

# Advocates for Student Achievement Poll

A Survey of 400 Likely Voters in the Spring 2009 Milwaukee School Board Election  
Districts 4, 6, and 7

*February 2, 2009*

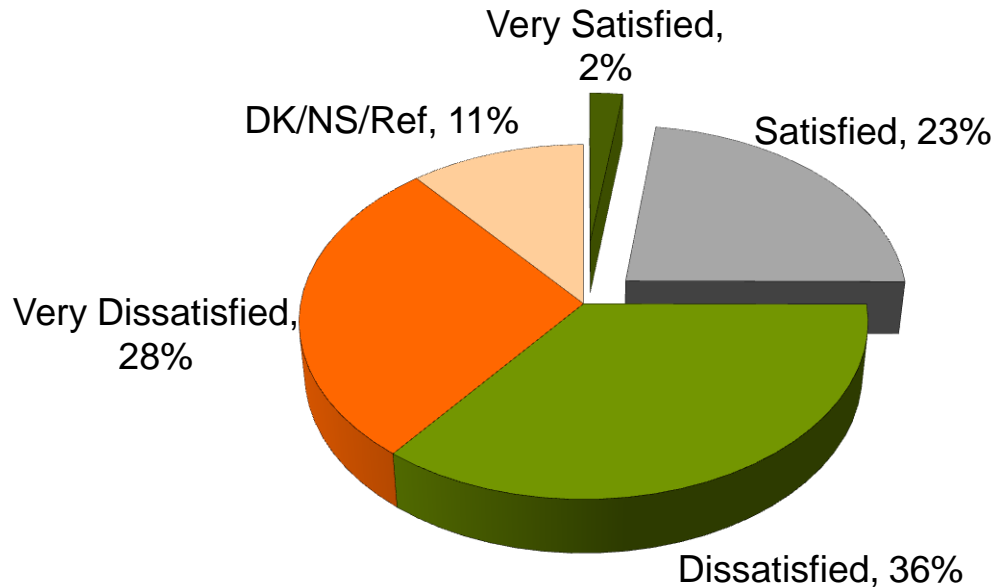
# Voters are Looking for Major Change

- Voters are not happy with the job public schools are doing in the City of Milwaukee
  - Overwhelmingly disapprove of the direction of MPS
  - Disapprove of the job the MPS School Board is doing
- All points to voters crying out for major change, not incremental tinkering, but wholesale change in the way MPS operates

# Overall Satisfaction

- Very low satisfaction with the direction of Milwaukee Public Schools (1 in 4 satisfied)

Satisfaction with the direction in which the Milwaukee Public Schools are headed



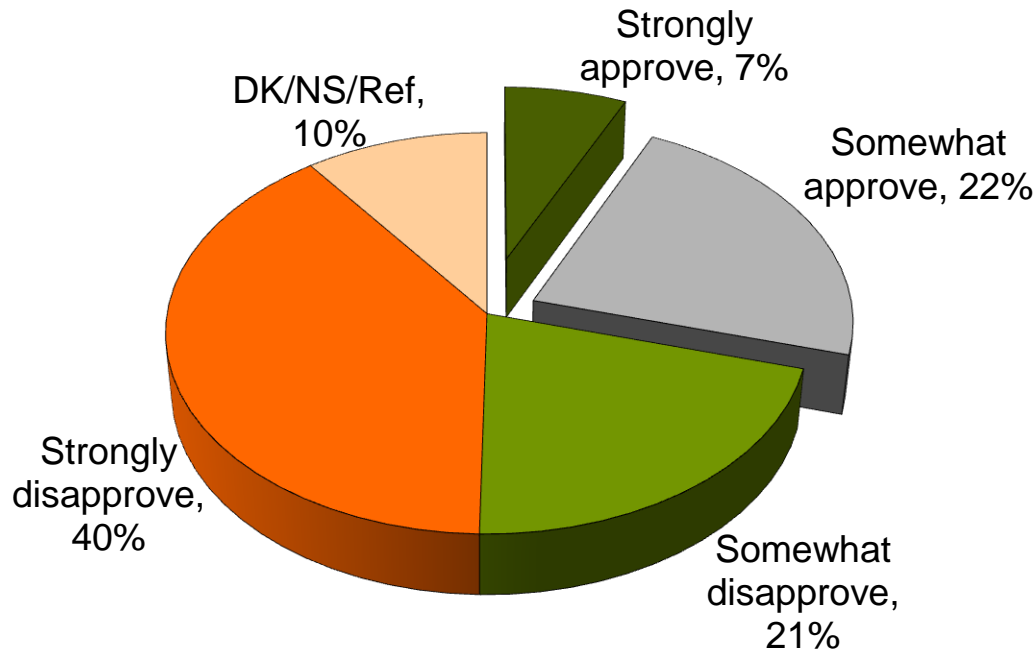
*“These numbers are startling even by the standards of other troubled urban districts and show a level of frustration among the electorate that goes far beyond a call for minor or incremental change.”*

Thinking about the direction the Milwaukee Public Schools are headed, generally speaking, are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied with the direction in which the Milwaukee Public Schools are headed? [IF RESPONDENT SAYS “SATISFIED” OR “DISSATISFIED,” PROBE WITH] And is that somewhat or very satisfied/dissatisfied?

# Job Approval – School Board

- Only 3 of 10 voters approve of the job the School Board is doing

Current School Board Approval Rating



Do you APPROVE or DISAPPROVE of the job the current Milwaukee Public School Board is doing? [PROBE: And is that STRONGLY (approve/disapprove) or SOMEWHAT (approve/disapprove)?]

## Ratings even lower among frequent voters

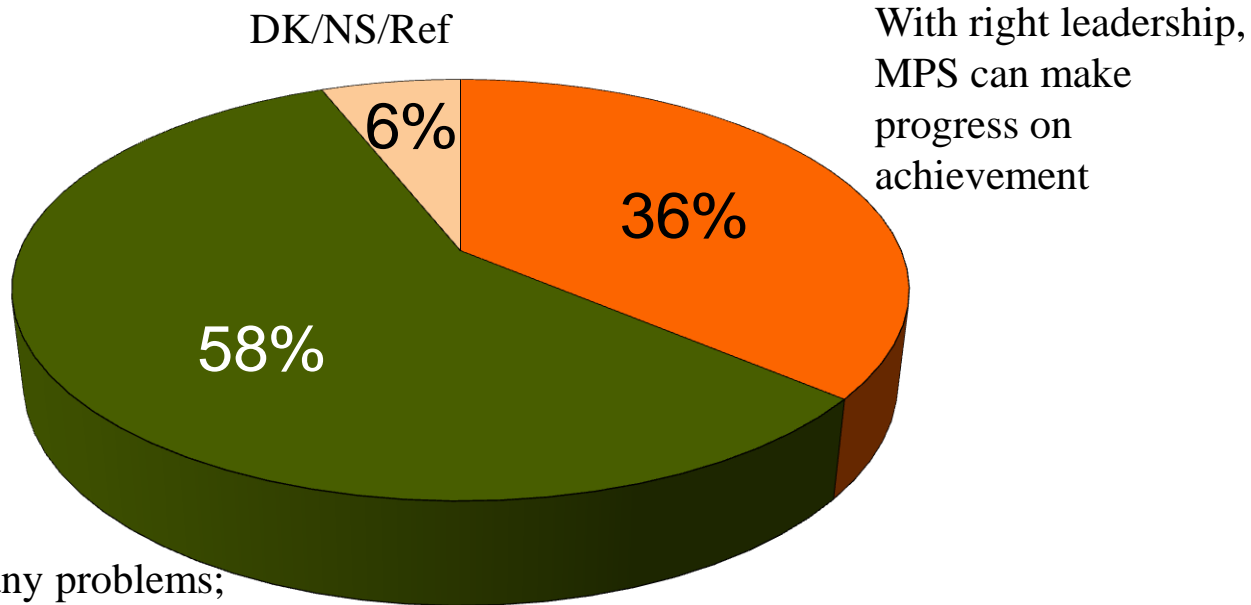
- Among frequent voters in past April Elections, the numbers are even lower, which further strengthens the mandate for change

Vote history in past 4 April elections

	Less Regular Voters: 1 or 2 out of 4	Regular Voters: 3 or 4 out of 4
<b>Satisfaction with direction of MPS</b>		
Satisfied	29%	21%
Dissatisfied	59%	70%
<b>Approve of job MPS School Board is doing</b>		
Approve	34%	18%
Disapprove	56%	72%

# Mandate for Change

- **Voters do not believe real progress can be made on achievement without drastic change**



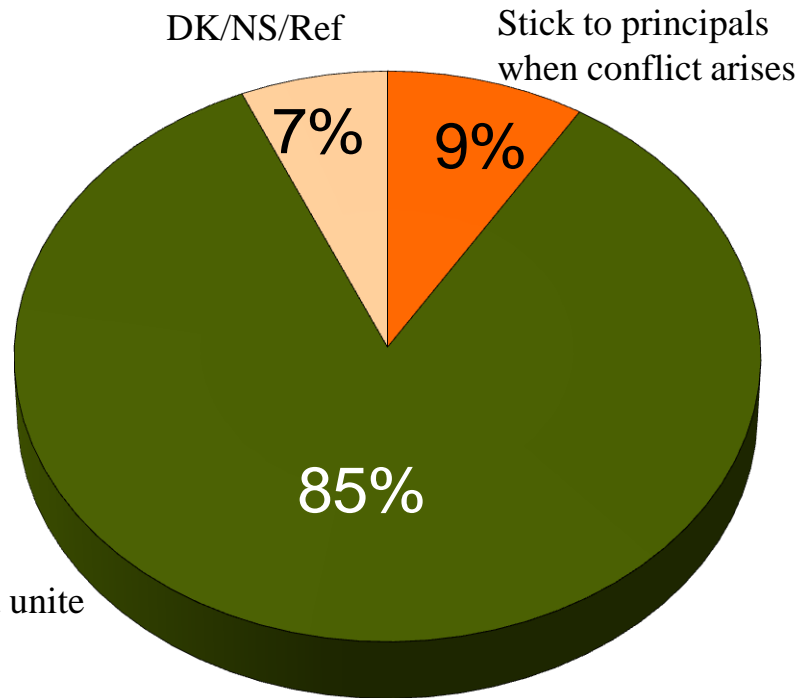
MPS has so many problems; drastic chg needed for progress on achievement

I am now going to read you two statements about the Milwaukee Public Schools. Please tell me which of these statements is closer to your own point of view.

*“These numbers represent an indictment of the current Board and the ways it has operated, and speak to the need for a dramatic break from the politics of the past.”*

# Unity among Board Members

- **Voters are looking for Board members who can set aside differences and work together**



Set aside ideology and unite when conflict arises

Stick to principals when conflict arises

DK/NS/Ref

7%

9%

85%

In recent years, the school board has often been unable to resolve their differences on key issues facing our schools. Do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

*“In Milwaukee, candidates need to demonstrate a willingness to break from the past, lead positive change and work with other members of the Board.”*

# Voices calling for change

- **Few believe progress on achievement is possible with MPS as it exists today**
- **The demographic groups who see change as necessary are diverse**

Demographic	% who say progress is possible w/right leadership
All Voters	36%
Under \$50K Blacks	34%
K-12 child in household	31%
White Independent Men	30%
Black Men	30%
Women under \$50K	30%
Men	29%
Under \$50K whites	28%
White HS or less	23%
Married men	23%
Men 18-49	20%
Self-ID Republicans	20%

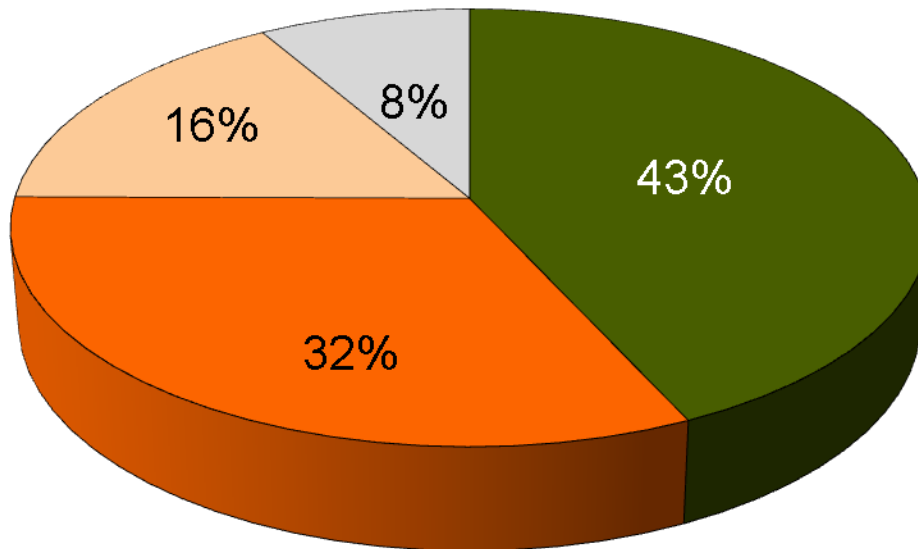


# The Issues Landscape

- **Voters want a better return on their education investment, though not necessarily lower taxes**
  - **Voters are open to creative solutions, and want board members to work together**
  - **Some separation on the issues between Districts, though not as much as we expected**
- ...**The specifics of the issues are less important than the concepts of change, unity and getting results for MPS children**

# Taxes vs Education Funding

- **There is not a great deal of tax anxiety among Milwaukee voters, with less than half saying taxes should be cut**

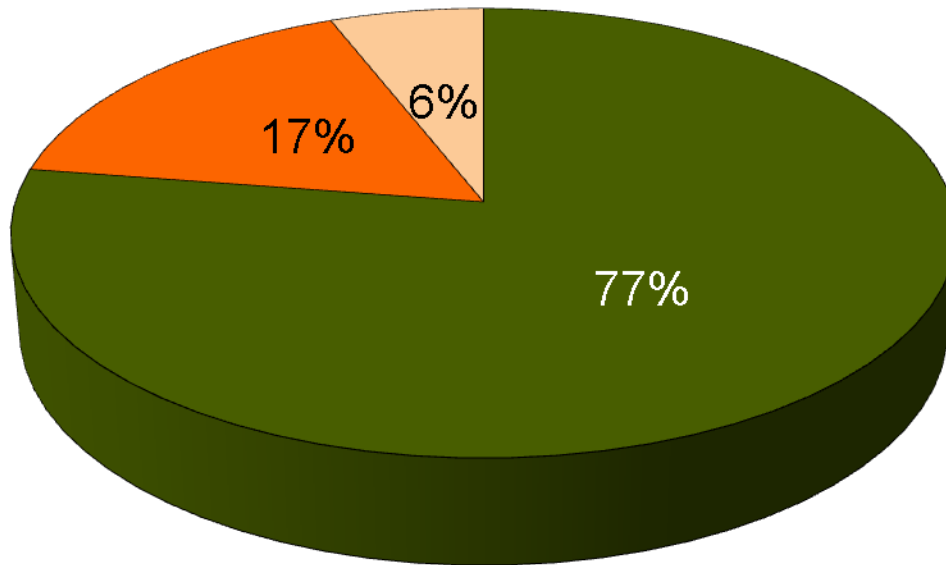


- Taxes too high. Reduce even if means less ed funding
- Taxes about right given education service level
- Tax levels should be raised to provide additional ed funding
- DK/NS/Ref

In terms of the level of property taxes and education funding in the city of Milwaukee, do you believe that: [ROTATE TOP TO BOTTOM, BOTTOM TO TOP, SAY “OR” BETWEEN EACH]

# Efficiency

- Despite mixed opinion of tax *levels*, a large majority want tax dollars spent more efficiently

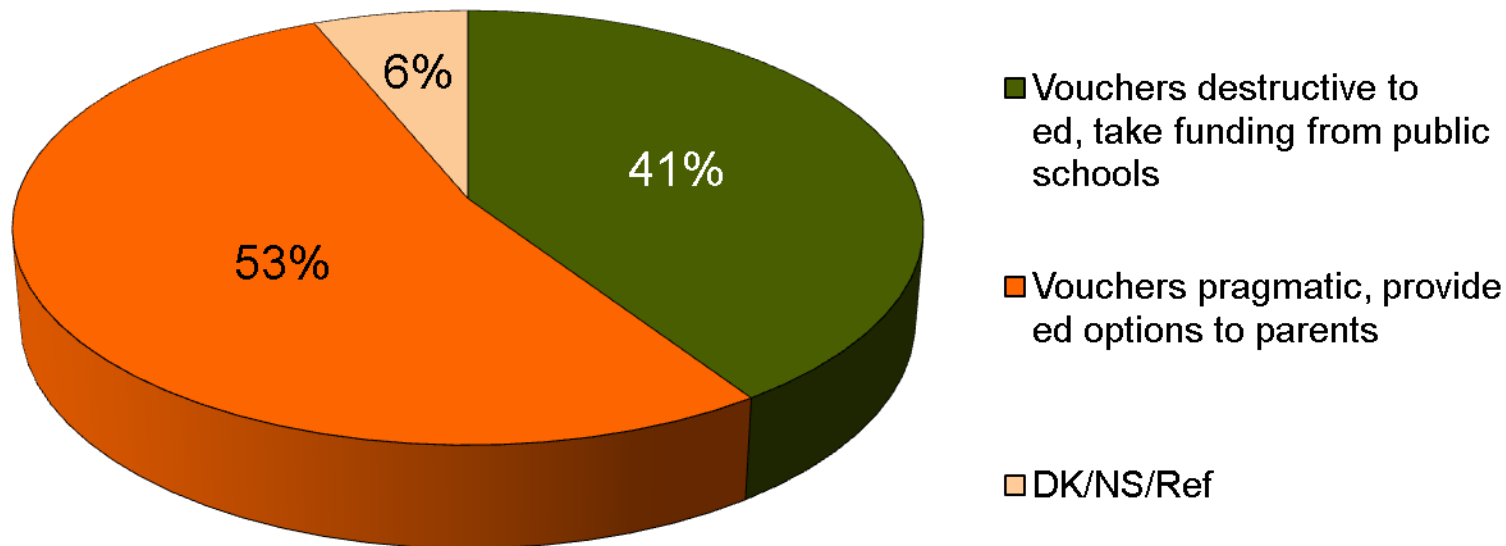


- Use our tax \$ wisely by eliminating waste & streamlining
- Current Board uses tax \$ efficiently without much waste
- DK/NS/Ref

In terms of how the School Board uses our tax dollars today, do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

# Vouchers

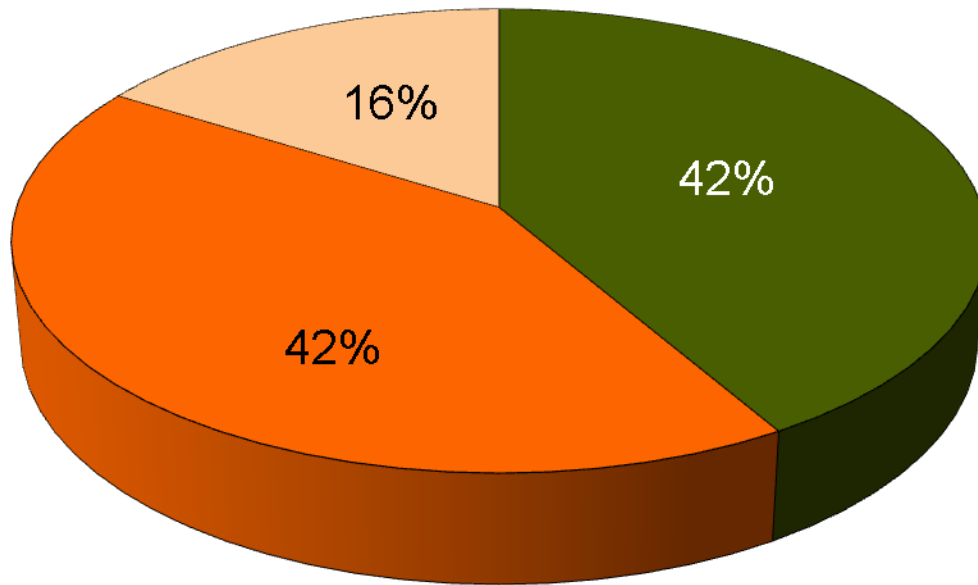
- Opinions on vouchers are mixed, though tilted in favor of their being a pragmatic way of offering parents education choices



Currently, many parents in the city of Milwaukee use taxpayer funded vouchers to send their children to private schools. Do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

# The Teachers Union

- **Voters are split on whether the teachers union is an overall positive or negative for MPS**

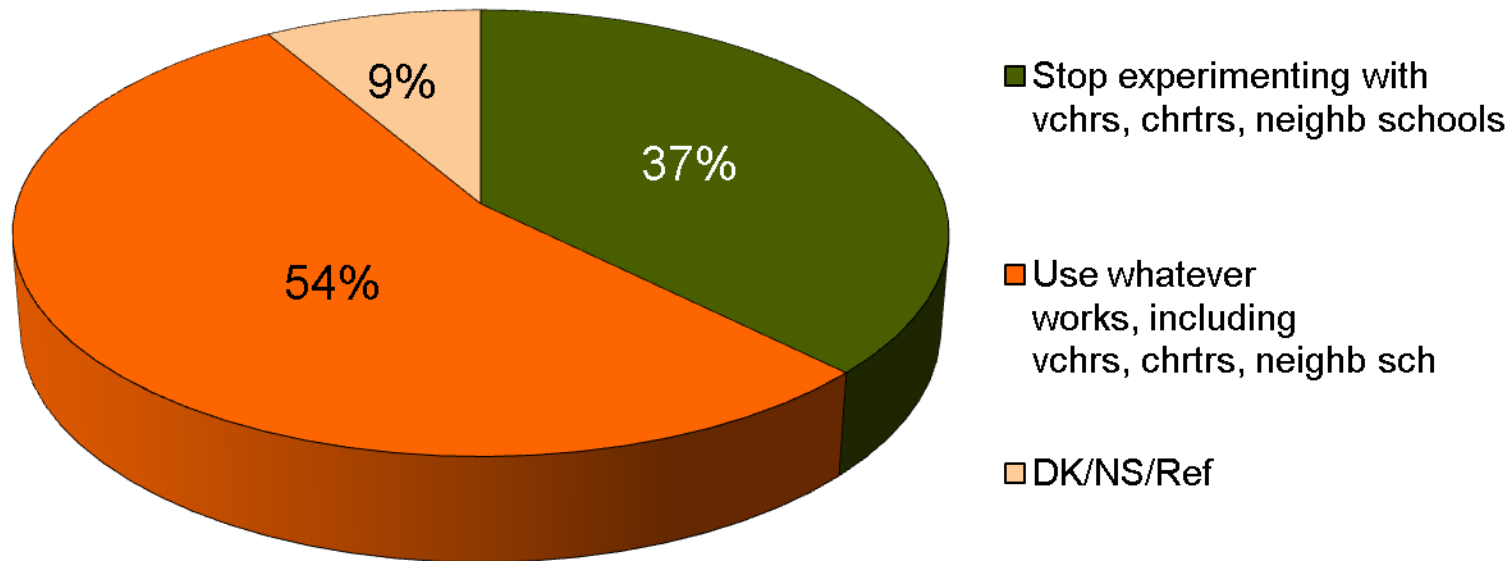


- Union good for schools, committed to quality ed
- Union does not care about students, looks out for themselves
- DK/NS/Ref

The teachers union represents all teachers in Milwaukee. Do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

# Tradition vs Do What Works

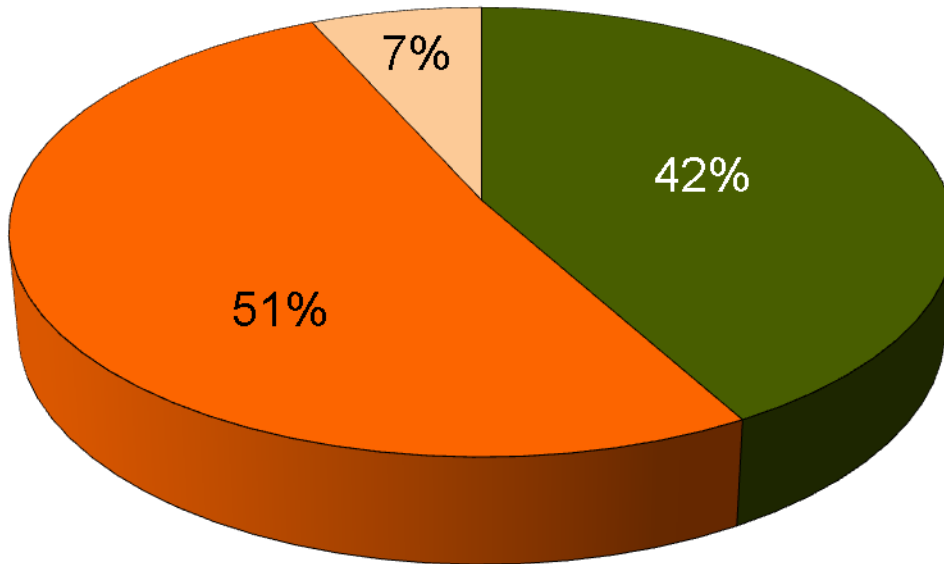
- A majority believe the MPS Board should be willing to do whatever works



In recent years, the Milwaukee School Board has implemented an expanded set of educational options in Milwaukee. Do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

# Facilities

- **Voters are open to the idea of leasing or selling excess space to save money**



- Keep all schools open so students can attend close to home
- Sell/lease extra space to priv/charter schools to save money
- DK/NS/Ref

Currently, MPS schools have capacity for a hundred thousand students, but only eighty thousand students enrolled. Do you believe that [ROTATE ORDER. READ FIRST STATEMENT, SAY “OR”, READ SECOND STATEMENT.]

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