

EMC DRA Hybrid Web/Telephone Survey of Fremont Union High School District Special Election Voters

December 2017-January 2018

# Methodology



- Hybrid telephone and online survey of Fremont Union High School District special election voters
- ▶ 506 total interviews; overall margin of error ±4.4 percentage points
- ▶ Survey conducted December 7<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup>, 2017
- Interviews conducted by trained professional interviewers
- Where applicable results compared to previous surveys;
  - May 2014; n=604, MoE: ± 4.0%, The Center for Community Opinion
  - June 2013; n=404, MoE: ± 4.9%, The Center for Community Opinion

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

# **Key Findings**



- The vast majority of respondents are aware of the high quality of education provided by Fremont Union HSD high schools.
- The District's ratings on financial management and the condition of classrooms, school buildings, and other school facilities have improved steadily over time as voter awareness of the District appears to have increased.
- Although a majority see a need for additional funding for the high schools, support for a parcel tax measure based on square footage of building area falls short of the necessary two-thirds.
- Maintaining strong core academics, preparing students for college and careers, and attracting and retaining quality teachers are top voter priorities.
- Information about the particular benefits of a square footage measure such as ensuring that businesses would pay their fair share – does not resonate as strongly as messages about attracting and retaining high quality teachers, ensuring the revenue will be spent locally and continuing the tradition of academic excellence in local high schools.

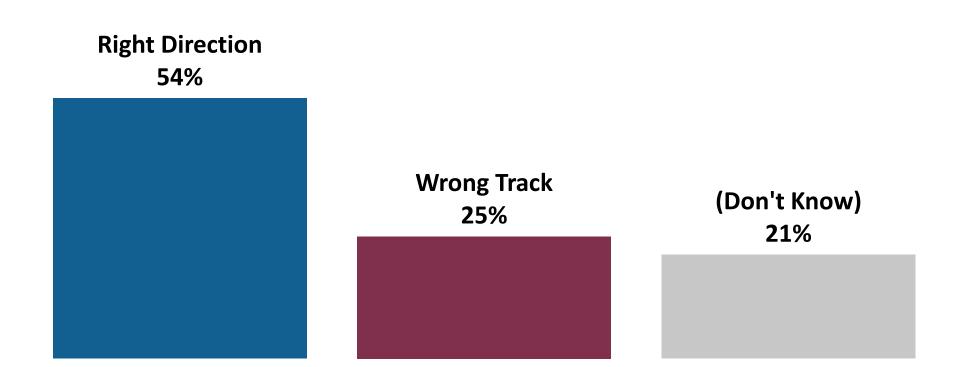


## **Issue Environment**

# **Right Direction/Wrong Track**



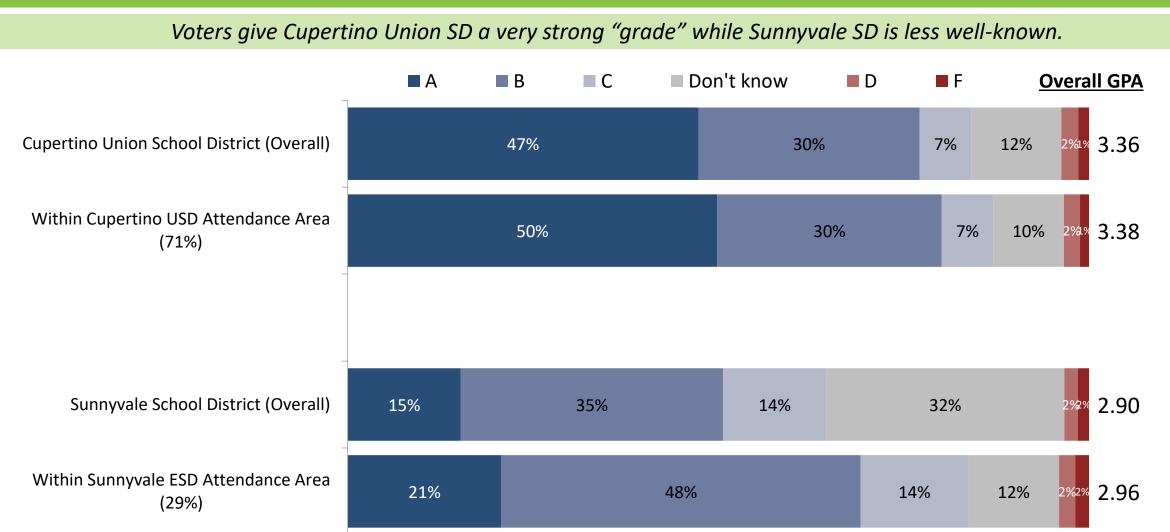
Just over half of voters believe that things in the area are going in the right direction.



Q4. Do you feel that things in your area are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things have gotten pretty seriously off on the wrong track?

# **Elementary School District Ratings**



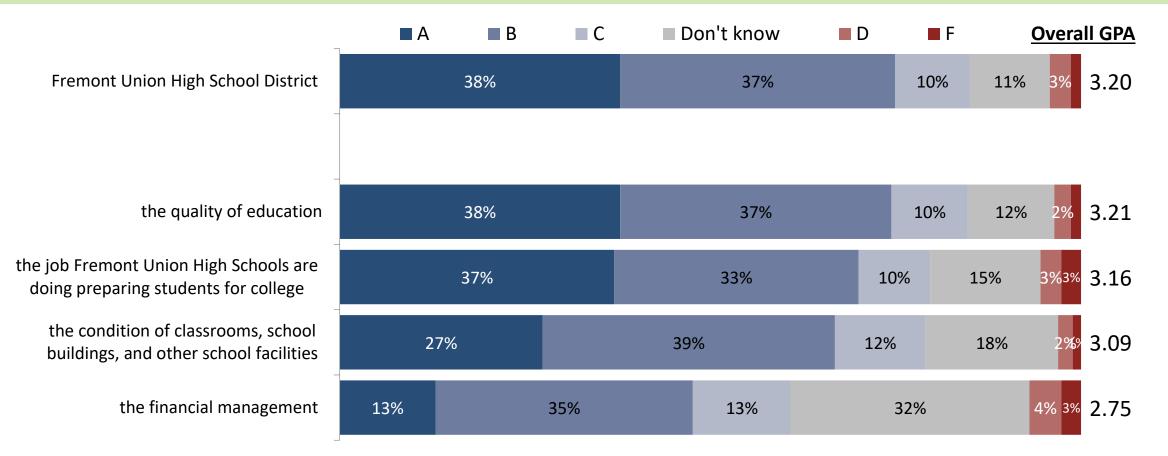


Q8-10. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the schools in your community were graded in the same way. Regardless of whether you have children in school, what grade would you give each of the following school districts? A, B, C, D or F?

# **Fremont Union High School District Ratings**



FUHSD gets high marks, particularly on providing quality education and preparing students for college.



Q8-10. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the schools in your community were graded in the same way. Regardless of whether you have children in school, what grade would you give each of the following school districts? A, B, C, D or F? Q11-14. Using the same grading system, please grade the following areas relating to the Fremont Union High School District.

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### Fremont Union High School District Ratings – Over Time



The District's ratings on financial management and the condition of classrooms, school buildings, and other school facilities have improved steadily over time, largely due to increased awareness.

	_	1	A	B		С	Dor	n't know	D	F F	<u>c</u>	Overall GPA
the condition of classrooms, school buildings, and other school facilities*	'17	27%			39%				12%	18%	2%	3.09
	'14	24	%		32%			12%	31%		29	3.12
	'13	16%			35%		99	6	39%		29	3.05
	-											
the financial management	'17	13%		35%			139	6	32%		4% 3%	2.75
	'14	12%	25	25%		10%		49%			2% 29	2.83
	'13	8%	23%		8%				56%		2%3%	2.71

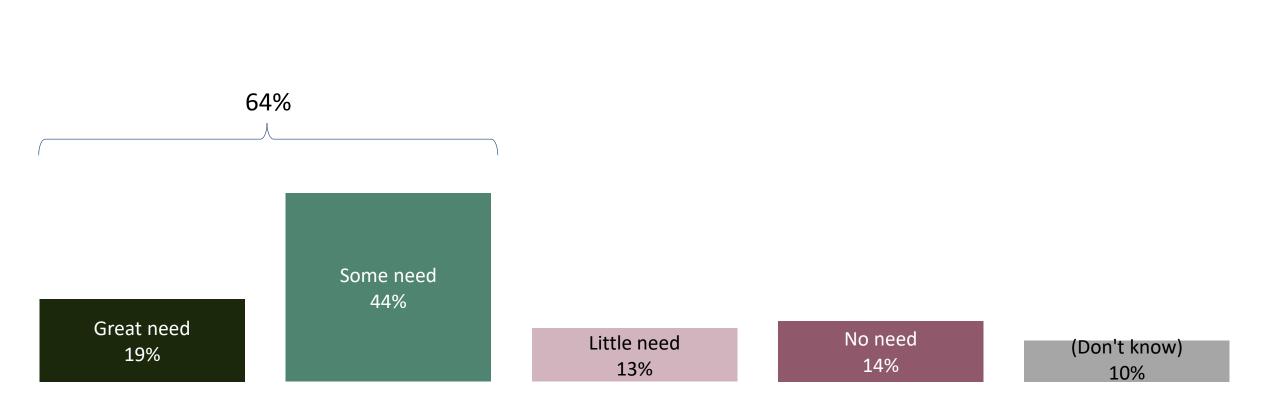
Q11-14. Using the same grading system, please grade the following areas relating to the Fremont Union High School District

\*Asked as "the condition of facilities" in 2014 and "condition of classroom buildings and facilities" in 2013. Note: Methodology change from phone-only surveys to hybrid phone/web may impact changes over time

### **FUHSD Need for Additional Funding**



Just under two-thirds perceive a need for additional funding for the District.



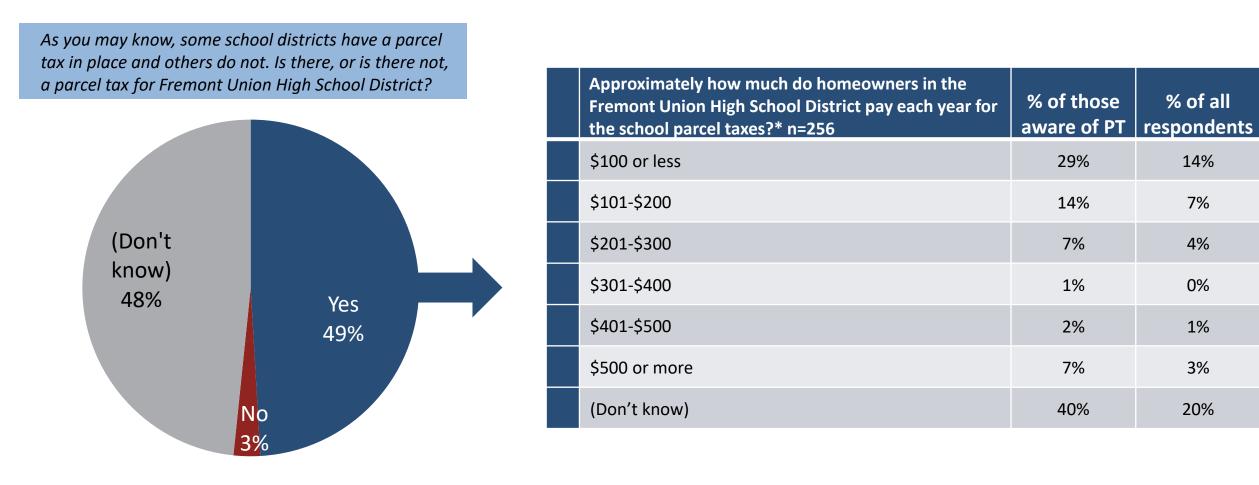
Q5. Would you say high schools in the district have a great need for more money, some need, a little need or no real need for more money?

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### **Awareness of Parcel Tax**



Almost half of voters know that there is an existing parcel tax for the District\*.



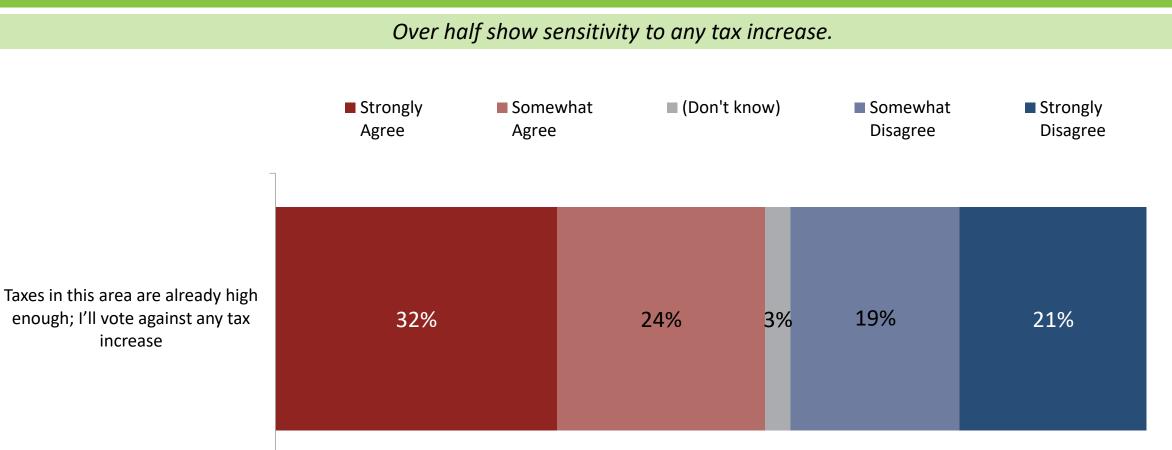
Q6. Some school districts have a parcel tax in place and others do not. Is there a parcel tax for FUHSD?

Q7. How much do homeowners in the FUHSD pay each year for the school parcel taxes?

\*Online participants may have been able to look up the parcel tax rate online while taking the survey.

#### **Attitudes about Taxes**



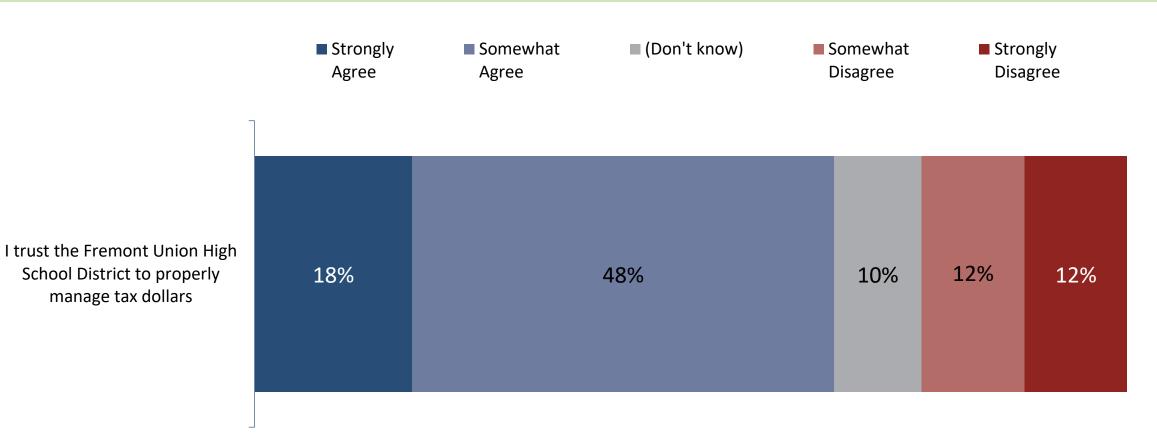


Q16-17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

### **Trust in FUHSD**



A strong majority trust the District to properly manage tax dollars.



Q16-17. Please tell me whether you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.



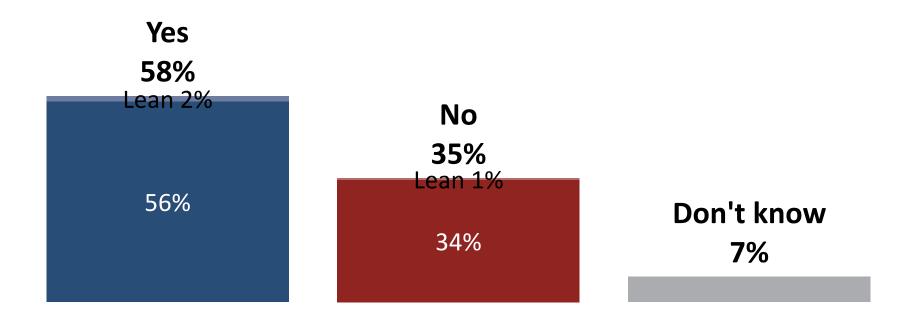
# Initial Support for Square-footage Parcel Tax Measure

#### **Initial Vote**



#### Initial support for the replacing the parcel tax with a tax based on building square footage is below two-thirds.

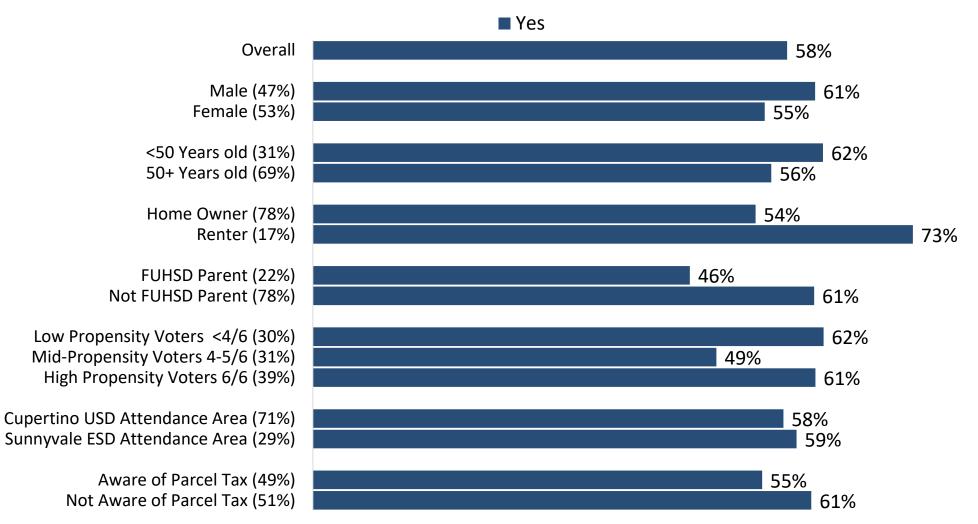
To attract and retain high quality teachers and staff, continue outstanding education in local high schools including strong academic programs in science, math, technology and engineering, and prepare students for college and careers and replace the existing school parcel tax; shall Fremont Union High School District levy at 5.6 cents per square foot of building area per year, providing approximately \$10 million annually for 8 years, with citizen oversight, exemptions for seniors, and all funds benefiting local high schools?



## **Initial Support by Subgroups**



There is majority support, but less than two-thirds, among most demographic subgroups.



Q15. If the election were held today, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject this measure?



# **Measure Components**

#### **Measure Components**



Maintaining strong core academics, preparing students for college and careers, and attracting and retaining quality teachers are top priorities.

	■ 7 - Very important ■ 6	5	<u>Total important</u>
Maintain strong core academic programs in reading, writing, math, and science	60%	17	% 11% <b>87%</b>
Prepare students for college and careers	56%	18%	12% <b>86%</b>
Continue strong academic programs in science, math, technology and engineering	56%	22%	11% <b>89%</b>
Attract and retain high quality teachers and staff	56%	18%	12% <b>85%</b>
Continue outstanding education in local high schools	52%	22%	10% <b>83%</b>
Enhance opportunities for students to stay competitive and prepare for college and 21st century careers	46%	22%	16% <b>84%</b>

Q18-29. I'm going to read you a list of components that could be included in a Fremont Union High School District measure. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important.

#### Measure Components, cont.



#### Other components are also important to the vast majority.

-	7 - Very important	■ 6	5	<u>Total important</u>
Raise pay for teachers and staff	39%	20%	15%	74%
Provide counseling and support services to help students cope with stress	38%	18%	20%	76%
Provide teacher and staff development to improve instruction	37%	22%	20%	79%
Increase teacher training, resources and classroom support	36%	21%	20%	77%
Raise pay for teachers in shortage areas such as special education	34%	19%	19%	72%
Provide academic tutoring to help students keep up and close the achievement gap	34%	20%	19%	73%

Q18-29. I'm going to read you a list of components that could be included in a Fremont Union High School District measure. After each one, please rate how important that item is to you, using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means not at all important, and 7 means extremely important.



# **Additional Information**

## **Additional Information**



Messages about how the measure will attract and retain high quality teachers and that the revenue will be spent locally are very convincing reasons to support a measure.

Very convincing Somewhat convincing **Total convincing** Great teachers are at the center of student achievement. This measure will help attract and 72% retain the highest quality teachers so that kids in all our high schools have access to the best 34% 38% education possible. All revenue from this measure will be spent right here in our local high schools and cannot be taken away by the state. A citizens' oversight committee and annual audits will ensure all 34% 36% 71% funds from this measure are spent as promised. This measure will help keep teacher salaries competitive to prevent our high quality 29% 41% 70% teachers from leaving for higher paying districts. Known for rigorous academic programs, outstanding graduation rate & superior test scores, [FUHSD] Schools are among the top...in the state. This measure will provide the resources 29% 67% 38% needed to continue the tradition of academic excellence for local students. 34% 33% 66% By investing in our local schools, we help maintain high property values in our community.

Q30-38. Next, I'd like to read you statements from people who support a school funding measure for Fremont Union High School District. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote for the measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.

## **Additional Information**

This measure will not increase taxes for the majority...in the school district. It will replace the existing parcel tax with a new funding measure that will cost the average homeowner

the same amount, while doubling revenue for local high schools.



**Total convincing** 

61%

#### Messages explaining the particular benefits of the square footage measure do not resonate as strongly.

Very convincing

28%

Somewhat convincing

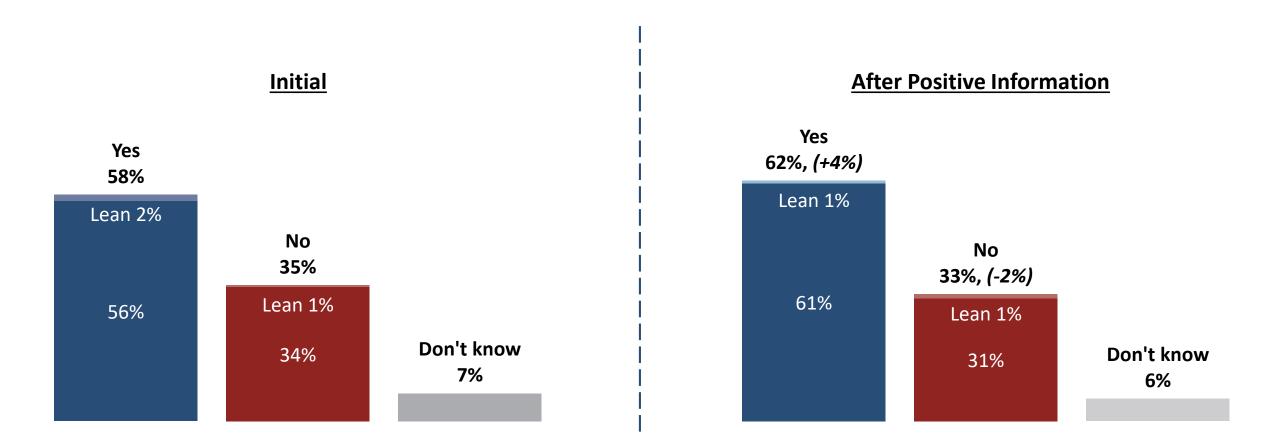
34%

This measure will replace the existing ninety-eight dollar per parcel tax for local high schools with a new school funding measure that is based on the square footage of property. The cost to the average homeowner will still be 98 dollars annually.	19%	41%	61%	
This measure ensures local businesses, commercial property owners, and large homeowners are paying their fair share of property taxes to support our local schools.	22%	36%	58%	
With this measure, over half of property owners would see a decrease in their taxes for local high schools.	15%	26% <b>42%</b>		
Q30-38. Next, I'd like to read you statements from people who support a school funding measu Fremont Union High School District After each one, please tell me how convincing that state reason to vote for the measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or convincing.	ment is as a	Fremont Unior	n High School District Survey 1	7-6488 <mark>DRAFT</mark>   21

# **Vote After Positive Information**



Support increases slightly after additional information has been provided, but remains under two-thirds.



Q39. Given what you've heard, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads... (IF UNDECIDED/NOT SURE) Well which way do you lean -- towards voting yes or no on the measure?

# **School Funding Measure Negative Statements**

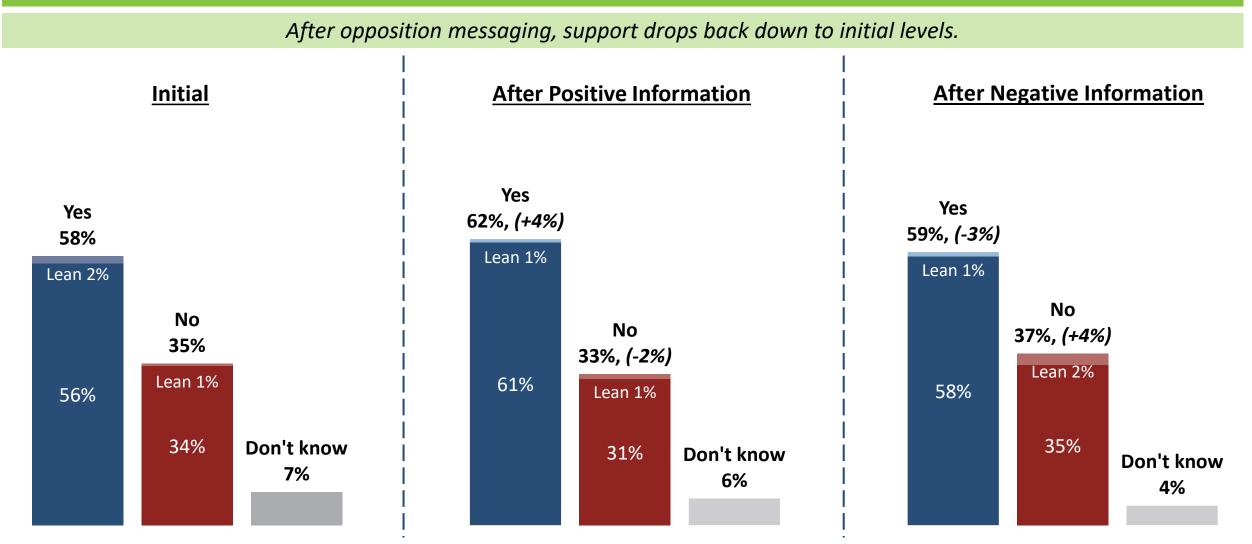


#### Messages surround housing costs are convincing reasons to oppose the measure. Very convincing Somewhat convincing **Total convincing** This measure will increase taxes on large property owners who will just pass the increase on to tenants, 26% 62% 36% pushing rents in the area even higher than they already are. Paying teachers a few thousand dollars more per year still won't allow them to live in Silicon Valley, the 27% 35% 62% real problem is housing costs, so we should fix that instead of passing more school tax measures. We are already paying too much money in taxes and our local teachers and administrators are among the 54% highest-paid in the state. The district needs to do a better job managing the money they have and not 28% 26% come to us with a new tax measure. This measure would increase taxes dramatically for many property owners in the district. 20% 29% 48% This measure would hurt our local economy and hit small businesses especially hard. 10% 23% 33%

Q40-44. Next, I'd like to read you some things people have said in opposition to a school funding measure for Fremont Union High School District. After each one, please tell me how convincing that statement is as a reason to vote against the measure – very convincing, somewhat convincing, not too convincing, or not at all convincing.

# **Vote After Opposition Statements**



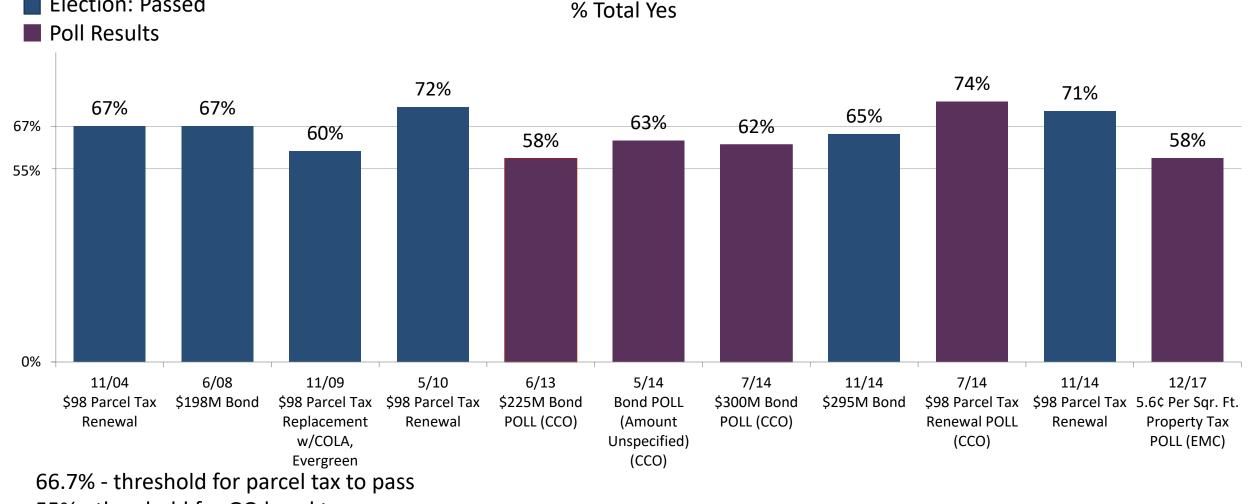


Q39. Given what you've heard, would you vote yes to approve or no to reject a measure that reads... (IF UNDECIDED/NOT SURE) Well which way do you lean -- towards voting yes or no on the measure?

# **FUHSD Polling & Election Results**



Historical Election and Poll results demonstrate some fluctuation in support for revenue measures for FUHSD over the years.



55% - threshold for GO bond to pass

**Election: Passed** 

# **Conclusion & Recommendations**



- The high quality of education provided by the FUHSD schools is evident and valued by the community.
- While a parcel tax measure based on square footage is supported by a majority of likely voters, support falls short of the two-thirds needed for passage.
- Explaining the benefits of a square footage measure structure does not increase support to two-thirds.
- Tax sensitivity is fairly high, but voters may be more receptive to a more traditional parcel tax structure. Therefore, additional research is recommended to determine whether a flat parcel tax measure is viable.



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