BOND MEASURE FEASIBILITY SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT

PREPARED FOR
GAVILAN COLLEGE

SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Gavilan College cultivates learning and personal growth in students of all backgrounds and abilities through innovative practices in traditional and emerging learning environments. By providing career and technical education programs, undergraduate degrees, university transfer courses, and certificate programs, Gavilan College helps students and returning veterans receive education, counseling, and skills training they need to succeed and help strengthen our local economy.

In 2004, Gavilan College asked voters for assistance in funding the repair, renovation and upgrade of college classrooms and facilities by passing a general obligation bond: Measure E. In addition to the $108 million raised by Measure E, the District has been able to leverage additional state matching funds and make use of other resources to construct new classrooms and make priority repairs and improvements. Despite these substantial investments, however, facility and technology needs remain for which the College does not have a funding source. In addition to basic facility repairs, there is a clear need to upgrade classrooms, labs, and career training facilities to better prepare students for in-demand jobs in science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security and skilled trades, build a campus in San Benito County, and improve counseling, job training, and support service facilities for students and returning military veterans. However, to adequately fund its ongoing facility needs and access additional State matching funds, the District will need the financial support of the communities it serves through the passage of a local bond measure.

MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH   The primary purpose of this study was to produce an unbiased, statistically reliable evaluation of voters' interest in supporting a local bond measure to partially fund the facility and technology improvements noted above. Additionally, should the District decide to move forward with a bond measure, the survey data provides guidance as to how to structure a measure so that it is consistent with the community's priorities and expressed needs. Specifically, the survey was designed to:

·   Gauge current levels of support for a local bond measure to fund the improvement of college facilities and classroom technology

·   Identify the types of projects voters are most interested in funding, should the measure pass

·   Expose voters to arguments in favor of—and against—the proposed bond measure to gauge how information affects support for the measure, *and*

·   Estimate support for the measure once voters are presented with the types of information they will likely be exposed to during the election cycle.

It is important to note at the outset that voters' opinions about tax measures are often somewhat fluid, especially when the amount of information they initially have about a measure is limited. How voters think and feel about a measure today may not be the same way they think and feel once they have had a chance to hear more about the measure during the election cycle. Accordingly, to accurately assess the feasibility of passing a bond measure, it was important that in addition to measuring *current* opinions about the measure (Question 2), the survey expose respondents to the types of information voters are likely to encounter during an election cycle— including arguments in favor (Question 10) and opposed (Question 12) to the measure—and gauge how this information ultimately impacts their voting decision (Questions 11 & 13).

OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGY   For a full discussion of the research methods and techniques used in this study, turn to *Methodology* on page 28. In brief, the survey was administered to a random sample of 610 registered voters in the Gavilan Joint Community College District who are likely to participate in the November 2018 general election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the June 2018 primary election. The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (telephone and email) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Administered in English and Spanish between August 31 and September 14, 2017, the average interview lasted 17 minutes.

ORGANIZATION OF REPORT   This report is designed to meet the needs of readers who prefer a summary of the findings as well as those who are interested in the details of the results. For those who seek an overview of the findings, the sections titled *Just the Facts* and *Conclusions* are for you. They provide a summary of the most important factual findings of the survey in bullet-point format and a discussion of their implications. For the interested reader, this section is followed by a more detailed question-by-question discussion of the results from the survey by topic area (see *Table of Contents*), as well as a description of the methodology employed for collecting and analyzing the data. And, for the truly ambitious reader, the questionnaire used for the interviews is contained at the back of this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) and a complete set of crosstabulations for the survey results is contained in Appendix A.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS   True North thanks Gavilan College for the opportunity to assist the College in this important effort. The collective expertise, local knowledge, and insight provided by College staff and representatives improved the overall quality of the research presented here. A special thanks also to Jared Boigon (TBWB Strategies) for assisting in the design of the study.

DISCLAIMER   The statements and conclusions in this report are those of the authors (Dr. Timothy McLarney and Richard Sarles) at True North Research, Inc. and not necessarily those of Gavilan College. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

ABOUT TRUE NORTH   True North is a full-service survey research firm that is dedicated to providing public agencies with a clear understanding of the values, perceptions, priorities and concerns of their residents and voters. Through designing and implementing scientific surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews, as well as expert interpretation of the findings, True North helps its clients to move with confidence when making strategic decisions in a variety of areas—such as planning, policy evaluation, performance management, establishing fiscal priorities, passing revenue measures, and developing effective public information campaigns.

During their careers, Dr. McLarney and Mr. Sarles have designed and conducted over 1,000 survey research studies for public agencies, including more than 350 revenue measure feasibility studies. Of the measures that have gone to ballot based on Dr. McLarney's recommendation, more than 94% have been successful. In total, the research that Dr. McLarney has conducted has led to over $29 billion in voter-approved revenue measures.

JUST THE FACTS

The following section is an outline of the main factual findings from the survey. For the reader's convenience, we have organized the findings according to the section titles used in the body of this report. Thus, if you would like to learn more about a particular finding, simply turn to the appropriate report section.

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

- When asked to rate the importance of eight issues, protecting the quality of education received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (84%), followed by creating jobs and improving the local economy (81%), and reducing traffic congestion (79%).

- Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (56%) was rated as less important than items that would be impacted by a bond measure—including protecting the quality of education (84%), ensuring local access to an affordable college education and career training (77%), and maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at our local community colleges (63%).

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

- With only the information provided in the ballot language, 65% of likely November 2018 voters surveyed indicated that they would support the proposed $248 million bond, whereas 27% stated that they would oppose the measure, and approximately 9% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice.

- Among the minority of voters who initially opposed the bond measure (or were unsure), the most frequently mentioned specific reasons for their position were the belief that taxes are already too high, concerns that District money is/will be mismanaged or misspent, and a need for more information.

TAX THRESHOLD

- At the highest tax rate tested ($25 per $100,000 of assessed valuation), 47% of voters overall indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in incremental increases in support for the measure, with 57% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested ($12 per $100,000 of assessed valuation).

- Voters generally responded more positively when the cost of the measure was expressed as an annual total for the median home owner when compared with a rate per $100,000 of assessed valuation. At the rate of $25 per $100,000 of assessed valuation tested, 46% of Santa Clara County voters indicated that they would support the proposed bond measure. When that rate was translated into an annual cost for the median home owner in the District (approximately $113 per year), 55% of Santa Clara voters surveyed indicated that they would support the bond.

- Similarly, among San Benito voters, when the rate of $25 per $100,000 AV (52%) was translated to an annualized total of $88 for the median home owner in San Benito County, support increased to 60%.

RELATED ATTITUDES

- When asked to rate the overall quality of education provided at Gavilan College, nearly one-third (31%) of likely voters were not sure, indicating a lack of familiarity with the College.

- Among those with an opinion, however, assessments of the quality of education provided at Gavilan College were mostly positive, with 8% rating it excellent, 37% good, 16% fair, and approximately 6% indicating it is poor or very poor.

- When asked to rate the District's performance in managing its finances, 42% of voters surveyed were unsure or declined to provide a response. Opinions among remaining respondents were mixed, with 19% of voters rating the District's management of its finances as excellent (3%) or good (16%), 20% saying it is fair, and 18% describing it as poor (11%) or very poor (7%).

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

When presented with a list of 20 projects and improvements that could be funded by the bond, voters were most interested in using the money to:

- Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, and faulty electrical systems where needed.

- Upgrade science centers and wet labs to allow for current instruction in healthcare, biology, chemistry and physical sciences.

- Upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, math, engineering, and technology.

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

When presented with arguments in favor of the measure, voters found the following arguments to be the most persuasive:

- *Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our community.*

- *We need better access to high quality, affordable education in the Hollister area. If this measure passes, our community will receive a new college campus and increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs, and degrees* (presented to San Benito County voters).

- *Our local community colleges ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve.*

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

- After presenting respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates associated with the bond, projects and improvements that could be funded, as well as positive arguments voters may encounter, overall support for the measure among likely November 2018 voters dropped slightly to 62%, with 34% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes. Approximately 30% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Of the arguments in opposition to the measure, voters found the following to be the most persuasive:

- *Don't be fooled. Including interest, this bond will cost taxpayers about 400 million dollars and will take property owners more than 30 years to pay off.*
- *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.*
- *The District passed a 108-million-dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities, now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers.*

FINAL BALLOT TEST

- After presenting the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates, projects that could be funded, as well as arguments in favor of and against the proposal, support for the bond measure was found among 56% of likely November 2018 voters, with 28% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 35% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

CONCLUSIONS

The bulk of this report is devoted to conveying the details of the study findings. In this section, however, we attempt to 'see the forest through the trees' and note how the collective results of the survey answer the key questions that motivated the research. The following conclusions are based on True North's and TBWB's interpretations of the survey results and the firms' collective experience conducting revenue measure studies for public agencies throughout the State.

Is a Gavilan College bond measure feasible for 2018?

Yes. Voters generally have a positive opinion of the quality of education provided by Gavilan College and they consider protecting the quality of education to be the *most* important issue facing the community— more important than all other benchmark issues including preventing local tax increases. These sentiments translate into strong natural support (65%) for a $248 million bond measure to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries, improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans, improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment, and build a college campus in San Benito County.

The results of this study suggest that, if structured appropriately and combined with a broad-based and effective public education effort and independent campaign, the proposed bond measure has a good chance of passage in 2018.

Having stated that a measure is feasible, it is important to note that a recommendation to take the next steps toward placing a measure on the ballot comes with several qualifications and conditions. Indeed, although the results are promising, all revenue measures must overcome challenges prior to being successful. The proposed measure is no exception. The following paragraphs discuss some of the challenges and the next steps that True North and TBWB recommend.

What projects do voters identify as priorities for a future bond?

One of the goals of this study was to identify voters' preferences with respect to how the proceeds of a successful bond should be spent. This information can be used to ensure that the resulting bond project list and the measure are consistent with voters' priorities.

Voters in the Gavilan Community College District clearly see a need for the proposed projects and improvements that could be funded by the bond. In fact, nearly all of the projects tested were favored by at least two-thirds of voters surveyed. That said, voters expressed the *greatest* interest in using bond proceeds to repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, and faulty electrical systems where needed, upgrade science centers and wet labs to allow for current instruction in healthcare, biol-

ogy, chemistry and physical sciences, and upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, math, engineering, and technology.

It is also worth noting that building a college campus in San Benito County was among the most compelling features of the proposed bond measure for those residing in San Benito County, but was also viewed positively by most Santa Clara County voters as it would help in relieving overcrowding at existing campuses.

How will the tax rate affect support for the measure?

Naturally, the willingness of voters to support a specific revenue measure is contingent, in part, on the tax rate associated with a measure. The higher the rate, all other things being equal, the lower the level of aggregate support that can be expected. It is important that the rate be set at a level that the necessary proportion of voters view as affordable.

One of the clear patterns in the survey data is that some voters are price sensitive with respect to the proposed bond. A significant percentage of voters who were initially supportive of the $248 million bond, for example, later hesitated when presented with the individual tax rates that could be associated with the bond. Although voter sensitivity regarding the "price" of the measure was partially overcome when the tax rates were converted to an annual total tax for the average home owner, as well as once voters were exposed to additional information about what the measure would accomplish and why it is needed, it will nevertheless be important to keep the tax rate within voters' comfort zone.

True North and TBWB will work closely with the District and the District's financial advisor in the coming months to select the appropriate tax rate and corresponding bond amount.

How might a public information campaign affect support for the proposed measure?

As noted in the body of this report, individuals' opinions about revenue measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. Thus, in addition to measuring current support for the measure, one of the goals of this study was to explore how the introduction of additional information about the measure may affect voters' opinions about the bond.

It is clear from the survey results that voters' opinions about the proposed bond measure are somewhat sensitive to the nature—and amount—of information that they have about the measure. Information about the specific improvements that could be funded by the bond, as well as arguments in favor of the measure, were found by many voters to be compelling reasons to support the measure. Moreover, this information played an important role in limiting the erosion of support for the measure once respondents were exposed to the types of opposition arguments they will likely encounter during an election cycle.

Accordingly, one of the keys to building and *sustaining* support for the bond measure will be the presence of an effective, well-organized public outreach effort and a separate independent campaign that focuses on the need for the measure as well as the many benefits that it will bring.

How might the economic or political climate alter support for the measure?

A survey is a snapshot in time—which means the results of this study and the conclusions noted above must be viewed in light of the current economic and political climates. Despite concerns about the high cost of living, voter support for the proposed bond measure was strong, which speaks volumes about the value that voters place on having a high quality, affordable college education available locally. Nevertheless, should the economy and/or political climate improve, support for the measure could increase. Conversely, negative economic and/or political developments and competing ballot measures, especially at the local level, could dampen support for the measure below what was recorded in this study.

IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

The first substantive question of the survey presented respondents with several issues facing residents in the District and asked them to rate the importance of each issue. Because the same response scale was used for each issue, the results provide an insight into how important each issue is on a scale of importance *as well as* how each issue ranks in importance relative to the other issues tested. To avoid a systematic position bias, the order in which the issues were presented was randomized for each respondent.

Figure 1 presents the issues tested, as well as the importance assigned to each by survey participants, sorted by order of importance.[1] Overall, protecting the quality of education received the highest percentage of respondents indicating that the issue was either extremely or very important (84%), followed by creating jobs and improving the local economy (81%), and reducing traffic congestion (79%). Given the purpose of this study, it is instructive to note that preventing local tax increases (56%) was rated as less important than items that would be impacted by a bond measure—including protecting the quality of education (84%), ensuring local access to an affordable college education and career training (77%), and maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at our local community colleges (63%).

Question 1   *To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing your community and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to you, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important.*

FIGURE 1 IMPORTANCE OF ISSUES

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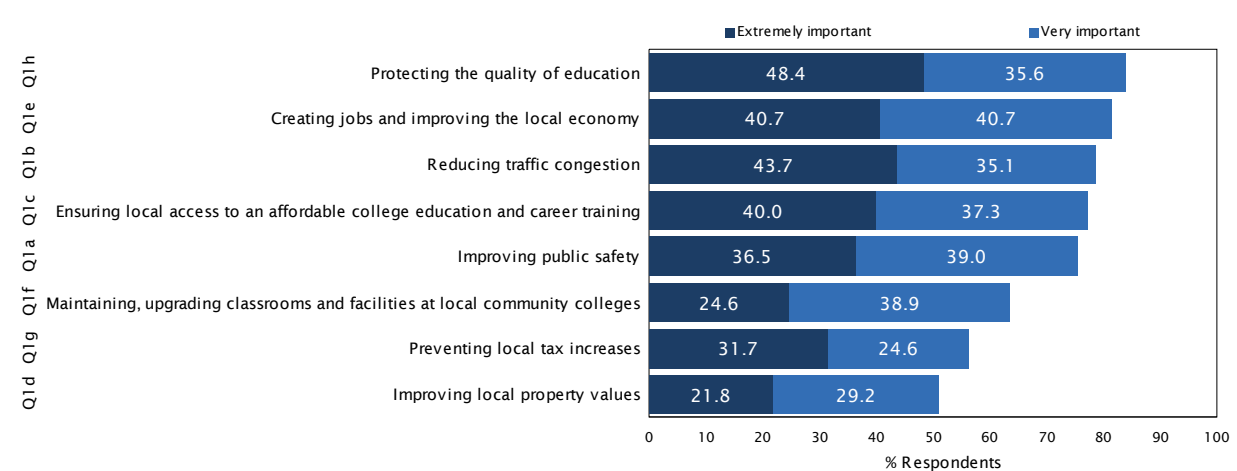
1. Issues were ranked based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the issue was either *extremely* important or *very* important.

INITIAL BALLOT TEST

The primary research objective of this survey was to estimate voters' support for a bond measure that would raise $248 million to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries, improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans, improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment, and build a college campus in San Benito County. To this end, Question 2 was designed to take an early assessment of support for the proposed measure.

The motivation for placing Question 2 up-front in the survey is twofold. First, voter support for a measure can often depend on the amount of information they have about a measure. At this point in the survey, the respondent has not been provided information about the proposed measure beyond what is presented in the ballot language. This situation is analogous to a voter casting a ballot with limited knowledge about the measure, such as what might occur in the absence of an effective education campaign. Question 2—also known as the Initial Ballot Test—is thus a good measure of voter support for the proposed measure *as it is today*, on the natural. Because the Initial Ballot Test provides a gauge of 'uninformed' support for the measure, it also serves a second purpose in that it provides a useful baseline from which to judge the impact of various information items conveyed later in the survey on voter support for the measure.

Question 2 *In order to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries; improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans; improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment; and building a college campus in San Benito County; shall Gavilan Joint Community College District issue 248 million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 2 INITIAL BALLOT TEST
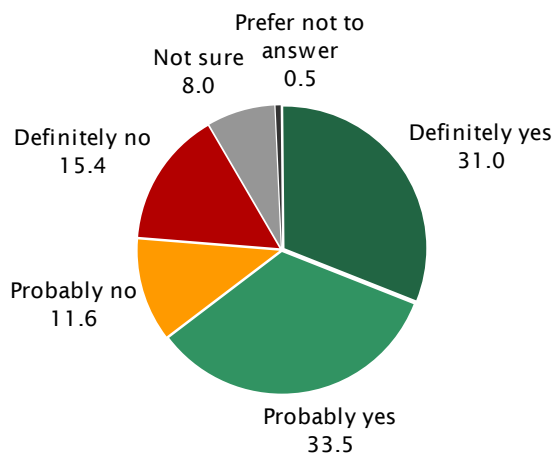
Figure 2 presents the results of the Initial Ballot Test among all likely November 2018 voters surveyed. Overall, 65% of respondents indicated that they would definitely or probably support the measure at this stage in the survey, whereas 27% stated that they would oppose the measure and 9% were unsure or unwilling to share their vote choice. For Proposition 39 bonds in California, support at the Initial Ballot Test was approximately 10 percentage points above the 55% support level required for the measure to pass.

SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS   For the interested reader, Table 1 shows how support for the measure at the Initial Ballot Test varied by key demographic traits. The blue column (Approximate % of Likely Voter Universe) indicates the percentage of the electorate that each subgroup category comprises.

Initial support for the proposed bond measure was widespread among likely November 2018 voters, exceeding 50% in all but three of the identified subgroups (Republicans and those in single- and dual-Republican households) and exceeding 60% in most. When compared with their respective counterparts, initial support for the bond was substantially higher among renters, Democrats, those in single- and dual-Democrat households, voters between 18 and 29 and between 40 and 49 years of age, voters who are likely to participate in the November 2018 general election but *not* the June 2018 primary election, and female voters. It's also worth noting that initial support for the measure among San Benito voters was slightly higher than support among Santa Clara County voters (67% vs. 64%).

TABLE 1 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	% Not sure
Overall		100	64.5	8.0
Hsld Member Taken Classes at Gavilan College (QD1)	Yes	69	64.1	7.7
	No	31	64.1	9.1
Public School Child in Hsld (QD2)	Yes	34	69.1	6.7
	No	66	62.1	8.8
Registration Year	2017 to 2009	58	67.9	8.2
	Before 2009	42	59.9	7.7
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74	61.2	7.1
	No	26	74.0	10.5
Party	Democrat	52	76.3	8.4
	Republican	30	47.1	3.5
	Other / DTS	18	59.3	14.1
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	78.2	6.0
	Dual dem	19	80.6	4.3
	Single rep	9	42.2	1.7
	Dual rep	14	40.9	5.4
	Other	12	61.7	12.2
	Mixed	28	64.5	13.2
Age	18 to 29	8	70.1	15.7
	30 to 39	10	64.1	12.5
	40 to 49	14	72.8	6.7
	50 to 64	37	64.2	9.9
	65 or older	31	59.8	2.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79	64.1	7.8
	No	21	66.0	8.5
Likely June 2018 Voter	Yes	51	58.5	6.7
	No	49	70.7	9.2
County of Residence	San Benito	30	66.8	7.8
	Santa Clara	70	63.5	8.0
Gender	Male	49	59.6	7.6
	Female	51	69.6	8.6

REASONS FOR OPPOSING MEASURE   Respondents who did not support the measure at Question 2 were subsequently asked if there was a particular reason for their position. Question 3 was asked in an open-ended manner, allowing respondents to mention any reason that came to mind without being prompted by or restricted to a particular list of options. True North later reviewed the verbatim responses and grouped them into the categories shown in Figure 3.

Approximately 8% of respondents said that they weren't sure about their reasons for not supporting the measure. Among the specific reasons offered, the belief that taxes are already too high (27%), concerns that District money is/will be mismanaged or misspent (26%), and a need for more information (17%) were the most common.

Question 3   *Is there a particular reason why you do not support the measure I just described?*

FIGURE 3   REASON FOR NOT SUPPORTING MEASURE

Taxes already too high — 26.8
Money is misspent, mismanaged — 26.4
Need more information — 16.6
Not sure, no particular reason — 8.1
Mentioned past ballot measure, bond — 7.0
Other ways to be funded — 4.9
Do not support bonds, increased debt — 4.9
Do not trust District — 4.8
Measure too expensive — 3.7
Schools are okay as-is, no need for more money — 3.5
Other higher priorities in community — 3.3
District has enough money — 2.4
Money should go to increasing teacher salaries — 0.7

% Respondents Who Do Not Support Measure

TAX THRESHOLD

Naturally, voter support for a revenue measure is often contingent on the cost of the measure. The higher the tax rate, all other things being equal, the less likely a voter is to support the measure. One of the goals of this study was thus to gauge the impact that changes in the tax rate can be expected to have on voter support for the proposed bond measure.

Questions 4, 5, and 6 were designed to do just that. Respondents were first instructed that the amount each home owner will pay if the measure passes depends on the *assessed* value of their home—not the market value. Voters were then presented with the highest tax rate ($25 per $100,000 assessed valuation) and asked if they would support the proposed measure at that rate. If a respondent did not answer 'definitely yes', they were asked whether they would support the measure at the next lowest tax rate. The three tax rates tested using this methodology and the percentage of respondents who indicated they would vote in favor of the measure at each rate are shown in Figure 4.

Question 4   *The amount each home owner will pay if the community college bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home - not the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: _____ per 100,000 (one hundred thousand) dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

FIGURE 4 TAX THRESHOLD
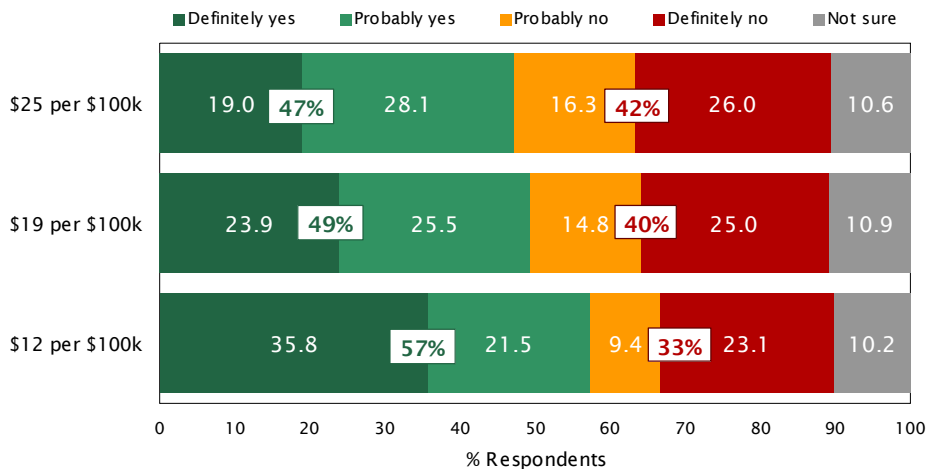
The most obvious pattern revealed in Figure 4 is that some voters are price sensitive when it comes to their support for the proposed bond measure. As the cost of the measure to their household increases, support for the bond decreases. At the highest tax rate tested ($25 per $100,000 of assessed valuation), 47% of voters overall indicated that they would support the bond. Incremental reductions in the tax rate resulted in incremental increases in support for the measure, with 57% of voters indicating that they would support the bond at the lowest tax rate tested ($12 per $100,000 of assessed valuation).

ANNUALIZED IMPACT FOR MEDIAN HOME OWNER   Because voters occasionally overestimate their current assessed valuation and/or have difficulty translating the tax rate into an annualized total, the survey also tested a different approach for conveying the tax rate information. In addition to presenting rates as described above, voters were also provided with the total annual cost of the bond for the median homeowner in their area (see Questions 5 and 6) based on the $25 tax rate tested in Question 4. The results are presented below in Figure 5.

Voters generally respond more positively when the cost of the measure is expressed as an annual total for the median home owner when compared with a rate per $100,000 of assessed valuation. At the rate of $25 per $100,000 of assessed valuation tested, 46% of Santa Clara County voters indicated that they would support the proposed bond measure. When that rate was translated into an annual cost for the median home owner in the District (approximately $113 per year), 55% of Santa Clara voters surveyed indicated that they would support the bond. Similarly, among San Benito voters, when the rate of $25 per $100,000 AV (52%) was translated to an annualized total of $88 for the median home owner in San Benito County, support increased to 60%.

Question 5   *Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the typical home owner about $113 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

Question 6   *Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the typical home owner about $88 per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure?*

FIGURE 5 SUPPORT MEASURE AT AVERAGE OF $113 & $88 PER YEAR
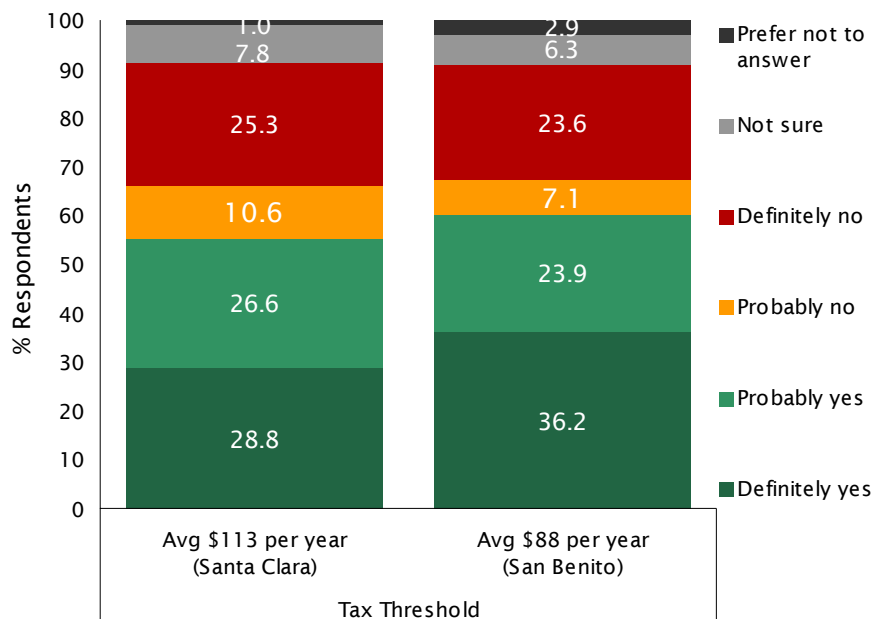
RELATED ATTITUDES

To understand *why* voters take the positions that they do with respect to a revenue measure, it is often instructive to look beyond the specifics of the measure itself. With respect to the proposed measure, how do residents perceive the quality of education being provided by Gavilan College? And has the College has done a good job managing its finances?

QUALITY OF EDUCATION   The first question in this series asked voters to rate the overall quality of education provided at Gavilan College. As shown in Figure 6, nearly one-third (31%) of likely voters were not sure, indicating a lack of familiarity with the College. Among those with an opinion, however, assessments of the quality of education provided at Gavilan College were mostly positive, with 8% rating it excellent, 37% good, 16% fair, and approximately 6% indicating it is poor or very poor.

FIGURE 6   QUALITY OF EDUCATION
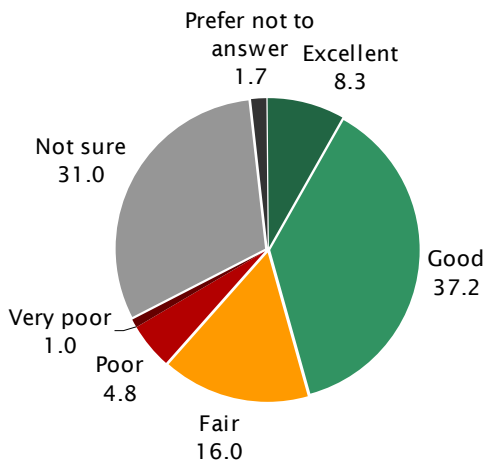
Question 7   *In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided by Gavilan College? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*

For the interested reader, Figure 7 below shows how perceptions of the quality of education provided by the College varied (among those with an opinion) according to whether the voter or a household member has taken a class at the College, county of residence, as well as their voting position at the Initial Ballot Test.

FIGURE 7   QUALITY OF EDUCATION BY HSLD MEMBER TAKEN CLASSES AT GAVILAN COLLEGE, COUNTY OF RESIDENCE & POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

FISCAL MANAGEMENT   The second and last question in this series asked voters to rate the District's performance in managing its finances, using a five-point scale of excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor. As shown in Figure 8, 42% of voters surveyed were unsure or declined to provide their opinion on this topic. Opinions among remaining respondents were mixed, with 19% of voters rating the District's management of its finances as excellent (3%) or good (16%), 20% saying it is fair, and 18% describing it as poor (11%) or very poor (7%).

FIGURE 8 RATING DISTRICT'S FISCAL MANAGEMENT

Prefer not to answer 1.4
Excellent 2.7
Good 16.2
Fair 20.2
Poor 11.3
Very poor 7.0
Not sure 41.1
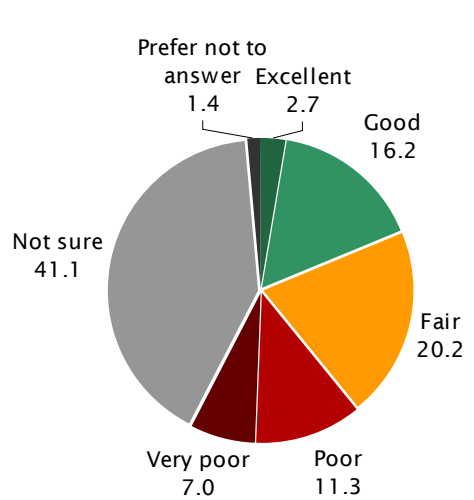
Question 8   *In general, how would you rate the job the District has done in managing its finances? Would you say it has done an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*

Figure 9 below presents the responses to this question (among those with an opinion) according to whether the voter or a household member has taken a class at the College, county of residence, as well as their voting position at the Initial Ballot Test.

FIGURE 9 RATING DISTRICT'S FISCAL MANAGEMENT BY HSLD MEMBER TAKEN CLASSES AT GAVILAN COLLEGE, COUNTY OF RESIDENCE & POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

% Respondents Who Provided Opinion

	Good	Excellent
Yes	27.4	5.1
No	32.4	4.1
San Benito	28.0	2.2
Santa Clara	28.3	6.0
Def, prob yes	38.5	7.6
Def, prob no	7.5	0.0
Not sure	31.8	1.9

Hsld Member Taken Classes at Gavilan College (QD1)   County of Residence   Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)

P R O J E C T S & P R O G R A M S

The ballot language presented in Question 2 indicated that the proposed bond measure would be used to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries, improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans, improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment, and build a college campus in San Benito County. The purpose of Question 9 was to provide respondents with the full range of projects and improvements that may be funded by the proposed measure, as well as identify which of these improvements voters most favored funding with bond proceeds.

After reading each improvement that may be funded by the measure, respondents were asked if they would favor or oppose spending some of the money on that particular improvement assuming that the measure passes. Truncated descriptions of the improvements tested, as well as voters' responses, are shown in Figure 10 below.[2]

Question 9   *The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of projects and improvements. If the measure passes, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion?*

FIGURE 10 PROJECTS & PROGRAMS
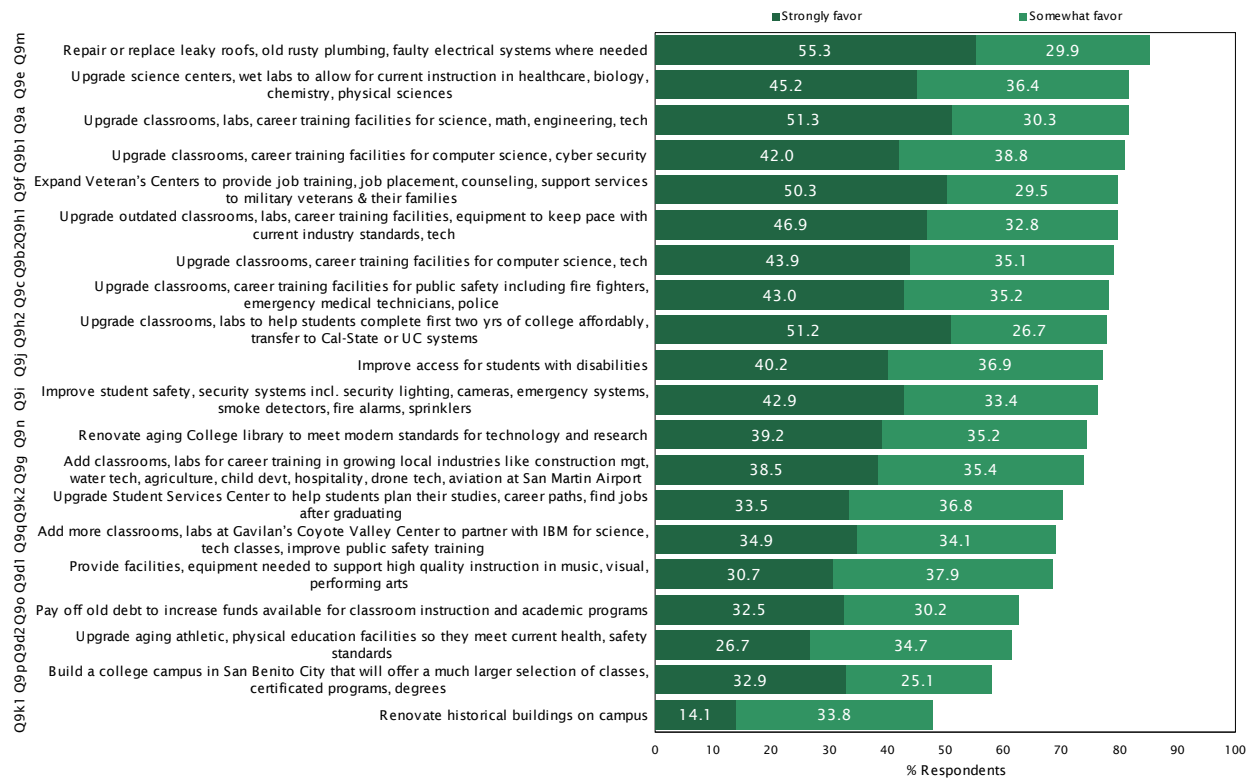
2. For the full text of the improvements tested, turn to Question 9 in *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31.

Overall, the improvements that resonated with the largest percentage of respondents were repairing or replacing leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, and faulty electrical systems where needed (85% strongly or somewhat favor), upgrading science centers and wet labs to allow for current instruction in healthcare, biology, chemistry and physical sciences (82%), and upgrading classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, math, engineering, and technology (82%).

PROJECT RATINGS BY SUBGROUP   Table 2 presents the top five projects (showing the percentage of respondents who *strongly* favor each) by position at the Initial Ballot Test. Not surprisingly, individuals who initially opposed the measure were generally less likely to favor spending money on a given project or service when compared with supporters. Nevertheless, initial supporters, opponents, and the undecided did agree on two of the top five priorities for funding.

TABLE 2   TOP PROJECTS & PROGRAMS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Program or Project Summary	% Strongly Favor
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 394)	Q9m	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems where needed	69
	Q9h2	Upgrade classrooms, labs to help students complete first two yrs of college affordably, transfer to Cal-State or UC systems	68
	Q9a	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for science, math, engineering, tech	62
	Q9h1	Upgrade outdated classrooms, labs, career training facilities, equipment to keep pace with current industry standards, tech	59
	Q9e	Upgrade science centers, wet labs to allow for current instruction in healthcare, biology, chemistry, physical sciences	58
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 165)	Q9f	Expand Veteran's Centers to provide job training, job placement, counseling, support services to military veterans & their families	40
	Q9a	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for science, math, engineering, tech	28
	Q9m	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems where needed	25
	Q9j	Improve access for students with disabilities	23
	Q9i	Improve student safety, security systems incl. security lighting, cameras, emergency systems, smoke detectors, fire alarms, sprinklers	23
Not Sure (*n* = 49)	Q9m	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, faulty electrical systems where needed	47
	Q9a	Upgrade classrooms, labs, career training facilities for science, math, engineering, tech	40
	Q9h2	Upgrade classrooms, labs to help students complete first two yrs of college affordably, transfer to Cal-State or UC systems	37
	Q9d1	Provide facilities, equipment needed to support high quality instruction in music, visual, performing arts	36
	Q9e	Upgrade science centers, wet labs to allow for current instruction in healthcare, biology, chemistry, physical sciences	33

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS

If the Board chooses to place a bond measure on an upcoming ballot, voters will be exposed to various arguments about the bond in the ensuing months. Proponents of the measure will present arguments to try to persuade voters to support a measure, just as opponents may present arguments to achieve the opposite goal. For this study to be a reliable gauge of voter support for the proposed bond measure, it is important that the survey simulate the type of discussion and debate that will occur prior to the vote taking place and identify how this information ultimately shapes voters' opinions about the bond.

The objective of Question 10 was thus to present respondents with arguments in favor of the proposed measure and identify whether they felt the arguments were convincing reasons to support it. Arguments in opposition to the measure were also presented and are discussed later in this report (see *Negative Arguments* on page 23). Within each series, specific arguments were administered in random order to avoid a systematic position bias.

Question 10   *What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing. Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to SUPPORT the measure?*

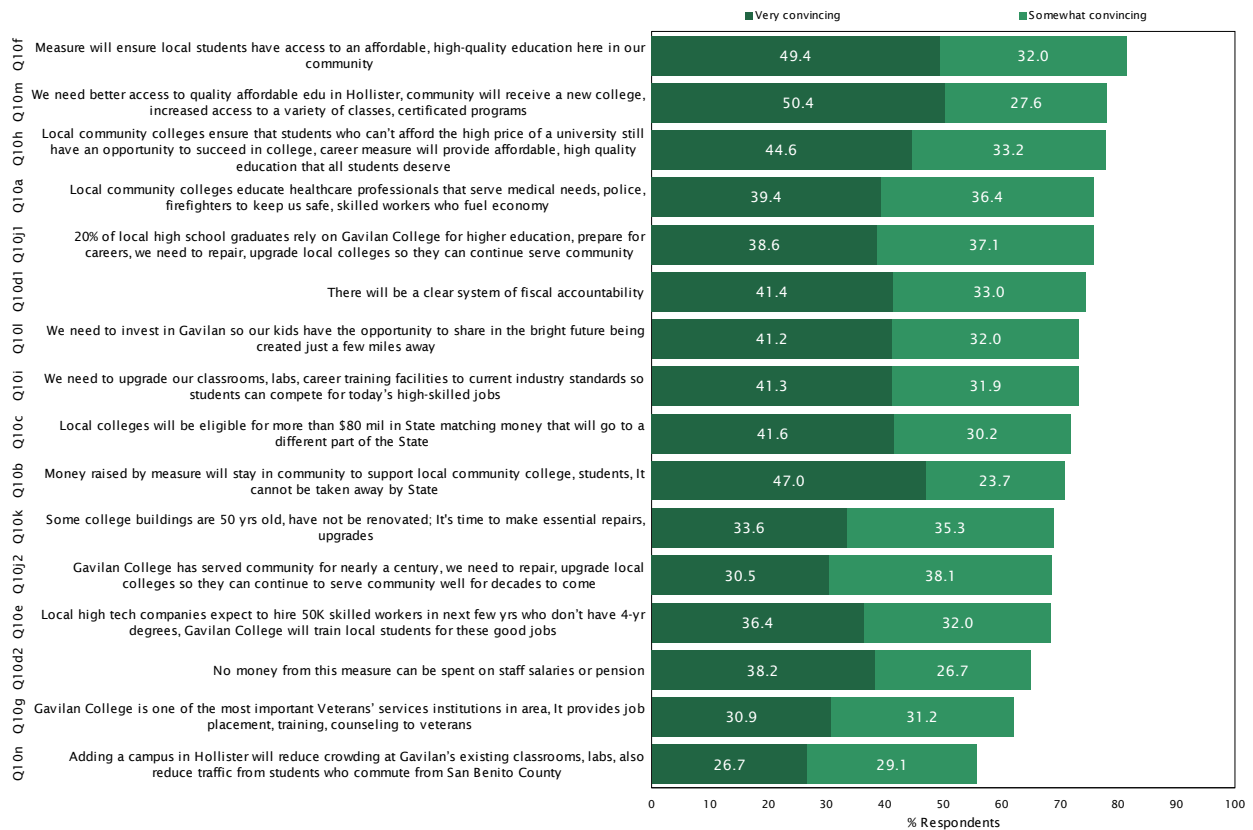**FIGURE 11   POSITIVE ARGUMENTS**

Figure 11 presents the truncated positive arguments tested, as well as voters' reactions to the arguments. The arguments are sorted from most convincing to least convincing based on the percentage of respondents who indicated that the argument was either a 'very convincing' or

'somewhat convincing' reason to support the measure. Using this methodology, the most compelling positive arguments were: *Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our community* (81% very or somewhat convincing), *We need better access to high quality, affordable education in the Hollister area. If this measure passes, our community will receive a new college campus and increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs, and degrees* (78% among voters in San Benito County), and *Our local community colleges ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve* (78%).

Considering the *intensity* of voters' reactions to the statements, another strong positive argument was: *All money raised by the measure will stay in our community to support our local community college and students. It cannot be taken away by the State or used for other purposes* (47% very convincing).

POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT   Table 3 lists the top five most convincing positive arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited it as *very* convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test. The most striking pattern in the table is that the positive arguments resonated with a higher percentage of voters who were initially inclined to support the measure when compared with voters who initially opposed the measure or were unsure. Nevertheless, two specific arguments were ranked among the top five most compelling by all three groups.

TABLE 3 TOP POSITIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Positive Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
	Q10f	Measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our community	66
Probably or	Q10m	We need better access to quality affordable edu in Hollister, community will receive a new college, increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs	65
Definitely **Yes**	Q10b	Money raised by measure will stay in community to support local community college, students, It cannot be taken away by State	64
(*n* = 394)	Q10h	Community colleges ensure students who can't afford high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college, career	62
	Q10c	Local colleges will be eligible for more than $80 mil in State matching money that will go to a different part of the State	57
	Q10d2	No money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pension	21
Probably or	Q10d1	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	17
Definitely **No**	Q10m	We need better access to quality affordable edu in Hollister, community will receive a new college, increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs	17
(*n* = 165)	Q10f	Measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education in our community	15
	Q10c	Local colleges will be eligible for more than $80 mil in State matching money that will go to a different part of the State	12
	Q10b	Money raised by measure will stay in community to support local community college, students, It cannot be taken away by State	36
Not Sure	Q10d1	There will be a clear system of fiscal accountability	34
(*n* = 49)	Q10m	We need better access to quality affordable edu in Hollister, community will receive a new college, increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs	34
	Q10f	Measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our community	32
	Q10d2	No money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pension	30

INTERIM BALLOT TEST

After informing respondents about the potential tax rates associated with the bond, projects and improvements that could be funded, as well as exposing them to positive arguments they may encounter about the bond, the survey again presented voters with the ballot language used previously to gauge how their support for the proposed bond measure may have changed. As shown in Figure 12, overall support for the measure among likely November 2018 voters dropped slightly to 62%, with 34% of voters indicating that they would *definitely* vote yes. Approximately 30% of respondents opposed the measure at this point in the survey, and an additional 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

Question 11   *Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again. In order to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries; improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans; improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment; and building a college campus in San Benito County; shall Gavilan Joint Community College District issue 248 million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 12   INTERIM BALLOT TEST
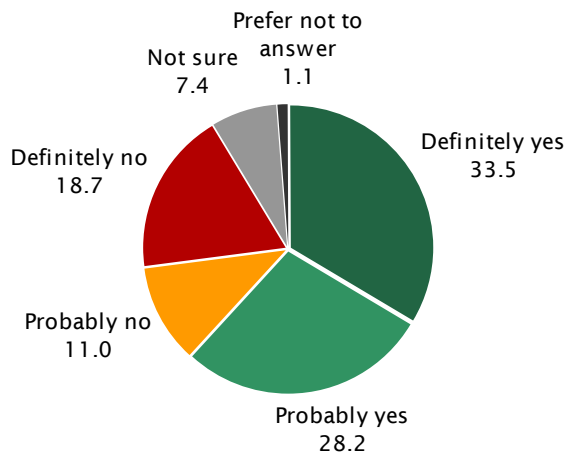
SUPPORT BY SUBGROUPS   Table 4 on the next page shows how support for the measure at this point in the survey varied by key voter subgroups, as well as the percentage change in subgroup support when compared with the Initial Ballot Test. Positive differences appear in green, whereas negative differences appear in red. Despite modest fluctuations, support for the proposed bond remained broad-based at the Interim Ballot Test, exceeding 55% in nearly all subgroups with the continued exception of Republicans and those in single- and dual-Republican households.

TABLE 4 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT INTERIM BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)
Overall		100	61.8	-2.7
Hsld Member Taken Classes at Gavilan	Yes	69	60.6	-3.5
	No	31	63.8	-0.3
Child in hsld Attend Local Public School (QD2)	Yes	34	67.2	-1.9
	No	66	58.9	-3.2
Registration Year	2017 to 2009	58	66.3	-1.6
	Before 2009	42	55.7	-4.3
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74	56.6	-4.5
	No	26	76.5	+2.5
Party	Democrat	52	75.4	-0.9
	Republican	30	38.9	-8.2
	Other / DTS	18	60.3	+1.0
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	74.3	-3.9
	Dual dem	19	78.6	-2.1
	Single rep	9	35.0	-7.2
	Dual rep	14	32.1	-8.8
	Other	12	62.9	+1.2
	Mixed	28	64.8	+0.4
Age	18 to 29	8	78.7	+8.6
	30 to 39	10	67.3	+3.3
	40 to 49	14	66.8	-6.0
	50 to 64	37	59.8	-4.5
	65 or older	31	55.7	-4.1
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79	60.8	-3.3
	No	21	65.4	-0.6
Likely June 2018 Voter	Yes	51	54.7	-3.8
	No	49	69.0	-1.7
County of Residence	San Benito	30	62.4	-4.4
	Santa Clara	70	61.5	-2.0
Gender	Male	49	57.1	-2.5
	Female	51	67.6	-2.0

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Whereas Question 10 presented respondents with arguments in favor of the measure, Question 12 presented respondents with arguments designed to elicit opposition to the measure. In the case of Question 12, however, respondents were asked if they felt that the argument was a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to *oppose* the measure. The arguments tested, as well as voters' opinions about the arguments, are presented in Figure 13.

Question 12 *Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying. Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?*

FIGURE 13 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS

Very convincing
Somewhat convincing
Q12d
Including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $400 millions, will take property owners more than 30 yrs to pay off
37.3
29.0
Q12b
People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, now is not the time to be raising taxes
35.6
28.9
Q12a
District passed a 108 million dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities
34.1
29.5
Q12e
District can't be trusted, they mismanaged last bond and didn't build what they promised
32.9
28.6
Q12c
No guarantee that money will be distributed fairly, some areas will get more than their fair share than others
25.8
33.9
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
% Respondents

The most compelling negative arguments tested were: *Don't be fooled. Including interest, this bond will cost taxpayers about 400 million dollars and will take property owners more than 30 years to pay off* (66% very or somewhat convincing), *People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes* (65%), and *The District passed a 108-million-dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities, now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers* (64%).

NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY INITIAL SUPPORT Table 5 below ranks the negative arguments (showing the percentage of respondents who cited each as very convincing) according to respondents' vote choice at the Initial Ballot Test.

TABLE 5 NEGATIVE ARGUMENTS BY POSITION AT INITIAL BALLOT TEST

Position at Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Item	Negative Argument Summary	% Very Convincing
Probably or Definitely **Yes** (*n* = 394)	Q12b	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, now is not the time to be raising taxes	24
	Q12d	Including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $400 millions, will take property owners more than 30 yrs to pay off	23
	Q12e	District can't be trusted, they mismanaged last bond and didn't build what they promised	19
	Q12a	District passed a 108 million dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities	19
	Q12c	No guarantee that money will be distributed fairly, some areas will get more than their fair share than others	15
Probably or Definitely **No** (*n* = 165)	Q12d	Including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $400 millions, will take property owners more than 30 yrs to pay off	70
	Q12a	District passed a 108 million dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities	68
	Q12b	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, now is not the time to be raising taxes	63
	Q12e	District can't be trusted, they mismanaged last bond and didn't build what they promised	63
	Q12c	No guarantee that money will be distributed fairly, some areas will get more than their fair share than others	46
Not Sure (*n* = 49)	Q12d	Including interest, bond will cost taxpayers about $400 millions, will take property owners more than 30 yrs to pay off	43
	Q12a	District passed a 108 million dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities	41
	Q12e	District can't be trusted, they mismanaged last bond and didn't build what they promised	40
	Q12c	No guarantee that money will be distributed fairly, some areas will get more than their fair share than others	37
	Q12b	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living, now is not the time to be raising taxes	34

FINAL BALLOT TEST

Voters' opinions about ballot measures are often not rigid, especially when the amount of information presented to the public on a measure has been limited. An important goal of the survey was thus to gauge how voters' opinions about the proposed measure may be affected by the information they could encounter during the course of an election cycle. After providing respondents with the wording of the proposed measure, potential tax rates, projects that could be funded, and arguments in favor of and against the proposal, the survey again asked voters whether they would vote 'yes' or 'no' on the proposed bond measure.

Question 13   *Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time. In order to upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries; improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans; improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment; and building a college campus in San Benito County; shall Gavilan Joint Community College District issue 248 million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure?*

FIGURE 14 FINAL BALLOT TEST
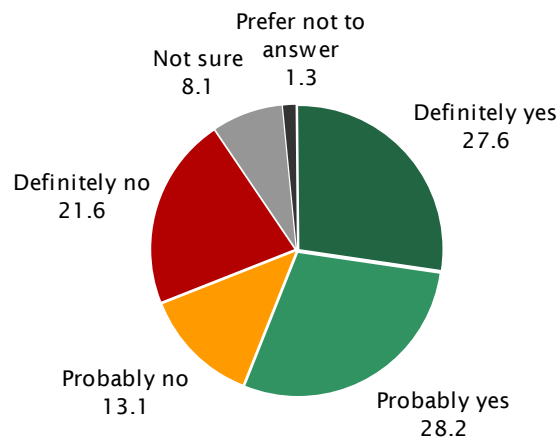
At this point in the survey, support for the bond measure was found among 56% of likely November 2018 voters, with 28% indicating that they would *definitely* support the measure. Approximately 35% of respondents opposed the measure at the Final Ballot Test, and 9% were unsure or unwilling to state their vote choice.

CHANGE IN SUPPORT

Table 6 provides a closer look at how support for the proposed bond measure changed over the course of the interview by calculating the difference in support between the Initial, Interim, and Final Ballot Tests within various subgroups of voters. The percentage of support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test is shown in the column with the heading *% Probably or Definitely Yes*. The columns to the right show the difference between the Final and the Initial, and the Final and Interim Ballot Tests. Positive differences appear in green, and negative differences appear in red.

TABLE 6 DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN OF SUPPORT AT FINAL BALLOT TEST

		Approximate % of Voter Universe	% Probably or Definitely Yes	Change From Initial Ballot Test (Q2)	Change From Interim Ballot Test (Q11)
Overall		100	55.9	-8.7	-5.9
Hsld Member Taken Classes at Gavilan	Yes	69	55.1	-9.1	-5.6
	No	31	57.9	-6.2	-5.9
Child in hsld Attend Local Public School (QD2)	Yes	34	60.2	-8.9	-7.0
	No	66	53.7	-8.4	-5.1
Registration Year	2017 to 2009	58	61.4	-6.5	-4.9
	Before 2009	42	48.4	-11.6	-7.3
Homeowner on Voter File	Yes	74	51.5	-9.7	-5.1
	No	26	68.2	-5.8	-8.3
Party	Democrat	52	69.1	-7.1	-6.3
	Republican	30	33.7	-13.4	-5.2
	Other / DTS	18	54.1	-5.2	-6.2
Household Party Type	Single dem	19	66.7	-11.5	-7.6
	Dual dem	19	73.9	-6.7	-4.7
	Single rep	9	27.3	-14.9	-7.7
	Dual rep	14	28.4	-12.5	-3.7
	Other	12	55.2	-6.5	-7.7
	Mixed	28	59.4	-5.1	-5.5
Age	18 to 29	8	74.7	+4.6	-4.0
	30 to 39	10	57.6	-6.4	-9.7
	40 to 49	14	59.9	-12.9	-6.8
	50 to 64	37	55.3	-8.9	-4.5
	65 or older	31	49.1	-10.7	-6.6
Likely to Vote by Mail	Yes	79	54.4	-9.7	-6.4
	No	21	61.3	-4.7	-4.1
Likely June 2018 Voter	Yes	51	49.1	-9.4	-5.6
	No	49	62.7	-7.9	-6.3
County of Residence	San Benito	30	57.5	-9.3	-4.9
	Santa Clara	70	55.1	-8.4	-6.4
Gender	Male	49	52.3	-7.3	-4.8
	Female	51	60.8	-8.9	-6.9

Voter subgroups generally responded to the negative arguments with a reduction in their support for the measure when compared with levels recorded at the Interim Ballot Test. The general trend over the course of the entire survey (Initial to Final Ballot Test) was also one of declining support for most voter subgroups, averaging -9% overall. Even with this decline, however, support at the Final Ballot Test remained just above the 55% threshold for passage of a Prop 39 bond.

Whereas Table 6 displays change in support for the measure over the course of the interview at the group level, Table 7 on the next page presents individual-level changes that occurred between the Initial and Final Ballot Tests for the measure. On the left side of the table is shown each of the response options to the Initial Ballot Test and the percentage of respondents in each

group. The cells in the body of the table depict movement within each response group (row) based on the information provided throughout the course of the survey as recorded by the Final Ballot Test. For example, in the first row we see that of the 31.0% of respondents who indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Initial Ballot Test, 21.0% indicated they would definitely support the measure at the Final Ballot Test. Approximately 7.3% moved to the probably support group, 1.6% moved to the probably oppose group, 0.2% moved to the definitely oppose group, and 0.9% percent stated they were now unsure of their vote choice.

To ease interpretation of the table, the cells are color coded. Red shaded cells indicate declining support, green shaded cells indicate increasing support, whereas white cells indicate no movement. Moreover, within the cells, a white font indicates a fundamental change in the vote: from yes to no, no to yes, or not sure to either yes or no.

TABLE 7 MOVEMENT BETWEEN INITIAL & FINAL BALLOT TEST

Initial Ballot Test (Q2)		Final Ballot Test (Q13)				
		Definitely support	Probably support	Probably oppose	Definitely oppose	Not sure
Definitely support	31.0%	21.0%	7.3%	1.6%	0.2%	0.9%
Probably support	33.5%	5.3%	19.1%	4.0%	1.5%	3.6%
Probably oppose	11.6%	0.4%	0.3%	5.4%	4.7%	0.8%
Definitely oppose	15.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.7%	14.1%	0.3%
Not sure	8.5%	0.7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.1%	3.8%

As one might expect, the information conveyed in the survey generally had the greatest impact on individuals who either weren't sure about how they would vote at the Initial Ballot Test or were tentative in their vote choice (probably yes or probably no). Moreover, Table 7 makes clear that although the information presented in the survey did impact some voters, it did not do so in a consistent way for all respondents. Some respondents found the information provided during the course of the interview to be a reason to become more supportive of the measure, while a larger percentage found the same information reason to be less supportive. Although 19% of respondents made a *fundamental*[3] shift in their opinion regarding the measure over the course of the interview, the net impact is that support for the measure at the Final Ballot Test (56%) was approximately nine percentage points lower than support at the Initial Ballot Test (65%).

3. This is, they changed from a position of support, opposition, or undecided at the Initial Ballot Test to a different position at the Final Ballot Test.

BACKGROUND & DEMOGRAPHICS

TABLE 8 DEMOGRAPHICS OF SAMPLE

Total Respondents	*610*
Hsld Member Taken Classes at Gavilan College (QD1)	
Yes	67.6
No	30.6
Prefer not to answer	1.8
Child in hsld Attend Local Public School (QD2)	
Yes	33.4
No	64.6
Prefer not to answer	2.0
Homeowner on Voter File	
Yes	74.1
No	25.9
Age	
18 to 29	8.3
30 to 39	9.7
40 to 49	13.8
50 to 64	36.7
65 or older	31.4
Registration Year	
2017 to 2009	57.6
Before 2009	42.4
Party	
Democrat	52.2
Republican	29.9
Other / DTS	17.8
Household Party Type	
Single dem	18.6
Dual dem	18.9
Single rep	8.7
Dual rep	14.0
Other	12.1
Mixed	27.8
Likely to Vote by Mail	
Yes	78.8
No	21.2
Likely Jun 2018 Voter	
Yes	50.5
No	49.5
Gender	
Male	48.1
Female	50.4
Prefer not to answer	1.6
County of Residence	
San Benito	29.7
Santa Clara	70.3

In addition to questions directly related to the proposed measure, the study collected basic demographic information about respondents and their households. Some of this information was gathered during the interview, although much of it was collected from the voter file. The profile of the likely November 2018 voter sample used for this study is shown in Table 8.

M E T H O D O L O G Y

The following sections outline the methodology used in the study, as well as the motivation for using certain techniques.

QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT   Dr. McLarney of True North Research worked closely with Gavilan College to develop a questionnaire that covered the topics of interest and avoided possible sources of systematic measurement error, including position-order effects, wording effects, response-category effects, scaling effects, and priming. Several questions included multiple individual items. Because asking the items in a set order can lead to a systematic position bias in responses, items were asked in random order for each respondent.

Some of the questions asked in this study were presented only to a subset of respondents. For example, only individuals who did not support the bond at the Initial Ballot Test (Question 2) were asked the follow-up open-ended Question 3 regarding their reasons for not supporting the measure. The questionnaire included with this report (see *Questionnaire & Toplines* on page 31) identifies the skip patterns that were used during the interview to ensure that each respondent received the appropriate questions.

PROGRAMMING, PRE-TEST & TRANSLATION   Prior to fielding the survey, the questionnaire was CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) programmed to assist interviewers when conducting the telephone interviews. The CATI program automatically navigates the skip patterns, randomizes the appropriate question items, and alerts the interviewer to certain types of keypunching mistakes should they happen during the interview. The survey was also programmed into a passcode-protected online survey application to allow online participation for sampled voters. The integrity of the questionnaire was pre-tested internally by True North and by dialing into voter households in the district prior to formally beginning the survey. Once finalized, the questionnaire was also professionally translated into Spanish to allow for data collection in English or Spanish according to respondent preference.

SAMPLE   The survey was administered to a stratified and clustered random sample of registered voters in the District who are likely to participate in the November 2018 election, with a subset who are also likely to participate in the June 2018 primary election. Consistent with the profile of this universe, the sample was stratified into clusters, each representing a combination of age, gender, and household party-type. Individuals were randomly selected based on their profile into an appropriate cluster. This method ensures that if a person of a particular profile refuses to participate, they are replaced by an individual who shares their same profile.

STATISTICAL MARGIN OF ERROR   By using the probability-based sampling design noted above, True North ensured that the final sample was representative of voters in the District who are likely to participate in the November 2018 election. The results of the sample can thus be used to estimate the opinions of *all* voters likely to participate in the November 2018 election. Because not all voters participated in the study, however, the results have what is known as a statistical margin of error due to sampling. The margin of error refers to the difference between what was found in the survey of 610 voters for a particular question and what would have been found if all 61,422 likely November 2018 voters identified in the District had been surveyed for the study.

Figure 15 provides a graphic plot of the *maximum* margin of error in this study. The maximum margin of error for a dichotomous percentage result occurs when the answers are evenly split such that 50% provide one response and 50% provide the alternative response. For this survey, the maximum margin of error is ± 3.95%

FIGURE 15 MAXIMUM MARGIN OF ERROR DUE TO SAMPLING
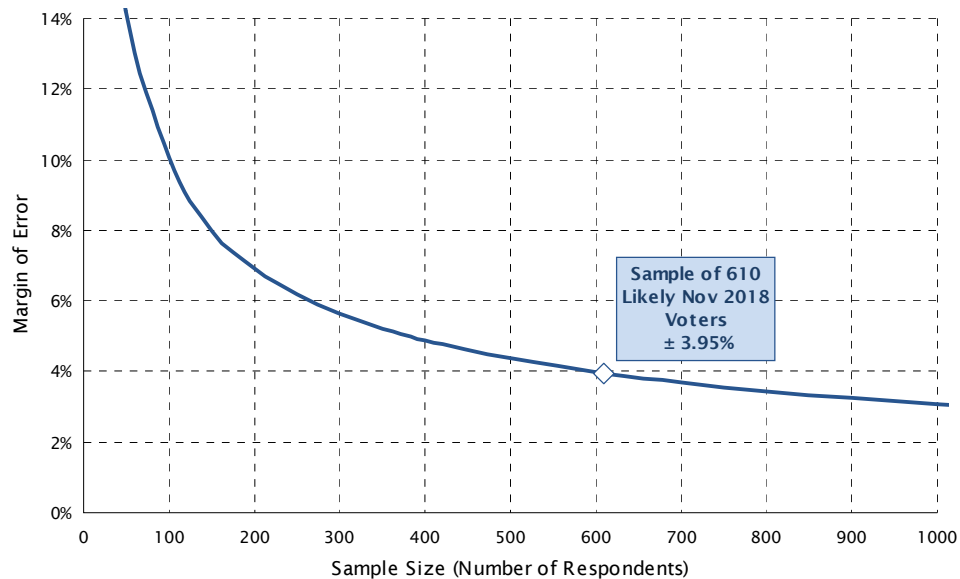
Within this report, figures and tables show how responses to certain questions varied by sub-groups such as age, gender, and partisan affiliation. Figure 15 is thus useful for understanding how the maximum margin of error for a percentage estimate will grow as the number of individuals asked a question (or in a particular subgroup) shrinks. Because the margin of error grows exponentially as the sample size decreases, the reader should use caution when generalizing and interpreting the results for small subgroups.

RECRUITING & DATA COLLECTION   The survey followed a mixed-method design that employed multiple recruiting methods (telephone and email) and multiple data collection methods (telephone and online). Telephone interviews averaged 17 minutes in length and were conducted during weekday evenings (5:30PM to 9PM) and on weekends (10AM to 5PM). It is standard practice not to call during the day on weekdays because most working adults are unavailable and thus calling during those hours would likely bias the sample.

Voters recruited via email were assigned a unique passcode to ensure that only voters who received an invitation could access the online survey site, and that each voter could complete the survey only one time. During the data collection period, an email reminder notice was also sent to encourage participation among those who had yet to take the survey. A total of 610 English and Spanish-language surveys were completed between August 31 and September 14, 2017.

DATA PROCESSING   Data processing consisted of checking the data for errors or inconsistencies, coding and recoding responses, and preparing frequency analyses and crosstabulations.

ROUNDING   Numbers that end in 0.5 or higher are rounded up to the nearest whole number, whereas numbers that end in 0.4 or lower are rounded down to the nearest whole number. These same rounding rules are also applied, when needed, to arrive at numbers that include a decimal place in constructing figures and charts. Occasionally, these rounding rules lead to small discrepancies in the first decimal place when comparing tables and pie charts for a given question.

TRUENORTH
R E S E A R C H

Section 1: Introduction to Study

Hi, may I please speak to _____. My name is _____, and I'm calling on behalf of TNR, an independent public opinion research firm. We're conducting a survey of voters about important issues in your community and I'd like to get your opinions.

If needed: This is a survey about important issues in Santa Clara and San Benito (Buh-NEE-tow) Counties. I'm NOT trying to sell anything and I won't ask for a donation.
If needed: The survey should take about 12 minutes to complete.
If needed: If now is not a convenient time, can you let me know a better time so I can call back?

If the person asks why you need to speak to the listed person or if they ask to participate instead, explain: For statistical purposes, at this time the survey must only be completed by this particular individual.

If the person says they are an elected official or is somehow associated with the survey, politely explain that this survey is designed to measure the opinions of those not closely associated with the study, thank them for their time, and terminate the interview.

Section 2: Importance of Issues

Q1	To begin, I'm going to read a list of issues facing your community and for each one, please tell me how important you feel the issue is to <u>you</u>, using a scale of extremely important, very important, somewhat important or not at all important. Here is the (first/next) issue: _____. Do you think this issue is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not at all important?

	Randomize.	Extremely Important	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not at all Important	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Improving public safety	36%	39%	21%	2%	1%	0%
B	Reducing traffic congestion	44%	35%	19%	2%	0%	0%
C	Ensuring local access to an affordable college education and career training	40%	37%	18%	4%	1%	0%
D	Improving local property values	22%	29%	33%	14%	2%	0%
E	Creating jobs and improving the local economy	41%	41%	16%	2%	0%	0%
F	Maintaining and upgrading classrooms and facilities at our local community colleges	25%	39%	29%	6%	1%	0%
G	Preventing local tax increases	32%	25%	31%	10%	2%	0%
H	Protecting the quality of education	48%	36%	13%	2%	0%	1%

Section 3: Initial Ballot Test

Your household is within the Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) Joint Community College District. Next year, voters in the District may be asked to vote on a local ballot measure. Let me read you a summary of the measure.

Q2	In order to:
	
	    ◇ Upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries
	    ◇ Improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans
	    ◇ Improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment
	    ◇ And building a college campus in San Benito (Buh-NEE-tow) County
	
	Shall Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) Joint Community College District issue **248** million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local?
	
	If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?		

	1	Definitely yes	31%	*Skip to Q4*
	2	Probably yes	33%	*Skip to Q4*
	3	Probably no	12%	*Ask Q3*
	4	Definitely no	15%	*Ask Q3*
	98	Not sure	8%	*Ask Q3*
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%	*Skip to Q4*

Q3	Is there a particular reason why you do <u>not</u> support the measure I just described? *If yes, ask:* Please briefly describe your reason. Verbatim responses recorder and later grouped into categories shown below.

Taxes already too high	27%
Money is misspent, mismanaged	26%
Need more information	17%
Not sure, no particular reason	8%
Mentioned past ballot bond, measure	7%
Do not support bonds, increased debt	5%
Do not trust District	5%
Other ways to be funded	5%
Schools are okay as-is, no need for more money	4%
Measure too expensive	4%
Other higher priorities in community	3%
District has enough money	2%
Money should go to increasing teacher salaries	1%

Section 4: Tax Threshold								
Q4	The amount each home owner will pay if the community college bond passes depends on the assessed value of their home – <u>not</u> the current market value of the home. If you heard that the annual property taxes on your home would increase: _____ per 100,000 (one hundred thousand) dollars of assessed valuation, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)? *If needed:* The assessed value of your home is listed on your property tax bill.								

Read in sequence starting with the highest amount (A), then the next highest (B), and so on. If respondent says 'definitely yes', record 'definitely yes' for all LOWER dollar amounts and go to next question.

	Ask in Order	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably no	Definitely no	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	$25	19%	28%	16%	26%	9%	2%
B	$19	24%	25%	15%	25%	9%	2%
C	$12	36%	21%	9%	23%	8%	2%

Split Sample. Only those flagged in Santa Clara County receive Q5.

Q5	Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the <u>typical</u> home owner about **$113** per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes	29%
	2	Probably yes	27%
	3	Probably no	11%
	4	Definitely no	25%
	98	Not sure	8%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Split Sample. Only those flagged in San Benito County receive Q6.

Q6	Let me put it another way: If you knew that this measure would cost the <u>typical</u> home owner about **$88** per year, would you vote yes or no on the bond measure? *Get answer, then ask:* Is that definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes	36%
	2	Probably yes	24%
	3	Probably no	7%
	4	Definitely no	24%
	98	Not sure	6%
	99	Prefer not to answer	3%

Section 5: Quality of Education			
Q7	In general, how would you rate the quality of education provided by Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?		
	1	Excellent	8%
	2	Good	37%
	3	Fair	16%
	4	Poor	5%
	5	Very Poor	1%
	98	Not sure	31%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%
Q8	In general, how would you rate the job the District has done in managing its finances? Would you say it has done an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?		
	1	Excellent	3%
	2	Good	16%
	3	Fair	20%
	4	Poor	11%
	5	Very Poor	7%
	98	Not sure	41%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 6: Projects & Programs							
Q9	The measure we've been discussing would provide funding for a variety of projects and improvements. <u>If the measure passes</u>, would you favor or oppose using some of the money to: _____, or do you not have an opinion? *Get answer, if favor or oppose, then ask:* Would that be strongly (favor/oppose) or somewhat (favor/oppose)?						
	Randomize. Split Sample B1/B2, D1/D2, H1/H2 & K1/K2 using odd/even clusters.	Strongly Favor	Somewhat Favor	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for **science**, **math**, **engineering**, and **technology**	51%	30%	4%	7%	6%	1%
B1	Upgrade classrooms and career training facilities for **computer science** and **cyber security**	42%	39%	8%	5%	4%	2%
B2	Upgrade classrooms and career training facilities for **computer science** and **technology**	44%	35%	7%	8%	4%	2%

C	Upgrade classrooms and career training facilities for **public safety** including fire fighters, emergency medical technicians, and police	43%	35%	7%	8%	5%	2%
D1	Provide the facilities and equipment needed to support high quality instruction in **music**, **visual**, and **performing arts**	31%	38%	12%	10%	8%	1%
D2	Upgrade aging athletic and physical education facilities so they meet current health and safety standards	27%	35%	18%	13%	5%	2%
E	Upgrade science centers and wet labs to allow for current instruction in **healthcare**, **biology, chemistry and physical sciences**	45%	36%	5%	7%	5%	2%
F	Expand Veteran's Centers which provide job training, job placement, counseling, and support services to military veterans and their families	50%	30%	9%	5%	4%	2%
G	Add classrooms and labs for career training in growing local industries like **construction management, water technology, agriculture, child development, hospitality, drone technology and aviation** at San Martin (Mar-TEEN) Airport	38%	35%	9%	9%	7%	1%
H1	Upgrade outdated classrooms, labs, career training facilities, and equipment to keep pace with current industry standards and technology	47%	33%	8%	6%	4%	2%
H2	Upgrade classrooms and labs to help local students complete the first two years of college affordably, and transfer to the Cal-State or UC (You-See) systems.	51%	27%	8%	9%	4%	2%
I	Improve student safety and campus security systems including security lighting, security cameras, emergency communications systems, smoke detectors, fire alarms, and sprinklers	43%	33%	9%	8%	6%	2%
J	Improve access for students with disabilities	40%	37%	7%	6%	7%	2%
K1	Renovate historical buildings on campus	14%	34%	21%	17%	12%	3%
K2	Upgrade the Student Services Center to help students plan their studies and career paths, and find jobs after graduating	33%	37%	12%	11%	5%	2%
M	Repair or replace leaky roofs, old rusty plumbing, and faulty electrical systems where needed	55%	30%	4%	6%	3%	2%
N	Renovate the aging College library to meet modern standards for technology and research	39%	35%	11%	9%	5%	2%
O	Pay off old debt to increase funds available for classroom instruction and academic programs	32%	30%	12%	12%	10%	2%

P	Build a college campus in San Benito (Buh-NEE-tow) County that will offer a much larger selection of classes, certificated programs, and degrees	33%	25%	15%	17%	7%	3%
Q	Add more classrooms and labs at Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) 's Coyote Valley Center to partner with IBM for science and technology classes and improve public safety training	35%	34%	14%	10%	6%	2%

Section 7: Positive Arguments

What I'd like to do now is tell you what some people are saying about the measure we've been discussing.

| Q10 | Supporters of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to **SUPPORT** the measure? |

	Randomize. Split Sample D1/D2, J1/J2 using odd/even clusters	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	Our local community colleges are a vital resource for our community. They educate the healthcare professionals that serve our medical needs, the police and firefighters that keep us safe, and the skilled workers who fuel our economy.	39%	36%	13%	5%	3%	3%
B	All money raised by the measure will stay in our community to support our local community college and students. It cannot be taken away by the State or used for other purposes.	47%	24%	11%	12%	4%	2%
C	If voters approve this measure, our local colleges will be eligible for more than **80** million dollars in State matching money that otherwise will go to a different part of the State.	42%	30%	14%	7%	5%	2%
D1	This measure requires a clear system of accountability, including a project list detailing exactly how the money will be used, a Citizens' Oversight Committee, and independent audits to ensure the money is spent properly.	41%	33%	11%	7%	4%	4%
D2	By law, no money from this measure can be spent on staff salaries or pensions.	38%	27%	12%	16%	5%	2%
E	Local high tech companies expect to hire 50 thousand skilled workers in the next few years who don't have 4-year degrees. We are counting on Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College to train local students for these good jobs	36%	32%	17%	9%	4%	2%

F	Because the cost of attending the University of California and State University systems has become so expensive, many more students are starting their education at community colleges. This measure will ensure local students have access to an affordable, high-quality education here in our community.	49%	32%	9%	5%	3%	2%
G	Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College is one of the most important Veterans' services institutions in our area. It provides job placement, job training, and counseling to returning veterans.	31%	31%	18%	8%	9%	3%
H	Our local community colleges ensure that lower and middle-income students who can't afford the high price of a university still have an opportunity to succeed in college and careers. This measure will provide the affordable, high quality education that all students deserve.	45%	33%	10%	6%	4%	2%
I	We need to upgrade our classrooms, labs, and career training facilities to current industry standards so our students can compete for today's high-skilled jobs.	41%	32%	15%	6%	3%	2%
J1	Twenty percent of all local high school graduates rely on Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College for higher education and to prepare for careers. We need to repair and upgrade our local colleges so they can continue to serve our community well for the decades to come.	39%	37%	12%	4%	4%	4%
J2	Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College has served our community for nearly a century. Many of us, and our parents or children, went there or expect to attend. We need to make sure classrooms, labs and instructional technology remain up-to-date so the College continues to serve our community well in the decades to come.	31%	38%	21%	5%	5%	1%
K	Some college buildings are 50 years old and have not be renovated. It's time to make essential repairs and upgrades.	34%	35%	18%	5%	6%	3%
L	Our community is in the shadow of Silicon Valley. Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College provides an affordable gateway for local students to acquire the skills they need to compete for careers in the world's fastest-growing industries. We need to invest in Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) so our kids have the opportunity to share in the bright future being created just a few miles away.	41%	32%	15%	6%	4%	2%

	Split Sample. Only those flagged in San Benito County receive M.						
M	We need better access to high quality, affordable education in the Hollister area. If this measure passes, our community will receive a new college campus and increased access to a variety of classes, certificated programs, and degrees.	50%	28%	8%	8%	4%	2%
	Split Sample. Only those flagged in Santa Clara County receive N.						
N	Adding a campus in the Hollister area will reduce crowding at Gavilan (GAV-i-lan)'s existing classrooms and labs, and also reduce traffic from the thousands of students who commute each year from San Benito County	27%	29%	24%	9%	9%	3%

Section 8: Interim Ballot Test		
Sometimes people change their mind about a measure once they have more information about it. Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it again.		
Q11	In order to: ◇ Upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries ◇ Improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans ◇ Improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment ◇ And building a college campus in San Benito (Buh-NEE-tow) County Shall Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) Joint Community College District issue **248** million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes	34%
	2	Probably yes	28%
	3	Probably no	11%
	4	Definitely no	19%
	98	Not sure	7%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 9: Negative Arguments							
Next, let me tell you what opponents of the measure are saying.							

Q12	Opponents of the measure say: _____. Do you think this is a very convincing, somewhat convincing, or not at all convincing reason to OPPOSE the measure?						
	Randomize	Very Convincing	Somewhat Convincing	Not At All Convincing	Don't Believe	Not sure	Prefer not to answer
A	The District passed a 108-million-dollar bond in 2004 to expand and modernize their facilities – now they want more money? That's not fair to taxpayers.	34%	30%	22%	7%	6%	2%
B	People are having a hard time making ends meet with the high cost of living. Now is NOT the time to be raising taxes.	36%	29%	22%	7%	4%	2%
C	There is no guarantee that the money will be distributed fairly. Some areas will get more than their fair share from the bond, while others will get less.	26%	34%	24%	7%	8%	2%
D	Don't be fooled. Including interest, this bond will cost taxpayers about 400 million dollars and will take property owners more than 30 years to pay off.	37%	29%	17%	9%	6%	2%
E	We can't trust the District with this measure. They mismanaged the last bond and didn't build what they promised.	33%	29%	15%	8%	13%	2%

Section 10: Final Ballot Test		
Now that you have heard a bit more about the measure, let me read you a summary of it one more time.		
Q13	In order to: ◊ Upgrade classrooms, labs and career training facilities for science, healthcare, technology, public safety, cyber security, and other growing industries ◊ Improve counseling, job training, and support facilities and services for returning veterans ◊ Improve local access to affordable, high quality education by repairing, constructing and acquiring classrooms, facilities, sites and equipment ◊ And building a college campus in San Benito (Buh-NEE-tow) County Shall Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) Joint Community College District issue **248** million dollars in bonds at legal interest rates, with independent citizen oversight, no money for administrators, and all money staying local? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this measure? Get answer, then ask: Would that be definitely (yes/no) or probably (yes/no)?	
	1	Definitely yes	28%
	2	Probably yes	28%
	3	Probably no	13%
	4	Definitely no	22%
	98	Not sure	8%
	99	Prefer not to answer	1%

Section 11: Background & Demographics		
Thank you so much for your participation. I have just a few background questions for statistical purposes.		
D1	Have you or a member of your household ever taken a class at Gavilan (GAV-i-lan) College?	
	1	Yes	68%
	2	No	31%
	98	Not sure	0%
	99	Prefer not to answer	2%

D2	Do you have any children in your home who attend a local public school?	
1	Yes	33%
2	No	65%
98	Not sure	0%
99	Prefer not to answer	2%

Those are all of the questions that I have for you. Thanks so much for participating in this important survey.

Post-Interview & Sample Items		
S1	Gender	
1	Male	48%
2	Female	50%
3	Prefer not to answer	2%
S2	Party	
1	Democrat	52%
2	Republican	30%
3	Other	4%
4	DTS	14%
S3	Age on Voter File	
1	18 to 29	8%
2	30 to 39	10%
3	40 to 49	14%
4	50 to 64	37%
5	65 or older	31%
99	Not coded	0%
S4	Registration Date	
1	2017 to 2009	58%
2	2008 to 2005	8%
3	2004 to 2001	11%
5	Before 2001	23%

S5	Household Party Type		
	1	Single Dem	19%
	2	Dual Dem	19%
	3	Single Rep	9%
	4	Dual Rep	14%
	5	Single Other	8%
	6	Dual Other	4%
	7	Dem & Rep	8%
	8	Dem & Other	12%
	9	Rep & Other	5%
	0	Mixed (Dem + Rep + Other)	2%
S6	Homeowner on Voter File		
	1	Yes	74%
	2	No	26%
S7	Likely to Vote by Mail		
	1	Yes	79%
	2	No	21%
S8	Likely June 2018 Voter		
	1	Yes	51%
	2	No	49%
S9	Likely November 2018 Voter		
	1	Yes	100%
	2	No	0%
S10	County of Residence		
	1	San Benito	30%
	2	Santa Clara	70%