

# Vancouver School Board

## Educational Facilities Review



### Summary of the Responses from the Educational Facilities Review Feedback Form

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Objectives & Participation

- As part of its public consultation process, the Vancouver School Board (VSB) Educational Facilities Review Committee distributed a feedback form to assess educational priorities among parents, students and VSB employees.
- NRG Research Group, an independent research company, assisted in the development of the form, tabulation of the feedback and the analysis of the responses.
- The form was comprised of nine items assessing priorities for education and five items assessing priorities regarding facilities. Respondents rated each item on a 4-point scale:
  - Should not be a priority at all
  - Lower priority
  - Higher priority
  - Top priority
- Respondents were also asked to provide additional suggestions regarding the Educational Facilities Review.

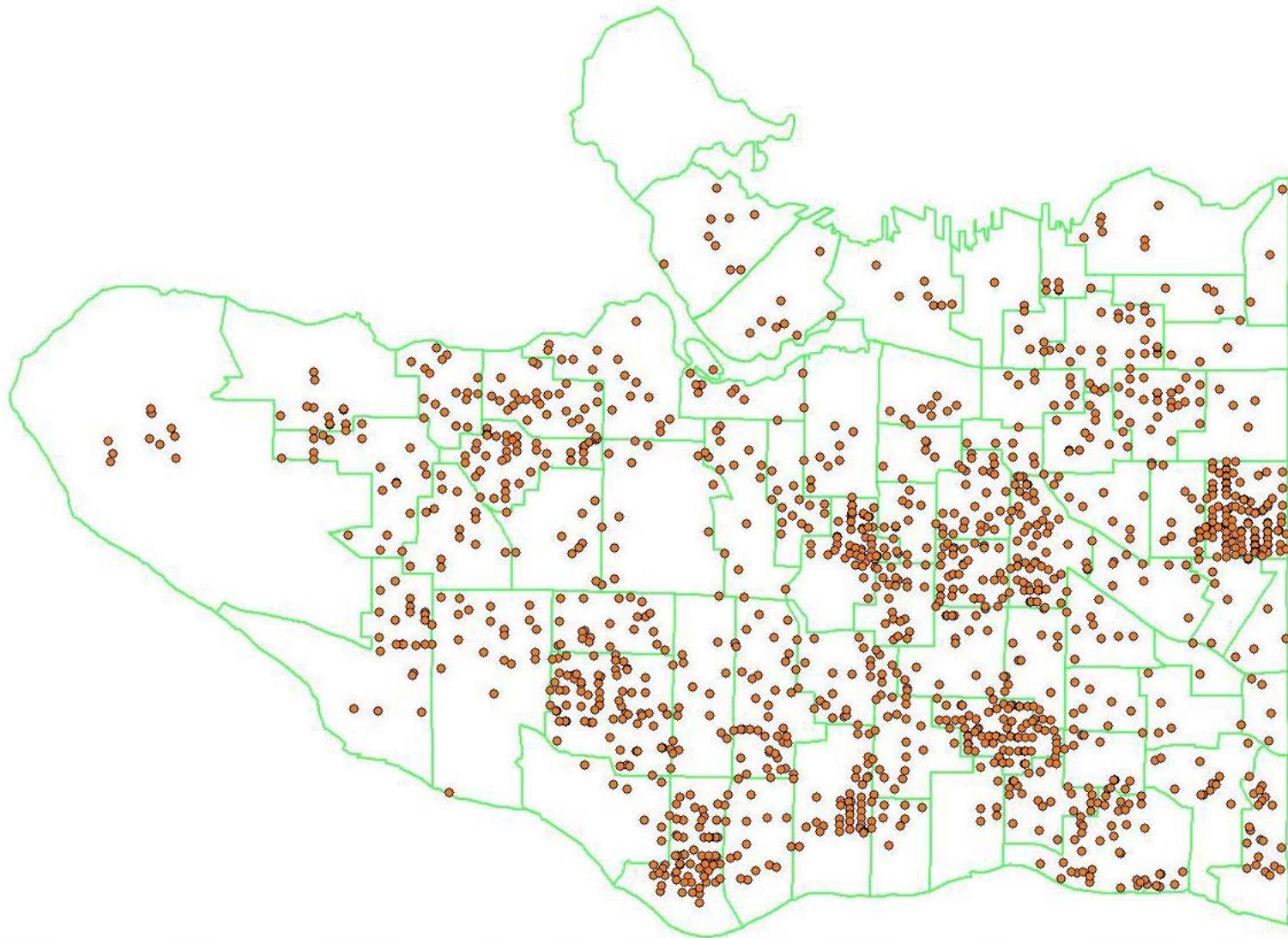
# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Objectives & Participation

- The form was made available from April 17 to May 23 through three channels:
  - At VSB Open Houses (May 8, 9, 10 in 2007)
  - Through VSB elementary and secondary schools
  - Online feedback form available at VSB website
- The form was translated into six languages: Punjabi, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Spanish and Korean. The English version of the form is in the appendix to this report.
- A total of 2,074 forms were returned to VSB by May 25, 2007. This is a high rate of response given the time frame for form collection (just over 5 weeks).
- Responses were received from residents living in all elementary and secondary school catchment areas. (see following slide)

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Geographic Distribution of Respondents



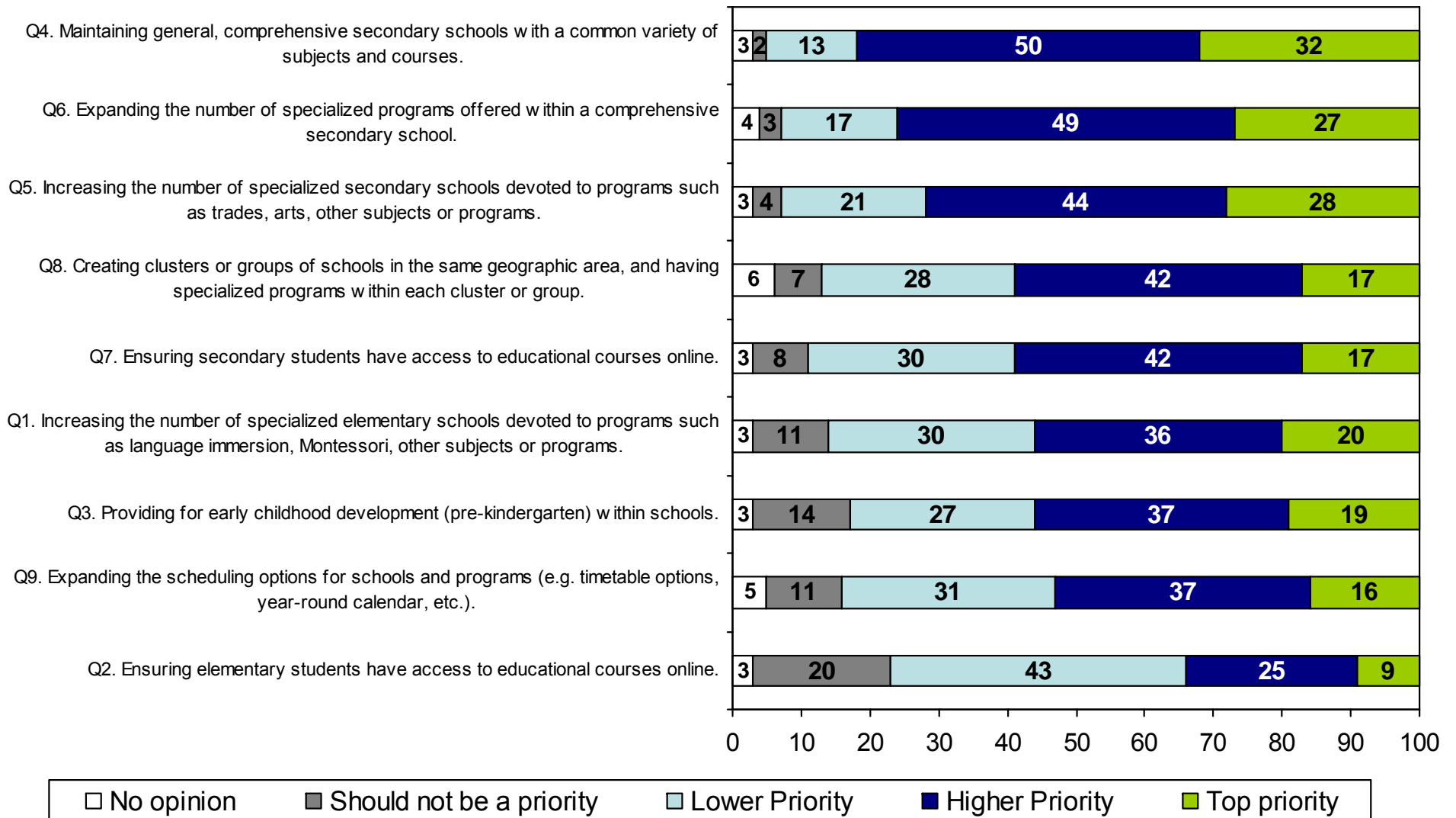
# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Summary of Education and Facilities Priorities

- Respondents rated nine education items and five facility items on the extent to which VSB should consider each a priority as it makes decisions regarding educational programs and facilities.
- The graphs on the following slides illustrate the percentage of respondents who rated each item as a top priority (green), a higher priority (dark blue), a lower priority (light blue), or who indicated that item should not be a priority at all (grey).
- The items are rank-ordered based on the percentage of respondents who consider the item a high priority – rating it as either a “top priority” or a “higher priority” on the rating scale.

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Summary of Education Priorities



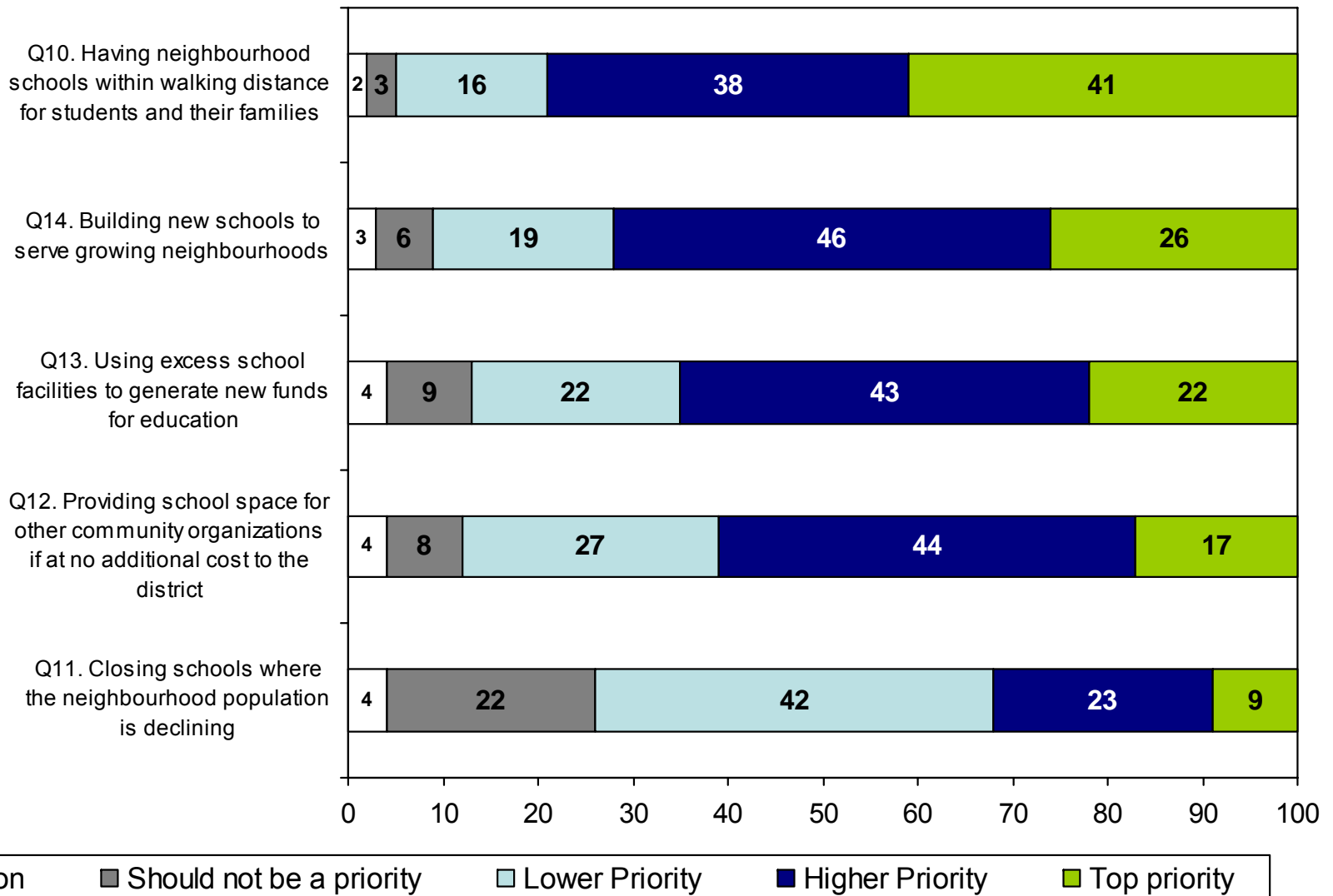
# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Summary of Education Priorities

- While all of the education priority items included in the feedback form represented potential enhancements to student learning, respondents clearly differentiated the various options.
- The results show that respondents want priority placed on secondary school education. They want comprehensive secondary schools with a common variety of subjects to remain a priority, but they also want to see more specialized programs in secondary schools.
- The other education items were ranked lower in priority, but only one item—ensuring elementary students have access to educational courses online—was rated as a low priority by the majority of respondents.
- The results indicate that the majority of respondents do see substantial value in online learning for secondary students, the creation of clusters of schools devoted to specialized programs, increasing the number of specialized elementary schools, providing for early childhood development, and expanding scheduling options. However, for each of these five items, there was a sizable percentage of respondents (35% to 42%) who do not view them as high priority.

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Summary of Facilities Priorities



# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Summary of Facilities Priorities

- The results show that having neighbourhood schools within walking distance is highly important to these respondents. The item assessing this priority elicited the most “top priority” ratings, at 41%.
- While this results points to a preference for maintaining schools close to home, the results also indicate that respondents support action to be taken to address the shifting population within Vancouver and to fully utilize school facilities. “Building new schools to serve growing neighbourhoods” and “Using excess school facilities to generate new funds for education” were both endorsed relatively strongly by respondents. Respondents also generally support the VSB generating funds through providing space to community organizations.
- Two-thirds of respondents do not feel that closing schools where the neighbourhood population is declining should be a high priority. However, just under a third do appear to endorse the VSB taking action to close under-utilized facilities.

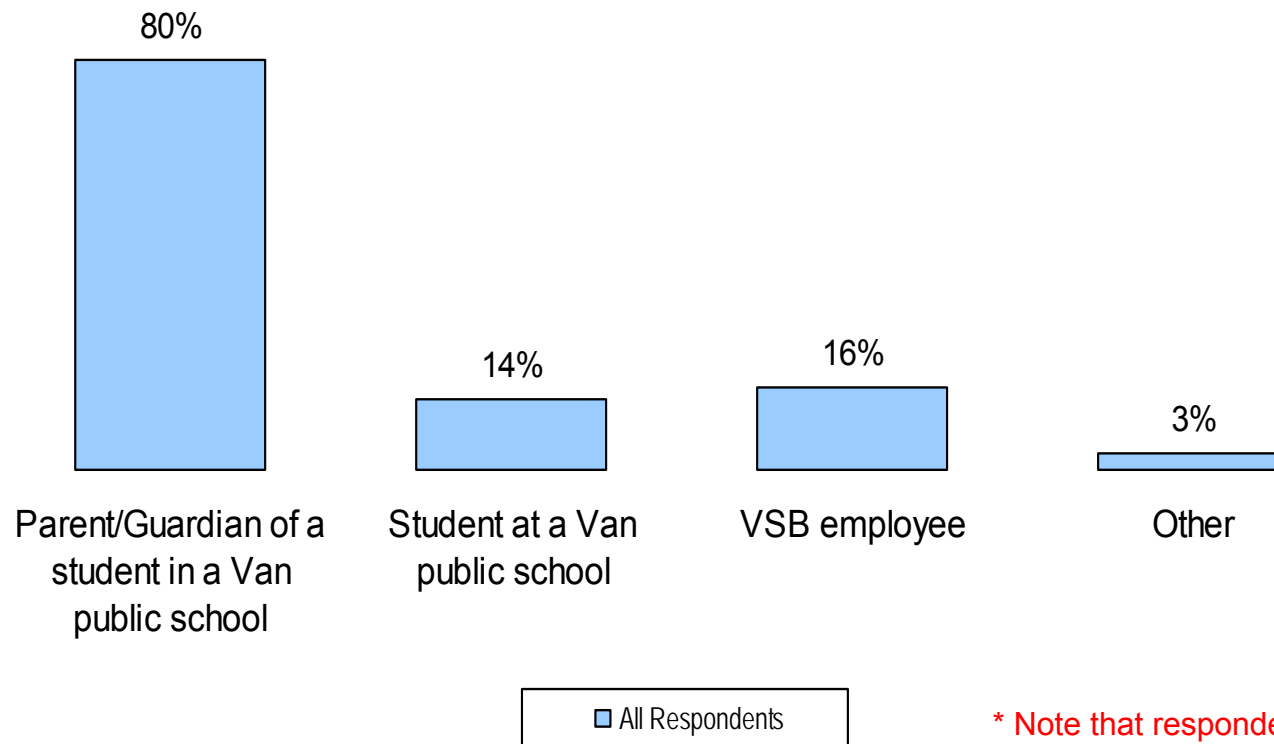
# Participant Characteristics



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Participant Characteristics

Which of the following categories describe you?

- Four out of five respondents were parents or guardians of students attending Vancouver public schools.



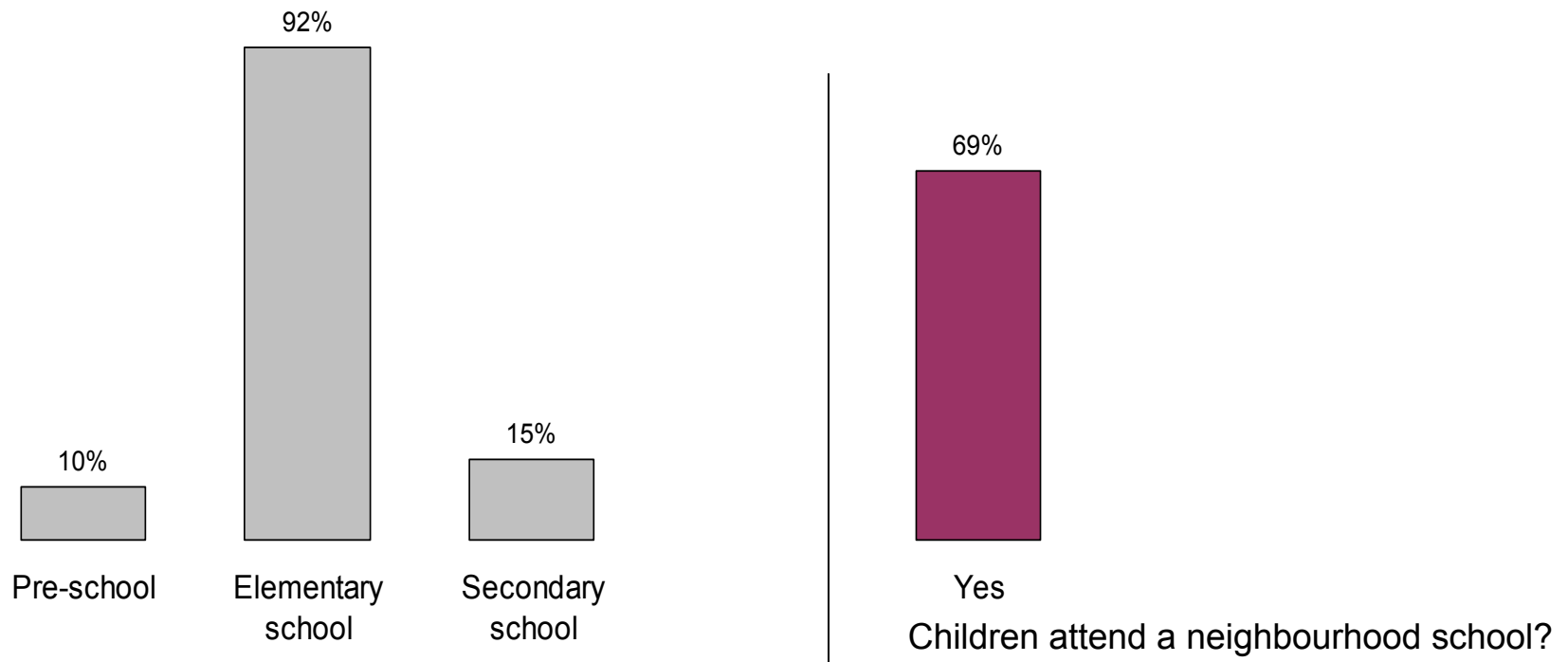
\* Note that respondents could choose more than one category. Therefore, the percentages do not add to 100%.

Base: All Respondents n=2,074

## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Participant Characteristics

PARENTS/GUARDIANS ONLY – Does your child/children attend... / Do any of your children attend your neighbourhood school?

- Nine out of ten respondents were parents/guardians of children in elementary school. Three out of five said that their children attend a neighbourhood school.



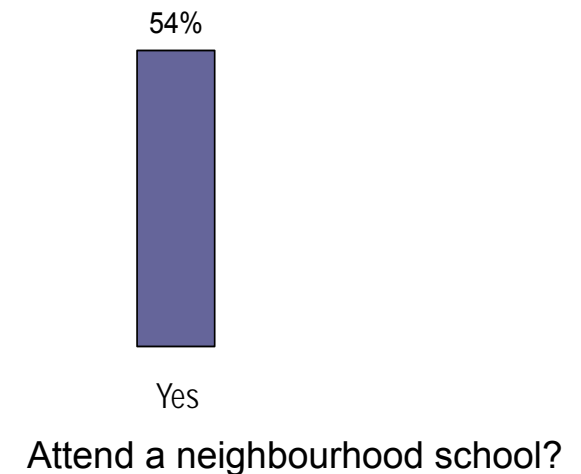
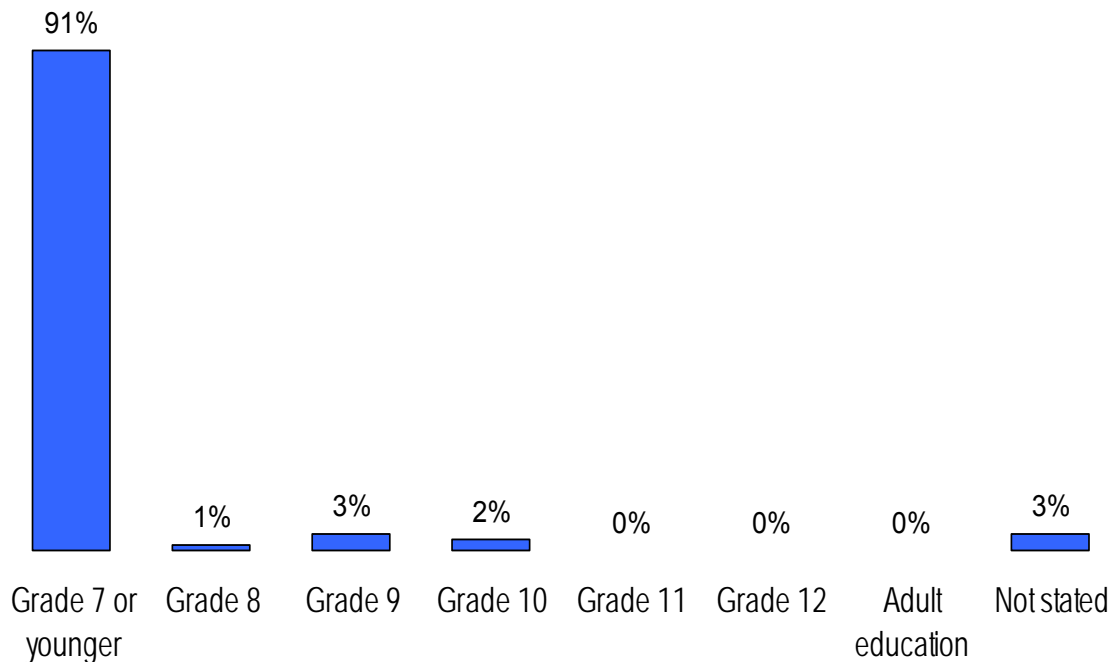
\* Note that respondents could choose more than one category.  
Therefore, the percentages do not add to 100%.

Base: Parents/Guardians only n=1,668

## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Participant Characteristics

### STUDENTS ONLY – What grade are you in? / Do you attend your neighbourhood school?

- Nine out of ten student respondents were in Grade 7 or a lower grade.
- Just under half of student respondents said that they attend a neighbourhood school. Note that this percentage probably does not reflect the actual percentage of students from neighbourhood schools that responded. “Neighbourhood school” was not defined on the feedback form, and some students may have been unfamiliar with this term.



Base: Students only n=290



# Education Priorities

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

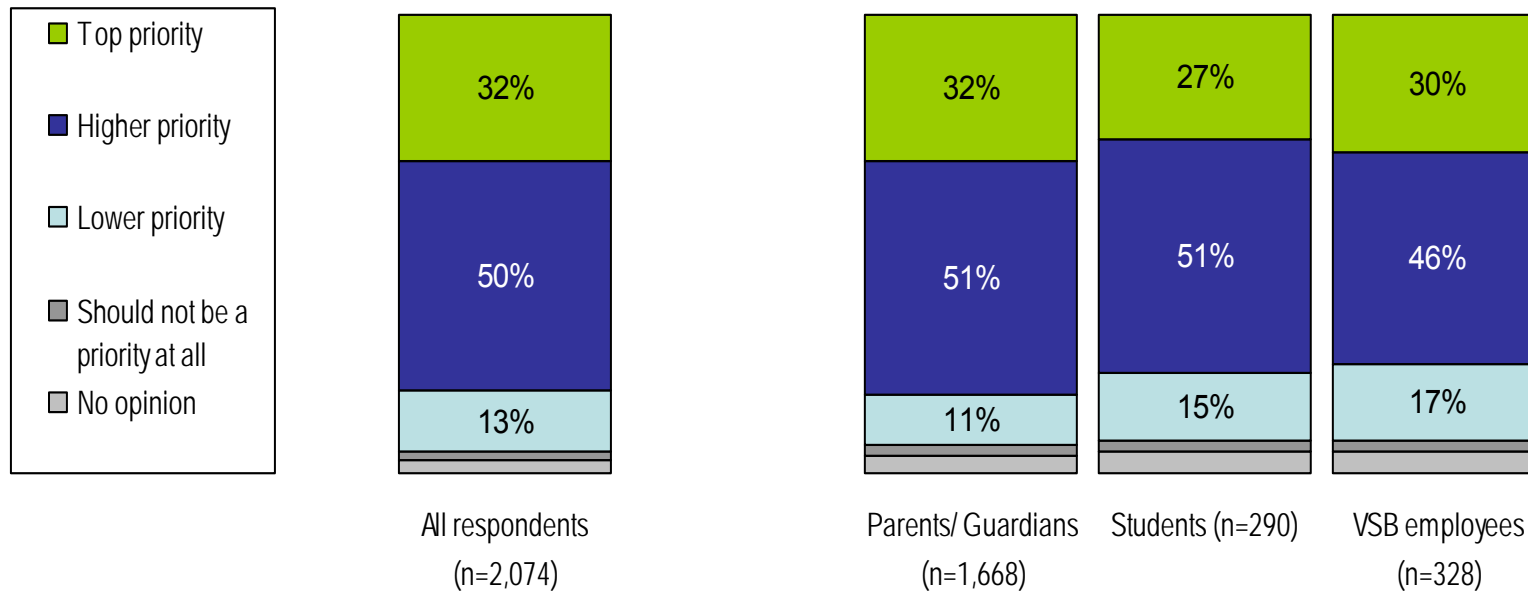
## Interpreting the Charts

- The graphs on the slides that follow show the percentage of respondents who rated each item as a top priority (green), a higher priority (dark blue), a lower priority (light blue), or who indicated that item should not be a priority at all (grey).
- The first bar on the left shows the ratings from the total number of respondents (All Respondents=2,047). The three bars on the right show the ratings given by Parents/Guardians (n=1,668), Students (n=290), and VSB Employees (n=328).
- The Education and Facilities items are presented in the order in which respondents evaluated them as high priority – giving a rating of either “top priority” or “higher priority” on the rating scale.
- Note that we compared the results for parents of pre-school students, parents of elementary school students, and parents of secondary students. We found very few differences. Therefore we did not create separate charts showing the ratings for these groups.

# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

## Q4 – Maintaining general, comprehensive secondary schools with a common variety of subjects and courses.

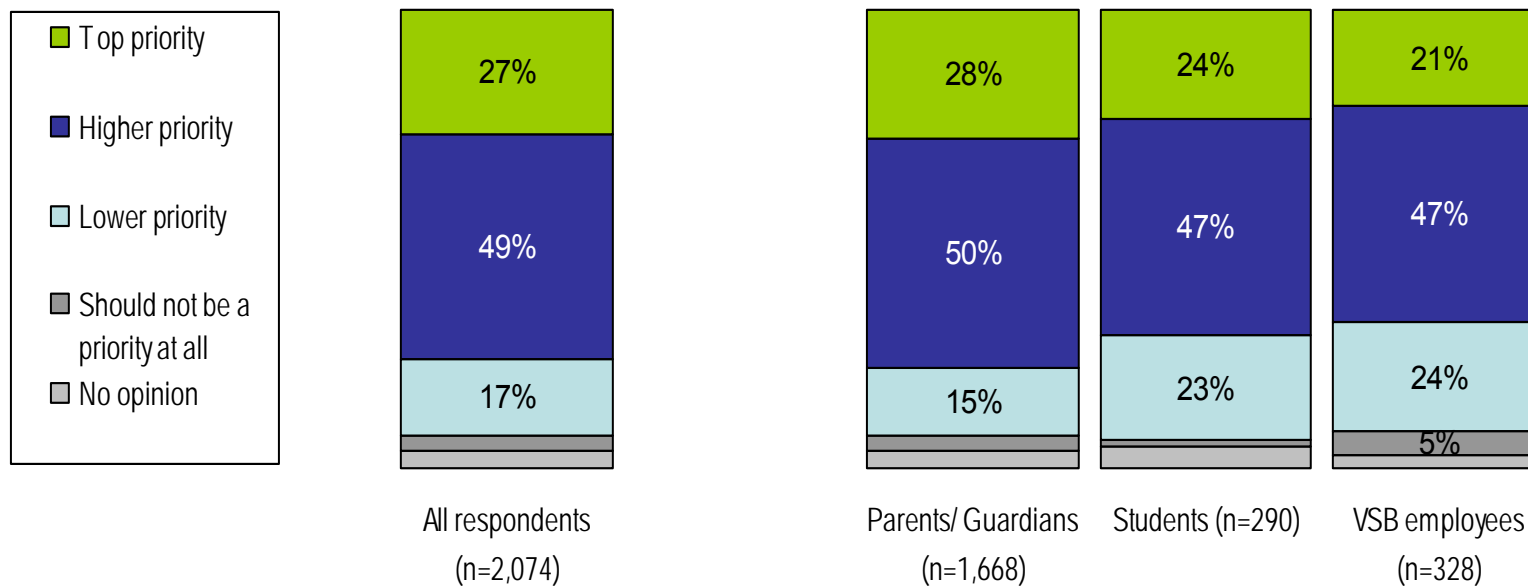
- Maintaining general, comprehensive secondary schools with a common variety of subjects and courses ranked highest among the education priorities. Overall, 82% of respondents rated it as a high priority (higher priority + top priority)—with just under a third rating it as a “top priority”.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

### Q6 – Expanding the number of specialized programs offered within a comprehensive secondary school.

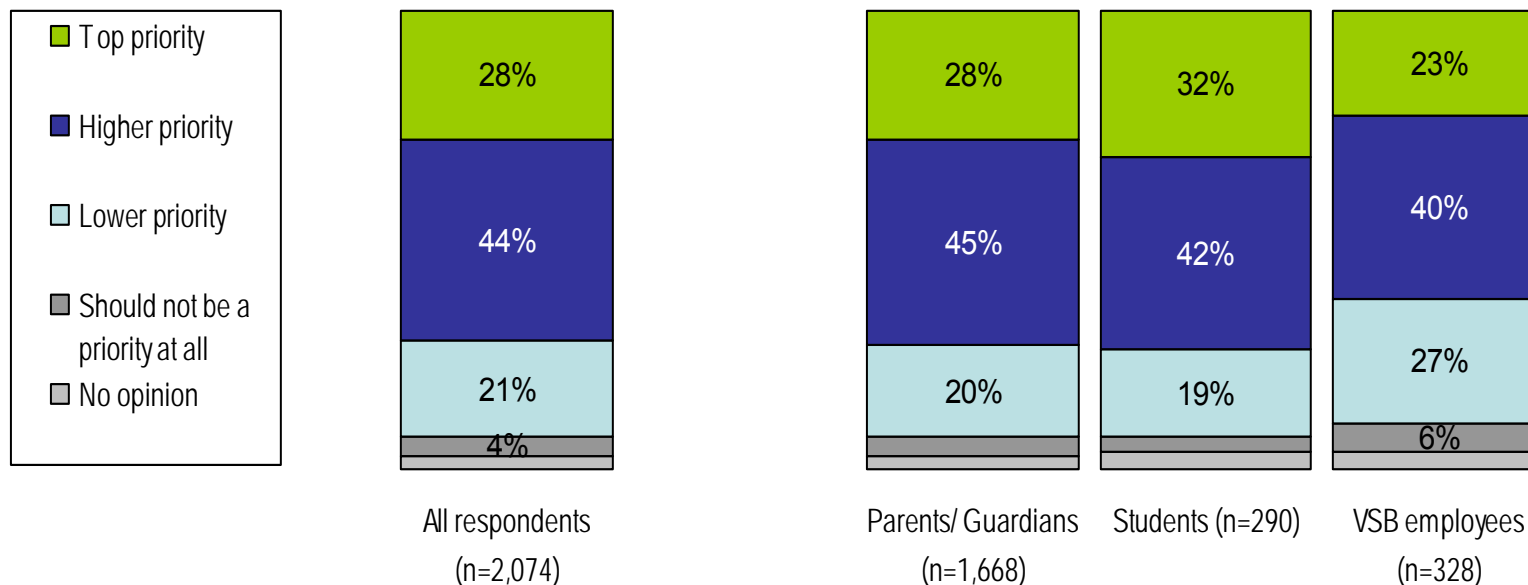
- Expanding the number specialized programs within secondary schools also ranked among the high priority items for respondents, with three-quarters of respondents (76%) rating it as a high priority.
- Parents were more likely than students or VSB employees to rate this item as high priority.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

### Q5 – Increasing the number of specialized secondary schools devoted to programs such as trades, arts, other subjects or programs.

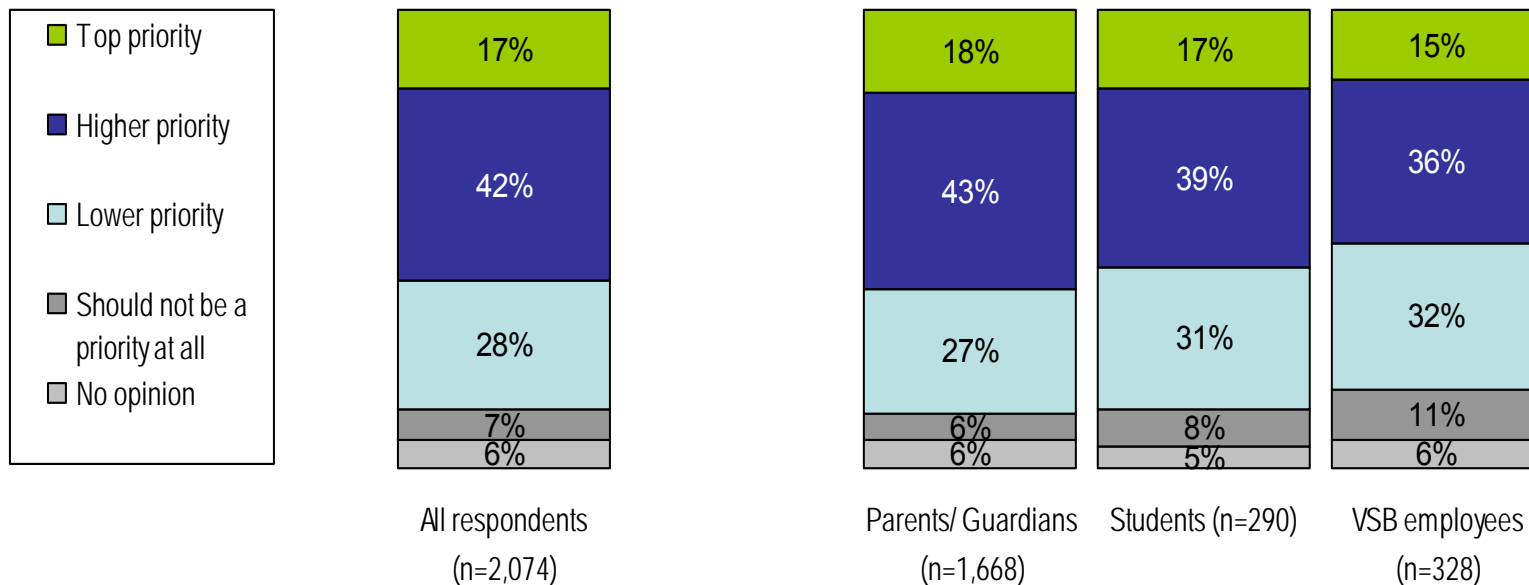
- In line with the results for the two previous secondary school items, increasing the number of specialized secondary schools was rated as high priority by 72% of respondents. There is more ambivalence regarding this priority, however. A quarter of respondents rated increasing the number of these schools as low priority (lower priority + no priority).
- VSB employees were less likely to rate this item as a high priority.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

Q8 – Creating clusters or groups of schools (elementary and secondary) in the same geographic area, and having specialized programs within each cluster or group.

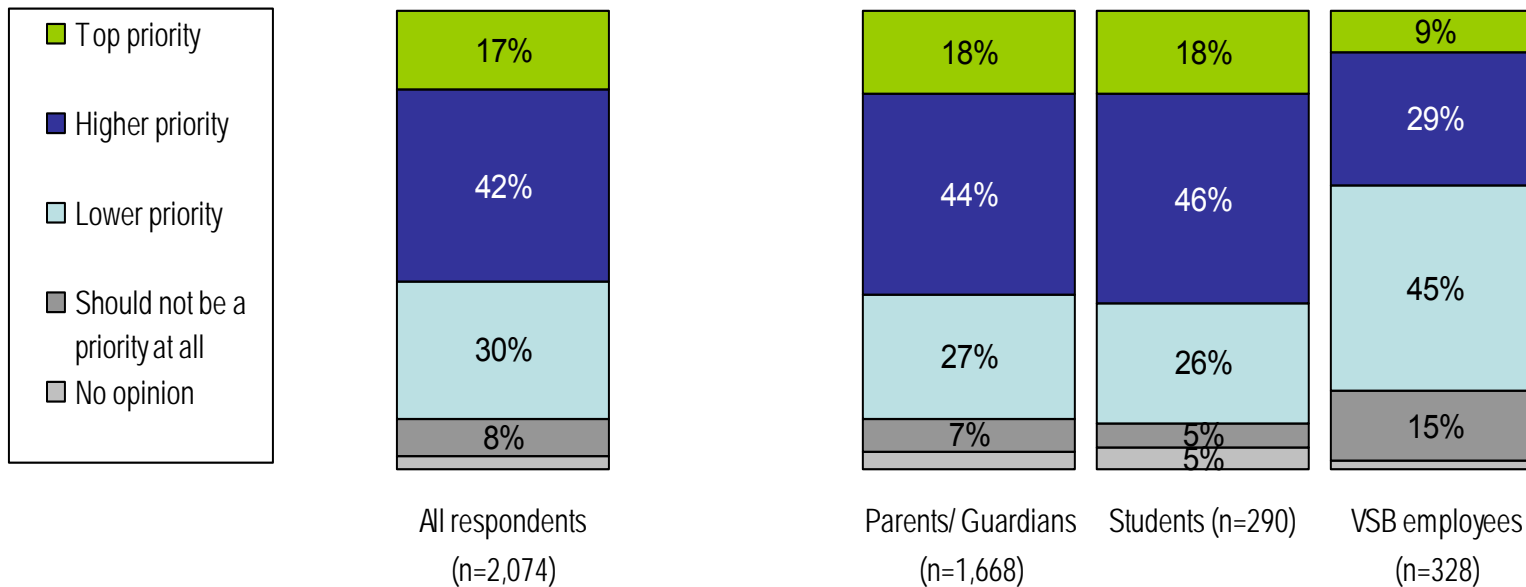
- There was more ambivalence regarding the remaining six education priority items. While the majority of respondents tended to rate these items as high priority, substantial proportions of respondents also rated these items as low priority.
- As a case in point, creating clusters or groups of schools was rated as high priority by 59% of respondents. However, over a third of respondents (35%) rated the creation of clusters as a low priority.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

## Q7 – Ensuring secondary students have access to educational courses online.

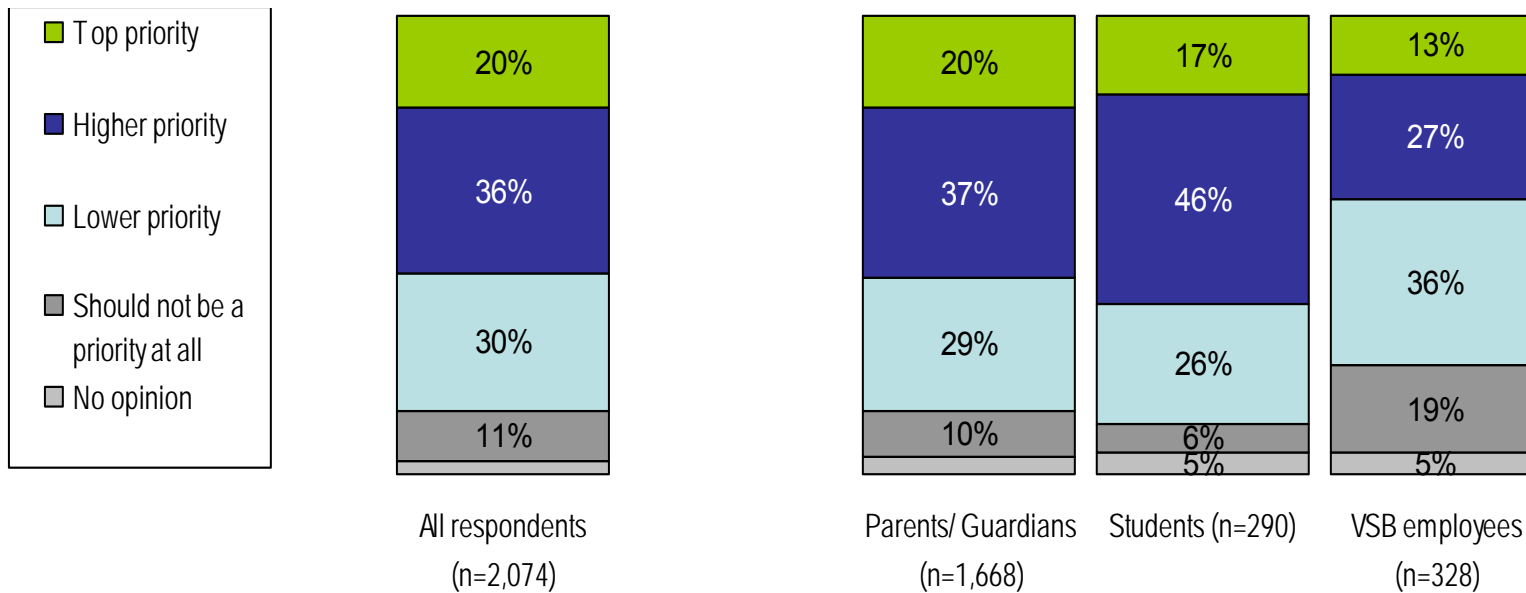
- Overall, 59% of respondents said that ensuring that secondary students have access to online education courses is a high priority, while 38% said it was a low priority.
- VSB employees were much more likely to assign low priority to online course access for secondary students.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

Q1 – Increasing the number of specialized elementary schools devoted to programs such as language immersion, Montessori, other subjects or programs.

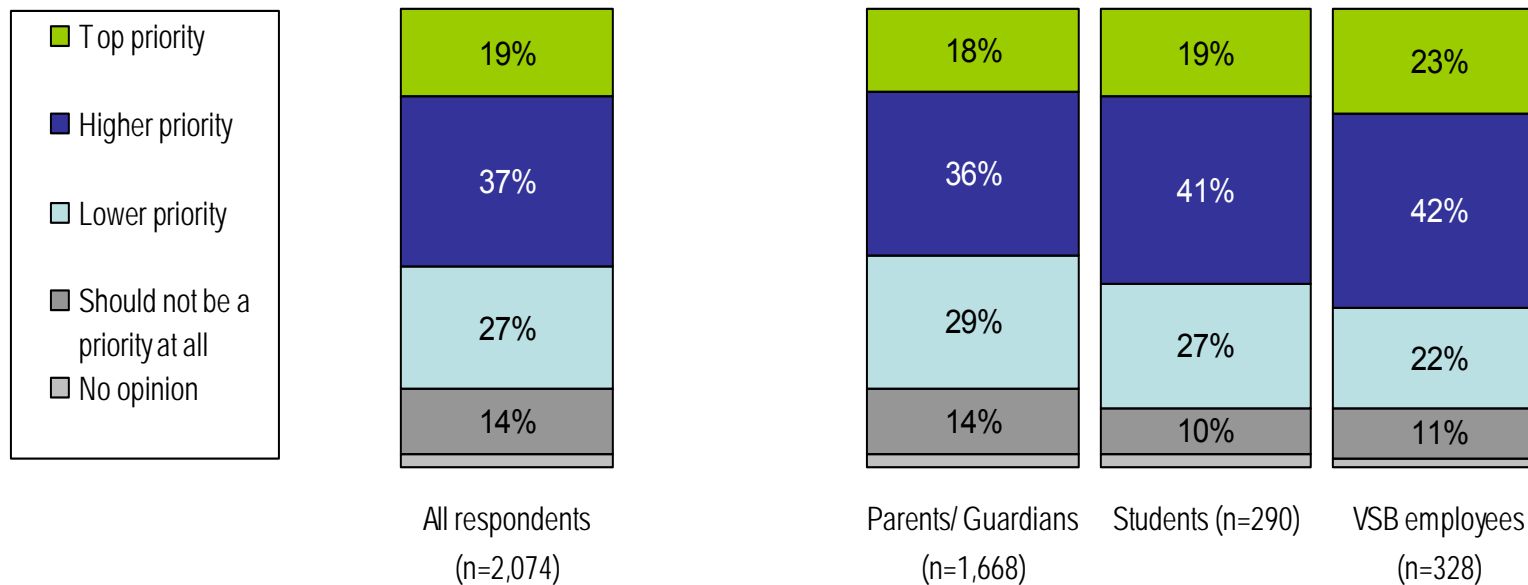
- Overall, 56% of respondents said that increasing the number of specialized elementary schools is a high priority; however, 41% said it was a low priority.
- VSB employees assigned lower priority to specialized elementary schools.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

## Q3 – Providing for early childhood development (pre-kindergarten) within schools

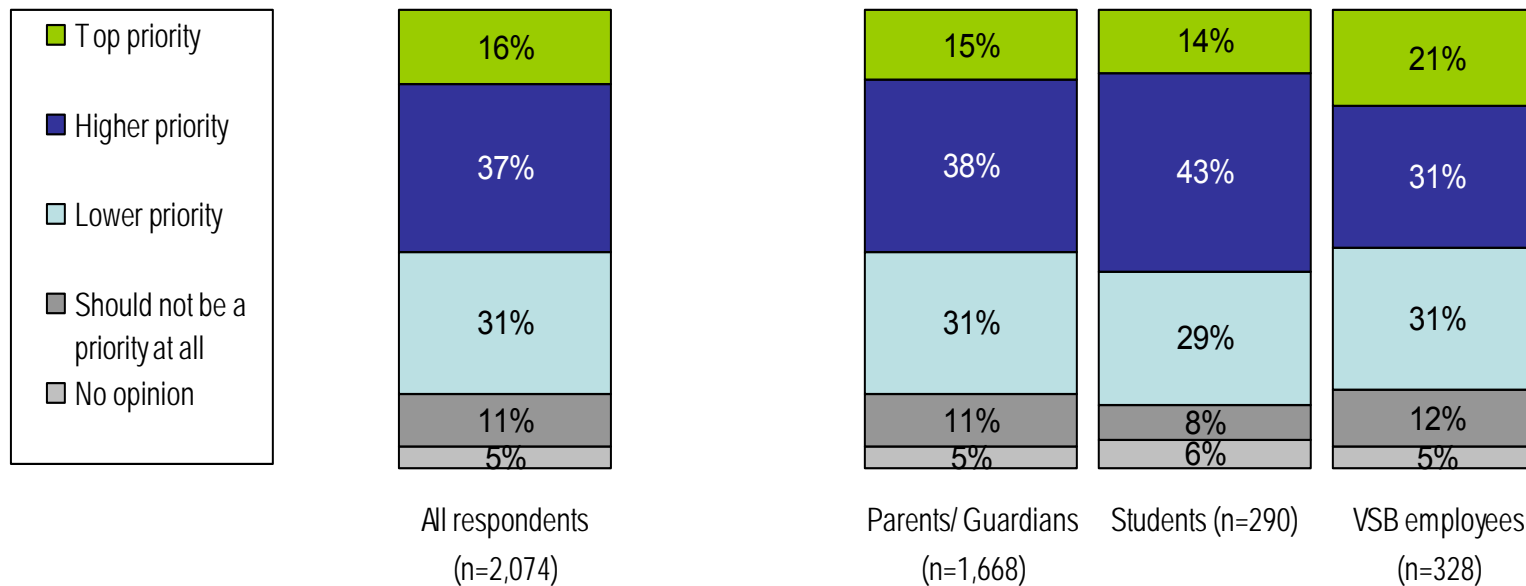
- The priority ratings for providing for early childhood development within schools were very similar to those for increasing specialized elementary schools—just over half (56%) rated it as a high priority and 41% rated it as a low priority.
- VSB employees were more likely than parents to rate providing early childhood development within schools as high priority.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

### Q9 – Expanding the scheduling options for schools and programs (e.g. timetable options, year-round calendar, etc.)

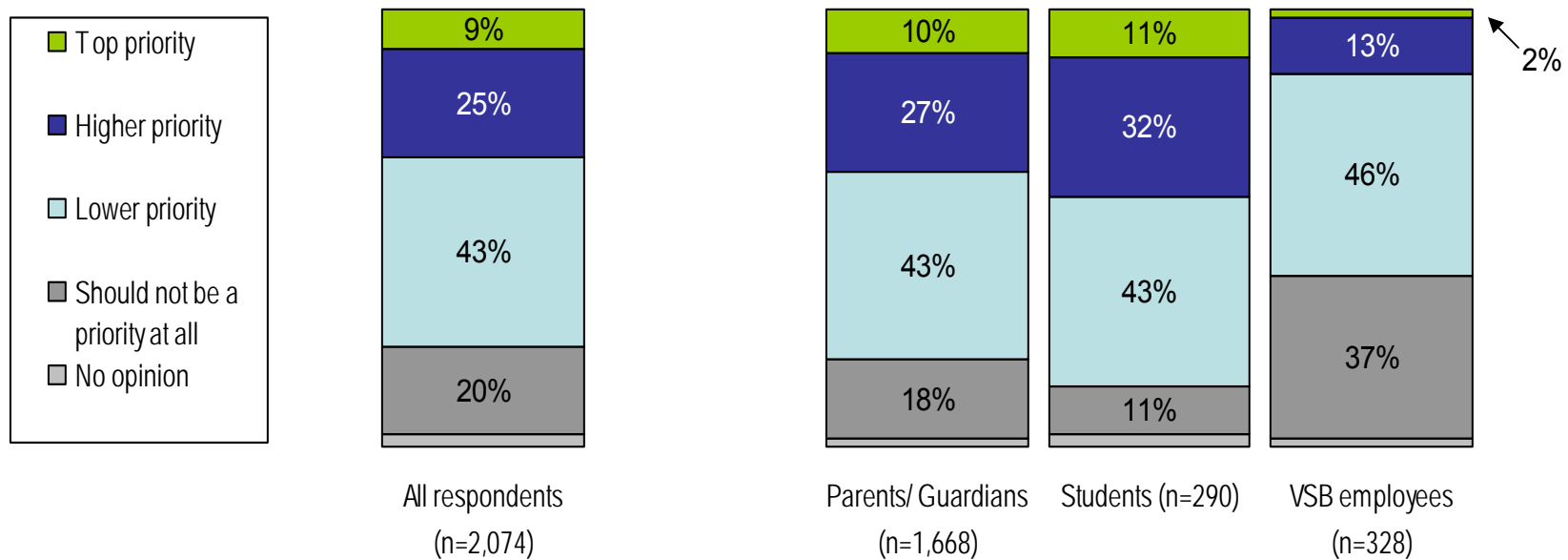
- Respondents were fairly evenly divided on the subject of expanding the scheduling options for schools and programs. While 53% rated it as a high priority, 42% rated as a low priority.
- VSB employees were more ambivalent about scheduling options—one in five rated it as a top priority, but two in five rated it as low priority.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Education Priorities

## Q2 – Ensuring elementary students have access to educational courses online

- Elementary student access to online courses was the only education item that the majority of respondents (63%) rated as low priority.
- VSB employers were particularly likely to rate elementary student access to online courses as a low priority.



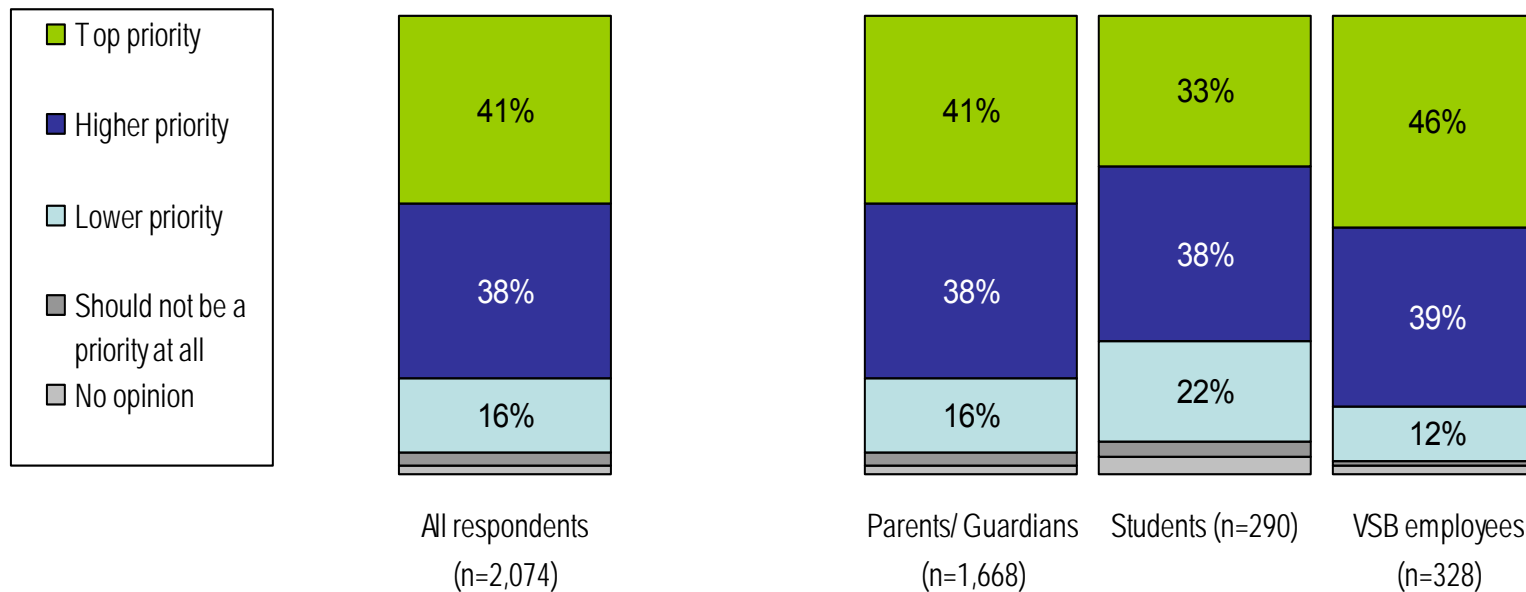
# Facility Priorities



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Facility Priorities

### Q10 – Having neighbourhood schools that are within walking distance for students and their families.

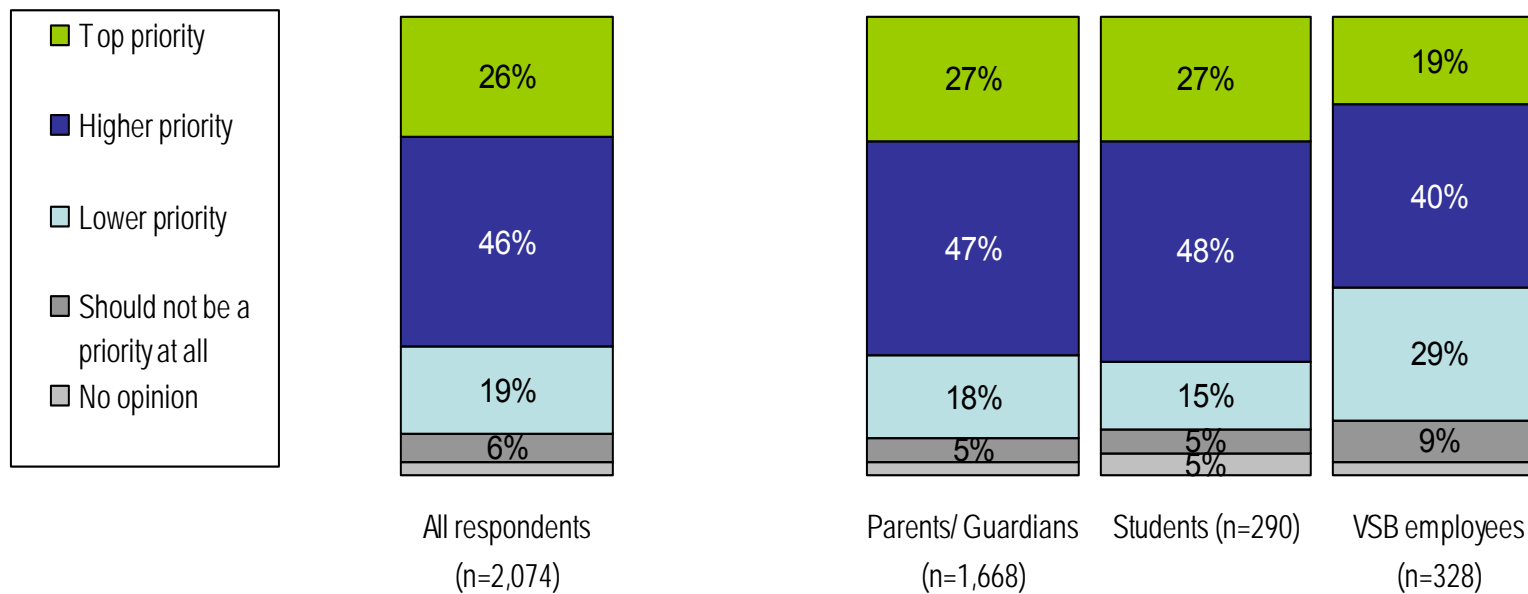
- Among the five facility priority items, having neighbourhood schools within walking distance was rated as a high priority among 79% of respondents. This item received the highest percentage of “top priority” ratings—with 41%.
- VSB employees were most likely to assign “top priority” ratings to having neighbourhood schools.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Facility Priorities

## Q14 – Building new schools to serve growing neighbourhoods.

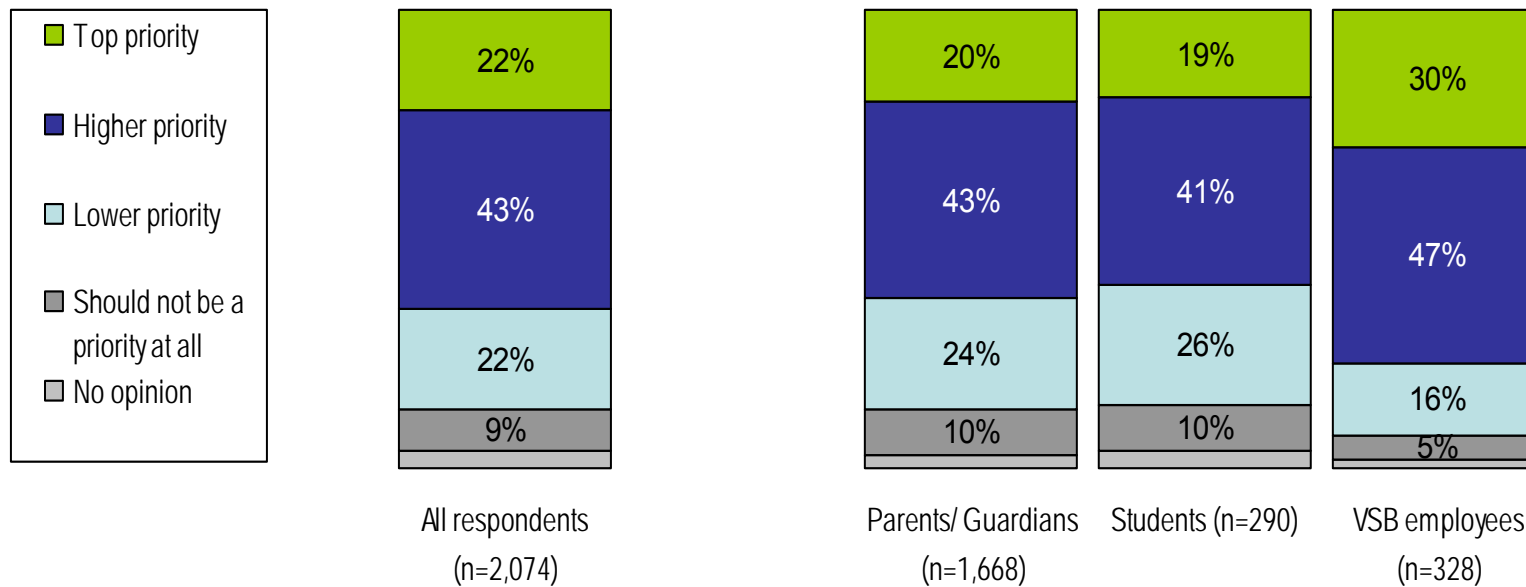
- 72% of respondents rated building new schools in growing neighbourhoods as high priority.
- VSB employees were less likely to rate building new schools as a high priority.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Facility Priorities

Q13 – Using excess school facilities to generate new funds for education – e.g. leasing properties.

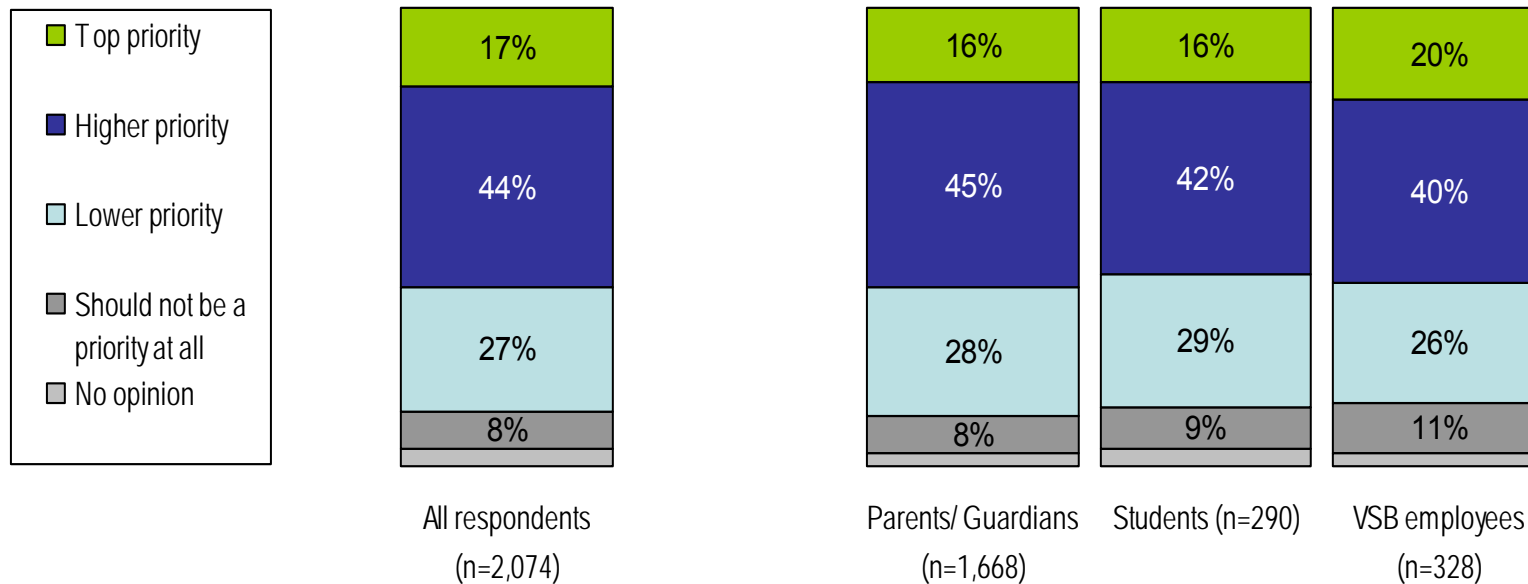
- Respondents were generally supportive of VSB using excess school facilities to generate education funding—two-thirds (65%) said it should be a high priority.
- VSB employees were more likely to indicate that the use of excess space should be a high priority.



## VSB Educational Facilities Review – Facility Priorities

### Q12 – Providing school space for other community organizations if at no additional cost to the school district.

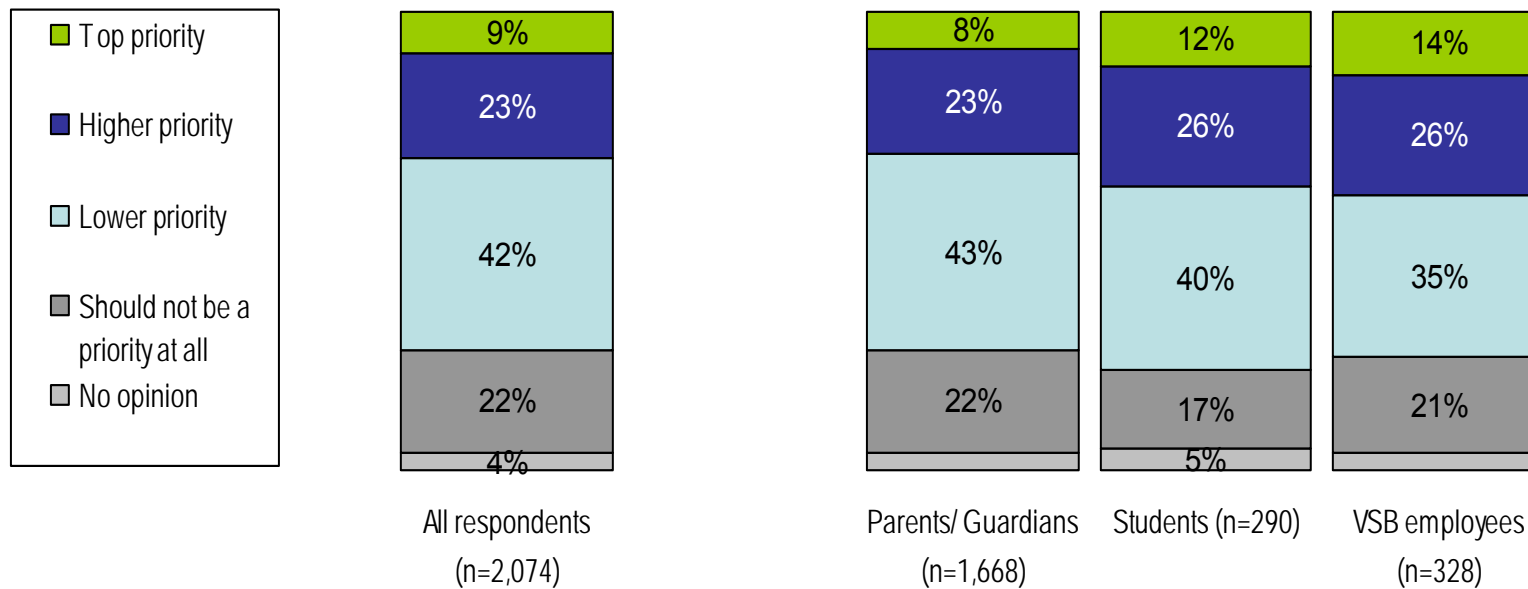
- Three out of five respondents (61%) rated making school space available to other community organizations (if at no additional cost to the district) as high priority.
- Over a third (35%), however, felt that this should be either a low priority or not a priority at all.



# VSB Educational Facilities Review – Facility Priorities

## Q11 – Closing schools where the neighbourhood population is declining.

- Just under a third (32%) of respondents indicated that it was a high priority to close schools in neighbourhoods where the population is declining.
- However, just under two-thirds (64%) feel that it should be a lower priority or not a priority at all.



# Additional Feedback



# VSB Educational Facilities Review– Additional Feedback

## Q15 – Is there anything else VSB should consider as part of its Education Facilities Review?

- Over a quarter (28%) of respondents provided additional suggestions for what the VSB should consider as part of the EFR. These responses were content coded and categorized, as shown below.

RENT/LEASE SCHOOL FACILITIES AS A REVENUE SOURCE	12%
AFTER SCHOOL / DAYCARE FACILITIES & PROGRAMS	10%
ENSURE ADEQUATE FACILITIES & SUPPLIES (E.G. TEXTBOOKS)	9%
SEISMIC UPGRADES TO HERITAGE/OLDER SCHOOLS	8%
HAVE MORE MONTESSORI SCHOOLS	7%
ADD/TRANSFER SPEC. PROG. TO LOW ENROLL. SCHOOLS	6%
INCREASE NO. OF SPOTS FOR LEARNING IMPAIRED STUDENTS	6%
NEED MORE TEACHERS / AIDES / SSSW IN CLASSROOMS	6%
HAVE K-GR 12 MONTESSORI/OFFER SECOND. SCHOOL MONTESSORI	5%
ADDITIONAL FUNDING IS NEEDED	4%
INCREASE ARTS/MUSIC/DRAMA PROGRAMS & FACILITIES	4%
LOCAL STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE 1ST PRIORITY TO ATTEND NEIGHBOURHOOD. SCHOOLS	4%
TRANSFER/BUS FROM OVERCROWDED TO LOW ENROLLMENT SCHOOLS	4%
CONCENTRATE ON 'BASICS' (MATH, WRITING, SCIENCES ETC)	3%
SPECIAL PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGHOUT VSB BOUNDARIES	3%
CHANGE CLASS SCHEDULE OR HOURS (E.G. SEMESTER, 10-4 PM)	3%

ABILITY TO WALK TO NEIGHBOURHOOD SCHOOL IS IMPORTANT	2%
RENT/LEASE LOW ENROLL. SCHOOL FACILITIES (STOP CLOSURES)	2%
CHANGE SCHOOL BOUNDARIES TO BALANCE ENROLLMENT NUMBERS	2%
PERCENTAGE OF ESL STUDENTS IN CLASSES	2%
CONTINUE TO OFFER SPECIAL ELEM. PROG. IN SECON. SCHOOLS	2%
CREATE MIDDLE SCHOOLS / JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS	2%
SCHOOLS SHOULD BE MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIENCE	1%
PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERS - REDUCE COSTS/OFFER SPEC. PROG.	1%
ONLINE COURSES - DETRIMENT TO STUDENTS SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	1%

Base: Respondents who gave additional feedback (n=572)

\* Note that respondents could give more than one response. Therefore, the percentages do not add to 100%.

## VSB Educational Facilities Review– Additional Feedback

### Q15 – Is there anything else the VSB should consider as part of its Education Facilities Review

- Respondents provided a large volume of thoughtful feedback, and many respondents took the time to provide more than one suggestion.
- Through their comments, respondents expressed the importance of:
  - Effective utilization of existing school facilities
    - Rent/lease school facilities; have after school daycare and programs; add/transfer specialized programs to low enrolment schools; transfer students from overcrowded to low enrolment schools.
  - Ensuring facilities and materials are upgraded
    - Ensure adequate facilities and supplies; seismic upgrades
  - Specialized programs
    - Have more Montessori schools; increase spots for learning impaired students; have secondary school Montessori; increase arts, music, drama programs
  - Increasing teaching resources
    - Need more teachers/ aides

# VSB Educational Facilities Review

## Appendix – Feedback Form



### Vancouver School Board Educational Facilities Review Feedback Form

1580 West Broadway, Vancouver, BC V6J 5K8 | www.vsb.bc.ca

Thank you for agreeing to share your views with the Vancouver School Board (VSB). Educating the diverse student population in Vancouver is calling for review and change in a number of areas. Utilizing our facilities most effectively is one of these. Your feedback will help the VSB make decisions that best reflect the educational needs and values of Vancouver students and families.

All feedback you provide is strictly confidential and anonymous. This form should take about 5 minutes to complete. If there is a question you prefer not to answer, simply leave it blank. Summary results from the feedback forms will be made available to the public.

Background information about the Educational Facilities Review is available at [www.vsb.bc.ca](http://www.vsb.bc.ca).

#### DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Which of the following categories describe you?

Mark all that apply.

- Parent/Guardian of a student in a Vancouver public school
- Student at a Vancouver public school
- Vancouver School Board employee
- Other: Please specify \_\_\_\_\_

What is your 6-digit postal code?

V | | | | | |

#### PARENTS / GUARDIANS ONLY

Does your child/children attend a: (please mark all that apply)

- Pre-school
- Elementary school
- Secondary school
- VSB Adult Education Centre

What school does your child/children attend?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do any of your children attend your neighbourhood school?

- Yes  No

#### STUDENTS ONLY

What grade are you in?

- Elementary, Grade \_\_\_\_\_
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12
- Adult education

What school do you attend?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you attend your neighbourhood school?

- Yes  No

Turn Over →

#### PRIORITIES

Educational needs and priorities are changing significantly. At the same time, the VSB is currently operating with an excess of up to 10,000 student spaces (20% of total spaces). The VSB must decide how to balance its spending between providing educational programs and maintaining facilities.

The VSB needs to establish priorities for making these decisions. Using the scale provided, please rate how much priority the VSB should place on each of the following:

EDUCATION PRIORITIES	Should not be a priority at all	Lower priority	Higher priority	Top priority
1. Increasing the number of specialized elementary schools devoted to programs such as language immersion, Montessori, other subjects or programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Ensuring elementary students have access to educational courses online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Providing for early childhood development (pre-kindergarten) within schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Maintaining general, comprehensive secondary schools with a common variety of subjects and courses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Increasing the number of specialized secondary schools devoted to programs such as trades, arts, other subjects or programs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Expanding the number of specialized programs offered within a comprehensive secondary school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Ensuring secondary students have access to educational courses online.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Creating clusters or groups of schools (elementary and secondary) in the same geographic area, and having specialized programs within each cluster or group.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Expanding the scheduling options for schools and programs (e.g. timetable options, year-round calendar, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FACILITY PRIORITIES	Should not be a priority at all	Lower priority	Higher priority	Top priority
10. Having neighbourhood schools that are within walking distance for students and their families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Closing schools where the neighbourhood population is declining.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Providing school space for other community organizations if at no additional cost to the school district.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Using excess school facilities to generate new funds for education – e.g., leasing properties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Building new schools to serve growing neighbourhoods.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK

15. Is there anything else the VSB should consider as part of its Educational Facilities Review?

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

**For further information please contact:**

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