

# Lawrence Public Schools USD 497

## 2016 Community Telephone Survey



December 19, 2016

# Lawrence School District 2016 Resident Telephone Survey Executive Summary December 19, 2016

From mid-November through early December 2016, 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 the Lawrence School District.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers and the completed calls were divided into four groups, using the cross streets of Iowa and 15th to identify the quadrants. The number in each quadrant was identified by the school district as being representative of the general population pattern. This means that the data contained in this report that reflects the views of the entire survey group has a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%. (The Margin of Error within the demographic and geographic subgroups is larger, because the number of participants in each subgroup is smaller.)

The findings from the research are as follows:

## **“Grading” questions**

Survey participants gave 19 of 28 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district’s “overall” performance – a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale.

Factors at the top of the list included “Performance of district teachers,” “Quality of education” and “Safety of students.”

The lowest-rated of the nine factors that fell short of the statistical equivalent of a “B” were “Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making,” “Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom,” and “The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts.”

## **Patron Hot Buttons**

The term “Patron Hot Button” is used to recognize the factors that received a grade from at least 81% of the survey population, meaning that respondents feel confident enough in their knowledge to render an opinion. In the case of this survey population, all but two of the 28 factors achieved Hot Button status – suggesting a very active interest in school district news and activities. The two that were not Hot Buttons were “The equity of the technology available to students in the district’s elementary schools” and “Performance of the superintendent and district administrators.”

### **Strengths and areas needing improvement**

“Teachers” topped the list of district strengths, according to the answers provided to an open-ended question on this topic. This was followed by “Diverse population” and “Strong education/curriculum.”

More than one-fourth of the respondents (109, specifically) said, “Don’t know,” when asked to identify an area needing improvement. The most frequently mentioned actual suggestions for improvement were “Manage money/budget” and “Listening to patrons.”

### **Support or opposition to project ideas being considered**

The collection of project ideas that are under discussion were presented in separate, school-specific questions. After each group was read, respondents were asked if including this set of projects, for this school (or schools, in the case of the middle schools) would make them “More likely to vote in favor” of a bond issue, “More likely to vote against” or would it “Make no difference” in their voting decision.

The Lawrence High School project ideas received strong support, with 78% of the participants saying that including these projects would make them “More likely to vote in favor.” The middle school ideas were viewed almost as positively, with 73% saying that including them in a bond issue would make them “More likely to vote in favor.”

The Lawrence Free State High School projects drew notably less support – although still a majority (51% “More likely to vote in favor”). However, that support ranged from a low of 37% to a high of 69% within the demographic and geographic cross-tabulation groups. Of the 15 subgroups, six of them had a support level of less than 50%.

### **Support or opposition for a ballot issue**

After hearing the ideas that the district is considering – but before hearing any financial details – 76% of the respondents said they would either “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a ballot issue that included these projects, “if the election were held today.”

When the possibility of a tax increase of \$55 per year for the owner of a \$200,000 home was introduced, 71% said they would “Strongly favor” or “Favor” a ballot issue (again, if the election was held today).

Opponents and those who were undecided at a \$55 per year increase were then offered a smaller bond issue – meaning fewer projects would be included – with a lower price tag of a \$45 per year increase. Combining those who were supportive at \$55 per year with those who became supportive at \$45 per year, total support grew to 74%. This process was repeated for continuing opponents and those who remained undecided with an even smaller proposal for \$35 per year. Total support grew again – to 76%.

Taking into account the 5% Margin of Error for this survey, this means that the support at all three tax increase levels is identical, statistically speaking.

### **Sources of school district news**

Five of 23 potential sources of school district news are consulted “frequently” for such information by at least one-third of the survey participants.

Leading this list was “Friends and neighbors,” followed by “*The Lawrence Journal-World* print edition” and “Teachers and staff in the district.”

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



# Lawrence School District 2016 Resident Telephone Survey Final Report December 19, 2016

**Finding 1: Nineteen of 28 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors – plus the district’s “overall” performance – received a grade of “B” or better (or the statistical equivalent of a “B”) on the traditional A-F grading scale. Additionally, 26 of the 28 factors qualified for Patron Hot Button status, which suggests the presence of a very engaged and opinionated patron community.**

From mid-November to early December 2016, a 12- to 15-minute telephone survey was conducted with 400 randomly selected, head-of-household (male or female), registered voter patrons living within the boundaries of the Lawrence School District (USD 497) to determine their views on the district’s current performance, on projects being considered for a possible future ballot issue and on where they get their news about the school district, among other topics.

Calls were placed to landlines and cell phone numbers, and the completed interviews were divided into four quadrants, based on the cross streets of 15th and Iowa, in quantities identified by the school district as being representative of the general population pattern. This means that the results shown in this document that reflect the views of the entire survey group of 400 have a Margin of Error of plus or minus 5%, at the time this survey was conducted. (The Margin of Error within the demographic and geographic subgroups is larger, because the number of respondents within each subgroup is smaller.)

Individuals who qualified to participate in the survey by confirming their status as a head of household and a registered voter (and also that they lived within a region of the district where there was still room under the quota, when they were contacted), started the survey by being asked to “grade” – either A, B, C, D or F – 28 different people, program, facility and district/patron relationship factors, along with the district’s overall performance.

Starting a survey in such a manner gives respondents an immediate opportunity to share their thoughts on the district’s current performance. In doing so, they provide data that is a snapshot of the views of a cross-section of community members, during the mid-November to early December 2016 time period.

In addition to the individual grades on each factor (which are displayed below) the results were also analyzed using a 5-point weighted scale.

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 individuals who were willing to offer a grade – eliminating those who said, “Don’t know” from the equation – to arrive at a single number between 1.00 and 5.00.

Recognizing that a 5.00 would be, essentially, impossible, because it would require all those with an opinion to say, “A,” a 4.00 (or a “B”) is generally considered the dividing line between areas of strength and those that may need attention. However, taking into account the Margin of Error, a score as low as 3.80 is still, statistically speaking, a “B.”

In this analysis, 19 of the 28 factors – plus the district’s overall performance – achieved a score of 3.80 or higher. At the top of the list were the following:

- Performance of district teachers – 4.36
- Quality of education – 4.30
- Safety of students – 4.29
- Quality of high school facilities – 4.12
- Quality of elementary school facilities – 4.11
- The quality of technology available to students – 4.07
- Maintenance and upkeep of school facilities – 4.06
- Performance of school principals – 4.05

Four of the nine factors that fell short of the 3.80 mark scored at 3.71 or higher, meaning that they were not far off the target. The nine factors were:

- Equity among the high school facilities across the district – 3.76
- Equity among elementary school facilities across the district – 3.74
- Performance of the superintendent and district administrators – 3.73
- The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises – 3.71
- The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns – 3.68
- The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens – 3.64
- Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making – 3.55
- Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom – 3.53
- The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts – 3.40

From a percentage standpoint, having nine out of 28 (or about 32%) of the factors fall below the 3.80 mark is only slightly higher than is average for this exercise. And it is important to note that only three of the factors are below the 3.60 mark, which would be indicative of an area of notable concern for a segment of the population.

Even so, because it is the goal of every school district to have scores at or above 3.80 on this exercise, a cross-tabulation analysis on these lower-rated factors was conducted. The goal was to determine if the scores were impacted by the respondent's age, length of time living in the district, student status, where he or she lived, or gender.

In reviewing this information, it is important to remember that these subgroups are smaller in number and, therefore, the Margin of Error is higher. As such, it is best to look for trends, instead of focusing on individual numbers.

In doing so, the following were noted:

- The scores for current student families were consistently higher than they were among past student families (meaning all district students in the household had graduated) or “never” student families. In fact, for seven of the nine factors, the scores among current student families were above the 3.80 mark, indicating that those who are currently being served by the district express a high degree of satisfaction.
- Respondents ages 18 to 34 were also the highest on seven of the nine factors (among the age subgroup). However, it is important to remember that the group size was only 90 respondents, meaning that just a handful of different responses could make a more significant impact on the final scores within this group.
- There were no consistent trends among the subgroups by gender, location of residence or length of time living in the school district.

The other aspect of the grading exercise is the identification of Patron Hot Buttons. These are the factors that at least 81% of the respondents were willing to grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are, therefore, the factors that are thought to be the ones that come to mind first, when a typical patron thinks about the school district.

While it is not uncommon for a majority of the graded factors to achieve such a status, the results for the Lawrence School District show the presence of a highly engaged and opinionated community.

Specifically, all but two of the 28 factors achieved this status. Those two were:

- The equity of the technology available to students in the district’s elementary schools
- Performance of the superintendent and district administrators

Not achieving Patron Hot Button status does *not* mean that these two areas are not of interest. It simply means that at least 20% of the participants in the research did not feel confident enough in their knowledge to offer a grade.

All of this data – the grades and the high number of Hot Buttons – affirms the presence of a community that regularly thinks about and discusses the school district.

*Questions 1-3 asked respondents whether or not they were a head of household, a registered voter and lived within the school district's boundaries. A "Yes" answer was required on all three questions for the respondent to be able to participate. As such, those questions and answers are not displayed here. All answers with percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding. All verbatim comments displayed here are one comment, by one respondent each. Had they been indicative of a trend, they would have appeared in sufficient enough quantity to be listed in the chart associated with the question.*

- 4. To make certain that we have people from all parts of the district participating in this survey, can you tell me if you live north or south of 15th Street? Do you live east or west of Iowa? Number of respondents in each region identified by the school district as being representatives of the population pattern.**

Response	Number
North of 15th and east of Iowa	101
North of 15th and west of Iowa	109
South of 15th and east of Iowa	100
South of 15th and west of Iowa	90

**As you know, students in school are usually given a grade to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Lawrence School District from others, please tell me what grade (A, B, C, D or F) you would give the Lawrence School District on each of the following items. Let's start with...***Questions 5 through 9 were asked first and in that order, followed by 10 through 33, which were read in a rotated manner (although 23 and 24 were kept together).*

- 5. The quality of technology available to students**

Response	Percentage
A	34%
B	37%
C	19%
D	4%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	6%



**6. The equity of the technology available to students in the district's elementary schools**

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	41%
C	15%
D	2%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	24%

**7. The equity of the technology available to students in the district's middle schools**

Response	Percentage
A	22%
B	43%
C	14%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	18%

**8. The equity of the technology available to students in the district's high schools**

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	35%
C	19%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	16%

**9. How the district uses technology to enhance student learning**

Response	Percentage
A	25%
B	41%
C	17%
D	5%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

**10. Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom**

Response	Percentage
A	10%
B	39%
C	21%
D	11%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	18%

**11. Value received for the tax dollars spent**

Response	Percentage
A	30%
B	36%
C	21%
D	9%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	4%

## 12. Performance of district teachers

Response	Percentage
A	44%
B	49%
C	6%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

## 13. Quality of education

Response	Percentage
A	43%
B	46%
C	10%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	1%

## 14. Preparation of students to be college and career ready

Response	Percentage
A	25%
B	48%
C	19%
D	6%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	2%

**15. The district's efforts to provide personalized learning for all students**

Response	Percentage
A	21%
B	43%
C	15%
D	8%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

**16. Quality of elementary school facilities**

Response	Percentage
A	27%
B	50%
C	13%
D	2%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	9%

**17. Equity among elementary school facilities across the district**

Response	Percentage
A	16%
B	38%
C	25%
D	6%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	15%



### 18. Quality of middle school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	20%
B	51%
C	17%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	8%

### 19. Equity among middle school facilities across the district

Response	Percentage
A	14%
B	48%
C	21%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	12%

### 20. Quality of high school facilities

Response	Percentage
A	31%
B	42%
C	18%
D	1%
F	0%
Don't know (not read)	7%

**21. Equity among high school facilities across the district**

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	37%
C	24%
D	5%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	14%

**22. Maintenance and upkeep of school facilities**

Response	Percentage
A	33%
B	40%
C	16%
D	4%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	6%

**23. Providing a system of supports to meet the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of students.**

Response	Percentage
A	20%
B	64%
C	9%
D	5%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	3%

**24. I'm interested to hear more about your grade for this area. In what ways does the Lawrence School District fall short of your expectations in terms of providing a system of supports to meet the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of its students?** *Asked only of the 57 respondents who answered, "C" "D" or "F" on question 23. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Too much emphasis on testing/scores	25
Other (see below)	18
Not enough programs for advanced students	14

#### **Verbatim "other" comments**

They need to reach out to the community more to help them. They need to include them, regardless of income status. They have not done a very good job with that here.

Students that have Special Needs are often left with few options.

It's not that they fall short. There are so many things we need, like help for autistic students and the whole spectrum of learning disabilities. I don't know how any school would be above a C.

It doesn't seem like they have enough support from the schools for students that need the help.

They need to have more parental support and involvement in their children's education.

They bend over backwards for all students.

I think we need to have more structure in each student's day, and I think we need to be more careful about secondary students spending more time on tasks and less time on extracurricular activities and things that take them out of the classroom.

I feel like particularly the teachers don't have enough time to dedicate to students who are having issues. The counselors don't have enough time to properly deal with issues individually. They do the best they can with the resources they have. But they're just overloaded.

The availability of teachers to help with advanced students who need more than the typical classroom. It is not available and they need more resources.

I forget the name of the acronym, but they used to have social workers come in and teach, but they've stopped doing that now. The classes are too big and they have less one-on-one time. So, if one student struggles, then the rest of the class lags behind. And that's okay; everybody struggles, sometimes. But they have too many kids to help everyone more individually.

They miss out on teaching enough communication. Kids only rely on their phones.

Teachers allow students to be pushed through. They move on students and they shouldn't. My stepson was not doing well and his grades were awful, but, because he was in sports, they pushed him along.

They just seem average.

Equity and focus on achievements of students of color.

Governor Brownback cutting back is undermining our schools. The schools are suffering and, in turn, the students are suffering.

When they started talking about cuts, they should take a look at administration. They don't need a line to McDonald. There are far too many administrators.

They are weak at supporting disabled people. They are over-focused on standardized testing. For my particular situation, they were slow to identify with slow or fast learners.

The interaction of teachers with parents is lacking. There is an overindulgence of technology in dealing with parents, rather than direct or written communication.

## 25. Safety of students

Response	Percentage
A	44%
B	43%
C	7%
D	4%
F	<1%
Don't know (not read)	2%



## 26. Performance of school principals

Response	Percentage
A	28%
B	38%
C	13%
D	4%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	17%

## 27. Performance of the superintendent and district administrators

Response	Percentage
A	12%
B	41%
C	16%
D	5%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	24%

## 28. Performance of the Lawrence Board of Education

Response	Percentage
A	18%
B	40%
C	21%
D	3%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	16%

## 29. Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making

Response	Percentage
A	11%
B	36%
C	32%
D	6%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	13%

**30. The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts**

Response	Percentage
A	9%
B	39%
C	24%
D	15%
F	3%
Don't know (not read)	10%

**31. The district's record on making and fulfilling promises**

Response	Percentage
A	17%
B	34%
C	21%
D	8%
F	2%
Don't know (not read)	19%

**32. The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns**

Response	Percentage
A	19%
B	35%
C	23%
D	7%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	13%

**33. The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	20%
B	32%
C	26%
D	7%
F	4%
Don't know (not read)	11%

**34. Overall, what grade would you give the Lawrence School District?**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
A	23%
B	58%
C	14%
D	3%
F	1%
Don't know (not read)	1%

**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). Items in boldface type are “Patron Hot Buttons,” meaning that at least 81% of the respondents were willing to offer a grade, rather than saying, “Don’t know.” These are the factors that typical patrons think of first, when they consider the performance of the school district.**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>5-point weighted scale rating</b>
Performance of district teachers	4.36
Quality of education	4.30
Safety of students	4.29
Quality of high school facilities	4.12
Quality of elementary school facilities	4.11
The quality of technology available to students	4.07
Maintenance and upkeep of school facilities	4.06
Performance of school principals	4.05
The equity of the technology available to students in the district’s high schools	4.05
Overall grade	4.00
The equity of the technology available to students in the district’s middle schools	3.99
Providing a system of supports to meet the academic, social, emotional and behavioral needs of students	3.98
How the district uses technology to enhance student learning	3.97
The equity of the technology available to students in the district’s elementary schools	3.96
Quality of middle school facilities	3.95
Preparation of students to be college and career ready	3.94
Value received for the tax dollars spent	3.87
The district’s efforts to provide personalized learning for all students	3.86
Performance of the Lawrence Board of Education	3.83
Equity among middle school facilities across the district	3.81
Equity among high school facilities across the district	3.76
Equity among elementary school facilities across the district	3.74
Performance of the superintendent and district administrators	3.73
The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises	3.71
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	3.68
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.64
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.55
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.53
The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts	3.40



**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for the factors that scored below 3.80 by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because three respondents refused to answer this question.**

Factor	Overall score	18-34 (n=90)	35-54 (n=175)	55 or older (n=132)	Up to 5 years (n=61)	5-15 years (n=136)	More than 15 years (n=203)	Student, yes (n=126)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=142)
Equity among high school facilities across the district	<b>3.76</b>	3.83	3.80	3.69	3.79	3.70	3.80	3.95	3.68	3.67
Equity among elementary school facilities across the district	<b>3.74</b>	3.81	3.72	3.72	3.83	3.78	3.68	3.96	3.62	3.64
Performance of the superintendent and district administrators	<b>3.73</b>	3.73	3.77	3.47	3.70	3.75	3.73	4.01	3.59	3.56
The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises	<b>3.71</b>	3.78	3.79	3.53	3.83	3.75	3.64	4.09	3.49	3.50
The district’s responsiveness to citizen concerns	<b>3.68</b>	3.85	3.64	3.60	3.69	3.65	3.69	4.03	3.55	3.46
The district’s efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	<b>3.64</b>	3.79	3.64	3.54	3.74	3.58	3.65	4.14	3.38	3.39
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	<b>3.55</b>	3.58	3.55	3.50	3.47	3.55	3.56	3.86	3.42	3.35
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	<b>3.53</b>	3.70	3.54	3.38	3.48	3.57	3.52	3.79	3.36	3.43
The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts	<b>3.40</b>	3.46	3.40	3.34	3.42	3.43	3.37	3.72	3.29	3.19

**Cross-tabulation: 5-point scale rating for the factors that scored below 3.80 by location of the respondent's residence and gender. Note: "n" equals the number of respondents in each group.**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Overall score</b>	<b>N of 15th/E of Iowa (n=101)</b>	<b>N of 15th/W of Iowa (n=109)</b>	<b>S of 15th/E of Iowa (n=100)</b>	<b>S of 15th/W of Iowa (n=90)</b>	<b>Female (n=220)</b>	<b>Male (n=180)</b>
Equity among high school facilities across the district	<b>3.76</b>	3.78	3.66	3.85	3.78	3.66	3.88
Equity among elementary school facilities across the district	<b>3.74</b>	3.87	3.52	3.76	3.83	3.62	3.87
Performance of the superintendent and district administrators	<b>3.73</b>	3.81	3.61	3.67	3.86	3.74	3.72
The district's record on making and fulfilling promises	<b>3.71</b>	3.84	3.62	3.60	3.79	3.68	3.74
The district's responsiveness to citizen concerns	<b>3.68</b>	3.79	3.64	3.56	3.74	3.67	3.69
The district's efforts to report its plans and progress to citizens	<b>3.64</b>	3.67	3.59	3.57	3.75	3.61	3.68
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	<b>3.55</b>	3.60	3.51	3.43	3.69	3.51	3.59
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	<b>3.53</b>	3.44	3.31	3.60	3.80	3.56	3.48
The balance of spending among academics, athletics and the arts	<b>3.40</b>	3.47	3.40	3.23	3.51	3.38	3.42

**Finding 2: Teachers, the district’s diverse population and its strong education/curriculum were identified by respondents as strengths. More than one-fourth of the respondents could not identify an area needing improvement. Among those who were able to pinpoint a need, manage money/budget and listening to patrons topped the list.**

To close out the evaluation portion of the survey, respondents were presented with separate open-ended questions that asked them to identify what they viewed as the district’s strengths and areas where it could improve.

The responses were coded, meaning that common words, phrases and ideas were identified to help pinpoint the most commonly held opinions.

In doing so, “teachers” (mentioned by 83 respondents) was the most popular idea on the subject of district strengths. This was followed by “diverse population” (62 mentions) and “strong education/curriculum” (47 mentions).

On the subject of areas needing improvement, the list of responses was led by the 109 participants who said, “Don’t know.” Having “Don’t know” as the top answer is considered a positive sign, because it suggests that there is not a dominant concern among average residents.

The most frequently mentioned actual suggestions for improvement were “manage money/budget” (58 mentions) and “listening to patrons” (51 mentions).

Below the charts associated with each of these two questions are individual verbatim comments. These comments are either “one-off” ideas, contain more than one thought, or something similar. In other words, they did not appear in enough quantity to merit inclusion in the chart.

In reviewing these individual comments, it is important to keep in mind that each is one comment, by one person and is not indicative of a trend.

**35. What do you think are the greatest strengths of the Lawrence School District?**

*Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Teachers	83
Other (see below)	71
Diverse population	62
Strong education/curriculum	47
Major university and its resources	36
Facilities	30
Don't know	28
Community support	24
Technology	19

**Verbatim “other” comments**

They have a high graduation rate.

Perseverance through the budget shortage that the legislature is causing.

They have really good staff. They try for quality treatment for all students.

They try to involve parents and communicate with parents very well.

Good teachers. And it's an all-around decent school for the size of the district.

They are in tune to what the kids need. They really seem to listen to what the parents say.

The tenure of the teachers. A dedicated staff that devotes extra help to students. The extra hours they spend and also spending their own money for school supplies.

Performing arts.

The kids have plenty of extracurricular activities to get involved with.

The variety of programs they offer and also the quality of the programs.

Everybody tries really hard to help the kids go further in life and be productive citizens.

I only had nieces and nephews that went through the district, so I don't know. But they seem to have been doing a lot of updating.

The sustaining of established neighborhood schools. Quality of teachers.

The ability to meet kids where they are and improve them from that point on. I like the way Lawrence split its high schools.

I don't know of any.

Resourcefulness in a state where the voters do not elect people who support public schools. In that environment, they do an outstanding job. They do a good job trying to meet all students' needs. They try to provide activities to appeal to a broad spectrum of students.

Their support of the arts. Diversity. Opportunity for college preparedness available.

Teachers and innovation.

They are getting the kids more involved in the environment, like the gardening. That teaches them very useful skills.

I would say probably good support of the teachers.

The bus drivers are very considerate with the students and their safety.

Excellent schools.

They embrace differences in students in a compassionate way.

The families, teachers, students and administrators.

None, really.

They make an effort to meet the varying demands of each section of town. They do at least talk about that.

Nothing.

Strong arts and sciences programs.

I don't know what to say. The kids here get a better education. I've got friends in Missouri that have kids in school and they don't get as good of an education.

Teaching staff and technology.

Their ability to reach out to the community and university. The resources that are available here to them.

Students graduate and go on to successful careers and the district helps develop these young men and women.

Very little. Maybe, having KU here available for those wishing to take college courses in high school.

Quality of teachers and administrators.

Teachers are pretty good, but they have had to let a lot of them go, because of Brownback.

The kids coming out of the district are great.

Inclusion for different types of kids.

High-quality teachers in good facilities with strong support from leadership.

There seems to be good leadership.

Being at the foot of Kansas University. Lots of diversity of students. Highly educated community.

They are doing their best to keep up to date with the limited resources they have. They keep the teachers well-supplied, despite the current lack of funding.

They hire capable staff, teachers, especially.

Their staff, because we have lots of veteran teachers. They're committed to kids.

I think they do a good job with the staff and children. They seem to be interested.

The teachers are good and hold everything together with the dedication they have.

They strive for excellence. They try to do what's right.

The teaching staff. The professional staff is overworked and underpaid.

Good graduation rate. Teachers are good at helping students that need a little extra help.

Classroom size. The teachers at all levels.

Continuing desire to find ways to include all students and community through the process.

The arts program and the gifted program.

They have some really good teachers; beautiful and safe facilities. Overall good quality education.

It's a good quality education. The facilities are adequate. Teachers are in tune with their students.

They balance all the needs of students with the resources available.

I don't really have anything very positive to say about that.

Very united school district. Community is supportive.

I think they do a real good job at education. I had kids who learned quickly from a young age and took college classes in high school. Those advanced classes were good – keep those up. The teachers are really good, though admittedly they are better in grade school than in high school. Lawrence High does seem to be going downhill since Max Rice and Mike Browning left.

Free State High School's facilities are good.

I don't have children there. Everything that I've heard hasn't been bad.

They have really good teachers. I think you're dealing with a district that values education.

The teachers and parental involvement.

With the diverse student body and focus on providing a good education, the Lawrence School District is top notch.

The stability of the programs.

They do have some very good teachers. Not all of them, but some of them. Some of the programs are very good, such as art and music.



It's a decent-sized school district.

The ability to teach students something that may help them in the future.

Probably the desire to go ahead and try things, instead of doing what we have always done.

There is a small-town feel to the district.

Their approach to individual learning. Well-rounded curriculum.

They seem to be fairly organized.

Verbal articulation is stellar, but lacking in substance and accurate information.

**36. Where could the district improve?** *Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don't know	109
Other (see below)	71
Manage money/budget	58
Listening to patrons	51
Smaller class sizes	44
Emphasize academics over athletics	29
Communication	23
Equity among the schools	15

**Verbatim "other" comments**

More trade; more teachers in the trade industry.

Helping some lower-income areas.

Technology available. Computers for all students.

Lack of leadership. Administration is being paid way too much.

They don't have the money they need to improve. The demands put on teachers to raise the grades, when they are not earned or deserved.

Busing is a mess.

I don't know why we can't impeach in Kansas.

Equity across the district, and I would say meeting the needs of gifted and college-bound students.

They used to have gangs there.

Better coordinating of planning for city growth.

Hiring quality teachers

I've had no problems at all with Lawrence High.

Try improving ways to encourage kids to stay in school.

Better salary to the teachers and stop spending more on administrators. They need technical training for students who aren't interested in college.

In supporting more arts and liberal arts classes.

Different ideas on how to meet the needs of certain students.

There's no consistency in the governing of the schools, especially at the elementary level.

Community engagement.

I think they are doing what they can with what they have.

Better funding.

They need more diversity in the teaching staff to match the increasing diversity of the students.

Don't overcrowd the classrooms. Sometimes it's more trouble on the teachers than anything.

Better communication and solicitation with parents.

Spend too much on athletics. Too much faith in computer-based technology. Too much use of digital textbooks.

Drugs are getting in the schools too easily.

Increased funding given to the district from the state.

Get the School Board to get a backbone and stand up.

They need to work on making the best use of funds and making sure the funds go for academic learning before other items.

Technology, probably. Just the industrial technology.

If they didn't bow down to the union so much. The teachers need to listen to their students more.

One child I know played violin in Topeka. She transferred here and had to wait three years to get into a class in middle school. I remember going to school here and we'd start in fifth grade for band. But I guess it's an area that had cuts. Also, I have a Special Needs student that lives with me and he had an assistant through grade school. Now, he's in middle school and they have no IEPs. He's autistic and has no assistance in classes now. In his math classes they're failing him, because he doesn't understand the tests and what the teacher's asking of him. He had As in all his other classes, except math, because he doesn't understand the tests.

When my daughter brought her own device to school, it wasn't good enough to do the activities. They should pay teachers more to keep them.

Equity between east and west sides of town. Class sizes need to be smaller.

I think working on the student-teacher ratio. Providing more support to teachers.

The status quo has not been good enough. They have to build bigger buildings. When they need a bunch of money, we have to have a school bond, instead of using a reserve.

Equity to low-income schools.

They need to have some money to work with. They don't, because of Brownback.

Better college prep.

The division between the haves and the have-nots in the schools. Too many kids are underserved in the district. Not all schools are equal in quality of the buildings or their teaching programs.

Stop making change for change's sake. Blended learning is sort of a disaster. Stop removing so many books from the library.

They could show more courtesy and respect to district teachers. Listen more to your teachers.

Resources are misdirected a little bit. They spend more funding on technology, when I think they should be spending on more personnel.

Being a little more transparent with the community.

More paraeducators to help with the Special Needs students. Better skilled educators to deal with kids with behavioral problems. Better intervention.

Community support is lacking.

By bringing art and physical education back and better lunches.

Cut back on administrators. There are too many administrators.

Value the professional staff higher. I'm talking about the teachers.

They are working on integrated technology.

Check to see if they really need the amount of administrative staff that they have.

Follow up with career choices for students.

Instructors struggle with handling the diversity of the students.

Special Needs programs always need improvement.

More foreign languages taught.

Let some of the teachers go that don't like to teach kids that have some Special Needs. What I'm trying to say here is that not all kids fit a mold, but that doesn't mean that they are bad kids. I had one of each; one who fit the mold and one who did not. For the one that didn't, I think if he just had one teacher who showed an interest, he would have had a better experience in public school. Most teachers did not take an interest in him. A couple did. School was a struggle. He did have a really great choir teacher at Free State High.

We need more funding across the board.

Overall, they are doing a pretty good job.

When they started doing "no child left behind," they really messed up. And the half-day on Wednesday.

Equity is not well-served in Lawrence. The schools are not all the same in what they teach.

Be careful with the financial resources you have.

Besides Brownback sticking it to schools, the district seems to struggle with spending.

Improve a lot on discipline. The principal didn't want to pay that much attention. One time, my son was absent for three days in a row and I received a letter about it. I figured out why he wasn't going to school. His girlfriend wasn't in school on the same days. I thought it was obvious after I thought it through. I thought the principal was stupid! You need to get rid of him. And they have off-duty police officers. I'm shocked at that. It seems like they just need more discipline. Max Rice was on the up and up. Since they got rid of him, I don't think they've found anybody to quite replace him.

I think they have some communication issues; they could probably be improved. There is something controversial that I don't know too much about. They don't talk about it as much, so the controversy doesn't erupt.

I think the need to improve efforts to protect students of color.

They should be keeping the maintenance on the buildings up to date as they go along, so they don't have to do complete remodels.

Don't use Common Core math.

Get more money out of the state government.

The School Board needs to be more open and responsive about what they are doing. Be responsive and responsible with their money. Provide more supplies for the teachers, so they don't have to spend their own money.

Stop closing the neighborhood schools.

Individualized learning. Gifted and slow learner programs.

They need an injection of reality of what the world is really like. They focus too much on students being college-bound rather than the reality that many will not attend college and would prefer vocational training instead.

**Finding 3: At the time this survey was conducted, strong support was expressed for the projects being considered for Lawrence High School and for the district’s middle schools. The support was less – though still a slight majority – for the projects being discussed for Lawrence Free State High School.**

The survey then turned to the subject of the projects being considered for a potential future bond issue.

Separate questions were asked about the collection of projects for Lawrence High School, for Lawrence Free State High School and for the district’s four middle schools. After each project group was read, respondents were asked if including these ideas in a future bond issue would make them “more likely to vote in favor,” “more likely to vote against” or would it “make no difference” in their voting decision. Those who answered that they would be “more likely to vote against” were asked for additional details about their thinking.

The group of projects for Lawrence High School saw strong support among respondents, as 78% said they would be “more likely to vote in favor” of a bond issue that included this project list. Those who were negative suggested that the list was a bit overwhelming, with some wondering if they were all necessary.

The projects for the middle schools were nearly as popular, with 73% saying they would be “more likely to vote in favor.” Opponents, again, expressed concern about the length of the project list.

The Lawrence Free State High School project list drew majority support, but just barely, as 51% said that they would be “more likely to vote in favor” of a bond issue that included these projects. Probably not surprisingly, the most common view among those who were negative about these projects is that Free State is newer and, as such, the projects are not necessary.

The cross-tabulation analysis reveals modest differences of opinion across the groups for the Lawrence High School and middle school projects. Yet, the range is fairly close for both, with support for the Lawrence High School projects ranging from 72% to 86%, and for the middle school projects from 65% to 78%.

The story is different for the Lawrence Free State projects, however. The range is 37% to 69%, with six of the 15 subgroups scoring below 50%. One other area of note: The two “location of residence” subgroups that are south of 15th Street had scores of 39% (east of Iowa) and 37% (west of Iowa).



All of this data would seem to suggest that the length of the project list, combined with the rather modest support for the Free State projects, may be concerns that require attention, if these projects were to remain in any final proposal.

As you may recall, voters in the district passed a bond issue in 2013 that led to renovation projects throughout the district, mostly at the elementary school level. The district is now discussing the possibility of a future bond issue to address the needs at the middle and high school levels. This survey is designed to hear what a cross-section of residents thinks about the ideas being considered for such a bond issue.

- 37. One of the projects being considered would be an expansion and renovation of Lawrence High School to create a secure campus, flexible space for more collaborative, project-based learning and to address equity by bringing Lawrence High's facilities more in line with those of Free State High School. The projects at Lawrence High include enlarging classrooms, modernizing the library, renovating the annex, auxiliary gym and natatorium, which is the swimming pool, renovating the auditorium and fine arts area, career and technical education area, and locker rooms, and improving mechanical, electrical, plumbing and roofing systems. If this set of projects for Lawrence High School was part of the bond issue, would you be more likely to vote in favor, more likely to vote against or would it make no difference to you?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	78%
More likely to vote against	10%
Would make no difference to you	11%
Don't know (not read)	1%

- 38. Which of these projects for Lawrence High School would make you more likely to vote against a bond issue?** *Asked only of the 38 respondents who answered, "More likely to vote against" on question 37. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Too many to comprehend	17
All of them	12
Other (see below)	9

#### Verbatim "other" comments

With all of these projects, you might as well build a new Lawrence High School.

Enlarging classrooms; modernizing the library. Renovating the annex, auxiliary gym, swimming pool. Renovating the auditorium and fine arts area. Career and technical education areas and locker rooms.

Because we just got our tax statement and the schools get a bundle. They take a lot out of it.

Maybe, the roof and mechanical needs, but what about the auditorium and library? They are fine the way they are, as far as I know. They don't need to do all that stuff at once.

I'm not for any bond issue. Bonds are not the way to do it. Legalize marijuana and tax it, like in Colorado, and they would have enough money. Then they could also increase the tax on liquor. They did it on cigarettes and they should raise the tax on liquor, too.

I don't want to spend any more money on taxes. Taxes are already too high.

Too many items lumped in together on that project. I would need more information on why they need all that.

Anything other than upgrading mechanical systems.

They need to build a new one. Not enough room to expand the school.

- 39. At Lawrence Free State High School, the district is considering adding classrooms to address growth in the student population and to create flexible space for more collaborative, project-based learning. In addition, the project list for Free State includes modernizing the library, renovating locker rooms, and making parking and site improvements, among other improvements. If this set of projects for Lawrence Free State High School was part of the bond issue, would you be more likely to vote in favor, more likely to vote against or would it make no difference to you?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	51%
More likely to vote against	17%
Would make no difference to you	28%
Don't know (not read)	4%

**40. Which of these projects for Lawrence Free State High School would make you more likely to vote against a bond issue?** *Asked only of the 69 respondents who answered, “More likely to vote against” on question 39. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Not needed/Free State is newer	37
Other (see below)	13
All of them	11
Too many to comprehend	8

#### Verbatim “other” comments

I think that all of the money should go to the original high school, because it’s fallen so far behind.

Because Free State is a fairly new school and I can't believe it needs all that already.

Because it’s a lot newer than Lawrence High. That would have to be down the road, I would think.

We keep spending money, every few years. Why do they think they can keep grabbing money to do that?

Parking improvements, library, locker rooms.

Renovating Free State. That was just built.

Locker rooms, and parking and site improvements. I would remove those items.

No more taxes. We are heavily taxed already.

Free State is fine the way it is. Also, I don’t really want my taxes raised.

Renovating locker rooms and making parking and site improvements. They don’t need it.

Those projects are not as important as the projects for Lawrence High School.

It's too new to need any of that kind of stuff. If anything, the money needs to go to Lawrence High. It’s falling behind.

If the bond issue were for both schools, I would vote against it. If the bond issue was just for Lawrence High, I would vote in favor. But if the bond issue is only for Free State, I would vote against that, at this time. They need to wait their turn.

- 41. The projects at the district's four middle schools include modernization of the libraries, renovations to create flexible spaces for more collaborative, project-based learning, and improvements to mechanical, electrical, plumbing and roofing systems. If these projects for the district's four middle schools were part of the bond issue, would you be more likely to vote in favor, more likely to vote against or would it make no difference to you?**

Response	Percentage
More likely to vote in favor	73%
More likely to vote against	11%
Would make no difference to you	14%
Don't know (not read)	3%

- 42. Which of these projects for the school district's four middle schools would make you more likely to vote against a bond issue?** *Asked only of the 43 respondents who answered, "More likely to vote against" on question 41. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages displayed below.*

Response	Number
Too many on one bond issue	21
All of them	15
Other (see below)	7

#### Verbatim "other" comments

Modernizing the libraries, renovations to create flexible spaces for more collaborative, project-based learning.

There again, I just would vote against it, because our taxes are bad enough now. I see things that people could do without easily.

South Central is a pretty new school. Southwest is fairly new.

There needs to be two different bond issues. Don't try to put so many projects on one bond issue. We can't really afford to have our taxes raised much more.

Only Central needs improvement. The other three middle schools are in great condition and are fairly new buildings.

Lawrence High projects are more important. They shouldn't try to do too many projects at one time.

They were remodeled recently, so I don't think they need that work yet.

**Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” percentage for each project set by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because three respondents refused to answer this question.**

“More likely to vote in favor”		Overall score	18-34 (n=90)	35-54 (n=175)	55 or older (n=132)	Up to 5 years (n=61)	5-15 years (n=136)	More than 15 years (n=203)	Student, yes (n=126)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=142)
Lawrence High School projects		<b>78%</b>	78%	78%	79%	72%	78%	80%	86%	77%	73%
Lawrence Free State High School projects		<b>51%</b>	54%	54%	45%	52%	55%	48%	53%	48%	52%
Middle school projects		<b>73%</b>	76%	73%	70%	69%	74%	73%	76%	70%	72%

**Cross-tabulation: “More likely to vote in favor” percentage for each project set by location of the respondent’s residence and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

“More likely to vote in favor”		Overall score	N of 15th/E of Iowa (n=101)	N of 15th/W of Iowa (n=109)	S of 15th/E of Iowa (n=100)	S of 15th/W of Iowa (n=90)	Female (n=220)	Male (n=180)
Lawrence High School projects		<b>78%</b>	83%	75%	74%	81%	80%	76%
Lawrence Free State High School projects		<b>51%</b>	57%	69%	39%	37%	53%	49%
Middle school projects		<b>73%</b>	78%	78%	65%	68%	75%	69%

**Finding 4: At the time this research was conducted, there was a solid foundation of support for the idea of a bond issue and for three potential tax increases that might be associated with its passage.**

Having heard the project ideas and expressed their views about each, respondents were then presented with a set of questions dealing with the possibility of a bond issue to fund what had just been discussed.

This set began by asking a general question about how the respondent thought he or she would vote on a proposal that included the projects that had been discussed, if the election were held today. A total of 76% said they would either “strongly favor” or “favor” such a proposal.

This was followed by a question asking, again, how the individual would vote on an election “today” if the proposal resulted in a tax increase of “about \$55 per year” for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the district. The results showed no statistical change from the general question on this subject, as 71% said they would either “strongly favor” or “favor” such a proposal.

Those who were in opposition (or who were undecided) at that level were offered the idea of a proposal that would include fewer of the projects that had been discussed, and that would result in a tax increase of “about \$45 per year” instead. The combined support – that is, those who were supportive at \$55 per year, combined with those who became supportive at \$45 per year – grew to 74%.

The process was repeated for opponents or those who remained undecided, who were then asked about an even smaller proposal that would result in a tax increase of “about \$35 per year.” Total support increased to 76%.

Taking into account the Margin of Error, this means that the support at all three tax levels was statistically identical. In other words, an individual is either supportive or not at this time, and a small adjustment in the amount of the request does not appear to have much of an impact.

That being said, it is important to remember that questions such as these are intended to get a sense of current opinion. As the project list is finalized and the tax implication is determined, it will be essential for the district to clearly communicate the needs and, more importantly, how students and staff will benefit from the proposed changes.



- 43. Based on what I have shared with you about the potential projects for a school bond issue, how do you think you would vote, if the election were held today? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose the bond issue? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.**

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor	24%
Favor	52%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	4%
Oppose	8%
Strongly oppose	6%
Would depend on what it costs (not read)	5%
Don't know (not read)	2%

- 44. What if the bond issue resulted in a tax increase of about 55 dollars a year for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the school district? If an election on such a bond issue were held today, would you...? Choices, except where indicated, were read to respondents.**

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor	18%
Favor	53%
Lean favor (not read)	1%
Lean oppose (not read)	1%
Oppose	12%
Strongly oppose	9%
Don't know (not read)	7%

- 45. What if, instead, the bond issue included FEWER of the projects we have just been discussing, and it resulted in a tax increase of about 45 dollars a year for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the school district? If an election on such a bond issue were held today, would you...?** *Asked only of the 114 respondents who did not answer, “Strongly favor,” “Favor” or “Lean favor” on question 44. Percentages shown below for the three “favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 44 and 45, under the assumption that an individual who is supportive of a higher tax increase would be supportive of a lower one as well.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor	18%
Favor	56%
Lean favor (not read)	0%
Lean oppose (not read)	1%
Oppose	10%
Strongly oppose	9%
Don’t know (not read)	7%

- 46. What if, instead, the bond issue included EVEN FEWER of the projects we have been discussing, and it resulted in a tax increase of about 35 dollars a year for the owner of a \$200,000 home in the school district? If an election on such a bond issue were held today, would you...?** *Asked only of the 105 respondents who did not answer “Strongly favor,” “Favor” or “Lean favor” on question 45. Percentages shown below for the three “favor” categories are the combined percentages for questions 44, 45 and 46, under the assumption that an individual who is supportive of a higher tax increase would be supportive of a lower one as well.*

Response	Percentage
Strongly favor	19%
Favor	57%
Lean favor (not read)	<1%
Lean oppose (not read)	1%
Oppose	9%
Strongly oppose	9%
Don’t know (not read)	6%

**47. Why do you believe you would oppose the bond issue, if the election were held today?** *Asked only of the 74 respondents who answered, “Lean oppose,” “Oppose” or “Strongly oppose” on question 46. Responses were coded, based on common words, phrases and ideas. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Don’t want more taxes	22
Don’t spend money they have wisely	20
Do too many projects at once	18
Other (see below)	14

#### Verbatim “other” comments

I need to know more about the condition of the schools and what the final cost would be, before I can approve.

I need to know more about what the final costs would be and look at my own finances to see if I could afford an increase in my taxes.

Because I don’t think they’re considering the teachers and student body.

Because I oppose most of the needs for money, except the mechanical and plumbing needs. I feel the rest is a waste of money.

Because they don’t need any more money.

I go back to what I said earlier. Why can’t they work within their budget? It sounds like they want a bond issue every year.

I need to know more about the issue and need to think about whether I can afford any more taxes.

Because you pay as you go. Pay for the other bond issue first.

I don’t think all the projects are important, so I would need to know more about what exactly will be done, before I would vote in favor of the bond issue.

Try to find alternative funding. Where is the casino money going?

Please take care of the outstanding bond issue first, before asking for more.

I just don't think they've done a good job with spending the money we've given them to date. Also, too many projects to get your head around.

I need to know more about the district's financial needs and how they spend and use the resources they have.

I don't think the district is rational in what they are attempting. They seem to think their supply of financial resources is endless.

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage for a bond issue, in general, and then for each potential tax increase level by age, length of time living in the district, and the presence of a current district student, past district student or no district student ever in the household. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group, and “age” will not square with “overall” score, because three respondents refused to answer this question.**

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage	Overall score	18-34 (n=90)	35-54 (n=175)	55 or older (n=132)	Up to 5 years (n=61)	5-15 years (n=136)	More than 15 years (n=203)	Student, yes (n=126)	Student, past (n=132)	Student, never (n=142)
Bond issue, in general	<b>76%</b>	77%	78%	72%	67%	79%	76%	83%	74%	72%
\$55 per year tax increase	<b>71%</b>	71%	72%	69%	70%	72%	70%	82%	67%	65%
\$45 per year tax increase	<b>74%</b>	74%	73%	72%	74%	74%	73%	83%	70%	68%
\$35 per year tax increase	<b>76%</b>	74%	75%	75%	74%	75%	75%	83%	72%	71%

**Cross-tabulation: Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage for a bond issue, in general, and then for each potential tax increase level by location of the respondent’s residence and gender. Note: “n” equals the number of respondents in each group.**

Combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage	Overall score	N of 15th/E of Iowa (n=101)	N of 15th/W of Iowa (n=109)	S of 15th/E of Iowa (n=100)	S of 15th/W of Iowa (n=90)	Female (n=220)	Male (n=180)
Bond issue, in general	<b>76%</b>	83%	74%	71%	74%	76%	76%
\$55 per year tax increase	<b>71%</b>	75%	70%	66%	73%	70%	72%
\$45 per year tax increase	<b>74%</b>	78%	75%	66%	73%	73%	74%
\$35 per year tax increase	<b>76%</b>	79%	75%	69%	76%	74%	76%

**Finding 5: Five of 23 potential sources of school district news are consulted “frequently” for such information by at least one-third of the survey participants. “Friends and neighbors,” *The Lawrence Journal-World* print edition, and teachers and staff in the district were at the top of the list.**

The substantive portion of the survey closed by asking respondents which of 23 potential sources they consulted “frequently” for district news.

Five of these sources were identified as such by at least one-third of the survey participants:

- “Friends and neighbors” – 73%
- *The Lawrence Journal-World* print edition – 54%
- Teachers and staff in the district – 39%
- The school district’s administration, either in person, or when a member of the administration is quoted in the news media – 38%
- The district’s printed newsletter, which is inserted into *The Lawrence Journal-World* each quarter – 34%

Nine additional sources were reported to be consulted “frequently” by between 25% and 32%, suggesting that while there may not be a long list of “go to” sources that are extremely popular, information about the school district is still sought by typical residents through a number of different locations.

**48. I have just a few more questions. I’m wondering where you turn for information about the Lawrence School District, beyond just news about weather-related school closings. I’m going to read a short list of people and places where you might turn for district news. If you consult this source frequently, say, “Yes.” If you consult it only every so often or you don’t consult it at all for district news, say, “No.” Let’s start with...***Choices were read and rotated.*

Response	Percentage
Friends and neighbors	73%
<i>The Lawrence Journal-World</i> print edition	54%
Teachers and staff in the district	39%
The school district’s administration, either in person, or when a member of the administration is quoted in the news media	38%
The district’s printed newsletter, which is inserted into <i>The Lawrence Journal-World</i> each quarter	34%
Channel 6 News in Lawrence	32%

The Lawrence School Board, either in person, or when a member of the Board is quoted in the news media	32%
Phone calls or e-mails from the district's automated notification system	31%
The school district's website	30%
The district's Skyward Family Access system for online student records	29%
Individual school websites	28%
Outdoor marquees signs	27%
<i>The Lawrence Journal-World</i> online edition	27%
Individual school newsletters	25%
School principals in the district	23%
Local radio stations	21%
The school district's Facebook page, Twitter and other social media sites	18%
Individual schools' social networking sites	16%
Parent organizations, including the PTO, PTA and Booster Clubs	12%
Social media sites that are not directly connected to the school district	9%
School Board meeting broadcasts on channel 26, via live streaming on the web or via video archive	8%
School site councils	5%
The Educate Lawrence advocacy group	3%



## Demographics

The final questions in the survey were standard demographic topics. This is information that is collected to allow for the creation of the cross-tabulation analyses seen throughout the report.

The highlights of these questions:

- While 51% of the respondents had lived within the boundaries of the district more than 15 years, 31% had lived there up to 10 years.
- 63% were between the ages of 25 and 54.
- There were 126 current student families, 132 past student families and 142 “never” student families in the survey group.

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

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

Response	Percentage
Less than 2 years	3%
2 years to 5 years	13%
More than 5 years to 10 years	15%
More than 10 years to 15 years	19%
More than 15 years	43%
I've lived here all my life	8%

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

Response	Percentage
18 to 24	4%
25 to 34	19%
35 to 44	22%
45 to 54	22%
55 to 64	20%
65 or older	14%
Refused (not read)	1%

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

Response	Number
Yes, children	124
Yes, children and grandchildren	2
Yes, grandchildren	61
No	213

**52. Does your child who is a student in the district have internet access at home?** *Asked only of the 126 respondents who answered either “Yes, children” or “Yes, children and grandchildren” on question 51. All respondents answered, “Yes.”*

**53. Do you have any children or grandchildren who previously were students in the district, but who have graduated?** *Asked only of the 274 respondents who did not answer either “Yes, children” or “Yes, children and grandchildren” on question 51. Numbers, rather than percentages, displayed below.*

Response	Number
Yes, children	129
Yes, children and grandchildren	3
Yes, grandchildren	5
No	137

**54. RECORD GENDER**

Response	Percentage
Female	55%
Male	45%

## Summary

The mid-November to early December random telephone survey of 400 head-of-household (male or female), registered voters in the Lawrence School District shows the presence of a very engaged community that clearly has much to say about its school district.

For the most part, the views expressed during this time period were positive. While a number of factors of district performance fell short of ideal, in terms of the perception in the community, most of these shortfalls were modest. The core components of a school district's brand – teachers, building-level leaders, the buildings themselves, the environment in these buildings, access to technology for students, etc. – were all strong. It was the more nebulous, district/patron relationship areas that were viewed a little less positively.

This support for the work at the buildings was further affirmed when the teachers, the diverse population and the district's "strong education/curriculum" were among the most frequently mentioned strengths. Those who could identify an area that needed improvement were led by concerns about money and about the district listening to patrons.

In terms of the projects, the ideas for Lawrence High School and for the district's four middle schools are clearly supported at this time. Support for the projects for Lawrence Free State High School is much more modest, with comments that would suggest that while the case for the other projects is obvious to most people – projects for Free State seem a little "early" to some, for such a "new school."

Once the district pinpoints a final proposal, making the case through simple, repetitive, benefit-driven messaging – even for the LHS and middle school projects, which begin from a solid footing – will be critical. The need for simplicity is even more important in a situation like this, where the list of projects being considered is a very long one. Long project lists increase the risk of residents being overwhelmed, and overwhelmed voters do not tend to default to the positive.