

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

**Fall 2003 through Spring 2012**

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## Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over eight years (thirty-five 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 half (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

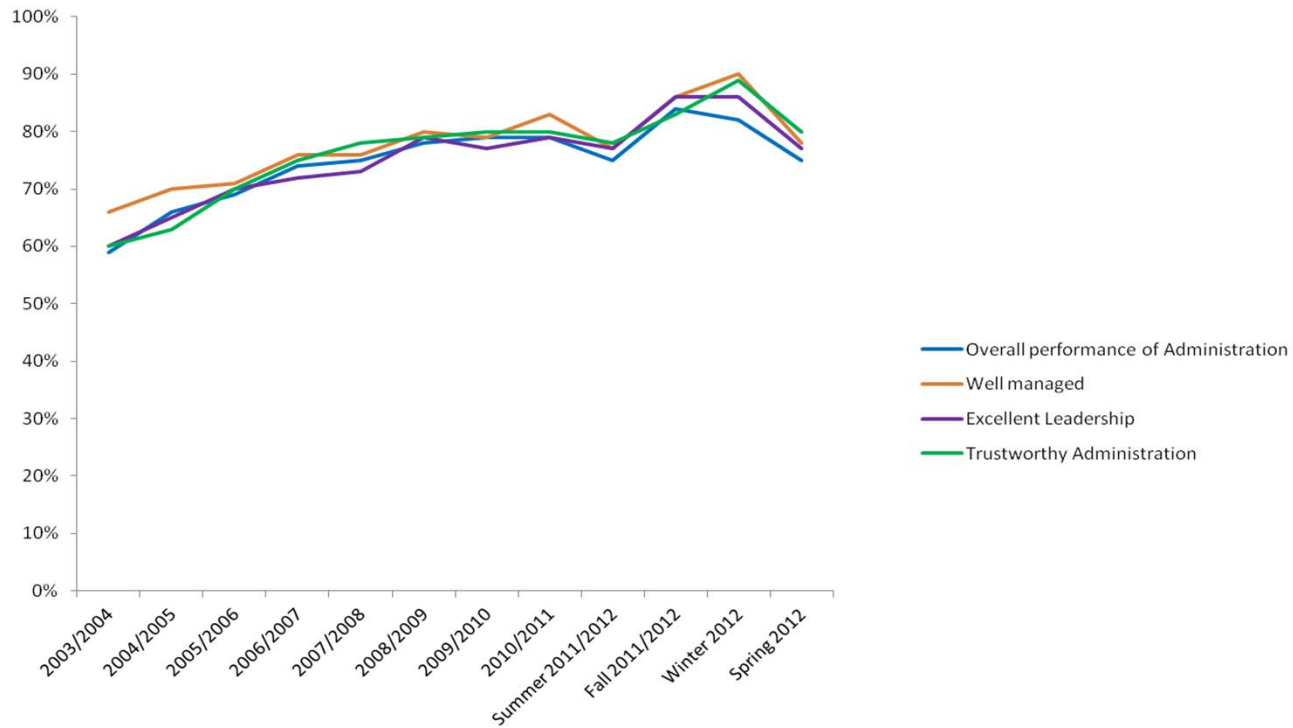
Please note that:

- The responses given in the current wave (Spring 2012) 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 2012

- As the following charts detail, perceptions have improved since this study began in 2003. But, there were declines in grades during the current quarter which were primarily directional.
- The vast majority of residents give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 64% to 89%.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. Approximately eight in ten residents (79%) 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



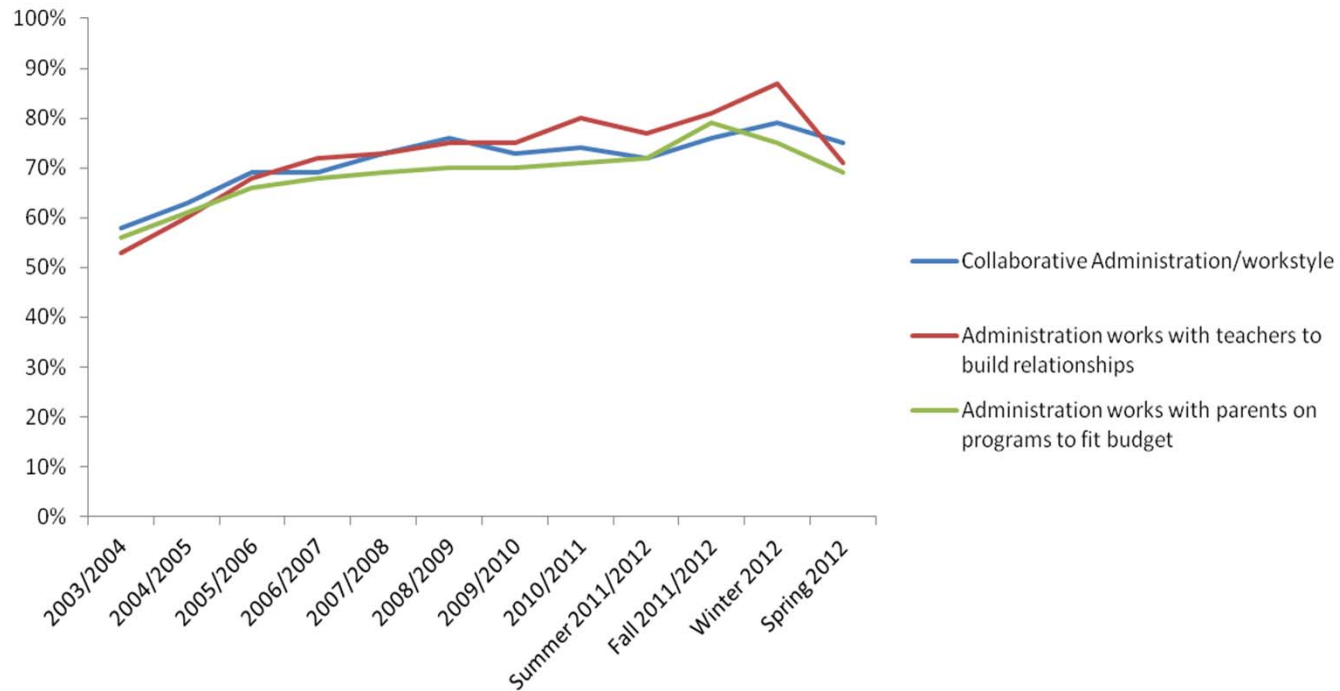
Note:

The 2011-2012 School year includes all four quarters: the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2011, Winter Quarter (January/ February,/March 2012) and Spring Quarter (April/May /June 2012).

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

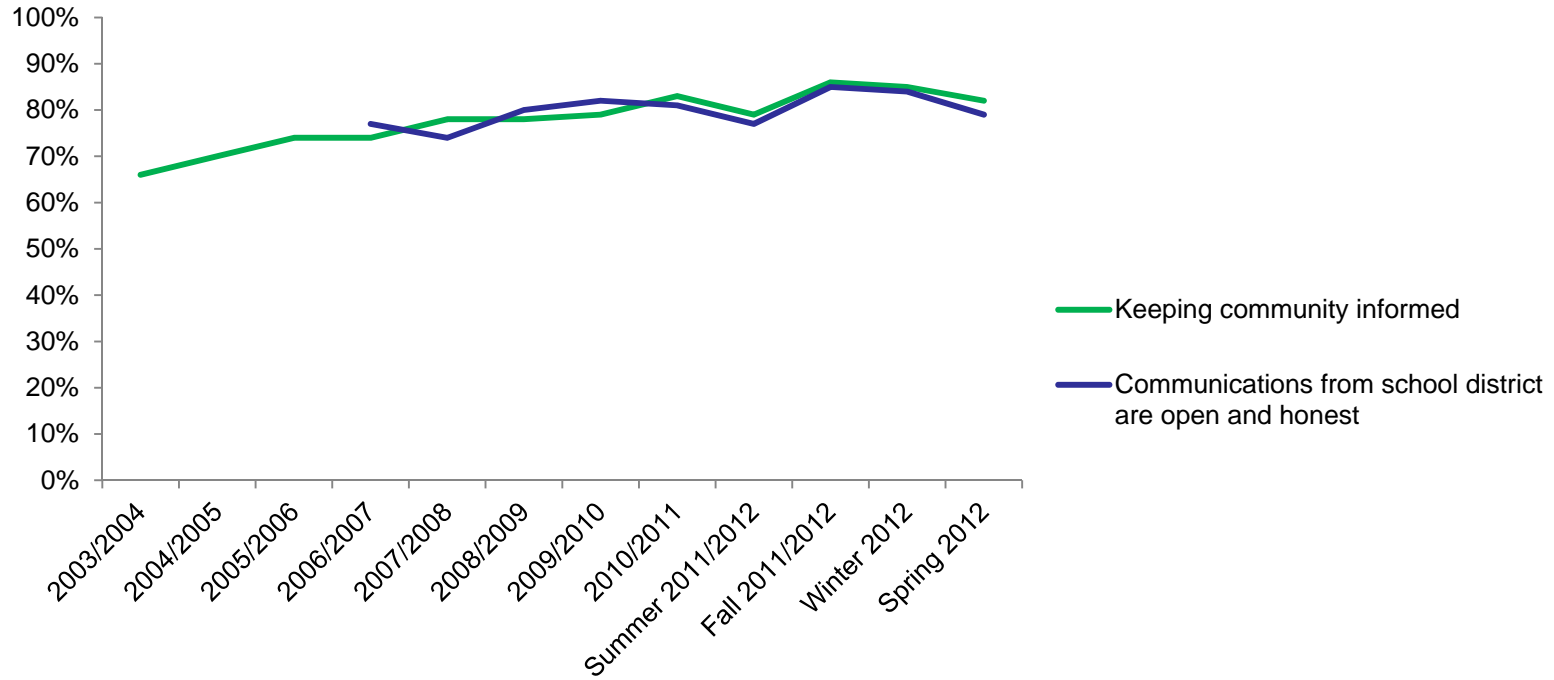


Note:

The 2011-2012 School year includes all four quarters: the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2011, Winter Quarter (January/ February,/March 2012) and Spring Quarter (April/May /June 2012).

Q. Based on your impressions if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give 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



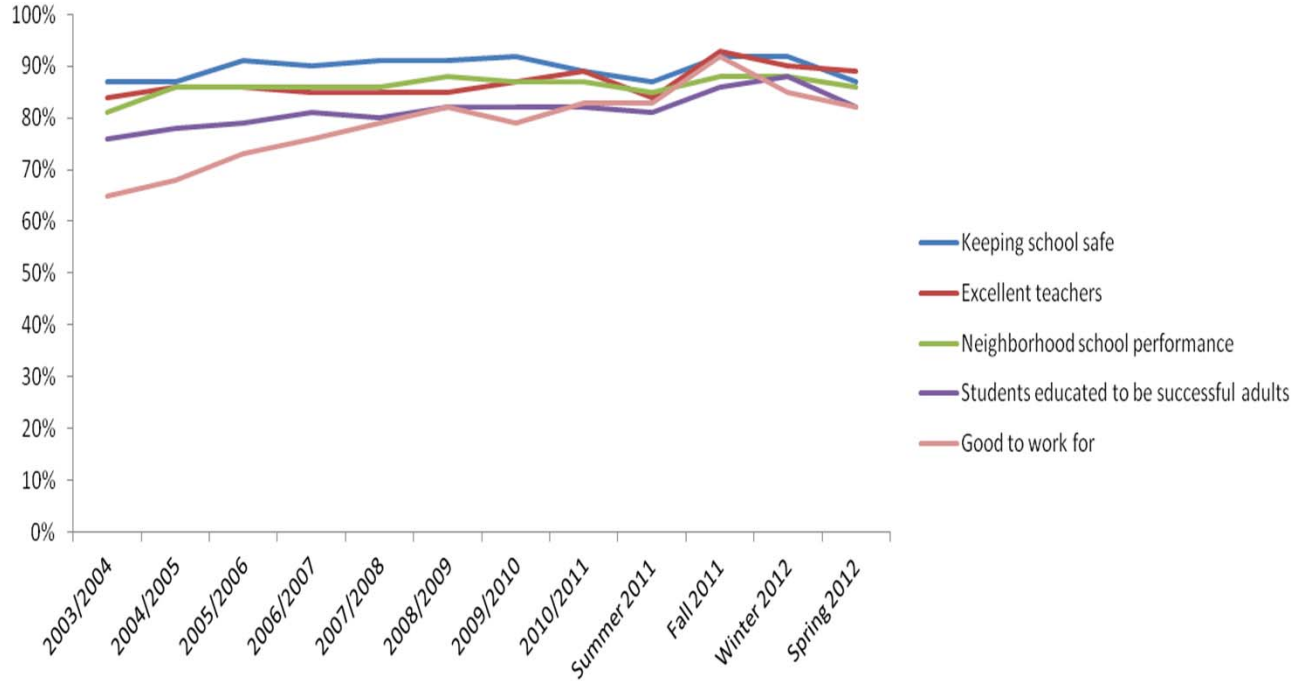
Note:

The 2011-2012 School year includes all four quarters: the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2011, Winter Quarter (January/ February,/March 2012) and Spring Quarter (April/May /June 2012).

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

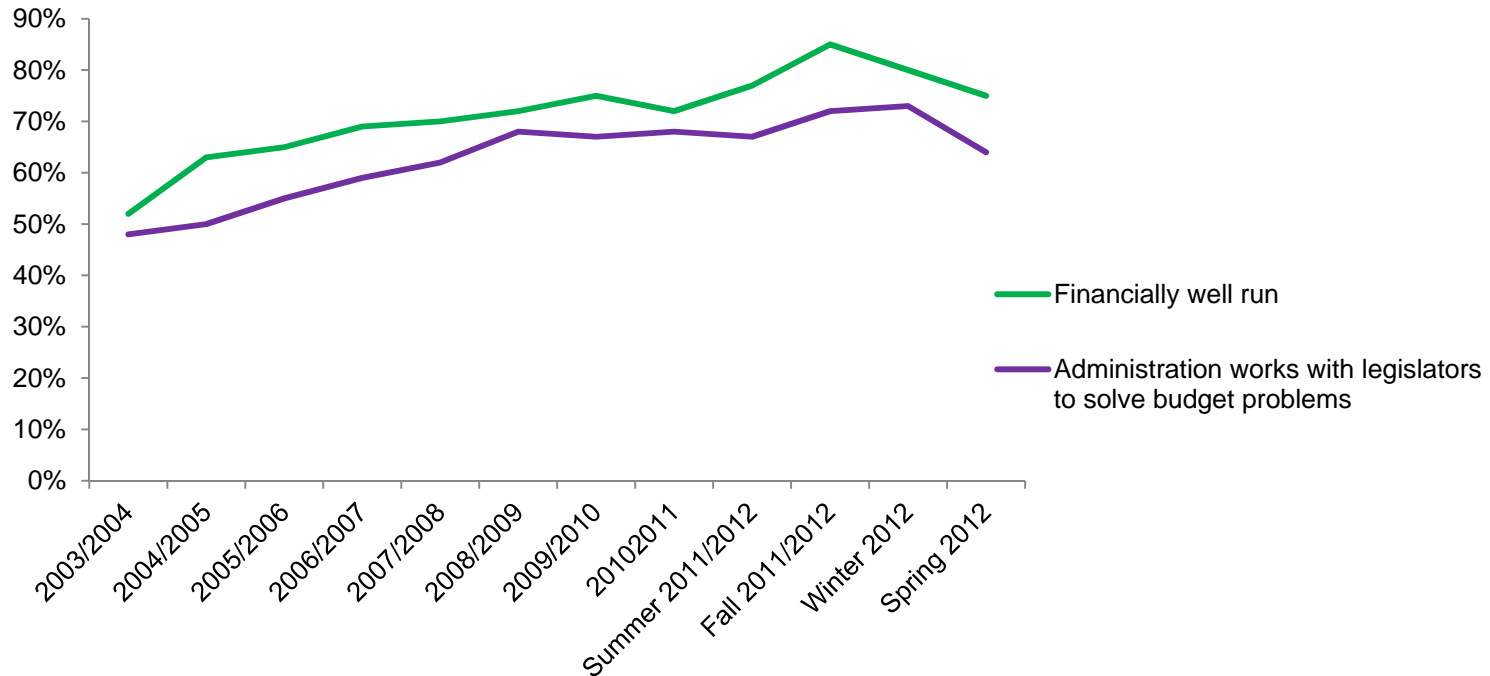


Note:

The 2011-2012 School year includes all four quarters: the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December 2011), Winter Quarter (January/ February,/March 2012) and Spring Quarter (April/May /June 2012).

Q. Based on your impressions, if you were to give a grade to the Issaquah School District, would you give 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 2011-2012 School year includes all four quarters: the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2011, Winter Quarter (January/ February,/March 2012) and Spring Quarter (April/May /June 2012).

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

## Ratings During Past Quarter

- During the Spring quarter there were significant declines in A/B grades for:
  - Trustworthy Administration (from 89% in the Winter to 80% in the Spring)
  - Well managed (from 90% to 78%)
  - Excellent leadership (from 86% to 77%)
  - Administration working with teachers to build relationships (from 87% to 71%)
- There were directional declines in high grades in virtually all other performance areas.

# Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Winter 2012 Vs. Spring 2012

	Winter 2012 (Jan., Feb., March)					Spring 2012 (April, May, June)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Excellent teachers	90%	45	45	8	3	89%	40	50	9	2
Keeping schools safe	92%	57	35	6	2	87%	61	27	9	4
Neighborhood school performance	88%	41	48	9	3	86%	40	46	10	4
Students educated to be successful adults	88%	40	49	9	3	82%	39	43	14	4
Keeps community informed	85%	41	44	10	4	82%	44	38	14	4
Good to work for	85%	37	47	12	3	82%	34	47	14	4
Trustworthy Administration	89%	37	52	7	4	80%*	36	44	14*	6
Communications from school district are open and honest	84%	45	40	12	4	79%	39	40	14	6
Well managed	90%	34	56	9	2	78%*	32	46*	15*	6*
Excellent leadership	86%	31	55	9	5	77%*	32	44*	18*	6
<b>Overall performance of Administration</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>
Financially well run	80%	33	47	13	6	75%	30	44	16	9
Collaborative Administration	79%	28	51	16	5	75%	30	45	18	8
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	87%	30	56	9	4	71%*	32	39*	23*	6
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	75%	25	49	20	6	69%	29	40	22	9
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	73%	24	49	19	8	64%	22	42	28	7

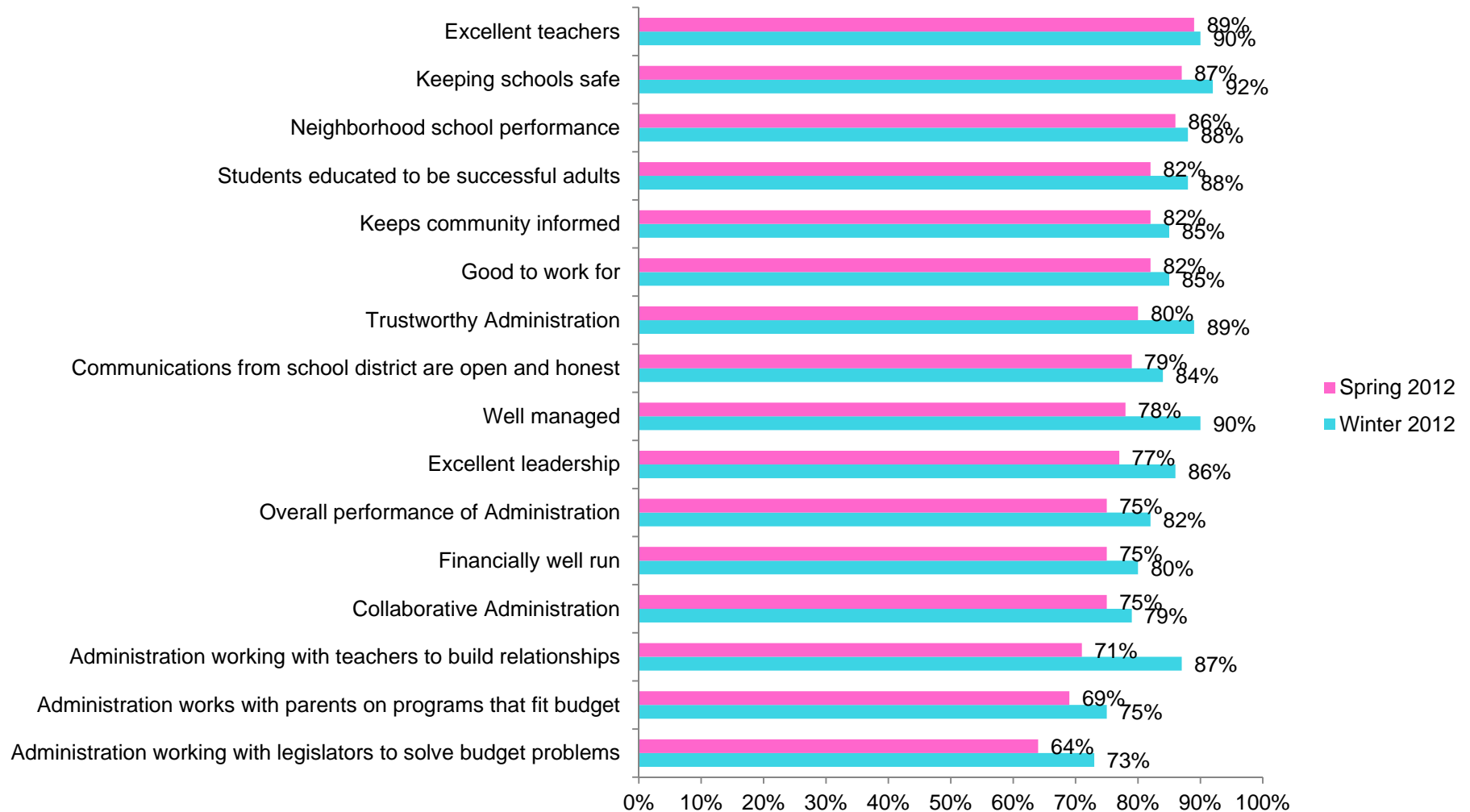
Note:

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 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 2012 Vs. Spring 2012 % 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 give the District a high grade for *encouraging their opinions and welcoming their involvement*.
  - Nine in ten parents overall (93%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*. Almost three out of four parents (73%) give the District an A grade, which is significantly more than in 2006 (63%).
    - Across school levels there are no significant differences in the levels of parents giving A or B grades.
    - But, parents of High School students (59%) are less likely to give an A grade than parents of Elementary (82%) and Middle School (74%) students.
  - Over four out of five (86%) parents give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*. Almost one half of parents (48%) give the District an A grade, which is significantly more than in 2006 (34%).
    - Again, across school levels there are no significant differences in the levels of parents giving A or B grades.
    - But, parents of Elementary school students (57%) are more likely to give an A grade than parents of Middle School (37%) and High School (36%) students.



## Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Winter 2012 Vs. Spring 2012

Fall 2006 (October, November, December)					Spring 2012 (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%	89%	87%	76%
A	34	41**	34**	19	48*	57	37****	36****
B	47	49	49	53	38	32	50****	40
C	14	6**	14	22	12	7**	12**	21
D or F	6	4	4	6	2	4	2	2
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97%	93%	87%	93%	96%	95%	88%
A	63	77**	69**	47	73*	82**	74**	59
B	29	20**	24**	40	20*	14**	21	29
C	7	3**	7	11	7	3**	4**	11
D or F	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

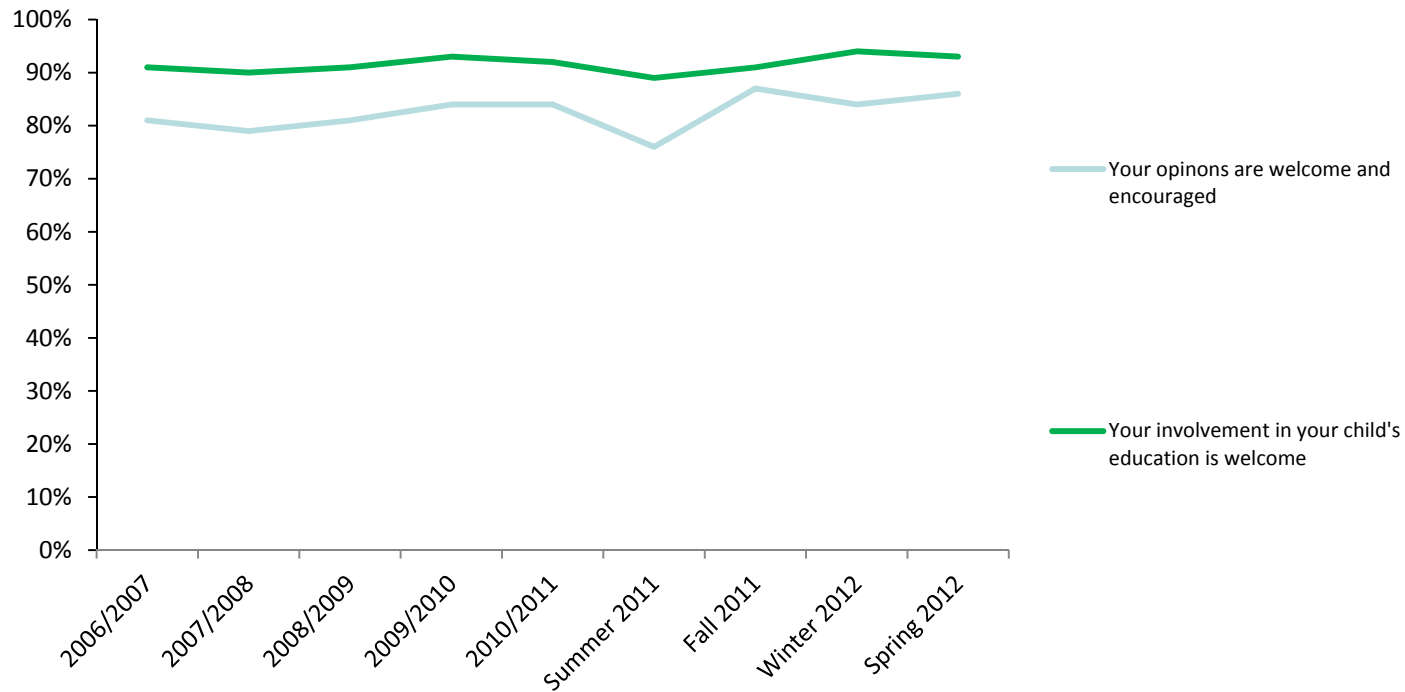
\*\* = Significant difference vs. parents of High School students.

\*\*\* = 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.
- Residents' perceptions of the Administration have improved since the first wave of measurements were taken in Fall 2003. But, the desire for improvements increased significantly this quarter vs. the previous quarter (from 39% to 49%).
  - Approximately half (49%) mention that something needs improvement, which is significantly fewer than in the 2003/04 school year (64%) but significantly more than the previous (Winter) quarter (39%).
  - At the same time, approximately four in ten (38%) mention a positive reason for the grade they gave, which is significantly more than in the 2003/2004 school year (26%) but comparable to the Winter quarter (39%).
- 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 (22%)
  - Good parental involvement/support (8%)
  - Satisfied/happy with the school experience (6%)

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 reason is Communication which overall was a reason given by 12% of residents, up significantly from 6% the previous quarter. Specific comments on communication include...
  - Improve communication to parents from teachers/administration/provide more timely information (7%)
  - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (6%)
- Other reasons given are:
  - Room for improvement (13%)
  - Better administration/leadership/better decision making (9%)
  - Increase funding/work with State for funding/better use of funds (5%)
- Very few (less than 5%) mention any specific negative reason.

## Suggestions for District

- Residents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. Three out of four (75%) of residents continue to make at least one suggestion, which is directionally more than the previous (Winter) quarter (67%).
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communications. One in four residents (24%) make this type of suggestion, which is comparable to last quarter (25%).
- Specific communication suggestions include:
  - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (14%).
  - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (11%).

## Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (11%)
  - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (7%), which was also mentioned by comparable levels during recent years.
  - Need to reduce class size/lower student-teacher ratio (6%)
  - Change curriculum/go back to basics (5%)
  - Top heavy administration/salaries too high/reduce overhead (5%)
- All other suggestions were made by less than 5% of respondents.

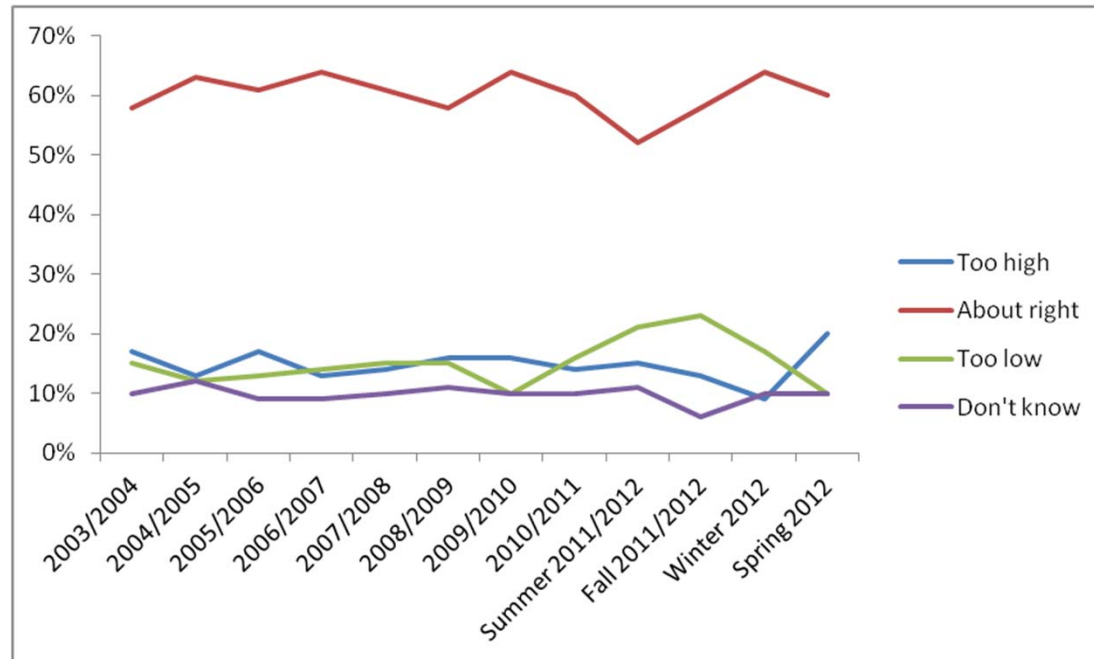
## How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Seven in ten residents (70%) feel that the amount of taxes that they pay for local public education is about right or too low.
  - While historically the vast majority have felt this way, significantly fewer feel this way now than last quarter (70% now vs. 80%).
  - Significantly more residents feel now that taxes are too high (20% vs. 10% last quarter).
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

Too high	20%	
About right	60%	} 70%
Too low	10%	
Don't know	10%	

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 – Spring 2012)



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



# Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

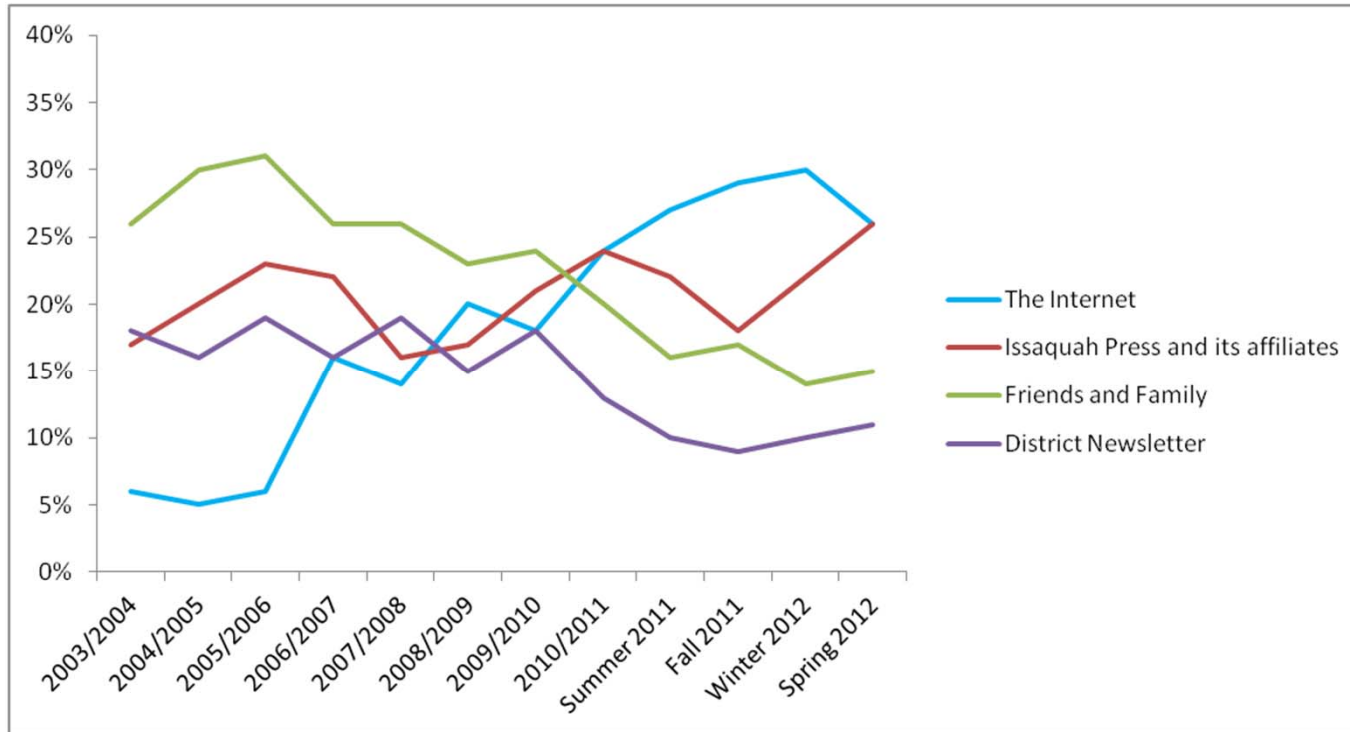
- The Internet, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates, Friends and Family, and the District Newsletter continue to be the primary source of information about Issaquah schools. Almost eight in ten (78%) of residents mention one of these sources as their primary source.
- As the chart that follows shows, since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents are using the Internet as their primary source of information (4% vs. 26%).
- Usage of the Issaquah Press/its affiliates as a primary source of information has also grown significantly since Fall 2003 (from 10% to 26%).

## Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools

The Internet	26%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	26
Friends and Family	15
District Newsletter	11
School employees	6
Seattle Times	4
Work there/personal experience	4
School	2
Television	1
Other	2
Don't Know	2

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

## Top Four Primary Sources of Information About Issaquah Schools (2003/2004 School Year – Spring 2012)



Q. Where do you get most of your information about Issaquah schools?

## Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall, the number of residents giving the District high grades has improved since 2003.
- However, during the Spring quarter there were declines in A/B grades for virtually all attributes, which for the most part were directional declines. The declines were significant for:
  - Trustworthy Administration (from 89% in the Winter to 80% in the Spring)
  - Well managed (from 90% to 78%)
  - Excellent leadership (from 86% to 77%)
  - Administration working with teachers to build relationships (from 87% to 71%)

## 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 extremely strong with almost all parents giving it high grades.
  - Approximately four out of five residents (79%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest* , which is directionally lower than the previous (Winter) quarter (84%).
  - Nine in ten parents (93%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome* which is comparable to the level achieved in the Winter (94%).
    - Approximately three in four (73%) give the District an A grade, which is significantly more than in 2006 (63%).
  - Over four out of five parents (86%) give Issaquah an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District* , which is directionally higher than the previous quarter (84%).
    - Almost half (48%) give the District an A grade, which is significantly more than in 2006 (34%).

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Respondents are asked for their reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance.
  - Approximately four in ten (38%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** more than in the 2003/2004 school year (26%) and comparable to last Winter (39%).
  - Approximately half (49%) mention something that needs improvement which is significantly fewer than the 2003/04 school year (64%) but significantly more than in the Winter (39%)
  - 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 three out of four residents (75%) made a suggestion which is directionally more than in the Winter (67%).
- The most frequently given suggestions are:
  - Improve in the area of communications (24%). Specific requests include:
    - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (14%)
    - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (11%)
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (11%)
  - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (7%)
  - Need to reduce class size/lower student-teacher ratio (6%)

# 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. Seven in ten (70%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (60%) or too low (10%). However, significantly more residents (80%) had these positive feelings last Winter.
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be the Internet (26%), the Issaquah Press (26%), Friends and Family (15%), and the District Newsletter (11%). Approximately eight in ten (78%) residents mention one of these sources as their primary source of information about the District.
- This Spring approximately half the respondents (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