

A LEGENCE Company

FOSSTON ISD #601

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Listening Sessions and Community Survey Results
January 19 and 21, 2026

Listening/Input Session Results







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Fosston Stakeholder Listening Sessions

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS	DATE
School Board	8/18/25
Elementary Staff	8/26/25
High School Staff	8/26/25
Support Staff	8/26/25
Fosston Community In-Person	10/7/25
High School Students	10/7/25
Gully Community In-Person	10/14/25
Lengby Community In-Person	10/14/25
Community Wide Survey Monkey	12/11/25

Listening Session Questions

- What are the Great Things happening in the Fosston School District?
- What are the Challenges facing the Fosston School District?
- What are the Greatest Facility and Grounds Needs district wide?
- What Advice would you give the decision makers as they work through this process?
- What are your Expectations as we move through this process? (School Board Only)
- What would you want your Younger Siblings to have in school that you didn't have? (Students Only)
- What is the best way for the District to Communicate with you? (Community Only)

What Great Things are happening in the Fosston School District?

Internal Common Themes

- Experienced teaching staff (70)
- Positive environment (33)
- Athletic activities (22)
- Community support (17)
- Student engagement (16)
- Course diversity (9)
- Expansion of CTE spaces (7)
- Mentorship program (5)

External Common Themes

- Great staff (9)
- Good curriculum (7)
- Communication (5)
- Sports (4)
- Indian education program (3)
- Closeness, community involvement (2)
- Student/teacher relations (2)
- Kids involvement/response to bullying (2)

What Challenges are facing the Fosston School District?

Internal Common Themes

- Budget/finances (52)
- Space limitations (33)
- Older buildings (30)
- Curriculum issues (27)
- Communication with staff (20)
- Behavior issues (11)
- Perception of leadership (11)
- Lack of support (9)
- Community support (7)

External Common Themes

- Old/outdated facilities (7)
- Maintenance of existing structures (6)
- Money (5)
- Safety (5)
- Over emphasis on sports (3)
- Surrounding schools on 20 minute away (3)
- Elementary opportunities for students (2)
- Playground access for all (2)
- Last minute communication (2)

What Advice would you give the decision makers moving through this process?

Internal Common Themes

- Listen to student input/student perspective (37)
- Open communication (32)
- Long term planning (23)
- Open minded decisions (21)
- Listen to staff (20)
- Budget considerations (12)
- Community engagement (11)

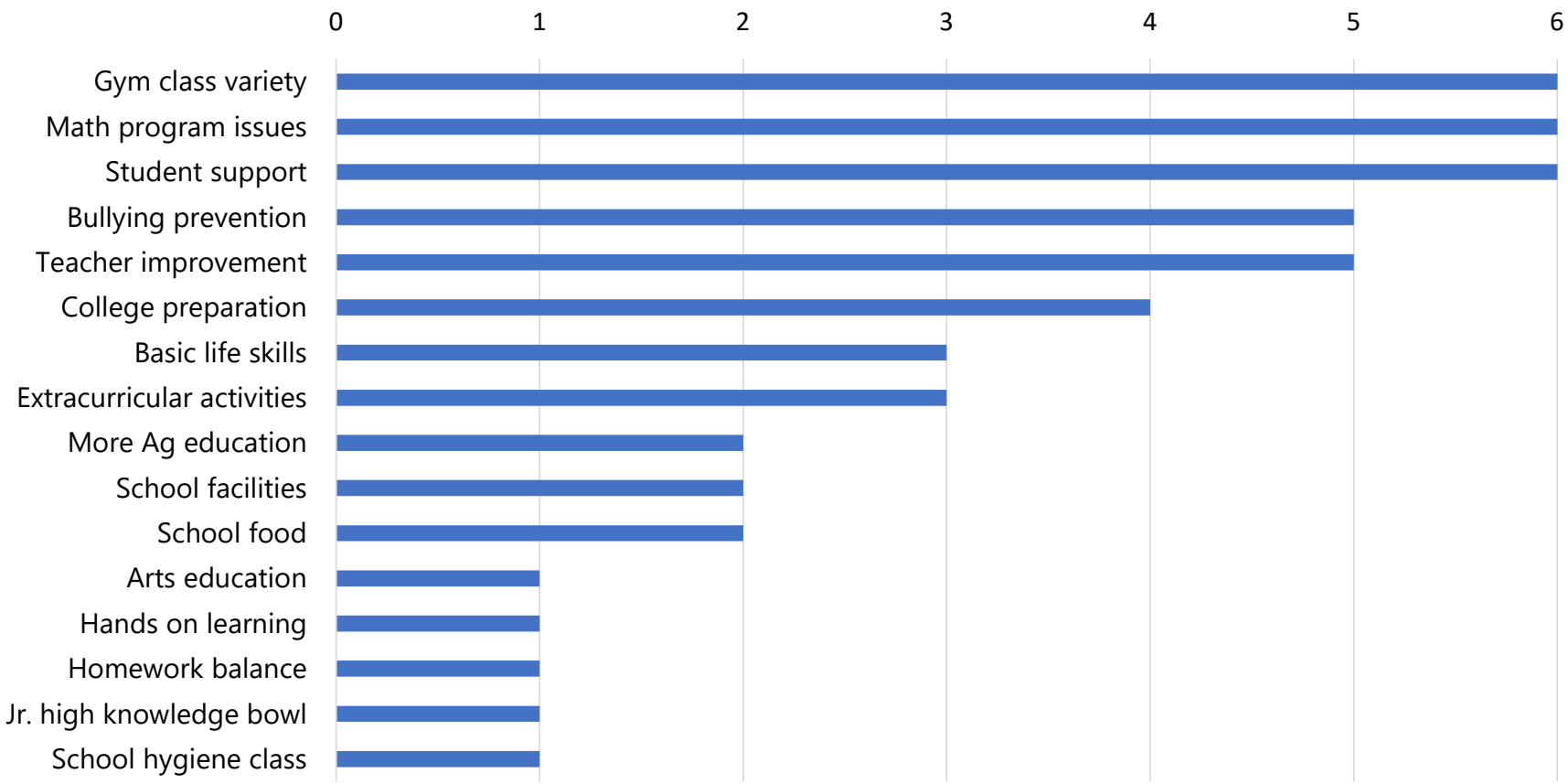
External Common Themes

- Listen (9)
- Keep existing building up-to-date (4)
- New is out of the question (4)
- Share all data with the community (4)
- Keep in mind needs vs. wants (3)
- Fosston cannot afford anymore new expenses (2)

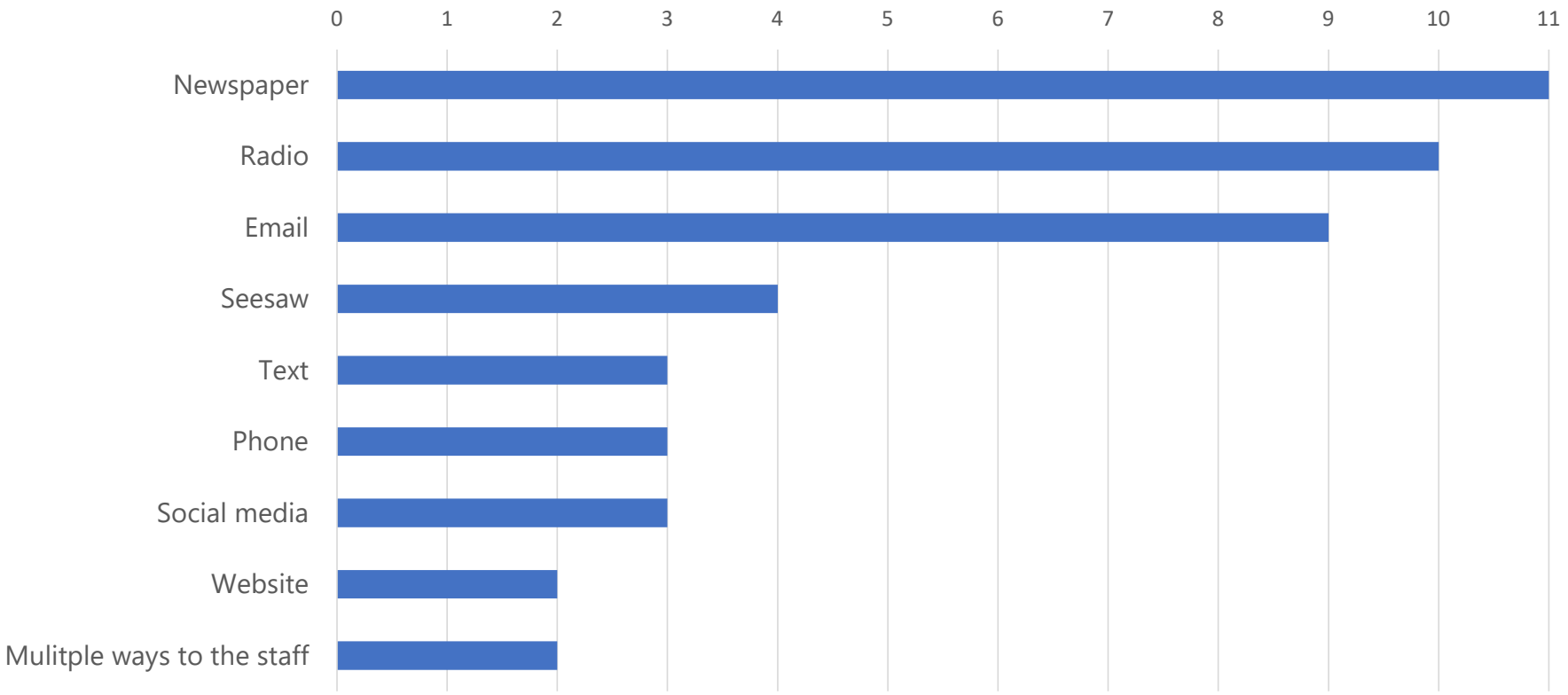
What are the School Board's Expectations going through this process?

- District wide planning
- Needs assessment
- Make building improvements
- Structure efficiency
- Have stakeholder participation
- Be transparent and communicate
- Community education

Student Responses: What would you want for Younger Siblings?



What is the best way for the District to Communicate with you? (External)

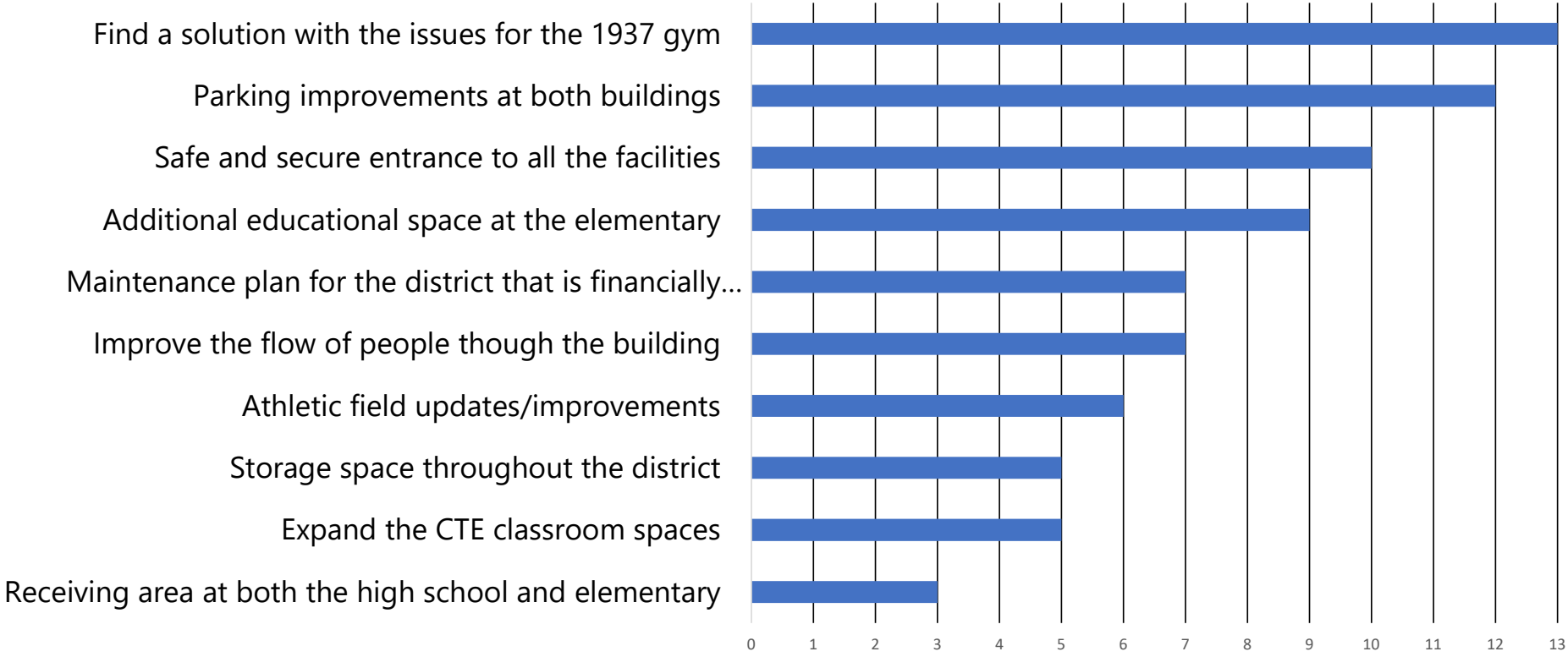


Greatest Facility and Grounds Needs

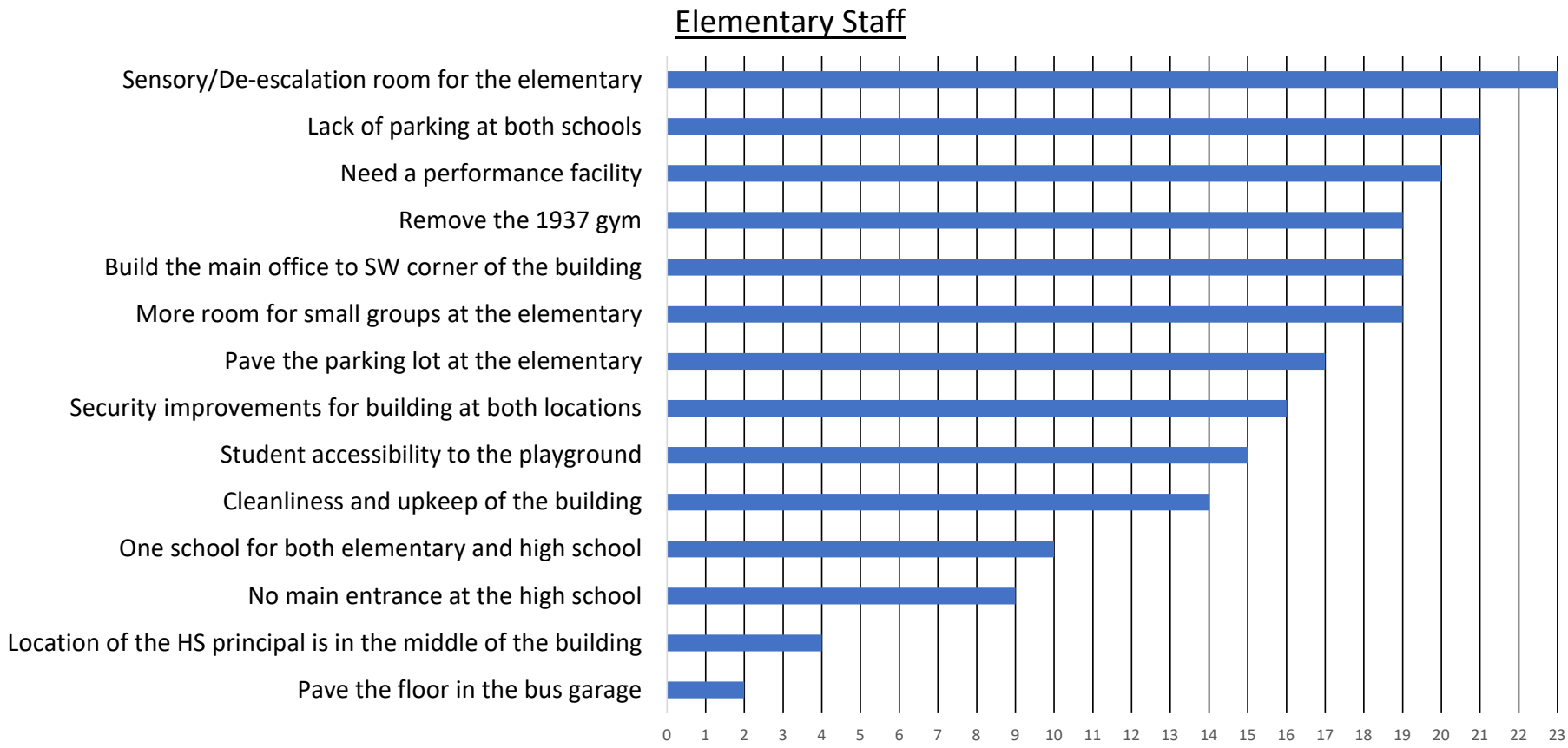
Fosston Public Schools
HOME OF THE GREYHOUNDS

INTERNAL - What are the Greatest Facility Needs of the District?

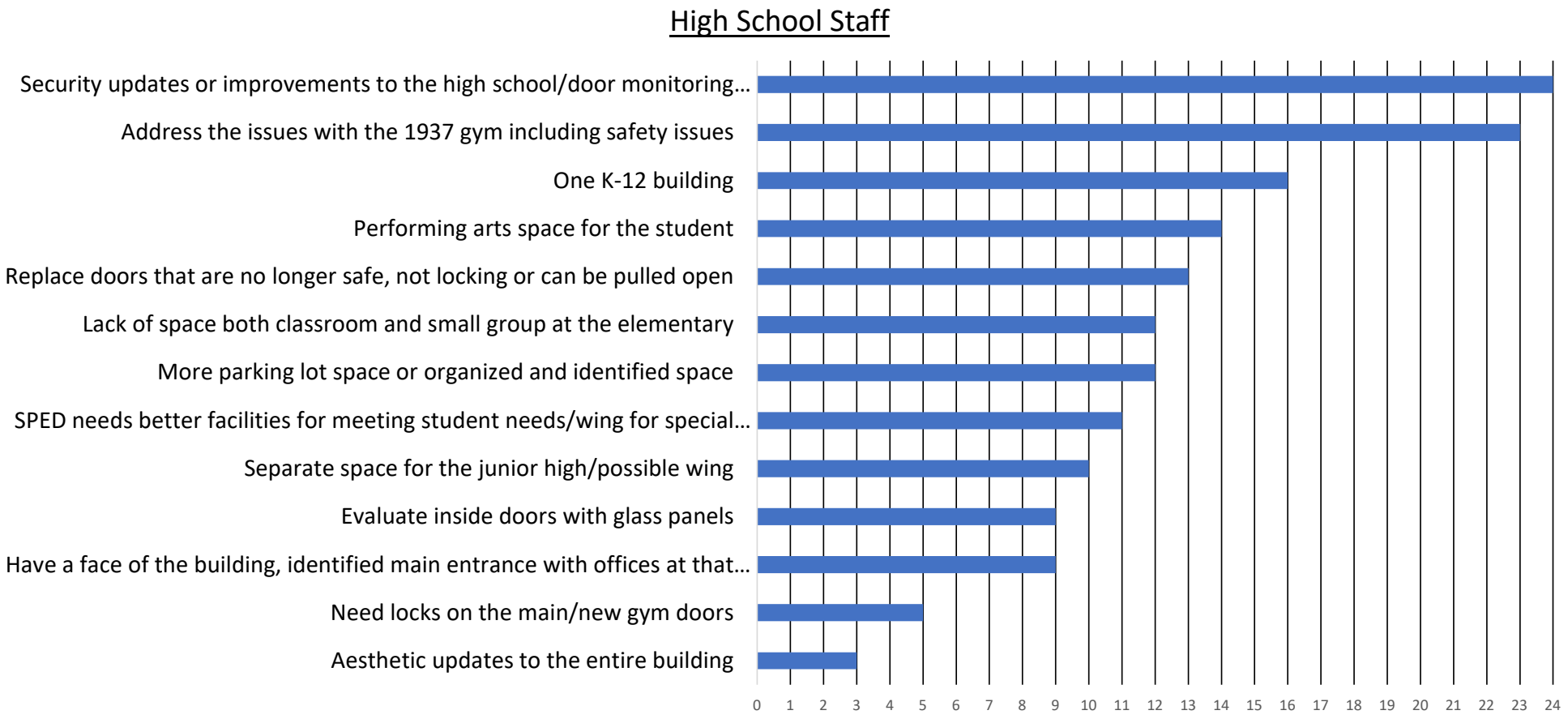
School Board and Administrative Team



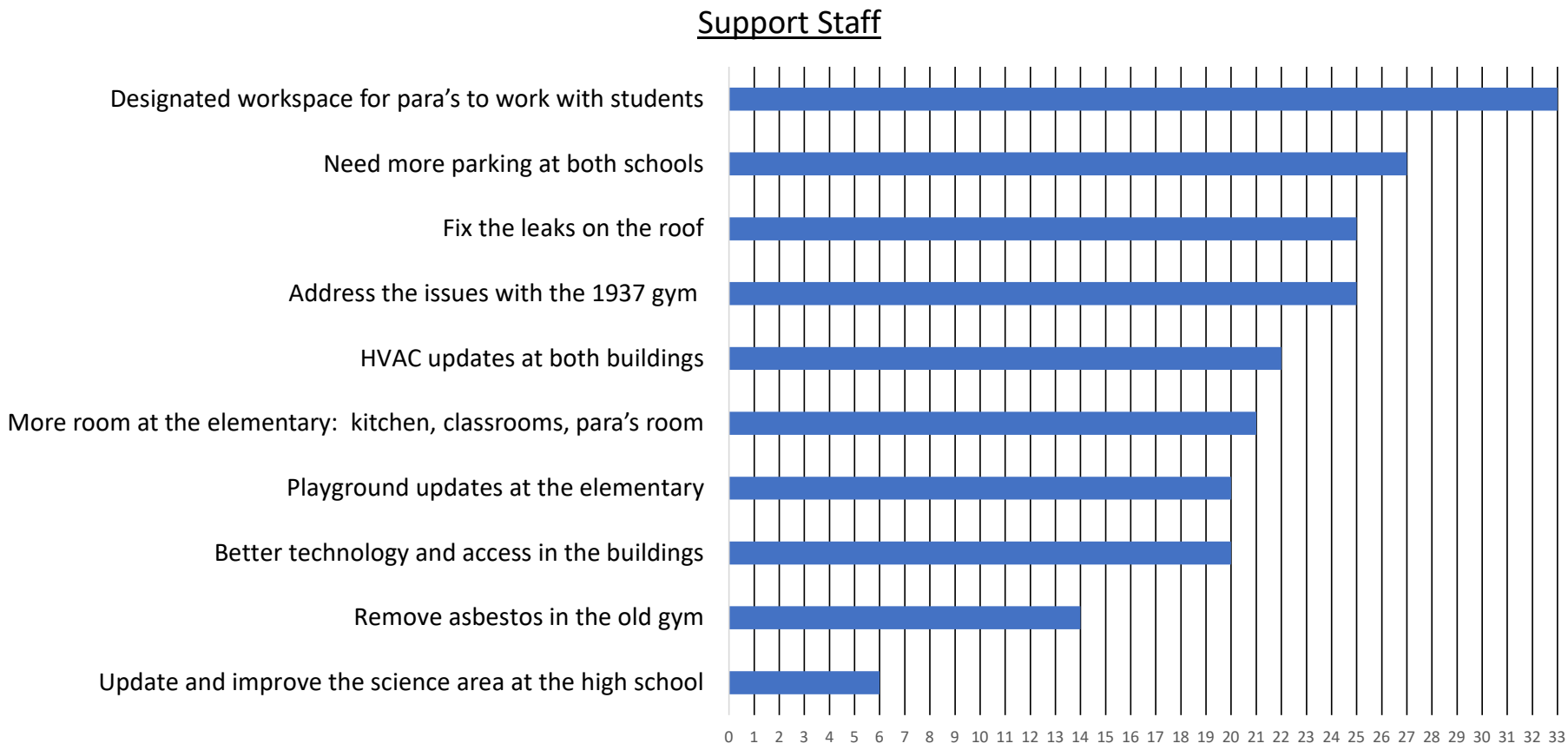
INTERNAL - What are the Greatest Facility Needs of the District?



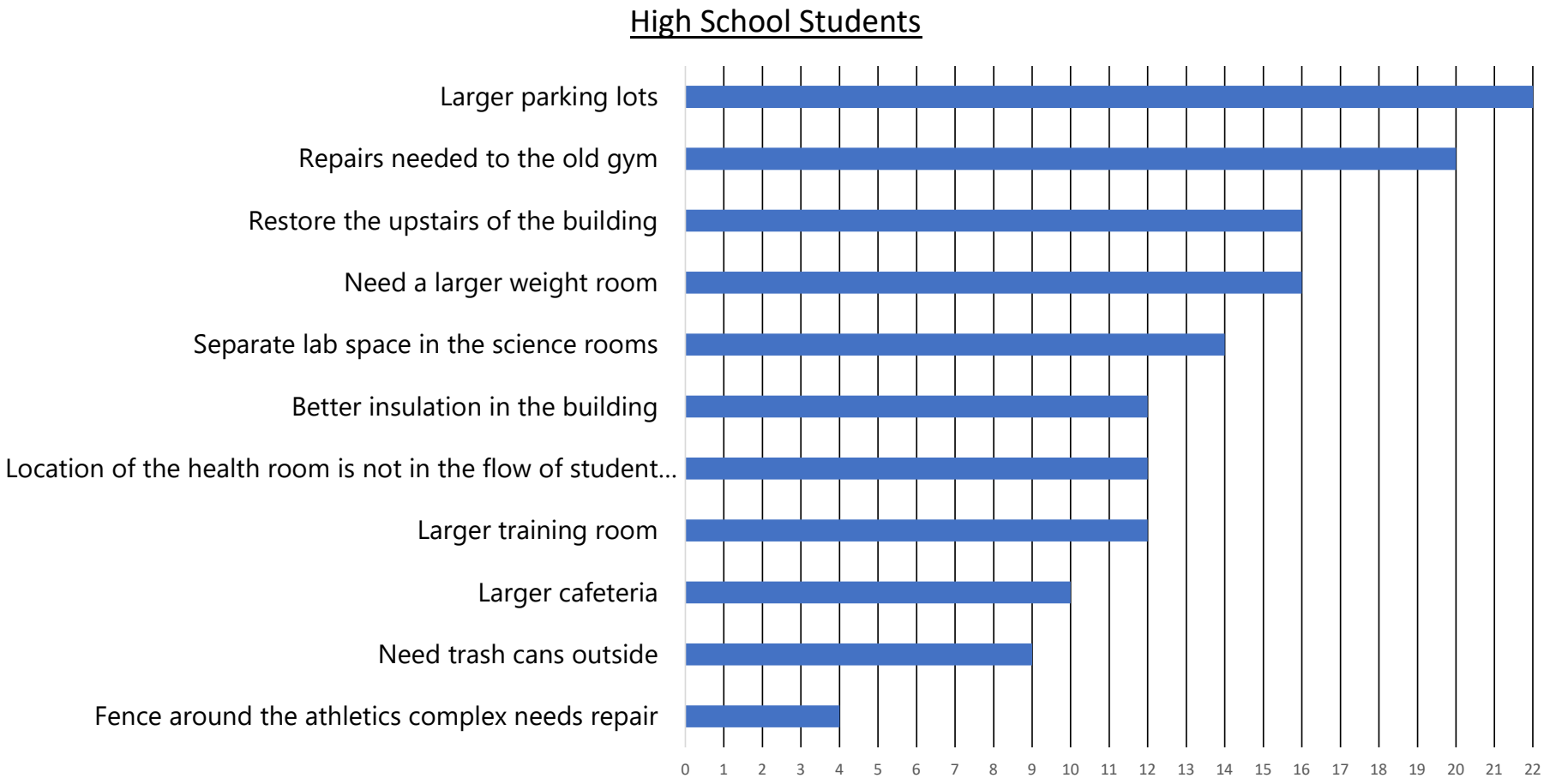
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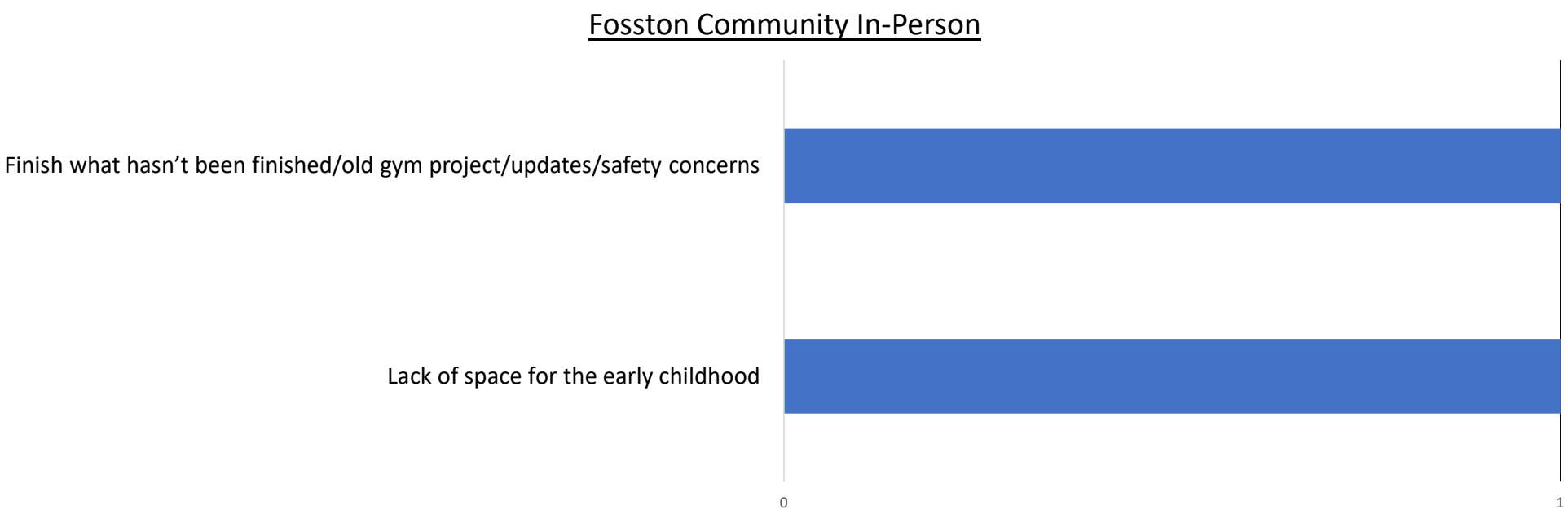


Top Overall Facility Issues From INTERNAL Listening Session:

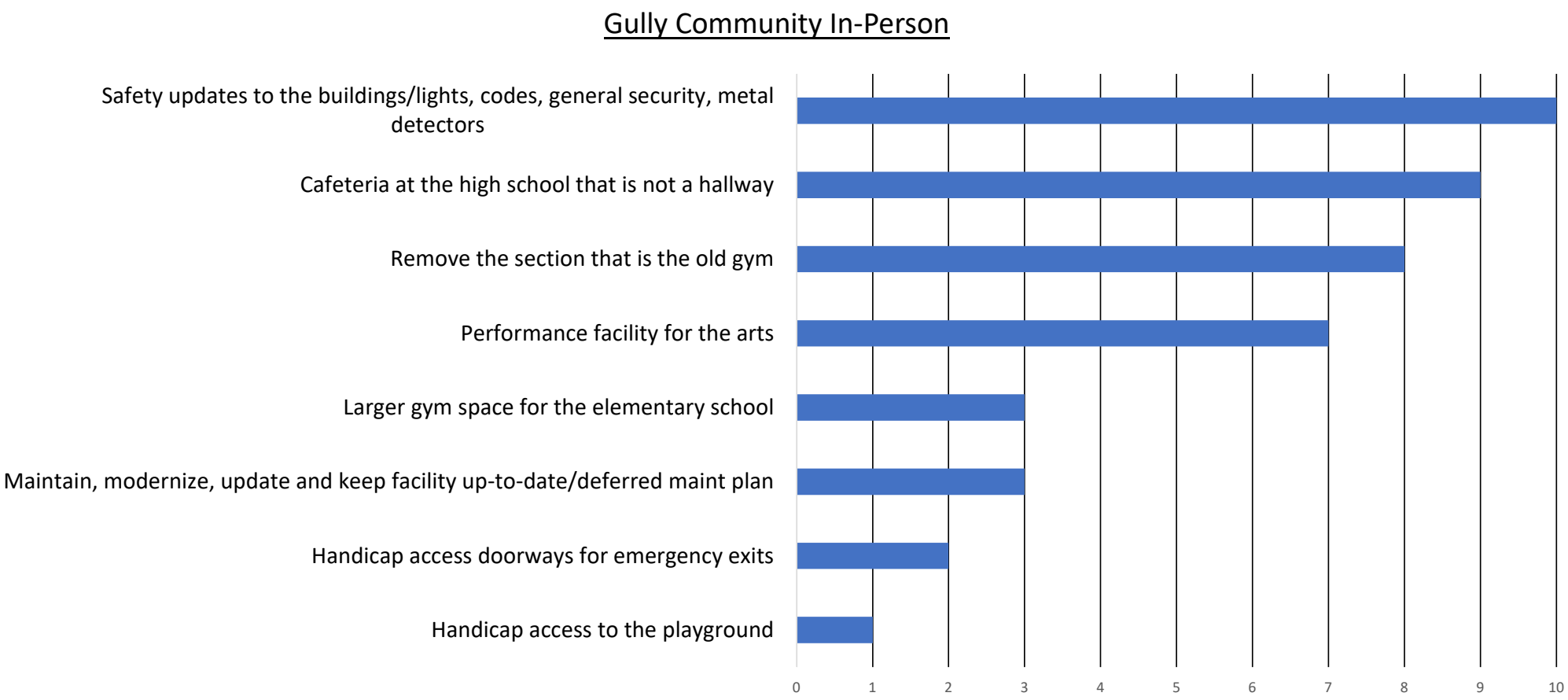
Fosston Schools

- Find a solution for the 1937 gym (114)
- Parking improvements at both buildings (111)
- Safe and secure entrances at all buildings (63)
- Additional educational space at the elementary (50)
- Designated workspace for para's to work with students (38)
- Student accessibility to the playground (35)
- Need a performance facility (34)
- Sensory/de-escalation room at the elementary (34)
- Larger weightroom (28)
- One K-12 building (26)

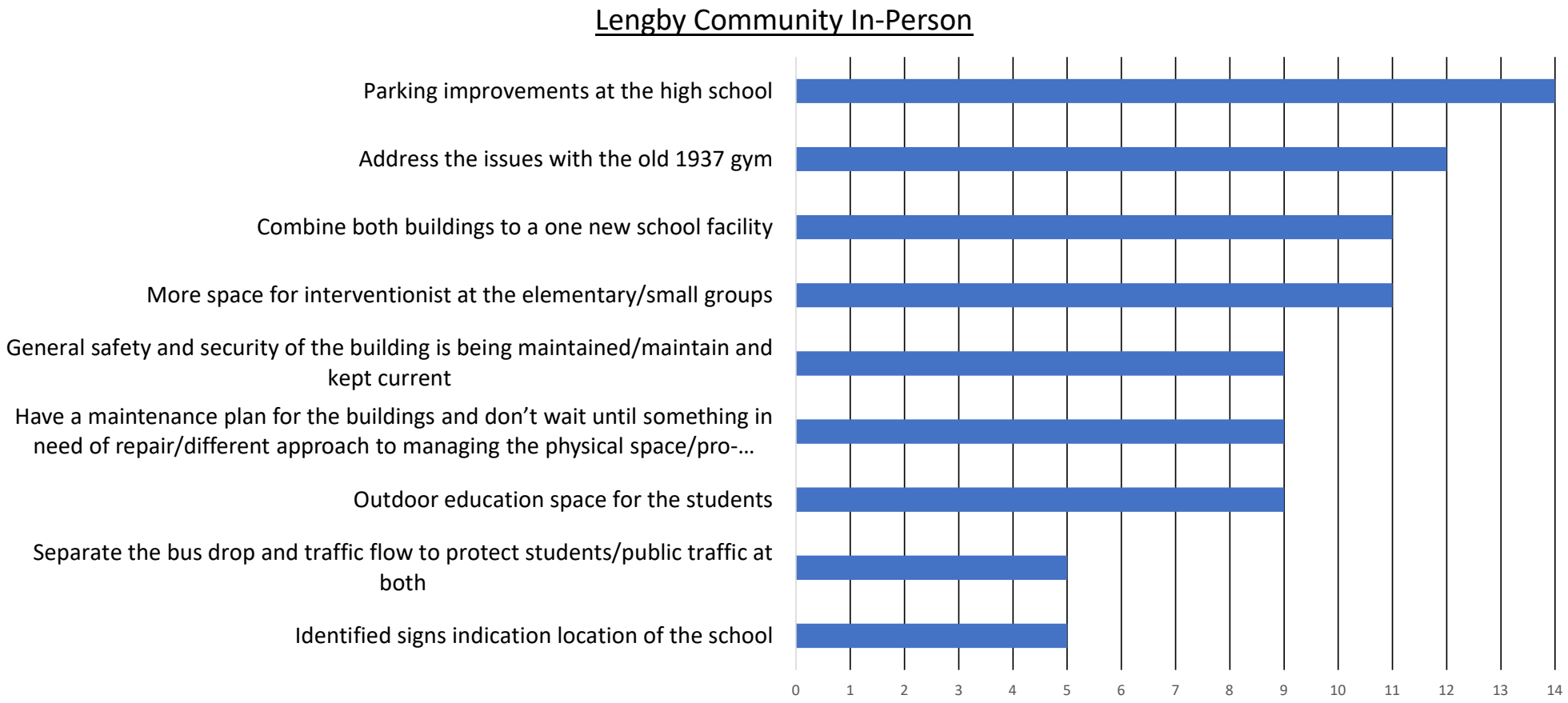
EXTERNAL - What are the Greatest Facility Needs of the District?



EXTERNAL - What are the Greatest Facility Needs of the District?



EXTERNAL - What are the Greatest Facility Needs of the District?



Top Overall Facility Issues From EXTERNAL Listening Session:

Fosston Schools

- Address the issues with the 1937 gym (20)
- Safety updates to the buildings (19)
- Parking improvements at the high school (14)
- One K-12 school (11)
- More space for interventionists/small groups at the elementary (11)
- Have a long term LTFM plan for replacement of things (9)
- Outdoor education space for students (9)
- Cafeteria at the high school that is not a hallway (9)
- Performance space for the arts (7)
- Separate bus drop and improved traffic flow at both schools (5)
- Identified signage for location of both schools and entrances (5)
- Handicap access for emergency exits and playground access (3)

Top Facility Issues From ALL Listening Session:

INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS		EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS
Find a solution for the 1937 gym (114)	134	Address the issues with the 1937 gym (20)
Parking improvements at both buildings (111)	125	Parking improvements at the high school (14)
Safe / secure entrance at both buildings (63)	82	Safety updates to the buildings (19)
Additional education space at the elementary (50)	61	More space for interventionists/small groups at the elementary (11)
Need a performance facility (34)	41	Performance space for the arts (7)
Student accessibility to the playground (35)	38	Handicap access to emergency exits and playground (3)
One K-12 building (26)	37	One K-12 school (11)
Designated workspace for para's (38)		Long term plan facility maintenance plan (9)
Sensory/de-escalation room at elementary (34)		Outdoor education space for students (9)
Larger weight room (28)		Cafeteria that is not a hallway (9)
		Separate bus drop and traffic flow (5)
		Identified signage for location and entrance (5)


Thank You!
QUESTIONS?







Fosston Schools
Educational Space Adequacy Results

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What is Educational Space Adequacy?

Educational Adequacy is a complete analysis of a school building focusing on the 18 categories as listed below

1. Classroom Size and Suitability
2. Cafeteria/Kitchen/Serving
3. Security and Supervision
4. Main Office/Nurse/Support Services
5. Science Classrooms/Labs
6. Art Classrooms/Labs
7. Music Classrooms/Practice Areas etc.
8. Teacher/Staff Collaborative Planning Areas
9. Student Commons/Break-Out Areas
10. Physical Education/Athletics/Locker Rooms/Pool etc.
11. Site Suitability: Fields/Green Space, Playgrounds etc.
12. Parking and Bus Drop-off: Staff/Students/Parents
13. Technology
14. Library/Media Center: Location/Size/Layout
15. Special Education/Support Services
16. Auditoriums/Performing Arts Spaces
17. Career and Technical Education
18. Hallways/Washrooms/Lockers/Maintenance/Other

Educational Space Adequacy (Category One Example)

1. Classroom Size/Suitability

- **General Purpose Classrooms 850-950 sq. ft., Kindergarten 1200-1500 sq. ft., Early Childhood 1000 sq. ft.**
- **Adequate storage/cabinetry/countertop space**
- **Adequate number of electrical outlets/computer/data drops**
- **Natural light**
- **Interactive white board, tack/white boards**
- **Furniture – easily movable – flexible for small groups**

How The Process Works?

- ICS Educational Consultants walk through the building and evaluate all the spaces in the school comparing them to suggested MDE guidelines

- Consultants meet with the building administration for input, review and feedback

Educational Adequacy Color Key

Green	**Adequate** – Meets 4-5 of the Analysis Criteria - including MDE Guidelines for School Educational Adequacy.
Yellow	**Questionable Adequacy** - Meets only 2-3 of the Analysis Criteria but may be considered adequate based upon current programming/ enrollment and/or size of area.
Red	**Inadequate** – Meets 1 or none of the Analysis Criteria - Is perceived as a significant need by staff.

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Educational Space Adequacy Results





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Educational Space Adequacy Results

Fosston Elementary School

Green	**Adequate** – Meets 4-5 of the Analysis Criteria - including MDE Guidelines for School Educational Adequacy
Yellow	**Questionable Adequacy** - Meets only 2-3 of the Analysis Criteria, but may be considered adequate based upon current programming/enrollment and/or size of area.
Red	**Inadequate** – Meets 1 or none of the Analysis Criteria - Is perceived as a significant need by staff

	CATEGORY	COLOR
1	Classroom Size and Suitability	Y
2	Cafeteria/Kitchen/Serving	G
3	Security and Supervision	R
4	Main Office/Nurse/Support Services	G
5	Science Classrooms/Labs	NA
6	Art Classrooms/Labs	NA
7	Music Classrooms/Practice Areas/Etc.	Y
8	Staff Lounge/Collaborative Planning Areas	G
9	Student Commons/Break-Out Areas	R
10	Physical Education/Athletics/Locker Rooms Etc.	R
11	Site Suitability: Fields/Green Space/Storage Etc.	R
12	Parking/Bus Drop-Off: Staff/Students/Parents	Y
13	Technology	G
14	Library/Media Center	Y
15	Special Education/Support Services	G
16	Auditoriums/Performing Arts Spaces	NA
17	Career and Technical Education	NA
18	Hallways/Lockers/Washrooms/Maintenance Space	G

Educational Space Adequacy Results

Fosston High School

Green	**Adequate** – Meets 4-5 of the Analysis Criteria - including MDE Guidelines for School Educational Adequacy
Yellow	**Questionable Adequacy** - Meets only 2-3 of the Analysis Criteria, but may be considered adequate based upon current programming/enrollment and/or size of area.
Red	**Inadequate** – Meets 1 or none of the Analysis Criteria - Is perceived as a significant need by staff

	CATEGORY	COLOR
1	Classroom Size and Suitability	R
2	Cafeteria/Kitchen/Serving	Y
3	Security and Supervision	R
4	Main Office/Nurse/Support Services	G
5	Science Classrooms/Labs	Y
6	Art Classrooms/Labs	G
7	Music Classrooms/Practice Areas/Etc.	Y
8	Staff Lounge/Collaborative Planning Areas	G
9	Student Commons/Break-Out Areas	Y
10	Physical Education/Athletics/Locker Rooms Etc.	Y
11	Site Suitability: Fields/Green Space/Storage Etc.	R
12	Parking/Bus Drop-Off: Staff/Students/Parents	R
13	Technology	Y
14	Library/Media Center	G
15	Special Education/Support Services	G
16	Auditoriums/Performing Arts Spaces	R
17	Career and Technical Education	Y
18	Hallways/Lockers/Washrooms/Maintenance Space	G

Final Educational Adequacy Results

Fosston Public Schools
HOME OF THE GREYHOUNDS

	CATEGORY	Fosston	
		ELEM	HS
1	Classroom Size and Suitability	Y	R
2	Cafeteria/Kitchen/Serving	G	Y
3	Security and Supervision	R	R
4	Main Office/Nurse/Support Services	G	G
5	Science Classrooms/Labs	NA	Y
6	Art Classrooms/Labs	NA	G
7	Music Classrooms/Practice Areas/Etc.	Y	Y
8	Staff Lounge/Collaborative Planning Areas	G	G
9	Student Commons/Break-Out Areas	R	Y
10	Physical Education/Athletics/Locker Rooms Etc.	R	Y
11	Site Suitability: Fields/Green Space/Storage Etc.	R	R
12	Parking/Bus Drop-Off: Staff/Students/Parents	Y	R
13	Technology	G	Y
14	Library/Media Center	Y	G
15	Special Education/Support Services	G	G
16	Auditoriums/Performing Arts Spaces	NA	R
17	Career and Technical Education	NA	Y
18	Hallways/Lockers/Washrooms/Maintenance space	G	G

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Thank You!
QUESTIONS?

Fosston GREYHOUNDS

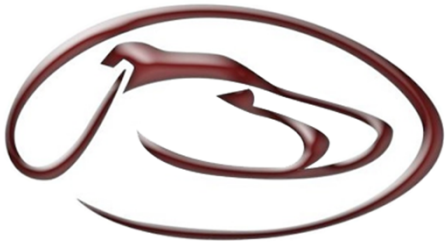
Community Survey Results

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Survey Goals

We sought to answer…

- How do residents view the quality of education and the condition of the school facilities?
- How important do residents believe it is to invest in school facilities?
- Should the district continue investing in the 1937 high school gym?
- What are residents' perceptions of parking and traffic flow?
- How do residents evaluate the identified facility needs?
- What is the most effective way to communicate with residents about the facility planning process?



Survey Methodology

- Conducted using ThoughtExchange
- Nov. 24 – Dec. 11
- Open to all Fosston School District residents
- Promoted through district channels and local media.
- Results most strongly reflect the opinions of parents, staff, and those who closely follow the schools – they should **not** be considered representative of the entire community.

Demographics

- There were **470** respondents (**340** complete)
  - **78%** have children who attend or have attended the schools
  - **90%** have immediate family members who have attended
- **82%** live in the district.
- **9%** Do not live in the district but open open-enroll their students to Fosston Public Schools.



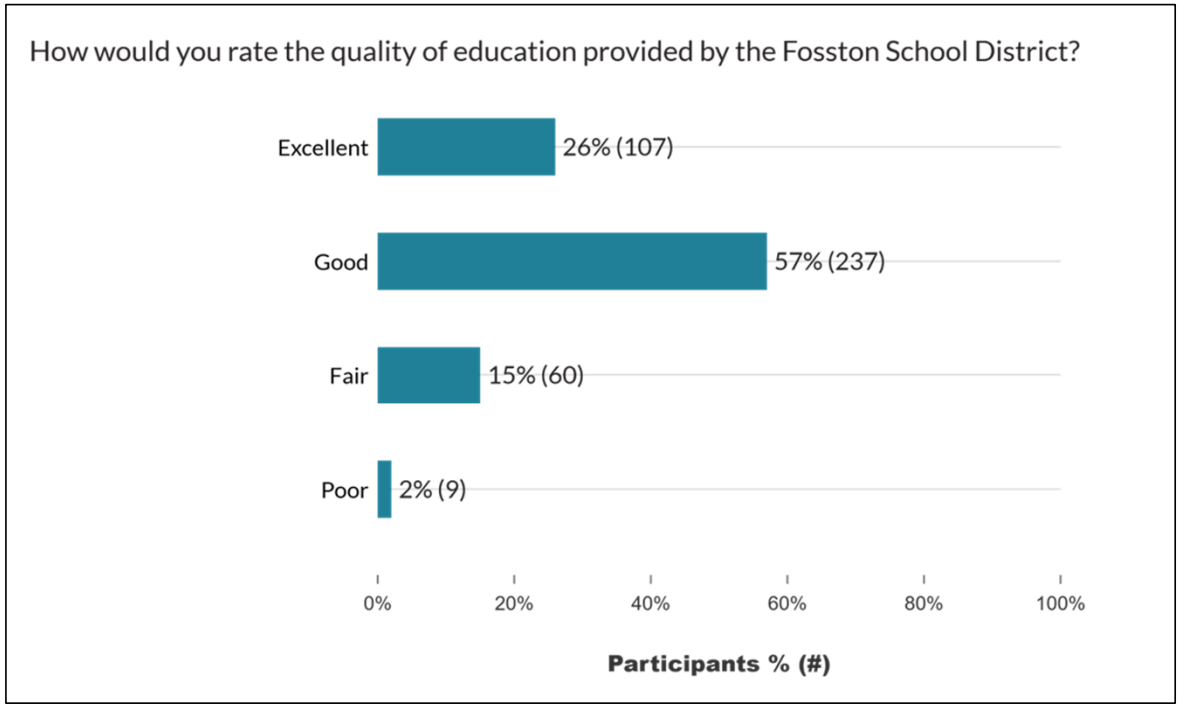
Approximately how many years have you lived in the district?

%		Answer
8%	(33)	Less than 5 years
15%	(62)	5-10 years
15%	(64)	11-20 years
15%	(63)	21-30 years
35%	(147)	More than 30 years
13%	(54)	I do not live in the district boundaries

Perceptions of Education

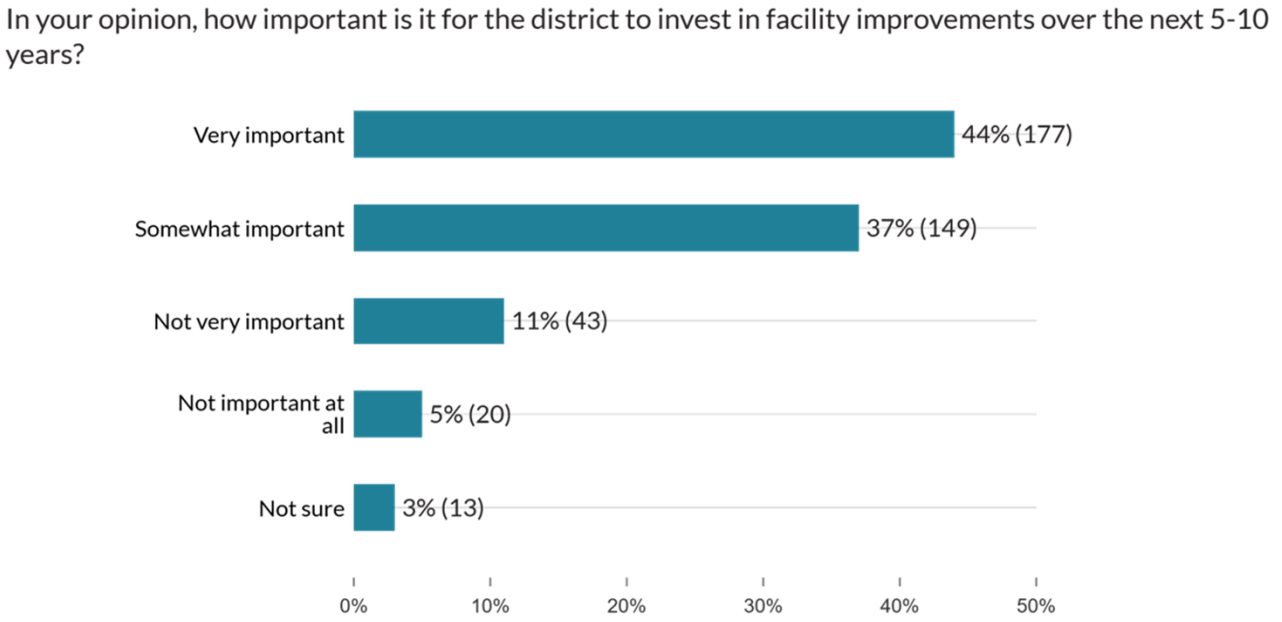
- The sentiment towards the quality of education is **generally positive**, with 57% rating it as good and 26% as excellent.
- The community shows a strong connection to Fosston Public Schools, with a high percentage of respondents having **family ties to the district.**





Perceptions of Building Quality

- There is a significant concern about the condition of school facilities, with **52% rating them as good and 34% as fair**.
- Investment in facility improvements is deemed very important by **44% of respondents.**
- Overall, there is a strong sentiment to make necessary repairs and improvements sooner rather than later, supported by **54% of respondents**



Perceptions of 1937 HS Gym

- This facility is a significant topic within the community.
  - **66%** of respondents are very familiar with the gym.
  - **61%** have been inside within the last year and **27%** in the last 1-5 years.
- Opinions are divided regarding its future:
  - **38%** support demolishing and replacing it to meet current needs.
  - **22%** are unsure and want more information.
  - Others support preserving and renovating it, with varying considerations of cost.

Q13: What do you think the district should do with the 1937 gym facility?

Item	#	%
Preserve and renovate it for continued use even if it is **MORE** expensive than replacing with new	40	10%
Preserve and renovate it for continued use **at equal cost with new**	54	14%
Preserve and renovate it for continued use only if it is significantly **LESS** expensive than replacing it with new	63	16%
Demolish and replace to meet current needs of students and programming	145	38%
Not sure/need more information	84	22%

Perceptions of 1937 HS Gym

Q14: Please share any thoughts you have about the 1937 gym - it's value to the school and community, and what role (if any) you see it playing in the future:

- Many respondents express strong sentimental and historical value, advocating for preservation and renovation to maintain the gym's role in community events.
- Concerns about safety, structural integrity, and cost-effectiveness lead others to support demolition and replacement with a modern facility that better meets current needs.
- Some suggest repurposing the space for classrooms or a theater, while others emphasize the importance of maintaining gym space for sports and activities.
- Overall, opinions are divided between preserving history and prioritizing functional upgrades.

Perceptions of Parking

- **73%** indicate the **High School** parking and traffic flow needs improvement or is poor.
- **54%** indicate the **Elem. School** parking and traffic flow needs improvement or is poor.
- Issues include insufficient parking, congestion during peak times, and safety concerns for students and pedestrians.

Community suggestions include:

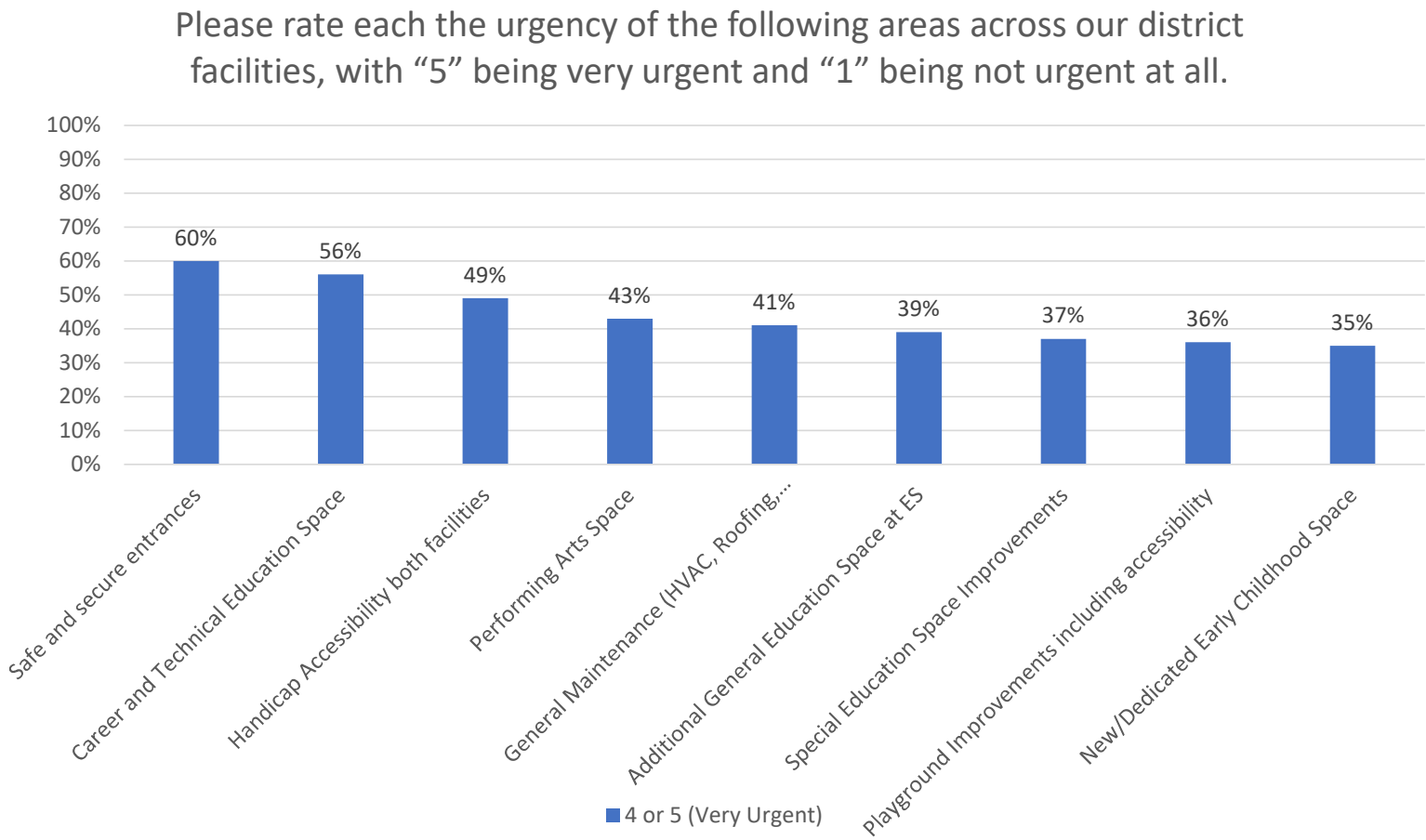
- Creating additional parking using grassy areas or nearby properties
- Implementing safety measures such as crosswalks with lights and reduced speed limits near Highway 2,
- Improving signage and procedures for pick-up and drop-off.

While some feel the current situation is adequate, the majority emphasize the need for enhanced parking and safer access.

Facilities Improvement Needs

Score of 4 or 5 (Very Urgent)

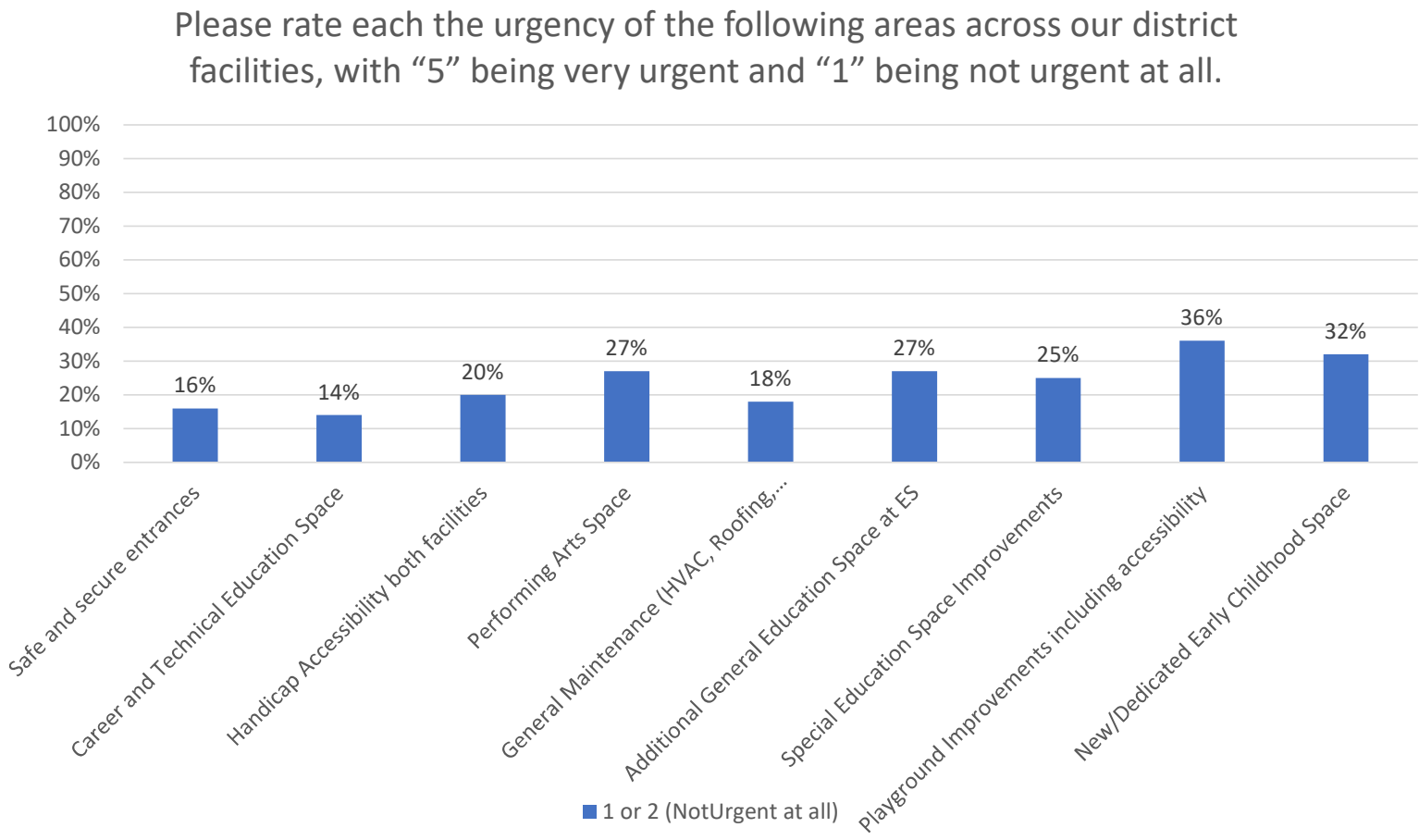
When asked how well the building currently meet the needs of students and staff, on average **44% of respondents** feel these areas of need are **urgent or very urgent.**



Facilities Improvement Needs

Score of 1 or 2 (Not Urgent at All)

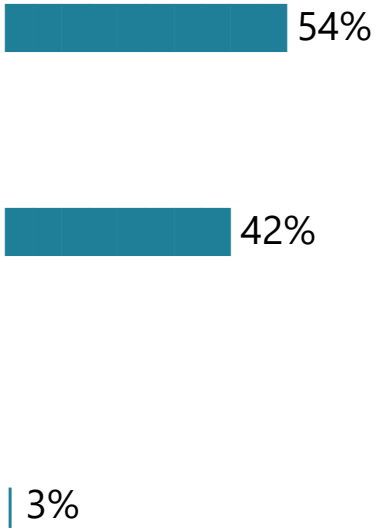
When asked how well the building currently meet the needs of students and staff, on average **24% of respondents** feel these areas of need are **not urgent or not urgent at all.**



Support for Making Improvements

Q: Knowing improvements need to be made to School Buildings and facilities, which option is closest to your opinion?

Item	#	%
The district should try to make repairs and improvements that students and staff need sooner, rather than later.	190	54%
The district should make as many repairs and improvements as it can, but only if they can be completed without increasing taxes.	148	42%
The district should not be considering any building improvements at all.	11	3%



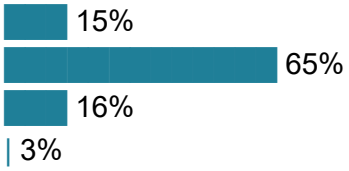
School Board and Administration Trust

Overall, the community has trust in the district leadership

Q9: The Fosston School Board and Administration make decisions that are in the best interest of students and staff.

Answered: 397 | Not answered: 73

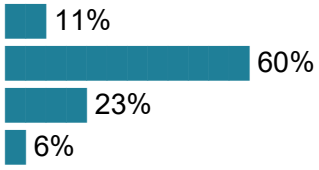
Item	#	%
Strongly agree	60	15%
Agree	259	65%
Disagree	65	16%
Strongly disagree	13	3%



Q10: The Fosston School Board and Administration do a good job managing the district's finances and my tax dollars?

Answered: 391 | Not answered: 79

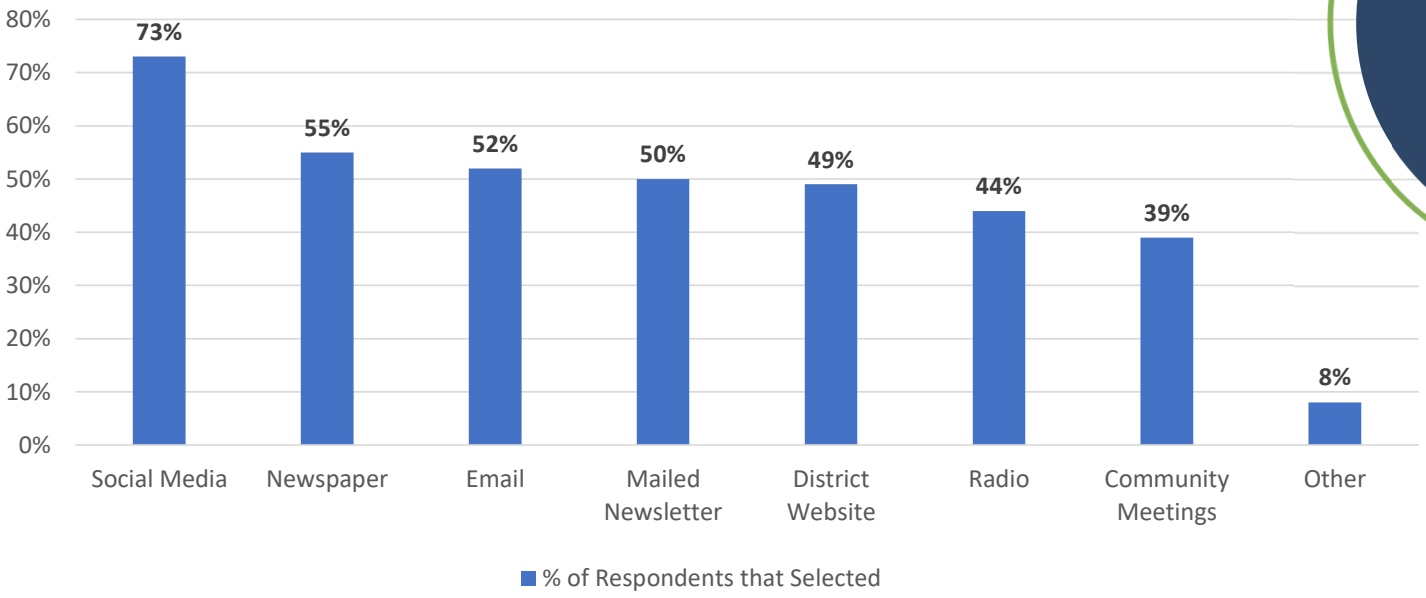
Item	#	%
Strongly agree	42	11%
Agree	236	60%
Disagree	90	23%
Strongly disagree	23	6%



Preferred Modes of Communication

Q. What is the best way to communicate information about the planning process going forward? Select all the apply.





Community Advice with Future Planning

Community feedback urges the school board and administration to prioritize:

- Safety, accessibility, and educational improvements over sports or aesthetic enhancements.
- Many respondents express concerns about high taxes and urge fiscal responsibility.
- Transparency and community involvement through public listening sessions and clear communication about plans and costs.
- Maintenance and improvement of existing facilities rather than new construction, focusing on long-term sustainability and efficient resource use.
- Additional comments emphasize the importance of investing in quality teachers and educational programs, especially in trades and life skills, alongside facility upgrades. Concerns about declining enrollment, high taxes, and the need for better communication are also noted.

FOSSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
(ISD 601)
STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROJECTION TO 2035/36

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Applied Insights north

The Overview

Population trends create framework for future enrollment change:

- District lies in Polk and Mahnomen counties both which lost population over past two decades and are expected to continue to decline.
- District's estimated population declined slightly from 3,729 in 2000 to 3,672 in 2020.
- The change in population set the pattern for the number of resident students living within the district: larger upper grade cohorts moved up and out, while, a fairly consistently sized group of lower grade cohorts created a foundation for future enrollment albeit at a smaller number of students; those larger upper grade cohorts started between 2008/09 and 2012/13 when Fosston's enrollment peaked; since then, there has been a slow process of smaller class cohorts filling in behind the larger ones moving up the grades.

K-12 student enrollment declined slightly over past ten years:

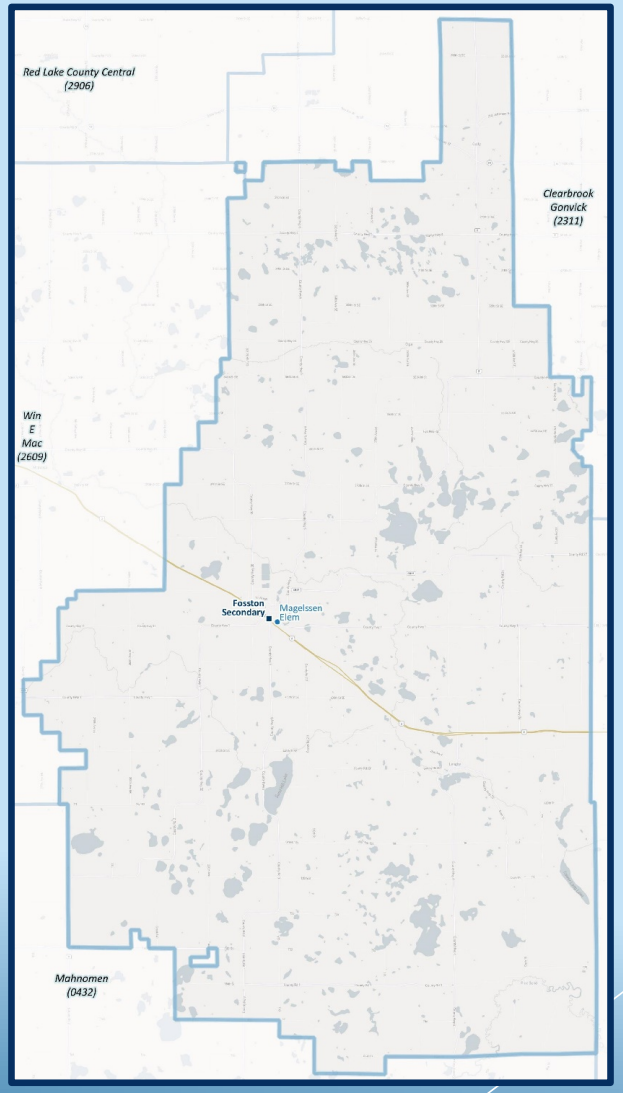
- K-12 enrollment declined from 646 in 2016/17 to 547 in 2025/26.
- Resident students declined from 543 to 425 but student counts in grades K-4 have been stable over past seven years.
- District gains students via open enrollment—average gain of 46 over last three years.
- Number of home-schooled students grew from the low 20s to the 30s.

Recent and emerging trends impacting near-term enrollment:

- Fosston is a vibrant mini-regional hub possessing a diverse economy widely seen as trending in a positive direction.
- City actively facilitates new housing development through redevelopment and new construction.
- New child care facility resulted from a citywide initiative to address a critical need.
- Future economic and residential development is being encouraged through expansion of industrial park and acquisition of 160 acres of land.

Factors Considered in Projection

- How many students live in the district? Where do they attend school? What are the patterns of enrollment change.
- Trends in adjacent districts including open enrollment exchanges.
- Development initiatives within or impacting district.
- Patterns of births relative to district kindergarten enrollment including projected births.



Map: MDE.

Fosston Schools (ISD 601) Student Enrollment Projection to 2035/36



Highlights

- **Total enrollment** is expected to decrease 5.1% from 547 to 519.
- **Resident student** enrollment is expected to decline 8.0% and **non-resident** student enrollment to rise 4.9%.
- Average K-4 grade sizes to shift from around 40 to 38 while upper grades begin and end in low 40s after a slight rise.
- Fosston begins and ends the projection period as a solid two-section school.

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Thank You!

Q&A

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