






# Tucson Unified School District Finance Issues Survey

*Summary of Findings from a Survey of Tucson USD  
Likely November 2023 Voters Conducted April 22-27, 2023*

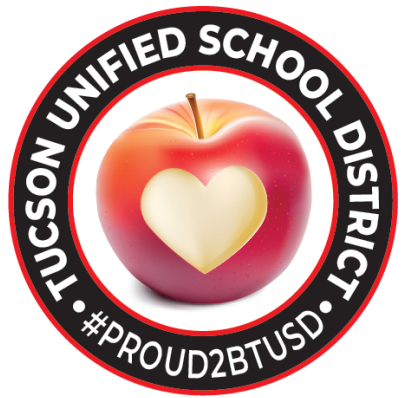


OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY

# Survey Methodology

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Dates                    | April 22-27, 2023  |
| Survey Type              | Dual-mode Voter Survey   |
| Research Population      | Tucson Unified School District Likely November 2023 Voters   |
| Total Interviews         | 619  |
| Margin of Sampling Error | (Full Sample) $\pm 4.0\%$ at the 95% Confidence Level  |
| Contact Methods          |  Telephone Calls  Email Invitations  Text Invitations |
| Data Collection Modes    |  Telephone Interviews  Online Interviews   |
| Languages                | English & Spanish  |

*(Note: Not All Results Will Sum to 100% Due to Rounding)*

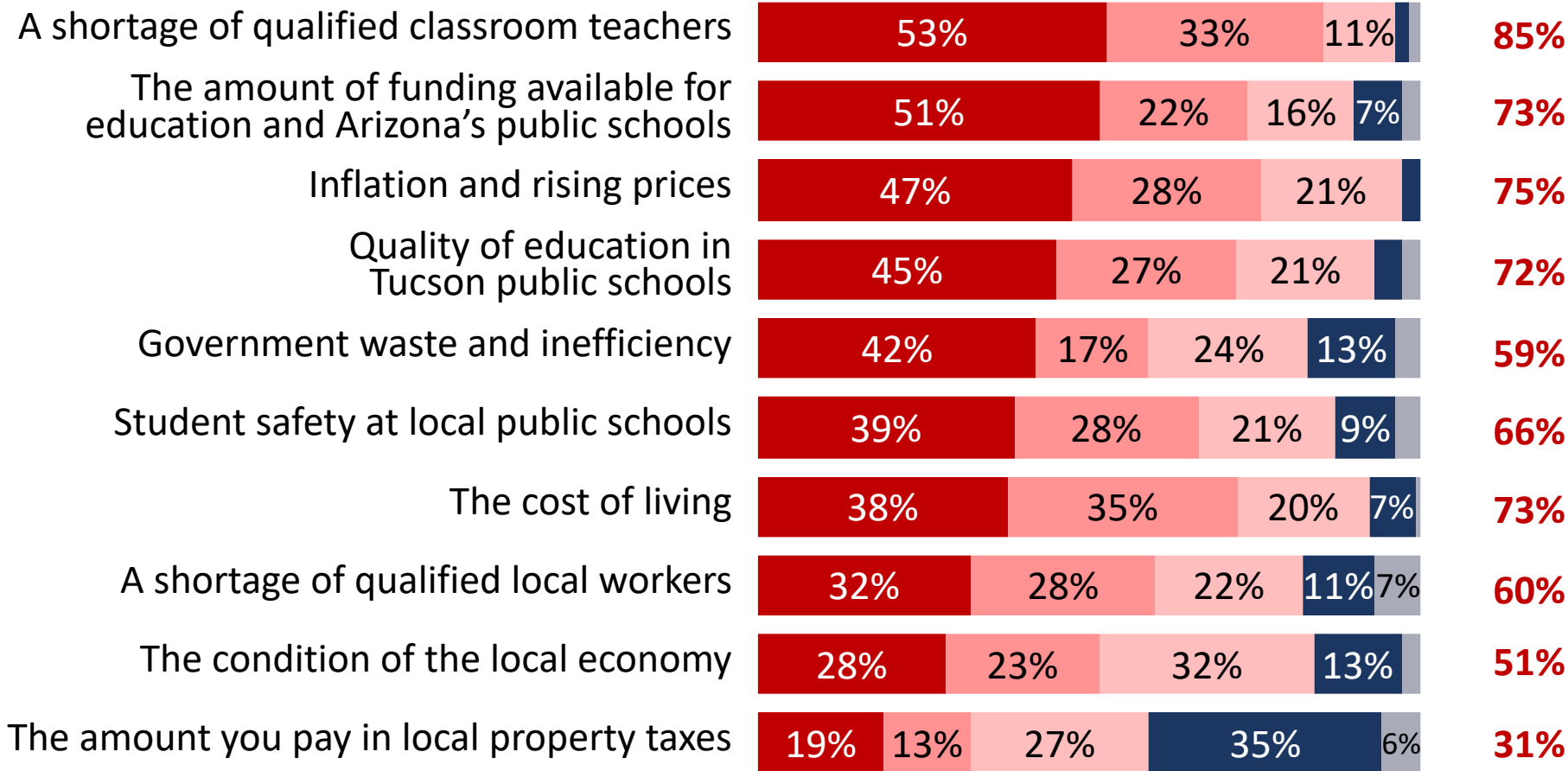


# **Voter Mood & Issue Context**

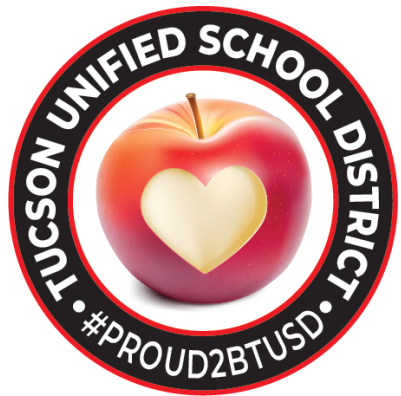
# Majorities identify the shortage of teachers and funding for Arizona's public schools as "extremely" serious problems; two-thirds also rate school safety as a major concern.

■ Ext. Ser. Prob. ■ Very Ser. Prob. ■ Smwt. Ser. Prob. ■ Not a Ser. Prob. ■ Don't Know

**Ext./Very Ser. Prob.**



Q8. I would like to change the subject and ask you about some issues that people in your area may be concerned about these days. Please tell me whether you consider it to be an extremely serious problem, very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not a serious problem for people who live in Tucson.  
Split Sample

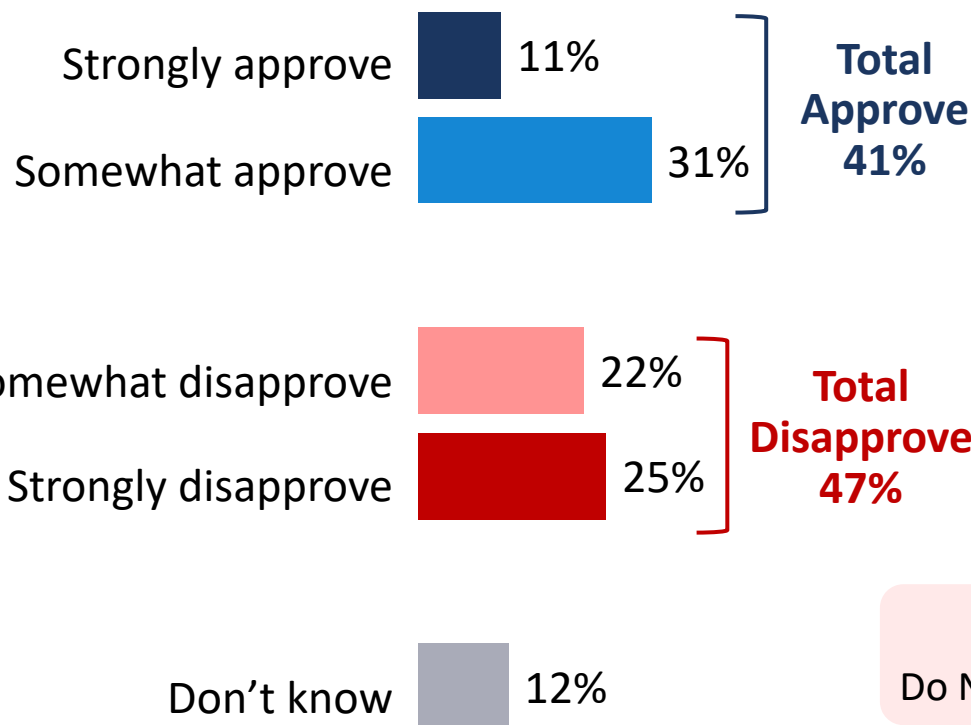


# **Views of Tucson Unified School District**

# A plurality disapproves of Tuscon USD's job performance – views are divided along partisan lines, and half of parents hold a negative impression of the district.

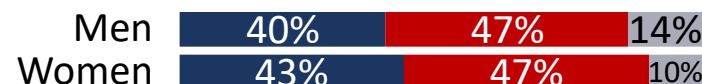


*Tucson Unified School District*

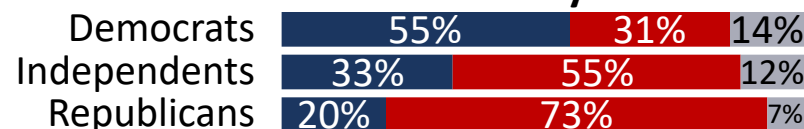


■ Total Approve ■ Total Disapprove ■ Don't Know

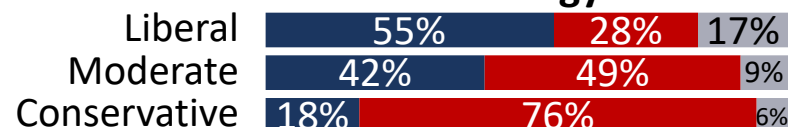
## Gender



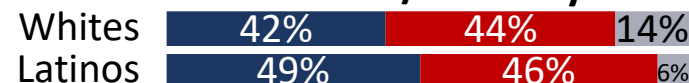
## Party



## Ideology



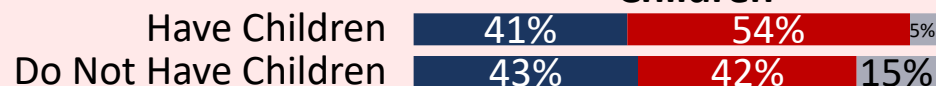
## Race/Ethnicity



## Age



## Children



## Residence



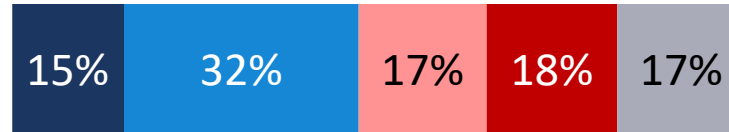
# Voters hold a more positive opinion of their “neighborhood public schools” than TUSD schools.

*I would like to ask you what you think about the job being done by different people and organizations. Please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the job that person or group is doing.*

■ Strng. App. ■ Smwt. App. ■ Smwt. Disapp. ■ Strng. Disapp. ■ Don't Know

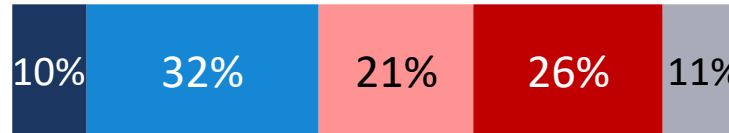
**Total App.** **Total Disapp.**

Your neighborhood public schools



**47%** **35%**

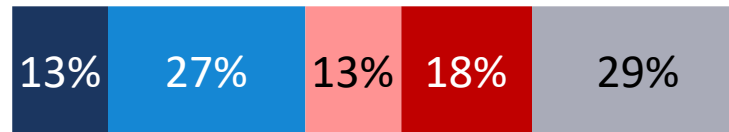
Tucson Unified public schools



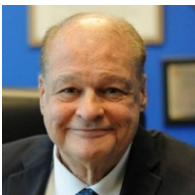
**42%** **47%**



Tucson Superintendent  
Dr. Gabriel Trujillo



**40%** **31%**



State Superintendent of  
Public Instruction Tom Horne



**22%** **53%**

# The vast majority believes TUSD needs additional funding, local schools require safety upgrades and a connection between good schools and property values.

*I would like to mention some statements about education and public schools in your area.*

*Please tell me if you think each of the following statements is accurate or inaccurate.*

■ Very Acc. ■ Smwt. Acc. ■ Smwt. Inacc. ■ Very Inacc. ■ Don't Know **Total Acc.** **Total Inacc.**

Tucson Unified School District needs additional funding to provide students with a quality education



**76%** **19%**

Neighborhood schools need upgrades to ensure student safety and security



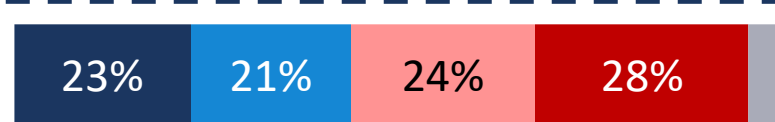
**77%** **16%**

Strong local schools will improve my property value



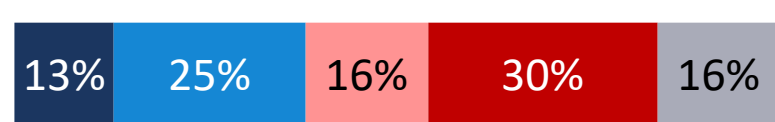
**79%** **15%**

With rising inflation and the high cost of living, this is not the right time to raise property taxes, even if it is for local schools



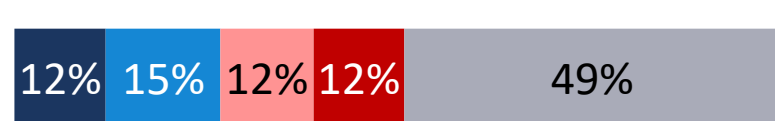
**44%** **52%**

Tucson Unified School District is fiscally responsible and uses taxpayer money efficiently



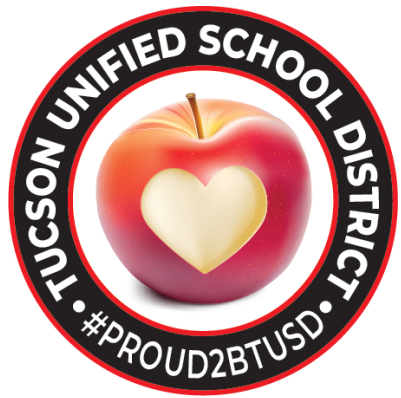
**37%** **46%**

The Tucson Unified school desegregation order requires local homeowners to pay additional property taxes



**27%** **24%**



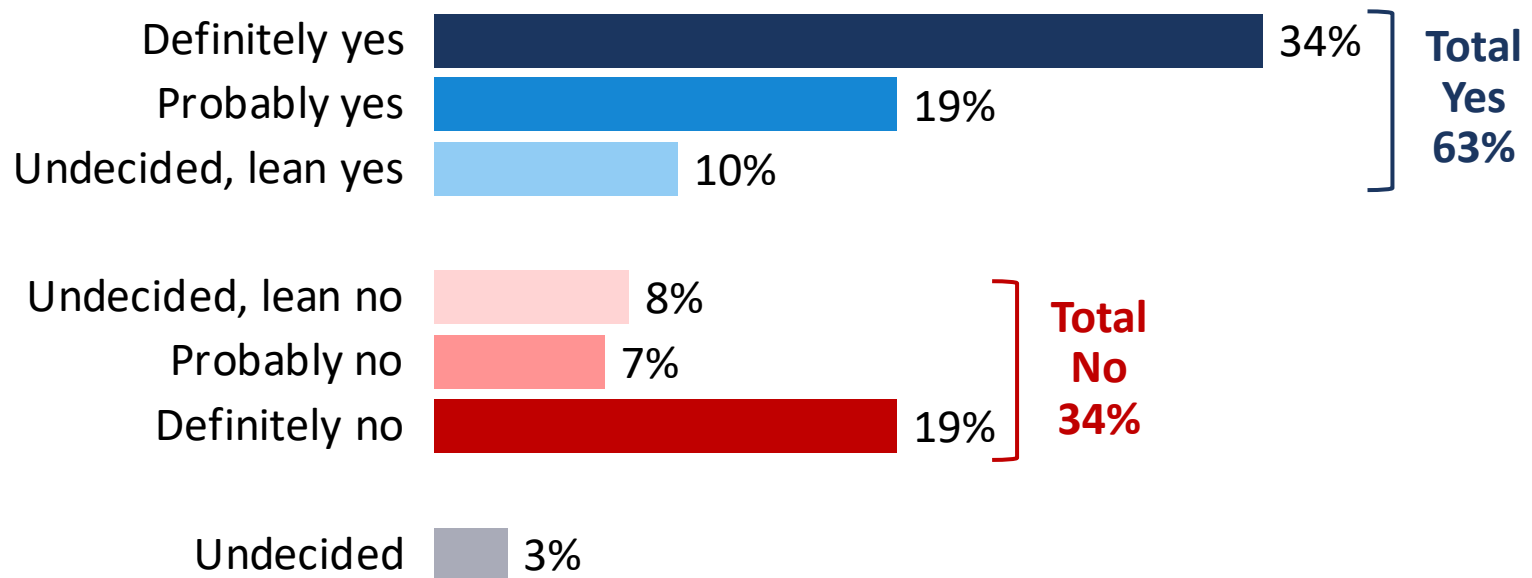


# **Views of Funding for Capital Improvements in Tucson Unified School District**

# More than six in ten voters support a \$480 million bond measure to improve TUSD schools, including a third who say they would “definitely” vote in favor.

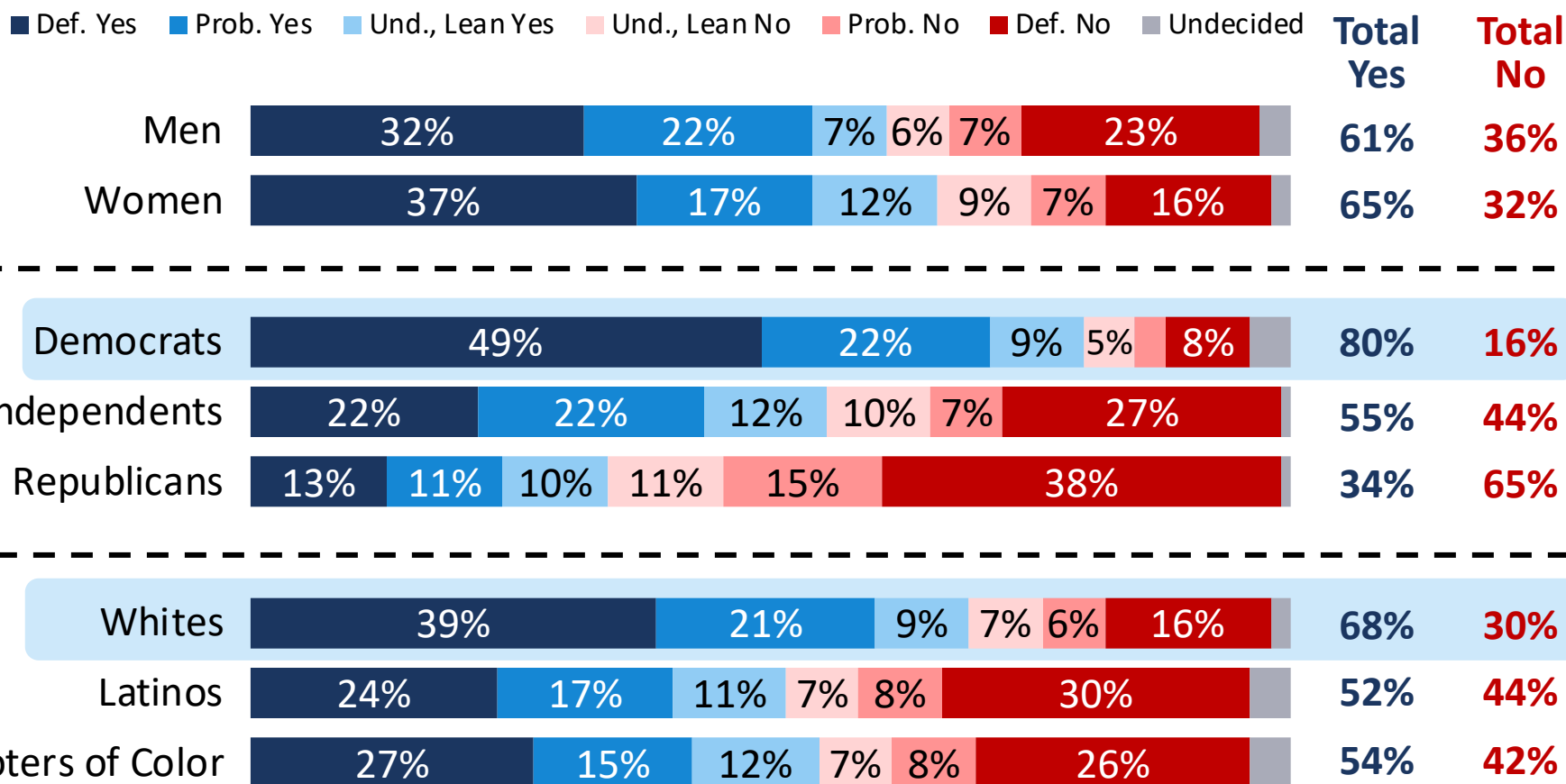
I am going to read you the summary of a local measure that may appear on the ballot in an upcoming local election. It may read as follows:

- A "yes" vote shall authorize the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board to issue and sell \$480 million of school improvement bonds of the District.
- A "no" vote shall not authorize the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board to issue and sell such school improvement bonds of the District.



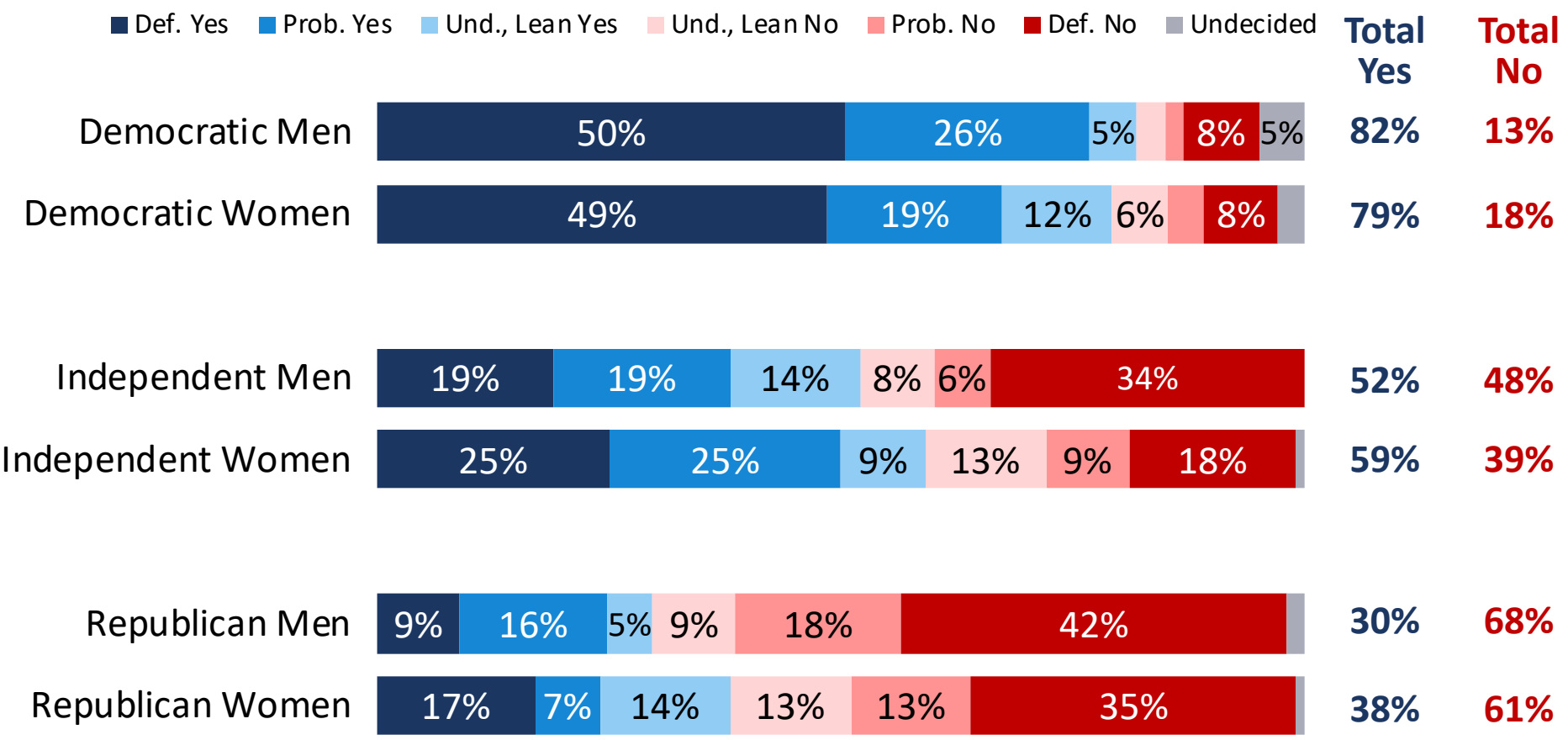
# The bond receives very strong support from Democrats and whites along with majorities of nonpartisans and Latinos.

*Initial Ballot Summary Vote by Gender, Party & Race/Ethnicity*



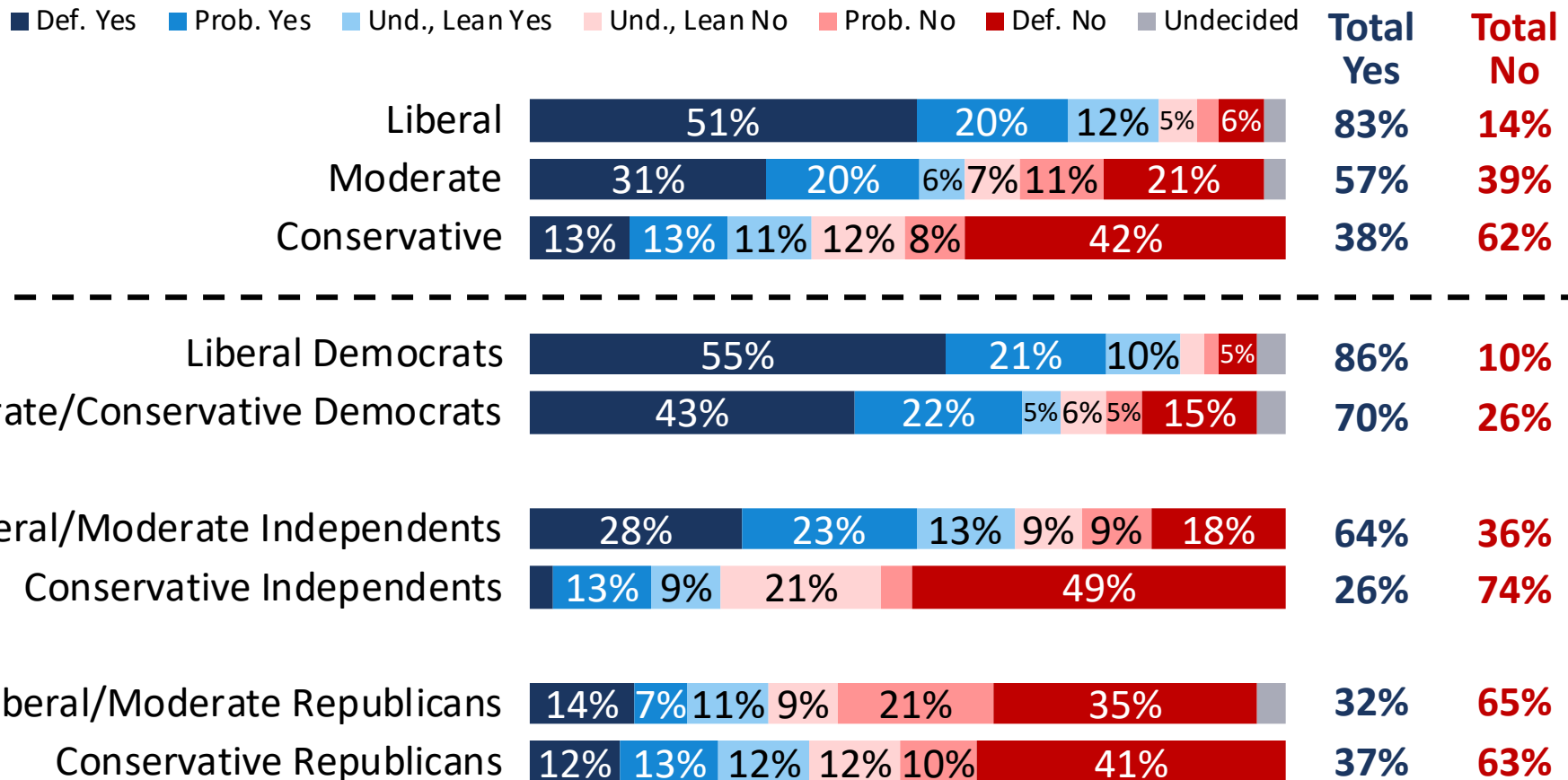
# Eight in ten Democrats regardless of gender vote in favor of the TUSD bond measure...

Initial Ballot Summary Vote by Party by Gender

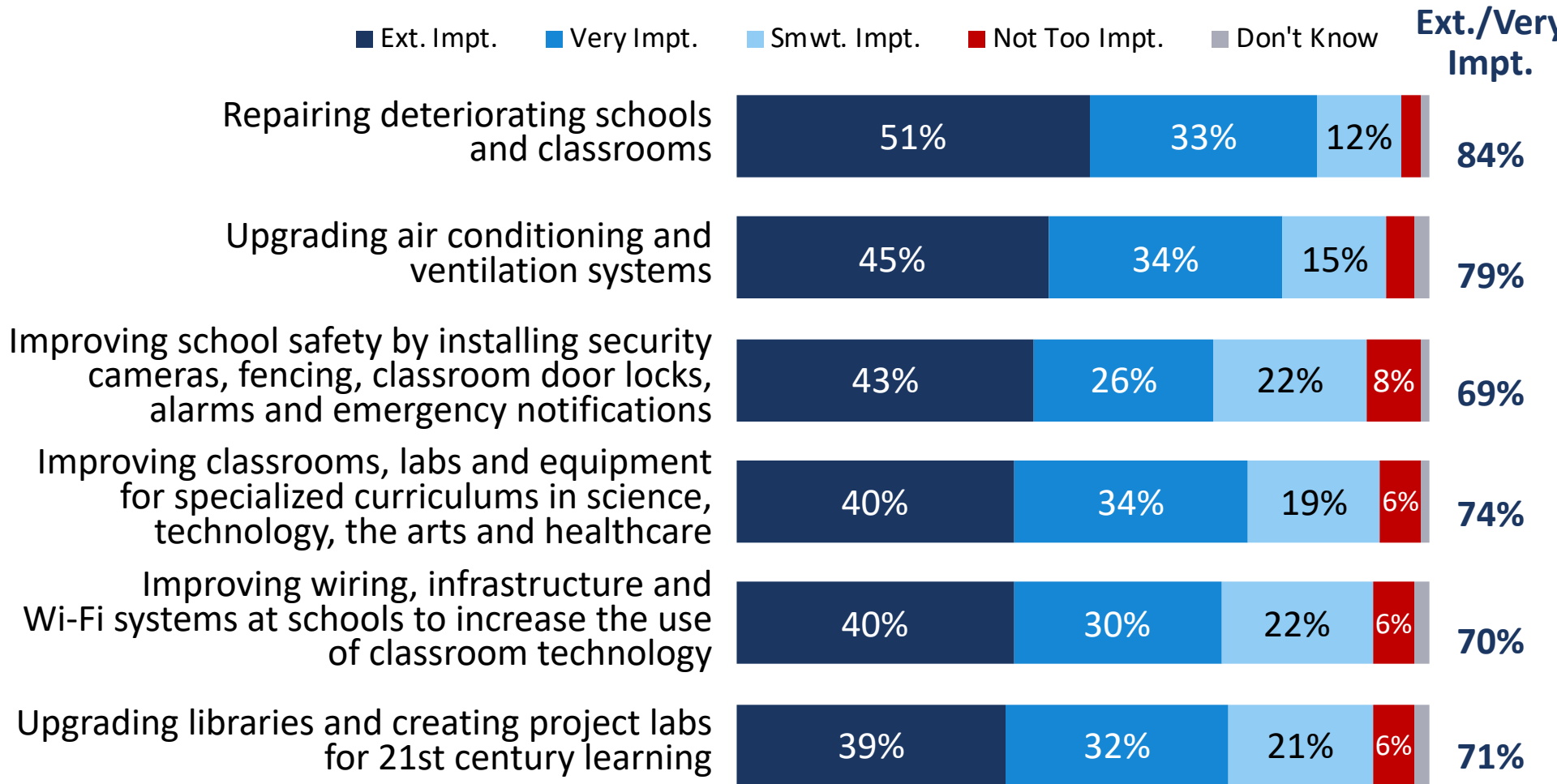


# ...and Democrats broadly back the measure irrespective of their political ideology.

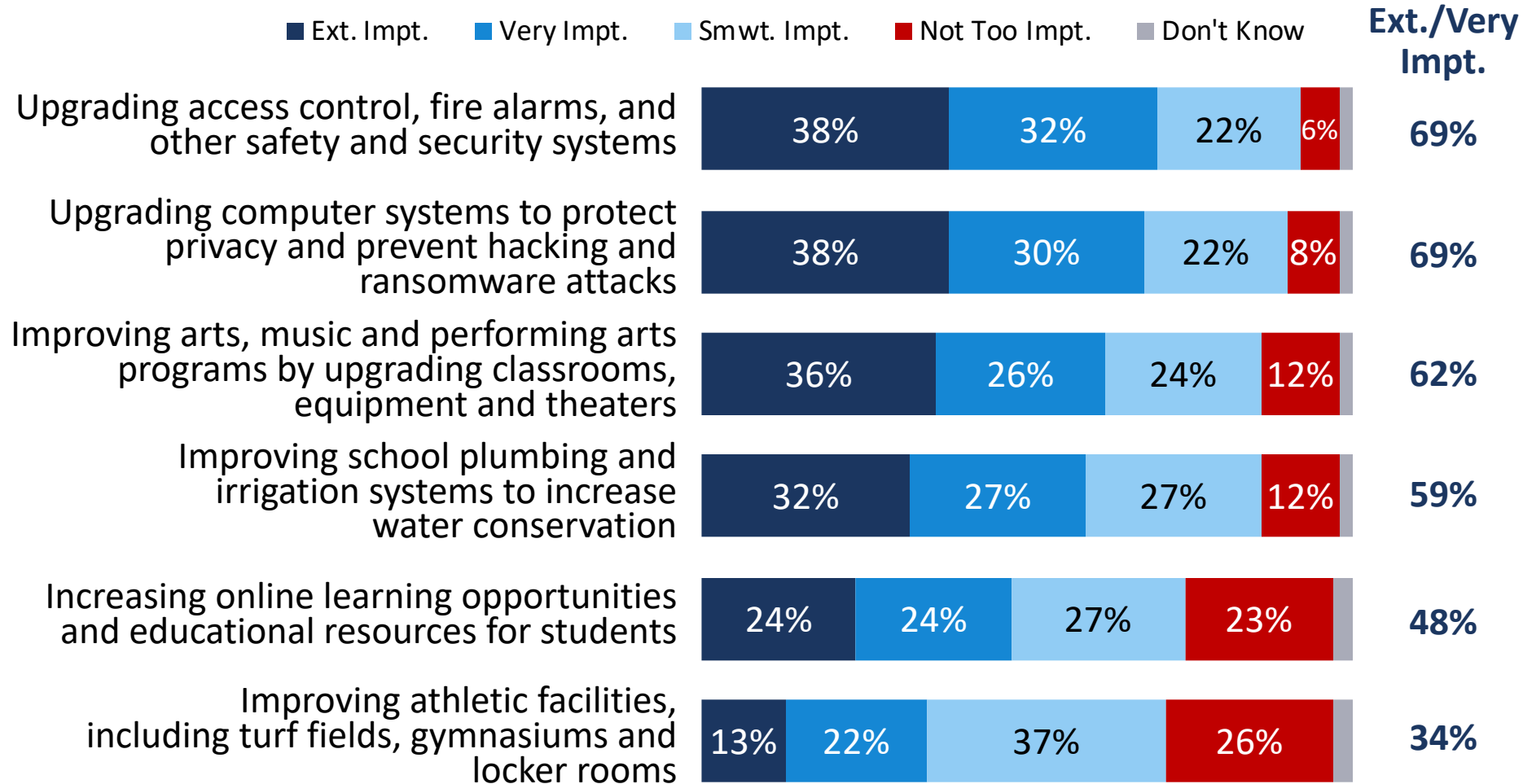
## Initial Ballot Summary Vote by Ideology & Party by Ideology

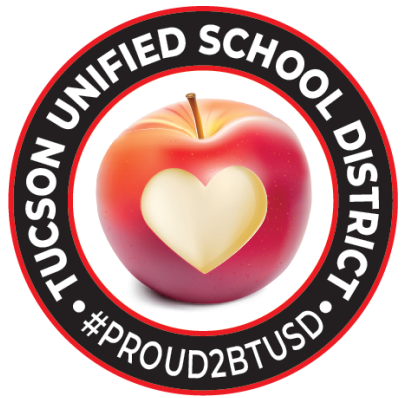


# Voters prioritize upgrading TUSD classrooms and air conditioning systems, improving school safety and investing in equipment and technology to improve education.



# Seven in ten rate strengthening online security system as highly important, but fewer see a need make investments to enhance online learning or to enhance athletic facilities.





# The Impact of Community Education



# Community Education Statements

*(Ranked by Percentage “Strongly Agreeing” with the Statement)*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>55%</b> | <b>(MATH/SCIENCE)</b> Students must have a strong foundation in math, science and technology to compete for a good job. Passing this bond will increase student access to quality labs, libraries, and classroom technology to ensure they are prepared for today’s in-demand careers, and our local economy has a skilled and well-educated workforce.   |
| <b>53%</b> | <b>^(SAFETY)</b> We have a responsibility to do everything we can to keep students and teachers safe. Funds from this bond will be used to improve classroom safety by installing up-to-date fire safety doors, smoke alarms and sprinkler systems as well as adding security cameras, perimeter fencing, emergency door locks and other life safety notifications in classrooms that can help to protect schools and improve police 911 response times.            |
| <b>50%</b> | <b>^(REPAIRS)</b> Neighborhood schools across Tucson are outdated, deteriorating and must be upgraded to protect student health and safety. This bond measure will fund critical improvement projects which include installing air conditioning and HVAC systems, upgrading plumbing and electrical wiring to increase water conservation and energy efficiency, replacing desks and classroom equipment, and meeting current standards for handicap accessibility. |
| <b>46%</b> | <b>(20 YEARS)</b> It has been nearly 20 years since Tucson voters approved a local bond measure to upgrade neighborhood schools. By providing a dedicated source of funding to repair schools, this bond measure will allow the district to provide students and teachers better learning environments and access to the education resources needed to improve Tucson schools.  |

# TUSD Community Education Statements (Continued)

(Ranked by Percentage “Strongly Agreeing” with the Statement)

44%

**(EVERY SCHOOL)** This bond measure is designed to benefit all of Tucson by requiring funds be used to upgrade every school in the district. This ensures that all students across Tucson have equal access to clean, safe and quality schools, and improving schools across the district will strengthen property values in every neighborhood.

43%

**(CAREER)** Tucson high schools provide students access to career education programs, especially for high-demand careers like information technology, healthcare, and engineering as well as traditional trades that provide stable, good-paying jobs. This ensures that students who do not attend a 4-year college have the opportunity to learn the job skills needed to get good-paying jobs.

34%

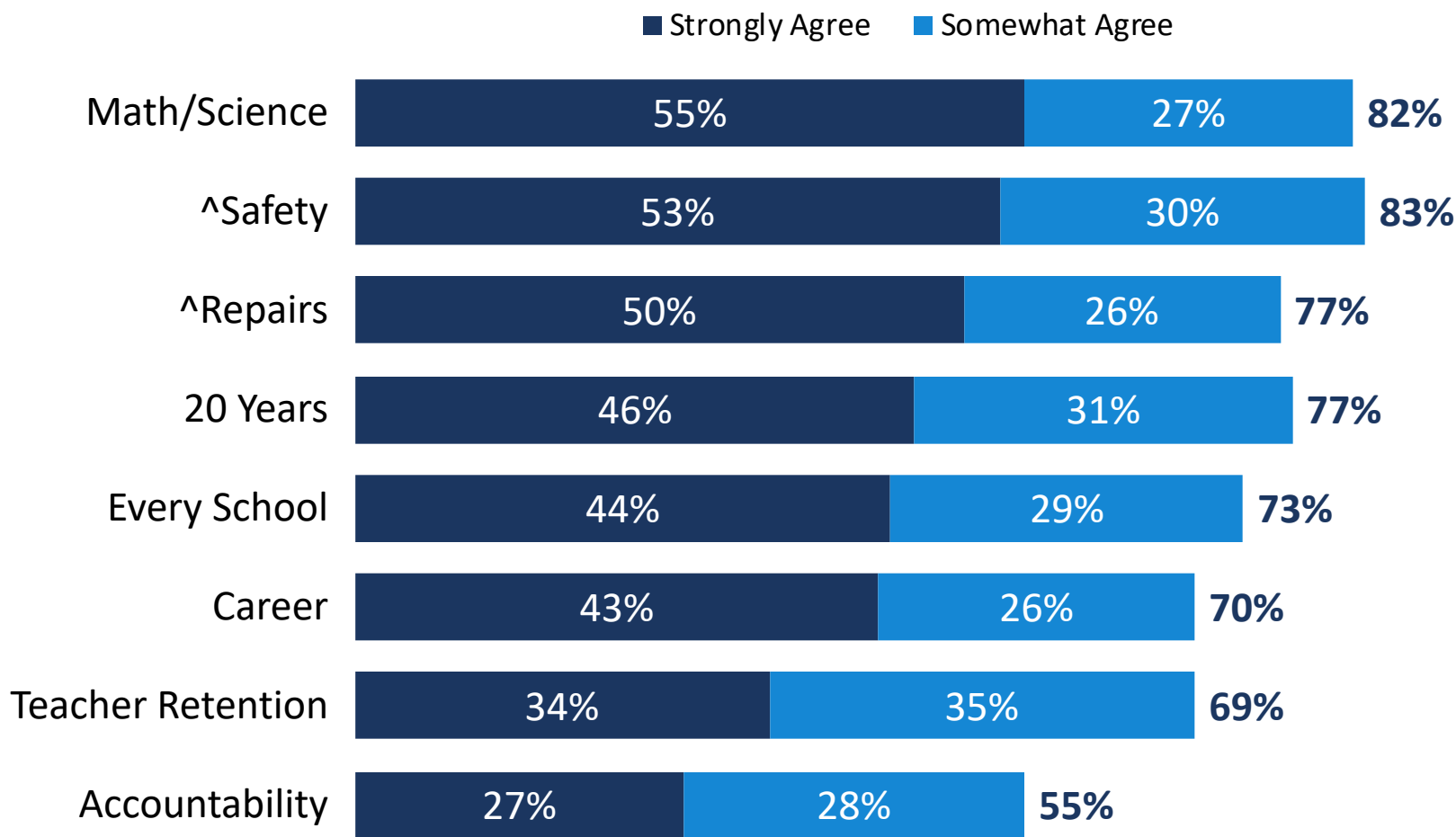
**(TEACHER RETENTION)** This measure will help Tucson public schools retain and attract quality teachers. By upgrading and building new classrooms, the best teachers will want to teach in our community because classrooms will be safer, up-to-date and have greater access to new technology to support 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skills and instructional needs.

27%

**(ACCOUNTABILITY)** Tucson Unified has a strong record of fiscal accountability, which includes a community oversight committee that reviews bond measure projects and spending. Furthermore, this bond requires independent annual audits to ensure transparency, and public expenditure reports so we can hold school officials accountable and make sure they are using our tax dollars effectively and as promised.

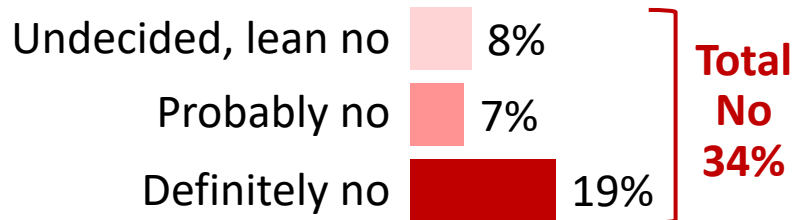
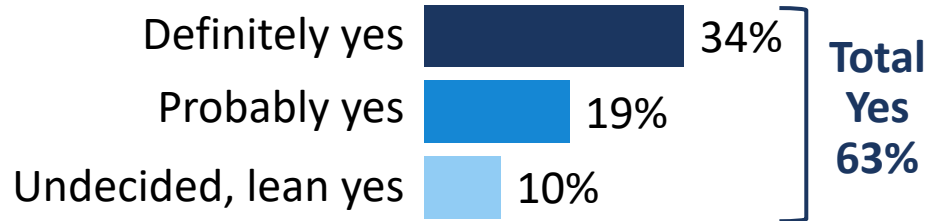
# The public agrees that TUSD needs additional resources to improve STEM education programs, to do more to make schools safer and to repair aging and deteriorating schools.

(Ranked by Percentage Saying “Strongly Agree” with the Statement)



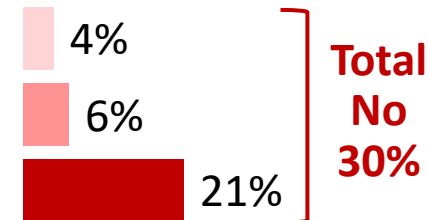
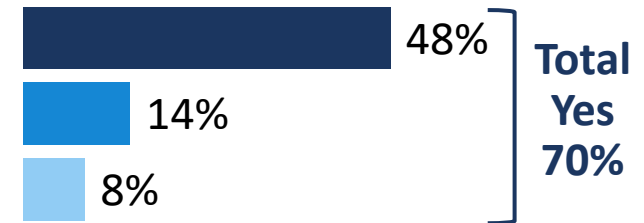
# Voters remain highly supportive following these statements, favoring the \$480 TUSD bond measure by a margin of more than two-to-one.

Initial Ballot  
Summary Vote



Undecided 3%

Vote After Community  
Education Statements



0%

Q3. If the election were held today, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this Tucson Unified School District bond measure?

Q12. Now that you have heard more about it, if the election were held today, would you vote "yes" to authorize the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board to issue and sell \$480 million of school improvement bonds or "no" to oppose it?

# Following community education statements, support for a TUSD bond measure increases among younger voters, parents and Latinos.

*Total Yes*

| Demographic Group                    | Initial Ballot Vote | Vote After Community Education Statements | Difference | % of Sample |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---|------------|-------------|
| <b><i>Interviewed in Spanish</i></b> | <b>43%</b>          | <b>72%</b>                                | <b>29%</b> | <b>5%</b>   |
| Latinos Ages 18-54                   | 53%                 | 71%                                       | 18%        | 7%          |
| Women Ages 18-54                     | 64%                 | 81%                                       | 17%        | 17%         |
| Non-College Educated Women           | 56%                 | 72%                                       | 16%        | 21%         |
| <b><i>Ages 30-39</i></b>             | <b>66%</b>          | <b>82%</b>                                | <b>16%</b> | <b>12%</b>  |
| <b><i>Have Children at Home</i></b>  | <b>53%</b>          | <b>68%</b>                                | <b>15%</b> | <b>21%</b>  |
| <b><i>Latinos</i></b>                | <b>52%</b>          | <b>67%</b>                                | <b>15%</b> | <b>20%</b>  |
| Tucson City Ward District 4          | 60%                 | 75%                                       | 15%        | 16%         |
| <b><i>Ages 40-49</i></b>             | <b>62%</b>          | <b>77%</b>                                | <b>15%</b> | <b>12%</b>  |
| Renters                              | 71%                 | 84%                                       | 13%        | 20%         |
| Latinos Ages 55+                     | 52%                 | 65%                                       | 13%        | 13%         |
| Some College or Less                 | 58%                 | 70%                                       | 12%        | 38%         |
| White Non-College Educated           | 66%                 | 77%                                       | 11%        | 23%         |
| White Independents                   | 53%                 | 64%                                       | 11%        | 11%         |
| Ages 18-54                           | 67%                 | 77%                                       | 10%        | 37%         |

# Statements from TUSD Bond Measure Opponents

(Ranked by Percentage Saying “Strongly Agree” with the Statement)

29%

**(TAXES)** With inflation and rising prices for gas, food and housing it is harder than ever for working families, small businesses and seniors on fixed incomes to make ends meet. We cannot afford a bond measure that will raise local property taxes for years to come.

29%

**\*(WOKE SCHOOLS)** Tucson teachers, school board members and bureaucrats are trying to indoctrinate our kids with a radical, woke agenda. They refuse to listen to parents, and instead use the classroom to teach Critical Race Theory and expose students to offensive material about gender and sexuality in schools. We should not reward them with more of our tax dollars.

26%

**(WASTE)** During the pandemic Tucson Unified received hundreds of millions of dollars in additional funding, and now wants us to approve the biggest school bond measure in Arizona history. We must vote NO on this half-billion-dollar bond; politicians and school administrators can’t be trusted because they waste our money, and reward themselves with outrageous executive salaries and taxpayer-funded pensions.

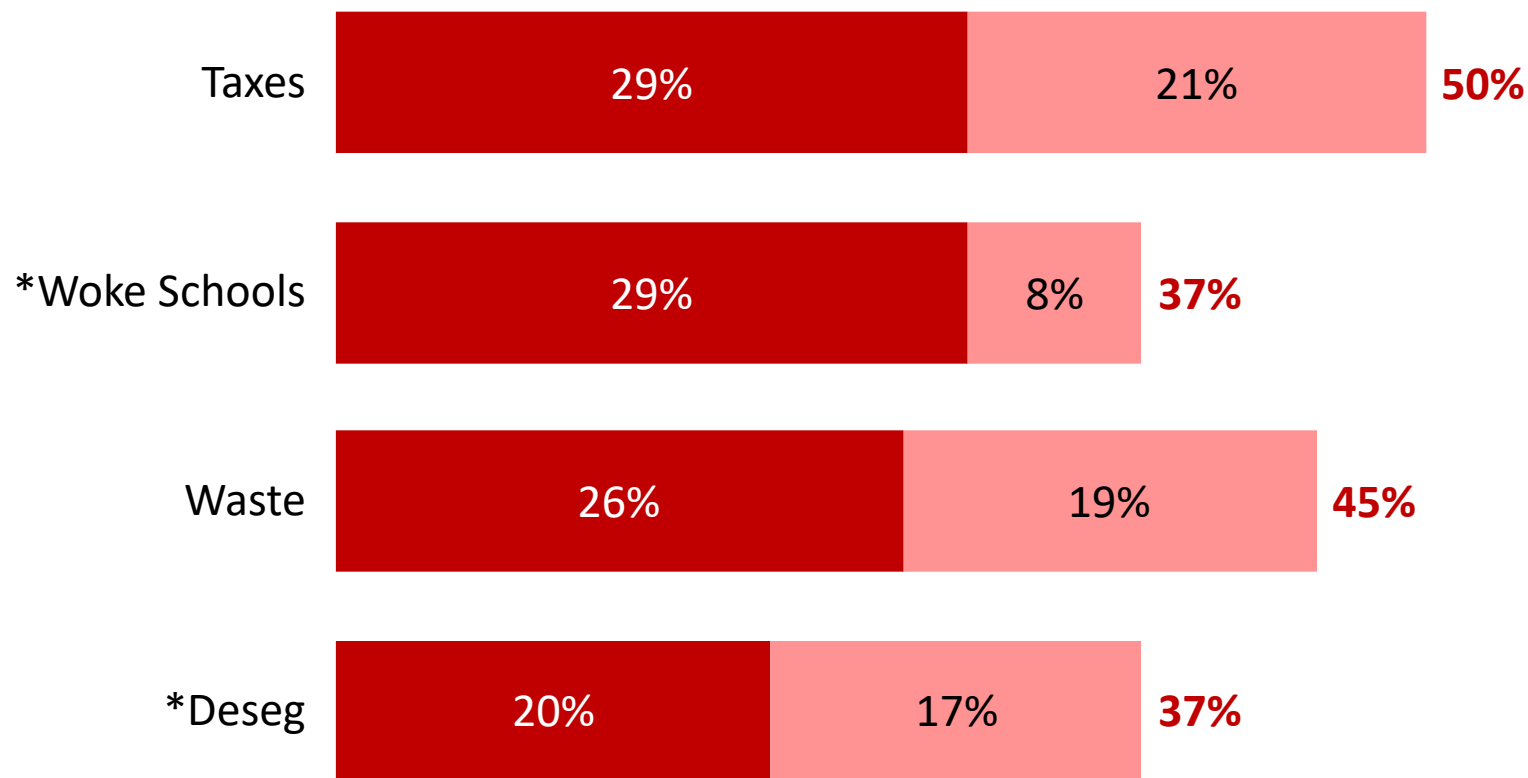
20%

**\*(DESEG)** Local homeowners already pay a special Tucson Unified school desegregation property tax that raises millions of dollars every year. School district officials already have the funding they need and should not try to raise our taxes even higher.

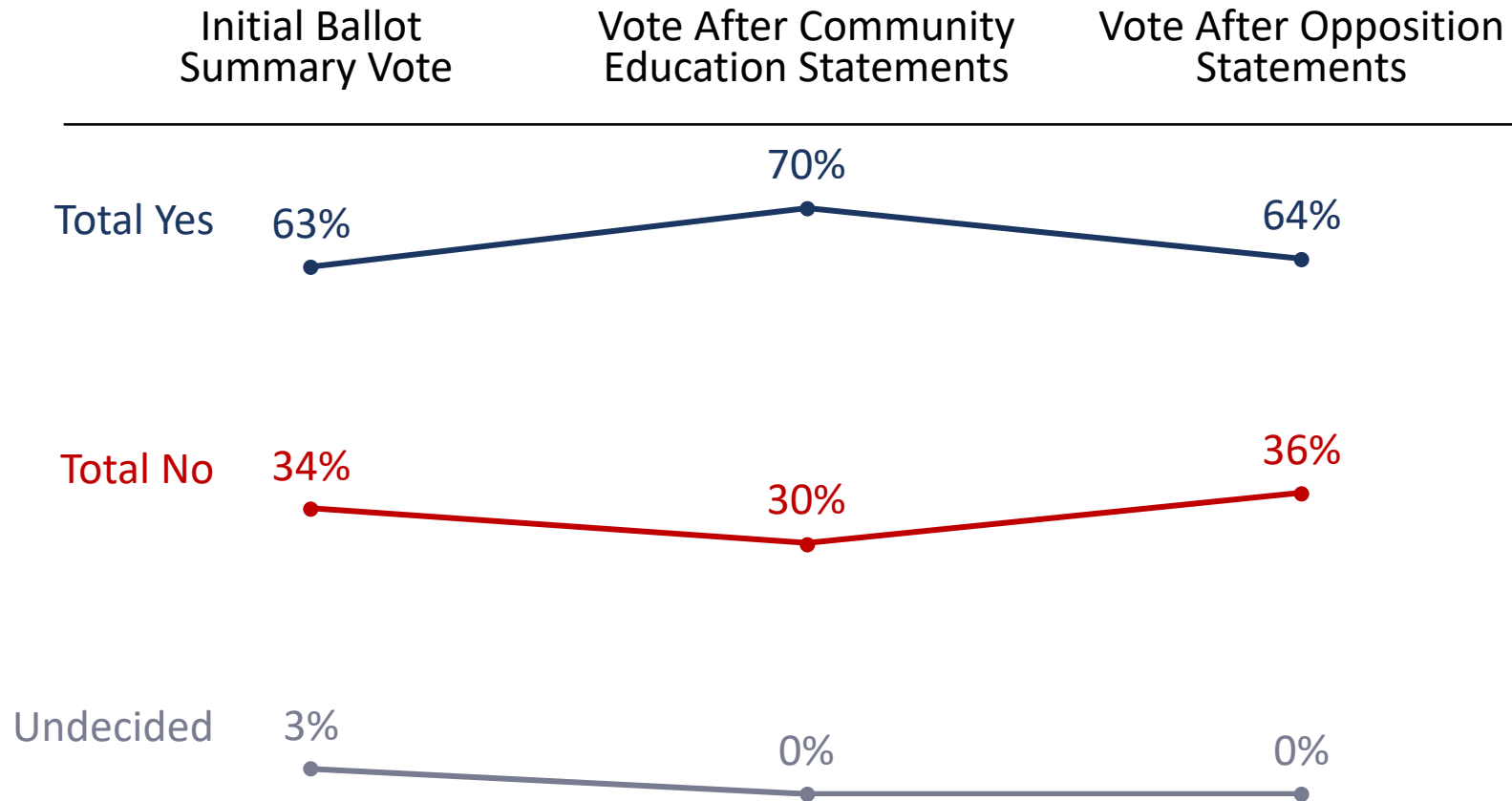
# Fewer TUSD voters agree with these statements, though raising concerns about higher taxes in the current economic climate resonates with half.

*(Ranked by Percentage Saying “Strongly Agree” with the Statement)*

■ Strongly Agree ■ Somewhat Agree



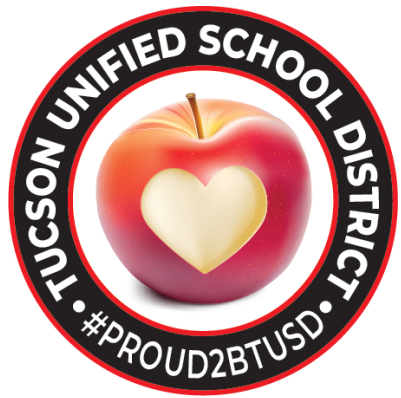
# Following these statements two-thirds continue to favor a \$480 million TUSD bond measure.



Q3. If the election were held today, would you vote yes in favor or no to oppose this Tucson Unified School District bond measure?

Q12 & Q14. If the election were held today, would you vote "yes" to authorize the Tucson Unified School District Governing Board to issue and sell \$480 million of school improvement bonds or "no" to oppose it?



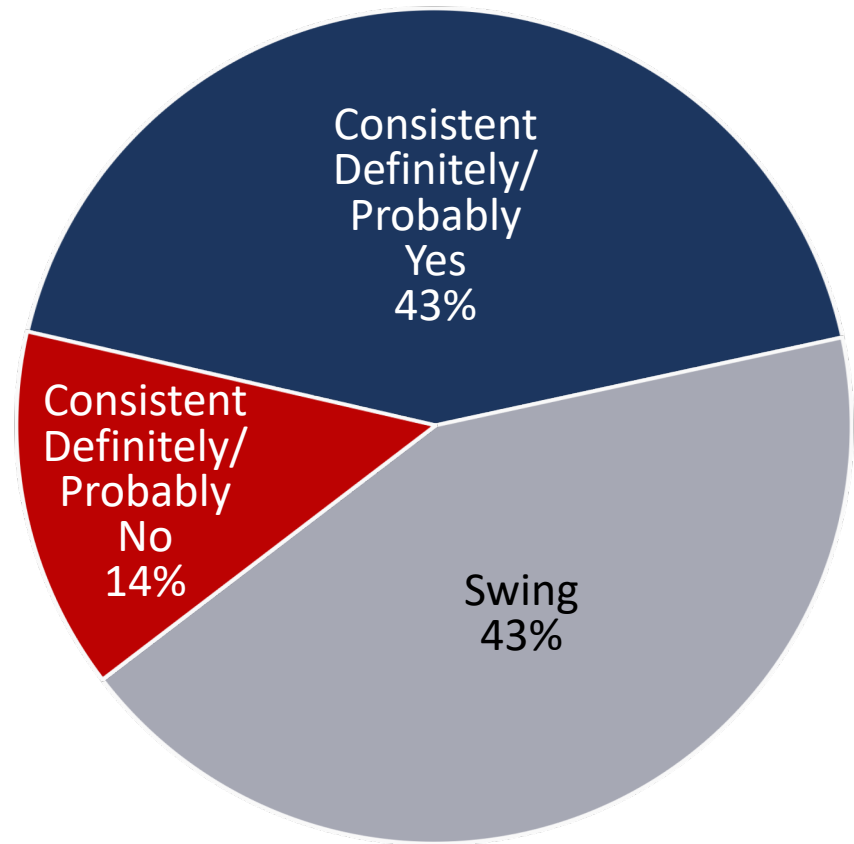


# Segmentation Analysis

# Segmenting the Electorate

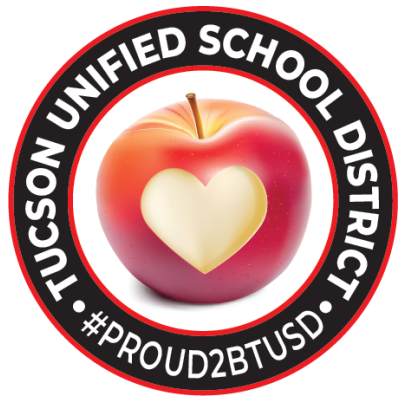
- ❖ **Consistent Definitely/Probably Yes:** Voters who consistently indicated they would definitely/probably vote yes on the measure
- ❖ **Consistent Definitely/Probably No:** Voters who consistently indicated they would definitely/probably vote no on the measure
- ❖ **Swing:** Voters who do not fall into any of the other categories – remaining consistently undecided or switching positions

The following slide shows demographic groups that *disproportionately* fall into one category or the other.



# Demographic Profile of the Segments

| Consistent Definitely/<br>Probably Yes | Swing  | Consistent Definitely/<br>Probably No |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>43% of the Electorate</b>           | <b>43% of the Electorate</b>                         | <b>14% of the Electorate</b>          |
| White Democrats                        | Conservative Republicans                             | Republican Men                        |
| Liberal Democrats                      | Latino Women   | Conservative Independents             |
| Democratic Men                         | Republican Women                                     | Republicans                           |
| Democrats Ages 18-54                   | Tucson City Ward District 5                          | Conservative                          |
| Liberal                                | White Republicans                                    | Republicans Ages 55+                  |
| Democrats                              | Moms   | Republicans Ages 18-54                |
| Democrats Ages 55+                     | Republicans Ages 18-54                               | Liberal/Moderate<br>Independents      |
| Democratic Women                       | Conservative   | Conservative Republicans              |
| Renters                                | Conservative Independents                            | Senate District 17                    |
| Senate District 20                     | High School Educated/<br>Vocational/Technical School | White Republicans                     |
| Whites Ages 18-54                      | Republicans  | Republican Women                      |
| White College-Educated                 | Interviewed in Spanish                               | Independent Men                       |
| Post-Graduate Educated                 | Republicans Ages 55+                                 | White Independents                    |
| Men Ages 18-54                         | Latinos Ages 55+                                     | Latino Men                            |
| Ages 40-49                             | Non-College Educated Women                           | Independents Ages 18-54               |



# Conclusions

# Conclusions

- The survey finds voters concerned about local schools, as pluralities currently disapprove of the job performance of the district overall and Tucson USD public schools.
- Specifically, voters identify a shortage of qualified teachers, a lack of state funding for public schools and the overall quality of education in TUSD schools as major problems – greater or equal to their level of concern about “inflation and raising prices”.
- There is also a consensus that TUSD needs additional funding to meet the educational needs of local students and improve school safety.
- Voters’ mindset and perceptions set a strong foundation for a potential TUSD bond measure:
  - *More than six in ten favor a \$480 TUSD bond measure – Democrats, liberals and white voters are the most likely to be supportive, majorities of Independents and Latinos would vote “yes,” and voters of all ages support the bond.*
- Support increases and intensifies following a plain language summary of how bond measure funds would be used – voters’ top priorities include repairing deteriorating classrooms, upgrading air conditioning, making safety improvements and investing in equipment and technology to enhance STEM programs and classroom education.
- In simulating a community education program, voters respond strongly to themes focused on STEM education, student safety and making health and safety repairs to schools.
- In sum, these survey results suggest Tucson USD voters regard a local school bond measure as warranted and appropriate and are prepared to approve such a measure if placed on the ballot.

**For more information,  
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**OPINION  
RESEARCH  
& STRATEGY**