



DOUGLAS COUNTY  
SCHOOL DISTRICT VOTERS  
MARCH 2023



**MOORE INFORMATION GROUP**  
RESEARCH • ANALYSIS • RESULTS

# METHODOLOGY

## SAMPLE

400 interviews among a representative sample of likely voters in the Douglas County, Colorado School District.

## METHOD

This survey was conducted March 18-23, 2023 using a mixed-mode approach consisting of live telephone interviews and text-to-online (P2P) responses. Landline, cell phone and text-to-online interviews were included.

## SAMPLING ERROR

Plus or minus 5% at the 95% confidence level. The margin for error is higher for subgroups, such as gender or an individual age category.



# DEMOGRAPHICS

County Commission District		Gender		Age	
District 1	29%	Men	49%	18-34	11%
District 2	37%	Women	51%	35-44	16%
District 3	34%			45-54	21%
				55-64	22%
				65+	30%

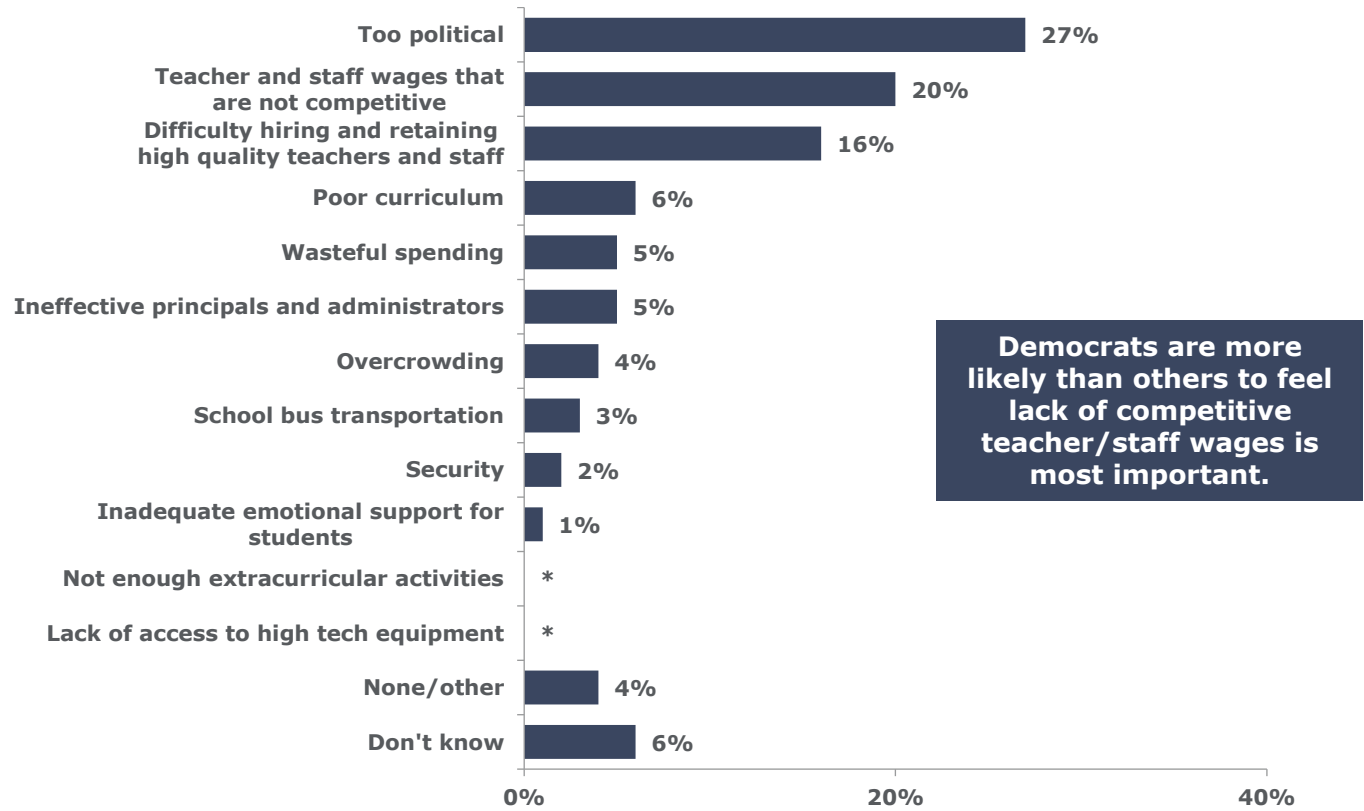
Partisan Vote Behavior		Party Registration		Philosophy	
Republicans	46%	Republicans	41%	Very Conservatives	22%
Inds./don't know	24%	Democrats	20%	Somewhat Conservatives	22%
Democrats	30%	Inds./others	39%	Moderates	26%
				Liberals	22%

Vote History		Education		Kids Under 18		Household Income	
1/4	6%	High school or less	4%	Yes	39%	Less than \$100K	21%
2/4	20%	Associate degree/ some college/ trade/voc. school	27%	No	58%	\$100K to \$149,999	18%
3/4	27%	College graduate	37%			\$150K or more	39%
4/4	45%	Post-graduate	30%			Don't know/NA	23%



# MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE: *Too Political*

“And which one of the following is the most important issue facing Douglas County schools today?” (Q1)

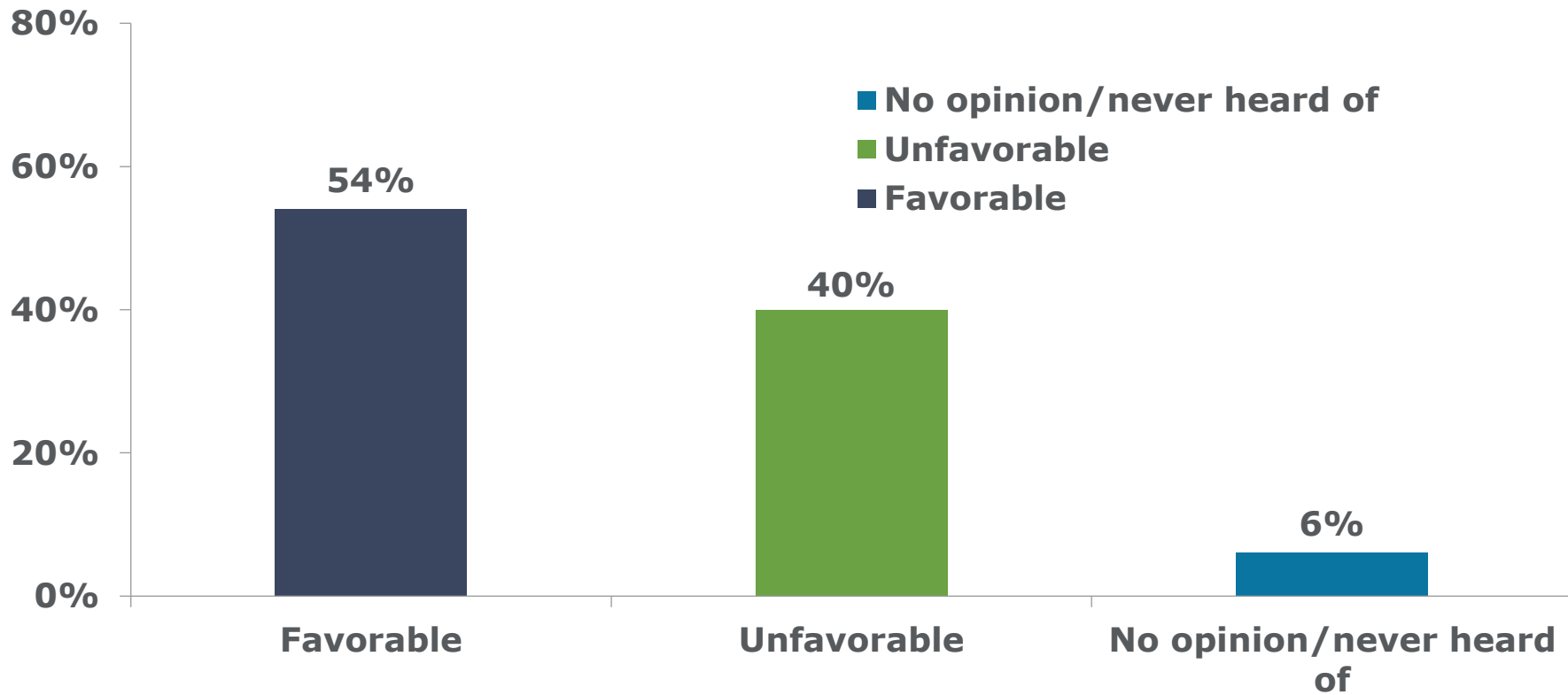


\*less than one-half of one percent



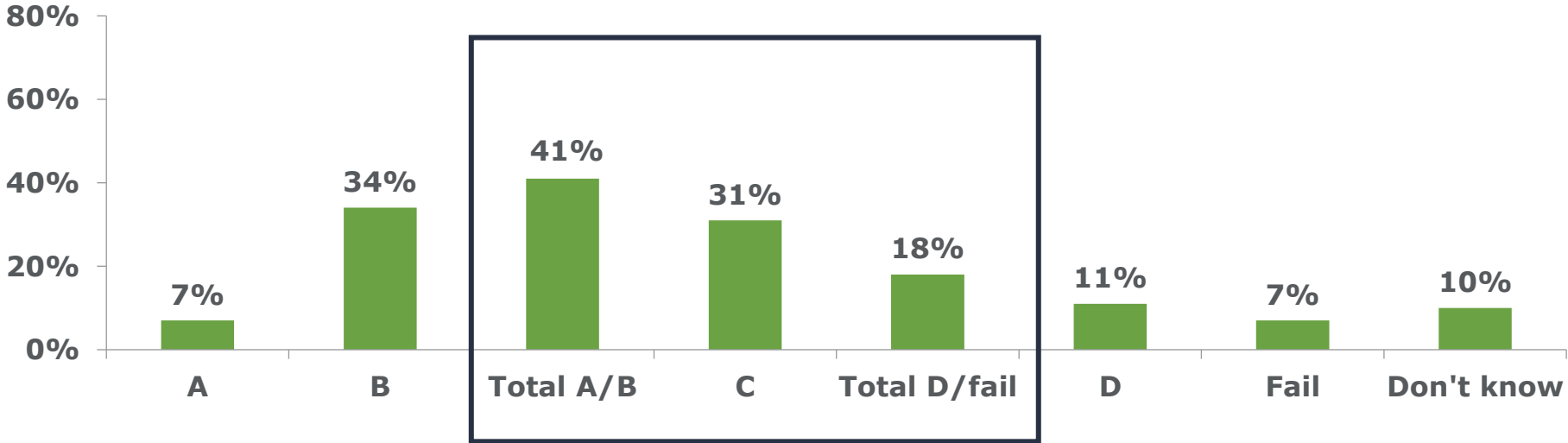
# IMAGE OF DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

"Now here are some organizations that have been mentioned in the news recently. For each one, please tell me whether you have heard of that organization, and if so, whether you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression. If you do not recognize the name, just say so."



# A PLURALITY OF VOTERS GIVE DCSD A STRONG GRADE

“Thinking now about education and schools, as you may know, students are often graded A, B, C, D, or Fail on the quality of their work. Using that system, how would you grade schools in the Douglas County School District?” (Q6)



County Commission District 3 voters and women are more likely to give DCSD schools an A or B.



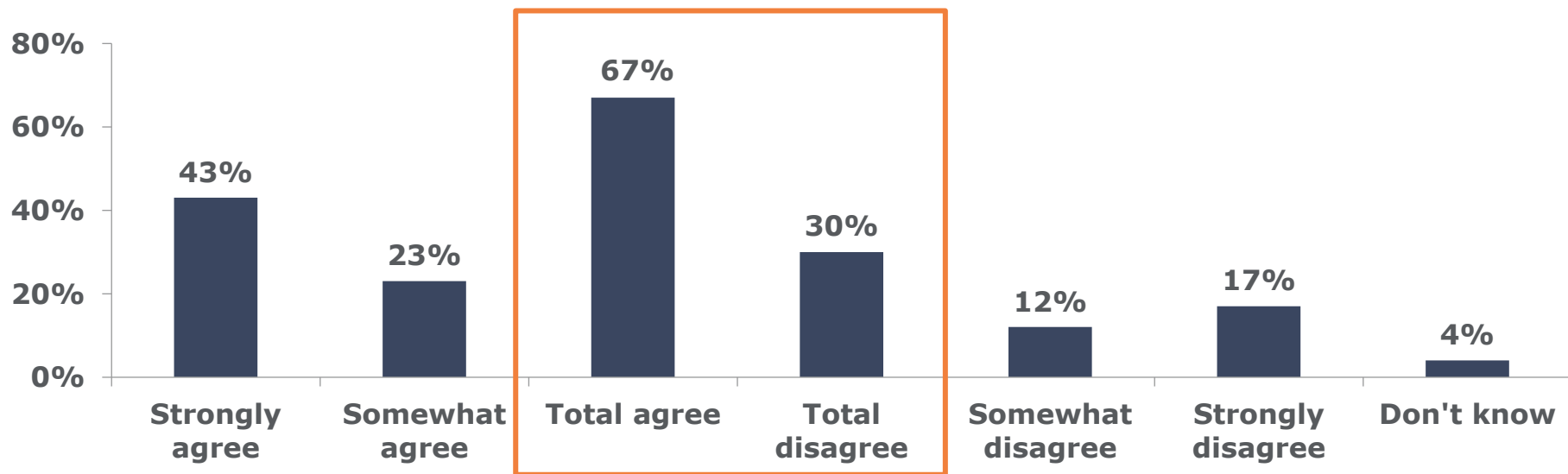


# SUPPORT FOR BALLOT MEASURES



# AGREE ON INCREASED FUNDING

“Do you agree or disagree that Douglas County schools should receive increased funding to address issues such as competitive pay to retain and attract teachers and staff, building and expanding schools where needed to reduce overcrowding and performing capital improvements on its current school buildings?” (Q7)



There is wide agreement on increased school funding among large majorities of all key demographic groups, with Democrats and women ages 18-54 being most likely to agree.





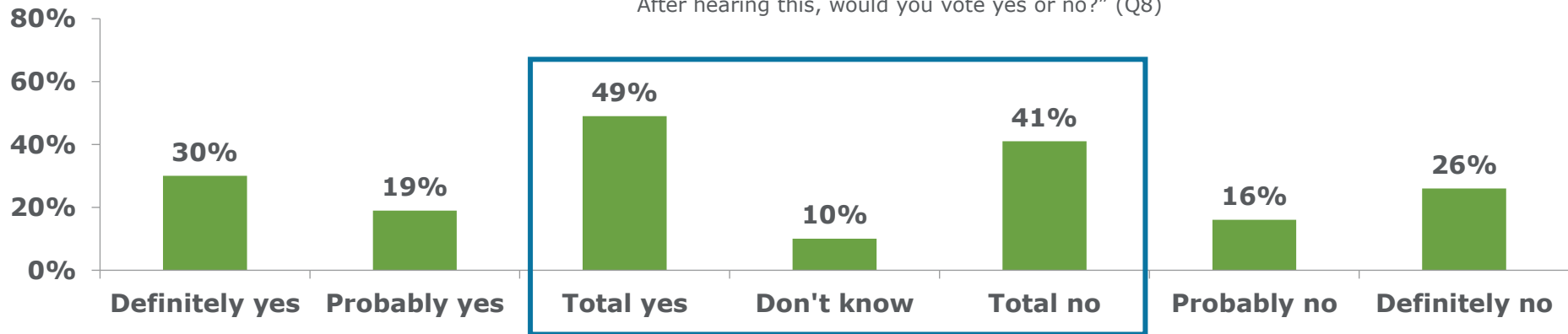
# BALLOT INITIATIVE 5A PROSPECTS ARE PROMISING

“As you may know, in the upcoming November 2023 local election Douglas County School District voters will likely be asked to vote on a couple of measures that would pass facility bonds, meaning borrowing money, and general levies, meaning additional taxes, to fund the needs at our public schools. I am going to read the language of some potential measures and ask you how you would vote on them. As you may know, some measure language can be long, please listen closely.

**Shall Douglas county school district taxes be increased \$60 million dollars annually** commencing in collection year 2024 and in each year thereafter, which is estimated to cost homeowners approximately one dollar per week per \$100,000 dollars of home value based on current assessment rates and assessed values for general fund purposes in order to:

- Retain and attract quality teachers and staff by increasing compensation for the 2023/2024 school year and thereafter maintaining district salaries and
- Benefits to be more competitive with neighboring school districts

After hearing this, would you vote yes or no?" (Q8)



**A solid majority of Democrats, voters ages 18-54 year and those with kids in the household support the \$60 million tax increase for school funding.**



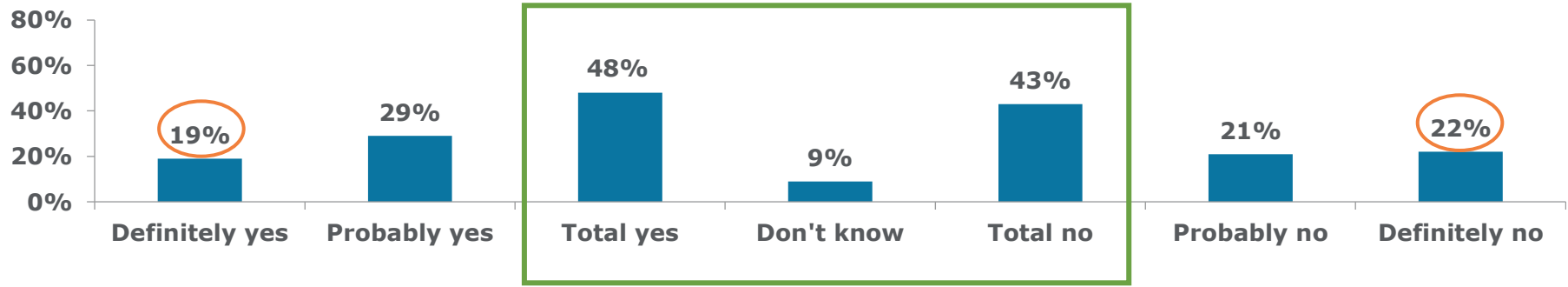
# BALLOT INITIATIVE 5B APPROACHES MAJORITY SUPPORT

“As you may know, in the upcoming November 2023 local election Douglas County School District voters will likely be asked to vote on a couple of measures that would pass facility bonds, meaning borrowing money, and general levies, meaning additional taxes, to fund the needs at our public schools. I am going to read the language of some potential measures and ask you how you would vote on them. As you may know, some measure language can be long, please listen closely.

With no expected increase in the district’s current bond fund mill levy rate of 6.700 mills and based on the district’s current assessed value and tax collection rate, shall **Douglas county school district debt be increased \$450 million dollars** with a repayment cost of \$792.7 million dollars, and shall district taxes be increased \$51.3 million dollars annually to pay such debt, all for the purpose of:

- Updating and performing critical capital improvements and maintenance at existing educational facilities;
- Implementing safety and security upgrades;
- Constructing and equipping three new neighborhood schools and additions to two existing neighborhood schools to accommodate growth and reduce overcrowding; and
- Implementing other capital improvements as described in the district’s bond priority plan

After hearing this, would you vote yes or no? (Q9)



**A solid majority of Democrats and women ages 18-54 also support the \$450 million bond issue.**



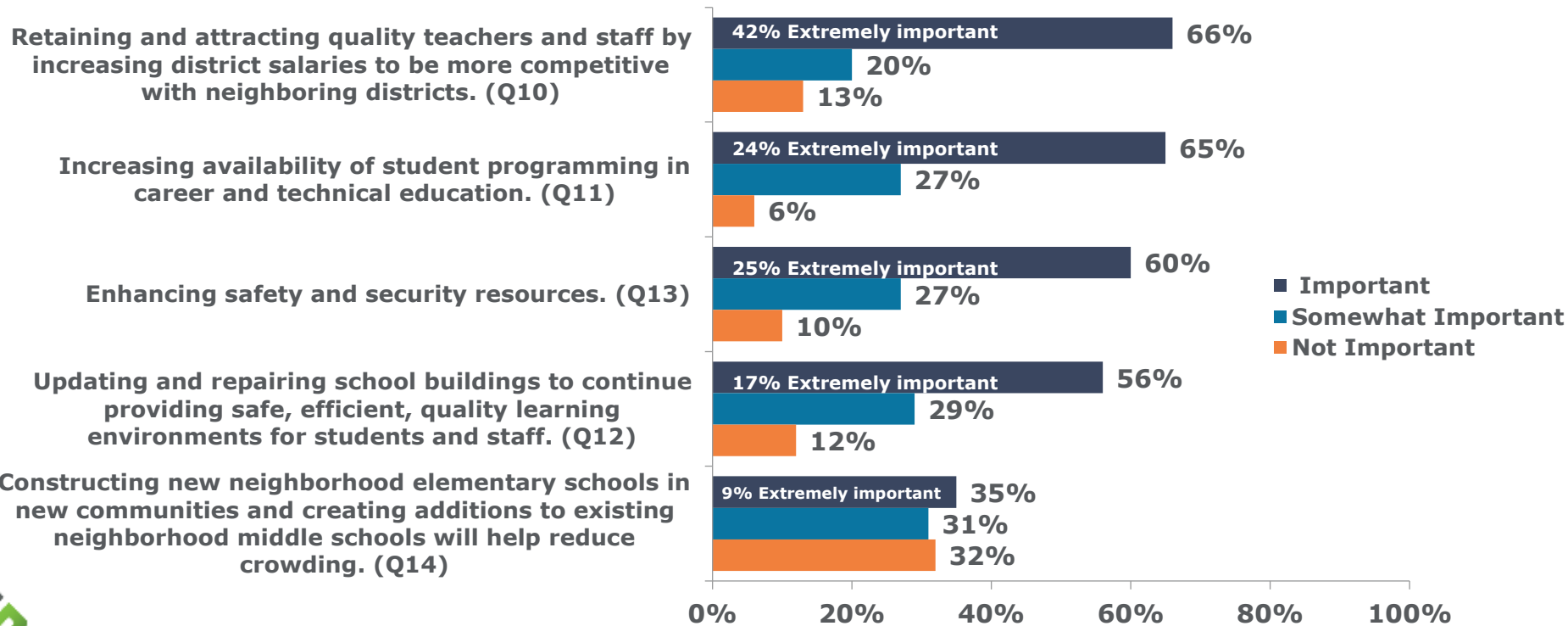


# IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING AREAS



# IMPORTANCE OF FUNDING AREAS

“Now I’m going to read you some specific things which MIGHT be funded if these proposals are placed on the ballot in the future. 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.”



# FUNDING AREAS: *KEY SUBGROUPS*

		County Commission District			Gender/Age					
% Extremely/very important	All voters	Dist. 1	Dist. 2	Dist. 3	Men	Men 18-54	Men 55+	Women	Women 18-54	Women 55+
Retaining and attracting quality teachers and staff by increasing district salaries to be more competitive with neighboring districts. (Q10)	66%	71%	61%	67%	60%	66%	54%	72%	78%	67%
Increasing availability of student programming in career and technical education. (Q11)	65%	70%	60%	66%	61%	63%	58%	68%	64%	72%
Enhancing safety and security resources. (Q13)	60%	65%	58%	59%	55%	56%	55%	65%	64%	66%
Updating and repairing school buildings to continue providing safe, efficient, quality learning environments for students and staff. (Q12)	56%	58%	52%	59%	45%	51%	38%	67%	68%	67%
Constructing new neighborhood elementary schools in new communities and creating additions to existing neighborhood middle schools will help reduce crowding. (Q14)	35%	38%	35%	32%	33%	35%	31%	36%	35%	37%



# FUNDING AREAS: *KEY SUBGROUPS (2)*

		Party Registration			Education		Children under 18	
% Extremely/very important	All voters	REPs	DEMs	INDs	Some college or less	College degree or more	Yes	No
Retaining and attracting quality teachers and staff by increasing district salaries to be more competitive with neighboring districts. (Q10)	66%	54%	86%	68%	60%	69%	70%	66%
Increasing availability of student programming in career and technical education. (Q11)	65%	63%	71%	63%	79%	58%	57%	69%
Enhancing safety and security resources. (Q13)	60%	63%	61%	58%	71%	56%	62%	59%
Updating and repairing school buildings to continue providing safe, efficient, quality learning environments for students and staff. (Q12)	56%	52%	70%	54%	59%	55%	62%	54%
Constructing new neighborhood elementary schools in new communities and creating additions to existing neighborhood middle schools will help reduce crowding. (Q14)	35%	37%	37%	31%	35%	34%	35%	36%





# MESSAGE TESTING: SUPPORT MEASURES

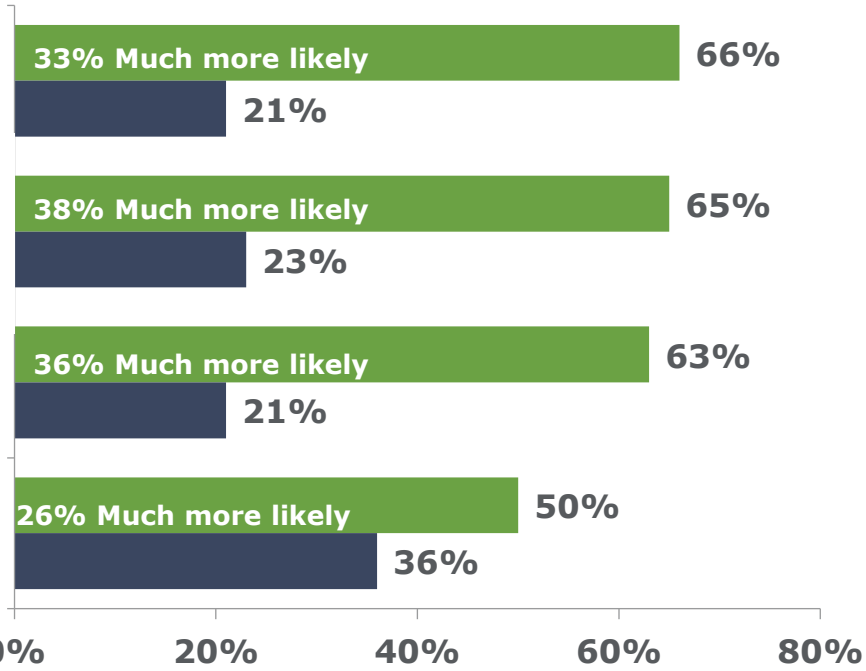


# SUPPORT MESSAGING IMPACT ON VOTE

“Here are some statements about these two ballot measures. After hearing each, please tell me if you are more likely or less likely to vote for new school district funding.”

■ More likely ■ Less likely

An investment in our students and schools is an investment in our community. Schools are an integral part of our neighborhoods, our economies, and our lives. A high-quality school system, which requires high-quality teachers and staff, attracts businesses and residents to our thriving community. And this helps keep our home values strong. (Q18)





# SUPPORT MESSAGES: *KEY SUBGROUPS*

	All voters	County Commission District			Gender / Age					
		Dist. 1	Dist. 2	Dist. 3	Men	Men 18-54	Men 55+	Women	Women 18-54	Women 55+
<b>% More likely</b>										
An investment in our students and schools is an investment in our community. Schools are an integral part of our neighborhoods, our economies, and our lives... (Q18)	66%	75%	60%	65%	60%	73%	46%	72%	76%	68%
Nearly ninety percent of students in Douglas County schools graduate – over 6 points higher than the statewide average and on par with neighboring districts Littleton and Cherry Creek. Yet, DCSD collects \$2,000 less per student in mill levy override dollars each year than both of those school districts... (Q16)	65%	70%	62%	64%	58%	66%	49%	72%	73%	71%
Douglas County School District is at risk of losing some of its best teachers to neighboring school districts because we cannot pay them as well as many other districts. DCSD starting teacher pay is \$43,680. (Q15)	63%	69%	55%	65%	60%	65%	54%	65%	73%	59%
Passing a mill levy override and bond measure is an investment in top teaching talent and our school buildings... (Q17)	50%	54%	43%	56%	45%	54%	35%	55%	67%	46%



# SUPPORT MESSAGES: *KEY SUBGROUPS (2)*

% Support	All voters	Party Registration			Education		Children under 18	
		REPs	DEMs	INDs	Some college or less	College degree or more	Yes	No
An investment in our students and schools is an investment in our community. Schools are an integral part of our neighborhoods, our economies, and our lives...(Q18)	66%	56%	83%	68%	64%	67%	74%	63%
Nearly ninety percent of students in Douglas County schools graduate – over 6 points higher than the statewide average and on par with neighboring districts Littleton and Cherry Creek. Yet, DCSD collects \$2,000 less per student in mill levy override dollars each year than both of those school districts...(Q16)	65%	58%	78%	65%	60%	67%	66%	66%
Douglas County School District is at risk of losing some of its best teachers to neighboring school districts because we cannot pay them as well as many other districts. DCSD starting teacher pay is \$43,680. (Q15)	63%	53%	77%	65%	54%	66%	62%	65%
Passing a mill levy override and bond measure is an investment in top teaching talent and our school buildings... (Q17)	50%	43%	64%	51%	51%	51%	58%	47%



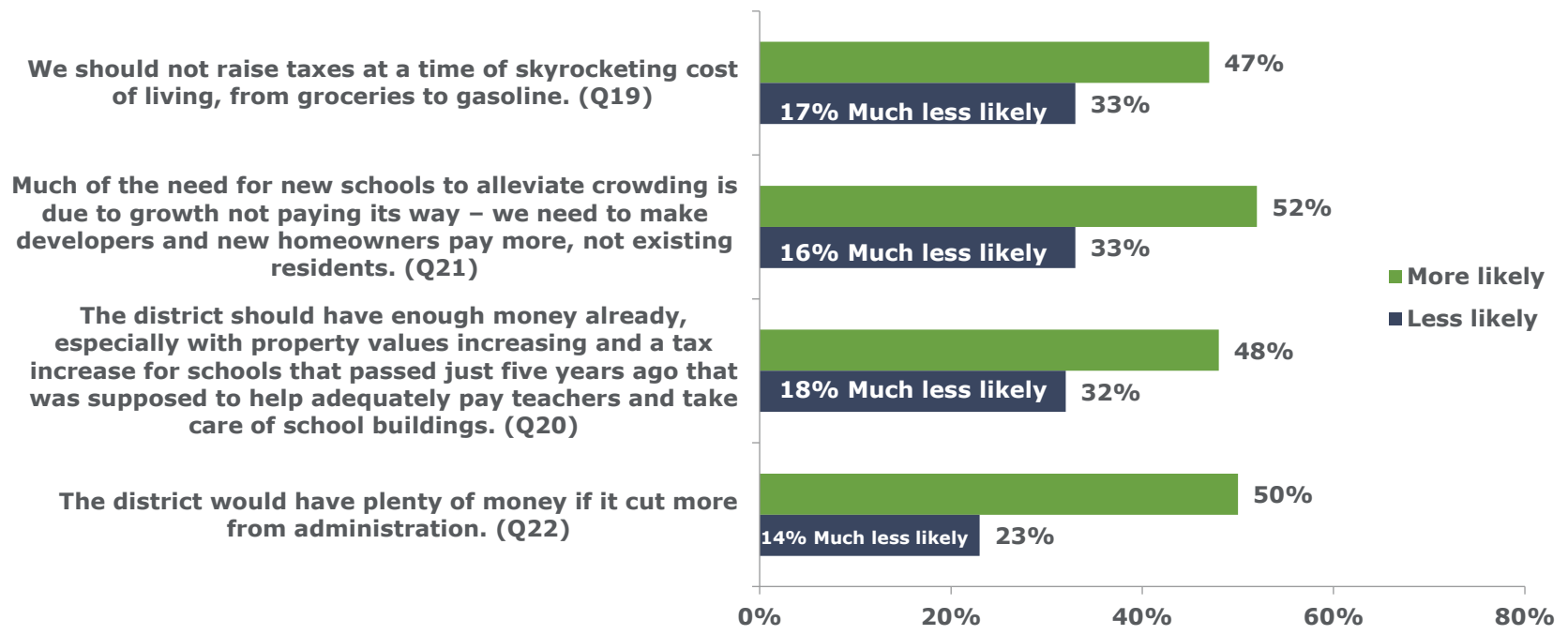


# MESSAGE TESTING: OPPOSE MEASURES



# OPPOSITION MESSAGES IMPACT ON VOTE

“Here are some statements about these two ballot measures. After hearing each, please tell me if you are more likely or less likely to vote for a new school district bond.”



**The fact that opposition messages are generating a positive reaction indicates some respondents may have misunderstood the prompt.**



# OPPOSITION MESSAGES: LET'S LOOK AT "SWITCH TO NO" VOTERS

**To further explore the effectiveness of the opposition messages, we have looked at voters who did not vote "No" on one of the initial ballots but moved to "No" after being exposed to the Opposition messaging.**

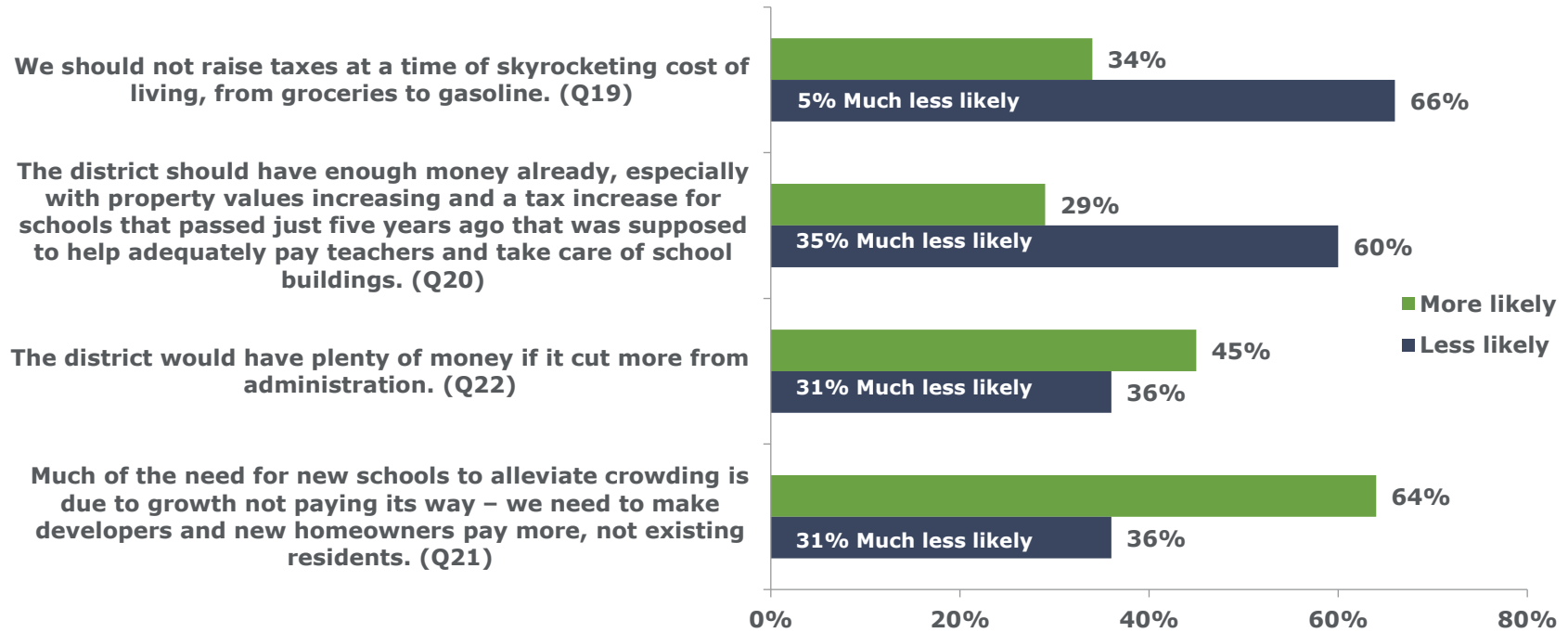
**This movement represents 3% (N=12) of voters who changed their vote to "No" on 5A and 4% (N=15) who changed their vote on 5B.**



# OPPOSITION MESSAGES IMPACT ON VOTE AMONG THOSE WHO SWITCHED TO “NO” ON 5A (\$60MM TAX INCREASE)

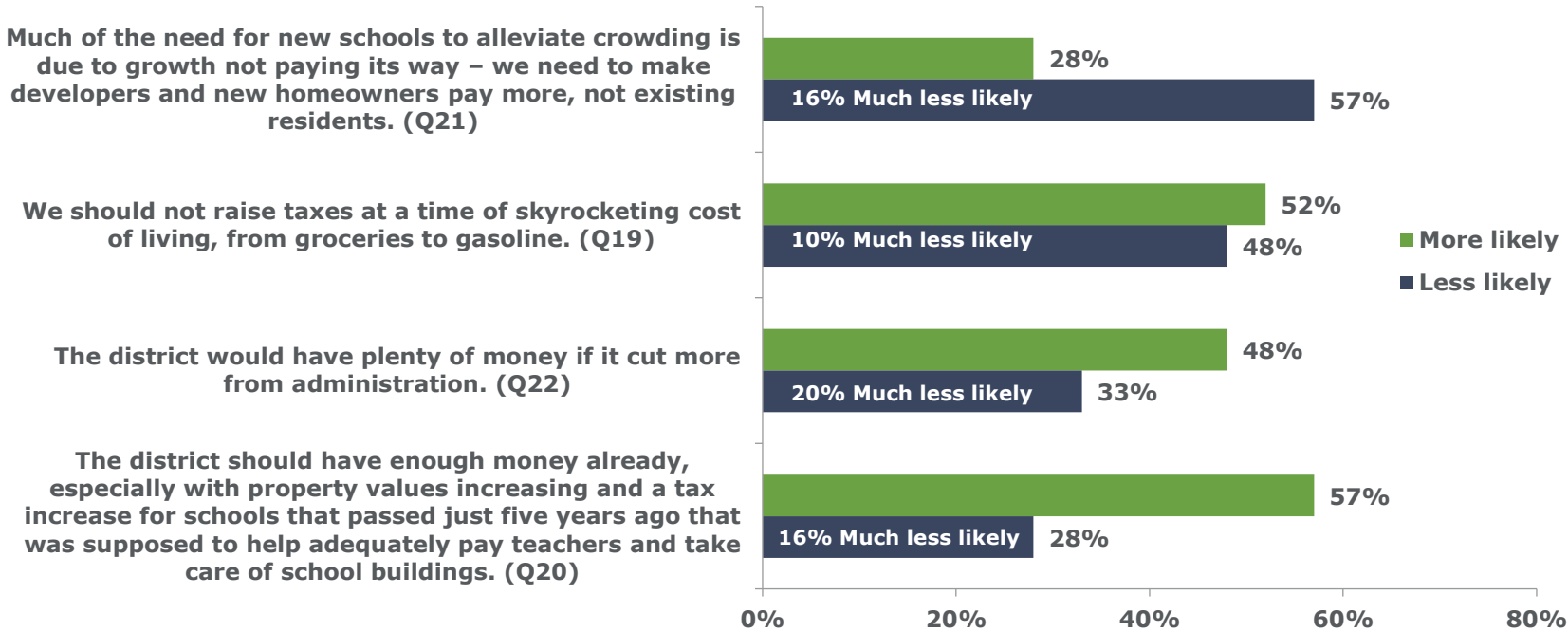
N=12 voters switch to “no” after hearing opposition messages.

*\*In general, cell sizes under N=50 should be used cautiously; in this case, we’ve elected to show these results in efforts to aid the understanding of the opposition message series’ impact.*



# OPPOSITION MESSAGES IMPACT ON VOTE AMONG THOSE WHO SWITCHED TO "NO" ON 5B (\$450 MM BOND)

N=15 voters switch to "no" after hearing opposition messages. \*Note cell size under N=50





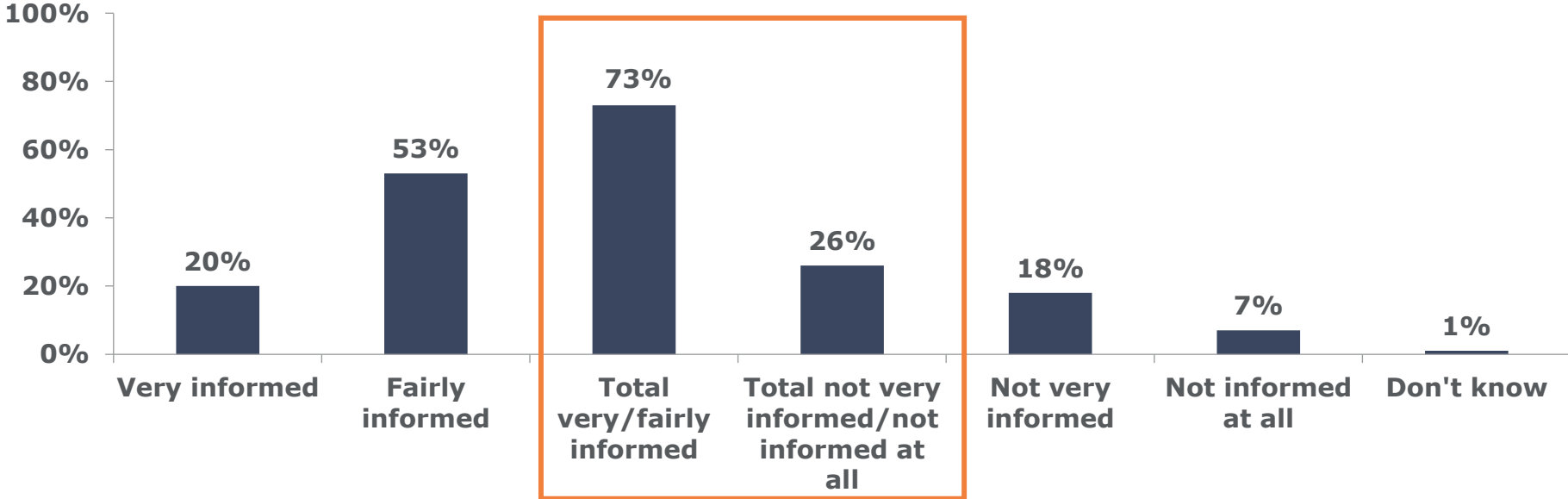
# KNOWLEDGE LEVEL OF LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDING





# KNOWLEDGE OF FUNDING: MAJORITY SAY THEY ARE INFORMED

“Moving on, how would you rate your knowledge regarding how local school funding in Douglas County works? Would you say you are...,” (Q23)



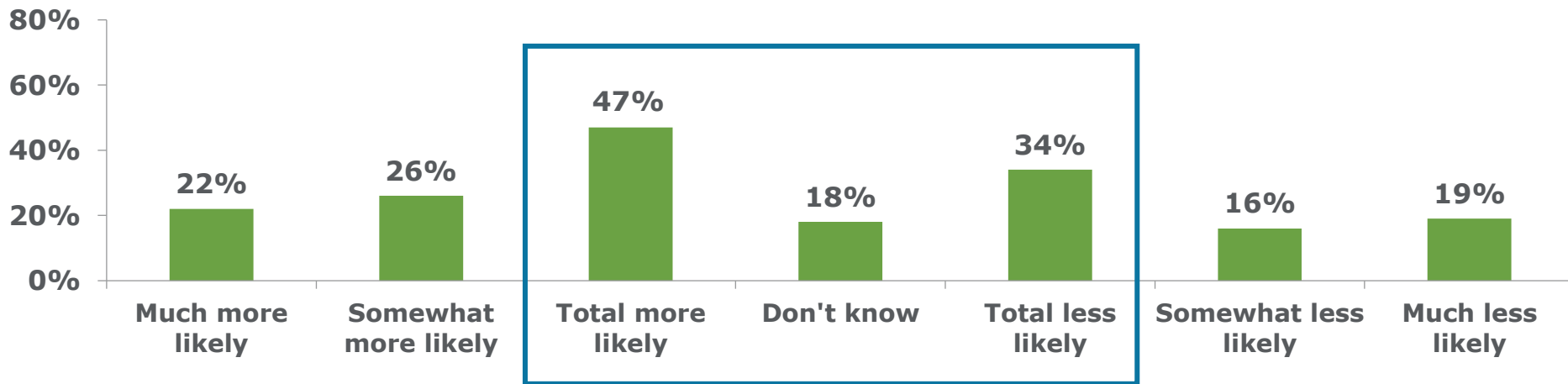
Independents, those with kids 18 and under, and County Commission District 2 voters are more likely to consider themselves informed on how local school funding works.



# POSITIVE IMPACT OF SCHOOL FUNDING 101 ON VOTE

"As you may know, the legislature sets total funding for each school district across Colorado. Think of our funding as a bucket. The state sets the size of the bucket and the bucket is first filled with local funding, and then the state backfills the rest. The local share - or mills - is generated by property tax dollars in Douglas County. The state's share comes from income tax and sales tax revenues. Economic growth and rising property taxes does not provide our schools with more money - if the local share is higher, the state share is less. Voters in growing communities can approve additional funding but only through mill levy overrides and/or bonds.

Knowing this, are you more or less likely to support the two public school funding measures being considered in Douglas County?" (Q24)



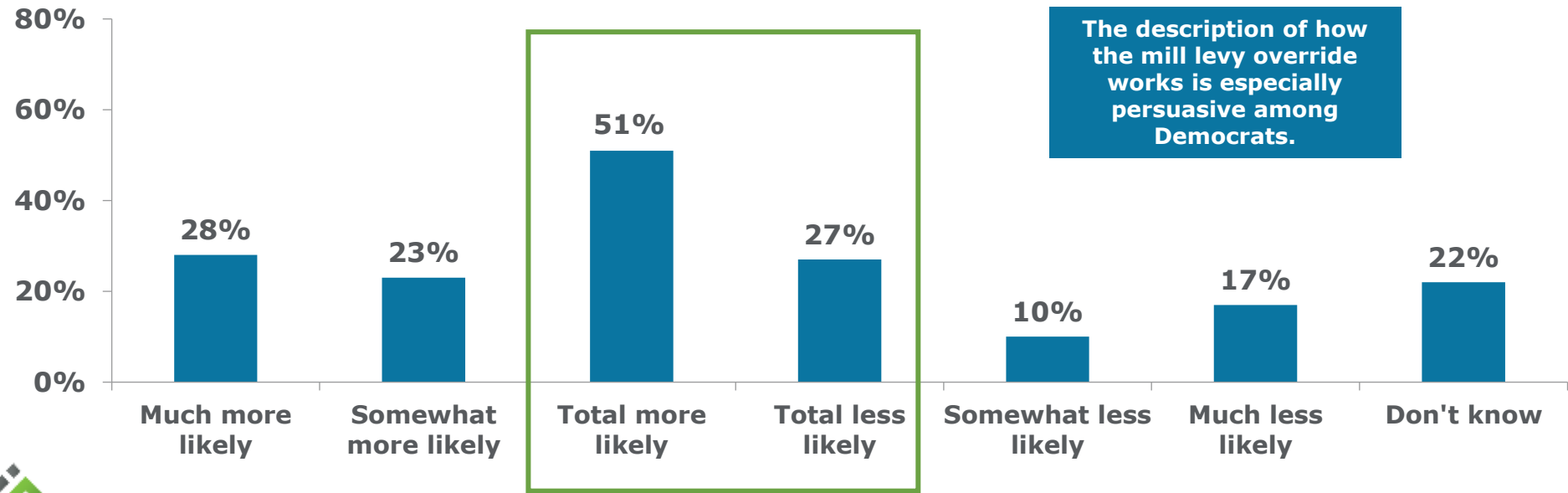
The description of how the Legislature sets funding for school districts is especially persuasive for Women ages 18-54 year.



# VOTE IMPACT OF MILL LEVY OVERRIDE EXPLANATION

“As you may know, Douglas County School District’s current mill levy override is \$1,000 to \$2,000 per student less than our neighboring districts. DCSD has 63,000 students, which creates a \$63 to 126 million gap dollar between DCSD and neighboring districts and is the reason DCSD cannot pay competitively.

Knowing this, are you more or less likely to support the two public school funding measures being considered in Douglas County?” (Q25)





# INITIAL VS. INFORMED SUPPORT



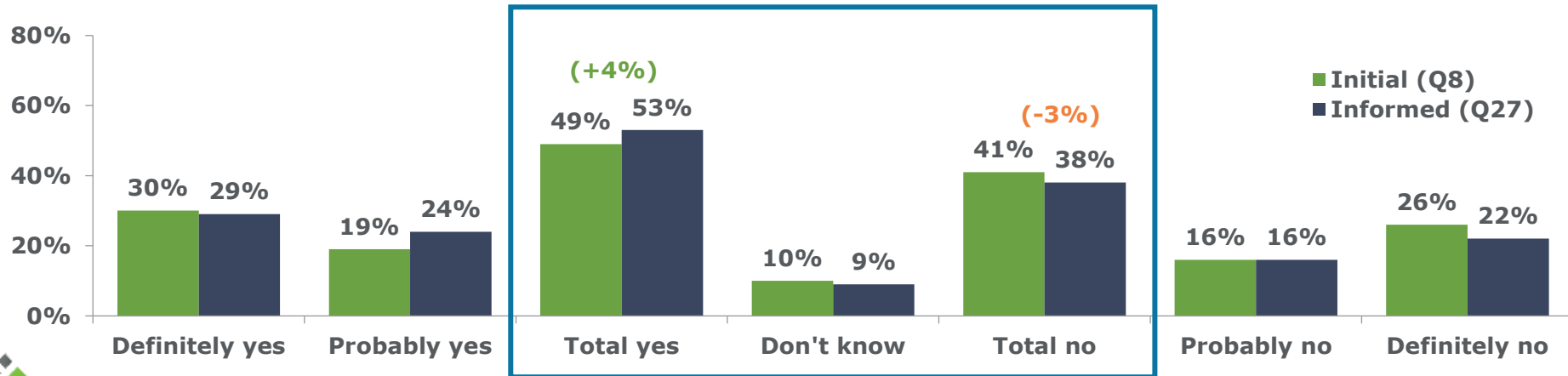
# INITIAL VS. INFORMED BALLOT: \$60MM FUNDING INCREASE

"As you may know, in the upcoming November 2023 local election Douglas County School District voters will likely be asked to vote on a couple of measures that would pass facility bonds, meaning borrowing money, and general levies, meaning additional taxes, to fund the needs at our public schools. I am going to read the language of some potential measures and ask you how you would vote on them. As you may know, some measure language can be long, please listen closely.

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Benefits to be more competitive with neighboring school districts

After hearing this, would you vote yes or no?" (Q27)



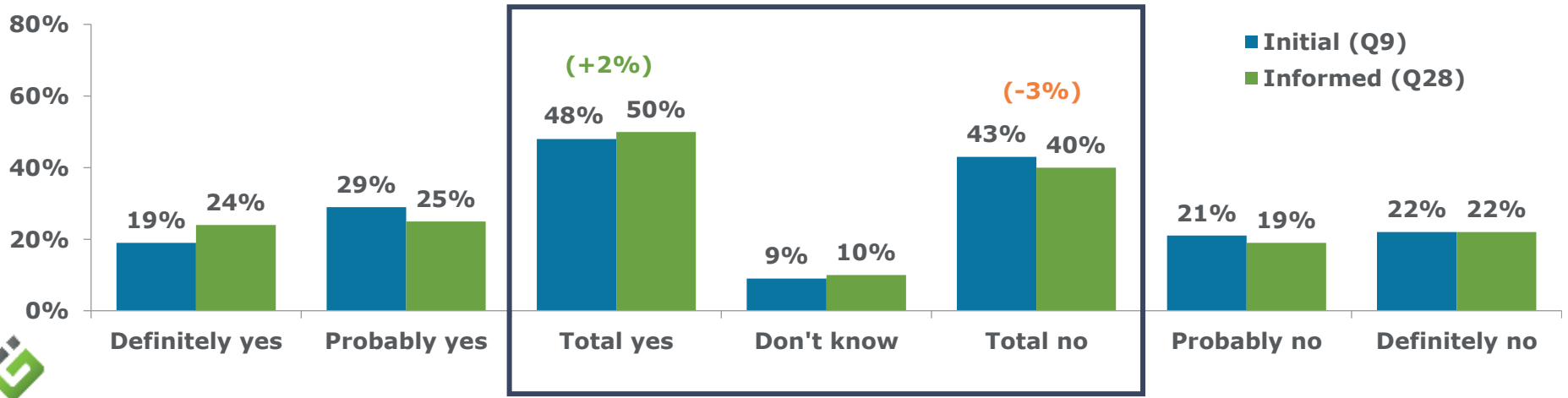
# INITIAL VS. INFORMED BALLOT: \$450MM *BOND ISSUE*

“As you may know, in the upcoming November 2023 local election Douglas County School District voters will likely be asked to vote on a couple of measures that would pass facility bonds, meaning borrowing money, and general levies, meaning additional taxes, to fund the needs at our public schools. I am going to read the language of some potential measures and ask you how you would vote on them. As you may know, some measure language can be long, please listen closely.

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- Implementing other capital improvements as described in the district’s bond priority plan

After hearing this, would you vote yes or no?” (Q28)





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