



Results and Analyses of the 2008 Parent Survey



**SC EDUCATION
OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**



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Executive Summary

The parent survey was designed in 2001 to meet the requirements of the Education Accountability Act (EAA) and the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act. Section 59-18-900 of the EAA requires that the annual school report card include "evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students" as performance indicators to evaluate schools. In addition Section 59-28-190 of the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act requires the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) to "survey parents to determine if state and local efforts are effective in increasing parental involvement." The tool that has been adopted by the EOC and administered by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to meet these statutory requirements is the annual parent survey.

Since 2002 the SCDE has administered the parent survey to a sample of parents whose children attended public schools in South Carolina. Annually, the EOC has analyzed the results of the parent survey and issued reports. The results of the 2008 administration of the parent survey were consistent with prior year parent survey results with the following exceptions: (1) The percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent and who were satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school declined significantly between 2007 and 2008. A significant decline is defined as an annual reduction of 3% or greater. The decline may be explained by the distribution of Excellent schools in 2008 versus 2007. In 2007 36% of all Excellent schools were high schools, but in 2008 the percentage of Excellent schools that were high schools was 53%. As national research and prior results of the parent survey document, parent satisfaction with public schools declines as the child moves from elementary to middle to high schools. Another explanation is that parents who responded to the 2008 parent survey and who had children attending high schools with an Excellent rating were significantly less satisfied than all other parents whose children attended an Excellent elementary or middle school with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school. The results show that even in Excellent high schools opportunities exist to improve the educational achievement of students through greater collaboration between parents, principals and teachers. (2) The data also reveal that all parents of high school students in South Carolina who responded to the survey were less satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school, down

from 77.3% in 2007 to 72.5% in 2008. Because the responses underrepresented the general high school population, making generalizations to the entire population of high school parents is not statistically valid. However, as compared to prior year parent survey, parents who completed the survey and had children in high schools were less satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school in 2008 than in 2007. The following summarizes the results of the 2008 parent survey.

2008 Parent Survey Respondents

Total Number: **68,761** ↑Up 6.5% from prior year

Return Rate: **Between 36% and 45% of all eligible parents**

By School Level (Compared to % of All Students)

Grades 3-5	39.4%	(33%)
Grades 6-8	38.2%	(32%)
Grades 9-11	19.4%	(32%)

By Absolute Rating of School (Compared to % of All Students)

Excellent	8.7%	(10.2%)
Good	18.2%	(18.2%)
Average	39.7%	(40.6%)
Below Average	21.5%	(20.1%)
At-Risk	10.9%	(10.5%)

Other Facts about the Respondents:

- ❖ Typically white females
- ❖ Just as likely to have a child in elementary or middle school
- ❖ Representative of percentage of children in public schools by absolute rating of school
- ❖ Under represents parents of African-American students by 5.5%
- ❖ Higher Educational attainment than general population of South Carolina

Parent Satisfaction with Public Schools, 2008

I am satisfied with

Learning Environment

All Parents		Parents of Children in:			
2008	82.3%	Elementary	86.2%	Excellent	88.1% ↓ (3.8%)
2007	82.2%	Middle	78.6%	Good	86.3%
		High	72.5% ↓ (4.8%)	Average	83.2%
				Below Average	79.5%
				At-Risk	73.8%

Home and School Relations

All Parents		Parents of Children in:			
2008	77.8%	Elementary	83.0%	Excellent	82.1% ↓ (4.7%)
2007	77.9%	Middle	73.4%	Good	80.9%
		High	72.4%	Average	78.3%
				Below Average	75.4%
				At-Risk	73.2%

Social and Physical Environment

All Parents		Parents of Children in:			
2008	78.6%	Elementary	85.3%	Excellent	84.3% ↓ (5.1%)
2007	79.0%	Middle	73.2%	Good	84.0%
		High	71.4%	Average	79.7%
				Below Average	75.3%
				At-Risk	68.4%

Discipline – An issue of concern to ALL Parents

Only 56.6% of parents believe students at their child's school are well-behaved.

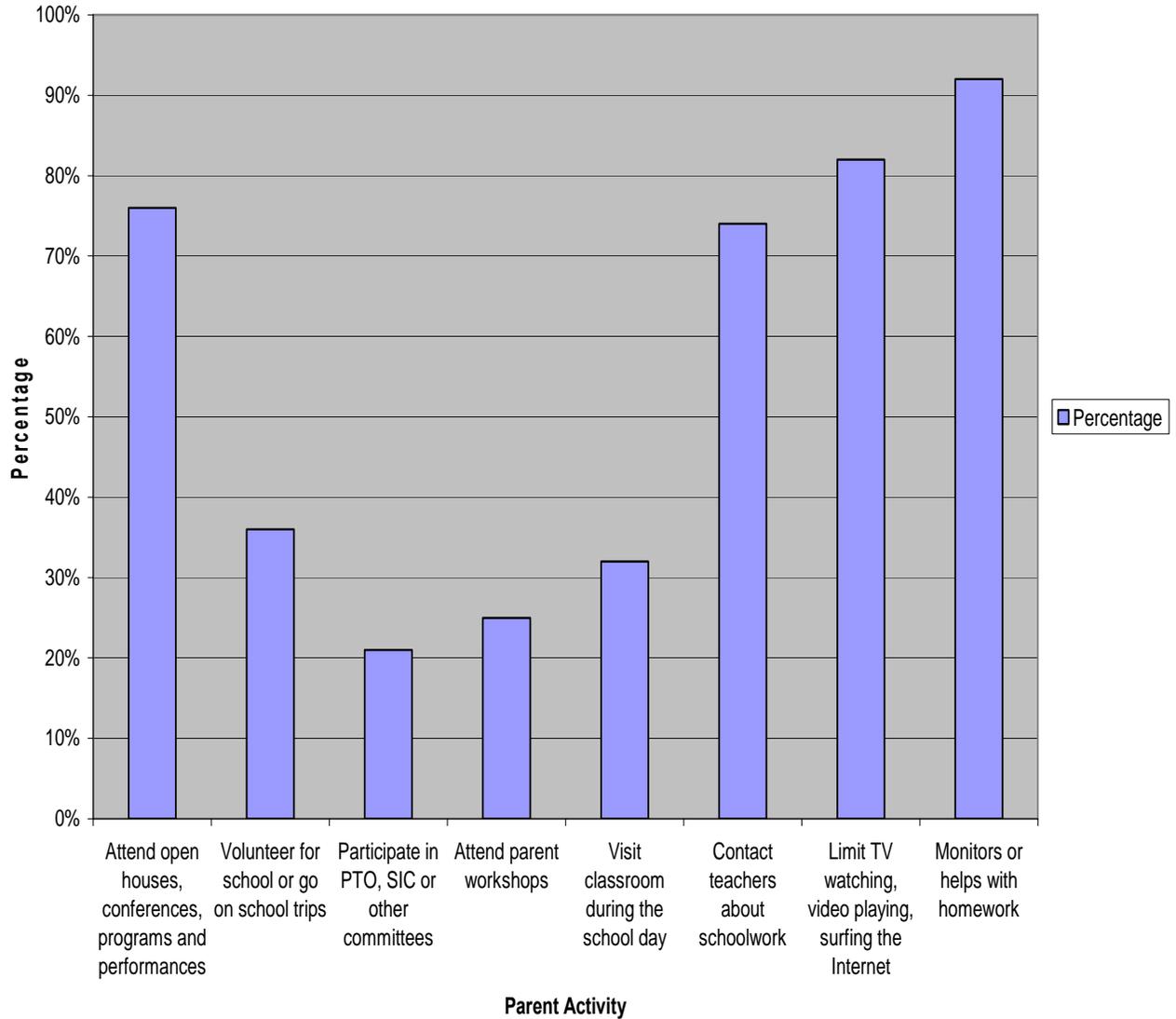
Parents who believe students at their child's school are well-behaved by:

School Level:		Absolute Rating:	
Elementary	65.5%	Excellent	70.2%
Middle	48.2%	Good	67.3%
High	48.0%	Average	57.8%
		Below Average	48.4%
		At-Risk	39.8%

Note: Compared to results of the 2007 Parent Survey, only percentage changes of 3% or more are noted.

Parental Involvement, 2008

Percentage of Parents who say that they do this



Parents Report Obstacles to Parental Involvement

Work Schedule	56.2%
Lack of timely notification of volunteer opportunities	26.8%
School does not encourage involvement	18.0%
Lack of child or adult care services	15.2%
Family and health problems	14.9%
Involvement not appreciated	12.8%
Transportation	11.6%

PART ONE

Summary of Prior Parent Surveys

Annually, the EOC has issued a report documenting the results of the parent survey. The annual report focuses on two specific areas: (1) parent perceptions or satisfaction levels with public schools; and (2) parental involvement activities as self-reported by parents. Copies of prior reports can be downloaded at www.eoc.sc.gov.

The 2007 report represented the first in a triennial evaluation design. While the EOC will continue to report annually on the results of the parent survey, the EOC will conduct an in-depth analysis of the survey results and provide specific recommendations every three years. The 2007 report not only tabulated and analyzed parent survey responses by school type and rating, but also provided a review of the research literature on parental involvement in public schools, including the benefits of parental involvement on students, parents and schools and an in-depth analysis comparing the results of the parent and teacher surveys administered in 2007. The parent and teacher surveys determine satisfaction with the same three constructs, the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of schools.

Analyzing the results of the 2007 parent survey, the first triennial evaluation documented the following. In 2007 parent satisfaction levels increased to a six-year high for all 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. Parent satisfaction improved as the absolute performance rating of the school improved and declined as the absolute performance rating of the school declined. Parents continued to express concern with student behavior at their child's school with parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Unsatisfactory/At-Risk more than twice as likely to feel that students misbehaved in school as compared to parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent rating. As in prior years, less than half of the parents believed that their child's school considered changes based on what parents say. Finally, parents in 2007 reported levels of parental involvement comparable to prior surveys with over 78% attending open houses or parent-teacher conferences and 93% reporting helping their child with homework. The biggest obstacle to parental involvement was again work schedules.

The second component of the 2007 triennial evaluation included reliability, correlation and multiple regression analyses to compare the teacher and parent survey responses to determine the degree to which parent and teacher satisfaction variables correlated with the absolute index of the school and the statistical predictions between the parent and teacher satisfaction variables and the school absolute index. The data found that the questions on both the parent and teacher surveys consistently and reliably measured parent and teacher satisfaction with each construct (learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment), but were significantly stronger in the teacher survey. The correlation analysis suggested that parents who have children in schools with higher absolute school indices and teachers employed in schools with higher absolute school indices tended to be satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations, and the social and physical environment.

The multiple regression analysis provided contrasting information.

- For parents, all three indicators were significant predictors of an elementary, middle or high school's absolute index when analyzed separately to control for multicollinearity. However, parent satisfaction of the social and physical environment was the **strongest predictor** of the absolute school index.
- Parent satisfaction with all three indicators explained 49% of the variance in the absolute index of elementary schools, 57% in middle, and 30% in high schools.
- On the other hand, for teachers, the social and physical environment was **not** a predictor of a school's absolute index. Instead, teacher satisfaction with home and school relations was a predictor of a middle and high school's absolute index while teacher satisfaction with the learning environment and home and school relations was a predictor of an elementary school's absolute index.
- Furthermore, teacher satisfaction with home and school relations was the **strongest indicator** of the absolute school index for all three school levels.

Based on the results of the 2007 parent survey, the EOC recommended that:

- Funding should be provided to the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to implement the Parental Involvement in Their Children's Education Act;
- Technical assistance to underperforming schools should include designing strategies to address weaknesses in the learning environment, home and school relations, social and physical environment as revealed on the teacher and parent surveys;
- SCDE should provide results of the parent survey as well as teacher and student surveys directly to each school district superintendent, school principal and school improvement council chair; and
- Principals and school improvement councils should identify strengths and weaknesses in their schools and implement policies to improve parental involvement by all parents and address issues of concern to teachers, parents and students.

Pursuant to the triennial research design, the EOC will conduct another in-depth analysis of the survey response in 2010.

The results of the 2008 parent survey are documented in this report. The results for each question are not only tabulated, but also analyzed by schools according to the school's 2008 absolute rating and level i.e. elementary, middle and high. As in prior years, where appropriate, comparisons between the 2008 and 2007 parent survey results are highlighted as well as any long-term trends in parent perceptions and parental involvement activities.

PART TWO

Administration of the 2008 Parent Survey

The design and sampling methodology for the parent survey were established in 2001. The EOC contracted with the Institute of Families in Society at the University of South Carolina to design the survey and to recommend a medium for distributing the survey. To maintain complete anonymity and to maximize the return rate, the Institute recommended that the survey be mailed to a sample of parents along with a postage paid, return envelope. While the sampling methodology proposed by the Institute was implemented, the parent survey has never been mailed to parents due to budgetary restrictions. Instead, schools have been given the responsibility for distributing and collecting the forms. Generally, schools send the surveys home with students. Some schools have held parent meetings or special meetings at school where the surveys were distributed.

The parent survey is typically administered during the second semester of each school year. Rather than surveying all parents of public school students, the parents of students in the highest grade at all elementary, middle and high schools are surveyed. In high schools and career centers, parents of all 11th graders are surveyed. Parents in schools containing grades 2 or lower (K-1, K-2, and 1-2 configurations) are not surveyed.

Compared to the prior year, in 2008 there were no changes in the administration or shipping procedures of the parent survey. A copy of the 2008 survey and instructions provided by the South Carolina Department of Education to schools are in the appendix. The 2008 administration of the parent survey occurred over the following period of time and involved the following actions.

March 3, 2008	All schools received survey forms.
April 4, 2008	Date for parent survey forms returned to school.
April 14, 2008	Last day for schools to mail completed forms to contractor.

A school survey coordinator, a staff person designated by the school principal, distributed and collected the parent surveys at each school according to instructions provided by SCDE. According to the "Administration of the 2008 Report Card Surveys" in the appendix, an independent contractor hired by SCDE mailed to each school the following:

- ✓ An envelope containing:
 1. A letter to the principal from the Executive Director of the EOC,
 2. Two sets of instructions for administering the surveys,
 3. A page of shipping instructions, and
 4. One-pre-addressed UPS shipping label (used to return completed surveys to contractor with freight prepaid).

- ✓ Parent survey envelopes. Each envelope contained a letter from the State Superintendent of Education and a parent survey form.

- ✓ If applicable, Spanish parent survey envelopes were included. The outside of the envelope was marked with "S."

The name of each school was printed on the survey forms to assist parents who were completing surveys for multiple schools. SCDE reported that the total cost of printing, shipping, processing and scanning the parent survey in 2008 totaled \$53,952.46.¹

The survey coordinator then distributed envelopes containing the parent survey and letter from the state Superintendent of Education to each classroom teacher within the designated grade being surveyed. Teachers gave each student an envelope and instructions to take the envelope home for their parents to complete and then return the completed survey to school in the sealed envelope. The envelopes were designed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of all parents. Parents were given the option of mailing the completed survey directly to SCDE with parents incurring the cost of the mailing or of returning the survey to the school. The school survey coordinator was expressly advised that mailing of the envelopes directly to the parents was allowed with all costs to be borne by the school. Information did not exist to document if any schools mailed the parent surveys to parents.

Upon receiving the completed parent surveys, the school survey coordinator then mailed the forms to the independent contractor for scanning and preparation of the data files. Individual school results were tabulated by SCDE. The overall parent satisfaction scores of three questions relating to the school's overall learning environment, home and school relations, and social and physical environment were printed on the 2008 annual school report cards. For each school, SCDE aggregated the responses to all survey questions and provided the summary data to the district office.

As in prior years, the 2008 parent survey contained forty-six questions designed to elicit information on parental perceptions and parental involvement patterns. For the first twenty-one questions, parents were asked to respond to individual statements using one of the following responses: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree or Don't Know. These twenty-one questions focused on three key components: learning environment, home and school relations, and the physical and social environment of their child's school. These components and individual activities reflect the framework devised by Dr. Joyce Epstein of the National Network of Partnership Schools.

The remaining questions on the survey addressed parental involvement activities and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. Parents were asked about their participation in various parental involvement activities both in and outside of the school. Parents were also asked to determine from a list of responses potential barriers to their involvement in their child's education. Finally, parents were asked to provide specific information about themselves, their child, and their household. Parents were asked four questions about their child – their child's grade in school, gender, race/ethnicity, and grades on his or her last report card. Four questions sought information about the parent, his or her gender, race/ethnicity, highest level of education and total yearly household income.

¹ Cynthia Hearn, e-mail message to Melanie Barton, March 18, 2009.

PART THREE

Response Rate for 2008 Parent Survey

According to Instructional Assessment Resources (IAR), the goal of any survey is to have an acceptable response rate to make generalizations to a larger population or to measure effects. "High survey response rates help to ensure that survey results are representative of the target population. A survey must have a good response rate in order to produce accurate, useful results." ² According to IAR, acceptable response rates vary by the method of distribution:

- Mail: 50% is adequate, 60% is good, 70% is very good
- Phone: 80% is good
- Email 40% is average, 50% is good, 60% is very good
- Online: 30% is average
- Classroom paper: >50% is good
- Face-to-face: 80-85% is good" ³

Distribution of the South Carolina parent survey does not fall within any of the above media for distribution. Consequently, two methods were developed to analyze the response rate for the 2008 parent survey to determine the percentage of eligible parents that completed and returned a parent survey.

One method is to compare the number of surveys mailed to schools with the number of completed surveys returned. According to SCDE, a total of 189,500 parent surveys were mailed to 1,128 schools for distribution. This total included 9,236 surveys printed in Spanish. The schools included elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, career centers and the following special schools:

- Felton Laboratory School
- John de la Howe School
- Wil Lou Gray School
- School for the Deaf and the Blind
- Department of Juvenile Justice Schools
- Palmetto Unified Schools
- Governor's School for Science and Mathematics
- Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities

Schools containing grades 2 or lower (K-1, K-2, and 1-2 configurations) were not included in the survey. This first method inflates the sample size because schools did request and received extra copies of the parent survey for parents who enrolled children in the second semester or who lost their original form.

² "Response Rates," Instructional Assessment Resources, The University of Texas at Austin, <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/diia/assessment/iar/teaching/gather/method/survey-Response.php> (accessed on March 20, 2009).

³ Ibid.

A second method is to use the statewide 135-day average daily membership of all students in grades 5, 8 and 11 in school year 2007-08 as the sample size. On the 45th, 90th and 135th days of school, the Student Accountability System (SASI) collects and classifies each student in South Carolina's public schools by grade and by a pupil classification system prescribed in the Education Finance Act. In school year 2007-08 the 135-day average daily membership for grades 5, 8 and 11 rounded to the nearest student totaled 151,132.24.⁴

Due to the grade spans and guidelines for administering the survey, 88% of the 1,131 schools in South Carolina surveyed parents of children in grades 5, 8 and 11. The remaining 12% or 140 schools had grade configurations of PK-3, PK-4, PK-6, K-6, K-7, 1-3, 2-3, 4-6, 5-7, 6 only, or 9-10 which resulted in surveying parents of children in grades other than 5, 8 and 11 or in multiple grades. For example, according to the instructions for administering the 2008 parent survey which are located in the appendix, a school with a grade K-7 configuration would sample parents of children in grades 5 and 7. A school with grades 4 through 6 would survey parents of sixth graders. Therefore, using ADM for 5, 8 and 11 grades likely deflates the total number of parents surveyed.

As reflected in Table 1, the total number of parent surveys returned in 2008 increased by 4,165 or 6.5% from the prior year.

Table 1
Total Number of Parent Surveys Returned

2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002
68,761	64,596	69,495	66,895	66,283	64,732	55,864

Using the two methods of determining response rates and the total number of parent surveys returned, two response rates were calculated in Table 2. Between 36.3% and 45.5% of all eligible parents surveyed responded to the 2008 parent survey. Over one-third of all eligible parents responded to the parent survey in 2008. Compared to IAR's definitions of acceptable response rates for email and online surveys, the response rate to the 2008 parent survey should be considered average.

Table 2
Determining the Response Rate

	Sample Size	Surveys Returned	Response Rate
Method 1: Surveys Distributed	189,500	68,761	36.3%
Method 2: ADM of 5, 8 and 11 th grades	151,132	68,761	45.5%

⁴“S.C. Average Daily Membership and Attendance.” South Carolina Department of Education. 17 Mar. 2009. <<http://ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Data-Management-and-Analysis/old/research/documents/ADM13508.xls>>.

The subsequent question is how do the respondents of the 2008 parent survey compare to the larger, target population—parents of all public school children.

Parents completing the survey were asked four questions about their child:

1. What grade is your child in? (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th or 11th)
2. What is your child's gender?
3. What is your child's race/ethnicity?
4. What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?

Parents were asked another set of four questions about themselves and their family:

1. What is your gender?
2. What is your race/ethnic group?
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 - Attended elementary/high school
 - Completed high school/GED
 - Earned Associate Degree
 - Attended college/training program
 - Earned college degree
 - Postgraduate study/and/or degree
4. What is your family's total yearly household income?
 - Less than \$15,000
 - \$15,000 - \$24,999
 - \$25,000 - \$34,999
 - \$35,000 - \$54,999
 - \$55,000 - \$75,000
 - More than \$75,000

Responses to these eight questions revealed the following about the parents who completed the 2008 parent survey.

Respondents to the 2008 Parent Survey

Gender

Male	13.8%
Female	84.2%

Race

African-American	32.3%
Caucasian/white	57.1%
Hispanic	4.3%
Other	3.5%

Education

Attended elementary/high school	12.1%
Completed high school/GED	24.5%
Earned Associate Degree	9.2%
Attended college/training program	21.6%
Earned college degree	18.1%
Postgraduate study/and/or degree	9.9%

Household Income

Less than \$15,000	11.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	12.6%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	13.2%
\$35,000 - \$54,999	16.4%
\$55,000 - \$75,000	14.3%
More than \$75,000	23.7%

Their Child Enrolled in:

Grades 3-5	39.4%
Grades 6-8	38.2%
Grades 9-11	19.4%

Their Child's Gender:

Male	43.8%
Female	54.3%

Their Child's Ethnicity:

African-American	32.5%
Caucasian/White	55.4%
Hispanic	4.2%
Other	4.4%

Their Child's Grades:

All or mostly A's and B's	54.2%
All or mostly B's and C's	28.9%
All or mostly C's and D's	10.4%
All or mostly D's and F's	2.3%

Note: Percentages do not add up to 100% because some questions were not answered.

As in prior years, the “typical” parent responding to the survey in 2008 was a white female. However, unlike prior years, the “typical” parent in 2008 was just as likely to have had a child in elementary school as in middle school. As Table 3 below notes, there was an increase between 2007 and 2008 in the number of parents whose child was enrolled in middle or high schools participating in the parent survey. The percentage of parent survey responses from parents of children in elementary and middle school replicated the actual percentage of students enrolled in schools based on the 135-day average daily membership. However, parent survey respondents significantly underrepresented the parents of high school students.

Table 3
Parental Respondents by Child’s Grade, Compared to Prior Year and to State

Parents whose Child Enrolled in:	2007 Parent Survey	2008 Parent Survey	Percentage of 135-day Average Daily Membership 2007-08
Grades 3-5	45.2%	39.4%	33%
Grades 6-8	36.5%	38.2%	32%
Grades 9-11	16.8%	19.4%	32%

Table 4 below compares the enrollment by ethnicity of all children in South Carolina public schools in 2007-08 with the parent survey respondents.⁵ Compared to the percentage of African American children enrolled in public schools, 5.5% fewer respondents to the 2008 parent survey were of African American ethnicity. And, more of the parent survey respondents were of White or Other ethnicity as compared to children in public schools.

Table 4
Ethnicity

	Children in Public Schools in 2007-08	Parent Survey Respondents, 2008	Difference with school Population
White	53.6%	57.1%	+3.5%
African American	37.8%	32.3%	- (5.5%)
Hispanic	5.0%	4.3%	- (0.7%)
Other	2.4%	3.5%	+1.1%

Regarding the educational attainment of the respondents, 37.2% of parents who responded to the survey in 2008 had earned an associate, bachelor’s or postgraduate degree. The data showed that the level of educational attainment of parent survey respondents in 2008 is consistent with prior survey respondents. As in prior parent surveys, the respondents had more extensive educational attainment than the general population of South Carolina. For comparison purposes, based on the U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 2000, 24.8% of persons eighteen years of age or over in South Carolina had obtained an associate, bachelor’s or graduate degree as reflected in Table 5.

⁵ South Carolina Department of Education, “Quick Facts,” http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/Accountability/Data-Management-and-Analysis/old/research/documents/QuickFacts_012009.pdf (accessed March 20, 2009).

Table 5
Educational Attainment in South Carolina⁶

EDUCATION	Total Number	% of Population
Less than 9 th Grade	228,213	7.6%
9 th -12 th Grade, No Diploma	490,832	16.3%
High School Graduate or GED	901,827	30.0%
Some College, No Degree	637,838	21.2%
Associate Degree	186,147	6.2%
Bachelor's Degree	377,855	12.6%
Graduate or Professional Degree	<u>180,207</u>	6.0%
TOTAL	3,002,919	

Regarding the annual household income of the respondents, in 2008 54.0% of the parents who completed the survey reported having an annual household income in excess of \$35,000 as compared to 54.5% of the parents in 2007. For comparison purposes, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median household income in South Carolina in 2007 was \$43,508.⁷ According to the annual school and district report card data, the poverty index for all school districts in the state for school year 2007-08 was 65.06%, up from 64.3%% in 2006-07. The poverty index combines information about the percentage of students eligible for Medicaid services and the percentage participating in the federal free or reduced-price lunch program. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Nutrition Programs, Income and Eligible Guidelines for school year 2007-08, a family of four with an annual income \$26,845 was eligible for the free lunch program while a family of four with an annual income of \$38,203 was eligible for the reduced-price lunch program.

An analysis was also conducted to determine the distribution of respondents by the absolute rating of their child's school. Approximately 39.7% of all parents responding to the 2008 survey had a child attending a school with an absolute rating of Average as reported on the 2008 annual school report card. Approximately 40.6% of all students in public schools in South Carolina were enrolled in a school with an absolute rating of Average in 2007-08. Table 6 compares the percentage of respondents with the percentage of students enrolled in each school as determined by the absolute rating. The data demonstrate that the parent respondents in 2008 were representative of the student enrollment in public schools when considering the absolute rating of the school.

⁶ South Carolina Budget and Control Board, Office of Research and Statistics, "Educational Attainment for Persons 18 Years of Age and over by County," <http://www.ors2.state.sc.us/abstract/chapter7/education4.php> (accessed March 18, 2009).

⁷ United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, "County-Level Unemployment and Median Household Income for South Carolina," Last Updated December 15, 2008, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/unemployment/RDLList2.asp?ST=SC> (accessed March 18, 2009).

Table 6
Parents whose child attended a school in 2007-08 who responded to survey and
whose child's school had a 2008 absolute rating of:

	Number	% of Respondents	% of ALL students in public schools in SC in 2007-08 enrolled in a school with an absolute rating of:
Excellent	5,964	8.7%	10.2%
Good	12,508	18.2%	18.2%
Average	27,321	39.7%	40.6%
Below Average	14,759	21.5%	20.1%
At-Risk	7,477	10.9%	10.5%

Note: Special schools, career centers, schools without ratings, and schools with no ratings available are excluded from the above data.

Conclusions

- Using two methods of calculating a response rate, one method that underestimated and one that overrepresented the total number of parents eligible to take the survey, the response rate to the 2008 parent survey was between 36 and 45% which by industry standards is considered average.
- Compared to the average daily membership of children in public schools in South Carolina in 2007-08, parents of children in elementary and middle schools were equally represented in the survey and reflected the statewide distribution of children across these grades in public schools; however, parents of children in high schools were not equally represented.
- Compared to the enrollment by the ethnicity of children enrolled in public schools in South Carolina in 2007-08, respondents to the 2008 parent survey underrepresented African American parents.
- Compared to the poverty index of school districts, the respondents reported having higher household incomes; however, the reported household incomes are reflective of the state's median household income.
- Based on the 2008 absolute ratings of schools, the distribution of respondents by the absolute rating of their child's school mirrored the distribution of public schools by absolute rating in South Carolina.

PART FOUR

Results of the 2008 Parent Survey

The parent survey was designed to determine: (1) parent perceptions or satisfaction with their child's public school and (2) parental involvement efforts in public schools. The following is an analysis that documents the actual parent responses to questions focusing on parental satisfaction and parental involvement.

Parent Perceptions of Their Child's School

The information below summarizes the results of the 2008 parent survey. At the school level responses to these questions can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of parental involvement initiatives at the individual school site. Statewide, the data provide policymakers information on the overall effectiveness of policies and programs in promoting parental involvement. The following analysis focuses on parent perceptions or satisfaction with the learning environment, home-school relations, and the social and physical environment of their children's schools.

A. Learning Environment

The first five questions in the parent survey ask parents to reflect upon the learning environment of their child's school. Questions 1 through 4 are designed to elicit parental agreement with specific aspects of the learning environment at their child's school, focusing on homework, expectations, and academic assistance. Question 5 offers parents the opportunity to report on their overall satisfaction with the learning environment at their child's school. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 5 are included on the annual school report card. Table 7 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2008 parent survey.

Table 7
Percentage of Parents in 2008 Responding:

Learning Environment Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	86.9%	7.8%
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	88.3%	7.2%
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	88.2%	6.1%
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	77.7%	13.1%
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	82.3%	13.5%

Note: Totals due not add to 100% because omitted questions are not included.

Table 8 compares the percentage of parents who responded that they agreed or strongly agreed to these questions across the past six years. The percentages are relatively constant over time. Question 4, "my child's teachers encourage my child to learn," has

consistently elicited the lowest percentage of parents responding that they agreed or strongly agreed.

Table 8
Percentage of Parents who Agree or Strongly Agree across Years to:

Learning Environment Questions	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	86.9%	88.2%	87.74%	88.42%	89.07%	88.12%
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	88.3%	89.1%	87.36%	87.66%	88.18%	87.49%
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	88.2%	88.9%	87.42%	87.74%	88.11%	87.52%
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	77.7%	77.3%	76.96%	76.40%	75.61%	75.56%
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	82.3%	82.2%	81.26%	81.16%	80.94%	80.13%

The next analyses compared the responses to these five questions by two factors: (1) the school type; and (2) the absolute performance rating of schools based on the 2008 annual school report card.⁸ As Table 9 documents, the data demonstrate that a greater percentage of parents whose child attended an elementary school expressed satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's school. Parents of children attending a middle or high school expressed comparable levels of satisfaction with the learning environment of their child's school. Across all grade levels, parents expressed the least agreement with question 4, "my child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it." Parents of middle school students expressed the least agreement at 75.1%.

Table 9
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended an Elementary, Middle or High School Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Learning Environment Questions	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	90.6%	84.1%	83.2%
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	90.6%	86.0%	85.9%
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	91.3%	86.0%	84.3%
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	79.1%	75.1%	78.9%
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	86.2%	78.7%	78.5%

⁸ Note: Excluded are schools that did not receive an absolute rating in 2008 as well as all career centers and special schools.

On the other hand, comparing survey responses across schools based on the 2008 absolute rating of the schools, the data reveal that the greater the absolute performance of the school, the greater the percentage of parents who responded favorably to the learning environment questions (Table 10). Whereas approximately 88% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent were satisfied with the learning environment at their child's school, only 74% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk were satisfied with the learning environment at their child's school. This finding is consistent with prior years' reports on the parent survey.

Table 10
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended a School with the Following Absolute Ratings Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Learning Environment Questions	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below Average</i>	<i>At-Risk</i>
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	86.7%	88.5%	87.7%	86.3%	83.2%
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	92.2%	90.9%	88.8%	86.0%	82.9%
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	89.9%	89.7%	88.6%	87.0%	85.8%
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	82.6%	80.0%	78.3%	75.0%	73.7%
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	88.1%	86.3%	83.2%	79.5%	73.8%

Did parent perceptions by absolute rating change between 2007 and 2008? Compared to the prior year, a smaller percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent were satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school, down from 91.9% in 2006 to 88.1% in 2007 (Table 11) On the other hand, parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk were more satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school. The percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk and were not satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school declined from 24.2% to 19.9%, a 4.3% decline in dissatisfaction from 2007 to 2008.

Across time, the percentage of parents whose child attended an underperforming school, a school with an absolute rating of Below Average or At-Risk and expressed satisfaction with the learning environment has increased. In 2008 79.5% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Below Average were satisfied with the learning environment at their child's school as compared to 70.89% in 2003. Similarly, the percentage of parents whose child attended an At-Risk school and who were satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school increased from 62.88% in 2003 to 73.8% in 2008. (Table 11)

Table 11
Learning Environment
Question 5: I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school
Agree or Strongly Agree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	88.1%	91.9%	87.44%	85.61%	86.28%	87.05%
Good	86.3%	86.1%	85.44%	84.58%	83.40%	82.56%
Average	83.2%	83.2%	81.53%	81.06%	78.94%	77.51%
Below Average	79.5%	78.5%	76.99%	75.05%	70.89%	70.89%
At-Risk	73.8%	71.6%	69.47%	66.38%	61.30%	62.88%

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	7.8%	6.5%	8.93%	11.11%	10.65%	10.10%
Good	10.5%	11.6%	10.58%	12.11%	13.29%	13.77%
Average	13.1%	13.8%	14.15%	14.57%	17.01%	18.18%
Below Average	16.0%	18.0%	18.07%	20.01%	23.61%	23.53%
At-Risk	19.9%	24.2%	24.85%	27.63%	32.19%	30.97%

B. Home and School Relations

The next eleven questions on the parent survey determine parent perception of home and school relations by focusing on the relationship between the parent and their child's teacher and between the parent and the school. Question 11 offers parents the opportunity to report on their overall satisfaction with home and school relations at their child's school. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 5 are included on the annual school report card. Table 12 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2008 parent survey.

Table 12
Percentage of Parents in 2008 Responding:

Home and School Relations Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child	53.8%	42.4%
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	62.2%	33.6%
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	53.2%	40.7%
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	75.0%	15.6%
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	65.1%	26.3%
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	75.4%	20.4%
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	47.8%	27.5%

Table 12 (Continued)		
Home and School Relations Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	75.5%	17.7%
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	63.4%	20.0%
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	77.3%	11.7%
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school	77.8%	16.0%

Note: Totals do not add to 100% because omitted questions are not included.

As reflected in prior parent survey reports, the 2008 parent survey responses revealed similar concerns. For example, 42.4% of parents contended that their child's teacher did not contact them to say good things about their child. One-third of parents reported that their child's teacher did not tell them how to help their child learn. Regarding relations between the parent and the home, over three-fourths of the parents agreed that their child's school returned phone calls or e-mails promptly, provided information about what their child should be learning, and scheduled activities at times that parents could attend. Over 77% of the parents also agreed that their child's principal was available and welcoming. However, less than half of all parents who responded to the survey felt that their child's school considered changes based on parent input.

As documented by Table 13, overall parental satisfaction with home and school relations remained relatively unchanged from 2007 to 2008. Over three-fourths of all parents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with home and school relations at their child's school.

Table 13
Home and School Relations

Question 11: I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Agree or Strongly Agree	77.8%	77.9%	76.58%	67.84%	66.90%	66.76%
Disagree or Strongly Disagree	16.0%	17.1%	16.59%	17.66%	18.16%	18.63%

The next question is how, if any, do parent perceptions of home and school relations differ by the type of school. Based on national research and the prior results of South Carolina's annual parent surveys, parents with children in middle or high school are generally less satisfied with home and school relations than parents of elementary age children. Some contend that this dissatisfaction is due to the documented decline of parental involvement at the middle and high school level. Research points out that parents "generally become less involved as their children grow older for many reasons: schools are bigger and farther from home, the curriculum is more sophisticated, each student has several teachers, parents of older students are more likely to be employed, and students are beginning to establish some sense of separation and independence from parents." ⁹ On

⁹ Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikelund, "Parent Involvement in Education." Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2001, <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.htm.l>.

the other hand, parents point out that middle and high schools generally do not provide forums for involvement or consistent methods of communication with parents. “The research on the effectiveness of parental involvement with older students, therefore, often focuses on different forms of participation- e.g., parents monitoring homework, helping students make postsecondary plans and select courses which support these plans, parent-school agreements on rewards for achievement and behavioral improvements—as well as some of the ‘standby’ function such as regular homeschool communication about students’ progress and parent attendance at school-sponsored activities.”¹⁰ Table 14 below disaggregates the results of the 2008 parent survey regarding home and school relations by the child’s school level.

Table 14
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended an Elementary, Middle or High School
Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Home and School Relations Questions	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
1. My child’s teachers contact me to say good things about my child	63.1%	45.9%	43.2%
2. My child’s teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	73.3%	55.1%	46.5%
3. My child’s teachers invite me to visit my child’s classrooms during the school day.	65.5%	44.6%	35.7%
4. My child’s school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	79.7%	71.5%	69.3%
5. My child’s school includes me in decision-making.	70.2%	62.3%	56.3%
6. My child’s school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	82.3%	70.3%	66.8%
7. My child’s school considers changes based on what parents say.	52.1%	43.3%	43.7%
8. My child’s school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	78.6%	72.8%	72.6%
9. My child’s school treats all students fairly.	70.4%	57.2%	55.7%
10. My principal at my child’s school is available and welcoming.	82.0%	74.8%	69.6%
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child’s school	83.0%	73.4%	72.4%

When analyzing the 2008 responses to these questions by grade level, the data revealed that parents whose child attended high school generally expressed less agreement than all other parents with these questions; however, on the majority of questions, the variation between parents of middle school children and parents of high school children were less than five percent. Compared to parents of middle school students, a smaller percentage of parents of children in high school agreed that the principal at their child’s school as available and welcoming. Responses to Questions 1, 2 and 3 showed the greatest variation between parents of elementary school children and all other parents. Less than

¹⁰ Ibid.

half of parents with middle school and high school students agreed that teachers contacted them to say good things about their child as compared to almost two-thirds of the parents of elementary school children.

Finally, the next issue is how parent perceptions of home and school relations differ by the absolute rating of the school that their child attends. Table 15 summarizes the results based on the responses to these eleven questions. In bold are the highest percentage reported for each question. The largest difference between parent responses to these questions occurred in responses to questions 3 and 9. Approximately 69.5% of parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent rating agreed or strongly agreed that their child's school treated all students fairly. On the other hand, only 56.5% of parents whose child attended a school rated At-Risk agreed or strongly agreed with question 9. In contrast, 63.7% of parents whose child attended an At-Risk school said that their child's teachers invited them to visit the classrooms during the school day while only 50.7% of parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent rating expressed agreement with question 3.

Table 15
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended a School with the Following Absolute Ratings Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Home and School Relations Questions	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below Average</i>	<i>At-Risk</i>
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child	56.9%	57.1%	53.1%	52.4%	52.5%
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	61.5%	63.6%	61.4%	63.1%	63.7%
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	50.7%	51.8%	50.7%	55.4%	63.7%
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	78.9%	80.0%	75.8%	71.9%	66.7%
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	65.9%	66.3%	64.5%	65.4%	64.3%
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	77.7%	78.9%	75.8%	73.3%	71.5%
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	53.3%	49.0%	47.1%	46.7%	45.9%
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	80.3%	79.7%	76.0%	72.8%	68.5%
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	69.5%	68.1%	63.8%	59.9%	56.5%
10. My principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	77.3%	77.6%	78.3%	76.6%	75.3%
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school	82.1%	80.9%	78.3%	75.4%	73.2%

Eight of the eleven questions on home and school relations were answered most often in the affirmative by parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent or Good. Parents whose children attended a school rated At-Risk responded most often in the affirmative to two questions: (1) my child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn; and (2) my child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day. Across all schools, parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent were the only parents who expressed a majority view that their child's school considered changes based on what parents say.

Again, since 2002, the parent survey has demonstrated that parental satisfaction with home and school relations improved as the absolute performance rating improved and declined as the absolute performance rating of the school declined. Over time, between 2003 and 2008 parent satisfaction with home and school relations increased from 56% to 73% for respondents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk. (Table 16). The percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk and expressed dissatisfaction with home and school relations declined from 2007 to 2008, from 22.5% to 18.7%.

Table 16
Home and School Relations

Question 11: I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.

Agree or Strongly Agree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	82.1%	86.8%	80.29%	71.57%	71.63%	72.27%
Good	80.9%	80.7%	79.86%	70.30%	68.58%	68.57%
Average	78.3%	78.4%	76.61%	67.59%	64.99%	64.42%
Below Average	75.4%	74.8%	73.78%	63.43%	59.50%	59.98%
At-Risk	73.2%	72.0%	70.12%	58.37%	57.42%	56.08%

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	12.1%	10.1%	13.06%	15.93%	15.54%	15.21%
Good	14.1%	15.2%	13.90%	16.21%	16.94%	17.57%
Average	15.8%	16.8%	16.88%	17.32%	19.66%	20.64%
Below Average	18.2%	19.3%	19.02%	20.70%	23.09%	23.59%
At-Risk	18.7%	22.5%	22.06%	25.42%	25.91%	27.90%

C. Social and Physical Environment

The last five questions on the parent survey focus on the social and physical environment of schools. These questions are designed to elicit parent perceptions of the cleanliness, safety, and climate of their child's school. Question 5 asks parents to report on their overall satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's schools. For each school, the aggregate parental responses to question 5 are included on the annual school report card. Table 17 summarizes the total responses to these five questions for all parents who completed the 2008 parent survey.

Table 17
Percentage of Parents in 2008 Responding:

Social and Physical Environment Questions	Agree or Strongly Agree	Disagree or Strongly Disagree
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	87.9%	7.5%
2. My child feels safe at school.	86.3%	9.5%
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	79.0%	10.4%
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	56.6%	27.5%
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	78.6%	15.1%

Note: Totals due not add to 100% because omitted questions are not included.

As in prior years, over one-fourth of parents responding to the survey did not feel that students at their child's school were well behaved. Statewide, parents are concerned with discipline. However, despite the national and state media attention on school crime and weapons on campus, especially in high schools, 86.3% of parents stated that their child felt safe at school. Overall, parent satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's school was relatively unchanged from the prior year (Table 18).

Table 18
Percentage of Parents Responding Accordingly in 2007:
Agree or Strongly Agree

Social and Physical Environment Questions	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	87.9%	88.5%	86.83%	87.57%	87.72%	86.90%
2. My child feels safe at school.	86.3%	87.1%	85.92%	86.30%	85.91%	85.68%
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	79.0%	79.3%	78.48%	78.34%	77.55%	77.01%
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	56.6%	56.6%	55.16%	55.41%	53.38%	54.05%
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school	78.6%	79.0%	77.80%	77.67%	76.99%	77.25%

However, do parents' perceptions of the social and physical environment of their child's school differ by the school level or absolute rating of their child's school? Table 19 documents that parents of children in elementary school are generally more satisfied with the social and physical environment of their child's school than all other parents. The results also show that parents of children in high school are less satisfied with the cleanliness and safety of their child's school than all other parents. However, high school parents are comparable to elementary parents in their belief that their child's teachers care about their child as an individual. The most significant difference between these parents focused on student behavior. Less than one-half of all parents whose children attended middle or high school believed that students at their child's school behaved well.

Table 19
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended an Elementary, Middle or High School
Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Social and Physical Environment Questions	<i>Elementary</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>High</i>
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	93.0%	85.6%	78.5%
2. My child feels safe at school.	91.8%	82.5%	79.1%
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	85.0%	74.4%	81.7%
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	65.5%	48.2%	48.0%
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school	85.3%	73.2%	71.4%

How do parent perceptions of the social and physical environment of their child's school differ by the absolute rating of the school? Table 20 shows that there is a significant variation in parents' perception of student behavior between schools rated Excellent and all other. Approximately, 70.2% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent agreed or strongly agreed that students at their child's school were well behaved as compared to 39.8% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk.

However, when compared to the results of the 2007 parent survey, the percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent and agreed or strongly agreed that students at their child's school behaved was down from 80.2% in 2007 to 70.2% in 2008.¹¹ And, parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent or Good had comparable perceptions of the social and physical environment of their child's schools.

Table 20
Percentage of Parents Whose Child Attended a School with the Following Absolute
Ratings Agree or Strongly Agree to:

Social and Physical Environment Questions	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below Average</i>	<i>At-Risk</i>
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	89.2%	91.3%	88.9%	87.3%	79.1%
2. My child feels safe at school.	89.9%	90.6%	87.3%	84.2%	77.5%
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	82.7%	82.5%	78.9%	77.3%	74.7%
4. Students at my child's school are well behaved.	70.2%	67.3%	57.8%	48.4%	39.8%
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school	84.3%	84.0%	79.7%	75.3%	68.4%

¹¹ Education Oversight Committee. "Results and Analyses of the 2007 Parent Survey." May 19, 2008. <<http://www.eoc.sc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/005CF7BA-A43F-421B-AB04-72B8B8B6E4A3/17770/ParentSurveyReportJune2008.pdf>>.

Are there any changes across time in parental satisfaction across schools with differing absolute indices? Table 21 documents the historical trend that the higher the absolute rating of the school, the more favorable parental perception of the social and physical environment of their child's school. For example, 84.3% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent were satisfied with the social and physical environment of their child's school as compared to 68.4% of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of At-Risk. The data do show, however, that between 2007 and 2008 parents whose child attended an Excellent school were less satisfied with the social and physical environment of their child's school in 2008 than in 2007. And, parents in underperforming schools had increases in parent satisfaction with the social and physical environment of their child's Below Average or At-Risk school.

Table 21
Social and Physical Environment

Question 5: I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.

Agree or Strongly Agree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	84.3%	89.4%	84.58%	82.43%	83.60%	85.42%
Good	84.0%	84.0%	83.48%	82.49%	80.31%	80.69%
Average	79.7%	80.6%	78.63%	77.87%	74.93%	74.08%
Below Average	75.3%	73.9%	72.21%	69.36%	63.40%	65.34%
At-Risk	68.4%	66.7%	62.91%	60.58%	53.88%	57.37%

Disagree or Strongly Disagree

Parents whose child attends a school rated:	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Excellent	10.1%	7.7%	10.63%	13.16%	11.76%	10.56%
Good	11.4%	12.2%	11.67%	12.44%	14.36%	13.52%
Average	14.4%	14.8%	15.46%	15.89%	18.51%	19.20%
Below Average	17.9%	20.5%	20.93%	22.82%	28.47%	26.64%
At-Risk	22.7%	26.7%	28.99%	31.27%	35.50%	34.84%

Significant Changes from 2007 to 2008

The results of the 2008 parent survey demonstrated that the percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent and who expressed satisfaction with all three indicators (learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment) declined from 2007 to 2008.¹² The declines exceed three percentage points across all three indicators. A significant decline is defined as three percentage points or greater.

Table 22
Percentage of Parents in Excellent Schools Satisfied with:

	2007	2008	Difference
Learning Environment	91.9%	88.1%	-3.8%
Home and School Relations	86.8%	82.1%	-4.7%
Social and Physical Environment	89.4%	84.3%	-5.1%

¹² Ibid.

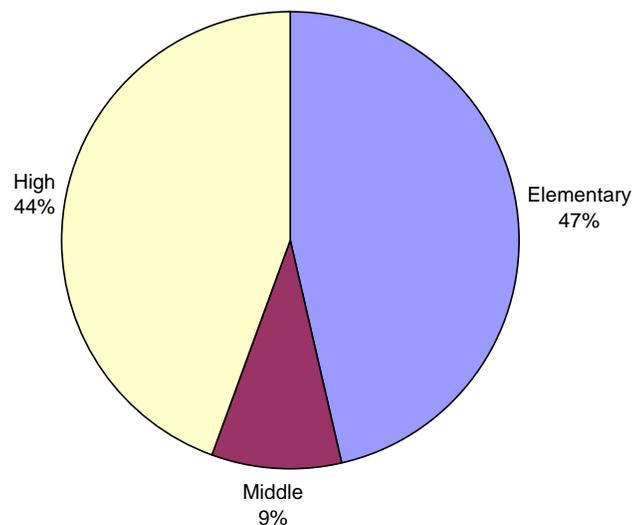
One possible explanation for the decline is the distribution of Excellent schools in 2008 as compared to 2007. In 2007 36% of all Excellent schools in South Carolina were high schools, but in 2008 the percentage of Excellent schools that were high schools was 53%. (Table 23) As research and prior results of the parent survey document, parent satisfaction declines as the child moves from elementary to middle to high schools. It should also be pointed out that all parents of high school students who responded to the survey were less satisfied with the learning environment of their child's school, down from 77.3% in 2007 to 72.5% in 2008.

Table 23
Distribution of Excellent Schools by School Level, 2007 and 2008

	2007	2008
School Level	n (%)	n (%)
Elementary	31 (56%)	31 (41%)
Middle	4 (7%)	5 (7%)
High	<u>20</u> (36%)	<u>40</u> (53%)
TOTAL:	55	76

Another explanation focuses on the distribution of actual responses across grade levels. A total of 4,358 parents whose child attended a school with an Excellent responded to the 2008 parent survey. Of these parents, 47% completed the survey for their child who was in elementary school, 9% for their child who was in middle school and 44% for their child who was in high school. (Table 24)

Table 24
Parents in Excellent Schools Responding to 2008 Parent Survey



Because the number of respondents who had a child in elementary school is comparable to the number of respondents who had a child in high school, comparisons between these parents can be made. Table 25 documents that parents of high school students in these Excellent schools were significantly less satisfied with a the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school than parents whose child attended an Excellent elementary school. Parents of children in high schools expressed the greatest level of dissatisfaction with home and school relations.

Table 25
Percentage of Parents whose Child Attended an Excellent by School Level
Agreeing or Strongly Agreeing:

QUESTON	Elementary (n=2,027)	Middle (n=397)	High (n=1,934)
I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	93.2%	93.5%	84.3%
I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.	91.2%	84.9%	75.3%
I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	93.3%	87.2%	79.3%

Disagreeing or Strongly Disagreeing

QUESTON	Elementary (n=2,027)	Middle (n=397)	High (n=1,934)
I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school	4.1%	4.5%	10.4%
I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.	5.2%	10.3%	17.4%
I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	4.1%	10.3%	13.5%

The data document that parents who responded to the 2008 parent survey and who had children attending high schools with an Excellent rating were significantly less satisfied with the learning environment, home and school relations and social and physical environment of their child's school. The dissatisfaction may explain the annual decline in parent satisfaction across all Excellent schools. The results show that even in Excellent high schools opportunities exist to improve the educational achievement of students through greater collaboration between parents, principals and teachers.

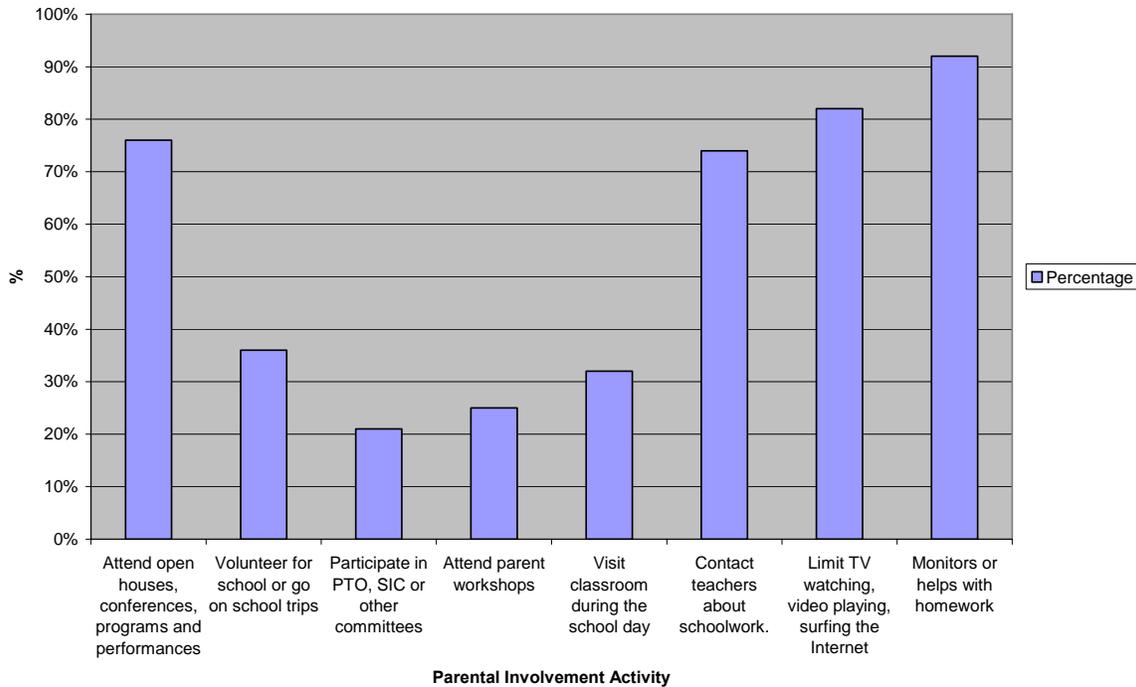
Parental Involvement

The next analysis deals with parents' responses to questions regarding specific parental involvement activities and/or parenting activities in which the respondents participate. Parents are asked specifically to respond to thirteen questions in one of four ways:

- I do this
- I don't do this but would like to
- I don't do this and I don't care to
- The school does not offer this activity/event.

Table 26 consolidates responses to several of these questions to illustrate the percentage of parents responding "I do this." The consolidation was based on whether the question focused on parental involvement activities at the school, classroom or child level. The 68,761 parents, who completed the survey, responded accordingly:

Table 26
Percentage of Parents Responding "I Do This"



In analyzing the responses to "I don't do this but would like to," Table 27 illustrates the percentage and number of parents who expressed an interest in participating in these activities. These parents want to be involved but either have personal barriers to prevent their involvement or obstacles at the school level. At a school level, these are the parents for whom initiatives to improve parental involvement should be focused.

Table 27
Parents Responding “I don’t do this but would like to:

Parental Activity	%	(n)
Attend open houses, conferences, programs and performances	17%	23,405
Volunteer for school or go on school trips	40%	54,874
Participate in PTO, SIC or other committees	41%	84,684
Attend parent workshops	40%	27,830
Visit classroom during the school day	51%	35,319
Contact teachers about schoolwork.	20%	13,418
Limit TV watching, video playing, surfing the Internet	9%	6,342
Monitors or helps with homework	5%	6,394

Table 28 documents parent responses to each question on parental involvement in 2008 and the number of parents who responded accordingly. In addition, Table 28 includes comparable results since 2006. The data show that a slightly lower percentage of parents in 2008 than in 2007 reported “doing” these activities at school and home though the difference on any one question is less than two percentage points less than in the prior year. The data also demonstrate that across time parents are more inclined to participate in activities that are focused on their individual child than in school committees or groups.

Table 28
Percentage Parents Responding

“I do this”	2008	(n)	2007	2006
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	76.7%	52,754	78.5%	75.44%
Attend student programs or performances	76.1%	52,307	77.0%	74.10%
Volunteer for the school	37.0%	25,460	39.8%	38.36%
Go on trips with my child's school	34.0%	23,396	36.5%	34.12%
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	12.3%	8,472	14.3%	13.15%
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	34.2%	23,498	36.8%	35.17%
Participate in school committees	17.0%	11,685	19.3%	17.48%
Attend parent workshops	25.3%	17,370	26.2%	24.68%
Visit my child's classrooms during the school day	32.5%	22,343	34.3%	33.93%
Contact my child's teachers about my child's schoolwork.	74.0%	50,882	74.7%	72.34%
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	82.2%	56,499	83.3%	81.14%
Make sure my child does his/her homework.	92.9%	63,862	93.8%	92.56%
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	91.8%	63,093	93.0%	91.41%

**Table 28 (continued)
Percentage Parents Responding**

"I don't do this but would like to"	2008	(n)	2007	2006
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	16.9%	11,629	16.5%	17.69%
Attend student programs or performances	17.1%	11,776	17.4%	18.24%
Volunteer for the school	36.9%	25,385	36.7%	35.75%
Go on trips with my child's school	42.9%	29,489	42.9%	42.14%
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	47.1%	32,413	48.0%	47.21%
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	35.9%	24,654	35.6%	36.01%
Participate in school committees	40.2%	27,617	40.8%	40.39%
Attend parent workshops	40.5%	27,830	40.2%	40.62%
Visit my child's classrooms during the school day	51.4%	35,319	50.8%	50.49%
Contact my child's teachers about my child's schoolwork.	19.5%	13,418	19.6%	20.92%
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	9.2%	6,342	9.1%	9.96%
Make sure my child does his/her homework.	4.0%	2,759	4.0%	4.46%
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	5.3%	3,635	5.1%	5.78%

"I don't do this and I don't care to"	2008	(n)	2007	2006
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	3.4%	2,350	3.5%	3.87%
Attend student programs or performances	3.3%	2,273	3.2%	3.80%
Volunteer for the school	19.9%	13,670	19.7%	19.51%
Go on trips with my child's school	14.7%	10,093	14.6%	15.16%
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	31.3%	21,528	30.8%	29.86%
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	24.1%	16,605	23.2%	22.86%
Participate in school committees	32.1%	22,064	31.5%	30.91%
Attend parent workshops	17.3%	11,877	17.1%	17.25%
Visit my child's classrooms during the school day	13.6%	9,340	13.3%	13.55%
Contact my child's teachers about my child's schoolwork.	4.3%	2,978	4.5%	4.93%
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	6.7%	4,636	6.4%	7.30%
Make sure my child does his/her homework.	1.6%	1,088	1.4%	1.72%
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	1.5%	1,020	1.4%	1.61%

The next analysis seeks to determine if there were any differences in parental involvement across schools based on the type of school their child attends. This is the second year that this data has been analyzed. In 2007 the data showed that parents with children in elementary school were more involved in their child's school but all parents reported making sure that their child did his or her homework and helped with homework as needed. Table 29 below documents the results of the 2008 parent survey which show that parental involvement as measured by these thirteen questions is highest for parents whose children are in elementary school. Regarding parental involvement in school committees, PTOs and School Improvement Councils, the level of involvement is relatively consistent for all parents responding to the survey.

**Table 29
Percentage Parents Responding**

"I do this"	Elementary	Middle	High
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	82.9%	76.4%	62.9%
Attend student programs or performances	82.1%	74.2%	66.2%
Volunteer for the school	44.3%	31.6%	29.6%
Go on trips with my child's school	42.2%	28.2%	24.6%
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	12.9%	11.5%	11.8%
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	38.7%	32.0%	27.7%
Participate in school committees	21.4%	13.0%	13.1%
Attend parent workshops	27.7%	24.2%	21.0%
Visit my child's classrooms during the school day	45.9%	23.7%	14.6%
Contact my child's teachers about my child's schoolwork.	81.2%	72.0%	60.2%
Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays, video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	89.7%	81.7%	64.9%
Make sure my child does his/her homework.	96.9%	92.6%	83.7%
Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	96.7%	91.3%	80.7%

Finally, are there differences in parent involvement based on the absolute performance rating of the school? This is the second year that this analysis has been analyzed using the following questions which reflect parental involvement at the school site. It should be emphasized again that parents self-report their involvement.

As Table 30 illustrates, a lower percentage of parents whose child attended a school with an absolute rating of Excellent reported that they participated in these parental involvement activities in 2008 than in 2007. Again, a possible explanation for the decline in parental involvement is the distribution of Excellent schools in 2008 as compared to 2007. In 2007 36% of all Excellent schools were high schools, but in 2008 the percentage of Excellent schools that were high schools was 53%. In 2008 44% of all parents whose child attended an Excellent school and responded to the survey completed the survey based on their perception of their child's high school. With national research documenting that parents generally become less involved as their children grow older, the decline in parental involvement in Excellent schools in 2008 may be explained by a greater number of high school parents in Excellent schools responding to the survey. If the trend continues into 2009, then there might other factors affecting parental involvement in these schools. Regarding schools rated Good, Average, Below Average and At-Risk, self-reported parental involvement in 2007 and 2008 was comparable.

Table 30
Percentage of Parents Responding Whose Child Attended in 2008 a School with an
Absolute Rating of:

(In parenthesis are the 2007 parent survey results)

"I do this"	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	At-Risk
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	74.8 (86.6)	82.5 (82.6)	78.3 (80.8)	75.4 (70.4)	66.7 (66.8)
Attend student programs or performances	75.6 (85.5)	82.2 (81.4)	77.6 (79.1)	74.7 (72.1)	64.6 (64.7)
Volunteer for the school	43.8 (55.5)	46.6 (47.9)	36.7 (40.1)	32.5 (32.2)	26.5 (27.7)
Go on trips with my child's school	37.0 (47.4)	42.3 (42.3)	34.3 (37.8)	31.7 (30.9)	24.9 (24.2)
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	11.7 (12.9)	12.9 (12.9)	11.1 (13.1)	13.7 (16.5)	17.1 (19.3)
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	38.5 (50.1)	40.1 (40.1)	33.2 (35.8)	31.7 (32.6)	32.4 (35.5)
Participate in school committees	20.6 (28.6)	22.0 (22.0)	15.5 (18.4)	15.2 (16.6)	15.6 (17.7)
Attend parent workshops	25.2 (29.6)	24.8 (24.8)	23.8 (25.6)	26.7 (27.2)	28.8 (28.4)
"I don't do this but I would like to"	Excellent	Good	Average	Below Average	At-Risk
Attend open houses or parent-teacher conferences	16.7 (9.6)	12.4 (12.8)	15.7 (14.5)	18.1 (20.9)	25.8 (27.7)
Attend student programs or performances	15.4 (10.7)	12.4 (13.7)	16.2 (15.9)	18.6 (21.3)	26.5 (28.1)
Volunteer for the school	19.4 (26.4)	30.7 (30.7)	36.7 (35.9)	40.3 (42.3)	47.1 (48.5)
Go on trips with my child's school	34.6 (34.1)	38.1 (37.7)	43.1 (42.1)	46.1 (47.5)	51.0 (53.8)
Participate in School Improvement Council Meetings	38.3 (42.3)	43.1 (43.9)	46.9 (47.5)	50.2 (51.5)	54.4 (56.5)
Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations	25.6 (23.9)	30.1 (30.5)	35.7 (35.1)	39.6 (41.1)	44.6 (45.2)
Participate in school committees	35.8 (31.2)	34.4 (35.9)	40.1 (40.2)	43.7 (45.7)	50.0 (50.1)
Attend parent workshops	21.7 (33.4)	36.9 (36.9)	40.5 (39.8)	43.0 (43.5)	47.0 (47.3)

When looking at the obstacles to parental involvement, responses to the 2008 survey showed parents perceived that their work schedule was the most common obstacle to their involvement at their child's school. Over 56% of parents said that their work schedule made it hard for them to be involved in their child's school. The obstacles are consistent across the prior six years as reported in Table 31.

Table 31
Percentage Parents Replying "True" to these questions

	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Lack of transportation reduces my involvement	11.6%	11.8%	12.89%	12.31%	12.47%	12.59%
Family health problems reduce my involvement.	14.9%	15.0%	15.48%	15.41%	14.88%	15.43%
Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	15.2%	15.4%	16.14%	15.87%	15.49%	15.27%
My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	56.2%	55.4%	55.63%	55.54%	56.23%	56.97%
The school does not encourage my involvement.	18.0%	19.6%	19.76%	20.04%	20.35%	20.10%
Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	26.8%	27.3%	28.19%	28.31%	29.11%	29.07%
I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	12.8%	13.6%	14.03%	14.08%	14.08%	14.24%

Parents were also asked several questions about their child's school and its efforts in increasing parental involvement. Across these questions, two-thirds of parents consistently rated the efforts of their child's school at parental involvement efforts as good or very good. Approximately one-fourth rated the school's efforts as "okay." Across the past three years, these percentages have been relatively constant as reflected in Table 32 indicating little improvement over time by public schools in improving parental involvement.

Table 32
Percentage (%) of Parents who responded:
Very Good or Good Bad or Very Bad Okay

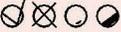
	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006	2008	2007	2006
School's overall friendliness.	75.1	75.0	73.11	2.8	3.1	3.39	20.2	20.2	21.79
School's interest in parents' ideas and opinions.	57.5	58.0	56.24	8.6	8.8	9.25	31.1	30.8	31.86
School's effort to get important information from parents.	61.9	61.5	62.01	9.0	9.4	8.63	26.5	27.1	26.98
The school's efforts to give important information to parents.	67.5	67.2	66.55	7.4	8.1	7.63	22.8	23.1	23.75
How the school is doing overall.	70.0	69.7	68.74	4.3	4.8	4.92	23.5	23.8	24.37

APPENDIX

South Carolina Parent Survey

Parents in South Carolina who have children in selected grades are being asked to complete this survey. This survey asks you how you feel about your child's school. Since this survey will be used to help make your child's school a better place, it is very important to tell us exactly what you think. Your answers will be kept private. The school will get a summary of the survey results.

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

- Make solid marks that fill the circle completely.
- Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change.
- Make no stray marks on this form.
- Correct Mark: ● Incorrect Marks: 

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Learning Environment at your child's school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers give homework that helps my child learn.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. My child's school has high expectations for student learning.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers encourage my child to learn.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My child's teachers provide extra help when my child needs it.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am satisfied with the learning environment at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about Home and School Relations.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's teachers contact me to say good things about my child.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. My child's teachers tell me how I can help my child learn.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers invite me to visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. My child's school returns my phone calls or e-mails promptly.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. My child's school includes me in decision-making.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. My child's school gives me information about what my child should be learning in school.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. My child's school considers changes based on what parents say.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. My child's school schedules activities at times that I can attend.	<input type="radio"/>				
9. My child's school treats all students fairly.	<input type="radio"/>				
10. The principal at my child's school is available and welcoming.	<input type="radio"/>				
11. I am satisfied with home and school relations at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please mark how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the Social and Physical Environment at your child's school.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
1. My child's school is kept neat and clean.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. My child feels safe at school.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. My child's teachers care about my child as an individual.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Students at my child's school are well-behaved.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. I am satisfied with the social and physical environment at my child's school.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please tell us if you do the following.

	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to	The school does not offer this activity/event
1. Attend Open Houses or parent-teacher conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Attend student programs or performances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Volunteer for the school (bake cookies, help in office, help with school fund raising, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Go on trips with my child's school (out of town band contest, field trip to the museum, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Participate in School Improvement Council meetings.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Participate in Parent-Teacher-Student Organizations (PTA, PTO, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Participate in school committees (textbook committee, spring carnival committee, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Attend parent workshops (how to help my child with school work, how to talk to my child about drugs, effective discipline, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please tell us if you do the following.

	I do this	I don't do this, but I would like to	I don't do this, and I don't care to
1. Visit my child's classrooms during the school day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Contact my child's teachers about my child's school work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Limit the amount of time my child watches TV, plays video games, surfs the Internet, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Make sure my child does his/her homework.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Help my child with homework when he/she needs it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Go on to next page. 

Please mark if each of the following is TRUE or FALSE.

	TRUE	FALSE
1. Lack of transportation reduces my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Family health problems reduce my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Lack of available care for my children or other family members reduces my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. My work schedule makes it hard for me to be involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The school does not encourage my involvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Information about how to be involved either comes too late or not at all.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. I don't feel like it is appreciated when I try to be involved.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please rate your school on...

	Very good	Good	Okay	Bad	Very bad
1. The school's overall friendliness.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. The school's interest in parents' ideas and opinions.	<input type="radio"/>				
3. The school's efforts to get important information from parents.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. The school's efforts to give important information to parents.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. How the school is doing overall.	<input type="radio"/>				

Please answer the following questions about your child who attends the school identified at the bottom of this page.

1. What grade is your child in? 3rd 4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th
2. What is your child's gender? Male Female
3. What is your child's race/ethnicity?
 African - American/Black Hispanic Asian American/Pacific Islander
 Caucasian/white Native American Other
4. What grades did your child receive on his/her last report card?
 All or mostly A's and B's All or mostly C's and D's
 All or mostly B's and C's All or mostly D's and F's

Please answer the following questions about yourself. We are asking these questions because we want to be sure that schools are involving all parents. For each question, please mark only one answer. Your answers will be kept private.

1. What is your gender? Male Female
2. What is your race/ethnic group?
 African - American/Black Hispanic Asian American/Pacific islander
 Caucasian/white Native American Other
3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?
 Attended elementary/high school Earned Associate Degree Earned college degree
 Completed high school/GED Attended college/training program Postgraduate study and/or degree
4. What is your family's total yearly household income?
 Less than \$15,000 \$25,000 - \$34,999 \$55,000 - \$75,000
 \$15,000 - \$24,999 \$35,000 - \$54,999 More than \$75,000

Thank you very much for completing this survey!

DO NOT MARK IN THIS AREA



3205044

Leaphart Elementary



ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

The Education Accountability Act of 1998 specifies that “school report cards should include information in such areas as...evaluations of the school by parents, teachers, and students.” To obtain these evaluations, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) has constructed student, teacher, and parent surveys that are designed to measure perceptions of three factors: home and school relations, the school’s learning environment, and the school’s social and physical environment. The purpose of these teacher, parent, and student surveys is to obtain information related to the perceptions of these groups about your school. Results will provide valuable information to principals, teachers, parents, School Improvement Councils, and community groups in their efforts to identify areas for improvement. Results will also appear on the annual school report cards.

SCHEDULE

Teacher Surveys – on www.ed.sc.gov website

- February 1, 2008 – Website opens.
- February 29, 2008 – Website closes.

Student & High School Student Surveys – paper forms

- March 3, 2008 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- April 14, 2008 – Last day for schools to ship completed survey forms to contractor.

Parent Surveys – paper forms

- March 3, 2008 – All schools should receive survey forms by this date.
- April 4, 2008 – Date for parent survey forms to be returned to the school.
This is the date appearing in the letter to parents.
- April 14, 2008 – Last day for schools to ship completed survey forms to contractor.

CONTACTS

If your student or parent survey forms are damaged in shipment please contact Mike Pulaski with Columbia Business Forms. His email address is mpulaski@mindspring.com.

If you have questions about administration procedures for any survey, please contact Cynthia Hearn at chearn@ed.sc.gov or 803-734-8269.

INDEX

This booklet is divided into sections by the different tasks required for the administration of surveys.

SECTION	PAGE	SECTION	PAGE
Changes This Year	2	Preparing Surveys for Shipment	6
General Guidelines	2	Shipping the Completed Surveys	6
Receipt and Distribution of Materials	3	Appendix A – Student and Parent	
Survey Guidelines	3	Survey Participants	7
Administration of Surveys	5	Teacher Instructions for Student Survey	8

**ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008
REPORT CARD SURVEYS**

CHANGES THIS YEAR

STUDENT & PARENT SURVEYS – No changes in administration or shipping procedures.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- ✓ Useful survey results are dependent upon candid responses. The survey administration must encourage candid responses by protecting the anonymity of the respondents and by communicating to respondents that the information is important and will be used for improvement purposes. A letter from the State Superintendent of Education enclosed with the parent survey explains the survey and its purpose.
- ✓ No names or other identifying information should appear on the survey forms or the envelopes containing the parent survey forms. Every effort should be made to ensure that responses to the surveys remain anonymous.
- ✓ While principals should be aware of survey procedures and due dates, they should not be involved in handling completed survey forms. School staff are not allowed to review completed surveys.
- ✓ School principals must designate a staff person to serve as the school's survey coordinator. This person will be responsible for overseeing the distribution of surveys to students and parents and packaging completed surveys for return to contractor. The school survey coordinator also will keep teachers informed of the web-based teacher survey procedures and due dates and report any problems to the Department of Education.
- ✓ Guidelines established by the Education Oversight Committee determine the grade level(s) to be surveyed in each school. All students in the highest grade at elementary and middle schools should complete a student survey. Their parents should receive the parent survey form. For high schools and career centers the surveys should be administered to all 11th graders and their parents. Appendix A on page 7 lists the grade level(s) to be surveyed as determined by the grade span of the school.
- ✓ Sampling is not allowed. All students in the designated grade and their parents should receive a survey. You do not need to have students complete a survey if they are absent on the day of administration or if they would have difficulty reading and responding to the items. However, these students should be given a parent survey to take home.
- ✓ Special education students are to be included and should be provided the same accommodations used for testing.
- ✓ Student and parent surveys should not be administered to children in grades two and below or their parents. For schools that contain only grades two and below, only the teacher survey will be conducted.
- ✓ These survey forms cannot be copied. The scanning equipment can not scan photocopies.
- ✓ Retain the container in which you received the survey forms. That same container can be used to return the survey forms to the contractor.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008
REPORT CARD SURVEYS

RECEIPT AND DISTRIBUTION OF MATERIALS

- Check the materials received in your shipment to ensure that you have received the following items:
 - ✓ An envelope containing;
 1. A letter to the principal from the Education Oversight Committee (EOC),
 2. Two sets of instructions for administering the surveys,
 3. A page of shipping instructions, and
 4. One pre-addressed UPS shipping label (used to return completed surveys to contractor, freight prepaid).
 - ✓ Parent survey envelopes. Each envelope contains a letter from the State Superintendent of Education and a parent survey form.
 - ✓ If applicable, Spanish parent survey envelopes. The outside of the envelope is marked with “S.”
 - ✓ Student survey forms.
- The number of survey forms allocated to your school is based on numbers provided by your district office in December. The shipping list located on the Office of Data Management and Analysis website (http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/research/report_card_surveys.html) provides the number of survey forms ordered for your school.
- Check a few student and parent survey forms to make sure that your school name is on the form. If you have received survey forms for another school, please contact Mike Pulaski.
- Keep the box in which the survey forms were delivered to use for the return shipment.
- Give the letter from the EOC to your principal.
- Determine the number of student and parent survey forms you will need for each class at the designated grade level(s). Count the surveys into classroom stacks and distribute.

SURVEY GUIDELINES

Student & High School Student Surveys

- Student surveys should be administered in classroom settings.
- Each survey item has four response choices. Respondents must decide whether they agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or disagree with each statement. Students will mark their responses by darkening bubbles on the survey form. If they do not have knowledge relative to the statement, students should be instructed to skip the item and go on to the next one.
- Teachers should not read the survey items to the students, but they may answer student questions about the survey items. Teachers may read items to special education students with an oral administration testing accommodation. On the last page of these instructions is the script for teachers to use to explain the survey to students.
- It is important that the surveys not be folded, torn, stapled, or damaged in any way. Please have the students use pencils. A number 2 pencil is not required.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008 REPORT CARD SURVEYS

Parent Surveys

- Parent surveys are available in both English and Spanish. Spanish-language parent surveys are for recent immigrants or parents who do not yet possess adequate English reading skills. The Spanish version of the parent survey is enclosed in an envelope with an “S” on the outside.
- Schools will distribute envelopes containing parent surveys to students in the appropriate grade(s). Students should take the envelope home for their parents to complete the survey inside and then return the envelope to the school. Envelopes are used to maintain confidentiality.
- The parent survey should be administered to the parents of the same children participating in the student survey.
- Parents with children in the highest grade at two different schools will receive two survey forms to complete. The name of the school appears on the survey form to help avoid confusion for the parents.
- Parent surveys will not be administered to parents of children in grades two and below. For schools that contain only grades two and below, only the teacher survey will be conducted.
- The parent survey forms are identical for all grade levels. If you are surveying parents for more than one grade level, the correct number of survey forms for all grade levels will be in your shipment.
- Each survey contains fifty-four questions and should take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. The letter enclosed with the survey form tells parents that they are being asked for their opinions about their child’s school. Parents are asked to think about the entire year rather than a specific event or something that happened only once or twice. They are asked to provide honest responses that can help to improve the school.
- Parents should mark their responses by darkening bubbles on the survey. Although the scanning equipment can read pen marks, it is still a good idea to use a pencil should the parent need to change an answer. It is also important that the surveys not be folded, torn, stapled, or damaged in any way.
- No names or other identifying information should appear on the survey forms or the envelopes containing the survey form. Every effort should be made to ensure that responses to the surveys remain anonymous.
- Parents have the option of mailing their completed survey form to the Department of Education. The mailing address is provided in the letter to parents from the State Superintendent of Education.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008
REPORT CARD SURVEYS

ADMINISTRATION OF SURVEYS

Student & High School Student Surveys

- Choose a day within the time period to administer the survey to the students. The survey should be administered to students at the same time (homeroom or advisory period for example).
- Copy the teacher instructions from the last page of these administration procedures and provide a copy of the instructions with the survey forms. Make sure the classroom teachers administering the student surveys are familiar with the administration instructions for your school.
- On the day the survey is to be administered, distribute materials to each classroom teacher within the designated grade(s).
- Make sure you are available to respond to any problems that may arise during administration of the surveys.

Parent Survey

- Distribute the parent surveys **as soon as possible** after they are received at the school. This should allow sufficient time for parents to complete and return the survey prior to the April 4 due date.
- Distribute the envelopes containing the parent survey form and letter to each classroom teacher within the designated grade(s). The envelopes containing the Spanish version of the survey and letter will be marked with an "S." Have the teachers distribute the envelopes to students. Teachers should ask students to take the envelopes home for their parents to complete the surveys. Students should be instructed not to remove the survey form or letter from the envelope. Students should bring the envelopes containing the completed surveys back to school as soon as possible.
- If your budget allows, survey forms may be mailed to students' homes.
- Make sure you are available to respond to any problems that may arise during administration of the surveys.

Teacher Survey

- The teacher survey is conducted online over the internet. The survey can be accessed from the State Department of Education website at www.ed.sc.gov.
- Teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, and speech therapists at the school should complete the teacher survey. Part-time teachers may complete a survey form if they are on campus at least half of each school day or week.
- The survey may be completed using any computer with internet access. Teachers may use their home computers.
- There is no way to determine which teachers have completed the survey, but the internet site keeps track of how many survey forms have been completed for each school. The teacher survey reporting tool may be accessed from the first page of the teacher survey.
- Problems with your school's internet access should be directed to your district technology coordinator.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008
REPORT CARD SURVEYS

PREPARING SURVEYS FOR SHIPMENT

Student & High School Student Surveys

- Place all surveys flat, face up, and turned the same way. **Return all completed survey forms, even those that may be damaged.** No changes or edits may be made to student responses. School personnel should not be allowed to review student responses.
- Carefully paper-band the completed forms with one strong paper band. Do not use rubber bands as they tear the forms. Two or three wraps with adding machine paper fastened with masking tape makes a strong band.
- Unused survey forms should be placed on top of the bound materials to be returned.

Parent Survey

- All parent surveys should be returned in their individual envelopes. Envelopes should be returned flat, face up, and all turned the same way.
- All parent surveys returned without the envelope should be placed on top of the envelopes. Place the survey forms flat, face up, and turned the same way. **Return all completed survey forms, even those that may be damaged.** No changes or edits may be made to parent responses. School personnel should not be allowed to review parent responses.
- Carefully paper-band the completed survey forms with one strong paper band. Do not use rubber bands as they tear the forms. Two or three wraps with adding machine paper fastened with masking tape makes a strong band.
- Unused survey forms should be placed on top of the bound materials to be returned.

SHIPPING THE COMPLETED SURVEYS

- Please return all of your school's completed student and parent survey forms at the same time. Package both types of surveys in the same sturdy box. Use crumpled paper, cardboard, or Styrofoam beads to fill the voids in the shipping carton to help keep surveys from being damaged during transit. You may want to use the box in which the survey forms were delivered for the return shipment.
- Attach the pre-addressed, bar-coded UPS return shipping label to your package. (NOTE: If you are re-using the original delivery box be sure to remove or cover up the old label.) Give the package to your UPS driver the next time a delivery is made to your school. You also can drop off the package at any UPS store as well as selected Office Depot and Staples locations. **Scheduling a special pick up from your school will cost you extra.**
- If the return UPS shipping label is missing, please contact Mike Pulaski with Columbia Business Forms. His email address is mpulaski@mindspring.com.
- All surveys must be shipped on or before **Monday, April 14, 2008.**

ADMINISTRATION OF THE 2008
REPORT CARD SURVEYS

Appendix A—Student and Parent Survey Participants

School's Grade Span	Grade Level of Students and Parents to be Surveyed	School's Grade Span	Grade Level of Students and Parents to be Surveyed
K-1, K-2, 1-2	none	4-9	5 & 9
K-3	3	5-9	9
1-3	3	6-9	9
2-3	3	7-9	9
K-4	4	8-9	9
1-4	4	K-10	5, 8, & 10
2-4	4	1-10	5, 8, & 10
3-4	4	2-10	5, 8, & 10
K-5	5	3-10	5, 8, & 10
1-5	5	4-10	5, 8, & 10
2-5	5	5-10	8 & 10
3-5	5	6-10	8 & 10
4-5	5	7-10	8 & 10
K-6	6	8-10	10
1-6	6	9-10	10
2-6	6	K-11	5, 8, & 11
3-6	6	1-11	5, 8, & 11
4-6	6	2-11	5, 8, & 11
5-6	6	3-11	5, 8, & 11
K-7	5 & 7	4-11	5, 8, & 11
1-7	5 & 7	5-11	8 & 11
2-7	5 & 7	6-11	8 & 11
3-7	5 & 7	7-11	8 & 11
4-7	5 & 7	8-11	11
5-7	7	9-11	11
6-7	7	10-11	11
K-8	5 & 8	K-12	5, 8, & 11
1-8	5 & 8	1-12	5, 8, & 11
2-8	5 & 8	2-12	5, 8, & 11
3-8	5 & 8	3-12	5, 8, & 11
4-8	5 & 8	4-12	5, 8, & 11
5-8	8	5-12	8 & 11
6-8	8	6-12	8 & 11
7-8	8	7-12	8 & 11
K-9	5 & 9	8-12	11
1-9	5 & 9	9-12	11
2-9	5 & 9	10-12	11
3-9	5 & 9	11-12	11

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENT SURVEY

Surveys should be administered in a classroom setting. One student should be designated in each classroom to collect the student surveys and to bring them to the school survey coordinator. To ensure confidentiality, classroom/homeroom teachers should not collect completed surveys. Classroom teachers and school administrators are not to review completed student surveys.

Pass out surveys and pencils.

The teacher should read the following script.

Today you are being asked your opinions about our school. There are no right or wrong answers. When you read each item, think about the entire year rather than a specific event or something that happened once or twice. Please provide honest and true answers so that we can change and improve our school. Do not talk to other students, but you can ask me a question if you do not understand a statement. Do NOT write your name on the survey. Do not fold or bend the sheet.

First, read the instructions at the top of the form and mark your grade. Make sure you have a pencil. Do not use a pen. You will read each statement, and mark your response on your survey sheet. Darken the ovals completely with your pencil. Erase any stray marks or changes. Remember to continue on the back of the sheet.

There are four choices for each sentence. Decide whether you agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or disagree with each sentence. Do your best to decide. If you do not know anything about the subject, you can skip the sentence and go on to the next one.

When you have completed the survey, check to see that you have marked only one response to each sentence and that you have marked your correct grade. Then, place your survey on your desk. (The designated student) will collect the forms.

Have the student designated to collect surveys do so. Then, have the student take the completed surveys to the school survey coordinator.

Thank You