

School District of New Berlin Community Survey Results

Joe Donovan, Donovan Group

Survey Review: Limitations

Please note:

The following data are not based on a scientific sample.

Because we used a convenience sample, it would be methodologically inappropriate to conduct regression analysis or attempt to calculate error.

Survey Review: Methodology

The survey opened on May 23, 2018

- The School District of New Berlin, at the request of the Board of Education, surveyed the district community in an effort to engage stakeholders into the district's challenges and possible solutions to those challenges.
- In early May, a postcard survey invitation was mailed to all community members encouraging them to participate in an online survey.
- Parents were reminded of the survey via email and social media.
- Participants were asked to take the survey online by following a custom survey website address.
- Paper copies of the survey were also available at the district by request.

The survey closed on June 8, 2018

Survey Review: Results

A total of 2,070 people completed the survey.

There is often significant difference of opinion between the all-respondent group which includes a majority of parents of students in the district, compared with respondents who are not parents and not employees.

In addition to the all-respondent group, we will show results from two comparison groups.

Survey Review: Results

The first comparison group is comprised of respondents who have indicated that they:

1. Do not currently have children attending New Berlin schools
2. Do not have children who are younger than school age
3. Are not employees
4. Are residents of the district

The total number of this comparison group is 589 and results will be shown in red.

Survey Review: Results

The second group is the all-respondent group minus employees of the district.

The total number of this comparison group is 1,964 and results will be shown in blue.

Survey Review: Results

What is your age? *

18-25	1.6%	4.1%	1.4%
26-34	10.6%	7.6%	9.9%
35-44	37.7%	4.8%	38.4%
45-54	25.4%	13.8%	25.0%
55-64	13.7%	35.3%	14.0%
65 or over	11.0%	34.5%	11.3%

Survey Review: Results

How long have you lived in the School District of New Berlin? *

Less than 1 year	2.6%	1.7%	2.6%
Between 1 and 5 years	16.2%	11.7%	16.7%
Between 5 and 10 years	19.5%	6.3%	19.8%
Between 10 and 20 years	29.6%	19.7%	30.4%
Between 20 and 30 years	14.8%	26.8%	15.3%
More than 30 years	13.3%	33.8%	13.8%
I do not live in the district	4.1%	0.0%	1.3%

Survey Review: Results

Please check all that apply to you: *

I do not have children	10.3%	30.9%	9.8%
I have school-aged children	55.5%	0.0%	56.9%
I have preschool-aged children	17.0%	0.0%	17.3%
I have children who currently attend or have attended a School District of New Berlin school	58.7%	42.6%	60.6%
I have grandchildren who currently attend or have attended a School District of New Berlin school	4.1%	11.5%	4.0%
I have attended a School District of New Berlin school	8.0%	10.7%	7.9%
I am a community member who has never had children attend a School District of New Berlin school	10.1%	25.5%	10.2%
I am an employee of the School District of New Berlin	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	2.9%	7.5%	3.1%

Survey Review: Results

If your child(ren) currently attend the School District of New Berlin, which school(s) do they attend?* (Select all the apply.)

Elmwood Elementary School	13.1%	0.0%	13.3%
Orchard Lane Elementary School	16.5%	0.0%	16.7%
Poplar Creek Elementary School	8.3%	0.0%	8.3%
Ronald Reagan Elementary School	15.3%	0.0%	15.2%
New Berlin Eisenhower MS/HS	19.0%	0.0%	19.1%
New Berlin West MS/HS	15.1%	0.0%	15.0%
I do not have school-aged children	12.7%	100.0%	12.5%

Survey Review: Results

Based on the following map, in which elementary quadrant do you reside?

Poplar Creek (blue section)	16.5%	17.2%	16.7%
Orchard Lane (purple section)	27.7%	27.4%	28.8%
Ronald Regan (orange section)	25.4%	26.9%	26.2%
Elmwood (yellow section)	24.7%	24.8%	25.5%
I'm not sure	1.3%	3.5%	1.4%
I do not live in the district	4.4%	0.3%	1.4%

Survey Review: Results

How would you describe the district to someone who is not familiar with it? *

Overwhelmingly, the attitude toward the School District of New Berlin is very positive. Many feel the district has high-achieving schools, offers good extra-curricular programs and works toward improving services for students. Following is a sampling of responses that represent the main, positive theme. Responses have not been edited.

Survey Review: Results

- A district with excellent education and extracurriculars across the board. While it is not perfectly run, it tries hard to do its best to communicate with parents and the community and look for ways to excel and remain affordable. They try hard to focus on students and succeed more than most other districts.
- A great school district! We moved to New Berlin specifically for the school district.
- A mid-sized school district that is consistently ranked at the top and has all the academic offerings needed to succeed at a high level.
- New Berlin is an excellent school district that offers an outstanding education to children.
- SDNB elementary schools have involved teachers and administration. The schools are modern and the teachers engage in creative ways of teaching to motivate students. Class sizes are larger than some districts, but still manageable where I feel as if the teachers know my children.

Survey Review: Results

What are the district's strengths?

Here again, the responses showed a lot of support and appreciation for many of the district's strengths. Several themes emerged, such as the quality teachers, low class sizes, great class offerings and the district's high state and national ranking. Following is a sampling of responses, which have not been edited.

Survey Review: Results

Great teachers:

- The college prep is above any other district I've seen. Getting kids interested in careers in elementary school is absolutely incredible and crucial in today's society. I started building websites when I was 13, so getting to present to a bunch of kids who could start learning even earlier than I did is amazing. The teachers are so loving too and do an excellent job. The administrative staff is incredible as well.
- Talented teaching and support staff who are committed to their students, strong school leadership, engaged and involved families, forward thinking district leadership.
- Teachers and administrators work well with parents of students who have special health issues and require special considerations for absences as well as students who are academically and artistically top achievers and need additional learning opportunities.

Survey Review: Results

Variety of class offerings:

- Very competitive sports for both girls and boy Strong arts programs both in visual, musical, and theater Preparing students for college, especially sending students to take classes on college campus or AP classes
- Viewed as academically strong school good balance of extracurricular activities Secure environment Seem to be building a stronger Tech School program link with WCTC and others
- They offer a wide variety of classes. There's ample variety of chances to involve yourself in athletics, clubs, activities, etc. There's also good opportunities for kids choosing the trades.

Survey Review: Results

Highly ranked:

- Highly rated. Kids leave high school ready for college.
- Highly-ranked for academic success among school districts in Wisconsin. Does a great job with college and career readiness starting at a young age. Elmwood is well-run overall -- everything from the bus line to the evening performances are well-organized and on schedule. There is a high level of parent engagement including lots of volunteers to put on fun events for the kids. The physical school building is pleasant and well-maintained.
- High quality, nationally-ranked schools as well as amazing teachings and school administrators

Survey Review: Results

What are the district's weaknesses?

Several themes emerged in regard to weaknesses. One area of concern for respondents was a lack of fiscal control or accountability, along with an administration that is too large. Some said there is too much focus on preparing students only for test scores and a lack of preparation for the non-college bound. Teacher turnover was another area of concern.

Survey Review: Results

Fiscal themes:

- Financial management
- Financial management. Too much cost in administration in comparison to other school districts! There has to be a way to reduce costs in this area without removing benefits/pay to teachers that keep our schools winning awards.
- Poor administration. Fiscal mismanagement and bad decision-making. Extreme focus on test scores instead of rich, deep learning. Too much money spent on administrators and not on class room teachers. Experienced teachers leaving the district.
- Administrative heavy. Not enough resources(money) goes to the students and teachers. Not budget savvy. Not trustworthy.

Survey Review: Results

Focus on testing/higher learning:

- As my children have told me who are now in college the district pushes ap courses to much. They do not help kids who would go to vocational schools or help with skilled trades. The administrators only care about sending kids to college
- too much standardized testing. also need to have more 'hands on' jobs as those are very important skills. would also like a mandated 'life skills' class in high school.
- Too much focus on testing. the kids are constantly taking a test that is not specific to their regular classes.
- Too much emphasis on college prep, when the majority of HS students do not complete secondary education and/or find employment in their field of study. The selection of HS course offerings is diminishing, leading to some classes offered only at one high school or the other.
- They currently do not require students to take life skills classes such as home economics, personal finance, and shop. No math option at the high school level for third year except Algebra II. There are no tangible consequences for students who do not complete their homework or study for tests as they can not be graded on homework and can retake tests. This is a disadvantage when they get to college because college is not this way.

Survey Review: Results

Teacher turnover:

- teacher turnover, no pre-school program
- Teacher retention. In my daughters 7 years at PC only her last 2 are still there. Teachers were only staying a year or two.
- Staff retention: Demands on staff are causing high quality teachers/support staff that the district has made a significant financial contribution are leaving and even more are looking for jobs elsewhere. It takes years to train teachers and build them into strong educators. New Berlin is not a destination district, but a stepping stone for too many educators. This is a significant cost to the district, both a financial cost and a cost to the education of the students. District office is over staffed. Students do not benefit from more administrators.

Survey Review: Results

Where do you get most of your information about the schools and the district?

Parent organizations	6.2%	1.9%	6.4%
Friends or neighbors	13.5%	17.0%	14.0%
My children and their friends	7.9%	4.1%	8.2%
School and district Facebook	8.8%	4.5%	8.7%
School newsletters	13.6%	6.3%	13.5%
District mailings/newsletters	12.7%	18.8%	12.8%
District website	8.6%	5.9%	8.2%
Board of Education meetings	2.8%	2.9%	2.8%
Teachers and staff	8.1%	4.3%	7.4%
Facebook	4.9%	4.8%	5.0%
Twitter	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%
Local newspapers	6.1%	14.9%	6.2%
Local television	2.9%	6.4%	3.0%
Local radio	3.1%	7.4%	3.2%

Survey Review: Results

Next we asked respondents to select the level of importance of various aspects in the schools.

The district strives to make the most of the investments local taxpayers make in their public schools in its ongoing efforts to achieve the district's mission.

Please indicate the level of importance you place on the following items. *

Survey Review: Results

Maintaining reasonable class sizes

Critically important	61.8%	38.4%	61.4%
Important	28.2%	39.4%	28.4%
A little important	8.3%	18.8%	8.4%
Not important	1.7%	3.4%	1.8%

Survey Review: Results

Increasing state assessment scores and academic scores

Critically important	20.4%	20.0%	20.7%
Important	53.5%	54.8%	53.2%
A little important	20.8%	20.2%	20.8%
Not important	5.2%	4.9%	5.3%

Survey Review: Results

Controlling tax impact

Critically important	25.7%	47.9%	26.5%
Important	33.2%	28.4%	33.1%
A little important	30.4%	19.7%	30.1%
Not important	10.8%	4.1%	10.3%

Survey Review: Results

Maintaining facilities as part of a long-range facilities plan

Critically important	25.9%	25.0%	25.4%
Important	62.0%	60.3%	62.3%
A little important	10.6%	13.2%	10.7%
Not important	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%

Survey Review: Results

Providing adequate support for all students

Critically important	56.1%	40.4%	55.0%
Important	35.8%	44.0%	36.7%
A little important	7.0%	14.3%	7.2%
Not important	1.0%	1.4%	1.1%

Survey Review: Results

Providing a wide variety of elective classes to students

Critically important	28.3%	22.4%	27.7%
Important	46.3%	38.5%	46.2%
A little important	21.1%	30.2%	21.7%
Not important	4.3%	8.8%	4.4%

Survey Review: Results

Providing safe and secure schools

Critically important	76.2%	67.4%	75.8%
Important	20.8%	27.7%	21.1%
A little important	2.6%	4.4%	2.7%
Not important	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%

Survey Review: Results

Providing career exploration and guidance

Critically important	30.1%	27.8%	30.0%
Important	52.9%	53.1%	53.1%
A little important	14.8%	15.8%	14.7%
Not important	2.2%	3.2%	2.2%

Survey Review: Results

Providing mental health resources to students in need

Critically important	40.3%	33.1%	39.5%
Important	40.6%	38.9%	40.8%
A little important	15.7%	22.2%	16.2%
Not important	3.3%	5.8%	3.5%

Survey Review: Results

Recruiting and retaining top educators

Critically important	59.4%	46.3%	58.6%
Important	33.9%	40.6%	34.4%
A little important	5.7%	11.2%	6.0%
Not important	1.0%	1.9%	1.0%

Survey Review: Results

Providing college-level / Advanced Placement (AP) classes

Critically important	31.1%	24.6%	31.5%
Important	51.4%	50.4%	50.8%
A little important	14.3%	19.2%	14.4%
Not Important	3.2%	5.8%	3.4%

Survey Review: Results

Providing industry certifications for high school students (IT, nursing, etc.)

Critically important	23.4%	27.5%	23.4%
Important	48.0%	44.8%	47.5%
A little important	21.3%	19.4%	21.7%
Not important	7.3%	8.3%	7.4%

Survey Review: Results

Providing trade opportunities such as construction, welding, etc.

Critically important	29.2%	39.2%	29.2%
Important	48.4%	45.5%	48.2%
A little important	18.8%	12.4%	19.0%
Not important	3.5%	2.9%	3.7%

Survey Review: Results

Next we asked:

Do you have anything to add about the above items?

Following is a sampling of responses, which have not been edited.

Survey Review: Results

AP classes are given too much focus:

- Ap classes are going by the wayside nationally and should not be a focus of a good school district. There are huge trade deficits in Wisconsin. Even our own governor had to entice Foxconn to relocate here. Why? Because we aren't producing the right kind of workers, we need more trade classes and more industry certificates not more ap classes and books. Our focus should be on creating a better world through dynamic leadership not teaching a child how to take a test.
- AP classes are losing their impact in college. We have a college student and it made no difference whatsoever that they had passed their AP exam. It sure did add a lot of stress to their high school career though. AP isn't what it used to be and needs to be reassessed and perhaps survey recent grads to see if it was worth it.
- I feel like the district focus's on AP classes and doesn't offer a variety of courses like other districts for students that aren't strong students putting them at a disadvantage against their peers.
- i think AP classes are "over rated". it doesn't matter how many you take, it's not going to get you any further in school or life. I do not understand New Berlin's obsession with AP classes.

Survey Review: Results

Collaborate with the community:

- (1) Providing opportunities for projects with business and community. (2) Providing accelerated math and reading opportunities in primary grades
- Additional services that are not "critical" should be optional or at an extended fee with financial aid for those who can't afford it. We have many well off families in our district and some not so fortunate.
- Keep building on the community involvement as many parents are willing to volunteer and help in many ways.

Survey Review: Results

More special education assistance and mental health awareness:

- Adequate support for all students should include more support for special education programs
- Helping students who need extra help academically but do not qualify for special education services.
- Providing special education services that focus on future employment
- Mental health awareness and assistance is vitally important for the parents and students as well as additional training for staff
- Students are not currently being provided mental health resources that are needed. Often times the choices are up to the families seek outside treatment when they are in a crisis or need help.

Survey Review: Results

Keep class sizes small, retain teachers/aides:

- Keep the high quality schools with low class sizes. 30 should NOT be an acceptable goal for class size!
- Keeping class size down at the grade school level is critical to controlling bullying, racism and other bad behavior. The bigger the classes the less control teachers have.
- Maintaining class sizes under 24 is a *MUST*, the mission statement will not be able to be executed if class sizes rise! While providing the opportunity for students to take college classes seems like a nice touch, there is not reason that the district should be paying for that!
- Retaining and recruiting outstanding educators should be a priority. Maintaining an excellent school district benefits the whole community - it leads to a safe and friendly environment, and property values increase.

Survey Review: Results

Respondents were then provided background information on the school district's financial situation. They were then asked the degree to which they agreed with the following statement:

Survey Review: Results

I believe the school district's most urgent financial needs must be addressed now. *

Strongly Agree	35.6%	27.8%	35.0%
Agree	46.7%	44.3%	46.7%
Disagree	12.1%	17.3%	12.5%
Strongly Disagree	5.6%	10.5%	5.8%

Survey Review: Results

Next, respondents read about various options the school board has considered as it works to address structural deficits and re-fund the district's long-range plans. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of support they would give to the board for the following options:

Survey Review: Results

Consolidate middle/high schools

I would definitely support it	20.3%	34.6%	20.4%
I would probably support it	20.1%	24.3%	19.9%
I would probably not support it	20.8%	19.2%	20.8%
I would definitely not support it	38.7%	21.9%	39.0%

Survey Review: Results

Consolidate elementary schools

I would definitely support it	18.7%	34.3%	19.2%
I would probably support it	18.6%	22.8%	18.6%
I would probably not support it	19.4%	18.3%	19.0%
I would definitely not support it	43.3%	24.6%	43.1%

Survey Review: Results

Spend the fund balance

I would definitely support it	10.2%	12.2%	10.3%
I would probably support it	37.5%	39.0%	37.8%
I would probably not support it	37.4%	34.5%	37.1%
I would definitely not support it	14.9%	14.3%	14.8%

Survey Review: Results

Cut programs and staffing

I would definitely support it	10.5%	21.1%	10.9%
I would probably support it	14.0%	21.4%	14.3%
I would probably not support it	29.5%	26.3%	29.6%
I would definitely not support it	46.0%	31.2%	45.2%

Survey Review: Results

How likely are you to support an operational referendum beginning in November 2018 or April 2019 to address the district's current structural deficit and fund its long-range facilities plans?

I would definitely support it	47.2%	30.1%	45.8%
I would probably support it	25.6%	24.1%	26.1%
I would probably not support it	10.6%	12.7%	10.7%
I would definitely not support it	16.7%	33.1%	17.5%

Survey Review: Results

I would vote "yes" on a referendum question if I felt that it was the correct solution and if it had a tax increase of approximately \$200 to \$250 per year on each \$250,000 of assessed property value.

Strongly Agree	48.2%	28.7%	47.0%
Agree	24.0%	22.1%	24.0%
Disagree	10.4%	15.4%	10.8%
Strongly Disagree	17.4%	33.8%	18.2%

Survey Review: Results

Respondents were then asked:

Please share why you would or would not support an operational referendum that would result in a tax increase of approximately \$200 to \$250 per year on each \$250,000 of assessed property value.

The responses to this question break down into mainly two main categories: those who believe the investment in schools/education is worth the money and those who feel taxes are already too high.

Survey Review: Results

Higher taxes are worth it:

- We need to spend money to keep our schools strong and provide our children with the education and opportunities to succeed in whatever career path they choose.
- We would gladly pay more in taxes to maintain high level of education and smaller class sizes.
- We moved to New Berlin to provide our elementary aged kids with great education and opportunity. This would cost our family \$500 but that is WELL WORTH IT.
- I would support the referendum because I have lived in New Berlin for over thirty years and our taxes have remained very reasonable with few major increases! Educating our children well in a safe environment is one of the most important function (if not the most important) a city can provide!

Survey Review: Results

Taxes are too high:

- We pay too much in property taxes already
- We just got re-assessed by the city and have no idea what the new tax rate will be for 2018 with these new, higher valuations. Adding an unknown amount on top of that for retired folks with limited income would be a large burden.
- I would not support a referendum because there are more options that could be explored from reducing the staff in the central district, raising contributions for benefits, raising fees for current households with kids in new berlin schools.
- According to the Washington Post 46% of Americans do not have enough money to cover an emergency expense of \$400. If taxes are increased people will just use debt to cover their higher expenses.
- A \$250/year tax increase for the next 10 years would be devastating to the senior population of New Berlin.

Survey Review: Results

How likely are you to support an operational referendum with the previously described approximate tax impacts, beginning in November 2018 or April 2019, which would last for six years through 2025?

Very likely	44.7%	27.5%	43.4%
Likely	25.8%	21.2%	26.1%
Unlikely	11.7%	15.4%	12.0%
Very Unlikely	17.7%	35.8%	18.5%

Survey Review: Results

How likely are you to support an operational referendum with the previously described approximate tax impacts, beginning in November 2018 or April 2019, which would last for 10 years through 2029?

Very likely	35.9%	20.4%	34.9%
Likely	26.0%	20.7%	25.9%
Unlikely	17.2%	19.4%	17.5%
Very Unlikely	20.9%	39.6%	21.7%

Survey Review: Results

What do you think the Board of Education should keep in mind as it considers options to address the district's needs?

The responses here were quite varied. Following is a sampling of ideas that respondents provided repeatedly:

Survey Review: Results

- A long term solution is most important to me. I have three young children in the district, and I care most about them maintaining stability throughout their school years, so the sooner a solution can be implemented and maintained, the better.
- Class size matters and has a huge affect on the education our kids are getting. With bigger class sizes some kids will just slip through the cracks and not get the proper education they need. Also our school rankings will suffer and new berlin will end up not having some of the best schools in the state
- Closing an elementary school will cause larger class sizes which will have a negative impact on our students. If results begin to suffer, what will attract new residents to this area?
- Consider both cut backs / school combinations PLUS a lower tax increase. Compromise between the 2 to show the citizens that you are committed to improving the district financial status.

Survey Review: Results

- Consolidation and cutting programs is not good for our kids. We need to make the right decisions for the future of this community.
- Cut Admin Staff. Double up on Duties. How many assistance principals do we have and need? What is more important? Education or Sports?
- Fancy buildings and classrooms don't educate the student, good teachers do. Spend the money like it was coming out of your pocket.
- I think a balanced approach is the best approach. I think we'll need to do a combination of cost cutting and the operational referendum for the maximum support of the community. If everyone feels they get something, then its a win for all.
- What we can do to support the students, and making sure that the district's expectations for student success is in alignment with the actual expectations for real-world success. Students need exposure to the expectations of the real-world in order to be successful post-graduation.



Thank you

Any questions?