

# THE EFFECT OF THE INTERIOR DESIGN OF A SCHOOL ON THE WELLBEING AND SUCCESS OF STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF.



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## LITERATURE REVIEW

### IMPACT OF THE INTERIOR ENVIRONMENT ON K-12 SCHOOLS

#### FURNITURE

"Within the classroom designs, much attention was given to providing flexible work surfaces, seating, and storage to accommodate a wide range of users," (Kaup et al., 2013, p. 50).

#### COLOR

"Depending on the age of the children, different colours are considered stimulating; younger children prefer bright colours and patterns while adolescents prefer more subdued colours (Engelbrecht, 2003)" (Higgins et al., 2005, p. 20).

#### SAFETY & SECURITY

"Unfortunately, the unintended consequence of enhancing security measures is that it might create the impression that a need for more security exists, indicating that the school is unsafe when in fact it may not be," (Mowen & Freng, 2018, p. 389).

#### MENTAL HEALTH

Rural schools are often left at a disadvantage because of their lack of access to mental health care. This is due to their location being further away from larger cities where most medical resources exist (Moon et al., 2017). We plan to fix this by allocating space for mental health resources within our rural K-12 school.

## REFERENCES

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## ABSTRACT

Research conducted, including an online survey and literature review, considers the effect of the interior design of a school on the wellbeing and success of students, faculty and staff. This research helps answer two questions:

1. What role does the interior environment play on students' learning and success in the classroom?
2. What safety and security measures need to be integrated in the design of a school to protect all occupants while still being a welcoming and comfortable environment?

Results show that students want flexible furniture, classrooms that incorporate color, a welcoming and open entrance, and are open to having an inclusive restroom within the school. Results also show that staff want a place where they can retreat to to take a break.

## METHODOLOGY

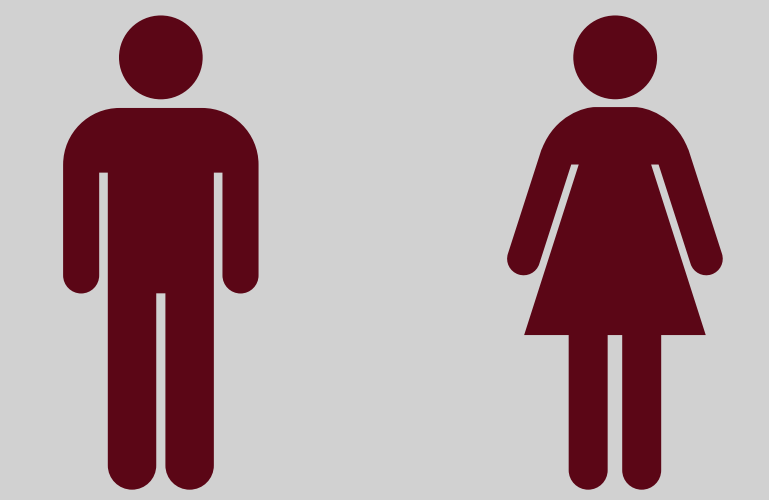
In order to understand how the interior environment impacts student, staff, and faculty engagement and success in a K-12 school, our team created a mixed method online survey that was sent out to staff and faculty at six rural schools throughout the state of North Dakota. The survey consisted of two parts:

1. Student Success
2. Staff and Faculty Success

Questions focused on interior elements, safety measures, flexible furniture configurations, and storage. Survey questions were formatted to include Likert scale, ranking, short answer, rating, and multiple choice.

## PARTICIPANTS

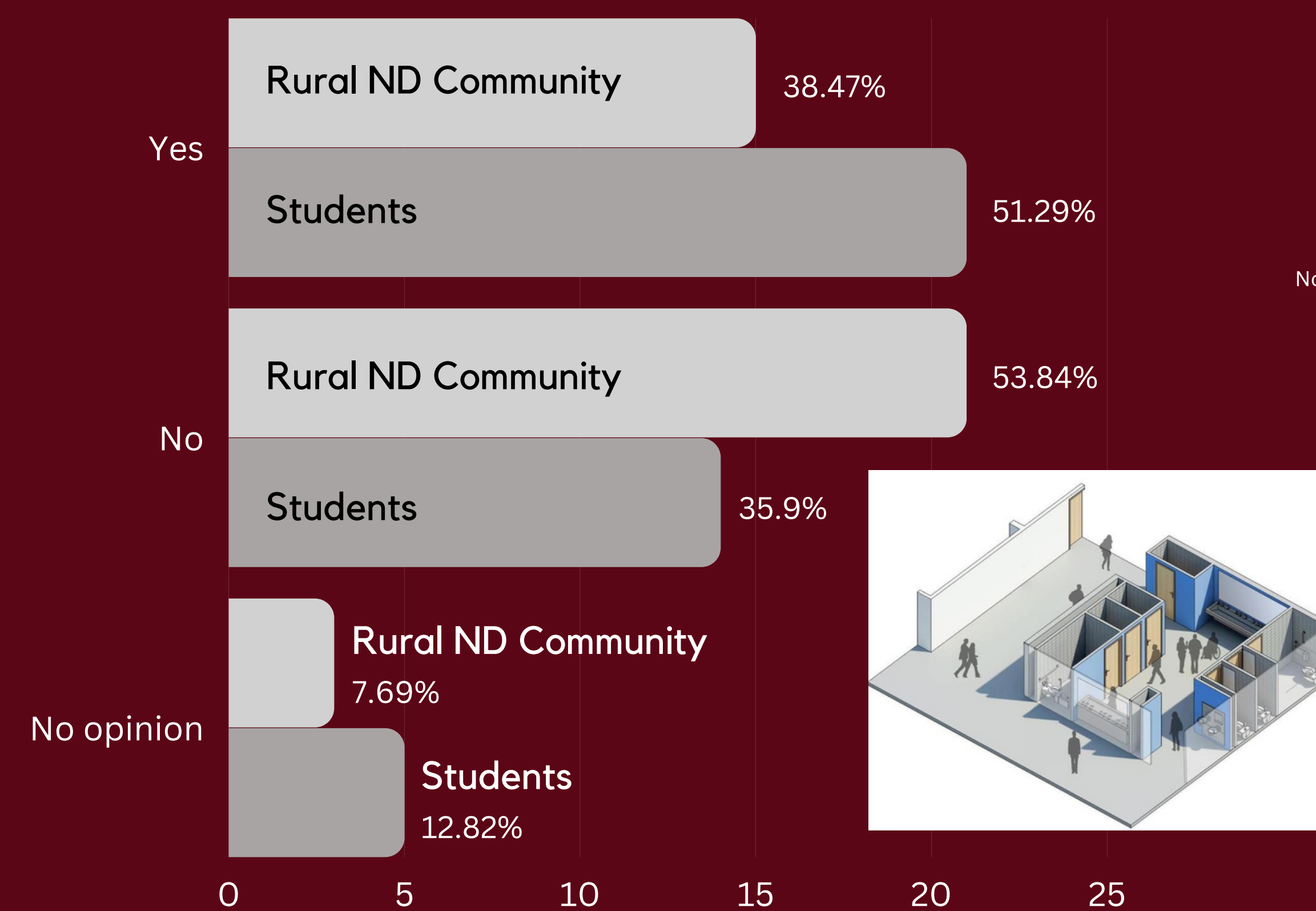
Faculty and staff from six rural North Dakota school districts received the online survey. The survey resulted in 51 total responses.



29% male 71% female

## RESULTS

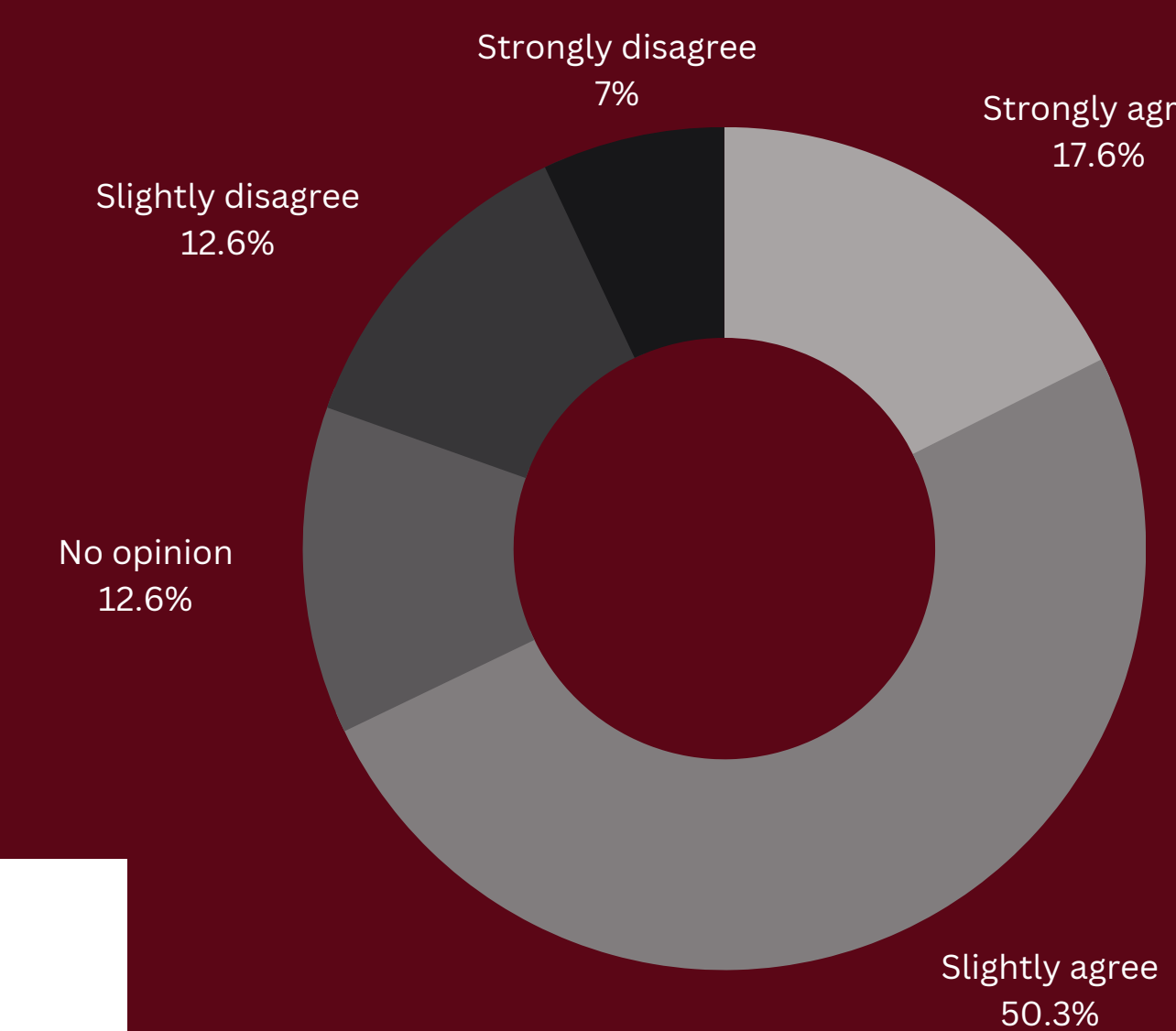
### Acceptance of Inclusive restrooms within North Dakota



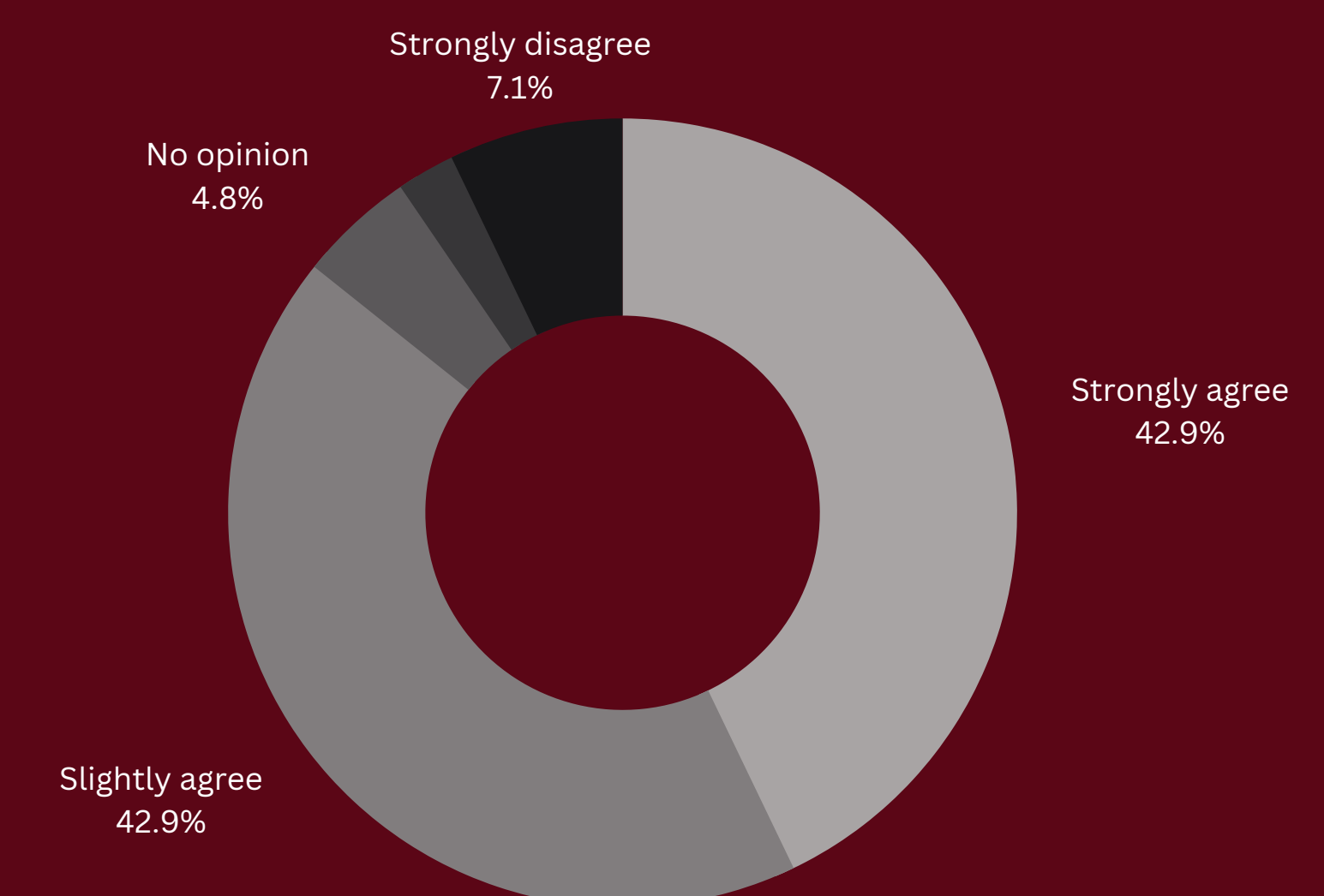
"Do you think inclusive restrooms would be welcomed by rural, North Dakota community?"

"Do you think inclusive restrooms would be well-received and accepted by students?"

### "If I had a place to relax or take a break, I would be a better teacher and coworker"



### "Flexible furniture allows for better collaboration amongst students"



### When selecting between the two photo options below, option B was exceedingly favored



Option A Secure School Entrance with Intensive Security



Option B Secure School Entrance with Minimal Security

5% 95%

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of the research conducted through a survey and literature review was to determine the effect of the interior design of a school on the wellbeing and success of students, faculty and staff. The findings of this research conclude that having areas near entrances that are bright and open and allows for a mix of natural and artificial light is highly favorable. In addition, it was proven that having less security measures such as metal detectors was preferred. To accommodate the wide range of users within a school, it was concluded that the use of flexible furniture allows students to be more comfortable, enhances collaboration amongst students, and improves student success. Another finding of how student success is improved is through the use of color and integration of student color preferences. Research showed that rural schools are at a disadvantage due to the lack of access to mental health care and indicates the need for providing mental health resources within the school. When looking into the acceptance of incorporating an inclusive restroom within the school, the survey provided evidence that suggests that an inclusive restroom would not be welcomed by a rural, North Dakota community but would be well-received and accepted by the students. Staff wellbeing and success results indicated that faculty and staff want spaces designated for them where they can retreat to when needing a break. Overall, the findings of this study and literature review provided important and useful information about what design elements are desired and preferred within a school in a rural area. Limitations for this study include not being able to ask students in grades K-12 and a lack of responses. If this study was to be conducted again, we recommend including college students who are majoring in education in the population sample to take the survey. We are looking to advance the design of future schools and they are the ones who will be working in these future environments so receiving their input would be beneficial.

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