

Parents Want Their Children's Data

DQC's 2015 Parent Poll Results

April 2016

The Data Quality Campaign (DQC) believes that when parents and educators have the right information to make decisions, students excel. And parents agree, according to a recent survey. DQC's Parent Poll, conducted online by Harris Poll in November 2015, surveyed 1,093 US parents with children ages 5–17 about their attitudes toward data collection and data use in schools.

From individual student data to aggregate school performance data, parents are hungry for information: nearly 9 out of 10 parents (89 percent) say they need data like grades and test scores to understand how their child is progressing in school so they can help them do their best. For many parents (48 percent) the top criterion to determine school quality is data on how well their school prepares students for the future. Most parents (87 percent) say they also use data to make decisions about their child's education.

The poll also found that most parents largely trust those closest to students, including teachers (91 percent), principals (83 percent), and guidance counselors (79 percent), to appropriately use education data to support student success.

Despite the generally positive findings of DQC's Parent Poll, the public conversation around education data use remains polarized, in part because it has focused largely on standardized testing. Although assessment data is one important piece of student information, the narrow focus of the public conversation has ignored the fact that parents by and large want access to multiple types of education data, as noted above.

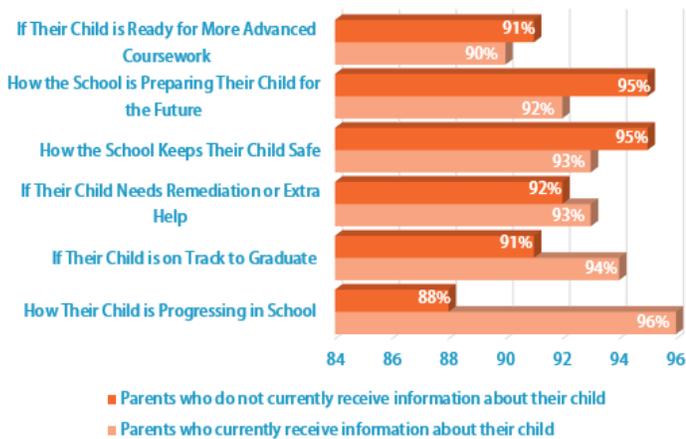
When information about students is provided in a timely, useful manner, every adult working with a child—especially parents—is able to support that student's learning more effectively. Understanding parent attitudes around data use is the first step that policymakers and advocates can take to ensure that their efforts really meet parents' needs. Read on for more detailed information on parental attitudes toward education data.

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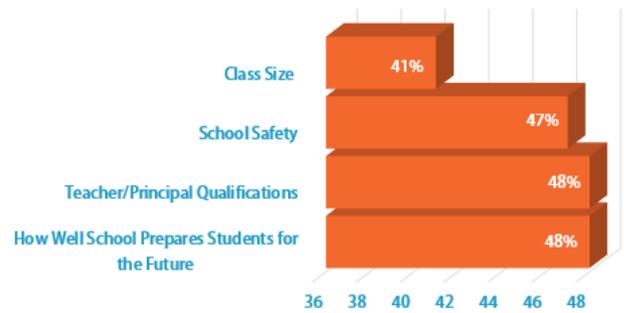
PARENTS USE DATA TO SUPPORT STUDENT SUCCESS

Parents use a variety of data for various purposes, including to determine school quality. While most parents receive information from their child's school about academic progress (93 percent) and when they need extra help (78 percent), the kind of data parents want varies based on what level of information they already receive.

What do parents want to know?



Which of the following helps you determine the quality of a school?



- 89 percent of parents say they need data, like grades and test scores, to understand their child's progress so they can help them do their best.
- 91 percent of parents are at least somewhat interested in receiving information about their child's social emotional learning, and more than half (55 percent) are very interested.

Parents report receiving a variety of information about how their students are doing in school, and they want to keep getting that information.

- 96 percent of parents who are currently receiving information about how their child is progressing in school say they want to continue receiving that information.
- 94 percent of parents who receive data on whether their child is on track to graduation want to continue receiving it.

Most parents not currently receiving information from schools (about their child's progress, school safety, future readiness, etc.) wish they did.

- 95 percent of parents who do not have information about how the school is preparing their child for the future would like to have that information.
- 91 percent of parents who do not have information about whether their child is on track to graduate wish they did.

Parents are also interested in different types of data—91 percent are at least somewhat interested in receiving information about their child's social-emotional learning.

91%
of parents who do not have information about whether their child is on track to graduate wish they did

PARENTS FEEL THAT DATA IS TIMELY, ACCESSIBLE, CLEAR, SECURE

While states, districts, and schools have much more to do to equip all parents with useful information, most parents feel the data they do get is fairly timely, private, secure, and easy to access and understand. However, only 70 percent of parents say they receive any feedback on how the school is preparing their child for the future, their top criterion of school quality. In this and other ways, parents affirm that schools still have room for improvement:

- 93 percent of parents who receive information from their child’s teachers think it is at least somewhat easy to understand.
- 85 percent of parents say they get their child’s test results in a timely manner so that they can be sure to get them extra help if needed.
- 82 percent of parents can easily access the information they need to make sure their child gets a great education.
- 81 percent of parents trust that their child’s school is keeping their child’s data private and secure.
 - About 7 in 10 parents say they personally know (72 percent)—and understand (70 percent)—what data is currently being collected by their child’s school.
 - Most parents have at least some trust that school professionals are using their children’s academic data appropriately to support their children in school, including teachers (91 percent), principals (83 percent), guidance counselors (79 percent), district superintendents (61 percent), and the state department of education (59 percent).

91%
of parents trust
their child’s teacher
to use data
appropriately

For more information about how effective education data use can help students excel, visit www.dataqualitycampaign.org.

For more information on detailed poll results and methods, please contact:
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RESEARCH METHODS

The survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Poll via its Parent Query product on behalf of Data Quality Campaign from November 6–16, 2015, among 1,093 parents of child(ren) ages 5–17.

Results were weighted for age within gender, region, race/ethnicity, income, and education where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. Propensity score weighting was also used to adjust for respondents’ propensity to be online.

All sample surveys and polls, whether or not they use probability sampling, are subject to multiple sources of error which are most often not possible to quantify or estimate, including sampling error, coverage error, error associated with nonresponse, error associated with question wording and response options, and post-survey weighting and adjustments. Therefore, Harris Poll avoids the words “margin of error” as they are misleading. All that can be calculated are different possible sampling errors with different probabilities for pure, unweighted, random samples with 100 percent response rates. These are only theoretical because no published polls come close to this ideal.

Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have agreed to participate in Harris Poll surveys. The data have been weighted to reflect the composition of US adults. Because the sample is based on those who agreed to participate in the Harris Poll panel, no estimates of theoretical sampling error can be calculated.



The Data Quality Campaign is a national, nonprofit organization leading the effort to bring every part of the education community together to empower educators, parents, and policymakers with quality information to make decisions that ensure that students excel. For more information, go to www.dataqualitycampaign.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter (@EdDataCampaign).
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