



# Fifth Grade Stakeholders' Committee



December 13, 2023





## Meeting Dates

December 13, 2023

January 18, 2024

February 1, 2024

February 15, 2024 (Make Up Date)



## Location & Time

6:00 - 7:00 pm

Board of Education Building



# Purpose of Committee

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The charge of the committee is to:

- Work collaboratively to review community concerns
- Finalize recommendations to the Board of Education and administration on certain topics should the district reconfigure schools

The committee:

- Will not make the determination on reconfiguration

# Committee Norms

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- Listen attentively to members when they are speaking
- Be open to different viewpoints
- Suggest honest feedback during discussions
- Maintain confidentiality
- Remain on topic to move the meeting forward

# Why Move 5th Grade?

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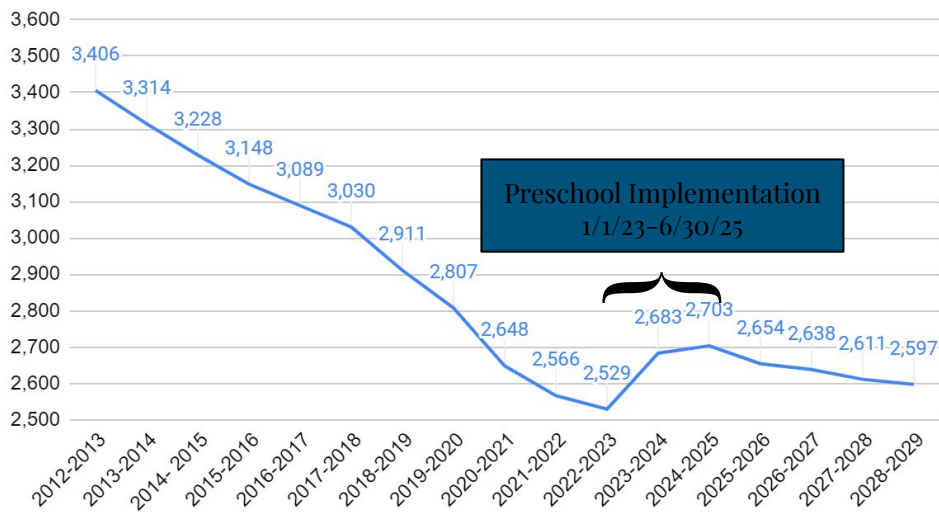
It is not just because of preschool!

- Level out capacity of the buildings
- Utilization of rooms dedicated to subject areas (art, music, etc.)
- Better utilization of specialists (BSI, specials all in one building)
- Decline in enrollment at Middle and High Schools

# Districtwide

Year	Total Enrollment
2012-2013	3,406
2013-2014	3,314
2014-2015	3,228
2015-2016	3,148
2016-2017	3,089
2017-2018	3,030
2018-2019	2,911
2019-2020	2,807
2020-2021	2,648
2021-2022	2,566
2022-2023	2,529
2023-2024	2,683
2024-2025	2,703
2025-2026	2,654
2026-2027	2,638
2027-2028	2,611
2028-2029	2,597

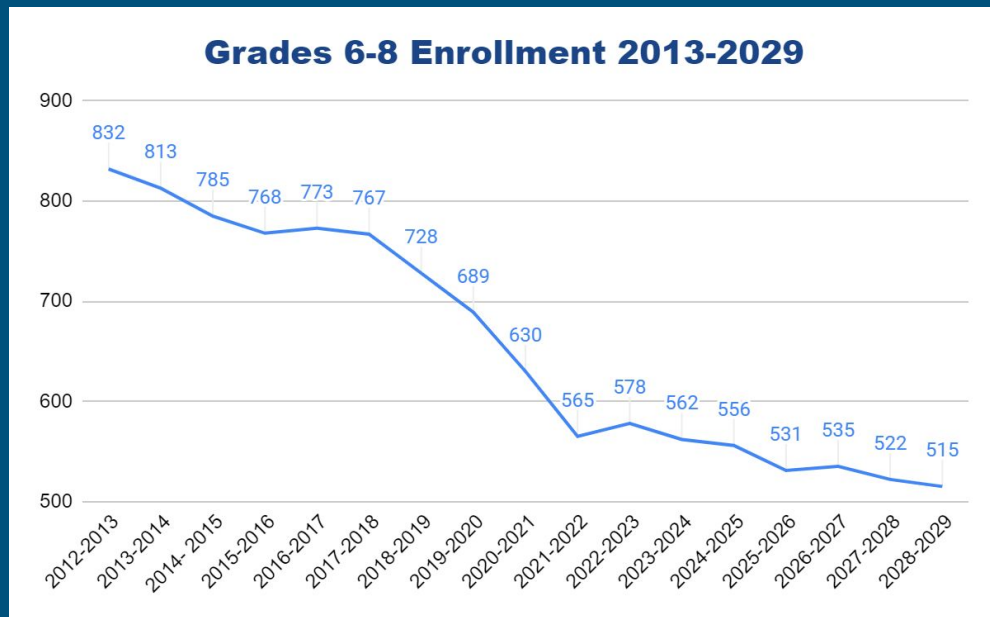
**Districtwide Enrollment 2013-2029**



- Projected Change in Total Enrollment 2013 vs. 2029:  
Decrease of 809 students or -23.8%
- Highest District Enrollment on Record: 3,648 in October 2006

# Grades 6-8

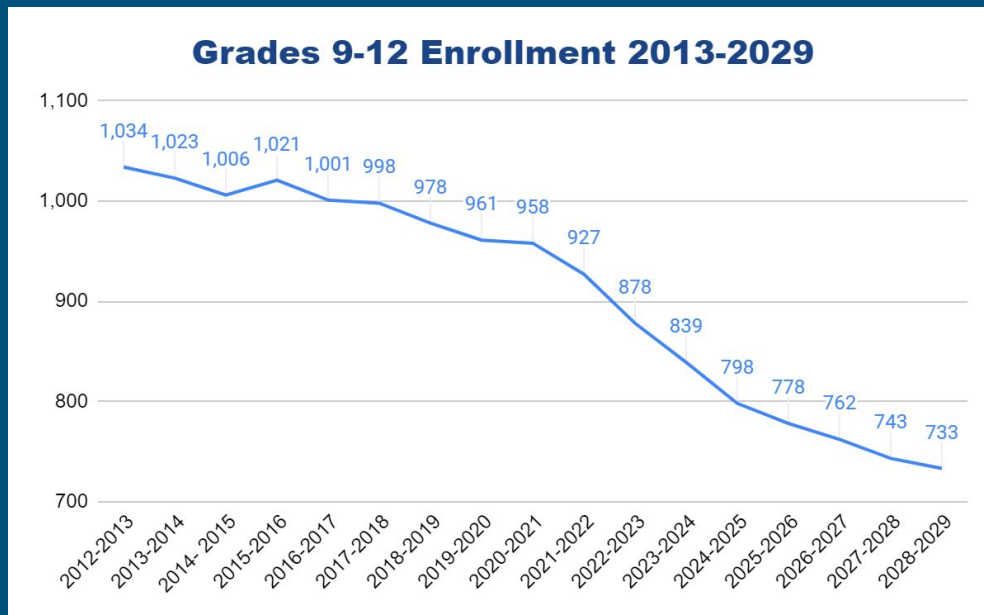
Year	Grades 6-8
2012-2013	832
2013-2014	813
2014-2015	785
2015-2016	768
2016-2017	773
2017-2018	767
2018-2019	728
2019-2020	689
2020-2021	630
2021-2022	565
2022-2023	578
2023-2024	562
2024-2025	556
2025-2026	531
2026-2027	535
2027-2028	522
2028-2029	515



- Projected Change in 6-8 Enrollment 2013 vs. 2029:  
Decrease of 317 students or -38.1%
- Highest Middle School (6-8) Enrollment on Record: 922 in October 2004

# Grades 9-12

Year	Grades 9-12
2012-2013	1,034
2013-2014	1,023
2014-2015	1,006
2015-2016	1,021
2016-2017	1,001
2017-2018	998
2018-2019	978
2019-2020	961
2020-2021	958
2021-2022	927
2022-2023	878
2023-2024	839
2024-2025	798
2025-2026	778
2026-2027	762
2027-2028	743
2028-2029	733



- Projected Change in 9-12 Enrollment 2013 vs. 2029:  
Decrease of 301 students or -29.1%
- Highest High School (9-12) Enrollment on Record: 1,125 in October 2007



# Enrollment

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- Impacts of S-2 on yearly budget
- Elementary enrollment decline mostly flattened long-term
- Middle School enrollment continues to mildly decline
- High School enrollment will begin to steeply decline

# Parent Survey

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Topics of concern brought to my attention:

- Transportation
- Aftercare
- Recess
- Self-contained vs switching classes
- Special classes
- Participation in co-curricular activities
- Changing for PE
- Elementary Events (Lose vs. Gain)
- SEL Concerns
- Certification
- Timeframe
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Trimesters vs. Marking Periods

# Review of Survey Data

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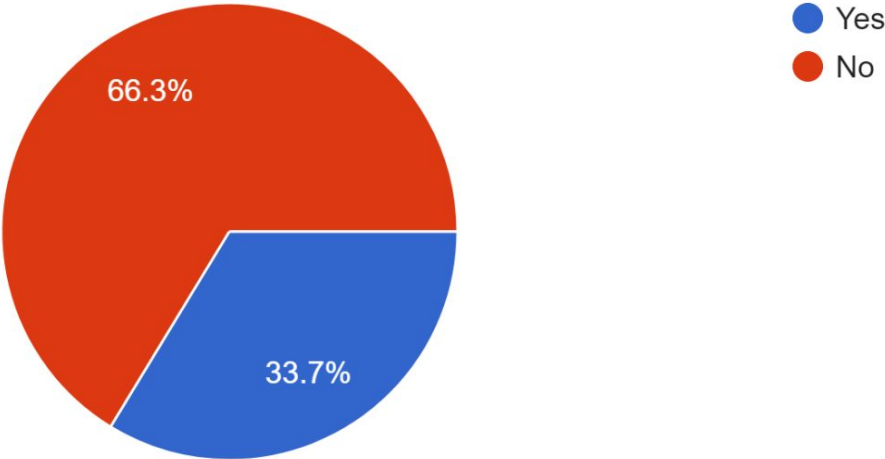
The survey received 534 responses.

293 respondents live in the Oak Ridge/Milton side of the township

241 respondents live in the Lake Hopatcong side of the township

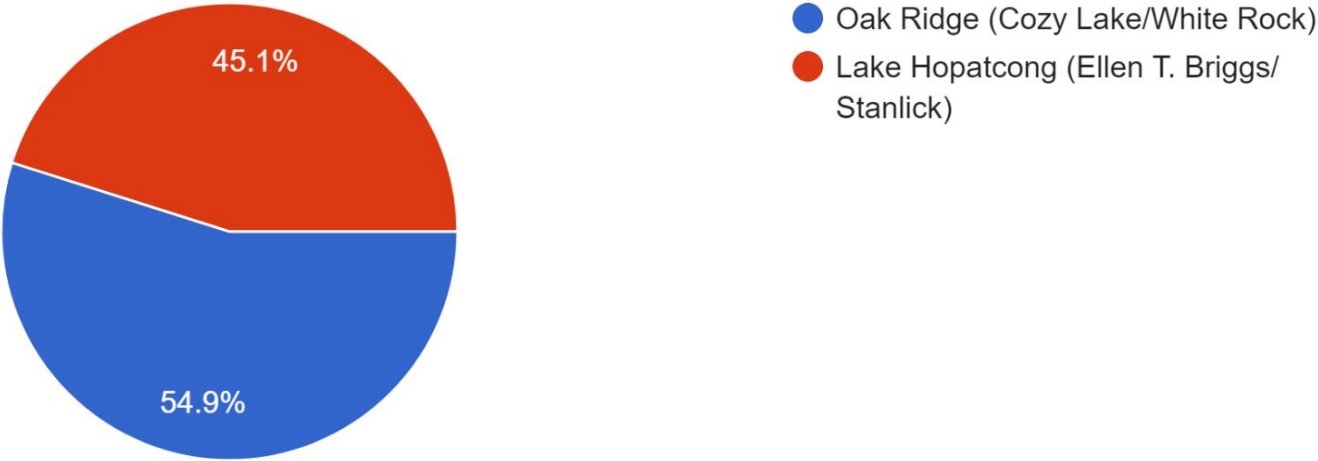
Do you have a child currently in fourth grade enrolled in Jefferson Township Schools?

534 responses



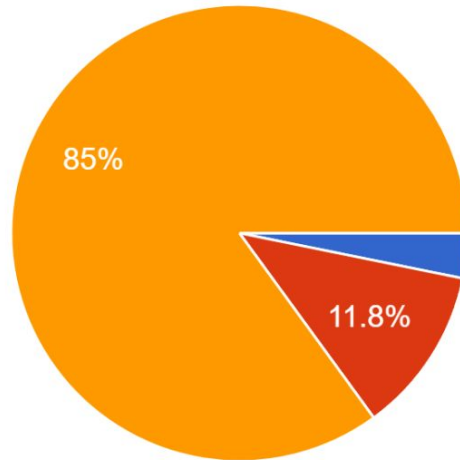
Do you live in the Oak Ridge or Lake Hopatcong section of Jefferson?

534 responses



Please choose the option that best describes how you feel about fifth graders being bused to the Middle School.

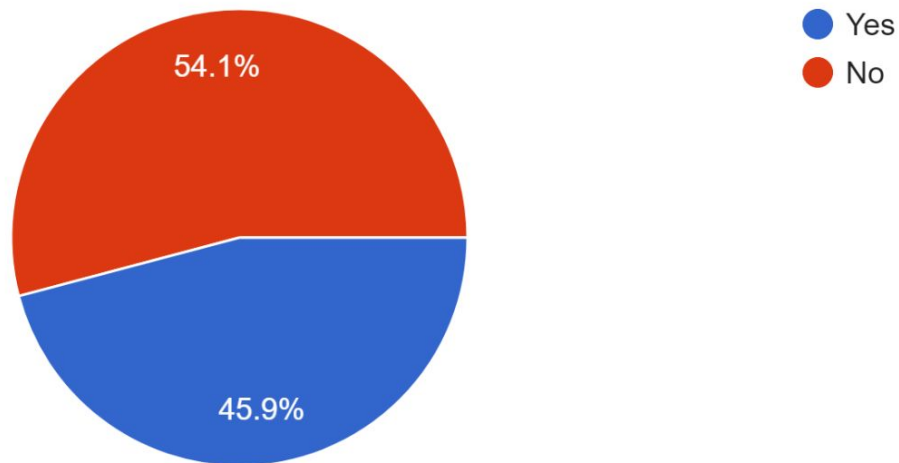
534 responses



- I would be comfortable with the fifth graders being on the same bus as the middle schoolers and high schoolers.
- I would be more comfortable if there is a transportation aide assigned to the bus.
- I would be more comfortable if middle schoolers were separated from high schoolers.

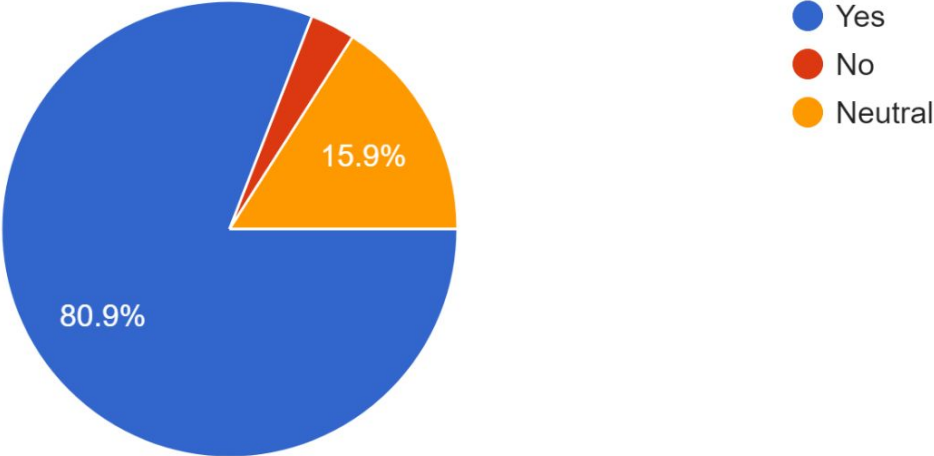
If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, before-and-aftercare is a concern for me.

534 responses



If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, I believe that fifth graders should have playground equipment.

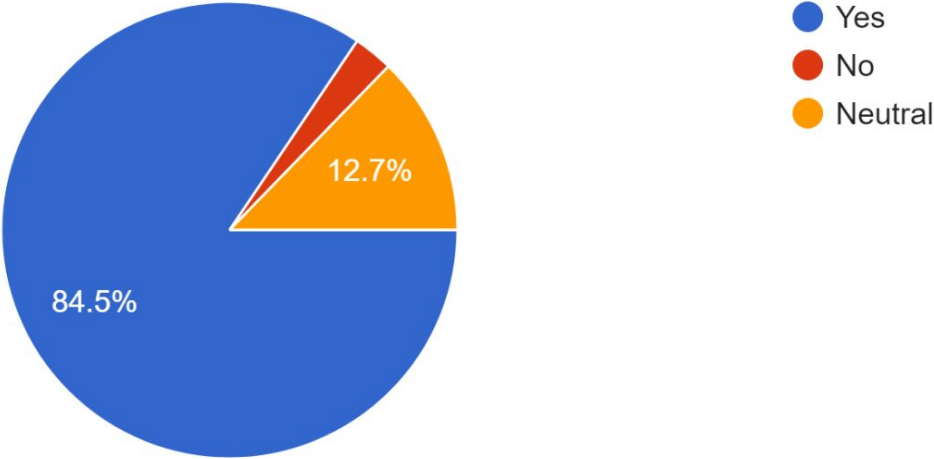
534 responses





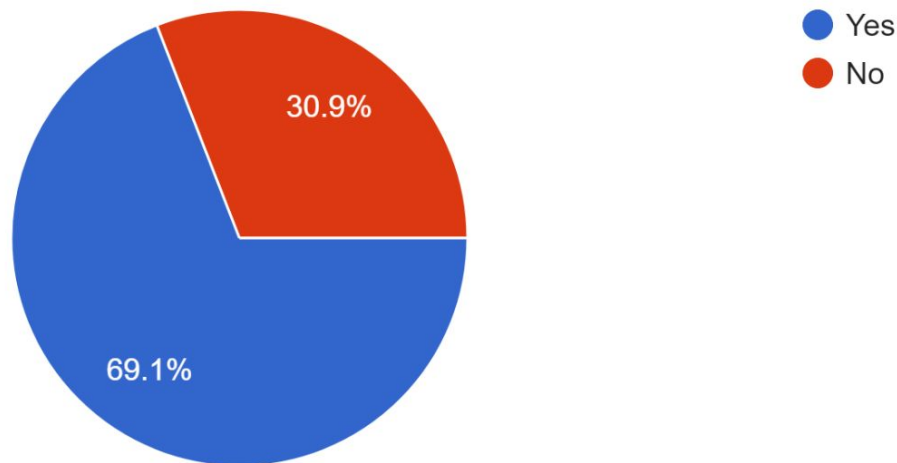
If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, I want my child to remain contained in a completely separate, private wing of the school with the same homeroom, specials, bathrooms, etc.

534 responses



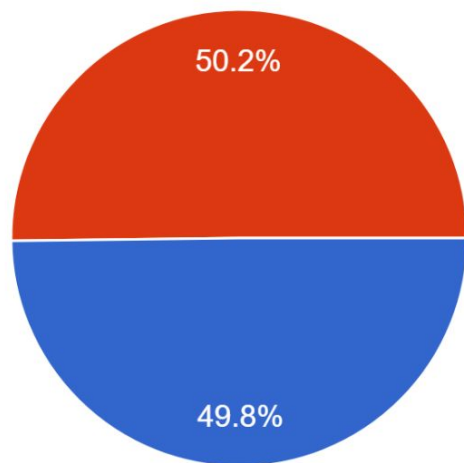
If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, I want my child to have the elective classes the Middle School offers (Art, STEM, Robotics, Music, Financial Literacy, Media Studies, etc.).

534 responses



If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, I want my child to have the option of participating in the current co-curricular activities offered at the Middle School.

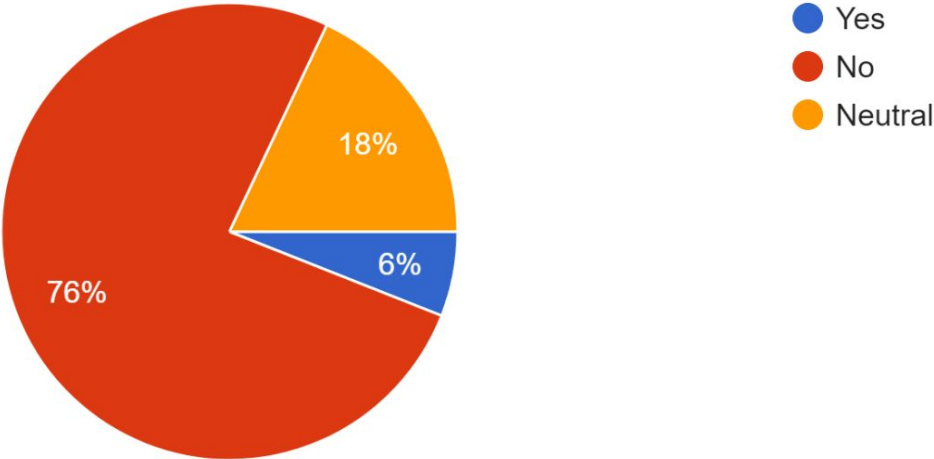
534 responses



- Yes, I am interested in my child participating in these activities.
- No, I am not interested in my child participating in these activities.

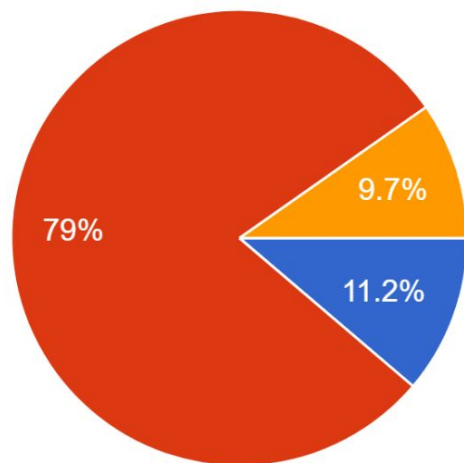
If fifth grade moved to the Middle School, I want my child to change for physical education classes.

534 responses



## Which statement best describes how you are feeling about the possibility of the fifth grade move to the Middle School?

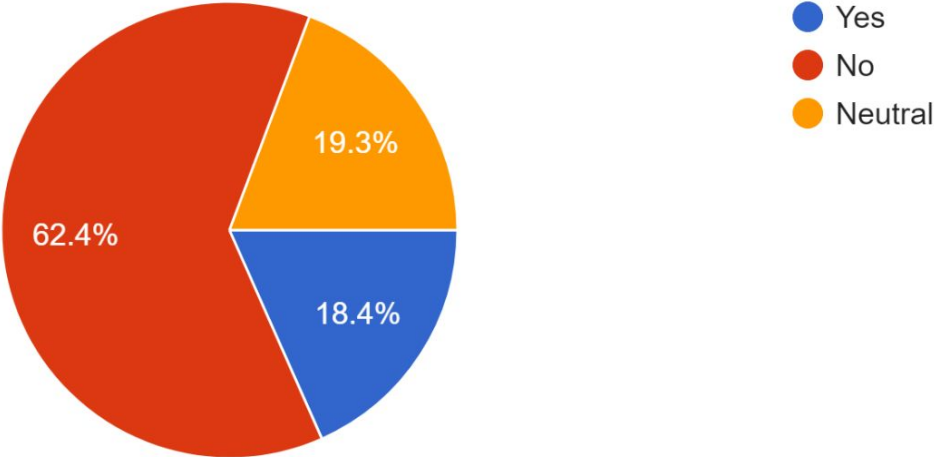
534 responses



- I am open to moving the fifth grade to the Middle School.
- I am not open to moving the fifth grade to the Middle School.
- I do not have a strong opinion either way.

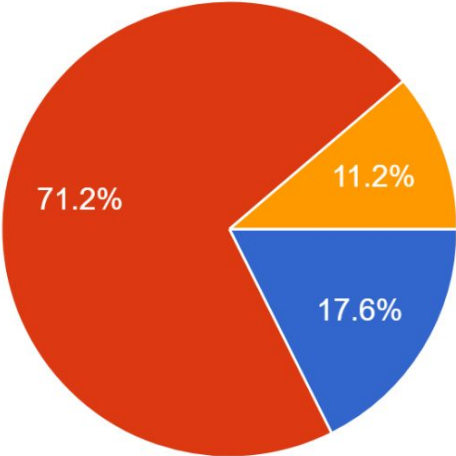
I would be more comfortable with the transition if the move to the Middle School occurred in September 2025.

534 responses



Given declining enrollment, our elective courses at the Middle School and High School will likely be reduced. Understanding that moving fifth grade to t...ents, which statement best reflects your position?

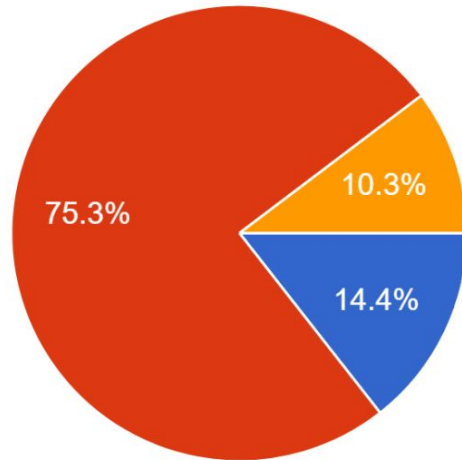
534 responses



- I am open to the move.
- I am opposed to the move.
- I do not have a strong opinion either way.

The move from fifth grade to sixth grade presents many challenges including changing classes, navigating the building, using lockers, etc. Consider the fifth grade transition easier. Understanding this, I am:

534 responses

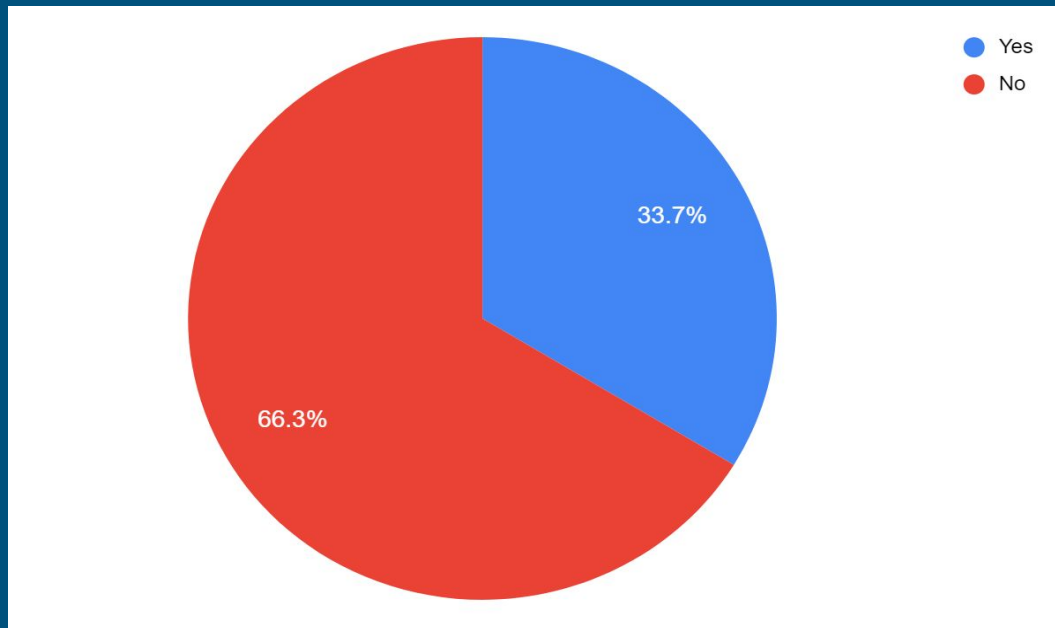


- Open to having fifth grade join the Middle School.
- Not open to having fifth grade join the Middle School.
- I do not have a strong opinion either way.



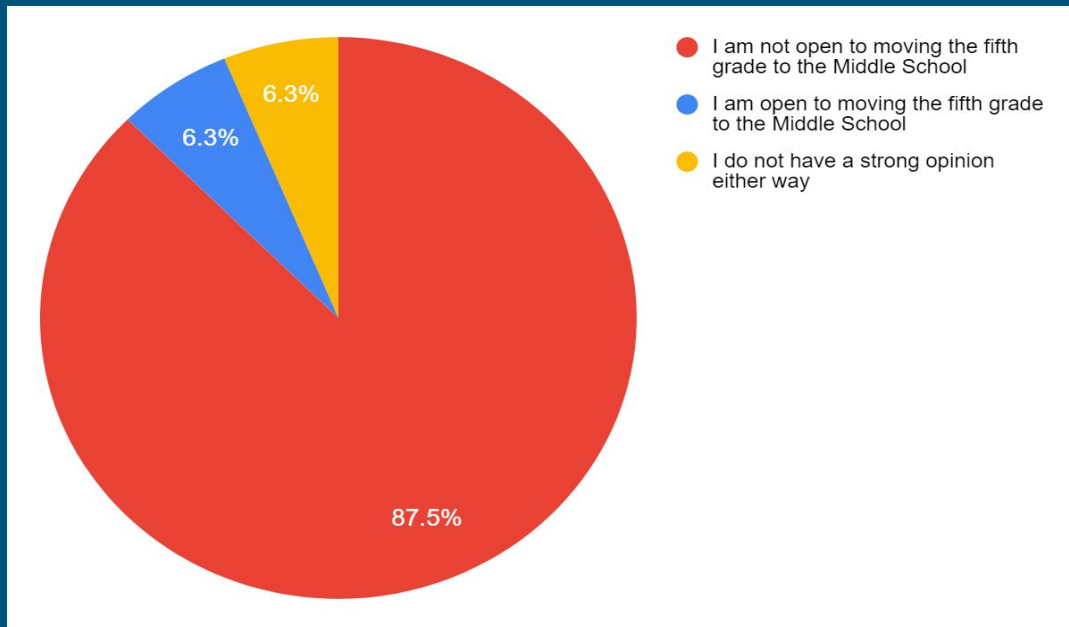
# Respondents who currently have a child in fourth grade

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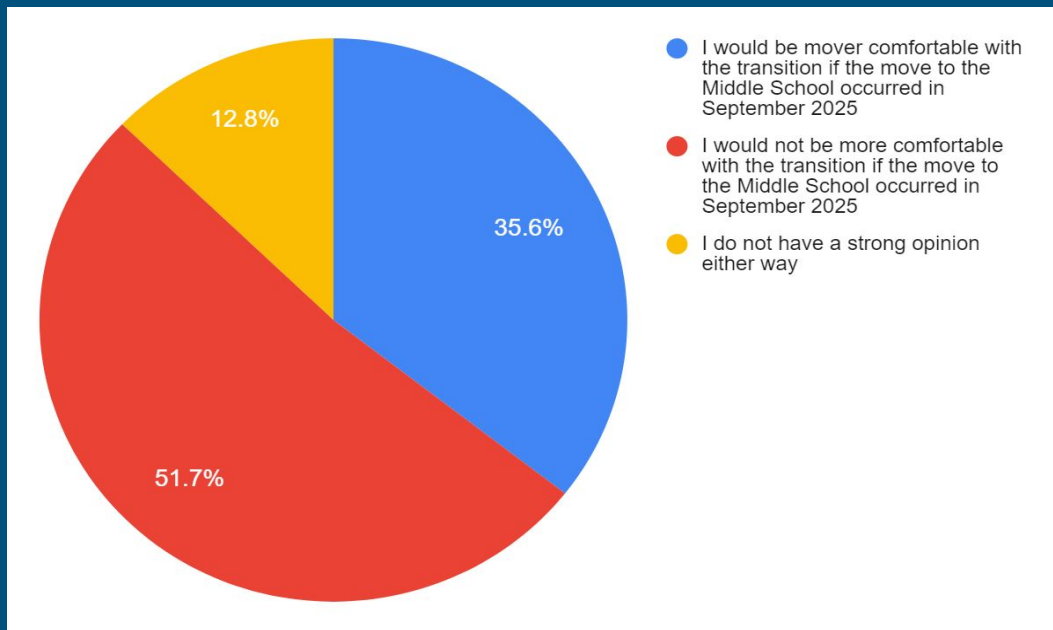
# Respondents who currently have a child in fourth grade

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# Respondents who currently have a child in fourth grade

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# My main concerns of the potential fifth grade move to the Middle School are:

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## **MENTIONED BY MORE THAN 80%**

- Just too young/ /maturity level

## **MENTIONED BY MORE THAN 50%**

- Busing concerns regarding being with older kids

## **MENTIONED BY 30-50%**

- Missing out on 5<sup>th</sup> grade traditional activities (parades, parties, leadership, safety patrol, recess, graduation)
- Bullying
- Exposure to inappropriate things for their age (language, sex, drugs)

## **MENTIONED BY LESS THAN 30%**

- Unsupervised activities
- After school care
- Special education students being neglected/not getting as much attention
- Gym
- Earlier start time/missing sleep

## The primary benefits of the transition are:

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### MENTIONED BY MORE THAN 50%

- No benefit

### MENTIONED BY LESS THAN 50%

- Expanded electives
- Improve academics for advanced 5<sup>th</sup> graders
- Maintain programs
- Easier to transition in 6<sup>th</sup> grade
- Extra-curriculars

# Other Comments to Consider:

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- Rather consider other options
- Opens up preschool for all Jefferson residents I am all for it
- Whatever the choice, 5th graders are properly monitored, supported, and provided opportunities to get help
- Consider staggering start times for bussing
- Please examine why so many are against moving fifth grade to the MS
- Change needs to be communicated way in advance
- If fifth graders remained in the same classroom except for electives, lunch, and PE it would be the combo of elementary and middle--would support
- Move not appropriate for THIS particular grade due to Covid--push to 2025

# Finalization of Recommendations

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## Transportation

- The committee prefers that middle and high schoolers be on different buses
- If three tiers is not possible, assign an aide to every bus

## Aftercare

- A suggestion was made to add Stanlick and White Rock as bus stops for students who would attend after care
- At this time, there are approximately 10 fifth graders who participate in aftercare

# Finalization of Recommendations

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## Recess

- The committee is recommending the district purchase playground equipment for the Middle School

## Class Structure and Electives

- The committee recommends students remaining in a cohort model, similar to the structure currently in fifth grade
- The committee recommends keeping the core electives they have now and rotate other current MS offerings throughout the year



# Finalization of Recommendations

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## Co-Curricular Activities

- The committee is recommending fifth graders be allowed to participate in after school clubs and activities

## Physical Education

- The committee is recommending that fifth graders do not change for physical education class

# Finalization of Recommendations

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## Elementary Events

- The committee is recommending that all activities (class parties, parades, Trep\$, safety patrol, etc.) continue

## Parent-Teacher Conferences

- The committee is recommending that parent-teacher conferences continue to be held

# Finalization of Recommendations

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## Grade Terms

- The committee is recommending the fifth grade continue to use trimesters

## SEL Programs

- The committee is recommending to continue social-emotional learning programs that are appropriate for the grade level

# Overall Recommendation

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While the committee realizes the eventual benefit of moving the fifth grade to the Middle School, they are recommending that the move take place in September 2025. This will provide additional time for the students and community to adjust to the changes. It will also provide additional time for the district to implement the move.