



JOHN FOX ◀ Marketing Consulting

Forest Hills Schools Final Research Presentation

Prepared for:



June 19, 2014



- **Objectives & Methodology**
- **Executive Summary**
- **Detailed Findings
(in the order of survey questions)**
- **Interviewee Demographics**



Objectives And Methodology



◆ Objectives

- Secure feedback from Forest Hills School District residents on facilities issues and communication of information.
- Gauge community intent to vote in favor of/against two facilities plan options for a possible bond issue, and the reasons for these opinions:
 - A \$173 million plan to totally renovate both high schools and the middle school, and replace the current six elementary schools with four larger totally new elementary schools, closing two current schools to be determined.
 - A \$98 million plan to renovate both high schools and the middle school, renovate five of the current six elementary schools and build a totally new Wilson elementary school
- Determine awareness of and opinions on issues related to the plans, their relationship to current teaching/learning trends, their financial implications, and a focus on having 6 renovated versus 4 new elementary schools.
- Analyze the feedback both overall and by demographics where appropriate.



◆ Actionability

- Provide a “go/no go” decision for placing a bond issue on the ballot in November, 2014, and which option to pursue
- If it is placed on the ballot, determine its best “sales” messages (positives to emphasize and negatives to address) and sources for information for pre-vote marketing, PR and other communications, to help ensure its passage.
- A key goal of the research is to let the Forest Hills community know that, based on their opinions, the recommended facilities plan is what they want, not just what the school board or administration wants.



- **Specific issues researched:**
 - Awareness of Forest Hills schools' operations in general
 - What should be the top priority in the district
 - Opinions on the schools' facilities (to compare versus a late 2013 study)
 - The effectiveness of the district's communication programs, and specific sources for information on the schools
 - Reaction to the possible facilities plans/bond issues, in terms of voting intent and unaided reasons-why
 - Scaled rating questions: level of agreement on 12 facilities and financial-related hypotheses; relative importance of 10 selling points; and awareness of 5 specific issues
 - Interviewee demographics (for cross-tabulation of the data)



- **500 completed telephone and online interviews**
 - 333 completed telephone interviews conducted May 27 through June 6 among a random sample of households from lists of registered voters
 - 167 online interviews, selected at random from 1,000+ surveys completed May 23-30, from a link sent to the community via e-mails, the district website and other publicity
- All participants were screened for being a resident of the Forest Hills School District, a registered voter and planning to vote in a November, 2014 election.
- The two plans and their voting-related and reason-why questions were presented in a different rotation every other interview, to avoid order bias. The multi-part questions (hypotheses, importance and awareness) were also presented in a different rotation each interview.



- **The total sample's error range is plus or minus 4.4% at the 95% confidence level (the standard level of the research industry)**
 - **This means that were the study to be replicated, the results would fall within 4 to 5 percentage points of those reported here, 19 out of 20 times.**
 - **For comparisons within a single question, approximately 9 points of difference are necessary for statistical significance.**
 - **For comparisons between two questions in this study, approximately 6 points of difference are necessary for statistical significance.**
 - **Cross-tabulations of the data by demographics and other break-outs of the data are noted when there is significance at the 95% confidence level.**

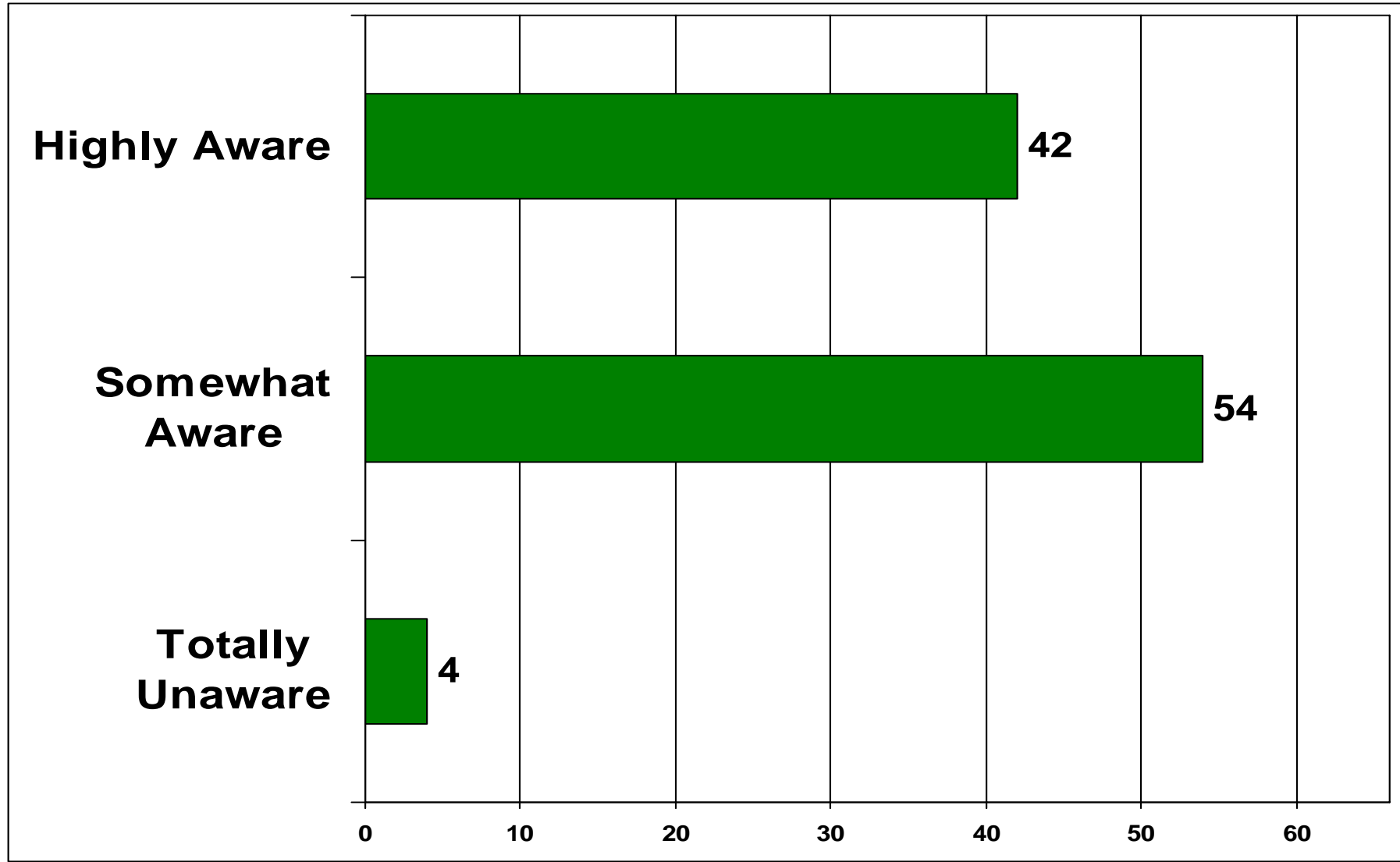


Detailed Findings

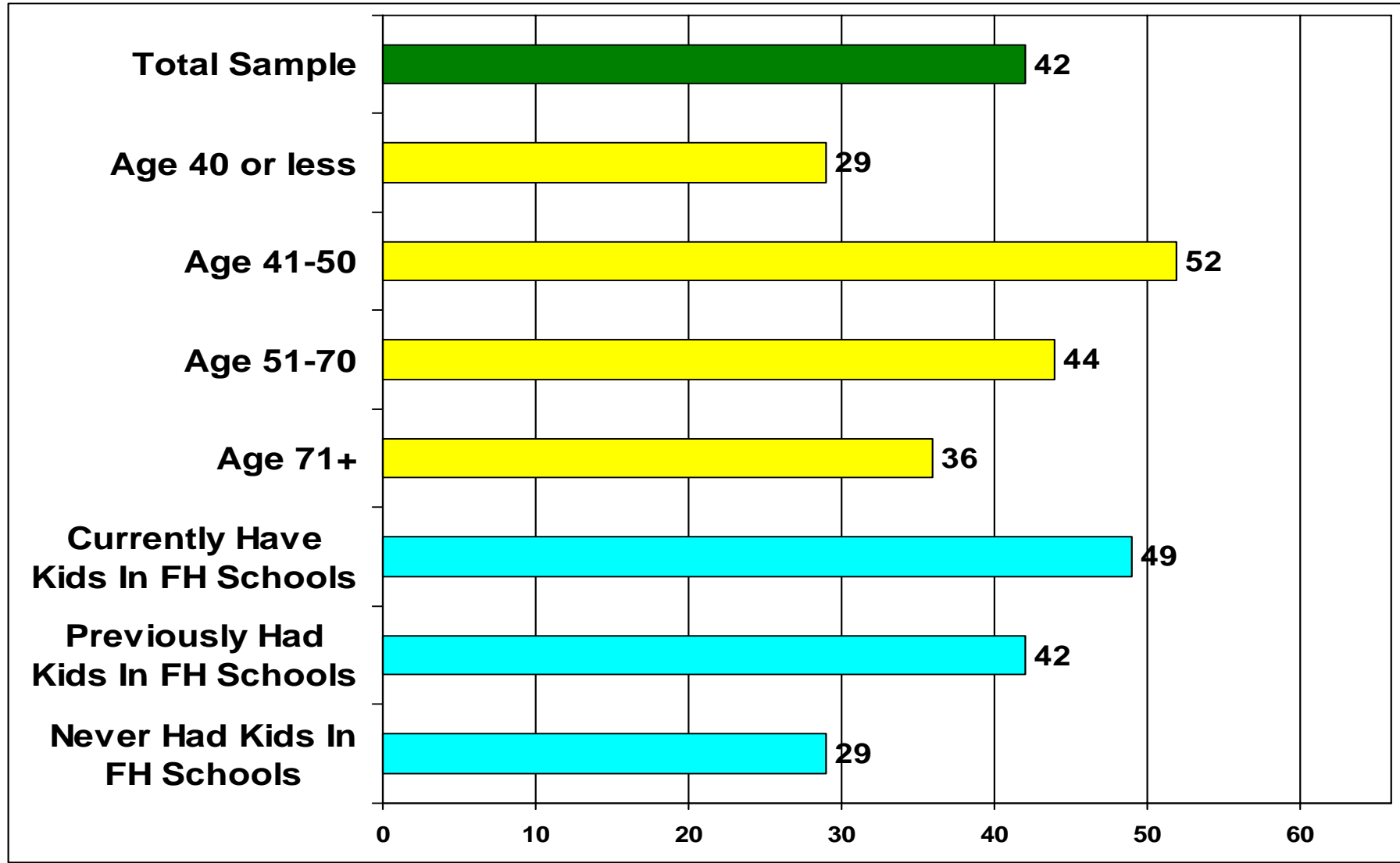
(In the approximate order of survey questions)

Overall Awareness (%)

How knowledgeable would you say you are regarding the Forest Hills Schools' educational programs and overall management and operation of the school district?



Highly Aware: Demographic Differences (%)

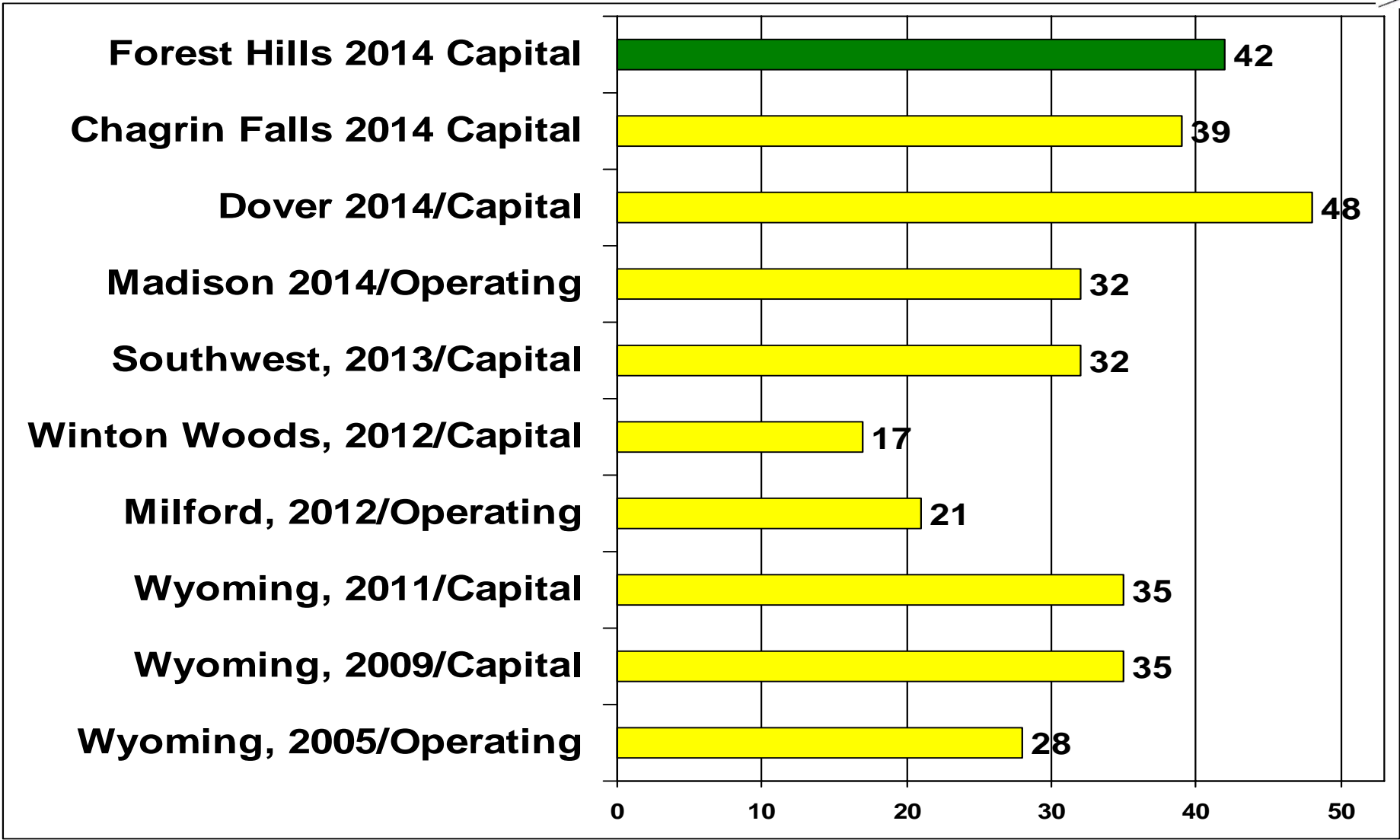


Overall Awareness Comparison (%)

(Highly Aware, versus other districts in previous research)



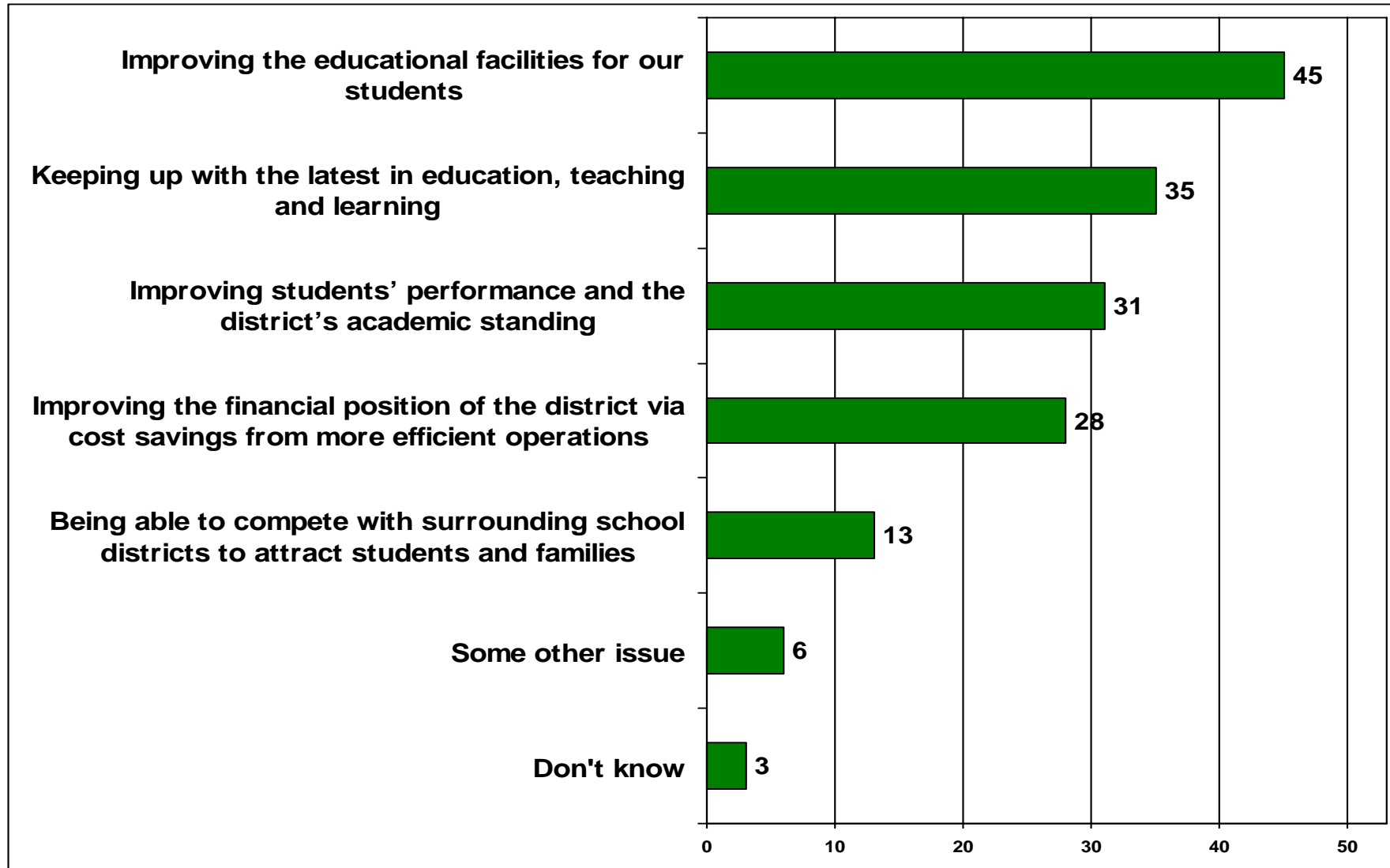
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Top School District Priority (%)



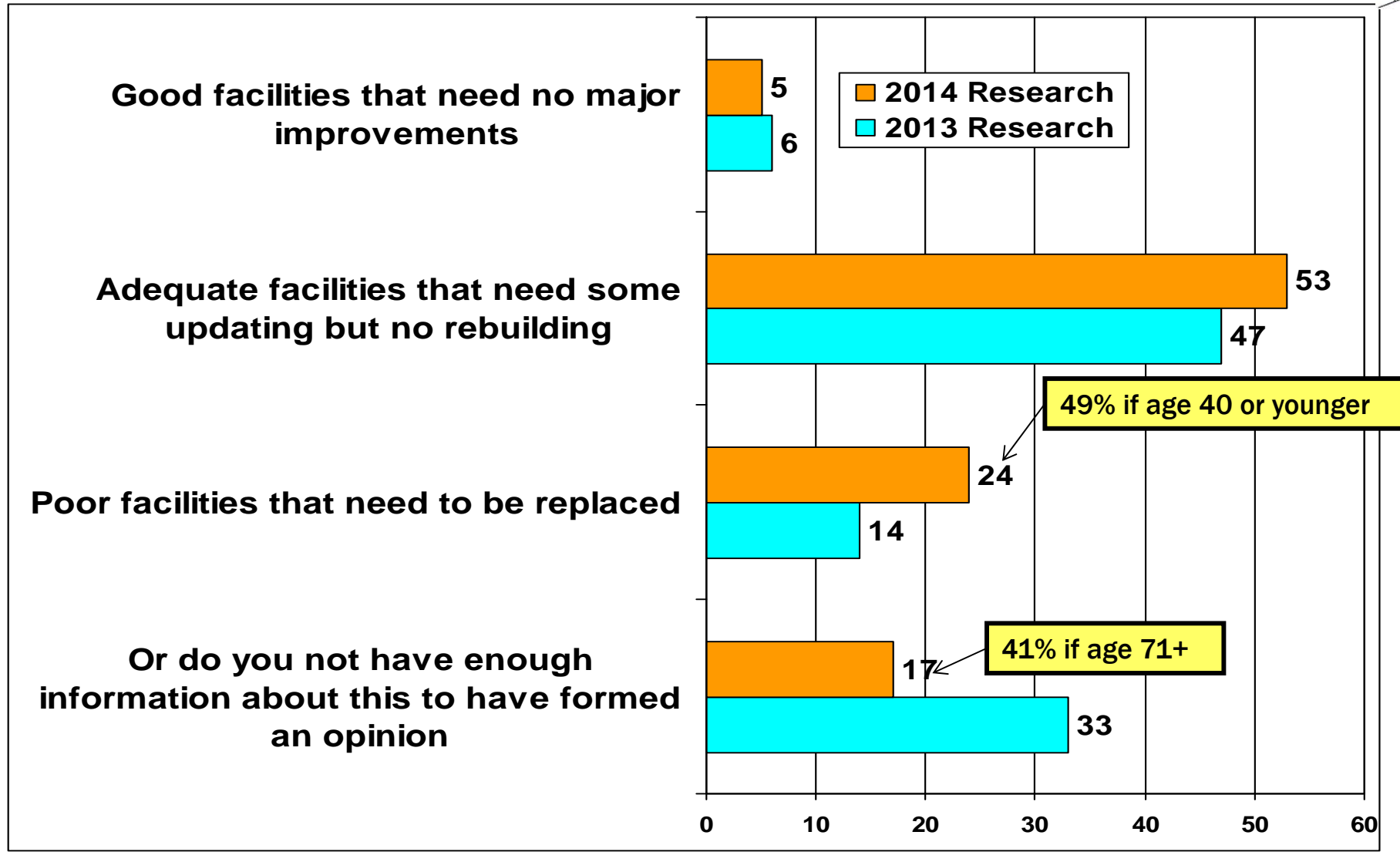
Which one or two of the following issues do you think should be the top priorities for the Forest Hills Schools to work on during the next few years?



Facilities : General Opinion of (%)

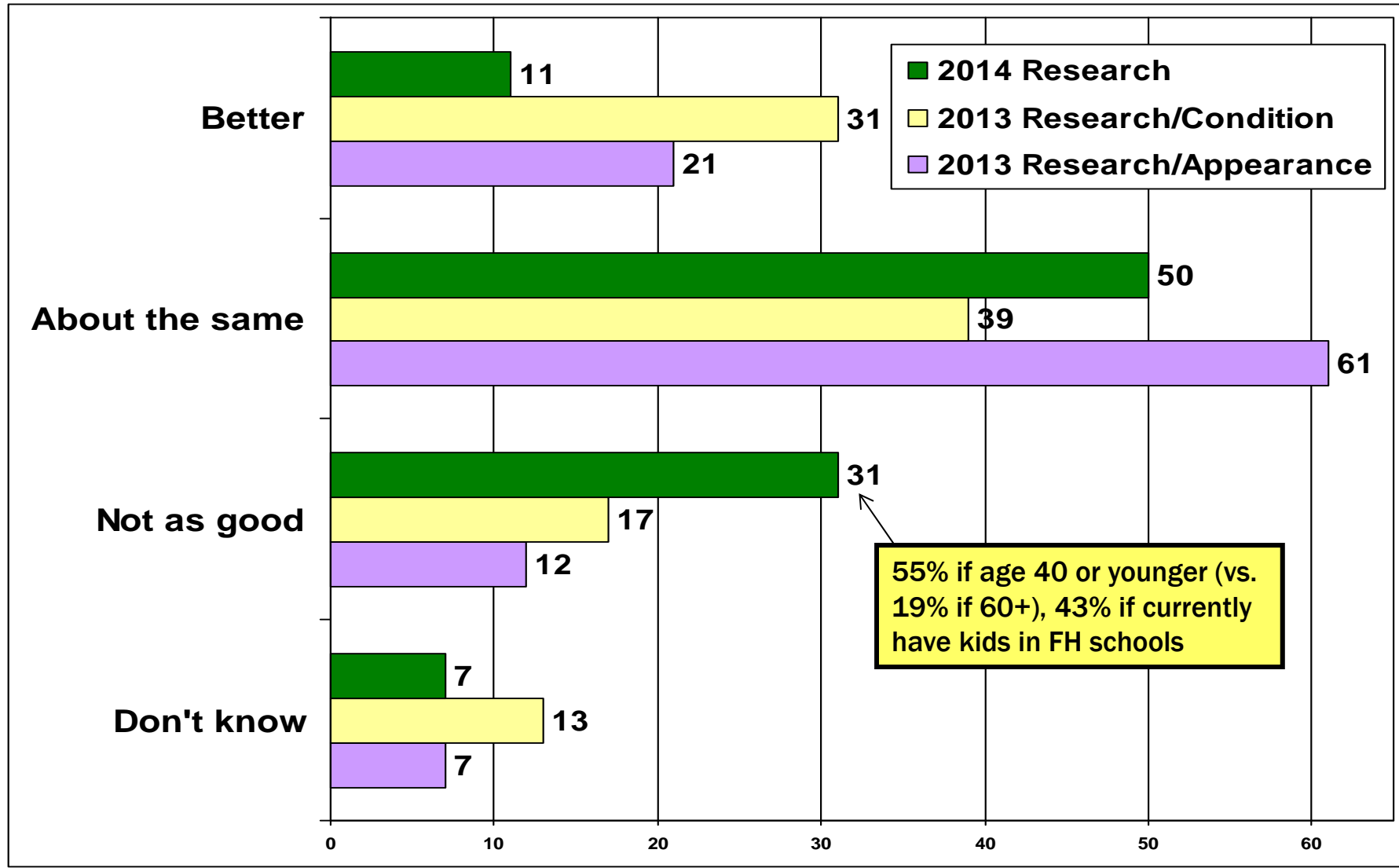


In general, do you think that the Forest Hills Local School District buildings and classrooms are...



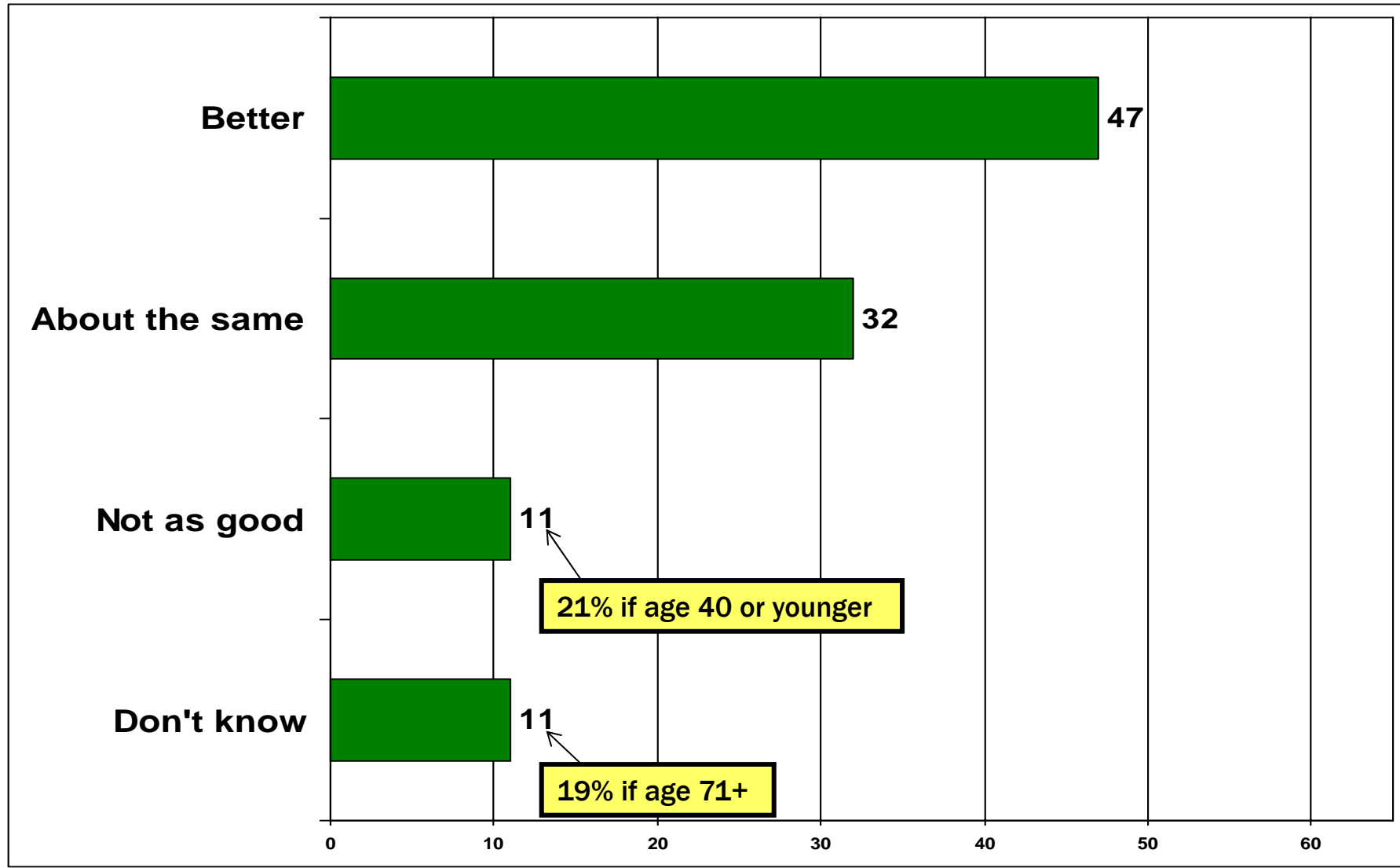
Facilities : Condition/Appearance (%)

Compared to other nearby public school districts, would you say the appearance and physical condition of the Forest Hills Local School District buildings are...?



Facilities: Offering The Latest (%)

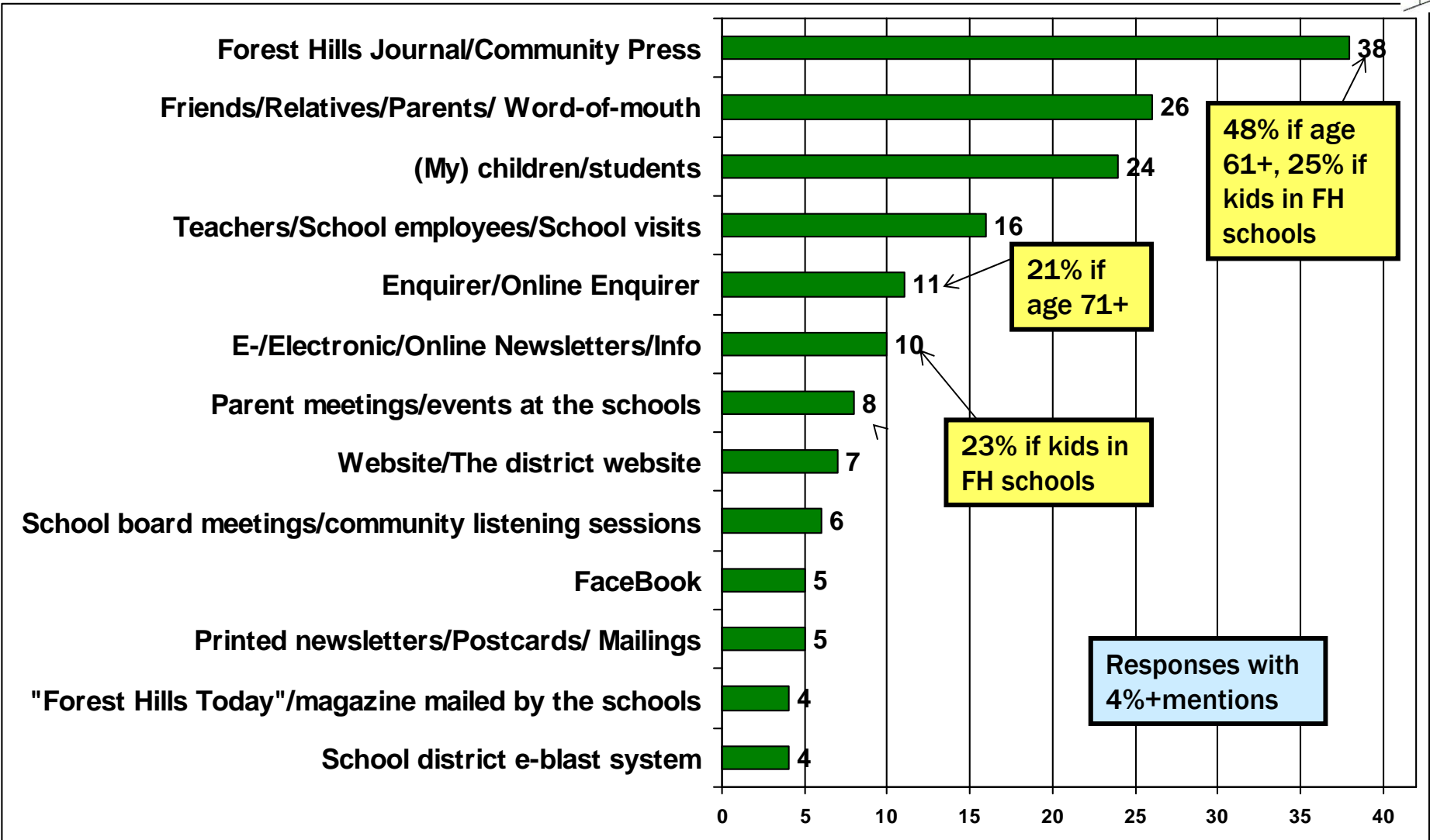
In your opinion, how do the Forest Hills district school buildings compare to other nearby public school districts in terms of offering the latest in education, teaching and learning? Would you say they are...



(Unaided) Sources of Information (%)



Where do you get most of your information regarding the Forest Hills Schools? (UP TO 2 RESPONSES ALLOWED)



HIGHER-COST PLAN CONCEPT



An option is to totally renovate both high schools and the middle school, and replace the current six elementary schools with four larger totally new elementary schools, closing two current schools to be determined. The total cost of this option is approximately \$173 million dollars.

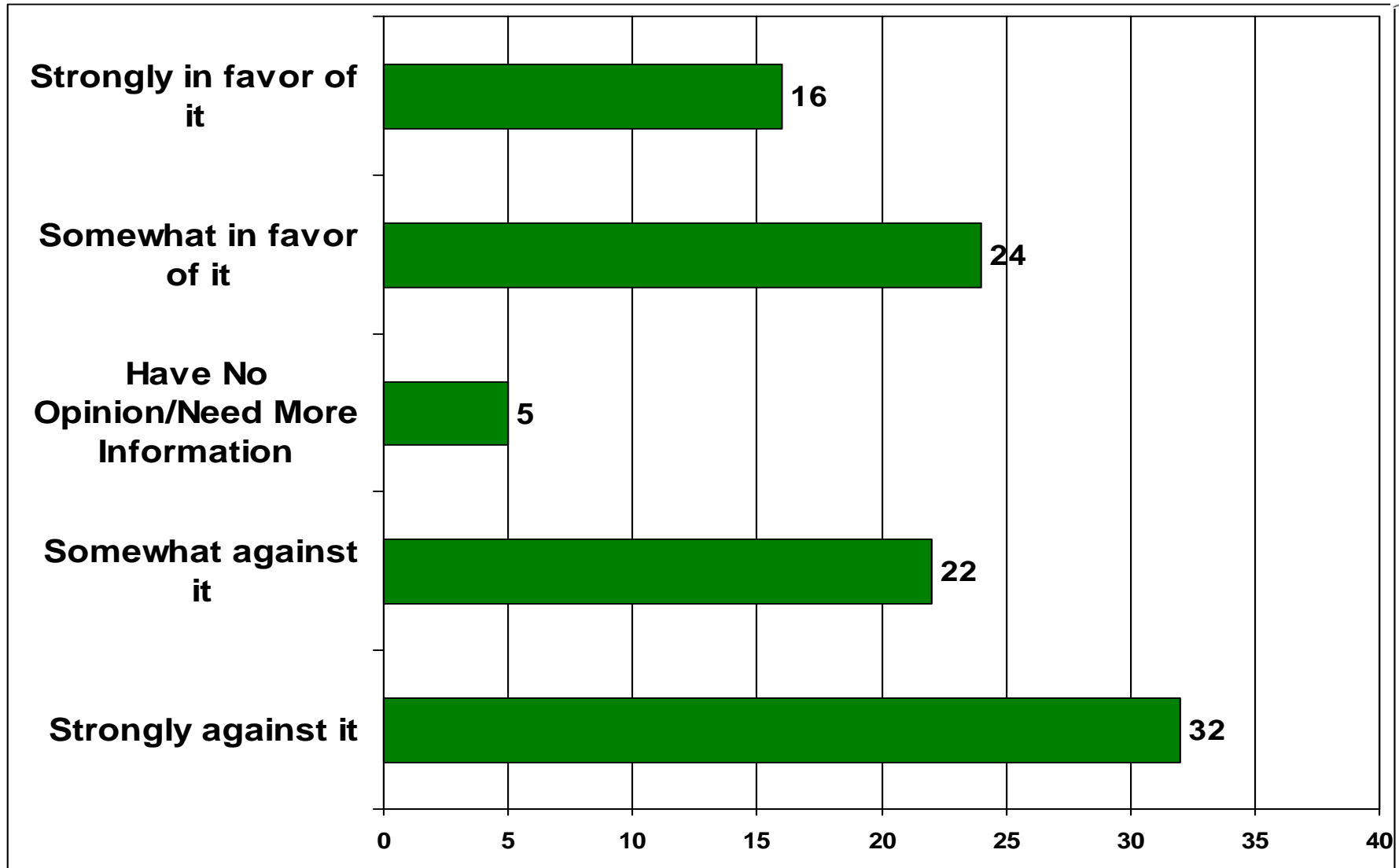
A bond issue to fund this effort may be voted on in November of this year. This would involve a property tax increase of approximately an additional \$233 dollars per year on every \$100,000 dollars of a home's market value. Because of the dollar amount of this option, a state rebate of 15% or approximately \$24 million dollars could be available to possibly lower the tax burden longer term.

This would result in operational savings of approximately a million dollars per year. It would require some redistricting of the elementary schools. If the bond issue were not to pass, the district would need to spend approximately \$600,000 to \$1 million dollars per year out of the operating budget for repairs and maintenance, perhaps necessitating a tax levy that would also increase property taxes.

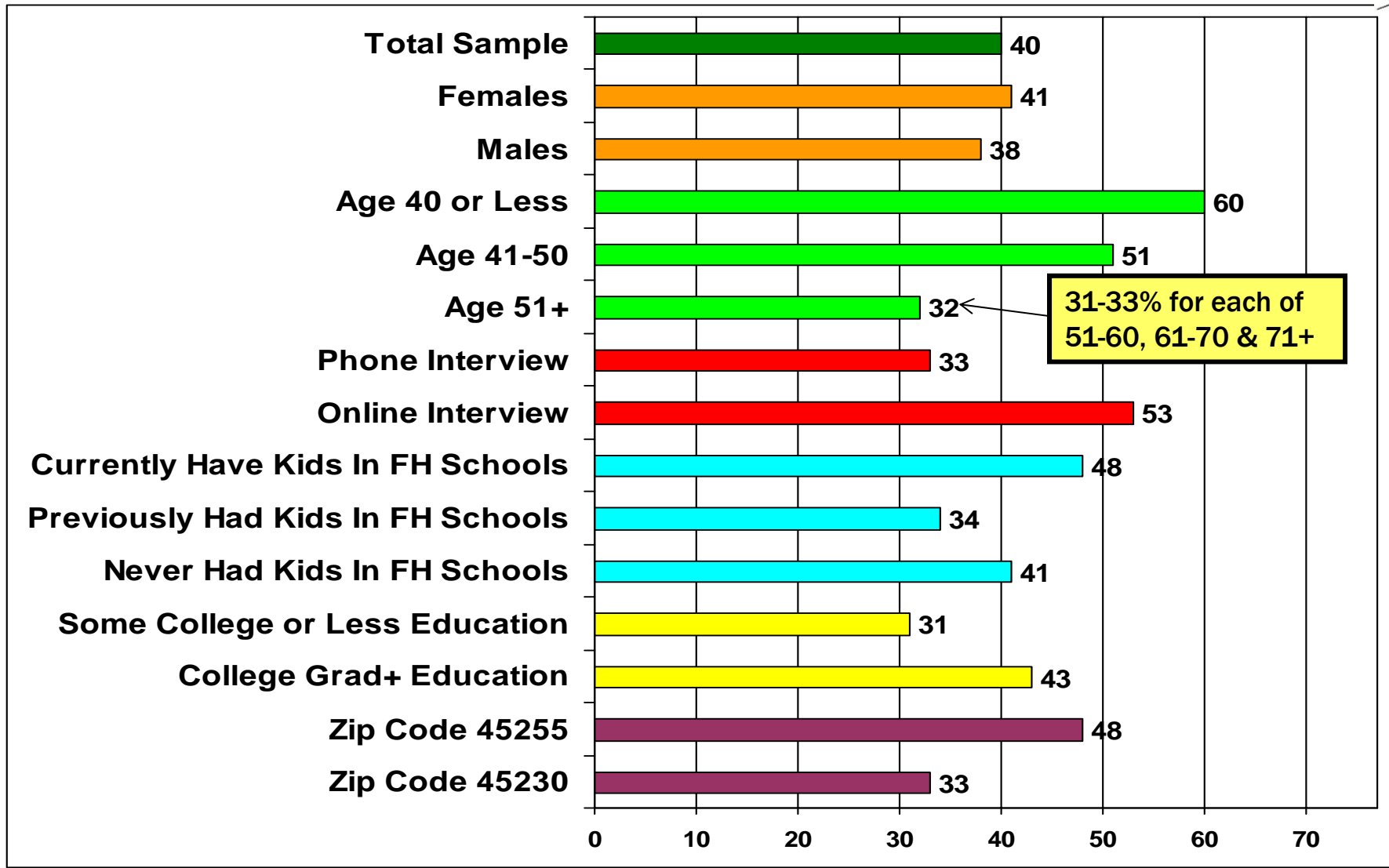
Higher Cost (\$173M) Plan Vote Intent (%)



If the election for this bond issue were held tomorrow, would you say you would be...

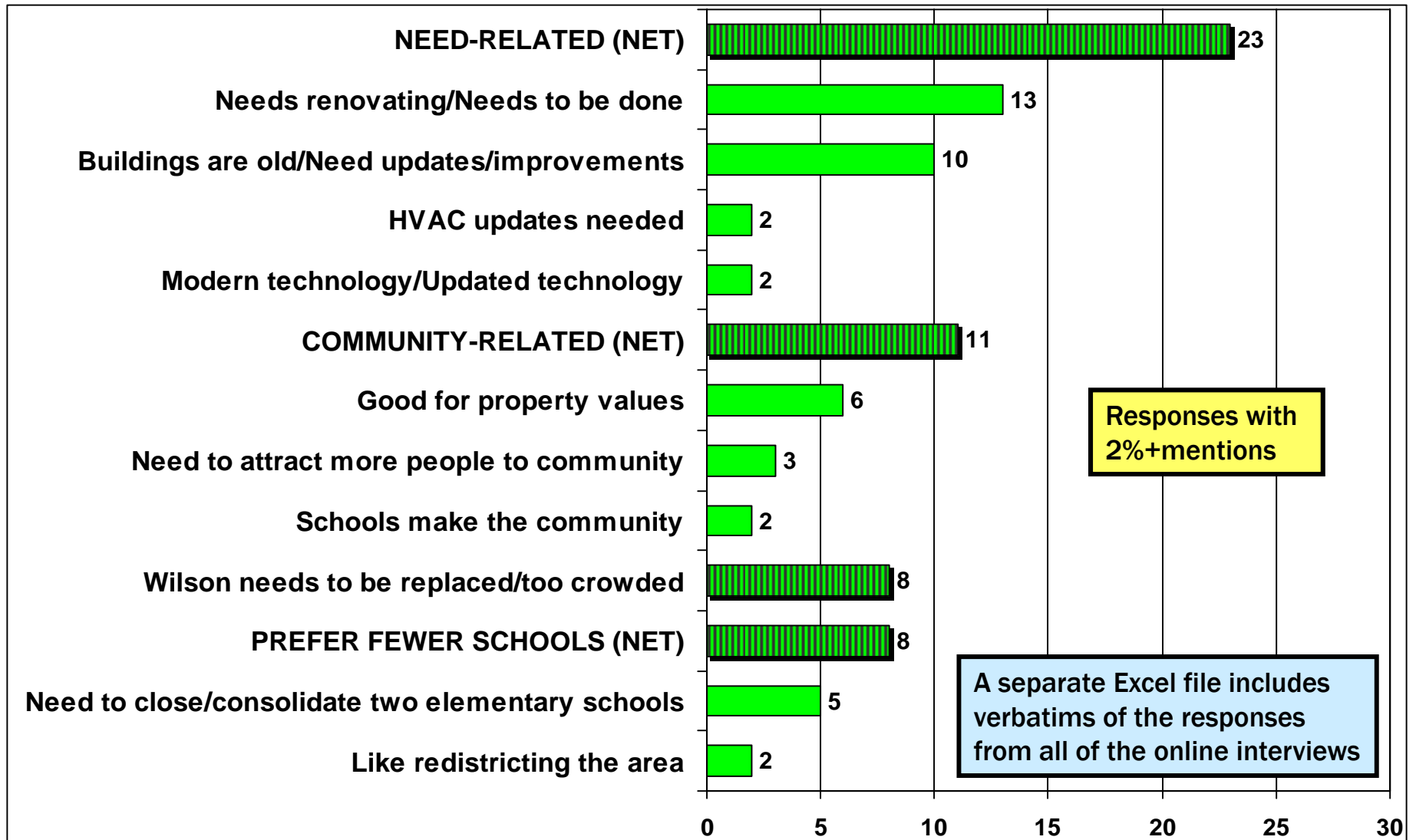


Strongly or Somewhat in Favor of Higher Cost Plan, By Cross-tabs (%)



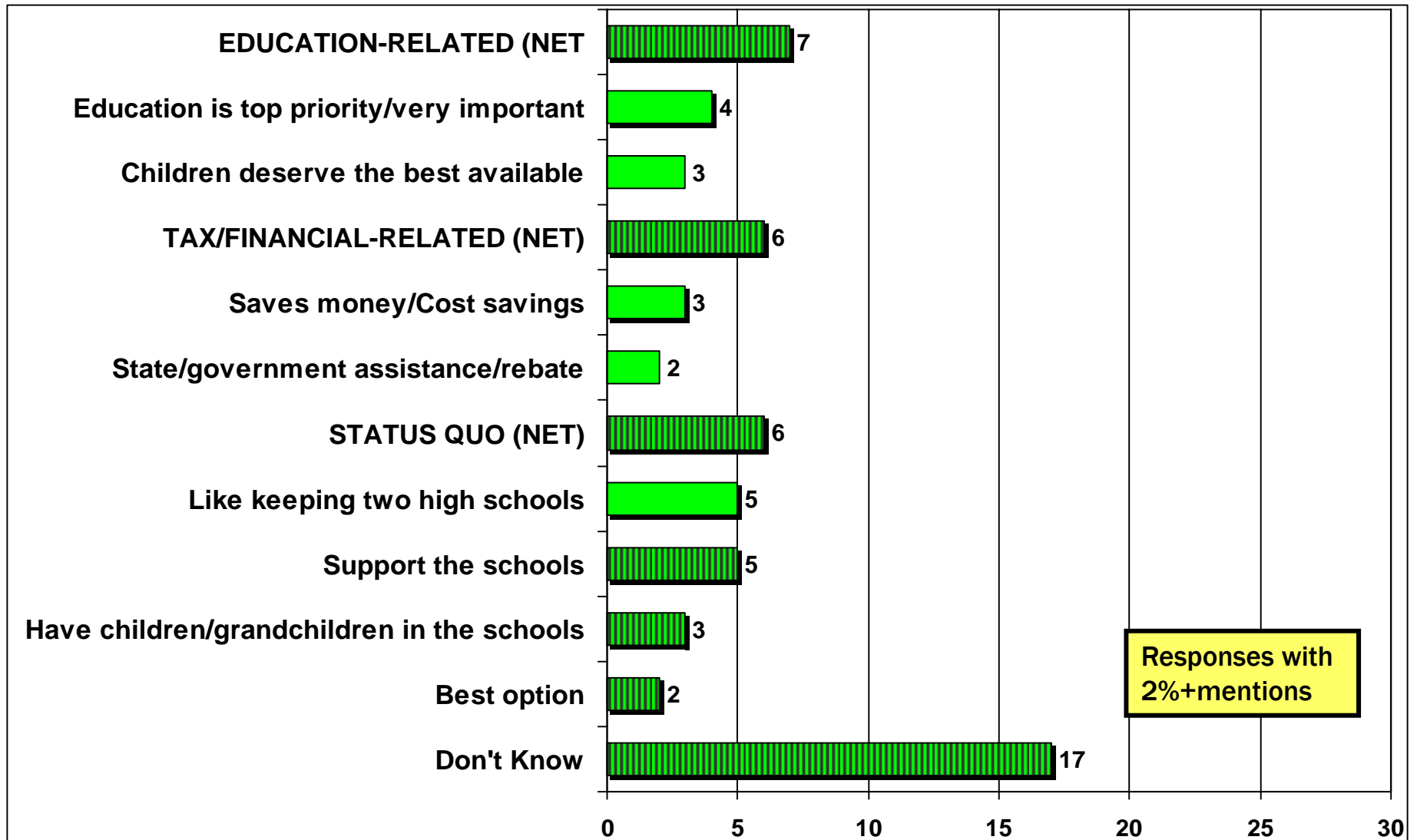
(Unaided) Reasons For Higher Cost Plan (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly in favor/somewhat in favor? Why else? Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=199)



Reasons For Higher Cost Plan—Continued (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly in favor/somewhat in favor? Why else? Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=199)



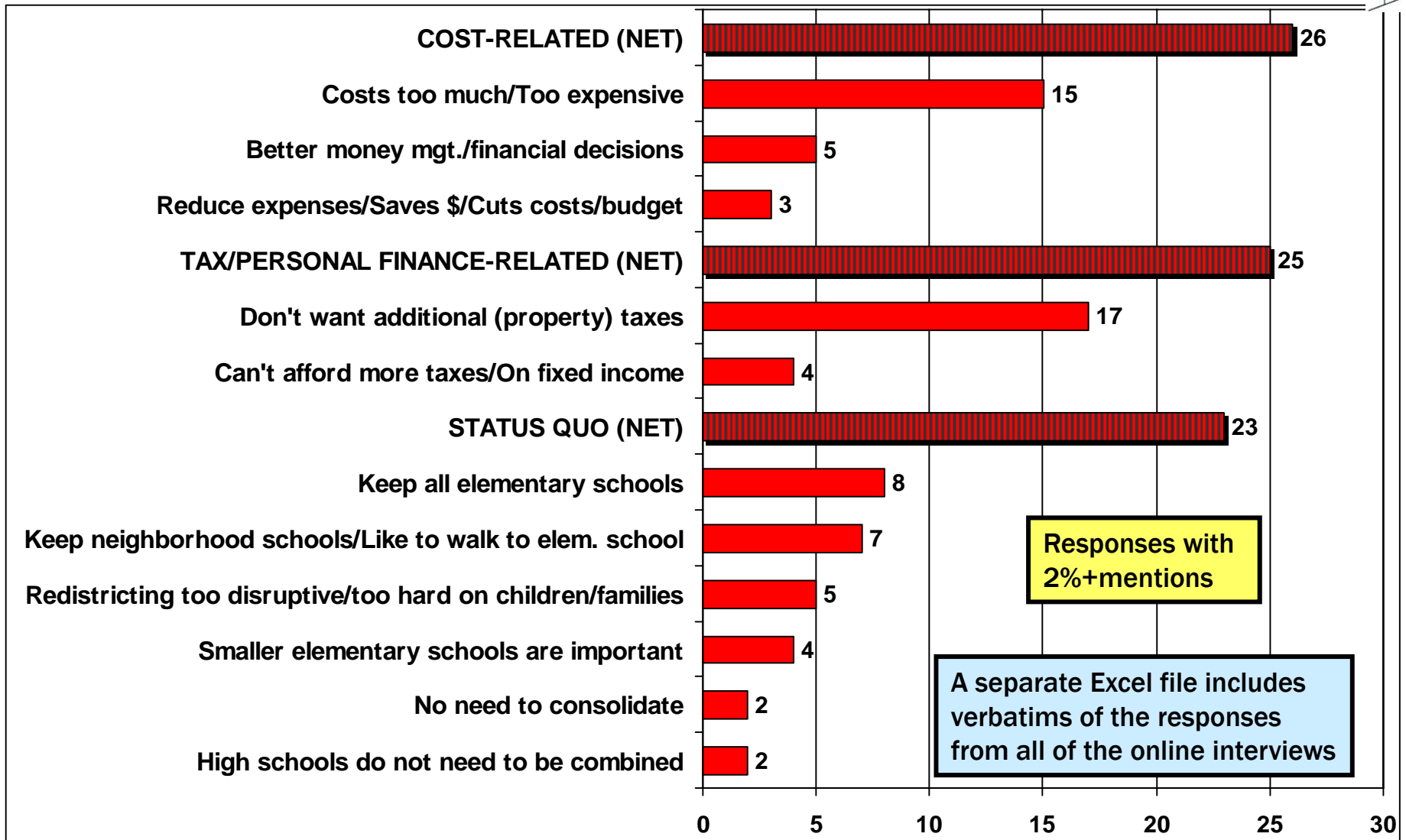


● Why Strongly In Favor of Higher Cost (\$173M) Plan

- Addresses replacement cycle concerns. Reduces operating costs. Addresses disparities between elementary schools.
- Uniform improvements district wide.
- Our buildings are in poor shape compared to other districts.
- The elementary schools are old, falling apart and in desperate need of rebuilding. I love the idea of redistricting the elementary schools.
- Again I know we need better facilities. Four new schools would be fine with me, but I don't have to deal with the redistricting because my children are older.
- We do not plan on staying in Forest Hills if there aren't serious improvements within the school district.
- I fully believe that the high schools need to be renovated, Anderson High School in particular with the lack of updated HVAC the learning environment is compromised.
- The bond cost is reasonable. New elementary schools will attract new families to the community, helping to ensure property values. This offsets the bond cost and sets up the community for long-term relevance and competitive advantage over other districts.
- I believe we need to invest in the future and build schools to last.
- New buildings for elementary students is desirable. Would include a state rebate as well as potential maintenance savings from general fund.
- It's time.

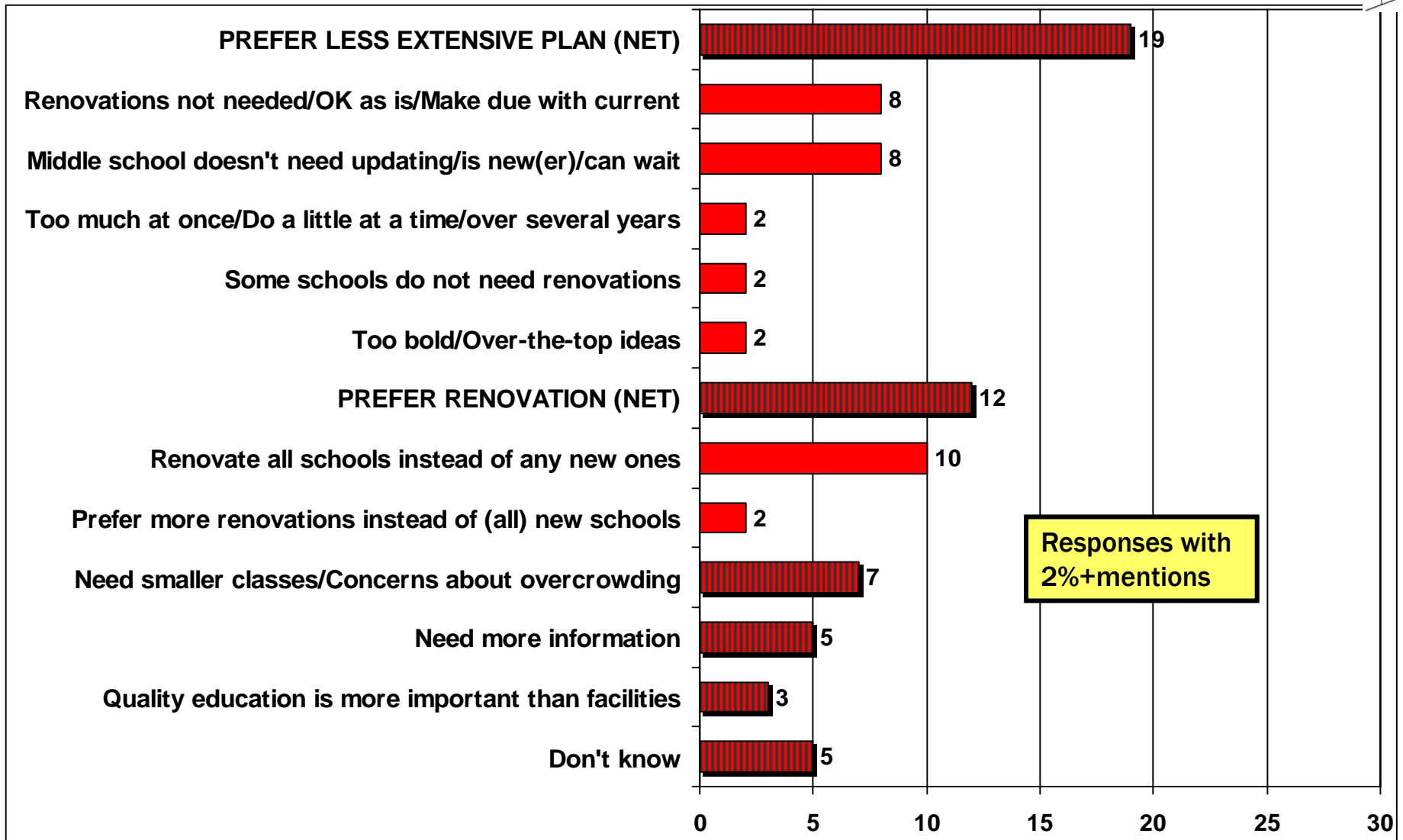
(Unaided) Reasons Against Higher Cost Plan (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly against/somewhat against? Why else?
Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=273)



Reasons Against Higher Cost Plan—Continued (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly against/somewhat against? Why else?
Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=273)





● Why Strongly Against Higher Cost (\$173M) Plan

- Not happy about raising taxes. Most parents want children to remain at neighborhood schools.
- Is it really necessary to do all that at one time? I thought Nagel and Turpin were fairly new.
- Elementary student count would increase per building and class sizes could be higher. Maintaining these buildings for future growth might not appeal to new families wanting to move to this district. Location change and the monthly property tax increases will likely be barriers.
- Too expensive.
- I like the 6 smaller elementaries. I don't want to lose any of them.
- Closing grade schools means redistricting. When was a study made to determine future needs?
- The 4 elementary option is way too expensive and it is wasteful. Not all our elementary buildings should be discarded so carelessly. You put this option to voters and it won't pass. Also an operating levy won't pass due to such high millage of this facility plan.
- Closing two elementary schools would greatly increase the distance to school for some families and therefore increase bus time.
- My property taxes are too high already. Ten thousand four hundred dollars a year.
- The cost is too high and we will lose neighborhood elementary schools. Demolition costs of the 6 old elementary schools would be an additional expense.
- Doesn't address our needs. Renovate to new is much more cost effective.

LOWER-COST PLAN CONCEPT



An option is to renovate both high schools and the middle school, renovate five of the current six elementary schools and build a totally new Wilson elementary school. The total cost of this option is approximately \$98 million dollars.

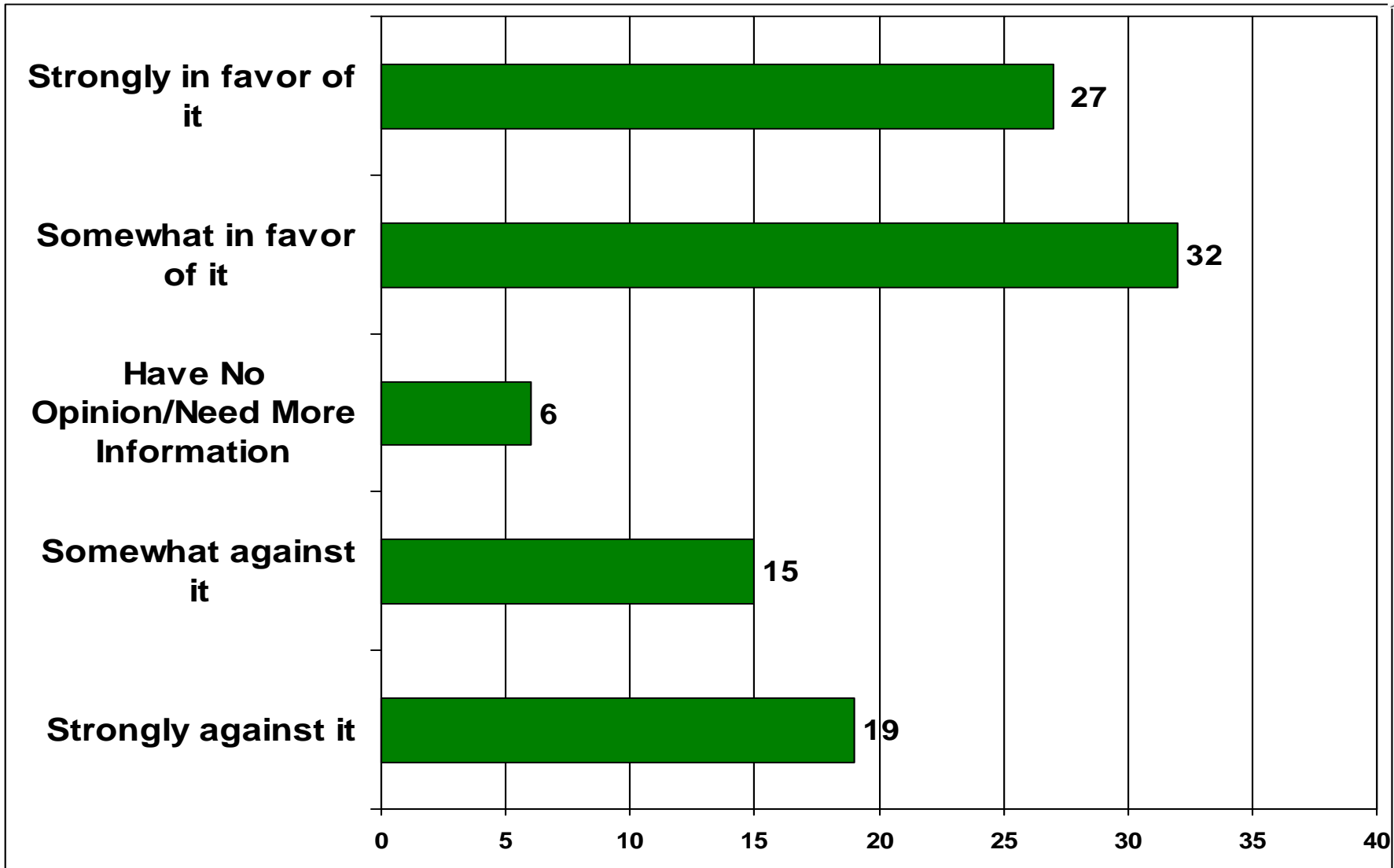
A bond issue to fund this effort may be voted on in November of this year. This would involve a property tax increase of approximately an additional \$132 dollars per year on every \$100,000 dollars of a home's market value.

There is no significant operational cost savings associated with this facilities plan. This would result in no change in the current configuration of the elementary schools. If the bond issue were not to pass, the district would need to spend approximately \$600,000 to \$1 million dollars per year out of the operating budget for repairs and maintenance, perhaps necessitating a tax levy that would also increase property taxes.

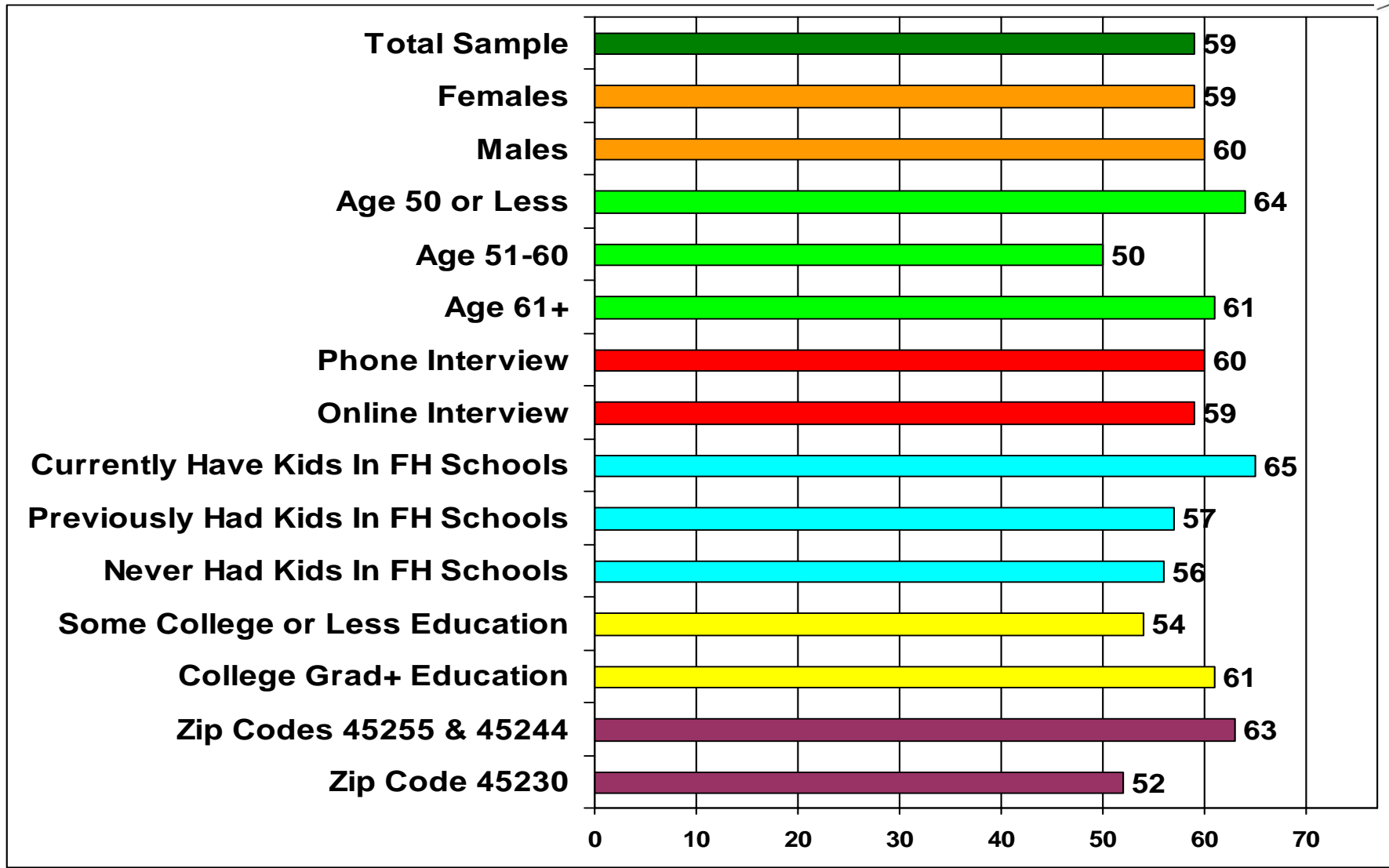
Lower Cost (\$98M) Plan Vote Intent (%)



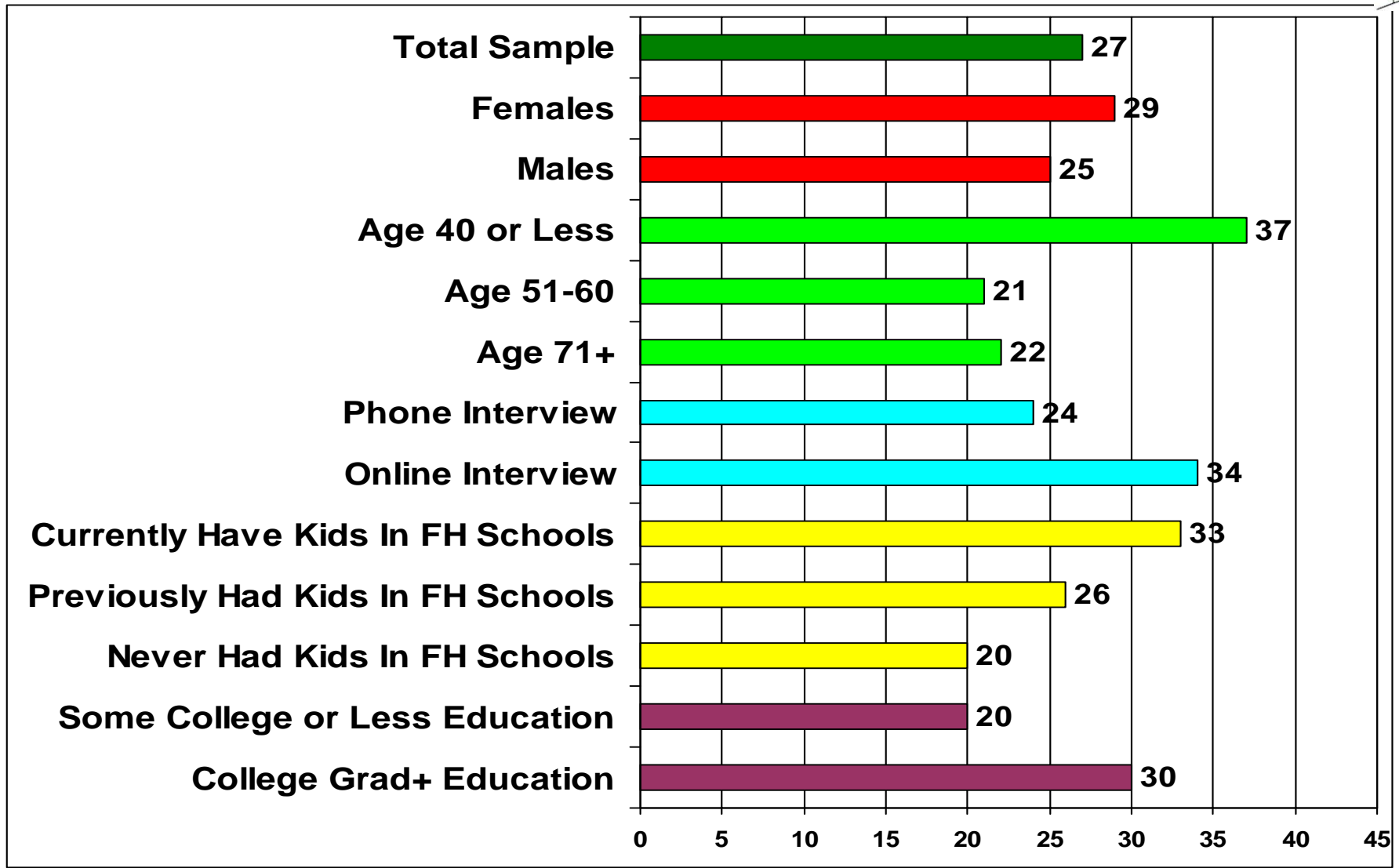
If the election for this bond issue were held tomorrow, would you say you would be...



Strongly or Somewhat in Favor of Lower Cost Plan, By Cross-tabs (%)

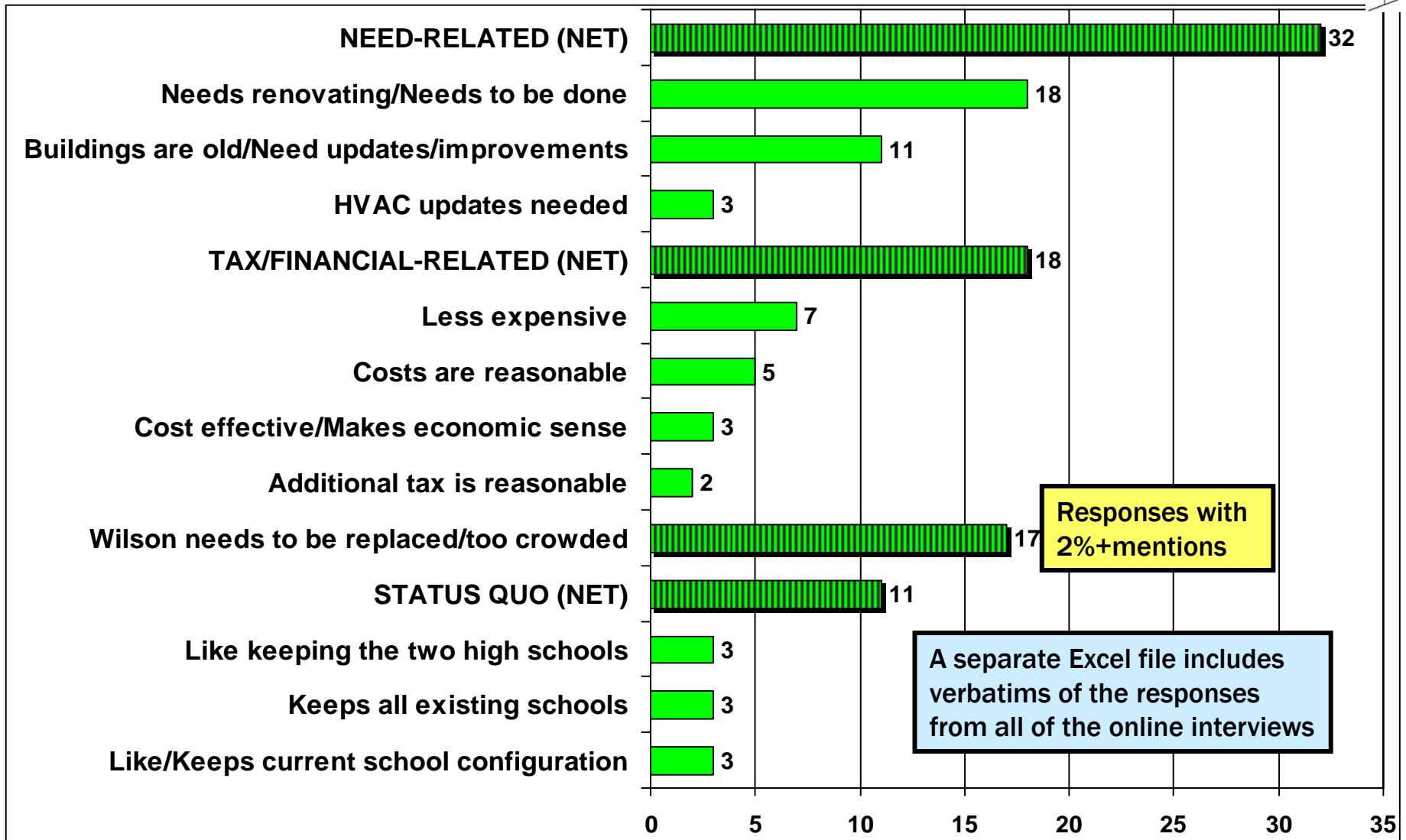


Strongly in Favor of Lower Cost Plan, By Cross-tabs (%)



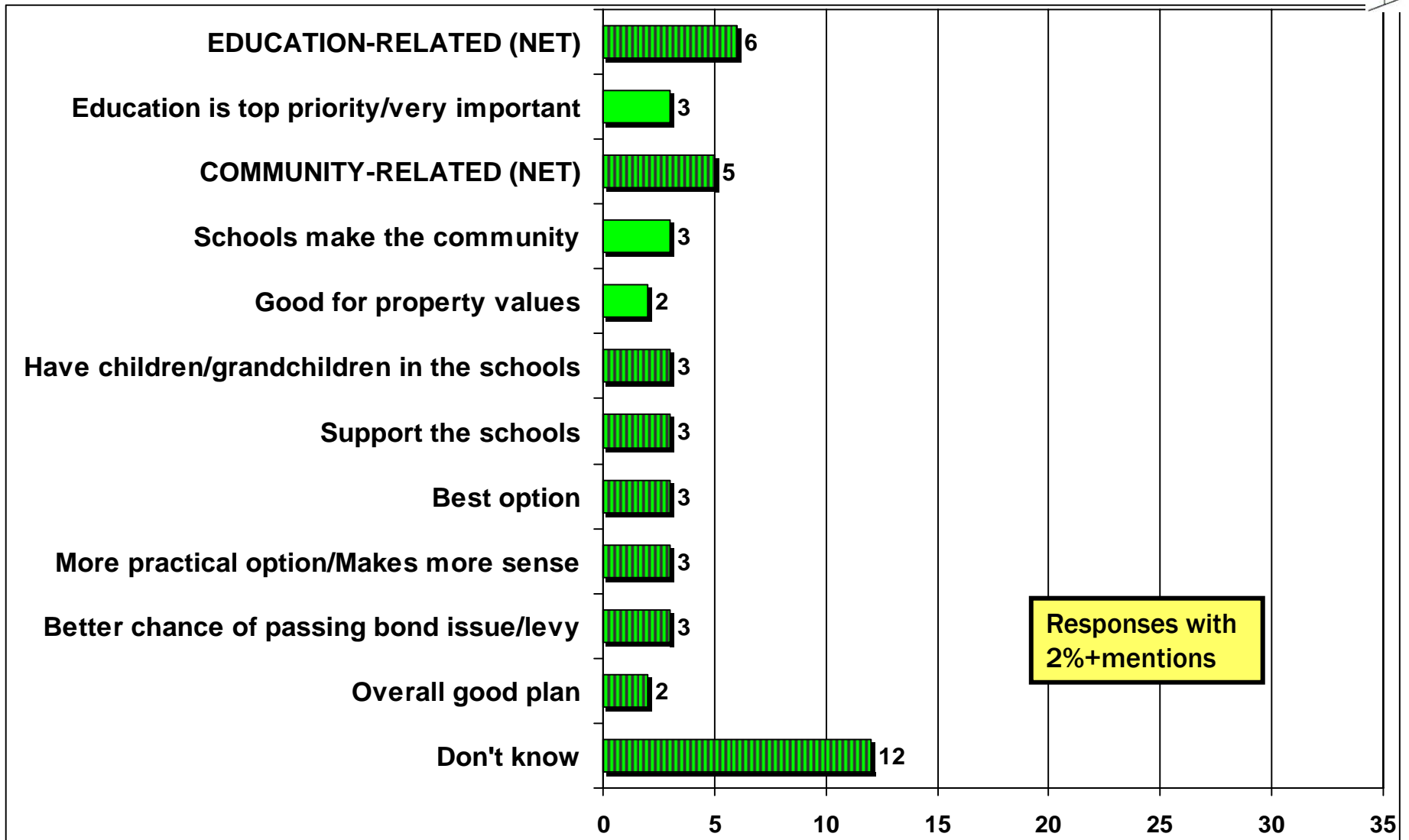
(Unaided) Reasons For Lower Cost Plan (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly in favor/somewhat in favor? Why else? Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=297)



Reasons For Lower Cost Plan—Continued (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly in favor/somewhat in favor? Why else? Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=297)



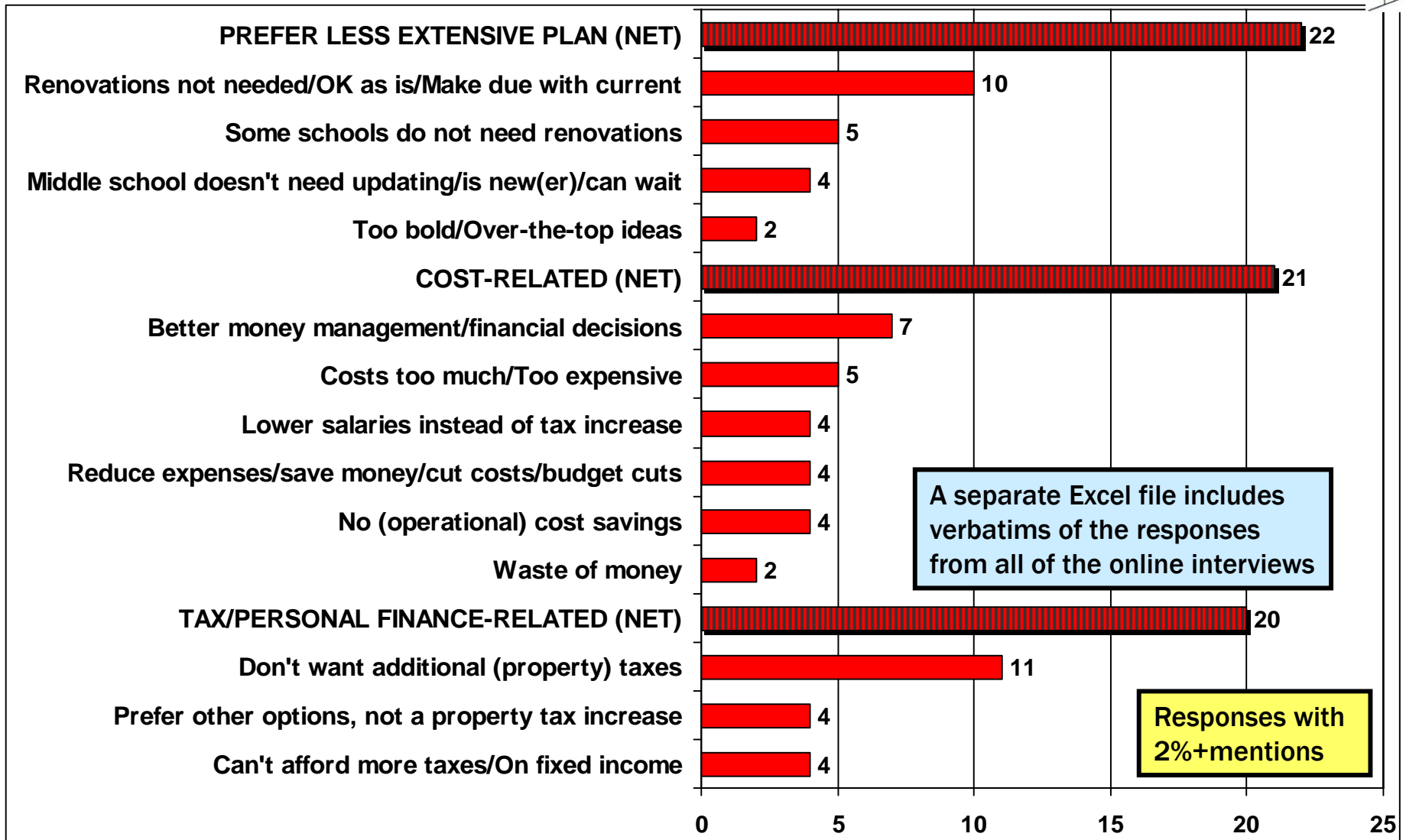


● Why Strongly In Favor of Lower Cost (\$98M) Plan

- I think more would be in favor of this option since there is no large change for students and the schools are not being torn down causing havoc in the district.
- It is more cost effective and keeps current status, which is good.
- Old buildings overdue for replacement, no air conditioning in many of them. The time is now.
- These renovations are all needed, for academic and facilities purposes, and a new Wilson is a must. The cost is reasonable and this should be done.
- I love the configuration of the district as is. Some schools are already very large so consolidating would give less opportunities to those elementary kids. While I am not totally against that option, I feel this option is better at this time. Wilson NEEDS to be rebuilt for safety reasons- wires on the ceiling, leaking ceilings, so many outside doors, etc. What I have seen at the other schools, a renovation could do wonders.
- My husband and I will always vote for school issues because good schools attract good people.
- I know the poor quality of these facilities and we need major changes in all of them to meet our educational needs of the future. Also Wilson must be rebuilt.
- Our schools are not up to par with our community! The schools appearance really pushes people away and makes them doubt the ability of the schools.
- Preserves current school configuration, least cost, addresses critical needs.

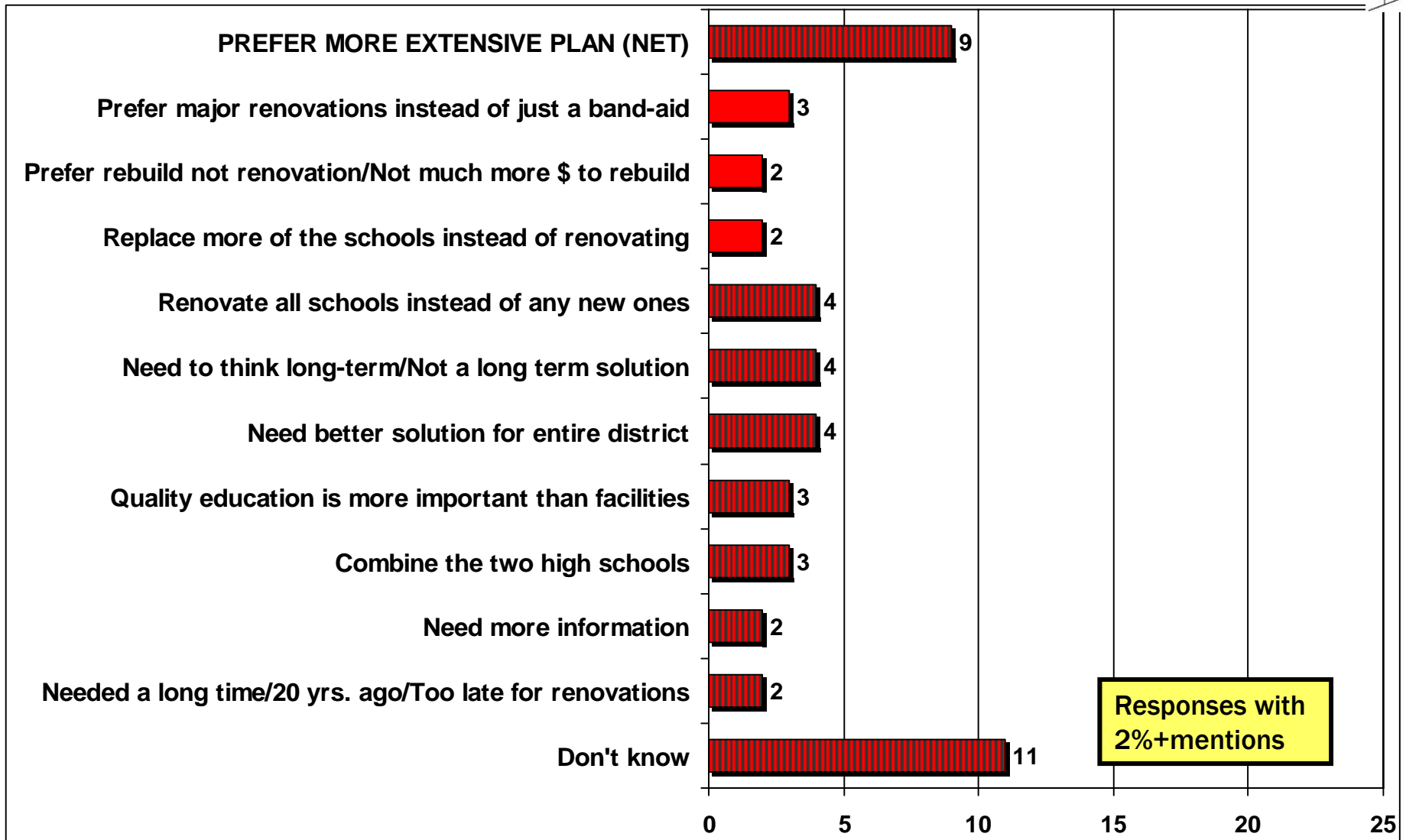
(Unaided) Reasons Against Lower Cost Plan (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly against/somewhat against? Why else?
Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=169)



Reasons Against Lower Cost Plan—Continued (%)

Why do you say you would be strongly against/somewhat against? Why else?
Any other reasons for your opinion on the bond issue or the facilities plan that it would cover? (n=169)



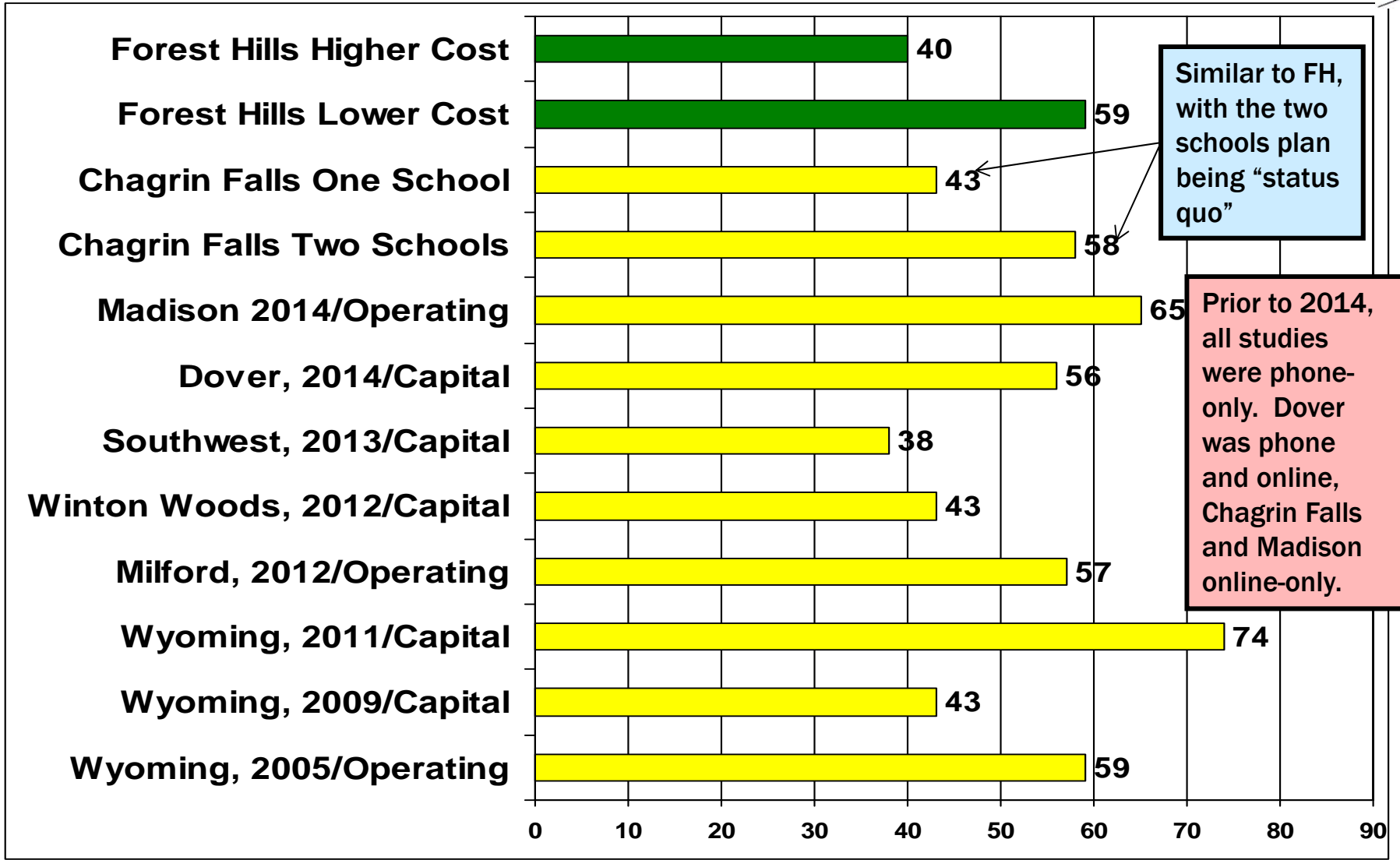


● Why Strongly Against Lower Cost (\$98M) Plan

- Does not address long term replacement cycle for other buildings. Does not reduce operating costs. Increases disparity of facilities intra-district.
- All that renovation is not needed and enough hasn't been done to reduce expenses. Too much spent on sports and not enough on education. Do we really need the expense of swimming pools?
- Too expensive. I would look to consolidate grade schools, middle & high schools.
- This option has already failed. After attending a school built in 1919 that is still in use, Nagle seems brand new to me. Why on earth does it need renovated already? If we keep asking the community for the same thing, they will only become more weary and resolute. Come up with something else!!!!
- You have to find money somewhere other than property tax all the time. Get a sales tax in Anderson or a fee for students. Enough on the people of Anderson who own property. I have grandchildren in the school district and would try to give a one time donation. I will never vote to raise property taxes as I am slowly losing the ability to own property.
- They are fine.
- Still no long term plan. Fix up. Short term solution. Money wastes when buildings need to be replaced later. Irresponsible.
- It is not the building that teaches the child!
- Waste of money.

Positive Voting Intent Comparison (%)

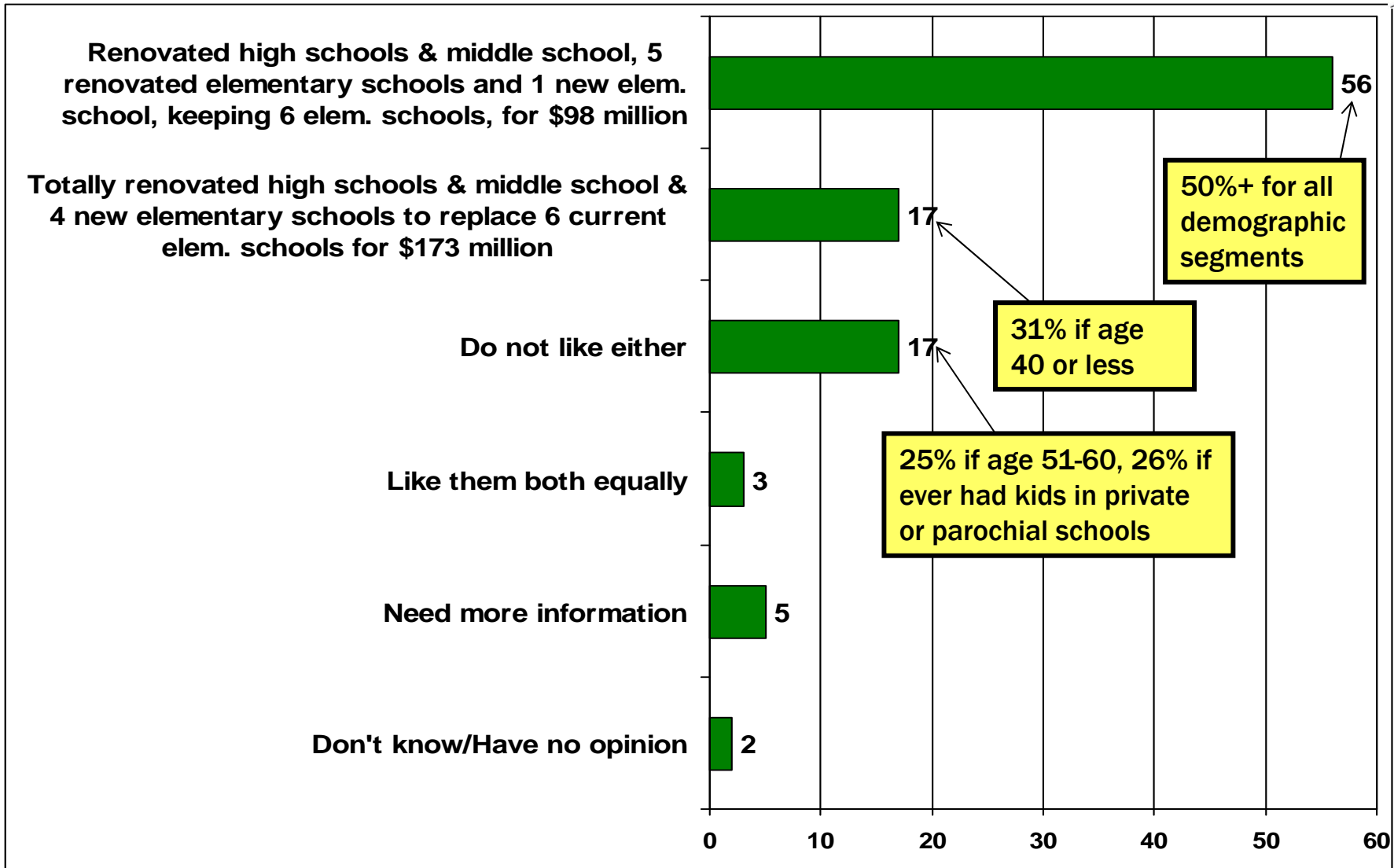
(Strongly Or Somewhat In Favor, versus other districts in previous research)



Facilities Plan Preference (%)

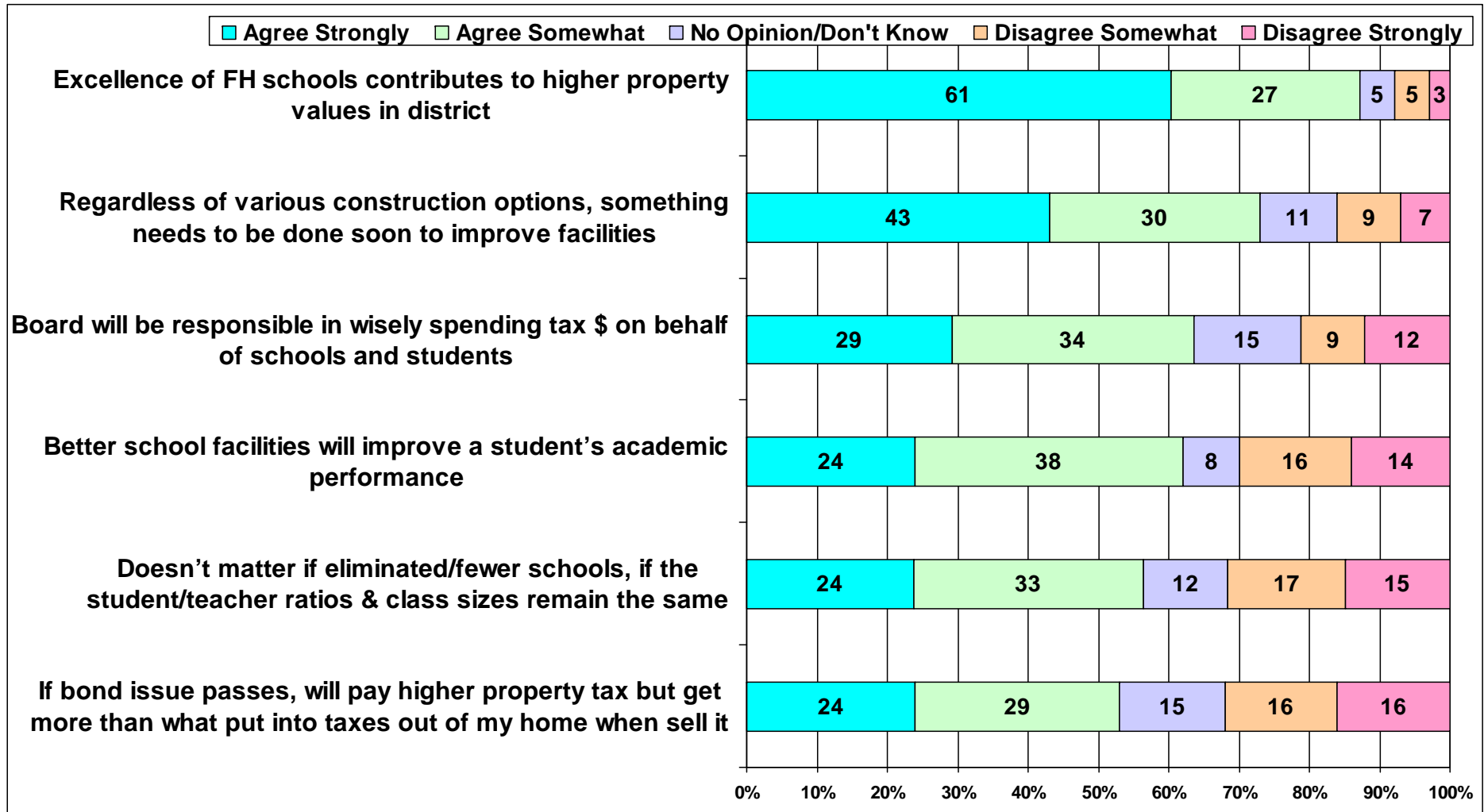


Which of the two school facilities plan options do you prefer the most...?



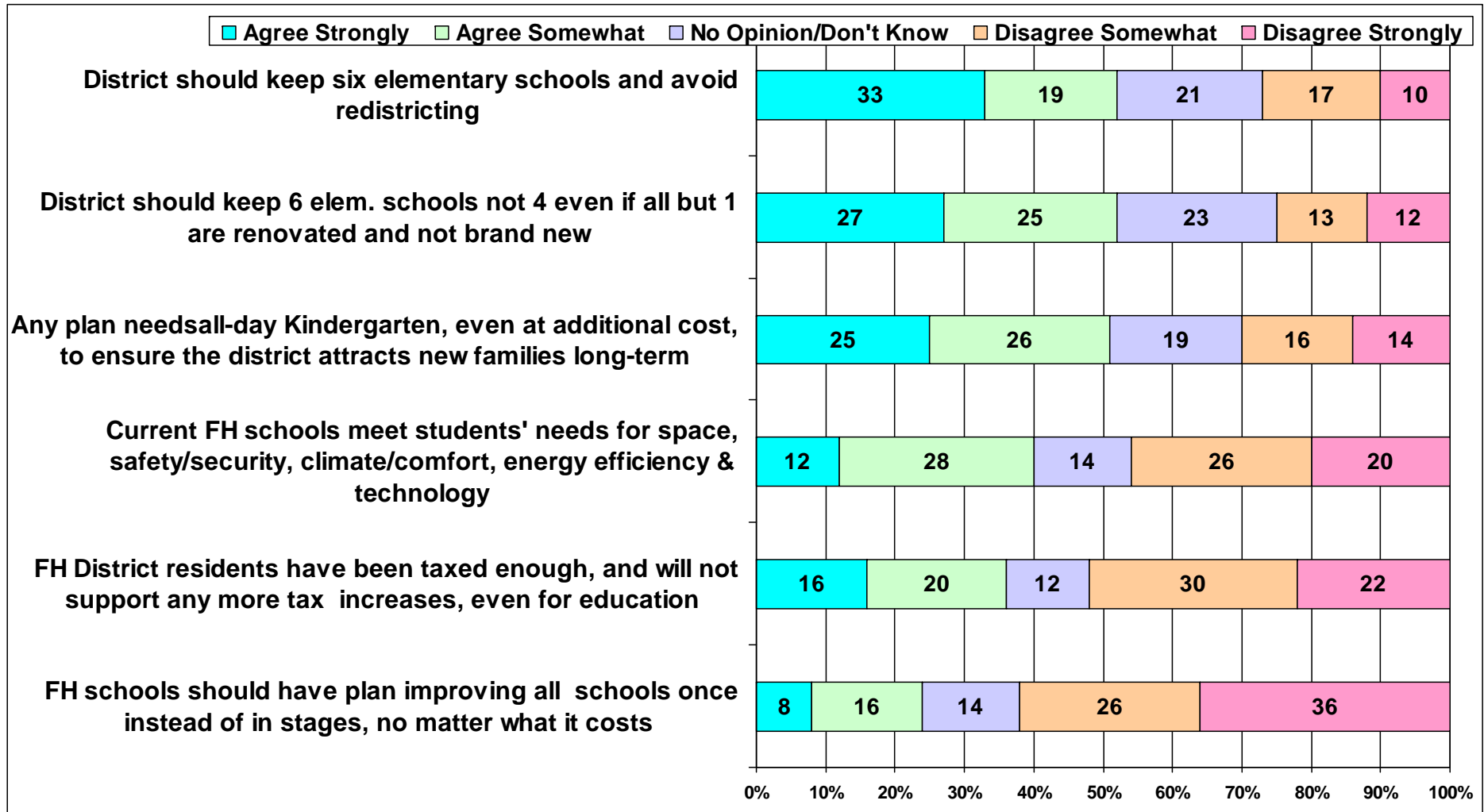
Agreement On Issues (%)

Using the scale Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Have No Opinion, Disagree Somewhat or Disagree Strongly, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: (RANKED BY AGREE STRONGLY + SOMEWHAT)



Agreement On Issues (%)

Using the scale Agree Strongly, Agree Somewhat, Have No Opinion, Disagree Somewhat or Disagree Strongly, please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements: (RANKED BY AGREE STRONGLY + SOMEWHAT)

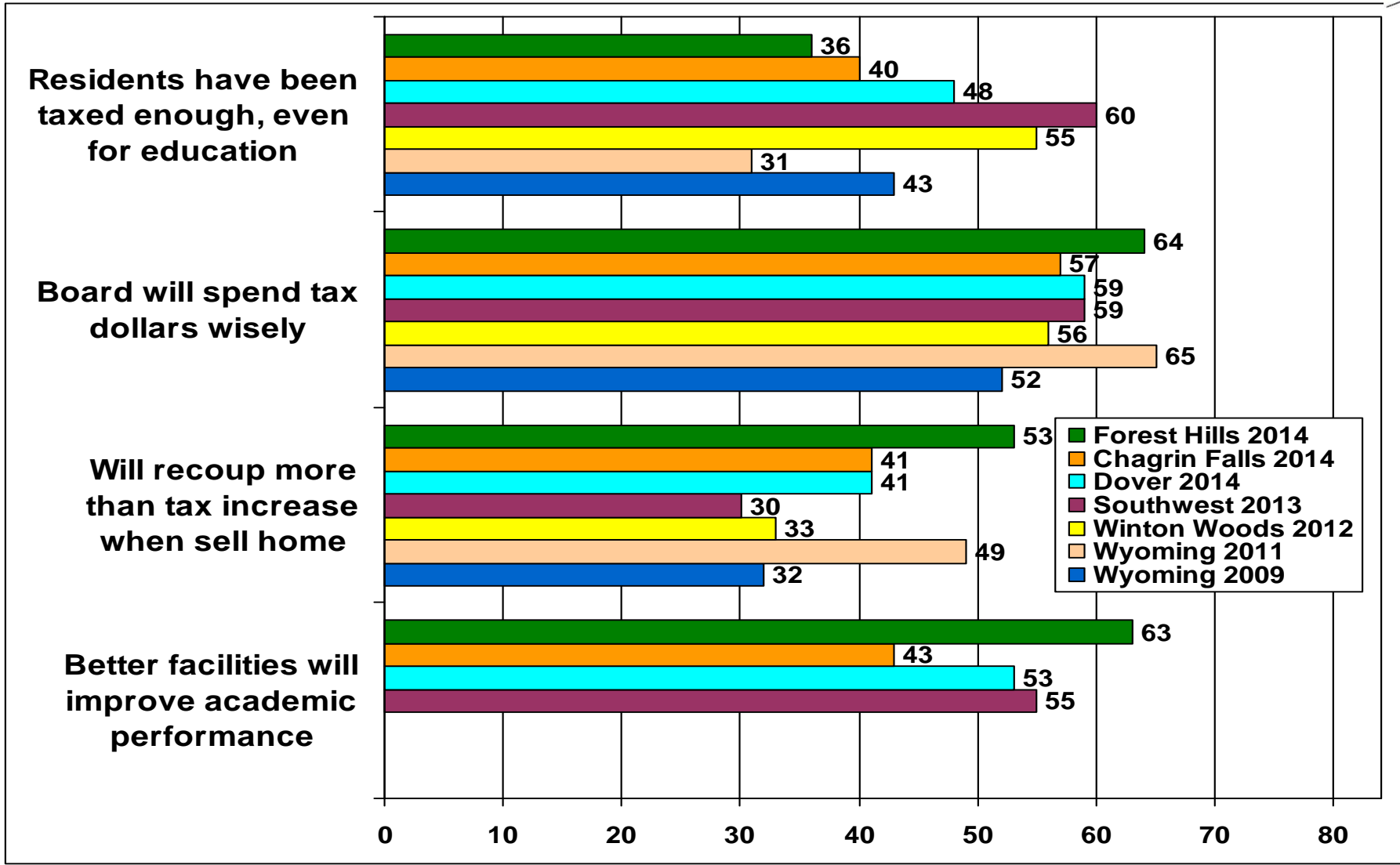




- **“Agree strongly” responses are significantly stronger among the following segments:**
 - Excellence of schools contributes to property values: Females
 - Something needs to be done with facilities: Age 40 or less, never had children in private or parochial schools
 - Keep 6 schools to avoid redistricting: Higher general awareness
 - Keep 6 schools even if not brand new: Age 61+ and females
 - Need all-day Kindergarten: Age 50 or less
 - Board will be responsible in spending: Age 61-70 and higher education
 - Better facilities improve performance: Age 40 or less
 - Will recoup tax dollars if sell home: Higher general awareness and kids currently in the Forest Hills schools
 - Been taxed enough: Age 51+, ever had children in private or parochial schools
 - Current facilities meet needs: Age 61+

Agreement Comparison (%)

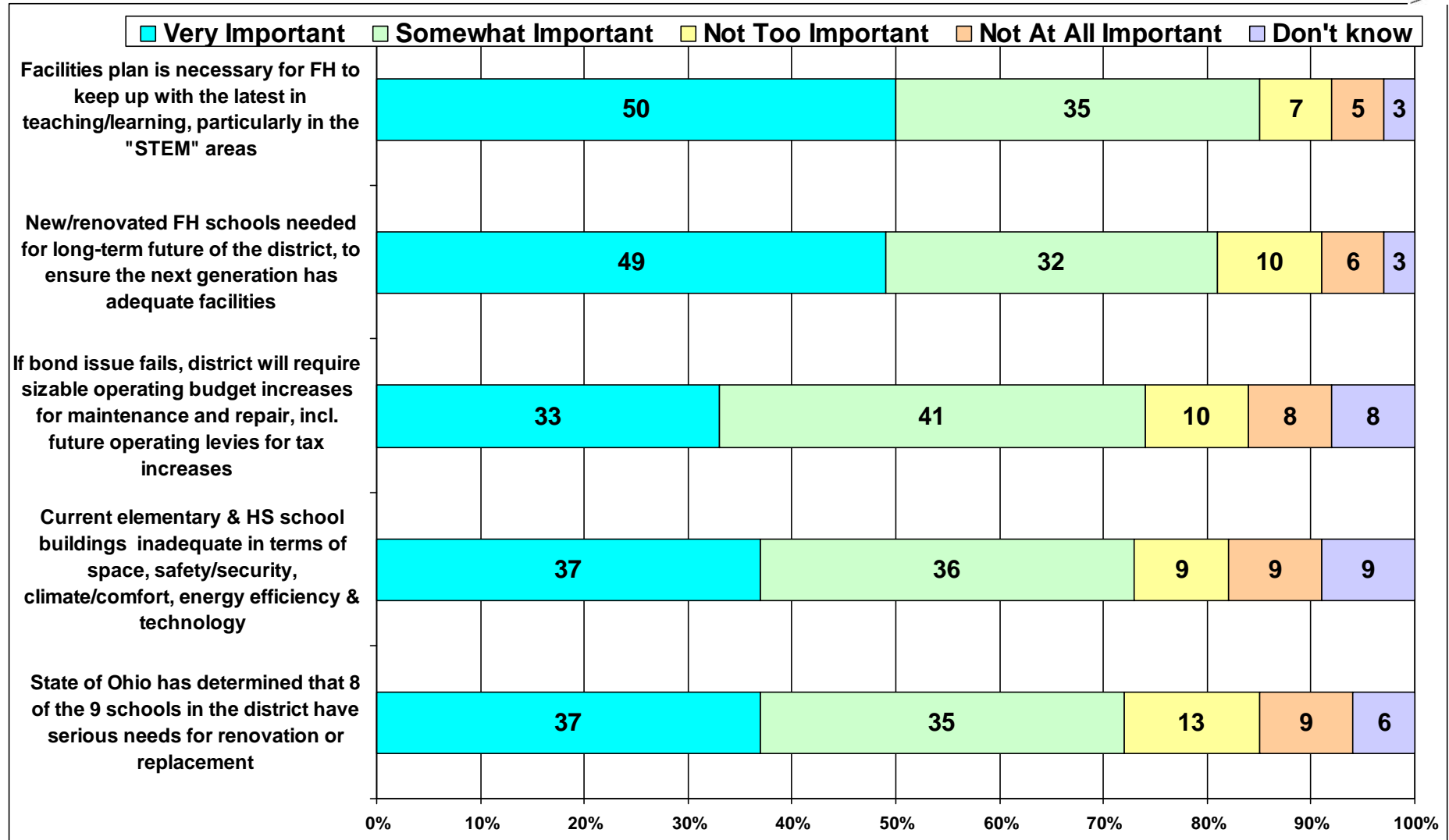
(Agree Strongly or Somewhat, versus other districts with building projects in previous research)



Importance of Selling Points (%)



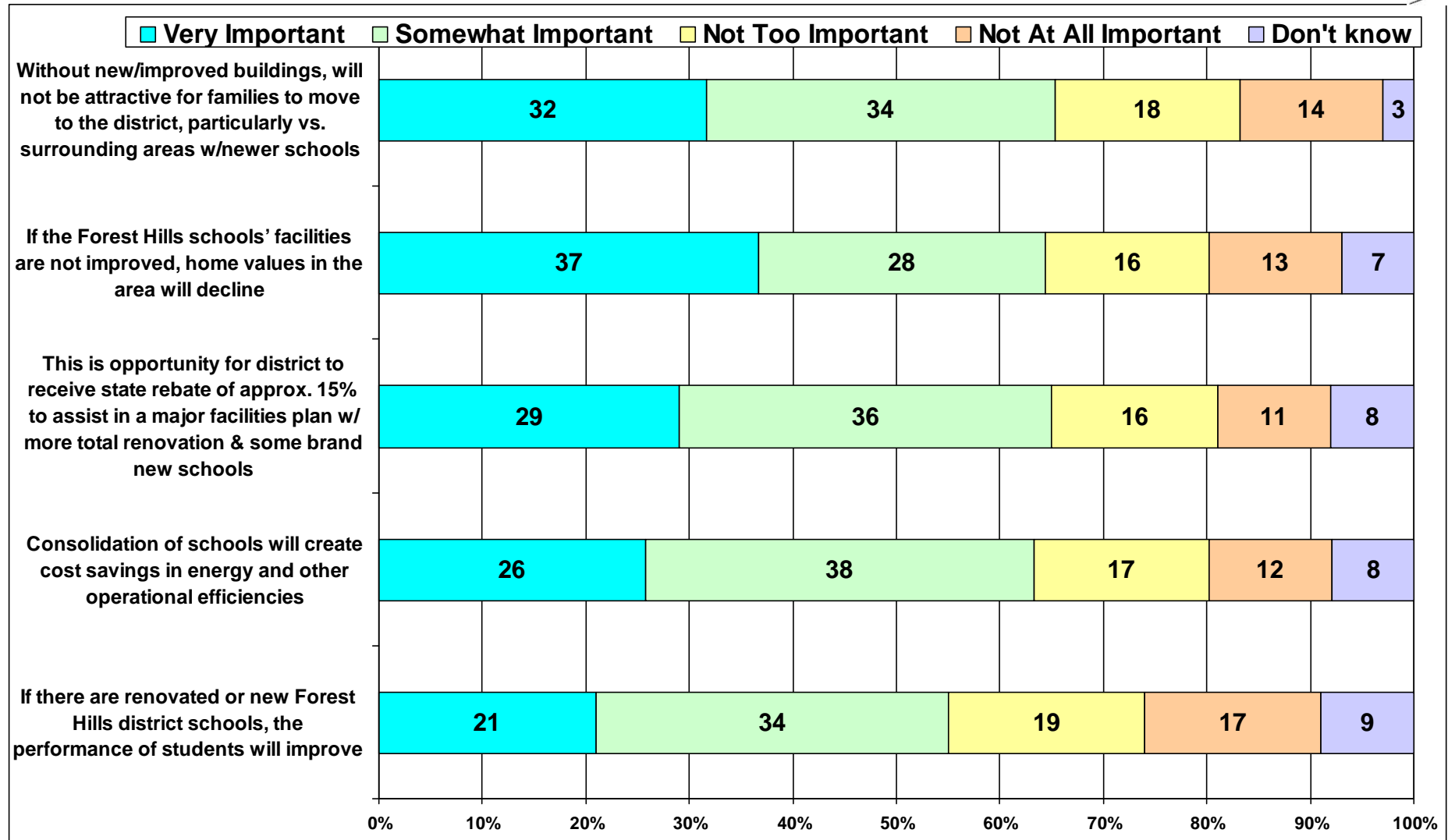
Following is a list of possible reasons for voting in favor of a bond issue for either of the proposed school construction options. Please state your opinion on whether each statement is Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Too Important or Not At All Important as a reason for people to vote in favor of the bond issue.



Importance of Selling Points (%)



Following is a list of possible reasons for voting in favor of a bond issue for either of the proposed school construction options. Please state your opinion on whether each statement is Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not Too Important or Not At All Important as a reason for people to vote in favor of the bond issue.



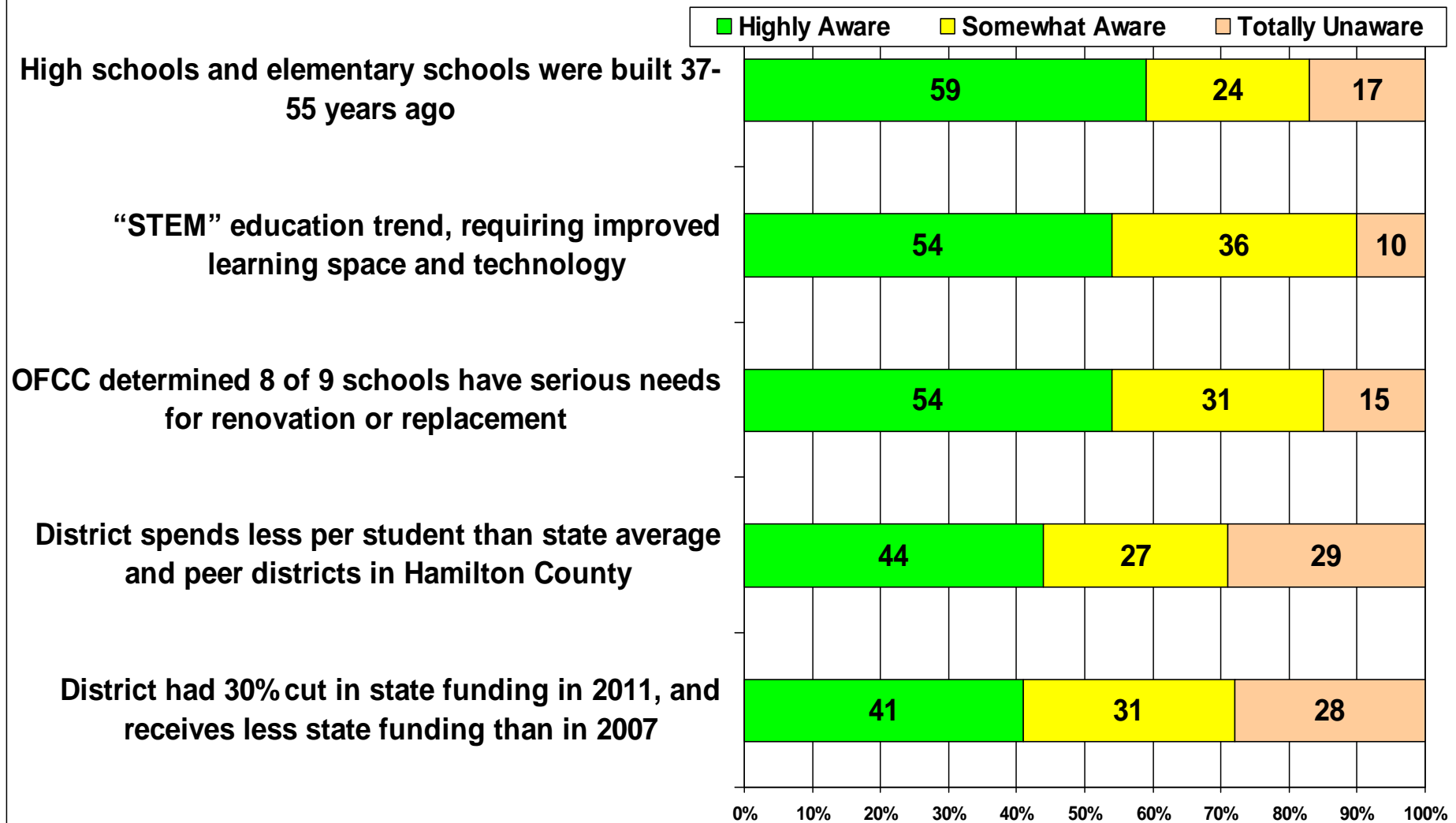
Selling Points Importance: Cross-tabulations



- While all 10 of these questions' "very important" responses correlate strongly with the inclination to vote in favor of the bond issue, the strongest relationships are for the points on the long-term future and the state assessment of 8 of the 9 schools having serious needs.
- Some key areas where "very important" responses are significantly stronger:
 - Facilities plan needed to keep up with latest trends/STEM: Females, zips 45255 & 45244
 - New/renovated schools needed for long term future: Age 40 or less
 - State assessment of 8 of the 9 schools having serious needs: Children currently in the Forest Hills schools, age 40 or less, college grad+ education, never had kids in private or parochial schools
 - Buildings are inadequate: Children currently in the Forest Hills schools, age 50 or less, college grad+ education, never had kids in private or parochial schools
 - Home values will decline: Children currently in the Forest Hills schools, age 40 or less, zip 45255

Awareness Of Specific Issues (%)

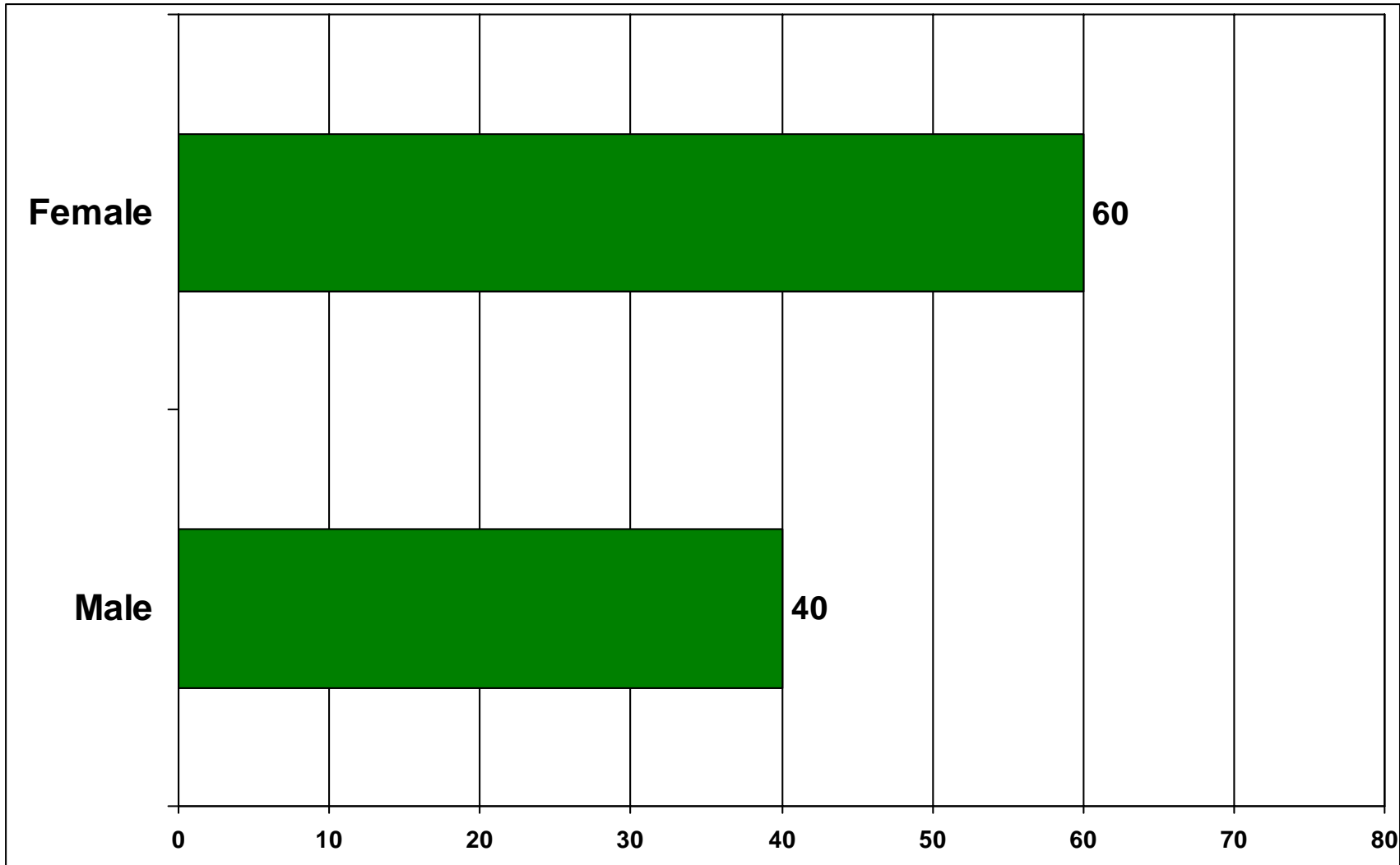
Please tell me how aware you were, before today, of each of the following factors relating to schools, using a scale of Totally Unaware, Somewhat Aware or Highly Aware.



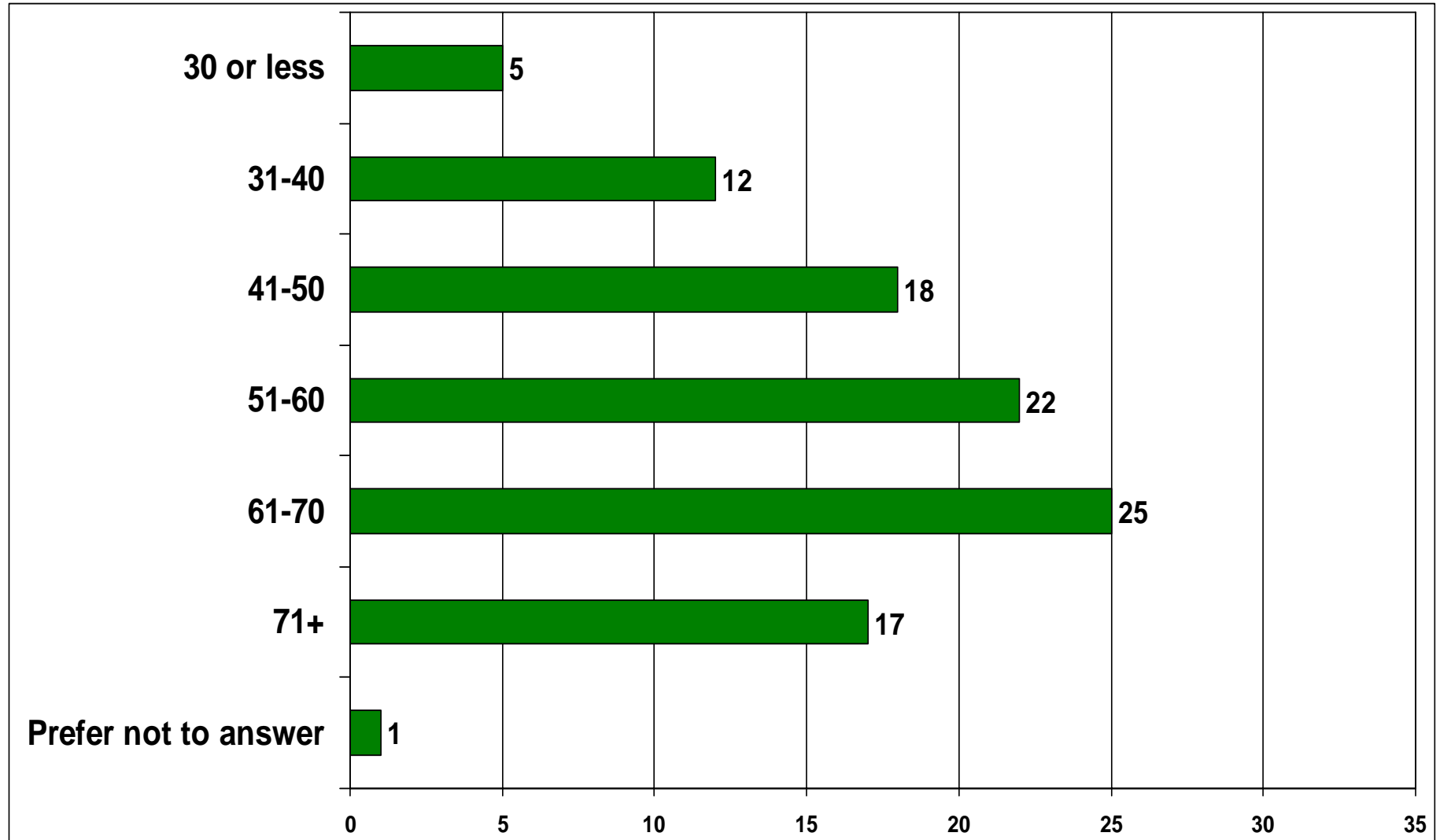


Interviewee Demographics

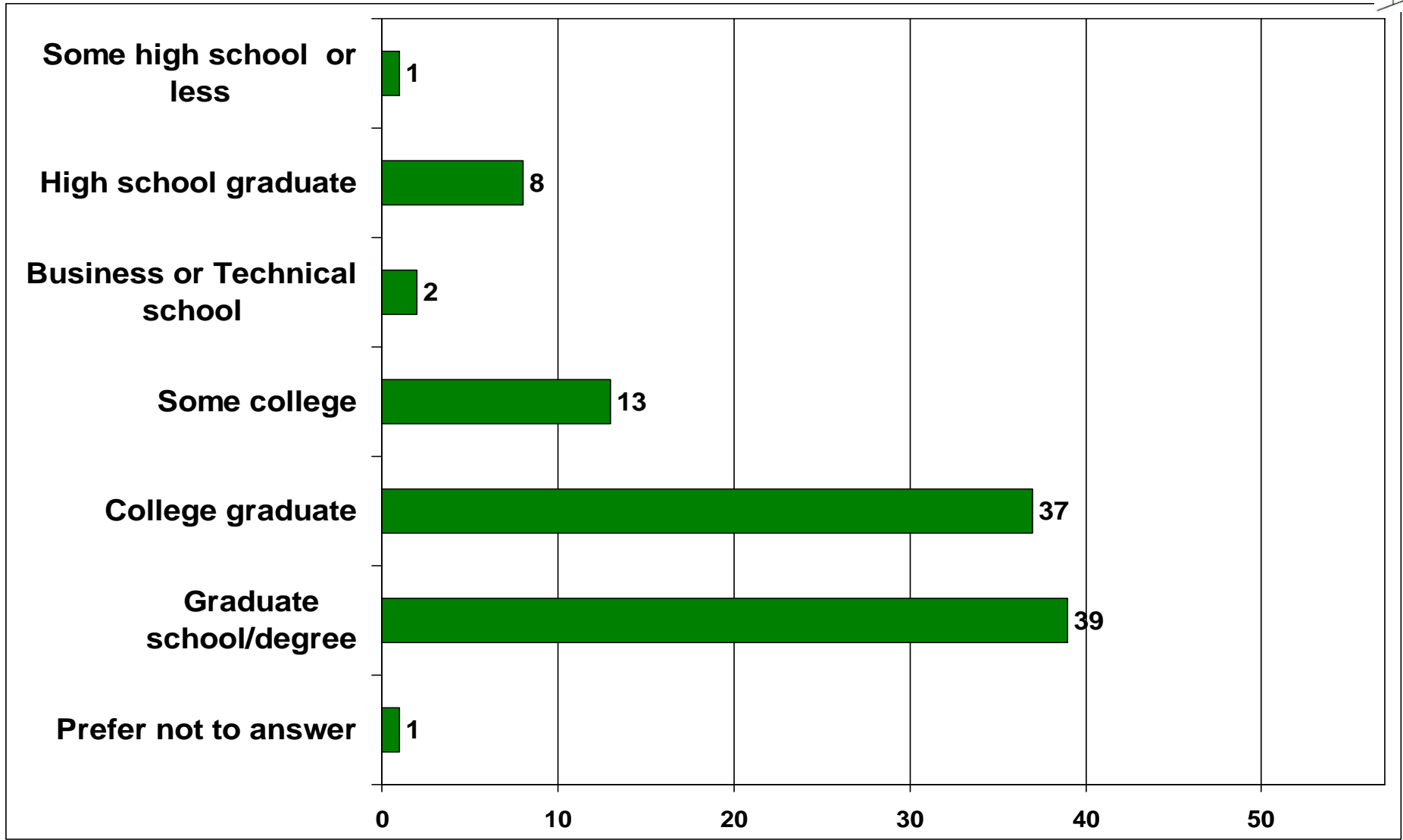
Gender (%)



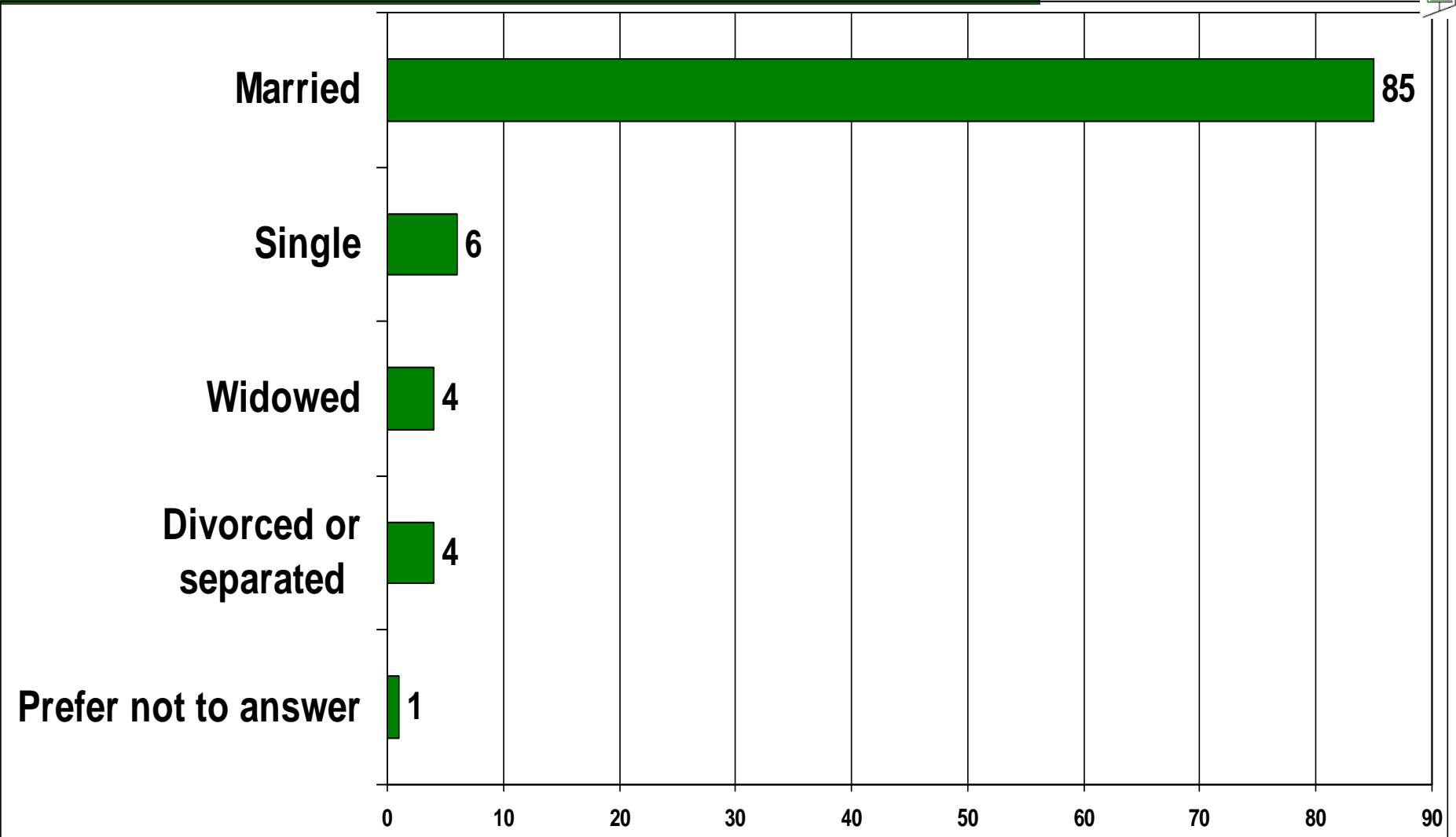
Age (%)



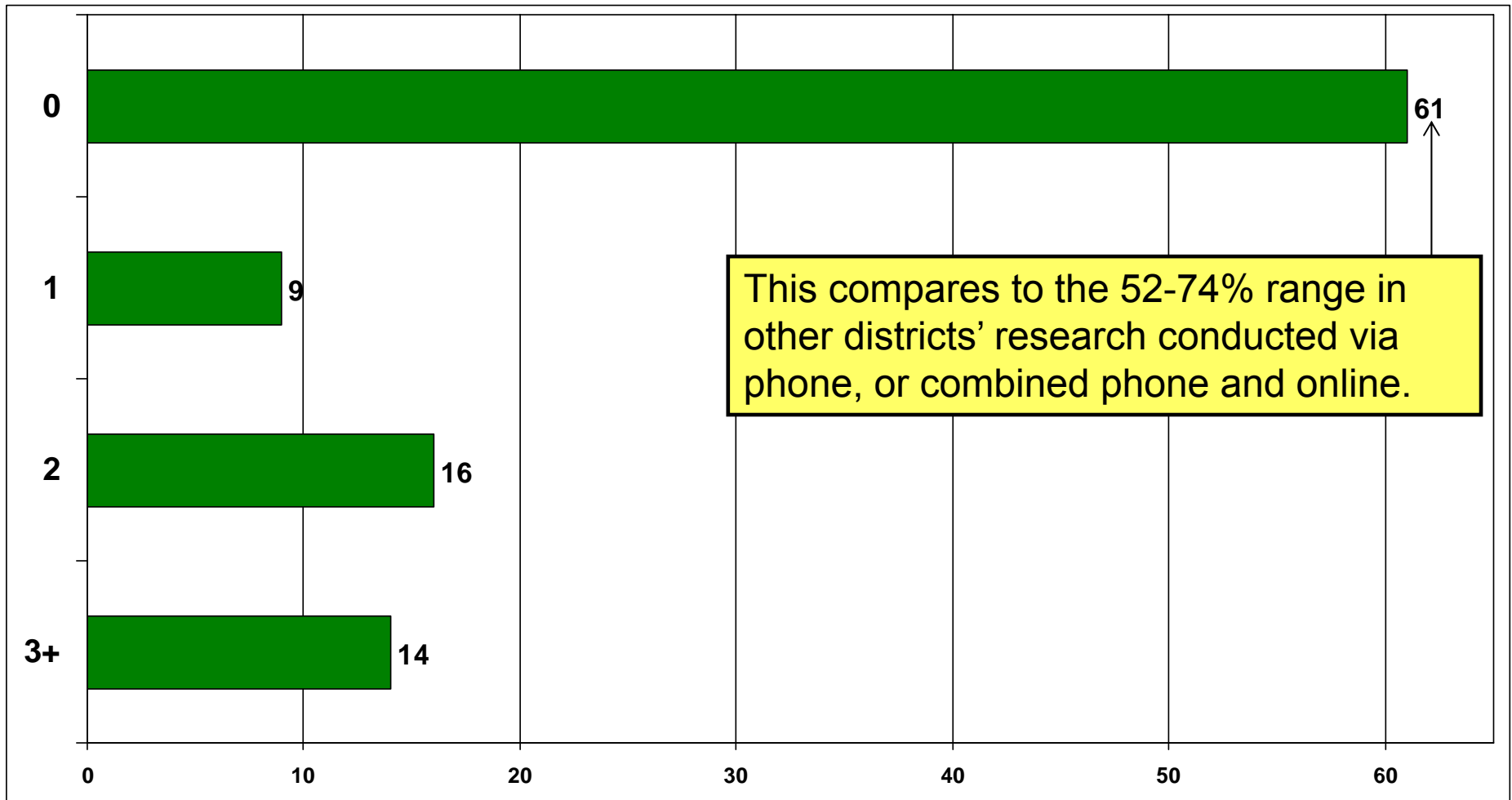
Education (%)



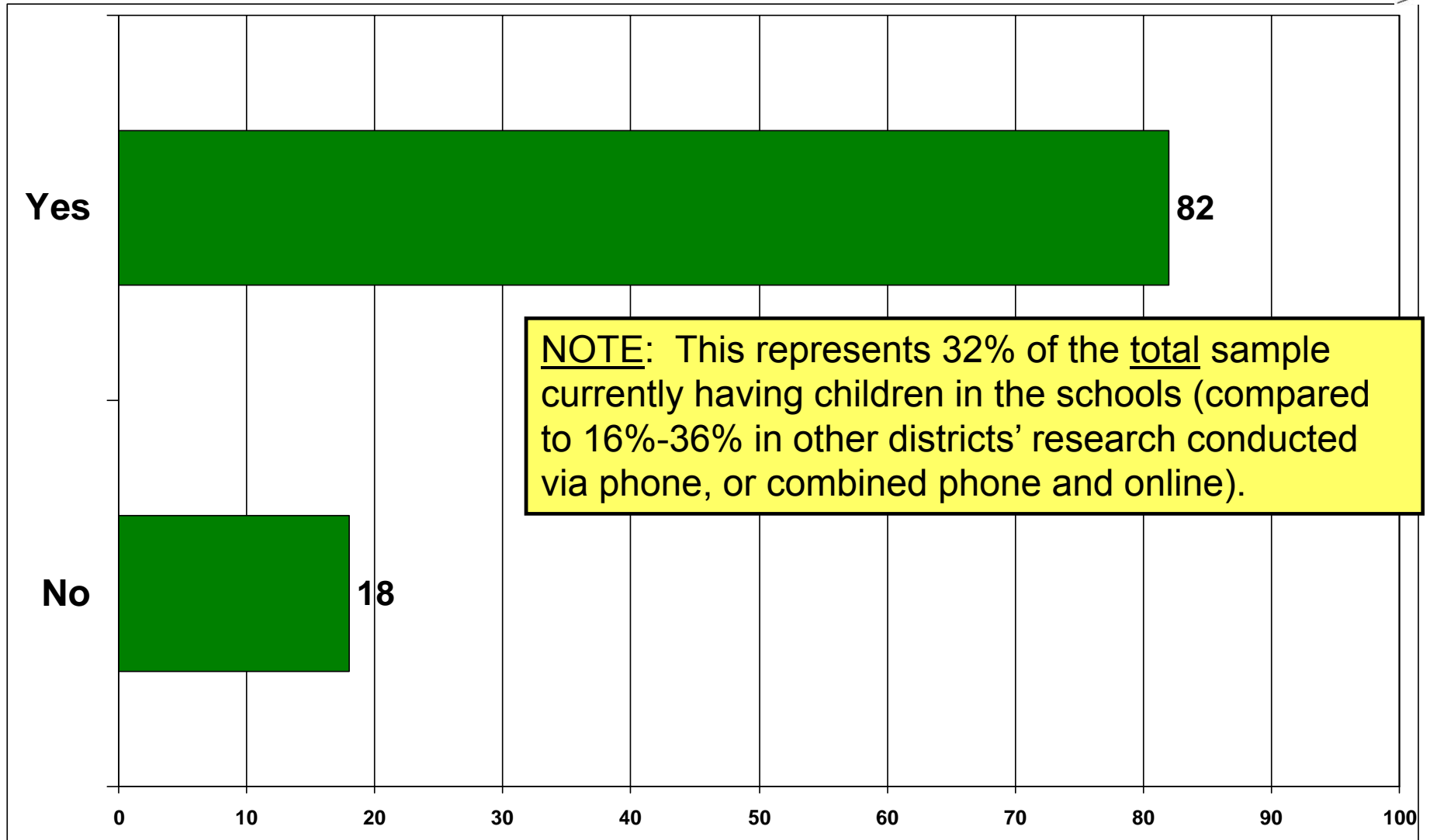
Marital Status (%)



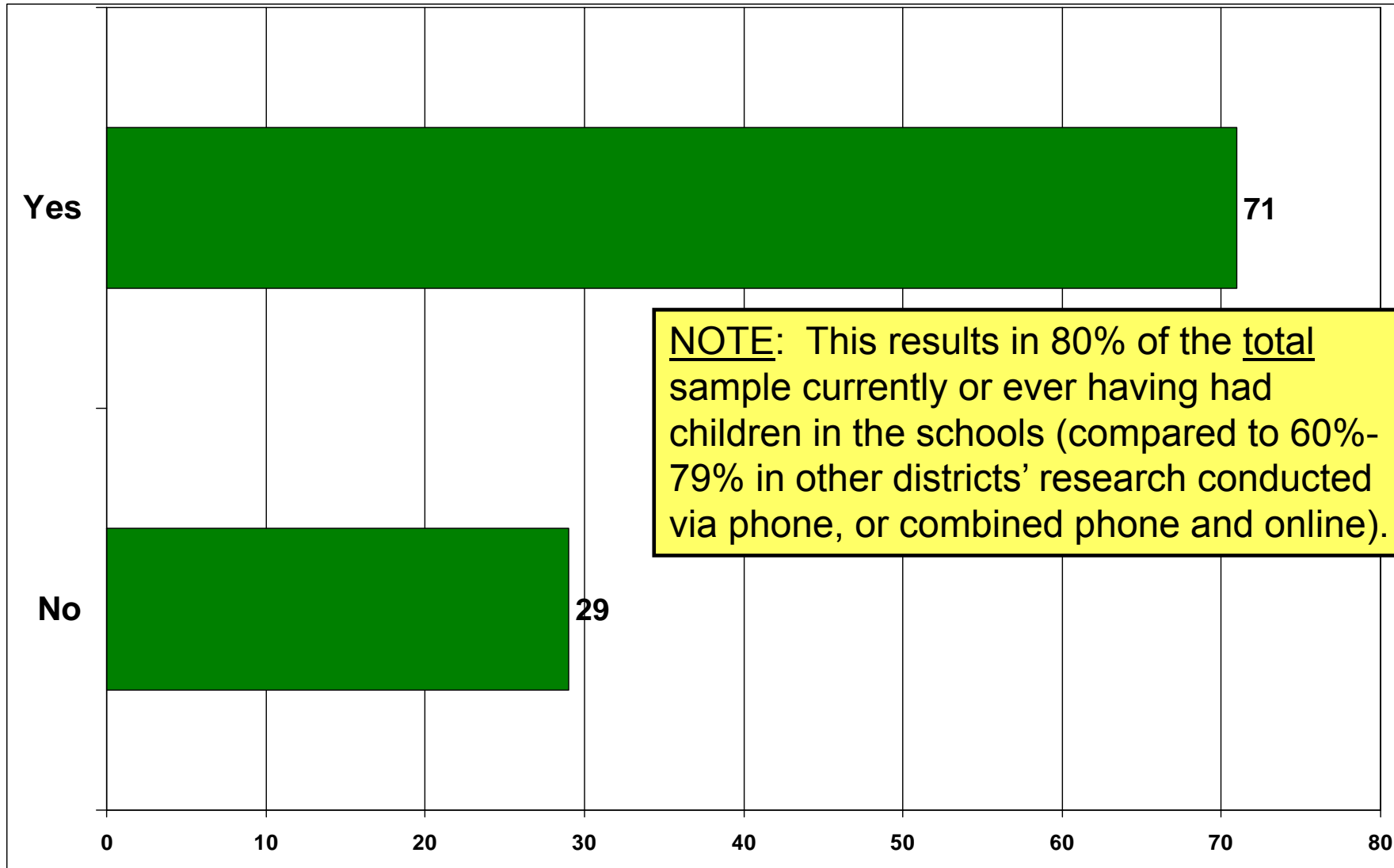
Number Of Children At Home Age 18 or Under (%)



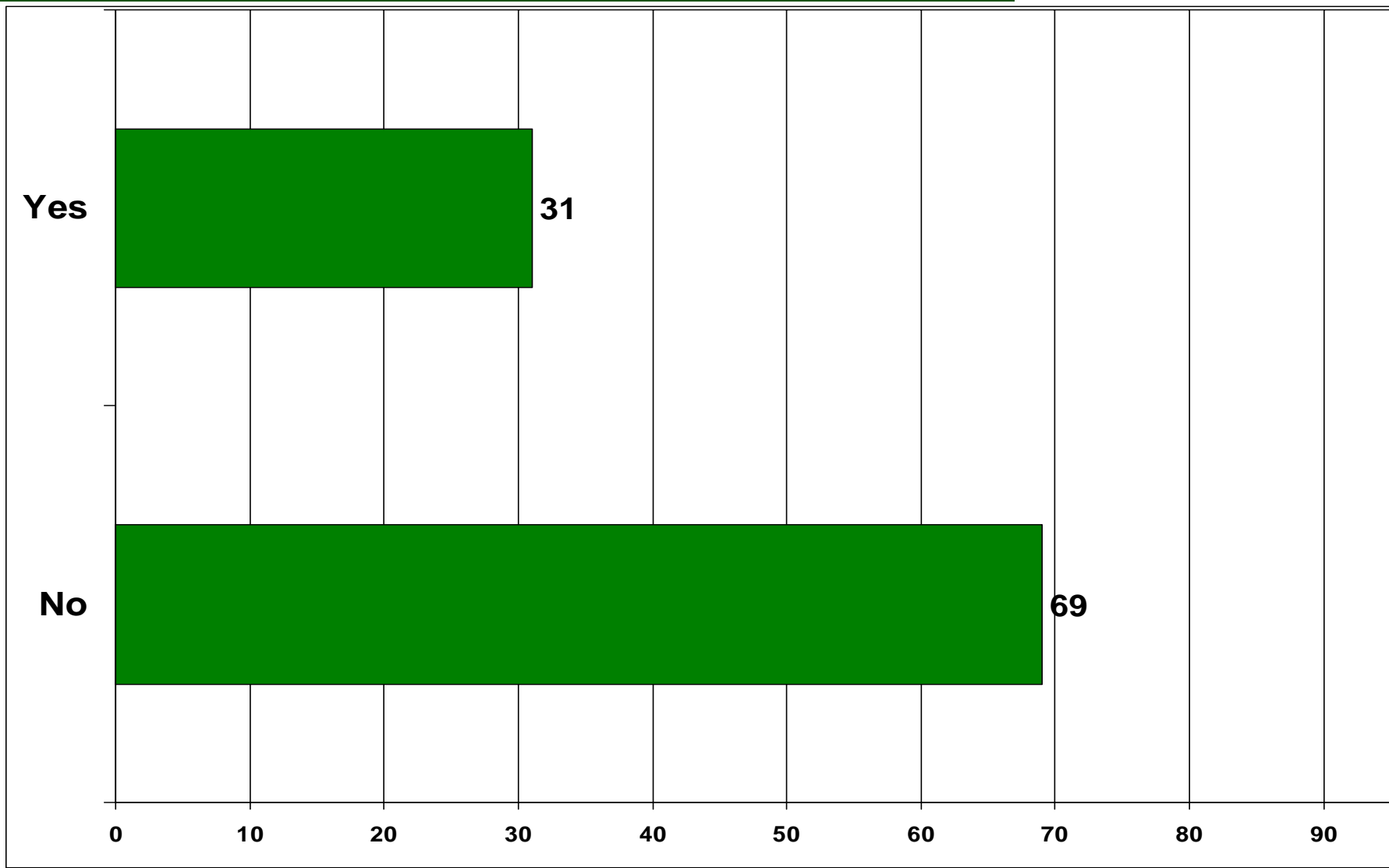
Currently Have Children in Forest Hills Schools (% of those with children) (n=194)



Ever Had Children in Forest Hills Schools (% of those without children in schools) (n=341)

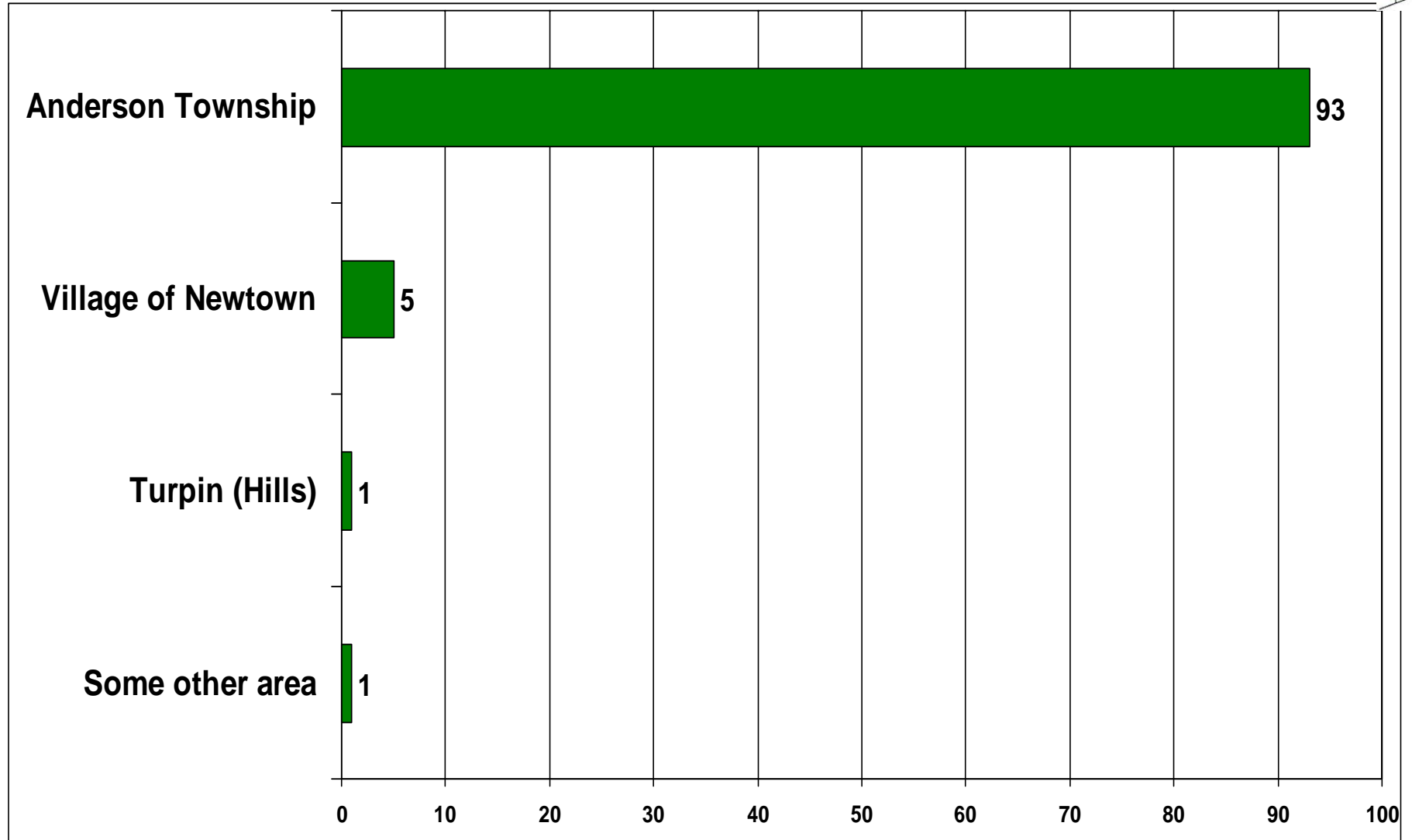


Currently/Ever Had Children in Private or Parochial Schools (%)

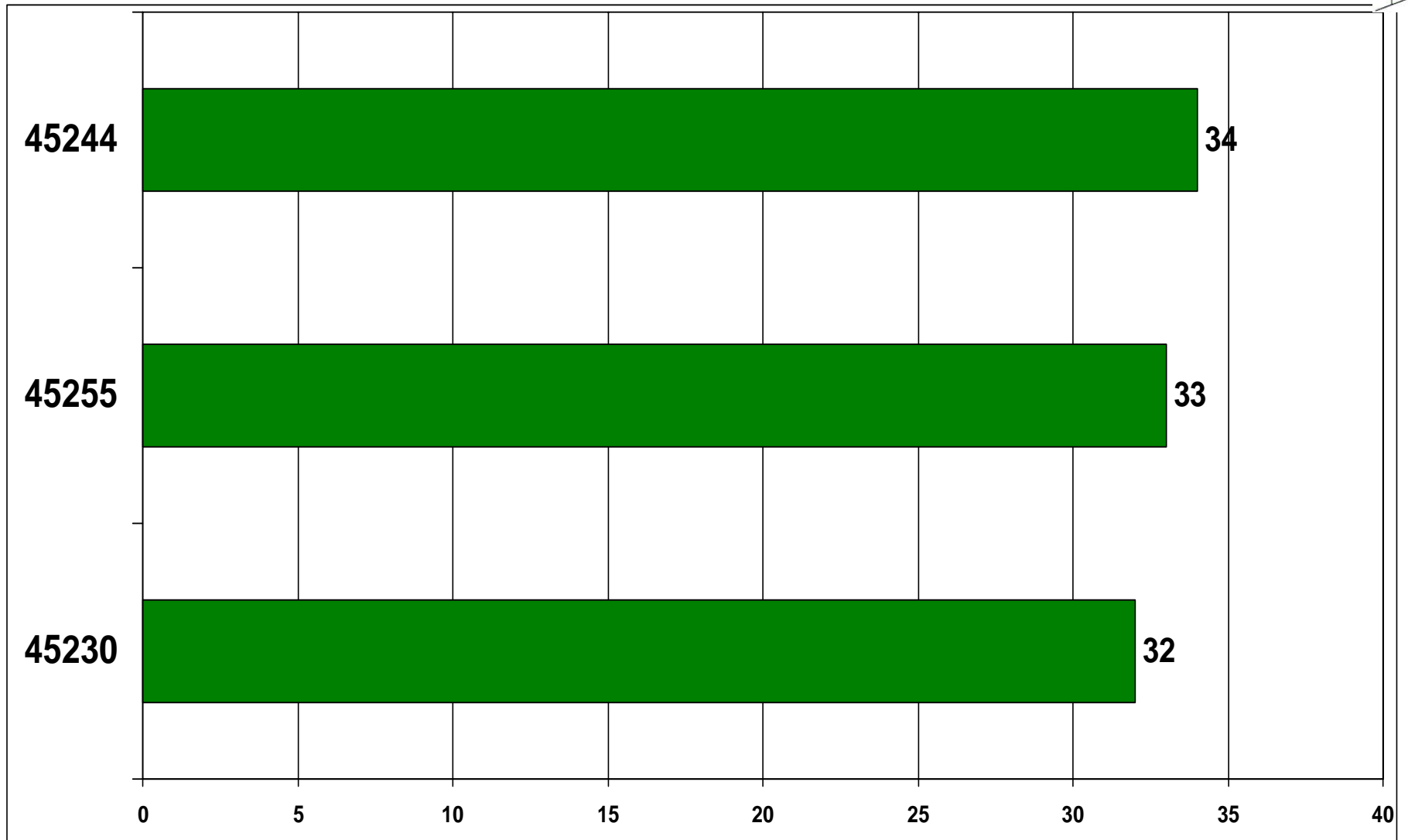




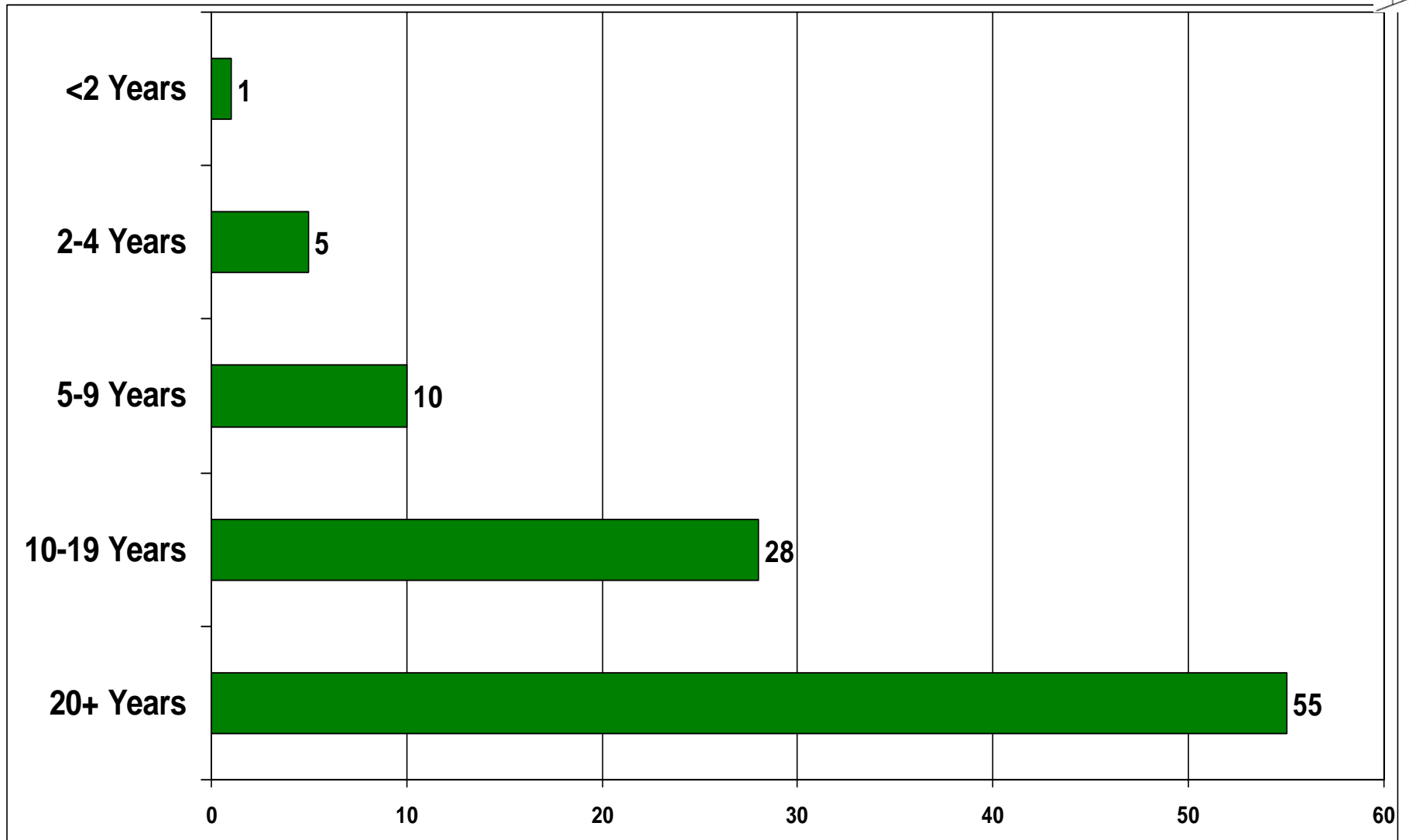
Area Of The District (%)



Zip Code (%)



How Long Lived in Forest Hills District (%)





Executive Summary



- **Major conclusions from the research:**

- As noted in the preliminary presentation at the special school board meeting on June 9, there is “cautious optimism” in the results of this research, with the community clearly preferring the lower-cost plan with 6 elementary schools over the higher cost plan with 4 elementary schools.
- The key questions on intention to vote on a possible bond issue for the two different plans shows 59% in favor of the lower cost plan (27% strongly) compared to 40% for the higher cost plan (16% strongly).
- A follow-up question comparing the two options shows 56% preferring the lower cost plan, 17% preferring the higher cost plan, and 17% not liking either one.
- Both the volunteered reasons for voting intent and the specific hypotheses tested in the research demonstrate: a recognized need for improvement in the district’s facilities, including increased knowledge of this need since a research study from about six months ago (late 2013); and a preference for six elementary schools instead of four (in general, desiring not to change the current configuration of schools).
- Positive voting intent for the lower cost plan is relatively stable across all demographic segments.



● Major Conclusions (continued)

- On the positive side, there seem to be no major negatives, at least for the lower cost plan being proposed, including some of the questions on tax/financial issues that have been red flags in research in other districts. However, this could be a function of the above average income in Forest Hills.
- The caution comes from:
 - The far less than 50% in favor of the higher cost plan despite its advantages (new schools, lower on-going operating costs), should that plan still be under consideration
 - The fact that other districts in the recent past have had positive research results in terms of voting intent, but have lost their bond issue or tax levy elections.
- The strongest selling points for the plan are needing improved facilities for the latest in education trends (“STEM”) and for students’ long-term future, and the state’s determination that 8 of the 9 district schools have serious needs.
- There are some awareness gaps for education-related issues in general and particularly for some points related to the operations of the district (on both the revenue and spending sides).
- Positive response to the idea of all-day kindergarten makes this an area that should be considered in the plan, if it is not cost prohibitive.



● Indicated Actions

- These findings, in conjunction with two other northeast Ohio districts' positive research results but negative voting results in 2014, point to proceeding with caution and with strong marketing and “get-out-the-vote” efforts (particularly among younger voters) if a Forest Hills school facilities plan is to be placed on the ballot.
- If a plan is placed on the ballot, it should be the lower cost option, with the possibility of including all-day kindergarten (perhaps considering additional research on this latter subject).
- In order to pass a bond issue, it will take a full-time, district-wide PR effort to communicate (particularly to older households not currently involved with the schools) the need for this project, its long-term benefits, fiscally responsible steps that have already been taken, and the potential consequences to taxpayers should the bond issue fail.
- For perspective, if 60% of the district consists of empty-nesters without students in the schools, 45% of these must vote in favor, along with 60% of parents of students (representing 40% of voters), to achieve 51% in favor of the bond issue.



● Indicated Actions

- This research exceeded these figures, but only for the lower cost plan. However, comparing research and election results from some other districts shows a drop-off in positive intent once one enters the voting booth.
- Most important, consistent with this research's objective of proposing a plan that is what the community has told the district that it wants, Forest Hills needs to follow the research findings and go only with some variation of the lower cost plan.
- This can possibly include all-day kindergarten, but the higher-cost plan should not be forced on the voting public unless perhaps it is implemented in stages over a longer period of time than being considered for the other plan.



● Awareness

- 42% of the sample indicates being highly aware of the district's educational programs and overall management and operation (4% totally unaware).
- This figure is above average compared to other school districts that have conducted this type of research.
- Different from some other school districts' research, there is no significant relationship between results from this question and the key question on bond issue voting intent (i.e., higher awareness does not lead to positive voting intent).
- As expected, there is a relationship between higher overall awareness and currently having children in the Forest Hills schools. Interestingly, by age, there is below average awareness in both the under age 40 and over age 70 segments.
- Among 5 specific points tested, awareness is weakest for cuts in state funding and the district spending below average per student (41-44% highly aware), and strongest for the older age of the school buildings, the "STEM" education trends and the OFCC assessment of 8 out of 9 facilities having serious needs.
- These are clearly some awareness gaps in the Forest Hills community that must be addressed in communications efforts on behalf of a bond issue.

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **District Priorities**
 - With the opportunity to select two of five choices as the top priority for the next few years, improving the educational facilities for students is the top choice (by 45%), followed by keeping up with latest in education, teaching & technology (35%), and improving performance and the district's academic standing (30%) and improving the financial position of the district (27%), with the ability to compete with surrounding districts/attract students & families last at 13%.
 - There are 2% who volunteer some other item, and 2% respond "don't know".
 - The volunteered responses to this question from every online response are listed in a separate Excel file.

- **Opinions of Facilities**
 - Two questions asked in a late 2013 study show increased awareness of the need for facilities improvements.
 - Assessment of buildings/classrooms show 24% ratings of "poor" (vs. 14% in 2013), with 17% having no opinion/needing more information (vs. 33% in 2013).
 - Ratings of buildings' appearance/physical condition compared to other nearby districts are 31% "not as good" (vs. 12% for appearance in 2013), 50% "about the same (vs. 61% in 2013) and 11% "better: (vs. 21% in 2013).

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



● Opinions of Facilities (continued)

- In a question asked only in 2014 asking for a comparison between Forest Hills' buildings and other nearby districts' for offering the latest in education, teaching and learning, 47% rate Forest Hills “better”, 32% “about the same”, 11% “not as good”, and 11% don't know.
- This (compared to the previous questions on facilities) would tend to indicate that the community may not be up to speed on what is required today for teaching/learning relative to “STEM” and other 21st century education trends.

● Information Sources

- The most noted source for receiving information on the schools is the Forest Hills Journal (noted by 38%–48% if age 61+), followed by children/students and word-of-mouth (24-26%).
- Next are teachers/school visits at 16% and then the Enquirer, e-newsletters and parent meetings/events (8-11%).
- Web-related sources are at a relatively low level (7% for the districts website, 5% for FaceBook).

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Opinions On The Possible Plans/Bond Issues**

From the key question on voting intent for the two facilities plan options:

- For the higher cost plan (\$173 million, total renovation of the high and middle schools, 4 all-new elementary schools), 16% are strongly in favor, 24% somewhat in favor, 22% somewhat against, 32% strongly against, and 4% undecided (40% total in favor, 55% total against).
- For the lower cost plan (\$98 million, renovation of the high schools, middle schools and 5 elementary schools, and an all-new Wilson Elementary), 27% are strongly in favor, 32% somewhat in favor, 15% somewhat against, 19% strongly against, and 7% undecided (59% total in favor, 34% total against).
- The lower-cost plan appeals more to those from all demographic segments, whereas the higher-cost plan has significantly stronger positive voting intent among the younger and more highly educated interviewees, those with children currently in the Forest Hills schools, and zip code 45255.
- The only segment to be above 50% in favor for the higher-cost plan is age 50 or less, while every segment is above 50% in favor for the lower-cost plan (including age 61+ and those without children in the Forest Hills Schools).

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



● Opinions On The Possible Plans/Bond Issues (continued)

- Focusing on the better-received lower cost plan, the key figures to look at, based on past school district research and its possible predictability, are the 59% “in favor” and the 34% “against”.
- Some perspective from research in other Ohio districts:
 - In Wyoming (an upscale district where education is the main reason for living there), three successful bond issues/tax levies that were researched via phone from 1998 to 2005 had at least 59% in favor in the studies, and the actual vote in favor was always within 1 to 2 percentage points of this.
 - The one time (2009) Wyoming received only 43% in favor (bond issue for a new middle school), it was recommended not to go ahead. They then waited 2½ years, the next study showed 74% in favor, and the vote came in at 73% in favor.
 - Phone research in 2012 in Milford showed 57% in favor of an operating levy that was narrowly defeated in Nov.’12 (concurrent with the presidential election), but which passed in May’13 at 60% after utilizing a more full-time PR person.
 - Phone research in 2012 for a school construction bond issue to consolidate schools in the Winton Woods district showed 43% in favor. It was recommended not to go ahead with a vote, based on the perceived need to improve the district’s academic standing.

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Opinions On The Possible Plans/Bond Issues (continued)**
 - **Some perspective from research in other Ohio districts (continued):**
 - A 2013 phone study in the Southwest (Harrison) district for a multi-school construction plan (new and renovations) showed 38% in favor, and the project was tabled.
 - In Dover (a small town in northeast Ohio) earlier this year, a combination phone and online research study for a new high school showed 56% in favor (32% strongly), including 55% of age 61+ in favor. A May'14 bond issue was defeated with 45% in favor.
 - In Madison (Lake County near Cleveland) earlier this year, an online-only study for an operating levy showed 65% in favor (32% strongly), with no significant differences for the older age segments. A May'14 tax levy was defeated with only 31% in favor.
 - These last two examples show the need to use this research as an aid to judgment and particularly to help formulate communications plans if going on the ballot, and not as a predictor of voting success.

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Reasons For Voting Intent**

- Unaided (voluntary) reasons for being in favor of the lower-cost plan are led by comments relating to the need for better facilities, noted by 32%, followed by financial-related factors at 18%, specifics about Wilson at 17%, and preserving the status quo of the facilities at 11%.
- Unaided reasons for being against the lower-cost plan focus on three categories of responses (all at 20-22%): preferring a less extensive plan, cost-related issues, and personal tax/financial-related concerns (the latter typically being the most-mentioned negative in these types of studies).
- Unaided (voluntary) reasons for being in favor of the higher-cost plan are also led by comments relating to the need for better facilities (23%), and then are much more fragmented than for the lower-cost plan, with community-related factors, specifics about Wilson and preferring fewer schools next at 8-11%.
- Unaided reasons for being against the higher-cost plan focus on four categories: cost and personal tax/financial-related issues (25-26%), the same status quo point that were positives for the lower-cost plan (23%), and preferring a less extensive plan (19%), along with specifying a preference for renovation (12%).

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Reasons For Voting Intent (continued)**

- This report includes slides of some representative responses for reasons strongly in favor and strongly against each plan, from the online research (from responses included in the sample of 167 online responses included in the total research sample of 500).
- Verbatims for the responses to this question, from every online response (over 1,000 responses) are listed in a separate Excel file, organized by the two proposed facilities plans and by in favor versus against, strongly and somewhat.

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



● Facilities Plan Preference

- A question specifically asking for a preference between the two facilities plan options shows 56% preferring the \$98 million plan with 5 renovated and 1 new elementary schools, compared to 17% preferring the \$173 million plan with 4 new elementary schools. There are 3% who indicate liking them both equally.
- Preference for the lower-cost plan is above 50% for every demographic segment.
- There are 17% who say they do not like either plan (31% if age 40 or less). This could be seen as encouraging in terms of predicting a passing vote in November. However, we don't know if and how many people will vote against the lower-cost plan because they might prefer a more extensive higher-cost plan (or vice versa).
- It should be noted that the “like both” and “like neither” choices were not read to interviewees in the phone research but were listed in the online research. Only 1% volunteered that they “like both equally” via phone, compared to 7% online—a statistically significant difference. There were 19% who volunteered “do not like either” in the phone research, compared to 13% noting this online—not a significant difference.
- 2% have no opinion/don't know, and 5% say they need more information,

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(continued)



- **Facilities/Bond Issue-Related Statement Agreement**

From a list of 12 specific hypotheses regarding the schools, facilities, and the possible bond issue, the following support the bond issue and lower cost plan:

- 87% agree (61% strongly) that the excellence of the Forest Hills schools contributes to higher property values in the district.
- 73% agree (43% strongly) that regardless of the various construction options being considered in the district, something needs to be done soon to improve school facilities.
- 64% agree (29% strongly) that the Forest Hills Schools Board of Education will be responsible in wisely spending tax dollars on behalf of the schools and students (21% disagree, 12% strongly). This compares favorably to other districts where this question was asked.
- 63% agree (24% strongly) that better school facilities will improve a student's academic performance (30% disagree, 14% strongly).
- 53% agree (24% strongly) that if a proposed bond issue passes, they will pay higher property taxes but will get more than what they put into these taxes out of my home when they sell it (32% disagree, 16% strongly). This also compares favorably to other districts where this question was asked.

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Facilities/Bond Issue-Related Statement Agreement (continued)**

Support for the bond issue and lower cost plan (continued):

- 52% agree (33% strongly) that the district should keep six elementary schools and avoid redistricting (27% disagree, 10% strongly).
- 52% agree (27% strongly) that the district should keep six elementary schools, not four, even if it means that the all but one of the schools are renovated and not brand new (25% disagree, 12% strongly).
- 36% agree (15% strongly) that Forest Hills School District residents have been taxed enough, and will not support any more tax increases, even for education (52% disagree, 22% strongly). This also compares favorably to other districts where this question was asked.
- 24% agree (8% strongly) that the Forest Hills schools should have a facilities plan that improves all of its schools all at once, instead of doing this in stages, no matter what it costs (62% disagree, 36% strongly).

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Facilities/Bond Issue-Related Statement Agreement (continued)**

Results are more mixed on the following:

- **40% agree (12% strongly) that the current Forest Hills schools meet the needs of their students, in terms of space, safety and security, climate and comfort, energy efficiency and technology (46% disagree, 20% strongly).**

And the following question indicates the one possible addition to the lower-cost facilities plan that could secure voter support, assuming its cost is not prohibitive:

- **51% agree (25% strongly) that any facilities plan needs to include all-day Kindergarten, even at an additional cost, to ensure that the district attracts new families for the long-term (31% disagree, 14% strongly).**

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



● Importance of Selling Points

- Among 10 specific points tested, the highest rated (81-85% very or somewhat important) are:
 - Needing a facilities plan is necessary for Forest Hills to keep up with the latest in teaching and learning, particularly in the “STEM” areas
 - Needing new/renovated schools for the long-term future of the school district, to ensure that the next generation of students has adequate facilities
- At the next level (72-74% very or somewhat important) are:
 - If a bond issue fails, the district will need sizable operating budget increases for maintenance and repair, including future operating levies for tax increases
 - The current elementary and high school buildings are inadequate in terms of factors such as space, safety and security, climate and comfort, energy efficiency and technology
 - The state of Ohio determining that 8 of the 9 schools in the district have serious needs for renovation or replacement

DETAILED EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (continued)



- **Importance of Selling Points (continued)**

- Of relatively less importance, but still important (63-66% very or somewhat important) are:
 - Without new or improved school buildings, the area will not be attractive for families to move to the district, particularly compared to surrounding areas with newer schools.
 - If the Forest Hills' facilities are not improved, home values in the area will decline.
 - This is an opportunity to receive a state rebate of approximately 15% to assist in a major facilities plan with more total renovation as well as some brand new schools.
 - Consolidation of schools will create cost savings in energy and other operational efficiencies.
- The least important point tested (55% very or somewhat important) is that if there are renovated or new Forest Hills district schools, the performance of students will improve
- The selling points with the strongest relationship to interviewees' inclination to vote in favor of the lower cost bond issue are the points on the long-term future and the state assessment of 8 of the 9 schools having serious needs.



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