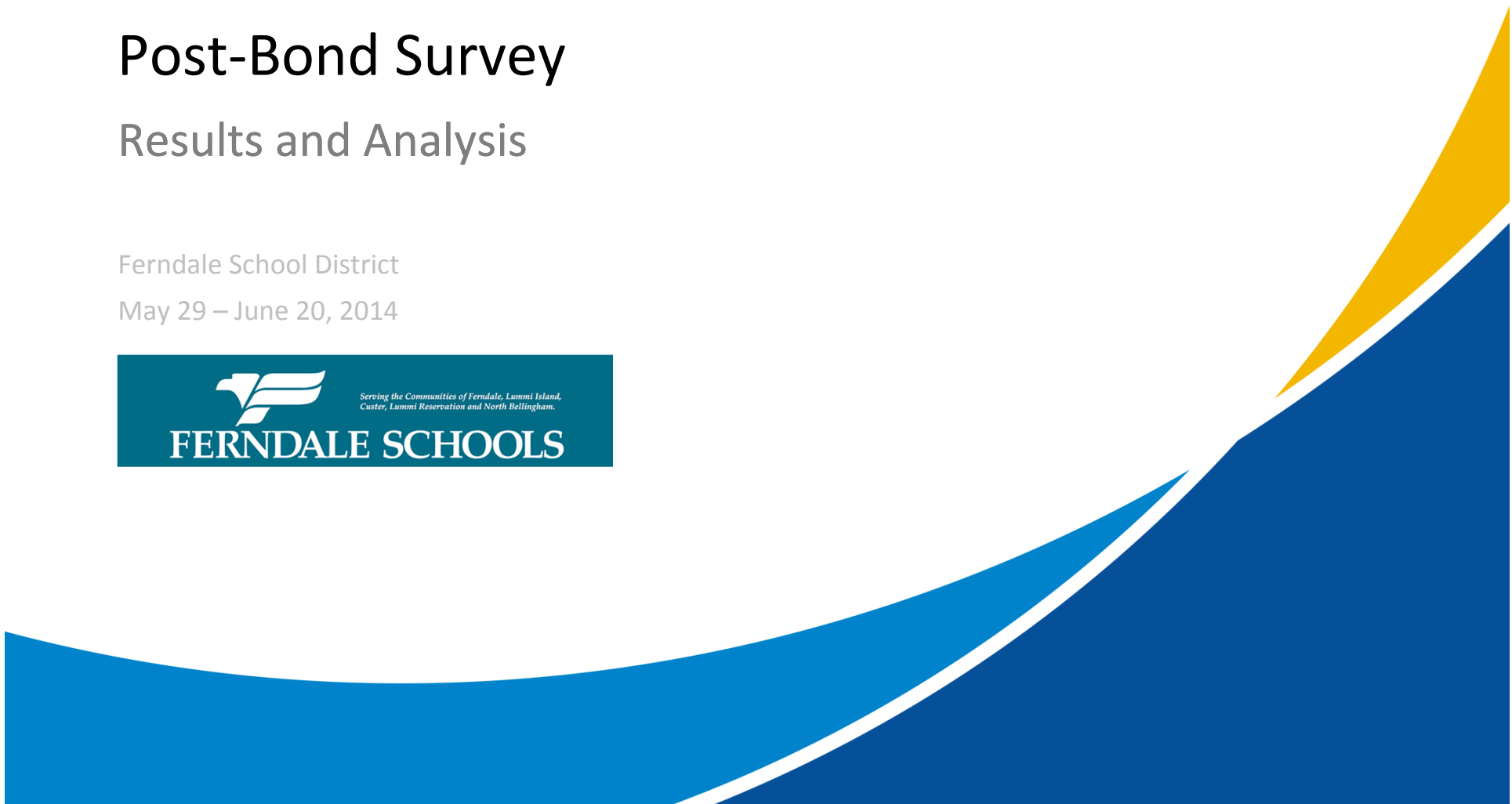


# Post-Bond Survey

## Results and Analysis

Ferndale School District

May 29 – June 20, 2014



# Overview

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Patrons of Ferndale School District were invited to complete the Post-Bond Survey, open to participation May 29 – June 20, 2014.

The purpose of the survey was to delve deeper into how the Ferndale community felt about the recent failed bond proposal and why they felt that way. One of the prevalent themes we heard throughout our focus group conversations had to do with trust. In order to address the community's concerns, we broke trust into several parts.

Survey topics included six dimensions of trust:

- Competence
- Reliability
- Integrity
- Courage
- Communication
- Respect

Patrons were also asked to share feedback on each of the three parts of the bond.

# Technical Notes

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## **Survey Development**

- In order to increase content validity, survey questions were jointly developed in collaboration with Dr. Linda Quinn, Scott Brittain, Mark Deebach and Tammy Bengen. Focus groups were also conducted to gather feedback from district employees on the recent bond proposal and to draft the Post-Bond Survey.
- Most items used 3-point or 4-point Likert scales.
- Only participants who identified as employees of the district were presented items on courage.

## **Survey Deployment**

- Pre-survey communications included a press release and newsletter content to build awareness of the survey.
- The survey was administered via a public URL and email invitations with unique links.
- The survey was translated into Spanish and Russian.

## **Data Analysis and Reporting**

- Results do not reflect random sampling; therefore, they should not be generalized to the entire population. Rather, results reflect the perceptions and opinions of those 1,186 patrons who responded to the survey.
- The findings for each item in the report exclude participants who did not answer the item.
- Data labels of 5% or less are not shown.
- Analysis procedure: 10% or 100 (whichever is greater) of randomized open-ended responses were analyzed for common themes. Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.
- Positive views are responses that affirm desirable outcomes.
  - For questions in this survey using an agreement scale, both Agree and Strongly Agree responses are considered positive views.
  - The term positive does not imply statistical significance.

# Executive Summary

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Almost 6 out of 10 participants identified as a parent of a current Ferndale School District student.

About half of the participants agree that district leaders demonstrate the skills needed to perform their jobs well and complete responsibilities in a timely and efficient manner. About 70% do not believe district leaders seek all relevant information prior to making a decision.

Over half of the participants feel district leaders cannot be counted on to “do the right thing,” deliver on commitments or respond to concerns.

A majority of participants do not feel district leaders’ words align with their actions and that they do not hold themselves accountable for their actions.

A majority of district employees believe they have opportunities to try new things and make mistakes; however, 6 out of 10 do not feel comfortable sharing a contrary opinion with district leaders.

# Executive Summary (Continued)

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Over half do not believe district leaders maintain open and effective lines of communication with the community. While over half of participants believe district leaders provide the community with a variety of opportunities to share input prior to making decisions, 62% feel district leaders are not transparent in their communication efforts with the community.

Sixty percent feel district leaders treat everyone respectfully; however, a majority of participants feel voiced concerns are not addressed.

Eight out of 10 participants support rebuilding Ferndale High School. Of those participants, 53% do not support the project in its current form, but would support it with changes.

Six out of 10 participants support remodeling Windward High School. Of those participants, 37% do not support the project in its current form, but would support it with changes.

Six out of 10 participants support moving the maintenance and transportation facilities to the Mt. View site. Of those participants, 39% do not support the project in its current form, but would support it with changes.

# Participation

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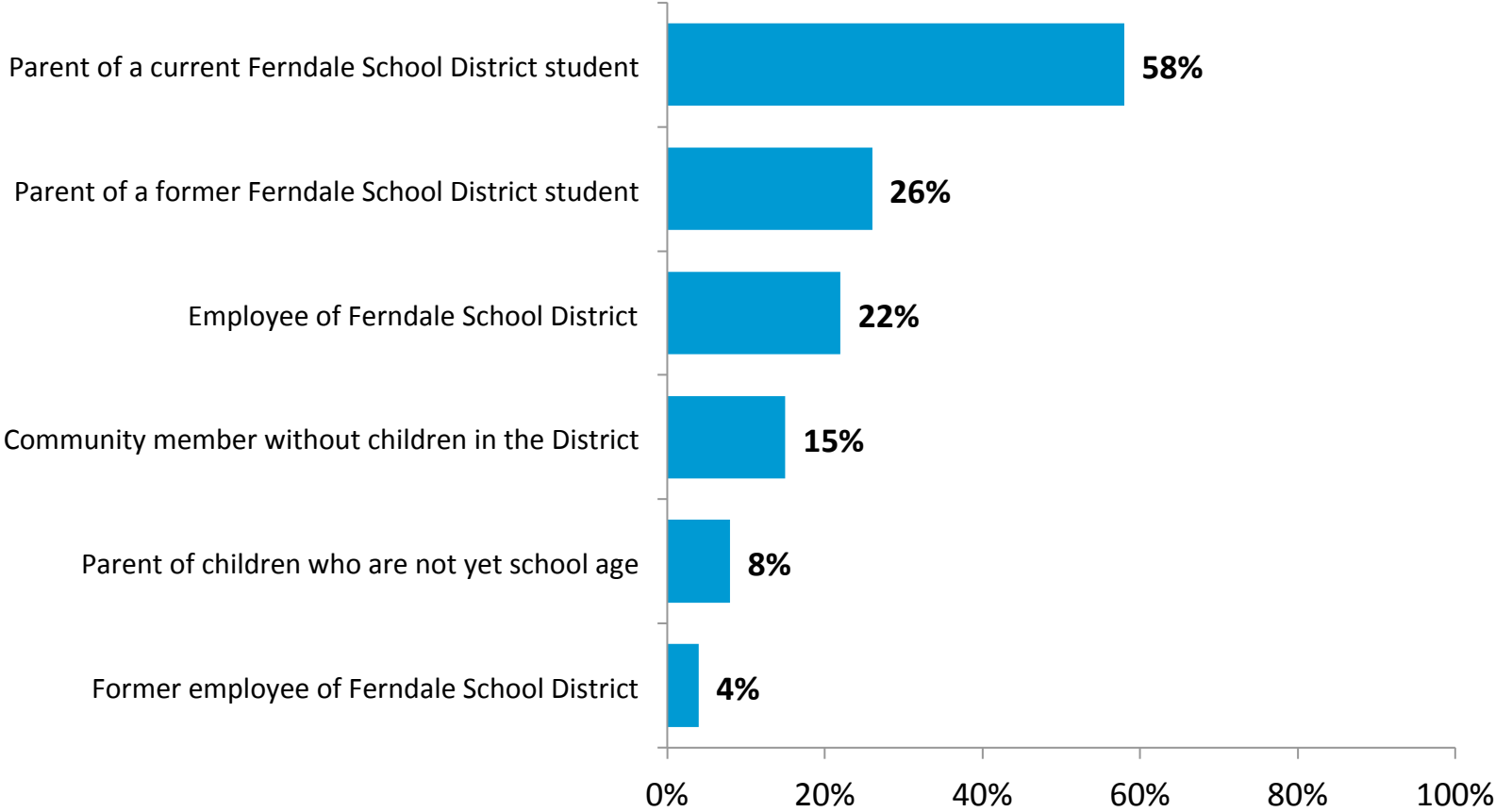
Responding Group	Number of Responses via Emailed Invitation	Number of Responses via Public URL	Total Number of Responses
FSD Patrons	658	528	1,186

**No participants took the survey in Spanish. One participant took the survey in Russian.**

*Reminder emails were sent to non-participants 6/5, 6/12 and 6/17.*

# Participant Information

I am a(n) . . . (N=1,179)



*Note: The sum of percentages may exceed 100% because participants could select more than one response option.*

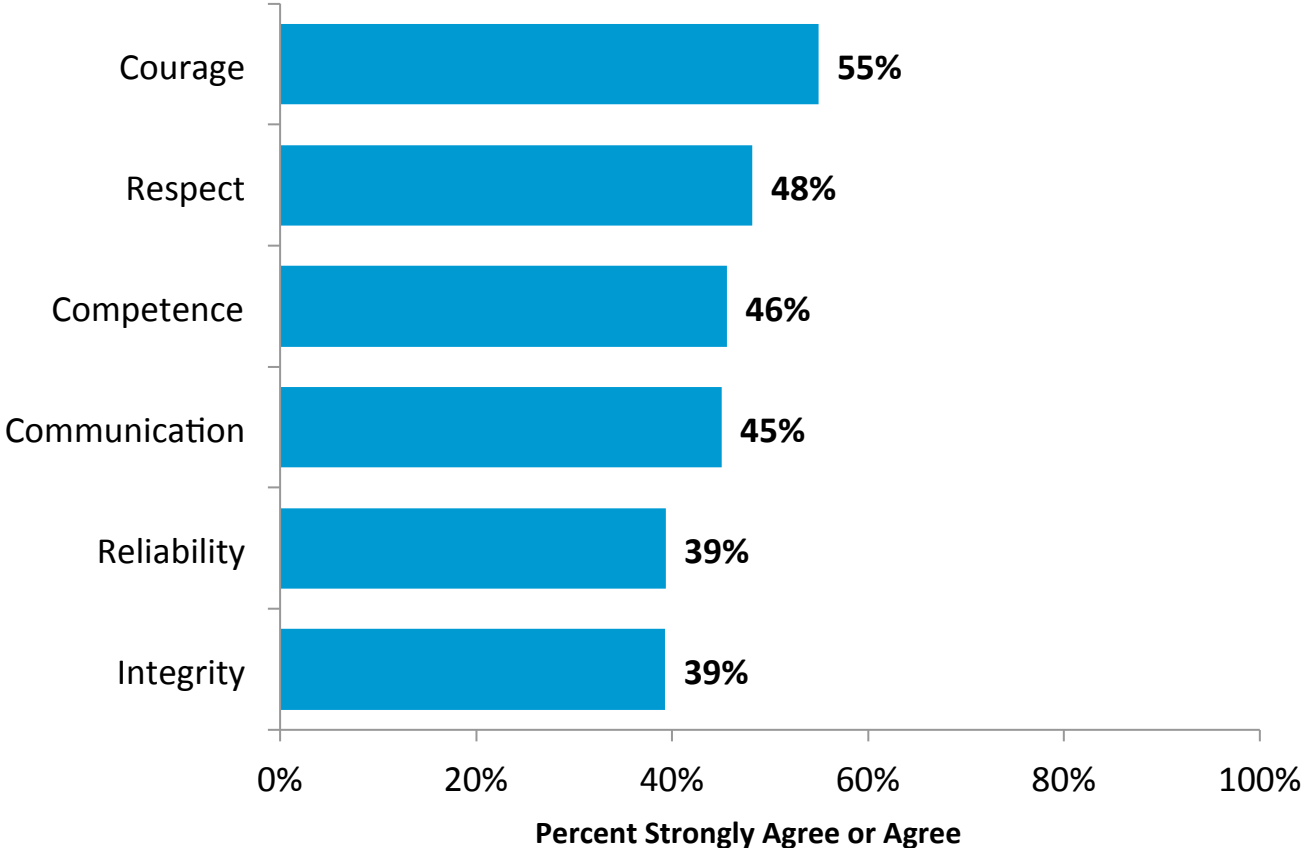
# Main Findings

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# Dimensions of Trust

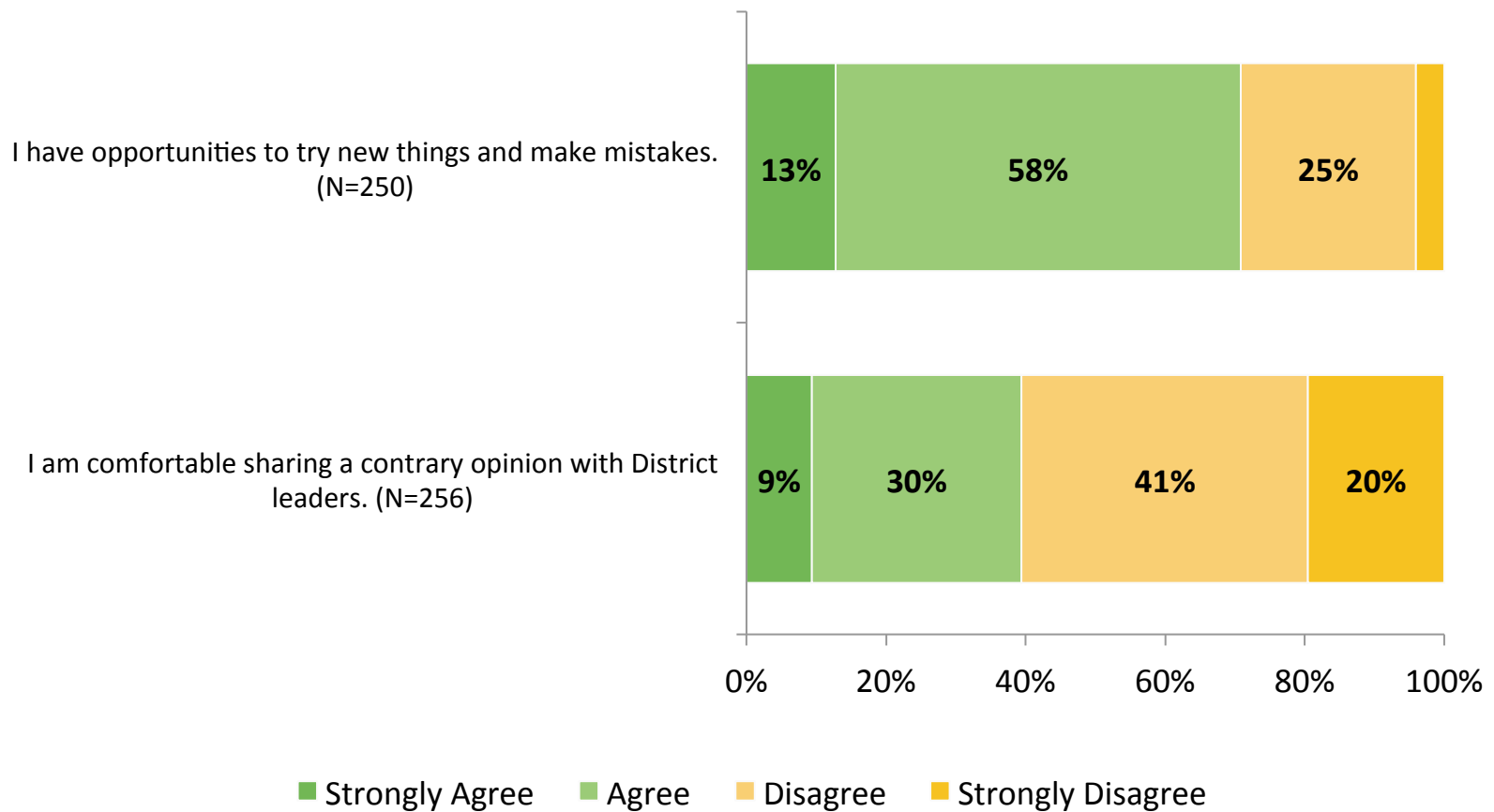
Dimension agreement rates (Strongly Agree + Agree) range between 39% and 55%. There is a 16-point gap between the lowest and highest dimension.



*Note: Courage represents only participants who answered that they are Employees of Ferndale School District.*

# Courage

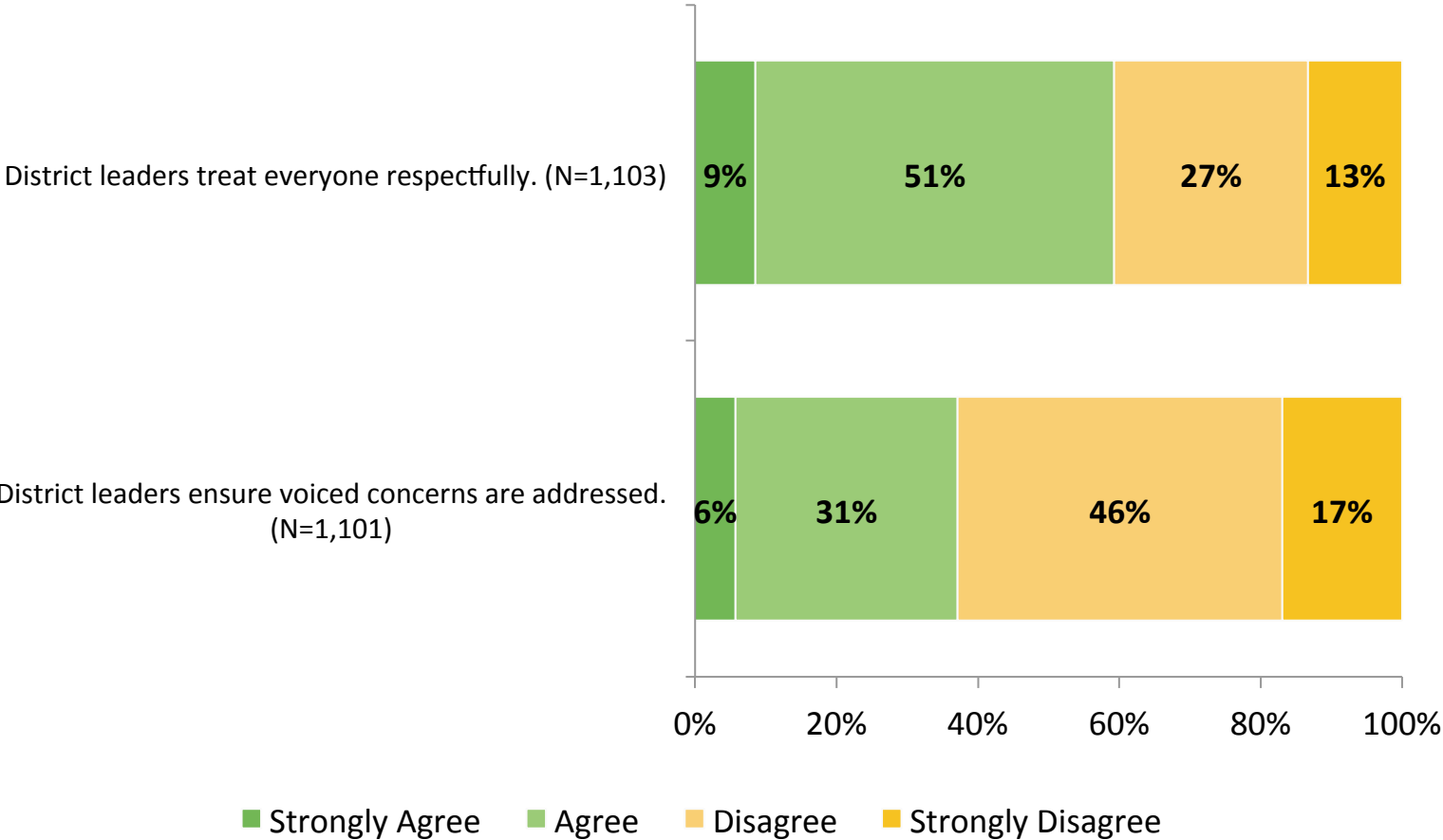
Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



*Note: Only participants who answered that they are Employees of Ferndale School District were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

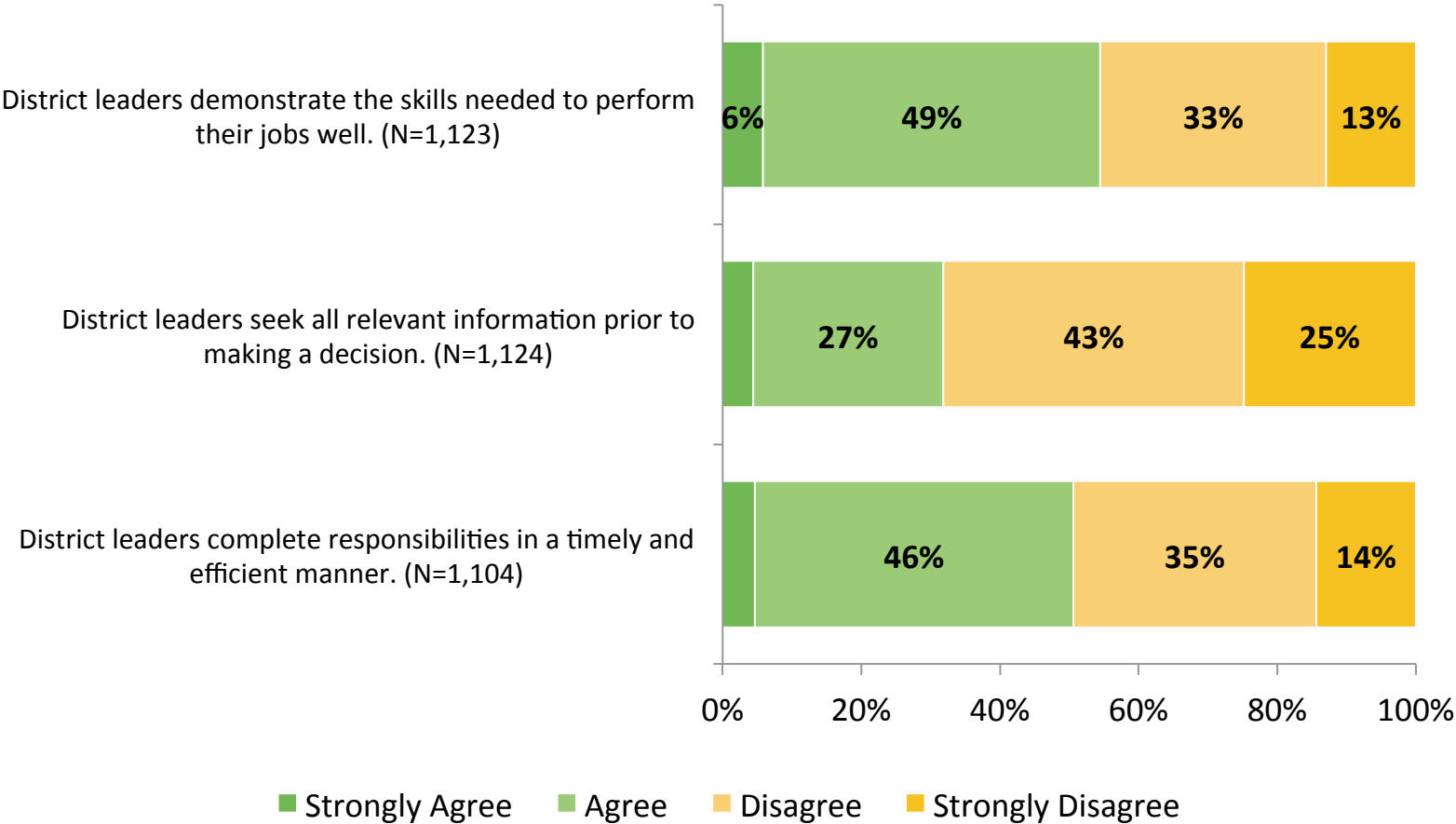
# Respect

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



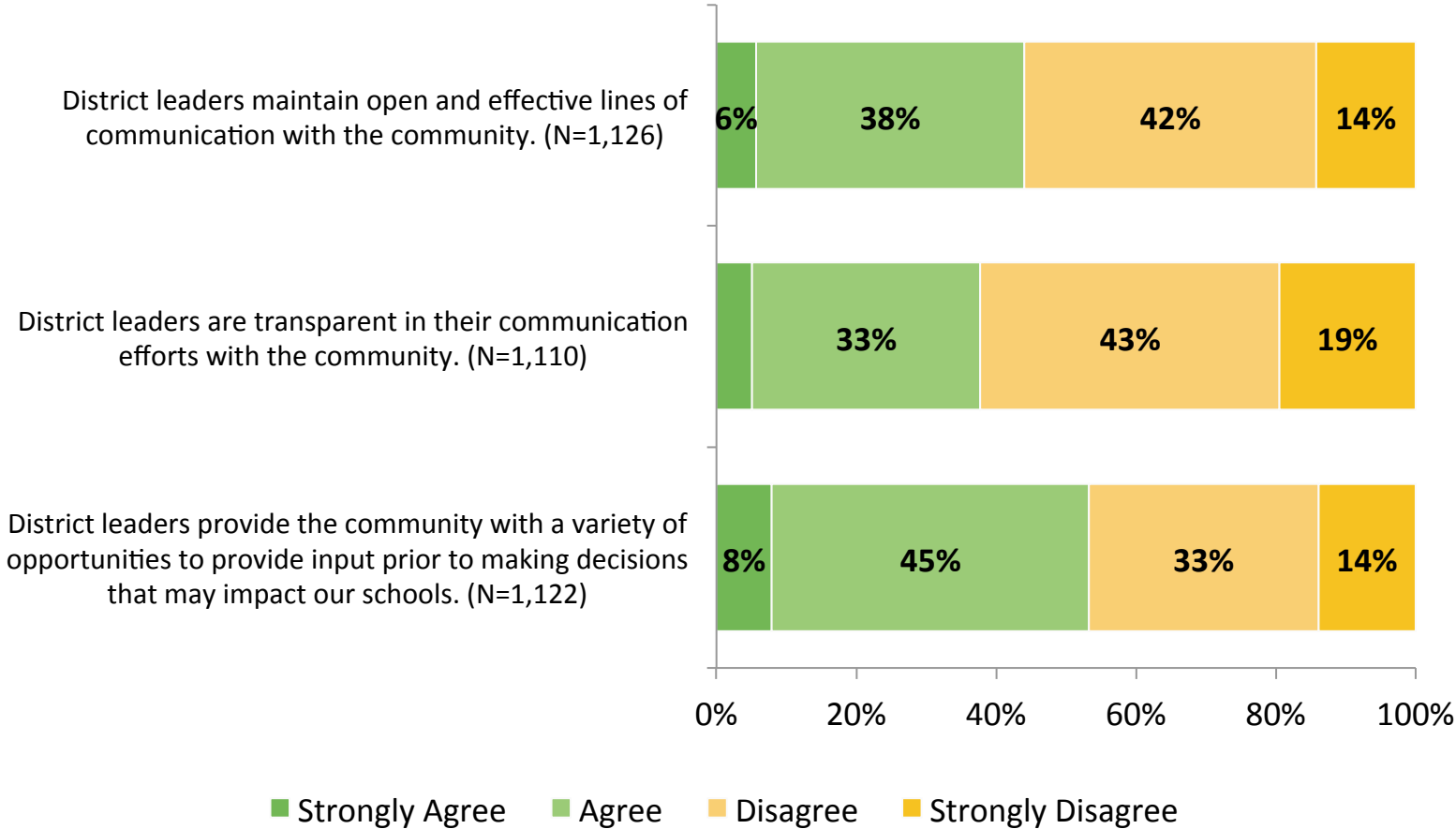
# Competence

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



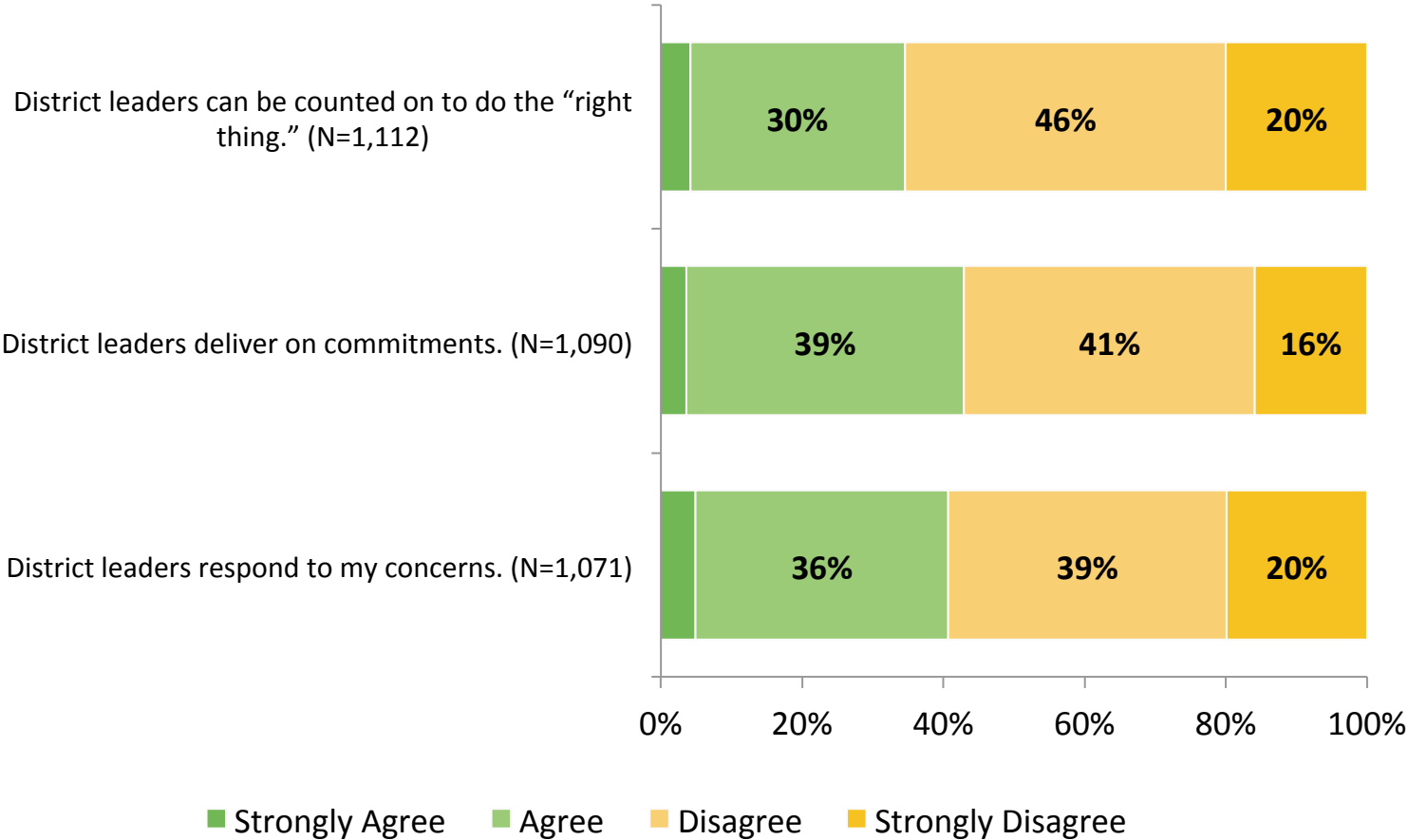
# Communication

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



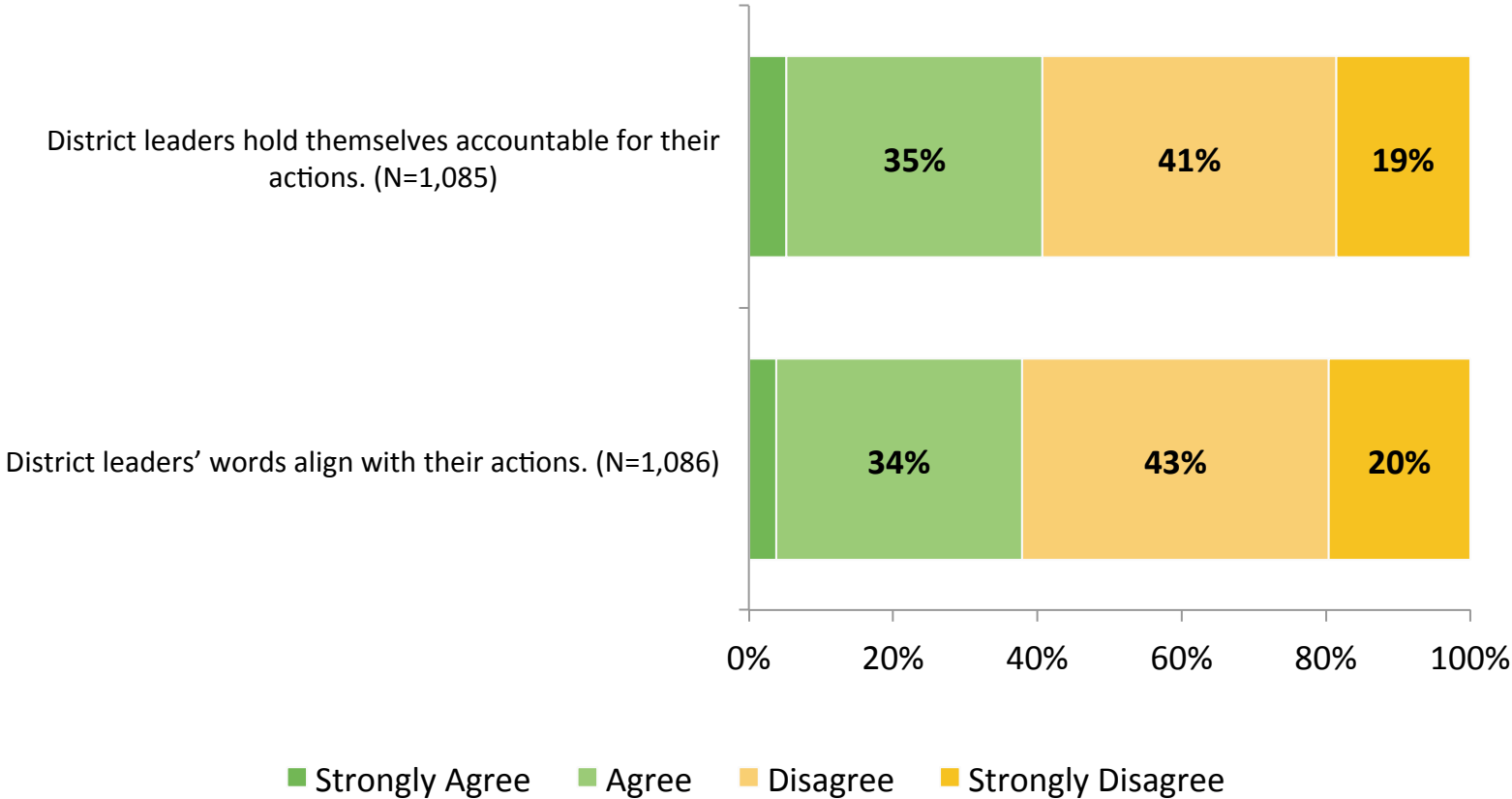
# Reliability

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



# Integrity

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.



# Parts of the Bond Proposal

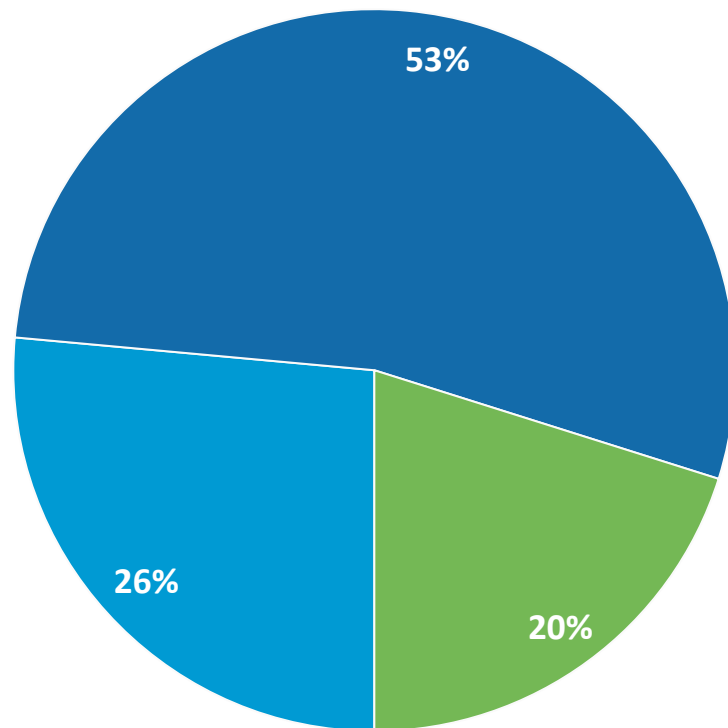
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# Part One: Rebuilding Ferndale High School

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Part One: Rebuilding Ferndale High School (N=1,172)



- I support this project in its current form
- I do not support this project, but would support it with changes
- I will not support this project, even if modified

# Common Themes to Open-Ended Questions

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## Please share why you support this project in its current form. (N=192)

The most commonly cited reason for support of the project was participants' belief that its implementation would improve students' educational experience.

Participants expressed concern regarding the current conditions of the facilities intended for renovation or reconstruction and the negative effect that these issues create for the learning environment.

Improvements in technology necessary to foster 21st century skills as well as the need to enhance the security of the high school campus were identified as priorities by participants.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they support this project in its current form were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Questions

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### Please share what changes you would like to see made to this project proposal. (N=484)

The most prevalent suggestion among survey participants was to lower the overall dollar amount of the bond offering. Participating patrons expressed concern about the potential tax burden as well as the complexity of the projects to be addressed by the proceeds.

Some participants believe there are opportunities to remodel school facilities rather than to completely rebuild them.

Participating patrons expressed the desire for greater detail in the allocation of funds and specifics about the plans for projects proposed.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they do not support this project, but would support it with changes were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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### Please share why you do not support this project. (N=202)

The most common concern among participants who do not support this project is to lower the overall dollar amount of the bond offering. The increase in taxes caused by the bond was also a common concern.

Participants identified the district's fiscal management as an opportunity for improvement, seeking a greater emphasis on prudent application of funds for facilities and maintenance. A related concern was the respondents' mistrust in the district administration's commitment to apply the funds in accordance with the stated objectives shared with the community.

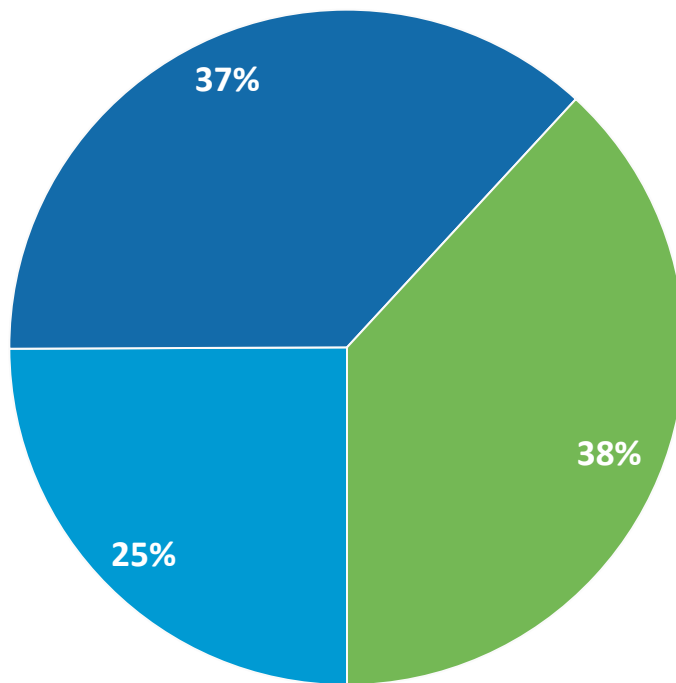
*Note: Only participants who answered that they will not support this project, even if modified, were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

# Part Two: Remodeling Windward High School

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Part Two: Remodeling Windward High School (N=1,143)



- I support this project in its current form
- I do not support this project, but would support it with changes
- I will not support this project, even if modified

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

---

### Please share why you support this project in its current form. (N=123)

The most commonly cited reason for support of the project was the belief that Windward High School is an asset to the community and the students it serves.

Many feel it should be remodeled to better meet the needs of high school students.

Patrons referred specifically to the North Bellingham campus and its need for repair.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they support this project in its current form were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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### Please share what changes you would like to see made to this project proposal. (N=265)

A desire for more information about the specific proposed repairs to Windward High School and the cost associated with each repair was the most prevalent suggestion.

Many said they would support renovating the facility if it was used for North Bellingham elementary students.

Patrons felt the proposal was too expensive.

Several suggested moving Windward High School to the Mt. View site.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they do not support this project, but would support it with changes were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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### Please share why you do not support this project. (N=296)

Many patrons do not understand the mission and goals of Windward High School and feel two high schools (especially one that serves so few students) is unnecessary.

Patrons feel the campus should be used for North Bellingham elementary students.

Several feel the project is not a priority and is too expensive.

Some suggested building an alternative satellite school on or near the Ferndale High School Campus.

Few do not trust the district to make good use of tax dollars.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they will not support this project, even if modified, were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

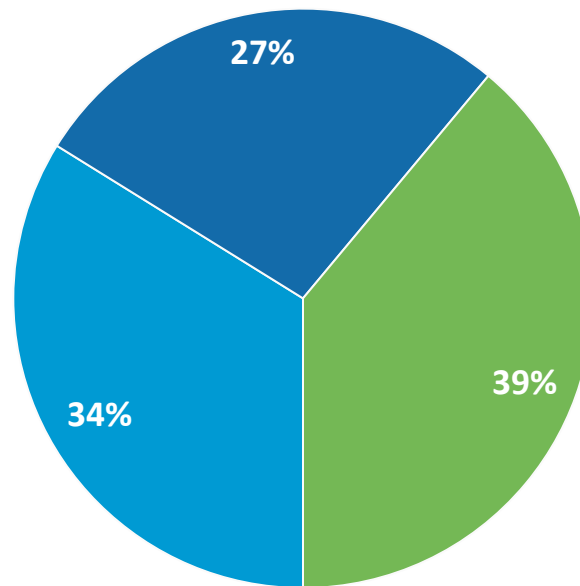
*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*



# Part Three: Moving the Maintenance and Transportation Facilities to the Mt. View Site

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Part Three: Moving the Maintenance and Transportation Facilities to the Mt. View Site (N=1,135)



- I support this project in its current form
- I do not support this project, but would support it with changes
- I will not support this project, even if modified

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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### Please share why you support this project in its current form. (N=140)

Participants wrote they want to make use of current district property.

Participants see moving the Maintenance and Transportation facility to Mt. View as necessary in order to make room for the High School's site improvements.

Participants noted that the Mt. View site is currently unused and that they'd like to see it used for something.

Some wrote that they don't know enough about this part of the bond proposal.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they support this project in its current form were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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Please share what changes you would like to see made to this project proposal. (N=206)

Most wrote that they would like more detailed information before making a decision.

Many respondents noted their uncertainty since the Mt. View site is in a residential area.

Some wrote that the project would be too expensive.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they do not support this project, but would support it with changes were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

## Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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### Please share why you do not support this project. (N=297)

Most don't support the project because Mt. View is an a residential area and they don't feel it should be disturbed.

Many wrote that roads near Mt. View are not fit for increased traffic. Others expressed concerns about exhaust and/or pollution in the residential area.

Participants shared that they think the site should have been kept as an elementary school.

*Note: Only participants who answered that they will not support this project, even if modified, were given the opportunity to answer this question.*

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

# Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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## Please share your thoughts on how the district can rebuild and/or maintain trust. (N=733)

Participants feel the district must listen to the community and demonstrate that they value the input shared by stakeholders as they develop policy for the district and make decisions affecting the future of the community.

Participants feel communication from the district should detail the specifics of district plans and indicated that this would help them make informed choices. Some respondents expressed a desire for greater frequency in communication from the district.

Some respondents also indicated that more modest requests for funds and tighter controls on financial management would enhance the level of stakeholder trust in the district.

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

# Common Themes to Open-Ended Responses

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**In general, please share why you believe the February bond proposal was defeated. (N=860)**

Overall, patrons believe the February bond proposal was too expensive.

Many cite lack of trust and previous botched projects as the primary reasons the bond was defeated.

Many feel they need more information and time to process the proposal.

Patrons would like to see the district focus on one project, not three.

Several asked the district to do a better job listening to its stakeholders and including them in the process.

*Note: Common themes are listed from most to least recurrent.*

# Conclusions

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## Highlights

- A total of 1,186 people took their time to respond to the survey and provide us with valuable feedback.
- A total of 79% of those who responded to the survey said they would support a bond measure for Ferndale High School either in the form it was proposed last February (26%) or in a modified form (53%).
- The people who responded to the survey provided us with specific feedback we can use to guide future plans and actions related to facilities.
- The people who responded to the survey provided us with specific feedback we can use to improve relationships between the school district and the community.
- The majority of those who responded to the survey perceive that the district provides the community with a variety of opportunities to give input before making a decision (53%).

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## Next Steps

- While we very much appreciate all of those who shared their opinions via the survey, the percentage of our total stakeholders is still too small. (We only heard from about 7%.) Therefore, we know we need to employ different communication strategies. To this end, we are hosting a community forum on September 22 to discuss ideas reflected in the survey. The School Board is also going to hold a study session at a different school each month and invite people to have face-to-face conversations with them.
- This information will help us in future bond planning, especially since the majority of those who indicated they would support a bond for Ferndale High said it would have to be something different from what was proposed last February. Several local citizens have come forward to help develop a modified plan, which will be shared at the community forum on September 22.
- We heard the message that the proposed bond was “sprung” on people too quickly, it was too expensive, and the information the district put out was not specific enough. As a result, we are going back to the drawing board. With more citizen input, we are going to figure out a more specific, less expensive, scaled down plan for addressing the needs of our high schools. We are not going to rush into proposing another bond.
- We heard the message that we need to rebuild trust with the community. Several of the actions mentioned above are part of our plan for doing so. In addition, we have committed to focusing our efforts during the year ahead on strengthening relationships, attending to staff and community, and ensuring every student has a quality learning experience every day.
- We want to improve the number who are part of the dialogue. Therefore we are implementing several new ways to improve our communication. We are using our Facebook page more frequently. We are implementing a new feature on our website called “Let’s Talk” to foster more two-way dialogue with our community. Also, we are developing a district mobile app to give parents and others more immediate access to district information.





K12 *Insight* is a technology-based research and communications firm that helps school district leadership better engage in conversations with parents, teachers, staff, students and the general public on critical district issues.

K12 *Insight's* approach results in greater transparency and collaborative decision-making.

Watch our [Candid Conversations video](http://bit.ly/12m6z4x), at <http://bit.ly/12m6z4x>, to learn more about how we work.