

**1999 STATEWIDE 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**

**1999 Public and Educator 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 poll conducted in the fall of 1999. Highlights of key findings in four areas of educational reform are reported and include the following:

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Quality of Education</u> Grading the Schools Respect and Confidence in Public Schools</p>	<p style="text-align:center"><u>Discipline</u> Problems in Public Schools Methods to Help Improve Student Behavior</p>
<p style="text-align:center"><u>Accountability</u> Student Accountability Teacher Accountability</p>	<p style="text-align:center"><u>Parent Involvement</u> Amount of & Opportunities for Involvement Strategies for Improving Parent Involvement Patterns of Parent Involvement</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), and educator poll results;
- Trend analyses of the statewide poll on the condition of education in Delaware;
- Comparisons of the 1999 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

A new element to 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 1999 public or educator poll, please contact the staff of the R&D Center by email at 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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Grading the Schools

Poll Results

Most citizens (83%) as well as educators (91%) gave the public schools in Delaware a grade of a “B” or “C.” Parents were more likely to give the schools a higher grade than nonparents. Student behavior was cited as the most important factor in determining the grade citizens gave to public schools.

Citizens who reported feeling very well informed about schools in Delaware were also more likely to give the schools a higher grade than citizens who felt less well informed.

Putting it in Context

*Nationally**, 67% of U.S. citizens gave public schools a grade of “B” or “C.” Compared to Delaware citizens, there was more variability in grades given to the public schools nationally.

*Compared to previous years***, respondents to this year’s poll were more satisfied with public schools in Delaware. In 1997 30% of citizens gave the schools a “B” while 40% of this year’s citizens gave the public schools the grade of “B.”

Fewer respondents felt they were well informed about public schools in Delaware (34%) compared to respondents to the 1994 poll (60%). A larger percentage of this year’s respondents indicated their primary source of information was the media (82% compared to 67% in 1994).

Respect and Confidence in Public Schools

Poll Results

A higher percentage of educators (92%) expressed a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of respect and confidence in the public schools compared to parents (71%) and nonparents (57%).

Putting it in Context

Nationally, public confidence in public schools has been declining since 1970.

Compared to previous years, fewer of this year’s respondents believed public schools were getting worse.

* For the complete results of the trend analysis, see pages 36-43.

** For the complete results of the national comparisons, see pages 44-49.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Student Accountability

Poll Results

Roughly half of Delaware citizens and one-third of educators believed the accountability system should be used to determine if a student graduates from high school, advances to the next level of schooling, or is permitted to participate in extracurricular activities. Roughly an equal percentage of educators (61%) and citizens (64%) supported the use of an accountability system for determining if students should attend summer school.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, many states are developing accountability systems with consequences for students. By 2003, 26 states are expected to have laws in place linking student performance on statewide tests to graduation. Six states (DE, CA, LA, OH, SC, and WI) now have laws that will tie promotion to the next grade level to student test scores.

Compared to previous years, respondents to this year's poll did not support the various uses of an accountability system as strongly. In 1997, most respondents believed a system should be used to make graduation decisions (80%+) or promotion decisions (70%+).

Experts conclude the unintended negative effects of high stakes accountability systems often outweigh the intended positive effects.

Teacher Accountability

Poll Results

Most educators (94%) and Delaware citizens (80%) believed the purpose of the accountability system should be to improve the quality of teaching rather than to determine consequences (positive or negative) for teachers.

Given a list of six possible criteria for holding teachers accountable, both educators and citizens placed classroom observations and tests of teacher knowledge at the top of their list while student achievement as measured by standardized tests ranked fourth.

Most citizens and educators believed teachers should not be held accountable for frequently absent students or students who do not complete homework assignments.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, only a handful of states currently evaluate teachers on the basis of student test scores. Of those states do, none use test scores as the sole measure. For example, in Texas, only 1/8th of a teacher's evaluation is based on their school's performance on state tests.

Although an accountability system can be multi-purpose, a single system cannot do it all. Most systems already in place across the nation focus less on improving instruction and more on holding schools and districts accountable.

Many experts in accountability believe schools should not be rewarded or penalized for factors they cannot control. Therefore, some systems are designed to control for these factors. But opponents to this approach believe it makes the system more complicated and results in lowered expectations for some students.

DISCIPLINE

Problems in Public Schools

Poll Results

For Delaware citizens, student behavior was the most important factor in determining their perception of the quality of Delaware's public schools.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, student misbehavior is the most frequently cited problem facing public schools. Compared to U.S. citizens, Delawareans did not perceive student drug use, school violence, and student drinking as widespread a problem.

Methods to Help Improve School Discipline

Poll Results

When asked about methods to help improve school discipline, nearly all Delaware citizens said training for teachers on how to deal with problem children and classes for students on how to solve problems in a nonviolent manner would be most helpful. Classes for parents of problem children were also strongly endorsed by Delaware citizens and educators.

Most Delaware educators and many Delaware citizens were also in favor of creating more alternative schools for students with behavior problems.

Putting it in Context

National data reveal surprisingly little has changed since 1985 with respect to methods for improving student behavior. Classes for parents and teachers on how to deal with problem children were, and still are, viewed as the best solutions.

Research indicates teachers skilled in classroom management are better able to prevent disruptions from occurring. In addition, integrating conflict resolution skills and peer mediation strategies into the school curriculum has positive benefits on student behavior.

Alternative schools where students learn life skills as they fulfill normal academic requirements have shown some success in reducing discipline problems.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Amount of and Opportunities for Involvement

Poll Results

A majority of educators and parents agreed schools welcome family involvement and make it easy to be involved, but only a small percentage of Delaware educators (3%) and parents (8%) reported that parents in Delaware are very involved in their children's education.

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.

Strategies for Improving Parent Involvement

Poll Results

More educators than parents believed schools do a very good job of giving parents updates on student work and making parents aware of opportunities for volunteering at the school.

Strategies that may deserve more attention included, helping parents understand what to expect of their children when they reach certain ages and providing parents with information on how to help their child with homework.

Putting it in Context

Good communication is critical for involving parents in their children's education.

Nationally, parents are more likely to say their school does a good job of keeping them well informed between report cards and making them aware of volunteer opportunities compared to Delaware parents.

Research indicates involving parents as educators at home with their children is one of the most effective ways to improve students' achievement and attitudes. Parents, however, need and want to learn how to do this better.

Patterns of Parent Involvement

Poll Results

Parents in Delaware were more likely to attend a general school meeting, parent-teacher conference, or a class event than to volunteer at the school or to serve on a parent advisory group.

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.

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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**Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 1999 Results Analysis (Parents and Non-Parents Combined)**

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?	3%	42%	41%	6%	1%	7%
What is the most important factor in determining the grade you gave the public schools?	Percent who gave the schools an A or B		Percent who gave the schools a C, D, or F			
♦ Student behavior	35%		30%			
♦ Teacher capacity and quality	19%		15%			
♦ Quality of instruction	12%		16%			
♦ Effort put forth by schools	9%		0%			
♦ Curriculum	6%		8%			
♦ School environment & structure	5%		10%			
♦ Communication and involvement with parents/community	5%		4%			
♦ Standards/accountability	3%		3%			
♦ Student outcomes (test scores, graduation rates, etc.)	3%		1%			
♦ School/classroom resources	2%		4%			
♦ DSTP and standardized testing programs	1%		5%			

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Very little	None at all	Don't know
How much respect and confidence do you have in public schools, a great deal, quite a lot, very little, or none at all?	11%	51%	32%	1%	4%
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	Worse 23%	About the same 46%	Improved 12%		Don't know 19%
For each subject, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?	Not Important At All	Somewhat Important	Very Important		Don't know
a. Computers	0%	9%	91%		0%
b. Mathematics	0%	2%	98%		0%
c. Reading	0%	1%	99%		0%
d. Writing	0%	4%	97%		0%
e. Science	0%	23%	77%		0%
f. Social Studies	0%	30%	70%		0%
g. Foreign Languages	6%	41%	53%		0%
h. Physical Education	3%	38%	59%		0%
i. Art and Music	2%	37%	61%		0%

II. Educator and Student Accountability

Student test scores are not the only means to hold teachers accountable. I am going to read a list of possible criteria for creating an accountability system that would hold teachers accountable for their performance. As I read each one please tell me if you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important to include in a teacher accountability system.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Don't know
a. academic achievement or improvement of students as measured by standardized tests	41%	50%	4%	4%
b. classroom observations	51%	44%	4%	2%
c. evaluation by other teachers in the system	38%	52%	7%	3%
d. students' evaluations	31%	55%	12%	3%
e. parents' opinions	44%	47%	7%	2%
f. tests of teacher knowledge	71%	25%	1%	3%
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Should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student:	Yes		No	Don't know
a. is frequently absent?	8%		90%	2%
b. has frequent behavior problems in class?	24%		72%	4%
c. is transferred to the school midyear?	29%		66%	6%
d. doesn't do his/ her homework?	15%		83%	2%

	Improve the quality of teaching	Positive or negative consequences for teachers	Both are equally important	Don't know
Which of the following do you think is a more important purpose of a teacher accountability system?	80%	6%	12%	3%
Which of the following should be used as positive consequences or rewards?	Yes		No	Don't know
a. Offer monetary rewards to highly effective teachers.	66%		23%	11%
b. Recognize highly effective teachers with a banquet or dinner meeting.	60%		27%	12%
c. Give highly effective teachers more planning time or fewer classes to teach.	56%		30%	14%
Which of the following should be used as negative consequences or sanctions?	Yes		No	Don't know
a. Ineffective teachers would be fired if in the last 3 years they received two unsatisfactory evaluations	45%		37%	18%
b. Ineffective teachers would lose their teaching license, meaning they could not teach anywhere in Delaware	36%		51%	14%
c. Requiring ineffective teachers to observe highly effective teachers	79%		8%	12%
d. Requiring ineffective teachers to take courses to keep their jobs	86%		4%	10%

Should the student accountability system be used to determine if a student ...	Yes	No	Don't know
♦ graduates from high school?	55%	42%	4%
♦ advances to the next grade level of schooling?	59%	37%	3%
♦ is permitted to participate in extracurricular activities?	52%	45%	3%
♦ would be required to attend summer school?	64%	32%	4%

III. Discipline

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%	7%	46%	38%	6%
♦ school violence	1%	15%	46%	33%	5%
♦ student drinking	1%	12%	54%	25%	8%
♦ lack of parent involvement	0%	7%	47%	41%	4%

The following statements describe possible solutions to problems confronting public schools and their perceived helpfulness in improving school discipline.	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful at all		Don't know
♦ classes for teachers on how to deal with problem children	69%	29%	1%		2%
♦ classes for principals to help them create more orderly behavior	54%	37%	7%		2%
♦ required classes for parents of problem children	69%	24%	6%		1%
♦ suspension of students with extreme behavior problems	51%	30%	18%		2%
♦ creation of a curriculum more relevant to the interests and concerns of students	34%	49%	12%		4%
♦ classes for students on how to solve problems without violence	76%	21%	2%		1%
♦ creation of more alternative schools	28%	52%	11%		8%
♦ installation of metal detectors in school	35%	46%	15%		4%
♦ police officers/security guards in schools	32%	50%	14%		4%

IV. Parent Involvement

	Very involved	Somewhat involved	Not very involved		Don't know
In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?	8%	63%	21%		7%
	Yes		No		Don't know
Do you believe the state accountability system should be used to determine fines for parents of children who do not attend school?	46%		41%		12%
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
My child's school welcomes family involvement. *	0%	7%	47%	43%	3%
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there. *	2%	9%	50%	36%	3%
	Doesn't do it at all	Does just o.k.	Does it very well		Don't know
The following statements describe how well your child's school performs with regards to these activities. *					
Lets you know between report cards how your child is doing in school	6%	44%	48%		3%
Helps you understand what children at your child's age are like (i.e., child development)	24%	38%	35%		3%
Makes you aware of chances to volunteer at the school	9%	44%	44%		3%
Provides information about how to help your child with his/her homework	24%	39%	33%		3%

* Questions asked only of parents.

Which of the following activities did the mother, father, both, or neither attend during the past year? *	Mother	Father	Both	Neither	School didn't have	Don't remember
♦ attended a general meeting, for example, a back-to-school night or a meeting of a parent-teacher organization	34%	6%	50%	8%	1%	2%
♦ gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference	42%	5%	40%	7%	5%	2%
♦ attended a class event such as a play, sports event, or science fair	22%	7%	56%	8%	6%	2%
♦ acted as a volunteer at the school or served on a committee	40%	2%	10%	40%	5%	2%
♦ gone to a meeting of a parent advisory group or policy council	12%	1%	6%	49%	28%	3%

	Willing to sign	Not willing to sign	Don't know
Thinking about the public school system attended by your oldest child, would you be willing or not willing to sign an agreement which would specify everyone's responsibilities – the school's, your child's, and yours as a parent?	72%	14%	13%

	Held accountable	Not held accountable	Don't know
Do you believe that schools should or should not be held accountable for the performance of students whose parents do not sign this type of agreement?	23%	60%	17%

* Questions asked only of parents.

V. Science Education

	Your child's teacher	Your child's principal	Other parents	Other source	I don't get any information
Where do you get information about science education in Delaware? **	47%	0%	5%	26%	29%
	Too much	Just the right amount	Too little		Don't Know
Do you believe there is too much, too little, or just the right amount of emphasis on science in Delaware's public schools?	2%	27%	38%		31%
	Gotten worse	Stayed about the same	Improved		Don't know
As compared to five years ago, would you say that science education in Delaware has gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	7%	41%	10%		40%
	More knowledgeable	Neither	Less knowledgeable		Don't know
As compared to five years ago, would you say that children in Delaware are more knowledgeable or less knowledgeable about science?	15%	28%	15%		40%
	Yes		No		
Have you heard of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study also known as TIMSS?	6%		95%		

** Numbers do not add to 100% because parents were permitted to list more than one source of information.

Comparing Delaware students to ...			
	other students in the U.S.	other students in the world	a predetermined standard
Student test scores can be reported in different ways. Of the following three ways, which do you think is the most useful way of reporting test scores?	51%	12%	38%
Have you ever heard of the Smithsonian Science Project? *	Yes 16%	No 85%	
	Gotten worse	Stayed about the same	Improved
(If yes) Because of the Smithsonian Science Project, would you say that science education in Delaware has gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved? *	2%	54%	45%

VI. General Information

	Not at all informed	Somewhat informed	Well informed	Very well informed
How well informed do you feel you are about the public schools in your community?	14%	52%	25%	9%
Where do you get most of your information about Delaware public schools?	Percent responding**		Percent responding**	
• Newspaper	58%	• School and district meetings	7%	
• Newsletters from schools or districts	33%	• Radio	6%	
• Own children or grandchildren	31%	• No sources of information	5%	
• Friends/Neighbors/Spouse	23%	• Other	3%	
• Television	18%			
• Direct contact with school personnel in a professional capacity	8%			

**Numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were permitted to list more than one source of information.

*Questions asked only of parents.

In which county do you live?	New Castle 67%	Kent 18%	Sussex 16%
Are there any children in your household currently attending school in grades Kindergarten through 12 th in Delaware?	Yes 39%	No 61%	
In what school district do you live?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Christina	16%	• Milford	2%
• Red Clay	18%	• Smyrna	4%
• Brandywine	15%	• Lake Forest	3%
• Colonial	10%	• Seaford	2%
• Cape Henlopen	4%	• Laurel	2%
• Caesar Rodney	4%	• Woodbridge	1%
• Indian River	5%	• Delmar	<1%
• Appoquinimink	4%	• PolyTech	<1%
• Capital	6%	• Don't know	5%
What is your age?	Average Age 45.3	Range 18-89	
Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	Average years in Delaware 28.8	Range 0-83	

What is your occupation?	Percent responding		Percent responding
<i>Occupational Classification</i>			
• Professional (e.g. doctor, lawyer)	10%	• Retired	19%
• Executive, Administrative and Managerial	14%	• Farming	1%
• Clerical/secretarial	9%	• Student	2%
• Sales (e.g. insurance, car)	7%	• Homemaker	7%
• Service (e.g. restaurants, maintenance)	9%	• Unemployed	2%
• Technical (e.g. computer)	11%	• Other	2%
• Industrial	7%	• Refused	1%

Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	Yes 6%	No 94%
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How would you describe your race?	Percent responding
• White	77%
• African American	20%
• Asian/Pacific Islander	3%
• Native American	<1%
• Other (e.g. Multi-Racial)	1%

Gender of Respondent	Female 40%	Male 60%
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DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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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?	6% (2%)	50% (37%)	37% (43%)	5% (6%)	1% (1%)	1% (12%)
What is the most important factor in determining the grade you gave the public schools?	Percent who gave the schools an A or B		Percent who gave the schools a C, D, or F			
♦ Student behavior	39%	(24%)		28%	(33%)	
♦ Teacher capacity and quality	19%	(18%)		20%	(9%)	
♦ Quality of instruction	11%	(17%)		15%	(18%)	
♦ Effort put forth by schools	8%	(12%)		0%	(0%)	
♦ Curriculum	6%	(6%)		9%	(7%)	
♦ School environment & structure	4%	(6%)		11%	(9%)	
♦ Communication and involvement with parents/community	5%	(5%)		4%	(3%)	
♦ Standards/accountability	3%	(1%)		4%	(2%)	
♦ Student outcomes (test scores, graduation rates, etc.)	1%	(6%)		1%	(2%)	
♦ School/classroom resources	4%	(0%)		4%	(5%)	
♦ DSTP and standardized testing programs	1%	(3%)		4%	(7%)	

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Very little	None at all	Don't know
How much respect and confidence do you have in public schools, a great deal, quite a lot, very little, or none at all?	12% (10%)	59% (47%)	25% (37%)	2% (1%)	3% (6%)
	Worse	About the same	Improved		Don't know
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	20% (25%)	51% (43%)	14% (12%)		15% (21%)
	Not Important At All	Somewhat Important	Very Important		Don't know
For each subject, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?					
a. Computers	0% (0%)	8% (9%)	92% (91%)		0% (0%)
b. Mathematics	0% (0%)	1% (2%)	99% (98%)		0% (0%)
c. Reading	0% (0%)	1% (2%)	99% (98%)		0% (0%)
d. Writing	0% (0%)	2% (4%)	98% (96%)		0% (0%)
e. Science	0% (0%)	22% (23%)	78% (77%)		0% (0%)
f. Social Studies	1% (0%)	25% (33%)	74% (67%)		0% (0%)
g. Foreign Languages	5% (7%)	38% (43%)	57% (51%)		0% (0%)
h. Physical Education	4% (3%)	32% (42%)	64% (55%)		0% (0%)
i. Art and Music	1% (2%)	31% (41%)	67% (57%)		0% (0%)

II. Educator and Student Accountability

Student test scores are not the only means to hold teachers accountable. I am going to read a list of possible criteria for creating an accountability system that would hold teachers accountable for their performance. As I read each one please tell me if you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important to include in a teacher accountability system.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Don't know
a. academic achievement or improvement of students as measured by standardized tests	39% (43%)	54% (48%)	4% (5%)	3% (5%)
b. classroom observations	46% (54%)	49% (40%)	2% (5%)	2% (2%)
c. evaluation by other teachers in the system	30% (43%)	62% (45%)	5% (9%)	2% (3%)
d. students' evaluations	31% (30%)	55% (56%)	12% (11%)	2% (3%)
e. parents' opinions	48% (42%)	45% (48%)	4% (9%)	2% (1%)
f. tests of teacher knowledge	69% (72%)	26% (23%)	1% (2%)	3% (3%)

Should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student:

	Yes	No	Don't know
a. is frequently absent?	8% (7%)	90% (91%)	2% (2%)
b. has frequent behavior problems in class?	23% (25%)	73% (72%)	4% (4%)
c. is transferred to the school midyear?	26% (30%)	68% (65%)	6% (5%)
d. doesn't do his/ her homework?	13% (16%)	86% (81%)	2% (3%)

	Improve the quality of teaching	Positive or negative consequences for teachers	Both are equally important	Don't know
Which of the following do you think is a more important purpose of a teacher accountability system?	78% (82%)	6% (6%)	13% (11%)	3% (2%)
Which of the following should be used as positive consequences or rewards?	Yes		No	Don't Know
a. Offer monetary rewards to highly effective teachers.	67% (67%)		23% (24%)	10% (12%)
b. Recognize highly effective teachers with a banquet or dinner meeting.	58% (62%)		32% (24%)	10% (14%)
c. Give highly effective teachers more planning time or fewer classes to teach.	58% (52%)		29% (33%)	13% (14%)
Which of the following should be used as negative consequences or sanctions?	Yes		No	Don't Know
a. Ineffective teachers would be fired if in the last 3 years they received two unsatisfactory evaluations	48% (43%)		35% (38%)	16% (19%)
b. Ineffective teachers would lose their teaching license meaning they could not teach anywhere in Delaware	39% (33%)		48% (52%)	13% (14%)
c. Requiring ineffective teachers to observe highly effective teachers	81% (79%)		6% (10%)	13% (12%)
d. Requiring ineffective teachers to take courses to keep their jobs	84% (86%)		3% (5%)	13% (10%)

Should the student accountability system be used to determine if a student ...	Yes	No	Don't know
♦ graduates from high school?	49% (59%)	46% (38%)	5% (3%)
♦ advances to the next grade level of schooling?	56% (62%)	41% (35%)	4% (3%)
♦ is permitted to participate in extracurricular activities?	49% (54%)	47% (44%)	4% (3%)
♦ would be required to attend summer school?	60% (67%)	36% (29%)	4% (4%)

III. Discipline

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%)	10% (6%)	48% (48%)	37% (39%)	5% (7%)
♦ school violence	1% (1%)	18% (12%)	48% (46%)	29% (36%)	4% (6%)
♦ student drinking	1% (1%)	13% (11%)	55% (54%)	22% (27%)	8% (8%)
♦ lack of parent involvement	0% (0%)	9% (6%)	53% (44%)	34% (46%)	3% (4%)

The following statements describe possible solutions to problems confronting public schools and their perceived helpfulness in improving school discipline.	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful at all	Don't know
♦ classes for teachers on how to deal with problem children	70% (68%)	28% (29%)	2% (1%)	1% (2%)
♦ classes for principals to help them create more orderly behavior	56% (52%)	33% (39%)	9% (6%)	2% (3%)
♦ required classes for parents of problem children	70% (68%)	24% (24%)	5% (6%)	1% (2%)
♦ suspension of students with extreme behavior problems	57% (47%)	27% (31%)	15% (19%)	0% (3%)
♦ creation of a curriculum more relevant to the interests and concerns of students	33% (35%)	58% (44%)	7% (16%)	2% (5%)
♦ classes for students on how to solve problems without violence	79% (74%)	18% (23%)	2% (1%)	0% (2%)
♦ creation of more alternative schools	27% (29%)	60% (47%)	10% (13%)	4% (12%)
♦ installation of metal detectors in school	35% (35%)	50% (44%)	13% (17%)	2% (4%)
♦ police officers/security guards in schools	34% (31%)	53% (49%)	11% (15%)	2% (4%)

IV. Parent Involvement

	Very involved	Somewhat involved	Not very involved	Don't know
In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?	8% (9%)	70% (58%)	18% (23%)	4% (10%)
Do you believe the state accountability system should be used to determine fines for parents of children who do not attend school?	50% (43%)		37% (44%)	12% (13%)
My child's school welcomes family involvement.	0%	7%	47%	43%
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	2%	9%	50%	36%
The following statements describe how well your child's school performs with regards to these activities.	Doesn't do it at all	Does just o.k.	Does it very well	Don't know
Lets you know between report cards how your child is doing in school	6%	44%	48%	3%
Helps you understand what children at your child's age are like (i.e., child development)	24%	38%	35%	3%
Makes you aware of chances to volunteer at the school	9%	44%	44%	3%
Provides information about how to help your child with his/her homework	24%	39%	33%	3%

Which of the following activities did the mother, father, both, or neither attend during the past year?	Mother	Father	Both	Neither	School didn't have	Don't remember
♦ attended a general meeting, for example, a back-to-school night or a meeting of a parent-teacher organization	34%	6%	50%	8%	1%	2%
♦ gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference	42%	5%	40%	7%	8%	2%
♦ attended a class event such as a play, sports event, or science fair	22%	7%	56%	8%	6%	2%
♦ acted as a volunteer at the school or served on a committee	40%	2%	10%	40%	5%	2%
♦ gone to a meeting of a parent advisory group or policy council	12%	1%	6%	49%	28%	3%

	Willing to sign	Not willing to sign	Don't know
Thinking about the public school system attended by your oldest child, would you be willing or not willing to sign an agreement which would specify everyone's responsibilities – the school's, your child's, and yours as a parent?	74% (71%)	11% (15%)	15% (13%)

	Held accountable	Not held accountable	Don't know
Do you believe that schools should or should not be held accountable for the performance of students whose parents do not sign this type of agreement?	27% (21%)	54% (64%)	18% (16%)

V. Science Education

	Your child's teacher	Your child's principal	Other parents	Other source	I don't get any information
Where do you get information about science education in Delaware?	47%	0%	5%	26%	29%
	Too much	Just the right amount	Too little		Don't know
Do you believe there is too much, too little, or just the right amount of emphasis on science in Delaware's public schools?	2% (2%)	44% (34%)	32% (24%)		21% (40%)
	Gotten worse	Stayed about the same	Improved		Don't know
As compared to five years ago, would you say that science education in Delaware has gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	10% (5%)	47% (37%)	8% (11%)		35% (47%)
	More knowledgeable	Neither	Less knowledgeable		Don't know
As compared to five years ago, would you say that children in Delaware are more knowledgeable or less knowledgeable about science?	13% (16%)	36% (23%)	14% (16%)		37% (45%)
	Yes		No		
Have you heard of the Third International Mathematics and Science Study also known as TIMSS?	6% (6%)		94% (95%)		
	Comparing Delaware students to ...				
	other students in the U.S.	other students in the world	a predetermined standard		Don't know
Student test scores can be reported in different ways. Of the following three ways, which do you think is the most useful way of reporting test scores?	48% (52%)	8% (14%)	44% (34%)		

	Yes	No	
Have you ever heard of the Smithsonian Science Project?	16%	85%	
	Gotten worse	Stayed about the same	Improved
(If yes) Because of the Smithsonian Science Project, would you say that science education in Delaware has gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	2%	54%	45%

VI. General Information

How well informed do you feel you are about the public schools in your community?	Not at all informed 4% (20%)	Somewhat informed 44% (56%)	Well informed 38% (17%)	Very well informed 13% (7%)
Where do you get most of your information about Delaware public schools?	Percent responding*			
• Newspaper	53% (61%)			
• Friends/Neighbors/Spouse	15% (27%)			
• Own children or grandchildren	65% (9%)			
• Television	16% (20%)			
• Newsletters from schools or districts	62% (14%)			
• Direct contact with school personnel in a professional capacity	10% (6%)			
• Radio	2% (8%)			
• School and district meetings	16% (2%)			
• Other	2% (3%)			
• No source of information	1% (0%)			

In which county do you live?	New Castle 65% (68%)	Kent 20% (16%)	Sussex 15% (16%)
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*Numbers do not add up to 100% because respondents were permitted to list more than one source of information.

In what school district do you live?	Percent responding	Percent responding
• Christina	17% (26%)	• Milford 3% (2%)
• Red Clay	17% (18%)	• Smyrna 6% (3%)
• Brandywine	16% (14%)	• Lake Forest 3% (3%)
• Colonial	8% (11%)	• Seaford 2% (2%)
• Cape Henlopen	4% (4%)	• Laurel 1% (2%)
• Caesar Rodney	4% (4%)	• Woodbridge 1% (1%)
• Indian River	5% (5%)	• Delmar 1% (<1%)
• Appoquinimink	6% (3%)	• Don't know 1% (7%)
• Capital	6% (6%)	• Polytech <1% (0%)

	Average Age	Range
What is your age?	39.4 (49.1)	18-70 (18-89)

	Average years in Delaware	Range
Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	24.7 (31.5)	0-60 (0-83)

What is your occupation?	Percent responding	Percent responding
<i>Occupational Classification</i>		
• Professional (e.g. doctor, lawyer)	12% (8%)	• Retired 2% (30%)
• Executive, Administrative and Managerial	16% (12%)	• Farming 2% (1%)
• Clerical/secretarial	10% (9%)	• Student 1% (2%)
• Sales (e.g. insurance, car)	8% (6%)	• Homemaker 9% (5%)
• Service (e.g. restaurants, maintenance)	11% (7%)	• Unemployed 1% (3%)
• Technical (e.g. computer)	15% (9%)	• Other 3% (2%)
• Industrial	9% (6%)	• Refused 2% (0%)
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	Yes 10% (3%)	No 90% (97%)
How would you describe your race?	Percent responding	
• White	74% (78%)	
• African American	21% (18%)	
• Asian/Pacific Islander	4% (2%)	
• Native American	0% (1%)	
• Other (e.g. Multi-Racial)	1% (1%)	
Gender of Respondent	Female 37% (42%)	Male 63% (58%)

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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**Statewide Poll of Educators on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 1999 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?	3%	61%	30%	1%	0%	4%
What is the most important factor in determining the grade you gave the public schools?	Percent who gave the schools an A or B	Percent who gave the schools a C, D, or F				
♦ Student behavior	11%	26%				
♦ Teacher capacity and quality	22%	7%				
♦ Quality of instruction	27%	9%				
♦ Effort put forth by schools	6%	3%				
♦ Curriculum	6%	1%				
♦ School environment & structure	3%	9%				
♦ Communication and involvement with parents/community	1%	3%				
♦ Standards/accountability	1%	13%				
♦ Student outcomes (test scores, graduation rates, etc.)	14%	10%				
♦ School/classroom resources	5%	8%				
♦ DSTP and standardized testing programs	2%	5%				

	A great deal	Quite a lot	Very little	None at all	Don't know
How much respect and confidence do you have in public schools, a great deal, quite a lot, very little, or none at all?	34%	57%	7%	0%	2%
	Worse	About the same	Improved		Don't know
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	14%	31%	50%		5%
	Not Important At All	Somewhat Important	Very Important		Don't know
For each subject, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?					
a. Computers	0%	19%	81%		0%
b. Mathematics	0%	2%	98%		0%
c. Reading	0%	0%	100%		0%
d. Writing	0%	5%	95%		0%
e. Science	0%	19%	81%		1%
f. Social Studies	0%	30%	70%		0%
g. Foreign Languages	3%	59%	38%		1%
h. Physical Education	3%	45%	53%		0%
i. Art and Music	2%	47%	52%		0%

II. Educator and Student Accountability

Student test scores are not the only means to hold teachers accountable. I am going to read a list of possible criteria for creating an accountability system that would hold teachers accountable for their performance. As I read each one please tell me if you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important to include in a teacher accountability system.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important At All	Don't know
a. academic achievement or improvement of students as measured by standardized tests	20%	62%	17%	1%
b. classroom observations	56%	41%	2%	1%
c. evaluation by other teachers in the system	37%	52%	10%	1%
d. students' evaluations	15%	58%	27%	0%
e. parents' opinions	13%	65%	22%	1%
f. tests of teacher knowledge	42%	50%	8%	0%
<hr/>				
Should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student:	Yes		No	Don't know
a. is frequently absent?	2%		97%	1%
b. has frequent behavior problems in class?	9%		87%	4%
c. is transferred to the school midyear?	27%		67%	6%
d. doesn't do his/ her homework?	16%		81%	2%

	Improve the quality of teaching	Positive or negative consequences for teachers	Both are equally important	Don't know
Which of the following do you think is a more important purpose of a teacher accountability system?	94%	3%	3%	2%
Which of the following should be used as positive consequences or rewards?	Yes		No	Don't know
a. Offer monetary rewards to highly effective teachers.	31%		47%	20%
b. Recognize highly effective teachers with a banquet or dinner meeting.	27%		60%	13%
c. Give highly effective teachers more planning time or fewer classes to teach.	27%		60%	13%
Which of the following should be used as negative consequences or sanctions?	Yes		No	Don't know
a. Ineffective teachers would be fired if in the last 3 years they received two unsatisfactory evaluations	20%		60%	20%
b. Ineffective teachers would lose their teaching license meaning they could not teach anywhere in Delaware	20%		60%	20%
c. Requiring ineffective teachers to observe highly effective teachers	80%		7%	13%
d. Requiring ineffective teachers to take courses to keep their jobs	40%		47%	13%

Should the student accountability system be used to determine if a student ...	Yes	No	Don't know
♦ graduates from high school?	30%	67%	3%
♦ advances to the next grade level of schooling?	38%	59%	3%
♦ is permitted to participate in extracurricular activities?	38%	58%	4%
♦ would be required to attend summer school?	61%	37%	2%

III. Discipline

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	3%	14%	55%	21%	7%
♦ school violence	3%	19%	57%	17%	4%
♦ student drinking	4%	16%	48%	22%	10%
♦ lack of parent involvement	1%	1%	35%	62%	1%

The following statements describe possible solutions to problems confronting public schools and their perceived helpfulness in improving school discipline.	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful at all	Don't know
♦ classes for teachers on how to deal with problem children	39%	53%	7%	0%
♦ classes for principals to help them create more orderly behavior	44%	46%	10%	1%
♦ required classes for parents of problem children	81%	17%	2%	0%
♦ suspension of students with extreme behavior problems	60%	29%	11%	0%
♦ creation of a curriculum more relevant to the interests and concerns of students	34%	41%	25%	1%
♦ classes for students on how to solve problems without violence	65%	30%	4%	1%
♦ creation of more alternative schools	60%	34%	6%	1%
♦ installation of metal detectors in school	12%	54%	31%	3%
♦ police officers/security guards in schools	20%	58%	20%	3%

IV. Parent Involvement

	Very involved	Somewhat involved	Not very involved		Don't know
In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?	3%	69%	27%		1%
	Yes		No		Don't know
Do you believe the state accountability system should be used to determine fines for parents of children who do not attend school?	59%		35%		6%
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
My school welcomes family involvement.	0%	1%	22%	77%	0%
My school makes it easy for parents to be involved there.	1%	3%	33%	63%	1%
	Doesn't do it at all	Does just o.k.	Does it very well		Don't know
The following statements describe how well your school performs with regards to these activities.					
Lets parents know between report cards how their child is doing in school	0%	24%	75%		1%
Helps parents understand what children at their child's age are like (i.e., child development)	20%	45%	33%		2%
Makes parents aware of chances to volunteer at the school	9%	30%	61%		0%
Provides information about how to help their child with his/her homework	11%	39%	47%		3%

How many of your students' parents do each of the following?	None	A Few	About ½	Almost All	Don't know
♦ volunteer to assist with class activities	21%	63%	12%	2%	3%
♦ attend parent-teacher conferences	1%	37%	28%	31%	3%
♦ attend school activities such as PTA meetings and Family Science Nights	7%	58%	24%	5%	6%

Thinking about the public school system in which you teach would you be willing or not willing to sign an agreement which would specify everyone's responsibilities – the school's, the child's, and the parents'?	Willing to sign	Not willing to sign	Don't know
	84%	10%	6%

Do you believe that schools should or should not be held accountable for the performance of students whose parents do not sign this type of agreement?	Held accountable	Not held accountable	Don't know
	19%	77%	3%

VI. General Information

Gender of Respondent	Female 31%	Male 70%	
In which county do you work?	New Castle 58%	Kent 18%	Sussex 24%

How many years have you been an educator in Delaware?	1 year 0%	2-5 years 11%	6-11 years 26%	12-20 years 26%	20+ years 37%
What is your current position as a Delaware Educator?	Percent responding				
• Classroom Teacher	82%	• District Administrator		3%	
• Building Administrator	5%	• Other		10%	
What is your highest level of education completed?	High school diploma 0%	BS/BA 33%	MA/MS/ M.Ed. 63%		Ph.D./Ed.D. 4%
Where did you complete your teacher or administrator education?	Percent responding				
• University of Delaware	39%				
• Delaware State University	7%				
• Wilmington College	9%				
• Wesley College	1%				
• University out of state	44%				
What grade level is your certification?	Percent responding			Percent responding	
• Pre-Kindergarten	6%	• 6 th grade		49%	
• Kindergarten	36%	• 7 th grade		54%	
• 1 st grade	51%	• 8 th grade		54%	
• 2 nd grade	51%	• 9 th grade		38%	
• 3 rd grade	51%	• 10 th grade		38%	
• 4 th grade	50%	• 11 th grade		38%	
• 5 th grade	48%	• 12 th grade		38%	

What grade level was your primary teaching responsibility this past school year?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Pre-Kindergarten	2%	• 6 th grade	13%
• Kindergarten	4%	• 7 th grade	14%
• 1 st grade	10%	• 8 th grade	14%
• 2 nd grade	12%	• 9 th grade	23%
• 3 rd grade	14%	• 10 th grade	23%
• 4 th grade	13%	• 11 th grade	22%
• 5 th grade	10%	• 12 th grade	23%

Percent of teachers certified in the grade that they teach	Percent responding		Percent responding
• Pre-Kindergarten	57%	• 6 th grade	94%
• Kindergarten	100%	• 7 th grade	97%
• 1 st grade	100%	• 8 th grade	97%
• 2 nd grade	97%	• 9 th grade	98%
• 3 rd grade	100%	• 10 th grade	98%
• 4 th grade	97%	• 11 th grade	98%
• 5 th grade	97%	• 12 th grade	100%

In what content areas are you certified to teach?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• English Language Arts	31%	• Computer programming	2%
• Mathematics	31%	• Art	2%
• Science	32%	• Music	3%
• Social Studies	31%	• Industrial Arts	3%
• Foreign Languages	5%	• Home Economics	2%
• Physical Education	4%	• Special education	20%
• Business Education	3%	• Other	29%

In what content areas are you teaching this year?	Percent responding		Percent responding
• English Language Arts	27%	• Computer programming	3%
• Mathematics	24%	• Art	2%
• Science	23%	• Music	3%
• Social Studies	22%	• Industrial Arts	2%
• Foreign Languages	3%	• Home Economics	1%
• Physical Education	2%	• Special education	13%
• Business Education	3%	• Other	18%

Percent of teachers certified in the content areas that they teach	Percent responding		Percent responding
• English Language Arts	86%	• Computer programming	50%
• Mathematics	90%	• Art	100%
• Science	88%	• Music	83%
• Social Studies	85%	• Industrial Arts	80%
• Foreign Languages	100%	• Home Economics	100%
• Physical Education	100%	• Special education	100%
• Business Education	100%	• Other	87%

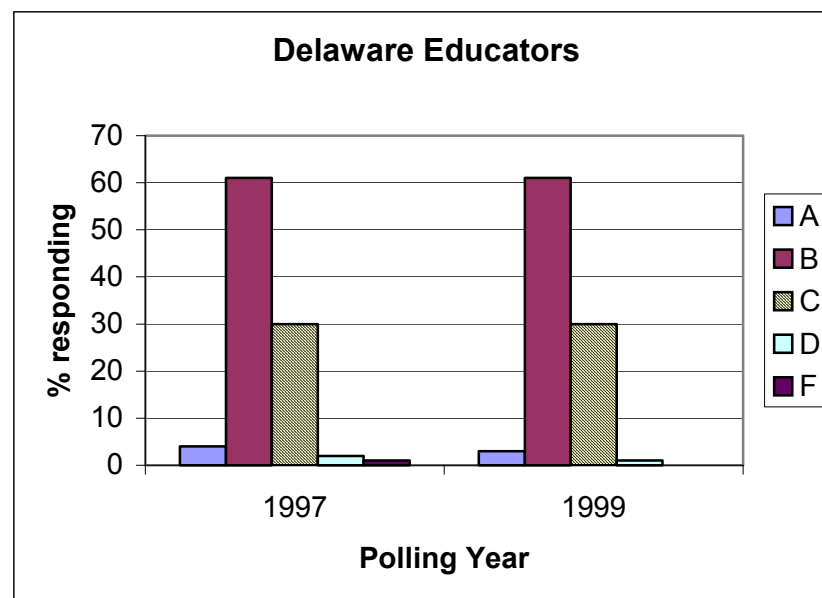
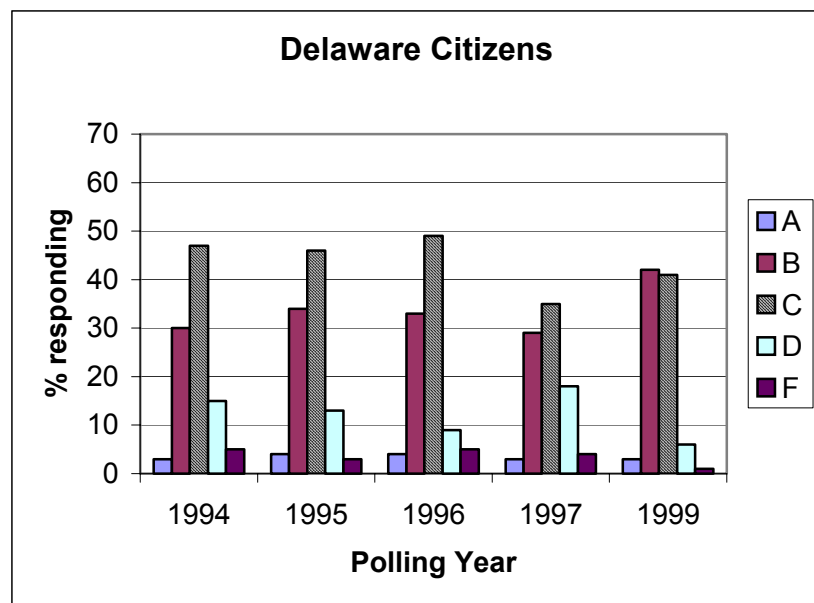
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Trend Analyses of the Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware

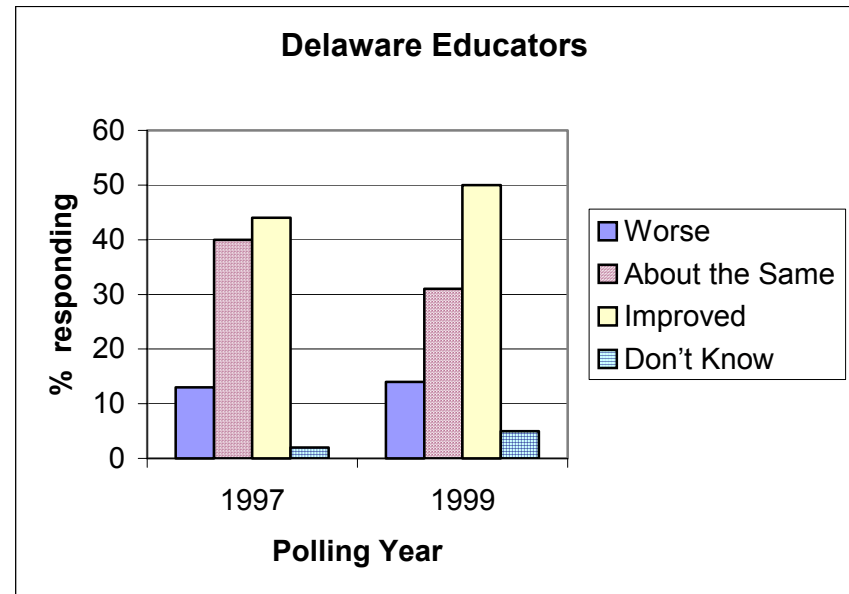
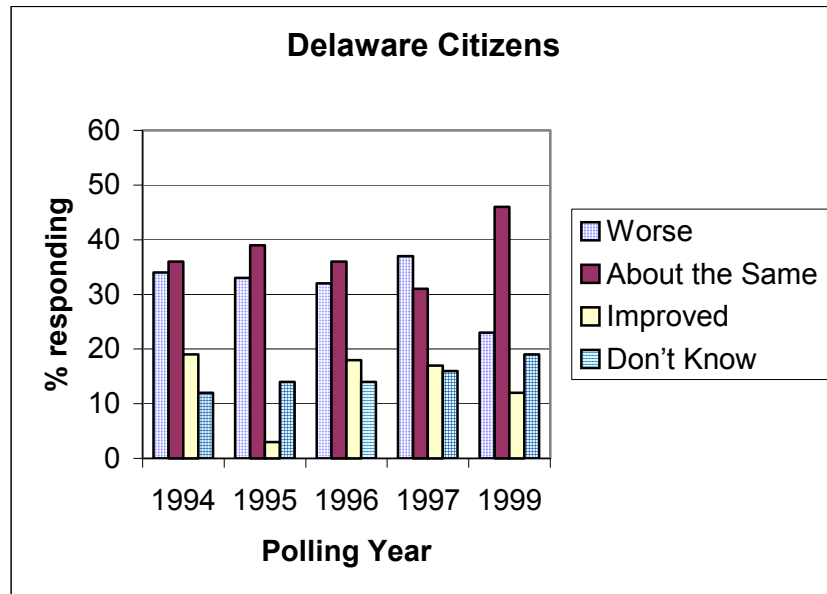
The following pages present information comparing the 1999 poll to previous years. Information from the 1998 poll results are not included because a different set of questions were asked that year.

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?**

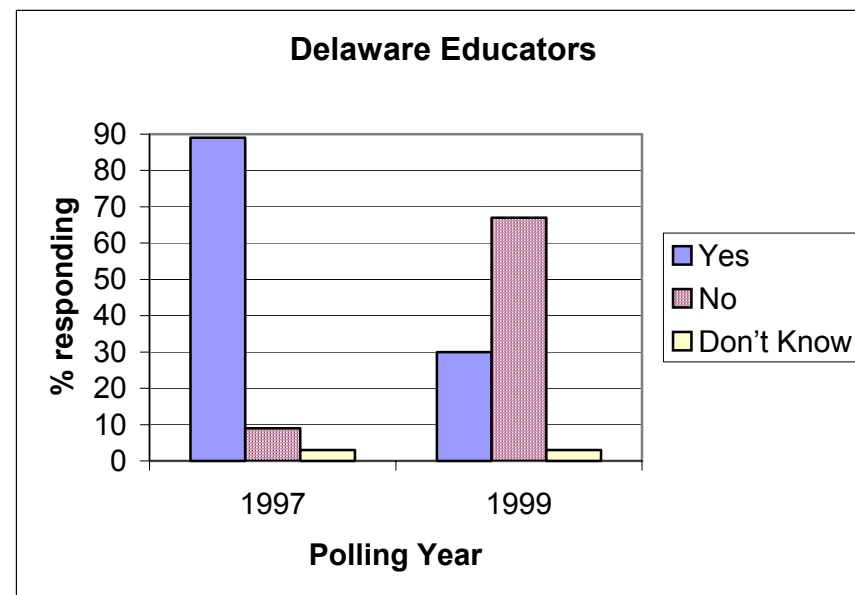
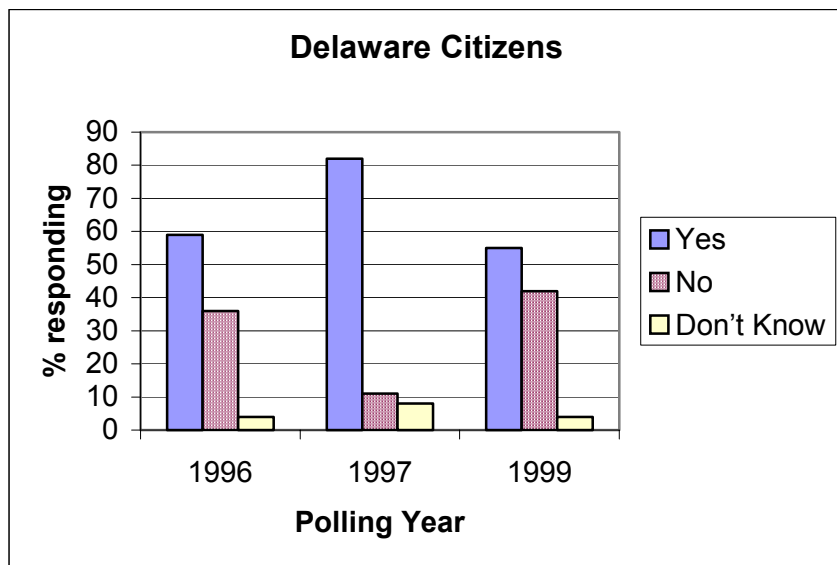


Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?

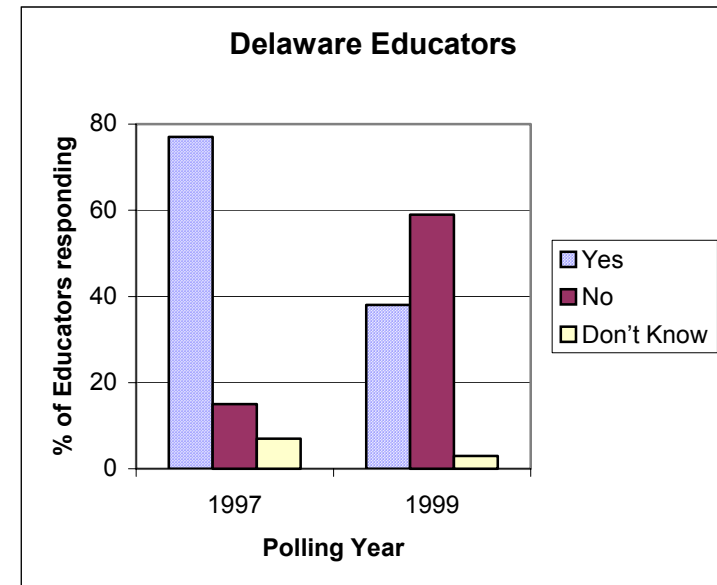
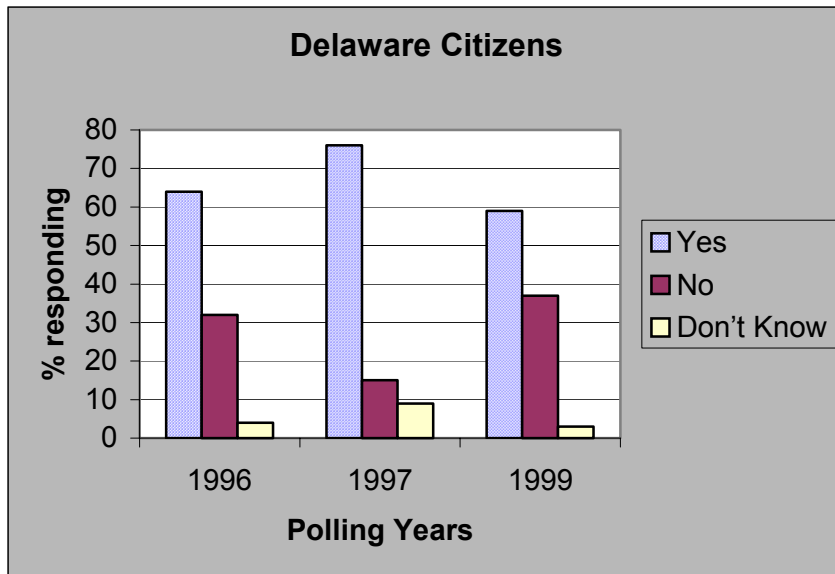


II. Educator and Student Accountability

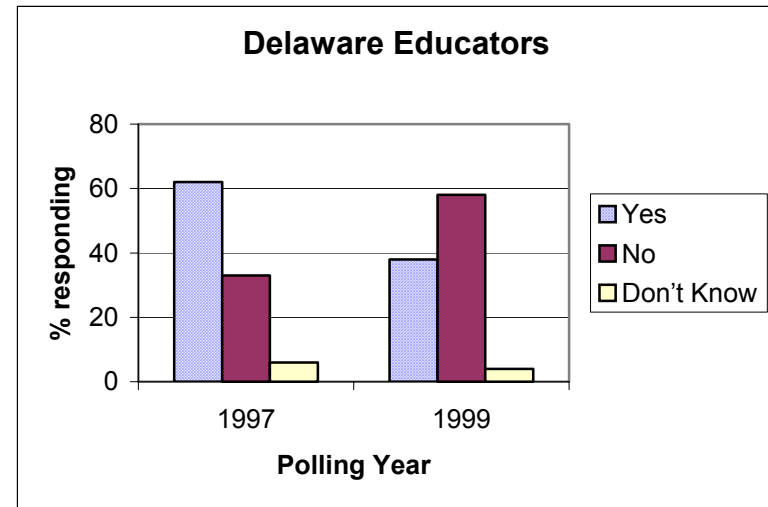
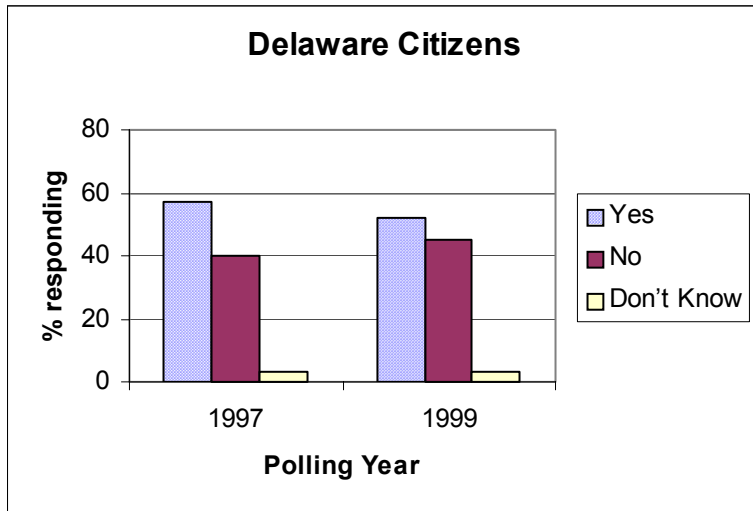
Should the student accountability system be used to determine if a student graduates from high school?



**Should the student accountability system be used to determine
if a student advances to the next grade level of schooling?**

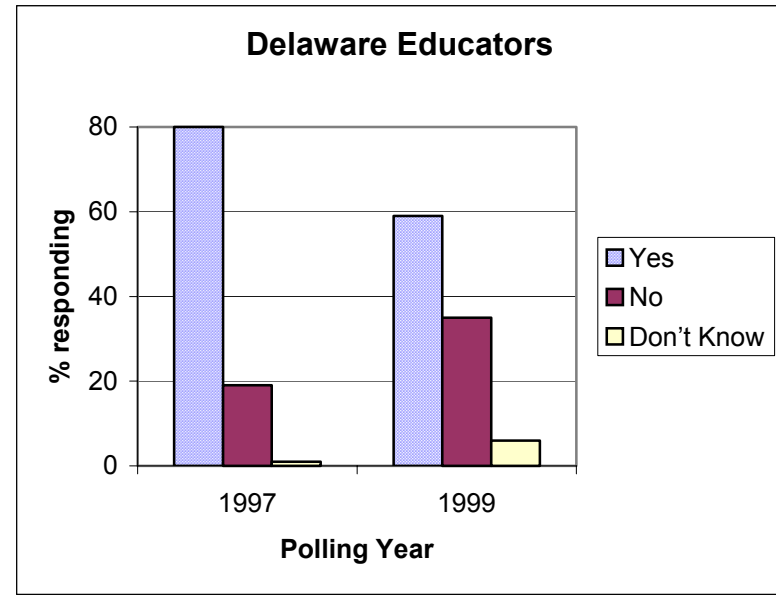
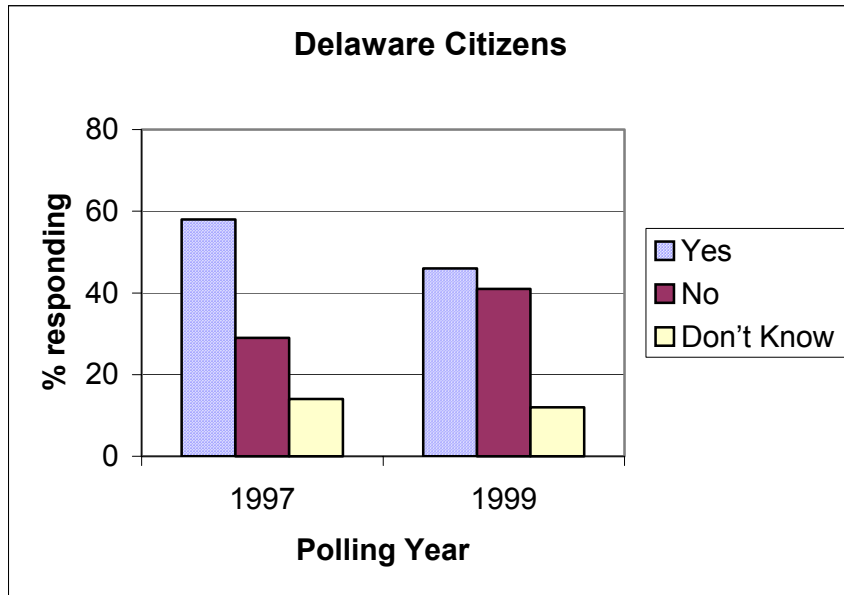


**Should the student accountability system be used to determine
if a student is permitted to participate in extracurricular activities?**



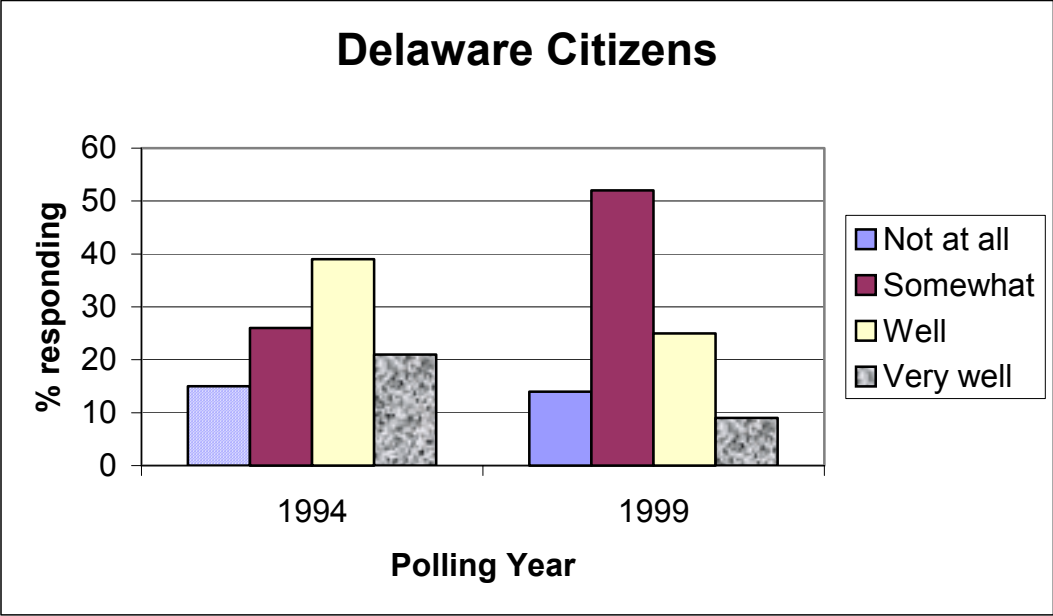
IV. Parent Involvement

Do you believe the state accountability system should be used to determine
fines for parents of children who do not attend school?

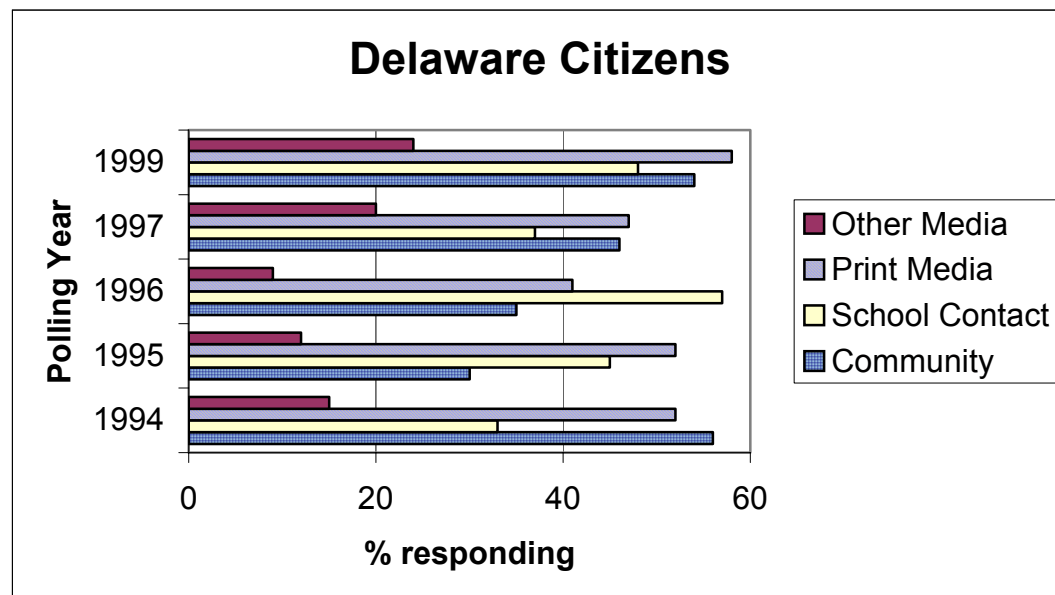


VI. General Information

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?



Note: Other Media = radio, TV
Print Media = newspaper
School Contact = school/district meetings, school/district newsletter, direct contact with teacher/administrator
Community = spouse, friend, neighbor, child, grandchild

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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?	3%	42%	41%	6%	1%	7%
Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools in this community were graded the same way. What grade would you give the public schools here? (Public Agenda Online, Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa 6/98)	(10%)	(36%)	(31%)	(9%)	(5%)	(9%)

III. Discipline

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 and widespread. (Public Agenda Online, Gallup Organization/Phi Delta Kappa 9/98)

	Not at all serious	Not very serious	Somewhat serious	Very serious	Don't know
♦ student drug use	1% (1%)	7% (4%)	46% (25%)	38% (68%)	6% (2%)
♦ school violence	1% (2%)	15% (9%)	46% (24%)	33% (65%)	5% (0%)
♦ student drinking	1% (1%)	12% (6%)	54% (28%)	25% (64%)	8% (1%)
♦ lack of parent involvement	0% (2%)	7% (7%)	47% (32%)	41% (59%)	4% (0%)

Lack of discipline is often cited as a problem confronting the public schools. As I read this list of possible solutions, please tell me if you believe it would be very helpful, somewhat helpful, or not helpful at all in improving school discipline. (Tell me which of these possible solutions you think would be most helpful in improving school discipline. (Polling Attitudes of Community on Education, Phi Delta Kappa International, 1985))

	National Ranking of Solutions	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Not helpful at all	Don't know
♦ required classes for parents of problem children	1	69%	24%	6%	1%
♦ classes for teachers on how to deal with problem children	2	69%	29%	1%	2%
♦ classes for principals to help them create more orderly behavior	3	54%	37%	7%	2%
♦ suspension of students with extreme behavior problems	4	51%	30%	18%	2%
♦ creation of a curriculum more relevant to the interests and concerns of students	5	34%	49%	12%	4%
♦ creation of more alternative schools	6	28%	52%	11%	8%

IV. Parent Involvement

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
My child's school welcomes family involvement. (National Household Education Survey, OERI, 1996)	0% (.5%)	7% (3.4%)	47% (45.2%)	43% (51.0%)	3%
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there. (National Household Education Survey, OERI, 1996)	2% (1.1%)	9% (7.2%)	50% (49.0%)	36% (42.7%)	3%
	Doesn't do it at all	Does just o.k.	Does it very well		Don't know
The following statements describe how well your child's school performs with regards to these activities. (National Household Education Survey, OERI, 1996)					
Lets you know between report cards how your child is doing in school	6% (11.5%)	44% (27.7%)	48% (60.9%)		3%
Helps you understand what children at your child's age are like (i.e., child development)	24% (29.9%)	38% (31.1%)	35% (39.0%)		3%
Makes you aware of chances to volunteer at the school	9% (15.3%)	44% (25.3%)	44% (59.4%)		3%
Provides information about how to help your child with his/her homework	24% (31.3%)	39% (30.5%)	33% (38.3%)		3%

Which of the following activities did the mother, father, both, or neither attend during the past year? (Since the beginning of this school year, have you or other adults in your household... Did you do this, did child's (mother/father), did both of you, or did neither of you? National Household Education Survey, OERI, 1996)	Mother or female guardian	Father or male guardian	Both	Neither	School didn't have	Don't remember
♦ attended a general meeting, for example, a back-to-school night or a meeting of a parent-teacher organization	34% (25.3%)	6% (3.7%)	50% (47.6%)	8% (16.1%)	1% (7.3%)	2% N/A
♦ gone to a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference	42% (33.3%)	5% (4.6%)	40% (32.2%)	7% (13.4%)	5% (16.4%)	2% N/A
♦ attended a class event such as a play, sports event, or science fair	22% (16.7%)	7% (2.8%)	56% (46.4%)	8%	6% (34.1%)	2%
♦ acted as a volunteer at the school or served on a committee	40% (26.0%)	2% (2.7%)	10% (10.7%)	40%	5% (60.5%)	2%
♦ gone to a meeting of a parent advisory group or policy council	12% (20.9%)	1% (2.1%)	6% (13.0%)	49% (13.0%)	28% (50.9%)	3% N/A

	Willing to sign	Not willing to sign	Don't know
Thinking about the public school system attended by your oldest child, would you be willing or not willing to sign an agreement which would specify everyone's responsibilities – the school's, your child's, and yours as a parent? (DE Poll, parents only, item source: Polling Attitudes of Community on Education, Phi Delta Kappa International, 1995, public school parents only)	74% (89%)	11% (9%)	15% (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 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 3, 1999 to January 27, 2000, telephone interviews were conducted with 919 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 stratified by county. The final sample upon which these results are based included 324 individuals from Kent County, 312 from New Castle County, and 283 from Sussex County. From January 3 to January 13, 2000, telephone interviews were conducted with 301 educators throughout the state. The educator poll included teachers, building administrators, and district administrators and employed a simple random sampling design. All analyses conducted by the R&D Center for the public poll involved adjusting data from the county samples to reflect the relative size of each in terms of 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:
Standard Measurement Error

Table 1 is provided to estimate the margin of error for any given question on the educator poll which utilized a simple random sample. For example, if the sample size for a question were 300 and the proportion of the sample that holds a given belief is 85%, the margin of error (95% confidence interval) would be ± 4.0 percentage points or a range from 81% to 89%.

Table 1:
Expected Margin of Error at 95% Confidence Interval for the Educator Poll

Number of Respondents	Estimated Proportion						
	.05	.15	.25	.50	.75	.85	.95
300	$\pm 2.5\%$	$\pm 4.0\%$	$\pm 4.9\%$	$\pm 5.7\%$	$\pm 4.9\%$	$\pm 4.0\%$	$\pm 2.5\%$

Since the public poll utilized a more complex, stratified random sample, the margin of error calculations are different. For the public poll, the expected margin of error (at the 95% confidence interval) is between $\pm 1.1\%$ and 7.9% for most of the survey questions. For the remaining questions, the margin of error was larger usually due to a smaller sample size. These questions are listed in Table 2.

Table 2:
Survey Questions with a Margin of Error Greater Than 8%

Question	Margin of Error
How helpful is the suspension of students with extreme behavior problems in improving school discipline?	8.0%
How well informed do you feel you are about the public schools in your community?	8.6%
As compared to five years ago, would you say that children in Delaware are more knowledgeable or less knowledge about science?	9.8%
How well does your child's school let you know between report cards how well your child is doing in school?	10.2%

Table 2 (Con't):
Survey Questions with a Margin of Error Greater Than 8%

How well does your child's school make you aware of chances to volunteer at the school?	11.0%
My child's school welcomes family involvement.	11.1%
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	11.9%
Should ineffective teachers lose their teaching license, meaning they could not teach anywhere in Delaware?	12.5%
Should ineffective teachers be fired if in the last 3 years they received two unsatisfactory evaluations?	12.9%
How well does your child's school provide information about how to help your child with his/her homework?	13.0%
How well does your child's school help you understand what children at your child's age are like?	13.1%
Did the mother or father (or both or neither) attend a general meeting for example a back-to-school night or a meeting of a parent-teacher organization during the past year?	18.0%
Did the mother or father (or both or neither) attend a class event such as a play, sports event, or science fair during the past year?	18.2%
Did the mother or father (or both or neither) attend a meeting of a parent advisory group or policy council during the past year?	20.0%
Did the mother or father (or both or neither) go to a regularly scheduled parent/teacher conference during the past year?	20.0%
Did the mother or father (or both or neither) act as a volunteer at the school or serve on a committee during the past year?	24.0%
Because of the Smithsonian Science Project, would you say that science education in Delaware has gotten worse, stayed about the same or improved?	26.0%

Appendix C:

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