

**2002 STATEWIDE PUBLIC POLL ON THE
CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE**

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

MARCH 2003

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

**2002 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 on their impressions regarding the condition of education in Delaware. This report summarizes the results for the statewide Public Poll conducted in the fall of 2002. Highlights of key findings related to several educational issues are reported and include the following:

<p style="text-align: center;">① <u>Parent and Community Involvement</u> Informed Citizens Degree of Parent Involvement Parent Perceptions of School Involvement</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">② <u>Quality of Education</u> Post-Secondary Preparation: Purpose and Success State and National Comparisons</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">③ <u>Early Care and Education</u> Choosing Childcare Access to Childcare Paying for Childcare</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">④ <u>Educational Accountability</u> Performance of Minority Students Systemic Improvement</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">⑤ <u>Charter Schools</u> Beliefs about the Purpose of Charter Schools Charter School Accountability and Impact</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⑥ <u>Student Mental Health</u> Perceived Incidence of Student Mental Health Problems Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Students</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">⑦ <u>School Climate and Discipline</u> Beliefs about Problem Student Behaviors</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">⑧ <u>Delaware Department of Education</u> Satisfaction with Services Direct Contact with the Department of Education</p>

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

- Full length copies of the Public Poll results [overall (white pages) and comparisons of parents vs. non-parents (green pages)];
- Trend analyses of the statewide poll on the condition of education in Delaware (purple pages);
- Comparisons of the 2002 poll results to national data (blue pages);
- Background information on the poll, survey design, data collection techniques, sampling error; and,
- A list of references (pink pages).

Putting the Results in Context

The summary of results for each topic on the poll includes a section entitled “Putting it in Context.” Information concerning related research, trends across polling years in Delaware, and national comparisons are included to provide a context for the poll results. While not all trend items and national comparisons are discussed in the topic summaries, they are included in the purple and blue sections of this report.

For more information on the 2002 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 PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT †

Informed Citizens

Poll Results

Delawareans were asked how well informed they are about the public schools in their communities. More parents (32%) than non-parents (21%) felt *very well informed* about the public schools in their communities, and more non-parents (26%) than parents (10%) felt they were *not informed at all*.

Putting it in Context

Since 1994, Delaware citizens have been widely varied in their perceived knowledge of their local public schools, as reported in the Public Polls. Typically, parents feel better informed than non-parents. Research shows that individuals who are knowledgeable about and interested in the public schools are more likely to have greater confidence in the public schools (Moy, Pfau, & Kahor, 1999).

† Not all trend items associated with this topic are discussed. See purple section for complete results.

① PARENT INVOLVEMENT (CONT'D)

Degree of Parent Involvement

Poll Results

About half (49%) of Delaware citizens believe parents are *somewhat* involved in their children's education and nearly the same percent believe parents are either *very* involved (18%) or *not very* involved (21%). When asked how parent involvement has changed since five years ago, a little more than one-third of Delawareans think parent involvement has *remained the same*, while about one-quarter each indicated that parents are *more involved* (26%) or *less involved* (23%).

Putting it in Context

This year's poll results show an increase in the percentage of Delawareans who believe parents are *very involved* in their children's education and a decrease in the percentage who feel parents are *somewhat involved* as compared to the Public Poll in 1999.

Gettinger and Guetschow (1998) reported that 40% of the parents involved in their study experienced one or more barriers to being involved in their children's education. Barriers receiving the highest rating by parents were time constraints, inflexible work schedules, never being asked by the teacher, and being uncertain how to contribute.

While Gettinger and Guetschow (1998) indicate that research on parent involvement typically uses a narrow definition, they also identify Epstein's (1992, 1995) six "types of activities in which parents can be involved to enhance their children's education at home or at school" (p. 39). These include: "(a) parenting and establishing a home environment to support learning; (b) communicating, or designing effective means of reciprocal communication between home and schools; (c) volunteering in schools or classrooms; (d) encouraging learning at home by helping children with activities that are specifically coordinated with schoolwork; (e) being involved in decision making, advocacy, and committee work; and (f) collaborating with the community to improve education for all children" (as cited in Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998, p. 38-39).

① PARENT INVOLVEMENT (CONT'D)

Parent Perceptions of School Involvement

Poll Results

The parents of children in public and private schools were asked several questions about the parent outreach at their oldest child's school. The majority of parents (70-77%) reported that their oldest child's school does a *good* or *excellent* job of sending home progress reports, including parents in important decision making, and making parents aware of chances to volunteer. Fewer parents (53-56%) feel the schools do a *good* or *excellent* job providing information to help their children with homework, or asking parents the best ways to work with their children. Between 20-45% of parents feel that their child's school is doing a *fair* or *poor* job of these outreach activities.

Parents whose oldest child had attended his or her current school for more than one year were asked whether any change had occurred in the aforementioned outreach activities since their children enrolled. Between 70-87% of parents said their child's school had *stayed the same* in all four outreach activities. With the exception of sending home progress reports, fewer than 20% of parents reported an increase in these school initiatives.

Putting it in Context

Parent perceptions of school outreach and of their own efficacy in impacting their children's education affect the decisions they make about getting involved in their children's education. A study focusing on parent perceptions of school outreach revealed that "the more parents perceived their child's teacher as valuing their contribution to their child's education, trying to keep them informed about their child's strengths and weaknesses, and providing them with specific suggestions to help their child, the higher the parents' involvement was both at home and at school" (Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000, p. 104). Research has also shown that "parents perceive themselves as being more effective through direct-involvement" with their children's education through activities including reading to their child, attending an individual conference, talking with their child's teacher, and advocating for their child (Gettinger & Guetschow, 1998, p.48-49).

When a national sample of parents were asked how well their children's school provides information on how to help their children with homework, 31% indicated that the school *doesn't do it at all* (National Household Education Survey, 1996). This compares to the 19% of Delaware parents who report that their children's school does a *poor* job. In another national survey, parents' beliefs on how good a job schools do of sending home progress reports mirror the beliefs of Delaware parents in this year's poll (Public Agenda Online, 1998).

② QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE

Post-Secondary Preparation: Purpose and Success

Poll Results

Most Delaware citizens (85-89%) indicated that it is *very important* for the public school system to prepare students for college and work, and to provide students with a well-rounded education. Somewhat fewer citizens (71%) felt preparing students for active involvement in their community and society is a *very important* role for the public school system. Most Delawareans (63-72%) reported that the public school system is doing a *good* or *fair* job of preparing students in all four areas, while very few (4-8%) indicated that they believe the public school system is doing an *excellent* job.

Putting it in Context

In Goodlad's (1984) landmark study, parents, teachers, and students rated each major aspect of education as very important – the academic, vocational, social and civic, and personal goals. This was found across all levels of education, from elementary through middle and high school. The majority of the respondents felt that academics were emphasized in school more than other goals, but it was clear that they hoped all four would be pursued.

National and State Comparisons

Poll Results

When respondents were asked to compare the current quality of public education in Delaware to the quality of education five years ago, 29% felt it had *improved*, 37% felt it had *stayed the same*, and 15% thought it had *gotten worse*. Delaware citizens were also asked where Delaware schools stand in relation to the nation. Almost half (48%) believe we are the *same* as the nation.

Putting it in Context

For the first time since 1994, more than 20% of Delaware citizens indicated that they believe the quality of education is better than it was five years earlier (Brown, 1994-1997, 1999). Their views on the quality of Delaware public schools in relation to the nation have become more positive after a decline in 1997, with more citizens believing Delaware schools are *as good as* the nation's and fewer thinking they are *worse*. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) periodically assesses student achievement throughout the nation. The most recent assessments of Delaware students in mathematics, reading, writing, and science, conducted in 1996 and 1998, indicate that Delaware is performing below the national average in math, reading, and science. Writing performance was equal to the national average (The National Center for Education Statistics).

③ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Choosing Childcare

Poll Results

About one-third (34%) of Delaware parents with children under the age of 13 responding to the poll utilize some form of child care for their children. The two most frequently reported reasons why parents chose their children's present care were the quality of care provided and practical considerations (e.g., hours compatible with the parents' work schedules and location of childcare). While less than half of the parents (41%) experienced no difficulties in locating acceptable child care for their children, more than half (59%) did report experiencing difficulties such as problems with the availability (17%), quality (17%), costs (11%), or location and hours of operation (10%) of child care.

Putting it in Context

Research shows that parents typically identify quality of care or practical factors (e.g., cost, location, hours, availability) to be the most important factors when selecting child care. However, families with low or moderate incomes are much more likely to select childcare based on practical factors than those families with high incomes. The instrumental needs and constraints of families (e.g., income, time, transportation, number of adults), as well as the age, and in some cases the developmental challenges of their children, may cause families to choose child care based on functional characteristics (e.g., location of the center in relation to the parents' work setting) instead of solely on the quality of the child care program. Consequently, "some children from low-income homes may be experiencing a double risk in that they live in disadvantaged homes and are more likely to receive lower quality nonmaternal childcare." (Peyton, Jacobs, O'Brien, & Roy, 2001).

③ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (CONT'D)

Access to Childcare

Poll Results

Over three-fourths (77%) of Delaware parents with children under age 13 are concerned about not having quality childcare when they need it. In addition, most citizens believe that access to affordable (72%), safe (63%), convenient (68%), and high quality (73%) childcare is limited to at least some extent in Delaware.

Putting it in Context

Research indicates that most child care programs provide mediocre or poor quality services (Clark, 2000). These child care programs have been described as "sufficiently poor to interfere with a child's emotional and intellectual development." (Helburn, 1995). According to the Delaware Early Care and Education Baseline Quality Study (Gammel-McCormick, Buell, Amsden, & Fahey, 2002), the quality of child care programs (birth to age 12) in Delaware varies widely across the state. They described many child care programs as mediocre or poor in areas such as space and furnishings, basic care, language development opportunities, and learning activities. These low scores were particularly likely to be found in programs that serve infants and toddlers. However, over half of the child care programs designed for preschool age children (ages 3-5) scored high on opportunities for language and reasoning development, interactions between the teacher and the children, and the structure of the program.

③ EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION (CONT'D)

Paying for Childcare

Poll Results

While it has been estimated that childcare can often cost as much as college tuition at a public university, over one-third of Delaware citizens (38%) responding to the poll believe that the parents themselves should bear all of the costs for childcare. However, half of Delaware citizens (49%) believe it should be a shared responsibility with the parents bearing about three-fourths (17%), half (25%), or one-fourth of the costs (7%) for childcare. Of those citizens who stated it should be a shared responsibility, most believe that parents and the government (federal, state, or local) should share in the costs for childcare with the largest number of citizens specifically identifying the state government as a partner. After the government, parents' employers were the second most frequently cited response (11%).

Putting it in Context

National research shows that the average annual cost of child care is more than the average cost of public college tuition in nearly every state (Schulman, 2000). In Delaware, the average annual cost for childcare for one infant, toddler, or pre-school age child is approximately \$5,000 to \$6,000, but can range from \$871 - \$14,820 per child (Gamel-McCormick et al., 2002). When considering how to cut childcare costs, childcare provider salary may be a primary target. However, high childcare costs do not translate directly into teacher salaries. The average teacher salary for a childcare provider is \$18,540 with average hourly rates ranging from \$6.26 for a provider in a family childcare program to \$10.78 for providers in Head Start or Early Childhood Assistance Programs (Gamel-McCormick et al., 2002).

④ EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY †

Performance of Minority Students

Poll Results

Delawareans were asked a number of questions about academic performance differences between minority and Caucasian students. When asked how often minority children (African-American and Hispanic) get as good an education as non-minority children in their communities, 57% of Delaware citizens indicated they get as good an education *most of the time*.

Fifty percent of Delawareans believe that minority and non-minority students do *about the same* academically, however, 35% believe minorities do *worse*.

Delawareans are nearly equally divided between those who believe claims that minorities are not doing well in school are *exaggerated* (24%) and those who believe that such claims *indicate a crisis* (27%).

Putting it in Context

A national survey of adults indicated that 72% of respondents believed that minority children received *as good* an education as white children in their communities (Public Agenda Online, 1999).

Even though most citizens in a national sample believed that minorities get as good an education as Caucasians, they are also aware of the achievement gaps between the groups. United States citizens appear to have a view more closely aligned with academic achievement differences found between minority and non-minority students than do Delaware citizens with almost half (49%) of the US sample believing that minority students have worse academic performance (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 2002). A recent report examining student achievement on the Delaware State Testing Program (DSTP) revealed “large gaps in achievement for African-American, Hispanic, and low-income students” (Banicky, 2002, p. 35) across all grade levels in both reading and mathematics, when compared with the performance of Caucasians and non-low income students on the DSTP. Approximately 15-30% fewer minority and low-income students met or exceeded the state standard in 1998 and 2001.

Nationally, 54% of parents surveyed view poor performance of minority students in school as a *crisis* (Public Agenda Online, 1998). “The concentrations of minority students, English-language learners, and low socio-economic status students among those retained in grade, denied high school diplomas, and placed in less demanding classes raise significant questions about the efficacy of schooling and the fairness of major educational decisions, including those made using information from high-stakes tests” (Heubert & Hauser, 1999, p. 281).

† Not all trend items associated with this topic are discussed. See blue section for complete results.

④ EDUCATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY (CONT'D)

Systemic Improvement

Poll Results

Delaware citizens were asked if they believe the educational accountability plan will decrease achievement differences between minority and non-minority students, and between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students. The largest percentage of Delawareans (41-43%) felt that the accountability plan would have *some* impact on decreasing these achievement differences.

When asked how much they think the educational accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools, 61% said *somewhat* or a *great deal*, while 31% said either *a little* or *not at all*.

Putting it in Context

A recent nation-wide study by Moon, Brighton, and Callahan (2003) examining the impact of state testing programs on teaching practices revealed, that while teachers are aware that “repetition, practice worksheets, and skill drills” (p.54) are not considered best practices, they feel compelled to do them in order to prepare students for state tests. Other impacts reported by the majority of teachers include teaching to the test and omitting content in favor of test preparation.

Compared to the 2000 poll, fewer Delaware citizens had negative beliefs about the state accountability plan. The percentage of Delaware citizens who feel the state accountability plan will have *no* impact on improving public schools decreased.

Much research exists describing difficulties with state accountability systems. In a study of low-performing schools put on probation, Mintrop (2003) concluded that “probation may foremost be a tool to arrest decline in persistently low-performing schools” (p. 22), however, such schools make little improvement beyond this.

There is very little research documenting academic improvement when indicators other than test scores are considered. Examining student achievement post-graduation, beyond high-stakes test scores, may be a more meaningful indicator of the success educational accountability systems can claim.

⑤ CHARTER SCHOOLS †

Beliefs about the Purpose of Charter Schools

Poll Results

When asked for their opinion of the purpose of charter school education, more than 90% of Delawareans surveyed provided responses related to classroom academics or control over the educational process. The three most commonly provided purposes were, as an alternative to regular public schools (17%), to provide smaller classes and/or individual attention (16%), and/or to provide better education (16%). Parental control or educational philosophy was mentioned by 11% of those surveyed, and academic focus (such as the arts, math and science, or business) or advanced, special, or gifted programs were mentioned by about 8%.

Responses indicate that some citizens have erroneous beliefs about charter schools. For example, many citizens surveyed mentioned the arts as a focus, or the Cab Calloway School of the Arts specifically, indicating some confusion about charter schools and magnet schools. Also, a sizeable minority of respondents have the misconception that charter schools charge tuition.

Putting it in Context

A national survey of charter schools conducted by RPP International (2000) for the U.S. Department of Education indicated that more than half of newly created charter schools were created to realize an educational vision of some type, and another 23% were created to serve a special population.

† Not all trend items associated with this topic are discussed. See blue section for complete results.

⑤ CHARTER SCHOOLS (CONT'D)

Charter School Accountability and Impact

Poll Results

About 70% of all Delaware citizens, including three-quarters of parents (75%), have heard or read about Delaware charter schools.

Of those citizens familiar with charter schools, 81% believe that charter schools should be accountable to the state in the *same way* as regular public schools. Almost half of all citizens (45%) believe that charter schools should be expected to have *higher achievement* than regular public schools, and just over half (53%) believe that charter schools should be expected to have *equal achievement* to regular public schools.

Putting it in Context

According to a Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll in 2002, a little over half (56%) of Americans have heard of charter schools, compared with 70% of Delawareans. In the 2000–2001 school year, 1% of public school students attended charter schools nationally (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). According to the Delaware Department of Education, about 4% of Delaware's public school students attended charter schools in 2001-2002 (Delaware Department of Education, 2002).

According to the same Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, after providing a brief description of charter schools, 77% of Americans indicated that charter schools should be accountable to their states in *the same way* regular public schools are accountable. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2002), 38 states have charter school laws. They also reported that more than 80% of charter schools are externally monitored on accountability measures in the areas of student achievement and attendance, school finances, and regulatory compliance. Delaware is one state that requires such monitoring.

⑥ STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

Perceived Incidence of Student Mental Health Problems

Poll Results

Almost two-thirds (65%) of Delaware citizens believe student mental health problems are *very* or *somewhat common*, while 21% think they are either *not very common* or *extremely rare*. Few (2%) indicated they think *students are too young to have mental health problems*.

Putting it in Context

“In the National Action Agenda for Children's Mental Health, the U.S. Surgeon General warns that the nation is facing a public crisis in caring for children and adolescents with behavioral, psychological, and emotional problems” (Olbrich, 2002). According to The Center for Health and Healthcare in Schools, an estimated one in five of the nation's youth ages 9-17 has a diagnosable mental health disorder. Some of the most common mental illnesses are related to anxiety, conduct, depression, learning, attention, and eating (Olbrich, 2002). In Delaware this amounts to more than 10,000 children with mental health illnesses in these and other areas (The Center for Mental Health Services).

⑥ STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH (CONT'D)

Meeting the Mental Health Needs of Students

Poll Results

More than 90% of citizens think it is *very* or *somewhat appropriate* for schools to work with mental health services to meet the mental health needs of students.

Over 20% of Delawareans feel they do not have enough information to comment on the availability of student mental health services in schools or the extent to which students in need of such services receive them. Few citizens (7-13%) believe mental health services are *very available* in the schools and that students in need of mental health services receive them, *to a great extent*.

Putting it in Context

In 2002, The Center for Health and Healthcare in schools reported that schools often function as the practical mental health system for children (Olbrich, 2002). They “provide a logical setting for both early identification of children at risk for serious emotional disturbance and for effective provision of services” (The Center for Mental Health Services).

Nationally, only 25% of children who need mental health services receive them. Recent data not only points to exceptionally high levels of unmet need, but to ethnic and racial disparities. Children in minority populations are less likely to have access to mental health services, and the care they receive is often of poorer quality (Olbrich, 2002). Additionally, school involvement in providing mental health services has been limited. (The Center for Mental Health Services).

Beliefs about Student Behaviors

Poll Results

Delaware citizens were asked a series of paired questions about student drug use and weapon possession. For the first question, Delawareans were informed of the percentage of 8th grade students in Delaware who self-identified as engaging in problem behaviors. Then asked whether the percentage was more or less than what they thought. Between 20-49% of Delaware citizens indicated that *a lot more* students than they thought were smoking marijuana, drinking alcohol, using other illegal drugs, and bringing weapons to school. They were less surprised with the number of students smoking cigarettes; only 11% responded with *a lot more* than they thought. Citizens were then asked about the seriousness of each of these problems. The majority (63-88%) of citizens feel that each problem – cigarette smoking, marijuana smoking, drinking alcohol, using other illegal drugs, and bringing weapons to school – is *very serious*. Fewer than 5% of Delawareans indicated that these problems were *not serious at all*.

Putting it in Context

Since 1999, there has been a steady increase in the percentage of Delaware citizens who believe problems of student alcohol consumption and illegal drug use are *very serious*. The most dramatic change in citizens' opinions, occurring between 2000 and 2002, was the large increase in those who think illegal drug use and alcohol consumption among students is a *very serious* problem. This particularly large increase in perceived seriousness likely resulted from providing current data on the behaviors of 8th grade Delaware students, because the actual incidence of these problem behaviors has remained fairly constant since 1999 for 8th and 11th grade students in Delaware (Martin et al., 1999-2002¹).

In comparison to 8th grade students in other states, Delaware students show a higher incidence of *recent*² marijuana smoking. Grunbaum et al. (2001)³ reported that high school students in Delaware had a significantly lower incidence of recent cigarette smoking (24%) than a national sample (28%). According to a series of reports by Martin and others, recent cigarette smoking among 11th grade Delaware students decreased between 1999-2002; and is similar to the decrease in a comparable national sample of high school students. In a nationwide study fewer Delaware high school students reported carrying a weapon during the month prior to being surveyed, compared to the national average. Grunbaum et al. (2001) also found significant differences in the national sample of high school students between males and females and for some racial comparisons regarding smoking, drinking, drug use, and weapon possession.

† Not all trend items associated with this topic are discussed. See blue section for complete results.

¹ Source of all data for grade 8.

² *Recent* refers to activity in the 30 days prior to completing the survey.

³ Source of all data reported for high school students (grades 9-12).

⑧ DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Satisfaction with Services

Poll Results

About two-thirds (64%) of parents and one half (52%) of non-parents in Delaware are either *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied* with the Delaware Department of Education (DDOE). When asked why Delawareans feel as they do about the Department, responses were extremely diverse covering 22 themes. The themes cited most frequently were the quality of public education (13%), areas in need of improvement (10%), helpfulness (11%), and programs/services (8%). Close examination of the reasons Delaware citizens gave for their level of satisfaction reveals that many replies were about public education in general, not specific DDOE activities.

The responses of both satisfied and dissatisfied Delawareans indicated that the most commonly reported reasons for their level of satisfaction are nearly the same: quality of public education, areas in need of improvement, and helpfulness. In the following comparisons, group differences ranging from 3-5% are included. Dissatisfied citizens raised three issues more often than satisfied citizens: personal experience, long-term outcomes of public education and special education. When comparing parents and non-parents, a higher percentage of *non-parents* are satisfied regarding helpfulness, and dissatisfied with programs/services, communication, discipline/safety/drugs, and curriculum. A higher percentage of *parents* are dissatisfied with long-term outcomes of public education, bureaucracy/politics, and school size.

Putting it in Context

When compared with the level of satisfaction reported in 2000, there is a decrease in the percentage Delaware citizens who are either *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied* with Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) this year.

⑧ DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (Cont'd)

Direct Contact with Department of Education

Poll Results

Approximately one-fifth (21%) of Delaware parents had direct contact with DDOE in the 12 months prior to the survey, more than twice the percentage of non-parents. The most common reasons why citizens had contact with DDOE were to get information on various topics (35%) or because they worked with DDOE in some capacity (20%).

Putting it in Context

This year, a few more Delawareans reported having had contact with DDOE than were reported in 2000. This change may have resulted from this year's question about contact in general, versus the 2000 question asking specifically if the citizen contacted the Department to request services.

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
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Statewide Public Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 2002 Results Analysis

I. Parent/Community Involvement

How well informed are you about 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?	<u>1</u> Not at all 21%	<u>2</u> 24%	<u>3</u> 30%	<u>4</u> Very well 24%	<u>Don't know</u> <1%
Has your oldest child attended his or her current school for more than one year?	<u>Yes</u> 73%	<u>No</u> 27%			
How good a job does the school do of sending home progress reports between report cards?	<u>Excellent</u> 45%	<u>Good</u> 32%	<u>Fair</u> 14%	<u>Poor</u> 6%	<u>Don't know</u> 3%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 20%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 71%	<u>Decreased</u> 6%		<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How good a job does the school do of including parents in important decisions about their children's education?	<u>Excellent</u> 32%	<u>Good</u> 38%	<u>Fair</u> 22%	<u>Poor</u> 6%	<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 16%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 77%	<u>Decreased</u> 6%		<u>Don't know</u> <1%

How good a job does the school do of making parents aware of chances to volunteer at the school?	<u>Excellent</u> 43%	<u>Good</u> 33%	<u>Fair</u> 12%	<u>Poor</u> 10%	<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 13%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 84%	<u>Decreased</u> 2%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How good a job does the school do of providing information about how to help your child with his/her homework?	<u>Excellent</u> 26%	<u>Good</u> 30%	<u>Fair</u> 21%	<u>Poor</u> 19%	<u>Don't know</u> 3%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 12%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 80%	<u>Decreased</u> 7%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How good a job does the school do of asking parents about the best ways to work with their children?	<u>Excellent</u> 20%	<u>Good</u> 33%	<u>Fair</u> 27%	<u>Poor</u> 18%	<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 8%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 87%	<u>Decreased</u> 4%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?	<u>Very involved</u> 18%	<u>Somewhat involved</u> 49%	<u>Not very involved</u> 21%		<u>Don't know</u> 12%
Compared to five years ago, are parents more involved or less involved in their children's education? Or has it stayed about the same?	<u>More involved</u> 26%	<u>About the same</u> 36%	<u>Less involved</u> 23%		<u>Don't know</u> 15%

II. Quality of Education in Delaware

	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
How important is it for the public school system to prepare students for college?	1%	9%	89%		1%
How important is it for the public schools system to prepare students for work?	3%	12%	85%		1%
How important is it for the public school system to prepare students to be actively involved in their community and society?	3%	25%	71%		0%
How important is it for the public school system to provide a well-rounded education to students?	1%	10%	88%		1%
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for college?	6%	33%	35%	9%	16%
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for work?	4%	29%	40%	11%	16%
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students to be actively involved in their community and society?	4%	27%	36%	19%	14%

How good a job do Delaware public schools do of providing a well-rounded education to students?	8%	37%	35%	9%	12%
	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Stayed the same</u>	<u>Worse</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have improved, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?	29%	37%	15%		19%
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Worse</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
Where would you say Delaware's schools stand in relation to the nation?	16%	48%	20%		16%

III. Early Child Care and Education

Do any of your children currently go to childcare at least once a week? Childcare could be provided in home or out of the home, before or after school, or during day or evening hours. (sample of parents with children 12 and under)	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
	34%	66%

What were the three most important reasons you chose your child's present care?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Quality	56%
Convenience	20%
Cost (Self-explanatory)	7%
Referral/Reputation (Includes referrals and recommendations from others)	6%
Other (Includes various responses, including those that don't answer the question asked)	9%

Breakdown of Quality and Convenience

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Quality (56%)	
- Quality of care/environment (Includes family care, religious reasons, the daycare’s environment, other children present and emotional ideas)	19%
- Quality of curriculum/programs/activities (Includes the type of curriculum or programming required, specific activities , and similarity with or preparation for school)	19%
- Quality of staff (Includes specific mentions of staff as a whole or individual staff members)	9%
- Other quality (Includes cleanliness and general “quality” as an answer)	5%
- Quality of safety (Self-explanatory)	5%
Convenience (20%)	
- Convenience of proximity (Daycare is convenient to home, work, or transportation)	13%
- Convenience non-specified (Self-explanatory)	5%
- Convenience of hours open (Hours fit schedule desired by respondent)	3%

What problems did you encounter, if any, in finding the right childcare for your children?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
No problems	41%
Availability	17%
Quality	17%
Fee-Regular	11%
Convenience	10%
Other	5%

	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not too concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned at all</u>	<u>Don’t know</u>
How concerned are you, if at all, about not having quality childcare when you need it?	77%	8%	3%	11%	

To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>affordable</u> childcare?	<u>Great extent</u> 11%	<u>Some extent</u> 45%	<u>Small extent</u> 22%	<u>Not at all</u> 5%	<u>Don't know</u> 16%	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>high quality</u> childcare?	<u>Great extent</u> 10%	<u>Some extent</u> 43%	<u>Small extent</u> 25%	<u>Not at all</u> 5%	<u>Don't know</u> 17%	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>convenient</u> childcare?	15%	46%	19%	3%	16%	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>safe</u> childcare?	19%	49%	12%	2%	19%	
It has been estimated that childcare can often cost as much as college tuition at a public university in Delaware. What percent of childcare costs should the parents themselves be expected to pay?	<u>100%</u> 38%	<u>@75%</u> 17%	<u>@50%</u> 25%	<u>@25%</u> 7%	<u>0%</u> 2%	<u>Don't know</u> 10%

Who should pay the remaining cost?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Government - state	43%
Government – non-specified	20%
Employers	11%
Government - Federal	4%
Sliding Scale	3%
School	1%
Charity	1%
Government - county	1%
Other	11%
Don't know	5%

IV. Educational Accountability

	<u>Very responsible</u>	<u>Mostly responsible</u>	<u>Somewhat responsible</u>	<u>Not at all responsible</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How responsibly do you feel the media reports on education in Delaware (for example, does it cover all sides, report on the “big picture,” not take information out of context).	8%	20%	55%	11%	6%
	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In general, how often do you think minority children get as good an education as non-minority children in your community?	57%	24%	10%	2%	7%
	<u>Better</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Worse</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
Do you think minority students do better, worse, or about the same as non-minority students in school?	4%	50%	35%		11%

	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Problem but not a crisis</u>	<u>Exaggerated</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
When you hear that many minority children are not doing well in school, which of the following comes closer to your reaction? A) This problem is a crisis and must be addressed quickly, b) This is a serious problem, but not a crisis, or c) This problem is exaggerated – things are probably not as bad as people make them out to be?	27%	44%	24%		4%

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you think the accountability plan will decrease the achievement differences between minority and non-minority students?	13%	43%	17%	18%	10%

	14%	41%	18%	19%	8%
How much do you think the accountability plan will reduce the achievement differences between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students?					

	19%	42%	19%	12%	8%
How much do you think the educational accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?					

V. Charter Schools

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Don't remember</u>
Have you heard or read about Delaware charter schools?	71%	29%		0%

In your opinion, what is the major purpose of charter school education?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Alternative to regular public school (Responses that describe charter schools as an alternative, choice, or freedom or moving kids from regular public schools)	17%
Smaller classes/Individual attention (Charter schools offer these)	16%
Better education (Charter schools offer better, more concentrated, higher quality education)	16%
Parent control/Educational philosophy (Charter schools offer parents more involvement and control and have different types of curricula, disciplinary strategies, approaches to learning)	11%
Academic focus (Charter schools have themes or specializations such as math, science, the arts, etc.)	8%
Programs—advanced/special/gifted (Focus on special programs for ability groups: advanced and/or gifted, special education, special needs)	8%
Similar to private school (Specific comparisons with private schools)	4%
Misconceptions/Strong opinions (Misconceptions in terms of funding, student selection, tuition. Strong opinions related to economic class and racial discrimination)	3%
Socio-economic segregation (Charter schools cause this)	3%
Other	6%
Don't know/No opinion	8%

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Do you think that charter schools should be accountable to the state in the way regular public schools are accountable?	81%	15%	4%

	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Equal</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Should charter schools be expected to have higher, lower, or equal student achievement compared with regular public schools?	<u>45%</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u><1%</u>	<u>2%</u>

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you believe that charter schools will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	23%	44%	15%	11%	7%

VI. Student Mental Health

	<u>Very Common</u>	<u>Somewhat common</u>	<u>Not very common</u>	<u>Extremely rare</u>	<u>Students are too young</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How common do you think mental health problems are among Delaware's students? Would you say very common, somewhat common, not very common, extremely rare, or students are too young to have mental health problems?	20%	45%	14%	7%	2%	13%

	<u>Very appropriate</u>	<u>Somewhat appropriate</u>	<u>Not very appropriate</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How appropriate do you think it is for schools to work with mental health services to meet the mental health needs of students?	64%	27%	6%	3%

	<u>Very available</u>	<u>Somewhat available</u>	<u>Not very available</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How available are mental health services to children in Delaware schools?	13%	37%	23%	27%

	<u>Great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>Small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
To what extent do you think Delaware students who need mental health services are receiving them?	7%	36%	32%	4%	21%

VII. School Climate and Discipline

	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
12% of 8 th grade students reported smoking cigarettes during the month before the survey. Is this a lot more than you thought, a little more, a little less, a lot less, or about what you thought?	11%	4%	24%	15%	43%	3%
	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not at all serious</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How serious a problem is student cigarette smoking?	63%	30%	4%			2%
	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
14% of 8 th grade students reported smoking marijuana during the month before the survey.	20%	13%	16%	11%	37%	3%
	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not at all serious</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How serious a problem is student marijuana smoking?	73%	23%	3%			1%
	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
24% of 8 th grade students reported drinking alcohol during the month before the survey.	30%	14%	13%	8%	33%	2%
	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not at all serious</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How serious a problem is student alcohol consumption?	80%	18%	2%			1%
	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
14% of 8 th grade students reported using other illegal drugs like crack, inhalants, heroine, and cocaine during the month before the survey.	49%	16%	8%	4%	21%	3%

How serious a problem is student use of other illegal drugs?	<u>Very serious</u> 88%	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 9%	<u>Not at all serious</u> 1%		<u>Don't know</u> 2%	
3% of 8 th grade students reported bringing a weapon to school or a school event during the month before the survey.	<u>A lot more</u> 28%	<u>A little more</u> 11%	<u>A little less</u> 15%	<u>A lot less</u> 10%	<u>About what I thought</u> 32%	<u>Don't know</u> 4%
How serious a problem is student weapon possession?	<u>Very serious</u> 83%	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 13%	<u>Not at all serious</u> 2%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%	

VIII. Delaware Department of Education

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education?	<u>Very Satisfied</u> 11%	<u>Somewhat satisfied</u> 44%	<u>Somewhat dissatisfied</u> 18%	<u>Very dissatisfied</u> 9%	<u>Don't know</u> 17%
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Why do you say that [you are satisfied or dissatisfied]?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Satisfied Respondents</u>	<u>Dissatisfied Respondents</u>
Quality of public education	13%	13%	12%
Helpfulness (How problems are handled, satisfaction level)	11%	11%	11%
Needs Improvement (General and specific areas of the public school system)	10%	11%	9%
Programs (Activities, in and out of school programs, services provided to the students)	8%	9%	8%
Communication	8%	7%	9%
DSTP (Accountability and state testing issues)	6%	7%	5%
Personal experience	5%	4%	7%
Discipline/Safety/Drugs (How discipline is handled, drug use in schools, school safety)	5%	5%	6%
Second-hand information (Information the respondent has heard by “word-of-mouth”)	5%	5%	4%
Long term outcome of public education (How well child does in “real world” after going through public education)	4%	3%	7%
Funding (How money should be spent, where money is/should come from)	4%	4%	4%
Special education (Special education and services provided to special education students, student specific comments)	4%	3%	6%
Caliber of teachers [Quality of teachers, qualifications of teachers (training etc.)]	3%	3%	4%
Bureaucracy/Politics (Nature of government involvement in schools, how politics affect schools)	3%	2%	3%
Diversity/Bussing (Multi-cultural diversity; discrimination issues)	3%	3%	3%
Parents/Families (Parent and family roles and involvement in education)	3%	2%	4%
Curriculum	3%	3%	4%
Private/Charter schools (Compares private school to public, opinions about charter schools)	3%	3%	3%
School size (School and class size)	2%	1%	3%
Other	12%	13%	11%
Don't know	6%	7%	4%

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Have you at any time in the past 12 months had direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education?	14%	85%	1%

What was the purpose of your contact with the Department?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Employees/contractors/board (Complaints or concerns related to schools, personnel, or student achievement, accomplishment, or behavior)	20%
General Information (Requests for information about schools, including bussing and programs)	14%
Information about own child [Requests for information or response regarding respondents own child (includes overlap with other categories, e.g., testing or complaints)]	13%
Teacher contact (All respondents who indicate that they are teachers)	11%
Unrelated to DOE (All responses that are <u>clearly</u> unrelated to DOE)	9%
Information about testing and/or placement (All responses that include mentions of testing or placement)	8%
Complaint/Concern (Complaints or concerns related to schools, personnel, or students achievement, accomplishment, or behavior)	7%
Advocacy (Advocating a change in or continuation of programs or services)	3%
Other (Responses that don't fit in other categories or are unclear as to their meaning)	14%

IX. Demographic Information

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Are you the parent, step-parent, or guardian of a child that is 18 or younger and lives in Delaware?	33%	67%

	<u>Public</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>Charter</u>	<u>Home schooled</u>	<u>None</u>
Do your children attend a public, private, or charter school? Or are your children home schooled?	59%	21%	4%	2%	13%

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>

Are any of your children 12 or younger?	74%	26%			
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	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			
Are any of your children 5 or younger?	50%	50%			

In what school district do you live?	<u>Percent responding</u>	<u>Percent responding</u>
• Appoquinimink	4%	• Polytech >1%
• Brandywine	9%	• Smyrna 3%
• Christina	18%	• Cape Henlopen 6%
• Colonial	8%	• Delmar 1%
• NCC Vo-Tech	>1%	• Indian River 6%
• Red Clay	14%	• Laurel 2%
• Capital	4%	• Seaford 3%
• Ceasar Rodney	5%	• Sussex Vo-tech 1%
• Lake Forest	2%	• Woodbridge 1%
• Milford	3%	• Don't know 10%

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
What is your age?	46.31	16.68	18-89

Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	28.93	20.42	0-89
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What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	<u>Percent responding</u>			<u>Percent responding</u>
• Less than 12 th grade	6%		• Master's degree	10%
• Completed high school	28%		• Ph.D., J.D., Ed.D, or M.D.	3%
• Completed 1, 2, or 3 years of college	23%		• Other post-baccalaureate degree	1%
• Bachelor's degree	28%			
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Refused</u>
	2%	97%		1%
How would you describe your race?	<u>Percent responding</u>			<u>Percent responding</u>
• White	79%		• Native American	1%
• African American	16%		• Other including bi-racial (please specify)	1%
• Asian/Pacific Islander	2%		• Refused	1%
What is your household income from all sources?	<u>Percent responding</u>			<u>Percent responding</u>
• <i>LESS THAN \$10,000</i>	8%		• \$35,000 - \$49,999	12%
• \$10,000 - \$14,999	9%		• \$50,000 - \$74,999	14%
• \$15,000 - \$19,999	14%		• \$75,000 or more	16%
• \$20,000 - \$34,999	23%		• Refused/Don't know	7%
Do you have more than one telephone number in your household?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		
	20%	79%		
Gender	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>		
	43%	57%		

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
of the
University of Delaware

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. Parent/Community Involvement

How well informed are you about 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?	<u>1</u> Not at all 10% (26%)	<u>2</u> 20% (27%)	<u>3</u> 38% (26%)	<u>4</u> Very well 32% (21%)	<u>Don't know</u> 0% (<1%)
Has your oldest child attended his or her current school for more than one year?	<u>Yes</u> 73%	<u>No</u> 27%			
How good a job does the school do of sending home progress reports between report cards?	<u>Excellent</u> 45%	<u>Good</u> 32%	<u>Fair</u> 14%	<u>Poor</u> 6%	<u>Don't know</u> 3%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 23%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 71%	<u>Decreased</u> 6%		<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How good a job does the school do of including parents in important decisions about their children's education?	<u>Excellent</u> 32%	<u>Good</u> 38%	<u>Fair</u> 22%	<u>Poor</u> 6%	<u>Don't know</u> 1%

How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 16%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 77%	<u>Decreased</u> 6%		<u>Don't know</u> <1%
How good a job does the school do of making parents aware of chances to volunteer at the school?	<u>Excellent</u> 43%	<u>Good</u> 33%	<u>Fair</u> 12%	<u>Poor</u> 10%	<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 13%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 84%	<u>Decreased</u> 2%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How good a job does the school do of providing information about how to help your child with his/her homework?	<u>Excellent</u> 26%	<u>Good</u> 30%	<u>Fair</u> 21%	<u>Poor</u> 19%	<u>Don't know</u> 3%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 12%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 80%	<u>Decreased</u> 7%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How good a job does the school do of asking parents about the best ways to work with their children?	<u>Excellent</u> 20%	<u>Good</u> 33%	<u>Fair</u> 27%	<u>Poor</u> 18%	<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How has this changed since your child began attending this school?	<u>Increased</u> 8%	<u>Stayed the same</u> 87%	<u>Decreased</u> 4%		<u>Don't know</u> 1%
In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?	<u>Very involved</u> 24% (15%)	<u>Somewhat involved</u> 51% (48%)	<u>Not very involved</u> 20% (22%)		<u>Don't know</u> 5% (15%)

	<u>More involved</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Less involved</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Compared to five years ago, are parents more involved or less involved in their children's education? Or has it stayed about the same?	34% (22%)	36% (36%)	20% (24%)	10% (17%)

II. Quality of Education in Delaware

	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
How important is it for the public school system to prepare students for college?	1% (1%)	7% (9%)	90% (89%)	1% (1%)	
How important is it for the public schools system to prepare students for work?	3% (3%)	10% (13%)	87% (83%)	0% (1%)	
How important is it for the public school system to prepare students to be actively involved in their community and society?	4% (3%)	25% (25%)	71% (71%)	<1% (<1%)	
How important is it for the public school system to provide a well-rounded education to students?	2% (1%)	10% (10%)	88% (89%)	<1% (1%)	
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for college?	7% (6%)	36% (32%)	33% (36%)	11% (8%)	13% (18%)

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for work?	5% (4%)	32% (27%)	37% (42%)	11% (12%)	15% (16%)
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students to be actively involved in their community and society?	5% (3%)	29% (26%)	36% (36%)	20% (19%)	10% (15%)
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of providing a well-rounded education to students?	8% (7%)	43% (35%)	32% (36%)	11% (8%)	7% (15%)
	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Stayed the same</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have improved, gotten worse, or stayed about the same?	33% (26%)	34% (39%)	15% (15%)	17% (20%)	
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Where would you say Delaware's schools stand in relation to the nation?	17% (15%)	45% (50%)	24% (18%)	15% (16%)	

III. Early Child Care and Education

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do any of your children currently go to childcare at least once a week? Childcare could be provided in home or out of the home, before or after school, or during day or evening hours. (sample of parents with children 12 and under)	34%	66%

What were the three most important reasons you chose your child's present care?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Quality	56%
Convenience	20%
Cost (Self-explanatory)	7%
Referral/Reputation (Includes referrals and recommendations from others)	6%
Other (Includes various responses, including those that don't answer the questions asked)	9%

Breakdown of Quality and Convenience

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Quality (56%)	
- Quality of care/environment (Includes family care, religious reasons, the daycare's environment, other children present and emotional ideas)	19%
- Quality of curriculum/programs/activities (Includes the type of curriculum or programming required, specific activities, and similarity with or preparation for school)	19%
- Quality of staff (Includes specific mentions of staff as a whole or individual staff members)	9%
- Other quality (Includes cleanliness and general "quality" as an answer)	5%
- Quality of safety (Self-explanatory)	5%
Convenience (20%)	
- Convenience of proximity (Daycare is convenient to home, work, or transportation)	13%
- Convenience non-specified (Self-explanatory)	5%
- Convenience of hours open (Hours fit schedule desired by respondent)	3%

What problems did you encounter, if any, in finding the right childcare for your children?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
No problems	41%
Availability	17%
Quality	17%
Fee-Regular	11%
Convenience	10%
Other	5%

	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not too concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
How concerned are you, if at all, about not having quality childcare when you need it?	77%	8%	3%	11%	0%	
	<u>Great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>Small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>affordable</u> childcare?	14% (9%)	45% (46%)	23% (22%)	8% (4%)	11% (19%)	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>high quality</u> childcare?	11% (9%)	45% (42%)	27% (24%)	8% (4%)	9% (21%)	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>convenient</u> childcare?	17% (14%)	53% (42%)	19% (20%)	4% (3%)	8% (20%)	
To what extent do you think Delaware parents have access to <u>safe</u> childcare?	22% (17%)	53% (47%)	12% (11%)	2% (2%)	11% (23%)	
	<u>100%</u>	<u>@75%</u>	<u>@50%</u>	<u>@25%</u>	<u>0%</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
It has been estimated that childcare can often cost as much as college tuition at a public university in Delaware. What percent of childcare costs should the parents themselves be expected to pay?	39% (37%)	16% (17%)	28% (24%)	6% (8%)	2% (2%)	7% (12%)

IV. Educational Accountability

How responsibly do you feel the media reports on education in Delaware (for example, does it cover all sides, report on the “big picture”, not take information out of context).	<u>Very responsible</u>	<u>Mostly responsible</u>	<u>Somewhat responsible</u>	<u>Not at all responsible</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	7% (9%)	19% (20%)	58% (54%)	12% (10%)	4% (6%)
In general, how often do you think minority children get as good an education as non-minority children in your community?	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	63% (54%)	22% (25%)	10% (10%)	2% (2%)	3% (8%)
Do you think minority students do better, worse, or about the same as non-minority students in school?	<u>Better</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
	3% (5%)	56% (46%)	31% (36%)	8% (12%)	
When you hear that many minority children are not doing well in school, which of the following comes closer to your reaction? a) This problem is a crisis and must be addressed quickly, b) This is a serious problem, but not a crisis, or c) This problem is exaggerated – things are probably not as bad as people make them out to be?	<u>Crisis</u>	<u>Problem but not a crisis</u>	<u>Exaggerated</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
	29% (26%)	46% (43%)	20% (26%)	3% (4%)	
How much do you think the accountability plan will decrease the achievement differences between minority and non-minority students?	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	15% (12%)	44% (42%)	15% (17%)	17% (18%)	7% (11%)

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you think the accountability plan will reduce the achievement differences between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students?	14% (13%)	40% (41%)	21% (16%)	18% (19%)	5% (9%)

How much do you think the educational accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	20% (18%)	45% (41%)	19% (19%)	11% (13%)	5% (9%)
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V. Charter Schools

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't remember</u>
Have you heard or read about Delaware charter schools?	75% (69%)	24% (31%)	1% (0%)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Do you think that charter schools should be accountable to the state in the way regular public schools are accountable?	78% (83%)	17% (13%)	5% (4%)

	<u>Higher</u>	<u>Equal</u>	<u>Lower</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Should charter schools be expected to have higher, lower, or equal student achievement compared with regular public schools?	46% (44%)	52% (54%)	1% (0%)	1% (2%)

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you believe that charter schools will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	24% (22%)	45% (44%)	16% (14%)	11% (12%)	5% (8%)

VI. Student Mental Health

	<u>Very Common</u>	<u>Somewhat common</u>	<u>Not very common</u>	<u>Extremely rare</u>	<u>Students are too young</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How common do you think mental health problems are among Delaware's students? Would you say very common, somewhat common, not very common, extremely rare, or students are too young to have mental health problems?	24% (17%)	41% (47%)	17% (12%)	6% (7%)	2% (2%)	10% (14%)
	<u>Very appropriate</u>	<u>Somewhat appropriate</u>	<u>Not very appropriate</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How appropriate do you think it is for schools to work with mental health services to meet the mental health needs of students?	66% (63%)	27% (27%)	6% (6%)			2% (3%)
	<u>Very available</u>	<u>Somewhat available</u>	<u>Not very available</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How available are mental health services to children in Delaware schools?	14% (13%)	41% (34%)	25% (22%)			19% (31%)
	<u>Great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>Small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
To what extent do you think Delaware students who need mental health services are receiving them?	8% (7%)	38% (35%)	32% (32%)	5% (3%)		16% (23%)

VII. School Climate and Discipline

	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
12% of 8 th grade students reported smoking cigarettes during the month before the survey. Is this a lot more than you thought, a little more, a little less, a lot less, or about what you thought?	13% (10%)	5% (4%)	25% (24%)	14% (15%)	43% (44%)	2% (4%)

How serious a problem is student cigarette smoking?	<u>Very serious</u> 64% (63%)	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 32% (30%)	<u>Not at all serious</u> 3% (5%)	<u>Don't know</u> (0%) (3%)		
14% of 8 th grade students reported smoking marijuana during the month before the survey.	<u>A lot more</u> 24% (18%)	<u>A little more</u> 13% (12%)	<u>A little less</u> 17% (16%)	<u>A lot less</u> 10% (12%)	<u>About what I thought</u> 35% (38%)	<u>Don't know</u> 2% (4%)
How serious a problem is student marijuana smoking?	<u>Very serious</u> 79% (70%)	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 19% (25%)	<u>Not at all serious</u> 1% (3%)	<u>Don't know</u> <1% (2%)		
24% of 8 th grade students reported drinking alcohol during the month before the survey.	<u>A lot more</u> 33% (29%)	<u>A little more</u> 16% (13%)	<u>A little less</u> 10% (14%)	<u>A lot less</u> 7% (8%)	<u>About what I thought</u> 33% (34%)	<u>Don't know</u> 1% (3%)
How serious a problem is student alcohol consumption?	<u>Very serious</u> 85% (77%)	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 14% (20%)	<u>Not at all serious</u> 1% (2%)	<u>Don't know</u> <1% (1%)		
14% of 8 th grade students reported using other illegal drugs like crack, inhalants, heroine, and cocaine during the month before the survey.	<u>A lot more</u> 55% (46%)	<u>A little more</u> 17% (16%)	<u>A little less</u> 7% (8%)	<u>A lot less</u> 3% (5%)	<u>About what I thought</u> 17% (23%)	<u>Don't know</u> 1% (3%)
How serious a problem is student use of other illegal drugs?	<u>Very serious</u> 91% (86%)	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 8% (10%)	<u>Not at all serious</u> <1% (1%)	<u>Don't know</u> 1% (2%)		

3% of 8 th grade students reported bringing a weapon to school or a school event during the month before the survey.	<u>A lot more</u>	<u>A little more</u>	<u>A little less</u>	<u>A lot less</u>	<u>About what I thought</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	27% (29%)	11% (12%)	18% (14%)	10% (10%)	32% (31%)	2% (5%)
How serious a problem is student weapon possession?	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not at all serious</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
	85% (82%)	12% (14%)	2% (2%)			<1% (<1%)

VIII. Delaware Department of Education

Overall, how satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education?	<u>Very Satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat satisfied</u>	<u>Somewhat dissatisfied</u>	<u>Very dissatisfied</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	15% (10%)	49% (42%)	18% (18%)	11% (7%)	7% (22%)

Why do you say that [you are satisfied or dissatisfied]?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent Responding</u>
Quality of public education	13% (13%)
Needs Improvement (general and specific areas of the public school system)	11% (10%)
Helpfulness (how problems are handled, satisfaction level)	10% (11%)
Programs (activities, in and out of school programs, services provided to the students)	7% (9%)
Communication	7% (8%)
Personal experience	6% (4%)
DSTP (accountability and state testing issues)	6% (6%)
Long term outcome of public education (how well child does in “real world” after going through public education)	5% (4%)
Funding (how money should be spent, where money is/should come from)	5% (4%)
Special education (special education and services provided to special education students, student specific comments)	5% (4%)
Caliber of teachers [quality of teachers, qualifications of teachers (training etc.)]	4% (3%)
Second-hand information (information the respondent has heard by “word-of-mouth”)	4% (5%)
Discipline/Safety/Drugs (how discipline is handled, drug use in schools, school safety)	4% (6%)
Bureaucracy/Politics (nature of government involvement in schools, how politics affect schools)	4% (2%)
Diversity/Bussing (multi-cultural diversity; discrimination issues)	4% (3%)
Private/Charter schools (compares private school to public, opinions about charter schools)	3% (3%)
School size (school and class size)	3% (1%)
Curriculum	3% (4%)
Parents/Families (parent and family roles and involvement in education)	2% (3%)
Other	12% (13%)
Don't know	6% (6%)

Why do you say that? (Broken down by satisfied and dissatisfied respondents)

Response

Percent Responding

	<u>Satisfied Respondents</u>	<u>Dissatisfied Respondents</u>
Quality of public education	12% (13%)	13% (11%)
Needs Improvement (General and specific areas of the public school system)	12% (10%)	9% (9%)
Helpfulness (How problems are handled, satisfaction level)	9% (12%)	12% (10%)
Programs (Activities, in and out of school programs, services provided to the students)	8% (9%)	5% (9%)
Communication	7% (7%)	6% (10%)
Personal experience	5% (3%)	7% (6%)
DSTP (Accountability and state testing issues)	7% (7%)	4% (6%)
Long term outcome of public education (How well child does in “real world” after going through public education)	4% (2%)	9% (6%)
Funding (How money should be spent, where money is/should come from)	5% (4%)	5% (4%)
Special education (Special education and services provided to special education students, student specific comments)	4% (3%)	7% (5%)
Caliber of teachers [Quality of teachers, qualifications of teachers (training etc.)]	4% (3%)	4% (4%)
Second-hand information (Information the respondent has heard by “word-of-mouth”)	4% (6%)	4% (3%)
Discipline/Safety/Drugs (How discipline is handled, drug use in schools, school safety)	4% (5%)	3% (7%)
Bureaucracy/Politics (Nature of government involvement in schools, how politics affect schools)	3% (2%)	6% (2%)
Diversity/Bussing (Multi-cultural diversity; discrimination issues)	3% (2%)	4% (3%)
Private/Charter schools (Compares private school to public, opinions about charter schools)	3% (3%)	3% (3%)
School size (School and class size)	2% (1%)	6% (1%)
Curriculum	3% (3%)	1% (6%)
Parents/Families (Parent and family roles and involvement in education)	3% (2%)	2% (4%)
Other	12% (14%)	13% (9%)
Don't know	7% (7%)	3% (5%)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Have you at any time in the past 12 months had direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education?	21% (10%)	78% (90%)	1% (1%)

What was the purpose of your contact with the Department?

Response

Percent Responding

Employees/contractors/board (Complaints or concerns related to schools, personnel, or student achievement, accomplishment, or behavior)	20%
General Information (Requests for information about schools, including bussing and programs)	14%
Information about own child [Requests for information or response regarding respondents own child (includes overlap with other categories, e.g., testing or complaints)]	13%
Teacher contact (All respondents who indicate that they are teachers)	11%
Unrelated to DOE (All responses that are <u>clearly</u> unrelated to DOE)	9%
Information about testing and/or placement (All responses that include mentions of testing or placement)	8%
Complaint/Concern (Complaints or concerns related to schools, personnel, or students achievement, accomplishment, or behavior)	7%
Advocacy (Advocating a change in or continuation of programs or services)	3%
Other (Responses that don't fit in other categories or are unclear as to their meaning)	14%

IX. Demographic Information

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			
Are you the parent, step-parent, or guardian of a child that is 18 or younger and lives in Delaware?	33%	67%			
	<u>Public</u>	<u>Private</u>	<u>Charter</u>	<u>Home schooled</u>	<u>None</u>
Do your children attend a public, private, or charter school? Or are your children home schooled?	59%	21%	4%	2%	13%
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			
Are any of your children 12 or younger?	74%	26%			

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Are any of your children 5 or younger?	50%	50%

In what school district do you live?	Percent responding	Percent responding
• Appoquinimink	6% (4%)	• Polytech
• Brandywine	10% (8%)	• Smyrna
• Christina	17% (18%)	• Cape Henlopen
• Colonial	9% (7%)	• Delmar
• NCC Vo-Tech	<1% (<1%)	• Indian River
• Red Clay	15% (13%)	• Laurel
• Capital	6% (4%)	• Seaford
• Ceasar Rodney	5% (5%)	• Sussex Vo-tech
• Lake Forest	3% (2%)	• Woodbridge
• Milford	4% (3%)	• Don't know

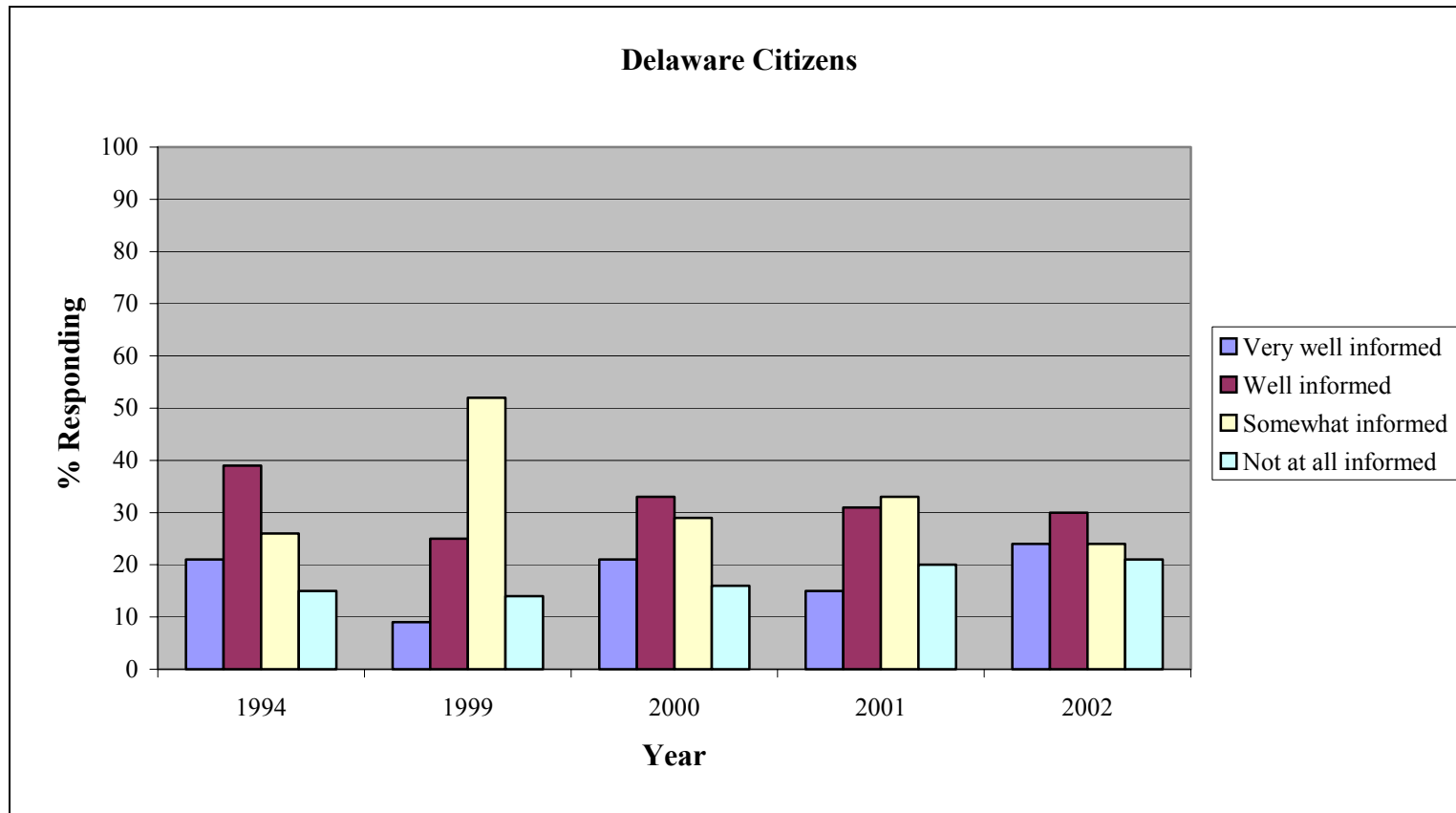
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
What is your age?	38.83	9.00	18-70
	(50.07)	(18.32)	(18-89)

Including the current year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	24.92	15.43	0-67
	(30.96)	(22.59)	(0-89)

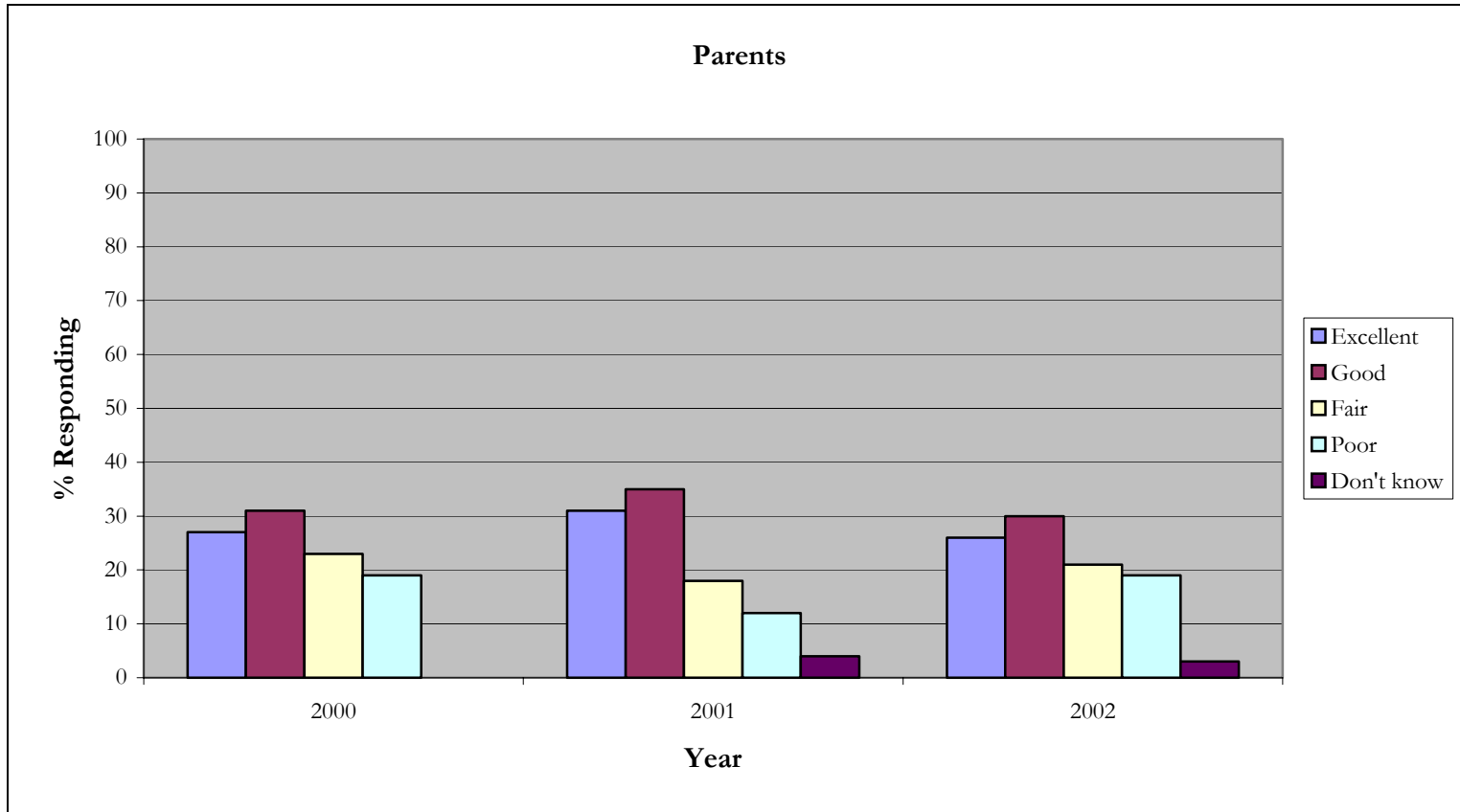
What is the highest level of education that you have completed?	<u>Percent responding</u>		<u>Percent responding</u>
• Less than 12 th grade	6% (7%)		• Master's degree 8% (11%)
• Completed high school	27% (29%)		• Ph.D., J.D., Ed.D, or M.D. 2% (3%)
• Completed 1, 2, or 3 years of college	25% (21%)		• Other post-baccalaureate degree 1% (1%)
• Bachelor's degree	31% (27%)		
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Refused</u>
	4% (2%)	96% (98%)	1% (1%)
How would you describe your race?	<u>Percent responding</u>		<u>Percent responding</u>
• White	72% (83%)		• Native American 1% (1%)
• African American	24% (13%)		• Other including bi-racial (please specify) 1% (1%)
• Asian/Pacific Islander	2% (2%)		• Refused 1% (1%)
What is your household income from all sources?	<u>Percent responding</u>		<u>Percent responding</u>
• LESS THAN \$10,000	11% (8%)		• \$35,000 - \$49,999 11% (12%)
• \$10,000 - \$14,999	8% (10%)		• \$50,000 - \$74,999 14% (13%)
• \$15,000 - \$19,999	13% (14%)		• \$75,000 or more 17% (15%)
• \$20,000 - \$34,999	21% (24%)		• Refused/Don't know 7% (6%)
Do you have more than one telephone number in your household?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	
	23% (19%)	77% (81%)	
Gender	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	
	40% (44%)	60% (56%)	

I. Parent/Community Involvement

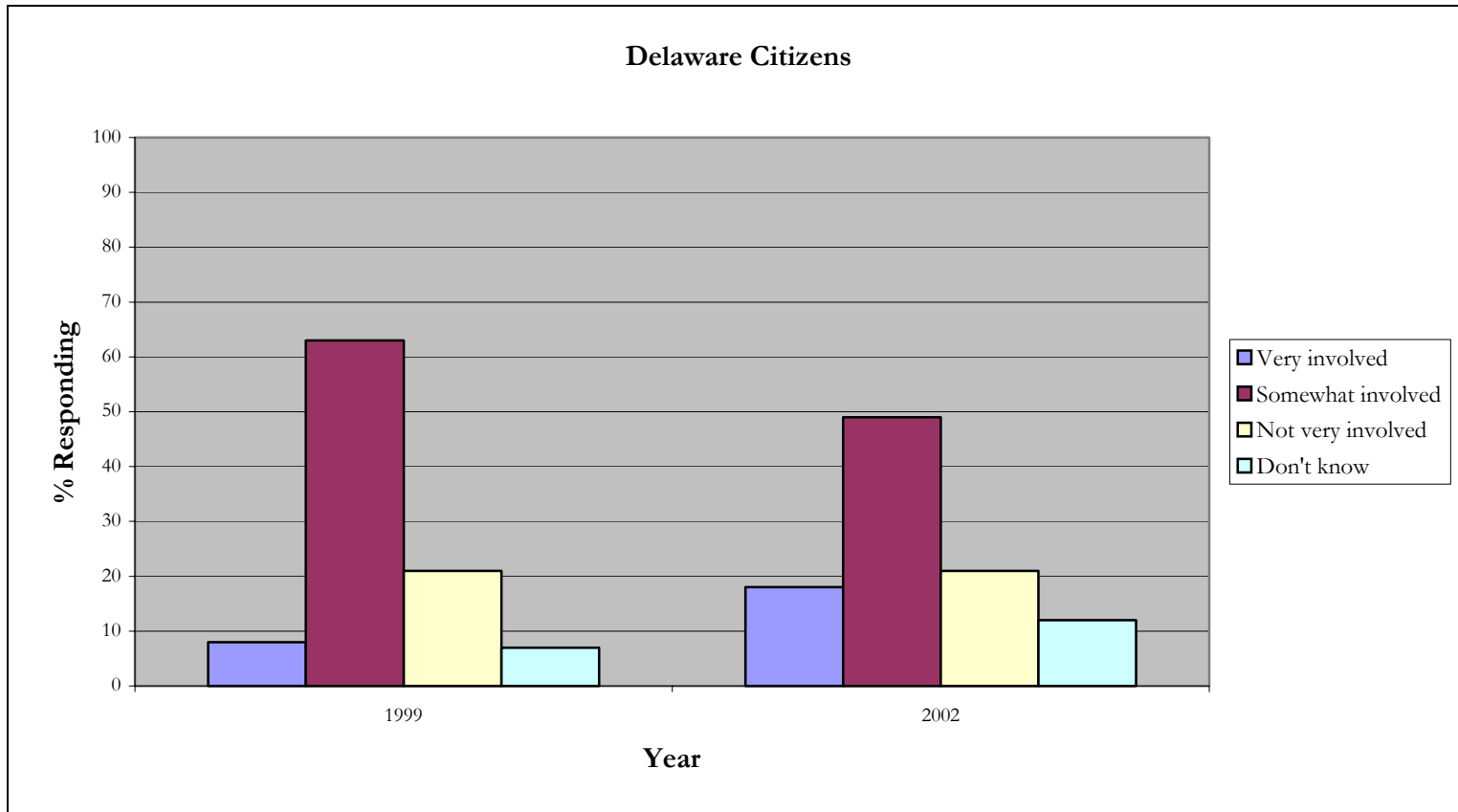
How well informed do you feel about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very well informed?



How good a job does the school do of providing information about how to help your child with his/her homework?

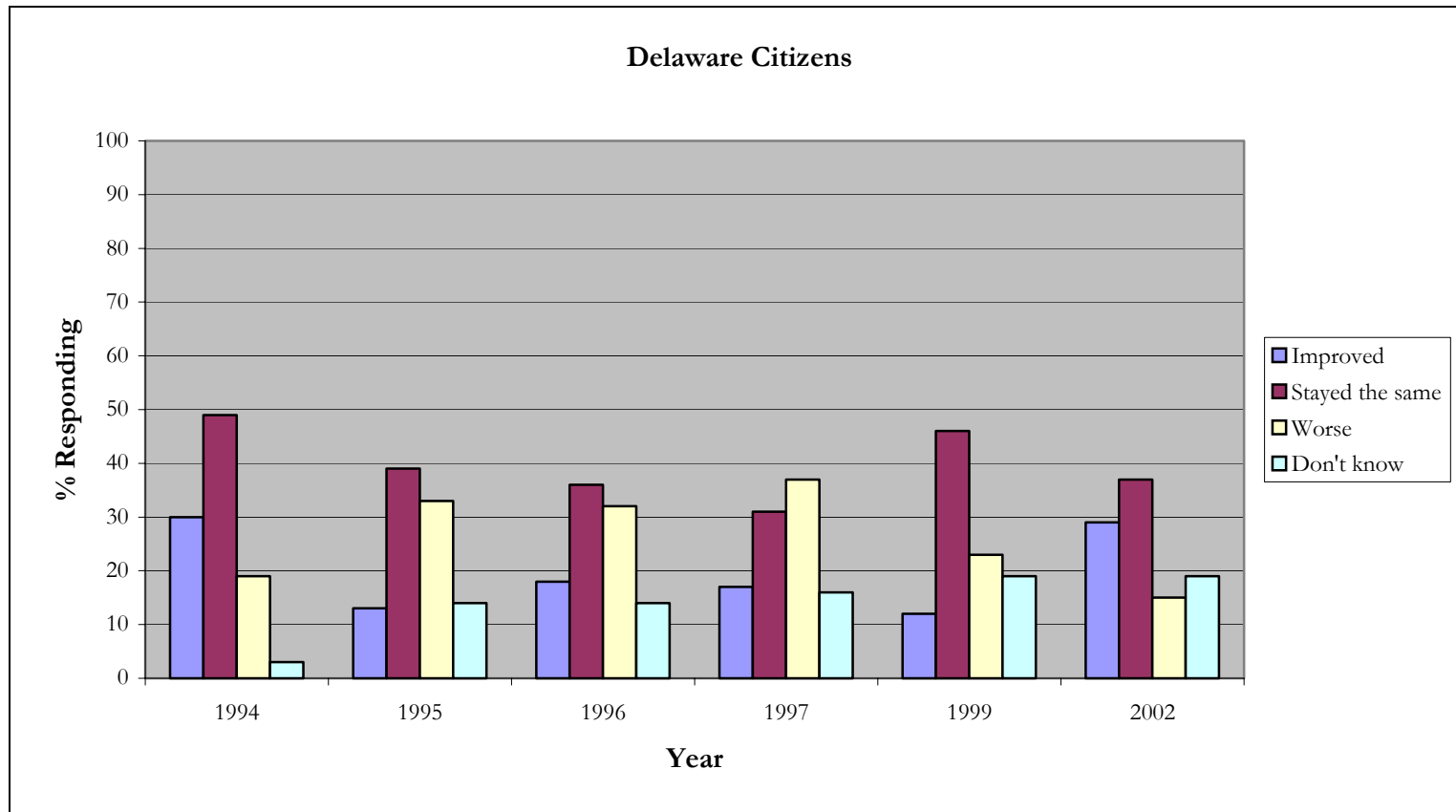


In your opinion, how involved are parents in their children's education in Delaware?

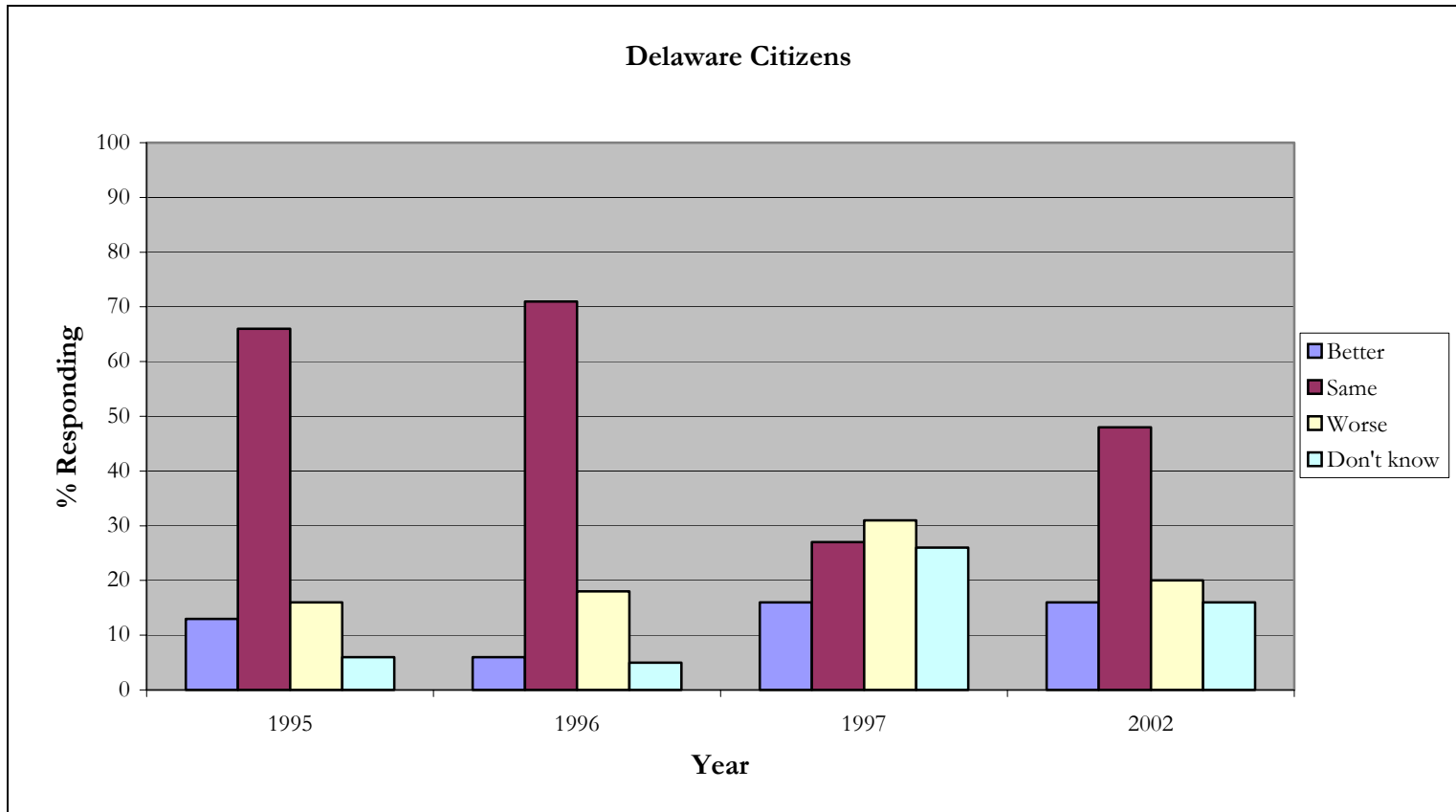


II. Quality of Education

Compared to five years ago, how would you say that the public schools in your district are performing?

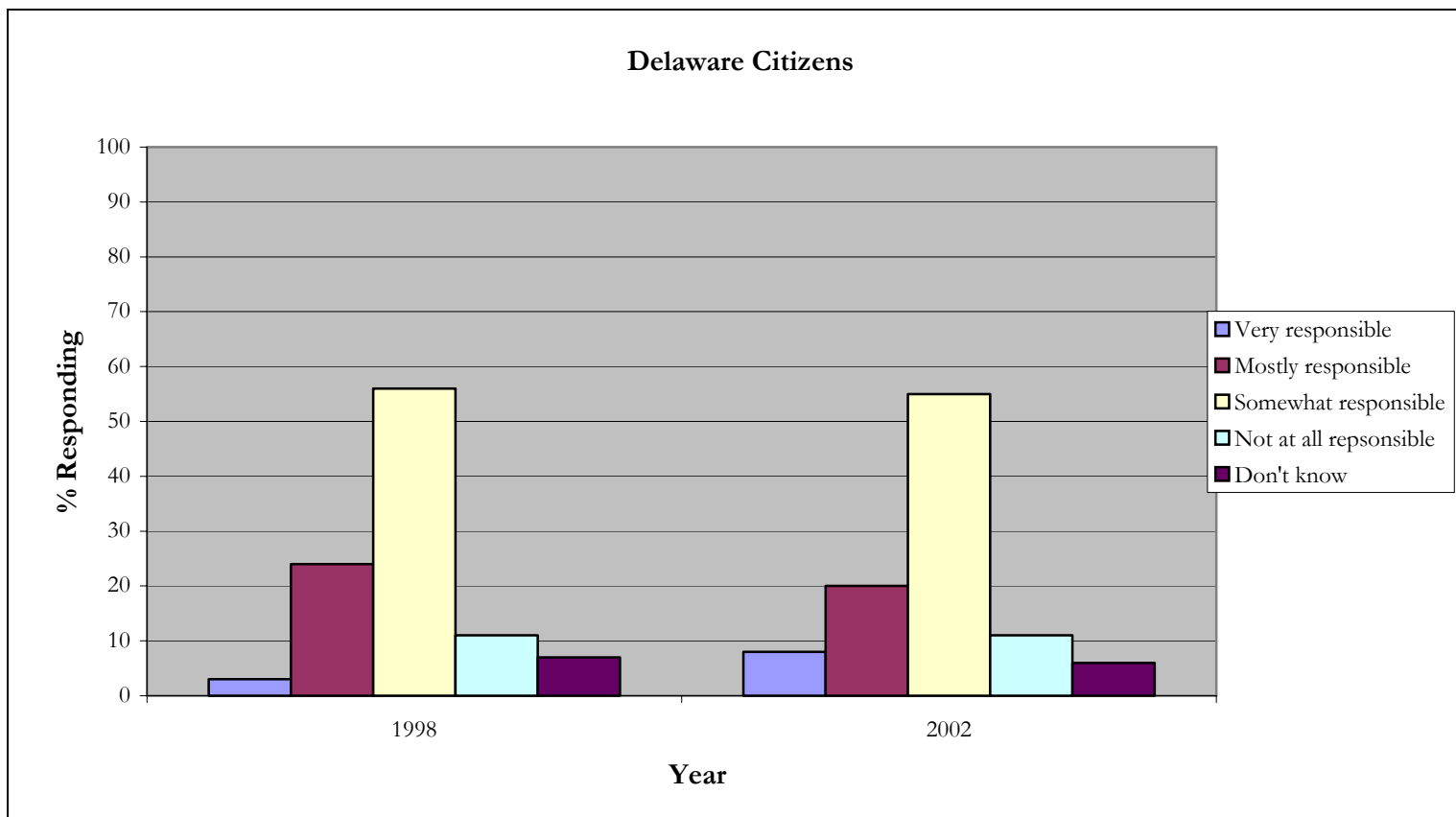


Where would you say Delaware's schools stand in relation to the nation?

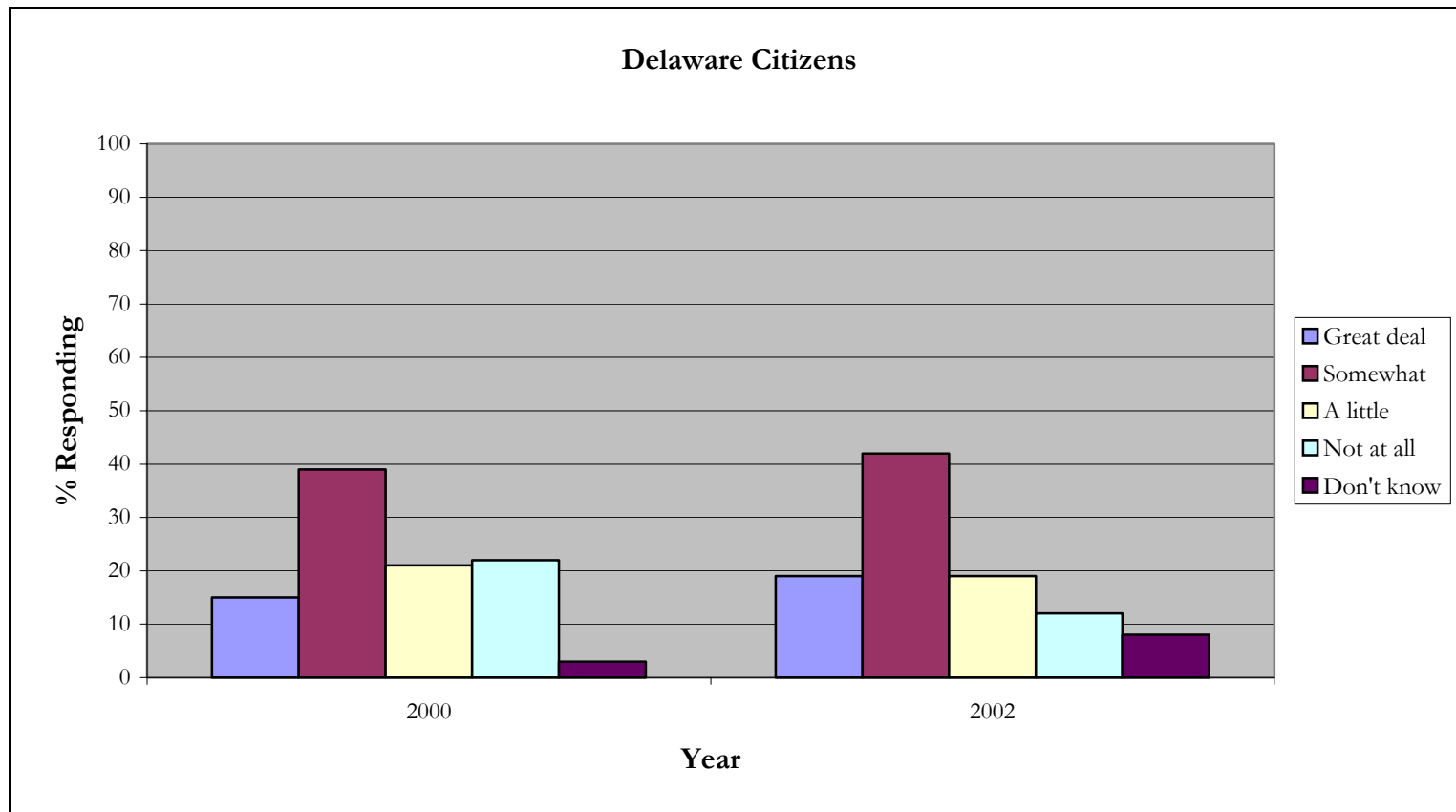


IV. Educational Accountability

How responsibly do you feel the media reports on education in Delaware (for example, does it cover all sides, report on the "big picture," not take information out of context).

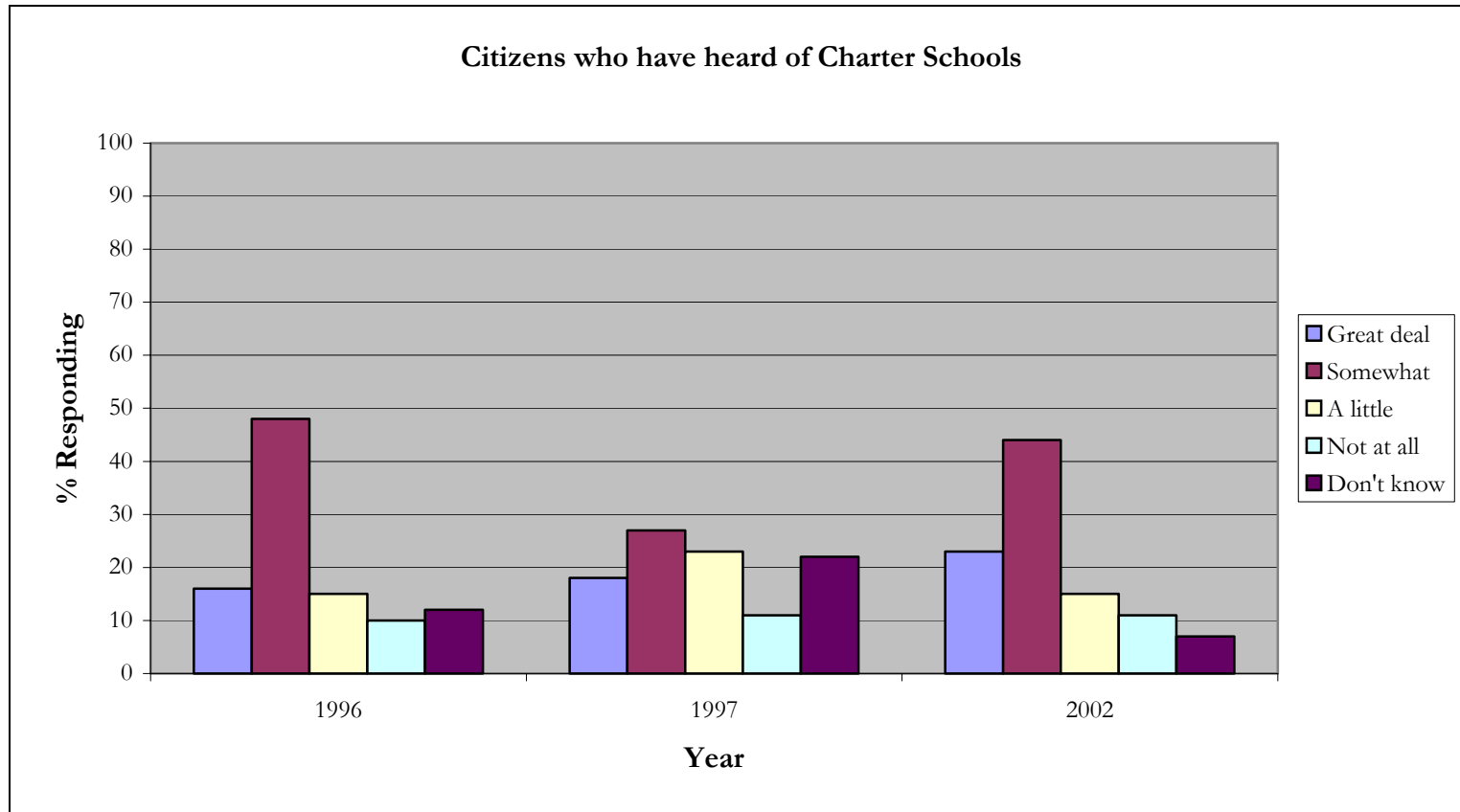


How much do you think the educational accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?



V. Charter Schools

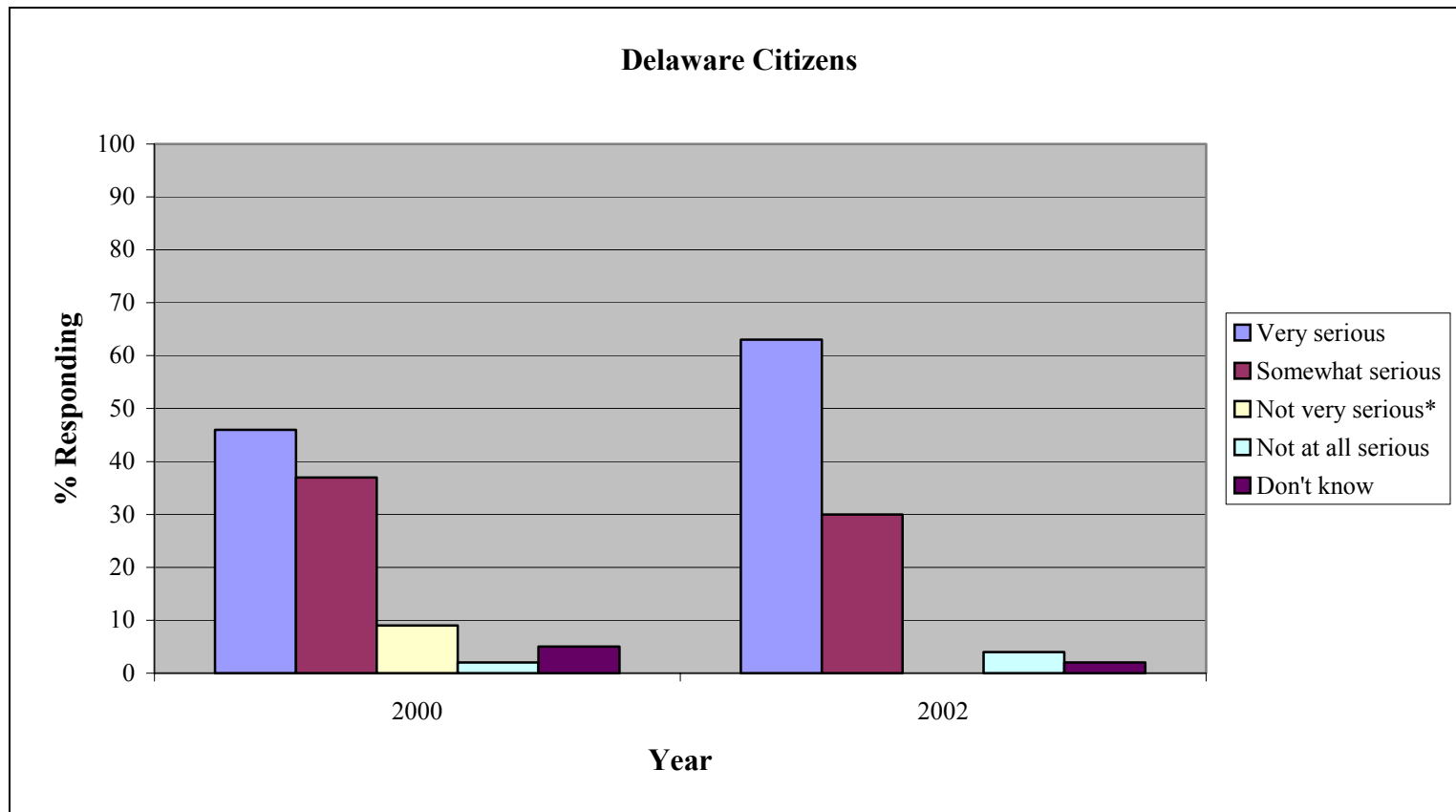
How much do you believe that charter schools will lead to improvement in all of Delaware schools?



VII. School Climate and Discipline

2000 – The following statement describes the seriousness of student smoking in Delaware public schools. A problem may be serious, but “very serious” means a problem is both serious and widespread.

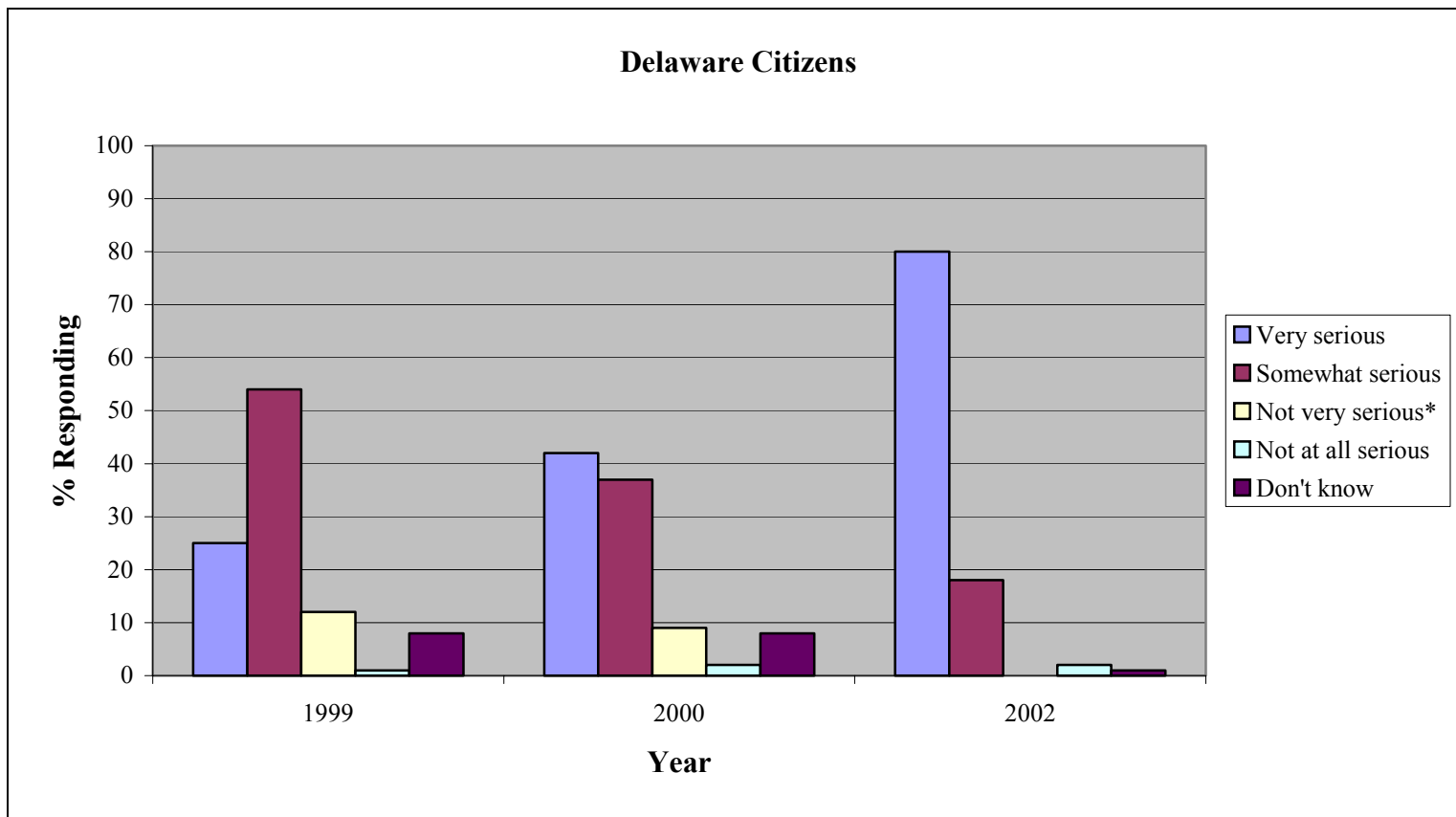
2002 – How serious a problem is student cigarette smoking?



* Not a response option in 2002.

1999-2000 - The following statement describes the seriousness of student use drinking in Delaware public schools. A problem may be serious, but "very serious" means a problem is both serious and widespread.

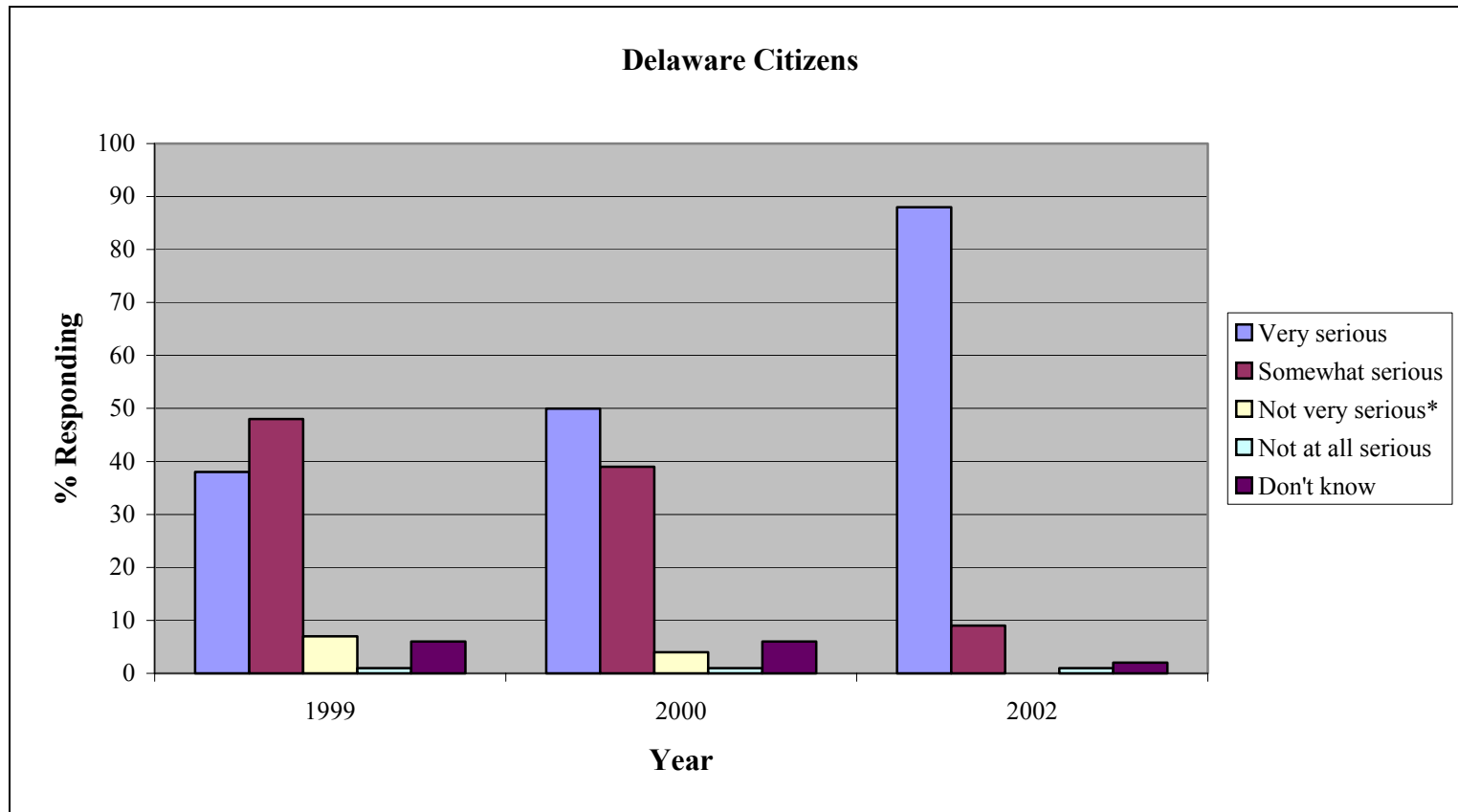
2002 – How serious a problem is student alcohol consumption?



* Not a response option in 2002.

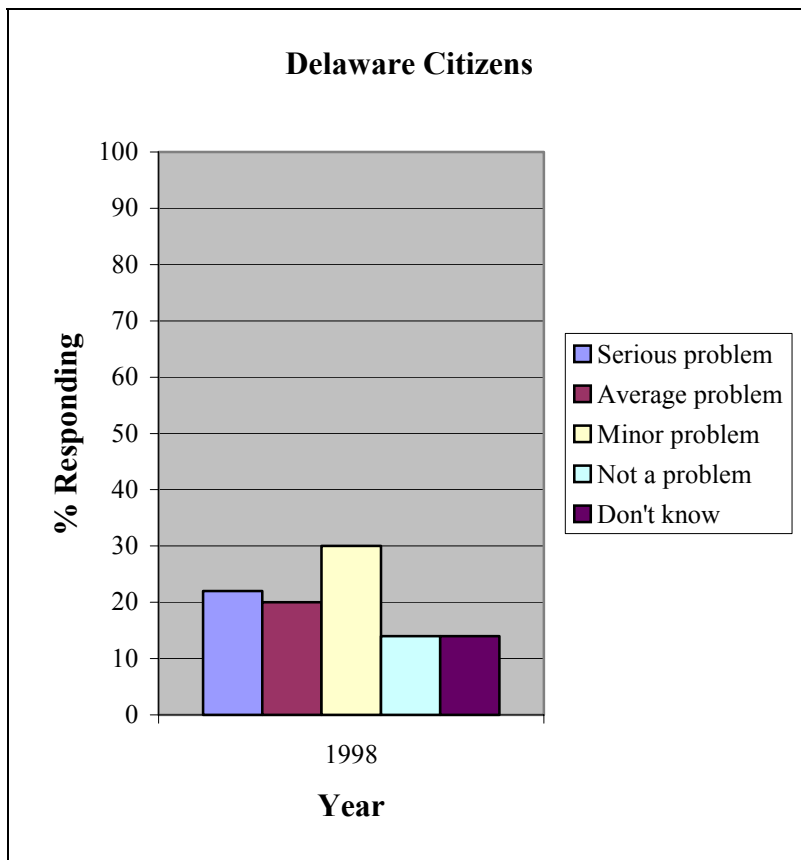
1999-2000 - The following statement describes the seriousness of student use of student drug use in Delaware public schools. A problem may be serious, but “very serious” means a problem is both serious and widespread.

2002 - How serious a problem is student use of other illegal drugs?

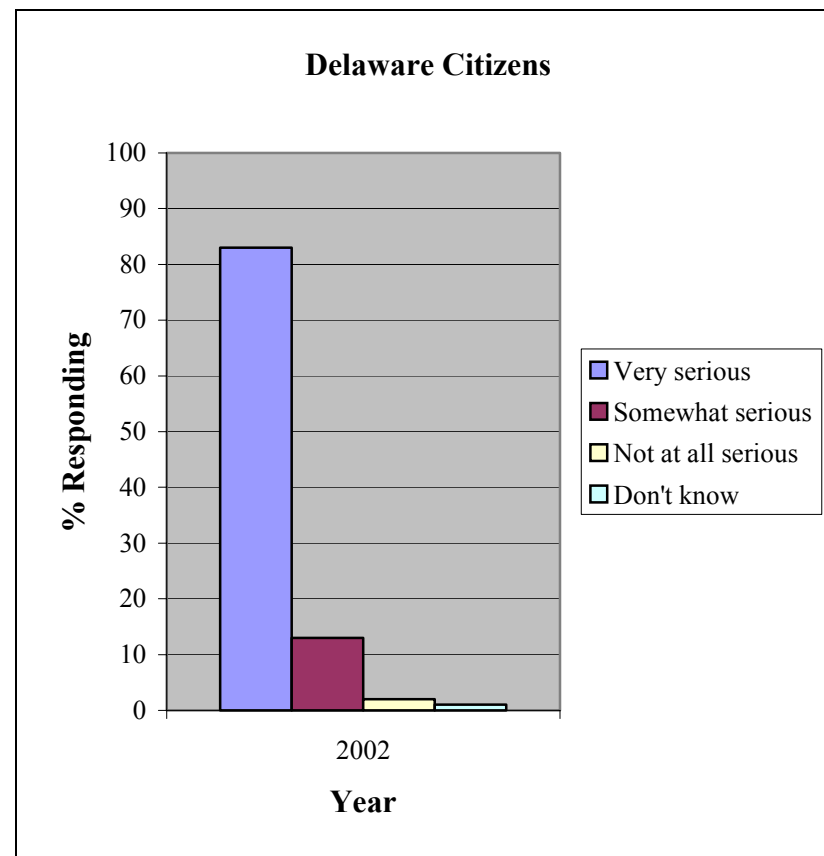


* Not a response option in 2002.

1998 – The following statement describes the degree to which student possession of weapons is a problem in Delaware public schools.

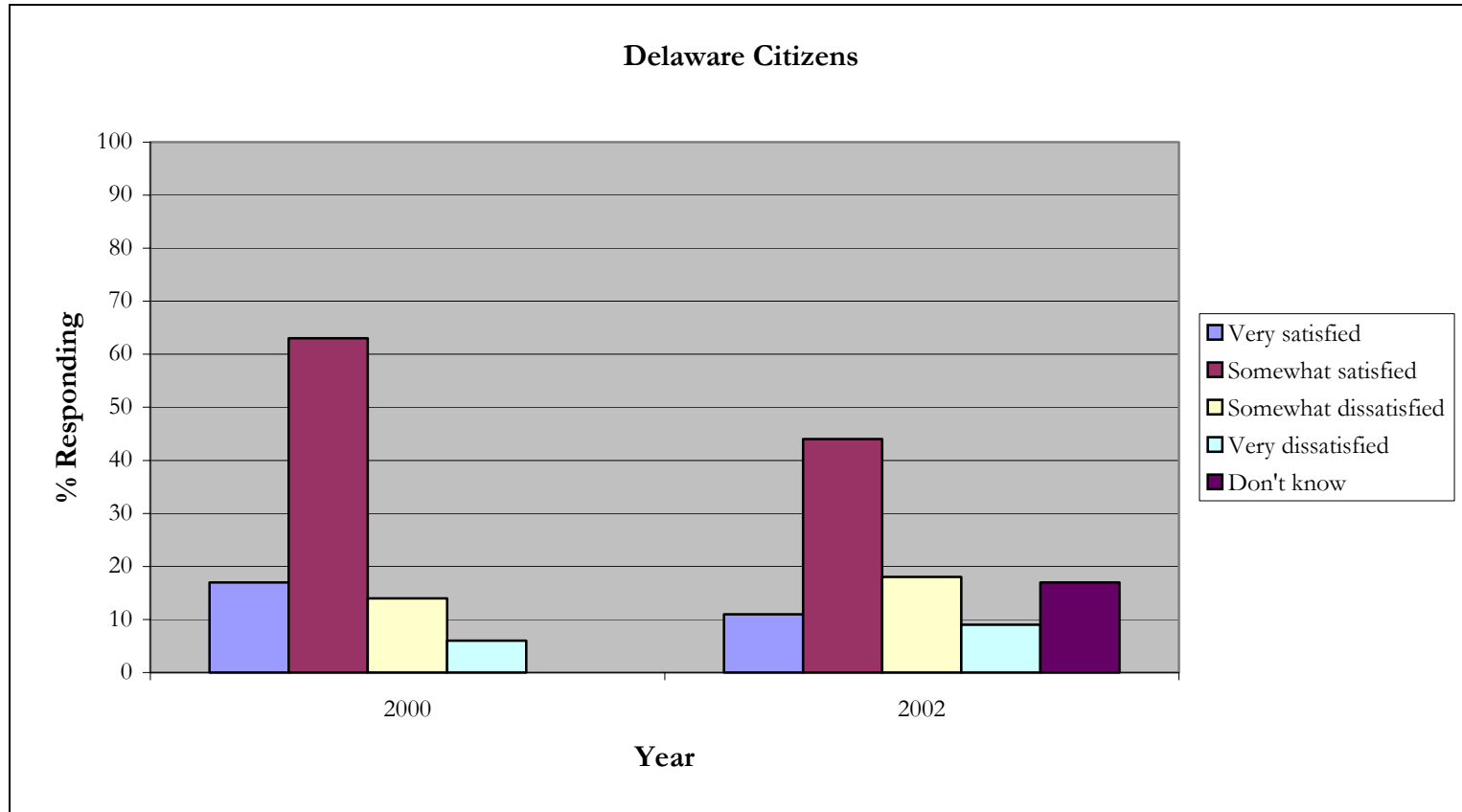


2002 – How serious a problem is student weapon possession?

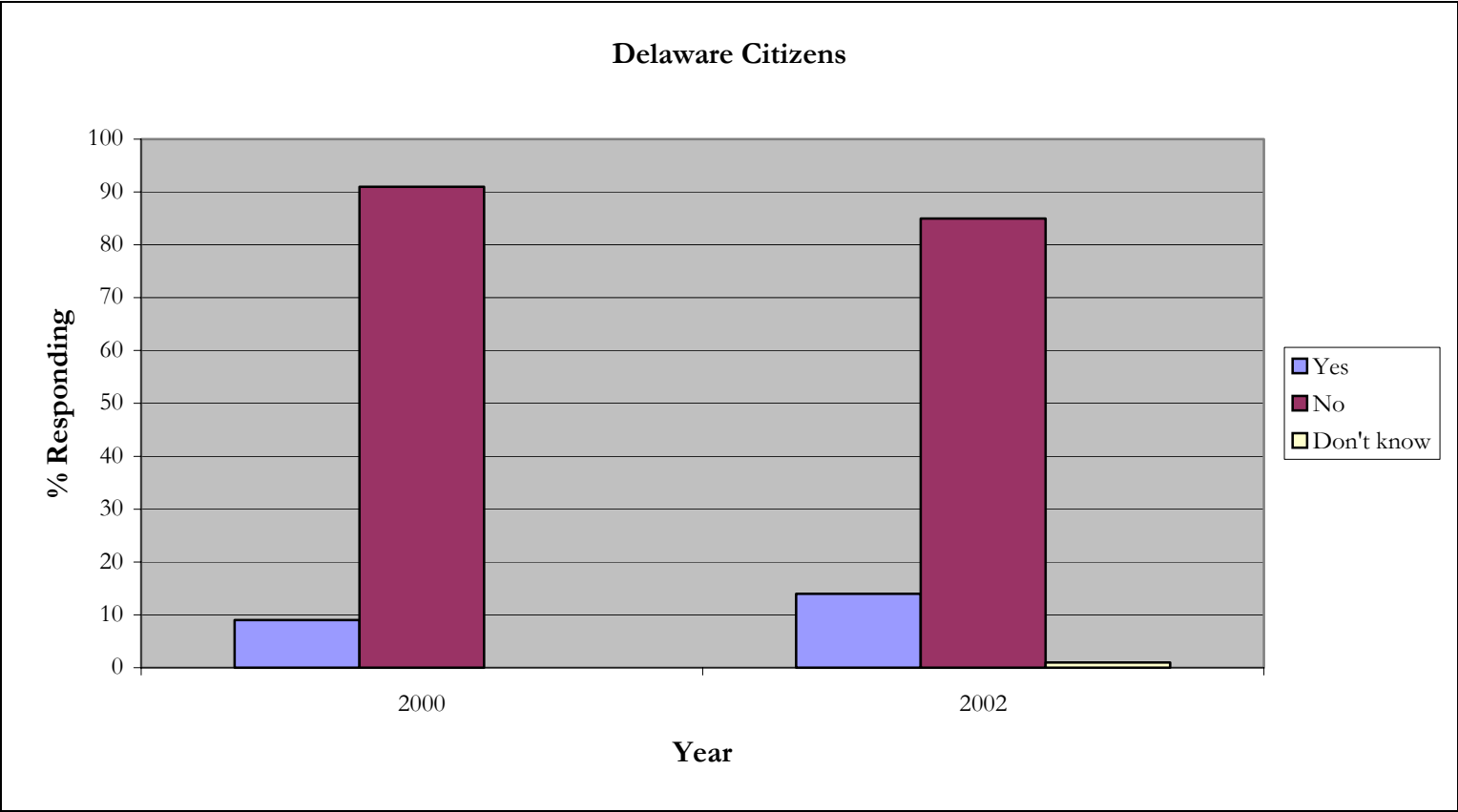


VIII. Delaware Department of Education

Overall, How satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education?



Have you at any time in the past 12 months had direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education?



DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
of the
University of Delaware

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

I. Parent/Community Involvement

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How good a job does the school do of providing information about how to help your child with his/her homework?	26%	30%	21%	19%	3%
How good a job does the school do of sending home progress reports between report cards? (Public Agenda Online, 1998, Parents Only).	45% (41%)	32% (35%)	14% (13%)	6% (11%)	3% (1%)
		<u>Does it very well</u>	<u>Does just o.k.</u>	<u>Doesn't do it at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The following statements describe how well your child's school performs with regards to these activities. Provides information about how to help your child with his/her homework. (National Household Education Survey, OERI, 1996)		(38%)	(31%)	(31%)	(3%)

III. Early Child Care and Education

	<u>Very concerned</u>	<u>Somewhat concerned</u>	<u>Not too concerned</u>	<u>Not concerned at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How concerned are you, if at all, about not having quality childcare when you need it? (Parents only)	66%	26%	3%	1%	0%
How concerned are you, if at all, about...not having adequate child care when you go to work? (Public Agenda Online, 2002, Parents only)	(37%)	(17%)	(13%)	(33%)	

IV. Educational Accountability

	<u>Most of the time</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Seldom</u>	<u>Never</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In general, how often do you think minority children get as good an education as non-minority children in your community?	57%	24%	10%	2%	7%
In general, do you think African-American, Latino, and other minority children get as good an education as white children in your community, or not? (Public Agenda Online, 1999)	<u>Yes</u> (72%)		<u>No</u> (23%)	<u>There are no minorities</u> (2%)	<u>Don't know</u> (3%)

Do you think minority students do better, worse, or about the same as non-minority students in school?	<u>Better</u> 4%	<u>About the same</u> 50%	<u>Worse</u> 35%	<u>Don't know</u> 11%
Just your impression, is the academic achievement of white students nationally higher, lower, or about the same as black and Hispanic students? (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll, 2002)	<u>Higher</u> (49%)	<u>Lower</u> (4%)	<u>About the same</u> (38%)	<u>Don't know</u> (9%)
When you hear that many minority children are not doing well in school, which of the following comes closer to your reaction? a) This problem is a crisis and must be addressed quickly, b) This is a serious problem, but not a crisis, or c) This problem is exaggerated – things are probably not as bad as people make them out to be? (Public Agenda Online, 1998, Parents Only)	<u>Crisis</u> 29% (54%)	<u>Problem but not a crisis</u> 46% (28%)	<u>Exaggerated</u> 20% (18%)	<u>Don't know</u> 3% (1%)

V. Charter Schools

Have you heard or read about Delaware charter schools?	<u>Yes</u> 71%	<u>No</u> 29%	<u>Don't remember</u> 0%
Have you heard or read about so-called charter schools? (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll 2002)	(56%)	(43%)	(1%)
Do you think that charter schools should be accountable to the state in the way regular public schools are accountable? (Phi Delta Kappa, 2002)	<u>Yes</u> 81% (77%)	<u>No</u> 15% (19%)	<u>Don't know</u> 4% (4%)

VII. School Climate and Discipline

How serious a problem is student cigarette smoking?	<u>Very serious</u> 63%	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 30%		<u>Not at all serious</u> 4%	<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How serious a problem would you say [smoking] is in public schools in your community? Would you say a very serious problem, fairly serious, not very serious, or not at all serious? (Phi Delta Kappa /Gallup Poll, 1998)	<u>Very Serious</u> (50%)	<u>Fairly Serious</u> (26%)	<u>Not Very Serious</u> (15%)	<u>Not At All Serious</u> (3%)	<u>Don't know</u> (6%)
How serious a problem is student alcohol consumption?	<u>Very serious</u> 80%	<u>Somewhat serious</u> 18%		<u>Not at all serious</u> 2%	<u>Don't know</u> 1%
How serious a problem would you say [alcohol consumption] is in public schools in your community? Would you say a very serious problem, fairly serious, not very serious, or not at all serious? (Phi Delta Kappa /Gallup Poll, 1998)	<u>Very Serious</u> (44%)	<u>Fairly Serious</u> (28%)	<u>Not Very Serious</u> (18%)	<u>Not At All Serious</u> (4%)	<u>Don't know</u> (6%)

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, and 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 initiated a program of annual public surveys on the condition of education in Delaware that began in the summer of 1994. The core of that survey has been repeated annually since then, 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 core topics will be repeated regularly, along with additional topics that examine public attitudes and opinions on matters of specific interest on an annual basis for the public survey, and a semi-annual basis for the educator survey.

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 31, 2002 to January 5, 2003, telephone interviews were conducted with 913 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. This year the sample of Delaware citizens included disproportionate numbers of respondents with and without school-age children, a weighting scheme was applied so the sample would more accurately reflect the statewide population on this demographic variable. 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, and results disaggregated by respondents with and without children of school-age. Other analyses that address particular questions or interests are also available, upon request.

Sampling Error

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

Amount of Sampling Error in Percentage Points			
at the 95% Confidence Interval Level			
	n = 913 Total	n=526 Non-Parents	n=387 Parents
Percentage near 10%	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%
Percentage near 20%	2.6%	3.5%	4.1%
Percentage near 30%	3.0%	4.0%	4.7%
Percentage near 40%	3.2%	4.3%	5.0%
Percentage near 50%	3.3%	4.4%	5.1%
Percentage near 60%	3.2%	4.3%	5.0%
Percentage near 70%	3.0%	4.0%	4.7%
Percentage near 80%	2.6%	3.5%	4.1%
Percentage near 90%	2.0%	2.6%	3.0%

The table would be used in the following way: The percent of citizens that believe parents are more involved in their children's education than they were five years ago is 26%. We go to the row for "percentages near 30%" in the table and across to the column for n=913. The number at this point is 3.0%, which means that the 26% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus

3.0 points. In other words, the odds are 95 in 100 that repeated samplings, using the same procedures and the same sample size, would have an average result somewhere between 23% and 29%, with the most likely value being the 26%. However, if we wanted to look only at how non-parents responded to this question, we would follow the same procedure except we would use the n=526 column as there were 526 non-parents in our sample. That is, the percent of non-parents that believe parents are more involved in their children's education than they were five years ago is 22%. We go to the row for "percentages near 20%" in the table and across to the column for n=526. The number at this point is 3.5%, which means that the 22% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 points. In other words, the odds are 95 in 100 that repeated samplings, using the same procedures and the same sample size, would have an average result somewhere between 18.5 % and 25.5%, with the most likely value being the 22%.

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