

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Spring 2007

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass almost four years (fifteen 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. In the Spring of 2007, four in ten respondents (39%) 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 an understanding of the overall community's perceptions regarding...
 - 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 (Spring 2007) 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. Spring 2007

- As the following charts detail, since the Fall of 2003 perceptions of the Issaquah School District have **significantly** improved in a number of areas...
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Administration works with teachers to build relationships
 - Financially well run
- In a number of other performance areas, perceptions of the District have improved directionally...
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with parents on programs that fit the budget
 - Good to work for
 - Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems

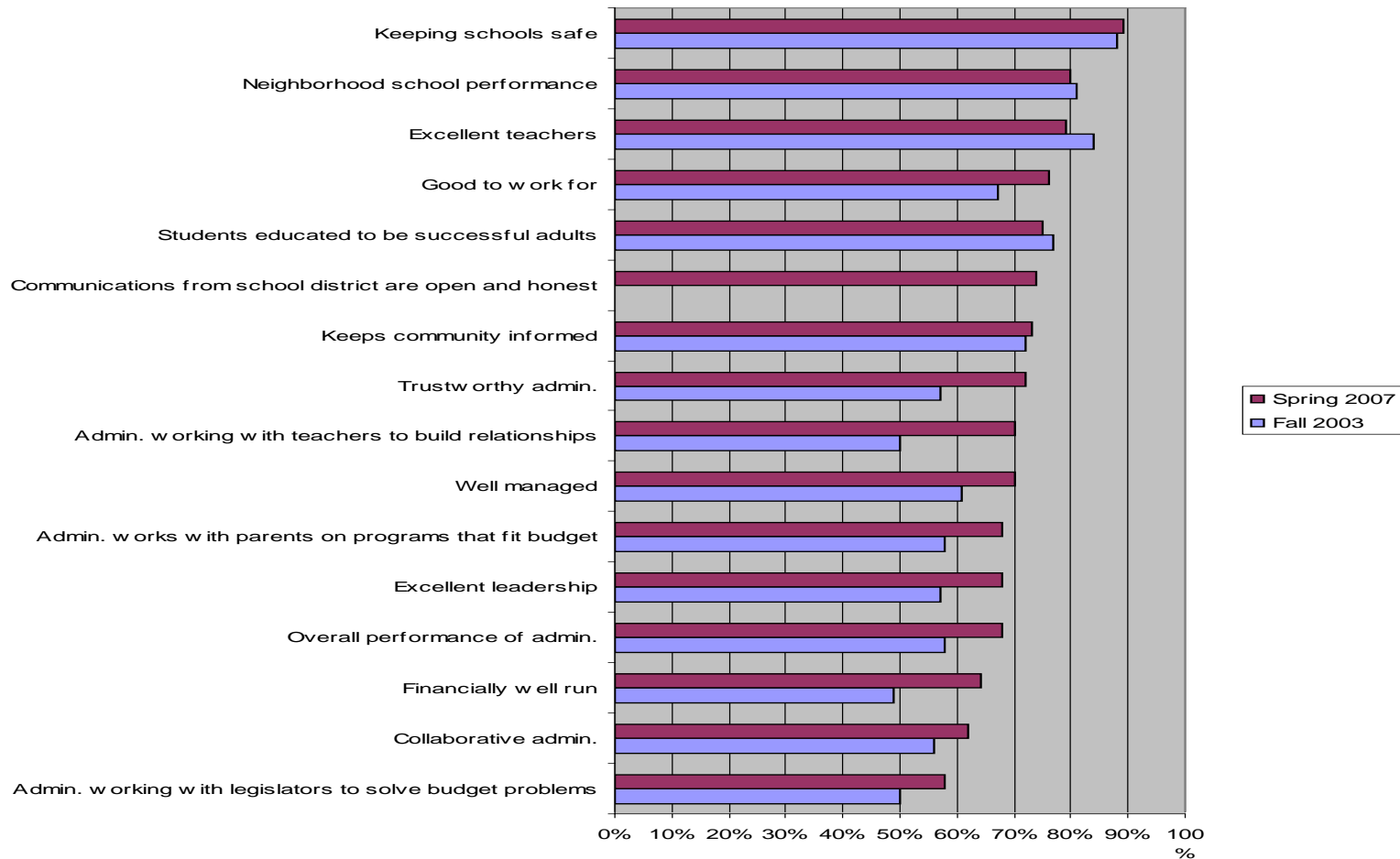
Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2003 Vs. Spring 2007

	Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Spring 2007 (April, May, June)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools safe	88%	46	42	6	4	89%	49	40	8	4
Excellent teachers	84%	34	50	12	3	79%	33	46	17	3
Neighborhood school performance	81%	30	51	13	5	80%	36	44	16	3
Students educated to be successful adults	77%	28	49	18	5	75%	26	49	18	7
Keeps community informed	72%	25	47	18	9	73%	34*	39	22	4*
Good to work for	67%	22	45	20	12	76%	23	53	22	3*
Well managed	61%	14	47	24	13	70%*	26*	44	25	4*
Overall performance of admin.	58%	13	45	27	14	68%	18	50	26	7*
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	58%	17	41	28	13	68%	21	47	20	12
Excellent leadership	57%	18	39	28	13	68%*	23	45	27	6*
Trustworthy admin.	57%	15	42	25	17	72%*	26*	46	22	6
Collaborative admin.	56%	13	43	29	14	62%	19	43	25	13
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	50%	12	38	27	21	70%*	21*	49*	25	4*
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	50%	8	42	32	16	58%	13	45	31	10
Financially well run	49%	14	35	34	16	64%*	23*	41	28	8*
Communications from school district are open and honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	74%	35	39	20	6

* = Significantly higher than 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.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Fall 2003 Vs. Spring 2007 % Giving an A or B Grade



Note:

The levels of A/B grades increased significantly for: *well managed*, *excellent leadership*, *trustworthy administration*, *administration working with teachers to build better relationships* and *financially well run*.

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

Ratings During Past Quarter

- During the past quarter there were decreases in A/B grades. At the end of the school year it is typical to see some declines in ratings. Additionally, at about this time the first finalist for the District Superintendent position dropped out and this may have had a negative impact on perceptions of the District's performance.
- As the following charts detail, during the past quarter Issaquah School District's the A/B grades given decreased **significantly** for...
 - Students educated to be successful adults (from 88% to 75%).
 - Overall performance of administration (from 78% to 68%).
 - Collaborative administration (from 72% to 62%).
- A/B grades decreased directionally for virtually all other performance areas.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Winter 2007 Vs. Spring 2007

	Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)					Spring 2007 (April, May, June)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools	91%	54	37	7	2	89%	49	40	8	4
Excellent teachers	86%	37	49	13	2	79%	33	46	17	3
Neighborhood school performance	84%	35	49	10	7	80%	36	44	16*	3
Students educated to be successful adults	88%	32	56	8	5	75%*	26	49	18*	7
Keeps community informed	76%	35	41	20	4	73%	34	39	22	4
Good to work for	76%	28	48	18	6	76%	23	53	22	3
Well managed	73%	25	48	16	10	70%	26	44	25*	4
Overall performance of admin.	78%	28	50	14	8	68%*	18*	50	26*	7
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	69%	22	47	24	7	68%	21	47	20	12
Excellent leadership	75%	21	54	21	3	68%	23	45	27	6
Trustworthy admin.	79%	34	45	13	8	72%	26*	46	22*	6
Collaborative admin.	72%	25	47	17	10	62%*	19	43	25	13
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	76%	28	48	19	5	70%	21	49	25	4
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	57%	12	45	30	13	58%	13	45	31	10
Financially well run	70%	20	50	22	9	64%	23	41	28	8
Communications from school district are open and honest	79%	37	42	15	6	74%	35	39	20	6

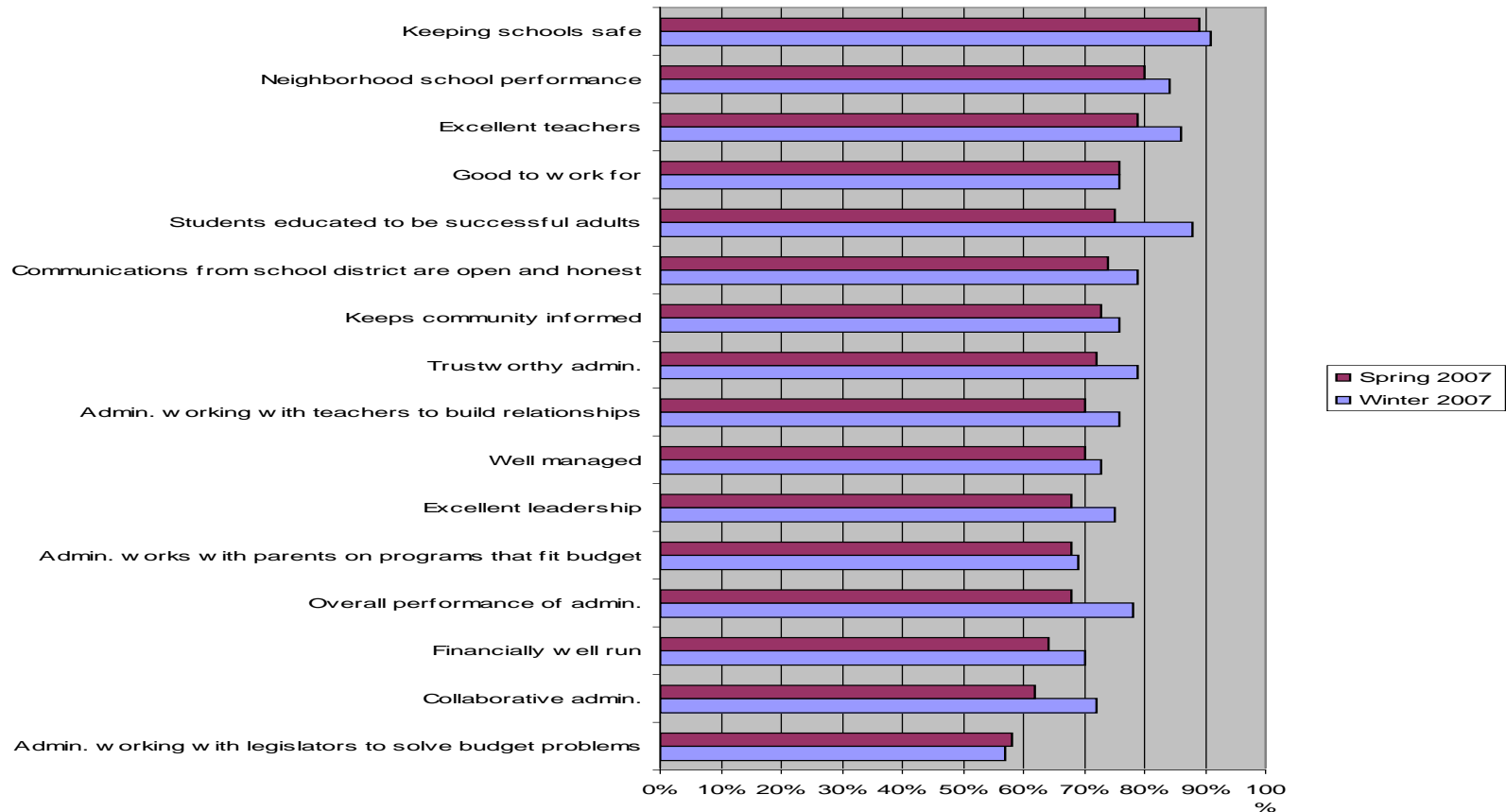
* = Significantly lower than previous wave of interviewing (Winter 2007).

Note:

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

The survey asks respondents to “grade” the district on these attributes. Numbers in the column represent the percentage of people who gave each attribute a specific grade. The numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Winter 2007 Vs. Spring 2007 % 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.

A and B grades decreased significantly for *overall performance of Administration, collaborative administration and students educated to be successful adults.*

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

- As the following charts detail, the vast majority of parents give the District high grades for encouraging their opinions and involvement in their children's education.
 - Nine in ten parents overall (90%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*.
 - Three in four parents overall (74%) give the Issaquah School District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district*. In the previous quarter (Winter 2007), significantly more parents (88%) gave the District an A or B grade for this.
 - Parent of High School students are directionally less likely to give the District a high grade than parents of Elementary School students.

Grades Given by Parents Regarding: *Your Involvement in your child's education is welcome*

Fall 2006 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)				Spring 2007 (April, May, June)			
	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	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	92%	97	93	87	91%	92	95	91	90%	94	91	85
A	63%	77	69	47*	69%	75*	59	67	60%	74	64	45*
B	29%	20	24	40*	22%	17	36**	24	30%	20	27	40*
C	7%	3	7	11**	6%	5	3	7	8%	6	6	11
D or F	1%	0	0	2	3%	3	3	2	3%	0	4	4

Note:

This attribute was added to the study in Fall 2006.

* = Significant difference vs. parents in the other school levels.

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

Grades Given By Parents Regarding:
Your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District

Fall 2006 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)				Spring 2007 (April, May, June)			
	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	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	88%	93*	83	80	74%***	79***	69***	68
A	34%	41	34	19*	42%	40	44	46	32%	37	26***	23** , ***
B	47%	49	49	53	46%	53*	39	34	42%	42	43	45
C	14%	6*	14	22	7%	3	12**	12**	19%***	12***	19	26** , ***
D or F	6%	4	4	6	5%	3	5	8	7%	8	11	6

Note:

This attribute was added to the study in Fall 2006.

* = Significant difference vs. parents in the other grade levels.

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

*** = Significant difference vs. Winter 2007

Reasons Given for Grade Given to Administration for Its Performance Overall

- Respondents are probed regarding reasons for the grade they give the Administration of Issaquah School District for its overall performance.
- Approximately one in three (32%) mention a positive reason, which is directionally higher than in Fall 2003 (27%).
- The reasons given continue to be diverse with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small minority of respondents. The most frequently given positive reasons include:
 - Doing a good job (15%)
 - Good parental involvement/support/communications (7%)
 - Quality of programs/curriculum (6%)
 - Positive administration comments (6%)

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

- The number of respondents mentioning in their reason that an improvement needs to be made has declined **significantly** since Fall 2003 (from 72% to 53%).
- The most frequently desired improvement continues to be in the area of communication (10%). Specific requests for improvement in communication include...
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/administration/provide more timely information (7%)
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input/partnering (4%)
- Other negative reasons for the grade given to the Administration are:
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations (8%)
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (6%)
 - Change curriculum/unhappy with curriculum/go back to basics (5%)
 - Average/OK performance (5%)
- Very few parents (less than 5%) mention any other specific reason.

Suggestions for District

- Respondents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. While most (68%) give a suggestion, this is **significantly** fewer than in Fall 2003 (83%).
- The suggestions given continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communication. But, **significantly** fewer people are making this suggestion (18% in Spring 2007 vs. 27% in Fall 2003).
- Suggestions for better communication continue to center on...
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/administration/provide more/timely information (15%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input (8%)

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (12%)
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations (9%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations/more qualified teachers (6%)
 - Change curriculum/unhappy with curriculum/go back to basics (6%)
 - Better placement of students in classes/programs (6%)
 - Improvement needed in math curriculum (6%)
 - Better organization/coordination/planning (6%)
 - Need to reduce class size (5%)
 - Teachers need to be better supported/pay/more respect (5%)
 - Put focus on classroom/decisions in best interest of student (5%)
- All other suggestions are given by less than 5% of respondents.

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

- Approximately four in five residents (79%) feel that the amount they pay for local public education is about right or too low.
- Specifically, residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

Too high	12%	
About right	65%	} 79%
Too low	14%	
Don't know	9%	

Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

- Residents of the Issaquah District most frequently say they receive information about Issaquah schools from their friends and family, the Issaquah Press and/or its affiliates, the District Newsletter and the Internet.
- Since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents mention that the Issaquah Press and its affiliates are their primary source of information (24% vs. 10%) and the Internet (17% vs. 4%).

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools in Spring 2007

Friends and Family	25%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	24
The Internet	17
District Newsletter	15
Seattle Times	6
School Employees	5
Through Mail/School Bulletin	2
From the School	2
Other	4
Don't Know	2

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Since the inception of this study in Fall 2003, *significant* improvements have occurred in residents' perceptions of the performance of the Issaquah School District in some key areas...
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Administration works with teachers to build relationships
 - Financially well run
- In several other areas perceptions of the District have improved directionally.
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with parents on programs that fit the budget
 - Good to work for
 - Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems
- With regard to the new attributes that were added this Fall, the District's performance is high.
 - Three in four residents (74%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest.*
 - Nine in ten (90%) parents give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome.*
 - Three in four parents (74%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome, and encouraged in this district.*

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- During the past quarter there was a **significant** decline in A/B grades given for:
 - Students educated to be successful adults
 - Overall performance of administration
 - Collaborative administration

In most other performance areas there was a directional decline in A/B grades.

At this time of the year (the end of the school year), it is typical to see declines in A/B grades given to the District. Additionally, at about this time the first finalist for the District Superintendent position dropped out and this may have had a negative impact on perceptions of the District's performance.

- Fewer residents are suggesting improvements in the Issaquah school district (68% in Spring 2007 vs. 83% in Fall 2003). This may be a reflection of increased satisfaction levels overall since the start of this study.
- Although significant changes have been made in the perceptions of residents, a minority (18% in Spring 2007) continue to suggest an improvement in communication. But, this is significantly fewer than in Fall 2003 (27%).

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Approximately four in five (79%) residents feel that the taxes they are paying for education are about right (65%) or too low (14%).
- The Issaquah Press and its affiliates have grown **significantly** as a source of information about the Issaquah school district and its schools since Fall 2003. Approximately one in four residents (24%) now consider it to be their primary source of information (vs. 10% in Fall 2003).
- The Internet has also grown **significantly** as a source of information about the District and its schools since Fall 2003 (from 4% to 17%).
- If additional in-depth learning is desired on any of these findings, it is possible to contact the respondents who have agreed to be re-contacted with additional questions on such things as the underlying reasons for a grade or suggested improvement. This quarter four in ten (39%) indicated that they are will to be contacted again to give further input.

Dorothy Geraghty, Education Market Research Consultant

- Dorothy Geraghty has over 20 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 Seafirst, Bristol Meyers, Seagrams, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, Porter Novelli Public Relations and various consulting companies.