

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Summer 2006

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass three years (twelve 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 being 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 number of respondents have answered yes. We have their names, phone numbers, and when available, e-mail addresses. In the Summer of 2006, 55 of the 150 respondents (36%) said they were 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 Analysis

Please note that:

- The responses given in the current wave (Summer 2006) 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 2006

- As the following charts detail, since the Fall of 2003 perceptions of the Issaquah School District have **significantly** improved in most areas...
 - Neighborhood school performance
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with teachers to build relationships
 - Financially well run
- In all other performance areas perceptions of the District have improved directionally.

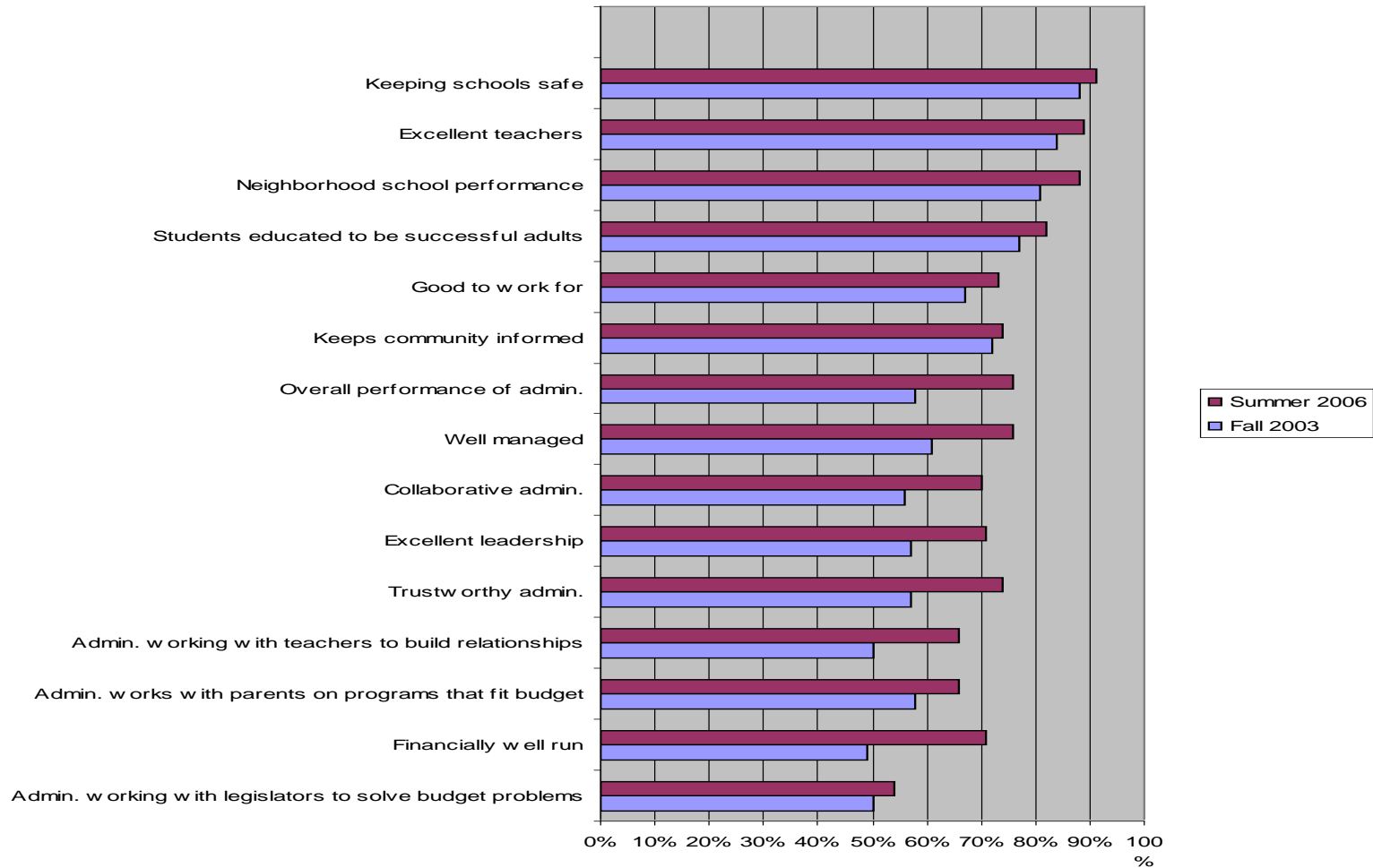
Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2003 Vs. Summer 2006

	Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Summer 2006 (July, August, September)				
Survey asked respondents to "grade" following attributes of district. Numbers in the column represent the PERCENTAGE of people who gave each attribute letter grades. The numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.										
	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%	54	37	7	2
Excellent teachers	84%	34	50	12	3	89%	37	52	8	4
Neighborhood school performance	81%	30	51	13	5	90%*	38	52	8	3
Students educated to be successful adults	77%	28	49	18	5	82%	35	47	13	5
Keeps community informed	72%	25	47	18	9	74%	36*	38	20	6
Good to work for	67%	22	45	20	12	73%	18	55	19	8
Well managed	61%	14	47	24	13	76%*	19	57*	14	9
Overall performance of admin.	58%	13	45	27	14	75%*	18	57*	15	11
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	58%	17	41	28	13	66%	20	46	20	14
Excellent leadership	57%	18	39	28	13	71%*	17	54*	16	13
Trustworthy admin.	57%	15	42	25	17	75%*	25*	50	14	12
Collaborative admin.	56%	13	43	29	14	70%*	21	49	19	12
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	50%	12	38	27	21	66%*	17	49	22	12
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	50%	8	42	32	16	59%	8	51	27	15
Financially well run	49%	14	35	34	16	71%*	18	53*	18	11

* = Significantly higher than Fall 2003 at the 90% confidence level.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Fall 2003 Vs. Summer 2006

% Giving an A or B Grade



Note: The levels of A/B grades increased significantly for: neighborhood school performance, overall performance of administration, excellent leadership, well managed, trustworthy administration, collaborative administration, administration works with teachers to build relationships and financially well run.

Ratings During Past Quarter

- As the following charts illustrate, during the past quarter, Issaquah School District's ratings have not changed significantly.
- Overall the ratings have changed upwards or downwards by only a few points or less during the past quarter with the following exceptions.
 - There have been *directional* improvements for:
 - Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems (from 54% in Spring 2006 to 59% in Summer 2006.)
 - Financially well run (from 64% to 71%).
 - There have been *directional* declines for:
 - Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget (from 72% to 66%).
 - Administration working with teachers to build relationships (from 72% to 66%).

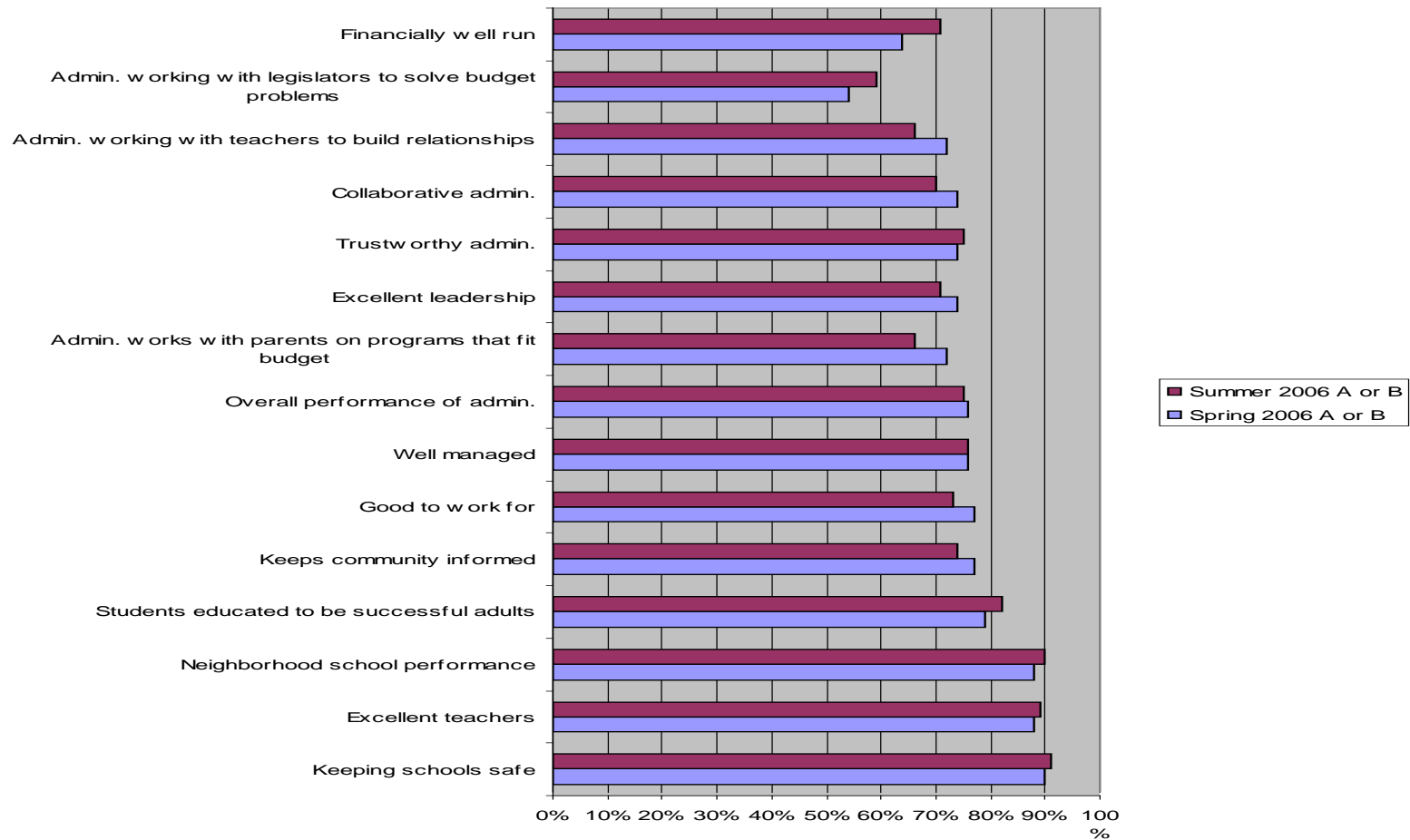
Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Spring 2006 Vs. Summer 2006

	Spring 2006 (April, May, June)					Summer 2006 (July, August, September)				
Survey asked respondents to "grade" following attributes of district. Numbers represent the PERCENTAGE of people who gave each attribute letter grades. The numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.										
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools safe	90%	50	40	7	2	91%	54	37	7	2
Excellent teachers	88%	46	42	7	6	89%	37	52	8	4
Neighborhood school performance	88%	43	45	8	4	90%	38	52	8	3
Students educated to be successful adults	79%	32	47	17	4	82%	35	47	13	5
Keeps community informed	77%	36	41	20	4	74%	36	38	20	6
Good to work for	77%	30	47	17	6	73%	18	55	19	8
Well managed	76%	34	42	18	6	76%	19	57*	14	9
Overall performance of admin.	76%	25	51	19	5	75%	18	57	15	11*
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	72%	23	49	23	7	66%	20	46	20	14*
Excellent leadership	74%	31	43	18	7	71%	17	54*	16	13*
Trustworthy admin.	74%	32	42	19	7	75%	25	50	14	12
Collaborative admin.	74%	26	48	22	4	70%	21	49	19	12
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	72%	30	42	23	5	66%	17	49	22	12
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	54%	14	40	34	11	59%	8	51	27	15
Financially well run	64%	32	32	26	8	71%	18	53*	18	11

* = Significantly higher than previous wave of interviewing (Summer 2006).

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Spring 2006 Vs. Summer 2006

% Giving an A or B Grade



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 four (26%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** less than Spring 2006 (42%) but overall not significantly different from the levels in preceding quarters.

The most frequent positive reasons include:

- Doing a good job (9%)
 - Positive word of mouth (6%)
 - Positive teacher comments (4%)
 - Good parental involvement/support/communications (4%)
 - Positive administration comments (3%)
- The number of respondents mentioning that an improvement needs to be made has declined **significantly** since Fall 2003 (from 72% to 59%).

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

- The improvements desired continue to be diverse with no specific improvement mentioned by more than a small minority.
- The most frequently requested improvement is communication, which is mentioned by three in twenty respondents (15%). Specific requests for improvement in communication include...
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/administration/provide more timely information (10%)
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input/partnering (9%)
- Other reasons for grade given are:
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations/better decision making (12%)
 - Average/OK performance (8%)
 - Room for improvement (8%)
 - Better organization/coordination/planning improvement needed (7%)
 - Teachers need to be better supported/support teacher needs/pay/more respect (6%)
- Very few parents (less than 5%) request any other specific improvement.

Suggestions for District

- Respondents are also asked for suggestions that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. While the vast majority (71%) give a suggestion, this is **significantly** fewer than in Fall 2003 (83%).
- The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communication. But, directionally fewer people are making this suggestion (21% in Summer 2006 vs. 27% in Fall 2003).
- Suggestions for better communication still center on...
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input (16%)
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/administration/provide more/timely information (11%).

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- There are very few other suggestions...
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations/better decision making (15%)
 - Better organization/coordination/planning needed (9%)
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding/better use of funds (9%).
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (9%)
 - Better training/monitoring of new teachers needed (7%)
 - More focus on students' individual needs/improve school/learning experience (6%)
- All other reasons are mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.
- Approximately one in twenty residents (6%) don't suggest any changes or improvements. In Fall 2003 significantly fewer residents (1%) didn't have a suggestion.

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

- Three in four residents (75%) feel that the amount they pay for local public education is about right or too low.
- Residents now feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

Too high	15%	
About right	64%	} 75%
Too low	11%	
Don't know	9%	

Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

- Residents of the Issaquah District continue to most frequently say they receive information about Issaquah schools from their friends and family, the Issaquah Press and/or its affiliates and the District Newsletter.
- 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%).

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools in Summer 2006

Friends and Family	32%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	24
District Newsletter	15
The Internet	9
Seattle Times	1
School Employees	5
Television	2
Work there	2
King Country Journal	3
From the School	1
Through Mail/School Bulletin	0
Don't Know	4

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 most areas...
 - Neighborhood school performance
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with teachers to build relationships
 - Financially well run
- In all other performance areas perceptions of the District have improved directionally.

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Fewer residents are requesting improvements in the Issaquah school district (71% in summer 2006 vs. 83% in Fall 2003). This may be a reflection of higher satisfaction levels overall.
- Although significant changes have been made in the perceptions of residents, a minority (21% in Summer 2006) continue to suggest an improvement in communication.
- Three in four (75%) of residents feel that the taxes they are paying for education are about right (64%) or too low (11%).
- 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).
- If additional in-depth learning is desired on any of these findings, it is possible to contact the respondents who have agreed to be recontacted with additional questions on such things as the underlying reasons for a grade or suggestion (such as improved communications)

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.