

Unit 5 Referendum Committee Community Telephone Survey November 2007

Overview of Data

In October-November 2007, UNICOM·ARC conducted a telephone survey of Unit 5 residents drawn from a random sample of registered voters in the District. The purpose of the survey was to learn about public perceptions of and priorities for Unit 5, particularly with respect to a possible referendum on behalf of the District.

Five hundred (500) interviews were completed, and a sample of this size yields an overall error margin of $\pm 4.4\%$. This overview provides overall results of questions asked in the survey, in the order in which they were asked.

	%
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?	
right	71.4%
mixed	8.2%
wrong	12.8%
other, don't know	7.6%

	%
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?	
A	23.0%
B	50.2%
C	12.2%
D	4.0%
Fail	.8%
other, don't know	9.8%
A-B	73.2%
D-Fail	4.8%

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

	%	
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?	strongly favor	14.8%
	favor	38.8%
	lean favor	4.2%
	lean oppose	1.0%
	oppose	18.8%
	strongly oppose	15.8%
	undecided	4.2%
	other, don't know	2.4%
	total favor	57.8%
	total oppose	35.6%

	%	
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?	strongly favor	10.8%
	favor	43.0%
	lean favor	2.4%
	lean oppose	1.8%
	oppose	19.4%
	strongly oppose	16.8%
	undecided	4.4%
	other, don't know	1.4%
	total favor	56.2%
	total oppose	38.0%

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.

	<i>strongly agree</i>	strongly/ somewhat agree	strongly/ somewhat disagree	other, don't know
05. Our students receive an excellent education for the taxes we pay to our local school district.	37.4%	81.4%	13.8%	4.8%
06. People like me can't afford to pay higher property taxes, no matter how good the cause.	22.2%	46.2%	51.6%	2.2%
07. Supporting public schools is the best thing we can do to protect the investment we've made in our homes.	43.0%	77.8%	17.2%	5.0%
08. I don't think cities, school districts or community colleges should raise taxes without asking voters for their approval.	70.4%	89.4%	9.6%	1.0%
09. People move into our district because of the reputation of our local school district.	37.0%	72.2%	18.8%	9.0%
10. There's room to cut from our school district's budget before students and staff would feel the impact.	17.6%	45.4%	42.8%	11.8%
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.	43.0%	80.8%	15.4%	3.8%

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.

	<i>excellent</i>	excellent/ good	not so good/ poor	other, don't know
12. Board of Education	9.2%	65.8%	17.8%	16.4%
13. Superintendent and central office administrators	11.2%	64.2%	14.4%	21.4%
14. School principals	23.6%	76.8%	7.2%	16.0%
15. Teachers	36.0%	86.8%	3.2%	10.0%

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.

	<i>excellent</i>	excellent/ good	not so good/ poor	other, don't know
16. Maintaining a safe and secure environment for students and staff	22.0%	86.8%	7.0%	6.2%
17. Keeping up with computers and technology	16.0%	71.2%	9.6%	19.2%
18. Providing school buildings that are in good repair and physical condition.	20.6%	86.4%	8.4%	5.2%
19. Maintaining acceptable class sizes	10.2%	68.2%	20.2%	11.6%
20. Avoiding cuts to programs, curriculum and teaching staff	8.8%	66.2%	19.4%	14.4%
21. Spending tax dollars effectively	7.0%	57.6%	31.2%	11.2%
22. Providing enough classroom and instructional space	9.2%	67.0%	21.6%	11.4%
23. Providing competitive salaries and benefits for teachers	10.8%	67.4%	11.6%	21.0%
24. Making sure that resources are equitably distributed across the District.	6.4%	55.8%	23.0%	21.2%
25. Keeping taxes affordable	5.2%	59.8%	35.8%	4.4%

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

	excellent	excellent/ good	not so good/poor	other, don't know
26. Communicating with area residents	7.8%	58.8%	35.6%	5.6%
27. Asking for public input	10.2%	58.2%	34.0%	7.8%
28. Responding to public input	5.0%	56.2%	32.2%	11.6%

	%	
29. From what you know, which of the following best describes Unit 5's financial condition?	has more money than it needs	8.8%
	has just enough money	42.4%
	needs additional revenue	39.4%
	other, don't know	9.4%

		%
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?	add more	7.8%
	maintain level	49.8%
	budget shortfalls/cuts	22.6%
	other, don't know	19.8%

		%
31. To the best of your knowledge is student enrollment in Unit 5 increasing, staying relatively stable, or decreasing?	increasing	89.0%
	remaining stable	6.0%
	decreasing	.6%
	other, don't know	4.4%

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.

	<i>top priority (7)</i>	<i>high priority (5-7)</i>	4	<i>low priority (1-3)</i>	<i>other, don't know</i>
32. Adding classroom and instructional space	25.0%	72.8%	11.4%	13.2%	2.6%
33. Improving transportation	11.0%	50.8%	18.2%	25.4%	5.6%
34. Adding teachers and staff to keep up with growing enrollment	34.6%	82.4%	7.2%	8.0%	2.4%
35. Keeping computers and educational technology up to date.	36.4%	85.0%	7.2%	5.0%	2.8%
36. Increasing technology training for teachers and staff	23.8%	75.4%	9.8%	10.2%	4.6%
37. Reinstating cuts made to curriculum	14.4%	57.8%	14.2%	17.4%	10.6%
38. Improving safety and security at various buildings	33.0%	73.4%	8.4%	15.0%	3.2%
39. Reducing class sizes in many District buildings	21.0%	63.8%	12.2%	18.0%	6.0%
40. Reinstating staff that have been cut in recent years	13.6%	55.0%	14.8%	21.4%	8.8%

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.

	<i>strongly agree</i>	strongly/ somewhat agree	strongly/ somewhat disagree	other, don't know
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.	37.2%	78.6%	19.2%	2.2%
42. All students in the District will benefit from adding more classrooms and eliminating crowded conditions.	39.6%	79.0%	19.6%	1.4%
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.	21.8%	57.2%	38.2%	4.6%
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.	28.4%	47.0%	49.2%	3.8%
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	30.2%	65.8%	31.8%	2.4%
46. I just don't trust the Board of Education to handle additional tax dollars wisely.	19.4%	40.4%	54.0%	5.6%
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.	45.0%	82.8%	15.2%	2.0%
48. I'm willing to support the District, but these proposals are just asking for too much.	24.2%	51.8%	44.2%	4.0%
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.	48.6%	81.8%	15.8%	2.4%

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

		%
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?	strongly favor	20.0%
	favor	37.2%
	lean favor	3.6%
	lean oppose	.6%
	oppose	16.6%
	strongly oppose	17.8%
	undecided	2.4%
	other, don't know	1.8%
	total favor	60.8%
	total oppose	35.0%

		%
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?	strongly favor	16.0%
	favor	41.4%
	lean favor	1.4%
	lean oppose	1.2%
	oppose	18.8%
	strongly oppose	17.4%
	undecided	1.8%
	other, don't know	2.0%
	total favor	58.8%
	total oppose	37.4%

Classification questions

		%
52. Education	high school or less	18.2%
	trade school	2.0%
	some college	18.4%
	college degree	35.4%
	post-graduate	25.2%
	other, don't know	.8%

		%
53. Do any children under the age of eighteen live in your household?	yes	37.0%
	no	63.0%
	other, don't know	.0%

		%
55. Age	18-34	9.4%
	35-49	30.8%
	50-64	35.8%
	65 or over	23.4%
	other, don't know	.6%

		%
56. Income	under \$50,000	14.8%
	\$50-99,999	38.6%
	\$100-149,999	23.8%
	\$150-199,999	5.0%
	\$200,000 or more	2.6%
	other, don't know	15.2%

		%
57. Do you own or rent your home?	own	96.0%
	rent	4.0%
	other, don't know	.0%

		%
58. How long have you lived in Unit 5?	0-2 years	4.8%
	3-5 years	9.0%
	6-10 years	13.2%
	11-20 years	21.4%
	more than 20 years	51.4%
	other, don't know	.2%

		%
59. Gender	male	50.0%
	female	50.0%