

## Parent Involvement in Schools

### Headline

The percentage of students whose parents reported involvement in their schools rose significantly between 1999 and 2003 across several measures, including attendance at a general meeting, a meeting with a teacher, or a school event, and volunteering or serving on a committee. ([See Figure 1](#))

### Importance

Students with parents who are involved in their school tend to have fewer behavioral problems and better academic performance, and are more likely to complete secondary school than students whose parents are not involved in their school.<sup>1</sup>

Parental involvement allows parents to monitor school and classroom activities, and to coordinate their efforts with teachers. Teachers of students with highly involved parents tend to give greater attention to those students, and they tend to identify problems that might inhibit student learning at earlier stages.<sup>2</sup>

Research has found that students perform better in school if their fathers as well as their mothers are involved, regardless of whether the father lives with the student or not.<sup>3,4</sup>

### Trends

Parental involvement in school, as measured by attendance at a general meeting, a meeting with a teacher, or a school event, and by volunteering or serving on a committee, rose significantly between 1999 and 2003. In 2003, 88 percent of students in kindergarten through twelfth grade had parents who attended a general meeting, compared with 78 percent in 1999. Seventy-seven percent of students had parents who attended a scheduled meeting with a teacher, 70 percent had parents who attended a school event, and 42 percent of students had parents who volunteered in school or served on a committee in 2003, compared with 73 percent, 65 percent, and 37 percent, respectively, in 1999. ([See Table 1](#))

### Differences by Grade

Parents are most likely to attend school meetings and events or to volunteer in their child's school when their children are in primary school. ([See Figure 1](#)) For example, in 2003, a little over 90 percent of students in kindergarten through fifth grade had parents who attended a meeting with their teachers, while 75 percent of middle school students, 59 percent of ninth through tenth grades students, and 53 percent of eleventh through twelfth grade students had parents who had done so.

### **Differences by Race and Ethnicity**

Hispanic and non-Hispanic black students were less likely to have parents who attended school events or who volunteered their time compared with non-Hispanic white students. Sixty-one percent of Hispanic students and 63 percent of non-Hispanic black students had parents who attended school events, while 74 percent of non-Hispanic white students had parents who had done so. Twenty-eight percent of Hispanic students and 32 percent of non-Hispanic black students had parents who volunteered their time, compared with 48 percent of non-Hispanic white students. ([See Table 1](#))

### **Differences by Parental Education**

Parents with higher levels of education and income are more likely to be involved in their children's school. For example, in 2003, 80 percent of students whose parents had a Bachelor's degree or above had parents who attended a school event, compared with 42 percent for students whose parents had less than a high school education. ([See Table 1](#))

### **Differences by Poverty Level**

Parents of students living in a household above the poverty level are more likely to be involved in school activities than parents of children living in a household at or below the poverty line. For example, in 2003, 45 percent of parents of children living above the poverty line acted as a volunteer or served on a committee at their child's school, compared with 27 percent of children living at or below the poverty line. ([Figure 2](#))

### **Differences by Parents' Language**

Parents who do not speak English (parents who did not learn English as a child and currently speak a non-English language in the home) are less likely than other parents to attend a general school meeting or school event, or to volunteer or serve on a committee. For example, 52 percent of parents who do not speak English reported attending a school event, compared with 62 percent of parents where one parent does not speak English and 72 percent of parents who both spoke English. Significant differences do not exist by parents' language, however, for the percentage that attend scheduled meetings with the teacher. ([See Table 1](#))

### **State and Local Estimates**

None available

### **International Estimates**

None available

## National Goals

The *No Child Left Behind Act*, signed into law January 2002, aims to make sure that all children achieve academic proficiency and gain the educational skills necessary to succeed later in life. The law mandates that parents are informed on how they can be involved in school improvement efforts and are provided with local report cards of schools in their district to help guide their involvement. Schools education agencies are required to disseminate literature on effective parent involvement and schools receiving Title I funding must have written policies, annual meetings, and training on parental involvement, and re-evaluate and revise their strategies when needed.

For more information on the requirements see “No Child Left Behind: A Parent’s Guide” at <http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.pdf>

## Definition

Parental involvement in school is defined as parent reported participation at least once during the school year in attending a general school meeting; attending a scheduled meeting with their child’s teacher; attending a school event; or volunteering in the school or serving on a school committee.

## Data Source

Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005: Table 3.  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>

Data for 1996 and 1999: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *The Condition of Education 2001*, NCES 2001–072, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001: Table 54-1 available at:  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001072>

## Raw Data Source

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. National Household Education Surveys (NHES) 1996 (Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey) and 1999 (Parent Interview Survey) <http://nces.ed.gov/nhes/>.

## Approximate Date of Next Update

Unknown

<sup>1</sup>Henderson, A.T., and N. Berla. "A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement." Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education, 1994.

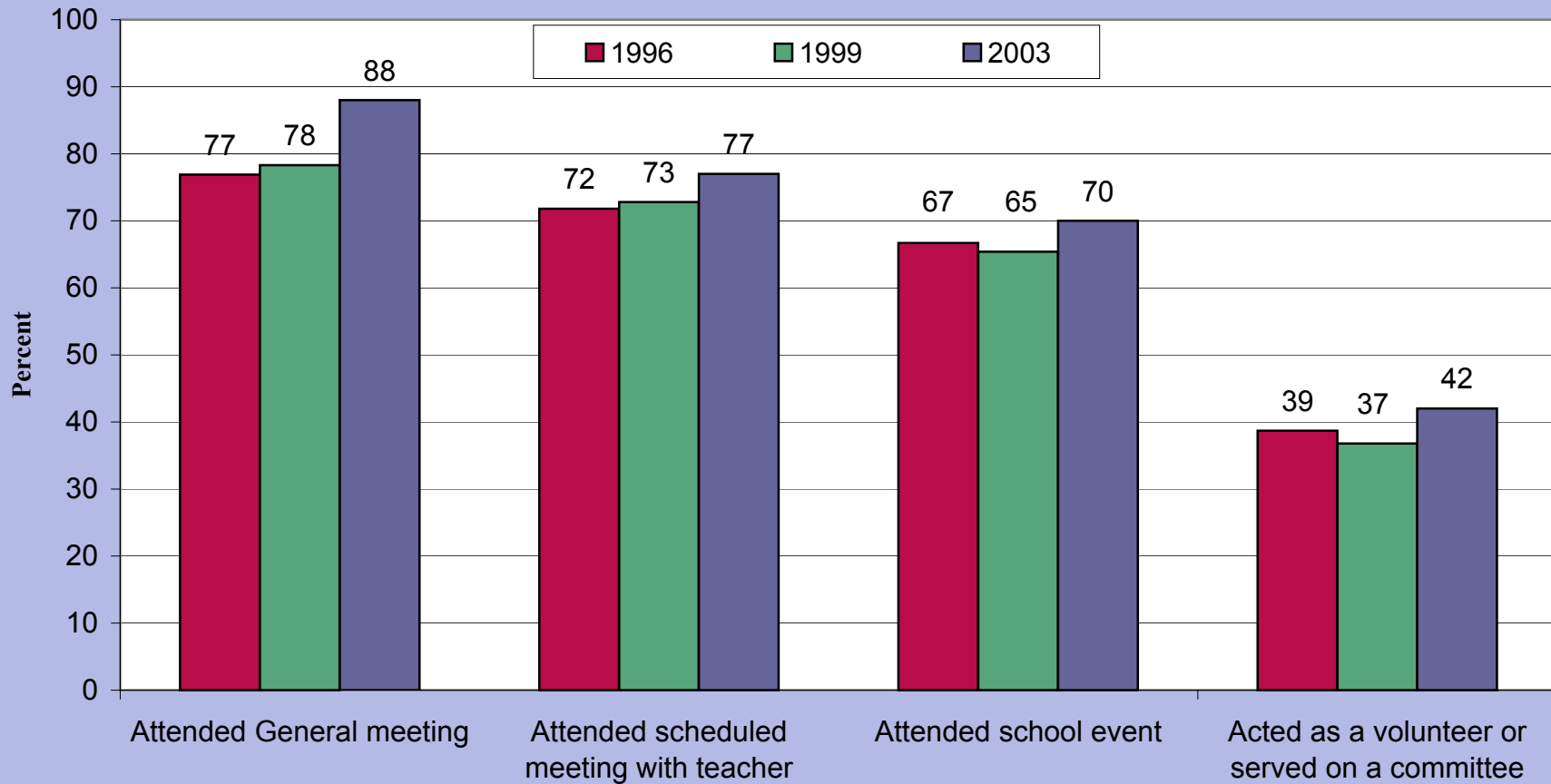
<sup>2</sup>Zill, N. and C.W. Nord. *Running in Place: How American Families are Faring in a Changing Economy and Individualistic Society*. Washington, DC: Child Trends, 1994.

<sup>3</sup>Nord, C.W., D. Brimhall, and J. West. *Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs98/fathers/>

<sup>4</sup>Nord, C.W. and J. West. *Fathers' and Mothers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools by Family Type and Resident Status*. U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2001. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/2001032.pdf>

Figure 1

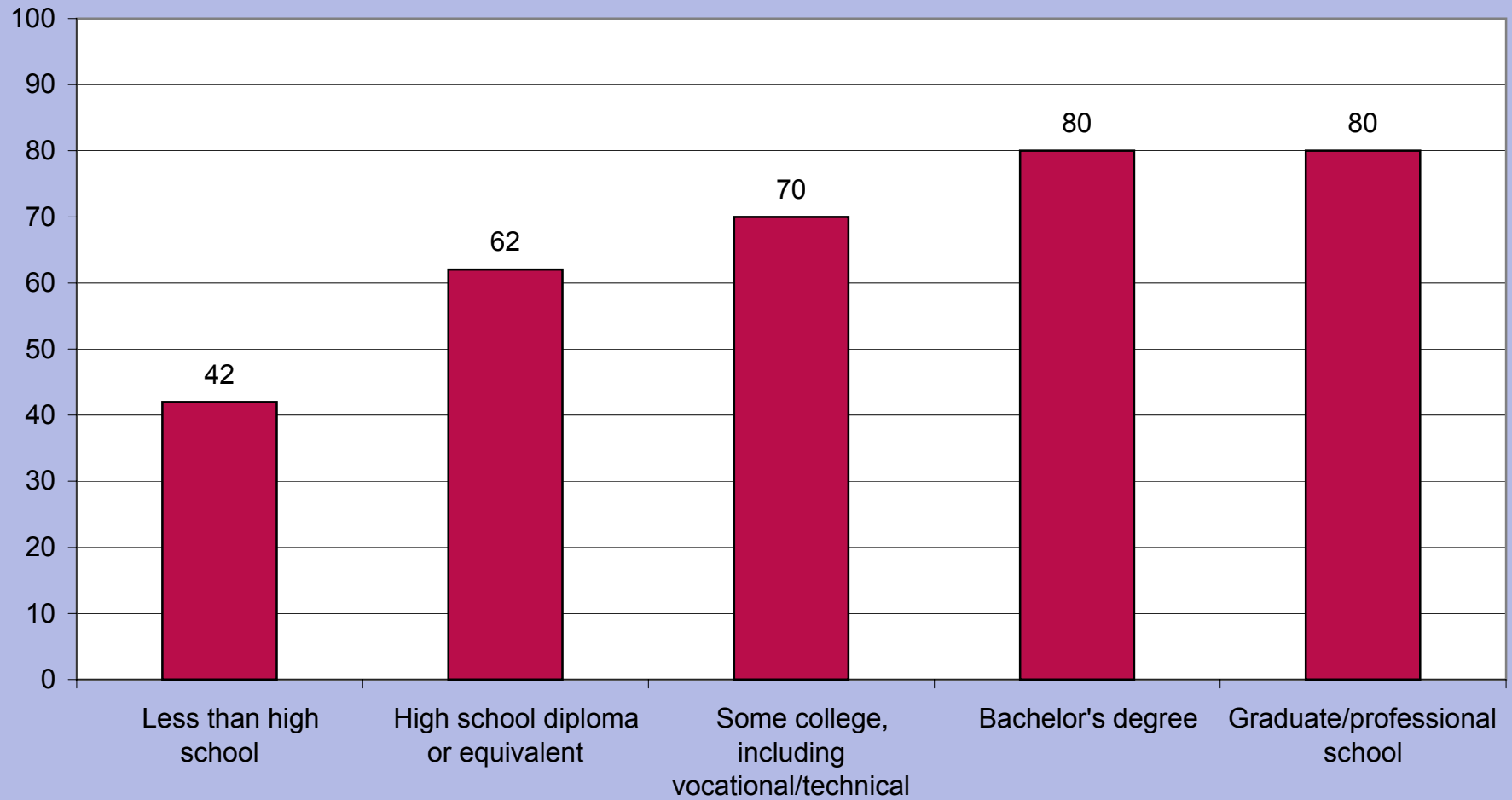
## Trends in the Percentage of Students Whose Parents Reported Involvement in their Child's School: Selected Years



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2001*, NCES 2001-072, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001. Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005: Table 3. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>

Figure 2

## The Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 Whose Parents Reported Attending School Events, by Parental Education Level, 2003



Source: Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005: Table 3.  
<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>

Table 1

**Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 Whose Parents Reported Involvement in Their Child's School, by Grade and Selected Characteristics, 2003<sup>1</sup>**

Characteristic	Attended General Meeting	Attended scheduled meeting with teacher	Attended school event	Acted as a volunteer or served on a committee
<b>Total</b>	88	77	70	42
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White, non-Hispanic	89	76	74	48
Black, non-Hispanic	89	79	63	32
Hispanic	83	78	61	28
Other	-	-	-	-
<b>Grade</b>				
K - 1st grade	93	92	71	54
2nd - 3rd grade	94	91	77	53
4th - 5th grade	94	91	78	50
6th -8th grade	88	75	70	35
9th - 10th grade	83	59	63	30
11th - 12th grade	74	53	59	31
<b>Household Poverty Status</b>				
Above poverty level	90	78	73	45
At or below poverty level	79	75	57	27
<b>Parents' highest education level</b>				
Less than high school	70	68	42	16
High school diploma or equivalent	84	75	62	30
Some college, including Vocational/technical	89	78	70	39
Bachelor's degree	93	80	80	55
Graduate/professional school	93	79	80	60
<b>Students grades</b>				
Mostly A's or excellent	91	77	78	50
Mostly B's or above average	87	76	69	40
Mostly C's or average	82	78	60	32
Mostly D's or lower, or below average or failing	81	81	43	21
<b>Parents' language</b>				
Both/only parent(s) speak(s) English	89	77	72	44
One of two parents speaks English	83	79	62	31
No parent speaks English	79	78	52	21

<sup>1</sup>Estimates from 2003 are from questions asked to parents about the 2002-2003 school year.

Note: Ungraded students or children who are home schooled are not included in this analysis; these students accounted for 1.6 percent of the students in grades K-12.

Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005: Table 3.

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>



Table 2

**Percentage of Students in Grades K-12 Whose Parents Reported Involvement in Their Child's School, by Grade and Selected Characteristics: 1996, 1999, and 2003<sup>1</sup>**

Characteristic	Attended General Meeting			Attended scheduled meeting with teacher			Attended school event			Acted as a volunteer or served on a committee			Indicated involvement in any of the four activities		
	1996	1999	2003	1996	1999	2003	1996	1999	2003	1996	1999	2003	1996	1999	2003
<b>Total</b>	76.9	78.3	88	71.8	72.8	77	66.7	65.4	70	38.7	36.8	42	91.7	91.5	-
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>															
White, non-Hispanic	79.0	80.5	89	72.6	73.6	76	71.6	71.6	74	44.1	42.7	48	93.5	93.8	-
Black, non-Hispanic	71.6	74.6	89	68.8	71.1	79	56.4	53.8	63	26.9	26.2	32	86.4	87.0	-
Hispanic	73.6	73.1	83	71.5	71.0	78	54.7	51.4	61	26.4	24.5	28	89.0	86.8	-
Other	73.2	76.6	-	71.6	73.1	-	64.2	62.3	-	35.4	30.6	-	89.9	90.3	-
<b>Parents' highest education level</b>															
Less than high school	57.5	57.3	70	62.7	59.9	68	42.2	37.7	42	16.9	13.0	16	79.1	75.9	-
High school diploma or equivalent	71.5	72.7	84	69.2	69.7	75	60.2	58.7	62	30.1	26.0	30	89.3	88.4	-
Some college, including Vocational/technical	77.9	79.1	89	72.5	73.7	78	69.2	66.9	70	39.2	37.4	39	92.9	93.1	-
Bachelor's degree	87.4	87.3	93	77.4	80.3	80	76.4	75.6	80	52.3	49.8	55	96.8	97.1	-
Graduate/professional school	88.5	88.9	93	76.3	76.0	79	81.9	78.9	80	56.7	54.3	60	97.2	96.8	-

<sup>1</sup> Estimates from 2003 are from questions asked to parents about the 2002-2003 school year.

Note: Ungraded students or children who are home schooled are not included in this analysis; these students accounted for 1.6 percent of the students in grades K-12.

Source: Data for 1996 and 1999: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *The Condition of Education 2001*, NCES 2001-072, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001; Table 54-1. Data for 2003: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Parent and Family Involvement in Education: 2002-03*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005; Table 3. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2005043>