

High Schools Configuration Feedback Synthesis



Process



High School Configuration Timeline and Process		
Board Learning		
October - November	Board	Academics Co-Curriculars Athletics Financial Analysis
December	Board	Engagement Planning Survey Development
Community Engagement (if proceeding to next phase)		
January - February		Community Forums Focus Groups Survey
Decision-Making		
February - March		Review feedback, develop recommendations, Board action
Action Steps (if needed)		
April 2026 through August of 2027 (16 months) Implementation September 2027, aligns with district reconfiguration		



Engagement



Communication & Outreach

- Media coverage (press releases, digital, print, and social media)
- Dedicated webpage on the district website
- District newsletter shared with the community

Direct Communication

- Direct emails sent to families and students in grades 7–12
(approximately 7,500 recipients)

Community Feedback

- Online survey open to stakeholders
- Student focus groups (grades 7–12)

In-Person Engagement

- Community Conversations (64 attendees across two meetings)
- High school staff meeting discussions
- Student listening sessions during lunch periods
(grades 7–12)



Community Meetings



Academics & Student Experience

- Several participants emphasized the importance of keeping academics central to the conversation.
- Noted that many academic programs are already shared across both schools.
- Interest in ensuring any changes prioritize student success and access to programs.

Athletics & Participation

- Declining participation across several sports and difficulty fielding full teams.
- Students sometimes playing “up” levels due to low numbers, raising safety concerns.
- Club sports and year-round specialization reducing high school participation.
- Desire for more competitive teams and stronger programs.



Opportunities for Students

- Mixed views on whether combining schools would increase or decrease opportunities.
- Some believe consolidation could allow more JV levels and intramural options.
- Others worry about roster limits in certain sports and reduced access for some students.

Community Identity & School Spirit

- Many believe two high schools divide the community and dilute school spirit.
- Interest in building one unified West Bend identity and stronger fan support.
- Others value the tradition and rivalry between East and West.



Student Enrollment & School Choice

- Perception that some families choose districts for more competitive athletics or programs.
- Concern that declining participation may influence school choice decisions.
- Some believe consolidation could make the district more attractive to families.

Financial & Operational Considerations

- Questions about potential cost savings, facility use, transportation, and booster funding.
- Interest in reinvesting savings into facilities, programs, or additional opportunities.

Badger Students

Lunch Conversations

208 prefer one high school

141 prefer current model

60 had no opinion



Why Some Students Prefer ONE High School

Unified Identity – Students want to feel like one school community rather than divided between East and West.

Stronger Athletic Programs – Combining teams could create fuller rosters, stronger competition, and more opportunities to compete weekly.

Less Division Among Friends – Students currently share classes, youth teams, and middle schools but are split in high school.

Fairness in Athletics – School choice based on sports performance creates imbalance; one school could remove that dynamic.

Simplicity & Clarity – Many programs and classes are already combined, so having one school feels more logical.

Why Some Students Prefer TWO Schools

Tradition & Rivalry – Some enjoy the East vs. West rivalry and events like Homecoming.

Unique School Identity – Two schools allow each campus to maintain its own traditions, colors, and identity.

More Roster Spots – Two schools can create more varsity opportunities in certain sports.

East & West Students



Lunch Conversations

219 prefer one high school

345 prefer current model (many for their high school years)

149 had no opinion

Why Some Students Prefer ONE High School

Stronger Athletics – Combining talent could create more competitive teams, fuller rosters, and better weekly competition.

Unity & Community – One school could reduce division and create a stronger sense of school spirit and shared identity.

Fairness in Athletics – School choice based on sports can create imbalance between teams.

Less Division Among Friends – Students often play together in youth sports and classes before high school but are split later.

Programs Already Shared – Many activities and classes are already combined, so one school feels more logical to some students.

Why Some Students Prefer TWO High Schools

Tradition & Legacy – Students value the long history of East and West and want to preserve existing traditions.

Rivalry & School Spirit – The East vs. West rivalry and Homecoming games are meaningful parts of student culture.

More Athletic Opportunities – Concern that combining schools could lead to fewer roster spots and more cuts.

Unique School Identity – Students appreciate each school having its own mascot, culture, and traditions.

Familiarity & Stability – Some students prefer keeping the system they know rather than navigating a major change.

Staff



Academics

Shared understanding that the academic program is the same for all students.

Athletic Competitiveness & Safety

- Combining schools could strengthen teams and address low participation.
- Concerns about roster spots balanced with benefits of deeper programs and safer athlete development.

Student Opportunities

- Mixed perspectives: potential for more developmental levels (JV/Freshman) vs. concerns about reduced playing time in some sports.

School Spirit & Traditions

- Some nostalgia for the East–West rivalry and Homecoming traditions.
- Others see opportunity to create new traditions and stronger unified school spirit.

Community Unity

- Many believe a single high school could bring the community together and allow students to graduate and compete alongside more peers.

Financial & Operational Considerations

- Long-term cost savings and improved facility scheduling viewed as important factors in the decision.



Email Communication



Community Unity

- Several contributors believe a single high school could strengthen community pride and shared identity.
- Current East/West structure is perceived by some as creating division among students and the broader community.

Athletics & Student Opportunities

- Some feel a combined school could lead to stronger athletic programs, fuller teams, and broader competition.
- Others expressed concern that two schools provide more roster spots and participation opportunities for students.

School Spirit & Traditions

- Supporters of consolidation believe one school could build stronger collective spirit.
- Others value the East vs. West rivalry and traditions, which create excitement and engagement for students.

Operational & Enrollment Considerations

- Combining schools could reduce duplication of services and facility congestion.
- Declining enrollment was noted as a factor influencing the discussion.

Student Experience

- Some community members believe students would benefit from winning, losing, and representing the community together.
- Others expressed emotional attachment to the existing structure and school identity.

*For reference, 5 additional emails were received



Survey

Online survey open from February 2 through February 16



2,588 responses (Check all that apply)

- 1181 Parent/Guardians
- 574 Community Members
- 440 Alumni
- 811 Students
- 267 Staff
- 94 Other
- 9 No Answer

School Affiliation (Check all that apply)

- 124 4K/Rolfs
- 351 Decorah
- 341 Fair Park
- 302 Green Tree
- 323 Jackson
- 423 McLane
- 1165 Silverbrook
- 1397 Badger
- 890 East
- 986 West
- 148 NA or No Answer

Years Connected to the District

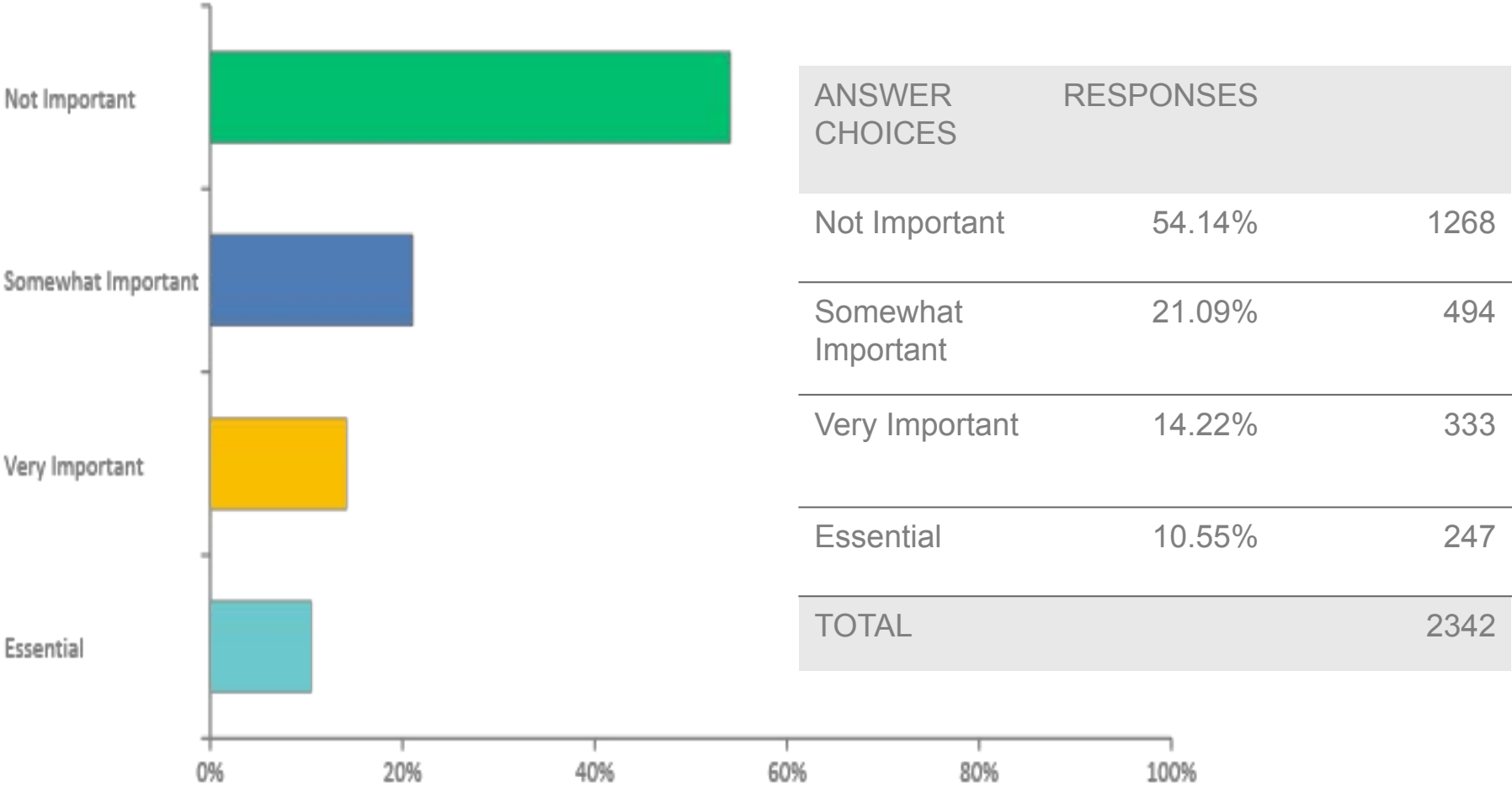
- 1065 0-10 Years
- 783 11-20 Years
- 728 21+ Years



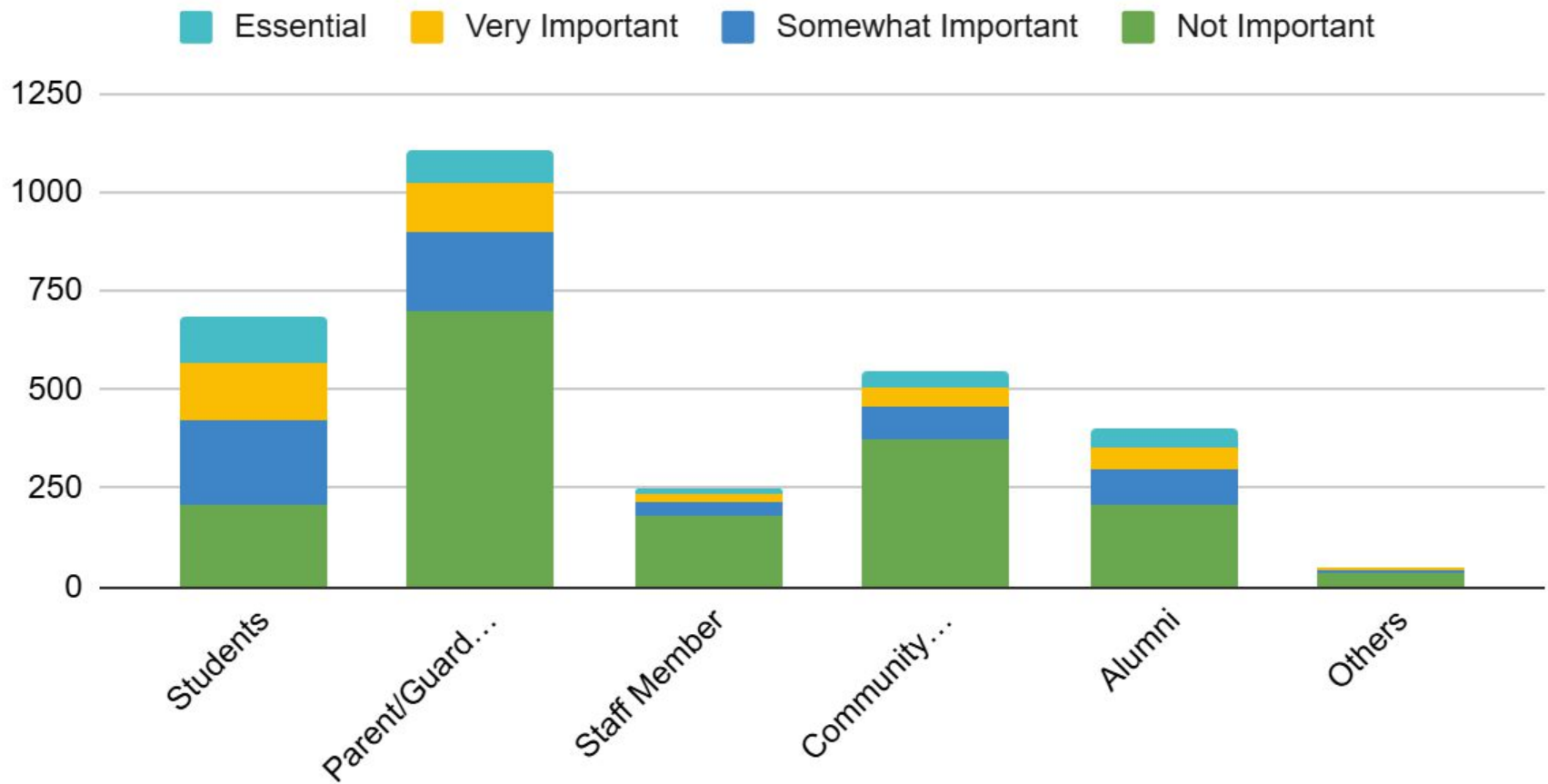
*For reference, the 2024 Referendum Survey yielded 1609 responses

Q4: How important is it to you that the district continues to operate both East and West high schools on one campus?

Answered: 2342 ,: 246



Q4: How important is it to you that the district continues to operate both East and West high schools on one campus?



	Students	Parent/Guardian	Staff Member	Community Member	Alumni	Others
Not Important	209	699	184	374	207	39
Somewhat Important	213	203	34	80	88	7
Very Important	149	122	17	52	61	3
Essential	113	86	16	40	47	1

Q5: How important is it to you that the district continues to operate both East and West high schools on one campus? Explain your response:

Community Identity & Tradition

- Strong emotional connection to East vs. West identity
- Concerns about losing school pride, traditions, and rivalries
- Some believe two schools strengthen community engagement



Opportunities

- Many comments suggested combining into one high school. Perceived benefits: Larger course offerings, Unified extracurricular programs, More efficient staffing and scheduling
- Sports and teams were the most frequently referenced topic. Comments focused on: team competitiveness, roster spots, combining sports programs.
- Concerns that maintaining two schools can lead to: Uneven course offerings, Duplicated programs, Differences in access to activities
- Many responses referenced enrollment levels and school capacity, including whether the district is large enough to support two schools.

Facilities & Capacity Considerations

- Discussion around:
 - Whether existing buildings can support enrollment
 - Potential need for facility upgrades or reconfiguration
- Some respondents raised concerns about overcrowding if schools were merged

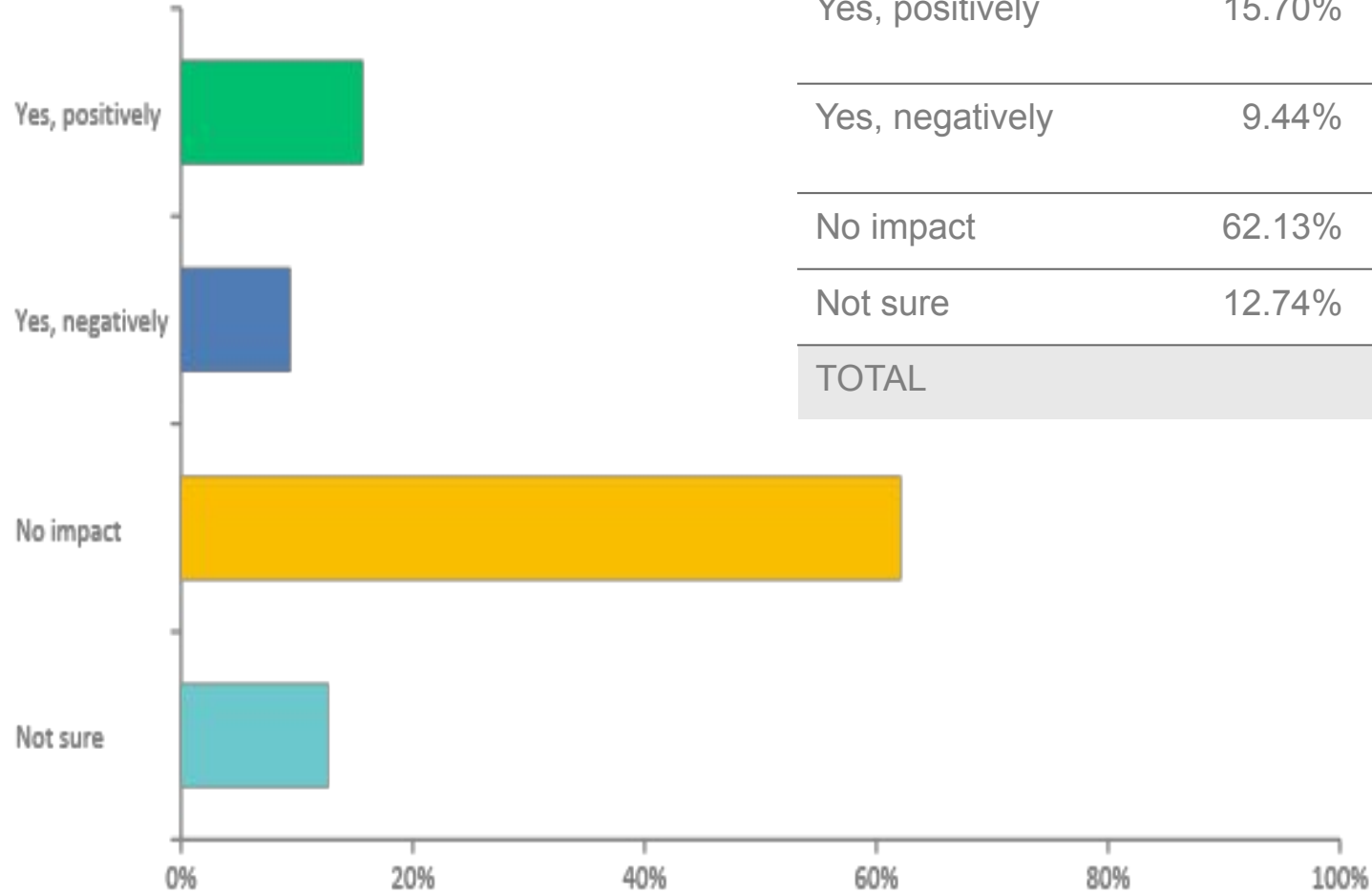


Financial Efficiency & Resource Use

- Questions about cost effectiveness of operating two high schools
- Some believe consolidation could: Reduce duplication of programs, Improve efficiency of staffing and resources

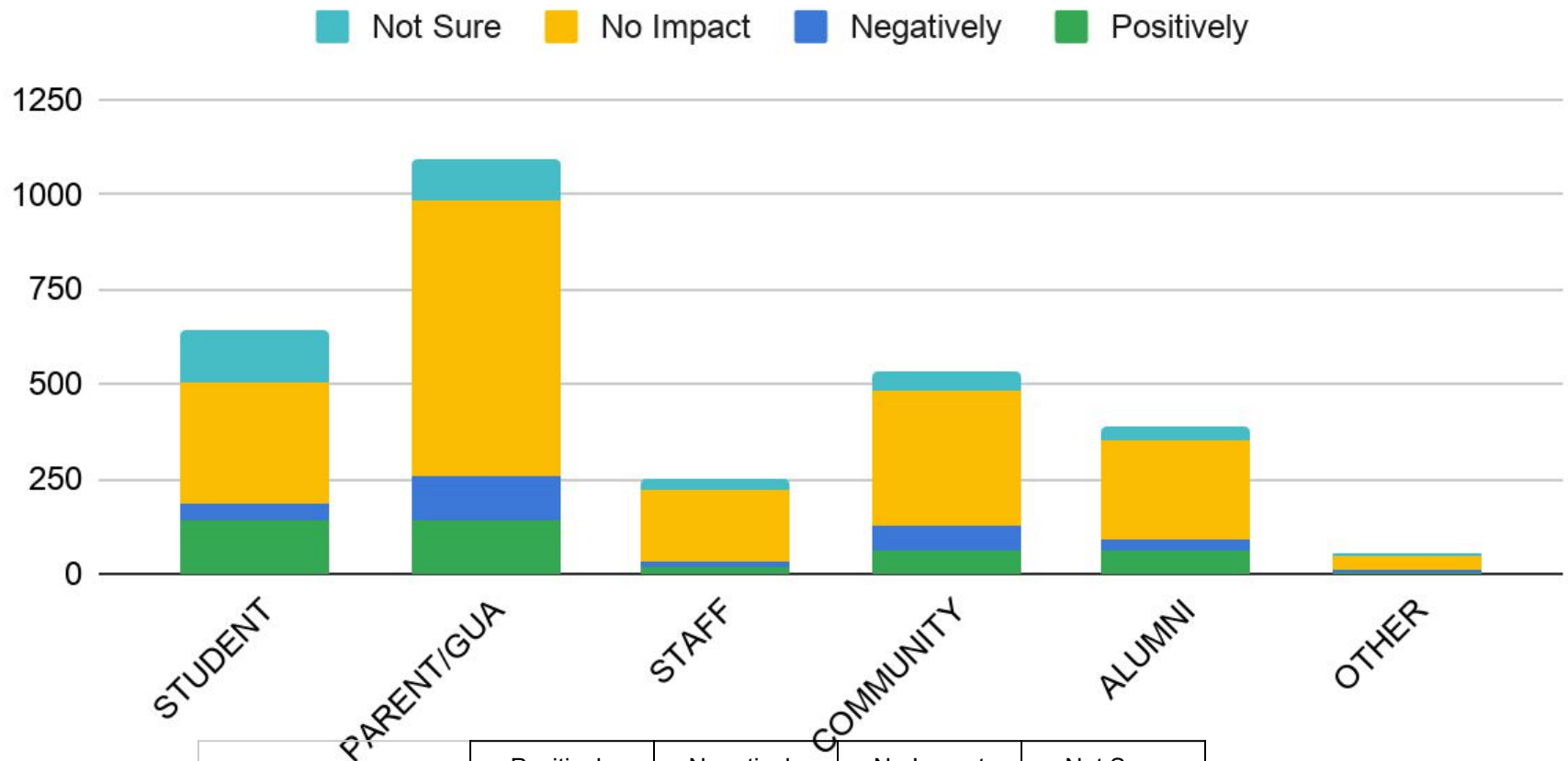
Q6: Does having two high school identities impact how you perceive the quality of education in West Bend?

Answered: 2268 ,: 320



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, positively	15.70%	356
Yes, negatively	9.44%	214
No impact	62.13%	1409
Not sure	12.74%	289
TOTAL		2268

Q6: Does having two high school identities impact how you perceive the quality of education in West Bend?



	Positively	Negatively	No Impact	Not Sure
STUDENT	143	40	323	138
PARENT/GUARDIAN	146	111	724	113
STAFF MEMBER	17	16	189	27
COMMUNITY MEMBER	61	65	359	47
ALUMNI	66	29	259	33
OTHER	6	9	36	6

Q7: Please share any thoughts you have on academic programming or recognition:

Academic Quality Concerns

- Many respondents focused on whether structural changes would affect the quality of education.
- Some expressed concern about: Larger class sizes, Reduced individual attention,
- Maintaining strong academic standards and quality of importance.

Expanded Course Opportunities

- A large portion of comments suggested that combining resources could expand course offerings. Potential benefits mentioned: More AP or advanced courses, Expanded electives, Increased scheduling flexibility.
- Frequent references to equal opportunities across schools.

Extracurricular & Athletic Implications

- Respondents frequently referenced sports, activities, and student recognition.
- Key considerations: Competition for teams or leadership roles, Visibility for scholarships or awards, Maintaining strong extracurricular programming.

Teacher & Staffing Impact

- Several responses highlighted the importance of teachers in maintaining academic quality.
- Concerns included: Staffing levels, Teacher workload
- Preserving strong relationships between students and staff.

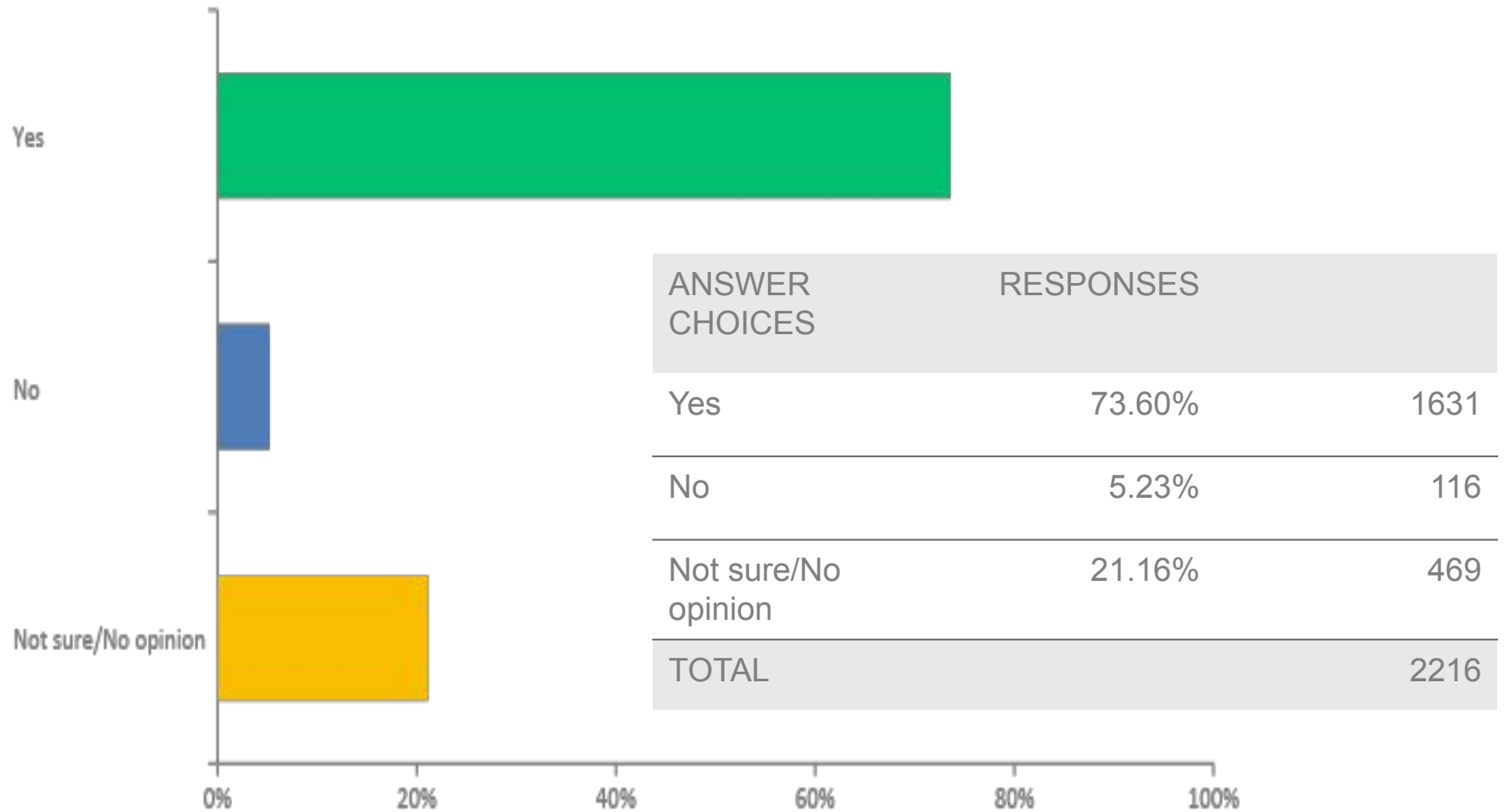
Minimal or No Academic Impact

- A notable portion of responses indicated little concern about academic changes.
- These respondents felt academic outcomes depend more on instruction and student effort than school structure.

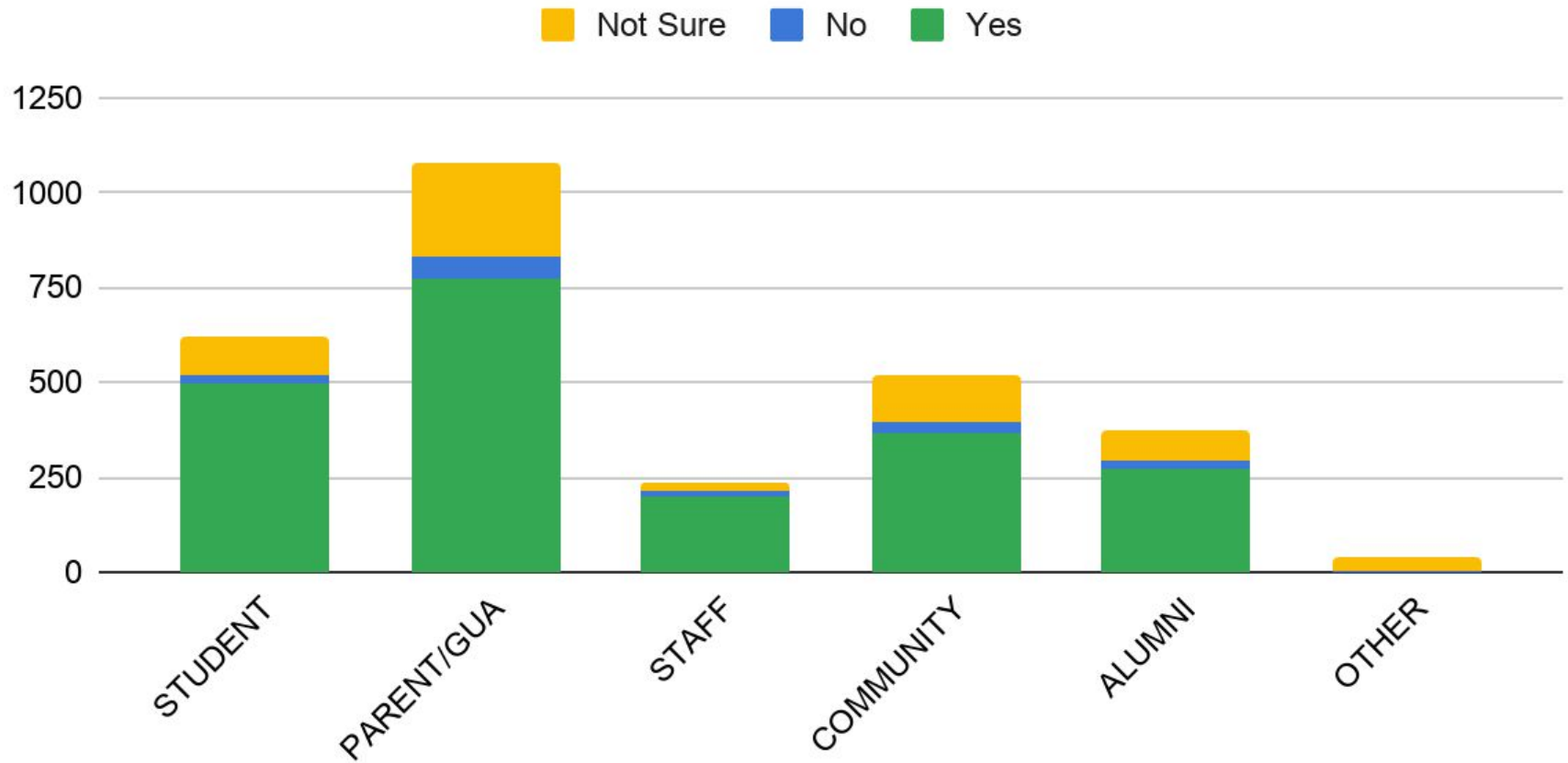


Q8: Are you satisfied with the current access students have to clubs and other co-curricular programs?

Answered: 2216 ,: 372



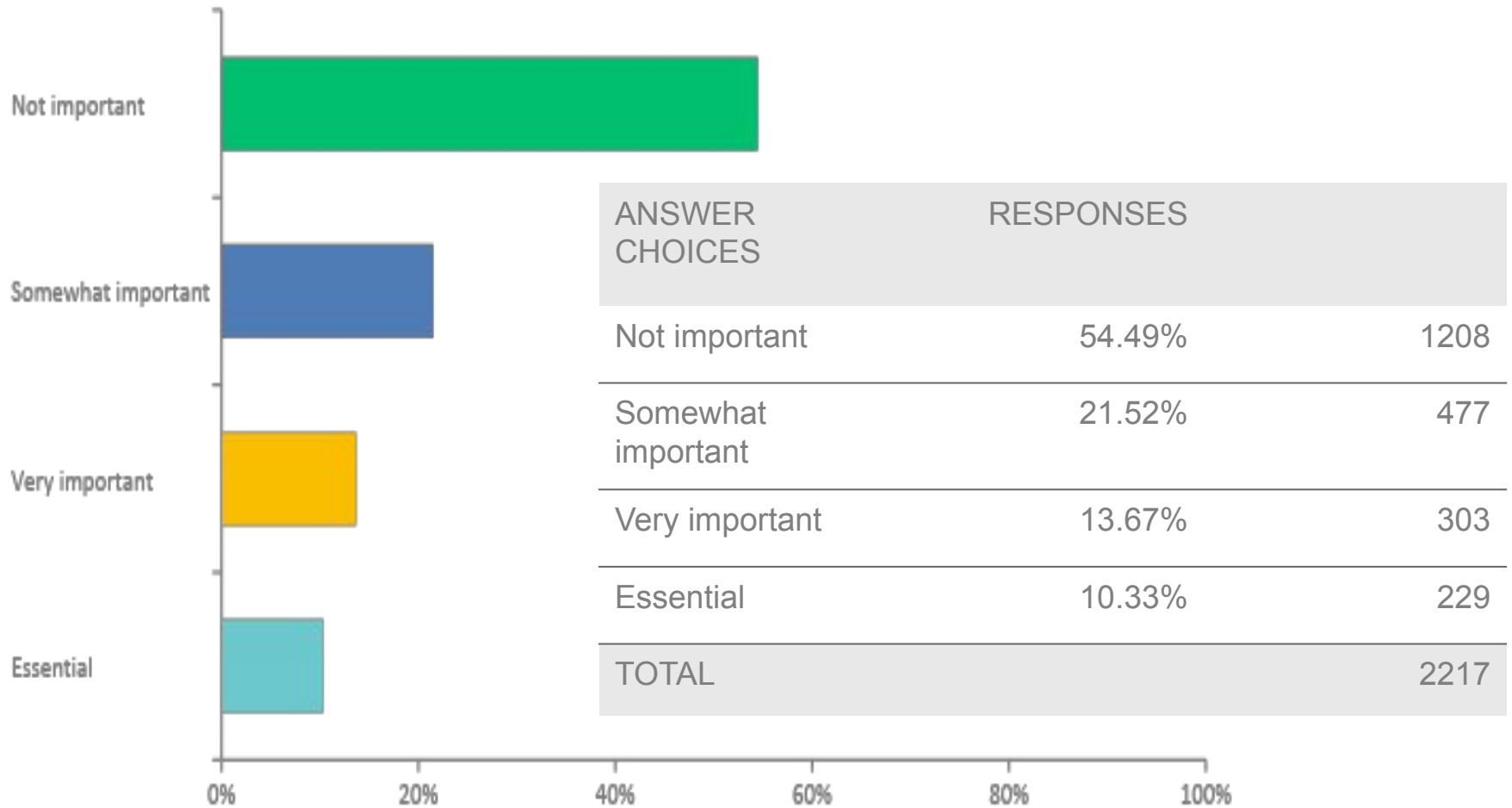
Q8: Are you satisfied with the current access students have to clubs and other co-curricular programs?



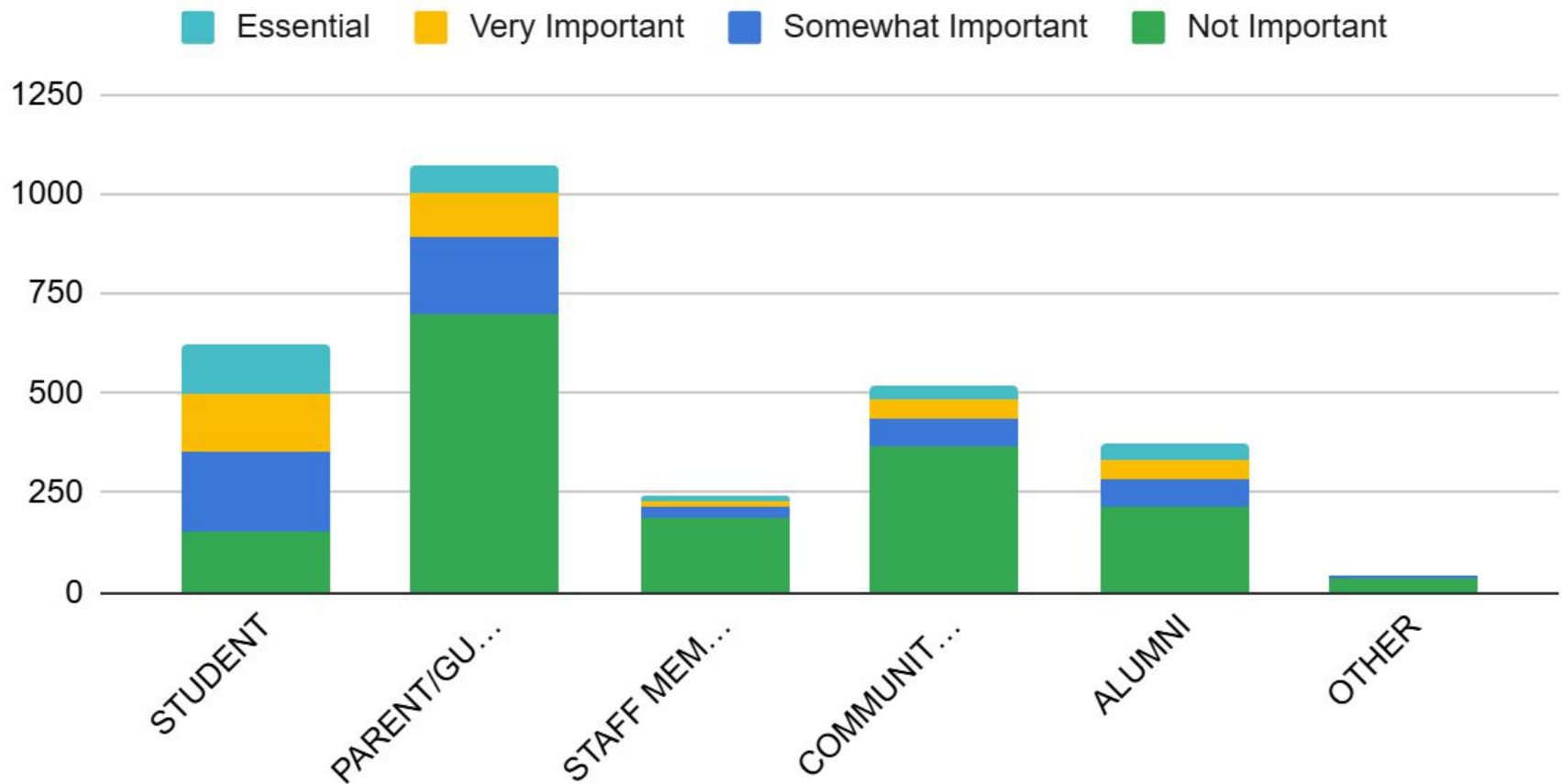
	Yes	No	Not Sure
STUDENT	496	27	95
PARENT/GUARDIAN	771	64	241
STAFF MEMBER	202	10	28
COMMUNITY MEMBER	365	31	122
ALUMNI	275	18	84
OTHER	1	5	35

Q9: How important is it to you that each high school maintains its own social traditions (e.g., prom court)?

Answered: 2217 ,: 371



Q9: How important is it to you that each high school maintains its own social traditions (e.g., prom court)?



	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
STUDENT	152	203	141	125
PARENT/GUARDIAN	702	190	114	69
STAFF MEMBER	189	28	15	10
COMMUNITY MEMBER	368	68	52	30
ALUMNI	213	68	53	40
OTHER	35	6	3	1

Q10: Please share any comments about co-curricular programs or traditions:

Access to Activities & Participation

- Most frequent concern: student access to sports, clubs, and activities.
- Some respondents worry a single school could:
 - Increase competition for teams and leadership roles
 - Reduce participation opportunities.
- Others believe combining could expand program offerings if resources are consolidated.

Importance of Traditions & School Identity

- Strong attachment to existing traditions such as:
 - East vs. West rivalry
 - Separate homecomings and prom courts
 - Individual school spirit.
- Some respondents feel these traditions define community identity.

Potential for Unified School Culture

- Another group supports creating a new unified identity if schools were combined.
- They believe a single school could:
 - Build stronger overall spirit
 - Create new traditions shared by all students.

Opportunities Across Schools

- Some respondents noted that maintaining two schools can lead to:
 - Uneven activity participation
 - Differences in program availability.
- Combining could potentially standardize opportunities for all students.

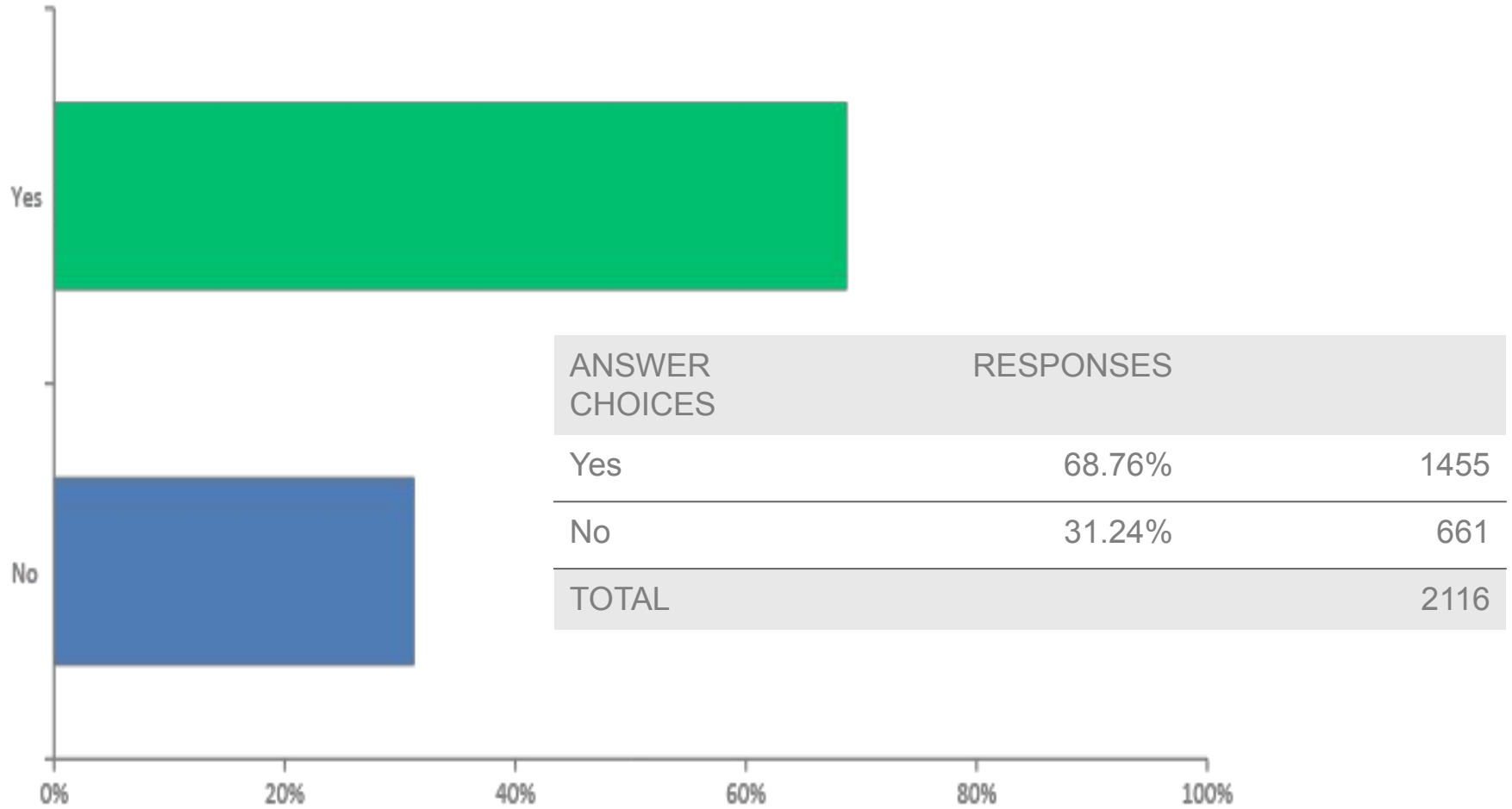
Minimal or No Impact on Activities

- A portion of respondents indicated co-curricular traditions are not a major factor in their opinion about school structure.
- These respondents prioritize academics, facilities, or finances instead.

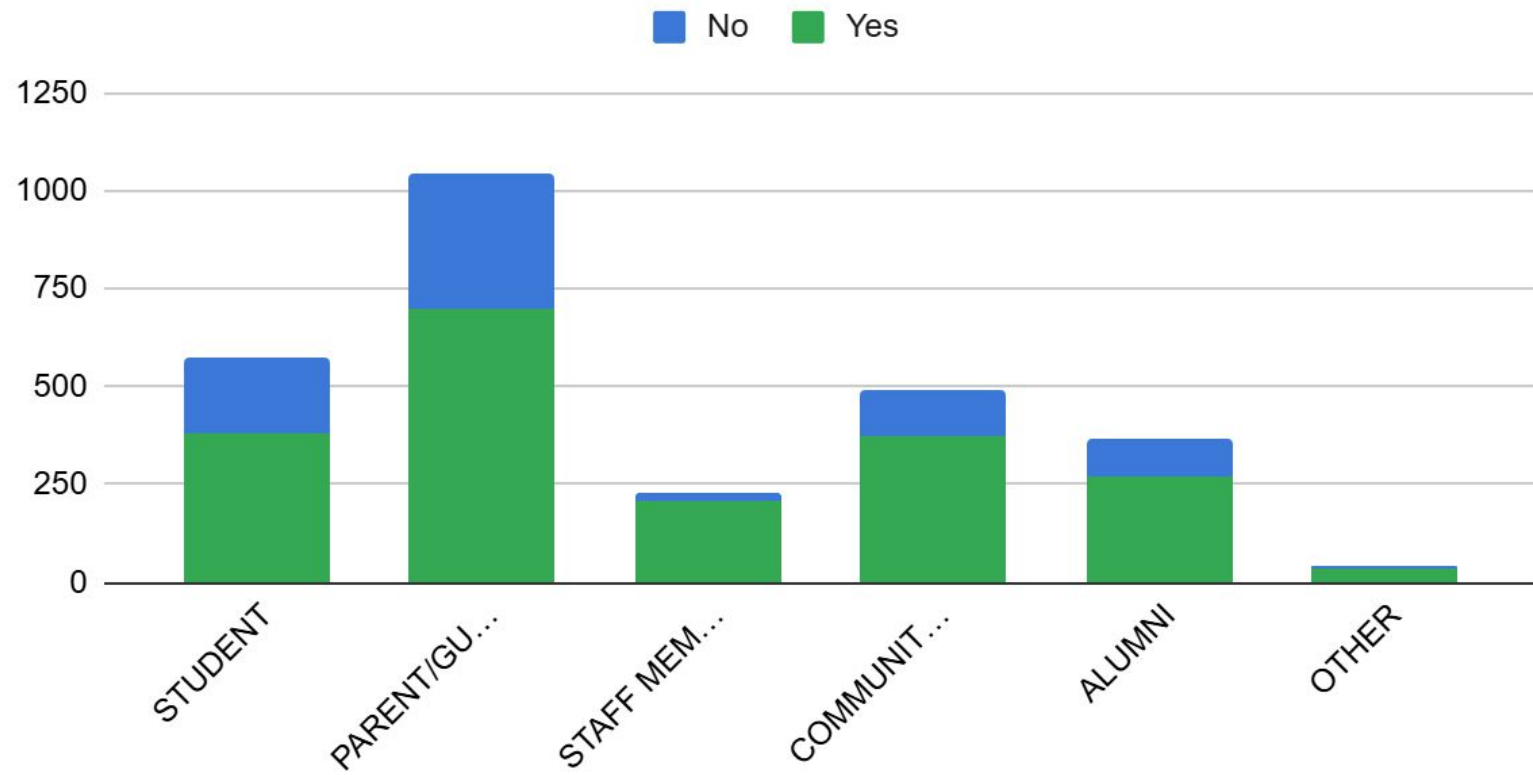


Q11: Were you aware that many (14+) athletic teams are already combined between East and West?

Answered: 2116 ,: 472



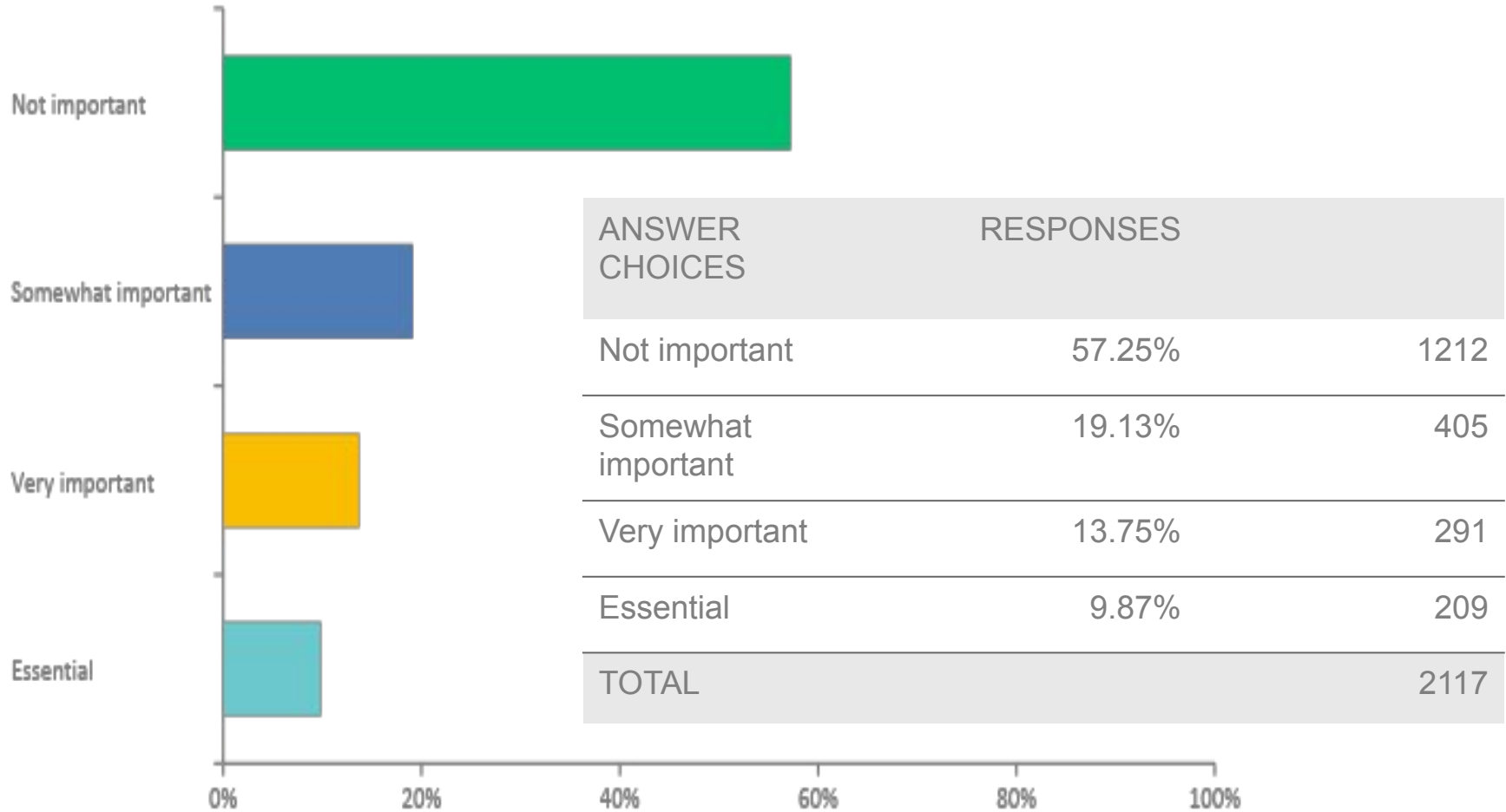
Q11: Were you aware that many (14+) athletic teams are already combined between East and West?



	Yes	No
STUDENT	379	195
PARENT/GUARDIAN	697	349
STAFF MEMBER	206	26
COMMUNITY MEMBER	377	117
ALUMNI	273	96
OTHER	35	10

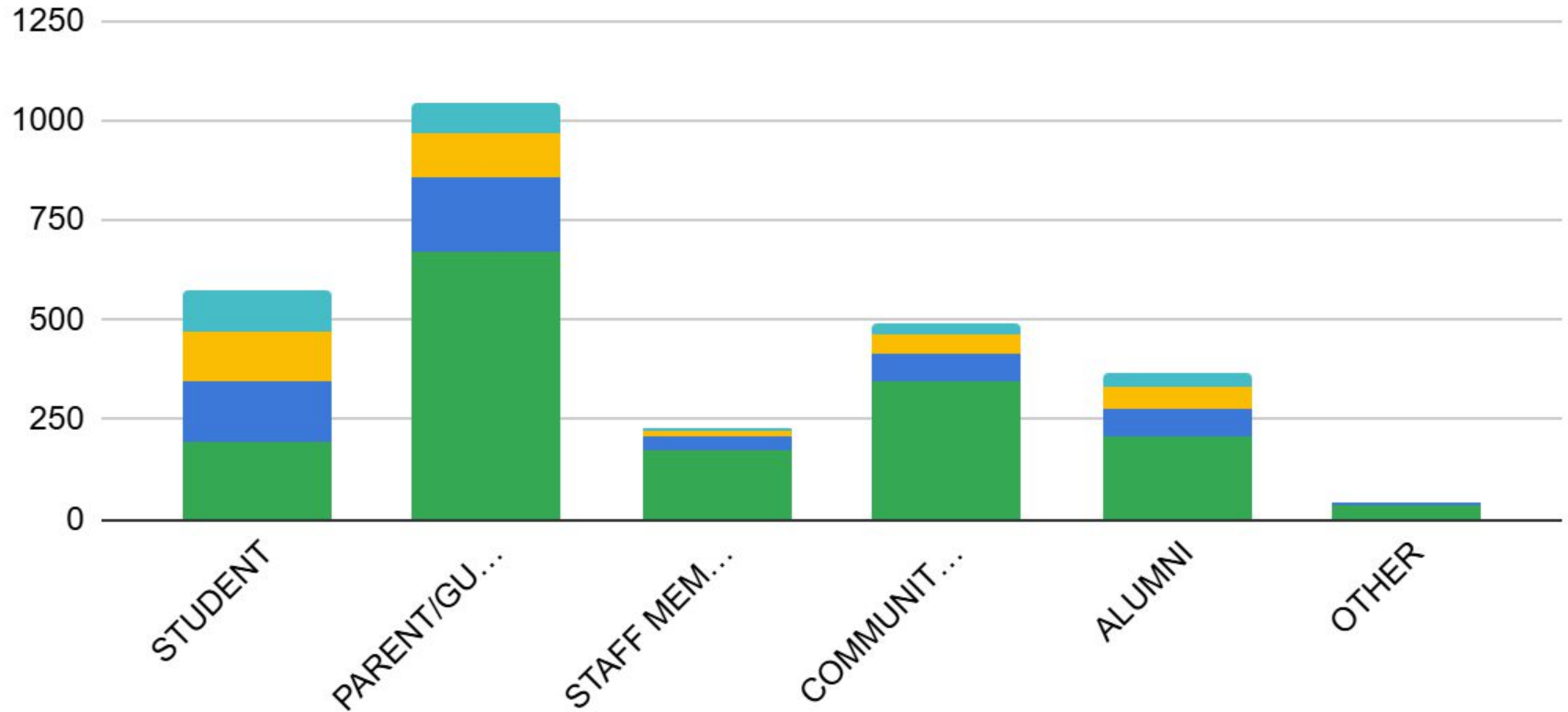
Q12: Currently East competes as the Suns, and West competes as the Spartans. How important is it to you that students compete on separate teams when able (not combined)?

Answered: 2117 , : 471



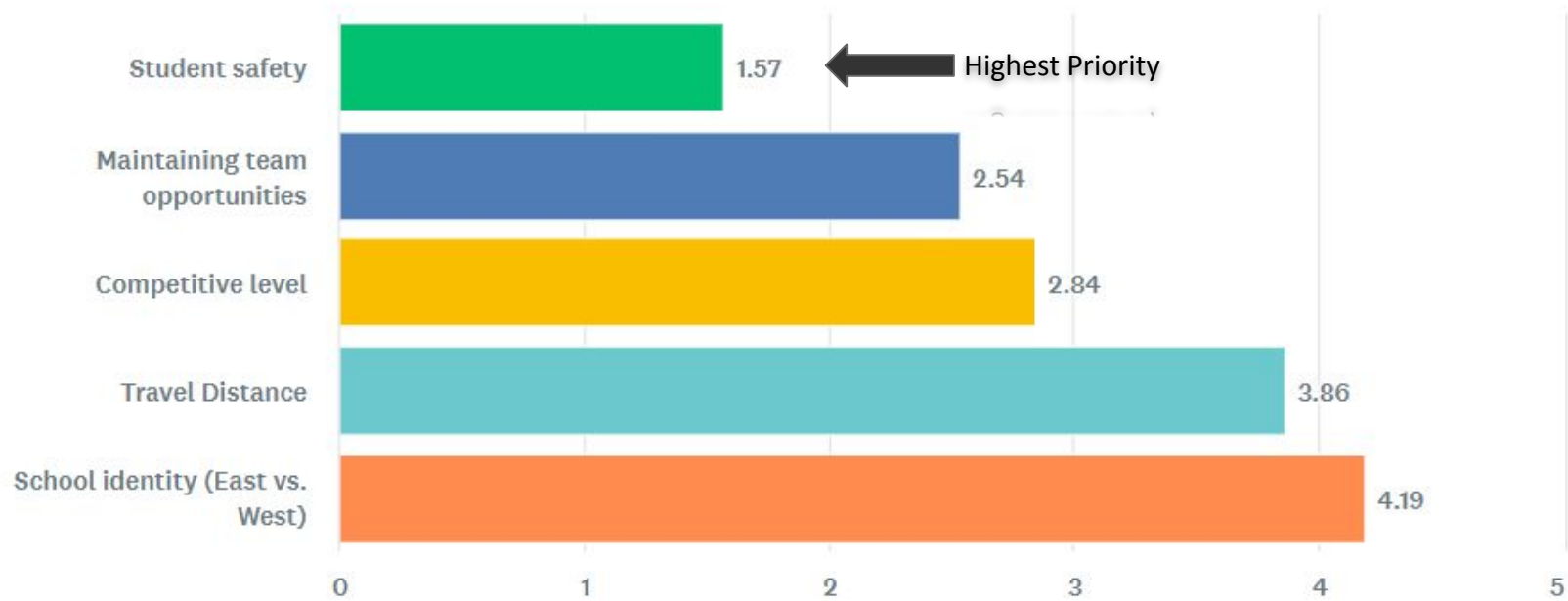
Q12: Currently East competes as the Suns, and West competes as the Spartans. How important is it to you that

■ Essential
 ■ Very Important
 ■ Somewhat Important
 ■ Not Important



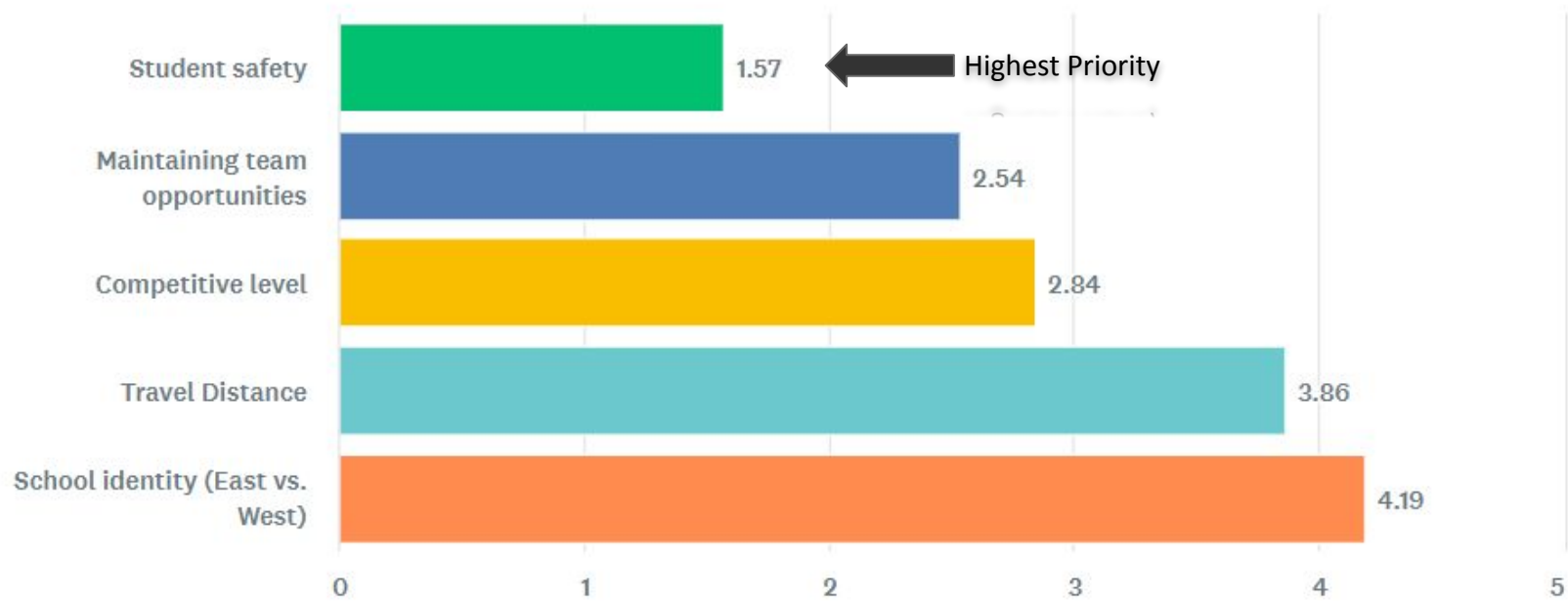
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
STUDENT	198	148	125	102
PARENT/GUARDIAN	672	188	111	74
STAFF MEMBER	175	31	14	11
COMMUNITY MEMBER	346	71	46	31
ALUMNI	207	72	54	34
OTHER	36	5	2	2

Q13: Please rank the following priorities for high school athletics (1 = most important):



↓	● 1 ↓	● 2 ↓	● 3 ↓	● 4 ↓	● 5 ↓	Total ↑	Weighted
Student safety	70.18% 1431	13.88% 283	7.95% 162	4.66% 95	3.33% 68	2039	1.57
Maintaining team opportunities	12.31% 251	41.69% 850	28.25% 576	15.30% 312	2.45% 50	2039	2.54
Competitive level	11.87% 242	27.27% 556	32.61% 665	21.73% 443	6.52% 133	2039	2.84
Travel Distance	0.88% 18	8.39% 171	20.06% 409	45.02% 918	25.65% 523	2039	3.86
School identity (East vs. West)	4.76% 97	8.78% 179	11.13% 227	13.29% 271	62.04% 1265	2039	4.19
						10195	3.00

Q13: Please rank the following priorities for high school athletics (1 = most important):



	1	2	3	4	5
STUDENT	Safety	Team Opportunities	Competition Level	School Identity	Travel Distance
PARENT/GUARDIAN	Safety	Team Opportunities	Competition Level	Travel Distance	School Identity
STAFF MEMBER	Safety	Team Opportunities	Competition Level	Travel Distance	School Identity
COMMUNITY MEMBER	Safety	Team Opportunities	Competition Level	Travel Distance	School Identity
ALUMNI	Safety	Team Opportunities	Competition Level	School Identity	Travel Distance
OTHER	Safety	Competition Level	Team Opportunities	Travel Distance	School Identity

Q14: Please share any other thoughts related to athletics:

Participation Opportunities

- The most common concern was maintaining opportunities for students to participate in sports.
- Respondents noted that combining schools could:
 - Increase competition for roster spots
 - Reduce participation opportunities for some students.

Team Competitiveness

- Many comments suggested that combining athletes from both schools could create stronger, more competitive teams.
- Potential benefits mentioned:
 - More depth of talent
 - Greater success in conference and state competition.

East vs. West Rivalry

- A large number of responses referenced the importance of the East vs. West rivalry.
- Respondents described it as:
 - A long-standing community tradition
 - A key element of school pride and engagement.

Program Sustainability

- Some respondents noted that certain sports struggle with low participation numbers at individual schools.
- Combining schools could help:
 - Maintain viable teams
 - Expand sport offerings.

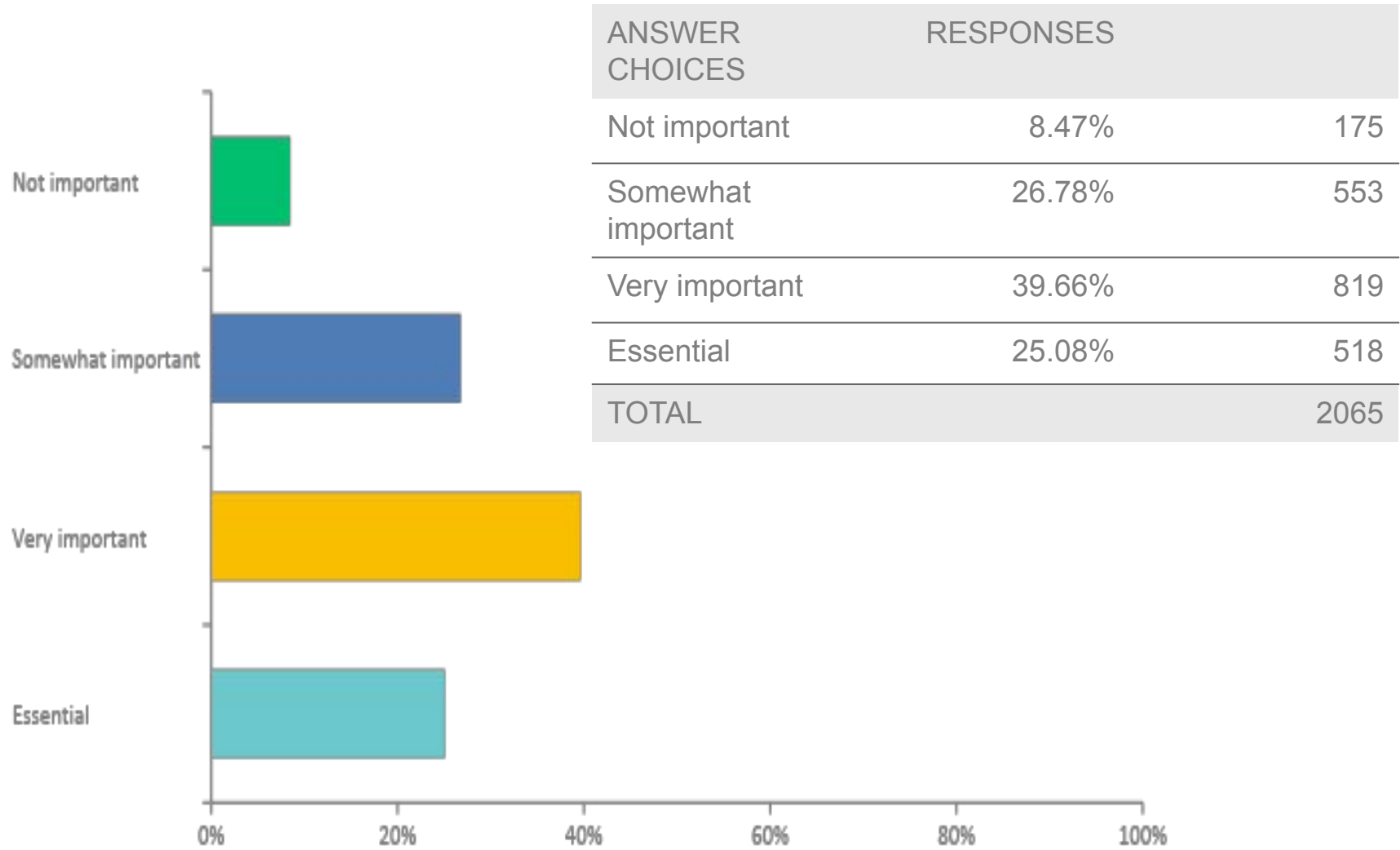
Minimal or Mixed Impact

- A portion of respondents indicated athletics should not drive the decision about school structure.
- These respondents emphasized that academics and student learning should remain the priority.

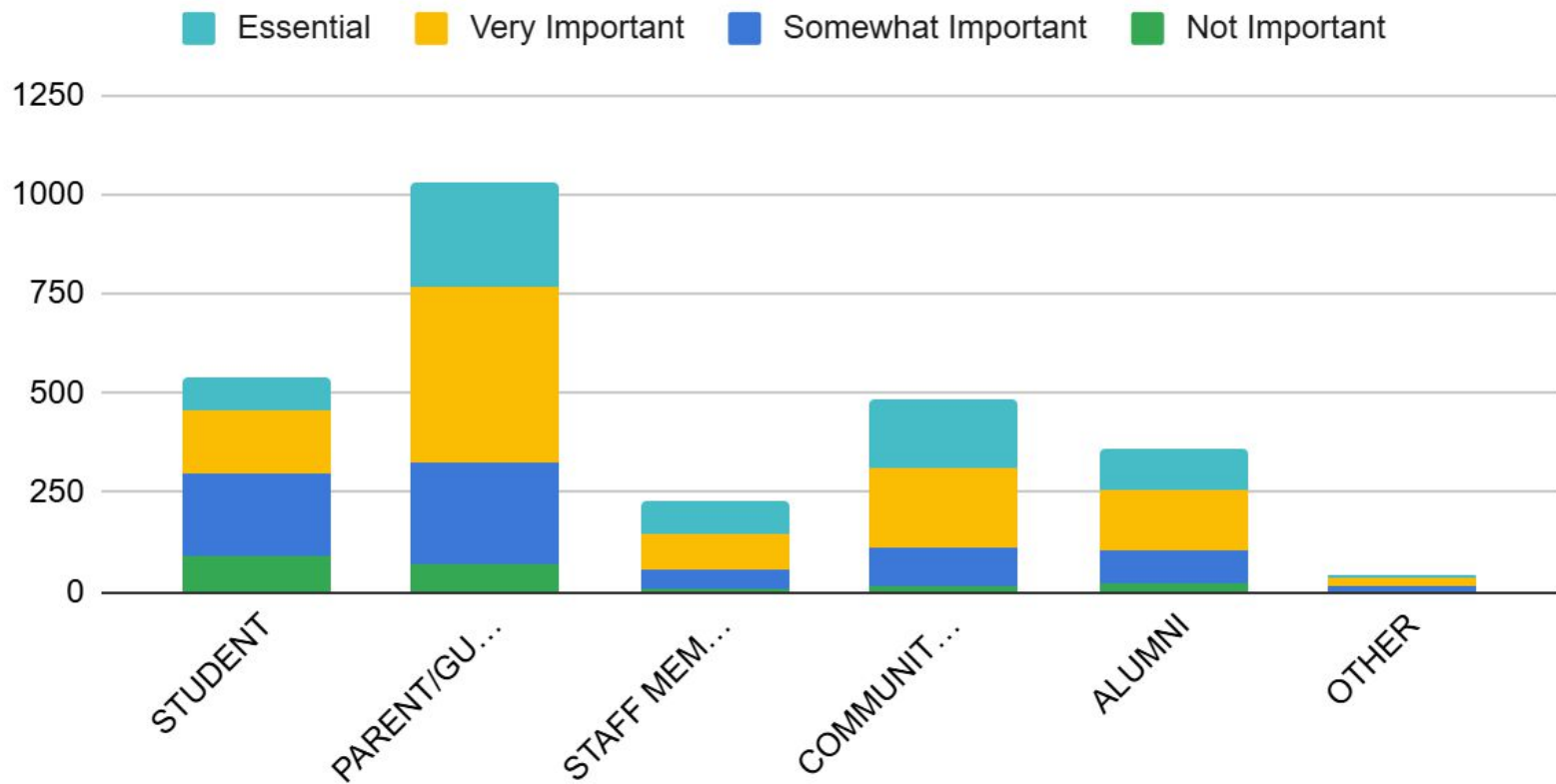


Q15: How important is financial sustainability to you when considering the future of high school configuration?

Answered: 2065 ,: 523



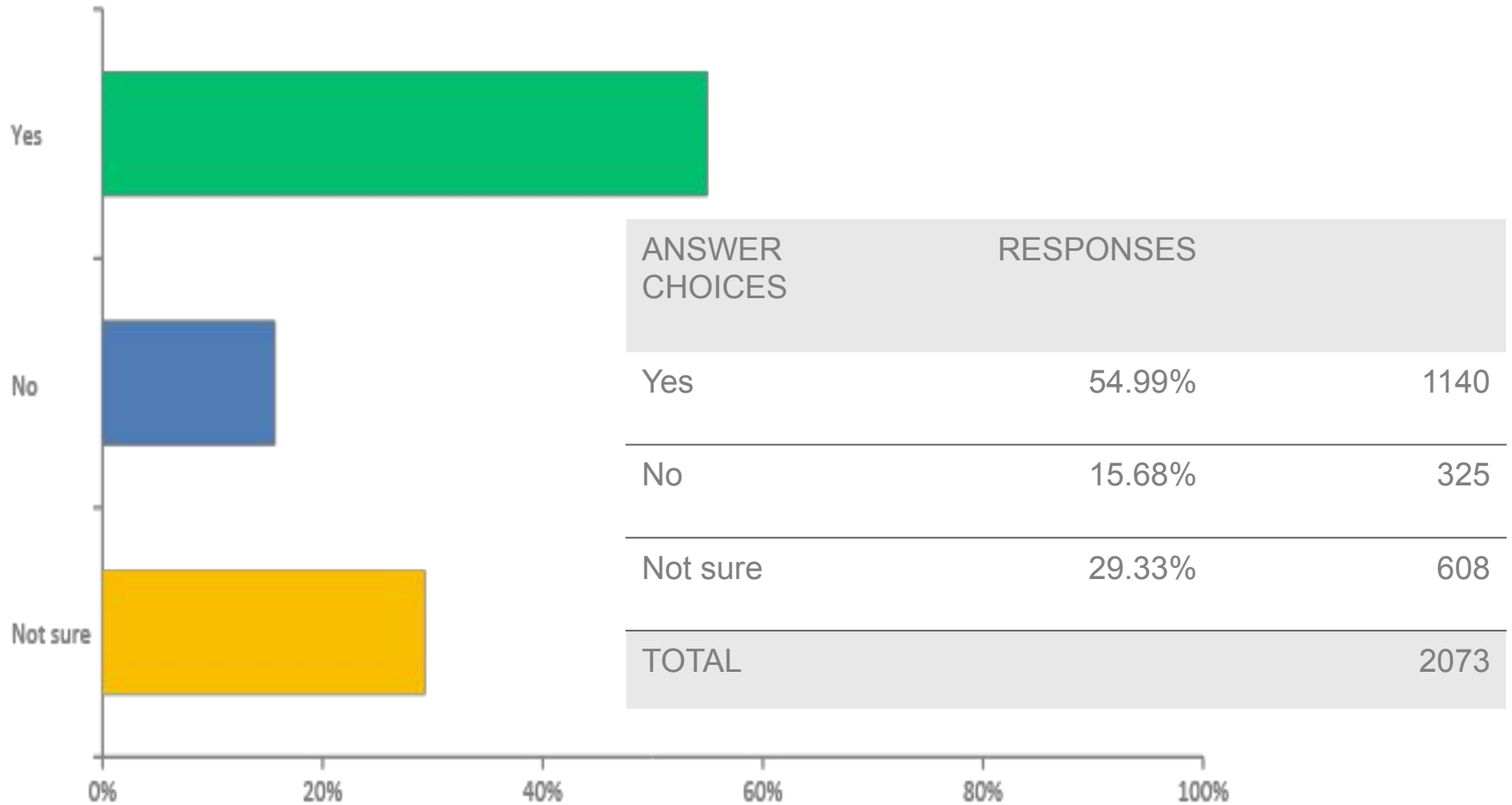
Q15: How important is financial sustainability to you when considering the future of high school configuration?



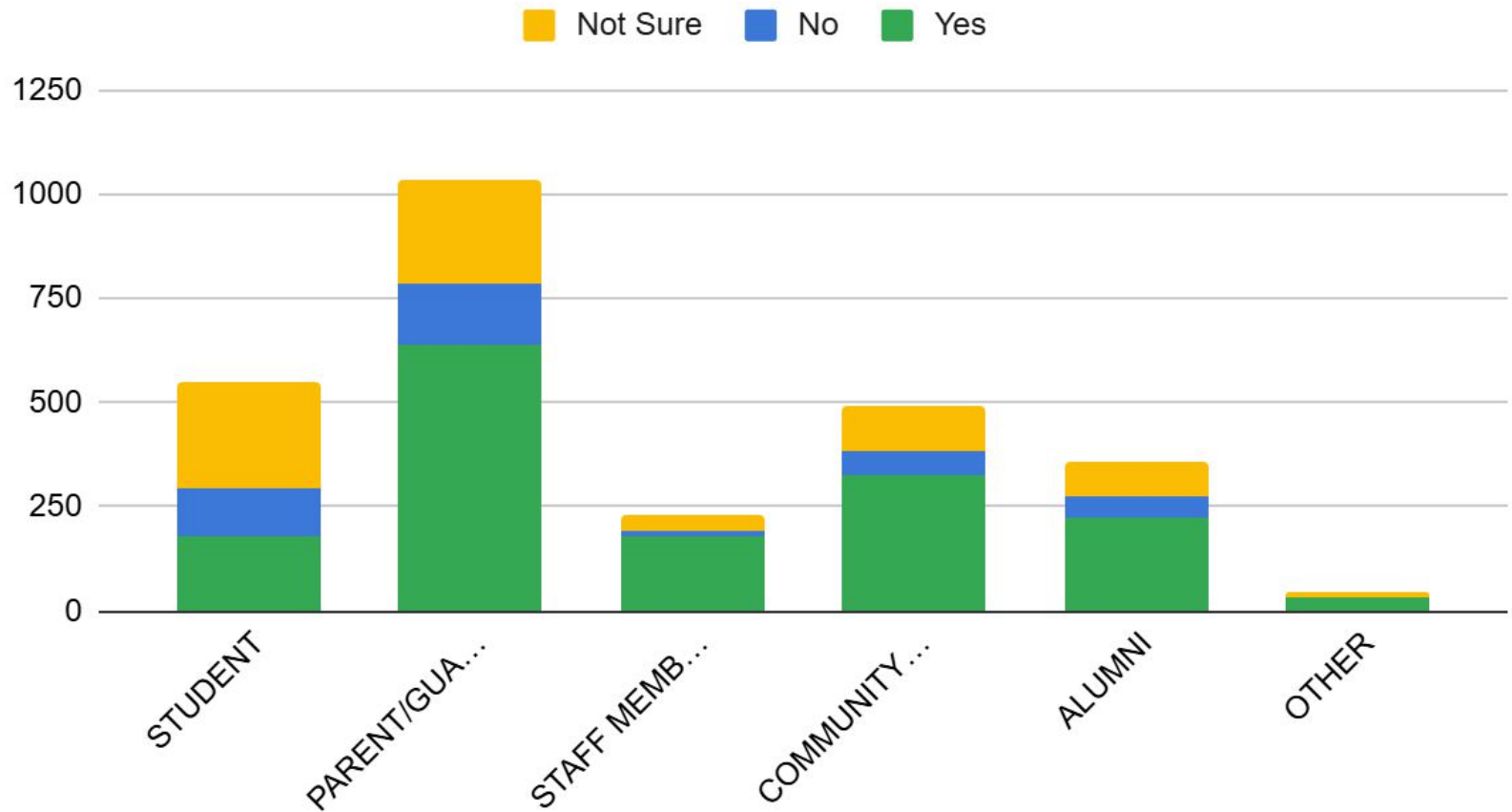
	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important	Essential
STUDENT	89	206	165	83
PARENT/GUARDIAN	69	255	443	267
STAFF MEMBER	10	45	93	79
COMMUNITY MEMBER	18	94	199	175
ALUMNI	20	86	154	102
OTHER	2	15	18	10

Q16: Would you support short-term costs (e.g., rebranding)?

Answered: 2073 ,: 515



Q16: Would you support short-term costs (e.g., rebranding)?



	Yes	No	Not Sure
STUDENT	178	117	253
PARENT/GUARDIAN	640	149	245
STAFF MEMBER	180	15	33
COMMUNITY MEMBER	324	59	107
ALUMNI	227	51	83
OTHER	33	3	10

Q17: Please share any comments or concerns about the financial impact:

Condition of Existing Facilities

- Many respondents referenced the current condition of East and West buildings.
- Comments focused on: Maintenance needs, Age of facilities, Need for modernization in some spaces.

Financial Responsibility and Efficient Spending

- They suggested that restructuring could: Improve building utilization, Reduce duplication of spaces or programs.
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Financial impact of restructuring: Uniforms, Logos, Signage

Neutral or Limited Impact

- A portion of respondents indicated facilities alone should not determine the decision.
- They emphasized prioritizing: Student learning, Academic programming, Community considerations.



Q18: What are your top 2–3 priorities when thinking about the future of high school configuration in West Bend?

Academic Quality & Opportunities

- Maintain strong academic programs
- Expand AP, electives, and career pathways
- Ensure students are prepared for college and careers

Student Experience & Belonging

- Students should feel known, supported, and connected
- Maintain positive school culture and relationships
- Avoid environments where students feel “lost”
- Safety referenced as a key priority

Participation Opportunities

- Protect access to sports, clubs, and leadership roles
- Concerns that larger schools could limit participation
- Desire for broad opportunities for student involvement

Community Identity & Traditions

- Strong connection to East and West pride and traditions
- Community values school spirit and local identity
- Importance of preserving meaningful traditions



Q19: Please share anything else you would like the district to consider as part of this process?

Academic Quality & Opportunities

- The most consistent priority across responses was maintaining or improving academic quality.
- Respondents emphasized: Strong instructional programs, Access to rigorous coursework, Expanded electives and AP opportunities.

Student Experience & School Culture

- Many comments focused on the overall student experience.
- Common considerations: School belonging and relationships, Maintaining positive school culture, Ensuring students feel known and supported.

Participation Opportunities

- Respondents frequently highlighted the importance of access to athletics, activities, and leadership opportunities.
- Concerns included: Increased competition for teams or clubs, Ensuring broad participation opportunities.

Financial Responsibility

- Many responses referenced the importance of cost-effective decisions.
- Priorities included: Responsible use of taxpayer funds, Long-term financial sustainability.

Facilities & Infrastructure

- Respondents also noted the importance of facility quality and capacity.
- Key concerns: Building condition, Adequate space for programs, Long-term facility planning.

Community Identity & Traditions

- A notable theme involved maintaining community traditions and school identity.
- Comments referenced: East/West pride, Community engagement and history.



Strategic Guidance for the Board Based on Community Feedback

Prioritize Academic Opportunities Above Structure

Across multiple questions, the strongest and most consistent theme was academic quality and opportunity.

Protect Student Participation Opportunities

A major concern across athletics, activities, and leadership programs was access for students. Safeguards to protect broad student participation.

Preserve Community Identity While Planning for the Future

The East–West identity appeared frequently. Traditions (old and new) are important. Continue engagement efforts throughout any planning.

Ensure Financial Responsibility

Many responses referenced taxpayer responsibility and long-term sustainability.



High School Comparisons



School	Students	Miles
Slinger High	1065	12
Germantown High	1288	15
Cedarburg High	1073	15
Hartford High	1324	18
Homestead High	1204	21
Menomonee Falls High	1261	22
Hamilton High	1577	23
Brookfield East High	1374	29
Arrowhead High	1950	30
King International	1308	31
Nicolet High	1043	32
Wauwatosa East High	1043	32
Brookfield Central High	1215	33
Riverside High	1240	34
Nathan Hale High	1134	35
Beaver Dam High	1031	36

School	Students	Miles
Waukesha West High	1167	37
Hamilton High	1472	38
Bradley Technology High	1048	38
Bay View High	1021	38
Pulaski High	1041	39
Greenfield High	1140	39
Fond du Lac High	1917	40
Oconomowoc High	1591	41
Reagan College Preparatory High	1372	42
Sheboygan South High	1075	43
Franklin High	1605	44
Sheboygan North High	1482	47
Muskego High	1634	47
Oak Creek High	2220	48
Oshkosh West High	1623	56
Oshkosh North High	1266	59



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