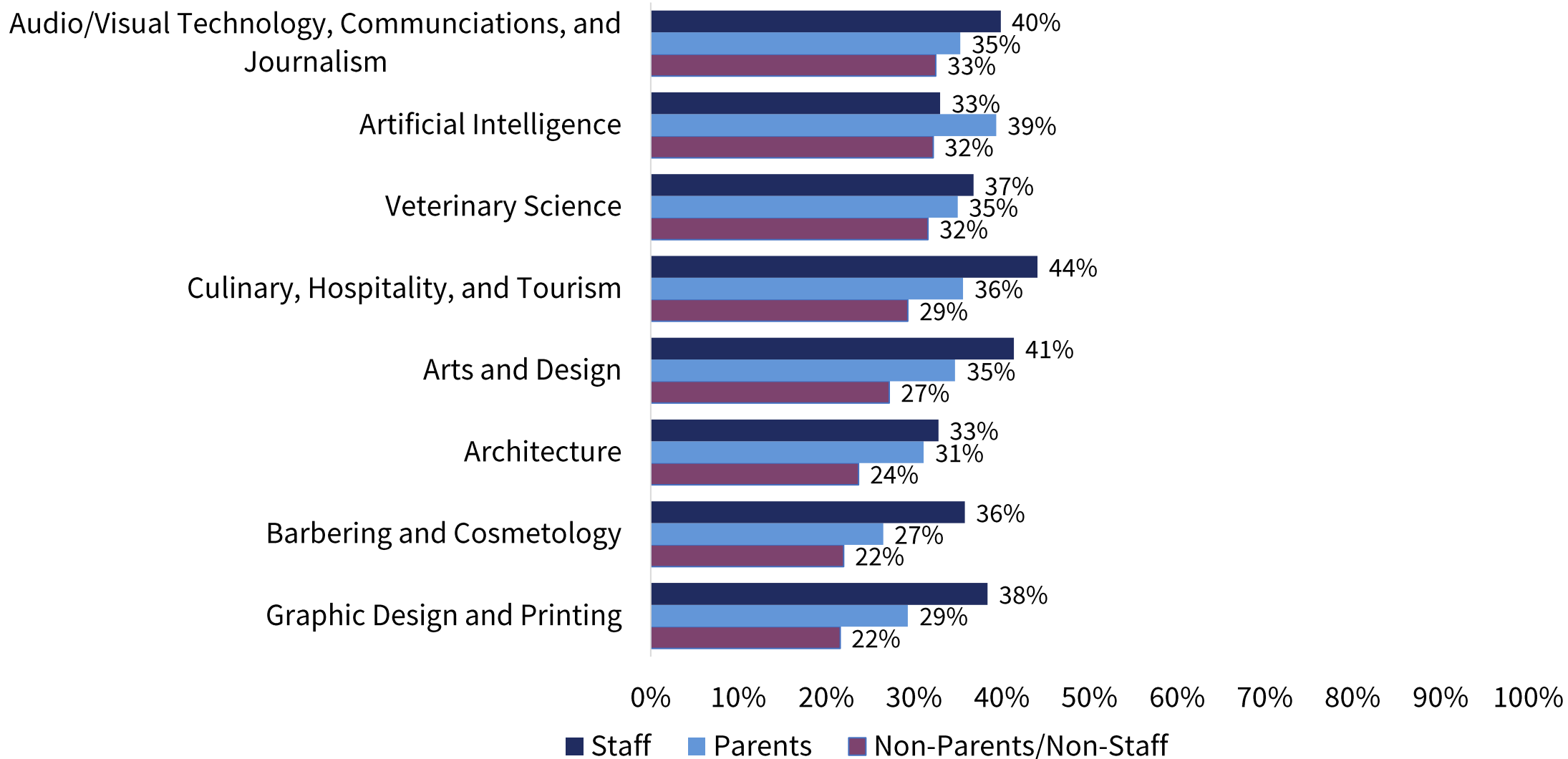
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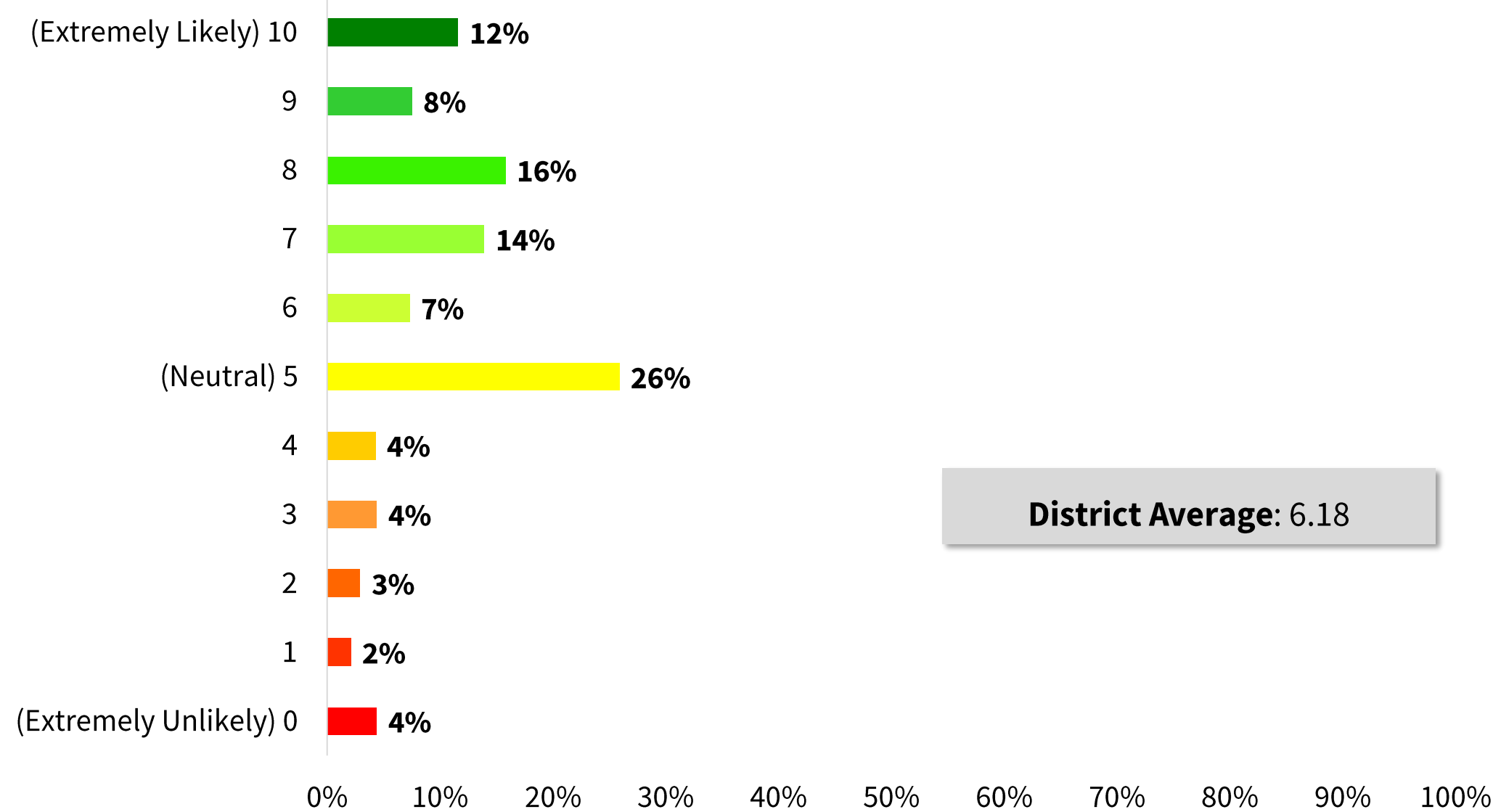
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On a scale of 0 – 10, how likely would you be to recommend the District to a friend or family member?





SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

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