

# **Rockwood Patron Survey 2007**

## **Executive Summary**

### **November 7, 2007**

In October and early November 2007, a 12- to 15-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household voters in the Rockwood School District to determine their views on a variety of issues related to the district's performance and its plans for the future.

Specifically, the survey asked patrons to:

- “Grade” the people, programs and facilities of the district either A, B, C, D or F
- Share their thoughts on the reasons why the district seeks support for a new bond issue seemingly every other year
- Define their support or opposition to a generically described bond issue, before the details are shared
- Report on whether inclusion of certain projects being considered for that bond issue would make them more likely to vote in favor, more likely to vote against, or make no difference; for those who would be more likely to vote against, report the reasons
- Identify their level of support or opposition to the bond issue again, once they had been made aware of the concepts being considered, and, again, after the potential dollar figures for that bond issue were discussed
- Define the sources they consult for district news
- Provide demographic data, including age, length of time living in the district, presence of a current or past district student in the household (or no district student ever in the household), presence or lack of a district employee in the household (and that employee's job title, if applicable), and gender

Participants in the survey were randomly selected from lists of individuals who had voted in both of the two most recent school elections. Additionally, calls were divided into the seven communities of the district, based on the percentage of total, combined votes in the two elections that came from each city. This helped to insure that the survey population mirrored the density of voter patterns.

Specifically, survey participants were divided as follows:

<b>City</b>	<b>Number</b>
Wildwood	86
Ellisville	71
Fenton	70
Ballwin	68
Chesterfield	42
Eureka	40
Clarkson Valley	23

Generally speaking, the frequent voters who participated in this study were complimentary of the district’s performance and reported that they were interested in following district news. But they were not exceptionally enthusiastic about the idea of a bond issue or any of the sets of projects presented for review. Specifically:

- Patrons gave 11 of 15 different people, program and facility areas of the district – plus the district “overall” – a grade of at least “B” on the traditional scale of A, B, C, D, F. Areas that were particularly highly rated included extracurricular and community education activities, safety and security of students, quality of teachers, quality of education, and the district’s efforts to provide students a world-class education.

Areas which rated below a “B” included the district’s record on making and fulfilling commitments, the district’s responsiveness to patron concerns, the performance of the Rockwood School Board in addressing the educational and management needs in the district, and the efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making.

- Growth, the need to keep up with neighboring districts, and the advancing age of the buildings in the Rockwood district were reported as the most likely reasons the district comes to patrons every other year with a bond proposal.
- Before information had been shared, 44% of patrons said they would either “strongly favor” or “favor” a generically described bond issue. A total of 39% said they would either “oppose” or “strongly oppose,” with the remainder split between “don’t know” (9%), “would depend on what it includes” (6%), and “would depend on the tax implication,” (2%).
- More than half of the patrons said that including the more maintenance-type projects in a bond issue would make them more likely to vote in favor of the proposal. Specifically, 58% said they would be more likely to support a proposal if safety and security enhancements were included; 55% were supportive of projects such as flooring, roofing and HVAC upgrades; and 52% were in favor of

technology enhancements. The second-most popular answer on each consisted of individuals who said these components would “make no difference” in their voting decision.

- The sets of projects aligned with each high school and its respective feeder schools drew more “make no difference” responses (from 51% to 53%) than any other category. The second highest was “more likely to vote in favor,” with support levels ranging from 31% to 38%.
- In both types of questions – maintenance and school-specific – stated opposition was minimal. Those who were in opposition gave consistent reasons why, including their concern over a tax increase, their concern about the district’s ability to manage its resources, their view that academics were important but that athletics were not worth added funding, and their belief that funds for many of these projects should already be available within the district’s resources.
- After hearing the details about the bond issue, general support (that is, the combination of those saying “strongly favor” or “favor”) increased by 10% to 54%. That support diminished measurably, however, when the possible tax figures were presented – even though the respondents were reminded that the proposal would not result in a tax increase. Specifically, support at the \$86 million level was 37%. It grew to 40% when those in opposition at the top level were presented with the possibility of a \$70 million proposal. When those still in opposition were presented with a \$60 million option, the support grew to 43%.
- More than half (51%) said that the recent property reassessment had at least “some” impact on their opinion about how they would likely vote on a potential bond issue.
- And, finally, patrons said they consulted 7 of 10 news sources more often than “rarely” for district news. These sources included informal (“friends and neighbors,” etc.), third-party (the local news media), and district-sponsored (such as printed newsletters).

The Final Report, which follows this Executive Summary, contains a series of Findings, discussion of each Finding, and all the questions, answers and appropriate cross-tabulations. A brief Summary concludes the report.

# **Rockwood Patron Survey 2007**

## **Final Report**

### **November 8, 2007**

**Finding 1: When asked to “grade” the district’s people, programs and facilities, patrons gave 11 of the 15 areas evaluated (plus the district “overall”) a grade of “B” or higher. The greatest praise was offered for the district’s extracurricular and community education activities, the safety and security of its students, the quality of technology provided to those students, the teachers, and the overall quality of education.**

After going through the formality of confirming the potential respondent was a head of household (either male or female), a registered voter (which was already known, but was asked anyway), and aware that he or she lived within the boundaries of the Rockwood School District (which, again, was known because participants were drawn from lists of individuals who had voted in both of the last two school elections), the participant was asked to pinpoint his or her city of residence for quota purposes. Assuming that he or she lived in a segment of the district where there was still room under the quota, the survey began in earnest.

The first question set asked respondents to give the district a grade of A, B, C, D or F on 15 different people, program and facility areas, plus an overall grade.

The purpose of this question set is three-fold.

First, by asking questions at the outset that do not require the respondents to have any specific “inside” knowledge about the district, it builds confidence among the survey participants that they can take part in the process, and do so successfully.

Second, these relatively easy questions help to build rapport between the interviewer and the respondent – rapport which will be essential when the topics become more complicated later in the survey.

Third, the responses to these questions provide insight into general patron opinion about the district’s strengths and, perhaps, shortcomings.

All the responses to each question are displayed below. However, to simplify the analysis, a weighted scale is also used.

In this scale, each grade of “A” is worth 5 points, down to each grade of “F” being worth 1 point. The points are totaled and then divided by the number of respondents who were willing to offer an opinion (meaning that those who say “don’t know” are not included).

The result is a single number between 1.00 and 5.00 that provides insight into the comparative ratings for the areas being studied. In looking at the numbers, it is best to use 4.00 as the dividing line between those areas considered strengths and those which may require some attention. The number 4.00 is used, because to score a 5.00 would require all survey respondents who were willing to offer the district a grade to select “A,” something which – given human nature – is extremely unlikely, even in the most beloved districts.

In the case of the Rockwood School District, this analysis shows that the district’s people, programs and facilities are generally well thought of. Specifically, high marks were given to:

- Variety and quality of extracurricular activities – 4.64 out of a possible 5.00
- Variety and quality of community education activities – 4.54
- Safety and security of students – 4.47
- Quality of technology available to students – 4.47
- Quality of teachers – 4.40
- Quality of education – 4.39
- The district’s efforts to provide students a world-class education – 4.39
- Quality of school principals – 4.35
- Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities – 4.20
- Overall grade – 4.20

All told, 11 of the 15 areas studied – plus the overall grade – scored above the 4.00 mark. Those which were below that level included areas which are usually toward the lower portion of the list, because they are somewhat more difficult for patrons to judge. Specifically:

- District’s record on making and fulfilling commitments – 3.82
- District’s responsiveness to patron concerns – 3.74
- Performance of the Rockwood School Board in addressing the educational and management needs in the district – 3.64
- Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making – 3.64

While these 4 have often been below the midpoint when this exercise has been used in other school districts, there does seem to be at least a modest message of concern from the patrons under the general category of the district’s “connectedness” with the patron community. Again, these scores are not significantly deficient, but rather they suggest an area that might benefit from further study.

One other note of concern within all the positive scores is the relatively high number of areas in which the percentage of those saying “don’t know” was 15% or higher.

Specifically:

- Variety and quality of community education activities – 28%
- Performance of the Rockwood School Board in addressing the educational and management needs in the district – 28%
- Quality of technology available to students – 24%
- Performance of the Superintendent in addressing the educational and management needs in the district – 23%
- Variety and quality of extracurricular activities – 22%
- Quality of school principals – 21%
- District’s record on making and fulfilling commitments – 20%
- District’s responsiveness to patron concerns – 17%
- Safety and security of students – 15%

These results become a bit more perplexing when it is discovered later on in the survey that the patrons *report* behavior (in terms of searching for district news) that suggests a level of interest that seems to contradict the fact that a measurable percentage of “don’t know” answers were found on these key questions. One could infer from this contradiction that patrons are only seeking out part of the district’s story, while not absorbing information about other key components that could help formulate an opinion.

Nonetheless, the sum total of these results would suggest that patrons who are willing to offer an opinion are generally happy with the bulk of the district’s people, programs and facilities, and with the performance of the district overall.

*Question 1 confirmed that the individual was the person on the voter list records, while question 2 confirmed the city of residence.*

**As you know, students in school are usually given a grade to reflect the quality of their work. Those grades are usually A, B, C, D or F. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Rockwood School District from others, please tell me what grade you would give the Rockwood School District on each of the following items. Let’s start with Questions 3 through 17 were rotated. “Don’t know” was not read to respondents. Percentages on all questions may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.**

### **3. Value for the tax dollars spent**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	28%
B	46%
C	15%
D	4%
F	0%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

**4. Quality of teachers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	41%
B	40%
C	6%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	13%

**5. Quality of education**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	42%
B	44%
C	5%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	8%

**6. The district's efforts to provide students a world class education**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	45%
B	31%
C	10%
D	<1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	14%

**7. Quality of technology available to students**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	39%
B	34%
C	3%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	24%

**8. The variety and quality of extracurricular activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	54%
B	21%
C	4%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	22%

**9. The variety and quality of community education activities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	43%
B	26%
C	4%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	28%

**10. Quality of school principals**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	35%
B	37%
C	7%
D	0%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	21%

**11. The district's responsiveness to patron concerns**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	15%
B	38%
C	23%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	17%

**12. Safety and security of students**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	48%
B	30%
C	6%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	15%

**13. Performance of the Superintendent in addressing the educational and management needs in the district**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	29%
B	33%
C	9%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	23%

**14. Performance of the Rockwood School Board in addressing the educational and management needs in the district**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	9%
B	36%
C	20%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	28%

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

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	10%
B	49%
C	23%
D	4%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	11%

**16. The district's record on making and fulfilling commitments**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	15%
B	43%
C	17%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	20%

**17. Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	26%
B	64%
C	5%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	5%

**18. Overall, what grade would you give the Rockwood School District?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	34%
B	51%
C	12%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	2%

**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for graded factors**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>5-point scale rating</b>
Variety and quality of extracurricular activities	4.64
Variety and quality of community education activities	4.54
Safety and security of students	4.47
Quality of technology available to students	4.47
Quality of teachers	4.40
Quality of education	4.39
The district's efforts to provide students a world class education	4.39
Quality of school principals	4.35
Upkeep and maintenance of school facilities	4.20
Overall grade	4.20
Performance of the Superintendent in addressing the educational and management needs in the district	4.10
Value for the tax dollars spent	4.05
District's record on making and fulfilling commitments	3.82
District's responsiveness to patron concerns	3.74
Performance of the Rockwood School Board in addressing the educational and management needs in the district	3.64
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.64

**Finding 2: Patrons offer a variety of reasons why they believe the district frequently approaches voters seeking support for bond issues, and they are initially cautious in their support for a potential 2008 bond issue.**

The bond issue section began with a question that asked patrons to share their thoughts on why they believe the Rockwood School District approaches voters every other year with a new bond issue.

The results suggest a variety of opinions, with the most popular being that the district is growing (35%), the need to stay competitive with neighboring districts (26%), and the advancing age of the district's facilities (25%). Smaller groups of patrons offered other responses, while 29% said "don't know."

Having now introduced the possibility of a bond issue in 2008, survey participants were asked how they would vote on such a generically described proposal, "if the election were held today."

This question is a critical component of the process, because it suggests the level of "benefit of the doubt" support among patrons. In other words, how much do patrons trust the district to make sensible choices on matters such as bond issues, even before they know any specifics?

In the case of the Rockwood School District, a total of 44% of respondents said they would either "strongly favor" or "favor" such a proposal, while 39% said they would "oppose" or "strongly oppose" it. The others were scattered among "don't know" (9%), "would depend on what it includes" (6%), and "would depend on the tax implication" (2%).

In an analysis of key demographic and geographic subgroups, a pattern appeared on this question that would be repeated through the survey to varying degrees: Younger residents, those who were newer to the district, and respondents who had children currently in the Rockwood School District were somewhat more positive. But, the differences between these individuals and those of other demographic groups were relatively minimal from a statistical standpoint. In terms of the different communities, support ranged from 47% in Fenton, down to 39% in Clarkson Valley, differences which are, again, statistically insignificant.

All told, these results clearly suggest a meaningful measure of caution among patrons about the prospect of a bond issue in the near future.

**19. As you may know, the Rockwood School District has been actively involved in a comprehensive long-range planning effort involving members of the School Board, the district’s administration, teachers, parents and community members. That planning effort may lead to the district proposing a bond issue sometime in 2008 that would be used to renovate and upgrade some of the facilities at schools across the entire district. As you may know, the Rockwood School District has a recent history of proposing a bond issue to voters every other year. Why do you think the district feels it necessary to make these requests? List displayed below was NOT read to respondents, but was used as a guide for the interviewers to use when recording responses. Percentages will add to more than 100%, because respondents were free to offer more than one answer.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
District is growing	35%
Don’t know	29%
District has to keep up with neighboring districts	26%
Buildings/facilities/classrooms are getting old	25%
Educational programming needs are changing	12%
Other (see below)	4%
Have to keep the teachers happy	1%

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“They make such large requests, so it is difficult to get them passed. Should lower the expectations; cut out the frills.”

“Current bond money is about to expire.”

“They do know how to spend a lot of money.”

“It is for the usual waste of money.”

“Need it for large projects.”

“Need funds.”

“Running out of money and need more.”

“They have money now for various needs.”

“It seems to be a commitment by the district to keep the pot full.”

“Finances are needed. I am on the bond issue committee.”

“Some schools, like Pond Elementary, need a parking lot.”

“They are not managing their money. They should not have to seek more money. They already have enough.”

“I assume it is because the bond is up and they need more money.”

“They really do not need more renovations. They should concentrate on good teachers and appropriate salaries.”

“Financial shortfall.”

“They need to spend money in order to keep grants and bonds. It is a scam.”

**20. If an election on such a bond issue were held today, would you strongly favor it, favor it, oppose it, or strongly oppose it?** *“Lean favor,” “Lean oppose,” “Don’t know,” “Would depend on the tax implication,” and “Would depend on what it includes,” were not read, but were noted if offered – unaided – by respondent.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly favor	13%
Favor	31%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	0%
Oppose	25%
Strongly oppose	14%
Would depend on the tax implication (not read)	2%
Would depend on what it includes (not read)	6%
Don’t know (not read)	9%

**Cross-tabulation: “Pre-information” support by city of residence.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Ballwin (n=68)</b>	<b>Chesterfield (n=42)</b>	<b>Clarkson Valley (n=23)</b>	<b>Ellisville (n=71)</b>	<b>Eureka (n=40)</b>	<b>Fenton (n=70)</b>	<b>Wildwood (n=86)</b>
<b>Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages</b>	<b>44%</b>	44%	45%	39%	46%	40%	47%	43%

**Cross-tabulation: “Pre-information” support by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of current district students in the household, past district students, or no district students ever in the household.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-34 (n=24)</b>	<b>35 to 54 (n=193)</b>	<b>55 or older (n=183)</b>	<b>Up to 5 years (n=17)</b>	<b>More than 5 years to 15 years (n=154)</b>	<b>More than 15 years (n=229)</b>	<b>Kids, current (n=111)</b>	<b>Kids, past (n=185)</b>	<b>Kids, never (n=104)</b>
<b>Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages</b>	<b>44%</b>	58%	46%	40%	41%	46%	43%	50%	43%	40%

**Finding 3: The three sets of “maintenance”-style projects drew generally positive – if not overwhelming – support from the survey participants.**

The project portion of the survey began with the presentation of three sets of projects that could best be described as district-wide maintenance and/or improvement initiatives under the categories of technology, building and grounds upkeep, and safety and security items.

For each set of aligned projects, a brief description was read to provide insight to the participants regarding the scope of the ideas being considered. After hearing each set described, the patrons were asked if including these projects would make them more likely to vote in favor of a bond issue, more likely to vote against, or make no difference.

More than half of the patrons said that each of these project sets would make them “more likely to vote in favor” of a bond issue. Specifically:

- 58% for safety and security
- 55% for maintenance
- 52% for technology upgrades

Far and away, the next largest group on each question consisted of those who said that including this set of projects would “make no difference” in their vote. In fact, “more likely to vote against” percentages ranged only from 5% to 9%.

Those who were against the projects were asked why. Their responses here were the beginning of what would be a very consistent theme throughout. Their primary concerns were taxes, their perception of the district’s inability to manage funds, their belief that such issues were already funded in previous bond issues, or that the project list was too large for one proposal.

Again, it is important to point out that those specifically stating their opposition to these projects were few in number, but their opposition continued (generally speaking) throughout the rest of the survey – no matter what was on the project list being discussed at that moment. Combined with the rather high percentage of “make no difference” voters (who, again, frequently carried that response throughout the rest of the survey), it would appear that many patrons are not focusing the merits of each group of projects, but already have a position in mind.

**I’m now going to share with you some of the specific ideas that have been discussed as part of this planning effort. After I read each one, I’ll be asking you if including this particular idea in a final proposal would make you more likely to vote in favor of a bond issue, more likely to vote against, or make no difference in your voting decision. I’m going to begin with projects that will affect all district schools.**

**21. The bond issue could include funds that would be used to upgrade technology available to students and staff at schools across the district, as well as to upgrade the district’s technology infrastructure by adding and upgrading computer servers and wireless networks, and upgrading the district’s finance, human resources and library systems. If these projects were included, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	52%
More likely to vote against	9%
Make no difference	38%
Don’t know (not read)	1%

**22. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON’T KNOW”? What didn’t you like? Asked only of the 41 respondents who answered question 21 either “more likely to vote against” or “don’t know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, shown below.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Other (see below)	14
Taxes too high right now	8
District doesn’t manage money well; wasteful	8
Already asked for this on the last bond issue; why again?	4
Don’t know/need more information	3
Too much to take on at one time	2
Not needed	2

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“The school board should not be able to hire and fire the Superintendent.”

“They slip in things. They do excessive things. My children go to private school, and we still have to pay for frills.”

“Technology is needed, but the rest is not.”

“When will this end? They keep asking for more.”

“Do we really need to upgrade our Finance and HR systems?”

“The money will be going to the main office instead of the children.”

“More technology is not needed.”

“I have no problem keeping technology updated, but upgrading Finance systems seems wasteful. You could be efficient using the old paper method if need be.”

“I think we need more classroom space before this.”

“No matter how many bond issues are passed, the district always is in need.”

“They seem to just keep digging in our pockets and for what, Finance and HR?”

“If this is needed, they need to find the money within the funds they already have.”

“Upgrading technology is fine as long as it is for the students and not administration.”

“The technology is already abundant. Tech will not solve educational dilemmas.”

**23. The bond issue could include funds that would be used for a comprehensive list of heavy maintenance projects across the district, including, as needed, upgrading paving, roofing, flooring, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. If these projects were included in the final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	55%
More likely to vote against	7%
Make no difference	37%
Don't know (not read)	1%

**24. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON’T KNOW”? What didn’t you like? Asked only of the 33 respondents who answered question 23 either “more likely to vote against,” or “don’t know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
District doesn't manage money wisely; wasteful	11
Taxes too high right now	7
This should be in the budget already	7
Other (see below)	6
Don't know/need more information	2

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“I am for improvements as needed, but I need specifics.”

“Would not benefit us.”

“As needed? Who determines what is needed? I don't trust the district to make those decisions.”

“If it's for Fenton schools, then I'll vote against.”

“It is good that they want to upgrade technology, but when they add more to it I will not vote in favor.”

“How much of this is really needed and how much is just a way of getting more money?”

**25. The bond issue could include funds that would be used for safety and security enhancements, as needed, across the district, such as alarms, upgraded doors and cameras. If these projects were included in the final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	58%
More likely to vote against	5%
Make no difference	36%
Don't know (not read)	1%

**Finding 4: When presented with sets of projects divided by each of the high schools and their feeder schools, more than half of the respondents on each question said that including these projects would “make no difference” in their voting decision, while the next largest group said they would be “more likely to vote in favor.” Those in opposition continued to express concerns about taxes and the district’s ability to manage funds wisely, and they also suggested that funds for the projects being described “should already be in the budget.”**

The second and final set of project-based questions presented high-profile samples of the ideas under consideration and grouped them by the 4 high schools and their respective feeder schools.

Each question began by identifying the specific high school and its feeder schools, and then detailed a list of projects that were clearly listed as examples, rather than the complete list. An effort was made to include projects that would touch as many schools as possible in the grouping to demonstrate the comprehensiveness of the list.

As with the maintenance-type projects, patrons were asked after each of the 4 sets was described if including these projects would make them more likely to vote in favor of a bond issue, more likely to vote against, or make no difference.

Interestingly, more than half of the survey participants on each of the 4 questions said that including that particular set of projects would “make no difference” in their voting decision. Those in support ranged from 38% down to 31%, with the remainder – no more than 10% – saying that including these projects would make them “more likely to vote against” a bond issue.

Once again, opponents noted many of the same reasons for their opposition as they had on the maintenance-type projects. Many, in fact, said “same answer as before” (or words to that effect) when asked about the reasons for their opposition, further reinforcing the belief that many in the audience have already made up their minds.

**Now, I want to touch on a few of the specific projects being recommended by the planning committee for individual schools in the district. These projects will be grouped by the four high schools in the district, and the schools that serve as feeders for those high schools. Questions 26 through 33 were rotated, but the pairs (26 and 27, 28 and 29, 30 and 31, and 32 and 33) were kept together so they made sense to the respondent.**

**26. As you may know, Eureka High School students come from LaSalle Springs or Wildwood Middle School, after they attend Blevins, Eureka, Geggie (GAY-gee), Ridge Meadows, Fairway, or Pond Elementary Schools.**

**The planning committee has recommended a list of projects that would impact each of these schools. In the interest of your time, I won't read every project for these schools. But, here are a few examples: Adding eight classrooms at Eureka High to address growth, rebuilding the stadium field at Eureka High to improve drainage, constructing a multi-purpose room outside the gym locker rooms at LaSalle Middle School, adding classroom space for before and after school care, and for Special School District students at Blevins, Eureka, Geggie (GAY-gee), and Fairway Elementary Schools, and constructing a new entrance foyer at Eureka Elementary.**

**Again, these are just a few of the projects being considered for this group of schools, but if these projects were included in a final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	36%
More likely to vote against	10%
Make no difference	51%
Don't know (not read)	3%

**27. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKLEY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON’T KNOW”? What didn't you like? Asked only of the 53 respondents who answered question 26 either “more likely to vote against,” or “don't know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Focus should be on academics, not athletics	11
Taxes too high right now	10
Other (see below)	9
District doesn't manage money wisely; wasteful	8
This should be in the budget already	6
Not needed	6
Don't know/need more information	3

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“Would not benefit us.”

“Why do they need so much luxury? They never just build classrooms. They build luxury resorts.”

“I would have to hear more about what is coming to Fenton.”

“I would have to look into that further. Our schools seem to get left out of these bond issues.”

“The schools seem to be pretty nice. I think the money could be used elsewhere.”

“Several of these are fairly new schools.”

“I don't know how much of this is actually necessary.”

“They like to threaten voters with, ‘We'll have to cut down sports, etc.’ It is not true.”

“Seems like a lot to take on at once.”

**28. As you may know, Lafayette High School students come from Rockwood Valley, Crestview or Wildwood Middle School, after they attend Ellisville, Babler, Chesterfield, Pond or Green Pines Elementary Schools.**

**The planning committee has recommended a list of projects that would impact each of these schools. In the interest of your time, I won't read every project for these schools. But, here are a few examples: A new library and classrooms, and an expanded locker room at Lafayette High, a library addition at Crestview Middle School, office space for reading, speech and PE, and additional classroom space for Special School District students at Chesterfield Elementary, and a new elevator and other projects at Babler Elementary related to the Americans with Disabilities Act.**

**Again, these are just a few of the projects being considered for this group of schools, but if these projects were included in a final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	38%
More likely to vote against	8%
Make no difference	52%
Don't know (not read)	3%

**29. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON’T KNOW”? What didn’t you like?** *Asked only of the 42 respondents who answered question 28 either “more likely to vote against,” or “don’t know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Other (see below)	10
Not needed	9
Taxes too high right now	5
Don’t know/need more information	5
District doesn’t manage money wisely; wasteful	5
Focus should be on academics, not athletics	4
This should be in the budget already	4

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“We need these things for the Fenton area; they really don't need it in that area.”

“It just seems like it is never ending. I know improvements need to be made, but how many times are you going to ask us for more money?”

“Take care of the kids’ needs first.”

“Same answer as before; my sons went to Lafayette without luxury, and they got an A+ education.”

“If the schools are not up to government standards, they need to be fixed and it should be in the budget or done with previous bonds.”

“Again, I would have to hear more about what is coming to Fenton.”

“I will vote in favor only if our schools are getting some of the money; Rockwood Summit High School and Rockwood South Middle School.”

“They have a new library already; they do not need another one.”

“Get buildings up to standard, and that is it.”

“Office space for PE? That makes no sense; all you need is outside when the weather is good and a gym when it is not.”

**30. As you may know, Marquette High School students come from Crestview or Selvidge Middle Schools, after they attend Ellisville, Kehrs Mill, Westridge, Wild Horse, Ballwin, Woerther, or Ridge Meadows Elementary School.**

**The planning committee has recommended a list of projects that would impact each of these schools. In the interest of your time, I won't read every project for these schools. But, here are a few examples: Additions at Marquette High including classrooms, student assistance workspace, an orchestra room and storage space, a new library addition and conversion of the current library into science rooms at Selvidge Middle, a new drop off and pick up lane at Ellisville Elementary, and expanded elevator access along with new space for before and after school care, and for Special School District students at Ballwin Elementary.**

**Again, these are just a few of the projects being considered for this group of schools, but if these projects were included in a final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	35%
More likely to vote against	7%
Make no difference	53%
Don't know (not read)	5%

**31. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON'T KNOW”? What didn't you like?** *Asked only of the 28 respondents who answered question 30 either “more likely to vote against,” or “don't know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
This should be in the budget already	7
Other (see below)	7
Not needed	6
Focus should be on academics, not athletics	4
Taxes too high right now	3
District doesn't manage money wisely; wasteful	1

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“Throw things out there and surely something will appeal to everyone. Wrong.”

“More and more is being asked of us, and many of these projects should have been done already.”

“Focus on the kids and what is best for them to be able to get a good education. Storage space does not.”

“Too many extras such as the library and orchestra room.”

“They like to say the arts will be lost if they don't get a new orchestra room, which is not true. They have money now.”

“Additional classroom space should always be a priority, but I think that money is available now.”

“Pork barrel approach.”

**32. As you may know, Rockwood Summit High School students come from Rockwood South Middle School, after they attend Bowles, Kellison, Stanton or Uthoff Valley Elementary School.**

**The planning committee has recommended a list of projects that would impact each of these schools. In the interest of your time, I won't read every project for these schools. But, here are a few examples: Library renovations and classroom additions that would result in the removal of the trailers at Rockwood Summit High, reconfiguring the soccer practice field and converting the football practice field at Rockwood Summit High to turn them both into regulation football fields, restroom upgrades and additional storage space at Bowles Elementary, and classroom space for before and after school care, and for Special School District students at Kellison and Stanton Elementary Schools.**

**Again, these are just a few of the projects being considered for this group of schools, but if these projects were included in a final proposal, how would it affect your vote?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
More likely to vote in favor	31%
More likely to vote against	10%
Make no difference	51%
Don't know (not read)	8%

**33. Why did you say EITHER “MORE LIKELY TO VOTE AGAINST” OR “DON’T KNOW”? What didn’t you like?** *Asked only of the 38 respondents who answered question 32 either “more likely to vote against,” or “don’t know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Other (see below)	11
Focus should be on academics, not athletics	11
Not needed	7
Too many projects	3
This should be in the budget already	3
District doesn’t manage money wisely; wasteful	3

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“The classroom space and library is fine, but the rest is not needed in my opinion.”

“Just add classrooms.”

“There is a lack of vision. Is all this needed?”

“Rockwood is not that old. They were asking for bond issue upgrades almost immediately. They need to spend wisely.”

“They had a problem putting in the all-weather fields, and that’s a big expense.”

“The classrooms are certainly needed, but I think they have the money now to do that. Maybe not enough, however, to do the others and that's OK.”

“Where do they plan to get the money to do all of this? I know, us.”

“They ask for money on this and then turn around while they are working on it and ask us again later for more.”

“Some of it I can see needing and some I can't, especially the field drainage project.”

“They like to threaten more trailers. It is not true. The money is there.”

“If it was just the removal of the trailers then I favor.”

**Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” percentages by city of residence.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Ballwin (n=68)</b>	<b>Chesterfield (n=42)</b>	<b>Clarkson Valley (n=23)</b>	<b>Ellisville (n=71)</b>	<b>Eureka (n=40)</b>	<b>Fenton (n=70)</b>	<b>Wildwood (n=86)</b>
<b>Technology upgrades</b>	<b>52%</b>	50%	55%	52%	54%	50%	49%	53%
<b>Heavy maintenance projects</b>	<b>55%</b>	59%	52%	61%	52%	55%	57%	53%
<b>Safety and security upgrades</b>	<b>58%</b>	60%	64%	57%	54%	50%	64%	56%
<b>Eureka HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>36%</b>	38%	40%	26%	34%	40%	31%	37%
<b>Lafayette HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>38%</b>	43%	40%	30%	38%	40%	33%	38%
<b>Marquette HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>35%</b>	32%	38%	30%	32%	35%	34%	40%
<b>Rockwood Summit HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>31%</b>	29%	36%	13%	31%	30%	37%	31%

**Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” percentages by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of current district students in the household, past district students, or no district students ever in the household.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-34 (n=24)</b>	<b>35 to 54 (n=193)</b>	<b>55 or older (n=183)</b>	<b>Up to 5 years (n=17)</b>	<b>More than 5 years to 15 years (n=154)</b>	<b>More than 15 years (n=229)</b>	<b>Kids, current (n=111)</b>	<b>Kids, past (n=185)</b>	<b>Kids, never (n=104)</b>
<b>Technology upgrades</b>	<b>52%</b>	63%	56%	46%	47%	56%	49%	59%	52%	43%
<b>Heavy maintenance projects</b>	<b>55%</b>	54%	56%	54%	47%	57%	55%	56%	59%	48%
<b>Safety and security upgrades</b>	<b>58%</b>	58%	59%	57%	59%	58%	58%	53%	62%	56%
<b>Eureka HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>36%</b>	38%	37%	34%	53%	33%	36%	37%	38%	31%
<b>Lafayette HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>38%</b>	38%	38%	38%	47%	36%	39%	39%	39%	36%
<b>Marquette HS and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>35%</b>	38%	37%	32%	41%	38%	33%	40%	33%	34%
<b>Rockwood Summit and feeder schools projects</b>	<b>31%</b>	46%	33%	28%	29%	28%	34%	37%	31%	26%

**Finding 5: “Post-information” support – that is, support after the details had been shared, but before the cost figures were revealed – increased to 54%. That support slipped measurably when the potential cost figures were presented for consideration. More than half (51%) said that the recent property reassessment had at least “some” impact on their responses to the tax level questions.**

After all the ideas had been presented, survey respondents were again asked how they would vote, “if the election were held today.”

Total support (combined “strongly favor” and “favor”) increased to 54%, with those ages 18-34 (63%), those living in Chesterfield (62%), and current district parents (60%) being most in favor. Those living in Clarkson Valley (43%), those residing in Eureka (45%), and those who had never had a child in a Rockwood district school (45%) were the least supportive.

Interestingly, only 1 respondent who was “strongly favor” or “favor” on the “pre-information” question changed to “lean favor” or lower after hearing the details of the potential proposal.

On the flip side, 38 respondents who were “lean favor” or lower – or who said “don’t know” or one of the other noncommittal answers – changed to “strongly favor” or “favor” on this question. The projects which were most influential in effecting that change:

- 31 of the 38 respondents said that the safety and security projects would make them “more likely to vote in favor”
- 29 said it about the maintenance projects
- 26 said it about the technology projects
- 21 said it about the Marquette High School (and feeder schools) projects
- 18 said it about the Lafayette High School (and feeder schools) projects
- 16 said it about the Rockwood Summit High School (and feeder schools) projects
- 15 said it about the Eureka High School (and feeder schools) projects

However, when patrons were presented with the potential price tag – and were told that it would not result in a tax increase – that support faded meaningfully.

Specifically, only 37% of the participating patrons said they would either “strongly favor” or “favor” a bond issue that would total \$85 million.

Those who were not in either of those two answer categories were then asked about a \$70 million price tag. Total support grew to just 40%. When continuing opponents were presented with the possibility of a \$60 million bond issue, support once again grew 3% – to 43%.

When asked about the impact of the recent property tax reassessment on their responses to the tax level questions, 51% said that this situation had at least “some” impact on how they answered, further reinforcing the message of caution that patrons seem to be sending through their responses.

**34. Earlier, I asked you how you would vote if an election on a bond issue were held today. Now that I have shared with you some specific information about the ideas being considered for the schools in the district, I want to ask you, again, how would you vote if the election were held today? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal? “Lean favor,” “Lean oppose,” “Don’t know” and “Would depend on the tax implication” were not read but were noted if offered – unaided – by the respondent.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly favor	13%
Favor	41%
Lean favor (not read)	2%
Lean oppose (not read)	1%
Oppose	26%
Strongly oppose	10%
Would depend on the tax implication (not read)	2%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

**Cross-tabulation: “Post-information” support by city of residence.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Ballwin (n=68)</b>	<b>Chesterfield (n=42)</b>	<b>Clarkson Valley (n=23)</b>	<b>Ellisville (n=71)</b>	<b>Eureka (n=40)</b>	<b>Fenton (n=70)</b>	<b>Wildwood (n=86)</b>
<b>Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages</b>	<b>54%</b>	50%	62%	43%	55%	45%	59%	55%

**Cross-tabulation: “Post-information” support by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of current district students in the household, past district students, or no district students ever in the household.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-34 (n=24)</b>	<b>35 to 54 (n=193)</b>	<b>55 or older (n=183)</b>	<b>Up to 5 years (n=17)</b>	<b>More than 5 years to 15 years (n=154)</b>	<b>More than 15 years (n=229)</b>	<b>Kids, current (n=111)</b>	<b>Kids, past (n=185)</b>	<b>Kids, never (n=104)</b>
<b>Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentages</b>	<b>54%</b>	63%	47%	49%	53%	53%	54%	60%	55%	45%

**35. While the bond issue being considered would not require a tax increase, the district is interested in finding out your thoughts on the cost. As such, what if the bond issue cost \$85 million, even if it resulted in no tax increase for district residents? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal? “Lean favor,” “Lean oppose,” and “Don’t know” were not read by were noted if offered – unaided – by the respondent.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly favor	8%
Favor	29%
Lean favor (not read)	1%
Lean oppose (not read)	1%
Oppose	43%
Strongly oppose	8%
Don’t know (not read)	12%

**36. What if the bond issue cost \$70 million, even if it resulted in no tax increase for district residents? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal? Asked only of the 251 respondents who did not answer question 35 either “strongly favor,” “favor,” or “lean favor.” Percentages below represent the combined “strongly favor” and “favor” percentages for questions 35 and 36, on the assumption that those who supported the higher dollar figure would also support a lower figure.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly favor	8%
Favor	32%
Lean favor (not read)	1%
Lean oppose (not read)	3%
Oppose	34%
Strongly oppose	7%
Don’t know (not read)	16%

**37. What if the bond issue cost \$60 million, even if it resulted in no tax increase for district residents? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the proposal?** *Asked only of the 238 respondents who did not answer question 36 either “strongly favor,” “favor,” or “lean favor.” Percentages below represent the combined “strongly favor” and “favor” percentages for questions 35, 36 and 37, on the assumption that those who supported a higher dollar figure would also support a lower figure.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly favor	8%
Favor	35%
Lean favor (not read)	5%
Lean oppose (not read)	3%
Oppose	28%
Strongly oppose	6%
Don't know (not read)	15%

**38. Why do you believe you would be unable to support the bond issue?** *Asked only of the 205 respondents who answered question 37 either “Lean oppose,” “Oppose,” “Strongly oppose,” or “Don't know.” Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Too much money to spend	58
Don't believe it wouldn't cost us anything/money has to come from somewhere	51
All of those projects are not needed	27
Other (see below)	25
Should already have the money to do a lot of this	20
Don't trust the district to spend money wisely	18
Don't know	6

**Verbatim “other” comments**

“Why do they not think ahead on space needs? They put in a pool and did not think of needing more classrooms at Rockwood Summit, so they had to put in trailers.”

“I want to know the source of the money. If I were sure residents would not pay the bill, I would be in favor.”

“The Fenton area is always the last to get any money from the school district; we seem to get left out a lot.”

“They are wasting money on sports and not spending enough on education.”

“I think the Rockwood School District has top-of-the-line equipment and buildings already. I just don't think anything needs to be done to improve it.”

“It just seems like a lot of money to be wasted.”

“There is too much luxury now. The schools look like palaces, and they don't need upgrading.”

“Because all the money benefits all the rich areas and not the Fenton area. We seem to be left out when it comes to improvements.”

“I just can't commit to how I would vote right now.”

“Where is money coming from? How will it be appropriated county-wide?”

“All this money is going to the administration, buildings and teachers. Nothing really gets down to the students.”

“I have to know all the specifics.”

“Usually when they expand, our assessment goes up.”

“I have to look at the whole picture. All the wealthier schools get all the construction. We pay taxes on the same scale as the wealthier people do. It's not fair.”

“I can't see the supporting details behind those figures. That's all. Throwing a number out there doesn't make it right or wrong.”

“I will favor improvements, but I wonder how the district will get the money without raising taxes?”

“The facilities don't need improving. It's the teachers and the students' conduct that needs improving.”

“They waste too much money on things such as parking lots, astroturf fields, bus transportation, and way too much on athletics.”

“I have 2 grown children. Some things are just cosmetics. My husband is in construction. He helped build some schools. They should listen to the teachers for what is really needed.”

“I need to know how they are going to pay for this.”

“I want to know more about how they will fund these things.”

“I think they are wasting a lot of money on luxury. They renovate every year and a lot of money has already been spent.”

“Some way or another the taxpayer will pay. This is a scam. There is no free money.”

“Don't want to answer.”

“I can't support a bond issue that focuses on projects that do not directly affect classroom education.”

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “strongly favor” and “favor” support for each tax level by city of residence.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Ballwin (n=68)</b>	<b>Chesterfield (n=42)</b>	<b>Clarkson Valley (n=23)</b>	<b>Ellisville (n=71)</b>	<b>Eureka (n=40)</b>	<b>Fenton (n=70)</b>	<b>Wildwood (n=86)</b>
<b>\$85 million</b>	<b>37%</b>	35%	43%	30%	34%	30%	40%	40%
<b>\$70 million</b>	<b>40%</b>	40%	48%	30%	41%	33%	41%	41%
<b>\$60 million</b>	<b>43%</b>	41%	52%	35%	46%	33%	46%	44%

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “strongly favor” and “favor” support for each tax level by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of current district students in the household, past district students, or no district students ever in the household.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-34 (n=24)</b>	<b>35 to 54 (n=193)</b>	<b>55 or older (n=183)</b>	<b>Up to 5 years (n=17)</b>	<b>More than 5 years to 15 years (n=154)</b>	<b>More than 15 years (n=229)</b>	<b>Kids, current (n=111)</b>	<b>Kids, past (n=185)</b>	<b>Kids, never (n=104)</b>
<b>\$85 million</b>	<b>37%</b>	46%	36%	36%	35%	34%	38%	42%	37%	31%
<b>\$70 million</b>	<b>40%</b>	50%	40%	38%	35%	41%	40%	47%	39%	34%
<b>\$60 million</b>	<b>43%</b>	50%	43%	40%	47%	44%	43%	50%	43%	38%

**39. How much would you say that the recent property reassessment for area residents is affecting how you said you would likely vote on a bond issue proposed by the Rockwood School District – even if this bond issue would NOT result in a tax increase? Would it say it affects your voting decision...***Choices were read to respondents. “Don’t know” was not read.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Very much	28%
Somewhat	23%
Not very much	21%
Not at all	24%
Don’t know (not read)	5%

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “Very much” and “Somewhat” responses regarding impact of reassessment on voting decision by city of residence**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Ballwin (n=68)</b>	<b>Chesterfield (n=42)</b>	<b>Clarkson Valley (n=23)</b>	<b>Ellisville (n=71)</b>	<b>Eureka (n=40)</b>	<b>Fenton (n=70)</b>	<b>Wildwood (n=86)</b>
<b>Combined “Very much/Somewhat” percentages</b>	<b>51%</b>	59%	43%	61%	48%	60%	46%	49%

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “Very much” and “Somewhat” support by age, length of time living in the district, and presence of current district students in the household, past district students, or no district students ever in the household.**

	<b>Overall</b>	<b>18-34 (n=24)</b>	<b>35 to 54 (n=193)</b>	<b>55 or older (n=183)</b>	<b>Up to 5 years (n=17)</b>	<b>More than 5 years to 15 years (n=154)</b>	<b>More than 15 years (n=229)</b>	<b>Kids, current (n=111)</b>	<b>Kids, past (n=185)</b>	<b>Kids, never (n=104)</b>
<b>Combined “Very much/Somewhat” percentages</b>	<b>51%</b>	38%	51%	50%	71%	54%	48%	45%	57%	47%

**Finding 6: Patrons report a high level of interest in district news, with 7 of 10 sources being consulted more often than “rarely” for district updates.**

The final substantive section of the survey addressed the topic of where patrons turn for district news, by presenting 10 different sources and asking respondents to state whether they turn to that source “frequently,” “sometimes,” “rarely,” or “never.”

To assist in the evaluation, a 4-point weighted scale is used, in which each “often” vote is worth 4 points, down to each “never” vote being worth 1. The points are totaled, and then divided by 400 (“don’t know” was not an option available to respondents) to arrive at a number between 1.00 and 4.00.

In the case of this scale, 2.00 is the dividing line. Any source that scores above 2.00 is consulted more often than “rarely,” meaning it is one which should be a focus of the district’s communication efforts for any ballot issue.

In this survey, 7 of the 10 sources scored over the 2.00 level. Specifically:

- “Friends and neighbors” – 3.31 (3.00 is “sometimes”)
- Printed newsletters that are mailed to parents and patrons – 3.26
- Suburban Journals newspapers – 2.65
- St. Louis Post-Dispatch – 2.59
- Electronic newsletters that are sent by e-mail – 2.15
- West News magazine – 2.09
- Local television news – 2.01

These results suggest that patrons have a rather healthy “appetite” for district news (although, as the high percentage of “don’t know” responses earlier in the survey would also seem to suggest – that interest may be very focused, rather than general).

**And, finally, I’m wondering who you turn to for information about the Rockwood School District. For each of the people or organizations I mention, please tell me whether you look to them frequently, sometimes, rarely, or never for information about the Rockwood School District. Remember, this is just for Rockwood School District news, not news in general. Let’s start with... Questions 40 through 49 were rotated.**

**40. The Suburban Journals newspapers**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	29%
Sometimes	33%
Rarely	12%
Never	26%

**41. The West News Magazine**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	16%
Sometimes	19%
Rarely	23%
Never	42%

**42. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	23%
Sometimes	38%
Rarely	14%
Never	25%

**43. Local television news**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	17%
Sometimes	14%
Rarely	22%
Never	47%

**44. Local radio stations**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	7%
Sometimes	6%
Rarely	25%
Never	63%

**45. Rockwood School Board members**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	10%
Sometimes	8%
Rarely	15%
Never	67%

**46. Rockwood School district staff**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	13%
Sometimes	11%
Rarely	14%
Never	62%

**47. Friends and neighbors**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	47%
Sometimes	39%
Rarely	12%
Never	2%

**48. Printed newsletters that are mailed to parents and patrons**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	60%
Sometimes	17%
Rarely	12%
Never	11%

**49. Electronic newsletters that are sent via e-mail**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Frequently	29%
Sometimes	12%
Rarely	3%
Never	56%

**Cross-tabulation: 4-point scale rating for news sources**

<b>News source</b>	<b>4-point scale rating</b>
Friends and neighbors	3.31
Printed newsletters that are mailed to parents and patrons	3.26
Suburban Journals newspapers	2.65
St. Louis Post-Dispatch	2.59
Electronic newsletters that are sent by e-mail	2.15
West News magazine	2.09
Local television news	2.01
Rockwood School District staff	1.76
Rockwood School Board members	1.62
Local radio stations	1.56

**Finding 7: Survey respondents – and, apparently, those who vote frequently on school matters – tended to be middle aged or older, mostly longer-term residents of the district.**

Because survey participants were drawn from lists containing those who had voted in both of the last two elections, the demographics of the survey population were driven by the characteristics found in that voter group.

The survey group suggests that that population:

- Is mostly middle aged or older
- Has more than likely lived in the district at least 10 years
- Is mostly populated by those who had a student in the district at one time, but who do not now (185 respondents), followed by those with a current student in the district (111) and those who had never had a student in a Rockwood district school (104)

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

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

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than 2 years	<1%
2 years to 5 years	4%
More than 5 years to 10 years	16%
More than 10 years to 15 years	22%
More than 15 years	52%
I've lived here all my life	6%

**51. In what age group are you? Is it...***Choices were read to respondents.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 to 24	<1%
25 to 34	6%
35 to 44	14%
45 to 54	34%
55 to 64	22%
65 or older	24%

**52. Are you, or is anyone in your immediate household, employed by the Rockwood School District?**

Response	Percentage
Yes	4%
No	96%

**53. In what capacity is this person employed? Is it...***Asked only of the 15 respondents who answered “yes” on question 52. Choices were read to respondents. Only those with at least 1 respondent listed below. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed.*

Response	Number
Classroom teacher	10
Food service staff	2
Transportation staff	2
Secretarial staff	1

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

Response	Number
Yes, children	109
Yes, children and grandchildren	2
Yes, grandchildren	32
No	257

**55. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated?** *Asked only of the 289 respondents who did not answer question 54 either “yes, children” or “yes, children and grandchildren.” Those who did skipped to question 57. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	182
Yes, children and grandchildren	3
Yes, grandchildren	12
No	92

**56. Do you have any children or grandchildren who attend private or parochial school right now or who are home schooled?** *Asked only of the 104 respondents who did not answer question 55 either “yes, children,” or “yes, children and grandchildren.” Those who did skipped to question 57. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

<b>Response</b>	<b>Number</b>
Yes, children	16
Yes, children and grandchildren	0
Yes, grandchildren	8
No	80

**57. RECORD GENDER**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Female	59%
Male	41%

## Summary

The October/November 2007 survey of patrons of the Rockwood School District presents a picture of a patron population that:

- Is generally positive about the people, programs and facilities of the district
- Believes that the district must continue to seek bond funding because of growth, and because of the need to stay competitive with neighboring districts
- Is cautious about general support for a bond issue
- Seems to favor the maintenance-type projects being considered, but is somewhat more ambivalent about the school-specific projects
- Is more supportive of the idea of a bond issue after hearing the details, but becomes measurably less enthusiastic about the proposal after hearing the potential dollar figures – even after being reminded that the proposal would not result in a tax increase
- Reports a significant interest in district news, even though a meaningful portion of the patrons don't feel comfortable offering an opinion on many key areas

These results present a number of challenges to the district.

First, while support for the district's people, programs and facilities is generally strong, there is an undercurrent of concern that suggests a modest feeling of being disconnected when one links the themes of some of the lower-rated areas.

Second, general support for the *idea* of a bond issue is limited. And, while that support grows to 54% after hearing the details of what's being considered, it drops off significantly when the dollar figure options are discussed.

Third, there appears to be a tone of support for the maintenance-type issues, but much less enthusiasm for projects that would affect each school. While the length of the project list made the presentation of this information rather challenging in the survey, the consistency of the much more modest support for these project sets suggests a theme of caution.

Fourth – and most importantly – the general tone throughout seems to suggest a patron population that makes up its mind early. This can be seen in the incredibly consistent answer patterns found within the maintenance-type project questions, the school-based project questions, and the reasons that opponents are against certain projects. In essence, if a patron was against one set of projects (or said that including a certain project set would make no difference in his or her voting decision), the chances are good that he or she was against (or ambivalent about) *all* the projects – and more than likely for the same reasons.

Combine all these challenges and the picture one gets is of a patron population that – at least, as of now – has less general enthusiasm than a district would prefer prior to creating a bond proposal. As such, it appears that for patrons to move beyond their

preconceived notions and consider supporting a proposal at the ballot box, the district will need to define a plan that is focused, that suggests financial due diligence, and whose benefits are communicated crisply and consistently from the time the proposal is finalized up to election day.