

Damonte Ranch Middle 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 about parent involvement (PI). 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 Damonte Ranch Middle school took the survey, this evaluation brief will highlight the results from Damonte Ranch Middle 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 513 Damonte Ranch Middle School parents, and 153 were returned, yielding a response rate of 30%. The top three ways that parents got most of their information about school were from EdLine (36%), when their child told them (15%), and from their child's folder (13%). Forty percent reported that all of their child's teachers post information on EdLine.

Parent Respondent Demographics

- 85% were mothers.
- 3% of the surveys were completed in Spanish.
- 15% were Hispanic/Latino; 75% white; 10% other.
- 71% had lived in Washoe County 6 years or more.
- 66% had one child in school.
- 91% had Internet access at home.

Damonte Ranch MS Student Demographics

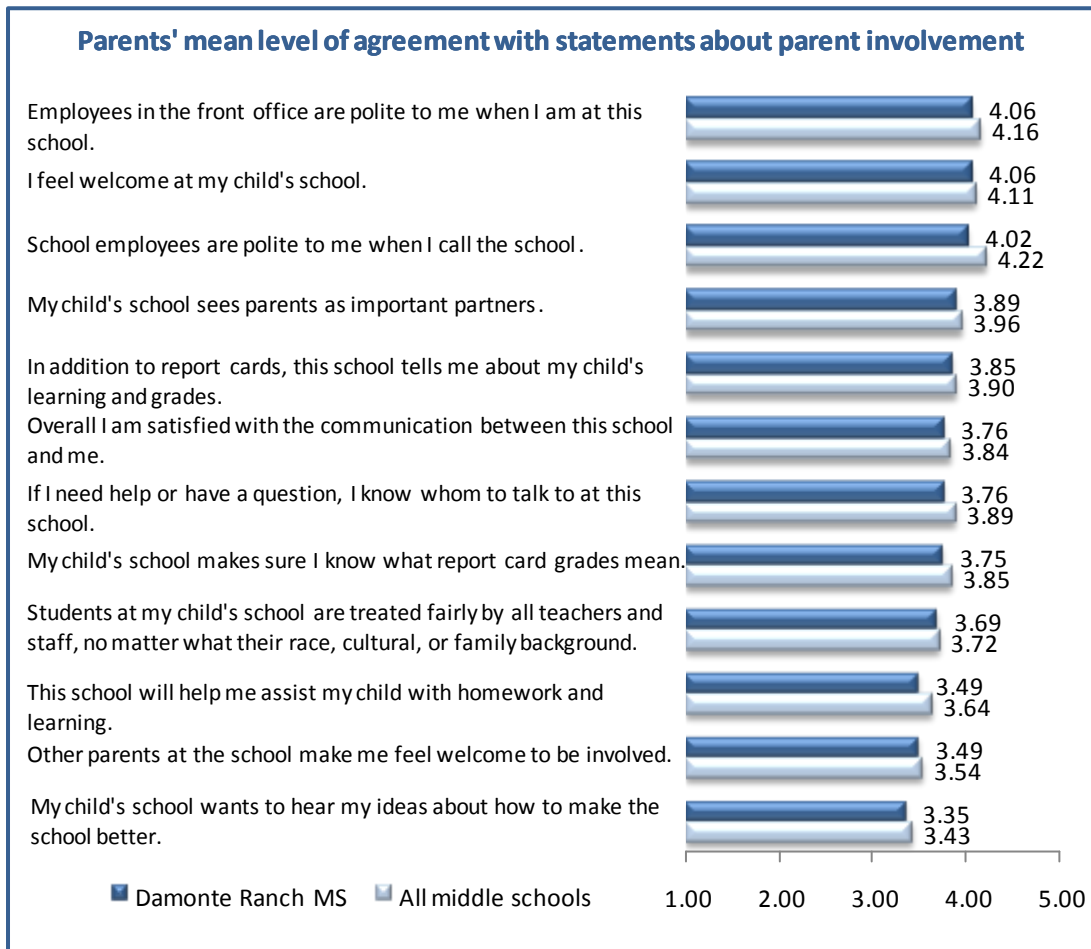
- 18% Hispanic/Latino
- 70% white; 12% other
- Transiency Rate: 26%
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 19%
- Limited English Proficiency: 3%

Parent Contact and Involvement with School

	Damonte Ranch MS	All WCS MS
Attended 3-5 school events a year	39%	42%
Contacted the school between 3-5 times in the past year	36%	43%
Had been asked to volunteer	60%	51%
Had volunteered for their child's school	50%	44%
Had not volunteered but would like to	49%	56%
Used EdLine to track child's progress	65%	62%

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 3.4 to 4.1. The lowest level of agreement was on the item "my child's school wants to hear my ideas about how to make the school better." The highest level of agreement was for the items "I feel welcome at my child's school" and "employees in the front office are polite to me when I am at this school."



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

- Spanish-speaking parents were more likely than English-speaking parents to agree that “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, “in addition to report cards, this school tells me about my child’s learning and grades.”

Comparisons of white and non-white parents' responses

- White parents were more likely to have Internet access at home (96%) than non-white parents (77%).
- White parents had attended more school events than non-white parents.
- White parents were more likely to have volunteered at their child’s school (56%) than non-white parents (34%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Communication seems to be the strongest area of parent involvement at Damonte Ranch Middle School, according to the parent survey results. Results from the parent survey suggest that two areas in which Damonte Ranch Middle School could improve their parent involvement are volunteering and school decision making.

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.

