

**2005 STATEWIDE PUBLIC POLL ON THE  
CONDITION OF EDUCATION IN DELAWARE**

TECHNICAL REPORT

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

**2005 Public Poll Technical Report:  
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 surveying citizens on their impressions regarding the condition of education in Delaware. This report presents the comprehensive results of the poll, in tabular and graphic formats, for the statewide Public Poll conducted in the spring of 2005. Highlights of key findings related to several educational issues are reported in a series of separate publications called *Public Opinion of Education*, and include the following topics:

<p><b><u>I. Quality of Education</u></b> Grading the Schools Performance Comparisons Student Preparation Importance of School Subjects</p>	<p><b><u>II. Early Care and Education</u></b> Support for Early Care Centers Full-Day Kindergarten Participation Early Entrance to Kindergarten</p>
<p><b><u>III. Gifted Education</u></b> Support for Gifted &amp; Talented Programs</p>	<p><b><u>IV. Finance Reform</u></b> Equalizing District Funding Gaps</p>
<p><b><u>V. Parent Involvement</u></b> Parent Involvement In and Out of School</p>	<p><b><u>VI. Educational Accountability</u></b> Educator Accountability Student Accountability The No Child Left Behind Act Achievement Gap</p>

This report includes:

- Full length copies of the Public Poll results [overall and comparisons of parents (p. 3) vs. non-parents (p. 18)];
- Trend analyses of the statewide poll on the condition of education in Delaware(p. 31);
- Comparisons of the 2005 poll results to national data (p. 66);
- Background information on the poll, survey design, data collection techniques, sampling error; and, references (p. 69).

For more information on the 2005 Public Poll, please contact the staff of the R&D Center by email at [ud-rcd@udel.edu](mailto:ud-rcd@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>

**DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER**  
of the  
University of Delaware

**Statewide Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware**  
**General 2005 Results Analysis (N = 910)**

**I. Quality of Education in Delaware**

<u>Question</u>	<u>Responses</u>					
How well informed are you about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very well informed?	<u>Not at all informed</u> 16%	<u>2</u> 30%	<u>3</u> 30%	<u>Very well informed</u> 24%	<u>Don't know</u> <1%	
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	A 7%	B 36%	C 31%	D 7%	F 3%	Don't know 16%
What grade would you give the public <u>middle</u> schools in Delaware?	4%	27%	34%	10%	3%	22%
What grade would you give the public <u>high</u> schools in Delaware?	5%	25%	31%	12%	6%	22%

In your opinion, what are the most important things to help public schools earn an A?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent response</u>
<b>Curriculum Standards and time in school:</b> more focused on academics, less emphasis on testing, maintain standards, prepare students for college and future life, school year/day should be longer	<b>37%</b>
<b>Teacher quality, accountability, and authority:</b> Teachers should have satisfactory level of knowledge, skills, and dedication; be accountable for students' learning; and have more control over curriculum, instruction, and classroom order.	<b>27%</b>
<b>Parents, community, and public:</b> Parents, community and public should be better informed and more involved in education.	<b>19%</b>
<b>Resources:</b> need sufficient materials and funds; teachers should be well paid; good teachers should be rewarded.	<b>17%</b>
<b>Class and school size:</b> Class and school size needs to be reduced.	<b>12%</b>
<b>Student Behavior:</b> Schools should discipline students more. Schools should have a uniform or dress code for students.	<b>12%</b>
<b>More focus on students:</b> attend to their needs, give them help, engage them more in learning. Teachers should spend more time with students.	<b>8%</b>
<b>Meeting diverse student needs:</b> meet the different needs and capacities of students, grouping them appropriately and educating them accordingly.	<b>7%</b>
<b>After school programs:</b> provide after school programs	<b>4%</b>
<b>Better administration:</b> Improve the administration. Administration should also care more about the teachers.	<b>4%</b>
<b>Study environment:</b> Schools should provide a good, safe environment for students to study.	<b>3%</b>
<b>Other:</b> General quality of education; diversity of faculty; student achievement; bussing policy; satisfied	<b>9%</b>
<b>Do not know</b>	<b>3%</b>

	<u>Worse</u>	<u>About the same</u>	<u>Improved</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	<b>26%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>18%</b>	
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for college?	<b>5%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for work?	<b>3%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't know
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students to be productive members of society?	<b>4%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of providing a well-rounded education?	<b>6%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>12%</b>
Where would you say Delaware's schools stand in relation to the nation? Are they better, worse, or about the same?	<u>Better</u> <b>14%</b>	<u>Same</u> <b>52%</b>	<u>Worse</u> <b>19%</b>		<u>Don't know</u> <b>15%</b>
For each subject, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not important at all</u>		<u>Don't know</u>
Computers	<b>89%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>		<b>0%</b>
Mathematics	<b>95%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>		<b>0%</b>
Reading	<b>98%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>0%</b>		<b>&lt;1%</b>
Writing	<b>92%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>		<b>0%</b>
Science	<b>72%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>		<b>&lt;1%</b>
Social Studies	<b>60%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>2%</b>		<b>0%</b>
Foreign Languages	<b>44%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>7%</b>		<b>&lt;1%</b>
Physical Education	<b>51%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>6%</b>		<b>0%</b>
Art and Music	<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>4%</b>		<b>0%</b>

## II. Early Care & Education

Delaware is moving toward creating full-day kindergarten programs throughout the state. If the state is not able to fully fund all students and must start with some and add more over time until all children can attend, which of the following alternatives would you most support?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
Children with parents who can afford to pay receive priority	<b>2%</b>
Families with financial need receive priority	<b>15%</b>
Children with special education needs receive priority	<b>26%</b>
A lottery system would be used allowing all children an equal chance to participate	<b>37%</b>
I do not support any of these options	<b>17%</b>
Don't know	<b>2%</b>

	<u>Preschool</u>	<u>Interventions</u>	<u>Fund equally</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Is it more important to put money into preschool or to support interventions for children entering school with low skill levels?	<b>24%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>5%</b>

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Do you think children identified as gifted and talented should be admitted to kindergarten at an early age?	<b>59%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>3%</b>

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A fair amount</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
A majority of Delaware early care and education providers have educational backgrounds that are limited to high school diplomas and, at times, a few college courses. A proposal has been made that public funds be used to support a tuition reimbursement and apprenticeship program to help early care providers and teachers take college coursework. To what degree do you support this proposal?	<b>38%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>

	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>4%</b>
To enable early childhood providers to enhance their facilities so they meet the quality standards set by the state, a proposal has been made that the state of Delaware partner with private business so early childhood providers would be able to borrow funds at low or no interest rates. To what degree do you support this proposal?					



### III. Gifted Education

The state of Delaware has adopted a definition to be used to identify students who are gifted and talented. It is as follows: Gifted and talented children are professionally identified as having outstanding abilities and being capable of high performance. These children require differentiated programs and services beyond what is typically provided in the regular school program. They have either demonstrated or show potential for high ability in one or more academic or non-academic areas. How much do you feel children identified as gifted and talented have special educational needs?

<u>A great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
<b>42%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>2%</b>

To what extent do you think the needs of gifted and talented students in the state of Delaware are getting their educational needs met in the public schools?

<u>A great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>A small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
<b>14%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>18%</b>

To what extent would you support increased funding to create educational programs for gifted and talented children in Delaware?

<b>36%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>4%</b>
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### IV. Finance Reform

How much do you agree that student funding should be based on individual educational needs?

<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
<b>24%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>6%</b>

How much do you agree that student funding should be based on where students live?

<b>4%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>3%</b>
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What funding sources should Delaware use to help reduce funding gaps between districts?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
<b>Taxes:</b> school, property, corporate, cigarette, alcohol, luxury, sales	<b>26%</b>
<b>Funding distribution:</b> equal distribution to all schools, distribution based on financial need	<b>12%</b>
<b>Miscellaneous revenue sources:</b> fundraising, donations, public, funds, uncollected fines, bonds, referendums	<b>11%</b>
<b>Gaming revenue:</b> casinos, lottery, gambling, harness racing	<b>9%</b>
<b>State:</b> state government, agencies, park revenue	<b>9%</b>
<b>Private sector:</b> businesses, corporations, organizations	<b>8%</b>
<b>Federal:</b> federal government, loans, grants	<b>6%</b>
<b>Government:</b> generic government response, budget, vouchers	<b>4%</b>
<b>School management:</b> consolidate districts, management of funds, busing, school choice	<b>4%</b>
<b>Local:</b> district financial needs, county government	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other:</b> any source, parents, financial aid, free education, Delaware is doing well	<b>1%</b>
<b>Do not know/No answer:</b>	<b>31%</b>

## **V. Parent Involvement**

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there. (Parents only)	<b>50%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>

In your opinion, what types of things should parents be doing both in and out of school to participate in their children's education?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent response</u>
<b>Communicating with School:</b> Communicate with school staff about child's progress, school policies and procedures.	<b>40%</b>
<b>Homework:</b> Parents monitor/help child with homework; make sure homework is completed; keep informed about homework.	<b>36%</b>
<b>Parental Involvement and Communication with Children:</b> Parents actively facilitate learning through outings, reading together, etc, and support children's emotional/educational/social needs by spending time at home with their children, and taking "field trips".	<b>33%</b>
<b>Volunteer:</b> Parents <i>actively</i> participate at school and in classroom, and are involved in school organizations and committees.	<b>20%</b>
<b>Attend School Activities and Meetings:</b> Parents <i>attend</i> school sponsored activities (sports, plays, etc) as well as school meetings.	<b>20%</b>
<b>Support School:</b> Parents support school staff by respecting decisions regarding their child's education and school structure/policy.	<b>4%</b>
<b>Preparation for School Success and Future:</b> Parents are aware of school and state educational standards, and prepare child for "life after graduation" by teaching practical and vocational life skills.	<b>3%</b>
<b>Parental Support of Discipline:</b> Parents discipline children at home and/or support school's disciplinary actions towards their children.	<b>2%</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>1%</b>

## VI. Educational Accountability

In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in this community, not enough emphasis, or about the right amount?	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Not enough</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>41%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>12%</b>
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?	<u>Too high</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Too low</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>12%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>15%</b>

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Consider these two ways to measure student achievement performance. One way is to examine student improvement over time and the other is by comparing student performance to an absolute benchmark. Which of the following best describes how you think these two measurement systems should be used to measure student achievement performance?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent response</u>
About 100% should be based on improvement over time	<b>12%</b>
Most should be based on improvement over time	<b>26%</b>
Improvement over time and an absolute benchmark should be weighted about equally	<b>40%</b>
Most should be based on an absolute benchmark	<b>6%</b>
About 100% should be based on an absolute benchmark	<b>9%</b>
Don't know	<b>8%</b>

Student Test scores are not the only means to hold students accountable. What other measures do you feel should be used to make these decisions about students? Please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important.

	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Grade point averages	1%	34%	65%	<1%
Class work and effort	0%	17%	82%	<1%
Opportunities to learn	1%	17%	79%	3%
Teacher Judgment	7%	50%	41%	2%
Attendance	2%	18%	80%	<1%
Classroom Behavior	1%	18%	81%	0%
Class participation	2%	34%	65%	<1%
Student Attitude	2%	20%	78%	1%
Homework	2%	34%	64%	<1%
Extracurricular Activities or community service	8%	51%	40%	<1%
Social, Emotional, Cognitive maturity, and readiness	2%	29%	68%	1%

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is frequently absent?	10%	89%	2%
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student has frequent behavior problems in class?	20%	75%	4%
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is transferred to the school midyear?	35%	58%	6%

Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student doesn't do his/her homework?	<u>Yes</u> 21%	<u>No</u> 77%			<u>Don't know</u> 2%
How useful are the reports detailing your child's DSTP scores? (Parents only)	<u>Very useful</u> 26%	<u>Somewhat useful</u> 37%	<u>A little useful</u> 7%	<u>Not at all useful</u> 12%	<u>Don't know</u> 16%
Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell:					
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
How their child compares to others in the nation?	80%	18%			2%
How their child compares to others in the state?	86%	12%			1%
Whether their child is progressing in school?	96%	3%			1%
How much their child knows about specific subjects?	93%	6%			1%
How much, if anything, do you know about the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001 - a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all.	<u>A great deal</u> 11%	<u>A fair amount</u> 38%	<u>Very little</u> 35%	<u>Nothing at all</u> 16%	<u>Don't know</u> 0%
Black and Hispanic students generally score lower on standardized tests than white students. In your opinion, how important do you think it is to close the academic achievement gap between white students about black and Hispanic students?	<u>Very important</u> 68%	<u>Somewhat important</u> 21%	<u>Not too important</u> 3%	<u>Not at all important</u> 5%	<u>Don't know</u> 3%
To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will reduce the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students?	<u>A great extent</u> 7%	<u>Some extent</u> 38%	<u>A small extent</u> 21%	<u>Not at all</u> 16%	<u>Don't know</u> 18%

	<u>A great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>A small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will reduce the achievement gap between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students?	<b>6%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>16%</b>

Just your opinion, what are some of the factors that cause the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic student?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
<b>Home life/environment:</b> home life, single-parent homes, general parent comments, lack of role models, social integration and family values	<b>35%</b>
<b>Economic advantage/disadvantage:</b> Poverty, family income, equal educational opportunities, access to resources, learning opportunities, poor nutrition	<b>25%</b>
<b>Lack of parent involvement:</b> Parental involvement, support, motivation, participation, lack of availability due to work, lack of time, accountability, awareness	<b>18%</b>
<b>Language and cultural differences:</b> Communication issues between teachers, students, and parents, cultural background differences	<b>18%</b>
<b>School systems:</b> Insufficient funding, biased testing, low school quality, student diversity, segregation, lack of role models	<b>14%</b>
<b>Student characteristics:</b> Attention span, attitude, behavior, peer pressure, attendance, interest in school, motivation	<b>9%</b>
<b>Parental personal attributes:</b> Parent's level of education, attitude, parenting skills, not good role models	<b>8%</b>
<b>Biased/racial attitudes:</b> General cultural and racial bias, discrimination, and prejudice; Teacher bias, cultural stereotypes, discrimination	<b>5%</b>
<b>Other:</b> general attitude, no gap, media, genetics, sociological, psychological, transportation	<b>9%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>4%</b>

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In your opinion, do black children and other minority children in your community have the same educational opportunities as white children?	<b>81%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>5%</b>

Consider a public school student whose school has been identified as needing improvement by the No Child Left Behind Act. To what degree would you support a proposal to allow the parents of this child to select a non-public school, with the government paying all or part of the tuition? Would you strongly support it, moderately support it, support it a little, or not support it at all?	<u>Strongly support</u> 25%	<u>Moderately support</u> 26%	<u>Support a little</u> 18%	<u>Not at all support</u> 27%	<u>Don't know</u> 5%
Under the NCLB Act, schools are required to report on the participation and performance of students on the statewide math and reading tests in as many as 33 distinct groups by race, disability status, and other characteristics. How fair do you think it is to designate a school as in need of improvement if only one group does not meet adequate yearly progress?	<u>Very fair</u> 4%	<u>Fair</u> 28%	<u>Unfair</u> 39%	<u>Very unfair</u> 20%	<u>Don't know</u> 9%
Under the No Child Left Behind Act, schools are rated using student DSTP scores. To what extent do the school ratings provide meaningful information about the schools in your community?	<u>A great extent</u> 12%	<u>Some extent</u> 45%	<u>A small extent</u> 21%	<u>No extent at all</u> 8%	<u>Don't know</u> 15%

## VII. Demographics

Are you the parent, step-parent, or guardian of a child that is currently attending school in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade in Delaware?	<u>Yes</u> 41%	<u>No</u> 59%				
Do your children attend a public, private, or charter school? Or are your children home schooled?	<u>Private</u> 17%	<u>Public</u> 46%	<u>Charter School</u> 6%	<u>Both public and private</u> 3%	<u>Home schooled</u> 2%	<u>Not in school</u> 17%



In what school district do you live?	<u>Percent Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>	
• Appoquinimink	4%	• Polytech	0%
• Brandywine	13%	• Smyrna	1%
• Christina	18%	• Cape Henlopen	4%
• Colonial	7%	• Delmar	1%
• NCC Vo-Tech	0%	• Indian River	6%
• Red Clay	16%	• Laurel	3%
• Capital	4%	• Seaford	2%
• Lake Forest	3%	• Sussex Vo-Tech	2%
• Milford	3%	• Woodbridge	1%
• Caesar Rodney	4%	• Don't know	8%

What grades are your children in?	<u>Percent Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>	
• K	15%	• 7 <sup>th</sup>	11%
• 1 <sup>st</sup>	11%	• 8 <sup>th</sup>	10%
• 2 <sup>nd</sup>	8%	• 9 <sup>th</sup>	8%
• 3 <sup>rd</sup>	11%	• 10 <sup>th</sup>	10%
• 4 <sup>th</sup>	14%	• 11 <sup>th</sup>	11%
• 5 <sup>th</sup>	13%	• 12 <sup>th</sup>	8%
• 6 <sup>th</sup>	9%		

What is the zip code for your home address?

	<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>
19701	5%	19797	<1%	19809	3%	19947	2%
19702	5%	19801	1%	19810	4%	19950	1%
19703	2%	19802	3%	19901	3%	19951	<1%
19706	0%	19803	3%	19939	1%	19962	1%
19707	3%	19804	3%	19940	1%	19964	<1%
19709	3%	19805	3%	19943	2%	19966	2%
19710	<1%	19806	1%	19944	<1%	19968	1%
19711	8%	19807	1%	19945	1%	19970	1%
19713	3%	19808	5%	19946	<1%	19971	1%
19717	<1%	19904	4%	19952	1%	19973	3%
19720	6%	19907	<1%	19953	<1%	19975	1%
19724	<1%	19923	<1%	19954	<1%	19977	1%
19730	<1%	19930	1%	19956	4%	19979	<1%
19732	0%	19933	1%	19958	2%		
19733	<1%	19934	1%	19963	2%		
19734	1%	19938	1%	19960	1%		

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
What is your age?	46.1	17.2	18-88

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Refused</u>
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	3%	97%	<1%

	<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>
How would you describe your race?			
• White	81%	• Native American	1%
• African-American	13%	• Other (including bi-racial)	2%
• Asian/Pacific Islander	2%	• Refused	1%

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>
Including this year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	<b>29.3</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>0-104</b>

What is your household income from all sources?	<u>Percent Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
• less than \$10,000	<b>2%</b>	• \$25,000-\$35,000 <b>7%</b>
• \$10,000 - \$15,000	<b>3%</b>	• \$35,000-\$50,000 <b>14%</b>
• \$15,000 - \$20,000	<b>4%</b>	• \$50,000-\$75,000 <b>22%</b>
• \$20,000 - \$25,000	<b>4%</b>	• \$75,000 or more <b>32%</b>
• Don't know	<b>2%</b>	• Refused <b>11%</b>

What is your gender?	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>
	<b>48%</b>	<b>52%</b>

**DELAWARE EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER**  
of the  
University of Delaware

**Statewide Poll on the Condition of Education in Delaware**

**Respondents with Children Attending K-12 Schools in DE (N =410) Compared to  
Respondents without Children Attending K – 12 Schools in DE (N = 500) (in Parentheses)**

**I. Quality of Education in Delaware**

<u>Question</u>	<u>Responses</u>					
How well informed are you about the public schools in your community, on a scale of one to four where one is not at all informed and four is very well informed?	<u>Not at all informed</u> <b>9%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<u>2</u> <b>27%</b> <b>(32%)</b>	<u>3</u> <b>34%</b> <b>(27%)</b>	<u>Very well informed</u> <b>30%</b> <b>(21%)</b>	<u>Don't know</u> <b>&lt;1%</b> <b>(&lt;1%)</b>	
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	<u>A</u> <b>10%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<u>B</u> <b>36%</b> <b>(36%)</b>	<u>C</u> <b>30%</b> <b>(32%)</b>	<u>D</u> <b>10%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<u>F</u> <b>4%</b> <b>(2%)</b>	<u>Don't know</u> <b>10%</b> <b>(21%)</b>
What grade would you give the public <u>middle</u> schools in Delaware?	<b>5%</b> <b>(3%)</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>(28%)</b>	<b>29%</b> <b>(37%)</b>	<b>13%</b> <b>(8%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(3%)</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>(20%)</b>
What grade would you give the public <u>high</u> schools in Delaware?	<b>7%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>22%</b> <b>(26%)</b>	<b>27%</b> <b>(33%)</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>(12%)</b>	<b>6%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>26%</b> <b>(19%)</b>
In your opinion, what are the most important things to help public schools earn and A?	The responses to this question cannot be disaggregated for parents and non-parents. Please use the previous table with the results for the total sample.					

Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?	<u>Worse</u> <b>28%</b> <b>(25%)</b>	<u>About the same</u> <b>28%</b> <b>(34%)</b>	<u>Improved</u> <b>27%</b> <b>(24%)</b>		<u>Don't know</u> <b>18%</b> <b>(18%)</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for college?	<u>Excellent</u> <b>5%</b> <b>(4%)</b>	<u>Good</u> <b>30%</b> <b>(27%)</b>	<u>Fair</u> <b>41%</b> <b>(43%)</b>	<u>Poor</u> <b>10%</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<u>Don't know</u> <b>14%</b> <b>(16%)</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for work?	<b>4%</b> <b>(3%)</b>	<b>30%</b> <b>(26%)</b>	<b>35%</b> <b>(36%)</b>	<b>14%</b> <b>(17%)</b>	<b>18%</b> <b>(18%)</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students to be productive members of society?	<b>3%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>30%</b> <b>(23%)</b>	<b>35%</b> <b>(37%)</b>	<b>22%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>(15%)</b>
How good a job do Delaware public schools do of providing a well-rounded education?	<b>6%</b> <b>(6%)</b>	<b>31%</b> <b>(33%)</b>	<b>44%</b> <b>(34%)</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(13%)</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(14%)</b>
Where would you say Delaware's schools stand in relation to the nation? Are they better, worse, or about the same?	<u>Better</u> <b>16%</b> <b>(13%)</b>	<u>Same</u> <b>50%</b> <b>(54%)</b>	<u>Worse</u> <b>23%</b> <b>(17%)</b>		<u>Don't know</u> <b>13%</b> <b>(16%)</b>

For each subject, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?

	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Computers	1% (1%)	10% (10%)	89% (89%)	0% (0%)
Mathematics	0% (<1%)	3% (6%)	97% (94%)	0% (0%)
Reading	0% (0%)	0% (3%)	100% (97%)	0% (<1%)
Writing	0% (1%)	5% (10%)	95% (90%)	0% (0%)
Science	0% (1%)	29% (27%)	71% (72%)	0% (<1%)
Social Studies	1% (2%)	33% (43%)	66% (55%)	0% (0%)
Foreign Languages	6% (7%)	43% (54%)	51% (39%)	<1% (0%)
Physical Education	4% (7%)	42% (45%)	54% (48%)	0% (0%)
Art and Music	2% (6%)	50% (47%)	48% (47%)	0% (0%)

## II. Early Care & Education

Delaware is moving toward creating full-day kindergarten programs throughout the state. If the state is not able to fully fund all students and must start with some and add more over time until all children can attend, which of the following alternatives would you most support?

<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
Children with parents who can afford to pay receive priority	<b>2% (2%)</b>
Families with financial need receive priority	<b>13% (17%)</b>
Children with special education needs receive priority	<b>29% (25%)</b>
A lottery system would be used allowing all children an equal chance to participate	<b>41% (35%)</b>
I do not support any of these options	<b>14% (20%)</b>
Don't know	<b>1% (2%)</b>
Refuse	<b>0% (1%)</b>

	<u>Preschool</u>	<u>Interventions</u>	<u>Fund Equally</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Is it more important to put money into preschool or to support interventions for children entering school with low skill levels?	<b>26%</b> <b>(23%)</b>	<b>42%</b> <b>(39%)</b>	<b>27%</b> <b>(31%)</b>	<b>4%</b> <b>(6%)</b>

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Do you think children identified as gifted and talented should be admitted to kindergarten at an early age?	<b>61%</b> <b>(58%)</b>	<b>26%</b> <b>(39%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(3%)</b>

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A fair amount</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
A majority of Delaware early care and education providers have educational backgrounds that are limited to high school diplomas and, at times, a few college courses. A proposal has been made that public funds be used to support a tuition reimbursement and apprenticeship program to help early care providers and teachers take college coursework. To what degree do you support this proposal?	<b>40%</b> <b>(37%)</b>	<b>42%</b> <b>(39%)</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<b>4%</b> <b>(4%)</b>

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>A fair amount</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
To enable early childhood providers to enhance their facilities so they meet the quality standards set by the state, a proposal has been made that the state of Delaware partner with private business so early childhood providers would be able to borrow funds at low or no interest rates. To what degree do you support this proposal?	<b>40%</b> <b>(34%)</b>	<b>37%</b> <b>(38%)</b>	<b>14%</b> <b>(13%)</b>	<b>6%</b> <b>(11%)</b>	<b>4%</b> <b>(4%)</b>

### III. Gifted Education

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>Somewhat</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
The state of Delaware has adopted a definition to be used to identify students who are gifted and talented. It is as follows: Gifted and talented children are professionally identified as having outstanding abilities and being capable of high performance. These children require differentiated programs and services beyond what is typically provided in the regular school program. They have either demonstrated or show potential for high ability in one or more academic or non-academic areas. How much do you feel children identified as gifted and talented have special educational needs?	<b>39%</b> <b>(45%)</b>	<b>42%</b> <b>(41%)</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>(7%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(2%)</b>

	<u>A great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>A small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
To what extent do you think the needs of gifted and talented students in the state of Delaware are getting their educational needs met in the public schools?	<b>17%</b> <b>(12%)</b>	<b>42%</b> <b>(42%)</b>	<b>21%</b> <b>(22%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(4%)</b>	<b>15%</b> <b>(20%)</b>

To what extent would you support increased funding to create educational programs for gifted and talented children in Delaware?	<b>37%</b> <b>(36%)</b>	<b>44%</b> <b>(40%)</b>	<b>11%</b> <b>(13%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(7%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(4%)</b>
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### IV. Finance Reform

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you agree that student funding should be based on individual educational needs?	<b>26%</b> <b>(23%)</b>	<b>51%</b> <b>(50%)</b>	<b>14%</b> <b>(14%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(6%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(7%)</b>



	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How much do you agree that student funding should be based on where students live?	5% (3%)	15% (16%)	50% (52%)	27% (26%)	3% (3%)

What funding sources should Delaware use to help reduce funding gaps between districts?

The responses for this question cannot be disaggregated for parents and non-parents. Please use the previous table with the results for the total sample.

## V. Parent Involvement

	<u>Strongly Agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
My child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	50%	37%	8%	2%	4%

In your opinion, what types of things should parents be doing both in and out of school to participate in their children's education?

The responses for this question cannot be disaggregated for parents and non-parents. Please use the previous table with results for the total sample.

## VI. Educational Accountability

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Not enough</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in this community, not enough emphasis, or about the right amount?	45% (38%)	15% (16%)	33% (31%)	7% (15%)

In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?

	<u>Too high</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Too low</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	13% (11%)	44% (40%)	29% (33%)	13% (16%)

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Consider these two ways to measure student achievement performance. One way is to examine student improvement over time and the other is by comparing student performance to an absolute benchmark. Which of the following best describes how you think these two measurement systems should be used to measure student achievement performance?

<u>Response</u>	<u>Percent response</u>
About 100% should be based on improvement over time	<b>10% (12%)</b>
Most should be based on improvement over time	<b>27% (25%)</b>
Improvement over time and an absolute benchmark should be weighted about equally	<b>40% (39%)</b>
Most should be based on an absolute benchmark	<b>5% (7%)</b>
About 100% should be based on an absolute benchmark	<b>10% (8%)</b>
Don't know	<b>7% (8%)</b>

Student test scores are not the only means to hold students accountable. What other measures do you feel should be used to make these decisions about students? Please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important.

	<u>Not important at all</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Grade point averages	1% (1%)	31% (36%)	68% (63%)	<1% (0%)
Class work and effort	0% (1%)	18% (16%)	81% (83%)	<1% (1%)
Opportunities to learn	1% (1%)	17% (17%)	78% (80%)	3% (3%)
Teacher Judgment	7% (7%)	54% (48%)	38% (43%)	2% (2%)
Attendance	1% (3%)	16% (19%)	83% (78%)	<1% (0%)
Classroom Behavior	1% (1%)	16% (20%)	83% (80%)	0% (0%)
Class participation	2% (2%)	32% (34%)	66% (64%)	<1% (0%)
Student Attitude	2% (1%)	19% (21%)	79% (77%)	1% (0%)
Homework	1% (2%)	31% (36%)	67% (62%)	<1% (0%)
Extracurricular Activities or community service	8% (9%)	51% (52%)	42% (39%)	<1% (0%)
Social, Emotional, Cognitive maturity, and readiness	2% (2%)	29% (29%)	68% (67%)	1% (2%)

	Yes	No	Don't know
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is frequently absent?	9% (10%)	87% (89%)	3% (1%)
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student has frequent behavior problems in class?	21% (20%)	74% (75%)	5% (4%)

Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is transferred to the school midyear?	<b>Yes</b> 34% (36%)	<b>No</b> 60% (57%)			<b>Don't know</b> 6% (7%)
Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student doesn't do his/her homework?	<b>15%</b> (24%)	<b>83%</b> (73%)			<b>2%</b> (3%)
How useful are the reports detailing your child's DSTP scores?	<u>Very useful</u> 26%	<u>Somewhat useful</u> 37%	<u>A little useful</u> 7%	<u>Not at all useful</u> 12%	<u>Don't know</u> 16%
Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell:					
How their child compares to others in the nation?	<b>Yes</b> 81% (78%)	<b>No</b> 15% (20%)			<b>Don't know</b> 3% (2%)
How their child compares to others in the state?	<b>87%</b> (11%)	<b>11%</b> (3%)			<b>1%</b> (1%)
Whether their child is progressing in school?	<b>95%</b> (93%)	<b>4%</b> (6%)			<b>1%</b> (1%)
How much their child knows about specific subjects?	<b>92%</b> (93%)	<b>6%</b> (6%)			<b>1%</b> (1%)
How much, if anything, do you know about the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001 - a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all.	<u>A great deal</u> 15% (8%)	<u>A fair amount</u> 35% (40%)	<u>Very little</u> 36% (34%)	<u>Nothing at all</u> 14% (17%)	<u>Don't know</u> 1% (1%)
Black and Hispanic students generally score lower on standardized tests than white students. In your opinion, how important do you think it is to close the academic achievement gap between white students about black and Hispanic students?	<u>Very important</u> 67% (68%)	<u>Somewhat important</u> 22% (20%)	<u>Not too important</u> 3% (2%)	<u>Not at all important</u> 4% (6%)	<u>Don't know</u> 3% (3%)

To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will reduce the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students?	<u>A great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>A small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>8%</b> <b>(6%)</b>	<b>36%</b> <b>(39%)</b>	<b>25%</b> <b>(19%)</b>	<b>16%</b> <b>(16%)</b>	<b>15%</b> <b>(20%)</b>
To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will reduce the achievement gap between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students?	<b>7%</b> <b>(4%)</b>	<b>34%</b> <b>(37%)</b>	<b>32%</b> <b>(21%)</b>	<b>15%</b> <b>(18%)</b>	<b>13%</b> <b>(18%)</b>
Just your opinion, what are some of the factors that cause the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students?	The responses for this question cannot be disaggregated for parents and non-parents. Please use the previous table with results for the total sample				
In your opinion, do black children and other minority children in your community have the same educational opportunities as white children?	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>			<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>79%</b> <b>(82%)</b>	<b>17%</b> <b>(12%)</b>			<b>4%</b> <b>(6%)</b>
Consider a public school student whose school has been identified as needing improvement by the No Child Left Behind Act. To what degree would you support a proposal to allow the parents of this child to select a non-public school, with the government paying all or part of the tuition? Would you strongly support it, moderately support it, support it a little, or not support it at all?	<u>Strongly support</u>	<u>Moderately support</u>	<u>Support a little</u>	<u>Not at all support</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>31%</b> <b>(21%)</b>	<b>19%</b> <b>(30%)</b>	<b>21%</b> <b>(15%)</b>	<b>22%</b> <b>(30%)</b>	<b>6%</b> <b>(4%)</b>
Under the NCLB Act, schools are required to report on the participation and performance of students on the statewide math and reading tests in as many as 33 distinct groups by race, disability status, and other characteristics. How fair do you think it is to designate a school as in need of improvement if only one group does not meet adequate yearly progress?	<u>Very fair</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Unfair</u>	<u>Very unfair</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>6%</b> <b>(3%)</b>	<b>28%</b> <b>(28%)</b>	<b>37%</b> <b>(40%)</b>	<b>19%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<b>10%</b> <b>(9%)</b>
Under the No Child Left Behind Act, schools are rated using student DSTP scores. To what extent do the school ratings provide meaningful information about the schools in your community?	<u>A great extent</u>	<u>Some extent</u>	<u>A small extent</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
	<b>14%</b> <b>(10%)</b>	<b>46%</b> <b>(45%)</b>	<b>21%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<b>8%</b> <b>(8%)</b>	<b>12%</b> <b>(17%)</b>

## VII. Demographics

Are you the parent, step-parent, or guardian of a child that is currently attending school in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade in Delaware?	<u>Yes</u> <b>41%</b>	<u>No</u> <b>59%</b>				
Do your children attend a public, private, or charter school? Or are your child home schooled?	<u>Private</u> <b>17%</b>	<u>Public</u> <b>46%</b>	<u>Charter School</u> <b>6%</b>	<u>Both public and private</u> <b>3%</b>	<u>Home schooled</u> <b>2%</b>	<u>Not in school</u> <b>17%</b>
In what school district do you live?	<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>			
• Appoquinimink	<b>5% (3%)</b>	• Polytech	<b>0% (0%)</b>			
• Brandywine	<b>11% (14%)</b>	• Smyrna	<b>1% (0%)</b>			
• Christina	<b>18% (18%)</b>	• Cape Henlopen	<b>3% (5%)</b>			
• Colonial	<b>8% (6%)</b>	• Delmar	<b>1% (2%)</b>			
• NCC Vo-Tech	<b>0% (0%)</b>	• Indian River	<b>5% (6%)</b>			
• Red Clay	<b>18% (15%)</b>	• Laurel	<b>5% (2%)</b>			
• Capital	<b>4% (4%)</b>	• Seaford	<b>2% (2%)</b>			
• Lake Forest	<b>5% (2%)</b>	• Sussex Vo-Tech	<b>1% (2%)</b>			
• Milford	<b>3% (3%)</b>	• Woodbridge	<b>1% (1%)</b>			
• Caesar Rodney	<b>6% (3%)</b>	• Don't know	<b>4% (12%)</b>			

What grade are your children in?	<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>
• K	15%	• 7 <sup>th</sup>	11%
• 1 <sup>st</sup>	11%	• 8 <sup>th</sup>	10%
• 2 <sup>nd</sup>	8%	• 9 <sup>th</sup>	8%
• 3 <sup>rd</sup>	11%	• 10 <sup>th</sup>	10%
• 4 <sup>th</sup>	14%	• 11 <sup>th</sup>	11%
• 5 <sup>th</sup>	13%	• 12 <sup>th</sup>	8%
• 6 <sup>th</sup>	9%		

What is the zip code for your home address?

	<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>		<u>Percent Responses</u>
19701	5%	19797	<1%	19809	3%	19947	2%
19702	5%	19801	1%	19810	4%	19950	1%
19703	2%	19802	3%	19901	3%	19951	<1%
19706	0%	19803	3%	19939	1%	19962	1%
19707	3%	19804	3%	19940	1%	19964	<1%
19709	3%	19805	3%	19943	2%	19966	2%
19710	<1%	19806	1%	19944	<1%	19968	1%
19711	8%	19807	1%	19945	1%	19970	1%
19713	3%	19808	5%	19946	<1%	19971	1%
19717	<1%	19904	4%	19952	1%	19973	3%
19720	6%	19907	<1%	19953	<1%	19975	1%
19724	<1%	19923	<1%	19954	<1%	19977	1%
19730	<1%	19930	1%	19956	4%	19979	<1%
19732	0%	19933	1%	19958	2%	Refused	1%
19733	<1%	19934	1%	19963	2%		
19734	1%	19938	1%	19960	1%		

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>	
What is your age?	<b>40.1 (50.2)</b>	<b>10.8 (19.5)</b>	<b>19-73 (18-88)</b>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>		<u>Refused</u>
Are you of Hispanic or Spanish origin?	<b>4% (2%)</b>	<b>96% (97%)</b>		<b>0% (0%)</b>
	<u>Percent Responses</u>			<u>Percent Responses</u>
How would you describe your race?				
• White	<b>74% (86%)</b>		• Native American	<b>0% (1%)</b>
• African-American	<b>19% (10%)</b>		• Other (including bi-racial)	<b>3% (2%)</b>
• Asian/Pacific Islander	<b>3% (1%)</b>		• refused	<b>1% (1%)</b>
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Standard Deviation</u>	<u>Range</u>	
Including this year, how many years have you lived in Delaware?	<b>25.8 (31.7)</b>	<b>15.5 (21.8)</b>	<b>0-66 (0-104)</b>	
	<u>Percent Responses</u>			<u>Percent Responses</u>
What is your household income from all sources?				
• less than \$10,000	<b>1% (3%)</b>		• \$25,000-\$35,000	<b>6% (7%)</b>
• \$10,000 - \$15,000	<b>2% (4%)</b>		• \$35,00-\$50,000	<b>12% (14%)</b>
• \$15,000 - \$20,000	<b>3% (4%)</b>		• \$50,000-\$75,000	<b>27% (19%)</b>
• \$20,000 - \$25,000	<b>5% (4%)</b>		• \$75,000 or more	<b>35% (29%)</b>
• Don't know	<b>&lt;1% (8%)</b>		• Refused	<b>8% (13%)</b>
	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>		
What is your gender?	<b>55% (50%)</b>	<b>45% (50%)</b>		

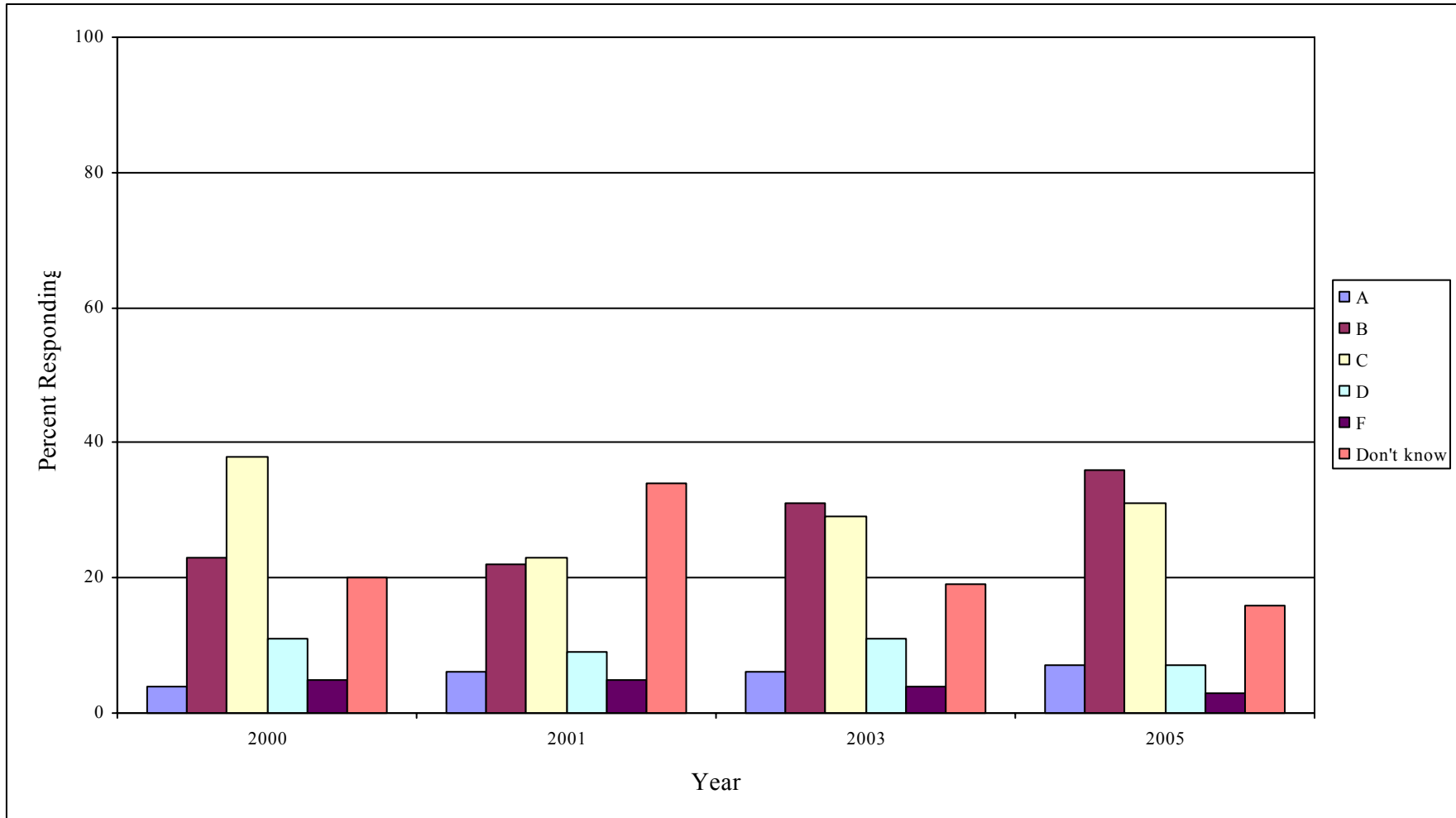


## **Trend Charts**

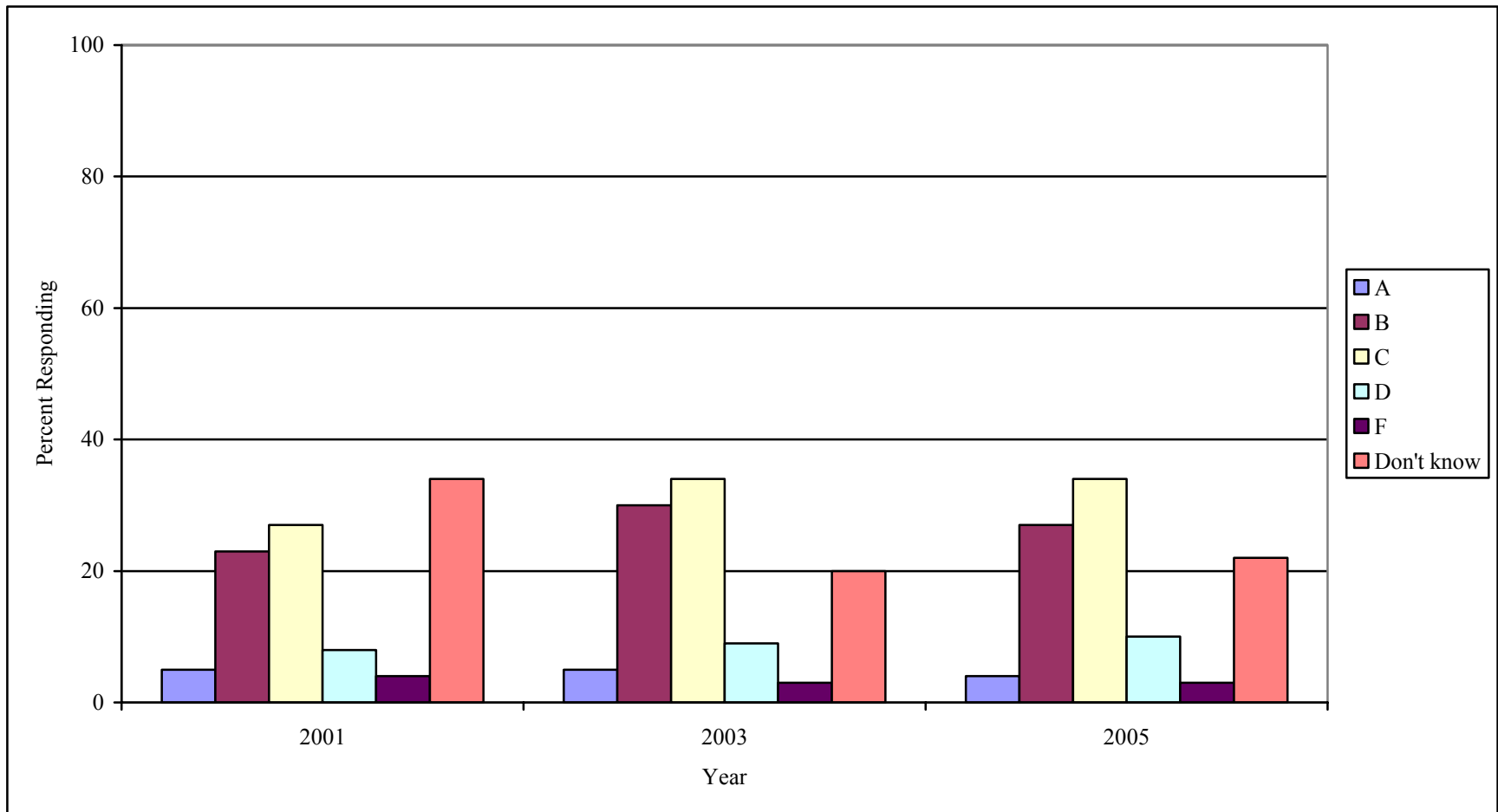
The following pages provide illustrations of Delaware trends using data from the *Statewide public poll on the condition of education in Delaware* which has been administered since 1994. Please refer to the reference list at the end of the report to identify the specific report you may need if you are interested in data from a particular year.

## I. Quality of Education

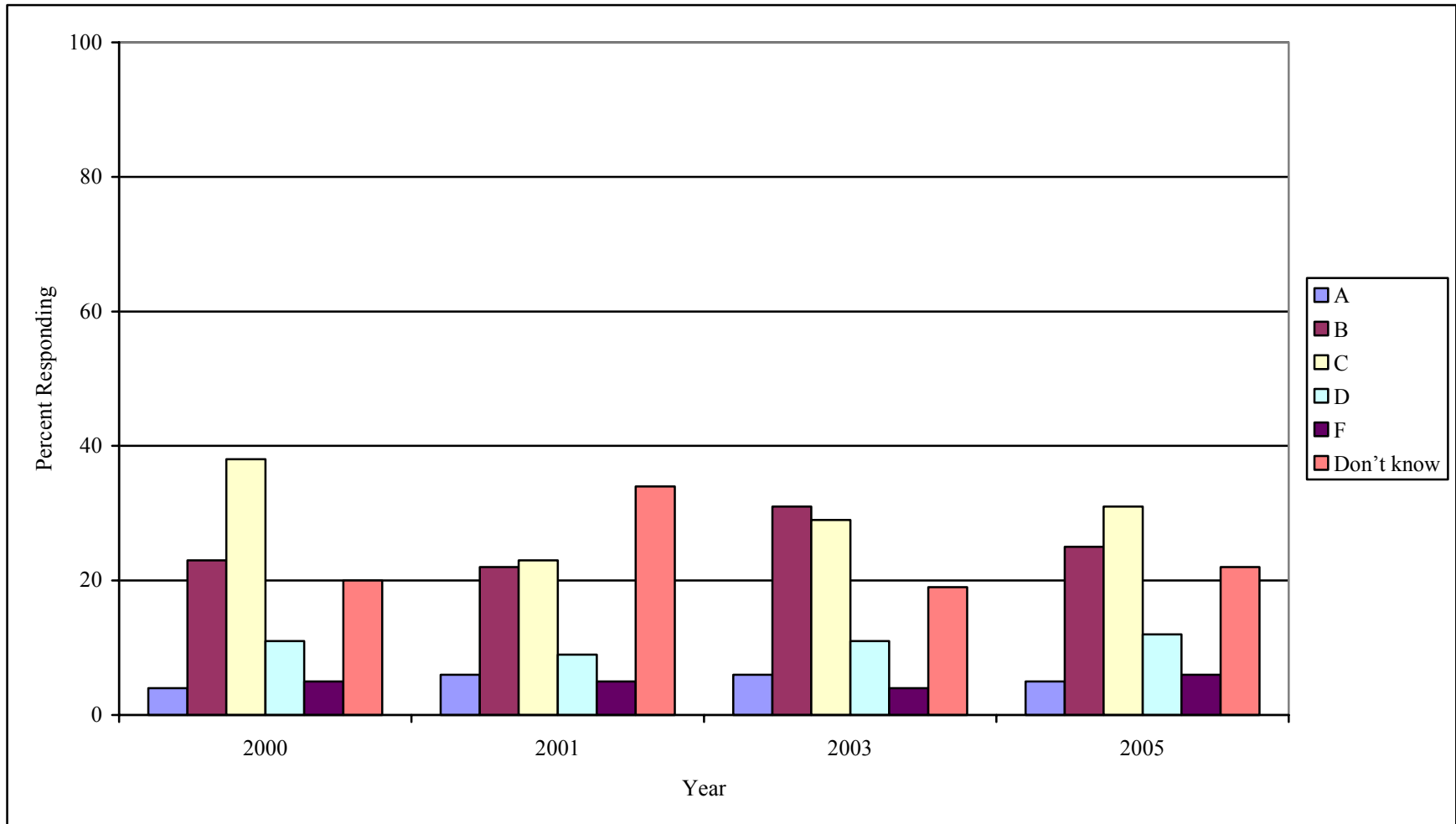
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public elementary schools in Delaware?



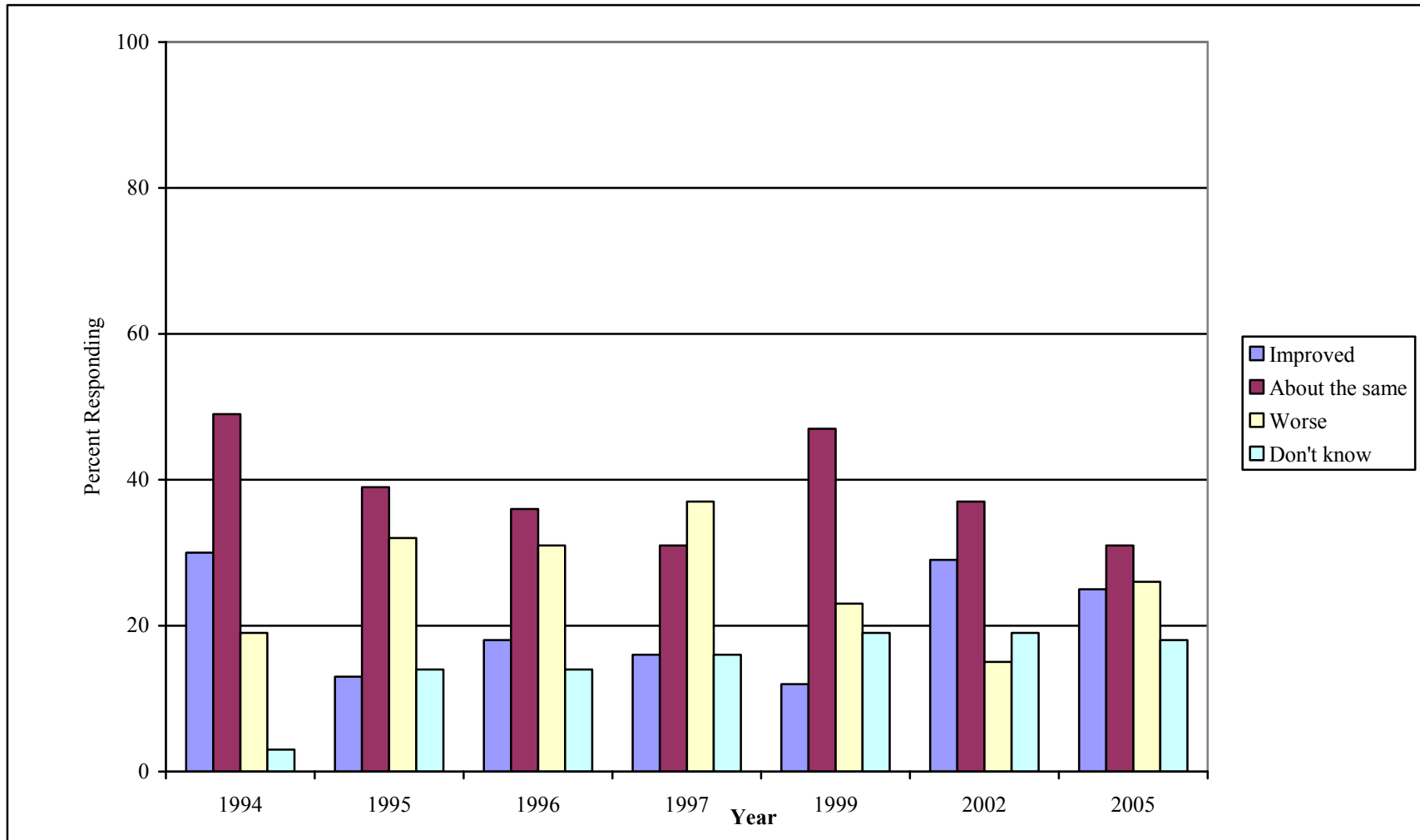
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public middle schools in Delaware?



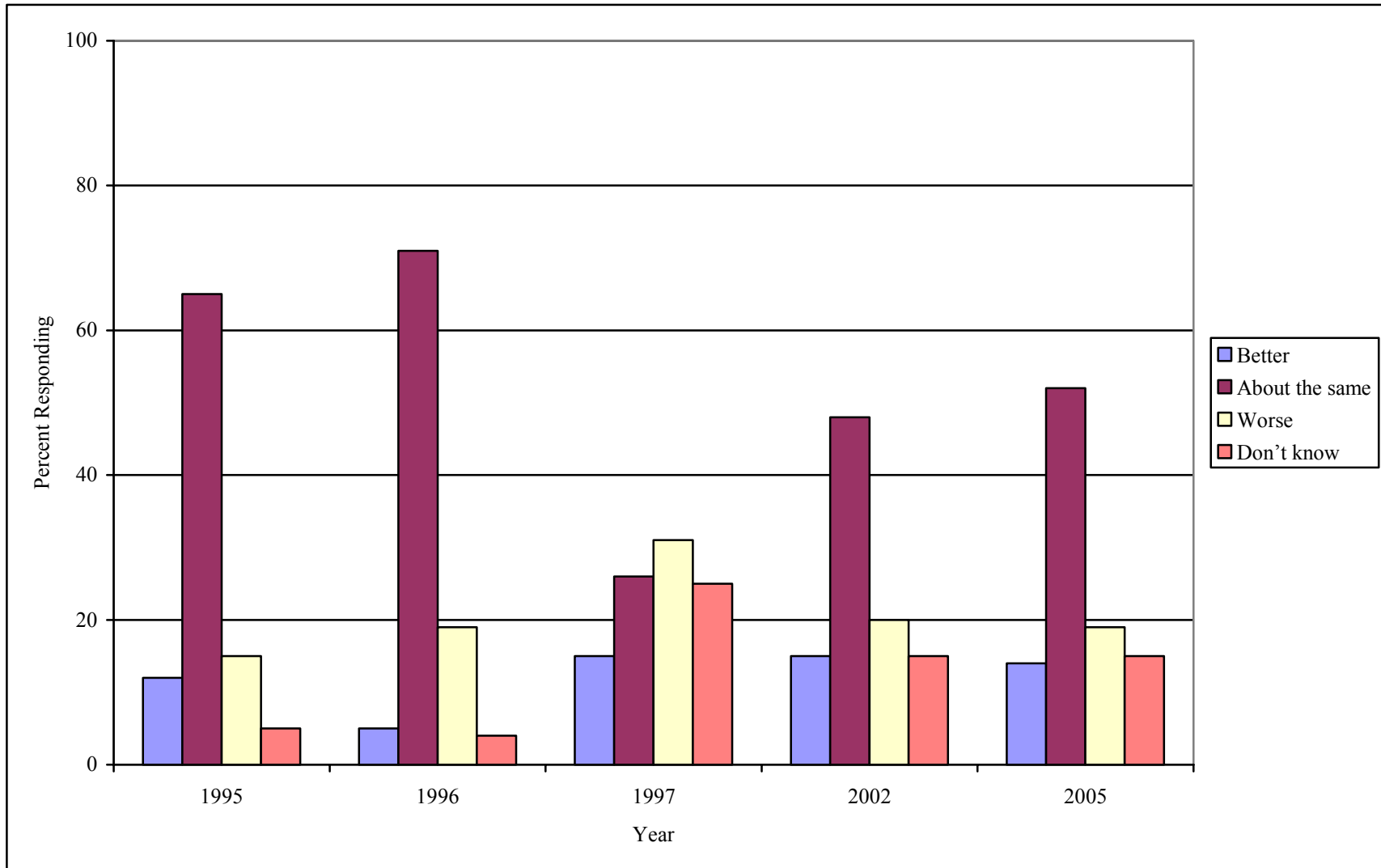
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public high schools in Delaware?



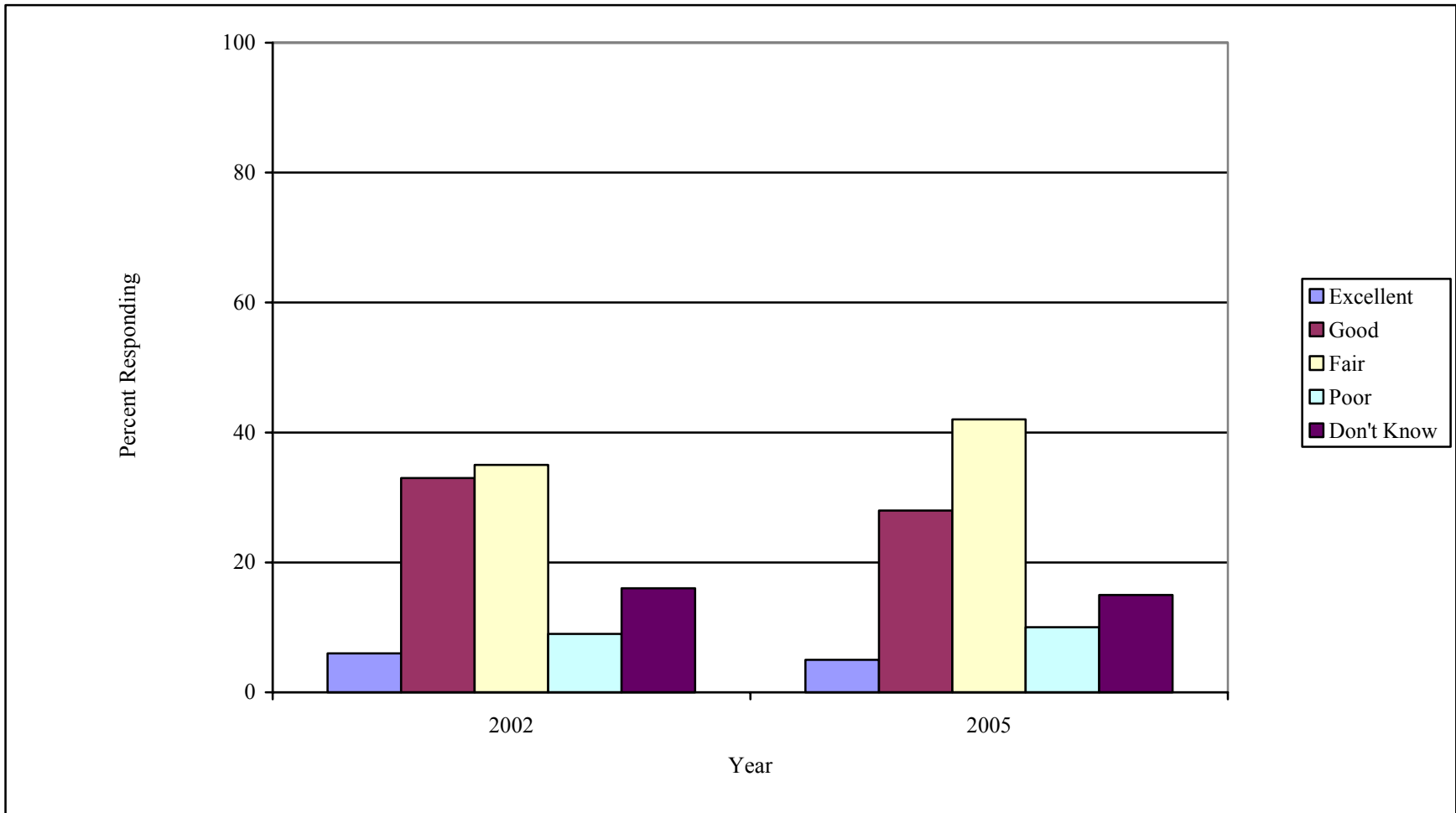
**Compared to five years ago, would you say that the public schools in your district have gotten worse, stayed about the same, or improved?**



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

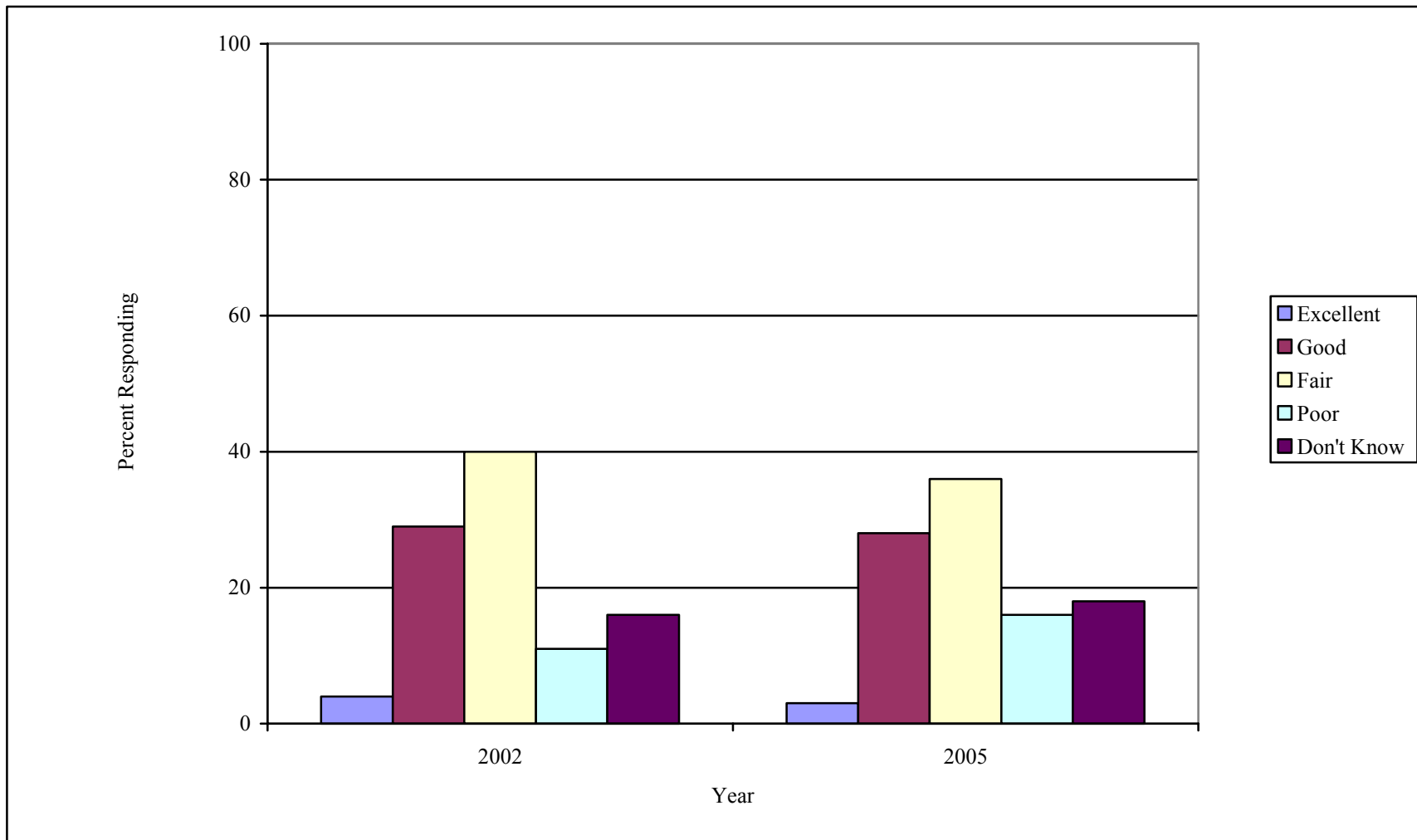


**How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for college?**



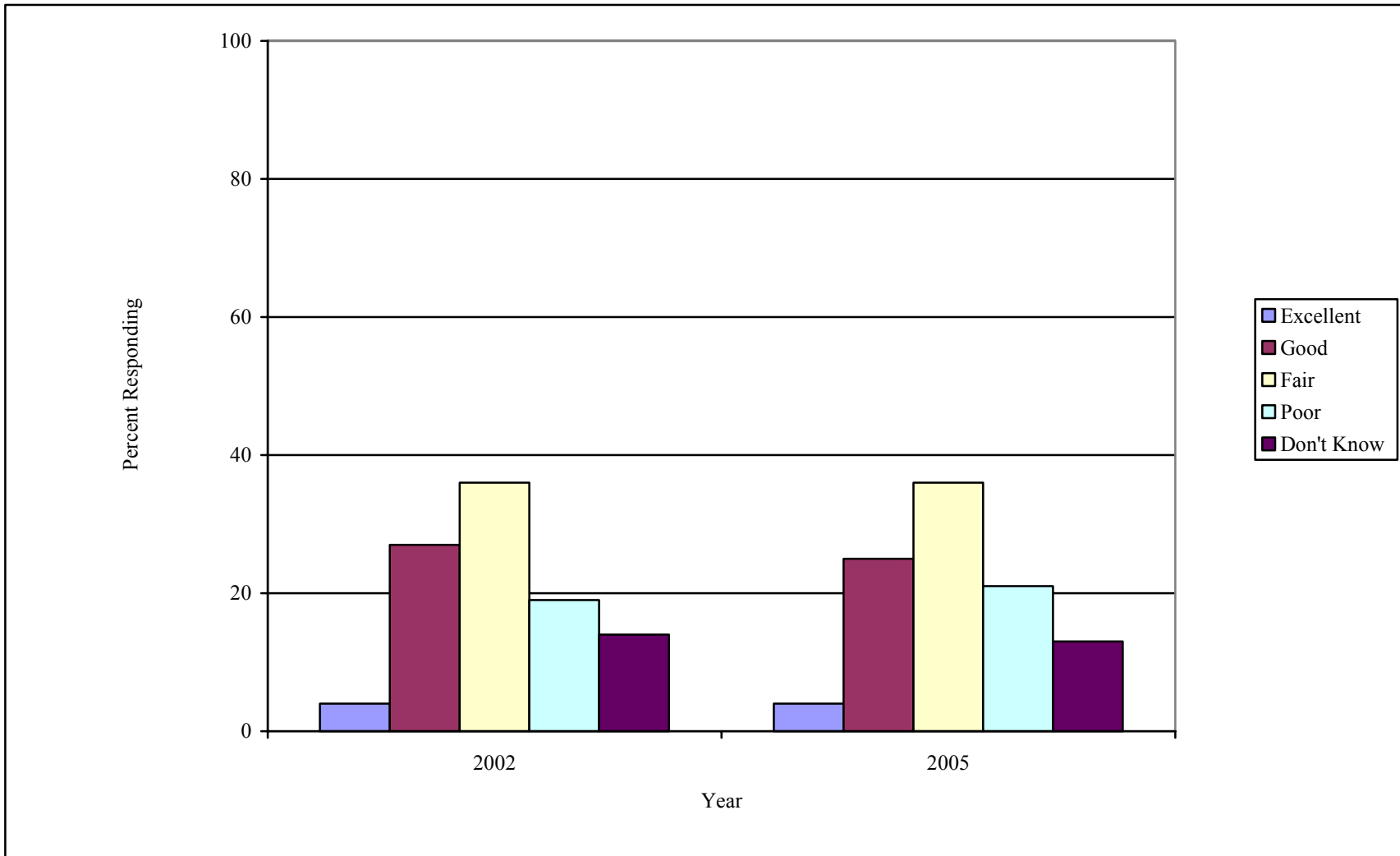
**How good a job do Delaware public schools do of preparing students for work?**

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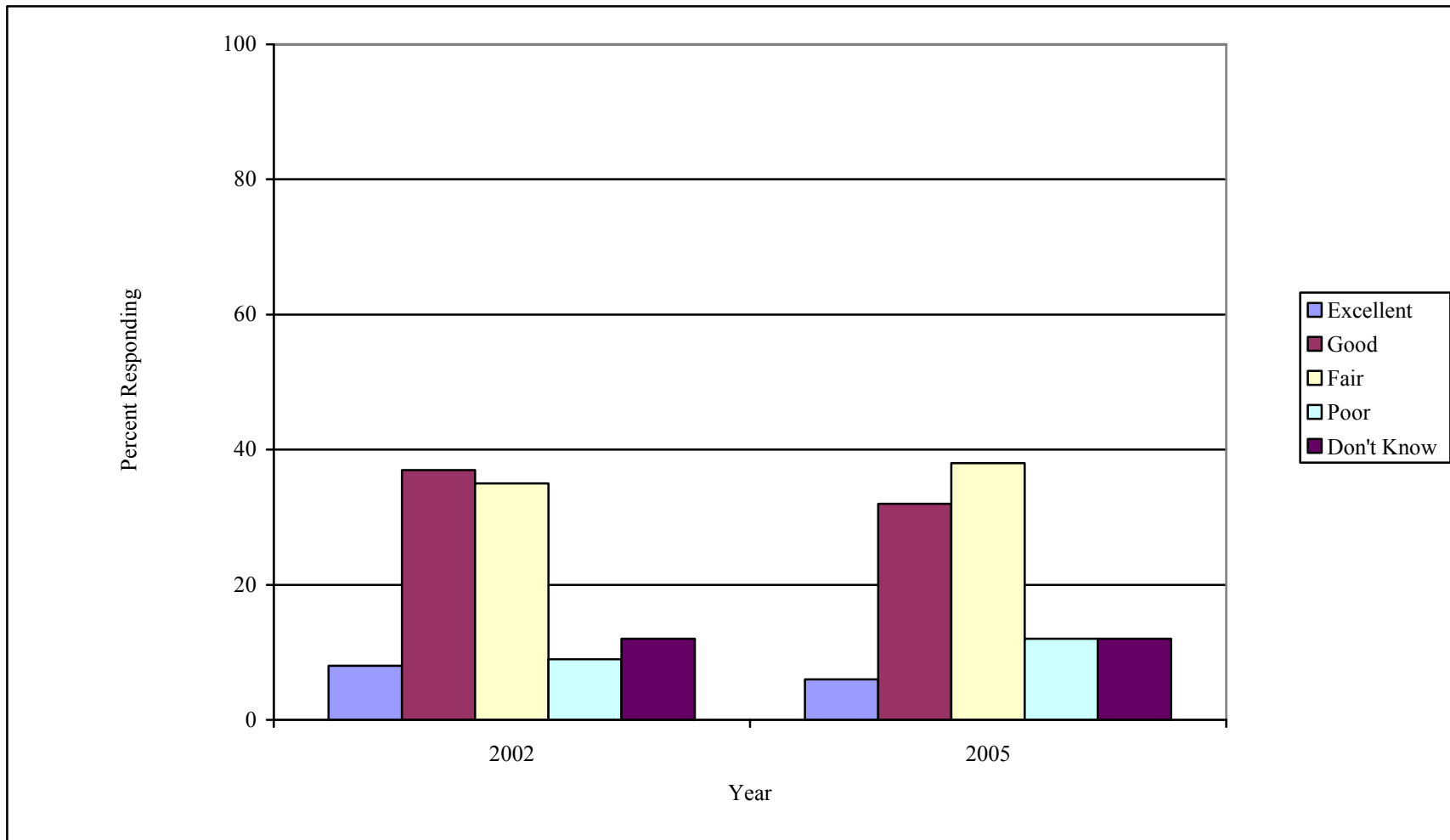


**How good a job do Delaware Public Schools do of preparing students to be a productive member of society?**



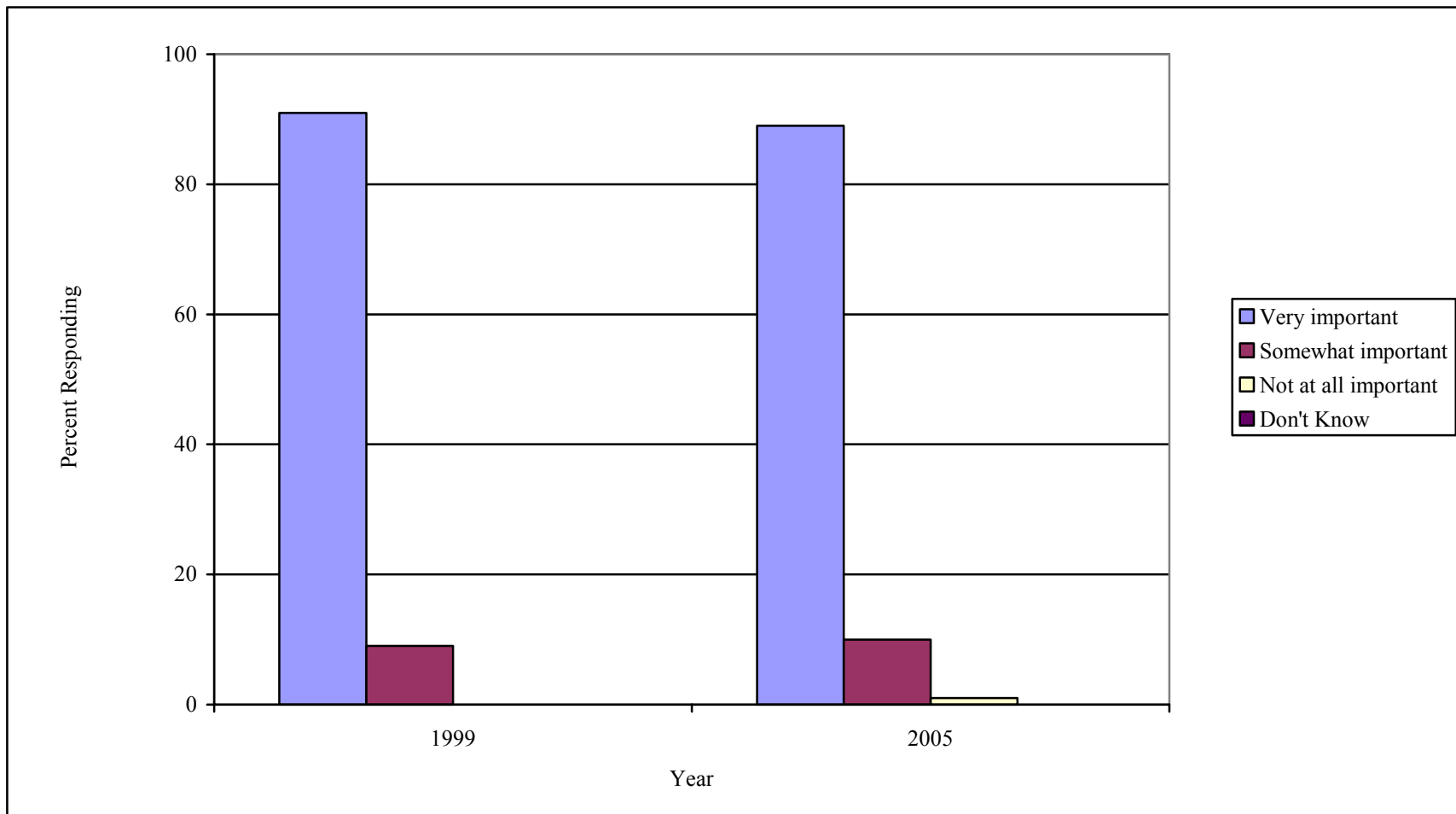
**How good a job do Delaware public schools do of providing a well-rounded education?**

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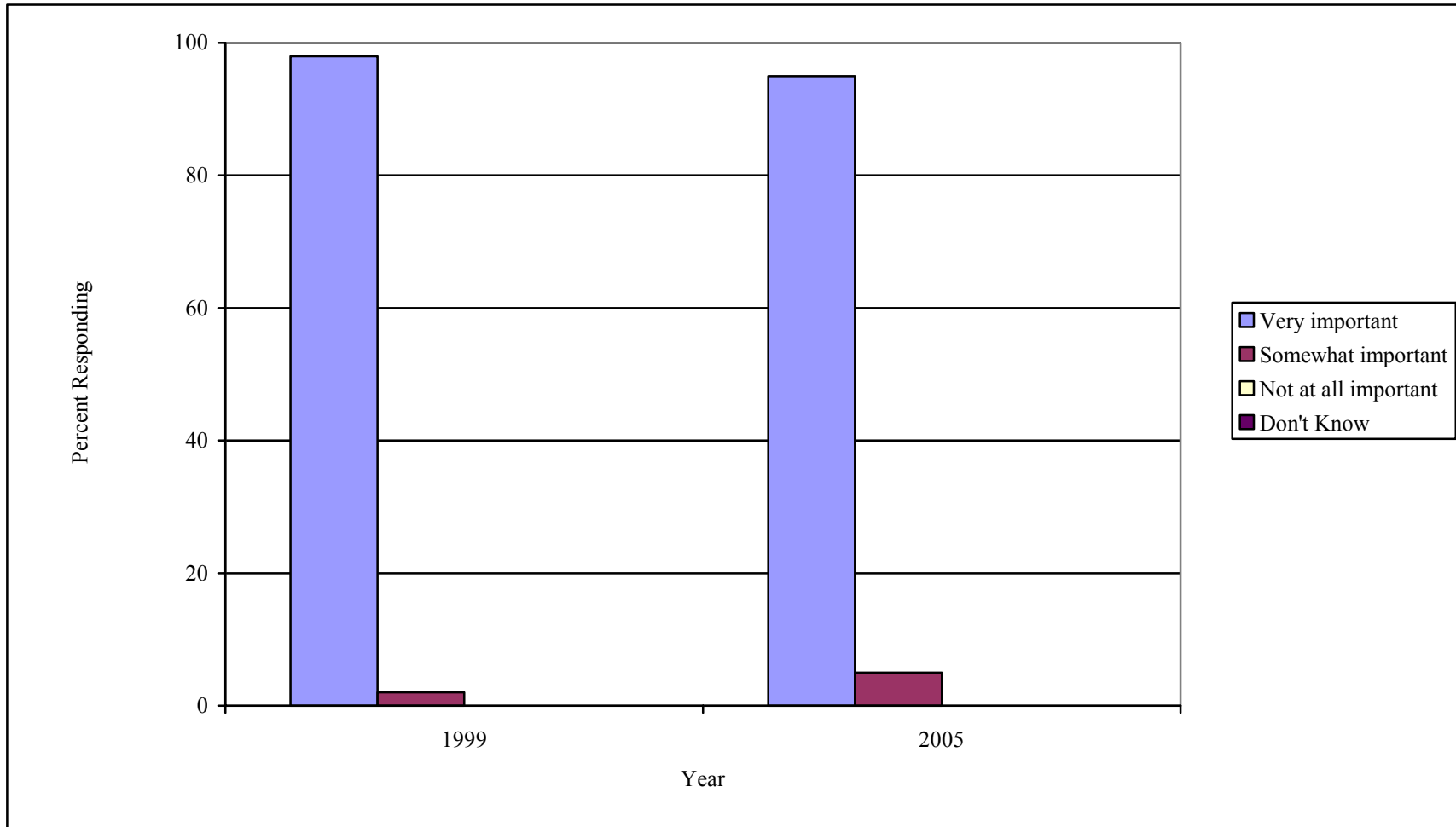
For computers, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?

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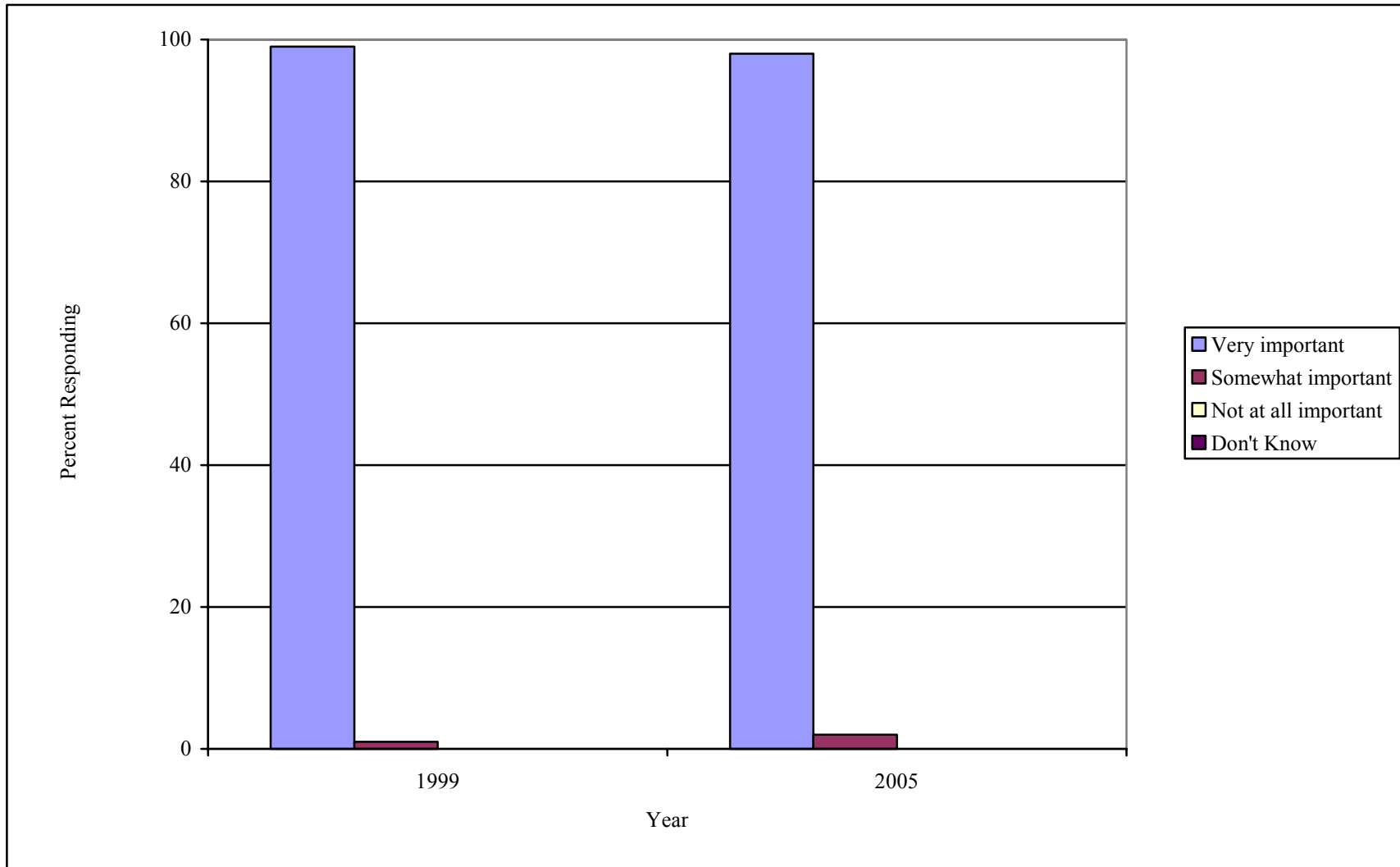


For mathematics, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?

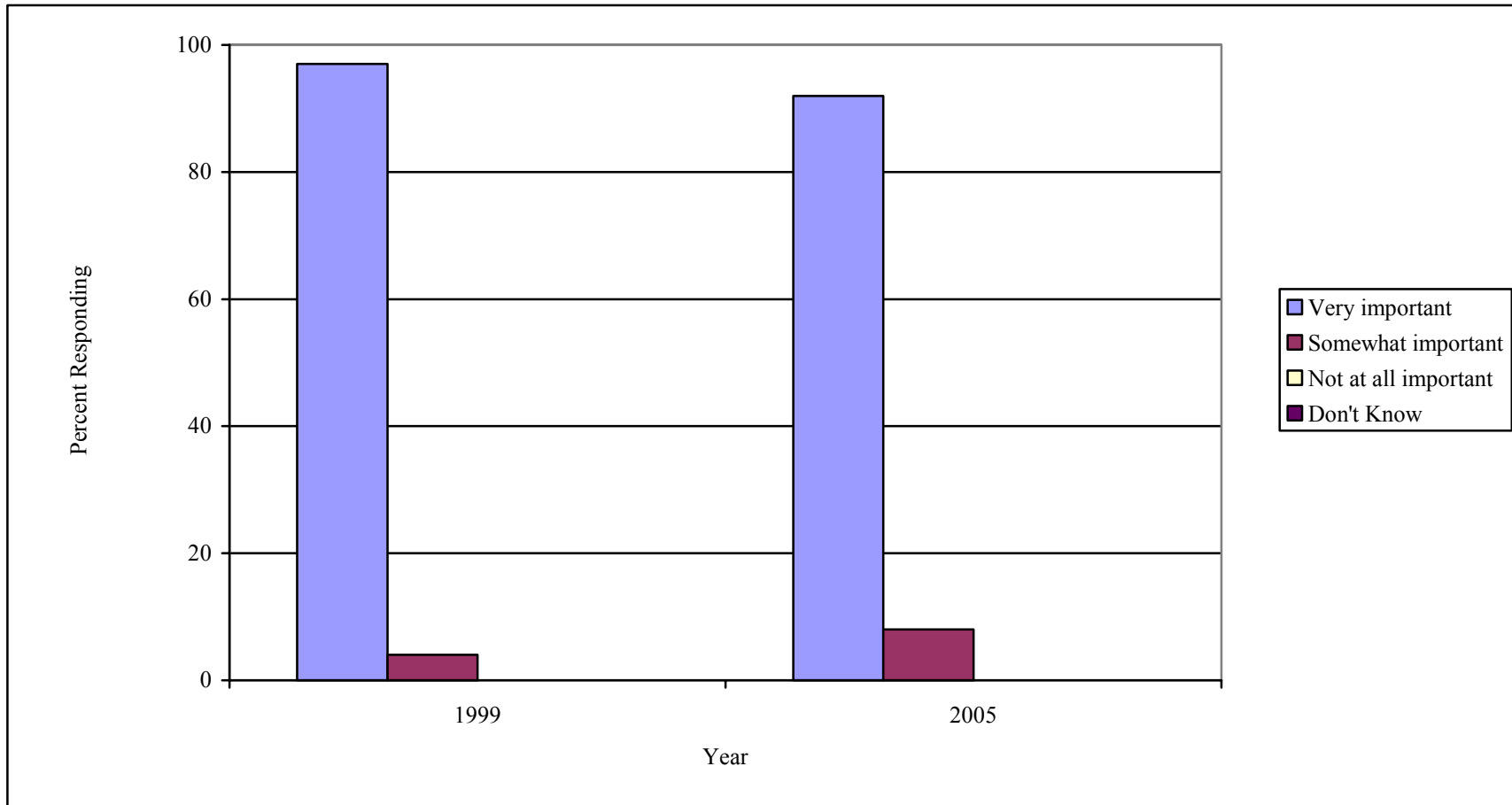
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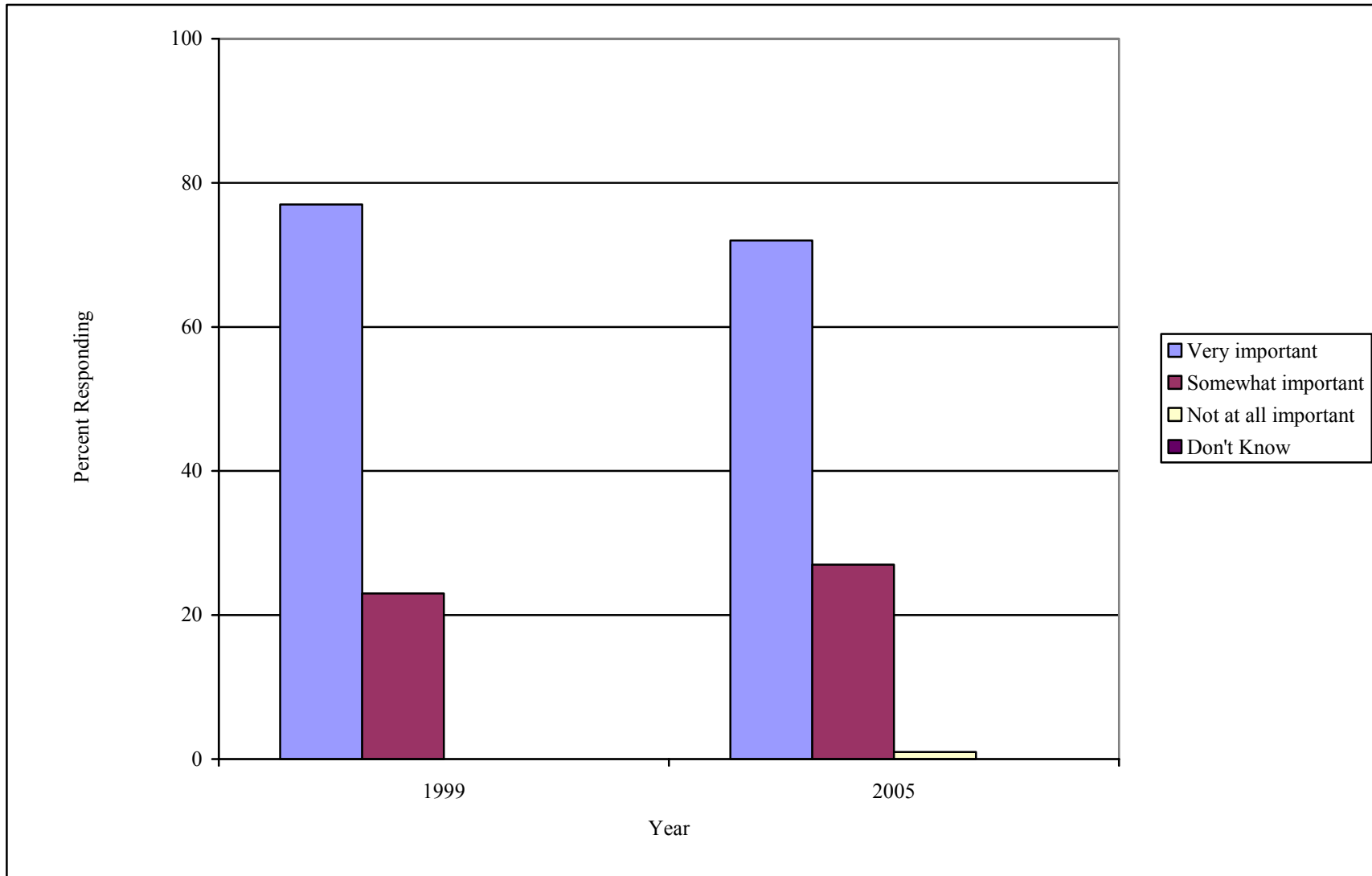
**For reading, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**



**For writing, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**

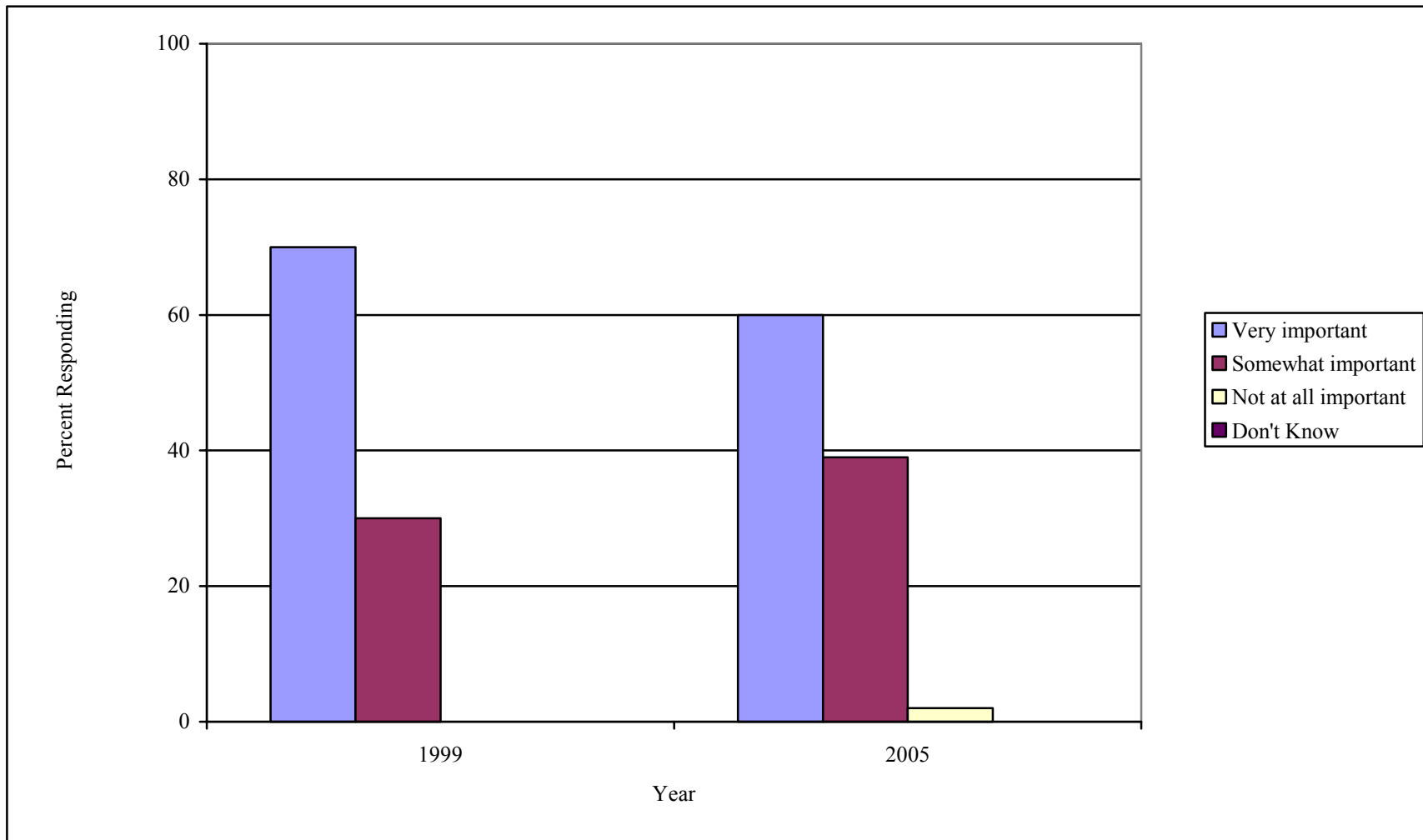


**For science, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**



**For social studies, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**

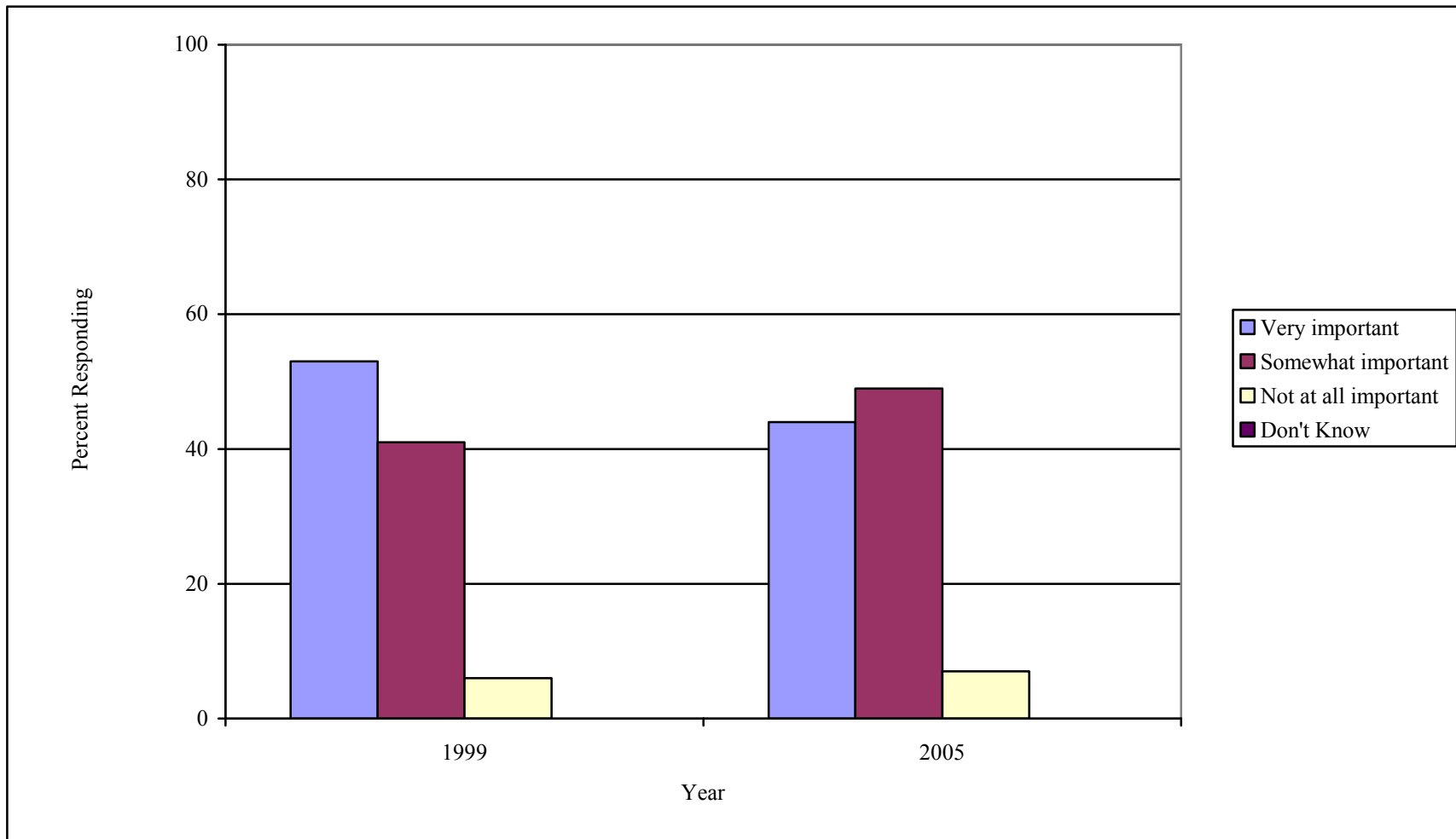
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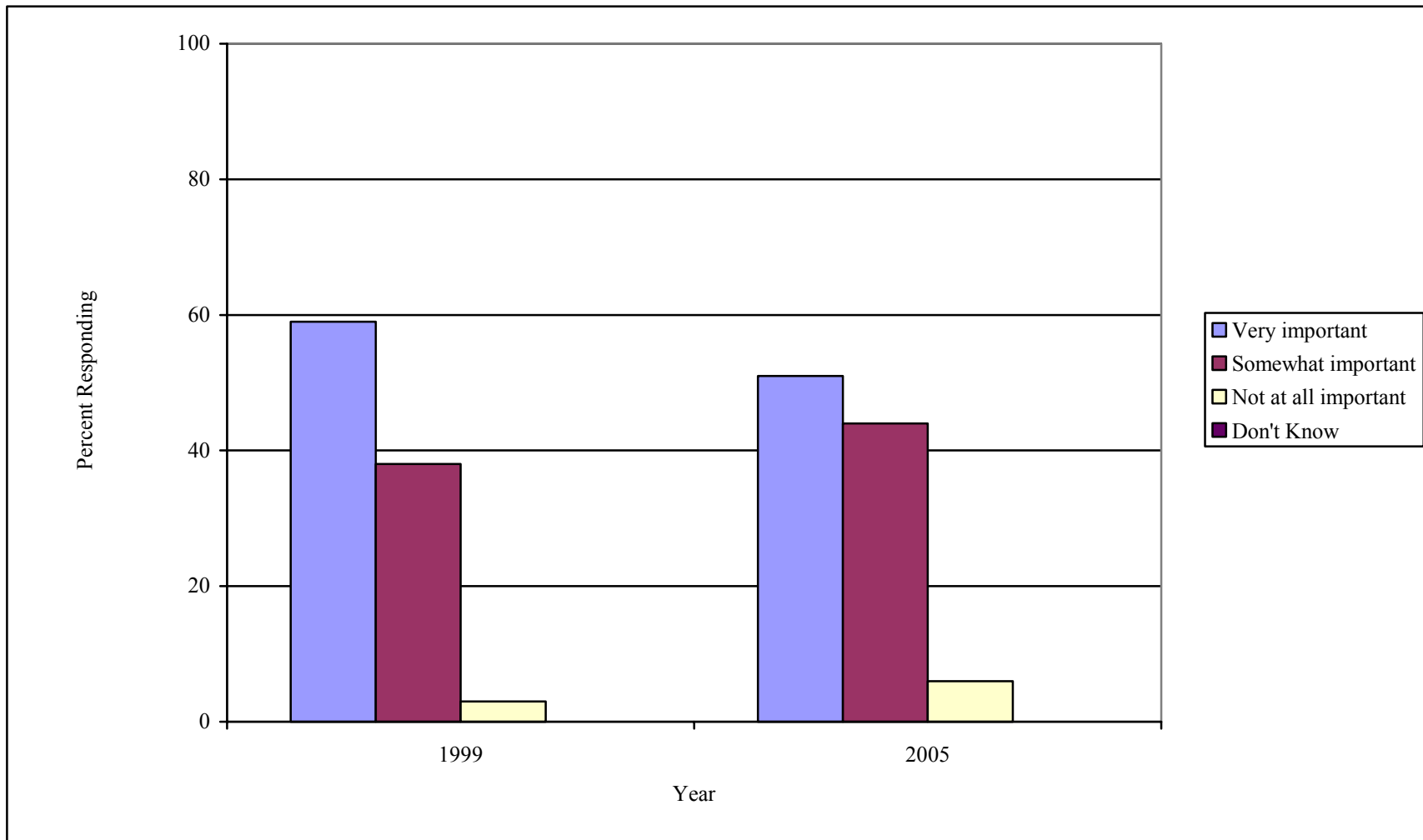
**For foreign language, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**

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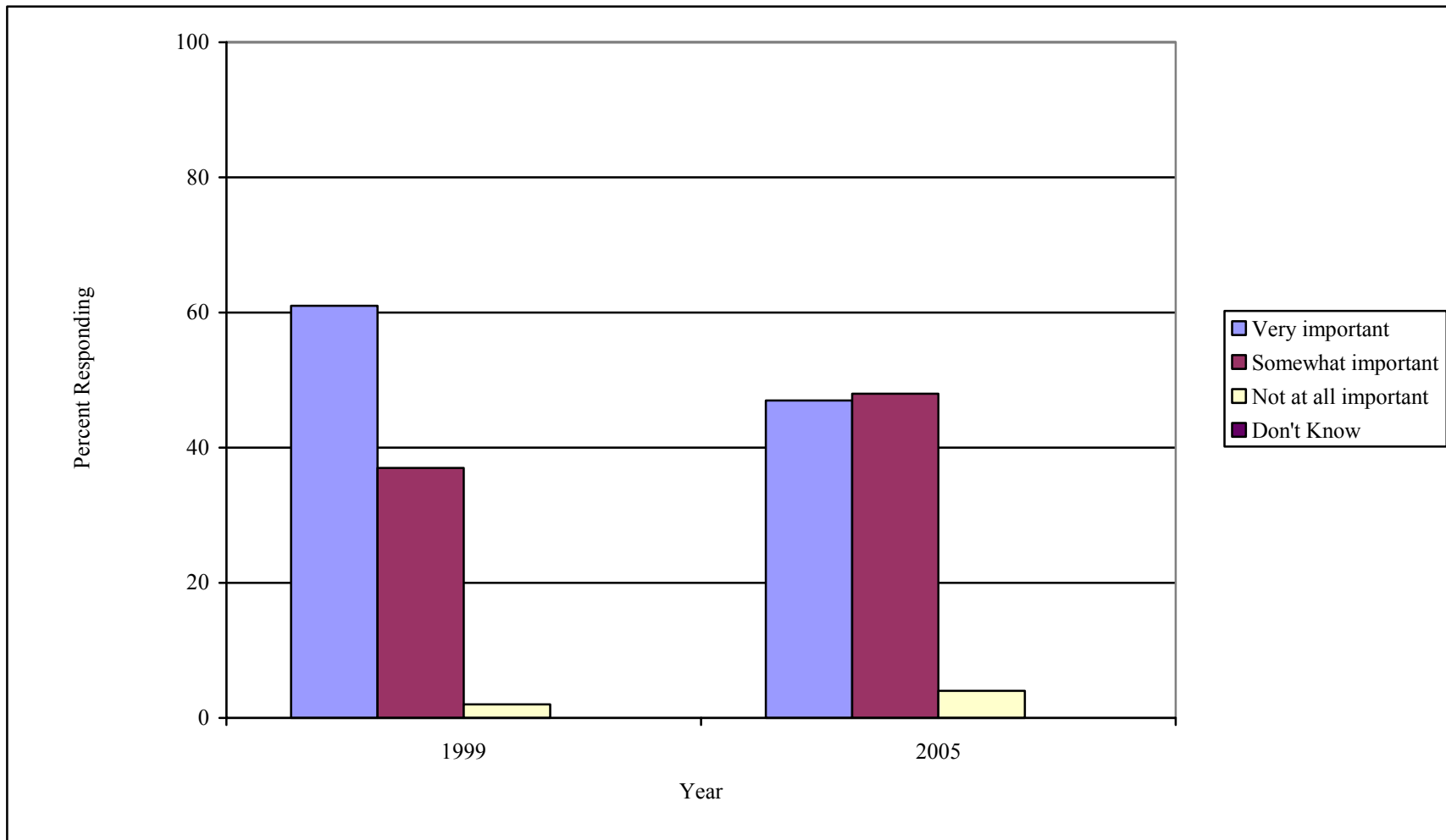
**For physical education, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**

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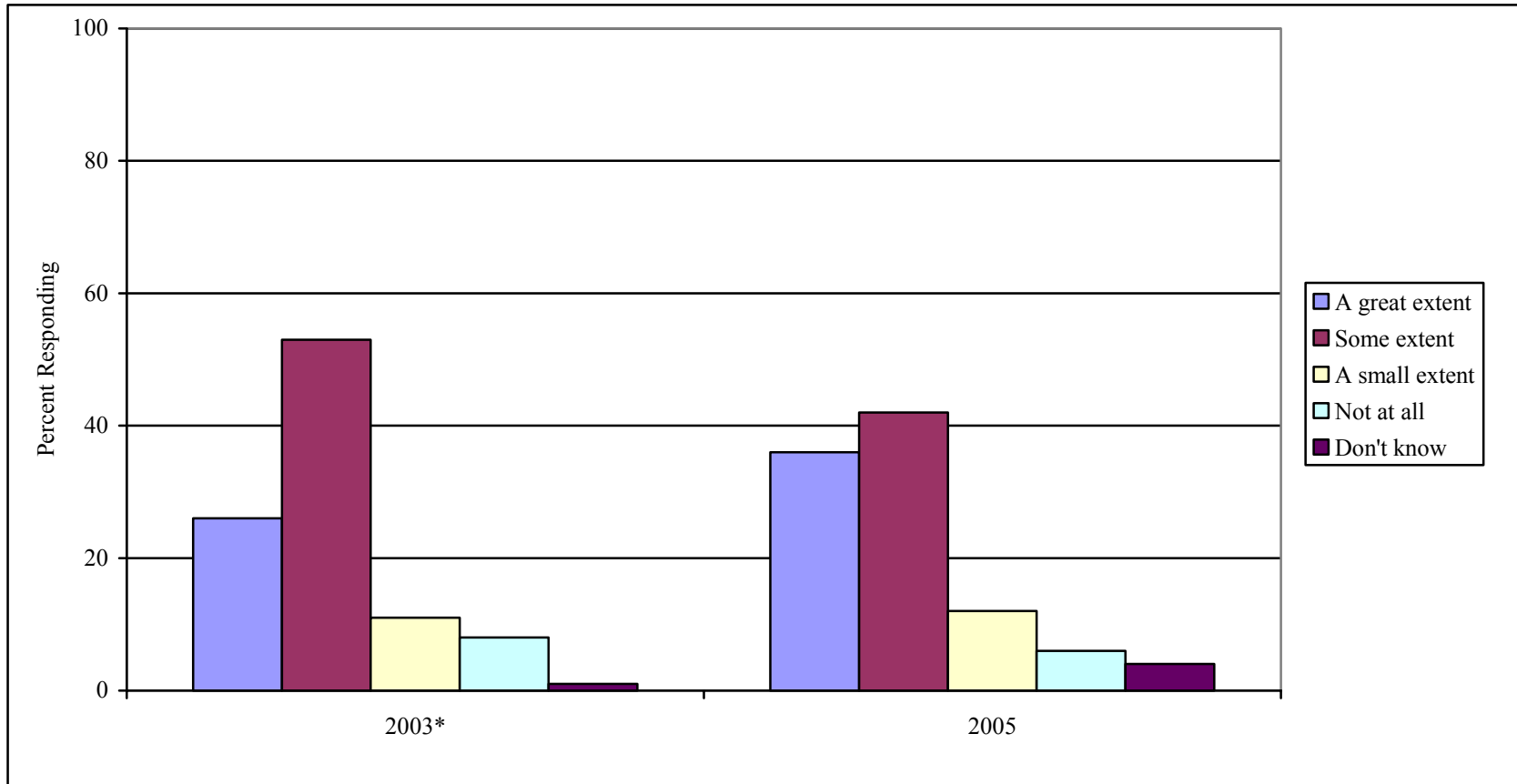
**For art and music, please tell me whether you think it is very important, somewhat important, or not at all important for students to learn in public schools?**

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### III. Gifted Education

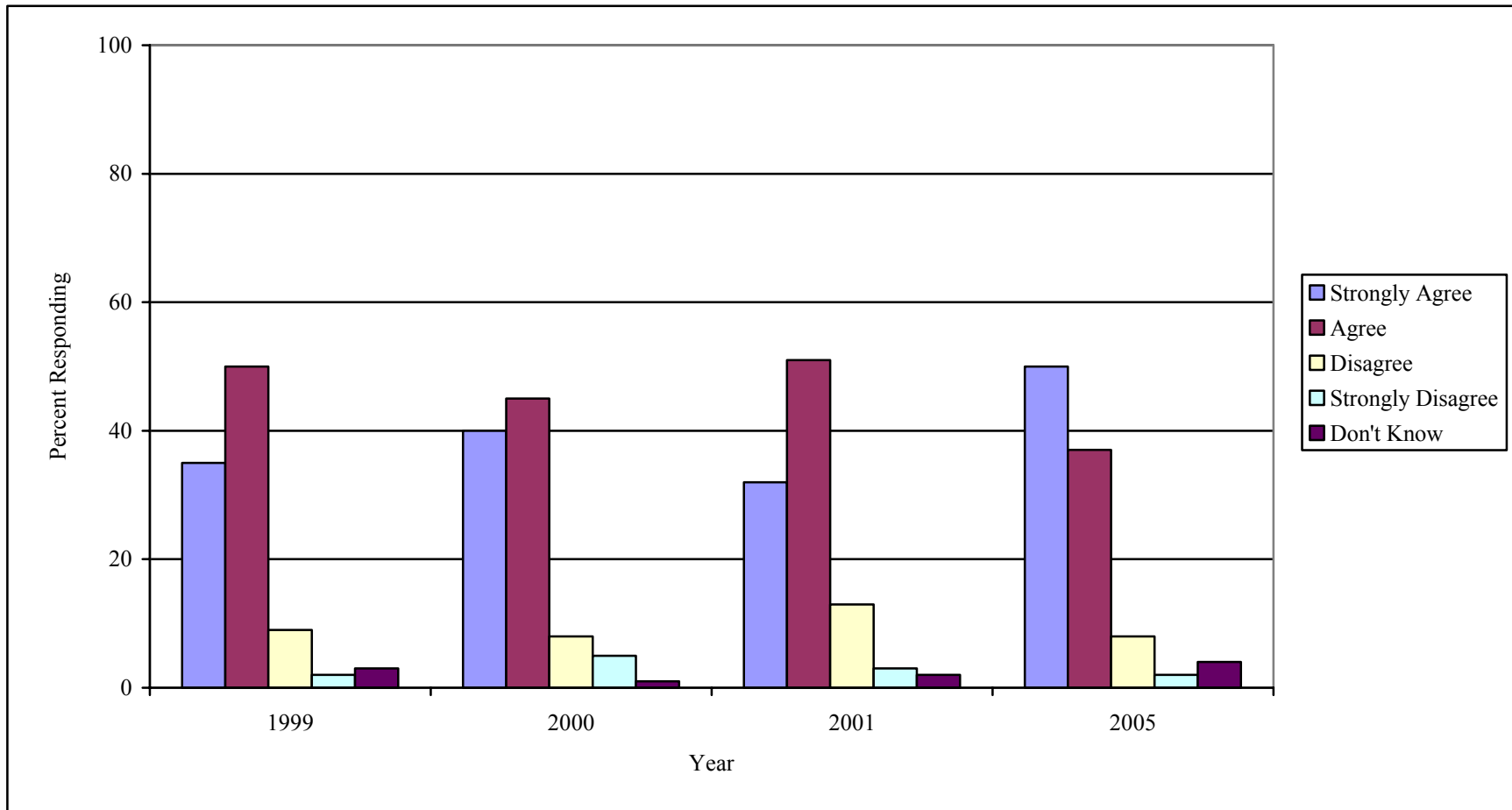
To what extent would you support increased funding to create educational programs for gifted and talented children in Delaware?



\* There was slightly different wording for this question in 2003. *To what extent would you support increased funding to create educational programs for the very smartest children in Delaware?*

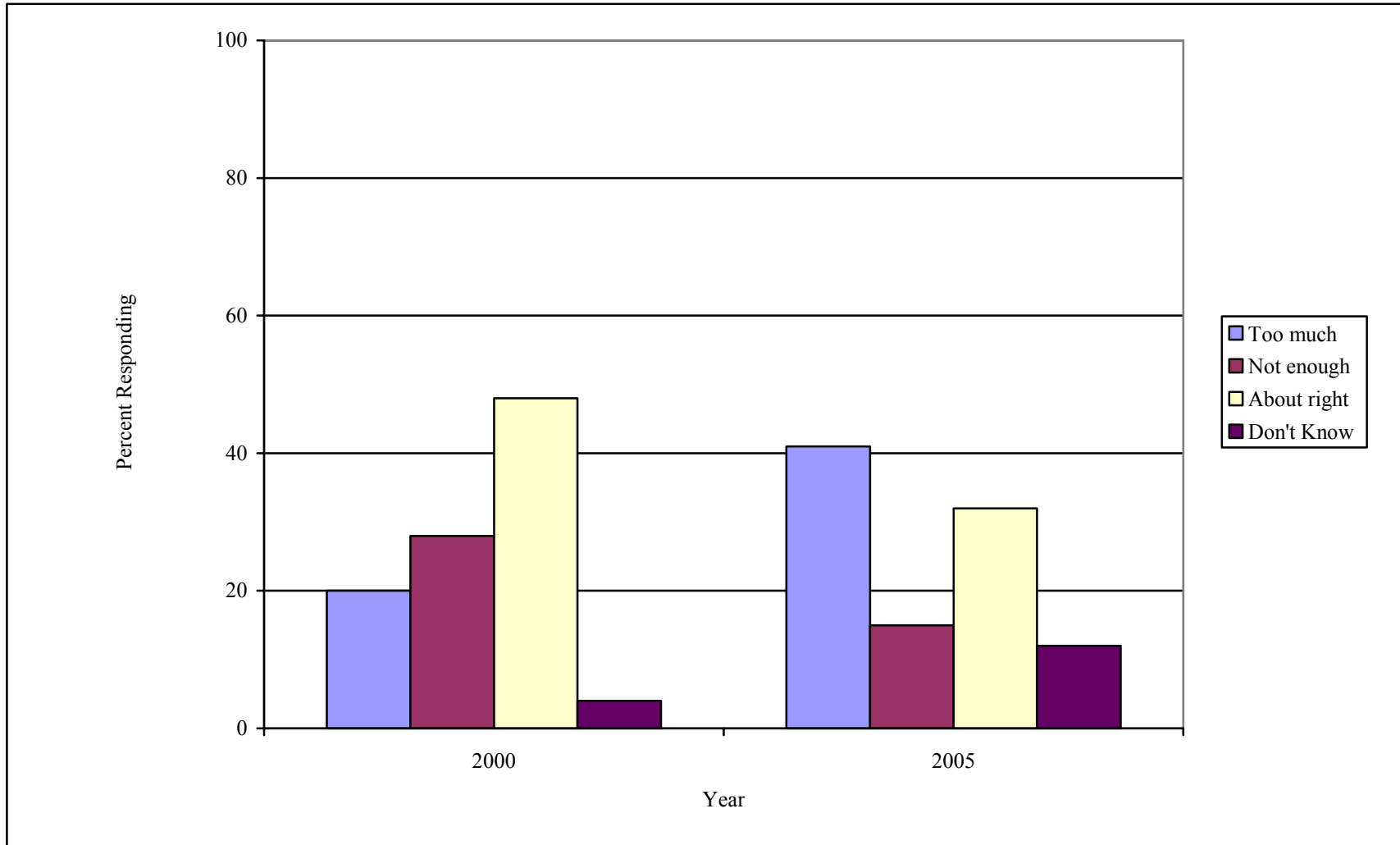
## V. Parent Involvement

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

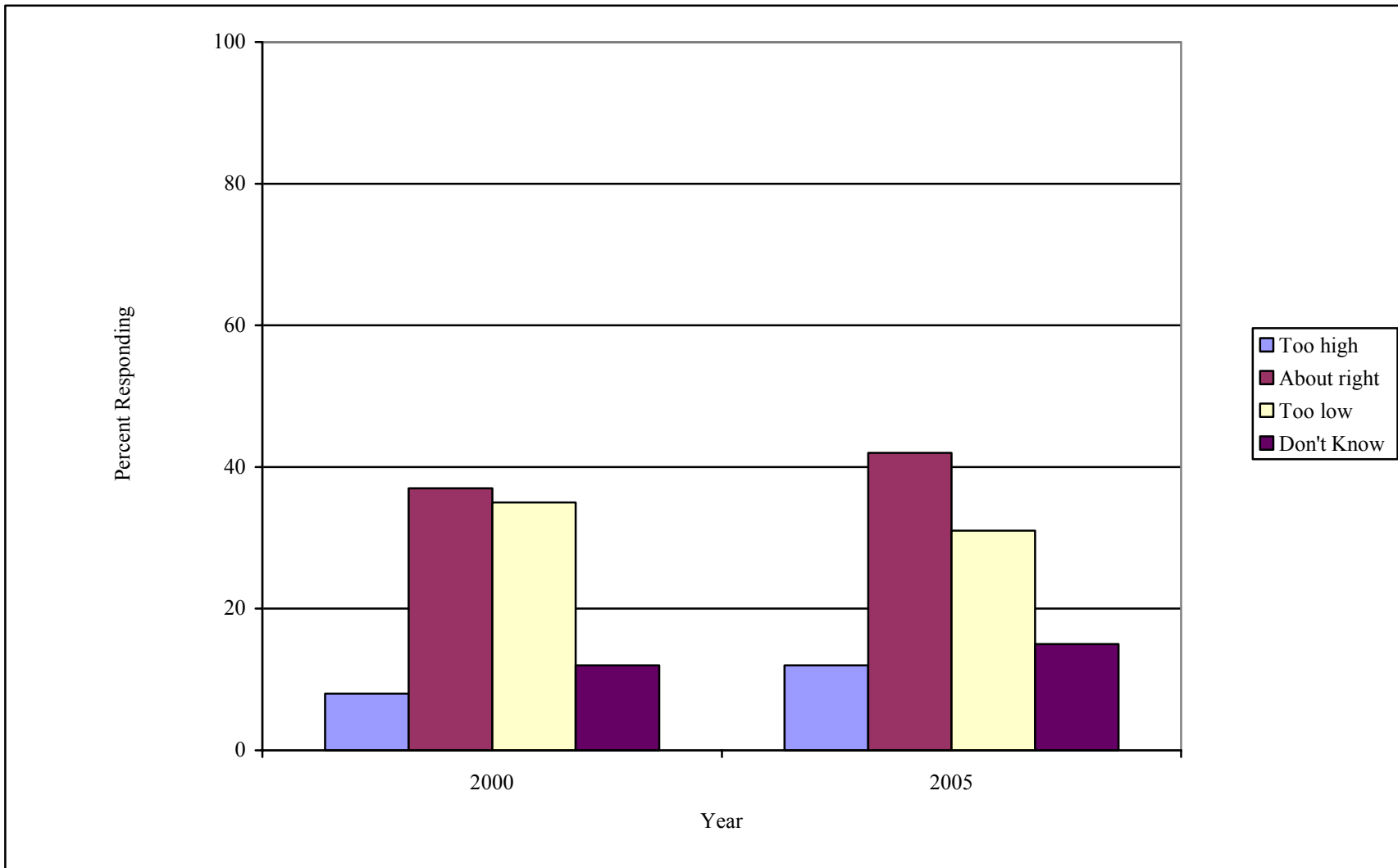


## VI. Accountability

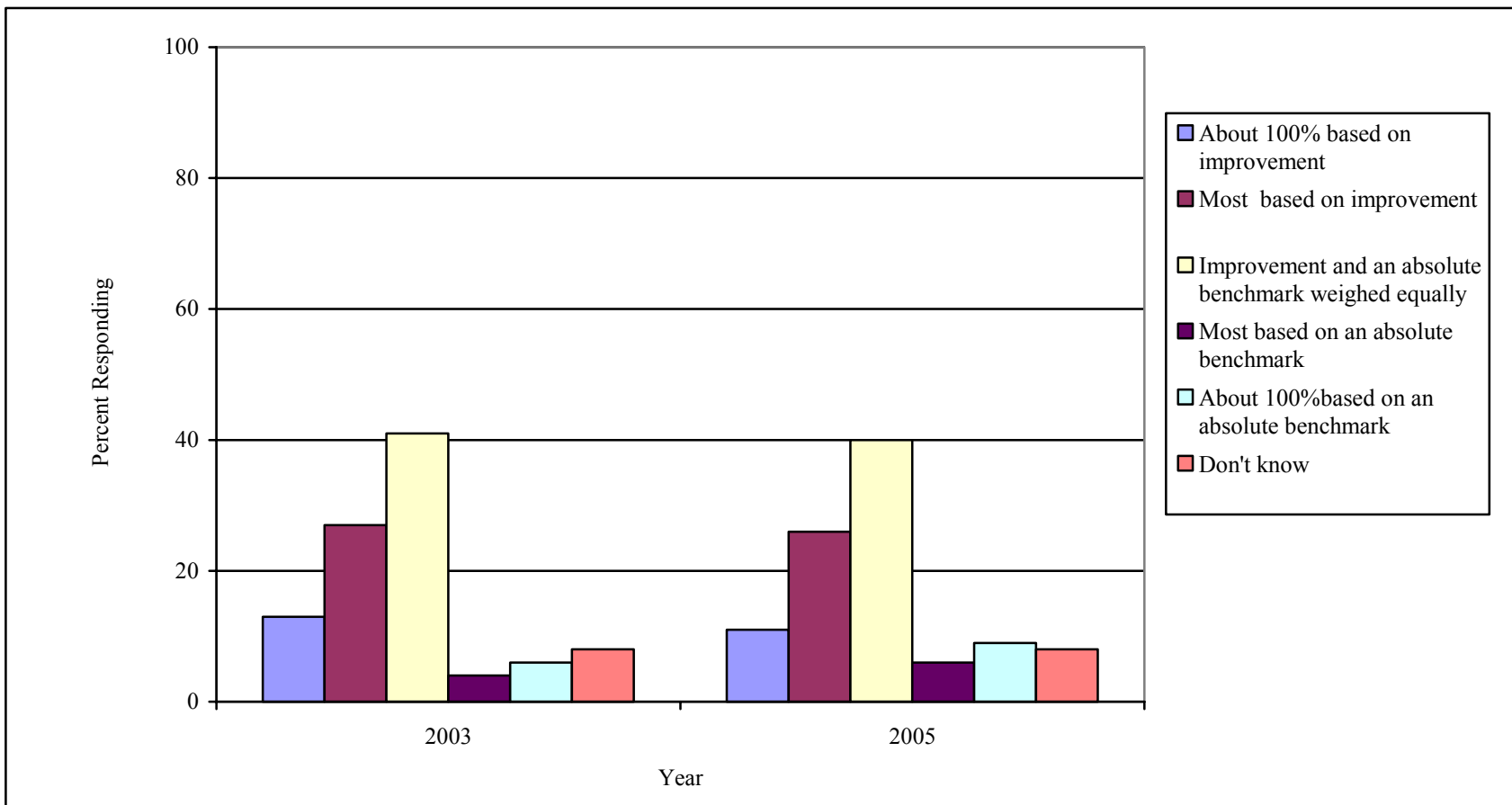
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in this community?



**In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low?**

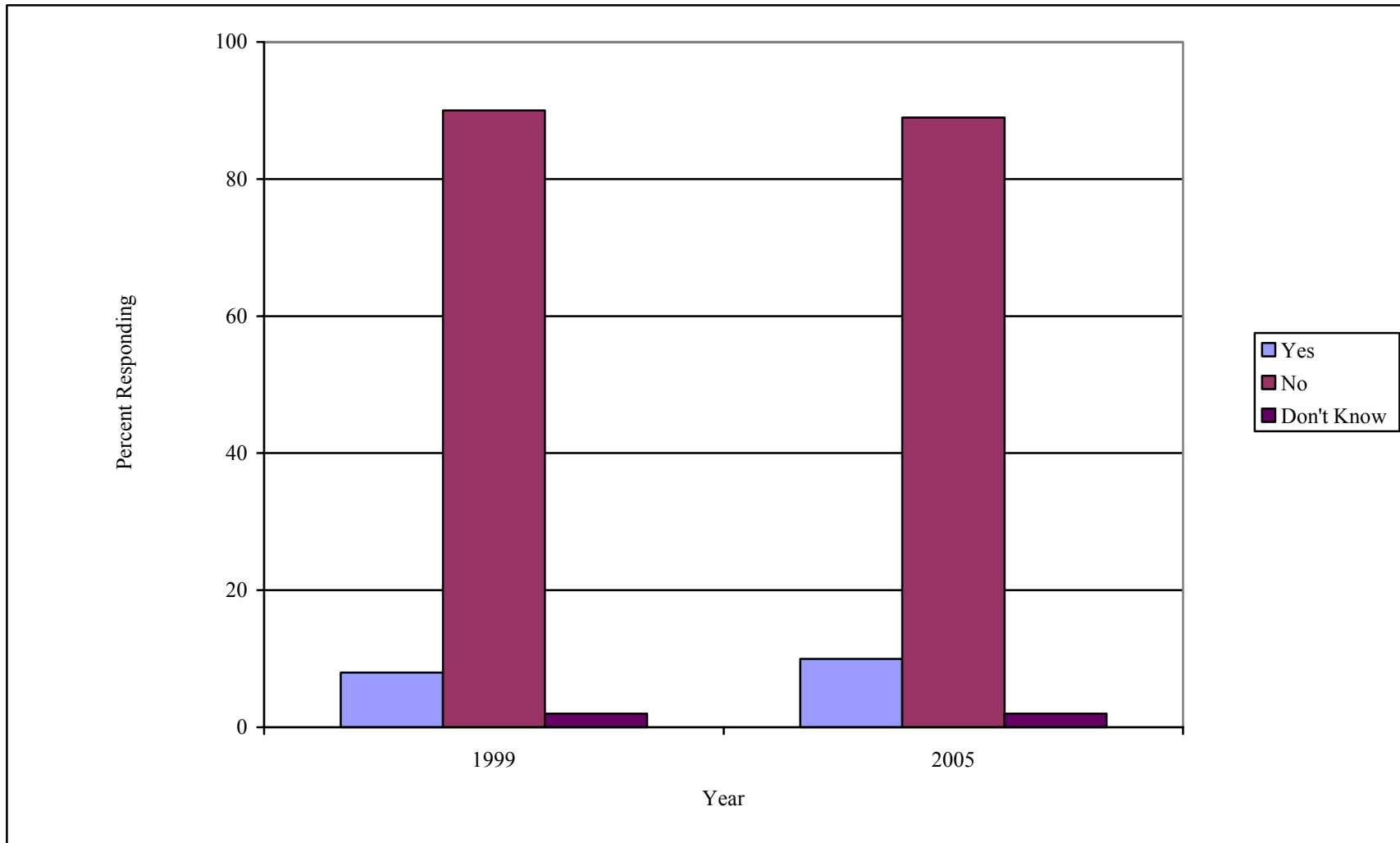


Consider these two ways to measure student achievement performance. One way is to examine student improvement over time and the other is by comparing student performance to an absolute benchmark. Which of the following best describes how you think these two measurement systems should be used to measure student achievement performance - About 100% should be based on improvement over time, most should be based on improvement over time, Improvement over time and an absolute benchmark should be weighted about equally, most should be based on an absolute benchmark, or about 100% should be based on an absolute benchmark.

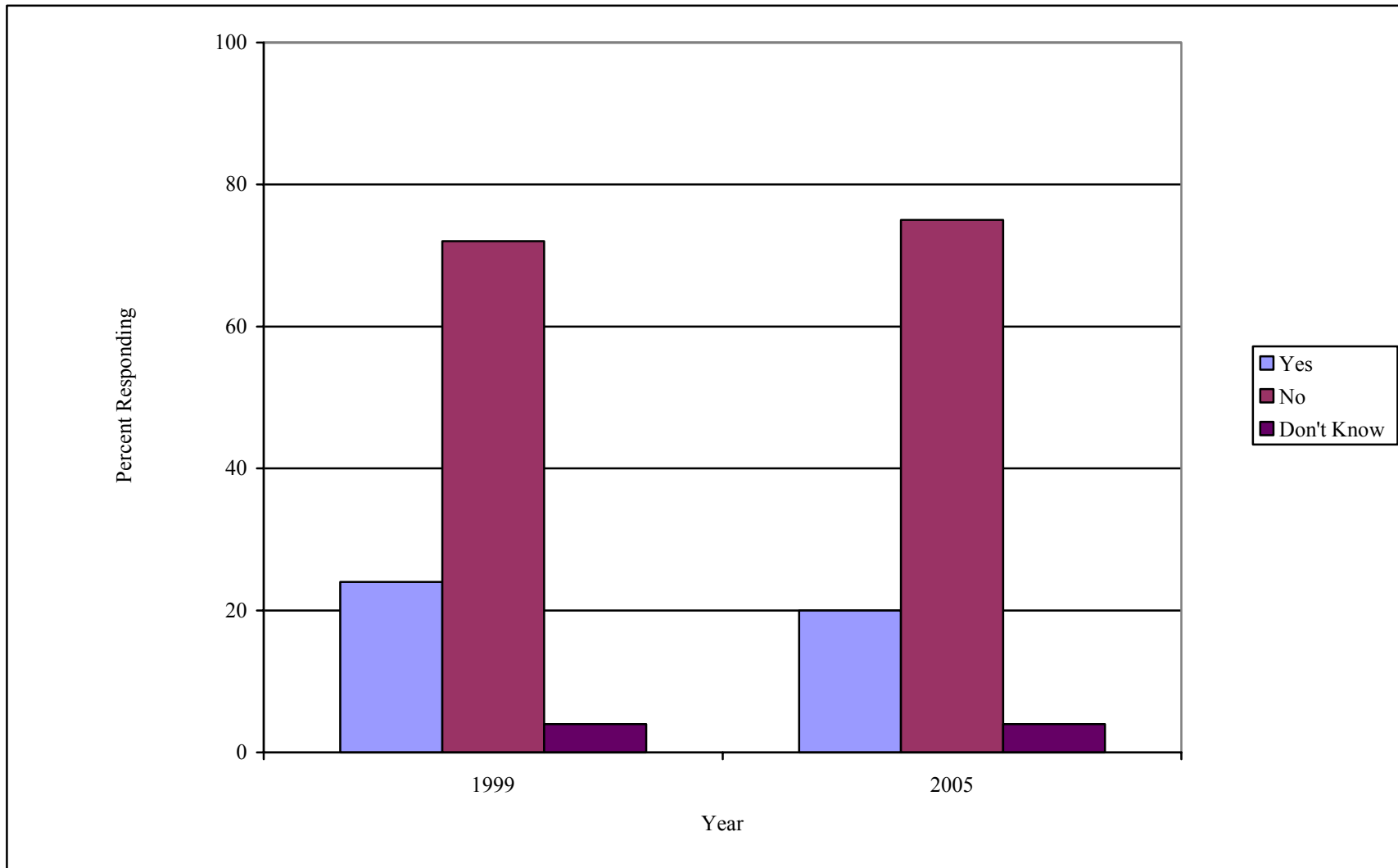




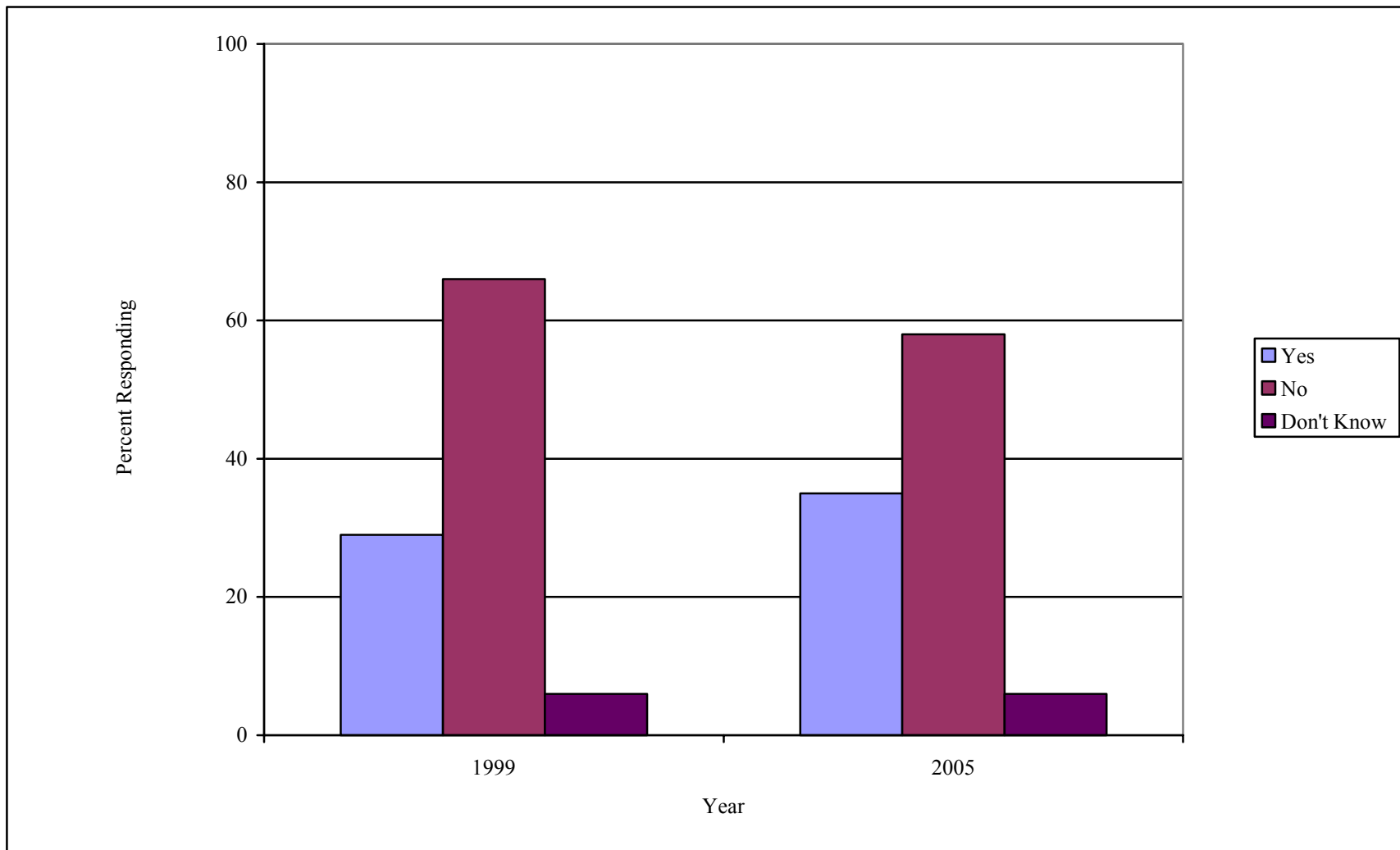
**Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is frequently absent?**



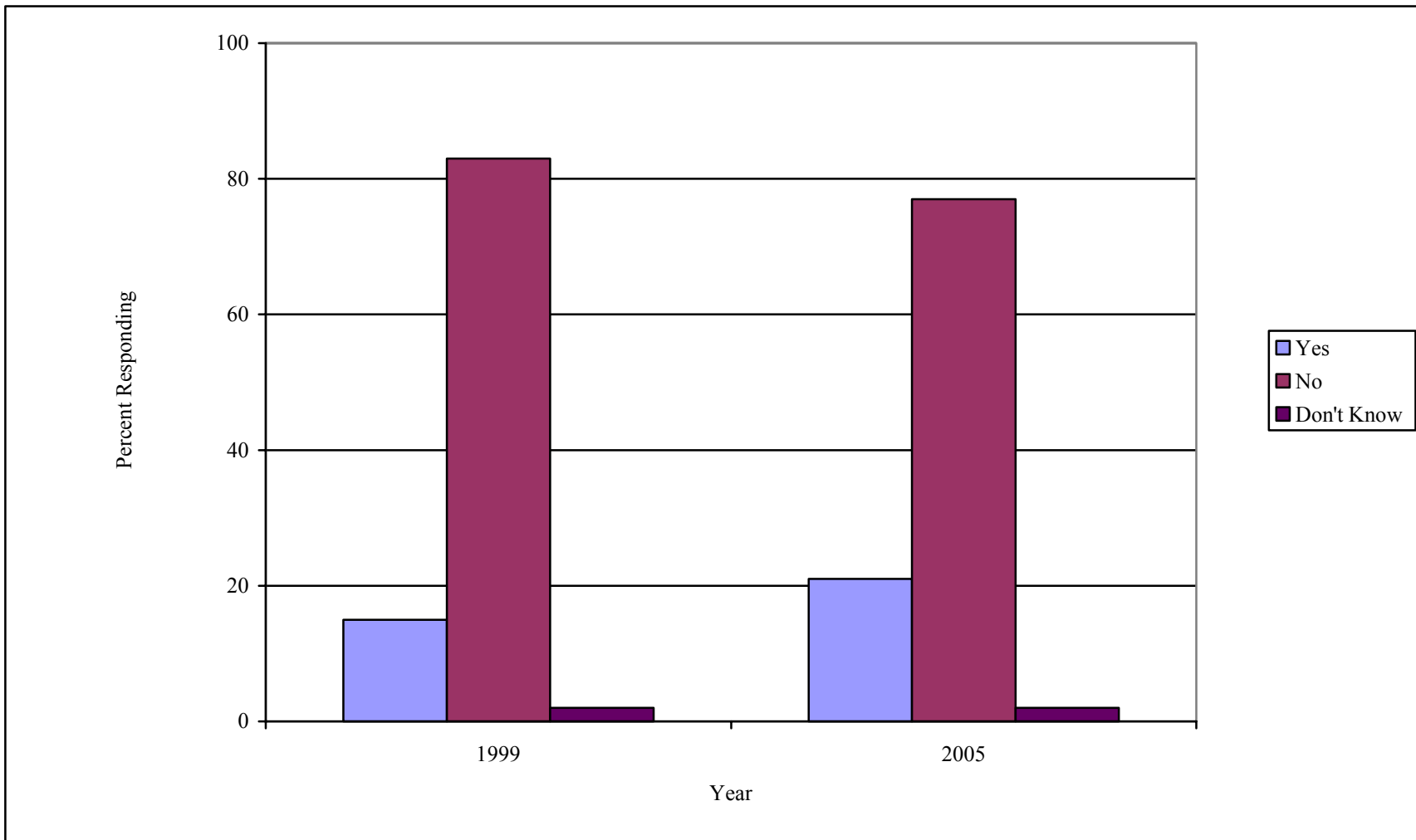
**Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student has frequent behavior problems in class?**



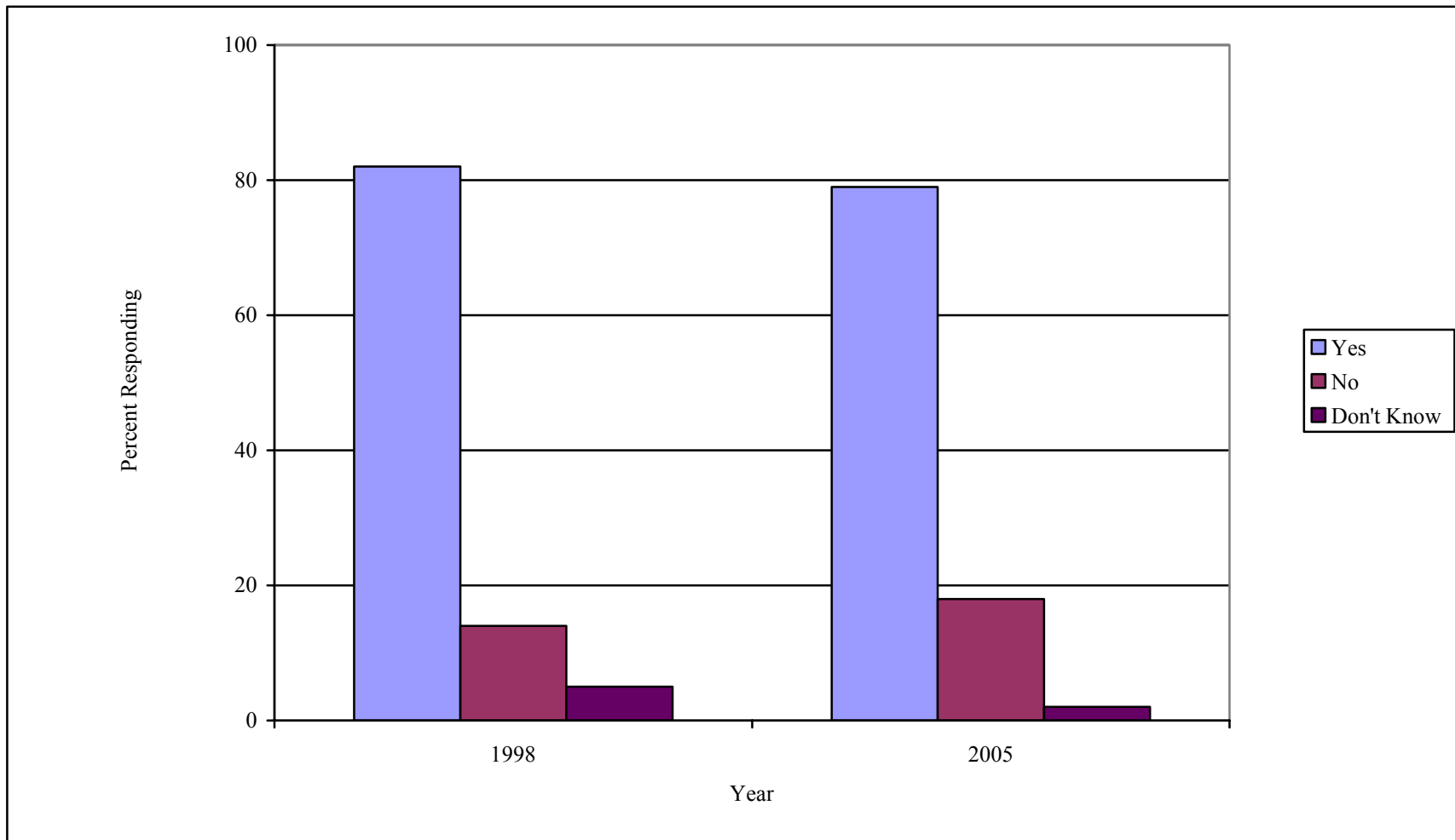
**Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student is transferred to the school midyear?**



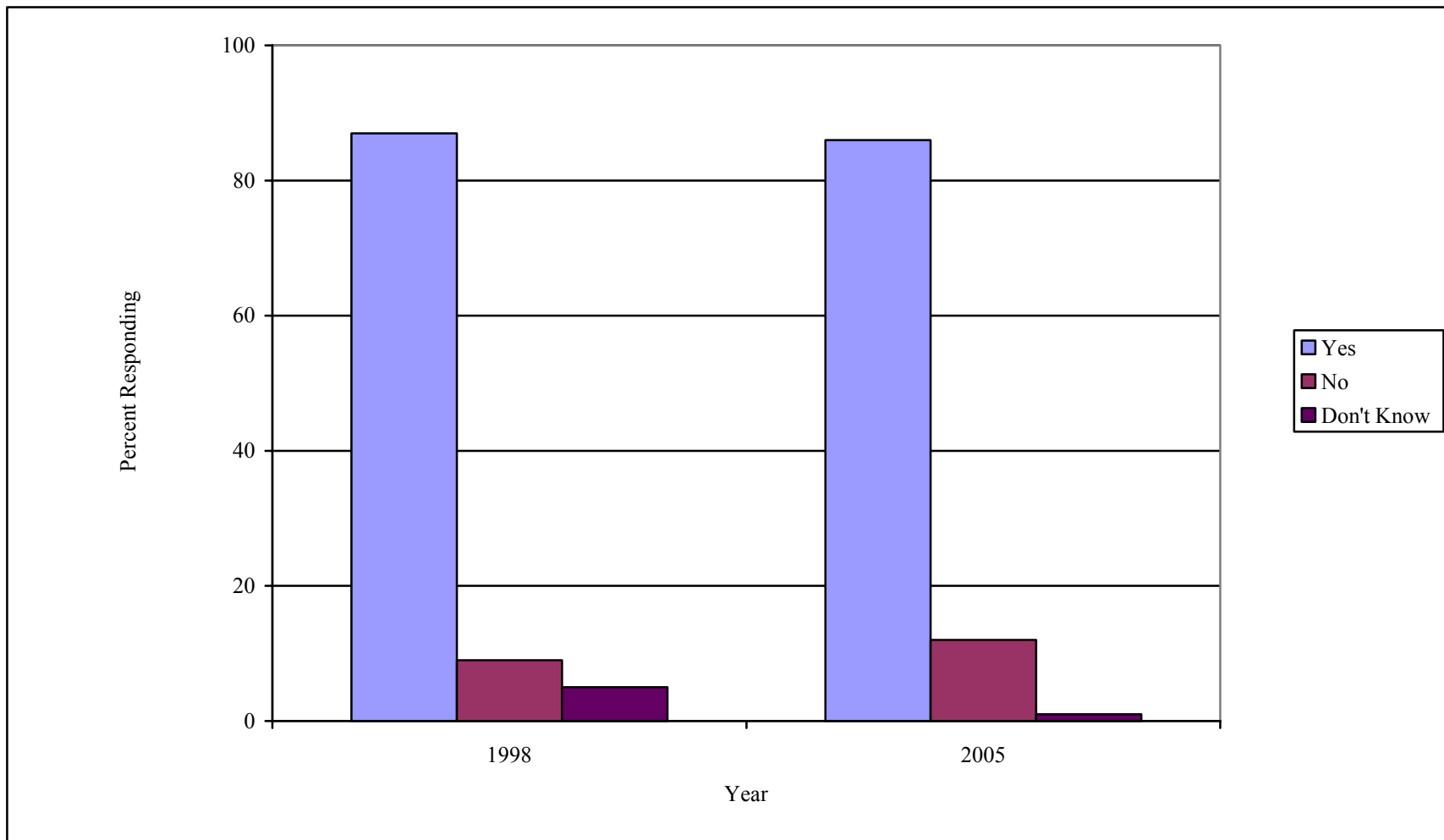
**Yes or no, should the teacher be held accountable for student performance if the student doesn't do his/her homework?**



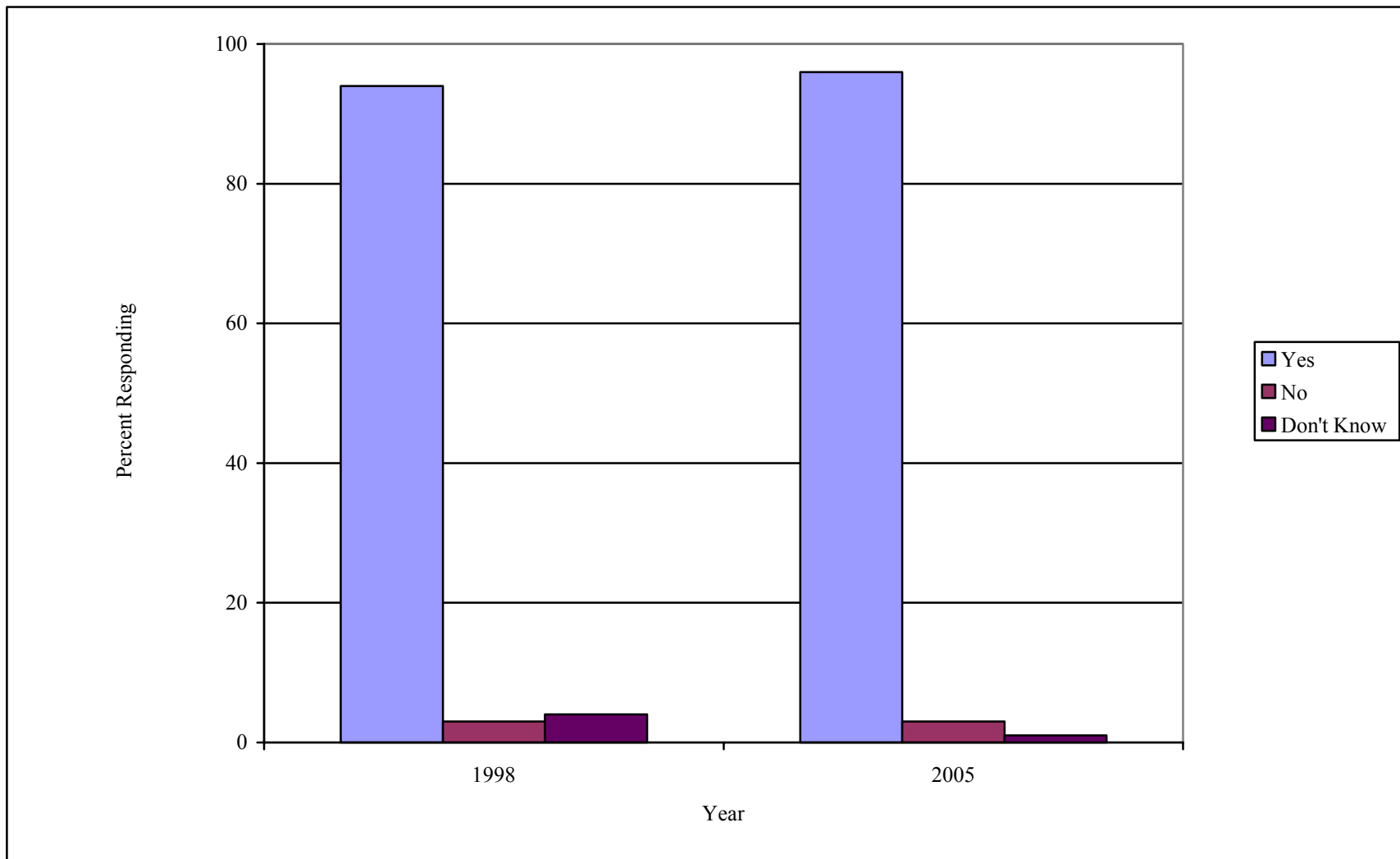
**Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell how their child compares to others in the nation?**



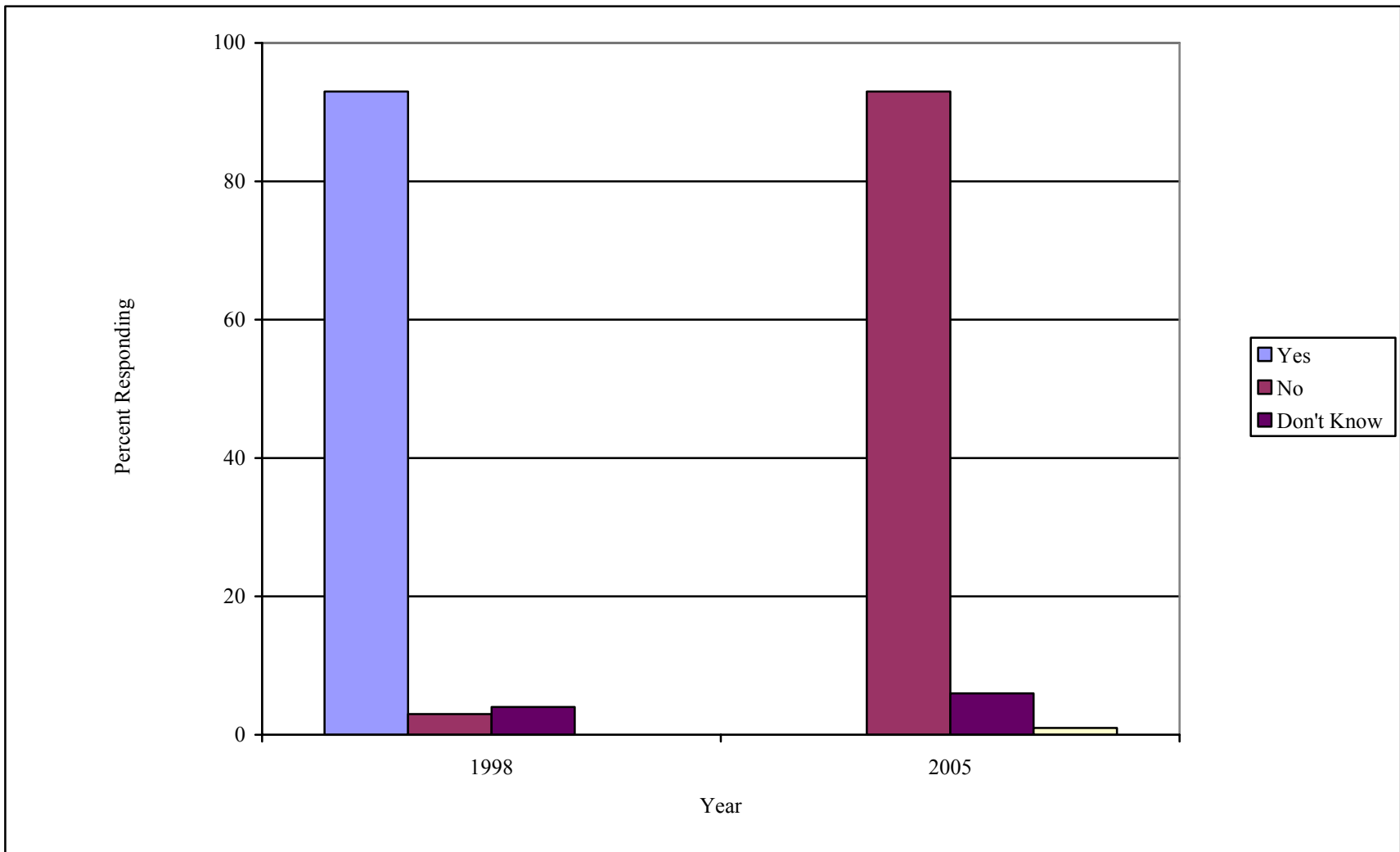
**Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell how their child compares to others in the state?**



**Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell whether their child is progressing in school?**

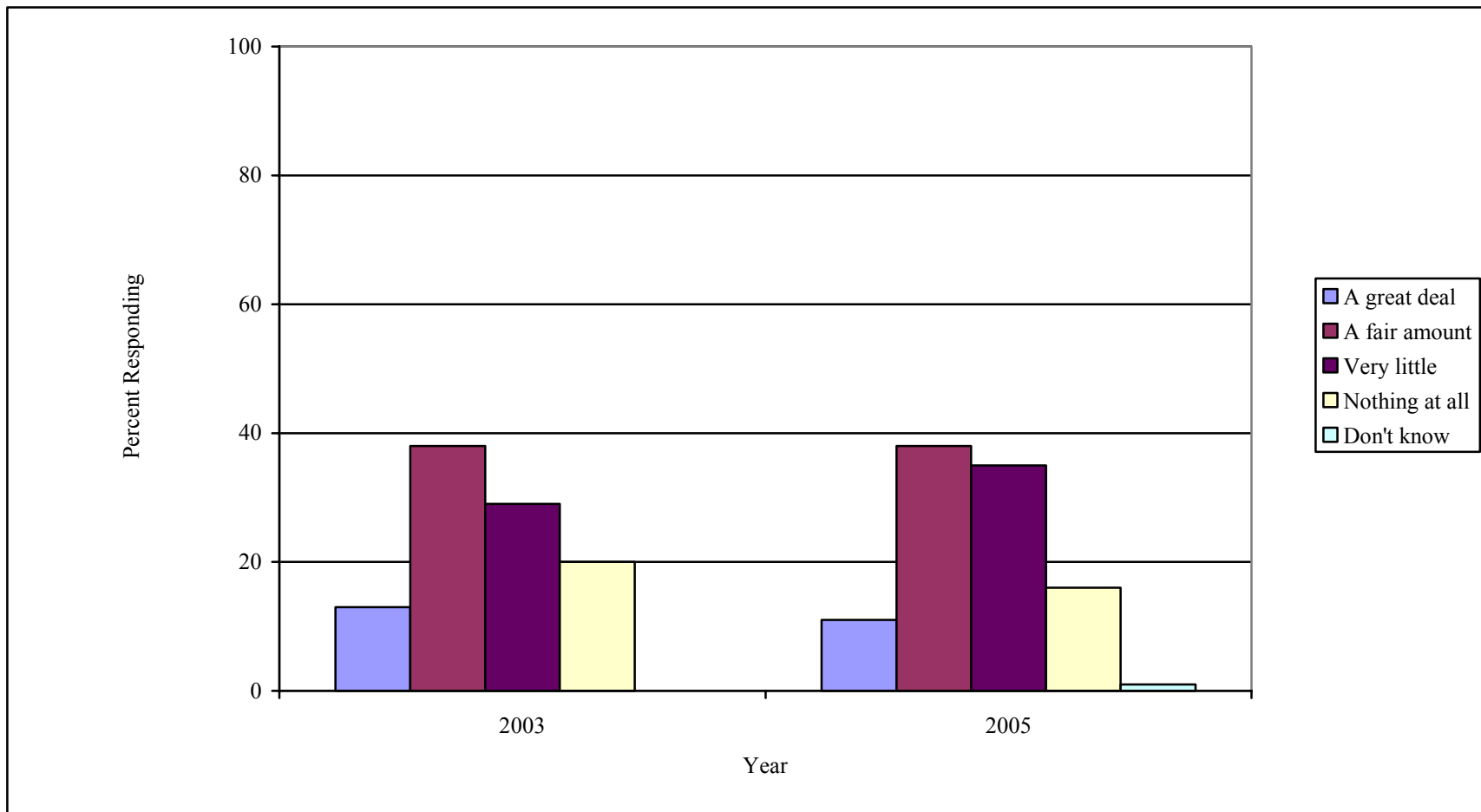


**Is it important that the state assessment program provide parents with results that tell how much their child knows about specific subjects?**

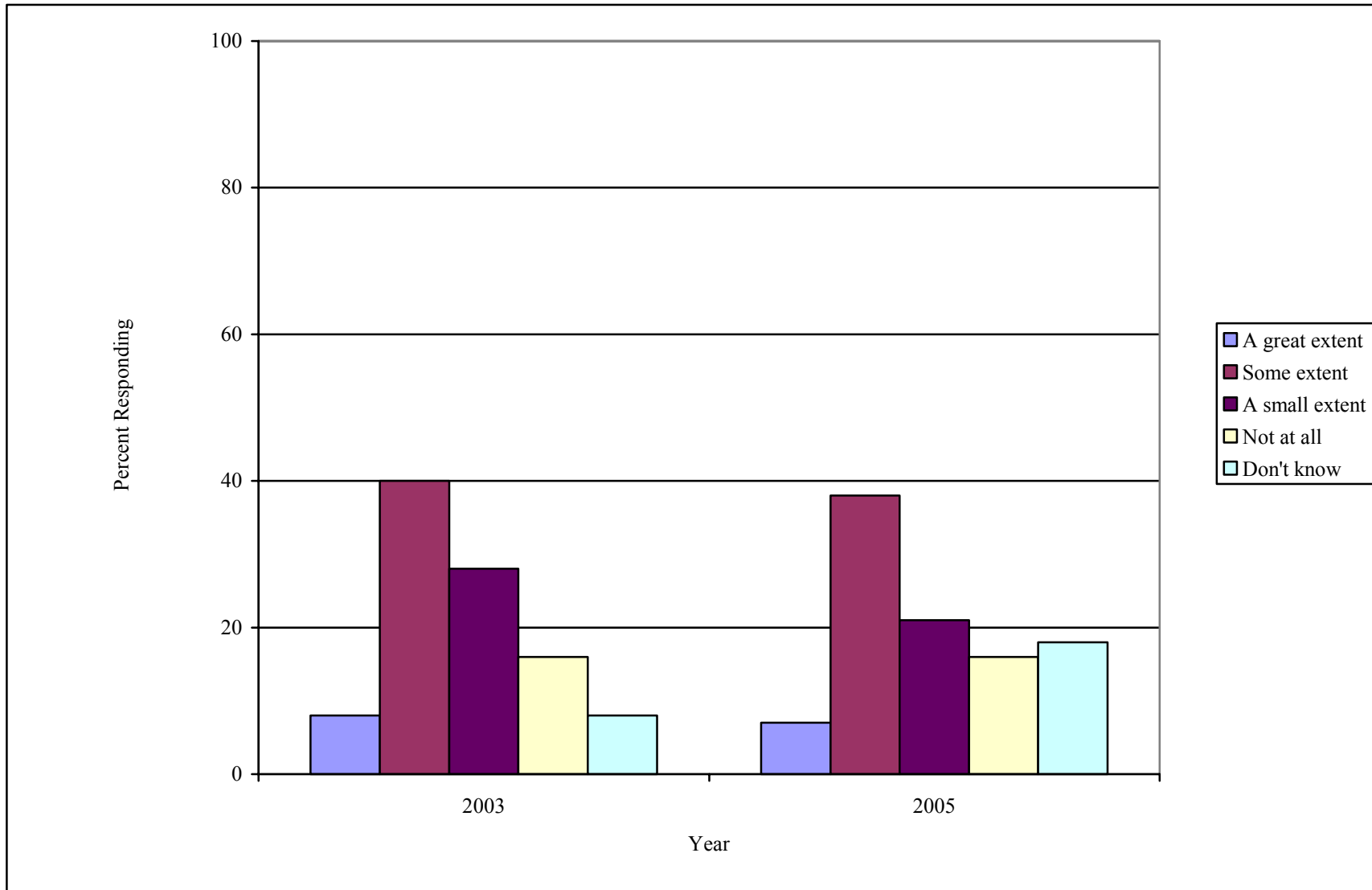




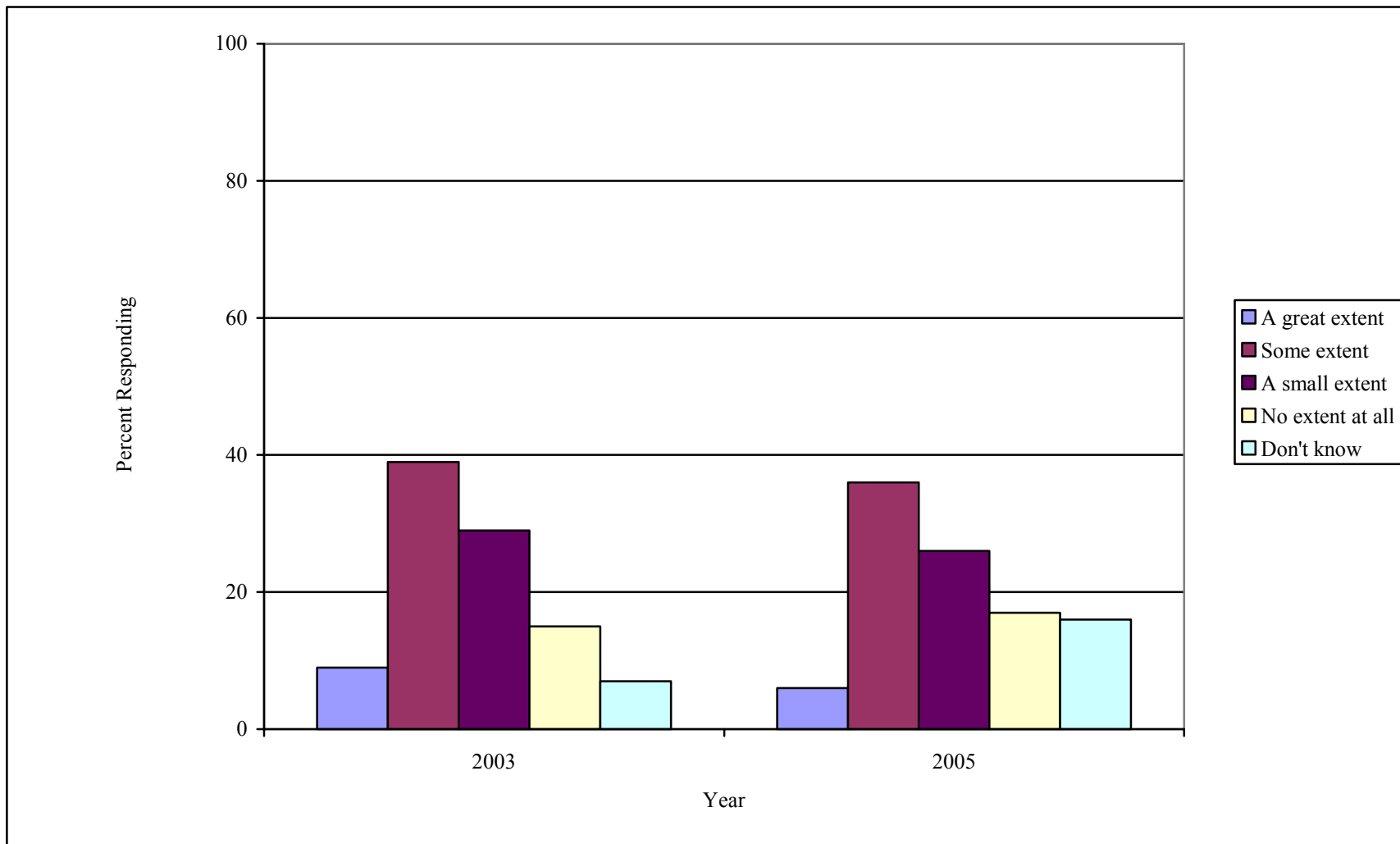
**How much, if anything, do you know about the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001 - a great deal, a fair amount, very little, or nothing at all.**



**To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will reduce the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students?**



To what extent do you think the federal accountability plan will decrease the achievement gap between economically advantaged and economically disadvantaged students?



**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. Quality of Education**

	A	B	C	D	F	Don't know
Students in Delaware are often given the grades A, B, C, D, or F to denote the quality of their work. What grade would you give the public <u>elementary</u> schools in Delaware?	7%	36%	31%	7%	3%	16%
What grade would you give the public <u>middle</u> schools in Delaware?	4%	27%	34%	10%	3%	22%
What grade would you give the public <u>high</u> schools in Delaware?	5%	25%	31%	12%	6%	22%
Students are often given the grades A, B, C, D and FAIL to denote the quality of their work. Suppose the public schools themselves, in your community, were graded in the same way. What grade would you give the <u>public schools</u> here – A, B, C, D, or FAIL? (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll 2004)	(13%)	(34%)	(33%)	(10%)	(4%)	(6%)

## V. Parent/Community Involvement

	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Strongly disagree</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
My Child's school makes it easy to be involved there.	<b>50%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>4%</b>
(Child's) school makes it easy for my family to be involved there. (2003 Parent involvement in education survey. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics)	<b>(43%)</b>	<b>(50%)</b>	<b>(6%)</b>	<b>(1%)</b>	<b>(0%)</b>

## VI. Accountability

	<u>Too much</u>	<u>Not enough</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
In your opinion, is there too much emphasis on achievement testing in the public schools in this community, not enough emphasis, or about the right amount? PDK/Gallup Poll (2004)	<b>41%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<b>15%</b> <b>(28%)</b>	<b>32%</b> <b>(48%)</b>	<b>12%</b> <b>(4%)</b>	
	<u>Too high</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Too low</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	
In your opinion, are student achievement standards in the public schools in Delaware too high, about right, or too low? PDK/Gallup Poll (2002)	<b>12%</b> <b>(9%)</b>	<b>42%</b> <b>(57%)</b>	<b>31%</b> <b>(33%)</b>	<b>15%</b> <b>(4%)</b>	
	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not too important</u>	<u>Not at all important</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Black and Hispanic students generally score lower on standardized tests than white students. In your opinion, how important do you think it is to close the academic achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students - very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all? PDK/Gallup Poll (2004)	<b>68%</b> <b>(64%)</b>	<b>21%</b> <b>(24%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>(5%)</b>	<b>3%</b> <b>(2%)</b>

In your opinion, do black children and other minority children in your community have the same educational opportunities as white children? PDK/Gallup Poll (2004)	<u>Yes</u> <b>81%</b> <b>(78%)</b>	<u>No</u> <b>14%</b> <b>(20%)</b>	<u>Don't know</u> <b>5%</b> <b>(2%)</b>		
How much, if anything, do you know about the No Child Left Behind Act - the federal education bill that was passed by Congress in 2001 (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2004)	<u>A great deal</u> <b>11%</b> <b>(6%)</b>	<u>A fair amount</u> <b>38%</b> <b>(18%)</b>	<u>Very little</u> <b>35%</b> <b>(40%)</b>	<u>Nothing at all</u> <b>16%</b> <b>(36%)</b>	<u>Don't know</u> <b>1%</b> <b>(&lt;1%)</b>

Just your opinion, what are some of the factors that cause the achievement gap between white students and black and Hispanic students? (PDK/Gallup Poll, 2002)

<u>Responses *</u>	<u>Percent Responses</u>
<b>Home life/environment:</b> home life, single-parent homes, general parent comments, lack of role models, social integration and family values	<b>35%</b>
<b>Home life/environment/upbringing</b>	<b>(37%)</b>
<b>Economic advantage/disadvantage:</b> Poverty, family income, equal educational opportunities, access to resources, learning opportunities, poor nutrition	<b>25%</b> <b>(24%)</b>
<b>Lack of parent involvement:</b> Parental involvement, support, motivation, participation, lack of availability due to work, lack of time, accountability, awareness	<b>18%</b> <b>(12%)</b>
<b>Language and cultural differences:</b> Communication issues between teachers, students, and parents, cultural background differences	<b>18%</b>
<b>School systems:</b> Insufficient funding, biased testing, low school quality, student diversity, segregation, lack of role models	<b>14%</b>
<b>Student characteristics:</b> Attention span, attitude, behavior, peer pressure, attendance, interest in school, motivation	<b>9%</b>
<b>Student lack of interest</b>	<b>(8%)</b>
<b>Parental personal attributes:</b> Parent's level of education, attitude, parenting skills, not good role models	<b>8%</b>
<b>Education not a priority for parents</b>	<b>(14%)</b>
<b>Biased/racial attitudes:</b> General cultural and racial bias, discrimination, and prejudice; Teacher bias, cultural stereotypes, discrimination	<b>5%</b> <b>(10%)</b>
<b>Poor community environment</b>	<b>(15%)</b>
<b>Other:</b> general attitude, no gap, media, genetics, sociological, psychological, transportation	<b>9%</b>
<b>Don't know</b>	<b>4%</b>

\*Every effort has been made to align the themes that emerged from the Delaware sample with the national themes, but there is not an exact correspondence.

## **Background, Design and Data Collection, and Sampling Error**

### **Background**

As one major aspect of its mission, the Delaware Education Research and Development Center (R&D Center) serves as a "trustworthy source of information about the condition of education in the state" to Delawareans. 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 by conducting analyses and studies to identify priorities, describe conditions, and anticipate courses of action and evaluate their consequences. The third is through collecting and analyzing new data on the state's schools as they relate to educational research and national views.

In keeping with this aspect of its work scope, the R&D Center initiated a program of annual public surveys on the condition of education in Delaware that began in 1994. The original survey was developed by the R&D Center with advice and direction from 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 education issues and provide information sought by various state constituents. A core of the original survey is also included and has been repeated annually since its inception in 1994. 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, while questions that examine public and educator attitudes and opinions regarding time-sensitive topics will be included when they are appropriate. The Public Poll is an annual survey, while the educator poll is conducted every other year.

### **Design and Data Collection**

From February 9 to March 25, 2005, telephone interviews were conducted with 910 citizens throughout the state. The sampling plan for the polls was scientifically developed and data were collected using random digit dialing to obtain a random sample of citizens. All analyses conducted by the R&D Center for the Public Poll involved weighting the data from the sample to reflect the statewide population more accurately. This volume includes results for the state as a whole, and results disaggregated by respondents with and without school-age children.

Not all percentages listed in response to each item total to 100%. This may be due to rounding all figures to the nearest whole percent, or because of participants refusing to answer a question. This year, only the item asking about household income had a refusal rate greater than 5%. 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. This is particularly important when determining if different groups responded differently to survey items. 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).

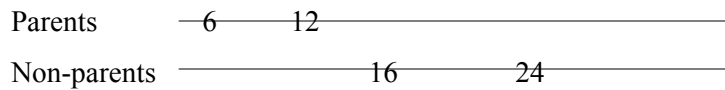
<b>Amount of Sampling Error in Percentage Points</b>			
<b>at the 95% Confidence Interval Level</b>			
	n = 910	n = 500	n = 410
	Total	Non-Parents	Parents
Percentage near 10%	2.0%	2.7%	3.0%
Percentage near 20%	2.7%	3.6%	4.0%
Percentage near 30%	3.0%	4.1%	4.5%
Percentage near 40%	3.2%	4.4%	4.8%
Percentage near 50%	3.3%	4.5%	4.9%
Percentage near 60%	3.2%	4.4%	4.8%
Percentage near 70%	3.0%	4.1%	4.5%
Percentage near 80%	2.7%	3.6%	4.0%
Percentage near 90%	2.0%	2.7%	3.0%

The table should be used in the following way: The percentage of parents who said they were “not at all informed” about the public schools in their community was 9%. Go to the row for "percentages near 10%" in the table and across to the column for n=910. The number at this point is 3.0%, which means that the 9% 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 6.0% and 12.0%, with the most likely value being 9%. However, to look only at how non-parents responded to this question, follow the same procedure only use the n=500 column as there were 500 non-parents in the sample. So, the percentage of non-parents who said they were “not at all informed” was 20%. Go to the row for "percentages near 20%" in the table and across to the column for n=500. The number at this point is 3.6%, which means that the 20% obtained in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus 3.6 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 16.4% and 23.6%, with the most likely value being 20%.

To determine whether there is a significant different between the responses of parents and non-parents, the following procedure would be applied.



Because there is no overlap between the parent range of 6.0 – 12.0 and the non-parent range of 16.4 – 23.6, we can say more non-parents than parents said they were “not at all informed” about the public schools in their community.

## Reference

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