



VALLEJO CITY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



Support for a Vallejo City Unified School District Bond Measure

**Key Findings from a Survey Conducted:
November 30-December 9, 2017**

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates – FM3

PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH & STRATEGY

Research Goals

1

1. Assessing the viability of a potential 2018 bond measure.

2

Assessing voters' bond measure spending priorities.

3

Determining if voters are aware of changes in District leadership and whether their impressions of the District and Vallejo's local schools have changed.

Survey Methodology

- ✓ 601 interviews with voters likely to cast ballots in November 2018 in the Vallejo City Unified School District
- ✓ Interviews conducted November 30-December 9, 2017
- ✓ Interviews conducted online and via telephone (landlines and cell phones)
 - Survey offered in English and in Spanish
- ✓ Margin of sampling error of $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% confidence level for the full sample
 - $\pm 5.7\%$ MOE for a half sample of 300
- ✓ Some percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding





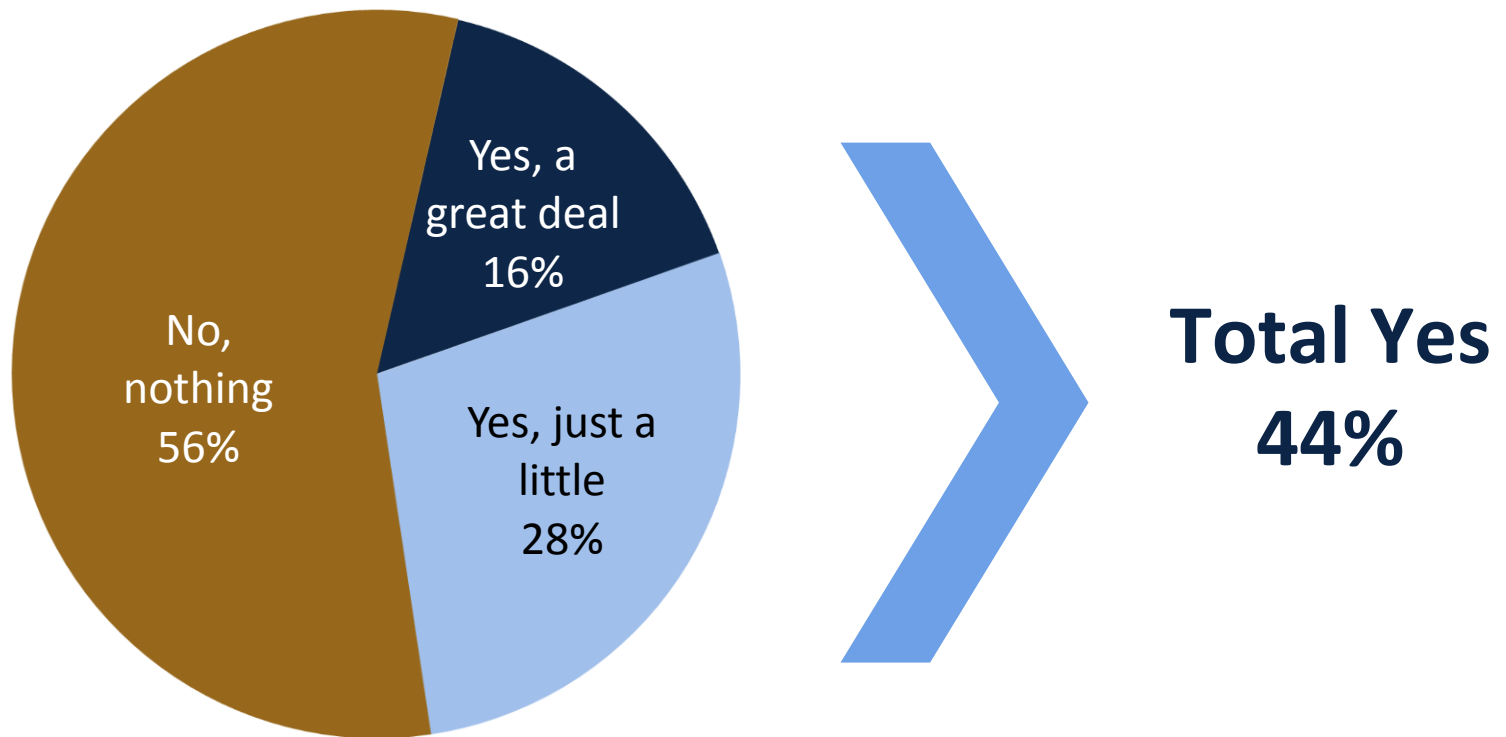
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General Perceptions of Vallejo Schools

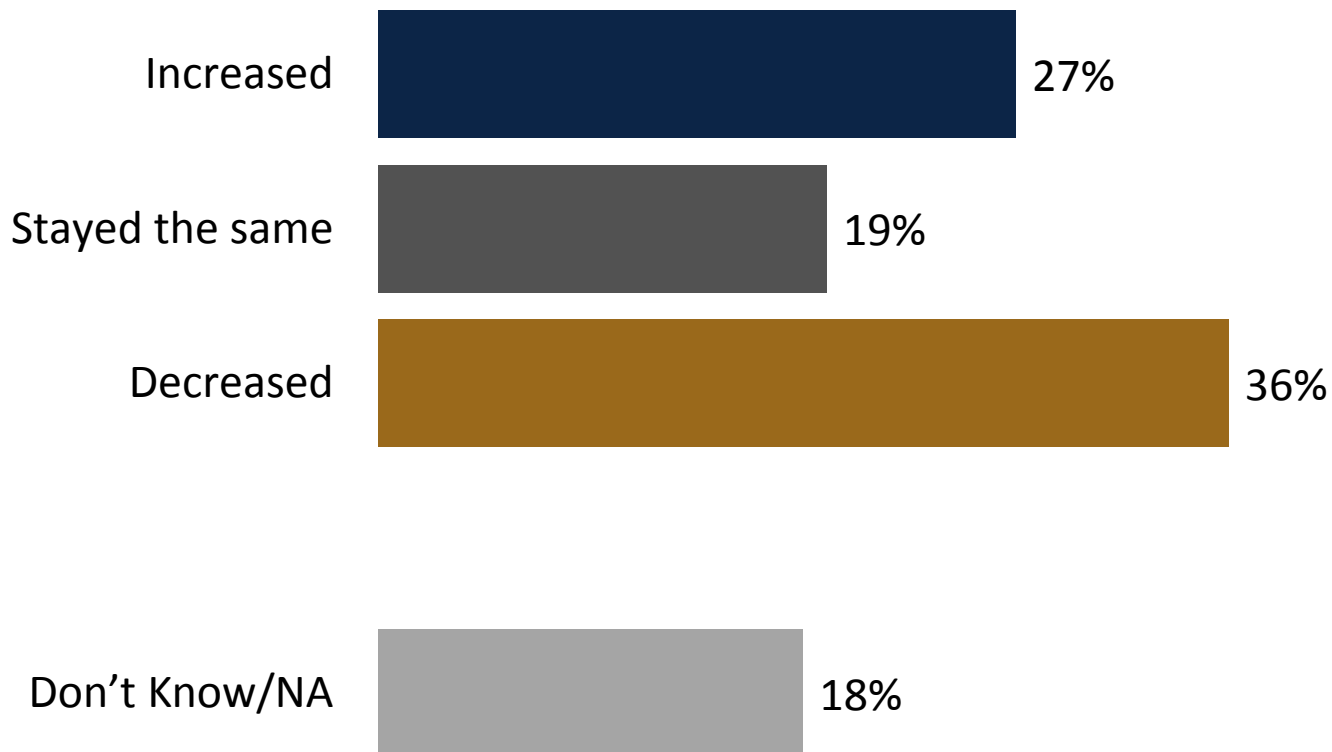
A majority of voters hasn't heard anything about changes to District leadership.

Have you seen, heard, or read anything recently about changes in the leadership of the Vallejo City Unified School District, either to its Board or the District's Superintendent?



Voters lack consensus on changes to enrollment.

To the best of your knowledge, has the number of students who attend Vallejo schools increased, stayed the same, or decreased over the past few years?



General views of the District and overall education quality have declined.

	Survey	Total Favorable	Total Unfavorable	Total Can't Rate
The Vallejo City Unified School District	Nov/Dec 2017	29%	57%	14%
	Jan 2016	37%	40%	23%
	June 2013	39%	42%	19%
Vallejo City Unified School District Board of Trustees	Nov/Dec 2017	21%	46%	33%
	Jan 2016	24%	29%	47%

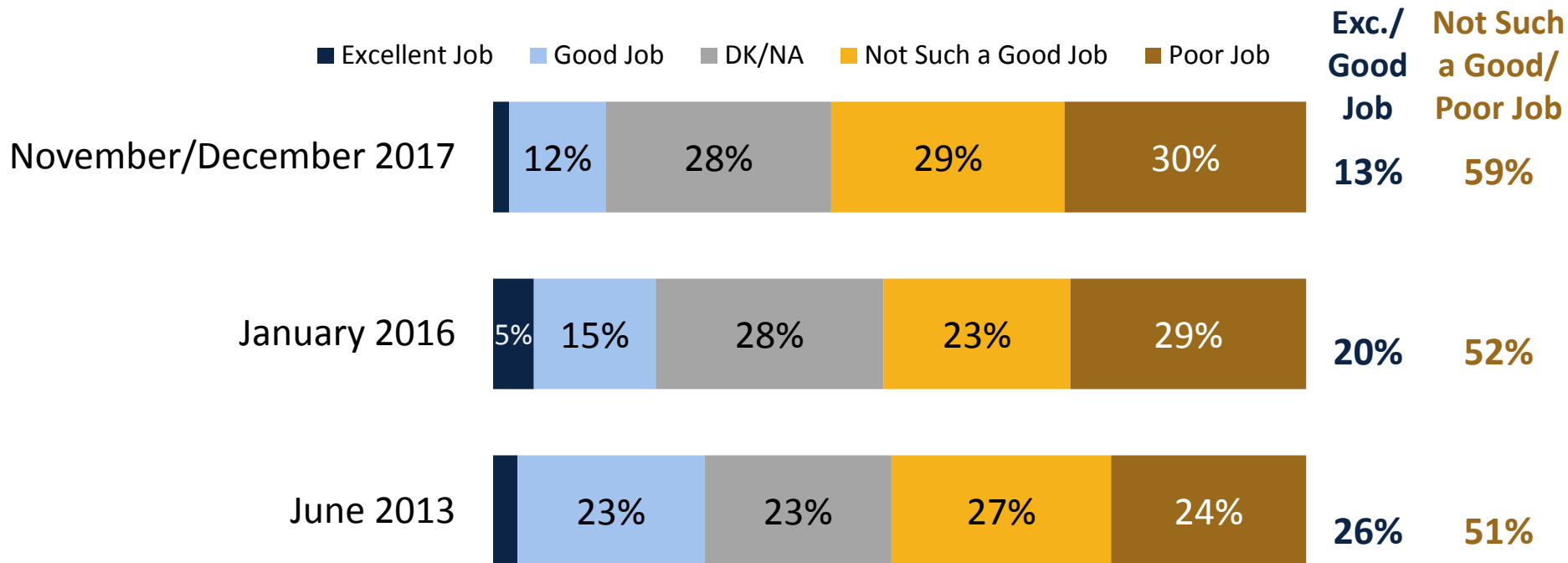
	Survey	Excellent/ Good	Not so Good/ Poor	Don't Know
Overall, how would you rate the quality of education in Vallejo's public schools	Nov/Dec 2017	19%	70%	10%
	Jan 2016	25%	62%	13%
	June 2013	27%	61%	12%

Q1. I am going to read you a list of names of some local institutions and people that are often in the public eye. Please tell me if your overall impression of that institution is favorable or unfavorable. If you don't recognize any of them, just say so.

**Slight Difference in Wording of Previous Surveys*

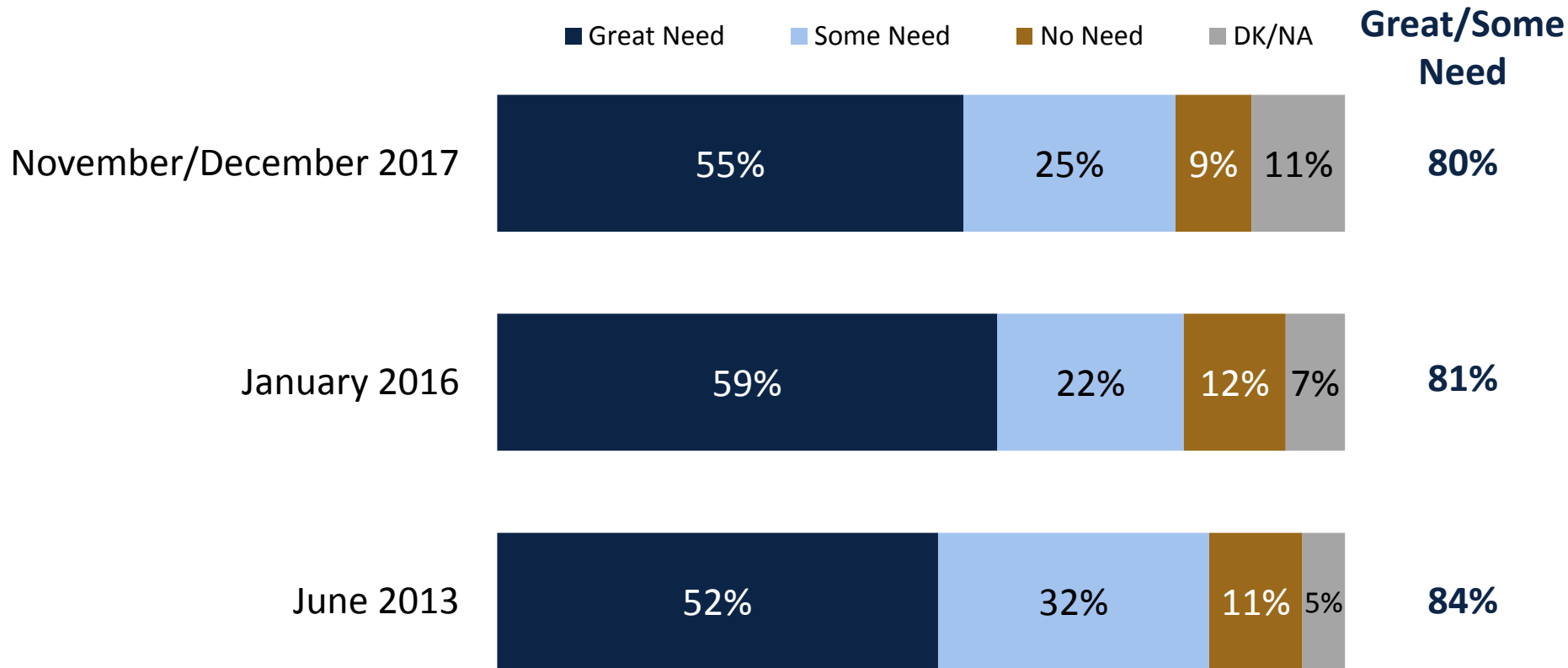
While voters continue to hold less positive views of the District's financial management...

How would you rate the job that the Vallejo City Unified School District is doing at managing its finances?

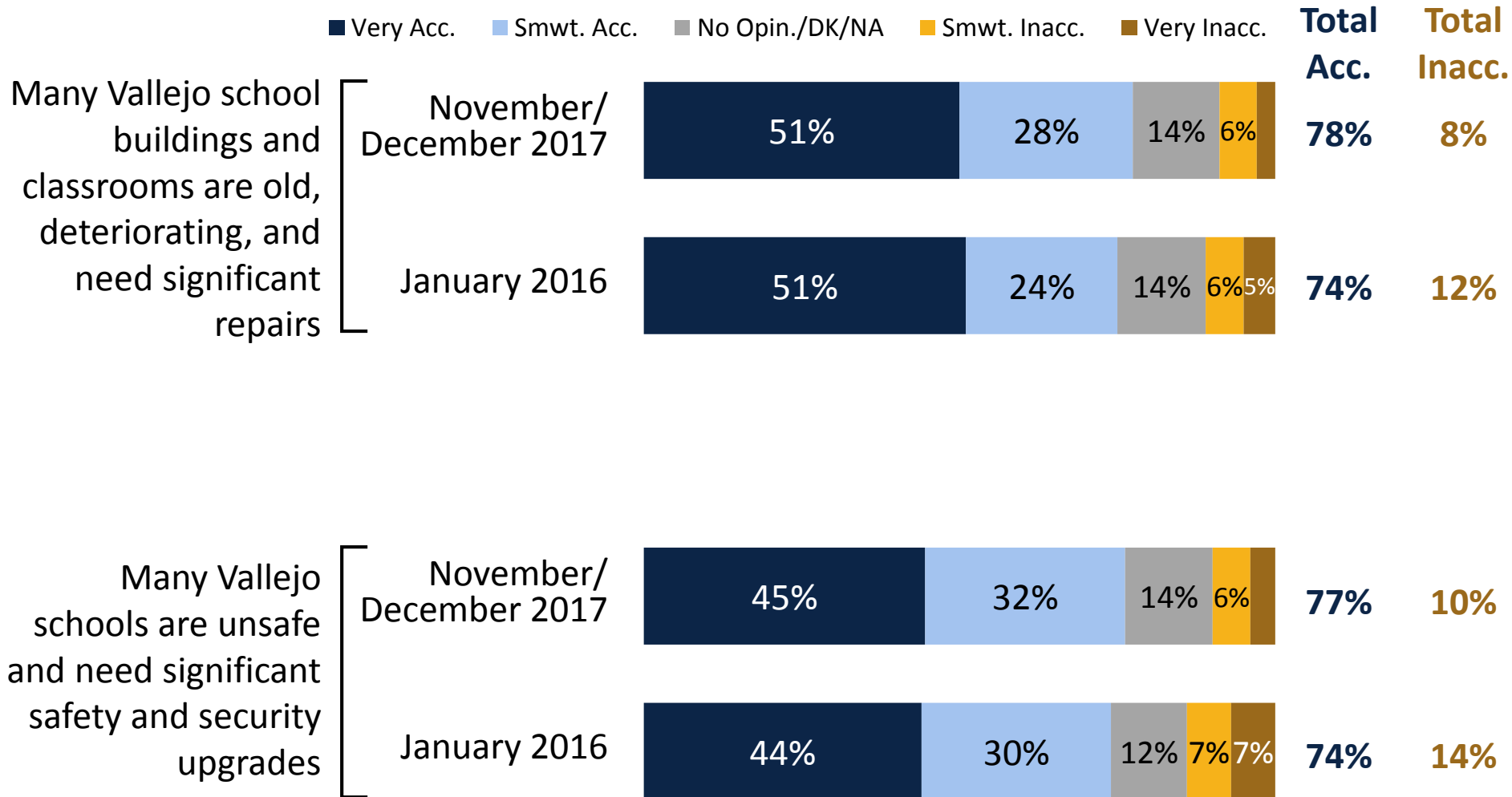


...four in five voters continue to feel Vallejo schools need additional funding...

Do you think Vallejo public schools have a great need for additional funding, some need for additional funding, or no need for additional funding?



...and most continue to believe facilities need repairs and safety upgrades.



Q8 b/d. Please tell me whether you think each of the following statements some people have made about Vallejo's public schools is accurate or inaccurate. If you don't know, or have no opinion, please tell me that too.



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Initial Support for a Vallejo City USD Bond Measure

Hypothetical Ballot Language for a Bond Measure

Vallejo School Repair/Student Safety Measure.

To improve classroom education, student safety, and college/career preparation by:

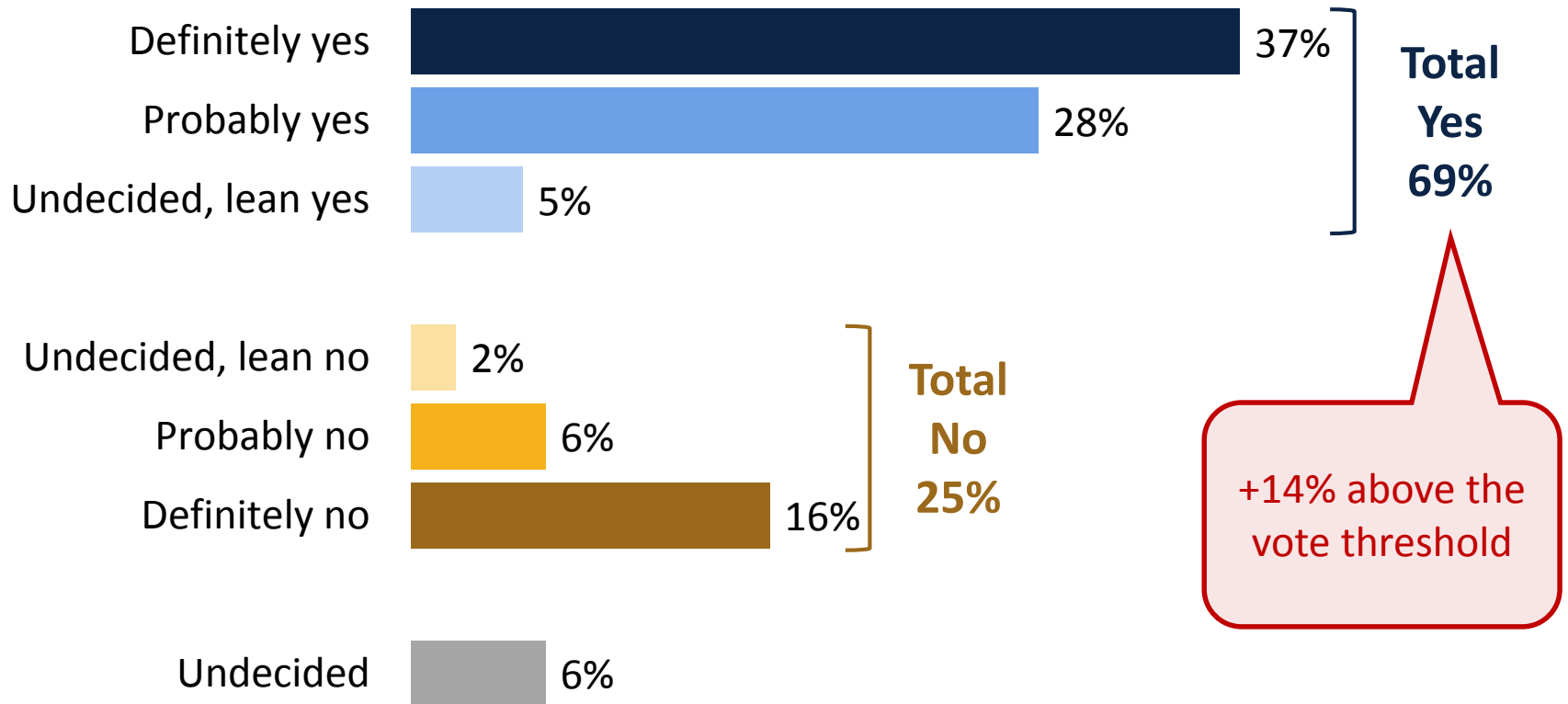
- Repairing and upgrading classrooms, science/technology labs, leaky roofs, and deteriorating bathrooms;
- Updating infrastructure such as security and fire safety systems, wiring, and plumbing;
- Ensuring access for disabled students; and
- Acquiring, constructing, and modernizing sites/facilities/equipment,

Shall the Vallejo City Unified School District issue \$175 million of bonds at legal interest rates, with citizen oversight, annual audits, and no money for administrators' salaries or pensions?

Prop 39 compliant bond measure with a 55% vote threshold

Nearly seven in ten said they would vote “yes” on the proposed bond measure.

If the vote on this measure were held today, would you vote yes in favor of it, or no to oppose it?



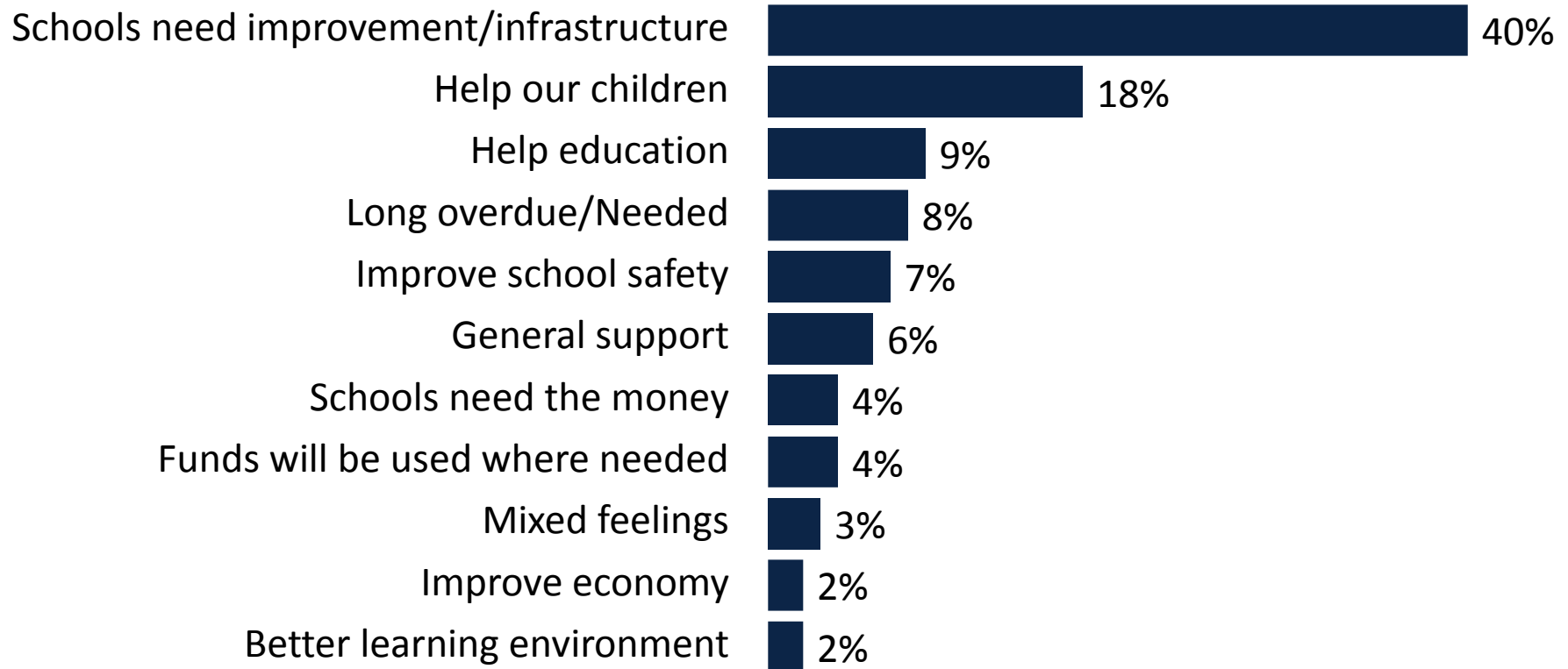
Perceptions of the proposed bond measure varied by demographic group.

- ✓ Support for the measure was strongest among voters under age 50, Democrats, renters, and voters of color (particularly Asian/Pacific Islander voters).
- ✓ Support is slightly higher in higher-turnout election scenarios, and viability was greater in November 2018 than June 2018.
- ✓ There are few differences in opinion by income group or gender.
- ✓ Those who see a need for additional funding in local schools are very likely to support a proposed measure.
- ✓ There is a weak correlation between views on the District's financial management and willingness to support a measure.

Two in five voters are willing to vote “yes” because they see the need for infrastructure improvements.

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **YES** on this measure?*

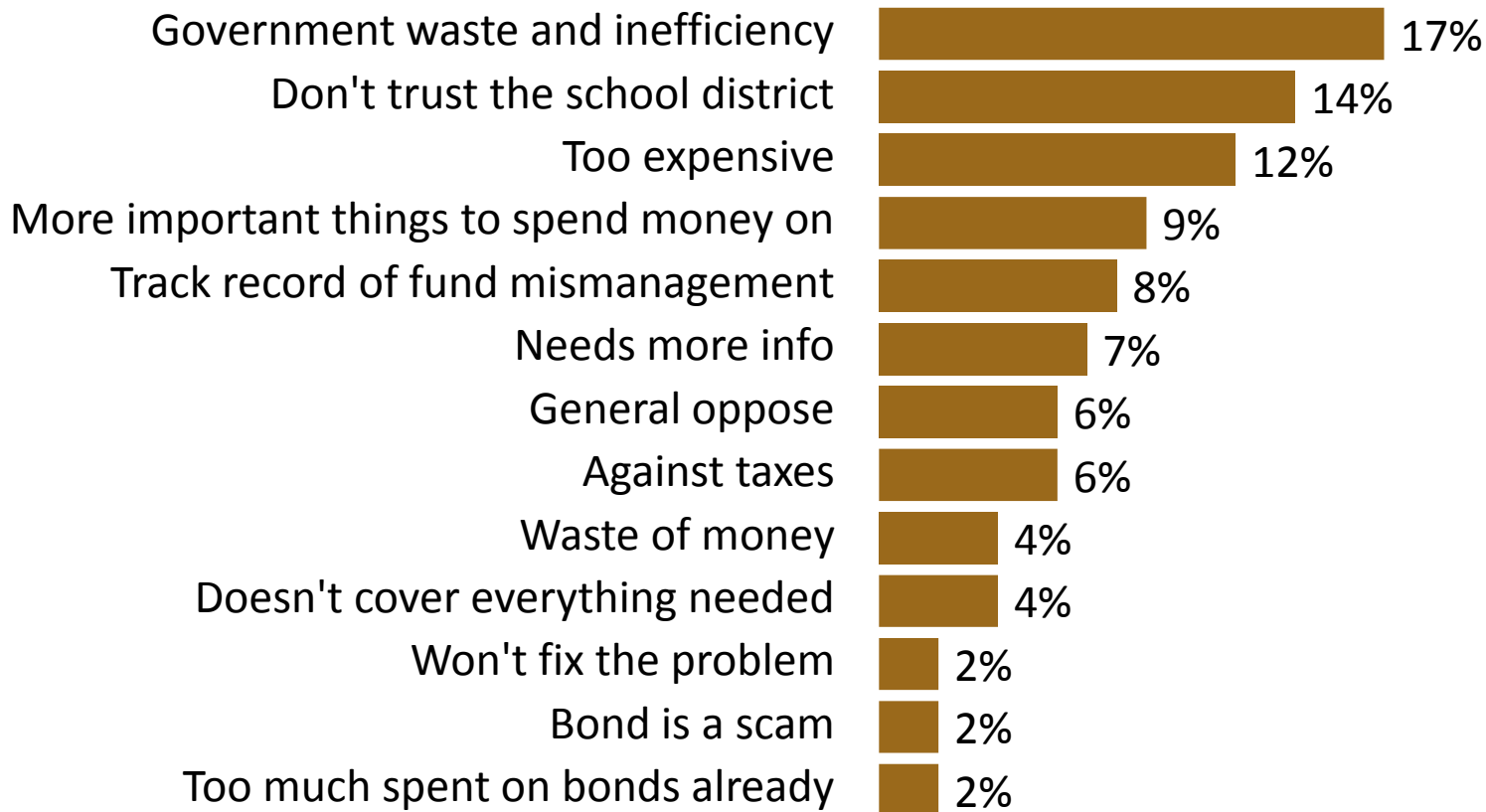
(Open-Ended; Responses Grouped; 2% and Above Shown)



Opponents cited a range of rationales, including general concerns about waste and specific concerns about the District.

*In a few words of your own, why would you vote **NO** on this measure?*

(Open-Ended; Responses Grouped; 2% and Above Shown)



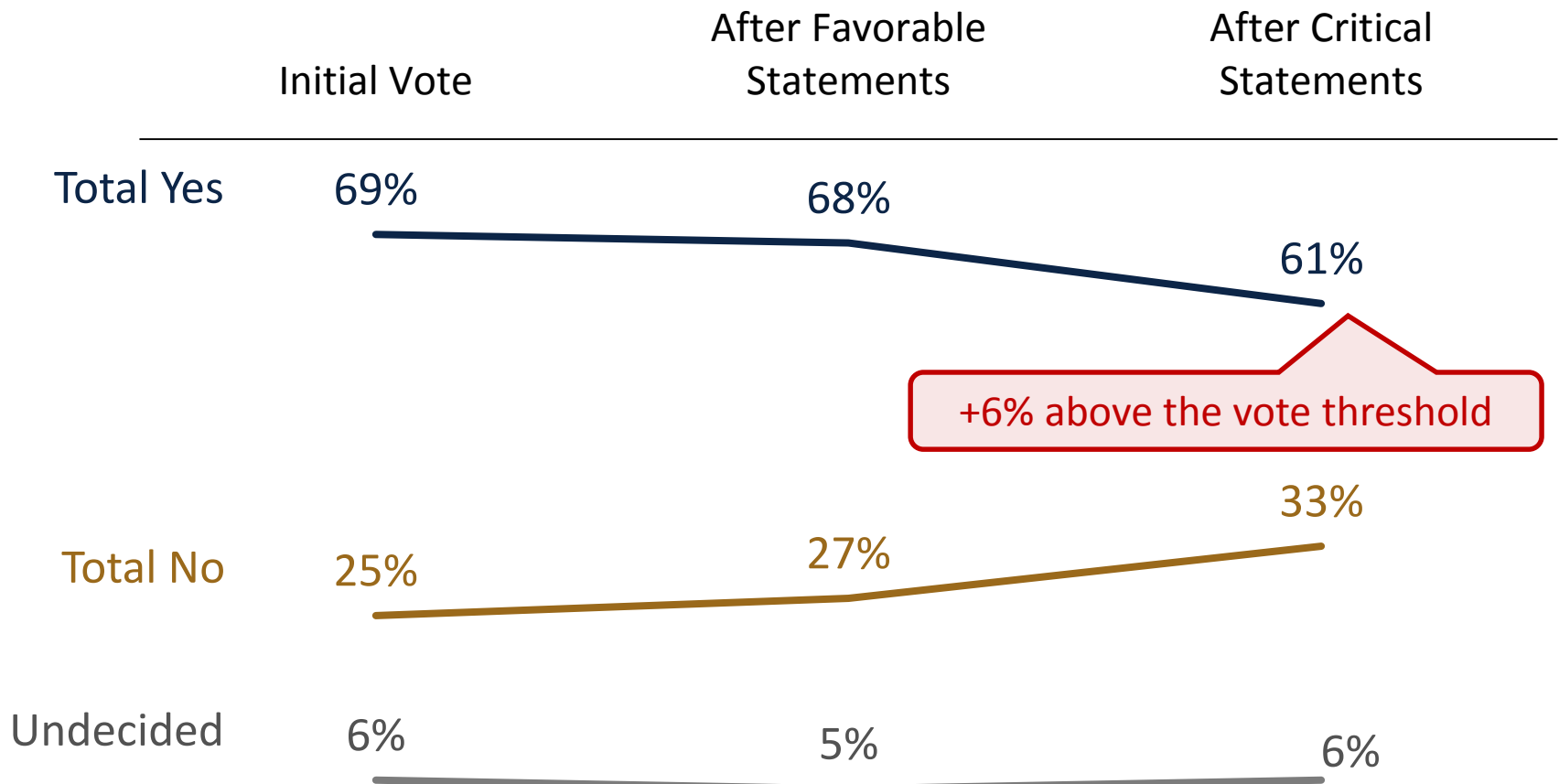


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Viability Factors

After an exchange of favorable and critical statements, overall support drops to closely mirror the Measure E vote.



The most compelling statements in favor of the proposed measure related to:

- A need to upgrade an aging and deteriorating classrooms and District infrastructure;
- The importance of making upgrades now, rather waiting and facing more expensive repairs; and
- The need for upgraded technology in classrooms, enabling 21st century learning.

The most compelling statements in opposition to the proposed measure related to:

- Concerns about fiscal mismanagement and pension costs;
- A preference to prioritize low-teacher pay; and
- The belief that a bond is the wrong approach, due to long-term interest costs.

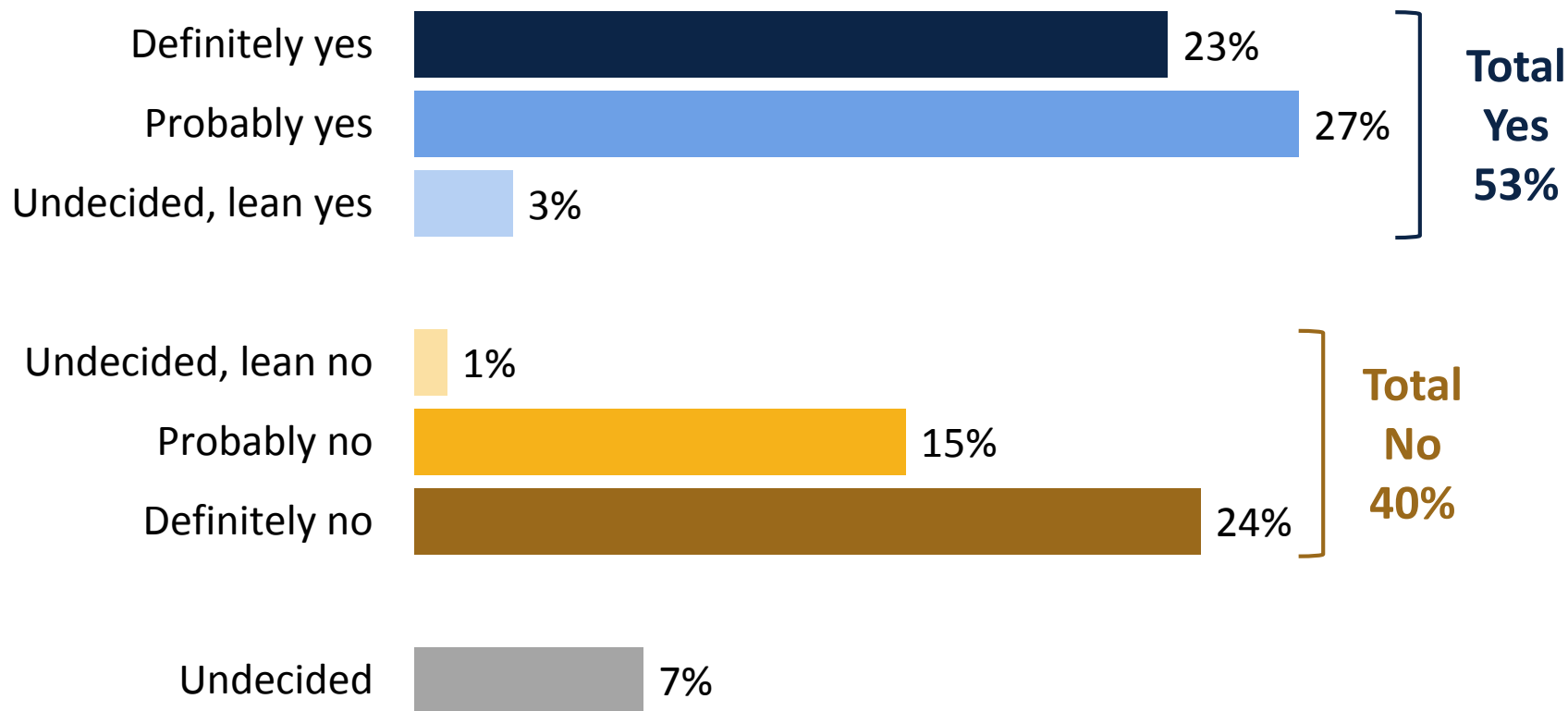
Support for a bond has hovered in the low-60s to low-70s over the past several years.

(Votes after pro/con argumentation in the surveys and actual Measure E election result)

Date	Amount	Scope	Threshold	Measurement	% Yes
June 2013	\$89 MM	Districtwide	55%	Survey	67%
June 2013	\$239 MM	Districtwide	Two-thirds	Survey	65%
Nov 2014	\$239 MM	Districtwide	Two-thirds	Election	62%
Jan 2016	\$139 MM	Elementary	55%	Survey	71%
Jan 2016	\$139 MM	Middle/High	55%	Survey	70%
Jan 2016	\$258 MM	Districtwide	Two-thirds	Survey	65%
Nov-Dec 2017	\$175 MM	Districtwide	55%	Survey	61%

As expected, support dropped notably when asked to focus on the ad valorem tax rate.

Suppose this potential bond measure for Vallejo schools would cost property owners each year \$60 per \$100,000 of assessed valuation – which is based on the amount you paid for your house plus inflation, not its current market value. In that case, would you vote yes in favor of it, or no to oppose it?





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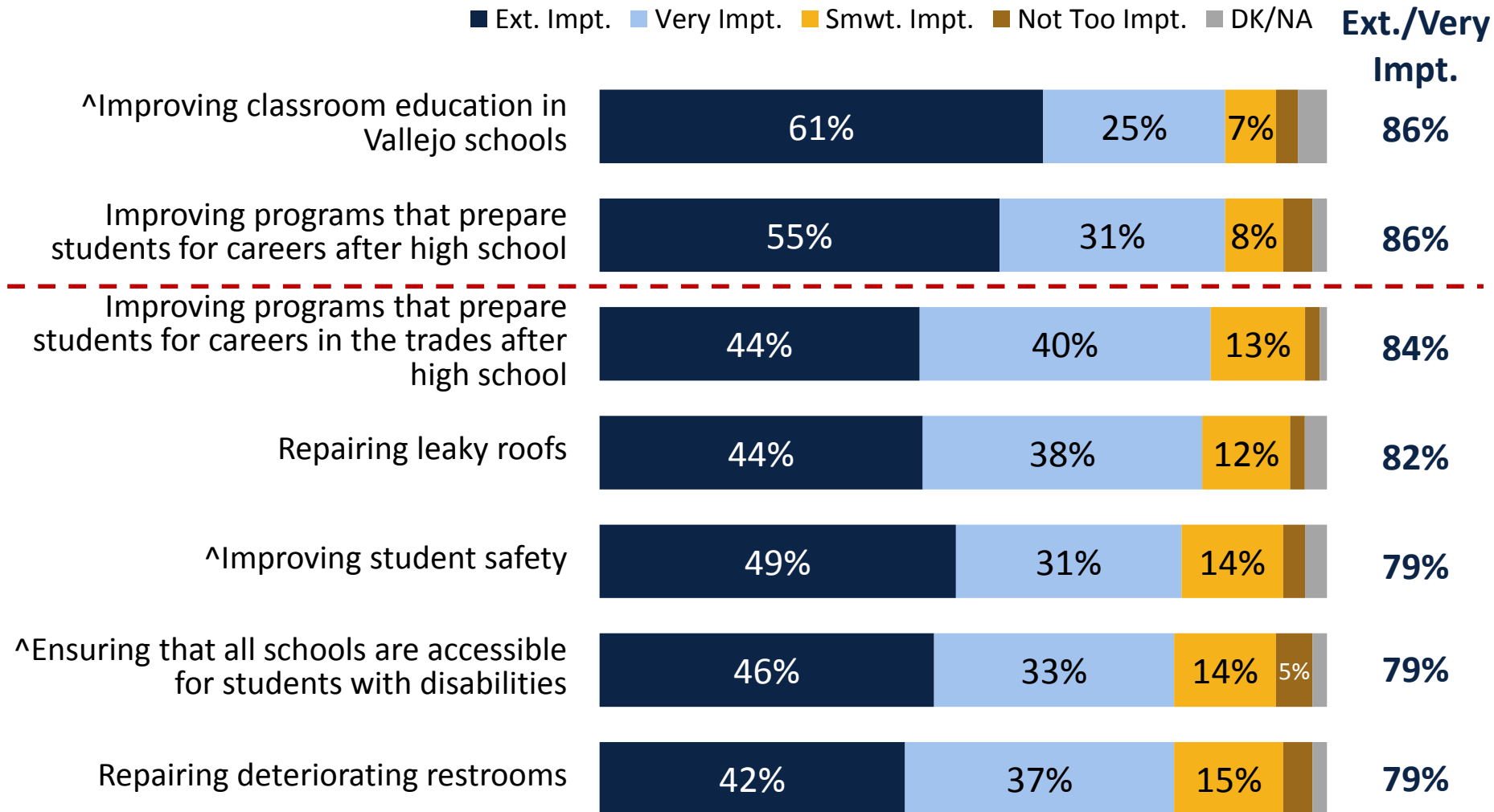
Bond Measure Spending Priorities

Survey respondents were read a list of potential bond spending priorities – in random order – and asked to indicate how important they felt each to be.

Some of the spending areas seen as most important by respondents related to:

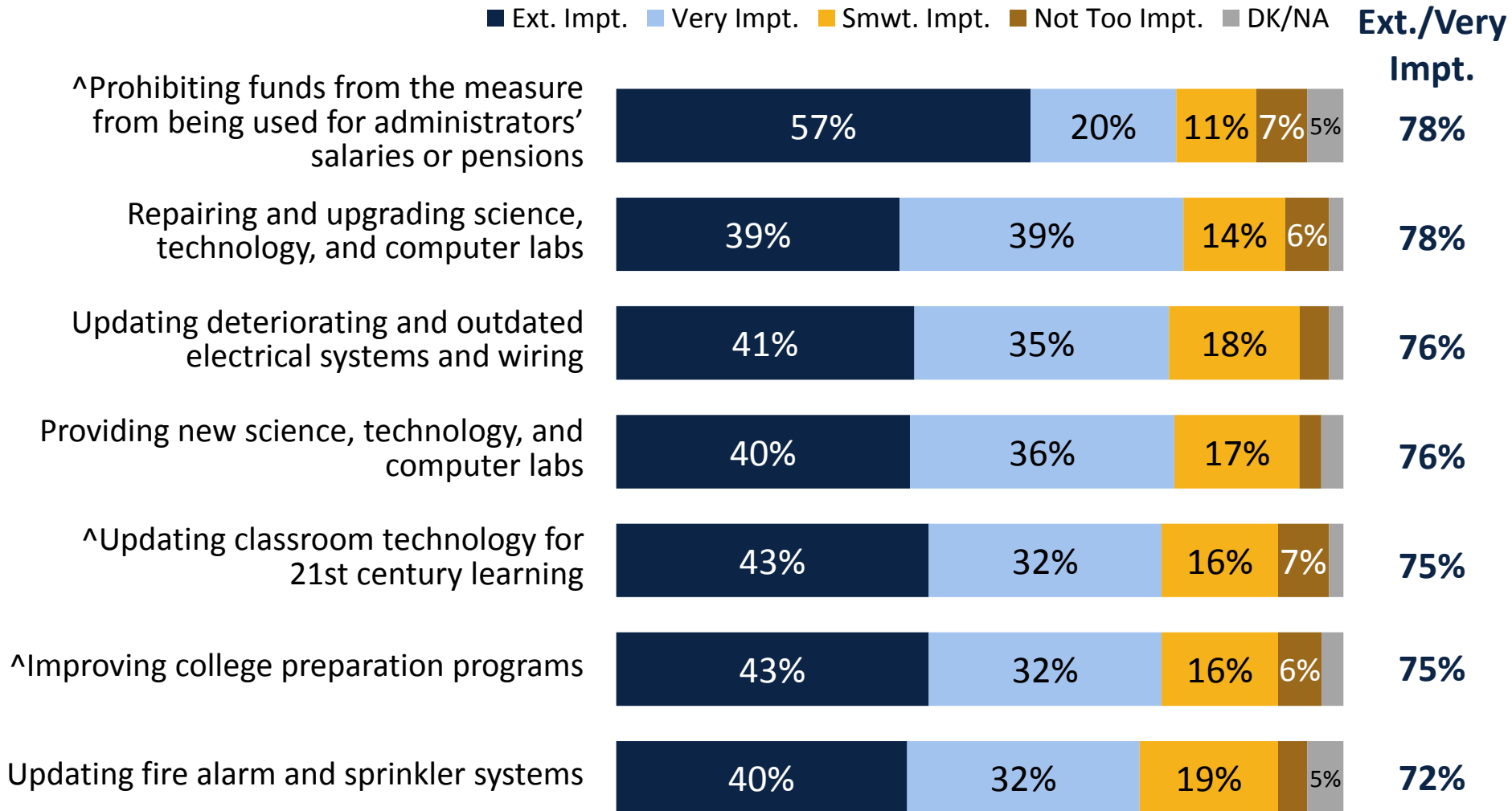
- Improvements benefiting classroom education;
- Career preparation;
- Basic infrastructure repairs;
- Student safety; and
- Technology upgrades.

Most Important Spending Priorities



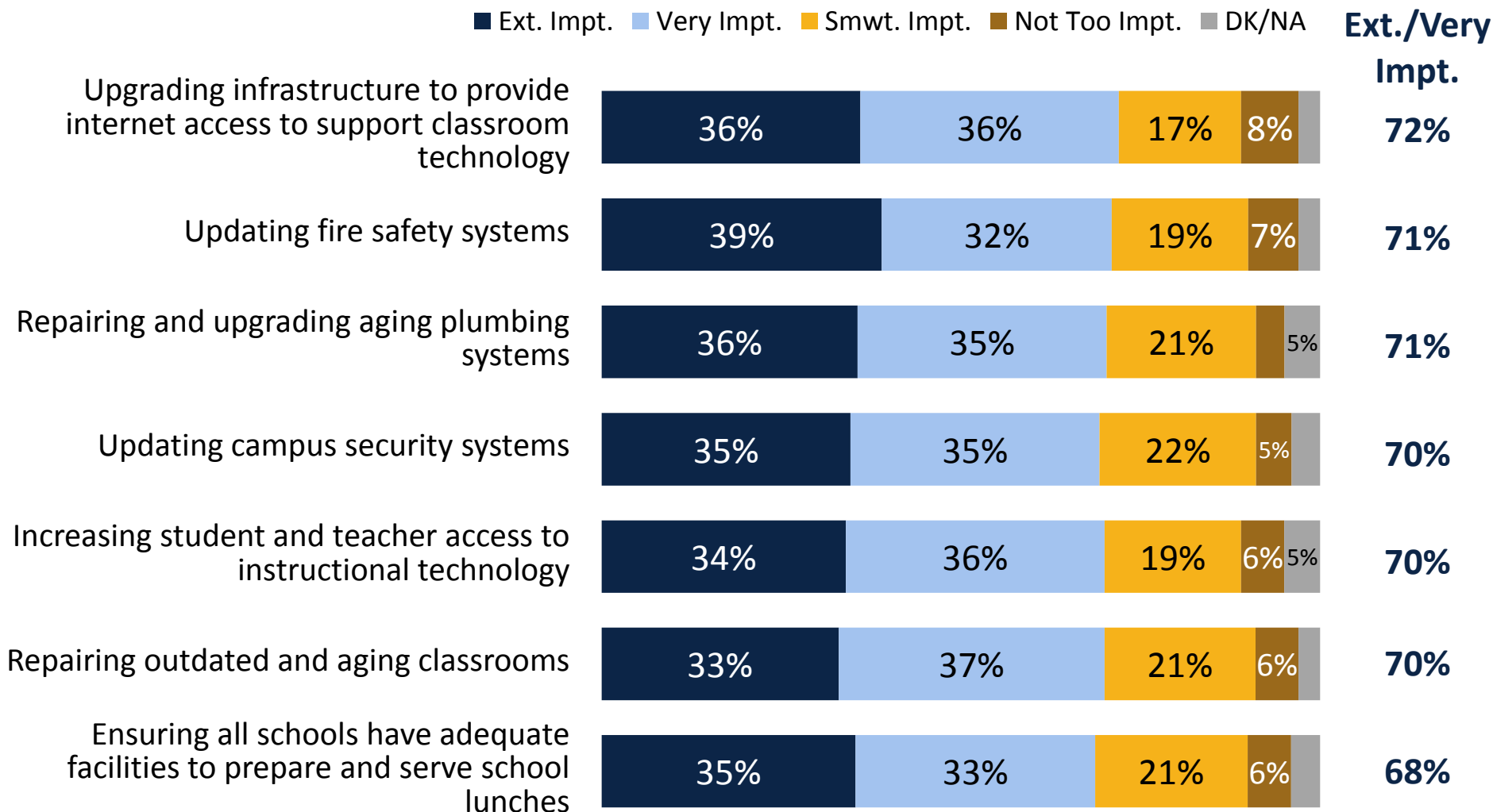
Q11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be sufficient funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? ^Not Part of Split Sample

Other Top Spending Priorities



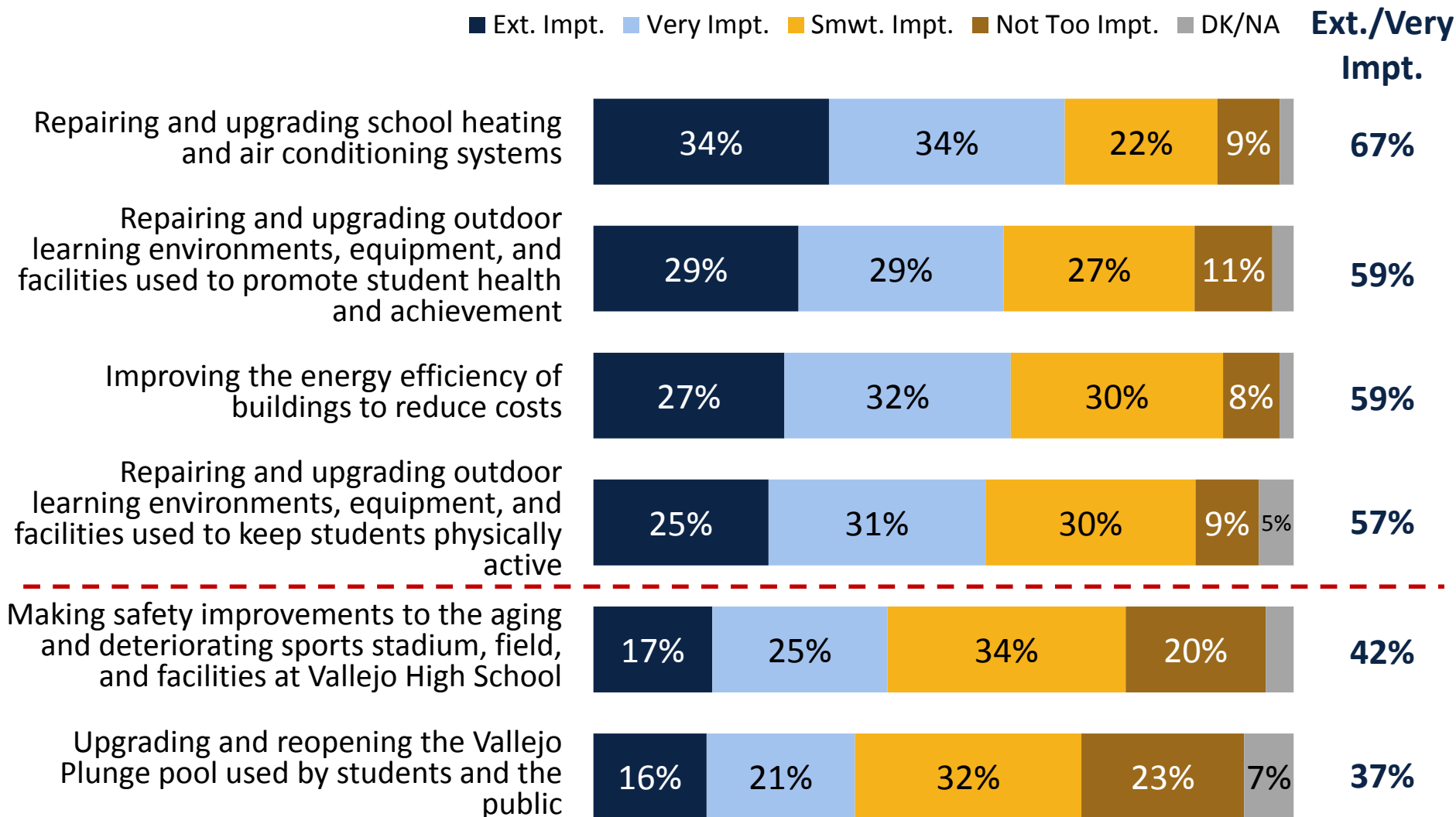
Q11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be sufficient funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? ^Not Part of Split Sample

Middle-tier Spending Priorities



Q11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be sufficient funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample

Lower-tier Spending Priorities



Q11. I am going to read you a list of specific projects that might be funded by this measure. Recognizing that there may not be sufficient funding for all such projects, please tell me how important it is to you that each item be funded: is it extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not too important? Split Sample



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Conclusions

Major Takeaways

- ✓ Few voters appear to know much about recent changes to District and Board leadership, and many are uncertain or misinformed about enrollment changes.
- ✓ Despite this lack of familiarity with the District, general opinions of the District and local schools appear to have deteriorated in the past two years.
- ✓ However, the perceived need for additional funding remains very high, as have impressions that local schools need repairs and safety improvements.
- ✓ The highest priority spending areas relate to improvements benefiting classroom education, career preparation, basic infrastructure repairs, student safety, and technology upgrades.

Bond Measure Viability Considerations

- ✓ Despite their clear misgivings, a solid majority of voters remains open to supporting a VCUSD bond measure, with consistent support in survey research and for Measure E.
- ✓ This level of support suggests a measure compliant with Prop 39 and its 55% vote threshold continues to be viable.
- ✓ While a larger measure is needed to fully address the District's infrastructure needs, a two-thirds measure would be highly risky.
- ✓ However, even a 55% measure does involve some risk given voters' concerns about the District's management and a desire to see increases to other non-infrastructure spending.
- ✓ Voters want a bond measure to address basic repairs to an aging infrastructure, while also providing access to technology and improving student safety.
- ✓ They want to know these investment will result in classroom improvements, preparing students for post-high school careers and/or college.
- ✓ They also want assurances that strict accountability procedures are in place.

For more information, contact:



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