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Douglas County School District Survey

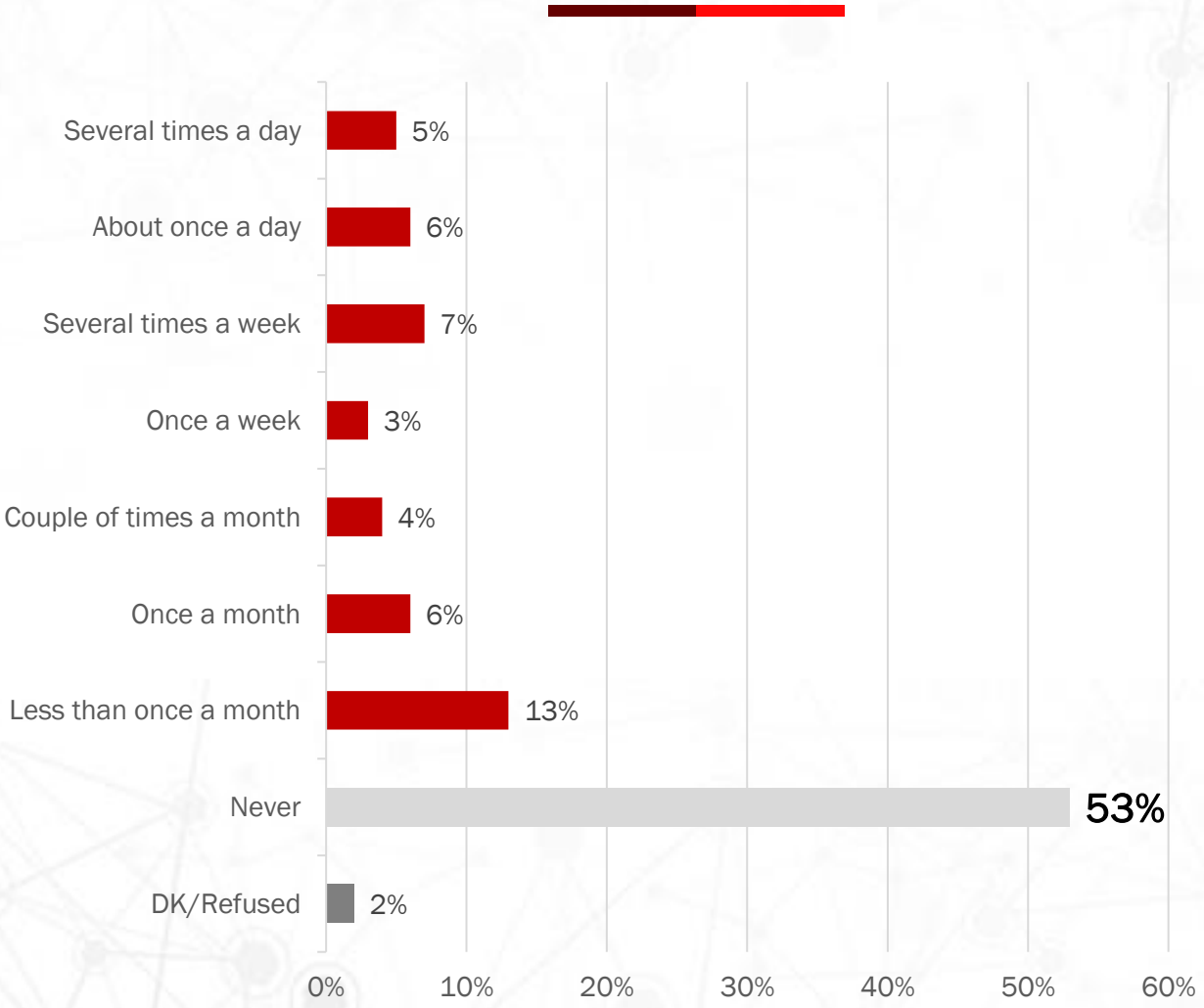
N=407 Likely Voters

MoE= +/- 4.9%

March 25-27, 2024

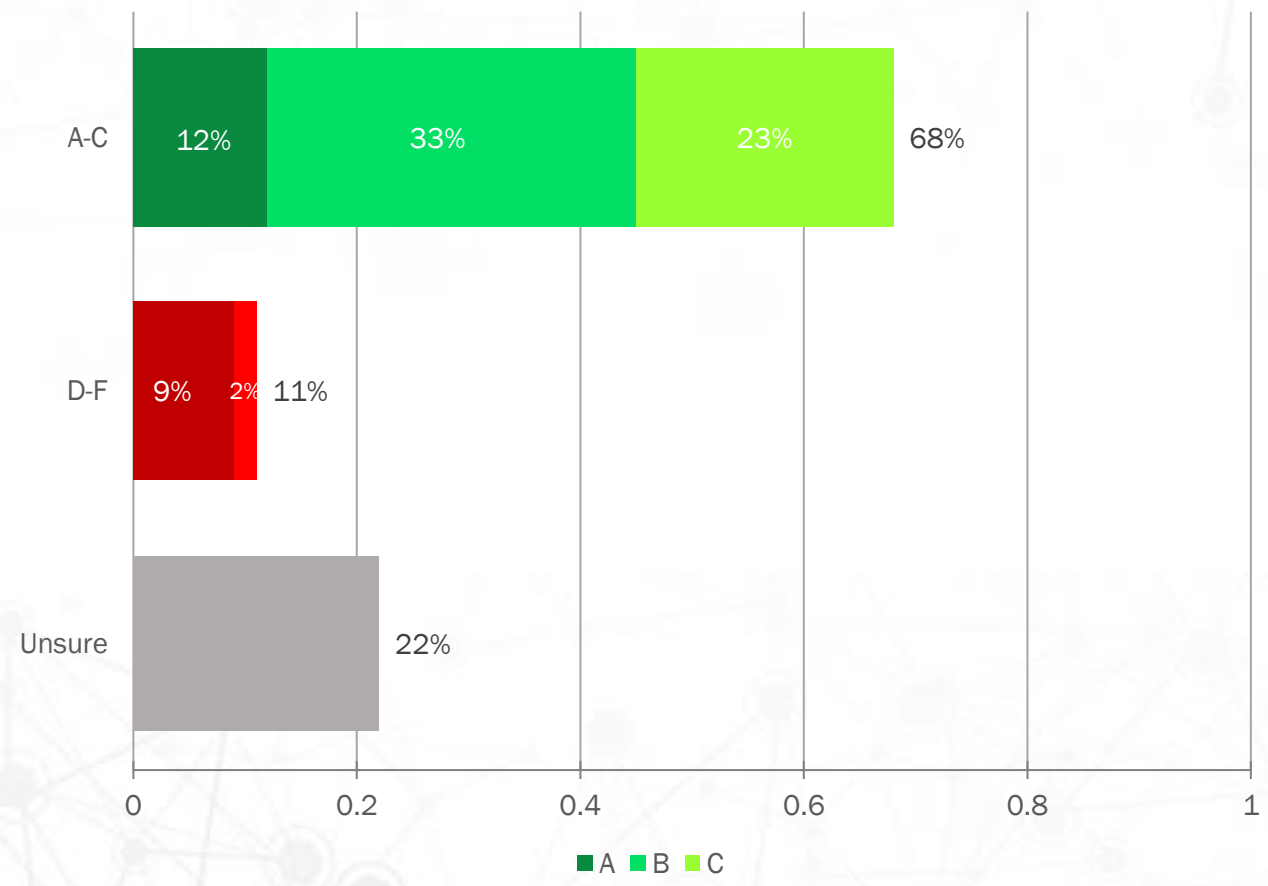
A majority of voters (53%) never interact with Douglas schools, while 47% say they have occasional/frequent contact with the District.

How often do you interact with the Douglas County School District



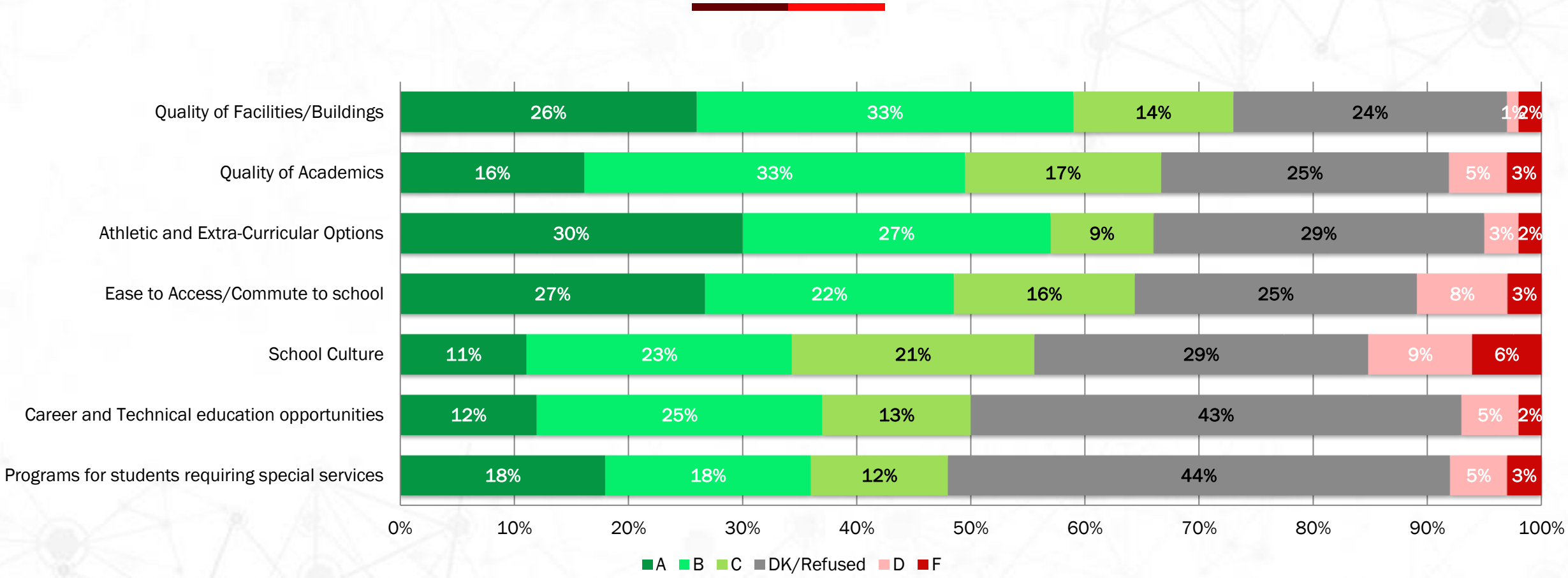
A majority of voters (68%) give Douglas County School District a grade of A (12%), B (33%), or C (23%).

Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D or Fail to rate the quality of their work at school. Suppose Douglas County School District was graded the same way, what grade would you give Douglas County School District?



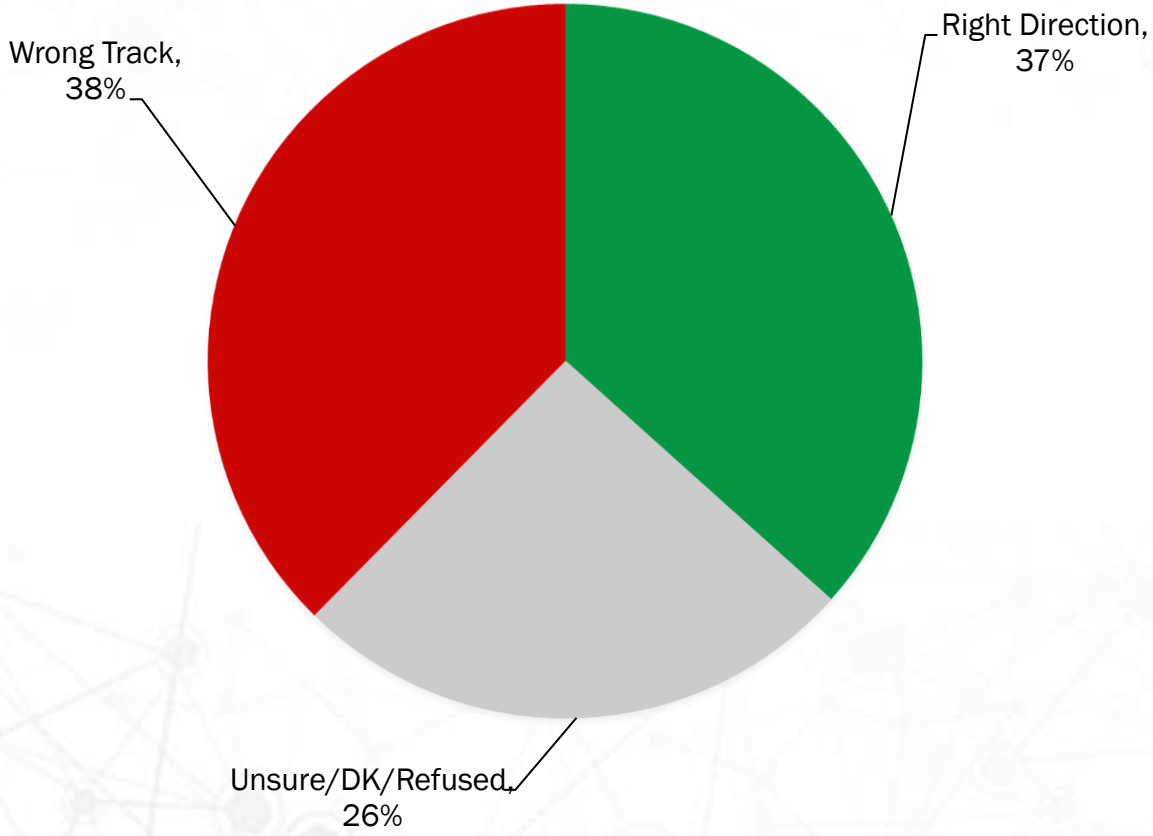
The quality of DCSD facilities and buildings receives the highest scores (73% A-C).

District Attribute Ratings



However, evidence of the acrimonious district history and older voter concerns about overall national trends yields a split view on the district's direction.

Thinking about the direction the Douglas County school district is headed today, do you believe things are going in the right direction or would you say things have gotten off on the wrong track?



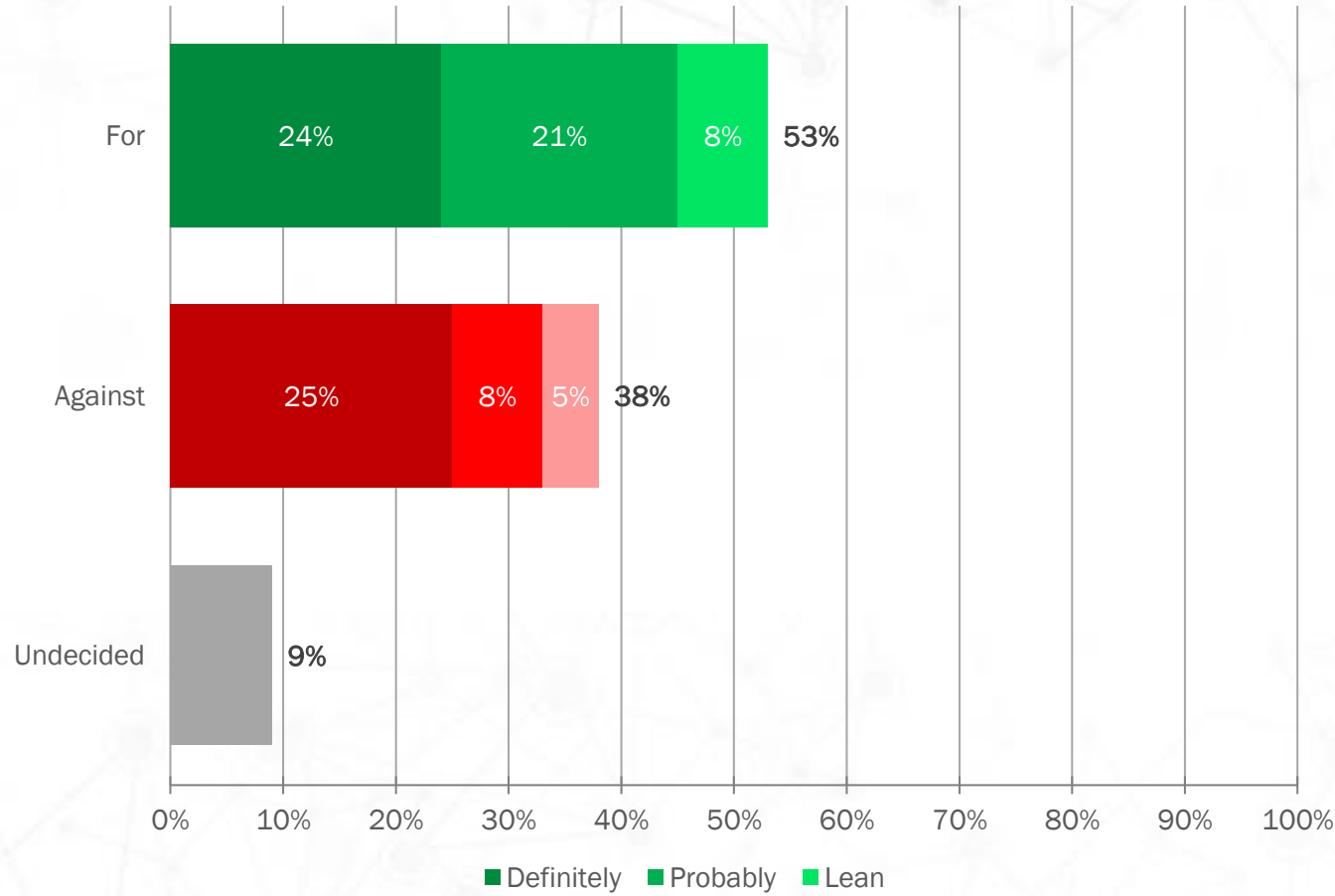
A 53% majority of voters say they would vote for the \$430M bond proposal.

Initial Ballot Test (SPLIT SAMPLE n=203)

Version A. Would you say you would vote for or against such a bond proposal?

With no expected increase in the district’s current bond fund tax rate of 5.2 mills and based on the district’s current assessed value and tax collection rate, shall Douglas County School District debt be increased \$430 million dollars with a repayment cost of \$755 million dollars, and shall district taxes be increased \$48 million dollars annually to pay such debt, all for the purpose of:

- Addressing a maintenance and repair backlog that includes urgent repairs to mechanical and electrical systems, roofs, intercom systems, parking lots, and playgrounds;
- Implementing safety and security upgrades at every school;
- Constructing and equipping two new neighborhood schools and additions to one existing neighborhood school to accommodate growth and reduce overcrowding;
- Funding for urgent needs to support special education, information technology, athletic and activity upgrades, and buses; and
- Enhancing the District’s career and technical education offerings for students.



A slightly higher 56% majority say they would support a \$490M school bond proposal.

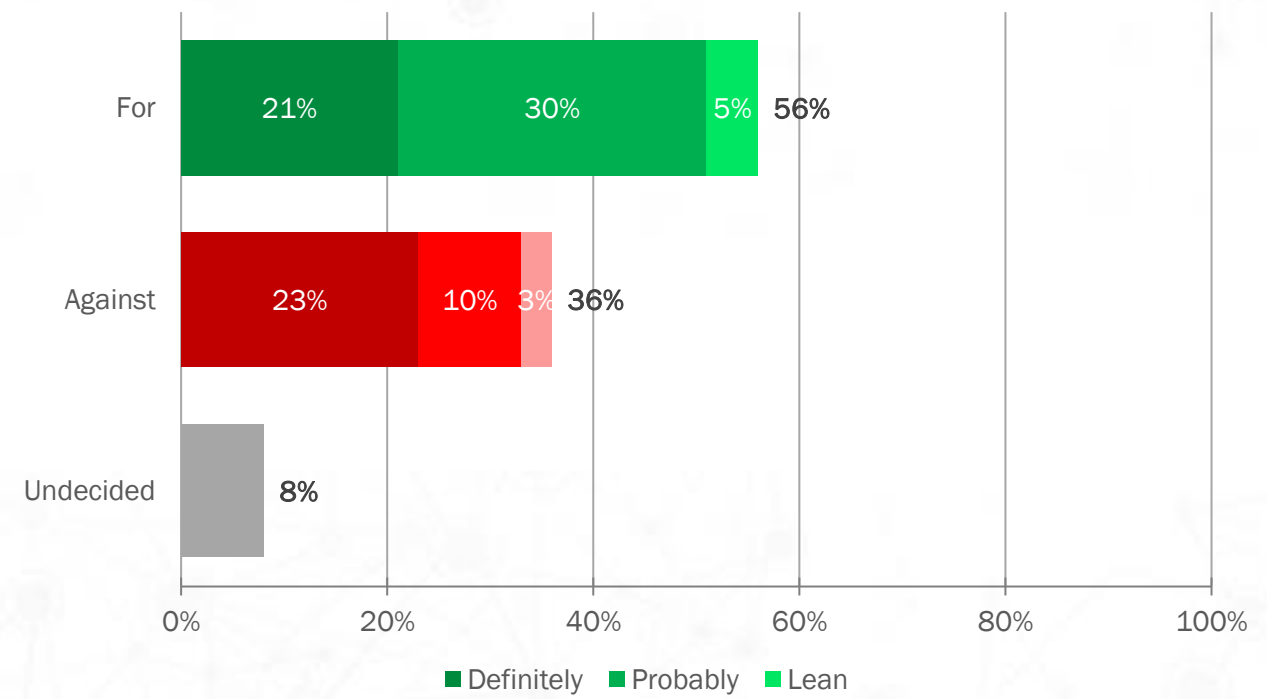
Initial Ballot Test (SPLIT SAMPLE n=203)

Version B. Would you say you would vote for or against such a bond proposal?



With no expected increase in the district’s current bond fund tax rate of 5.2 mills and based on the district’s current assessed value and tax collection rate, shall Douglas County School District debt be increased \$490 million dollars with a repayment cost of \$860 million dollars, and shall district taxes be increased \$55 million dollars annually to pay such debt, all for the purpose of:

- Addressing a maintenance and repair backlog that includes urgent repairs to mechanical and electrical systems, roofs, intercom systems, parking lots, and playgrounds;
- Implementing safety and security upgrades at every school;
- Constructing and equipping three new neighborhood schools and additions to two existing neighborhood schools to accommodate growth and reduce overcrowding;
- Funding for urgent needs to support special education, information technology, athletic and activity upgrades, and buses; and
- Enhancing the District’s career and technical education offerings for students.



The top movers after messaging are Democrats, Women 18-54, College+ Women, DCSD Children Yes, and Men 55+



Top Movers

	Size	Initial For	Informed For	Ballot Change
Democrat	22%	66%	75%	9%
Women 18-54	28%	62%	68%	6%
Highlands Ranch/Lone Tree	27%	58%	63%	5%
College+ Women	28%	54%	59%	5%
DCSD Children Yes	54%	55%	59%	4%
Men 55+	25%	49%	52%	3%
4 of 4	60%	48%	51%	3%
<College Men	18%	46%	49%	3%
Rural/Unincorporated	16%	56%	59%	3%
College+ \$75K+	48%	58%	60%	2%
Total	100%	55%	56%	1%
<College <\$75K	9%	67%	68%	1%
Castle Rock/Castle Pines	30%	43%	44%	1%
<College \$75K+	26%	56%	56%	0%
College+ <\$75K	8%	41%	41%	0%
0-1 of 4	16%	73%	73%	0%
2 of 4	13%	58%	58%	0%
Republican	41%	46%	45%	-1%
Independent/NPP	37%	59%	58%	-1%
College+ Men	32%	54%	53%	-1%
<College Women	21%	65%	64%	-1%
Parker	28%	63%	62%	-1%
Men 18-54	23%	56%	54%	-2%
DCSD Children No	46%	56%	54%	-2%
3 of 4	11%	64%	62%	-2%
Women 55+	21%	58%	55%	-3%

Best Messages

Most Effective

2nd Most Effective

Overall

Overall	100%
Persuadable	54%
Undecided	8%

Athletic and extra-curricular facilities require major safety and technology upgrades
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Career and Technical education opportunities – industry certifications and workforce training

2018 bond covered maintenance through 2021, leaving current backlog at over \$70 million dollars
Over one hundred aging school buildings, without urgent repairs some may need to temporarily close
Athletic and extra-curricular facilities require major safety and technology upgrades

Top Movers

Democrat	22%
Women 18-54	28%
College+ Women	28%
DCSD Children Yes	54%
Men 55+	25%

Overcrowding Requiring \$1 million dollar spend per year on temporary modular classrooms
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After messaging, given two opposing viewpoints, district voters indicate a six-point advantage for pro-bond viewpoint -- preference for increasing DCSD funding (POINT B – 45%) versus reducing debt (POINT A – 39%)

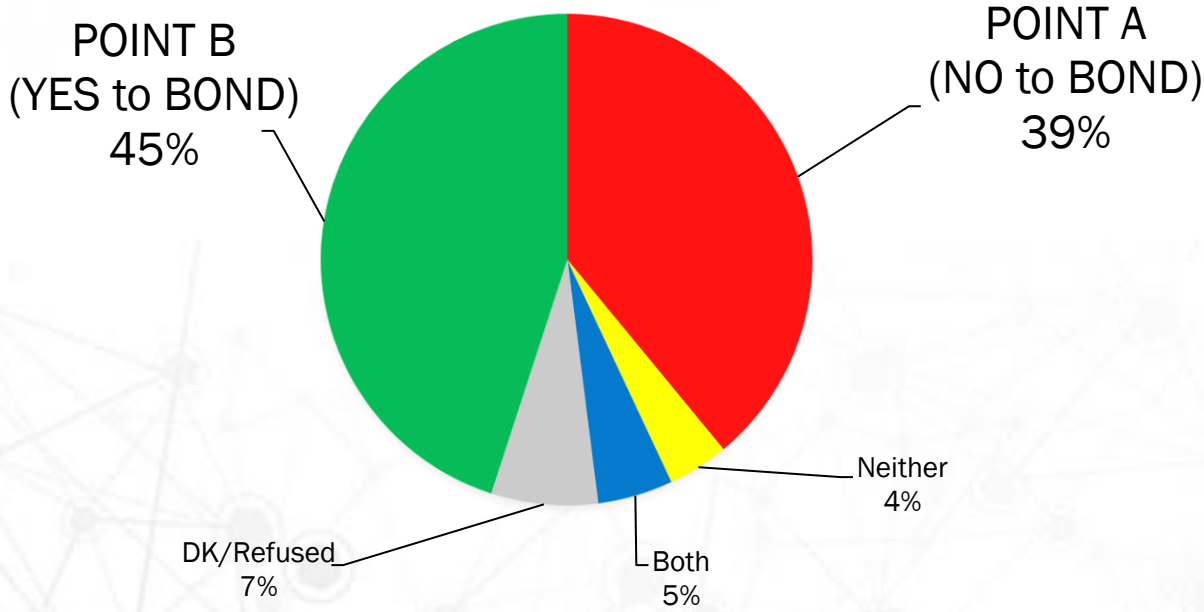
Now I am going to read you two points of view about the bond proposal, and please tell me which one you agree with more:



(Some/Other) people say the District failed in its last two attempts to pass a bond measure, because we cannot continue to strap our future generations with more and more debt. The District should live within its means and accept the will of the voters – “no” means “no” – especially considering that districtwide student enrollment has declined for two years in a row.

...while...

(Some/Other) people say that the District’s aging infrastructure, repair backlog, safety and security needs will become more urgent and expensive over time. Our property values will stay high as long as we continue to invest in our school system. Every Douglas County student and resident deserves a quality school in their community, which we cannot provide without a voter-approved bond measure. Additionally, we can do this without an increase in the tax rate we are paying for schools today.



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Our most recent survey finds majority positive attitudes about district performance overall and for most of the specific district attributes.
- At the same time, there are some mixed poll results, including more politically-charged attitudes about the history and direction of the district. Furthermore, only about half of the district voters have any interaction with the district, so there is an ongoing gap in awareness of district finances and performance.
- Factoring in a traditionally younger (more school-supportive) Presidential year electorate in 2024, our survey finds initial support for a school bond measure in the low to mid fifties.
 - Through the course of previous campaigns and new district leadership, many voters say they see the need and believe we should invest in school infrastructure. Thus, this poll finds increased support for a bond compared to previous years.
 - Still, this result does not predict an easy road and is not a prediction of the future, but rather a snap-shot of likely Nov 2024 voter attitudes at this time. A well-run, well-funded campaign -- combined with community leader consensus -- will be required to maintain this majority support through November.
- After positive message tests, our survey found that the top movers were Democrat women 18-54, College+ women, voters with DCSD Children, and Democrat/IND men 55+.
- The most persuasive messages focus on the districts' athletic and extra-curricular facilities (men, and those w/ DCSD kids), the growing \$70M repair backlog remaining after 2018 bond and risk of building closures (women under 55), and the ongoing cost of temporary modular buildings (Democrats).



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