



**Festus School District
2016 Community Online Survey
Final Report
November 16, 2016**

Introduction

At the same time a statistically reliable telephone survey was being conducted with residents of the Festus R-VI School District, similar online surveys were made available to patrons (via the district's website) and to staff members (through an e-mail distribution of a survey link).

A total of 227 community members chose to take part in their survey, though not all those who participated answered all the questions – a situation that is typical with online surveys. Only 11 staff members participated via the staff online survey. Because this number of participants is so low, the results from this survey were not reviewed.

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

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

Results summary

Online surveys typically draw the more passionate members of a community, because taking part requires making an effort to locate and complete the survey. This tends to slant the results either positively – if there is a generally good opinion of the school district in the community – or negatively, if there are issues.

In this case, the slant was definitely toward the positive. Specifically:

- While there was some variation, the general tone was somewhat more positive for the “grades” given to the district by online survey participants than from those who took part in the telephone survey. The most telling statistic that this was a more positive audience overall was the fact that the items that had the three lowest grades on the telephone survey (“The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises,” “The district’s responsiveness to patron concerns” and “Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making”) scored much higher on the online survey.
- The online survey group had similar views in terms of the disposition options for the land on Highway A that the district owns, as 49% said that the district should keep it and 42% said that it should sell it. When the possibility that the district might take a loss on such a sale was presented, the total support for keeping the land grew to 57%, while only 20% still wanted to sell it.
- All the project ideas being considered for a potential ballot issue were significantly more popular in the online survey. The percentage of individuals who said that including a certain project would make them “More likely to vote in favor” of a ballot issue ranged from a low of 65% (playground equipment and surface projects at the elementary and intermediate schools) to a high of 92% (construction of a theater/auditorium space).

The range on the telephone survey was 49% to 77% – with the same two projects occupying the opposite ends of this spectrum.

- Support for a ballot issue – in terms of the combined “Strongly favor/Favor” percentage – was overwhelming on the online survey. At a potential increase of about \$12 per month for a typical homeowner, the support was 88%. When opponents, or those who were undecided, at that level were presented with a \$9 option (for a smaller project list), support grew to 90%.

When continuing opponents and undecided respondents were given an option of a no-tax-increase proposal (for a much smaller set of projects), support grew to 95%. These results are not surprising, considering the high level of support seen throughout this survey from the group of individuals who chose to take part.

- A total of 94% of the online survey respondents said they thought people would be either “Much more likely to vote, ‘Yes’” or “Somewhat more likely” to do so for a school district proposal that included projects for which there was a public use beyond the needs of the schools. On the telephone survey, the result on this question was 58%.

- To limit the number of questions – which helps keep respondents engaged in the online survey through to the end – the question about how respondents perceived the district operating tax levy (in comparison to other Jefferson County school districts) was not included. It is, however, safe to assume that the results on this topic would be more favorable than they were on the telephone survey, given the general tone of the findings on the other online survey questions.

Note: All percentages may add to more or less than 100%, due to rounding.

As you know, students in school are traditionally given a grade of A, B, C, D or F to reflect the quality of their work. Based on your experience, the experience of your children, or things you have heard about the Festus R-VI School District from others, what grade would you give the district on each of the following items? Results shown, using a 5-point weighted scale for each of the factors, in which 5 points are given for each grade of “A,” down to 1 point for each “F” grade.

Graded factor	5-point weighted scale rating/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	5-point weighted scale rating/ Community online survey (n=227)
Quality of education	4.45	4.47
Safety of students in the district	4.39	4.45
Performance of district teachers	4.36	4.43
The district’s transportation program, meaning the bus service	4.36	4.17
The user-friendliness of the school district’s website	4.29	4.03
Quality of the school facilities	4.27	3.89
The quality of the technology available to students	4.26	3.95
Performance of school principals	4.23	4.13
Overall grade	4.20	4.32
Preparation of students for college, vocational or career training, or employment	4.15	4.15
The level of support for the district within the community	4.10	4.04
Performance of the superintendent	4.10	4.38
Value received for the tax dollars spent	4.08	4.29
Performance of the Festus Board of Education	4.07	4.21
Class sizes, meaning the number of students in each classroom	3.94	3.86
Efforts of the district to report its plans and progress to citizens	3.89	4.21
The quality of the district’s food service program	3.81	3.70
The district’s record on making and fulfilling promises	3.77	4.25
The district’s responsiveness to patron concerns	3.77	4.03
Efforts of the district to involve citizens in decision-making	3.61	3.95

As you may recall, in 2015, district patrons approved a ballot question that maintained the same overall school district tax levy. These funds have been used to construct new classrooms at the high school and elementary school, enhance technology infrastructure, and fund a School Resource Officer program, among other projects. With these new classrooms, the district has been able to address the overcrowding issue for the time being. As such, do you think the district should sell the property it already owns on Highway A or keep it?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
Sell it	37%	42%
Keep it	47%	49%
Depends on how much it could be sold for (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	2%	n/a
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents, but available to online respondents)	14%	9%

If the district would take a loss on the property if it was sold, would you... *Asked only of the respondents who answered the previous question, "Sell it." Percentages are of those who were eligible to answer the question. Numbers in the parenthesis are percentages for the total survey group, once it was known that selling the property might be done at a loss. The respondents not shown included individuals who said, "Don't know" and "It depends on how much of a loss."*

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey	Percentage/ Community online survey
Still want to sell it	64% of the 138 who originally wanted to sell it (24% of the total survey group)	52% of the 89 who originally wanted to sell it (20% of the total survey group)
Keep it	22% of the 138 who originally wanted to sell it (56% of the total survey group)	30% of the 89 who originally wanted to sell it (57% of the total survey group)

As the district continues to plan, some ideas have been discussed that might appear as part of a ballot issue at some point. Please share your thoughts on the ideas that are listed below.

One idea is to continue to enhance the security systems at the schools, including installing safety film on entrance doors and windows, and increasing the number of security cameras on the outside of the buildings. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	76%	83%
More likely to vote against	3%	6%
It would make no difference to you	13%	11%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	7%	n/a

One idea is to upgrade the playground equipment and surface at both the elementary school and the intermediate school. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	49%	65%
More likely to vote against	6%	14%
It would make no difference to you	42%	21%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	3%	n/a

One idea is to provide larger rehearsal spaces, larger classrooms and more storage space for the high school band and the choir. At the present time, the enrollment in band is double what the classroom space was designed to hold. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	77%	91%
More likely to vote against	3%	4%
It would make no difference to you	15%	5%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	6%	n/a

One idea is to expand the technology resources available to students and staff members, including launching a one-to-one Chromebook computer program for students in grades 6 through 12. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	68%	85%
More likely to vote against	5%	9%
It would make no difference to you	18%	7%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	9%	n/a

One idea is to acquire property adjacent to the campus that could be used for parking, for other projects or for both. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	63%	91%
More likely to vote against	11%	4%
It would make no difference to you	19%	5%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	7%	n/a

One idea is to construct a theater/auditorium space that would be used by students in drama and music and that would also be available for use by community groups. If this were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	71%	92%
More likely to vote against	4%	3%
It would make no difference to you	14%	4%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	12%	n/a

One idea is to construct an additional multipurpose/gymnasium facility that would create additional space for physical education classes, athletic practices and events, and that would serve as a wellness center that the community would be able to use and that would possibly be large enough to hold high school graduation, if the weather made it necessary to move the ceremony indoors. If this project were part of a future ballot issue, would you be...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
More likely to vote in favor of the ballot issue	75%	82%
More likely to vote against	6%	14%
It would make no difference to you	13%	4%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	6%	n/a

What if, at some point in the future, the district proposed a ballot issue that included these ideas and it resulted in a tax increase of about \$12 per month for the owner of a \$150,000 home in the district? If an election on such a ballot issue were held today, would you...?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
Strongly favor	10%	51%
Favor	52%	37%
Lean favor (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	2%	n/a
Lean oppose (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	1%	n/a
Oppose	17%	1%
Strongly oppose	10%	3%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents, but available to online respondents)	8%	8%

What if, instead, the proposal included FEWER of these ideas and it resulted in a tax increase of about \$9 per month for the owner of a \$150,000 home in the district? If an election on such ballot issue were held today, would you...?

Asked only of the respondents who did not answer, “Strongly favor” or “Favor” (also “Lean favor” on the telephone survey) on the previous question. Results shown below for the “Favor” categories are the combined responses for this question and the previous question, under the assumption that respondents who are in favor of a higher tax increase would support a lower one as well.

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
Strongly favor	10%	51%
Favor	54%	39%
Lean favor (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	2%	n/a
Lean oppose (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	0%	n/a
Oppose	16%	1%
Strongly oppose	9%	3%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents, but available to online respondents)	8%	6%

What if, instead, the proposal included EVEN FEWER of these ideas and it resulted in NO tax increase? If an election on a no-tax-increase ballot issue were held today, would you...? *Asked only of the respondents who did not answer, “Strongly favor” or “Favor” (also “Lean favor” on the telephone survey) on the previous question. Results shown below for the “Favor” categories are the combined responses for this question and the previous two questions, under the assumption that respondents who are in favor of a higher tax increase would support a lower one as well.*

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
Strongly favor	12%	54%
Favor	62%	41%
Lean favor (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	5%	n/a
Lean oppose (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	1%	n/a
Oppose	5%	0%
Strongly oppose	6%	<1%
Don't know (not read to telephone respondents, but available to online respondents)	10%	4%

Why do you think you would oppose a ballot issue like the one we have been discussing? *This question was made available to the one respondent who answered the previous question, “Strongly oppose” and to the nine who answered, “Don’t know.” Two chose to answer, and their responses were, “Nothing” and “Promises not kept.”*

Generally speaking, do you think that including projects in a ballot issue that could also be used by the community, such as a wellness center/gymnasium or a theater/auditorium space, make it much more likely that people will vote, “Yes,” somewhat more likely, somewhat less likely, much less likely, or do you think it doesn’t really affect how people vote?

Response	Percentage/ Community telephone survey (n=371)	Percentage/ Community online survey (n=227)
Much more likely to vote, “Yes”	16%	55%
Somewhat more likely	42%	39%
Somewhat less likely	10%	1%
Much less likely	4%	1%
Doesn’t really affect how people vote	23%	3%
Don’t know (not read to telephone respondents and not available to online respondents)	5%	n/a

Demographics

Community Online Survey

Number of respondents – 227

Student status:

Respondents with students currently attending school in the district – 181

Respondents with no students currently attending school in the district – 27

(Individuals who chose not to answer this question – 19)

Location of residence:

North of Highway A and on the Hillsboro side of Highway 55 – 99

South of Highway A – 58

North of Highway A and on the Crystal City side of Highway 55 – 41

I don't live in the Festus R-VI School District – 8

(Individuals who chose not to answer this question – 21)