

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Winter 2007

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over three years (fourteen 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 Winter of 2007, four in ten respondents (43%) said 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 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 so that there are 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 (Winter 2007) are compared to previous responses given.
 - **Statistically significant** differences in responses from one wave of interviews to another at the 90% confidence level are 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. Winter 2007

- As the following charts detail, since the Fall of 2003 perceptions of the Issaquah School District have **significantly** improved in most performance areas...
 - Students educated to be successful adults
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with parents on programs that fit the budget
 - 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. Winter 2007

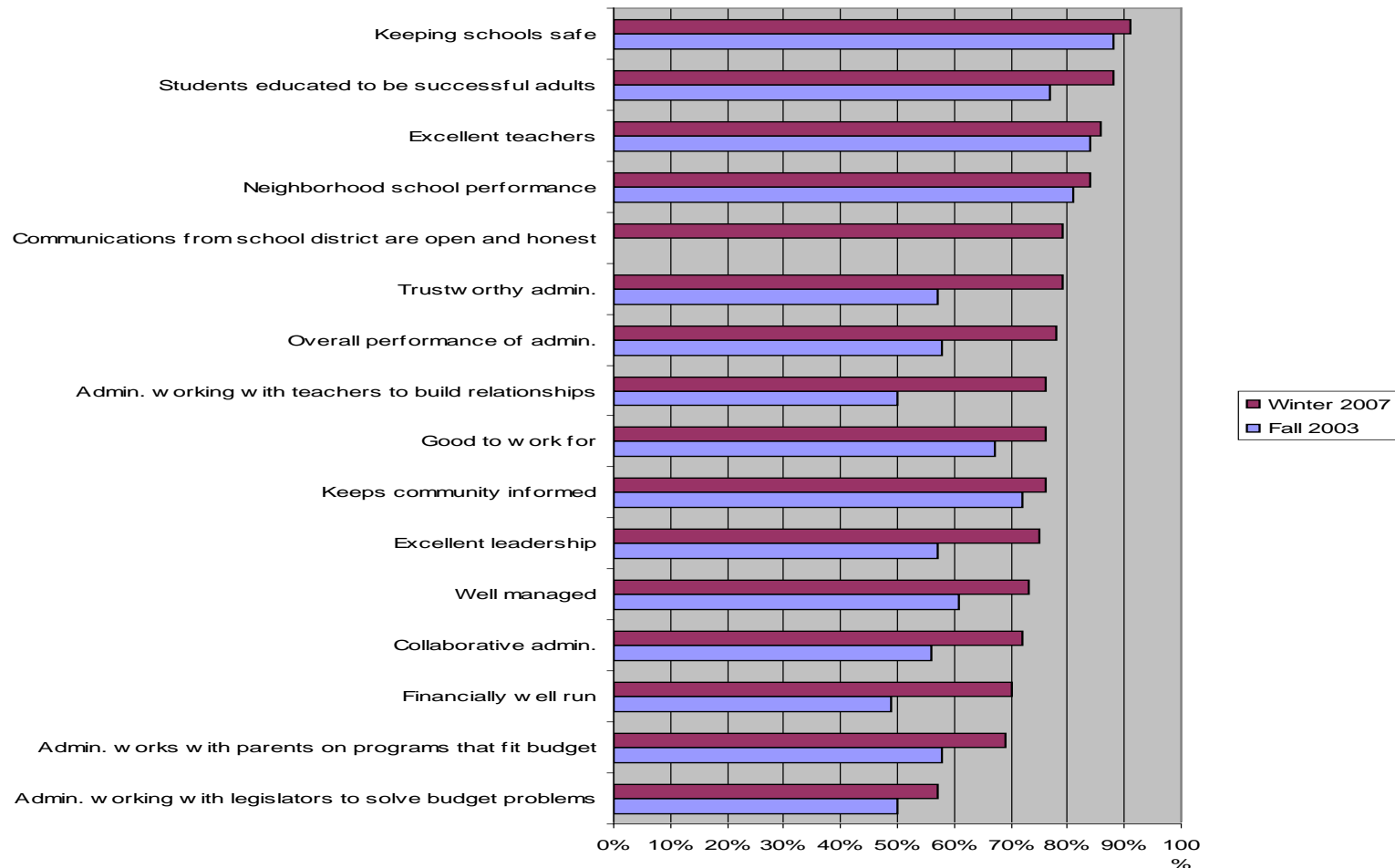
	Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)				
Survey asked respondents to "grade" following attributes of district. Numbers in the column represent the PERCENTAGE of people who gave each attribute letter grades. The numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding.										
	A or B	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	86%	37	49	13	2
Neighborhood school performance	81%	30	51	13	5	84%	35	49	10	7
Students educated to be successful adults	77%	28	49	18	5	88%*	32	56	8	5
Keeps community informed	72%	25	47	18	9	76%	35*	41	20	4
Good to work for	67%	22	45	20	12	76%	28	48	18	6
Well managed	61%	14	47	24	13	73%*	25*	48	16	10
Overall performance of admin.	58%	13	45	27	14	78%*	28*	50	14	8
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	58%	17	41	28	13	69%*	22	47	24	7
Excellent leadership	57%	18	39	28	13	75%*	21	54*	21	3
Trustworthy admin.	57%	15	42	25	17	79%*	34*	45	13	8
Collaborative admin.	56%	13	43	29	14	72%*	25*	47	17	10
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	50%	12	38	27	21	76%*	28	48	19	5
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	50%	8	42	32	16	57%	12	45	30	13
Financially well run	49%	14	35	34	16	70%*	20	50*	22	9
Communications from school district are open and honest	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	79%	37	42	15	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. Winter 2007

% Giving an A or B Grade



Note: The levels of A/B grades increased significantly for: *students educated to be successful adults, overall performance of Administration, excellent leadership, well managed, trustworthy Administration, collaborative Administration, Administration works with parents on programs that fit the budget, Administration works with teachers to build 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

- As the following charts detail, during the past quarter the levels of A and B grades significantly declined for...
 - Neighborhood school performance (from 91% giving an A or B grade to 84%)
 - Well managed (from 82% giving an A or B grade to 73%)
 - Financially well run (from 85% to 70%).
- Ratings for all other attributes have changed by only a few points or less during the past quarter with the following exceptions.
 - There have been *directional* improvements in A or B grades for:
 - Overall performance of the Administration (from 72% in Fall 2006 to 78% in Winter 2007.)
 - Students educated to be successful adults (from 81% to 88%).
 - There has been a directional decline for:
 - Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems (from 65% giving an A or B grade in Fall 2006 to 57% in Winter 2007).

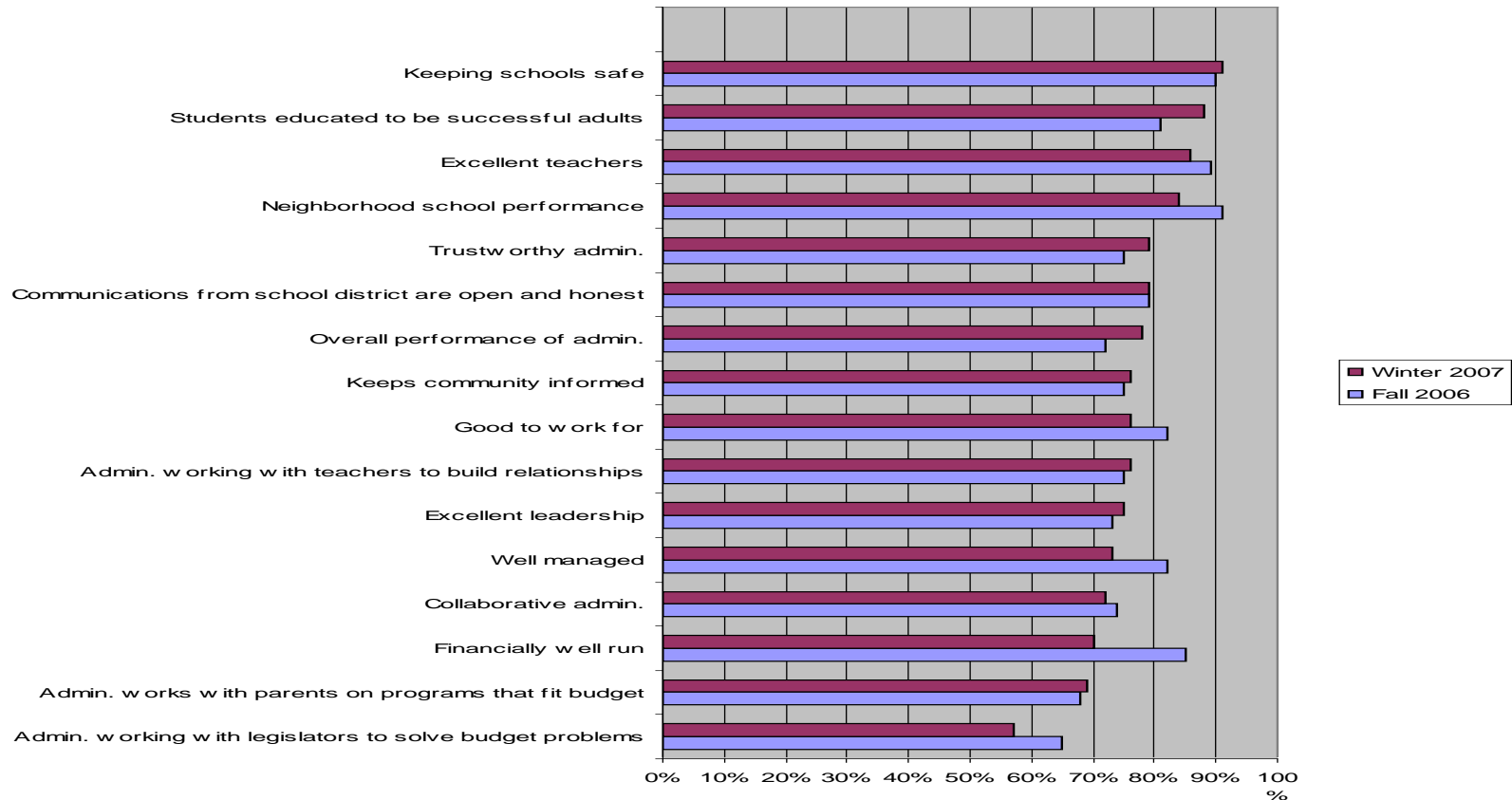
Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2006 Vs. Winter 2007

	Fall 2006 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)				
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%	47	43	5	5	91%	54	37	7	2
Excellent teachers	89%	42	47	7	3	86%	37	49	13*	2
Neighborhood school performance	91%	40	51	7	1	84%*	35	49	10	7
Students educated to be successful adults	81%	29	52	14	6	88%	32	56	8	5
Keeps community informed	75%	35	40	17	8	76%	35	41	20	4
Good to work for	82%	32	50	15	3	76%	28	48	18	6
Well managed	82%	33	49	13	5	73%*	25	48	16	10
Overall performance of admin.	72%	26	46	22	5	78%	28	50	14	8
Admin. works with parents on programs that fit budget	68%	24	44	26	6	69%	22	47	24	7
Excellent leadership	73%	25	48	21	7	75%	21	54	21	3
Trustworthy admin.	75%	35	40	19	6	79%	34	45	13	8
Collaborative admin.	74%	27	47	20	5	72%	25	47	17	10
Admin. working with teachers to build relationships	75%	28	47	22	3	76%	28	48	19	5
Admin. working with legislators to solve budget problems	65%	23	42	22	12	57%	12	45	30	13
Financially well run	85%	29	46	19	8	70%*	20	50	22	9
Communications from school district are open and honest	79%	40	39	17	4	79%	37	42	15	6

* = Significantly lower than previous wave of interviewing (Fall 2006).

Note: The attribute *Communications from school district are open and honest* was added to this study in Fall 2006

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study—Fall 2006 vs. Winter 2007 % Giving an A or B Grade



Note:

The level of A/B grades decreased significantly during the past quarter for *neighborhood school performance*, *well managed* and *financially well run*.

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

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

- As the following chart details, the vast majority of parents continue to give the District high grades for encouraging their opinions and involvement in their children's education.
 - Nine in ten parents overall (91%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*.
 - Almost nine in ten parents overall (88%) give the Issaquah School District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district*. This is directionally higher than the level of A/B grades given in Fall 2006 (81%).

Grades Given By Parents Regarding How Issaquah School District Treats Them

Fall 2006 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2007 (Jan., Feb., March)			
<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	88%	93*	83	80
A	34%	41	34	19*	42%	40	44	46
B	47%	49	49	53	46%	53*	39	34
C	14%	6*	14	22	7%	3	12**	12**
D or F	6%	4	4	6	5%	3	5	8
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97	93	87	91%	92	95	91
A	63%	77	69	47*	69%	75*	59	67
B	29%	20	24	40*	22%	17	36**	24
C	7%	3	7	11**	6%	5	3	7
D or F	1%	0	0	2	3%	3	3	2

Note: These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

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

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

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 four in ten (41%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** more than in Fall 2003 (27%) and most other preceding quarters. The most frequent positive reasons include:
 - Good parental involvement/support/communications (15%)
 - Doing a good job (14%)
 - Satisfied/happy with school experience (12%)
 - Positive Administration comments (8%)
 - Positive word of mouth (6%)
 - Positive teacher comments (6%)
- The number of respondents mentioning that an improvement needs to be made has declined **significantly** since Fall 2003 (from 72% to 42%).

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

- The improvements desired continue to be diverse with no specific desired improvement mentioned by more than a small minority.
- Two frequently desired improvements are:
 - Better Administration/leadership/community relations (11%)
 - Communication (8%). Specific requests for improvement in communication include...
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (6%)
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input/partnering (4%)
- Other reasons for the grade given to the Administration are:
 - Room for improvement (10%)
 - Increase funding/work with State for funding (6%)
 - Put focus on classroom/decisions in best interest of student (5%)
 - Better organization/coordination/planning needed (5%)
- Very few parents (less than 5%) give any other reason.

Suggestions for District

- Respondents are also asked for suggestions that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. While the majority (70%) 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 Winter 2007 vs. 27% in Fall 2003).
- Suggestions for better communication still center on...
 - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement/act on input (15%)
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (13%).

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (10%)
 - Better Administration/leadership/community relations/better decision making (9%)
 - More focus on students' individual needs/improve school/learning experience (7%)
 - Put focus on classroom/education/decisions in best interest of student (7%)
 - Better organization/coordination/planning needed (7%)
 - Better placement of students in classes/programs (7%)
 - Change curriculum/go back to basics (6%)
 - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding/better use of funds (5%).
 - Need to reduce class sizes (5%)
- All other suggestions are mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.

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

- Approximately four in five residents (78%) feel that the amount they pay for local public education is about right or too low.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

Too high	13%	
About right	62%	} 78%
Too low	16%	
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 the Internet, their friends and family, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates and the District Newsletter.
- Since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents mention the Internet (22% vs. 4%) and the Issaquah Press/its affiliates (19% vs. 10%) as their primary source of information.

Primary source of information about Issaquah Schools in Winter 2007

The Internet	22%
Friends and Family	20
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	19
District Newsletter	17
Seattle Times	8
School Employees	5
Television	2
Work there	-
King Country Journal	1
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...
 - Students educated to be successful adults
 - Overall performance of Administration
 - Excellent leadership
 - Well managed
 - Trustworthy Administration
 - Collaborative Administration
 - Administration works with parents on programs that fit the budget
 - Administration works with teachers to build relationships
 - Financially well run
- In all other performance areas perceptions of the District have improved directionally.
- With regard to the new attributes that were added this Fall, the District's performance is high.
 - Four in five residents (79%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest.*
 - Nine in ten (91%) parents give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome.*
 - Almost nine in ten parents (88%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district.*

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Fewer residents are requesting improvements in the Issaquah school district (70% in Winter 2007 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 Fall 2006) continue to suggest an improvement in communication. This is directionally fewer than in Fall 2003 (27%).
- Almost four in five (78%) of residents feel that the taxes they are paying for education are about right (62%) or too low (16%).
- 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 five residents (19%) now consider it to be their primary source of information (vs. 10% in Fall 2003).
- The Internet has grown tremendously as a source of information about the District and its schools since Fall 2003 (from 4% to 22%).
- 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.

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.