

# **Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results**

**Fall 2003 through Fall 2013**

**Prepared by:**

**Dorothy Geraghty  
Sammamish, WA 98074**

# Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over nine years (forty 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 one in three (32%) residents and one in two parents (47%) 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

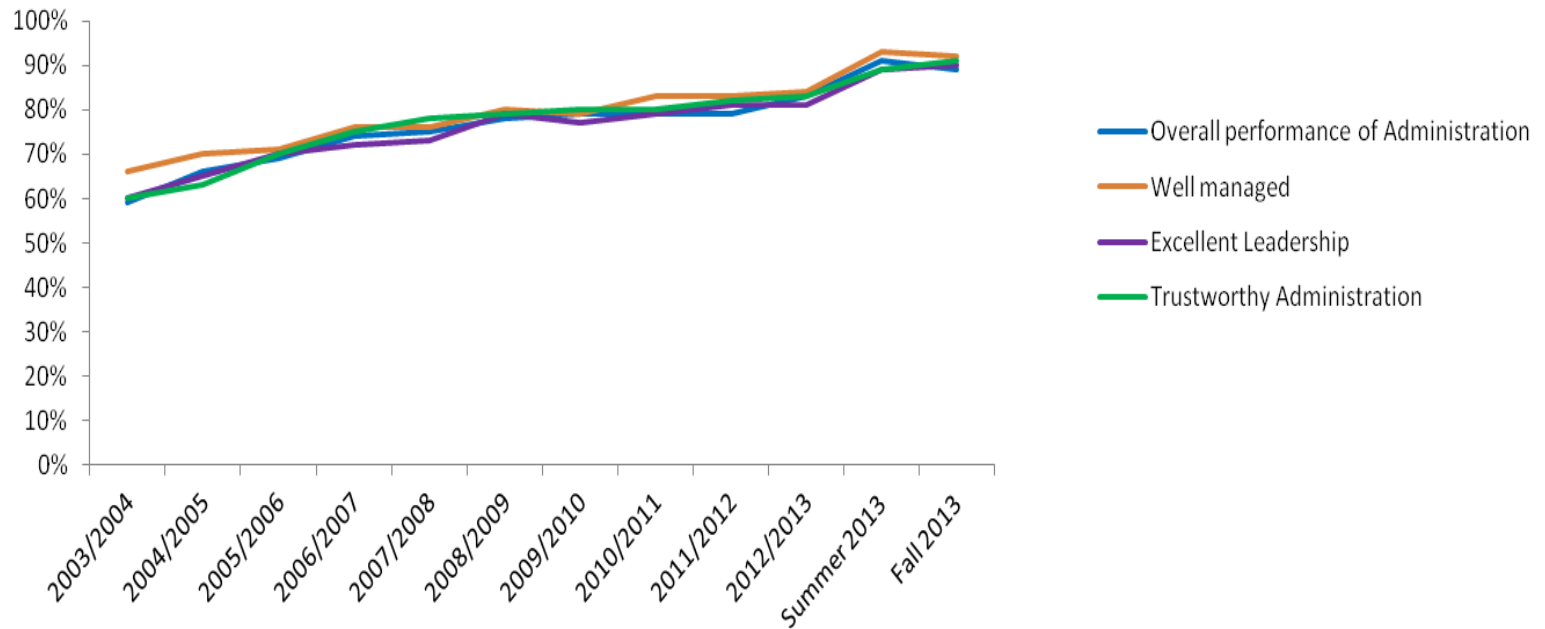
Please note that:

- The responses given in the current wave (Fall 2013) 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 – Fall 2013

- As the following charts detail, improved perceptions have been maintained since this study began in 2003. This Fall there were no significant changes in the levels of high grades being given.
- Almost all residents now give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 85% to 95%.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. Nine in ten residents (90%) give the District an A or B grade for its performance in this area.

## Results By School Year: Administration % Giving an A or B Grade



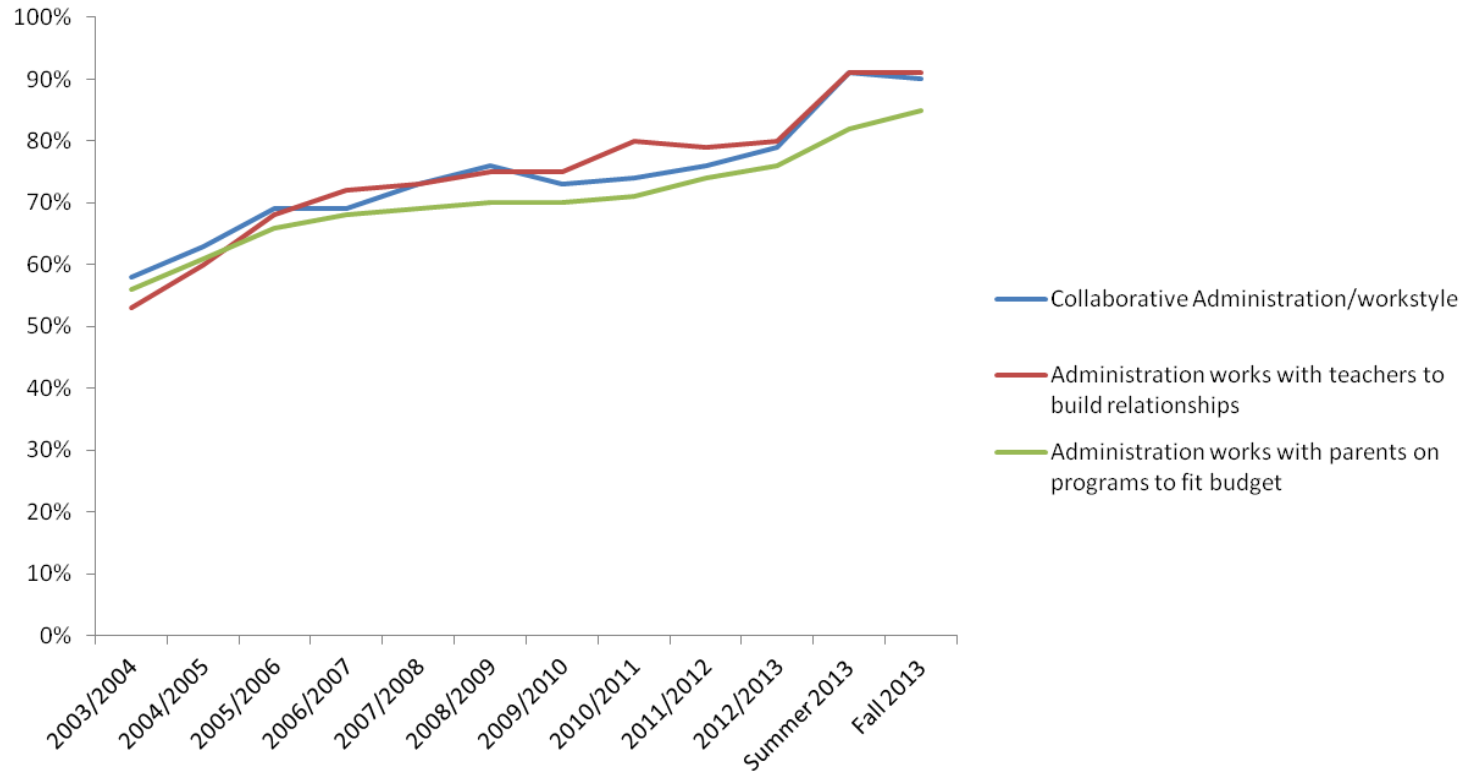
**Note:**

The 2012/2013 school year now includes all four quarters: Summer 2012 (July/August/September 2012), Fall 2012 (October/November/December 2012), Winter 2013 (January/February/March 2013), and Spring 2013 (April/May/June 2013). The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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 by School Year: Collaboration % Giving an A or B Grade

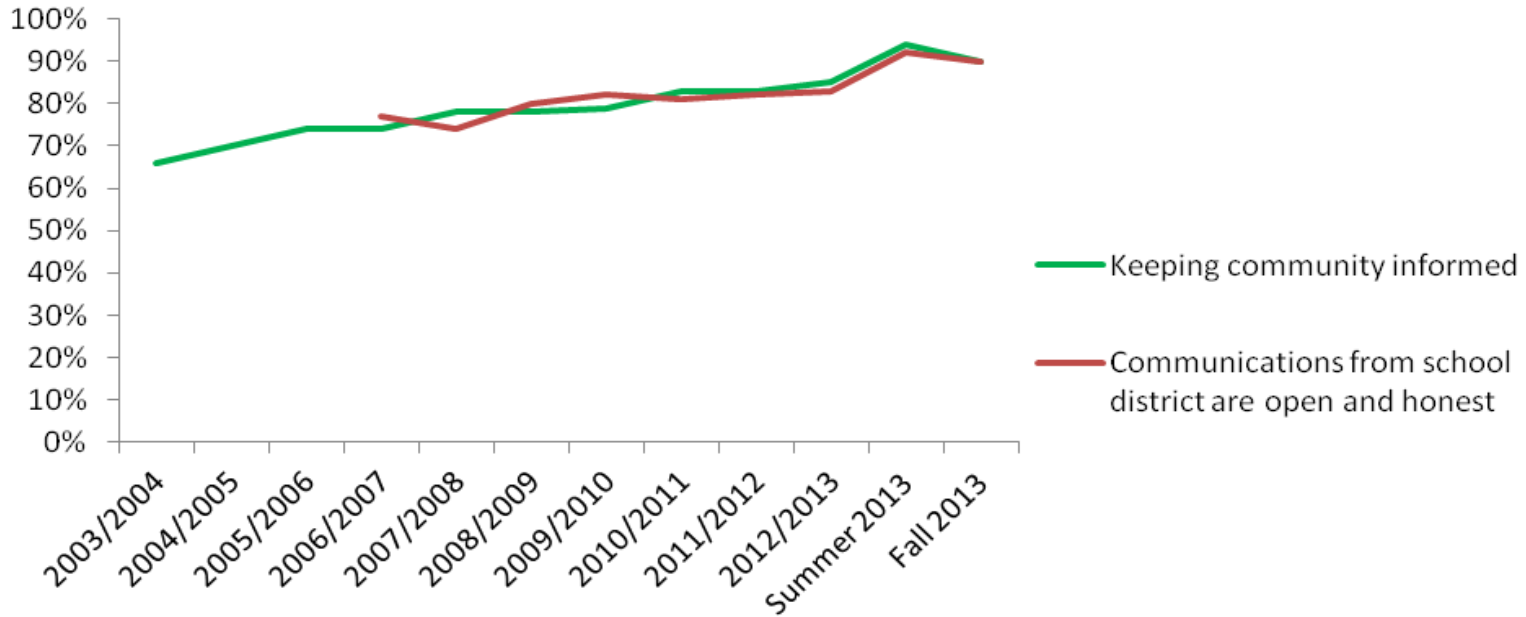


**Note:**

The 2012/2013 school year now includes all four quarters: Summer 2012 (July/August/September 2012), Fall 2012 (October/November/December 2012), Winter 2013 (January/February/March 2013), and Spring 2013 (April/May/June 2013). The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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 By School Year: Communications % Giving an A or B Grade

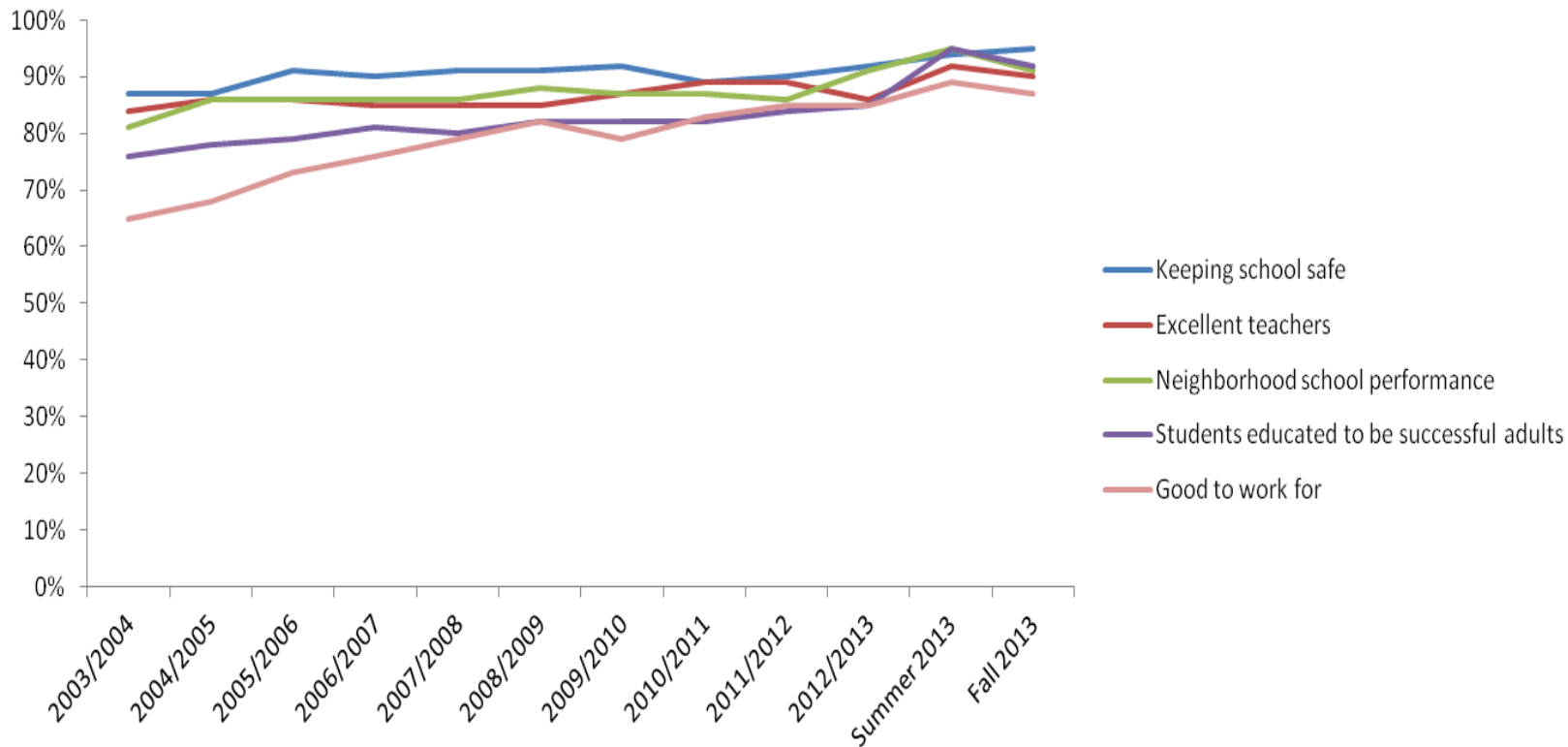


**Note:**

The 2012/2013 school year now includes all four quarters: Summer 2012 (July/August/September 2012), Fall 2012 (October/November/December 2012), Winter 2013 (January/February/March 2013), and Spring 2013 (April/May/June 2013). The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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 by School Year: School Performance % Giving an A or B Grade

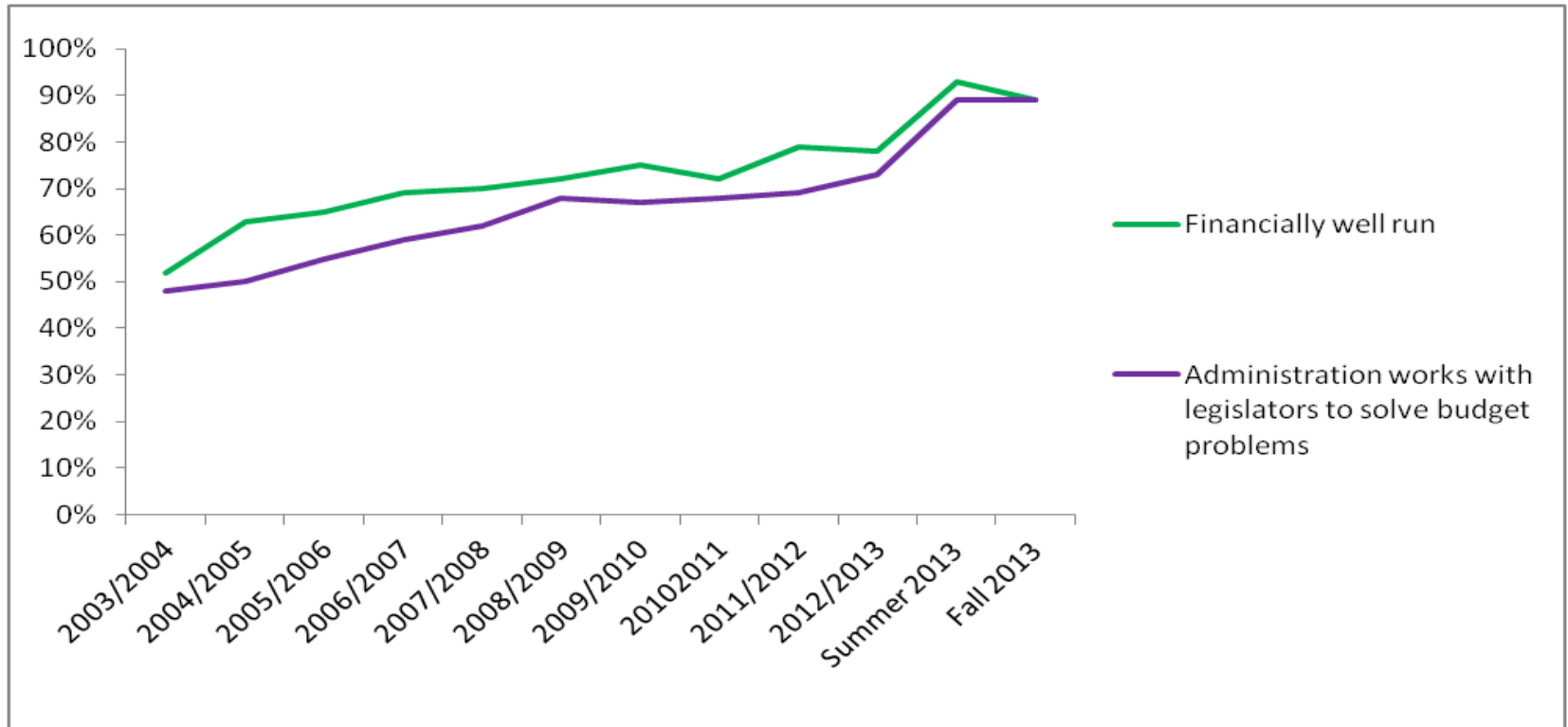


**Note:**

The 2012/2013 school year now includes all four quarters: Summer 2012 (July/August/September 2012), Fall 2012 (October/November/December 2012), Winter 2013 (January/February/March 2013), and Spring 2013 (April/May/June 2013). The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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 By School Year: Finance % Giving an A or B Grade



**Note:**

The 2012/2013 school year now includes all four quarters: Summer 2012 (July/August/September 2012), Fall 2012 (October/November/December 2012), Winter 2013 (January/February/March 2013), and Spring 2013 (April/May/June 2013). The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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

- As the following charts show, the levels of A/B grades have overall been stable since the Summer quarter with only small directional changes.
- But, there were significant declines in A grades for two attributes. At the same time, the levels of B grades increased, with the overall level of A/B grades remaining basically the same. The lower “A” grade levels might be due to slightly lower satisfaction levels.
  - The level of A/B grades for *keeping schools safe* remained high this Fall (95%). But, compared to the Summer, the level of A grades is significantly lower (42% vs. 62%) while the level of B grades is higher (53% vs. 32%).
  - The level of A/B grades for *keeps the community informed* also remained high this Fall (90%). But, compared to the Summer, the level of A grades is significantly lower (42% vs. 54%) and the level of B grades is higher ((48% vs. 40%).

# Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Summer 2013 Vs. Fall 2013

	Summer 2013 (July/August/September)					Fall 2013 (October/November/December)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools safe	94%	62	32	4	1	95%	42*	53*	3	2
Students educated to be successful adults	95%	40	55	4	1	92%	33	59	8	0
Well managed	93%	40	53	6	1	92%	33	59	8	0
Neighborhood school performance	95%	39	56	3	1	91%	36	55	7	1
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	91%	32	59	6	3	91%	23	68	7	2
Trustworthy Administration	89%	40	48	8	4	91%	33	58	4	5
Keeps community informed	94%	54	40	3	2	90%	42*	48	9	1
Excellent teachers	92%	45	47	5	3	90%	34	56	7	3
Communications from school district are open and honest	92%	45	47	5	3	90%	41	48	9	1
Collaborative Administration	91%	37	54	6	3	90%	29	60	8	2
Excellent leadership	89%	38	50	9	1	90%	31	59	10	0
Financially well run	93%	39	54	4	3	89%	31	58	8	2
<b>Overall performance of Administration</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	89%	30	59	9	2	89%	28	61	8	3
Good to work for	89%	36	53	8	2	87%	28	58	12	1
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	82%	32	50	13	5	85%	24	61*	13	2

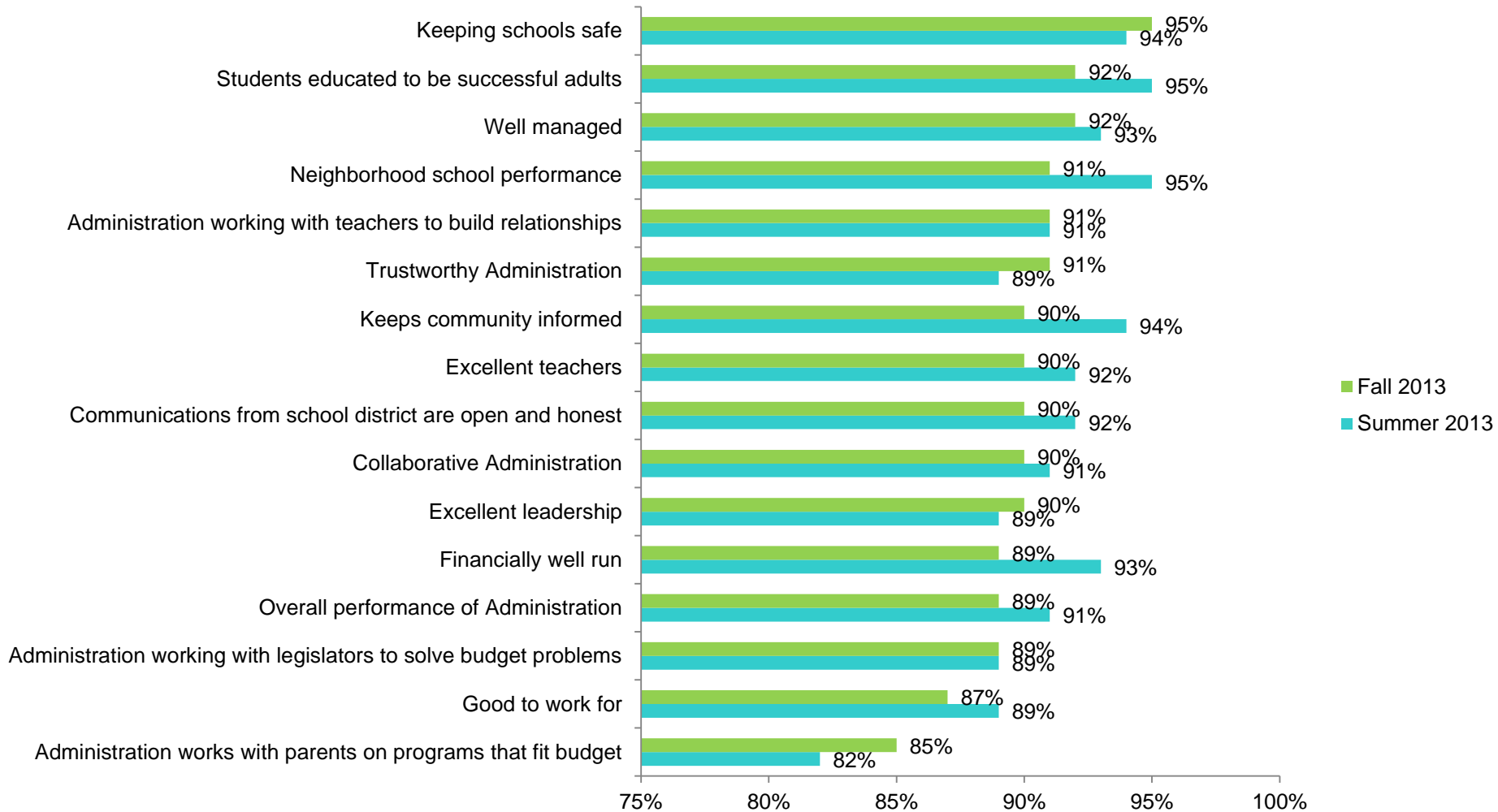
Note:

\* = Significant difference vs. Summer 2013 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 2013 Vs. Fall 2013 % 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

- Almost all parents continue to give the District a high grade for *encouraging their opinions and welcoming their involvement*
  - Almost all parents (95%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*.
  - Over eight in ten in ten parents (84%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*.
    - Parents of Elementary school students (25%) are significantly less likely now to give an A grade than parents of High School students (40%) and directionally less likely than parents of Middle School students (37%).



## Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 Vs. Fall 2013

Fall 2006 (October, November, December)					Fall 2013 (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%	84%	82%	84%	84%
A	34	41**	34**	19	35	25**	37	40
B	47	49	49	53	49	57	46	44
C	14	6**	14	22	9	17**	9	6
D or F	6	4	4	6	7	2	8****	10****
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97%	93%	87%	95%	95%	94%	91%
A	63	77**	69**	47	44*	38*	51*	48
B	29	20**	24**	40	51*	57*	44*	43
C	7	3**	7	11	4	5	4	6
D or F	1	0	0	2	1	0	2	2

\* = 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.

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

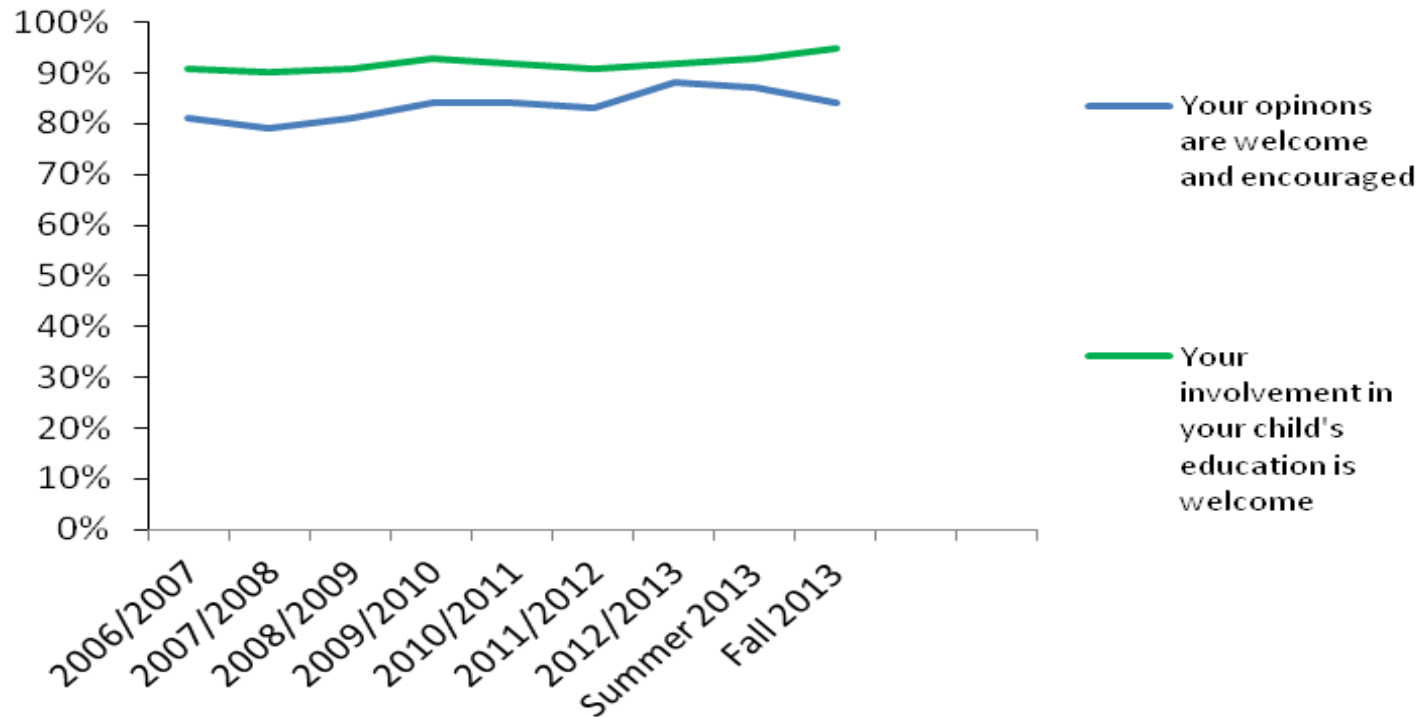
\*\* = Significant difference vs. parents of High School students.

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

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

Q. Based upon 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...?

# A/B Grades Given by Parents Regarding How the Issaquah School District Treats Them



Note: These performance attributes were added to this study in Fall 2006.

Q. Based in 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...?

# Reasons for Grade Given to Administration for Its Performance Overall

- Respondents are probed regarding their reasons for the grade they gave the Administration for its overall performance. The reasons have improved since the first wave of measurements were taken in the Fall of 2003 and in recent quarters.
- In recent quarters, fewer people are mentioning a dissatisfaction—23% in the Fall which is directionally fewer than in the Summer (31%), significantly fewer than in the Spring (48%) and the 2003/2004 school year (64%).
- At the same time, significantly more mention a positive reason. In the Fall almost three out of four (73%) mention a positive reason for the grade they gave, which is significantly more than in the Summer (62%), the Spring (48%) and the 2003/2004 school year (26%).
- 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:
  - Doing a good job (35%)
  - Satisfied/happy with the school experience (26%)
  - Good parental involvement/support (5%)
  - Positive teacher comments/like the teacher (5%)
- All other positive reasons were mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.

Q. Why did you give the overall performance of the Administration a grade of...?

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

- Since only 23% of residents mention a negative reason for the grade given to the Administration, the reasons not only continue to be diverse but also are mentioned by only a small number of residents.
- Historically a frequently given reason is Communication/the need for better/more communication, which only an extremely small minority of residents (3%) mentioned this Fall. In contrast, directionally more residents (8%) mentioned this in the Summer and significantly more mentioned it in the Spring (12%).
- A small minority also mentioned
  - Room for improvement (8%)
- Very few (less than 5%) mention any other specific negative reason.

# Suggestions for District

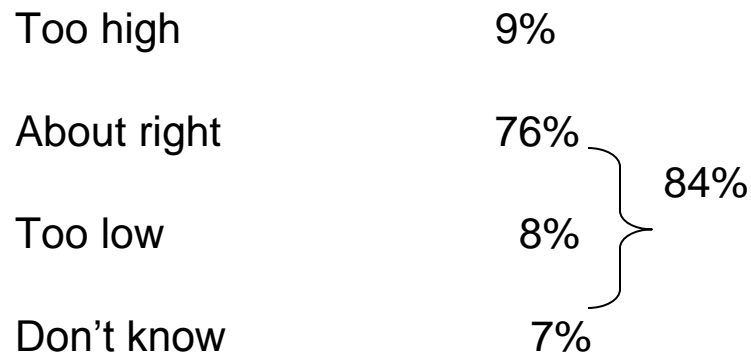
- Residents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. Approximately half of residents (54%) make a suggestion, which is significantly fewer than in the Summer (74%). But, 70% of parents are still making a suggestion.
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. One of the most frequently given suggestions continues to be to improve Communications. Approximately one in ten residents (8%) make this type of suggestion which is significantly fewer than in the Summer when 24% made this suggestion. But 17% of parents still suggest an improvement in Communications.
- Specific Communication suggestions include:
  - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (5%) which is significantly fewer than in the Summer (14%).
    - 8% of parents suggest this.
  - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (3%) which is also significantly less than in the Summer (11%).
    - 9% of parents request this.

## Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (9% of residents) which historically has been suggested by a small minority of residents.
    - Parents (15%) are especially likely to make this suggestion.
  - Improvement needed in math curriculum (9% of residents)
  - Better administration /leadership/better decision making (6% of residents)
- All other suggestions were made by less than 5% of respondents.

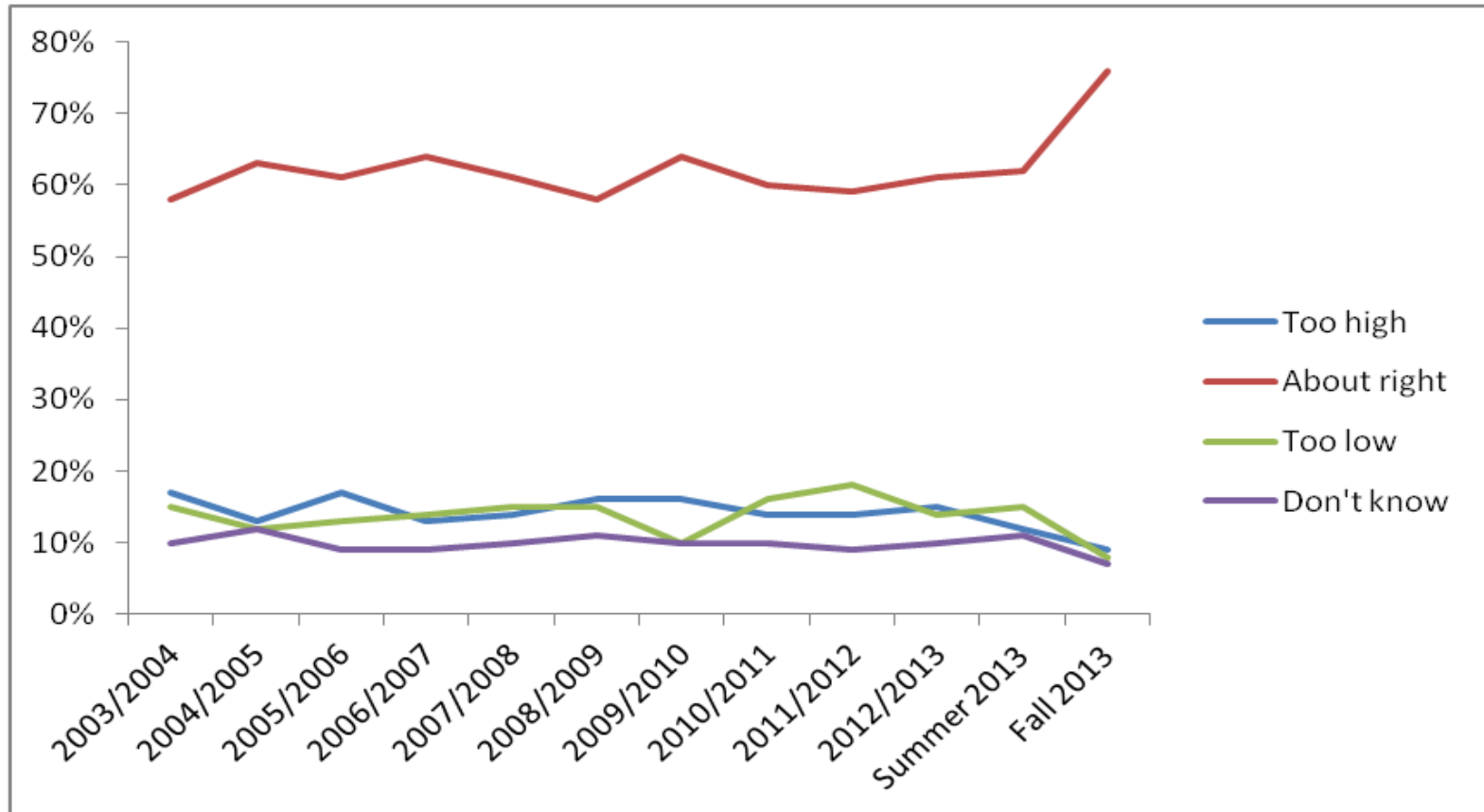
# How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Approximately four out of five residents (84%) feel that the amount of taxes that they pay for local public education is about right or too low. Significantly more residents feel that the taxes they pay are just right (76%) than in the Spring (62%).
- Historically, the vast majority of residents have felt that the taxes they pay for education are about right or too low.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...



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

## How Voters Feel about the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education (2003/2004 School Year – Fall 2013)



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



# Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

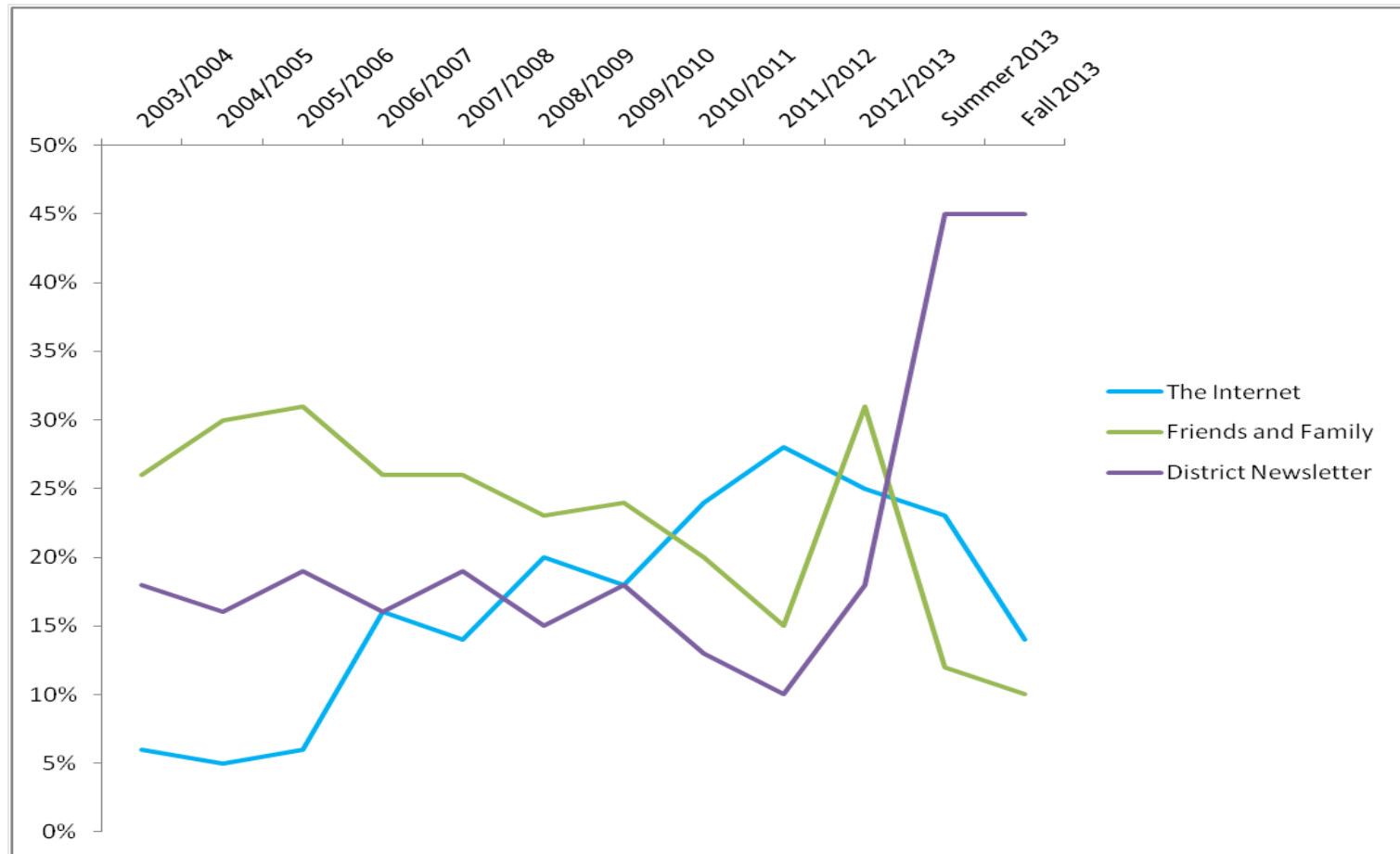
- The Internet, District Newsletter and Friends and Family continue to be primary sources of information about Issaquah schools. This Fall the Issaquah Press and school employees were also primary sources of information for a minority of residents.
- The Internet and District Newsletter continue to grow as primary sources of information—from 18% in 2003/2004 to 45% this Fall for the District Newsletter and from 6% in 2003/2004 to 14% this Fall for the Internet.

## Primary Source of Information about Issaquah Schools

District Newsletter	45%
The Internet	14
Friends and Family	10
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	10
School employees	9
Television	4
Work there/personal experience	1
Seattle Times	2
Mail/School Bulletin	0
School	0
Other	2
Don't Know	2

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

## Historical Top Three Primary Sources of Information about Issaquah Schools



# Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall, the number of residents giving the District high grades has improved significantly across virtually all performance areas since 2003.
- The vast majority of residents give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 85% to 95%.
- During the Fall overall the high (A/B) grades remained stable.

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to the attributes that were added to this study in Fall 2006, the District's performance continues to be strong with almost everyone giving it high grades
  - Over nine in in ten parents (95%) give the District an A/B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome.*
  - Over in ten parents (84%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District.*
  - Nine in ten residents (90%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest .*

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Respondents are asked for their reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance.
  - This Fall, approximately three out of four (73%) mention a positive reason, which is significantly more than in the Summer (62%).
  - One in four (23%) mention that something needs improvement which is directionally fewer than in the Summer (31%).
  - 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 the vast majority of residents continue to suggest at least one improvement. This Fall approximately half (54%) make a suggestion, which is significantly fewer than in the Summer (74%). But 70% of parents are still making a suggestion.
- Suggestions continue to be diverse with only a small minority making any specific suggestion.
- The most frequently given suggestions are:
  - Improve in the area of communications (8% of residents) which is significantly fewer than in the Summer (24%). But 17% of parents are still requesting this. Specific requests include:
    - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (5% of residents and 8% of parents)
    - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (3% of residents and 9% of parents)
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (9% of residents and 15% of parents). This historically has been mentioned by a small minority.
  - Improvement needed in Math curriculum (9% of residents)
  - Better Administration/Leadership/Better decision making (6% of residents)

# 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. Approximately eight in ten (84%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (76%) or too low (8%).
  - Significantly more residents feel that the taxes they pay are just right (76%) than in the Spring (62%).
- Historically the most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District are the District Newsletter (45%), the Internet (14%) and Friends and Family (10%)--or seven out of ten (69%) residents.
  - Since 2003, the District Newsletter (from 18% to 45%) and the Internet (from 6% to 14%) have grown as important sources of information.
- This Fall one in three residents (32%) and one in two parents (47%) 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 or budget 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, Seagram's, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, Porter Novelli Public Relations and various consulting companies.