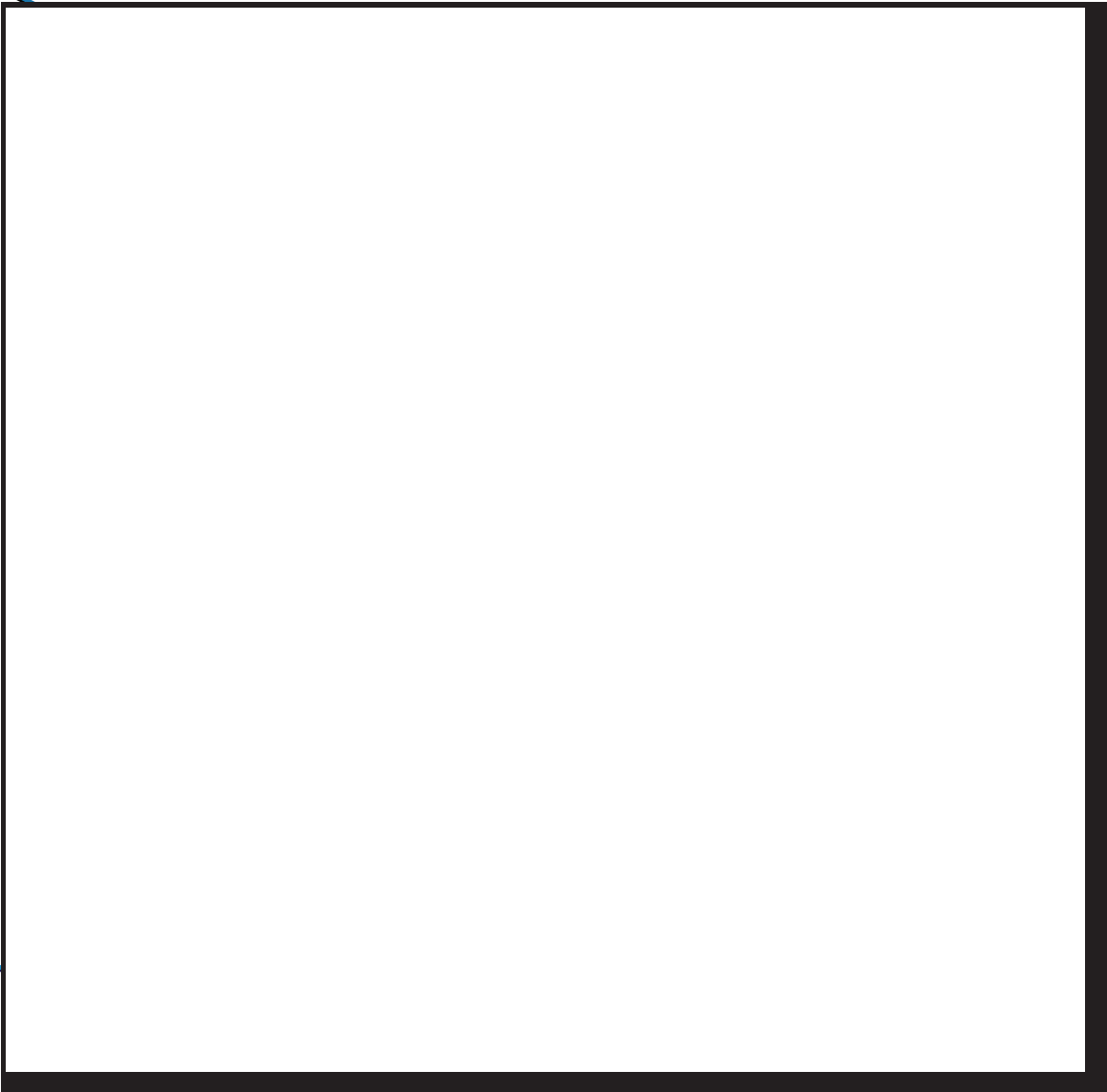


Idaho Falls School District 91

2018 Telephone Survey
Final Report



March 15, 2018

Idaho Falls School District 91 2018 Telephone Survey Executive Summary March 15, 2018

In February 2018, a 12- to 15-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household (male or female), registered voters living within the boundaries of Idaho Falls School District 91 who voted on the ballot issue for the district last November.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phones, and the number of completed interviews was allocated into four groups, using the river, Sunnyside and Broadway as identifiers, in quantities that fit the general population pattern in the school district. This means that the data shown in this report that reflects the views of all 400 participants has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%. (The data in the cross-tabulations has a higher Margin of Error, because the number of respondents in each group is smaller.)

The results of this research are as follows:

Grades for district performance: Just over 50% of the district's people, programs, facilities and district/patron relationship factors earned a "B" (or the statistical equivalent of a "B").

Respondents were asked to "grade" 18 different factors, plus the district's overall performance, using the traditional A-F grading scale. Using a 5-point weighted scale to analyze the responses, 10 of the factors earned a "B" or better (or the statistical equivalent of a "B"). At the top of the list were "Quality of elementary school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others," "Quality of education," "Quality of middle school facilities, based on what you know or on what you may have heard from others," and "Performance of district teachers."

The three lowest rated areas were "The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns," "Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91," and "Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others."

Teachers topped district "strengths," while "Don't know" was the most frequently mentioned area needing improvement.

The evaluation portion of the survey closed with open-ended questions asking participants to identify areas of strength within the district and those that may need improvement.

The responses were coded, meaning common words, phrases and ideas were collected to provide a clearer understanding of the most popular ideas. In doing so, the top three answers on "strengths" were "Teachers," "Quality curriculum" and "Don't know."

Areas needing improvement were led – dramatically so, with 111 mentions – by “Don’t know.” This was followed by “Budgeting/spending money” and “Improve/build a new high school or high schools.”

Reasons the ballot issue lost: Impact of messaging from opposition, lack of clarity about the tax implications and total cost of the bond issue topped the list.

Respondents were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement with each of 13 different statements that the district has heard related to the bond issue’s defeat. Five of the statements had combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentages of 64% or higher. The top three (with the first two tied at 68% each) were “The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No,” “The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying,” and (at 67%) “The total cost of the bond issue was too high.”

Rank order of the reasons: The top three remained the same, although the order changed.

When asked to *rank order* the three most important reasons the ballot issue lost, the cost of the bond issue was the clear top choice. This was followed by the concerns about the tax implications, and the effectiveness of the messaging from the opposition.

Advice for the district going forward: Active communication, cost reduction and detail the benefits.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked what advice they would give the district regarding the most important step it could take now. Topping the list was “Communicate details clearly and often,” followed by “Reduce the cost,” “Don’t know” and “Show need/benefit.” A follow-up question about “Any other advice?” produced much of the same, in terms of responses.

Primary sources of school district news: District website, local newspaper and other local media.

The final substantive question dealt with where respondents look first (and where else they look) for information about the school district – besides weather-related school closing information. The school district’s website topped the list, followed by a specific mention of the *Post-Register* newspaper, “newspaper” in general (which, if their counts were combined, would have easily been number one on the list) and local TV news.

Demographic characteristics of “Yes” and “No” voters: Men and “never student” families were most negative.

Having now gained the trust of the respondent over the course of a 12- to 15-minute conversation, he or she was asked how they voted. A total of 53% said they voted, “Yes,” 33% said they voted, “No” and 14% refused to answer.

When this information was compared to the demographic questions in the cross-tabulations, men were only slightly more “Yes” than “No” and “never student” families were decidedly “No” – 52% to 34%.

The full report that follows presents a series of findings, discussion of each of these findings, and all the questions, answers and appropriate cross-tabulations. A brief summary closes the report.

Idaho Falls School District 91 2018 Telephone Survey Final Report March 15, 2018

Finding 1: Survey participants gave 10 of 18 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale. Additionally, all but one of the factors (“The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents”) achieved Patron Hot Button status, meaning that at least 81% of respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” This high number of Hot Buttons affirms the presence of an interested and opinionated community.

In February 2018, a 12- to 15-minute telephone interview was conducted with 400 randomly selected, heads of households (male or female) who live within the boundaries of Idaho Falls School District 91 to learn their views on the district’s performance and on why they believe the November 2017 bond issue was unsuccessful. All respondents had to have voted in that election to participate in the survey.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided into segments based on the general population pattern, using the river, Sunnyside and Broadway, to create four quadrants. Allocating the interviews to match the patron population pattern means that the data displayed in this report that reflects all 400 respondents has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%. The Margin of Error among the demographic and geographic subgroups is larger, because the number of participants in each group is smaller.

Once an individual demonstrated that he or she fit the demographic characteristics required to participate, he or she was read a list of 18 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors (along with a question about the district’s overall performance) and asked to give each one a “grade” of A, B, C, D or F.

The reason the survey begins with such questions is to make it clear to the respondents that this process will not be difficult, while also building rapport with the interviewer – rapport that will be important when the questions become more difficult later in the survey. This question set also provides an excellent snapshot of current patron opinion on a variety of components related to the district and its performance.

All the grades for all the factors are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a 5-point weighted scale has also been applied. In this scale, each grade of “A” is worth 5 points, down to each grade of “F” being worth 1 point. The point values are totaled and divided by the number of respondents willing to offer a grade (rather than saying, “Don’t know”).

Recognizing that securing an “A” in this exercise would require all those with an opinion to say, “A,” the dividing line between areas of strength and those that may need attention is usually considered a “B” (4.00). However, taking into account the Margin of Error, a score as low as 3.80 is still, statistically speaking, a “B.”

For District 91, 10 of the 18 factors received a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B.” Those at the top of the list included the following:

- Quality of elementary school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others – 4.30
- Quality of education – 4.16
- Quality of middle school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others – 4.13
- Performance of district teachers – 4.13
- Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent by the school district – 4.02
- Safety of students in the district – 3.95

Having two of the three highest-rated factors be buildings is rather unusual, particularly considering that only about one-third of the survey participants currently have students in a district school at the present time. What it suggests is that typical residents rely heavily on what the facilities look like from the outside and on what they hear from others. This may have played a role in their decision-making on this past bond issue.

While it is disappointing that eight of the 18 factors did not score a “B” or better, five of those eight were within striking distance. The three that were not particularly close were:

- The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns – 3.48
- Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91 – 3.43
- Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others – 3.33*

**The “Quality of the Skyline High School facility” was also below 3.80 but a shade higher than IFHS, at 3.68.*

These results make it clear that there was no lack of awareness of the shortcomings of the Idaho Falls High School facility, but that there were other concerns that likely impacted the vote as well. As the reader of this report will note, communication about the bond issue was felt to be lacking, which opened the door for the opposition to create doubt. There are also some trust and service issues that – while not glaring – seem to be present.

To determine if where an individual lived or his or her demographic characteristics had any impact on his or her opinions on these lower-rated areas, a cross-tabulation analysis was conducted.

In reviewing cross-tabulation data, it is important to keep in mind the “n” number, which represents the number of individuals who fit that specific category from the total survey group of 400. Small groups – particularly very small ones, such as the 27 who have lived in the district up to five years – produce scores that are much more influenced by just a handful of opinions. It is important to recognize this when one sees scores in these small groups that have a big sway in them, as compared to others in this subgroup.

Because of the variation caused by the “n” number, it is best to look for trends, rather than to fixate on individual numbers. In doing so, the following trends were noted:

- Age and length of time living in the district had no real impact on an individual’s opinion – at least not consistently.
- With one exception, men were lower than women, but the score differences were insignificant.
- The location of residence subgroup was a bit all over the place, with no evident trends.
- The two most interesting ones were the student status subgroup and the “How did you vote?” subgroup.

While it is typical for current student families to give the highest scores – because they are the ones receiving the services at the present time – that was not always the case and, when it was, the differences were fairly minimal.

In terms of the self-reported voting, those who said they voted, “Yes” had higher scores than those who said they had voted, “No.” This is to be expected, but the score differences were not eyebrow-raising. What was interesting is that those who refused to provide this information were higher than the “Yes” voters in three cases, suggesting that the “refused” group was probably a mix of “Yes” and “No” voters.

The other element of this exercise is the identification of Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors that at least 81% of the survey participants were willing to grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” The idea is that Hot Buttons are the first things that come to mind for a typical patron – everyone from the most passionate to the more average patron – when the school district is mentioned.

In the case of District 91, all but one factor – “The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents” – achieved this status. This suggests the presence of a community that feels in touch with its school district and that is highly opinionated.

Questions 1– 3 asked respondents whether or not they were a head of household (male or female), were a registered voter and had voted in the November 2017 election on the District 91 bond issue.

To continue with the survey, a respondent had to answer, “Yes” to these questions. As such, those questions are not displayed below.

All answers with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. In reviewing the verbatim answers shown in this report, it is important to remember that each is one response, by one person and is not indicative of a trend.

Also, in reviewing the cross-tabulations (as mentioned above), it is important to keep the “n” number in mind. Groups with smaller “n” numbers can have their scores impacted significantly by a small number of responses. As such, in the case of the cross-tabulations, it is best to look for trends, rather than to focus on individual numbers.

Also, shading is used on some of the larger charts to enhance readability, but it does not reflect anything unique about the data.

4. To make certain that we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, please tell me do you live east or west of the river? (IF WEST) Do you live north or south of Broadway? (IF EAST) Do you live north or south of Sunnyside? *Quantities in each quadrant were identified by district leadership as being representative of the general population pattern in the district. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
East of the river and north of Sunnyside	168
East of the river and south of Sunnyside	70
West of the river and north of Broadway	95
West of the river and south of Broadway	67

I want to start today by getting your impressions on a variety of aspects of the school district. I'll ask questions about the bond issue in a little bit. Right now, please give each of the following school district factors a grade – A, B, C, D or F – just like in school. Your grade could be based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about District 91 from others. Let's start with... *Questions 5 and 6 were asked first and always in that order. The rest of the questions were then rotated to eliminate order bias (but those with potential follow-up questions were kept together, so that they made sense to the respondent).*

5. Academic preparation of students to be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91

Response	Percentage
A	18%
B	51%
C	16%
D	7%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

6. Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91?

Response	Percentage
A	12%
B	29%
C	34%
D	9%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	13%

7. Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent by the school district

Response	Percentage
A	27%
B	46%
C	13%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

8. I'm interested to learn more about the grade you just gave. Where do you believe you are not receiving good value for the tax dollars you are investing in the school district? *Asked only of the 73 respondents who answered question 7 either "C," "D" or "F." Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Money is not spent wisely/there is waste	48
Taxes are too high	14
Other (see below)	11

Verbatim "other" comments

They need to invest more money in the district and teachers.

I think we need more science programs.

There is a lot of waste on the administration side. We pay a lot of taxes for what we get.

Curriculum and the way they are taught. Most students cannot read or write well.

They spend on frivolous things. Curriculum could be tougher and there should be more options for those not going to college.

We are only receiving average dividends.

Do more for students that are not going to college. Get them ready for a trade.

I just don't think much overall of what they offer.

No comment.

They overspend, but the kids do not get the benefits.

My kids aren't going to school anymore.

9. Performance of district teachers

Response	Percentage
A	35%
B	42%
C	17%
D	2%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

10. Quality of education

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

11. I'm interested to learn more about the grade you just gave. Where is the school district falling short of your expectations, in terms of the quality of education it provides? *Asked only of the 51 respondents who answered question 10 either "C," "D" or "F." Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Only provides basic education/is average	18
Other (see below)	14
Need more advanced programs	12
Need more programs for those who are not planning to go to college	7

Verbatim “other” comments

More vo-tech options needed.

There are no science or language clubs. It is a bare minimum education. They're still in the dark ages.

They need to spend more money on STEM. More English, more math.

No discipline. Students don't get proper discipline. The classes are in chaos.

Science and math programs need improvement.

Apathy among staff. Just a paycheck.

They just don't care if the kids go to class – starting with the administrators.

Again, they are not going above average in seeking a better-quality district.

There are no special requirements for advanced education teaching.

Update your quality of education and give kids more to do.

Mainly encouraging each student to go on to higher education after graduation.

The district lacks programs for the highly motivated students.

They don't pay enough to retain good teachers.

That is just what I'm hearing from parents.

12. Quality of elementary school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others

Response	Percentage
A	44%
B	38%
C	10%
D	3%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

13. Quality of middle school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others

Response	Percentage
A	32%
B	40%
C	15%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	11%

14. Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others

Response	Percentage
A	8%
B	21%
C	47%
D	4%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	17%

15. Quality of the Skyline High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others

Response	Percentage
A	12%
B	45%
C	30%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	8%

16. Safety of students in the district

Response	Percentage
A	29%
B	43%
C	14%
D	5%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	7%

17. The quality of technology available to students in the district

Response	Percentage
A	16%
B	49%
C	21%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	10%

18. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	23%
B	41%
C	17%
D	5%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	14%

19. Performance of the superintendent and other district-level administrators

Response	Percentage
A	16%
B	42%
C	20%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

20. Performance of the District 91 Board of Trustees

Response	Percentage
A	13%
B	38%
C	25%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	17%

21. Efforts of the district to involve the community in decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	47%
C	14%
D	7%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	10%

22. I'm interested to learn more about the grade you just gave. Where is the school district falling short of your expectations, in terms of involving the community in decision-making? *Asked only of the 89 respondents who answered question 21 either "C," "D" or "F." Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
They haven't asked for my opinion	38
Other (see below)	21
Little effort to provide opportunity for input	16
Decisions are made behind closed doors	14

Verbatim "other" comments

Be honest and open.

They don't produce very well. They just don't seem to get anything done.

Well, the bond didn't pass. A lot of people in this area don't want to spend money on the schools. They are happy with the way things are.

Getting information out about the new high school.

They tried to slip past the citizens. There was no communication. They hold elections and don't give citizens enough time to go or prepare.

They seem to do what they want, regardless of our opinions.

I think they mean well but are not well-organized to inform.

They don't care what we want. They already have an agenda and if we vote it down, it's like what do we want. What do we do now?

I hear very little and, when we do, it seems the decisions have already been made.

I feel like they don't make the community aware of new bonds.

They aren't really open-minded. They have a closed mind and already have the outcome in their mind.

Not enough well-advertised public meetings.

Seems to be a club and those with power make the decisions.

They don't try hard at all. There is a 35% Mormon influence, so they believe everything they say.

Not a lot of transparency. Too many opposing points of view.

They have a "Why stir the pot?" attitude.

It's almost like they are afraid to make someone mad, so it's best not to ask.

Just be more open to suggestions.

The opposition seems to have a stronger base.

It needs to have more open input from citizens on bond issues.

They just don't care what we want.

23. The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	26%
C	33%
D	15%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	6%

24. The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens

Response	Percentage
A	21%
B	37%
C	28%
D	11%
F	1%
Don’t know (not read)	2%

25. The district’s record on fulfilling the promises it has made to residents?

Response	Percentage
A	10%
B	44%
C	12%
D	6%
F	1%
Don’t know (not read)	27%

26. I’m interested to learn more about the grade you just gave. What are some examples of where the district has not fulfilled a promise or promises to area residents? Asked only of the 78 respondents who answered question 25 either “C,” “D” or “F.” Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.

Response	Number
Be more transparent with funding	36
Feeling like we are kept in the dark	17
No specific examples	13
Other (see below)	12

Verbatim “other” comments

They don’t respond or pay attention to what is needed, but I know the main problem is they have a major lack of funds.

I don’t know that. I think the students could be better prepared.

They promised to keep us informed. They did not!

They haven't maintained our schools very well.

They don't advertise or communicate with citizens.

Influenced by the Republicans. Lack of funding.

Not enough information for the public's review.

We have very little information put out about the school in the paper.

They looked to hire more quality teachers and staff but have failed to do so.

I think they get in a mode of "Let's not shake things up. It may upset people," so they tell us what we want to hear.

How about the promise to not raise taxes?

Not able to staff qualified teachers.

27. Overall, what grade would you give Idaho Falls School District 91?

Response	Percentage
A	12%
B	54%
C	22%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

Cross-tabulation: Weighted 5-point scale rating for each factor. Factors that scored at 3.80 or higher are the statistical equivalent of a “B” (or better). All graded factors shown in boldface type achieved “Patron Hot Button” status, meaning that at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” The fact that all but one factor qualified suggests the presence of a very interested and engaged community.

Factor	5-point weighted scale rating
Quality of elementary school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	4.30
Quality of education	4.16
Quality of middle school facilities, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	4.13
Performance of district teachers	4.13
Value received by residents for the tax dollars spent by the school district	4.02
Safety of students in the district	3.95
Performance of school principals	3.94
Efforts of the district to involve the community in decision-making	3.88
Academic preparation of students to be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91	3.84
The quality of technology available to students in the district	3.84
The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents	3.76
Performance of the superintendent and other district-level administrators	3.74
Performance of the District 91 Board of Trustees	3.70
Overall grade	3.69
Quality of the Skyline High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.68
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.68
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.48
Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91	3.43
Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.33

Cross-tabulation: 5-point weighted scale results for all factors that scored below 3.80 by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 16 respondents refused to answer this question.

Factor	Overall score	18-34 (n=77)	35-54 (n=156)	55 or older (n=151)	Up to 5 years (n=27)	5-15 years (n=116)	More than 15 years (n=257)	Female (n=224)	Male (n=176)
The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents	3.76	3.72	3.77	3.76	3.78	3.74	3.77	3.81	3.70
Performance of the superintendent and other district-level administrators	3.74	3.67	3.78	3.79	3.58	3.79	3.73	3.78	3.69
Performance of the District 91 Board of Trustees	3.70	3.66	3.69	3.73	3.58	3.76	3.67	3.72	3.65
Overall grade	3.69	3.64	3.75	3.69	3.58	3.62	3.72	3.72	3.65
Quality of the Skyline High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.68	3.79	3.68	3.63	3.46	3.75	3.68	3.71	3.65
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.68	3.54	3.70	3.74	3.58	3.71	3.67	3.70	3.65
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.48	3.37	3.48	3.56	3.44	3.43	3.50	3.52	3.43
Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91	3.43	3.46	3.50	3.31	3.30	3.40	3.45	3.47	3.38
Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.33	3.31	3.39	3.32	3.24	3.39	3.32	3.32	3.35

Cross-tabulation: 5-point weighted scale results for all factors that scored below 3.80 by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “Private/parochial/home-school” participants (of which there were 13) are not included in this analysis.

Factor	Overall score	E/River and N/Sunnyside (n=168)	E/River and S/Sunnyside (n=70)	W/River and N/Broadway (n=95)	W/River and S/Broadway (n=67)	Student, yes (n=124)	Student, past (n=131)	Student, never (n=132)
The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents	3.76	3.73	3.71	3.80	3.83	3.78	3.77	3.74
Performance of the superintendent and other district-level administrators	3.74	3.67	3.75	3.81	3.82	3.78	3.78	3.65
Performance of the District 91 Board of Trustees	3.70	3.61	3.71	3.73	3.82	3.75	3.65	3.63
Overall grade	3.69	3.72	3.65	3.60	3.79	3.89	3.69	3.50
Quality of the Skyline High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.68	3.73	3.70	3.58	4.10	3.69	3.65	3.70
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.68	3.63	3.66	3.71	3.77	3.64	3.72	3.65
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.48	3.45	3.50	3.41	3.62	3.45	3.48	3.47
Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91	3.43	3.47	3.37	3.43	3.36	3.75	3.31	3.16
Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.33	3.34	3.36	3.39	3.21	3.40	3.23	3.38

Cross-tabulation: 5-point weighted scale results for all factors that scored below 3.80 by how the respondent claimed he or she voted in the November 2017 election. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Factor	Overall score	Voted, “Yes” (n=212)	Voted, “No” (n=131)	Refused (n=57)
The district’s record on fulfilling promises it has made to residents	3.76	3.82	3.69	3.31
Performance of the superintendent and other district-level administrators	3.74	3.83	3.65	3.58
Performance of the District 91 Board of Trustees	3.70	3.78	3.56	3.59
Overall grade	3.69	3.83	3.49	3.61
Quality of the Skyline High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.68	3.68	3.61	3.85
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.68	3.71	3.60	3.74
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.48	3.52	3.37	3.54
Amount of support and guidance given to students to help them be college- and/or career-ready after high school graduation from District 91	3.43	3.55	3.24	3.38
Quality of the Idaho Falls High School facility, based on what you know, or on what you may have heard from others	3.33	3.35	3.30	3.33

Finding 2: “Teachers” and “Quality curriculum” topped the list of strengths of the district identified by the respondents in an open-ended question. On a similar question dealing with shortcomings, 111 respondents were unable to name an area needing improvement. Those who were able to do so listed “Budgeting/spending money” and “Improve/build a new high school or high schools” at the top.

To close the evaluation section, respondents were presented with separate open-ended questions asking them to identify the strengths and the areas needing improvement for Idaho Falls School District 91.

The list of strengths was led by “Teachers” (74 mentions) and “Quality curriculum” (62 mentions). However, it is interesting that among a survey group with 17 of 18 factors achieving Hot Button status that the next highest answer was “Don’t know” (58 mentions).

This trend continued with the areas needing improvement, as 111 respondents said, “Don’t know.” This was followed by “Budgeting/spending money” (76 mentions) and “Improve/build a new high school or high schools” (58 mentions).

Normally, having “Don’t know” as the most frequently mentioned comment on areas needing improvement is considered good news, because it means that individuals in the community aren’t stewing about particular issues. But pairing that with almost 15% saying, “Don’t know” on a question dealing with district strengths *and* the high number of Hot Buttons suggests the presence of a very active, non-traditional communications “network” – meaning that the school district is the subject of a lot of conversation in the community.

Below the charts for each question are verbatim comments that are either “one-off” items, have more than one idea contained in the comment or some combination of these factors. It is important to remember when reviewing these that each is one comment, by one person. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in enough quantity to appear in the chart associated with the question.

28. What do you think are the strengths of the school district? *Open-ended responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Teachers	74
Quality curriculum	62
Don't know	58
Community support	44
Nice place to live/raise a family	40
Other (see below)	39
Good communication	32
They care about the students	30
Nice elementary schools	21

Verbatim “other” comments

A lot of caring people. Respect for the citizens is high. Their effort to be innovative is high.

Although it seems no school is safe at this time, it does seem to be a safe place to get an education and make something of yourself.

Its teachers and administration.

Extracurricular opportunities are prevalent throughout the schools.

Caring teachers and staff. Community support.

Lots of school spirit. Some teachers have genuine interest in the kids and try their best to teach them.

They are trying to hire more quality teachers and improve programs.

Responsible teachers who challenge students.

There are no strengths.

Do a decent job preparing students for life's lessons.

They have generally tried to meet the needs of students, and they always want to have cultural diversity and strong academics.

It's very open about what it is trying to do, and I think they make good long-term plans.

They do good for grade school, fair at the middle school and are failing tremendously at the high school. I can't say there are any strong points.

No comment.

The elementary schools fare well. They are revamped and taken care of. Kids are a priority.

Nice and, for the most part, a safe place to go to school.

I think safety of students is most important at this time in history.

They have potential, due to resources in the city.

They care about the students and care about keeping up with other districts. A beautiful school building.

That's a broad question. Their leadership seems capable but restrained by fiscal considerations.

Probably would say that they get a lot of support from parents and the facilities are nice.

They are community-oriented.

We are living in a nice area. I can give them that.

The community will support them, if we know more about the plans beforehand.

The facilities are good.

No comment.

Variety of academic offerings.

The superintendent really listened. Teachers are prepared and bringing in new concepts. They go beyond for the children's education.

Has a small-town feel to it.

I think that the community is interested in education and improving it.

They try to help those who want help.

The facilities are well-kept and cared for.

The staff really values the children and their education.

Ability to do a lot with little money.

It's pretty good. But I'm not up to date on that. I know it has slipped a little, but it's still pretty good.

Good curriculum and high quality in their sports.

Efforts to get students prepared for life.

Teachers really try to connect with students; involve every ethnic background.

The closeness of the community.

29. Where could the district improve? *Open-ended responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	111
Budgeting/spending money	76
Improve/build a new high school or high schools	58
Improve communication	48
Other (see below)	45
Provide more vocational training	27
Hiring more quality teachers	20
Limit religious influence	15

Verbatim “other” comments

On the bond issue, I don't know if all avenues were exhausted.

Technology. There needs to be more access to technology for students.

They have a major lack of funds. They need to get out more, door to door, if possible, and let the community know what is needed and why.

More technical trade instruction. Make students aware as to what is available for them after high school.

Pay the teachers more and expect more out of them.

All schools and staff need to come together more.

They should stop shooting for new architecture, which is wasted space. They were not thinking of the students, just expansion. They need to take out wasted space to be filled in the future if needed.

To expand the facilities to accommodate the increase in the student population.

That's kind of tough. Because if they spend too much money on advertising, people seem to want to sue them. They should find someone to advertise among the people.

With the Florida shooting happening, we must continue to improve safety within our schools. Arming teachers, however, is not the answer.

Getting the kids to class for one thing. They need to get the kids in class and teach them to be responsible.

Despite the pushback from the religious sector, sex education must be emphasized more.

No comment.

The biggest concern is that they are focusing on the lower end of Special Needs students and forgetting or not caring for the students who have no Special Needs. It seems they are left out a lot.

Bullying, at times, is an issue.

Have more vocational training for students who don't go to college. Finding funds.

They need more technology.

They need to separate the church influence from the school. Then we would be on semesters, not trimesters.

They should care about taxpayers, also. The city already taxes us too much.

More transparency. There is never enough.

Provide more opportunities for advanced students.

The salaries of teachers should increase.

The Board members and administration should have more open meetings to let the public know who they are. Most of the public do not know any of the Board members.

Better teachers and better management of finances.

Like I said before, encouraging all students to go on to higher education after graduation.

Stronger curriculum.

Better facilities. More technology.

Better preparation for college.

Strive for more than being average.

No comment.

They just want to get by. Take more pride.

Funding. Just getting more grants and things.

The facilities.

Improve science programs.

Some of the teachers need to be replaced.

Do more for a child who decides to freak out and no one pays attention.

Better teachers with better pay.

Better basic teaching.

Science education. Better athletic program.

The use of technology.

Facilities, especially the high schools. I think the bond issue is very important to get the facilities in order.

High school upgrades. More challenging courses for students.

With the curriculum.

Our leaders need to be open-minded and listen.

Its good-old-boys' closeness.

Finding 3: The cost of the bond issue, the perceived lack of clarity regarding the cost to taxpayers and the efforts of the opposition were seen as key factors in the bond issue being defeated.

The survey then presented 13 statements that – in one form or another – the district has heard about why the ballot issue was unsuccessful.

Respondents were first asked to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with each one. Nine of the 13 factors had a combined “Strongly agree/Agree” score of greater than 50%. The five of these nine that achieved a score of 64% or higher were as follows:

- The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.” – 68%
- The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying. – 68%
- The total cost of the bond issue was too high. – 67%
- There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district. – 64%
- It wasn’t clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building. – 64%

While these statistics are valuable and easier to read than the details, it would be wise to review the comments connected to the statement about the opposition and what it had to say that was effective.

After having the chance to respond individually, participants were read the list again and asked to identify the “Most important,” “Second-most important” and “Third-most important” reasons.

These responses were analyzed, using a 3-point weighted scale. The number of points is immaterial, except to pinpoint the separation from one factor to another. In doing so, there was a clear number one and a strong number two among the top three:

- The total cost of the bond issue was too high. – 613 points
- The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying. – 523 points
- The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.” – 270 points

Following fairly close were:

- People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School. – 187 points
- The school district didn’t seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue. – 152 points

- People thought that the district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option. – 145 points.

In essence, while the order was shuffled somewhat in part two of this exercise, the core concerns remained the same – cost, tax implications and the effect of the messages from the opposition.

Since the election, the school district has heard a lot of different ideas from voters and from residents in general about why they thought the bond issue did not achieve the required supermajority of “Yes” votes. I’m going to read you a short list of some of the statements that have been made. After I read each one, please tell me if you “Strongly agree” that this was an important reason the bond issue lost, “Agree,” “Neither agree nor disagree,” “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree,” or that you “Don’t know.” This survey is completely confidential. The district will get a report of the findings but will not see any individual responses. So, please tell me what you think. *Questions 30 through 41 were rotated.*

30. The total cost of the bond issue was too high.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	35%
Agree	32%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%
Disagree	19%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don’t know (not read)	1%

31. The tax implications of the bond weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the school district was saying.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	31%
Agree	37%
Neither agree nor disagree	9%
Disagree	14%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don’t know (not read)	6%

32. People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	23%
Agree	28%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%
Disagree	31%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

33. People thought the school district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	7%
Agree	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	5%
Disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know (not read)	11%

34. The negative tone in the community regarding the Mayor's race impacted how some people viewed the school bond issue, too.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	9%
Agree	35%
Neither agree nor disagree	8%
Disagree	37%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know (not read)	10%

35. Some people thought the process to select the design team and construction manager was not handled fairly.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	6%
Agree	44%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%
Disagree	18%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	22%

36. The school district didn't seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	13%
Agree	38%
Neither agree nor disagree	4%
Disagree	29%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	15%

37. There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	18%
Agree	46%
Neither agree nor disagree	5%
Disagree	11%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	19%

38. It wasn't clear whether the proposed new Idaho Falls High School would or would not have sports facilities.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	4%
Agree	18%
Neither agree nor disagree	16%
Disagree	30%
Strongly disagree	2%
Don't know (not read)	31%

39. The district did not do a good job getting the information about the bond issue out to the public.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	12%
Agree	41%
Neither agree nor disagree	11%
Disagree	27%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know (not read)	6%

40. It wasn't clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	19%
Agree	45%
Neither agree nor disagree	14%
Disagree	20%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

41. People were concerned that this bond had NO funds for any schools other than the two high schools.

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	3%
Agree	33%
Neither agree nor disagree	10%
Disagree	37%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know (not read)	17%

42. The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.”

Response	Percentage
Strongly agree	21%
Agree	47%
Neither agree nor disagree	13%
Disagree	12%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know (not read)	7%

43. What specific information from the opposition do you think was most influential in causing people to vote, “No?” *Asked only of the 273 respondents who answered question 42 either “Strongly agree” or “Agree.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Emphasized high cost/would raise taxes	142
Created doubt about the need for a new school	51
Created trust issues	34
Other (see below)	19
Targeted elderly and those without kids on why they should be expected to pay	16
Put out confusing ads	11

Verbatim “other” comments

Created general fear from issues regarding cost, budget and need.

They implied through some of their advertising that they were getting rid of the old high school.

Organized opposition to any raise in taxes. Older people or people without children thinking they should not have to pay any taxes for the schools.

Renovating the current high schools.

I think they pushed hard on our sweet school. We can just remodel it. Maybe better publications.

I think their goal was to create confusion and it worked.

I don't remember any specifics.

That we don't need a new building. Our enrollment is declining.

Cheap and stupid people listened to negative reports.

Fear about taxes. People do not agree to higher taxes.

No comment.

The cost or where the money would go. A lot of people thought it was a misuse of funds.

The high school location was not good, and the tax levy would be too high.

Just the unknown about costs and what they were going to do with the old building.

The number of ads in the newspaper that were very misleading and confusing. Also, stressed high cost of bond.

Uncertain about tax implications and maybe it could have been renovated.

The cost and that it was not necessary.

I really don't know.

Concern about paying back the loan. They said the cost would go up.

Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for each statement by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 16 respondents refused to answer this question.

Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage	Overall score	18-34 (n=77)	35-54 (n=156)	55 or older (n=151)	Up to 5 years (n=27)	5-15 years (n=116)	More than 15 years (n=257)	Female (n=224)	Male (n=176)
The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.”	68%	65%	69%	71%	70%	61%	71%	67%	70%
The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying.	68%	68%	69%	69%	59%	72%	67%	70%	66%
The total cost of the bond issue was too high.	67%	65%	65%	69%	52%	58%	71%	67%	64%
There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district.	64%	66%	66%	62%	74%	66%	62%	65%	63%
It wasn’t clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building.	64%	58%	65%	66%	63%	64%	65%	63%	66%
People thought the school district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option.	53%	57%	51%	52%	48%	58%	51%	54%	52%
The district did not good a good job getting information about the bond issue out to the public.	53%	47%	51%	56%	59%	51%	54%	49%	59%
People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School.	51%	52%	49%	51%	44%	53%	50%	50%	51%
The school district did not seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue.	51%	64%	47%	48%	59%	47%	51%	47%	55%
Some people thought that the process to select the design team and construction manager was not handled fairly.	50%	56%	49%	48%	48%	50%	50%	50%	49%
The negative tone in the community regarding the Mayor’s race impacted how some people viewed the school bond issue, too.	44%	45%	41%	45%	26%	43%	45%	42%	44%
People were concerned that this bond issue had no funds for any schools other than the two high schools.	36%	39%	36%	33%	22%	47%	32%	33%	39%
It wasn’t clear whether the proposed new Idaho Falls High School would or would not have sports facilities.	22%	17%	24%	23%	30%	25%	19%	24%	19%

Cross-tabulation: Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for each statement by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “Private/parochial/home-school” participants (of which there were 13) are not included in this analysis.

Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage	Overall score	E/River and N/Sunnyside (n=168)	E/River and S/Sunnyside (n=70)	W/River and N/Broadway (n=95)	W/River and S/Broadway (n=67)	Student, yes (n=124)	Student, past (n=131)	Student, never (n=132)
The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.”	68%	74%	69%	59%	67%	69%	67%	70%
The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying.	68%	68%	71%	68%	64%	67%	70%	69%
The total cost of the bond issue was too high.	67%	70%	66%	65%	58%	68%	69%	61%
There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district.	64%	70%	64%	60%	55%	67%	56%	70%
It wasn’t clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building.	64%	58%	71%	72%	61%	62%	66%	66%
People thought the school district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option.	53%	54%	49%	52%	58%	52%	50%	55%
The district did not good a good job getting information about the bond issue out to the public.	53%	54%	59%	53%	48%	56%	54%	51%
People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School.	51%	51%	36%	58%	57%	52%	47%	54%
The school district did not seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue.	51%	50%	56%	51%	46%	43%	55%	54%
Some people thought that the process to select the design team and construction manager was not handled fairly.	50%	54%	59%	46%	34%	47%	49%	55%
The negative tone in the community regarding the Mayor’s race impacted how some people viewed the school bond issue, too.	44%	43%	30%	52%	46%	46%	47%	37%
People were concerned that this bond issue had no funds for any schools other than the two high schools.	36%	32%	37%	41%	36%	36%	31%	40%
It wasn’t clear whether the proposed new Idaho Falls High School would or would not have sports facilities.	22%	23%	23%	18%	21%	23%	18%	27%

Cross-tabulation: Strongly agree/Agree” percentage for each statement by how the respondent claimed he or she voted in the November 2017 election. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.

Combined “Strongly agree/Agree” percentage	Overall score	Voted, “Yes” (n=212)	Voted, “No” (n=131)	Refused (n=57)
The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, “No.”	68%	69%	66%	70%
The tax implications of the bond issue weren’t clear, and that made some people not trust what the district was saying.	68%	71%	66%	63%
The total cost of the bond issue was too high.	67%	68%	65%	60%
There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district.	64%	61%	67%	68%
It wasn’t clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building.	64%	66%	62%	60%
People thought the school district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option.	53%	52%	61%	39%
The district did not good a good job getting information about the bond issue out to the public.	53%	51%	56%	56%
People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School.	51%	52%	53%	40%
The school district did not seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue.	51%	49%	50%	58%
Some people thought that the process to select the design team and construction manager was not handled fairly.	50%	49%	50%	51%
The negative tone in the community regarding the Mayor’s race impacted how some people viewed the school bond issue, too.	44%	46%	40%	39%
People were concerned that this bond issue had no funds for any schools other than the two high schools.	36%	35%	35%	37%
It wasn’t clear whether the proposed new Idaho Falls High School would or would not have sports facilities.	22%	22%	20%	25%

44-46 I'm now going to read through this list one more time. Please tell me which factor you think was most important in people voting, "No." If you think the most important reason was something different, please let me know that, too. What do you think was the second-most important reason? Again, if it is something that is not on the list, please tell me what it is. And finally, what do you think was the third-most important reason? Again, if it is something that is not on the list, please tell me what it is. List was read to respondents and, if needed, reread on questions 45 and/or 46. Results are shown, using a 3-point weighted scale, in which 3 points is awarded for each "Most important reason" response, down to 1 point for each "Third-most important" answer.

Statement	Most important reason	Second-most important reason	Third-most important reason	3-point weighted scale points
The total cost of the bond issue was too high.	172	34	29	613
The tax implications of the bond weren't clear, and that made some people not trust what the school district was saying.	85	86	96	523
The opposition did a good job of pointing out reasons to vote, "No."	54	26	56	270
People did not like the proposed location for the new Idaho Falls High School.	7	62	42	187
The school district didn't seek input from the community at meetings or open houses, before deciding on the bond issue.	9	36	53	152
People thought the school district never seriously considered renovation of Idaho Falls High School as an option.	18	38	15	145
It wasn't clear what would happen to the current Idaho Falls High School building.	6	41	39	139
There are trust issues in the community regarding the school district.	31	15	2	125
The district did not do a good job getting information about the bond issue out to the public.	12	19	32	106
The negative tone in the community regarding the Mayor's race impacted how some people viewed the school bond issue, too.	2	11	21	49
Some people thought the process to select the design team and construction manager was not handled fairly.	0	20	0	40
It wasn't clear whether the proposed new Idaho Falls High School would or would not have sports facilities.	0	7	0	14
People were concerned that this bond had NO funds for any schools other than the two high schools.	0	0	7	7

47. Were there any other reasons that we haven't discussed that you think were important? *Of the 394 respondents who were asked this question (because they did not say, "Don't know" on one of the three previous questions), 387 said, "No." The remaining seven responses are shown below, in verbatim form.*

The health of staff of all schools. Get their thinking united and get something done.

They are not taking care of the facilities they have. There are no funds to do upkeep.

Taxed pretty high already. The new mayor is spend-happy. They need to get the Board members to work together with him better.

There was a factor about possible jealousy between the two schools – about who got the most money.

With two schools vying for the money, someone is not happy.

The people did not accept it.

Safety of the students.

Finding 4: Communication, cost and greater engagement with the community were the most common pieces of advice for the district shared by survey participants.

The survey began to draw to a close with an open-ended question asking respondents what they would tell the district is the “most important step” it should take, now that the bond issue had lost.

Sensing that this question related to a potential future bond issue, the comments were focused in that direction. At the top of the list were:

- Communicate details clearly and often – 95 mentions
- Reduce the cost – 77 mentions
- Don’t know – 72 mentions
- Show need/benefit – 43 mentions
- Look at different location options – 38 mentions

The next question asked for any “other advice” the respondents might give to the district. After the 144 who said, “Nothing more/none” and the 74 who said, “Don’t know,” the items at the top of the list had a similar, communication-heavy feel:

- Communicate details clearly and often – 61 mentions
- Work with the community for solutions – 47 mentions
- Be transparent – 35 mentions

Thank you for staying with me. We are almost done.

48. If you were advising the district, what would you tell them is the most important step they can take following the bond issue’s loss? *Open-ended responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Communicate details clearly and often	95
Reduce the cost	77
Don’t know	72
Show need/benefit	43
Look at different location options	38
Other (see below)	34
Use the community as a voice of support	26
Be transparent	15

Verbatim “other” comments

Really regroup and make sure this is best.

They don’t seem to get information out to the community, if we don’t have children in school.

Get the information out to the community. Maybe go out in twos – an adult and a student – and go door to door, letting people know what the schools need.

To be as clear as possible and transparent on where the money is really going.

We want the children to stay in this area and to not move out of the area.

Unity.

They should show that taxes are not going up so high.

Investigate and take a random survey and have the Trustees and the community to vote.

Try to reduce the total cost somehow and really keep the city leaders backing up the bond.

Don't bring it up again. I know they will; they always do.

Challenge themselves more. Go above average.

They need to consider letting people know other ways to generate money.

Be open to input from the community.

Try again and be more integrated with the community.

To open their minds and hear what other people say. Why do they need a new high school?

Run it again. Communicate, communicate, communicate.

No comment.

To make very clear where the money is coming from.

Stop listening to the religious groups and Republicans and get the district united.

Start earlier in the process. Involve more community members.

Just keep educating people on the poor condition that the school district is in financially. Legislators need to get off their backside and really help the district.

Get the complete proposal out to everybody.

To be more careful about the wording of the bond and be clearer about where funds will be appropriated.

They must engage parents of students.

Listen more to the residents.

Better communication with the people that didn't vote. More advertising.

Advertise more. Tell those who don't know where to vote in the city.

Seek more input from the parents and community.

They should focus on the Idaho Falls High School: renovating and rebuilding.

To look at the options much more carefully and try to reduce the cost.

Just seek every opportunity to gather all information from the entire school district.

Help students get ready for college or careers after graduation.

They might talk more to people on the west side to see if they were slighted.

Get a really good cross-section of the district patrons to start the initial work.

49. What other advice would you give the district? *Open-ended responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Nothing more/none	144
Don't know	74
Communicate details clearly and often	61
Work with the community for solutions	47
Be transparent	35
Other (see below)	20
Be patient	19

Verbatim “other comments”

Maybe get out more to individuals who do not have children in school. They need to win those people over.

Make education a top priority.

We need to be diverse toward businesses in our area.

Correct information is vital.

Be completely open and honest with the public.

Try, try again.

Try to pass it later, because they do need a new school, and get parents out to vote.

Keep after it.

Make no decision behind closed doors.

Property taxes are sufficient right now. Do not need another increase.

Give more money to teachers, instead of building a new school.

Try again, please.

Take time to find out all of the details.

Have town hall meetings.

Try again. I'm still interested in the school district, although my kids have graduated.

They need to be more transparent about where the money is being spent.

They need to use less money.

Reach out to voters, using all forms of communication to tell the "story" of the bond.

Don't let the opposition get ahead of them.

They need to point out why we need a new high school, not once, but repeatedly.

Finding 5: The school district website and local news media (particularly, the local newspaper) are the most commonly consulted sources for district news – aside from weather-related school closing information.

The final substantive section dealt with where respondents are likely to turn first for key school district news – besides reports of schools being closed, due to weather – followed by a question about any other news “outlets” that would be consulted.

Normally, this question involves the reading of a list of possible sources generated during the planning meeting. However, that list topped 30 and – considering the length of the survey – an open-ended alternative was selected as the better course of action.

As the reader will note below, the district’s website and traditional media rank high on this list, with more secondary sources (friends, social media, etc.) being a step down. This is good information to know, should the district plan another ballot issue in the future and want to know where best to invest their time and other resources getting the information into the hands of the voters.

My last few questions will help us divide our interviews into groups.

50. If you were looking for news about the school district – beyond just weather-related school closing news – what source would you go to first for this news? Responses were coded.

Response	Number
School district website	80
<i>Post-Register</i> newspaper	73
Newspaper (general)	61
Local TV news (general)	57
Internet	44
Friends and family	43
Social media	26
Other (see below)	16

Verbatim “other” comments

East Idaho News.

Radio.

Local news, Channel 8 or KBIK.

That's the issue. There is really none.

The newspaper – *Post Register*. Television local news.

I don't really know.

My wife.

I don't know.

I'm a nationwide school consultant. I would consult my network. I work six months out of the year on bond issues.

I don't know.

Eastern Idaho newspaper.

Local Channel 8.

Newspaper, TV.

The school website. Local news.

Probably my kids.

Facebook.

51. What other sources might you consult also? *Responses were coded.*

Response	Number
School district website	78
Newspaper (general)	64
Friends and family	59
Internet	51
Local TV news (general)	45
<i>Post-Register</i> newspaper	36
Other (see below)	27
No others	22
Social media	18

Verbatim “other” comments

Teachers and administrators that I know.

The district office.

I would pick up the phone.

Local radio stations.

District website. But it’s hard to navigate.

East Idaho News.com and the school district website.

Calling the district office and asking questions.

Channel 8.

Radio could have something on that.

School publicity. A lady that worked for the newspaper.

The school newspapers.

I would show up at district meetings.

Call the school.

Talk with the district office.

Channel 3.

Local TV, district website.

Phone, internet, the school district’s website.

Whatever resource is available at the time.

TV news or newspaper.

Local officials.

Media.

I don't know.

Depends on what I was looking for.

Ask my child.

East Idaho News.com.

Radio and television.

Website, newspaper.

Demographics and, specifically, demographics of individuals, based on how they voted.

The survey closed with a series of standard demographic questions that allowed the data to be segmented by characteristics, such as age, length of time living in the district, student status and gender.

And now that they had built up rapport over the course of a 12- to 15-minute interview, the respondents were then asked if they would mind telling the interviewer how they voted in the bond issue election.

A total of 53% said they voted, “Yes,” while 33% said they voted, “No” and 14% chose not to provide this information.

The cross-tabulation revealed three areas of concern – two serious and one more modest.

The modest one – because of the small size of the sample – is the people who had lived in the district up to five years. An even number (41%) said they voted, “Yes” and “No.”

The most serious ones were:

- Men – Their votes were just 43% “Yes” and 41% “No.”
- Those who had never had a child in the district – 34% “Yes” and 52% “No.”

While a turnaround among “never parents” may be too much to expect, clearly, the margin here needs to be narrowed. But the fact that men were barely more positive than negative suggests that the messages were simply not connecting with what matters to them the most. This is an issue that the district should study carefully, before any future bond issue is being planned.

52. How long have you, yourself, lived within the boundaries of Idaho Falls School District 91? Is it...? *Choices were read to respondents.*

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	2%
2 years to 5 years	5%
More than 5 years to 10 years	11%
More than 10 years to 15 years	19%
More than 15 years	55%
I’ve lived here all my life	10%

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

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	3%
25 to 34	17%
35 to 44	20%
45 to 54	19%
55 to 64	23%
65 or older	15%
Refused (not read)	4%

54. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend school in District 91 right now? *Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	113
Yes, children and grandchildren	11
Yes, grandchildren	67
No	209

55. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated? *Asked only of the 276 respondents who did not answer question 54 either “Yes, children” or “Yes, children and grandchildren.” Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	114
Yes, children and grandchildren	17
Yes, grandchildren	5
No	140

56. Do you now, or have you ever had, any children or grandchildren who attended a private or charter school or are home-schooled, instead of attending school in District 91? *Asked only of the 145 respondents who did not answer question 55 either “Yes, children” or “Yes, children and grandchildren.” Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	8
Yes, children and grandchildren	3
Yes, grandchildren	2
No	132

57. Earlier in the survey, you said that you had voted in the November bond issue election. So that we can compare the responses in the survey between those who voted, “Yes” and those who voted, “No,” would you mind telling me how you voted? Remember, all your responses are confidential.

Response	Percentage
I voted, “Yes”	53%
I voted, “No”	33%
Refused (not read)	14%

Cross-tabulation: How respondents claimed to have voted in the November 2017 bond issue election by age, length of time living in the district and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group. “Age” will not square with “overall” score, because 16 respondents refused to answer this question.

Response	Overall score	18-34 (n=77)	35-54 (n=156)	55 or older (n=151)	Up to 5 years (n=27)	5-15 years (n=116)	More than 15 years (n=257)	Female (n=224)	Male (n=176)
Voted, “Yes”	53%	51%	54%	53%	41%	53%	54%	61%	43%
Voted, “No”	33%	31%	32%	33%	41%	38%	30%	26%	41%
Refused to provide this information	14%	18%	13%	14%	19%	9%	16%	13%	16%

Cross-tabulation: How respondents claimed to have voted in the November 2017 bond issue election by location of the respondent’s residence, and by the presence of a current district student in the household, a past student (but no current student) or no student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “Private/parochial/home-school” participants (of which there were 13) are not included in this analysis.

Response	Overall score
Voted, “Yes”	53%
Voted, “No”	33%
Refused to provide this information	14%

E/River and N/Sunnyside (n=168)	E/River and S/Sunnyside (n=70)	W/River and N/Broadway (n=95)	W/River and S/Broadway (n=67)
54%	50%	50%	58%
33%	33%	39%	22%
13%	17%	11%	19%

Student, yes (n=124)	Student, past (n=131)	Student, never (n=132)
70%	60%	34%
15%	28%	52%
15%	12%	16%

58. RECORD GENDER

Response	Percentage
Female	56%
Male	44%

Summary and recommendations

School districts in Idaho start any ballot proposal at a disadvantage, given the onerous percentage required for passage. That's why it is critical to provide clear, complete, repetitive messaging, to be strategically selective about when to respond to those who want the population to vote, "No," to demonstrate a commitment to offering engagement opportunities, and, most importantly, to keep the focus of the patrons on the student-related benefits of any proposal.

This research made several things clear about today and recommendations for next steps:

- The typical resident has an opinion on pretty much anything related to the school district, meaning that the organized opposition had a very willing audience.
- Practically everyone agrees that Idaho Falls High School has become unsuitable. There are also concerns about Skyline, but not with the same passion as with IFHS.
- The school district may have been technically correct in its presentation of the cost of its bond issues to taxpayers, but there was enough of an air of uncertainty – intended or not – to create doubt and, worse yet, to create a trust issue.
- The location proposed for the new IFHS. was an issue, but it was not the major one that the loudest voices suggested it was. This does not mean that the school district shouldn't consider alternatives, just that this was not the primary reason that the bond issue was defeated.
- There is an us and them mentality, as in, "If they are getting X, what are we going to get?" In the case where a new school is clearly needed, but only renovation is necessary for the other school, it is all the more important to focus on student benefits rather than bricks and mortar.
- For a new high school and renovations to an existing high school, the cost was reasonable. But this was not clear to voters, which could have been addressed through repeated demonstrations of why such a price tag is not out of line with what such projects cost.
- Whatever the district decides to do next, more communication about the needs and the solutions being proposed is critical. In simple terms, it is time to overwhelm patrons with the messages of need and student benefit in multiple venues. Even if a next attempt to pass a bond issue is in the distant future, keeping these two messages on the front burner is essential.