

**2000 STATEWIDE PUBLIC POLL ON THE
CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE**

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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Pamela J. Brown, Ph.D., Associate Policy Scientist

With Contributions From:
Cheryl M. Ackerman, Ph.D.
Lisa A. Banicky, Ph.D.
Audrey J. Noble, Ph.D.
Ophelia Robinson, M.A.



Delaware Education Research & Development Center
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716

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

**2000 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 fall/winter of 2000. Highlights of key findings in six areas of educational reform are reported and include the following:

<p style="text-align:center">① <u>Quality of Education</u> Grading the Schools Prepared for the World of Work</p>	<p style="text-align:center">② <u>Accountability</u> Student and Educator Accountability Focus on Achievement</p>
<p style="text-align:center">③ <u>Discipline</u> School Safety Problems in Public Schools</p>	<p style="text-align:center">④ <u>Parent Involvement</u> Amount and Opportunities for Involvement Strategies for Improving Parent Involvement Patterns of Parent Involvement</p>
<p style="text-align:center">⑤ <u>Neighborhood Schools/School Choice</u> Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools Reasons for Choosing a School</p>	<p style="text-align:center">⑥ <u>Communication</u> Sources of Information Informed citizens</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 2000 poll results to national data;
- Background information on the poll, survey design, data collection techniques; and,
- A list of references.

Putting the Results in Context

This year's summary of the poll results is 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 2000 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

Most citizens (71%) gave the public schools in Delaware a grade of a "B" or "C." Parents were slightly more likely to give the schools a higher grade than nonparents. Both parents and nonparents alike were more likely to give a higher grade to Delaware elementary schools than high schools.

Citizens were split on the most important factor in determining the grade they gave to public schools. They cited many different factors including, but not limited to, teacher quality, communication, involvement with parents, measures of student performance, and quality of instruction.

Citizens are also split on how they view the education children get today as compared to their own educational experiences. About a third (37%) believe children today get a better education while about a third (36%) believe they get a worse education.

Putting it in Context

*Nationally**, while few U.S. or Delaware citizens gave the schools a grade of a "D" or an "F," about half of U.S. citizens (49%) gave the public schools in their community an "A" or "B" compared to a little more than one-third (36%) of Delaware citizens.

*Compared to previous years***, the pattern of assigned grades has remained relatively stable with most Delaware citizens giving the public schools a "B" or a "C." However, there has been a shift within the last four years to a fairly equal distribution of "B's" and "C's." Prior to 1997, Delaware citizens were more likely to give the schools a "C" than a "B."

For the first time since 1994, the percent of Delaware citizens that stated that children today are getting a better education than they did rose above 30%. In addition, it is the first time the percent of Delaware citizens that stated that children today are getting a worse education dropped below 40%.

Prepared for the World of Work

Poll Results

Many citizens (59%) believe that most students have the skills to succeed in the work world, but some citizens (32%) believe that only a few students have these skills.

Putting it in Context

Around 60% of U.S. public school teachers as well as Delaware residents believe that at least most students have the skills to succeed in the work world. However, nationally, 59% of U.S. employers believe that graduates of public schools *lack the skills* they need to succeed in the work world. (Public Agenda Online, 1999).

** For the complete results of the trend analysis, see pages 35-42.

* For the complete results of the national comparisons, see pages 43-49.

② ACCOUNTABILITY

Student and Educator Accountability

Poll Results

DE citizens were asked several questions related to testing and the use of tests in schools. When asked who was more likely to drop out, a student who is retained because of poor performance on an achievement test or a student who is promoted to the next grade despite poor performance, DE citizens were nearly evenly split in their responses.

Delaware citizens' responses were split regarding a significant amount of classroom time teachers devote to preparing students for standardized tests. Roughly half (45%) indicated that there was nothing wrong with it because tests are designed to measure important skills and knowledge. The other half of the respondents (48%) felt that using class time to prepare for a test was problematic because it leads to teaching to the test and learning suffers.

When citizens were asked to identify other measures besides student test scores as a means to hold students accountable, they identified many different indicators including, but not limited to, attendance, classroom behavior, class participation, student attitude, grades, and participation in extracurricular or community service activities.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates that neither retention nor social promotion (promoting a student despite poor performance) are effective strategies for assisting low-performing students. Furthermore, "researchers conclude that grade retention, as typically implemented, is an ineffective if not harmful practice." (Banicky & Foss, 2000, p. I-6). More effective remedies for dealing with low performing students include providing students with extra learning time and individualized instruction.

Research in the area of high-stakes testing indicates that teaching to the test most often occurs when consequences are attached to performance. In addition, teaching to the test frequently leads to a narrowing of curriculum (i.e. only those specifically topics covered on the test).

To combat the negative consequences of teaching to the test, experts suggest linking the test closely to appropriate curriculum and using more than a single measure to assess student performance.

Focus on Achievement

Poll Results

Many citizens (40%) believe the student achievement standards in Delaware are neither too high nor too low. However, about a third (38%) believe they are too low.

Delaware citizens are split over the emphasis on student achievement testing in the public schools. While about a one-fourth (23%) believes there is too much emphasis, about one-third (31%) believes there is not enough emphasis.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, most citizens (57%) believe the student achievement standards are about right. However, similar to Delaware citizens, some U.S. citizens (33%) believe the standards are too low.

Almost half of U.S. citizens (48%) believe there is the right amount of emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in their community. On the other hand, similar to Delaware, some U.S. citizens believe there is too much of an emphasis (20%) or not enough emphasis (28%).

③ DISCIPLINE

School Safety

Poll Results

Most believe the schools in their community are either somewhat safe (57%) or very safe (23%) while few (14%) believe the schools in their community are not too safe.

Putting it in Context

National data reveal that the perceptions of Delaware citizens' view of the schools regarding safety are very similar to that of U.S. citizens, i.e., most believe the schools are somewhat safe (46%) or very safe (29%) and few believe the schools are not too safe (15%)

Problems in Public Schools

Poll Results

Nearly half of Delaware citizens viewed student drug use (50%), student smoking (46%), student drinking (42%) and teen pregnancy (42%) as serious and widespread problems in Delaware public schools.

The most frequently cited cause of student violence in public schools was a lack of parental control (discipline, supervision, involvement, values).

Putting it in Context

Research indicates that citizens' perceptions of their own community or school will be more positive than that of the larger community (state, nation, etc.).

Nationally, lack of parental control (24%) and a lack of family structure (poverty, divorce, etc.) (20%) were the most frequently cited causes of student violence in public schools.

④ PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Amount of and Opportunities for Involvement

Poll Results

Most parents (86%) stated that schools make it easy to be involved. When asked what makes them feel this way, almost half of the parents explained that the kind and frequency of communication was the basis for their perception. Others explained that the abundance or lack of activities for families and parents, invitations (or lack of) by the school for involvement, and accessibility of the staff to parents were key factors also.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates parent involvement improves student achievement. Children whose parents provide help at home and are in touch with the school 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.

Impediments for teachers include lack of time and training, but studies show schools that make involvement a high priority achieve higher levels of parent-teacher collaboration, thereby maximizing benefits for children.

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

Strategies for Improving Parent Involvement

Poll Results

Many parents stated that schools do an excellent job of providing parents with information about their son or daughter, such as preparing progress reports on student performance between report cards or about the school in general such as making them aware of opportunities to volunteer at school.

However, strategies that empower parents to take a more active role in their child's learning may deserve more attention such as helping parents understand what to expect of their children when they reach certain ages and giving parents guidance on how to get kids excited about learning. This trend is observed in national data also.

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.

Patterns of Parent Involvement

Poll Results

Delaware parents were more likely to attend a parent-teacher conference, or student extracurricular function than a PTA, school board, or other public school meeting.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates parents prefer to be involved in activities that directly involve their child and are less likely to be involved as a volunteer or decision maker.

⑤ NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS/SCHOOL CHOICE

Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools

Poll Results

While about half of Delaware citizens (49%) believe that student achievement will rise if students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, almost half (46%) believe student achievement will not change.

Slightly more than half (55%) of New Castle County residents believe that achievement will rise when children are allowed to attend a neighborhood school. However, 40% of New Castle County residents stated that it will not affect student achievement positively or negatively.

Two-thirds of Delaware citizens (67%) believe parent involvement will increase when students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school.

Almost three-fourths (74%) of New Castle County residents stated that parent involvement will rise when students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school.

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.

⑤ NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS/SCHOOL CHOICE (CON'T)

Reasons for Choosing a School

Poll Results

Most Delaware parents believe that quality of teaching staff (96%), maintenance of discipline (88%), curriculum offered (86%), and size of classes (77%) are very important factors for choosing a public school for their child. About half of Delaware parents (52%) believe that proximity of the school to the home is a very important factor in choosing a school.

While most parents (76%) stated they were familiar with Delaware's school choice program, over half (54%) stated they do not have enough information about the different public schools in Delaware to make the best choice for their child. The most frequently cited reasons for not having enough information include: (1) parents not knowing where to locate information, (2) schools and/or districts not distributing information, and (3) parents' lack of access to the kind of information desired (curriculum used, etc.)

Putting it in Context

Nationally, many more citizens view the quality of the teaching staff (85%), maintenance of student discipline (76%), and the curriculum (74%) as very important factors in choosing a public school for a child as compared to the proximity of the school to the home (29%) or the availability of various extracurricular activities such as band/orchestra, theatre, and clubs (19%).

Nationally, a little more than one-third (39%) of U.S. citizens stated they did not feel they had enough information about the different public schools in their community to make the best choice for a child.

⑥ COMMUNICATION

Sources of Information

Poll Results

About two-thirds of Delaware citizens get most of their information about the public schools from the newspaper (36%) or word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends, neighbors, family members) (29%). Only 14% get most of their information directly from the school or district in written form such as school and district newsletters or letters sent home.

Almost half of Delaware citizens stated that their single best source of information is the newspaper (26%) or word of mouth from other adults (20%).

Putting it in Context

Consistently over the past four 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.

Informed Citizens

Poll Results

While parents were more likely to state they are well informed about the public schools in their community as compared to nonparents, 30% of parents stated they were either somewhat informed or not informed at all.

Putting it in Context

While more Delaware citizens (54%) feel well informed about the public schools in their community as compared to 1999 (34%), it is slightly less than the percent of citizens who felt well informed in 1994 (60%).

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
of the
University of Delaware

**Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 2000 Results Analysis**

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 schools in Delaware?	4%	32%	39%	9%	3%	12%
What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	9%	39%	27%	5%	3%	16%
What grade would you give the public <u>high schools</u> in Delaware?	4%	23%	38%	11%	5%	20%

What is the most important factor in determining the grade you gave the public schools? (n=339)

♦ Teacher capacity and quality	19%
♦ Communication and involvement with parents/community	16%
♦ Measures of student performance	15%
♦ Quality of instruction	13%
♦ Student behavior	9%
♦ Curriculum	8%
♦ School environment & structure	4%
♦ School/classroom resources	4%
♦ Effort put forth by schools	2%
♦ Standards/accountability	1%
♦ DSTP and standardized testing programs	<1%
♦ Other (administration, treatment of students, etc.)	9%

	All	Most	A few	None	Don't know
In your opinion, how many students – all, most, some, a few, or none – have the skills to succeed in the work world?	5%	59%	32%	1%	3%
As you look back on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did?	37%	36%	23%		4%

II. Educator and Student Accountability

	A great deal of improvement	Some improvement	A little improvement	No improvement	Don't know
To what extent do you think the student accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	15%	39%	21%	22%	3%
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in your community, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount?	23%	31%	35%		11%
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?	9%	40%	38%		13%

	There is nothing wrong with this because the tests measure important skills and knowledge	This is a problem because when teachers teach to the test real learning suffers	Don't know		
When schools require students to pass a standardized test to be promoted to the next grade or graduate, teachers often take significant classroom time to prepare their students for the test. Do you think that:	45%	48%	7%		
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Some people worry schools will be overwhelmed because too many students will fail. Would you say you agree or disagree with this view? Is this strongly or somewhat?	23%	37%	23%	13%	4%
	More of those who repeat a grade will drop out		More of those promoted anyway will drop out		Don't know
Just your impression, which children are more likely to drop out of school: those who fail achievement tests and have to repeat a grade, or those who fail achievement tests and are promoted anyway?	46%		41%		14%

Students test scores are not the only means to hold students accountable. What other measures do you feel should be used to make these decisions about students?

♦ no other measures	27%	♦ student attitude	2%
♦ grade point average/grades	12%	♦ homework	2%
♦ classwork and effort	11%	♦ participation in extracurricular activities or community service	1%
♦ opportunities to learn	8%	♦ social, emotional, cognitive maturity, and readiness	1%
♦ teacher judgment	5%	♦ other	7%
♦ attendance	4%		
♦ classroom behavior	4%	♦ don't know	9%
♦ class participation	3%	♦ refused	6%

III. Discipline

	Extremely safe	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not too safe	Not at all safe	Don't know
In general, do you feel the schools in your community are extremely safe, very safe, somewhat safe, not too safe, or not at all safe?	2%	23%	57%	10%	4%	5%
	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious	Don't know	
The following statements describe the seriousness of a problem in Delaware public schools. A problem may be serious, but “very serious” means a problem is both serious <u>and</u> widespread.						
◆ Student drug use	1%	4%	39%	50%	6%	
◆ School violence	1%	13%	46%	36%	4%	
◆ Student drinking	2%	9%	39%	42%	8%	
◆ Student smoking	2%	9%	37%	46%	5%	
◆ Teenage pregnancy	1%	10%	37%	42%	10%	
◆ Gangs	7%	23%	29%	27%	15%	

What, in your opinion, are the major causes of student violence in public schools?	Percent Responding
♦ lack of parental control (discipline, supervision, involvement, values)	38%
♦ peer pressure and peer relations	11%
♦ drugs or alcohol	7%
♦ lack of control in the school (no discipline, overcrowding, etc.)	6%
♦ integration/segregation problems; racial/ethnic disputes	5%
♦ influence of the media (TV, movies, music, news media)	5%
♦ home life (other home problems such as poverty, divorce, family structure, etc.)	4%
♦ kid's attitudes (boredom, disrespect, lack of self-esteem)	4%
♦ material jealousies (clothes, shoes, money, etc.)	3%
♦ gangs	2%
♦ lack of anger management training and positive problem solving techniques	2%
♦ availability of weapons	1%
♦ other	9%
♦ don't know	4%
♦ refused	1%

How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing violence in the public schools – very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective?	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know
♦ Stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students	64%	25%	6%	3%	3%
♦ Training school staffs in how to deal with student violence	56%	34%	6%	2%	3%
♦ More vocational or job-training courses in public schools	52%	34%	8%	4%	3%
♦ Drug and alcohol abuse programs for students	52%	32%	9%	4%	3%
♦ Values and ethics education for students	59%	29%	7%	2%	3%
♦ Education designed to reduce racial and ethnic tensions	51%	35%	7%	3%	4%
♦ Courses offered by the public schools in how to be a good parent	49%	32%	10%	6%	3%
♦ Conflict education for students	53%	37%	5%	2%	4%

IV. Parent Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	Don't know
When some children do poorly in school, some people place the responsibility on the children, some on the parents, some on the school or the teachers. What percentage of the responsibility do you think each has when children do poorly in school?					
Children	42.3	114.7	30	33	1%
Parents	57.0	113.3	40	50	1%
School/Teachers	40.9	114.7	30	34	1%

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't know
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	40%	46%	8%	5%	1%

What makes you feel this way?	Percent responding
➤ Great/poor communication from the school	47%
➤ Abundance/lack of activities and programs for families/parents (PTA, trips, conferences, family night)	17%
➤ Invitation (or lack of) from the school for involvement	17%
➤ Accessibility (or lack of) of staff/open door policy	16%
➤ Positive/negative previous experiences with school/staff	16%
➤ Addressing (or not addressing) barriers to parent involvement (working parents, transportation, etc.)	2%
➤ Other	2%

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
How good a job does your child's school do at:					
♦ sending home progress reports between report cards	54%	32%	10%	3%	1%
♦ helping parents understand what children at each age are like	22%	32%	24%	16%	6%
♦ making parents aware of chances to volunteer at the school	41%	35%	14%	10%	0%
♦ providing parents with information about how to help their child with his/her homework	27%	31%	23%	19%	0%
♦ informing parents quickly if children are consistently late or absent	47%	35%	9%	10%	0%
♦ informing parents if children are having academic problems	38%	33%	17%	12%	0%
♦ giving parents guidance about how to get kids excited and interested in learning	22%	29%	27%	23%	0%

In the last 12 months, which of the following, if any, have you yourself done?	Yes	No
♦ attended a school play or concert in a local public school	63%	37%
♦ attended a local public school athletic event	52%	48%
♦ met with any teachers or administrators in the local public schools about your own child	74%	26%
♦ attended a PTA meeting	35%	65%
♦ attended a school board meeting	14%	86%
♦ attended any other meeting dealing with the local public schools	31%	69%
♦ made sure your children attended school	68%	31%
♦ made sure books were available for your children to read	95%	5%
♦ made sure that homework assigned to any of your children was completed	96%	5%
♦ read and/or discussed a school assignment with any of your children	95%	5%
♦ read a book to, or with, any of your children	80%	20%
♦ placed definite limits on the kind of TV any of your children watch	83%	17%
♦ placed definite limits on the amount of TV any of your children watch	80%	20%

What could schools do to encourage you to become more involved in your child's school? (n=325)	
♦ Better communication	33%
♦ Nothing	26%
♦ More family activities (accommodate working parents)	13%
♦ Doing a fine job now	13%
♦ Don't know	7%
♦ School more proactive	5%
♦ Other	3%

V. Neighborhood/Choice Schools

Are you familiar with Delaware's School Choice Program?	Yes 54%	No 46%	
Parents can apply to send their children to any public school in Delaware. Do you feel you have enough information about the different public schools in Delaware to make the best choice for your children?	Yes, know enough 42%	No, don't know enough 58%	Don't know 0%

What makes you feel this way?	Yes, I know enough	No, I don't know enough
➤ I have (not) received information from schools/districts.	29%	55%
➤ I have (not) conducted own research.	21%	8%
➤ I don't know where to get the information I need (information is promotionally only or not the kind of information I need).	--	12%
➤ I get information from my own sources (listen to other parents, children, teachers; read the newspaper; base it on own experiences with the schools; attend school meetings or visit schools.).	43%	--
➤ School choice is a hassle (no slots available, some schools do not participate, receive information too late to make choice, etc.)	--	6%
➤ I am too new to the area.	--	6%
➤ I am happy where my children are.	4%	6%
➤ I am not interested in public schools.	3%	4%
➤ No real choice available (schools are the same).	--	2%

The following are factors that might be considered in choosing a public school for your child. Tell whether you would consider each factor very important, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all in choosing a local school?	Very important	Fairly important	Not Very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Quality of teaching staff	96%	3%	0%	<1%	0%
Maintenance of student discipline	88%	11%	1%	1%	0%
Curriculum (e.g. courses offered)	86%	13%	1%	<1%	0%
Size of classes	77%	19%	3%	<1%	0%
Grades or test scores of the student body	45%	46%	7%	2%	0%
Track record of graduates in high school, in college, or on the job	47%	36%	12%	4%	0%
Closeness to home (location of the school)	52%	31%	14%	3%	0%
Extracurricular activities, such as band/orchestra, theatre, clubs	53%	37%	9%	1%	0%

	Of a similar ethnic background as your child	From a variety of ethnic backgrounds	You have no preference	Don't know
Which would you prefer? That your child's classmates are ...	3%	39%	58%	0%

	Similar in ability to your child	From a variety of different abilities	You have no preference	Don't know
Which would you prefer? That your child's classmates are ...	40%	30%	31%	0%

	Achievement will rise 49%	Achievement will decline 6%	Will not change 46%	Don't know 0%
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think student achievement in the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?				

	Involvement will rise 67%	Involvement will decline 3%	Will not change 27%	Don't know 3%
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think parent involvement with the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?				

V. Satisfaction with State DOE

	Yes 9%	No 91%	Don't know 0%
Have you at any time in the past 12 months initiated direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education to request services?			

	Phone call 65%	Letter 3%	Email 1%	In person at a local public-school event (e.g. board meeting, open house, PTA meeting) 15%	Via the State DOE internet site <1%	Other 17%
How did you contact them?						

What types of services did you request from them?	Percent responding
➤ Information	55%
➤ Advocacy	21%
➤ Testing of child	12%
➤ Training/Instruction	7%
➤ Financial support	5%

What services, if any, would you like the Delaware Department of Education to provide that it does not currently provide? (n=716)	Percent Responding
♦ none	43%
♦ don't know	20%
♦ informational source for parents and community members	6%
♦ curriculum concerns -- academic	6%
♦ infrastructure -- financial, organizational	5%
♦ parental education courses	3%
♦ after school and out-of-school programs	3%
♦ teacher concerns -- testing, time, PD	3%
♦ curriculum concerns -- social, family planning, etc.	3%
♦ safety concerns -- buses, drugs, sex offenders	2%
♦ more services for students with learning disabilities	2%
♦ parent involvement	1%
♦ refused	1%

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Overall, how satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education – would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?	17%	63%	14%	6%	0%

VI. General Information

	Very well informed	Well informed	Somewhat	Not at all 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?	21%	33%	29%	16%	1%

Where do you get most of your information about the public schools?	Percent Responding
♦ Newspaper	36%
♦ Word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends/neighbors/family members)	29%
♦ Written communication from school or district (e.g., newsletters, letters sent home)	14%
♦ Word of mouth from children (e.g., own children, grandchildren, neighborhood children)	12%
♦ TV	7%
♦ Direct contact with school personnel in a professional capacity	6%
♦ School or district meetings including PTA	6%
♦ No source of information	4%
♦ Websites	1%
♦ School profiles (paper or web)	<1%
♦ Other	12%
♦ Don't know	<1%
♦ Refused	<1%

What is your best source of information about the local public schools?	Percent Responding			
♦ Newspaper	26%			
♦ Word of mouth from other adults (e.g., friends/neighbors/family members)	20%			
♦ Direct contact with school or school personnel in a professional capacity	12%			
♦ Other	11%			
♦ Written communication from school or district (e.g., newsletters, letters sent home)	9%			
♦ Word of mouth from children (e.g., own children, grandchildren, neighborhood children)	7%			
♦ TV	5%			
♦ No source of information	3%			
♦ School or district meetings including PTA	3%			
♦ Website	1%			
♦ Radio	1%			
♦ Don't know	1%			
♦ Refused	1%			
In what county do you live?	New Castle 65%	Kent 16%	Sussex 19%	Don't know 0%

In what school district do you live?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Appoquinimink	4%	• Polytech	0%
• Brandywine	12%	• Smyrna	3%
• Christina	20%	• Cape Henlopen	4%
• Colonial	9%	• Delmar	<1%
• NCC Vo-Tech	0%	• Indian River	7%
• Red Clay	20%	• Laurel	2%
• Capital	4%	• Seaford	3%
• Caesar Rodney	5%	• Sussex Vo-tech	<1%
• Lake Forest	3%	• Woodbridge	1%
• Milford	2%	• Don't know	0%

	Average years in Delaware	Range
Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	27.8	0-89

What is your occupation?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Professional (e.g. doctor, lawyer)	17%	• Retired	16%
• Executive, Administrative and Managerial	14%	• Farming	<1%
• Clerical/secretarial	5%	• Student	4%
• Sales (e.g. insurance, car)	4%	• Homemaker, stay-at-home parent	7%
• Service (e.g. restaurants, maintenance)	12%	• Unemployed	2%
• Technical (e.g. computer)	1%	• Other	10%
• Industrial	7%	• Refused	<1%

	Average	Range
What is your age?	Age 44.8	18-89
	Yes	No
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	3%	97%
How would you describe your race?	Percent responding	
• White	82%	
• African American	14%	
• Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	
• Native American	<1%	
• Other	2%	
• Refused	0%	
	Female	Male
Gender	52%	48%

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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 schools in Delaware?	7% (3%)	33% (31%)	40% (39%)	11% (9%)	4% (3%)	4% (17%)
What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	14% (7%)	39% (36%)	28% (28%)	6% (5%)	3% (3%)	10% (21%)
What grade would you give the public <u>high schools</u> in Delaware?	6% (4%)	27% (22%)	32% (38%)	11% (12%)	5% (4%)	20% (20%)
	All	Most	A few	None	Don't know	
In your opinion, how many students – all, most, some, a few, or none – have the skills to succeed in the work world?	9% (5%)	59% (56%)	28% (36%)	2% (1%)	2% (4%)	

	Too much emphasis	Not enough emphasis	About the right amount	Don't know
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in your community, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount?	29% (21%)	25% (33%)	39% (33%)	7% (14%)
	Too high	About right	Too low	Don't know
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?	13% (6%)	45% (37%)	35% (40%)	7% (16%)
	Better today	Worse today	No difference	Don't know
As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did?	41% (35%)	36% (40%)	20% (21%)	3% (5%)

II. Educator and Student Accountability

	No improvement	A little improvement	Some improvement	A great deal of improvement	Don't know
To what extent do you think this student accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	24% (21%)	20% (23%)	40% (39%)	14% (14%)	2% (3%)
	There is nothing wrong with this because the tests measure important skills and knowledge		This is a problem because when teachers teach to the test real learning suffers		Don't know
When schools require students to pass a standardized test to be promoted to the next grade or graduate, teachers often take significant classroom time to prepare their students for the test. Do you think that:	48% (40%)		48% (52%)		4% (8%)

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Some people worry schools will be overwhelmed because too many students will fail. Would you say you agree or disagree with this view? Is this strongly or somewhat?	30% (19%)	34% (38%)	22% (25%)	11% (15%)	4% (5%)

	More of those who repeat a grade will drop out	More of those promoted anyway will drop out	Don't know
Just your impression, which children are more likely to drop out of school: those who fail achievement tests and have to repeat a grade, or those who fail achievement tests and are promoted anyway?	50% (45%)	38% (42%)	12% (13%)

III. Discipline

	Extremely safe	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not too safe	Not at all safe	Don't know
In general, do you feel the schools in your community are extremely safe, very safe, somewhat safe, not too safe, or not at all safe?	5% (2%)	24% (22%)	57% (56%)	9% (10%)	4% (3%)	1% (7%)

The following statements describe the seriousness of a problem in Delaware public schools. A problem may be serious, but “very serious” means a problem is both serious <u>and</u> widespread.	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious	Don’t Know
♦ Student drug use	1% (<1%)	4% (5%)	41% (38%)	50% (50%)	4% (7%)
♦ School violence	1% (1%)	13% (14%)	46% (45%)	37% (36%)	3% (5%)
♦ Student drinking	2% (2%)	8% (10%)	38% (39%)	45% (42%)	6% (8%)
♦ Student smoking	2% (2%)	9% (10%)	35% (36%)	50% (47%)	5% (6%)
♦ Teenage pregnancy	1% (1%)	12% (9%)	39% (37%)	40% (42%)	7% (12%)
♦ Gangs	6% (6%)	26% (21%)	29% (29%)	27% (27%)	12% (16%)

How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing violence in the public schools – very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective?	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't Know
◆ Stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students	67% (62%)	22% (27%)	6% (6%)	3% (2%)	2% (3%)
◆ Training school staffs in how to deal with student violence	59% (57%)	33% (34%)	6% (5%)	2% (2%)	1% (3%)
◆ More vocational or job-training courses in public schools	56% (49%)	32% (36%)	9% (7%)	4% (4%)	1% (3%)
◆ Drug and alcohol abuse programs for students	56% (50%)	33% (34%)	8% (10%)	2% (4%)	1% (3%)
◆ Values and ethics education for students	63% (58%)	30% (30%)	5% (6%)	2% (2%)	<1% (3%)
◆ Education designed to reduce racial and ethnic tensions	56% (50%)	34% (36%)	6% (8%)	2% (4%)	2% (3%)
◆ Courses offered by the public schools in how to be a good parent	53% (47%)	33% (33%)	8% (11%)	6% (6%)	1% (3%)
◆ Conflict education for students	59% (51%)	35% (38%)	4% (6%)	2% (2%)	1% (4%)

IV. Parent Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	Don't know
When some children do poorly in school, some people place the responsibility on the children, some on the parents, some on the school or the teachers. What percentage of the responsibility do you think each has when children do poorly in school?					
♦ Children	38.5 (42.5)	99.2 (114.6)	30 (30)	33 (33)	1% (1%)
♦ Parents	53.1 (57.4)	98.2 (113.2)	40 (40)	50 (50)	1% (1%)
♦ School/Teachers	38.0 (40.3)	99.0 (114.7)	30 (30)	34 (34)	1% (1%)
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	5%	9%	44%	40%	2%

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
How good a job does your child's school do at:					
♦ sending home progress reports between report cards	52%	32%	11%	4%	1%
♦ helping parents understand what children at each age are like	21%	31%	25%	17%	6%
♦ making parents aware of chances to volunteer at the school	39%	34%	16%	10%	0%
♦ providing parents with information about how to help their child with his/her homework	26%	33%	23%	19%	0%
♦ informing parents quickly if children are consistently late or absent	45%	35%	10%	10%	0%
♦ informing parents if children are having academic problems	37%	33%	18%	13%	0%
♦ giving parents guidance about how to get kids excited and interested in learning	21%	28%	27%	24%	0%

In the last 12 months, which of the following, if any, have you yourself done?	YES	NO
♦ attended a school play or concert in a local public school	63%	37%
♦ attended a local public school athletic event	55%	45%
♦ met with any teachers or administrators in the local public schools about your own child	77%	23%
♦ attended a PTA meeting	36%	65%
♦ attended a school board meeting	13%	87%
♦ attended any other meeting dealing with the local public schools	32%	68%
♦ made sure your children attended school	97%	3%
♦ made sure books were available for your children to read	95%	5%
♦ made sure that homework assigned to any of your children was completed	95%	5%
♦ read and/or discussed a school assignment with any of your children	95%	5%
♦ read a book to, or with, any of your children	80%	20%
♦ placed definite limits on the kind of TV any of your children watch	83%	17%
♦ placed definite limits on the amount of TV any of your children watch	80%	20%

V. Neighborhood/Choice Schools

	YES	NO	
Are you familiar with Delaware's School Choice Program?	76% (45%)	25% (55%)	
	Yes, know enough	No, don't know enough	Don't know
Parents can apply to send their children to any public school in Delaware. Do you feel you have enough information about the different public schools in Delaware to make the best choice for your children?	46% (31%)	54% (69%)	0% (0%)

	Very important	Fairly important	Not Very important	Not important at all	Don't know
The following are factors that might be considered in choosing a public school for your child. Tell whether you would consider each factor very important, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all in choosing a local school?					
♦ Quality of teaching staff	97% (95%)	3% (6%)	0% (0%)	<1% (0%)	0% (0%)
♦ Maintenance of student discipline	90% (80%)	10% (15%)	<1% (2%)	<1% (4%)	0% (0%)
♦ Curriculum (e.g. courses offered)	87% (78%)	12% (20%)	1% (2%)	<1% (0%)	0% (0%)
♦ Size of classes	80% (71%)	19% (22%)	2% (7%)	<1% (0%)	0% (0%)
♦ Grades or test scores of the student body	43% (47%)	47% (46%)	8% (7%)	2% (0%)	0% (0%)
♦ Track record of graduates in high school, in college, or on the job	48% (40%)	36% (47%)	13% (9%)	4% (4%)	0% (0%)
♦ Closeness to home (location of the school)	51% (49%)	34% (36%)	12% (13%)	3% (2%)	0% (0%)
♦ Extracurricular activities, such as band/orchestra, theatre, clubs	54% (53%)	36% (40%)	9% (7%)	1% (0%)	0% (0%)

	Of a similar ethnic background as your child	From a variety of ethnic backgrounds	You have no preference	Don't know
Which would you prefer? That your child's classmates are ...	4% (6%)	40% (35%)	56% (60%)	0% (0%)

	Similar in ability to your child	From a variety of different abilities	You have no preference	Don't know
Which would you prefer? That your child's classmates are ...	41% (41%)	28% (30%)	31% (30%)	0% (0%)

	Achievement will rise	Achievement will decline	Will not change	Don't know
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think student achievement in the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?	38% (53%)	7% (5%)	54% (42%)	0% (0%)

	Involvement will rise	Involvement will decline	Will not change	Don't know
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think parent involvement with the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?	62% (69%)	2% (3%)	33% (25%)	3% (3%)

V. Satisfaction with State DOE

	Yes	No	Don't know
Have you at any time in the past 12 months initiated direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education to request services?	13% (8%)	87% (93%)	0% (0%)

	Phone call	Letter	Email	In person at a local public-school event (e.g. board meeting, open house, PTA meeting)	Via the State DOE internet site	Other
How did you contact them?	71% (57%)	2% (6%)	2% (2%)	12% (15%)	2% (0%)	12% (20%)
			Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
			Don't know			
Overall, how satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education – would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?			21% (14%)	59% (64%)	14% (17%)	6% (5%)
						0% (0%)

VI. General Information

	Not at all informed	Somewhat	Well 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?	7% (22%)	23% (31%)	42% (28%)	27% (19%)	1% (1%)
In what county do you live?	New Castle 59% (62%)	Kent 18% (17%)	Sussex 23% (21%)	Don't know 0% (0%)	

In what school district do you live?	Percent responding		Percent responding
♦ Appoquinimink	5% (3%)	♦ Polytech	0% (0%)
♦ Brandywine	9% (13%)	♦ Smyrna	3% (3%)
♦ Christina	16% (18%)	♦ Cape Henlopen	5% (6%)
♦ Colonial	12% (6%)	♦ Delmar	1% (<1%)
♦ NCC Vo-Tech	0% (0%)	♦ Indian River	8% (8%)
♦ Red Clay	17% (20%)	♦ Laurel	2% (2%)
♦ Capital	5% (5%)	♦ Seaford	3% (3%)
♦ Caesar Rodney	7% (5%)	♦ Sussex Vo-tech	1% (<1%)
♦ Lake Forest	3% (4%)	♦ Woodbridge	1% (1%)
♦ Milford	2% (3%)	♦ Don't know	0% (0%)

Average years in Delaware

Range

Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	24.8 (29.2)	0-74 (0-88)
What is your age?	Average Age 39.8 (47.5)	Range 21-74 (18-89)
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	Yes 4% (3%)	No 96% (97%)
How would you describe your race?	Percent responding	
♦ White	77% (82%)	
♦ African American	21% (10%)	
♦ Asian/Pacific Islander	1% (2%)	
♦ Native American	<1% (<1%)	
♦ Other	1% (2%)	
♦ Refused	0% (0%)	

Gender	Female 59% (59%)	Male 41% (41%)
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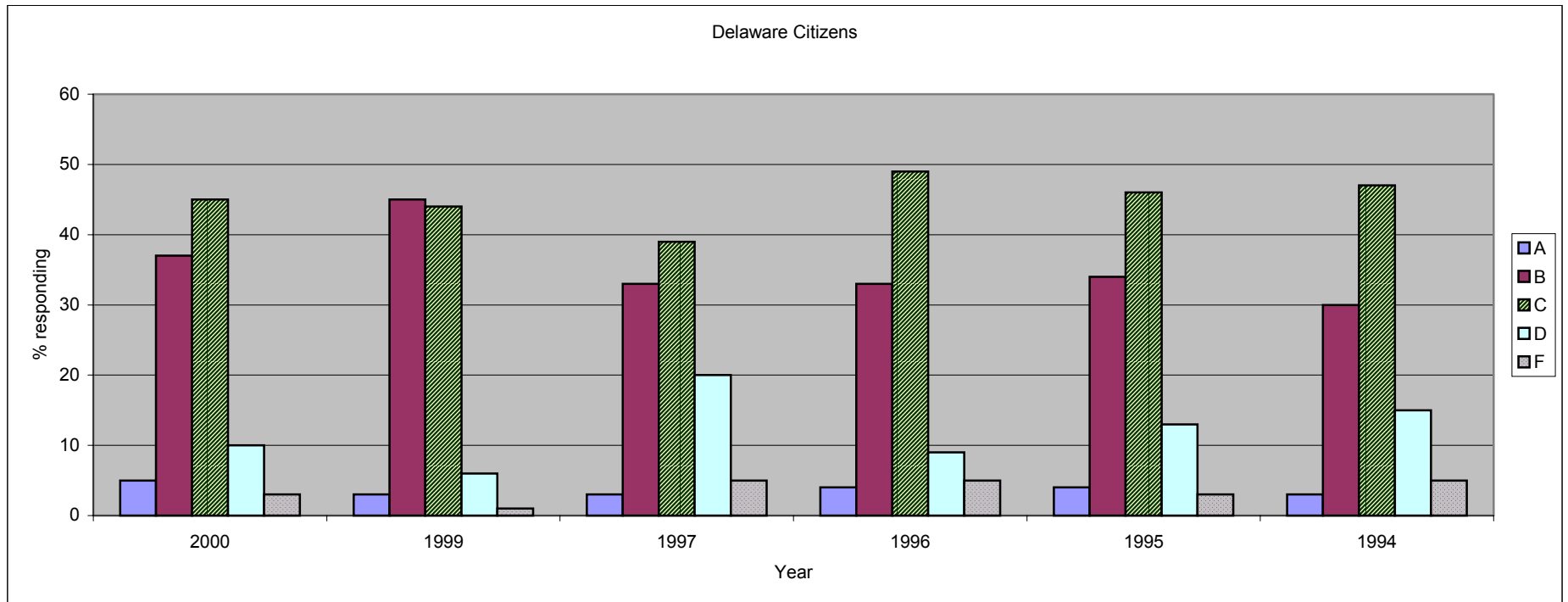
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Trend Analyses of the Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware

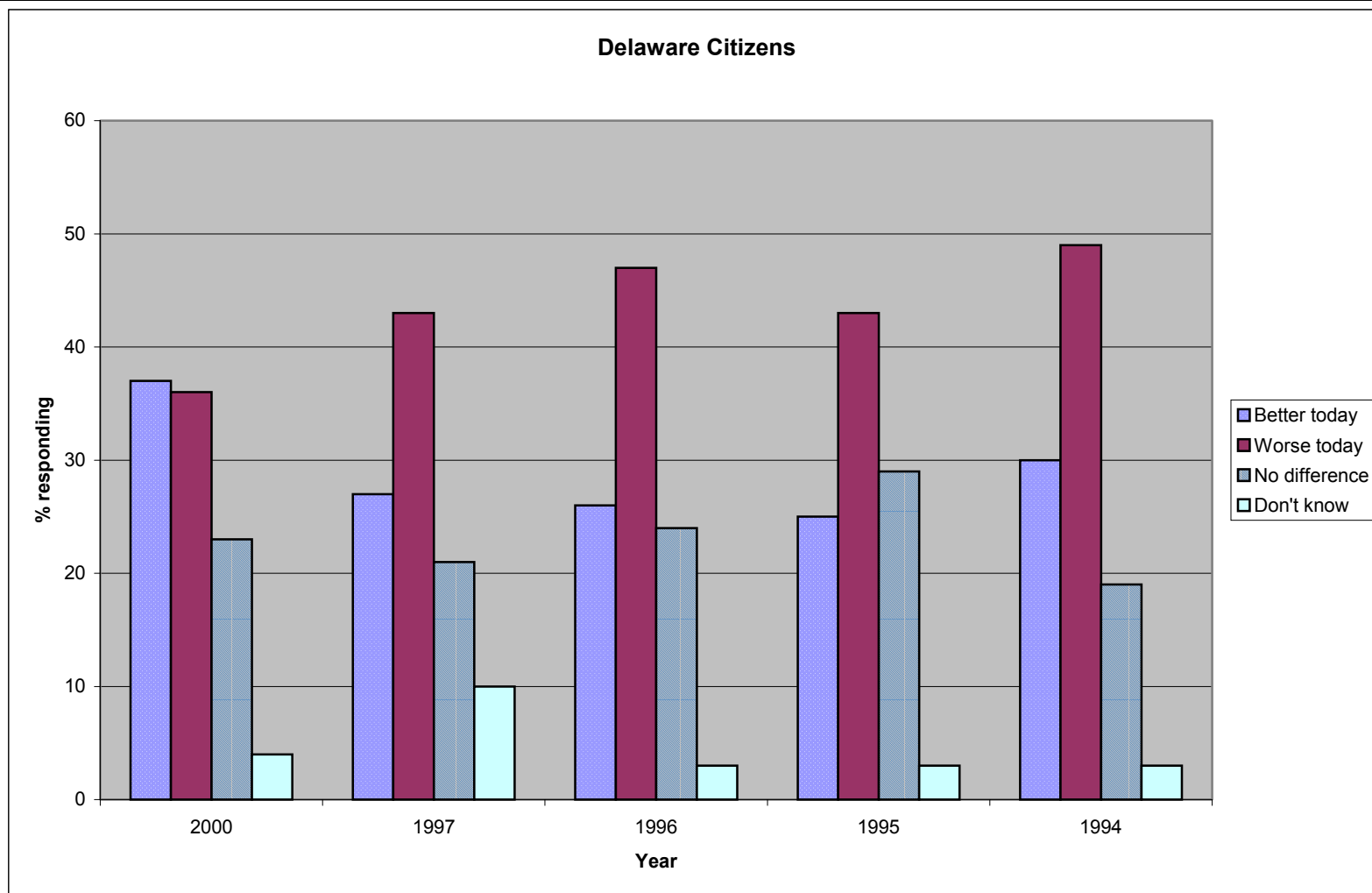
The following pages present information comparing the 2000 poll to previous years. Information from the 1998 poll is not included because a different set of questions were asked that year.

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 schools in Delaware?**

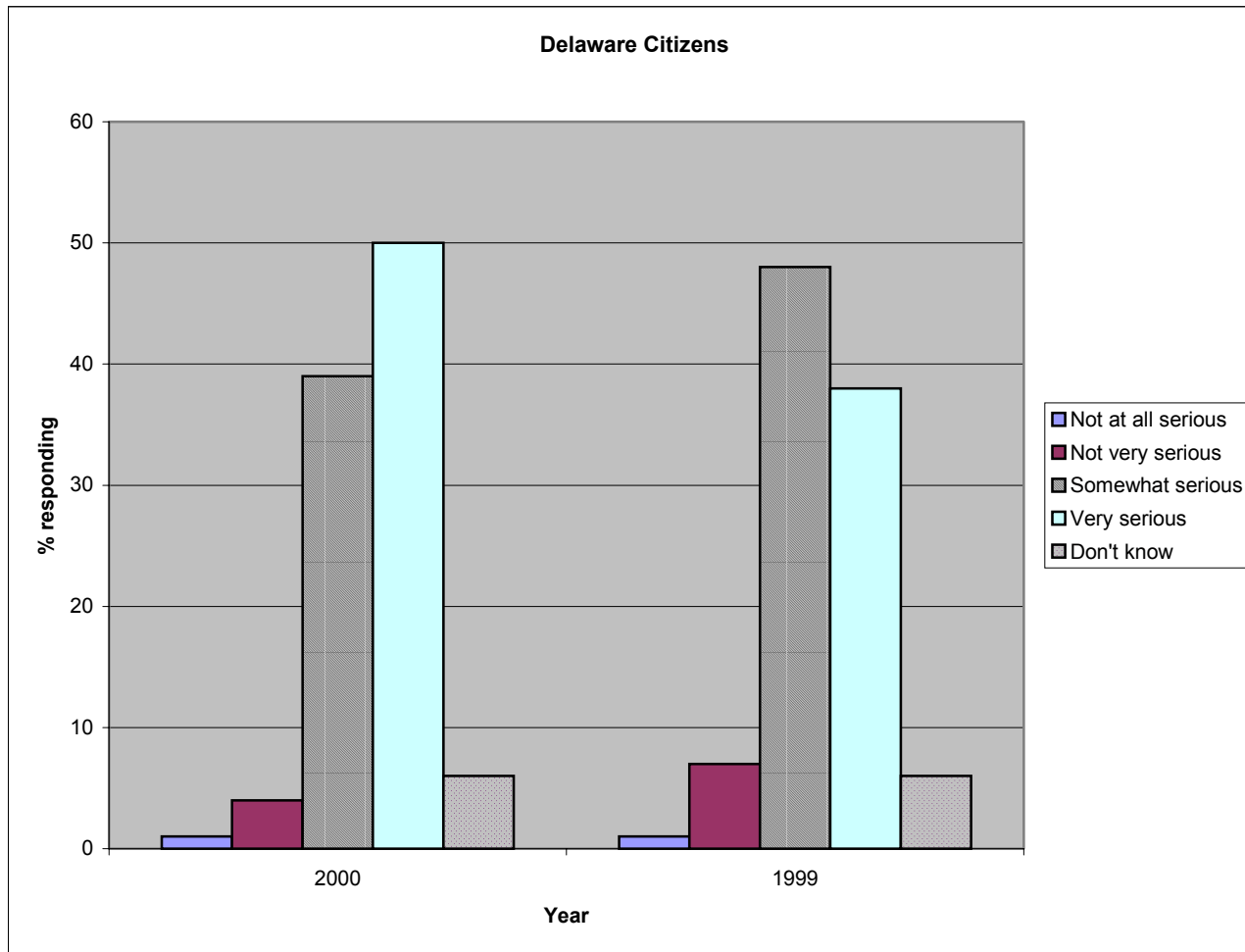


**As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression
that children today get a better or worse education than you did?**

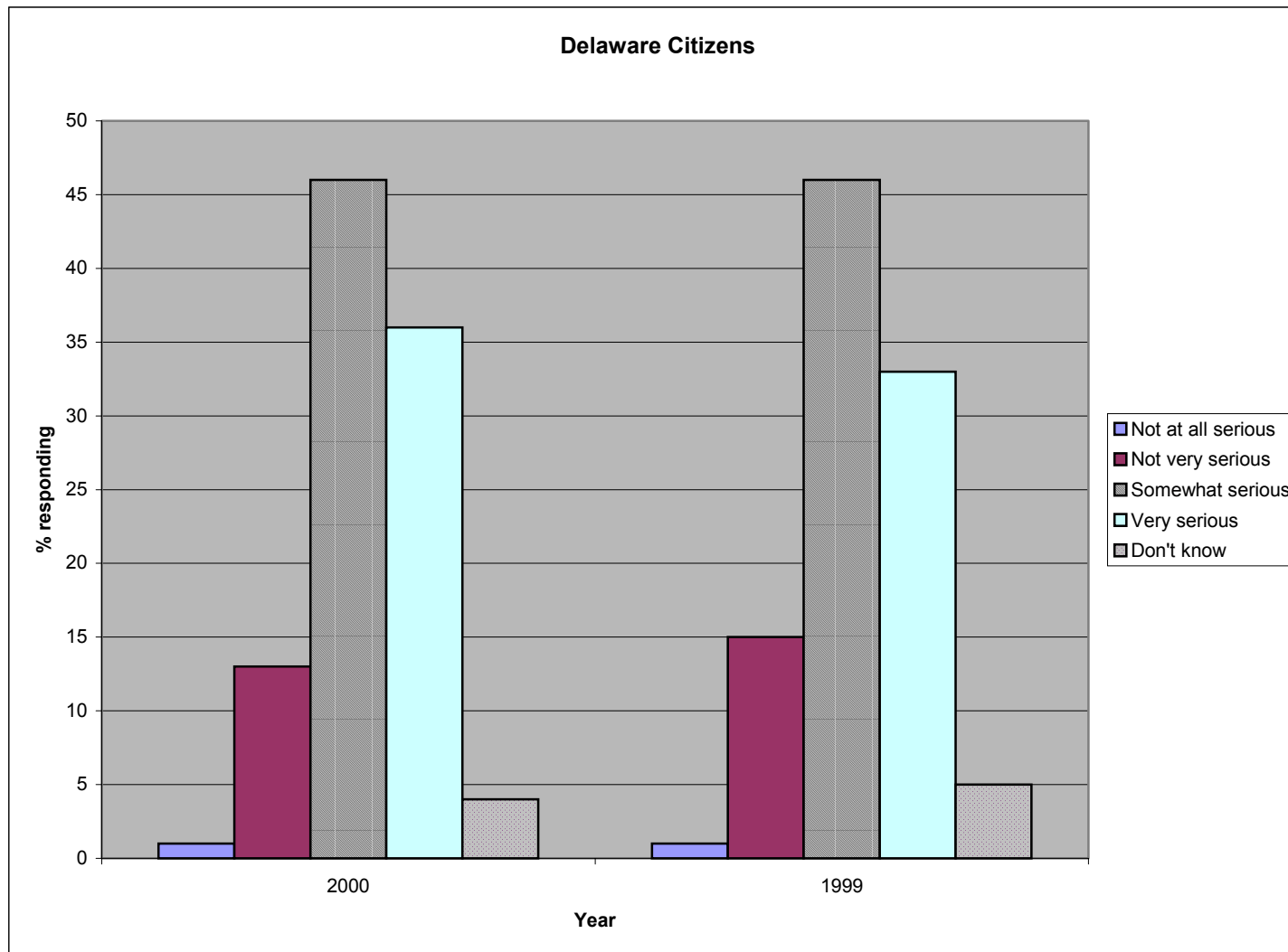


III. Discipline

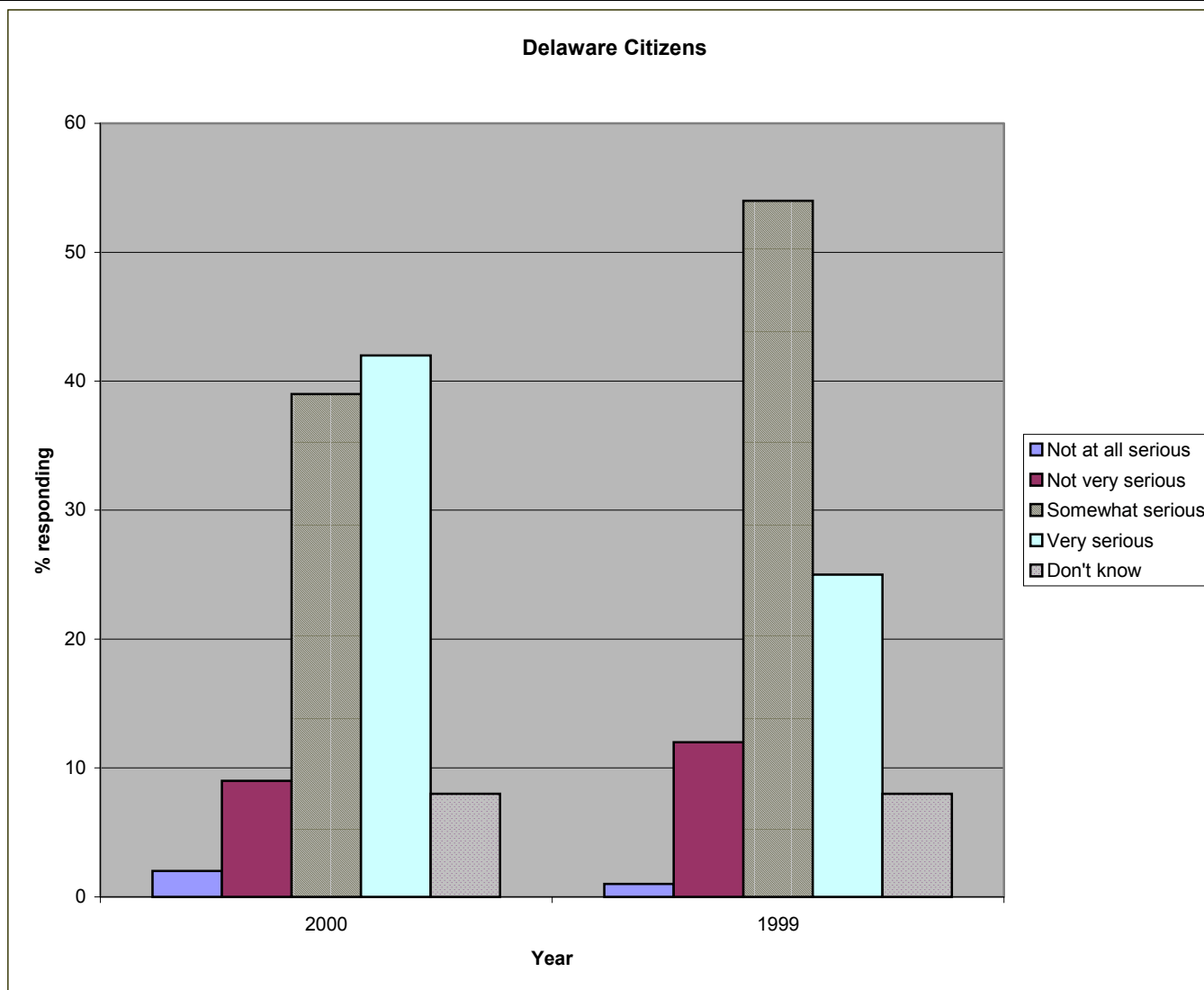
I would like to read some things people have said are problems in public schools. Please tell me if you think student drug use is a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious problem in Delaware?



I would like to read some things people have said are problems in public schools. Please tell me if you think school violence is a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious problem in Delaware?

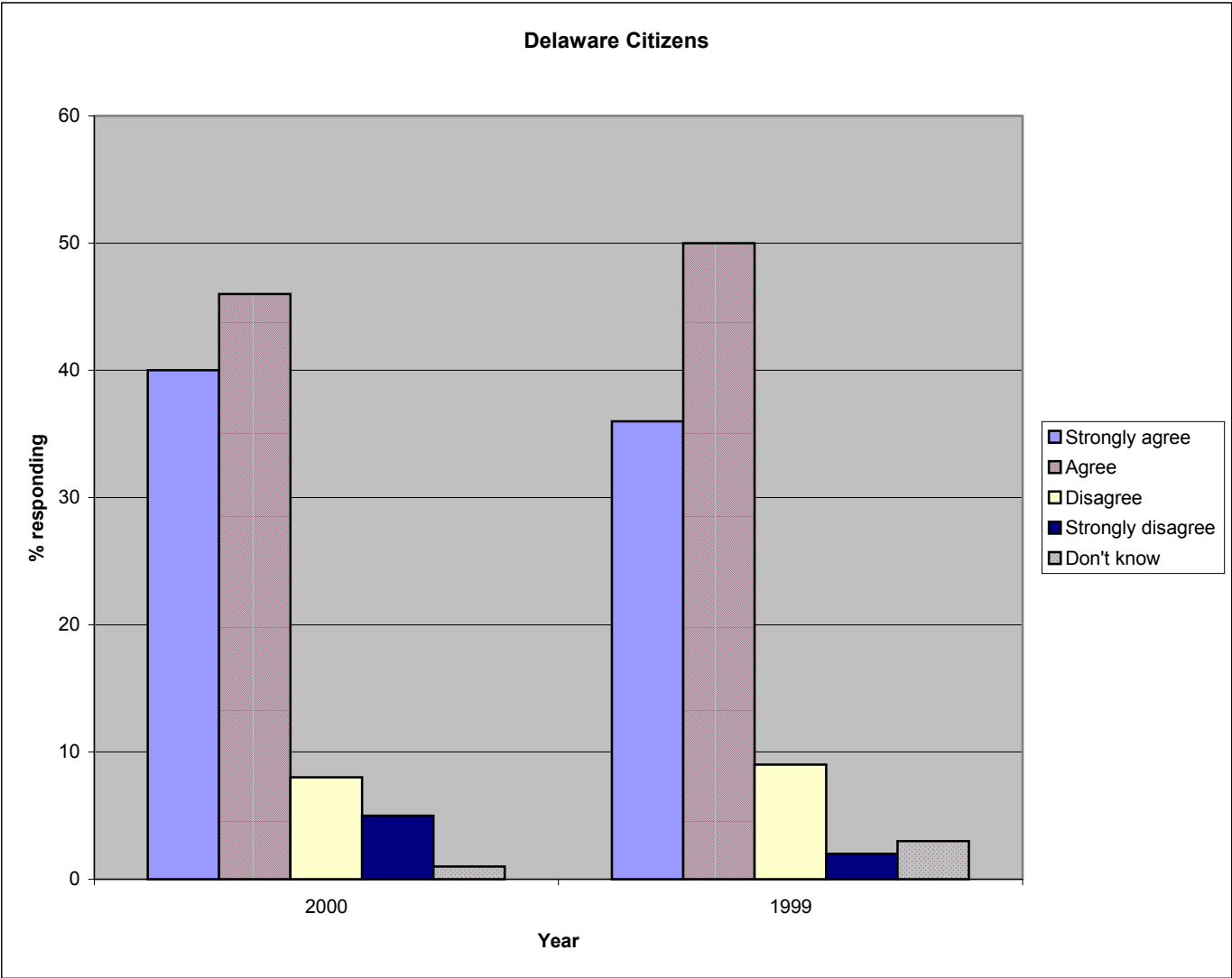


I would like to read some things people have said are problems in public schools. Please tell me if you think student drinking is a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious problem in Delaware?



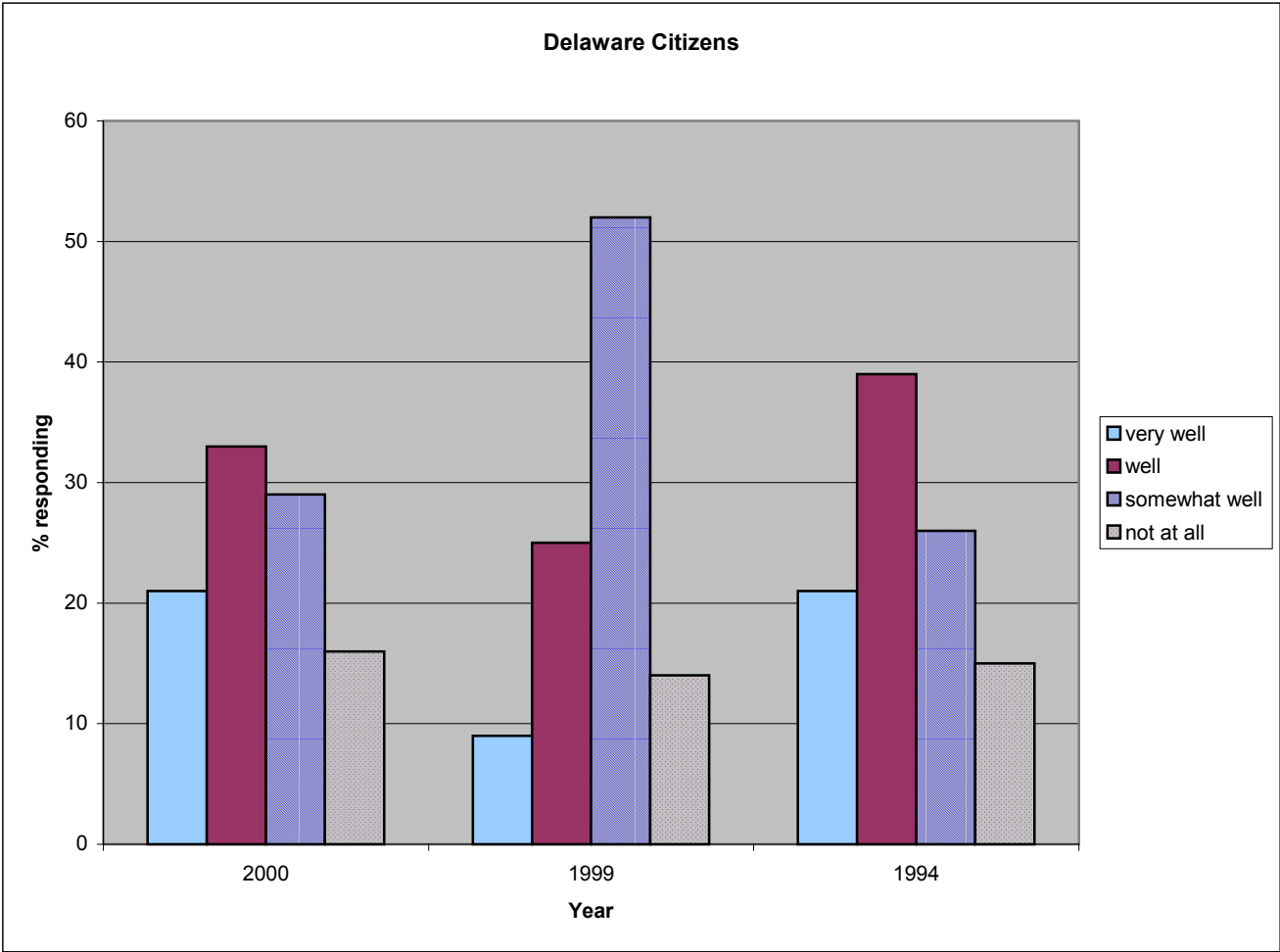
IV. Parent Involvement

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

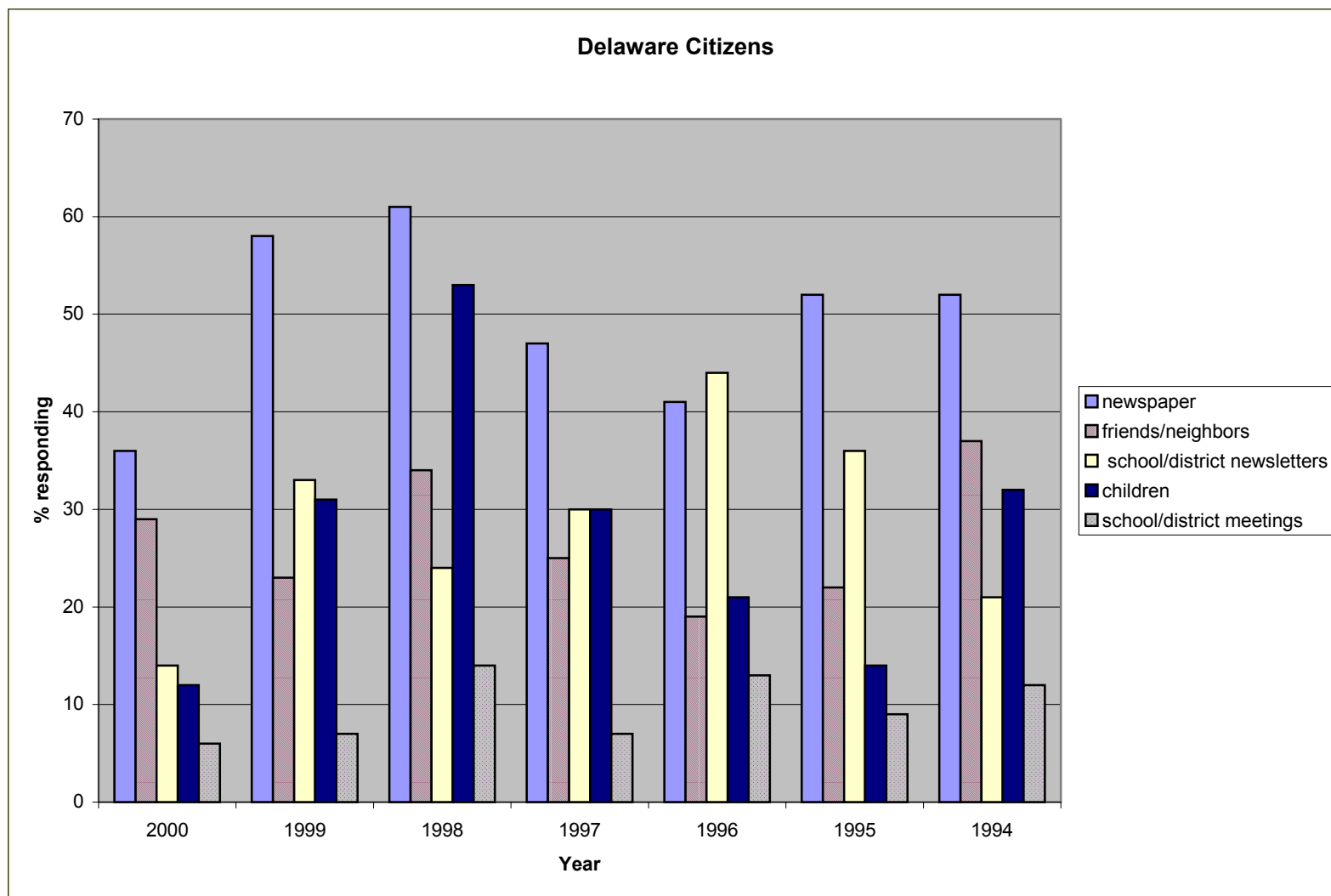


VI. General Information

How well informed do you feel you are about the public schools in your community?



Where do you get most of your information about Delaware public schools?



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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
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 schools in Delaware?	4%	32%	39%	9%	3%	12%
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 public schools here? (Public Agenda Online/Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1999)	(11%)	(38%)	(31%)	(9%)	(5%)	(6%)
What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	9%	39%	27%	5%	3%	16%
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%)

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
What grade would you give the public <u>high</u> schools in Delaware?	4%	23%	38%	11%	5%	20%

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%)
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	Too much emphasis	Not enough emphasis	About the right amount	Don't know
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in your community, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1997)	23% (20%)	31% (28%)	35% (48%)	11% (4%)

	Too high	About right	Too low	Don't know
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?	9%	40%	38%	13%

	Too high	About right	Too low	Don't know
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in your community too high, about right, or too low? (Public Agenda Online/Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1999)	(6%)	(57%)	(33%)	(4%)

	Better today	Worse today	No difference	Don't know
As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did? (Public Agenda Online/ICR Survey Research Group, 1999)	37% (48%)	36% (42%)	23% (7%)	4% (4%)

II. Educator and Student Accountability

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Some people worry schools will be overwhelmed because too many students will fail. Would you say you agree or disagree with this view? Is this strongly or somewhat? (Public Agenda Online/Education Week/Pew Charitable Trusts, 1999) -- parents only.	30% (20%)	34% (24%)	22% (28%)	11% (24%)	4% (4%)

	More of those who repeat a grade will drop out	More of those promoted anyway will drop out	Don't know
Just your impression, which children are more likely to drop out of school: those who fail achievement tests and have to repeat a grade, or those who fail achievement tests and are promoted anyway? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1990)	46% (32%)	41% (54%)	14% (14%)

III. Discipline

	Extremely safe	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not too safe	Not at all safe	Don't know
In general, do you feel the schools in your community are extremely safe, very safe, somewhat safe, not too safe, or not at all safe? (Public Agenda Online/CBS News, 2000)	2% (8%)	23% (29%)	57% (46%)	10% (10%)	4% (5%)	5% (2%)
What, in your opinion, are the major causes of student violence in public schools? (Gallup Poll/Phi Delta Kappa, 1995)	Delaware Citizens			U.S. Citizens		
♦ lack of parental control (discipline, supervision, involvement, values)	38%			(24%)		
♦ peer pressure and peer relations	11%			N/A		
♦ drug related	7%			(13%)		
♦ lack of control in the school (no discipline, overcrowding, etc.)	6%			N/A		
♦ integration/segregation problems; racial/ethnic disputes	5%			(4%)		
♦ influence of the media (TV, movies, music, news media)	5%			(3%)		
♦ lack of family structure/problems of family life/poverty	4%			(20%)		
♦ kid's attitudes (boredom, disrespect, lack of self-esteem)	4%			(6%)		
♦ material jealousies (clothes, shoes, money, etc.)	3%			N/A		
♦ gang related	2%			(5%)		
♦ lack of anger management training and positive problem solving techniques	2%			N/A		
♦ availability of weapons	1%			(3%)		
♦ other	9%			N/A		
♦ don't know	4%			N/A		
♦ refused	1%			N/A		

How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing violence in the public schools – very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1994)	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know
♦ Stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students	64% (86%)	25% (8%)	6% (3%)	3% (2%)	3% (1%)
♦ Training school staffs in how to deal with student violence	56% (72%)	34% (20%)	6% (5%)	2% (2%)	3% (1%)
♦ More vocational or job-training courses in public schools	52% (67%)	34% (25%)	8% (7%)	4% (1%)	3% (<1%)
♦ Drug and alcohol abuse programs for students	52% (66%)	32% (23%)	9% (7%)	4% (3%)	3% (1%)
♦ Values and ethics education for students	59% (60%)	29% (27%)	7% (9%)	2% (3%)	3% (1%)
♦ Education designed to reduce racial and ethnic tensions	51% (57%)	35% (27%)	7% (10%)	3% (4%)	4% (2%)
♦ Courses offered by the public schools in how to be a good parent	49% (51%)	32% (28%)	10% (15%)	6% (5%)	3% (1%)
♦ Conflict education for students	53% (45%)	37% (35%)	5% (3%)	2% (3%)	4% (6%)

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
♦ sending home progress reports between report cards	54% (41%)	32% (35%)	10% (13%)	3% (11%)	1% (1%)
♦ informing parents quickly if children are consistently late or absent	47% (47%)	35% (29%)	9% (11%)	10% (8%)	0% (8%)
♦ informing parents (quickly) if children are having academic problems	38% (33%)	33% (31%)	17% (21%)	12% (11%)	0% (5%)
♦ giving parents guidance about how to get kids excited and interested in learning	22% (20%)	29% (37%)	27% (26%)	23% (15%)	0% (2%)

V. Neighborhood/Choice Schools

	Yes, know enough	No, don't know enough	Don't know
Parents can apply to send their children to any public school in Delaware. Do you feel you have enough information about the different public schools in Delaware to make the best choice for your children?	42%	58%	0%
Suppose you could choose any school in this school district. Do you feel you have enough information about the different public schools in this community to make the best choice for a child or not? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1991)	51%	39%	10%

	Very important	Fairly important	Not Very important	Not important at all	Don't know
The following are factors that might be considered in choosing a public school for your [a] child, [assuming free choice of public schools were allowed in this community]. Tell whether you would consider each factor very important, fairly important, not too important, or not important at all in choosing a local school? (Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa, 1991)					
Quality of teaching staff	96% (85%)	3% (11%)	0% (2%)	<1% (<1%)	0% (2%)
Maintenance of student discipline	88% (76%)	11% (20%)	1% (2%)	1% (<1%)	0% (2%)
Curriculum (e.g. courses offered)	86% (74%)	13% (21%)	1% (3%)	<1% (<1%)	0% (2%)
Size of classes	77% (57%)	19% (31%)	3% (9%)	<1% (1%)	0% (2%)
Grades or test scores of the student body	45% (46%)	46% (42%)	7% (7%)	2% (1%)	0% (4%)
Track record of graduates in high school, in college, or on the job	47% (45%)	36% (39%)	12% (12%)	4% (1%)	0% (3%)
Closeness to home (location of the school) [proximity to home - PDK]	52% (29%)	31% (45%)	14% (20%)	3% (3%)	0% (3%)
Extracurricular activities, such as band/orchestra, theatre, clubs	53% (19%)	37% (49%)	9% (24%)	1% (5%)	0% (3%)

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, and in the fall/winter of 2000 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 October 30, 2000 to February 21, 2001, telephone interviews were conducted with 1,112 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:

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