What Wisconsin Wants from Schools K-12

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It is hoped that this study will be used to stimulate dialogue and partnerships between the many stakeholders to help develop future parents, citizens and workers who are well-prepared to compete in a rapidly changing, competitive world.

"Besides the basics, be able to foster a belief they can do what they want and can make good choices. Also, teach them the ability to pick a goal and move beyond the 12th grade." - Parent

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Research Background / Methodology

Research Background

- Others have carefully studied and reported on what Educators, Parents, Community and Business Leaders want from education at the *national and international* levels to help children and countries compete successfully in the 21st century. A list of some of these reports is provided in the Appendix

- Many of these reports suggest that requirements today go beyond teaching core subjects to help children develop an appetite to learn and acquire lifelong skills to:
  - effectively work with others,
  - achieve self confidence,
  - become a critical thinker, and
  - demonstrate sound character even when alone

- Interest for this Wisconsin-based study was sparked by a Franklin Covey presentation of its Leadership Program in October 2009, in Washington, DC

Research Background / Methodology, continued

Research Objectives

- Understand what Wisconsin Parents, Community Leaders and Employers want from K-12th grade education
  - Determine if the desired qualities of education expand beyond the core subjects
  - If more qualities are desired, identify what these attributes and skills are
  - Measure the relative importance of the attributes and skills Parents, Community Leaders and Employers want
- Determine if differences exist in the wants and expectations of Parents, Community Leaders and Employers in K-12th grade education in Wisconsin
- This study does not seek to endorse other research or positions on this topic
- Also, this study does not seek to judge the current state of education in Wisconsin

Research Background / Methodology, continued

Survey Administration

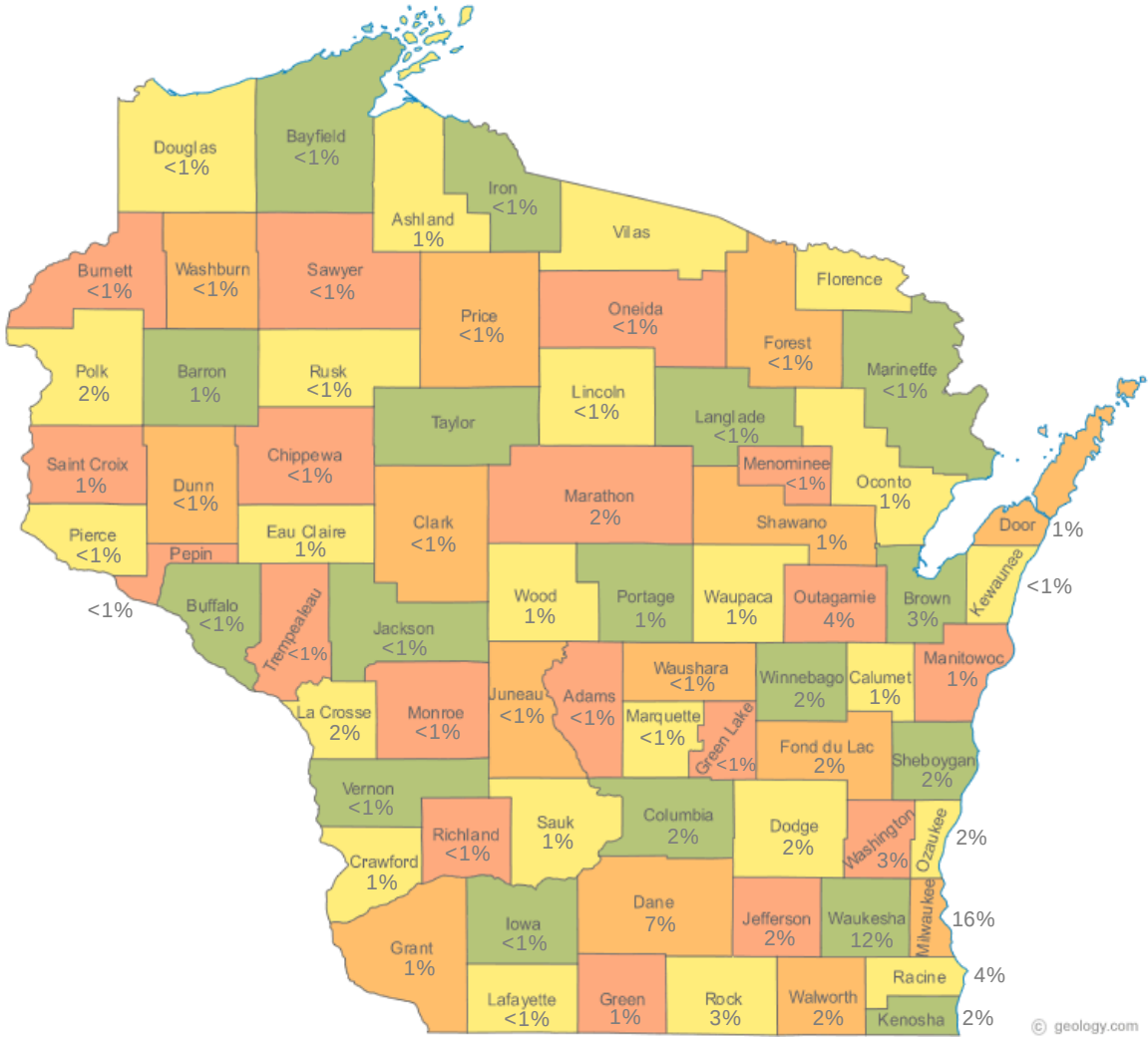
- 450 telephone interviews were conducted from February 15th – March 5th, 2010
- No monetary incentives were used
- The research sponsor, The Pieper Family Foundation, was not identified
  - However, respondents who completed the study were given the Pieper Family Foundation's website where results will be posted after the study has been completed
- To qualify, respondents had to fall into one of the segments below:

Respondent Segments	
Parents (n=150)	• Have at least one child enrolled in a public or private school in any grade between K-12th grade
Community Leaders (n=150)	• An active member defined as someone who regularly attends gatherings or events, contributes time or money or holds a leadership role in any of the following organizations: • Business or professional organization, non-profit organization, labor union, religious organization, community service group, political or activist group
Employers (n=150)	• Manager level or above and responsible for hiring and/or training at their organization • Work for an organization with greater than 5 employees and not in education

Research Background / Methodology, continued

Sampling Strategy

- Parents, Community Leaders, and Employers were randomly surveyed across the state of Wisconsin to ensure statewide representation
- Telephone interviews were conducted in 69 of the 72 Wisconsin counties
- Reliable and accurate insights are available at the state level and not on a county basis due to small number of responses per county



Research Background / Methodology, continued

Statistical Reliability and Accuracy Completed Interviews and Margin of Error for What Wisconsin Wants from K-12th Grade Education Study			
Group Type	Confidence Level	Interviews	Margin of Error
Parents	95%	150	±8.00%
Community Leaders	95%	150	±8.00%
Employers	95%	150	±8.00%

- With 450 randomly selected respondents, the overall sampling error estimate at the 95% confidence level is a plus or minus 4.61% for the state.
  - That is to say, if a similar survey were conducted repeatedly, results within plus or minus 4.61% would occur for any one question 95 out of 100 times. Looking at it another way, if a question received a "yes" answer by 60% of the 450 respondents, the chances are 95 out of 100 that between 55.39% and 64.61% of the targeted population would answer a similar "yes" response, if asked. Sampling error such as this is applied to each cross-tabulation market cell as well as the total survey sample.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive Summary

- At the start of the interview respondents were asked an open-end question of what a child should gain from their K-12 education. The message from Wisconsin Parents, Community Leaders and Employers is consistent and clear about the importance of the core subjects, and the desire to develop other qualities and skills as well
- Besides reading, writing and arithmetic, the list for half also includes critical thinking and learning lifelong skills

Learning and Innovation Skills (59%)

- Ability to learn / life-long learning
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- Creativity and innovation

Life and Career Skills (50%)

- People skills
- Ethics
- Responsibility
- Leadership Skills

Professional Development (14%)

- Prepare for future / workforce
- Good work ethic
- Teamwork

Information and Media: Computer and Technology Skills (5%)

Executive Summary, continued

- The 450 Wisconsin Parents, Community Leaders and Employers provided more than 1,500 ideas covering 35 categories when asked for their opinions on what they want from a K-12 education. A handful of ideas and words were heard more often than others

Legend:

Blue - < 5%
Orange - 5% to 9.9%
Purple - 10% to 14.9%
Green - 15% to 30.9%
Red - 40% +

Executive Summary, continued

- Several of the character qualities listed on the previous chart align with other reports available, including the select Moral Virtue attributes from Dr. Tom Lickona's report entitled Character Matters
  - While the character qualities mentioned by Parents, Community Leaders and Business Leaders touched on many of the Virtues included in Lickona's research, most frequently they cited 'Justice' and 'Integrity' qualities as shown below:

Justice	Integrity
• Respect for others • Self-respect • Responsibility • Honesty	• Adhering to a moral principle • Ethical consistency • Being honest with oneself

Executive Summary, continued

- When asked to rate the importance of 13 attributes cited as important in other studies, critical thinking, people skills and ethics moved up the list to join the core subjects as the most important

Top of Mind - What is Important

(% Mentioned)

1. Mathematics (58%)
2. Reading Comprehension (53%)
3. Written Communication (40%)
4. People Skills (22%)
5. Oral Communications (17%)
6. Ability to Learn (16%)
7. Sciences (12%)
8. Ethics (10%)
9. Spelling (10%)
10. History (10%)
11. Critical Thinking/Problem Solving (10%)

Rated Importance

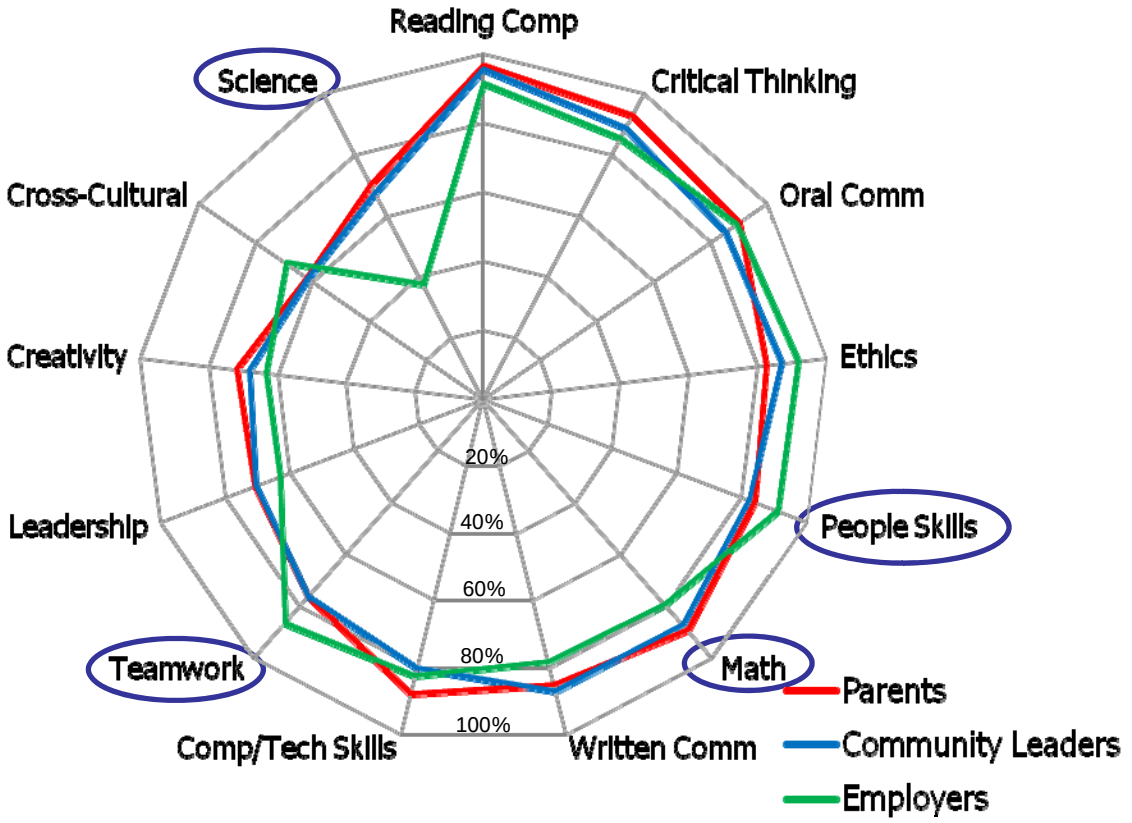
(A rating of 8,9, or 10 on a 10-pt scale)

1. Reading Comprehension (94%)
2. Critical Thinking (89%)
3. Oral Communication (88%)
4. Ethics (87%)
5. People Skills (86%)
6. Mathematics (85%)
7. Written Communications (84%)
8. Computer & Technical Skills (84%)
9. Teamwork & Collaboration (80%)
10. Leadership Skills (68%)
11. Creativity & Innovation (68%)
12. Cross-Cultural Skills (64%)
13. Sciences (58%)

Executive Summary, continued

- Overall ratings by Parents, Community Leaders and Employers are similar for 9 of the 13 items rated
- No group differences were found for the top four rated attributes:
  - Reading comprehension
  - Critical thinking
  - Oral communication
  - Ethics
- Employers were different in 4 areas
  - More emphasis on people skills and teamwork
  - Less importance on Math and Science

Rated Importance of Skills for K-12 Education
(A rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-pt scale)



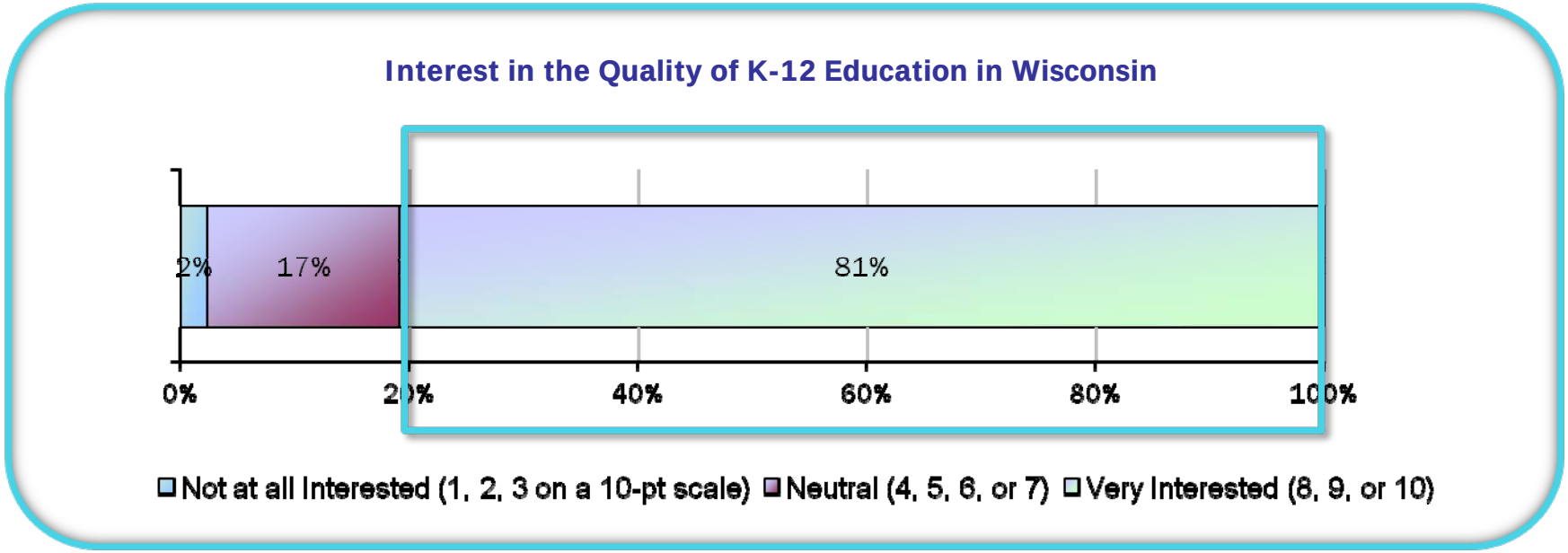
Note: Circled attributes represent significant differences between quota groups at the 95% confidence level

DETAILED FINDINGS

WHAT WISCONSIN WANTS FROM K-12TH GRADE EDUCATION

In 2010, interest in the quality of education in Wisconsin is high

- 81% of the respondents rated themselves as very interested in the overall quality of education in Wisconsin



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Q2. Education and schools have been in the news a lot lately. How interested are you in the quality of Kindergarten to 12th grade education in Wisconsin?

The 'core subjects' are still at the forefront of what is most important in Wisconsin Education based on their 'top of mind' comments

Core Subjects (68%)

Reading comprehension (53%):

- *"Reading comprehension, writing skills and the ability to think intuitively." - Community Leader*

History (10%):

- *"History is really important; I majored in History and I feel it's important to know so that we don't repeat it." - Employer*

Economics/Finance (6%):

- "*Basic money management and economics…Knowing how to survive in the real world financially, plus being able to balance a checkbook and live on a budget." - Parent*

Art/Music (2%):

- *"An appreciation of the arts." – Employer*

English (<1%):

- *"A well-rounded education such as English, written communication and listening skills." - Community Leader*

Learning and Innovation Skills (59%)

Ability to learn (16%):

- *"I would say the ability to learn and understand the new information. Every school teaches different things; it is important to be able to pick up these new things." - Parent*

Critical thinking/problem solving skills (10%):

- *"Ability to use common sense and reasoning. Development of a personality and interest in life." - Employer*

Teamwork and collaboration (5%):

- *"They need to learn to have good social skills, getting along well with their peers to achieve a common goal." - Parent*

n=450

Q3. In your opinion, what are the most important things a child should gain from their Kindergarten to 12th grade education that will help them in life?

Education components move past the core subjects to also include life skills, character building, professional development, critical thinking and many others

Life & Career Skills (50%)

People skills (22%):

- *"Interaction/People skills; Respecting authority and their elders." - Community Leader*

Responsibility (5%):

- *"Individual responsibility; that they become responsible for themselves and not reliant on society." - Parent*

Life skills (4%):

- *"Foster a belief they can do what they want, make good choices, have the ability to pick a goal, and move forward with it." - Parent*

Working with the community (1%):

- "*How to be an active member in the community…Using good social skills to always have a positive impact, dealing with negative aspects in a positive light." - Community Leader*

Professional Development (14%)

Prepare for future/workforce (5%):

- *"Preparation for future education and integration into the community workforce." - Employer*
- *"Enough knowledge to go out and become a productive member of society; Being able to have job security in any economy." - Parent*

Good education/curriculum (4%):

- *"Good education is important; Learn good study habits and apply them in the workplace." - Parent*

Information and Media- Computer and technology skills (5%):

- *"Becoming computer savvy and staying up on all the latest technology advancements." - Parent*

n=450

Q3. In your opinion, what are the most important things a child should gain from their Kindergarten to 12th grade education that will help them in life?

Core subjects *AND* learning and innovations skills are most important when categorizing comments

- Approximately 2 in every 3 respondents think core subjects (68%) and learning and innovation skills (59%) are important things to gain from a K-12 education
- Professional development and computer and technology skills are less frequently mentioned as important

Top of Mind Comments (% Mentioned)	Total
Core Subjects	68%
Learning and Innovation Skills	59%
Life and Career Skills	50%
Professional Development	14%
Information and Media: Computer and Technology Skills	5%
Other	7%

n=450
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q3. In your opinion, what are the most important things a child should gain from their Kindergarten to 12th grade education that will help them in life?

The core subjects are important, but do not dominate the top spots on the list as rated by Parents, Community Leaders and Employers

- Reading clearly topped the list
- Rated as high in importance as mathematics and writing are
  - Critical thinking
  - Oral communications, and
  - Ethics
- Of lesser importance are
  - Leadership skills
  - Creativity and innovation
  - Cross cultural skills, and
  - Science

Skills for K-12 Education (% Important, a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-pt scale)	Total
Reading Comprehension	94%
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills	89%
Oral Communications	88%
Ethics	87%
People Skills	86%
Mathematics	85%
Written Communications	84%
Computer and Technology Skills	84%
Teamwork and Collaboration	80%
Leadership Skills	68%
Creativity and Innovation	68%
Cross-cultural Skills	64%
Science	58%

n=450
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q4. Please rate how important the following attributes are for children to gain from their Kindergarten to 12th grade education that will help them in life?

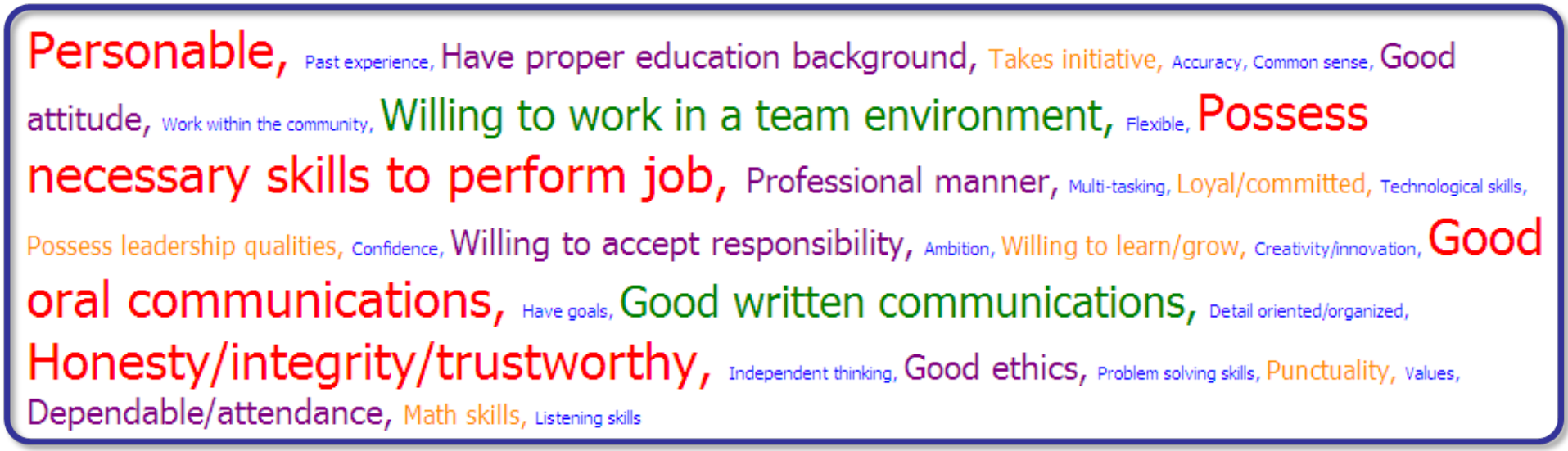
WISCONSIN EMPLOYEE QUALITIES

Qualified, personable, honest and a good communicator are valued by employers

Legend:

Blue - < 5%
Orange - 5% to 9.9%
Purple - 10% to 19.9%
Green - 20% to 29.9%
Red - 30% +

- Wisconsin Employers were asked for their opinions on what are important qualities they look for in an employee – approximately one-third mention they not only look for someone who is qualified (35%), but someone who is honest (38%), personable (35%) and speaks well (31%)
- Willing to work in a team environment (25%) and writing well (25%) are next on employers' list



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Q8. What are the most important qualities that you look for in an employee?

Employers also look for character, critical thinking and being driven among other things in an employee

Leadership and Responsibility (65%)

Honesty/integrity/trustworthy (38%):

- *"Honesty. Being able to work independently. Being able to work in a team and have professionalism."*

Good ethics (12%):

- *"Loyalty and ethics. Good command of the English language. Able to think on their feet – good problem solving skills. Handle money honestly."*

Possess leadership qualities (7%):

- *"Willingness to learn so that you have the opportunity to become the best."*

Initiative and Self Direction (30%)

Willing to learn/grow (9%):

- "*Open minded and ready to take criticism. Be ready to grow with the job and not be afraid to learn something new."*

Productivity and Accountability (28%)

Dependable/attendance (15%):

- *"If given an assignment, to make sure it's done on time or even simply showing up for work when they're supposed to."*

Loyal/committed (7%):

- *"Longevity – they stay at the job a long time. Attendance."*

Accuracy (1%):

- *"In their knowledge of representing products and with data input, making sure that it has been done accurately."*

Social and Cross Cultural Skills (43%)

Professional manner (11%):

- *"Competitive drive with good work ethic. Sales skills. Problem solving skills."*

n=150
Q8. What are the most important qualities that you look for in an employee?

‘Big picture’ Employers desire employees with leadership potential, responsible, communicate effectively and work well in a team environment

- When categorizing what qualities Wisconsin Employers want in an employee, leadership /responsibility (65%) and communication / collaboration (50%) are most important
- Initiative / self direction (30%) and productivity / accountability (28%) were less frequently mentioned as important

Top of Mind Comments (% Mentioned)	Total
Leadership and Responsibility	65%
Communication and Collaboration	50%
Social and Cross Cultural Skills	45%
Qualifications/Skill Set	44%
Initiative and Self Direction	30%
Productivity and Accountability	28%
Other	12%

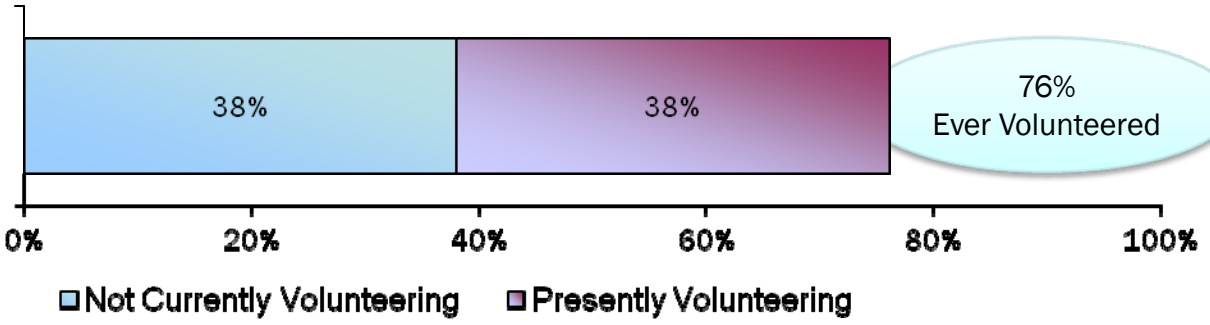
n=150
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q8. What are the most important qualities that you look for in an employee?

HELPING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Most have volunteered time to K-12 education either presently or in the past

- Three-quarters (76%) of Parents, Community Leaders and Employers who participated in this study have volunteered their time in the past to K-12 education, and presently one-third (38%) volunteer
- Previous or present volunteering is not impacted by those who are interested in the quality of education and those who are not

Volunteering with K-12 Education



Volunteering Based on Interest in the Quality of Education

Volunteering Status	Interested	Not Interested
Presently	41%	36%
Ever	80%	73%

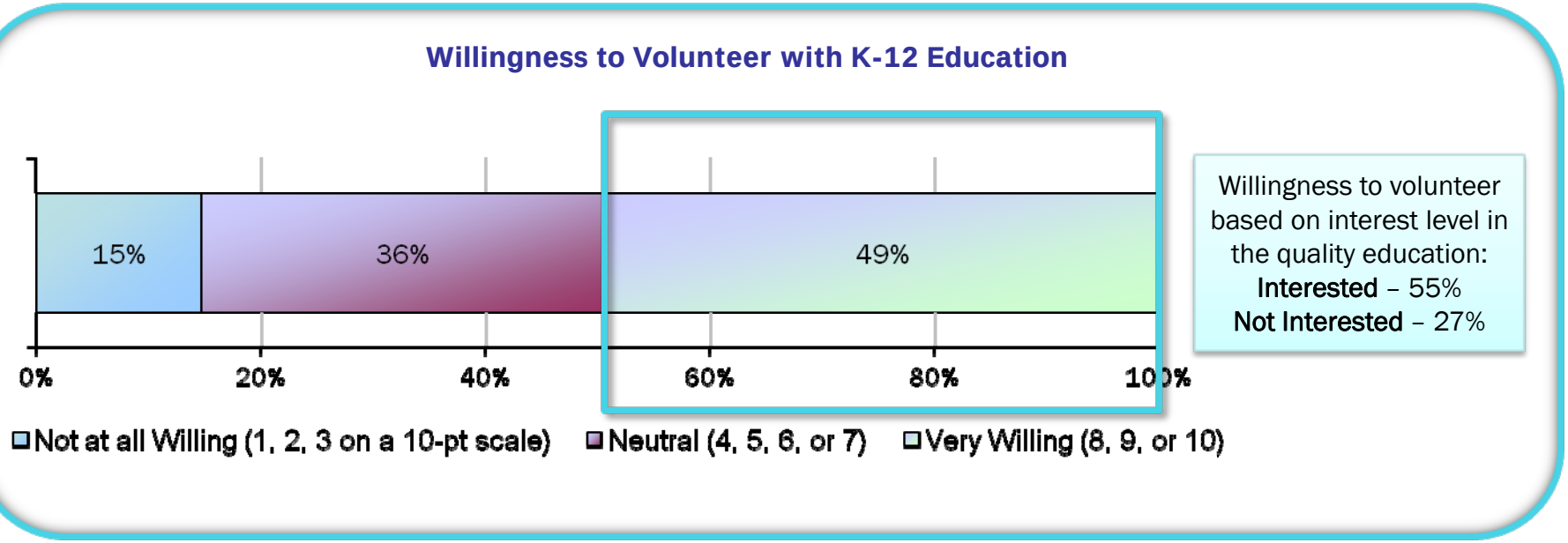
n=450

Q6. Are you presently volunteering your time to kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools in any way?

Q7. Have you ever volunteered your time to kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools?

Willingness to volunteer in K-12 education and schools in the future increases for those most interested in the quality of education

- Overall if asked, half (49%) would be willing to volunteer with K-12 education
  - The willingness to volunteer increases significantly for those interested in the quality of education (55%) compared to those who are not interested (27%)
- Only 15% of Parents, Community Leaders and Employers are not willing to give their time



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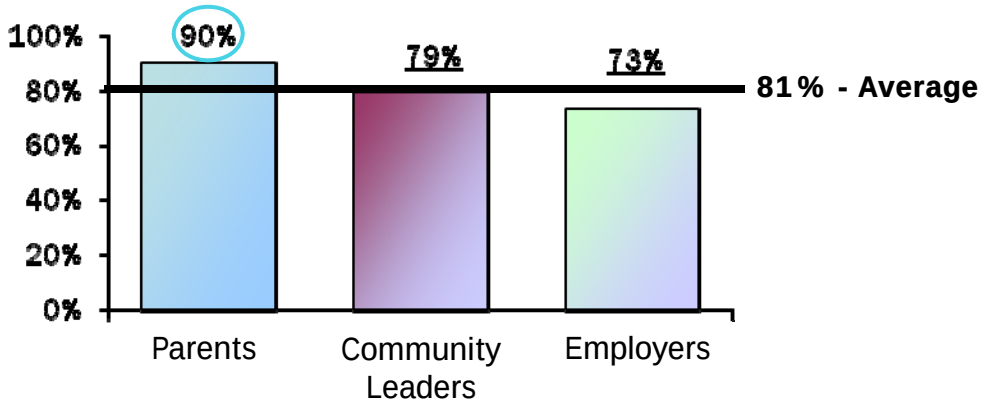
Q5. If asked, how willing would you be to volunteer to help with kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools?

GROUP COMPARISON

Not surprisingly, Wisconsin Parents are most interested in the quality of K-12 education

- Majority of Parents (90%) with children enrolled in K-12 schools are interested in the quality of the education
- Even though Community Leaders and Employers lag behind Parents, overall approximately three-quarters are still very interested in quality Wisconsin education (Community Leaders 79%, Employers 73%)

Interest in the Quality of K-12 Education in Wisconsin
(% Interested, a rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-pt scale)



n=449
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q2. Education and schools haven been in the news a lot lately. How interested are you in the quality of Kindergarten to 12th grade education in Wisconsin?

Math, reading and writing were mentioned most often when asked what are the most important things a child should gain a K-12 education

- Few difference exist between Parents, Community Leaders and Employers
  - Fewer Employers mentioned reading as being important
  - Oral communications were less frequently mentioned by Parents

Skills for K-12 Education
(% Mentioned)

	Total*	Parents	Community Leaders	Employers
Mathematics	58%	63%	57%	54%
Reading Comprehension	53%	(59%)	(58%)	41%
Written Communications	40%	40%	43%	39%
People Skills	22%	24%	25%	18%
Oral Communications	17%	8%	(19%)	(23%)
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills	10%	(12%)	5%	(12%)
Ethics	10%	11%	9%	11%

n=450
*Only mentions greater than 10% are shown.
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q3. In your opinion, what are the most important things a child should gain from a k-12 education

Like the frequency of comments, the importance ratings show consistency across the different groups

- Parents have a high level of expectation across the board
  - Less so for ethics and teamwork and collaboration
- Employers look for many of the same things as parents
  - Although they place more emphasis on ethics and people skills, but less on Science

Skills for K-12 Education (A rating of 8, 9, or 10 on a 10-pt scale)	Total	Parents	Community Leaders	Employers
Reading Comprehension	94%	97%	95%	91%
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving Skills	89%	(93%)	89%	85%
Oral Communications	88%	90%	85%	89%
Ethics	87%	83%	87%	(92%)
People Skills	86%	84%	82%	(91%)
Mathematics	85%	(89%)	87%	79%
Written Communications	84%	85%	(87%)	79%
Computer and Technology Skills	84%	88%	81%	83%
Teamwork and Collaboration	80%	77%	77%	(87%)
Leadership Skills	68%	71%	71%	63%
Creativity and Innovation	68%	72%	68%	63%
Cross-cultural Skills	64%	62%	62%	69%
Science	58%	(70%)	(67%)	37%

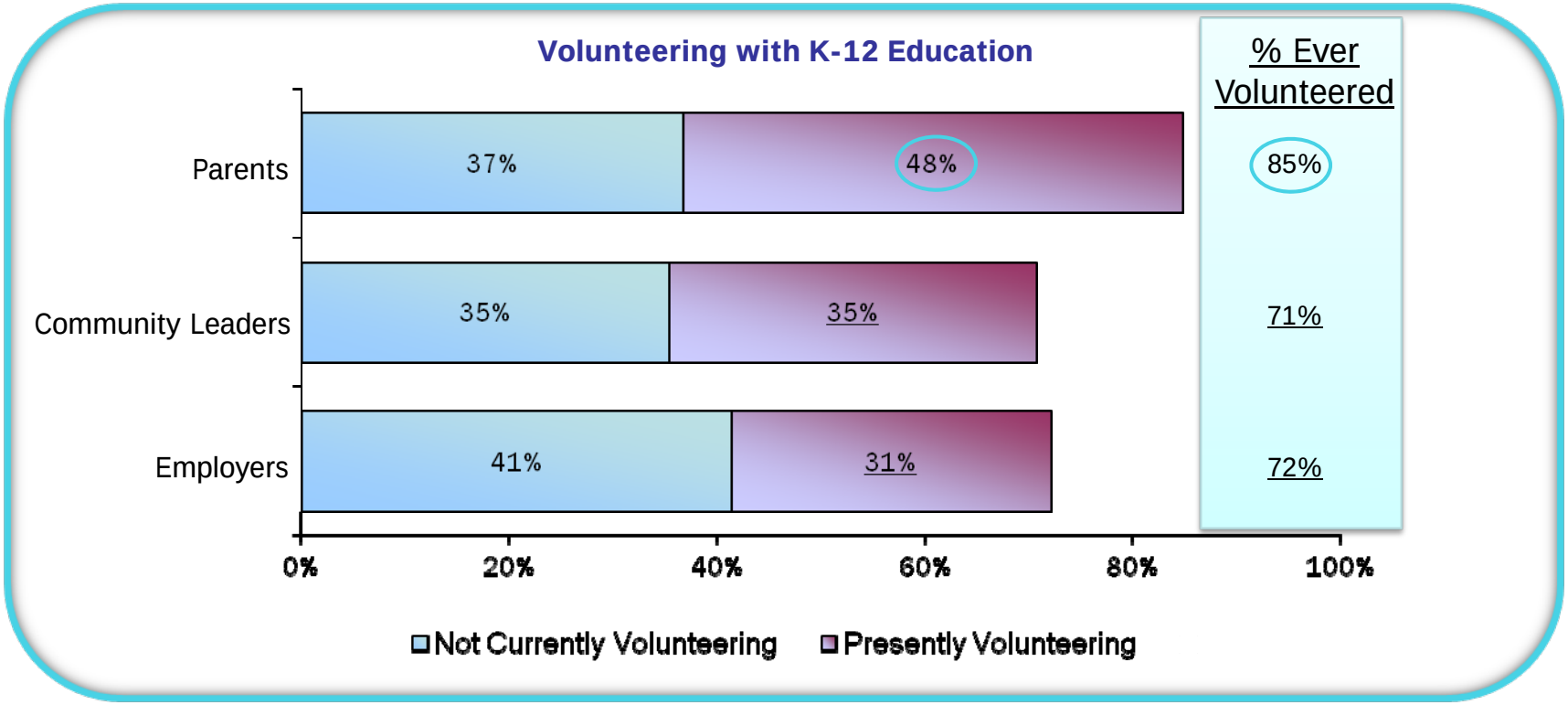
n=450

Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level

Q4. Please rate how important the following attributes are for children to gain from their Kindergarten to 12th grade education that will help them in life?

Parents are the most active volunteer group in K-12 education and schools currently and in the past

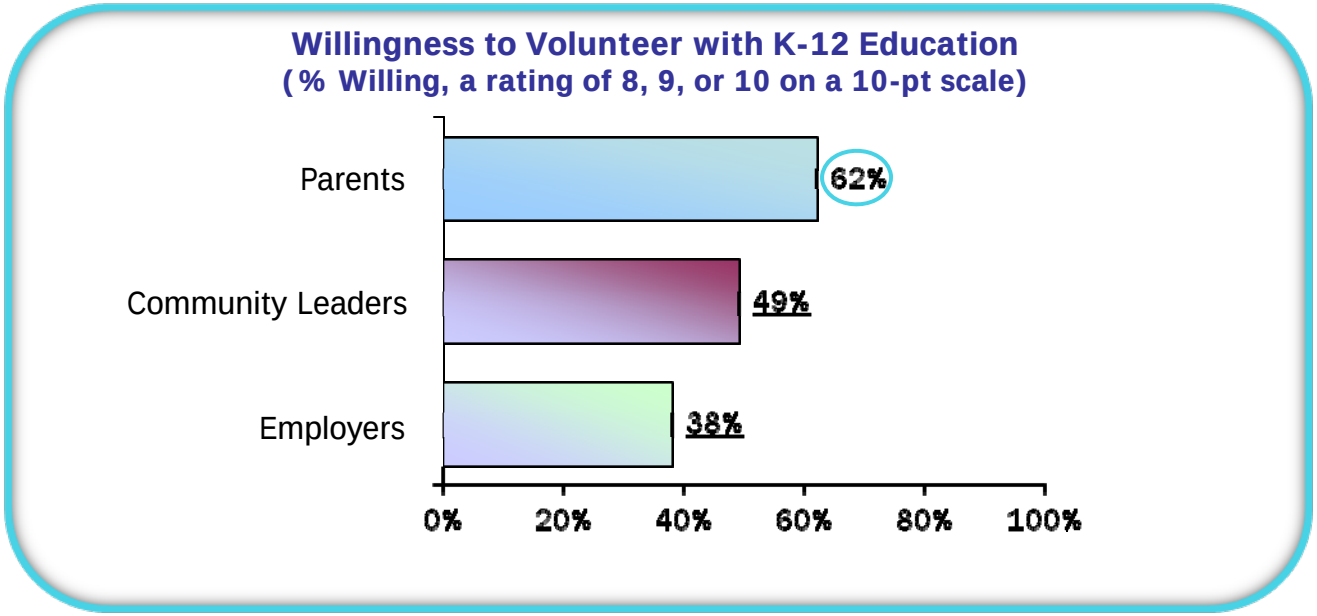
- Most Parents indicate they have volunteered (85%) and nearly half are still currently doing so (48%) – while fewer Community Leaders and Employers have (71%, 72% respectively) or are currently donating their time (35%, 31%)



n=450
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q6. Are you presently volunteering your time to kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools in any way?
Q7. Have you ever volunteered your time to kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools?

Leading those willing to volunteer are the Parents

- Even though the majority of Parents are interested in the quality of Wisconsin education, only 6 in 10 (62%) are willing to volunteer to help with K-12 education and schools
- The willingness drops for both Community Leaders (49%) and Employers (38%)



n=443
Note: Circled items are significantly higher than those that are underlined at the 95% confidence level
Q5. If asked, how willing would you be to volunteer to help with kindergarten to 12th grade education and schools?

APPENDIX

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Demographic profile - Parents

Education	Total	Age	Total	Income	Total
Some high school	2%	18-25	-	Under $25,000	5%
High School Diploma	31%	26-34	9%	$25,000 - $49,999	15%
Associate Degree/Technical Certification	15%	35-44	44%	$50,000 - $74,999	21%
Some College	2%	45-54	42%	$75,000 - $99,999	19%
Bachelor's Degree	36%	55-64	5%	$100,000 - $149,999	15%
Master's Degree	10%	65 or greater	-	$150,000 - $249,999	6%
Professional Degree	2%			$250,000 or greater	3%
Doctorate	1%	**Ethnic Background**			
		Caucasian/White	96%	**Gender**	
Marital Status		African American/Black	1%	Male	36%
Married	92%	American Indian	-	Female	64%
Never Married	3%	Asian/Asian-American	-		
Divorced	3%	Hispanic/Latino/Puerto Rican	2%		
Widow	1%				
Separated	-				
Other	-				

n=150

D2. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?, D3. Which of the following best describes your age?
D4. Which of the following ranges describes your approximate total household income?, D5. Which of the following best describes your marital status?
D6. What is your ethnic background?, D7. Gender

Demographic profile – Community Leaders

Education	Total	Age	Total	Income	Total
Some high school	3%	18-25	-	Under $25,000	8%
High School Diploma	27%	26-34	5%	$25,000 - $49,999	19%
Associate Degree/Technical Certification	20%	35-44	13%	$50,000 - $74,999	16%
Some College	1%	45-54	23%	$75,000 - $99,999	6%
Bachelor's Degree	27%	55-64	23%	$100,000 - $149,999	13%
Master's Degree	11%	65 or greater	35%	$150,000 - $249,999	7%
Professional Degree	7%			$250,000 or greater	12%
Doctorate	5%	**Ethnic Background**			
		Caucasian/White	92%	**Gender**	
Marital Status		African American/Black	2%	Male	61%
Married	62%	American Indian	1%	Female	39%
Never Married	7%	Asian/Asian-American	1%		
Divorced	11%	Hispanic/Latino/Puerto Rican	1%		
Widow	16%				
Separated	1%				
Other	1%				

n=150

D2. What is the highest level of education you have achieved?, D3. Which of the following best describes your age?
D4. Which of the following ranges describes your approximate total household income?, D5. Which of the following best describes your marital status?
D6. What is your ethnic background?, D7. Gender

Firmographic profile – Employers

Number of Employees	Total
Less than 5	-
5 to 25	36%
26 to 50	21%
51 to 100	20%
101 to 249	15%
250 to 499	4%
500 to 1,000	2%
Greater than 1,000	1%
Title	
CEO, President, Owner, Managing Director	55%
VP of Human Resources	1%
Director of Human Resources	7%
Human Resources Manager	5%
Other Manager Title and Above	31%
Below manager level	-

Company Description	Total
Private business	83%
Public company	2%
State/Local/Federal Govt	5%
Non-profit organization	10%
Public utility	-
Government	-
Education	-
Other	1%

n=150
QE. Approximately how many people work at your company? This includes both full-time and part-time employees.
QF. Which of the following best describes the company your work for?
QG. What is your current title or role within your organization?

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Reviewed Literature

- Business Summit on 21st Century Skills, Wisconsin Department of Public Education, WisconsinPK-16 Leadership Council, Competitive Wisconsin, March 2007

  http://dpi.wi.gov/nwp/pdf/business_summit_brochure.pdf
- The Leader in Me, Franklin Covey – Book and School Leadership Program

  *www.**theleaderinme**.org/schools.html*
- Effective Education for Employment: A global perspective, Edexcel and White Loop, April 2009

  http://eee-edexcel.com/xstandard/docs/effective_education_for_employment_web_version.pdf
- Keeping Our Edge: Americans Speak on Education and Competitiveness, Peter D. Hart and The Winston Group, June 21, 2006

  http://www.ets.org/Media/Education_Topics/pdf/HW_KeepingOurEdge2006.pdf
- You might be surprised; What teachers, parents, school leaders and the public think about public education today, Public Agenda, July 2005

  http://www.publicagenda.com/articles/you-might-be-surprised-what-teachers-parents-school-leaders-and-public-really-think-about-public-education-today
- Lickona, Thomas. Character Matters*: How to Help Our Children Develop Good Judgment, Integrity, and Other Essential Virtues*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Print.

The 7 Habits and Life Skills

The Leader in Me, Franklin Covey

What Parents and Business Leaders Want	21st Century Life Skills	The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
INDEPENDENCE		Habits 1–3
• Goal setting • Organization • Time management • Planning	• Initiative • Responsibility • Self-direction • Personal productivity	• Be Proactive® • Begin With the End in Mind® • Put First Things First®
INTERDEPENDENCE		Habits 4–6
• Teamwork • Conflict management • Creativity • Analytical skills	• Problem solving • Communication • Collaboration • Cross-cultural skills	• Think Win-Win® • Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood® • Synergize®
RENEWAL		Habit 7
• Fun • Desire to learn • Good health and hygiene	• Meaningful work • Emotional stability • Technical skills	• Sharpen the Saw® (Body, Heart, Mind, Spirit)