2001 STATEWIDE EDUCATOR POLL ON THE CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

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R&D
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CENTER

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 educator poll conducted in the fall of 2001. Highlights of key findings in six areas of educational reform are reported and include the following:

① **Quality of Education** Grading the Schools Prepared for the World of Work	② **Accountability** Relationship Between Assessment and Accountability Impact on Schools, Teachers, and Students
③ **Discipline** Problems in Public Schools Causes of Violence Measures to Reduce Violence	④ **Parent Involvement** Amount and Opportunities for Involvement
⑤ **Neighborhood Schools** Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools	⑥ **Satisfaction with State Department of Education** Types of Services Requested Level of Satisfaction

In addition to a summary of the findings, this report includes:
- Full length copies of the educator poll results;
- Trend analyses of the statewide poll on the condition of education in Delaware;
- Background information on the poll, survey design, data collection techniques; and,
- A list of references.

Putting the Results in Context
This year's summary of the poll results includes a section entitled "putting it in context." Information concerning related research and trends across polling years in Delaware is included to provide a context for the poll results (see the section entitled "Putting it in Context").

For more information on the 2001 educator poll, please contact the staff of the R&D Center by email at ud-rdc@udel.edu or by phone at (302) 831-4433.

① **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

Grading the Schools

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
Most educators (70%) gave the public schools in Delaware a grade of an "A" or "B." However, they were more likely to give a higher grade to Delaware elementary schools than high schools.	*Nationally,* about half of U.S. citizens (49%) gave the public schools in their community an "A" or "B" compared to a little more than one-third (36%) of Delaware citizens.

Educators were divided on the most important factor in determining the grade they gave to public schools. While educators cited many different factors including, but not limited to, teacher quality, communication, involvement with parents, measures of student performance, and quality of instruction, student outcomes such as test scores or graduation rates (28%) was the most frequently cited factor.

While many educators (56%) believe the student achievement standards in the Delaware public schools are neither too high nor too low, most (83%) believe there is too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools.

Many educators (52%) also believe that children today get a better education than they themselves did; however, about a fourth (26%) believe children today get a worse education.

Prepared for the World of Work

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
Many educators (66%) believe that all or most students have the skills to succeed in the work world, but almost a third of the educators (30%) believe that only some students have these skills.	Around 60% of U.S. public school teachers as well as Delaware residents believe that at least most students have the skills to succeed in the work world. However, nationally, 59% of U.S. employers believe that graduates of public schools *lack the skills* they need to succeed in the work world. (Public Agenda Online, 1999).

② **ACCOUNTABILITY**

Relationship between Assessment and Accountability

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
Educators were asked several questions related to testing and the use of tests in schools. When asked who was more likely to drop out, a student who is retained because of poor performance on an achievement test or a student who is promoted to the next grade despite poor performance, two-thirds of educators (67%) stated that the student who repeats a grade is more likely to drop out.	Research indicates that neither retention nor social promotion (promoting a student despite poor performance) is an effective strategy for assisting low-performing students. Furthermore, "researchers conclude that grade retention, as typically implemented, is an ineffective if not harmful practice." (Banicky & Foss, 2000, p. I-6). More effective remedies for dealing with low performing students include providing students with extra learning time and individualized instruction.
Educators' perceptions were clear regarding the significant amount of classroom time teachers devote to preparing students for standardized tests. Nearly three-fourths (72%) indicated that using class time to prepare for a test is problematic because it leads to teaching to the test and learning suffers.	Research in the area of high-stakes testing indicates that teaching to the test most often occurs when consequences are attached to performance. In addition, teaching to the test frequently leads to a narrowing of curriculum (i.e. only those topics specifically covered on the test). To combat the negative consequences of teaching to the test, experts suggest linking the test closely to appropriate curriculum and using more than a single measure to assess student performance.

Impact on Schools, Teachers, and Students

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
Most educators (73%) stated that the state standards influence to a great extent their classroom instruction and curriculum decisions. About half (49%) stated that the DSTP also influences to a great extent their classroom instruction and curriculum decisions. As a result of high stakes testing in Delaware, many educators believe that curriculum changes are driven by the state test and not by student needs (89%) and decisions about teaching and learning continue to move further from the classroom and the school (84%). Educators also noted several impacts on teachers as a result of high stakes testing in Delaware. Several believe that teachers' morale has decreased (86%), teachers' professional judgment is valued less (84%), and there is a sense of powerlessness among teachers (83%). Many stated that they believe teacher shortages are also likely to occur (91%).	The National Research Council recommends that "High-stakes testing programs should routinely include a well-designed evaluation component. Policymakers should monitor both the intended and unintended consequences of high-stakes assessments on all students and on significant subgroups of students, including minorities, English-language learners, and students with disabilities" (Heubert & Hauser, 1999, p. 281).

Educators are split on the usefulness of the DSTP data. Whereas about half (53%) believe the data are useful for improving classroom instruction, almost half (44%) do not. Also, about half (47%) believe the data are useful for diagnosing individual student learning problems, but half (51%) do not. This pattern is consistent across grade level and content area taught.

③ DISCIPLINE

Problems in Public Schools

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
Most Delaware educators viewed student drug use (84%), student drinking (76%), student smoking (79%), school violence (71%), and teenage pregnancy (71%) as serious problems in the public schools. However, less than one-third viewed these problems as widespread: student drug use (23%), student smoking (32%), school violence (11%), student drinking (27%) and teen pregnancy (21%).	Most Delaware citizens also viewed these problems as serious: student drug use (89%), student drinking (81%), student smoking (83%), school violence (82%), and teen pregnancy (79%). However, citizens were more likely to also view these problems as widespread: student drug use (50%), student drinking (42%), student smoking (46%), school violence (36%), and teen pregnancy (42%). (Brown, 2001). Although this data is based on the perceptions of adults about student behaviors, the Center for Drug & Alcohol Studies at the University of Delaware has collected data regarding the usage level of various illegal substances as reported by a large sample of 5th, 8th, and 11th students. According to the 2000 Delaware School Survey, very few 5th grade students reported regular use (once a month or more) of cigarettes (2%), alcohol (2%), or marijuana (1%). However, more than one-fourth of 8th graders reported regular use of alcohol (27%), but fewer reported regular use of either cigarettes (16%) or marijuana (16%). Almost half of the 11th grade students reported regular use of alcohol (44%), whereas about one-fourth reported regular use of cigarettes (26%) or marijuana (25%). (Martin & Gealt et al, 2001).

Causes of Violence

Poll Results

Educators were divided on the causes of student violence in public school. While educators cited many different causes including, but not limited to, lack of parental control, peer pressure, students' attitudes, the media, students' anger and intolerance, lack of parental control [discipline, supervision, involvement, values] (28%) was the most frequently cited cause. Very few educators (1%) cited gangs, drugs, or availability of weapons as a major cause of violence in the public schools.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, lack of parental control (24%) and a lack of family structure (20%) were the top two most frequently cited causes of student violence in the public schools by U.S. citizens.

Measures to Reduce Violence

Poll Results

Although most educators viewed many measures as at least somewhat effective in reducing violence in the public schools, more than half stated that stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students (56%), conflict education for students (55%), courses in how to be a good parent (53%), and more vocational or job-training courses (51%) would be very effective.

Putting it in Context

Nationally, most adults place the responsibility for preventing future school violence incidents in the hands of parents. Many adults also indicate that more jobs and community programs for young people would reduce violent crime. Many educators promote the importance of long-term use of curriculum-based and school-wide programs for teaching social problem solving and developing responsible behavior. Other important measures include paying more attention to children with antisocial attitudes, increasing school security, better enforcement of school code of conduct policies, and controlling gun ownership.

④ **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

Amount of and Opportunities for Involvement

Poll Results

Nearly all educators (93%) stated that their school makes it easy for parents to be involved. Most educators cited that inviting parent participation (35%), offering activities for parents and families such as PTA and parent classes (31%), and communicating with the parents (17%) through school newsletters, the website, and phone calls with teachers were indicators of ways their school makes it easy for parents to be involved.

Putting it in Context

In 2000, most Delaware parents (86%) stated that schools make it easy to be involved. When asked what makes them feel this way, almost half of the parents explained that the kind and frequency of communication was the basis for their perception. Others explained that the abundance or lack of activities for families and parents, invitations (or lack of) by the school for involvement, and accessibility of the staff were key factors also.

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	*Putting it in Context*
Many educators stated that their school does an excellent job of providing parents with information about their son or daughter, such as preparing progress reports on student performance between report cards (67%) or informing parents quickly if their children are consistently late or absent (48%) and about the school in general such as making them aware of opportunities to volunteer at school (44%).	Delaware parents and educators hold a similar view regarding how well schools involve parents. Both groups believe that schools do an excellent job of providing parents with information about their son or daughter, such as preparing progress reports on student performance between report cards or providing them with information about the school in general such as making them aware of opportunities to volunteer at school. However, the school's efforts to use strategies that empower parents to take a more active role in their child's learning are perceived by both groups in a weaker light. (Brown, 2000). This trend is observed in national data also.
However, educators are less likely to report that their school does an excellent job of utilizing strategies that empower parents to take a more active role in their child's education such as helping parents understand what to expect of their children when they reach certain ages (18%), giving parents guidance on how to gets kids excited about learning (10%), and providing parents with information about how to help their child with his/her homework (30%).	Research indicates involving parents as educators at home with their children is one of the most effective ways to improve students' achievement and attitudes. Also, good communication is critical for involving parents in their children's education.

⑤ **NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS**

Beliefs about Neighborhood Schools

Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
About one-third of Delaware educators (34%) believe that student achievement will rise if students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, but almost half (43%) believe student achievement will not change.	Research indicates when children attend a neighborhood school, the student population reflects the community's composition. If the schools become segregated along economic factors, numerous problems are created that disadvantage children attending high-poverty urban schools. These problems include administrators having more difficulty hiring qualified teachers and more funding being invested in remediation classes and less in advanced classes. Peer group support for educational achievement is also much lower. (Noble, 2001).
	Research suggests that children attending high-poverty urban schools tend to perform worse academically than students in low poverty schools. These children also tend to read less, get lower grades, have lower attendance rates, and spend less time on homework.
Over half of Delaware educators (60%) believe parent involvement will increase when students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, but almost a third (32%) believe parent involvement will not change.	In addition, research indicates that teachers in high poverty schools are more likely to report a lack of family involvement as a serious problem. However, with adequate training and encouragement increased family involvement in schools can be achieved.

⑥ **SATISFACTION WITH STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Types of Services Requested	
Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
In the last year, one-third of Delaware educators reported they initiated direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education to request services. While educators reported requesting information about a variety of topics such as certification, professional development, the DSTP, retirement, and state or federal policies or regulations, the most frequently cited request by educators was for information regarding certification (26%) -- national board certification or Delaware certification.	

Level of Satisfaction	
Poll Results	*Putting it in Context*
While most educators (71%) are at least somewhat satisfied with the services provided by the state department of education, about one-fourth of educators are dissatisfied (24%).	

Statewide Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware
General 2001 Results Analysis -- Delaware Educators (n=280)

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?	9%	61%	25%	2%	<1%	3%

Question						
What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
	20%	53%	14%	2%	0%	12%

Question						
What grade would you give the public <u>high schools</u> in Delaware?	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
	5%	44%	32%	7%	<1%	11%

What is the most important factor in determining the grade you gave the public schools? (top 7 categories)	Percent Responding
♦	28%
♦ Quality of instruction/curriculum	23%
♦	15%
♦ Student behavior/discipline issues	8%
♦	6%
♦ Communication and involvement with parents/community	5%
♦	5%

	All	Most	Some	A few	None	Don't know
In your opinion, how many students – all, most, some, a few, or none – have the skills to succeed in the work world?	5%	61%	30%	3%	0%	2%

	Too much emphasis	Not enough emphasis	About the right amount			Don't know
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in your community, not enough emphasis on testing, or about the right amount?	83%	1%	15%			<1%

	Too High	About Right	Too Low			Don't know
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?	36%	56%	5%			3%

	Better today	Worse today	No difference			Don't know
As you look back on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did?	52%	26%	17%			5%

II. Educator and Student Accountability

	A great deal	Somewhat	Very Little	Not at all	Don't know
How much do the state standards influence your classroom instruction and curriculum decisions?	73%	17%	5%	3%	3%

	A great deal of improvement	Some improvement	A little improvement	No improvement	Don't know
To what extent do you think the student accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?	10%	43%	32%	14%	<1%

When schools require students to pass a standardized test to be promoted to the next grade or graduate, teachers often take significant classroom time to prepare their students for the test. Do you think that:	There is nothing wrong with this because the tests measure important skills and knowledge	This is a problem because when teachers teach to the test real learning suffers	Don't know
	25%	72%	3%

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Some school districts require students to pass a standardized test in order to be promoted. Students who fail the test must either go to summer school or repeat the grade. Some people worry schools will be overwhelmed because too many students will fail. Would you say you agree or disagree with this view? Is this strongly or somewhat?	53%	32%	8%	6%	1%

	More of those who repeat a grade will drop out	More of those promoted anyway will drop out	Don't know
Just your impression, which children are more likely to drop out of school: those who fail achievement tests and have to repeat a grade, or those who fail achievement tests and are promoted anyway?	67%	23%	11%

	A great deal	Somewhat	Very little	Not at all
How much does the DSTP influence your classroom instruction and curriculum decisions?	49%	29%	14%	7%

The Delaware Education Research and Development Center recently presented the results of a study they conducted in 6 schools throughout the state of Delaware looking at the impact of the student accountability plan on schools in Delaware. We would like to share with you some of the issues uncovered by this study and ask you to indicate the extent to which you agree, tend to agree, tend to disagree or disagree with the statements. As a result of high stakes testing context in Delaware…

	Disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Agree	Don't Know
a. Instruction is focused less on the standards and more on teaching to the DSTP.	21%	10%	23%	41%	5%
b. Teachers are feeling as though they need to expose students to as much as possible and hope that it sticks.	10%	7%	16%	66%	1%
c. Curriculum changes are driven by the state test and not by student needs.	8%	1%	18%	71%	1%
d. Teachers are teaching the same ways to most students.	38%	12%	18%	29%	3%
e. Curriculum control is at the district/state level and not the school.	10%	3%	16%	70%	2%
f. There is a sense of powerlessness among teachers.	10%	6%	18%	65%	1%
g. Decisions about teaching and learning continue to move further from the classroom and school.	10%	5%	19%	65%	1%
h. Teachers' professional judgment is valued less.	9%	5%	17%	67%	1%
i. Teacher shortages are likely to occur.	5%	2%	10%	81%	2%
j. Teachers' morale has decreased.	8%	4%	17%	69%	1%
k. Professional development offerings have become more narrow.	29%	8%	12%	50%	3%

	Disagree	Tend to disagree	Tend to agree	Agree	Don't Know
l. The developmental needs of all students are being addressed	51%	11%	16%	21%	1%
m. Delaware students are receiving a well-rounded education.	29%	12%	26%	31%	3%
n. DSTP data are useful for improving classroom instruction.	31%	13%	29%	24%	4%
o. DSTP data are useful for diagnosing individual student learning problems.	35%	16%	21%	26%	3%

III. Discipline

	Extremely safe	Very safe	Somewhat safe	Not too safe	Not at all safe	Don't know
In general, do you feel the schools in your community are extremely safe, very safe, somewhat safe, not too safe, or not at all safe?	14%	39%	41%	4%	1%	1%

	Very serious	Somewhat serious	Not very serious	Not at all serious	Don't know
I would like to read some things people have said are problems with public schools. Please tell me if you think the problem is very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious in Delaware. Keep in mind that a problem may be serious, but "very serious" means a problem is both serious <u>and</u> widespread.					
♦ Student drug use	23%	61%	9%	2%	6%
♦ School violence	11%	60%	23%	3%	4%
♦ Student drinking	27%	49%	13%	4%	8%
♦ Student smoking	32%	47%	12%	3%	6%
♦ Teenage pregnancy	21%	50%	18%	3%	8%
♦ Gangs	8%	32%	38%	11%	13%

What, in your opinion, are the major causes of student violence in public schools?   Percent Responding

♦	**28%**
♦ Lack of family structure (problems of family life, poverty)	**24%**
♦	**18%**
♦ Peer pressure and peer relations (i.e., bullying, jealousy, etc.)	**15%**
♦	**10%**
♦ Media (TV, movies, pop music, news media)	**10%**
♦	**7%**
♦ Community or neighborhood problems brought to school	**8%**
♦	**8%**
♦ Other	**12%**

How effective do you think each of the following measures would be in reducing violence in the public schools – very effective, somewhat effective, not very effective, or not at all effective?	Very effective	Somewhat effective	Not very effective	Not at all effective	Don't know
♦ Stronger penalties for possession of weapons by students	**56%**	**32%**	**9%**	**2%**	**1%**
♦ Training school staffs in how to deal with student violence	**48%**	**43%**	**6%**	**2%**	**1%**
♦ More vocational or job-training courses in public schools	**51%**	**36%**	**7%**	**5%**	**1%**
♦ Drug and alcohol abuse programs for students	**39%**	**48%**	**8%**	**3%**	**1%**
♦ Values and ethics education for students	**41%**	**46%**	**9%**	**3%**	**1%**
♦ Education designed to reduce racial and ethnic tensions	**42%**	**45%**	**8%**	**4%**	**1%**
♦ Courses offered by the public schools in how to be a good parent	**53%**	**33%**	**10%**	**4%**	**1%**
♦ Conflict education for students	**55%**	**39%**	**2%**	**3%**	**1%**

IV. Parent Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode
When some children do poorly in school, some people place the responsibility on the children, some on the parents, some on the school or the teachers. What percentage of the responsibility do you think each has when children do poorly in school?				
Children	31.4	13.8	33	33
Parents	40.5	15.8	35	50
School/Teachers	28.1	11.8	30	30

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Don't know
My school makes it easy for parents to be involved there.					
.	2%	6%	43%	50%	<1%

What makes you feel this way?	Percent responding
➢ Invitation (or lack of) for parents to volunteer and participate	35%
➢ Activities/programs (or lack of) for parents and families (PTA, booster club, homework hotline, parent classes)	31%
➢ Communication (or lack of) from the school (phone calls, school newsletter, website)	17%
➢ Accessibility (or lack of) of teachers/teacher encouragement	9%
➢ Addressing (or not addressing) barriers to parent involvement (transportation, schedules of working parents)	7%
➢ Administrator support and school policies	5%
➢ Other	4%

How good a job does your school do at…	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
a. Sending home progress reports between report cards	67%	25%	7%	1%	1%
b. Helping parents understand what children each age are like	18%	41%	28%	10%	4%
c. Making parents aware of chances to volunteer at school	44%	36%	16%	3%	1%
d. Providing parents information about how to help their child with his/her homework	30%	36%	24%	9%	1%
e. Informing parents quickly if children are consistently late or absent	48%	34%	14%	3%	1%
f. Informing parents quickly if children are having academic problems	36%	50%	13%	1%	<1%
g. Giving parents guidance about how to get kids excited and interested in learning	10%	44%	35%	10%	1%

V. Neighborhood Schools

	Achievement will rise	Achievement will decline	Will not change	Don't know
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think student achievement in the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?	34%	14%	43%	9%

	Involvement will rise	Involvement will decline	Will not change	Don't know
When students are allowed to attend a neighborhood school, do you think parent involvement with the public schools in these communities, on average, will rise, will decline, or will not change much?	60%	3%	32%	5%

VI. Satisfaction with State DOE

	Yes	No	Don't know
Have you at any time in the past 12 months initiated direct contact with the Delaware Department of Education to request services?	**33%**	**67%**	**<1%**

	Phone call	Letter	Email	In person at a local public-school event (e.g. board meeting, open house, PTA meeting)	Via the State DOE internet site	Other
How did you contact them?	**57%**	**1%**	**22%**	**8%**	**3%**	**10%**

What types of services did you request from the Delaware Department of Education? Percent responding

➢ Information concerning Delaware certification	**20%**
➢ Information about continuing education or professional development	**13%**
➢ Information about DSTP or Alternate Assessment	**12%**
➢ General information or advice	**12%**
➢ Financial information (payroll, salary, retirement)	**11%**
➢ Questions/requests for instructional materials/curriculum development	**10%**
➢ Inquiries on policies/laws/ethics/special education regulations	**7%**
➢ Information on National Board certification	**6%**
➢ Information about extracurricular activities	**4%**
➢ Other	**10%**

What services, if any, would you like the Delaware Department of Education to provide that it does not currently provide?	Percent Responding
♦	**15%**
♦ More support regarding accountability and/or the DSTP	**6%**
♦	**5%**
♦ Increased direct involvement with schools and faculty members	**5%**
♦	**4%**
♦ More parental interaction and programs	**3%**
♦	**3%**
♦ Better develop of curriculum	**1%**
♦	**15%**
♦	**36%**
♦ Don't Know	**7%**

	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Overall, how satisfied are you with the services supplied by the Department of Education – would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?	**11%**	**60%**	**19%**	**5%**	**4%**

VI. Demographic Questions

	New Castle		Kent		Sussex
In what county do you work?	**54%**		**21%**		**25%**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	Range
Including this year, how many years have you been an educator in Delaware?	**15.9**	**10.3**	**15**	**3**	**0-38**

	High School	BS/BA	MS/MA/MEd	PhD/EdD	
What is your highest level of education <u>completed</u>?	**<1%**	**35%**	**60%**	**2%**	

	University of Delaware	Delaware State University	Wilmington College	Wesley College	Other University
Where did you complete your teacher education or administrator education?	**32%**	**11%**	**9%**	**1%**	**41%**

	Classroom Teacher	Building Administrator	District Administrator	Other (guidance counselor, teacher's aide, reading specialist, etc.)
What is your current position as a Delaware educator?	**83%**	**1%**	**0%**	**16%**

What grade levels are you teaching this year?	Percent responding			Percent responding
Pre-K	**1%**	6th		**6%**
K	**5%**	7th		**8%**
1st	**12%**	8th		**10%**
2nd	**11%**	9th		**18%**
3rd	**12%**	10th		**19%**
4th	**8%**	11th		**20%**
5th	**10%**	12th		**19%**

In what content areas are you teaching this year?	Percent responding		Percent responding
English Language Arts	**11%**	Computer Programming	**1%**
Mathematics	**5%**	Art	**<1%**
Science	**6%**	Music	**1%**
Social Studies	**4%**	Industrial Arts	**<1%**
Foreign Languages	**1%**	Home Economics	**1%**
Physical Education	**3%**	Special Education	**4%**
Business Education	**1%**	Other	**9%**

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

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

I.   **Quality of Education in Delaware**

**Students in Delaware are often given the grades of A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work.
What grade would you give the public schools in Delaware?**
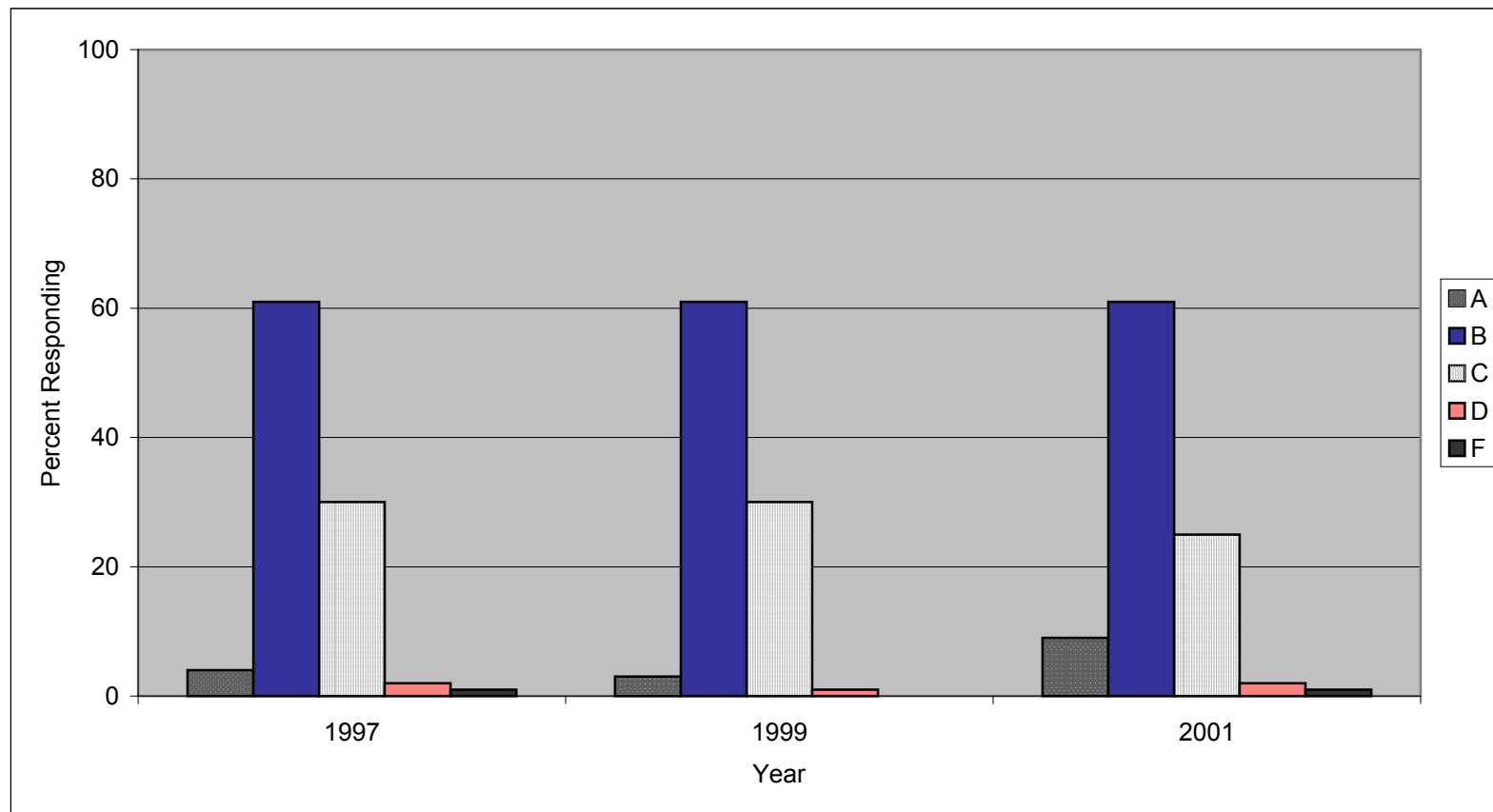
As you look on your own elementary and high school education, is it your impression that children today get a better or worse education than you did?

Legend:
- Better Today
- Worse Today
- No Difference
- Don't Know

Y-axis: Percent Responding
X-axis: Year (1997, 2001)

DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER
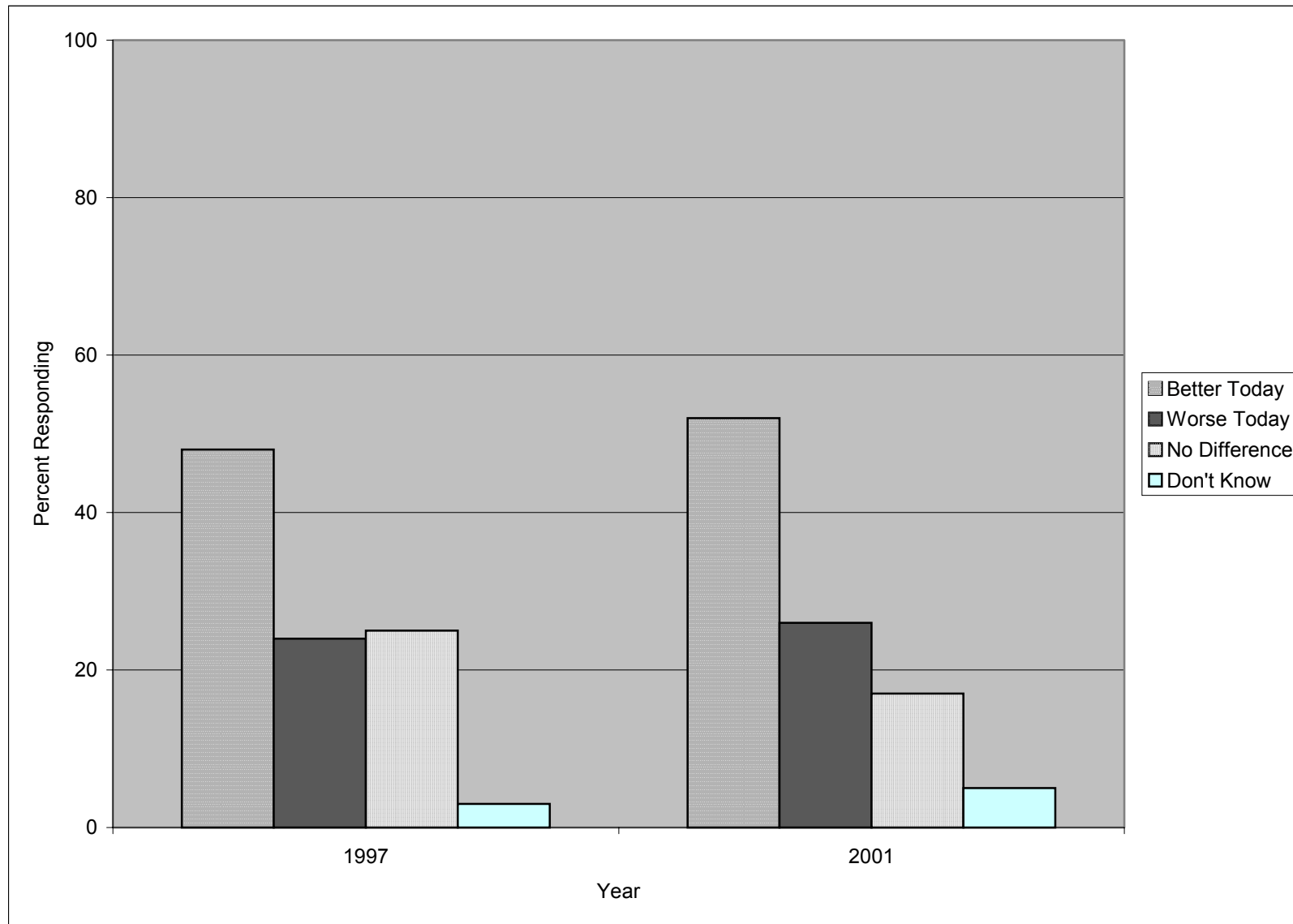
II.   Educator and Student Accountability

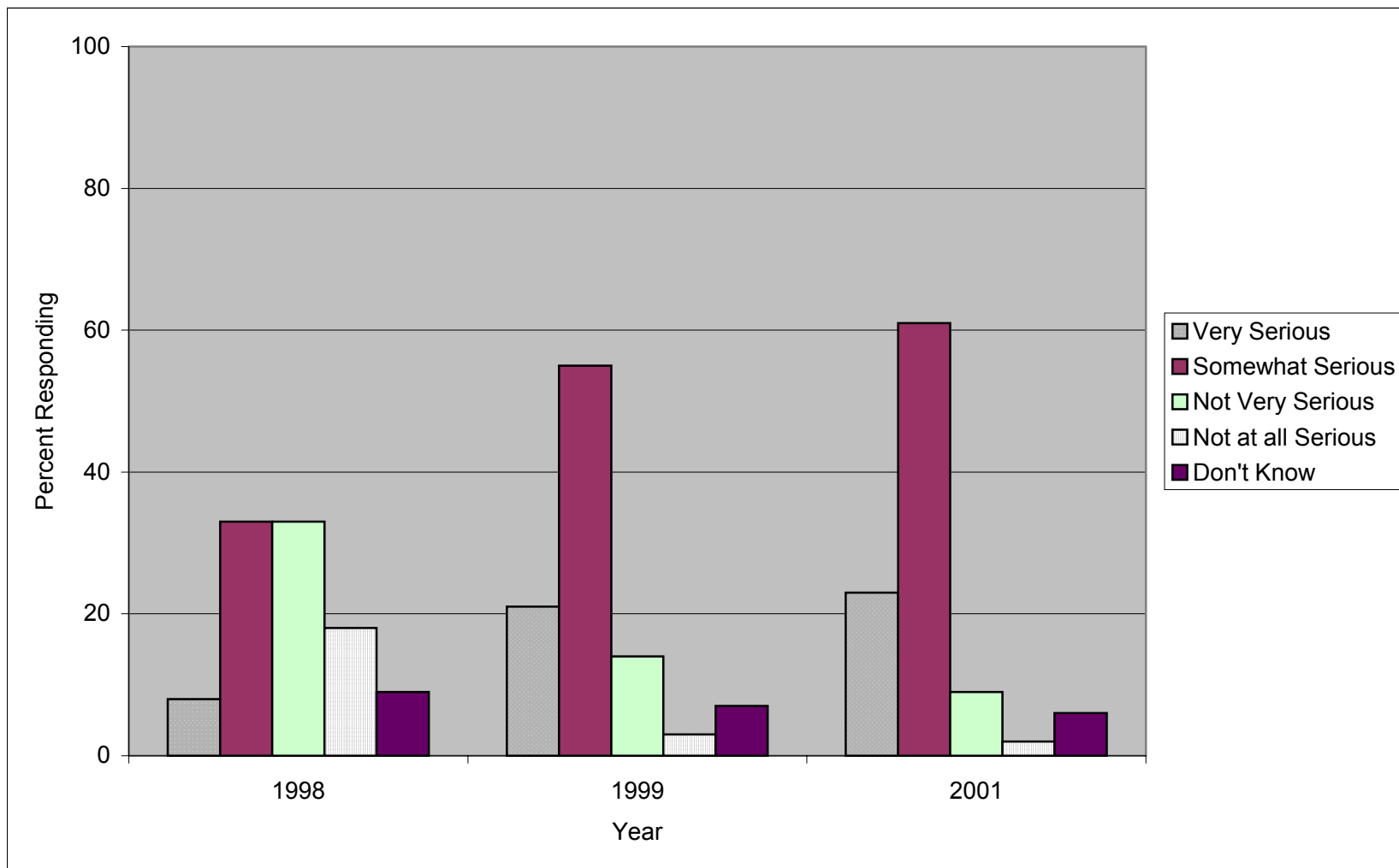**To what extent do you think the student accountability plan will lead to improvement in all of Delaware's schools?**
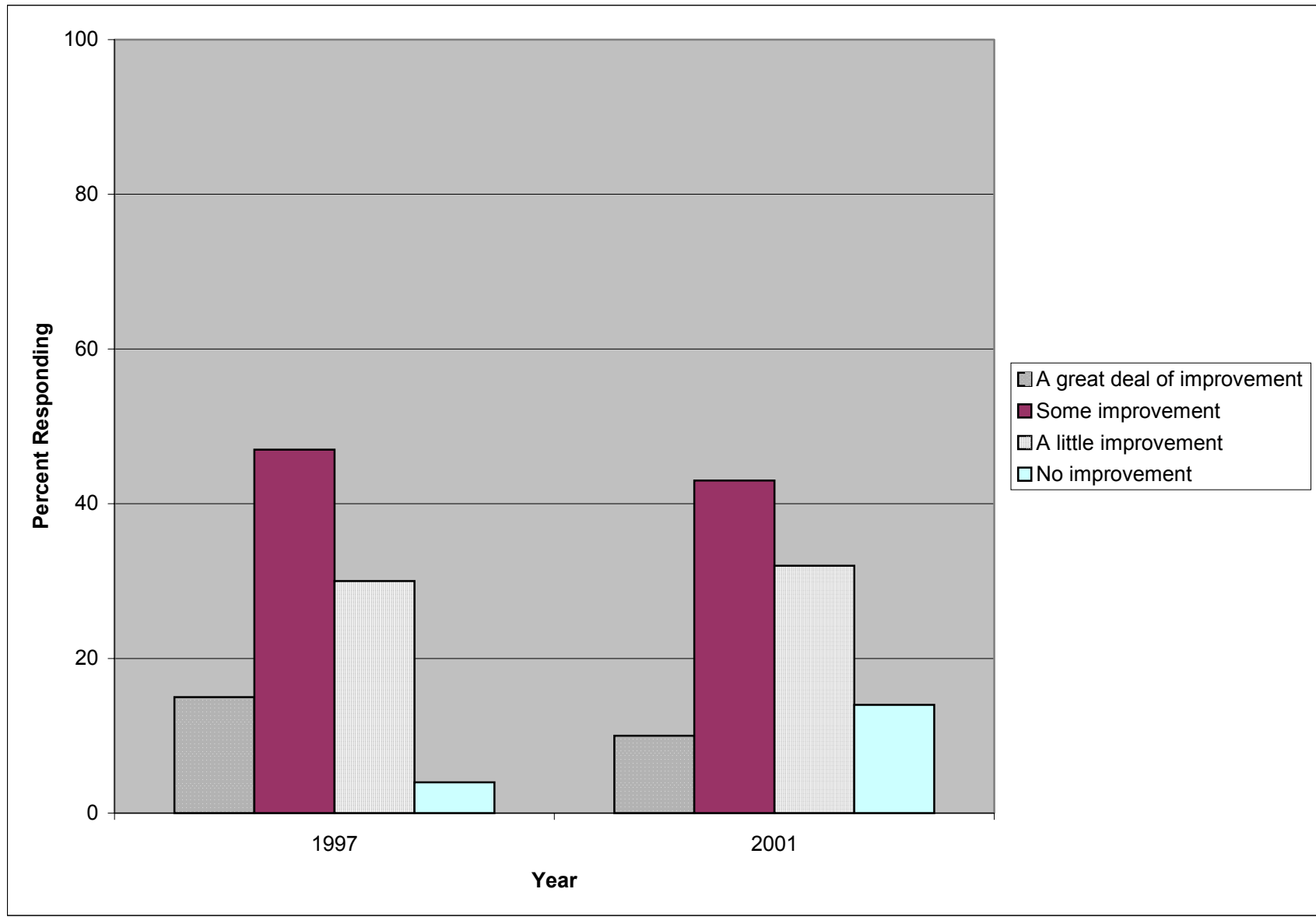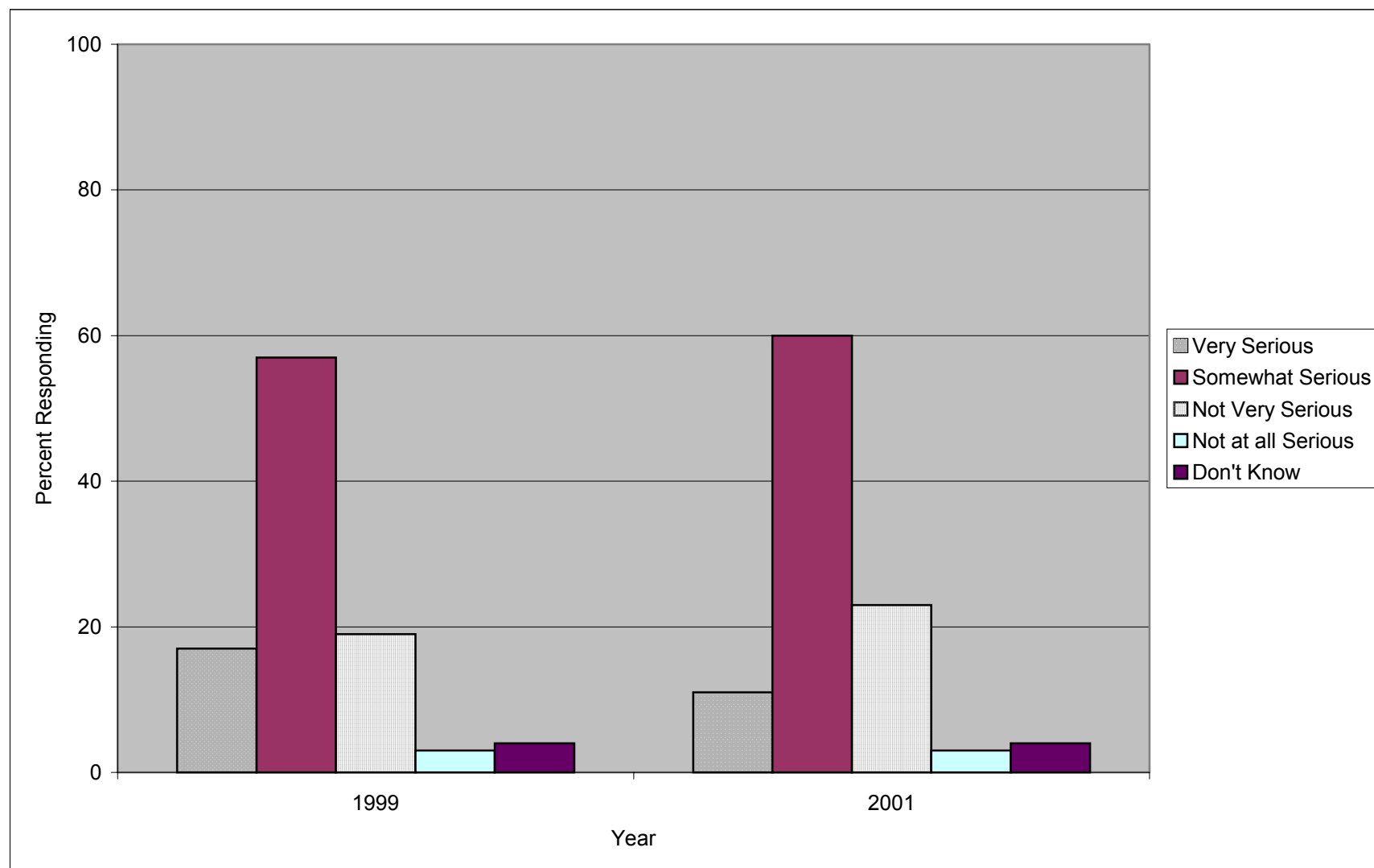
III.   Discipline

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

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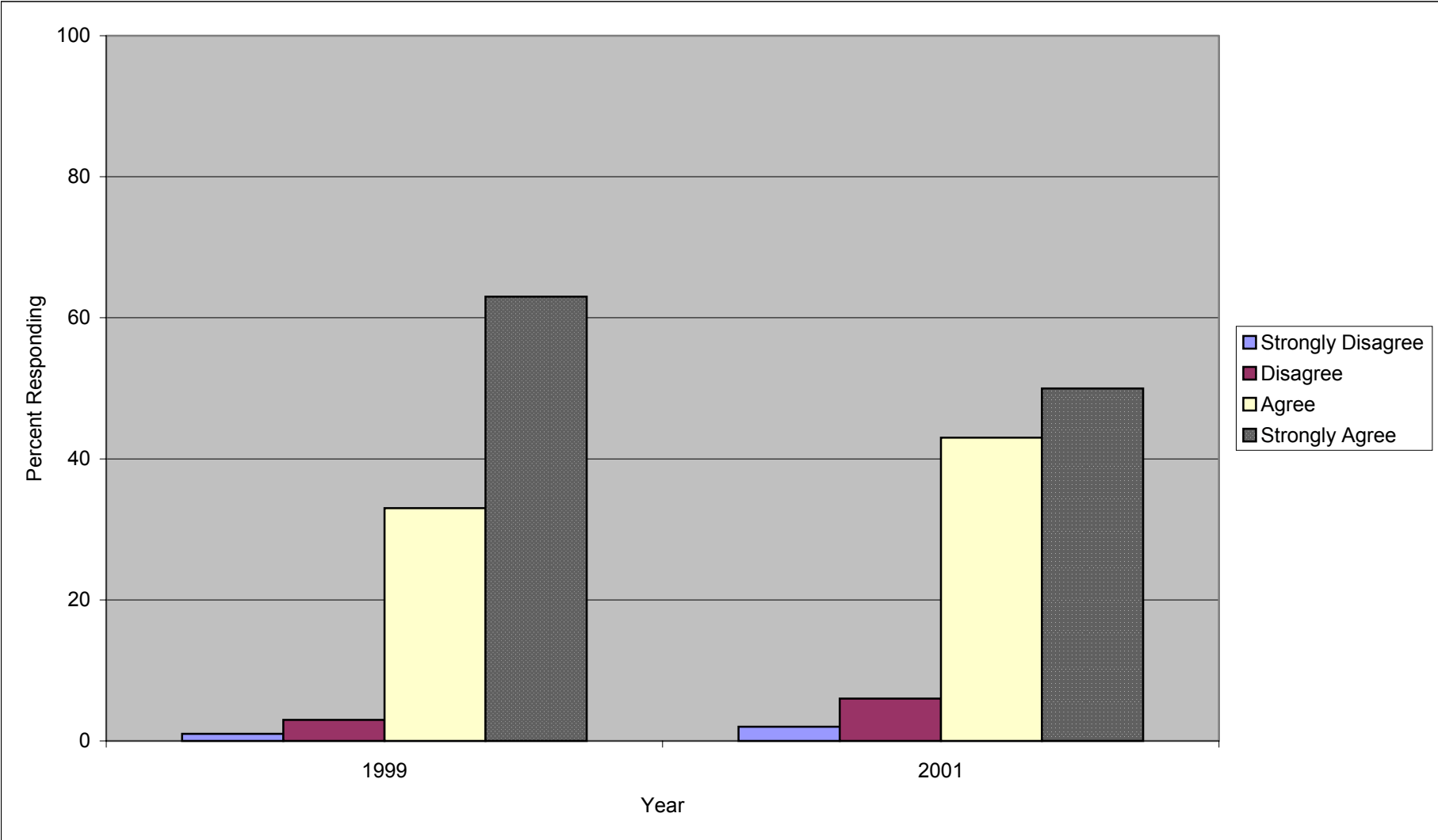
I would like to read some things people have said are problems in public schools. Please tell me if you think <u>student drinking</u> is a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious, or not at all serious problem in Delaware?
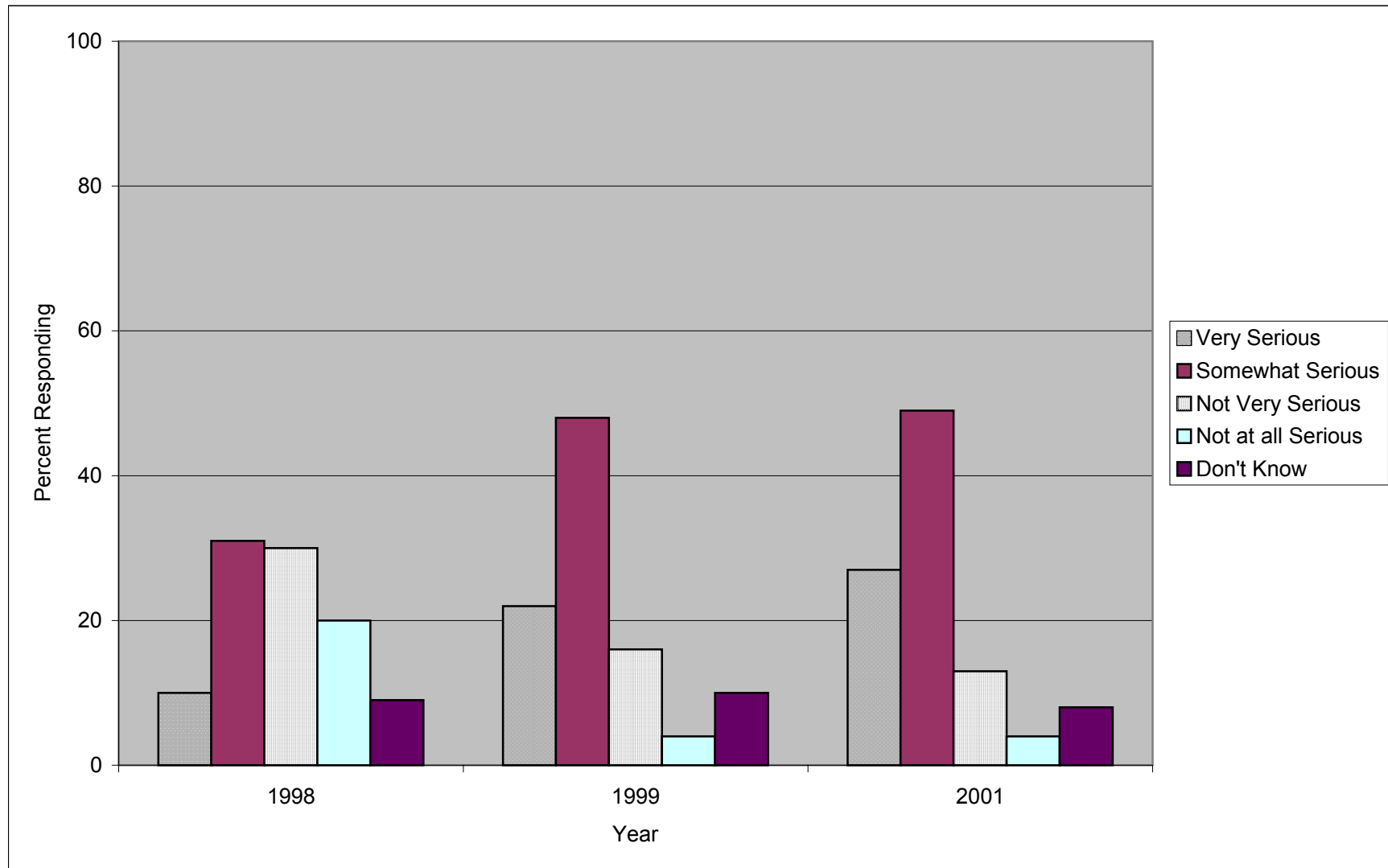
IV.   Parent Involvement

My school makes it easy for parents to be involved there.

APPENDIX A:

Background, Design and Data Collection, and Sampling Error

Background

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

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

Design and Data Collection

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

From October 22 to November 18, 2001, telephone interviews were conducted with 280 educators throughout the state. The sampling plan for the polls was scientifically developed. The educator poll used a random sample of educators employed in a Delaware public school. All analyses conducted by the R&D Center for the public poll involved adjusting data from the sample to reflect the statewide population. Because all percentages listed in this report were rounded to the nearest whole percent, some of the rows in the tables may not total 100%. This volume includes results for the state as a whole. 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 teachers had been surveyed. The size of the sampling error depends largely on the number of teachers 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	
Percentage near 10%	3.6%
Percentage near 20%	4.8%
Percentage near 30%	5.5%
Percentage near 40%	5.9%
Percentage near 50%	6.0%
Percentage near 60%	5.9%
Percentage near 70%	5.5%
Percentage near 80%	4.8%
Percentage near 90%	3.6%

The table would be used in the following way: The percent of educators that gave the public schools in Delaware a "B" is 61%. We go to the row for "percentages near 60%" in the table and across to the column for 95% confidence level. The number at this point is 5.9%, which means that the 61% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 5.9 points. In other words, the odds are 95 in 100 that repeated samplings, using the same procedures and the same sample size, would have an average result somewhere between 55.1% and 66.9%, with the most likely value being the 61%.

APPENDIX B:

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