

School Board Study Session
Monday, April 28, 2025 4:00 PM

District Office Conference Room, Room 164
Austin High School
401 3rd Ave. NW
Austin, MN 55912

Agenda

1. Call to order/roll call
Speaker(s): Chairperson
2. Approval of agenda (Action)
Speaker(s): Chairperson
3. Hormel Assurance Scholarship update
Speaker(s): Career Pathway Coordinator Jane Carlson and Riverland Program Coordinator Taylor Flugge
4. Benchmark Survey results
Speaker(s): Peter Leatherman, Morris Leatherman Company
5. Board discussion on roles, processes, and procedures
Speaker(s): Gary Lee, MN School Boards Association
6. Board discussion on district climate
Speaker(s): Chairperson
7. Adjournment (Action)
Speaker(s): Chairperson

Austin School District

2025 Residential Study

The Morris Leatherman Company

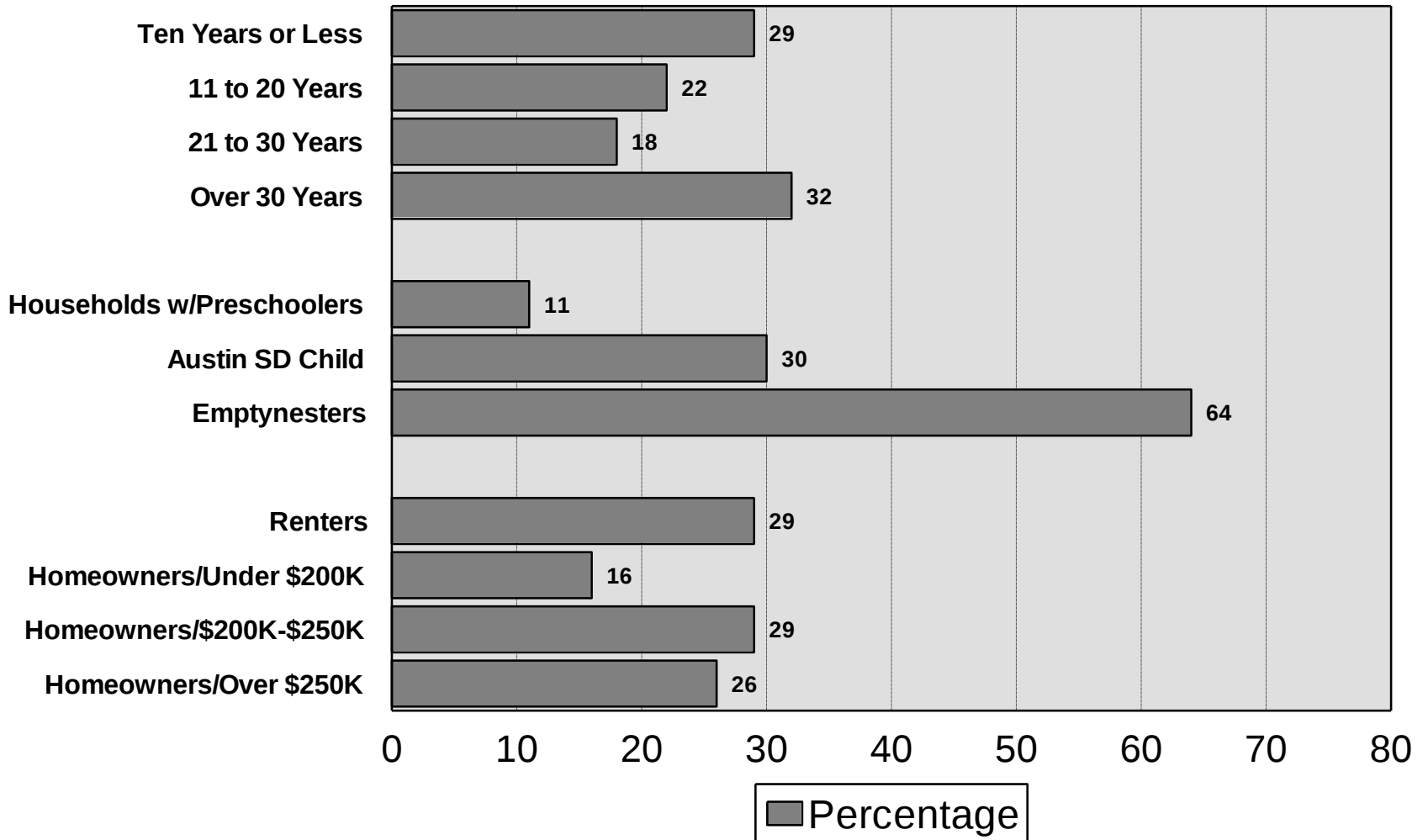
Survey Methodology

2025 Austin Public Schools

- ① 400 random sample of Austin School District residents.
 - ① Results projectable within +/-5.0% in 95 out of 100 cases
- ① Average interview time of 10 minutes
- ① Non-response level of 6.5%
- ① Telephone interviews conducted between April 2nd and April 16th, 2025
- ① Cellphone only households: 55%
- ① Landline only households: 12%
- ① Both landline and cellphone households: 33%

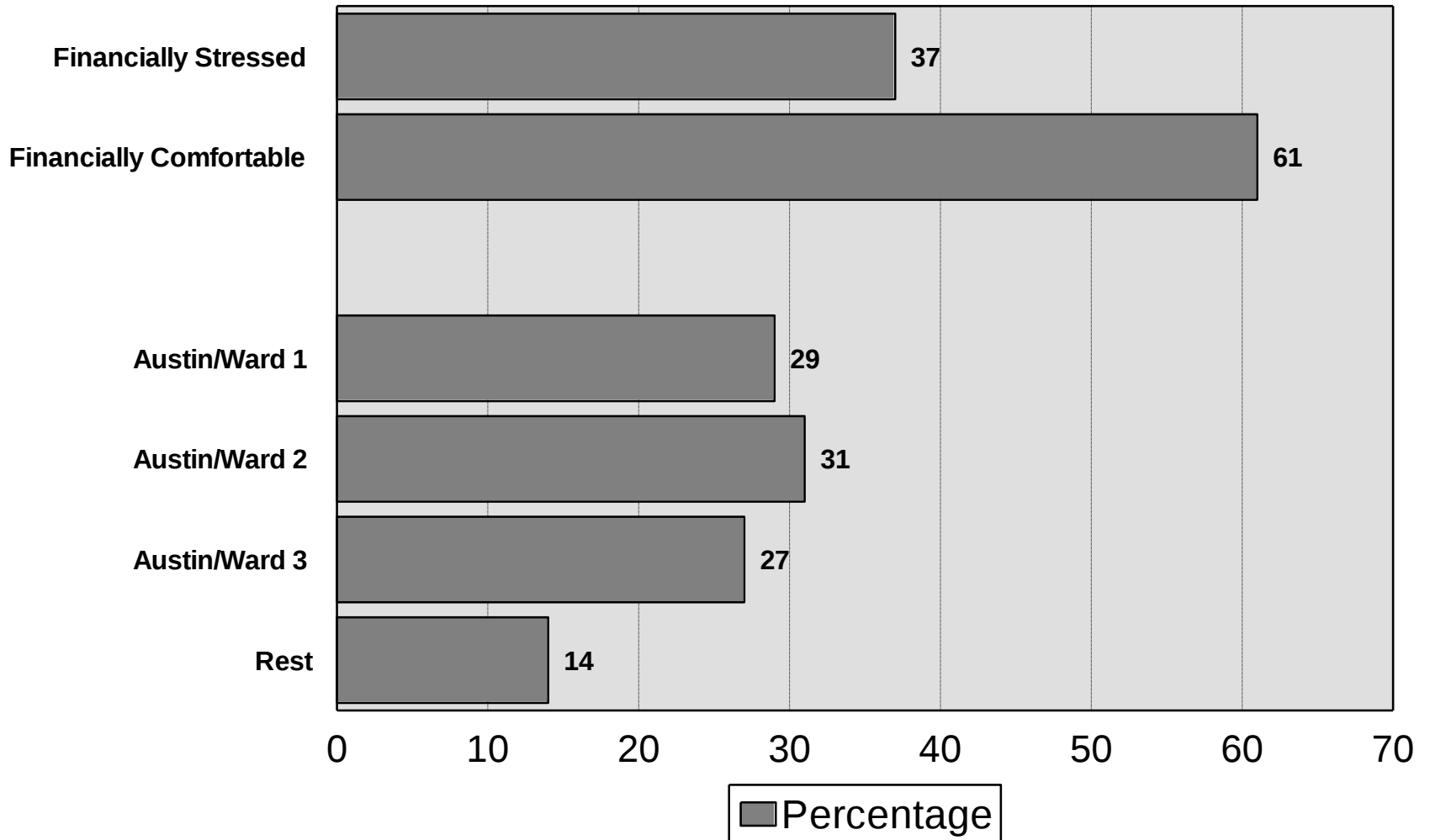
Demographics I

2025 Austin Public Schools



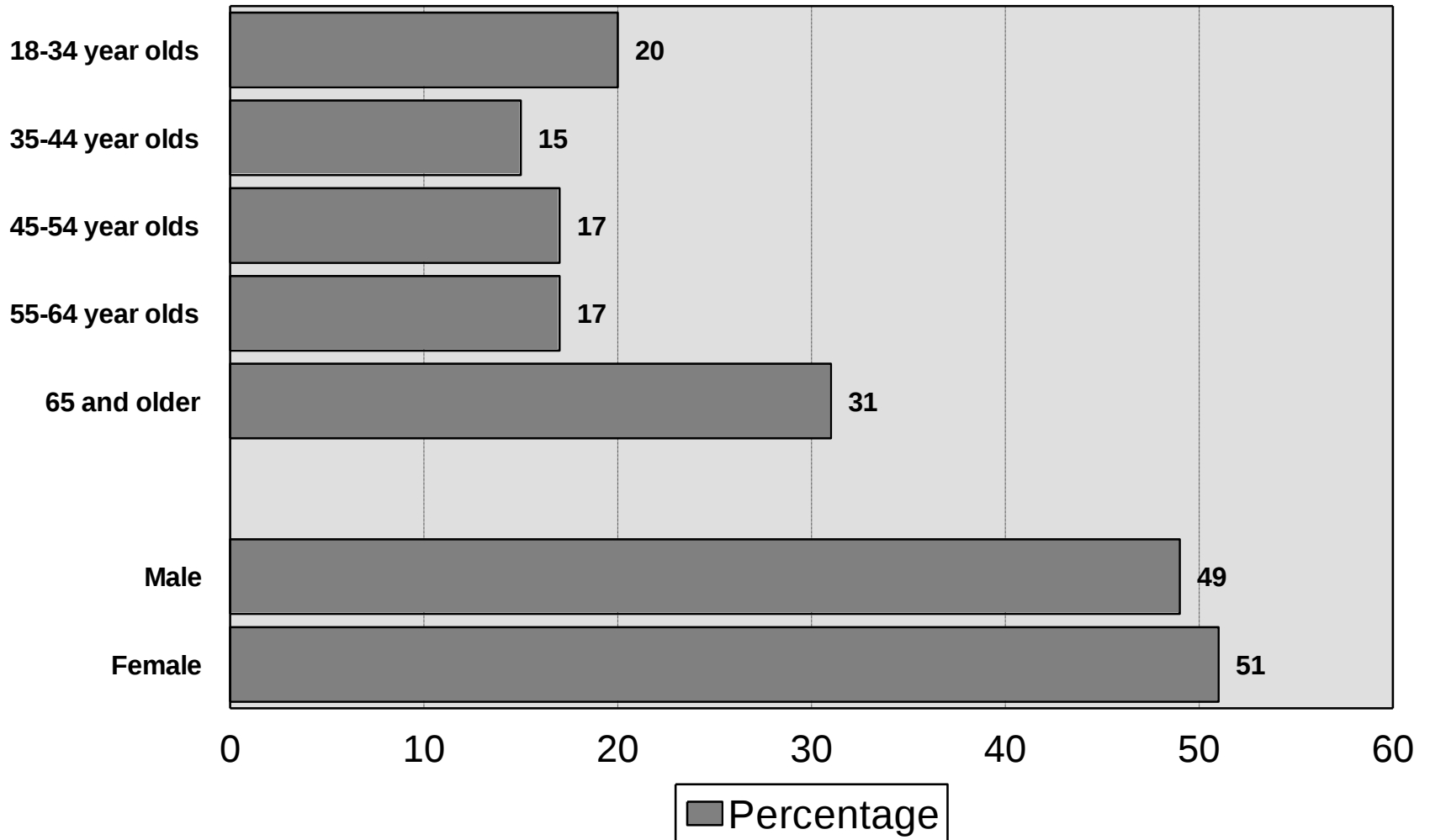
Demographics II

2025 Austin Public Schools



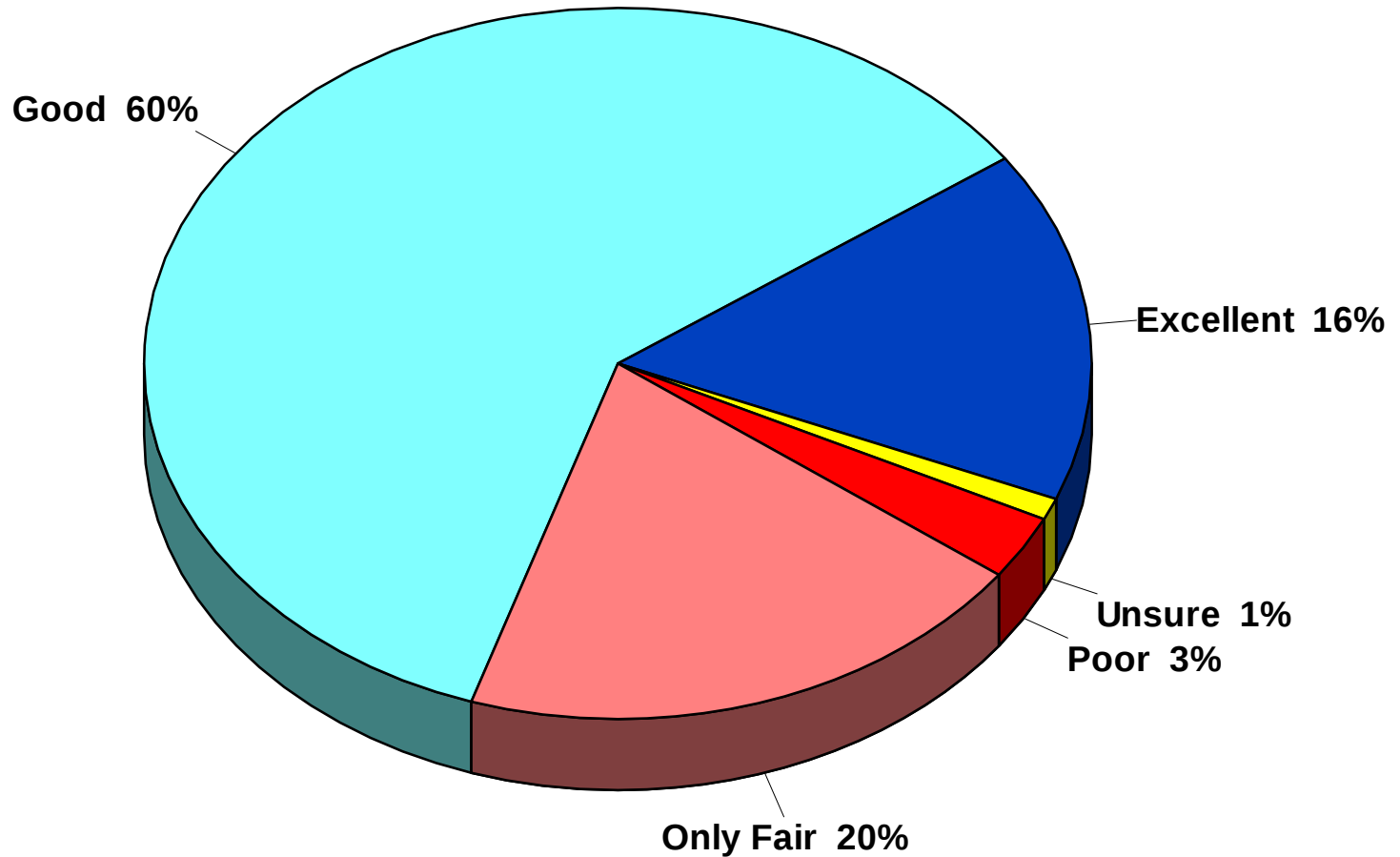
Demographics III

2025 Austin Public Schools



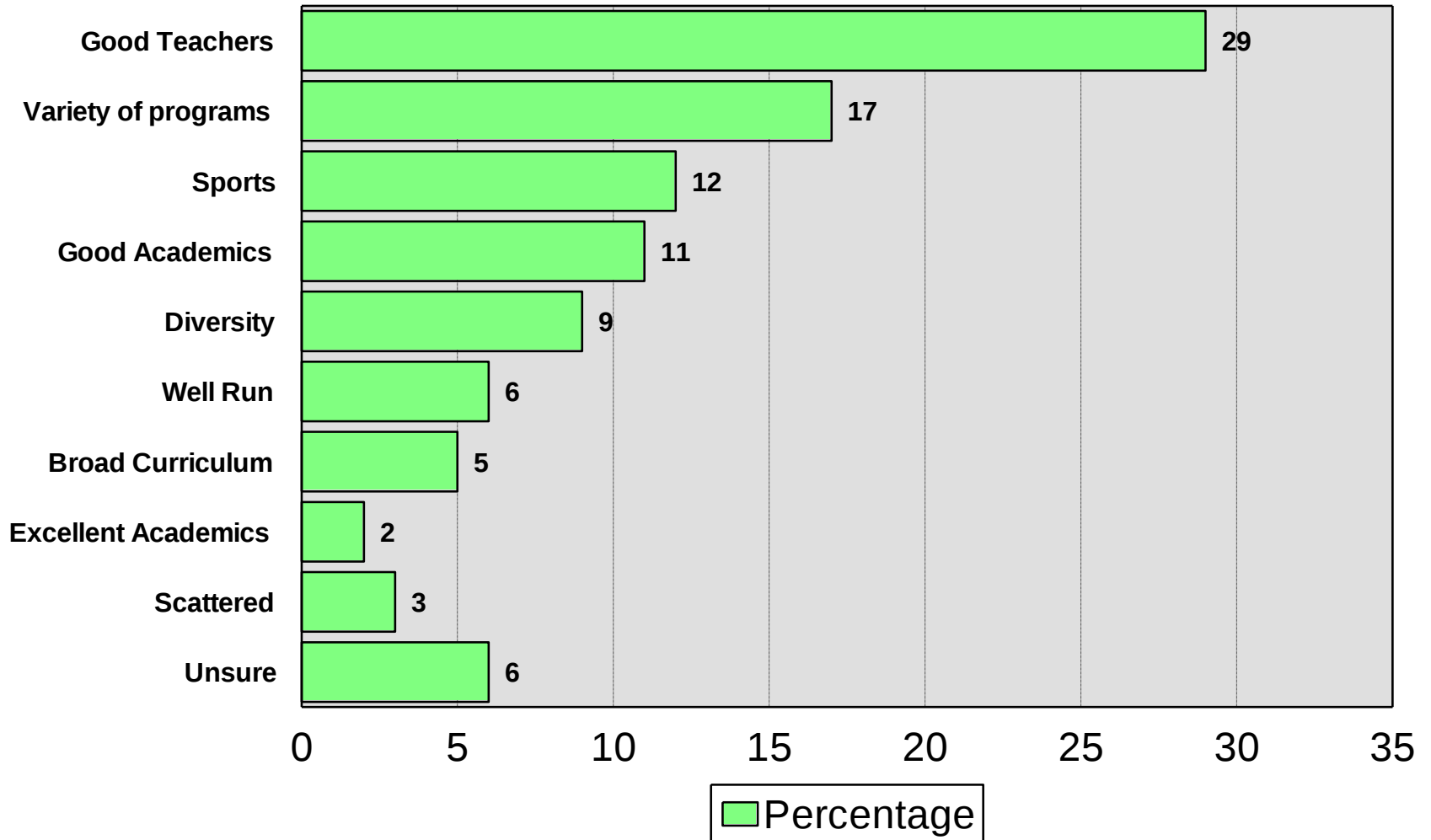
Quality of Education

2025 Austin Public Schools



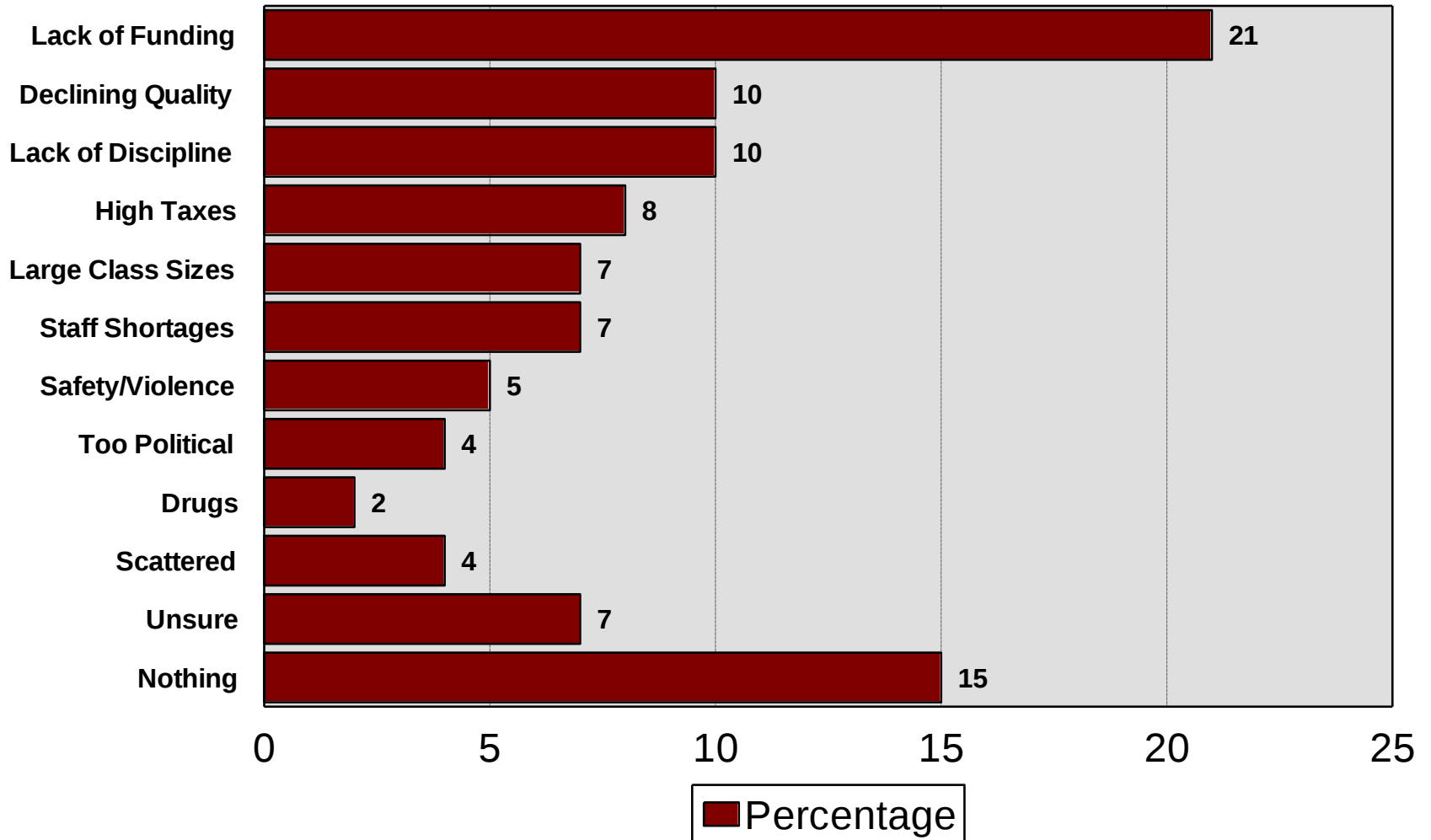
Like Most

2025 Austin Public Schools



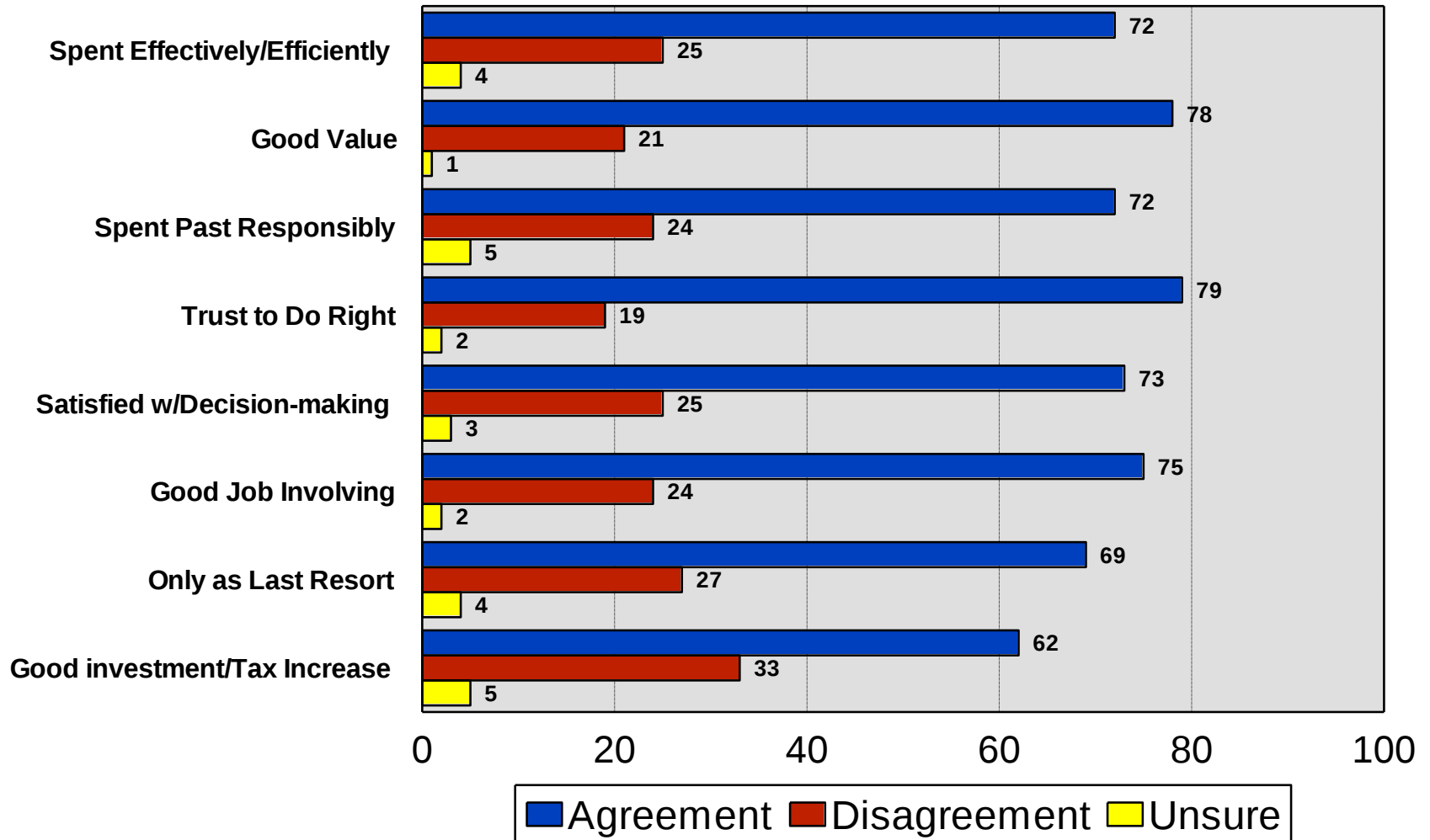
Most Serious Issue

2025 Austin Public Schools



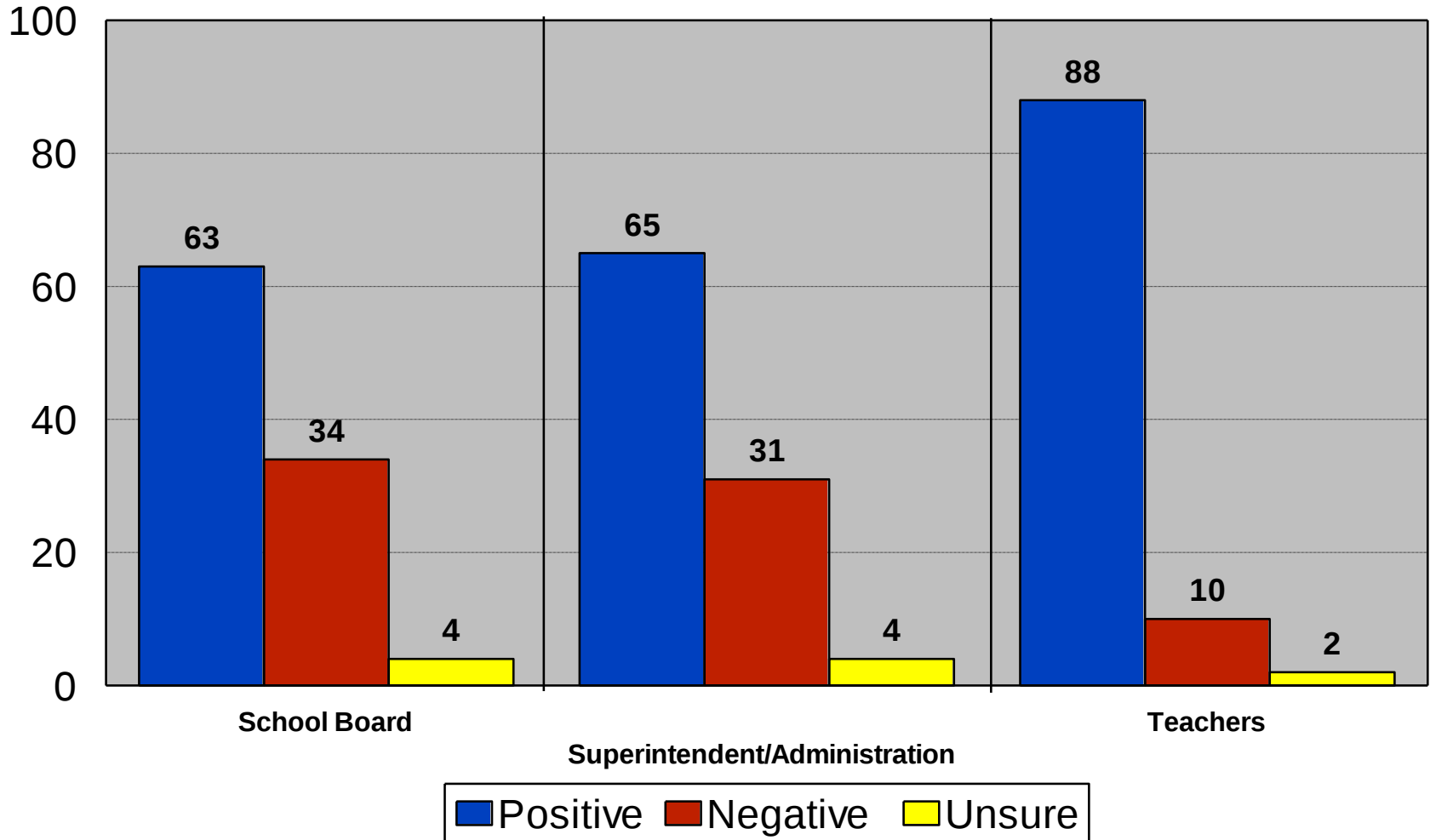
Specific School District Perceptions

2025 Austin Public Schools



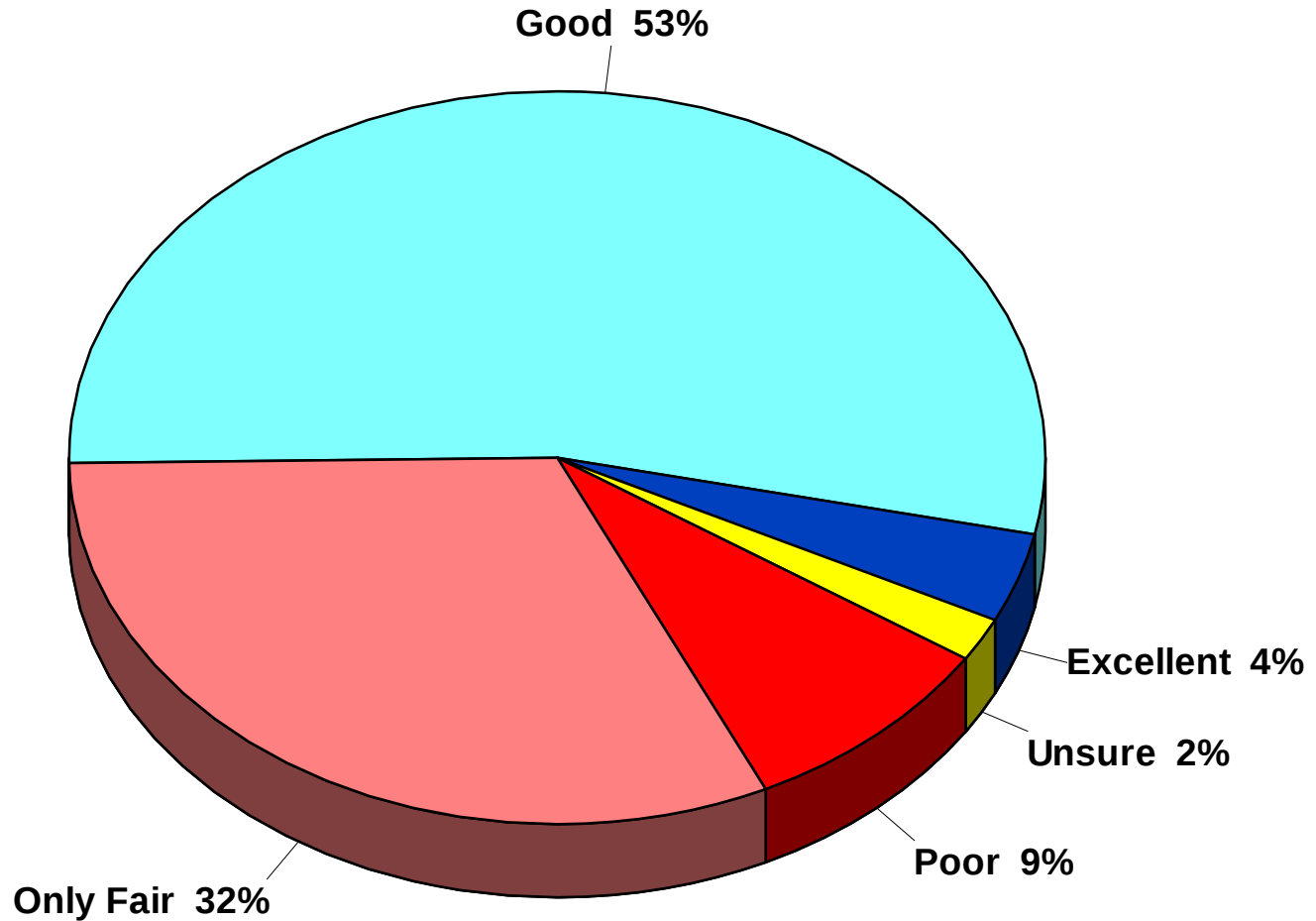
Job Performance Ratings

2025 Austin Public Schools



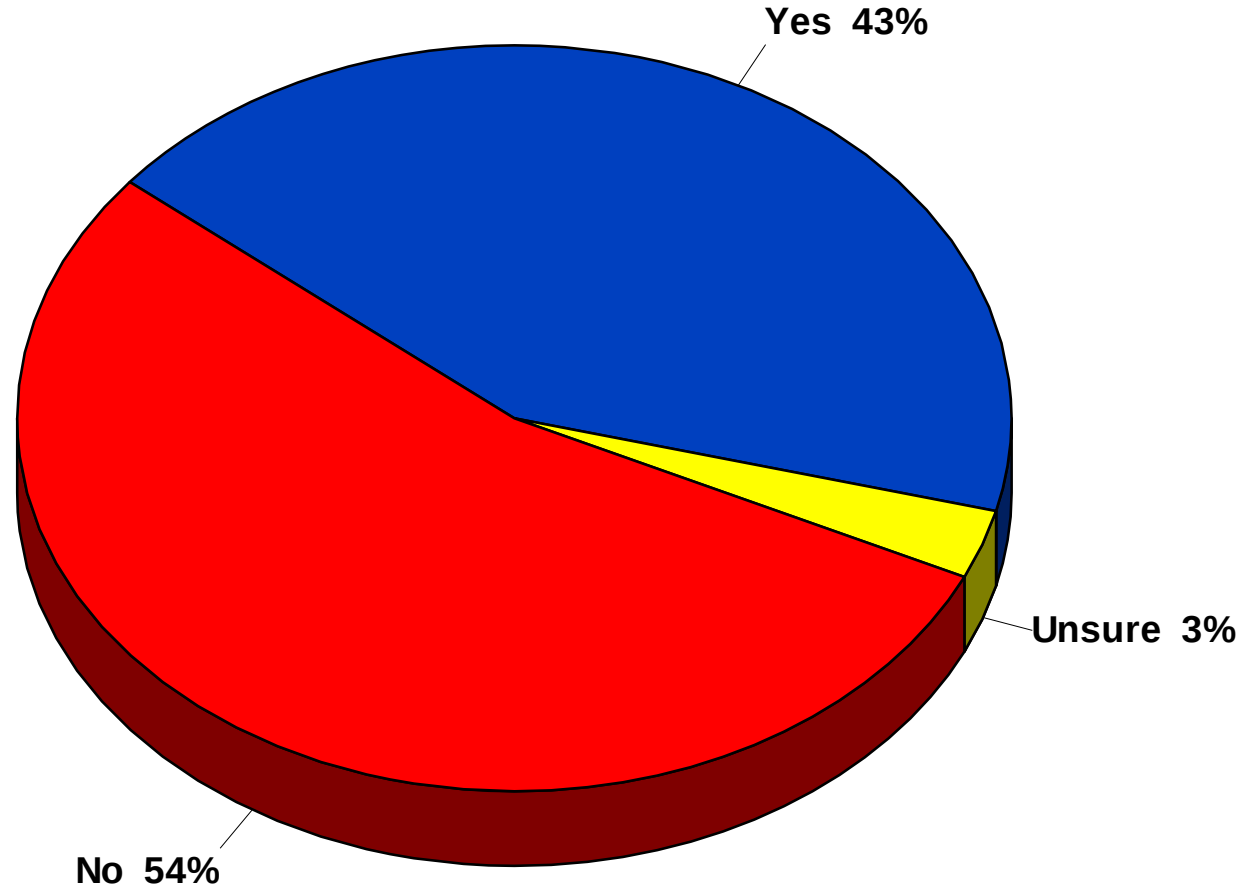
Financial Management

2025 Austin Public Schools



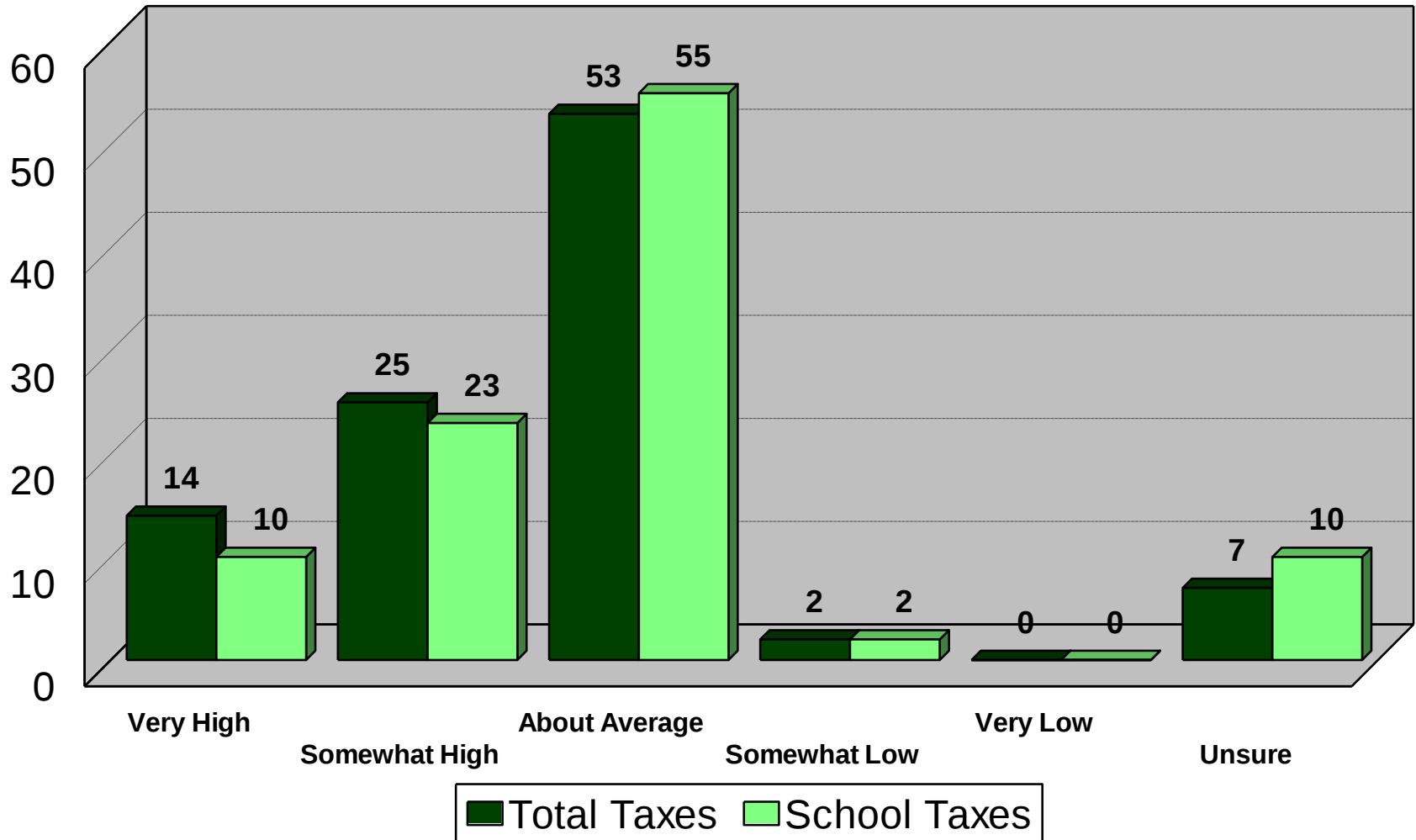
District Adequately Funded

2025 Austin Public Schools



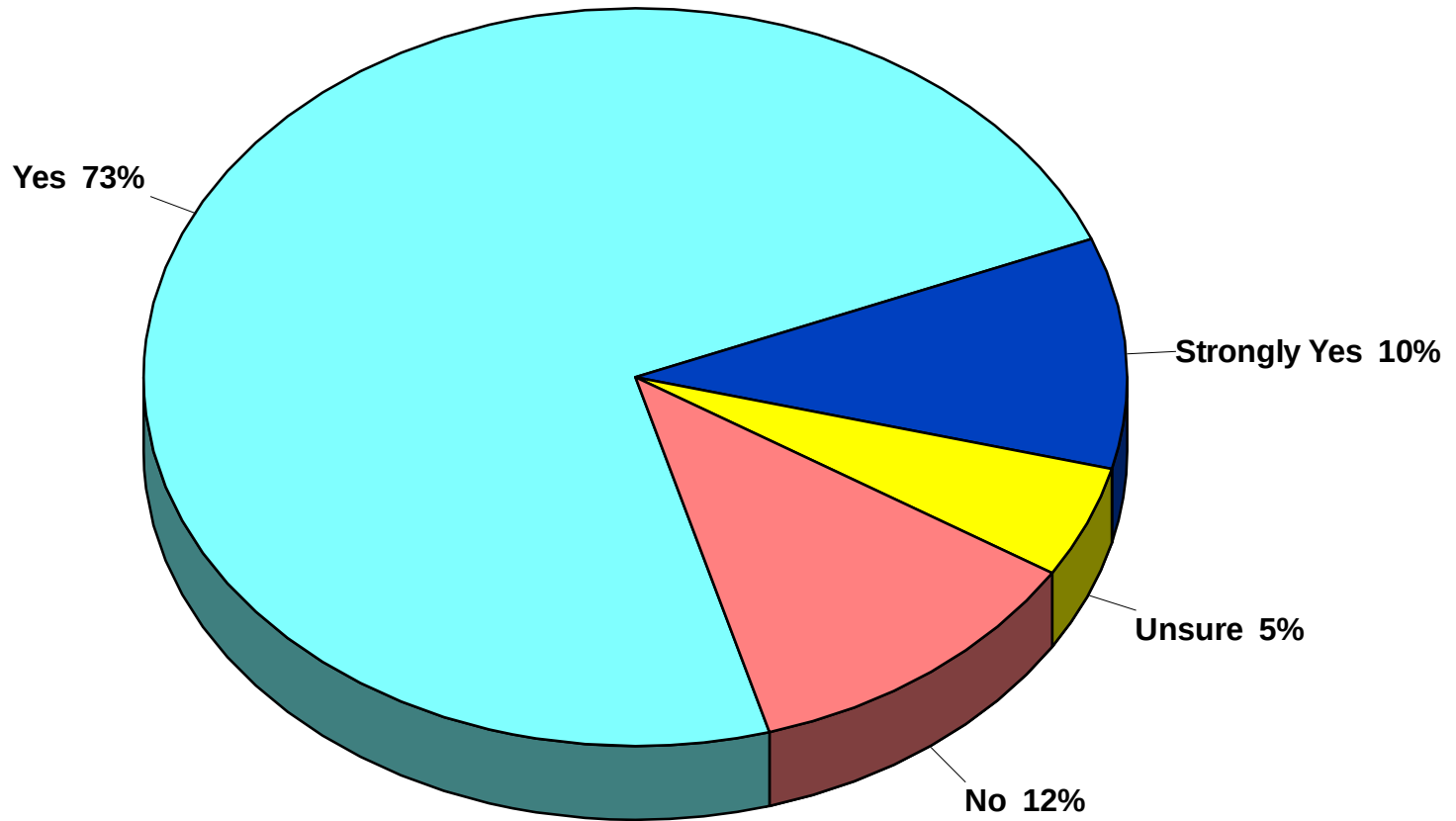
Property Tax Comparisons

2025 Austin Public Schools



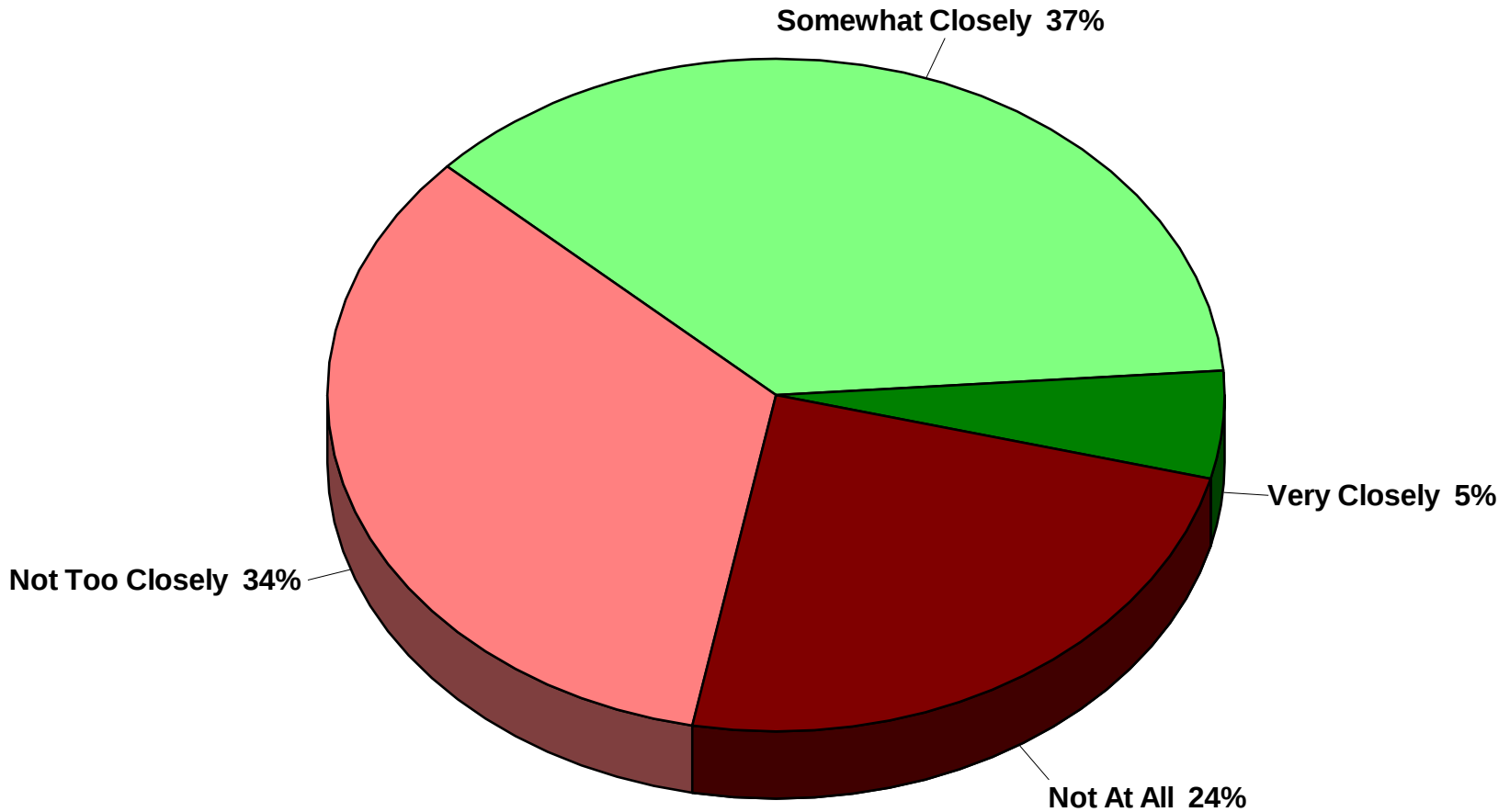
Buildings & Facilities Meet Needs

2025 Austin Public Schools



Following Discussions

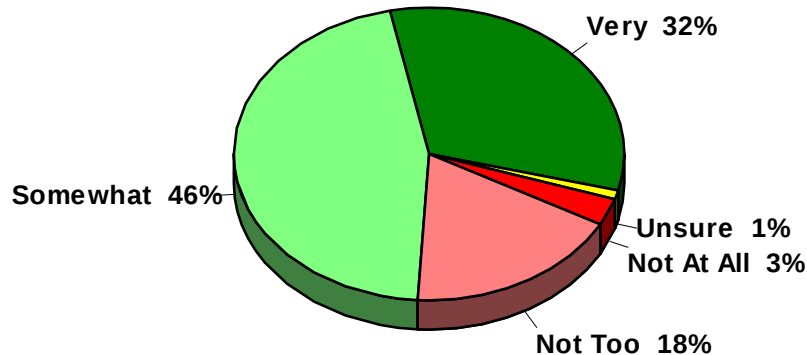
2025 Austin Public Schools



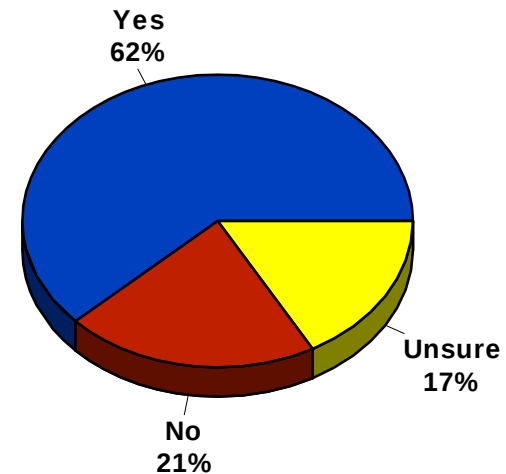
Morris Leatherman Company

Flexible Learning Spaces

2025 Austin Public Schools



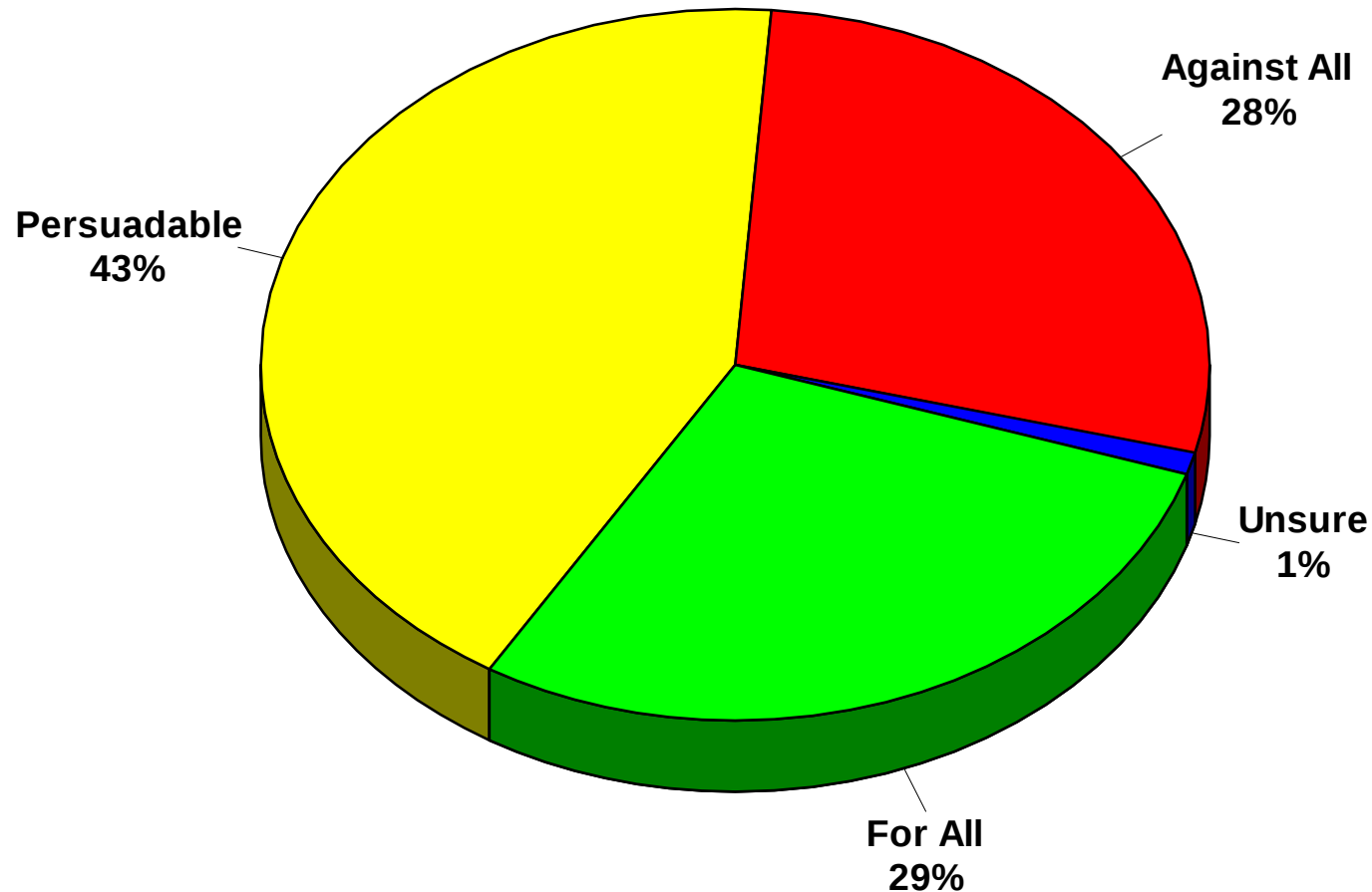
Importance of classroom design to student learning



Austin Public Schools currently provide sufficient spaces

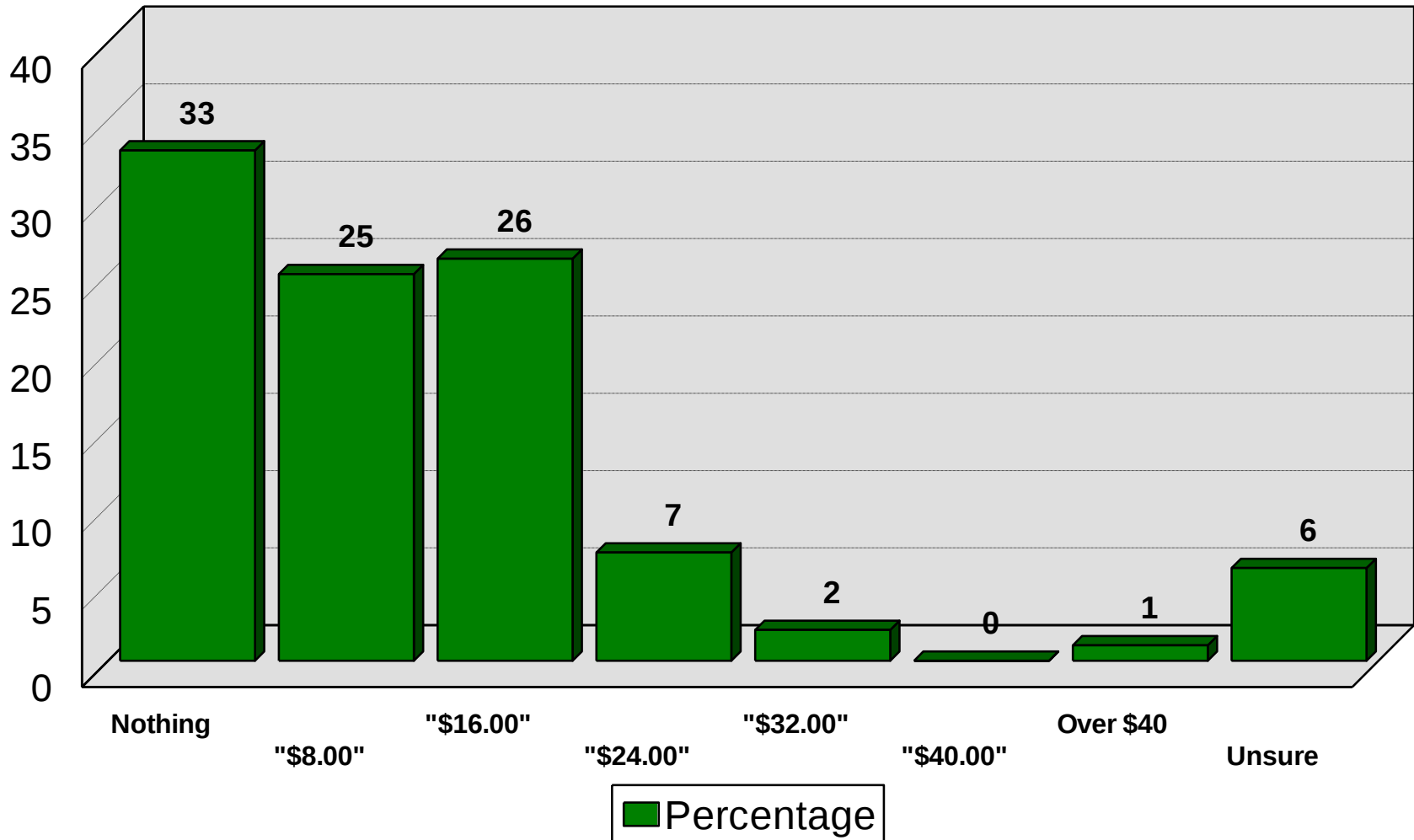
Referendum Predisposition

2025 Austin Public Schools



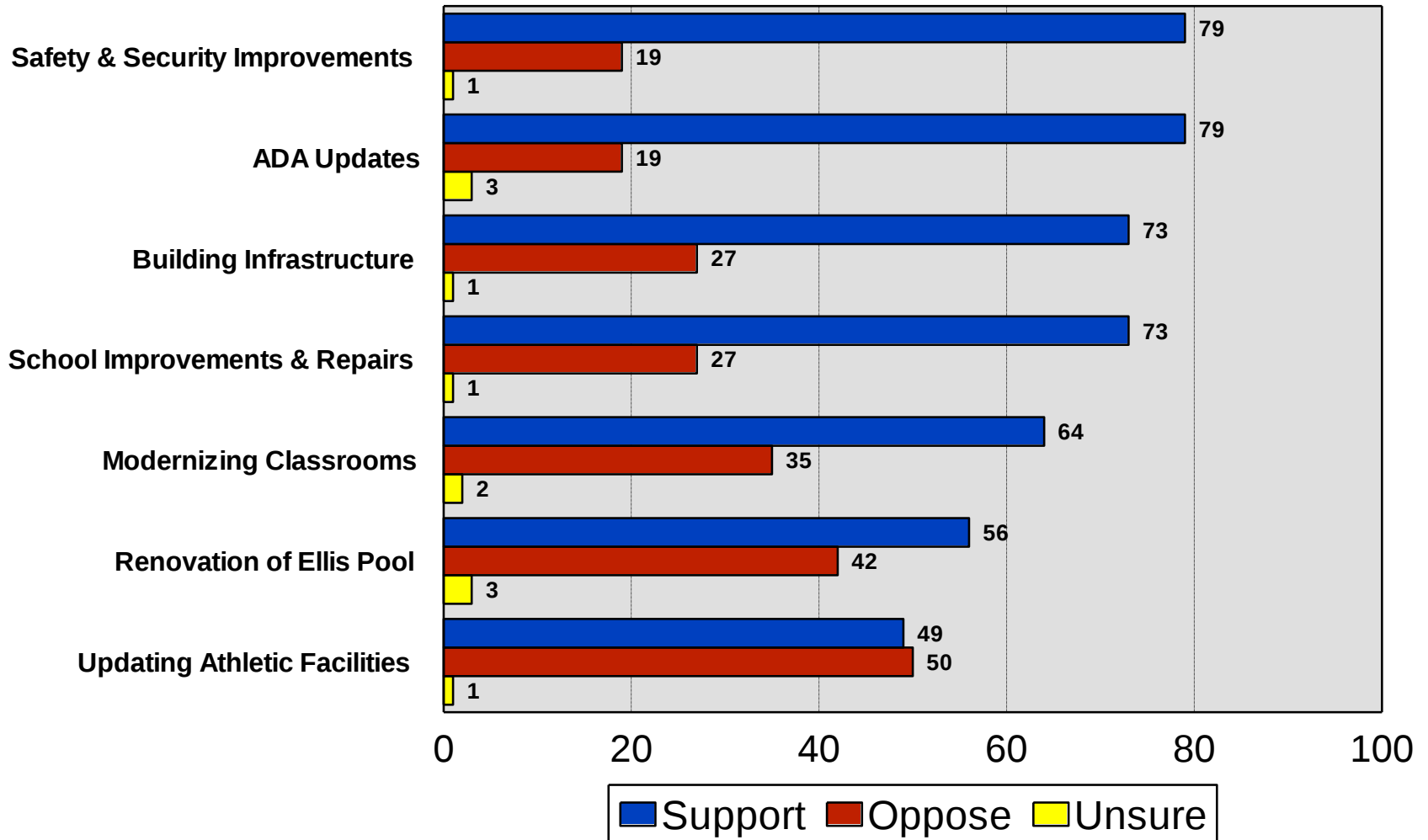
Property Tax Increase for Bond Referendum

2025 Austin Public Schools



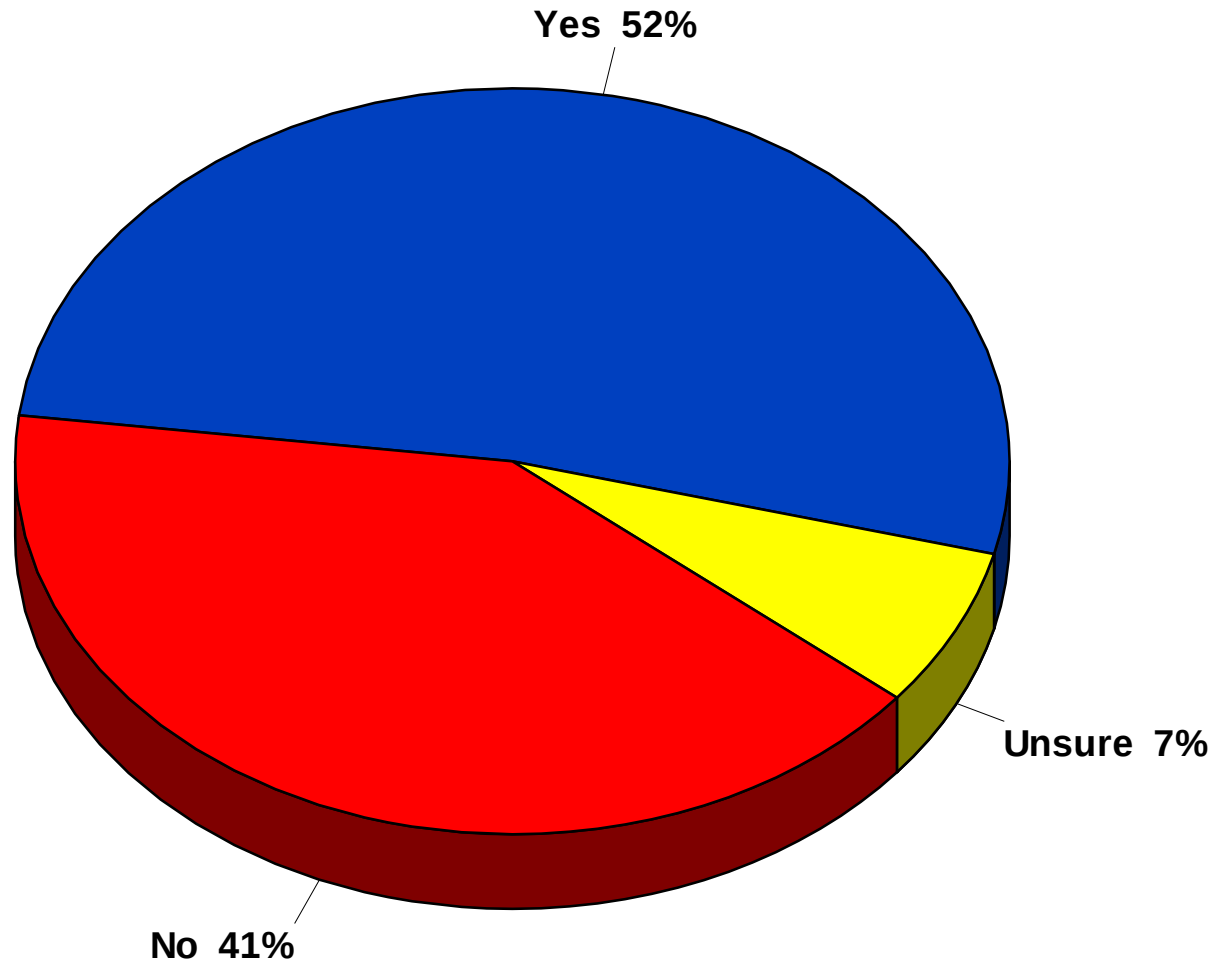
Property Tax Increase for....

2025 Austin Public Schools



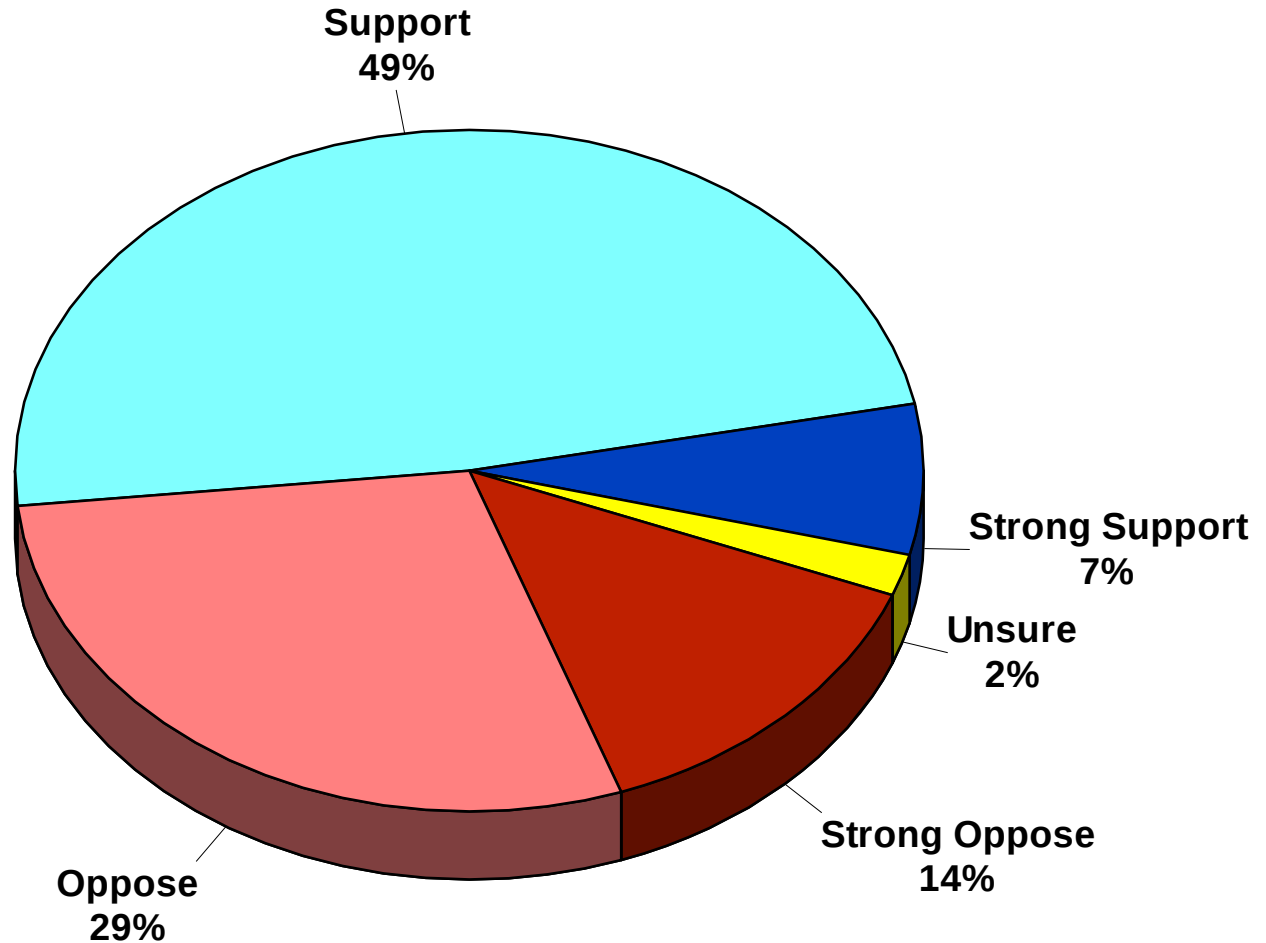
\$84MM Fair Price

2025 Austin Public Schools



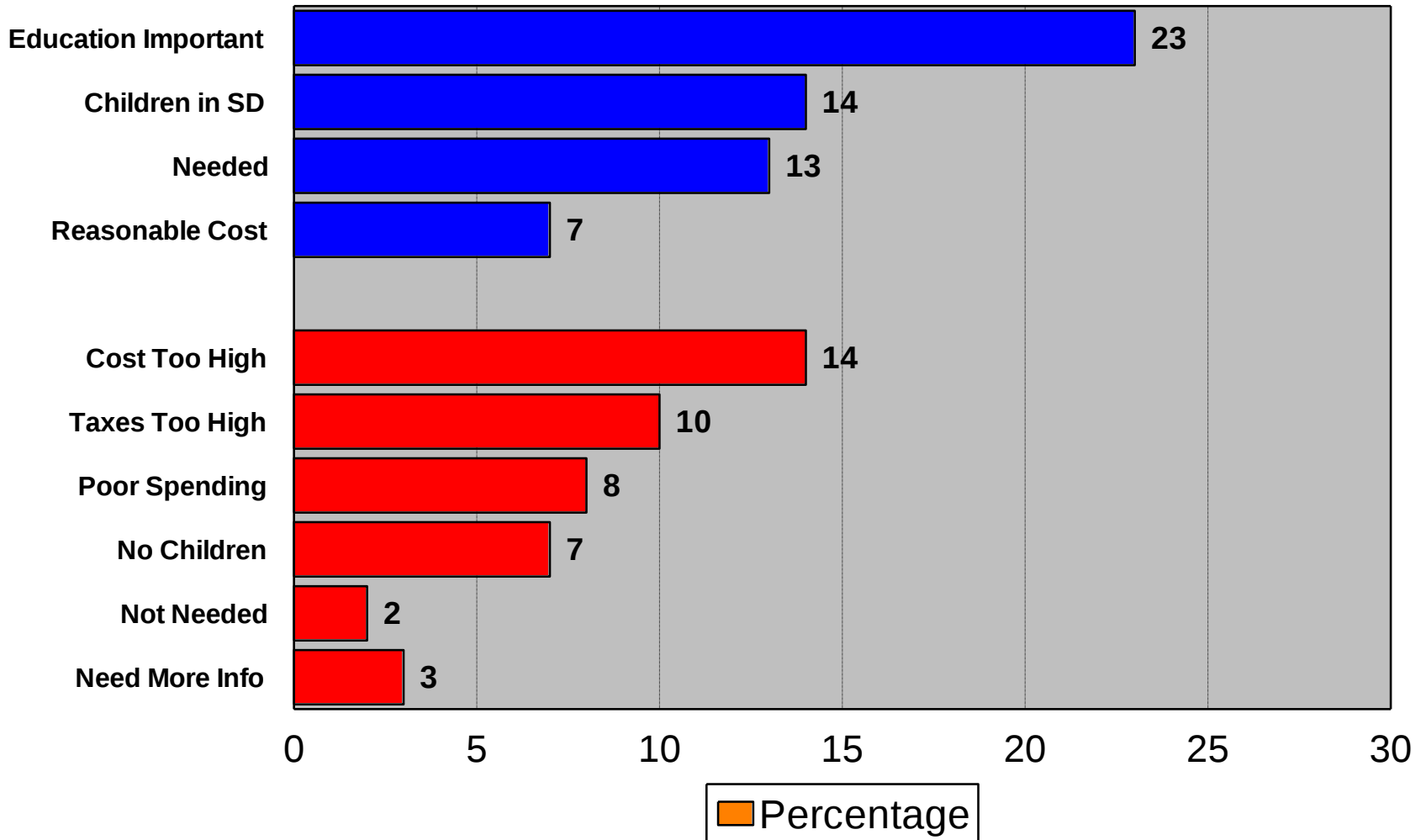
\$84MM Bond Referendum

2025 Austin Public Schools



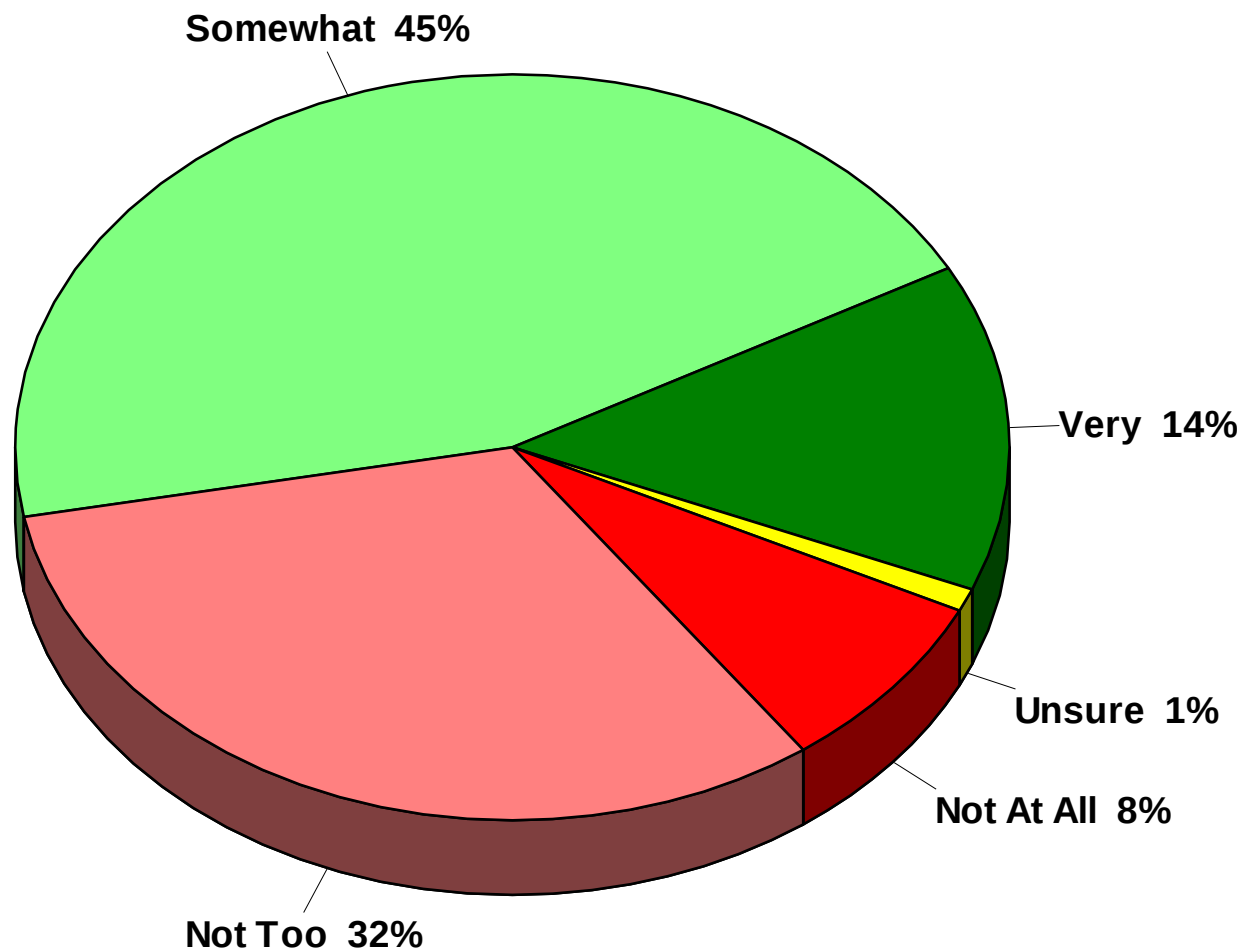
Reason for Bond Position

2025 Austin Public Schools



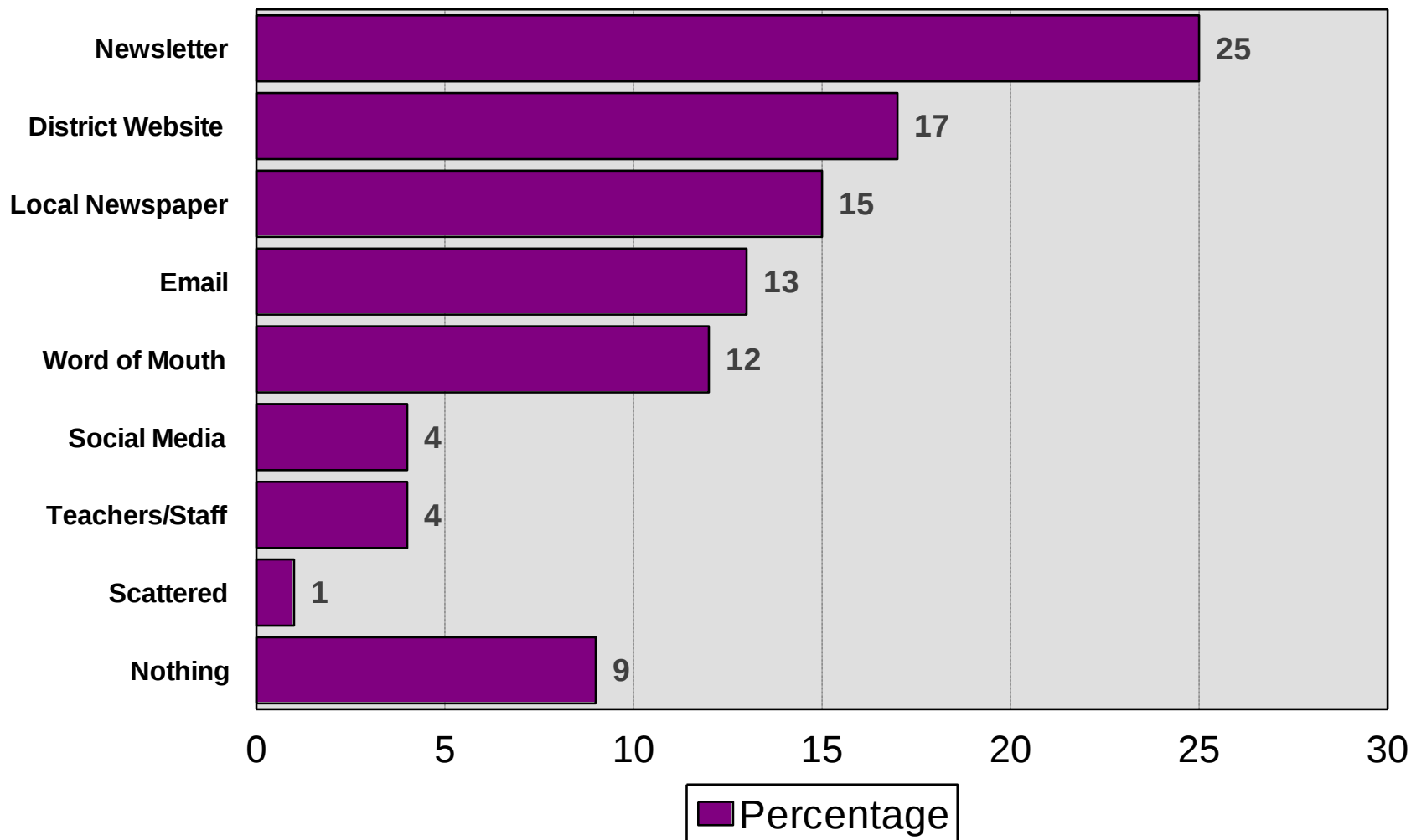
Informed about School District

2025 Austin Public Schools



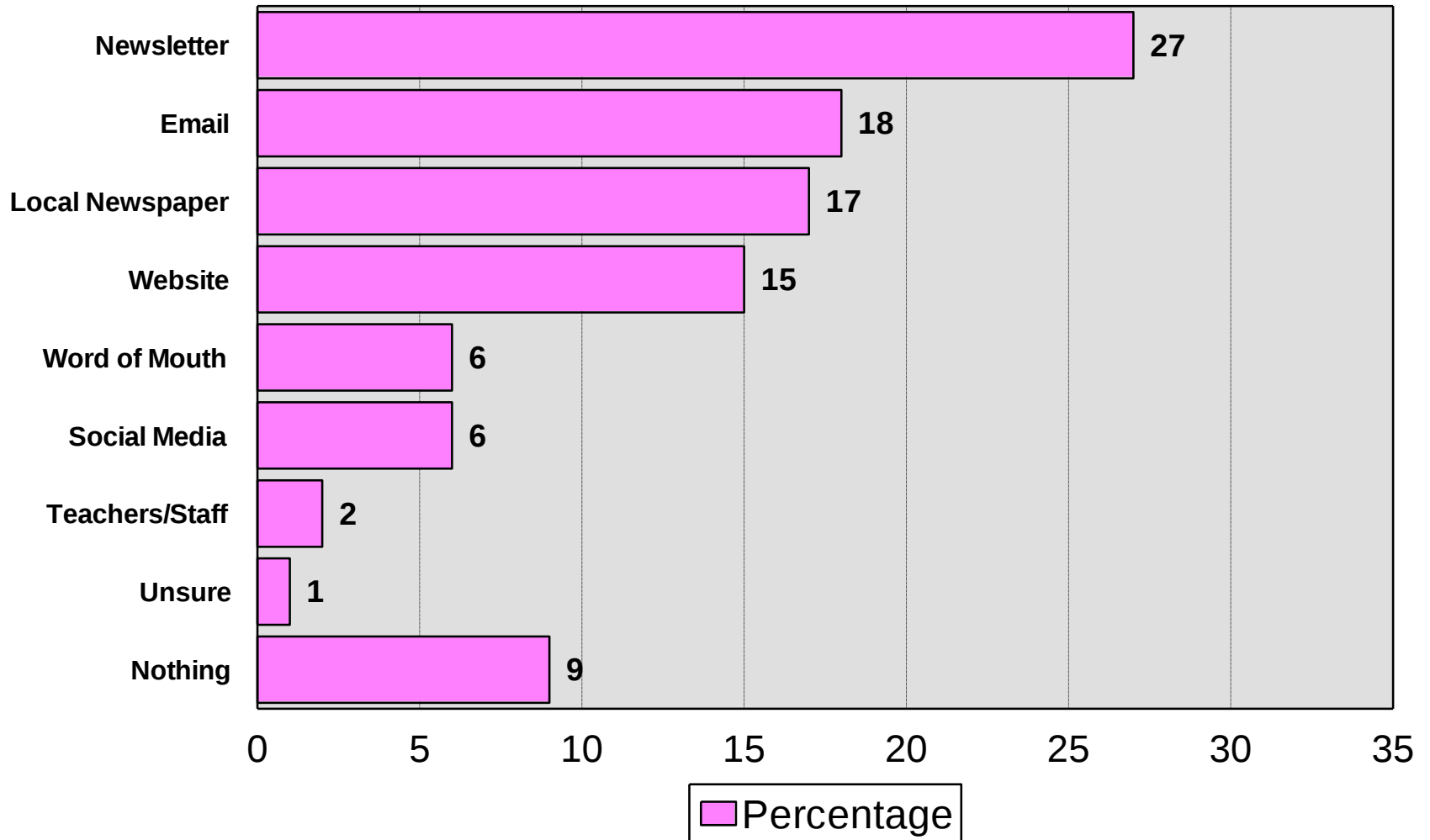
Principal Source of Information

2025 Austin Public Schools



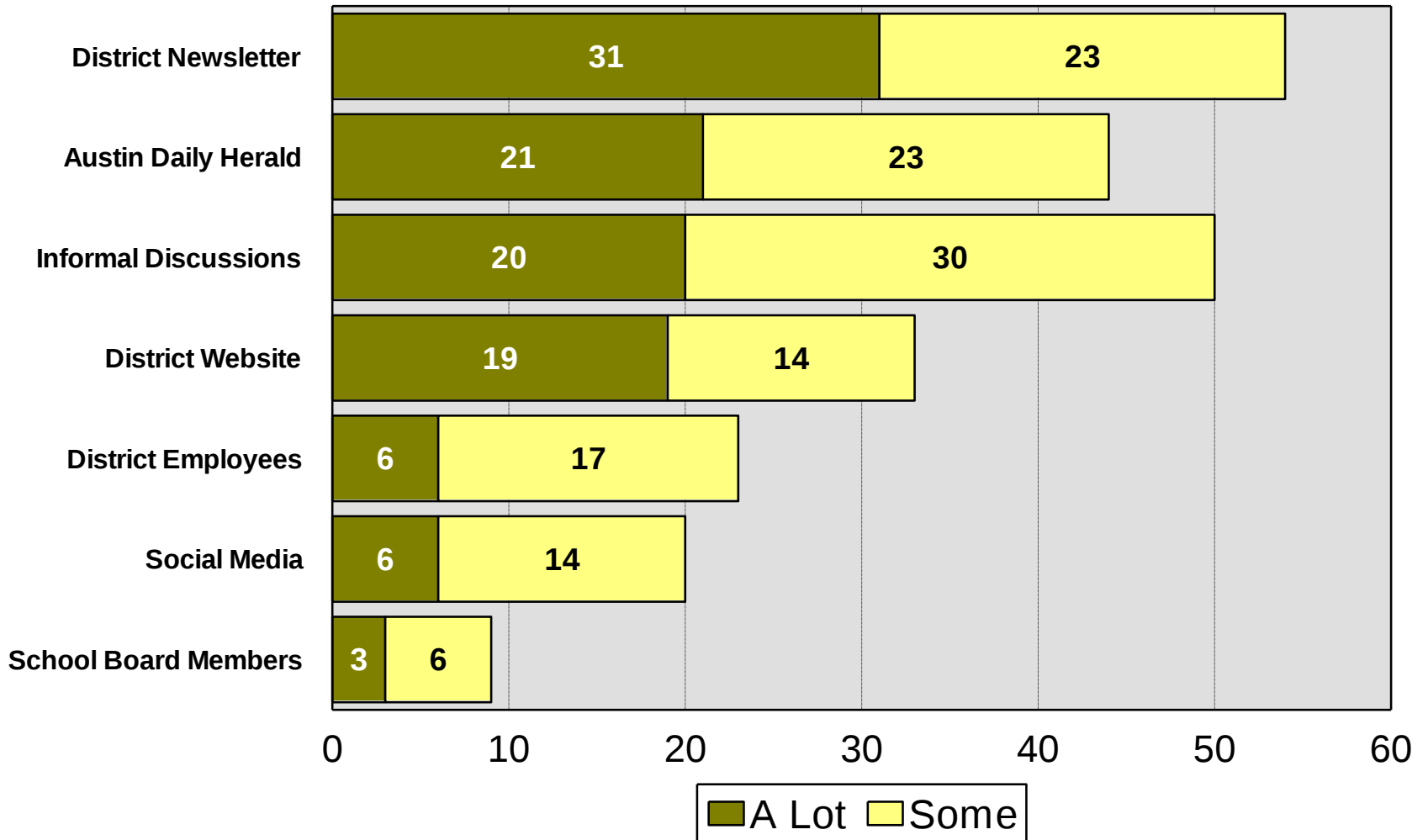
Most Effective Way

2025 Austin Public Schools



Information Sources

2025 Austin Public Schools



- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 1. | Approximately, how many years have you lived in the Austin Public School District? | FIVE YEARS OR LESS....13% |
| | | SIX TO TEN YEARS.....16% |
| | | 11 TO TWENTY YRS.....22% |
| | | 21 TO THIRTY YRS.....18% |
| | | OVER THIRTY YEARS.....32% |
| | | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0% |

As you may know about one-third of Austin School District residents tend to vote in off-year or special elections, held in non-Presidential or non-gubernatorial election years....

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 2. | In past off-year and special elections, would you say you have always voted, often voted, rarely voted, or never voted? | ALWAYS VOTED.....41% |
| | | OFTEN VOTED.....36% |
| | | RARELY VOTED.....16% |
| | | NEVER VOTED.....8% |
| | | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0% |

If the School District were to hold an election next November....

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 3. | How likely are you to vote in an election next November - absolutely certain, very likely, 1/2-1/2, not too likely, or not at all likely? | ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN....38% |
| | | VERY LIKELY.....33% |
| | | 1/2-1/2.....16% |
| | | NOT TOO LIKELY.....10% |
| | | NOT AT ALL LIKELY.....2% |
| | | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2% |

Continuing....

- | | | |
|----|---|---------------------------|
| 4. | How would you rate the quality of education provided by Austin Public Schools -- excellent, good, only fair, or poor? | EXCELLENT.....16% |
| | | GOOD.....61% |
| | | ONLY FAIR.....20% |
| | | POOR.....3% |
| | | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1% |

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------------------|
| 5. | From what you have heard or seen, what do you like most about the Austin Public School District? | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6% |
| | | EXCELLENT ACADEMICS....2% |
| | | GOOD ACADEMICS.....11% |
| | | BROAD CURRICULUM.....5% |
| | | VARIETY OF PROGRAMS...17% |
| | | GOOD TEACHERS.....29% |
| | | SPORTS.....12% |
| | | DIVERSITY.....9% |
| | | WELL RUN.....6% |
| | | SCATTERED.....3% |

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 6. | And, from what you have heard or | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....7% |
|----|----------------------------------|---------------------------|

seen, what do you think is the most serious issue facing the Austin Public School District?	NOTHING.....15%
	LACK OF FUNDING.....21%
	HIGH TAXES.....8%
	DECLINING QUALITY.....10%
	LACK OF DISCIPLINE.....10%
	SAFETY/VIOLENCE.....5%
	LARGE CLASS SIZES.....7%
	STAFF SHORTAGES.....7%
	TOO POLITICAL.....4%
	DRUGS.....2%
	SCATTERED.....4%

I would like to read you a short list of statements others have told us. For each one, please tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. If you don't know, just say so.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 7. During the last several years, Austin Public School District Board and Administration have spent tax money effectively and efficiently. | STRONGLY AGREE.....3% |
| | AGREE.....69% |
| | DISAGREE.....23% |
| | STRONGLY DISAGREE.....2% |
| | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....4% |
| 8. When Austin Public Schools ask voters to approve an increase in the referendum amount, it is only as last resort after the School Board and Administration have considered all other budget alternatives. | STRONGLY AGREE.....7% |
| | AGREE.....62% |
| | DISAGREE.....24% |
| | STRONGLY DISAGREE.....3% |
| | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....4% |
| 9. I trust the Austin Public School District Board and Administration to do what is right for children in this district. | STRONGLY AGREE.....12% |
| | AGREE.....67% |
| | DISAGREE.....17% |
| | STRONGLY DISAGREE.....2% |
| | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2% |
| 10. The Austin Public School District Board and Administration spend operating and bond referendum funds responsibly. | STRONGLY AGREE.....3% |
| | AGREE.....69% |
| | DISAGREE.....22% |
| | STRONGLY DISAGREE.....2% |
| | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5% |
| 11. Our community receives a good value from its investment in local public schools. | STRONGLY AGREE.....12% |
| | AGREE.....66% |
| | DISAGREE.....19% |
| | STRONGLY DISAGREE.....2% |
| | DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1% |

12.	The Austin Public School District Board and Administration does a good job of involving community leaders, parents, and interested citizens in decisions about the schools.	STRONGLY AGREE.....11% AGREE.....64% DISAGREE.....21% STRONGLY DISAGREE.....3% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%
13.	I am satisfied with the School District's decision-making process.	STRONGLY AGREE.....12% AGREE.....61% DISAGREE.....23% STRONGLY DISAGREE.....2% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%
14.	Austin Public Schools are a good investment and I would support a tax increase to protect that investment.	STRONGLY AGREE.....7% AGREE.....55% DISAGREE.....22% STRONGLY DISAGREE.....11% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%

Changing topics....

Let' shift the conversation to talk about the management of our local schools.

15.	Would you say that you follow the work of the School Board and Administration in the Austin Public School District - very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or do you really not follow their work at all?	VERY CLOSELY.....7% SOMEWHAT CLOSELY.....41% NOT TOO CLOSELY.....37% NOT AT ALL.....16% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
16.	Overall, how would you rate the performance of the Austin Public School District Board - excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....7% GOOD.....56% ONLY FAIR.....28% POOR.....6% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....4%
17.	How would you rate the performance of the District's Administration, - excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....5% GOOD.....60% ONLY FAIR.....26% POOR.....5% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....4%
18.	And, how would you rate the performance of the teachers and instructional staff in Austin Public Schools - excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....34% GOOD.....54% ONLY FAIR.....9% POOR.....1% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%

19.	How would you rate the financial management of Austin Public Schools - excellent, good, only fair, or poor?	EXCELLENT.....4% GOOD.....54% ONLY FAIR.....32% POOR.....9% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%
20.	Do you believe the Austin Public Schools are adequately funded?	YES.....43% NO.....54% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....3%
21.	In comparison with neighboring districts, do you consider total property taxes in your community to be very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low?	VERY HIGH.....14% SOMEWHAT HIGH.....25% ABOUT AVERAGE.....53% SOMEWHAT LOW.....2% VERY LOW.....0% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....7%
22.	In comparison with other neighboring school districts, do you think that school taxes in the Austin Public School District are very high, somewhat high, about average, somewhat low, or very low?	VERY HIGH.....10% SOMEWHAT HIGH.....23% ABOUT AVERAGE.....55% SOMEWHAT LOW.....2% VERY LOW.....0% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....10%

Thinking about the Austin School District buildings and facilities....

23.	Do you think they meet the needs of educating today's children? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY YES.....10% YES.....74% NO.....12% STRONGLY NO.....0% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....5%
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IF "NO" OR "STRONGLY NO," ASK: (n=48)

24. Why do you feel that way?

NEED MORE SPACE, 19%; NEED MAINTENANCE, 21%; NEED UPDATES, 23%; IMPROVE SAFETY AND SECURITY, 8%; NEEDS MODERNIZING, 29%.

The Austin Public School District has been discussing options for a long-term facilities plan, one that will gain community support and meet current and future space and educational needs. Independent experts and a citizen facilities committee have conducted an assessment of the current schools, including the

quality of classrooms, the adequacy of space, security measures, safety, and operating costs.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 25. Would you say you have been following these discussions very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely, or not following it at all? | VERY CLOSELY.....5%
SOMEWHAT CLOSELY.....37%
NOT TOO CLOSELY.....34%
NOT FOLLOWING AT ALL..24%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0% |
|--|--|

Discussion has taken place about the need today for public school buildings to contain modern flexible learning spaces, so students can learn in one-on-one, small group and large group settings. As a result, programs can be better tailored to meet individual learning needs, and more innovative teaching approaches can be employed.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 26. How important do you think classroom design is to student learning - very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important? | VERY IMPORTANT.....32%
SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT....46%
NOT TOO IMPORTANT.....18%
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT...3%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1% |
| 27. From what you have seen or heard, do Austin Public School District buildings currently provide for sufficient modern learning spaces? | YES.....62%
NO.....21%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED....17% |

Continuing....

- | | |
|--|---|
| 28. Which of the following three statements best describes your feelings: | STATEMENT A.....28%
STATEMENT B.....43%
STATEMENT C.....29%
NONE OF ABOVE (VOL)....0%
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1% |
| A. I would vote <u>against</u> almost any tax increases for the schools; | |
| B. I would vote for a tax increase under some conditions, but against it under other conditions; | |
| C. I would vote <u>for</u> almost any tax increases for the schools. | |

Let's talk about a bond referendum for facilities needs across the district....

- | | |
|---|--|
| 29. How much would you be willing to pay in additional property taxes in order to fund this bond referendum? [SELECT RANDOM STARTING POINT; MOVE UP OR DOWN | NOTHING.....33%
\$8 A MONTH.....25%
\$16 A MONTH.....26%
\$24 A MONTH.....7%
\$32 A MONTH.....2% |
|---|--|

DEPENDENDING ON ANSWER] How about	\$40 A MONTH.....0%
_____? [REPEAT]	OVER \$40 A MONTH.....1%
	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....6%

To address additional facility needs, the School District is considering some options. For each of the following, please tell me if you would strongly support a property tax increase for that purpose, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose a property tax increase for that purpose. (ROTATE)

	STS	SMS	SMO	STO	DKR
30. Improvements to building infrastructure, including parking lots, indoor air quality and energy efficiency and deferred maintenance, including HVAC and electrical systems.	36%	37%	18%	9%	1%
31. Improvements and repairs to school building walls, windows, and roofs, as well as, updating building interiors with new paint, flooring and ceilings?	36%	37%	17%	10%	1%
32. Modernizing classrooms, including creation of flexible learning spaces, labs, and new furniture?	36%	28%	18%	17%	2%
33. Safety and security improvements, such as secured entrances, access control, and camera systems?	49%	30%	12%	7%	1%
	STS	SMS	SMO	STO	DKR
34. Updating buildings to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act?	44%	35%	12%	7%	3%
35. Updating athletic facilities, including replacing artificial turf and running track?	25%	24%	22%	28%	1%
36. Renovation of the Ellis Pool, including replacement of the roof and mechanical systems and creating a diving well to meet current state regulations?	27%	29%	19%	23%	3%

The total cost of these options could be up to 84 million dollars.

37.	Does this sound like a fair price -	YES.....	52%
	84 million dollars - for these	NO.....	41%
	improvements?	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	7%

If voters approved a bond referendum to fund these improvements, the owner of a \$150,000 home would see a monthly property tax increase of about \$15 or \$178 per year for twenty years, while the owner of \$250,000 home would see a monthly property tax increase of about \$29 or \$345 per year.

38.	If the election were today, would	STRONGLY SUPPORT.....	7%
	you support or oppose this bond	SUPPORT.....	49%
	referendum? (WAIT FOR RESPONSE) Do	OPPOSE.....	29%
	you feel strongly that way?	STRONGLY OPPOSE.....	14%
		DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	2%

IF A POSITION IS GIVEN (#1-#4), ASK: (n=393)

39.	Could you tell me one or two	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	0%
	reasons why you feel that way?	EDUCATION IMPORTANT...	23%
		NEEDED.....	13%
		COST IS REASONABLE.....	7%
		TAXES TOO HIGH.....	10%
		COST IS TOO HIGH.....	14%
		POOR DISTRICT SPENDING.	8%
		NOT NEEDED.....	2%
		CHILDREN IN DISTRICT..	14%
		NO CHILDREN IN SD.....	7%
		NEED MORE INFORMATION..	3%

Moving on....

40.	In general, how informed do you	VERY INFORMED.....	14%
	feel about decisions made by the	SOMEWHAT INFORMED.....	45%
	School Board and Administration -	NOT TOO INFORMED.....	32%
	very informed, somewhat informed,	NOT AT ALL INFORMED....	8%
	not too informed, or not at all	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	1%
	informed?		

41.	What is your primary source of	DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....	0%
	information about the Austin	NOTHING.....	9%
	Public School District?	DISTRICT NEWSLETTER...	25%
		DISTRICT WEBSITE.....	17%
		EMAIL/E-NEWSLETTER....	13%
		WORD OF MOUTH.....	12%

LOCAL NEWSPAPER.....15%
DISTRICT STAFF.....4%
SOCIAL MEDIA.....4%
SCATTERED.....1%

42. And, how would you prefer to receive information about the Austin Public School District?
DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%
NOTHING.....9%
DISTRICT NEWSLETTER...27%
DISTRICT WEBSITE.....15%
EMAIL/E-NEWSLETTER....18%
WORD OF MOUTH.....6%
LOCAL NEWSPAPER.....17%
DISTRICT STAFF.....2%
SOCIAL MEDIA.....6%

I would like to read you a number of sources of information about the Austin Public School District. For each one, please tell me if you receive a lot of your information about the school district from that source, some information, a little information, or none at all? (ROTATE LIST)

	ALT	SOM	LIT	NAA	DKR
43. The "Austin Daily Herald" newspaper?	21%	23%	23%	33%	0%
44. School District newsletter?	31%	23%	14%	33%	0%
45. School District employees?	6%	17%	19%	58%	0%
46. School District website?	19%	14%	17%	51%	0%
47. Social media, such as Facebook or Twitter?	6%	14%	20%	60%	0%
48. School Board members?	3%	6%	12%	80%	0%
49. Informal discussions with neighbors or acquaintances?	20%	30%	23%	28%	0%

Now, just a few more questions for demographic purposes....

50. Which of the following ranges contains your age? Please stop me when I reach the correct one.
18-24.....6%
25-34.....14%
35-44.....15%
45-54.....17%
55-64.....17%
65 AND OVER.....31%
REFUSED.....0%

51. Are there school-aged children in your household (IF "YES," ASK:) Do they attend Austin Public Schools, public schools in other school districts, parochial or pri-
NO.....64%
YES/AUSTIN SD.....30%
YES/OTHER PUBLIC.....1%
YES/PAROCIAL/PRIVATE..4%
YES/CHARTER.....0%

vate schools, charter schools, or homeschool?	YES/HOMESCHOOL.....1% YES/COMBINATION.....0% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
IF "NO," ASK: (n=256)	
52. Have you ever had children in Austin Public Schools?	YES.....49% NO.....51% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
53. Does your household contain any preschoolers or infants?	YES.....11% NO.....88% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....1%
54. Do you own or rent your present residence? (IF "OWN," ASK:) Which of the following categories con- tains the approximate value of your residential property - under \$200,000, \$200,000-\$250,000, \$250,001-\$300,000, \$300,001- \$350,000, \$350,001-\$400,000, or over \$400,000?	RENT.....29% OWN/UNDER \$200,000....16% OWN/\$200K-\$250K.....29% OWN/\$250K-\$300K.....17% OWN/\$300K-\$350K.....5% OWN/\$350K-\$400K.....2% OWN/OVER \$400K.....2% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....0%
55. Finally, thinking about your household finances, how would you describe your financial situation, would you say that - A) Your monthly expenses are ex- ceeding your income; B) You are me[e]ting your monthly expenses but are putting aside little or no savings; C) You are managing comfortably while putting some money aside; D) Managing very well?	STATEMENT A.....3% STATEMENT B.....34% STATEMENT C.....46% STATEMENT D.....15% DON'T KNOW/REFUSED.....2%
56. Gender (DO NOT ASK/BY PHONER OBSERVATION)	MALE.....49% FEMALE.....51%
57. Region of School District.	AUSTIN WARD 1.....29% AUSTIN WARD 2.....31% AUSTIN WARD 3.....27% REST.....14%