



Parcel Tax Feasibility Study for Davis Joint USD Telephone Survey of Likely November Voters

Presented to DJUSD Board of Education
April 25, 2016



Methodology

- ▶ Telephone survey of Likely November 2016 Voters in the Davis Joint Unified School District
- ▶ Survey conducted April 6-17, 2016
- ▶ 400 completed interviews; Margin of Error: ± 4.90 percentage points
- ▶ Where applicable, data tracked from:
 - EMC Research Telephone survey; June 18-21, 2008

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

Project Purpose

- ▶ The primary goal of this research was to identify the level of support for a proposed \$620 parcel tax on the November 2016 ballot.

Key Findings

- ▶ Davis voters are aware of the high quality of education provided by local Davis schools.
- ▶ Support for a \$620 parcel tax measure to maintain current programming exceeds the necessary two-thirds threshold, particularly among younger voters and those who are likely to vote this November.
- ▶ Well over a majority (64%) also appear to support a higher, \$750 parcel tax to maintain and improve current programs, but the total falls just short of the 2/3 threshold and the order of questions may have influenced opinions.
- ▶ Maintaining high quality academics, retaining teachers and supporting struggling students are particularly important measure components.
- ▶ Messages about how the measure will prevent teacher layoffs and how all funds will stay in local schools are very compelling.

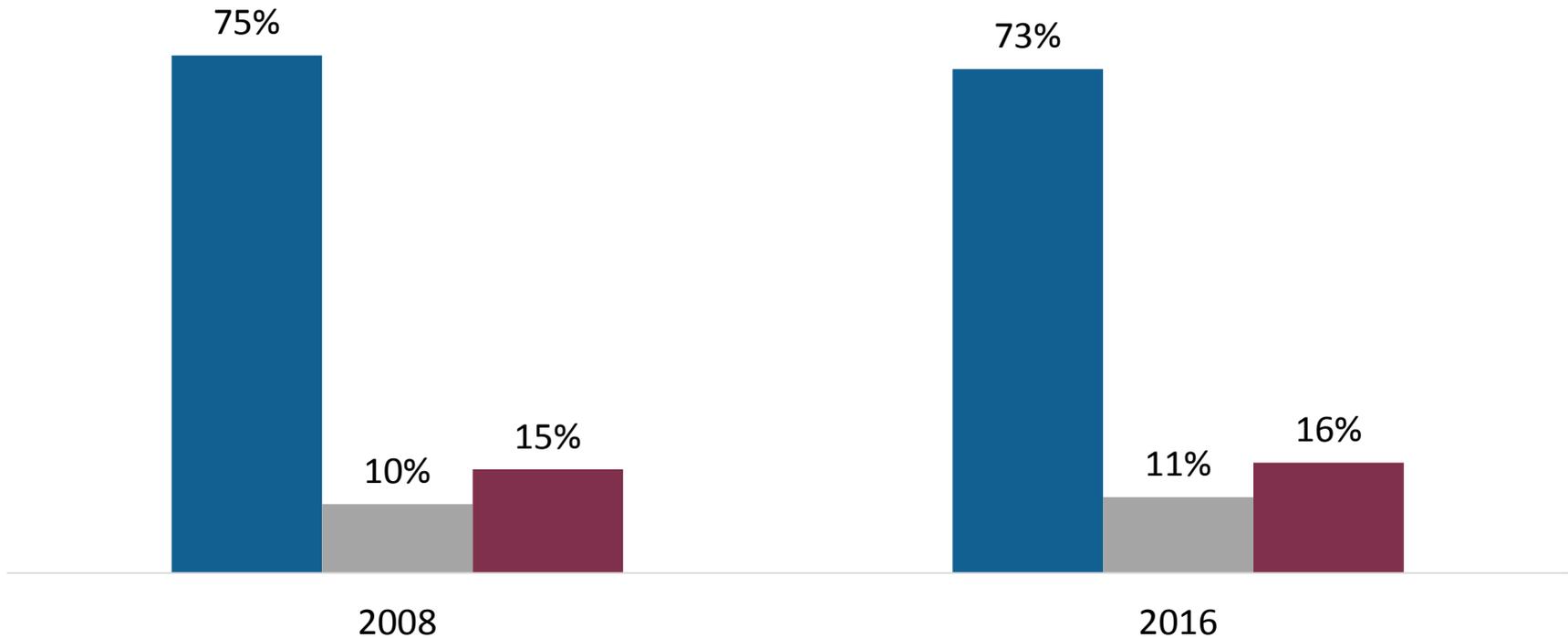


Issue Environment

Right Direction/Wrong Track: the Davis Area

The overall level of optimism remains high.

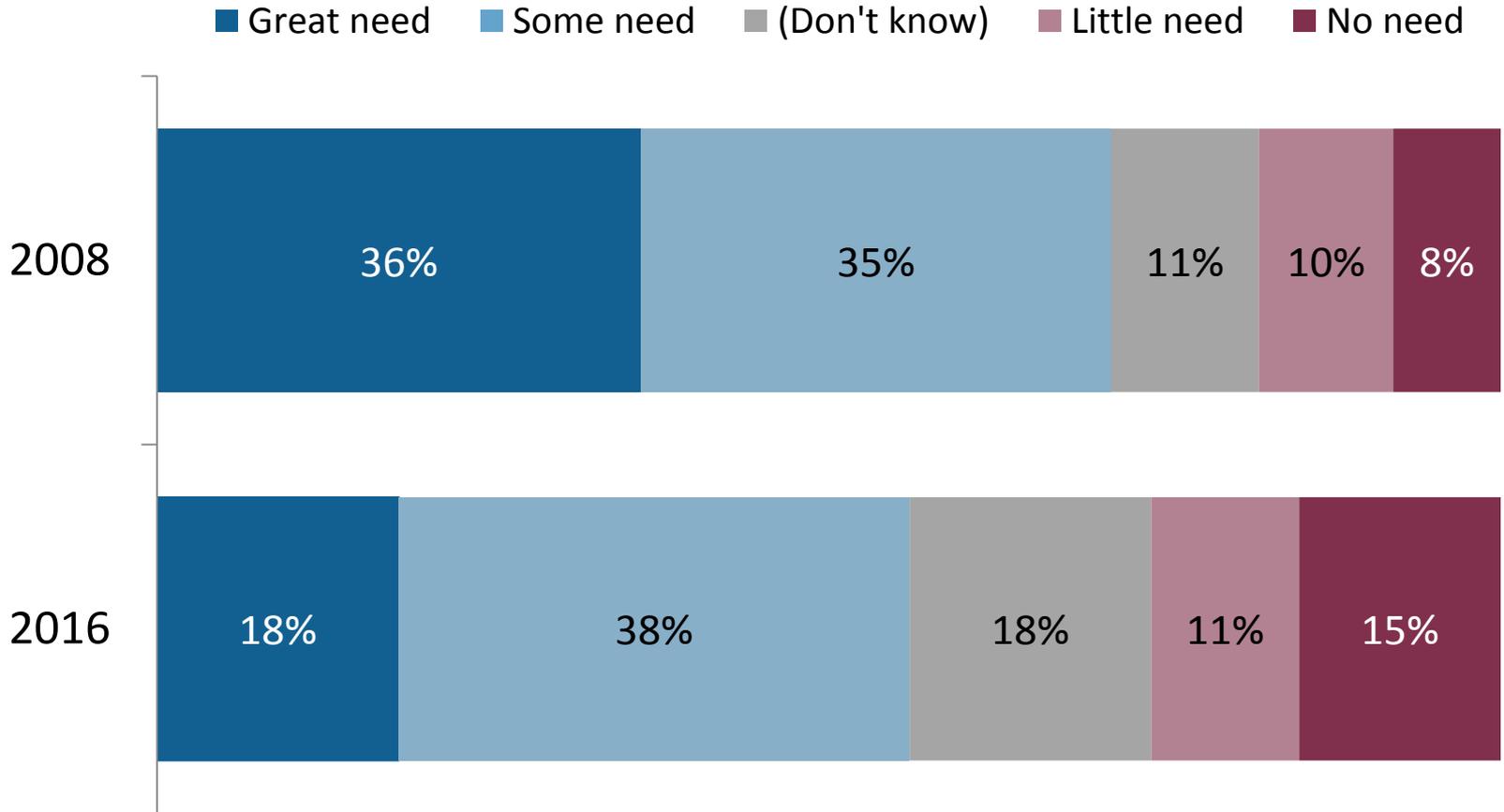
■ Right Direction ■ (Don't know) ■ Wrong Track



Q4. Do you think things here in Davis are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel that things are pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

Davis JUSD Need for Funding

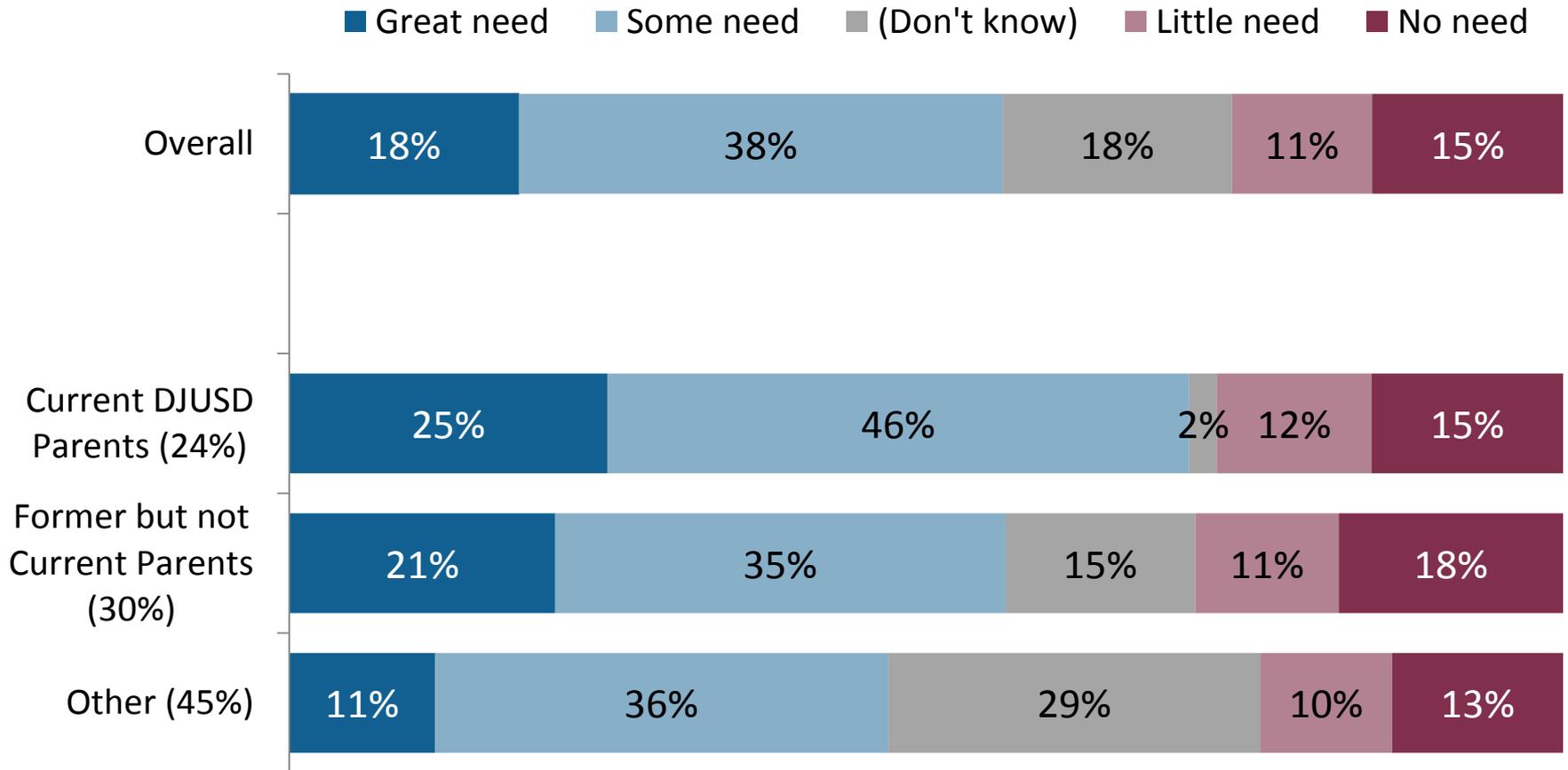
The perceived need for funding has declined since 2008.



Q5: Would you say that public schools in the Davis Joint Unified School District have a great need for more money, some need for more money, only a little need for money, or no real need for more money?

Davis JUSD Need for Funding among Parents

Current parents are more likely to perceive a need for funding than former parents and those who have never had a child in a Davis JUSD school.



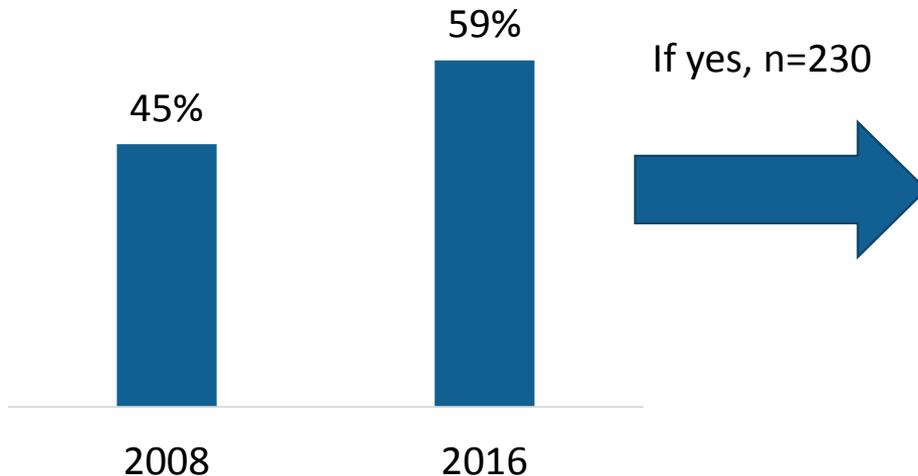
Q5: Would you say that public schools in the Davis Joint Unified School District have a great need for more money, some need for more money, only a little need for money, or no real need for more money?

Awareness of Existing Tax

Awareness of a parcel tax has gone up, though most don't know the current tax amount.

Is there, or is there not, a school parcel tax for Davis Joint Unified School District?

■ Yes, there is a parcel tax



Approximately how much do Davis homeowners pay each year for the school parcel taxes?

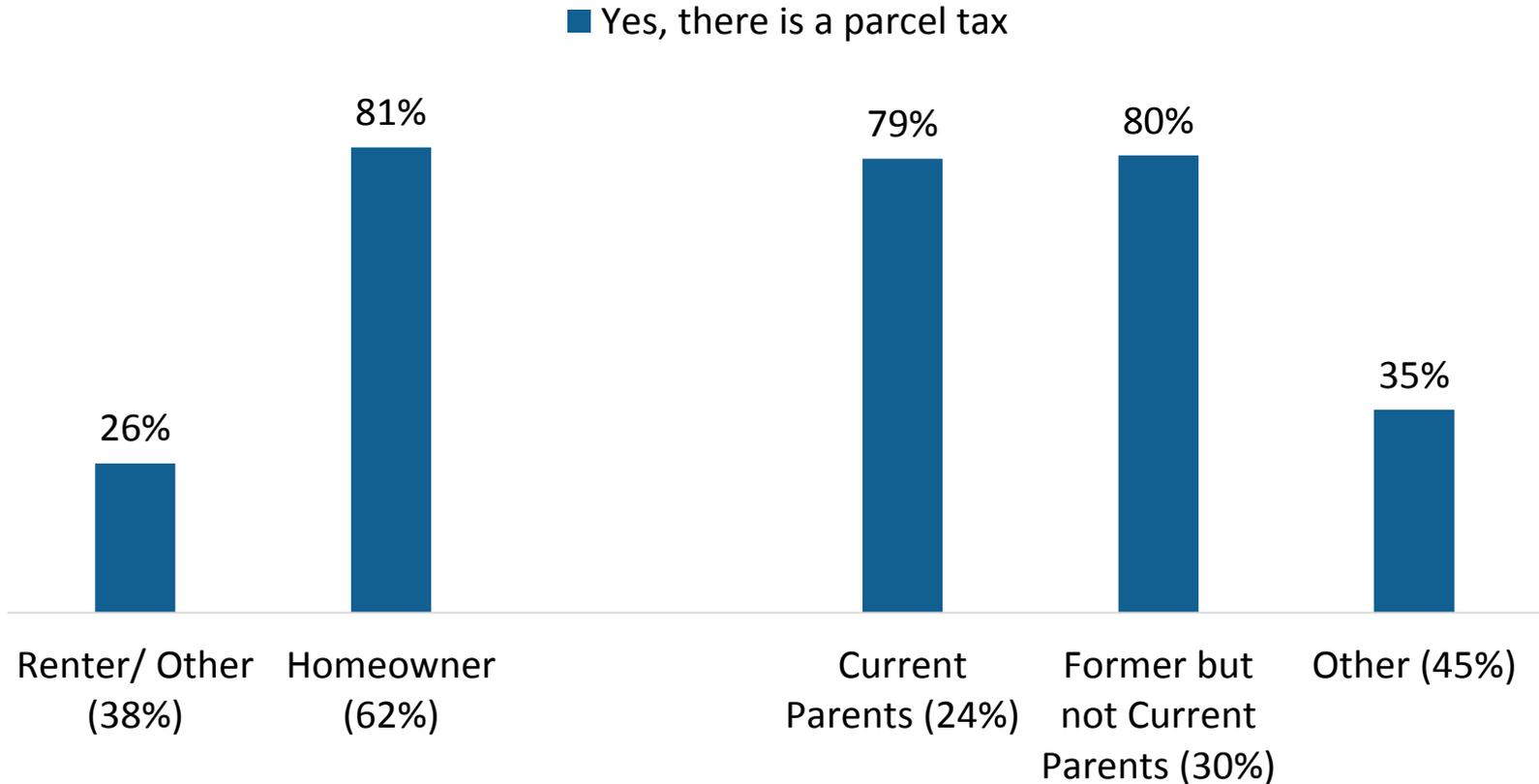
Amount	Percent
\$200 or less	12%
\$201-\$400	13%
\$401-\$700	11%
\$700+	10%
Don't know	54%

Q6: As you may know, some school districts have a parcel tax in place and others do not. Is there, or is there not, a school parcel tax for Davis Joint Unified School District?

Q7: I know you may not know exactly, but approximately how much do Davis homeowners pay each year for the school parcel taxes?

Awareness of Existing Tax by Subgroup

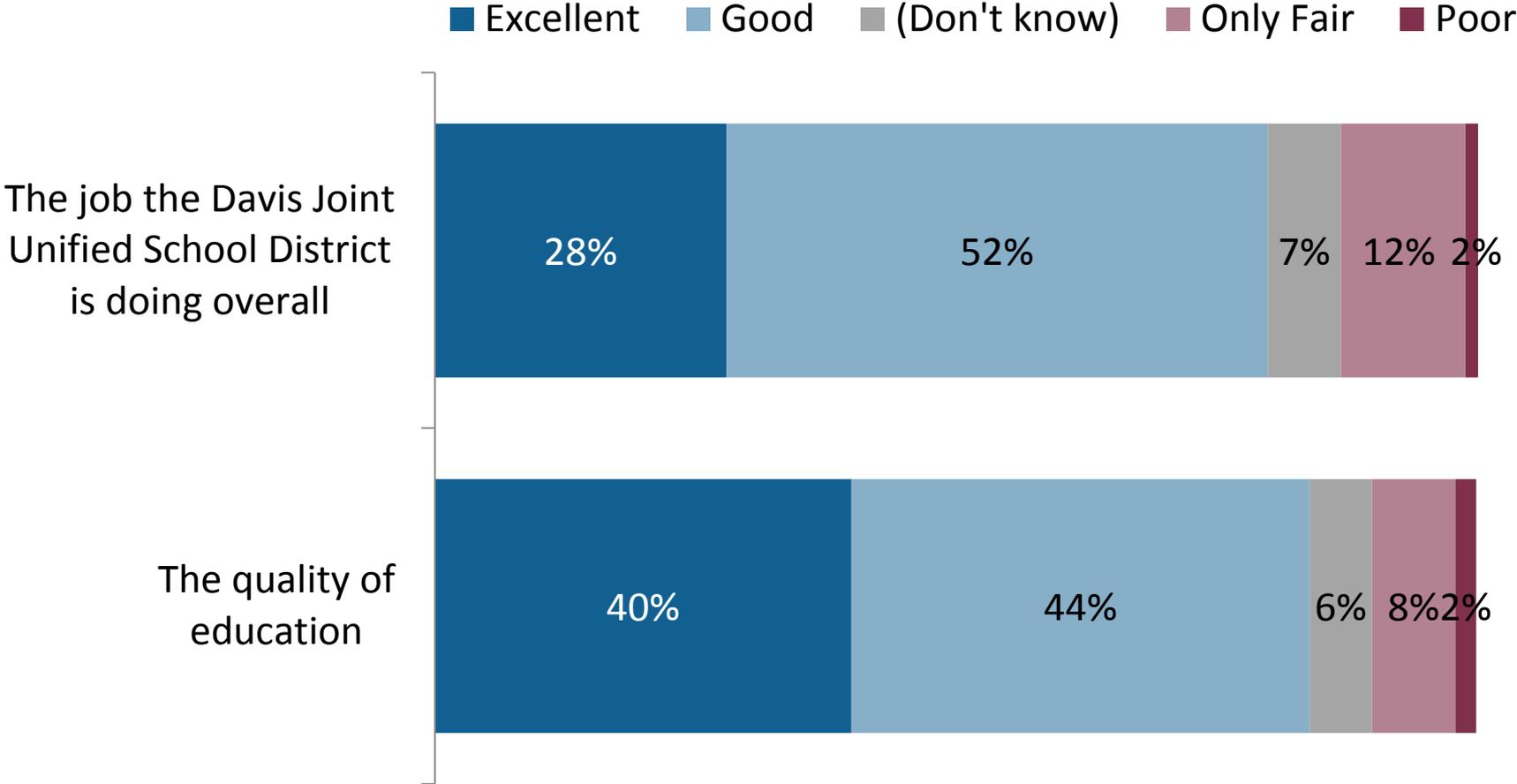
Awareness of a parcel tax is far higher among homeowners and current or former parents compared to renters and those who never had a child in a Davis school.



Q6: As you may know, some school districts have a parcel tax in place and others do not. Is there, or is there not, a school parcel tax for Davis Joint Unified School District?

Quality of Education Rating

Voters rate the District and the quality of education positively.

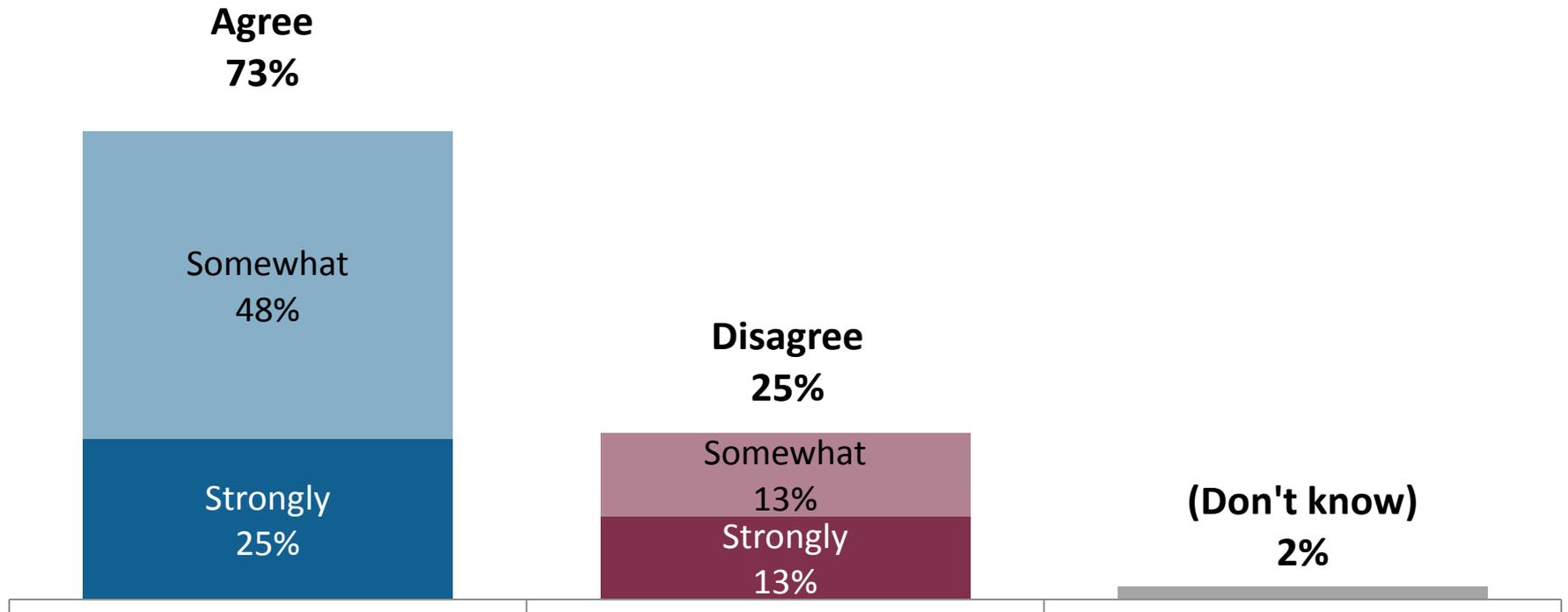


Q8-Q9: Regardless of whether or not you have children currently in school, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the following areas relating to the Davis Joint Unified School District

Trust in the Davis JUSD

Nearly three-quarters say they trust the district with their tax dollars.

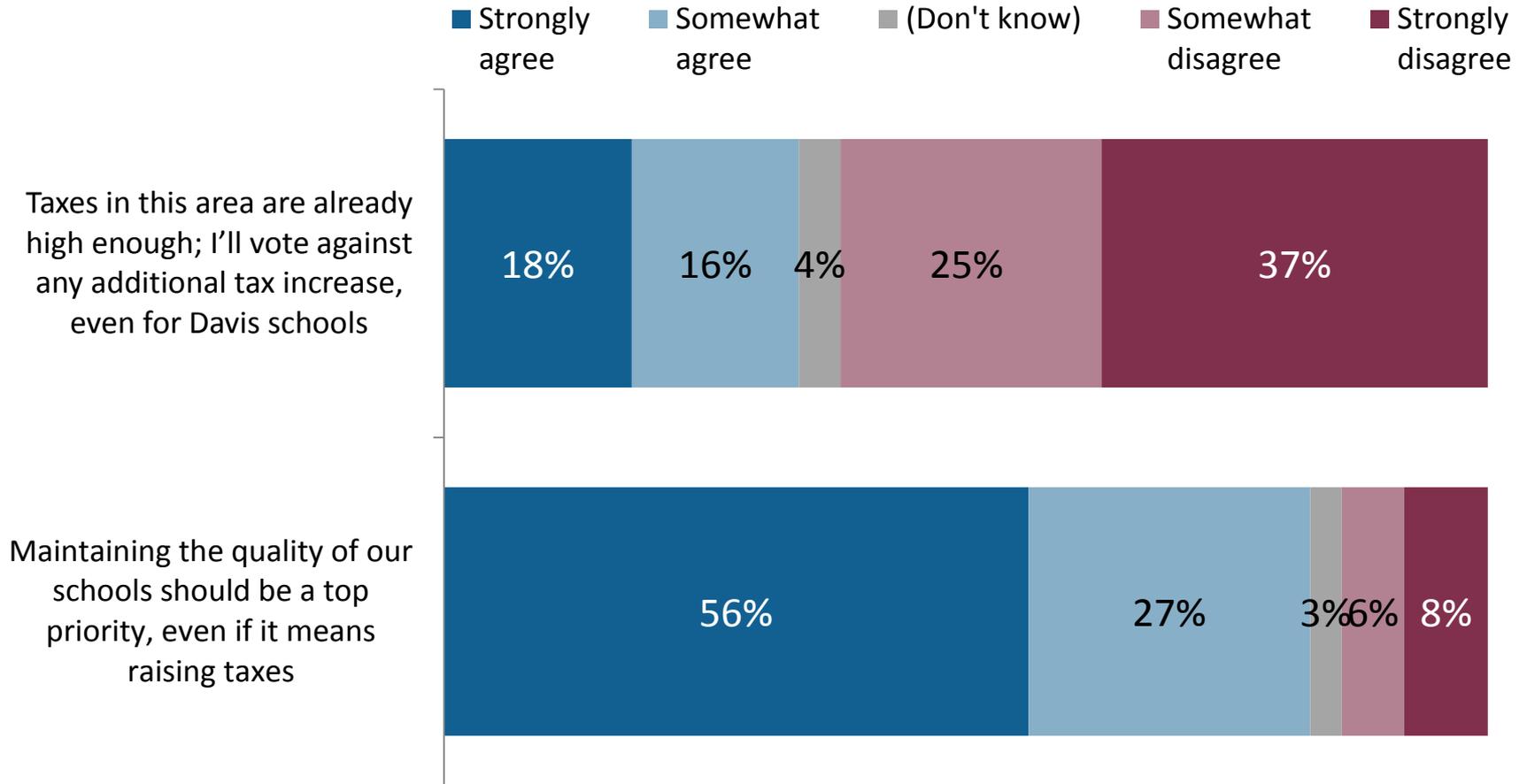
I trust the Davis Joint Unified School District to properly manage my tax dollars.



Q11-Q15: For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Tax Attitudes

The vast majority of voters prioritize maintaining quality schools, even if it means raising taxes.



Q11-Q15: For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

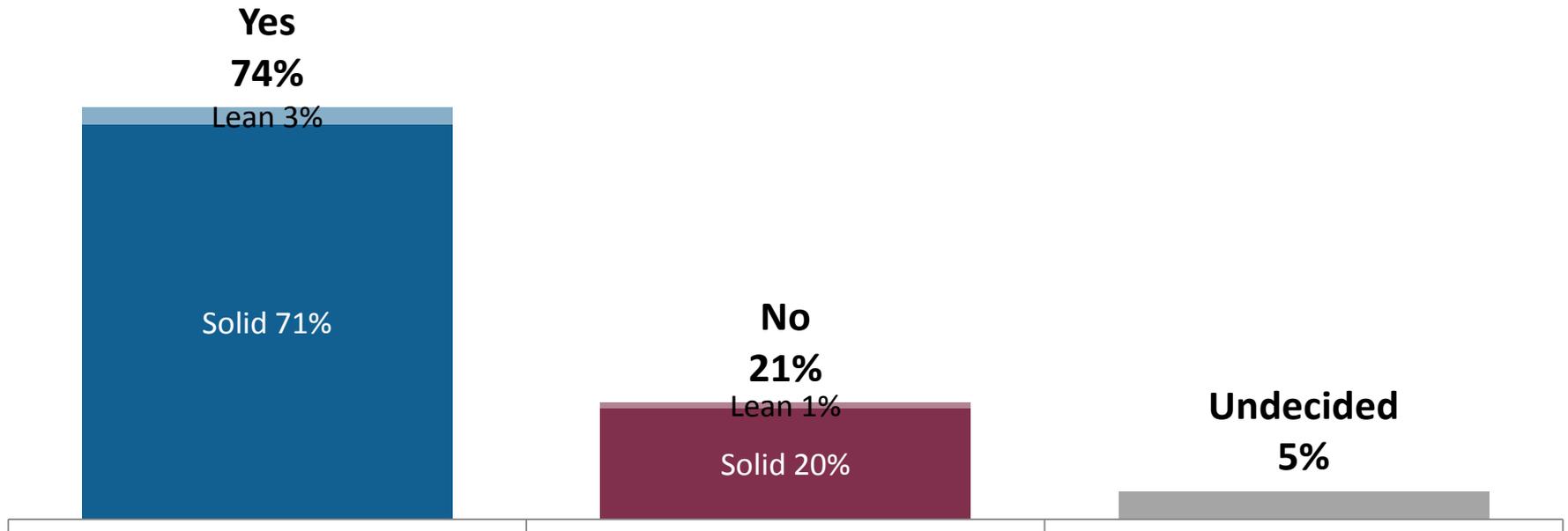


Parcel Tax Measure

Initial Parcel Tax Measure Vote

Initial support is above the two-thirds threshold needed to pass.

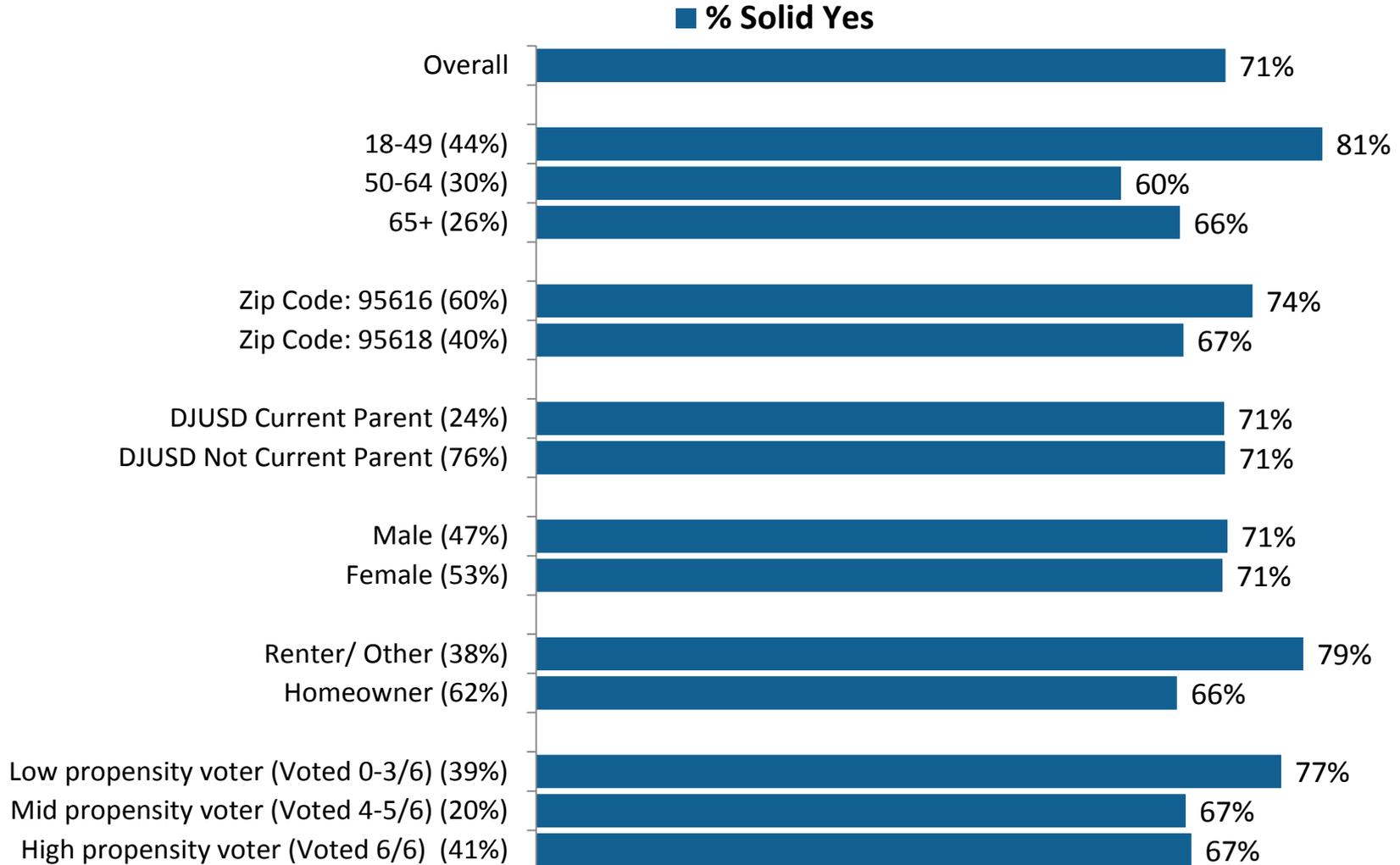
To maintain outstanding academic programs in math, science, reading and writing; retain high-quality teachers; keep class sizes small; support student health and safety; and maintain student athletics, arts and music programs, shall Davis Joint Unified School District replace its expiring school parcel taxes at the 2017-18 rate of \$620 per parcel for 8 years, raising approximately \$9.5 million per year to be used exclusively for Davis schools, with citizens' oversight, annual audits and an exemption available for seniors?



Q10. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve this measure or no to reject it?

Parcel Tax Measure Initial Support, by Subgroup

Support is highest among younger and lower propensity voters.



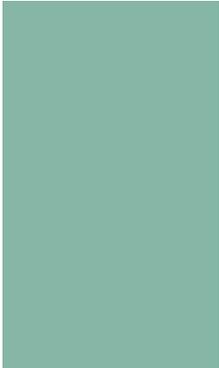
Q10. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve this measure or no to reject it?

Willingness to Support a Tax

Support for a \$620 parcel tax measure exceeds two-thirds, while support for a larger amount to improve programs is also high, but just under the threshold.

Total Agree: I would vote yes to approve a \$750 annual school parcel tax measure for DJUSD to **maintain and improve educational programs**

64%



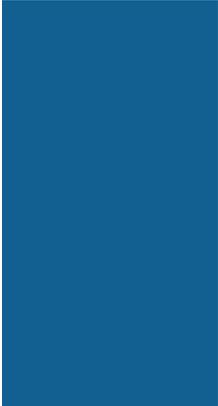
Total Agree: I would vote yes to approve a \$620 measure for DJUSD to **maintain current educational programs.**

71%



Solid Yes on Ballot Question \$620/ year parcel

71%



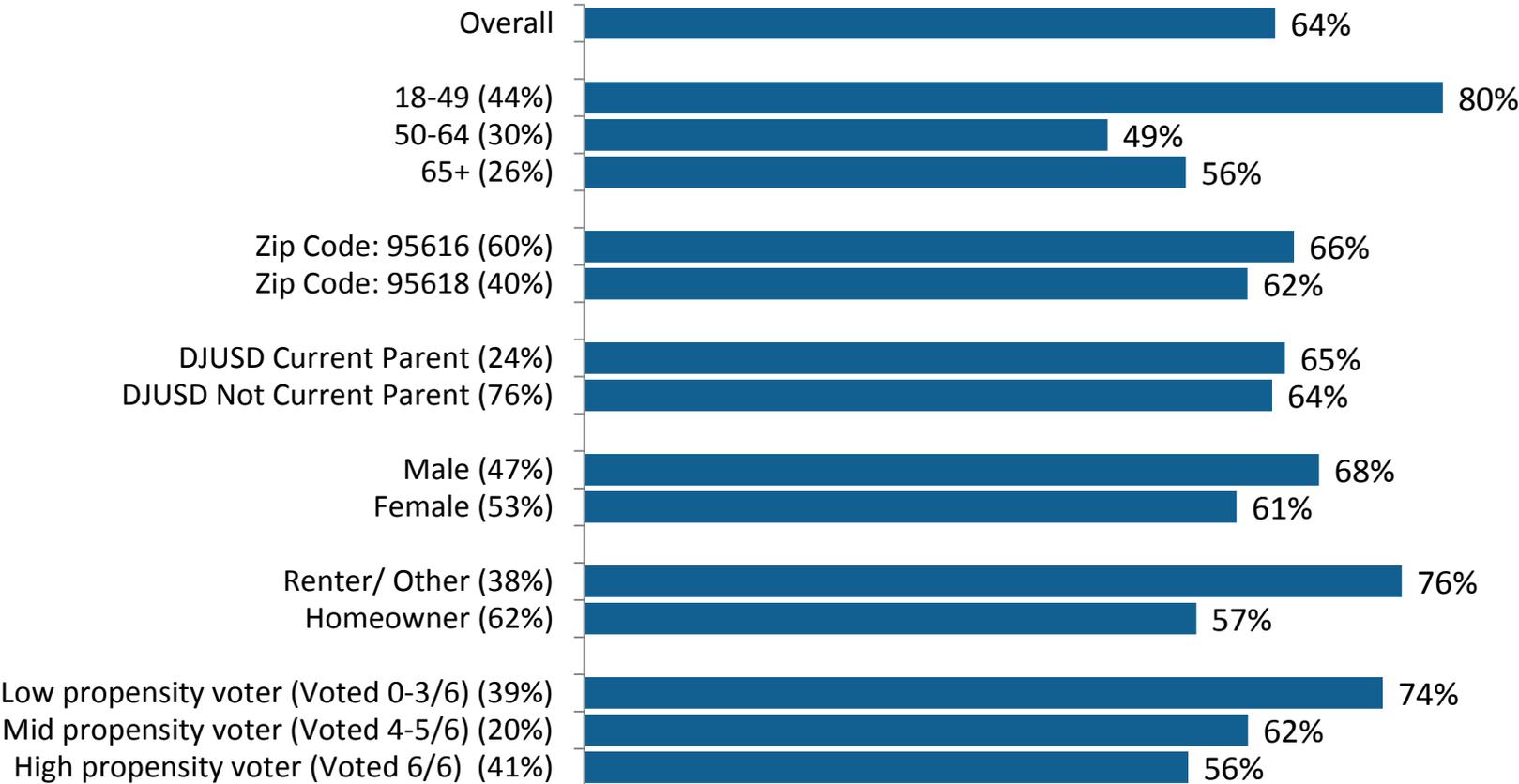
Q11-Q15: For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Willingness to Support a \$750 PT by Subgroup

Support for a \$750 parcel tax is high among younger voters, renters and low propensity voters but falls short of the two thirds mark among some key groups.

I would vote yes to approve a \$750 measure for DJUSD to maintain and improve educational programs.

■ Total Agree

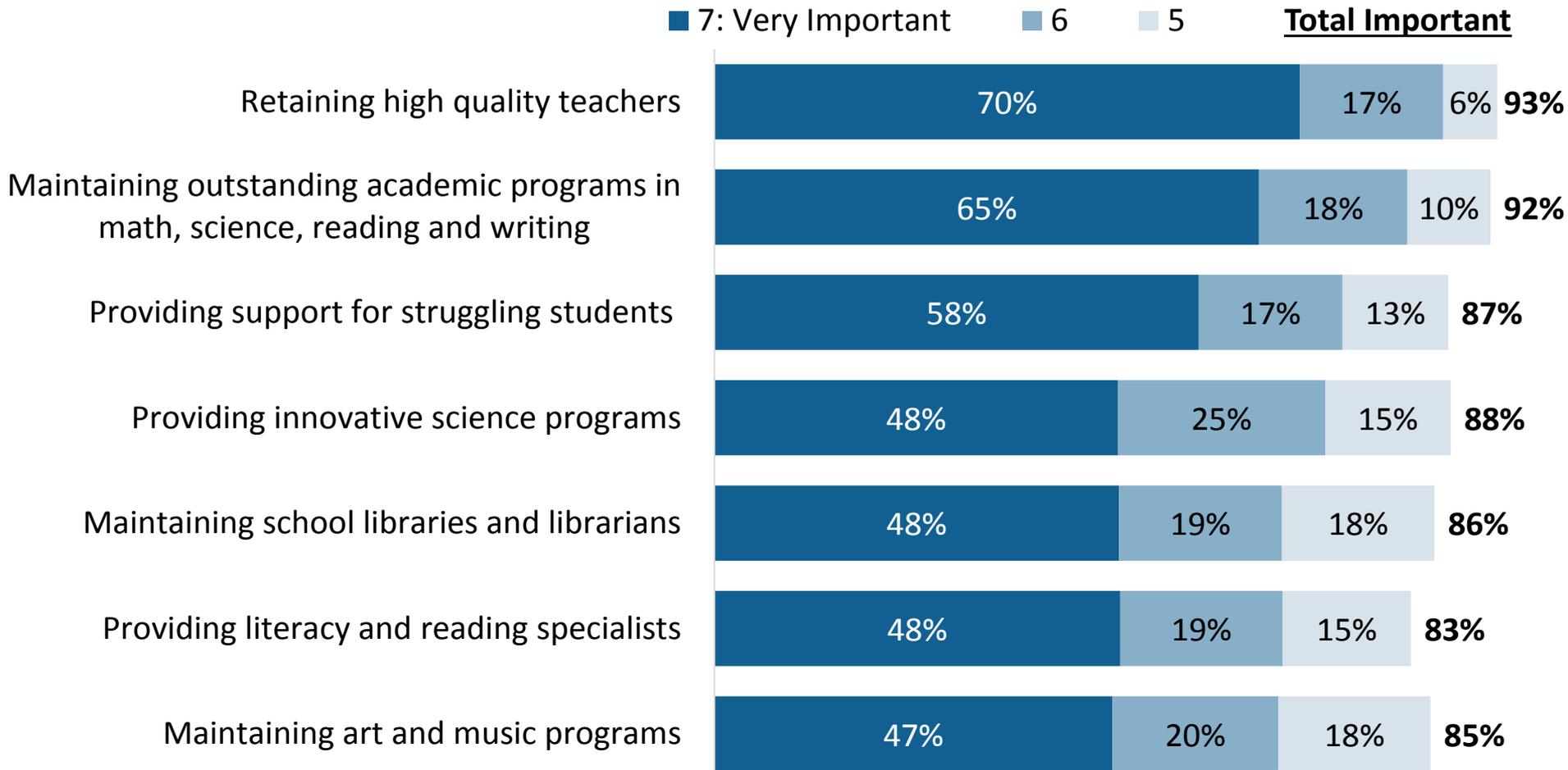


Q11-Q15: For each of the following statements please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the statement.



Parcel Tax Components: Academics and Programs

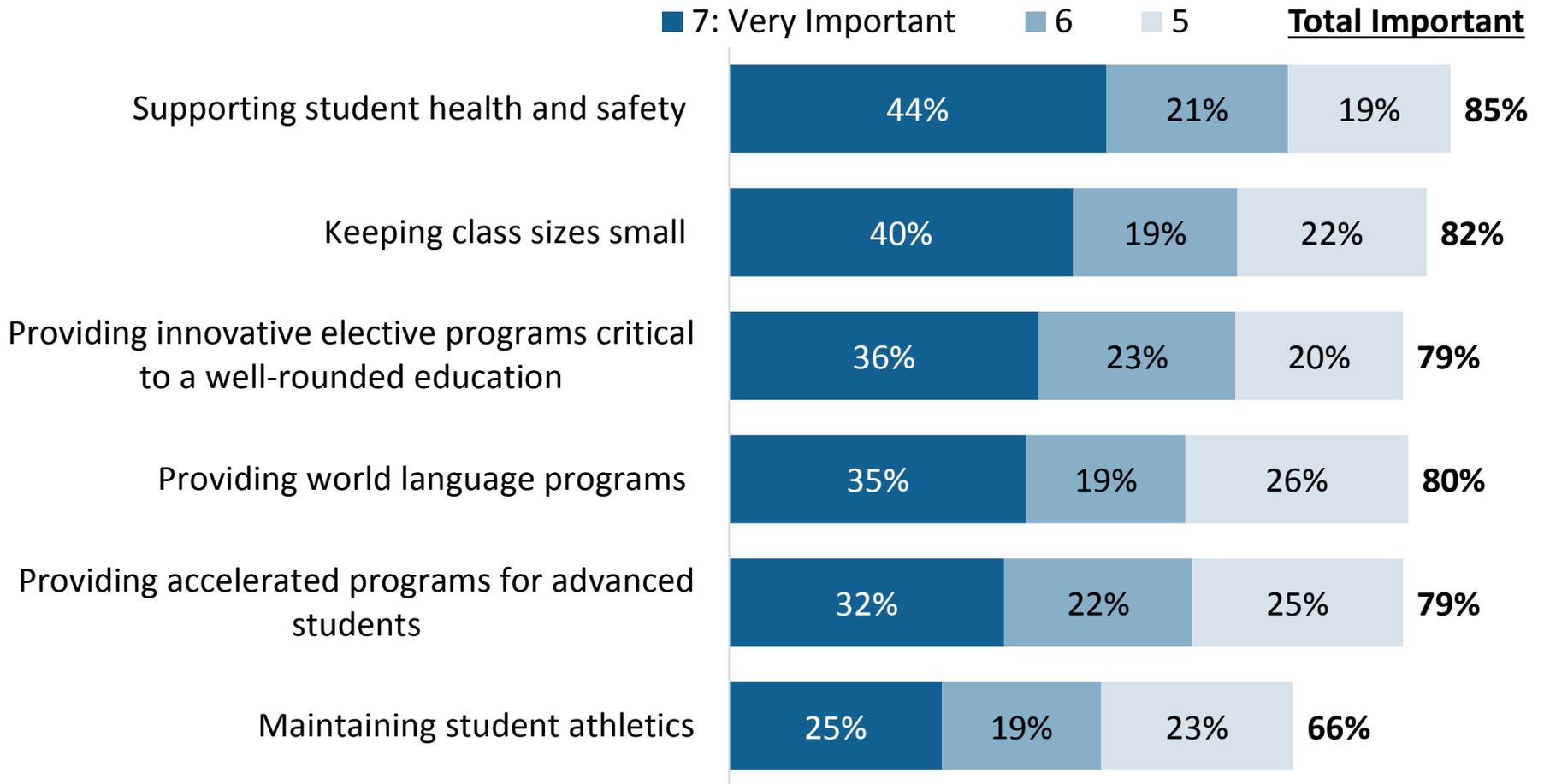
Retaining high quality teachers and maintaining outstanding programs are the highest valued components of a potential measure.



Q16-31: I'm going to read you a list of specific programs and components that could be part of the Davis Joint Unified School District parcel tax measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not important at all and seven is very important, please tell me how important each of the projects is to you.

Parcel Tax Components: Academics and Programs, cont.

Other components are also rated as important with less intensity.

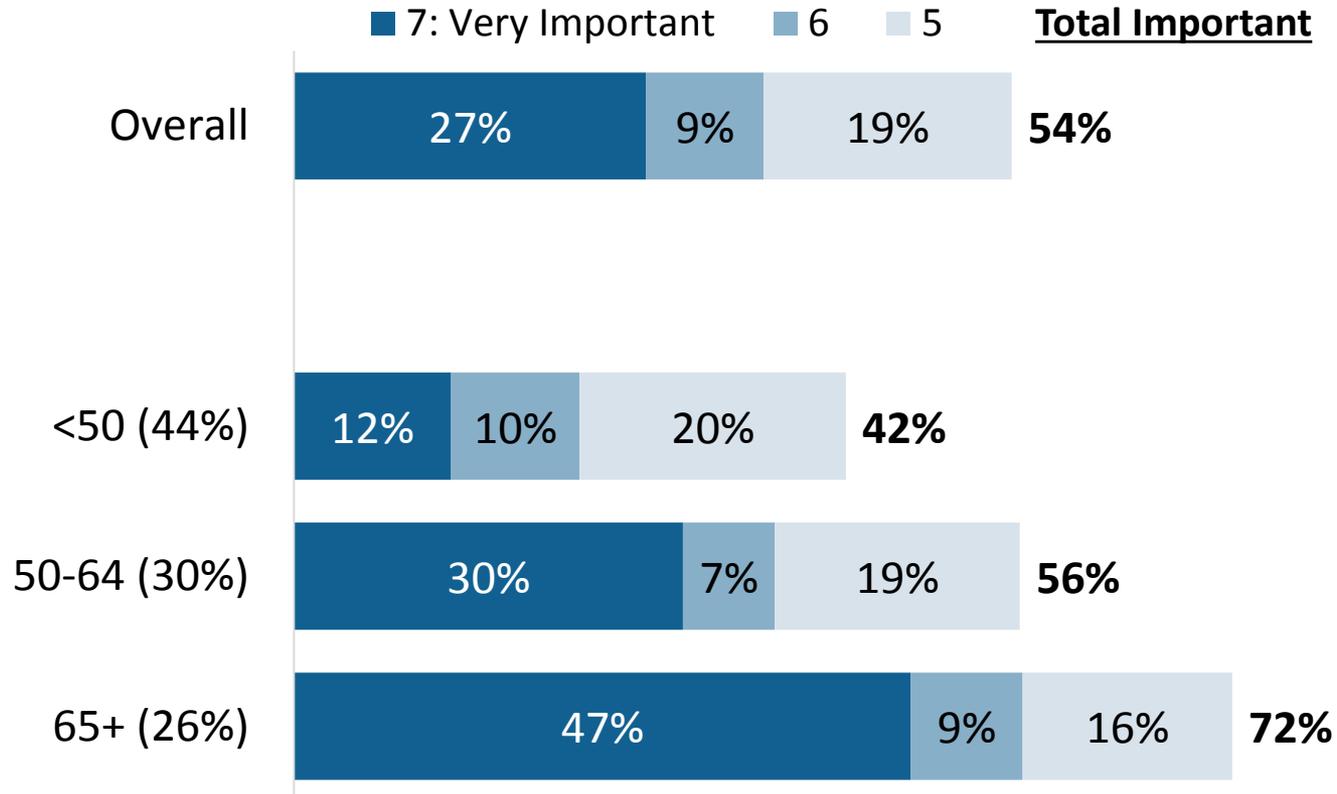


Q16-31: I'm going to read you a list of specific programs and components that could be part of the Davis Joint Unified School District parcel tax measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not important at all and seven is very important, please tell me how important each of the projects is to you.

Parcel Tax Components: Exemption for Seniors

An exemption for seniors is very important to about half of voters age 65 and older.

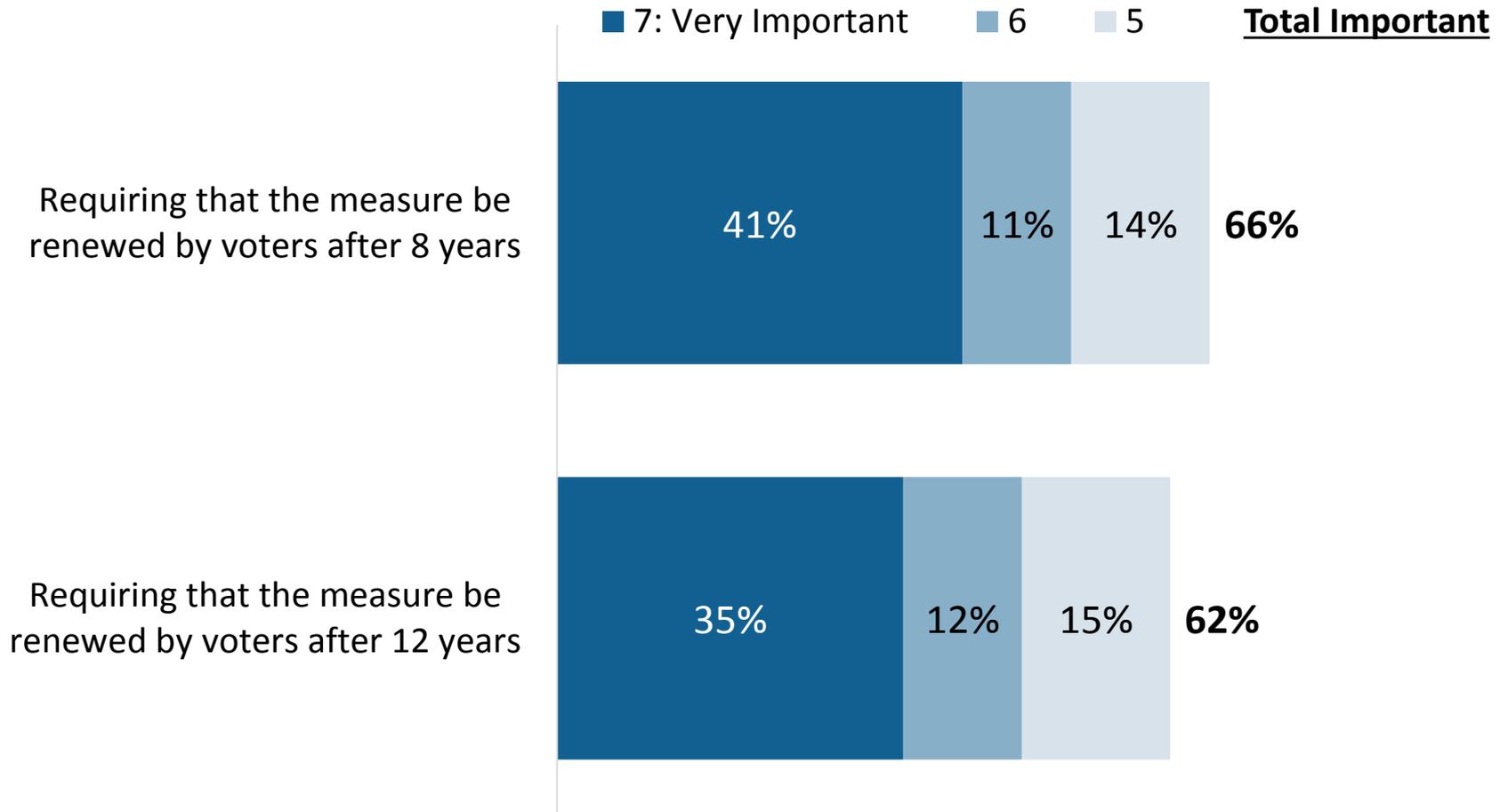
Making an exemption available for seniors



Q16-31: I'm going to read you a list of specific programs and components that could be part of the Davis Joint Unified School District parcel tax measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not important at all and seven is very important, please tell me how important each of the projects is to you.

Parcel Tax Components: Duration

Requiring that the measure include a sunset is important for many, and 8 years sounds better than 12 years overall.



Q16-31: I'm going to read you a list of specific programs and components that could be part of the Davis Joint Unified School District parcel tax measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not important at all and seven is very important, please tell me how important each of the projects is to you.

Top Measure Components – Among DJUSD Parents

Parents also rate retaining high quality teachers as the most important measure component.

Very Important Projects Among Davis Joint USD Parents

Retaining high quality teachers (73% Very Important)

Maintaining outstanding academic programs in math, science, reading and writing (61%)

Providing support for struggling students (60%)

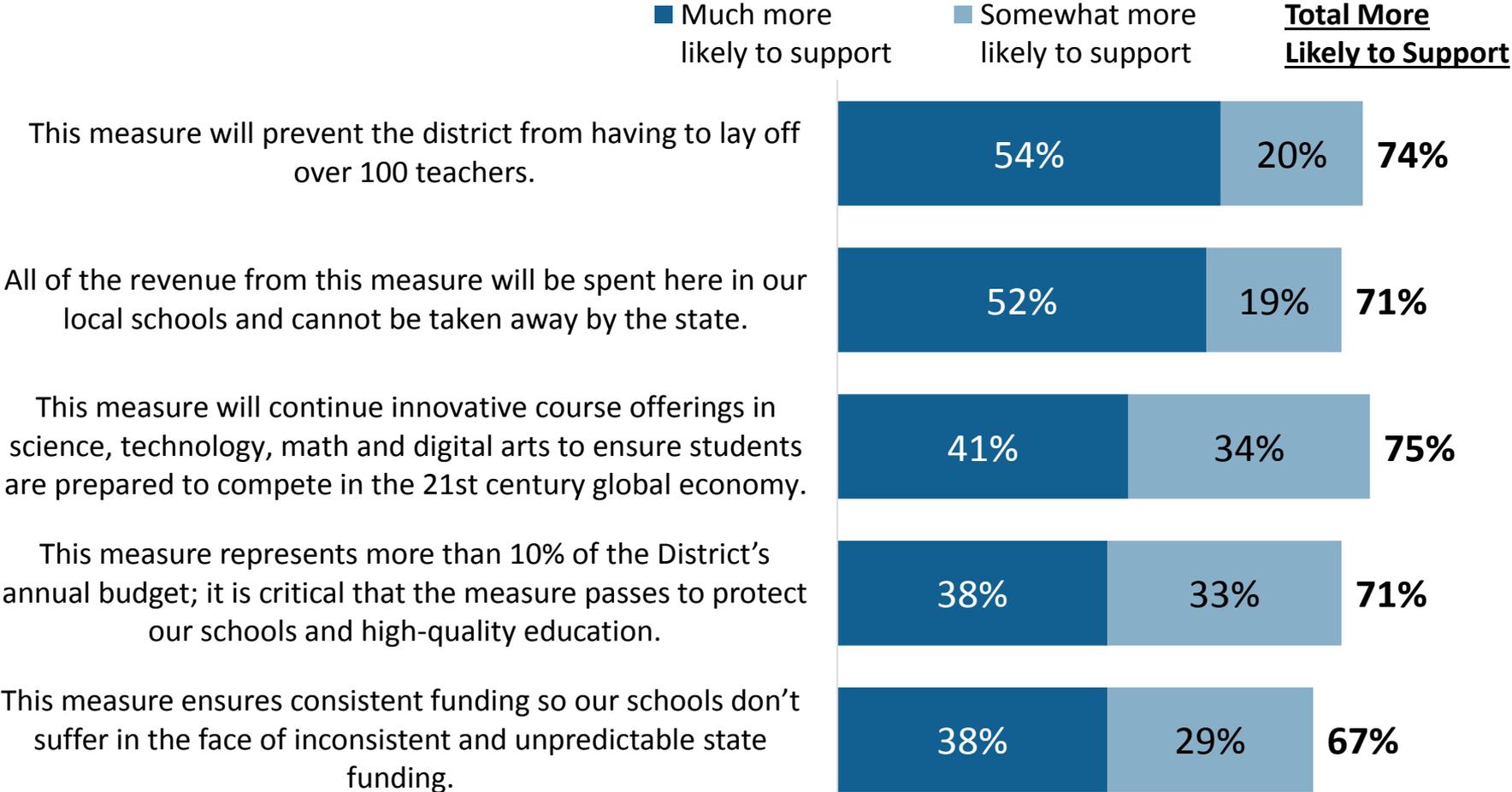
Maintaining art and music programs (51%)

Maintaining school libraries and librarians (51%)

Q16-31: I'm going to read you a list of specific programs and components that could be part of the Davis Joint Unified School District parcel tax measure. On a scale of one to seven, where one is not important at all and seven is very important, please tell me how important each of the projects is to you.

Additional Measure Information

Messaging regarding the prevention of teacher layoffs and guaranteeing revenue stays local are extremely compelling.

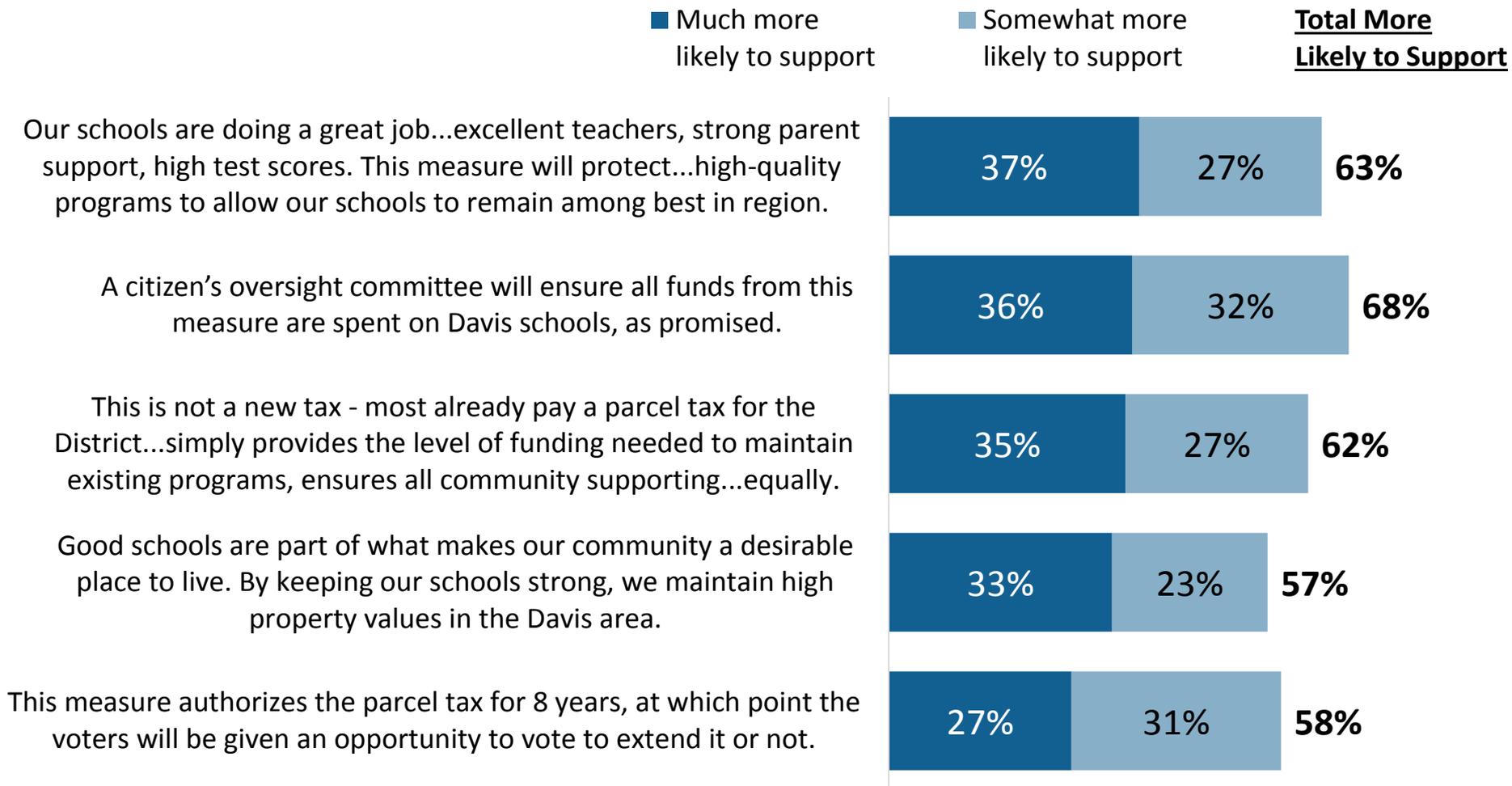


Q32-41. I'm going to read you some additional information about the proposed school parcel tax measure for Davis Joint Unified School District. After hearing each statement, please tell me if it makes you much more likely to support the measure, somewhat more likely to support it, or if it makes no difference to you.



Additional Measure Information, cont.

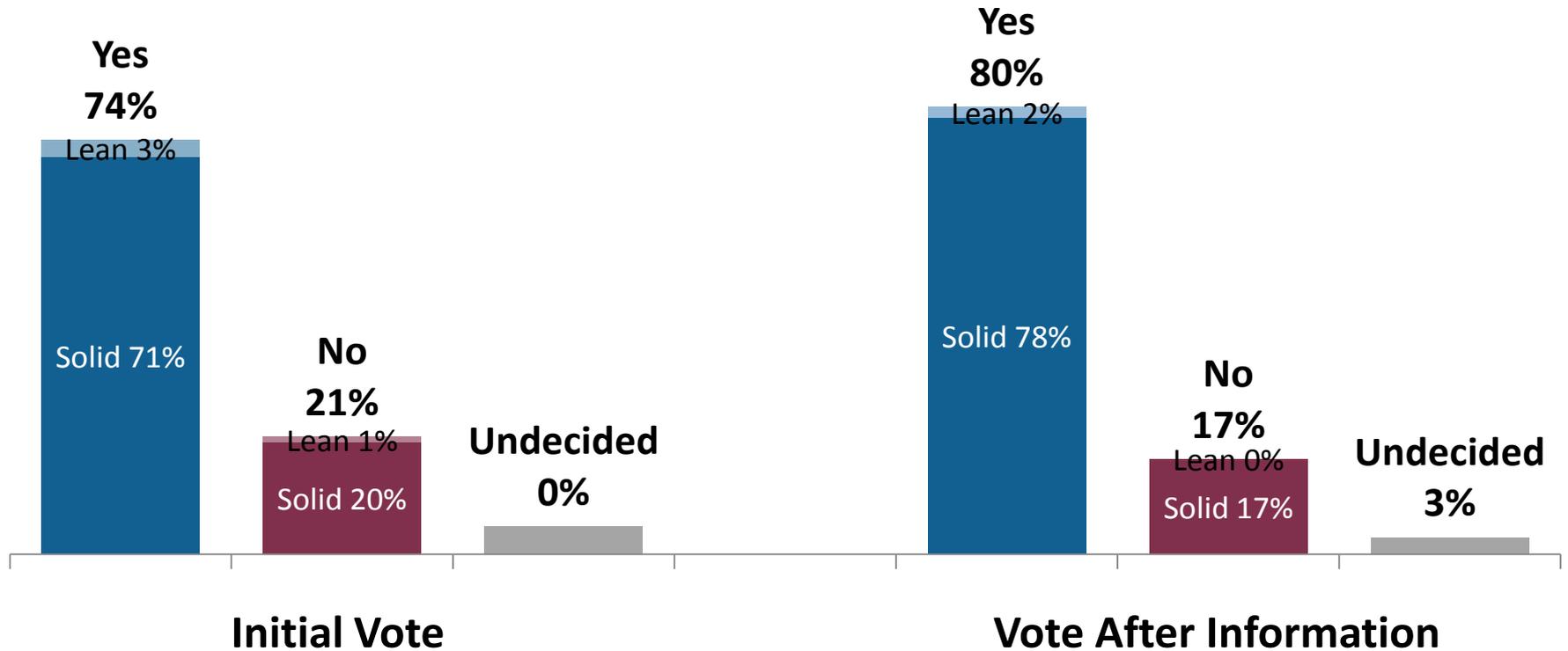
Other messages are compelling, but with less intensity.



Q32-41. I'm going to read you some additional information about the proposed school parcel tax measure for Davis Joint Unified School District. After hearing each statement, please tell me if it makes you much more likely to support the measure, somewhat more likely to support it, or if it makes no difference to you.

After Information: Parcel Tax Measure Vote

After hearing more information, support increases to 80%.

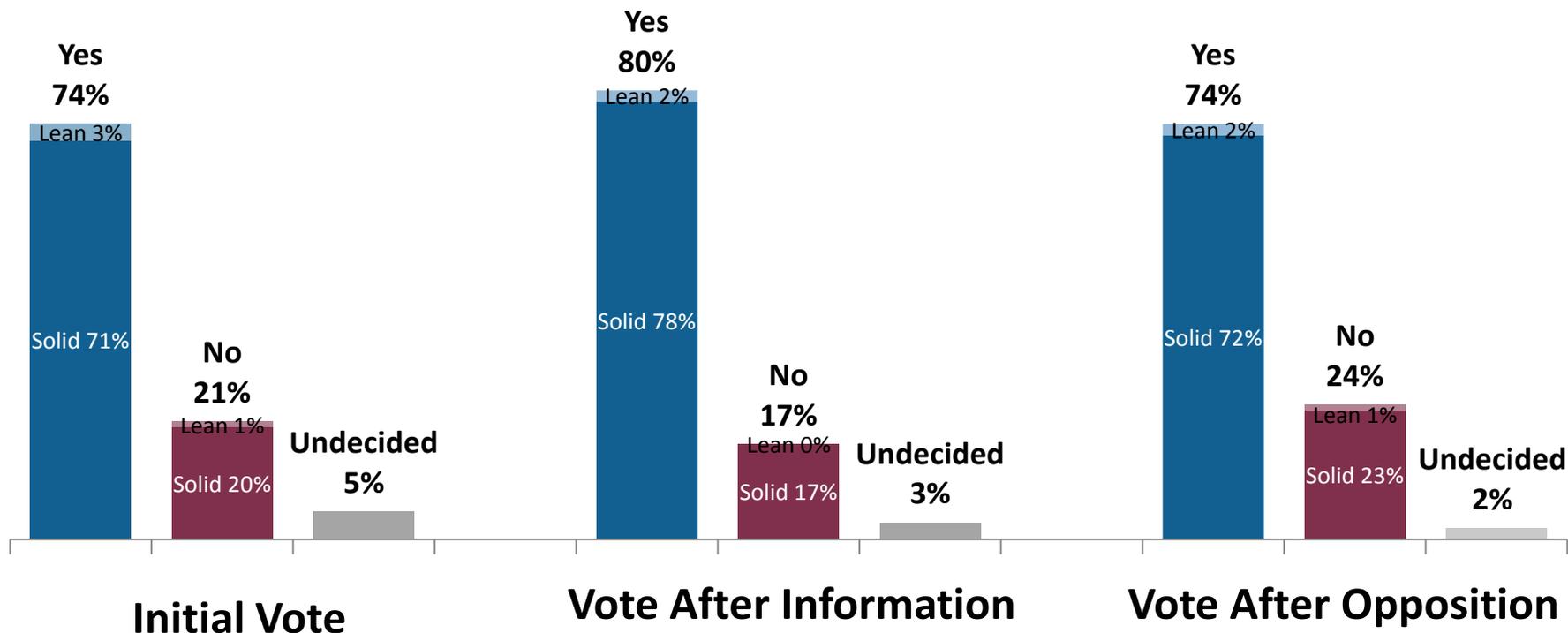


Q42: Given what you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads

After Opposition: Parcel Tax Measure Vote

Opposition messaging has a low impact on total support for the measure.

Opponents say this measure is just too expensive on top of all the other taxes in this area. At \$620 per year, plus inflation increases, a lot of local residents just can't afford to pay it. Davis schools have been renewing parcel taxes every 4 years since 1984, and now they want to pass a measure for 8 more years. It's time for the district to just tighten its belt and do a better job managing the money it has, without going back to taxpayers for more money.

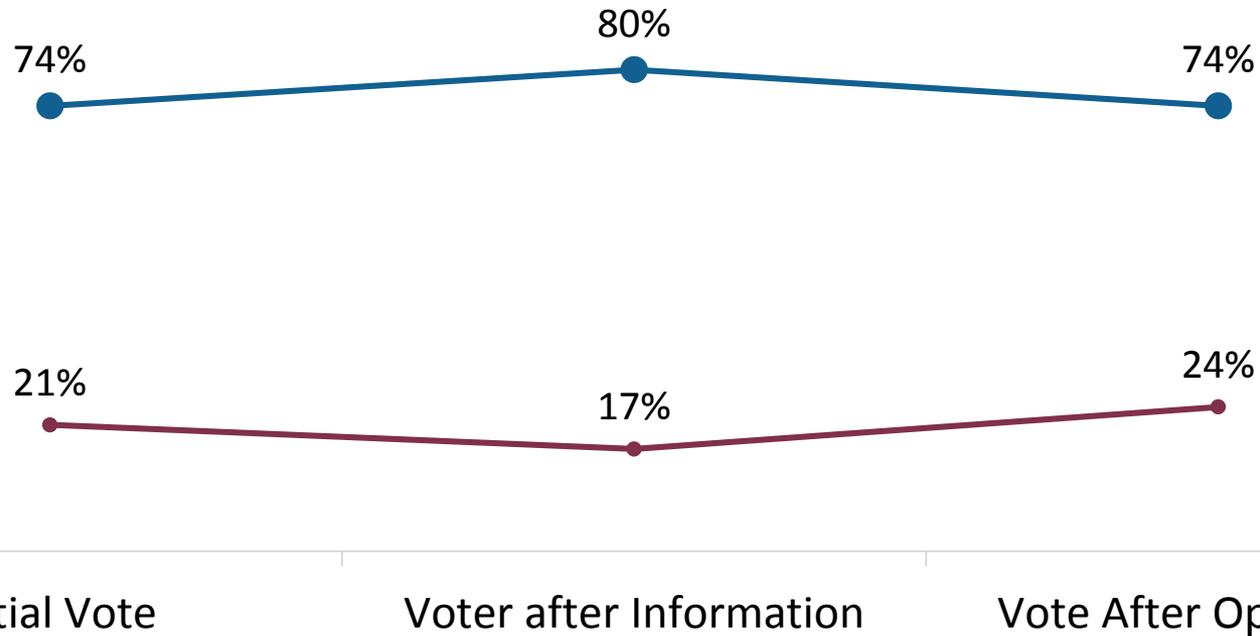


Q43: Given what you've heard, if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads

Total Vote Progression

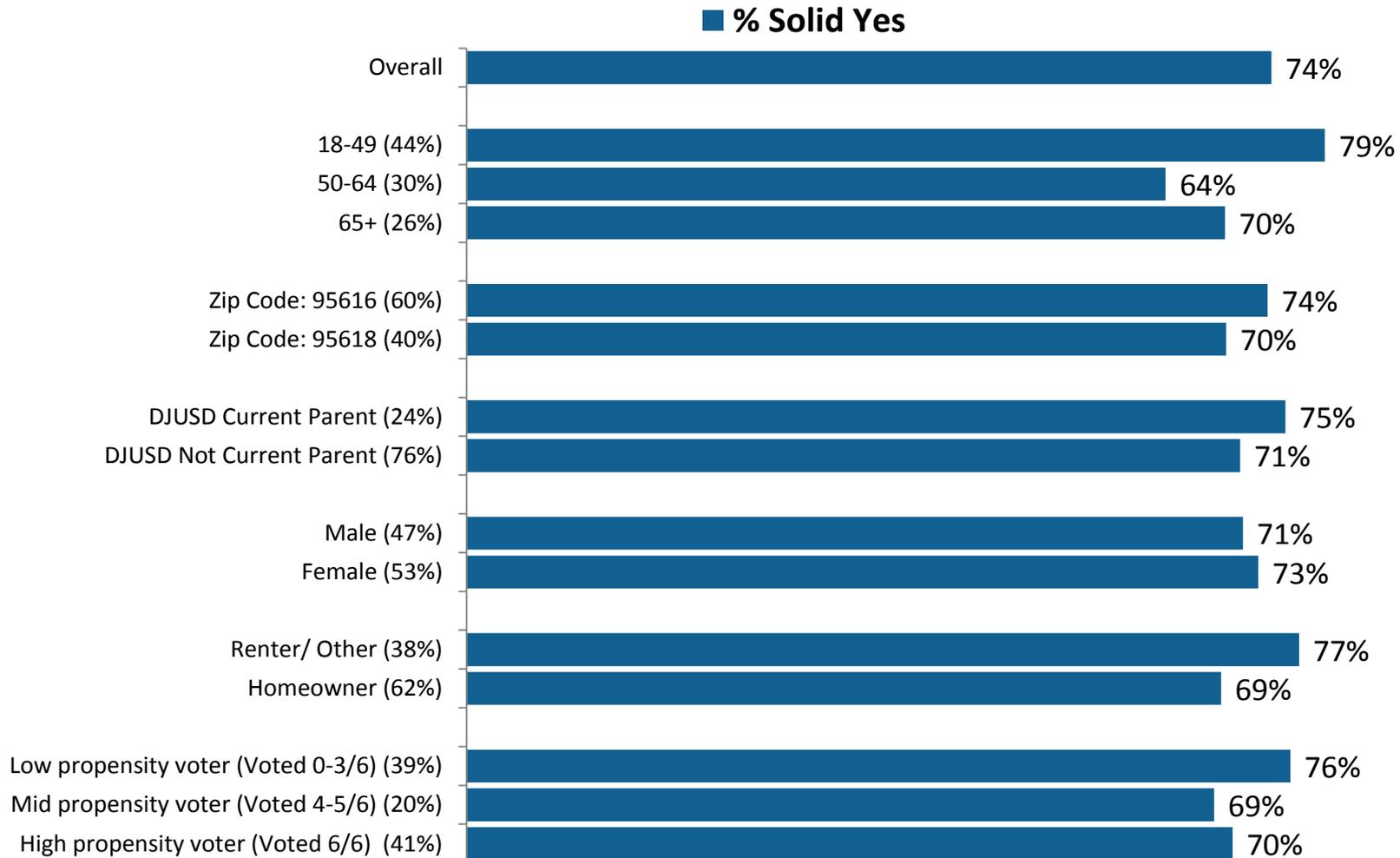
Support for a measure is high throughout the survey.

● % Total Yes ● % Total No



Parcel Tax Measure Final Support, by Subgroup

Support remains highest among younger and lower propensity voters.



Q10. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve this measure or no to reject it?

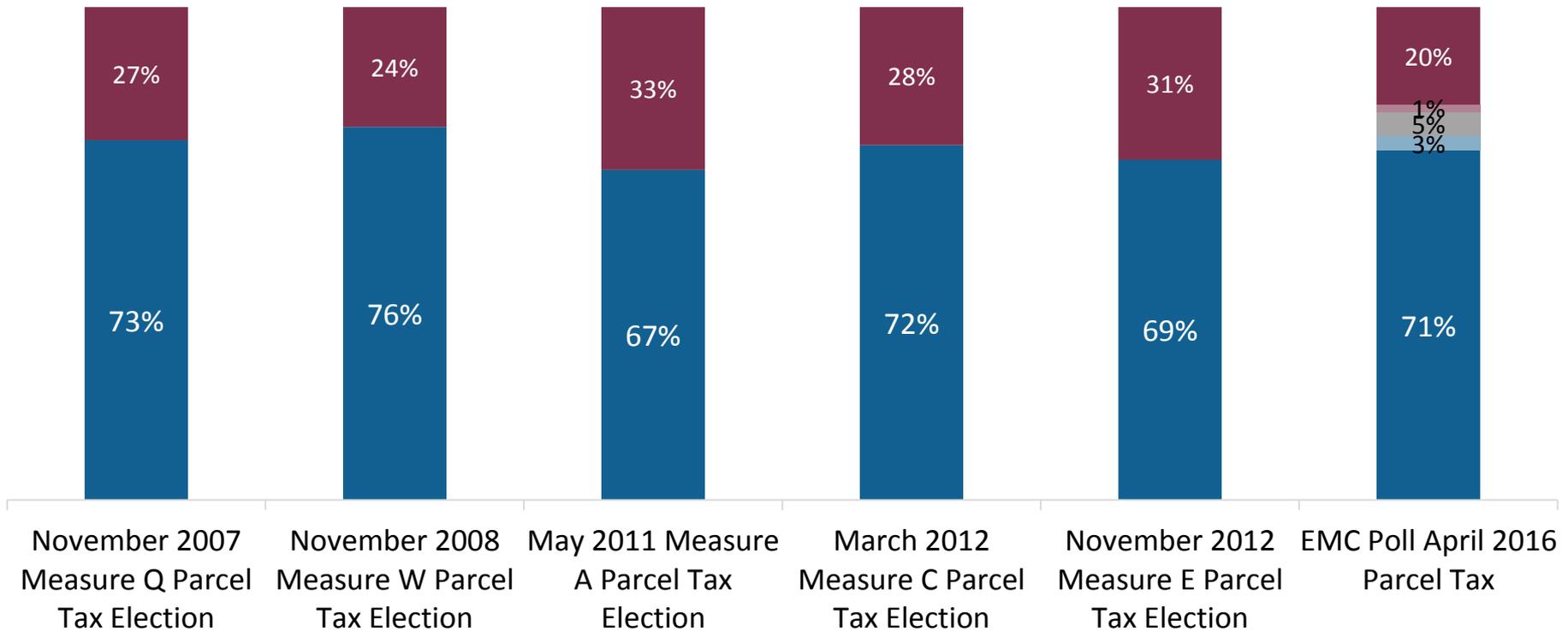


Historical Data and Next Steps

Historic Election Results

Voters in the district have a history of strong support for parcel tax measures for the schools.

■ Yes ■ Lean Yes ■ (Undecided) ■ Lean No ■ No



Conclusions & Next Steps

- ▶ A parcel tax measure to maintain existing educational programs with an 8-year sunset appears feasible for the November, 2016 ballot.
- ▶ The high turnout election this November provides the opportunity to include younger and more progressive voters that are strong supporters of a parcel tax for schools.
- ▶ A higher parcel tax amount to both maintain *and improve* programs may be feasible, but support for a \$750 measure is lower among some key demographic groups such as homeowners and voters over 50. Therefore, careful consideration should be given to the potential risks and rewards as achieving two-thirds support for the higher amount would likely require a robust, coordinated, privately funded outreach effort.

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