

Facility Master Plan

Leadership Team Meeting #7

Newton Public Schools USD 373

June 4, 2025 @6:00pm

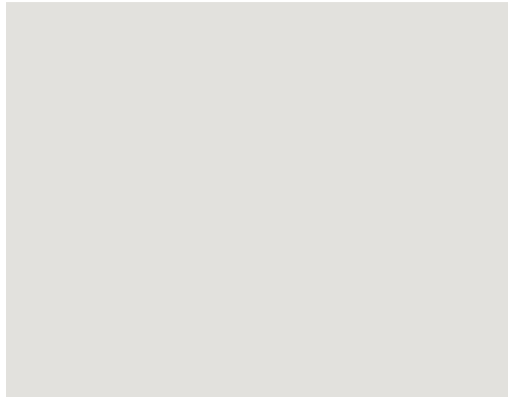
Facilitated by:

Ginna Wallace, Planner

Todd White, Education Planner

NEWTON

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Meeting Agenda

	I. Process Foundation ☐ Process Expectations and Board of Education Guidance ☐ Meeting 6 Summary	10 Min
	II. New Information ☐ Public Input Experience and Survey Results	20 Min
	III. Committee Input ☐ Alignment of Survey Results and Facility Master Plan Recommendations	40 Min
	IV. Next Steps ☐ Final voting and comments	20 Min



Process Foundation

RSP & Associates Introduction

RSP Team:

Robert Schwarz, AICP, CEFPP,

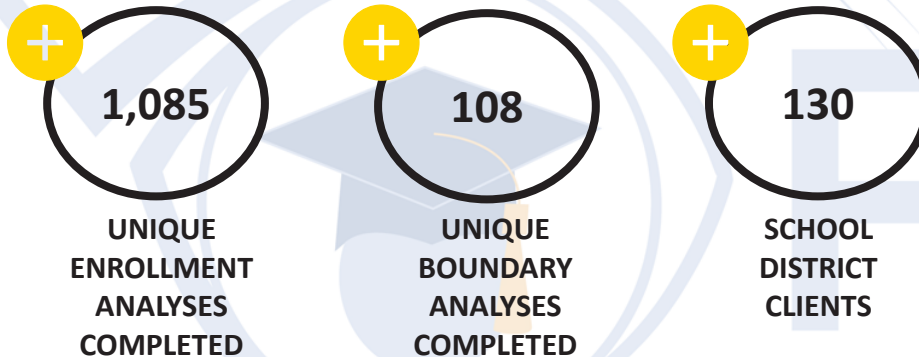
Military, County, City, and School District Planner
University of Kansas – Master of Urban Planning (MUP)

Ginna Wallace, AICP, Planner

University of Kansas – Master of Urban Planning (MUP)

Todd White, Retired Kansas Superintendent

SIMPLE FACTS ABOUT RSP



- Founded in 2003
- Professional educational planning firm
- Expertise in multiple disciplines (GIS, Planning, Facilitation)
- 20+ years of planning experience, 80+ years of education experience, 20+ years of GIS experience
- Projection accuracy of 97% or greater

Company was started with the desire and commitment to assist school districts in long-range planning. RSP has served over **130** clients in:

- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Iowa
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Minnesota
- Missouri
- Nebraska
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Wisconsin

RSP Facility Master Plan Projects:

Lawrence USD 497 (2022/23)
Ankeny Community School District (2022/23)
Des Moines Public Schools (2023/24)
Hutchinson Public Schools USD 308 (2021/22)

Our Partners:



Partner Network
Silver



Process

Throughout the Process:

7 Leadership Team Meeting

(November 2024 to June 2025)

Public Input

(May 2025)

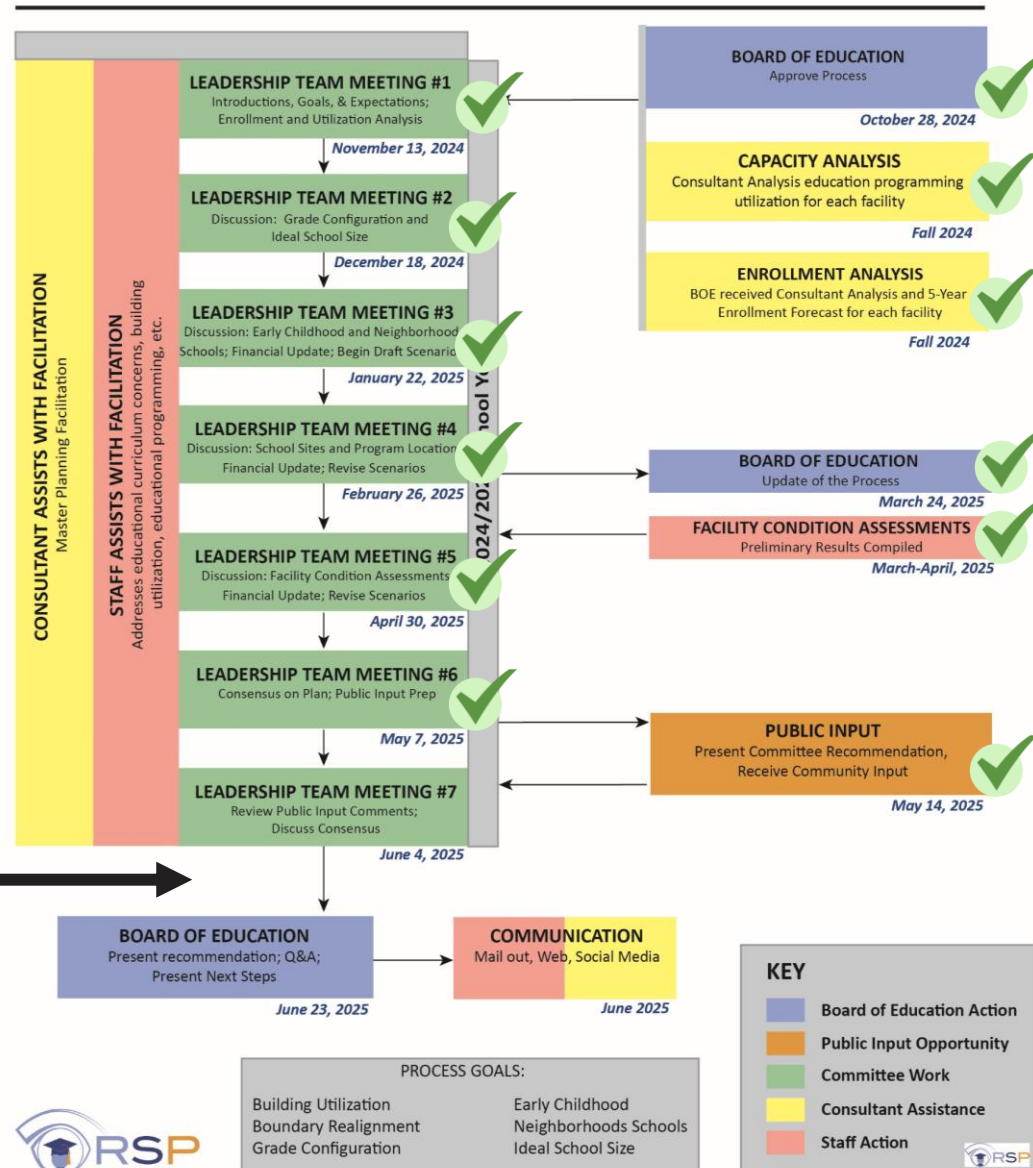
3 Board meetings

(October, March, and June)

RSP assists with facilitation and analysis throughout the entire process



COMPREHENSIVE FACILITY PLANNING PROCESS



Board Approved 10/28/2024



Roadmap to Success



Main Takeaway:

- ☐ RSP has mapped out the general progress of the process to reach outcomes
- ☐ Meeting agendas are flexible, but the overall timeline is established to ensure objectives are met at each meeting

Committee Stages of Input



DREAD

- Lots of data
- Homework!
- Identify challenges

Key Question:

How are the children?

The first part of this process may feel overwhelming! There will be lots of information and discussion that is necessary to reach a solution



DREAM

- Time to think BIG
- Utilize foundation of information
- No stone left unturned

Key Question:

What is best for the children?

The second part of this process allows members to dream about the future. Think outside the box and allow yourself to think about where Newton can be 10 years out.



DESIGN

- Integrate realistic limitations
- Create implementable steps
- Build community support

Key Question:

How will the children be?

The end outcome should be a realistic Blueprint that the community, Board, and District can support.

A Process Involving Everyone

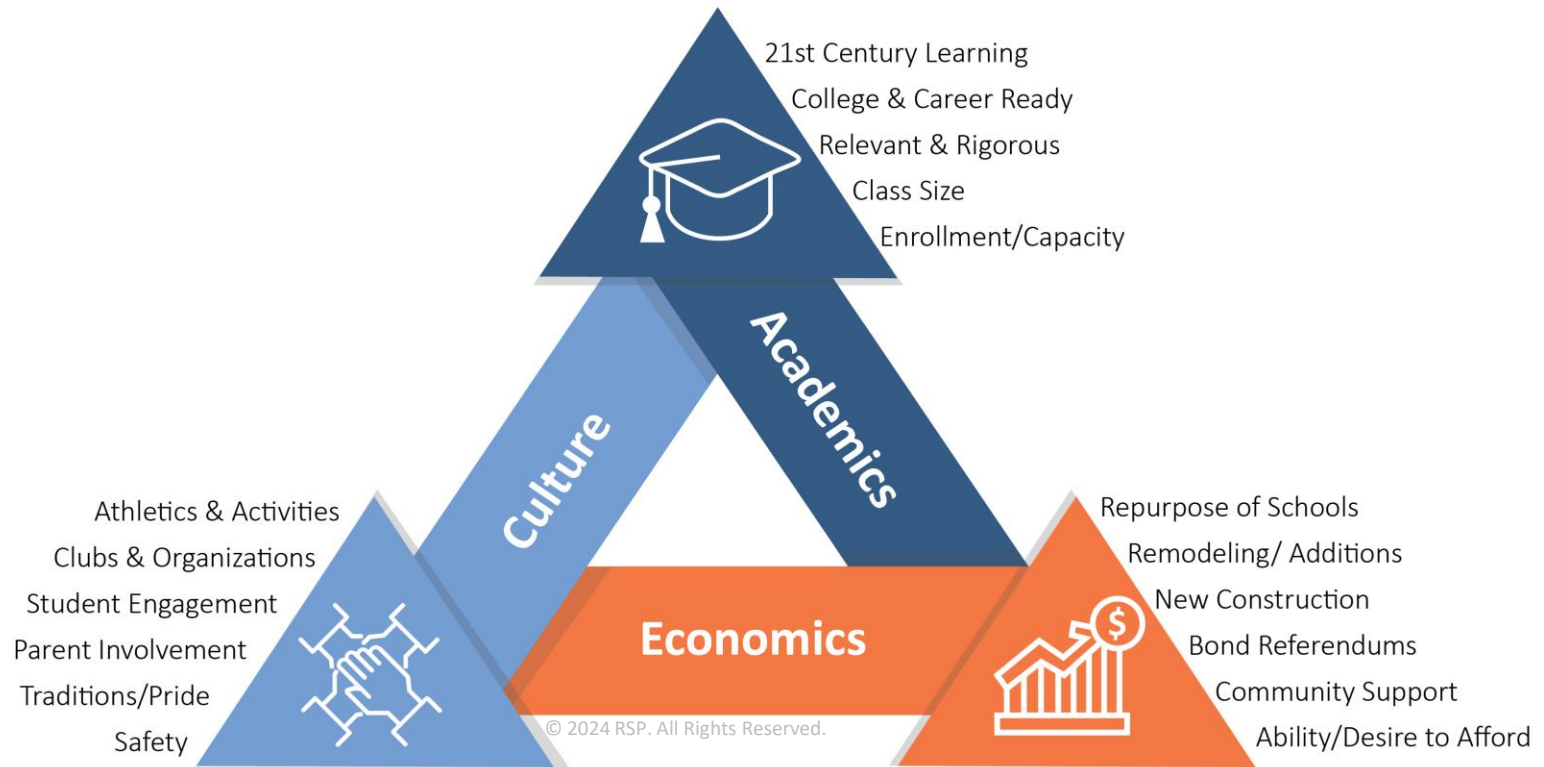


Graphic Explanation:

- ❑ Re-imagining education will take all these entities working toward enhancing the student experience
- ❑ Visual shows how everyone is connected toward that outcome

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A Process with Objectives (ACE)



Graphic Explanation:

- ❑ Each of these items create the experience and reality for the community
- ❑ If too much emphasis is placed in only one or two of these areas, it could result in a negative student outcome

Board of Education Goals

Goal Area #1: Focus on Core Instruction

- To include hard and soft skills
- Reading and mathematics are foundational skills necessary for all students to succeed.
- Focus on important soft skills that are age-appropriate throughout the district.
 - **Strategy #1:** All core instructional areas will be aligned to state standards.
 - **Strategy #2:** All core instructional areas will have common assessments created at the grade level and/or content area that validate the rigor of the curriculum at the system level.
 - **Strategy #3:** Grade levels and content areas that have the interim assessments available to them will administer those assessments during the three open windows
 - **Strategy #4:** Focus on instructional strategies that matter

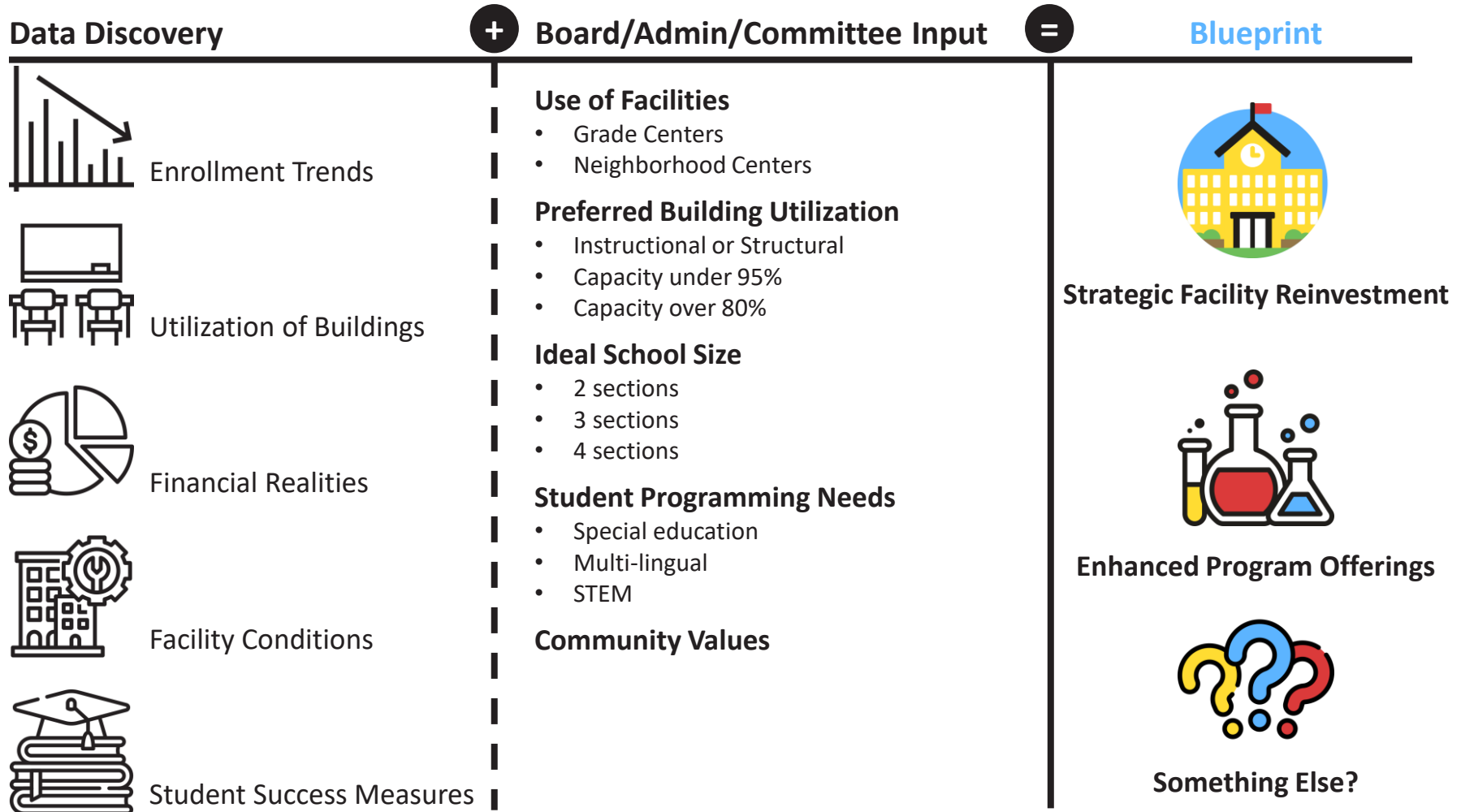
Goal Area #2: Improve and/or Sustain Culture

- Invite the community to support kids on the field, at performances.
- How do we give people permission to be proud? Has to be organic, not toxic positivity.
- Consistencies with processes in behavior, leadership,
- What things are we doing to encourage the negative rather than put spin on the positive? Proactive vs. reactive.
- Recognize students/staff at BOE, or at the schools
- Bring everything back to your goals. (Board vision?)

Goal Area 3: Form Partnerships/Connections with Stakeholders

- Sharing our good intern/partner experiences to bring more people to table. Expand if/when possible
- Bring our community INTO the lower grades, establishing connections early.
- Get people into our buildings. Showcase volunteering early on. Introducing our kids.
 - **Strategy #1:** Develop a specific and intentional plan for communication for all stakeholders
 - **Strategy #2:** Engage the school parent and community patron population in a more regular and meaningful manner

Investigation of the District



Main Takeaway: Data Discovery items create the foundation for data-driven, community-supported solutions

Process Guiding Principles

The following are potential Guiding Principles to consider for the Facility Blueprint Process:

- ☐ The Board will consider the committee work as part of **long-range District planning**
- ☐ The future Facility Blueprint should provide even **better educational opportunities** at each school to ensure an equitable student experience at each school
- ☐ The Facility Blueprint Process may include an evaluation of (but not limited to):
 - Attendance areas or grade centers
 - Ideal grade configuration
 - Optimal facility utilization
 - Current and future student programming need
 - Financial opportunities for implementation
- ☐ The Facility Blueprint implementation will include solutions in the following areas (but not limited to):
 - Building utilization (how many sections, teams, and/or students in a building)
 - Programming (special education, multi-lingual, student activities, STEM focused, etc.)
 - How building are utilized (grade centers, neighborhood centers, etc.)
 - Implementation (building inventory need, program delivery, attendance area plan, timeline, funding, etc.)



Board Approved 10/28/2024

100% committee support 11/13/24

Committee Belief Statements

Facility Needs

All students will have access to facilities that support their academic and personal growth today and tomorrow.

100% support at Meeting #3



Program Offerings

Students will have strong foundational skills that will enable them to succeed in a variety of program offerings. USD 373 will continue to provide students access to a variety of program options in academics, athletics, activities, CTE, and post-secondary skills training.

100% support at Meeting #4



Student Experience

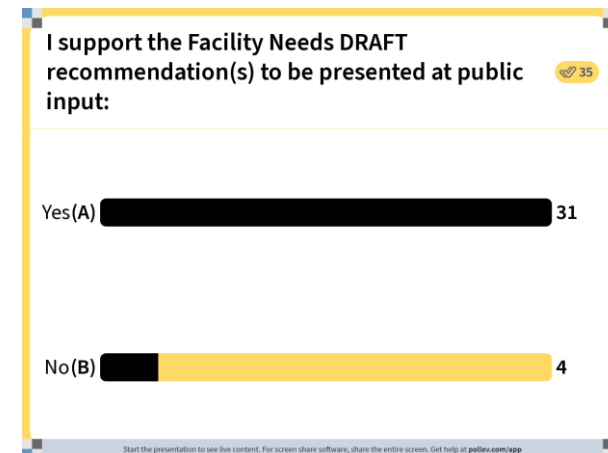
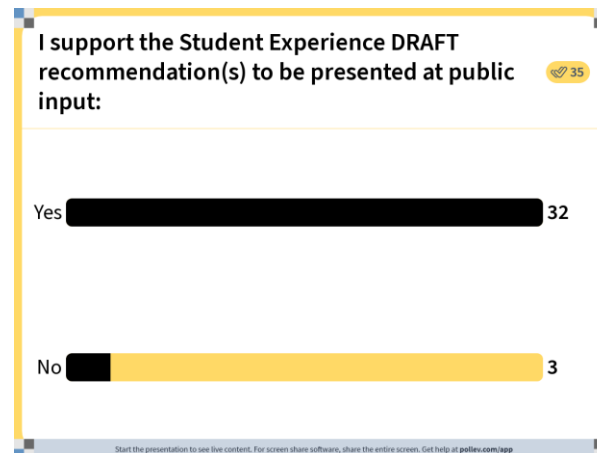
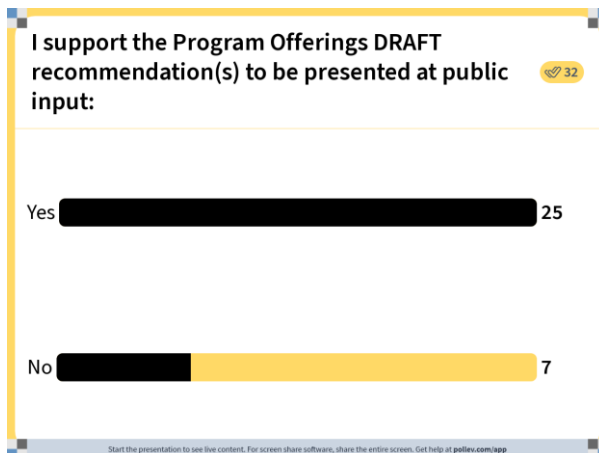
We believe in fostering growth and community pride, striving to maintain smaller class sizes in the primary grades, embracing students as they grow, and providing supportive, inclusive environments that prepare every student for success in school and beyond.

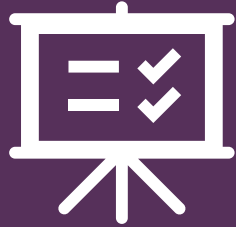
100% support at Meeting #4



Meeting #6 Summary

- New Information Focus: Aligning key projects to the Three FMP Categories
- Activity: Review and discuss public input materials
- General feedback from recommendation boards:
 - Keep strategies to 2-3 ideas (over 3 is overwhelming)
 - Keep it simple (limit options)
 - Make wording more Action based
 - Better define statements by providing examples
 - Declining enrollment is not reflected in any of the objectives or strategies
 - Provide funding disclaimers without noting potential bonding need
- Received general majority support in each category to move forward to public input



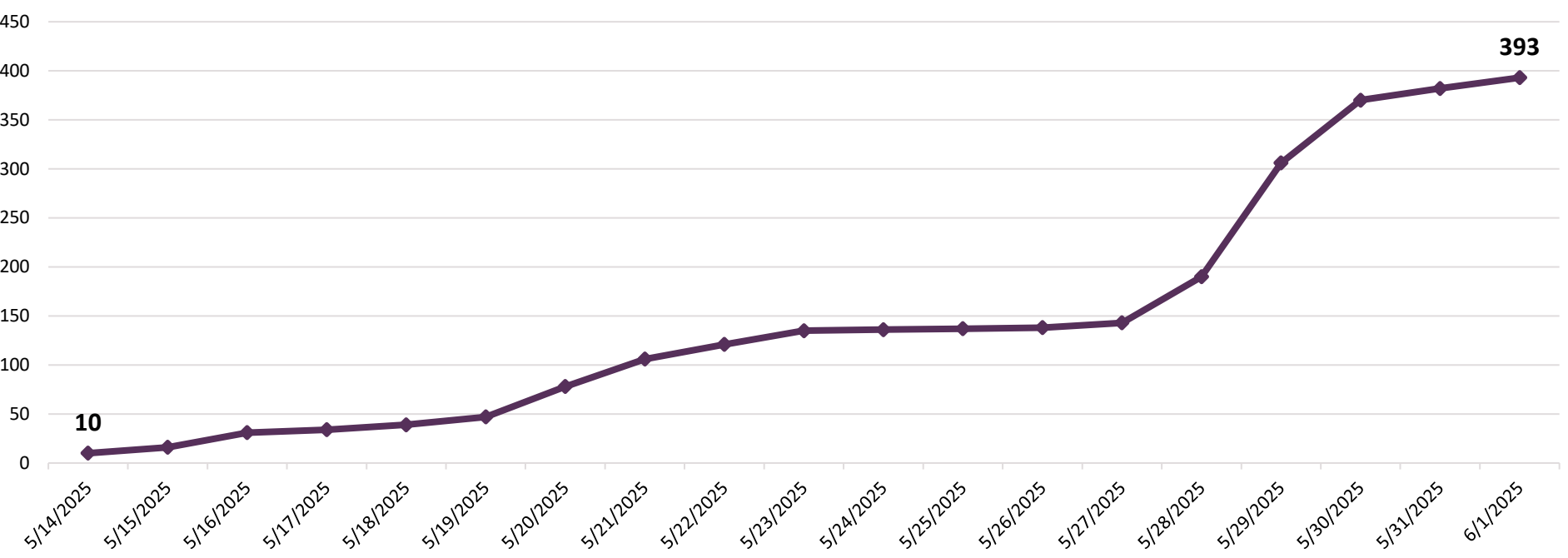


New Information

Community Survey Results

393 Total Survey Respondents

Survey Traffic Over Time:

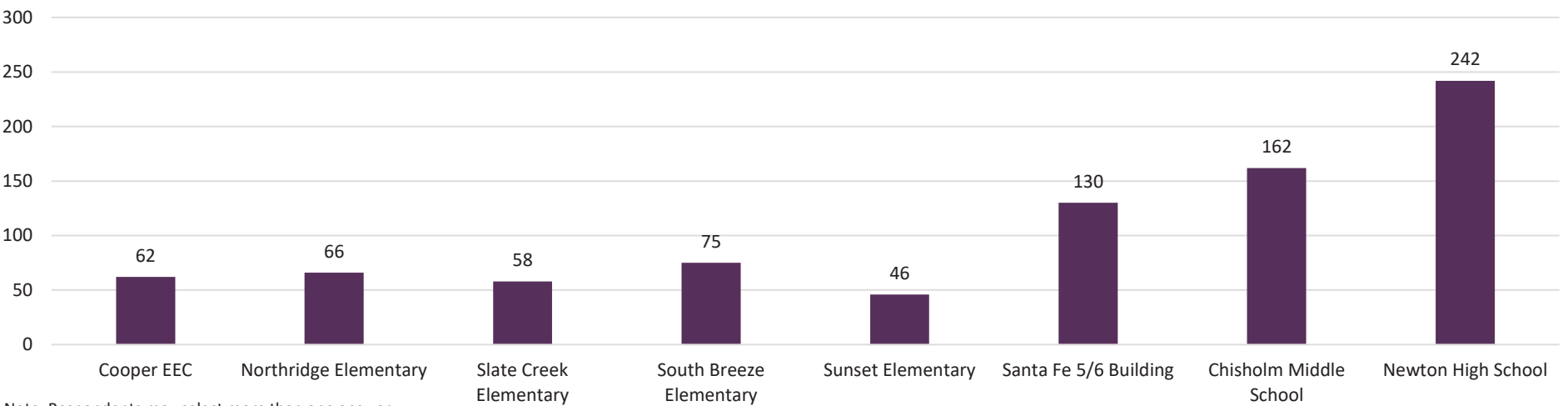


About the Survey:

- Survey opened on the in-person public input night (May 14th)
- Survey was advertised and distributed by district administration (social media, handouts, verbal, etc.)
- Survey was able to be translated to other languages – all results are compiled
- Survey was closed at 11:59pm June 1st with **393 total results**

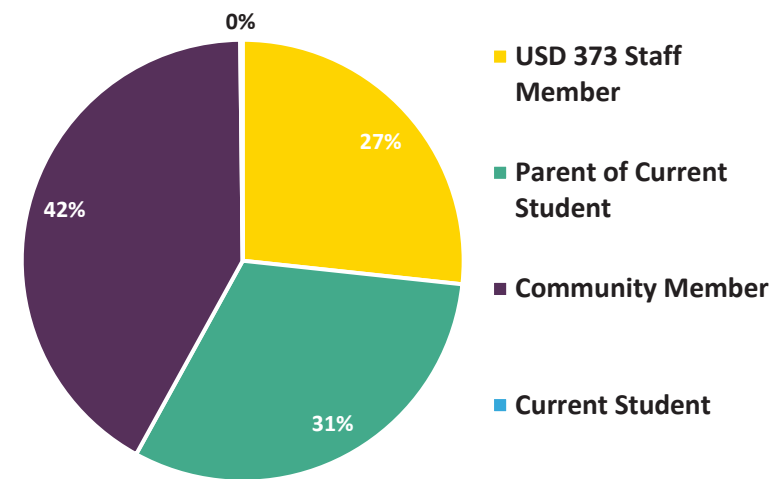
About the Survey Respondents:

School Identification of Survey Respondents:



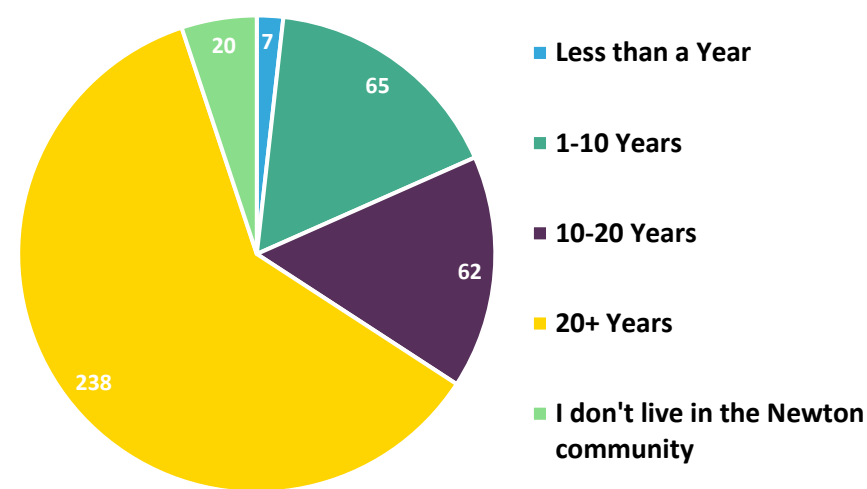
Note: Respondents may select more than one answer

Roles of Survey Respondents:



Note: Respondents may select more than one answer

Longevity with Community:

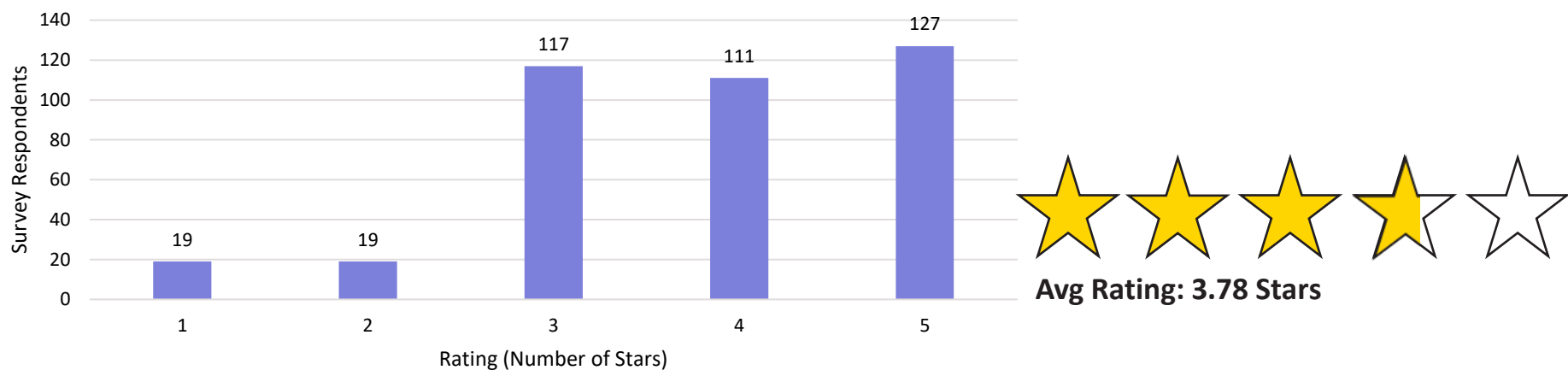


Program Offerings Objective #1:

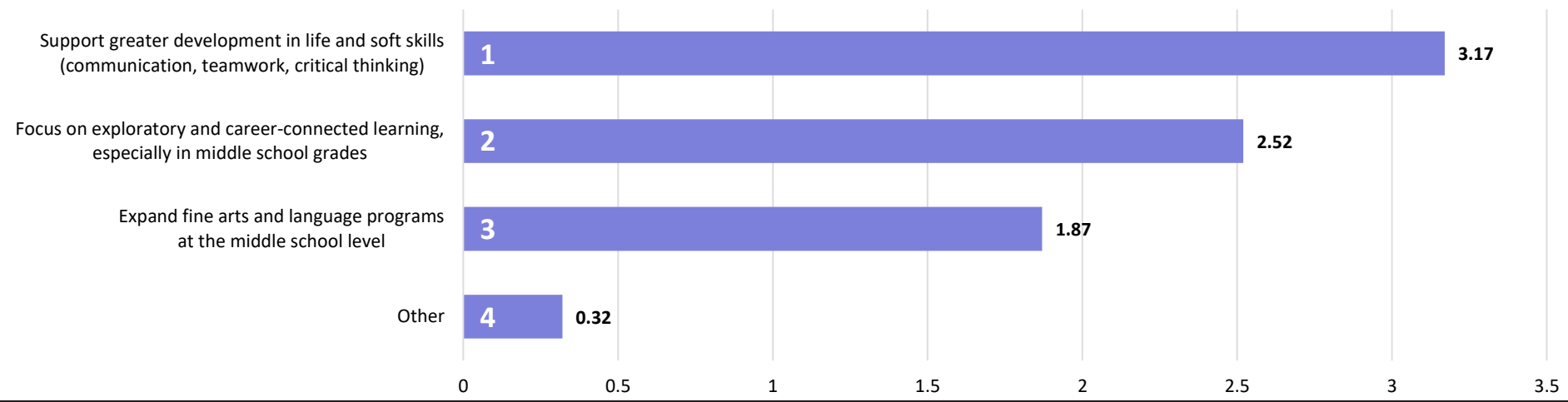


Objective #1: For the District to explore expanded elective class offerings for students in all grades.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

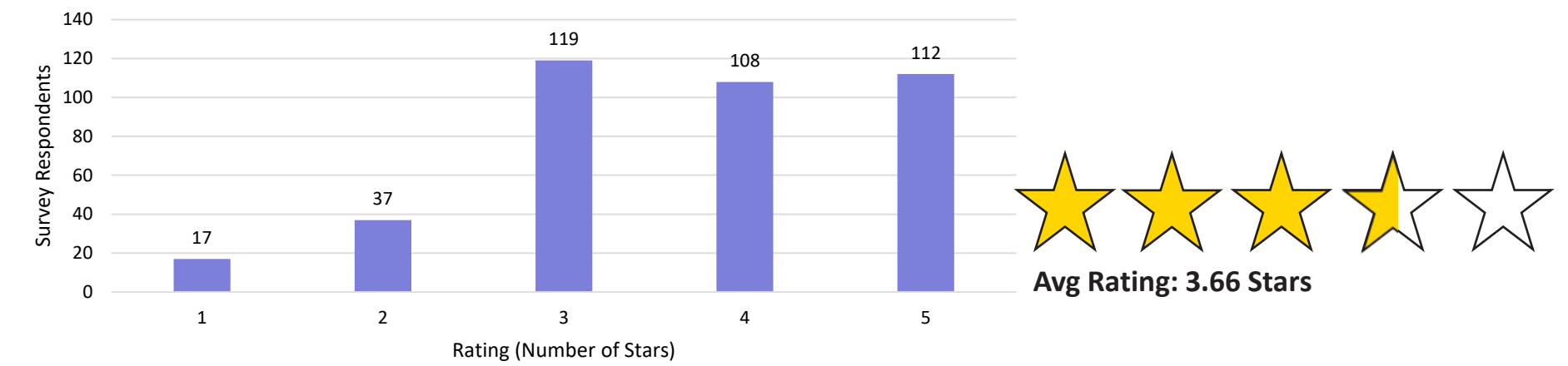


Program Offerings Objective #2:

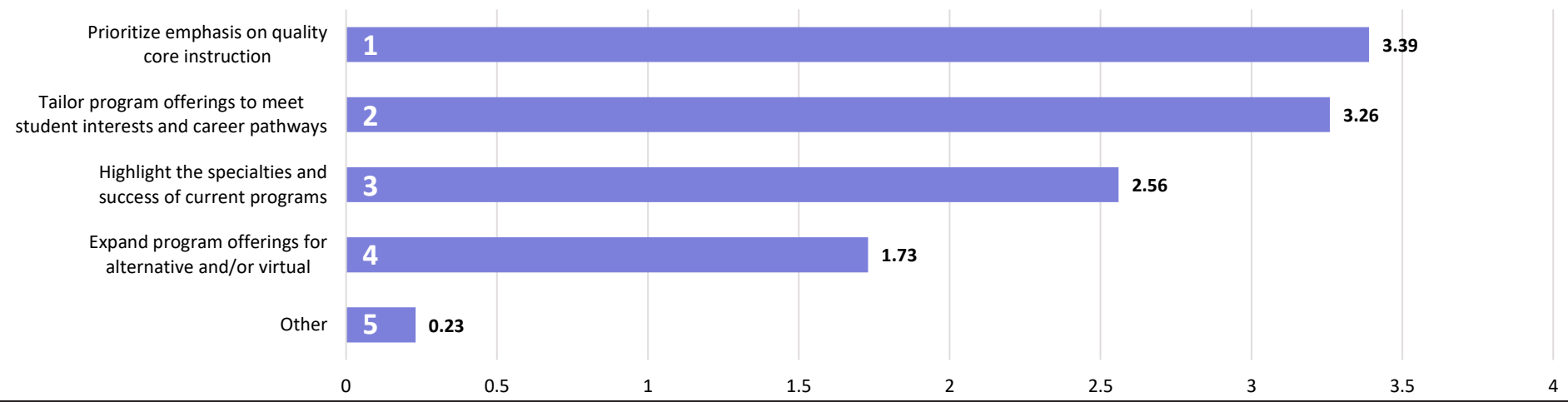


Objective #2: For the District to support greater pride throughout the community and promote program offerings.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

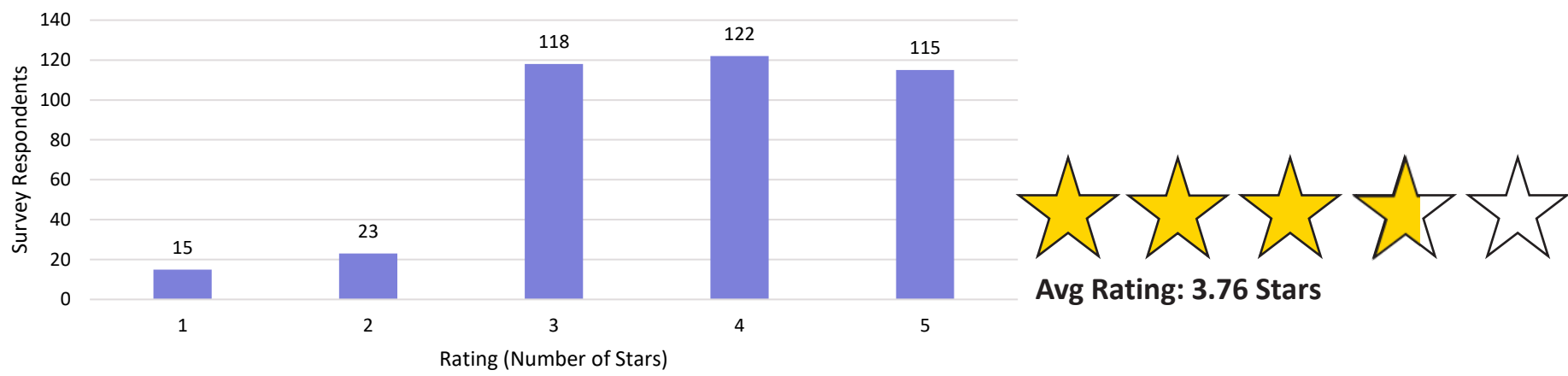


Program Offerings Objective #3:

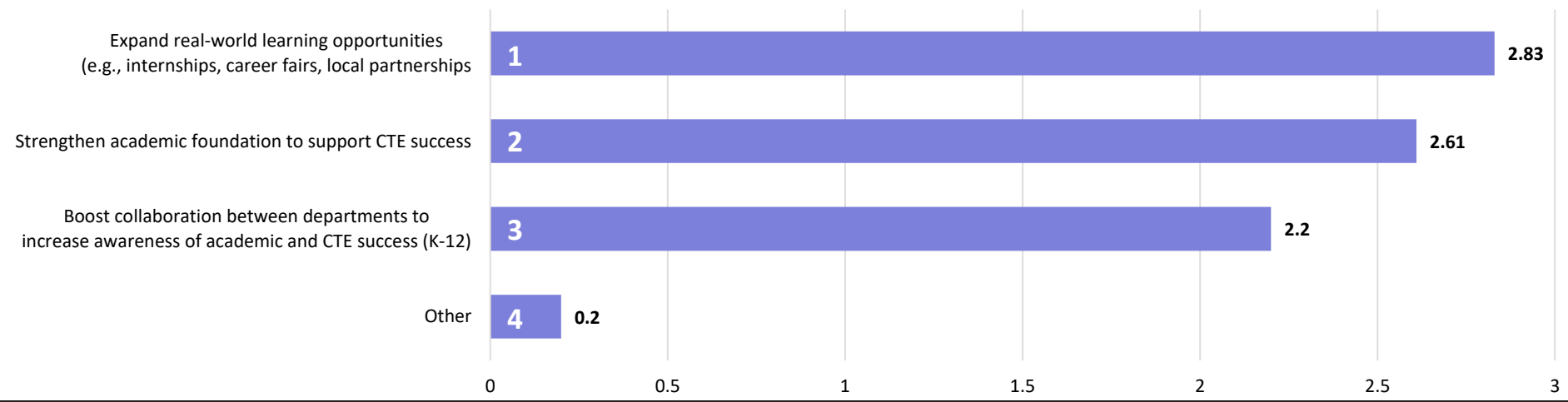


Objective #3: For the District to foster greater CTE and Academic alignment in middle and high school grades.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:



Program Offerings Comments (Key Themes)



Focus on Core Academics and Foundational Skills:

- Many respondents emphasized the need to prioritize reading, writing, math, and science over expanding programs. There is concern that basic academic outcomes are suffering despite the breadth of programs.

CTE (Career & Technical Education) Controversy:

- There is a mixed perception of CTE: some praise its real-world benefits, while others criticize the overemphasis and funding toward it.
- Multiple comments expressed a need for balance between CTE and core subjects, and some asked for better public understanding of what CTE includes.

Real-World and Life Skills Curriculum:

- Strong interest was expressed in classes that teach life skills (e.g., taxes, budgeting, cooking), both as part of electives and integrated into core curriculum.

Support for Special Populations:

- Several comments called for better support and inclusion of Special Education and SPED students, advocating for tailored electives and stronger program integration.

Expanded Program Access and Scheduling:

- Respondents noted scheduling conflicts (e.g., between band and CTE) and requested more flexible, accessible options for students, including consideration of year-round school or online alternatives.

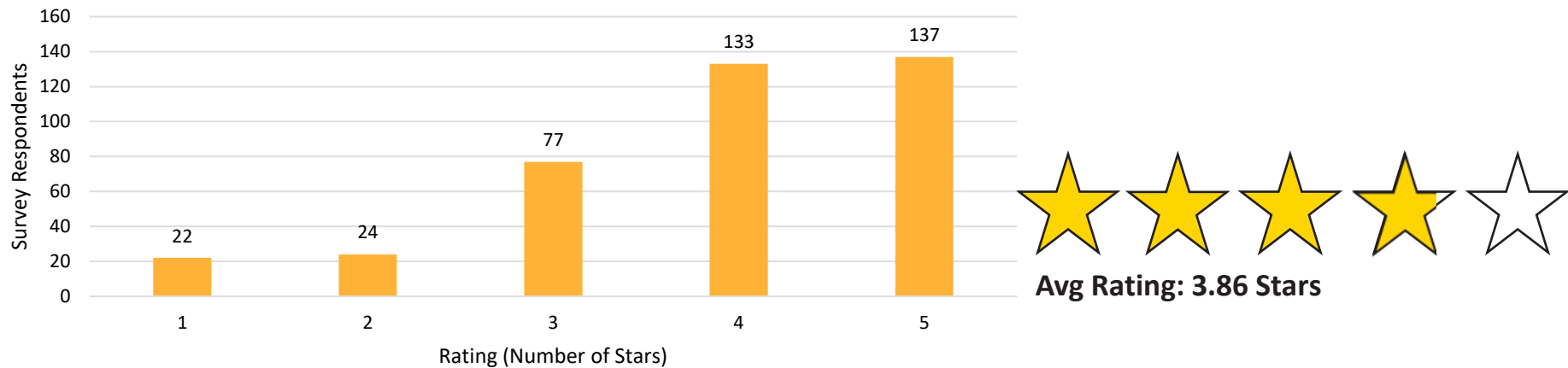
Disclaimer: Providing open-ended comments was optional. The summaries are based on approximately 60-80 comments per open ended question, representing about 15–20% of total survey responses. As such, the identified themes may not reflect the views of the overall majority.

Student Experience Objective #1:

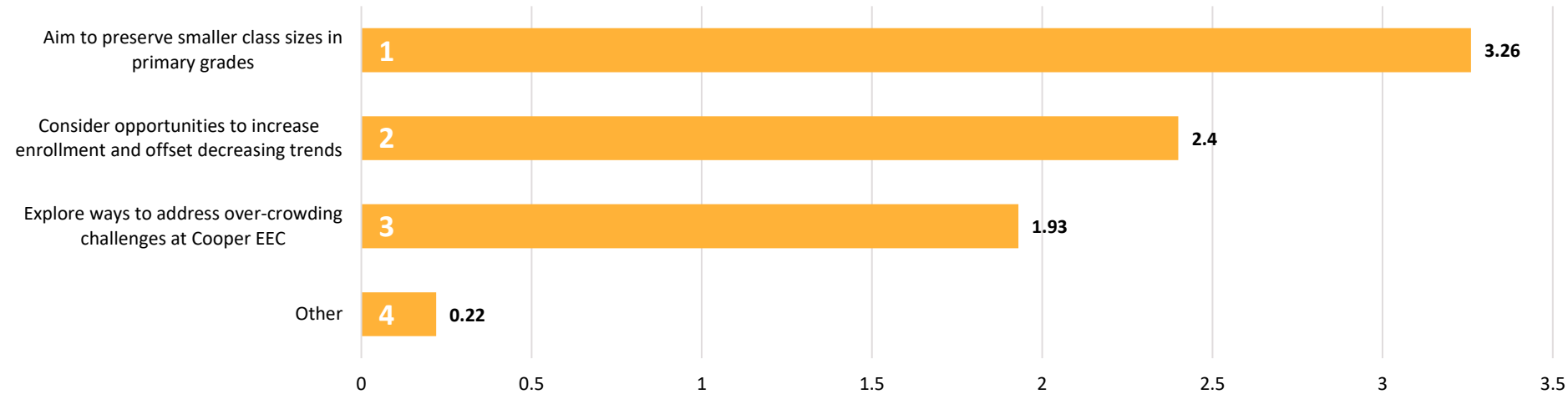


Objective #1: For the District to maintain the current grade levels and balance enrollment between buildings.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

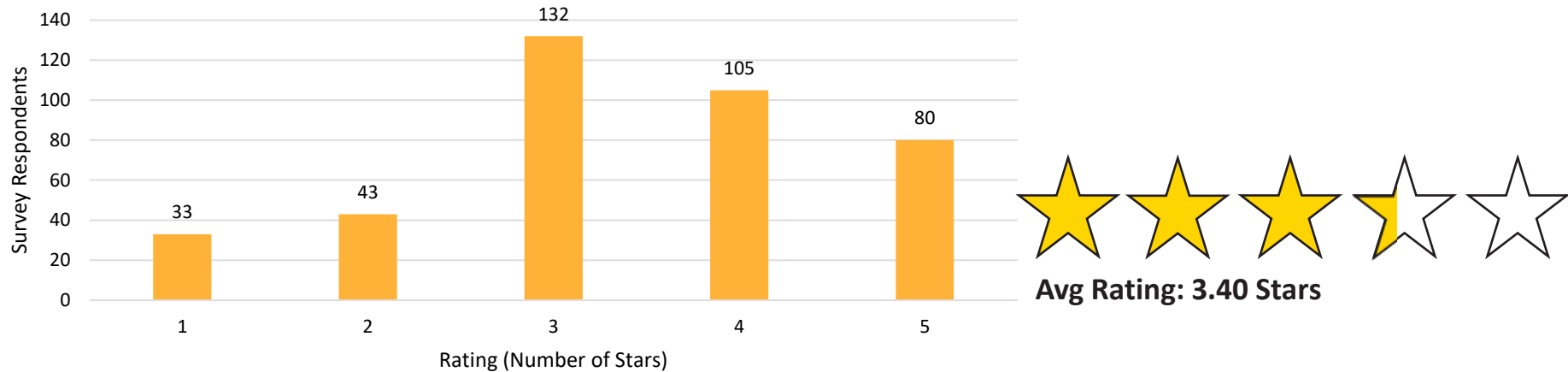


Student Experience Objective #2:

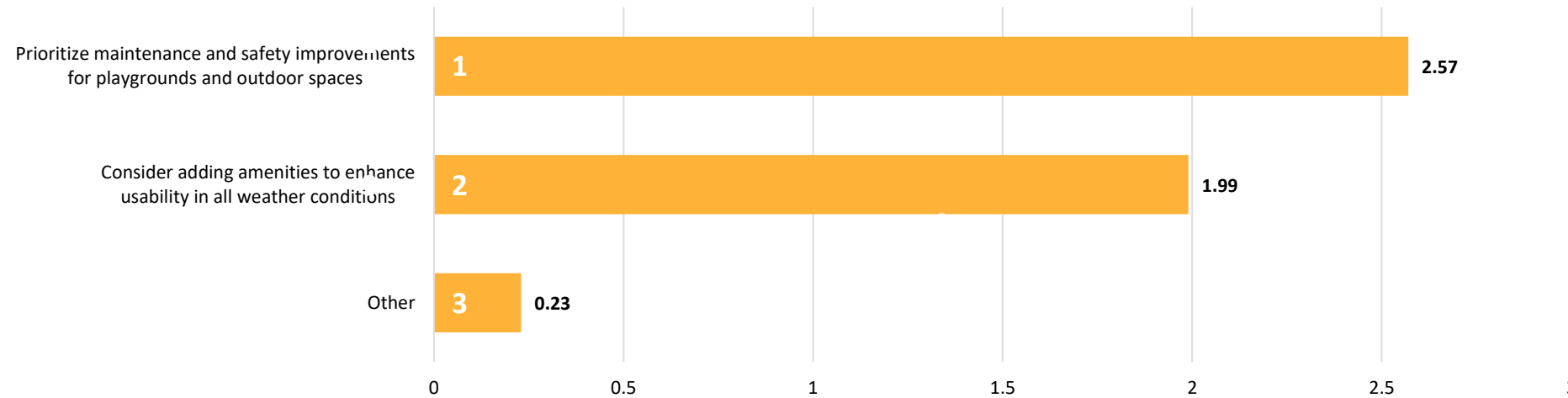


Objective #2: For the District to upgrade and maintain outdoor amenities at school sites.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

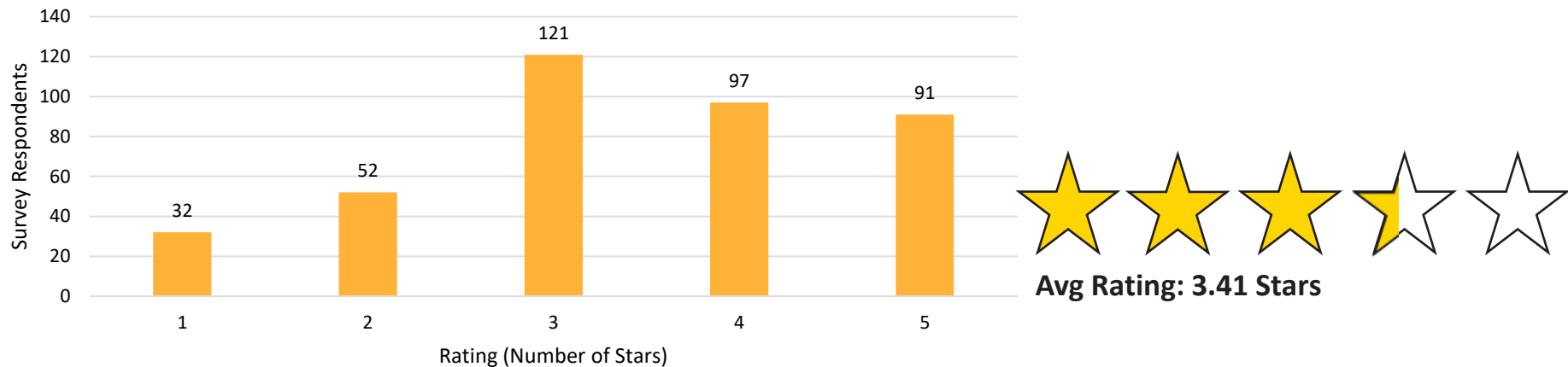


Student Experience Objective #3:

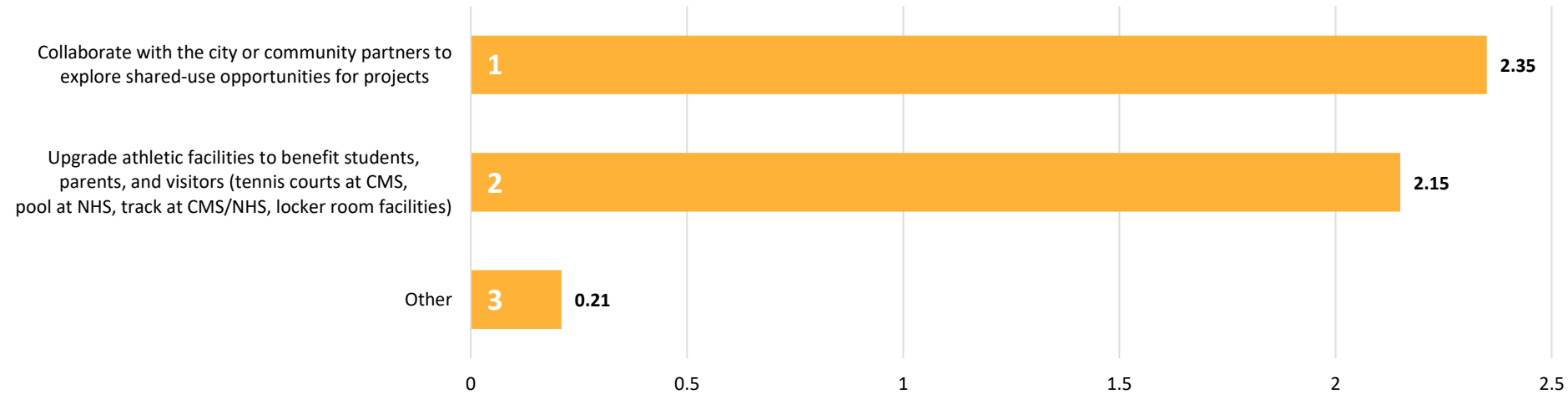


Objective #3: For the District to consider enhancements to athletic and extra-curricular facilities.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:



Student Experience Comments (Key Themes)



Equity in Extracurricular Offerings:

- Many want more emphasis on fine arts, non-athletic extracurriculars, and inclusive activities, with concerns that sports receive disproportionate attention and funding.

Bullying, Safety, and Behavior Support:

- Several parents expressed frustration with bullying and the lack of effective response.
- Others stressed the need for better behavioral supports and inclusive, supportive environments.

Teacher and Staff Retention:

- There were numerous calls for better pay and working conditions for teachers, paraeducators, and support staff, linking these improvements directly to student success.

Class Size and Student-Teacher Connection:

- Concerns about overcrowding, especially in special programs like Cooper, and issues with CMS's block schedule were raised.
- Smaller class sizes and daily teacher contact were viewed as key to better learning and relationships.

Community and Cultural Identity:

- Some respondents felt a lack of community pride and called for a district-wide effort to celebrate successes, foster inclusion, and build a stronger culture that supports all students.

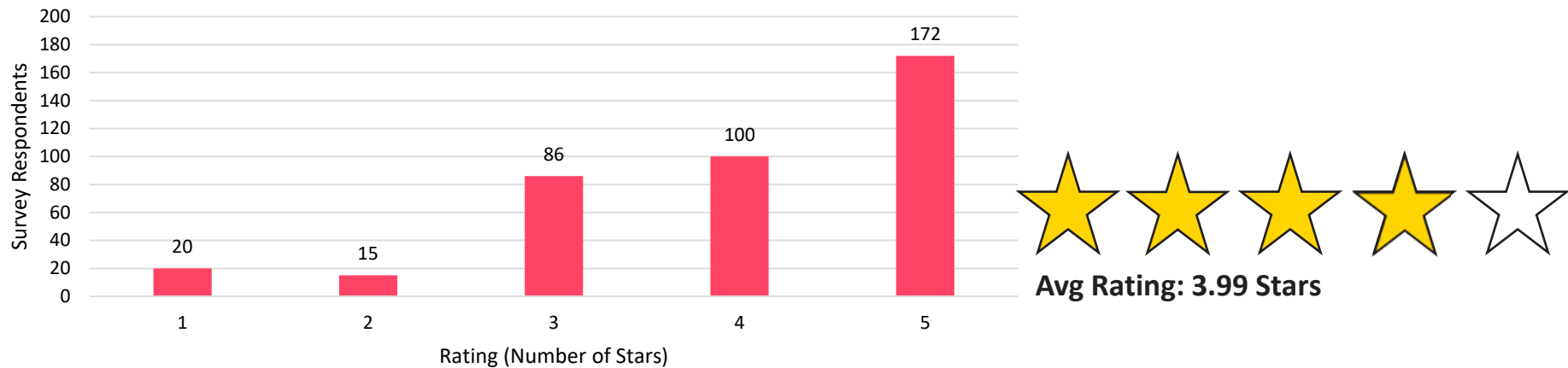
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Facility Needs Objective #1:

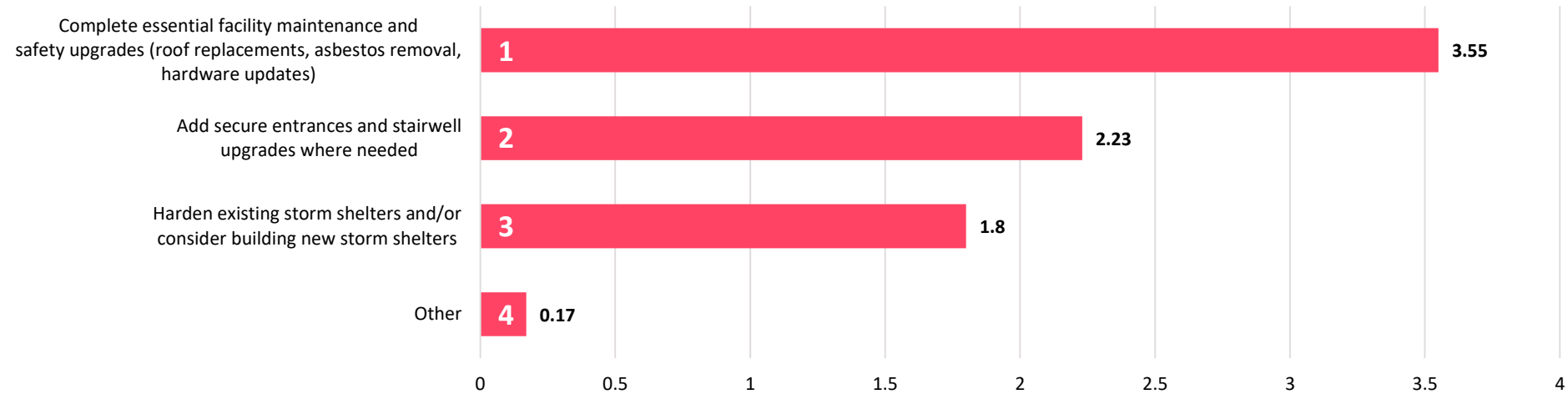


Objective #1: For the District to expand safety, accessibility, and security at facilities.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

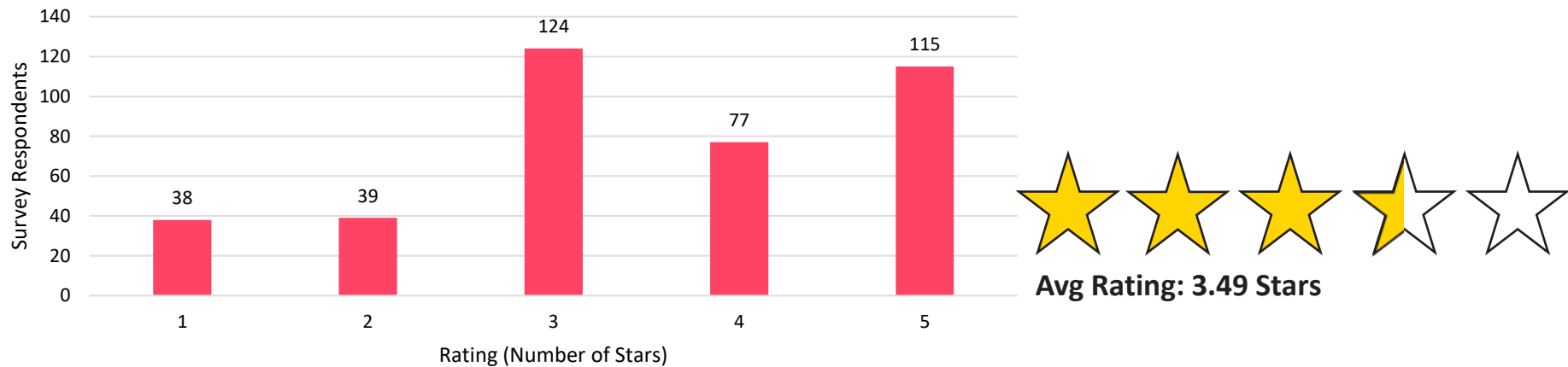


Facility Needs Objective #2:

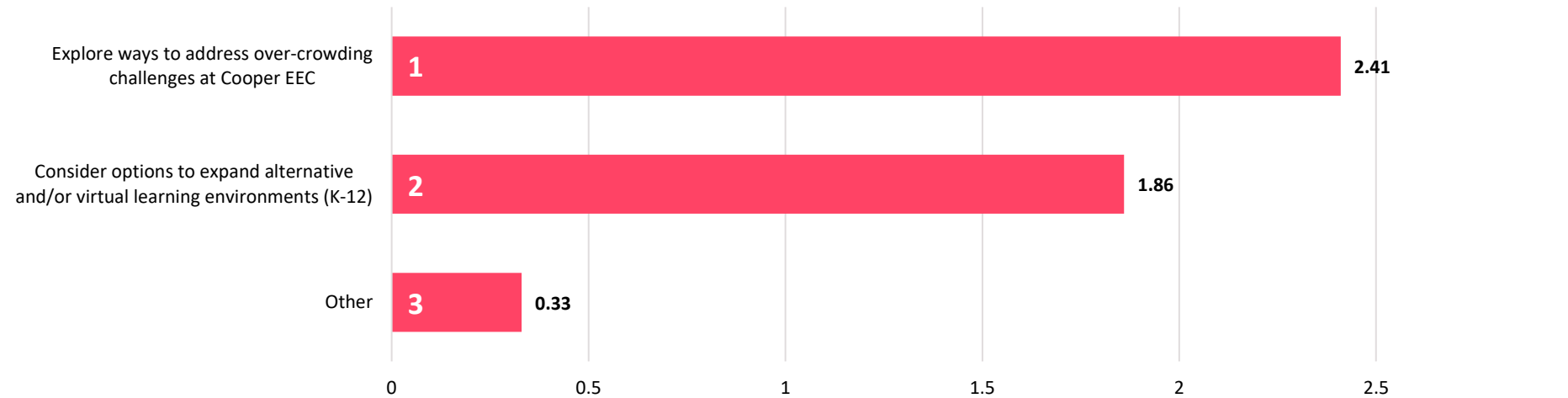


Objective #2: For the District to consider ways to maximize use of all district facilities.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:

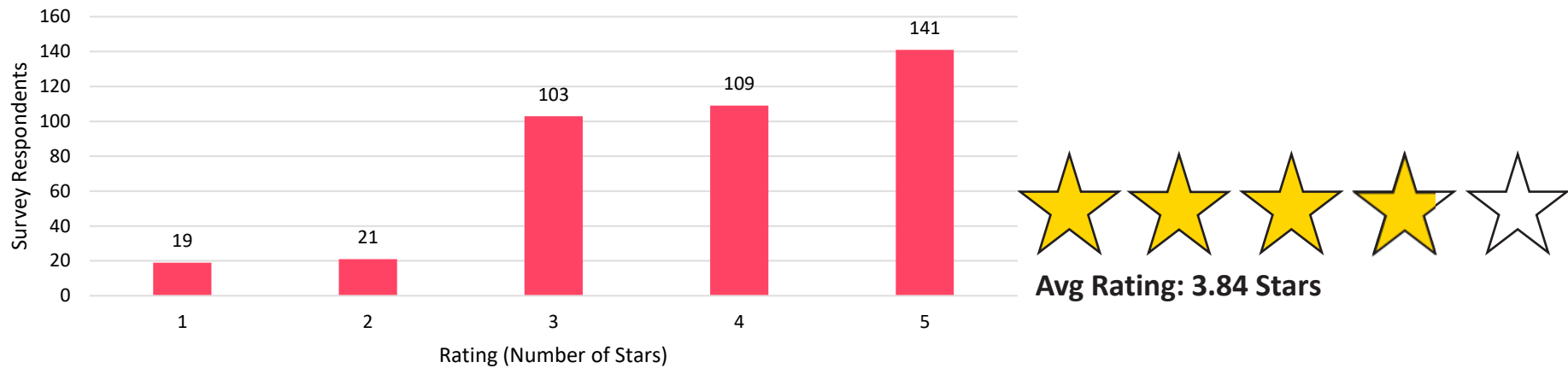


Facility Needs Objective #3:

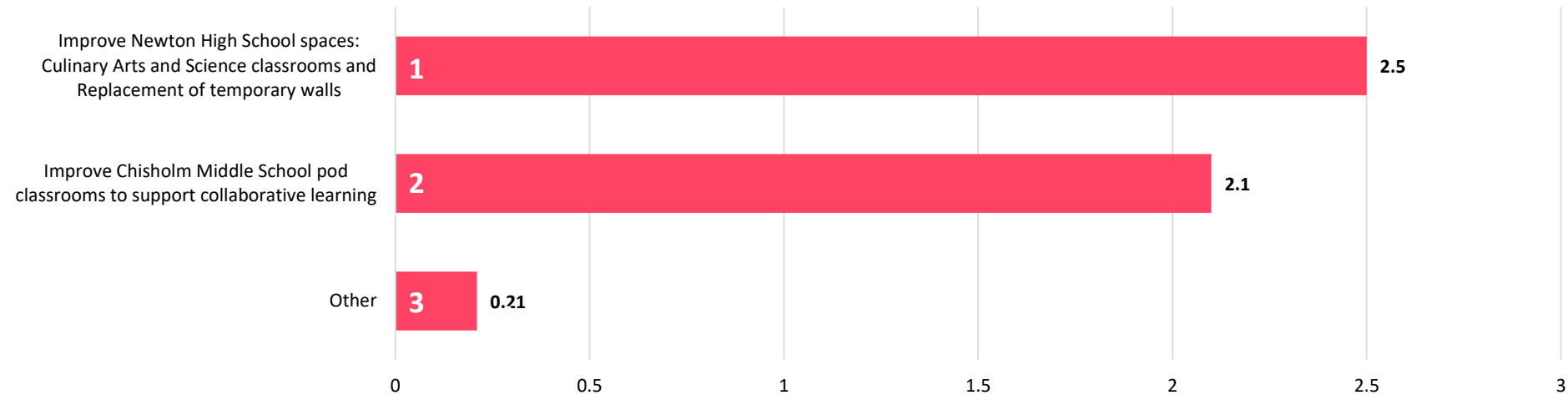


Objective #3: For the District to consider strategic facility improvements that enhance learning environments.

Rating of Objective Statement:



Ranking of Potential Strategies:



Facility Needs Comments (Key Themes)



Maintenance and Modernization of Existing Buildings:

- Repeated mentions of basic issues like leaks, outdated classrooms, lack of warm water, and poor infrastructure show strong community support for maintaining what currently exists over building new facilities.

Safety and Security:

- Comments emphasized the need for safer structures (e.g., permanent walls at NHS), secure entrances, storm shelters, and code-compliant upgrades, especially in older schools.

Upgrade Specific Program Facilities:

- Facilities for CTE (e.g., kitchens, science labs), performing arts, and athletics were frequently noted as inadequate or outdated.
- Many supported upgrades but wanted them to be equitably distributed.

Early Childhood and Cooper Concerns:

- Strong support for preserving the Early Childhood Center at Cooper and skepticism about overcrowding claims.
- Many cautioned against relocating or splitting services into elementary buildings.

Fiscal Responsibility and Transparency:

- A number of participants expressed frustration with perceived wasteful spending or lack of clear priorities, emphasizing the need for smart investments that directly support students.

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Part 3: Committee Input

Program Offerings



Belief Statement:

Students will have strong foundational skills that will enable them to succeed in a variety of program offerings. USD 373 will continue to provide students access to a variety of program options in academics, athletics, activities, CTE, and post-secondary skills training.

Objective #1:



For the District to explore **expanded elective class** offerings for students in all grades.

Objective #2:



For the District to support **greater pride** throughout the community and promote program offerings.

Objective #3:



For the District to foster greater **CTE and Academic alignment** in middle and high school grades.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Support greater development in life and soft skills (communication, teamwork, critical thinking)
2. Focus on exploratory and career-connected learning, especially in middle school grades
3. Expand fine arts and language programs at the middle school level

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Prioritize emphasis on quality core instruction
2. Tailor program offerings to meet student interests and career pathways
3. Highlight the specialties and success of current programs
4. Expand program offerings for alternative and/or virtual

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Expand real-world learning opportunities (e.g., internships, career fairs, local partnerships)
2. Strengthen academic foundation to support CTE success
3. Boost collaboration between departments to increase awareness of academic and CTE success (K-12)

Disclaimer: All potential strategies may involve financial considerations, including but not limited to: evaluating budget priorities, reallocating funds, exploring a bond referendum, and other financial adjustments.

The goal of this process is to identify a vision for our facilities, students, and staff, with further investigation and planning to be completed after gathering input from the community.

Student Experience



Belief Statement:

We believe in fostering growth and community pride, striving to maintain smaller class sizes in the primary grades, embracing students as they grow, and providing supportive, inclusive environments that prepare every student for success in school and beyond.

Objective #1:



For the District to **maintain** the current grade levels and **balance enrollment** between buildings.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Aim to preserve smaller class sizes in primary grades
2. Consider opportunities to increase enrollment and offset decreasing trends
3. Explore ways to address over-crowding challenges at Cooper EEC

Objective #2:



For the District to upgrade and maintain **outdoor amenities** at school sites.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Prioritize maintenance and safety improvements for playgrounds and outdoor spaces
2. Consider adding amenities to enhance usability in all weather conditions

Objective #3:



For the District to consider enhancements to **athletic and extra-curricular facilities**.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Collaborate with the city or community partners to explore shared-use opportunities for projects
2. Upgrade athletic facilities to benefit students, parents, and visitors (tennis courts at CMS, pool at NHS, track at CMS/NHS, locker room facilities)

Disclaimer: All potential strategies may involve financial considerations, including but not limited to: evaluating budget priorities, reallocating funds, exploring a bond referendum, and other financial adjustments.

The goal of this process is to identify a vision for our facilities, students, and staff, with further investigation and planning to be completed after gathering input from the community.

Facility Needs



Belief Statement:

All students will have access to facilities that support their academic and personal growth today and tomorrow.

Objective #1:



For the District to expand **safety, accessibility, and security** at facilities.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Complete essential facility maintenance and safety upgrades (roof replacements, asbestos removal, hardware updates)
2. Add secure entrances and stairwell upgrades where needed
3. Harden existing storm shelters and/or consider building new storm shelters

Objective #2:



For the District to consider ways to **maximize** use of all district facilities.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Explore ways to address over-crowding challenges at Cooper EEC
2. Consider options to expand alternative and/or virtual learning environments (K-12)

Objective #3:



For the District to consider **strategic facility improvements** that enhance learning environments.

Potential Strategies (prioritized):

1. Improve Newton High School spaces:
 - Culinary Arts and Science classrooms
 - Replacement of temporary walls
2. Improve Chisholm Middle School pod classrooms to support collaborative learning

Disclaimer: All potential strategies may involve financial considerations, including but not limited to: evaluating budget priorities, reallocating funds, exploring a bond referendum, and other financial adjustments.

The goal of this process is to identify a vision for our facilities, students, and staff, with further investigation and planning to be completed after gathering input from the community.

Committee Activity and Discussion

Objective: Engage in a collaborative discussion to analyze public input and identify any final adjustments or messages to share with the Board.

Instructions:

1. Each group will function as a discussion team; discuss personal experiences from attending the public input sessions
2. Designate **one person** at each table to take notes and complete the feedback sheet. RSP will collect one form per table at the end of the session
3. Review Materials: Survey results summary slides, raw survey comments (optional deeper dive)

Group Discussion Prompts: Use the questions below to guide your conversation:

- **What surprised you in the public feedback?** (Unexpected concerns, positive themes, areas of strong agreement/disagreement)
- **Do any adjustments need to be made to the current recommendations to better reflect the district's long-term vision?** (Think in terms of feasibility, educational value, and community alignment)
- **What additional feedback should be communicated to the School Board?** (Consider gaps in the plan, suggestions for implementation, or messages to clarify intent)

Results: The scribe should summarize main points from the discussion, especially anything you feel is critical for the Board to hear before final decisions are made.

Time: You will have approximately **30-40 minutes for this activity**

Committee Feedback Sheet

One sheet per table will be collected at the end of the meeting.

Program Offerings:

Student Experience:

Facility Needs:

Purpose: Engage in a discussion and polling questions about items to consider when engaging in long-range planning efforts. Additionally, assist RSP by providing direction on next steps in this process

Expectations: Questions are designed to receive preliminary, thought-provoking feedback to begin setting the foundation for long-range planning efforts. There will be more opportunities to discuss in greater detail each of these topics.

Directions: Use your cell phones to participate in the polls!

Text to Number: 22333

Message Body: RSPMeeting

Stay in the text thread! Do not click the link in the automatic reply. Answer questions by responding A, B, C... in the text thread.

Helpful Hints:

- ☐ To change your answer, simply text the new answer. The Poll will integrate the last message sent as the final result.
- ☐ For questions with "Select all that apply": To change your answer, text "CLEAR", then send your new answers.



Part 4: Next Steps

Next Steps

Next Meetings:

Board of Education June 23, 2025

There is a discussion board made for Meeting #7 if there are additional comments you would like communicated between now and June 23.

<https://rsp.mysocialpinpoint.com/newton-fmp/meeting-7>



Thank you for your hard work and collaboration throughout this process.



NEWTON
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

COMPREHENSIVE FACILITY PLANNING PROCESS

