

Wentzville School District 2019 Patron Telephone Survey Final Report



December 31, 2019

Wentzville School District 2019 Patron Telephone Survey

Executive Summary

December 31, 2019

In late November and early December 2019, a 10- to 12-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, registered-voter, heads of household (male or female) living within the boundaries of the Wentzville School District to determine their thoughts on the district's performance and to receive input on the district's potential no-tax-increase bond issue and operating levy proposals.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phones, and the completed interviews were divided between the district's three high school drawing areas in quantities that reflected the general population pattern, according to the district's Administration. This means that the results contained within this report that reflect the views of all 400 participants have a Margin of Error of plus or minus 4.9% (or 5%, when rounded). The results for the demographic and geographic subgroups studied in cross-tabulations have a higher Margin of Error, because the number of participants in each group is lower.

Generally speaking, survey respondents were quite positive about the district's performance and its ideas for a potential no-tax-increase bond issue and operating levy proposals. Their support was less, however, when the potential cost of such an increase in the operating levy was discussed.

Specifically:

"Grades" for district performance

Twelve of the 13 people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district's overall performance – received a grade of "B" or better (or at least the statistical equivalent of a "B") on the traditional A-F grading scale.

Those at the top of the list included "The quality of technology available to students," "Quality of school facilities," "Safety of students" and "Performance of teachers." The two that did not score at a "B" or better were "Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making" and "The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns."

Patron Hot Buttons

All but one of the 13 factors noted above received a grade – rather than a response of "Don't know" – from at least 81% of the surveyed residents, making these factors "Patron Hot Buttons." Hot Buttons are the factors that come to mind first when the district is thought about by the typical resident, and these results show the active interest in the district across the community.

The only factor that did not qualify as a Hot Button was “The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns.”

District strengths and areas needing improvement

The evident satisfaction with the school district’s performance appeared again on the answers to separate open-ended questions asking respondents for their thoughts on the strengths of the Wentzville School District and where it could improve.

Topping the list of strengths were “Quality of education,” “Teachers/staff,” “Community support” and “School facilities.” Areas needing improvement were a little harder to come by as the top two answers were, “Don’t know” and “Nothing/They’re doing fine as is.”

Support for potential no-tax-increase bond issue ideas

Respondents expressed a strong level of support for the classroom additions at the three existing middle schools and for the kitchen/cafeteria renovation at those same schools. A total of 72% and 58%, respectively said that if these projects were part of a bond issue, they would be “More likely to vote in favor.”

The idea for the fourth middle school had more support (35%) than opposition (22%), but it seems clear that typical residents will need much more information about this project and how it fits in with the overall district facility plan.

Even with that modest level of caution, 61% said they would either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a bond issue that included the described projects. Once participants were told that it would not require a tax increase, support grew to 81%.

Support for potential operating levy increase proposal ideas

The three benefits that would be a result of the passage of an increase in the operating levy were even more popular, collectively, than the bond issue ideas. Those saying they would be “More likely to vote in favor” of a proposal that included the specific mentioned benefits ranged from 62% to 75%.

The idea of an operating levy increase that would make these proposed benefits a reality drew a combined “Strongly favor/Favor” score of 61%. However, when the potential costs were discussed, support diminished notably.

Specifically, just 33% said they would either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a proposal that would result in a tax increase of about \$29 per month for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the school district.

Opponents and undecideds were then offered a proposal that would mean less revenue to put toward these plans, and that would cost the same homeowner about \$23 a month. Combined support (meaning the support at \$29 per month combined with those who became supportive at \$23) grew to just 34%.

Those who remained in opposition (or undecided) were then offered an even smaller proposal that would result in a monthly increase of a little less than \$16, again, for the owner of a \$200,000 home.

Total support jumped to 50% combined “Strongly favor/Favor.” However, taking into account the 5% Margin of Error, this means that the support for such an increase, at the time this survey was taken, ranged from 45% to 55%.

Voting intention, as of today, if the district placed both issues on the same ballot

When asked how they would vote if the district placed both a no-tax-increase bond issue and an operating levy increase proposal on the same ballot, 41% said they would vote “yes” for both, while 17% said they would vote “yes” on the bond and “no” on the levy, 15% said they would vote “no” on both, and 3% said they would vote “yes” on the levy and “no” on the bond.

The full report that follows presents a series of findings, discussion of each of these findings, and all the questions, answers and appropriate cross-tabulations. A brief summary closes the report.

Wentzville School District Patron Survey

Final report

December 31, 2019

Key finding 1: Research participants found favor with the people, programs and facilities of the Wentzville School District via a grading exercise. There were some modest concerns about two district/patron relationship factors – which is not at all uncommon. Additionally, respondents expressed a significant interest in, and perceived awareness of, the various facets of the district’s performance, with 12 of the 13 graded factors achieving Patron Hot Button status.

From late November through mid-December 2019, a 10- to 12-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, registered-voter, heads of household (male or female) in the Wentzville School District to learn their views on the district’s current performance and to secure their input on potential bond issue and operating levy proposals being considered.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided between the drawing areas for the district’s three high schools in quantities identified by the district’s Administration as being representative of the population pattern. This means that the results shown in this report that reflect all 400 respondents have a Margin of Error of plus or minus 4.9% (which is typically rounded up to 5%, for simplicity’s sake). The data shown for the demographic and geographic subgroups has a larger Margin of Error, because the number of participants in each group is smaller.

Once an individual demonstrated that he or she was qualified to participate, he or she was read a list of 13 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors (along with the district’s overall performance) and asked to give each one a “grade” of A, B, C, D or F.

The reason the survey begins with such questions is to make it clear to the respondents that this process will not be difficult, while also building rapport with the interviewer – rapport that will be important when the questions become more difficult later in the survey. This question set also provides an excellent snapshot of current patron opinion on a variety of components related to the district and its performance.

All the grades for all the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied. In this scale, each grade of “A” is worth 5 points, down to each grade of “F” being worth 1 point. The point values are totaled and divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, “Don’t know”).

Recognizing that securing an “A” in this exercise would require all those with an opinion to say, “A,” the dividing line between areas of strength and those that may need attention is usually considered a “B” (4.00). However, taking into account the Margin of Error, a score as low as 3.80 is still, statistically speaking, a “B.”

The Wentzville School District received positive feedback through this exercise, as 12 of the 13 factors – plus the district’s “overall” performance – received a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”). Those at the top of the list included the following (any factor at 4.50 or higher is considered extremely strong):

- The quality of technology available to students – 4.72
- Quality of school facilities – 4.64
- Safety of students – 4.50
- Performance of teachers – 4.31
- Preparing students to be college- and career-ready – 4.24
- Overall grade – 4.19

Scores such as these place the district *well above average* compared to other school districts of similar size. Clearly, there is much about the district’s work that pleases the typical patron.

The two factors that scored below the 3.80 mark were:

- Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making – 3.67
- The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns – 3.38

While it is not unusual for the more nebulous district/patron relationship factors to score lower (because respondents without recent direct experience can sometimes be hard-pressed to offer an informed grade), it is often helpful to look more deeply at the demographic and geographic characteristics of the respondents who offered these answers.

In looking at the cross-tabulation data, it is important to remember that the Margin of Error is higher for this data than it is for the entire survey group. As such, it is best to look for trends, rather than fixate on individual numbers. In doing so, the following was noted:

- Younger and middle-aged respondents were more positive than those 55 or older, but the gap was not dramatic.
- The three drawing areas and the length of time living in the district (with the exception of the very small group of up-to-five-year residents) were similar in their responses.
- Current student families were, thankfully, the most positive among the student status group. Interestingly, “never” student families scored higher on both factors than did “past” student families (meaning all their children had graduated).

- Female respondents were more positive than male participants, but, again, the difference was rather modest.
- Those with a Household Income (HHI) of up to \$50,000 in 2019 *and* those with HHI of more than \$150,000 to \$200,000 were more positive than those in the middle two income groups.

In essence, while these two graded factors appear to need some additional attention, this is not a case of one or two groups of residents being dramatically out of step with the rest of the survey participants. This should simplify any strategic efforts the district may wish to employ to enhance these results in future surveys.

The other component of the grading exercise is the identification of Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors that at least 81% of the survey respondents were willing to offer a grade on, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” In essence, Patron Hot Buttons are the factors that the respondents appear to consider first, when they think about the school district.

Twelve of the 13 graded factors also qualified as Patron Hot Buttons, suggesting a significant interest in the school district, strong opinions that may be based on fact or supposition, or a combination of the two. Whatever the case, the school district is clearly the topic of much conversation in the community.

Questions 1– 3 asked respondents whether or not they were a head of household (male or female), were a registered voter, and where they lived, in terms of high school drawing areas.

To continue with the survey, a respondent had to answer, “Yes” to the first two questions, As such, those questions are not displayed below.

All answers with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. In reviewing the verbatim answers shown in this report, it is important to remember that each is one response, by one person and is not indicative of a trend.

Also, in reviewing the cross-tabulations (as mentioned above), it is important to keep the “n” number in mind. Groups with smaller “n” numbers can have their scores impacted significantly by a small number of responses. As such, in the case of the cross-tabulations, it is best to look for trends, rather than to focus on individual numbers.

3. To make certain we have people who live in all parts of the school district, can you tell me which of the district's three high schools the children in your area typically attend? Is it...? *Number of respondents from each drawing area identified by district leadership as being representative of the population pattern. Choices were read to respondents. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below.*

Response	Number
Holt High School	152
Timberland High School	140
Liberty High School	108

As you know, students in school are traditionally given a grade of A, B, C, D or F to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Wentzville School District from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with... *Questions 4 through 16 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

4. Quality of education

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	55%
C	11%
D	1%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

5. Performance of teachers

Response	Percentage
A	40%
B	46%
C	9%
D	<1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

6. Quality of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	63%
B	31%
C	2%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	4%

7. The quality of the technology available to students

Response	Percentage
A	67%
B	24%
C	1%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	8%

8. The value received for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	14%
B	45%
C	21%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	16%

9. Preparing students to be college- and career-ready

Response	Percentage
A	32%
B	56%
C	7%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	4%

10. Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	33%
C	18%
D	11%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	17%

11. Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	38%
C	20%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

12. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	34%
B	47%
C	15%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

13. Performance of the Superintendent

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	51%
C	16%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

14. Performance of the School Board

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	56%
C	19%
D	2%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	5%

15. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	70%
B	22%
C	4%
D	3%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

16. The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns

Response	Percentage
A	11%
B	27%
C	25%
D	14%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	20%

17. Thinking about everything you know or have heard about the district, what overall grade would you give the Wentzville School District?

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	64%
C	7%
D	<1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale rating for each factor. Items that scored at 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a “B” (or better). Those that are displayed in bold are Patron Hot Buttons, meaning that at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are the factors that typical patrons think of first, when they are considering the school district’s performance.

Item	5-point weighted scale rating
The quality of technology available to students	4.72
Quality of school facilities	4.64
Safety of students	4.50
Performance of teachers	4.31
Preparing students to be college- and career-ready	4.24
Overall grade	4.19
Performance of school principals	4.18
Quality of education	4.17
Performance of the Superintendent	3.98
Performance of the School Board	3.88
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.85
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.80
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38

Cross-tabulation: Five-point weighted scale scores for the two factors that scored below 3.80 by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 14 respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	Age			Length of time living in the district			Gender	
		18-34 (n=84)	35-54 (n=189)	55 or older (n=113)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=128)	More than 15 years (n=231)	Female (n=208)	Male (n=192)
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67	3.99	3.75	3.54	3.28	3.71	3.72	3.78	3.55
District’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38	3.61	3.34	3.30	3.52	3.47	3.33	3.42	3.32

Cross-tabulation: Five-point weighted scale scores for the two factors that scored below 3.80 by location of the respondent’s residence (high school drawing area), and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Factor	Overall score	Location of respondent’s residence			Presence of student in household		
		Holt HS drawing area (n=152)	Liberty HS drawing area (n=108)	Timberland HS drawing area (n=140)	Student, yes (n=142)	Student, past (n=114)	Student, never (n=144)
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67	3.71	3.67	3.64	3.76	3.60	3.65
District’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38	3.44	3.44	3.32	3.60	3.08	3.36

Cross-tabulation: Five-point weighted scale scores for the two factors that scored below 3.80 by household income level of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. These numbers may not square with “Overall,” because 21 respondents refused to answer this question and five respondents who answered “More than \$200,000” are not included, because of the small number in this category.

Factor	Overall score	Household income level of respondent			
		Up to \$50K (n=89)	More than \$50K up to \$100K (n=160)	More than \$100K up to \$150K (n=73)	More than \$150K up to \$200K (n=52)
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67	3.77	3.64	3.46	3.76
District’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38	3.54	3.33	3.12	3.57

Key Finding 2: The core components of a successful school district – quality of education, teachers/staff, community support and school facilities – received the most mentions in an open-ended question about the strengths of the Wentzville School District. A similar question asking for areas where the district needed to improve had a majority of respondents either saying, “Don’t know” or “Nothing/They’re doing fine as is.”

The evaluation portion of the survey came to a close with two open-ended questions that provided the chance for participants to opine freely about the school district’s strengths and areas where it needed to improve.

The answers to both questions were coded, meaning that common words, phrases and ideas were gathered together to provide a clearer picture of the thoughts that topped both lists.

In terms of the district’s strengths, the list was led by “Quality of education” (89 mentions), followed by “Teachers/staff” (74 mentions), “Community support” (48 mentions), “School facilities” (42 mentions) and “Communications” (38 mentions).

The list of areas needing improvement was a bit more of a struggle for survey participants. A total of 136 said, “Don’t know,” followed by “Nothing/They’re doing fine as is” (113 mentions). This means that 62% of the survey participants could not identify any area of deficit, in terms of the school district’s performance. Along with the very high number of “B” or better grades on the previous exercise, these results show that the typical resident seems to be quite satisfied with the school district.

Below the charts for each question are verbatim comments that are either “one-off” items, have more than one idea contained in the comment or some combination of these factors. It is important to remember when reviewing these that each is one comment, by one person. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in enough quantity to appear in the chart associated with the question.

18. What do you think are the district's strengths? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below.*

Response	Number
Quality of education	89
Teachers/staff	74
Community support	48
School facilities	42
Communications	38
Don't know	37
It's a safe district	34
Parental involvement	25
Other (see below)	13

Verbatim "other" comments

High test scores.

They really care about students. They are aware of students' living conditions and they are concerned for them.

There is nothing.

Technology, facilities and teachers.

The district offers many opportunities for advanced learning.

Just an average to below-average school district.

Teachers do a good job of working with the kids and informing parents.

There are lots of activities the kids can be involved in.

I'm not sure I can think of any. The schools have gone downhill over the last decade.

Teachers and facilities.

Good graduation rate.

Teachers are approachable and dedicated. My daughter went for three years here and did very well.

Good education, teachers that care and an Administration that works with parents and staff.

19. Where could the district improve? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	136
Nothing/They're doing fine as is	113
Managing budget/costs	81
Communications	53
Other (see below)	17

Verbatim "other" comments

There are too many early pregnancies.

There are alcohol problems.

Pay the teachers better.

Listen. They seem to be too political.

They could bring in better teachers.

Please focus more on the safety of students. The district should work on community-building. Conflict resolution should be a target.

Get an Administration that is more in touch with community needs.

The current calendar year includes no real summer. The day schedule is too long. My children are on the bus at 6:30. That is not healthy.

Monitor drug problems.

Lack of diversity.

Students need to be taught how to communicate without technology.

Maybe reduce our taxes some.

Schools should emphasize academics over sports.

Special Education and Gifted programs are being lessened or even possibly dropped. I, myself, benefitted from Gifted classes. It challenged me and made me stay at a good level all through high school.

Hiring highly qualified teachers.

Teach real-life skills that seem to be missing in classrooms today.

Listen to the patrons.

Key Finding 3: Support for the expansion of the three existing middle schools and for the kitchen/cafeteria remodeling projects at those schools was strong, at the time this survey was conducted. The idea to construct a fourth middle school drew more support than opposition, but that support was less enthusiastic. However, when asked how they would vote on a no-tax-increase bond issue “if the election were held today,” 81% said they would either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” it.

The survey then turned to the potential no-tax-increase bond issue. Each respondent was presented with the three main projects (or project groups) in individual questions. After the facts for each were presented, participants were asked if including the project in a bond issue would make them, “More likely to vote in favor,” “More likely to vote against” or would it “Make no difference” in their voting decision.

The additional classrooms at the existing middle schools drew 72% saying they would be “More likely to vote in favor” of a bond issue that included this project. Support was less – but still strong (58%) – for the kitchen/cafeteria renovation projects at the middle schools. Opposition was only 13% and 14%, respectively, for these two projects.

The fourth middle school project saw 35% saying they would be “More likely to vote in favor,” 22% “More likely to vote against,” 26% “Would make no difference in my voting decision” and 17% “Don’t know.”

While it is somewhat disappointing to see this level of support for the key project in the proposal, it is important to remember two things.

First, there is no strong opposition to the idea at this time. Mostly, it appears to be a case of, “I need to know more,” as 43% said either “It would make no difference in my voting decision” or “Don’t know.” These are individuals who will want to understand how all the middle school projects fit together into the district’s plan, before they commit one way or the other.

Second, these responses were offered before individuals knew that the proposal would not require a tax increase. Clearly, this will be the most expensive of the three projects (or project groups), so there was likely some hesitancy as a result.

Even with this modest measure of caution, 61% said they would “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a bond issue that included the described projects. Upon finding out that the proposal would not require a tax increase, support jumped to 81% (combined “Strongly favor/Favor”).

While this number will very likely come down as the details are finalized and chatter begins in the community (and, most assuredly, there will be at least some confusion about the bond and the operating levy proposal, what each covers and what each costs), the district is starting with a solid foundation of support.

The Wentzville School District is conducting this research to better understand the current opinions across the area about two ballot issues that are being considered for the future.

One of the proposals being discussed is a bond issue for construction and renovation projects to address the growth in the district – which is expected to be an average of five hundred fifteen NEW students each year for the next 10 years. The other proposal being considered is an operating levy increase that would be used for salaries and staffing, to help the district be competitive with other neighboring districts.

I'm now going to read you the specifics of each proposal to find out which ideas you like, if any, and which you don't like, again, if any.

Let's start with the potential bond issue... *Questions 20 to 22 were rotated. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

- 20. One idea being discussed for a possible bond issue is the construction of the school district's fourth middle school. This middle school would be located on land the district owns in the North-West portion of the school district, adjacent to the new high school. This new middle school would have a capacity of between one thousand, two hundred, and one thousand five hundred students. Also, if this new middle school was built, students from EACH middle school would have their own high school, rather than splitting up. If this new middle school was part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	35%
More likely to vote against	22%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	26%
Don't know (not read)	17%

- 21. One idea for the potential bond issue is adding new classrooms at each of the school district's three middle schools to address the growth in the student population. If these classroom additions at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	72%
More likely to vote against	13%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	10%
Don't know (not read)	4%

- 22. One idea for the potential bond issue is to renovate and expand the kitchen and cafeteria facilities at each of the district's three middle schools, to assist with the flow of students and with meal preparation. If these kitchen and cafeteria projects at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	58%
More likely to vote against	14%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	20%
Don't know (not read)	9%

23. Now that you have heard what is being considered for a potential future bond issue for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	15%
Favor it	46%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose it	16%
Strongly oppose it	11%
Depends on what it costs (not read)	7%
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (not read)	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

24. What if the bond issue resulted in NO TAX INCREASE for area residents? How do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	44%
Favor it	37%
Lean favor (not read)	4%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose it	8%
Strongly oppose it	5%
Don't know (not read)	4%

25. Why do you believe you would OPPOSE/STRONGLY OPPOSE the potential bond issue we have been discussing? *Asked only of the 48 respondents who answered “Oppose” or “Strongly oppose” or who were placed in “Lean oppose” by the interviewer on question 24. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don’t believe that there wouldn’t be a tax increase	34
The projects are not needed	9
Other (see below)	5

Verbatim “other” comments

More should be spent on academics.

The kids don’t need schools so fancy.

I would need more info on what is actually proposed to get done.

Not sure there is the money right now to do all this.

A no-tax-increase proposal is never true. No taxes should be increased for seniors. We did our part. Now others must help. Chicago School District has a cap on taxes at a certain age.

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three project ideas, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages for the *idea* of a bond issue and when it is revealed that the bond issue would be “no tax increase” by age, length of time living in the district, and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 14 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=84)	35-54 (n=189)	55 or older (n=113)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=128)	More than 15 years (n=231)	Female (n=208)	Male (n=192)
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	35%	30%	36%	35%	37%	25%	35%	35%	34%
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	22%	29%	21%	19%	22%	15%	23%	21%	24%

New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	72%	69%	74%	73%	88%	54%	70%	75%	69%
New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	13%	17%	12%	12%	5%	9%	16%	13%	14%

Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote in <u>favor</u>	58%	52%	62%	54%	61%	45%	57%	58%	57%
Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	14%	19%	10%	14%	7%	8%	16%	15%	11%

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor”
percentage

For the idea of a bond issue	61%	56%	61%	62%	66%	47%	58%	60%	60%
For a no-tax-increase bond issue	81%	77%	81%	83%	83%	62%	80%	83%	78%

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three project ideas, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages for the *idea* of a bond issue and when it is revealed that the bond issue would be “no tax increase” by location of the respondent’s residence (high school drawing area), and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Response	Overall score	Holt HS drawing area (n=152)	Liberty HS drawing area (n=108)	Timberland HS drawing area (n=140)	Student, yes (n=142)	Student, past (n=114)	Student, never (n=144)
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	35%	53%	18%	28%	34%	35%	35%
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	22%	9%	43%	21%	25%	18%	23%

New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	72%	80%	63%	71%	77%	68%	72%
New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	13%	7%	23%	12%	11%	14%	15%

Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	58%	64%	50%	57%	55%	58%	60%
Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	14%	7%	19%	16%	13%	14%	14%

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage

For the idea of a bond issue	61%	66%	54%	59%	58%	61%	62%
For a no-tax-increase bond issue	81%	84%	81%	77%	80%	82%	80%

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three project ideas, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages for the *idea* of a bond issue and when it is revealed that the bond issue would be “no tax increase” by household income level of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. These numbers may not square with “Overall,” because 21 respondents refused to answer this question and five respondents who answered “More than \$200,000” are not included, because of the small number in this category.

Response	Overall score	Up to \$50K (n=89)	More than \$50K up to \$100K (n=160)	More than \$100K up to \$150K (n=73)	More than \$150K up to \$200K (n=52)
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	35%	33%	36%	36%	33%
Fourth MS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	22%	26%	21%	23%	17%

New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	72%	70%	73%	77%	75%
New classrooms at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	13%	13%	14%	12%	8%

Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	58%	61%	56%	60%	58%
Kitchen and cafeteria renovations at the existing MSS/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	14%	17%	14%	14%	4%

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage

For the idea of a bond issue	61%	57%	61%	58%	67%
For a no-tax-increase bond issue	81%	81%	79%	82%	87%

Key Finding 4: Survey participants were extremely supportive of the three benefits that would be realized by the passage of an increase in the Wentzville School District operating levy. However, that support dipped dramatically when the potential costs were presented.

Next up in the survey were questions about a potential operating levy increase. The format was the same as the bond issue – each of the three benefits from such an increase was presented in a separate question. After each question was read, respondents were asked if including this benefit in such a proposal would make them “More likely to vote in favor,” “More likely to vote against” or would it “Make no difference” in their voting decision.

Support was strong for all three benefits. Specifically, the percentages of those saying “More likely to vote in favor” were as follows:

- Competitive salaries for teachers, staff and transportation department employees – 75%
- Increasing the number of specialized teachers – 74%
- Increasing the overall number of teachers and staff – 62%

Perhaps even more compelling is the fact that the highest “More likely to vote against” percentage in the cross-tabulations was just 14%; most were in the single digits. In other words, there seems to be consistent support for these ideas.

After reacting to the benefits, respondents were asked a general question about their level of support or opposition to such a proposal, and 61% said they would “Strongly favor” or “Favor.” That number changed notably when the cost options were shared for review and comment.

The financial questions began with the highest amount being considered – \$29 a month increase for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district. Only 33% said they would “Strongly favor” or “Favor” such a proposal.

Those who did not select one of these options (or who were not placed in the “Lean favor” category by the interviewer) were then asked about their views on a proposal that would result in a lower level of funds for these objectives, and that would cost that same homeowner \$23 a month instead. The reaction to this drop was tepid, as combined support grew to just 34%.

Continuing opponents (and those who remained undecided) were then offered a proposal with an even lower level of available funds that would cost a little less than \$16 a month for the \$200,000 homeowner. Total support grew to 50% at that level.

Remembering the 5% Margin of Error, this means that support for a proposal that would result in a monthly tax increase of a little less than \$16 a month for the owner of a \$200,000 home ranged from 45% to 55% at the time this survey was taken. Even with the benefit of operating levy proposals only requiring a simple majority, these results suggest that the district will need to clearly, simply and repetitively present information about this proposal and how it will impact students, teachers, staff and the community-at-large.

Careful study of the cross-tabulations is also recommended, as they clearly show certain groups where support – even at this lowest tax increase level – is a bit underwater. Groups such as the Liberty and Timberland drawing areas, “never” student families, those age 35 to 54, those living in the district up to five years and those living in the district more than 15 years, male respondents and respondents whose Household Income is more than \$100,000 all reported support at less than 50%.

Again, there is no quarrel with the *ideas* being considered, but the cost will need some explaining.

Now, I’d like to share with you the ideas for a potential operating levy increase proposal, which is separate from the bond issue we were just discussing. Questions 26 to 28 were rotated. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

26. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to ensure that salaries for teachers, staff and the transportation department were competitive with other area school districts. If funding to ensure competitive salaries was part of an operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	75%
More likely to vote against	8%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	16%
Don’t know (not read)	1%

- 27. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of teachers and staff, to provide additional support for students. If funding to increase the number of teachers and staff to reduce class sizes was part of the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	62%
More likely to vote against	10%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	24%
Don't know (not read)	5%

- 28. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of specialized teachers and staff, such as reading interventionists (in-ter-VENT-un-a-lists) in schools across the district. If funding to provide for additional specialist teachers and professionals was included in the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	74%
More likely to vote against	5%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	19%
Don't know (not read)	3%

29. Now that you have heard what is being considered for a potential future operating levy increase proposal for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	7%
Favor it	54%
Lean favor (not read)	<1%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	14%
Strongly oppose it	13%
Depends on what it costs (not read)	8%
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (not read)	2%
Don't know (not read)	3%

30. What if this proposal resulted in a tax increase of about 29 dollars a month for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district? If your home was worth more than \$200,000, the tax increase would be higher. If your home was worth less, the tax increase would be lower. If the election were held today on such a proposal, would you...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	30%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	2%
Oppose it	38%
Strongly oppose it	22%
Don't know (not read)	6%

31. What if, instead, the proposal provided less additional funding, and cost the owner of a \$200,000 house about 23 dollars a month? If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? *Asked only of the 269 respondents who did not answer question 30 either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” (and who were not placed in “Lean favor” by the interviewer). The percentages shown for the three “Favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 30 and 31, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a larger levy increase would be in favor of a smaller one as well. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	31%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	37%
Strongly oppose it	22%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

32. And, what if, instead, the proposal provided even less funding, and it cost the owner of a \$200,000 house a little less than 16 dollars a month. If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? *Asked only of the 264 respondents who did not answer question 31 either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” (or who were not placed in “Lean favor” by the interviewer). The percentages shown for the three “Favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 30, 31 and 32, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a larger levy increase would be in favor of a smaller one as well. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	47%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	18%
Strongly oppose it	21%
Don’t know (not read)	9%

33. Why do you believe you would oppose the operating levy proposal from the Wentzville School District, if the election were held today? *Asked only of the 158 respondents who answered question 32 either “Oppose it,” “Strongly oppose it” or who were placed in the “Lean oppose” category by the interviewers. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don’t want a tax increase	87
Not needed/things are fine as is	43
Would need to see more specifics/costs	22
Other (see below)	6

Verbatim “other” comments

Besides needing to know more specifics on cost, I need to feel the Administration will make the right decisions.

There is so much home building going on in my area right now. The district will benefit from more homeowners.

Current staff is high quality, so they don't need more specialized teachers.

I don't want my taxes increased and they should find a source of income through other means.

I believe our school levy already makes the school district competitive with other districts.

Not sure I trust how the money would be spent.

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three benefits of an increase in the operating levy, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage for the *idea* of an operating levy and the three potential tax increase levels by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 14 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=84)	35-54 (n=189)	55 or older (n=113)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=128)	More than 15 years (n=231)	Female (n=208)	Male (n=192)
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>in</u>	75%	77%	76%	73%	71%	77%	75%	81%	69%
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>									
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	8%	5%	9%	9%	10%	8%	8%	7%	9%

Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	62%	65%	64%	58%	49%	70%	60%	67%	56%
Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	10%	5%	9%	13%	12%	7%	10%	9%	10%

Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	74%	69%	76%	77%	56%	80%	74%	78%	69%
Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	5%	5%	4%	5%	10%	5%	3%	4%	6%

**Combined “Strongly favor/Favor”
percentage**

For the idea of an operating levy increase	61%	61%	62%	59%	63%	67%	56%	63%	58%
\$29 per month increase/\$200K home	33%	36%	32%	35%	29%	32%	34%	33%	32%
\$23 per month increase/\$200K home	34%	37%	33%	37%	29%	34%	35%	35%	33%
<\$16 per month increase/\$200K home	50%	51%	49%	51%	39%	54%	46%	53%	47%

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three benefits of an increase in the operating levy, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage for the *idea* of an operating levy and the three potential tax increase levels by location of the respondent’s residence (high school drawing area), and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Response	Overall score	Holt HS drawing area (n=152)	Liberty HS drawing area (n=108)	Timberland HS drawing area (n=140)	Student, yes (n=142)	Student, past (n=114)	Student, never (n=144)
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	75%	84%	67%	73%	77%	72%	76%
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	8%	5%	12%	9%	8%	9%	8%

Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	62%	65%	58%	61%	70%	61%	54%
Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	10%	6%	11%	12%	5%	13%	11%

Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	74%	80%	72%	68%	75%	77%	69%
Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	5%	3%	4%	8%	2%	8%	5%

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage

For the idea of an operating levy increase	61%	66%	57%	57%	65%	61%	55%
\$29 per month increase/\$200K home	33%	34%	32%	31%	41%	37%	22%
\$23 per month increase/\$200K home	34%	37%	32%	32%	42%	39%	22%
<\$16 per month increase/\$200K home	50%	55%	46%	48%	54%	57%	41%

Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” and “More likely to vote against” percentages for the three benefits of an increase in the operating levy, plus combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage for the *idea* of an operating levy and the three potential tax increase levels by household income level of the respondent. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. These numbers may not square with “Overall,” because 21 respondents refused to answer this question and five respondents who answered “More than \$200,000” are not included, because of the small number in this category.

Response	Overall score	Up to \$50K (n=89)	More than \$50K up to \$100K (n=160)	More than \$100K up to \$150K (n=73)	More than \$150K up to \$200K (n=52)
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	75%	72%	82%	67%	75%
Competitive salaries/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	8%	9%	4%	14%	6%

Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	62%	63%	64%	58%	56%
Funds to hire additional teachers and staff/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	10%	8%	9%	10%	8%

Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>in favor</u>	74%	70%	76%	71%	73%
Additional specialized teachers/More likely to vote <u>against</u>	5%	6%	6%	3%	2%

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage

For the idea of an operating levy increase	61%	60%	65%	53%	56%
\$29 per month increase/\$200K home	33%	30%	38%	26%	31%
\$23 per month increase/\$200K home	34%	31%	39%	26%	31%
<\$16 per month increase/\$200K home	50%	54%	54%	44%	38%

Key Finding 5: Respondents showed a bit of hesitancy when asked how they would vote, if the district decided to place both issues on the same ballot. While those who said they would “Vote yes on both” outnumbered those who would vote “no” on one or both, the margin was slim.

The substantive part of the survey closed with a key question: If the district put both issues on the ballot at the same time, how do you think you would vote (again “if the election were held today”)?

Forty-one percent of survey participants said they would vote “yes” on both proposals. Only 15% said they would vote “no” on both, while 17% said they would vote “yes” on the bond, but “no” on the levy, and 3% said they would vote “yes” on the levy and “no” on the bond. The other respondents were scattered among a variety of answers that suggested uncertainty.

Clearly, the issue is not one of opposition to the ideas, but more a case of typical residents needing to know more. Time will allow the district to fill that information gap, but – particularly with a no-tax-increase *and* a tax increase appearing on the same ballot – that information must be, again, simple, clear and repetitive.

34. If the Wentzville School District decided to place BOTH the no-tax-increase school bond issue and the operating levy increase proposal on the ballot at the same time, and the election were held today, do you think you would...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Vote yes on both	41%
Vote yes on the bond and no on the levy	17%
Vote yes on the levy and no on the bond	3%
Vote no on both	15%
Vote yes on the bond, but the levy depends on what it costs (not read)	2%
Depends on what the levy costs (not read)	12%
Don't know (not read)	11%

Cross-tabulation: Percentages for the five most popular answers on the question of what the respondent would do if the district placed both an operating levy and bond issue proposal on the same ballot by age, length of time living in the district, and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 14 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=84)	35-54 (n=189)	55 or older (n=113)	Up to 5 years (n=41)	5-15 years (n=128)	More than 15 years (n=231)	Female (n=208)	Male (n=192)
Vote “yes” on both	41%	42%	41%	41%	39%	43%	38%	43%	39%
Vote “yes” on the bond and “no” on the levy	17%	12%	23%	13%	20%	13%	19%	17%	17%
Vote “no” on both	15%	25%	11%	13%	20%	13%	15%	14%	16%
Depends on what the levy costs	12%	8%	12%	13%	7%	11%	13%	13%	10%
Don't know	11%	10%	9%	14%	10%	11%	10%	12%	9%

Cross-tabulation: Percentages for the five most popular answers on the question of what the respondent would do if the district placed both an operating levy and bond issue proposal on the same ballot by location of the respondent’s residence (high school drawing area), and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Response	Overall score	Holt HS drawing area (n=152)	Liberty HS drawing area (n=108)	Timberland HS drawing area (n=140)	Student, yes (n=142)	Student, past (n=114)	Student, never (n=144)
Vote “yes” on both	41%	45%	44%	34%	46%	45%	34%
Vote “yes” on the bond and “no” on the levy	17%	17%	15%	19%	17%	15%	19%
Vote “no” on both	15%	12%	22%	13%	14%	12%	18%
Depends on what the levy costs	12%	8%	9%	18%	13%	11%	10%
Don't know	11%	11%	9%	11%	4%	12%	15%

Cross-tabulation: Percentages for the five most popular answers on the question of what the respondent would do if the district placed both an operating levy and bond issue proposal on the same ballot by household income level of the respondent.

Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. These numbers may not square with “Overall,” because 21 respondents refused to answer this question and five respondents who answered “More than \$200,000” are not included, because of the small number in this category.

Response	Overall score	Up to \$50K (n=89)	More than \$50K up to \$100K (n=160)	More than \$100K up to \$150K (n=73)	More than \$150K up to \$200K (n=52)
Vote “yes” on both	41%	51%	40%	41%	31%
Vote “yes” on the bond and “no” on the levy	17%	13%	15%	19%	29%
Vote “no” on both	15%	16%	16%	18%	8%
Depends on what the levy costs	12%	10%	13%	8%	15%
Don't know	11%	9%	11%	8%	13%

Demographics

The survey closed with a series of demographic questions that are not subject to quota, but that contain data used to create the cross-tabulation groups seen throughout this survey.

Some of the highlights:

- The respondents trended toward longer term residents (58% had lived in the district more than 15 years), but they also included 25% who had resided there 10 years or less.
- 67% were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 142 current student families, 114 past student families and 144 “never” student families.
- 54% of the respondents were female, while 46% were male.

Thank you for staying with me. My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.

35. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of the Wentzville School District? Is it...? *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	3%
2 years to 5 years	8%
More than 5 years to 10 years	14%
More than 10 years to 15 years	18%
More than 15 years	48%
I’ve lived here all my life	10%

36. In what age group are you? Is it...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	19%
35 to 44	23%
45 to 54	25%
55 to 64	16%
65 or older	12%
Refused (not read)	4%

37. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in the Wentzville School District right now? *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	134
Yes, children and grandchildren	8
Yes, grandchildren	62
No	196

38. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated? *Asked only of the 258 respondents who answered question 37 either “Yes, grandchildren” or “No.” Numbers rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	106
Yes, children and grandchildren	8
Yes, grandchildren	3
No	141

39. And finally, I'm going to read some ranges for household income. Now, I DON'T WANT TO KNOW YOUR EXACT INCOME, but if you would, please say "stop" when I get to the range that best describes your total expected household income, before taxes, for 2019. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Up to \$50,000	22%
More than \$50,000 up to \$75,000	17%
More than \$75,000 up to \$100,000	24%
More than \$100,000 up to \$150,000	18%
More than \$150,000 up to \$200,000	13%
More than \$200,000	1%
Refused (Don't read)	5%

40. RECORD GENDER

Response	Percentage
Female	54%
Male	46%

Summary

The November/December 2019 survey of 400 randomly selected, registered-voter, heads of household (male or female) in the Wentzville School District revealed the presence of a patron population that seems to be on the same page as the district, for the most part.

- “Grades” for the district’s current performance were strong, with the exception of two district/patron relationship factors – areas that are often at the bottom of the list on this exercise.
- Residents are clearly interested in the district, as all but one of the factors received a grade – rather than an answer of “Don’t know” – from at least 81% of the respondents.
- The ideas for a potential no-tax-increase bond issue were well received, although there appears to be a need for more information and explanation about the fourth middle school. This is not a case of opposition, but more an unwillingness to express an opinion at this time on this project.
- Voting intention on the bond issue, as of the time this survey was taken, was strong in general and very positive when the fact that it would require no tax increase was revealed.
- The benefits that would result from an increase in the operating levy were even more popular, as was the idea of an operating levy proposal that would fund those benefits. However, respondents were very reserved with their support when the cost options were revealed.
- Less than half of the participants said they would likely vote “yes” on both proposals, if they appeared on the same ballot, but outright opposition to one or both was less. Again, it appears like a case where information and communication will play a key role.

It seems clear that the community likes what is happening at the Wentzville School District. As the district moves forward into the communication phase of its proposals, it will be important to demonstrate clearly how these changes will maintain and enhance the quality that is seen in these results and that has come to be expected by district patrons.



**Wentzville School District
2019 Online Surveys of the community, parents and staff
Final Report
December 31, 2019**

Introduction

At the same time a statistically reliable telephone survey was being conducted with residents of the Wentzville School District, similar online surveys were made available to community members (via the district's website) and to staff members and parents (through an email distribution of separate survey links to each audience).

Parents took the most advantage of this opportunity to speak up, as 986 chose to take part, though not all those who participated answered all the questions – a situation that is typical with online surveys. A total of 745 staff members participated, followed by 36 residents.

The results of the online surveys are shown below, in a form that allows for direct comparison, where possible, to the more statistically reliable telephone survey of randomly selected heads of households in the district. Because those who participate are self-selected, rather than randomly drawn, all online data should be considered *supplemental information*. The telephone survey answers are in bold, to make the distinction between the two methodologies clear.

And because the numbering varies between the telephone and online surveys, the results below are shown in the order in which the questions appeared in the online survey, but without question numbers. All wording reflects the online survey wording, meaning that phrases, such as "As we just discussed" and other language that would be used during a phone conversation, have been replaced with more directive language for respondents who were completing the survey on their own.

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Three other important notes:

First, all questions with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.

Second, the shading in the charts, when it is present, is to improve readability. There is no significance, in terms of the results.

Finally, and most importantly, the results for the community online survey should be considered “for information only,” due to the small response count.

Evaluation of the district's performance

As you know, students in school are traditionally given a grade of A, B, C, D or F to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Wentzville School District from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Responses are displayed using a 5-point weighted scale, in which each grade of "A" is worth five points, down to each grade of "F" being worth one point. The points are totaled and then divided by the number of people willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, "Don't know." A score of 4.00 is a "B," although, taking into account the Margin of Error (at least for the parent and staff surveys, which have a large number of participants), a score as low as 3.80 should still be considered a "B." Note: "n" equals the number of responses on each survey.

Factor	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Quality of technology available to students	4.72	4.41	4.33	4.47
Quality of school facilities	4.64	4.29	3.94	4.15
Safety of students	4.50	4.05	4.03	3.81
Performance of teachers	4.31	4.36	4.52	4.15
Preparing students to be college- and career-ready	4.24	4.04	4.22	3.59
Performance of school principals	4.18	4.19	4.16	3.53
Quality of education	4.17	4.35	4.41	3.85
Performance of the Superintendent	3.98	3.87	3.99	3.14
Performance of the School Board	3.88	3.71	3.83	2.78
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.85	4.20	4.32	3.40
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.80	3.98	4.03	3.13
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67	3.83	4.12	3.11
The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38	3.69	3.98	2.46

Thinking about everything you know or have heard about the district, what overall grade would you give the Wentzville School District?

Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
4.19	4.13	4.14	3.38

Reactions to the bond issue proposal components and cost

The Wentzville School District is conducting this research to better understand the current opinions across the area about two ballot issues that are being considered for the future.

One of the proposals being discussed is a bond issue for construction and renovation projects to address the growth in the district – which is expected to be an average of 515 NEW students each year for the next 10 years. The other proposal being considered is an operating levy increase that would be used for salaries and staffing, to help the district be competitive with other neighboring districts.

Below are the specifics of each proposal. Please indicate which ideas you like, if any, and which you don't like, again, if any.

Let's start with the potential bond issue...

One idea being discussed for a possible bond issue is the construction of the school district's fourth middle school. This middle school would be located on land the district owns in the Northwest portion of the school district, adjacent to the new high school. This new middle school would have a capacity of between 1,200 and 1,500 students. Also, if this new middle school was built, students from EACH middle school would have their own high school, rather than splitting up. If this new middle school was part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the bond issue	35%	73%	83%	63%
More likely to vote against the bond issue	22%	11%	4%	15%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	26%	9%	6%	22%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	17%	7%	8%	0%

One idea for the potential bond issue is adding new classrooms at each of the school district's three middle schools to address the growth in the student population. If these classroom additions at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the bond issue	72%	44%	49%	41%
More likely to vote against the bond issue	13%	32%	28%	41%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	10%	14%	13%	7%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	4%	9%	11%	11%

One idea for the potential bond issue is to renovate and expand the kitchen and cafeteria facilities at each of the district's three middle schools, to assist with the flow of students and with meal preparation. If these kitchen and cafeteria projects at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the bond issue	58%	47%	48%	41%
More likely to vote against the bond issue	14%	19%	12%	30%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	20%	23%	27%	22%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	9%	11%	13%	7%

Now that you have read what is being considered for a potential future bond issue for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	15%	35%	50%	29%
Favor it	46%	40%	33%	29%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	16%	8%	3%	7%
Strongly oppose it	11%	6%	2%	18%
Depends on what it costs (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	7%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	4%	11%	12%	18%

What if the bond issue resulted in NO TAX INCREASE for area residents? How do you think you would vote, if the election were held today?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	44%	65%	72%	44%
Favor it	37%	23%	17%	19%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	8%	3%	2%	4%
Strongly oppose it	5%	4%	1%	26%
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	4%	4%	8%	7%

Why do you believe you would OPPOSE/STRONGLY OPPOSE the potential bond issue we have been discussing? *This question was provided to the respondents on the online surveys who did not answer “Strongly favor it” or “Favor it” on the previous question. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below. Only most frequent answers for each online survey are shown.*

Parents

Response	Number
District wastes money	11
Taxes are too high right now/Don't want an increase	7
District is already in debt/Should pay that off first	6
Students aren't getting a good education	5
Don't trust that the money will be spent as promised	4
Boundary process has been poorly run	4
Developers should be expected to pay	3
Don't believe “no tax increase”	3
School safety/behavior issues should be the focus	3

Staff members

Response	Number
District wastes money	2
Taxes are too high right now/Don't want an increase	2
District is already in debt/Should pay that off first	2
Boundary process has been poorly run	2

Community members *Because of the small number of responses to the survey from this group, all verbatim comments are shown, as typed by the respondent.*

My taxes high enough! I do not have children in school. my taxes are \$1,875.00 - \$1,356.00 goes to school. Enough is !Enough! I am tired of being taxed to death.

Only way to pay off debt is through more taxes! Always seems that we see only the needs of district. Maybe it would be good to see how the district has cut back.

Poor decision making by Central Office Administration and the Board of Education.

You are lying when you say it is a "no tax increase." You would be issuing bonds, which must be paid back. By extending the length of bonds, taxpayers would pay a higher rate for a longer period of time. It is devious to call this "no tax increase."

The district needs more funds from residents to provide the very best education and services for all students, K-12.

Reactions to the operating levy proposal components and cost

Below are the ideas for a potential operating levy increase proposal, which is separate from the bond issue discussed above.

One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to ensure that salaries for teachers, staff and the transportation department were competitive with other area school districts. If funding to ensure competitive salaries was part of an operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the operating levy proposal	75%	70%	89%	52%
More likely to vote against the operating levy proposal	8%	15%	3%	33%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	16%	8%	2%	11%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	7%	6%	4%

One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of teachers and staff, to provide additional support for students. If funding to increase the number of teachers and staff to reduce class sizes was part of the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the operating levy proposal	62%	72%	84%	44%
More likely to vote against the operating levy proposal	10%	14%	5%	33%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	24%	8%	4%	19%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	5%	7%	7%	4%

One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of specialized teachers and staff, such as reading interventionists in schools across the district. If funding to provide for additional specialist teachers and professionals was included in the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
More likely to vote in favor of the operating levy proposal	74%	61%	71%	48%
More likely to vote against the operating levy proposal	5%	16%	10%	30%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	19%	14%	12%	19%
Don't know/n-a (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	3%	9%	8%	4%

Now that you have heard what is being considered for a potential future operating levy increase proposal for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	7%	45%	65%	30%
Favor it	54%	27%	20%	19%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	14%	10%	4%	19%
Strongly oppose it	13%	7%	2%	22%
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	8%	12%	10%	11%
Depends on what it costs (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	3%	n/a	n/a	n/a

What if this proposal resulted in a tax increase of about \$29 a month for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district? If your home was worth more than \$200,000, the tax increase would be higher. If your home was worth less, the tax increase would be lower. If the election were held today on such a proposal, would you...? Asked only of the respondents who chose an answer other than “Strongly favor,” “Favor” or, in the case of the telephone survey, were placed in the “Lean favor” category by the interviewer.

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	3%	20%	35%	7%
Favor it	30%	26%	29%	15%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	38%	22%	15%	22%
Strongly oppose it	22%	24%	8%	48%
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	6%	8%	13%	7%
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	0%	n/a

What if, instead, the proposal provided less additional funding, and cost the owner of a \$200,000 house about \$23 a month? If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? *Asked only of those respondents who did not answer “Strongly favor,” “Favor” or, in the case of the telephone survey, were placed in the “Lean favor” column by the interviewer on the previous question. Responses for the three “Favor” categories are the cumulative totals for this question and the previous one, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a higher tax increase would also support a lower one.*

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	3%	20%	35%	7%
Favor it	31%	30%	33%	15%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	37%	20%	13%	22%
Strongly oppose it	22%	22%	6%	44%
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	7%	9%	12%	11%

And, what if, instead, the proposal provided even less funding, and it cost the owner of a \$200,000 house a little less than \$16 a month. If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? *Asked only of those respondents who did not answer “Strongly favor,” “Favor” or, in the case of the telephone survey, were placed in the “Lean favor” column by the interviewer on the previous question. Responses for the “Favor” categories are the cumulative totals for this question and the previous two, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a higher tax increase would also support a lower one.*

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Strongly favor it	3%	21%	35%	7%
Favor it	47%	42%	41%	33%
Lean favor (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (Not read to telephone survey respondents, and not available to online participants)	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose it	18%	14%	8%	15%
Strongly oppose it	21%	19%	5%	41%
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	9%	5%	10%	4%

Why do you believe you would oppose the operating levy proposal from the Wentzville School District, if the election were held today? *This question was provided to the respondents on the online surveys who did not answer “Strongly favor it” or “Favor it” on the previous question. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below. Only most frequent answers for each online survey are shown.*

Parents

Response	Number
Taxes are too high right now/Don't want an increase	106
District wastes money	18
Make do with what you have	17
New residents mean more tax dollars/This shouldn't be needed	17
Students aren't getting a good education	14
Don't trust that the money will be spent as promised	11
Cut back on Central Office staff pay	9
Developers should be expected to pay	7
Reduce Central Office staff	7
Boundary process has been poorly run	6
Teachers are already well-paid	6
NEA controls the district	4
Use Reserve Funds first	4

Staff

Response	Number
Taxes are too high right now/Don't want an increase	30
Cut back on Central Office staff pay	11
District wastes money	8
Reduce Central Office staff	7
New residents mean more tax dollars/This shouldn't be needed	4
Make do with what you have	3
Use Reserve Funds first	3

Community members *Because of the small number of responses to the survey from this group, all verbatim comments are shown, as typed by the respondent.*

I believe there has been a lot of wasteful spending with the last two tax increases. There needs to be more spending on personnel and less on buildings.

You people waste too much money now.

The district has enough residents that are paying extremely high taxes currently. Learn to use the money wisely and don't make improvements that only partially correct the problems.

No new taxes! Where did the money go from all the home values going up!?

Our taxes in this area are the highest. If you could promise that these funds were to truly be going to staff teachers and support. Not admin building. Teachers and support staff are in the trenches and are underpaid. Not to mention there are not enough to handle the mental health crisis in these buildings that the district has known about and seems to turn a blind eye to. All staff and students are being exposed to violence on daily basis. Staff in school buildings working directly with the children need this money

Poor financial management by superintendent and board of education

Teacher pay is already competitive. That is not the problem we have. The school district has also been less than forthcoming about past tax increases/bond issues. There is no reason for Wentzville to be the highest taxed school district in the entire county.

I would oppose anything that would increase taxes by more than \$10 a month.

I don't believe the district is being good stewards of the current money and I see no reason we should have the highest tax levy of all districts in the county.

Taxes are too high already.

If the Wentzville School District decided to place BOTH the no-tax-increase school bond issue and the operating levy increase proposal on the ballot at the same time, and the election were held today, do you think you would...?

Response	Community telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=986)	Staff online survey (n=745)	Community online survey (n=36)
Vote yes on both	41%	50%	66%	33%
Vote yes on the bond and no on the levy	17%	27%	12%	11%
Vote yes on the levy and no on the bond	3%	2.%	2%	7%
Vote no on both	15%	10%	4%	30%
Vote yes on the bond, but the levy depends on what it costs (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	2%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Depends on what the levy costs (Not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	12%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Don't know (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	11%	9%	12%	19%
Other (Not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online survey participants)	n/a	3%	3%	0%

Demographics

Parent online survey

Number of participants: 986

Where the participants have children attending school in the district:

Elementary School level – 586

High School level – 308

Middle School level – 279

Prefer not to answer – 133

Early Childhood level – 46

Length of time living in the district:

5 years to 15 years – 404

Up to 5 years – 212

More than 15 years – 202

Prefer not to answer – 138

I've lived here all my life – 30

Gender:

Female – 567

Male – 223

Prefer not to answer – 196

Staff online survey

Number of participants: 745

Length of time working for the district:

More than 5 years to 15 years – 289

Up to 5 years – 199

More than 15 years – 156

Prefer not to answer – 101

Live within the district's boundaries?:

Yes – 427

No – 243

Prefer not to answer – 75

Gender:

Female – 467

Male – 117

Prefer not to answer – 161

Community online survey

Number of participants: 36

Length of time living in the district:

More than 15 years – 13

5 to 15 years – 9

Prefer not to answer – 9

I've lived here all my life – 3

Less than 5 years – 2

Currently have children attending school in the district?:

Yes – 15

No – 12

Prefer not to answer – 9

Gender:

Prefer not to answer – 18

Female – 12

Male – 6