

## **Parents are Truant...Student Achievement at Risk**

The study is Your Child's first regional study. It covers Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The study was conducted by Michigan-based EPIC-MRA in early October.

Your Child is a coalition of several education and family organizations. This study was paid for by the following coalition members: MEA, The Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice, Middle Cities Education Association, Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals, and the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.

### **Timely Tips for Parents!**

#### **Got 5 minutes?**

- Introduce yourself. Indicate the best way to give you information (phone, email, notes, etc.).
- Write a note or email to the teacher just to check in and see how your child is doing.
- Call the teacher. Remember to let teachers know about out-of-school factors that may be affecting your child.

#### **Got 10 minutes?**

- Share your child's strengths, talents and interests with your child's teachers.
- Read classroom and/or school newsletters.
- Check out your child's school website.

#### **Got 15 minutes?**

- Share your family's culture, values and parenting practices with your child's teacher.
- Talk with your child's teacher about how to support learning at home.
- Attend parent-teacher conferences with specific questions you want to ask.

#### **30 minutes & more...**

- Read and know your school's handbook.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to develop a parent communication policy.
- Attend PTA, school board, and/or town meetings and speak to issues of concern.

**Your Child's Top  
Five Things Every Parent Can Do to  
Connect with Your Child's Teacher...**

*1. Make the time!*

At the start of the school year, make arrangements to meet with your child's teacher. This is an ideal time to share information about your child with the teacher so that he/she can best connect with our child.

*2. Banish the blame.*

Take a "no fault" approach when dealing with difficult issues relating to your children. Blaming teachers or classmates only strains relationships. Join forces with teachers to reach a common goal: helping your children overcome difficulties and find success.

*3. Drop a Line!*

Any time is a good time to drop your child's teacher a note. Do you have a question about homework? Is your child upset about something that happened at school? Were you really impressed by a project that your child has been working on? Take a moment to write a note to the teacher.

*4. It's Your Call!*

Call your child's teacher for a particular reason-or for no reason at all. Teachers don't always have the time to call you, but they do appreciate hearing from you. Ask teachers before hand for a good time to call.

*5. Be prepared.*

Bring a list of questions to parent-teacher conferences. Prepared questions help the conference stay focused and keep you on the issues that matter.

**EPIC \* MRA Multi-Statewide Survey of Parents – Sept/Oct '04 – SSA & B**  
**[FREQUENCY REPORT OF SURVEY RESPONSES**  
**OVERALL: 1,2729 SAMPLE – ERROR ± 3.0%]**

7. How often do you attend parent-teacher conferences – all the time, most of the time, sometimes, seldom, or never?

	<u>Minnesota</u>						
		<u>Indiana</u>					
		<u>Wisconsin</u>					
		<u>Michigan</u>					
		<u>Illinois</u>					
	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Ohio</u>					
<i>All the time</i>	61%	57%	59%	52%	71%	69%	73%
<i>Most of the time</i>	12%	15%	9%	15%	12%	9%	9%
<b>Combined ALL/MOST</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>83%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<i>Sometimes</i>	9%	5%	8%	12%	9%	7%	8%
<i>Seldom</i>	5%	6%	6%	6%	3%	4%	4%
<b>Combined: Sometime/SELDOM</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<i>Never</i>	11%	15%	12%	13%	3%	10%	6%
<i>Undecided/don't know</i>	2%	2%	6%	2%	2%	1%	--%

8. Generally speaking, how productive would you say parent-teacher conferences are for you – very productive, mostly productive, only a little productive, or not productive at all?

	<u>Minnesota</u>						
		<u>Indiana</u>					
		<u>Wisconsin</u>					
		<u>Michigan</u>					
		<u>Illinois</u>					
	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Ohio</u>					
<i>Very productive</i>	43%	46%	34%	46%	46%	41%	38%
<i>Mostly productive</i>	37%	42%	44%	33%	33%	38%	44%
<b>Total PRODUCTIVE</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>82%</b>
<i>Only a little productive</i>	13%	6%	10%	14%	15%	14%	16%
<i>Not productive at all</i>	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	4%	1%
<b>Total LITTLE/NOT PRODUCTIVE</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>17%</b>
<i>Undecided/don't know</i>	5%	5%	10%	4%	4%	3%	1%

9. Thinking about the last parent-teacher conference you attended, did you find it to be a difficult or easy experience?

		<u>Minnesota</u>					
		<u>Indiana</u>					
		<u>Wisconsin</u>					
		<u>Michigan</u>					
		<u>Illinois</u>					
	<u>Ohio</u>						
	<u>Overall</u>						
Difficult Experience	8%	7%	6%	7%	10%	11%	5%
Easy Experience	86%	88%	85%	85%	86%	86%	92%
Undecided/don't know	6%	4%	9%	8%	4%	3%	3%

10. Why do you think it was difficult for you?

		<u>Minnesota</u>					
		<u>Indiana</u>					
		<u>Wisconsin</u>					
		<u>Michigan</u>					
		<u>Illinois</u>					
	<u>Ohio</u>						
	<u>Overall</u>						
Talk down to/teacher attitude	13%	--%	--%	8%	33%	17%	25%
Not listening	11%	--%	50%	8%	--%	17%	--%
Behavior problems not discussed	9%	20%	--%	4%	--%	33%	--%
Teacher doesn't care about children	5%	--%	--%	8%	--%	17%	--%
Didn't know what to expect	3%	--%	--%	--%	--%	17%	--%

21B. How would you rate the job your child’s teacher does in explaining the curriculum, classroom assignments, plans and events – would you offer a positive rating of excellent or pretty good, or a negative rating of only fair or poor?

		<u>Minnesota</u>					
		<u>Indiana</u>					
		<u>Wisconsin</u>					
		<u>Michigan</u>					
		<u>Illinois</u>					
	<u>Overall</u>	<u>Ohio</u>					
<i>Excellent</i>	39%	39%	37%	41%	43%	28%	42%
<i>Pretty Good</i>	45%	52%	40%	43%	38%	60%	46%
<b>Total POSITIVE</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>88%</b>	<b>88%</b>
<i>Only fair</i>	9%	6%	15%	9%	11%	6%	8%
<i>Poor</i>	3%	1%	8%	2%	2%	--%	2%
<b>Total NEGATIVE</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>10%</b>
<i>Undecided/don't know</i>	4%	2%	--%	5%	6%	6%	2%