



Parent and Teacher Perspectives:

Finding the Common Ground

Recent large-scale surveys shed light on how parents and teachers are experiencing K-12 education in the USA these days. The surveys highlight both frustrations and opportunities for building stronger partnerships. This white paper explores these dynamics and offers recommendations for schools to bridge the home-school dissatisfaction gap using effective communication and community-building approaches.

Parental Satisfaction with K-12 Education

According to [2023 Gallup poll data](#), only 36% of parents said they were satisfied with K-12 education quality, tying an all-time low seen in 2000. [In 2024, parental satisfaction rose by 7% to 43%](#). However, the majority, 55% of parents, still say they are somewhat or completely dissatisfied.

Following the pattern from the last 25 years, parents seem to view their children's education more positively than they view the nation's educational system—76% are satisfied with their children's education.

This discrepancy suggests that parents might be more forgiving of their specific school or teachers but are aware of broader systemic issues. Many cite concerns like falling academic standards, inadequate funding, and post-pandemic challenges.

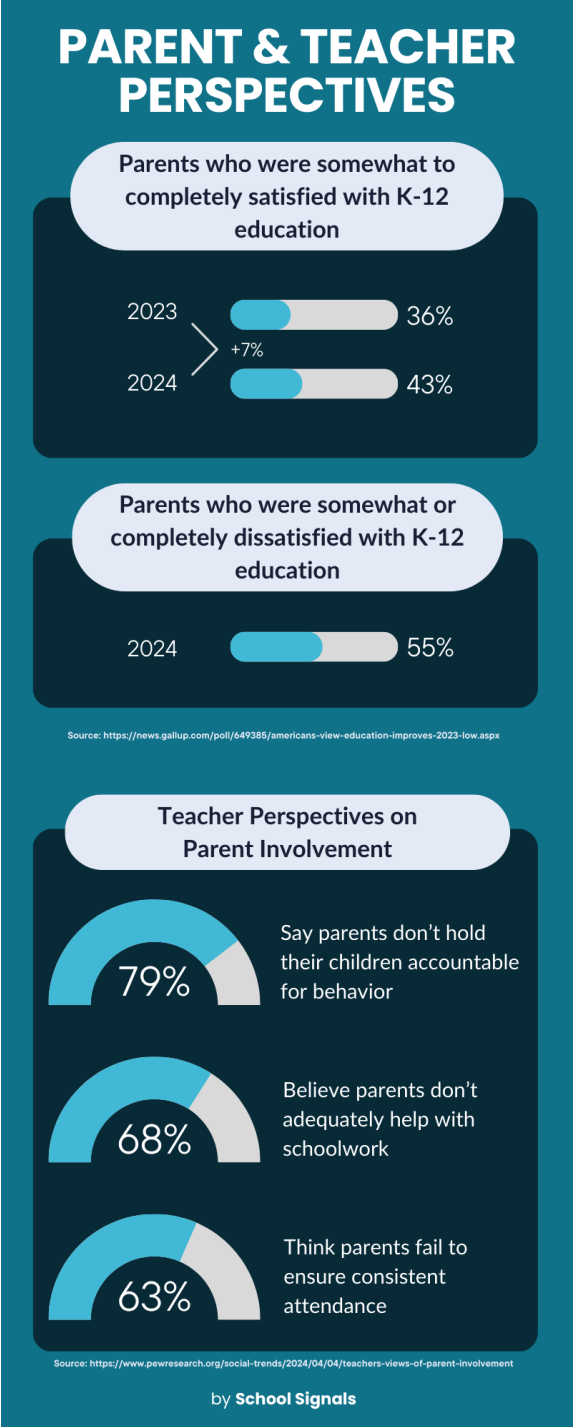
Teachers' Views on Parental Involvement

[A Pew Research Center study](#) highlights that many teachers feel parents aren't stepping up in ways that could truly help students succeed.

- 79% of teachers say parents don't hold their children accountable for behavior.
- 68% believe parents don't adequately help with schoolwork.
- 63% think parents fail to ensure consistent attendance.

These frustrations are particularly pronounced in high-poverty schools and among high school teachers, where the stakes of disengagement are often higher. It's no

secret that when students don't have a stable support system at home, their academic and social progress can suffer.



A Shared Struggle

The numbers paint a picture of two groups—parents and teachers—feeling stuck. Teachers are frustrated by a lack of parental involvement and teamwork, while parents may feel disconnected, distrustful, or uncertain about how to engage. COVID-19 didn't create these issues, but it amplified them. The disruption of routines, the shift to remote learning, and the resulting learning gaps made it more challenging to create a sense of normalcy and shared responsibility.

Parents may be juggling work, childcare, and economic uncertainty and are worried about their students who have fallen behind. On the other hand, many teachers are navigating overcrowded classrooms, limited resources, low wages, and the emotional toll of supporting students in crisis.

Instead of seeing each other as adversaries or pointing fingers, we need to give grace and recognize the power of working together.

What We Can Do

1. Boosting Clear and Consistent Communication

Parents can't support what they don't know, and teachers can't assume families fully grasp the stakes of parameters like chronic [absenteeism](#) or below-grade-level reading skills. Communicating clearly and consistently with the parents can help.

Clarity in communication means using easy-to-understand language. As the famous author and orator John Maxwell said, "Talk to people, not above them." Using jargon, technical terms, or acronyms can make it difficult for people to understand what you want to say. In the school environment, teachers may need to talk with parents about IEPs, developmental delays, and more. Parents may feel overwhelmed hearing this language, as they may not know what it means. Teachers can help by providing examples and definitions. Explaining educational standards or expectations can also help.

Consistent communication should engage and activate parents and not rely on generic or canned messaging. One [principal in Montgomery, Alabama](#), held monthly informal parent meetings to discuss new ideas or concerns.

To boost the communication between school and home, schools can implement communication strategies that include consistent communication with weekly school and classroom updates, text message alerts, monthly progress updates, positive feedback delivery, and visual aids that clearly connect attendance to outcomes.

2. Equipping Families with Helpful Resources

Many parents want to help but don't always know how. Schools can provide workshops or online resources to manage homework routines, handle behavioral issues, or understand grade-level expectations/desired outcomes.

Consider creating a community resource packet with everything from charities offering bill assistance and food pantries to mental health support, free parenting classes, and recreation centers. This packet can be posted on the school's website and [communication](#) platform, along with printed copies for families to take with them.

3. Increasing Volunteering Opportunities to Build a Community

Combining active forms of parental involvement, like volunteering in classrooms and working with their children on skills at home, directly impacts student achievement. [Rebecca Marcon's 1999 study](#) of D.C. preschoolers and their parents found that children of highly involved parents performed better.

[Research by Leslie Morrison Gutman and Carol Midgley in 2000](#) determined that parental involvement may also be a protective factor against the influence of other elements, like low socioeconomic status, on academic performance.

In [2013, research from Bayer, Grossman, and DuBois](#) showed that developing deep, long-term mentoring relationships like those established by [Big Brothers Big Sisters of America](#) has a greater impact on students than other types of volunteerism.

Making [volunteering signups easy](#) through digital platforms and apps can increase volunteering rates and parent involvement, too.

4. Developing Students' Real-World Skills with PBL

For students to see value in their education, we need to help them connect with their passions and make learning feel purposeful. Offering opportunities to learn practical skills—financial literacy, leadership, trades, and internships—can make the school feel relevant and engaging.

[PBL](#) involves students designing and carrying out projects to answer complex, open questions. Students often work in small groups on projects for several weeks. Community partnerships are relationships schools build with local professionals, businesses, and nonprofits to offer unique learning experiences that students typically wouldn't get on a school campus.

4. Integrating SEL Programs to the Curriculum

[SEL](#) programs result in many benefits for students in all grade levels. In one [study](#), using the Second Step curriculum in preschool positively affected Pre-K students' pre-literacy and math skills, as well as school readiness into 1st grade. Research [shows](#) that targeted SEL programs improve peer relationships and happiness among middle schoolers, particularly boys.

Social-emotional learning not only benefits students but also improves educators' general well-being. Teachers who implement SEL in their classrooms report less job-related anxiety, better relationships with their students, and improved job satisfaction. Thus, SEL programs can serve as a mitigating factor for schools that are already losing teachers to burnout.

Families benefit when there is clear communication about the specific social-emotional skills children are learning. Second Step's curriculum, for instance, includes parent letters about the weekly SEL topics students are studying. Some research shows that curricula that guide parents on supporting social-emotional learning at home have

greater benefits for students than those that don't. Teachers can share these important resources and insights on SEL in the [Classroom feed](#).

5. Prioritizing Students' Mental Health

Addressing the mental health crisis in schools is non-negotiable. Teachers need trauma-informed training, and schools can work to create accessible systems for counseling and peer support.

Providing mental health awareness resources to families and students and addressing mental health stigma is sometimes needed. Parents can be encouraged to have open conversations at home, letting their students know it's okay to seek help if they struggle.

6. Be Kind!

It doesn't cost a thing to pay someone a compliment. We're in this together, and we're only human. Parents and teachers can make an effort occasionally to send an encouraging word or write a quick thank you note.

Remembering Our Why

Education is evolving, but its purpose remains timeless: to prepare young people for a better future. Let's recognize that we are allies in this effort and lift each other to ensure every child gets the chance they deserve.

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For other references, follow the links in the text.

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