

Sierra Vista Elementary School Staff and Parent Surveys
Washoe County School District Parent Involvement Council
Evaluation Brief July 2008



Background

To learn more about how to strengthen partnerships between the district, individual schools, and parents, the Washoe County School District's (WCSD) Parent Involvement Council (PIC) conducted a district-wide needs assessment. The PIC is comprised of parents, school district administrative, certified and classified employees, and business representatives. The needs assessment included three components: an online administrator survey, an online teacher and staff survey, and a parent survey administered through the mail. Since only one staff member from Sierra Vista took the survey, no staff results are included in this report. This evaluation brief will highlight the results from Sierra Vista Elementary School's parent survey only. Throughout the brief, percentages reported are based on the number of respondents who answered the item, which may be less than the total number of survey respondents.

6 Standards of Parent Involvement

Communication	Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
Parenting	Parenting skills are promoted and supported.
Student Learning at Home	Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
Volunteering	Parents are welcome in the schools and their support and assistance are sought.
School Decision Making	Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families.
Collaborating with the Community	Community resources are used to strengthen schools, families and student learning.

Parent Survey

Every parent in the school district was mailed a parent involvement survey written by members of the PIC. As part of the survey development process, parents outside of the PIC were also consulted for feedback and suggestions. The survey was mailed to 376 Sierra Vista Elementary School parents, and 83 were returned, yielding a response rate of 22%. The top three ways that parents got most of their information about school were from their child's folder (30%), flyers from school (20%), and phone calls from the school (16%).

Parent Respondent Demographics

- 79% were mothers.
- 59% of the surveys were completed in Spanish.
- 49% were Hispanic/Latino; 28% white; 23% other.
- 77% had lived in Washoe County 6 years or more.
- 68% had one child in school.
- 57% had Internet access at home.

Sierra Vista ES Student Demographics

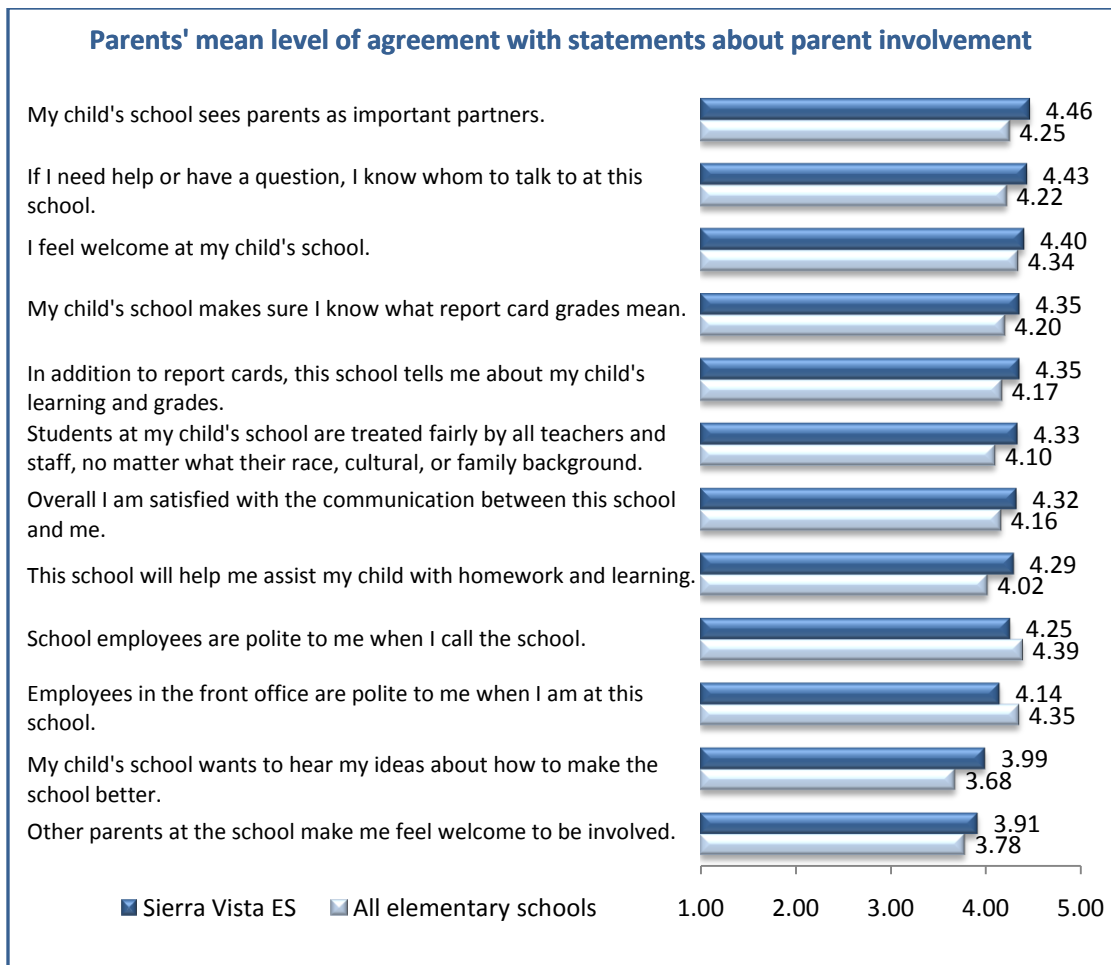
- 68% Hispanic/Latino
- 15% white; 17% other
- Transiency Rate: 31%
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 82%
- Limited English Proficiency: 57%

Parent Contact and Involvement with School

	Sierra Vista ES	All WCSD ES
Attended 3-5 school events a year	51%	47%
Contacted the school between 3-5 times in the past year	40%	40%
Had been asked to volunteer	63%	69%
Had volunteered for their child's school	40%	62%
Had not volunteered but would like to	68%	60%

Opinions about Parent Involvement

Parent respondents indicated their level of agreement with 12 statements about parent involvement at their child's school (see bar graph on the page to the right). Responses could range from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The level of agreement was fairly high ranging between a mean of 3.9 to 4.5. The lowest level of agreement was on the item "other parents in the school make me feel welcome to be involved." The highest level of agreement was for the item "my child's school sees parents as important partners."



Comparisons of English-speaking and Spanish-speaking parents' responses

- English-speaking parents were more likely to have Internet access at home (79%) than Spanish-speaking parents (41%).
- English-speaking parents had lived in Washoe County longer than Spanish-speaking parents.
- Spanish-speaking parents were more likely than English-speaking parents to agree that “other parents at the school make me feel welcome to be involved;” “my child’s school wants to hear my ideas about how to make the school better;” “my child’s school sees parents as important partners;” and, “overall, I am satisfied with the communication between this school and me.”

Comparisons of white and non-white parents' responses

- White parents were more likely to have Internet access at home (100%) than non-white parents (41%).
- White parents were more likely to have volunteered at their child’s school (73%) than non-white parents (27%).
- Non-white parents were more likely than white parents to agree that “my child’s school makes sure I know what report card grades mean.”

Conclusions and Recommendations

Parent respondents rated communication as a top area of parent involvement at Sierra Vista Elementary School. Parent results showed high levels of agreement on several communication-related items. Results from the parent surveys suggest that school decision making and volunteering are areas in which Sierra Vista Elementary School could strengthen parent involvement.

As parent involvement is a viable and necessary strategy for student achievement, a general recommendation is to reallocate school site funding to support systemic implementation of parent involvement. Another recommendation is to provide all school staff with appropriate professional development on how to effectively engage parents in their children's education. Schools also should help parents understand academic standards, state and district assessments, how to monitor a child's progress and work with educators to improve the achievement of their children. A variety of strategies to improve parent involvement are highlighted below.

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Strategies to Improve Parent Involvement

General

- Reallocate school site funding to support systemic implementation of parent involvement. Example: Pay teachers overtime for working with parents at school wide meetings from the school general fund budget.
- Provide appropriate professional development to all school staff on how to effectively engage parents in their children's education. Example, customer service training for education support professionals; training for teachers in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners.

School Decision Making

- Create networks to link all families with parent representatives.

Volunteering

- Create a parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families.
- Send out an annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.