



**Lee's Summit R-7 School District
2019 Online Surveys of the Community, Parents and Staff
Final Report
November 8, 2019**

Introduction

At the same time a statistically reliable telephone survey was being conducted with residents of the Lee's Summit R-7 School District, similar online surveys were made available to community members (via the district's website) and to staff members and parents (through an email distribution of separate survey links to each audience).

Parents took the most advantage of this opportunity to speak up, as 900 chose to take part, though not all those who participated answered all the questions – a situation that is typical with online surveys. A total of 448 staff members participated, followed by 446 residents.

The results of the online surveys are shown below, in a form that allows for direct comparison, where possible, to the more statistically reliable telephone survey of randomly selected heads of households in the district. Because those who participate are self-selected, rather than randomly drawn, all online data should be considered *supplemental* information.

And because the numbering varies between the telephone and online surveys, the results below are shown in the order in which the questions appeared in the online survey, but without question numbers. All wording reflects the online survey wording, meaning that phrases, such as "As we just discussed" and other language that would be used during a phone conversation, have been replaced with more directive language for respondents who were completing the survey on their own.

Two other important notes:

First, responses to the one open-ended question were coded, meaning that common words, phrases and ideas were collected to identify the most common responses.

Second, all questions with percentages may add up to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.

Observations about the results

As is typical for online surveys, the “grades” tracked lower than on the phone survey.

Individuals who participate in online surveys are what we call “self-selected.” In other words, they have to make a special effort to take part. While clicking on a link might not require much actual *effort*, individuals who do so see it as either their responsibility to an organization that matters to them, or their chance to sound off on issues that trouble them.

As such, it is very common for evaluation scores (such as the grading section of these surveys) to trend lower than they do with telephone survey results, which include a cross-section of respondents.

Such was the case on these three surveys. The greatest concerns were seen with the performance of the Board of Education and Administration, class sizes, and the responsiveness of the district to citizen concerns. The scores for vocational and technical education should be discounted somewhat, because of the high number of “Don’t know” responses from parents and the community on this item.

The project ideas were more universally supported than on the telephone survey.

One important sign that a school district is on the right track, in terms of its project plans, is when the online support is higher than what is seen on its companion telephone survey. With rare exception, that was the case with all three of these online surveys.

This is a situation where the close sense of connection with the district works in its favor. The grading section is where concerns are voiced, while – at least in strong districts that have considered all the nuances of their project ideas – the support of said projects is usually strong.

Potential ballot box support is also strong.

The three survey groups had higher levels of “Strongly favor/Favor” support for the idea of a ballot issue than the phone survey group did, but lower than phone participants when the “no-tax-increase” component was revealed.

This second item should not be any cause for concern. The phone survey support for a “no-tax-increase” bond issue was unusually high, so comparing it to the online results is a true shades of grey exercise. All four scores (the three online surveys and the phone survey) are very strong. All of these results will come down a bit when the survey proposal is finalized and presented to the community. But clearly this ballot issue will start the information and campaign phase with a good foundation of support.

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 Lee’s Summit School District from others, indicate what grade you would give the school district on each of the following items. Responses shown as a weighted 5-point scale rating – from a 5.00 for each “A” down to 1.00 for each “F.” Points were added together and divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade. Items that scored at 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a “B” (or better).

Those that are displayed in bold (on the telephone survey only) 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. “n” is the number of participants in each group.

Item	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
The quality of the technology, like computers and tablets, that are available to students	4.61	4.37	4.25	4.34
Quality of technical or vocational education	4.49	2.23*	2.82**	3.50
Performance of teachers	4.42	4.37	4.35	4.59
Quality of school buildings	4.40	4.15	4.03	3.75
Quality of education	4.33	4.36	4.31	4.59
Safety of students in the district	4.21	3.90	3.73	4.15
Preparing students to be college- and career-ready	4.14	3.28	3.88	4.08
Overall grade	4.10	3.87	3.79	3.92
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.98	3.62	3.66	3.74
Performance of the school district Central Office Administration	3.94	2.71	2.78	3.13
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.90	3.30	3.12	2.91
The district’s record on fulfilling promises	3.87	2.70	2.86	3.26
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.71	3.76	3.66	3.97
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.71	2.70	2.88	3.32
Performance of the School Board	3.50	2.30	2.41	2.84
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.40	3.52	3.52	3.82

*48% said “Don’t know” **34% said “Don’t know”

Recently, the Lee’s Summit R-7 Board of Education approved a plan to move students in the sixth grade to middle school, beginning with the 2022-2023 school year. This move will help address the large student population at many of the district’s elementary schools. Do you...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
Agree with the decision	43%	46%	56%	72%
Disagree with the decision	40%	35%	30%	14%
Not care one way or the other	16%	13%	10%	10%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	6%	5%	4%

The school district has been looking to the future and considering options for school building and other facility needs. The district’s leadership team and outside consultants have evaluated the current school buildings as part of the Comprehensive Facilities Master Plan Process. In doing so, they have identified specific projects that may appear in a future bond issue. The purpose of this survey is to see what a larger group of (parents/residents/staff members), such as yourself, think about these ideas.

Below is a brief description of the main ideas that have been discussed. After you read the description of each one, please indicate how you would feel if this project was included in a potential future bond issue. Would you be more likely to vote in favor of the bond issue, more likely to vote against, or would it make no difference in your voting decision?

Because of the decision to move sixth-grade students to the middle schools, one need that was identified was to build the school district’s fourth middle school. This school would be located on land that the district already owns near the intersection of US Highway 50 and Missouri Highway 291, and it would be able to serve between 750 and one thousand students. If this fourth middle school were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	41%	63%	62%	76%
More likely to vote against	37%	16%	17%	6%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	14%	13%	13%	12%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	8%	7%	7%	7%

With the construction of the district’s fourth middle school being considered, one idea is to also renovate the district’s other three middle schools. These renovations could include classroom upgrades as well as infrastructure improvements, and additions to accommodate the addition of sixth-grade students. The exact project list for each school will be determined based on the building’s specific needs and staff input. If the renovations to the district’s three middle schools were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	67%	65%	65%	77%
More likely to vote against	10%	16%	18%	6%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	17%	11%	10%	12%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	6%	8%	7%	5%

One idea is to conduct a large-scale renovation and expansion at Lee’s Summit High School, which is the oldest high school in the district. The exact project list for Lee’s Summit High School will be determined based on the building’s specific needs, and input from the staff and students. If the renovation and expansion of Lee’s Summit High School were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	84%	69%	68%	79%
More likely to vote against	9%	10%	11%	6%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	5%	16%	15%	11%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	2%	5%	7%	4%

One idea is to expand Mason Elementary School, located at 27600 North-East Colburn Road, in the northeast part of the district, which is growing. This expansion would help to reduce class sizes, because the school would have four sections for each grade level, rather than the three it has now. If this expansion project at Mason Elementary School were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	70%	50%	56%	73%
More likely to vote against	12%	12%	11%	3%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	16%	31%	25%	17%
Don't know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	8%	7%	7%

One idea is to renovate a portion of Prairie View Elementary School, located at 501 South-East Todd George Parkway. This school is experiencing declining enrollment, so the district is considering a renovation that would redesign one wing of Prairie View to serve as the district's SECOND Early Childhood Center, in addition to continuing to serve elementary students. If this renovation project at Prairie View Elementary School were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	68%	56%	59%	71%
More likely to vote against	15%	12%	14%	5%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	17%	25%	20%	17%
Don't know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	7%	6%	6%

One idea is to expand the school district’s Missouri Innovation Campus – also known as M.I.C. This would allow the facility, located at 1101 North-West Innovation Parkway, to expand its program offerings for students. If this expansion project at the Missouri Innovation Campus were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	53%	60%	57%	50%
More likely to vote against	10%	13%	17%	24%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	33%	18%	17%	19%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	5%	9%	10%	7%

One idea is to renovate and upgrade the other school buildings in the district that we have not discussed, beginning with the oldest buildings. The exact project list will be determined by the needs of each building with input from the students and staff at each building. These renovations could include, for example, more flexible spaces, including space for dedicated personal instruction and for staff and student collaboration. If these district-wide school building renovations and upgrades were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	62%	57%	55%	72%
More likely to vote against	7%	14%	16%	5%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	28%	18%	17%	15%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	4%	11%	11%	8%

One idea is to enhance the safety and security systems at all buildings, particularly at the building entrances. If these district-wide school building security system enhancements were included in a future bond issue, and the election were held today, would you be...?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
More likely to vote in favor	95%	80%	75%	78%
More likely to vote against	1%	7%	9%	4%
It would make no difference in my voting decision	4%	9%	12%	12%
Don't know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	4%	4%	5%

Now that you have heard the ideas that are being considered, how do you think you might vote on a bond issue, if the election were held today?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
Strongly favor	27%	41%	44%	63%
Favor	31%	37%	29%	23%
Lean favor (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose	14%	7%	8%	3%
Strongly oppose	2%	6%	9%	2%
Don't know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	15%	10%	10%	8%
Depends on what it costs (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	7%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Depends on what is actually included in the bond issue (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	4%	n/a	n/a	n/a

Because of the district’s fiscal management of its past bond issues, this potential new bond issue would NOT INCREASE TAXES for residents and businesses. Knowing this, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today?

Response	Telephone survey (n=400)	Parent online survey (n=900)	Community online survey (n=446)	Staff online survey (n=448)
Strongly favor	61%	50%	51%	67%
Favor	35%	32%	26%	21%
Lean favor (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	<1%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lean oppose (not read to telephone survey respondents and not available to online participants)	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a
Oppose	3%	6%	6%	4%
Strongly oppose	1%	5%	9%	2%
Don’t know (not read to telephone survey respondents, but available to online participants)	1%	7%	7%	7%

Why do you believe you would oppose such a bond issue, if an election were held today? *Asked only of the respondents who answered the previous question either “Oppose” or “Strongly oppose.”*
Participant count: Parent survey – 76; Community survey – 63; Staff survey – 19. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases or ideas. Total of items in the charts for each stakeholder group will exceed the number of participants, because multiple individuals had more than one concern in their comments. Only most frequent answers shown. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.

Parents

Response	Number
Don't want to move sixth-grade students/splitting them up for high school/students not emotionally ready for middle school	24
District is poor at managing money	21
Superintendent buyouts	15
School Board doing a poor job	10
“No tax increase” is just an extension of taxes/our taxes would go down otherwise	8
Administration doing a poor job	5
Equity program	4
Need another elementary instead	4
Taxes are high enough already	3
District poor at planning for future growth	3
District spends money on things that don't benefit students	3
Don't trust the school district	3
Class sizes are too large	3

Community

Response	Number
District is poor at managing money	16
Don't want to move sixth-grade students/splitting them up for high school/students not emotionally ready for middle school	15
Superintendent buyouts	13
School Board doing a poor job	9
Administration doing a poor job	8
“No tax increase” is just an extension of taxes/our taxes would go down otherwise	6
Need another elementary instead/multiple new elementary schools	4
Don't trust the school district	4
Class sizes are too large	4
Poor hires at SLC	3
Taxes are high enough already	3
Equity program	2
District poor at planning for future growth	2
District spends money on things that don't benefit students	2
Need more vocational/career training	2

Staff

Response	Number
District is poor at managing money	8
Don't want to move sixth-grade students/splitting them up for high school/students not emotionally ready for middle school	4
Superintendent buyouts	2
Administration staff too large	2
Class sizes are too large	2
District spends money on things that don't benefit students	2

Demographics for online surveys

Parent survey

Number of participants: 900

Location of students:

Elementary level – 535

High School level (including R-7 Online Academy and the Early College Program) – 340

Middle School level – 251

Skipped the question – 61

Early Childhood programs – 59

“Prefer not to answer” – 24

Length of time living in the district:

More than 5 years to 15 years – 328

More than 15 years – 278

Up to 5 years – 147

Entire life – 72

Skipped the question – 61

“Prefer not to answer” – 14

Gender:

Female – 498

Male – 236

“Prefer not to answer” – 97

Skipped the question – 61

“Other” – 8

Community online survey

Number of participants: 446

Students currently in the district:

Yes – 281

No – 141

Skipped the question – 24

Length of time living in the district:

More than 15 years – 200

More than 5 years to 15 years – 122

Entire life – 51

Up to 5 years – 41

Skipped the question – 24

Don't live in the district – 8

Gender:

Female – 291

Male – 93

“Prefer not to answer” – 36

Skipped the question – 24

“Other” – 2

Staff online survey

Number of participants: 448

Length of time working for the district:

More than 15 years – 155

More than 5 years to 15 years – 147

Up to 5 years – 101

Skipped the question – 25

“Prefer not to answer” – 20

Live within the district:

Yes – 311

No – 113

Skipped the question – 24

Gender:

Female – 291

Male – 66

“Prefer not to answer” – 66

Skipped the question – 24

Other – 1