

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Summer 2011

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass eight years (thirty-two 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 Summer almost 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:

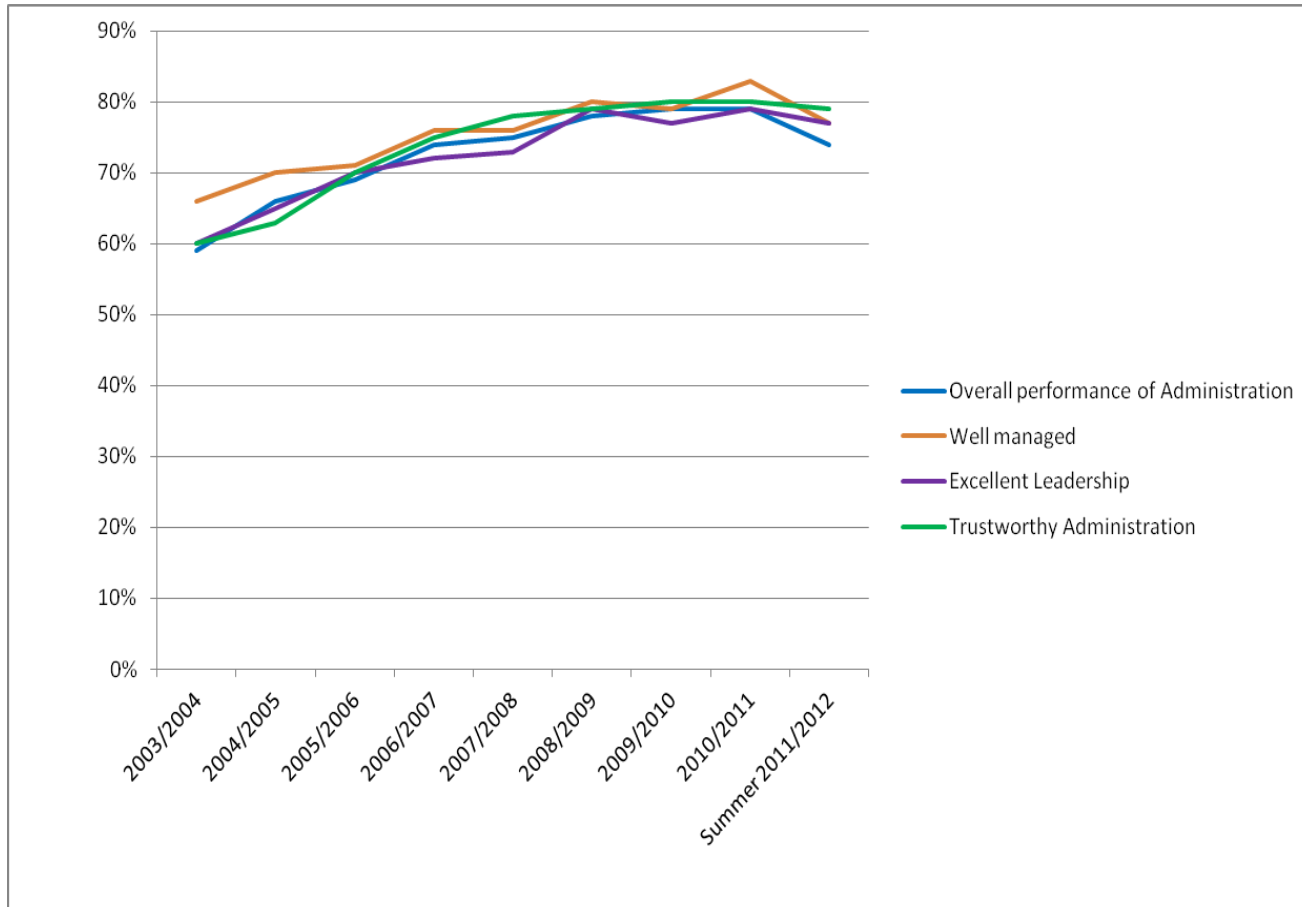
- The responses given in the current wave (Summer 2011) are compared to previous responses given.
 - When there are **statistically significant** differences in responses from one wave of interviews to another at the 90% confidence level it is noted.
 - When there are **directional** differences in responses (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. Summer 2011

- As the following charts detail, perceptions have improved since this study began in 2003. The vast majority of residents give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 67% to 87%.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. The vast majority of residents (76%) 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

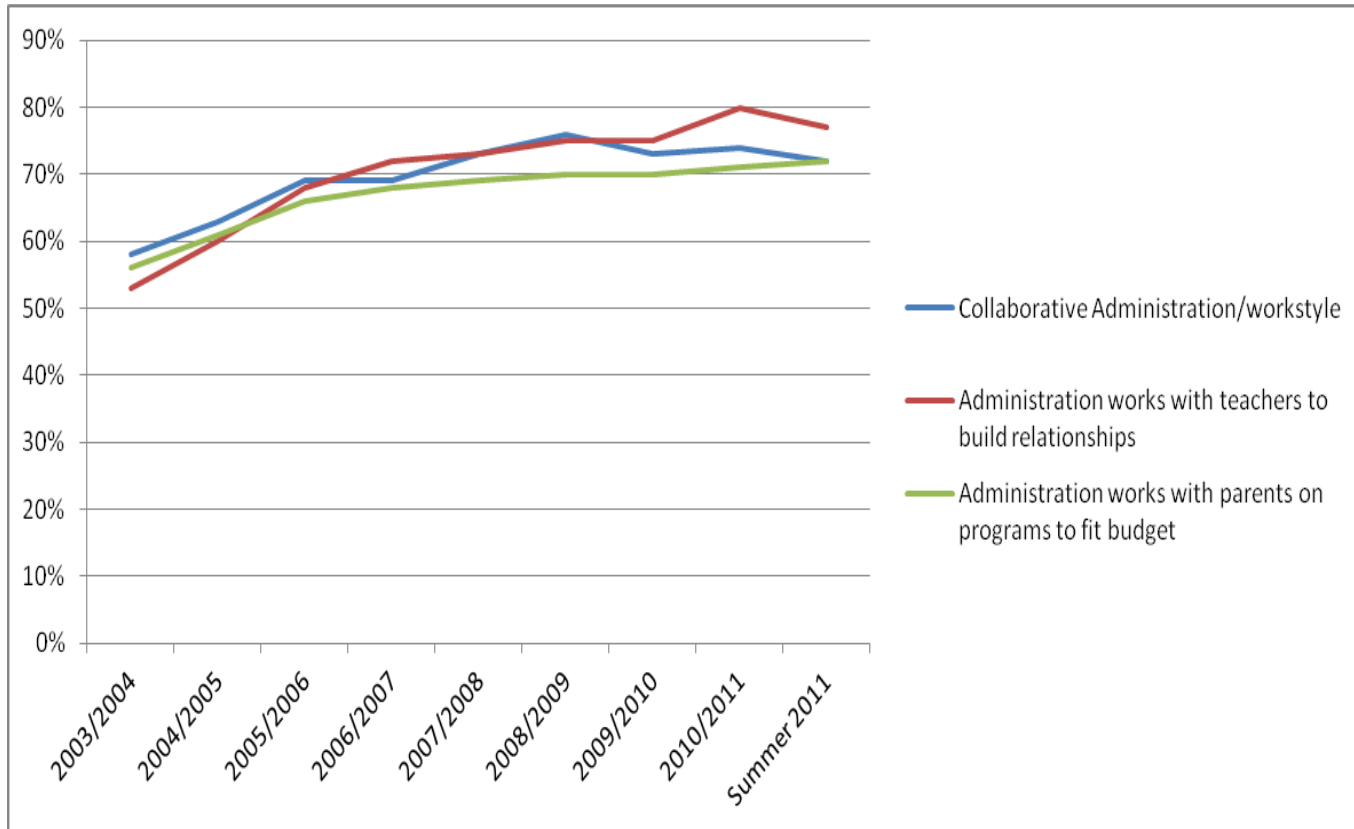


Note:

The 2011-2012 School year thus far includes the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011).

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

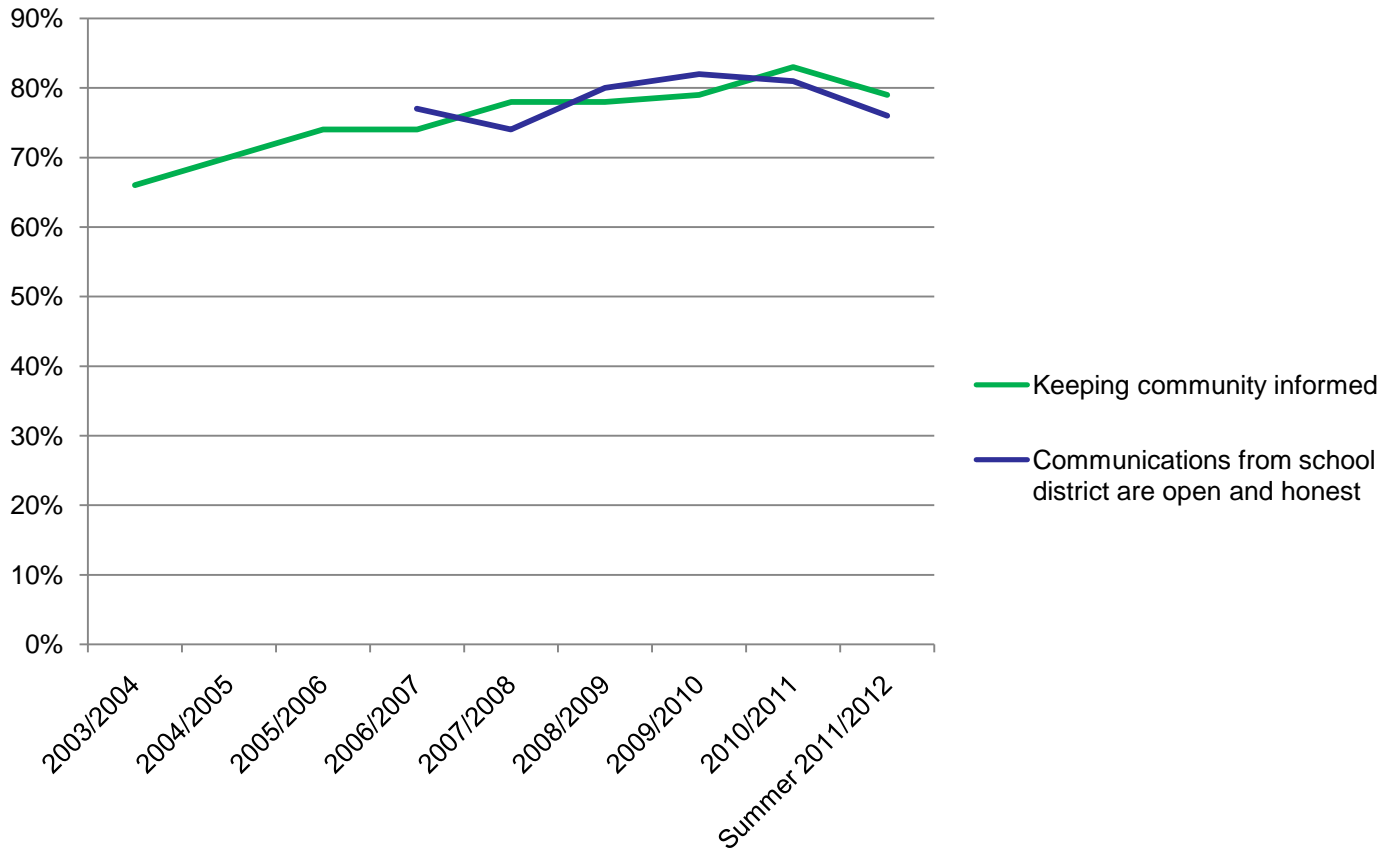


Note:

The 2011/2012 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September).

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



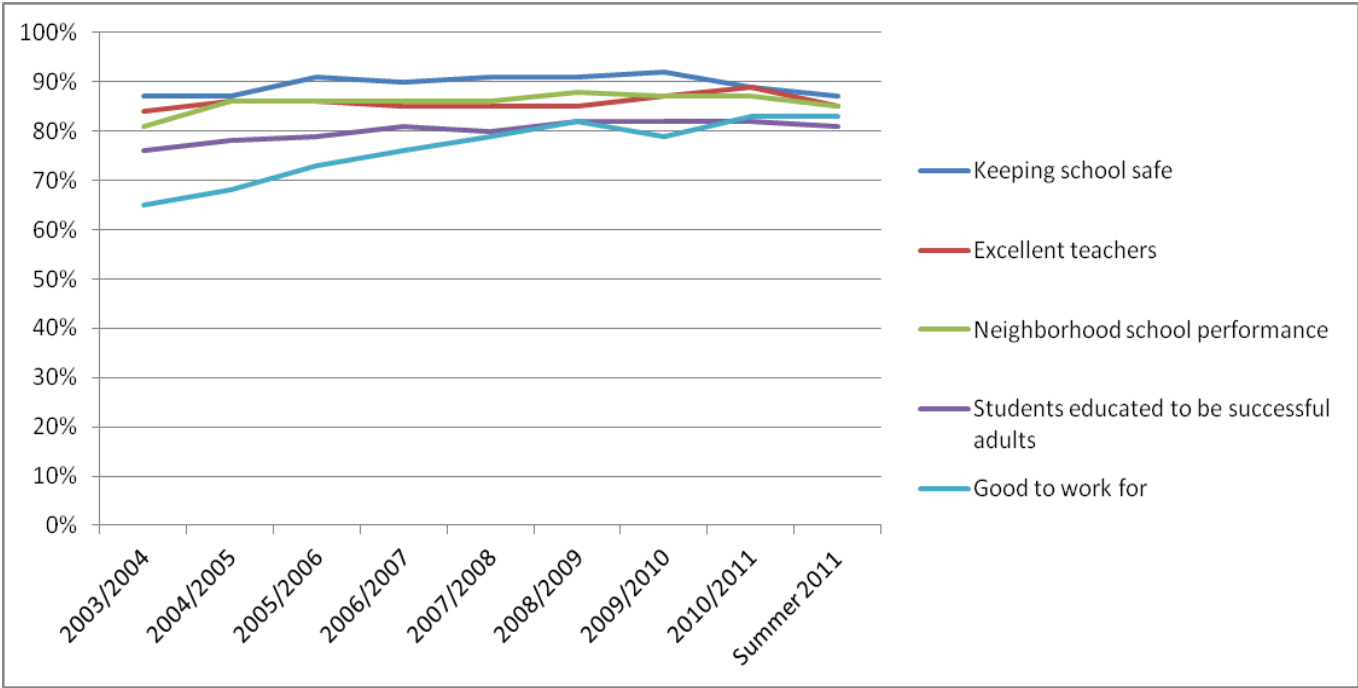
Note:

The 2011/2012 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September) 2011.

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

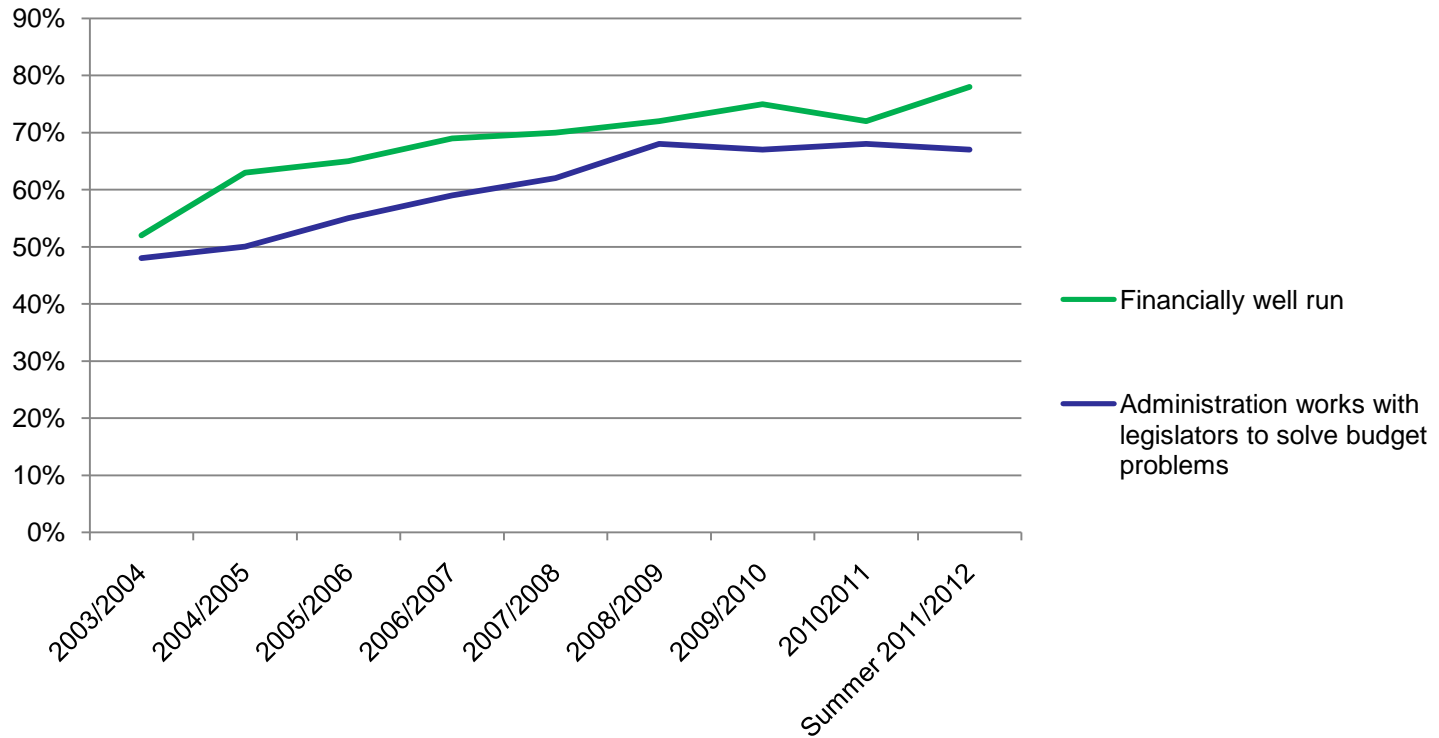


Note:

The 2011/12 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September).

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 thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September).

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

- The number of residents giving the District high grades continues to be high across performance areas.
- During the Summer quarter there were consistent, small directional declines in the levels of A/B grades given to the District.

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

	Spring 2011 (April, May, June)					Summer 2011 (July, Aug., Sept.)				
	A or B	A	B	C	D or F	A or B	A	B	C	D or F
Keeping schools safe	91%	58	33	7	2	87%	60	27	10	3
Excellent teachers	90%	43	47	10	0	85%	44	41	11	5*
Neighborhood school performance	89%	44	45	10	1	85%	44	41	11	4
Good to work for	85%	38	47	13	1	83%	35	48	12	5
Students educated to be successful adults	83%	41	42	14	3	81%	40	41	13	6
Keeps community informed	85%	49	36	12	3	79%	48	31	16	5
Trustworthy Administration	82%	41	41	13	5	79%	39	40	14	7
Financially well run	73%	28	45	24	3	78%	32	46	12*	10*
Well managed	84%	39	45	13	3	77%	35	42	15	8*
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	83%	32	51	15	2	77%	35	42	17	6
Excellent leadership	83%	30	53	15	2	77%	32	45	13	10*
Communications from school district are open and honest	82%	44	38	17	2	76%	46	30	15	9*
Overall performance of Administration	83%	31	52	15	2	74%	31	43	18	7*
Collaborative Administration	75%	28	47	22	3	72%	33	39	18	9
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	74%	29	45	21	4	72%	31	41	16	12*
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	69%	20	49	25	6	67%	23	44	22	11

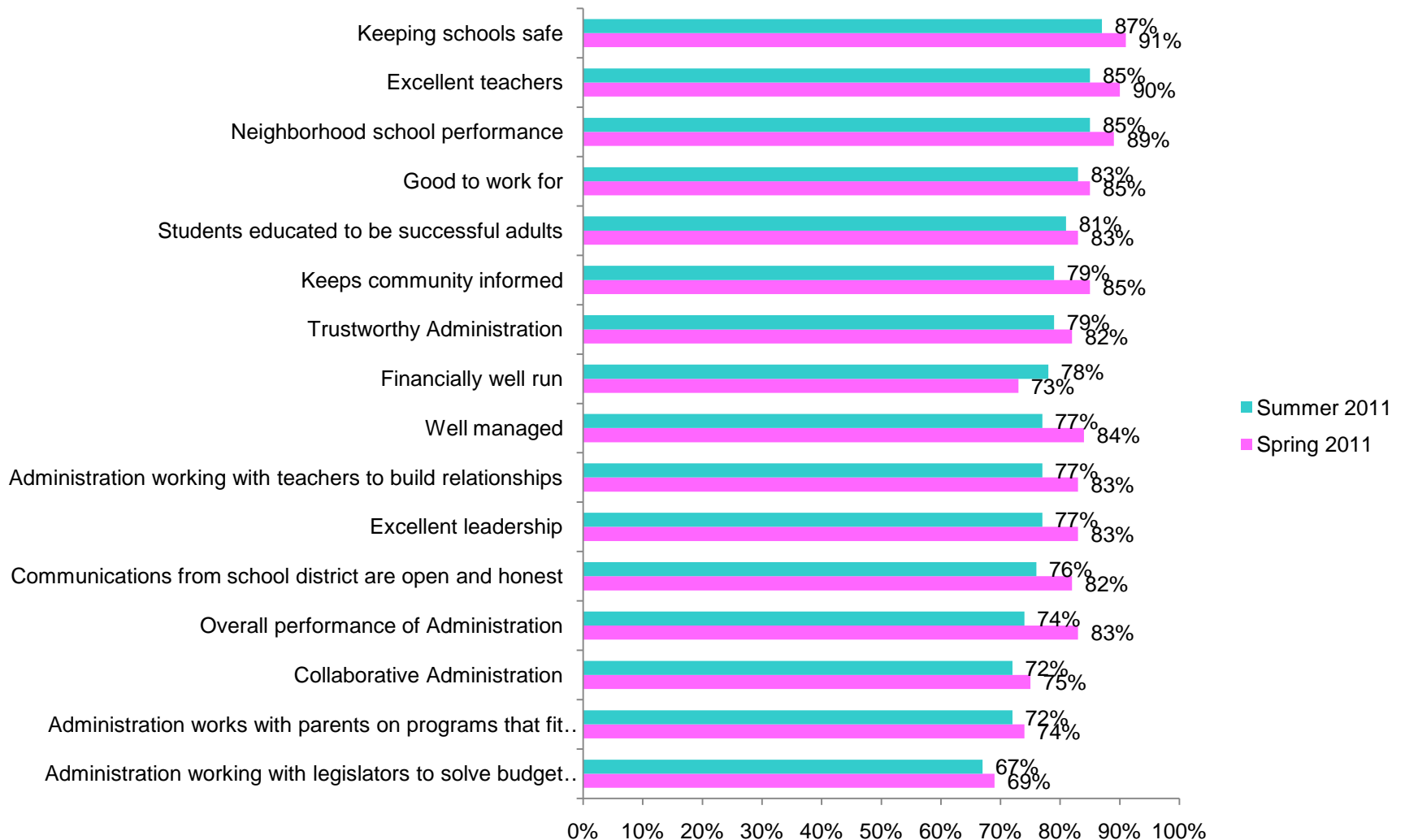
Note:

* = Significant difference vs. Spring 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— Spring 2011 Vs. Summer 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...?

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

- As the following charts detail, the vast majority of parents continue to give the District a high grade for *encouraging their opinions* and *welcoming their involvement*, but there were directional declines in grades during the past quarter.
 - Approximately nine in ten parents overall (89%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome* (vs. 91% the previous quarter). Two out of three (66%) give the District an A grade.
 - Parents of High School students (53%) are less likely to give the District an A grade for its performance in this area than parents of Elementary school students (73%) and parents of Middle school students (71%).
 - Three in four parents (76%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District* (vs. 86% last quarter).

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

Fall 2006 (October, November, December)					Summer 2011 (July, August, September)			
<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%	76%	77%	83%	73%
A	34	41**	34**	19	47*	49	51	44
B	47	49	49	53	29*	28	32	29
C	14	6**	14	22	13	16	16	11
D or F	6	4	4	6	11	7	2	15***
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97%	93%	87%	89%	91%	91%	86%
A	63	77**	69**	47	66	73**	71**	53
B	29	20**	24**	40	23	18**	20**	33
C	7	3**	7	11	9	4**	8	13
D or F	1	0	0	2	3	4	2	1

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

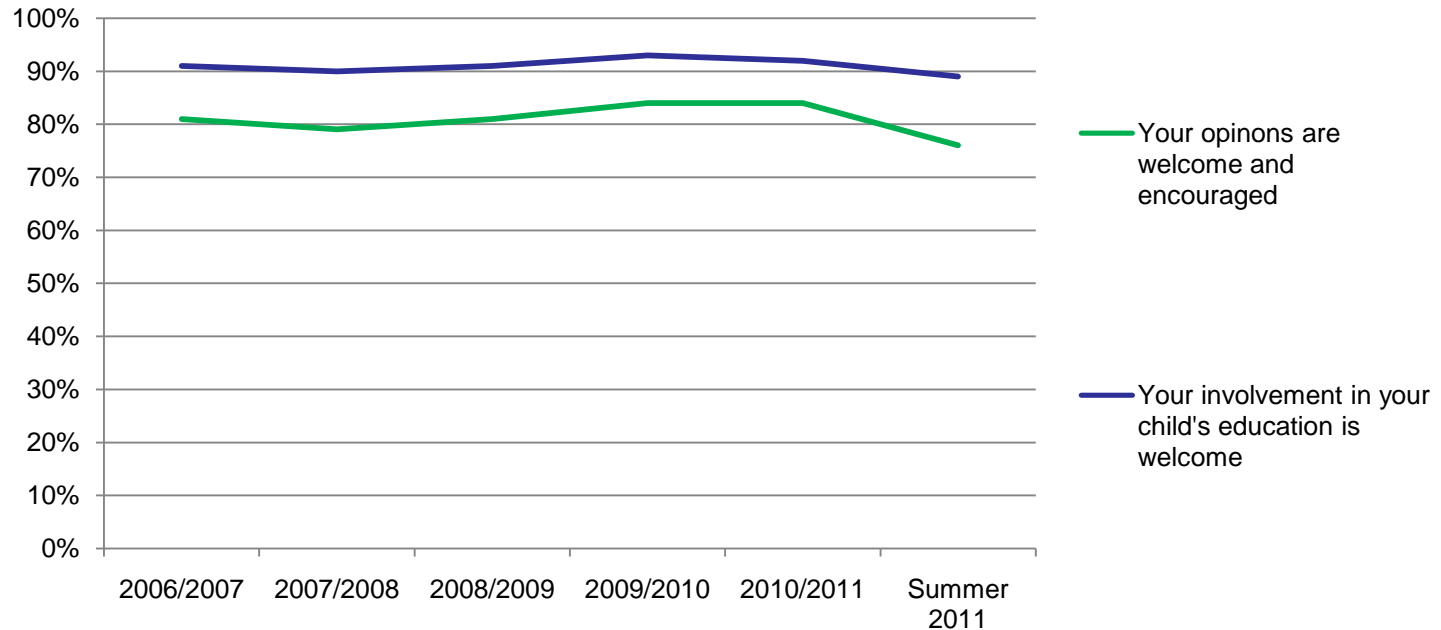
* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

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

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

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

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.
 - Over four in ten (44%) mention that something needs improvement, which is significantly fewer than in the 2003/04 school year (64%) but directionally more than the previous (Spring) quarter (41%).
 - At the same time, over four in ten (44%) mention a positive reason for the grade they gave, which is significantly more than in Fall 2003 (26%), and directionally more than in the Spring (41%).
- 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 (16%)
 - Satisfied/happy with school experience (8%)
 - Good parental involvement/support (8%)
 - Positive Administration comments/good staff (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 reasons are...
 - Room for improvement (9%)
 - Communications overall (7%), which was mentioned by significantly more residents in the 2003/2004 school year (12%) but by a comparable level of residents the previous (Spring) quarter (6%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input (5%)
 - Better administration/leadership/community relations/decision making (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 with three in four (77%) making a suggestion this Summer.
- The suggestions continue to be diverse which may reflect the varied needs and interests in this community.
- The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communications. Almost three in ten (28%) make this type of suggestion. Specific communication suggestions include:
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (15%), which is mentioned significantly more than in the Spring (6%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (14%)

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (11%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (9%) .
 - Teachers need to be better supported/support teacher needs/pay/more respect (8%).
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (6%)
 - More focus on student's individual needs/improve learning experience (5%)
 - More support/concern needed for children with average/poor grades (5%).
- All other suggestions were given by less than 5% of respondents.

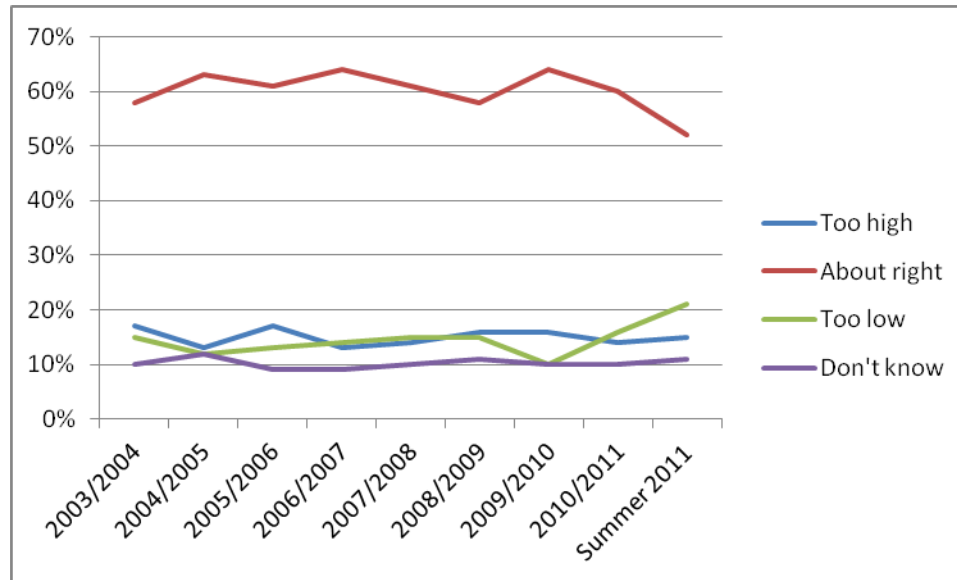
How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Approximately three in four residents (73%) 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, which is reflected in the chart that follows.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

Too high	15%	
About right	52%	} 73%
Too low	21%	
Don't know	11%	

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 – Summer 2011)



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

Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

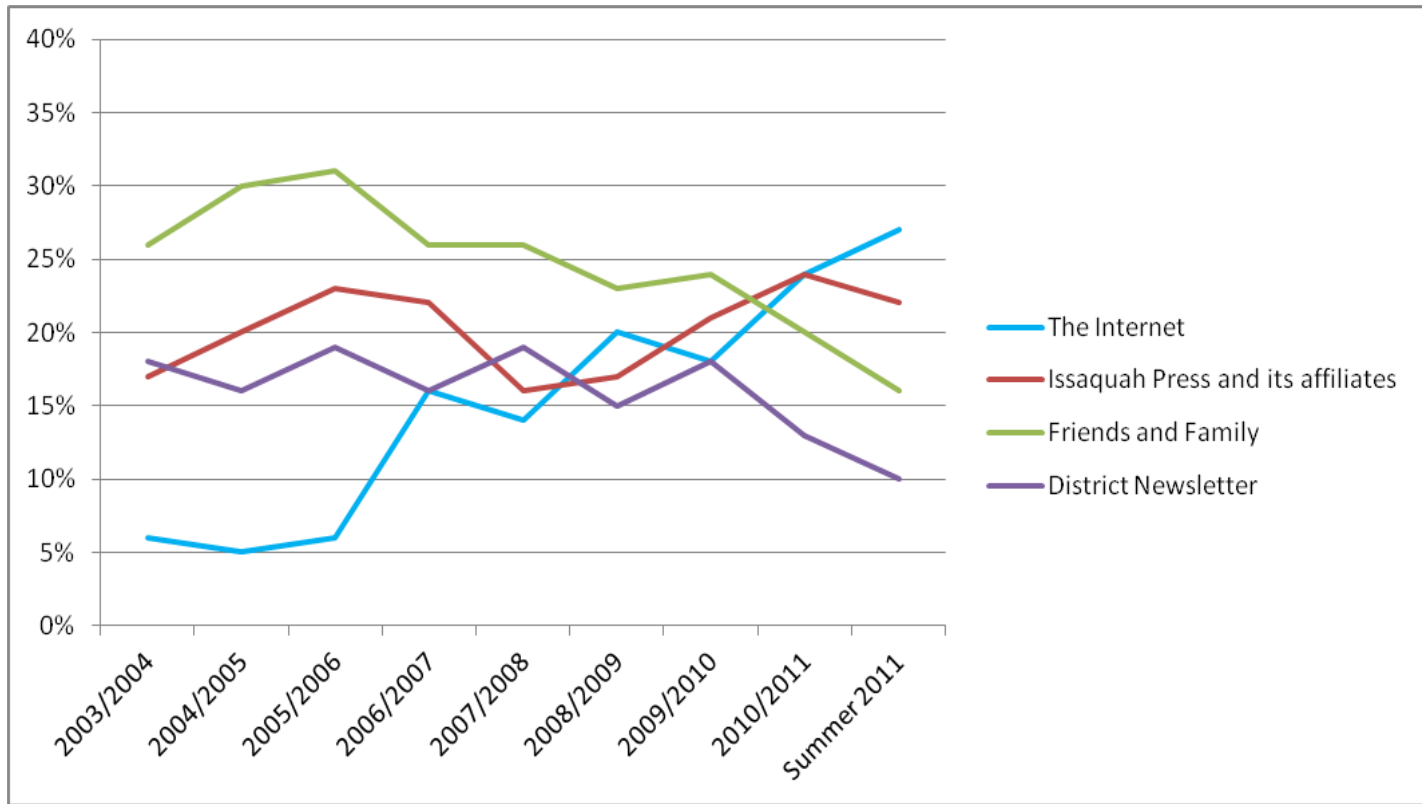
- Residents of the Issaquah District continue to most frequently mention that the Internet, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates, their Friends and Family, and the District Newsletter are their primary source of information about Issaquah schools.
- As the chart that follows shows, since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents are using the Internet as their primary source of information (4% vs. 27%).
- Usage of the Issaquah Press/its affiliates as a primary source of information has also grown significantly since Fall 2003 (from 10% to 22%).

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools

The Internet	27%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	22
Friends and Family	16
District Newsletter	10
Work there/personal experience	7
School Employees	6
From the school/school bulletin	2
Seattle Times	2
Other	5
Don't Know	3

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 – Summer 2011)



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. But, during the Summer quarter there were a number of small directional declines in the levels of A/B grades. These declines in part may be due to concerns about current budget issues and their impact on education in this District.
- 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. But, there were directional declines vs. the previous (Spring) quarter.
 - Three out of four residents (76%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest* (vs. 82% in the Spring).
 - Approximately nine in ten parents (89%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome* (vs. 91% in the Spring).
 - Two out of three (66%) continue to give the District an A grade.
 - Three out of four parents (76%) give Issaquah an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District* (vs. 86% in the Spring).

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance...
 - Approximately four in ten (44%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** more than in the 2003/2004 school year (26%) and directionally more than the previous (Spring) quarter (41%).
 - Approximately four in ten (44%) mention something that needs improvement, which is **significantly** fewer than in 2003/2004 (64%) but directionally more than last Spring (41%).
 - 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 Summer, approximately three in four residents (77%) of residents made a suggestion, which may in part reflect a high interest in the quality of education in this community. The most frequently given suggestions are:
 - Improve in the area of communications (28%) which is mentioned by significantly more residents than in the Spring (15%). Specific requests include:
 - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (15%), which is mentioned by significantly more parents than in the Spring (6%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (14%)
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (11%)
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-students relations (9%)
 - Teachers need to be better supported/support teacher needs/pay/more respect (8%)
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (6%)
 - More focus on students individual needs/improve learning experience (5%)
 - More support/concern needed for children with average/poor grades (5%)

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 three out of four (73%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (52%) or too low (21%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be the Internet (27%), the Issaquah Press (22%), Friends and Family (16%), and the District Newsletter (10%). Three out of four (75%) residents mention one of these sources as their primary source of information about the District.
- This quarter approximately half of 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 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.