



PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES



Key findings from a survey of 300 likely voters throughout the Maine Township High School District 207 conducted May 19-22, 2018.

A banner at the top of the slide features a collage of images: on the left, a large school building; in the center, a group of five students smiling; and on the right, another school building. Overlaid on this collage is the word "METHODOLOGY" in large, bold, white letters with a black outline. Below the word, there is a black rectangular box containing the "GCA" logo (with a red 'A') and the text "PUBLIC OPINION STRATEGIES" in white.

METHODOLOGY



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

- ❑ **Public Opinion Strategies is pleased to present the key findings of a statistically valid telephone survey throughout the Maine Township High School District 207.**
- ❑ **The survey was completed May 19-22, 2018, among 300 likely voters. The overall sample has a margin of error of $\pm 5.66\%$.**
- ❑ **Jim Hobart was the principal researcher, Kyle Clark was the project director, and Gabe Imber provided analytical support.**



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

FEASIBILITY OF A BALLOT MEASURE

WHAT WE DID

Residents reacted to a close simulation of the ballot language.

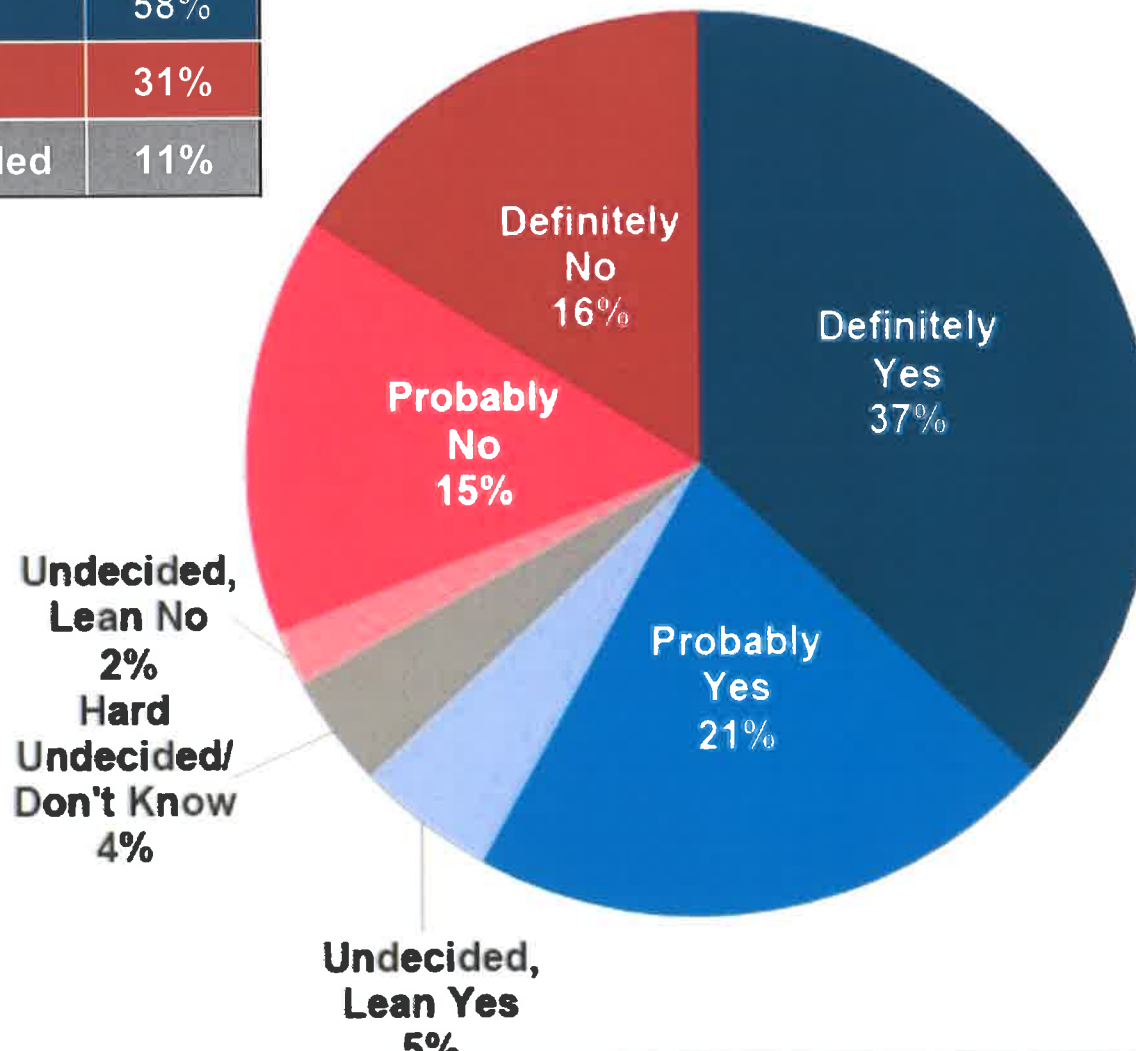
Shall the Board of Education of Maine Township High School District 207, Cook County, Illinois, improve the sites of, build and equip additions to and alter, repair and equip existing buildings, including, without limitation, constructing security improvements, increasing accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act, replacing electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, improving classrooms and labs, improving the Library Media Center, and renovating special education spaces, and issue bonds of said school district to the amount of one hundred ninety five million dollars for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?^

[^]Split Sample A, N=153

A clear majority of voters support the \$195 million dollar bond measure.

\$195 Million Bond Ballot[^]

Total Yes	58%
Total No	31%
Total Lean/Undecided	11%



[^]Split Sample A, N=153

WHAT WE DID

Residents reacted to a close simulation of the ballot language.

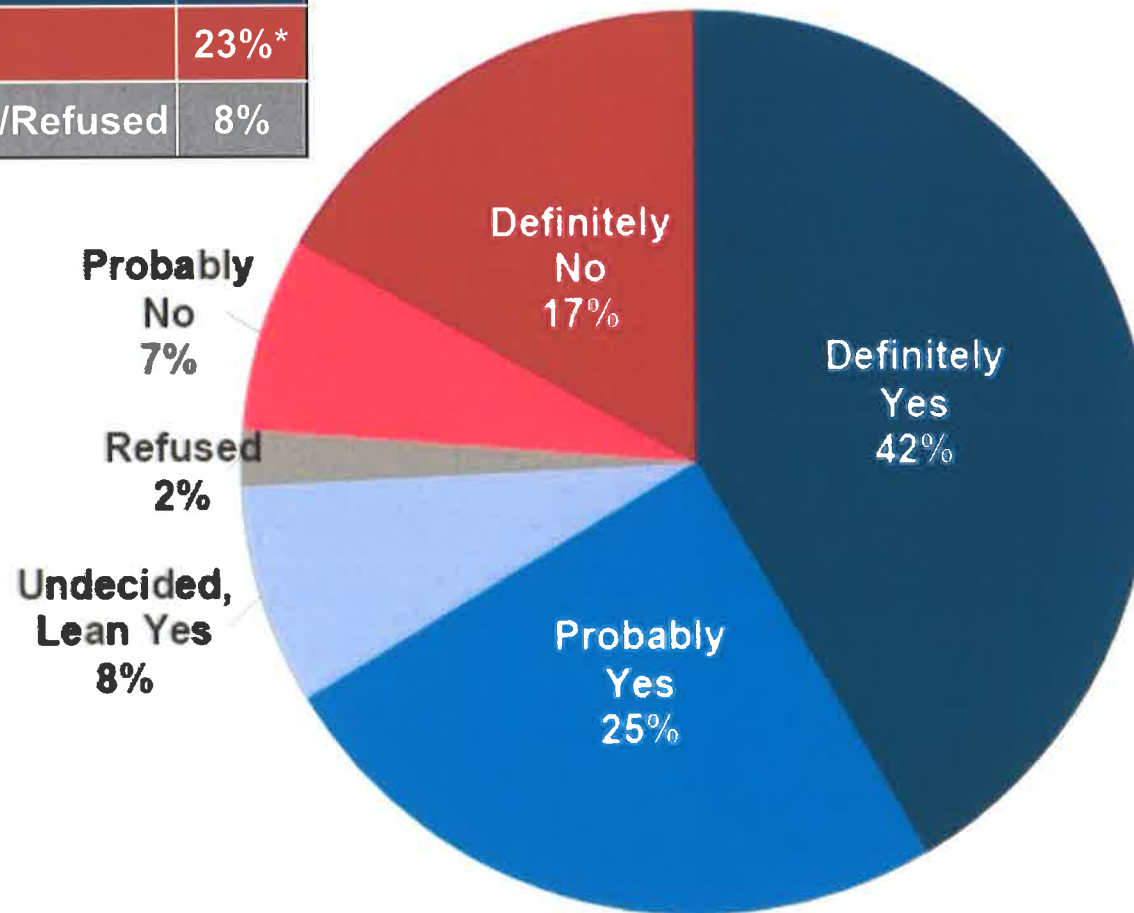
Shall the Board of Education of Maine Township High School District 207, Cook County, Illinois, improve the sites of, build and equip additions to and alter, repair and equip existing buildings, including, without limitation, constructing security improvements, increasing accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act, replacing electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems, improvements to some classrooms and labs, improving the Library Media Center, and renovating special education spaces, and issue bonds of said school district to the amount of one-hundred thirty five million dollars for the purpose of paying the costs thereof?^^

^^Split Sample B, N=147

Support is even stronger for the \$135 million dollar option.

\$135 Million Bond Ballot^^

Total Yes	67%
Total No	23%*
Total Lean/Undecided/Refused	8%

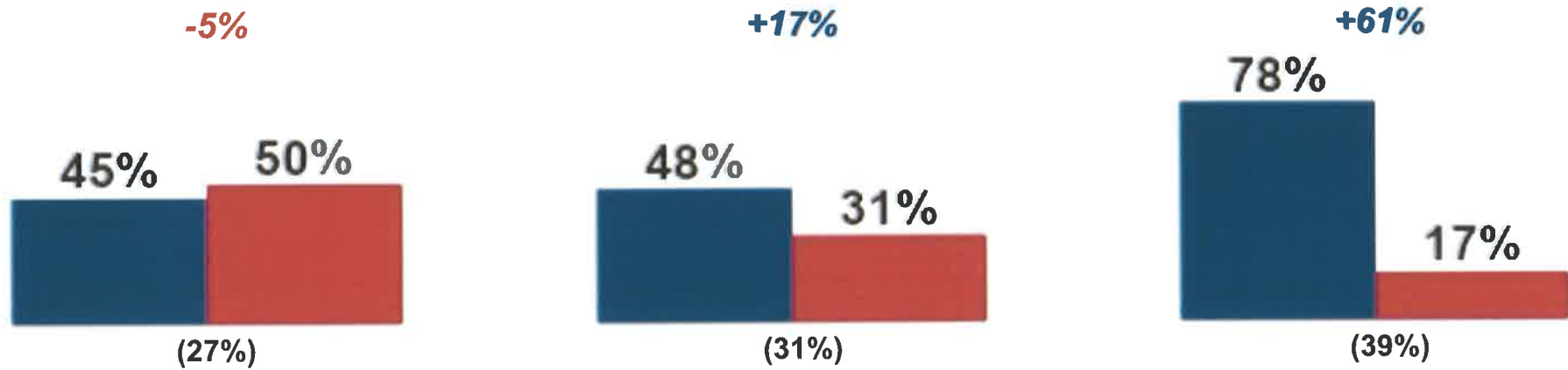


**Denotes Rounding; ^^Split Sample B, N=147*

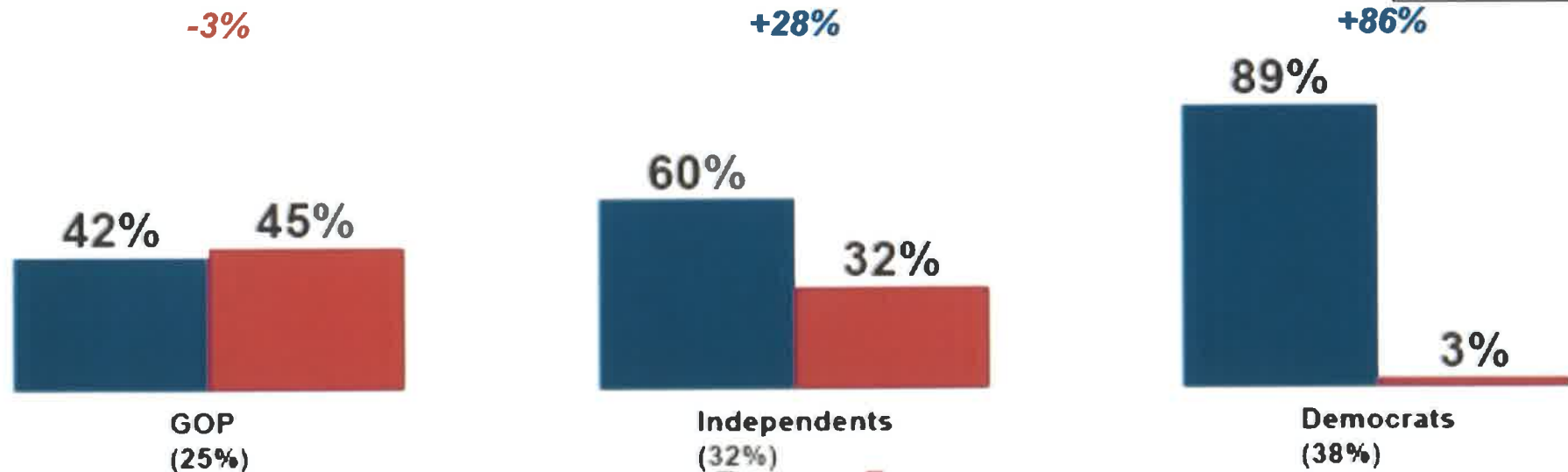
Support for the \$135 million option is very strong among Democrats and Independents.

\$195 Million Bond vs \$135 Million Bond Ballot By Party

\$195 Million Bond[^]



\$135 Million Bond^{^^}

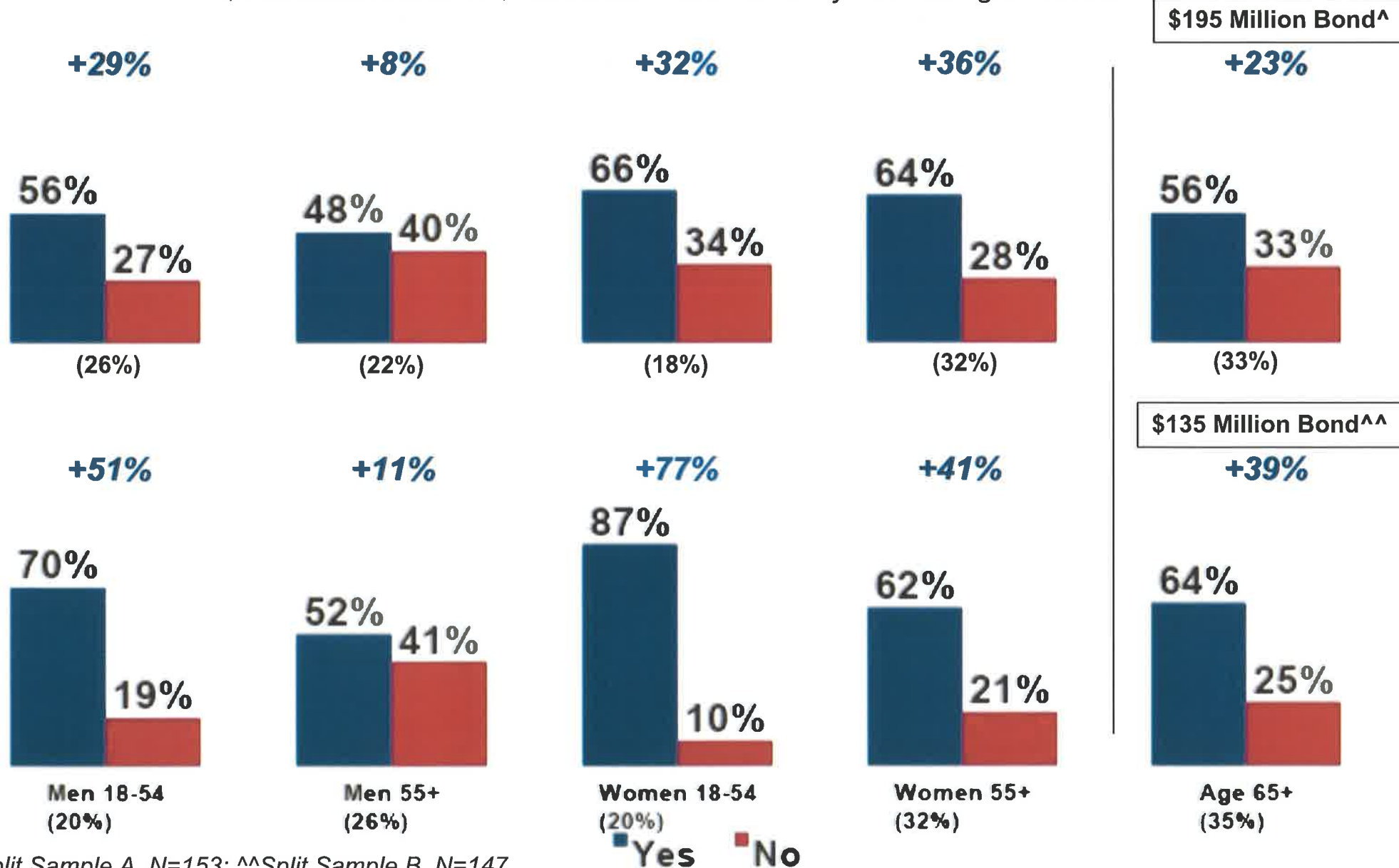


[^]Split Sample A, N=153; ^{^^}Split Sample B, N=147

■ Yes ■ No

Younger voters drive the support for both options.

\$195 Million Bond vs \$135 Million Bond Ballot By Gender/Age + Seniors



^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

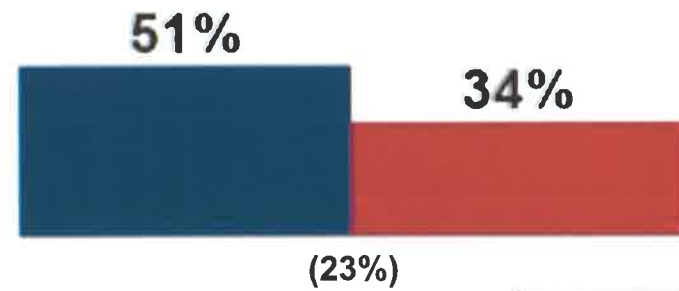
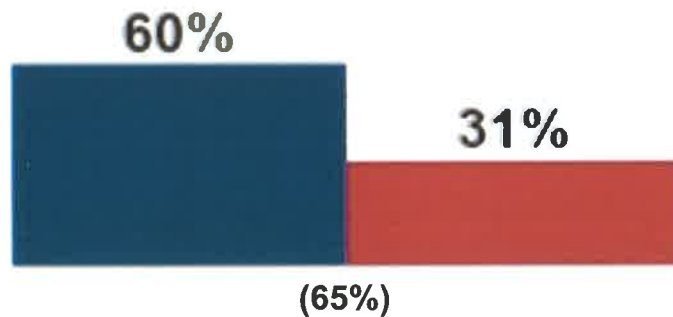
Parents are MUCH more supportive of the \$135 million dollar option

\$195 Million Bond vs \$135 Million Bond Ballot By Parent Status

\$195 Million Bond[^]

+29%

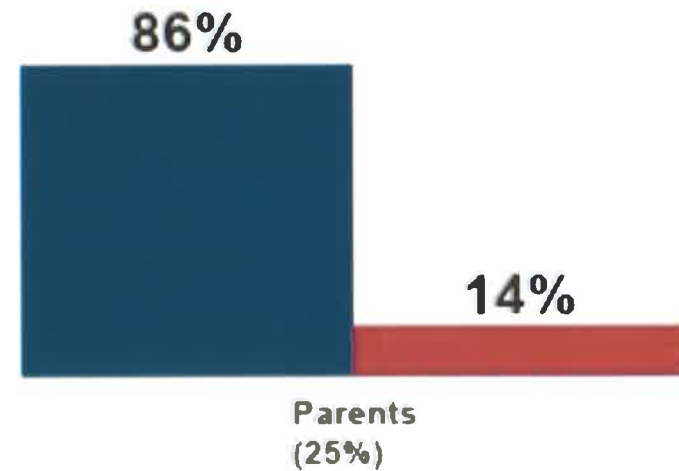
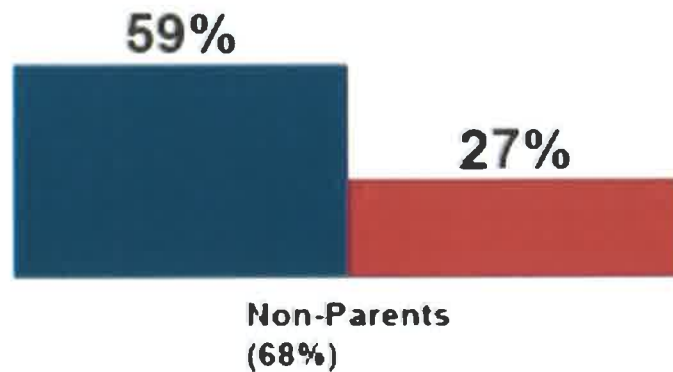
+17%



\$135 Million Bond^{^^}

+32%

+72%



**Non-Parents
(68%)**

**Parents
(25%)**

■ Yes ■ No

[^]Split Sample A, N=153; ^{^^}Split Sample B, N=147

Key Sub-Groups

\$195 Million Bond^

Definitely Yes (37%)

District 207 Facility Grade - C/D/F

Dem

Attended District 207 School

Cook County School District 62

Children In Pre-K/Elementary

Swing (47%)

District 207 Grade - D/F

District 207 Grade - DK

District 207 Facilities Grade - A

Cook County School District 62

Definitely No (16%)

Age 45-54

District 207 Facilities Grade - A

Mothers

GOP

Children In Middle School/High School

\$135 Million Bond^

Definitely Yes (42%)

District 207 Grade - DK

Mothers

Children In Middle School/High School

Attended District 207 School

Women 18-54

Swing (40%)

District 207 Facilities Grade - DK

District 207 Grade - C

Age 65+

Women 55+

Non-Parents

Definitely No (17%)

District 207 Grade - D/F

GOP

Age 55-64

District 207 Facilities Grade - B

Maine High Schools - Not As Good

The Yes verbatims focus on security and improved education, while the No verbatims center on cost.

Combined Bond Ballot Verbatims

Yes
Updating Schools Important
Improve Security
Better Schools
Students Need Innovative Schools
Education Important
Improve Disability Access
More School Programs/Services

No
Tax Increase Is Too High
Cost of Project Too Much
Do Not Have Kids
Not Fiscally Responsible
Pushing People Out Of The State
Find Other Ways To Get Money
Improvements Are Unnecessary

*What are the one or two main reasons why you would vote **YES** / **NO** on this proposal?*

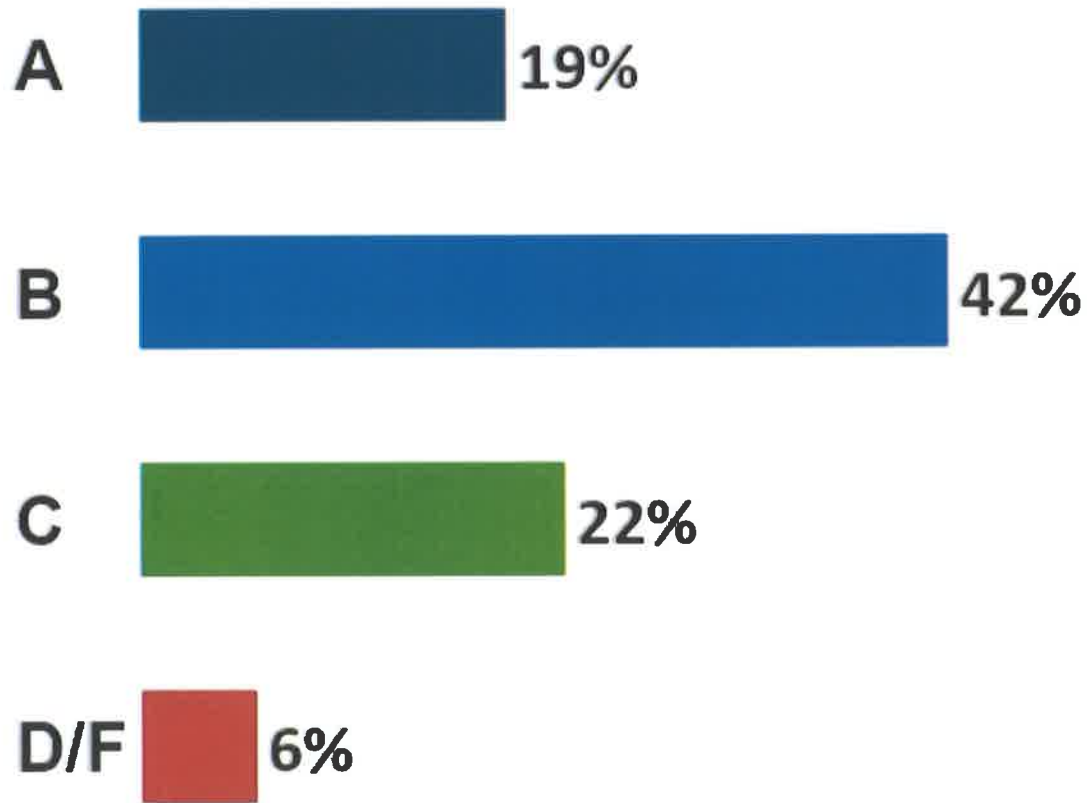
Voters are largely unmoved when they hear about the tax impact of each measure.

	More Likely	Less Likely	No Difference
If you learned that the tax impact will be two hundred and twenty eight dollars per year for a two hundred fifty thousand dollar home, or would it make no difference to you?^	11%	17%*	68%
if you learned that the tax impact will be one hundred and fifty-five dollars per year for a two hundred fifty thousand dollar home, or would it make no difference to you?^^	17%	14%	67%

**Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147*

And, would you be more likely or less likely to vote yes, in favor of this measure....

District 207 schools receive high marks.



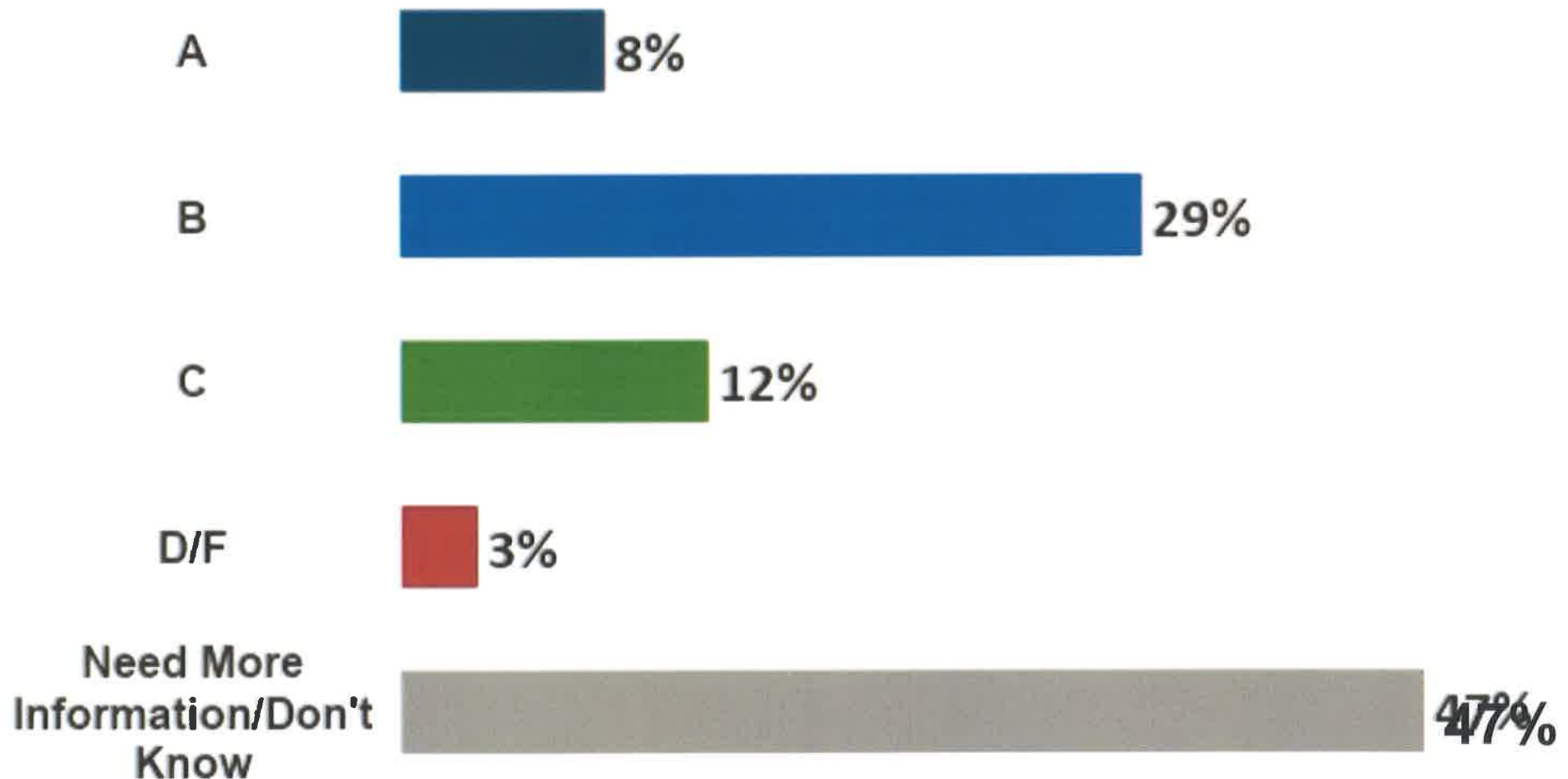
Schools often use the letters A, B, C, D or F for Fail to grade students. Suppose you had the chance to grade the District 207 high schools, what grade would you give them - A, B, C, D or F for fail?

Close to half of voters say that Maine East, South, and West are better than high schools in other parts of the state.

■ Better ■ About The Same¹ ■ Not As Good ■ Refused

Would you say that Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West are better than, about the same, or not as good as high schools in other parts of the state?

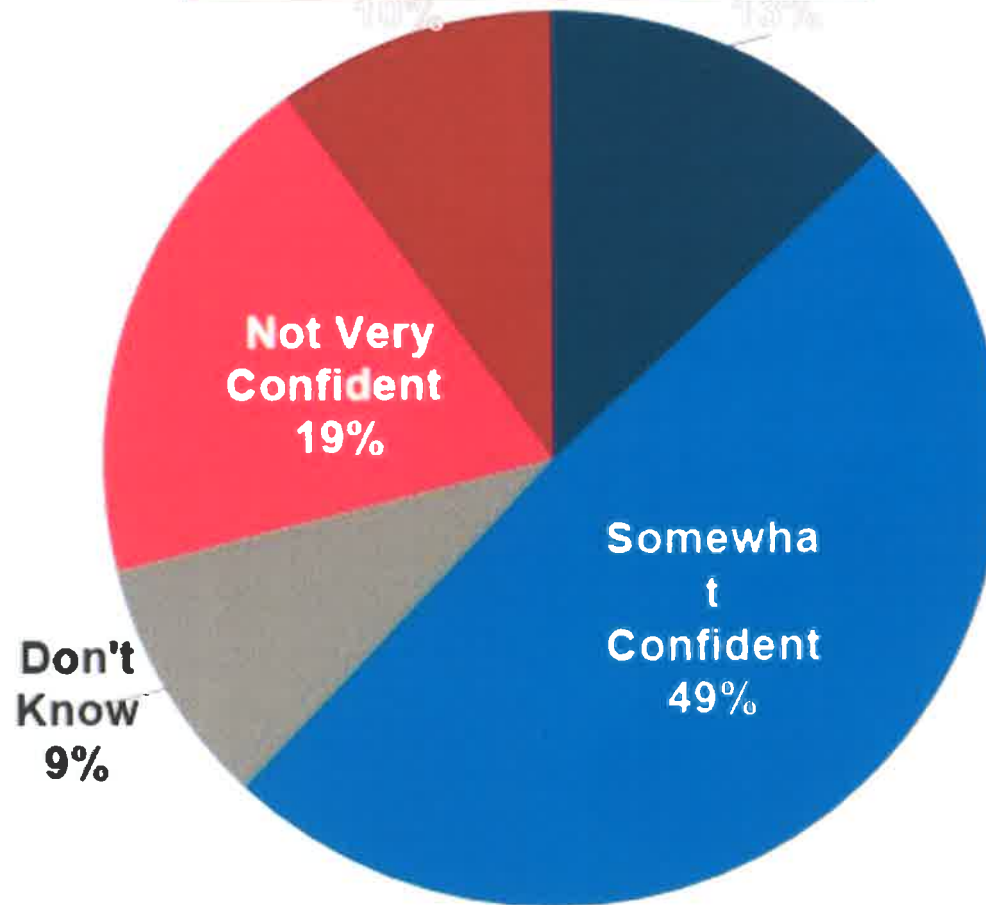
A significant number of voters are unsure about the adequacy of District 207 facilities.



What if you were to grade the adequacy of District 207 buildings and facilities, what grade would you give those campuses - A, B, C, D or F for fail, or do you not have enough information to judge?

Voters express confidence in how the District handles taxpayer money.

Total Confident	62%
Total Not Confident	29%



How confident would you say you are that District 207 is handling taxpayer money wisely?



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

FUNDING PRIORITIES

WHAT WE DID

In order to determine where residents' priorities lie, we asked respondents the importance of funding 15 Maine Township School District items.

I am going to read you some specific things which could be funded by District 207 if they had funding from a bond measure. Keeping in mind that it is difficult for everything to be equally important, please tell me how important each one of these is to you personally. Is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not very important to ensure funding is dedicated to that purpose?

Improving safety and security and replacing outdated equipment are the top priorities of voters.

Top Support Statements Ranked By Extremely/Very Important

**Extremely/Very
Important**

Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel.

72%

Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide.[^]

71%

Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building.[^]

65%

Installing new fire suppression systems at all three high schools.^{^^}

62%

Relocating and renovating special education spaces to better meet the needs of students at each high school in the district.^{^^}

58%

[^]Split Sample A, N=153; ^{^^}Split Sample B, N=147

Voters also recognize the importance of updating classrooms and labs and improving the Library.

Second Tier Support Statements Ranked By Extremely/Very Important

Extremely/Very
Important

Updating classrooms and labs at all three high schools to create flexible learning spaces that leverage instructional technology, enhance current teaching methods and promote collaboration.^

58%

Improving the Library Media Centers to increase functionality and access for all students and staff in the district.^

49%

Expanding fine arts spaces that are currently overcrowded at all three high schools.^

46%

Relocating and expanding the dining area and renovating the food service area at all three schools to ease congestion, while also replacing the fifty-year-old equipment.^

39%

Creating flexible learning spaces at each high school that will allow students to study individually and in small groups.^

35%

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

These funding items are lower priorities.

Bottom Tier Support Statements Ranked By Extremely Important

**Extremely/Very
Important**

Expanding and improving the Career and Technical Education instructional space at Maine South, including adding business presentation rooms.^

33%

Relocating offices of counselors, deans, psychologists and other support personnel into one area at each school. This will enhance student access to these services while also maintaining student privacy.^

29%

Constructing a new fieldhouse at Maine West so that all athletics and physical education space will be in one location, just like what already exists at Maine East and Maine South. This will allow for increased resource sharing and the ability to secure the rest of the building during after-hours events.^^

28%

Provide a more efficient connection to student services and support programs and expanding dining to the lower level at Maine West.^

24%

Creating an Entrepreneurial/Professional Development Center at Maine East by re-purposing the old pool area located in the lower level of the building.^^

15%

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Top Funding Priorities By Key Groups

% Extremely Important/Very Important

<u>GOP (26%)</u>	<u>Ind (32%)</u>
Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 73%	Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 66%
Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide. 65%[^]	Installing new fire suppression systems at all three high schools. 63%^{^^}
Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building. 57%[^]	Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide. 58%[^]
Installing new fire suppression systems at all three high schools. 49%^{^^}	Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building. 57%[^]

[^]Split Sample A, N=153; ^{^^}Split Sample B, N=147

Top Funding Priorities By Key Groups

% Extremely Important/Very Important

<u>Age 65+ (34%)</u>	<u>Men 55+ (24%)</u>
Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 82%	Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide 69%^
Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building. 75%^	Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 68%
Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide. 74%^	Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building. 50%^
Installing new fire suppression systems at all three high schools. 62%^	Expanding and improving the Career and Technical Education instructional space at Maine South, including adding business presentation rooms. 47%^

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Top Funding Priorities By Key Groups

% Extremely Important/Very Important

<u>Swing \$195m (24%)</u>	<u>Swing \$135m (20%)</u>
Replacing outdated plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems to extend the useful life of the existing buildings, reduce costly emergency repairs, and improve energy efficiency district-wide 71%^	Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 70%
Adding a handicapped-accessible hallway at Maine East, improving students' traffic flow and handicap access throughout the building. 63%^	Installing new fire suppression systems at all three high schools. 55%^^
Improving safety and security by constructing new front entrances at each high school with secure vestibules to prevent visitors from entering the buildings before being cleared by personnel. 60%	Updating classrooms and labs and labs at all three high schools to create flexible learning spaces that leverage instructional technology, enhance current teaching methods and promote collaboration. 54%^^
Expanding fine arts spaces that are currently overcrowded at all three high schools. 41%^	Relocating and renovating special education spaces to better meet the needs of students at each high school in the district. 48%^^

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

The transparency statements tested very well.

	More Likely	Less Likely
District 207 will conduct community outreach meetings to provide updates on projects to be funded by the bond measure.	73%	23%
All spending from the bond will be publicly disclosed.	81%	16%

Let me read you a few specific aspects of this new proposal, and for each one, please tell me if that would make you more likely or less likely to support this proposal.

WHAT WE DID

We also tested some specific pieces of information that residents might hear if a funding measure were to move forward.

*I am going to read you some arguments that people have made **IN FAVOR OF** / **AGAINST** increasing funding for District 207 in order to fund facility improvements at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West. After I read each one, please tell me whether the argument is very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing or not at all convincing as a reason to **INCREASE** / **NOT INCREASE** funding...*

The top messages focus on safety, security, and 21st century classrooms.

Top Support Statements Ranked By % Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel.	64%	86%
Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community.^	54%	77%
Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values.^	48%	72%
Many of these facility improvements will have to be made eventually. The longer the district waits to make them, the more expensive the improvements will be due to rising construction costs and borrowing costs.^	47%	75%
Replacing outdated electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems at the three high schools will save taxpayer dollars by reducing costly emergency repairs and improving energy efficiency.^	45%	89%

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Messages on improving accessibility and building improvements being long overdue also work well.

Bottom Tier Support Statements Ranked By % Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
Too many areas of the campuses at all three high schools are not easily accessible by students, parents, teachers and visitors with disabilities. Fixing these problems should be a priority.^	39%	77%*
Voters in District 207 have not been asked to approve additional funding for building improvements in forty-five years. This is long overdue. ^	39%	71%
It is much less expensive to renovate the three high schools than to replace them, and this proposal makes sure that a similar amount of money is spent on each of the three high schools.^	38%	69%
District 207 has spent more than thirty-three million dollars on repairs and upgrades in the last five years and will spend an additional forty-five million dollars out of their reserves if these improvements are approved. They are not just asking taxpayers for a tax increase.	25%	60%

*Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Top Messages By Swing Groups

% Very Convincing

<u>GOP (26%)</u>	<u>Ind (32%)</u>
Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 62%	Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 59%
It is much less expensive to renovate the three high schools than to replace them, and this proposal makes sure that a similar amount of money is spent on each of the three high schools. 37%^^	Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community. 51%^^
Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values. 36%^^	Replacing outdated electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems at the three high schools will save taxpayer dollars by reducing costly emergency repairs and improving energy efficiency. 48%^
Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community. 35%^^	Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values. 47%^^

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Top Messages By Swing Groups

% Very Convincing

<u>Age 65+ (34%)</u>	<u>Men 55+ (24%)</u>
Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 74%	Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 59%
Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community. 51%^^	Many of these facility improvements will have to be made eventually. The longer the district waits to make them, the more expensive the improvements will be due to rising construction costs and borrowing costs. 47%^
Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values. 49%^^	Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values. 41%^^
Replacing outdated electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems at the three high schools will save taxpayer dollars by reducing costly emergency repairs and improving energy efficiency. 45%^	Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community. 40%^^

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

Top Funding Priorities By Swing Groups

% Very Convincing

<u>Swing \$195m (24%)</u>	<u>Swing \$135m (20%)</u>
Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 56%	Students should be as safe as possible while at school. Installing secure entry vestibules at Maine East, Maine South, and Maine West will prevent visitors from entering the buildings until cleared by school personnel. 66%
Replacing outdated electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems at the three high schools will save taxpayer dollars by reducing costly emergency repairs and improving energy efficiency. 45%^	Maintaining high-performing high schools is critical to protecting local property values. 49%^
Many of these facility improvements will have to be made eventually. The longer the district waits to make them, the more expensive the improvements will be due to rising construction costs and borrowing costs. 35%^	Providing students with twenty-first century classrooms and labs that leverage instructional technology, promote collaboration and prepare students for college and the workforce should be a priority for our children and our community. 47%^
Voters in District 207 have not been asked to approve additional funding for building improvements in forty-five years. This is long overdue. 26%^	Too many areas of the campuses at all three high schools are not easily accessible by students, parents, teachers and visitors with disabilities. Fixing these problems should be a priority. 28%^

^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

The top opposition message focuses on the state budget crisis.

Top Opposition Statements Ranked By % Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
The state budget is in crisis and Illinois residents are already over-taxed, especially with the recent increase in state income taxes. This is not the time for yet another tax increase.	42%	66%
Seniors and other District residents who live on a fixed income and do not even have children at our schools will be significantly affected by this tax increase.	35%	60%
The District should be putting more than thirty-six point eight million dollars toward the projects. They are asking taxpayers to spend over ninety million dollars more than what the District will spend. ^{^^}	31%	60%
The bond issue is for one-hundred and thirty-five million dollars. The school district is trying to do too much at one time. ^{^^}	31%	55%*

*Denotes Rounding; ^^Split Sample B, N=147

These opposition messages are not especially effective.

Bottom Tier Opposition Statements Ranked By % Very Convincing

	Very Convincing	Total Convincing
The bond issue is for one hundred ninety-five million dollars. The school district is trying to do too much at one time.^	30%	57%
The District should be putting more than forty-five point seven million dollars toward the projects. They are asking taxpayers to spend over one hundred forty million dollars more than what the District will spend.^	29%	58%*
While it makes sense for a similar amount of money to be spent across all three high schools, this current proposal is too ambitious. District 207 should downsize the bond measure and focus on its absolute highest priority needs like replacing outdated mechanical systems.	27%	62%*
There are too many improvements that focus on athletics, fine arts, and other extra-curricular activities. Any improvements should be focused on the classroom, rather than wasting taxpayer dollars on projects that do not even affect academics.	18%	43%

*Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153

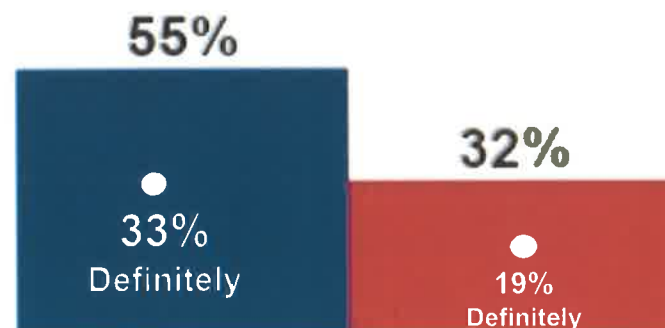
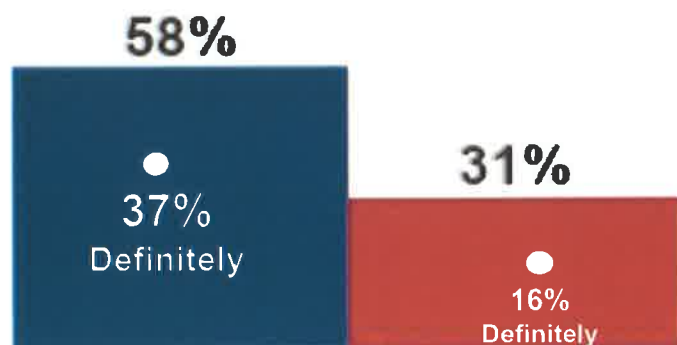
Support for both measure is largely unchanged on the informed ballot.

\$195 Million Bond vs \$135 Million Bond Ballot

\$195 Million Bond^

+27%

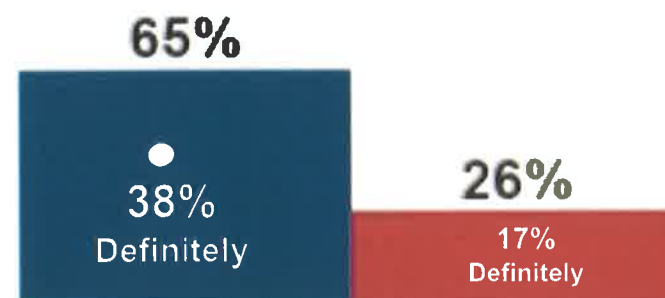
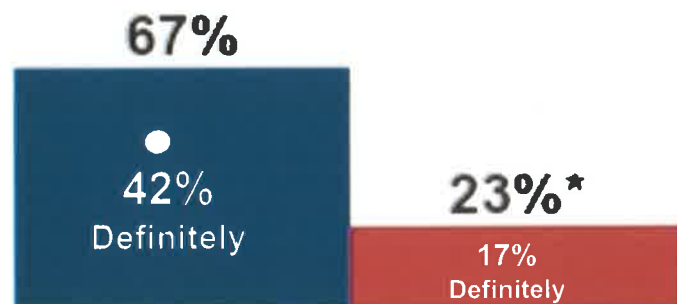
+23%



+44%

+39%

\$135 Million Bond^



Initial

Informed

■ Yes ■ No

*Denotes Rounding; ^Split Sample A, N=153; ^^Split Sample B, N=147



PUBLIC OPINION
STRATEGIES

THE BOTTOM LINE

THE BOTTOM LINE

- ☐ **There is strong support for both potential measures, with support for the \$135 million dollar option bordering on overwhelming. Not surprisingly, Democrats drive the support for both funding options.**
- ☐ **The key swing groups are seniors, older women, and non-parents.**
- ☐ **The top priorities are improved safety and security, infrastructure repairs, and ADA accessibility.**
- ☐ **The most effective messages in support of either bond measure are centered on safety, security, and 21st century classrooms. The top opposition message deals with the state's current budget crisis.**
- ☐ **Both the \$195 million dollar option and the \$135 million dollar option can pass, the more expensive proposal would just take a more aggressive campaign.**