

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

**Fall 2003 through Winter 2014**

**Prepared by:**

**Dorothy Geraghty  
Sammamish, WA 98074**

# Background

- This study was launched in October 2003. The results encompass over ten years (forty-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 many respondents have answered yes. We have their names, phone numbers, and when available, e-mail addresses. This Winter almost one in three (27%) residents and almost half of parents (45%) 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

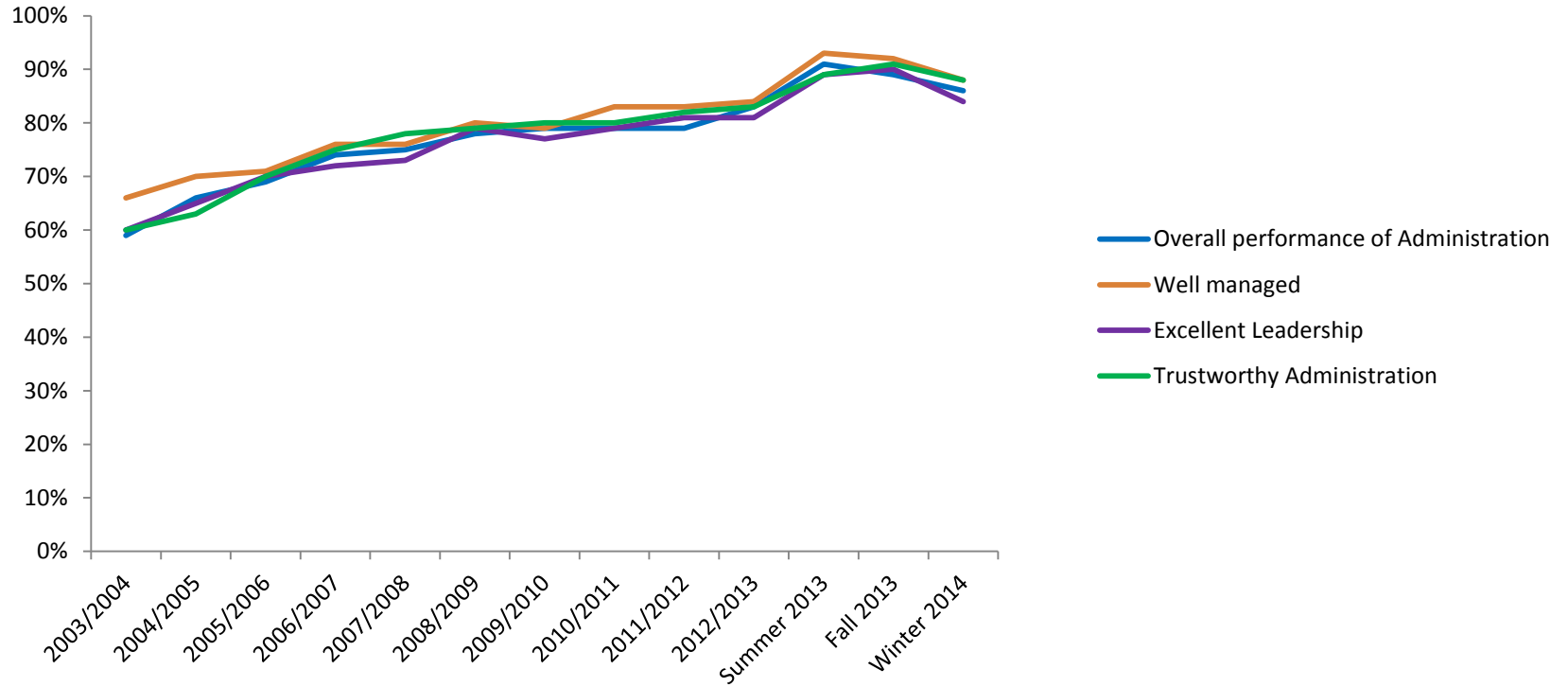
Please note that:

- The responses given in the current wave (Winter 2014) 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 – Winter 2014

- As the following charts detail, improved perceptions have overall been maintained since this study began in 2003.
- This Winter, there were a number of declines in the levels of high (A/B) grades which were primarily directional.
- In the past the levels of high grades have tended to be higher at the beginning of the school year than months later, possibly because of disappointing school grades, school weather closures and various other disappointments during the school year .
- Almost all residents now give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 79% to 98%.
- In 2006, the attribute *communications from the school district are open and honest* was added to this survey. Almost nine in ten residents (86%) 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



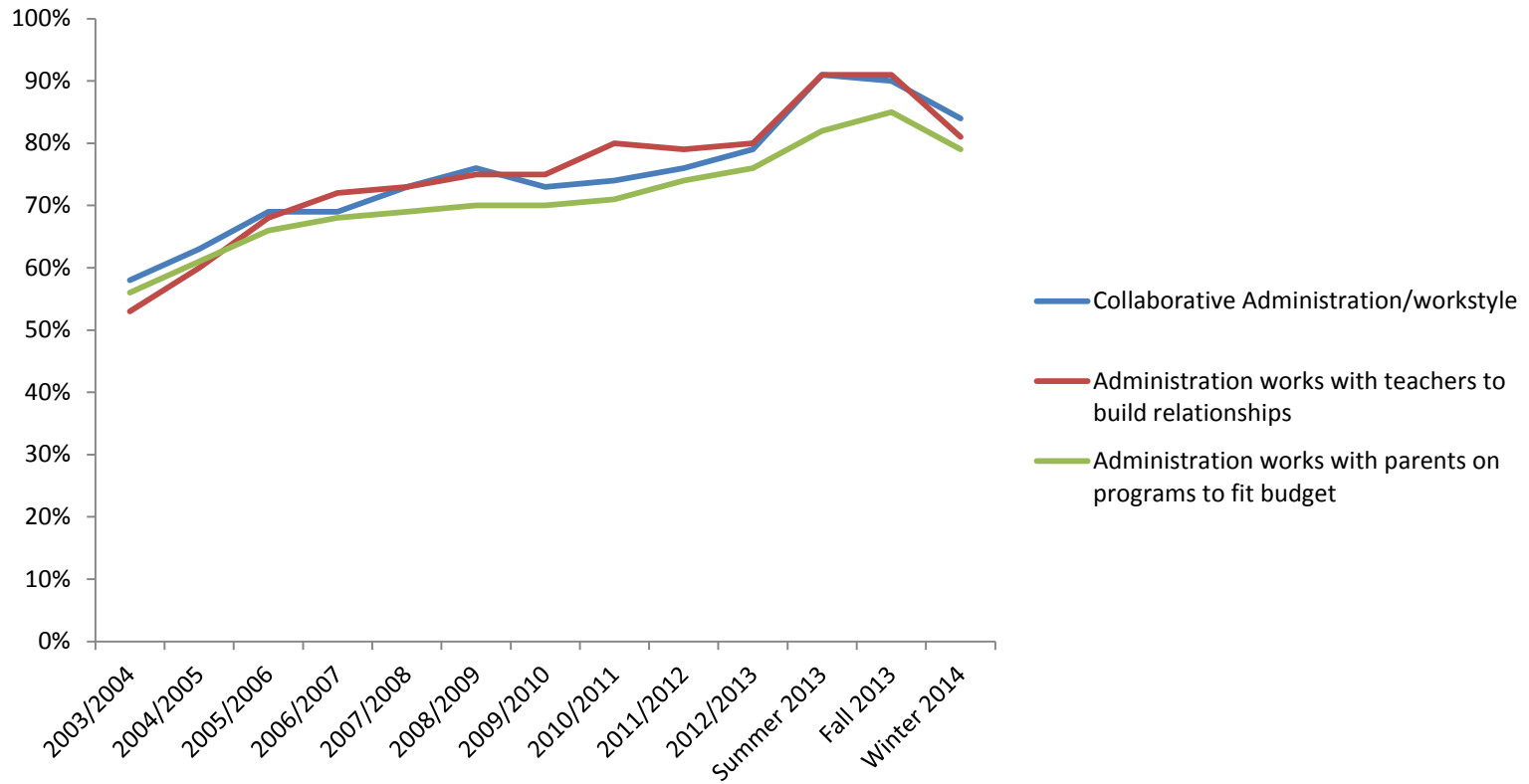
**Note:**

The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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

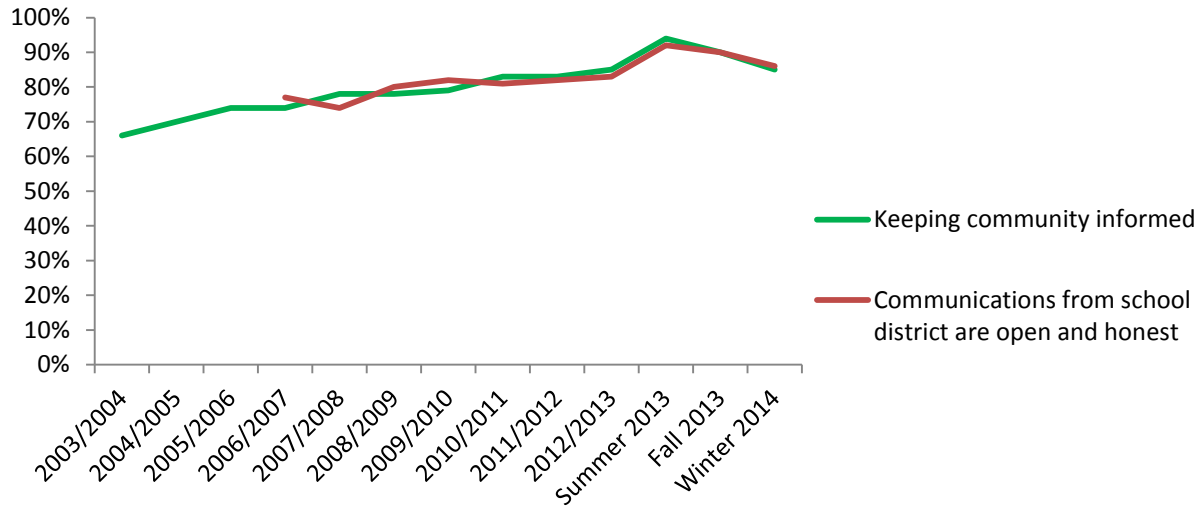


**Note:**

The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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: Communications % Giving an A or B Grade

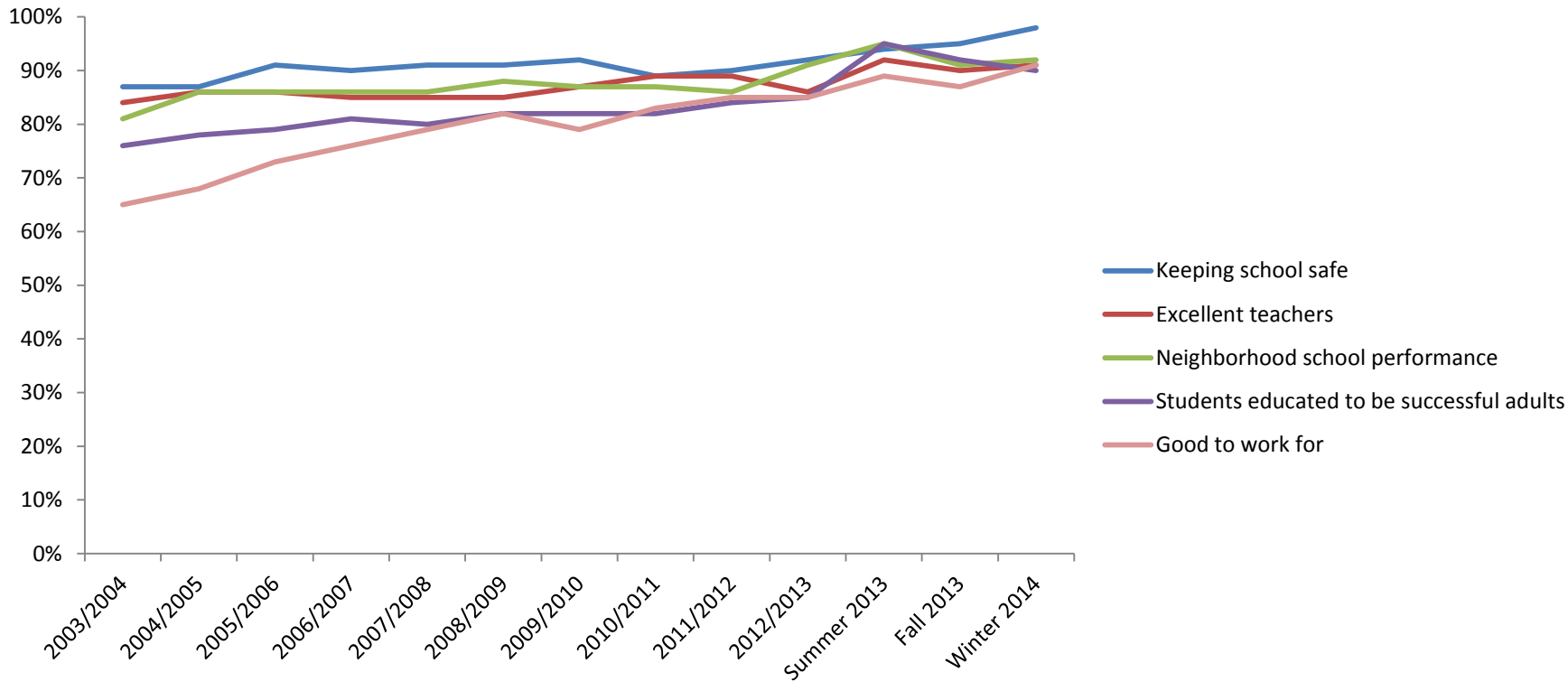


**Note:**

The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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

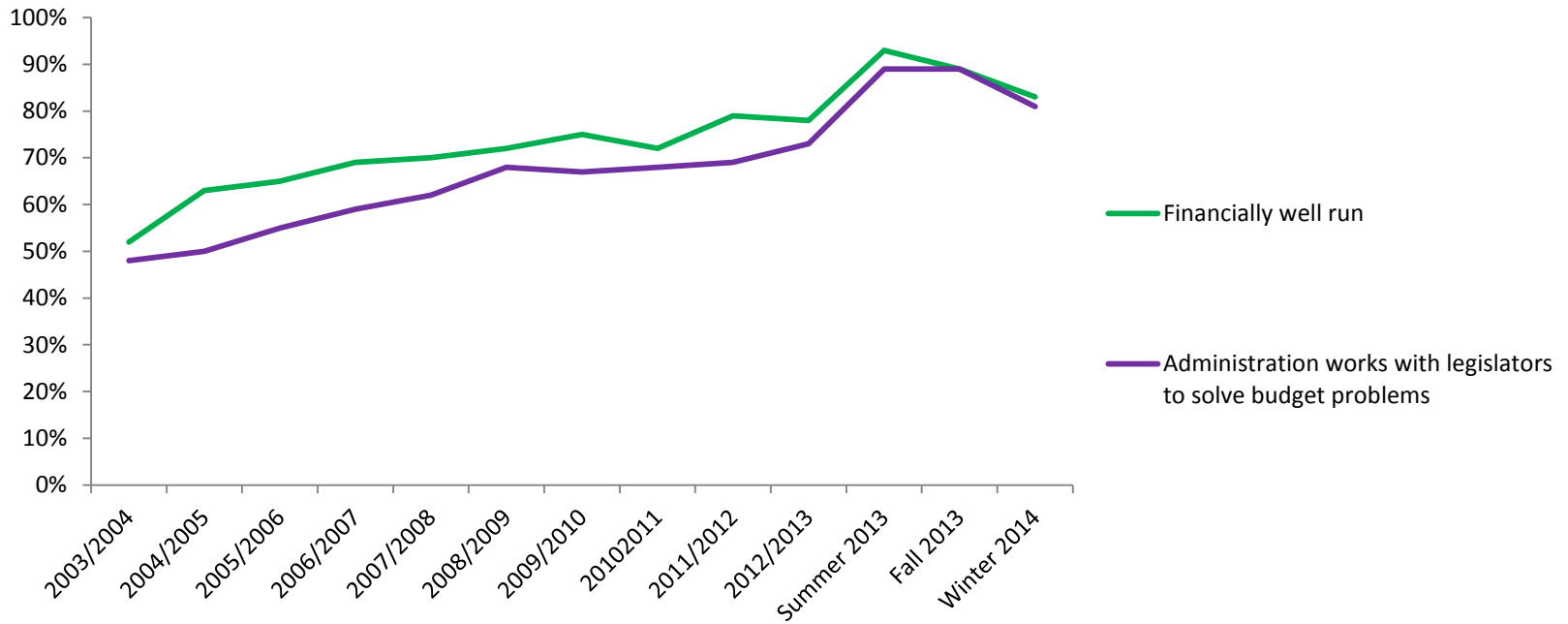


**Note:**

The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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: Finance % Giving an A or B Grade



Note:

The 2013/2014 school year began with Summer 2013.

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

- As the following charts show, the levels of A/B grades have had a number of directional declines since the Fall.
- But, there were significant declines in high (A/B) grades for two attributes since the Fall.
  - The level of A/B grades for *Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems* declined from 89% in the Fall to 81% in the Winter.
  - The level of A/B grades also declined for *Administration works with teachers to build relationships* (from 91% to 81%).

# Summary of Results of Community Polling Study

## Fall 2013 Vs. Winter 2014

|  | Fall 2013 (October/November/December) |           |           |          |          | Winter 2014 (January/February/March) |            |           |           |          |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|--------------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
|  | A or B                                | A         | B         | C        | D or F   | A or B                               | A          | B         | C         | D or F   |
| Keeping schools safe   | 95%                                   | 42        | 53        | 3        | 2        | 98%                                  | 61*        | 36*       | 2         | 0        |
| Neighborhood school performance                                  | 91%                                   | 36        | 55        | 7        | 1        | 92%                                  | 42         | 50        | 6         | 1        |
| Excellent teachers   | 90%                                   | 34        | 56        | 7        | 3        | 91%                                  | 42         | 49        | 7         | 2        |
| Good to work for   | 87%                                   | 28        | 58        | 12       | 1        | 91%                                  | 37         | 54        | 6         | 4        |
| Students educated to be successful adults                        | 92%                                   | 33        | 59        | 8        | 0        | 90%                                  | 34         | 56        | 9         | 2        |
| Well managed   | 92%                                   | 33        | 59        | 8        | 0        | 88%                                  | 40         | 48*       | 10        | 2        |
| Trustworthy Administration                                       | 91%                                   | 33        | 58        | 4        | 5        | 88%                                  | 35         | 53        | 6         | 6        |
| Communications from school district are open and honest          | 90%                                   | 41        | 48        | 9        | 1        | 86%                                  | 45         | 41        | 12        | 2        |
| <b>Overall performance of Administration</b>                     | <b>89%</b>                            | <b>44</b> | <b>45</b> | <b>8</b> | <b>3</b> | <b>86%</b>                           | <b>31*</b> | <b>55</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>5</b> |
| Keeps community informed   | 90%                                   | 42        | 48        | 9        | 1        | 85%                                  | 55*        | 31*       | 11        | 4        |
| Collaborative Administration                                     | 90%                                   | 29        | 60        | 8        | 2        | 84%                                  | 32         | 52        | 12        | 4        |
| Excellent leadership   | 90%                                   | 31        | 59        | 10       | 0        | 84%                                  | 37         | 47*       | 14        | 2        |
| Financially well run   | 89%                                   | 31        | 58        | 8        | 2        | 83%                                  | 43*        | 40*       | 14        | 3        |
| Administration working with teachers to build relationships      | 91%                                   | 23        | 68        | 7        | 2        | 81%*                                 | 28         | 53*       | 15*       | 4        |
| Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems | 89%                                   | 28        | 61        | 8        | 3        | 81%*                                 | 25         | 56        | 11        | 9*       |
| Administration works with parents on programs that fit budget    | 85%                                   | 24        | 61        | 13       | 2        | 79%                                  | 30         | 48*       | 13        | 8*       |

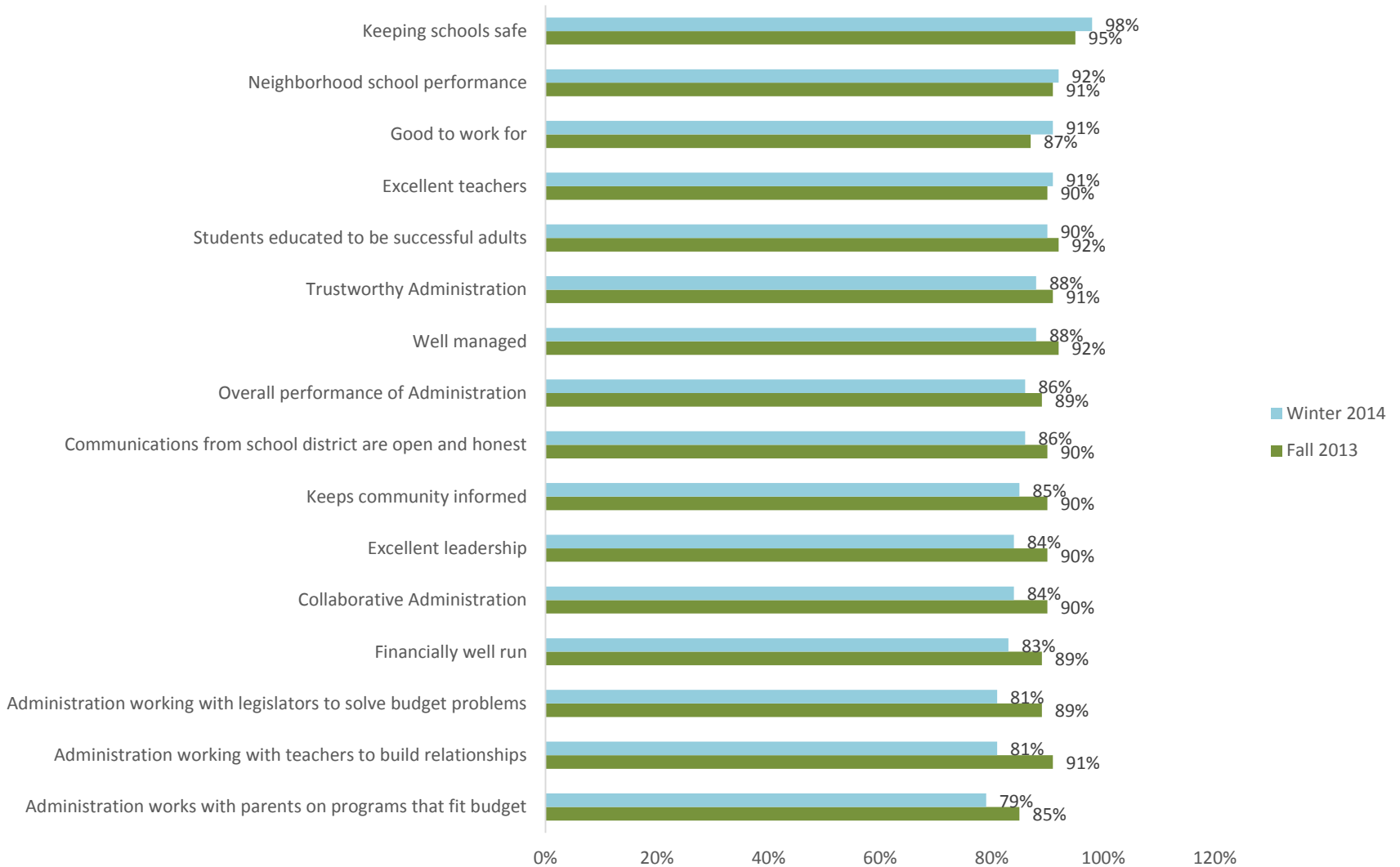
Note:

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2013 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 2013 Vs. Winter 2014 % 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 continue to give the District a high grade for *encouraging their opinions and welcoming their involvement*
  - Nine out of ten parents (92%) give the District an A or B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome*, which is comparable to the Fall (95%).
    - But, significantly more parents overall gave the District an A grade this Winter than in the Fall (72% vs. 44%).
  - Eight in ten in ten parents (80%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District*, which is comparable to the Fall (84%).
    - Parents of Elementary school students (83%) and parents of Middle School students (80%) are significantly more likely to give a high grade than parents of High School students (70%).



## Grades Given by Parents Regarding Involvement in Their Child's Education Fall 2006 Vs. Recent Waves (Fall 2013 and Winter 2014)

| Fall 2006 (October, November, December)                          |  |                                       |                                   |                                 | Fall 2013 (October, November, December)            |                                       |                                   |                                 | Winter 2014 (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 | 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   | <u>81%</u>   | <u>90%</u>                            | <u>83%</u>                        | <u>72%</u>                      | <u>84%</u>   | <u>82%</u>                            | <u>84%</u>                        | <u>84%</u>                      | <u>80%</u>   | <u>83**</u>                           | <u>80**</u>                       | <u>70</u>                       |
| A  | 34   | 41**                                  | 34**                              | 19                              | 35   | 25**                                  | 37                                | 40                              | 44   | 50^                                   | 41                                | 36                              |
| B  | 47   | 49                                    | 49                                | 53                              | 49   | 57                                    | 46                                | 44                              | 36^  | 33^                                   | 40                                | 34^                             |
| C  | 14   | 6**                                   | 14                                | 22                              | 9  | 17**                                  | 9                                 | 6                               | 12   | 9                                     | 16                                | 14                              |
| D or F   | 6  | 4                                     | 4                                 | 6                               | 7  | 2                                     | 8****                             | 10****                          | 8  | 8                                     | 5**                               | 16                              |
| <i>Your involvement in your child's education is welcome</i>     |  |                                       |                                   |                                 |  |                                       |                                   |                                 |  |                                       |                                   |                                 |
| A or B   | <u>92%</u>   | <u>97%</u>                            | <u>93%</u>                        | <u>87%</u>                      | <u>95%</u>   | <u>95%</u>                            | <u>94%</u>                        | <u>91%</u>                      | <u>92%</u>   | <u>93</u>                             | <u>90</u>                         | <u>90</u>                       |
| A  | 63   | 77**                                  | 69**                              | 47                              | 44*  | 38*                                   | 51*                               | 48                              | 72^  | 70^                                   | 72^                               | 68^                             |
| B  | 29   | 20**                                  | 24**                              | 40                              | 51*  | 57*                                   | 44*                               | 43                              | 21^  | 23^                                   | 19^                               | 22^                             |
| C  | 7  | 3**                                   | 7                                 | 11                              | 4  | 5                                     | 4                                 | 6                               | 5  | 4                                     | 7                                 | 5                               |
| D or F   | 1  | 0                                     | 0                                 | 2                               | 1  | 0                                     | 2                                 | 2                               | 4  | 3                                     | 4                                 | 5                               |

Note:

These attributes were added to the study in Fall 2006.

\* = Significant difference vs. Fall 2006.

^ = Significant difference vs. Fall 2013.

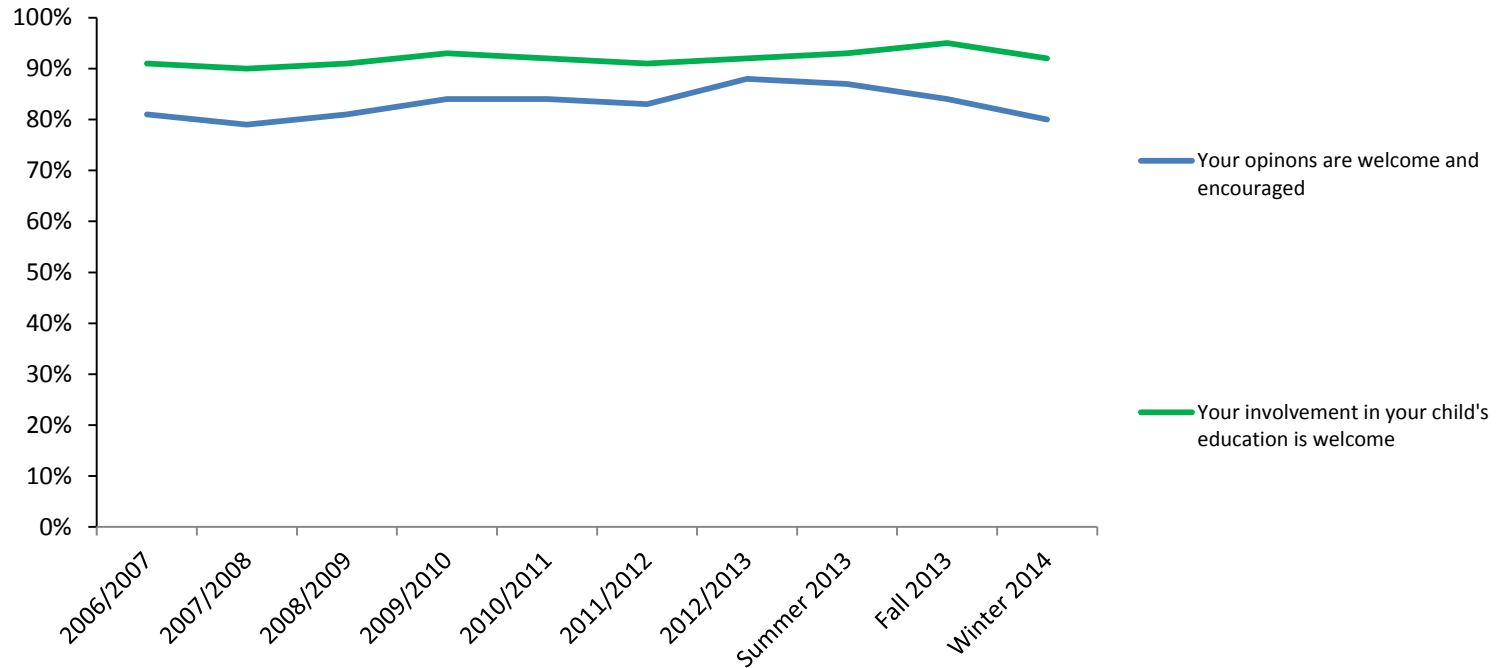
\*\* = Significant difference vs. parents of High School students.

\*\*\* = 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. The 2013/2014 school year began in Summer 2013.

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. The reasons have been increasingly more positive since the first wave of measurements were taken in the Fall of 2003 and in recent quarters. But, this Winter there was a significant increase in residents mentioning that improvements are needed—40% mentioned this in the Winter vs. 23% in the Fall.
- Also, significantly fewer residents gave a positive reason this Winter than in the Fall (49% vs. 73%). It may be that some residents were less satisfied months into the school year than they were in the beginning of it.
- 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 continue to be:
  - Satisfied/happy with the school experience (20%)
  - Doing a good job (14%)
  - Positive teacher comments/like the teacher (7%)
- All other positive reasons were mentioned by less than 5% of respondents.

Q. Why did you give the overall performance of the Administration a grade of...?

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

- Among the 40% of residents who mention a negative reason for the grade given to the Administration, the reasons continue to be diverse and mentioned by only a small number of residents.
- Historically a frequently given reason is Communication/the need for better/more communication, which only a small minority of residents (7%) mentioned this Winter. Specific reasons given include:
  - Improve communications to parents from teachers/administration/provide more timely information (5% of residents and 7% of parents).
  - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (3% of residents and 7% of parents).
- A small minority also mentioned...
  - Better administration/leadership/community relations/better decision making (7% of residents and 10% of parents)
  - Room for improvement (6% of residents and parents)
- Very few (less than 5%) mention any other specific negative reason.

# Suggestions for District

- Residents are also asked to suggest improvements that would cause them to give the District a higher grade. A little more than half of residents (55%) make a suggestion, which is comparable to the Fall (54%). Two out of three parents (66%) make a suggestion.
- The suggestions continue to be diverse. One of the most frequently given suggestions historically has been to improve Communications. Approximately one in four residents (23%) and three in ten (31%) of parents make this suggestion.
- Specific Communication suggestions include:
  - Improve communication to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more/timely information (19% of residents and 20% of parents).
  - Need to listen to parents/community, solicit input/involvement (6% of residents and 16% of parents).
    - Parents of High School students (24%) are especially likely to feel this way.

## Suggestions for District Cont'd.

- Only one other suggestion was made by at least 5% of residents ...
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (8% of residents) which historically has been suggested by a small minority of residents.
    - Parents of Middle School students (12%) are especially likely to make this suggestion.

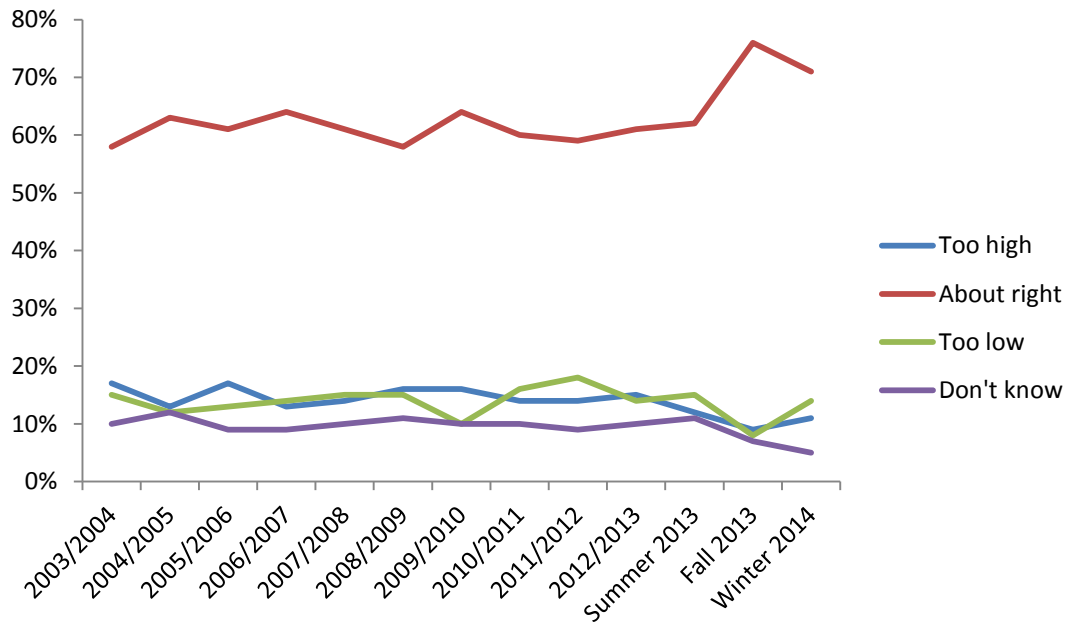
# How Voters Feel About the Tax Dollars They Pay for Local Public Education

- Approximately four out of five residents (85%) continue to feel that the amount of taxes that they pay for local public education is about right or too low.
- Historically, the vast majority of residents have felt that the taxes they pay for education are about right or too low.
- Residents feel that the taxes they pay for local public education are...

|             |     |       |
|-------------|-----|-------|
| Too high    | 11% |       |
| About right | 71% | } 85% |
| Too low     | 14% |       |
| Don't know  | 5%  |       |

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 2014)



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



# Primary Source of Information About Issaquah Schools

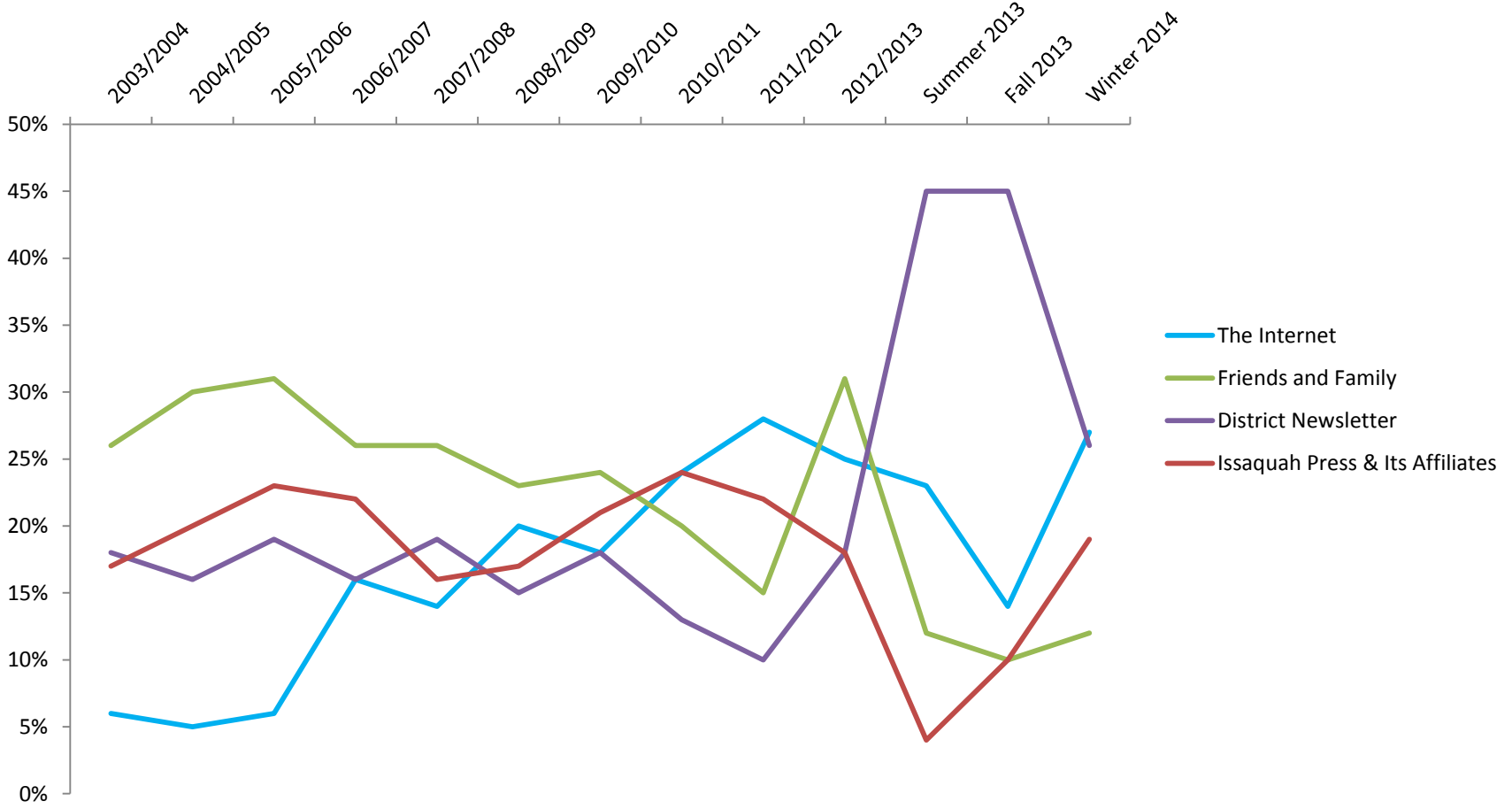
- The Internet, District Newsletter, the Issaquah Press & its affiliates and Friends and Family continue to be primary sources of information about Issaquah schools. This Winter there was a significant decline in residents mentioning that the District Newsletter is their primary source (26% vs. 45% in the Fall). At the same time, significantly more mentioned the Issaquah Press and its affiliates (19% vs. 10% in the Fall). It may be that prior to the levy election, more residents were turning to their newspaper for information.
- The Internet a continue to grow as primary sources of information— from 6% in 2003/2004 to 27% this Winter.

## Primary Source of Information about Issaquah Schools

|                                   |     |       |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------|
| The Internet                      | 27% | } 84% |
| District Newsletter               | 26  |       |
| Issaquah Press and its affiliates | 19  |       |
| Friends and Family                | 12  |       |
| E-mail                            | 6   |       |
| School employees                  | 1   |       |
| Television                        | 1   |       |
| Work there/personal experience    | 1   |       |
| The school                        | 1   |       |
| Other                             | 5   |       |
| Don't Know                        | 2   |       |

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



# Conclusions and Recommendations

- Overall, the number of residents giving the District high grades (A or B) has improved significantly across all performance areas since 2003.
- During the Winter quarter there were a number of directional declines in high grades and two significant declines...
  - The level of A/B grades for *Administration working with legislators to solve budget problems* declined from 89% in the Fall to 81% in the Winter.
  - The level of A/B grades also declined for *Administration works with teachers to build relationships* (from 91% to 81%).
- The vast majority of residents give the District an A or B grade across performance areas—ranging from 79% to 98%.

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- With regard to the attributes that were added to this study in Fall 2006, the District's performance continues to be strong with almost everyone giving it high grades
  - Nine in in ten parents (92%) give the District an A/B grade for *your involvement in your child's education is welcome.*
  - Four out of five parents (80%) give the District an A or B grade for *your opinions are welcome and encouraged in this District.*
  - Almost nine in ten residents (86%) give the District an A or B grade for *communications from the school district are open and honest .*

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- Respondents are asked for their reasons for the grade given to the District for its overall performance.
  - This Winter significantly fewer residents mentioned a positive reason than in the Fall (49% vs. 73%).
  - At the same time, significantly more residents mentioned that improvements are needed (40% vs. 23% in the Fall). This may be partly due to some residents/parents being less satisfied months into the school year than they were at the beginning of the school year.
  - 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 slightly more than half of residents (55%) made a suggestion which is comparable to the Fall (54%). Two out of three parents (66%) made a suggestion.
- Suggestions continue to be diverse with only a small minority making any specific suggestion.
- The most frequently given suggestions are:
  - Improve in the area of communications (23% of residents and 31% of parents). Historically this has been one of the most frequent suggestions. Specific requests include:
    - Improve communications to parents from teachers/Administration/provide more timely information (19% of residents and 20% of parents)
    - Need to listen to parents/community/solicit input/involvement (6% of residents and 16% of parents)
  - Better teachers needed/better teacher-student relations (8% of residents).

# Conclusions And Recommendations Cont'd.

- The vast majority of residents continue to be satisfied with the amount of taxes they are currently paying for local education. Over eight in ten (85%) feel that the taxes they are now paying for local education are about right (71%) or too low (14%).
- The most frequently mentioned primary sources of information about the District are the Internet (27%), the District Newsletter (26%), Issaquah Press/its affiliates (19%) and Friends and Family (12%)--or over eight out of ten (84%) residents.
  - This Winter significantly fewer residents mentioned the District Newsletter as their primary source of information than in the Fall (26% vs. 45%). At the same time, there was an increase in residents mentioning the Issaquah Press/its affiliates as a primary source (19% vs. 10% in the Fall). It may be that during the period prior to the Levy election, more residents were getting information from the Issaquah Press.
  - Since 2003, the Internet has grown as an important source of information (from 6% to 27%).
- This Winter almost one in three residents (27%) and almost half of parents (45%) 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.