
8. Parents' views

Parental engagement has a significant and ongoing impact on the academic outcomes and social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.¹⁴³ However, there is a paucity of research on parents' views of their child's engagement with school and learning.¹⁴⁴

The following chapter explores the factors that parents viewed as contributing to their child's engagement with and enjoyment of school and learning and to their own sense of connectedness to the school. Given the significant influence of parental engagement, hearing parents' views about what facilitates engagement provides insight into areas of action for schools, and the education system.

Throughout this chapter the term 'parents' is used to encompass parents, carers, step-parents or other caregivers who provided consent for a student to participate in the consultation, and who then completed the Parent Survey. Further detail about the process of consent and participation is detailed in the chapter Undertaking the School and Learning Consultation.

In interpreting the results, consideration must be given to the representativeness of parents who participated in the survey. As noted, the study design is likely to have resulted in a sample of students and families that can be described as having a higher level of engagement than the broader population as a whole. Additionally, the responses from parents suggest that many of them were actively involved in their child's education and had the resources to participate in school activities. This is not necessarily typical of the circumstances of all parents across WA.

8.1 Parent profile

A total of 421 parents of students participating in the School and Learning survey completed an adapted parent version of the survey. Each participating parent had a child attending Year 3 to Year 12 who had participated in the School and Learning consultation through their school. The design of the survey was such that individual responses of a parent and their child cannot be linked. The following chapter predominantly discusses the responses of 358 parents who were part of the main sample. An additional 63 parents also provided responses – their children were part of the additional sample of students.

The parents who participated in the survey were predominantly mothers (91.0% of participants were female and 9.0% were male) and 51 per cent held a bachelor or higher degree. Seventy-one per cent of parents were born in Australia, 22 per cent in the United Kingdom and the remaining seven per cent had been born elsewhere.

Of the participating parents:

- 30 per cent reported having a child who attends school in a regional area
- 70 per cent had a child attending school in the metropolitan area
- 17 per cent of parents had a child who was born outside of Australia
- 2.5 per cent had a child who is Aboriginal
- 21 per cent said that their child has a long-term health condition and/or disability.