



## Division of Accountability & Research

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### ***Parent & Community Involvement Survey*** **Executive Summary** **2007-08**

The Parental & Community Involvement Survey was developed during the 2005-06 school year in collaboration with the Diversity Education Office, the Grants Office and the Division of Accountability & Research. The purpose of the survey is to collect information from parents on the opportunities afforded to them to be actively and meaningfully involved in their children's education. The questions in the main sections in the survey are designed and written to collect data on what research indicates are the most common parental involvement opportunities as noted by Joyce Epstein, a leading researcher in the area of parental involvement working at John Hopkins University.

#### **Methodology**

A 21 item survey was mailed to the parents of all secondary school students in January of 2008. Elementary schools provided the survey to parents either through the mail or during school events during the month of January. Additional questions were added to the survey on the topics of bus transportation, the lunch program, and the possible need for a school based health center in the northwest quadrant of the district. Results from the additional questions were provided to the appropriate program directors and are reported in separate reports.

At the time of the survey, a total of 19,088 unique households were active in the districts student information system. The number of surveys returned was 5002 for an estimated return rate of 26%. This return rate in 2006-07 was 33%. The percent of students by grade level indicates a higher return rate for elementary school with 85% of parents reporting their child was in grade kindergarten through grade five. The distribution of the students ethnicity reported by the parents reflected percents very similar to the overall district population.

#### **Summary of Results**

Results of the survey are grouped into four areas:

- Student Achievement,
- Welcoming Environment
- Leadership/Partnership Opportunities
- Decision Making (Assessment, Evaluation & Planning)

**Student Achievement.** Questions on whether schools provide information to parents on the academic achievement of their students and how to support academic achievement had high agreement rates ranging from 72% to 92%. These results are very similar to those reported in 2006-07. Parents reported that they are provided opportunities to learn how to help their students along with information on opportunities for additional support if their student(s) needs it. The percent of parents that reported their

student(s) attended an after school program was 28% compared to 42% in 2006-07. The majority of parents (81%) agreed that the after-school program helped their child (for those whose child attended).

**Environment.** The vast majority of parents responding to the survey (90%-95%) find the Aurora Public Schools are a welcoming and safe environment for their child. Parents reported that the school information they receive is in a language they understand and that schools respect the different cultures that are represented in the community. Last, parents reported that school staff is able to meet with them to discuss their child's progress.

**Leadership/Partnership Opportunities.** On questions pertaining to opportunities for parents to have input into the school decision making process, relatively high agreement rates were noted. Parents reported that schools provide opportunities to give input on the school's program and services (81% agreed), that they received information on how to become involved in the schools decision-making process (77% agreed), that the school encourages them to participate in leadership activities (75% agreed) and that the school provides opportunities to plan/participate in school activities (79% agreed). For information on local agencies and other community support services, 69% of parents agreed that they received assistance when they need it. In regard to school improvement plans, 62% of parents reported they were familiar with what the plan is which is an improvement of 6% from the previous year.

**Assessment, Evaluation & Planning.** For those parents responding that they were familiar with the school improvement plan, the majority reported they understand how it is developed (73% agreed). A 19% drop in the percent of parents agreeing to the above statement was noted from the 2006-07 school year. The majority of parents also agreed that they know the goals in the school improvement plan (75% agreed) and that they are aware of what student achievement data is in a school improvement plan (73% agreed). The last question on the survey asked if parents received the state school accountability report with 65% stating 'yes' which is a 5% increase from the 2006-07 school year.

## **Conclusions**

The Center on School, Family and Community Partnerships notes that the nation's schools must improve education for all students, but schools cannot do this alone. More will be accomplished if schools, families, and communities work together to promote successful students. The Aurora Public Schools has actively sought to improve parental involvement and community support over the past several years. Data from the 2007-08 Parental & Community Involvement Survey indicate that for those parents who completed the survey, high levels of parental involvement and engagement are evident in the Aurora Public Schools. Future direction for parental and community involvement include targeting secondary level schools and parents to further verify the levels and types of programs/supports offered and to evaluate their effectiveness.