

# Public Sector Advisors



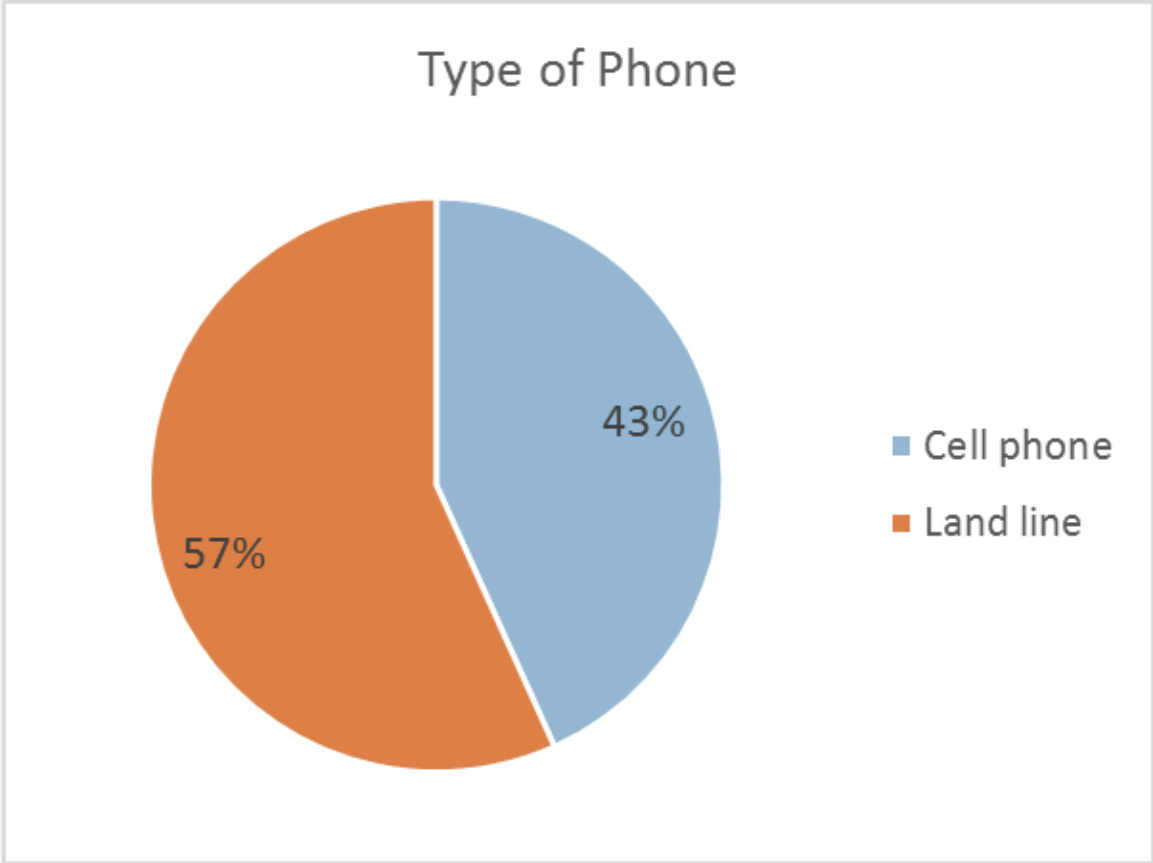
# Survey outline

- Survey included interviews with 400 registered voters in the Lakeville school district.
- Interviews were completed between June 16<sup>th</sup> and June 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Approximate margin of error is  $\pm 4.9\%$ .

## Who we called

- Interviews included demographic targets intended to provide a representative sample of voters in the district.
- Cell phones were tracked, but were not a demographic target.

# Who we called: Cell phones

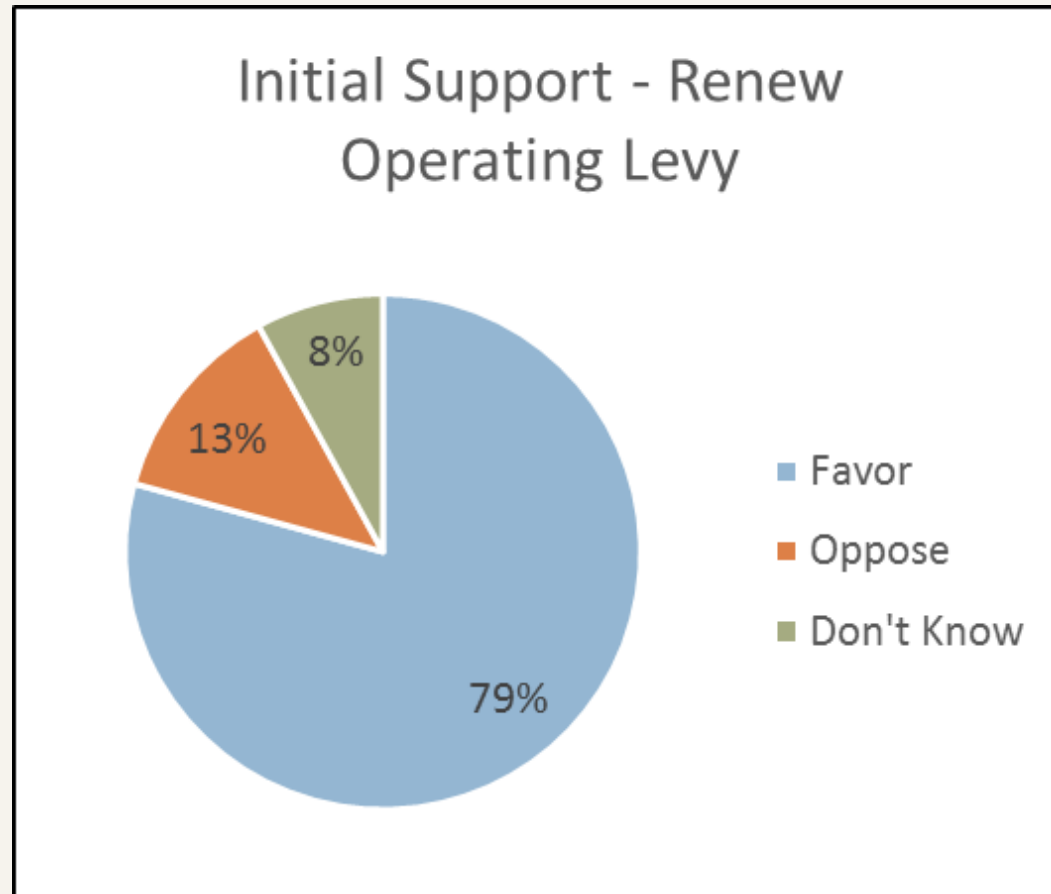


# Renew operating levy – initial support

“The Lakeville Area Public Schools receives part of its funding from an operating levy initially approved by voters in 2007. This 10-year levy, which brings in about \$8.2 million a year, will expire this year unless renewed by voters this coming November. Renewing the existing levy would not increase taxes.

Based on what you know now, would you be in favor of or opposed to a proposal to renew the existing levy?”

# Renew operating levy – initial support *(cont.)*



# Effects of information

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

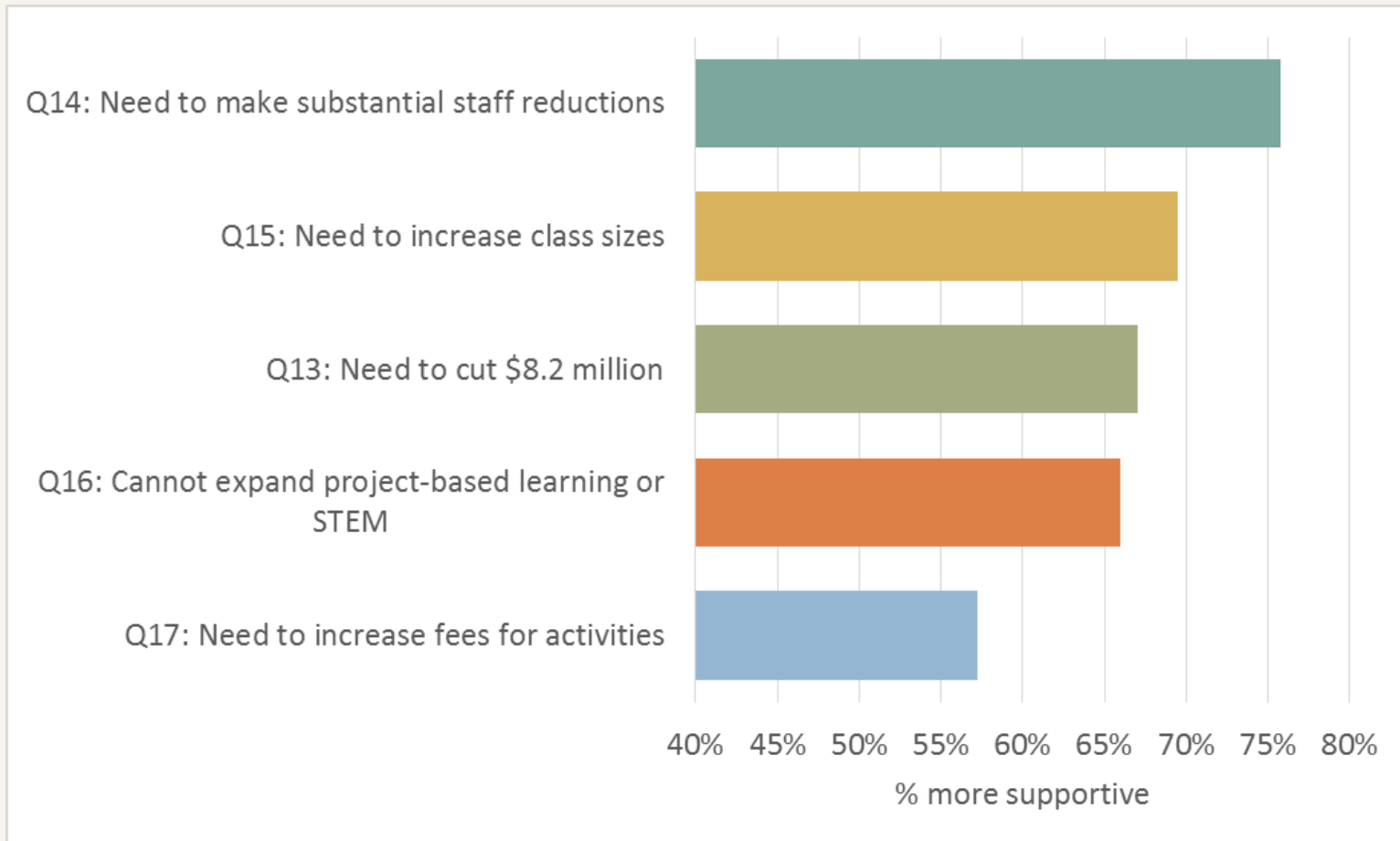
Please tell me whether the information in each statement would make you more likely or less likely to vote for such a proposal.”

# Elements of operating levy renewal

- Five elements were presented in the context of consequences to the district if the levy were not renewed.
- Elements were given to participants in random order.



# Support for levy renewal elements *(cont.)*

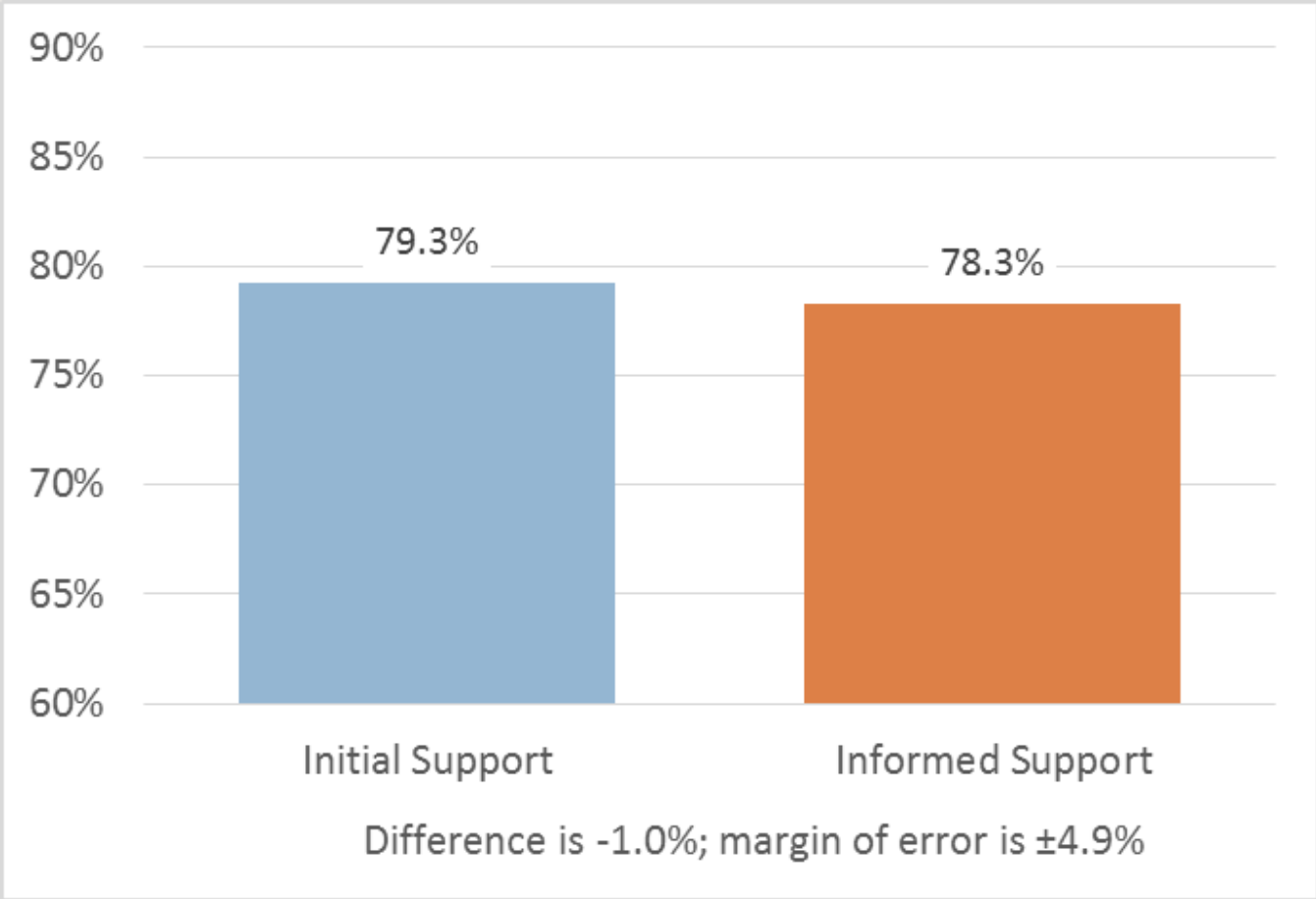


# Impact of information about levy renewal

“Now that you have heard some information about the district’s proposal, I want to see if this information has changed your opinion.

Would you favor or oppose a proposal to renew the district’s operating levy?”

# Impact of information (cont.)

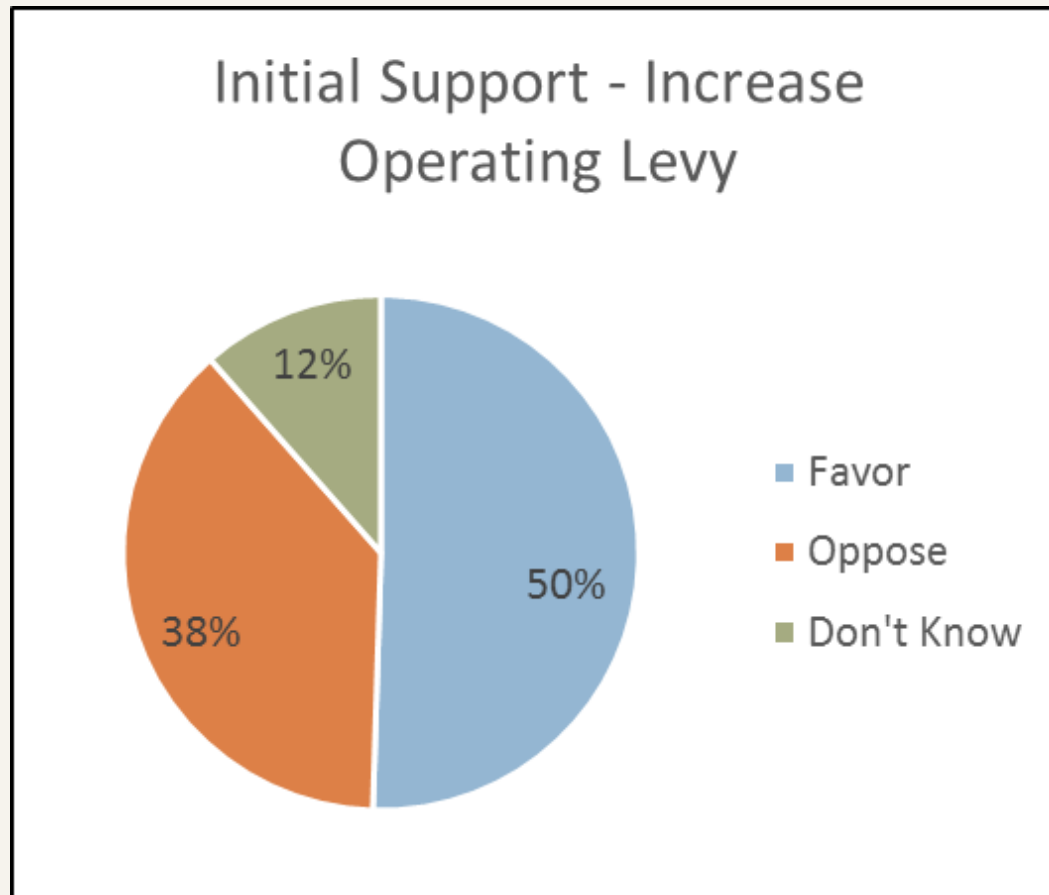


# Increase operating levy – initial support

“In order to avoid significant budget reductions and provide additional funding to enhance teaching and learning for students in the future, the Board of Education may ask voters to increase its operating levy to generate additional funding. Doing so would increase local property taxes.

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

# Increase operating levy – initial support *(cont.)*



# Effects of information

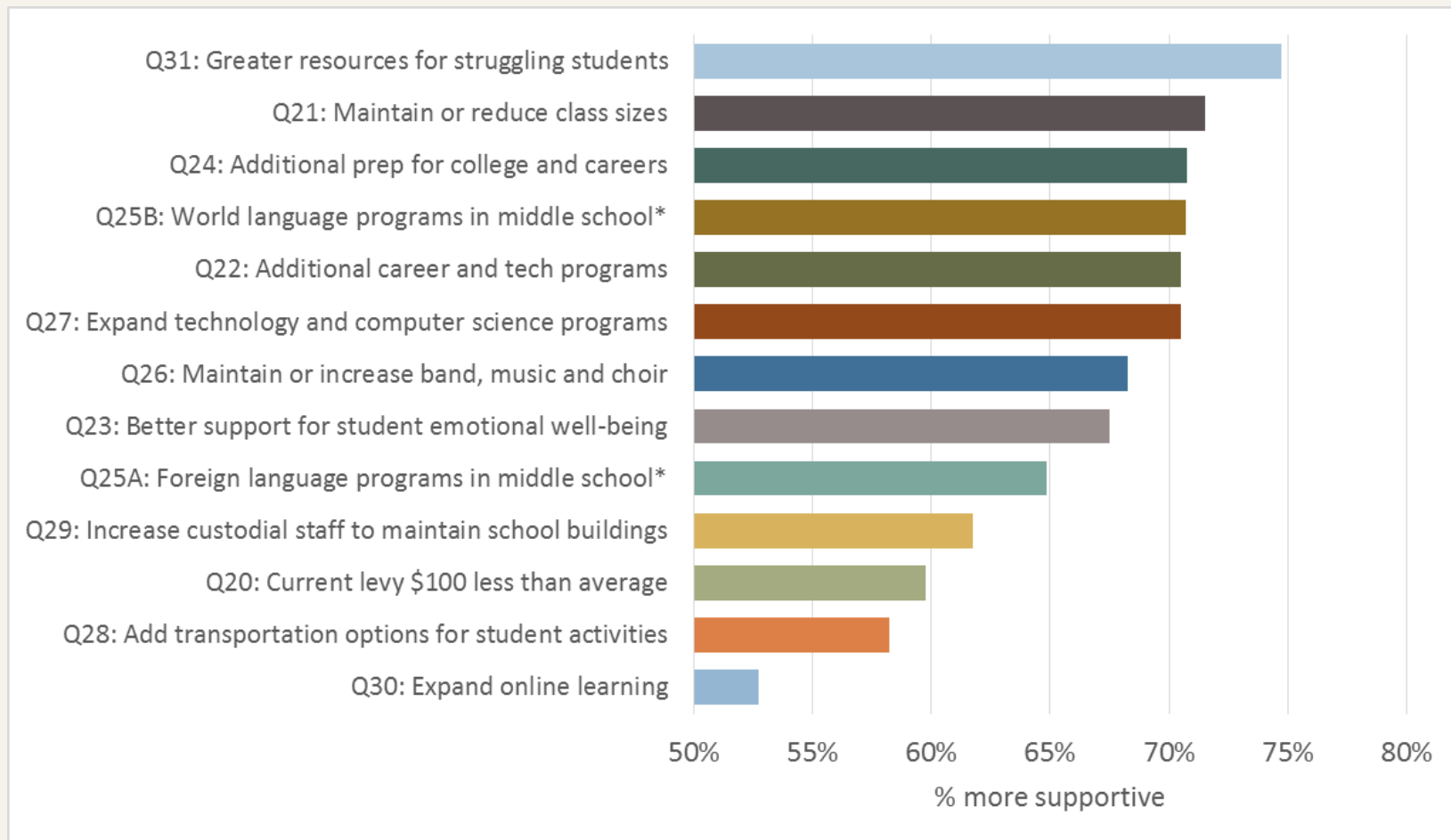
“I am going to read some statements about the proposal to increase the district’s operating levy.

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

# Elements of operating levy increase

- Twelve elements were presented in the context of the District's fiscal environment and programs and services that could be offered if the levy were increased.
  - One element was split, with half of participants asked about offering middle school options for “foreign languages,” and half asked about “world languages.”
  - Margin of error for split sample was  $\pm 6.9\%$ .
- Elements were given to participants in random order.

# Support for levy increase elements (cont.)



\* Half of participants were asked different versions of this question. Margin of error for split samples is  $\pm 6.9\%$ . Difference between versions (5.8%) is within margin of error.

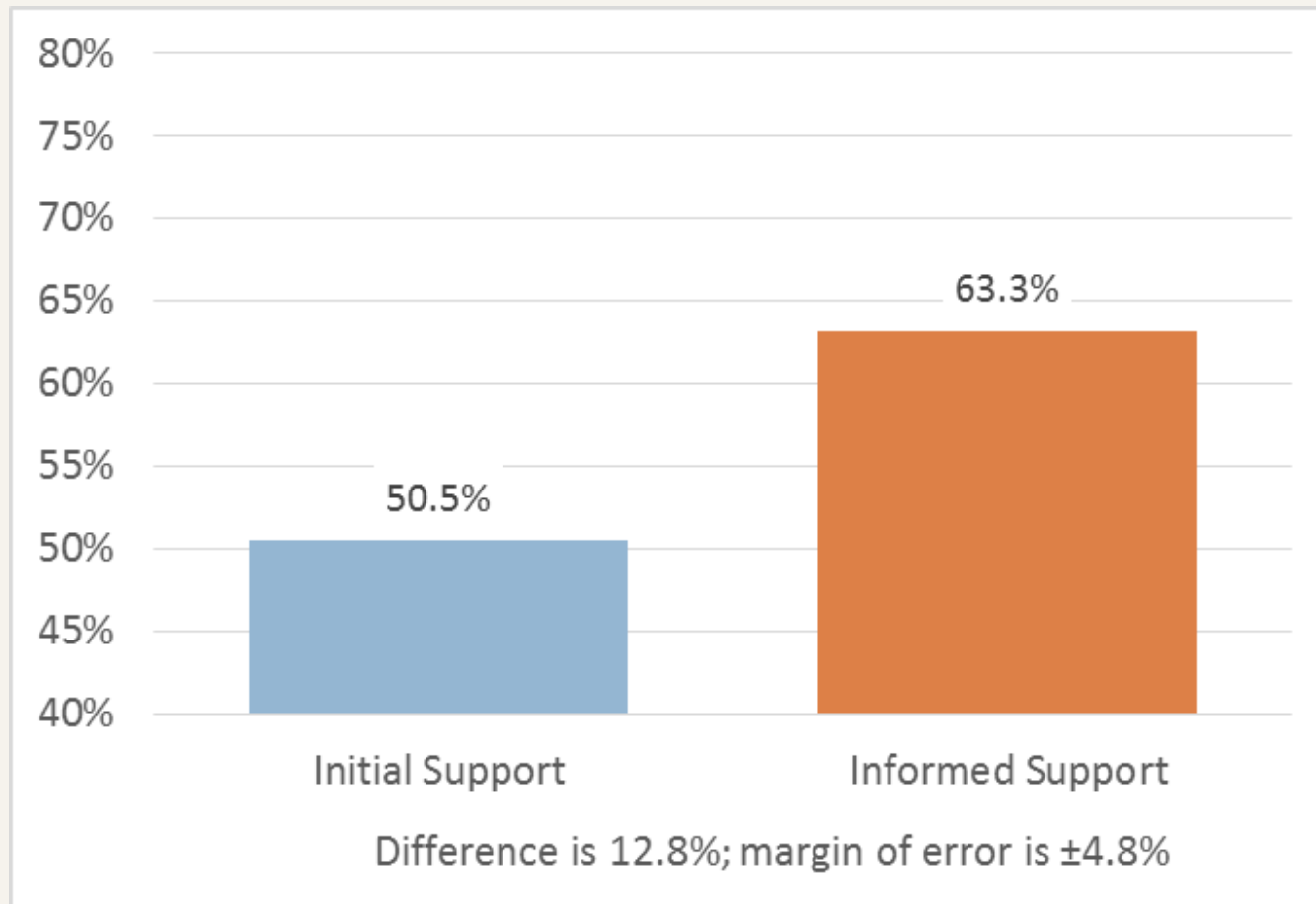


# Impact of information about levy increase

“Now that you have heard some information about the proposal to raise additional funding for the District through a property tax increase, I want to see if this information has changed your opinion.

Would you favor or oppose a proposal to increase the district’s operating levy?”

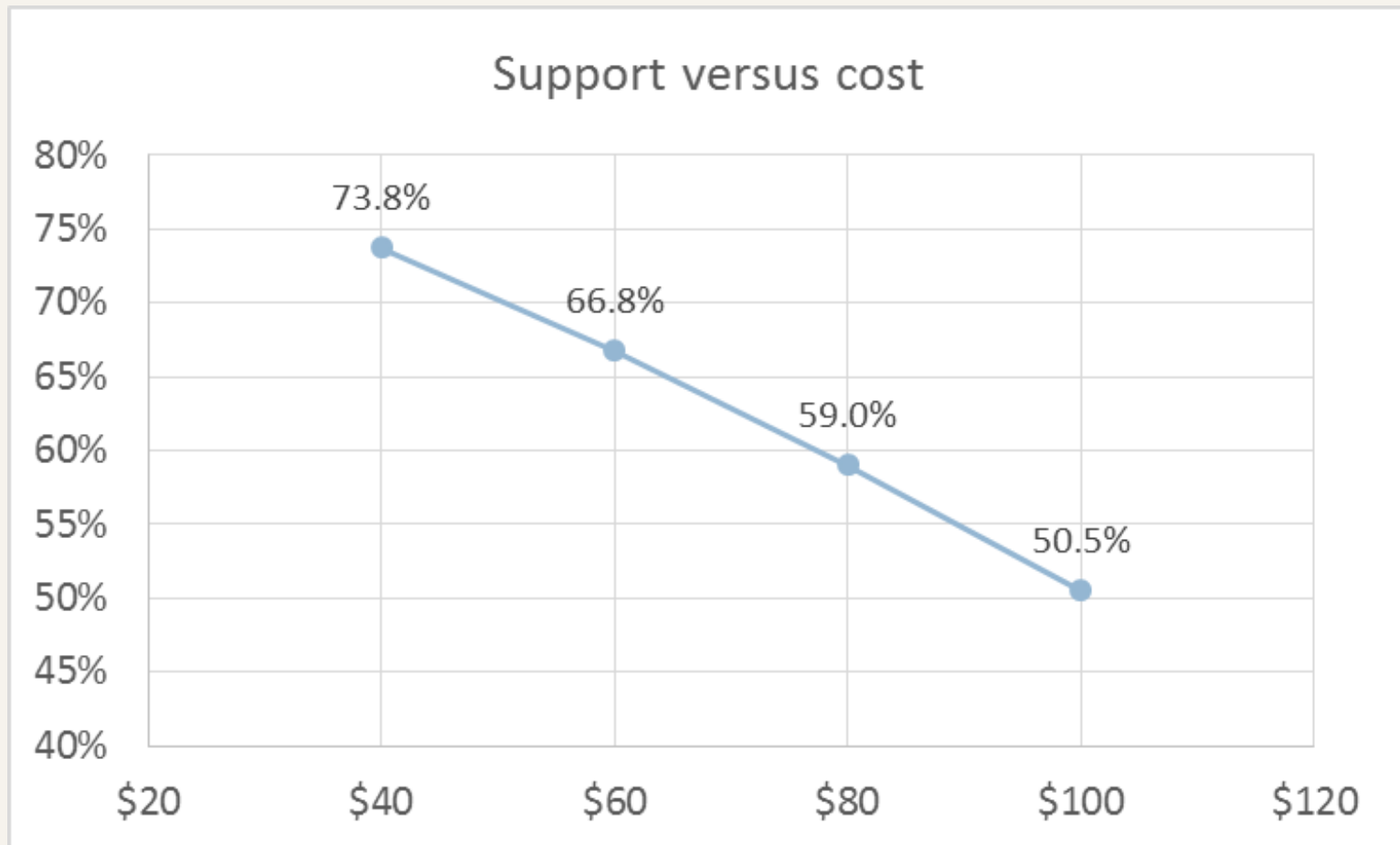
# Impact of information *(cont.)*



## Impact of cost information – levy increase

- Participants were asked about four potential property tax increases: \$40, \$60, \$80, and \$100 per year.
- Half of respondents were asked about impacts on an average value home; half were asked impacts on a home valued at \$265,000.
- To preclude responses given in anticipation of higher or lower options, dollar values were presented in random order.

# Impact of cost information – levy increase



Potential tax impacts tested were \$40, \$60, \$80 and \$100.

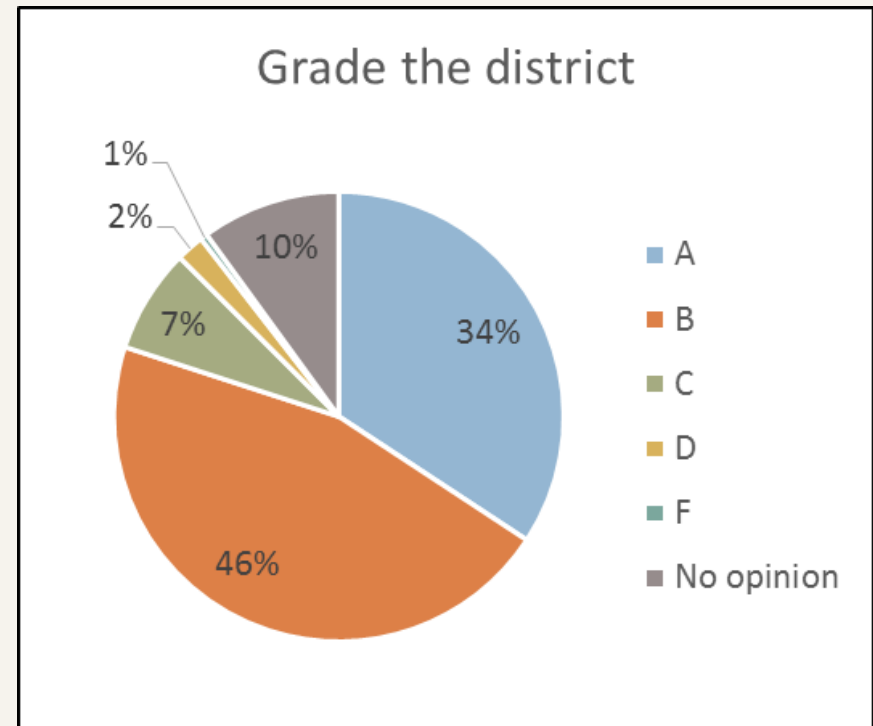
# Grading the district

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

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

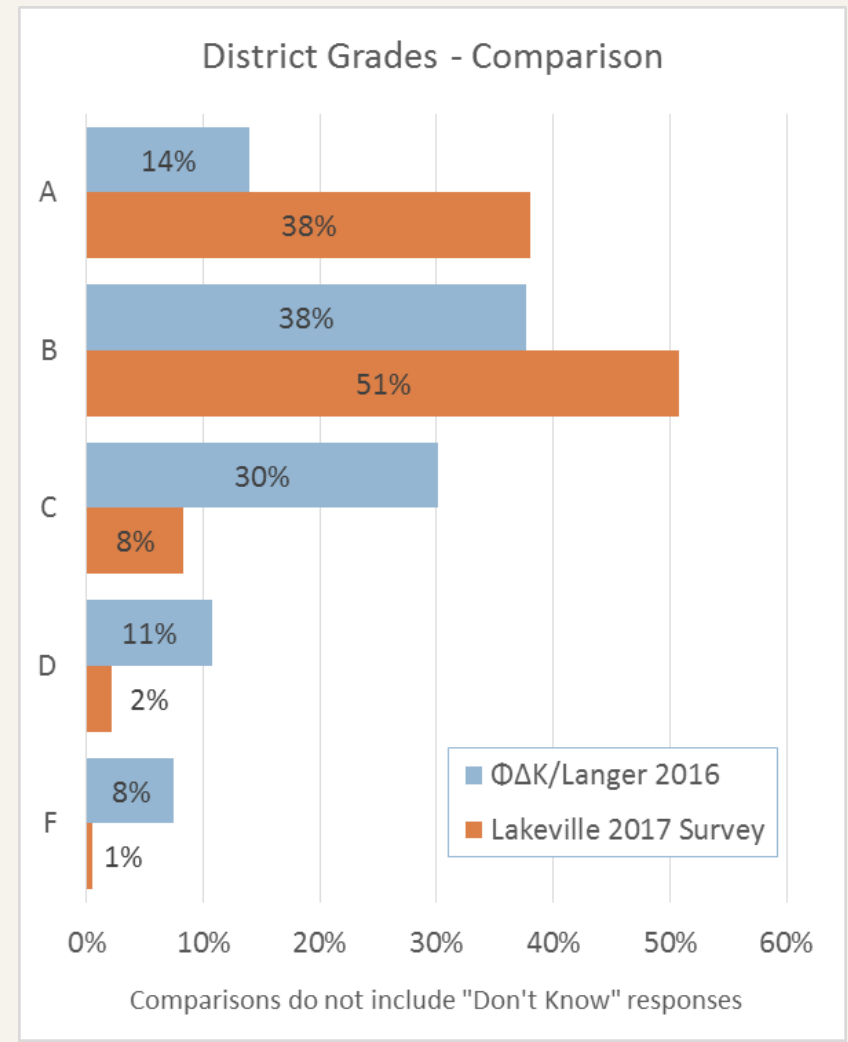
## Grading the district *(cont.)*

- 80% of respondents give A and B grades to the School District.
- 10% of participants could not offer a response.

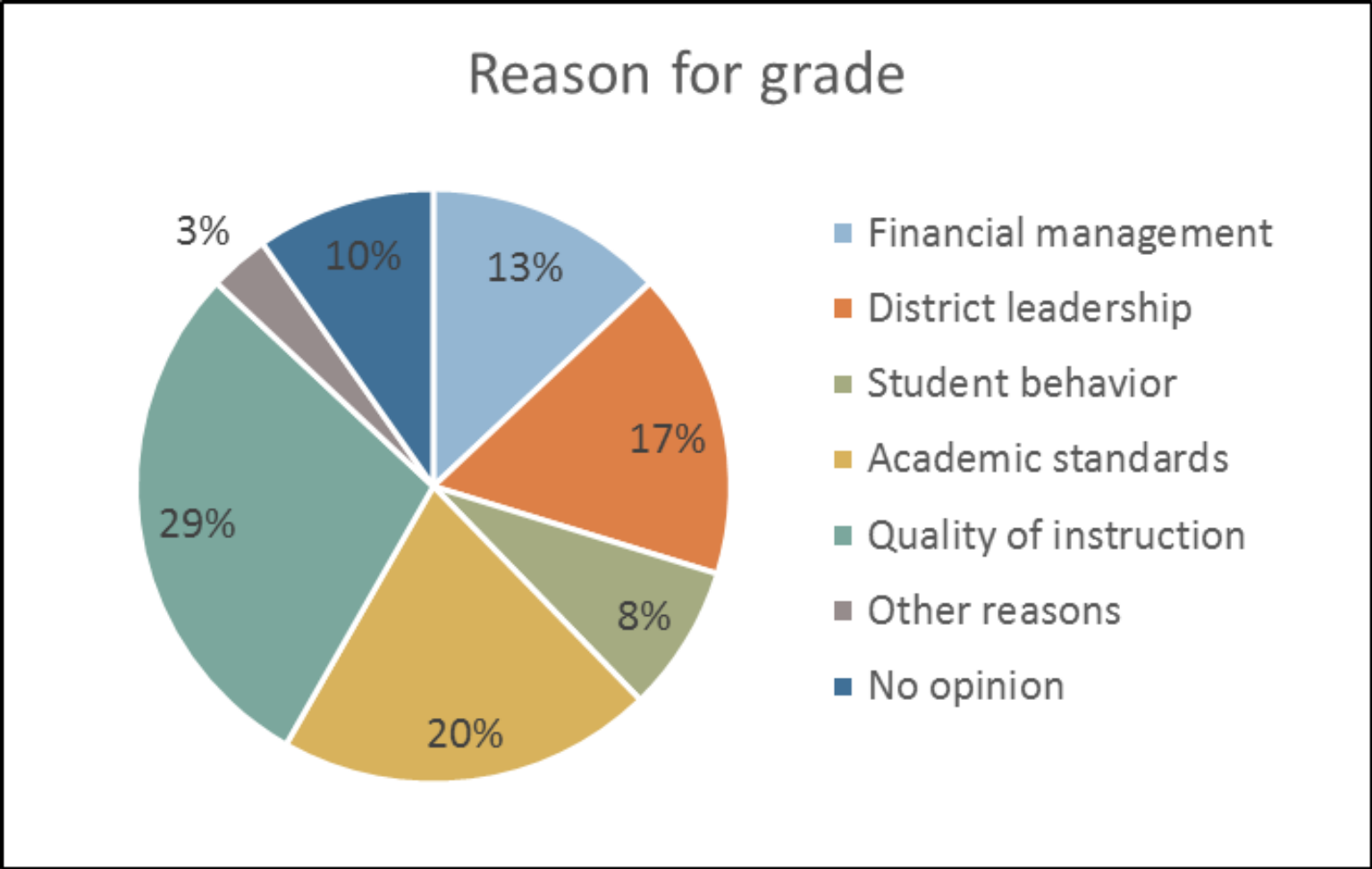


## Grading the district *(cont.)*

- Much higher proportion of A's and B's than Phi Delta Kappa/Langer Research national benchmark.

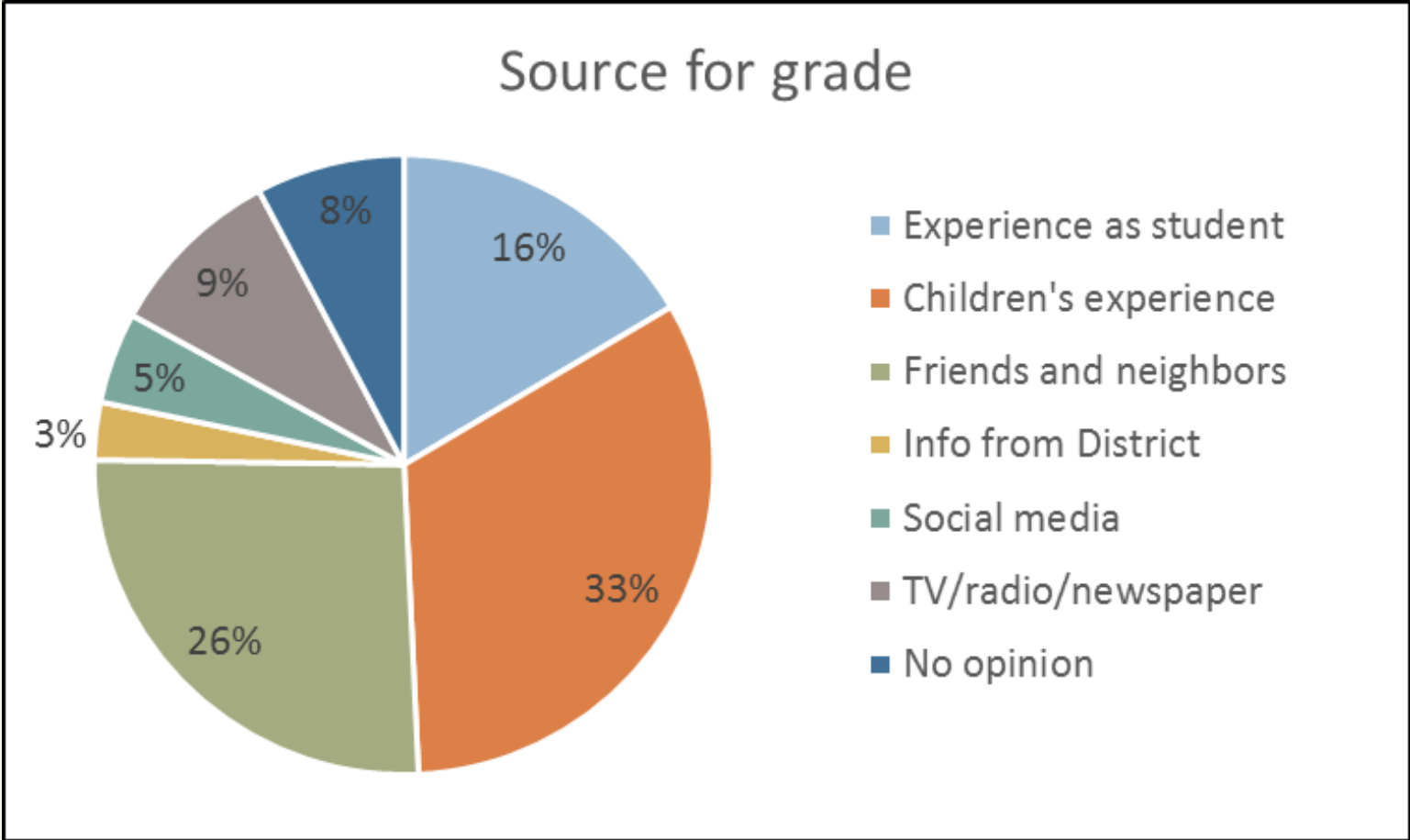


# Grading the district (cont.)





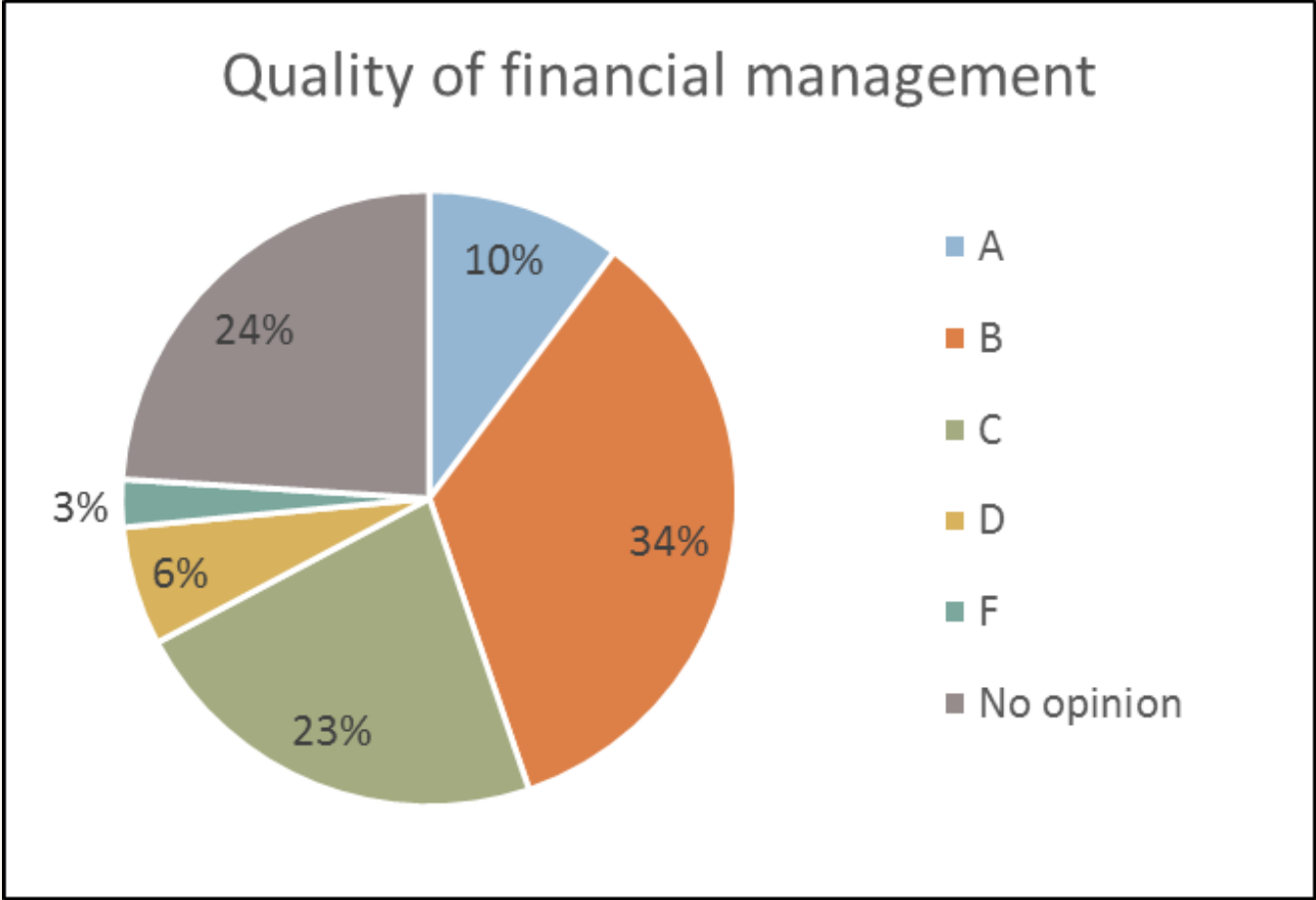
# Grading the district (cont.)



## Grading the district (*cont.*)

- Participants were also asked to evaluate the management of the district's finances.

# Grading the district (cont.)

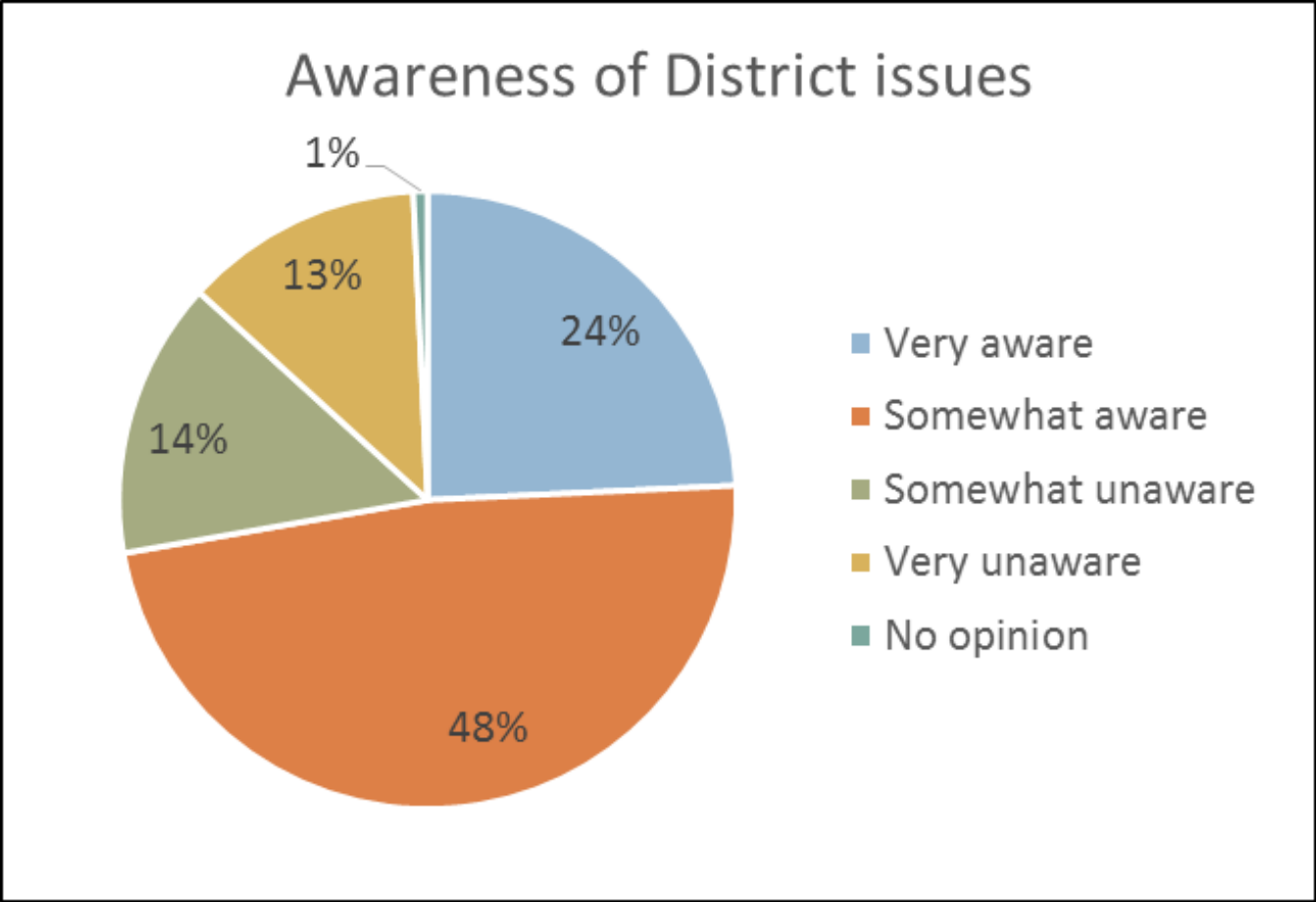


# Awareness of District issues

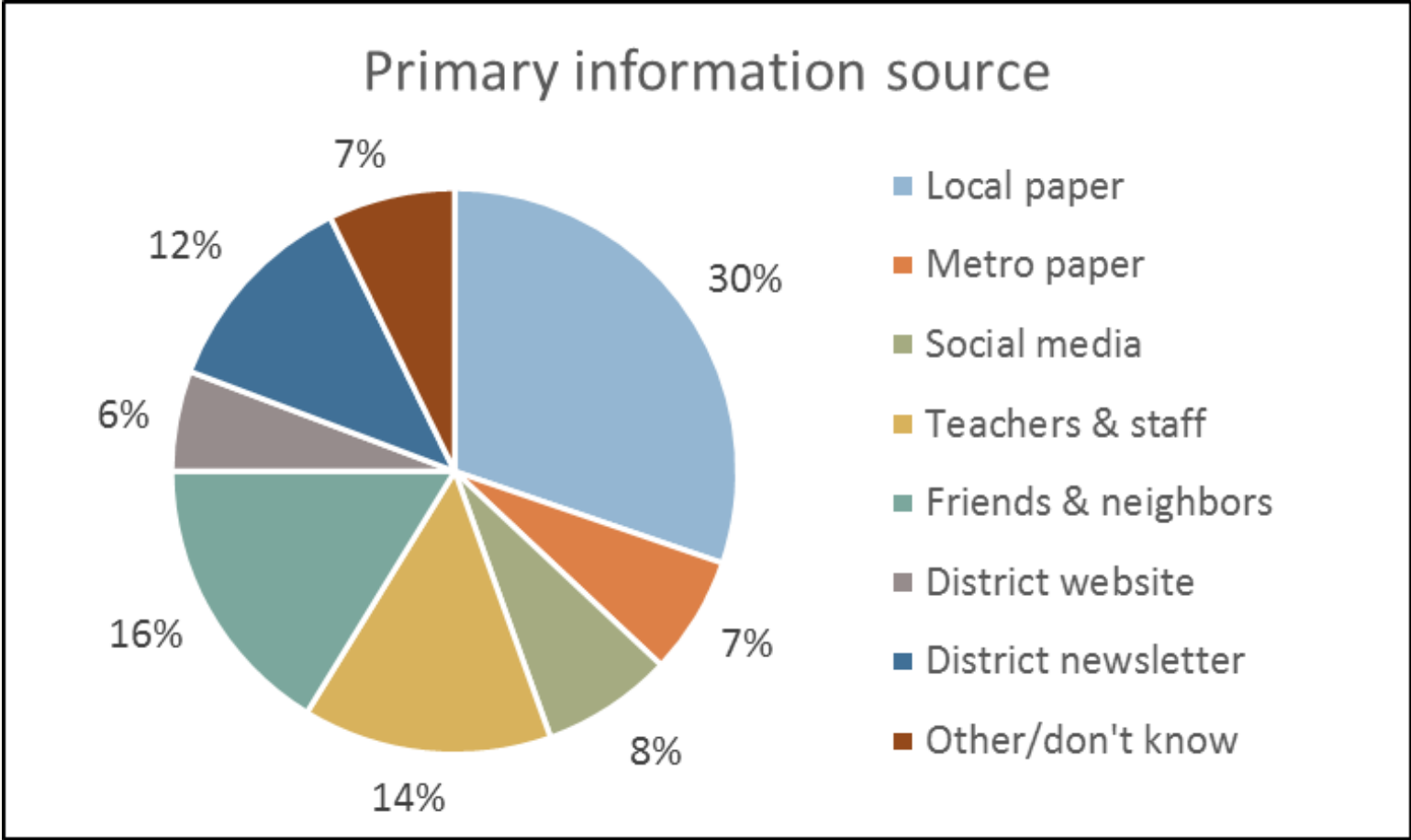
“The district provides information to the community in a variety of forms about programs and events and about issues facing the district.

Do you consider yourself very aware, somewhat aware, somewhat unaware or very unaware of events and issues at the district?”

# Awareness of District issues (cont.)



# Primary source of information



# Findings – operating levy renewal

- Initial support at 79.3%.
- Informed support at 78.3%.
- Details about the operating levy made no significant difference to support levels.
- Potential for staff reductions improved support from more than 75% of respondents.
  - Remaining elements had positive impact ranging from 57% to 69%.

# Findings – operating levy increase

- Initial support at 50.5%.
- Informed support at 63.3%.
- Details about the levy made a measurable improvement to support levels.



# Findings – operating levy increase

- Six elements had positive impact for more than 70% of respondents:
  - Resources for struggling students
  - Maintaining/reducing class sizes
  - College and career prep
  - World language programs in middle school
  - Career and technology programs
  - Technology and computer science programs

## Findings – operating levy increase

- Three elements had positive impact for less than 60% of respondents:
  - Expanding online learning
  - Transportation for school activities
  - Current levy \$100 less than average
- Other elements had positive impact on 60% to 70% of respondents.

## Findings – costs of operating levy increase

- Support levels at specific tax impacts were as follows:
  - \$ 40 tax impact: 74%
  - \$ 60 tax impact: 67%
  - \$ 80 tax impact: 59%
  - \$100 tax impact: 51%
- Support from Very Active voters was 68% at the \$40 impact, dropping to 51% at the \$100 impact.

## Findings – demographic groups

- For operating levy increase, most demographics showed informed support between 55% and 70%.
- Groups with highest levels of support:
  - Voters 18-44 years of age
  - Household income \$75-100k per year
  - Voters with Master's degree or higher
- Groups with lowest levels of support:
  - Voters over 45 years of age
  - Very Active voters
  - Residents outside of Lakeville city limits

# Recommendations

- If an operating levy increase is proposed, we recommend a tax impact not to exceed \$85 per year for an average homeowner.

# Thank You!

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