

SURVEY OF SASKATCHEWAN
Saskatchewan School Trustees Association
2000



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METHODOLOGY / INTRODUCTION

In the autumn of 2000, the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association commissioned Tanka Research to conduct a public opinion study among adult residents of the Province of Saskatchewan. The purpose of the project was to examine public opinion, attitudes and ideas regarding the current state of education in the province, specifically within the K-12 levels.

In close consultation with SSTA personnel, and with the assistance of two preliminary focus group sessions, each involving a reasonably balanced cross-section of the adult population, Tanka prepared a questionnaire for use in a random province wide telephone survey. While the resulting survey instrument contained a fair number of new questions, many others had been asked in similar surveys commissioned by the Association in previous years.

In late October, continuing into November of 2000, a total of seven hundred and four Saskatchewan adults (at least eighteen years of age) were interviewed as part of the project. Sampling was carried out in a systematic randomized fashion, proportionately stratified according to the virtual regions or zones described by the complete set of Saskatchewan telephone directories.

Fieldwork was conducted by Tanka's interviewing staff from the company's telephone center in Regina, using a computer-assisted telephone interviewing system in a supervised environment. Interviewers identified themselves as calling on behalf of Tanka Research in a survey, "... asking Saskatchewan people to share their opinions and advice on how we might improve our schools". The SSTA was identified as the sponsor of the project upon request, but only upon completion of the survey questionnaire.

Great care was taken to ensure that interviewing process maintained a consistently random standard. Interviewing was conducted on various days of the week, and at varying times of the day, within each of the virtual 'zones'.

At least five contact attempts were made with respect to each telephone number generated in the original sampling before the use of supplementals. Call-back appointments at times more convenient for potential respondents were used extensively throughout the entire fieldwork time frame.

A post-survey demographic examination verified that the respondent base represented an accurate reflection of the general population characteristics of the province as a whole, as available in estimates from various public sources, notably Statistics Canada.

Overall response data from a random probability survey of this nature is assumed to be subject to a margin of sampling error of approximately $\pm 3.8\%$ at the 95% confidence level (or nineteen times out of twenty). That margin could be narrower in an unbalanced situation, such as an 80-20 split of opinion, or considerably wider when viewing subsets of the overall data.

Thus, when viewing responses from subsets or subgroups, particularly the smaller ones, readers should understand that significant margins of sampling error might apply. In general, a comparison of two criteria, such as urban/rural will be more reliable than one with a greater number of criteria. Of course, the greatest confidence should be placed in the overall data.

Recognizing that there are an infinite number of ways to view the survey data, there are references according to other subsets of data and subgroups of respondents throughout this report. These may be from reorganizing subgroups into fewer categories, extending others into smaller units, or by cross-referencing other survey responses.

Of course, in any analysis, it is always prudent to try to highlight and comprehend the obvious – the overall response figures, before probing deeper beneath the surface for more subtle nuances. In other words, Saskatchewan citizens have delivered a number of clear messages, which should not be overlooked for the sake of detail, as in the often quoted forrest and trees metaphor. This report attempts to guide the reader in that regard.

Tanka Research is pleased to present this report for the use and benefit of the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, and its ongoing effort to advance the delivery of quality education for Saskatchewan children.

1. GENERAL VIEW

1.1 MAJOR ISSUES OR PROBLEMS

In a free response type question, survey respondents were asked to suggest two major issues or problems faced by their local schools. Two-thirds of all respondents were able to make at least one suggestion in this regard, while about one in three came up with two perceived issues. Responses were categorized and grouped as illustrated by the data in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1 - Major Issues or Problems Facing Schools

	Total %
FUNDING/ FINANCIAL PROBLEMS	58
Specific Financial Challenges/Shortages	29
Class Sizes Too Large/ Ratios High	10
Shortage of Staff/ Teachers/ TA's	6
Declining Enrollments / School Closures	5
Programs/ Courses/ Equip/ X-Curric	3
Special Needs Requirements	3
Overcrowded Schools	2
Lack of Funding in General	18
Allocation/ Management of Resources	5
other/misc	5
BEHAVIORAL/ SOCIAL PROBLEMS	22
Lack of Discipline/ Respect	9
Bullying/ Violence/ Lack of Supervision	6
Social Problems - Family/ Poverty/ Neglect	2
Lack of Guidance in Morals/ Values/ etc.	2
other/misc	2
QUALITY OF EDUCATION	16
Lack of Basic Skills/ Standards/ Testing	3
Some Poor Teachers/ Unmotivated	3
Poor Curriculum/ Emphasis/ Old/ Not Modern	3
Lack of Individual Attention	2
Lack of Parental Input/ Involvement	2
Lack of Programs/ Extra-Curricular	1
other/misc	2
no suggestions	34

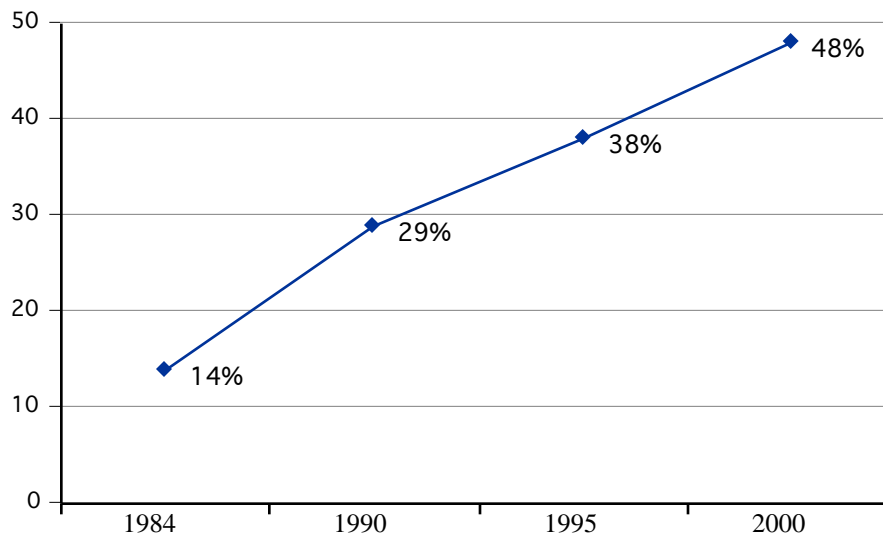
Total Column sums to more than 100% since 30% of all respondents made more than one suggestion

A majority (58%) of all survey respondents suggested issues or problems related to Funding/ Financial Problems faced by schools in their area.

Within that major category, the first two types of concerns total almost 48%, close to half of all respondents: *Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages* (29%) – funding pressures affecting staffing, specific programs or needs, facilities, etc., along with, *Lack of Funding in General* (18%) – general suggestions that schools or school boards are lacking in financial resources or inadequately funded. Compared to previous SSTA surveys, that is the highest level of concern yet expressed for what could be simply called, *Lack of Funding*.

It has risen to the current level of forty-eight percent (48%) from previous marks of thirty-eight percent (38%) in 1995; twenty-nine percent (29%) in 1990; and only fourteen percent (14%) back in 1984.

Exhibit 2 - Top-of-Mind Concern – “Lack of Funding” Issue 1984-2000



When we examine comments on Funding/ Financial Problems in the schools, we can further divide those who pointed to *Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages* (29%) into several subcategories.

First, as shown back in Exhibit 1, a large portion mentioned the specific problem of class sizes being too large or student-teacher ratios being too high. That is similar to the second item, a perceived shortage of teachers and/or teaching assistants. Together, these perceived staffing shortages accounted for over half of all the Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages cited.

There were also significant numbers who pointed to the financial pressures associated with Declining Enrollments, such as actual School Closures (5%). Those were mainly rural respondents.

Similarly, small but significant portions described Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages in terms of Programs, Courses, Equipment, and Extra-Curricular Activities (3%) being cut or placed under increased financial stress; others in terms of the costs of Special Needs Requirements (3%), and others in terms of the need for facilities – Overcrowded Schools (2%).

The thirteen percent of all respondents whose households were involved in education in any way (containing teachers, board employees, department employees, and so forth) were considerably more likely than others to point to Funding/ Financial Problems in the schools – 88% compared to 54% among respondents whose households were not directly involved. Seventy-one percent (71%) of those involved, put those problems in the *Lack of Funding* context. That compares to forty-four percent (44%) among others.

Among parents of children in the K-12 system, a full two-thirds (66%) suggested Funding/ Financial Problems in the schools. That includes a majority (56%) viewing this in the *Lack of Funding* context, either as Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages (33%), or A Lack of Funding in General (23%).

Nonetheless, even among Saskatchewan adults without children in the K-12 system, there was a strong perception of Funding/ Financial Problems in the schools (53%), reaching a majority proportion.

Moreover, most of those, accounting for 42% of all non-K-12 parents, also stated this as a, *Lack of Funding*.

As well as responses which fit into Specific Financial Challenges or Shortages, or a Lack of funding in General, there were also some within the major category of Funding/ Financial Problem, which were more along the lines of Allocation/ Management of Resources (5%).

They included criticisms of spending priorities, or administrative decision-making, opinions that teachers are paid too much or too little, and so forth. These were more likely to be from urban than rural areas and tended to come from respondents in higher income households.

Top-of-mind concern over the whole area of Funding/ Financial Problems in the schools tends to rise with household income. This major suggestion type rose from 43% among those with 2000 household income below thirty thousand dollars, to 59% among those in the \$30 thousand to \$60 thousand range, to 70% among those in households earning in excess of \$60 thousand.

A reverse pattern is seen with regard to the twenty-two percent (22%) who suggested problems within the second major category, Behavioral/ Social Problems as major issues facing schools today. This view came more frequently from those on the lower side of the income scale, falling from more than one-quarter (27%) of those in households earning less than \$30 thousand, to 21% among the middle group, to 18% among respondents from households with income over \$60 thousand.

Most of these Behavioral or Social Problems were put in the context either of how some students are perceived to act towards teachers and adults – Lack of Discipline/Respect (9%), or towards one another – Bullying/ Violence/ Lack of Supervision (6%).

However, some pointed to the types of social problems many children face within the Family, such as Poverty, or Neglect (2%), while others suggested that a Lack of Guidance in Morals/ Values (2%), and so forth was a major problem in today's schools.

The third major category of top-of-mind issues or problems in schools today included comments specifically about Quality of Education (15%), although many who expressed the concerns already discussed may have been indirectly thinking about quality as well. These included a handful of subtopics as shown in Exhibit 1, such as perceived lack of emphasis on basic skills, comparative academic standards, individual attention, parental involvement, programs or extra curricular activities, or criticisms of teacher dedication, curriculum emphasis and so on.

The Quality of Education type of issue or problem was offered more frequently by parents of children in the K-12 system than others

1.2 MOST POSITIVE

As well as issues or problems facing schools today, survey respondents were asked a second introductory question – another free response type, asking for suggestions as to what might be one of the most positive things happening in education in their communities.

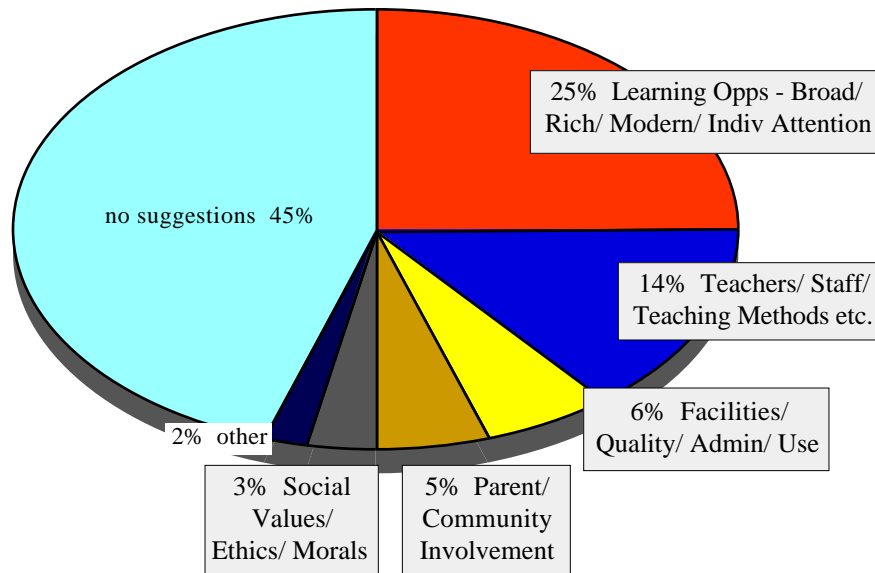
In this case, somewhat fewer, but still a majority (55%) of all respondents, were able to come up with a suggestion in this regard. Understandably, respondents with children in the K-12 system were considerably more likely than others to offer a suggestion on positive things happening in education in their community – 70% versus only 46%.

Again, responses were categorized into several major types of comments.

As shown in Exhibit 3 below, the most frequent type of suggestion related to the available Learning Opportunities – Broad/ Rich/ Modern/ Individual Attention (25%).

These descriptions of a richer, fuller school learning environment than perhaps they themselves had experienced as children, were heard more frequently from parents with children currently in the K-12 system (31%) than from those without children in the system (22%).

Exhibit 3 - Positive Thing Happening in Education



Other demographic groups more likely to have offered this type of response include respondents from households with higher level incomes, and those from households containing one or more persons employed or directly involved in the field of education.

In some ways this category is actually a more global view or combination of the second and third ranked positive categories – the second more specifically related to educators, and the third addressing facilities and equipment.

The second most frequent type of comment related to positive impressions of teachers and aides, their qualifications and/or dedication, and/or the modern teaching methods employed by the schools in their communities – Teachers/ Staff/ Teaching Methods, etc. (14%).

While teacher qualifications and dedication were more frequent thoughts, some comments on modern teaching methods offered the interesting view that relationships between teachers and individual students have generally become more positive, or healthier perhaps, than were seen with more authoritative, rigid, or impersonal methods of the past.

Parents of children currently in the K-12 system, who were generally a fair bit more likely than others to come up with any suggestion, were almost twice as likely as others to offer opinions which fit into this particular category.

Responses in other categories were considerably less frequent. Six percent (6%) of all survey respondents pointed to the Facilities - Quality/ Admin/ Use, as one of the most positive things happening in education in their communities. This basically includes all suggestions pointing to modern facilities or equipment found in the schools, and/or the administration or management of those resources, and was offered quite evenly across the demographic groups.

A small portion suggested that Parent and/or Community Involvement (5%) in education was one of the most positive things in their communities. Unlike other suggestions, this type came twice as often from women than men.

The final suggestion category, Social Values/ Ethics/ Morals (3%) includes all comments which suggested that the schools are doing well or better in terms of imparting or instilling those ingredients. While this is a small subgroup, making any demographic pattern difficult to discern, this type of response appeared to come disproportionately from respondents in their fifties.

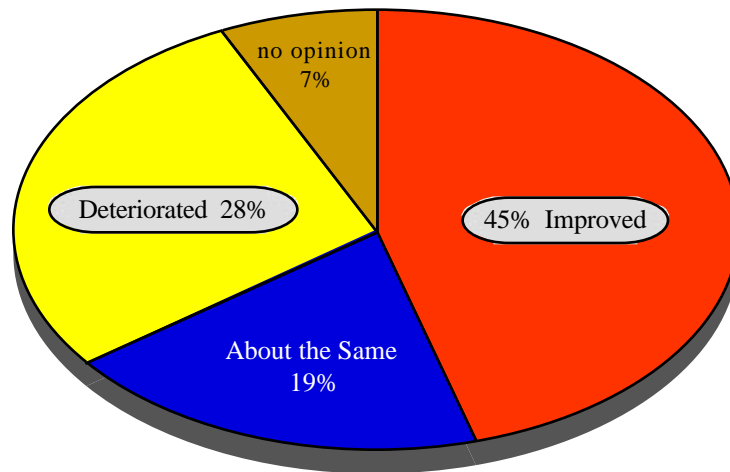
2. QUALITY AND STANDARDS

2.1 PERCEIVED DIRECTION

In terms of the direction of the overall quality of education that children in their area now receive, compared to ten or twenty years ago, more respondents suggested it had improved (45%), rather than deteriorated (28%).

While those figures are more positive than negative, the ratio of less than 5:3, along with the fact that more than one-quarter either sees little change or has no opinion, is a rather tepid endorsement of improvement or progress in the quality of education.

Exhibit 4 - Quality of Education Compared to 10 or 20 Years Ago



Parents with children in the K-5 level of the school system (49-28), and those with children in the middle grades 6-9 (50-29) were slightly more likely than adults with no children currently in the system (43-28) to see improvement rather than deterioration. However, parents of children in the upper grades 10-12, (38-37) were split virtually evenly on this question.

The differences according to the level of school children might lead one to assume that there are also visible differences according to age of the respondent.

That is the case to a certain extent. However, while adults under thirty (54-17) offer a much more positive set of responses, there is no age group which matches or accounts for the even split of opinion observed among parents of upper grade students.

While there are some regional differences within these responses, there is little difference according to whether or not the respondent is from a household involved in education, and none according to respondent gender.

The most negative data on this question come from the urban north, particularly visible when we isolate the City of Saskatoon itself (38-41), and find greater numbers claiming that the quality of education in the area has deteriorated rather than improved over the past ten or twenty years.

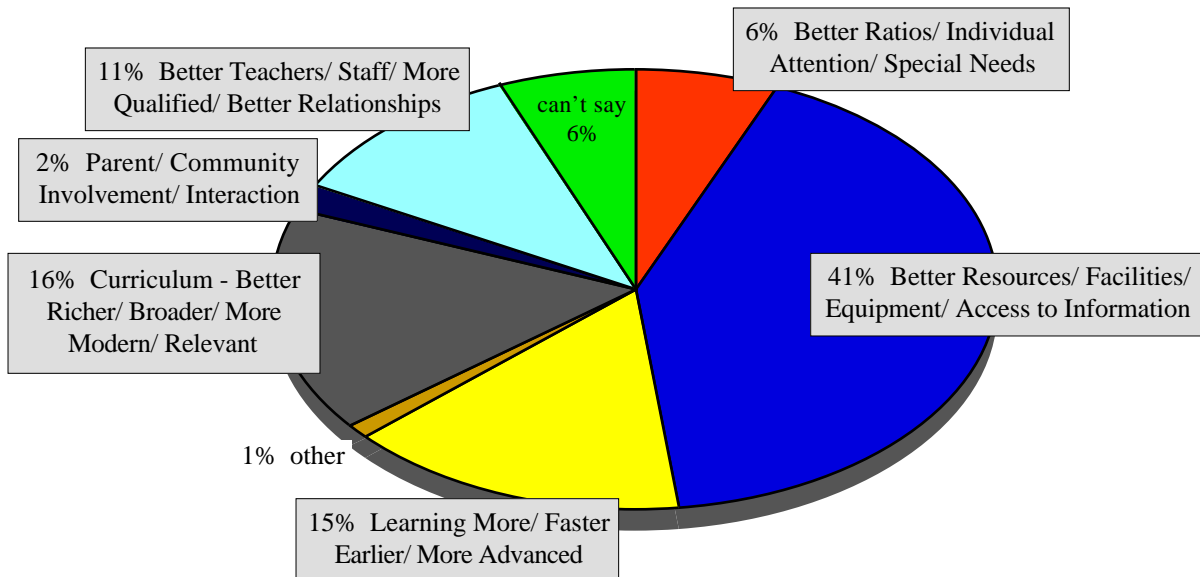
There is also a visible difference in these responses according to ancestry. Respondents who identified their ancestry as First Nations (63-22), along with those whose most direct ancestors came from *other continents* (57-29), appeared more likely than others to take a positive view of the direction in which the quality of education has moved — majorities in both cases. As a group, those of European descent (41-29) appeared less convinced.

2.1.1 How Improved

The 45% of all respondents who suggested that the overall quality of education in their area had improved over the past ten or twenty years, were subsequently asked how, or in what way, the quality had improved.

As shown below, the most frequent response category depicts a fuller, richer learning environment than may have been the case in the past, in terms of physical resources – Better Resources/Facilities/Equipment/Access to Information (41%). Computers and the internet are often mentioned in this type of rationale. It was heard frequently from all subgroups, and particularly often from those in their fifties, and people in the Prince Albert area.

Exhibit 5 - Rationale for Opinion – Overall Quality Improved
(among those perceiving improvement)



The second most frequent category also depicts a richer learning environment, but in terms of a superior curriculum rather than physical resources – Curriculum - Better/Richer/ Broader/More Modern/Relevant (16%).

The better curriculum rationale was also distributed quite evenly across all demographic groups, but heard slightly more often from survey respondents in the South West, including Moose Jaw and Swift Current, as well as among males in general.

The third response category included a similar description of how quality had improved — Learning More/Faster/Earlier/More Advanced (15%). These respondents suggested their children, or the students they had observed, appeared to be learning newer or more advanced things than they themselves had and/or were learning at an earlier stage or faster pace than they recalled from ten or twenty years back.

That type of response came almost twice as often from parents with children currently in the K-12 system than those without. In fact, this was the second most frequent rationale offered among parents with children in the system, as to how the overall quality of education had improved.

More than one in every ten respondents who perceived an improvement pointed to, Better Teachers/Staff/ More Qualified/ Better Relationships (11%). These comments included an assortment of positive remarks about today's educators being more prepared or qualified and/or able to establish better relationships with their students. This was heard more often from women, and from Saskatoon respondents who perceived an improved overall quality of education in their area.

A related category — Better Ratios/ Individual Attention/ Special Needs (6%) included comments which specifically focused on better student-teacher ratios and/or greater opportunity to provide individual attention as needed. Although not exclusive to those, this kind of suggestion appeared to come slightly more often from respondents in lower income households and those of aboriginal descent.

In addition to those included in the five major response categories illustrated in Exhibit 5, a handful of respondents suggested that greater Parent/Community Involvement/ Interaction (2%) was part of an improved overall quality of education in their area.

Still referring to Exhibit 5, although six categories of responses were used, three broader ones could have included most of the rationale offered for what this group seemed to perceive as a richer or more positive learning environment. Those would be improvements in any of three areas— physical resources, learning plans, and human resources.

2.1.2 How Deteriorated

The twenty-eight percent (28%) of all respondents who perceived a deterioration in the overall quality of education in their area over the past ten or twenty years, were also asked to provide a rationale for their thinking on this topic. This group tended to be slightly more urban than the population as a whole, weighted with respondents from the City of Saskatoon, and included disproportionate numbers of parents with children in the upper grades.

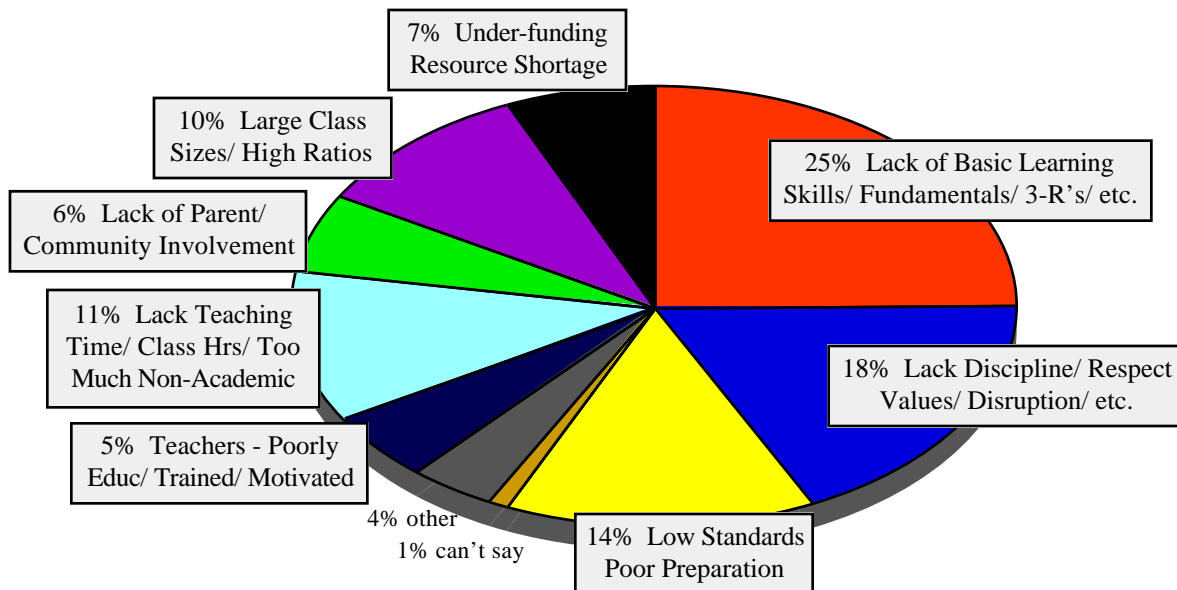
The most frequent type of suggestion was categorized as, Lack of Basic Learning Skills/Fundamentals/3 R's/etc. (25%), cited by one-quarter these respondents. This type of rationale was heard slightly more often from those within the subgroup who were parents of children in the middle school years.

Closely related to that point of view were those grouped into the third most frequent category — Low Standards/ Poor Preparation (14%). These respondents perceived a troublesome level of high school graduates as unprepared for post-secondary education or the work force. They were evenly distributed demographically.

The second most frequent category of response as to how the overall quality of education had deteriorated was, Lack Discipline/Respect/Values/ Disruption/etc. (18%). These respondents believe the overall quality of education that students in their area receive, has been damaged by a lack of these types of virtues or values.

Some specifically cited classroom disruption as a symptom of this problem, resulting in wasted or unproductive hours for both educators and students. These respondents were disproportionately female, or from lower income households.

Exhibit 6 - Rationale for Opinion – Overall Quality Deteriorated
(among those perceiving deterioration)



The fourth ranked category of response as to how overall quality had deteriorated was, lack of Teaching Time/Classroom Hours/Too Much Non-Academic (11%). This type of criticism, which also included specific mentions of a lack of attention for individual students, came disproportionately from two of the subgroups which define this entire subgroup – Saskatoon residents and parents of upper year students (Grades 10-12), although this does arise among parents of younger students as well.

Most of these respondents, in their thirties or forties, tend to feel that too much of the students' day is spent on non-academic pursuits, or could generally be used more efficiently.

Others within this group who based their view of deteriorated education quality on Large Class Sizes/ High Ratios (10%) tended to be women and on the younger side of the age spectrum. They were less likely than most to have children in the K-12 system, but more likely to be from households directly involved in the field of education.

Other categories of rationale contain fewer responses. Seven percent of all respondents within this minority subgroup blamed, Under-Funding/Resource Shortages (7%) for a deteriorated quality of education; six percent pointed to a Lack of Parent or Community Involvement (6%) in education; and five percent focused on, Teachers/Poorly Educated/Trained/Motivated (5%).

Reviewing opinion on the perceived direction that the quality of education has taken, it is evident that despite the fact that more people perceive improvement (45%) than deterioration (28%) over the past decade or two, that is hardly an overwhelming endorsement of the efforts that have been made.

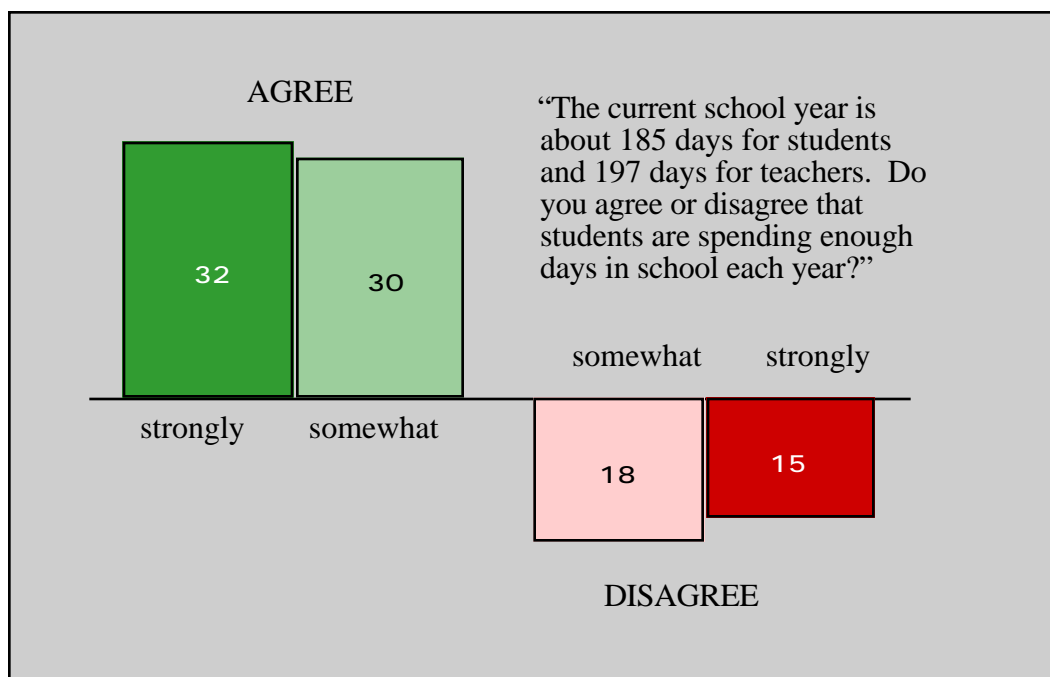
Those who do perceive improvement give credit to richer learning environments than existed in the past, in terms of physical resources, learning plans, and human resources. However, those who see deterioration blame a lack of emphasis on fundamental skills and basic preparedness, a lack of discipline or moral values among students, along with several other factors, including about one in six respondents who allude to funding problems either directly or in terms of class sizes or high student-teacher ratios.

Thus, it does not appear that financial pressures are generally seen as having caused a quality decline in education to this point in time. However, we do know, from Section 1, that most Saskatchewan adults now see funding and financial problems as the major issue facing our schools, and as such, the greatest threat to the quality of education in the future. This topic is further addressed in Section 4 of this report — Funding & Resource Utilization.

2.2 CURRENT SCHOOL YEAR

While most (62%) Saskatchewan adults appear to agree that students are spending enough days in school each year, about one-third (34%) disagrees. As shown below, as well as sizable portions on either side, there were also some strong feelings on this issue.

Exhibit 7 - Enough Days in School



Generally, younger respondents and parents of children in the K-12 system were more likely than others to agree with the status quo.

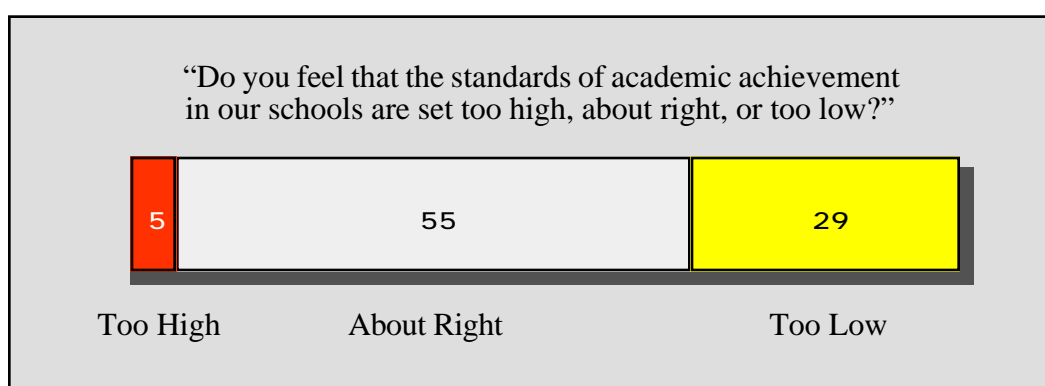
On the other hand, those who claimed our educational standards are too low, that our students are not being adequately prepared for their futures after high school, or that the quality of education in their area has deteriorated over the past ten or twenty years, were far more likely than others to disagree with the notion that students are spending enough days in school.

2.3 STANDARDS OF ACHIEVEMENT

2.3.1 Level of Standards

Most Saskatchewan adults appear to believe that standards of academic achievement in our schools are currently set, *about right* (55%), as opposed to either, *too low* (29%) or, *too high* (5%).

Exhibit 8 - Level of Academic Standards



With only minor differences between those with or without children in the K-12 system, we find rural respondents (7-65-20) in general, were far more likely than those living in urban areas (3-48-36) to be satisfied with current standards, with a much larger portion of the latter claiming that standards are too low.

This is seen even more clearly when we isolate the two major cities, and observe large portions in both the City of Regina (2-47-37) and the City of Saskatoon (5-44-39) taking the view that current standards are too low.

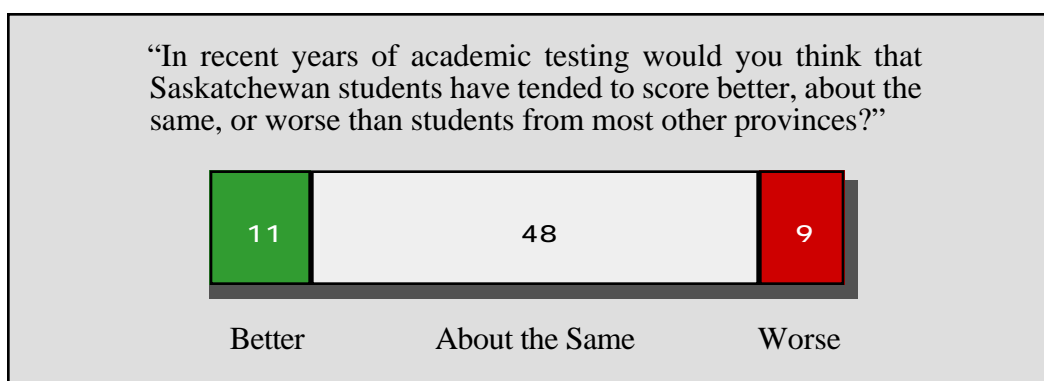
Respondents in their thirties, those from higher income households, those in the, *Highly Trained/ Technical/ Skilled* category of employment, and males in general, were among the most likely to see today’s standards as too low. Interestingly, people from households involved in education were more likely than others, to take the view that current standards are too low.

2.3.2 Current Impression

There is no clear public view on how Saskatchewan students may have scored in academic testing in recent years, compared to students from other provinces.

While about one-third (32%) simply had no opinion on the matter or would not hazard a guess, the largest percentage suggested that Saskatchewan students have tended to score, *about the same* (48%) as most others. Similar portions took the, *better* (11%) or, *worse* (9%) options.

Exhibit 9 - Current Impression of Achievement



The balance of opinion tips more towards the *better* side of the scale among retirees and respondents over sixty years of age, along with the East - Central and South region of the province.

Among other demographic groups, opinion appears more balanced.

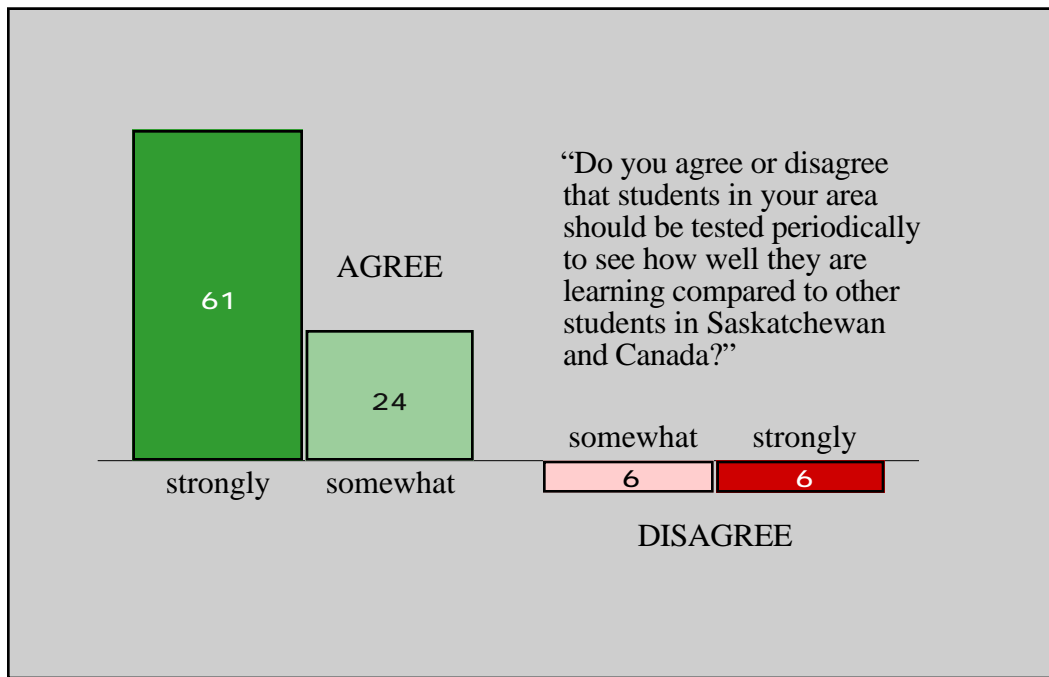
The shape of this data set is generally indicative of a population which simply does not know or have firm opinions on the question.

2.3.3 Testing Academic Achievement

There is a very high level of agreement (85%) among Saskatchewan adults that students, “should be tested periodically to see how well they are learning compared to other students in Saskatchewan and Canada”. That is even higher than the 76% figure measured in favour of this concept in the SSTA’s 1995 Survey.

In fact, a majority of survey respondents expressed *strong agreement* (61%) with testing of this kind, while only 12% offered any level of disagreement.

Exhibit 10 - Opinion on Periodic Testing



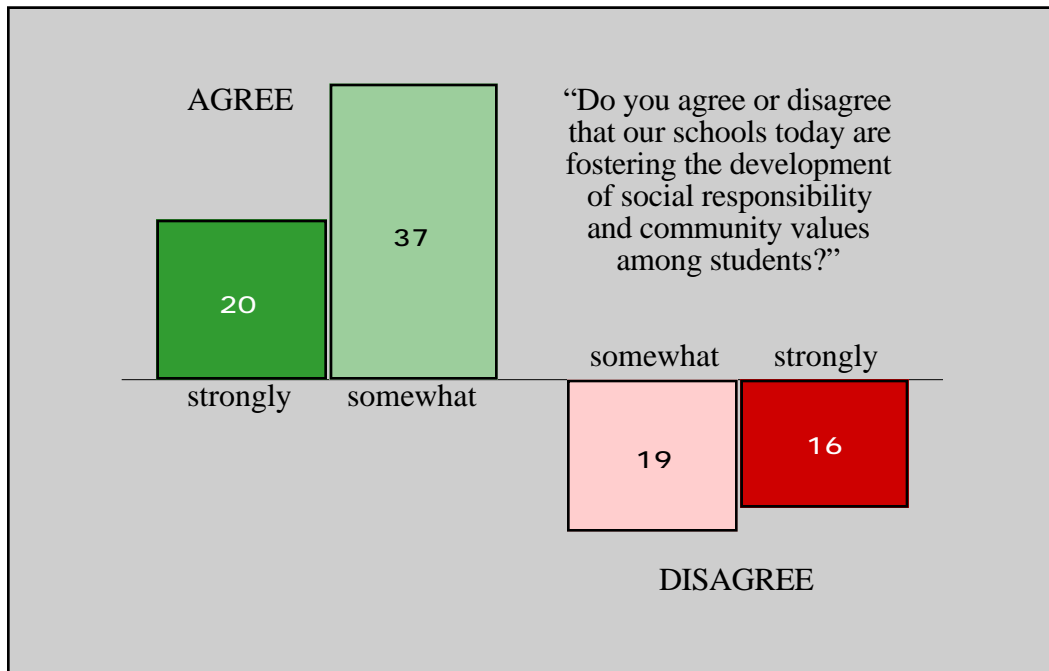
There is no identifiable subgroup where an overwhelming majority does not agree. Even within groups where opposition to the concept appears strongest, such as respondents from households involved in education, respondents of aboriginal ancestry, and current students, there are solid majorities in favour of this type of testing.

2.4 RESPONSIBILITY & VALUES

Most Saskatchewan adults (57%) appear to believe our schools today are indeed fostering the development of social responsibility and community values. However, a significant portion (35%) of the population tends to disagree. The 57% agreement figure compares to 62% in the 1995 SSTA Survey.

While there were some strongly held opinions in this regard, most were not.

Exhibit 11 - Fostering Social Responsibility & Community Values



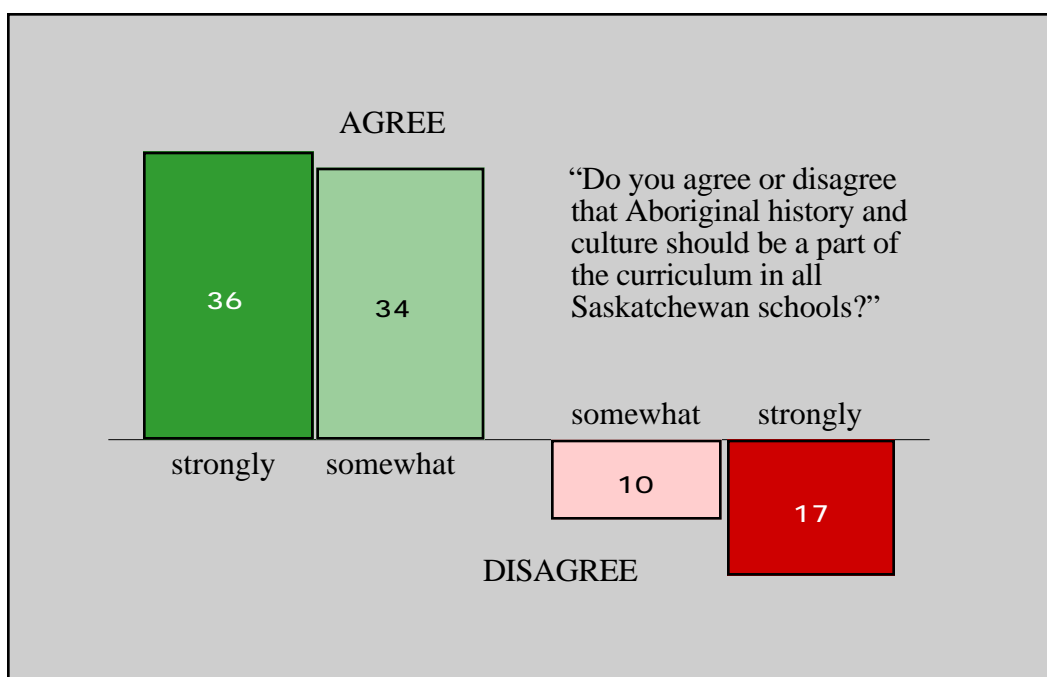
Parents with children in the K-12 system (66-27) were considerably more likely than others (51-40) to take a positive view in this regard.

Disagreement appeared highest among those from households where there is some direct involvement in the field of education, respondents in the Non-Technical/Service/Clerical occupational category, and those in their fifties.

2.5 ABORIGINAL HISTORY & CULTURE

A large majority of Saskatchewan adults (70%) appears to agree that Aboriginal history and culture should be a part of the curriculum in all Saskatchewan schools. As shown below, there were some strong feelings in this regard, on both sides of the opinion scale.

Exhibit 12 - Aboriginal History & Culture in Curriculum



The highest levels of support for this type of curriculum component were observed among respondents whose most direct ancestors were from the First Nations of North America, and among respondents in the Moose Jaw/Swift Current & South West region.

While there was a solid majority of support among all demographic groups, opposition to this idea tended to be slightly higher in the north, as well as among younger respondents and males in general.

2.6 PARENTS ON QUALITY ISSUES

2.6.1 New Technologies

The vast majority (85%) of K-12 parents surveyed agreed that their child is, *“receiving sufficient exposure to new technologies in the classroom like computers and the internet”*. That represents about a 10-point increase from the 1995 SSTA Survey when a very similar question drew 75% agreement.

The current eighty-seven percent agreement level includes a majority (57%) registering strong agreement.

Disagreement was measured at only twelve percent (12%), including 5% disagreeing strongly. Disagreement was considerably higher among parents from households involved in the field of education (27%), as well as those in the employment categories, Highly Trained/ Technical/ Skilled (20%), and Professional/ Highly Educated Career (17%).

2.6.2 Positive Atmosphere

The vast majority (80%) of parents also agreed that their child’s school has, *“established an atmosphere which challenges the student’s potential”*. That figure of eighty percent was comprised of 38% who stated strong agreement and another 42% saying they agree somewhat.

Only 16% of all K-12 parents disagreed that such a positive atmosphere has been created in their child’s school, which included 6% in strong disagreement. Again, parents from households involved in the field of education (31%) appeared considerably more likely than other parents (14%) to disagree.

Parents in the northern rural areas (23%), and those of aboriginal ancestry (24%) were also more frequent than others in challenging the idea that an atmosphere which challenges the student’s potential has been created in their schools.

2.6.3 Sports and Athletics

A similar majority (80%) of parents also agreed that their child is receiving “sufficient opportunities in sports and athletics through the school”. That includes a solid majority (58%) who said they strongly agree.

Disagreement (16%) included 7% who disagreed only somewhat, and 9% who stated strong disagreement that sufficient opportunities in sports and athletics were available for their child.

While responses to this question were quite flat demographically, it was observed that more than one-quarter of all single parents (26%) challenged the idea that their child was receiving sufficient opportunities in sports and athletics through the school.

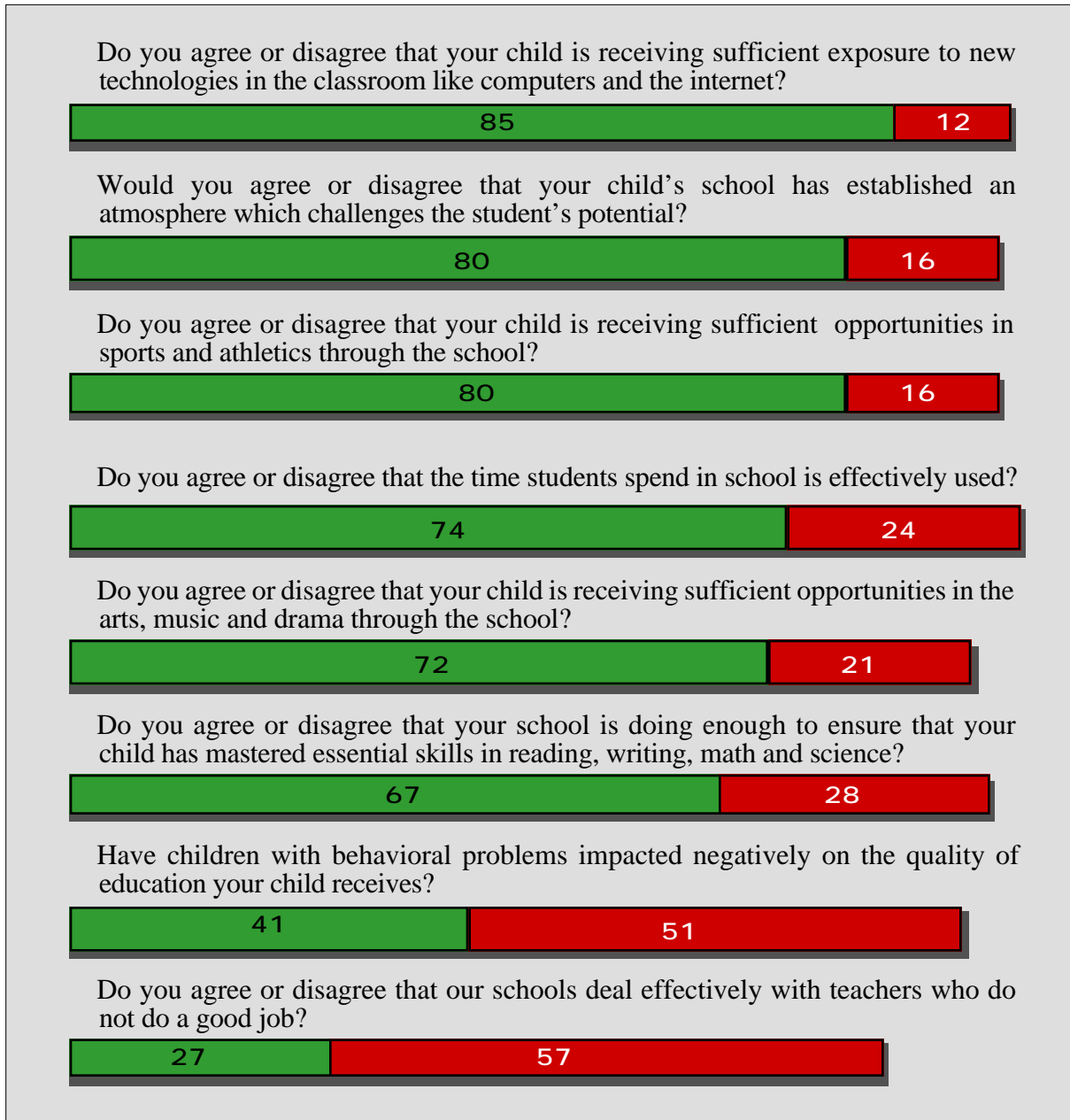
2.6.4 Effective Use of Time

Almost three-quarters (74%) of all parents agreed that, “the time students spend in school is effectively used”, including more than one-third (34%) who agreed strongly. That total agreement level is significantly higher than the 58% figure observed among parents of K-12 students in the 1995 SSTA Survey.

Unlike the questions on sufficient exposure to new technologies and a positive challenging atmosphere in the school, parents from households involved in education, were slightly more positive (78%) than others (73%) in this regard – the effective use of time spent in school.

About one-quarter (24%) of all K-12 parents disagreed that time in school is used effectively, including 12% who disagreed strongly. Disagreement was slightly higher in the rural (28%) as compared to urban areas (22%), and notably higher among parents in regions described as Moose Jaw/Swift Current/South West (35%).

Exhibit 13 - Parents on Quality Issues



2.6.5 Arts, Music & Drama

Most (72%) K-12 parents agreed that their child is, *“receiving sufficient opportunities in the arts, music and drama through the school”*. That included a large portion (46%) which strongly agreed.

Agreement on this question is slightly higher among those referring to children in the upper years, Grades 10-12 (76%), compared to those with children in the K-5 (68%) or middle school years (68%).

Similarly, urban parents (75%) agreed with sufficient opportunities in the arts at a slightly higher rate than those from rural areas (68%).

Examining the one in every five (21%) who disagreed, we also observe slightly above average rates of disagreement among single parents (30%), and those of aboriginal ancestry (28%).

2.6.6 Essential Skills

Two-thirds (67%) of all K-12 parents surveyed agreed that their school was doing enough to ensure that their child, *“has mastered essential skills in reading, writing, math and science”*.

That is somewhat lower than the 75% figure from the 1995 SSTA Survey.

Included in that two-thirds are 40% who agreed strongly with this positive view. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all K-12 parents disagreed with the idea that their school was doing enough to ensure the fundamentals were mastered.

While agreement far exceeded disagreement among all demographic groups, disagreement was above average among parents of children in the upper years (36%) of the system, and among those in Saskatoon and area (32%).

Recall from Section 2.1, that these were among the most likely groups to perceive an overall deterioration in education quality over the past ten or twenty years, and that a Lack of Basic Learning Skills was the most frequent rationale for that view.

It is also noteworthy that an above average portion (35%) of parents whose ancestry was other than North American or European, challenged the idea that their school was doing enough to ensure that the essential skills in reading, writing, math and science were mastered.

2.6.7 Problem Students

While most (51%) disagreed, a sizable percentage of K-12 parents (41%) suggested agreed that children with behavioral problems have, *“impacted negatively on the quality of education your child receives”*. The latter includes 22% who strongly agree that such an impact has been experienced.

Compared to the SSTA’s 1995 Survey where a similar question was asked to the parents of K-12 students, the current 41% percent figure represents little change from a 45% percent level measured then.

Recall from Section 2.1.2 that behavioral problems - Lack Discipline/Respect/Values/Disruption/etc. was the second most frequent type of rationale suggested by those who perceived a deterioration in the quality of education over the past ten or twenty years.

Parents from households involved in education were more likely (50-43) than others (40-52) to have experienced this type of negative impact. It also appeared more often among parents of middle school children (47-47), than among those with children in the early (41-50), or upper years (38-57).

In two of the five geographic regions created in this survey, there was actually more agreement with this type of negative impact than disagreement. Those were the East - Central and South region (52-43), and the Moose Jaw/Swift Current and South West region (48-39).

While the numbers were more even in Saskatoon and area (43-46), they were more positive in the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North (37-51), and far better in the Regina and area region (33-66).

The magnitude of the problem is indeed underscored by the fact that, even in the most positive region in this regard, a third of all K-12 parents claimed that behavioral problems of other children have negatively impacted their own child's quality of education.

In a focus group held in Regina, as a preliminary step in this survey, parents raised concerns about the amount of time that teachers are forced to spend dealing with behavioral problems, at the expense of other students.

2.6.8 Problem Teachers

As shown in Exhibit 13, while some (27%) agreed, most parents challenged the idea that, *"our schools deal effectively with teachers who do not do a good job"*. Fifty-seven percent (57%) disagreed, including 41% who strongly disagreed.

Educators clearly received more praise than criticism in this survey and in the focus groups which preceded it. However, the question of poorly performing teachers, or incidents of gross misconduct did arise in the group sessions.

As in the survey data, there was little confidence or belief that these situations are effectively recognized or handled by the schools, local boards, or any other body or authority.

Moreover, there was a general resignation among parents that, short of an all out parent revolution, little could be done in most of these situations, due to the terms of collective agreements, the teachers' union, or a lack of will among the parties involved.

The opinion that schools do not do a good job in dealing with poorly performing teachers tended to rise according to the age of parents, and was more prevalent and stronger among those with children in upper years, to the point among parents of Grade 10-12 students where 52% disagreed strongly.

While disagreement is slightly higher in rural (27-62) than urban (27-53) areas, majorities of K-12 parents in each region disagree that our schools deal effectively with teachers who do not do a good job, a sentiment especially noted in the East - Central and South, where 64% disagreed, including 48% strongly disagreeing.

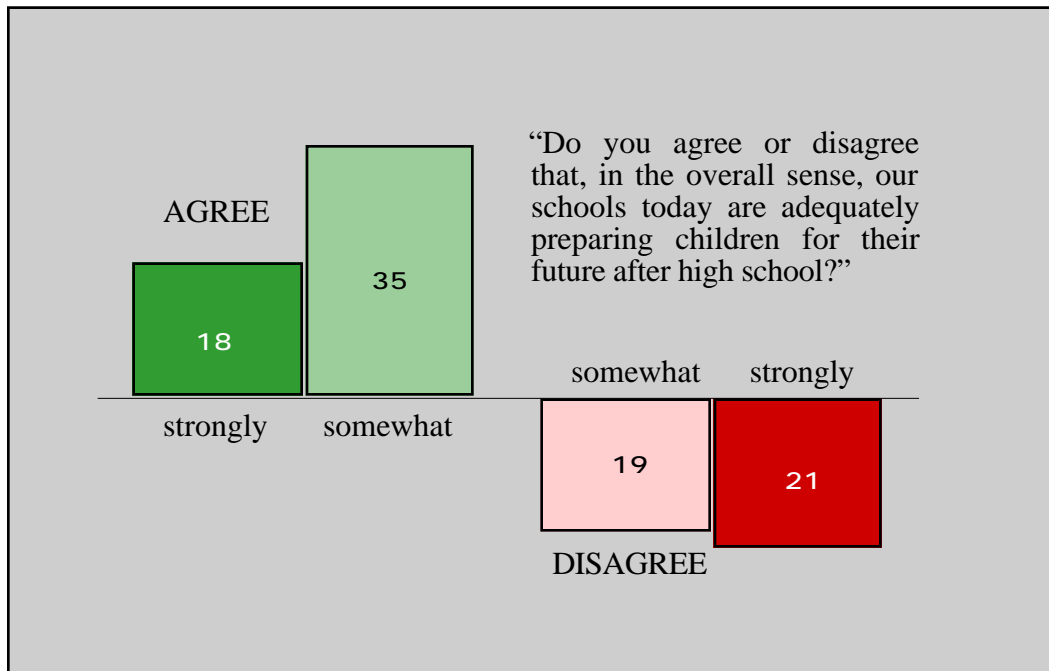
2.7 OVERALL PREPAREDNESS

2.7.1 General View

While a slight majority (53%) of Saskatchewan adults appears to agree that , “in the overall sense, our schools today are adequately preparing children for their future after high school”, there is a large body of disagreement (41%).

There is little difference here when comparing those without children currently in school (54-40) to those with children in the K-12 system (52-41). In the 1995 SSTA Survey, a similar portion (55%) of K-12 parents agreed.

Exhibit 14 - Schools Adequately Preparing Children for Future



However, parents of children in Grades 10-12 (51-47) appeared more likely to challenge the idea than either middle school parents (56-40), or those with children in the early grades (52-39). That ties to respondents age, where we find people in their fifties more inclined than others to disagree (48-50).

Respondents from households with any type of direct employment or involvement in the field of education (69-29) were far more likely than other survey respondents (51-42) to agree that our schools are adequately preparing children in this regard.

Overall, respondents in rural Saskatchewan (56-37) tended to have slightly more positive views of the general preparedness of our high school graduates, than those living in the cities (50-43).

Regionally, the most positive response set came from the East - Central & South region (64-29). Keeping in mind that data from the five major regions would be more reliable than the individual pieces which comprise them, it was observed that this included well above average agreement levels from both Yorkton-Melville and area (65-28), and Weyburn-Estevan and area (62-31).

Although less so than one would hope for, the data from the Battlefords/ Prince Albert & North region (57-38) was also slightly above average in the positive sense. This resulted from figures in North Battlefords and area (60-33) being above average and those from the Prince Albert region (53-43) very close to the overall figures.

Among the five major regions, Saskatoon and area (52-40) was closest to the overall figures. That resulted from a 49-42 split of opinion within the city itself, but more positive views from the much less populous rural area surrounding the city (59-32).

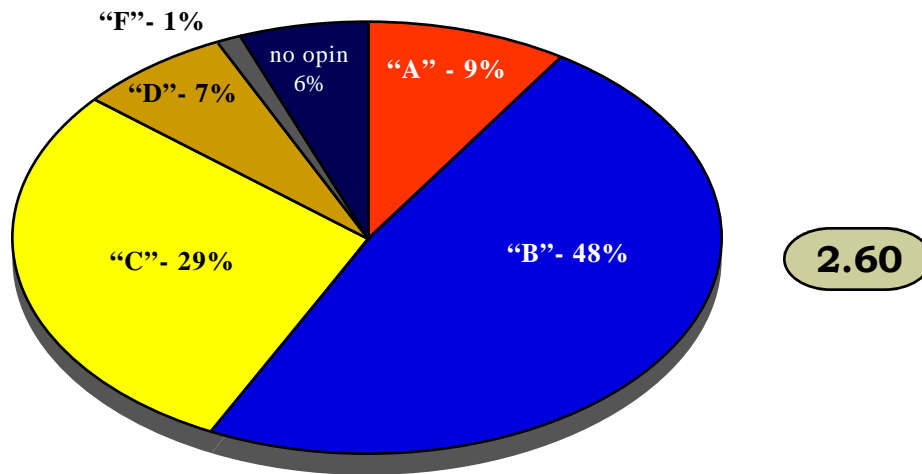
The Moose Jaw/Swift Current & South West region (52-45) appeared more evenly split on the overall preparedness of our high school graduates. However, those figures include far higher levels of agreement from the western portion, including the Swift Current/ Maple creek area (65-32), than from the eastern part, comprised of Moose Jaw and area (42-56).

Interestingly, the neighboring Regina and area region (46-48) had the least desirable view among the five major regions as to how adequately our graduates are prepared for their futures. The data from both the City of Regina itself (47-48) and the much smaller rural area (in terms of population) surrounding the city (44-49), both illustrated fairly even splits of opinion.

2.7.2 Grading the Quality

Respondents were asked to use a traditional 5-point grading system, A-B-C-D-F, to grade the quality of education provided by schools in their community. As shown below, a majority (57%) awarded their local schools an “A” or a “B”.

Exhibit 15 - Grade Assigned to Local Schools for Quality



Of course, another statement or view is equally correct — a majority (77%) comprised of more than three-quarter of all respondents, awarded their local schools a “B” or a “C” in terms of the quality of education.

In the data processing, values were assigned to each grade so as to create Grade Point Averages, for easy comparison between demographic groups (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0).

Thus, the lowest possible Grade Point Average would be zero (0.00) while the highest possible would be four (4.00). Respondents with no opinion (6%) were not included in the calculations. An overall GPA of 2.60 was calculated. One might consider that a “B minus” average in an extended grading system.

As shown in Exhibit 15, few respondents (1%) offered the schools failing marks. In fact, only 8% marked their local school schools less than “C”, which is generally considered a satisfactory or passing level.

Again, the rural perspective (2.68) appears slightly more positive than the urban (2.54), with 61% awarding “A’s” or “B’s”, versus 53% in the urban areas.

In fact, respondents in the two major cities (Saskatoon and Regina) offered considerably lower grades on the quality of education in their schools than others. Isolating those two cities, we observe GPA calculations of 2.36 in the City of Saskatoon, and 2.59 in the City of Regina. Both are below the figures reached among those residing in “other cities” (2.72), mid-sized towns (2.74), communities under 500 (2.63), or farms & acreages (2.63).

Parents of K-12 students (2.67) tended to give slightly more positive assessments of the quality of education in their schools, than others (2.55). That is particularly true of parents with children in the early K-5 years (2.72), and those in the middle school years (2.68). However, as seen elsewhere, parents of high school children (2.53) offered a less positive evaluation of quality, awarding fewer “A’s” and “B’s”.

Also visible in these response data are slightly lower quality of education assessments from respondents of aboriginal ancestry (2.45), mainly as a result of a greater portion of unsatisfactory marks – “D’s” and “F’s” (14%). According to ancestry, the highest marks were from those whose most direct ancestors came from continents other than North America or Europe (2.77). Almost two-thirds graded their schools “A” or “B” for quality of education.

In addition to evaluating their local schools, survey respondents were also asked to grade, *“schools across the province in general”*, again using ABCD or F in their evaluations.

A large portion (31%) of respondents declined this question, offering no opinion on the matter. However, among those who did, a Grade Point Average of 2.48 was reached – somewhat lower than the 2.60 GPA calculated with respect to the schools in the respondent’s own community, perhaps a *“C plus”* as opposed to a *“B minus”*.

Responses followed the same demographic patterns as seen previously, but for the most part evaluations were slightly lower, on a very consistent basis across all demographic groups.

In other words, virtually every demographic group examined tended to view the quality of education in their own area in a slightly more positive light than in *“schools across the province in general”*.

2.8 COMMENTS

On concluding the questionnaire section on Quality & Standards, respondents were asked if they had any further comments on how schools and school boards could do better in delivering quality education in their community.

A large portion (45%) of respondents did offer comments in this regard. These were subsequently grouped into the categories shown below.

Exhibit 16 – Comments/ Suggestions on Improving Quality of Education

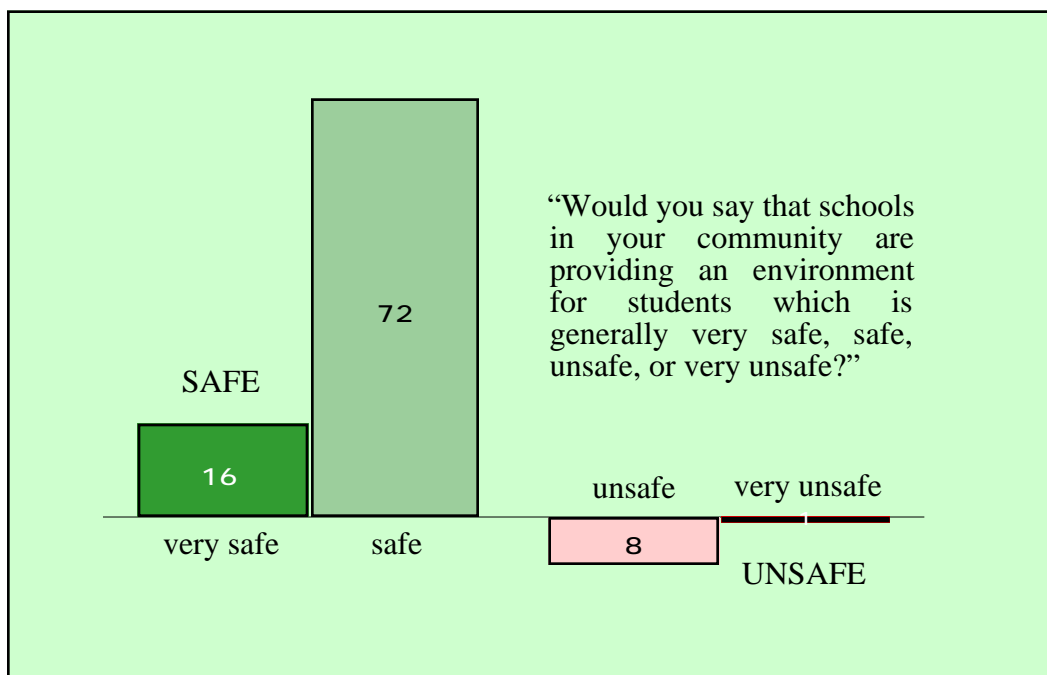
	% of all comments	% of all respondents
Hire More Teachers/ TA's/ Reduce Ratios	18	8
Higher Standards/ Testing/ Less Non-Academic	14	6
Promote/ Press for Increased Funding/ Resources	11	5
Improve Teachers - Training/ Motivation/ Morale	11	5
Improve Discipline/ Behaviour/ Morals/ Values	10	4
Improve Parent/ Community Involvement	9	4
Improve Admin/ Decisions/ Res Allocation/ Spend	8	4
Improve/Expand Curriculum/ Modern/ Relevant	5	2
Improve Life/Social Skills/Preparedness	4	2
other/ misc.	10	4
no comments	-	55

3. STUDENT SAFETY

3.1 GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

The vast majority (88%) of Saskatchewan adults appears to agree that their local schools are providing a safe environment for students. That includes about one in every six (16%) who rate the school environment as, *very safe*.

Exhibit 17 - Safety of School Environment



Survey respondents from households involved in education (94-6), parents of children in the K-12 system (91-8), respondents from higher income households (93-5), and women in general (90-8) all appear slightly more likely than others to perceive a safe school environment.

Nine percent (9%) of all respondents rated their local school environment as either unsafe (8%) or very unsafe (1%).

The portions perceiving an unsafe environment for students fell steadily with community size, from 11% among respondents in the two major cities, to 9% among those in “other cities”, to 8% among those in mid-sized towns, to 7% among those in small communities under 500, to only 6% among those living on farms or acreages.

It is also worth noting that respondents who suggested their most direct ancestors came from the First Nations of North America (83-15), or from continents other than North America or Europe (84-13), were slightly less inclined than those of European descent (88-9), to rate their local school environments as safe.

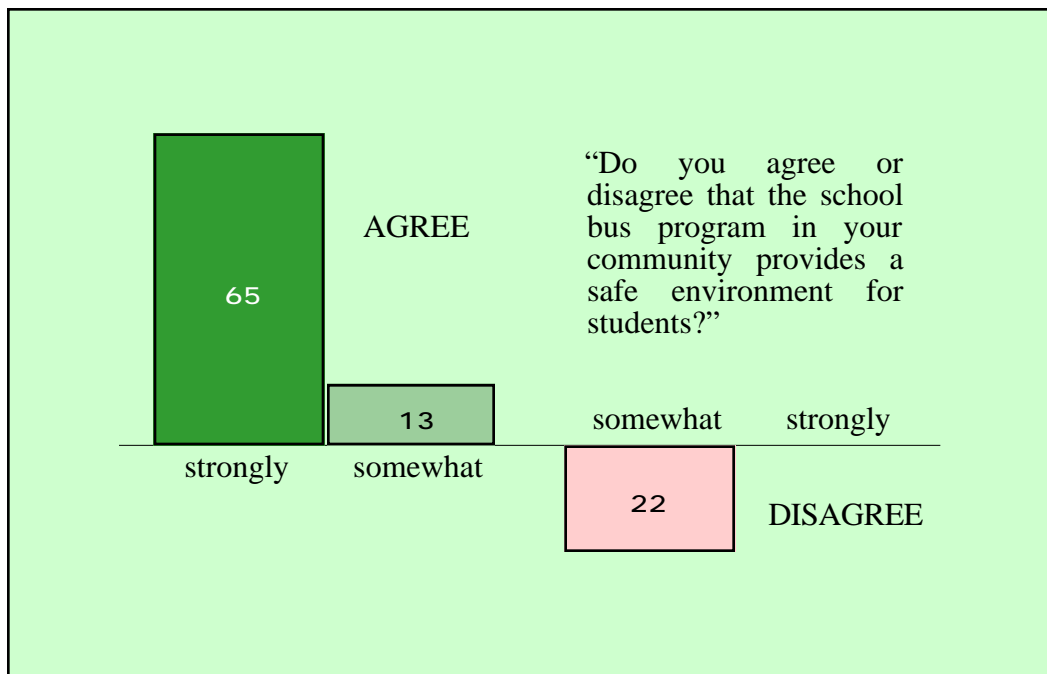
3.2 PARENTS ON SAFETY ISSUES

3.2.1 School Bus Program

About one-third (34%) of all K-12 parents surveyed have a child who is transported to or from school in a school bus – 26% of those in urban areas (cities), and 43% of those in rural areas.

Most parents (78%) agree that the school bus program in their community, provides a safe environment for students. That includes 65%, or almost two-thirds of all parents surveyed, who agree strongly.

Exhibit 18 - Safe School Bus Environment



However, a sizable portion (22%) of K-12 parents disagrees somewhat with the idea that their local school bus program provides a safe environment – 32% in the cities and 11% in rural areas.

Parents from households where someone is employed or directly involved in the field of education were considerably more likely to disagree that a safe school bus environment exists - 32% versus 21% among others.

A rather shocking figure of 46% of all K-12 parents from the Saskatoon and area region disagreed somewhat with the opinion that the school bus system provides a safe environment for students. That includes half (50%) of the parents from the City of Saskatoon itself.

In Regina and area, twenty-four percent (24%) of the K-12 parents surveyed disagreed somewhat that the school bus environment is safe, including almost one-third (31%) of those from the City itself.

Disagreement in those two areas (46% and 24%) far exceeded the disagreement levels in other regions, all three of which were measured at only nine percent.

When we view these responses according to whether or not the parent has children using the school bus system, we find a disagreement level of only 2% among parents with children using the system, compared to 33% among those whose children are not being transported by school bus.

That 33% disagreement figure includes 42% of all urban parents whose children do not use the buses, and 19% of all rural parents whose children do not.

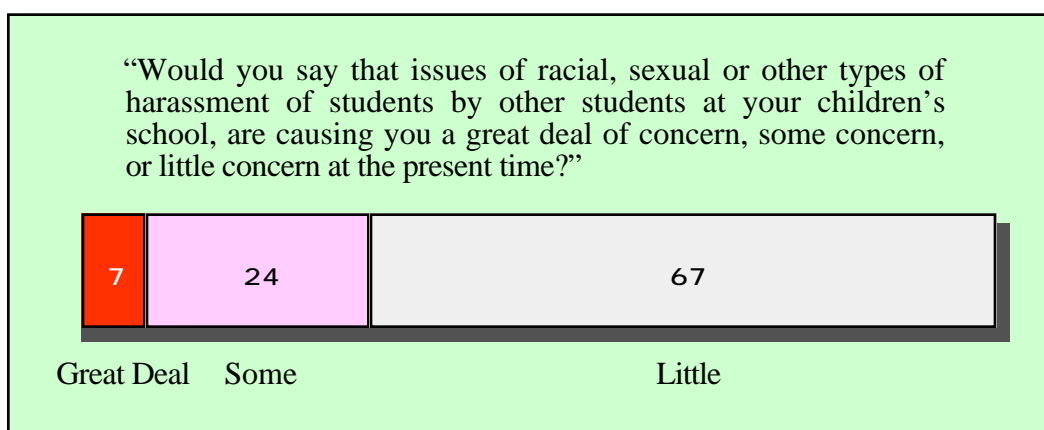
Viewed another way, ninety-seven percent (97%) of the K-12 parents who disputed the idea that the system provides a safe environment, are not using the system. It is a safe bet that significant numbers are not using the school bus system because of their concerns about safety.

3.2.2 Harassment

While two-thirds (67%) of all K-12 parents expressed little concern over racial, sexual, or other types of harassment of students by other students, a sizable portion (30%) stated at least some concern in this regard.

Included in the latter figure were 7% who said this type of issue was presently causing them a great deal of concern.

Exhibit 19 - Concern About Harassment By Other Students



Regionally, and according to almost all other demographic variables examined, there is little variance in the “great deal of concern” figures. However, when we view the total with at least some concern, some difference are apparent.

The 30% average figure experiencing at least some concern in this regard includes 34% of all K-12 parents in the northern half and 26% of those in the southern half of the province; 32% among urban parents and 28% among rural.

Two of the five major regions exhibited slightly above average levels of concern in this regard – the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (37%), and the East - Central & South region (36%).

Other regions showed slightly lower levels – Saskatoon & area (30%), Regina & area (24%), and Moose Jaw/Swift Current & South West (17%).

However, the greatest difference observed in how parents responded to this question was according to ancestry. Among K-12 parents whose most direct ancestors came from the First Nations of North America, forty-six percent (46%) expressed at least some concern over harassment of students by other students, including 21% who stated a great deal of concern.

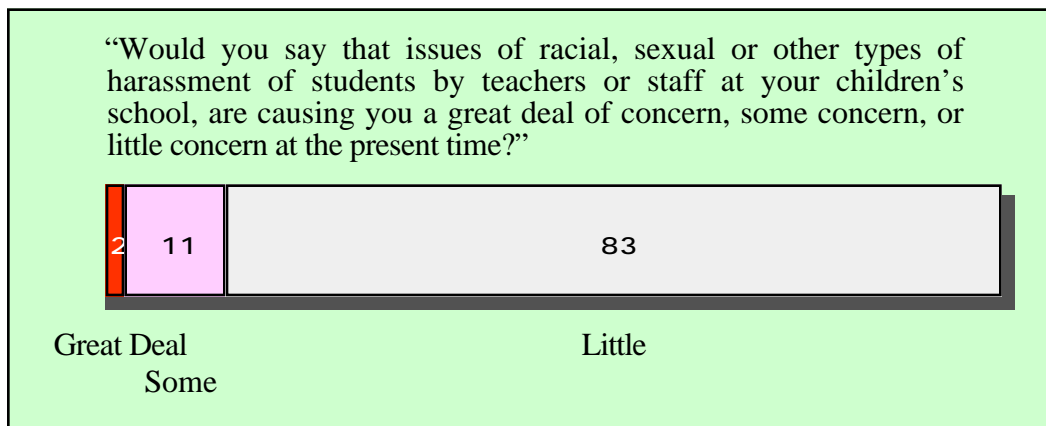
That compares to level of 29% among parents of European descent, and 25% among those of “other” ancestry.

Recall from Section 3.1 that First Nations respondents were seen as slightly less likely than others to rate their local school environment as safe.

K-12 parents were also asked to assess their own levels of concern over racial, sexual or other types of harassment of students by teachers or staff at their child’s school.

Response data are depicted below in Exhibit 20.

Exhibit 20 - Concern About Harassment By School Staff



Concern about this source of harassment was far lower than was seen with respect to other students. Nonetheless, almost one in every eight parents (13%) did express at least some concern in this regard – including 2% who claimed to be experiencing a great deal of concern at the present time.

Unlike harassment from other students, concern over racial, sexual, or other types of harassment of students by teachers or staff, was stated more often by male parents (17%) than females (9%). Similarly, parents from households involved in the field of education (22%), were more likely than others (12%) to express this type of concern.

However, once again, parents in the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (20%), and the East - Central & South region (21%) were more frequent than others in experiencing concern in this regard. Concern reached only 8-9 percent in the other regions.

Once again as well, parents of aboriginal ancestry (37%) showed the highest rate of concern about harassment from that source.

3.3 COMMENTS

In closing the School Safety topic, respondents were asked if they had any comments on how schools and school boards could do better in student safety at the schools in their area.

About one in three respondents (30%) offered suggestions in this regard. These were coded and grouped as shown below.

Exhibit 21 – Comments/ Suggestions on Improving School Safety

	% of all comments	% of all respondents
More/ Better Supervision	38	11
Greater Student Awareness/Input/Programs	21	6
Effective Penalties/Programs for Bullying/Violence	17	5
Closer Links to Other Agencies - Traffic/Crime/Family	11	3
Better School Bus Equipment/ Seat Belts	4	1
other/ misc.	9	3
no comments	-	70

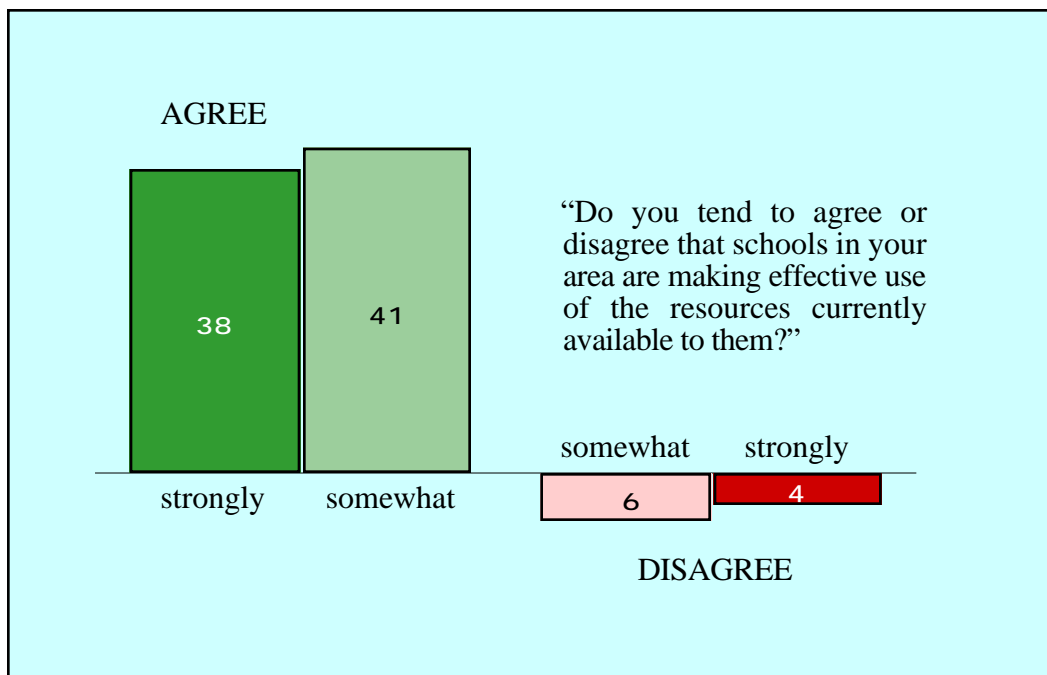
4. FUNDING & RESOURCE UTILIZATION

4.1 GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS

The vast majority (79%) of Saskatchewan adults appears to believe that schools in their area are making effective use of the resources currently available.

That level of agreement is very close to the 78% figure from a similar question in the 1995 SSTA survey. Agreement exceeded the 75% mark in all regions of the province, with only one in ten (10%) registering any disagreement.

Exhibit 22 - Effective Use of Resources



This positive view reached 94% among those from households directly involved in the field of education – certainly an indication that “insiders” believe schools are generally doing the best they can with what they have.

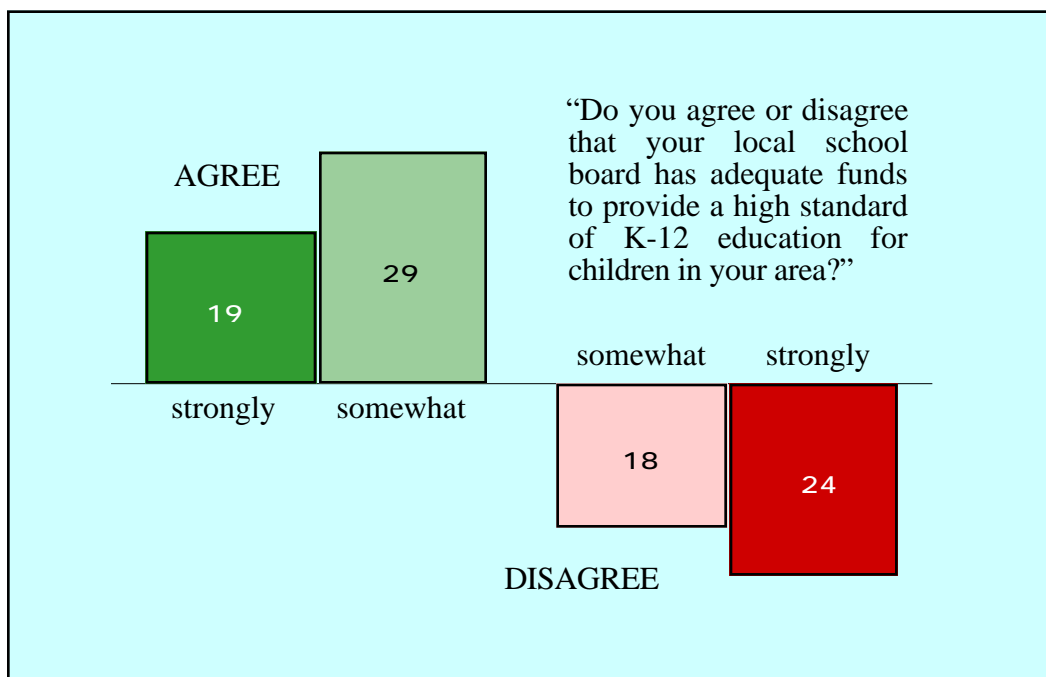
However, while reasons are unclear, significant disagreement was observed among respondents of ancestry other (22%) than North American or European.

4.2 FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

4.2.1 Adequacy

There is a fairly even split of opinion (48% versus 42%) among Saskatchewan adults as to whether or not their local school board has adequate funds to provide a high standard of education for children in the area.

Exhibit 23 - Adequacy of Funds for High Standard



This split of opinion was also evident among parents of K-12 children. While fifty-two percent (52%) agreed at least somewhat that the local board had adequate funds to do the job, forty-four percent (44%) disagreed.

Those figures represent a decline in the positive view since the 1995 SSTA Survey, in which 74% of all K-12 parents agreed that the resources were available at their child’s school for a quality education, while 23% disagreed.

Agreement that the local board has adequate funds appears slightly higher in the rural (50-39) than urban (46-45) areas. In fact, in the regions which surround and include the two major centers, opinion was very evenly divided in agreement and disagreement over adequate funding.

It is evident that respondents from households involved in the field of education (46-50) were slightly more likely than others (48-41) to perceive an underfunded situation with respect to their local school board.

Others more apt to take that view included respondents in their forties and those from higher income households.

However, demographic considerations aside, it is obvious that a very significant portion (42%) of Saskatchewan's adult population is of the opinion that their local school board does not have the funds it requires to deliver a high standard of education to children in the area.

4.2.2 Government Priorities

About two-thirds (66%) of all Saskatchewan adult citizens agree at least somewhat that there are areas where the government should spend less money, so it could make more funds available for education — 60% of all men and 71% of all women. That includes almost four of every ten (39%) who strongly agree.

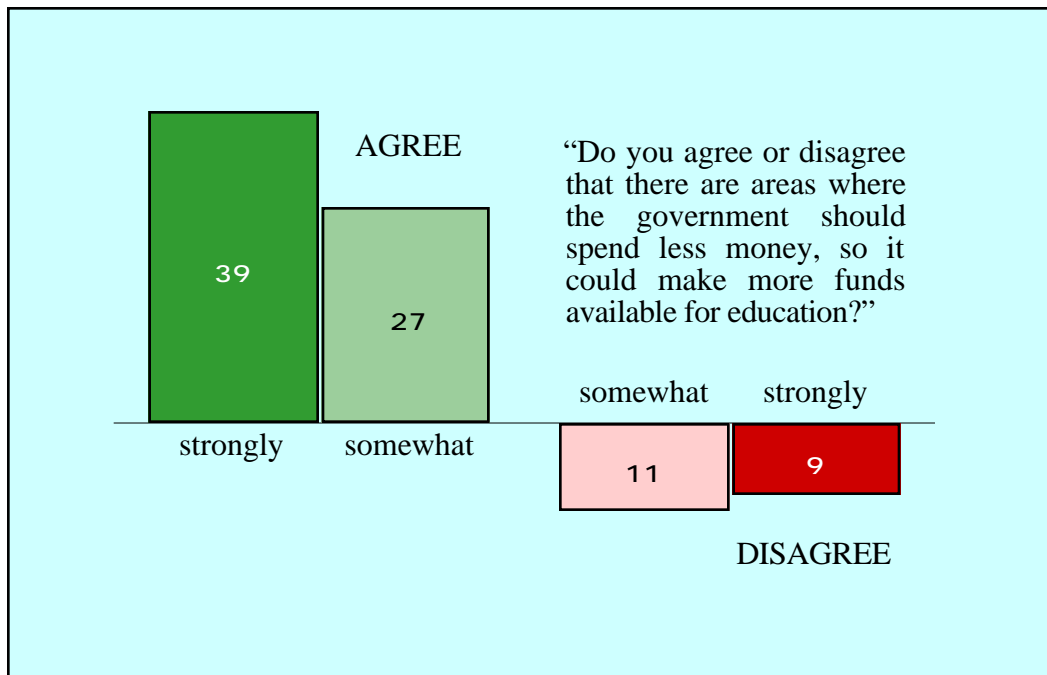
Among parents of K-12 students, an even larger portion (72-17) takes the majority view. Agreement rises from 71% among those with children in their early years, to 72% among those with middle school children, to 75% among those in their upper high school years.

Not surprisingly, those from households involved in education (74-12) are even more likely than others (64-21) to agree with this idea.

Agreement that the government should spend less elsewhere and thereby make more funds available to education was slightly higher in the northern portion of the province, notably the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (72-12), but reached solid majority proportions of at least 60% in each of the five regions, while disagreement reached no higher than one-quarter (25%).

Also among the most likely to agree with this idea were respondents noted earlier in this report as disagreeing in the overall sense that our schools today are adequately preparing children for their future after high school (72-17), as well as those who disagreed that their local school board has adequate funds to provide a high standard of K-12 education (75-15).

Exhibit 24 - Spend Less to Make more Available for Education



Disagreement with this proposition tended to rise according to respondent age group, peaking among those over sixty years of age (55-26), and those in the retired category of employment (55-27).

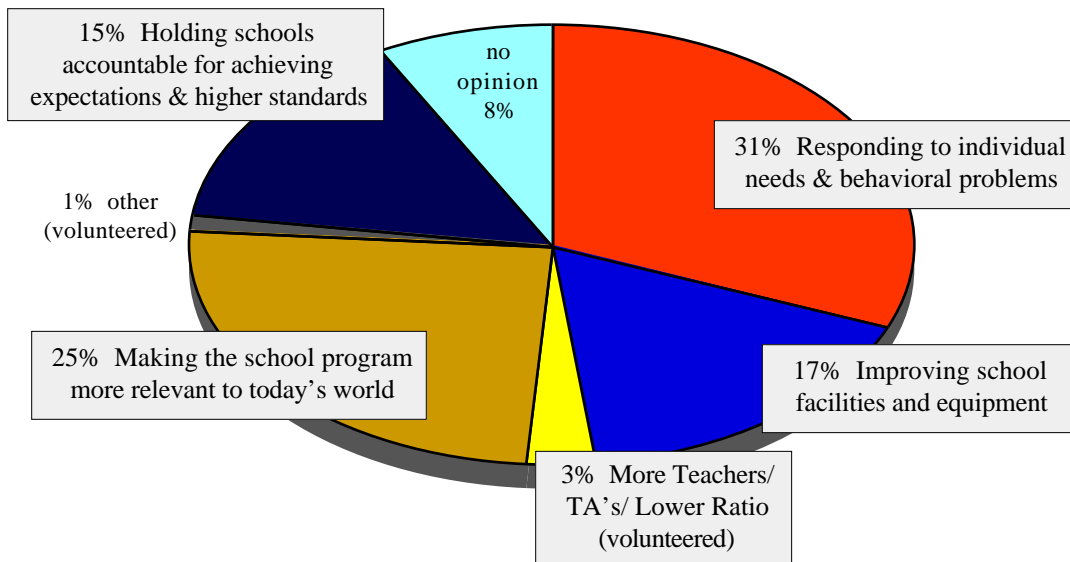
4.2.3 Greatest Need

Those who either challenged the idea that their local school board has adequate funds to provide a high standard of K-12 education (48%), or agreed that the government should spend less in some areas and make more funds available for education (66%), totaled seventy-six percent (76%) of all survey respondents.

In other words, at least three quarters (76%) of all Saskatchewan adults perceive a need for increased spending on education.

These respondents were asked to choose from four selected areas, as to where they see the greatest need for further additional funds. An “other” option allowed them to make further suggestions, as shown.

Exhibit 25 — Top Choice for Additional Funds Among Four Selected Areas
(among those perceiving a need for increased funding)



While all four areas were selected by significant numbers, the most frequent was, Responding to individual needs & behavioral problems (31%).

Based on the assumption that reduced student-teacher ratios would result in increased individual attention, one could also include the 3% who volunteered the idea that more teachers or teaching assistants are the greatest need.

The phrases individual attention and one-on-one assistance, were repeated in great numbers throughout this survey. It underscores a prevailing concern that children not be allowed to fall through the cracks in the school system, academically or socially.

This priority was by far the most frequent selection among women in general, as well as respondents from low income households, those of aboriginal descent, and those of ancestries “other” than North American or European.

The second most frequently selected area of greatest need for additional funds was, Making the school program more relevant to today’s world (25%).

While there was virtually no urban-rural difference in any of these spending priorities, this was the most frequent among males in general and respondents from higher income households. Otherwise, it was a common selection across all demographic criteria.

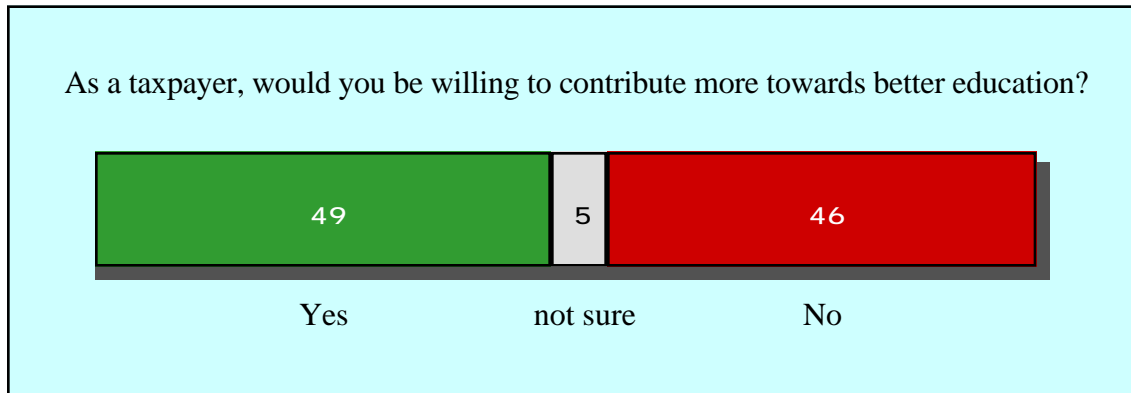
Improving school facilities and equipment (17%) was a more frequent top priority for increased funding among younger respondents and K-12 parents, particularly those with children in the earlier grades.

Like the item on relevancy to today’s world, Holding schools accountable for achieving expectations and higher standards (15%), was more frequently seen as the area in greatest need of additional funds, by males and respondents from higher income households. Also, people over forty were more likely than other respondents to view this as their top priority, in this respect.

4.2.4 Contributing More

Saskatchewan adults appear very closely split (49% versus 46%) on their willingness to contribute more towards better education.

Exhibit 26 Willingness to Contribute More



Most respondents from Saskatchewan’s cities (54-40) claimed they would be willing to pay more, while most from the rural areas said otherwise (43-53).

Similarly, while most K-12 parents (54-37) suggested they would be willing to contribute more, most respondents without children in the schools took a contrary position (46-51).

Notwithstanding those differing views, there is obviously a large portion of the population which considers the need serious enough to warrant additional tax revenues. That includes large portions in all population segments, urban and rural, parents and non-parents.

Among the most likely to indicate a willingness to contribute more are residents of the two major cities, students, single parents, respondents of aboriginal descent, and those within the highest household levels over \$90 thousand.

Most (58%) respondents who had earlier chosen the most frequent selection, *Responding to individual needs & behavioral problems*, as their top priority for additional funds, claimed to be willing to contribute more for better education.

Similarly, most (56%) of those who selected the #2 choice — *Making the school program more relevant to today's world*, also claimed a willingness to contribute more towards better education.

A majority (54%) of respondents who cited, *Improving school facilities and equipment*, as their top education spending priority claimed they were willing to contribute more.

However, a slightly smaller portion (47%) of the respondents who said their top priority was, *Holding schools accountable for achieving expectations and higher standards*, appeared willing to contribute more towards better education.

The 49% of all survey respondents who did claim they were willing to pay more towards better education, were subsequently asked to suggest how much more they would be willing to contribute in taxes for that purpose.

While a large portion (23%) of these respondents would not come up with a figure, two-thirds (67%) offered no more than two hundred dollars in this respect — either \$200 (20%), or \$100 (46%), or less (1%). The balance — about 9% suggested higher amounts.

We calculate an average (among those who did suggest an amount) of \$181, which, although it does not sound like a great sum, would constitute a significant increase in property taxes for most homeowners.

Generally speaking, the demographic groups seen as most likely to be willing to contribute more towards better education, were also the ones which tended to suggest higher amounts.

For example, urban residents and K-12 parents were not only more likely than others to suggest they would be willing to contribute more towards quality education, but also tended to suggest higher amounts than like-minded respondents with from rural areas, or those with no children in the system.

Similarly, those from households in the higher income levels, were not only more likely than others to express a willingness to contribute more, but also tended to offer higher amounts than other similarly inclined respondents.

4.2.5 Aboriginal Needs

Another reasonably close split of opinion (43% versus 52%) is apparent on whether or not Saskatchewan school boards, *“should invest more resources to support aboriginal students in becoming more successful in our schools”*.

There appeared to be slightly greater support in the southern half of the province for this type of measure. However, there was more disagreement than agreement in four of the five major regions, the exception being Regina and area (48-47), which split almost evenly.

As a group, respondents from households where someone was employed or directly involved in the field of education (51-44), tended to favor this type of investment, but only slightly more frequently than others (41-54).

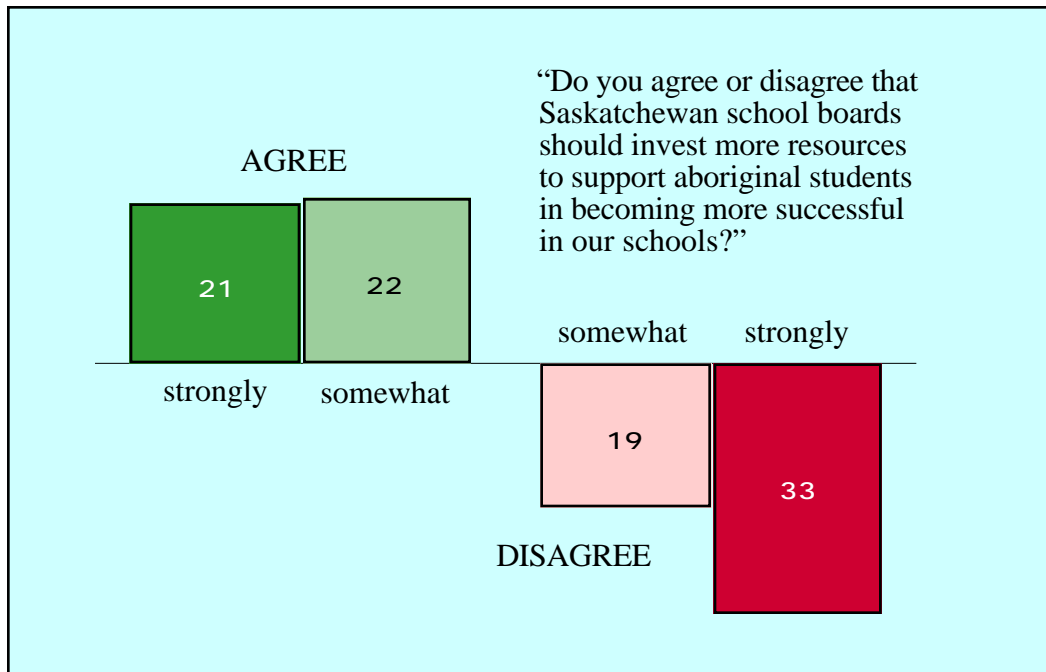
Similarly, a somewhat greater percentage of men (47-50) than women (39-55) agreed with this concept.

It was also evident within these response data, that there was generally little difference in opinion on the question of a targeted investment in aboriginal education, strictly on the basis of those who did or did not currently have children in the K-12 system.

However, it is clear that, as a group, those with children in high school (34-60) were far less willing than others to agree to a type of expenditure specifically in support of aboriginal students.

In an environment where there is widespread concern about funding and financial constraints, we assume that many parents of children in their final few years in school, would balk at almost any reallocation of resources, which might further strain a system struggling to maintain its current level of quality.

Exhibit 27 - Invest More Resources To Support Aboriginal Students



It should also be noted that respondents from low income households tended to agree with this idea.

While respondents of aboriginal ancestry, were among the most supportive of such an initiative, those whose origins were other than First Nations or European, were among the lowest in agreement.

4.3 COMMENTS

Respondents were offered the opportunity to comment or make further suggestions with regard to Funding & Resource Utilization – how schools and school boards could do better in this area.

About 20% of all respondents offered additional thoughts on this topic. They were grouped into five categories as shown below. As these numbers tend to be small and reasonably well dispersed demographically, there is little visible pattern in the responses.

Exhibit 28 – Comments on School Funding & Resource Utilization

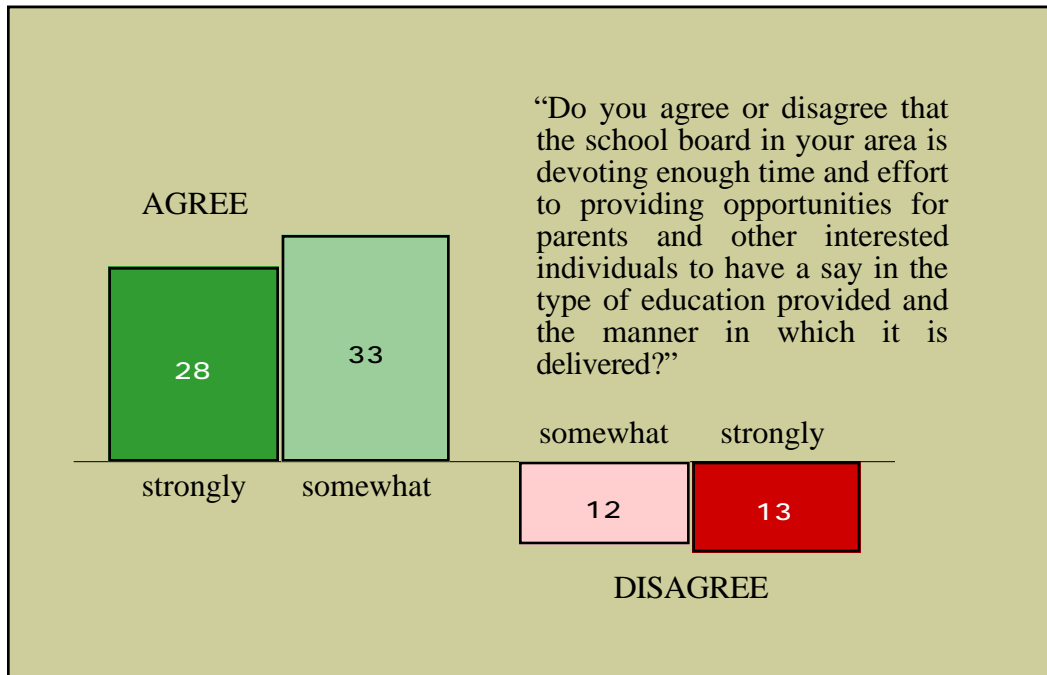
	% of all comments	% of all respondents
Public Review Spending/ Avoid Waste/Duplication	31	6
Solve Funding/Press Gov't/ New Ways/Taxes	19	4
Reduce Admin Exp/ Redirect to Classroom/ Basics	17	3
More Spending Needed in Specific Areas	9	2
Integrate Aboriginal Programs/Schools/ All Equal	8	2
other/ misc.	17	3
no comments	-	80

5. INPUT & COMMUNICATION

5.1 OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT

Most (61%) Saskatchewan adults appear to agree that their local school board is devoting enough time and effort to providing opportunities for input from parents and other interested citizens. On the other hand, about one-quarter (26%) of the adult population disagrees.

Exhibit 29 - School Board Providing Opportunities for Input



Perception of adequate input opportunity was slightly higher among K-12 parents interviewed than others, slightly slightly higher in the South and slightly higher in rural areas.

However, majorities in all five major regions expressed agreement that their local board makes an adequate effort on public input. That ranged from 56% in Saskatoon and area, to a high of 67% in the East - Central & South region.

5.2 PARENTS ON COMMUNICATION

5.2.1 Meeting With Teachers

Eighty-seven percent (87%) of all K-12 parents surveyed claim to have met personally with one of their child's teachers within the past twelve months. Another 3% volunteered that, while they themselves had not personally done so, their spouse or partner had.

That 87% figure is comprised of 86% of all male parents and 89% of all female parents surveyed; 91% of all urban parents and 84% of those in the rural areas.

Parents in the Battlefords/ Prince Albert & North region (77%) reported somewhat below average levels of meeting with teachers. That figure was measured the same in either segment of that region – North Battlefords and area and Prince Albert and area.

Regina and area (95%) recorded the highest level, including 98% of the parents surveyed from within the City itself. Saskatoon and area (91%) was also above the average level, including 92% of the City parents surveyed. In the two remaining regions, figures of 87% were recorded.

K-12 parents of aboriginal ancestry (78%), and those whose ancestry was "other" (75%) than First Nations or European, were both slightly less likely than those of European descent to report a parent-teacher interview in the past 12 months.

5.2.2 Communicating Progress

More than three-quarters (76%) of all K-12 parents surveyed agreed that, "*the teacher or the school clearly communicates how well your child is progressing during the school year*". That includes almost half (48%) who strongly agreed that clear communication is received on their child's progress.

On the other hand, one in every five parents (20%) disagreed, including 9% strongly disagreeing that they receive clear communication during the year on how their child is progressing. Current opinion (76-20) compares to similar figures in the 1995 SSTA Survey (79-16).

While there was little urban/rural difference seen, a slightly higher level of agreement was seen among parents in the south (81-16) than in the northern half (72-24) of the province

The Saskatoon & area figure was right on the overall average (76-19), but parents from the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (68-29) once again reported below average communication, in this case in terms of student progress. Figures from other regions: Regina and area (77-20); East - Central & South (84-13), and Moose Jaw/ Swift Current & South West (87-13).

K-12 parents of First Nations ancestry (60-31) were considerably less likely than others to agree that they receive clear communication on their child's progress.

5.2.3 Communicating Expectations

Compared to communicating progress during the year, a slightly lower overall percentage (70%) of parents agreed that, *"your child's teacher or the school has effectively communicated to you what your child is expected to learn at his or her grade level"*. However, half (50%) of all parents agreed *strongly* that the teacher or school has indeed effectively communicated that information.

Twenty-seven percent (27%) disagreed, including 15% strongly disagreeing. The current split of opinion (70-27) compares to 70-28 in the 1995 Survey.

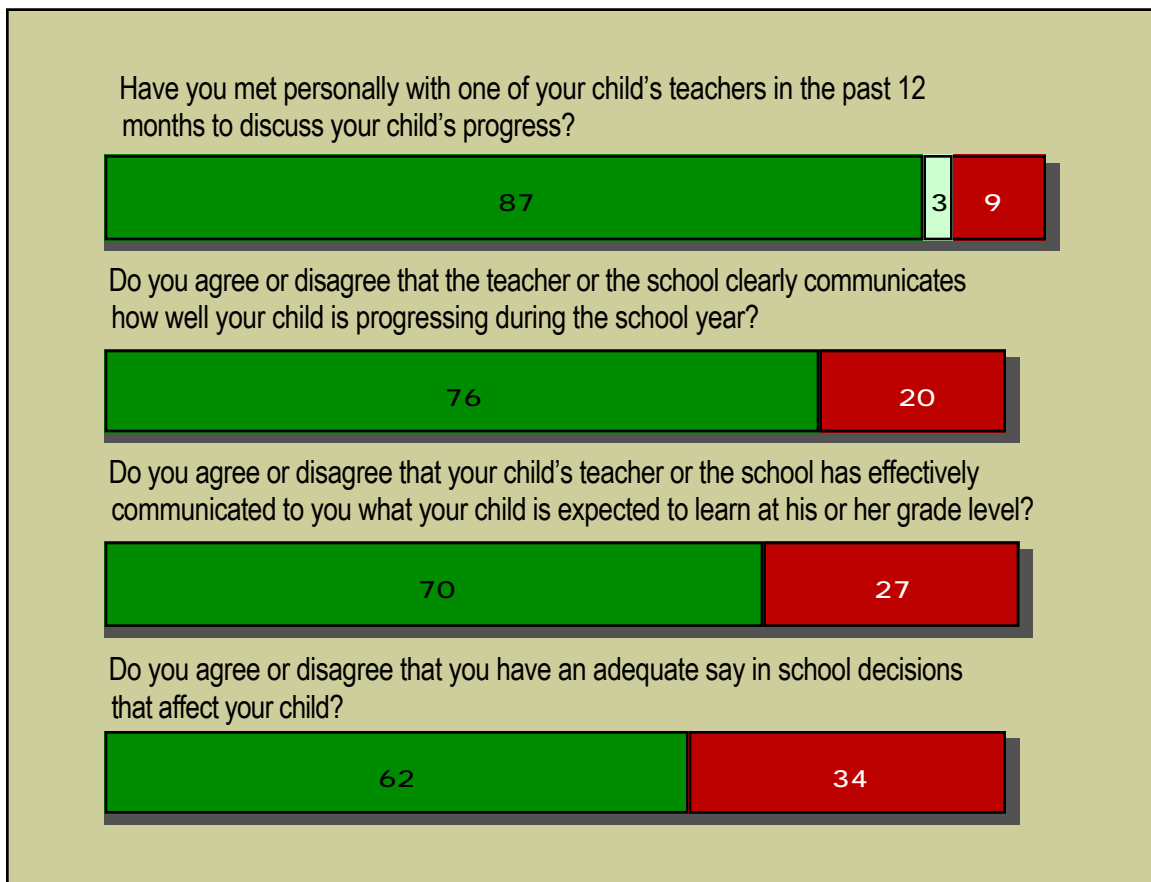
Communication in this regard also appears slightly weaker in the north. Nonetheless, in the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (65-31), agreement still ran about 2:1 over disagreement, while similar figures were observed in the adjacent Saskatoon and area region (68-31).

In the other regions, agreement levels on effective communication of expectations were over the seventy percent mark, including the Regina and area (74-23) region, the East - Central & South (73-27), and the Moose Jaw/ Swift Current & South West region (78-17).

However, once again, communication appeared considerably weaker between the schools and K-12 parents of aboriginal descent (57-34), in this instance on what the child is expected to learn at his or her grade level.

Communication of expectations was also rated much lower than reporting student progress, among single parents (63-33) and homemakers (53-47).

Exhibit 30 - Parents on Communications Issues



5.2.4 Participating in Decisions

Most (62%) K-12 parents tended to agree that they have enough say in decisions that affect their child, including 30% agreeing strongly. On the other hand, there was disagreement from more than one-third (34%) of all parents, almost half of that (17%) strong disagreement.

That 62-34 split of opinion compares to 61-33 in the 1995 SSTA survey.

Urban parents (66-30) were slightly more inclined than rural parents (58-39) to feel an adequate sense of input into school decisions affecting their child. And as a group, female parents (66-31) appeared slightly more convinced of their own influence in the process than males (58-38).

Regionally, opinion was fairly consistent, apart from the the Moose Jaw/ Swift Current & South West region (48-48), which showed a surprising level of disagreement on adequate parental influence on school decisions, considering we observed such positive numbers on the communication of expectations and student progress in that region.

In each of the other regions, there was over 60% in agreement: Saskatoon and area (64-32); the Battlefords/Prince Albert & North region (63-36), East - Central & South (67-30), and Regina and area (64-33).

Demographic groups which appear most doubtful about their influence on school decisions affecting their children, also include parents of children in the upper years in the system - Grades 10-12 (53-46), and hence parents in their forties (54-46) as well.

Single parents (56-41), those of aboriginal descent (57-40) and parents with household income levels over \$90 thousand (57-40), all show only slightly below average levels of agreement on adequate input into decision making.

5.3 COMMENTS

Survey respondents were invited to make suggestions or comments with regard to how schools and school boards could do better in parental involvement or public input into the way our schools are run.

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of all respondents offered additional thoughts on this topic, which were grouped into the categories shown below.

Exhibit 31 – Comments on Parental Involvement & Public Input

	% of all comments	% of all respondents
Board - Make Stronger Effort for Input/ Publicize	23	7
Greater Teacher-Parent Contact/ Updates/ Calls	16	5
Invite/Involve Parents in More Meetings	12	3
Use Parents for Ideas/ Career Experience/Expertise	11	3
More Printed Info/News from School/Board	7	2
Make Parents & Families More Welcome in Schools	5	1
Involve ASAP on Academic/Behavioral Problems	3	1
Positive Comments on Involvement/Input	10	3
other/ misc.	14	4
no comments	-	71

6. GOVERNANCE

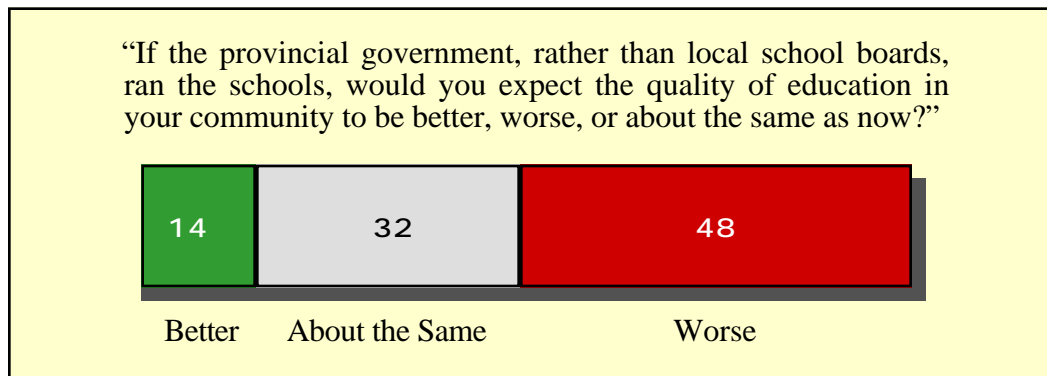
6.1 THE STRUCTURE

6.1.1 Alternative

Relatively few (14%) Saskatchewan adults take the view that a centralized alternative, where the provincial government ran the schools as opposed to local school boards, would offer any improvement to the quality of education in their communities.

As shown below, far greater numbers (48%) feel it would have a negative impact on quality.

Exhibit 32 - Centralized Alternative to School Boards



There was no identifiable demographic group where the government run concept tended to be seen as an improvement. However, homemakers and those in the Non-technical/service/clerical category of employment, appeared somewhat less likely than others to expect the local quality of education to be worsened by such a scheme.

While apparent across the board, opposition to a centralized alternative appears slightly stronger among men than women, in rural areas than urban, and tends to rise with respondents’ household income level.

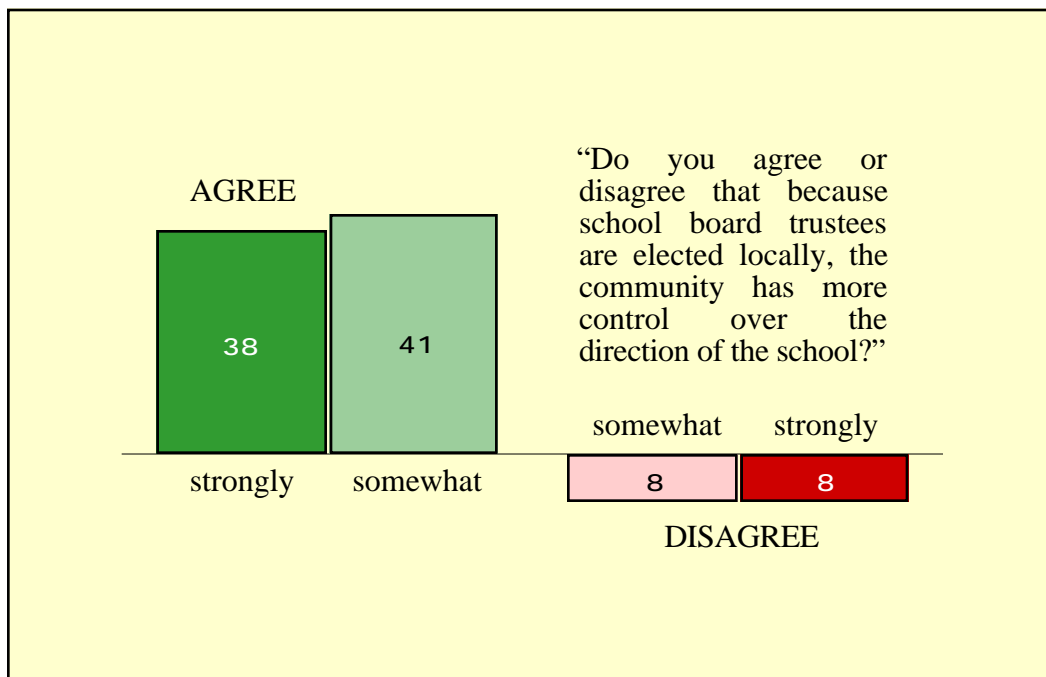
6.1.2 Local Control

Eight of every ten (79%) Saskatchewan adults agrees with the basic concept that, “because school board trustees are elected locally, the community has more control over the direction of the school”.

Only about one in every six (16%) people disagrees with that view.

That 79-16 opinion split is an even stronger endorsement of the current structure than was seen in the 1995 SSTA Survey (62-36).

Exhibit 33 - Locally Elected Trustees Gives Community More Control



Agreement that the locally elected concept gives the community greater control than would otherwise be the case, reached 76% in the urban areas and 81% in rural Saskatchewan. Virtually all demographic subgroups appeared to reach agreement levels of at least 75% on this question, including very strong agreement from respondents under forty years of age.

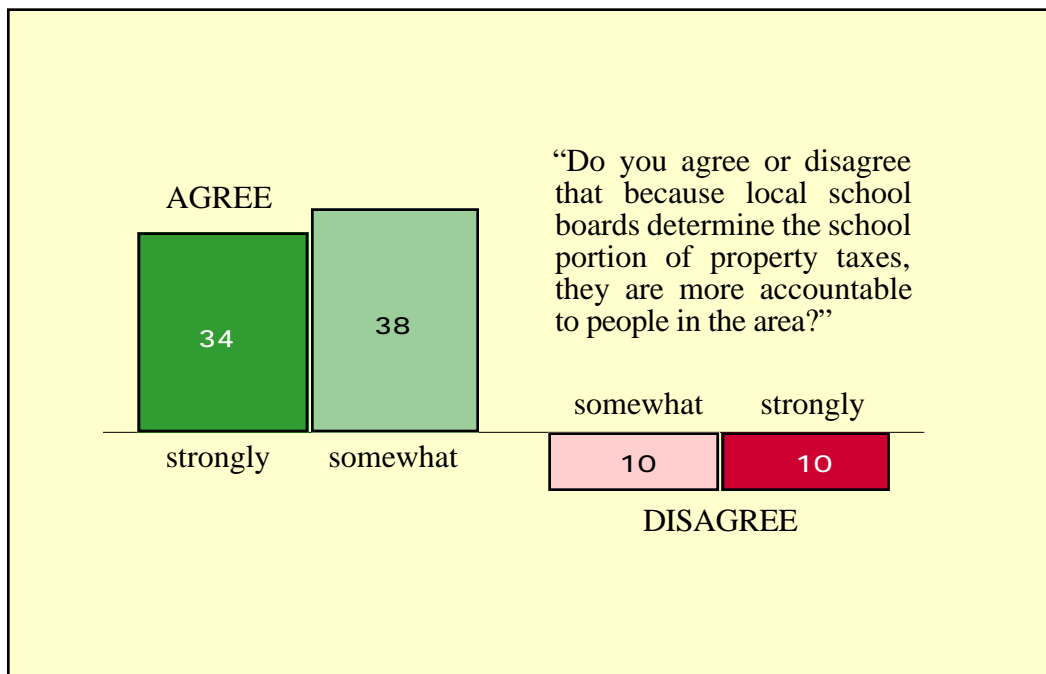
6.1.3 Accountability

Only slightly less enthusiastic than the recognition of locally elected trustees as intrinsic to local control, there is also a widespread belief among Saskatchewan adults that the local taxing authority makes school boards more accountable to area residents (72%).

Only about one in every five (21%) people challenges that idea.

Those figures (72-21) also represent a stronger endorsement of the current structure than was seen in the 1995 SSTA Survey (65-31).

Exhibit 34 - Local Taxing Authority Makes School Boards More Accountable



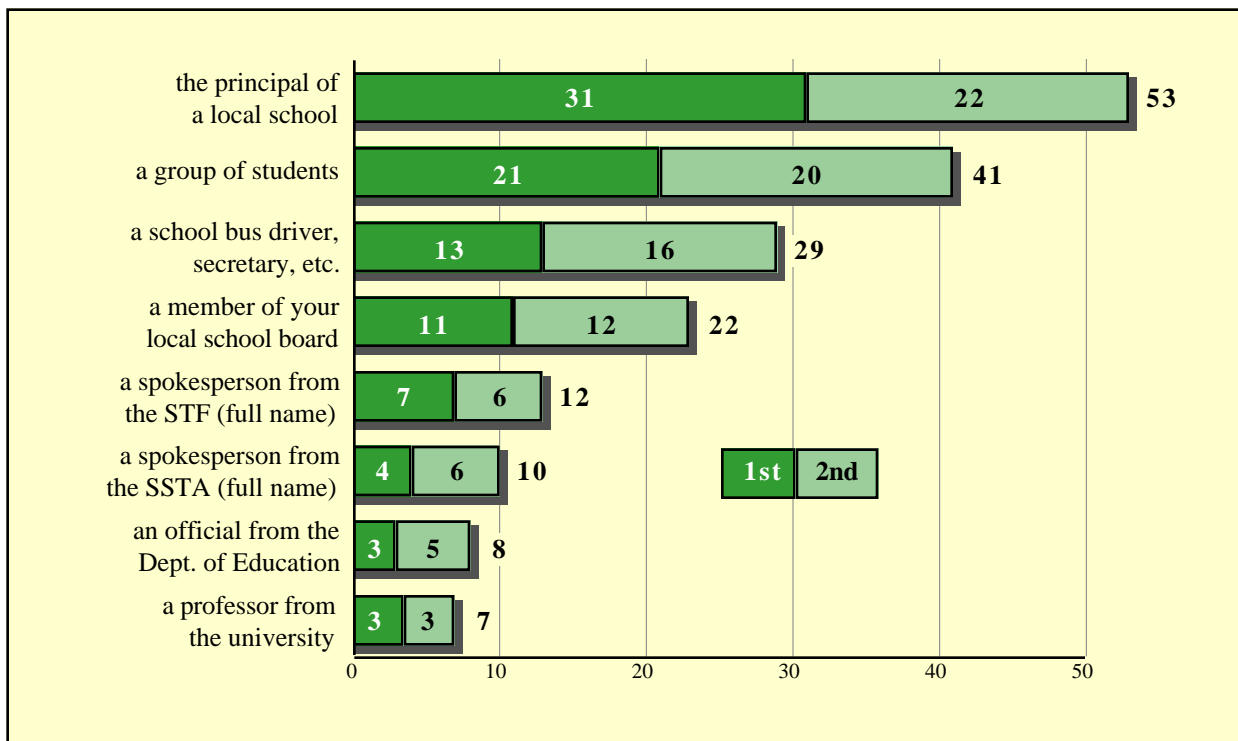
Once again, very consistent levels of agreement with this concept are observed across all demographic features of the population, with virtually every identifiable subgroup over the two-thirds level.

6.2 CREDIBILITY

In order to gain insight into the credibility Saskatchewan adults attach to various people or organizations, survey respondents were asked to choose first and second, from among eight selections, as to which would be, “the most believable in speaking on educational matters in Saskatchewan schools”.

This was not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible spokespersons, nor a detailed examination of the issue, but simply a guide in understanding how the SSTA might fare in this regard, against a handful of other choices.

Exhibit 35 - Most Believable on Educational Matters in Saskatchewan Schools



It was hardly surprising to find that most people assumed that, from among the choices offered, one of the most reliable sources for knowing what was really going on in the schools, would be, “the principal of a local school” (53%).

It is perhaps more surprising that messages from, “a group of students” (41%) or, “a school bus driver, secretary, or other school staff” (29%) on educational matters in Saskatchewan schools, would be viewed with such relative credibility, as compared to some of the other choices.

It could well be that those two tended to be viewed as more neutral sources than some of the others, in the sense of being less entangled in the educational machinery of Saskatchewan.

It is also interesting to note that, “a member of your local school board” (22%) was selected by more than twice as many respondents as, “a spokesperson from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association” (11%).

In the focus groups conducted prior to the implementation of the survey, a great deal of uncertainty was observed as to what exactly a school trustee was or did, and what or how the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association fit into the structure of education in the province. On the other hand, most appeared to comprehend the function of a local school board, and understand that members of local school boards are locally elected.

The acronym, SSTA, does not appear to enjoy widespread recognition either. Immediately after the credibility question, which specifically mentioned the full name of the association, only thirty-six percent (36%) of all respondents acknowledged that they had ever heard of the SSTA.

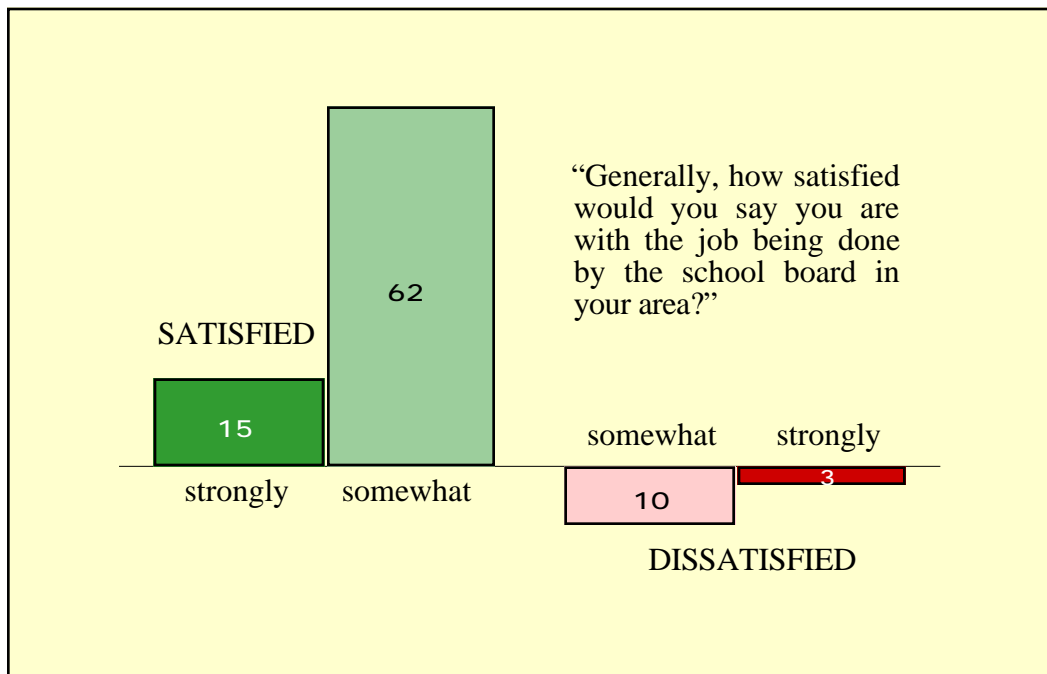
Thus, it is evident that, despite high levels of support for both the structure and the taxing authority of locally elected school boards, their association has considerable progress left to make, before it is generally considered a strong voice for education in the minds of Saskatchewan citizens.

6.3 SATISFACTION

It appears that more than three-quarters (77%) of all Saskatchewan adults are at least somewhat satisfied with the job being done by their local school board, while only thirteen (13%) are at all dissatisfied.

That represents a slight improvement over the SSTA’s 1995 figures (69-20).

Exhibit 36 - Satisfaction With Local School Board



While there were relatively few strong opinions, the overall satisfaction rate remains high – 71% in urban areas and 84% in rural Saskatchewan.

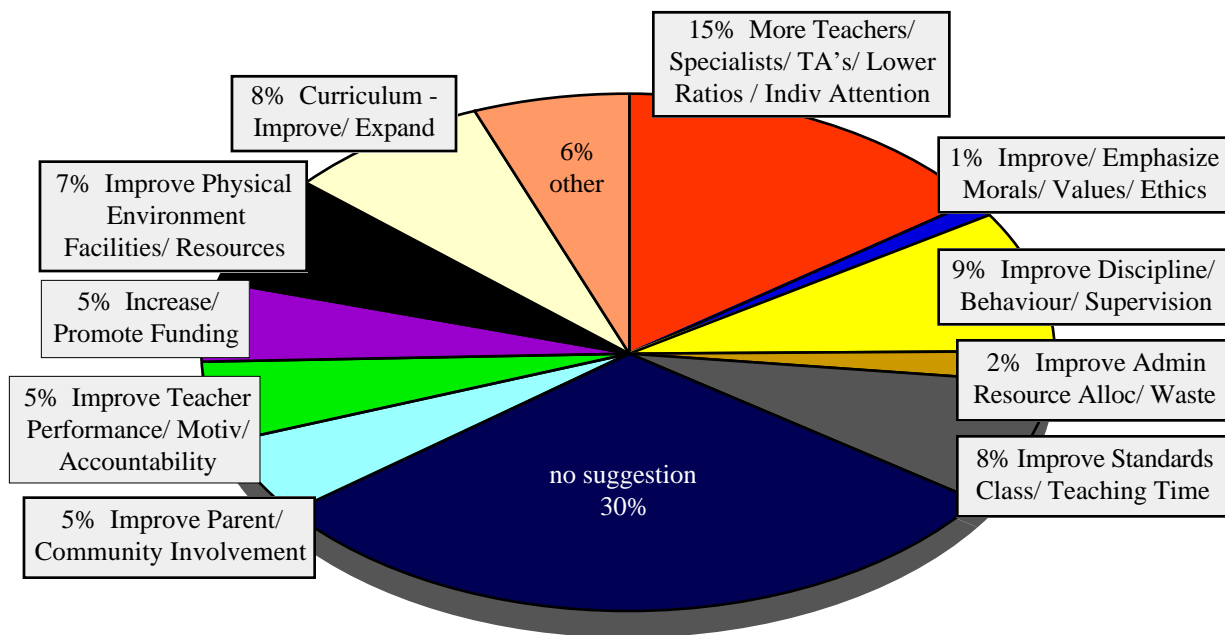
Satisfaction was measured lower in the Saskatoon & area region (66-23) than elsewhere, entirely a result of opinion within the City itself (61-28). While there are likely other factors involved, Saskatoon was seen earlier as comparatively negative in its view of the direction in which the quality of education has moved in recent years (Section 2).

7. POSITIVE CHANGE

7.1 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENT

In concluding the questionnaire, survey respondents were asked for a single suggestion to improve their local schools, “If there were one thing you could change to improve the schools in your community, what would that be?”. Responses were grouped into the categories shown below.

Exhibit 37 - Top-Of-Mind Change to Improve Schools



As shown above, seventy percent of all respondents offered a suggestion in this regard. The most frequent suggestion type for improving local schools was, More Teachers/Specialists/TA's/ Lower Ratios/ Individual Attention (15%). Recall that class sizes or high student-teacher ratios was among the most frequently cited major issues or problems facing schools (Section 1). This was often put in the context of responding to individual needs, or being able to provide one-on-one assistance when required.

That type of suggestion came more frequently from K-12 parents than others, particularly parents of children in the early years of school.

Almost one in every ten respondents made suggestions along the lines of, Improve Discipline/ Behaviour/ Supervision (9%), as one thing they would change to improve their local schools. This general theme has also arisen throughout the survey responses. Behavioral problems such as bullying and violence in the school yard, or disrespect and misconduct in the classroom, are seen as a detriment to both quality of education and student safety.

Improving these types of behaviour was heard more often from urban respondents but was visible in all demographic segments.

About one in every dozen respondents would, Improve Academic Standards/ Classroom or Teaching Time/ Testing (8%). People making these suggestions were evenly distributed across the demographic groups, and most had earlier claimed that academic standards in our schools were too low.

Equal numbers suggested they would Improve, Expand, Modernize, the Curriculum (8%), which might also include extra-curricular programs and activities. This was a common suggestion from rural areas, males and younger survey respondents in general.

Seven percent (7%) of all survey respondents would Improve Physical Environment/ Facilities or Resources, as their priority for improving the local schools. Although this category of response was slightly more frequent from males, it was otherwise very evenly distributed.

Other minor categories shown in Exhibit 37 showed little pattern, except to note that most of those who made suggestions in the category of, Improve Teacher Performance/ Motivation/ Accountability (5%) or, Improve Parent/ Community Involvement (5%) were K-12 parents, while most of those whose priorities were, Improve Administration/ Resource Allocation/Waste (2%), or Improve/Emphasize Morals/Values/Ethics (1%), were not K-12 parents.

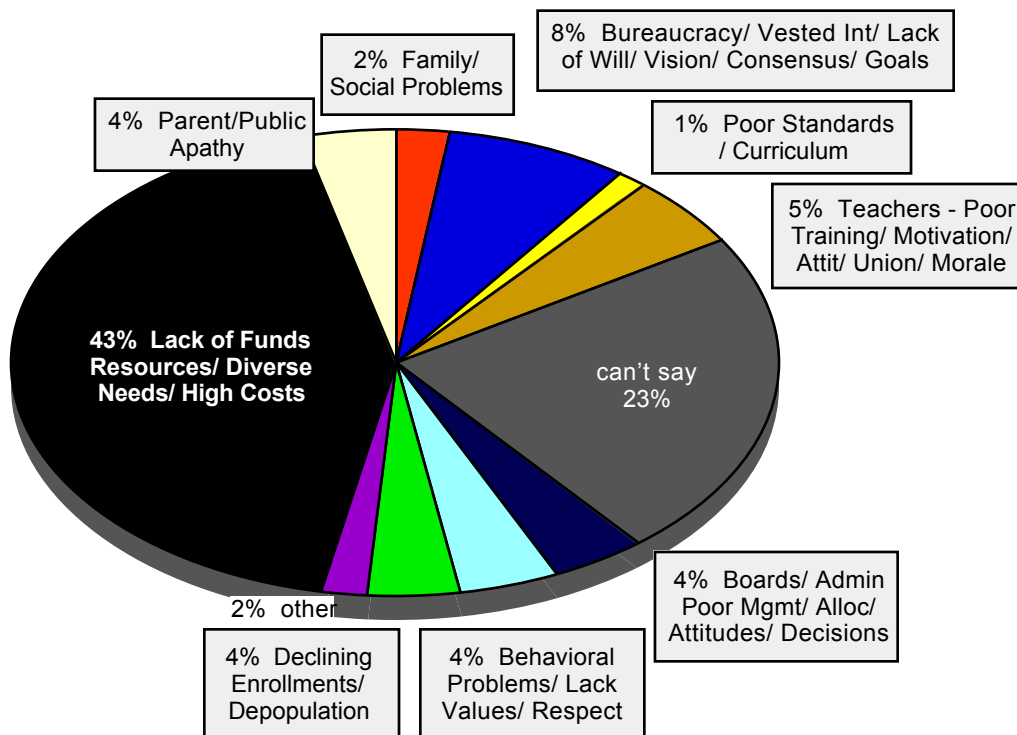
7.2 MAJOR OBSTACLE

As a final question, survey respondents were asked to suggest, “the major obstacle or impediment to improving the schools in your community”.

Again, we see the scale of public concern or awareness of funding and financial constraints, as a Lack of Funds/Resources/Diverse Needs - High Costs (43%) was by far the most frequent, accounting for a majority of actual suggestions.

When we examine these responses in relation to respondents’ suggested improvements for their local schools (in the previous question), it is apparent that this type of obstacle or impediment is number one in almost all cases. For example, among those who suggested improving their local schools by, *More Teachers/Specialists/TA’s/ Lower Ratios/ Individual Attention*, two-thirds cited a, “Lack of Funds ... “ as the major obstacle or impediment.

Exhibit 38 - Major Obstacle or Impediment to Improving Schools



No matter what respondents suggested as the one thing they would do to improve their local schools, “Lack of Funds ... ” is generally seen more than any other factor as the major obstacle or impediment.

Nonetheless, there were a few other significant obstacles or impediments mentioned.

Bureaucracy/Vested Interests/ Lack of Will/Vision/Consensus/Goals (8%) was actually the second most frequent category of responses.

This type of obstacle or impediment was cited by significant portions of those whose suggestions for improving their local schools were either, *Improve Teacher Performance/ Motivation/ Accountability*, or, *Improve Academic Standards/ Classroom or Teaching Time/ Testing*, or, *Improve Discipline/ Behaviour/ Supervision*.

Teachers - Poor Training/ Motivation/Attitude/ Union/ Morale (5%) was cited as the most frequent major obstacle or impediment among those who had offered, *Improve Teacher Performance/ Motivation/ Accountability*, as their one suggestion for improving the schools in their community.

Boards and administrators did not escape either, as apparent obstacles in some cases. Boards/ Administration/ Poor Management/ Allocations/ Attitudes/ Decisions (4%), was named as a major obstacle according to a variety of stated ideas for improvement, notably by those who suggested, *Improve Academic Standards*, or *Improve Physical Environment/ Facilities or Resources*.

However, despite these minor considerations, it has been evident throughout this summary, beginning with the first question asked respondents (Section 1), that most Saskatchewan adults are clearly of the view that Funding and Financial Problems form the single overwhelming issue facing the K-12 system, posing the greatest obstacle to improving, or perhaps even maintaining, current levels of quality education.

QUESTIONNAIRE

SSTA 2000

QUESTIONNAIRE — SSTA 2000

Hello, my name is ___ from Tanka Research Group in Regina and we are asking Saskatchewan people to share their opinions and advice on how we might improve our schools. Are you at least 18 years of age and a resident at this number ...

1. This survey is for all Saskatchewan adults, but first, could you please tell me whether you presently have, or if have you ever had, any children in the K-12 level of education in this province - that is Kindergarten to Grade 12?

yes, presently formerly (skip to #2) no, never (skip to #2)

2. [if presently] Do you have any in the Kindergarten to Grade 5 level?

yes no

3. In the Grade 6 to 9 level?

yes no

4. In the Grade 9 to 12 level?

yes no

5. Is your main occupation farming or ranching?

yes (skip to #4) no

6-7. Would you mind telling me your occupation please? (categories)

8. Is anyone in your household employed or directly involved in the field of education?

yes no (skip to #5)

9. And what is that involvement?

TOP-OF-MIND ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

10-11 First of all, can you suggest two major issues or problems faced by schools in your community today?

1st: _____
2nd: _____

12. And can you suggest one of the most positive things happening in education within your community?

QUALITY & STANDARDS

13. Are you of the view that the overall quality of education that children in your area receive today as compared to 10 or 20 years ago, has generally improved, stayed about the same, or deteriorated?

improved about the same deteriorated no op/ noa

14-15 How, or in what way, do you feel the overall quality has improved [deteriorated]?

16. The current school year is about 185 days for students and 197 days for teachers. Do you agree or disagree that students are spending enough days in school each year?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

17. Do you agree or disagree that students in your area should be tested periodically to see how well they are learning compared to other students in Saskatchewan and Canada?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

18. Do you feel that the standards of academic achievement in our schools are set too high, about right, or too low?

too high about right too low no op/ noa

19. In recent years of academic testing would you think that Saskatchewan students have tended to score better, about the same, or worse than students from most other provinces?

better about the same worse no op/ noa

20. Do you agree or disagree that our schools today are fostering the development of social responsibility and community values among students?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

21. Do you agree or disagree that Aboriginal history and culture should be a part of the curriculum in all Saskatchewan schools?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

#22 to #29 for parents of K-12 students only

22. Do you agree or disagree that the time students spend in school is effectively used?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

23. Do you agree or disagree that our schools deal effectively with teachers who do not do a good job?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

24. Do you agree or disagree that your school is doing enough to ensure that your child has mastered essential skills in reading, writing, math and science?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

25. Do you agree or disagree that your child is receiving sufficient exposure to new technologies in the classroom like computers and the internet?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

26. Do you agree or disagree that your child is receiving sufficient opportunities in sports and athletics through the school?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

27. Do you agree or disagree that your child is receiving sufficient opportunities in the arts, music and drama through the school?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

28. Have children with behavioral problems impacted negatively on the quality of education your child receives?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

29. Would you agree or disagree that your child's school has established an atmosphere which challenges the student's potential?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

30. Do you agree or disagree that, in the overall sense, our schools today are adequately preparing children for their future after high school?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

31. If you were using a grading system, ABCD or F, to grade the quality of education provided by schools in your community, what mark would you give them?

A B C D F no op/ noa

32. And how would you grade schools across the province in general?

A B C D F no op/ noa

33. Before we change topics slightly, do you have any further comments on how schools and school boards could do better in delivering quality education in your community?

STUDENT SAFETY

34. Would you say that schools in your community are providing an environment for students which is generally ...

very safe? safe? unsafe? or very unsafe? no op/ noa

46. As a taxpayer, would you be willing to contribute more towards better education?

yes no no op/ noa

[if yes to #46]

47. How much more per year would you be willing to contribute in taxes for that purpose ... \$100 per year? \$200? \$500?

48. Do you agree or disagree that Saskatchewan school boards should invest more resources to support Aboriginal students in becoming more successful in our schools?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

49. Do you have any further comments on how schools and school boards could do better in school funding or the utilization of school resources?

INPUT & COMMUNICATION

50. Do you agree or disagree that the school board in your area is devoting enough time and effort to providing opportunities for parents and other interested individuals to have a say in the type of education provided and the manner in which it is delivered?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

#51 to #54 for parents of K-12 students only

51. Do you agree or disagree that your child's teacher or the school has effectively communicated to you what your child is expected to learn at his or her grade level?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

52. Do you agree or disagree that the teacher or the school clearly communicates how well your child is progressing during the school year?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

53. Have you met personally with one of your child's teachers in the past 12 months to discuss your child's progress?

yes no no op/ noa

54. Do you agree or disagree that you have an adequate say in school decisions that affect your child?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

55. Do you have any further comments on how schools and school boards could do better in parental involvement or public input into the way our schools are run?

GOVERNANCE

56. If the provincial government, rather than local school boards, ran the schools, would you expect the quality of education in your community to be better, worse, or about the same as now?

better worse about the same no op/ noa

57. Do you agree or disagree that because school board trustees are elected locally, the community has more control over the direction of the school?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

58. Do you agree or disagree that because local school boards determine the school portion of property taxes, they are more accountable to people in the area?

agree strongly agree somewhat disagree somewhat disagree strongly no op/ noa

59. Which of these people would you generally tend to find the most most believable in speaking on educational matters in Saskatchewan schools? (order randomized)

- a) a professor from the university?
- b) a spokesperson from the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association?
- c) a group of students?
- c) an official from the Department of Education
- d) a spokesperson from the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation?
- e) a school bus driver, secretary or other school staff?
- e) a member of your local school board?
- f) the principal of a local school?

60. And which would you rank second in believability?

61. Generally, how satisfied would you say you are with the job being done by the school board in your area?

very satisfied somewhat satisfied somewhat dissatisfied very dissatisfied no op/ noa

62. Have you ever heard of the SSTA?

yes no no op/ noa

63. A couple of wrap-up questions ... If there were one thing you could change to improve the schools in your community, what would that be?

64. And what would you say is the major obstacle or impediment to improving the schools in your community?

65. Finally, just a few statistical questions to help understand the survey results ... Could you please tell me if you are ...

- under the age of thirty?
- 30 to 39?
- 40 to 49?
- 50 to 59?
- 60 to 69?
- 70 to 79?
- 80 or older?

66. Is your principal residence located ...

- in one of Saskatchewan's two major cities?
- in another Saskatchewan city?
- in a town with between 500 and 5,000 people
- in a smaller community with less than 500?
- or on a farm or acreage?

67. Which of these best describes your household ...

- one or more singles with no children in the home?
- a single parent with children in the home?
- a couple with no children living at home?
- a couple with children living in the home?

68. Is the total income of your household this year before taxes likely to be ...

- under \$30 thousand?
- \$30 to \$60 thousand?
- \$60 to \$90 thousand?
- or over \$90 thousand?

69. In terms of ethnic origin, did your most direct ancestors come from ...

- the First Nations of North America
- Europe?
- Asia?
- Africa?
- South or Central America?

other: 70. _____

71. Thank you very much for participating in this survey.

(end interview)

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72. Sex

73. Region