



**ALBUQUERQUE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Parent Involvement in Title I Schools

2005-2006

District Goal: Academic Excellence

Ranjana Damle Ph.D.
June 2007



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Title I Parent Involvement in APS 2005-2006

Executive Summary

The parent involvement provisions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) aim to achieve shared accountability between schools and parents to improve the educational success of students. The Title I parent involvement policy is designed to provide parents resources and support, and to equip them to become effective partners in their student's education. To evaluate the effectiveness of this parent policy, RDA conducted a survey of the parents in Title I schools to get their input regarding their involvement in schools. This report presents the findings of the survey and recommendations to focus the Title I policy to enhance parent involvement in their student's education.

Parent involvement is extensive in Title I elementary schools.

- Most parents speak to the teacher about their student's progress. They help their student with homework and work with the student's math and reading at least once a week.
- A small proportion of parents volunteers in school and classroom activities.
- Most parents attend parent-teacher conferences. A small proportion attends Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) meetings, other parent organization and Title I meetings.
- A majority of parents feel valued by their student's school as partners in their child's education.
- Many parents are interested in the opportunities to be at school, such as parent-child activities, field trips, student performances, and educational activities for parents.
- About a fifth of the parents would like telephone reminders for meetings.

Parent involvement in schools declines at the middle-school level.

- While three-fourths of the parents support homework at home, they are less likely to attend PIC or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings in the middle schools. Only a small fraction says they volunteer.
- A smaller proportion of middle school compared to the elementary school parents feel that they are valued by their school as partners in their student's education or that their school gives them opportunities to volunteer, to participate in program planning decisions, or to attend classes or workshops.
- A smaller proportion of the parents in alternative schools support homework at home or volunteer at the school compared to the parents in regular schools.

Barriers to parent involvement:

- Parents across all school levels and categories say that full-time work is the most significant barrier to their involvement in school activities.
- A small proportion of parents say a lack of childcare prohibits them from taking part in school activities.

Analyses of parent responses by language reveal some systematic differences between Spanish and English language respondents' attitudes and involvement.

- Elementary schools are more successful in getting Spanish speaking parents involved in Title I activities, but less so in getting their involvement in other areas. While proportionately more Spanish speaking parents report attending Title I planning and PIC meetings, a greater proportion of English speakers feel valued, volunteer, or engage in other school activities
- Middle schools are successful in eliciting support from Spanish speaking parents. Spanish speaking parents help with homework, speak to the teacher about their child's progress, and attend Title I meetings at a greater rate than English speaking parents.
- Spanish speakers prefer workshops offered in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare for their younger children to allow them to engage in school activities, clearly indicating a need for support that schools may be able to address.

Recommendations

Research on parent involvement overwhelmingly indicates that students whose parents are involved in their education achieve greater academic success and lower dropout rates. Parent involvement is most effective when parents are involved in student learning. However, parent engagement in and support of a wide range of school activities produce impressive results for students and their schools.

The APS District and its schools can increase parental involvement by communicating clear goals, expectations, and strategies to teachers, other school staff, families, and the community. The following recommendations suggest a few new strategies, or ways to intensify the existing ones, to enhance parent involvement in APS schools. Schools may:

- improve communication, using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, parent networks, student performances, curriculum nights, and phone calls, to increase parents' awareness of opportunities to get involved in their school.
- establish clear expectations about parent support for student's educational work at home through regular communication between parents and their student's classroom. Schools may have to make a special effort to reach out to parents who cannot be at school due to full-time work.
- consider expanding efforts to increase parent volunteering in classrooms, on committees, or to support school events, especially in the middle and alternative schools.
- focus on the parents of upper grade students to increase their support for student's academic work at home.
- find strategies to overcome language barriers and improve Spanish speaking parents' volunteering and engagement in school activities.
- offer the services that parents need, such as parent education, workshops in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare when parents attend school activities. Provision of childcare may be a useful investment as this will prepare families to support education also of younger children who will become students within a few years.
- continue to offer parent-child activities and student performances. While parents enjoy attending such activities and events, these opportunities allow parents familiarity with their student's school and educational process.

Title I Parent Involvement in APS 2005-2006

Introduction

The parent involvement provisions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) aim to achieve shared accountability between schools and parents to improve educational success of the students. School districts must develop and implement a policy to involve parents with meaningful consultation with the parents. The Title I parent involvement policy is intended to provide the parents resources and support, and to equip them to become effective partners in their student's education. The APS Title I Parent Involvement Council (PIC) at the school level and the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at the district level are designed to facilitate organization of parents to accomplish the mandated parent participation in program planning.

NCLB requires school districts to conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of their Title I parent involvement policy. School districts must include parents' input in the evaluation of their parent involvement policy.

RDA staff conducted a survey of the parents in Title I schools to get their input regarding parent involvement in their schools. This report provides analyses of the findings and makes recommendations to advance parent involvement in APS Title I schools.

Methods

Questionnaire

RDA distributed a Title I parent survey in the spring of 2006 to the parents of Title I students in 76 APS schools and one charter schoolⁱ that receive Title I funds. There are 56 elementary, 15 middle, 2 high, 3 alternative Title I schools. While all parents received the survey in 63 public and one charter schoolwide programs, only the parents of targeted students in the 13 targeted assistance schools received the survey. Of the 35,788 surveys sent out, RDA received 8,686 completed surveys back, a 24.3% return rate.

The Title I survey asked for parent input on a variety of topics. These topics included, but were not limited to: the opportunities to participate in the school and classroom activities at their child's school, parents' level of participation in their child's education, reasons for the lack of parental involvement, and suggestions for improving parent participation in the child's school. APS provided the questionnaire in both English and Spanish to ensure opportunity for the Spanish as well as English speakers to voice their opinions and ideas.

Organization of the Report

The report is organized in four main sections by school level or category: elementary, middle, alternative and charter. The report is set up to discuss three main themes: parents as partners, parents as volunteers, and strategies to increase parental involvement in their child's education. The elementary and middle school sections provide comparison of English and Spanish language responses.ⁱⁱ

1. Parents as Partners – Parents report on their participation in activities in school and at home to support their child’s education.
2. Parents as Volunteers – Parents report about their volunteering activity in their child’s school; they also share their reasons for not volunteering.
3. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement – Parents describe the barriers to participation in their child’s school and the strategies that would help them to attend school activities more often.

Strength and Limitations of the Study

The survey yielded a large number of responses (8,686) and a respectable response rate of 24.3% for a self-administered survey. A large response rate increases the chances that the Title I parent population of APS is well represented by those who responded to the survey. However, the results of any survey should be viewed with caution since the respondents may be systematically different from the population they are supposed to represent. For example, it is quite likely that the respondents are more involved than the overall Title I parent population, resulting in an overestimation of parent involvement rates. Only one of the two high schools returned a very small number of surveys with the response rate <4%. This report will not include the analysis of parent involvement in Title I high schools.

Results and Analysis

Respondent Language and Ethnicity - All Schools

Approximately 70 % of the returned surveys were from households with English as the primary language; about 30 % were from Spanish speaking households. About 63 % of the respondents were of Hispanic descent. As Table 1 indicates, the ethnicity of survey respondents’ children closely resembled the ethnic distribution in Title I schools, a further indication that the respondents represent the population of Title I parents.

Table 1 - Ethnicity as Reported by Respondents

	White	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	Other	No Response
Respondents	9.8%	2.1%	62.8%	4.3%	1.4%	7.6%	11.9%
All APS Title I Students	14.4%	3.8%	74.5%	5.8%	1.5%	0.0%	N\A
All APS Students	32.9%	3.9%	55.9%	5.0%	2.3%	0.1%	N\A

Response Rate

Of the 35,788 surveys sent out, RDA received 8,686 completed surveys back, a 24.3% return rate. Of all the surveys received, 78 % came from the elementary schools, while almost 19 % were from the middle schools. Less than 3% of the responses came from high, alternative and charter schools combined.

As Table 2 demonstrates, the response rates significantly differed across school levels or categories. The elementary and alternative school parents returned surveys at the largest rates - over 28% each. The response rate for all schools was 24.3%.

Table 2 - Response Rate by School Level or Category

Schools	Elementary	Middle	High	Alternative	Charter	All
Distributed	24,058	8,867	1,882	418	563	35,788
Received	6832	1644	61	119	30	8,686
Response Rate	28.4%	18.5%	3.2%	28.5%	5.7%	24.3%

Elementary Schools: Results and Analysis

The elementary school parents' responses comprised over four-fifths of all responses to the survey. The response rate for elementary schools was 28.4%. The elementary school findings are grouped into three sections and also presented by language.

Parents as Partners

Parents are considered partners in their student's education when they collaborate with the school to support their child's education. As Figure 1 reflects, almost all responding parents of Title I students spoke to their student's teacher about the student's progress. Most worked with the student at least once a week on reading, math at home and helped with the homework. The analysis of responses by language also revealed that the parents in the Spanish language group were far more likely to attend parent meetings compared to those in the English group (Figure 2).

Figure 1- ES Parent Participation in Educational Activities

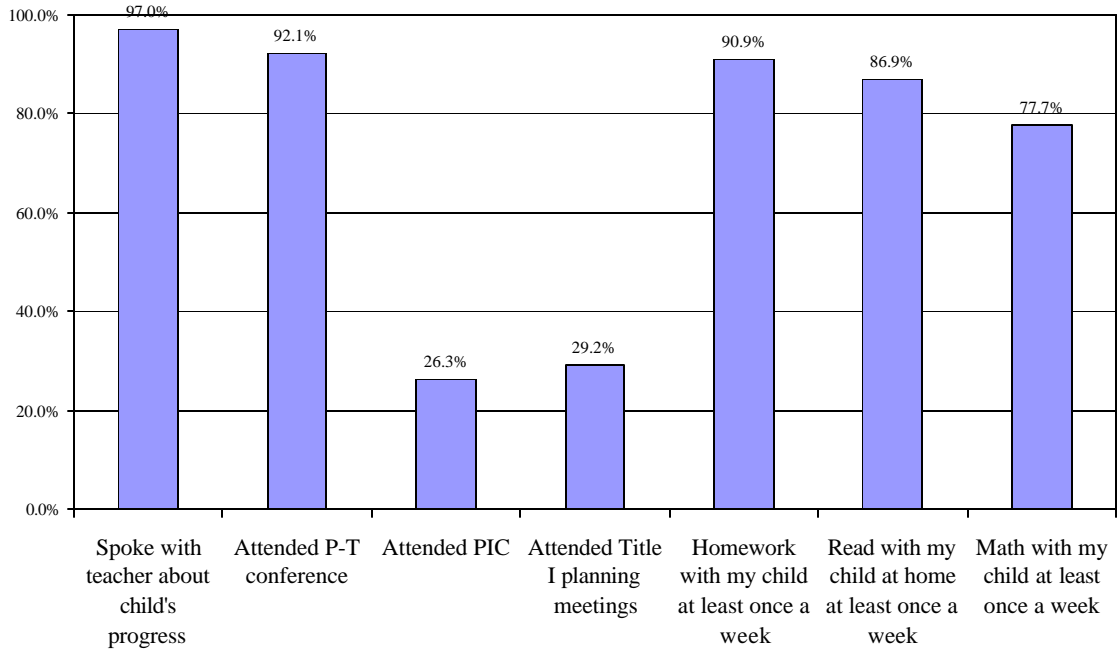
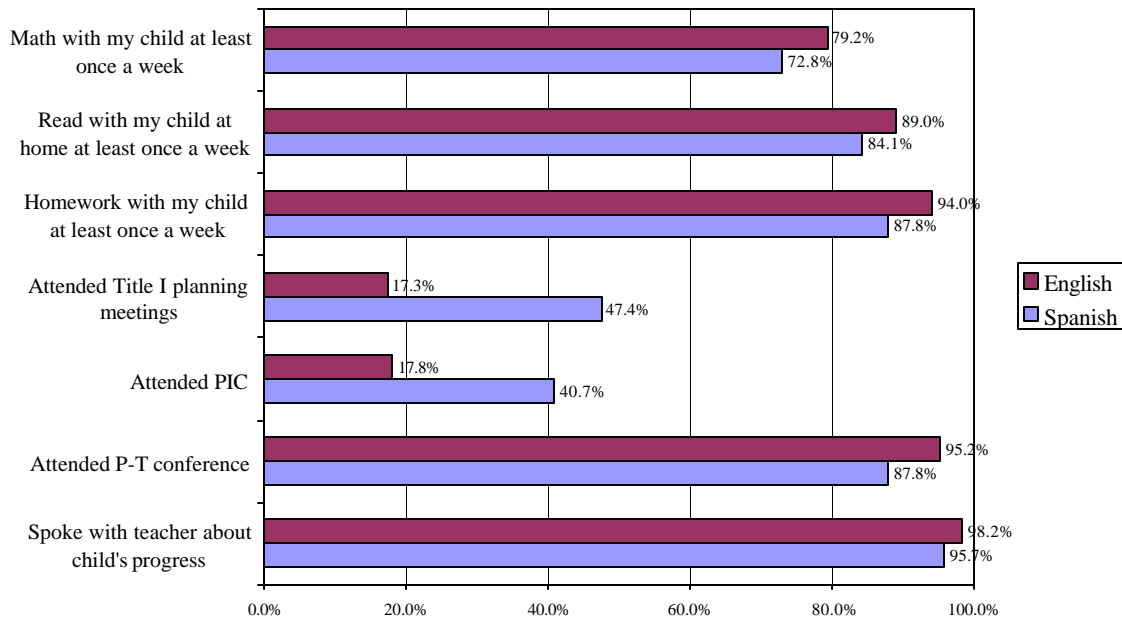


Figure 2 - ES Parent Participation in Educational Activities, by Response Language



The next four figures illustrate responses about parents' attitudes towards programs and their partnership with schools. While a majority of the parents expressed satisfaction with the Title I program and felt valued by their school as partners in their child's education, there was a systematic difference between the Spanish and English speakers (Figures 3 and 4). Although a larger proportion of Spanish speakers reported satisfaction with the Title I program compared to their English counterparts, the pattern reversed when asked whether they felt valued by the school. A greater proportion of English speakers (84.9%) felt valued by their schools as partners in their child's education compared to the Spanish speakers (73.4%). This may be a result of limited ability to communicate with the school on the part of the Spanish speaking parents and a limited ability of the school to communicate with parents. Schools may take measures to communicate to parents that they are valued by the schools for their partnership.

As Figure 5 shows, parents said that schools gave them opportunity to volunteer, communicate openly, and attend classes and workshops at the school. However, there was a systematic difference in responses; a greater proportion of English speaking as opposed to the Spanish speaking parents felt that their school offered them an opportunity to communicate or be part of the program planning decisions (Figure 6).

Figure 3 - ES Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

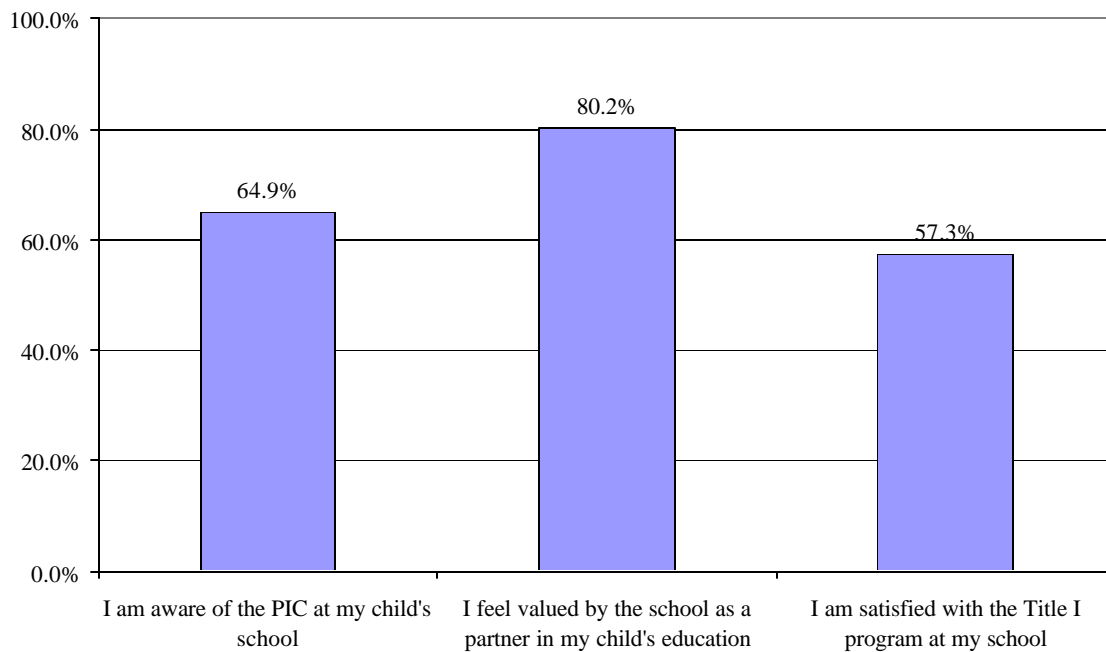


Figure 4 - ES Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements, by Response Language

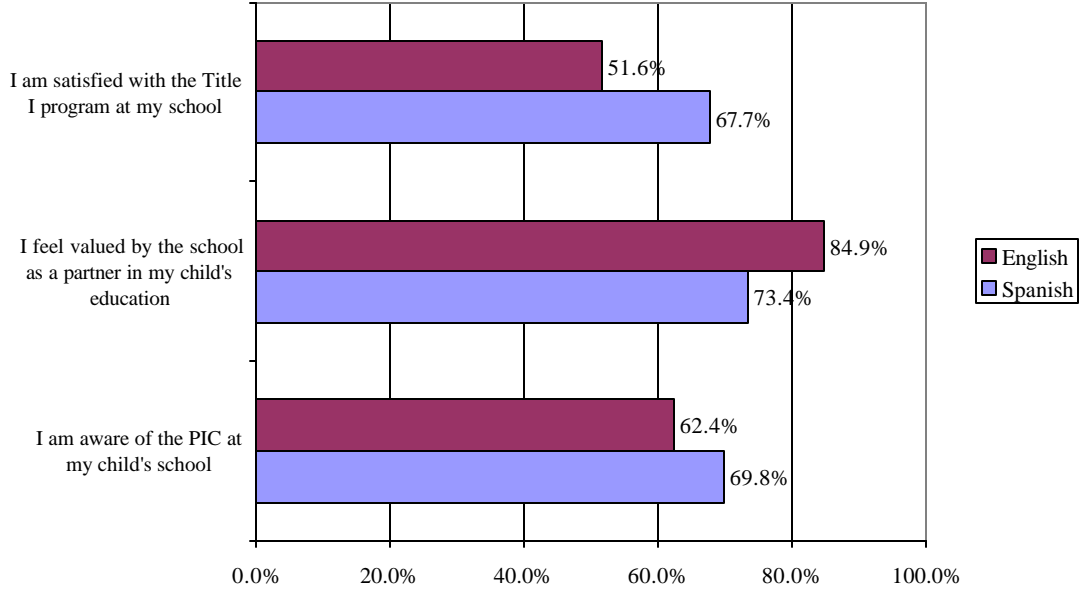


Figure 5- I Feel That My Child's Elementary School Gave Me an Opportunity to:

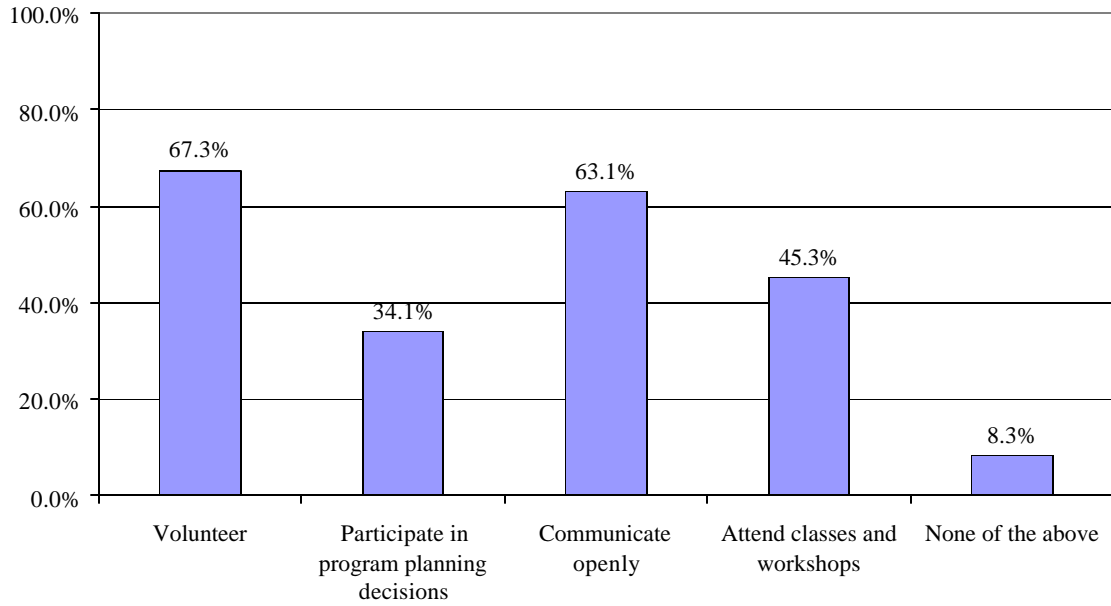
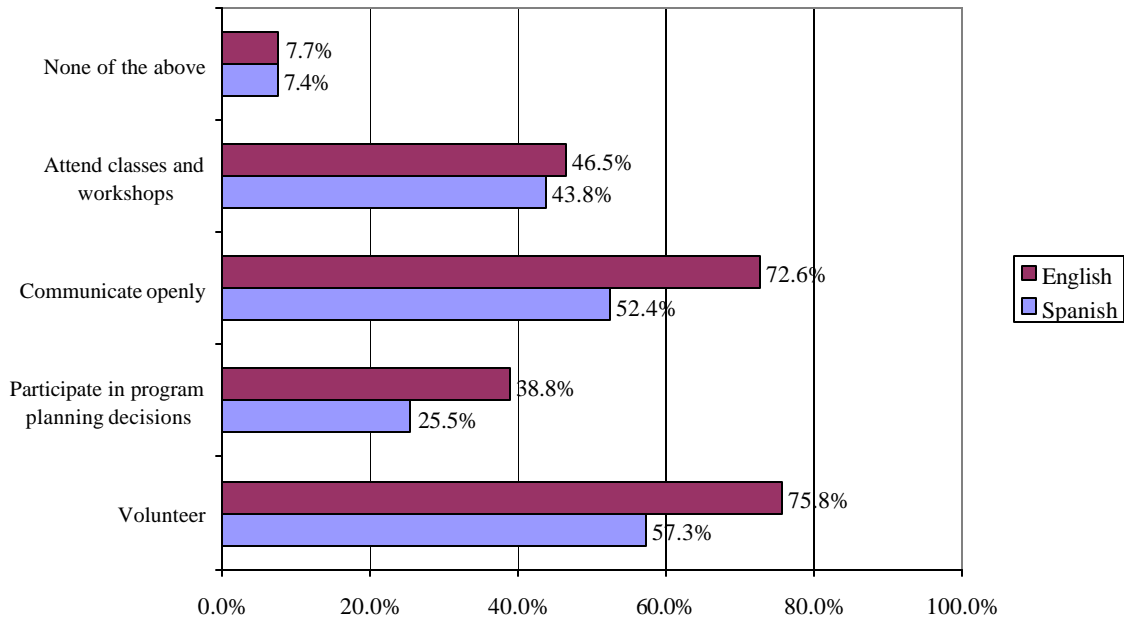


Figure 6 - I Feel That My Child's Elementary School Gave Me an Opportunity to, by Response Language



Parents as Volunteers

Parents reported they volunteered in many different areas and most volunteering occurred in the classrooms. Almost half the parents said they never volunteered. A slightly greater proportion of the English speaking parents volunteered compared to their Spanish counterparts. (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7 - ES Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

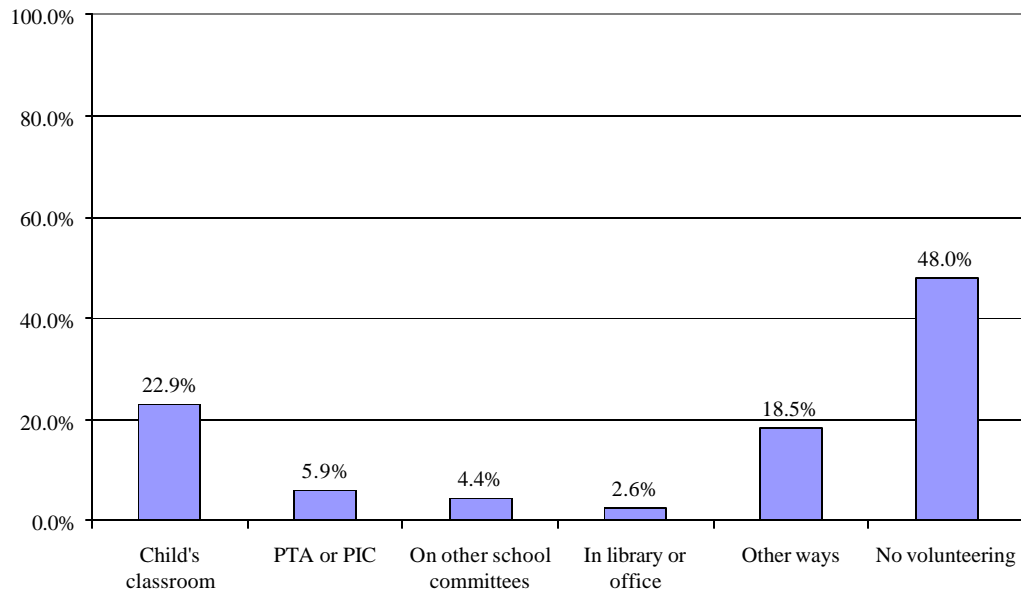
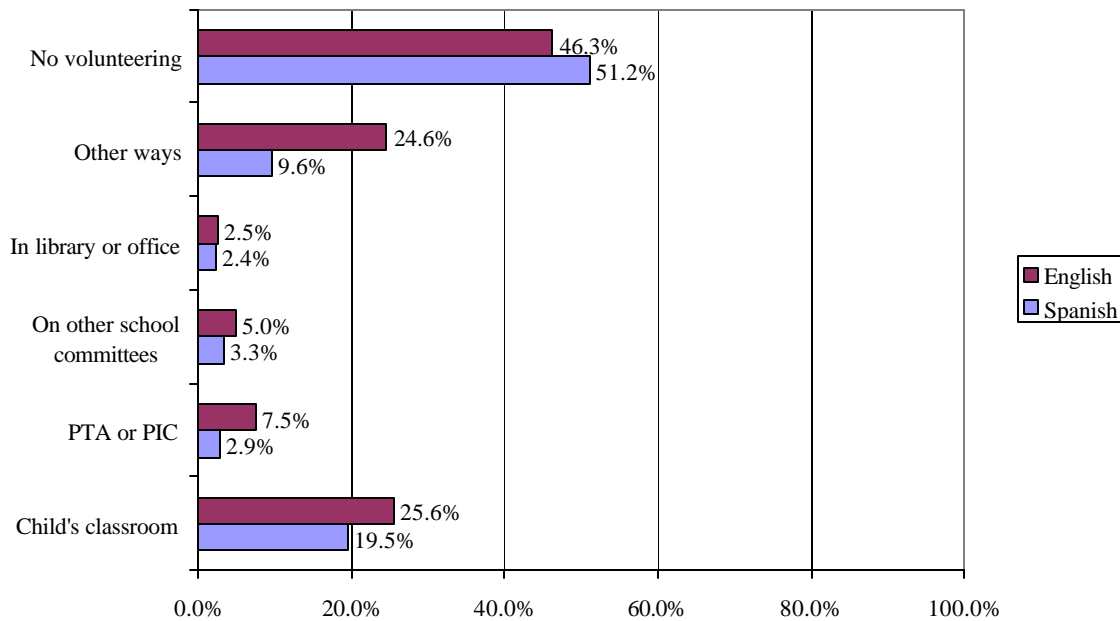


Figure 8 - ES Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for, by Response Language



Reasons for not volunteering. Full-time work was the most common reason for not volunteering (Figure 9). For a small proportion, a lack of childcare for their preschool age children created a barrier to freely get involved in the school. To be sure, the Spanish and English speakers reported slightly different challenges. The Spanish speakers more often reported the problem with childcare whereas a greater proportion of English speakers said a full-time job was the reason for their inability to volunteer (Figure 10). Since almost a fourth of Spanish speaking parents said the presence of young children becomes an impediment to parent engagement in schools, school administrators may look into removing this barrier by providing childcare at the school to facilitate their participation. This may be a useful investment as this also will prepare families to support the education also of younger children who will become students in the school within a few years.

Figure 9 - ES Parents Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings

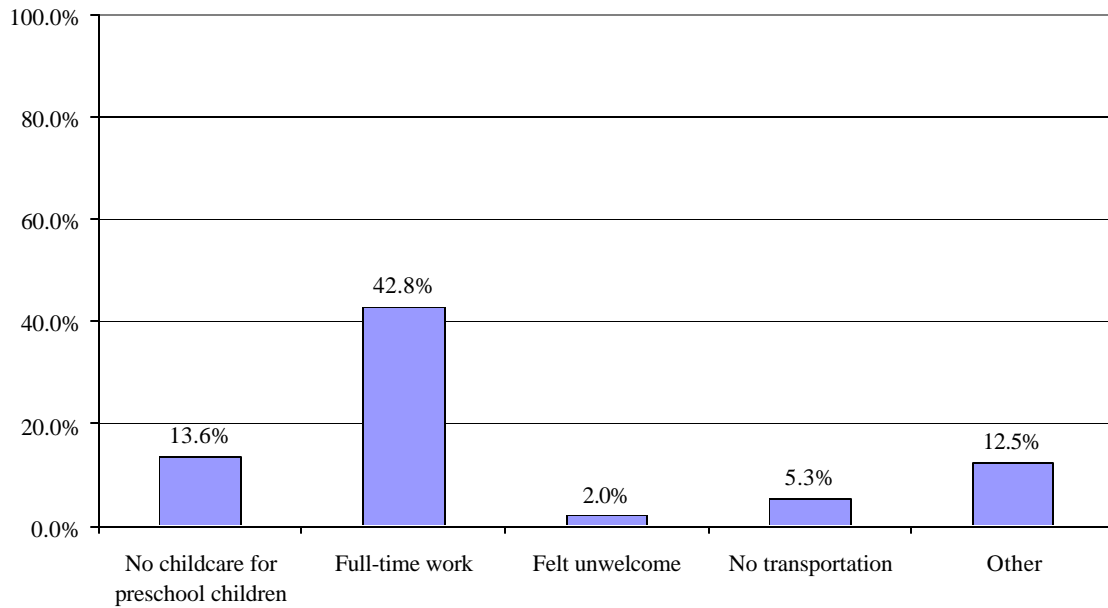
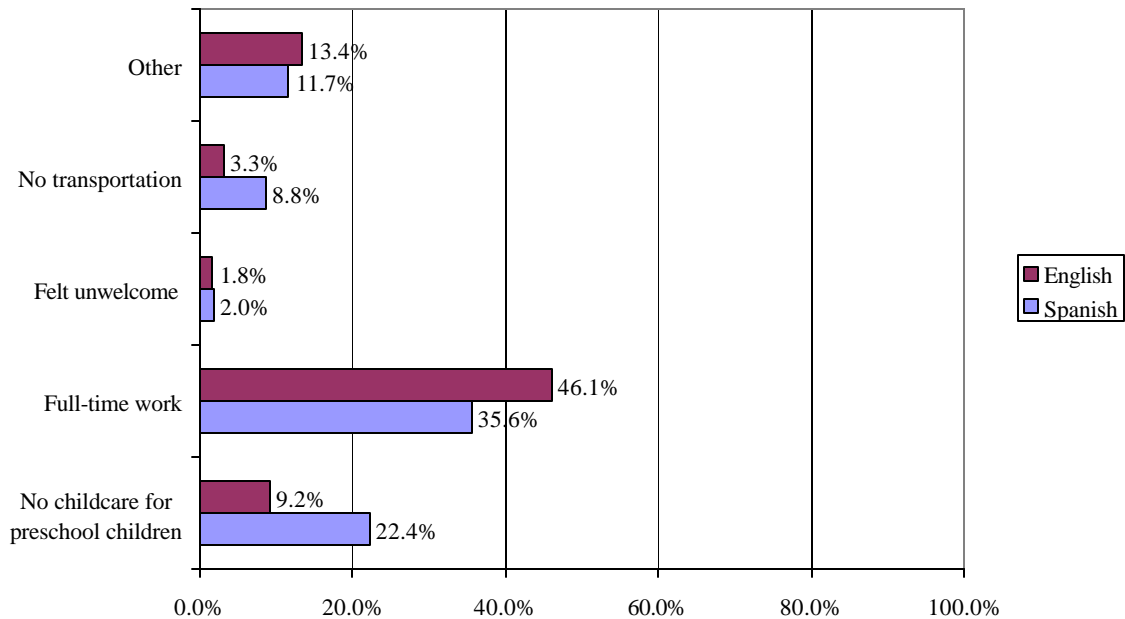


Figure 10 - ES Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings, by Response Language



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The survey invited the parents to indicate which events and activities they would most likely attend at their student's school and strategies to remove some of the barriers to parental involvement in schools. Parents said they were most likely to attend parent-child activities, parent education, field trips, and student performances at their schools. A small proportion said that they needed transportation and about 19% said that telephone reminders to the meetings would be helpful. The Spanish speaking respondents reported that workshops offered in Spanish and availability of childcare would promote their involvement in their child's school (Figure 12).

Figure 11 - ES Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:

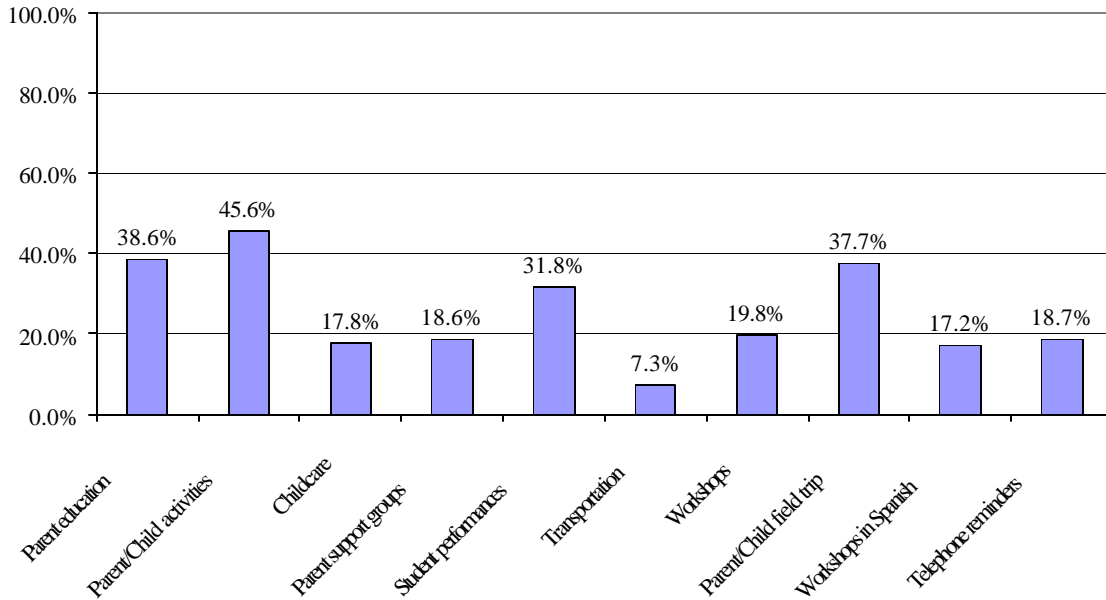
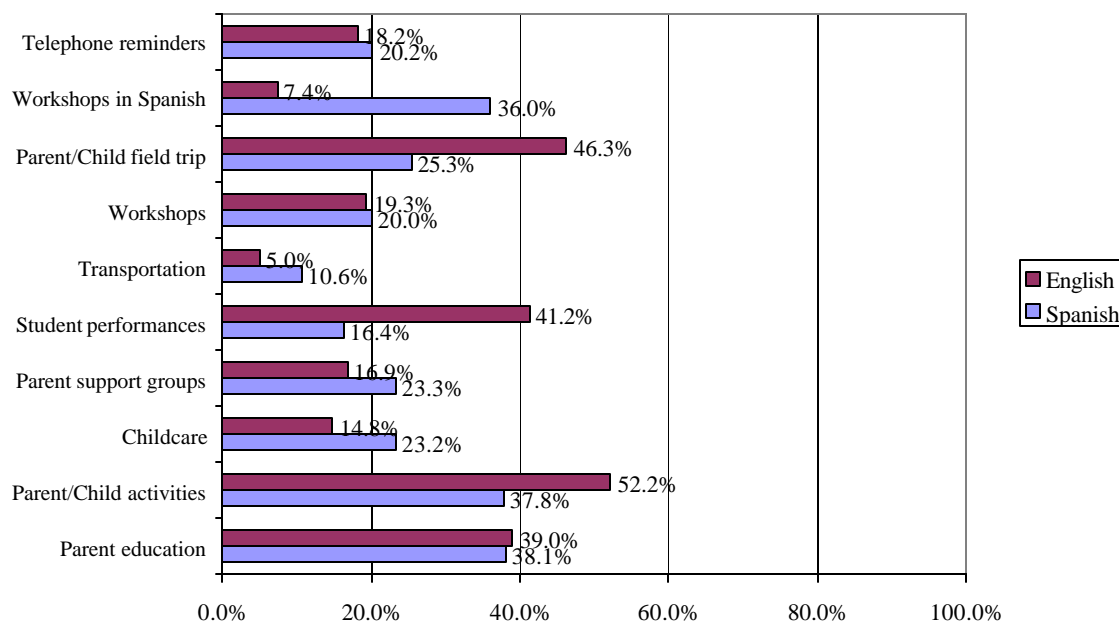


Figure 12 - ES Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Meetings That Offer, by Response Language



Middle Schools: Results and Analysis

Approximately 8,867 families of the middle school Title I students received the parent involvement survey. About 19% of the middle school families returned completed questionnaires, a rate significantly lower than that of the elementary school parents.

Parents of the middle school students demonstrated limited involvement in various school or classroom activities. Educational research shows that middle school students do better if their parents are involved in their schooling.ⁱⁱⁱ Greater parental involvement may prove to be an important strategy to improve student performance. Middle school administrators may choose to focus on improving parental involvement.

Parents as Partners

A majority of the parents helped their student with homework and spoke to their teachers about the student's progress (Figure 13). Less than half the middle school parents did reading or math with their children, a rate considerably lower than that of their elementary school counterparts.

A comparison of the responses based on language revealed that more Spanish than English speakers were involved in the educational process, and especially in Title I activities (Figure 14). They reported attending Title I and PIC meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and helping their student with the homework at a greater rate than the

English speakers. A greater proportion of English speaking parents reported doing math with their student at least once a week.

Figure 13 - MS Parent Participation in School Activities

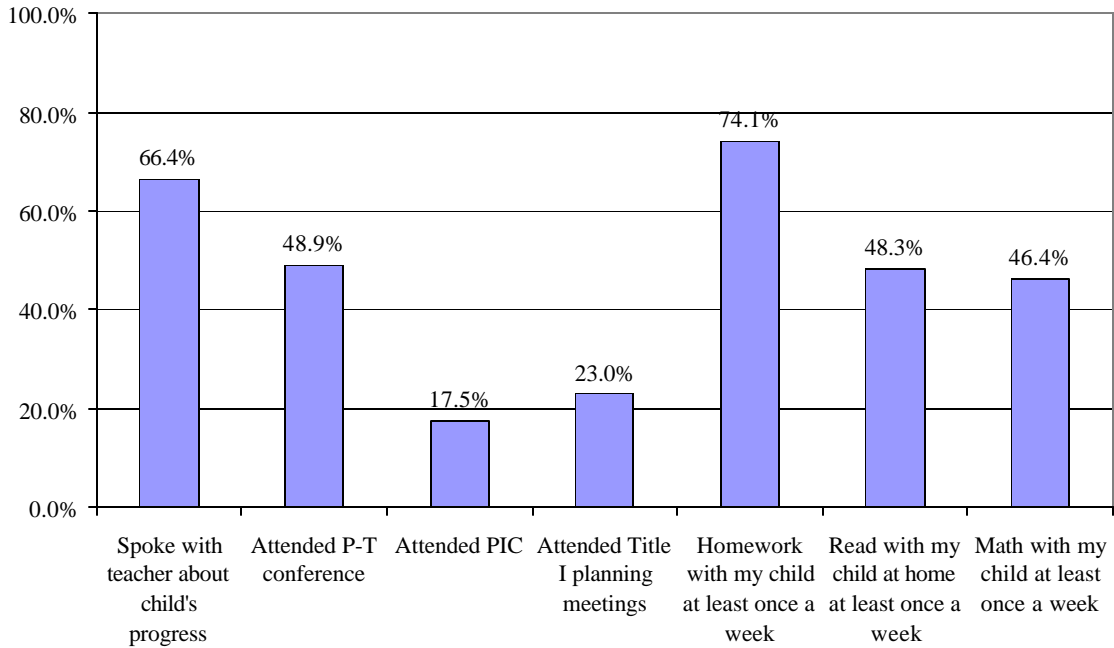
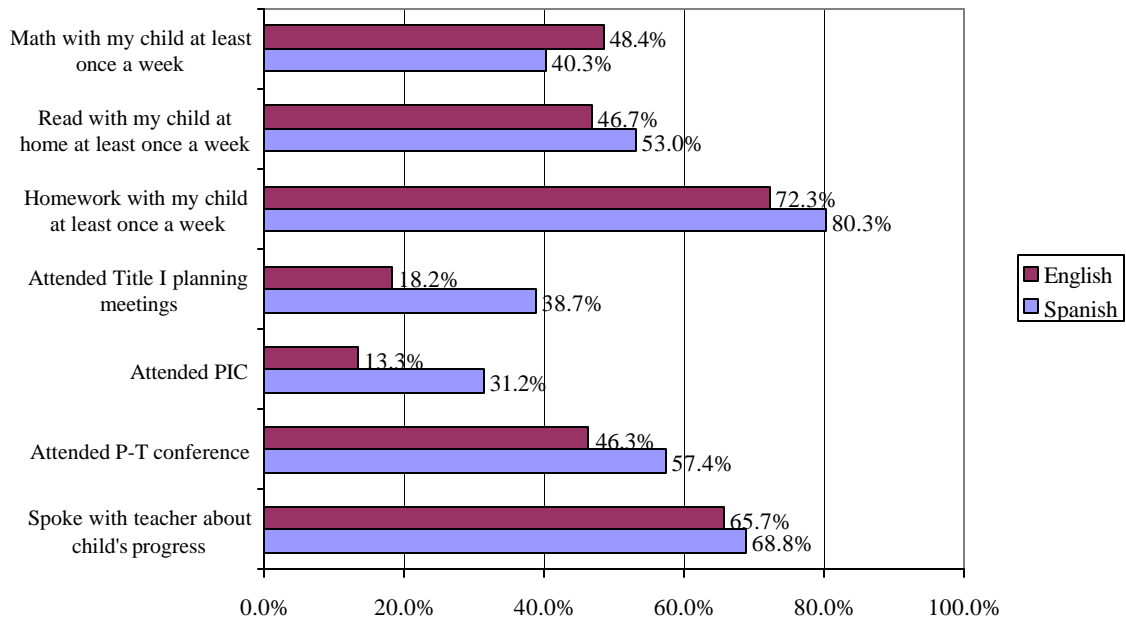


Figure 14 - MS Parents Involvement in School Activities, by Response Language



Parents expressed positive feelings regarding their partnership with school. As Figure 15 indicates, about half the middle school parents reported satisfaction with their Title I program and three-fourths said they felt valued by their school as partners in their children’s education. Clearly, Spanish speaking households seemed more aware and positive about the programs at the schools (Figure 16). However, it is noteworthy that fewer Spanish speakers felt valued as partners by their school compared to the English speaking parents. School administrators perhaps need to make a stronger attempt to communicate to the Spanish speaking parents that they are valued as partners in their child’s education.

About 40% of the parents said their school offered them an opportunity to communicate openly (Figure 17). A smaller proportion said the school offered opportunities to volunteer, attend classes and workshops, or participate in decision making. A third of the parents did not think the school provided opportunities to get involved in school. This is a message for the middle school administrators to clearly communicate to parents the opportunities offered to get involved in school’s educational activities.

Figure 15 - MS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

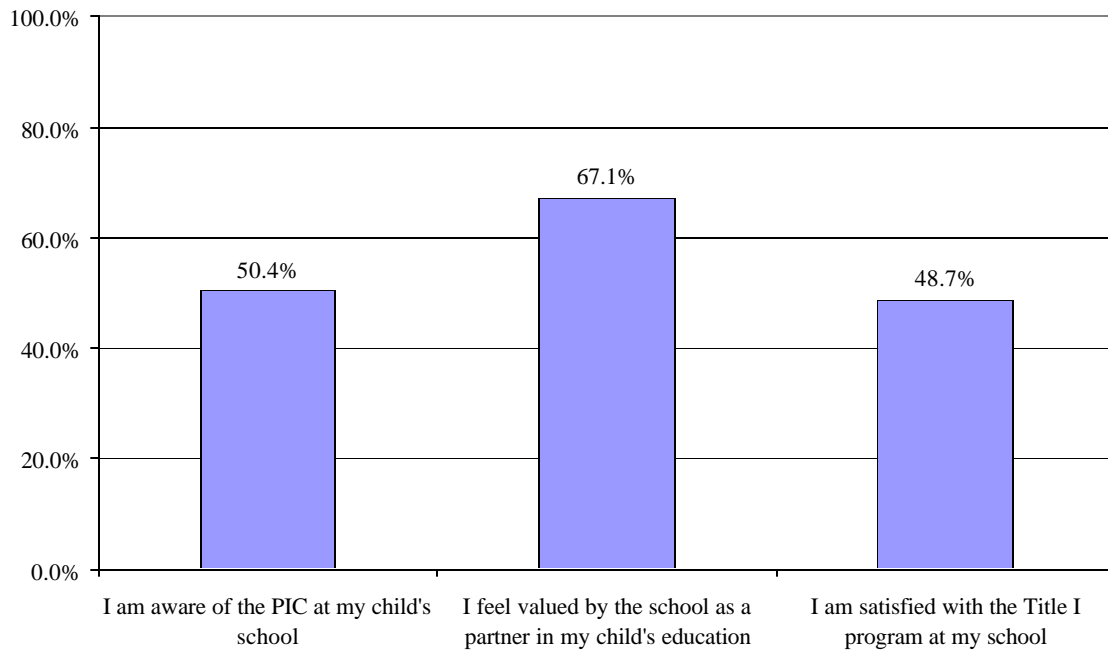


Figure 16 - MS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statement, by Response Language

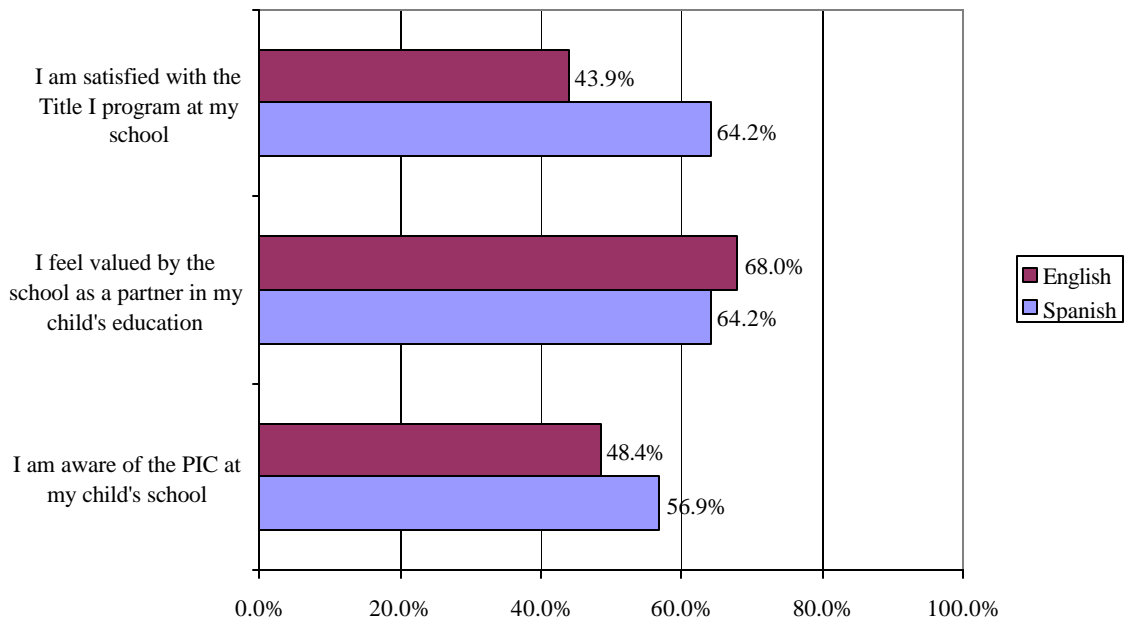


Figure 17 - I Feel That My Child's Middle Schools Gave Me an Opportunity to:

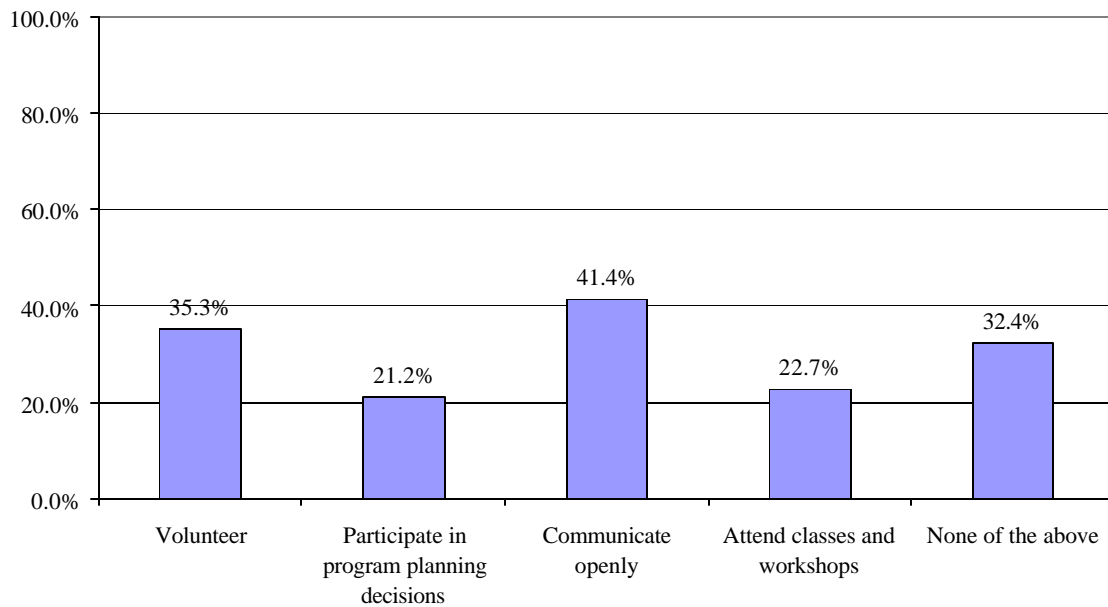
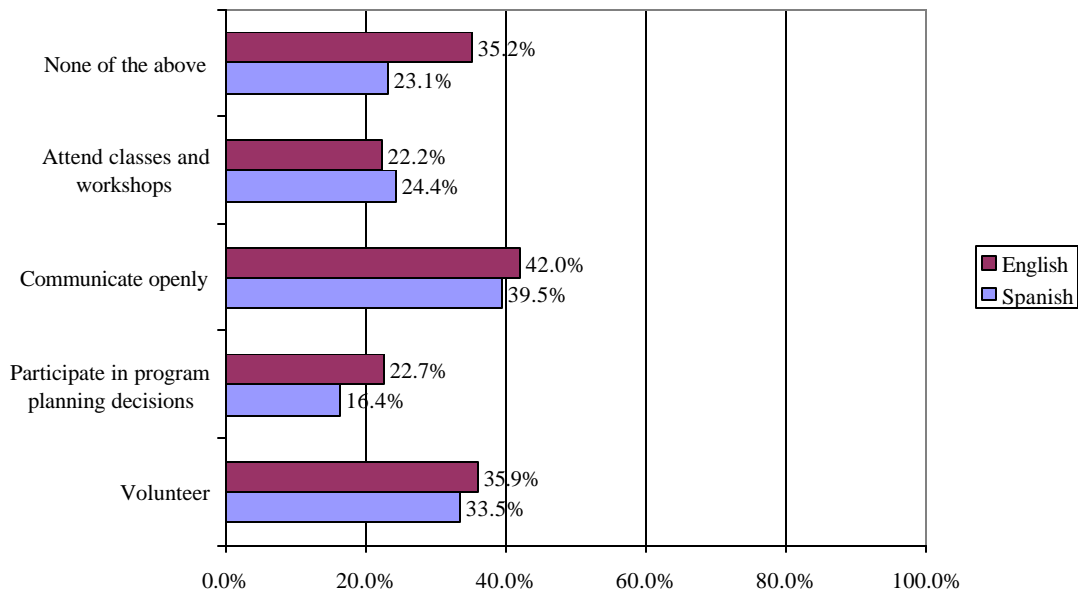


Figure 18 - I Feel That My Child's Middle School Gave Me an Opportunity to, by Response Language



Parents as Volunteers

Parent volunteering seemed greatly diminished in the middle schools in comparison with the elementary schools. For example, while three-fourths of the respondents at the middle schools never volunteered at their school, a much smaller proportion - less than half - in elementary schools said they never volunteered.

APS as well as school-based administrators may focus their energies on improving parent volunteering at the middle school level

Figure 19 - MS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

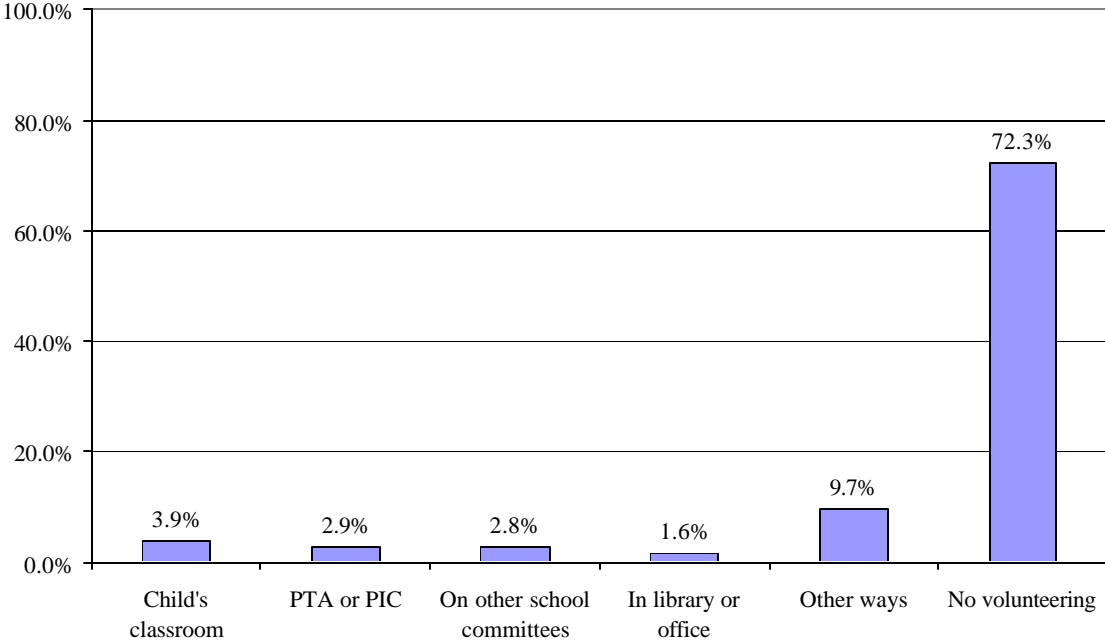
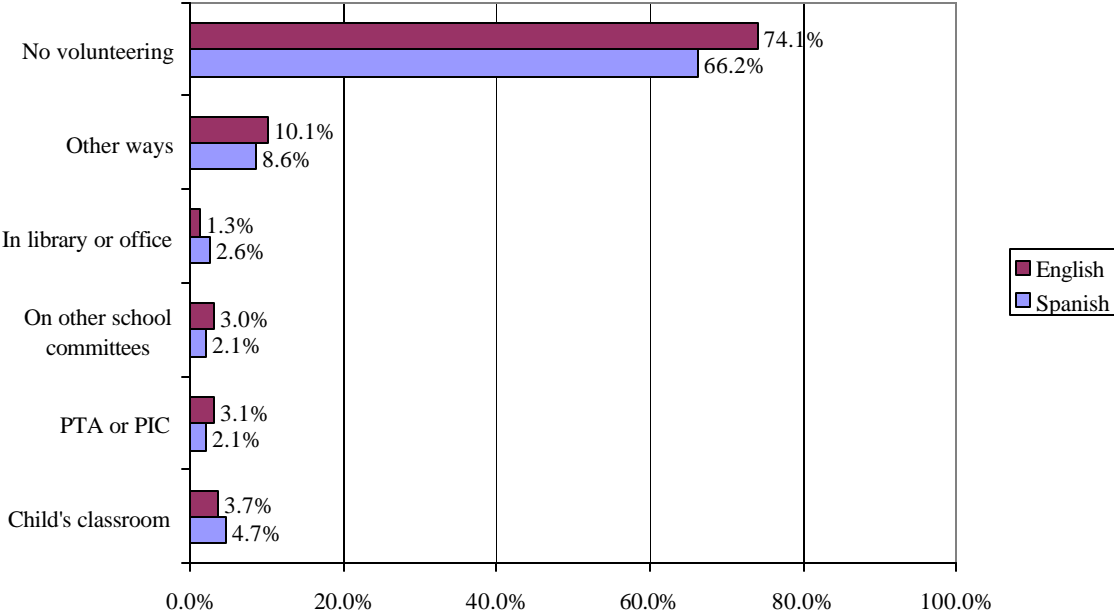


Figure 20 - MS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for, by Response Language



Reasons for not volunteering. Full-time work was the most quoted reason for not volunteering in the school. A greater proportion of Spanish speaking parents compared to the English ones reported that a lack of childcare for the young children at home was a major barrier to participating in their school, a theme that resonated in overall parent responses.

Repeating the pattern of difference found in this survey, proportionately more English speaking parents compared to the Spanish ones said that full-time work was the reason they did not volunteer. On the other hand, a higher percentage of Spanish speakers as opposed to the English ones said that a lack childcare for younger children prevented them from volunteering at their school.

Figure 21 - MS Parents Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings

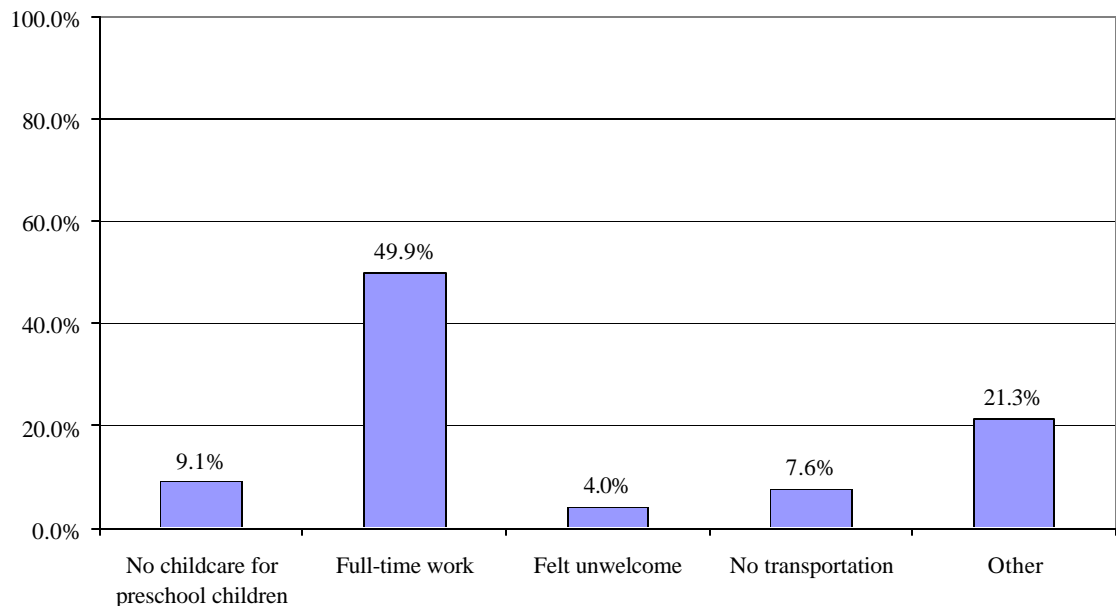
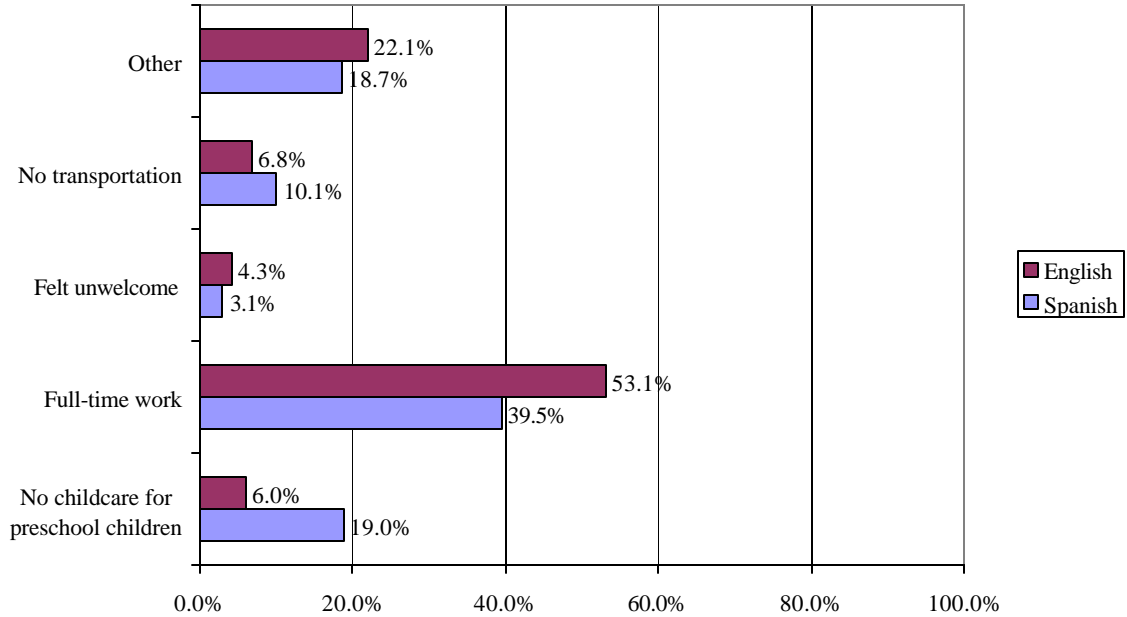


Figure 22 - MS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings, by Response Language



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

A small proportion, about a third of the middle school parents, was interested in the activities offered by their schools, such as parent-child activities and field trips, student performances, and parent education. While more English speakers were interested in student performances, the Spanish speaking parents opted for workshops in Spanish and parent support groups (Figure 24). Middle school administrators may consider exploring the disparate interests and needs of the Spanish and English language families and devise measures accordingly to meet their expectations.

Figure 23 - MS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:

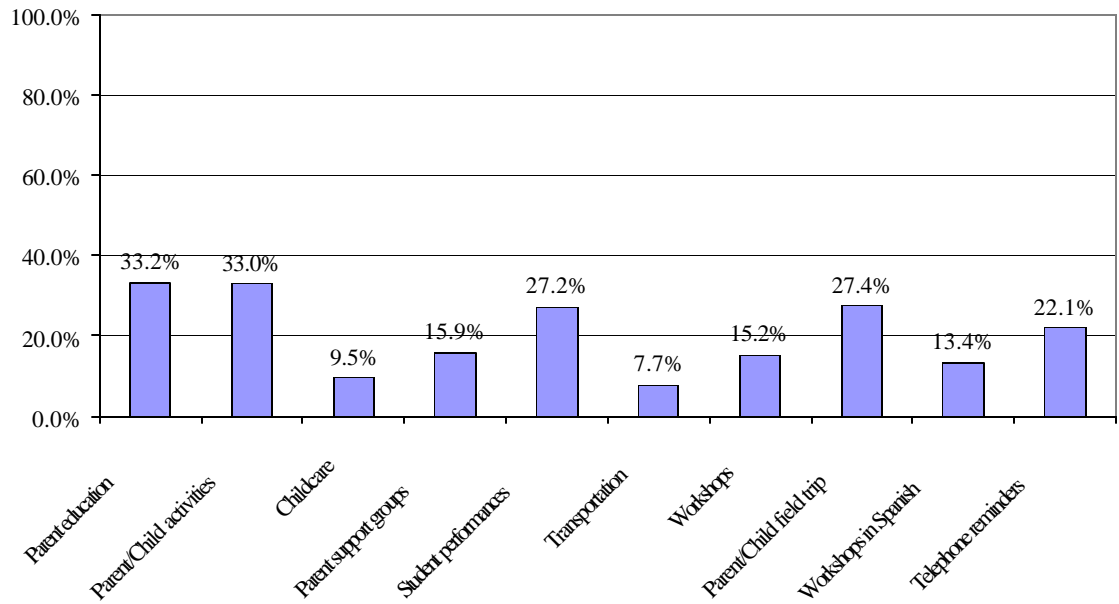
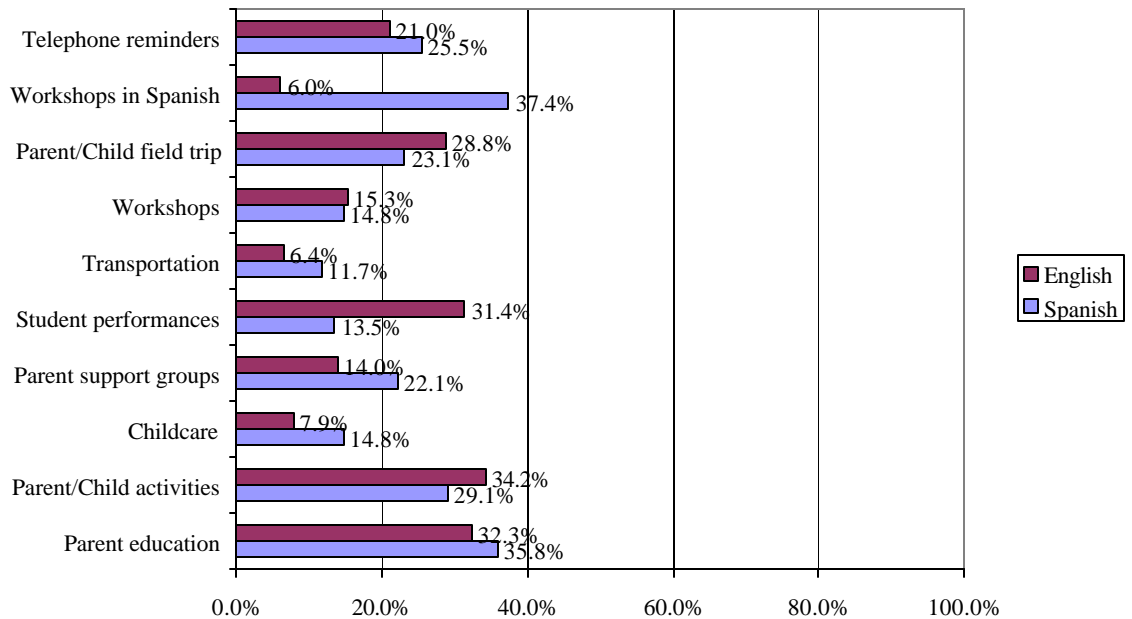


Figure 24 - MS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer, by Response Language



Alternative Schools: Results and Analysis

There are three Title I alternative schools in APS and their families face special challenges in educating their students. The alternative schools had the strongest rate of return (28.5%) across the different school levels and categories (see Table 2, p.3). The following analysis does not discuss results by language because of the small number of responses in Spanish language.

Parents as Partners

The alternative schools represented high and/or middle school grade levels. Parent involvement in the alternative schools was quite encouraging, especially when considered in the context of the widely observed decline in parental involvement at upper grade levels. Over half of the parents reported involvement in educational activities such as speaking to the teacher about their student's progress, attending parent-teacher conferences, and helping with homework (Figure 25). A smaller proportion said they read with their student and did math at least once a week. Perhaps the teachers could communicate a higher expectation of parental support of the student's work at home.

Over half the parents in alternative schools were satisfied with their Title I program and three-fourths felt valued by their school as a partner in their child's education (Figure 26). While parents reported that they felt the school gave them an opportunity to volunteer, communicate openly or otherwise get involved in the educational process at the school, about 40% were not aware of such opportunities at school (Figure 27). Schools may improve communication with the parents to ensure them better access to their school.

Figure 25 - AS Parent Participation in Educational Activities

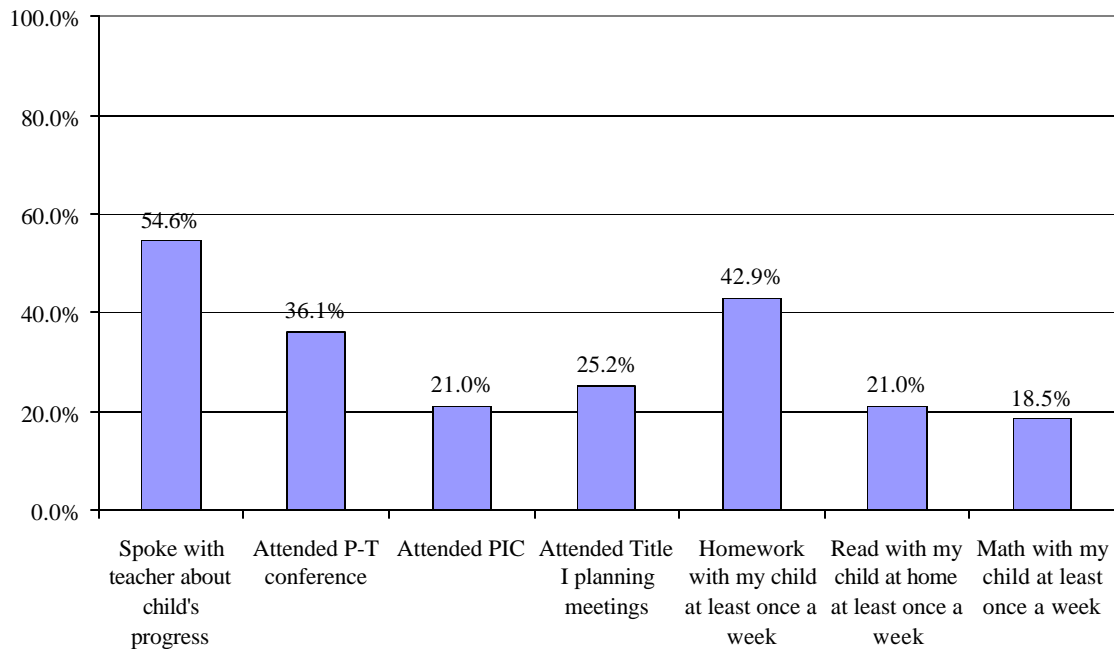


Figure 26 - AS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

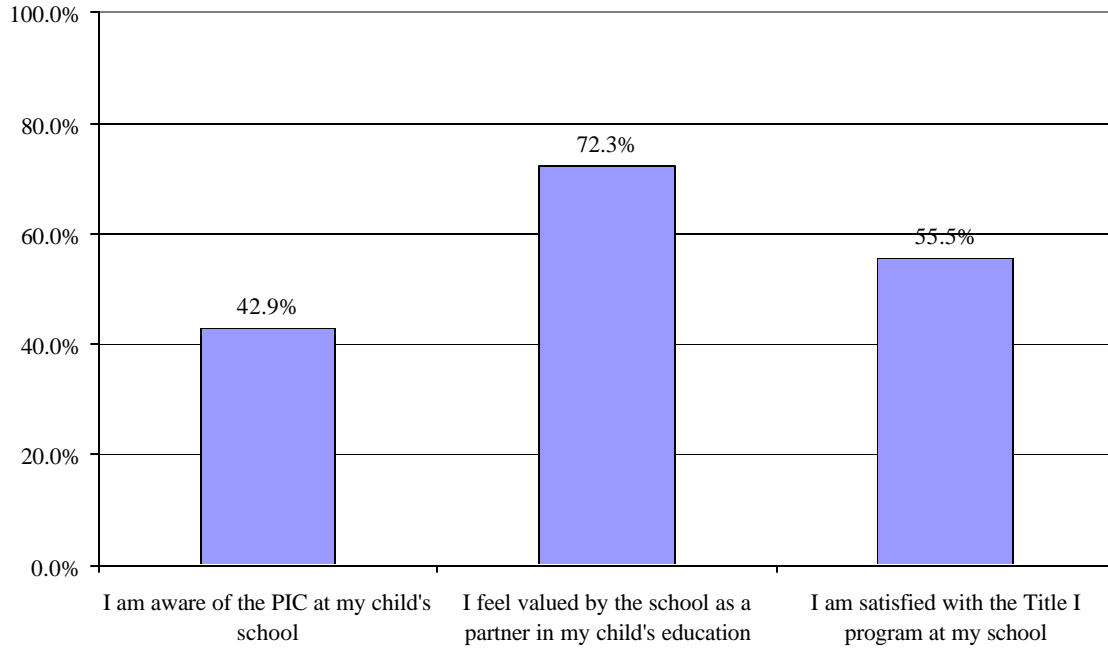
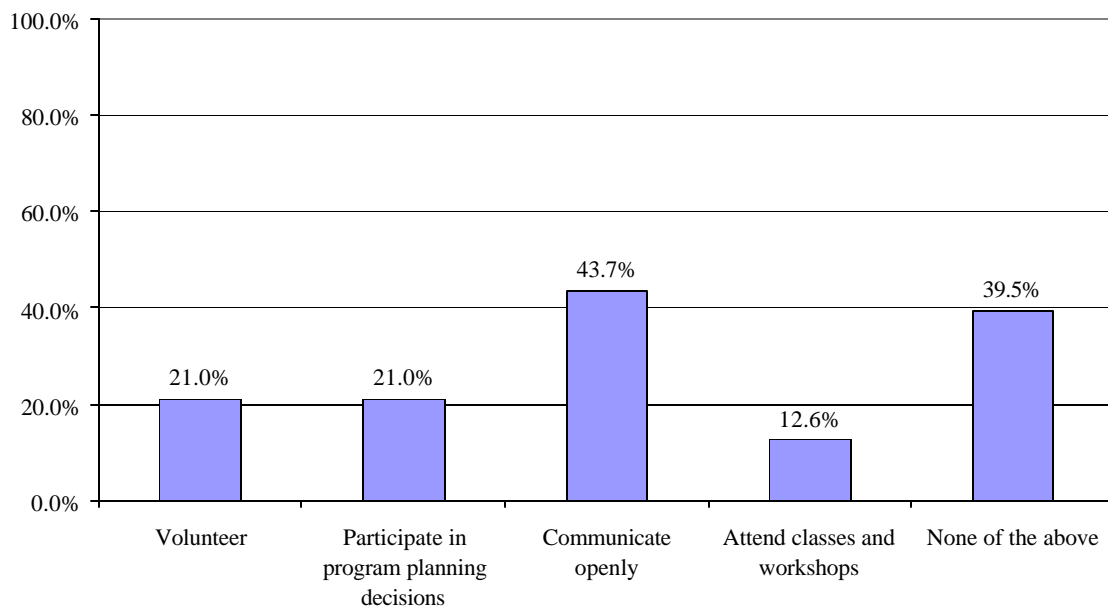


Figure 27 - I Feel That My Child's Alternative School Gave Me an Opportunity to:



Parents as Volunteers

There was very limited parent volunteering in alternative schools, indicating an area of potential growth for the schools. Full-time work was the most common barrier that limited volunteering.

Figure 28 - AS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

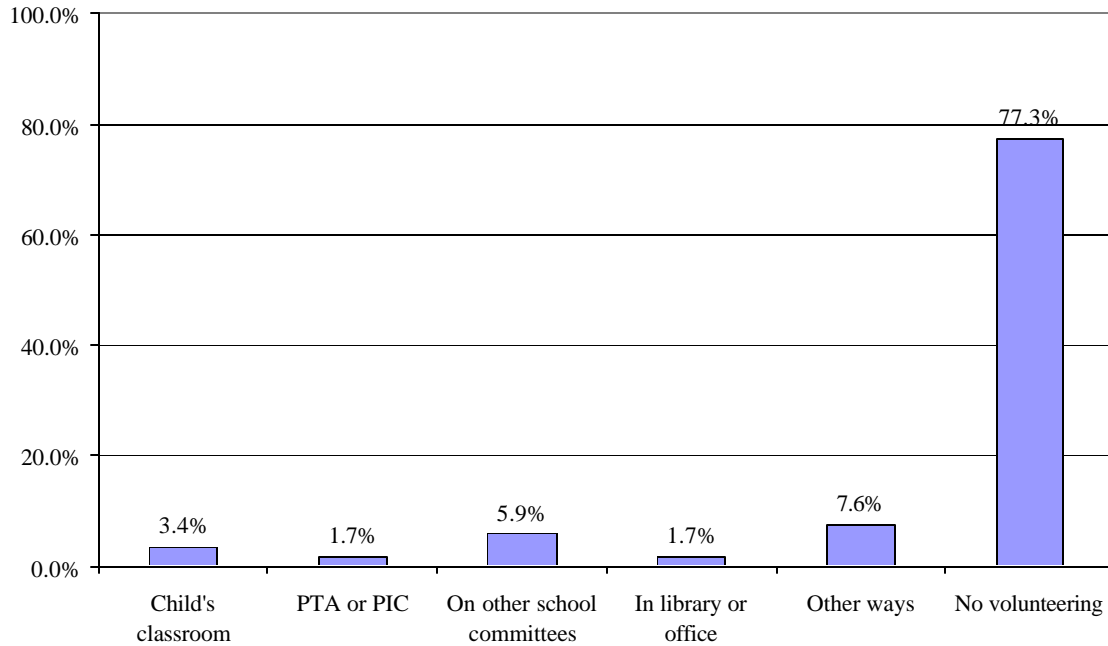
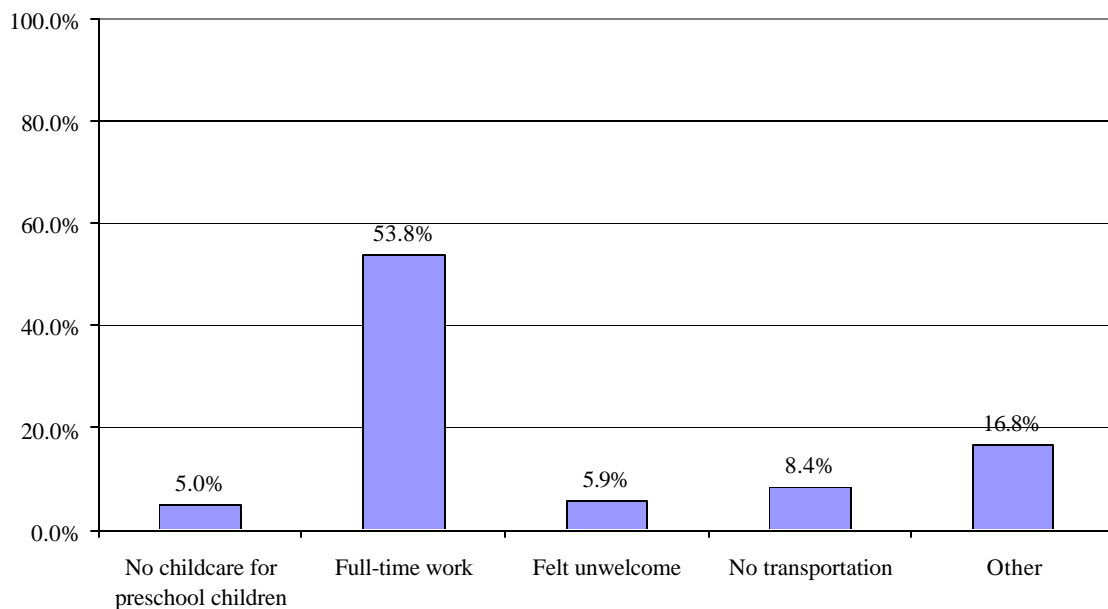


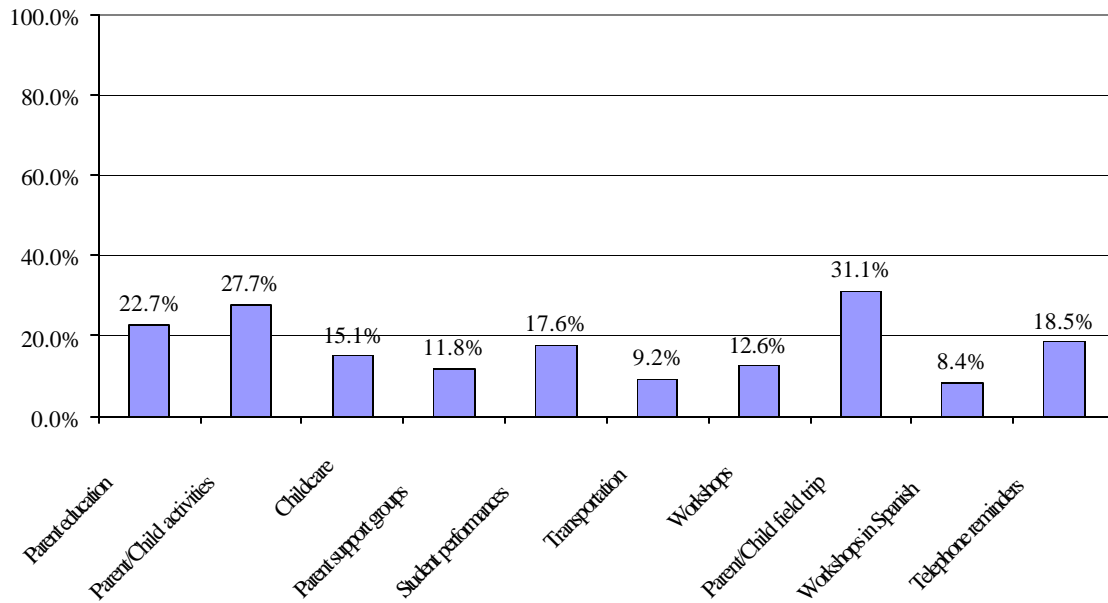
Figure 29 - AS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The alternative school parents were only marginally interested participating in school activities. As Figure 30 shows, less than a third of the parents said they were interested in parent-child activities and field trips. In a striking parallel with other APS parents, the alternative school parents suggested telephone reminders and childcare provision as strategies to improve their odds of attending school meetings and activities.

Figure 30 - AS Parent Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:



Charter School: Results and Analysis

There were 13 Title I charter schools in Albuquerque in the 2005-2006 school year. In Spring 2006, RDA staff contacted all Title I charter schools by phone to understand their parents involvement programs. RDA included one charter school in this Title I parent survey because the school administrators reported a rich parent involvement program at their school. RDA distributed the survey to the families of 588 students enrolled at the school. Although the rate of return for the survey was low - just under 6% - the results of the survey are included in this report as an example of the charter school component of the APS Title I program. Because of the small number of returned surveys (30), the report will present all parents and not analyze differences based on the response language. The results should be viewed with caution because the respondents may not truly be representative of the entire population of parents at the given charter school.

Parents as Partners

This was an elementary charter school and parents exhibited a high level of engagement in their child’s education. All of the respondents spoke to the teacher about their student’s progress and attended parent-teacher conferences. Almost all of them helped their student with the homework and two-thirds of them read as well as did math with their student (Figure 31). A majority of the parents showed awareness of school programs and felt valued by their school as partners in the ir student’s education (Figure 32).

Reflecting their satisfaction with their school, most parents said their school provided them an opportunity to volunteer and communicate openly. Almost two-thirds said they had an opportunity to attend workshops at their school (Figure 33).

Figure 31 - CS Parent Participation in Educational Activities

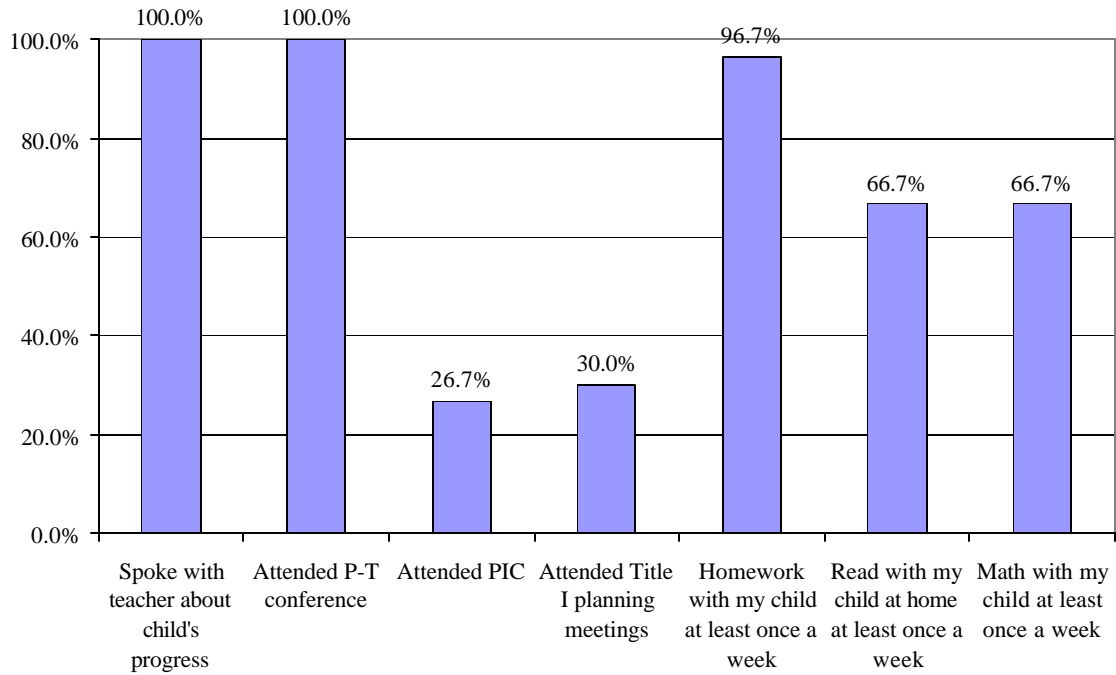


Figure 32 - CS Parents Ageement with Attitude Statements

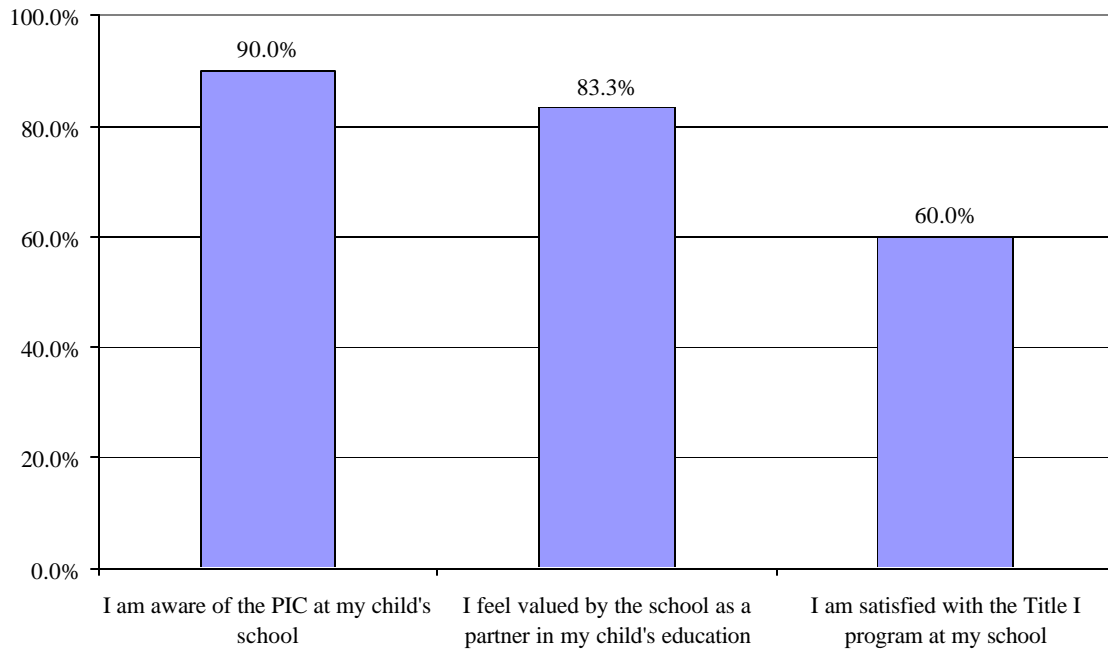
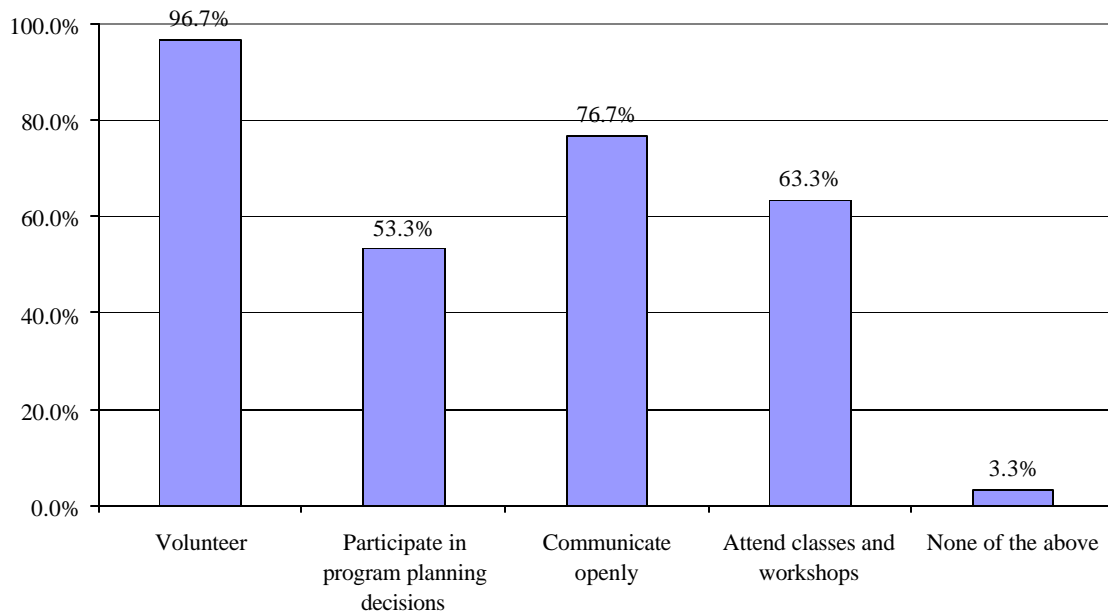


Figure 33 - I Feel That My Child's Charter School Game Me an Opportunity to:



Parents as volunteers

At least a third of the parents volunteered in some way although most volunteered in their child’s classroom. When asked for the reasons for not volunteering, echoing APS elementary parents, charter school parents reported full-time work as a barrier. A lack of childcare for younger siblings was a problem for some parents.

Figure 34 - CS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

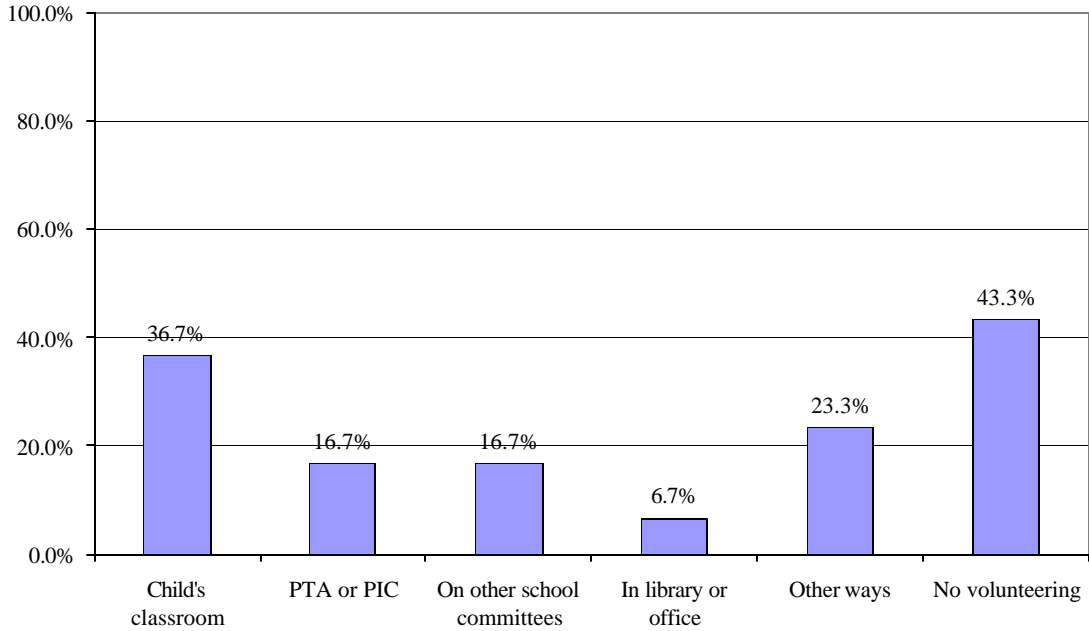
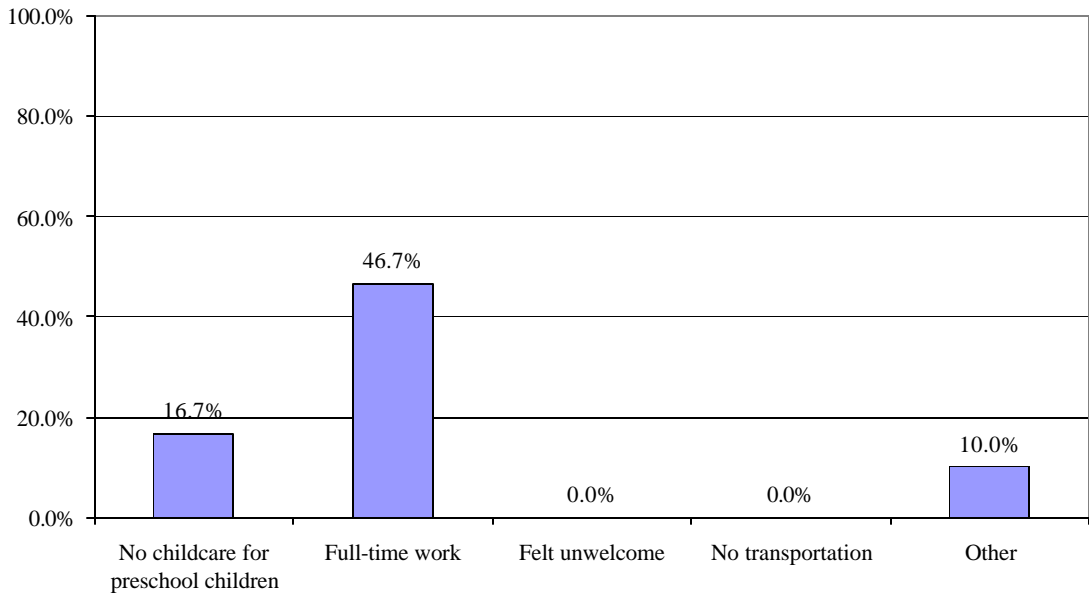


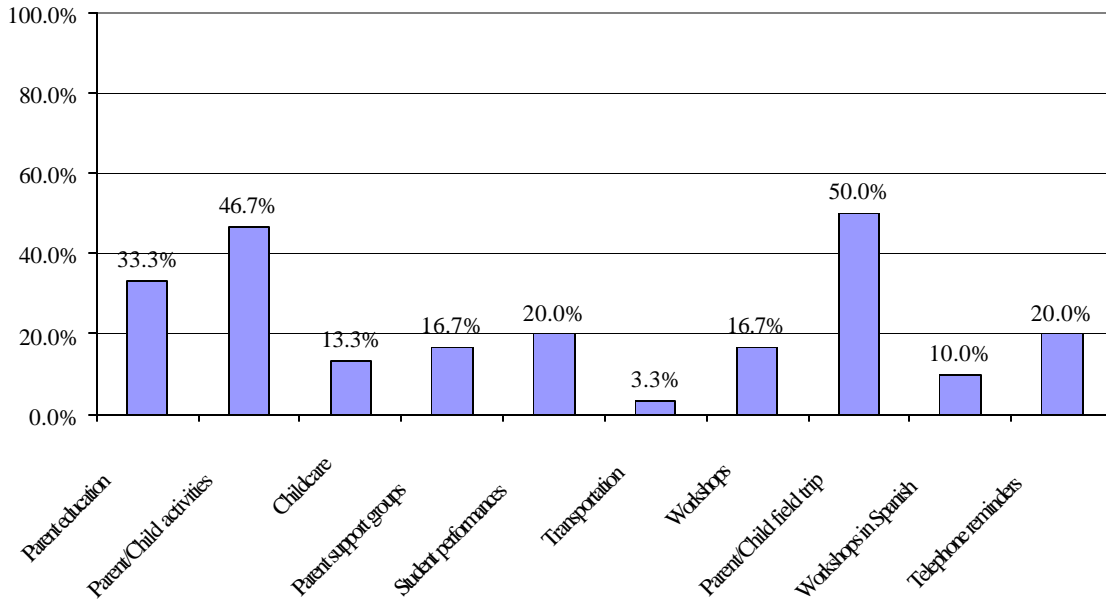
Figure 35 - CS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The survey questionnaire explored the types of activities parents would like to attend and some helpful strategies to get the parents to participate in activities. Parents in the given charter school favored parent-child activities, field trips and parent education analogous to the APS elementary school parents. Telephone reminders and childcare during the school activities were strategies deemed helpful by the parents.

Figure 36 - CS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:



Conclusions

Parents of elementary school students are more involved in their student's schooling compared to their counterparts in middle and alternatives schools.

- Parents speak to the teacher about their student's progress. They help their student with homework and work with the student's math and reading at least once a week.
- Parents volunteer in school and classroom activities.
- Parents attend Parent Involvement Council (PIC) meetings, other parent organization meetings, Title I meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Parents feel valued by their student's school as partners in their child's education.
- Parents are interested in the opportunities offered to them to come to school, such as parent-child activities, field trips, student performances, and educational activities for parents. They would like telephone reminders for meetings.

Parent involvement in schools declines at the middle-school level.

- While parents support homework at home, they are less likely to volunteer or attend PIC or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings.
- A smaller proportion of middle school parents compared to the elementary school parents feel that they are valued by their school as partners in their student's education or that their school gives them an opportunity to volunteer, to participate in program planning decisions, or to attend classes or workshops.
- A smaller proportion support homework at home or volunteer at the school compared to the parents in regular middle schools.

Analyses of parent responses by language reveal some systematic differences between Spanish and English language respondents' attitudes and involvement in their student's education.

- While proportionately more Spanish speaking parents report attending Title I planning and PIC meetings in elementary schools, a greater proportion of English speaking parents feel valued, volunteer, or engage in other school activities.
- In middle schools, more Spanish speaking parents say they support homework, speak to the teacher about their child's progress, and attend Title I meetings.
- Spanish speakers prefer workshops offered in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare for their younger children to allow them to engage in the school activities.

Barriers to parent involvement:

- Parents across all school levels and categories say that full-time work is the most significant barrier to their involvement in school activities.
- A small proportion of parents say a lack of childcare prohibits them from taking part in school activities.

Recommendations

Research on parent involvement indicates that involvement is most effective when parents are involved in student learning. However, parent engagement in and support of a wide range of school activities produce impressive results for students and their schools.

Schools can establish clear expectations about parent support for reading, math, and homework in general, ensuring involvement of those parents who work or otherwise not able to come to school. The following recommendations suggest a few new strategies, or measures to intensify the existing ones, to enhance parent involvement in APS schools.

- Schools may use a variety of methods, such as newsletters, parent networks, student performances, curriculum nights, and phone calls, to convey a clear message that parents are important partners and their support for their student's education is necessary and expected.
- Schools might consider expanding efforts to increase parent volunteering in classrooms, on committees, or to support school events, especially in the middle and alternative schools.
- Secondary schools need to make a stronger attempt to increase parental support for students' academic work at home.
- Schools may look into strategies to overcome language barriers and improve Spanish speaking parents' volunteering and engagement in school activities.
- Schools may continue to offer the services that parents need, such as parent education, workshops in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare when parents attend school activities. Provision of childcare may be a useful investment as this will prepare families to support education also of younger children who will become students within a few years.
- Schools may continue to offer parent-child activities and student performances. As parents like to attend these activities, schools should use such opportunities to improve parents' familiarity with their student's educational process.

ⁱ RDA conducted an informal survey of Title I charter schools to investigate the parent program in each school, and then picked a school with many parent program components in place to survey the parents. It is deemed unproductive to survey parents about the parent program if there is little evidence that a parent program exists in that school.

ⁱⁱ The number of Spanish language responses in alternative and charter school was too low to warrant a meaningful comparison between the responses returned by English and Spanish speakers in the survey.

ⁱⁱⁱ Parent Involvement in Education School Improvement Research Series (SIRS). Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikelund. <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html>



**ALBUQUERQUE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Parent Involvement in Title I Schools

2005-2006

District Goal: Academic Excellence

Ranjana Damle Ph.D.
June 2007



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Title I Parent Involvement in APS 2005-2006

Executive Summary

The parent involvement provisions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) aim to achieve shared accountability between schools and parents to improve the educational success of students. The Title I parent involvement policy is designed to provide parents resources and support, and to equip them to become effective partners in their student's education. To evaluate the effectiveness of this parent policy, RDA conducted a survey of the parents in Title I schools to get their input regarding their involvement in schools. This report presents the findings of the survey and recommendations to focus the Title I policy to enhance parent involvement in their student's education.

Parent involvement is extensive in Title I elementary schools.

- Most parents speak to the teacher about their student's progress. They help their student with homework and work with the student's math and reading at least once a week.
- A small proportion of parents volunteers in school and classroom activities.
- Most parents attend parent-teacher conferences. A small proportion attends Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) meetings, other parent organization and Title I meetings.
- A majority of parents feel valued by their student's school as partners in their child's education.
- Many parents are interested in the opportunities to be at school, such as parent-child activities, field trips, student performances, and educational activities for parents.
- About a fifth of the parents would like telephone reminders for meetings.

Parent involvement in schools declines at the middle-school level.

- While three-fourths of the parents support homework at home, they are less likely to attend PIC or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings in the middle schools. Only a small fraction says they volunteer.
- A smaller proportion of middle school compared to the elementary school parents feel that they are valued by their school as partners in their student's education or that their school gives them opportunities to volunteer, to participate in program planning decisions, or to attend classes or workshops.
- A smaller proportion of the parents in alternative schools support homework at home or volunteer at the school compared to the parents in regular schools.

Barriers to parent involvement:

- Parents across all school levels and categories say that full-time work is the most significant barrier to their involvement in school activities.
- A small proportion of parents say a lack of childcare prohibits them from taking part in school activities.

Analyses of parent responses by language reveal some systematic differences between Spanish and English language respondents' attitudes and involvement.

- Elementary schools are more successful in getting Spanish speaking parents involved in Title I activities, but less so in getting their involvement in other areas. While proportionately more Spanish speaking parents report attending Title I planning and PIC meetings, a greater proportion of English speakers feel valued, volunteer, or engage in other school activities
- Middle schools are successful in eliciting support from Spanish speaking parents. Spanish speaking parents help with homework, speak to the teacher about their child's progress, and attend Title I meetings at a greater rate than English speaking parents.
- Spanish speakers prefer workshops offered in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare for their younger children to allow them to engage in school activities, clearly indicating a need for support that schools may be able to address.

Recommendations

Research on parent involvement overwhelmingly indicates that students whose parents are involved in their education achieve greater academic success and lower dropout rates. Parent involvement is most effective when parents are involved in student learning. However, parent engagement in and support of a wide range of school activities produce impressive results for students and their schools.

The APS District and its schools can increase parental involvement by communicating clear goals, expectations, and strategies to teachers, other school staff, families, and the community. The following recommendations suggest a few new strategies, or ways to intensify the existing ones, to enhance parent involvement in APS schools. Schools may:

- improve communication, using a variety of methods, such as newsletters, parent networks, student performances, curriculum nights, and phone calls, to increase parents' awareness of opportunities to get involved in their school.
- establish clear expectations about parent support for student's educational work at home through regular communication between parents and their student's classroom. Schools may have to make a special effort to reach out to parents who cannot be at school due to full-time work.
- consider expanding efforts to increase parent volunteering in classrooms, on committees, or to support school events, especially in the middle and alternative schools.
- focus on the parents of upper grade students to increase their support for students' academic work at home.
- find strategies to overcome language barriers and improve Spanish speaking parents' volunteering and engagement in school activities.
- offer the services that parents need, such as parent education, workshops in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare when parents attend school activities. Provision of childcare may be a useful investment as this will prepare families to support education also of younger children who will become students within a few years.
- continue to offer parent-child activities and student performances. While parents enjoy attending such activities and events, these opportunities allow parents familiarity with their student's school and educational process.

Title I Parent Involvement in APS 2005-2006

Introduction

The parent involvement provisions under No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2001) aim to achieve shared accountability between schools and parents to improve educational success of the students. School districts must develop and implement a policy to involve parents with meaningful consultation with the parents. The Title I parent involvement policy is intended to provide the parents resources and support, and to equip them to become effective partners in their student's education. The APS Title I Parent Involvement Council (PIC) at the school level and the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) at the district level are designed to facilitate organization of parents to accomplish the mandated parent participation in program planning.

NCLB requires school districts to conduct an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of their Title I parent involvement policy. School districts must include parents' input in the evaluation of their parent involvement policy.

RDA staff conducted a survey of the parents in Title I schools to get their input regarding parent involvement in their schools. This report provides analyses of the findings and makes recommendations to advance parent involvement in APS Title I schools.

Methods

Questionnaire

RDA distributed a Title I parent survey in the spring of 2006 to the parents of Title I students in 76 APS schools and one charter schoolⁱ that receive Title I funds. There are 56 elementary, 15 middle, 2 high, 3 alternative Title I schools. While all parents received the survey in 63 public and one charter schoolwide programs, only the parents of targeted students in the 13 targeted assistance schools received the survey. Of the 35,788 surveys sent out, RDA received 8,686 completed surveys back, a 24.3% return rate.

The Title I survey asked for parent input on a variety of topics. These topics included, but were not limited to: the opportunities to participate in the school and classroom activities at their child's school, parents' level of participation in their child's education, reasons for the lack of parental involvement, and suggestions for improving parent participation in the child's school. APS provided the questionnaire in both English and Spanish to ensure opportunity for the Spanish as well as English speakers to voice their opinions and ideas.

Organization of the Report

The report is organized in four main sections by school level or category: elementary, middle, alternative and charter. The report is set up to discuss three main themes: parents as partners, parents as volunteers, and strategies to increase parental involvement in their child's education. The elementary and middle school sections provide comparison of English and Spanish language responses.ⁱⁱ

1. Parents as Partners – Parents report on their participation in activities in school and at home to support their child’s education.
2. Parents as Volunteers – Parents report about their volunteering activity in their child’s school; they also share their reasons for not volunteering.
3. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement – Parents describe the barriers to participation in their child’s school and the strategies that would help them to attend school activities more often.

Strength and Limitations of the Study

The survey yielded a large number of responses (8,686) and a respectable response rate of 24.3% for a self-administered survey. A large response rate increases the chances that the Title I parent population of APS is well represented by those who responded to the survey. However, the results of any survey should be viewed with caution since the respondents may be systematically different from the population they are supposed to represent. For example, it is quite likely that the respondents are more involved than the overall Title I parent population, resulting in an overestimation of parent involvement rates. Only one of the two high schools returned a very small number of surveys with the response rate <4%. This report will not include the analysis of parent involvement in Title I high schools.

Results and Analysis

Respondent Language and Ethnicity - All Schools

Approximately 70 % of the returned surveys were from households with English as the primary language; about 30 % were from Spanish speaking households. About 63 % of the respondents were of Hispanic descent. As Table 1 indicates, the ethnicity of survey respondents’ children closely resembled the ethnic distribution in Title I schools, a further indication that the respondents represent the population of Title I parents.

Table 1 - Ethnicity as Reported by Respondents

	White	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	Other	No Response
Respondents	9.8%	2.1%	62.8%	4.3%	1.4%	7.6%	11.9%
All APS Title I Students	14.4%	3.8%	74.5%	5.8%	1.5%	0.0%	N\A
All APS Students	32.9%	3.9%	55.9%	5.0%	2.3%	0.1%	N\A

Response Rate

Of the 35,788 surveys sent out, RDA received 8,686 completed surveys back, a 24.3% return rate. Of all the surveys received, 78 % came from the elementary schools, while almost 19 % were from the middle schools. Less than 3% of the responses came from high, alternative and charter schools combined.

As Table 2 demonstrates, the response rates significantly differed across school levels or categories. The elementary and alternative school parents returned surveys at the largest rates - over 28% each. The response rate for all schools was 24.3%.

Table 2 - Response Rate by School Level or Category

Schools	Elementary	Middle	High	Alternative	Charter	All
Distributed	24,058	8,867	1,882	418	563	35,788
Received	6832	1644	61	119	30	8,686
Response Rate	28.4%	18.5%	3.2%	28.5%	5.7%	24.3%

Elementary Schools: Results and Analysis

The elementary school parents' responses comprised over four-fifths of all responses to the survey. The response rate for elementary schools was 28.4%. The elementary school findings are grouped into three sections and also presented by language.

Parents as Partners

Parents are considered partners in their student's education when they collaborate with the school to support their child's education. As Figure 1 reflects, almost all responding parents of Title I students spoke to their student's teacher about the student's progress. Most worked with the student at least once a week on reading, math at home and helped with the homework. The analysis of responses by language also revealed that the parents in the Spanish language group were far more likely to attend parent meetings compared to those in the English group (Figure 2).

Figure 1- ES Parent Participation in Educational Activities

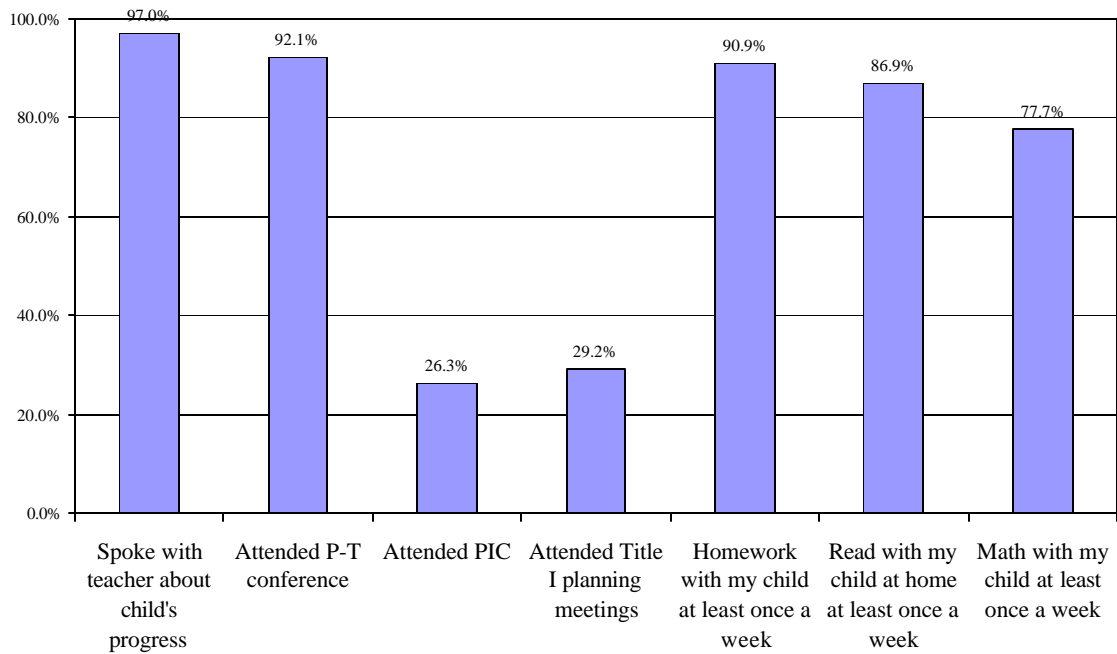
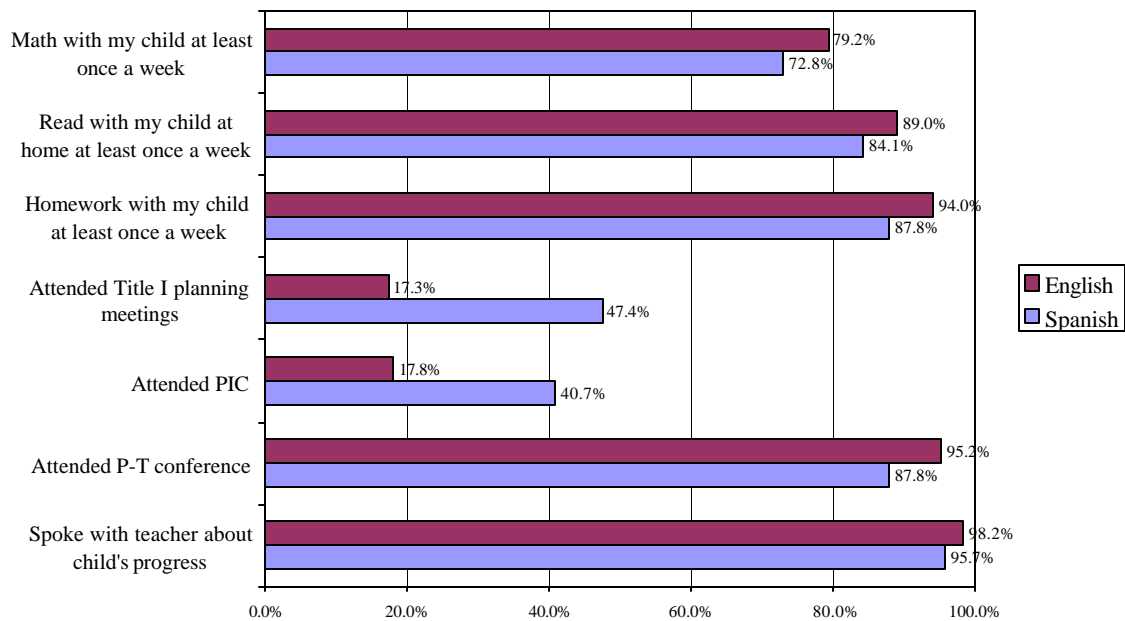


Figure 2 - ES Parent Participation in Educational Activities, by Response Language



The next four figures illustrate responses about parents' attitudes towards programs and their partnership with schools. While a majority of the parents expressed satisfaction with the Title I program and felt valued by their school as partners in their child's education, there was a systematic difference between the Spanish and English speakers (Figures 3 and 4). Although a larger proportion of Spanish speakers reported satisfaction with the Title I program compared to their English counterparts, the pattern reversed when asked whether they felt valued by the school. A greater proportion of English speakers (84.9%) felt valued by their schools as partners in their child's education compared to the Spanish speakers (73.4%). This may be a result of limited ability to communicate with the school on the part of the Spanish speaking parents and a limited ability of the school to communicate with parents. Schools may take measures to communicate to parents that they are valued by the schools for their partnership.

As Figure 5 shows, parents said that schools gave them opportunity to volunteer, communicate openly, and attend classes and workshops at the school. However, there was a systematic difference in responses; a greater proportion of English speaking as opposed to the Spanish speaking parents felt that their school offered them an opportunity to communicate or be part of the program planning decisions (Figure 6).

Figure 3 - ES Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

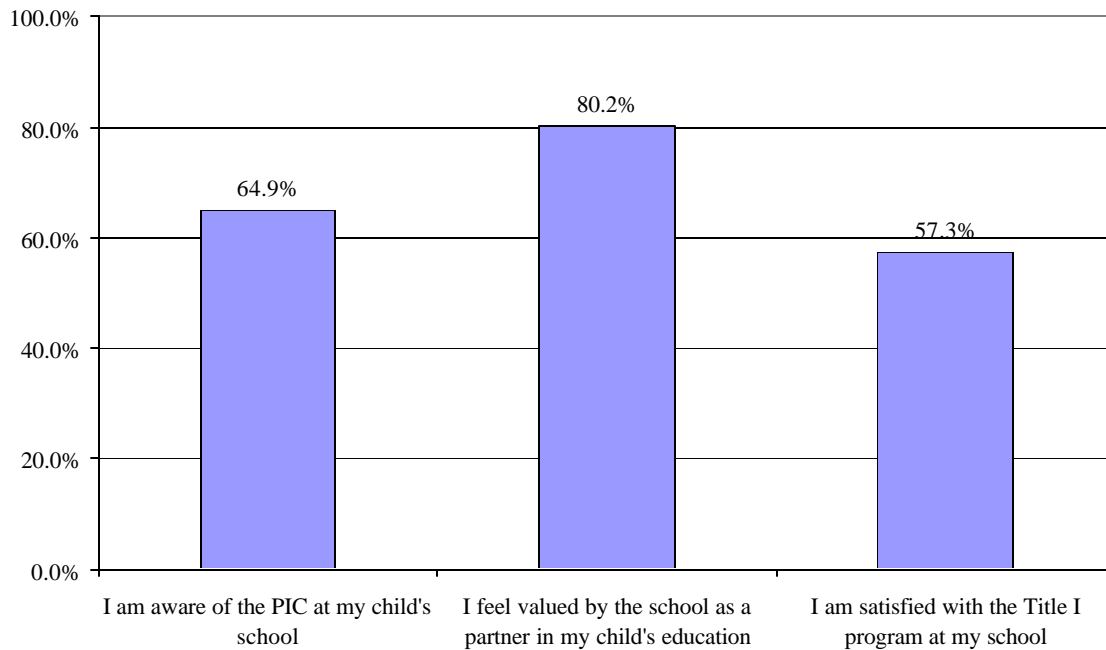


Figure 4 - ES Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements, by Response Language

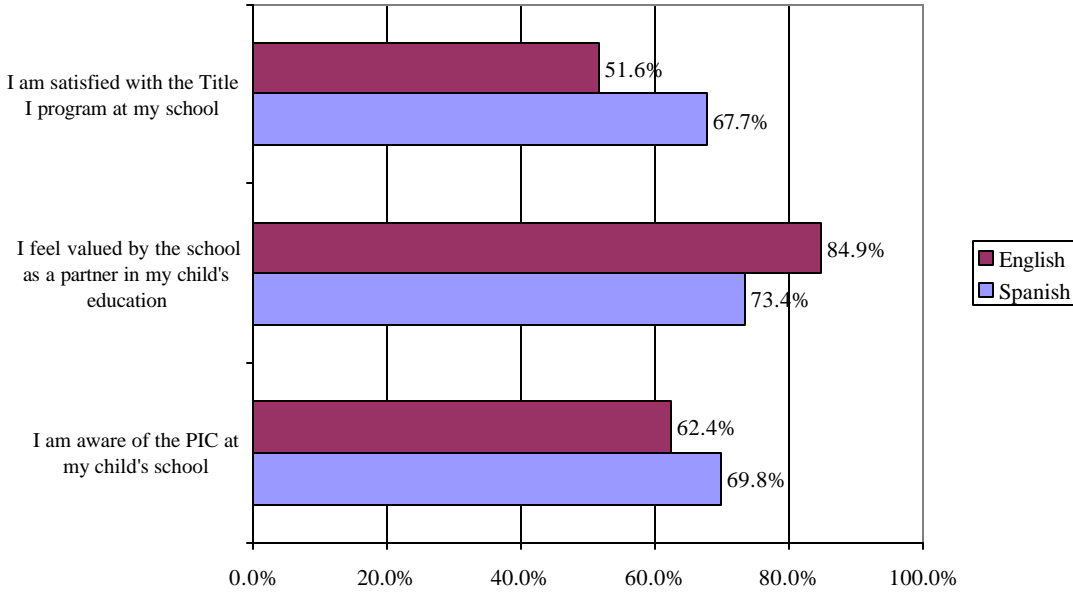


Figure 5- I Feel That My Child's Elementary School Gave Me an Opportunity to:

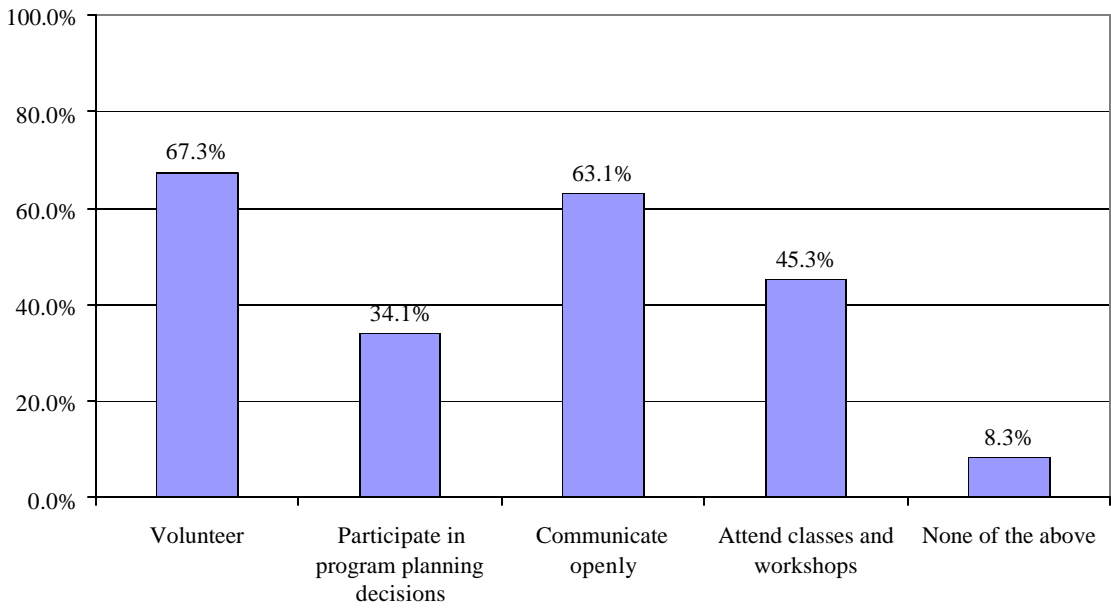
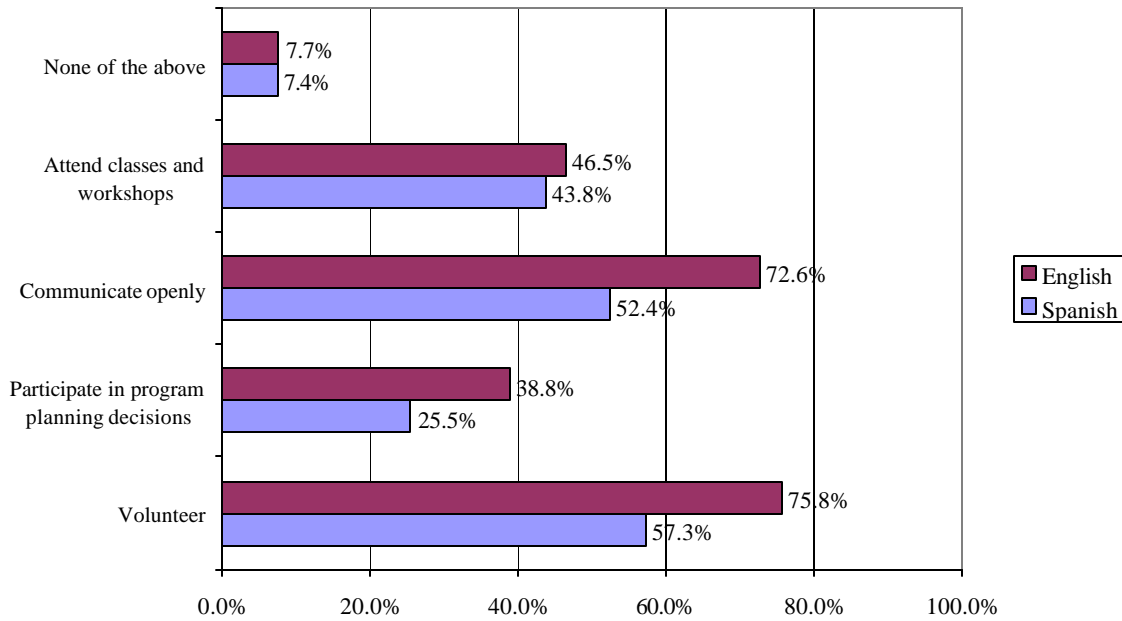


Figure 6 - I Feel That My Child's Elementary School Gave Me an Opportunity to, by Response Language



Parents as Volunteers

Parents reported they volunteered in many different areas and most volunteering occurred in the classrooms. Almost half the parents said they never volunteered. A slightly greater proportion of the English speaking parents volunteered compared to their Spanish counterparts. (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 7 - ES Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

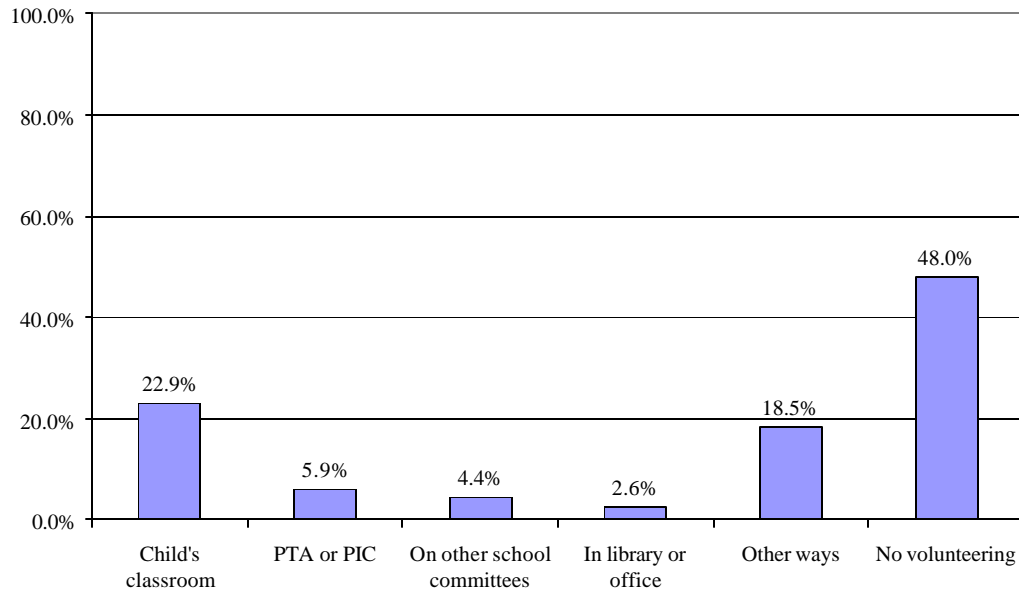
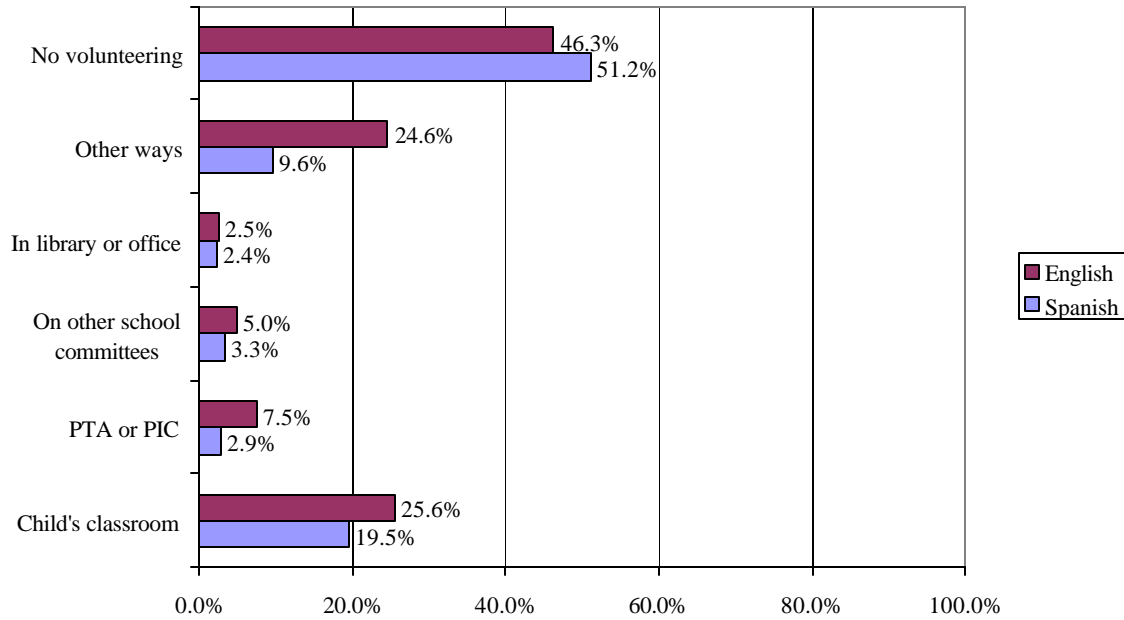


Figure 8 - ES Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for, by Response Language



Reasons for not volunteering. Full-time work was the most common reason for not volunteering (Figure 9). For a small proportion, a lack of childcare for their preschool age children created a barrier to freely get involved in the school. To be sure, the Spanish and English speakers reported slightly different challenges. The Spanish speakers more often reported the problem with childcare whereas a greater proportion of English speakers said a full-time job was the reason for their inability to volunteer (Figure 10). Since almost a fourth of Spanish speaking parents said the presence of young children becomes an impediment to parent engagement in schools, school administrators may look into removing this barrier by providing childcare at the school to facilitate their participation. This may be a useful investment as this also will prepare families to support the education also of younger children who will become students in the school within a few years.

Figure 9 - ES Parents Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings

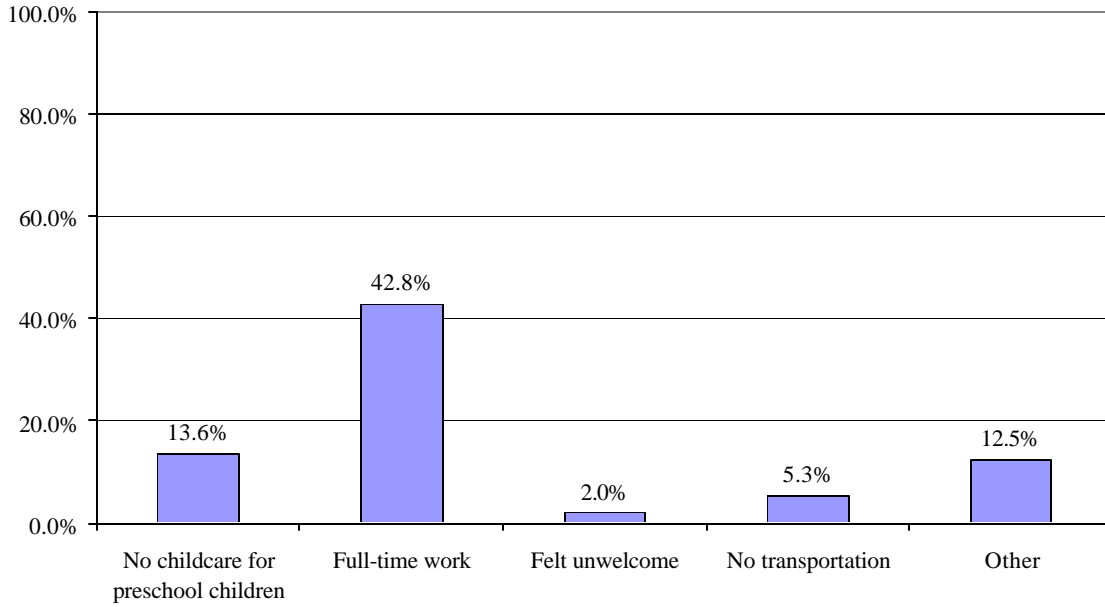
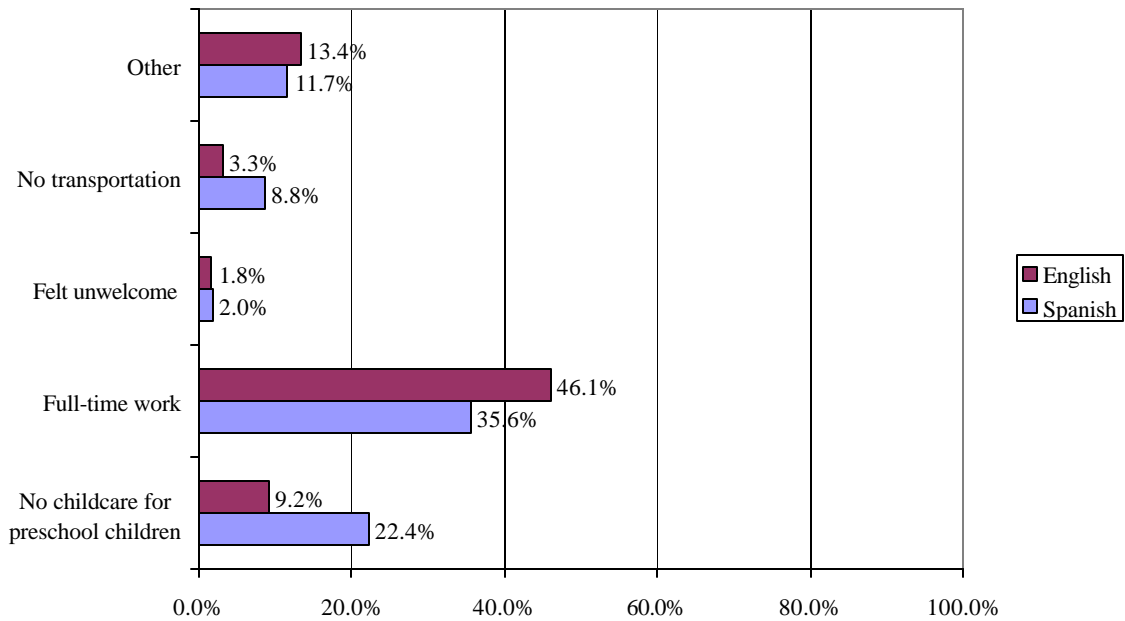


Figure 10 - ES Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings, by Response Language



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The survey invited the parents to indicate which events and activities they would most likely attend at their student's school and strategies to remove some of the barriers to parental involvement in schools. Parents said they were most likely to attend parent-child activities, parent education, field trips, and student performances at their schools. A small proportion said that they needed transportation and about 19% said that telephone reminders to the meetings would be helpful. The Spanish speaking respondents reported that workshops offered in Spanish and availability of childcare would promote their involvement in their child's school (Figure 12).

Figure 11 - ES Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:

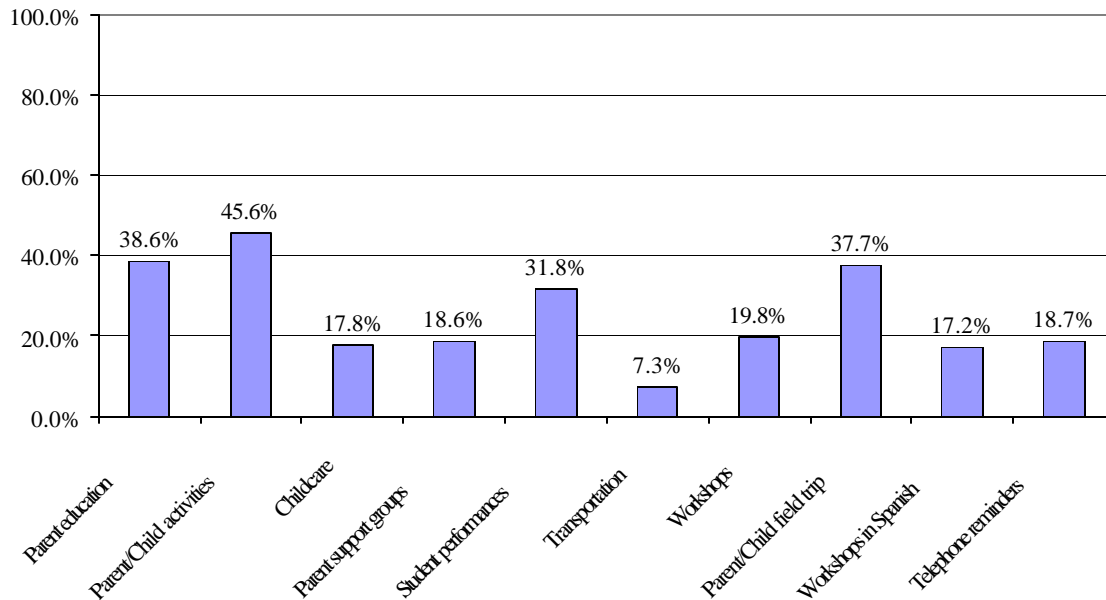
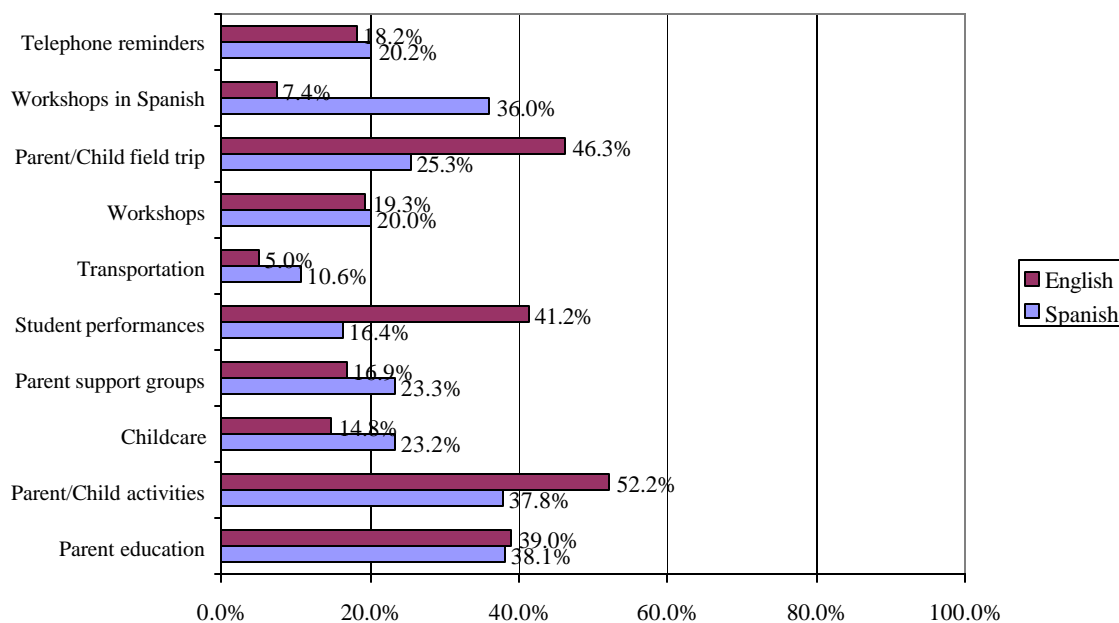


Figure 12 - ES Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Meetings That Offer, by Response Language



Middle Schools: Results and Analysis

Approximately 8,867 families of the middle school Title I students received the parent involvement survey. About 19% of the middle school families returned completed questionnaires, a rate significantly lower than that of the elementary school parents.

Parents of the middle school students demonstrated limited involvement in various school or classroom activities. Educational research shows that middle school students do better if their parents are involved in their schooling.ⁱⁱⁱ Greater parental involvement may prove to be an important strategy to improve student performance. Middle school administrators may choose to focus on improving parental involvement.

Parents as Partners

A majority of the parents helped their student with homework and spoke to their teachers about the student's progress (Figure 13). Less than half the middle school parents did reading or math with their children, a rate considerably lower than that of their elementary school counterparts.

A comparison of the responses based on language revealed that more Spanish than English speakers were involved in the educational process, and especially in Title I activities (Figure 14). They reported attending Title I and PIC meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and helping their student with the homework at a greater rate than the

English speakers. A greater proportion of English speaking parents reported doing math with their student at least once a week.

Figure 13 - MS Parent Participation in School Activities

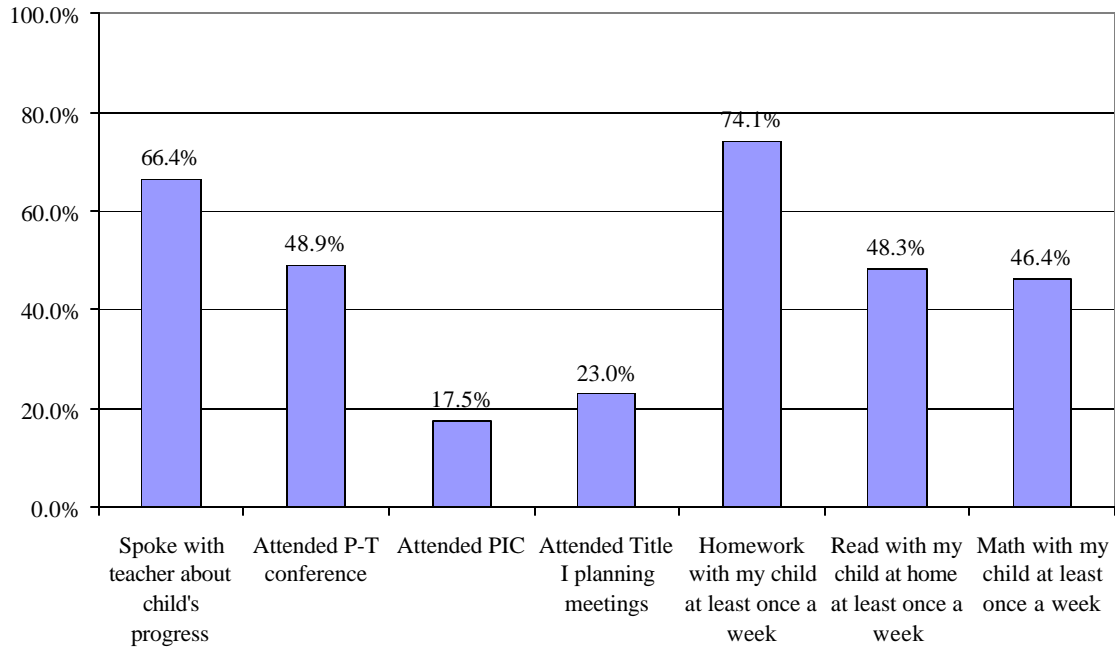
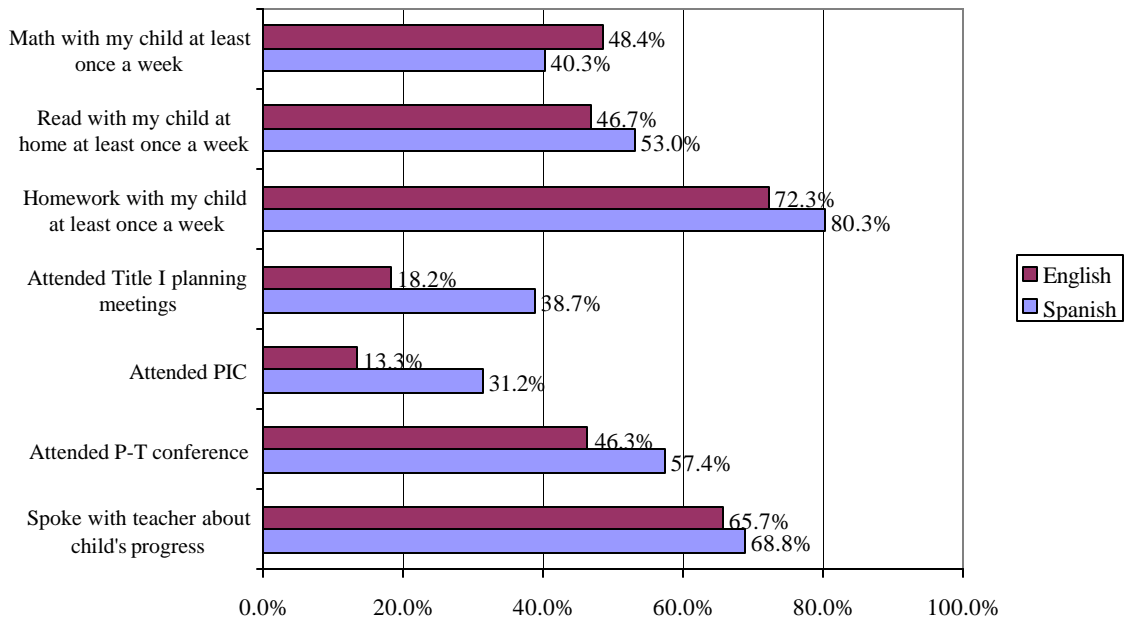


Figure 14 - MS Parents Involvement in School Activities, by Response Language



Parents expressed positive feelings regarding their partnership with school. As Figure 15 indicates, about half the middle school parents reported satisfaction with their Title I program and three-fourths said they felt valued by their school as partners in their children's education. Clearly, Spanish speaking households seemed more aware and positive about the programs at the schools (Figure 16). However, it is noteworthy that fewer Spanish speakers felt valued as partners by their school compared to the English speaking parents. School administrators perhaps need to make a stronger attempt to communicate to the Spanish speaking parents that they are valued as partners in their child's education.

About 40% of the parents said their school offered them an opportunity to communicate openly (Figure 17). A smaller proportion said the school offered opportunities to volunteer, attend classes and workshops, or participate in decision making. A third of the parents did not think the school provided opportunities to get involved in school. This is a message for the middle school administrators to clearly communicate to parents the opportunities offered to get involved in school's educational activities.

Figure 15 - MS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

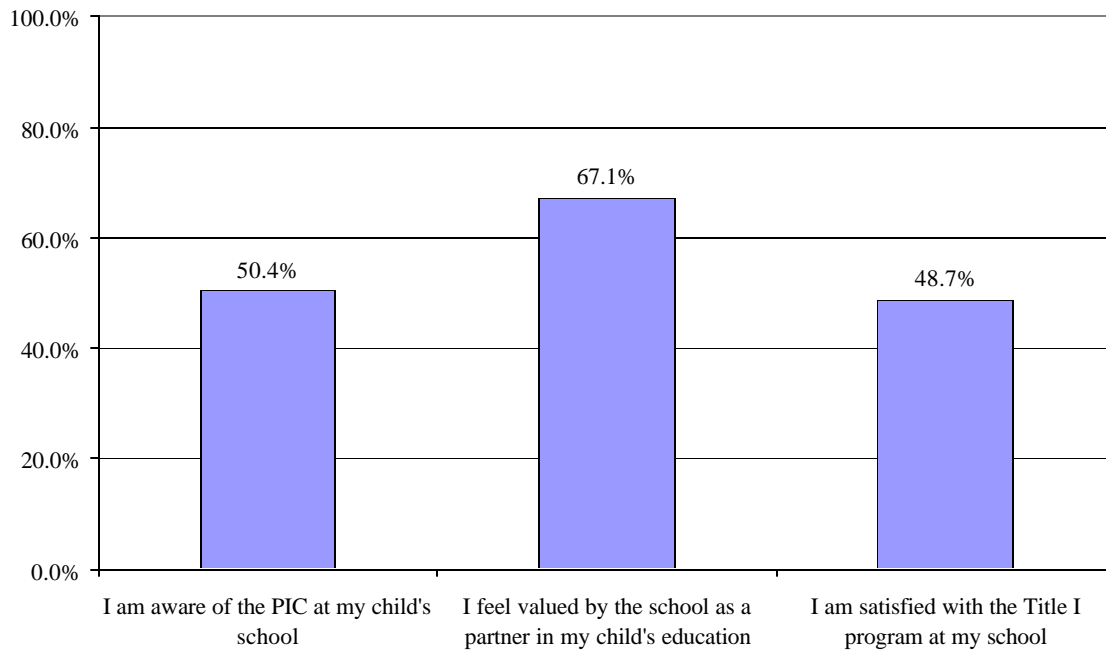


Figure 16 - MS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statement, by Response Language

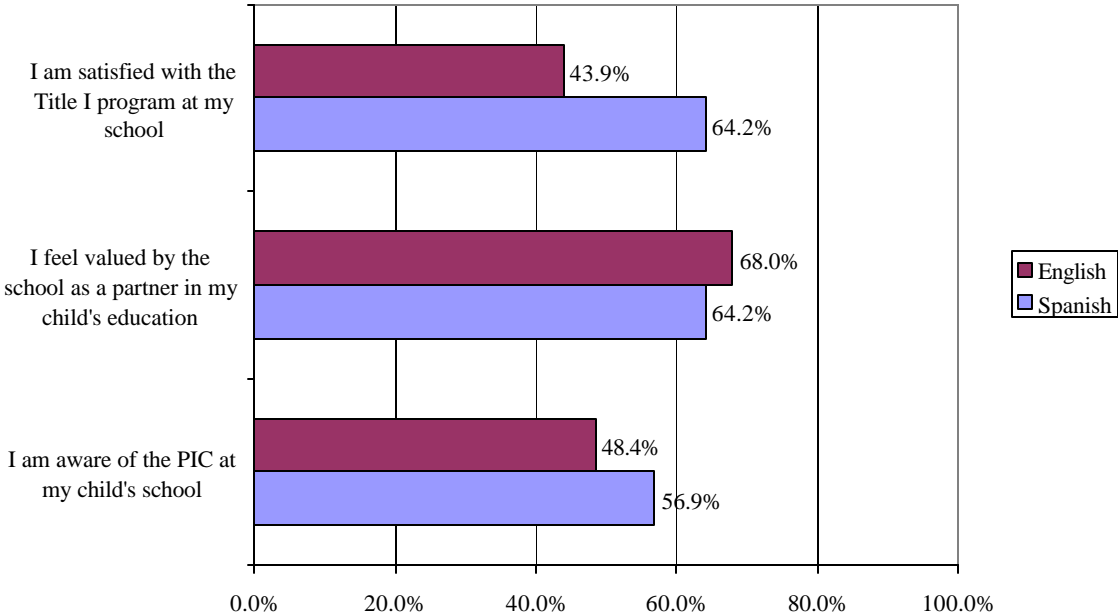


Figure 17 - I Feel That My Child's Middle Schools Gave Me an Opportunity to:

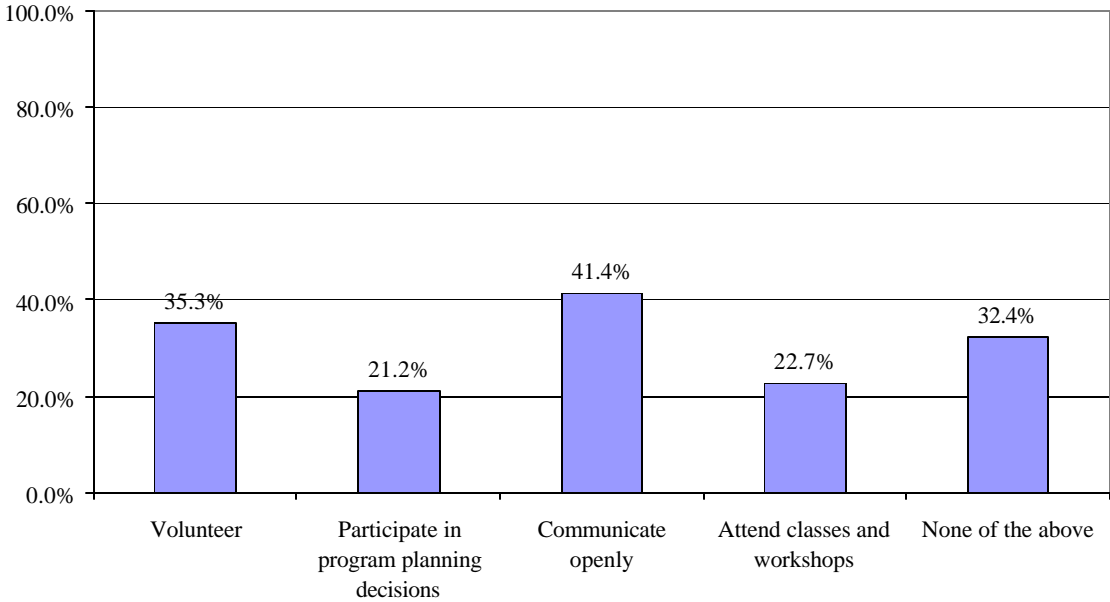
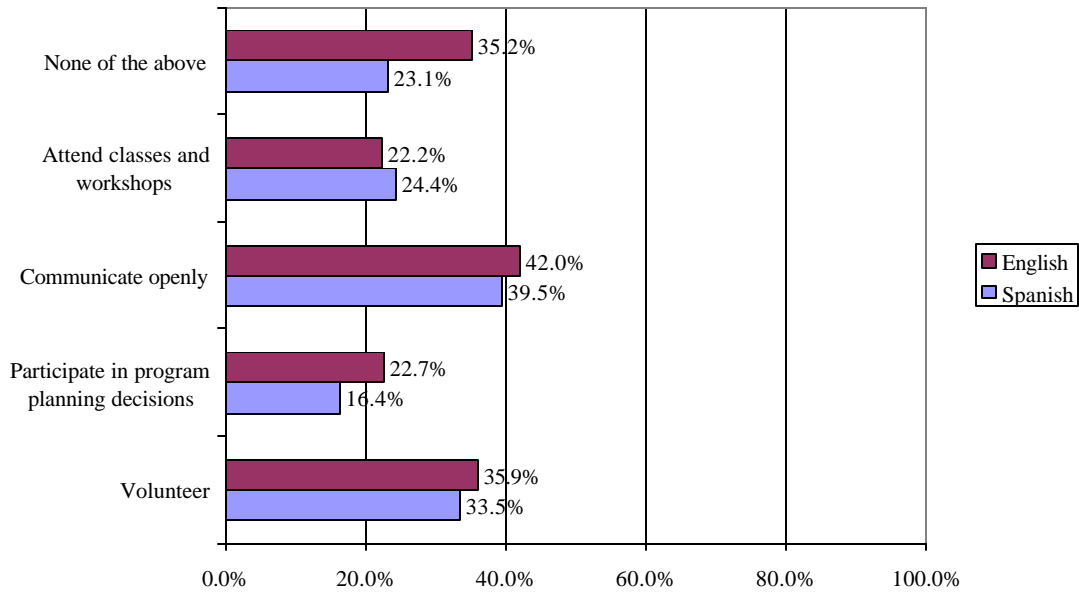


Figure 18 - I Feel That My Child's Middle School Gave Me an Opportunity to, by Response Language



Parents as Volunteers

Parent volunteering seemed greatly diminished in the middle schools in comparison with the elementary schools. For example, while three-fourths of the respondents at the middle schools never volunteered at their school, a much smaller proportion - less than half - in elementary schools said they never volunteered.

APS as well as school-based administrators may focus their energies on improving parent volunteering at the middle school level

Figure 19 - MS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

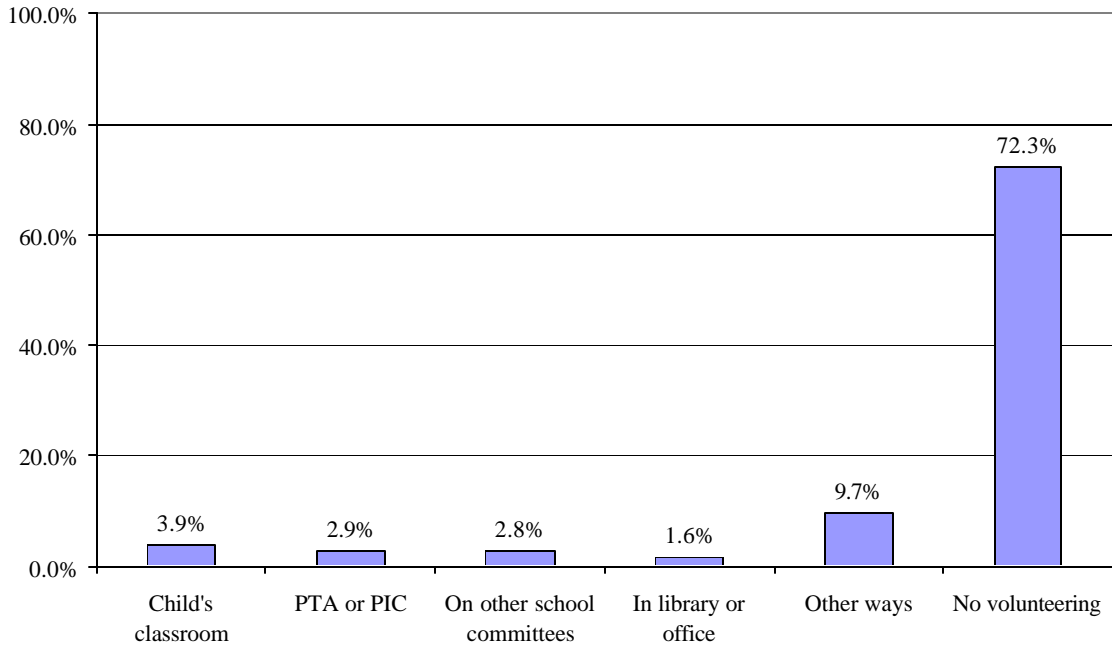
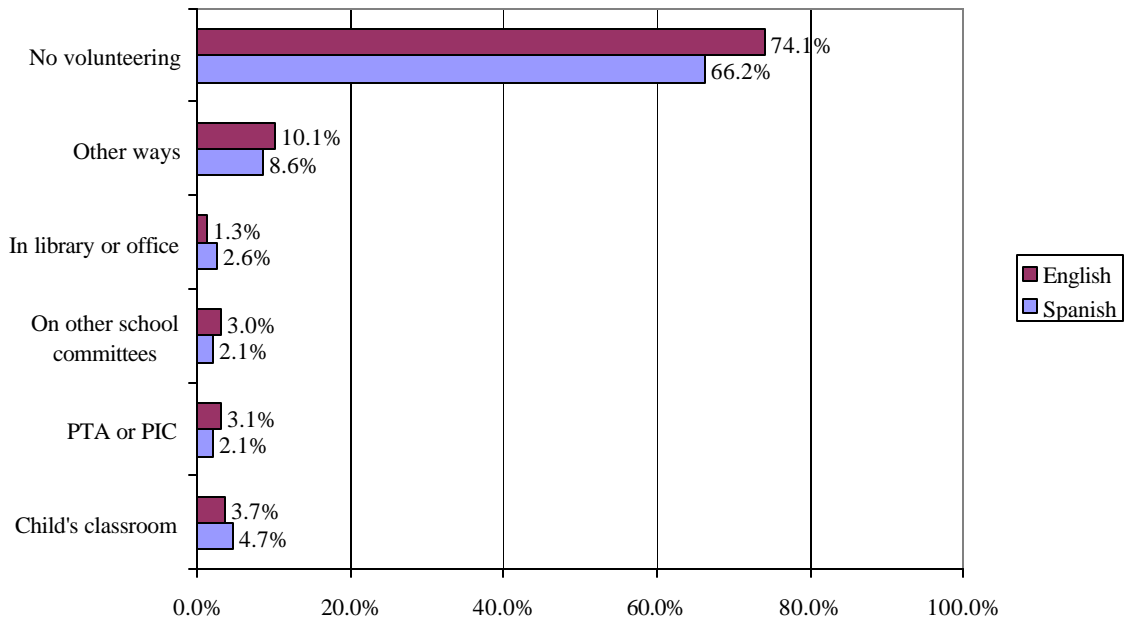


Figure 20 - MS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for, by Response Language



Reasons for not volunteering. Full-time work was the most quoted reason for not volunteering in the school. A greater proportion of Spanish speaking parents compared to the English ones reported that a lack of childcare for the young children at home was a major barrier to participating in their school, a theme that resonated in overall parent responses.

Repeating the pattern of difference found in this survey, proportionately more English speaking parents compared to the Spanish ones said that full-time work was the reason they did not volunteer. On the other hand, a higher percentage of Spanish speakers as opposed to the English ones said that a lack childcare for younger children prevented them from volunteering at their school.

Figure 21 - MS Parents Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings

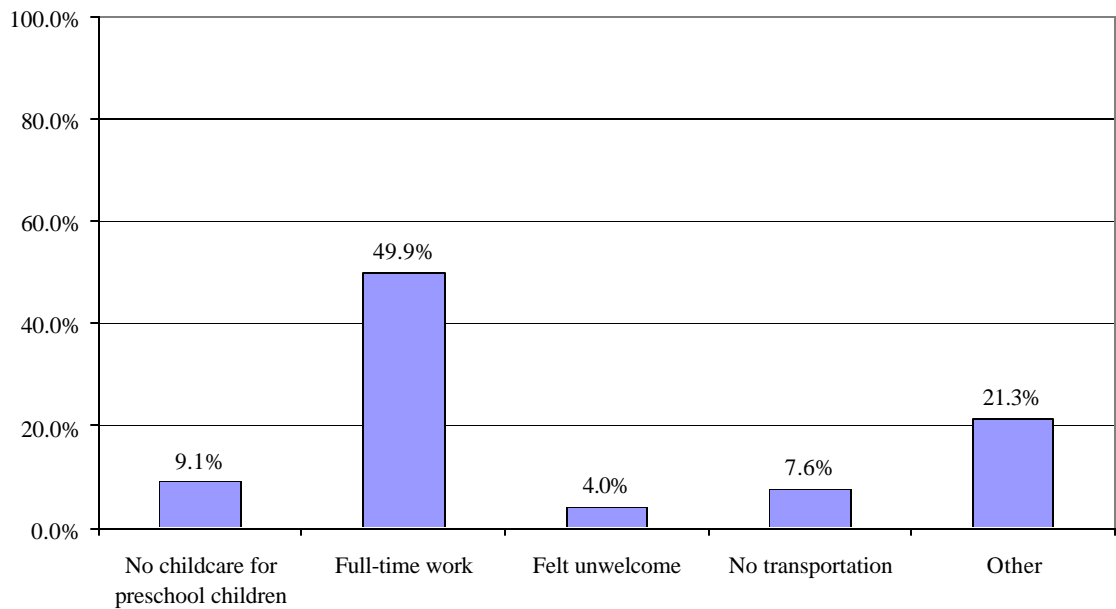
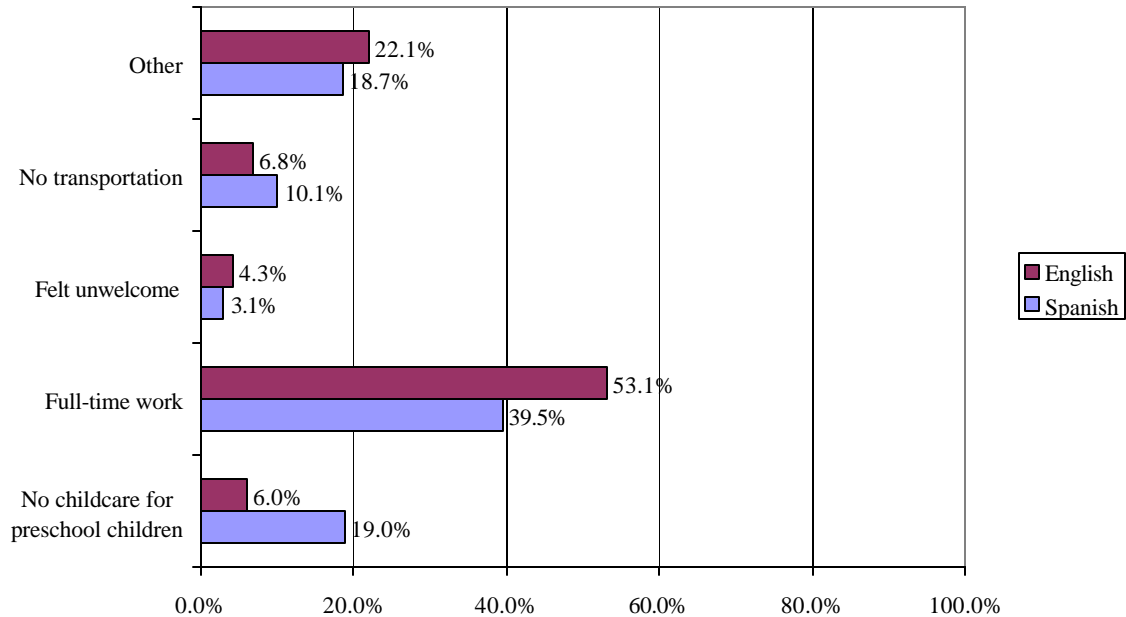


Figure 22 - MS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings, by Response Language



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

A small proportion, about a third of the middle school parents, was interested in the activities offered by their schools, such as parent-child activities and field trips, student performances, and parent education. While more English speakers were interested in student performances, the Spanish speaking parents opted for workshops in Spanish and parent support groups (Figure 24). Middle school administrators may consider exploring the disparate interests and needs of the Spanish and English language families and devise measures accordingly to meet their expectations.

Figure 23 - MS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:

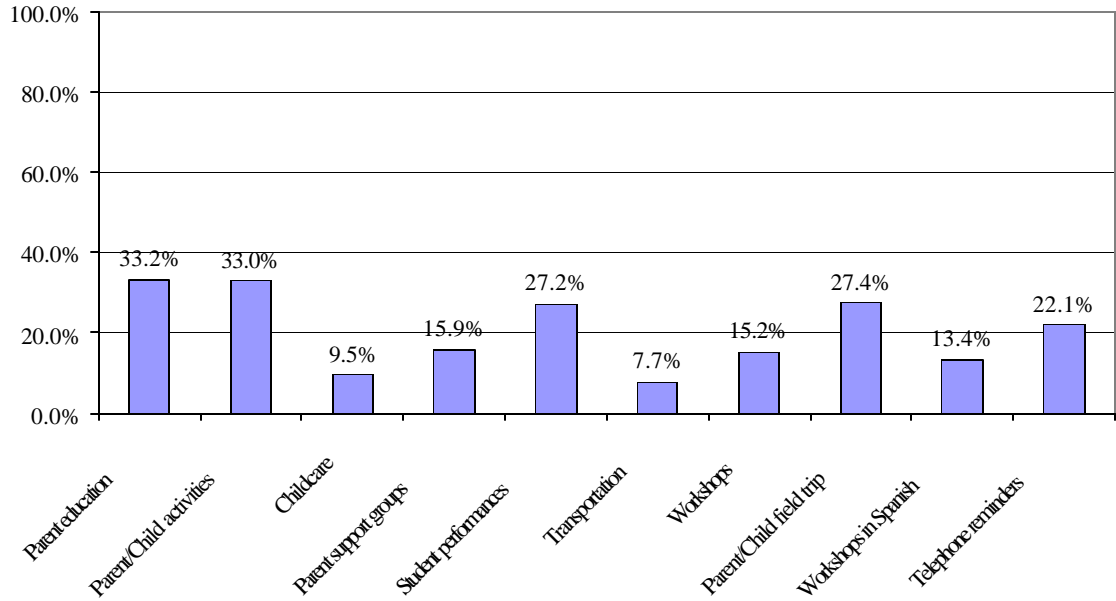
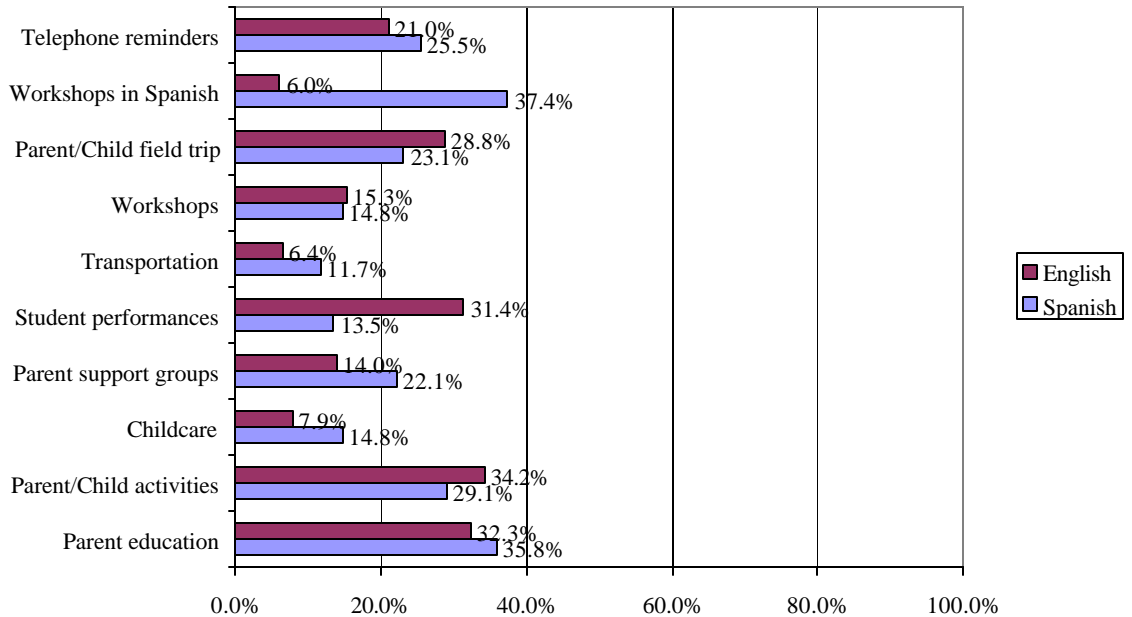


Figure 24 - MS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer, by Response Language



Alternative Schools: Results and Analysis

There are three Title I alternative schools in APS and their families face special challenges in educating their students. The alternative schools had the strongest rate of return (28.5%) across the different school levels and categories (see Table 2, p.3). The following analysis does not discuss results by language because of the small number of responses in Spanish language.

Parents as Partners

The alternative schools represented high and/or middle school grade levels. Parent involvement in the alternative schools was quite encouraging, especially when considered in the context of the widely observed decline in parental involvement at upper grade levels. Over half of the parents reported involvement in educational activities such as speaking to the teacher about their student's progress, attending parent-teacher conferences, and helping with homework (Figure 25). A smaller proportion said they read with their student and did math at least once a week. Perhaps the teachers could communicate a higher expectation of parental support of the student's work at home.

Over half the parents in alternative schools were satisfied with their Title I program and three-fourths felt valued by their school as a partner in their child's education (Figure 26). While parents reported that they felt the school gave them an opportunity to volunteer, communicate openly or otherwise get involved in the educational process at the school, about 40% were not aware of such opportunities at school (Figure 27). Schools may improve communication with the parents to ensure them better access to their school.

Figure 25 - AS Parent Participation in Educational Activities

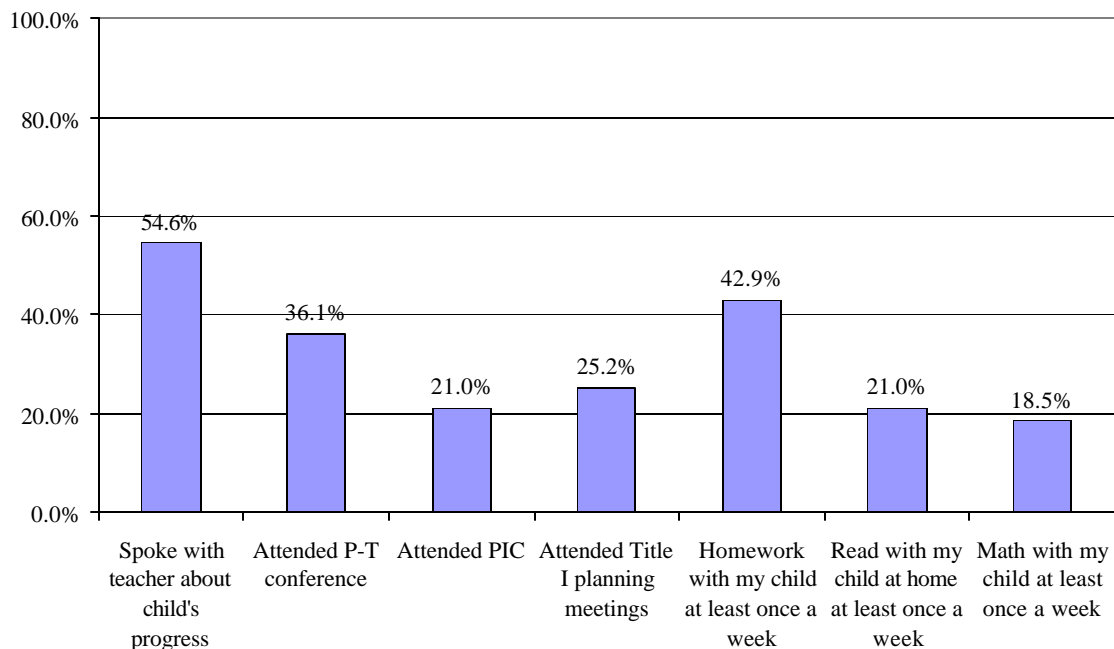


Figure 26 - AS Parent Agreement with Attitude Statements

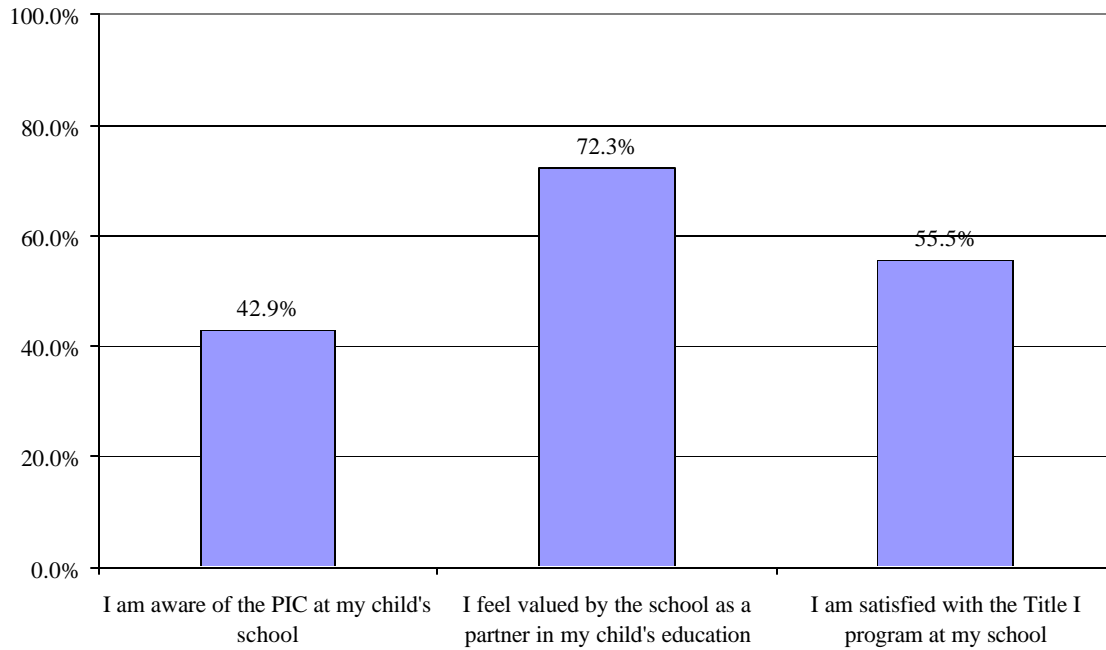
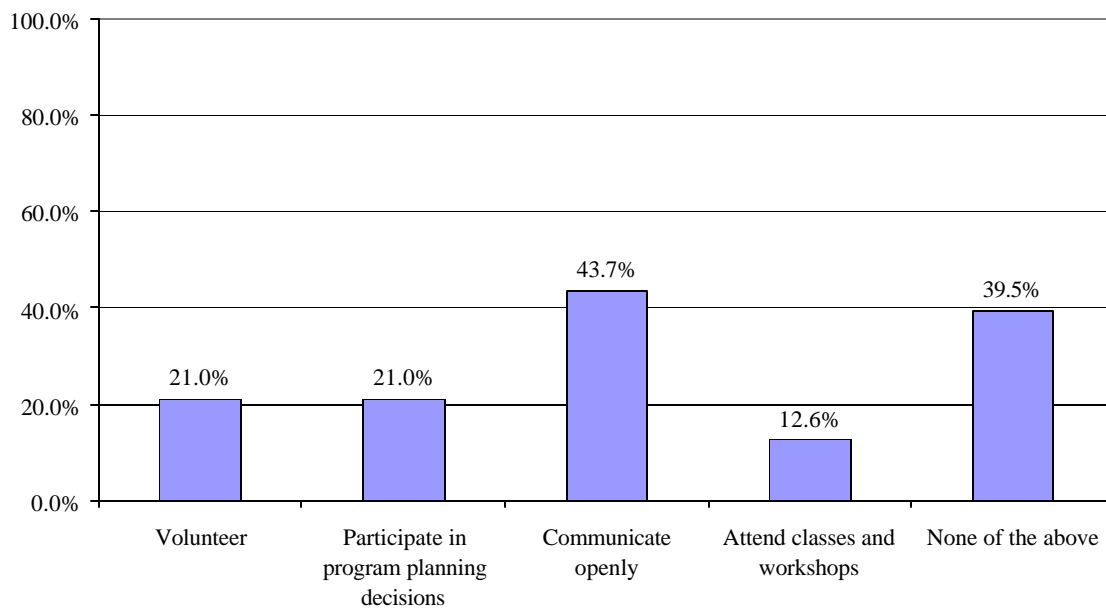


Figure 27 - I Feel That My Child's Alternative School Gave Me an Opportunity to:



Parents as Volunteers

There was very limited parent volunteering in alternative schools, indicating an area of potential growth for the schools. Full-time work was the most common barrier that limited volunteering.

Figure 28 - AS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

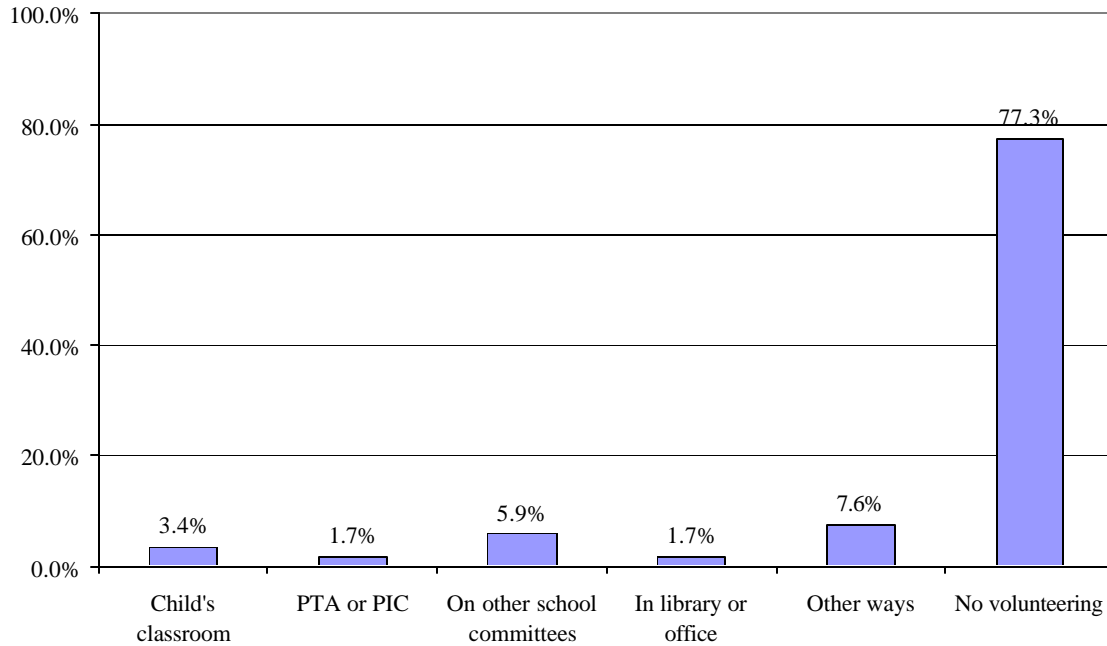
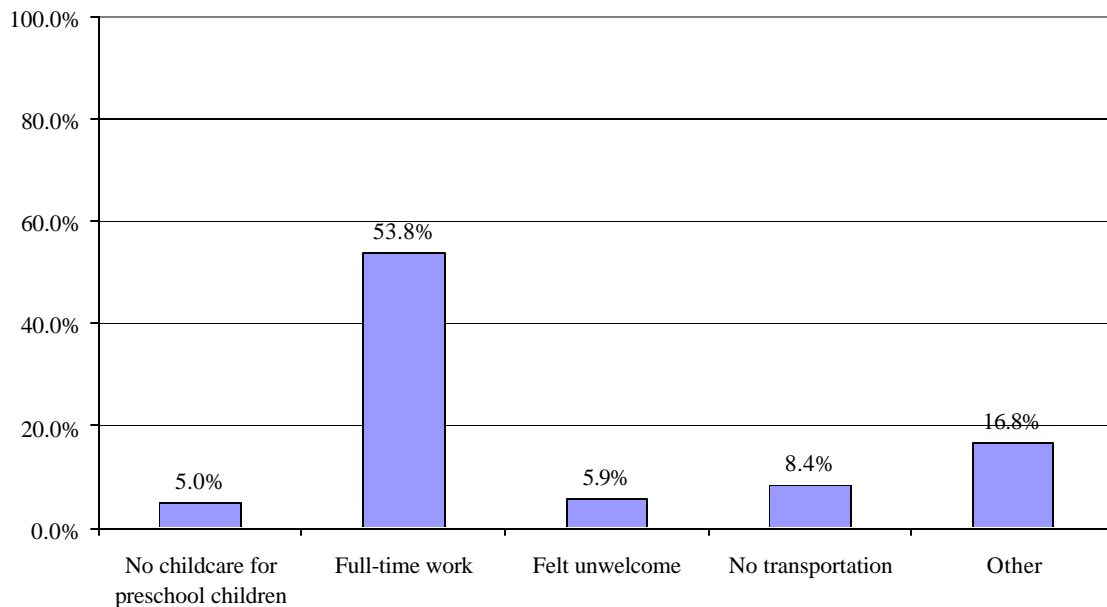


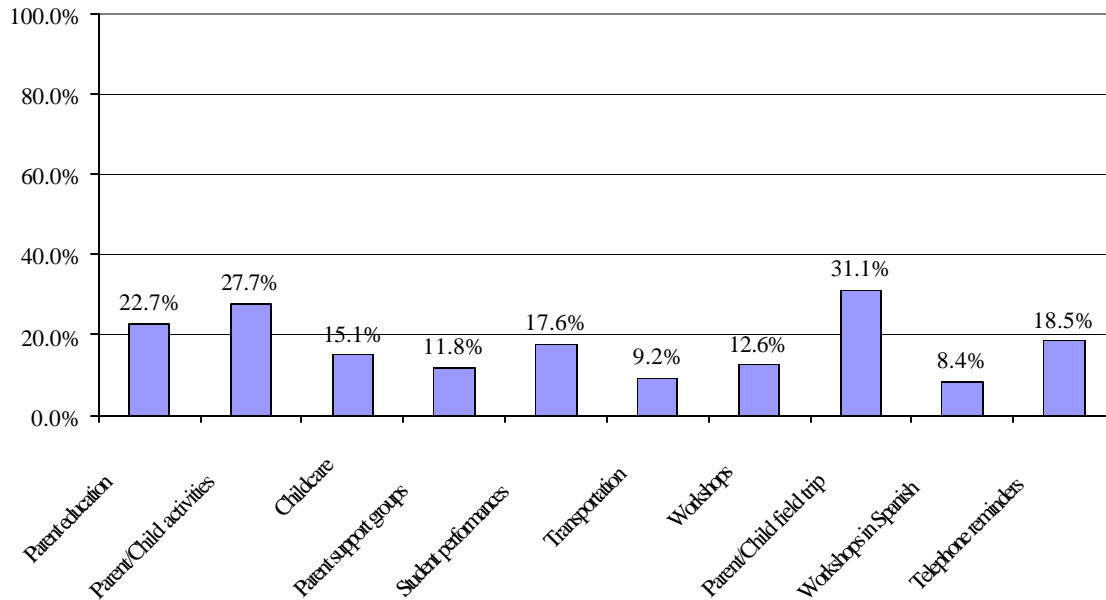
Figure 29 - AS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The alternative school parents were only marginally interested participating in school activities. As Figure 30 shows, less than a third of the parents said they were interested in parent-child activities and field trips. In a striking parallel with other APS parents, the alternative school parents suggested telephone reminders and childcare provision as strategies to improve their odds of attending school meetings and activities.

Figure 30 - AS Parent Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:



Charter School: Results and Analysis

There were 13 Title I charter schools in Albuquerque in the 2005-2006 school year. In Spring 2006, RDA staff contacted all Title I charter schools by phone to understand their parents involvement programs. RDA included one charter school in this Title I parent survey because the school administrators reported a rich parent involvement program at their school. RDA distributed the survey to the families of 588 students enrolled at the school. Although the rate of return for the survey was low - just under 6% - the results of the survey are included in this report as an example of the charter school component of the APS Title I program. Because of the small number of returned surveys (30), the report will present all parents and not analyze differences based on the response language. The results should be viewed with caution because the respondents may not truly be representative of the entire population of parents at the given charter school.

Parents as Partners

This was an elementary charter school and parents exhibited a high level of engagement in their child’s education. All of the respondents spoke to the teacher about their student’s progress and attended parent-teacher conferences. Almost all of them helped their student with the homework and two-thirds of them read as well as did math with their student (Figure 31). A majority of the parents showed awareness of school programs and felt valued by their school as partners in the ir student’s education (Figure 32).

Reflecting their satisfaction with their school, most parents said their school provided them an opportunity to volunteer and communicate openly. Almost two-thirds said they had an opportunity to attend workshops at their school (Figure 33).

Figure 31 - CS Parent Participation in Educational Activities

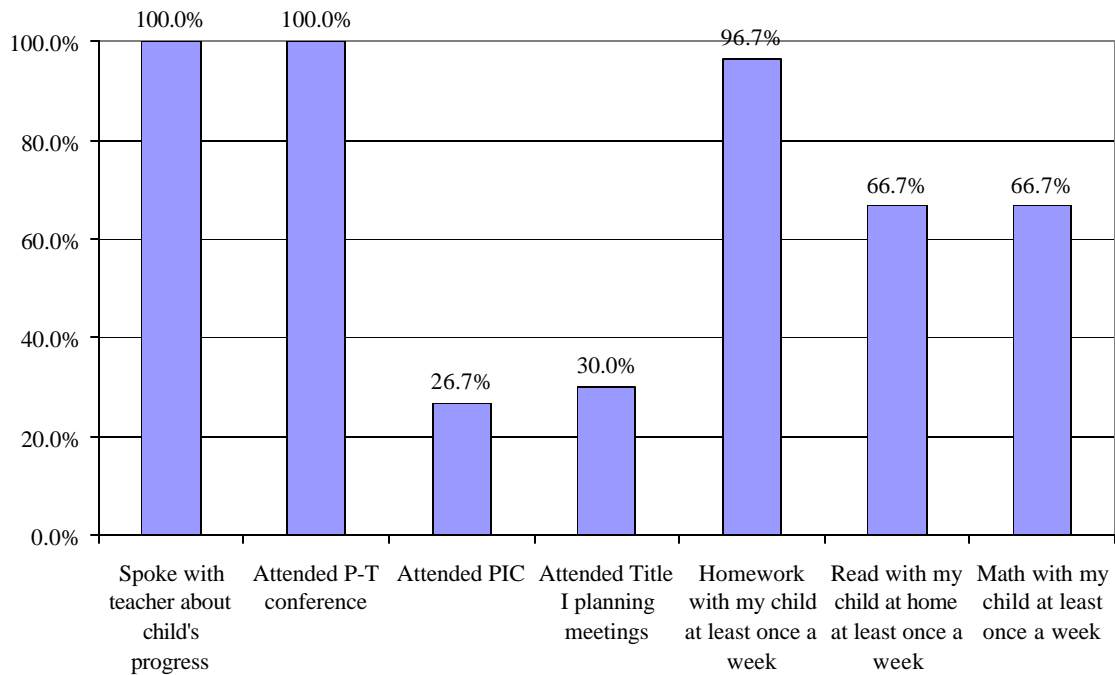


Figure 32 - CS Parents Ageement with Attitude Statements

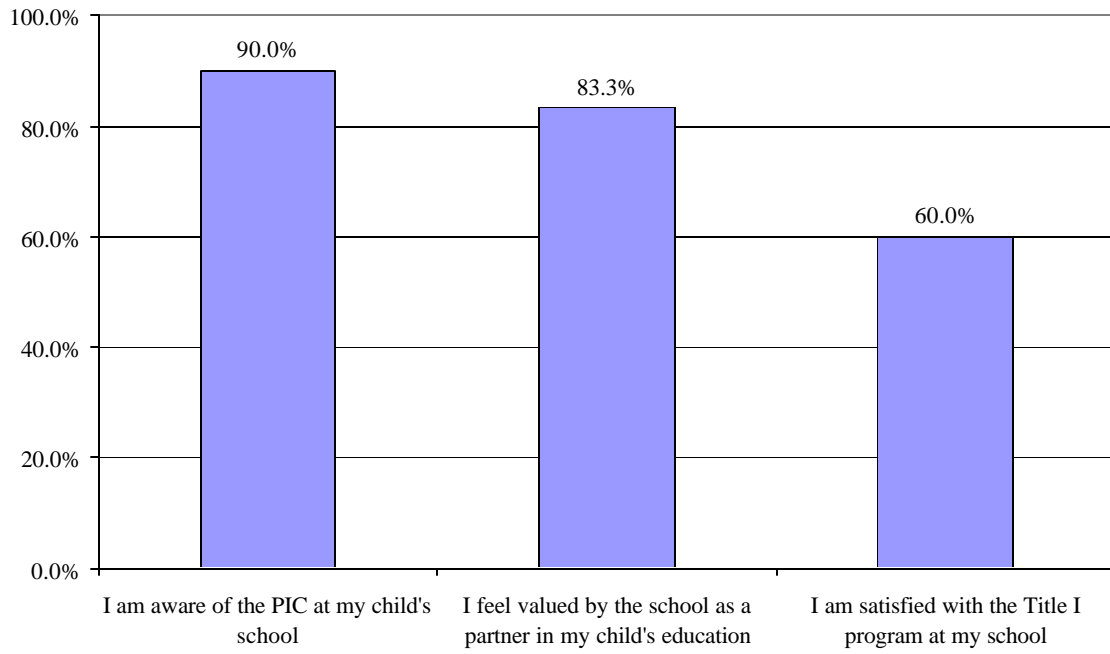
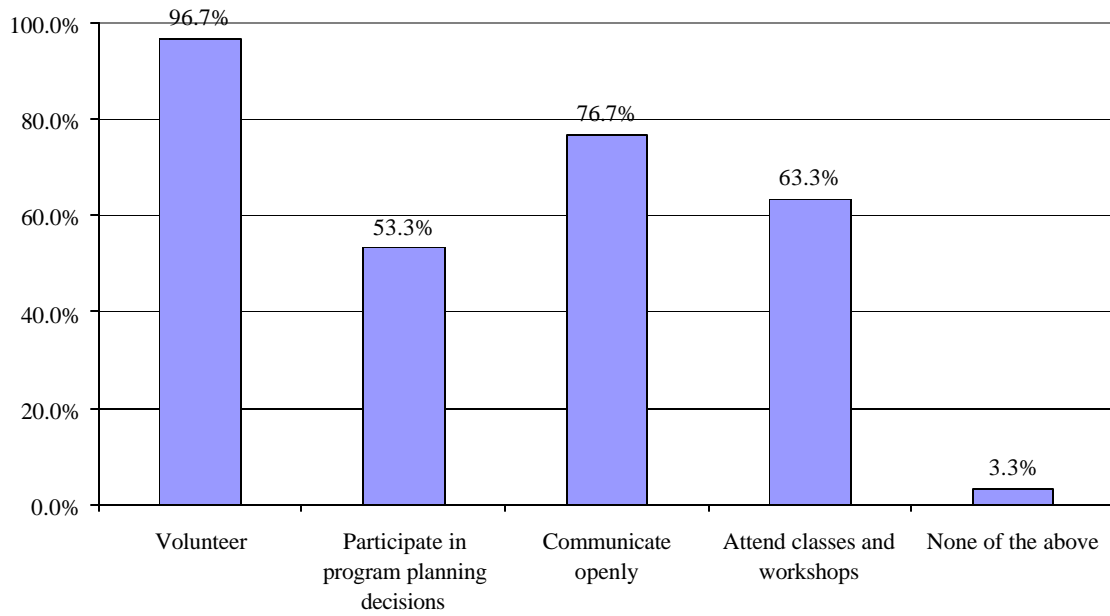


Figure 33 - I Feel That My Child's Charter School Game Me an Opportunity to:



Parents as volunteers

At least a third of the parents volunteered in some way although most volunteered in their child’s classroom. When asked for the reasons for not volunteering, echoing APS elementary parents, charter school parents reported full-time work as a barrier. A lack of childcare for younger siblings was a problem for some parents.

Figure 34 - CS Parents Report Activities They Volunteer for:

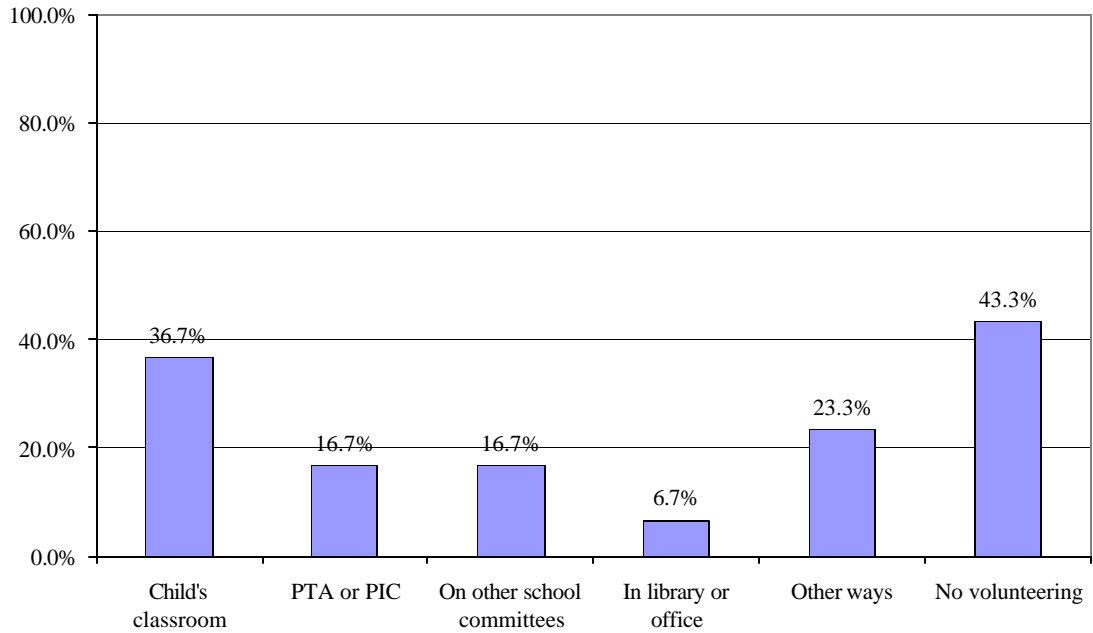
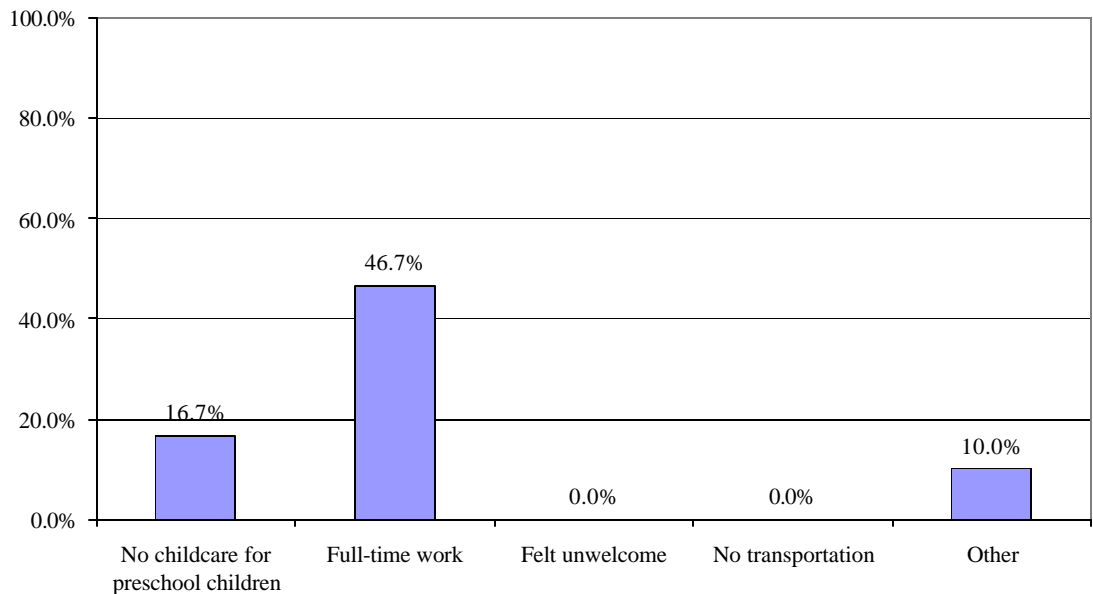


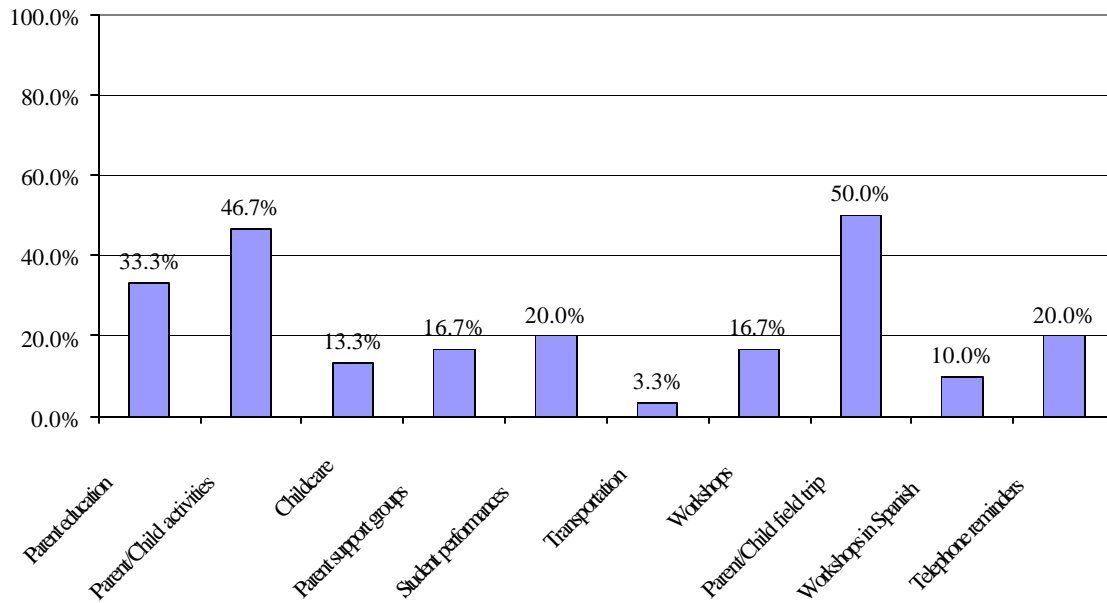
Figure 35 - CS Parents' Reasons for not Volunteering or Attending Meetings



Strategies to Increase Parent Involvement

The survey questionnaire explored the types of activities parents would like to attend and some helpful strategies to get the parents to participate in activities. Parents in the given charter school favored parent-child activities, field trips and parent education analogous to the APS elementary school parents. Telephone reminders and childcare during the school activities were strategies deemed helpful by the parents.

Figure 36 - CS Parents Would Most Likely Attend Parent Involvement Activities That Offer:



Conclusions

Parents of elementary school students are more involved in their student's schooling compared to their counterparts in middle and alternatives schools.

- Parents speak to the teacher about their student's progress. They help their student with homework and work with the student's math and reading at least once a week.
- Parents volunteer in school and classroom activities.
- Parents attend Parent Involvement Council (PIC) meetings, other parent organization meetings, Title I meetings, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Parents feel valued by their student's school as partners in their child's education.
- Parents are interested in the opportunities offered to them to come to school, such as parent-child activities, field trips, student performances, and educational activities for parents. They would like telephone reminders for meetings.

Parent involvement in schools declines at the middle-school level.

- While parents support homework at home, they are less likely to volunteer or attend PIC or Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) meetings.
- A smaller proportion of middle school parents compared to the elementary school parents feel that they are valued by their school as partners in their student's education or that their school gives them an opportunity to volunteer, to participate in program planning decisions, or to attend classes or workshops.
- A smaller proportion support homework at home or volunteer at the school compared to the parents in regular middle schools.

Analyses of parent responses by language reveal some systematic differences between Spanish and English language respondents' attitudes and involvement in their student's education.

- While proportionately more Spanish speaking parents report attending Title I planning and PIC meetings in elementary schools, a greater proportion of English speaking parents feel valued, volunteer, or engage in other school activities.
- In middle schools, more Spanish speaking parents say they support homework, speak to the teacher about their child's progress, and attend Title I meetings.
- Spanish speakers prefer workshops offered in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare for their younger children to allow them to engage in the school activities.

Barriers to parent involvement:

- Parents across all school levels and categories say that full-time work is the most significant barrier to their involvement in school activities.
- A small proportion of parents say a lack of childcare prohibits them from taking part in school activities.

Recommendations

Research on parent involvement indicates that involvement is most effective when parents are involved in student learning. However, parent engagement in and support of a wide range of school activities produce impressive results for students and their schools.

Schools can establish clear expectations about parent support for reading, math, and homework in general, ensuring involvement of those parents who work or otherwise not able to come to school. The following recommendations suggest a few new strategies, or measures to intensify the existing ones, to enhance parent involvement in APS schools.

- Schools may use a variety of methods, such as newsletters, parent networks, student performances, curriculum nights, and phone calls, to convey a clear message that parents are important partners and their support for their student's education is necessary and expected.
- Schools might consider expanding efforts to increase parent volunteering in classrooms, on committees, or to support school events, especially in the middle and alternative schools.
- Secondary schools need to make a stronger attempt to increase parental support for students' academic work at home.
- Schools may look into strategies to overcome language barriers and improve Spanish speaking parents' volunteering and engagement in school activities.
- Schools may continue to offer the services that parents need, such as parent education, workshops in Spanish, parent support groups, and childcare when parents attend school activities. Provision of childcare may be a useful investment as this will prepare families to support education also of younger children who will become students within a few years.
- Schools may continue to offer parent-child activities and student performances. As parents like to attend these activities, schools should use such opportunities to improve parents' familiarity with their student's educational process.

ⁱ RDA conducted an informal survey of Title I charter schools to investigate the parent program in each school, and then picked a school with many parent program components in place to survey the parents. It is deemed unproductive to survey parents about the parent program if there is little evidence that a parent program exists in that school.

ⁱⁱ The number of Spanish language responses in alternative and charter school was too low to warrant a meaningful comparison between the responses returned by English and Spanish speakers in the survey.

ⁱⁱⁱ Parent Involvement in Education School Improvement Research Series (SIRS). Kathleen Cotton and Karen Reed Wikelund. <http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/cu6.html>