

Appleseed This Week

Appleseed Report Finds North Carolina Schools Need Better Parent Involvement

May 15, 2008 - A new Appleseed report released last Friday identifies a variety of barriers preventing North Carolina parents from being fully involved in their children's education -- a critical component to higher student achievement under the No Child Left Behind Act. The report found that neither parents nor public school systems have fully invested in parent involvement as a top priority and key strategy for helping students do better in class.

The report, "**It Takes A North Carolina Parent: Transforming Education Under the No Child Left Behind Act**," was released in Raleigh in conjunction with the **North Carolina Parent Teacher Association (NCPTA)**'s Annual Conference. Research and interviews within the state of North Carolina underpin the report's findings. The report identifies parent involvement approaches that have been effective and describes how schools using those approaches communicate and collaborate with parents. Specifically, the report outlines four major findings -- and subsequent recommendations -- for education leaders and policymakers:

- **External barriers:** Low socioeconomic status, limited English proficiency and varying cultural expectations are among the significant obstacles to parent involvement.
- **Communications gap:** Parents typically do not receive enough information about their students' progress nor about school-, district- or state-level parent involvement policy.
- **Information unclear and untimely:** NCLB is rarely explained to parents in simple, straightforward terms, and parents do not receive test results in a timely way so they can make choices afforded by the law.
- **Parents do not feel welcome:** Some parents report feeling alienated by their child's schools and therefore believe they have little say in important educational decisions.

"This report calls on parents, school districts, the state Department of Public Instruction and community stakeholders to focus on parent involvement as an improvement strategy, particularly in poor communities with large numbers of parents who are not proficient in English," said **Edwin Darden**, Director of Education Policy for Appleseed, who oversaw the project. NCPTA President **Debra Horton** added, "This report is authentic. It names many of the issues that we have been trying to address and will be a platform for us to again urge communities to work harder to view parents as equal partners in educating students."

The report -- which received coverage in North Carolina in the [News & Observer](#), on [News14 Carolina](#) and [NBC17](#) -- extends Appleseed's 2006 groundbreaking national parent involvement study and advocacy, based at the outset in six states: Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, New Mexico, Texas and Washington state.

For more information on Appleseed, visit www.appleseednetwork.org. To support the work of Appleseed, donate [here](#).

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