

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Fall 2010

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass seven years (twenty nine quarters) of interviews.
- It is being conducted to obtain learning on the *overall* community's perceptions of the Issaquah School District on a variety of performance areas...
 - Education
 - Finance
 - Workplace environment
 - Management/leadership

Research Design

- This is a quantitative study with statistically significant findings.
- Interviews are conducted continuously among a random sample of adult residents (18 years old or older) in the Issaquah School District, with approximately 13 interviews conducted each week or 150 each quarter.
- By conducting interviews continuously, perceptions are measured throughout the quarter rather than at just one point in time when breaking news or an event could have a significant impact on the entire quarter's results.
- Ten-minute telephone interviews are conducted by trained interviewers who probe extensively when asking diagnostic questions, such as reasons for giving the District a specific grade for its overall performance.

Research Design Cont'd.

- The sample replicates the demographic profile of adults in the Issaquah School District with regard to age and sex, based upon the US Census.
- Respondents are asked if they are willing to provide further input to the District at the end of the interview. In each quarter a large number of respondents have answered yes. We have their names, phone numbers, and when available, e-mail addresses. This Fall almost half (45%) indicated that they are willing to be contacted again.
- This is a flexible survey. If an event occurs that might impact perceptions in the community, the sample can be increased for a short time to assess the impact.

Research Design Cont'd.

- Starting in Fall 2006, additional questions were added to this survey to gain understanding regarding...
 - The overall community's perception on...
 - *Communications from the school district are open and honest*
 - Parents' perceptions for...
 - *Your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district*
 - *Your involvement in your child's education is welcome*
- The sample was augmented to include at least 50 parents for each school level—Elementary, Middle and High School. Some parents have children in more than one school level and, therefore, answer about more than one school level.

Research Analysis

Please note that:

- The responses given in the current wave (Fall 2010) are compared to previous responses given.
 - When there are **statistically significant** differences in responses from one wave of interviews to another at the 90% confidence level it is noted.
 - When there are **directional** differences in responses (numerical differences that are not statistically significant), they are also mentioned.
- Responses do not always add up to 100% due to rounding. Instead at times they add up to 99% or 101%.

Key Findings

Fall 2003 Vs. Fall 2010

- As the following charts detail, since the Fall of 2003 the levels of A/B grades given to the Issaquah School District have **significantly** increased for virtually all performance attributes.
 - The exceptions are...
 - *Excellent teachers* which has improved directionally (90% are now giving an A or B grade vs. 84% in Fall 2003)
 - *Keeping schools safe* which has stayed the same with 88% giving an A or B grade.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. The vast majority of residents (80%) give the District an A/B grade for its performance in this area, with 40% giving the District an A grade for its performance.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2003 Vs. Fall 2010

| | Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.) | | | | | Fall 2010 (Oct., Nov., Dec.) | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | A or B | A | B | C | D or F | A or B | A | B | C | D or F |
| Neighborhood school performance | 81% | 30 | 51 | 13 | 5 | 90%* | 55* | 35 | 8 | 2 |
| Excellent teachers | 84% | 34 | 50 | 12 | 3 | 90% | 46* | 44 | 8 | 2 |
| Keeping schools safe | 88% | 46 | 42 | 6 | 4 | 88% | 59* | 29 | 11 | 1 |
| Students educated to be successful adults | 77% | 28 | 49 | 18 | 5 | 87%* | 42* | 45 | 11 | 2 |
| Well managed | 61% | 14 | 47 | 24 | 13 | 84%* | 34* | 50 | 12 | 4 |
| Keeps community informed | 72% | 25 | 47 | 18 | 9 | 83%* | 42* | 41 | 14 | 3 |
| Good to work for | 67% | 22 | 45 | 20 | 12 | 82%* | 43* | 39 | 15 | 4 |
| Administration working with teachers to build relationships | 50% | 12 | 38 | 27 | 21 | 81%* | 32* | 49 | 16 | 2 |
| Communications from school district are open and honest | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 80% | 40 | 40 | 16 | 4 |
| Trustworthy Administration | 57% | 15 | 42 | 25 | 17 | 79%* | 41* | 38 | 13 | 8 |
| Overall performance of Administration | 58% | 13 | 45 | 27 | 14 | 78%* | 31* | 47 | 16 | 6 |
| Excellent leadership | 57% | 18 | 39 | 28 | 13 | 76%* | 39* | 37 | 20 | 5 |
| Collaborative Administration | 56% | 13 | 43 | 29 | 14 | 74%* | 24* | 50 | 21 | 5 |
| Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget | 58% | 17 | 41 | 28 | 13 | 73%* | 31* | 42 | 25 | 2 |
| Financially well run | 49% | 14 | 35 | 34 | 16 | 72%* | 35* | 37 | 20 | 8 |
| Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems | 50% | 8 | 42 | 32 | 16 | 70%* | 21* | 49 | 23 | 7 |

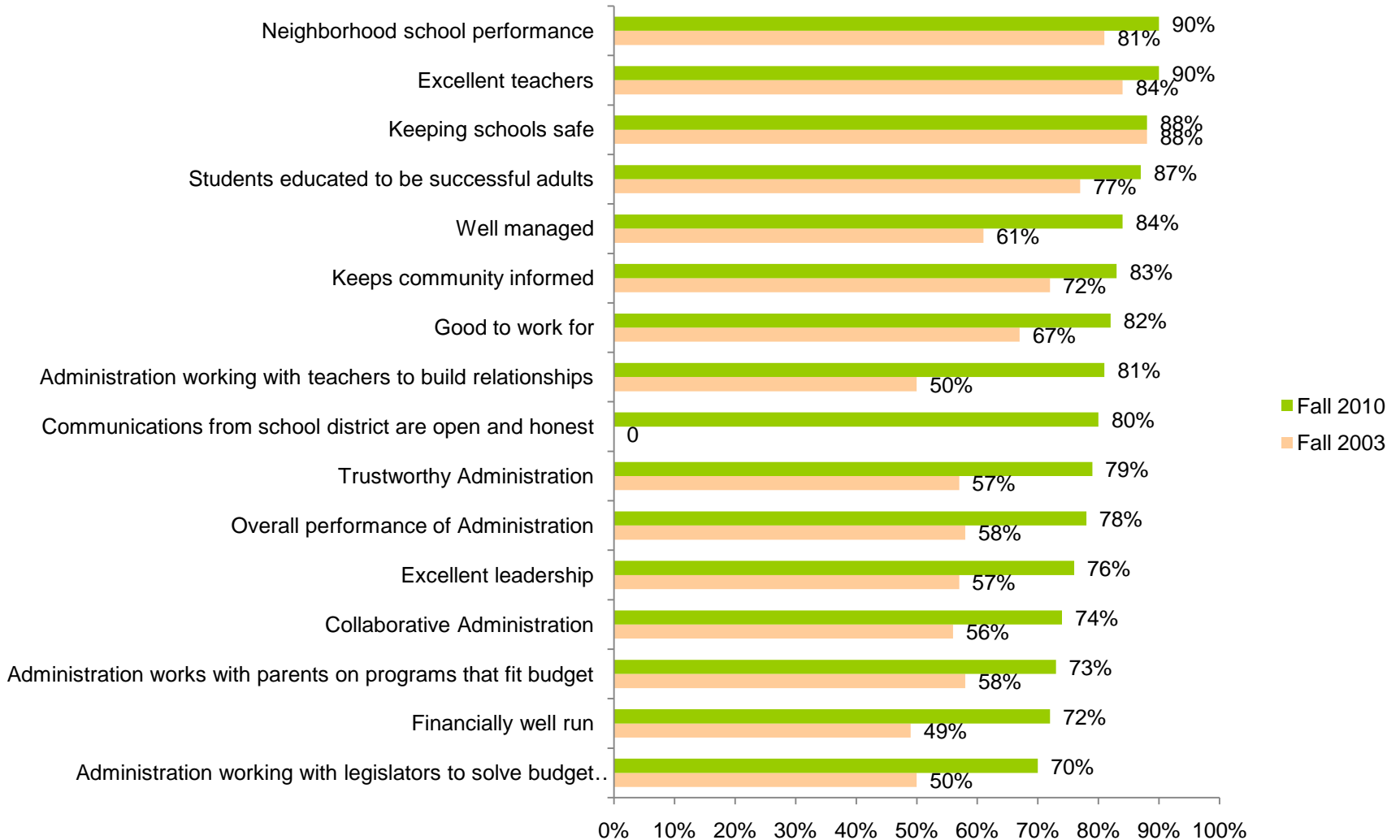
* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2003 at the 90% confidence level.

Note: *Communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this study in Fall 2006.

Q. Based on your impressions, if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give it a grade of A,B,C,D or F for its performance on...?

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Fall 2003 Vs. Fall 2010

% Giving an A or B Grade



Note:
The attribute *communications from school district are open and honest* was added to this study in Fall 2006.

Q. Based on your impressions, if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give it a grade of A,B,C,D or F for its performance on...?

Ratings During Past Quarter

- After experiencing directional or significant improvements for virtually all performance areas last quarter, there were many small, directional declines in high grades this quarter.
- There was a significant decline for *being good to work for* (from 90% last quarter to 82% this quarter). This may in part reflect concerns about possible layoffs due to impending budget cuts.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Summer 2010 Vs. Fall 2010

| | Summer 2010 (July/Aug./Sept.) | | | | | Fall 2010 (Oct., Nov., Dec.) | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|
| | A or B | A | B | C | D or F | A or B | A | B | C | D or F |
| Excellent teachers | 91% | 45 | 46 | 7 | 2 | 90% | 46 | 44 | 8 | 2 |
| Neighborhood school performance | 90% | 46 | 44 | 7 | 3 | 90% | 55 | 35 | 8 | 2 |
| Keeping schools safe | 93% | 61 | 32 | 4 | 3 | 88% | 59 | 29 | 11* | 1 |
| Students educated to be successful adults | 84% | 39 | 45 | 13 | 4 | 87% | 42 | 45 | 11 | 2 |
| Well managed | 86% | 33 | 53 | 9 | 5 | 84% | 34 | 50 | 12 | 4 |
| Keeps community informed | 85% | 45 | 40 | 10 | 4 | 83% | 42 | 41 | 14 | 3 |
| Good to work for | 90% | 35 | 55 | 9 | 2 | 82%* | 43 | 39* | 15 | 4 |
| Administration working with teachers to build relationships | 80% | 31 | 49 | 15 | 5 | 81% | 32 | 49 | 16 | 2 |
| Communications from school district are open and honest | 84% | 42 | 42 | 13 | 3 | 80% | 40 | 40 | 16 | 4 |
| Trustworthy Administration | 82% | 43 | 39 | 11 | 6 | 79% | 41 | 38 | 13 | 8 |
| Overall performance of Administration | 83% | 24 | 59 | 12 | 5 | 78% | 31 | 47* | 16 | 6 |
| Excellent leadership | 82% | 28 | 54 | 12 | 6 | 76% | 39* | 37* | 20 | 5 |
| Collaborative Administration | 76% | 31 | 45 | 21 | 4 | 74% | 24 | 50 | 21 | 5 |
| Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget | 69% | 24 | 45 | 25 | 6 | 73% | 31 | 42 | 25 | 2 |
| Financially well run | 75% | 31 | 44 | 19 | 5 | 72% | 35 | 37 | 20 | 8 |
| Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems | 75% | 19 | 56 | 18 | 7 | 70% | 21 | 49 | 23 | 7 |

Note:

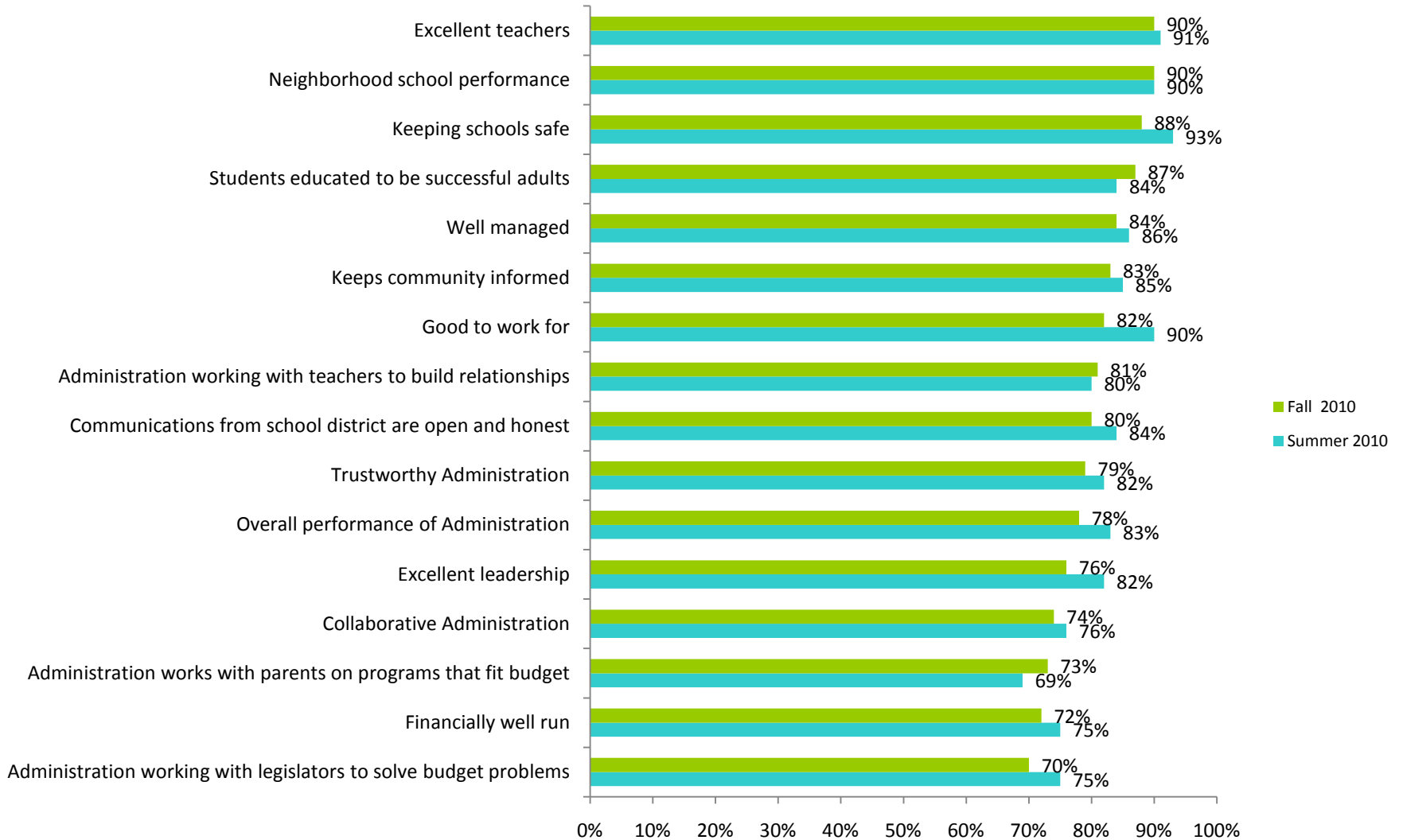
* = Significant difference vs. Summer 2010 at the 90% confidence level.

The attribute *communications from school district are open and honest* was added to this study in Fall 2006.

Q. Based on your impressions, if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give it a grade of A,B,C,D or F for its performance on...?

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study— Summer 2010 Vs. Fall 2010

% Giving an A or B Grade



Note:

The attribute *Communications from school district are open and honest* was added to this study in Fall 2006.

Q. Based on your impressions, if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give it a grade of A,B,C,D or F for its performance on...?

Grades Given by Parents Regarding How the Issaquah School District Treats Them

- As the following chart details, almost all parents continue to give the District a high grade for *encouraging their opinions* and *welcoming their involvement*.
 - Over nine in ten parents overall (94%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*. Two out of three (66%) give the District an A grade.
 - Parents of Elementary school students (71%) and Middle school students (70%) are significantly more likely to give an A grade than parents of High school students (55%).
 - Over four out of five parents (83%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district*.
 - Significantly more parents of High School students now give the District an A for its performance than in 2006 (37% vs. 19%).

Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 vs. Fall 2010

| Fall 2006 (October, November, December) | | | | | Fall 2010 (October/November/December) | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <i>Your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District</i> | | | | | | | | |
| | All Parents of Students Attending Issaquah Schools | Parents of Elementary School Students | Parents of Middle School Students | Parents of High School Students | All Parents of Students Attending Issaquah Schools | Parents of Elementary School Students | Parents of Middle School Students | Parents of High School Students |
| A or B | 81% | 90% | 83% | 72% | 83% | 79% | 82% | 91%* |
| A | 34 | 41** | 34** | 19 | 42 | 40 | 41 | 37* |
| B | 47 | 49 | 49 | 53 | 41 | 39 | 41 | 54 |
| C | 14 | 6** | 14 | 22 | 13 | 19** | 15 | 8* |
| D or F | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| <i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i> | | | | | | | | |
| A or B | 92% | 97% | 93% | 87% | 94% | 97% | 92% | 91% |
| A | 63 | 77** | 69** | 47 | 66 | 71** | 70** | 55 |
| B | 29 | 20** | 24** | 40 | 28 | 26 | 22** | 36 |
| C | 7 | 3** | 7 | 11 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 5 |
| D or F | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

** = Significant difference vs. parents of High School students.

*** = Significant difference vs. parents of Middle School students.

**** = Significant difference vs. parents of Elementary School students.

Reasons Given for Grade Given to Administration for Its Performance Overall

- Respondents are probed regarding reasons for the grade they gave the Administration for its overall performance.
- Residents' perceptions of the Administration have improved since the first wave of measurements were taken in Fall 2003, a year after the strike. During the past quarter, there was also improvement in residents' perceptions.
 - Approximately four in ten (44%) mention a positive reason for the grade they give, which is significantly more than in Fall 2003 (27%), a year after the strike, and directionally more than in the Summer (38%).
 - Four in ten (40%) mention that something needs improvement, which is significantly fewer than in Fall 2003 (72%) and last Summer (56%).
- The reasons given continue to be diverse with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small number of respondents.
- The most frequently given positive reasons are:
 - Satisfied/happy with school experience (20%)
 - Doing a good job (15%)

All other positive reasons were mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.

Reasons Given for Grade Given to Administration for Its Performance Overall Cont'd.

- Negative reasons for the grade given to the Administration continue to be varied with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small number of residents. The most frequently given reasons are...
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations/ decision making needed (8%), which is mentioned by significantly fewer residents than last Summer (14%).
 - Communications overall (8%)
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/more timely information (7%)
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding/better use of funds (6%)
- Very few (less than 5%) mention any other specific negative reason.

Suggestions for District

- Respondents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. Historically, the majority of residents make at least one suggestion.
 - Seven in ten residents (71%) made a suggestion this Fall. This is significantly less than in Fall 2003 when 83% made a suggestion. Last Summer a similar number of residents (72%) made a suggestion.
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communications. One in four (25%) continue to make this type of suggestion. Specific communication suggestions include:
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (24%). Last Summer directionally fewer parents made this suggestion (19%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (6%)
 - Parents of Middle School students (11%) are more likely to suggest this than parents of younger students.

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (10%)
 - Parents of High School students (19%) and Middle School students (19%) are more likely to suggest this than parents of Elementary School students (8%).
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (9%)
 - More focus on student's individual needs/improve learning experience (9%)
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (8%)
 - Need more discipline/better enforcement of rules (8%)
- All other suggestions were given by less than 5% of respondents.

How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Three out of four residents (75%) feel that the amount of taxes that they pay for local public education is about right or too low. In spite of the tough economy in recent years, residents have consistently had a positive attitude towards the taxes they pay for education.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| Too high | 16% | |
| About right | 65% | } 75% |
| Too low | 10% | |
| Don't know | 9% | |

Q. Do you feel that the current share of tax dollars that you pay for local public education is...?

Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

- Residents of the Issaquah District continue to most frequently mention that their Friends and Family, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates, the Internet, and the District Newsletter are their primary source of information about Issaquah schools.
- Since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents are using the Internet as their primary source of information (4% vs. 19%) and the Issaquah Press/its affiliates (10% vs. 25%).

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Issaquah Press and its affiliates | 25% |
| Friends and Family | 23 |
| The Internet | 19 |
| District Newsletter | 15 |
| School Employees | 5 |
| Work there/personal experience | 3 |
| From the school/school bulletin | 2 |
| Seattle Times | 3 |
| Other | 2 |
| Don't Know | 4 |

Q. Where do you get most of your information about Issaquah Schools? (Do not read list.)

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall, the number of residents giving the District high grades has improved since 2003.
 - Since 2003, the levels of high (A/B) grades have increased significantly for all but two performance attributes...
 - *Excellent teachers* where the high levels of A/B grades has improved directionally (from 84% in 2003 to 90% now)
 - *Keeping schools safe* where the high level of A/B grades remained the same (88%)
- During the Summer quarter, there had been directional or significant improvements in the levels of A/B grades for virtually all performance attributes. But, during the Fall quarter there were a number of directional declines that brought the levels of A/B grades back down to previous historical levels.
- There was one significant decline in A/B grades during the Summer for *good to work for* (from 90% last quarter to 82% this quarter. This may in part reflect concerns about possible layoffs due to impending budget cuts.

Conclusions and Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to the new attributes that were added to this study in Fall 2006, the District's performance continues to be extremely strong with the vast majority of parents giving it high grades.
 - Four out of five residents (80%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest.*
 - Over nine in ten parents (94%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome.* Two out of three (66%) give the District an A grade.
 - More than four out of five parents (83%) give Issaquah an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District.*

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- The levels of positive perceptions about the District has continued to improve. With regard to reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance...
 - Over four in ten (44%) mention a positive reason, which is significantly more than in Fall 2003 (27%) and directionally more than in the Summer (38%).
 - Four in ten (40%) mention something that needs improvement, which is significantly fewer than both 2003 (72%) and last Summer (56%).
 - The reasons continue to be diverse with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small minority of residents.
- Respondents are also asked to suggest improvements that the District could make, and historically the vast majority of residents will suggest at least one improvement. This Fall, seven in ten residents (71%) made a suggestion, which is significantly fewer than in Fall 2003 when 83% made a suggestion. A similar number of residents (72%) made a suggestion last Summer.
 - The suggestions continue to be diverse. The four most frequently given suggestions are:
 - Improve in the area of communications (25%); e.g., improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (24%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-students relations (10%). Parents of High School students and Middle School students (19%) are more likely to request this than parents of Elementary school students (8%).
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (9%)
 - More focus on student's individual needs/improve learning experience (9%)

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- The vast majority of residents continue to be satisfied with the amount of taxes they are paying for local education. Three out of four (75%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (65%) or too low (10%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be the Issaquah Press (25%), Friends and Family (23%), the Internet (19%) and the District Newsletter (15%). Four out of five (82%) residents mention one of these sources as their primary source of information about the District.
- This quarter almost half of the respondents (45%) indicated that they are willing to give further input. If additional in-depth learning is desired, it is possible to contact these respondents...
 - with additional questions on these findings, such as the underlying reasons for a grade or suggested improvements
 - regarding new issues that the District would like their input on, such as program changes under consideration
 - to invite them to join an advisory group

Dorothy Geraghty, Education Market Research Consultant

- Dorothy Geraghty has over 25 years of experience in Market Research and over 5 years of experience in Education as a teacher/head teacher in the Lake Washington and Bellevue School Districts. She has a B.S. in Marketing and M. A. in Education.
- Prior to becoming a consultant, Dorothy was the Market Research Analyst for Evergreen Healthcare, where she conducted *all* the quantitative and qualitative market research for the hospital, its medical offices and offsite facilities. While at Evergreen, Dorothy developed a Community Polling Study, which is used to assess and track its performance as a public entity in a variety of areas.
- Dorothy has consulted for other educational institutions and also for major businesses, such as Bank of America, US West, Bristol Meyers Squibb, Seagrams, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, Porter Novelli Public Relations and various consulting companies.