



# Shaping the Future of Our Classrooms: What Coloradans Think About Public Education

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## CASB 2025 Annual Convention





# Colorado Public Education Opinion Survey

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October 2025



# Survey Goals & Objectives



Our 2025 Colorado Public Education Opinion Survey covered a broad range of topics related to voter perceptions of the state's public education system. The survey examined opinions on the overall direction and effectiveness of Colorado's public schools, approval of local district leadership, and public trust in how schools manage their financial resources.

It also examined attitudes toward school funding, teacher salaries, and whether district budgets are sufficient to provide a quality education.

Respondents were asked to identify the biggest challenges schools face, including attracting and keeping teachers, preparing students for future careers, and enhancing core academic instruction.



# Survey Goals & Objectives



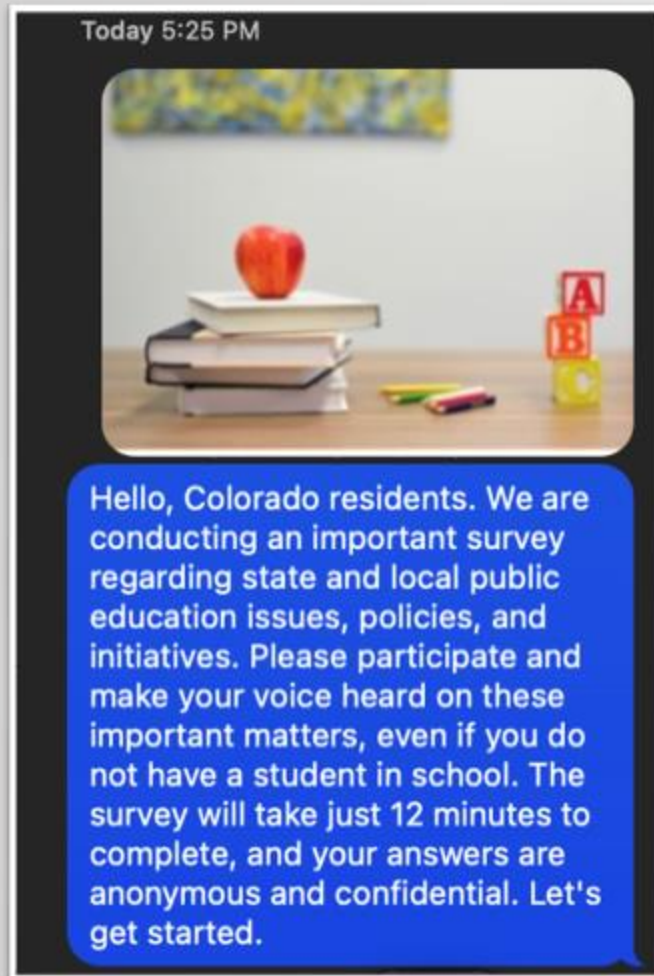
Beyond system performance, the survey examined attitudes toward key education policy areas and programs. It gauged voter awareness and support for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, the state's Universal Preschool (UPK) initiative, and the importance of college preparation versus career training.

Additional topics included opinions on school closures related to declining enrollment, the perceived value and cost of a four-year college degree, and factors affecting the quality of local schools. The survey also collected feedback on what voters believe schools should focus on—such as workforce readiness, basic academics, student well-being, and keeping politics out of classrooms.

Any questions regarding this survey and methodology can be directed to David Flaherty at [dflaherty@magellanstrategies.com](mailto:dflaherty@magellanstrategies.com) or Courtney Sievers at [csievers@magellanstrategies.com](mailto:csievers@magellanstrategies.com). You can also call our office at 303-861-8585.



# Survey Overview



Magellan Strategies is pleased to present the results of an online survey of 1,078 Colorado voters regarding public education issues and policies. The interviews were conducted from October 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

The overall survey responses have a margin of error of +/- 2.98% at the 95% confidence interval. Population subgroups will have a higher margin of error than the overall sample.

The survey data were weighted to be representative of Colorado's voter registration demographics. Magellan Strategies paid for this survey. The questions were not shared or developed by any other individuals or organizations.

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## Magellan Strategies Colorado Voter Registration and Past Election Turnout Report

Congress			2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
District 1	564,322	12.3%	376,614	11.5%	164,050	9.7%	284,718	11.3%	166,994	10.7%	402,100	12.2%
District 2	585,458	12.8%	442,946	13.5%	249,747	14.8%	357,243	14.2%	228,701	14.7%	443,136	13.5%
District 3	588,323	12.9%	416,657	12.7%	225,161	13.3%	332,651	13.2%	212,676	13.7%	414,471	12.6%
District 4	614,017	13.4%	471,304	14.4%	262,545	15.5%	359,940	14.3%	235,596	15.1%	435,671	13.3%
District 5	578,570	12.7%	385,817	11.8%	192,836	11.4%	286,072	11.4%	169,560	10.9%	379,527	11.6%
District 6	528,245	11.6%	369,596	11.3%	187,446	11.1%	283,639	11.3%	175,475	11.3%	426,390	13.0%
District 7	598,765	13.1%	454,447	13.9%	258,025	15.2%	367,399	14.6%	232,450	14.9%	436,096	13.3%
District 8	512,859	11.2%	352,885	10.8%	152,584	9.0%	246,055	9.8%	136,561	8.8%	346,068	10.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570,559</b>		<b>3,270,266</b>		<b>1,692,394</b>		<b>2,517,717</b>		<b>1,558,013</b>		<b>3,283,459</b>	

Sex			2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
Female	2,308,098	50.5%	1,702,135	52.0%	884,325	52.3%	1,303,748	51.8%	804,985	52.0%	1,679,090	51.9%
Male	2,262,462	49.5%	1,568,131	48.0%	808,069	47.7%	1,213,969	48.2%	744,082	48.0%	1,553,523	48.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570,559</b>		<b>3,270,266</b>		<b>1,692,394</b>		<b>2,517,717</b>		<b>1,549,067</b>		<b>3,232,613</b>	

Age			2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
18-34	1,445,243	31.6%	834,188	25.5%	235,166	13.9%	495,111	19.7%	214,380	13.8%	872,423	26.6%
35-44	846,140	18.5%	579,080	17.7%	245,792	14.5%	419,122	16.6%	224,716	14.4%	565,220	17.2%
45-54	661,645	14.5%	503,802	15.4%	259,175	15.3%	408,955	16.2%	241,398	15.5%	523,354	15.9%
55-64	636,924	13.9%	513,478	15.7%	323,679	19.1%	462,301	18.4%	317,119	20.4%	569,709	17.4%
65+	980,607	21.5%	839,718	25.7%	628,582	37.1%	732,228	29.1%	560,400	36.0%	752,753	22.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570,559</b>		<b>3,270,266</b>		<b>1,692,394</b>		<b>2,517,717</b>		<b>1,558,013</b>		<b>3,283,459</b>	

Party			2024		2023		2022		2021		2020	
Unaffiliated	2,243,257	49.1%	1,476,570	45.2%	676,249	40.0%	1,017,709	40.4%	566,548	36.4%	1,278,947	39.0%
Democrat	1,170,504	25.6%	900,176	27.5%	507,266	30.0%	761,772	30.3%	490,571	31.5%	1,017,590	31.0%
Republican	1,049,884	23.0%	830,042	25.4%	489,847	28.9%	705,537	28.0%	485,091	31.1%	936,440	28.5%
Libertarian	45,195	1.0%	27,746	0.8%	11,451	0.7%	21,429	0.9%	10,923	0.7%	34,130	1.0%
Other	61,719	1.4%	35,732	1.1%	7,581	0.4%	11,270	0.4%	4,880	0.3%	16,352	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,570,559</b>		<b>3,270,266</b>		<b>1,692,394</b>		<b>2,517,717</b>		<b>1,558,013</b>		<b>3,283,459</b>	

# Colorado Congressional Districts



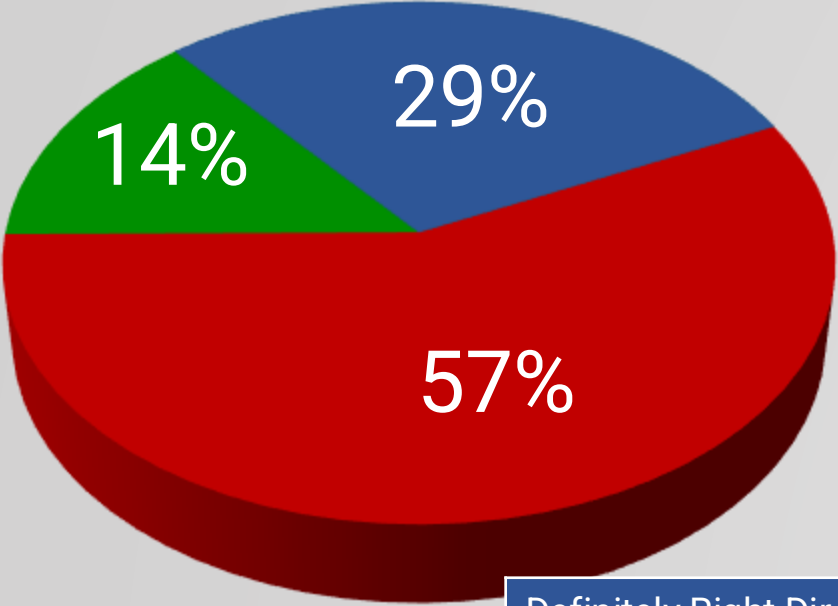
# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



# General Opinions of Public Education & Local School District Job Approval Educating Students

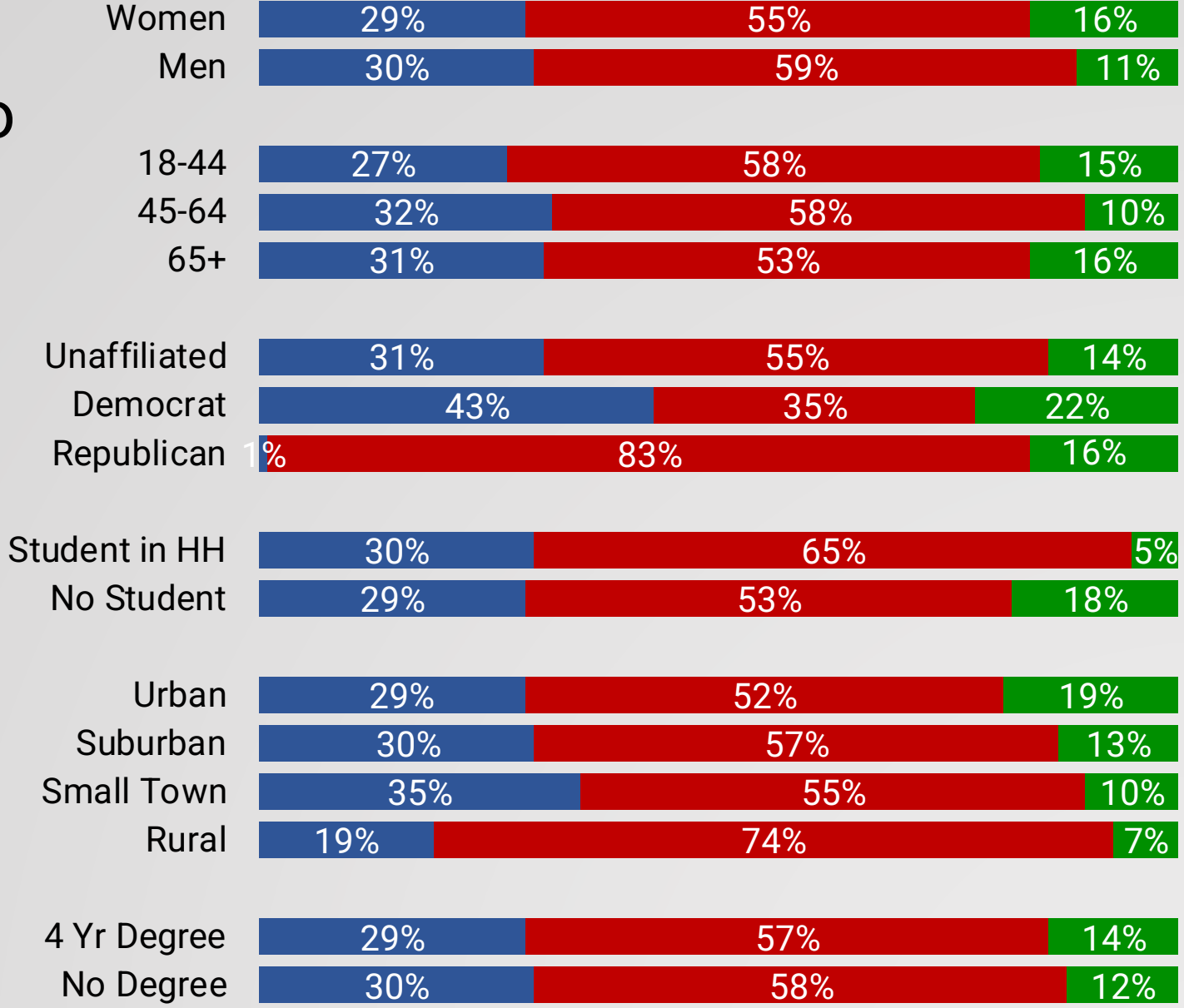


# Do you think the public education system in Colorado is headed in the right direction, or do you feel it is on the wrong track?



■ Right Direction  
■ Wrong Track  
■ No Opinion

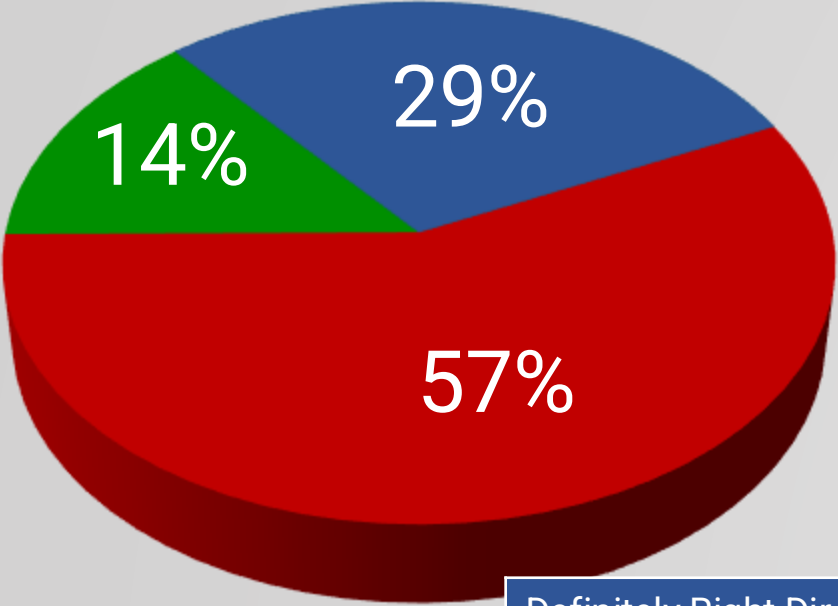
Definitely Right Dir.	5%
Probably Right Dir.	24%
Definitely Wrong Trk.	36%
Probably Wrong Trk.	21%



■ Right Direction   
 ■ Wrong Track   
 ■ No Opinion

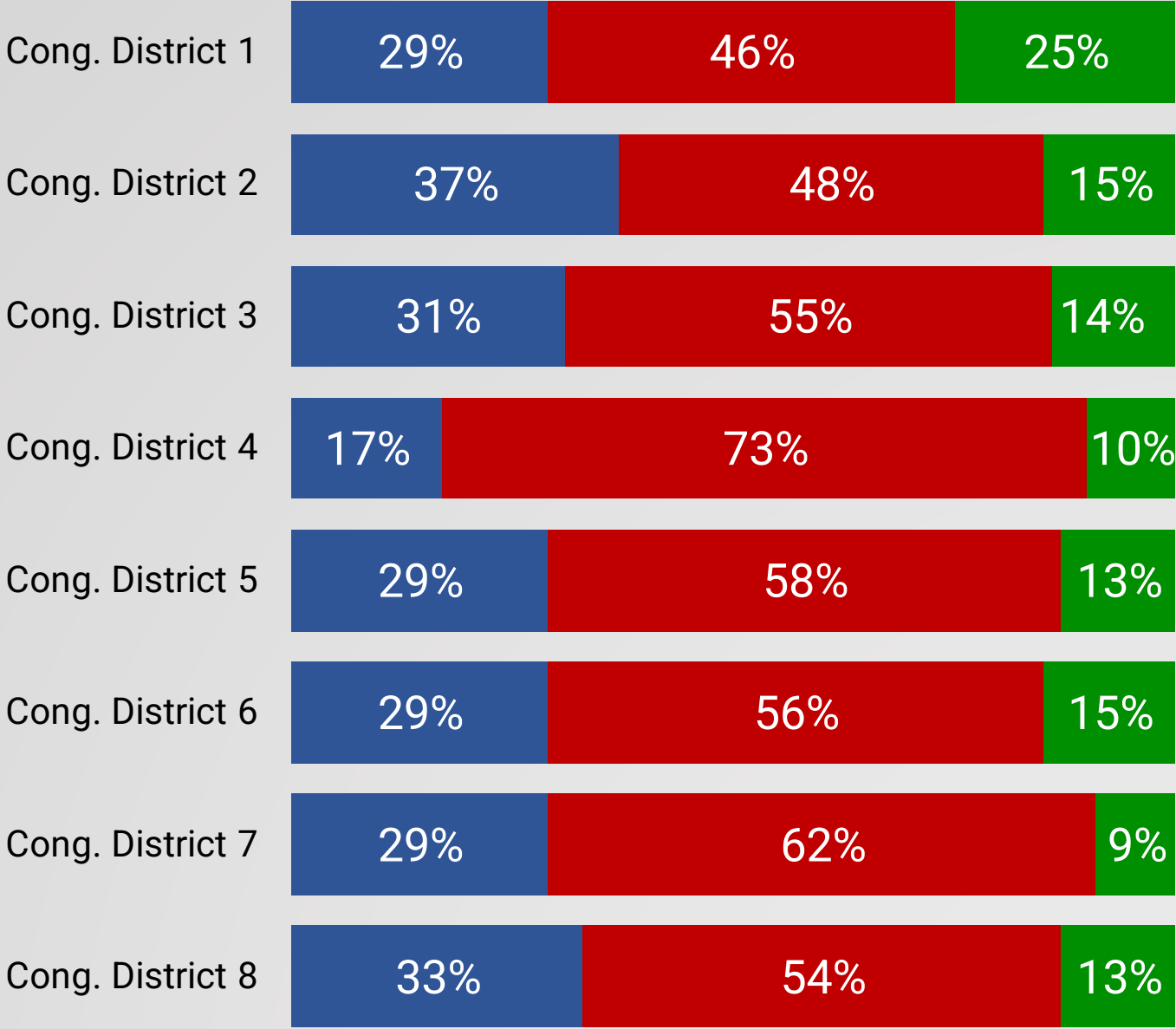


# Do you think the public education system in Colorado is headed in the right direction, or do you feel it is on the wrong track?



Definitely Right Dir.	5%
Probably Right Dir.	24%
Definitely Wrong Trk.	36%
Probably Wrong Trk.	21%

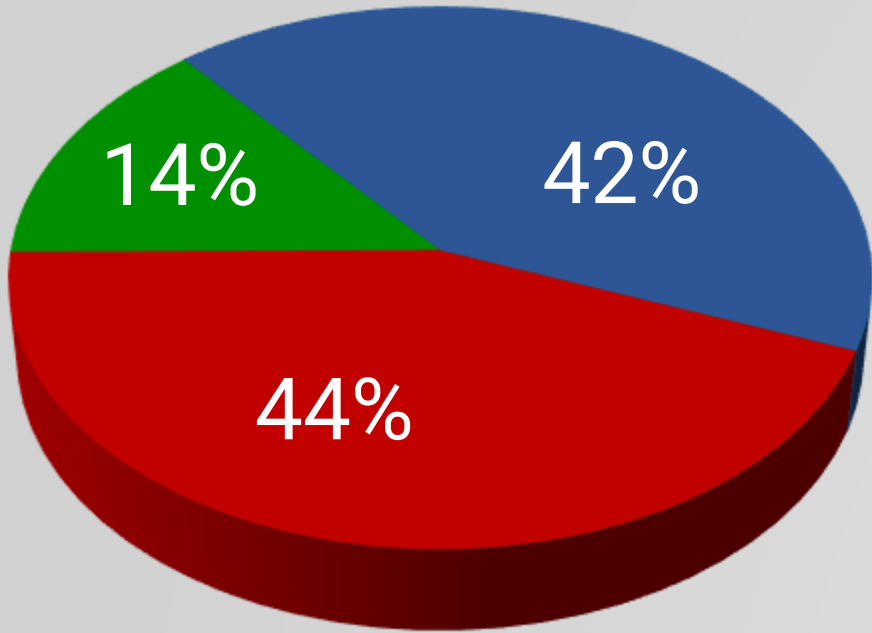
- Right Direction
- Wrong Track
- No Opinion



- Right Direction
- Wrong Track
- No Opinion

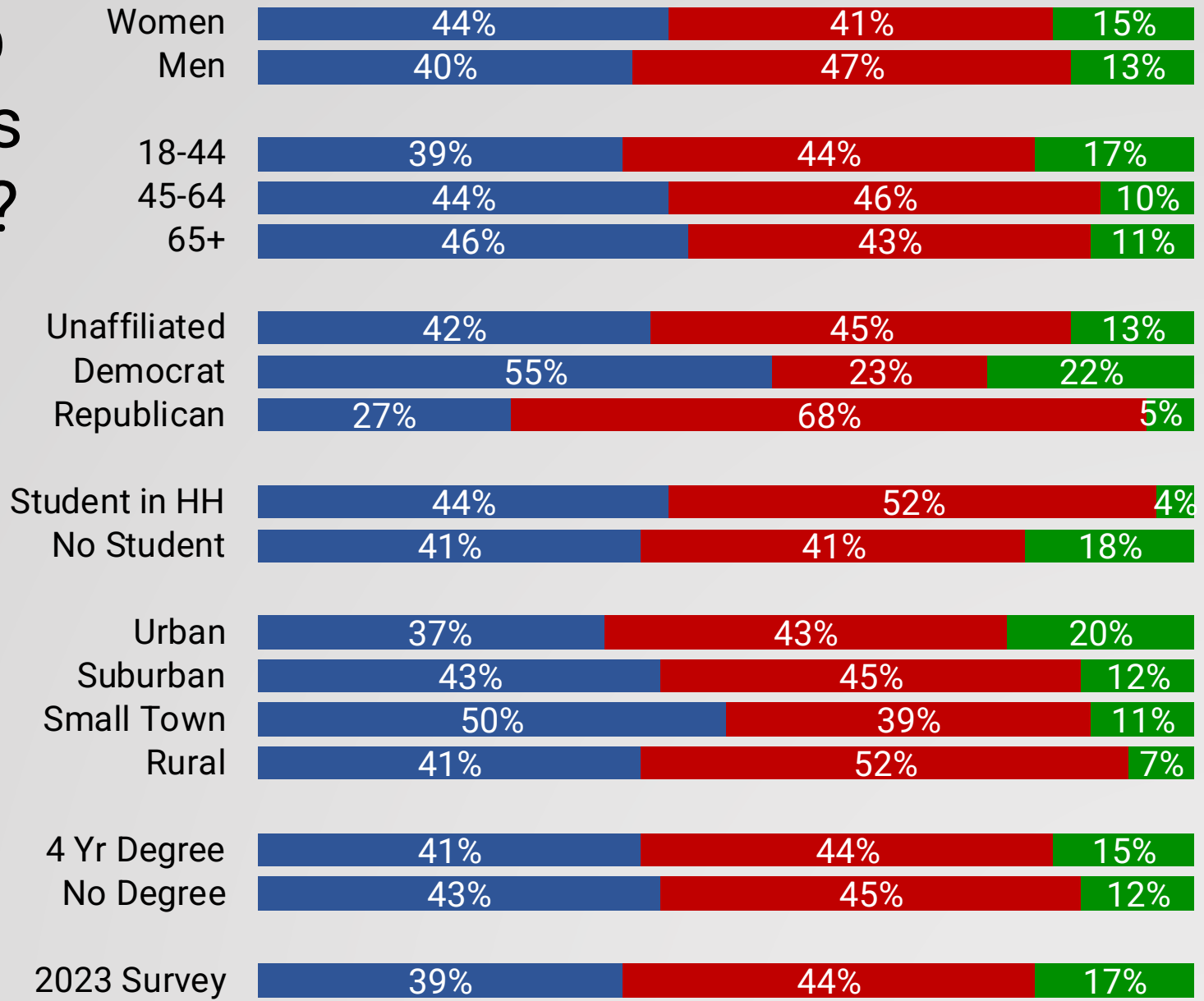


# Do you approve of the job your local school district is doing educating students?



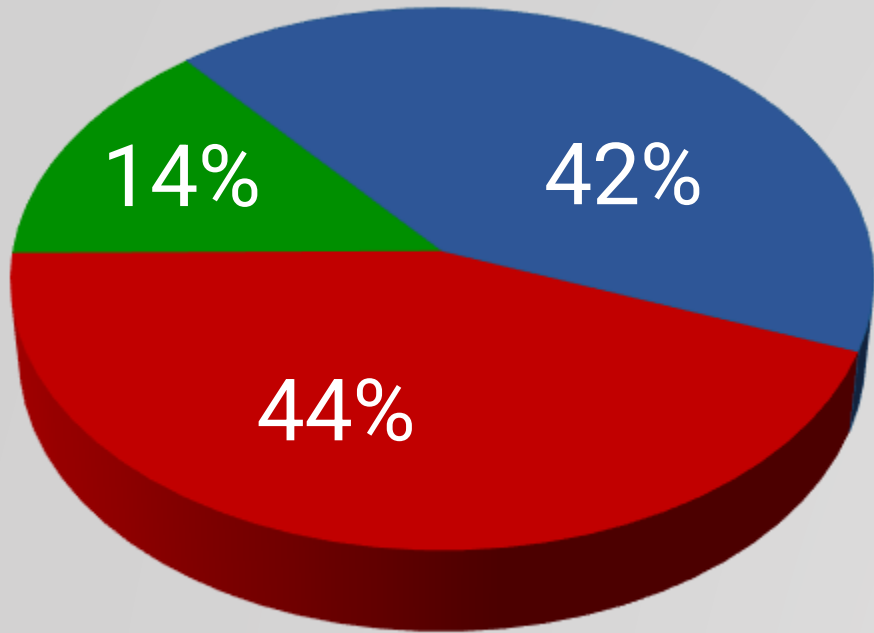
■ Approve  
■ Disapprove  
■ No Opinion

Strongly Approve	12%
Somewhat Approve	30%
Strongly Disapprove	24%
Somewhat Disapprove	20%



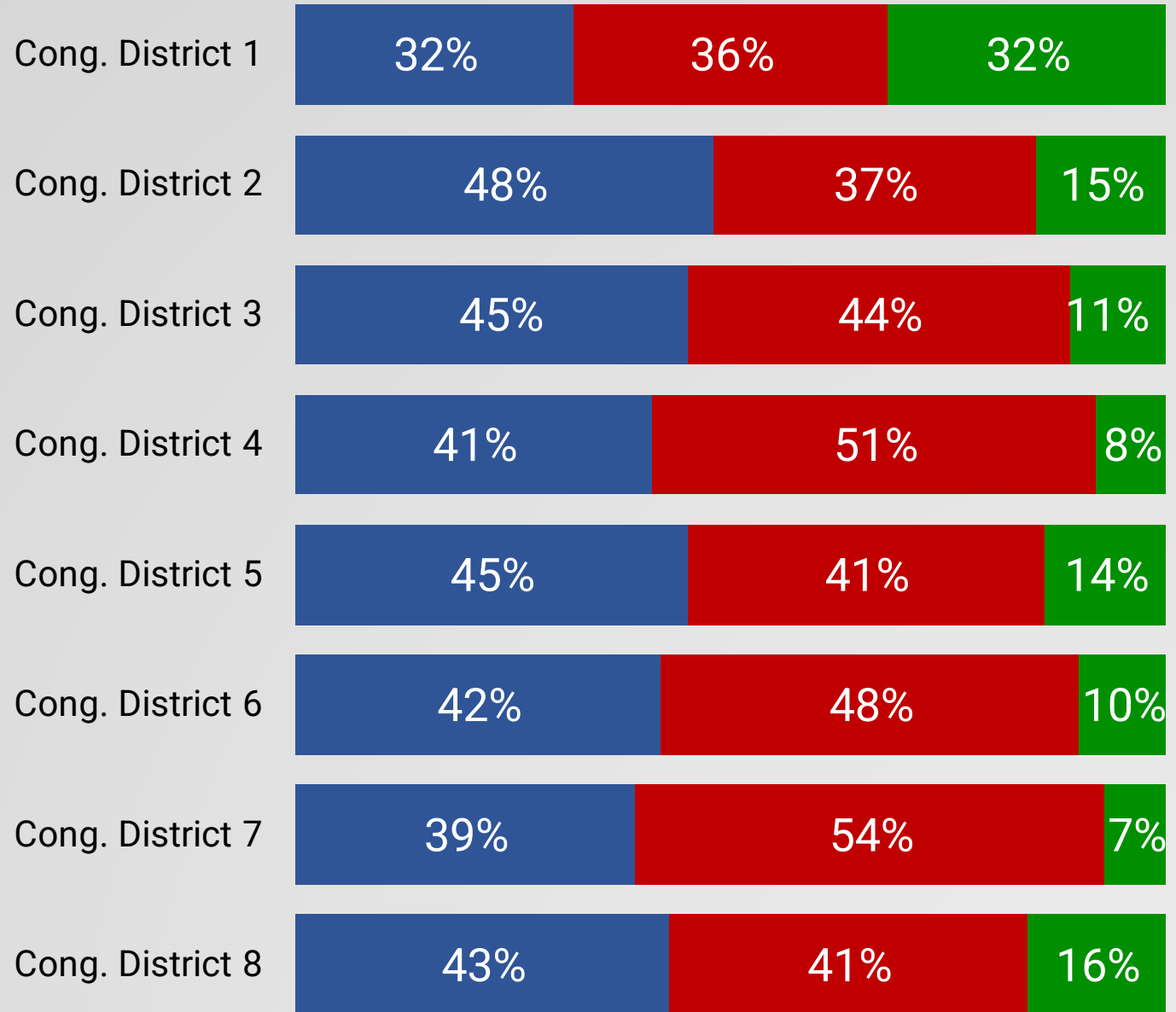
■ Approve    ■ Disapprove    ■ No Opinion

# Do you approve of the job your local school district is doing educating students?



- Approve
- Disapprove
- No Opinion

Strongly Approve	12%
Somewhat Approve	30%
Strongly Disapprove	24%
Somewhat Disapprove	20%



- Approve
- Disapprove
- No Opinion



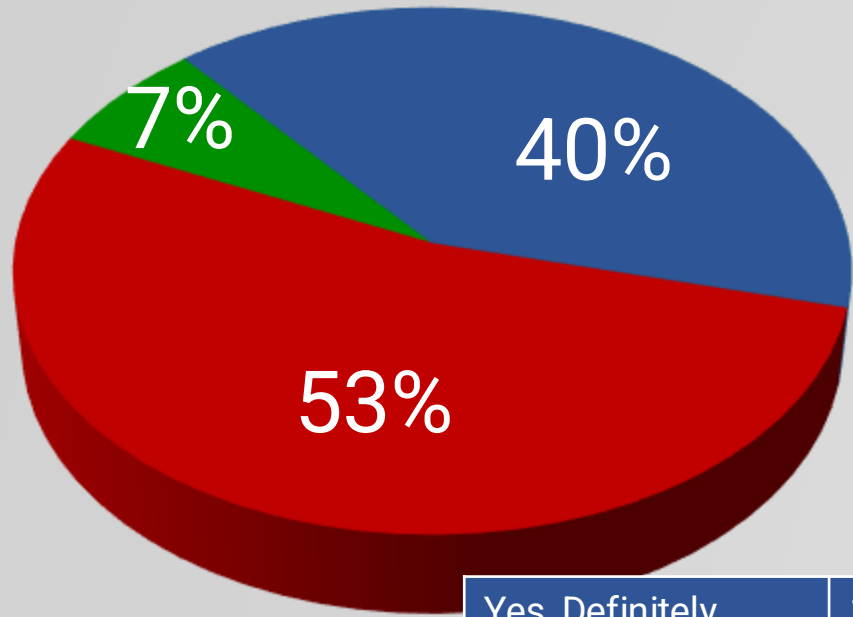
# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



## Opinions of School District Financial Means & Spending Taxpayer Money Wisely

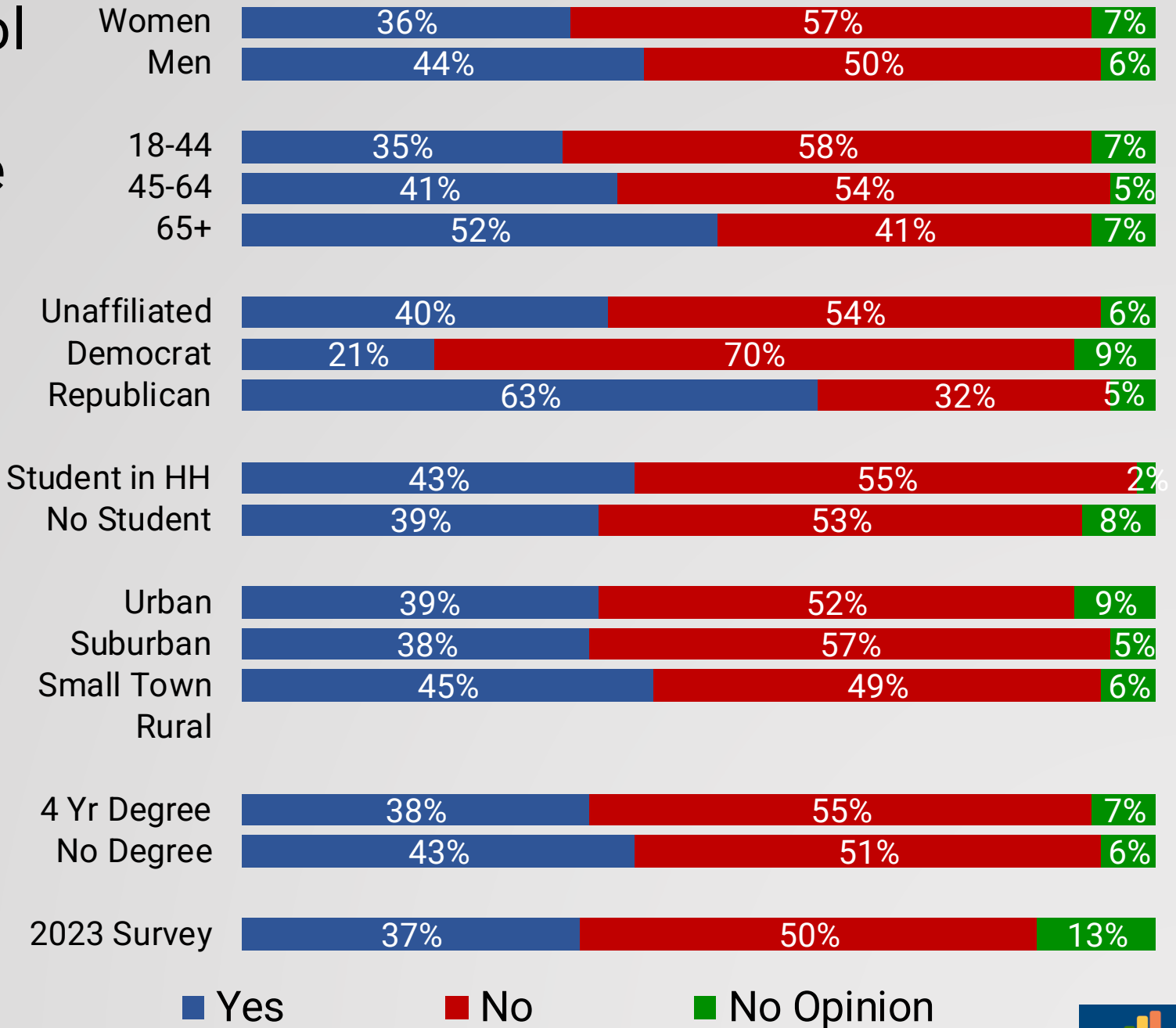


# Do you think your local school district has the financial resources needed to provide students with a good education?

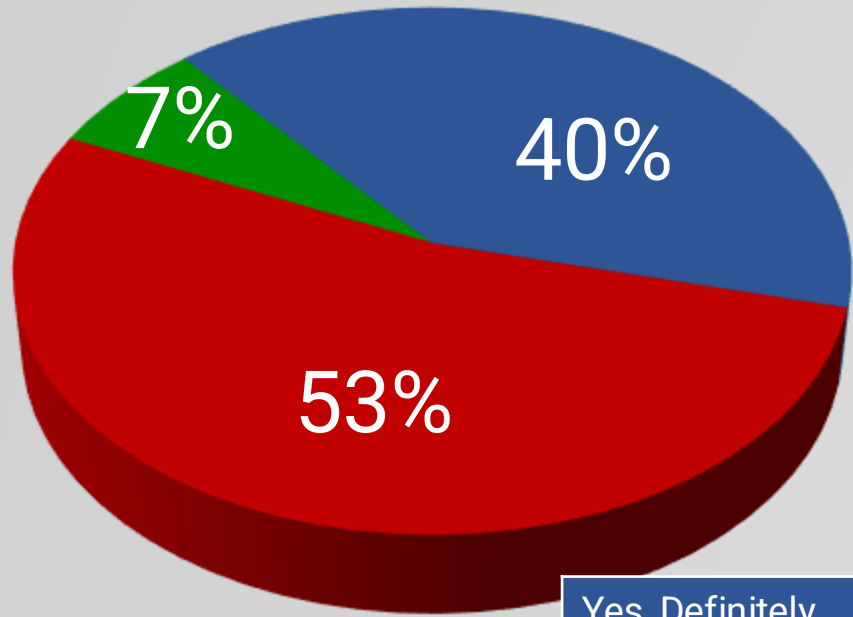


■ Total Yes  
■ Total No  
■ No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	18%
Yes, Probably	22%
No, Definitely Not	24%
No, Probably Not	29%

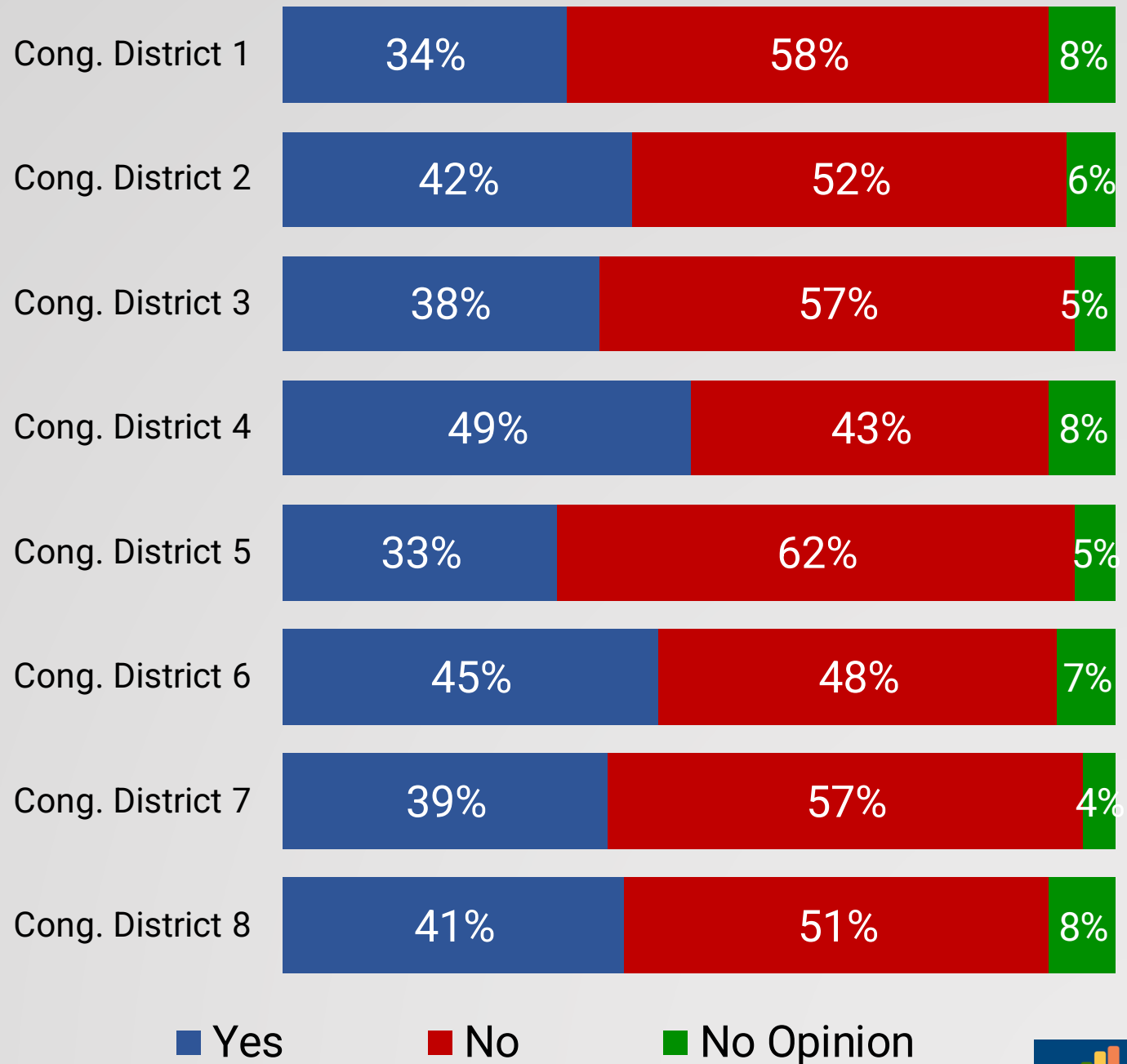


# Do you think your local school district has the financial resources needed to provide students with a good education?

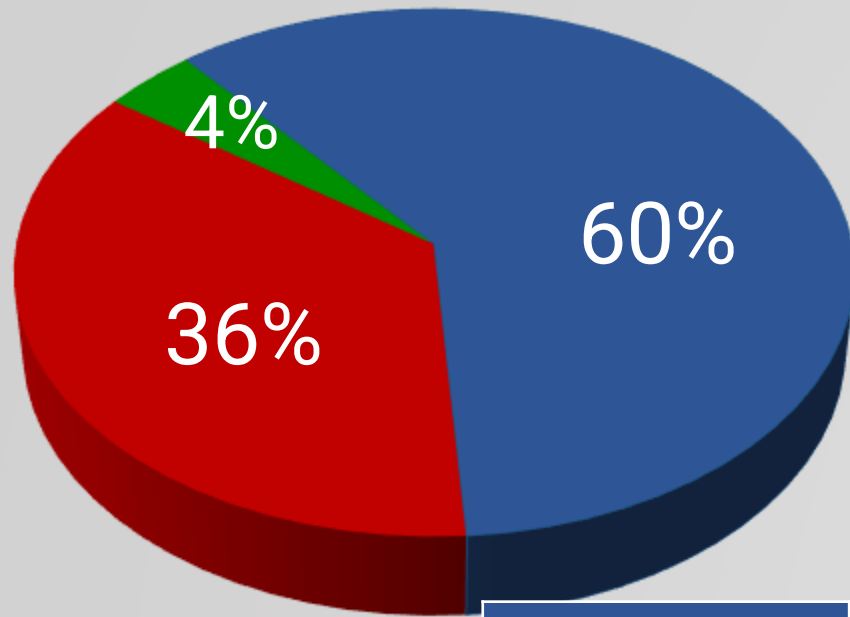


■ Total Yes  
■ Total No  
■ No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	18%
Yes, Probably	22%
No, Definitely Not	24%
No, Probably Not	29%

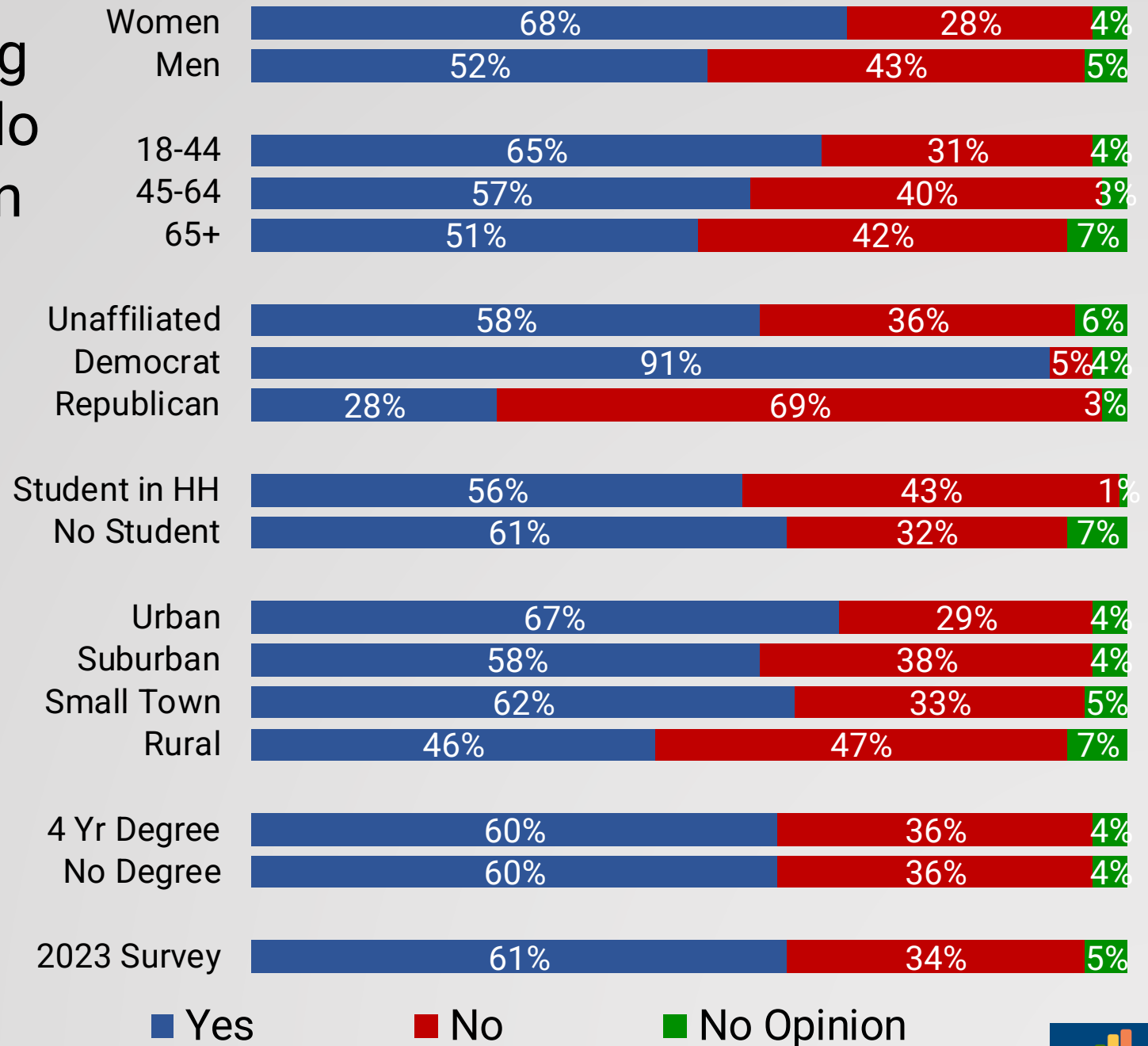


# Do you think additional funding for public education in Colorado will result in a better education for students?

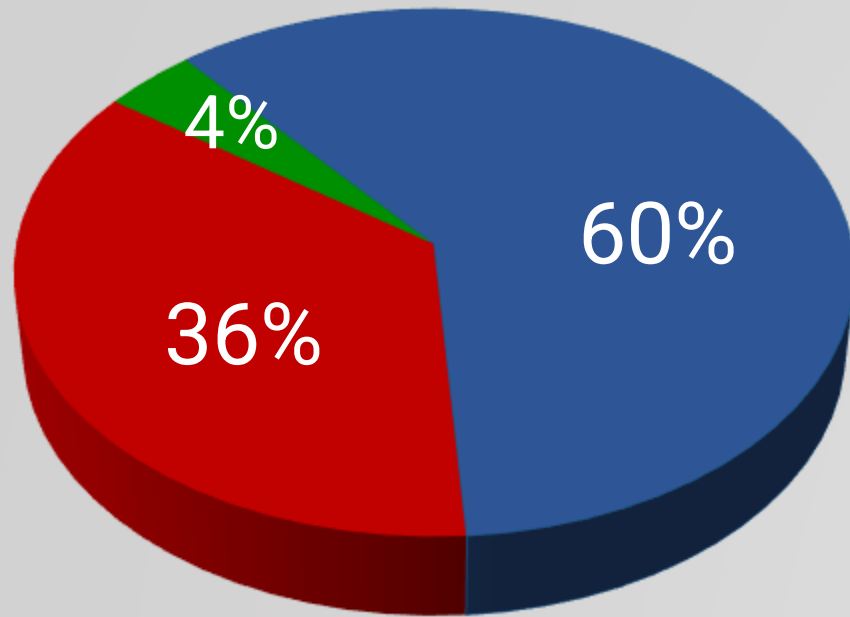


■ Total Yes  
■ Total No  
■ No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	38%
Yes, Probably	22%
No, Definitely Not	18%
No, Probably Not	18%

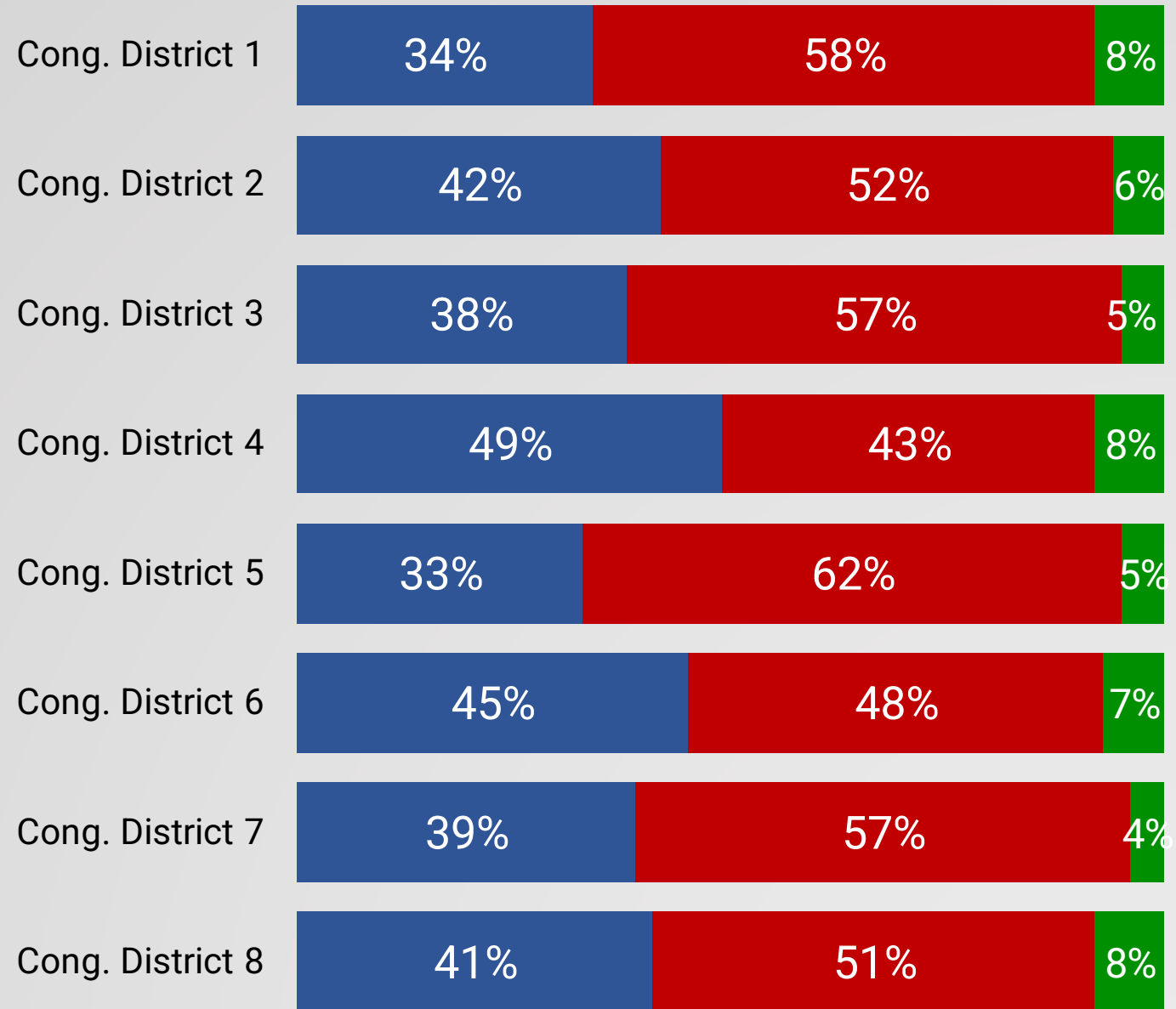


# Do you think additional funding for public education in Colorado will result in a better education for students?



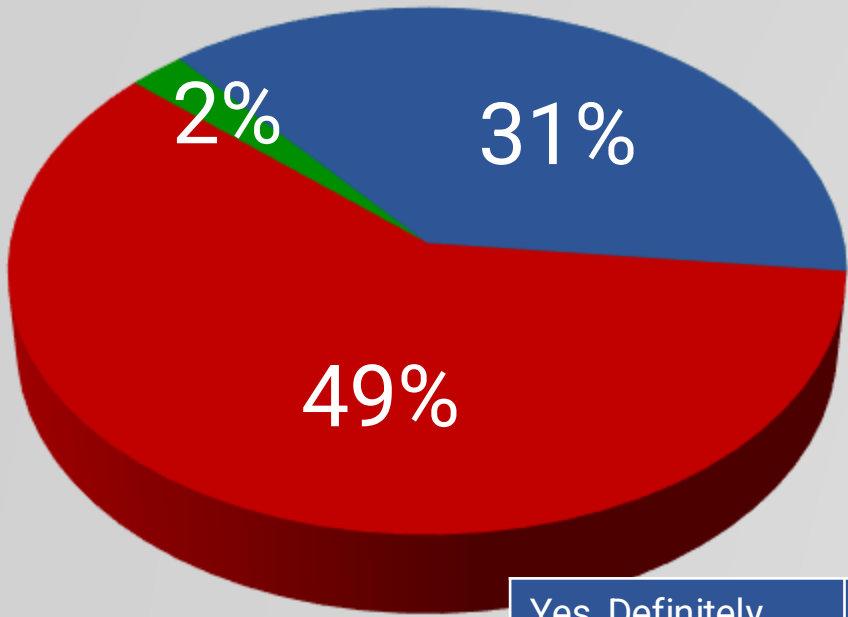
■ Total Yes  
■ Total No  
■ No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	38%
Yes, Probably	22%
No, Definitely Not	18%
No, Probably Not	18%



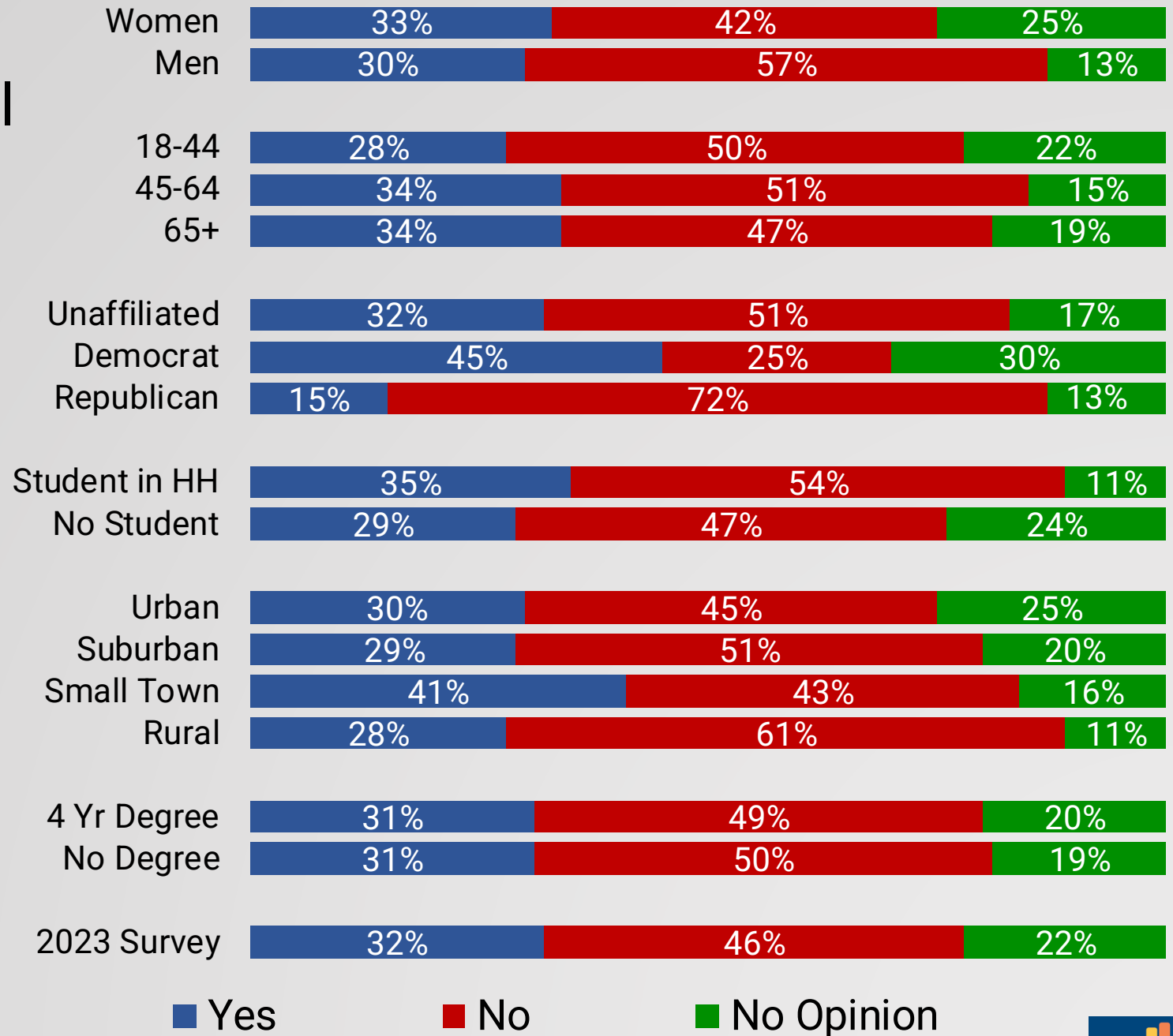
■ Yes      ■ No      ■ No Opinion

# Do you think your school district manages its financial resources efficiently and spends taxpayer money wisely?

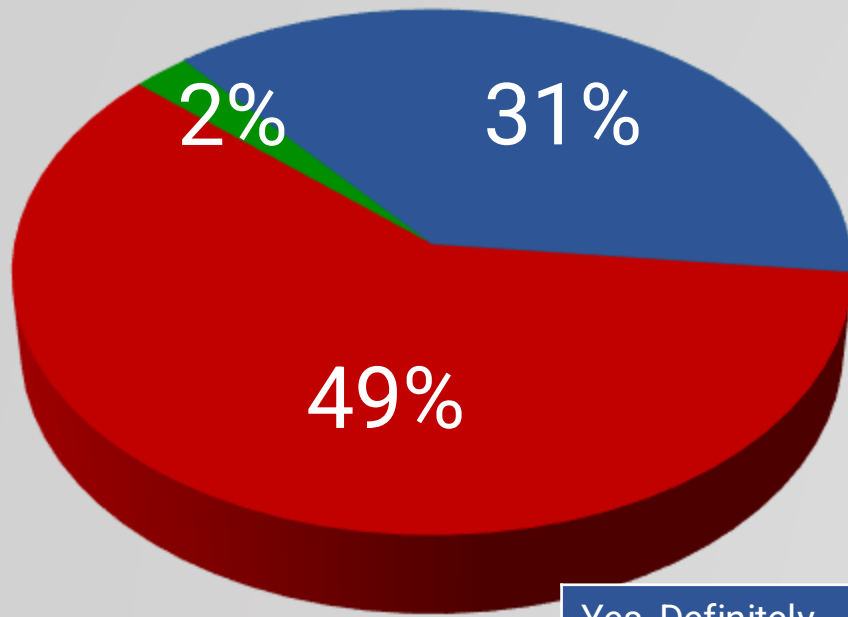


■ Total Yes  
■ Total No  
■ No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	7%
Yes, Probably	24%
No, Definitely Not	25%
No, Probably Not	24%

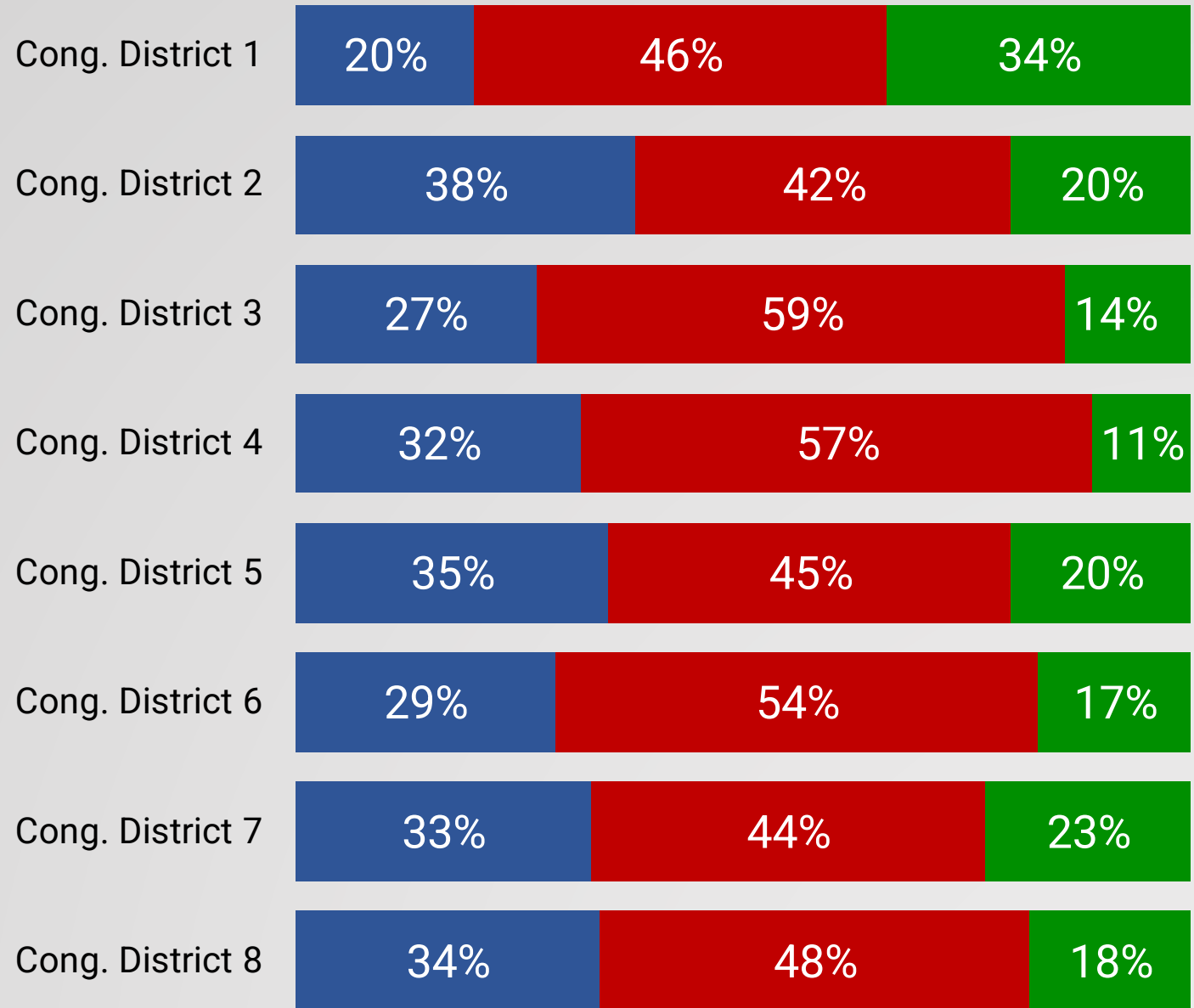


# Do you think your school district manages its financial resources efficiently and spends taxpayer money wisely?



- Total Yes
- Total No
- No Opinion

Yes, Definitely	7%
Yes, Probably	24%
No, Definitely Not	25%
No, Probably Not	24%



- Yes
- No
- No Opinion

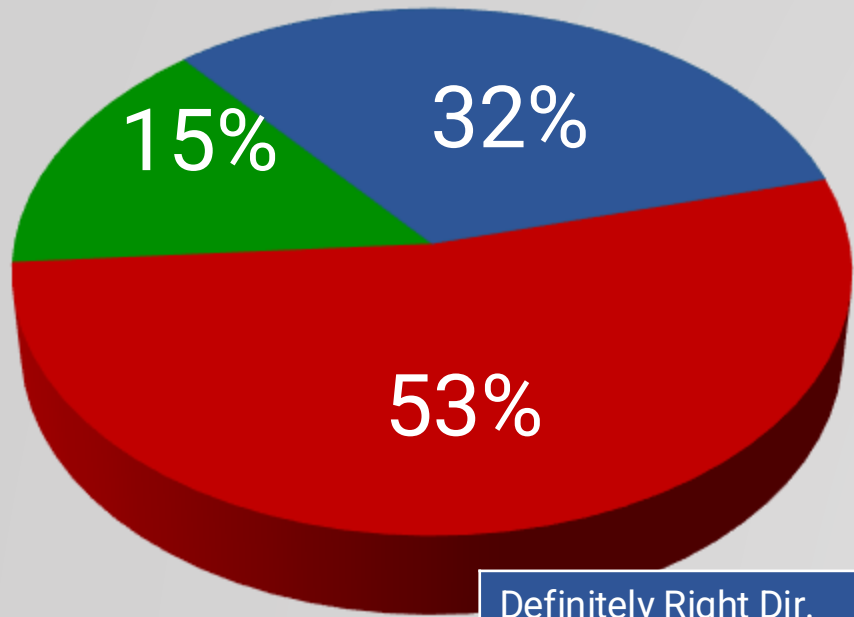
# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



Opinions of School  
District Heading in the  
Right Direction or Off On  
the Wrong Track

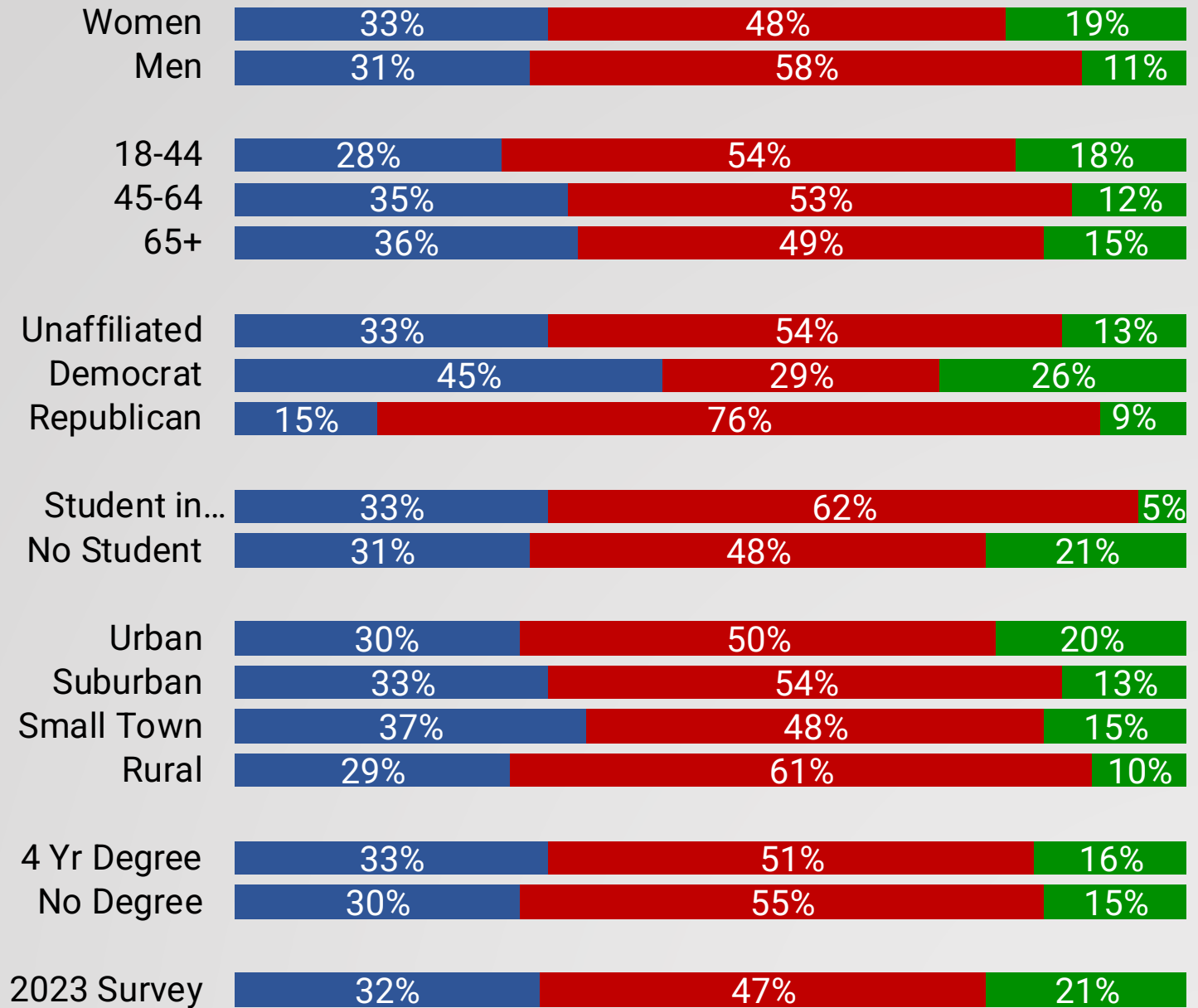


Do you think the public schools in your area are heading in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?



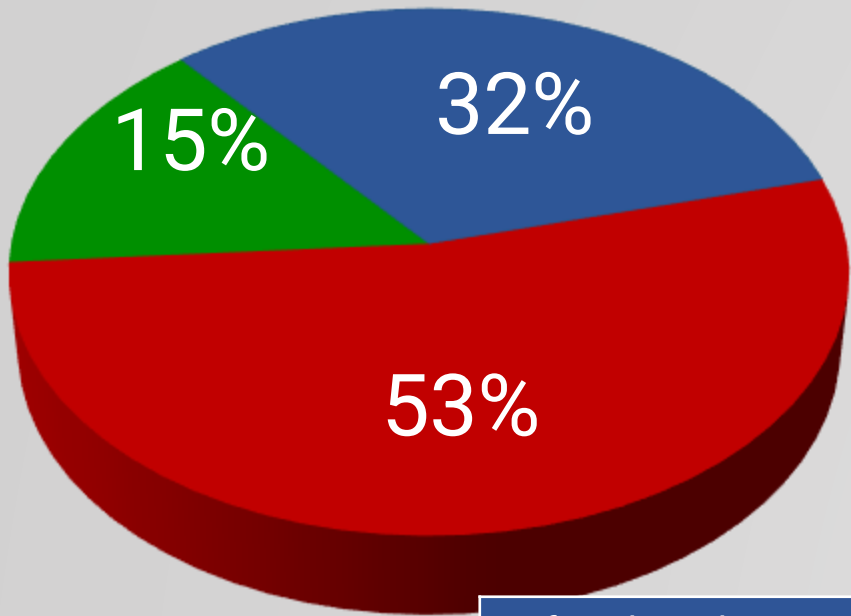
■ Right Direction  
 ■ Wrong Track  
 ■ No Opinion

Definitely Right Dir.	6%
Probably Right Dir.	26%
Definitely Wrong Trk.	28%
Probably Wrong Trk.	25%



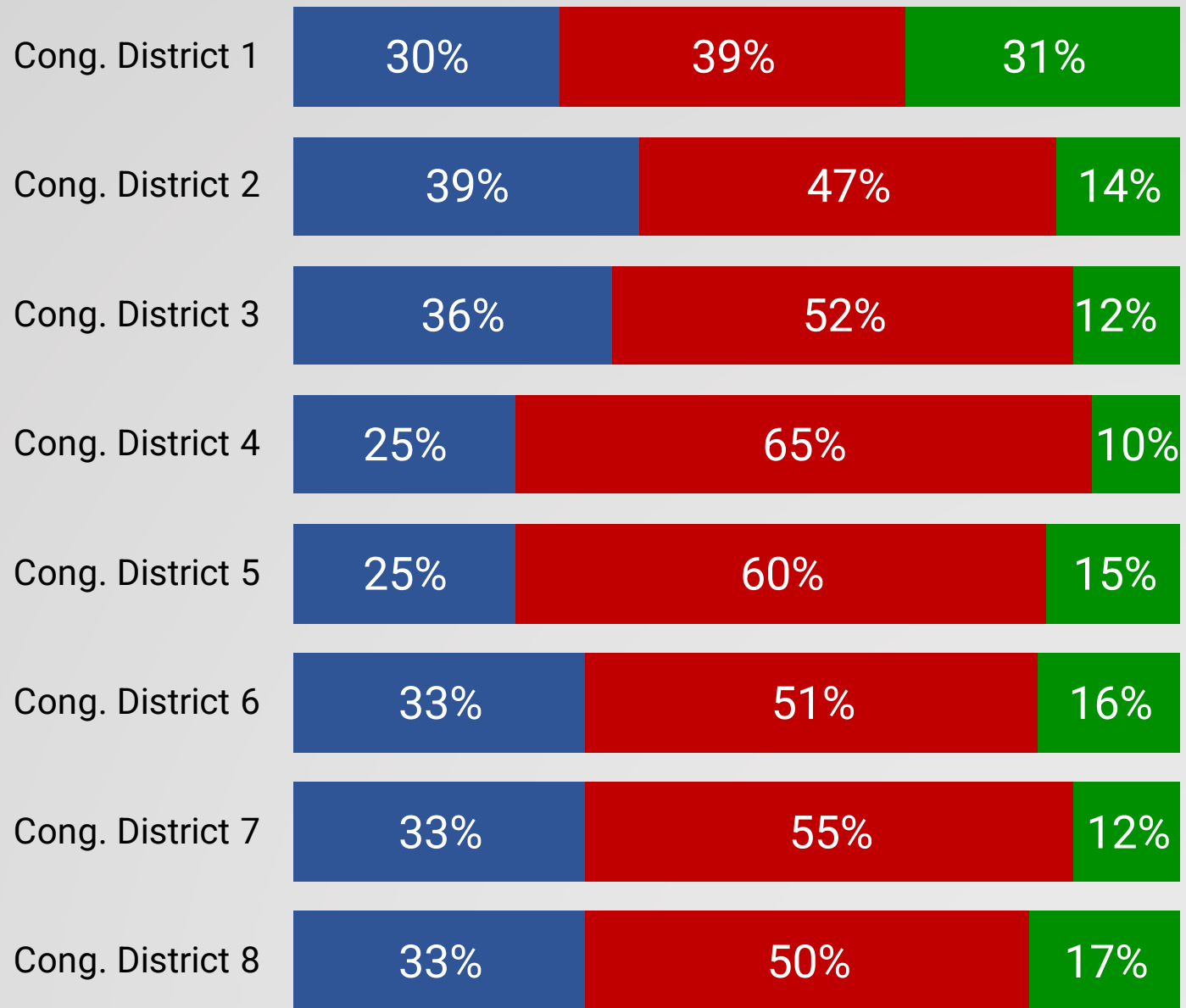
■ Right Direction ■ Wrong Track ■ No Opinion

Do you think the public schools in your area are heading in the right direction, or do you feel they are off on the wrong track?



■ Right Direction  
 ■ Wrong Track  
 ■ No Opinion

Definitely Right Dir.	6%
Probably Right Dir.	26%
Definitely Wrong Trk.	28%
Probably Wrong Trk.	25%



■ Right Direction ■ Wrong Track ■ No Opinion

Reasons why 32% of Coloradans think public schools in their area are headed in the right direction. *Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are headed in the right direction.*

**Strong and Dedicated Teachers and Staff:** Across nearly every county, respondents emphasized teacher quality, dedication, and care for students. Many referenced teachers who “go out of their way for kids,” “prepare students for real life,” and “work hard despite low pay and limited resources.” Examples include passionate teachers, open communication with parents, and educators who go above and beyond to support students’ learning and emotional growth. Some respondents also praised administrators and school boards that support educators, as well as teacher collaboration and professional development.

**Improved Student Outcomes and Opportunities:** Respondents noted rising graduation rates, higher test scores, and expanded academic and extracurricular opportunities. Many noted new career and technical education, college-prep, STEM, and trade programs. Some praised smaller class sizes, student well-being initiatives, and inclusive or bilingual education options. Others mentioned that their children are “thriving academically and socially” or that “students have access to many different opportunities to learn.”



Reasons why 32% of Coloradans think public schools in their area are headed in the right direction. *Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are headed in the right direction.*

**Leadership, Community Support, and Responsible Use of Resources:** A key third theme was effective local leadership and visible community investment. Respondents highlighted school board leadership, bond and mill levy passage, transparency, and new facilities and upgrades as signs of positive progress. Others focused on parent involvement, PTA participation, and strong community-school partnerships. Several credited balanced, non-politicized boards or praised schools that “stay focused on education rather than politics.”



Reasons why 53% of Coloradans think public schools in their area are on the wrong track. *Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are on the wrong track.*

**Too Much Politics and Ideology in Schools:** The most common theme across the state was frustration with perceived political or social agendas in classrooms. Many respondents described schools as emphasizing “woke ideology,” “DEI,” “gender identity,” “transgender education,” or “indoctrination” instead of focusing on traditional academics. Both conservative and moderate respondents expressed concern that schools are “teaching what to think instead of how to think,” and that topics like sexual orientation or political beliefs have no place in K–12 instruction. There were also calls to “get politics out of the classroom” and to “return to teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic.”

**Poor Academic Performance and Declining Standards:** Many comments focused on decreasing test scores, reduced rigor, and students being unprepared for their grades. People pointed out that students struggle with reading and math, do not meet grade-level standards, and are passed along without mastering skills. Some blamed excessive reliance on technology, too many standardized tests, or curriculum changes that “dumb down” education. Others expressed concerns about large class sizes, lack of discipline, and teachers being overextended, making it hard to ensure consistent learning.

Reasons why 53% of Coloradans think public schools in their area are on the wrong track. *Please describe the reasons why you think public schools in your area are on the wrong track.*

**Mismanagement, Administrative Bloat, and Teacher Retention Issues:** A third key theme focused on inefficiency and poor governance in school systems. Many mentioned too many administrators and insufficient classroom resources, stating that “money never reaches the students.” Others pointed out teacher turnover, low pay, burnout, and unstable leadership as major factors harming school quality. Several respondents said school boards are too political or self-serving, while others criticized the emphasis on new facilities or non-classroom spending.



# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey

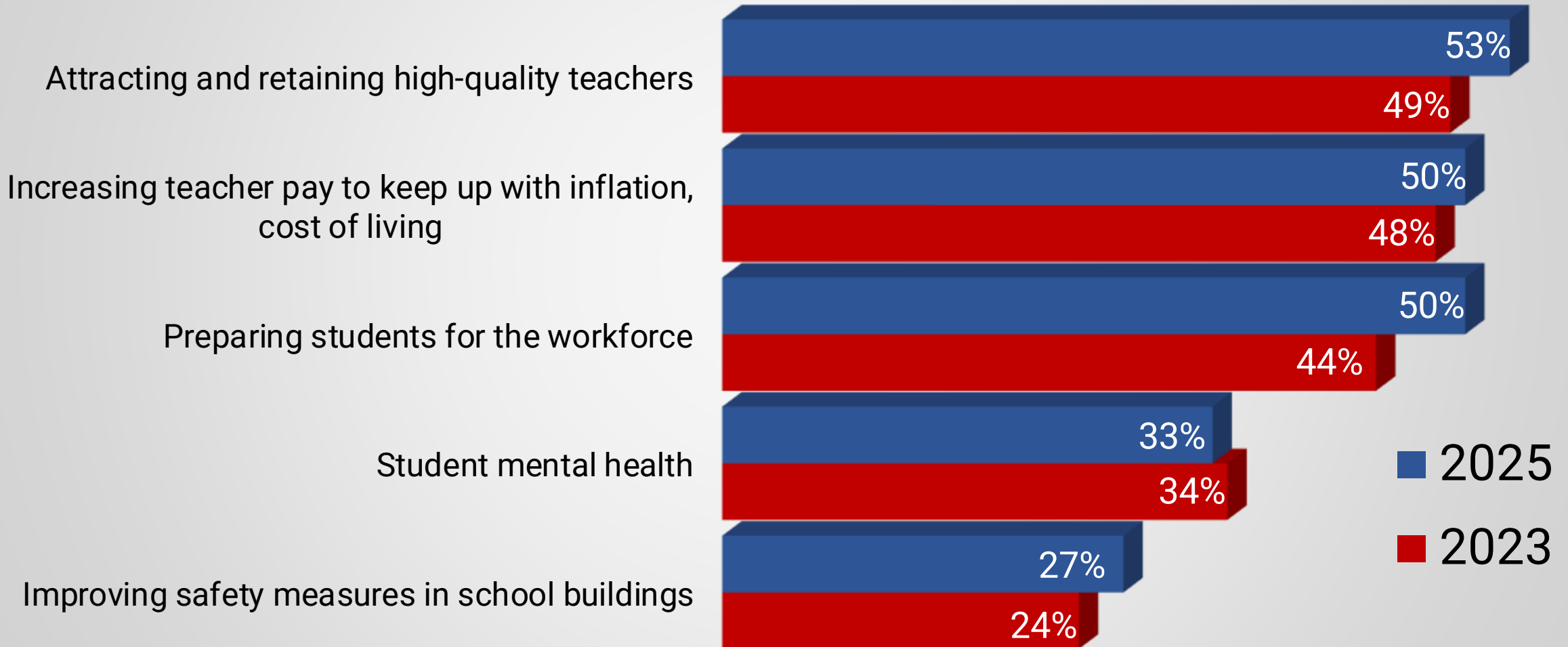


# Opinions on School District Priorities



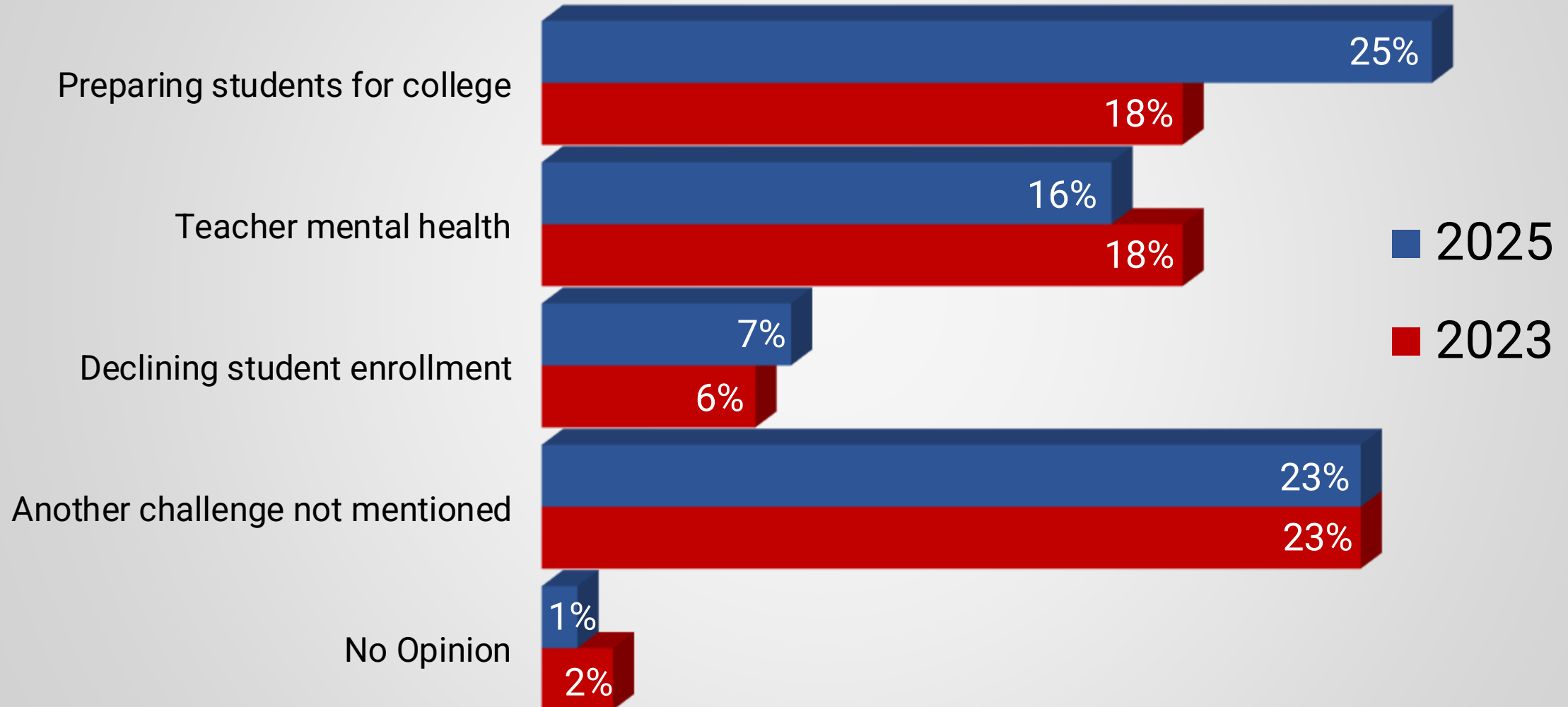
# Ranking School District Priorities

Among the following challenges facing public schools in Colorado, please choose three that you think school districts should be addressing the most.



# Ranking School District Priorities

Among the following challenges facing public schools in Colorado, please choose three that you think school districts should be addressing the most.



# A Summary of Responses Among the 23% of Residents Who Answered “Another Challenge Not Mentioned”

**Teaching Real-Life and Practical Skills:** The most common “other” response theme was a demand for life-preparation education. Respondents often mentioned financial literacy, budgeting, taxes, cooking, home economics, trades, shop, and basic job skills. Comments such as “teach kids about real life,” “bring back home, etc.,” and “prepare students for life after high school” appeared in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Several also noted that not every student plans to attend college, underscoring the need for career and technical education (CTE) and trade pathways.

**Removing Politics and Ideology from Classrooms:** The second most common theme focused on keeping education neutral and free of politics. Dozens of respondents expressed ideas like “get politics out of schools,” “stop woke/DEI/CRT ideology,” or “remove gender and sexual orientation topics.” On the other side, a smaller but noticeable number of respondents called for “restoring DEI initiatives” or “protecting LGBTQ students,” highlighting that polarization itself is seen as a major problem. Many also said they want schools to “just teach core subjects” and leave social and political issues to parents.



# A Summary of Responses Among the 23% of Residents Who Answered “Another Challenge Not Mentioned”

**Focus on Core Academics and Critical Thinking:** A third major “other” category aimed to re-emphasize foundational academics and thinking skills. Commonly mentioned subjects included reading, writing, math, science, history, and civics – often alongside frustration with “test prep” and “rote memorization.” Many emphasized teaching students how to think, not what to think, including calls for “critical thinking,” “logic,” “reasoning,” and “learning how to learn.” Several respondents also pointed out cell phone distractions, overreliance on technology, and the need for discipline and focus in classrooms.



# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey

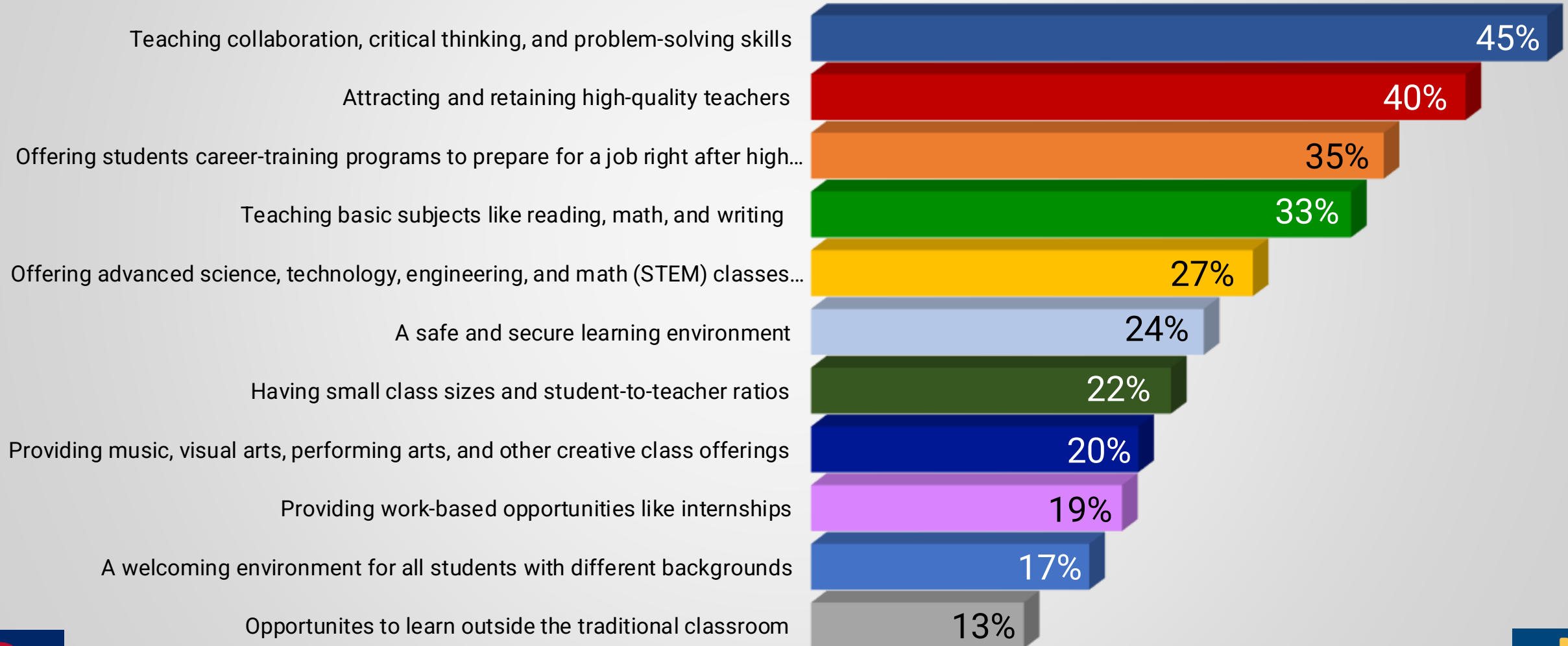


# Opinions on Attributes That Contribute to Great Schools



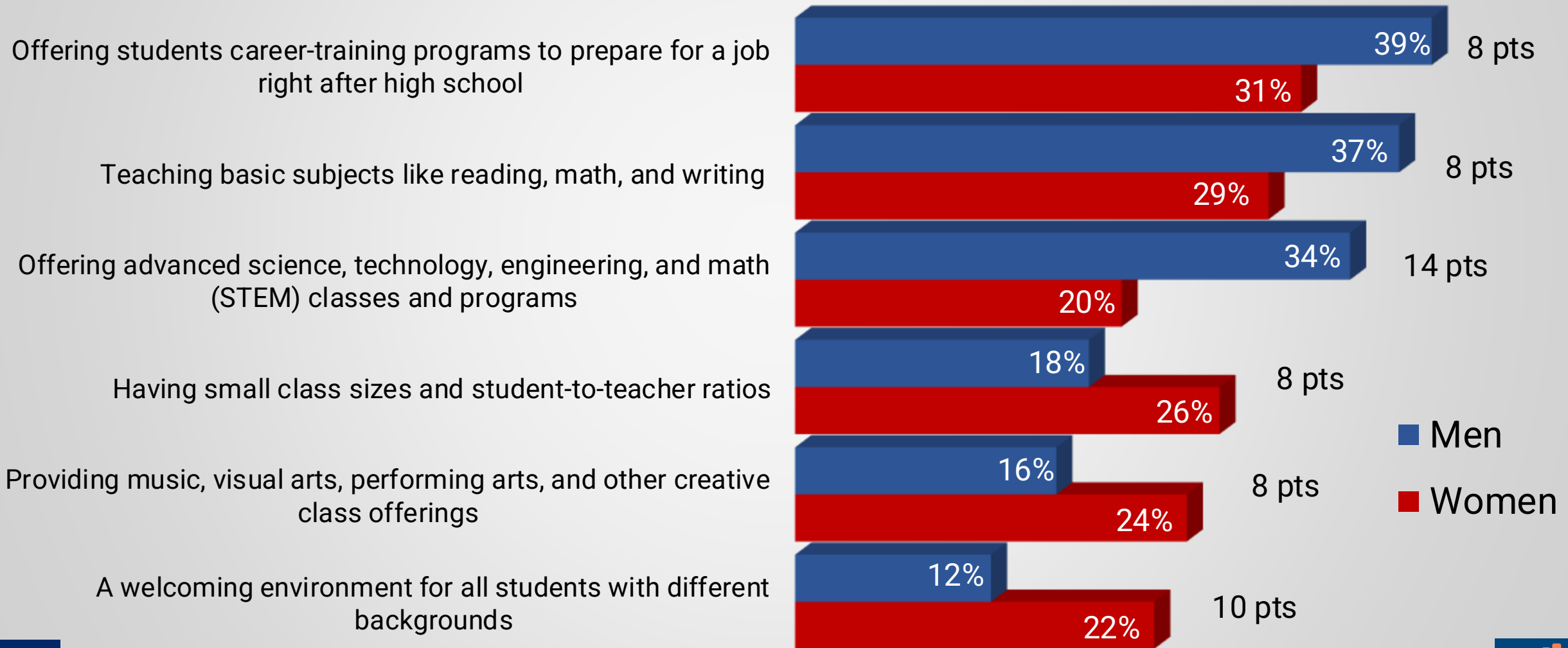
# Opinion on Attributes That Contribute to Great Schools

The following is a list of attributes and characteristics that contribute to great schools. Please choose up to three that you think should be the top priorities for your local school district when making budget decisions. (All Respondents)



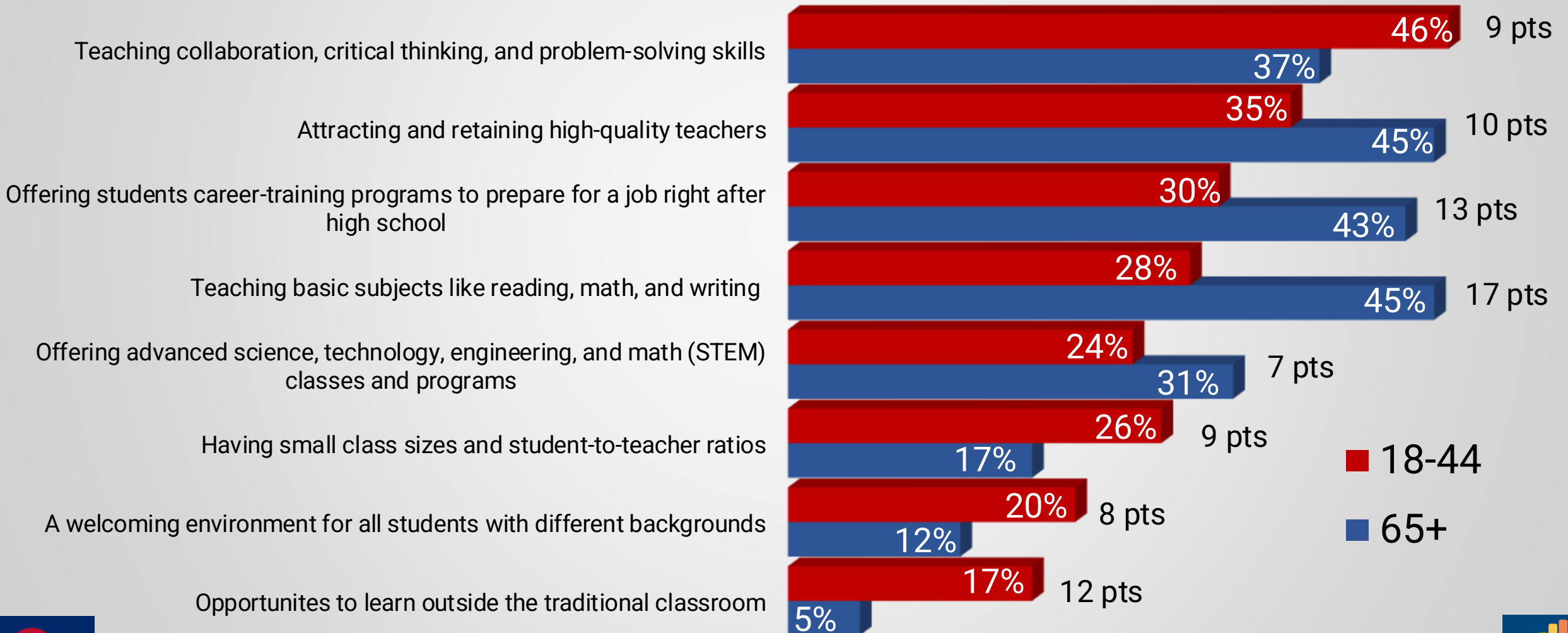
# Opinion on Attributes That Contribute to Great Schools

The following is a list of attributes and characteristics that contribute to great schools. Please choose up to three that you think should be the top priorities for your local school district when making budget decisions. (Differences between Women & Men)



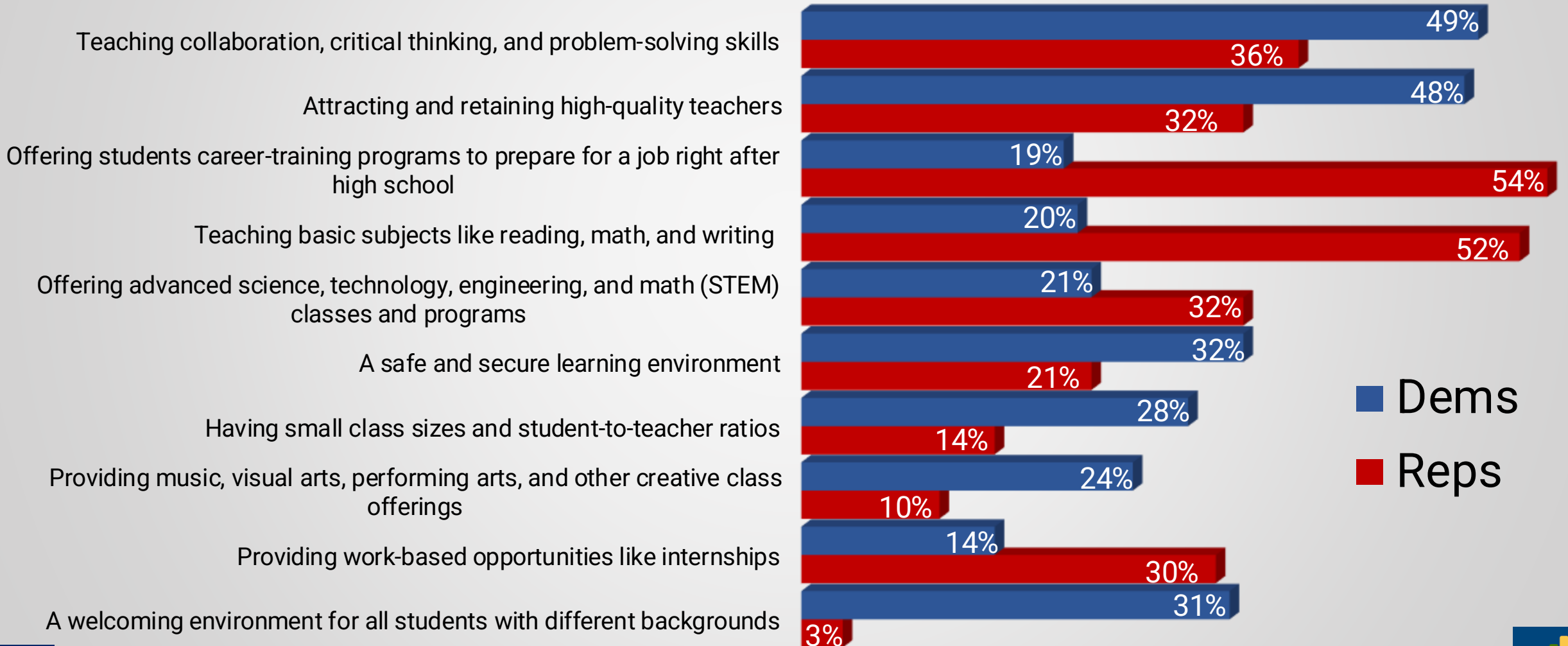
# Opinion on Attributes That Contribute to Great Schools

The following is a list of attributes and characteristics that contribute to great schools. Please choose up to three that you think should be the top priorities for your local school district when making budget decisions. (Differences between young & older voters)



# Opinion on Attributes That Contribute to Great Schools

The following is a list of attributes and characteristics that contribute to great schools. Please choose up to three that you think should be the top priorities for your local school district when making budget decisions. (Differences between Democrats & Republicans)



# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey

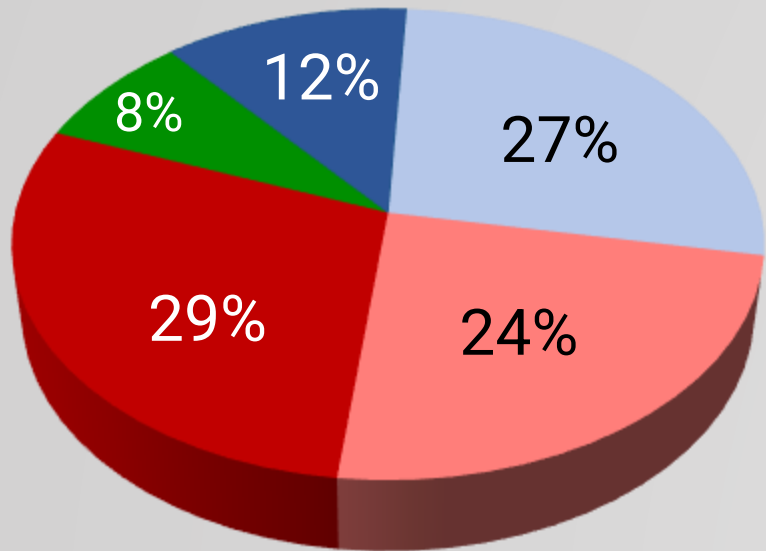


# Awareness & Opinions of Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programs

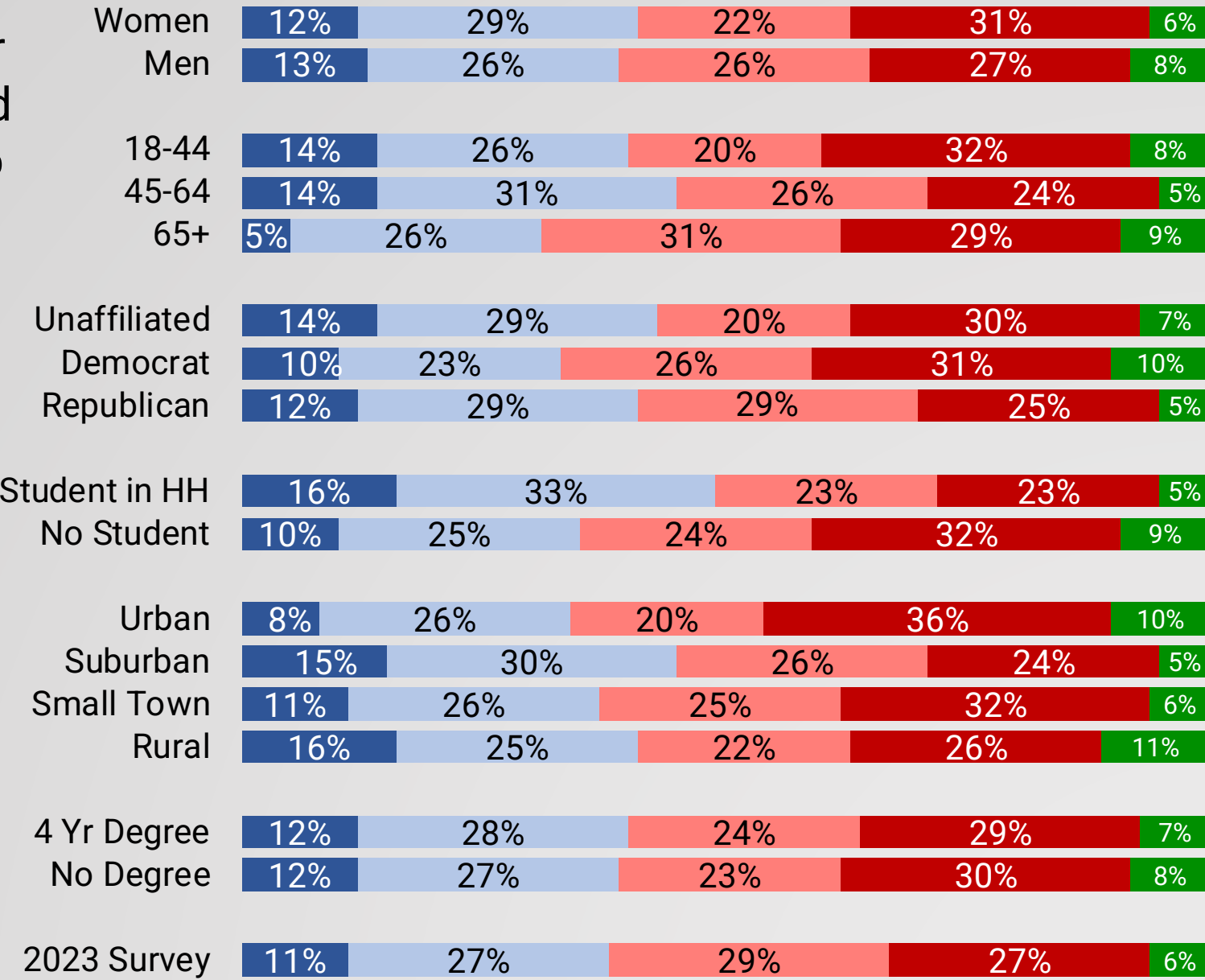


How familiar are you with the Career and Technical Education classes and programs offered by many Colorado school districts? Professional educators refer to these classes as “CTE Programming.”

Very and Somewhat Familiar 39%

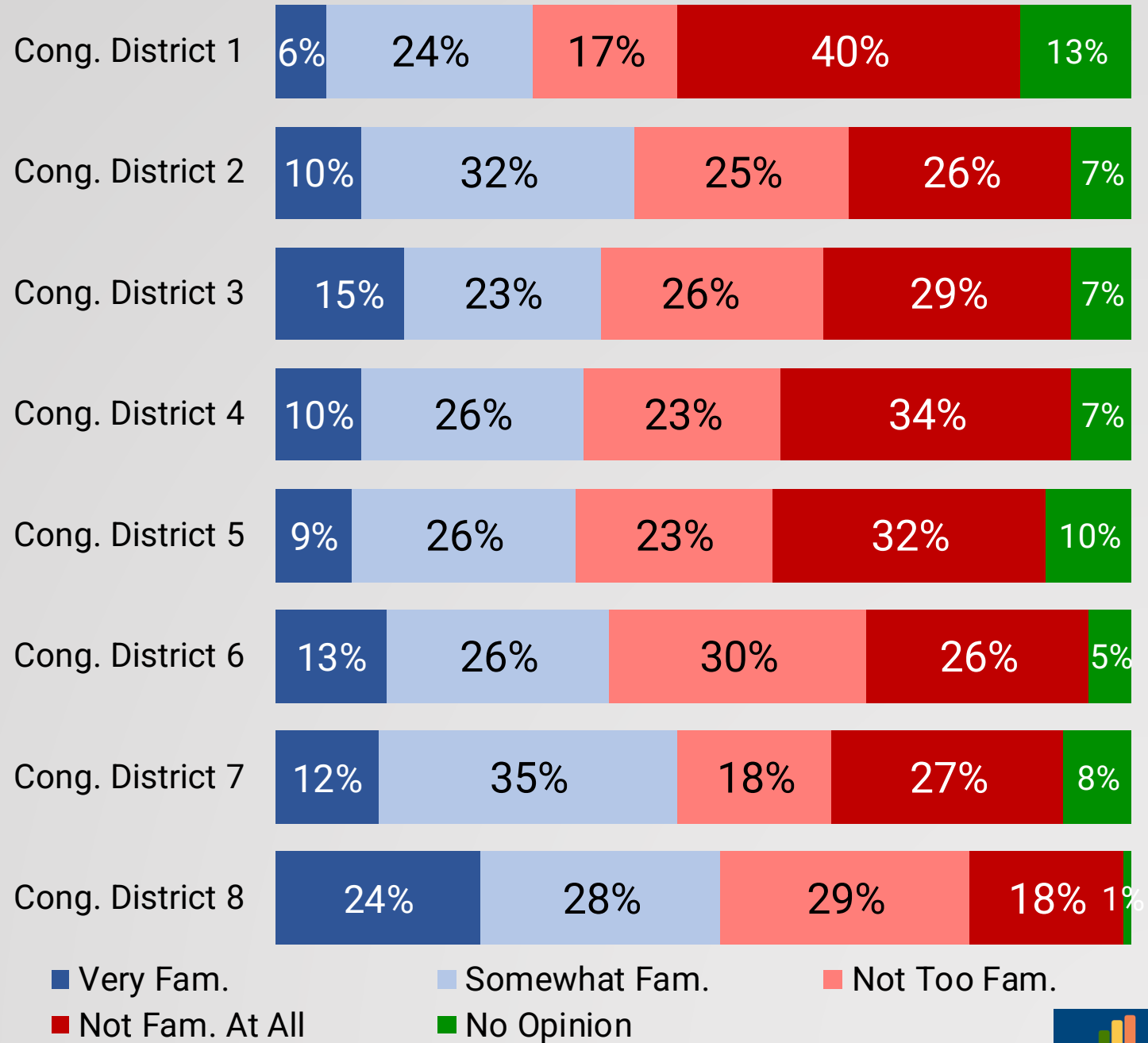
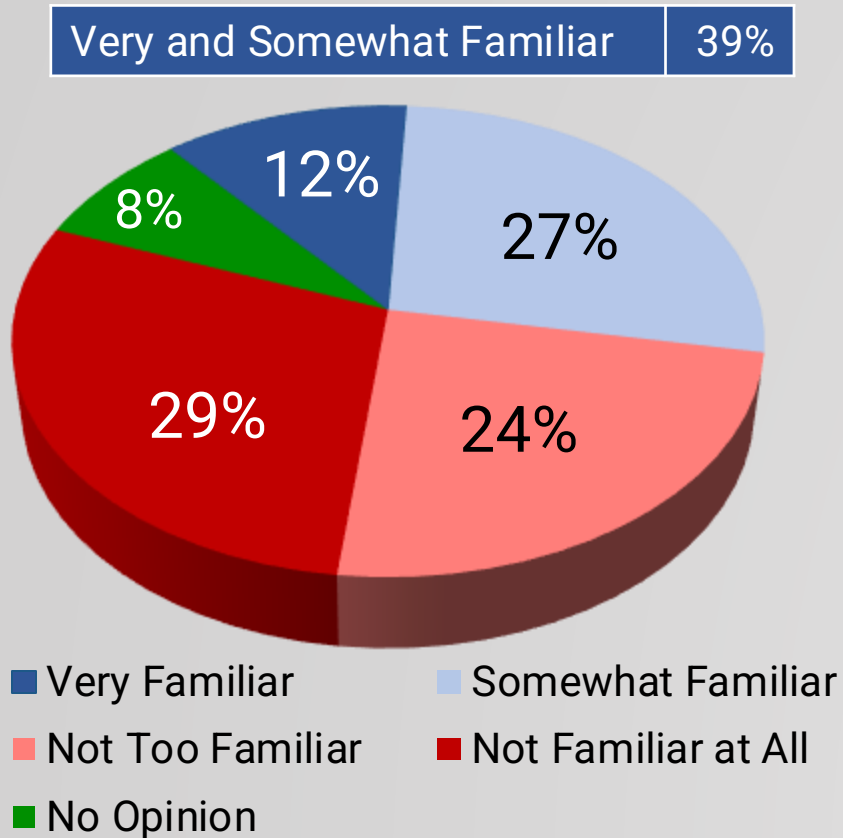


■ Very Familiar      ■ Somewhat Familiar  
■ Not Too Familiar      ■ Not Familiar at All  
■ No Opinion

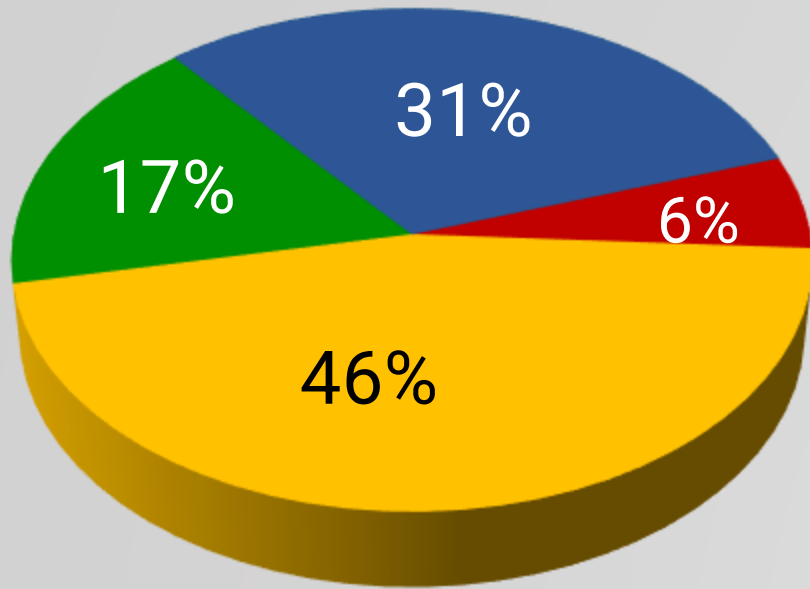


■ Very Fam.    ■ Smwt. Familiar    ■ Not Too Fam.    ■ Not Familiar    ■ No Opinion

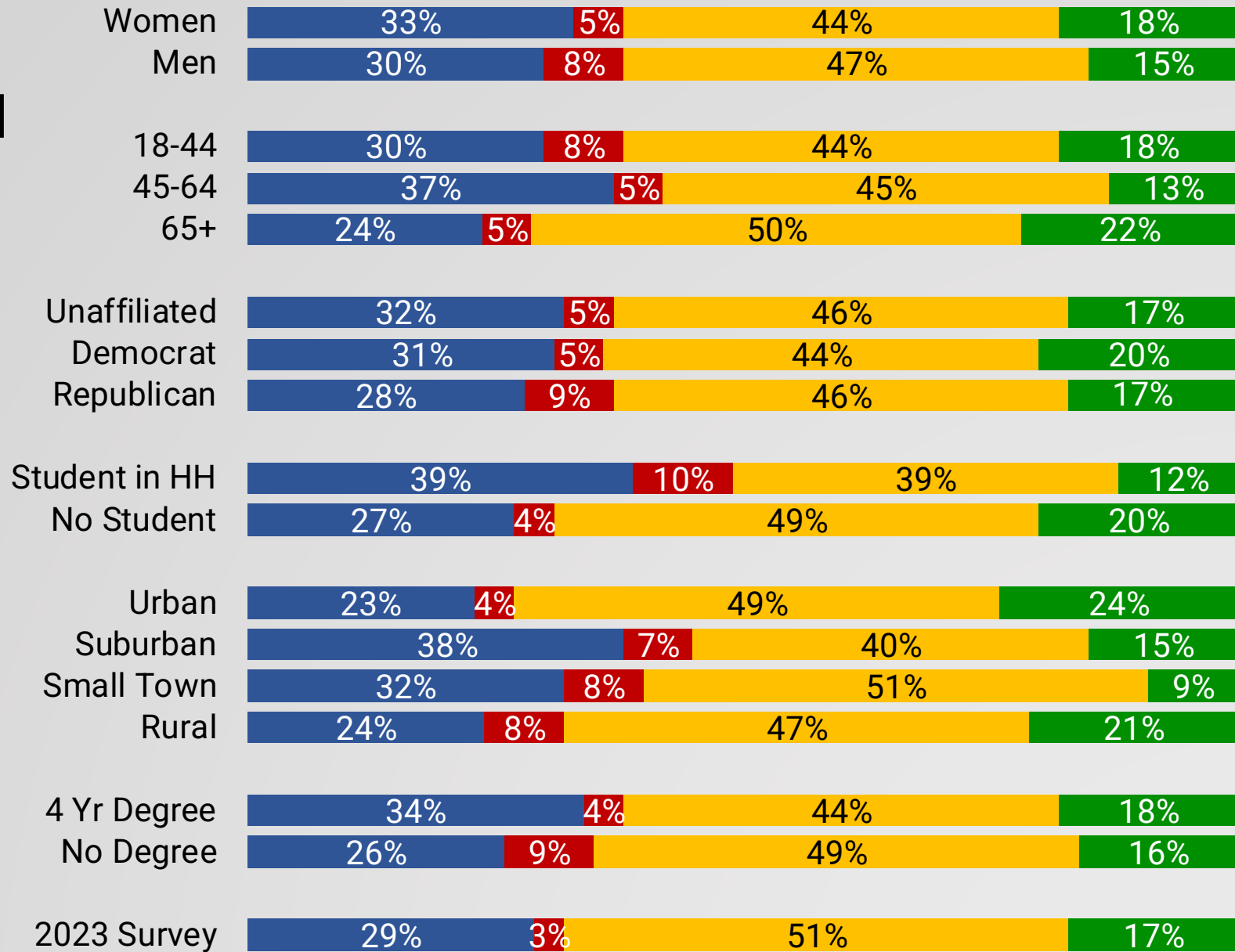
How familiar are you with the Career and Technical Education classes and programs offered by many Colorado school districts? Professional educators refer to these classes as “CTE Programming.”



# Does your school district offer students Career and Technical Education classes and programs?



■ Yes      ■ No  
■ Don't Know      ■ No Opinion



■ Yes      ■ No      ■ Don't Know      ■ No Opinion



# Respondent Education of Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programming



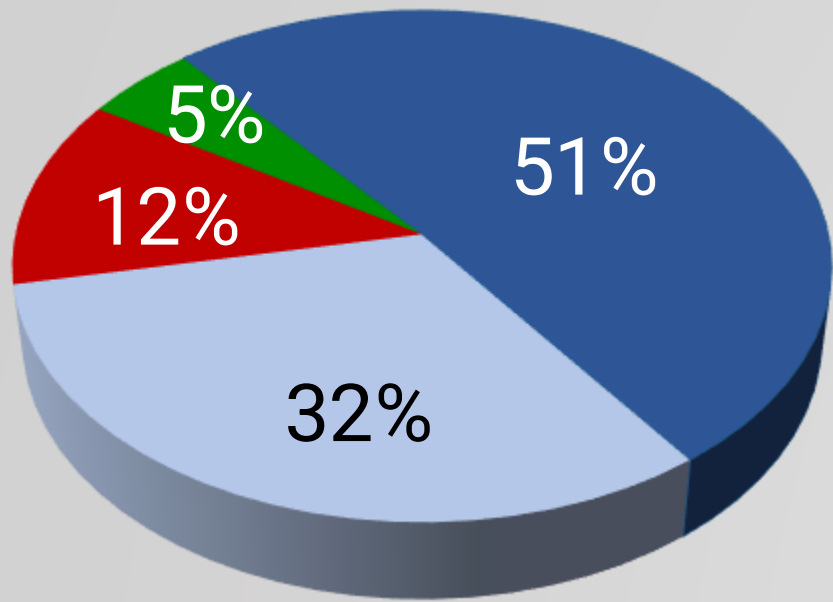
Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a program in which the school district partners with local industry leaders to provide students with opportunities to advance their post-secondary education, earn industry certificates, and engage in work-based learning across several career “pathways.”

These programs give students a competitive advantage as they enter college, the military, or start a career in the following areas:

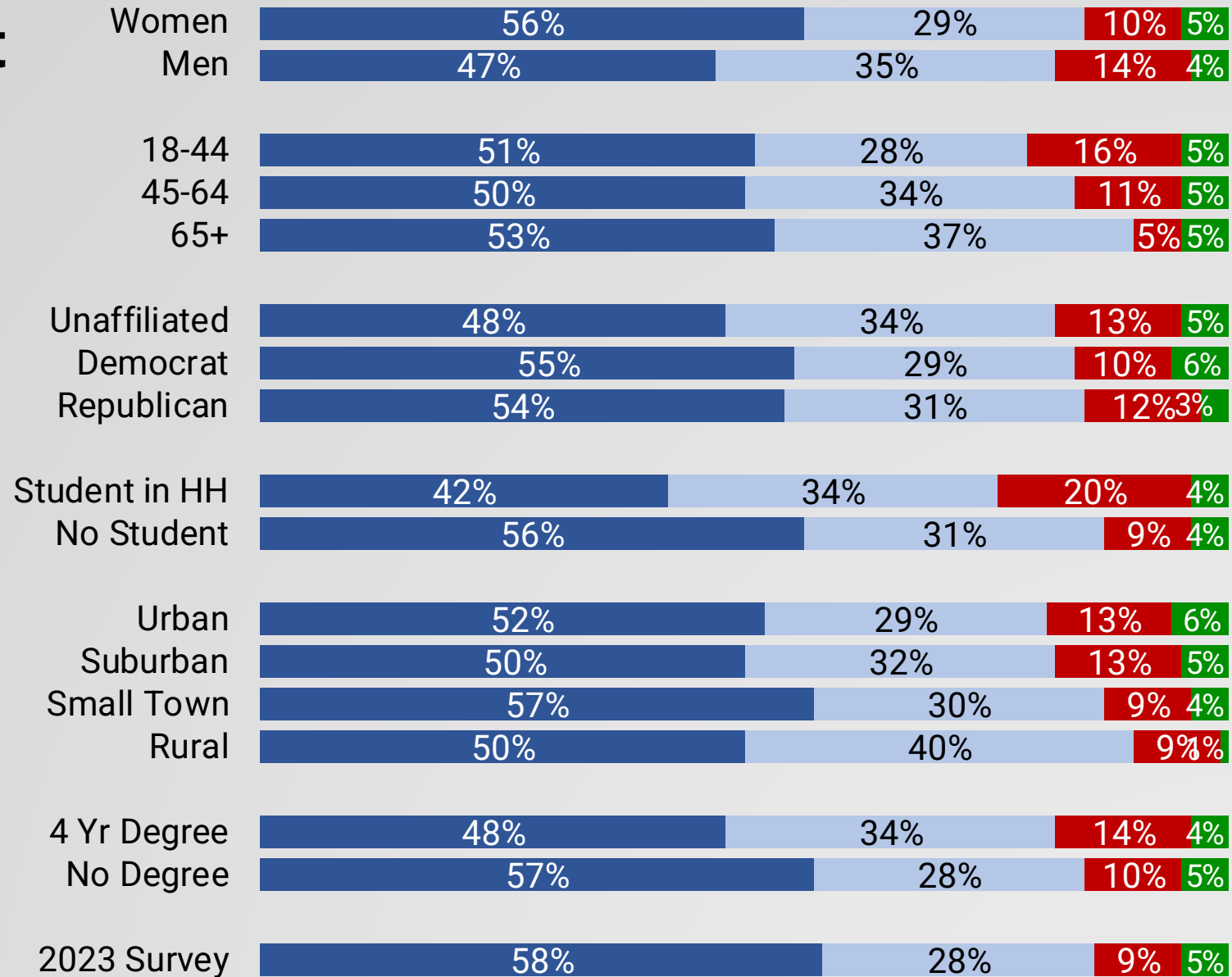
- Arts & Media Design
- Criminal Justice & Public Safety (Fire, Law Enforcement, EMS)
- Health Sciences, Nursing, Behavioral & Mental Health
- Hospitality, Food Production & Education
- Construction, Manufacturing & Skilled Trades (Such as Welding)
- Automotive Technology, Collision Repair & Refinishing
- STEM Education & Information Technology
- Business & Marketing

# CTE Programming Impact

Knowing this, would you have a more favorable opinion of your local school district if it offered CTE classes and programs?



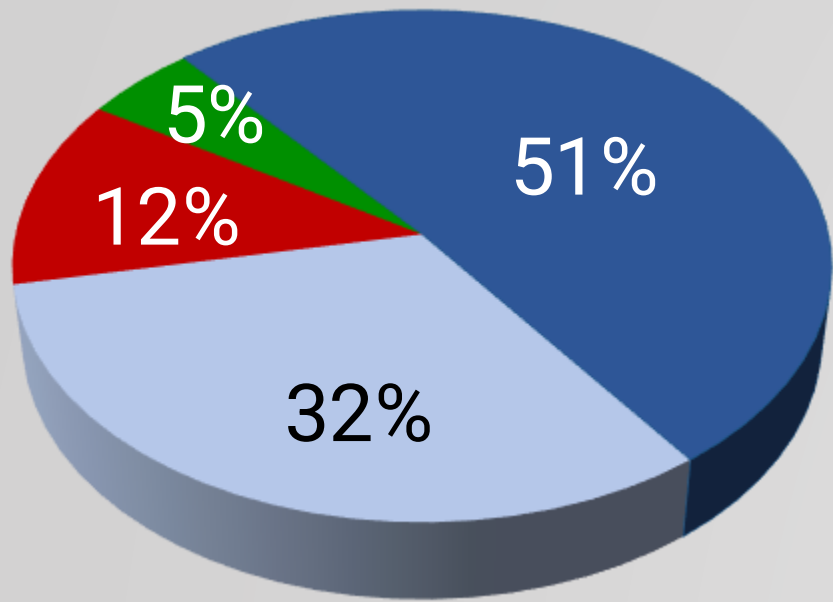
- Yes, much more favorable
- Yes, somewhat more favorable
- No, does not change my opinion
- No opinion



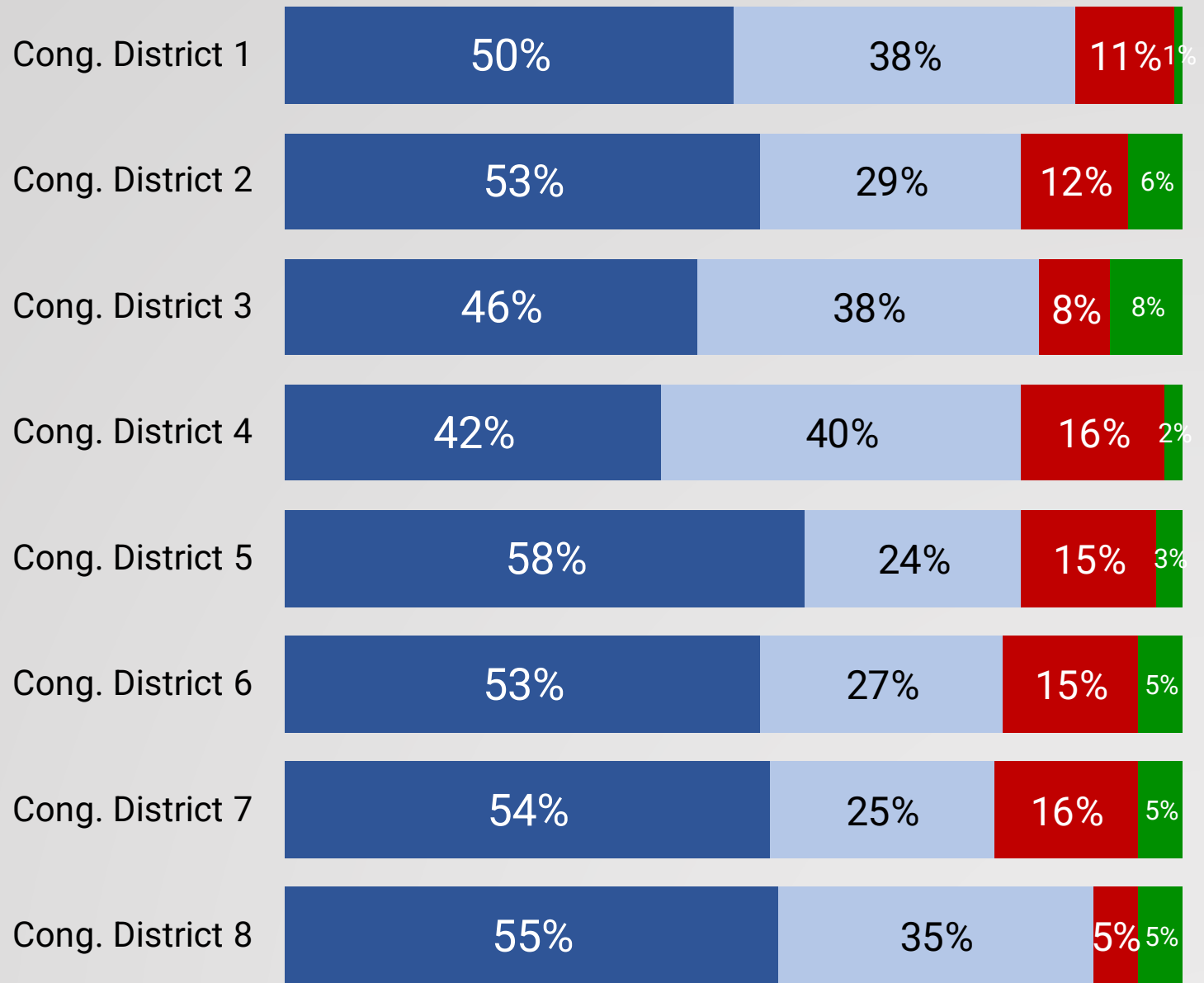
- Yes, Much More
- Yes, Smwtt. More
- No, No Change
- No Opinion

# CTE Programming Impact

Knowing this, would you have a more favorable opinion of your local school district if it offered CTE classes and programs?



- Yes, much more favorable
- Yes, somewhat more favorable
- No, does not change my opinion
- No Opinion



- Yes, Much More
- Yes, Somewhat More
- No, No Change
- No Opinion

# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



# Opinions on School Consolidation & Closure



# Respondent Education About School Consolidation & Closure



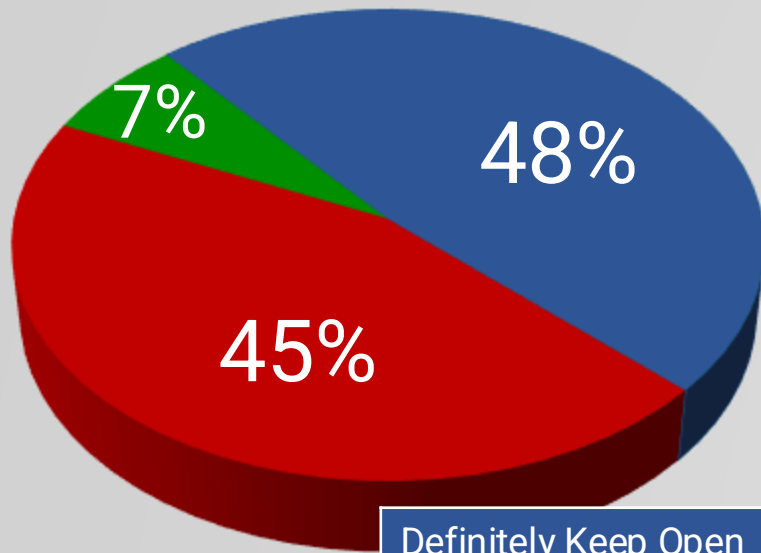
Many school districts across Colorado are facing a decline in student enrollment. For example, some elementary schools that were originally built for 400 to 450 students now serve only about 300.

Smaller schools often have fewer resources and limited access to special classes like art, music, and physical education. In some cases, grade levels may need to be combined into a single classroom. It also costs more to operate a school with fewer students than one at or near full capacity.

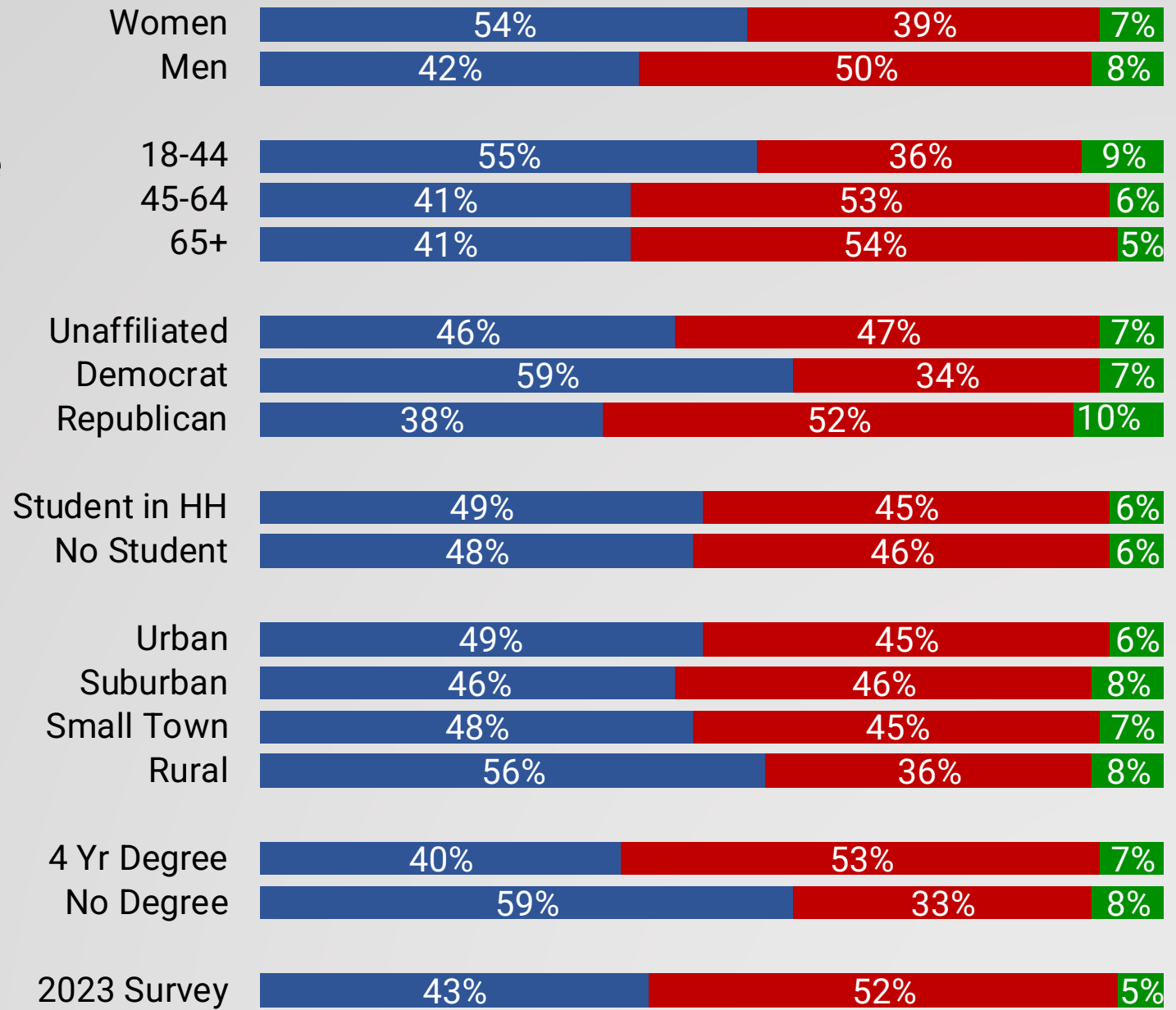
Because of this, school districts may eventually need to consider difficult options, such as merging schools or closing those with lower enrollment. Knowing this, do you think school districts should do everything possible to keep all schools open, or should they consider merging or closing schools with lower enrollment?

# Opinion of School Closures

Knowing this, do you think school districts should do everything possible to keep all schools open, or should districts consider merging or closing schools with smaller enrollment numbers?



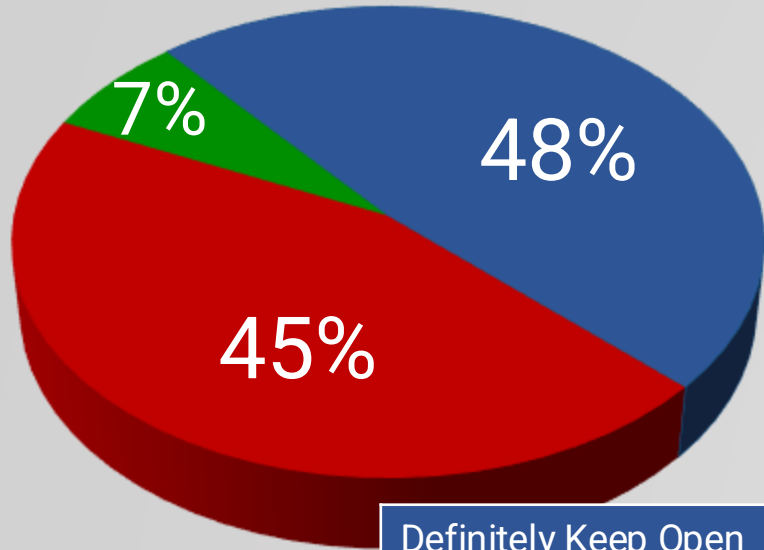
Definitely Keep Open	27%
Probably Keep Open	21%
Definitely Consider Closure	18%
Probably Consider Closure	27%



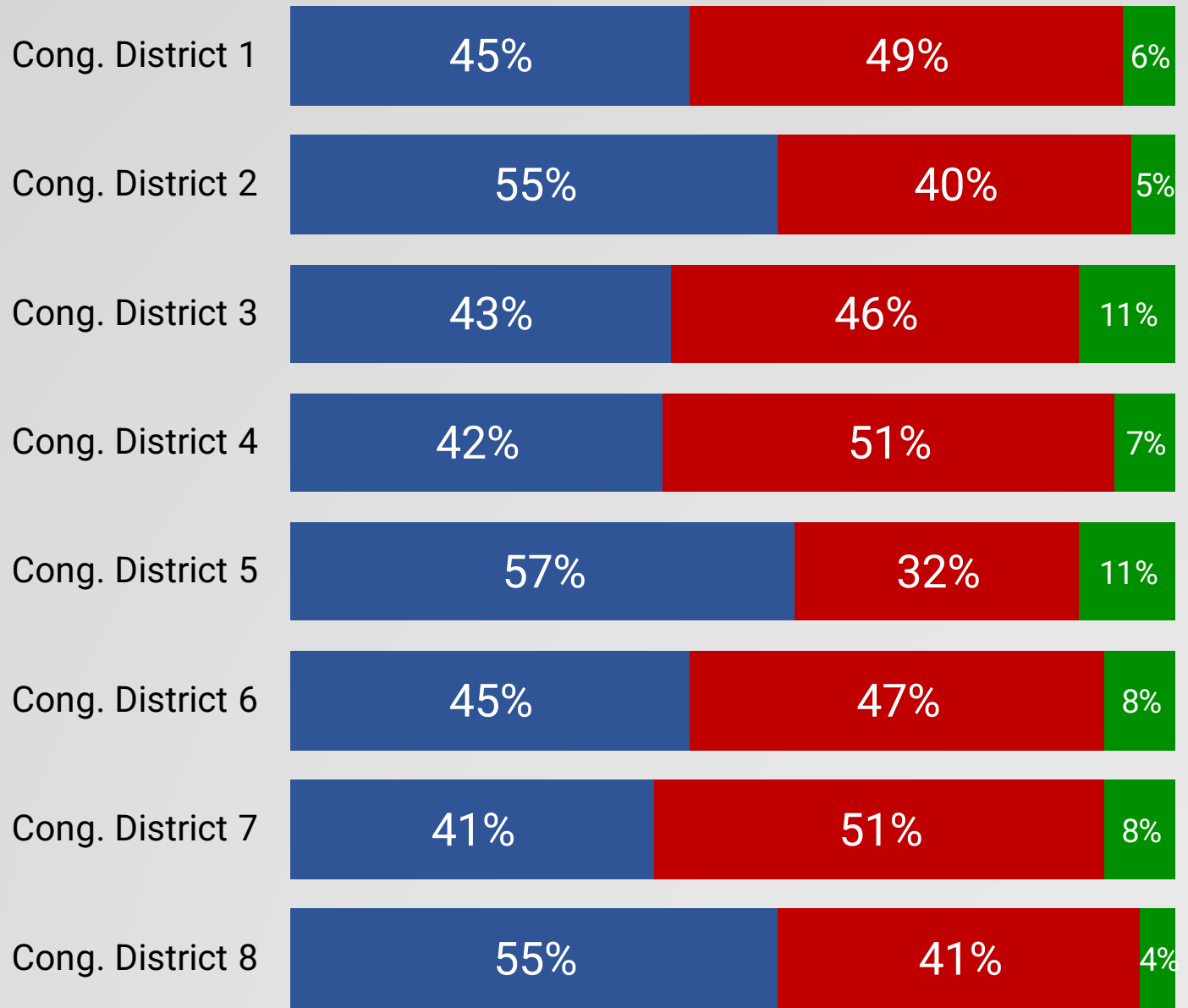
■ Keep Open ■ Consider Closure ■ No Opinion

# Opinion of School Closures

Knowing this, do you think school districts should do everything possible to keep all schools open, or should districts consider merging or closing schools with smaller enrollment numbers?



Keep Open	Definitely Keep Open	27%
	Probably Keep Open	21%
Consider Closure	Definitely Consider Closure	18%
	Probably Consider Closure	27%
No Opinion		



■ Keep Open ■ Consider Closure ■ No Opinion

# Opinions on Large and Small High School Environments



We are now going to describe two different kinds of high schools. After reading about each, please indicate which one you prefer your student to attend.

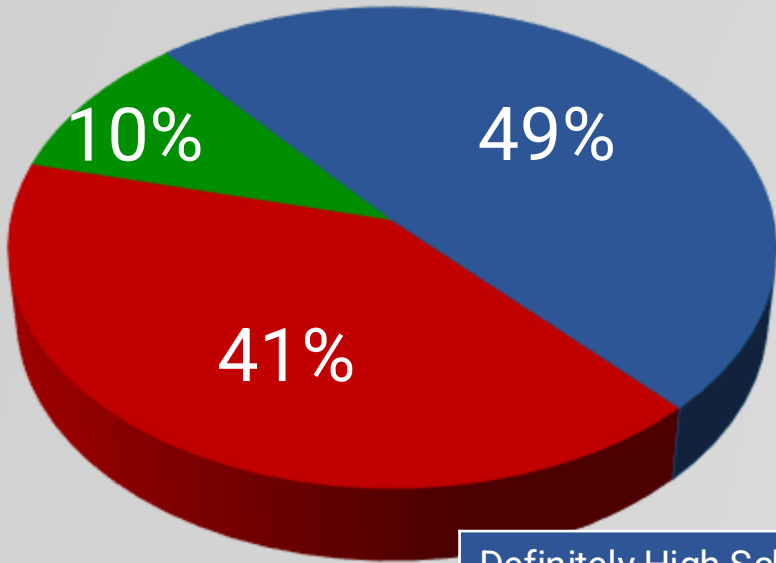
“High School A” is a smaller school that allows staff to build better relationships with every student and provides more opportunities for participation in sports and other activities because, with a smaller student body, there is less competition. However, High School A offers limited courses and fewer activities, such as the student newspaper, art shows, debate club, and musical/theatre performances.

“High School B” is a large school that offers a broader range of student courses and activities. However, the size of High School B makes it more difficult for staff to have close relationships with every student.

Knowing this, which High School would you want your student to attend?

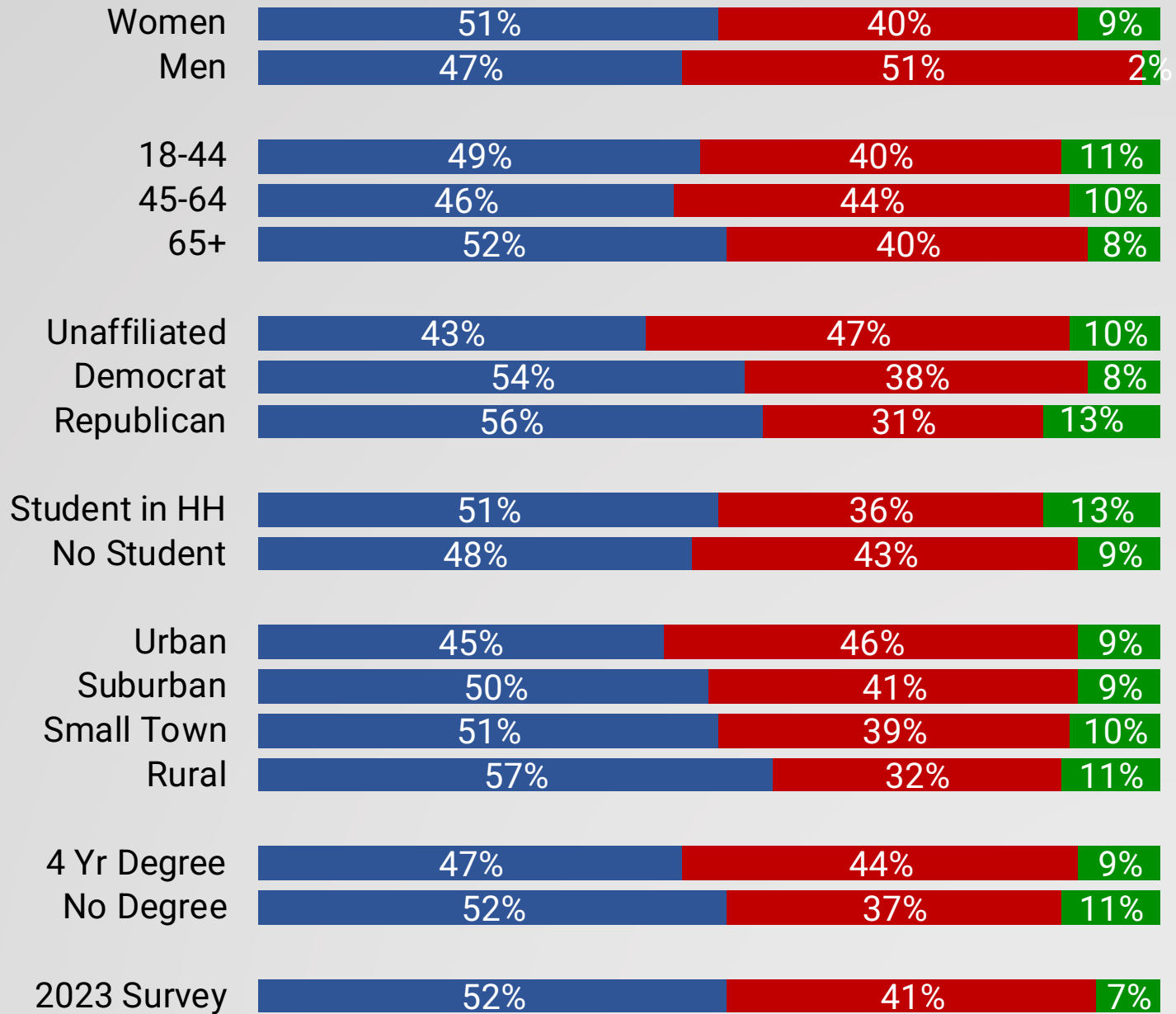
# Opinion of Large & Small High School Environments

Knowing this, which High School would you want your student to attend? (High School A is small, High School B is big)



■ High School A  
■ High School B  
■ No Opinion

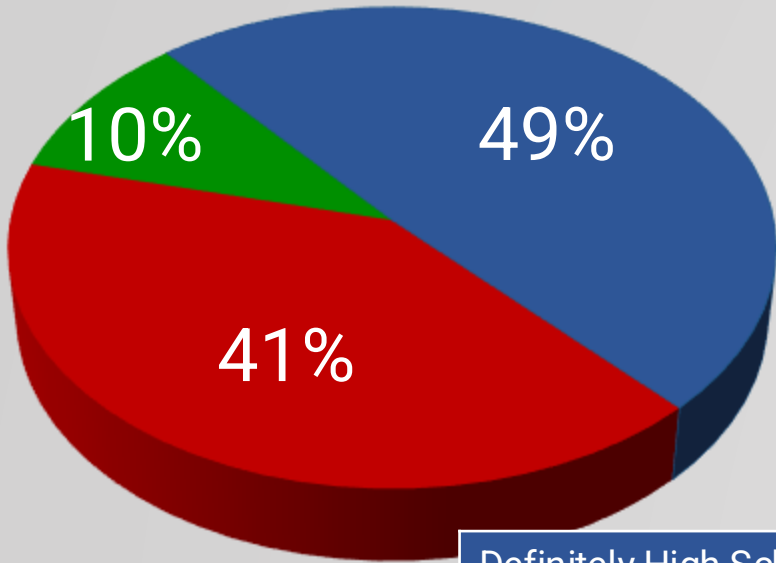
Definitely High School A	25%
Probably High School A	24%
Definitely High School B	11%
Probably High School B	30%



■ High School A ■ High School B ■ No Opinion

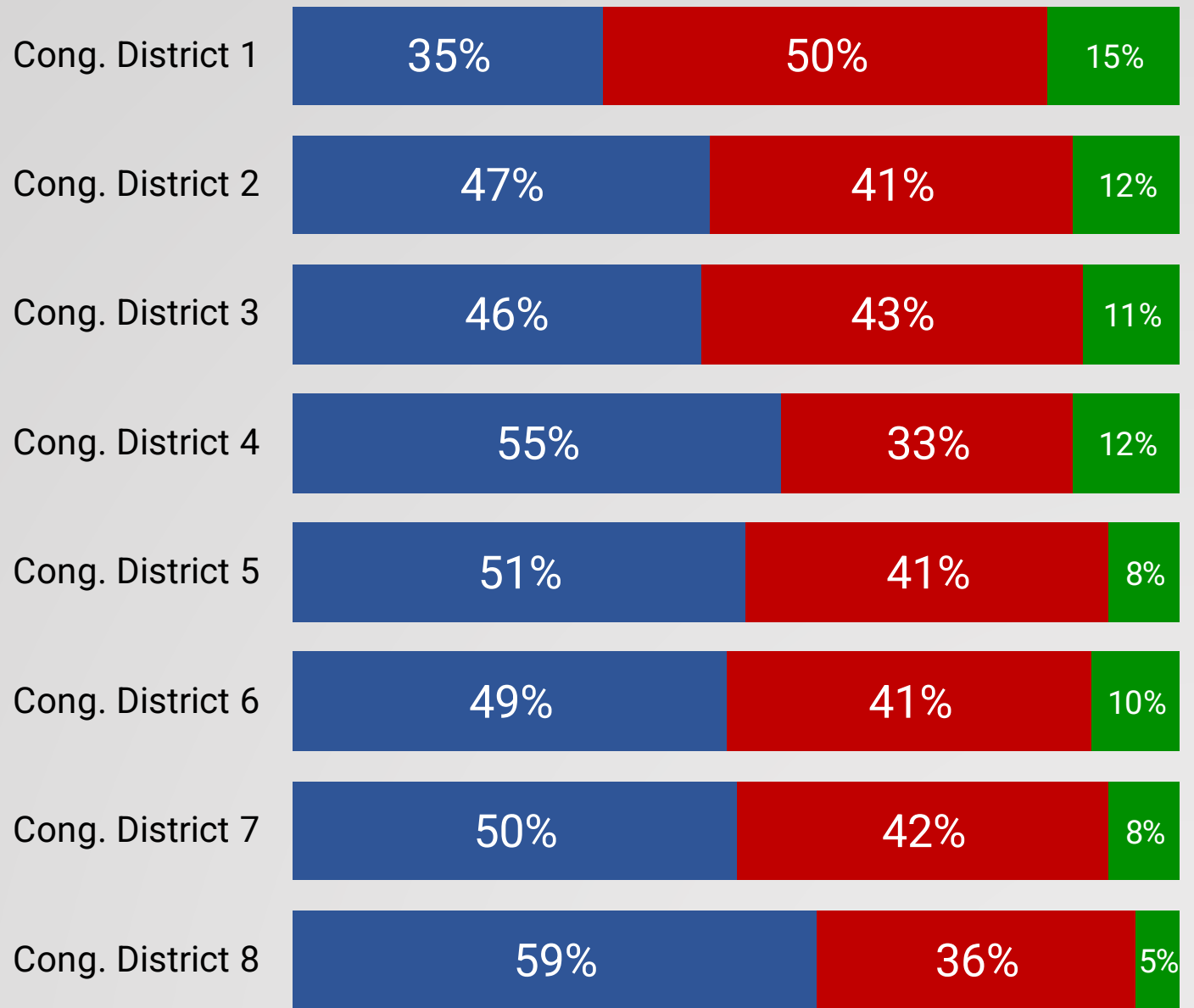
# Opinion of Large & Small High School Environments

Knowing this, which High School would you want your student to attend? (High School A is small, High School B is big)



- High School A
- High School B
- No Opinion

Definitely High School A	25%
Probably High School A	24%
Definitely High School B	11%
Probably High School B	30%



- High School A
- High School B
- No Opinion

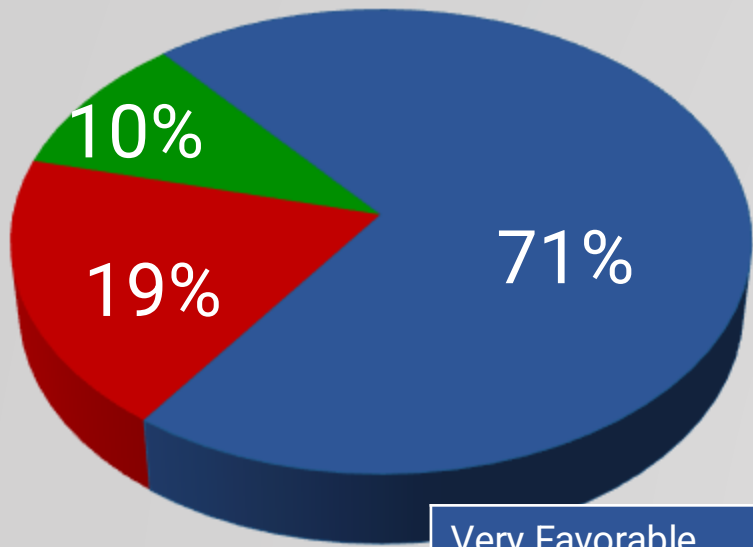
# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



# Opinions on Colorado's Universal Preschool Program

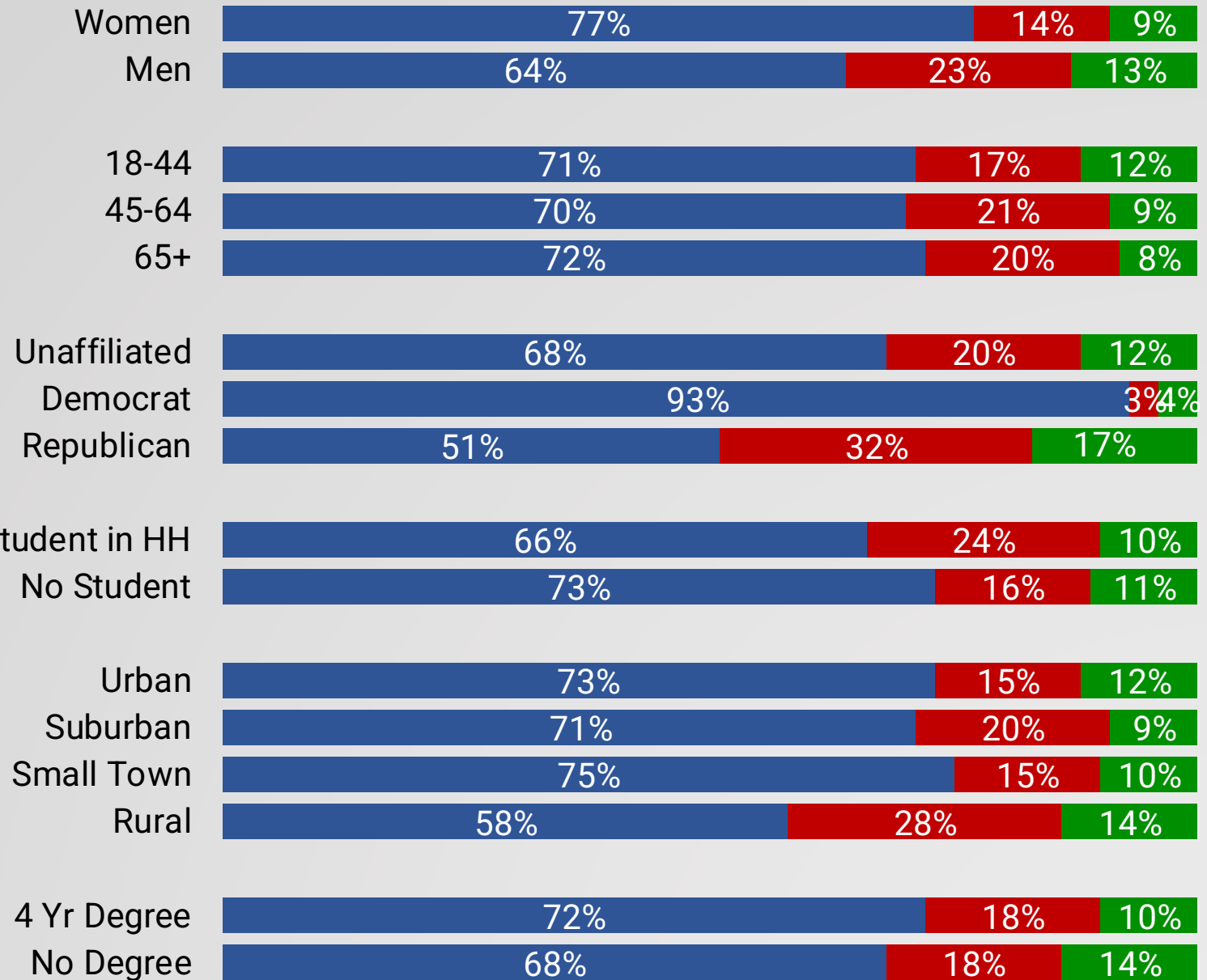


As you may know, Colorado has Universal Preschool (UPK), a state program that provides 10 to 15 hours per week of free, state-funded preschool for eligible 4-year-old children. Knowing this, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of Colorado's Universal Preschool program?



■ Favorable  
■ Unfavorable  
■ No Opinion

Very Favorable	46%
Somewhat Fav.	25%
Very Unfavorable	9%
Somewhat Unfav.	10%



■ Favorable   ■ Unfavorable   ■ No Opinion

# Why 71% Have a Favorable Opinion of UPK

*Please describe why you have an unfavorable opinion of the Universal Preschool Program.*

**Expanding Access and Affordability for Families:** The most prominent theme across the state was that UPK alleviates financial stress on families and increases access to early education. Respondents repeatedly said: “childcare is expensive,” “preschool should be free,” and “this helps working families.” Many described the program as a lifeline for dual-income or single-parent households, emphasizing that it “helps parents stay in the workforce,” “provides stability,” and “levels the playing field regardless of income.” Others highlighted economic benefits, calling the program an investment in Colorado’s workforce and future, or describing it as “a great use of taxpayer dollars that benefits everyone.”

**Early Learning and Developmental Benefits for Children:** The second-most prominent theme emphasized how UPK supports children’s growth, preparedness, and long-term success. Respondents described preschool as “a critical foundation,” “a head start,” and “vital for socialization and communication.” Many cited research or personal experience demonstrating higher kindergarten readiness, improved literacy, and lasting academic and social benefits for children who attend preschool. Several also highlighted equity in early development, noting UPK “helps close opportunity gaps” for lower-income or non-English-speaking families.



# Why 71% Have a Favorable Opinion of UPK

*Please describe why you have an unfavorable opinion of the Universal Preschool Program.*

**Strengthening Communities and Equity:** A third key theme focused on fairness, inclusion, and community investment. Many comments described UPK as “a right, not a privilege” and praised it for “giving every child an equal start.” Respondents highlighted that UPK promotes socialization across diverse backgrounds, reduces stigma associated with assistance programs, and fosters inclusivity. Several agreed that strong early education benefits society overall, citing long-term reductions in welfare or crime, and enhanced community well-being.



# Why 19% Have an Unfavorable Opinion of UPK

*Please describe why you have an unfavorable opinion of the Universal Preschool Program.*

**Government Overreach and Parental Responsibility:** The most common theme across the state was opposition to government involvement in raising or educating very young children. Many respondents emphasized that preschool should be a parental duty, not a government task: “It’s not the state’s job to raise kids,” “parents should pay for preschool,” and “children should be at home until kindergarten.” Several described UPK as an example of “socialism” or “cradle-to-grave government care,” while others expressed discomfort with the idea of state-funded early education creating dependency or eroding family values. A recurring phrase was “daycare, not education,” suggesting skepticism that the program truly offers meaningful instruction at that age.

**Cost, Taxpayer Burden, and Misplaced Spending Priorities:** The second most common concern involved finances and perceived misuse of public funds. Respondents across both parties labeled UPK as “a waste of money,” “not truly free,” and “an unnecessary tax burden.” Many said limited education funds should instead go toward K–12 education improvements, teacher pay, or addressing literacy gaps, rather than preschool expansion. Others objected to paying for other families’ childcare, calling it “welfare,” “deficit spending,” or “taxpayer-funded babysitting.” A smaller group mentioned implementation inefficiencies or rollout issues, describing them as “poorly planned,” “underfunded,” or “not uniformly available.”



# Why 19% Have an Unfavorable Opinion of UPK

*Please describe why you have an unfavorable opinion of the Universal Preschool Program.*

**Ideological Concerns and Early “Indoctrination”:** A prominent third theme emerged from respondents who distrust public education content at any level, especially for young children. Many comments claimed UPK allows “indoctrination,” “gender ideology,” or “political agendas” to influence children at an early age. Respondents used phrases like “get kids away from parents early,” “woke propaganda,” and “drag queen story hour,” indicating a deep mistrust of the curriculum and educators. These concerns often overlapped with moral or religious objections to public education for 4-year-olds.



# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey



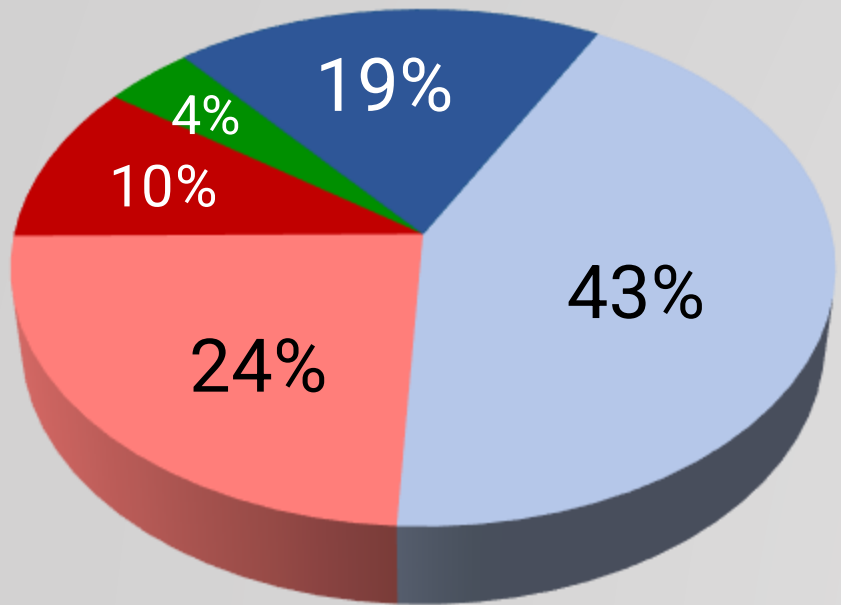
# Opinions on the Importance of Earning a Four-Year Degree & In-State College Affordability



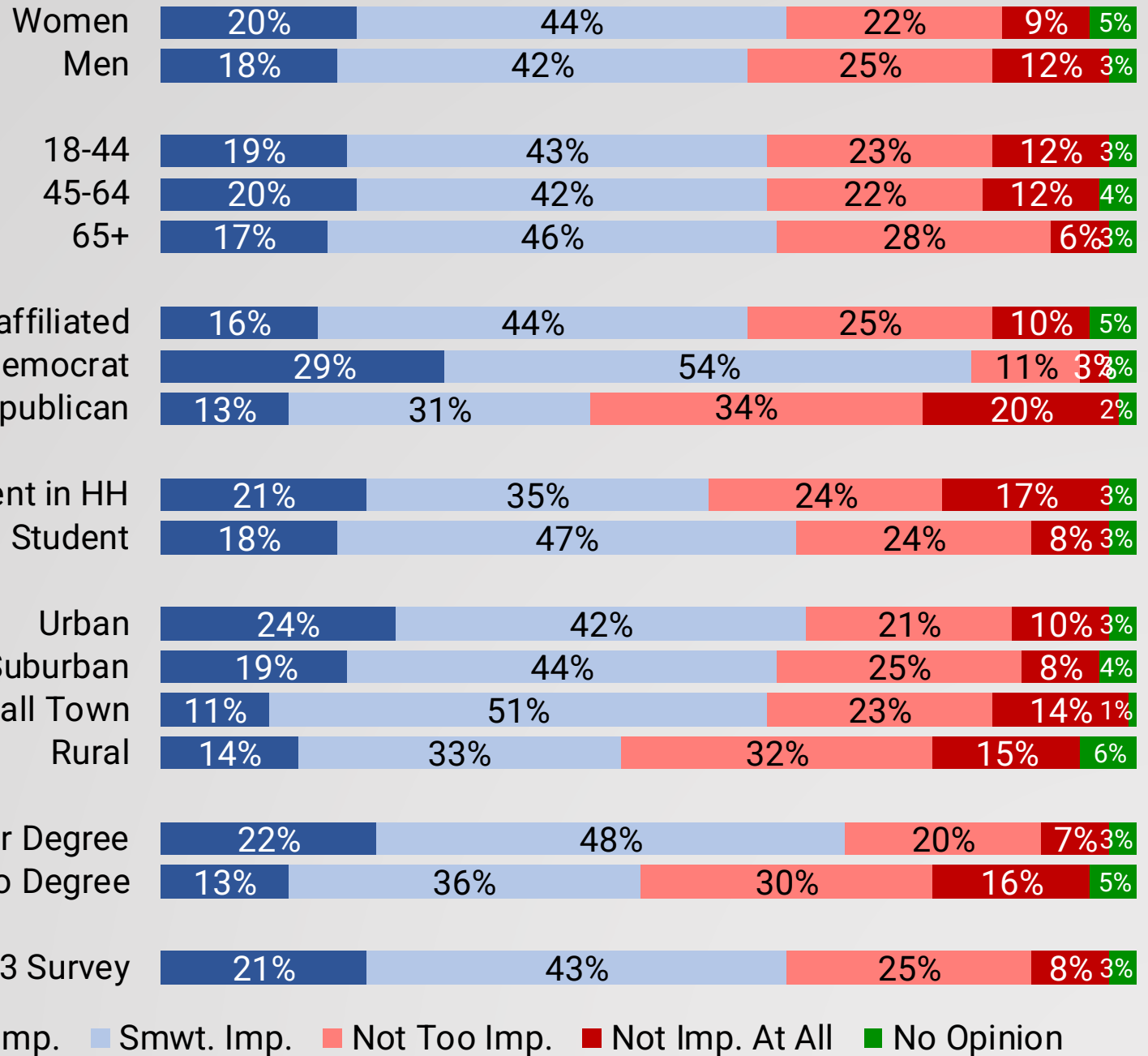
# Opinion On the Importance of Earning a Four-Year Degree

How important is it to earn an undergraduate degree from a four-year college or university?

Very and Somewhat Important 62%



■ Very Important    ■ Somewhat Important  
■ Not Too Important    ■ Not Important at All  
■ No Opinion

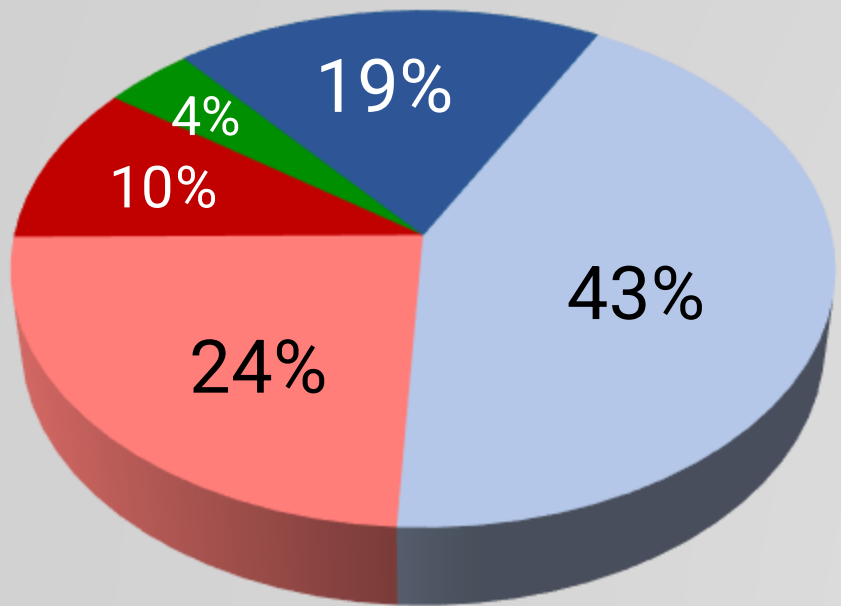


■ Very Imp.    ■ Smwtt. Imp.    ■ Not Too Imp.    ■ Not Imp. At All    ■ No Opinion

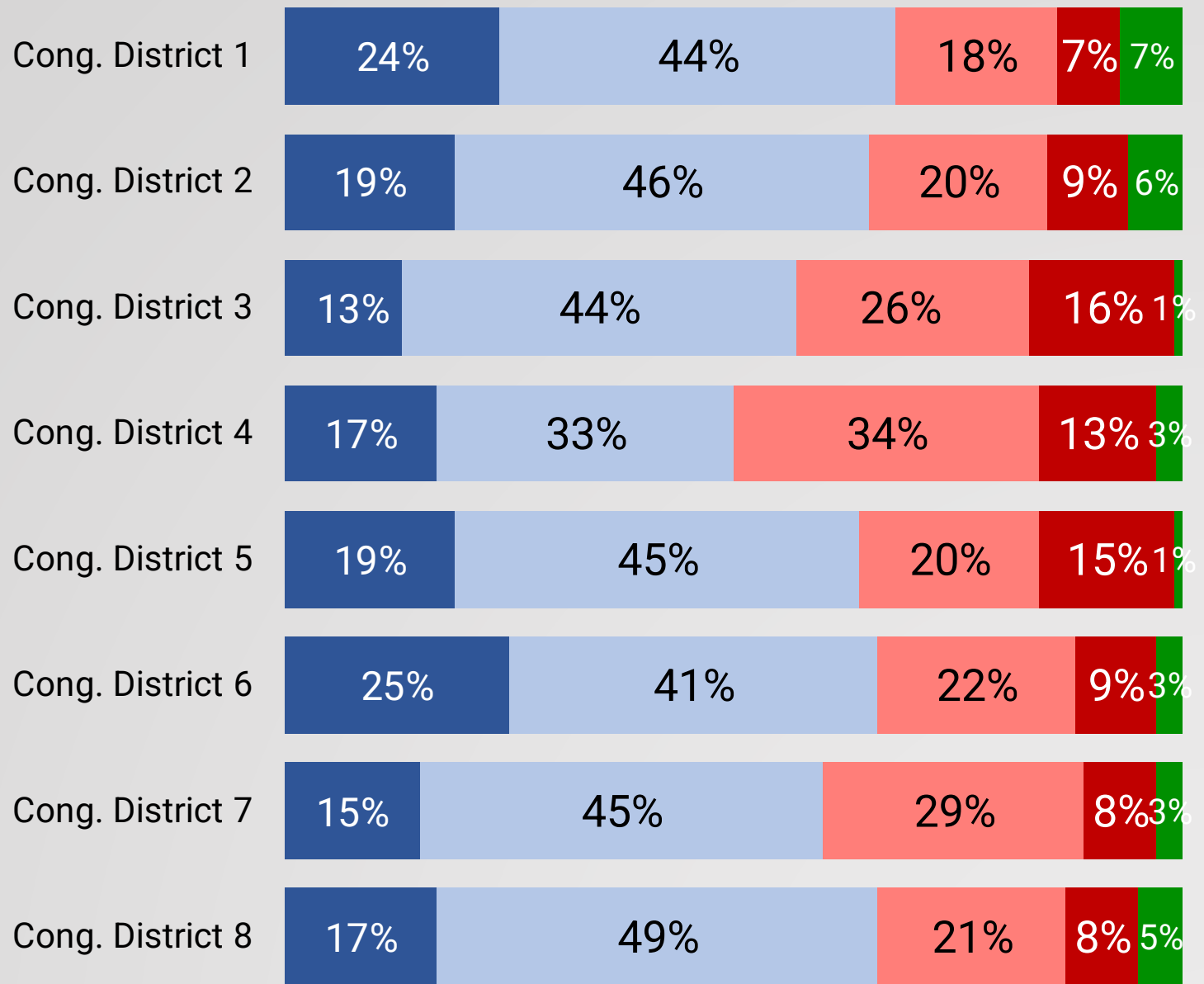
# Opinion On the Importance of Earning a Four-Year Degree

How important is it to earn an undergraduate degree from a four-year college or university?

Very and Somewhat Important 62%



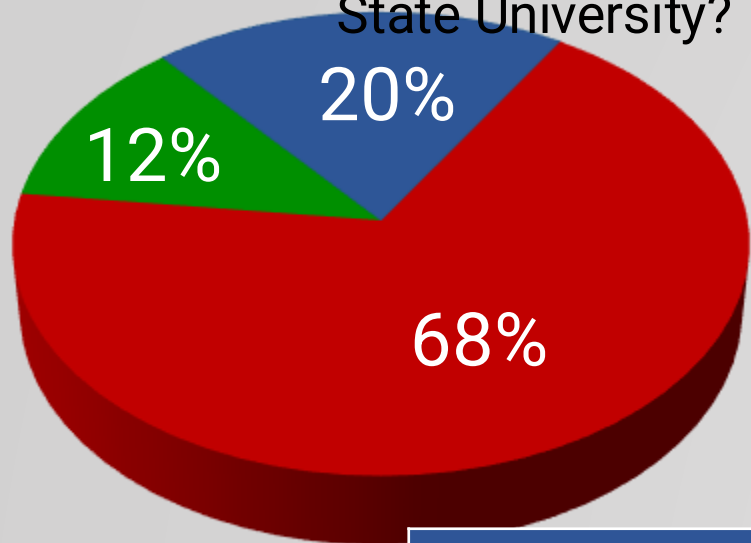
■ Very Important      ■ Somewhat Important  
■ Not Too Important      ■ Not Important at All  
■ No Opinion



■ Very Imp.    ■ Somewhat Imp.    ■ Not Too Imp.    ■ Not Imp. At All    ■ No Opinion

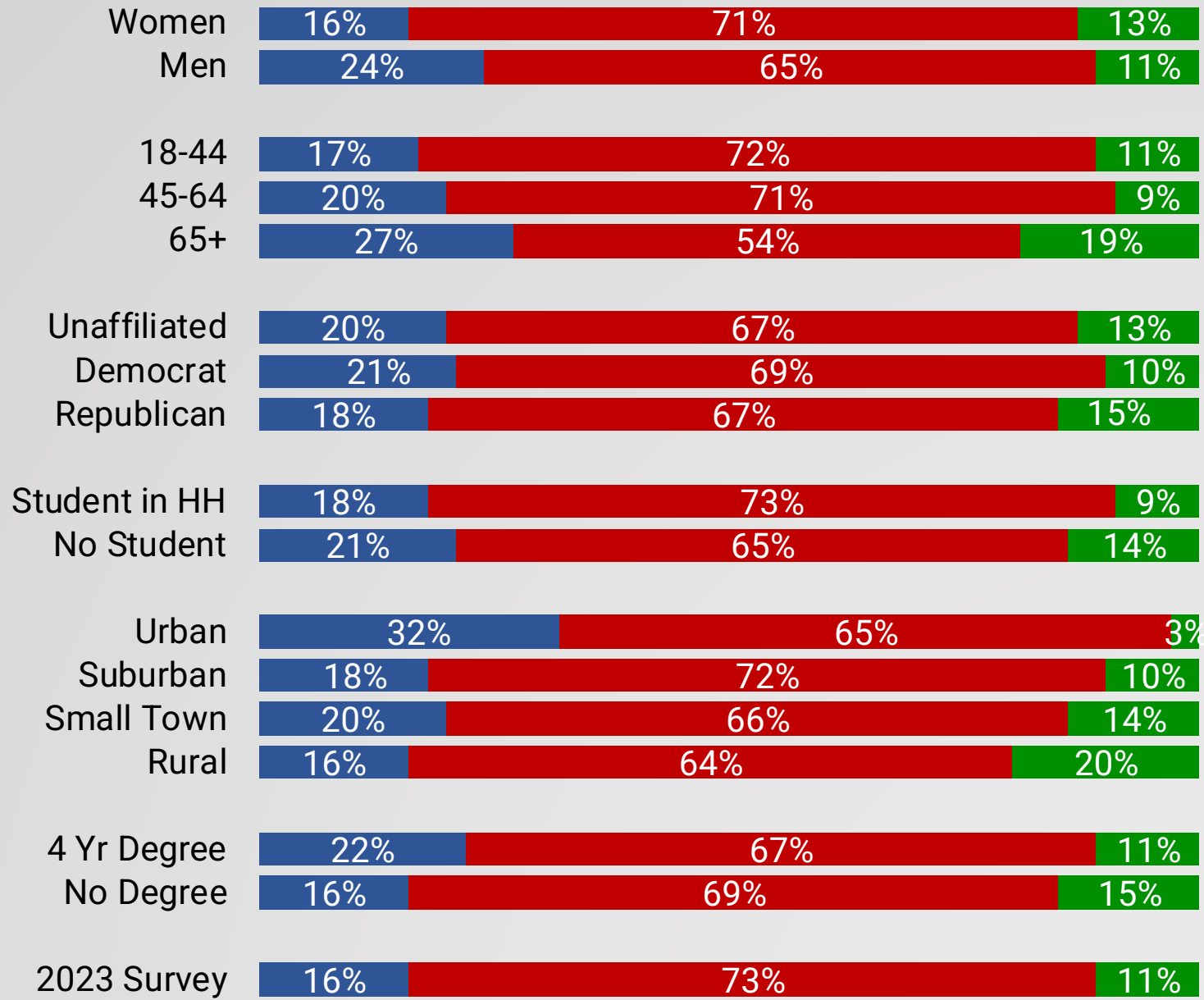
# Opinion of College Affordability

How affordable is it for a Colorado resident to earn an undergraduate degree from a public, state-supported Colorado college or university like the University of Colorado or Colorado State University?



■ Affordable  
■ Unaffordable  
■ No Opinion

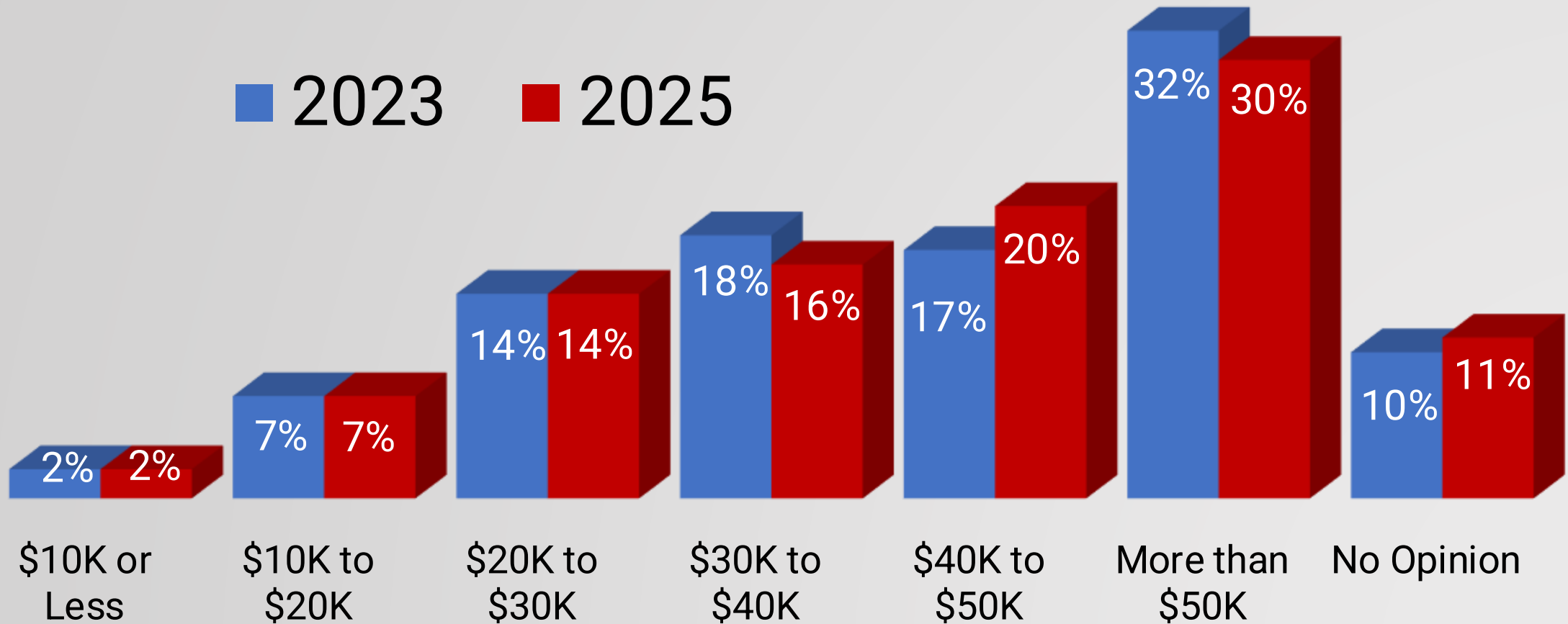
Very Affordable	3%
Somewhat Affordable	17%
Very Unaffordable	40%
Somewhat Unaffordable	28%



■ Affordable    ■ Unaffordable    ■ No Opinion

# Opinion of College Debt Amount for an In-State Resident

What do you think is the average amount of student debt a Colorado resident has when they graduate from a public, state-supported Colorado college or university?



# Colorado 2025 Public Education Opinion Survey

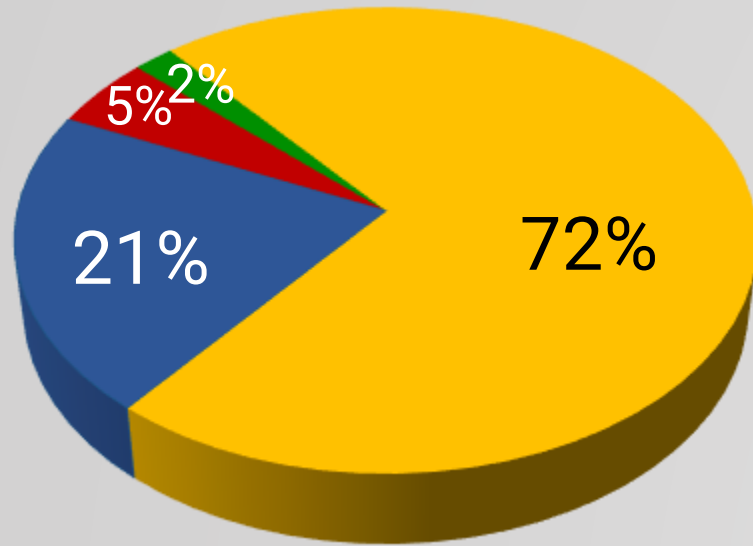


# Opinions on Prioritizing Career & Technical Education Programs or Preparing for College

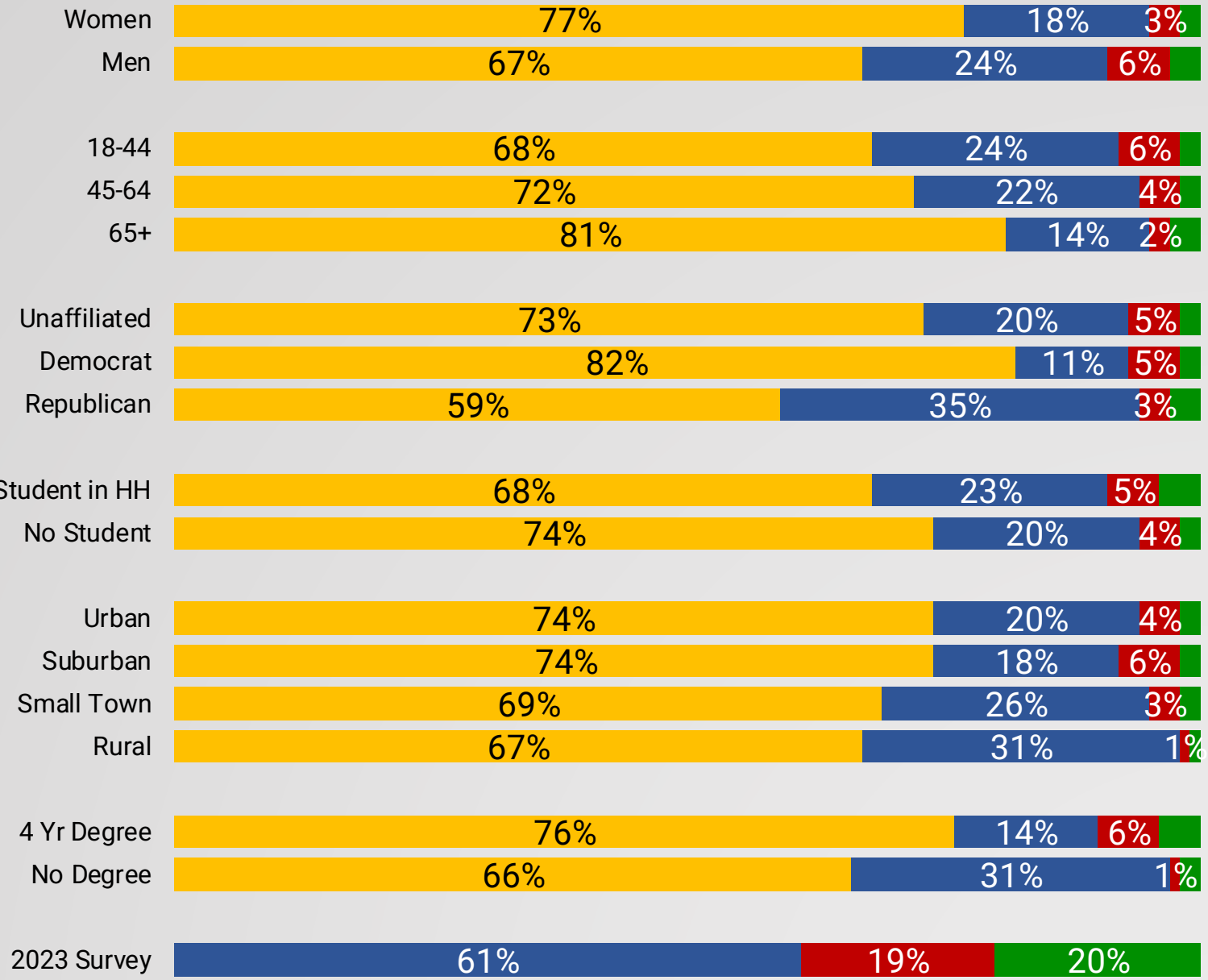


# Opinion of CTE Programs vs. Preparing for College

Which of the following do you think should have greater importance for high school students in your school district? Learning and obtaining industry training and certifications through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs or preparing for college?



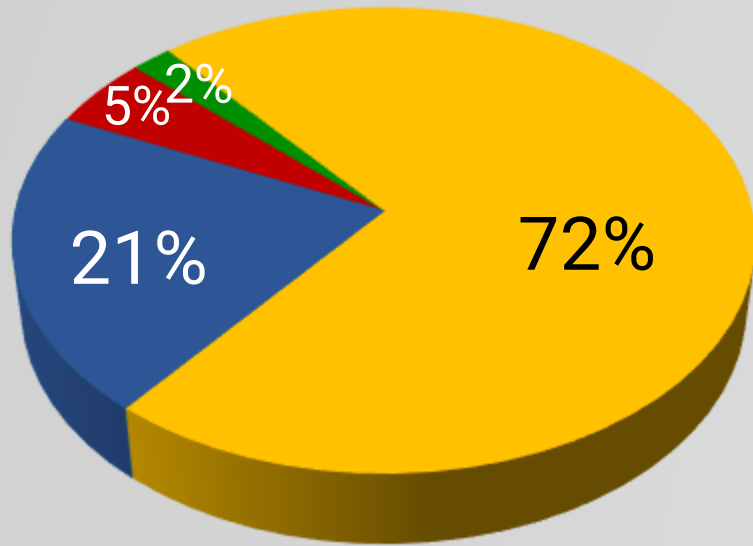
- Both Important
- CTE Programs
- College
- No Opinion



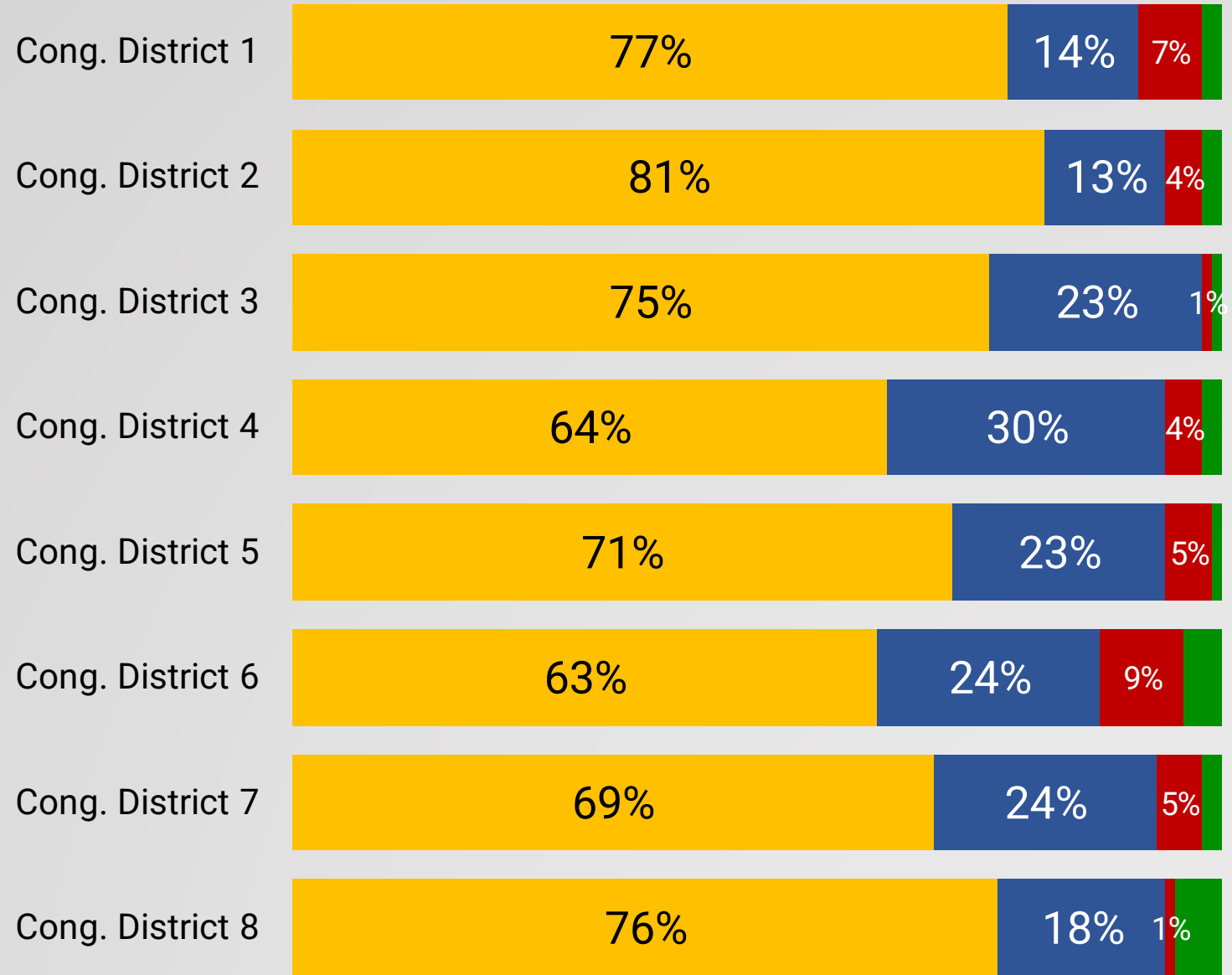
- Both Imp.
- CTE Programs
- College
- No Opinion

# Opinion of CTE Programs vs. Preparing for College

Which of the following do you think should have greater importance for high school students in your school district? Learning and obtaining industry training and certifications through Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs or preparing for college?



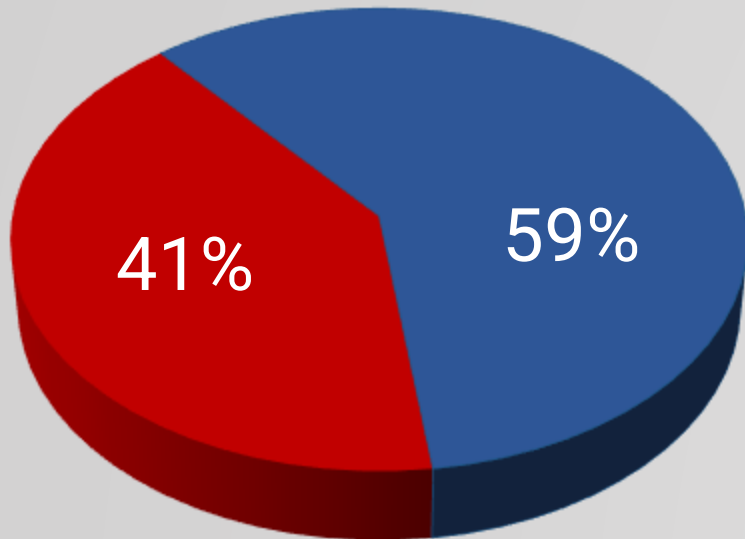
- Both Important
- CTE Programs
- College
- No Opinion



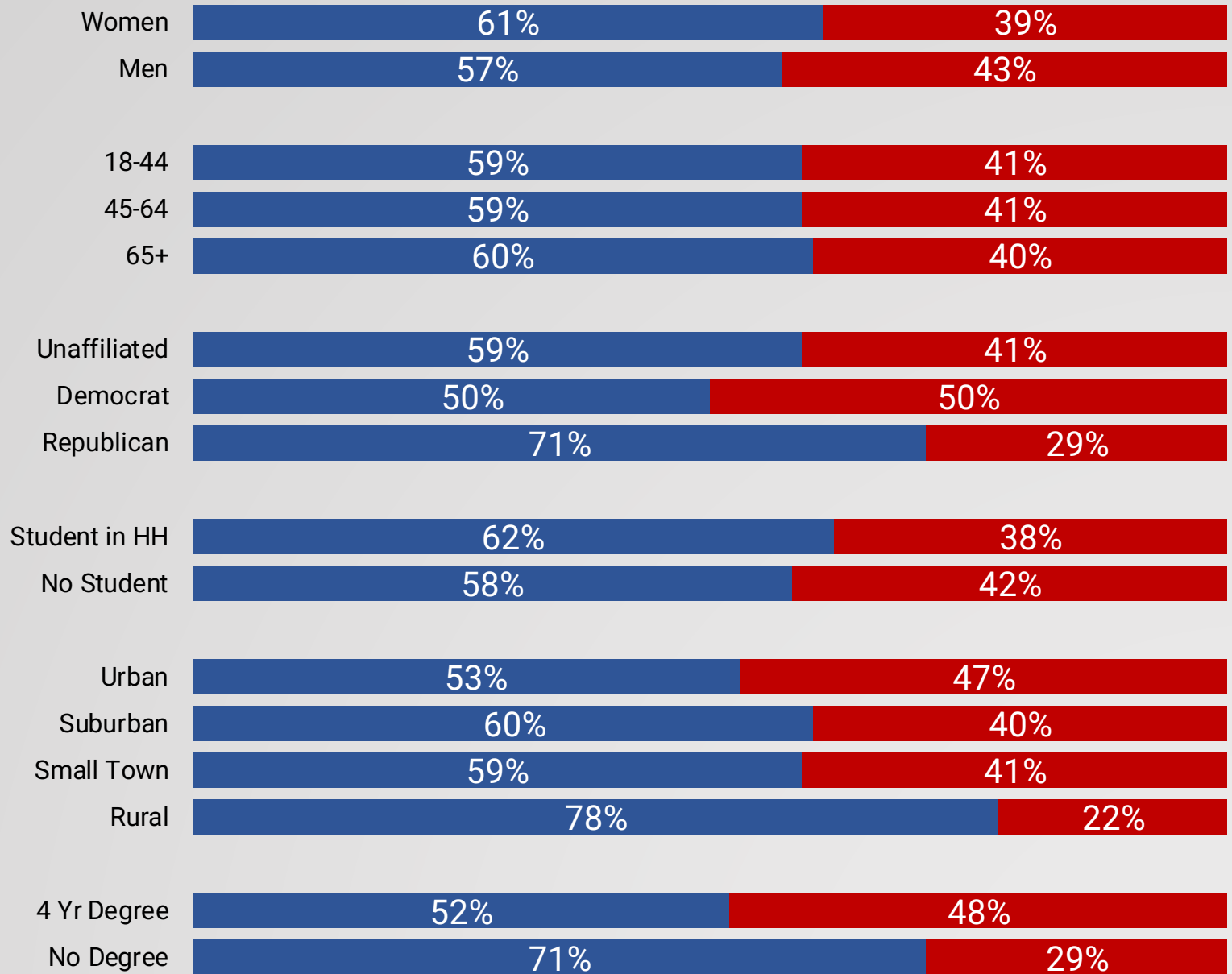
- Both Important
- CTE Programs
- College
- No Opinion



If you had to choose, do you lean more towards Career and Technical education having more importance in your local school district, or do you lean more towards preparing for college having more importance? [Asked to respondents who said both are important, 774n]



■ Lean Toward CTE  
■ Lean Toward College



■ Lean Toward CTE      ■ Lean Toward College

# Why 21% Think Career and Technical Education Programs Should Have Greater Importance

**College Isn't for Everyone – Provide Real-World, Hands-On Skills:** The main idea was that not every student benefits from or needs a four-year college degree, and CTE offers practical, job-ready skills for life after high school. Respondents often shared variations of “college isn't for everyone,” “we need to teach real-world skills,” and “students need hands-on experience.” Many contrasted college's high cost and lack of job guarantees with the immediate career-readiness and practical learning offered by CTE. Common comments included: “Real life hands-on experience is important for the workforce,” “teach kids something they can use to make a living,” and “CTE prepares students for real-world jobs, not just tests.”

**Workforce Demand and Skilled Labor Shortages:** A second major theme centered on economic needs – the growing demand for skilled trades and technical professionals across Colorado and the nation. Respondents repeatedly noted that there are “too many college graduates and not enough electricians, welders, and plumbers,” and emphasized that “America needs quality tradesmen.” Many mentioned that AI and automation are replacing white-collar jobs, making hands-on work more secure: “AI is deleting white-collar jobs; blue-collar work will become more important.” There was strong agreement that expanding CTE boosts local economies by filling workforce gaps and helping young people stay employed in their communities.



# Why 21% Think Career and Technical Education Programs Should Have Greater Importance

**College Debt, Cost, and “Useless Degrees”:** The third most common theme was financial and practical disillusionment with higher education. Many called college “a scam,” “a waste of time and money,” or “indoctrination instead of education.” Respondents highlighted that student debt burdens young people, while trade careers allow them to “earn while they learn.” Typical comments included: “College tuition is too high,” “most people don’t use their degree,” and “technical programs let students graduate with no debt and a career.” This theme appeared across political and demographic groups, showing widespread economic frustration with the traditional college model.



# Why 5% Think Preparing for College Should Have Greater Importance

**College Opens Opportunities and Leads to Better Jobs:** The main theme was that college preparation broadens career options and improves financial security. Many respondents said, “most good-paying jobs require a degree,” “college graduates earn more,” and “a degree is still important in today’s job market.” They see college as a gateway to higher wages, job stability, and career advancement—especially in STEM and professional fields like healthcare, engineering, and business. Some described it in economic terms: “College is still the best path to a livable income,” while others viewed it as essential for competing globally.

**Builds Critical Thinking, Communication, and Life Skills:** The second most common theme emphasized academic and intellectual growth, not just career results. Respondents described college as a place where students “learn to think critically,” “develop problem-solving skills,” and “gain independence and personal accountability.” Several noted that college preparation encourages writing, communication, and reasoning skills that help students even if they don’t attend college. One respondent summarized it as: “If you’re prepared for college and choose not to go, you’re still prepared for life.”



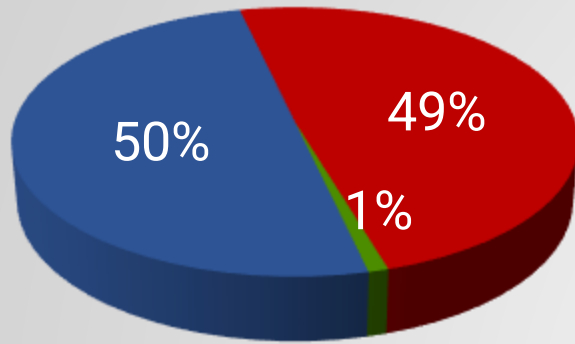
# Why 5% Think Preparing for College Should Have Greater Importance

**College Readiness Ensures Equity and Keeps Options Open:** A key theme was fairness and future flexibility. Many parents and educators emphasized that all students deserve to be prepared for college so that “the door stays open,” even if they later choose another path. Respondents argued that schools should give every student a strong foundation—covering reading, writing, math, and critical thinking—needed for higher education, regardless of income or background. Some also noted that “high school is too early for career specialization,” and that college prep helps students make informed decisions about their futures rather than being directed into trades or jobs too early.



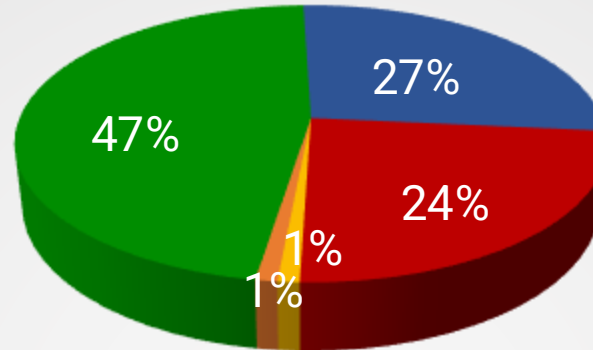
# Survey Demographics

## Gender



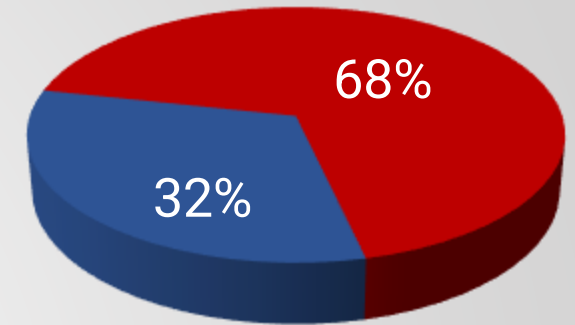
- Female
- Male
- Identify Differently

## Party Affiliation



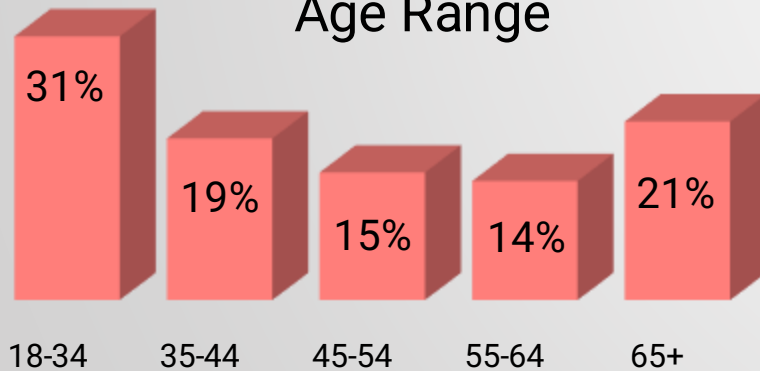
- Unaffiliated
- Democrat
- Republican
- Other Party
- Not Registered

## Student in HH

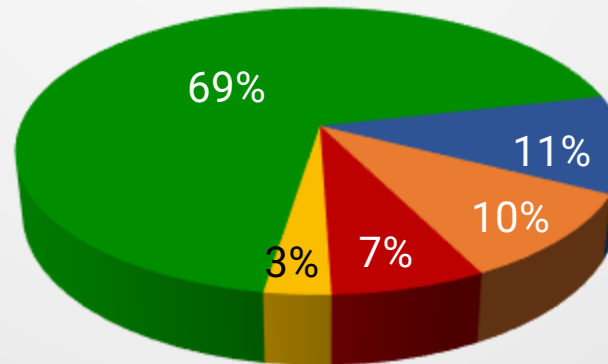


- Yes
- No

## Age Range

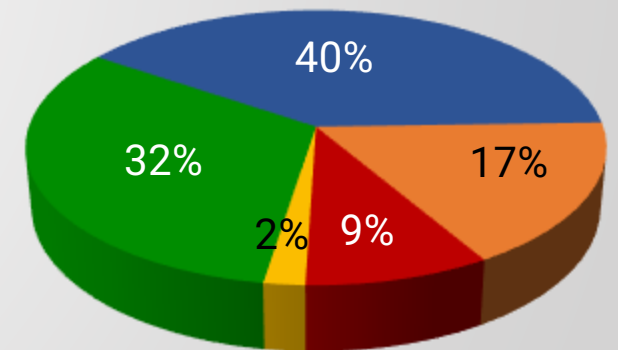


## Type of School



- Public
- Charter
- Private
- Homeschool
- Other

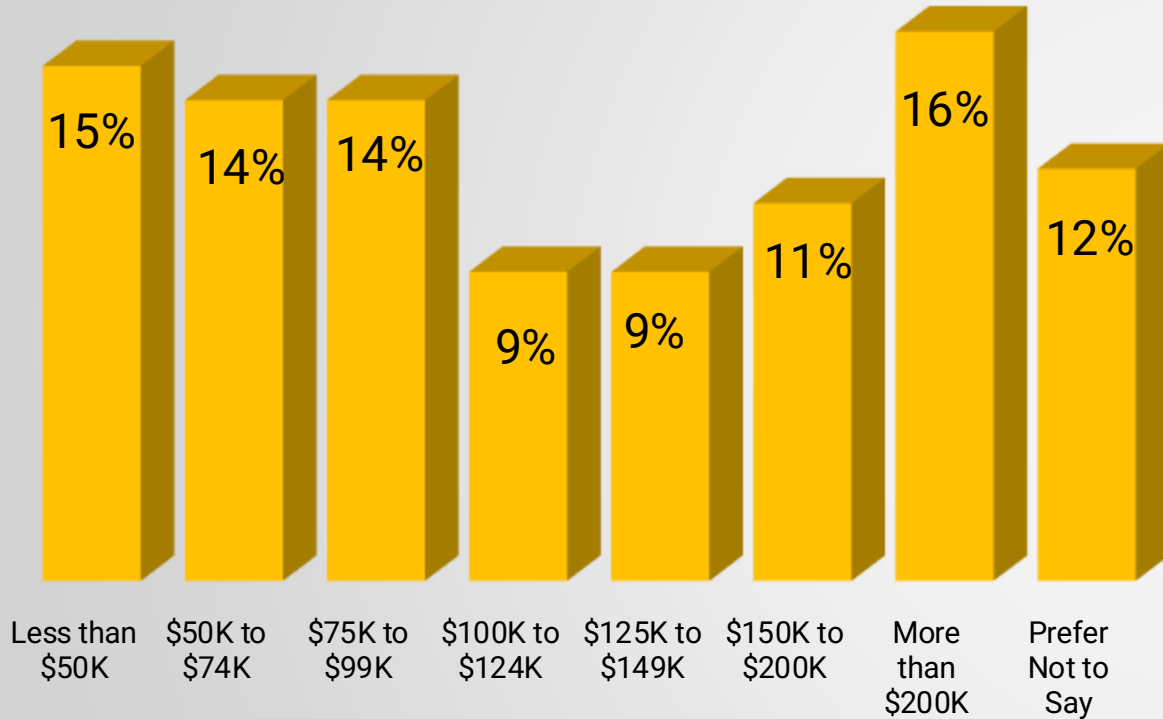
## Type of Area



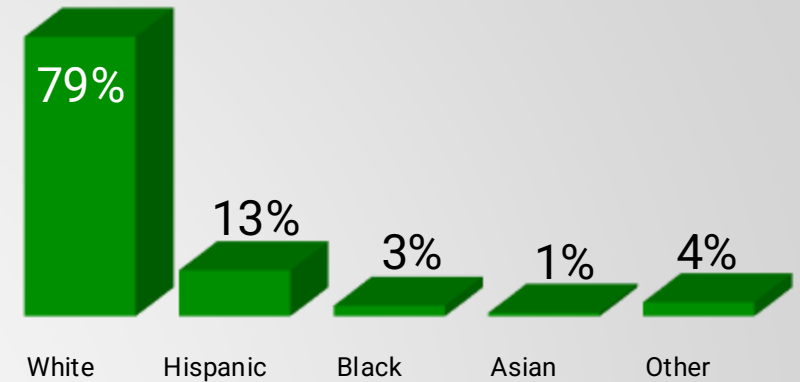
- City-Urban
- Suburban
- Small Town
- Rural
- Prefer not to say

# Survey Demographics

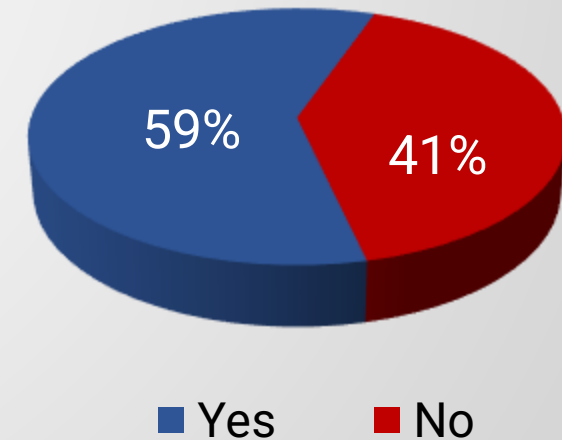
## Household Income



## Race & Ethnicity



## Four-Year Degree?



# Survey Methodology

The sample for this voter opinion survey was randomly selected from a Colorado voter file of 4.4 million registered voters and enhanced by appending cell phone numbers to the file. The interviews were conducted using an MMS text data collection method (sending respondents a text with an image and a message). Respondents who chose to participate in the survey answered questions on an online platform. The survey data were weighted to be representative of the demographics of the Colorado registered voter population.

Any questions regarding this survey and methodology can be directed to David Flaherty at [dflaherty@magellanstrategies.com](mailto:dflaherty@magellanstrategies.com) or Courtney Sievers at [csievers@magellanstrategies.com](mailto:csievers@magellanstrategies.com). You can also call our office at 303-861-8585.



**Magellan  
Strategies**

Your Trusted Survey Research Partner

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