

Issaquah School District Community Polling Study Results

Fall 2003 through Winter 2010

Prepared by:

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Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over six years (twenty-six 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

Purpose

- This study provides:
 - The opportunity to learn what parents and the community overall think about the District's performance. Respondents are selected randomly and are representative of the demographics in the community.
 - The ability to assess the District's performance on the Executive Limitations set by the Board.
 - Definitive facts to communicate to parents and the community if there are questions about the District's performance.

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. Since the sample is random, all residents have an equal opportunity of being selected for this study.
- 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 is representative of the types of people who live in this community. It 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. In the Winter of 2010, approximately four in ten respondents (43%) 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 additional 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 (Winter 2010) 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. Winter 2010

- As the following charts show, since this study began in Fall 2003, the levels of A/B grades given to the Issaquah District have increased **significantly** for *all* performance attributes.
- For the majority of performance attributes, the levels of A grades have increased significantly since Fall 2003.

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2003 Vs. Winter 2010

| | Fall 2003 (Oct., Nov., Dec.) | | | | | Winter 2010 (Jan., Feb., March) | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | 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 | 94%* | 59* | 35 | 7 | 0 |
| Excellent teachers | 84% | 34 | 50 | 12 | 3 | 92%* | 41 | 51 | 6 | 2 |
| Neighborhood school performance | 81% | 30 | 51 | 13 | 5 | 89%* | 44* | 45 | 10 | 0 |
| Students educated to be successful adults | 77% | 28 | 49 | 18 | 5 | 86%* | 38* | 48 | 12 | 2 |
| Good to work for | 67% | 22 | 45 | 20 | 12 | 86%* | 33* | 53 | 11 | 3 |
| Communications from school district are open and honest | NA | NA | NA | NA | NA | 85% | 49 | 36 | 11 | 4 |
| Keeps community informed | 72% | 25 | 47 | 18 | 9 | 81%* | 45* | 36 | 15 | 4 |
| Trustworthy Administration | 57% | 15 | 42 | 25 | 17 | 79%* | 40* | 39 | 17 | 5 |
| Well managed | 61% | 14 | 47 | 24 | 13 | 78%* | 32* | 46 | 16 | 7 |
| Overall performance of Administration | 58% | 13 | 45 | 27 | 14 | 77%* | 26* | 51 | 17 | 6 |
| Excellent leadership | 57% | 18 | 39 | 28 | 13 | 76%* | 33* | 43 | 17 | 7 |
| Collaborative Administration | 56% | 13 | 43 | 29 | 14 | 76%* | 34* | 42 | 17 | 7 |
| Administration working with teachers to build relationships | 50% | 12 | 38 | 27 | 21 | 75%* | 26* | 49 | 19 | 7 |
| Financially well run | 49% | 14 | 35 | 34 | 16 | 70%* | 26* | 44 | 22 | 8 |
| Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget | 58% | 17 | 41 | 28 | 13 | 70%* | 22 | 48 | 21 | 8 |
| Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems | 50% | 8 | 42 | 32 | 16 | 65%* | 19* | 46 | 28 | 8 |

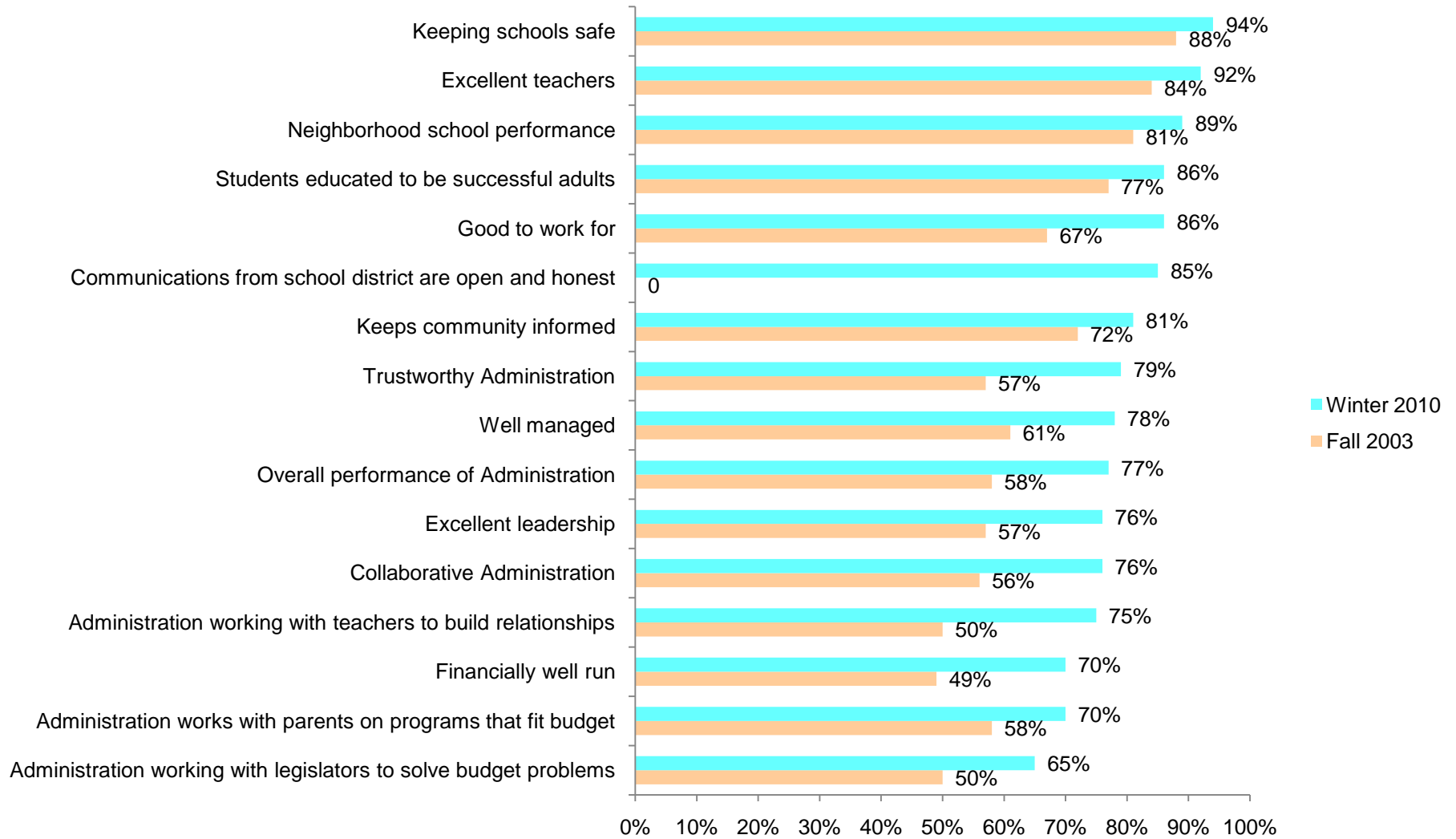
* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2003 at the 90% confidence level.

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. Winter 2010

% 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

- Overall, performance ratings were stable during the past quarter with only small directional changes.
- One exception is that ratings increased significantly for *excellent teachers*, rising from 82% giving an A or B rating in Fall 2009 to 92% in Winter 2010.
- But, ratings have decreased directionally for two quarters in a row for *financially well run* (from 83% in the Summer, to 76% in the Fall and 70% in the Winter). This may in part reflect budget cuts that began this school year and that people are now aware of; i.e., not laying off teachers resulted in other cuts.
 - In the Spring of 2009 when there was concern about potential teacher layoffs, A/B grades were at a comparable level (68%)

Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2009 Vs. Winter 2010

| | Fall 2009 (Oct., Nov., Dec.) | | | | | Winter 2010 (Jan., Feb., March) | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| | A or B | A | B | C | D or F | A or B | A | B | C | D or F |
| Keeping schools safe | 92% | 57 | 35 | 6 | 2 | 94% | 59 | 35 | 7 | 0 |
| Excellent teachers | 82% | 37 | 45 | 17 | 1 | 92%* | 41 | 51 | 6* | 2 |
| Neighborhood school performance | 84% | 43 | 41* | 14 | 2 | 89% | 44 | 45 | 10 | 0 |
| Students educated to be successful adults | 82% | 39 | 43 | 15 | 3 | 86% | 38 | 48 | 12 | 2 |
| Good to work for | 78% | 33 | 45 | 20 | 1 | 86% | 33 | 53 | 11 | 3 |
| Communications from school district are open and honest | 82% | 46 | 36 | 13 | 5 | 85% | 49 | 36 | 11 | 4 |
| Keeps community informed | 80% | 41 | 39 | 15 | 5 | 81% | 45 | 36 | 15 | 4 |
| Trustworthy Administration | 81% | 36 | 45 | 17 | 2 | 79% | 40 | 39 | 17 | 5 |
| Well managed | 79% | 33 | 46 | 17 | 3 | 78% | 32 | 46 | 16 | 7 |
| Overall performance of Administration | 80% | 27 | 53 | 15 | 4 | 77% | 26 | 51 | 17 | 6 |
| Excellent leadership | 77% | 33 | 44* | 19 | 4 | 76% | 33 | 43 | 17 | 7 |
| Collaborative Administration | 70% | 26 | 44 | 26 | 4 | 76% | 34 | 42 | 17* | 7 |
| Administration working with teachers to build relationships | 76% | 30 | 46 | 18 | 6 | 75% | 26 | 49 | 19 | 7 |
| Financially well run | 76% | 28 | 48 | 17 | 8 | 70% | 26 | 44 | 22 | 8 |
| Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget | 69% | 27 | 42 | 22 | 8 | 70% | 22 | 48 | 21 | 8 |
| Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems | 69% | 24 | 45 | 24 | 7 | 65% | 19 | 46 | 28 | 8 |

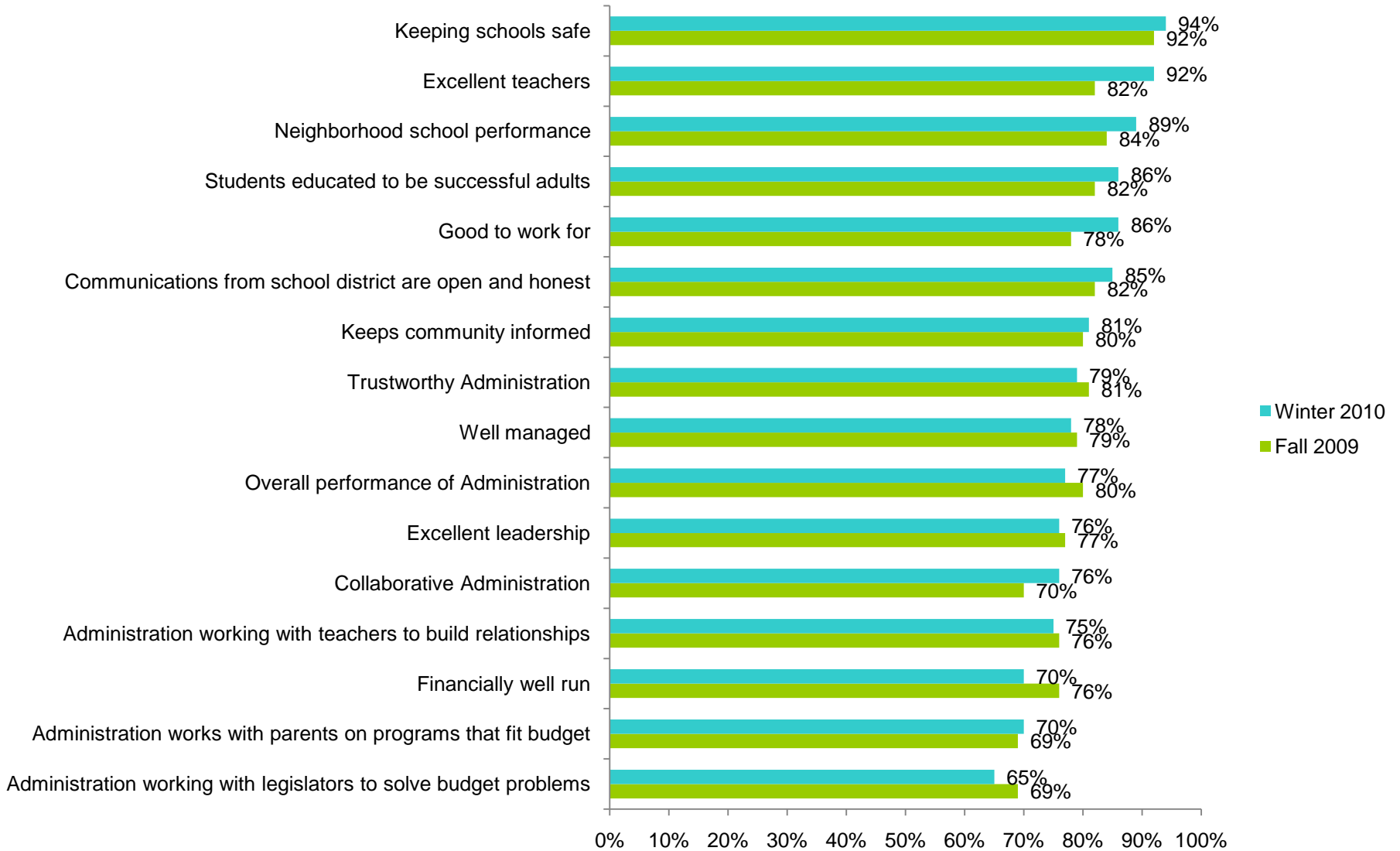
Note:

* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2009 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— Fall 2009 Vs. Winter 2010 % 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 chart details, the vast majority of parents continue to give the District high grades for encouraging their opinions and welcoming their involvement.
 - Almost all parents (92%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*. Seven in ten parents (70%) give the District an A grade, which is directionally more than in 2006 (63%).
 - Parents of Elementary school students continue to be *significantly* more likely to give an A grade than parents of Middle School students (76% vs. 57%).
 - Almost nine in ten parents (84%) continue to give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this district*. Significantly more parents are giving the District an A grade than in 2006 (49% vs. 34%).
 - Parents of Elementary school students are more likely than parents of Middle School students to give an A or B grade (87% vs. 72%).

Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 vs. Winter 2010

| Fall 2006 (October, November, December) | | | | | Winter 2010 (January, February, 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% | 84% | 87% | 72%**** | 77% |
| A | 34 | 41** | 34** | 19 | 49* | 53 | 44 | 35**** |
| B | 47 | 49 | 49 | 53 | 35 | 34 | 28 | 42*** |
| C | 14 | 6** | 14 | 22 | 14 | 10 | 20**** | 19 |
| D or F | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 3 |
| <i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i> | | | | | | | | |
| A or B | 92% | 97% | 93% | 87% | 92% | 96% | 90% | 89% |
| A | 63 | 77** | 69** | 47 | 70 | 76 | 57**** | 66 |
| B | 29 | 20** | 24** | 40 | 22 | 20 | 33**** | 23 |
| C | 7 | 3** | 7 | 11 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 9 |
| D or F | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 |

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 Given for Grade Given to Administration for Its Performance Overall

- Respondents are asked about their reasons for the grade they give the Administration for its overall performance.
- Residents' perceptions of the Administration have improved since this study began in 2003.
 - Approximately half (48%) mention a positive reason for the grade they gave, which is significantly more than in Fall of 2003 (27%).
 - Half (50%) mention that something needs improvement which is significantly less than in Fall 2003 (72%).
- The reasons given continue to be diverse with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small number of respondents. This is probably a reflection of the diverse needs of parents and residents in this community.

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

- The levels of positive comments remained stable during the past quarter and have increased since 2003. The most frequently given positive comments are:
 - Satisfied with school experience (16%) vs. 4% in 2003.
 - Doing a good job (17%) vs. 8% in 2003.
 - Good parental involvement/support/communications (10%) vs. 2% in 2003.
 - Positive comments about the Administration (7%) vs. 2% in 2003.
 - Positive teacher comments (6%) vs. 2% in 2003.
- The most frequently given negative reasons for the grade given to the Administration are mentioned by only small numbers of residents.
 - *Increase funding/work with State for funding/better use of funds* (13%) which is mentioned significantly more frequently than last quarter (7%) or in 2003 (4%). This may be a reflection of greater awareness of the State's potential to improve funding to help the District.
 - *Room for improvement* (11%), which significantly more residents mention than in 2003 (6%). Directionally more (11%) residents gave this reason last quarter.
 - *Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information* (4%) which is mentioned by significantly fewer residents than the previous quarter (9%). Historically, this has been one of the most frequently given reasons.
 - *Better Administration/leadership/community relations needed* (9%), which is mentioned by directionally fewer residents than in 2003 (12%).

Suggestions for District

- Respondents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. Historically, most make at least one suggestion.
 - Almost three in four residents (73%) made a suggestion this Winter. This is directionally fewer than in Fall 2003 (83%).
- The suggestions continue to be diverse.
- With the current budget problems, the most frequent suggestion is *increase funding/work with State for funding/better use of funds* (21%) which is mentioned *significantly* more than in the Fall (12%) or in 2003 (4%). This may be a reflection of increased awareness that the State has the capability and responsibility to help the District.
- The next most frequent suggestion is to improve communication which is mentioned by 14% of residents. This is significantly fewer than in the Fall (25%) and may reflect an increase in communications during the current budget crisis and possible math curriculum changes .

Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Specific suggestions for improvements in communication include:
 - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (8%), which is suggested by significantly fewer residents than the previous quarter (16%).
 - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (7%), which is suggested by directionally fewer residents than the previous quarter (11%)
- Other suggestions include...
 - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (8%)
 - Teachers need to be better supported/pay/more respect (8%)
 - Better Administration/leadership/community relations/decision making (6%)
- All other suggestions were given by less than 5% of respondents.

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

- Issaquah’s residents are comfortable with the taxes they pay for local education. Approximately three in four residents (76%) feel that the amount of taxes 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 | 15% | |
| About right | 67% | } 76% |
| Too low | 9% | |
| Don't know | 9 % | |

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 their Friends and Family, the District Newsletter, the Issaquah Press and the Internet 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. 16%) and the Issaquah Press (10% vs. 19%).

Primary source of Information about Issaquah Schools

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Friends and Family | 24% |
| District Newsletter | 20 |
| Issaquah Press and its affiliates | 19 |
| The Internet | 16 |
| Seattle Times | 6 |
| School Employees | 5 |
| Work there/personal experience | 3 |
| The School | 1 |
| Television | 1 |
| Other | 1 |
| 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 gains made in satisfaction levels since 2003 have been maintained.
- The levels of high grades have increased significantly for all performance since 2003.
- During the past quarter, grades for the District's performance remained stable with only small, directional changes with two exceptions.
 - The level of high grades (A or B) given for *excellent teachers* rose significantly during the past quarter to 92% (from 82% in the Fall).
 - Ratings for *financially well run* have decreased directionally for two quarters in a row, from 83% in the Summer, to 76% in the Fall and 70% in the Winter. These declines may be due to some dissatisfactions with budget cuts that started in the Fall.

Conclusions and Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to the new attributes that were added to this study in Fall 2006, the District continues to receive high grades from the vast majority of parents. Furthermore, the number giving an A grade is on the rise.
 - Virtually all parents (92%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*.
 - Seven in ten (70%) parents give the District an A grade which is *directionally* more than in Fall 2006 (63%).
 - Almost nine in ten parents (84%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*.
 - Almost half (49%) give an A grade which is *significantly* more than in 2006 (34%).
 - Approximately four out of five residents (85%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest*.
 - Almost half (49%) give an A grade, which is *directionally* more than in 2006 (40%).

Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Attitudes toward the District have continued to improve, which is reflected in the reasons residents provide for the grade they give to the District for its overall performance.
 - Approximately half (48%) mention a positive reason for the grade they give the Administration, which is significantly more than when this study began in Fall 2003 (27%).
 - Approximately half (50%) mention that the District needs to improve in some area when they explain why they gave the District the overall grade that they did. But, this is significantly fewer people than in Fall 2003 (72%).
 - The reasons continue to be diverse with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small minority of residents. One reason that is more frequently mentioned is *increase funding/work with State for funding/better use of funds* which 13% mention this quarter (vs. 7% last quarter and 4% in 2003).
- Respondents are also asked to suggest improvements that the District should make, and historically most residents will suggest at least one improvement. In this involved community, three in four residents (73%) made a suggestion this Fall, which is directionally fewer than in Fall 2003 when 83% made a suggestion.
 - The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion is to *increase funding/work with State for funding/better use of funds* which is suggested by 21% of residents (vs. 12% in the Fall and 4% in 2003).
 - The next most frequently suggested improvement is to improve communication which is mentioned by 14% of residents and historically has been frequently mentioned.

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 in four (76%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (67%) or too low (9%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be Family and Friends (24%), the District Newsletter (20%) the Issaquah Press (19%) and the Internet (16%).
 - Usage of the District Newsletter as a primary source of information grew directionally during the past quarter (from 15% last quarter to 20%).
- This quarter four in ten respondents (43%) indicated that they are willing to give further input. If additional in-depth learning is desired on any of these findings, it is possible to contact these respondents...
 - with additional questions on such things as the underlying reasons for a grade or suggested improvements
 - regarding new issues that the District would like their input on, such as curriculum changes under consideration
 - to invite them to join an advisory group

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 Bank of America, US West, Bristol Meyers, Seagrams, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, Porter Novelli Public Relations and various consulting companies.