

# 2009 COMMUNITY SURVEY

SEPTEMBER 15 & 16, 2009



**MAD RIVER LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

# INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

Mad River Local Schools conducted a random sample telephone survey of its residents on September 15 & 16, 2009. Volunteers made the telephone calls using a list of randomly selected registered voters. The random sample list was provided by the Haines-Americalist Company in North Canton, Ohio. The registered voter list was used because it is the most comprehensive list available within specific boundaries of the school district.

A total of 237 registered voters responded to the survey. The survey has a confidence level of 90% with a margin of error of + or - 6. This means if the survey were given to 100 different groups, the results would be within 6 points of the results of this survey 90 times.

Data from the survey results provides insight into voters' opinions and perceptions of their school district. The data reflects opinions about voters' perceptions of the current and preferred methods of receiving information about the

School District, the kinds of information desired by School District residents, whether or not student achievement has improved, whether or not the Schools are meeting the needs of all students, the extent to which teachers adapt instruction for individual students, the extent to which the quality of Mad River Schools affects property value, the importance of Mad River students learning with up-to-date computers and other technology, the safety of students at school, the District's student-to-teacher ratio, the amount of extra-curricular activities, voters' views about voting for new taxes, the District's tax rate, residents' knowledge of school finance, accessibility of school officials to parents and other residents, the extent to which tax dollars are used wisely and appropriately by School District officials, and the emphasis placed on the Ohio Achievement Test.

The results of the survey are contained in this report. They are presented by percentages. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. Total percentages that are more or less

than 100 are influenced by multiple-response questions and rounding.

Although results of demographic sub-groups (*parents of Mad River Schools students, parents of children who are preschool-age and younger, and adults who are 56 years old or older*) are listed in tables within this report, the only statistically-valid results are those for the total group. The sub-groups were not chosen as statistical random samples and have no statistical validity; however, they can be considered as representing trends.

Survey questions were developed by Don Miller & Associates after consultation with a focus group comprised of School District employees. The leadership team reviewed, revised and selected the 20 questions used in the questionnaire.

Don Miller, president of Don Miller & Associates, Glenford, Ohio, served as lead survey consultant.

# CONCLUSIONS

**1. The largest group of voters in this survey is those who are 56 years old or older.** More than one-half (52.74%) of the respondents are *56 years old or older*.

**2. The method through which most voters currently receive school information is school district publications.** Nearly eight of 10 (75.95%) respondents say they currently receive school information via *school district publications*.

**3. The method through which most voters would like to receive school information is school district publications.** Nearly six of 10 (59.07%) respondents say they would like to receive school information through *school district publications*.

**4. The information most voters would like to know about Mad River Schools is how district money is being spent.** Nearly eight of 10 (78.48%) respondents say they would like to know *how district money is being spent*.

**5. Most voters believe student achievement in Mad River Schools has improved in the last five years.** More than one-half (54.43%) of the respondents say student achievement has *improved* in the last five years.

**6. Most voters believe Mad River Schools are meeting the needs of all students.** More than one-half (51.48%) of the respondents say Mad River Schools *are* meeting the needs of all students.

**7. A large majority of voters believe Mad River teachers adapt their instruction to meet the needs of individual students.** More than six of 10 (65.82%) respondents say Mad

River teachers adapt their instruction to meet the needs of individual students either *all of the time, most of the time, or some of the time*.

**8. A large number of voters believe property value is directly affected by the quality of schools.** More than eight of 10 (81.01%) respondents *agree strongly or agree somewhat* that property value in the Mad River School District is directly affected by the quality of schools.

**9. Almost all voters believe it is important for students to learn with up-to-date computers and other technology.** Nearly all (97.47%) respondents say it is *very important or somewhat important* for students to learn with up-to-date computers and other technology.

**10. A large number of voters believe Mad River students are safe at school.** More than eight of 10 (81.43%) respondents say Mad River students are *very safe or somewhat safe* at school.

**11. A large number of voters believe Mad River teachers have the right number of students.** More than seven of 10 (73.84%) respondents say Mad River's student-to-teacher ratio of an average of one teacher for every 20 students is *the right amount of students* for each teacher to have.

**12. A majority of voters believe Mad River students have the right amount of extra-curricular activities.** More than six of 10 (64.14%) respondents believe Mad River students have *the right amount of activities*.

**13. Most voters do not believe the time has come to vote against all new taxes.** More

than one-half (52.74%) of the respondents *disagree* with the statement, "Now is the time to vote against all new taxes."

**14. Most voters believe the school tax rate in the Mad River School District is just right.** More than one-half (52.74%) of the respondents say the school tax rate is *just right*.

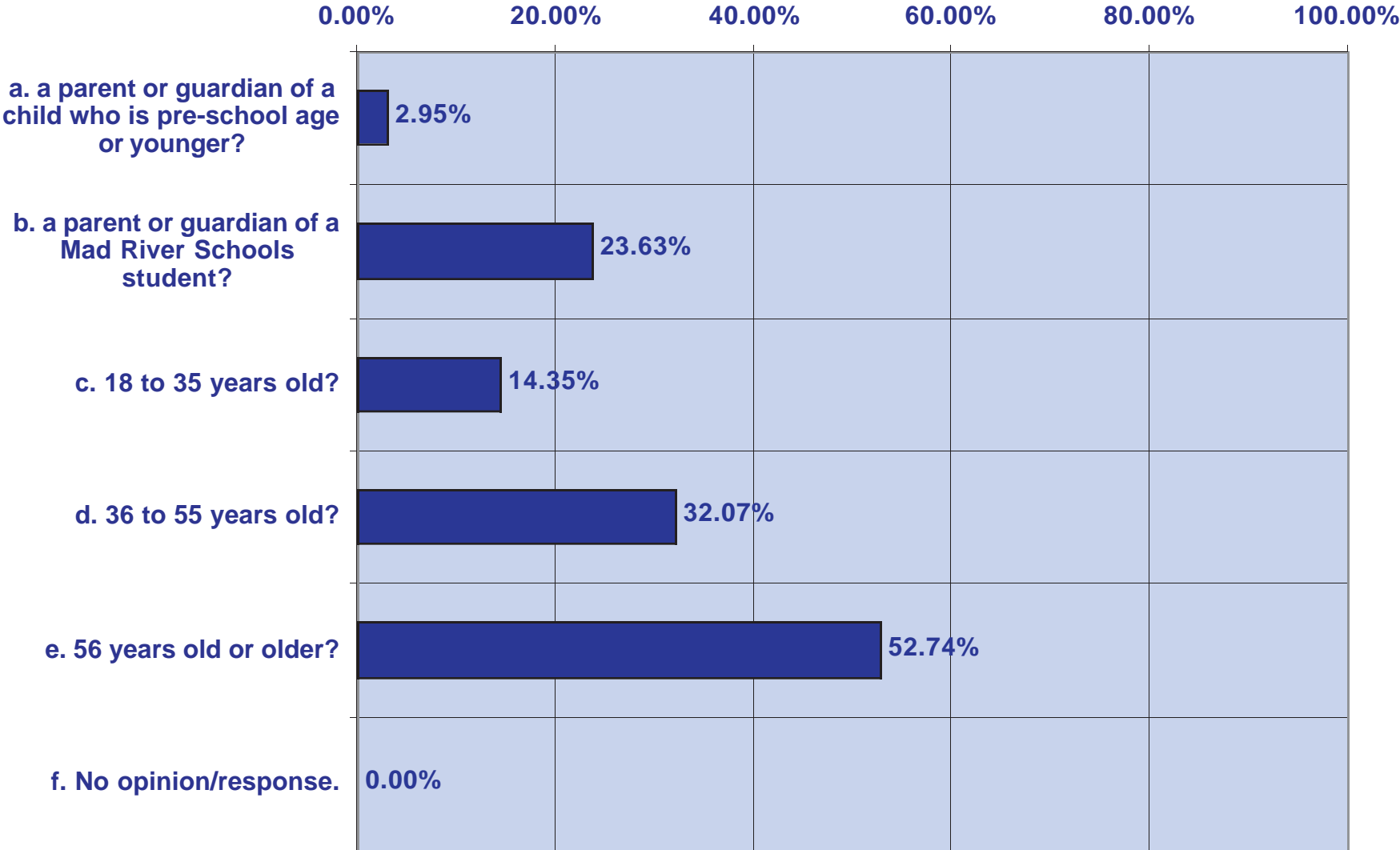
**15. A large number of voters say they are not knowledgeable about school finance.** Nearly seven of 10 (67.93%) respondents say they are *not very knowledgeable or not knowledgeable at all* about school finance.

**16. A majority of voters believe school officials are accessible to parents and other residents.** More than six of 10 (63.29%) respondents believe school officials are *very accessible or somewhat accessible* to parents and other residents.

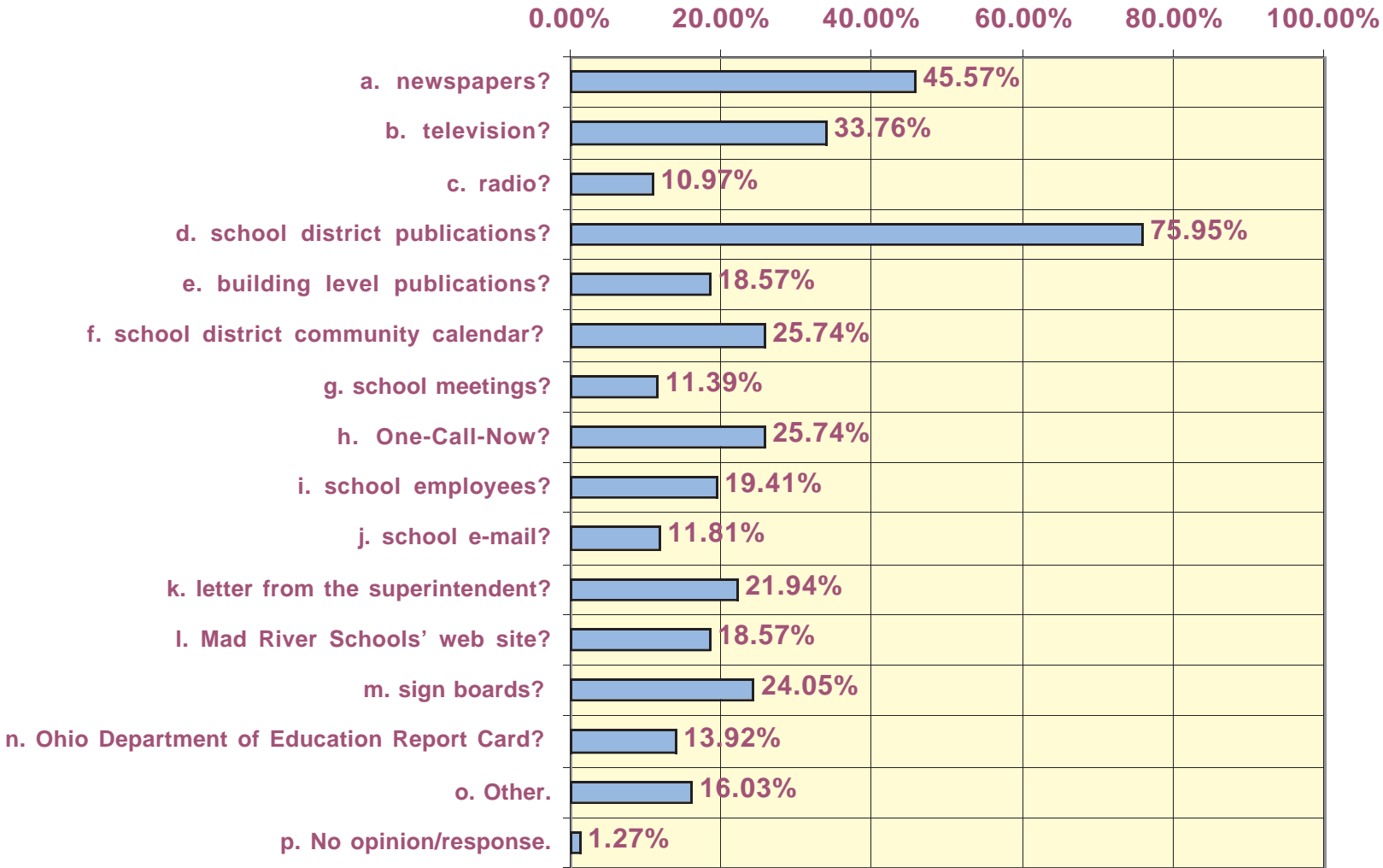
**17. A majority of voters believe Mad River School District officials use tax dollars wisely and appropriately.** Nearly seven of 10 (66.24%) respondents *strongly agree or somewhat agree* that tax dollars are used wisely and appropriately by Mad River School District officials.

**18. Many voters believe the Mad River Schools place the right amount of emphasis on the Ohio Achievement Test.** Nearly one-half (48.52%) of the respondents say Mad River Schools place *the right amount of emphasis* on the test.

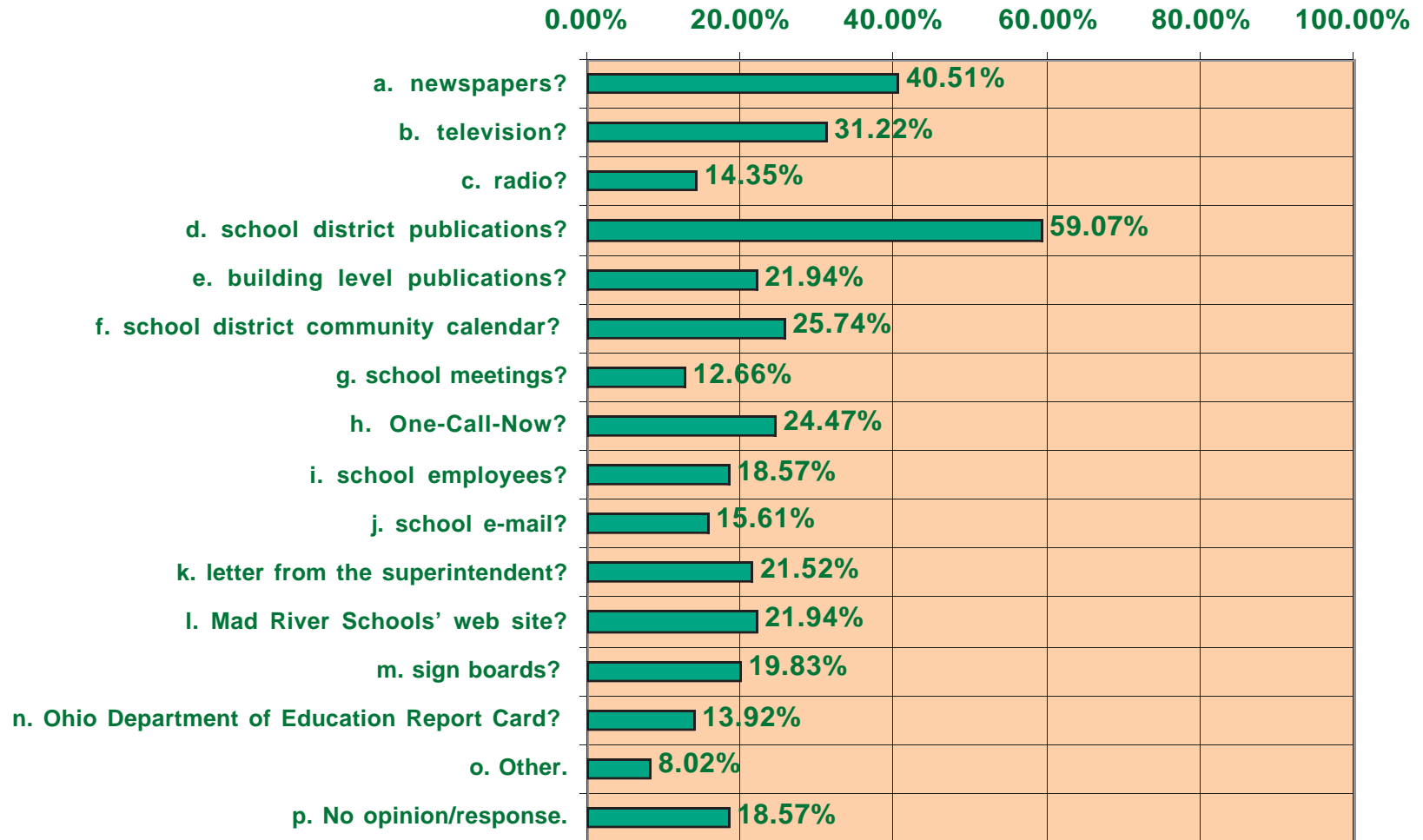
# 1. Are you



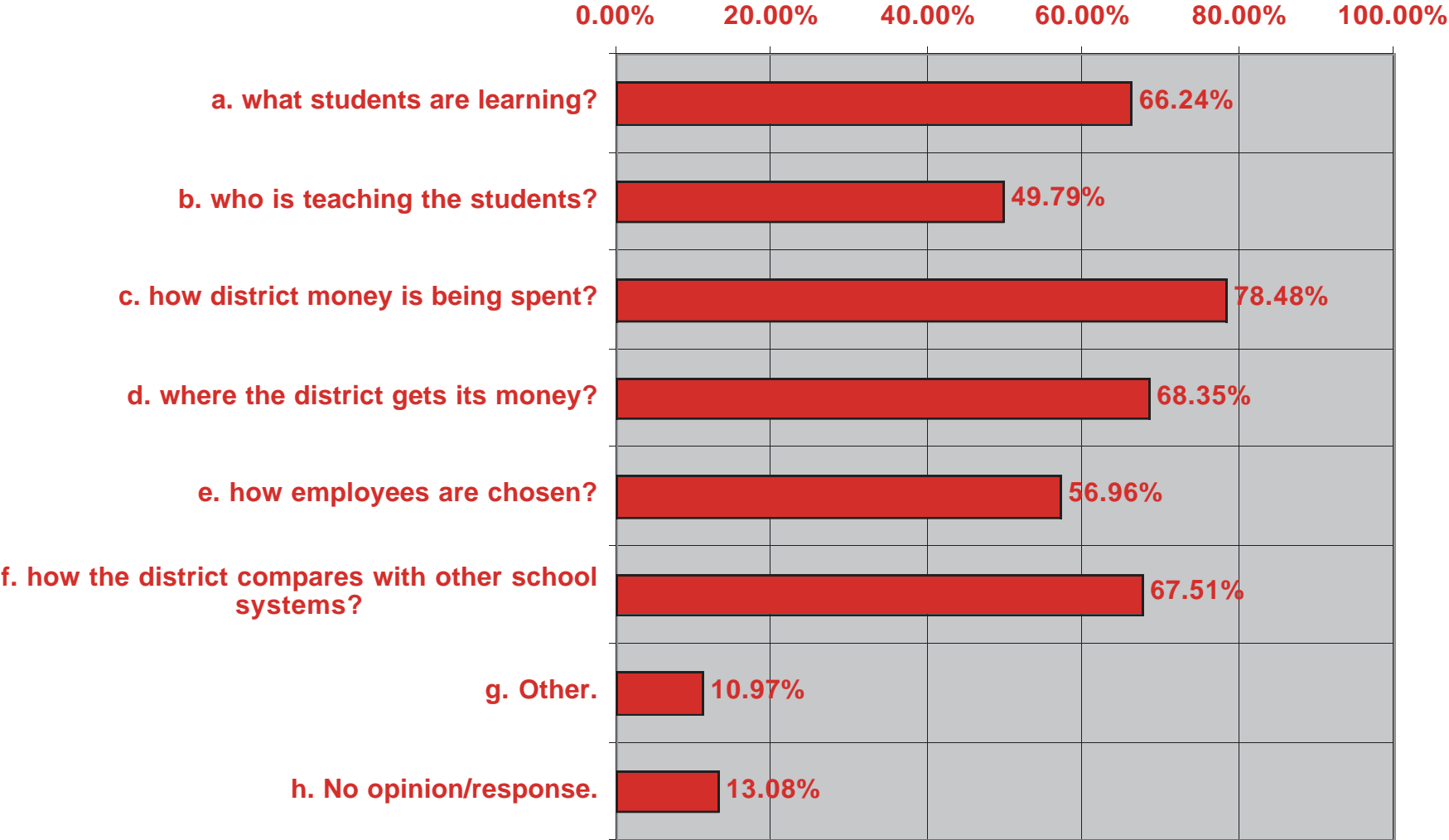
## 2. How do you CURRENTLY receive information about Mad River Schools? Do you receive school information through



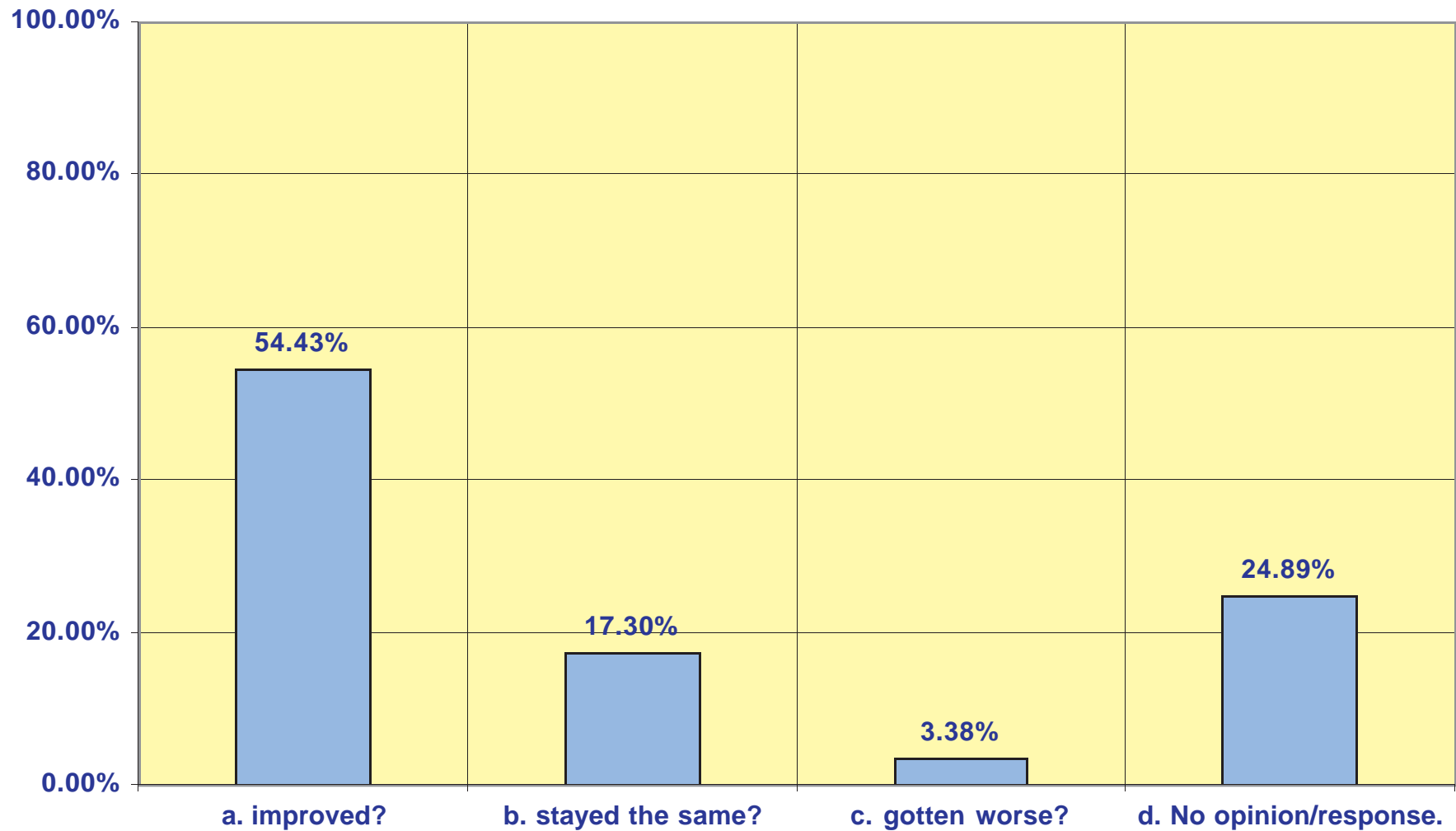
### 3. How would you LIKE TO receive information about Mad River Schools? Would you like to receive school information through



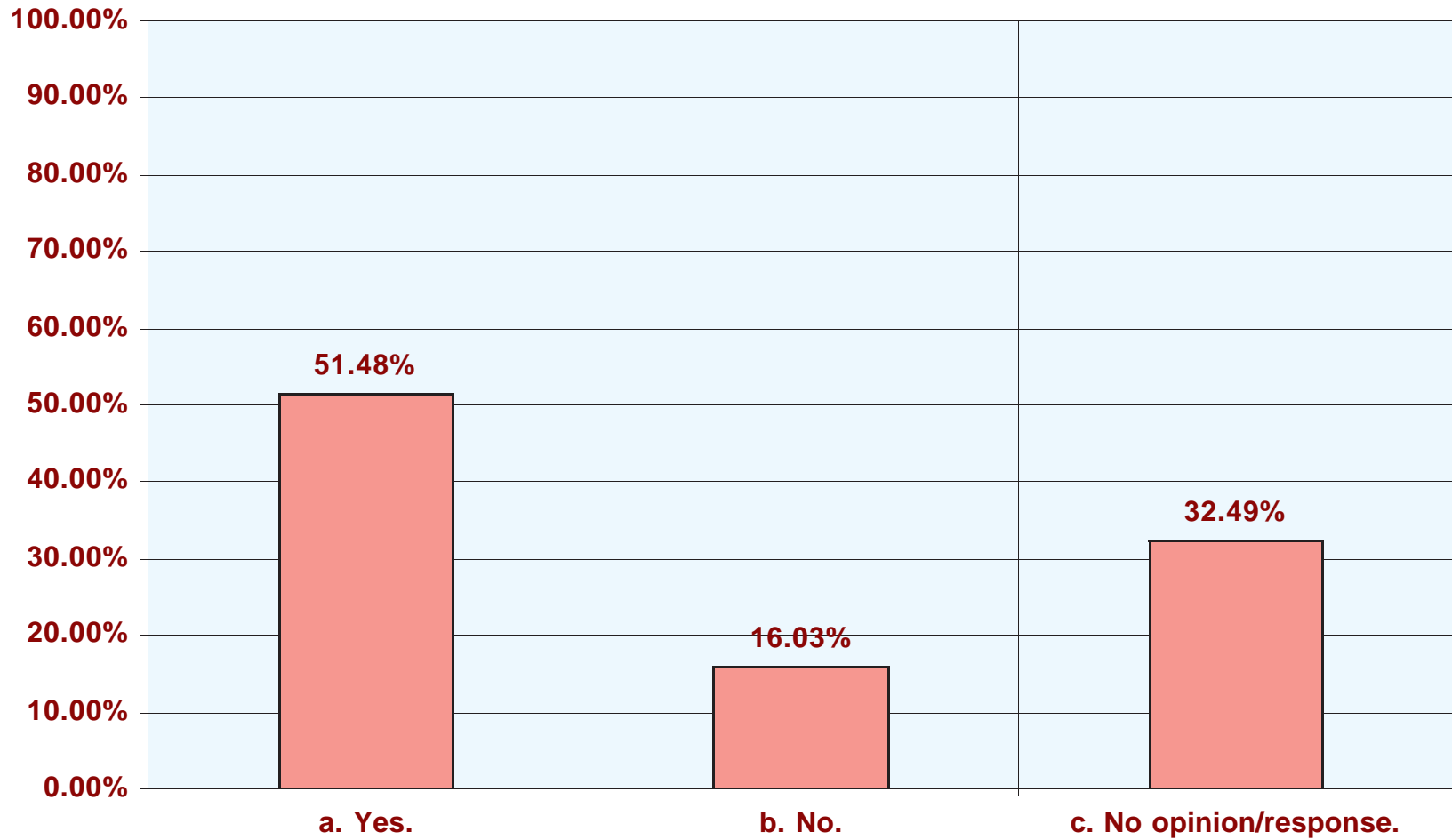
# 4. What would you like to know about Mad River Schools? Would you like to know



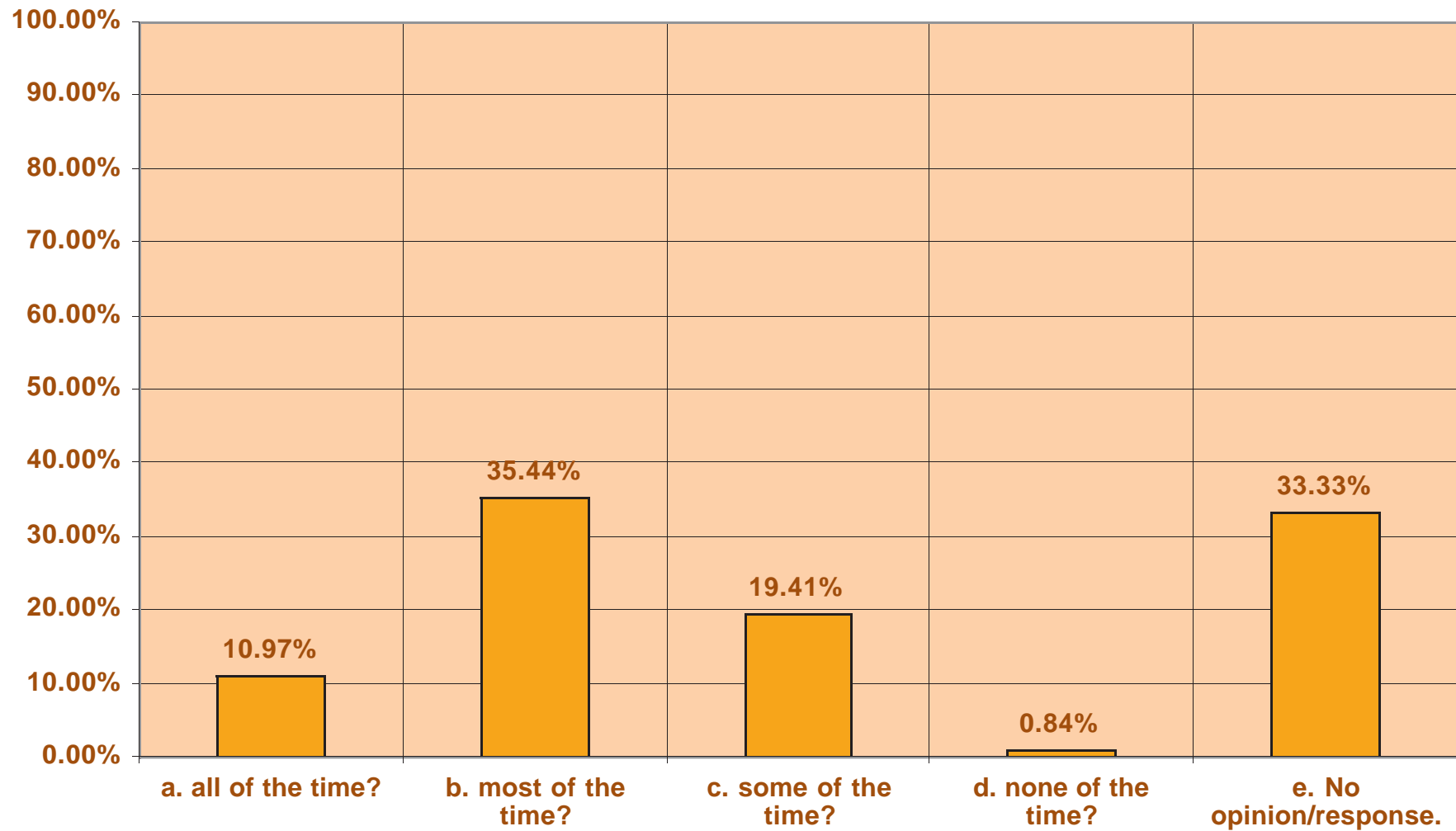
### 5. In the past five years, has student achievement in Mad River Schools



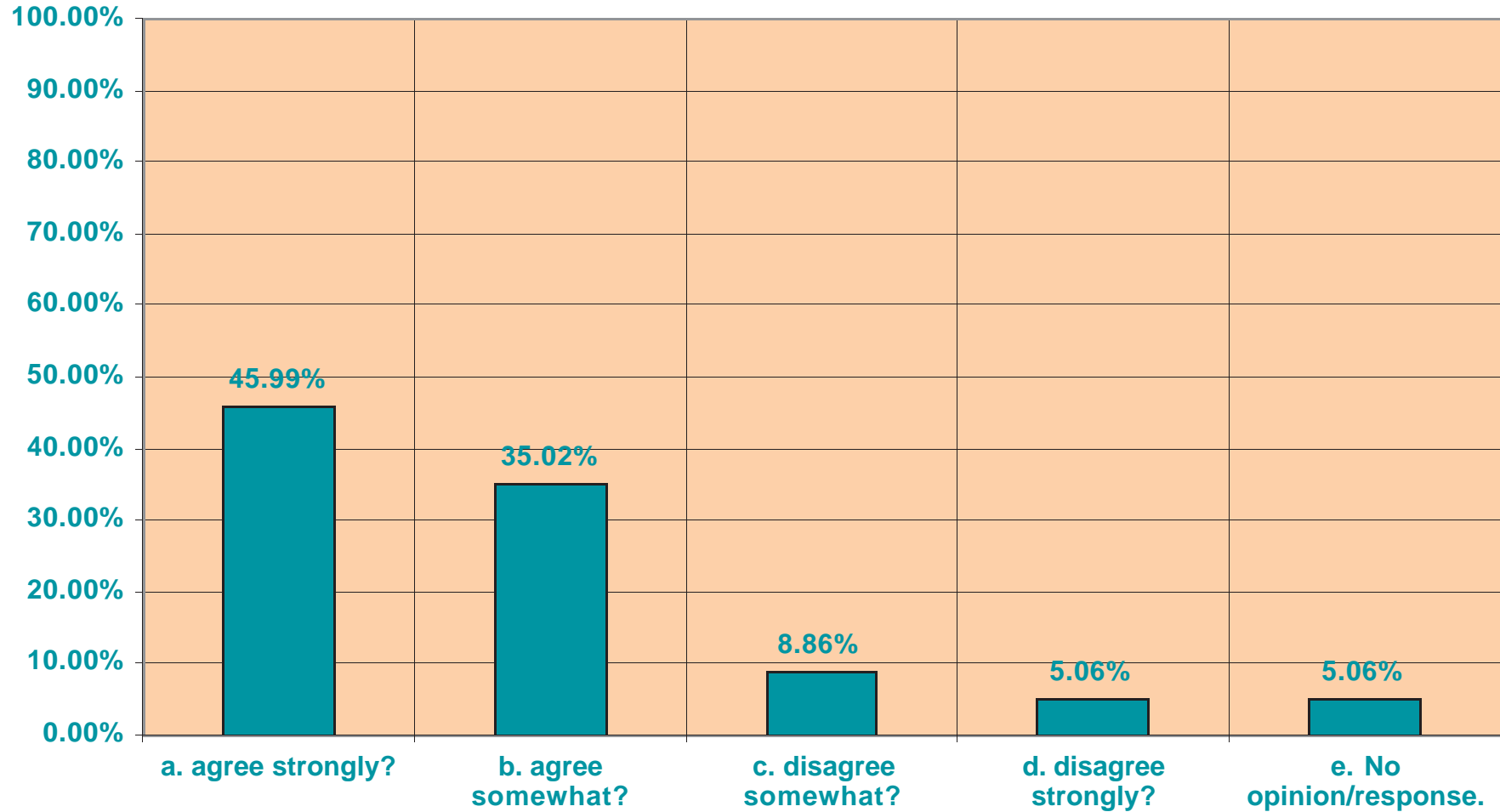
## 6. Are Mad River Schools meeting the needs of all students?



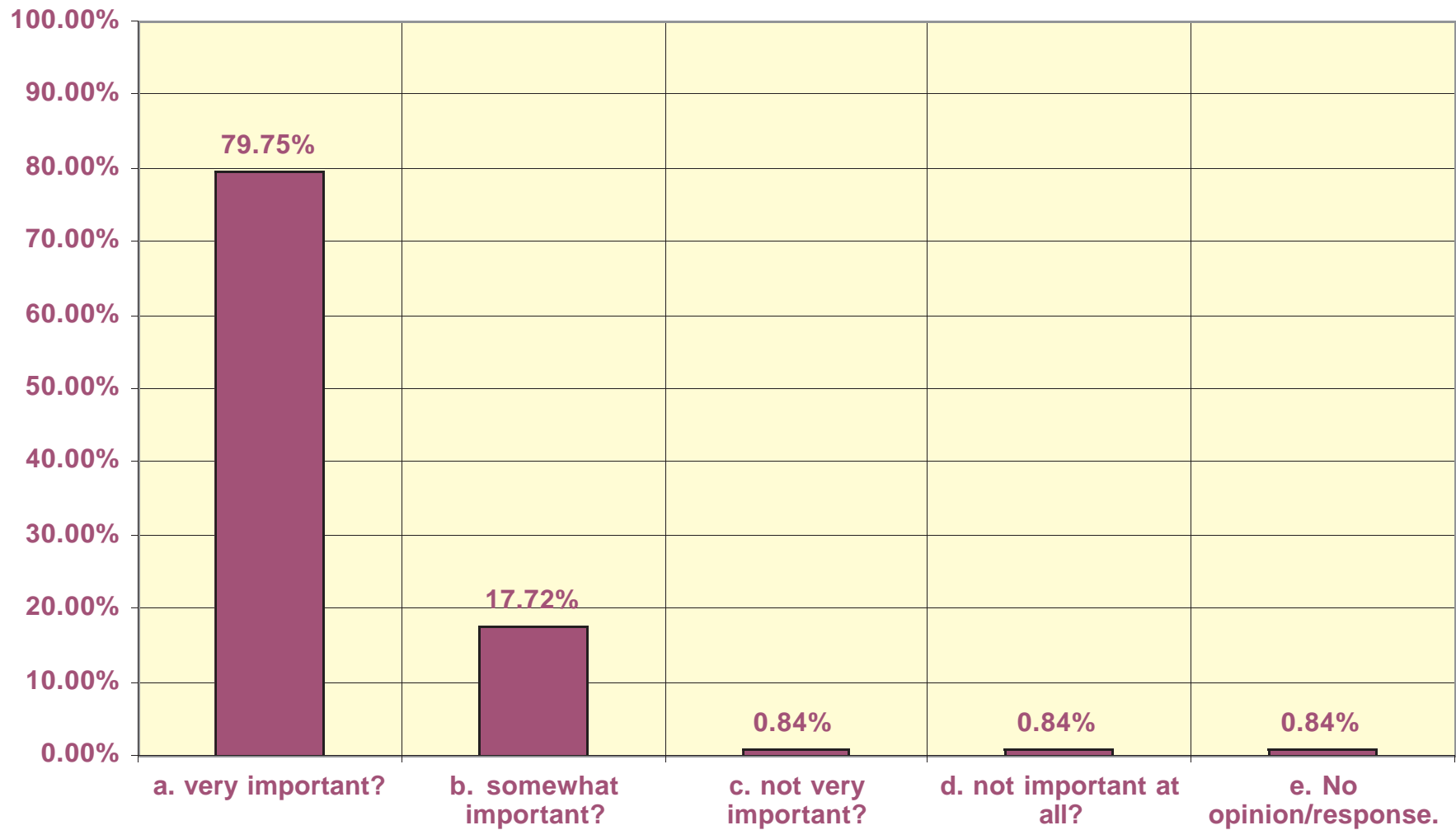
## 7. Do Mad River teachers adapt their instruction to meet the needs of individual students



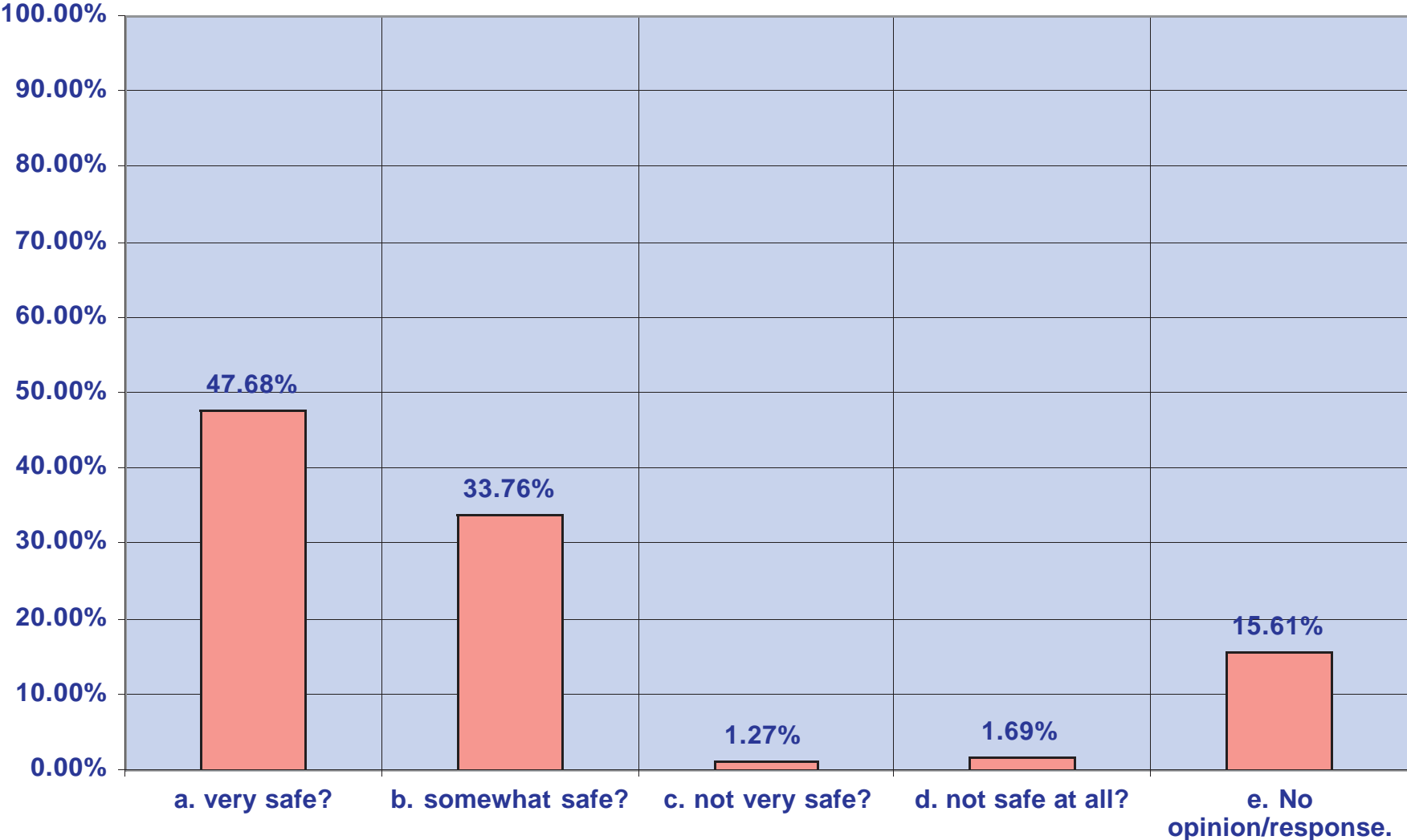
**8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
"Property value in the Mad River School District is directly  
affected by the quality of our schools." Do you**



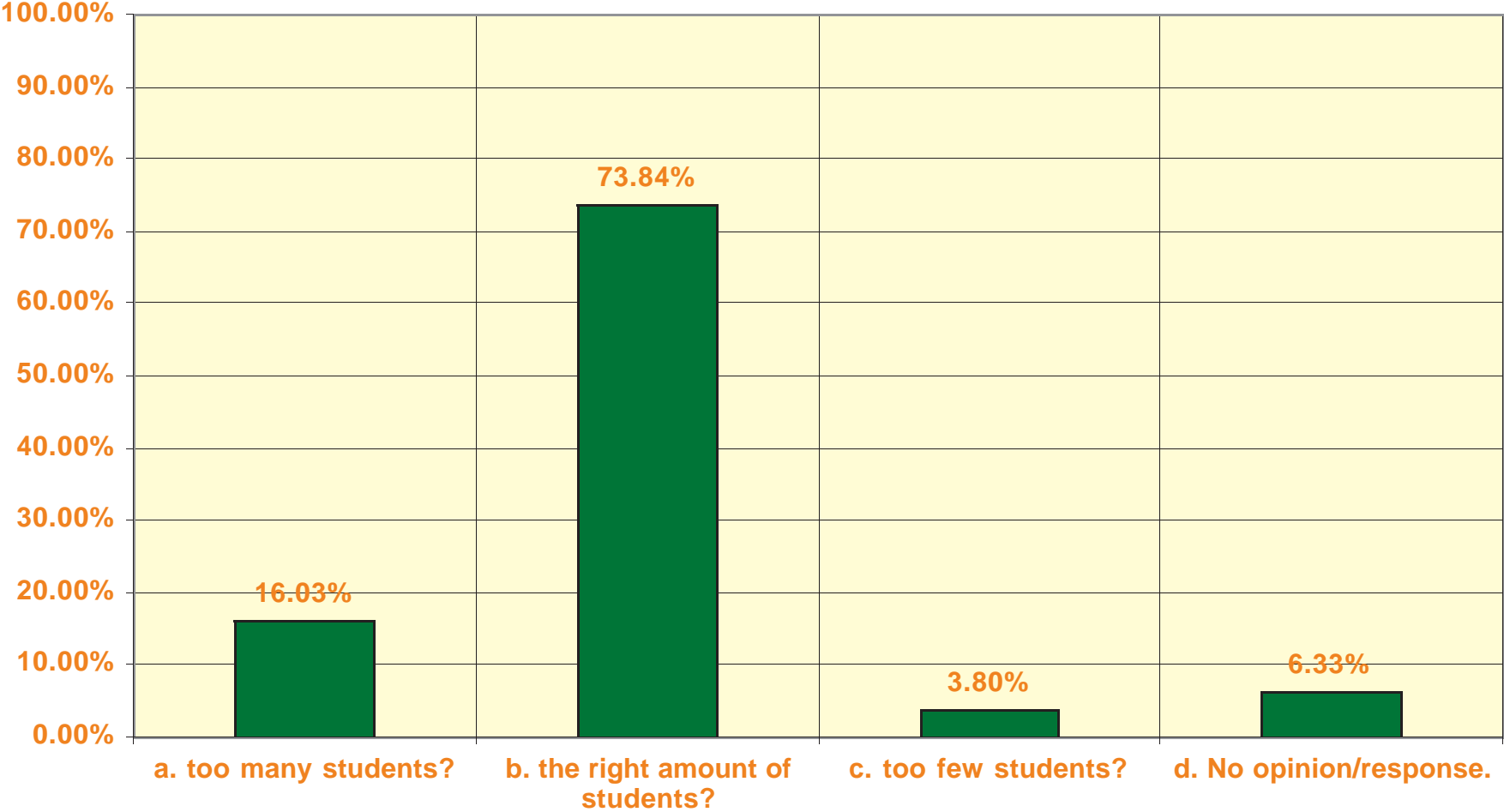
### 9. How important is it for Mad River students to learn with up-to-date computers and other technology? Is it



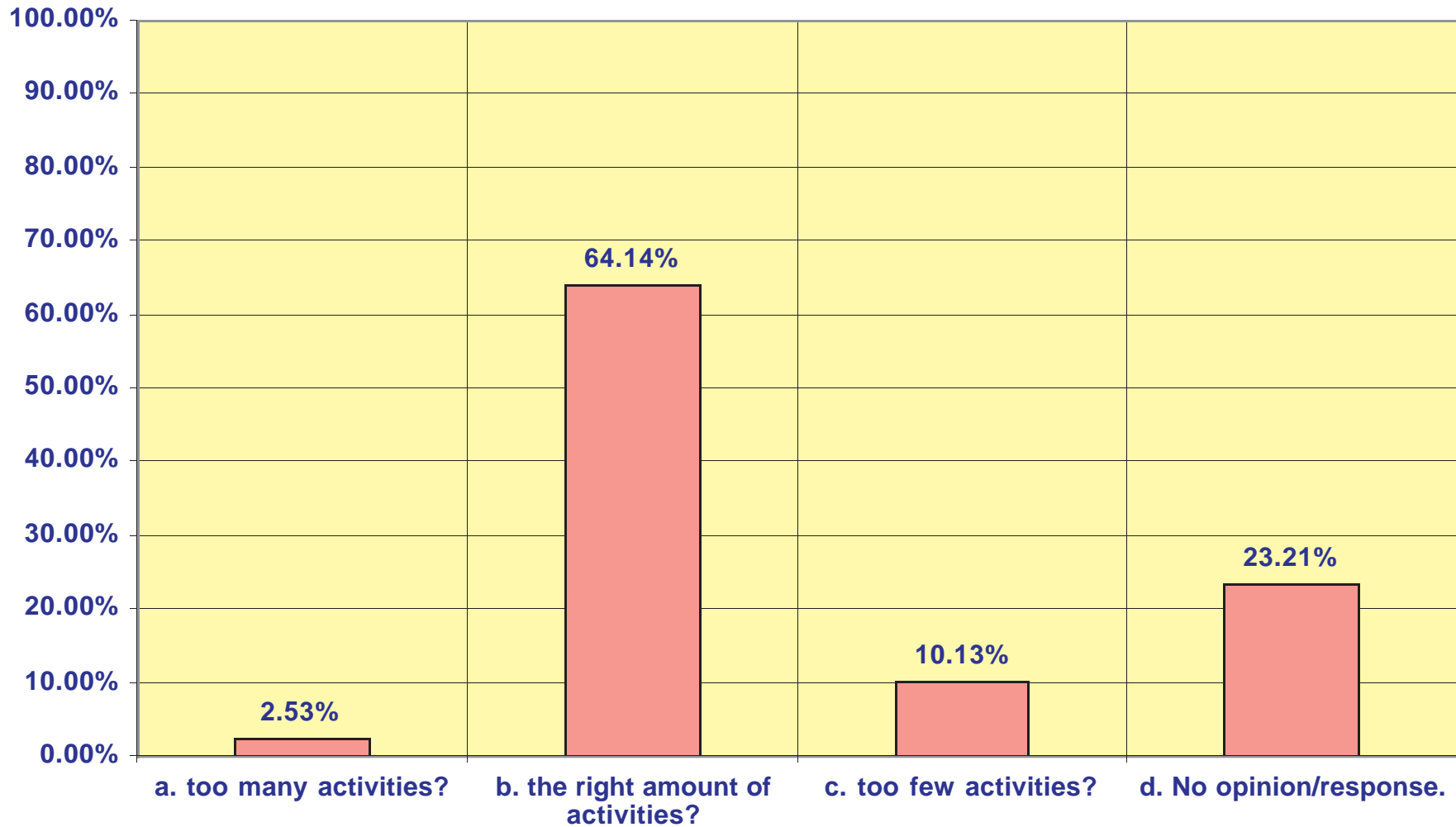
# 10. How safe are Mad River students at school? Are they



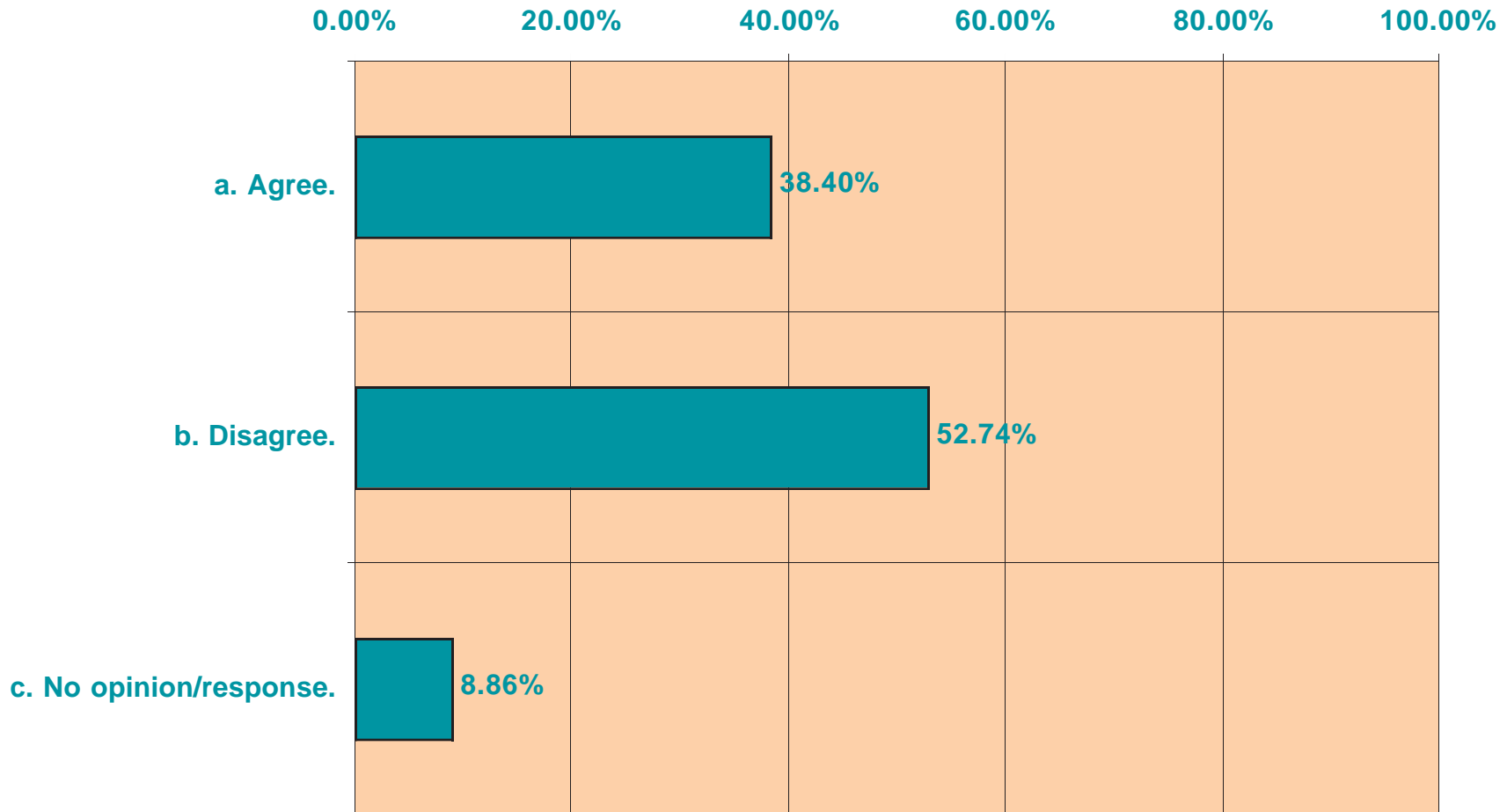
**11. How do you feel about Mad River's student-to-teacher ratio of an average of one teacher for every 20 students?  
Does each teacher have**



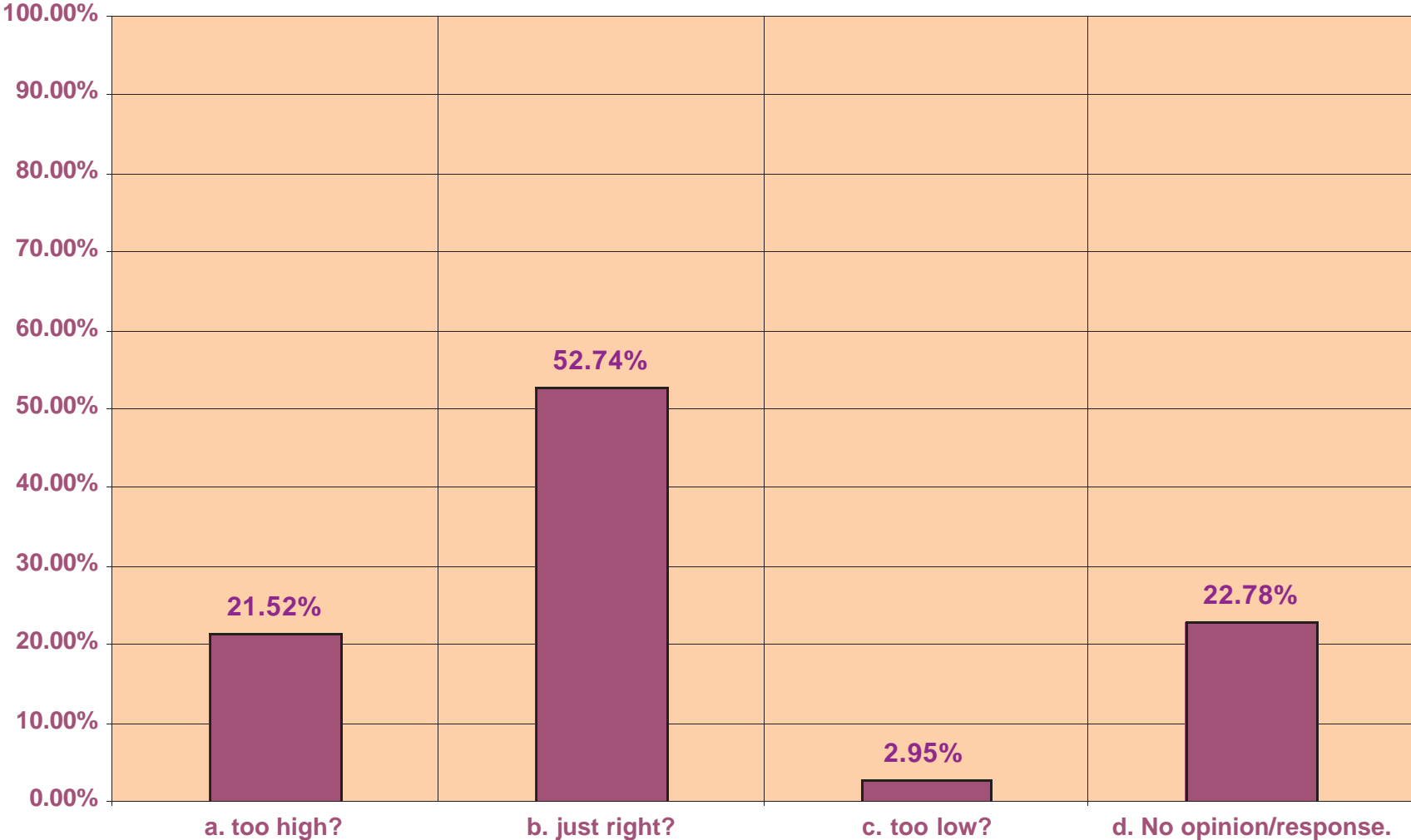
**12. When it comes to extra-curricular activities such as sports, clubs and drama, do Mad River students have**



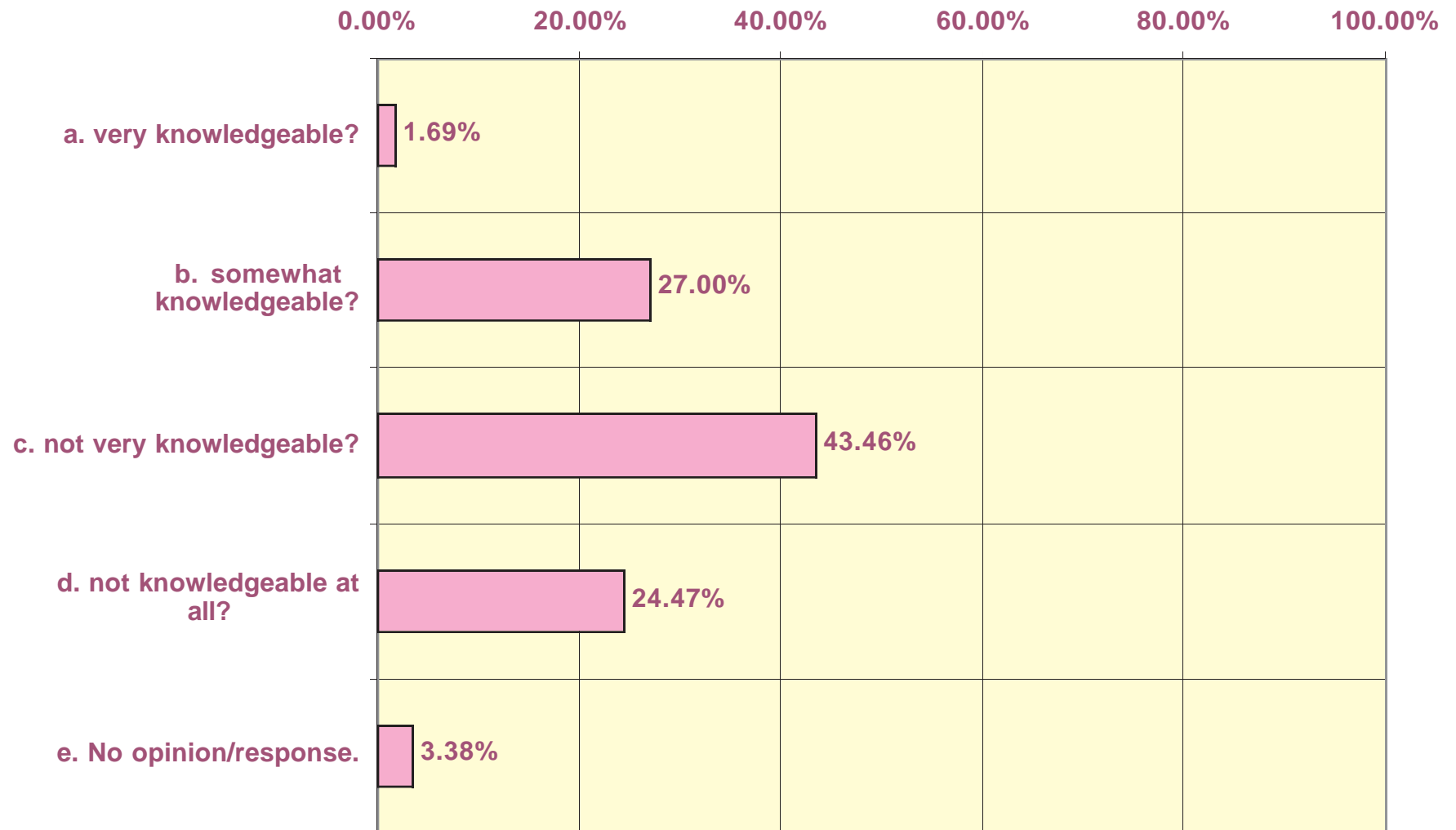
**13. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "The time has come to vote against all new taxes."**



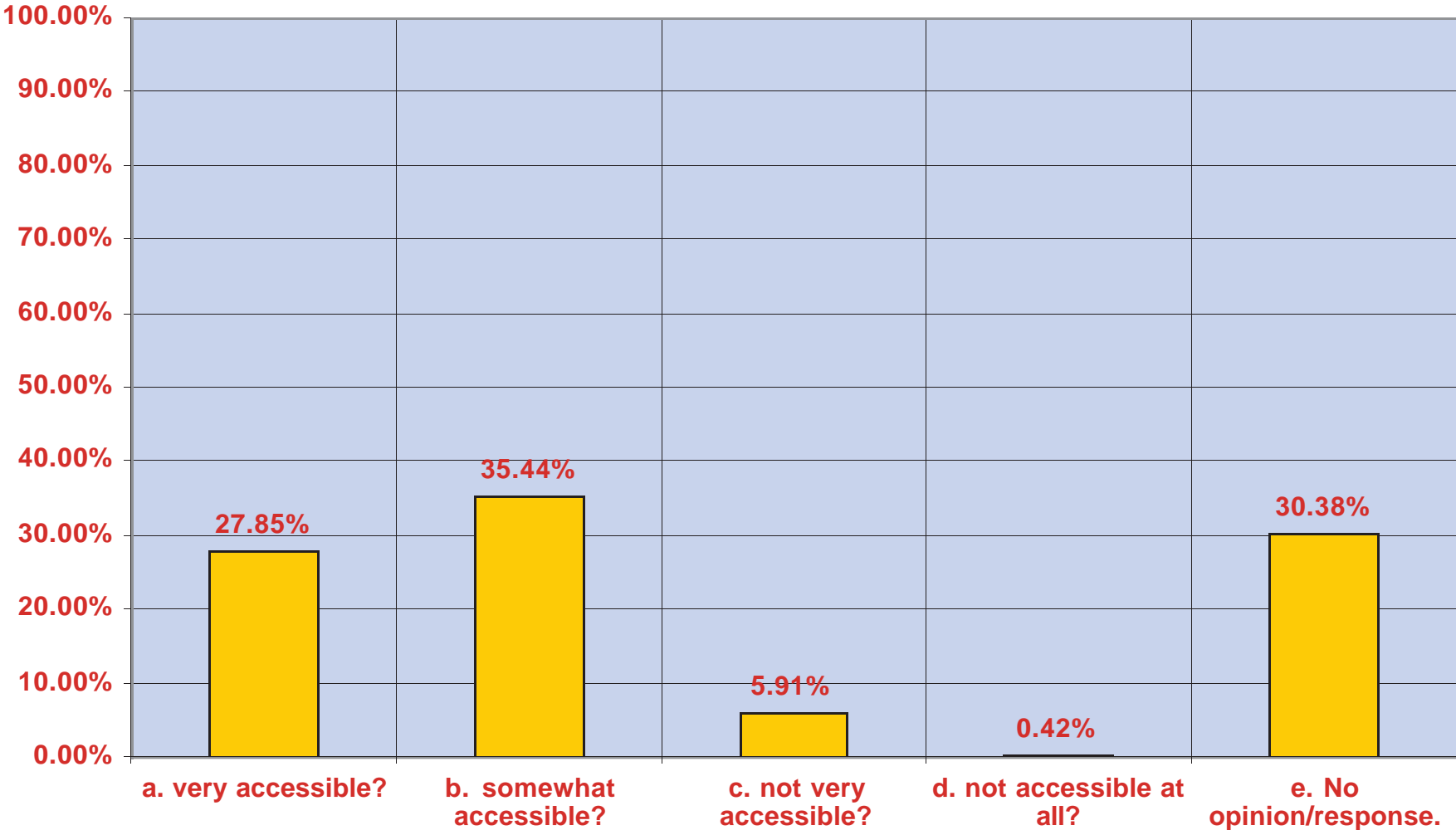
### 14. Is the school tax rate in the Mad River School District



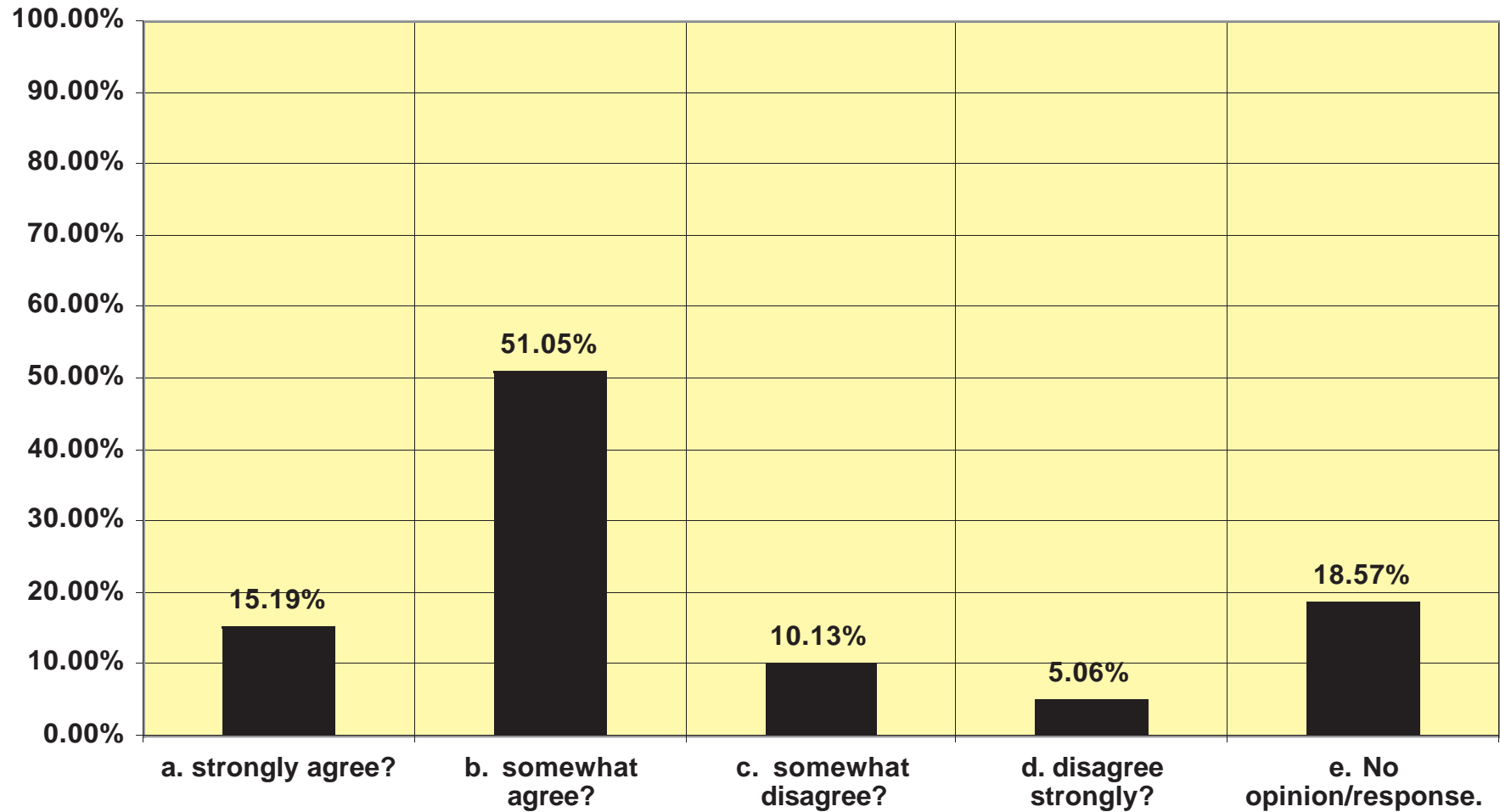
## 15. How knowledgeable are you about school finance? Are you



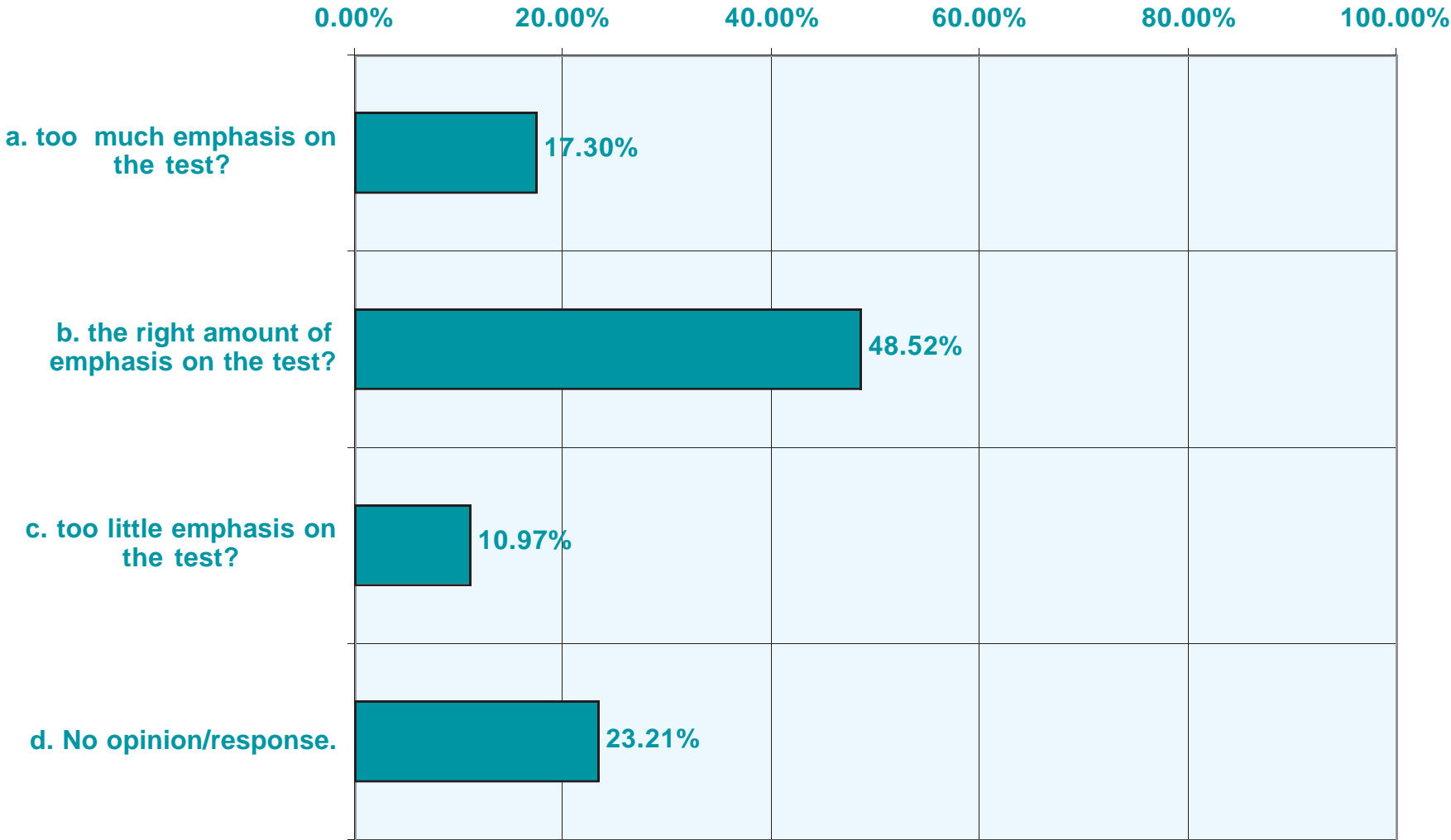
**16. How accessible are school officials to parents and other residents? Are they**



**17. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?  
"Tax dollars are used wisely and appropriately by Mad River  
School District officials." Do you**



# 18. When it comes to the Ohio Achievement Test, do Mad River Schools place



# Question 19. What one thing should be improved about Mad River Schools?

- Accessibility of teachers.
- All books; upgrade, up-to-date literature.
- Amount of homework--too much for one student; not enough for other.
- Any school system--not enough emphasis on fundamentals (basic math, reading, writing) and the sciences.
- Attendance policy.
- Attendance.
- Back to basics--spelling, math, etc.
- Better football team.
- Better lunches.
- Better way of people picking up their kids at B G.
- Bigger sports stadium.
- Block scheduling.
- Building improvement.
- Bus transportation for everyone.
- Busing availability.
- Busing. Students walk too far.
- College prep--more important than anything else.
- Communicating with the citizens.
- Communication about sports teams. Send information through the mail. Daughter missed an entire year.
- Communication when discipline problems.
- Communication with community.
- Communication with parents.
- Communication.
- Curriculum changed.
- Curriculum is very important.
- Curriculum.
- Did it with the new school buildings.
- Discipline unruly children more.
- Do better in sports.
- Dress code.
- Dress code.
- Ease up on bus drivers so not so rushed.
- Encourage students more to study harder.
- ESL students mentor needs to spend time through out year.
- Even with new sports people, we need something better. Every school district around has good sports programs and we're good at bowling.
- Football team.
- Football.
- Get class size down.
- Get the word out to other communities how great the schools are.
- Give kids too much homework.
- Helping students with particular needs.
- Higher rating on Report Card.
- How they work with their students--being able to help them when they're struggling.
- Improve everybody achieving at their level.
- Improve programs for academically gifted students 7-8-9-10 grades.
- Improve sports program.
- Improve sports team quality and numbers who go out for sports.
- Increase foreign language offerings.
- Increase test scores.
- Individual attention.
- Instead of teaching to the test, teach a more rounded curriculum.
- Issue with the busing we don't have.
- Kids that need special help should get that help.
- Less cost for participation in sports.
- Less participation fee for sports.
- Level of academics to be more competitive with surrounding schools.
- Lot of kids but the discipline needs to be handled better.
- Mad River Schools are very, very political; 80% of students dread school.
- Make Stebbins core classes better laid out.
- Meet all grade card standards.
- Momma has to drive babies to school.
- More after school extra-curricular activities.
- More contact with the parent.

# Question 19. What one thing should be improved about Mad River Schools?

- More emphasis on education to prepare kids for post-secondary.
- More extra-curricular activities for lower grades.
- More family activities at the higher levels.
- More information on block scheduling.
- More news about what's going on.
- More on education; less on how pretty.
- More sports in Mad River and Spinning.
- More teacher evaluations are needed at the middle school.
- More technology in school.
- Newsletter--it is okay for her as grandma, but parents might want more details.
- Not enough teachers to help students with special needs.
- Offer more extra-curricular activities, such as art.
- Pay teachers more.
- Pay-to-play is overpriced.
- Positive attitude towards students.
- Programs open to the public should be better advertised.
- Promote our schools. Too many going to charter schools.
- Promoting students \_\_\_\_\_ shouldn't be.
- Quality of sports.
- Safety of kids.
- Safety.
- Safety.
- Soccer in middle school.
- Sports programs are pitiful.
- Sports--coaches should be hired from the outside; not just teachers, could be parents.
- Sports.
- Spraying in back yard killing grass and flowers.
- State achievement test.
- Strive to get the best teachers.
- Students being disrespectful toward teachers.
- Students sometimes fall through the cracks.
- Superintendent should be more accessible at the office during working hours.
- Teacher ratio.
- Teachers must get the parents to take an active part in their education.
- Teachers should be required to stay at least 30 minutes after school in case parent wants to talk with teachers.
- Teaching family matters (dealing with finances, relationships, etc.)
- Test scores.
- Test--OAT could improve.
- Their pants hang around their knees.
- Improve the dress code.
- They'd get better teachers if they paid more.
- Too much emphasis on test; the entire year revolves around test.
- Too much time spent during Ohio Achievement test--not appropriate.
- Treat teachers better--give them a raise.
- Vocational options.
- Wasting a lot of expertise with community members. Ask them to volunteer in school.
- Way kids act--rude, more discipline.
- Way of testing kids should be changed.
- Way the State dictates the schools.
- When at teacher gets sick, they have someone sit in the room but they may not know the subject.
- When the sign is put up for Effective Rating--no big deal.
- With any school, they must address safety and bullying.

# Question 20. What one thing do you like about Mad River Schools?

- Academics--there are a lot of choices and opportunities.
- Accessibility of teachers.
- Accessible to all staff.
- Act together and more organized.
- All my kids liked school.
- All new schools. I love it.
- All new.
- All nice, new and clean schools.
- All nice, new.
- All three of my children graduated and did very well after graduation.
- Always felt that teachers and administrators were accessible.
- Always liked the schools since my son went there.
- Always liked the teachers and their support.
- Always seem to be safe.
- Amount of students in district.
- Anytime I have a problem, teachers get back to me right away--very accessible.
- Atmosphere.
- Beautiful new buildings.
- Better than Dayton schools.
- Better than Dayton Public Schools.
- Brantwood; the staff is great.
- Building (high school).
- Buildings are really up-to-date.
- Buildings look very nice.
- Buildings.
- Built new schools.
- Care about the students.
- Caring of staff with students.
- Caring of teachers.
- Centrally located.
- Children seem cheerful and friendly; mostly polite.
- Clean.
- Close by for children.
- Close to the neighborhood.
- Closeness of staff with students.
- Convenience to home.
- Convenient.
- Dedicated teachers.
- Discipline and dress code are good.
- Don't have much trouble with the students.
- Education is a priority.
- Environment.
- Everything was brand new.
- Faculty and staff seem very nice and are willing to work with students.
- Faculty.
- Focus on ESL students more.
- Friendly environment at the high school.
- Good community; good schools.
- Good job with closing in inclement weather.
- Good quality school and teachers.
- Good school district; I went there; my kids went there.
- Good school--kids learned well.
- Good school.
- Good schools.
- Good system with well-maintained facility and knowledgeable teachers.
- Good teachers.
- Good, dedicated staff.
- Grandchildren go there, and I'm happy with how it's going.
- Great communication with teachers.
- Great employees.
- Great teachers.
- Happy with principal at Stebbins--very fair.
- Hear good things about them.
- How the schools look.
- How they picked the new schools and let parent and public input before they built the new schools.
- I go to Stebbins occasionally, and they are very friendly.
- Importance given to IEP students.
- Impressed with Stebbins administration and teachers.
- Impressed with teachers.
- Improvement of scores on State test.
- Insurance.
- It is a very good school district.
- It's home.

# Question 20. What one thing do you like about Mad River Schools?

- Kids are getting a good education. No riots.
- Kids don't have to travel very far to get to a school.
- Kids find something to enjoy and feel comfortable.
- Kids get a good education. They prepare them for college.
- Kids learn and are able to get jobs.
- Kids walking on road.
- Locally controlled.
- Locations of schools.
- Locations.
- Look nice.
- Love everything about them.
- Love it.
- Love the programs: high school tech, engineering program.
- Love them.
- Many of the teachers are keeping modern, keeping up with current technology.
- Most people think Mad River has a good school system.
- My kids all got a good education and all are gainfully employed and live all over the United States.
- Never had any problems when my kids went to Stebbins.
- New and modern schools.
- New buildings.
- New buildings.
- New buildings.
- New buildings.
- New construction.
- New facilities.
- New schools that were built.
- New schools that were built.
- New schools, easy access, nice to look at.
- New schools.
- New schools.
- New schools.
- New schools.
- New schools.
- Nice school buildings--that helps the students' attitudes.
- Nice schools.
- Nice schools.
- Nice teachers.
- Nice, clean schools.
- Not Dayton Public.
- Not too big of a district so you know the staff.
- Not too many problems.
- One Call--love it.
- One of the better school districts in the area.
- Open communication.
- Opportunities for growth are great.
- Opportunities offered to children in the area.
- Overall, I think the staff is good.
- Overall, pretty happy.
- Parent-teacher conference.
- Participation from parents.
- People. When you go to events, teachers and other family members are friendly.
- Personalities of teachers and faculties, able to carry on a conversation.
- Pick up the paper and don't hear many bad things about the District.
- Policy to communicate with teachers using progress book.
- Positive and safe environment.
- Pretty buildings.
- Pretty close-knit community.
- Pretty good school; four kids went there.
- Pretty high school they built.
- Pretty informative about keeping us up-o-date about what's going on in school.
- Pretty; make the city look nice.
- Quality education.
- Quality of education they are getting is good.
- Quality teachers.
- Really like how they redid the schools.
- Relationships with teachers.
- Run by a bunch of great individuals.

# Question 20. What one thing do you like about Mad River Schools?

- Safe schools.
- Safer than city public schools.
- Safety of students.
- Schools are doing a pretty good job.
- Schools have up-to-date textbooks, equipment and supplies.
- Security set up--have to go sign child out.
- Seem to be improving.
- Seem up-to-date.
- Seems like everybody's doing a good job.
- Seems pretty competitive with other schools.
- Size of it.
- Small class size.
- Some of the teachers.
- Student-teacher ratio.
- Students are polite door-to-door.
- Teacher-to-student ratios.
- Teachers and staff do as good as they can.
- Teachers and staff.
- Teachers are easy to work with.
- Teachers are very friendly.
- Teachers at the district are accessible and communicate.
- Teachers go out of their way to help students.
- Teachers I used to interact with.
- Teachers seem genuinely concerned about students.
- Teachers that greet parents at bus pick-up. Good procedures.
- Teachers were always respectful.
- Teachers working closely with students.
- Teachers' accessibility.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teachers.
- Teaching methods.
- The district.
- There seems to be a strong interest in each individual child.
- They are neighborhood schools.
- They are there.
- They do have beautiful buildings.
- They got the job done. My kids graduated.
- They're friendly.
- Try very hard to keep students.
- Trying to improve.
- Very neighborhood friendly.
- Very new, clean.
- Very smart teachers.
- Very, very tidy and clean.
- Way they look.
- Well-rounded education.
- Willing to help the parent as well as the child.
- Winning sports program.
- With limited resources and classroom size, the teachers do a good job.