

At a Glance

Results of the 2007 Parent Survey

May 2008

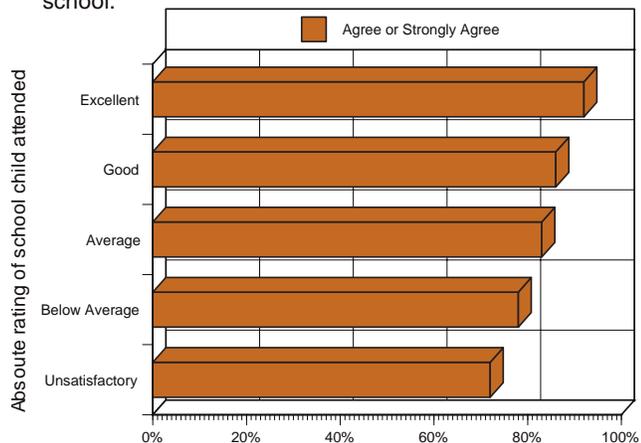
Background of Survey and Report

- Since 2002, the South Carolina Department of Education has collected information on parental involvement and reported parent perceptions of their child's school on the annual school report cards.
- The parents of students in grades 5, 8, and 11, or the highest grade in elementary and middle schools are surveyed.
- Using the results of the Parent Survey, the EOC issues annual reports to "determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parent involvement." (*Section 59-28-190, Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act*)
- The 2007 report represents the first in a triennial evaluation design, providing an in-depth analysis of the survey every three years and providing specific policy recommendations. This year's report uses a variety of statistical techniques to compare teacher and parent survey responses and their correlation with a school's performance.

Results of the 2007 Survey

- The total number of parent surveys returned in 2007 declined by seven percent from 2006. Even with the decline, an estimated 35 percent to 43 percent of the parents who were surveyed responded in 2007.
- Survey respondents have similar demographic and socio-economic characteristics – higher household incomes and higher educational level on average than the general population and public school population.
- Parent satisfaction levels increased to a six-year high for three indicators – learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment of their child's school.
- Parents whose child attended an elementary school expressed greater satisfaction with all three indicators than parents whose child attended a middle or high school.
- Parents consistently express concern with student behavior at their child's school and failure of their child's school to consider changes based on what parents say.
- Parents who have children in schools with higher absolute school indices and teachers employed in schools with higher absolute indexes tended to be more satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations, and the social and physical environment.
- An analysis tested whether the absolute index (which determines a school's Absolute Rating) of a school could be predicted based on parent and teacher satisfaction levels.
 - For parents, satisfaction with the social and physical environment was the most important predictor for a school's absolute index.
 - For teachers, satisfaction with home and school relations was the most important predictor for a school's absolute index.

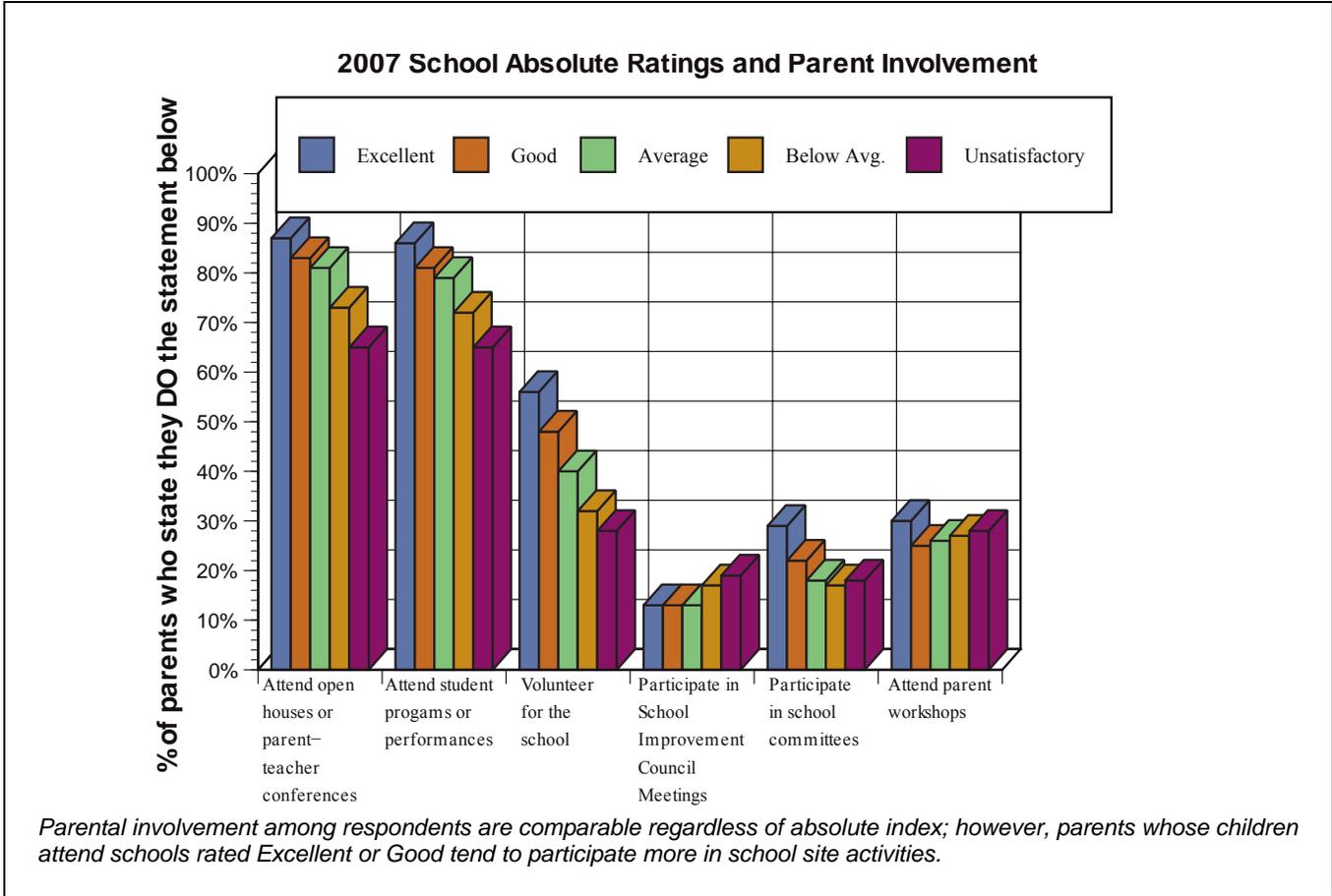
Percentage of parents who *agree* or *strongly agree* with the statement, "I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school."



Obstacles to Parent Involvement

The work schedule of parents was consistently reported as the greatest obstacle to their involvement in schools. Fifty-five percent of respondents stated that their work schedule made it hard to be involved. Other obstacles to parental involvement included:

- Family health problems (15 percent)
- Lack of available care for children or other family members (15 percent)
- Lack of transportation (12 percent)



EOC Recommendations

- To increase survey responses, the Education Oversight Committee recommends that the South Carolina Department of Education mail the parent surveys directly to parents and include a pre-addressed business reply mail envelope for parents to use to return the survey.
- School renewal plans, technical assistance and professional development should include strategies to develop strong parent, school, and teacher relationships and to improve the social and physical environment of schools.
- Additional strategies should address school safety and student discipline programs as well as provide clear expectations to parents about what their children should be learning in school.
- The General Assembly should provide funding for the South Carolina Department of Education to implement the Parental Involvement in Their Children’s Education Act.
- Results of the survey should be provided to district superintendents, school principals and chairs of each school improvement council.

Additional Information

- This year’s report includes a literature review related to parent involvement and its effects on academic performance. The full report can be found online at www.eoc.sc.gov. Click on *Reports and Publications*.
- For additional information about parent involvement, *New Carolina* has published a resource guide for South Carolina groups and individuals. “Increasing Parent Involvement in Education: A Resource Guide for South Carolina Communities” is available online at <http://www.newcarolina.org/images/PDF/parent-involvement-8.pdf>.

For additional information, contact the EOC at (803) 734-6148. A complete copy of “Results and Analyses of the 2007 Parent Survey” can currently be found online at www.eoc.sc.gov. Click on *Reports and Publications*.