

**2001 STATEWIDE PUBLIC POLL ON THE
CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE**

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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**DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
OF THE
University of Delaware**

**2001 Public Poll:
Summary of Results on the Condition of Education in Delaware**

INTRODUCTION

Each year the Delaware Education Research and Development Center (R&D Center) of the University of Delaware conducts a telephone poll questioning citizens and educators on their impressions regarding the condition of education in Delaware. This report summarizes the results for the statewide public poll conducted in the winter of 2002. Highlights of key findings in six areas of educational issues are reported and include the following:

<p style="text-align:center">① <u>Quality of Education</u> Grading the Schools Choosing a Public School</p>	<p style="text-align:center">② <u>Accountability</u> School Ratings School Accountability</p>
<p style="text-align:center">③ <u>Early Care and Education</u> Early Intervention Programs Learning Environment in the Home</p>	<p style="text-align:center">④ <u>Parent Involvement</u> Comfort Level of Parents Strategies for Improving Parent Involvement Responsibility for the Education of Children</p>
<p style="text-align:center">⑤ <u>Neighborhood and Charter Schools</u> Beliefs about Charter Schools Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools</p>	<p style="text-align:center">⑥ <u>Informed Citizens</u> Sources of Information Perceived Knowledge Level Reactions to Statements in the Media</p>

In addition to a summary of the findings, this report includes:

- Full length copies of the public poll results (overall and comparisons of parents vs. non-parents);
- Trend analyses of the statewide poll on the condition of education in Delaware;
- Comparisons of the 2001 poll results to national data;
- Background information on the poll, survey design, data collection techniques, sampling error; and,
- A list of references.

Putting the Results in Context

The summary of the poll results includes a section entitled “putting it in context.” Information concerning related research, trends across polling years in Delaware, and national comparisons are included to provide a context for the poll results (see the section entitled “Putting it in Context”).

For more information on the 2001 public poll, please contact the staff of the R&D Center by email at ud-rdc@udel.edu or by phone at (302) 831-4433. The full report can also be found on the web at <http://www.rdc.udel.edu>.

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

① QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Grading the Schools

Poll Results

About one-third of Delaware citizens did not believe they had enough information to give the public schools in Delaware a grade. However, of those citizens who did believe they had enough information, most (68%-78%) gave the public schools in Delaware a grade of a “B” or “C.” They were more likely to give a higher grade to Delaware elementary schools than middle or high schools. For example, the proportion of citizens giving the schools an “A” or a “B” is 1.75 times higher for elementary schools than for middle or high schools.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that political party affiliation as well as one's knowledge of and interest in the public school system predicts level of confidence in the public schools. Specifically, affiliation with the Democratic party produces greater confidence while affiliation with the Republican party does not. In addition, greater knowledge base and interest in the public schools predicts positive perceptions of the public school system. Demographic information such as gender, age, education level, and income do not predict confidence level in public schools. (Moy, Pfau, & Kahlor, 1999).

Choosing a Public School

Poll Results

Parents were split on the most important factor in choosing a public school for their child. However, the three factors most frequently cited included the quality of the teaching staff (79%), the size of the classes (56%), and the courses offered (41%). Factors related to student outcomes such as grades, test scores, or track record of graduates in college or on the job were cited by less than 20% of the parents as one of their top three factors for choosing a public school for their child.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that we “are becoming more and more aware of the fact that when parents are given the opportunity to choose, they ‘will be satisfied with their school of choice because they have exercised their right to choose’” (Windler, 1996, p. 68).

② ACCOUNTABILITY

School Ratings

Poll Results

Only some citizens (30%) have seen the school ratings published last November. However, of those parents that have seen the ratings, over half agree with the rating given to their child's school. Some parents (20%) stated they don't know if they agree or disagree with the rating. Few citizens (19%) have made any decisions or taken any action based on the school ratings. Two-thirds of Delaware citizens believe that other information besides student test scores should be included in these ratings.

When citizens were asked to identify other measures besides student test scores as a means to calculate these ratings, over three-fourths of citizens believe indicators such as attendance rates, drop-out rates, graduation rates, and measures of student behavior are important to include.

Putting it in Context

Within the Standards for Educational Accountability Systems, two standards for reporting of results are identified that discuss the dissemination of the results to the media and local schools and districts. While system-wide results should be made available to the media, this carries a responsibility also to educate the media and others in the appropriate as well as inappropriate interpretations of test results, including the use of error estimates. In addition, reports to schools and districts should "promote appropriate interpretation and use of results by including multiple indicators of performance, error estimates, and performance by subgroup" (Baker, Linn, Herman, & Koretz, 2002).

School Accountability: Rewards and Consequences

Poll Results

Citizens were likely to support certain rewards and consequences, but not others when a public school in their community received the lowest rating of "under review." For example, most citizens favored the provision of more professional development for teachers (96%) and the transfer of outstanding teachers and principals to work in a school that needs improvement (83%). Slightly more than half favored providing vouchers (that is, state funding) for parents to use at a private school of their choice (54%) or not renewing the principal's contract (61%). Of those who believe these sanctions are appropriate, most citizens (over 80%) favor these sanctions taking effect no later than two years at this same rating.

Few felt it would be appropriate to close the school (27%) or withhold state education funds from the school (17%).

In times of tight budgeting, many citizens (69%) believe it is better to provide additional financial assistance to schools that perform poorly than to financially reward schools that perform well.

Putting it in Context

According to the Standards for Educational Accountability Systems, stakes for accountability systems "should begin with broad diffuse stakes and move to specific consequences for individuals and institutions as the system aligns" (Baker, Linn, Herman, & Koretz, 2002). This allows educators as well as parents and students to make appropriate choices in determining how to best accomplish the goals of the accountability system.

Furthermore, these standards regarding stakes state that the accountability system should:

- ◆ apply to adults and students and should be coordinated to support system goals;
- ◆ include appeal procedures to contest rewards and sanctions; and,
- ◆ be made explicit at the outset of the implementation, including stakes for results and their phase-in schedule.

③ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Preschool Involvement

Poll Results

Most parents (88%) indicated their elementary age child attended nursery school, pre-school, or a day care center prior to starting kindergarten. On average, these children attended nursery school, preschool, or a day care center for two years (40%).

Putting it in Context

Research indicates that high quality early childhood programs can have very positive short-term as well as long-term impacts on the children served such as increases in academic achievement. However, the benefits can also include reducing the likelihood of grade retention, referral for special education services, and becoming a teen-age parent (Schonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Karoly et al, 1998).

Furthermore, some studies show that involvement in high quality early childhood programs can also lead to additional positive long-term results such as increasing the likelihood of graduating from high school, earning more money as a young adult, and decreasing the likelihood of becoming a welfare recipient (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980; Schweinhart, Barnes, & Wiekart, 1993).

According to the Delaware Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (2002), early intervention programs can also produce positive effects for children with disabilities and children living in poverty. For example, at the end of third grade, students who participated in state or federally funded early childhood programs showed significantly better academic outcomes (3rd grade DSTP reading and math scores; grades in language arts, mathematics, and listening) than comparable students who did not participate in early childhood programs (Gamel-McCormick & Amsden, 2002). Unfortunately, not all early childhood programs provide the kinds of high quality experiences that make a difference.

③ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (CON'T)

Early Educational Activities

Poll Results

Most parents indicated they were actively involved in their children's learning from infancy through the toddler and pre-school years. They indicated regular involvement (3 or more times a week) in activities such as reading to their child (90%), teaching their child songs or listening to children's music with him/her (84%), involving their child in creative activities such as coloring or doing a craft project (90%), involving their child in counting activities (83%), as well as having their child play with other children his/her age (88%). Slightly over half of the parents indicated they involved their children in these learning activities on a daily basis.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that young children who are continually exposed to a language-rich environment, including high quality, age-appropriate books, are more likely to become successful readers later. In addition, young children and infants benefit from frequent one-to-one interactions with parents as well as other caregivers. These interactions include reciting nursery rhymes, singing songs, and talking to the child in the course of everyday activities (National Research Council, 1999).

However, it is not just the type of language experiences that make a difference, but also the frequency in which these experiences occur. One extensive research study found that children's accomplishments at both age 3 and again at age 9 were strongly linked to the amount of language-rich experiences that children had in the first three years of life (Hart & Risley, 1995).

Since the amount of experience is correlated with the socio-economic status of the family, there is a widening gap between the experiences of the average child living in poverty and that of the average child in a professional family. For example, "the average welfare child was having half as much experience per hour (616 words per hour) as the average working-class child (1,251 words per hour) and less than one third that of the average child in a professional family (2,153 words per hour)" (Hart & Risley, 1995, p. 197). This study concludes that "by the time the children are 3 years old, even intensive intervention cannot make up for the differences in the amount of such experience children have received from parents" (Hart & Risley, 1995, p. 210). Therefore, especially for children living in low-income families, a high quality early educational experience is critical.

④ PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Comfort Level Perceived by Parents

Poll Results

Most parents (83%) stated that schools make it easy to be involved. In addition, nearly all parents (90%) believe their child's teachers are usually available and willing to talk with them about how their child is doing in school.

Putting it in Context

Research suggests that it is the quality of parent-teacher relationships rather than the quantity that fosters improved student achievement and behavior.

Facilitating Parent Involvement

Poll Results

About two-thirds of the parents stated that their child's school does an excellent or a good job of alerting parents to problems, such as informing parents quickly if their children are consistently late or absent, having academic problems, or misbehaving in school. Two-thirds of parents also indicated their child's school does an excellent or good job of providing them information about how to help their children with their homework.

However, strategies that empower parents to take a more active role in their child's learning are not perceived as positively. While over half of the parents believe their child's school does an excellent or good job of giving them guidance about how to get their children excited and interested in learning, almost 40% believe their child's school does only a fair or poor job of this.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates involving parents as educators at home with their children is one of the most effective ways to improve students' achievement and attitudes.

Good communication is critical for involving parents in their children's education. In the 2000 Public Poll on the Condition of Education, the quality of communication parents receive from the school was the most frequently cited reason why parents feel welcome (or not) in their child's school. In addition, the most frequently cited strategy schools could use to encourage greater parent involvement was better communication (Brown, 2001).

④ PARENT INVOLVEMENT (CON'T)

Responsibility for Education

Poll Results

The majority of the parents (61-65%) believe the responsibility of helping their children learn to read, write, and do mathematics should be shared fairly equally between parents and schools. While few parents (8%) believe that the schools should shoulder most of the responsibility for helping children learn to read, almost one-fourth of parents (23%) do believe schools should shoulder most of the responsibility for helping children learn mathematics.

On the other hand, most parents (80%) believe that helping children learn values such as respect for others, honesty, and politeness is primarily the responsibility of the parents. In addition, parents are split on the role schools should play in helping children learn appropriate social behaviors such as taking turns, following directions, and completing tasks. For example, slightly over half (60%) believe the parents should shoulder most of the responsibility. However, about one-third of parents (36%) believe that schools and parents should share about equally in helping children learn appropriate social behaviors.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates parent involvement improves student achievement. Children whose parents provide help at home score higher than children of similar ability and family background whose parents are not involved. These effects are not limited to early childhood but persist throughout the high school years.

⑤ NEIGHBORHOOD AND CHARTER SCHOOLS

Beliefs about Charter Schools

Poll Results

Over half of Delaware citizens (59%) feel they don't know enough to grade the charter schools in Delaware. However, of those who do feel they have enough information, slightly more than half (54%) give the charter schools a "B."

In addition, about two-thirds (65%) believe the impact of charter schools on other public schools in Delaware is mostly positive. Many (61%) also believe that all other public schools in Delaware should be given the same flexibility given to charter schools.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, studies show that parents whose children attend a charter school are generally quite positive about the educational services their children receive. However, these same parents express lower levels of satisfaction when asked about charter schools in general. In addition, "when a broader definition of the term 'customers' is employed (e.g., taxpayers), the results are less impressive" (Murphy & Shiffman, 2002, p. 185).

Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools

Poll Results

While there has been some debate in the editorial section of local newspapers regarding the value of the neighborhood school legislation, about half of Delaware citizens (55%) oppose repealing the legislation. One-fourth (26%) favors repealing the legislation, but one-fifth (20%) of citizens are unsure how they feel about the neighborhood school legislation.

Most citizens (85%) believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to shorter bus rides for students, and that shorter bus rides are a good thing (81%).

About half of Delaware citizens (56%) believe it will lead to the creation of schools with large numbers of poor children. Although about half of the citizens (49%) believe that the creation of schools with large numbers of poor children is a bad thing, some (40%) view it as neither good nor bad.

Also, about half of Delaware citizens (51%) believe that the legislation will lead to the creation of racially segregated schools (that is, schools with large numbers of children of the same race). While slightly less than half of Delaware citizens (47%) view the creation of racially segregated schools as negative (47%), more than a third (39%) view it as neither negative nor positive.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates when children attend neighborhood schools the student population reflects the community's composition. If the schools become segregated along economic factors, numerous problems are created that disadvantage children attending high-poverty urban schools. These problems include administrators having more difficulty hiring qualified teachers and more funding being invested in remediation classes and less in advanced classes. Peer group support for educational achievement is also much lower.

Research indicates that children attending high-poverty urban schools tend to perform worse academically than students in low poverty schools. These children also tend to read less, get lower grades, have lower attendance rates, and spend less time on homework.

Research indicates that teachers in high poverty schools are more likely to report a lack of family involvement as a serious problem. However, with adequate training and encouragement, increased family involvement in schools can be achieved.

⑥ INFORMED CITIZENS

Sources of Information

Poll Results

About three-fourths of Delaware citizens get most of their information about the public schools from the newspaper (45%) or word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends, neighbors, family members) (24%). Only 13% get most of their information directly from the school or district in written form such as school and district newsletters or letters sent home.

Over one-third of Delaware citizens stated that their single best source of information is the newspaper (28%) or word of mouth from other adults (14%).

Putting it in Context

Consistently over the past five years, the most frequently cited source of information about Delaware public schools by Delaware citizens has been newspapers. Since 1994, school and district meetings have been the least frequently cited source of information. While the role of school and district newsletters has fluctuated over the last several years, it has never surpassed newspapers as the most frequently cited source of information (Brown, 2001).

Perceived Knowledge Level

Poll Results

There is a great amount of variability regarding how well informed about the public schools citizens feel. Some citizens believe they are very well informed (15%) while others feel very ill informed (20%). Most, however, are somewhere between these two extremes.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that those who have knowledge of and interest in the public schools are more likely to have greater confidence in the public schools (Moy, Pfau, & Kahor, 1999).

Reaction to Statements in the Media

Poll Results

Most citizens agree with statements written in local newspapers about the public schools. For example, three-fourths of citizens (75%) agree with the newspaper quote that read, "Parents who can afford to send their children to private school are thinking again about that option. Some are taking a second look at charter schools." While over half of citizens (61%) agreed with the newspaper quote that read "School reform here in Delaware is more lip service than significant results," some (22%) disagreed with this statement.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that "individuals with lower levels of education tended to report greater confidence in the news media" (Moy, Pfau, & Kahlor, 1999, p. 137). At first glance, education levels seem to explain how individuals view the accuracy of the media. However, an individual's perceived knowledge of and interest in the public schools have been shown to have a greater influence (than education level) on his/her confidence in the media.

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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**Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 2001 Results Analysis (n=1,152)**

I. Quality of Education in Delaware

Question	Responses					
	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
Students in Delaware are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	8%	33%	24%	6%	3%	27%
What grade would you give the public <u>middle</u> schools in Delaware?	5%	23%	27%	8%	4%	34%
What grade would you give the public <u>high schools</u> in Delaware?	6%	22%	23%	9%	5%	34%

From this list, please select the top three factors in choosing a public school for your children.

	Percent Responding
♦ courses offered	41%
♦ size of the classes	56%
♦ behavior of the students	29%
♦ quality of the teaching staff	79%
♦ closeness of the school to your home	32%
♦ grades or test scores of the student body	18%
♦ track record of graduates in college or on the job	18%
♦ extracurricular activities available, such as band, sports, or clubs	23%

II. Educator and Student Accountability

Under the current accountability plan, students are tested in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 on a statewide test referred to as the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP). In November, based on four years of test scores, all Delaware public schools received a rating of Superior, Commendable, or Under Review. Have you seen any of these ratings?	Yes			No	
	30%			70%	
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Do you agree or disagree with the rating that was given to your child's school? Is that strongly or somewhat?	35%	28%	12%	6%	20%
Do you agree or disagree with the rating that was given to the public schools? Is that strongly or somewhat?	17%	37%	14%	10%	23%
Did you take any action or make any decisions based on these ratings?	Yes			No	
	19%			79%	
What did you do? (n=70)	Percent Responding				
◆ Made decision to stay at same school or send to another school	40%				
◆ Attend school related meetings (PTA, task force, related organizations)	11%				
◆ Contacted school	11%				
◆ Sought additional information/became active in implementing improvements	10%				
◆ Contacted state policy makers (legislators, governor)	6%				
◆ Signed petition, voted, or impacted voting decisions	4%				
◆ Made decision regarding whether to move or not	4%				
◆ Got child a tutor	3%				
◆ Other	3%				

Are there other pieces of information besides student test scores that you feel are important to include in the school ratings?	Yes 67%	No 24%	Don't Know 10%	
Which of the following do you believe are important to include in these school ratings?	Percent Responding			
◆ attendance rates	80%			
◆ drop-out rates	78%			
◆ graduation rates	83%			
◆ measures of student behavior	78%			
◆ other measures not listed here	40%			
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to withhold state education funds from the school?	Yes 17%	No 79%	Don't Know 4%	
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to withhold state education funds from the school?	Immediately 28%	After 2 years at this same rating 55%	After 4 years at this same rating 13%	Don't Know 4%
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to not renew the principal's contract?	Yes 61%	No 32%	Don't Know 6%	
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to not renew the principal's contract?	Immediately 24%	After 2 years at this same rating 60%	After 4 years at this same rating 13%	Don't Know 3%
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to provide vouchers (that is, state funding) for parents to use at a private school of their choice?	Yes 54%	No 40%	Don't Know 6%	
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to provide vouchers?	Immediately 45%	After 2 years at this same rating 46%	After 4 years at this same rating 8%	Don't Know 2%

	Yes		No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to close the school?	27%		68%	5%
	Immediately	After 2 years at this same rating	After 4 years at this same rating	Don't Know
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to close the school?	14%	41%	44%	1%
	Yes		No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to provide more professional training for teachers?	96%		3%	1%
	Immediately	After 2 years at this same rating	After 4 years at this same rating	Don't Know
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to provide more professional training for teachers?	80%	17%	3%	1%
	Yes		No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to transfer outstanding teachers and principals to work in the school that needs improvement?	83%		13%	4%
	Immediately	After 2 years at this same rating	After 4 years at this same rating	Don't Know
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to transfer outstanding teachers and principals to work in the school that needs improvement?	63%	32%	4%	2%
	To financially reward schools that perform well		To provide additional financial assistance to schools that perform poorly	Don't Know
In times of tight budgeting, which is better -- to financially reward schools that perform well or to provide additional financial assistance to schools that perform poorly?	16%		69%	15%
	Higher	Lower	About the Same	Don't Know
Just your impression, is the academic achievement of white students in Delaware higher, lower, or about the same as that of black and Hispanic students?	39%	2%	34%	25%

III. Early Childhood Education

Prior to starting kindergarten, did your child ever attend a nursery school, pre-school, or day care center?	Yes 88%		No 12%			
How many years did he/she attend any nursery school, pre-school, or day care center?	1 year 21%	2 years 40%	3 years 21%	4 years 11%	5 years 5%	6 years 2%
These next questions are about activities during the time between your child's birth and his/her fifth birthday. On average, how many times a week did anyone participate in the following activities with your child?	Not at all	Once or twice a week	3 or more times a week	Every day	Don't know	
a. read a book to your child	<1%	9%	31%	59%	<1%	
b. teach your child any songs or listen to children's music with him or her	2%	13%	33%	51%	<1%	
c. involve your child in household chores like setting the table or caring for pets	12%	25%	20%	42%	<1%	
d. involve your child in creative activities such as coloring or doing a craft project	<1%	10%	35%	55%	<1%	
e. involve your child in counting activities like asking your child to count the number of buttons on his or her shirt	2%	12%	32%	51%	2%	
f. have your child play with other children his or her age	1%	11%	33%	55%	0%	
	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	Poor	Don't Know
Thinking about your oldest child, how would you describe his or her performance in school?	43%	29%	21%	4%	3%	1%

	Very well			Not Well at All	Don't Know
How well do your child's grades reflect how much he or she has learned?	47%	30%	13%	7%	3%
How well does your child's score on the state test reflect how much he or she has learned?	Very well 29%	2 31%	3 17%	Not Well at All 9%	Don't Know 13%

IV. Parent Involvement

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	32%	51%	13%	3%	2%
My child's teachers are usually available and willing to talk with me about how my child is doing in school.	Strongly Agree 40%	Agree 50%	Disagree 6%	Strongly Disagree 3%	Don't know 2%
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
How good a job does your child's school do at....					
a. providing you information about how to help your children with their homework	31%	35%	18%	12%	4%
b. informing you quickly if your children are consistently late or absent	37%	24%	6%	6%	26%
c. informing you quickly if your children are having academic problems	35%	27%	14%	11%	14%
d. informing you quickly if your children are misbehaving in school	43%	24%	6%	4%	23%
e. giving you guidance about how to get your children excited and interested in learning	25%	33%	18%	18%	6%

Many people believe that both parents and schools share in the responsibility for the education of children. What percent of responsibility do you think <u>parents</u> should have for the following tasks?	0%-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80-100%
a. to help children learn to read	1%	7%	65%	16%	11%
b. to help children learn to write	3%	15%	63%	12%	8%
c. to help children learn mathematics	4%	19%	61%	11%	5%
d. to help children learn values such as respect for others, honesty, and politeness	0%	1%	19%	31%	49%
e. to help children learn appropriate social behaviors such as taking turns, following directions, and completing tasks	1%	3%	36%	27%	33%

V. Charter Schools

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
What grade would you give the charter schools in Delaware?	10%	22%	6%	2%	1%	59%
	Mostly Positive		Mostly Negative		Don't Know	
Do you think the impact of charter schools on other public schools in Delaware is mostly positive or mostly negative?	65%		23%		13%	

In what ways is it mostly positive? (n=287)	Percent Responding
➤ Make public schools accountable (competition for public schools)	33%
➤ Alternative teaching methods/subject areas	15%
➤ Provide families with a choice; an alternative to private schools	12%
➤ Better academic opportunities	11%
➤ Helps reduce class size in public schools	10%
➤ More well-rounded students; better student outcomes	6%
➤ More opportunities for parent involvement; less bureaucracy	5%
➤ Better discipline (few disruptions in classroom)	5%
➤ High quality teachers and staff	3%
➤ Don't know	2%

In what ways is it mostly negative? (n=87)	Percent Responding
➤ Take the best students from public schools	34%
➤ Take resources away from public schools	28%
➤ Promote elitism; are exclusionary; divide and segregate students	22%
➤ Not a better alternative; money better spent elsewhere	10%
➤ Not good examples of good teaching	6%
➤ Less monitoring than public schools	3%
➤ Other	14%

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Should all public schools in Delaware be given the same flexibility given to charter schools?	61%	18%	20%

VI. Neighborhood Schools

	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to the creation of racially segregated schools?	51%	41%	8%	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, are racially segregated schools a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	9%	47%	39%	5%
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to the creation of schools with large numbers of poor children?	56%	32%	12%	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, are schools with large numbers of poor children a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	5%	49%	40%	6%
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to children being on the school bus for shorter periods of time?	85%	9%	6%	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, is a shorter bus ride to school a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	81%	2%	15%	2%
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
Some folks in Delaware believe that the neighborhood school legislation should be repealed, that is, taken off the books. Do you agree or disagree with these folks?	26%	55%	20%	

VII. Information about the Public Schools

	Not at all informed			Very well informed	Don't know
How well informed are you about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very well informed?	20%	33%	31%	15%	1%

Where do you get most of your information about the public schools?	Percent Responding
◆ Newspaper	45%
◆ Word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends/neighbors/family members)	24%
◆ Written communication from school or district (e.g., newsletters, letters sent home)	13%
◆ Word of mouth from children (e.g., own children, grandchildren, neighborhood children)	12%
◆ Media/News	7%
◆ TV	3%
◆ Direct contact with school personnel in a professional capacity	6%
◆ Word of mouth (non-specific)	5%
◆ School or district meetings including PTA	4%
◆ Websites	4%
◆ No source of information	3%
◆ School profiles (paper or web)	0%
◆ Other (e.g., personal experience as parent, physician, bus driver, real estate agent, etc.)	21%
◆ Don't know	<1%

What is your single best source of information about the local public schools?	Percent Responding			
◆ Newspaper	28%			
◆ Word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends/neighbors/family members)	14%			
◆ Other (e.g., e.g., personal experience as parent, physician, bus driver, real estate agent, etc.)	13%			
◆ Direct contact with school or school personnel in a professional capacity	10%			
◆ Written communication from school or district (e.g., newsletters, letters sent home)	8%			
◆ Word of mouth from children (e.g., own children, grandchildren, neighborhood children)	5%			
◆ Media/News	4%			
◆ TV	2%			
◆ School or district meetings including PTA	2%			
◆ Website	2%			
◆ Don't know	3%			
	Very Useful		Not at all Useful	
How useful is this source of information?	38%	34%	21%	6%
	Yes	No	Don't remember	
Have you seen the school profile for the school your child attends?	50%	45%	5%	
	Requested it	Got it from the website	School mailed it	Other
Did you request a copy from the school, print out a copy from the website, or did the school mail a copy to you automatically?	12%	18%	57%	14%

	Very useful			Not at all Useful	Don't Know
How useful is the school profile to you as a parent in making judgments about the quality of your child's school?	24%	30%	18%	8%	20%

VIII. Reaction to Statements in the Media

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Over the years that the poll has been conducted, Delaware citizens have consistently stated they get much of their information about the public schools from the newspaper. We have collected four statements written in the Delaware newspapers in the last year. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements					
a. School reform here in Delaware is more lip service than significant results.	13%	48%	20%	2%	18%
b. Delaware's 11 th and 8 th grade student performance in social studies and science was appalling. It reflects a student population ill-equipped for life in the 21 st century.	11%	41%	24%	2%	23%
c. Parents who can afford to send their children to private schools are thinking again about that option. Some are taking a second look at charter schools.	15%	60%	10%	1%	14%
d. Those who can't afford private schools feel stuck if the school their children attend is under review (that is, the school received the lowest rating of "under review").	16%	57%	14%	1%	12%

IX. Demographic Information

Are you the parent, step-parent, or guardian of a child that is currently attending school is grades Kindergarten through 12 th grade in Delaware?	Yes 35%		No 65%		
Do you children attend a public, private, or charter school? Or are your children home schooled?	Public 75%	Private 19%	Charter 4%	Home School 2%	

What grade are your children in?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Kindergarten	14%	• 7 th	10%
• 1 st	15%	• 8 th	15%
• 2 nd	13%	• 9 th	14%
• 3 rd	14%	• 10 th	13%
• 4 th	15%	• 11 th	13%
• 5 th	13%	• 12 th	10%
• 6 th	16%		

In what county do you live?	New Castle 63%	Kent 15%	Sussex 22%
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In what school district do you live?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Appoquinimink	4%	• Polytech	<1%
• Brandywine	14%	• Smyrna	2%
• Christina	17%	• Cape Henlopen	5%
• Colonial	6%	• Delmar	1%
• NCC Vo-Tech	0%	• Indian River	6%
• Red Clay	16%	• Laurel	2%
• Capital	4%	• Seaford	3%
• Caesar Rodney	4%	• Sussex Vo-Tech	1%
• Lake Forest	2%	• Woodbridge	1%
• Milford	3%	• Don't know	10%

	Mean (standard deviation)	Range	
Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	27.99 (19.04)	0-99	
Percent responding			
What is your household income from all sources?			
• less than \$10,000	2%		
• \$10,000 - \$14,999	2%		
• \$15,000 - \$19,999	7%		
• \$20,000 - \$34,999	10%		
• \$35,000 - \$49,999	18%		
• \$50,000 - \$74,999	20%		
• \$75,000 or more	25%		
• refused/don't know	16%		
	Mean (standard deviation)	Range	
What is your age?	45.90 (15.77)	18-99	
	Yes	No	Refused
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	2%	97%	1%

How would you describe your race?	Percent responding
• White	82%
• African American	14%
• Asian/Pacific Islander	1%
• Native American	1%
• Other (including bi-racial)	2%

Gender	Female	Male
	61%	40%

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**Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
Respondents with Children Attending K-12 Schools in DE Compared to
Respondents without Children Attending K-12 Schools in DE (in Parentheses)**

I. Quality of Education in Delaware

Question	Responses					
	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
Students in Delaware are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	13% (5%)	41% (28%)	21% (25%)	7% (6%)	4% (2%)	14% (34%)
What grade would you give the public <u>middle</u> schools in Delaware?	7% (3%)	26% (21%)	23% (29%)	8% (7%)	6% (2%)	30% (36%)
What grade would you give the public <u>high schools</u> in Delaware?	8% (5%)	20% (24%)	20% (25%)	8% (9%)	7% (4%)	37% (33%)
From this list, please select the top three factors in choosing a public school for your children.						
	Percent Responding					
♦ courses offered	41%					
♦ size of the classes	56%					
♦ behavior of the students	29%					
♦ quality of the teaching staff	79%					
♦ closeness of the school to your home	32%					
♦ grades or test scores of the student body	18%					
♦ track record of graduates in college or on the job	18%					
♦ extracurricular activities available, such as band, sports, or clubs	23%					

II. Educator and Student Accountability

		Yes		No	
Under the current accountability plan, students are tested in grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 on a statewide test referred to as the Delaware Student Testing Program (DSTP). In November, based on four years of test scores, all Delaware public schools received a rating of Superior, Commendable, or Under Review. Have you seen any of these ratings?		39% (24%)		60% (75%)	
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Do you agree or disagree with the rating that was given to your child's school? Is that strongly or somewhat?	35%	28%	12%	6%	20%
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Do you agree or disagree with the rating that was given to the public schools? Is that strongly or somewhat?	(17%)	(37%)	(14%)	(10%)	(23%)
		Yes		No	
Did you take any action or make any decisions based on these ratings?		27% (13%)		73% (87%)	
		Yes		No	
Are there other pieces of information besides student test scores that you feel are important to include in the school ratings?		75% (73%)		25% (27%)	

Which of the following do you believe are important to include in these school ratings?	Percent Responding
♦ attendance rates	80% (81%)
♦ drop-out rates	79% (79%)
♦ graduation rates	85% (84%)
♦ measures of student behavior	79% (79%)
♦ other measures not listed here	40% (41%)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to withhold state education funds from the school?	15% (19%)	81% (78%)	5% (4%)

	Immediately	After 2 years at this same rating	After 4 years at this same rating	Don't Know
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to withhold state education funds from the school?	29% (28%)	57% (54%)	10% (14%)	3% (4%)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to not renew the principal's contract?	62% (61%)	31% (33%)	6% (6%)

	Immediately	After 2 years at this same rating	After 4 years at this same rating	Don't Know
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to not renew the principal's contract?	24% (24%)	59% (61%)	14% (13%)	3% (2%)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to provide vouchers (that is, state funding) for parents to use at a private school of their choice?	55% (53%)	39% (41%)	6% (6%)

In your opinion, at what point is it okay to provide vouchers?	Immediately 48% (43%)	After 2 years at this same rating 46% (46%)	After 4 years at this same rating 5% (10%)	Don't Know 1% (2%)
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to close the school?	Yes 26% (28%)		No 70% (67%)	Don't Know 4% (5%)
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to close the school?	Immediately 15% (14%)	After 2 years at this same rating 42% (40%)	After 4 years at this same rating 43% (44%)	Don't Know 0% (2%)
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to provide more professional training for teachers?	Yes 96% (96%)		No 3% (4%)	Don't Know 1% (1%)
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to provide more professional training for teachers?	Immediately 84% (77%)	After 2 years at this same rating 13% (18%)	After 4 years at this same rating 3% (3%)	Don't Know 1% (1%)
If a public school in your community received the lowest rating of "Under Review," in your opinion would it ever be okay to transfer outstanding teachers and principals to work in the school that needs improvement?	Yes 86% (81%)		No 11% (14%)	Don't Know 4% (5%)
In your opinion, at what point is it okay to transfer outstanding teachers and principals to work in the school that needs improvement?	Immediately 69% (59%)	After 2 years at this same rating 27% (35%)	After 4 years at this same rating 3% (4%)	Don't Know 1% (2%)

	To financially reward schools that perform well	To provide additional financial assistance to schools that perform poorly	Don't Know
In times of tight budgeting, which is better -- to financially reward schools that perform well or to provide additional financial assistance to schools that perform poorly?	17% (15%)	69% (69%)	15% (15%)

	Higher	Lower	About the Same	Don't Know
Just your impression, is the academic achievement of white students in Delaware higher, lower, or about the same as that of black and Hispanic students?	37% (40%)	2% (2%)	36% (33%)	25% (24%)

V. Charter Schools

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
What grade would you give the charter schools in Delaware?	12% (10%)	16% (25%)	7% (6%)	1% (2%)	2% (1%)	62% (57%)

	Mostly Positive	Mostly Negative	Don't Know
Do you think the impact of charter schools on other public schools in Delaware is mostly positive or mostly negative?	65% (64%)	22% (23%)	12% (13%)

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Should all public schools in Delaware be given the same flexibility given to charter schools?	58% (63%)	20% (18%)	23% (19%)

VI. Neighborhood Schools

	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to the creation of racially segregated schools?	51% (51%)	40% (42%)	9% (8%)	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, are racially segregated schools a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	9% (9%)	46% (49%)	42% (38%)	5% (5%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to the creation of schools with large numbers of poor children?	60% (54%)	28% (34%)	12% (12%)	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, are schools with large numbers of poor children a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	4% (6%)	49% (49%)	43% (39%)	4% (6%)
	Yes	No	Don't know	
Do you believe that the neighborhood school legislation will lead to children being on the school bus for shorter periods of time?	83% (87%)	11% (8%)	6% (6%)	
	Good Thing	Bad Thing	Neither Good nor Bad	Don't Know
In your opinion, is a shorter bus ride to school a good thing, a bad thing, or neither good nor bad?	79% (83%)	3% (2%)	17% (14%)	1% (2%)
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know	
Some folks in Delaware believe that the neighborhood school legislation should be repealed, that is, taken off the books. Do you agree or disagree with these folks?	31% (23%)	52% (56%)	17% (21%)	

VII. Information about the Public Schools

	Not at all informed			Very well informed	Don't know
How well informed are you about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very well informed?	11% (24%)	25% (37%)	40% (26%)	23% (11%)	1% (2%)

VIII. Reaction to Statements in the Media

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
Over the years that the poll has been conducted, Delaware citizens have consistently stated they get much of their information about the public schools from the newspaper. We have collected four statements written in the Delaware newspapers in the last year. Please tell us how much you agree or disagree with each of these statements					
a. School reform here in Delaware is more lip service than significant results.	13% (13%)	48% (48%)	23% (18%)	2% (2%)	13% (20%)
b. Delaware's 11 th and 8 th grade student performance in social studies and science was appalling. It reflects a student population ill-equipped for life in the 21 st century.	11% (11%)	37% (42%)	28% (21%)	2% (2%)	21% (24%)
c. Parents who can afford to send their children to private schools are thinking again about that option. Some are taking a second look at charter schools.	20% (13%)	58% (61%)	11% (10%)	1% (1%)	10% (16%)
d. Those who can't afford private schools feel stuck if the school their children attend is under review (that is, the school received the lowest rating of "under review").	18% (16%)	55% (58%)	17% (12%)	2% (0%)	8% (14%)

IX. Demographic Information

	New Castle	Kent	Sussex
In what county do you live?	65% (62%)	15% (15%)	20% (23%)
In what school district do you live?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Appoquinimink	5% (4%)	• Polytech	0% (0%)
• Brandywine	16% (13%)	• Smyrna	3% (2%)
• Christina	21% (15%)	• Cape Henlopen	4% (5%)
• Colonial	9% (5%)	• Delmar	1% (0%)
• NCC Vo-Tech	0% (0%)	• Indian River	5% (7%)
• Red Clay	13% (17%)	• Laurel	2% (2%)
• Capital	4% (4%)	• Seaford	3% (2%)
• Caesar Rodney	4% (3%)	• Sussex Vo-Tech	1% (1%)
• Lake Forest	3% (2%)	• Woodbridge	1% (2%)
• Milford	5% (3%)	• Don't know	2% (14%)

	Mean [standard deviation]	Range
Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	24.84 [14.92] (29.67 [20.73])	0-67 (0-91)
Percent responding		
What is your household income from all sources?		
• less than \$10,000	0.8% (2%)	
• \$10,000 - \$14,999	2% (3%)	
• \$15,000 - \$19,999	5% (9%)	
• \$20,000 - \$34,999	10% (12%)	
• \$35,000 - \$49,999	18% (22%)	
• \$50,000 - \$74,999	25% (21%)	
• \$75,000 or more	35% (25%)	
• refused/don't know	4% (7%)	
	Mean [standard deviation]	Range
What is your age?	40.07 [8.74] (49.01 [17.70])	19-99 (18-91)

	Yes	No	Refused
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	3% (2%)	97% (97%)	0.8% (1%)
How would you describe your race?	Percent responding		
• White	79% (83%)		
• African American	17% (12%)		
• Asian/Pacific Islander	0.8% (1%)		
• Native American	0.5% (0.8%)		
• Other (including bi-racial)	1% (3%)		
• Refused	0.8% (0.7%)		
	Female	Male	
Gender	64% (59%)	34% (41%)	

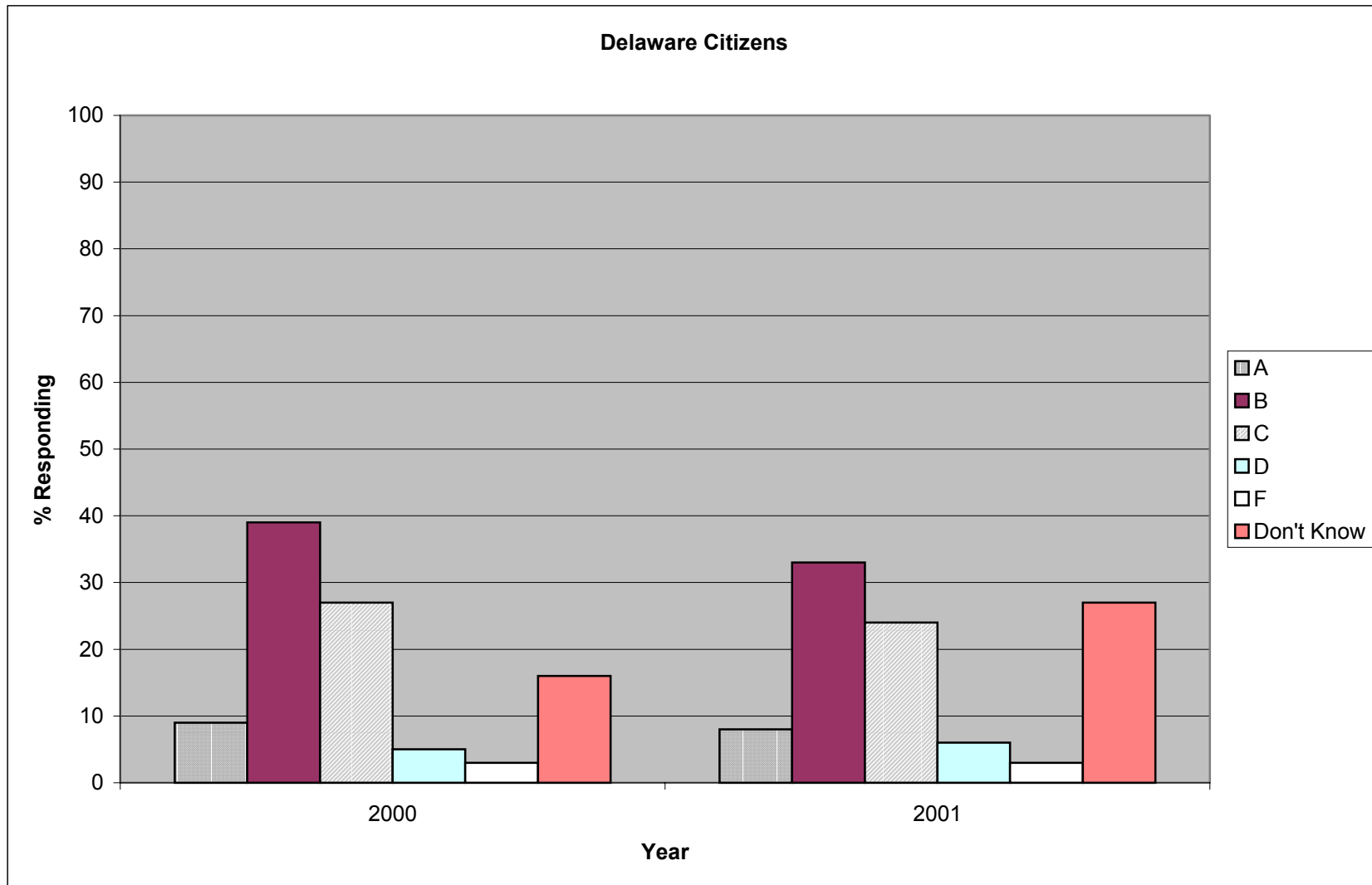
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Trend Analyses of the Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware

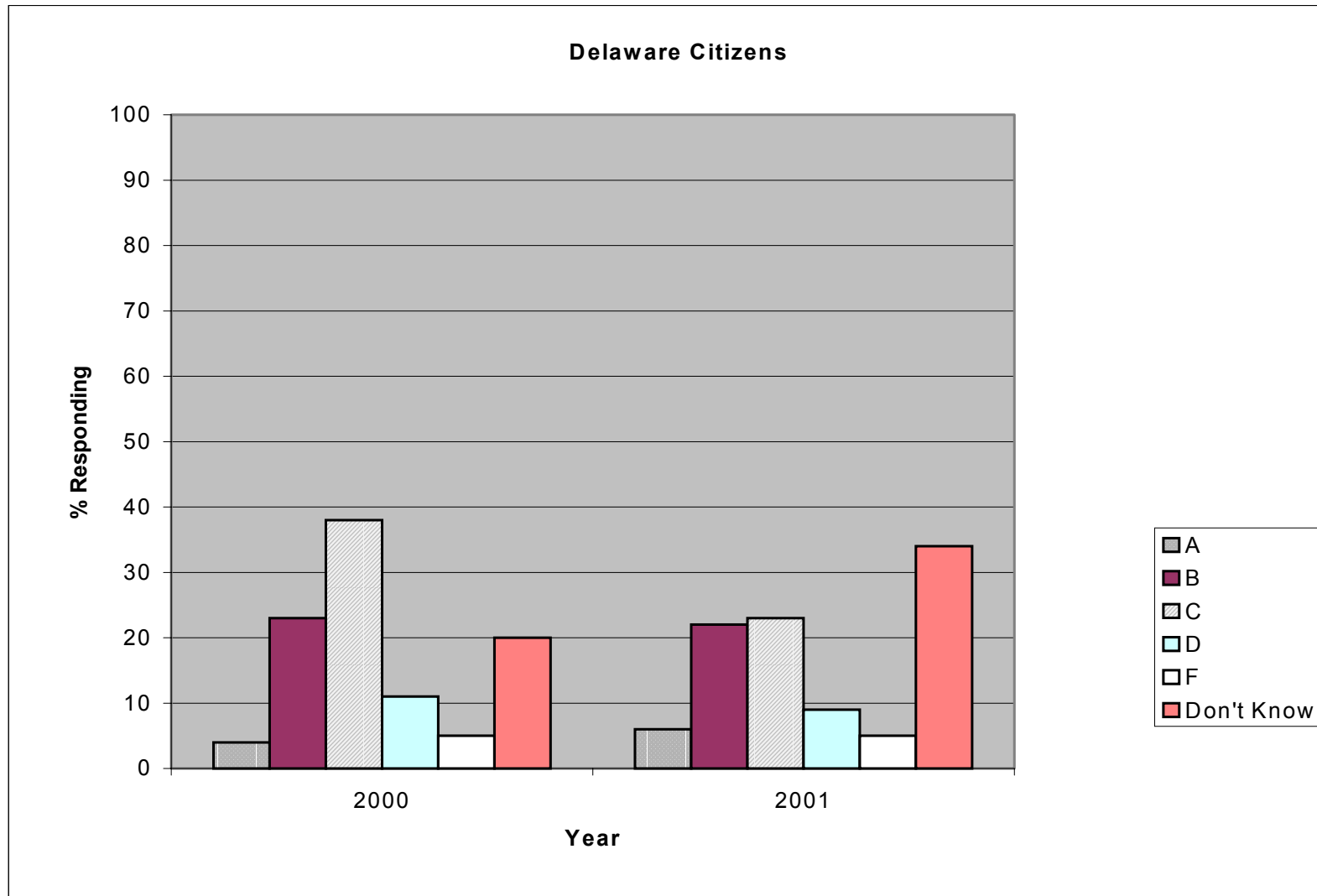
(The following pages present information comparing the 2001 poll to previous years.)

I. Quality of Education in Delaware

Students in Delaware are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work.
What grade would you give the public elementary schools in Delaware?

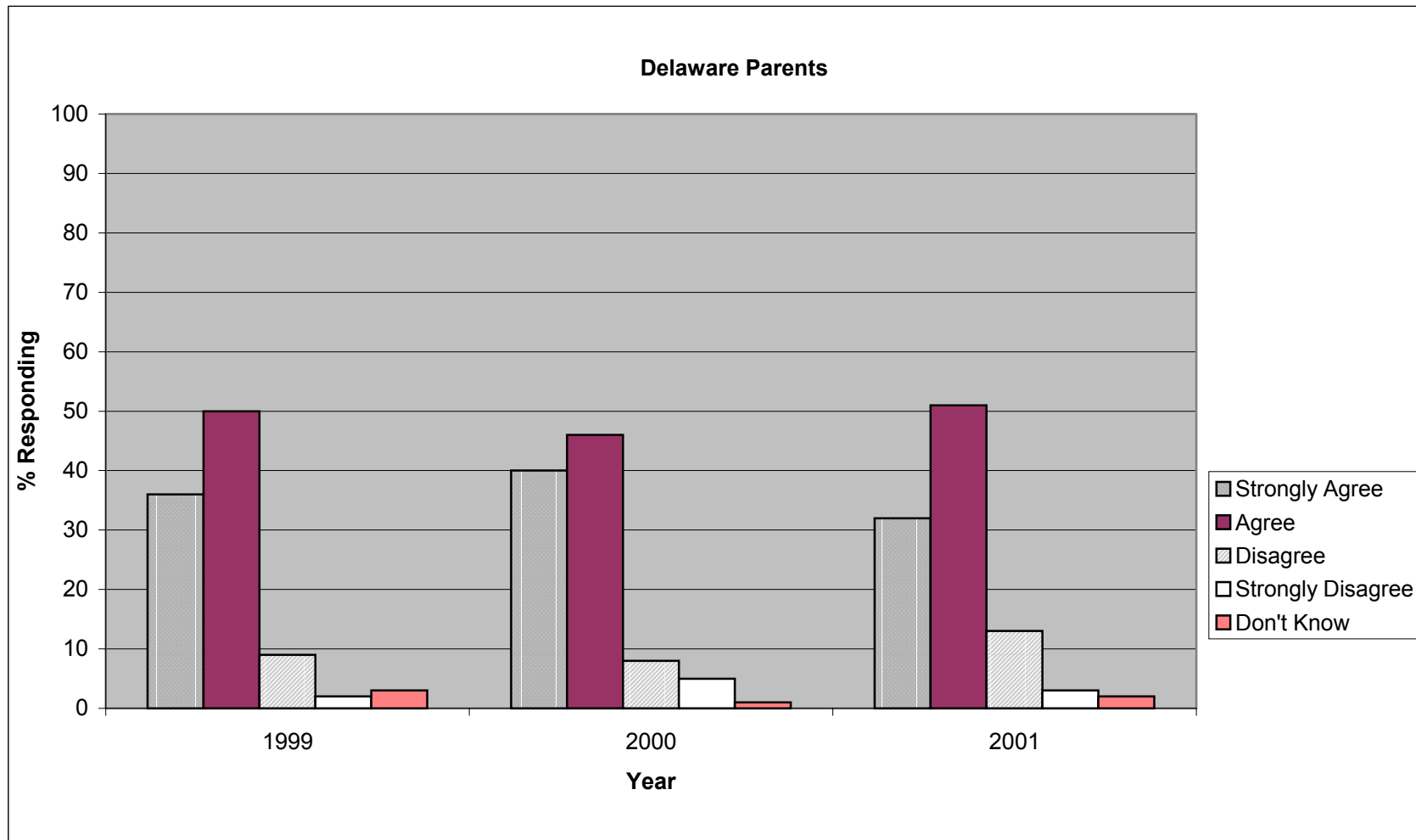


Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D or F to denote the quality of their work.
What grade would you give the public high schools in Delaware?

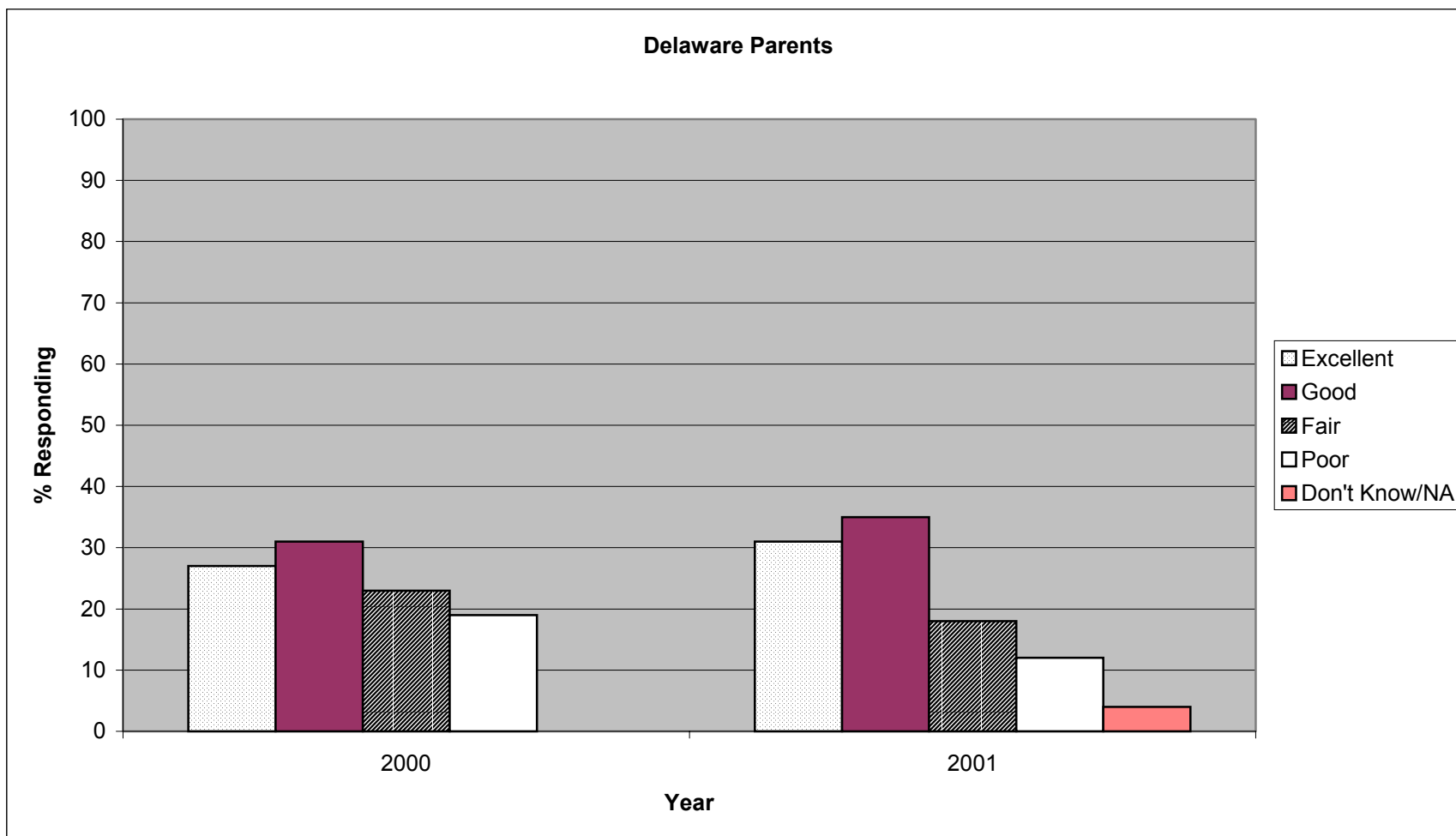


II. Parent Involvement

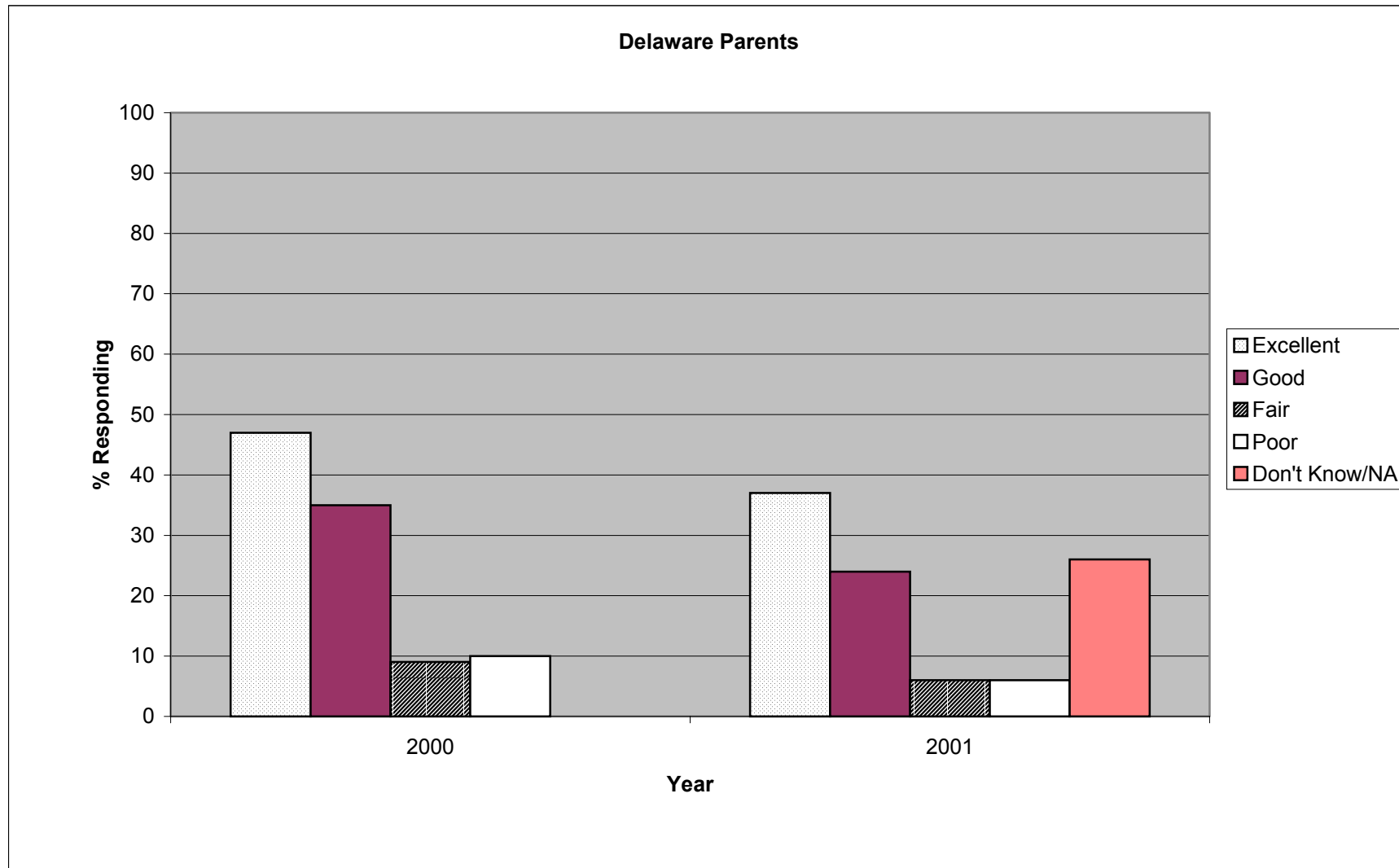
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.



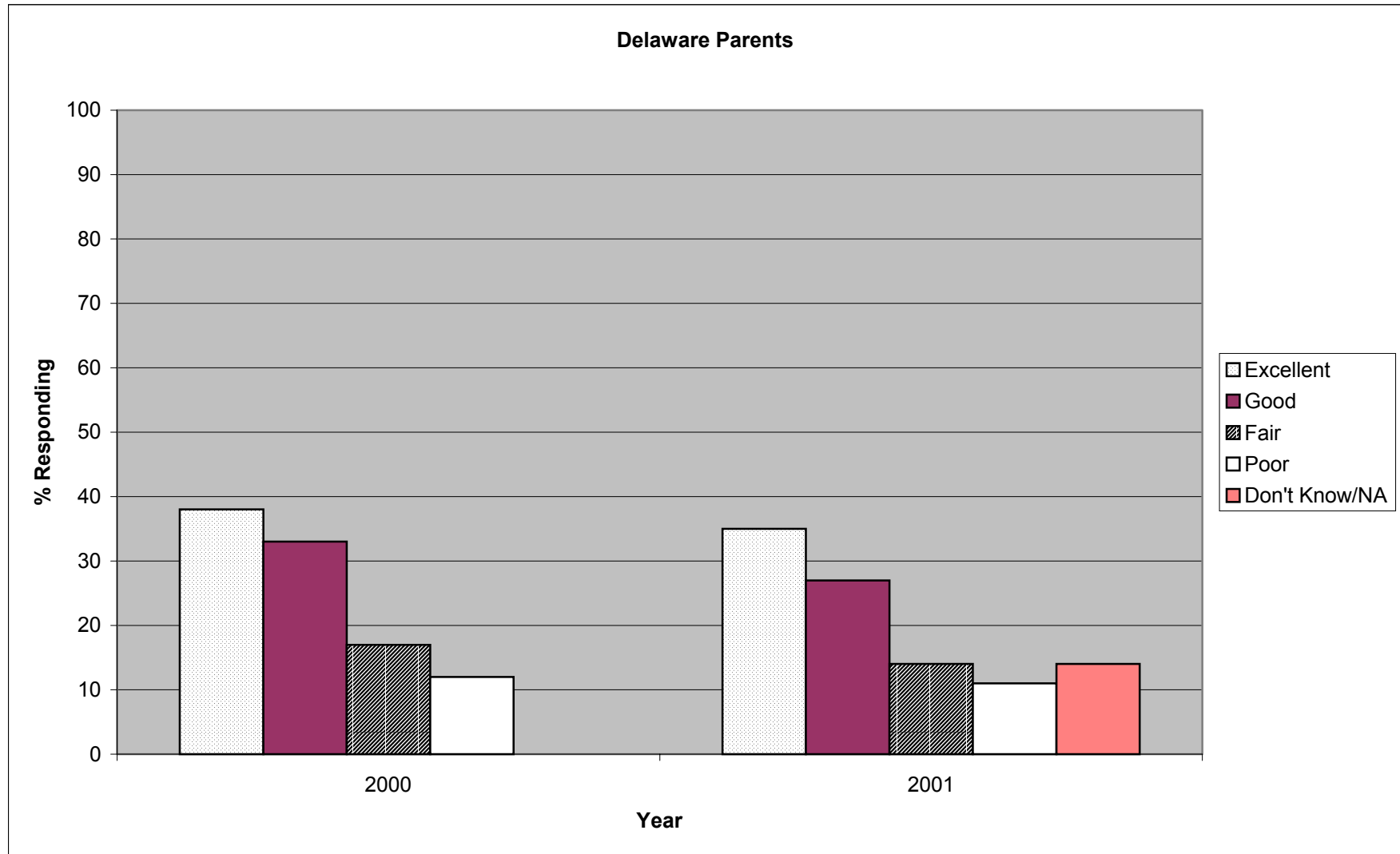
How good a job does your child's school do at providing information about how to help your children with their homework?



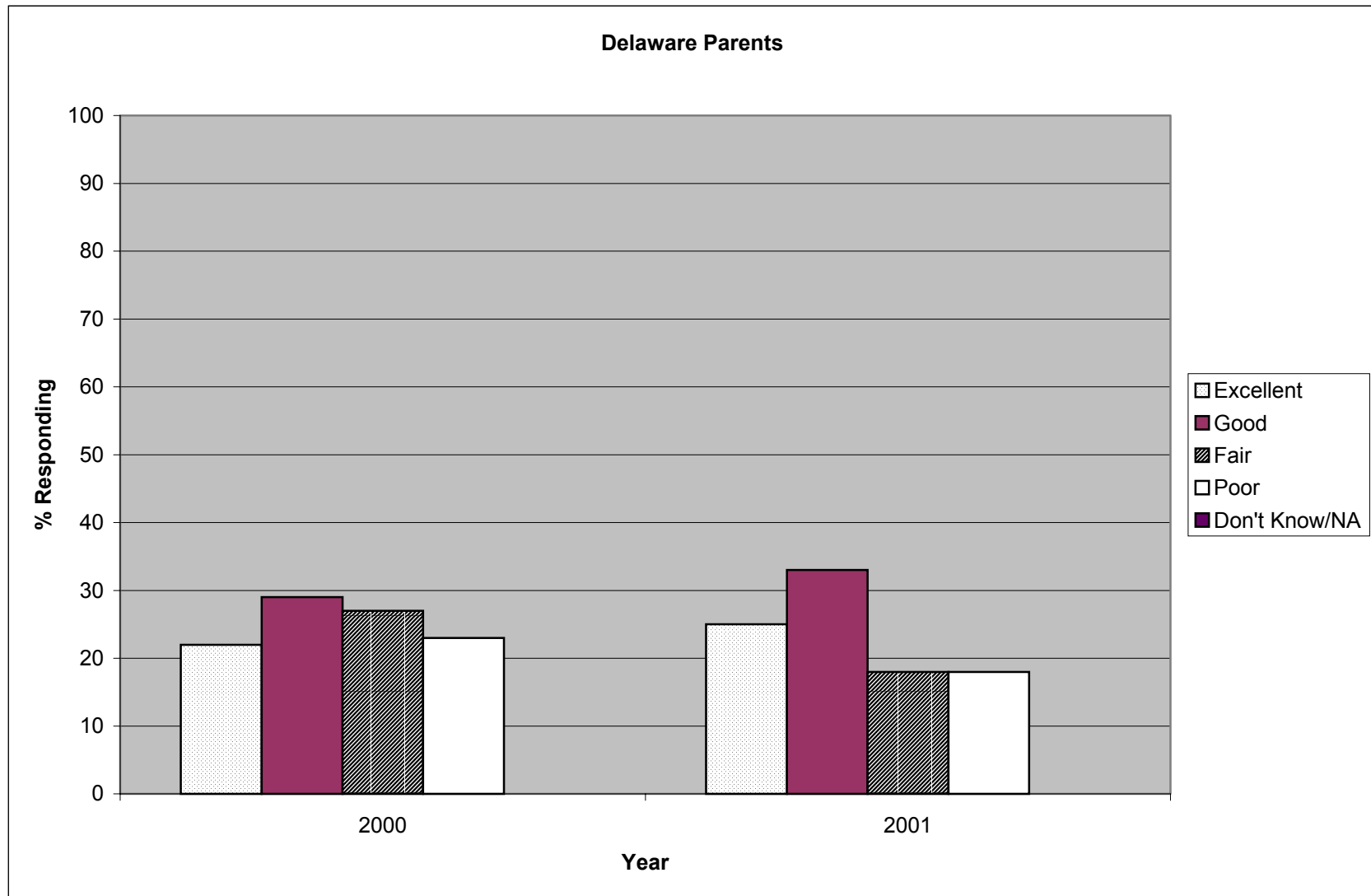
How good a job does your child's school do at informing you quickly if your children are consistently late or absent?



How good a job does your child's school do at informing you quickly if your children are having academic problems?

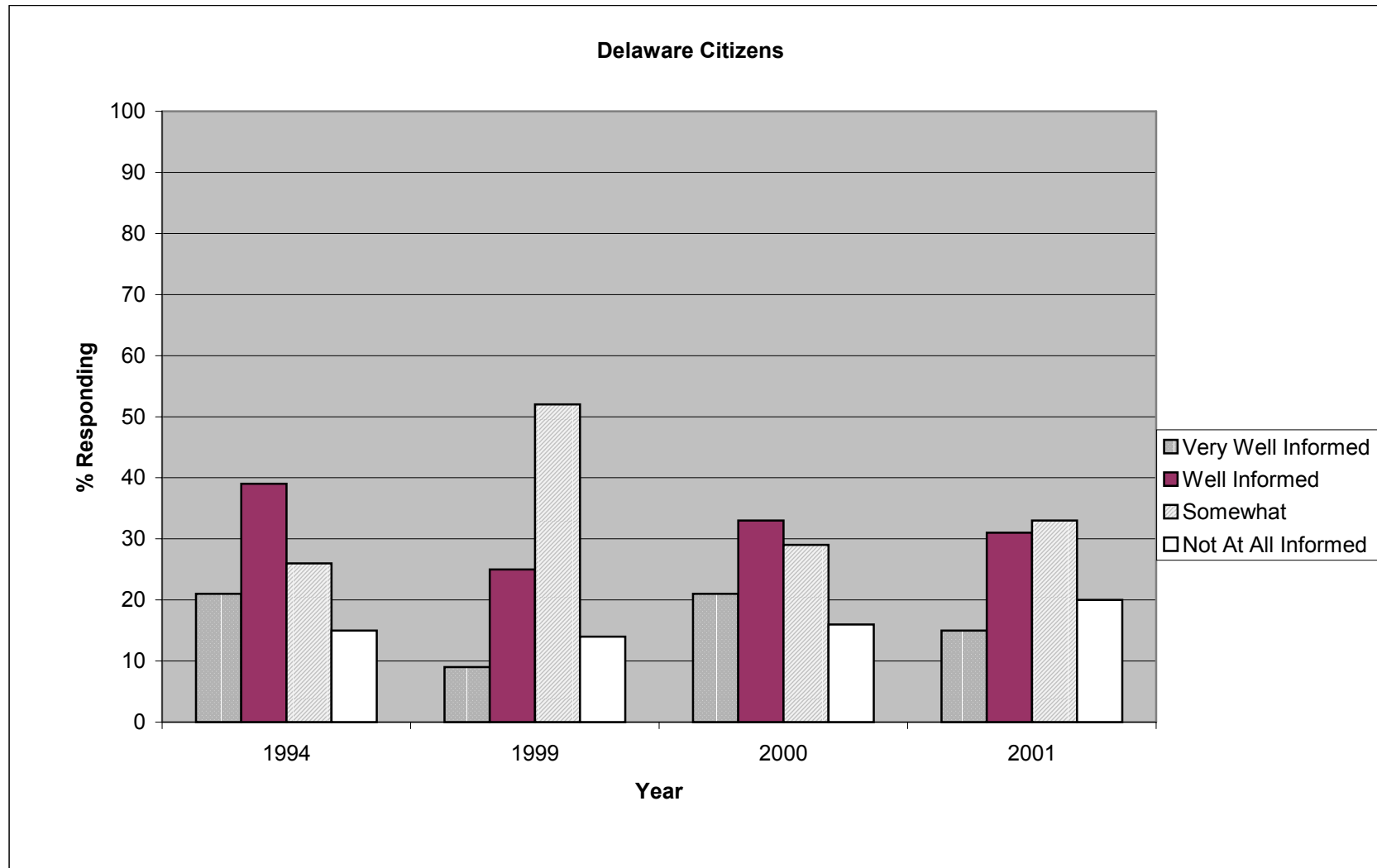


How good a job does your child's school do at giving you guidance about how to get your children excited and interested in learning?



VI. General Information

How well informed do you feel you are about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very informed?



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Comparisons Between National Results and Statewide Public Poll Results
(National results appear in parentheses)

I. Quality of Education in Delaware

Question	Responses					
	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	8%	33%	24%	6%	3%	27%
Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools, themselves, in the community were graded the same way. What grade would you give the elementary schools here? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1987)	(16%)	(36%)	(22%)	(4%)	(3%)	(19%)
What grade would you give the public <u>high</u> schools in Delaware?	6%	22%	23%	9%	5%	34%
Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools, themselves, in the community were graded the same way. What grade would you give the high schools here? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1987)	(11%)	(29%)	(26%)	(9%)	(4%)	(21%)

IV. Parent Involvement

How good a job does your child's school do of: (Public Agenda Online, 1998)	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
♦ informing parents quickly if children are consistently late or absent	37% (47%)	24% (29%)	6% (11%)	6% (6%)	26% (8%)
♦ informing parents (quickly) if children are having academic problems	35% (33%)	27% (31%)	14% (21%)	11% (11%)	14% (5%)
♦ giving parents guidance about how to get kids excited and interested in learning	25% (20%)	33% (37%)	18% (26%)	18% (15%)	6% (2%)

Appendix A:
Background, Design, and Data Collection

Background

The Delaware Education Research and Development Center (R&D Center) provides as one major aspect of its mission, service to the citizens of Delaware as a "trustworthy source of information about the condition of education in the state." It accomplishes this goal through three related activities. The first is gathering, organizing, and promoting access to a wide range of existing data describing education in the state. The second is the conducting of analyses and studies to identify priorities, describe conditions, anticipate courses of action, and evaluate their consequences. The third is the collection and analysis of new data on the state's schools as they relate to educational research and national views.

In keeping with this aspect of its workscope, the R&D Center has initiated a program of annual public surveys on the condition of education in Delaware. The first in this program of annual surveys was administered in the summer of 1994. The core of that survey was repeated in the spring of 1995, in the summers of 1996 and 1997, and in the fall of 1998 and 1999, in the fall/winter of 2000, and in the winter of 2001-2002 with the addition of new questions probing attitudes and opinions of particular interest at each administration of the poll. Beginning in 1996, the views of educators (teachers and administrators) were added to this program of research. The educator poll included many items from the public poll assessing the general condition of education. It is envisioned that the core of each survey will be repeated every year, with the addition of particular questions that examine public attitudes and opinions on matters of specific interest in any given year.

Design and Data Collection

The original survey was developed by the R&D Center with the advice and under the direction of a special workgroup on statewide polls on the condition of education. That review panel included representatives of the American Association of University Women, Delaware Chief State Officers Association, Delaware Association of School Administrators, Delaware School Board Association, Delaware State Education Association, Advisory Council on Careers and Vocational Education, Delaware Department of Public Instruction, and the Education Advisor for the Governor's Office, as well as selected legislators, members of the business community, the Business/Public Education Council, and the Delaware State Board of Education. Each year the survey is reviewed widely and revised to address timely issues and to provide information sought by various constituents.

From January 31, 2002 to April 11, 2002, telephone interviews were conducted with 1,152 citizens throughout the state. The sampling plan for the polls was scientifically developed. The public poll used random digit dialing to obtain a random sample of citizens. All analyses conducted by the R&D Center for the public poll involved adjusting data from the sample to reflect the statewide population. Because all percentages listed in this report were rounded to the nearest whole percent, some of the rows in the tables may not total 100%. This volume includes results for the state as a whole. The public poll results are disaggregated by respondents with and without children of school-age. Other analyses that address particular questions or interests are also available, upon request.

Appendix B:
Sampling Error

Sampling Error

In interpreting survey results, one should take into account that all surveys using a sample are subject to sampling error; that is, the extent to which the results may differ from what would be obtained if the entire population of Delaware teachers had been surveyed. The size of the sampling error depends largely on the number of citizens surveyed. The table below shows how much allowance should be made for the sampling error for this year's survey (adapted from the Polling Attitudes of Community on Education Manual, p.5-5).

Amount of Sampling Error in Percentage Points at the 95% Confidence Interval			
	Level		
	n = 1,152	n=752	n=400
Percentage near 10%	1.8%	2.2%	3.0%
Percentage near 20%	2.4%	2.9%	4.0%
Percentage near 30%	2.7%	3.3%	4.6%
Percentage near 40%	2.9%	3.6%	4.9%
Percentage near 50%	2.9%	3.6%	5.0%
Percentage near 60%	2.9%	3.6%	4.9%
Percentage near 70%	2.7%	3.3%	4.6%
Percentage near 80%	2.4%	2.9%	4.0%
Percentage near 90%	1.8%	2.2%	3.0%

The table would be used in the following way: The percent of citizens that gave the public elementary schools in Delaware a "B" is 33%. We go to the row for "percentages near 30%" in the table and across to the column for n = 1,152. The number at this point is 2.7%, which means that the 33% obtained in the

sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 2.7 points. In other words, the odds are 95 in 100 that repeated samplings, using the same procedures and the same sample size, would have an average result somewhere between 30.3 % and 35.7%, with the most likely value being the 33%. However, if we wanted to look only at how parents responded to this question, we would follow the same procedure except we would use the n=400 column as there were 400 hundred parents in our sample. That is, the percent of parents that gave the public elementary schools in Delaware a "B" is 41%. We go to the row for "percentages near 40%" in the table and across to the column for n = 400. The number at this point is 4.9%, which means that the 41% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 points. In other words, the odds are 95 in 100 that repeated samplings, using the same procedures and the same sample size, would have an average result somewhere between 36.1 % and 45.9%, with the most likely value being the 41%.

Appendix C:

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