

Facilities Survey Provides Data for Board of Education ***Board yet to determine if facilities projects will be pursued***

New Berlin, Wis. – A random telephone survey conducted among 379 School District of New Berlin voters shows residents think the district provides a safe, high-quality education to students, and varied levels of community support for facilities projects being considered.

Survey Process and Methodology

In late September and early October 2014, a 12- to 15-minute telephone study (landlines and cell phones) was conducted with 379 randomly selected, head-of-household, registered voters living within the boundaries of the School District of New Berlin. The survey's objective was to learn resident's views on the district's performance, understand if they would support facility ideas being discussed, and learn where they receive school district news. Data that reflects the views of the entire survey group has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%. The survey was conducted by Patron Insight, a research company that specializes in working with school districts on conducting research for facilities planning.

"We wish to thank all residents who took our survey to provide their opinions on our school district and some of the facilities projects we are considering," said Board of Education President David Maxey.

Maxey said the district's goal is to be responsible with taxpayer money. "We felt it prudent to know how our residents feel about a variety of facilities projects that we have not yet decided upon. We now have reliable data, representative of our entire community, which we can reflect on as we make future decisions."

District administrators will consider results from the telephone survey and a supplemental online survey as they develop recommendations to present to the Board on November 24th (7 p.m., New Berlin West Idea Center).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following information was taken from Patron Insight's Executive Summary of the telephone survey. The full report, as well as data from a supplemental online survey, can be found at:
<http://www.nbexcellence.org/district/communitysurvey.cfm>.

"Grades" for the school district in 15 areas

Respondents were asked to "grade" – A, B, C, D or F – the district on 15 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors, plus on its overall performance. These responses were analyzed using a 5-point weighted scale, with 5 points given for each "A" grade, down to 1 point for each "F." In this analysis, a score of 3.80 or higher is the statistical equivalent of a "B," which is typically considered the dividing line between areas of strength and those which may need improvement. Nine of the 15 factors achieved a score of 3.80 or higher.

The three factors with the highest grades were:

- Safety of students in the district – 4.24
- Performance of district teachers – 4.20
- Quality of education – 4.18

The three factors with the lowest grades were:

- The district’s efforts to involve the community in decision-making – 3.43
- The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns – 3.41
- The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises – 3.30

District strengths and opportunities for improvement

“Teachers,” “Strong academics/curriculum” and “Strong community involvement/ support” topped the list of strengths identified in an open-ended question by survey participants. A total of 142 respondents said, “Don’t know,” when asked to identify an area needing improvement, which generally suggests satisfaction among typical residents. Those with a suggestion focused on “Money management” and on “Communicating with citizens.”

Awareness of community partnerships and recent district facility improvements

More than one-fourth of the participants were at least “Somewhat aware” of the district’s initiatives to connect students to businesses, higher education and other community resources.

A more substantial 55% claimed at least the same level of awareness about the district’s recent facility improvements. When those who were at least “Somewhat aware” of either of these areas were asked to share specific details, the facility updates were vastly more well-known, with many participants able to be very detailed about what they knew.

Prioritization of facilities projects

Respondents were asked to state their views on the priority level of six total project ideas:

Project	Identified Project as at least a “Medium Priority”	Percentage of participants who said they would “Strongly Favor” or “Favor” a tax increase for the project
HVAC upgrades at New Berlin West	83%	62%
Adding air-conditioning to Poplar Creek and Orchard Lane Elementary School	76%	54%
New exterior doors at New Berlin West and certain elementary schools	55%	42%
Adding a new auxiliary gym at New Berlin Eisenhower	32%	20%
Pool upgrades at New Berlin Eisenhower to bring it up to current codes/allow it to be used for high school competition events	61%	44%
More extensive upgrades to the pool at New Berlin Eisenhower/new HVAC, adding locker room, relocating weight room*	72% <i>(of those who considered the more minimal pool upgrades at least a “Medium priority”)</i>	29%

*Asked only of the respondents who considered the basic pool upgrades either a “High Priority” or a “Medium priority,” under the assumption that a respondent who was not supportive of minimal changes to the swimming pool would also not be supportive of more complex changes.

Support for a tax increase for “High Priority” or “Medium Priority” projects

When asked to state their level of support or opposition to an additional \$62.50 in taxes per year (for the owner of a \$250,000 home in the school district) to support projects they considered to be priorities, 63% said they would “Strongly favor” or “Favor” such an increase, at the time this survey was conducted. Support grew as the potential tax level decreased. In studying this data, it is important to remember that respondents were stating their willingness to offer financial support for projects they considered to be priorities.

Sources of district information

Twelve of 18 potential sources of school district news are consulted “frequently” by survey participants. This list was led by “Friends and neighbors,” “Local television stations,” “The printed newsletter called *District Digest* that is mailed to residents” and “*The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* newspaper.”

FULL REPORTS ONLINE

Patron Insight’s full telephone survey report contains a series of findings, a discussion of each of those findings, and all the questions, answers and cross-tabulations.

Additionally, a supplemental report shares views of staff members and community members who provided their feedback through an online survey. While opinions in the supplemental report do not represent the entire community, they are also being reviewed by district administrators and the Board of Education, and will be considered as recommendations are made.

Both reports may be found at: <http://www.nbexcellence.org/district/communitysurvey.cfm>.

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