DETROIT LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

AGENDA
WORK SESSION
Monday, October 12, 2026 - 11:30 AM
Detroit Lakes Police Department - Community Room, 807 Summit Avenue, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota 56501

The mission of Detroit Lakes Public schools is to ensure consistent expectations, opportunities, meaningful support, and strong relationships so that every student develops the skills, confidence, and connections needed to thrive beyond graduation.

District Office ~ 702 Lake Avenue, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501 ~ 218.847.9271 ~ Website: www.dlschools.net
Superintendent: Mark Jenson Director of Finance & Operations: Jason Kuehn Education Director: Renee Kerzman

BOARD MEMBERS:

Julie Smith-Yliniemi, Clerk
25961 Brolin Beach Rd
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
218.204.0420

Michael Walther
28030 County Hwy 34
Callaway, MN 56521
218.841.3709

Michelle Okeson, Treasurer
24842 County Rd 113
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
218.841.6065

Mary Rotter,Vice Chair
23625 Pebble Beach LN
Detroit Lakes, MN 56501
651.335.0396

John Steffl, Chair
104 Manitoba St.
Callaway, MN 56521
218.850.5060

Sanford Nelson
28633 North Buffalo Lake Rd
Callaway, MN 56521
218.847.8360

Student Representative: Hayden Wilson 27wilsohayd@detlakes.k12.mn.us, Marielle Rufer 28rufermari@detlakes.k12.mn.us

---

I. **CALL TO ORDER**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

II. **ROLL CALL**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

IV. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

V. **DISCUSSION ITEMS**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

- A. Review the community and scientific survey results related to the referendum
- B. Review the facility needs identified through the planning process
- C. Evaluate where the prioritized needs fall within the $20M-$25M investment range the board has been discussing
- D. Review the potential tax impact
- E. Discuss a potential project timeline and next steps

VI. **MEETING ADJOURNED**
Presenter: Steffl, Board Chair

I pledge allegiance to the flag
of the United States of America,
and to the Republic
for which it stands,
one Nation under God,
indivisible,
with Liberty and Justice
for all.



A LEGENCE Company

RAPP STRATEGIES

DETROIT LAKES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Board Work Session

October 12, 2026

Detroit Lakes School District

2026 Residential Study

The Morris Leatherman Company

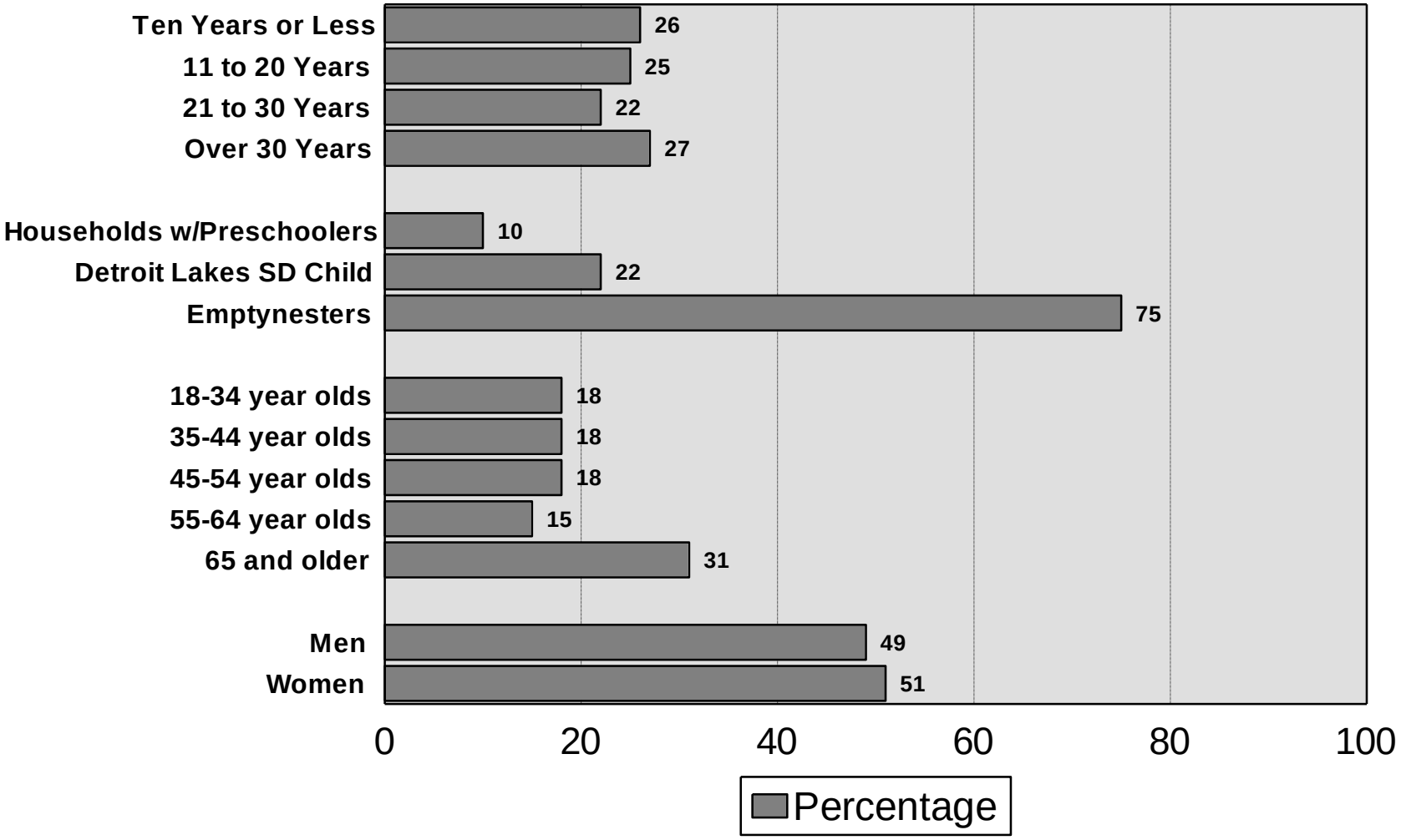
Survey Methodology

2026 Detroit Lakes School District

- 400 random sample of Detroit Lakes School District residents.
- Results projectable within +/-5.0% in 95 out of 100 cases
- Average interview time of 11 minutes
- Non-response level of 5.5%
- Telephone interviews conducted between September 15th and 25th, 2026
- Cellphone Only Households: 60%
- Landline Only Households: 15%
- Both Landline and Cellphone Households: 25%

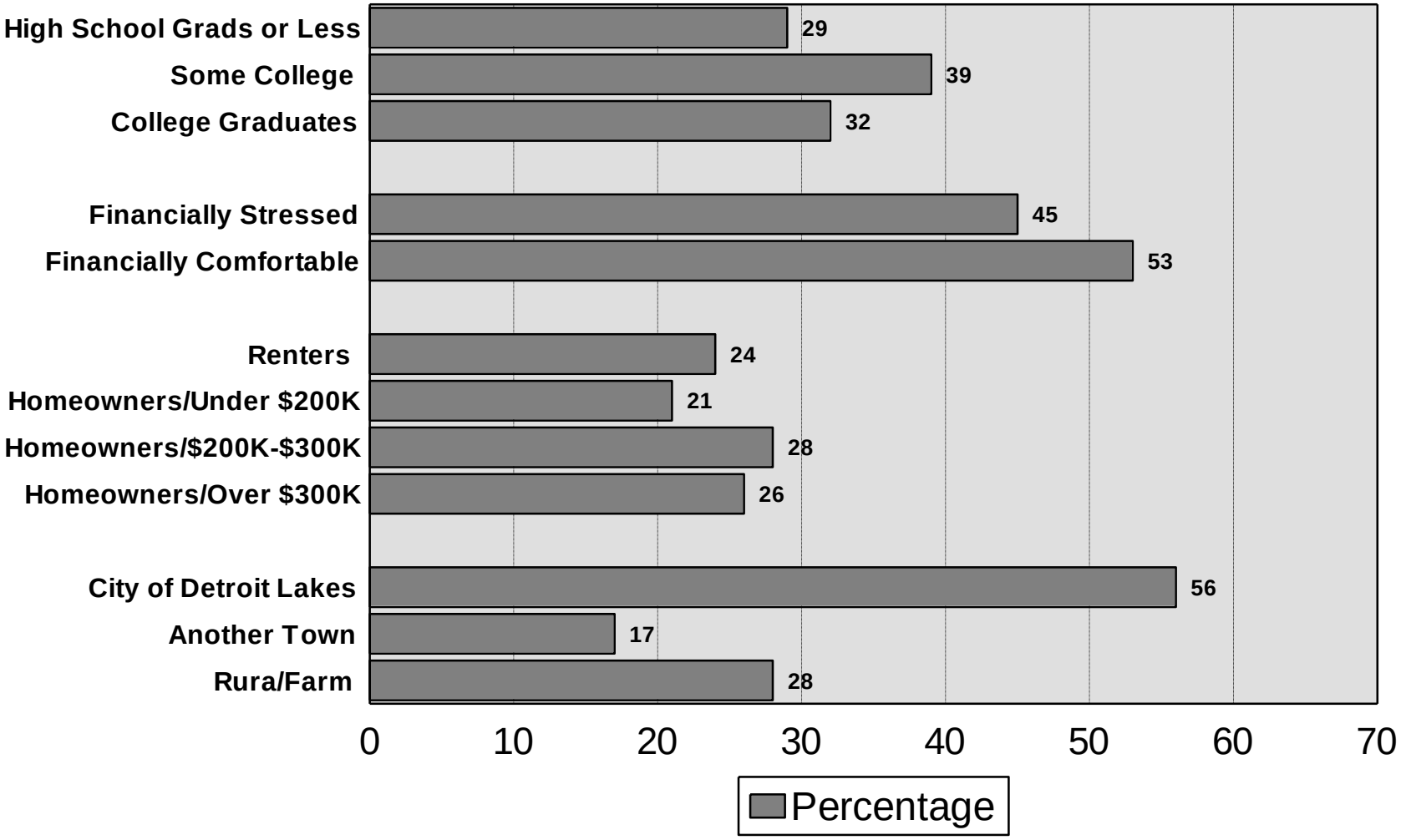
Demographics I

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



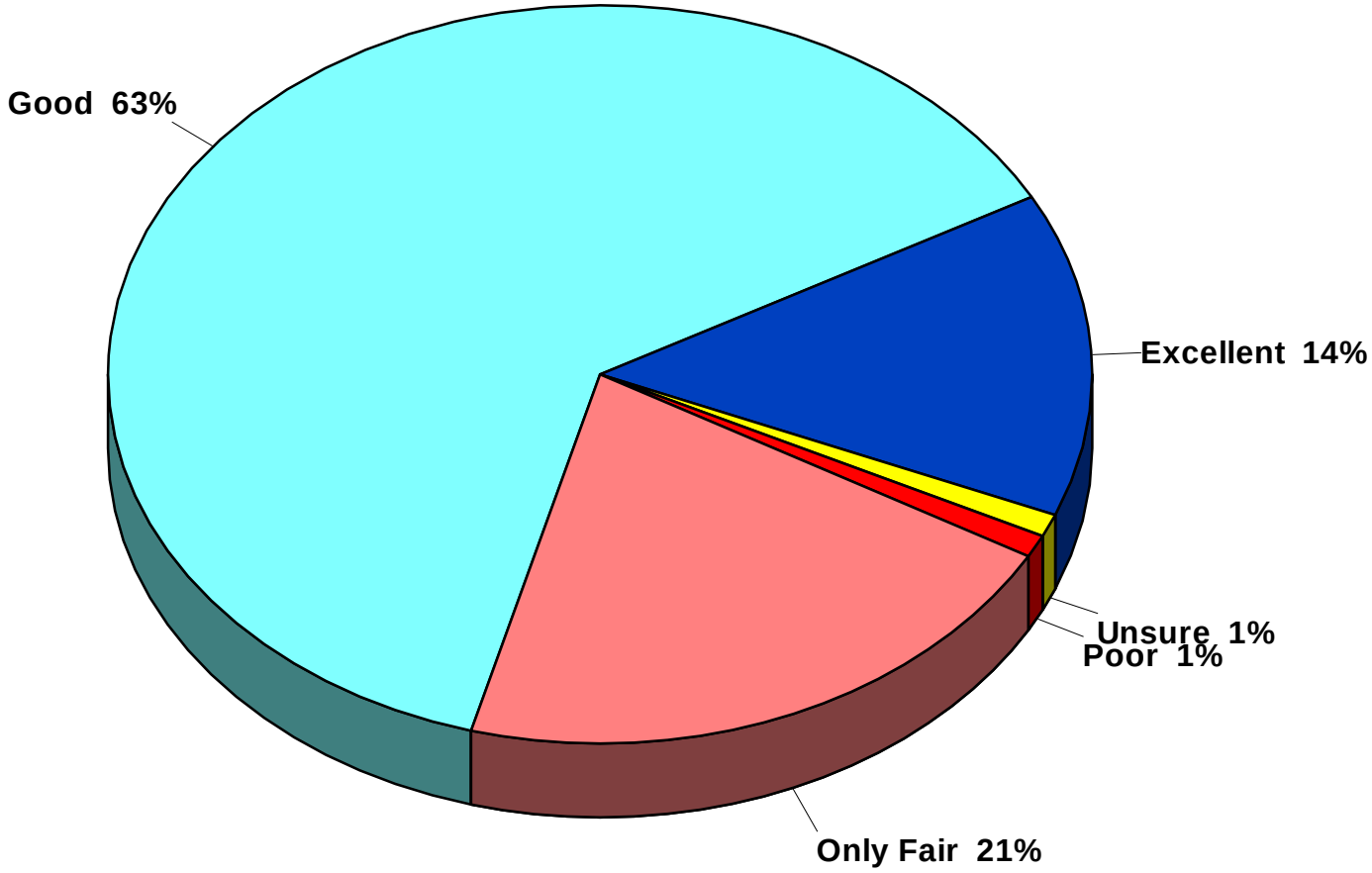
Demographics II

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



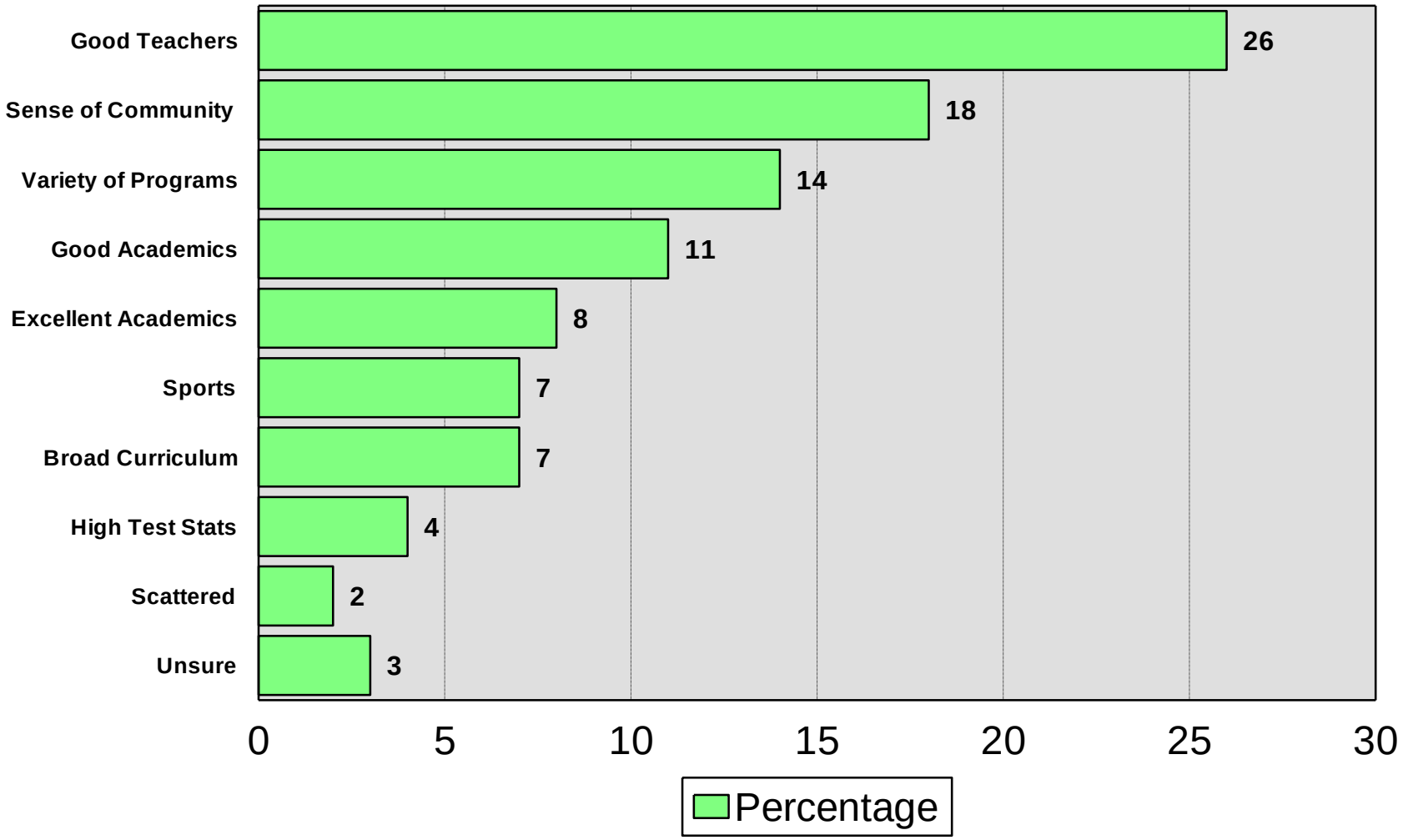
Quality of Education

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Like Most

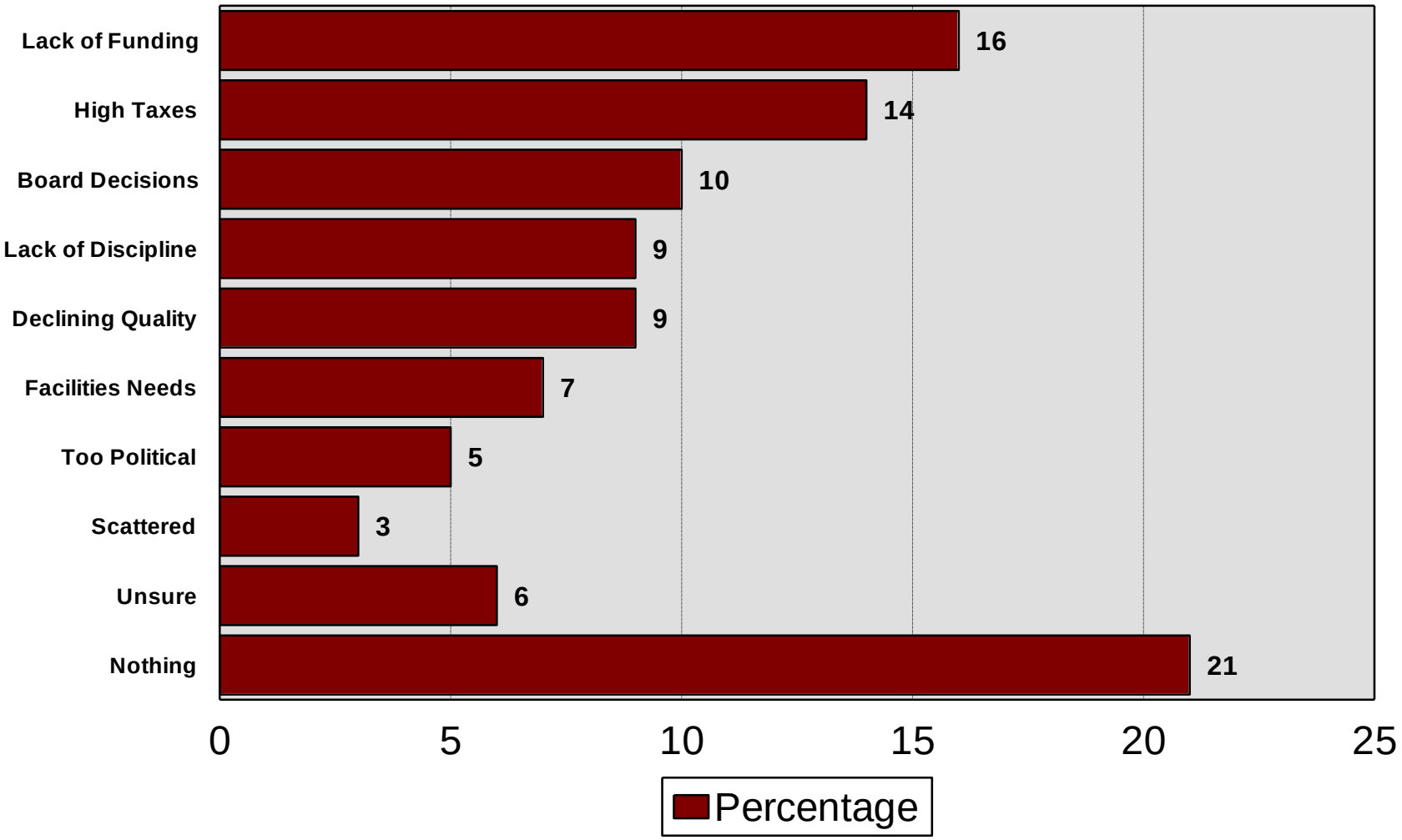
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

Most Serious Issue

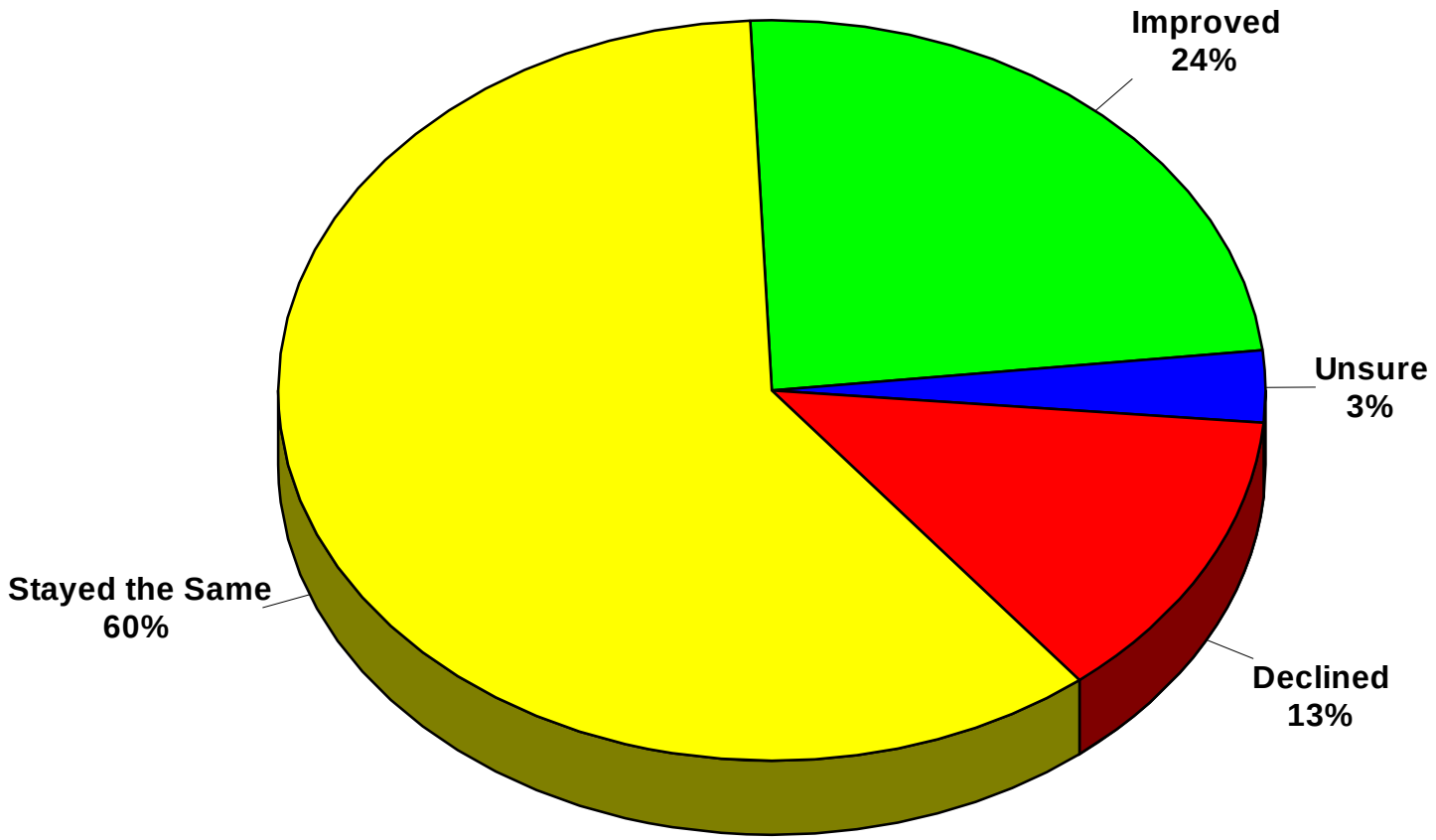
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

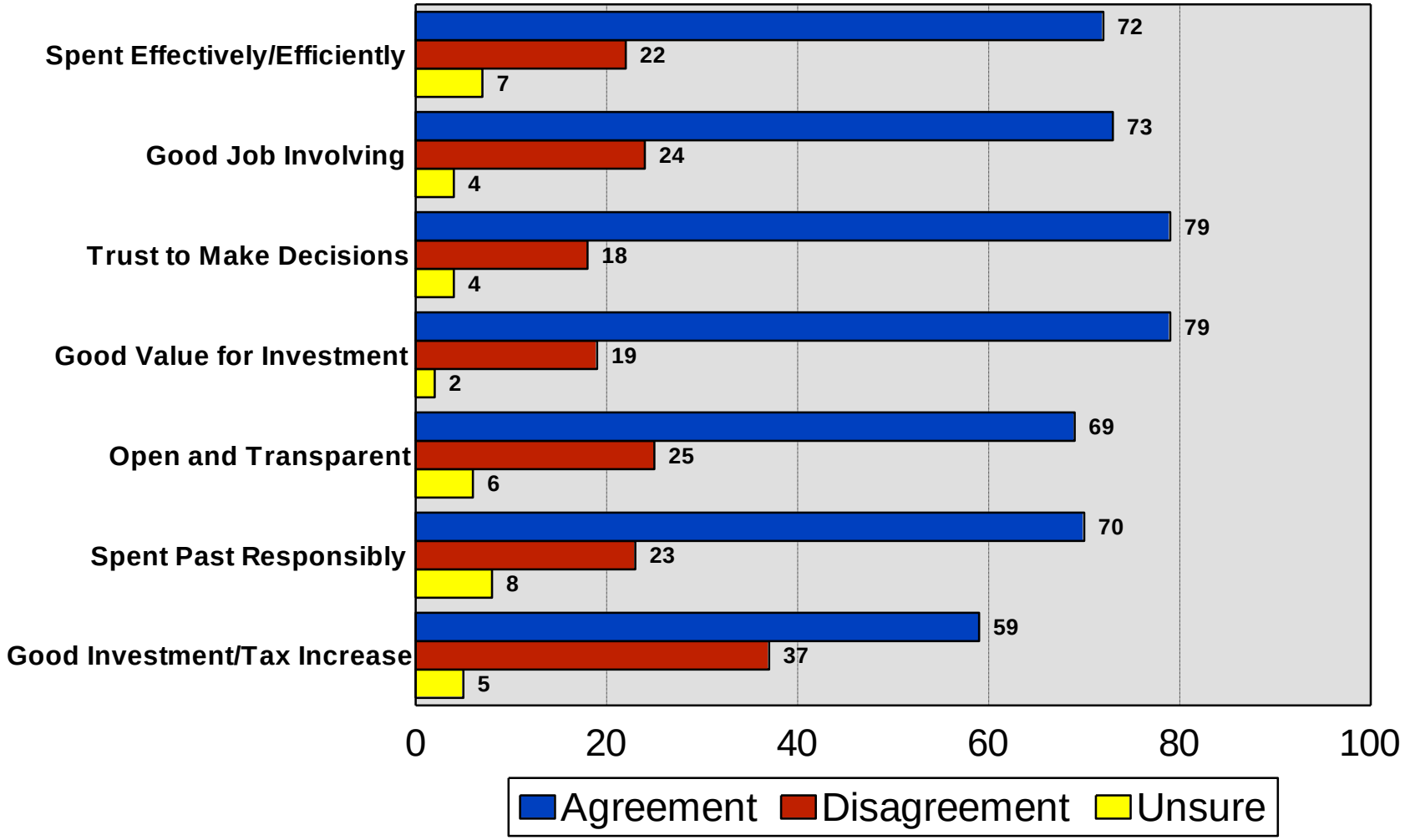
Quality Compared to Four Years Ago

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Specific School District Perceptions

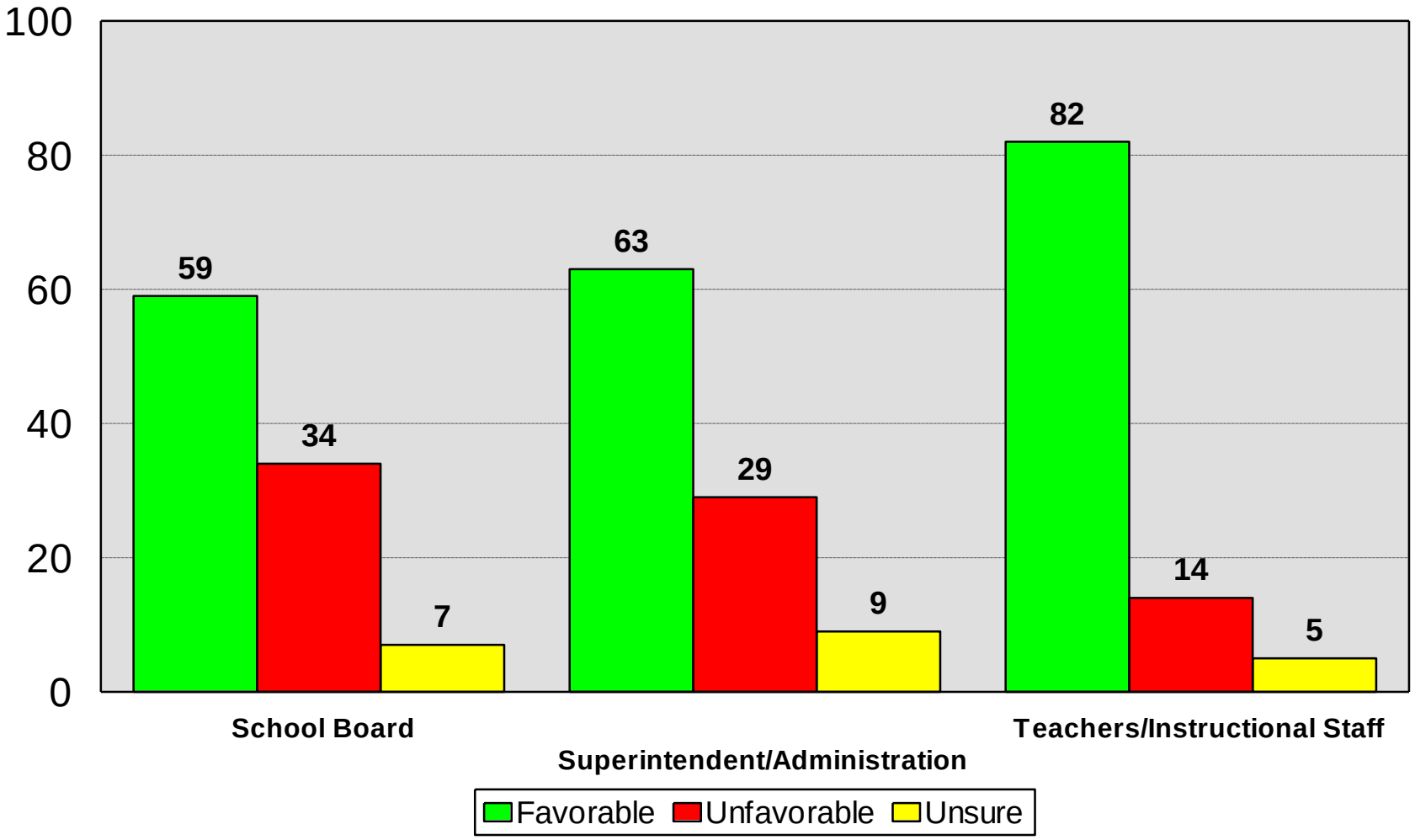
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

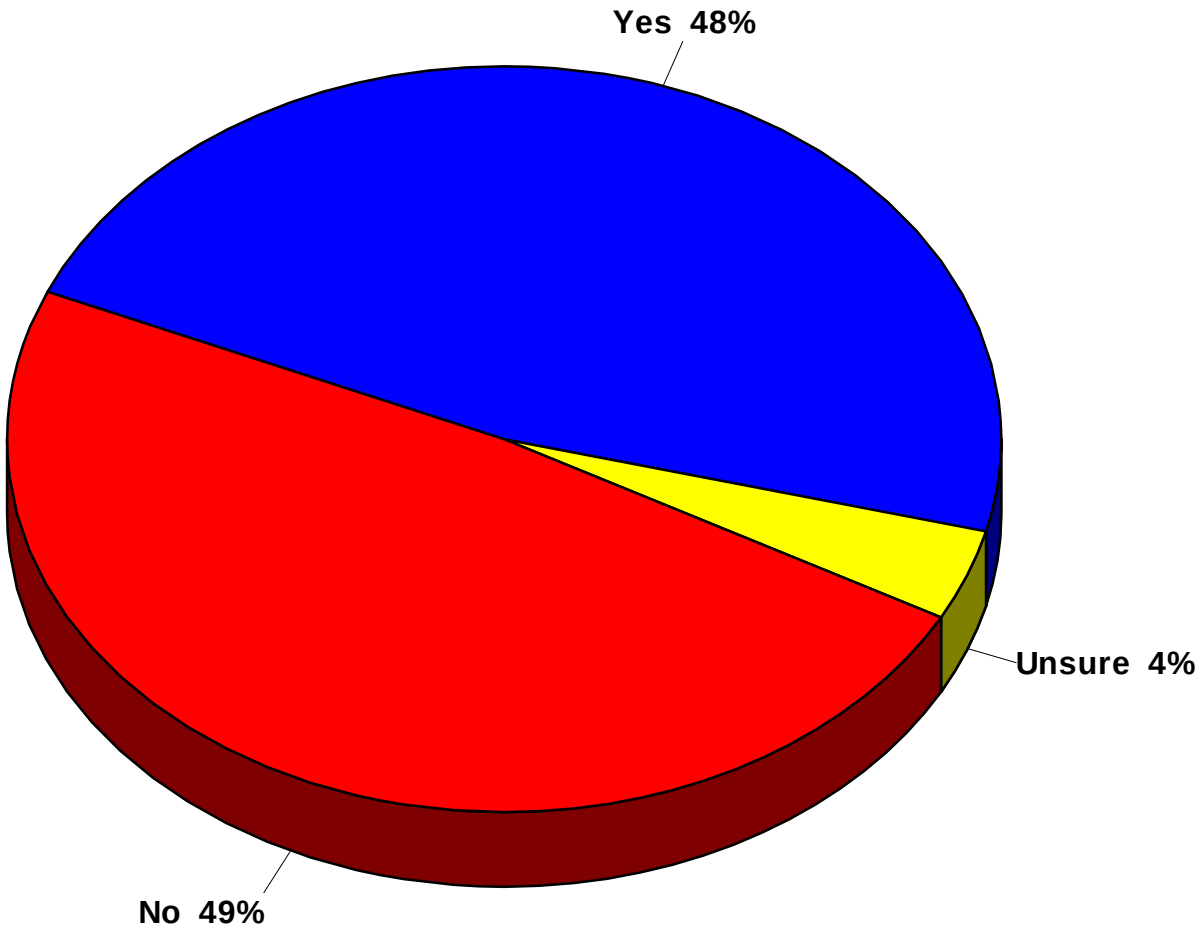
Job Performance Ratings

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Adequately Funded

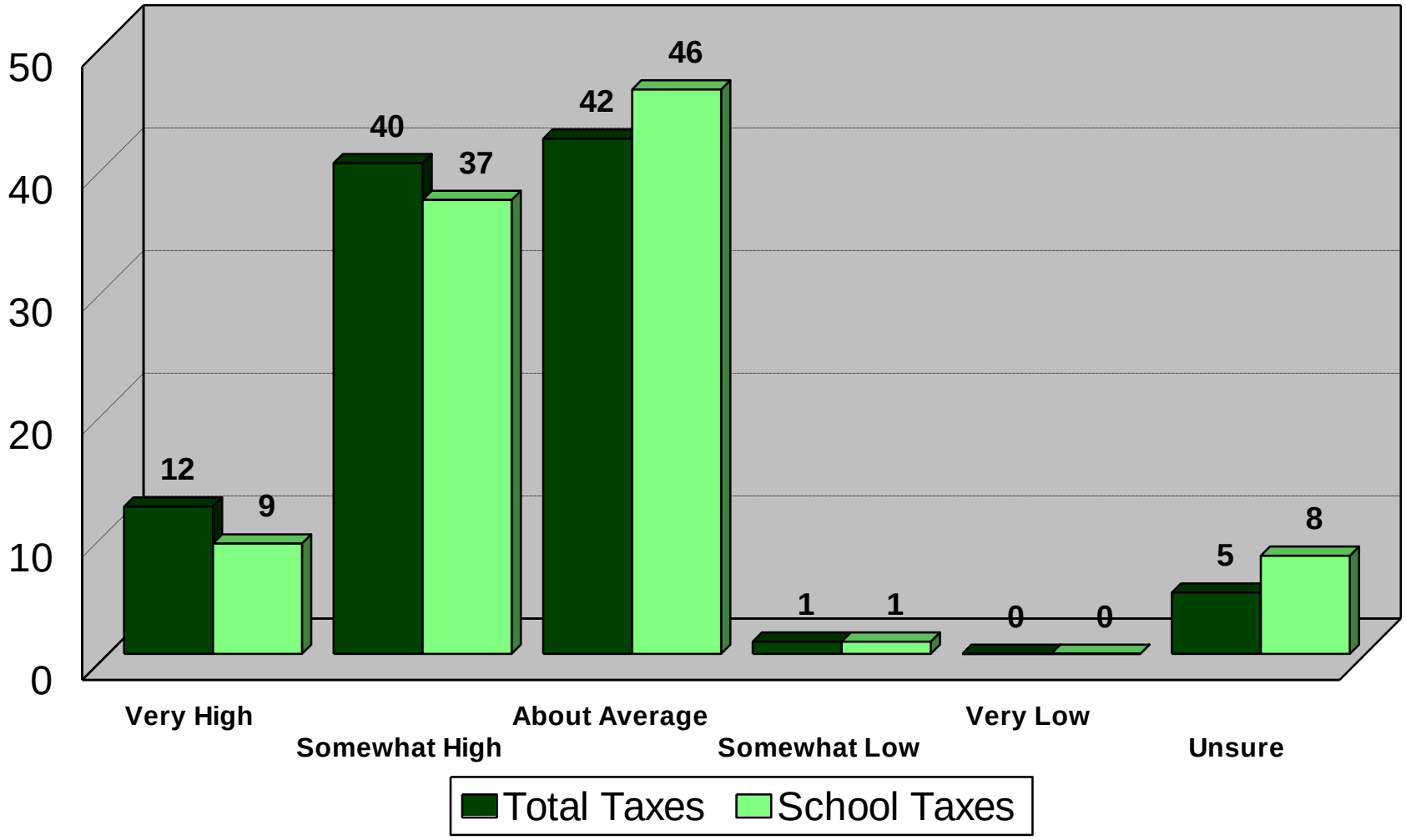
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

Property Tax Comparisons

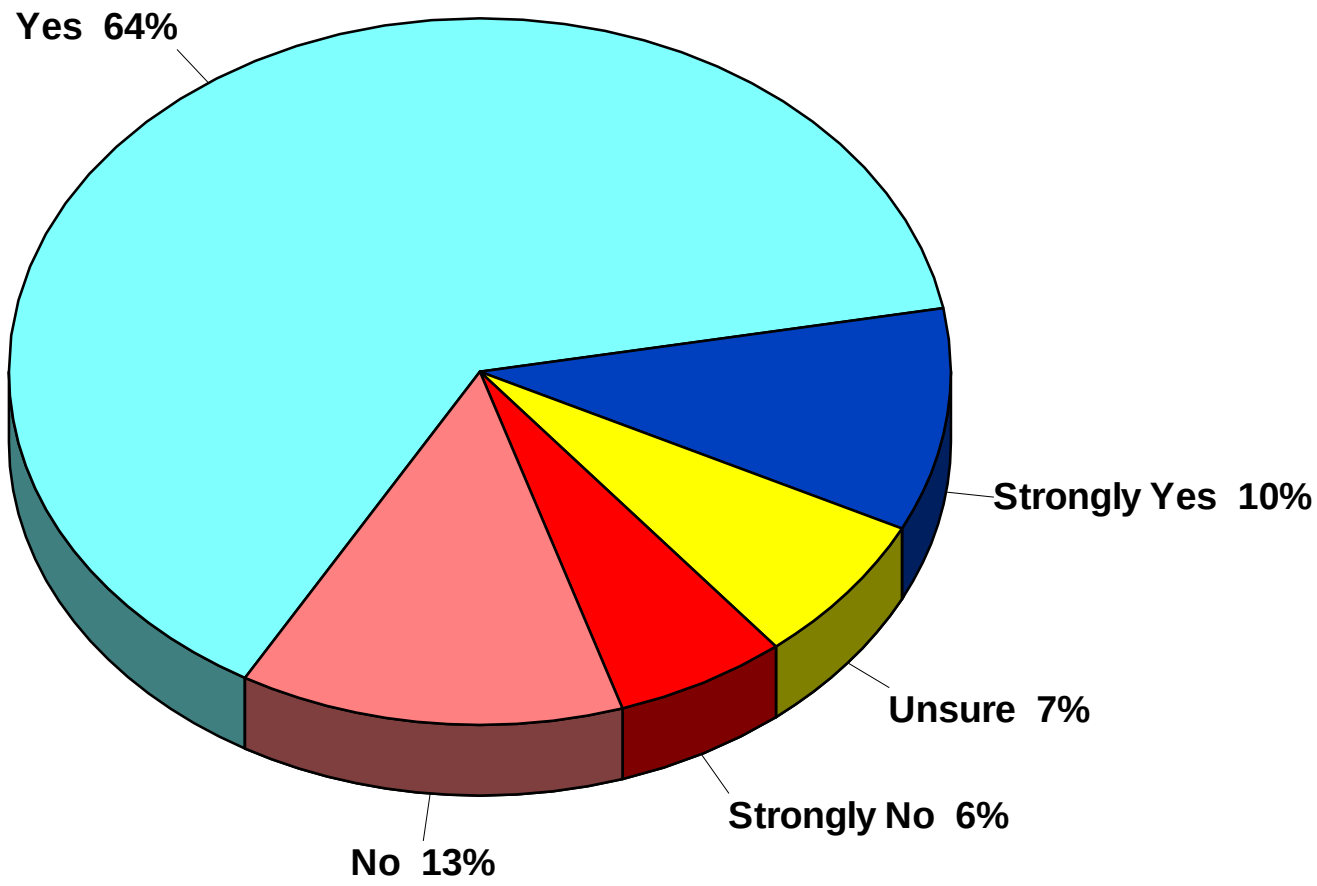
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

2018 Bond Referendum Funds Used to Improve Education

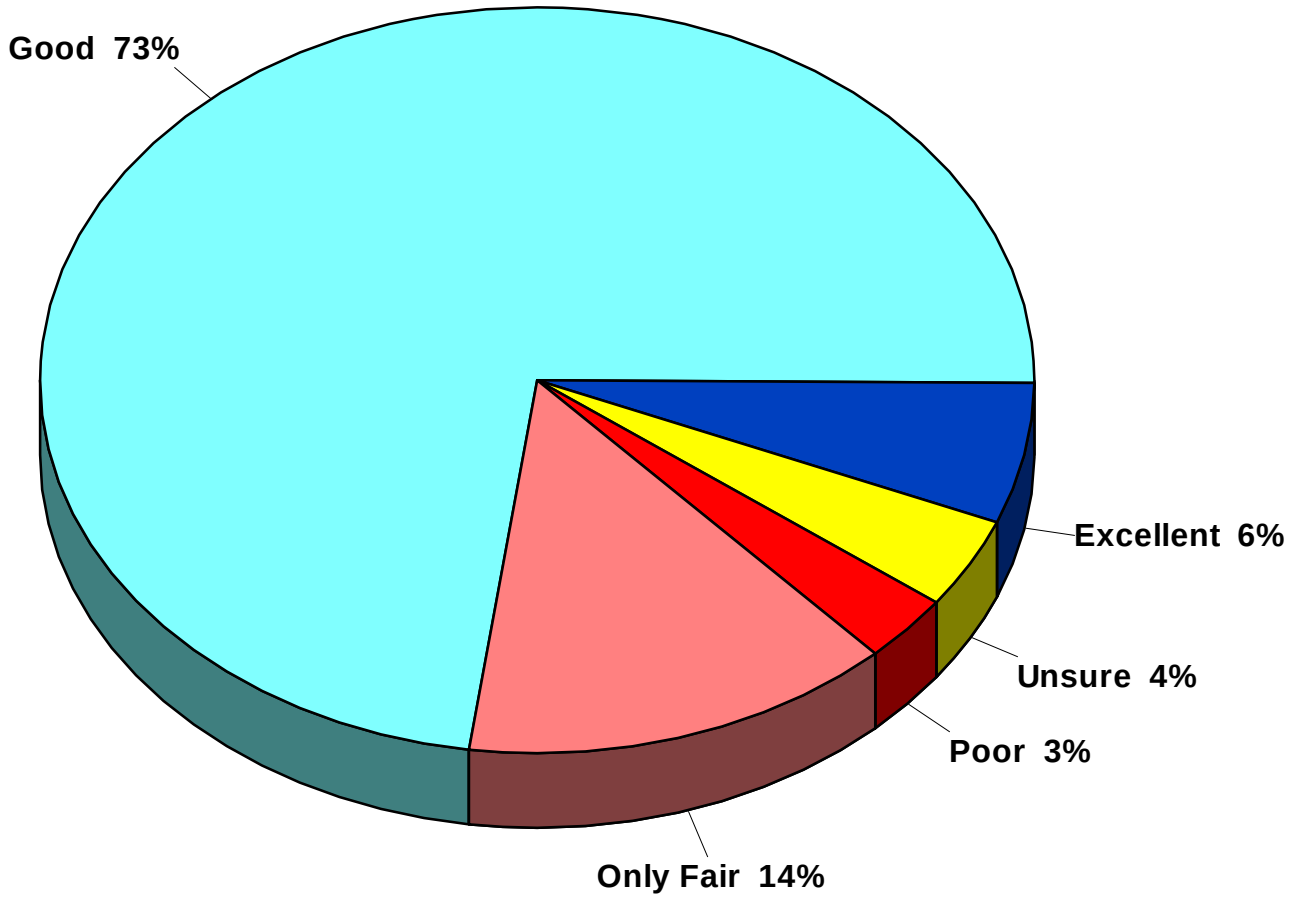
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

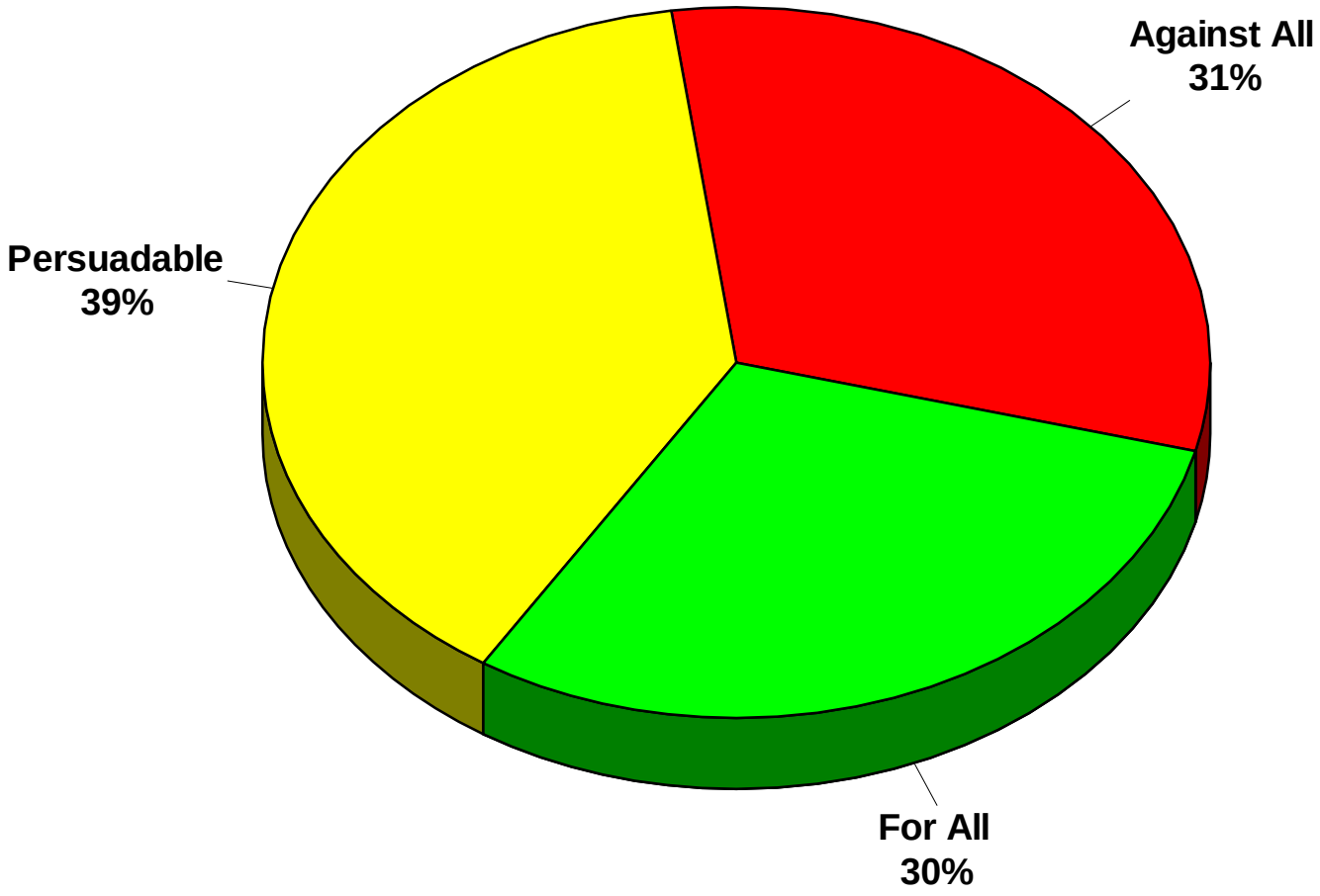
Rating of Buildings and Facilities

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



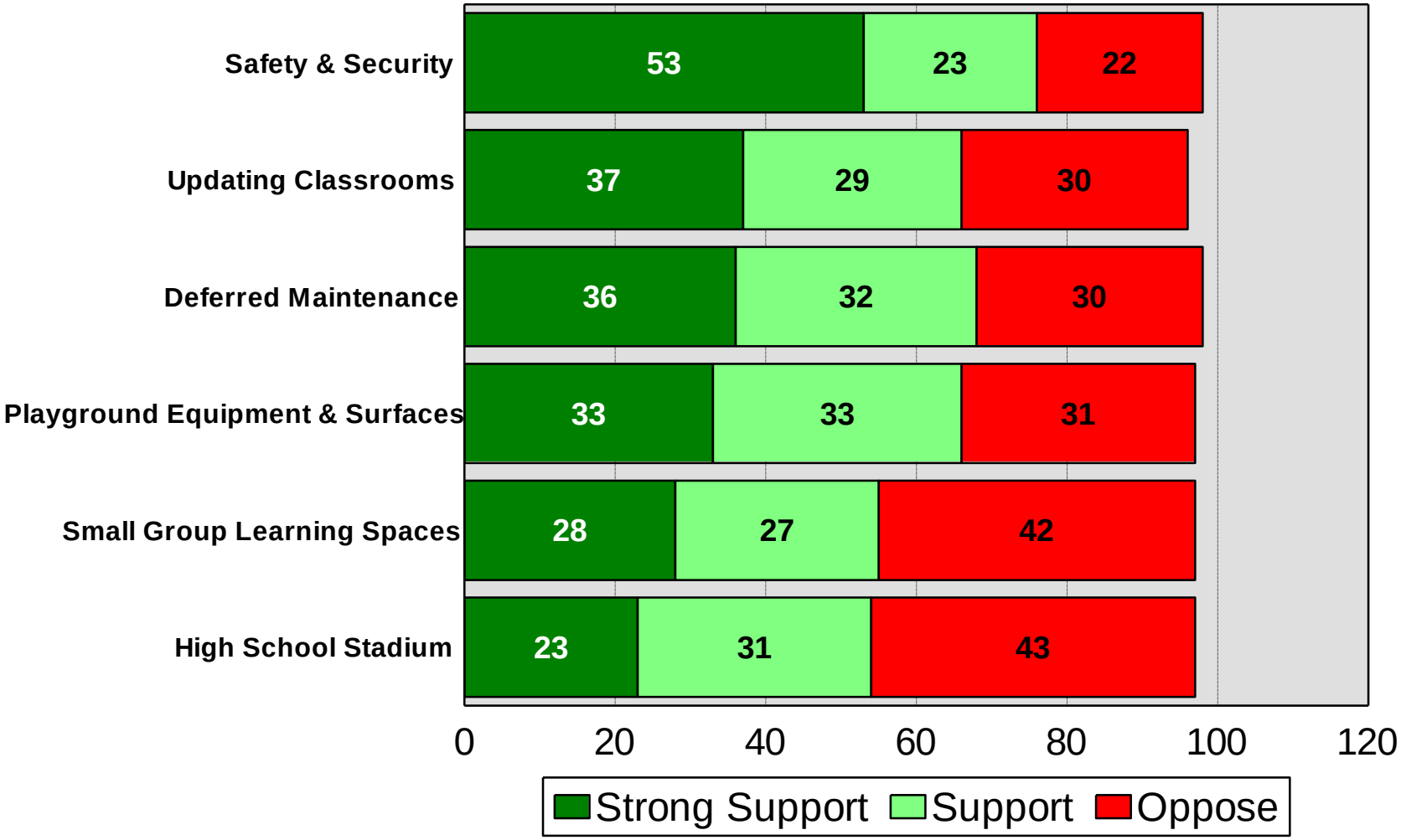
Referendum Predisposition

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



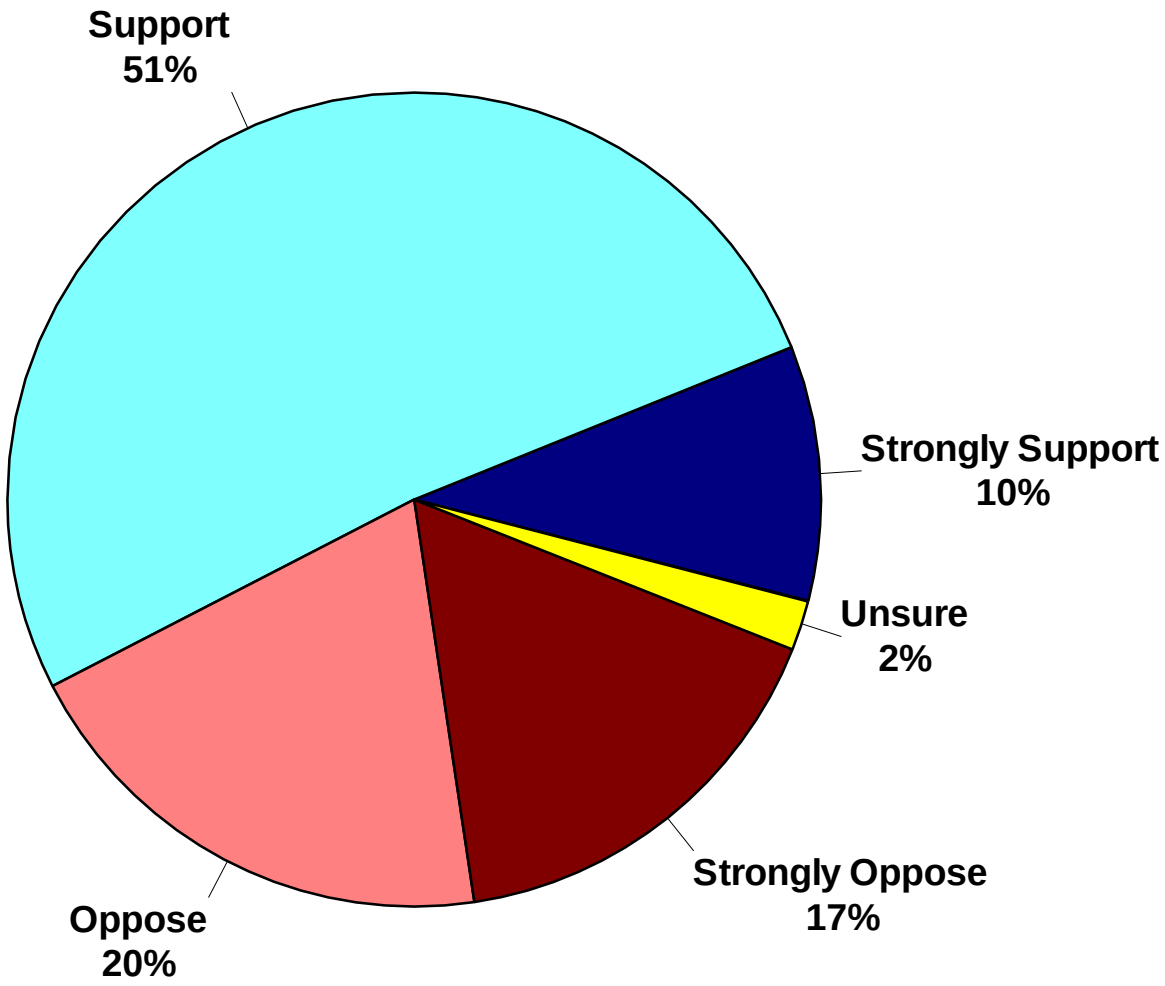
Property Tax Increase for....

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



$25MM Bond Referendum & $1.5MM Capital Projects Levy

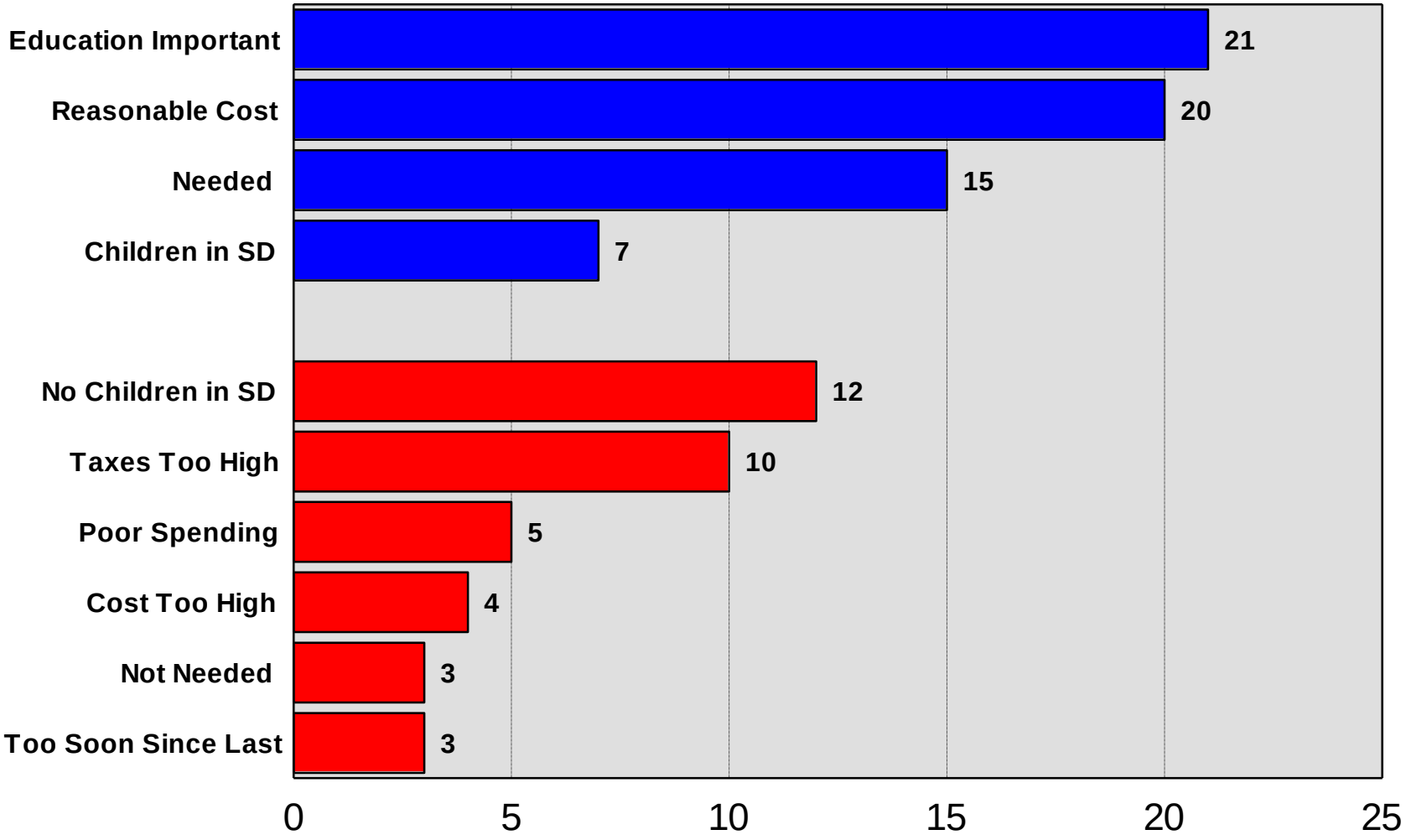
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



The Morris Leatherman Company

Reason for Position

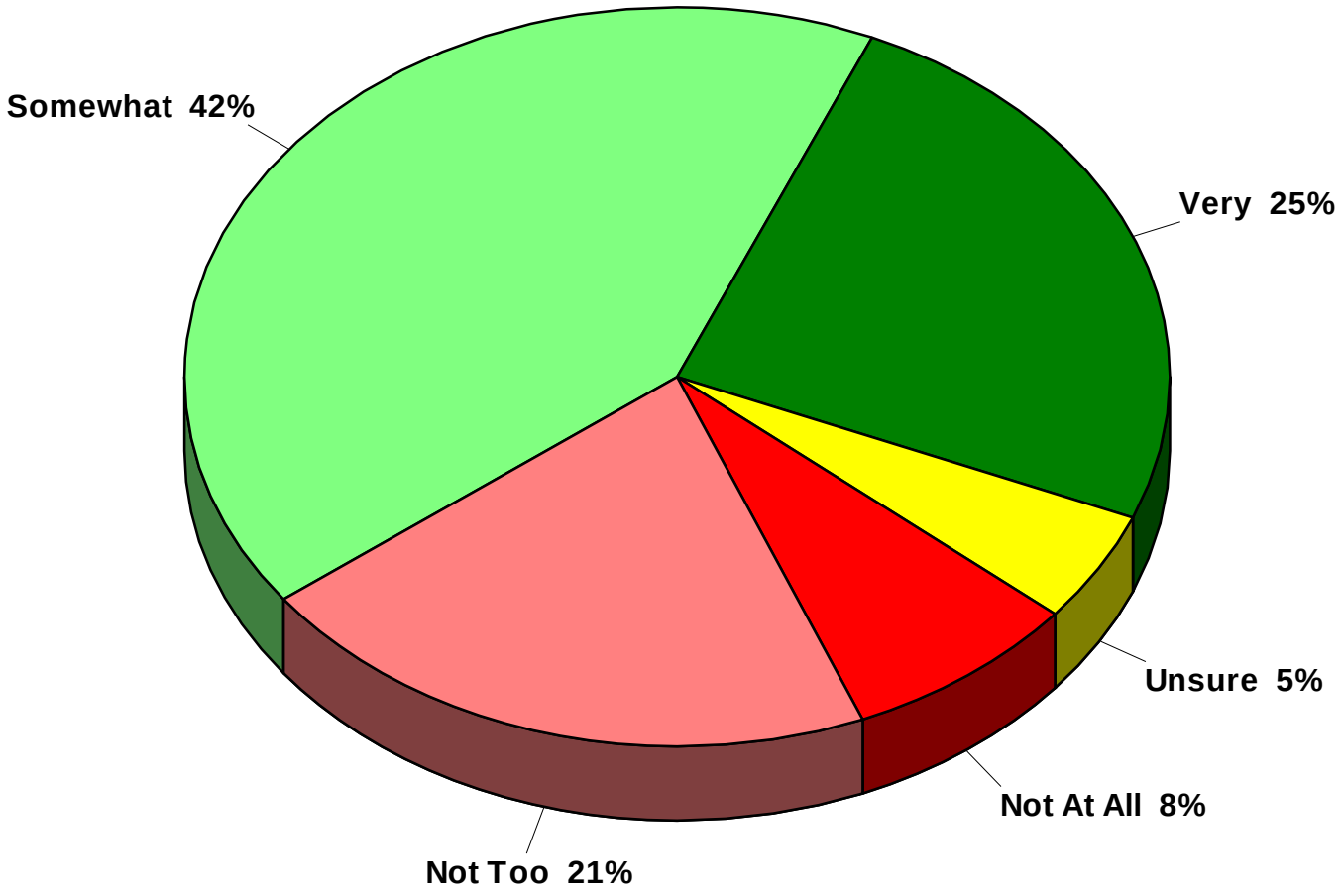
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



The Morris Leatherman Company

Importance of Investment in the High School Pool

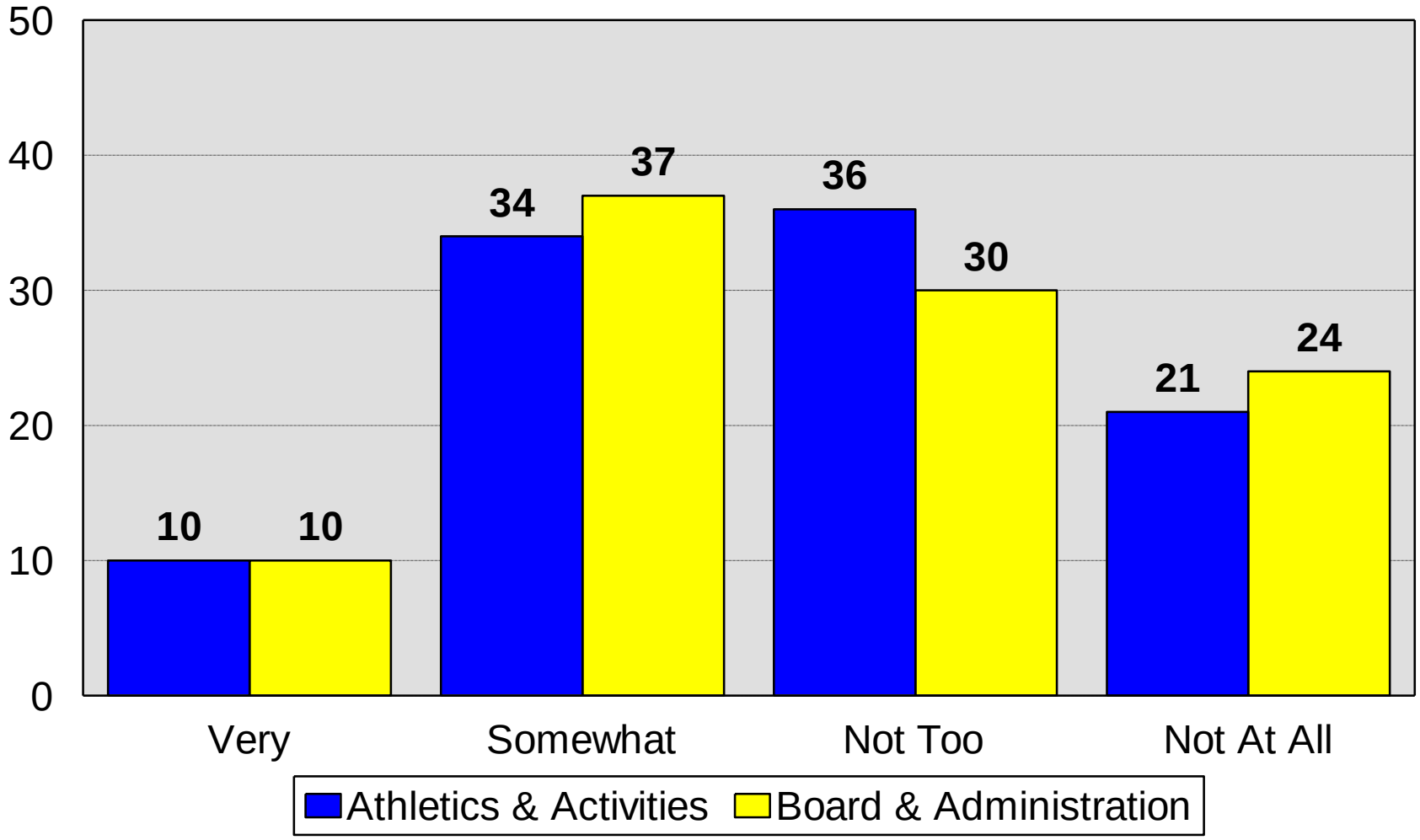
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



The Morris Leatherman Company

Informed about School District

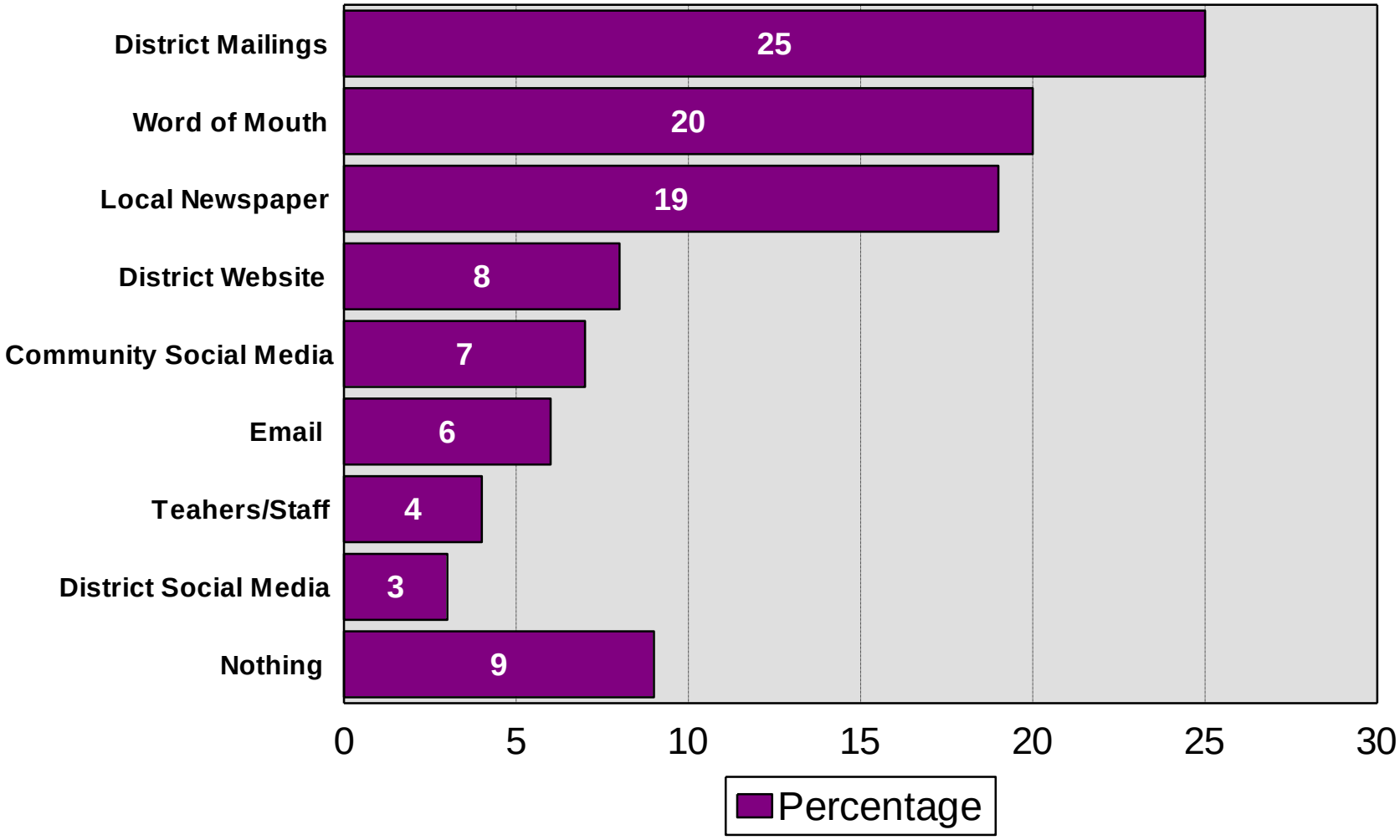
2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Morris Leatherman Company

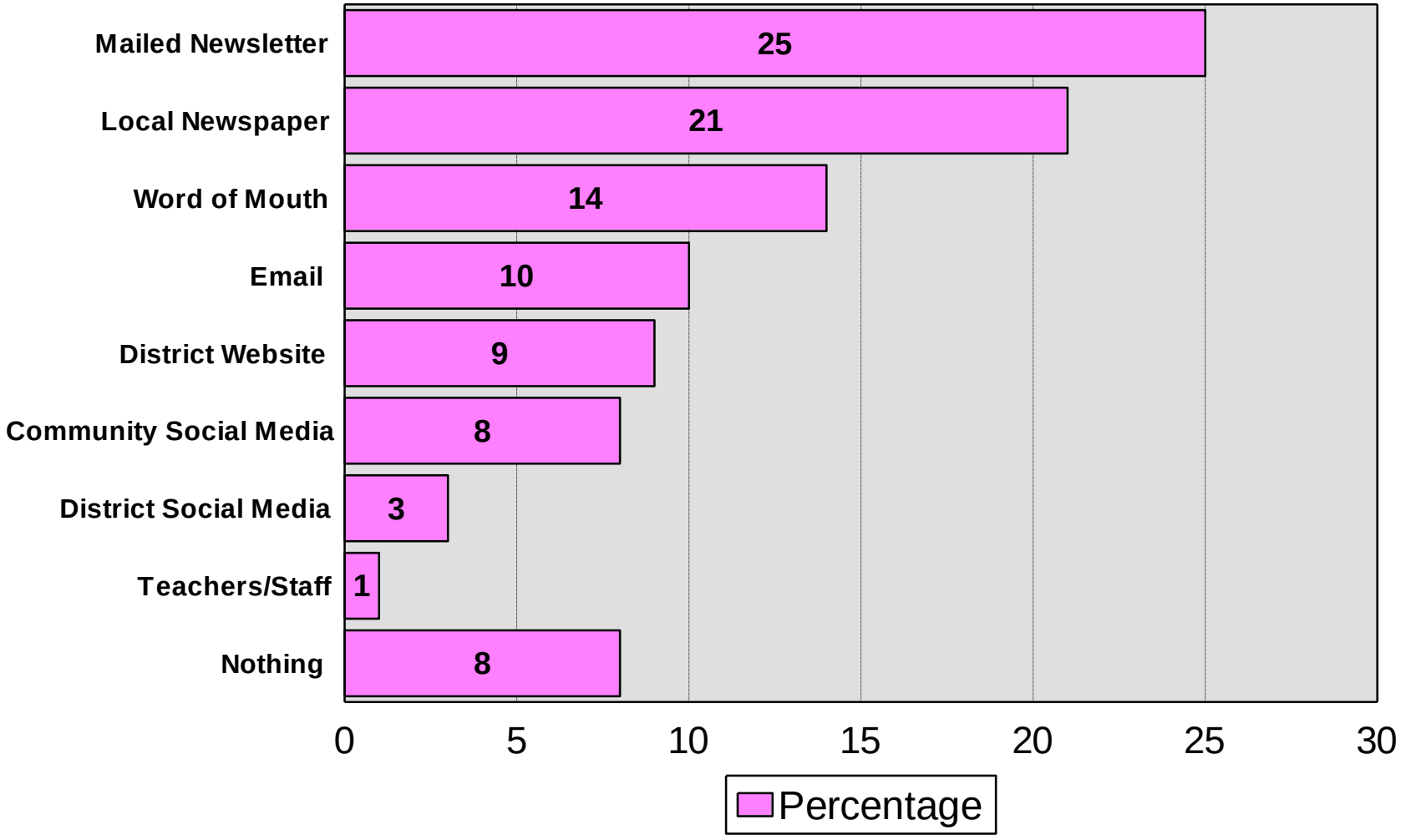
Principal Source of Information

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



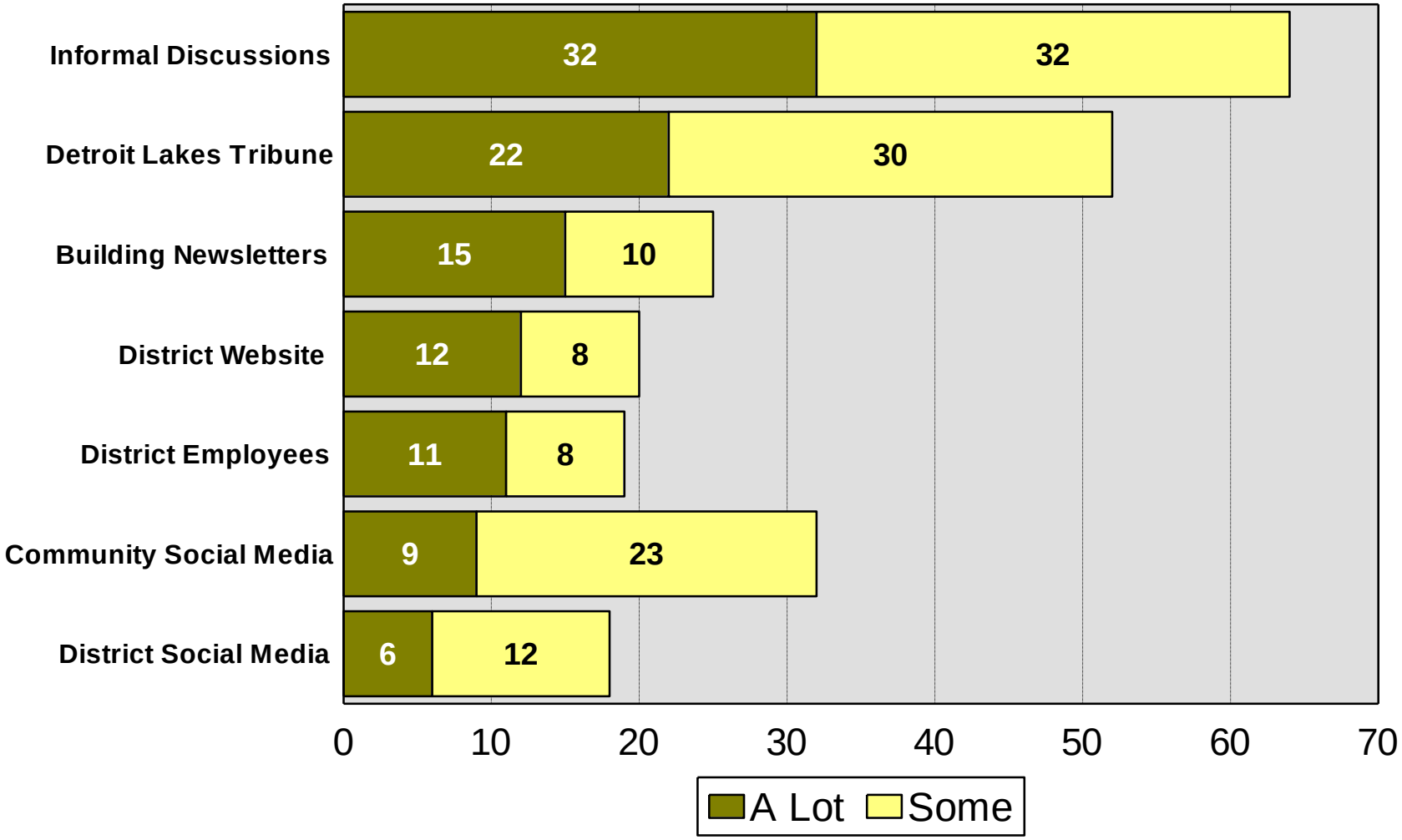
Most Effective Way

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Sources of Information

2026 Detroit Lakes School District



Parent & Staff Survey Results – Detroit Lakes School

Overview

- **September online survey**
- **Self-selected sample, doesn't reflect demographics of district**
- **Often opinions in self-selected samples reflect higher levels of intensity than scientific samples**
- **1,090 started survey**
  - 832 were staff/parents
  - 622 staff and parents completed the survey ← **Our Focus**

Areas of Agreement with Full Sample

- Quality of local education
- Whether Detroit Lakes Public Schools are adequately funded (although 36% aren't sure)
- Whether the bond referendum improved education (but 38% weren't sure)
- Building/facilities are excellent or good
- Priorities for additional investment
- Support for $25 million bond and $1.5 million levy

Differences in Opinions: Trust Drivers

Involving community in decisions	Scientific Survey	Online Survey: Parents/Staff
Strong Agree	10%	7%
Agree	63%	32%
Disagree	18%	32%
Strongly Disagree	6%	15%
Don't Know/Refused	4%	14%

Trust district to make decisions in the best interest of students & staff		
Strong Agree	12%	9%
Agree	67%	39%
Disagree	15%	29%
Strongly Disagree	3%	12%
Don't Know/Refused	4%	11%

Differences in Opinions: Tax Increase

DLPS is a good investment and I support a property tax increase to protect that investment	Scientific Survey	Online Survey: Parents/Staff
Strong Agree	11%	14%
Agree	48%	33%
Disagree	23%	24%
Strongly Disagree	14%	11%
Don't Know/Refused	5%	19%

General predisposition to support a tax increase for education		
Oppose almost any	31%	19%
Depends	39%	46%
Support nearly any	30%	19%
Don't Know/Refused	0%	16%

Differences in Opinions: Performance

School Board	Scientific Survey	Online Survey: Parents/Staff
Excellent/Good	59%	36%
Fair/Poor	34%	57%
Don't Know/Refused	7%	7%
Administration		
Excellent/Good	63%	58%
Fair/Poor	29%	34%
Don't Know/Refused	9%	8%

Teachers		
Excellent/Good	82%	85%
Fair/Poor	14%	14%
Don't Know/Refused	8%	1%

What Concerns Were Identified?

Trust district to make decisions in best interest of students and staff	
Symbol/stickers policies	99
Board governance/transparency	52
Curriculum focus/changes	17
Staff/budget reductions	17
LGBTQ student support	17
Stakeholder and community input	16

Most serious issue facing District	
Board governance/transparency	76
School budget/funding	66
Enrollment trends	59
Student safety and inclusion	43
Curriculum ideology and content	41
Bullying prevention and response	40

Data reflects the number of respondents who gave open-ended responses on these topics, AI used to group similar answers



Deferred Maintenance and Facility Needs

Identified needs based on assessments, surveys, and meetings with staff.

ICS
A LEGENCE Company

Deferred Maintenance Needs

Planning budget estimate: $18.803 million | High School $8.070M • Middle School $3.389M • Roosevelt $1.495M • Rossman $2.374M • Athletics $3.149M • Administration $0.327M

Mechanical & Indoor Air Quality

- Replace aging HVAC, rooftop units and condensing units
- Replace boilers and domestic water-heating equipment
- Add dehumidification for the high school stage and gym

Roofs & Building Envelope

- Replace roof sections at or beyond expected service life
- Complete tuckpointing, caulking and exterior finish repairs
- Replace selected exterior doors and address door-security needs

Interior & Learning Environments

- Modernize middle school restrooms
- Update high school locker rooms
- Add music storage area
- Replace classroom casework at the Middle School and Rossman ES

Playgrounds & Site Needs

- Update aging playground equipment and provide ADA equipment
- Add dedicated early childhood playground areas with age-appropriate equipment
- Improve accessible surfacing and address grass and mud areas

Athletic Infrastructure

- Replace grandstand and press box; resurface track
- Update athletic lighting, storage, tennis fencing and irrigation

Additional Items Requiring Further Exploration

Items requiring additional scope definition, prioritization and cost development

Middle School

- Locker room remodel
- Furniture allowance and new student lockers
- STEM equipment
- Finish tiling cafeteria floor; updated railing and soundproofing
- New gym curtain and basketball winches
- Elevator updates
- Interior finish upgrades in art, technical applications and healthy living classrooms
- Create a weight room

Rossman Elementary School

- Multipurpose room interior finishes
- Additional staff restrooms
- Carpet replacement in various classrooms
- Urinal partitions
- Hot water at existing classroom sinks
- Turf green space on the playground

High School

- Additional music practice rooms
- Potential repurposing of pool area
- Elevator updates
- Band and choir interior finish upgrades
- Furniture and cameras for second-level collaboration area
- Additional interior and exterior storage

Roosevelt Elementary School

- Improve secured-entrance intercom system
- Add playground cameras
- Larger conference room options

Districtwide Security

- Replace glass in selected secure-entrance doors
- Confirm locations, security-performance requirements and priority order

Additional exploration items are not currently included in the $18.803 million planning budget unless specifically identified in the existing scope.

Estimated Tax Impact Example

Estimated average home valued at $375,000

$25M

GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS

20 years • 5.00% average interest

$1.5M

CAPITAL PROJECT LEVY

10 years

Actual tax impact will be recalculated after the final scope and financing structure are established.

Example monthly and annual impact on a residential homestead

$200,000 home value	**$5.17/mo or $62/year**
$300,000 home value	**$8.42/mo or $101/year**
$400,000 home value	**$11.67/mo or $140/year**
$500,000 home value	**$14.92/mo or $179 year**

EHLERS
YOUR PARTNERS IN PUBLIC FINANCE

Financing scenario: $25 million bond issue plus a $1.5 million capital project levy for 10 years.

Draft Timeline for 2027 Special Elections

Key Review and Comment, board action, publication and election milestones

Required Action	Feb. 9, 2027	Apr. 13, 2027	May 11, 2027	Aug. 10, 2027	Nov. 2, 2027
Submit Review & Comment application materials to Commissioner of Education*	Sept. 22, 2026	Nov. 24, 2026	Dec. 22, 2026	Mar. 23, 2027	June 15, 2027
Adopt formal resolution calling the election**	Nov. 17, 2026	Jan. 19, 2027	Feb. 16, 2027	May 18, 2027	Aug. 10, 2027
Adhere to election timeline provided by attorney	Typically emailed in coordination with call for election				
Receive Review and Comment by	Dec. 11, 2026	Feb. 12, 2027	Mar. 12, 2027	June 11, 2027	Sept. 3, 2027
Publish Review and Comment**	Dec. 1–23, 2026	Feb. 2–24, 2027	Mar. 2–24, 2027	June 1–23, 2027	Aug. 24–Sept. 15, 2027
Hold School Board public meeting to discuss MDE response**	Prior to election, after receipt of MDE response				
Hold special election	**Feb. 9, 2027**	**Apr. 13, 2027**	**May 11, 2027**	**Aug. 10, 2027**	**Nov. 2, 2027**

* Commissioner has up to 60 days from receipt to complete Review and Comment. Additional time should be allotted for publication and public meeting requirements.
** Legal time frame shown.

MDE = Minnesota Department of Education | Confirm statutory dates with bond counsel and election officials before action.


QUESTIONS?