Freedom Area School District
Community Survey Results

Fall 2018
Survey Summary

• The survey was conducted in late October/early November of 2018.

• Residents within the District were mailed a paper survey. Each survey included a unique survey access code for those who preferred to take the survey online.

• Total responses = 1,174 (368 paper)

• Participation rate = 32%

• Margin of error = +/- 2.9%
Respondent Information
What is your age?

- Under 18: 0.09%
- 18-25: 1%
- 26-34: 12%
- 35-54: 56%
- 55-64: 15%
- 65 and over: 16%
Do you live in the Freedom Area School District?
Are you an employee of the Freedom Area School District?

- Yes (n=151)
- No (n=937)
Do you have children attending the District?

- Yes (n=560): 52%
- No (n=526): 48%
In which city or township do you reside?

- Town of Freedom: 64%
- Town of Center: 14%
- Do not live in the District: 8%
- Town of Oneida: 6%
- Town of Kaukauna: 4%
- City of Appleton: 3%
- Town of Osborn: 1%
## How would you like to receive School/District information?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Non-Parents (Non-Staff)</th>
<th>Parents (Non-Staff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District mailings</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School website</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School newsletters</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Access (Skyward)</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Pursuit</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text messaging</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automated phone notification</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings at school</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Board meetings</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent organizations</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appleton Post Crescent</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Email**: 16% for Non-Parents, 78% for Parents
- **District mailings**: 15% for Non-Parents, 75% for Parents
- **School website**: 15% for Non-Parents, 57% for Parents
- **School newsletters**: 35% for Non-Parents, 43% for Parents
- **Family Access (Skyward)**: 1% for Non-Parents, 35% for Parents
- **Freedom Pursuit**: 5% for Non-Parents, 38% for Parents
- **Text messaging**: 4% for Non-Parents, 32% for Parents
- **Automated phone notification**: 3% for Non-Parents, 32% for Parents
- **Facebook**: 6% for Non-Parents, 18% for Parents
- **Meetings at school**: 3% for Non-Parents, 12% for Parents
- **School Board meetings**: 4% for Non-Parents, 6% for Parents
- **Parent organizations**: 1% for Non-Parents, 5% for Parents
- **Radio**: 2% for Non-Parents, 2% for Parents
- **Twitter**: 1% for Non-Parents, 2% for Parents
- **Appleton Post Crescent**: 2% for Non-Parents, 12% for Parents
- **Other**: 1% for Non-Parents, 1% for Parents
Financial Background
The District works hard to be good stewards of taxpayers’ dollars. In 2018, the District made its final payment on a loan that funded past building projects. The District is now referendum debt free.

Since 2014, the Freedom Area School District’s tax mill rate, which is used to calculate property taxes, has declined by $2.47. For a person with a $150,000 home, this represents a savings of $370.50 each year.
The graph below illustrates that the **Freedom Area School District** has the lowest school property tax mill rate in our area.
Referendum Feedback
How did you vote on the last referendum?

(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)

- I voted "Yes": 44% (All Residents), 54% (Parents (Non-Staff)), 29% (Non-Parents (Non-Staff))
- I voted "No": 40% (All Residents), 30% (Parents (Non-Staff)), 21% (Non-Parents (Non-Staff))
- I did not vote: 53% (All Residents), 13% (Parents (Non-Staff)), 11% (Non-Parents (Non-Staff))
- I choose not to answer: 5% (All Residents), 3% (Staff), 3% (Parents (Non-Staff)), 7% (Non-Parents (Non-Staff))
If you voted “No,” why?
(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All Residents</th>
<th>Staff Residents</th>
<th>Parent Residents (Non-Staff)</th>
<th>Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too expensive/felt the tax impact was too large</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not support new outdoor athletic fields/felt existing fields could be utilized</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not support building a new school</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt the current school could be remodeled</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not support the proposed location (District-owned land on County Road N)</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know what the Town of Freedom was planning to do with their town hall complex initiative</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not support the construction of an auditorium</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not agree with the planning process</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacked information regarding what was being proposed</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will never vote “yes” on any school building referendum</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What advice would you give regarding a plan to invest in our schools?

(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)

Refine the plan based on survey feedback and ask for voter support through another referendum

- All Residents: 72%
- Staff: 92%
- Parents (Non-Staff): 80%
- Non-Parents (Non-Staff): 61%

Do nothing at this time

- All Residents: 12%
- Staff: 0%
- Parents (Non-Staff): 6%
- Non-Parents (Non-Staff): 20%

Undecided/would need more information

- All Residents: 16%
- Staff: 8%
- Parents (Non-Staff): 14%
- Non-Parents (Non-Staff): 20%
Freedom Elementary School Background

Freedom Elementary School was originally built in 1965 and expanded in 1996. This summer, the parking lot was expanded and the main entrance was updated to better control visitor access. Freedom Elementary School has already become one of the largest elementary schools in Wisconsin, serving over 700 students. In addition:

- Classrooms and support areas are at capacity.
- Some of the classrooms are too small and do not provide the flexibility for student collaboration and small group instruction.
- Every space in the school is utilized, resulting in scheduling, supervision and student circulation challenges.

Because of the current capacity issues the District would like to move 4th and 5th grade students into the middle school to provide needed space at the elementary level. The change would also allow the District to maintain current class sizes while incorporating flexibility for future enrollment growth.
Middle/High School Background
The Freedom Middle/High School was originally built in 1928 and expanded in 1956, 1972, 1996 and 2000. Over the years, the District has significantly increased the number of course offerings that require additional space and more flexible areas for hands-on learning. Although the building has served the District well, portions of the school are 90 years old, and a major investment will be needed to address the following issues:

- Classrooms and support areas are nearing capacity.
- The school lacks appropriately designed areas for art, engineering, agriculture and technical education.
- Additional classrooms are needed for special education students and special needs programming.
- The choir and band areas are too small to meet current demand and need acoustical enhancements.
- Because of the number of expansions, the school is a maze of hallways, creating student circulation issues and inefficient space utilization.
- Technology infrastructure has been upgraded recently, but additional Wi-Fi network points are needed.
- Additional/updated locker rooms and equipment storage are needed.
- Additional gym and fitness spaces are needed to support District students, community youth programs and other community events.
- Lunchroom facilities at FMS/FHS are outdated and too small to meet school and community needs.
- There is no auditorium at the high school, only a theater (Lecture Hall) with a seating capacity for 196.

Expansion on the current site is limited due to the site size. Additionally, the building has a large number of load-bearing walls, which limit remodeling options. Some community members feel the school should be updated, while others don’t believe it makes sense to continue to invest in this building. The following table outlines some of the differences between the two options:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Factors</th>
<th>Build New</th>
<th>Remodel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows for normal school operations during construction</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creates flexible/appropriately sized classrooms</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expands music areas</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expands technical education (shop) program</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves climate control and energy efficiency</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves parking</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves technology infrastructure</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves traffic congestion/pedestrian safety</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increases gym space</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides space for future growth (building expansion)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Estimated cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>$58.9 million</strong></td>
<td><strong>$50.6 million</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In general, what advice would you give regarding addressing the needs at the Freedom Schools?  
(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)
OPTION 1a:
Build a New High School
After a thorough review of the previous plan, it was determined that the size of a new high school cannot be reduced from what was proposed in 2017 referendum. However, the investment needed to build the outdoor athletic competition fields could be postponed and the existing fields would be utilized. Therefore, the cost to build a new high school was reduced to $58.9 million. The new school would be built on 76 acres of District-owned land on County Road N and designed:

- to serve up to 650 students
- with classrooms and labs to support class offerings in family & consumer education and various careers in engineering, agriculture, manufacturing and construction
- with classrooms and flexible spaces for student collaboration and project-based learning
- with a 3-court gym and a 650-seat auditorium
- with sufficient parking and proper separation of pedestrians and vehicle/bus traffic
- with energy efficient systems and natural lighting
- with outdoor practice fields
- to accommodate future expansion

Option 1 would also provide $1 million for light remodeling at the current middle/high school.
Would you support a $59.9 million referendum to build a new high school?

*Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $311 for each $100,000 of property value ($25.91 per month).*

All Residents

- **Definitely yes**: 31%
- **Probably yes**: 22%
- **Undecided**: 15%
- **Probably no**: 14%
- **Definitely no**: 18%

53% Yes

32% No
Would you support a $59.9 million referendum to build a new high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $311 for each $100,000 of property value ($25.91 per month).

Staff Residents

- Definitely yes: 51%
- Probably yes: 26%
- Undecided: 18%
- Probably no: 3%
- Definitely no: 2%

77% Yes

5% No
Would you support a $59.9 million referendum to build a new high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $311 for each $100,000 of property value ($25.91 per month).

Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- Definitely yes: 42%
- Probably yes: 24%
- Undecided: 15%
- Probably no: 11%
- Definitely no: 8%

Total: 66% Yes, 19% No
Would you support a $59.9 million referendum to build a new high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $311 for each $100,000 of property value ($25.91 per month).

Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- Definitely yes: 18%
- Probably yes: 18%
- Undecided: 15%
- Probably no: 19%
- Definitely no: 30%

36% support, 49% oppose.
OPTION 1b: Build a New High School with an Athletic Complex
Option 1a assumes continuing to use the football, track and soccer fields at the current campus. Although this would create some scheduling, transportation and student supervision challenges, it would decrease the initial investment needed to build a new high school.

The high school project could be expanded by $7.1 million to build an athletic complex for baseball, softball, track & field as well as a multi-use artificial turf field for football, soccer, marching band and physical education.
Would you support a $67 million referendum to build a new high school with athletic complex?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $354 for each $100,000 of property value ($29.50 per month).

All Residents

- Definitely yes: 25%
- Probably yes: 16%
- Undecided: 13%
- Probably no: 17%
- Definitely no: 29%

41% Yes
46% No
Would you support a $67 million referendum to build a new high school with athletic complex?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $354 for each $100,000 of property value ($29.50 per month).

Staff Residents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Residents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably yes</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probably no</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely no</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you support a $67 million referendum to build a new high school with athletic complex?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $354 for each $100,000 of property value ($29.50 per month).

Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- Definitely yes: 35%
- Probably yes: 18%
- Undecided: 15%
- Probably no: 16%
- Definitely no: 16%

53% Yes, 32% No
Would you support a $67 million referendum to build a new high school with athletic complex?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $354 for each $100,000 of property value ($29.50 per month).

Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- Definitely yes: 13%
- Probably yes: 12%
- Undecided: 11%
- Probably no: 18%
- Definitely no: 46%

25% Yes
64% No
OPTION 2: Renovate and Expand the Existing Middle/High School

If the community does not support building a new high school, a significant investment will be needed to expand and renovate the existing middle/high school. If the community supports this option, the District would likely stay at this location for the foreseeable future.

To address all projects listed on the following slide, it would cost $50.6 million.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>All Residents</th>
<th>Staff Residents</th>
<th>Parent Residents (Non-Staff)</th>
<th>Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Update building systems (lighting, electrical, plumbing and heating) that are beyond their service life</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel/expand space for the technical education (Shop/Ag) to support courses offerings in engineering, agriculture, manufacturing, auto body and construction</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>2.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and building code compliance issues</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demolish the oldest sections of the school, including the dome gym, and construct a new two-story academic wing</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update science labs</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add/renovate general and special education classrooms</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expand/update cafeteria and kitchen areas</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remodel/expand art, band and choir classrooms</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build an auditorium for school/community use</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve traffic flow and add parking, which will require relocation of the soccer field</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build a 3-court gym, wrestling room and fitness center</td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Would you support a $50.6 million referendum to renovate the existing middle/high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $256 for each $100,000 of property value ($21.33 per month).

**All Residents**

- Definitely yes: 20%
- Probably yes: 23%
- Undecided: 22%
- Probably no: 17%
- Definitely no: 18%

43% Yes
35% No
Would you support a $50.6 million referendum to renovate the existing middle/high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $256 for each $100,000 of property value ($21.33 per month).

Staff Residents

- Definitely yes: 37%
- Probably yes: 27%
- Undecided: 17%
- Probably no: 13%
- Definitely no: 6%

64% Yes | 19% No
Would you support a $50.6 million referendum to renovate the existing middle/high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $256 for each $100,000 of property value ($21.33 per month).

Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- Definitely yes: 29%
- Probably yes: 24%
- Undecided: 21%
- Probably no: 15%
- Definitely no: 11%

53% Yes, 26% No
Would you support a $50.6 million referendum to renovate the existing middle/high school?

Representing an estimated annual tax increase of approximately $256 for each $100,000 of property value ($21.33 per month).

Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff)

- **Definitely yes**: 9%
- **Probably yes**: 20%
- **Undecided**: 24%
- **Probably no**: 20%
- **Definitely no**: 27%

- **29%** Yes
- **47%** No
Funding Support
Since 2014, the Freedom Area School District’s tax mill rate, which is used to calculate property taxes, has declined. The chart shows the tax impact for various referendum amounts compared to the 2014 level.
The District could begin implementing the project in phases, thus reducing the initial investment. However, due to the increasing cost of construction and the likelihood that interest rates will rise, the costs will likely be more expensive in future years. The District would like to know your level of support should they consider a phased approach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Referendum</th>
<th>$37 million</th>
<th>$47 million</th>
<th>$57 million</th>
<th>$67 million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax mill rate impact per $100,000 of property value over the current tax level</td>
<td>$175 per year ($14.58 per month)</td>
<td>$234 per year ($19.50 per month)</td>
<td>$294 per year ($24.50 per month)</td>
<td>$354 per year ($29.50 per month)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Tax impacts assume 20-year borrowing and an interest rate of 4.50%.*
How much of an increase would you support through a referendum, assuming the project(s) included were acceptable to you?

(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)

- **Non-Parent Residents (Non-Staff):**
  - 20% support $67 million
  - 17% support $57 million
  - 5% support $47 million
  - 14% support $37 million
  - 24% support other
  - 20% support I'm not sure/need more information

- **Parent Residents (Non-Staff):**
  - 43% support $67 million
  - 18% support $57 million
  - 9% support $47 million
  - 7% support $37 million
  - 18% support other
  - 5% support I'm not sure/need more information

- **Staff Residents:**
  - 51% support $67 million
  - 21% support $57 million
  - 10% support $47 million
  - 7% support $37 million
  - 11% support other
  - 0% support I'm not sure/need more information

- **All Residents:**
  - 33% support $67 million
  - 18% support $57 million
  - 7% support $47 million
  - 10% support $37 million
  - 20% support other
  - 12% support I'm not sure/need more information
  - 5% support I would not support any referendum
Funding for Operations
If the community supports a capital referendum to update our facilities, would you support an operational referendum to fund daily operations?

*(Freedom Area School District Residents Only)*

- **Yes**: 77%
- **No**: 21%
- **Undecided/no opinion**: 2%

**All Residents**: 46%
**Staff**: 54%
**Parents (Non-Staff)**: 33%
**Non-Parents (Non-Staff)**: 36%
What did we learn?

A majority of all subgroups and 72% of all respondents encourage the District to refine a plan, based on survey feedback, and ask for voter support through another referendum.

In general, respondents support building a new school vs. remodeling the existing middle/high school, but not at a cost of $59.9 million.
Possible strategies to consider:

1. Reduce the cost and scope of the proposed new high school project.
   - Go to referendum for a lower cost high school “base plan”. (This would be the 1st question on the ballot)
   - Go to referendum for the items removed in the base plan. (This would be the 2nd question on the ballot and require postponing any operational referendum, because of the 2 question per ballot limitation)

2. Go to referendum for up to $37 million to begin to update the existing schools.
Thank you!