

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Spring 2011

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass more than seven years (thirty-one 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 Spring approximately one third (35%) 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 (Spring 2011) 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 2011

- 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. Among the remaining attributes, there have been directional increases.
 - Furthermore, the level of “A” grades being given has increased significantly for almost all attributes.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. The vast majority of residents (82%) give the District an A or B grade for its performance in this area, with 44% giving the District an A grade.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2003 Vs. Spring 2011

	Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Spring 2011 (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	91%	58*	33	7	2
Excellent teachers	84%	34	50	12	3	90%	43	47	10	0
Neighborhood school performance	81%	30	51	13	5	89%*	44*	45	10	1*
Keeps community informed	72%	25	47	18	9	85%*	49*	36*	12	3*
Good to work for	67%	22	45	20	12	85%*	38*	47	13	1*
Well managed	61%	14	47	24	13	84%*	39*	45	13*	3*
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	50%	12	38	27	21	83%*	32*	51*	15*	2*
Excellent leadership	57%	18	39	28	13	83%*	30*	53*	15*	2*
Overall performance of Administration	58%	13	45	27	14	83%*	31*	52	15*	2*
Students educated to be successful adults	77%	28	49	18	5	83%	41*	42	14	3
Trustworthy Administration	57%	15	42	25	17	82%*	41*	41	13*	5*
Communications from school district are open and honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	82%	44	38	17	2
Collaborative Administration	56%	13	43	29	14	75%*	28*	47	22	3*
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	58%	17	41	28	13	74%*	29*	45	21	4
Financially well run	49%	14	35	34	16	73%*	28*	45	24*	3*
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	50%	8	42	32	16	69%*	20*	49	25	6*

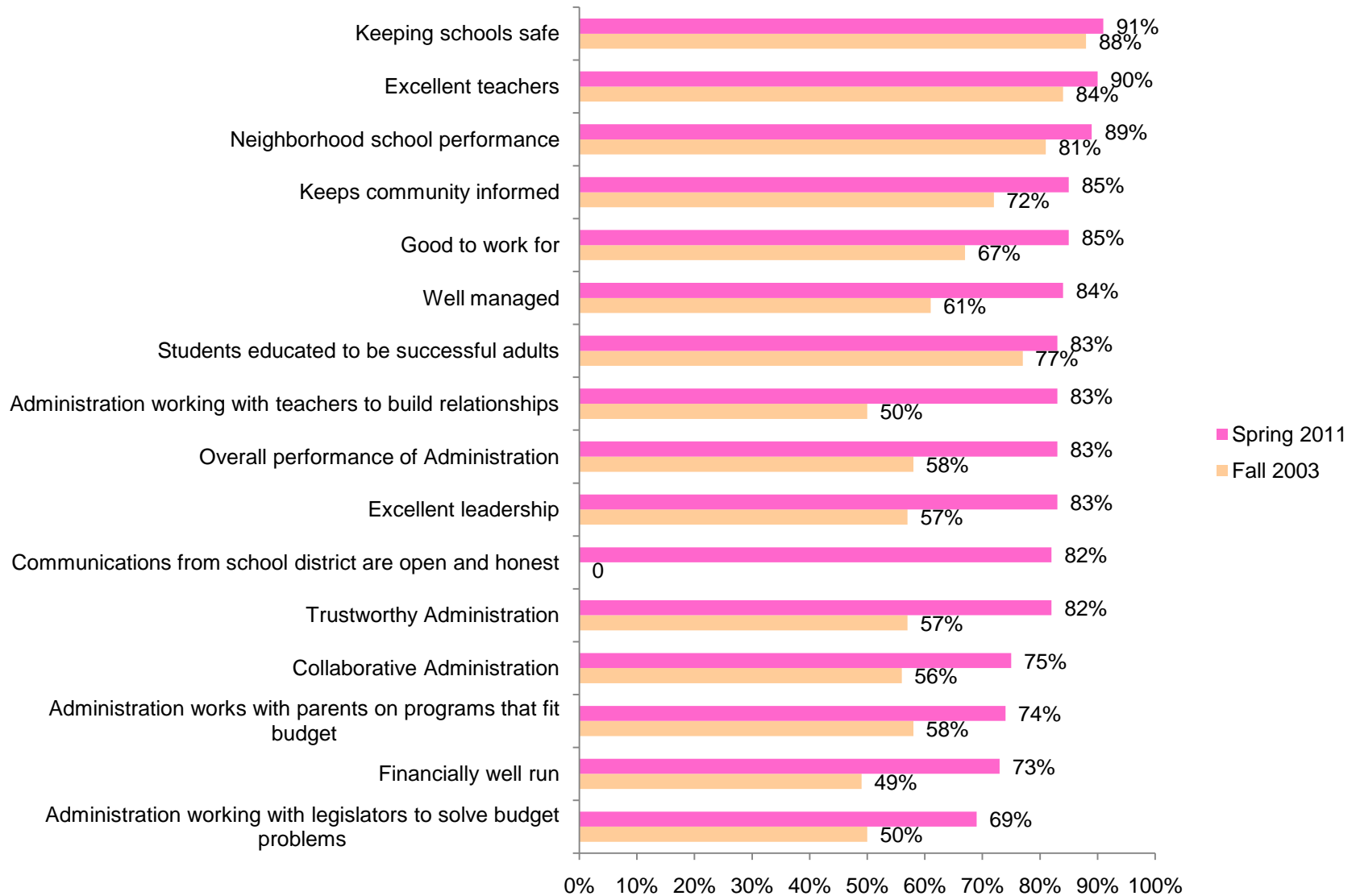
* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2003 at the 90% confidence level.

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. Spring 2011

% 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

- The number of residents giving the District high grades continues to be high across performance areas.
- During the past quarter there was a significant increase in the % of the community giving a high grade (A or B) for the **overall performance of the Administration**, from 72% to 83%.
- In all other performance areas, there were directional increases in the levels of high grades.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Winter 2011 Vs. Spring 2011

	Winter 2011 (Jan., Feb., March)					Spring 2011 (April, May, June)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools safe	86%	54	32	10	3	91%	58	33	7	2
Excellent teachers	86%	38	48	10	4	90%	43	47	10	0
Neighborhood school performance	83%	38	45	13	4	89%	44	45	10	1*
Keeps community informed	78%	39	39	15	7	85%	49	36	12	3
Good to work for	77%	32	45	21	2	85%	38	47	13	1
Well managed	79%	30	49	15	6	84%	39	45	13	3
Students educated to be successful adults	79%	36	43	13	8	83%	41	42	14	3*
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	76%	24	52	20	3	83%	32	51	15	2
Excellent leadership	76%	32	44	18	6	83%	30	53	15	2
Overall performance of Administration	72%	21	51	22	5	83%*	31*	52	15	2
Communications from school district are open and honest	80%	42	38	16	4	82%	44	38	17	2
Trustworthy Administration	79%	36	43	15	6	82%	41	41	13	5
Collaborative Administration	72%	28	44	23	5	75%	28	47	22	3
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	66%	27	39	24	10	74%	29	45	21	4*
Financially well run	70%	24	46	20	11	73%	28	45	24	3
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	61%	22	39	26	13	69%	20	49	25	6*

Note:

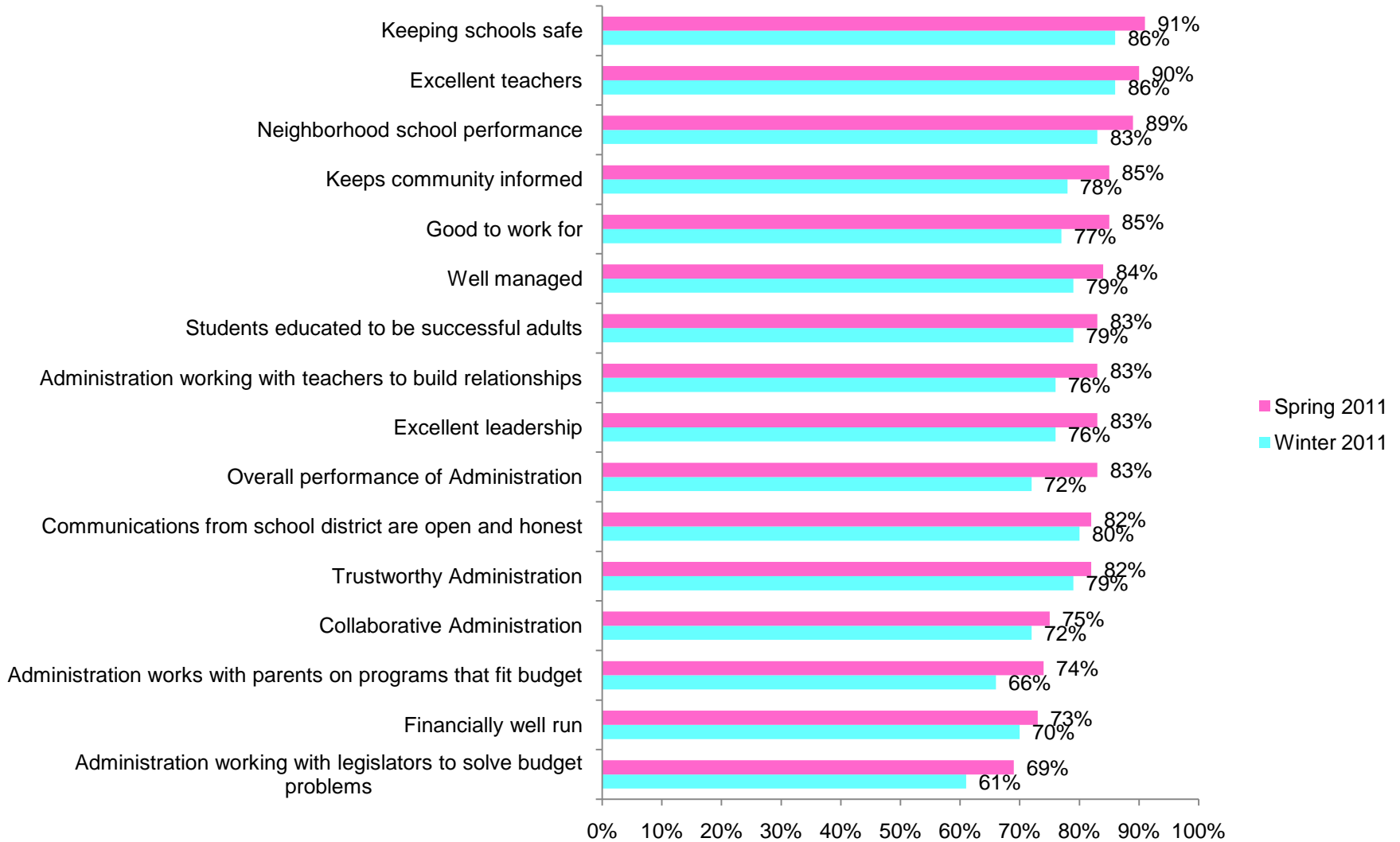
* = Significant difference vs. Winter 2011 at the 90% confidence level.

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— Winter 2011 Vs. Spring 2011

% 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.

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 (91%) 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 High School students (51%) are less likely to give the District an A grade for its performance in this area than parents of Elementary school students (69%) and parents of Middle school students (71%).
 - Over four out of five parents (86%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*.
 - Significantly more parents of Elementary students give the District an “A” grade than do parents of High School students (51% vs. 34%).

Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 vs. Spring 2011

Fall 2006 (October, November, December)					Spring 2011 (April, May, June)			
<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%	86%	85%	88%	85%
A	34	41**	34**	19	44*	51**	48	34
B	47	49	49	53	42	34**	40	51
C	14	6**	14	22	9	13	9	7
D or F	6	4	4	6	4	3	3	7
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97%	93%	87%	91%	96%**	92%	83%
A	63	77**	69**	47	66	69**	71**	51
B	29	20**	24**	40	25	27	21	32
C	7	3**	7	11	8	5**	8	12
D or F	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	5

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...?

Reasons 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. They also improved this quarter after declining the previous quarter.
 - Only four in ten (41%) mention that something needs improvement, which is **significantly** fewer than both Fall 2003 (72%) and the previous (Winter) quarter (57%).
 - Approximately four in ten (41%) 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 Winter (38%).
- 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 (18%)
 - Satisfied/happy with school experience (13%)
 - Good parental involvement/support (7%)
 - Positive Administration comments/good staff (7%)

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...
 - Communications overall (6%), which was mentioned by significantly more residents in Fall 2003 (15%) but by a comparable level of residents the previous (Winter) quarter (7%).
 - Room for improvement (7%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (6%)
 - Average/okay performance (5%)
- 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. The majority of residents continue to make at least one suggestion but this quarter fewer residents requested an improvement.
 - Approximately two out of three residents (67%) made a suggestion this Spring. This is **significantly** fewer than this Winter (79%) or in Fall 2003 (83%) .
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communications. Approximately three in twenty (15%) make this type of suggestion. Specific communication suggestions include:
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (6%), which is **significantly** fewer than last Winter (16%) or in Fall 2003 (14%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (10%)

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (14%) . This request has been made by similar levels of residents for over a year.
 - Parents of Elementary school students are less likely to make this request than parents of Middle School and High School students.
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (7%)
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (7%)
 - More focus on student's individual needs/improve learning experience (7%)
- All other suggestions were given 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 (79%) 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, 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	11%	
About right	64%	} 79%
Too low	15%	
Don't know	10%	

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 the Internet, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates, their Friends and Family, 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. 28%).
- Usage of the Issaquah Press/its affiliates as a primary source of information has also grown significantly since Fall 2003 (from 10% to 25%).

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools

The Internet	28%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	25
Friends and Family	14
District Newsletter	11
Work there/personal experience	5
School Employees	4
TV	3
From the school/school bulletin	2
Seattle Times	2
Other	2
Don't Know	3

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.
 - The levels of high grades (A/B) have increased **significantly** for virtually all performance attributes.
 - “A” grades have also increased significantly for almost all the performance attributes.
- During the Spring quarter, there was a **significant** increase in the number of residents giving the Administration a high grade for its *overall performance* (from 72% in the Winter to 83%).
- There were also directional increases in the levels of high grades for the other performance attributes. These improvements represent a recovery after a decline in high grades during the previous Winter quarter.

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 (82%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest.*
 - Over nine in ten parents (91%) 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 (86%) give Issaquah an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District.*

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Respondents' perceptions of the Administration have improved since 2003. They also improved during the past quarter after declining the previous (Winter) quarter.
- With regard to reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance...
 - Approximately four in ten (41%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** more than in Fall 2003 (27%) and directionally more than the previous (Winter) quarter (38%).
 - Approximately four in ten (41%) mention something that needs improvement, which is **significantly** fewer than in 2003 (72%) and last Winter (57%).
 - 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 Spring, approximately two out of three (67%) of residents made a suggestion, which is **significantly** fewer than this Winter (79%) or in the Fall of 2003 (83%).
 - The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestions are:
 - Improve in the area of communications (15%):
 - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (6%), which is mentioned by significantly fewer parents than last Winter (16%) or in Fall 2003 (14%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (10%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-students relations (14%), which has been requested by similar levels of residents for over a year.
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (7%)
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (7%)
 - More focus on students individual needs/improve learning experience (7%)

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 four out of five (79%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (64%) or too low (15%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be the Internet (28%), the Issaquah Press (25%), Friends and Family (14%), and the District Newsletter (11%). Approximately four out of five (78%) residents mention one of these sources as their primary source of information about the District.
- This quarter approximately one third of the respondents (35%) 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.