

THE IDEASTREAM EDUCATION LISTENING PROJECT

"It is easier to keep talking once you know someone is listening."

-- A participant in the first community dialogue of The Listening Project

Education as a Community Challenge

ideastream *Listening Projects* have a long and productive history in Northeast Ohio. They began in the summer of 2001, when public stations WVIZ/PBS & 90.3 WCPN ideastream reversed roles with their viewers and listeners and became the audience . . . traveling to communities of Northeast Ohio and engaging residents in questions and conversations about themselves and their communities. The annual community listening activities connected and engaged the local populace; they helped ideastream understand and respond to residents' perceptions and issues; and they investigated ideastream's role in helping residents enjoy local resources and alleviating challenges.

In each of five annual community Listening Projects since 2001, *Education* followed *Economy* as the second ranked area of local concern—a problem that residents consistently said had deleterious effects on the quality of life in Northeast Ohio.

ideastream's long history and recognition as an educational community resource provided both the motivation and the credibility to delve further into the issues surrounding local education challenges. The *Education Listening Project's* ambition was to emulate the community *Listening Projects'* success, this time using local educators as respondents as it investigated the publicly maligned educational climate in Northeast Ohio.

In early 2006, the *Education Listening Project* was born. The *Education Listening Project's* goal was to seek an understanding of the issues surrounding Northeast Ohio education problem perceptions. It was an endeavor that sought insight into a challenge that perennially vexed the local public.

The ideastream *Education Listening Project* was designed and implemented by TRAC Media Services, a national public broadcast research firm that performed the community Listening Projects in Northeast Ohio and in other regions of the United States.

The Listening Research

Educational Leaders: In the winter of 2006, the *Education Listening Project* initiated a conversation with area education leaders. The discussion focused upon educators' perceptions about local education. The educational leaders were asked what ideastream could do to assist educators to meet current challenges. What could ideastream do to help educators and the public understand each other's concerns?

The leaders that participated represented pre-school, elementary, secondary and post-secondary educator and administrator communities. With findings from the community *Listening Projects* and the educational leader conversation as guides for research, a survey of area educators was devised.

Members of the educational community in Northeast Ohio were asked to participate in the survey.

Education Practitioners: A randomly selected group of teachers, principals, education specialists and superintendents were invited to return Internet or mail surveys or respond to telephone questionnaires. During a five-month period beginning in summer, 2006, responses were gathered from the educators.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE EDUCATION LISTENING PROJECT 2006 SURVEY

| ELP 2006 | | Teachers | Principals | Specialists* | Superintendents |
|-------------|--------------------|----------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Gender | Male | 23% | 39% | 22% | 76% |
| | Female | 77% | 61% | 78% | 24% |
| Age | Under 35 | 29% | 8% | 22% | - |
| | 36-49 | 36% | 50% | 33% | - |
| | 50 + | 36% | 42% | 44% | 100% |
| Education | Bachelor's Degree | 16% | - | 40% | - |
| | Master's Degree | 84% | 100% | 50% | 76% |
| | Doctorate Degree | - | - | 10% | 24% |
| Ethnicity | Non-Hispanic White | 87% | 83% | 77% | 100% |
| | African-American | 10% | 17% | 11% | - |
| | Other | 3% | - | 11% | - |
| Respondents | | 80 – 53% | 30 – 20% | 23 – 15% | 17 – 11% |

*Specialists in some form of instruction (intervention, remediation, counseling).

Summary of Findings

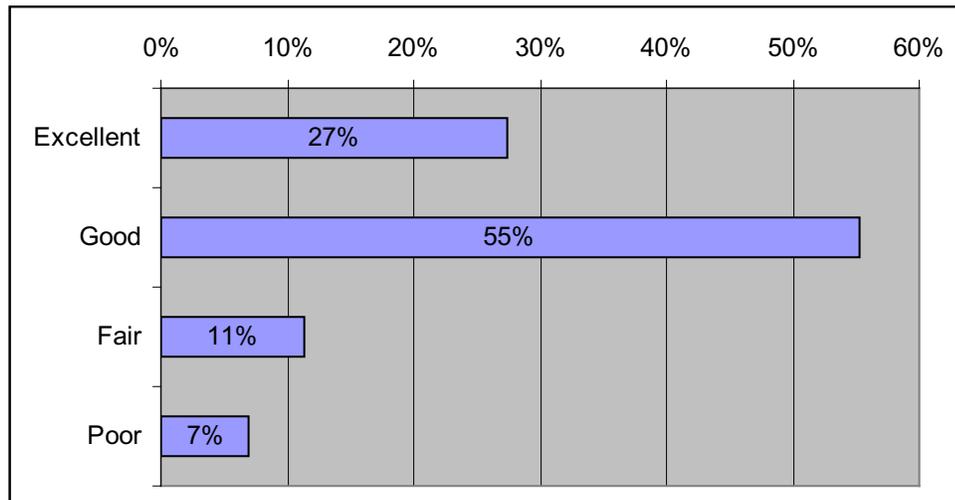
- The educators had a positive attitude about Northeast Ohio. They were more likely to describe it “Excellent” or “Good” than the general population in the community Listening Projects.
- The community assets and resources educators identified were the same as those named by the general population.
- Community problems and issues were similar to those named by the general population list with the exception of *Education*, which educators were much more likely to name as an area challenge.
- Only 13% of the respondents said education in Northeast Ohio was “Very Effective.” Teachers were significantly more likely to cite “Need for Improvement” than were administrators.
- Classroom teachers were least likely of all samples to say that the average educator had “Large” or “Moderate” potential impact to improve education in a school or district. Administrators and specialists were far more positive.
- Funding was named as the most critical aspect of the educational challenge, especially by administrators and specialists.
- Teachers were more likely to identify areas beyond funding as critical challenges, including: an uninformed public, inexpert/ineffective administrators, student issues and lack of educator morale.
- Institutions of higher education topped the list of “Entities/institutions most influential in helping educators,” but state/district educational bodies and WVIZ/PBS followed closely.
- TeacherLine, SMART, Instructional Television Services and Interactive Video Distance Learning were the most used and recommended ideastream educational services named by the educators.

- The list of most requested additional ideastream services/workshops was led by 1) Instruction in using the in-school technology available to teachers followed by 2) In-school training in math, science and reading. 3) Student/Parent motivational workshops and 4) Working with the community workshops were other frequently named needs.
- Two-thirds of the educators said they thought public broadcasting educational media has “Large” or “Moderate” potential impact for improving the local educational climate.
- Educators use ideastream broadcast services: Over three-quarters (81%) of the educators said they watched WVIZ/PBS “Often” or “Occasionally”; and almost one third (31%) listened to 90.3WCPN “Often” or “Occasionally.”

Northeast Ohio Communities

Educators have a positive attitude about Northeast Ohio. When educators were asked to rate their communities as places to live, they rated Northeast Ohio more highly than the general population did. Almost 90% of educators rated their communities “Excellent” or “Good” compared to 79% of the general population in the last community Listening Project.

HOW WOULD YOU RATE NORTHEAST OHIO AS A PLACE TO LIVE?*
All Educators



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

Community Assets: What then, are the resources – the things that make communities in Northeast Ohio “Excellent” or “Good” places to live? The question was open-ended and respondents were allowed to name up to three assets.

“Many people are committed to helping others in need.”

“I grew up in the area and have a sense of pride in all the accomplishments of Ohioans. There is a representative sample of a variety of cultures and top rated educational and medical facilities.”

“There are many available resources, both educational and recreational, for families with children—museums, festivals, sports, parks and recreation.”

-- Participants in the 2006 Education Listening Project

The *Education Listening Project* respondents endorsed the same assets as the college-educated respondents from the general population survey in the 2005-2006 community *Listening Project*. People/Community led with over half of the respondents naming it an asset; Weather/Environment was second, with slightly under half. Location/Amenities and Cost of Living were highly valued, and Culture and Recreation/Activities followed.

Community Challenges: The list of community challenges, problems and issues was also the same as the general population survey, including Economy, Education, Urban Sprawl/Congestion, Politics and Crime/Drugs, but the ordering of the first two challenges was quite different.

Whereas economy was named by 73% of the general public, only 30% of the educators identified it as a primary challenge. Education (including funding challenges) leaped into first place: 40% of the educators compared to 19% of the general population identified it as a primary local issue.

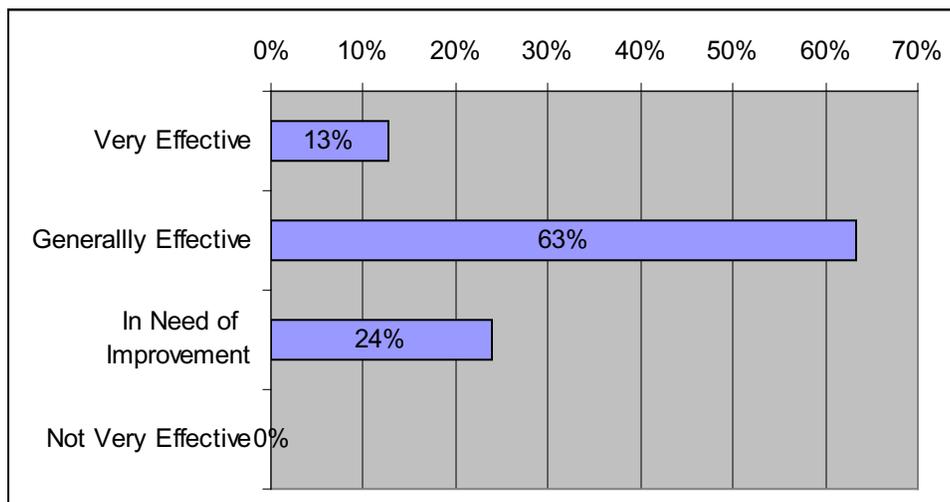
Education in the Communities

"Overall, the school systems are excelling."

-- *Participant in the 2006 Education Listening Project*

Rating Education: The educators were asked: "How would you evaluate education, overall, in Northeast Ohio?" Is it "Very Effective," "Generally Effective," "In Need of Improvement," or "Not Very Effective?" The dominant choice, among most educators, was "Generally Effective."

HOW WOULD YOU EVALUATE EDUCATION IN NORTHEAST OHIO?*

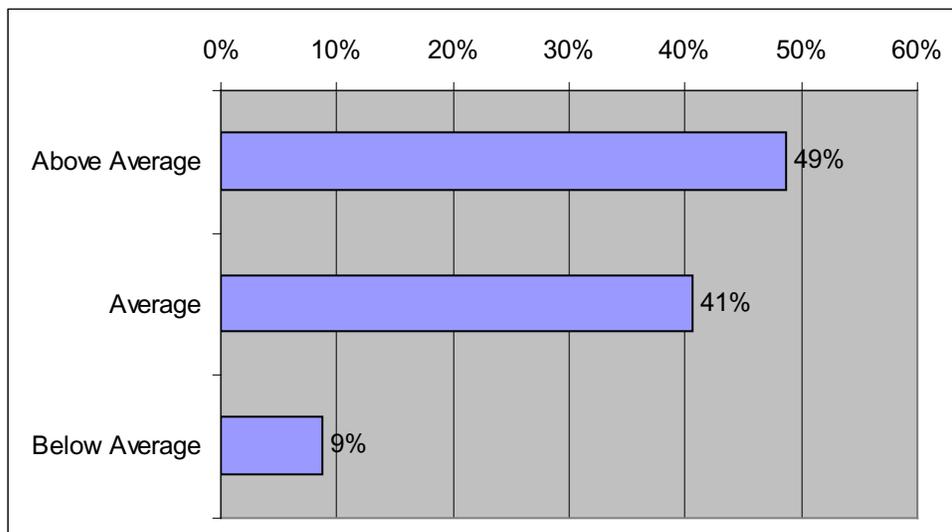


*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

This finding mirrored perceptions of the educational leader participants, who generally believed that a good educational foundation exists in Northeast Ohio, but that it needs to build upon itself to become a "Very Effective" enterprise.

My School: Educators assessed their own schools differently from other schools. When asked, "How would you compare education in your particular district, school or institution to the rest of Northeast Ohio," participants were more likely to rate their schools "Above Average" (49%) or "Average" (41%) than "Below Average." Principals were more likely to rate their schools higher than teachers (62% versus 52% "Above Average" responses). Superintendents were more likely to choose "Average" than "Above Average" (41% and 53%, respectively).

HOW WOULD YOU COMPARE EDUCATION IN YOUR PARTICULAR DISTRICT, SCHOOL OR INSTITUTION TO THE REST OF NORTHEAST OHIO?*



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

Educators' Potential Impact

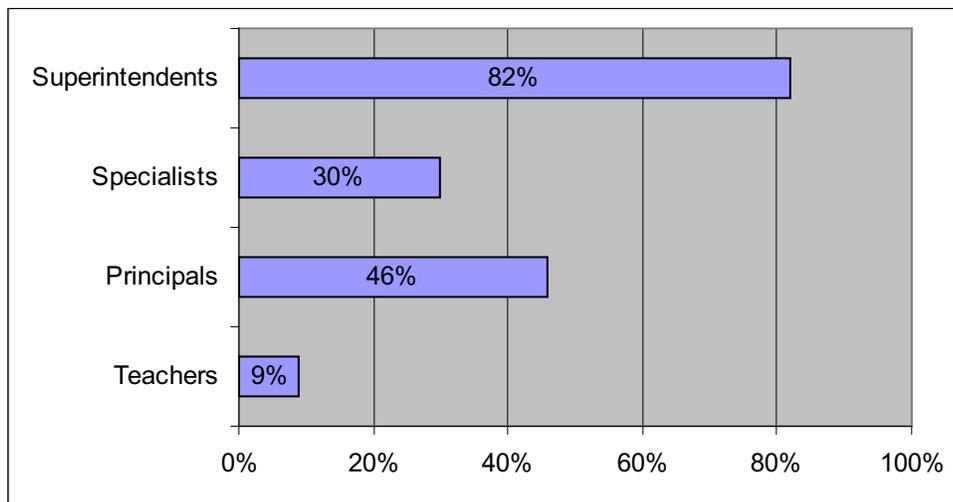
"Teachers have a large impact on their individual classroom and can improve the district in that way. The administration must be the leading driver for the district."

-- Participant in the 2006 Education Listening Project

When asked, "How much impact does the average educator have in improving education in a school, district or educational institution," the answers differed hugely between the four groups. While only 9% of the teachers felt the average educator had a "Large Impact," principals, specialists and, especially, superintendents, were much more positive.

HOW MUCH IMPACT DOES THE AVERAGE EDUCATOR HAVE IN IMPROVING EDUCATION IN A SCHOOL, DISTRICT OR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION?*

LARGE IMPACT



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF EACH SAMPLE.

Forty-three percent of teachers felt the average educator had only “Some” or “No” impact compared to 14% of the principals, 18% of the specialists and none of the superintendents. Clearly, administrators and specialists have a very different view of the average educator’s “reality” than do teachers.

Education’s Assets and Challenges

Assets and Resources: In an open-ended question, we asked respondents to identify positive and negative things about education in Northeast Ohio. The assets were primarily human--people doing the best they could in difficult circumstances. Some educators also felt their district or schools were providing tools and resources that made life in the classroom better.

“We are constantly trying to do the best we can regardless of the obstacles put before us.”

“We are consistently doing more with fewer teachers and less resources and community/parental support.”

“The dedication of all classroom educators. These folks put it on the line every day. Too bad they are not accorded the respect they deserve.”

“It is free. Anyone who wants it has access. Education is available to all willing to utilize the various resources at various locations. Education is not limited to the schoolhouse.”

“We have very high standards across all the academic areas.”

-- Participants in the 2006 Education Listening Project

The educators were also asked, “What is the best thing about education in Northeast Ohio?” Their responses were coded and sorted into broad categories. Here is a summary of the top “Best thing about education” categories named by the educators:

BEST THING ABOUT EDUCATION IN NORTHEAST OHIO

- Available Education Resources
- Educator Dedication
- Cultural Diversity
- Excellent Schools

Available education resources comprised a full 43% of the teacher responses.

Challenges and Issues: In an open-ended query about the primary challenges to education in Northeast Ohio, educators agreed that the “funding issue” is the leading challenge. However, principals, specialists and superintendents were more inclined to select that issue as paramount than teachers who said “testing/teaching issues” and “student issues” are also primary concerns for them.

We followed the open-ended query about local educational challenges with a set of questions to quantitatively assess potential impact of educational issues in Northeast Ohio. Specific issues suggested by the education leaders in the pre-survey discussion were presented, and respondents graded each item on a scale of one to five. “Five” represents “Large Impact” and “One” represents “Least Impact” on the educational climate in Northeast Ohio. Here are the mean scores for each group of educators; the leading sample is in bold.

MEAN IMPACT SCORES ON CRUCIAL EDUCATIONAL ISSUES* (Five is Most Impact)

| | Teacher | Principal | Specialist | Superintendent |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|
| Lack of public support to provide adequate tax and bond resources | 4.28 | 4.85 | 4.49 | 4.75 |
| A public that is uninformed or misinformed about educational issues | 4.66 | 4.15 | 4.56 | 4.50 |
| Varying needs in different districts and at different educational institutions | 4.25 | 4.00 | 4.24 | 4.25 |
| Resource inequality among schools and educational institutions | 4.13 | 4.23 | 4.25 | 4.50 |
| Unsafe, inadequate or antiquated facilities | 3.97 | 4.00 | 3.96 | 4.00 |
| State/government issues like mandated testing, teaching to standards and goal setting | 4.13 | 4.23 | 4.22 | 4.84 |
| Poorly trained or ill-prepared teachers | 3.00 | 2.85 | 2.98 | 3.50 |
| Inexpert or ineffective administrators | 3.56 | 2.77 | 3.38 | 3.25 |
| Parental issues like lack of involvement, apathy or interference | 4.53 | 3.77 | 4.35 | 4.75 |
| Student-related issues like values, ability, motivation and interest | 4.25 | 4.08 | 4.25 | 4.25 |
| Lack of morale in the educational community | 4.00 | 3.77 | 3.96 | 3.25 |

* SCORES REPRESENT RESPONSES FROM EACH SAMPLE.

Overall, the top two concerns are lack of public support to provide adequate tax and bond resources, and a public that is uninformed or misinformed about educational issues. These two issues may be inextricably tied and were also a major concern cited by the educational leader group. The educational leaders felt this was an area in which WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN can play a significant role.

Unsafe, inadequate or antiquated facilities and parental issues like lack of involvement, apathy or interference appear to relate either directly or indirectly to the first two issues of public support and being informed about educational issues. External, student-related issues like values, ability, motivation and interest were also rated high in impact, as was state/government issues like mandated testing, teaching to standards and goal setting. Also, educators didn't exclude themselves from scrutiny, pointing to poorly trained, ill-prepared teachers and inexperienced or ineffective administrators as issues that influence the local educational climate.

Resource inequality was a big source of concern among superintendents. Districts may differ in institutional assets and needs, and that has consequences. One educator pointed out:

“The most critical educational challenge in Northeast Ohio is getting our State Government to understand that the testing and accountability measures they have instituted are biased. In Cleveland, we have no supplies, no laboratory equipment, etc. and yet our students are being evaluated against school districts where these things are supplied.”

-- Participant in the 2006 Education Listening Project

Districts stretch their dollars at the expense of learners, as another educator noted:

“...The public in general has a jaded perception of how schools are funded. Districts stretch their dollars into oblivion at the expense of the learners. Through lack of support this translates into reduced dollars for quality instruction, textbooks, technology, and, of course, increased class sizes. Many educators have lost their positions and self-esteem through lack of public support.”

-- Participant in the 2006 Education Listening Project

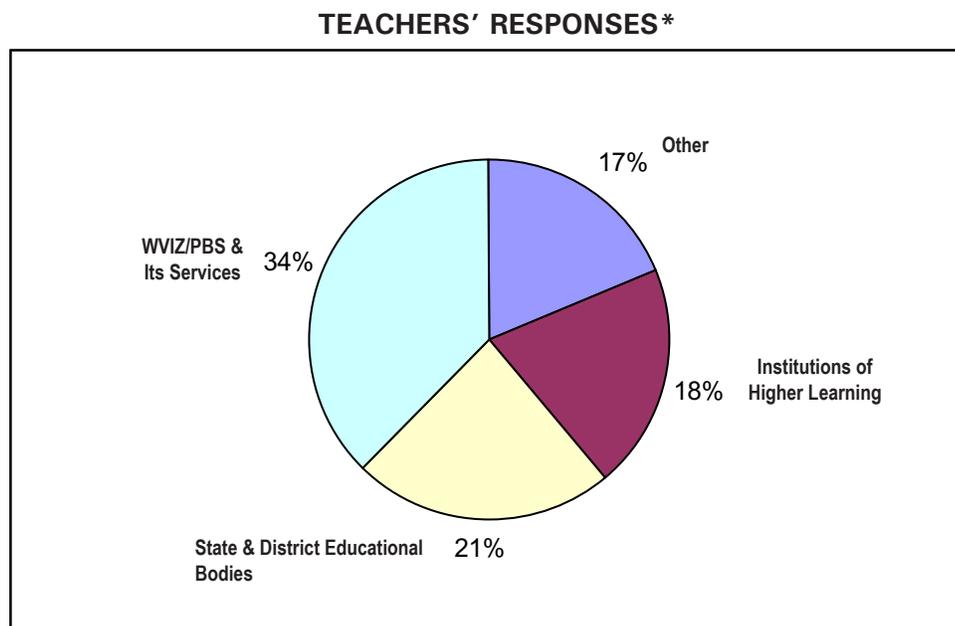
Who Can Help? Influential Entities

An open-ended question asked educators to name institutions or entities that are most influential in helping educators improve education in Northeast Ohio. More than one answer was allowed. Here are the ranked categories and the percent of the total response for each:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Institutions of Higher Education (e.g., universities, institutes) | 24% |
| State and district educational bodies (school boards, state agencies) | 16% |
| WVIZ/PBS and its services | 14% |
| Foundations, Grantors | 11% |
| Libraries, Museums, Cultural/Nature Centers | 9% |
| Local Businesses, Corporations | 8% |
| Professional Organizations | 6% |
| County/Social Services | 6% |

Overall, institutions of higher education were named the entity/institution most influential in helping educators in Northeast Ohio, but state/district educational bodies and WVIZ/PBS followed closely.

Classroom teachers were most positive of all samples about ideastream, WVIZ/PBS's services, with 34% of teachers' naming WVIZ/PBS's services among the most influential in improving local education.



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF TEACHERS ONLY.

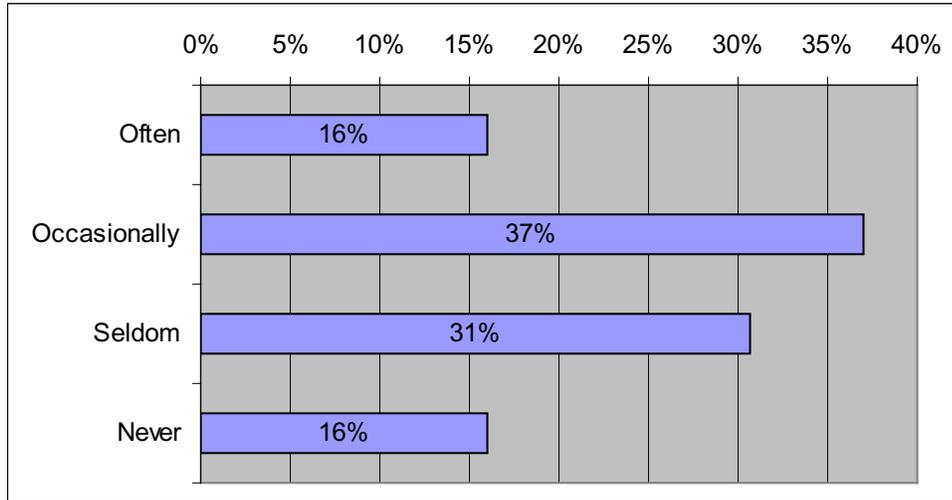
It is clear that WVIZ/PBS educational services are highly valued among Northeast Ohio educators, especially among teachers. Why? What services do they use?

What does WVIZ/PBS Do for Educators?

WVIZ/PBS ideastream offers many educational services, including helping school districts in the use of technology and providing student and teacher programming through technology. ideastream provides educational services to educators and students in over 400 school districts and individual schools containing 500,000 students. It presents workshops for teachers, school administrators and caregivers and broadcasts community college credit courses. The educational interactive video network managed by ideastream connects hundreds of school districts, colleges, museums and specialty content providers.

Respondents were asked if they used ideastream's educational services "Often," "Occasionally," "Seldom," or "Never," in the past year. Some practitioners used services a great deal.

OVERALL, EDUCATORS USED IDEASTREAM EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR*

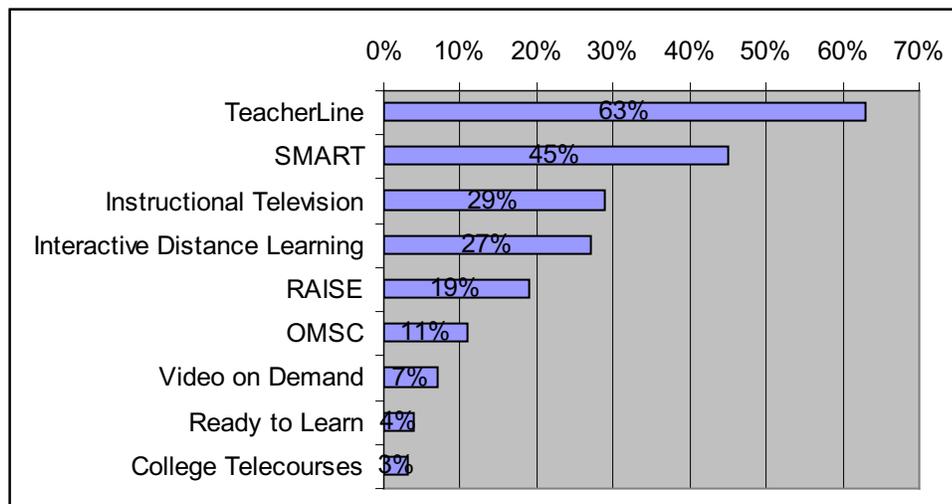


*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

Educators were offered nine specific titles among ideastream educational services: Ready to Learn workshops for parents and child care providers; PBS TeacherLine-Online Professional Development; Video on Demand Service; Interactive Video Distance Learning; Instructional Television Programming; College telecourses; SMART Consortium (Science and Math Achievement Required for Tomorrow; RAISE (Regional Alliance for Informal Science Education; OMSC (Ohio Math and Science Coalition). They were asked how often they used, or recommended for use, each service.

Overall, the top educational services named by the educators were TeacherLine and SMART.

USED OR RECOMMENDED IDEASTREAM EDUCATIONAL SERVICES* **



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

**MORE THAN ONE ANSWER ALLOWED.

The chart below shows how each sample used the top four WVIZ/PBS Educational Services:

TOP FOUR USED WVIZ/PBS SERVICES

| | Teacher | Principal | Specialist | Superintendent |
|---------------------------------------|---------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| TeacherLine | 83% | 23% | 78% | 24% |
| SMART | 48% | 63% | 0% | 59% |
| Instructional TV | 25% | 40% | 22% | 41% |
| Interactive Video Dist. Learn. | 16% | 40% | 22% | 59% |

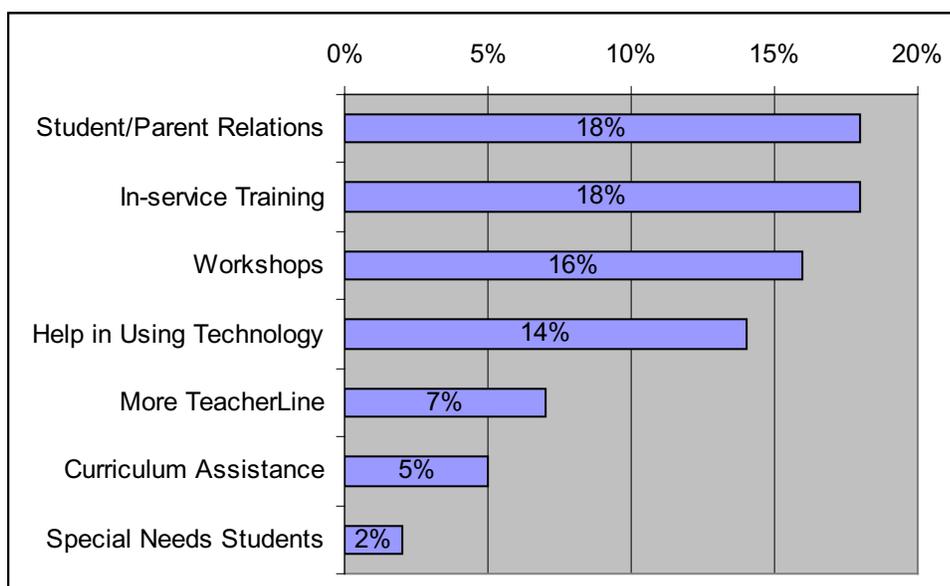
Each service appears to have a target audience of potential users. Specific services may lack resonance with different categories of educators because their duties and roles differ by professional area.

What Else Is Needed?

When asked, in an open-ended query, what further services or workshops WVIZ/PBS could provide educators, the teachers had most requests. In-service training in math, science and reading and help in using technology in their schools were the two most requested services. Other areas of much interest were student/parent relations and professional workshops.

The services most requested by principals and specialists were in-service training and student/parent relations, followed by workshops and help in using technology. Needs differ by job and role.

WHAT WOULD BE THE MOST USEFUL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, CONTENT OR WORKSHOPS THAT WVIZ/PBS OR 90.3 WCPN COULD OFFER TO YOU? * * * * *



* "NO ANSWER" RESPONSES EXCLUDED.

** VERY LIMITED RESPONSES BY SUPERINTENDENTS.

*** PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

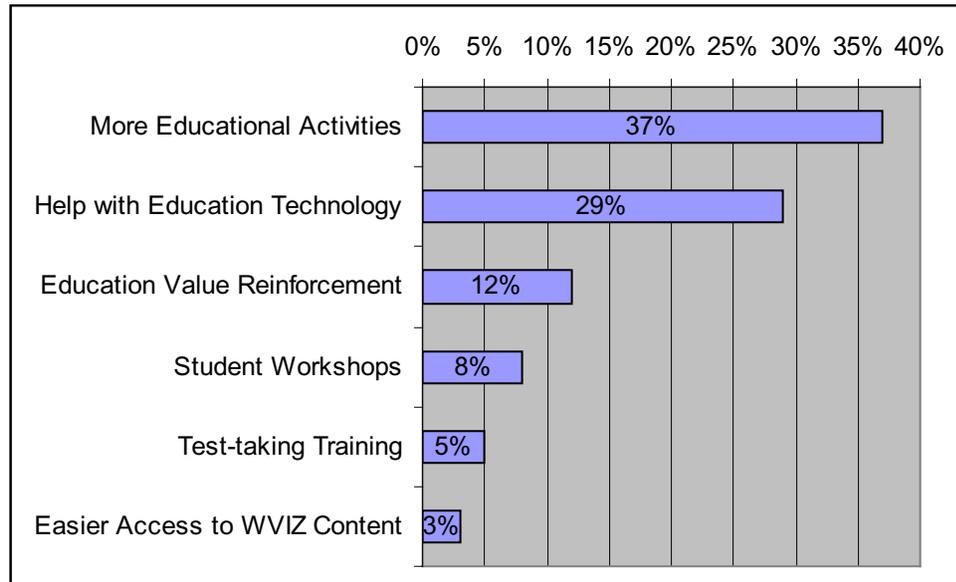
**** MORE THAN ONE ANSWER ALLOWED.

What's Most Valuable?

Looking for priorities for potential new WVIZ/PBS educational services, ideastream asked respondents an open-ended question, "What is the most valuable content of services that WVIZ/PBS or 90.3 WCPN could offer to students in your school, district or educational institution?"

More educational activities topped the chart with 37% of the responses, followed by help with educational technology with 29%. Education value reinforcement, student workshops, test taking training and easier access to WVIZ/PBS content were also named as "Most Valuable."

WHAT IS THE MOST VALUABLE CONTENT OF SERVICES THAT WVIZ/PBS OR 90.3 WCPN COULD OFFER TO STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL, DISTRICT OR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION? * * * * *



*VERY LIMITED RESPONSES BY SUPERINTENDENTS.

**PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

***MORE THAN ONE ANSWER ALLOWED.

Responses indicate educators' genuine concern for students, ranging from improving their test scores to raising their self-esteem. Here are some of the educators' comments.

"Help students with Ohio Achievement Test training and preparation."

"Real-world applications in high school math."

"After school tutoring."

"Reading workshops for upper elementary."

"Help with character/motivation for upper elementary."

"Motivational speakers to give students a glimpse of real life after school and possibilities."

"Self esteem programs."

"Workshops on technology integration, literacy connections to the arts."

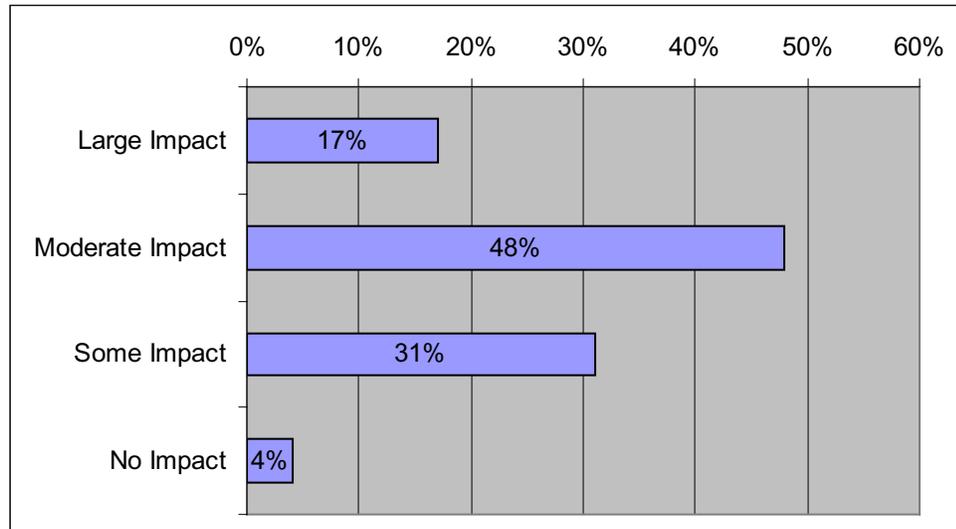
"Real life applications of math and science to career choices."

"Forums that bring students and the community together."

WVIZ/PBS's Potential Impact in Education

Since a primary aspect of the ideastream mission includes education, and since a concentrated effort is devoted to services for the educational community, it appeared useful to question whether the Northeast Ohio educational community thinks of ideastream and public broadcasting as an ally. Do they feel ideastream has potential impact to help them improve the local educational climate?

IN YOUR ESTIMATION, HOW MUCH POTENTIAL IMPACT HAS A PUBLIC MEDIA EDUCATIONAL SERVICE TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE IN YOUR SCHOOL, DISTRICT OR INSTITUTION?*



*PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.

A majority of all respondents believe that educational media can have a "Large" to "Moderate Impact," with principals and superintendents leading the way.

Increasing Impact

How can WVIZ/PBS and 90.3 WCPN increase their impact on the local educational climate?

"Keep on creating valuable educational programming."

"Become more involved."

"Find ways to involve and reach parents of the low achieving, struggling group of students. The parents that become involved in our schools are the ones that are already doing the things necessary to promote learning. We can't seem to get to the parents/guardians of those who need to become involved."

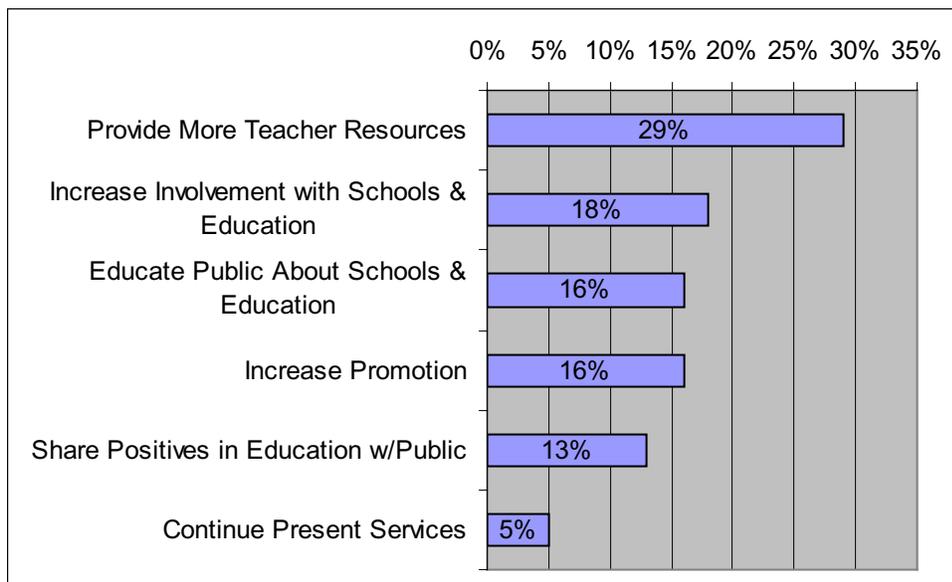
"By continuing to tell the stories of the schools so the public hears the accurate/unbiased story. The continuation of working with school districts."

"Instructional TV programming with classroom lessons."

-- Participants in the 2006 Education Listening Project

The group's top response was provide more teacher resources with 29% of the responses; it was followed by increase involvement with schools & education at 18%. Increased promotion and educate public about schools and education, and share positives in education with the public also had high resonance with the educators, with double digit scores.

HOW CAN WVIZ/PBS AND 90.3 WCPN INCREASE THEIR IMPACT ON THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL CLIMATE? * * * * *



*VERY LIMITED RESPONSES BY SUPERINTENDENTS.
 **PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.
 ***MORE THAN ONE ANSWER ALLOWED.

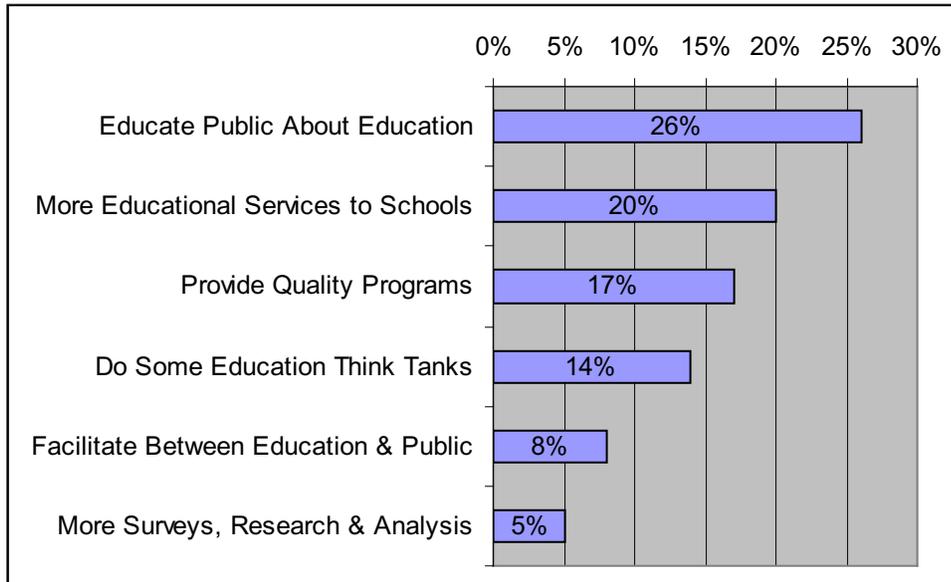
The teachers' top suggestion was more station involvement with the schools and education. They felt that increased promotion of ideastream services would be helpful, (including "educating the public about what the station does"). They also wanted ideastream to help educate the public about schools and education, and to furnish more on-the-ground resources for the teachers.

Although superintendents' responses were limited, their primary request was for more programming about problems in education in Northeast Ohio, and they wanted the public informed about "the real issues and successes" in Northeast Ohio schools. They suggested asking teachers about their needs, then delivering.

The Public and the Education Community

The education community realizes that the public has "issues" with local education. Respondents were asked what the station could do to help educators and the public work together to advance the educational enterprise. The responses focused on communication: They suggested station-sponsored "think tanks" and forums, they asked for "facilitation" between the public and educators; they want the public to "hear about good things happening in schools." They also want ideastream to provide more resources for the teachers, and "to do more research to discover what the public needs to know to help educators and education in Northeast Ohio." More than a few wanted "the political workings of testing and funding exposed," and "an honest discussion of the real problems affecting learning, i.e., society, culture, family structure."

HOW CAN PUBLIC BROADCASTING HELP EDUCATORS AND THE PUBLIC WORK TOGETHER TO RESOLVE EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES IN NORTHEAST OHIO? * * * * *



*VERY LIMITED RESPONSES BY SUPERINTENDENTS.
 **PERCENTAGES REPRESENT RESPONSES OF ALL SAMPLES.
 ***MORE THAN ONE ANSWER ALLOWED.

Do You Use It?

Throughout the survey, public broadcasting was spontaneously mentioned by respondents as an education ally for local educators and for the public. So if it's a good thing, do they use it for their own personal elucidation or entertainment? The educators are close to the college-educated respondents in the general population in their public broadcasting viewing and listening habits. Public TV, as in the general population, has more reported usage than radio.

How often do they view or listen to ideastream? Eighty-one percent watch WVIZ/PBS "Often" or "Occasionally;" 31% listen to 90.3 WCPN.

| DO YOU VIEW/LISTEN TO IDEASTREAM STATIONS? | | |
|---|-----------------|------------------|
| | WVIZ/PBS | 90.3 WCPN |
| Often | 17% | 12% |
| Occasionally | 64% | 19% |
| Seldom/Never | 19% | 69% |

Do teachers and principals differ? Here's watching WVIZ/PBS:

| DO YOU VIEW WVIZ/PBS? | | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| | Teacher | Principal | Specialist | Superintendent |
| Often | 19% | 15% | 20% | 6% |
| Occasionally | 66% | 61% | 50% | 47% |
| Seldom | 13% | 23% | 30% | 47% |
| Never | 3% | 0% | 0% | 0% |

Here's listening to 90.3 WCPN:

DO YOU LISTEN TO 90.3 WCPN?

| | Teacher | Principal | Specialist | Superintendent |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|------------|----------------|
| Often | 13% | 15% | 10% | 6% |
| Occasionally | 6% | 23% | 30% | 47% |
| Seldom | 38% | 23% | 20% | 24% |
| Never | 44% | 39% | 40% | 24% |

In Conclusion

The findings of the *Education Listening Project* provide a great deal of information for ideastream professionals. Some results were expected—even predictable—while others were unexpected and provocative. One thing is clear: While the public challenges education as a “problem child” in Northeast Ohio, educational practitioners candidly respond with perceptions even harsher than those of the public.

Even a casual observer might observe that substantial discrepancies between teachers’ and administrators’ perceptions, as evidenced on some survey questions, might provoke a measure of frustration in their relationships as these worthy professionals perform daily yeoman service in the name of public good, despite many distractions and hardships. They do agree, however, that school funding—an aspect of the *Economy* challenge—is part and parcel of the challenge of *Education* in Northeast Ohio.

It was frequently suggested in the community Listening Project discussion groups that the challenges of *Education* and *Economy* are related.

“Of course, the economy and education problems are related. The schools are underfunded, some more than others, and that causes inequality and inferior education!”

Participant, Community Listening Project

While administrators perceived the problem of educational funding at a very intense level, they, along with the teachers, recognized it was not the only issue confronting them.

“We could have all the money in the world, and there would still be problems in our educational system. We can’t blame it all on dollars! Throwing money at it is only part of the answer.”

Participant, Education Leader Group Participant

It is noteworthy that most educators ranked the condition of Northeast Ohio education, overall, much lower than they ranked education in their own particular schools/districts. The education leaders in the pre-survey group suggested that this was probably true for parents and public as well. Educators thought that education problems in the city of Cleveland tended to spill over and contaminate public perceptions of all residents in all communities.

“We hear problems regarding education all the time about Cleveland. But things in Shaker Heights don’t seem so bad.”

Participant, Education Leader Group Participant

Others suggested that the prevalent “Cleveland inferiority complex” was particularly evident in the area of education.

“Folks here tend to take a negative view of ourselves. And since everybody thinks he or she knows a lot about education—they’ve been to school, their kids have been to school—it’s easy to focus on what’s wrong with education . . . something they think they know a lot about.”

Participant, Community Listening Project

While many educators felt that some public education about “what’s right” with education in Northeast Ohio would help them with public perceptions, they also know that simply changing attitudes of the public won’t alleviate educational problems. Some of the public criticism, they say, is fair and deserved.

But other educators wish the public would spend more time learning about the difficulties and trying to fix problems that it can control, especially regarding student values, motivation and work habits. A number of educator-respondents said they’d like to invite the public to help fix what they think is broken.

The educators who responded in this study know a good bit about ideastream educational services. They tend to focus their use and appreciation on a select number of services that ideastream offers. They—especially the administrators—believe that public broadcasting educational media has potential to positively influence education in Northeast Ohio. When the educators were asked about education-influencing institutions and entities, public broadcasting came high on the list of influential entities that the educators spontaneously named.

It’s clear that the educators think public broadcasting has a role to play in improving education in Northeast Ohio, and they value its assistance. While they “don’t expect miracles from ideastream,” they’d like help in the form of “user friendly services” for teachers and classrooms, and for help in “educating the public about education in Northeast Ohio.” Teachers say they need professional development opportunities and help in “learning how to use the media effectively” in their work.

Teachers, principals and superintendents suggest that ideastream and the educational community must keep in close communication—that the educational community must be educated about the services available, and that ideastream must keep listening to what educators need. The educators would also like ideastream to keep listening to the community—they’d like to hear more about the specific problems that loom large in the public’s perception of education as a Northeast Ohio challenge.