

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

**Fall 2003 through Winter 2012**

**Prepared by:**

**Dorothy Geraghty  
Sammamish, WA 98074**

# Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over eight years (thirty-four 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 Winter about four in ten (39%) 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:

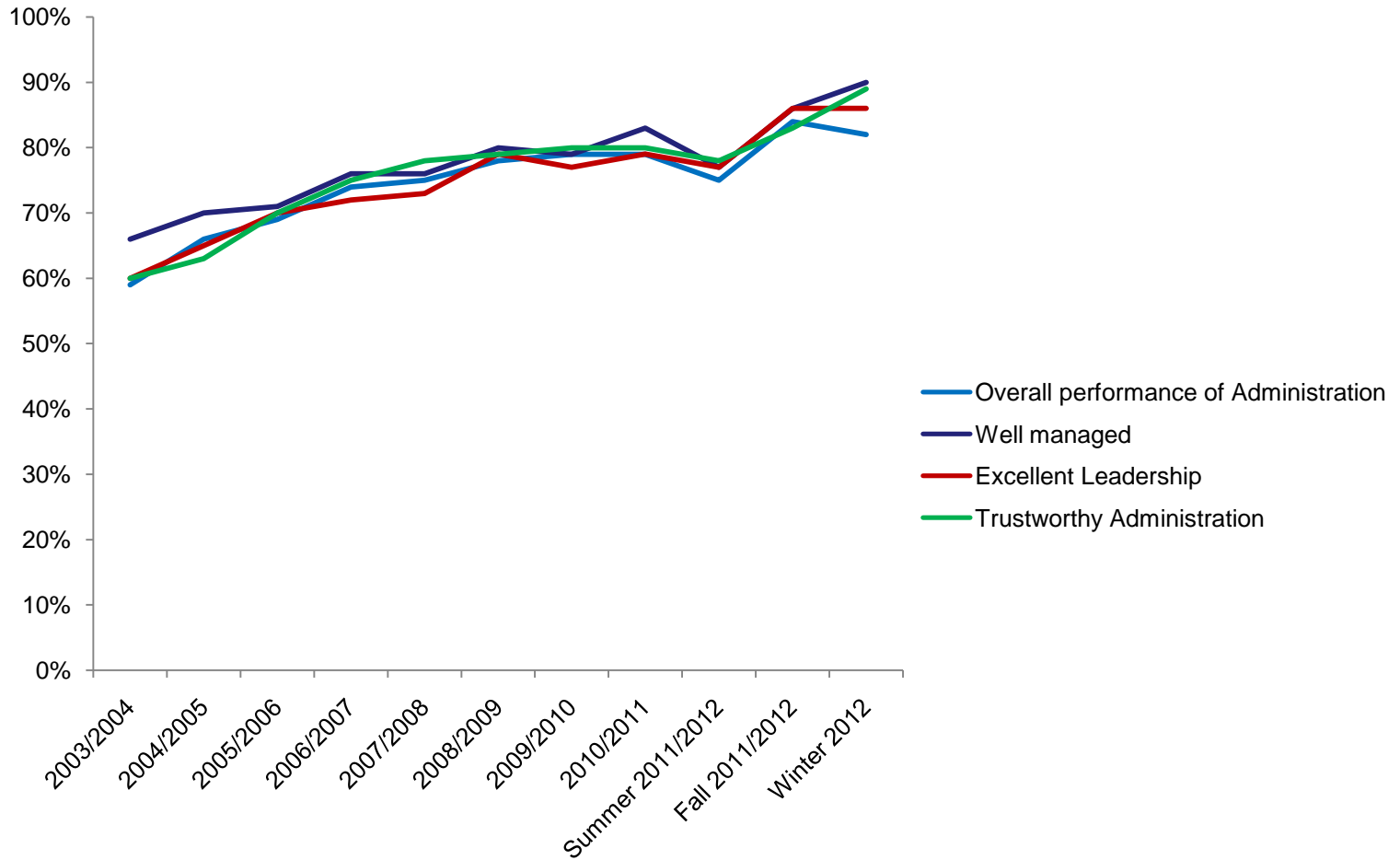
- The responses given in the current wave (Winter 2012) are compared to previous responses given.
  - When there are **statistically significant** differences in responses from one wave of interviews to another at the 90% confidence level it is noted.
  - When there are **directional** differences in 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. Winter 2012

- As the following charts detail, perceptions have improved since this study began in 2003. The level of A/B grades remained stable during the current quarter and did not change significantly vs. the previous (Fall) quarter.
- The vast majority of residents give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 73% to 92%.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. The vast majority of residents (84%) now give the District an A or B grade for its performance in this area, which is significantly more than in the 2006/2007 school year (77%).

## Results By School Year: Administration % Giving an A or B Grade



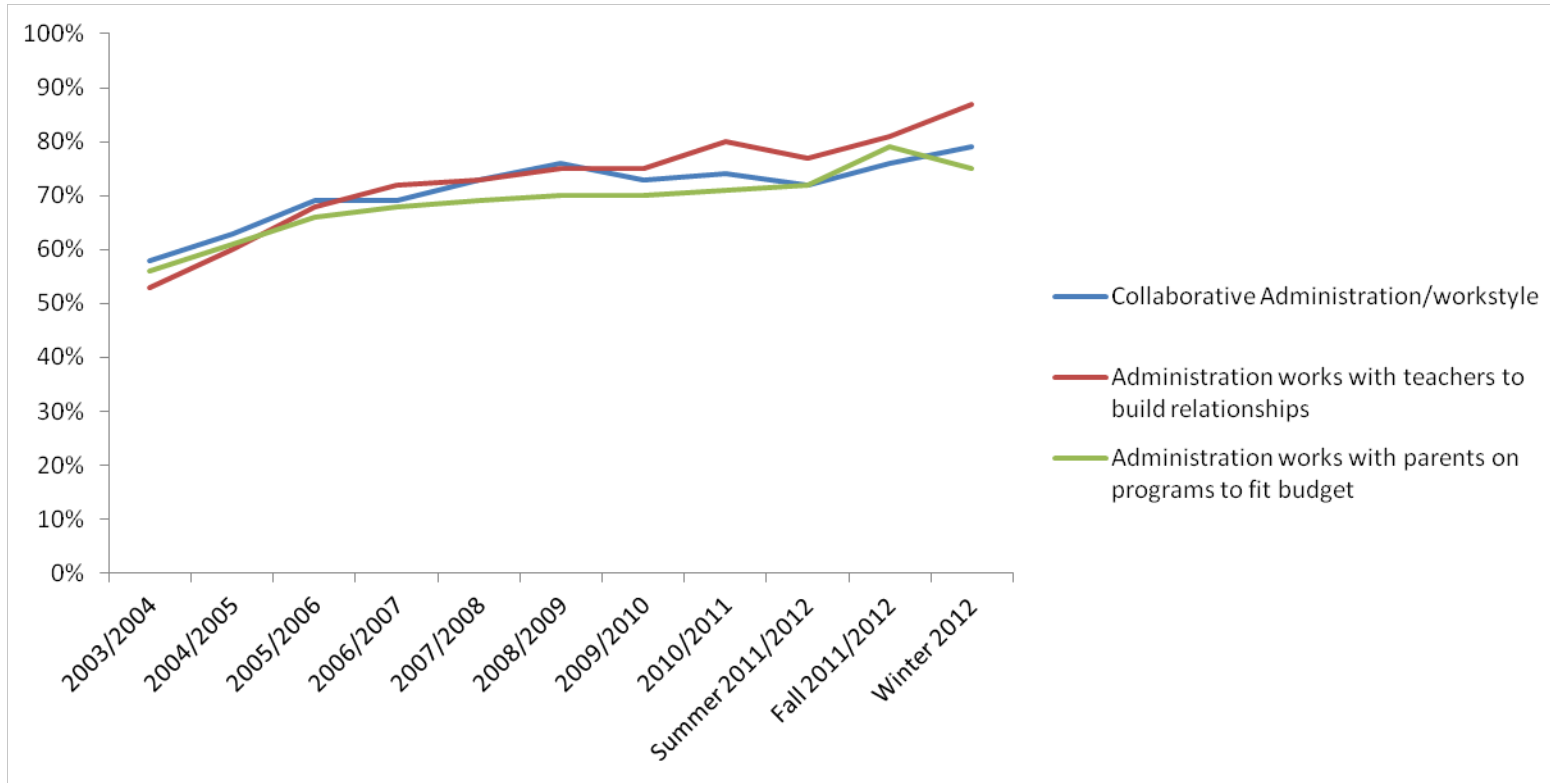
Note:

The 2011-2012 School year thus far includes the Summer Quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2012 and Winter Quarter (January, February, March 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

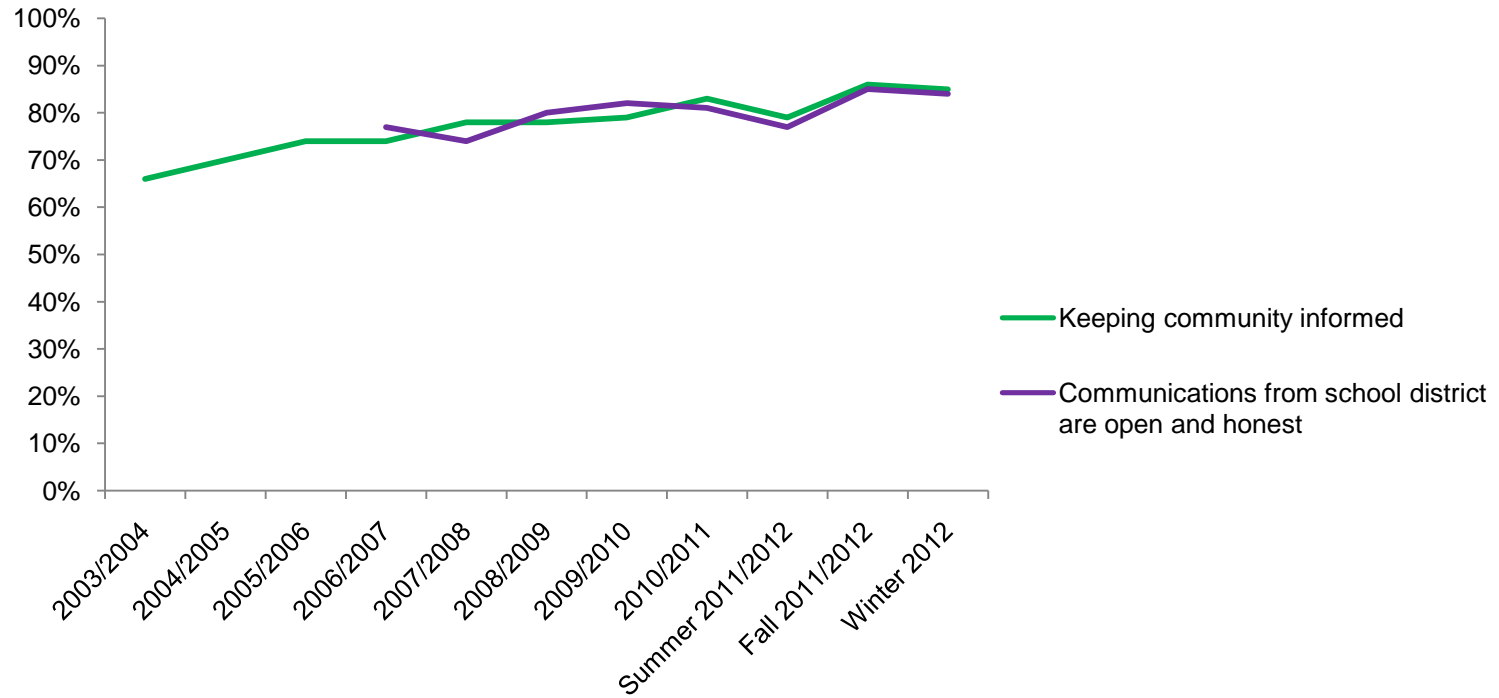


Note:

The 2011/2012 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September 2011) Fall Quarter (October/November/December) 2011 and Winter quarter (January, February, March 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



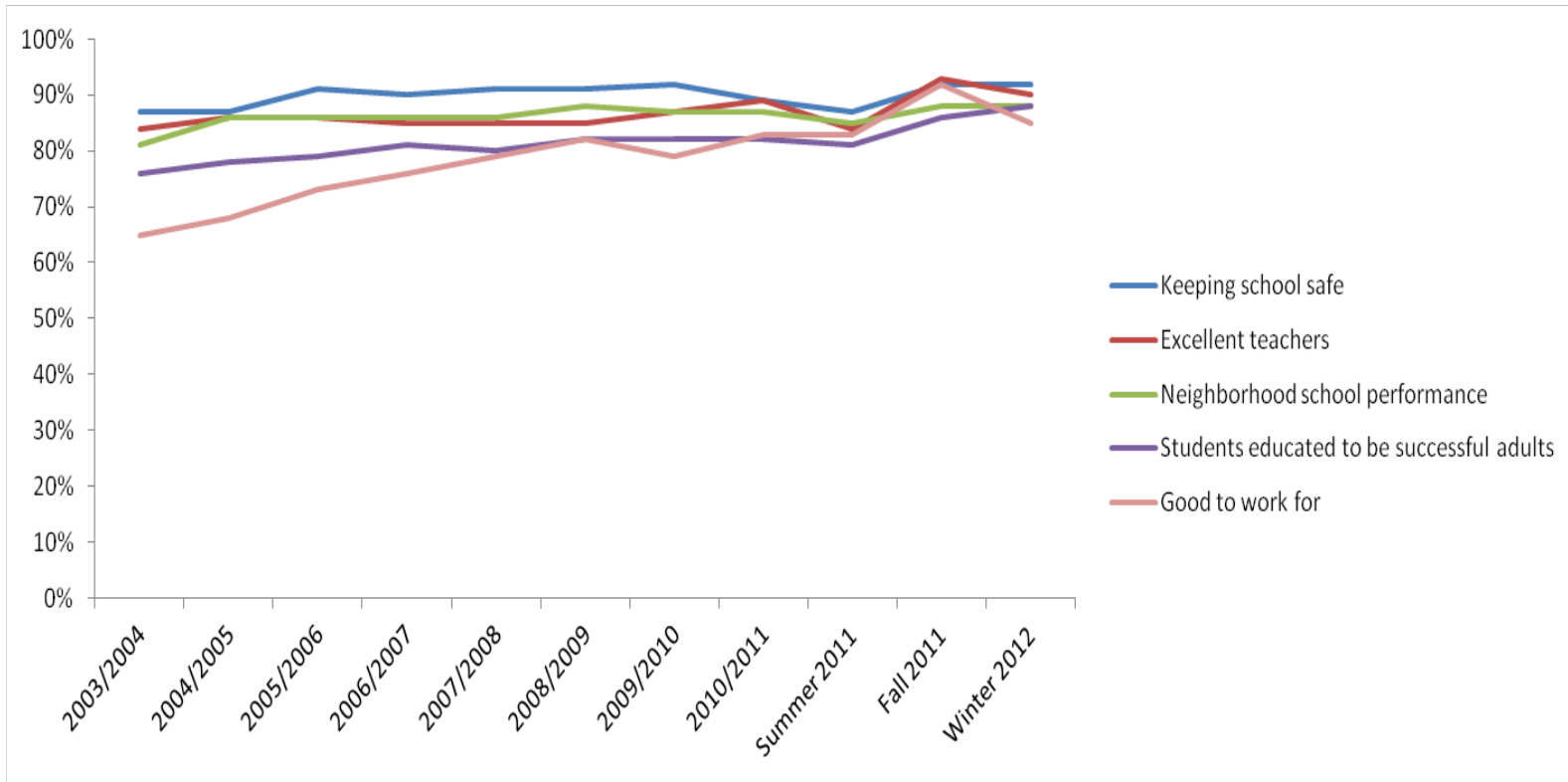
Note:

The 2011/2012 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September 2011) , Fall quarter (October/November/December) 2011 and Winter quarter (January, February, March 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

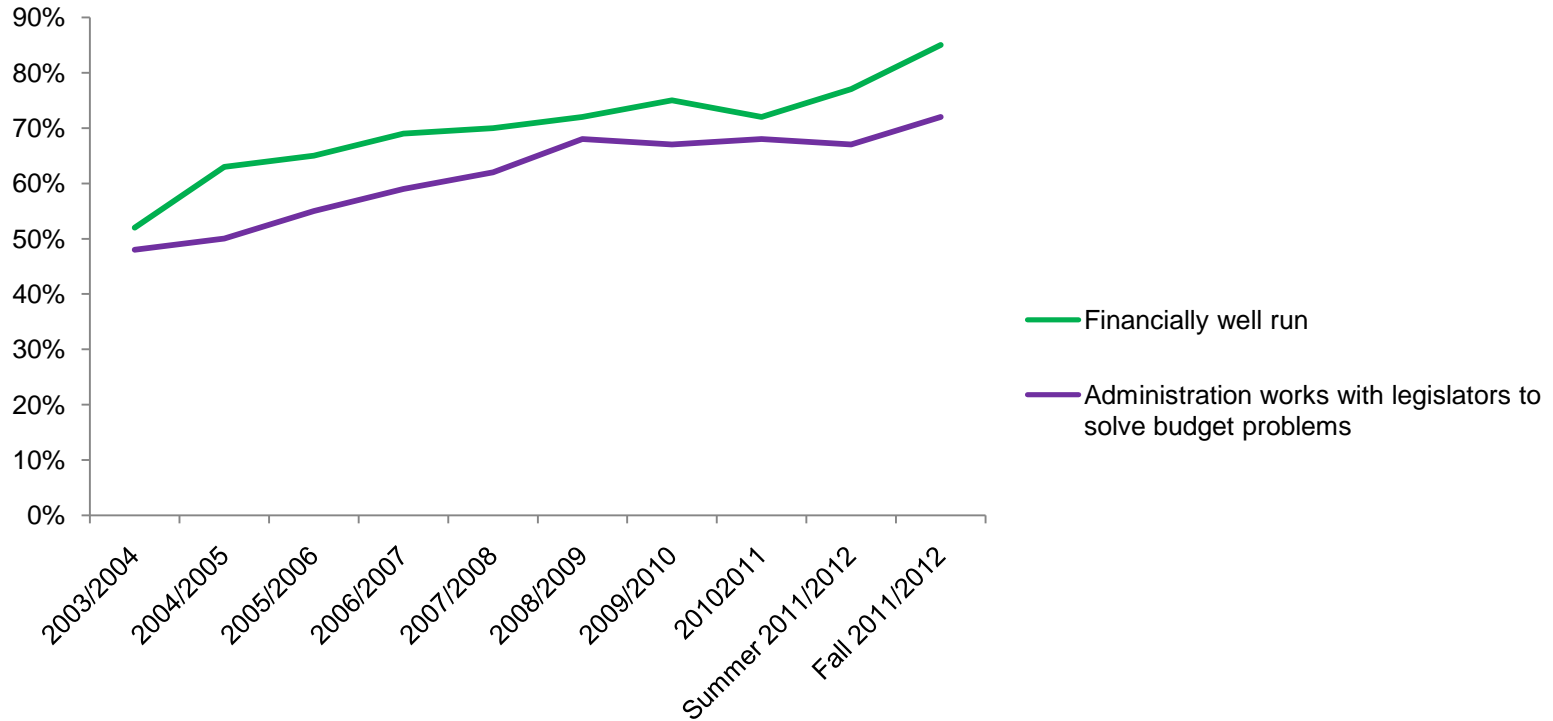


Note:

The 2011/12 school year thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September 2011), Fall quarter (October/November/December 2011), and Winter quarter (January, February, March 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 thus far includes the Summer quarter (July/August/September) , Fall quarter (October/November/December) and Winter quarter (January/February/March 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

- The vast majority of residents giving the District high grades continues to be high— with 73% to 92% giving an A or B rating across performance areas.
- During the Winter quarter grades were stable vs. the previous (Fall) quarter. There were no significant changes in high (A/B) grades.

# Summary of Results of Community Polling Study Fall 2011 Vs. Winter 2012

	Fall 2011 (Oct., Nov., Dec.)					Winter 2012 (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%	61	31	6	2	92%	57	35	6	2
Excellent teachers	93%	41	52	7	0	90%	45	45	8	3
Well managed	86%	39	47	13	1	90%	34	56	9	2
Trustworthy Administration	83%	46	37	15	2	89%	37	52*	7*	4
Neighborhood school performance	87%	49	39	12	1	88%	41	48	9	3
Students educated to be successful adults	86%	46	40	9	5	88%	40	49	9	3
Administration working with teachers to build relationships	81%	36	45	16	3	87%	30	56*	9	4
Excellent leadership	86%	37	49	9	5	86%	31	55	9	5
Keeps community informed	86%	58	28	9	5	85%	41*	44*	10	4
Good to work for	92%	43	49	7	1	85%	37	47	12	3
Communications from school district are open and honest	85%	53	32	12	3	84%	45	40	12	4
<b>Overall performance of Administration</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>4</b>
Financially well run	85%	37	48	9	6	80%	33	47	13	6
Collaborative Administration	76%	28	48	21	3	79%	28	51	16	5
Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget	79%	32	48	16	4	75%	25	49	20	6
Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems	72%	30	42	23	4	73%	24	49	19	8

Note:

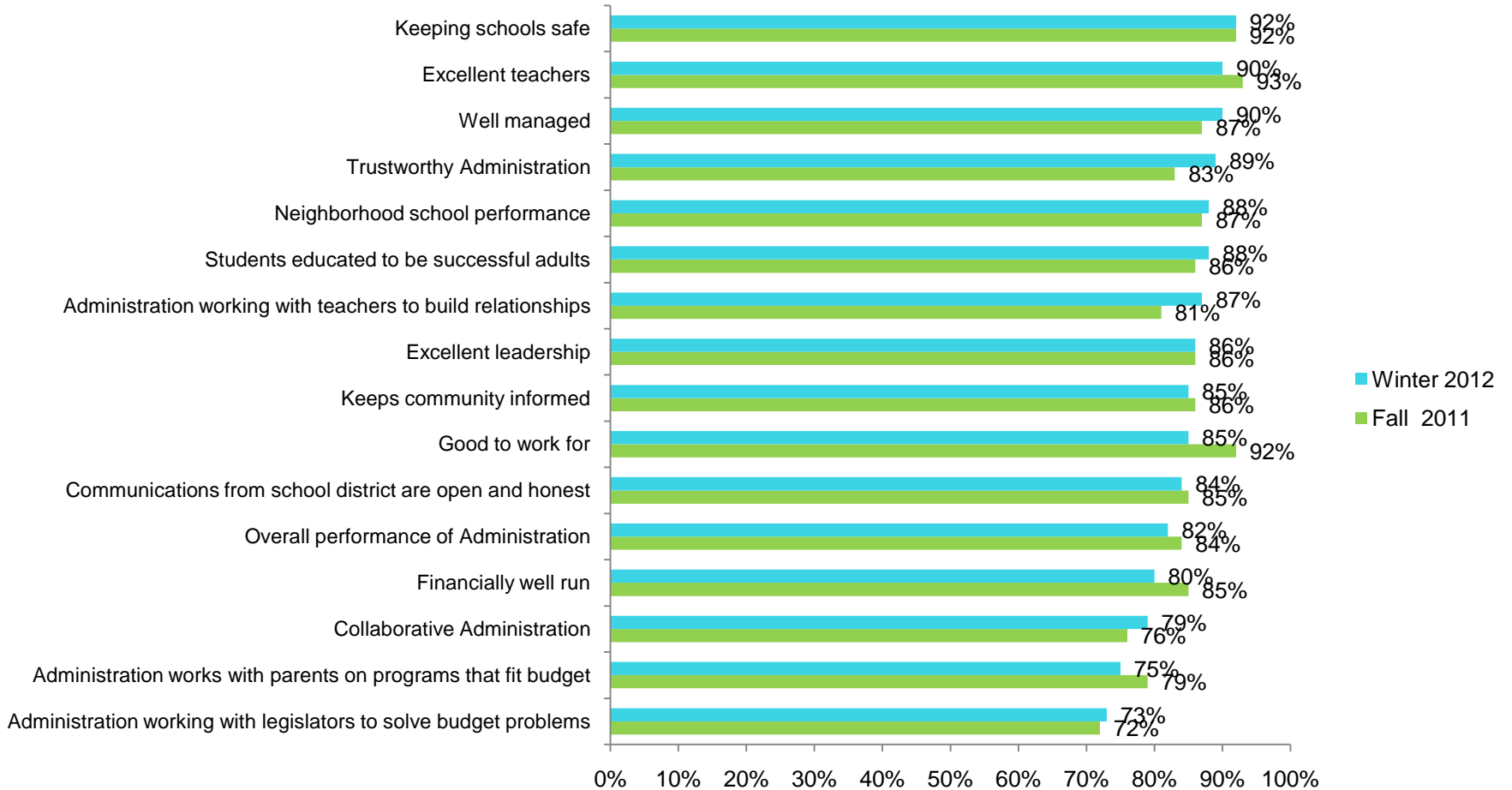
\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2011 at the 90% confidence level.

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— Fall 2011 Vs. Winter 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 (94%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*. Two thirds of parents (66%) give the District an A grade.
    - Across school levels there are no significant differences in the levels of parents giving A or B grades..
  - Over four out of five (84%) parents give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*. One half of parents (52%) 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.



## Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 vs. Winter 2012

Fall 2006 (October, November, December)					Winter 2012 (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%	84%	87%	85%
A	34	41**	34**	19	52*	55	53*	52*
B	47	49	49	53	32*	29*	34	33*
C	14	6**	14	22	11	12	8	9
D or F	6	4	4	6	5	4	5	6
<i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>								
A or B	92%	97%	93%	87%	94%	95%	95%	87%
A	63	77**	69**	47	66	72	70	62
B	29	20**	24**	40	28	23	25	25
C	7	3**	7	11	6	4	5	11
D or F	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	2

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

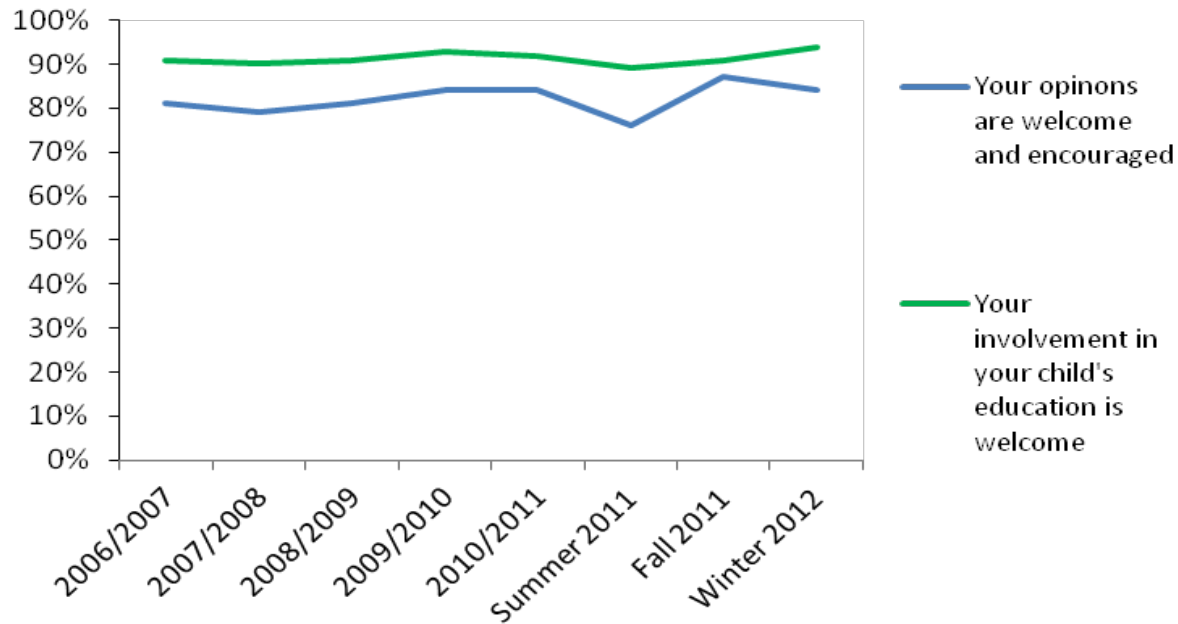
\*\* = Significant difference vs. parents of High School students.

\*\*\* = 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 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...?

# 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. Overall, perceptions have been stable vs. the previous quarter with small directional changes.
  - Approximately four in ten (39%) mention that something needs improvement, which is significantly fewer than in the 2003/04 school year (64%) and directionally fewer than the previous (Fall) quarter (42%).
  - At the same time, approximately four in ten (39%) mention a positive reason for the grade they gave, which is significantly more than in the 2003/2004 school year (26%), and but directionally fewer than in the Fall (48%).
- 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 (21%)
  - Satisfied/happy with school experience (7%)
  - Good parental involvement/support (6%)

All other positive reasons were mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.

# 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 (67%), which is the same as in the previous (Fall) quarter (67%).
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. The most frequently given suggestion continues to be to improve communications. One in four residents (25%) make this type of suggestion, which is directionally more than in the Fall (20%).
- Specific communication suggestions include:
  - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (19%).
  - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (8%).

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

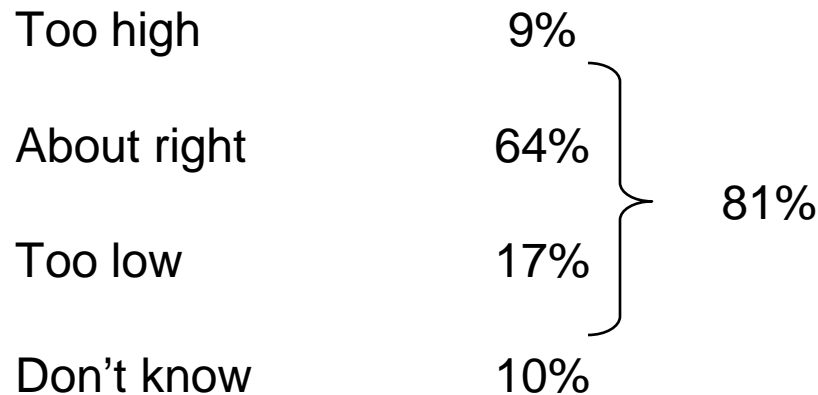
- Negative reasons for the grade given to the Administration continue to be varied with no specific reason mentioned by more than a small number of residents. The most frequently given reasons are...
  - Room for improvement (15%)
  - Communications overall (6%), which was mentioned by significantly more residents in the 2003/2004 school year (12%) but by the same level of residents the previous (Fall) quarter (7%).
- Very few (less than 5%) mention any specific negative reason.

## Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Other suggestions include...
  - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (10%), which was also mentioned by comparable levels during recent years.
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (8%) .
- All other suggestions were made by less than 5% of respondents.

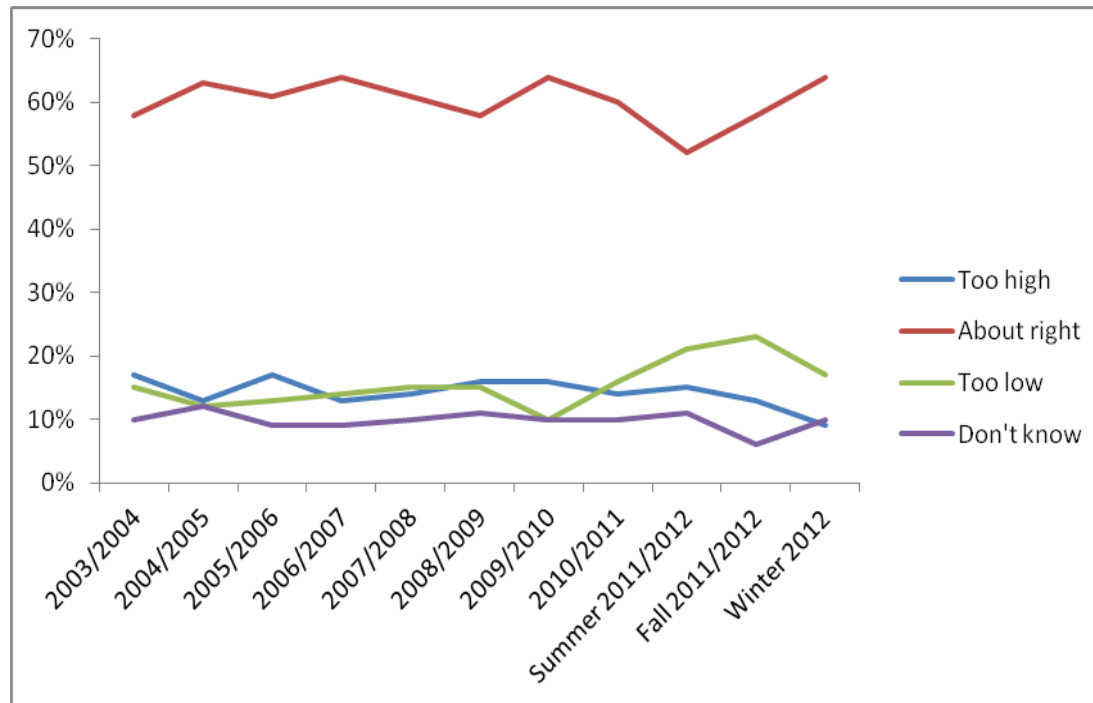
# How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Approximately four out of five residents (81%) feel that the amount of taxes that they pay for local public education is about right or too low. Historically the vast majority have felt this way.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...



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 – Winter 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

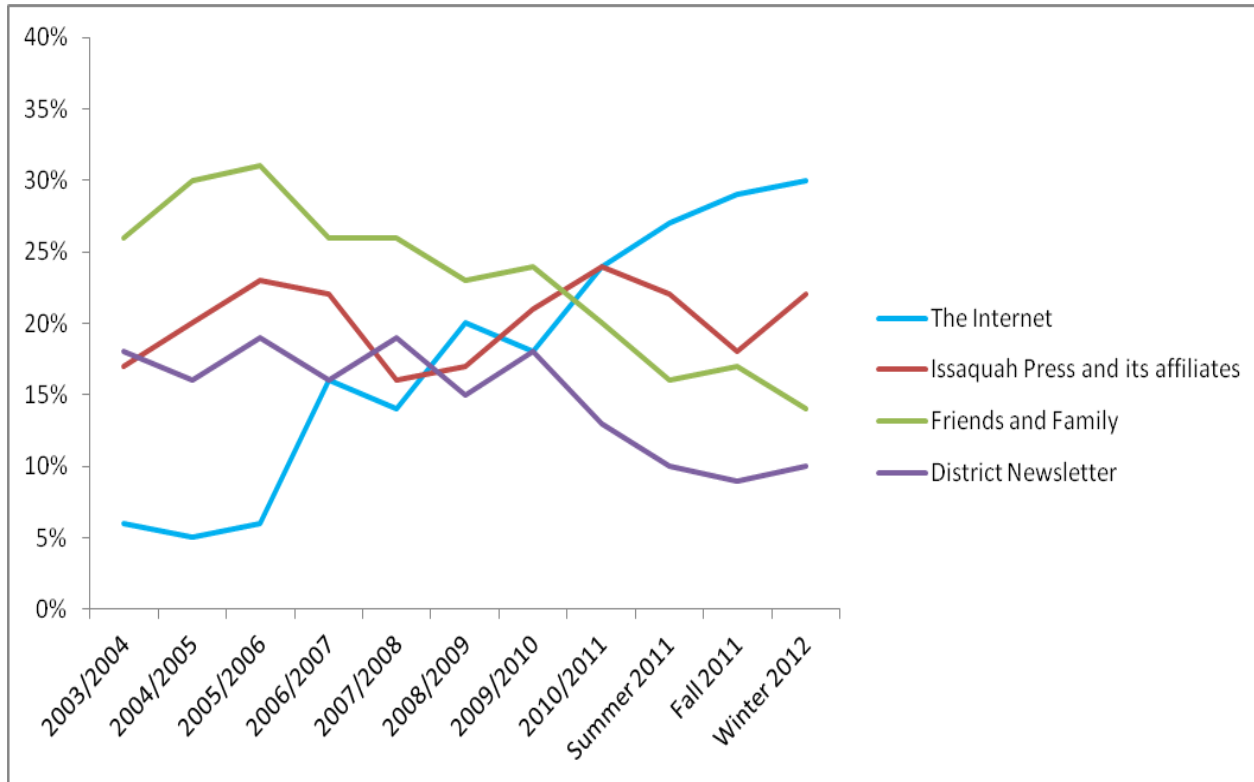
- The Internet, the Issaquah Press/its affiliates, Friends and Family, and the District Newsletter continue to be the primary source of information about Issaquah schools. Three out of four (76%) of residents mention one of these sources as their primary source.
- As the chart that follows shows, since this study began in Fall 2003, significantly more residents are using the Internet as their primary source of information (4% vs. 30%).
- 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	30%
Issaquah Press and its affiliates	22
Friends and Family	14
District Newsletter	10
Seattle Times	8
The School	2
Work there/personal experience	6
School Employees	2
Television	1
Other	4
Don't Know	1

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 – Winter 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. During the Winter quarter, the level of A/B grades was relatively stable with no significant changes.
- 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.
  - Over four out of five residents (84%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest* , which is comparable to the previous (Fall) quarter (85%).
  - Nine in ten parents (94%) 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 Fall (91%).
    - Two out of three (66%) continue to give the District an A grade.
  - Over four out of five parents (84%) give Issaquah an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District* , which is comparable to the Fall (87%).

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance...
  - Approximately four in ten (39%) mention a positive reason, which is **significantly** more than in the 2003/2004 school year (26%) but directionally fewer than in the Fall (48%).
  - Also, approximately four in ten (39%) mention something that needs improvement, which is **significantly** fewer than in 2003/2004 (64%) and directionally fewer than in the Fall (42%).
  - 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 Winter, approximately two in three residents (67%) of residents made a suggestion, which is comparable to the Fall (67%).
- The most frequently given suggestions are:
  - Improve in the area of communications (25%). Specific requests include:
    - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (19%)
    - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (8%)
  - Increase funding/school support/work with State for funding (10%)
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-students relations (8%)

# 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 four out of five (81%) feel that the taxes they are paying for local education are about right (64%) or too low (17%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District continue to be the Internet (30%), the Issaquah Press (22%), Friends and Family (14%), and the District Newsletter (10%). Approximately three out of four (76%) residents mention one of these sources as their primary source of information about the District.
- This Winter approximately four in ten respondents (39%) 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

## **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, Seagram's, Wells, Rich Green Advertising, Porter Novelli Public Relations and various consulting companies.