Mercer Island School District

May 2012 Telephone Survey

Presentation of Results
Methodology

- Telephone survey in the City of Mercer Island
- 300 total interviews
- Overall Margin of Error + 5.7 points at the 95% confidence interval
- Conducted May 30th – June 5th, 2012
- Survey conducted by trained, professional interviewers calling from a central, monitored location.

Please note that due to rounding, some percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.
School and District Ratings
School District Job Ratings

Q2-8. Regardless of whether you have children in the school district, using a scale of excellent, good, only fair, or poor, how would you rate...

- The job Mercer Island schools are doing overall
  - Excellent: 42%
  - Good: 42%
  - Only Fair: 6%
  - Poor: 6%

- The job the Mercer Island teachers are doing
  - Excellent: 37%
  - Good: 40%
  - Only Fair: 13%
  - Poor: 9%

- The job the Mercer Island School District administration is doing
  - Excellent: 13%
  - Good: 39%
  - Only Fair: 18%
  - Poor: 9%

- The physical condition of the school buildings on the island
  - Excellent: 13%
  - Good: 44%
  - Only Fair: 23%
  - Poor: 7%

- The job the School District is doing spending taxpayer dollars responsibly
  - Excellent: 12%
  - Good: 40%
  - Only Fair: 23%
  - Poor: 13%

- The job the School District does budgeting and handling its finances
  - Excellent: 10%
  - Good: 35%
  - Only Fair: 15%
  - Poor: 23%

- The job the School District is doing planning for the future
  - Excellent: 7%
  - Good: 28%
  - Only Fair: 29%
  - Poor: 17%
Ratings by Approvers/Rejecters

- **Administration:**
  - Approvers: 66% Positive, 16% Negative
  - Rejecters: 46% Positive, 38% Negative

- **Physical Condition:**
  - Approvers: 35% Positive, 56% Negative
  - Rejecters: 77% Positive, 14% Negative

- **Planning for the future:**
  - Approvers: 50% Positive, 36% Negative
  - Rejecters: 25% Positive, 63% Negative
### Contributors to a Good Education

Now I’d like you to rank a list of items on their importance in contributing to a good education. Use a scale of one to seven, where one means that item is not important at all, and seven means that item is extremely important. You can use any number on the scale. If you do not have an opinion one way or the other, please just say so. *(REPEAT AFTER EACH UNTIL UNDERSTOOD: How important is that item in contributing to a good education on a scale of one to seven where one is not important at all and seven is extremely important?)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>7 - Extremely important</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good teachers and principals</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging curriculum</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly competitive teacher salaries</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular activities like sports, music, and language</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking advantage of the best technology to improve learning</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small class sizes</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern buildings, equipment, and facilities</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bond Measure
Q16. As you may know, residents were asked to vote on a measure last April for the Mercer Island School District. Based on what you know, please describe in a few words what the measure would have done if it was approved. If you are not sure or didn’t pay attention to the measure, please just say so. (ONE RESPONSE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New schools/Renovate</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 New schools (i.e. 3 elementaries and the middle school)</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wasted/Too much money/Increased taxes/A Levy/Bond</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build/Rebuild 3 elementaries</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tear down all and rebuild</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate overcrowding/Lower class sizes</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Approval/Rejection by Subgroups

Overall
- Approve 47%
- Reject 53%

Age < 55
- Approve 65%
- Reject 31%
+34%

Age 55+
- Approve 30%
- Reject 64%
-34%

Strong Voters
- Approve 38%
- Reject 57%
-19%

Weak Voters
- Approve 60%
- Reject 38%
+22%

No children attending MIPS
- Approve 59%
- Reject 40%
+19%

Children attending MIPS
- Approve 41%
- Reject 53%
-12%
### Reasons to Reject

Q19. (IF REJECT) Why did you vote to reject the measure? Anything else?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost/Expensive/Poor economy/Raised taxes</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unnecessary construction/No work needed/Buildings are fine/Wasteful</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly planned/Lack of information</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not realistic/Too ambitious</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should have/consider other options/alternatives</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q20. **(IF APPROVE)** Why did you vote to approve the measure? Anything else?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Approval</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School construction needed/Need to improve/update buildings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always support schools/children/Important for the community</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate overcrowding/Reduce class sizes</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in the proposal/measure/District needs it</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will provide for a good/quality education</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have/will have children in the school system</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will increase/preserve property values</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Reasons Measure Failed- Overall

Last April’s school measure was voted down. I’ll read some reasons it might have failed, for each one please tell me how significant a factor you think that item was in the measure’s defeat. Use a scale where 1 means that item was not a factor at all and 7 means that item was a very significant factor in the measure’s defeat. If you do not have an opinion please just say so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Scale 1</th>
<th>Scale 2</th>
<th>Scale 3</th>
<th>Scale 4</th>
<th>Scale 5</th>
<th>Scale 6</th>
<th>Scale 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The measure cost too much</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our school buildings don’t need to be torn down and replaced at this time</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better to renovate or remodel schools than to rebuild them</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measure left too much discretion to the school board, so there was no way to ensure what would be built</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plan wasn’t detailed enough</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was not enough community engagement in developing this measure</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stevenson Property issue made it seem like the district didn’t really have a plan</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents don’t trust the district to spend the money wisely</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respected members of the community who usually support school measures came out against this one</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measure was unnecessary, the school district routinely is one of the best performing in the state</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Last April’s school measure was voted down. I’ll read some reasons it might have failed, for each one please tell me how significant a factor you think that item was in the measure’s defeat. Use a scale where 1 means that item was not a factor at all and 7 means that item was a very significant factor in the measure’s defeat. If you do not have an opinion please just say so.
### Reasons Measure Failed - Supporters

Last April’s school measure was voted down. I’ll read some reasons it might have failed, for each one please tell me how significant a factor you think that item was in the measure’s defeat. Use a scale where 1 means that item was not a factor at all and 7 means that item was a very significant factor in the measure’s defeat. If you do not have an opinion please just say so.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>7 - A very significant factor</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The measure cost too much</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was not enough community engagement in developing this measure</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Our school buildings don’t need to be torn down and replaced at this time</strong></td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respected members of the community who usually support school measures came out against this one</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plan wasn’t detailed enough</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stevenson Property issue made it seem like the district didn’t really have a plan</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better to renovate or remodel schools than to rebuild them</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residents don’t trust the district to spend the money wisely</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measure left too much discretion to the school board, so there was no way to ensure what would be built</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measure didn’t include adding a fourth elementary school</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The measure was unnecessary, the school district routinely is one of the best performing in the state</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Opinions and Concerns

Now I’m going to read you some statements about Mercer Island schools in general. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. If you do not have an opinion one way or the other, please just say so.

1. I won’t approve any tax increases right now, no matter what it is for.
   - Strongly Agree: 9%
   - Somewhat Agree: 6%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 22%
   - Strongly Disagree: 61%

2. The school aged population on the Island is increasing.
   - Strongly Agree: 35%
   - Somewhat Agree: 34%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 8%
   - Strongly Disagree: 3%

3. Our schools are overcrowded and it is negatively impacting educational quality.
   - Strongly Agree: 26%
   - Somewhat Agree: 23%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 26%
   - Strongly Disagree: 13%

4. Our school buildings were designed for teaching in a different era, newer buildings would help teachers improve student learning.
   - Strongly Agree: 19%
   - Somewhat Agree: 24%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 25%
   - Strongly Disagree: 26%

5. Mercer Island schools are falling behind others in the area.
   - Strongly Agree: 13%
   - Somewhat Agree: 17%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 31%
   - Strongly Disagree: 26%

6. Non-academic projects like renovating Mary Wayte pool and remodeling the high school stadium should be part of a future schools measure.
   - Strongly Agree: 26%
   - Somewhat Agree: 36%
   - Somewhat Disagree: 16%
   - Strongly Disagree: 13%
Moving Forward
Our schools are still in pretty good shape. We should try to make the current buildings last as long as we can.

Overall

- 71% Keep or Replace
- 70%
- 4% Other
- 25% Our existing school buildings are reaching the end of their useful life and should be torn down and replaced as soon as possible

Approvers

- 34%
- 61%

Rejecters

- 95%
- 3%
Use of Portable Classrooms

**Overall**

- 62%: We should take steps so that portables are used only once in a while
- 5%: Other
- 32%: We should continue to use portables for future student population growth

**Approvers**

- 79%
- 19%

**Rejecters**

- 51%
- 40%
School Size

Overall

- Three larger elementary schools of about 700 students each: 37%
- Other: 16%
- Four smaller elementary schools of about 525 students each: 46%

Approvers
- 36%
- 46%

Rejecters
- 41%
- 46%
- 32%
- 50%
Q43. The school district is facing a few choices on how to deal with an increasing school aged population. Currently, the school district’s grade configuration is elementary schools housing kindergarten through fifth grade, middle school with grades six through eight, and high school. In general...

- **45%**
  - Do you prefer that the current grade and school configuration stay the same?

- **4%**
  - Other

- **50%**
  - Are you open to changing the grade and school configuration?

**Kids in MISD Now/Previously**

- **49%**
  - Yes
- **51%**
  - No

**No Kids in MISD**

- **43%**
  - Yes
- **57%**
  - No
Q44-48. I’d like to know more of your thoughts on school grade configuration and what that means for the district. I’ll read the options, all of which would address the increasing school age population, rate them using a scale of strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, and strongly oppose. If you don’t have an opinion, please just say so.

- **Continue the current configuration by building a new 4th elementary school and remodel, expand, or replace the current middle school**
  - Strongly Support: 23%
  - Somewhat Support: 34%
  - Somewhat Oppose: 16%
  - Strongly Oppose: 14%

- **Build 3 new, larger elementary schools, and rebuild the middle school**
  - Strongly Support: 17%
  - Somewhat Support: 22%
  - Somewhat Oppose: 18%
  - Strongly Oppose: 31%

- **Build 1 new middle school, and have 2 middle schools with grades 5-8, and 3 elementaries with kindergarten through 4th grade**
  - Strongly Support: 7%
  - Somewhat Support: 31%
  - Somewhat Oppose: 19%
  - Strongly Oppose: 27%

- **Build 1 new school, and reconfigure the schools to create elementary schools with K-4th grade, an intermediate school with grades 5-6, and a middle school with grades 7-8**
  - Strongly Support: 8%
  - Somewhat Support: 24%
  - Somewhat Oppose: 18%
  - Strongly Oppose: 36%

- **Build 1 new school housing K-8th grade**
  - Strongly Support: 5%
  - Somewhat Support: 18%
  - Somewhat Oppose: 19%
  - Strongly Oppose: 48%
### More on Grade and School Configuration

#### Parents w/Kids in MISD Now/In Past
- Current, w new 4th elem & remodel/exp/repl current middle: 60% Support, 31% Oppose
- 3 new, larger elem & rebuild middle: 36% Support, 52% Oppose
- 1 new middle, have 2 middle w/5-8, 3 elem w/K-4: 34% Support, 48% Oppose
- 1 new, reconfigure to elem w/K-4, interm w/5-6, middle w/7-8: 28% Support, 57% Oppose
- 1 new, w/K-8: 23% Support, 65% Oppose

#### No Kids in MISD
- Current, w new 4th elem & remodel/exp/repl current middle: 52% Support, 26% Oppose
- 3 new, larger elem & rebuild middle: 48% Support, 39% Oppose
- 1 new middle, have 2 middle w/5-8, 3 elem w/K-4: 49% Support, 40% Oppose
- 1 new, reconfigure to elem w/K-4, interm w/5-6, middle w/7-8: 43% Support, 46% Oppose
- 1 new, w/K-8: 20% Support, 71% Oppose
Q49. If we do build a new school, which comes closer to your view...

- **37%**
  - Existing schools should be remodeled or rebuilt so they are of comparable quality to the new school

- **5%**
  - Other

- **57%**
  - It is okay to have one school that is newer than the others

**Kids in MISD Now/Previously**
- 36%
- 58%

**No Kids in MISD**
- 39%
- 53%
Q50-54. Whatever you think of school configuration, if a new school were to be built, I’d like you to rate each of the following sites where that new school could be located. Use a scale of one to five where five means that is a great location, and one means it is a poor location. You can use any number on the scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Rating 1</th>
<th>Rating 2</th>
<th>Rating 3</th>
<th>Rating 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On property owned by the school district just west of the High School</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At or near the current site of Mercer Island City Hall</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behind the skate park and old recycling center of Mercerdale Park</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A portion of Luther Burbank Park</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase private property</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Findings

There is a sharp division between those who approved the measure and those who rejected it on key questions throughout the survey, highlighting a clear divergence in opinion among voters.

The school district gets positive ratings for its overall performance, but weak or negative ratings on budgeting and planning for the future.

The primary causes of the measure’s failure can be attributed to

- The overall cost of the measure
- A shared sense that the current buildings are in good shape, making the measure unnecessary
- That modern buildings are among the least important contributors to a good education

A majority are fine with having one school that is newer than the others, including parents with children currently/formerly in MISD.