



**DRAFT**



**Survey of Sierra Sands  
Unified School District Voters  
January 2020**

# Methodology

- ▶ Survey of likely voters in Sierra Sands Unified School District
- ▶ Mixed-mode (telephone/email-to-web) methodology
  - Phone interviews conducted in English by trained, professional interviewers; landlines and mobile phones included
  - A random selection of voters with email addresses available were sent an email invitation with a link to take the survey online
- ▶ Survey conducted January 14<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup>, 2020
- ▶ 314 interviews; overall margin of error  $\pm 5.5$  percentage points

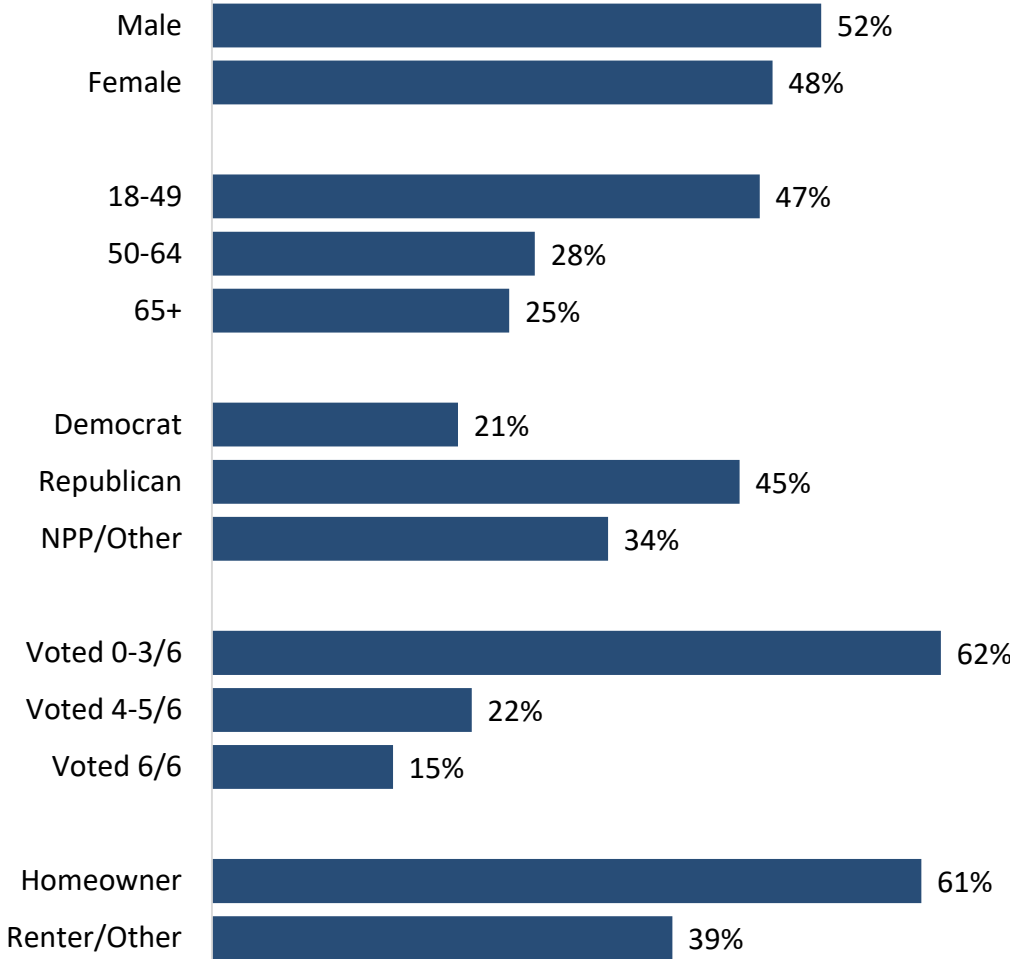
Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

# Key Findings

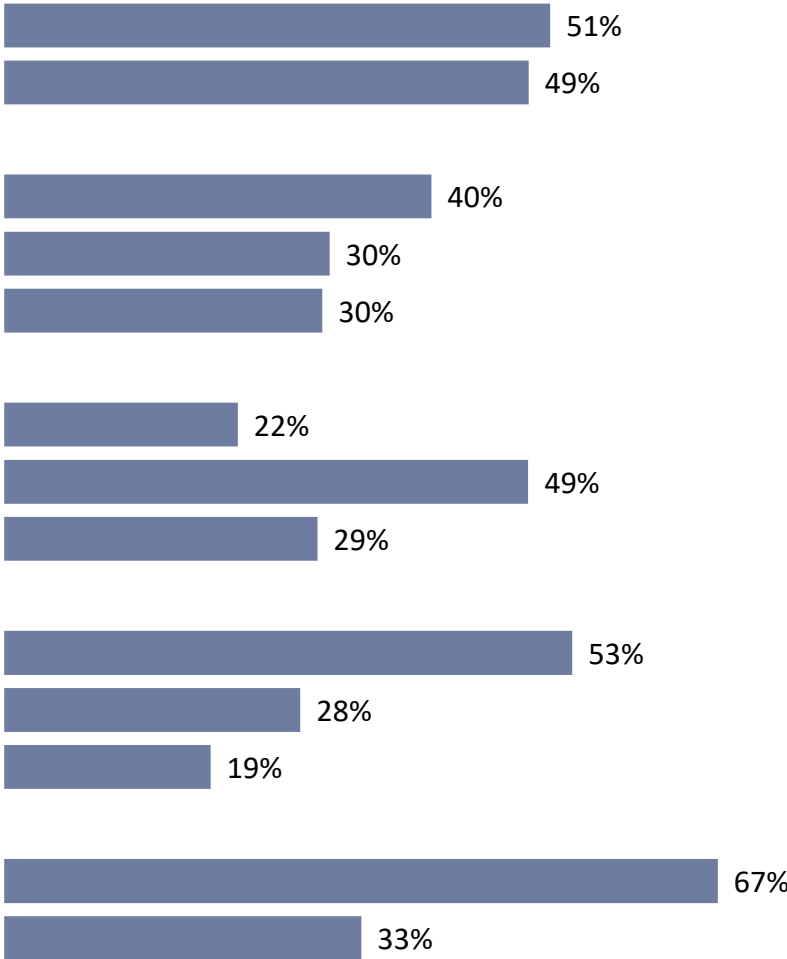
- ▶ Sierra Sands Unified School District is viewed positively by local voters.
- ▶ A majority perceive a need for additional funding for local schools, and many recognize the need for improvements to school buildings and grounds.
- ▶ However, support for a bond measure for Sierra Sands USD is just above the threshold needed for passage in this poll, and support does not increase as voters learn more about it.
- ▶ Support among key demographics, particularly parents, is not as strong as we have seen in other districts.
- ▶ Many voters are reluctant to support new taxes.
- ▶ Basic repairs and maintenance, updates to expand STEM programs, and safety upgrades are the most compelling potential bond projects for voters.

# Voter Demographics

## All Registered Voters



## Likely November 2020 Voters

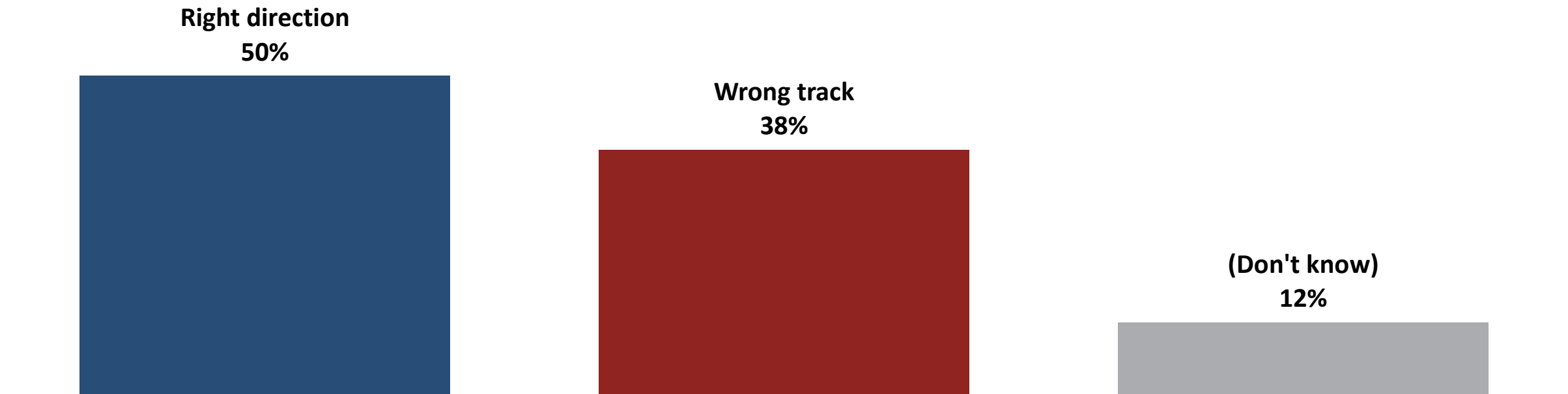




**Issue Environment**

# Mood of the Electorate

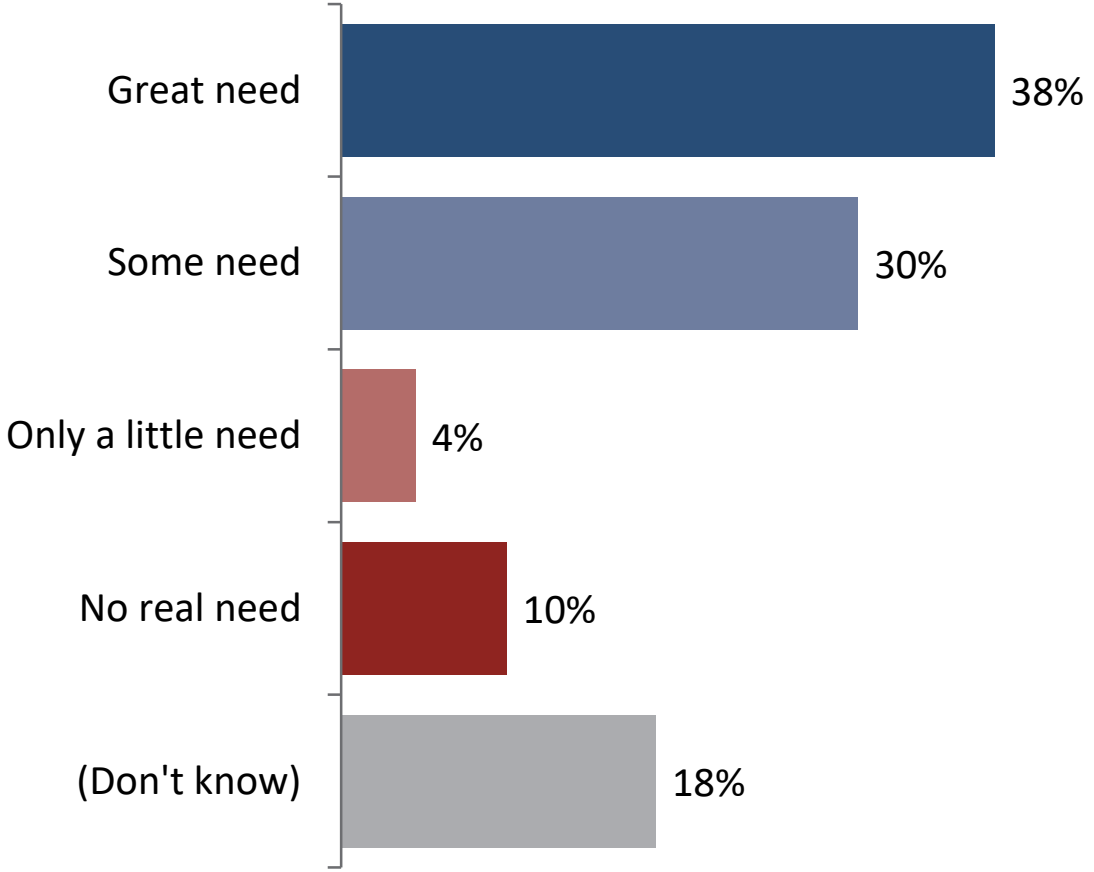
*Half of voters in the district are optimistic about how things are going in the area.*



Q4. Do you feel that things in your area are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

# Sierra Sands USD Need for Funds

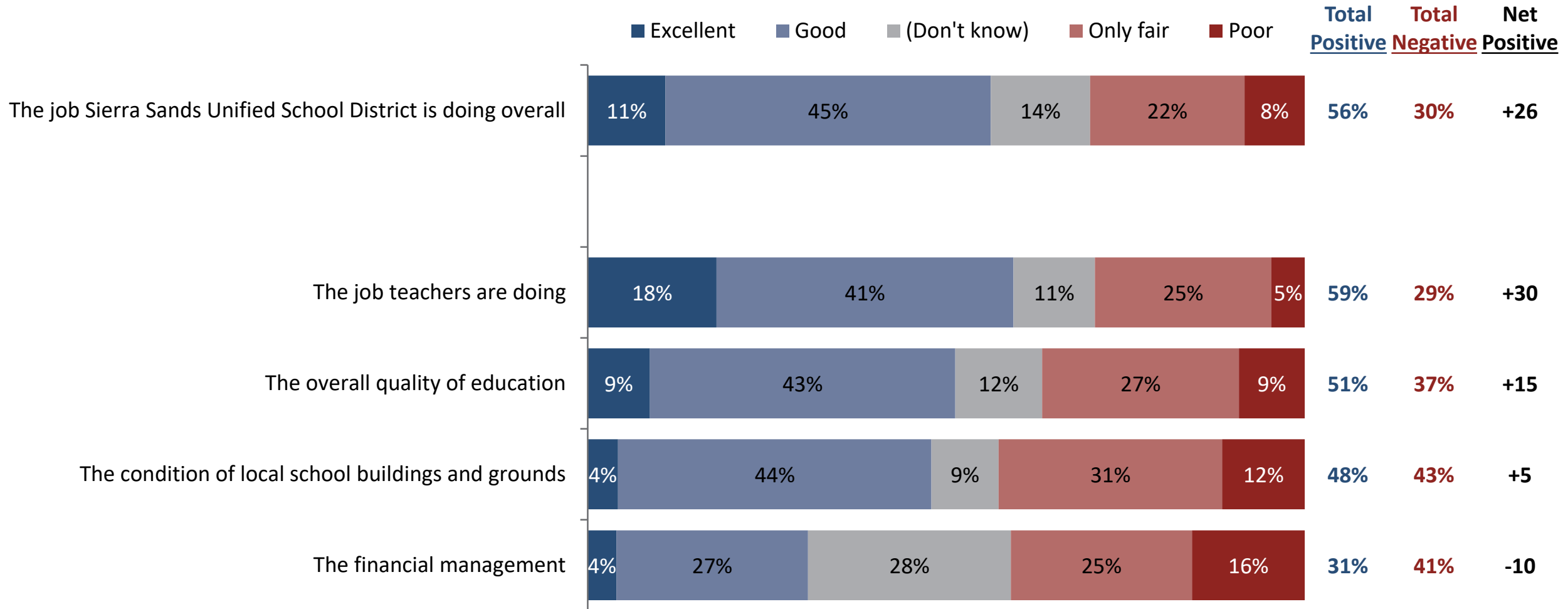
*Most voters see at least some need for additional funds for local schools.*



Q5. As you may know, you live in the Sierra Sands Unified School District. Would you say that public schools in Sierra Sands Unified School District have a great need for more money, some need for more money, only a little need or no real need for more money?

# District Ratings

*Ratings of the job the District is doing are net positive, but many recognize room for improvement to the condition of school buildings and grounds.*



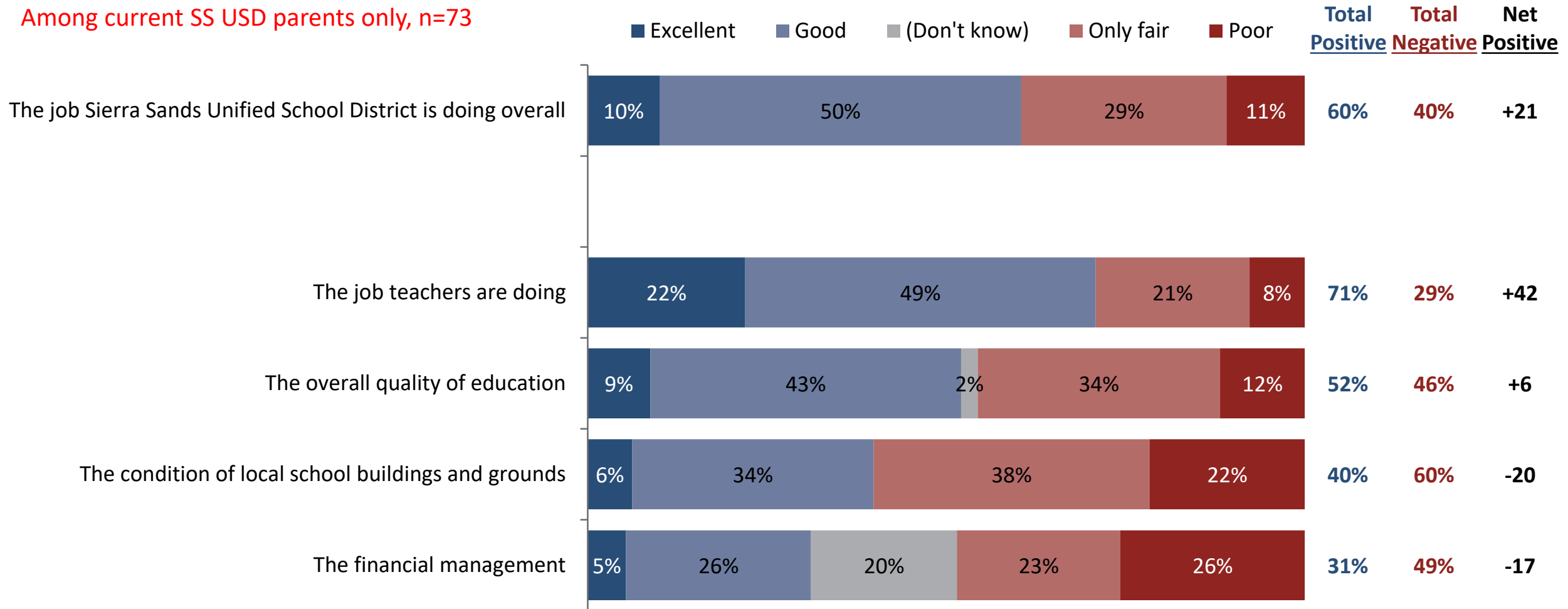
Q6-10. Regardless of whether or not you have children in school, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the following areas relating to the Sierra Sands Unified School District.



# District Ratings among Parents

*Parents appear to be more aware of the need for facilities updates, as they are more negative about the conditions of school buildings and grounds.*

Among current SS USD parents only, n=73



Q6-10. Regardless of whether or not you have children in school, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, please rate the following areas relating to the Sierra Sands Unified School District.



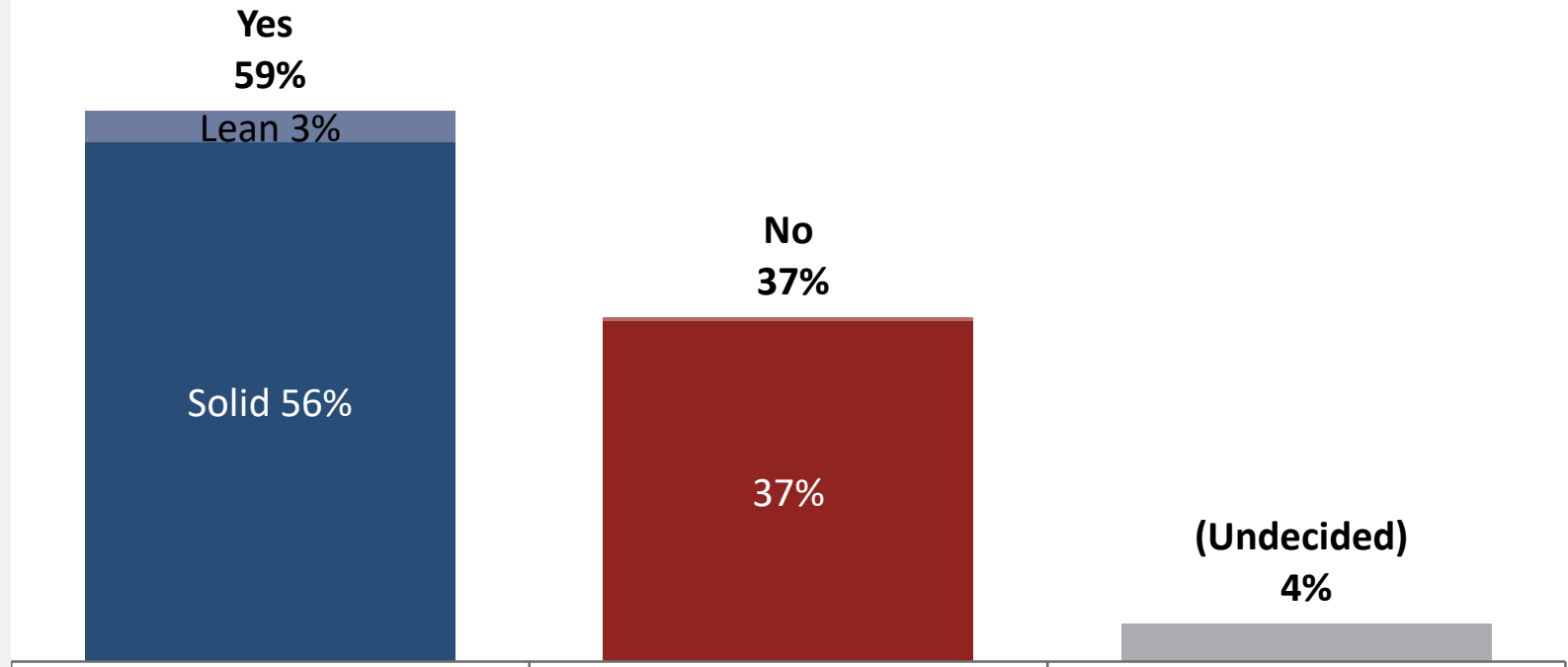
**Potential Bond Measure**

# Initial Vote

*Initial support for the tested bond measure is right near the 55% threshold needed for passage.*

*To update and reconstruct local schools to expand science, technology, engineering, arts and math programs; provide updated classrooms/labs for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning; improve school earthquake safety/ disabled access; and construct and equip classrooms/facilities; shall Sierra Sands Unified School District issue \$45,700,000 in bonds, at legal rates, repaying an annual average of \$2,690,000, at approximately \$60/\$100,000 assessed valuation while bonds are outstanding, with independent oversight, audits, no money for administrators' salaries/pensions, and all funds remaining local?*

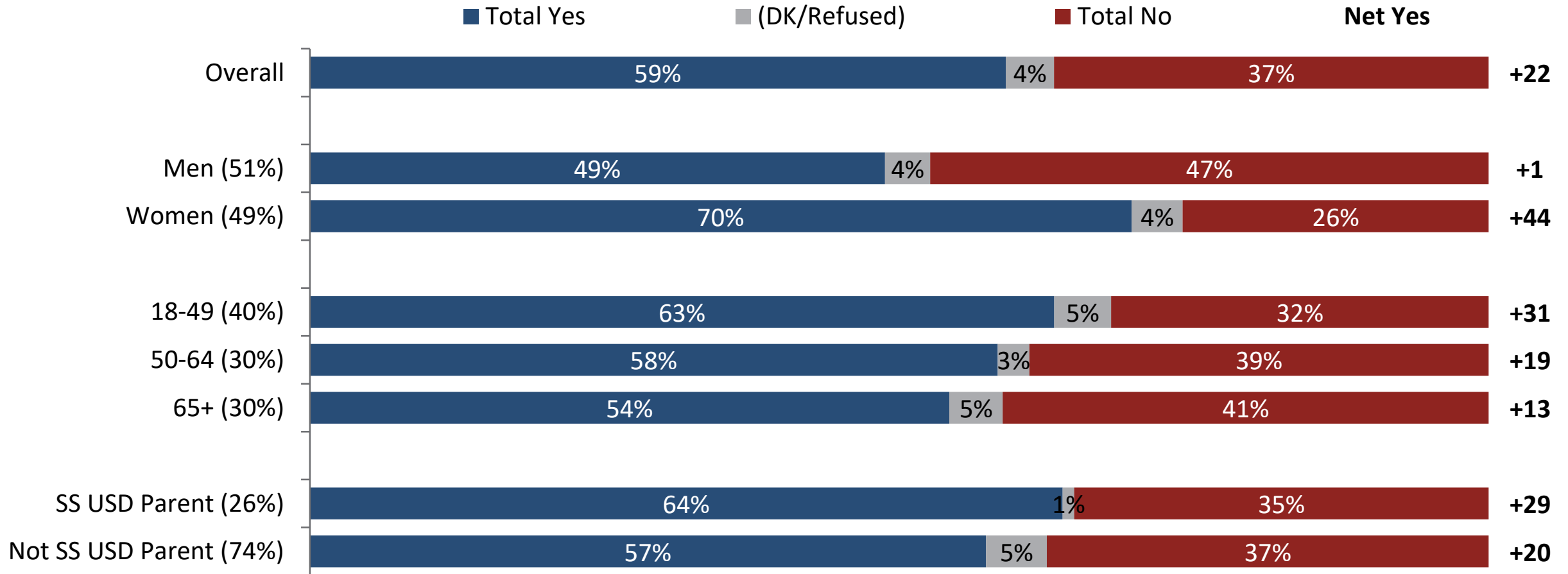
**If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?**



*Overall Margin of Error = ±5.5 percentage points*

# Initial Vote by Subgroups

*Women, younger voters and those who have children currently attending SS USD schools are more supportive of a bond than other groups, although these levels of support are not overwhelming compared to other districts.*

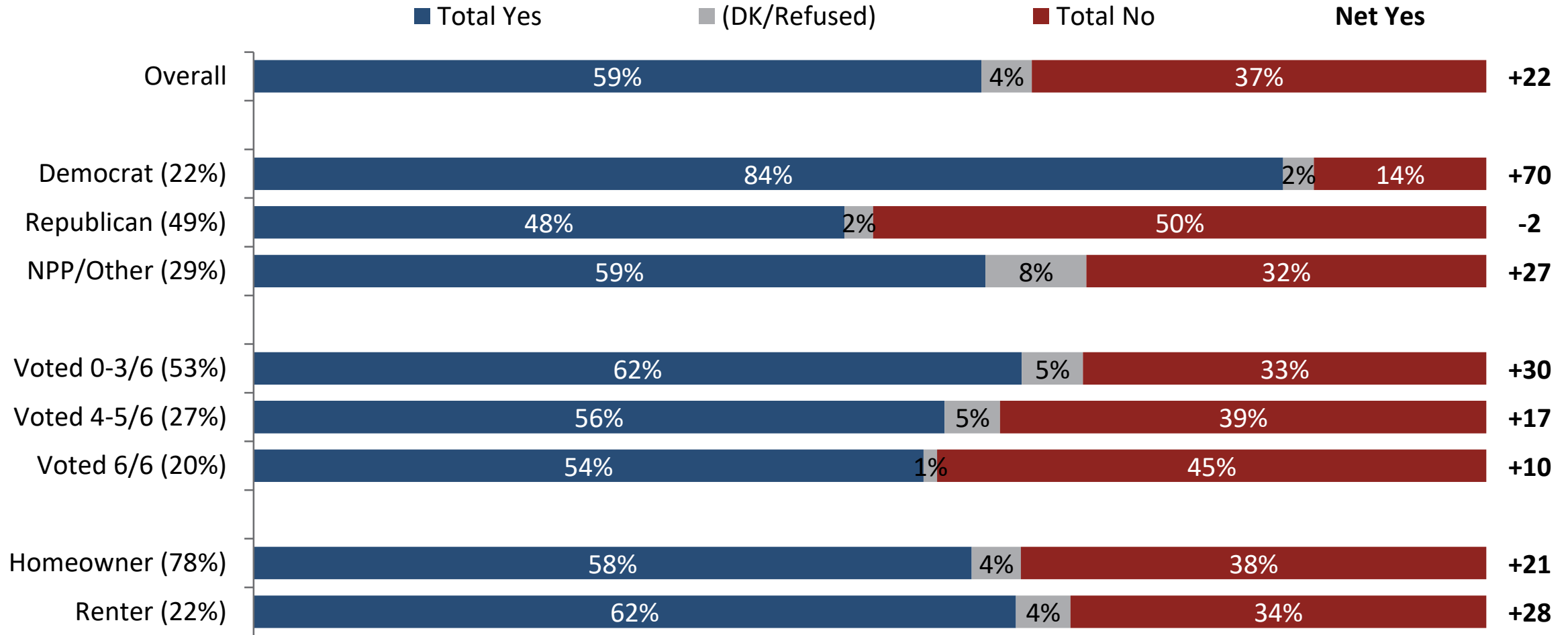


*Overall Margin of Error = ±5.5 percentage points, and higher within subgroups*

Q11. Now I'd like to ask you about a measure that may appear on the ballot in the November 2020 election  
 ...if the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# Initial Vote by Subgroups

*Democrats are particularly supportive of a bond.*



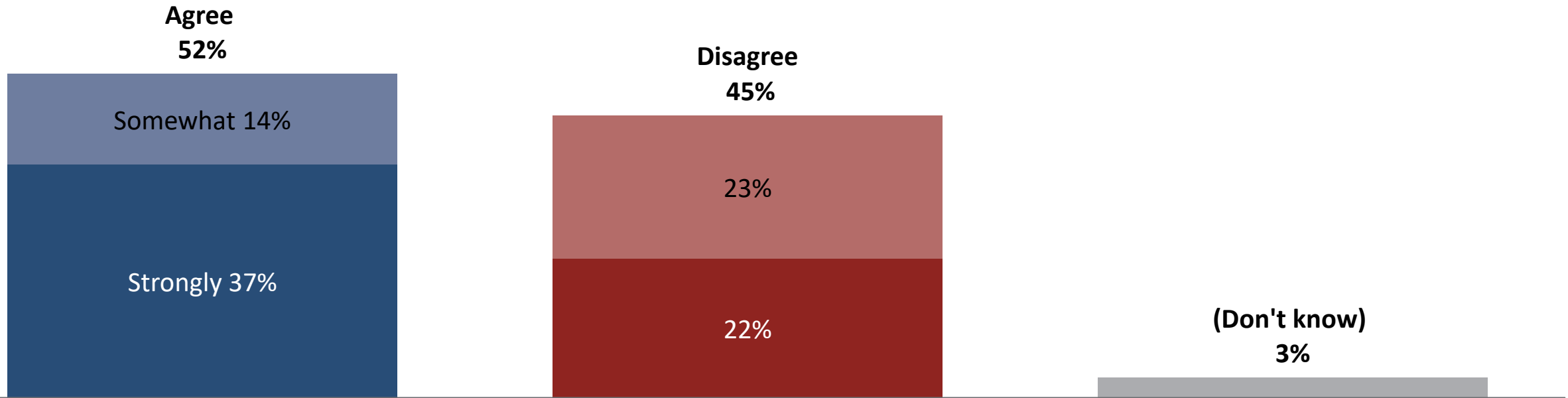
*Overall Margin of Error = ±5.5 percentage points, and higher within subgroups*

Q11. Now I'd like to ask you about a measure that may appear on the ballot in the November 2020 election  
 ...If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

# General Tax Sentiment

*Voters are sensitive to new taxes, with a majority thinking that taxes are already too high and should not be further increased for any reason.*

*“Taxes are already too high, I would never vote for a tax increase no matter how it might be used.”*



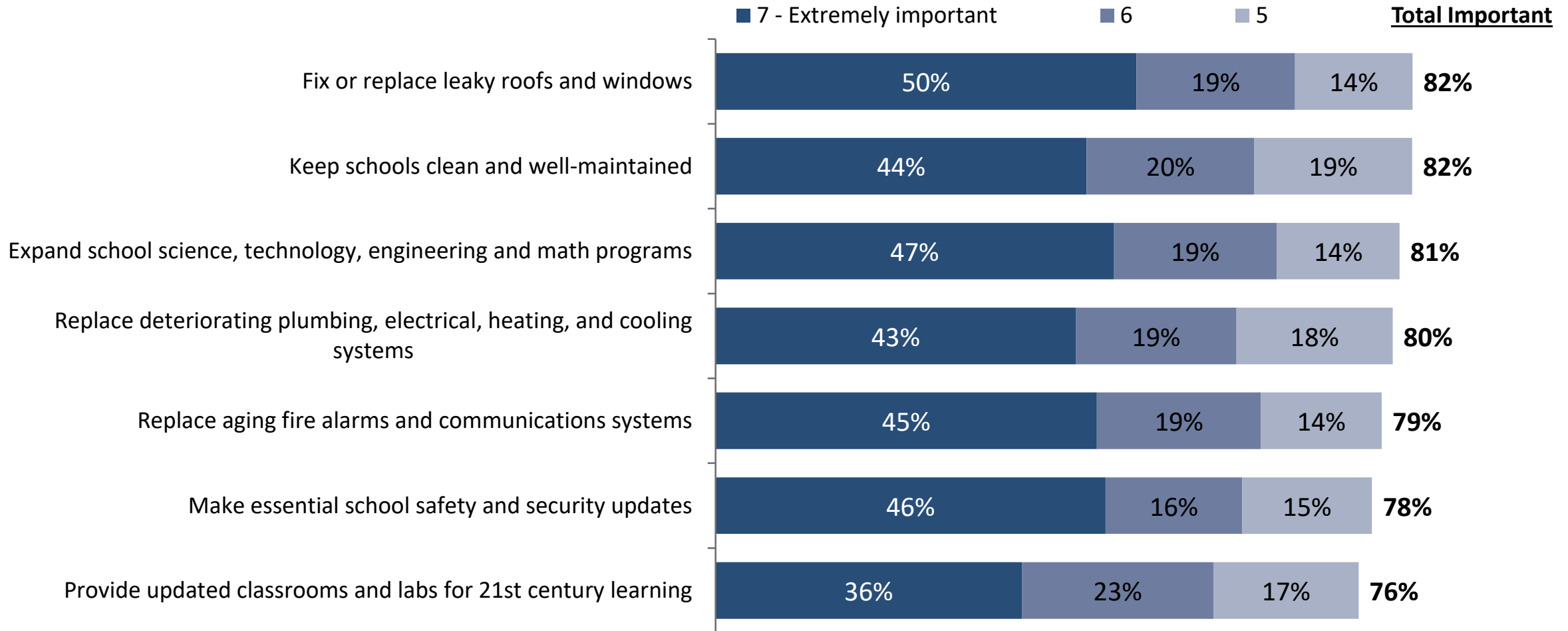
Q13. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.



# **Bond Components and Messages**

# Bond Component Importance – Top Tier

*Voters prioritize bond projects involving basic repairs and maintenance, updates to expand STEM programs, and safety upgrades.*

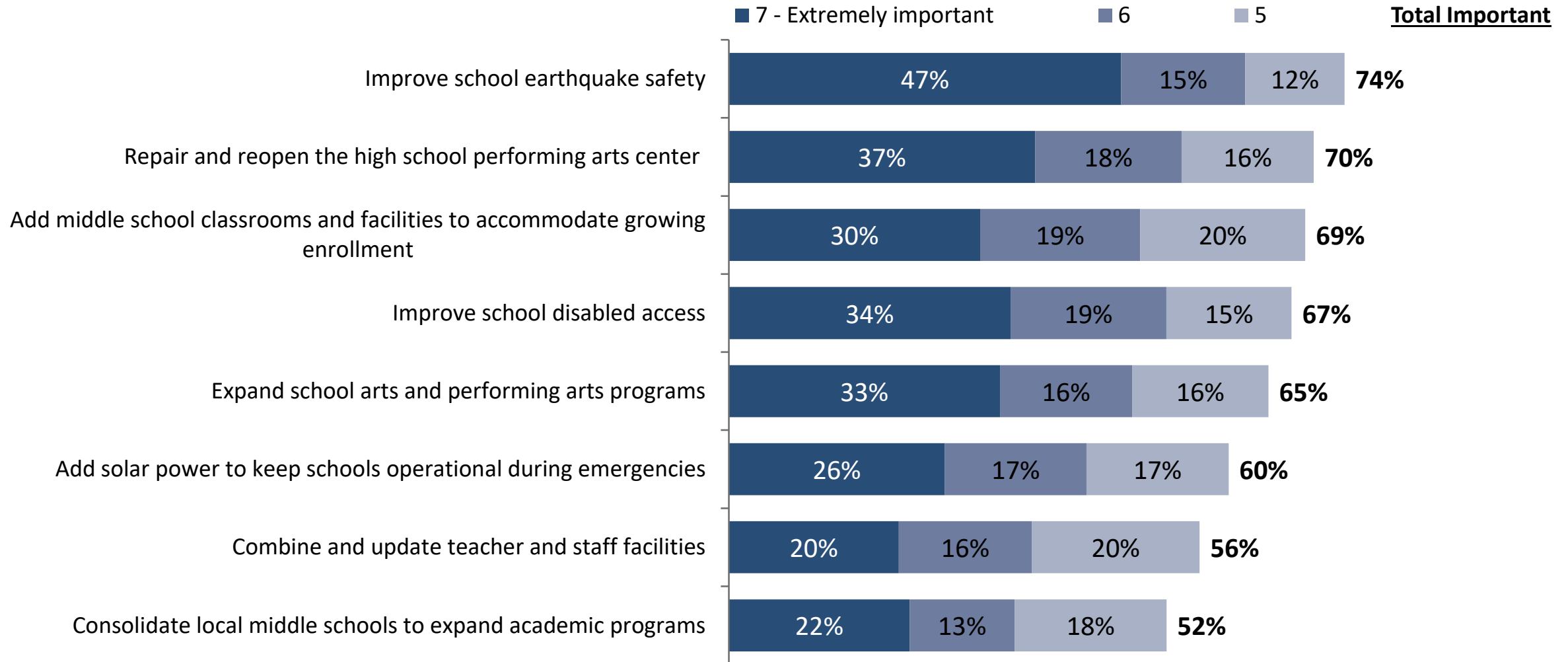


Q16-30. Now I would like to read you a list of components that could be included in the Sierra Sands Unified School District measure. On a scale of one to seven, where 1 is not important at all and 7 is extremely important, please indicate how important each of the following is to you.



# Bond Component Importance – Second Tier

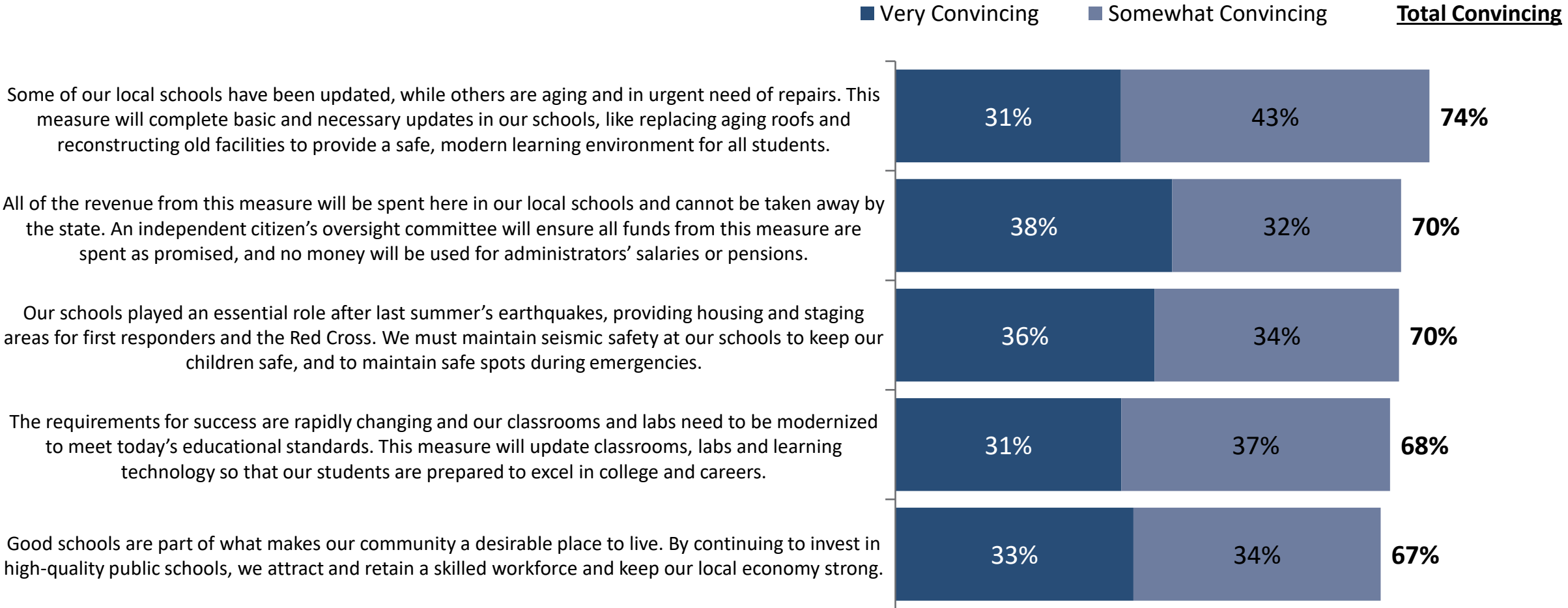
*Consolidating local middle schools and updating teacher and staff facilities are lower priorities.*



Q16-30. Now I would like to read you a list of components that could be included in the Sierra Sands Unified School District measure. On a scale of one to seven, where 1 is not important at all and 7 is extremely important, please indicate how important each of the following is to you.

# Support Statements – Top Tier

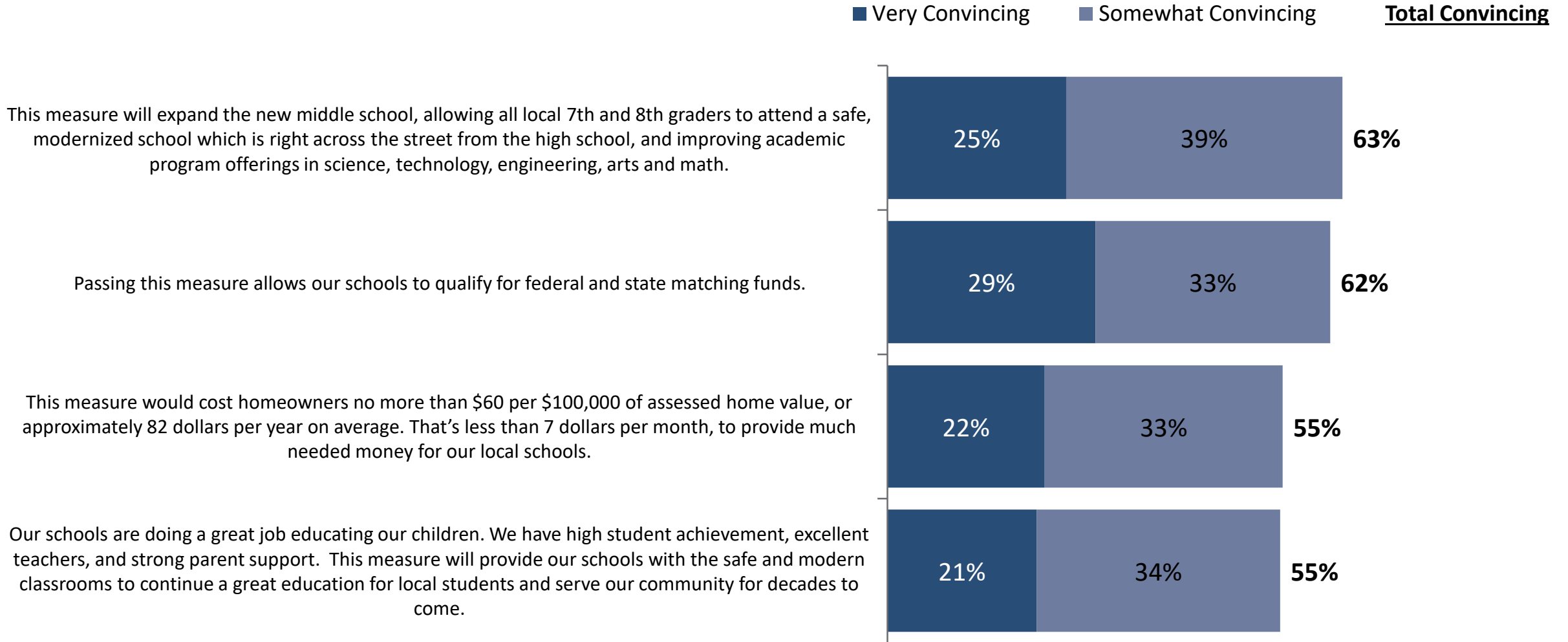
*There are a variety of messages that resonate as reasons to support a bond measure, although no single message theme emerges as being overwhelmingly convincing.*



Q31-39. Next, I'd like to read you statements from people who SUPPORT the proposed measure for the Sierra Sands Unified School District. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote FOR the measure.

# Support Statements – Second Tier

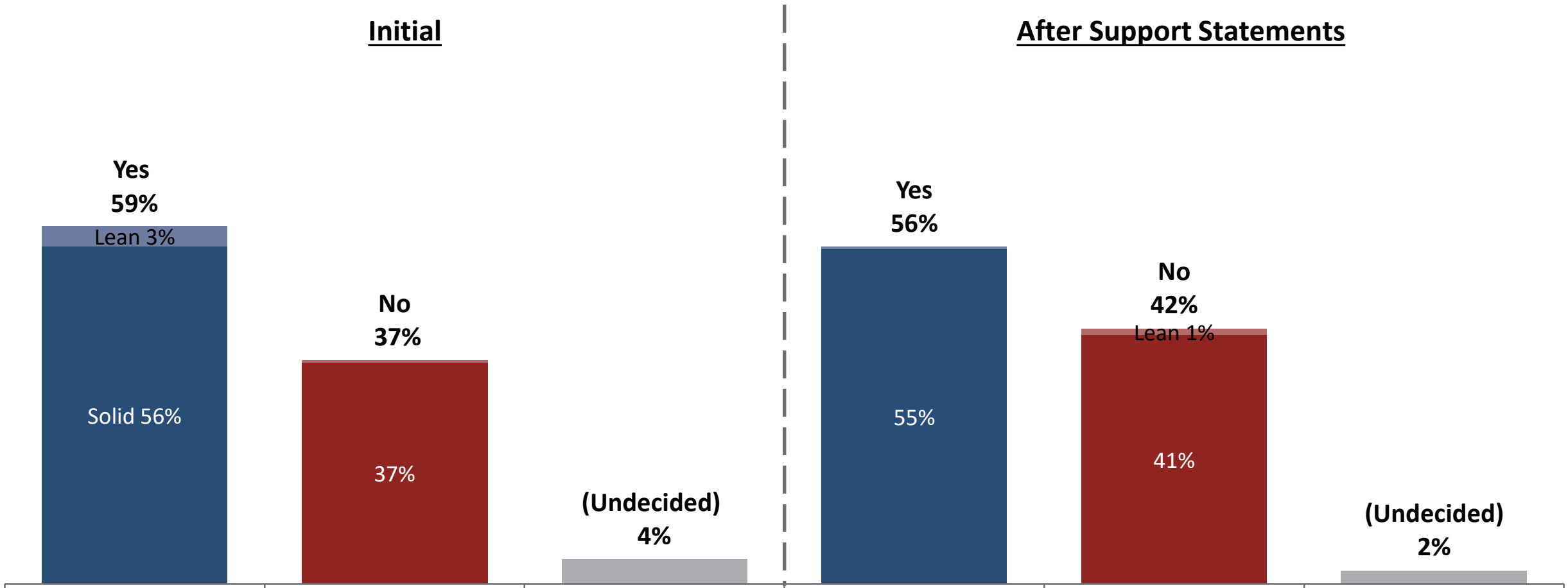
*While all tested messages are convincing to a majority, some garner lower intensity.*



Q31-39. Next, I'd like to read you statements from people who SUPPORT the proposed measure for the Sierra Sands Unified School District. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote FOR the measure.

# Vote After Support Statements

*Support for a bond does not increase after positive messages have been presented.*



*Overall Margin of Error = ±5.5 percentage points*

Q40./Q11. Based on what you've heard.... If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?

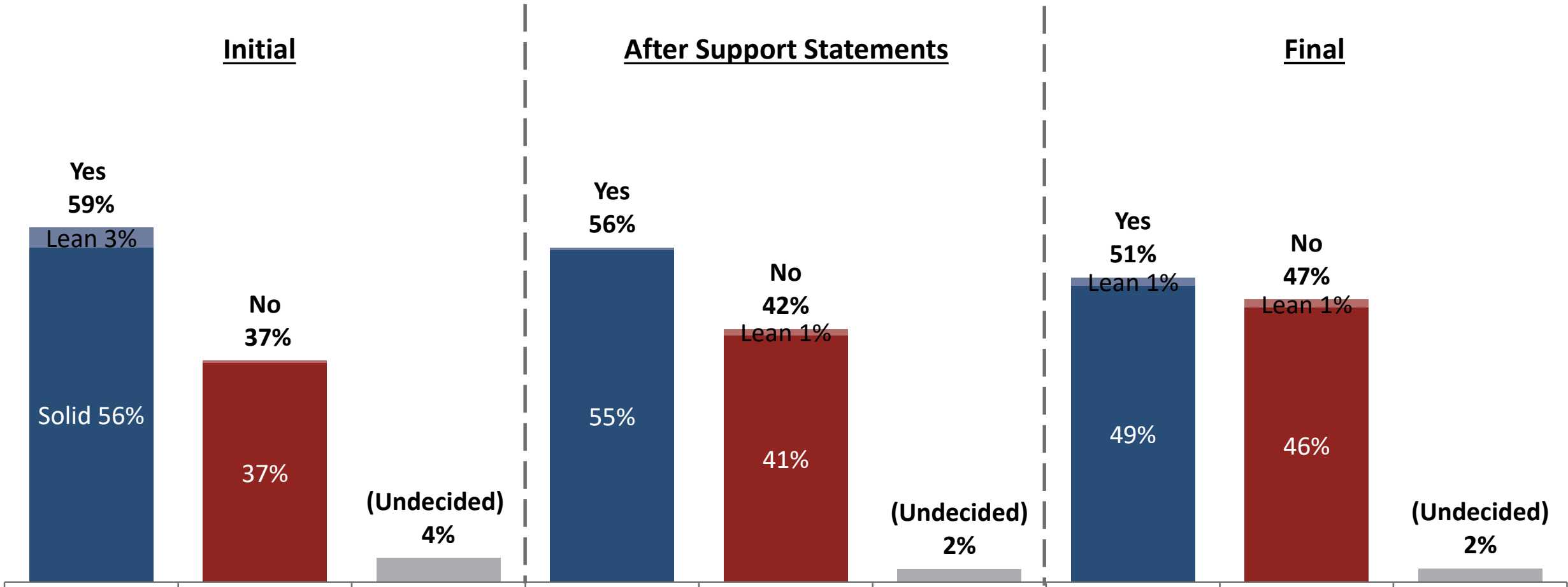
# Vote Progression

*Support drops below 55% after opposition statements have been presented.*

## Initial

## After Support Statements

## Final



*Overall Margin of Error = ±5.5 percentage points*

Q44. Now, given everything you've heard, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject the \$45,700,000 bond measure for the Sierra Sands Unified School District?

# Conclusions

- ▶ A bond measure for Sierra Sands USD appears feasible, but would be a challenge to pass this November.
- ▶ Several key indicators outline the challenges associated with passing this measure, namely: initial support is just above the threshold needed for passage, support does not increase after additional positive messaging, support declines after opposition messaging, there is significant tax sensitivity, and support from key demographic groups, particularly parents, is not as high as we would typically like to see.
- ▶ An independently funded outreach campaign is therefore recommended if the District moves forward with a measure to ensure voters are aware of the fiscal accountability features of a measure and the benefits to school maintenance, educational quality, and safety.



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