



Wentzville School District Patron Survey Topline report December 18, 2019

Introduction

A Topline Report presents a “snapshot” of the numerical data gathered from all participants in a quantitative research study. The Final Report will include what is contained in this document, plus answers to the open-ended questions, written discussion of the findings and cross-tabulations on key questions by demographic and geographic characteristics.

In essence, the Topline data should be the primary focus to assist with decision-making, while the Final Report helps to pinpoint areas of strength and need by the various types of individuals who make up the survey participant group.

The preliminary survey questions are not shown in this report, because a “Yes” answer on question 1 (“Are you the MALE/FEMALE head of household?”) and question 2 (“Are you, yourself, a registered voter?”) is required for the potential respondent to continue with the survey.

In reviewing the information contained in this report, please note that the percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.

Summary of Results

Evaluation of current district performance

The findings show a generally satisfied patron community in terms of their review of the performance the people, programs and facilities of the school district.

Very high scores are seen on technology for students, quality of education, safety and performance of teachers. Two scores were below the statistical equivalent of a “B,” – both of them in the category of district/patron relationship factors. These will be reviewed in the cross-tabulation process to determine if this is a common feeling or if it is seen primarily in certain demographic or geographic segments.

Review of the bond issue components and the respondents' current voting intention

The expansion projects, along with the kitchen and cafeteria projects at the three existing middle schools, were very positively received. The new middle school support was a little less enthusiastic, but still more positive than negative. However, the data seems to suggest that simple, clear and repetitive information about how the projects fit together to solve the overcrowding concerns might improve the score for the additional middle school.

Even with this apparent – albeit modest – communication need, the support is strong for the bond issue in general and grows demonstrably once the fact that it is a “no tax increase” proposal is revealed.

Review of the operating levy proposal components and the respondents' current voting intention

The three benefits that would be seen by the passage of an operating levy increase were even more popular, ranging from 62% saying they would be “More likely to vote in favor” of a proposal that included funds to increase staffing, all the way up to 75% if the proposal included funds to enhance teacher, staff and transportation salaries to improve the district’s competitiveness for talent.

When it came to the *idea* of such a proposal, support was a solid 61% (combined “Strongly favor” and “Favor” if the election were held today). The story changed, however, when the cost information was presented.

Specifically, 33% said they would either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a proposal that resulted in a tax increase of “about \$29 a month” for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district.

Opponents and those who were undecided at that level were then presented with a proposal – that, it was stated, would provide less funding – and that would result in a \$23 a month increase. Total support (meaning combining those who supported the higher amount with those who became supportive at this lower amount) grew to just 34%. Only five respondents who were against the proposal at \$29 became supportive at \$23.

When continuing opponents and undecided respondents were presented with a proposal that would mean an increase of “a little less than \$16 a month,” total support jumped to 50%. Remembering that this research has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%, that means that the support for this lowest dollar increase amount, as of the first two weeks of December 2019, ranges from 45% to 55%.

Voting intention, as of today, if the district placed a bond and a levy proposal on the ballot at the same time

Should the district decide to place both proposals on the same ballot, 41% of the survey participants said they would vote “yes” on both, while 15% said they would vote “No” on both.

Not surprisingly, of those who would only vote “Yes” for *one* of the two, the no-tax-increase bond issue drew stronger support (17% of the participants) than the operating levy proposal (3%).

Also, a rather large segment (25%) were not ready to commit, offering an answer (such as “Don’t know”) that was recorded by the interviewer, but was not read as one of the choices.

Telephone Survey results

3. To make certain we have people who live in all parts of the school district, can you tell me which of the district's three high schools the children in your area typically attend? Is it...? *Number of respondents from each drawing area identified by district leadership as being representative of the population pattern. Choices were read to respondents. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below.*

Response	Number
Holt High School	152
Timberland High School	140
Liberty High School	108

As you know, students in school are traditionally given a grade of A, B, C, D or F to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Wentzville School District from others, please tell me what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Let's start with... *Questions 4 through 16 were rotated to eliminate order bias.*

4. Quality of education

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	55%
C	11%
D	1%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

5. Performance of teachers

Response	Percentage
A	40%
B	46%
C	9%
D	<1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

6. Quality of school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	63%
B	31%
C	2%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	4%

7. The quality of the technology available to students

Response	Percentage
A	67%
B	24%
C	1%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	8%

8. The value received for the tax dollars spent

Response	Percentage
A	14%
B	45%
C	21%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	16%

9. Preparing students to be college- and career-ready

Response	Percentage
A	32%
B	56%
C	7%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	4%

10. Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	33%
C	18%
D	11%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	17%

11. Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	38%
C	20%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	7%

12. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	34%
B	47%
C	15%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

13. Performance of the Superintendent

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	51%
C	16%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

14. Performance of the School Board

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	56%
C	19%
D	2%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	5%

15. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	70%
B	22%
C	4%
D	3%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

16. The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns

Response	Percentage
A	11%
B	27%
C	25%
D	14%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	20%

17. Thinking about everything you know or have heard about the district, what overall grade would you give the Wentzville School District?

Response	Percentage
A	26%
B	64%
C	7%
D	<1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	3%

18. What do you think are the district's strengths? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrase and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below. TO COME IN FINAL REPORT*

19. Where could the district improve? *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below. TO COME IN FINAL REPORT*

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale rating for each factor. Items that scored at 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a “B” (or better). Those that are displayed in bold are Patron Hot Buttons, meaning that at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are the factors that typical patrons think of first, when they are considering the school district’s performance.

Item	5-point weighted scale rating
The quality of technology available to students	4.72
Quality of school facilities	4.64
Safety of students	4.50
Performance of teachers	4.31
Preparing students to be college- and career-ready	4.24
Overall grade	4.19
Performance of school principals	4.18
Quality of education	4.17
Performance of the Superintendent	3.98
Performance of the School Board	3.88
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.85
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.80
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.67
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.38

The Wentzville School District is conducting this research to better understand the current opinions across the area about two ballot issues that are being considered for the future.

One of the proposals being discussed is a bond issue for construction and renovation projects to address the growth in the district – which is expected to be an average of five hundred fifteen NEW students each year for the next 10 years. The other proposal being considered is an operating levy increase that would be used for salaries and staffing, to help the district be competitive with other neighboring districts.

I'm now going to read you the specifics of each proposal to find out which ideas you like, if any, and which you don't like, again, if any.

Let's start with the potential bond issue... *Questions 20 to 22 were rotated. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

20. One idea being discussed for a possible bond issue is the construction of the school district's fourth middle school. This middle school would be located on land the district owns in the North-West portion of the school district, adjacent to the new high school. This new middle school would have a capacity of between one thousand, two hundred, and one thousand five hundred students. Also, if this new middle school was built, students from EACH middle school would have their own high school, rather than splitting up. If this new middle school was part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	35%
More likely to vote against	22%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	26%
Don't know (not read)	17%

21. One idea for the potential bond issue is adding new classrooms at each of the school district's three middle schools to address the growth in the student population. If these classroom additions at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	72%
More likely to vote against	13%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	10%
Don't know (not read)	4%

- 22. One idea for the potential bond issue is to renovate and expand the kitchen and cafeteria facilities at each of the district's three middle schools, to assist with the flow of students and with meal preparation. If these kitchen and cafeteria projects at the district's three middle schools were part of a bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	58%
More likely to vote against	14%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	20%
Don't know (not read)	9%

- 23. Now that you have heard what is being considered for a potential future bond issue for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.**

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	15%
Favor it	46%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose it	16%
Strongly oppose it	11%
Depends on what it costs (not read)	7%
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (not read)	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

- 24. What if the bond issue resulted in NO TAX INCREASE for area residents? How do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.**

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	44%
Favor it	37%
Lean favor (not read)	4%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose it	8%
Strongly oppose it	5%
Don't know (not read)	4%

25. Why do you believe you would OPPOSE/STRONGLY OPPOSE the potential bond issue we have been discussing? *Asked only of the 48 respondents who answered “Oppose” or “Strongly oppose” or who were placed in “Lean oppose” by the interviewer on question 24. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.* TO COME IN FINAL REPORT

Now, I'd like to share with you the ideas for a potential operating levy increase proposal, which is separate from the bond issue we were just discussing. Questions 26 to 28 were rotated. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

- 26. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to ensure that salaries for teachers, staff and the transportation department were competitive with other area school districts. If funding to ensure competitive salaries was part of an operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	75%
More likely to vote against	8%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	16%
Don't know (not read)	1%

- 27. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of teachers and staff, to provide additional support for students. If funding to increase the number of teachers and staff to reduce class sizes was part of the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	62%
More likely to vote against	10%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	24%
Don't know (not read)	5%

- 28. One idea for the operating levy proposal is to provide funds to increase the number of specialized teachers and staff, such as reading interventionists (in-ter-VENT-un-a-lists) in schools across the district. If funding to provide for additional specialist teachers and professionals was included in the operating levy proposal, and the election were held today, would you be...?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	74%
More likely to vote against	5%
It would have no impact on my voting decision	19%
Don't know (not read)	3%

29. Now that you have heard what is being considered for a potential future operating levy increase proposal for the Wentzville School District, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	7%
Favor it	54%
Lean favor (not read)	<1%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	14%
Strongly oppose it	13%
Depends on what it costs (not read)	8%
Depends on what is included in the final proposal (not read)	2%
Don't know (not read)	3%

30. What if this proposal resulted in a tax increase of about 29 dollars a month for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district? If your home was worth more than \$200,000, the tax increase would be higher. If your home was worth less, the tax increase would be lower. If the election were held today on such a proposal, would you...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	30%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	2%
Oppose it	38%
Strongly oppose it	22%
Don't know (not read)	6%

31. What if, instead, the proposal provided less additional funding, and cost the owner of a \$200,000 house about 23 dollars a month? If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? Asked only of the 269 respondents who did not answer question 30 either “Strongly favor” or “Favor,” or who were placed in “Lean favor” by the interviewer. The percentages shown for the three “Favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 30 and 31, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a larger levy increase would be in favor of a smaller one as well. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	31%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	37%
Strongly oppose it	22%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

32. And, what if, instead, the proposal provided even less funding, and it cost the owner of a \$200,000 house a little less than 16 dollars a month. If the election on such a proposal were held today, would you...? Asked only of the 264 respondents who did not answer question 31 either “Strongly favor” or “Favor,” or who were placed in “Lean favor” by the interviewer. The percentages shown for the three “Favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 30, 31 and 32, under the assumption that an individual who is in favor of a larger levy increase would be in favor of a smaller one as well. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor it	3%
Favor it	47%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	<1%
Oppose it	18%
Strongly oppose it	21%
Don’t know (not read)	9%

33. Why do you believe you would oppose the operating levy proposal from the Wentzville School District, if the election were held today? *Asked only of the 158 respondents who answered question 32 either “Oppose it,” “Strongly oppose it” or who were placed in the “Lean oppose” category by the interviewers. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below. TO COME IN FINAL REPORT*

34. If the Wentzville School District decided to place BOTH the no-tax-increase school bond issue and the operating levy increase proposal on the ballot at the same time, and the election were held today, do you think you would...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Vote yes on both	41%
Vote yes on the bond and no on the levy	17%
Vote yes on the levy and no on the bond	3%
Vote no on both	15%
Vote yes on the bond, but the levy depends on what it costs (not read)	2%
Depends on what the levy costs (not read)	12%
Don’t know (not read)	11%

Thank you for staying with me. My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.

35. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of the Wentzville School District? Is it...? *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	3%
2 years to 5 years	8%
More than 5 years to 10 years	14%
More than 10 years to 15 years	18%
More than 15 years	48%
I’ve lived here all my life	10%

36. In what age group are you? Is it...? *Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	2%
25 to 34	19%
35 to 44	23%
45 to 54	25%
55 to 64	16%
65 or older	12%
Refused (not read)	4%

37. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in the Wentzville School District right now? *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	134
Yes, children and grandchildren	8
Yes, grandchildren	62
No	196

38. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated? *Asked only of the 258 respondents who answered question 37 either “Yes, grandchildren” or “No.” Numbers rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	106
Yes, children and grandchildren	8
Yes, grandchildren	3
No	141

39. And finally, I'm going to read some ranges for household income. Now, I DON'T WANT TO KNOW YOUR EXACT INCOME, but if you would, please say "stop" when I get to the range that best describes your total expected household income, before taxes, for 2019. Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.

Response	Percentage
Up to \$50,000	22%
More than \$50,000 up to \$75,000	17%
More than \$75,000 to \$100,000	24%
More than \$100,000 up to \$150,000	18%
More than \$150,000 up to \$200,000	13%
More than \$200,000	1%
Refused (Don't read)	5%

40. RECORD GENDER

Response	Percentage
Female	54%
Male	46%