

Community Survey Results

Liberty Withdrawal from RSU 3

Fielded March 28 – April 15, 2026

Prepared for the Liberty Withdrawal Committee

79 responses analyzed (105 received, 26 excluded as bot/duplicate)

Executive Summary

Key findings at a glance

41%

of respondents who took a position favor leaving RSU 3

32 of 79 respondents — vs. 19% (15) who favor staying

#1

Quality of education ranked the top priority

By a wide margin: mean rank 1.89 (vs. tax burden #2 at 3.18); 57.9% of those who ranked it placed it first

23%

are still undecided or want more information

Combined 'not enough info yet' + 'neutral' — a meaningful audience for committee outreach

32 : 15

Leavers vs. Stayers diverge most on community, bus ride, and recent K-5 quality

Stayers worry about town's sense of community; Leavers report bus ride and post-Walker K-5 quality concerns

Methodology & Data Quality

How responses were collected, cleaned, and analyzed

Survey design

Platform: SurveyMonkey, distributed by the Liberty Withdrawal Committee

Field period: March 28 – April 15, 2026

Format: 6 questions — 1 multi-select, 1 Likert matrix (13 items), 1 directional (stay/leave), 1 ranking (7 factors), 1 channel-preference, 1 open-ended

Anonymity: Name and email fields not collected by the survey itself, but residents were asked to provide their email address if they wanted to use the survey as a vehicle for communicating it to the committee.

Response disposition

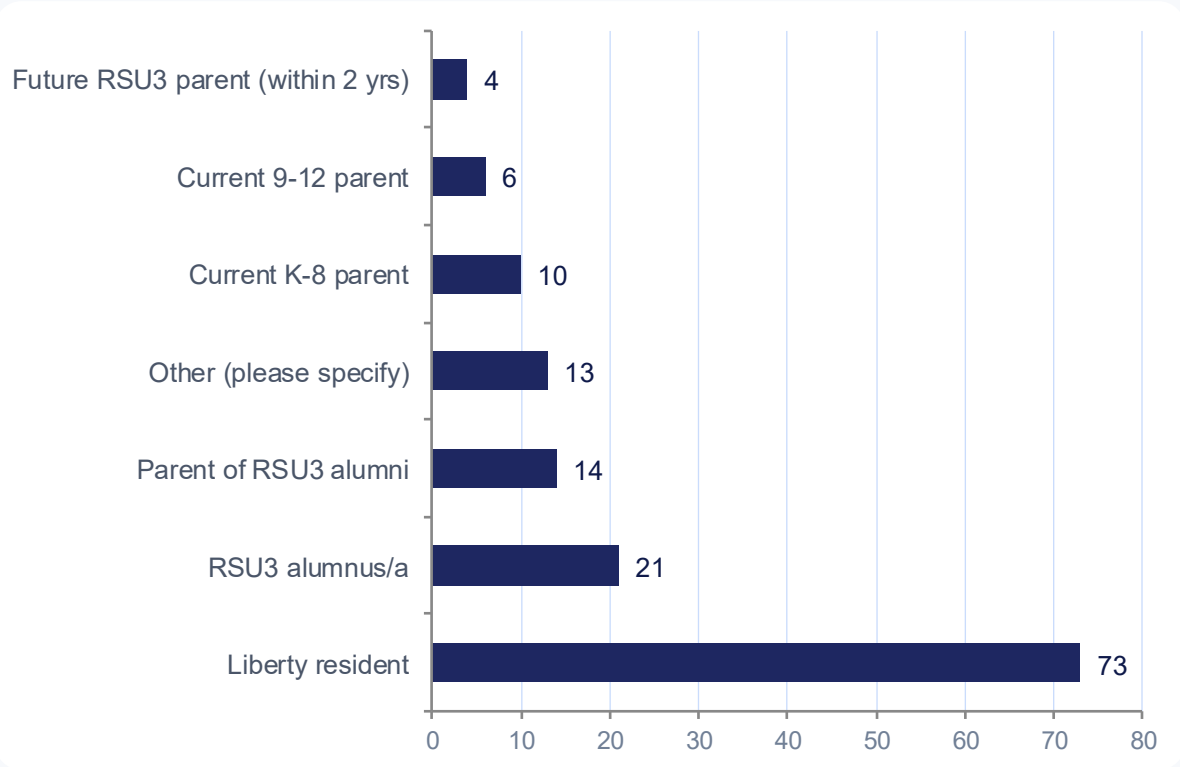
Disposition	n
Total responses received	105
Excluded — bot/spam (single IP, 24 responses; 23 of 24 flagged 'Poor Quality + Speeding' by SurveyMonkey)	-24
Excluded — duplicates beyond 2-per-IP household rule (2 IPs each had 3 responses)	-2
Responses analyzed	79

Notes for the working group

- All percentages in this deck use n=79 unless noted. Cross-tab segments may sum to >n because Q1 was multi-select.
- Likert items scored 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree); 'N/A — Don't know / Can't yet answer' is excluded from means.
- Q4 mean ranks: lower = more important. NA responses are excluded from the rank but flagged in the appendix table.
- Open-ended responses were grouped into themes; representative quotes appear verbatim with any email/PII removed.

Respondent Profile (Q1)

Multi-select; n=79 respondents may select multiple categories



Profile highlights

92.4% are Liberty residents

26.6% are RSU 3 alumni

16 have students currently enrolled (K-12)

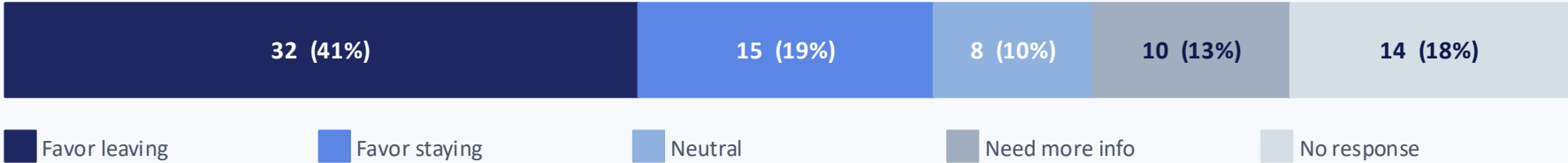
4 expect to enroll within 2 yrs

13 selected 'Other' — most are non-resident property owners, summer residents, homeschooling families, or parents of children attending private school.

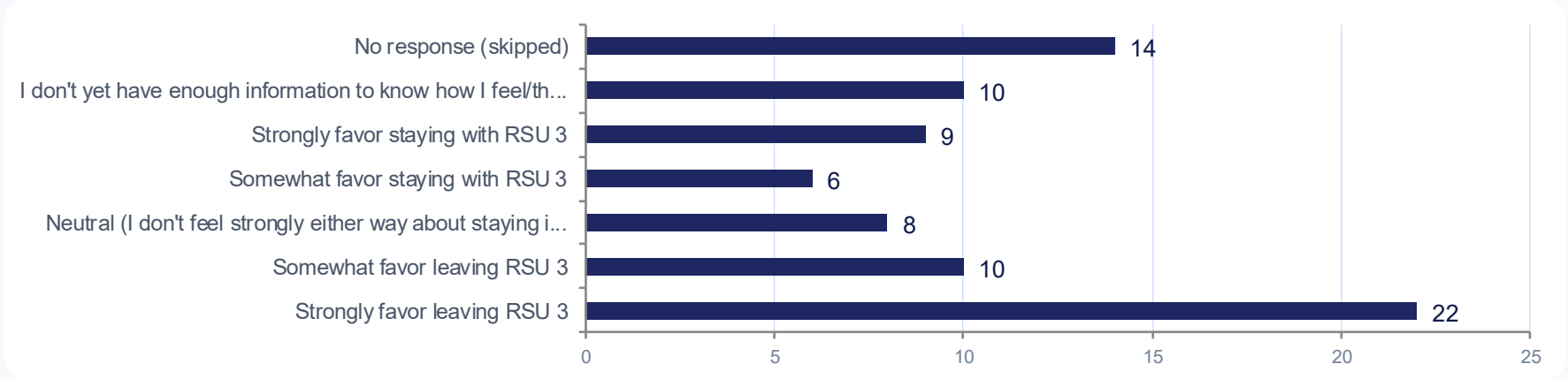
Stay or Withdraw? Overall Stance (Q3)

Single-select question; n=79

Net stance distribution

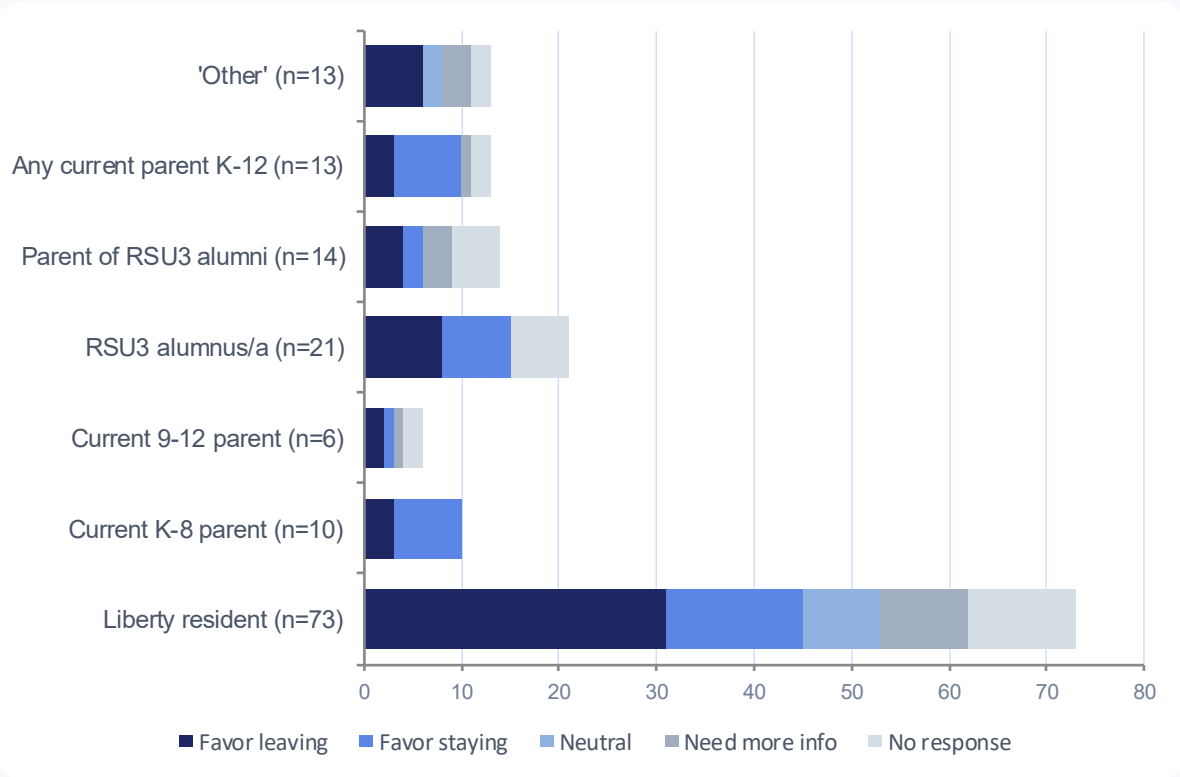


Full detail (6 response options)



Stance by Respondent Segment (Q1 × Q3)

Multi-select segments — totals exceed n; small segments noted



Patterns to note

Liberty residents lean LEAVE

31 leave / 14 stay (n=73)

Current K-8 parents lean STAY

7 stay / 3 leave (n=10) — small base; flag for follow-up

Alumni split nearly evenly

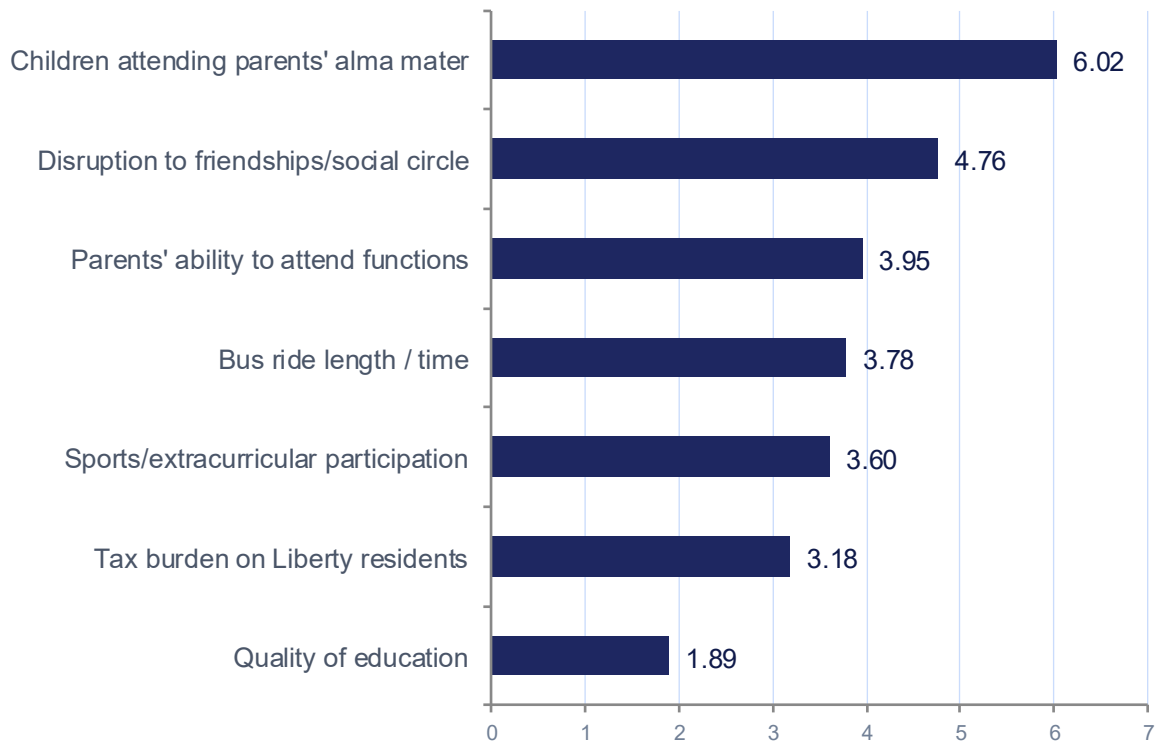
8 leave / 7 stay / 6 no-resp (n=21)

'Other' segment (non-residents, homeschoolers, private-school families) skews LEAVE

6 leave / 0 stay (n=13)

Ranked Priorities (Q4) — Overall

Mean rank across all respondents (lower = more important)

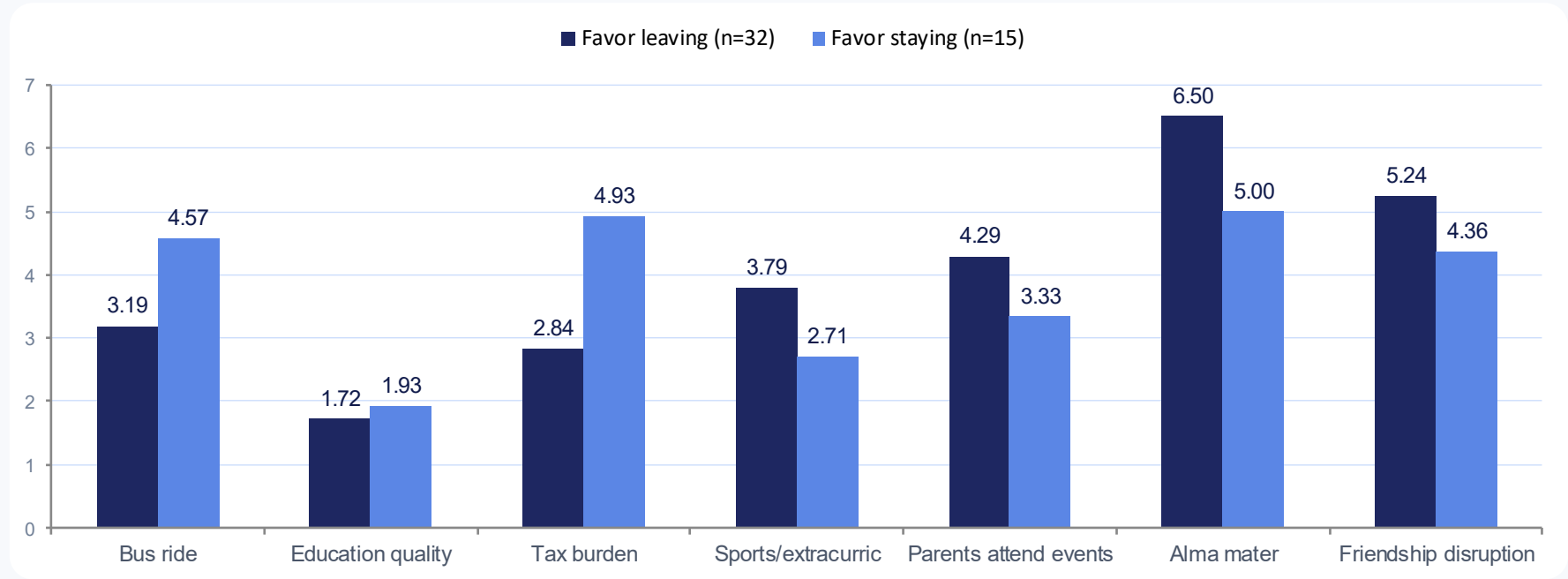


% who ranked it #1

Quality of education	57.9%
Tax burden on Liberty residents	20.5%
Sports/extracurricular participation	2.9%
Bus ride length / time	9.2%
Parents' ability to attend functions	6.8%
Disruption to friendships/social circle	7.0%
Children attending parents' alma mater	0.0%

How Priorities Differ by Stance (Q4)

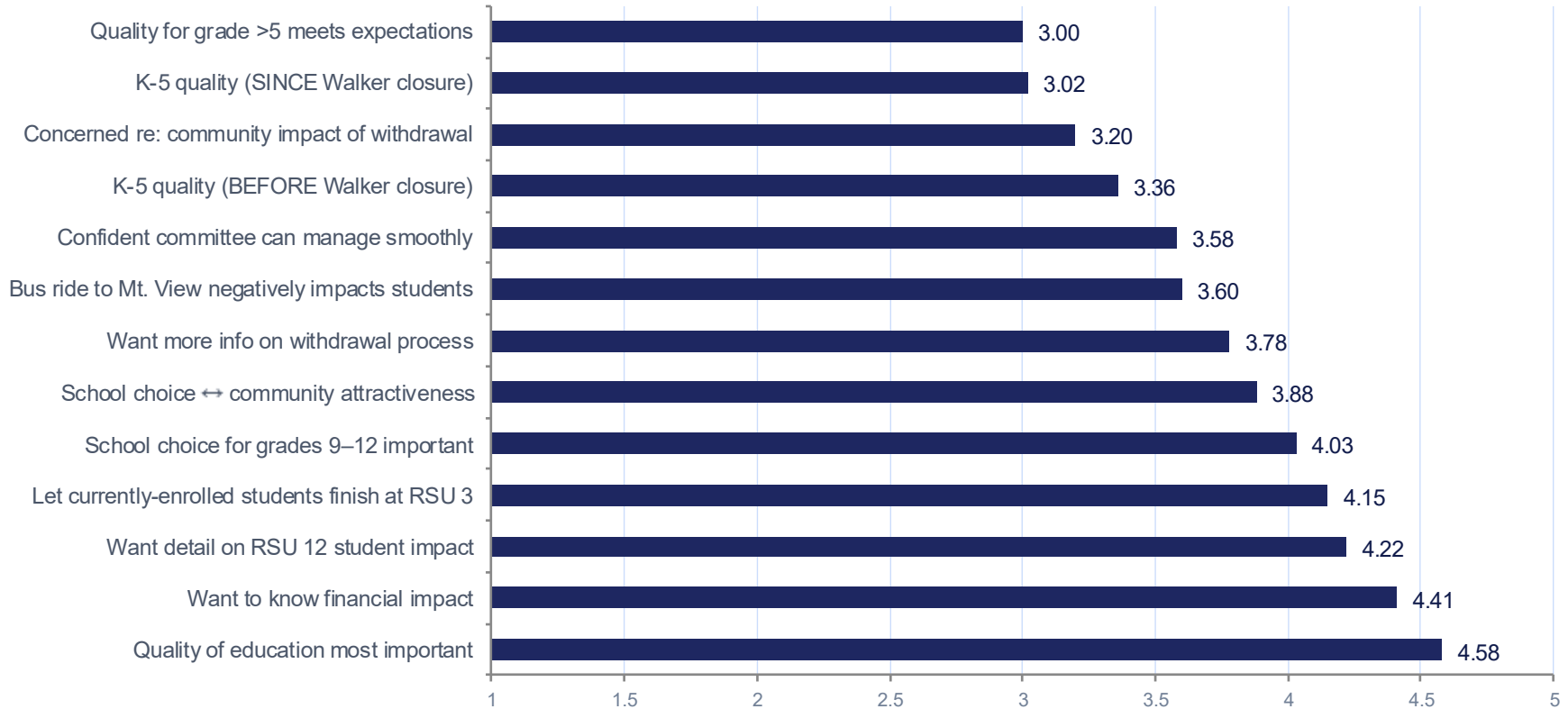
Mean rank by 'Favor leaving' vs. 'Favor staying' (lower = more important)



Where they agree: Education quality is #1 for both groups (1.72 vs. 1.93). **Where they diverge:** Leave-leaners rank tax burden much higher (2.84 vs. 4.93) and bus ride higher (3.19 vs. 4.57); stay-leaners give more weight to extracurriculars and friendships.

Likert Statements (Q2) — Overall Mean Scores

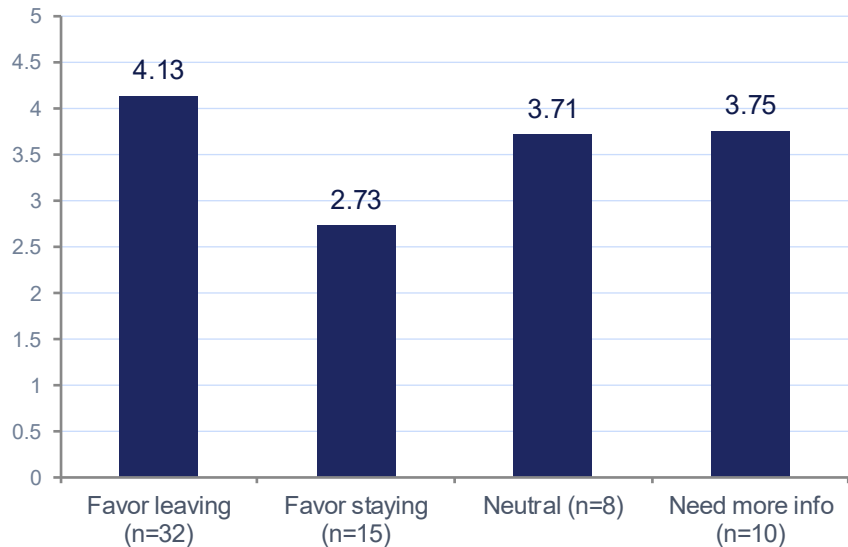
13 items rated 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree); 'N/A' excluded from means



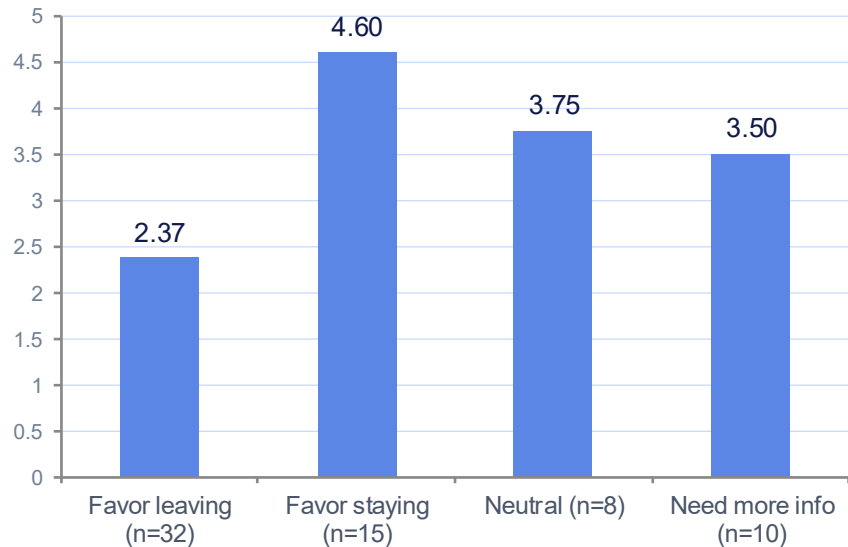
Confidence vs. Concern — by Stance (Q2)

Two of the most stance-divergent Likert items

Confidence in committee



Concern: withdrawal could impact community

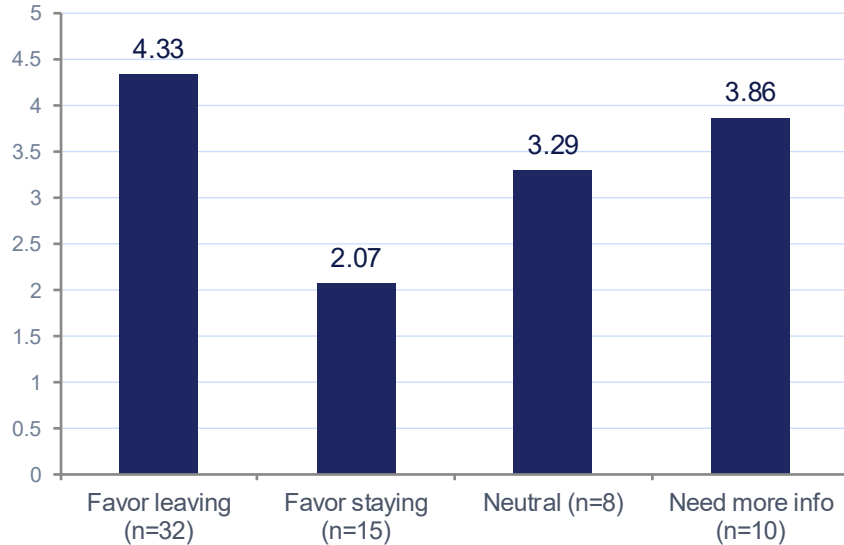


Reading: Leave-leaners are more confident in the committee (4.13) than stay-leaners (2.73), but stay-leaners are far more concerned about community impact (4.60 vs. 2.37). The two camps see different problems — and different roles for the committee.

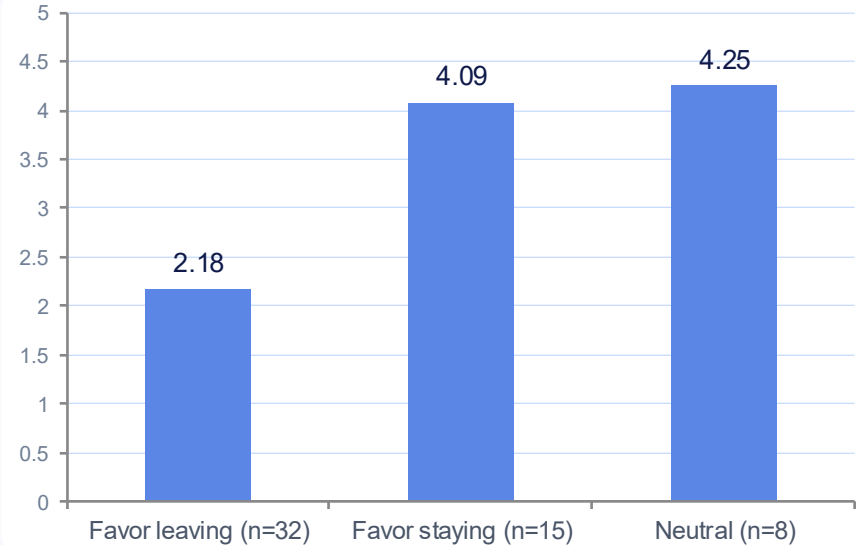
Bus Ride & Post-Walker K-5 Quality — by Stance (Q2)

Two practical, lived-experience items where stances diverge sharply

Length of bus ride negatively impacts students



K-5 quality has met expectations SINCE Walker closure

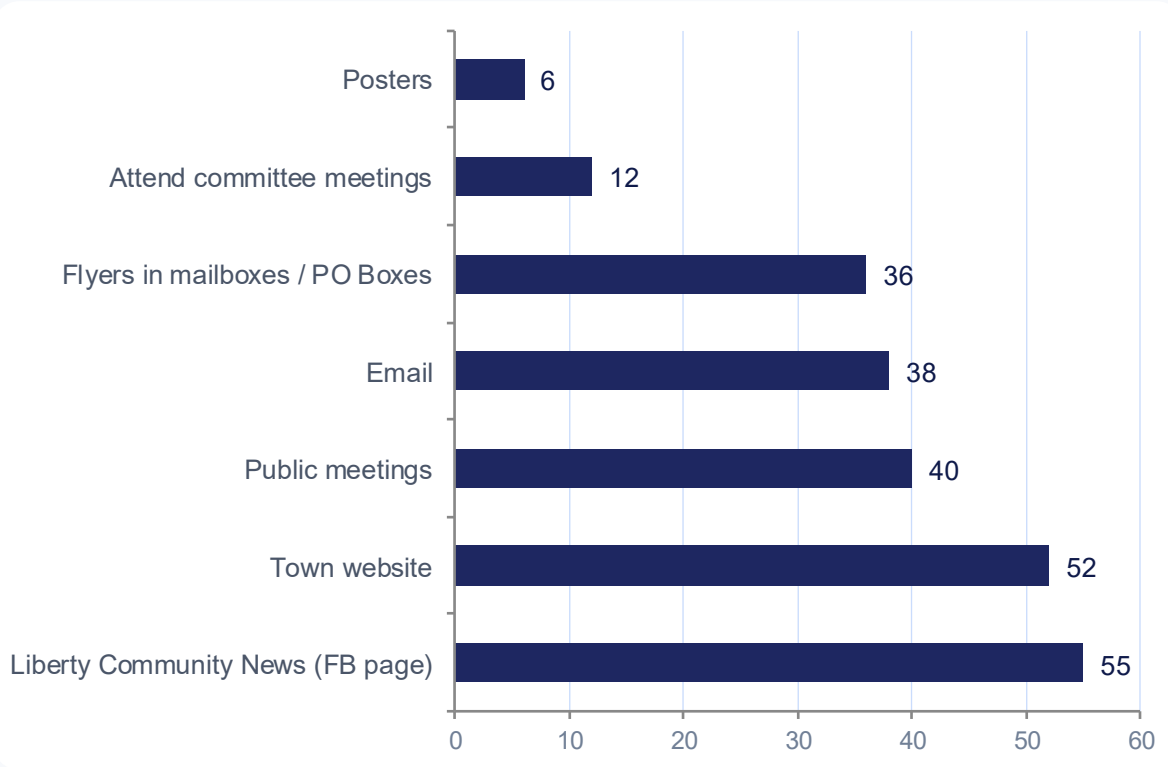


"Need more info" stance excluded — all 10 answered N/A on this item.

Note on N/A: For the post-Walker K-5 quality item, 48% of all respondents answered 'N/A — Don't know' — most respondents don't have current K-5 students, so this view comes from a smaller, more direct sample. Stay-leaners (4.09) report meeting expectations; leave-leaners (2.18) do not.

How Respondents Want Information (Q5)

Multi-select; n=79



Implications for outreach

Digital channels lead.

Liberty Community News (FB) and the Town website together cover the largest share — combine with email for ~3-channel saturation.

Public meetings still matter.

About half want them — but only ~15% are willing to attend committee meetings as observers.






Print is supplemental.

Mailbox flyers reach ~46%; posters trail at ~8%.

Note: 19 respondents left email addresses in the comment box — they have signaled willingness to be contacted directly.

Open-Ended Themes — Stay/Withdraw Comments

From Q3 'Please add a comment if you wish' — n=14 responses

Theme	n	Frequency
Per-student cost / Liberty over-paying based on property values	6	
Allow currently-enrolled students to finish at RSU 3	2	
Disconnect — Liberty as 'source of income, otherwise forgotten'	2	
Loss of school-board representation if some students stay in RSU 3	1	
Need full transparency of financials before deciding	1	
School choice for grades 9–12 valued	1	
Disruption to friendships / social continuity	1	

Representative quotes

"Liberty has been forced to overpay for too long. The cost to any town should be an equal per student amount, NOT based on property values."

— theme: Per-student cost / Liberty over-paying based on property values

"Strongly favor leaving RSU 3 for incoming students, but feel as though students already enrolled should have an option to finish out their careers in the district."

— theme: Allow currently-enrolled students to finish at RSU 3

"We were a source of income for them and largely forgotten otherwise."









— theme: Disconnect — Liberty as 'source of income, otherwise forgotten'

"Withdrawing will mean Liberty will not have a seat on RSU 3 school board even if some students elect to stay."

— theme: Loss of school-board representation if some students stay in RSU 3

Open-Ended Themes — Other Factors / Info Needed

From Q2 'Another factor or information you need' — n=16 responses

Theme	n	Frequency
Special-needs students — costs and services	4	
Vocational / Tech school access (Waldo Tech, etc.)	2	
Transportation logistics for new district	3	
Walker School closure already shifted town's sense of community	2	
Demographics — how many families are actually affected	2	
Tax burden / per-capita inequity	2	
Allow current students to finish at RSU 3	1	
Alternative options beyond RSU 12 (e.g., Belfast)	1	
Whether withdrawal would draw homeschool families back	1	

Representative quotes

"What special considerations are being made for the families/children with special needs? Educational needs? Financial needs?"

— theme: Special-needs students — costs and services

"Our kids need to be able to attend a hands-on school such as Waldo Tech."

— theme: Vocational / Tech school access (Waldo Tech, etc.)

"What will be the transportation plan to get students to RSU 12 and alternate high school sites?"

— theme: Transportation logistics for new district

"I think closing Walker School has already impacted our town's sense of community and we will not get that back."

— theme: Walker School closure already shifted town's sense of community

Open-Ended Themes — Other Ranking Factors

From Q4 'Other factor that should be considered' — n=11 responses

Theme	n	Frequency
School-facility condition (lead-in-water, sprinklers, fire code)	2	
Special-education services availability and funding	2	
Tech/vocational school access (Waldo Tech)	1	
Continuity for currently-enrolled students	2	
School choice as a tool to attract families to Liberty	2	
Town demographics / attractiveness to incoming families	1	

Representative quotes

"Condition of school facility is a consideration that ranks highly for me, especially regarding health and safety — lead in water, sprinkler systems, fire exits, building security."

— theme: School-facility condition (lead-in-water, sprinklers, fire code)

"We need more information about quality and availability of special services in the Palermo/Erskine district."

— theme: Special-education services availability and funding

"That few years of tech school is a priority!"

— theme: Tech/vocational school access (Waldo Tech)

"Kids who have started school at Mt. View should be able to continue there if they wish."

— theme: Continuity for currently-enrolled students

Open-Ended Themes — Closing Comments

From Q6 'Anything else to share with the committee' — n=20 responses

Theme	n	Frequency
Thank you / appreciation for committee's work	10	
Tax burden / Maine school funding system needs reform	2	
Education quality concerns at Mt. View — drives families to private school	2	
Don't let Walker closure cloud the decision	2	
Bus-ride length unavoidable due to Liberty's geography	1	
School choice has logistical / financial barriers	1	
Concern for special-needs students under any new arrangement	1	
Survey was confusing (esp. ranking)	1	

Representative quotes

"Thank you for the hard work it takes to lead our town through this decision."

— theme: Thank you / appreciation for committee's work

"If property taxes are the most important reason residents favor withdrawal, then we should advocate efforts in the legislature to change how public schools are funded in Maine."

— theme: Tax burden / Maine school funding system needs reform

"I drive my child every day to a private school in Augusta because I do not feel Mount View provides a great education."

— theme: Education quality concerns at Mt. View — drives families to private school

"The closing of Walker and the feelings tied shouldn't affect the thoughts on this."

— theme: Don't let Walker closure cloud the decision

Key Takeaways for the Committee

Synthesis across all questions and open-ended themes

01 Direction is leave-leaning, but a meaningful 'undecided' middle remains.

40% favor leaving and 19% favor staying among the 79 cleaned responses. Roughly 23% are either neutral or want more information — a clear audience for committee outreach.

02 Education quality is the universal #1 factor — across stances.

Both leave-leaners (mean rank 1.72) and stay-leaners (1.93) place education quality first. Framing all communications around 'quality of education' will land with both camps.

03 Tax burden and bus ride drive the leave case.

Leave-leaners rank tax burden ~2 places higher than stay-leaners (2.84 vs. 4.93) and feel the bus ride negatively impacts students (4.33 vs. 2.07). These are practical, fact-checkable concerns the committee can address with concrete numbers.

04 Community continuity drives the stay case.

Stay-leaners are far more concerned about town community impact (4.60 vs. 2.37) and rank disruption to friendships and extracurriculars more highly. Highlight: many call for letting current students finish at RSU 3.

05 K-5 experience post-Walker is a flashpoint.

Among respondents able to answer, leavers say K-5 has not met expectations since Walker closed (2.18); stayers say it has (4.09). The committee should consider whether this is a perception gap, an experience gap, or both.

06 Outreach should be primarily digital.

Liberty Community News (FB), Town website, and email cover the strongest preferences. ~19 respondents left email addresses signaling direct contact is welcome. Reserve public meetings for milestones.

Appendix A — Full Q2 Distributions

All 13 Likert items; 1=Strongly Disagree, 5=Strongly Agree, NA = 'Don't know / can't yet answer'; n=79

Statement	Mean	1	2	3	4	5	NA	% Agree
I want more information about the withdrawal process	3.78	2	8	18	26	23	2	64%
I feel confident the committee can manage the process smoothly	3.58	6	8	18	21	21	5	57%
School choice for students in Grades 9–12 is important	4.03	4	4	9	27	31	4	77%
Quality of education for all students is most important	4.58	3	0	1	19	55	1	95%
Plan should let currently-enrolled RSU 3 students stay through graduation	4.15	3	3	10	23	36	4	79%
I'm concerned how withdrawal could impact our town's sense of community	3.20	11	13	14	22	14	5	49%
I want to know the financial impact of withdrawal	4.41	2	1	3	26	41	5	92%
I want details on how RSU #12 decision could impact students	4.22	3	0	6	36	32	2	88%
K-5 quality met expectations BEFORE Walker School closure	3.36	3	10	14	12	11	29	46%
K-5 quality has met expectations SINCE Walker School closure	3.02	7	5	16	6	7	38	32%
Quality for students older than 5th grade meets my expectations	3.00	10	7	14	7	10	31	35%
School choice ↔ community attractiveness for current/future families	3.88	5	2	14	29	24	4	72%
Length of bus ride to Mt. View Complex negatively impacts students	3.60	7	9	12	23	22	6	62%

Appendix B — Full Q4 Ranking Detail

Mean rank, ranked-vs-NA counts, and top-1 / top-3 frequencies

Factor	Mean rank	n ranked	% ranked #1	% top-3
Quality of education	1.89	76	57.9%	88.2%
Tax burden on Liberty residents	3.18	78	20.5%	61.5%
Sports/extracurricular participation	3.60	68	2.9%	54.4%
Bus ride length / time	3.78	76	9.2%	42.1%
Parents' ability to attend functions	3.95	74	6.8%	39.2%
Disruption to friendships/social circle	4.76	71	7.0%	23.9%
Children attending parents' alma mater	6.02	55	0.0%	5.5%

Reading note: Lower mean rank = more important. The 'n ranked' column reflects how many respondents assigned a numeric rank vs. marking 'NA'. 'Children attending parents' alma mater' has the highest NA rate, suggesting it's not a salient factor for many respondents.

Discussion & Next Steps

Suggested working-group questions:

- Are the K-5 quality-since-Walker concerns better addressed through fact-based communication, or do they reflect actionable issues we should escalate to RSU 3?
- How do we engage the ~23% who are neutral or undecided — without further polarizing the leave/stay camps?
- Should the committee follow up directly with the 19 respondents who left email addresses?
- What level of financial-impact detail can we publish before the next public meeting?
- Should we run a targeted follow-up survey for current K-12 parents specifically (n was small in this round)?