



# A Report on a Community Survey

Prepared for

**The Indian Prairie School  
District**

Thursday  
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## Survey Basics

The observations and conclusions in this report are based on the results of 400 telephone interviews with registered voters in the Indian Prairie School District. All interviews were completed between July 23 and July 26, 2005. The overall margin of error for the results of the common questions included in the questionnaire is +/-4.5%. The demographic characteristics of the population interviewed reflect the demographic characteristics of the voters in the district with one exception. The voters interviewed are more likely to vote in any election held in the district than the total population of voters in the district. This bias was intentional.

## Conclusions and Observations

Voters prefer building permanent classrooms or a new high or middle school as an option to creating additional classroom space. They consider changing grade configurations or adopting split shifts as the least acceptable ways to create additional space.

They have a very positive attitude towards the district. They give very high marks to the district in general, to its facilities and to its ability to serve the community. Voters felt that a lack of information was a major factor in the defeat of the April referendum and overwhelmingly suggested that a key to winning voter approval was an effort to provide more information to voters. The idea that taxes were too high was much more of a concern for those who did not vote in April than for those who did.

The largest group of voters relies on newspapers for information about the district. Overall, they would prefer to receive information via direct mail. There are significant differences, however, in the ways parents and non-parents prefer to receive information in the future.

Our observations and conclusions are based on the following analysis of the interviews completed for this study.

## Creating Additional Space

Fourteen ways in which the district might create additional classroom space were presented to those interviewed as part of this study. As each item was presented, respondents were asked to tell us how acceptable the option was as a means of providing additional classroom space. This series of questions was introduced with the following language: *“Because there will be more students in the district’s schools than the buildings were designed to accommodate the Indian Prairie School District needs to create additional classroom space. There are a number of ways the district can create the space it needs. To get your reaction to some of these options, I am going to read a list of some of the options the district has available. For each, tell me if you believe the option is very acceptable, somewhat acceptable, somewhat unacceptable or very unacceptable.”*

We want to look at the responses to these questions in two different ways. The first is a ranking of the responses by the percentage of those interviewed who felt the option was a very acceptable way to create additional classroom space. This method of ranking the responses is very simple and allows us to place the options into a priority ranking. This ranking is presented in the following table.

<b>Pct. Very Acceptable</b>	<b>Pct. Very Unacceptable</b>	<b>Option</b>
<b>53.3%</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
<b>38.5%</b>	<b>14.8%</b>	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
<b>32.8%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>29.3%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	23. Build a seventh middle school.
<b>28.6%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom

		space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>28.5%</b>	<b>21.5%</b>	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
<b>27.0%</b>	<b>30.0%</b>	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
<b>26.9%</b>	<b>20.9%</b>	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
<b>26.6%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
<b>24.9%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
<b>24.0%</b>	<b>22.3%</b>	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
<b>22.3%</b>	<b>13.8%</b>	27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
<b>18.8%</b>	<b>39.5%</b>	24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.
<b>13.0%</b>	<b>23.0%</b>	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.

Using this method of ranking, the project seen as most acceptable is the building of additional permanent classrooms at the school sites where additional space is needed. More than half of those interviewed, 53.3% found this a very acceptable option. Only 5.5% found it very unacceptable. Voters are sensitive to the impact of adding classrooms that might reduce field or parking space, however. Notice that when this information was included in the question the number of

individuals stating that building permanent classrooms at the schools that need them dropped to 32.8%. Those who found this option very unacceptable increased to 9%. The idea of building a third comprehensive high school was seen as very acceptable by 38.5% of those interviewed but the percentage who found this option very unacceptable is also higher than in either of the responses to building permanent classrooms. The third high school was seen as very unacceptable by 14.8%.

The lowest ranking was given to options that involved changing the grade configuration of the schools or operating the high school on a split shift. The idea of using split shifts was seen as very acceptable by 18.8% and very unacceptable by 39.5%. The idea of reconfiguring the grades assigned to elementary, middle and high school was seen as a very acceptable option by 13.0%. It was found very unacceptable by 23.0%. Even using this simple method of ranking, voters in the district expressed clear preferences for some of the options presented and clear concerns about others<sup>1</sup>.

This simple method of ranking, however, obscures the impact on the priority given to a project by the three other possible responses. If an option has roughly equal numbers of voters stating that it is very acceptable and very unacceptable (i.e. an option that polarizes the community), the impact of the very unacceptable responses will be obscured in this simple ranking. Therefore, we will look at a second form of ranking. The responses are all assigned a numerical value (very acceptable = 1 and very unacceptable = 4). This allows us to calculate a mean response for each question. Before making this calculation, all of the responses from individuals with no opinion concerning the acceptability of the option are removed from the data set. This allows us to create a ranking where the lower the mean score the more acceptable the option (and conversely, the higher the

score the more unacceptable the project). In the following table, the calculated mean is used to rank these projects.

Mean	Rank Using Only Very Acceptable	Option
1.62	1	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
1.99	3	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.05	2	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
2.12	4	23. Build a seventh middle school.
2.24	9	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
2.28	12	27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
2.3	6	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
2.32	8	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
2.37	10	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
2.38	5	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools

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<sup>1</sup> After all of these options had been presented, voters were asked: “*Is there an option which I did not present to you that you believe the district should consider?*” The responses to this question are presented in Appendix A.

		in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.41	11	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
2.47	7	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
2.58	14	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.
2.8	13	24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.

The means ranking changes the priority in which some of these options are placed. With two exceptions, however, it does not change the items found most acceptable or least acceptable. Building permanent classrooms, regardless of the impact this might have on the fields and parking space available, immerges as the most acceptable option. Building a new high school or middle school remains among the most acceptable options. Changing grade configuration and adopting a split session schedule at the high school trade places but remain the most unacceptable options presented. The two exceptions concern building more facilities like the Freshman Centers (Q27) and the adoption of a year-round calendar (Q18). The ranking given to facilities like the Freshman Centers moved up significantly and the ranking given to a year-round calendar moved down significantly.

This method of ranking also makes it much easier to create a ranking that compares the way parents and non-parents react to these options. During the interview, a series of questions was used to determine if the individual being

interviewed currently had a child in public school or had a grown child who had gone to school in the district in the past. The responses to all of these questions are used to divide the interviews conducted as part of this study into three groups: current parents, parents of grown children who went to school in the district in the past (to be called “alumni parents”), and non-parents. This allows us to create the following table that uses the calculated mean to rank the options based on the responses of current parents.

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Option</b>
1.64	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
1.93	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
2.05	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.09	23. Build a seventh middle school.
2.24	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
2.27	27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
2.37	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
2.38	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
2.44	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.46	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
2.46	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
2.6	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and

high schools.

- 2.63** 18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
- 2.9** 24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.

The most acceptable options remain in the same position within the ranking when compared to the overall responses. Portable classrooms and the adoption of a year-round calendar drop to near the bottom of the list. Now we can compare the ranking among parents to that found among alumni parents.

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank Among Parents</b>	<b>Option</b>
1.64	1	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
1.87	3	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2	11	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
2.18	2	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
2.33	4	23. Build a seventh middle school.
2.36	13	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
2.38	10	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
2.43	9	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.53	6	27. Build additional high school grade level centers

		similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
<b>2.55</b>	<b>14</b>	24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.
<b>2.56</b>	<b>5</b>	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
<b>2.57</b>	<b>7</b>	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
<b>2.59</b>	<b>8</b>	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
<b>2.7</b>	<b>12</b>	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.

Among alumni parents changing attendance boundaries or adopting a year-round calendar are seen as more acceptable than among current parents. Even the idea of adopting split shifts on the high school level does better among alumni parents than among current parents. Magnet schools and small accelerated schools are given a much lower ranking by alumni parents than among parents. Changing grade configurations at the district’s schools remains at the bottom of the ranking.

The next table allows us to compare the ranking given by parents to the responses collected among non-parents.

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Rank Among Parents</b>	<b>Option</b>
<b>1.58</b>	<b>1</b>	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.

<b>1.99</b>	<b>3</b>	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>2.06</b>	<b>4</b>	23. Build a seventh middle school.
<b>2.1</b>	<b>5</b>	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
<b>2.12</b>	<b>7</b>	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
<b>2.14</b>	<b>2</b>	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
<b>2.17</b>	<b>6</b>	27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
<b>2.25</b>	<b>10</b>	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
<b>2.29</b>	<b>9</b>	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>2.29</b>	<b>11</b>	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
<b>2.31</b>	<b>13</b>	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
<b>2.38</b>	<b>8</b>	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
<b>2.5</b>	<b>12</b>	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.
<b>2.77</b>	<b>14</b>	24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.

The non-parents react to these options in much the same way as the parents with one major exception. Among the non-parents building a new middle school is

seen as a more acceptable solution to the need for additional classrooms than is the building of a third high school. Among non-parents a year-round calendar, changing the grade configuration of the schools and adopting split shifts are found to be among the least acceptable solutions.

In the following table, we divide the responses to these questions according to whether or not the individual being interviewed cast a ballot in April. The most acceptable way to create additional classroom space among voters who participated in the April election is the creation of additional permanent classroom space at the school sites that need the space. The ranking given to this options drops some when voters are reminded that these new classrooms will encroach on field and parking space but still ranks above the building of a new high school or middle school.

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Option</b>
<b>1.77</b>	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
<b>2.02</b>	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>2.11</b>	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
<b>2.15</b>	23. Build a seventh middle school.
<b>2.17</b>	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
<b>2.24</b>	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
<b>2.28</b>	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
<b>2.31</b>	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
<b>2.49</b>	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.

- 2.5 27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
- 2.54 25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
- 2.57 22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.
- 2.57 26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
- 2.78 24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.

Among those who did not vote in the April election, the ranking of the first four options is the same as among those who did vote. Building permanent classrooms is ranked more acceptable than building either a new high school or a new middle school. What is different among those who did not cast a ballot in April is the ranking given to the building of additional facilities like the Freshman Centers or the creation of small high schools. These rank much higher among those who did not participate in the district’s most recent election than among those who did.

Mean	Rank Among Those Who Voted	Option
1.55	1	19A. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
1.98	2	19B. Add permanent classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.02	3	17. Build a third comprehensive high school.
2.1	4	23. Build a seventh middle school.

2.17	10	27. Build additional high school grade level centers similar to the Freshman Centers the district has created.
2.2	11	25. Build a small high school where some students in 11th and 12th grades would be able to concentrate on accelerated high school classes and begin college level course work.
2.22	7	21A. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools.
2.33	13	26. Build a magnet school which will allow students to concentrate in a specific discipline or area of study.
2.39	5	21B. Change the attendance boundaries for individual schools as often as needed to avoid overcrowding.
2.41	8	20A. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space, even when doing so reduces the amount of space available for athletic fields and parking.
2.43	6	20B. Add portable classrooms to the schools in the district that need additional classroom space.
2.45	9	18. Adopt a year-round school calendar.
2.59	12	22. Change the grade levels assigned to elementary, middle and high schools.
2.81	14	24. Instead of the current seven hour high school day, operate the high schools on split shifts where half of the students attend classes for five hours in the morning and the other half attend classes for five hours in the afternoon.

## A Willingness to Raise Taxes

The next question in the survey was designed to provide us with a general sense of whether or not voters would be willing to raise taxes to pay the costs associated with many of these proposals. After all of the ways in which the district might create additional classroom space had been presented, each person was asked: *“There is a cost associated with most of the ways the district can create additional classroom space. If the district asked local voters to approve a property tax increase to raise the funds needed to create the classroom space the district needs, would you favor or oppose such a proposal?”* In response, 47.3% said they would favor such a proposal with 33.0% opposed and 19.3% undecided.

If we divide the responses to this question by parent status, we find that support for a tax increase to create additional classroom space is strongest among parents. 54.6% of the district’s parents said they would support a tax increase with 26.5% opposed and 18.9% undecided. Support is weakest among alumni parents where 35.0% would favor a tax increase and 43.3% would oppose one. An additional 21.7% of the alumni parents were undecided. All of the responses to the uninformed benchmark are presented in the following table.

	<b>K-12 Parents</b>	<b>Alumni Parents</b>	<b>Non- Parents</b>
Favor	54.6%	35.0%	43.2%
Oppose	26.5%	43.3%	36.8%
Undecided	18.9%	21.7%	18.7%
Refused			1.3%

Support for a tax increase is also strongest among those least likely to vote and weakest among those most likely to cast a ballot in any election held in the district. The differences in the level of support available from each type of voter are not as important, however, as the relatively uniform level of support and

opposition found regardless of past voting behavior. To look for differences of opinion based on a voter's propensity to vote, each individual's history of voting activity was used to define voter types. Five recent elections in the district<sup>2</sup> were used as the basis for classifying voters as Very Active Voters (who have voted in at least four or five of the last five elections), Active Voters (who have voted in two or three of the last five elections), and Less Active or Newly Registered Voters (who have voted once or registered within the last 12 months but have not yet voted). All responses are presented in the following table divided based on voter activity.

	<b>Very Active Voters</b>	<b>Active Voters</b>	<b>Less Active &amp; New Voters</b>
Favor	45.4%	46.7%	49.3%
Oppose	36.1%	30.9%	32.9%
Undecided	18.5%	21.1%	17.9%
Refused		1.3%	

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<sup>2</sup> The elections used for this study were the November elections held in 2004, 2002, 2000; the 2004 primary election and the April, 2005 ballot.

## Evaluating the District

The perception of the education provided by the district is very good. 76.1% of those interviewed give the District an A or a B when asked the following question: *“Let’s begin with a simple question. Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools in your community were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the public schools in the Indian Prairie School District?”* The grades given to the Indian Prairie School District are significantly better than those collected as part of the Phi Delta Kappa/ Gallup *Poll of the Public’s Attitudes towards the Public Schools*. Responses from both the district survey and the PDK survey are presented in the following table.

	<b>Indian Prairie</b>	<b>PDK 2004</b>
<b>A</b>	34.8%	13.0%
<b>B</b>	41.3%	34.0%
<b>C</b>	7.3%	33.0%
<b>D</b>	.3%	10.0%
<b>F</b>	0.0%	4.0%
<b>DK</b>	16.5%	6.0%

As expected, the parents in the district give it higher grades than either the alumni parents or the non-parents. Alumni parents and non-parents are more likely to give the district a B instead of an A. The largest number of voters unable to evaluate the district is found among the non-parents. All of the responses to this question divided by parent status are presented in the following table.

	<b>K-12 Parents</b>	<b>Alumni Parents</b>	<b>Non- Parents</b>
<b>A</b>	41.1%	31.7%	28.4%
<b>B</b>	47.6%	50.0%	30.3%
<b>C</b>	5.9%	10.0%	7.7%
<b>D</b>	0.0%	0.0%	.6%
<b>F</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>DK</b>	5.4%	8.3%	32.9%

There is a regional difference in the grades given to the district. Voters in Will County are more likely to give the district an A instead of a B. The percentage of those interviewed who were unable to give the district a grade is higher in DuPage County than in Will County<sup>3</sup>. All of the responses to this question divided by county are presented in the following table.

	DuPage Co	Will Co
<b>A</b>	30.7%	40.9%
<b>B</b>	41.1%	41.5%
<b>C</b>	7.9%	6.3%
<b>D</b>	0.0%	0.6%
<b>F</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>DK</b>	20.3%	10.7%

Voters in the district also give high grades to the facilities in the Indian Prairie School District. Each person interviewed was asked: *“What grade would you give to the school facilities that serve your neighborhood in the Indian Prairie School District?”* Almost half, 49.5%, give the district’s facilities an A with an additional 28.8% giving them a B. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>A</b>	49.5%
<b>B</b>	28.8%
<b>C</b>	6.5%
<b>D</b>	.8%
<b>F</b>	0.0%
<b>DK</b>	14.5%

As might be expected, parents give the district’s facilities higher grades than either the alumni parents or the non-parents. In this case, however, the responses offered by alumni parents are more like those of the parents than those of the non-parents. Non-parents are more likely to give the district a B instead of an A or not be able to evaluate the district’s facilities. All of the

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<sup>3</sup> The percentage of interviews with parents in each county accurately reflects the distribution

responses to this question divided by parent status are presented in the following table.

	<b>K-12 Parents</b>	<b>Alumni Parents</b>	<b>Non- Parents</b>
<b>A</b>	58.4%	53.3%	37.4%
<b>B</b>	31.9%	33.3%	23.2%
<b>C</b>	5.4%	5.0%	8.4%
<b>D</b>	1.1%	0.0%	.6%
<b>F</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>DK</b>	3.2%	8.3%	30.3%

The regional difference in the grades given to the district’s facilities is greater than in the first question. Voters in Will County are more likely to give the district an A instead of a B. The percentage of those interviewed who were unable to give the district a grade is higher in DuPage County than in Will County. All of the responses to this question divided by county are presented in the following table.

	<b>DuPage Co</b>	<b>Will Co</b>
<b>A</b>	42.7%	59.7%
<b>B</b>	31.1%	25.2%
<b>C</b>	7.1%	5.7%
<b>D</b>	0.8%	0.6%
<b>F</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>DK</b>	18.3%	8.8%

Those able to grade the district in response to either of these questions was then asked: *“Is the grade you just gave based mainly on: 1) your personal experience as a student in the public schools; 2) the experiences of your children; 3) your experience as a volunteer or employee of the school district; 4) the experiences of your friends and neighbors; 5) information you have received directly from the school district or 6) information from TV, radio, or newspaper coverage of your local schools?”* Almost half, 47.7%, said that the grade they offered was based on the experiences of their children. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

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of parents in the voter file.

<b>The experiences of your children.</b>	47.7%
<b>The experiences of your friends and neighbors.</b>	12.4%
<b>Your experience as a volunteer or employee of the school district.</b>	12.1%
<b>Your personal experience as a student in the public schools.</b>	10.5%
<b>Information from TV, radio, or newspaper coverage of your local schools.</b>	8.5%
<b>Information you have received directly from the school district.</b>	6.2%
<b>Don't know</b>	2.5%

If we divide the responses to this question according to parent status, we find that parents and alumni parents base their grades on the experience of their children. Non-parents based their grade on either the experience of a friend or neighbor, information in the media or contact with the district (either as a volunteer or because they received information from the district). All of the responses to this question divided by parent status are presented in the following table.

	<b>K-12 Parents</b>	<b>Alumni Parents</b>	<b>Non- Parents</b>
<b>The experiences of your children.</b>	68.3%	52.5%	13.0%
<b>The experiences of your friends and neighbors.</b>	1.7%	13.6%	28.7%
<b>Your experience as a volunteer or employee of the school district.</b>	11.1%	11.9%	13.9%
<b>Your personal experience as</b>	12.2%	10.2%	7.8%

a student in the public schools.

Information from TV, radio, or newspaper coverage of your local schools.	1.1%	8.5%	20.0%
Information you have received directly from the school district.	3.9%	1.7%	12.2%
Don't know	1.7%	1.7%	4.3%

Each person interviewed was asked to evaluate the job the district does “*keeping the public informed about school district plans.*” 35.1% believe the district does an excellent or above average job of keeping the public informed while 18.3% believe the district does a below average or poor job. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Informed</b>	
Excellent	12.3%
Above Average	22.8%
Average	42.0%
Below Average	8.8%
Poor	9.5%
Unable to Evaluate	4.8%

When asked to evaluate the job the district does: “*serving the educational needs of the students in your neighborhood*” only 2.8% give the district a below average or poor rating. 69.3% feel that the district does an excellent or above average job of serving the students in their neighborhood. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Serving students</b>	
Excellent	29.0%
Above Average	40.3%
Average	18.8%
Below Average	2.8%
Poor	0.0%

**Unable to Evaluate**                      9.3%

There is a slight difference in the response to this question based on the county of residence of the individual being interviewed. Voters in Will County are more likely to state that the district is doing an excellent job than are voters in DuPage County. DuPage County voters are more likely to state that they cannot evaluate the district. All of the responses to this question divided by county are presented in the following table.

<b>Serving students</b>	<b>DuPage Co</b>	<b>Will Co</b>
<b>Excellent</b>	26.1%	33.3%
<b>Above Average</b>	39.4%	41.5%
<b>Average</b>	20.3%	16.4%
<b>Below Average</b>	2.9%	2.5%
<b>Poor</b>	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Unable to Evaluate</b>	11.2%	6.3%

Everyone interviewed was also asked *“Consider the financial management of the school district’s budget. Would you rate the financial management as excellent, above average, average, below average or poor?”* 22.5% rated the financial management of the district as excellent or above average while 19.3% rated it as below average or poor. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Rate financial management</b>	
<b>Excellent</b>	6.5%
<b>Above Average</b>	16.0%
<b>Average</b>	37.5%
<b>Below Average</b>	12.3%
<b>Poor</b>	7.0%
<b>Unable to Evaluate</b>	20.8%

If an individual rated the district as below average or poor in response to any of these questions, he or she was then asked: *“Why have you given the district a rating of*

*below average or poor?*” 117 people responded to this question. Of interest is the fact that in most cases an individual only gave the district low marks in one area. These responses are presented in Appendix B divided into five categories. If an individual gave the district an excellent rating in response to any of these questions, he or she was asked: *“Why have you given the district an excellent rating?”* 115 individuals responded to this question. Most of the responses reflect the fact that the individual’s evaluation of the district is based on some personal contact or experience with the district. These responses are presented in Appendix C.

A large majority, 63.1%, agree or strongly agree with the statement: *“The Indian Prairie School District can be trusted to spend local tax dollars wisely.”* 27.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	16.8%
<b>Agree</b>	46.3%
<b>Disagree</b>	17.5%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	10.0%
<b>Don’t know</b>	9.5%

Those interviewed appear equally ready to accept enrollment projections from either the district or an outside expert. To explore voter reaction to such projections, the sample used for this survey was divided into two equal groups. Half of those interviewed were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: *“I would trust the enrollment projections provided to the public by the Indian Prairie School District.”* The other half were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: *“I would trust the enrollment projections provided to the district by a third party expert.”* Both versions of the statement received the same response with more than 69% agreeing or strongly agreeing that they would trust enrollment projections from either source. All of the responses to both versions of this question are presented in the following table.

	<b>By district</b>	<b>By expert</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	25.6%	26.4%
<b>Agree</b>	44.2%	44.3%
<b>Disagree</b>	16.1%	14.9%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	6.5%	4.5%
<b>Don't know</b>	7.5%	10.0%

The same split sample presentation was used to explore the degree to which voters have confidence in the district's decision making process or, when they are created, the advisory committees upon which it relies for input. More than 60% have confidence in both the decision making process used by the district and the committees it appoints to assist it. The first of these questions asked voters to agree or disagree with the statement: *"I have confidence in the school district's decision making process."* All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	20.1%
<b>Agree</b>	45.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	16.1%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	8.0%
<b>Don't know</b>	10.1%

The other half of the sample was asked to agree or disagree with the statement: *"When the school district appoints a Citizens Advisory Committee, I have confidence in the recommendations such committees make to the district."* All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	21.9%
<b>Agree</b>	47.8%
<b>Disagree</b>	14.4%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	4.0%
<b>Don't know</b>	11.9%

## The April Referendum

A number of questions were included in the survey to explore voter reaction to the district’s April referendum. The first of these asked: *“In April, the Indian Prairie School District asked voters to approve a school bond referendum. Did you favor or oppose the district’s proposal?”* In response, 36.0% said they favored the proposal with 37.5% opposed and 24.3% not sure of their opinion. An additional 2.3% (nine individuals) refused to answer the question<sup>4</sup>.

Each individual was then asked: *“What do you believe was the most important reason the school bond referendum failed to win support from local voters?”* 314 individuals responded to this question. Almost half of the comments can be placed in two broad categories. 24.4% felt that the proposal failed because taxes were too high already and 23.3% felt that a need for more information was the key reason for the defeat of the proposal. All of the responses to this question are in Appendix D. The following table presents all of the responses to this question after each response was assigned to one of seven categories.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Taxes are too high already	24.4%
A lack of information	23.2%
Other/ Miscellaneous	16.8%
The cost of the proposal was too high	11.1%
A lack of trust/ mismanagement	10.2%
Poor planning/ a need for other options	10.2%
Perception of the last referendum	4.1%

There are some important differences in the way those who voted in the April election responded to this question when those responses are compared to the responses offered by those who did not vote. A lack of information, concerns about trust and poor planning are named more often among those who voted in

April than among those who did not. Those who did not vote are much more likely to state that taxes were too high already. All of the responses to this question divided according to whether or not the individual voted in April are presented in the following table.

Category	Voted	Did not vote
<b>Taxes are too high already</b>	15.4%	30.2%
<b>A lack of information</b>	26.0%	21.4%
<b>Other/ Miscellaneous</b>	13.8%	18.8%
<b>The cost of the proposal was too high</b>	8.9%	12.5%
<b>A lack of trust/ mismanagement</b>	17.1%	5.7%
<b>Poor planning/ a need for other options</b>	13.0%	8.3%
<b>Perception of the last referendum</b>	5.7%	3.1%

Each person interviewed was also asked: *“Is there one thing that the district could change about its bond referendum that you believe would cause more voters to support it?”* 217 individuals responded to this question. Almost half, 44.2%, felt that the one thing that any future campaign needed to provide was additional information. Only 12.4% felt that lowering the cost of the proposal was needed and 10.6% felt the district needed to explore other options. All of the responses to this question are presented in Appendix E at the end of this report. The following table presents all of the responses to this question after each response was assigned to one of seven categories.

Category	Percentage
<b>Provide more information</b>	44.2%
<b>Other/ Miscellaneous</b>	17.1%
<b>Lower the cost of the proposal</b>	12.4%
<b>Explore other options</b>	10.6%
<b>Accountability</b>	7.8%
<b>Build at a different location</b>	5.1%
<b>Define attendance area before building</b>	2.8%

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<sup>4</sup> Among those who voted in April, 40.0% said they favored the proposal and 49.2% opposed. The remaining 10.8% either were not sure or refused to answer the question.

There is virtually no difference in the way voters responded to this question when the responses are divided according to whether or not the individual voted in April. A need for more information is named by more than 44% of each group. All of the responses to this question divided according to whether or not the individual voted in April are presented in the following table.

Category	Voted	Did not vote
<b>Provide more information</b>	44.3%	44.2%
<b>Other/ Miscellaneous</b>	15.9%	17.8%
<b>Lower the cost of the proposal</b>	13.6%	11.6%
<b>Explore other options</b>	10.2%	10.9%
<b>Accountability</b>	8.0%	7.8%
<b>Build at a different location</b>	6.8%	3.9%
<b>Define attendance area before building</b>	1.1%	3.9%

In response to the question “*which of the following was your primary source of information about the district’s bond referendum during the April election?*” most voters named newspapers. No other information source was selected by more than 12%<sup>5</sup>. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

Source of Info	Percentage
<b>Newspapers</b>	41.5%
<b>School District</b>	11.5%
<b>Direct mail</b>	10.0%
<b>Other</b>	8.3%
<b>Don't know/Refused</b>	7.3%
<b>Materials left at my door</b>	6.3%
<b>All of these</b>	5.5%
<b>Public meetings</b>	5.0%
<b>Internet</b>	4.8%

Half of those who said that newspapers were their primary source of information named the Naperville *Sun* as the source of their information. 17.5% named the

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<sup>5</sup> There is additional information in the frequency summary provided with this report on the other ways in which voters received information. Overall, the results indicate that both the opponents and supporters of the referendum made contact with voters either through the mail, at the door or via the Internet.

*Daily Herald* and 15.7% the *Chicago Tribune*. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table<sup>6</sup>.

<b>Newspaper</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Naperville Sun</b>	50.0%
<b>Daily Herald</b>	17.5%
<b>Chicago Tribune</b>	15.7%
<b>Aurora Beacon</b>	6.6%
<b>Chicago Sun Times</b>	6.0%
<b>60504</b>	3.6%
<b>Other</b>	0.6%

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<sup>6</sup> Allowing those interviewed multiple responses to this question does not change the percentage naming each paper significantly.

## Communications

A portion of the questionnaire was used to explore the district’s communications efforts. The first question in this sequence asked those interviewed: *“How do you currently receive information about the Indian Prairie School District?”* 40.5% said that they currently receive information about the district through the newspapers with 20.8% naming direct mail and 15.0% materials sent home with children. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table<sup>7</sup>.

Source	Percentage
Newspapers	40.5%
Direct mail	20.8%
Materials sent home with students	15.0%
Internet	7.8%
E-mail	6.5%
Other	5.5%
Don't know	4.0%

The responses categorized here as “Other” mostly reflect word of mouth contact with friends, neighbors or the schools. The specific responses to this question that did not fit into one of the broad categories used for this question are presented in the following listing.

- Community pamphlets
- Comparing notes with my friends who do have children in the school system
- Friends
- Friends
- Friends and family
- Friends and others

- From the superintendent's son who is my son's best friend
- Grandkids and daughter-in-law
- Homeowners newsletter
- I get information from school all the time. I'm the vice-president of the PTA.
- Indian Prairie Newsletter in the mail
- Neighbors
- Neighbors
- Neighbors
- Newsletter
- Newsletter
- Newsletter
- Our own investigations
- PTA
- PTA
- Talking to people involved in the school, meetings
- Talking with friends of mine who work for the district
- Talking with neighbors
- Through school (employee) or through paper (Naperville Sun)
- Through school where I work, newspapers and mail
- Word of mouth from neighbors
- Word of mouth or from neighbors
- Work with students and get information from them; also work in schools sometimes and get information there.

Apparently, people would prefer to receive information in the future through the mail. When asked: *“What is the most effective way for the district to communicate with you in the future?”* 31.5% named direct mail with 22.5% asking for information

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<sup>7</sup> Allowing respondents to voice a second or third response makes no significant difference in

through the newspaper. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table.

<b>Preferred source</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Direct Mail</b>	31.5%
<b>Newspapers</b>	22.5%
<b>E-mail</b>	15.8%
<b>Handouts sent home with students</b>	11.5%
<b>Internet</b>	5.5%
<b>Other</b>	4.3%
<b>Homeowners newsletter</b>	2.3%
<b>Town hall meetings</b>	2.0%
<b>No preference</b>	2.0%
<b>Homeowners meetings</b>	1.5%
<b>Don't know</b>	1.3%

If we separate the responses to this question by parent status we find that parents would prefer information be sent through the mail, with their children or by email. Alumni parents prefer to find information in the newspaper. Among non-parents 37.4% have a preference for direct mail and 32.9% are looking for information in the newspaper. All of this information is presented in the following table.

<b>Preferred source</b>	<b>K-12 Parents</b>	<b>Alumni Parents</b>	<b>Non- Parents</b>
<b>Direct Mail</b>	27.6%	28.3%	37.4%
<b>Newspapers</b>	8.6%	38.3%	32.9%
<b>E-mail</b>	23.2%	13.3%	7.7%
<b>Handouts sent home with students</b>	23.8%	0.0%	1.3%
<b>Internet</b>	6.5%	5.0%	4.5%
<b>Other</b>	4.9%	3.3%	3.9%
<b>Homeowners newsletter</b>	1.1%	5.0%	2.6%
<b>Town hall meetings</b>	2.2%	0.0%	2.6%
<b>No preference</b>	1.1%	1.7%	3.2%
<b>Homeowners meetings</b>	0.5%	5.0%	1.3%
<b>Don't know</b>	0.5%	0.0%	2.6%

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the percentages naming each of these sources of information.

At the very end of the interview each person was asked: *“In which of the following subject areas would you most like to receive additional information about the Indian Prairie School District?”* Just over one-third, 34.4%, said they wanted more information about the district budget and finances. 21.3% wanted to know more about how the district compares to other school districts. All of the responses to this question are presented in the following table<sup>8</sup>.

Subject	Percentage
District budget and finances	34.3%
How District compares to other districts	21.3%
Other	15.5%
Don't know	12.3%
Student test scores	10.5%
Enrollment	6.3%

Parents have more of an interest in student test scores than alumni parents or non-parents. Alumni parents want more information about the district’s budget and finances. Higher numbers of both alumni parents and non-parents did not have a response to this question than parents. All of this information is presented in the following table.

Subject	K-12 Parents	Alumni Parents	Non- Parents
District budget and finances	34.1%	40.0%	32.3%
How District compares to other districts	21.6%	20.0%	21.3%
Other	17.3%	10.0%	15.5%
Don't know	4.3%	21.7%	18.1%
Student test scores	13.0%	5.0%	9.7%
Enrollment	9.7%	3.3%	3.2%

<sup>8</sup> The responses in the category “Other” were either people who were prompted to answer the question and said they wanted to know more about all of these subjects or who named very specific programs (e.g. more information about special education).

## Specific Communications Efforts

The survey also explored the use of and reaction to a number of district communication efforts. The specific responses to these questions are included in the frequency summary that accompanies this report. The following is a summary of the findings of this portion of the survey.

- 55.8% of those interviewed have visited the district's web site. Of these, 56.1% found it very easy to access information on the site. 39.9% said they went to the site for calendar information.
- 40.0% of those interviewed said that they read the district's electronic newsletter *Pathways*. 24.4% found it to be very interesting with 65.6% stating that it was somewhat interesting. 23.8% found the information in *Pathways* very useful with an additional 60.6% stating that it was somewhat useful.
- Of those who said they did not read the electronic version of *Pathways*, 32.5% said they had read the print version of the newsletter in the past.
- 23.8% of those interviewed subscribe to the district's e-news service. Of those, 29.5% find the e-news very interesting with an additional 68.4% stating that it was somewhat interesting. 34.7% found the e-news very useful and 60.0% found it somewhat useful.