

McLean County Unit School District No. 5
Community Survey
Final draft

Hello, I'm _____ calling from Attitude Research Company. We're conducting a survey to learn more about people's attitudes concerning some local and community issues, and this phone number was selected at random. According to our research procedure, I have to speak to a (male or female) over the age of 18 who is at home when I place this call.

01. Generally speaking, do you think things in the Bloomington-Normal area are moving in the right direction, or do you think things are off track and moving in the wrong direction?

- 1) right
- 2) mixed (*do not read*)
- 3) wrong
- 9) other, don't know

02. Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D, and Fail to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools in your area were graded the same way. What grade would you give your local public schools — A, B, C, D, or Fail?

- 1) A
- 2) B
- 3) C
- 4) D
- 5) Fail
- 9) other, don't know

Next, I'd like to ask you about two possible proposals that might appear on a future ballot.

[rotate order]

03. [First/Next] is a possible building bond proposal Unit 5 School District that would build two elementary schools, one middle school, expand and renovate Sugar Creek Elementary School, and make renovations to eight other elementary schools. While an amount for this proposal has not been determined, assume for the purposes of this question that it would be a \$90-\$100 million bond proposal. If an election were held today, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose this referendum? [if undecided probe: which way are you leaning?]

- 1) strongly favor
- 2) favor
- 3) lean favor
- 4) lean oppose
- 5) oppose
- 6) strongly oppose
- 8) undecided
- 9) other, don't know

04. [First/Next] is a proposal by Unit 5 School District that would raise the District's tax rate by ten cents to fund operational expenses and address cash flow. If an election were held today, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose this referendum? [if undecided probe: which way are you leaning?]

- 1) strongly favor
- 2) favor
- 3) lean favor
- 4) lean oppose
- 5) oppose
- 6) strongly oppose
- 8) undecided
- 9) other, don't know

I'm going to read some statements that people are making about public issues. For each, tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. The first is...

[Read list, remind of choices if necessary, and code each as:]

- 1) strongly agree
- 2) somewhat agree
- 3) somewhat disagree
- 4) strongly disagree
- 9) other, don't know

[rotate order]

05. Our students receive an excellent education for the taxes we pay to our local school district.

06. People like me can't afford to pay higher property taxes, no matter how good the cause.

07. Supporting public schools is the best thing we can do to protect the investment we've made in our homes.

08. I don't think cities, school districts or community colleges should raise taxes without asking voters for their approval.

09. People move into our district because of the reputation of our local school district.

10. There's room to cut from our school district's budget before students and staff would feel the impact.

11. With all of the growth in our area, it stands to reason that our local school district needs more resources than they have in years past.

For each of the following, please rate the job performance of your local school district, Unit 5, as

excellent, good, not so good or poor. The first is...

[Read list, remind of choices if necessary, and code as:]

- 1) excellent
- 2) good
- 3) not so good
- 4) poor
- 9) other, don't know

[rotate order]

12. Board of Education

13. Superintendent and central office administrators

14. School principals

15. Teachers

We would like you to evaluate conditions in Unit 5. For each item that I read, tell me if you think the district is doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job.

[Read list, remind of choices if necessary, and code as:]

- 1) excellent
- 2) good
- 3) not so good
- 4) poor
- 9) other, don't know

[rotate order]

16. Maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and staff

17. Keeping up with computers and technology

18. Providing school buildings that are in good repair and physical condition.

19. Maintaining acceptable class sizes

20. Avoiding cuts to programs, curriculum and teaching staff

21. Spending tax dollars effectively

22. Providing enough classroom and instructional space

23. Providing competitive salaries and benefits for teachers

24. Making sure that resources are equitably distributed across the District.

25. Keeping taxes affordable

Again, for each of the following, please indicate whether you think Unit 5 does an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job:

- 1) excellent
- 2) good
- 3) not so good
- 4) poor
- 9) other, don't know

26. Communicating with area residents

27. Asking for public input

28. Responding to public input

29. From what you know, which of the following best describes Unit 5's financial condition? Would you say it has more money than it needs, just enough money to meet its needs or is in need of additional revenue?

- 1) has more money than it needs
- 2) has just enough money
- 3) is in need of additional revenue
- 9) other, don't know

30. Would you say that in the last four years Unit 5 has had sufficient dollars to be able to add staff and curriculum, has maintained its level of staffing and curriculum, or has had budget shortfalls that resulted in cuts in staff and curriculum?

- 1) add more
- 2) maintain
- 3) budget shortfalls/cuts
- 9) other, don't know

31. To the best of your knowledge is student enrollment in Unit 5 increasing, staying relatively stable, or decreasing?

- 1) increasing
- 2) staying stable
- 3) decreasing
- 9) other, don't know

Let's assume Unit 5 had a variety of needs but not enough money to meet all of its needs. For each of the following items, please tell me how high a priority you would place on each by using a 7-point scale. If you think the item should be a top priority, rate it a 7. If you think it should be

a very low priority, rate it a 1. Of course, you can use any number between 7 and 1. Okay?
[pause, repeat instructions if necessary] The first is...

[rotate order]

32. Adding classroom and instructional space
33. Improving transportation
34. Adding teachers and staff to keep up with growing enrollment
35. Keeping computers and educational technology up to date.
36. Increasing technology training for teachers and staff
37. Reinstating cuts made to curriculum
38. Improving safety and security at various buildings
39. Reducing class sizes in many District buildings
40. Reinstating staff that have been cut in recent years

Unit 5 is considering a referendum to build new schools, expand one school, and make renovations to other schools, as well as another referendum to increase its tax rate for the purpose of funding operational expenses and addressing cash flow. I'm going to read several statements that people who favor or oppose these proposals might make. For each, please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree. The first is...

[Read list, repeat choices if needed, and code each as:]

- 1) strongly agree
- 2) somewhat agree
- 3) somewhat disagree
- 4) strongly disagree
- 9) other, don't know

[rotate order]

- 41 It is projected that Unit 5 will grow by 300 students per year over the next ten years. We must keep up with growth by building schools and adding classrooms.
42. All students in the District will benefit from adding more classrooms and eliminating crowded conditions.
43. Unit 5 hasn't had an increase in its tax rate to pay for operational expenses since 1983. It just makes sense that an increase is needed now.

44. I'm tired of taxing bodies raising property taxes without giving voters a choice. I'm sending a message and voting 'no' on these proposals.
45. For a homeowner whose home has an appraised or market value of \$150,000, these referenda would require an additional investment of about \$130 a year, or about \$2.50 a week. That's not much money to protect the quality of our schools and our community.
46. I just don't trust the Board of Education to handle additional tax dollars wisely.
47. We've always taken pride in our area for being a good place to live and raise a family. We must continue this tradition by supporting our schools and these proposals.
48. I'm willing to support the District, but these proposals are just asking for too much.
49. We've all seen what happens to rapidly growing cities that don't take care of their schools. We can't let that happen here in Unit 5.

Now that you've answered a lot of questions, I'd like to ask you again about two possible ballot proposals.

[rotate order]

50. [First/Next] is a possible building bond proposal Unit 5 School District that would build two elementary schools, one middle school, expand and renovate Sugar Creek Elementary School, and make renovations to eight other elementary schools. While an amount for this proposal has not been determined, assume for the purposes of this question that it would be a \$90-\$100 million bond proposal. If an election were held today, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose or strongly oppose this referendum? [if undecided probe: which way are you leaning?]

- 1) strongly favor
- 2) favor
- 3) lean favor
- 4) lean oppose
- 5) oppose
- 6) strongly oppose
- 8) undecided
- 9) other, don't know

51. [First/Next] is a proposal by Unit 5 that would raise the District tax rate by ten cents to fund operational expenses and address cash flow. If an election were held today, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose this referendum? [if undecided probe: which way are you leaning?]

- 1) strongly favor
- 2) favor
- 3) lean favor
- 4) lean oppose
- 5) oppose
- 6) strongly oppose
- 8) undecided
- 9) other, don't know

And now, a few final questions for classification purposes.

52. What was the last grade or year of school you completed?

- 1) high school or less
- 2) trade school
- 3) some college
- 4) college degree
- 5) post-graduate
- 6) other, don't know

53. Do any children under the age of eighteen live in your household?

- 1) yes
- 2) no
- 9) other, don't know

[if 'yes' to 53] 54. Do any of these children attend...? [check all that apply]

- 1) a Unit 5 elementary school
- 2) a Unit 5 middle school
- 3) a Unit 5 high school
- 4) private school at any level
- 8) not asked
- 9) none of the above, other, don't know

55. In which of the following age groups are you?

- 1) 18-34
- 2) 35-49
- 3) 50-64
- 4) 65 or over
- 9) other, don't know, refused

56. Of course, I don't need the exact amount, but please tell me which of the following categories best represents your total household income, before taxes, for 2006. Just stop me when I get to your category.

- 1) under \$50,000
- 2) \$50-99,999
- 3) \$100-149,999
- 4) \$150,000-199,999
- 5) \$200,000 or more
- 9) other, don't know

57. Do you own or rent your home?

- 1) own
- 2) rent

58. How long have you lived in Unit 5?

- 1) 0-2 years
- 2) 3-5 years
- 3) 6-10 years
- 4) 11-20 years
- 5) more than 20 years
- 9) other, don't know

59. Gender [*don't ask, code as follows*]

- 1) male
- 2) female