

Chapter 11. Teens and School

Because of the time spent in school, the school experience can provide insight into the development of the adolescent. Each year one-third of high school students fail to graduate with their class; tragically, most of them dropout with less than two years of their high school education to complete. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of high school dropouts reported not being motivated or inspired at school. They did not feel school provided the necessary academic and personal support for success.¹

Students need a variety of support from teachers, parents, and peers. Teachers are the most important because they hold definite power to regain and move the classroom toward enjoyable, engaging learning.² Students want to be challenged, therefore feel a sense of accomplishment when they have to work to earn the grade.¹ However, peers are a huge influence that can have both a positive or negative effect on students' performance. Classmates can encourage, constrict, or poison another classmate's performance.² Even though the parents do not directly interact with their child in the classroom environment, their influence is very significant to their child's performance. A parent's involvement in school activities and the support they provide to their teen is essential for the student's school performance.³

This chapter highlights how teens in southwest Wisconsin perceive their school:

- Do teens perceive that rules in their school are fairly enforced?
- Do teens perceive their parents and teachers as being interested in them and their activities and how does this affect school performance?
- How do teen time commitments affect their grades in school?

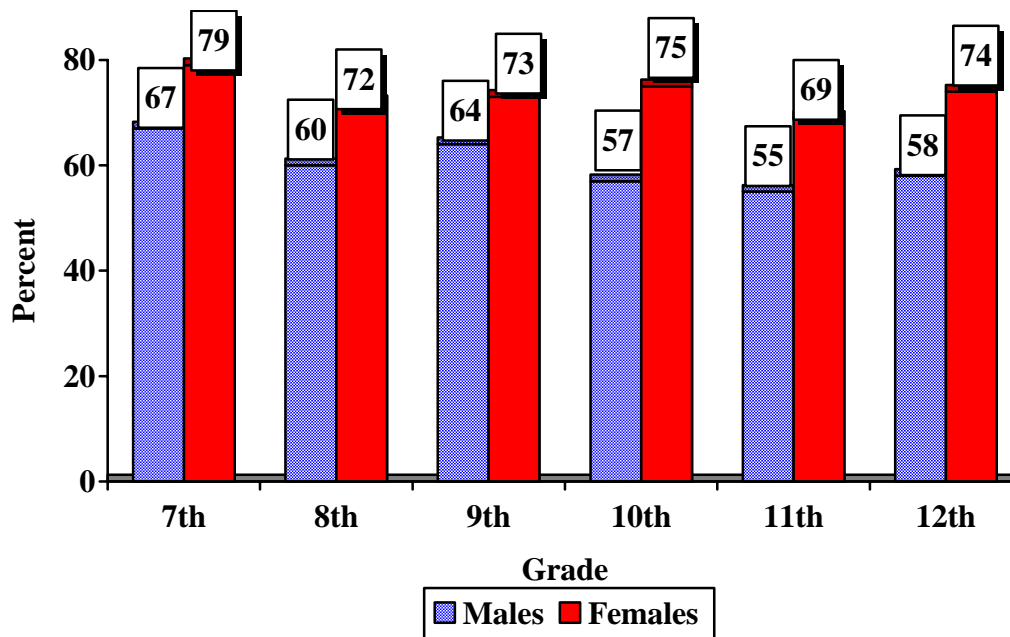
¹ Bridgeland, John M., Dilulio, John J. Jr., & Morison Karen Burke. (2006). The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts. *WI-Clearinghouse Newsletter 4(6)*, 1-20.

² Pierce, K.M. (2006). Posing, Pretending, Waiting for the Bell. *The High School Journal 89(2)*, 1-15.

³ Parenting: Building Strong Connections. *The Youth Connection*. (2006) 3-9.

TEENS WHO REPORT GETTING A's AND B's

Teens by grade and gender who report that their average grades in their course work at school are “mostly A’s”, “about half A’s and B’s” and “mostly B’s”:



Key Findings:

The percentage of females who report getting “mostly A’s”, “about half A’s and B’s” and “mostly B’s” in their course work is consistently in the low to mid 70% range.

The percentage of males who report getting “mostly A’s”, “about half A’s and B’s” and “mostly B’s” in their course work ranges from 55% for 11th graders to 67% for 7th graders.

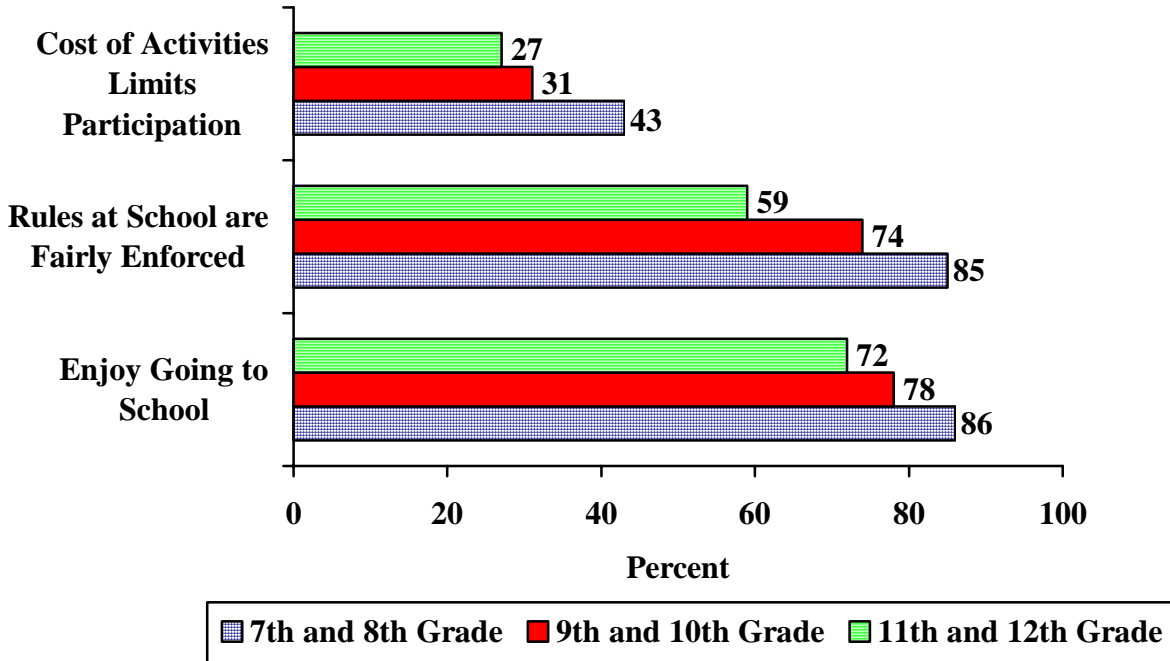
Other Notable Findings:

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of all teens report getting “mostly A’s”, “about half A’s and B’s” or “mostly B’s” in their course work.

Thirty-six percent (36%) of 12th grade females report getting “mostly A’s” in their course work, which compares to 21% of 12th grade males who report the same.

FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

Students who “strongly agree” or “agree” with the following statements about school:



Key Findings:

More 7th and 8th grade students report they enjoy going to school and that rules at their school are fairly enforced more than 9th-12th graders.

More 7th and 8th grade students report the cost of participating in school activities keeps them from participating as much as they would like to than 9th-12th graders.

Other Notable Findings:

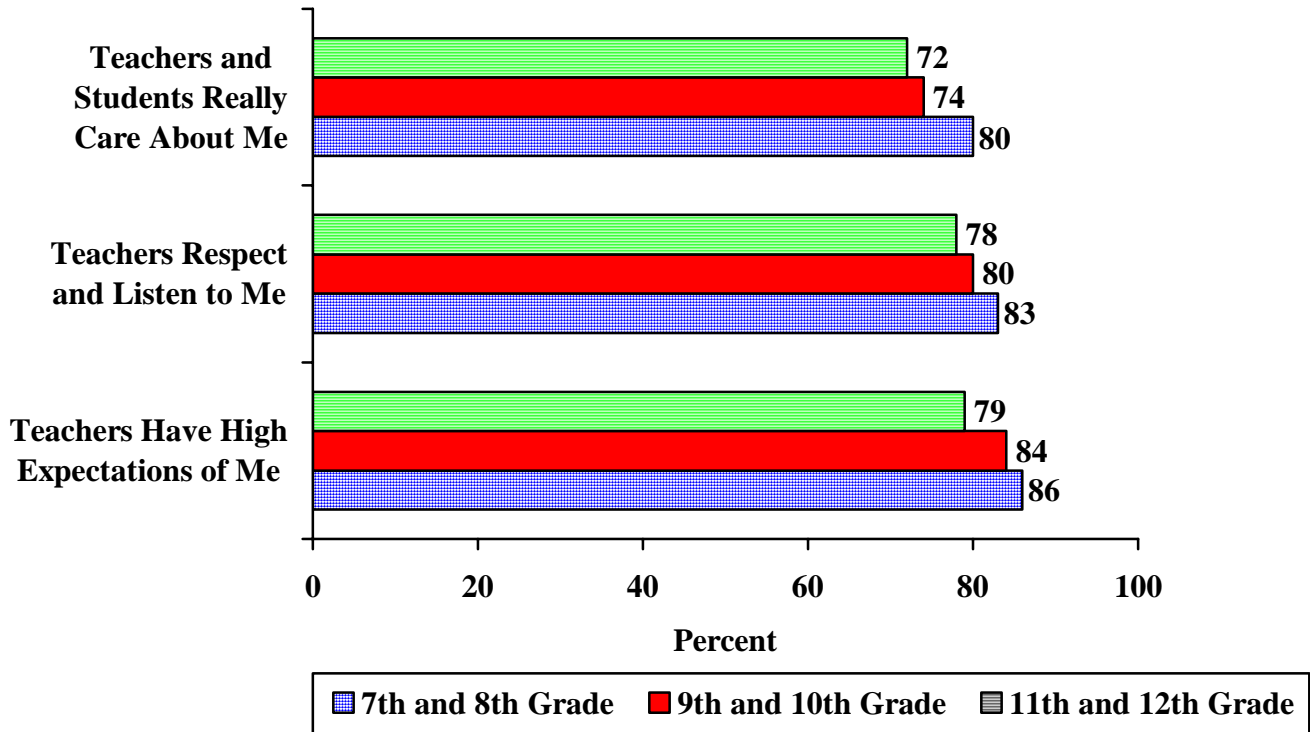
Forty-one percent (41%) of 7th grade males and 36% of 7th grade females “agree” or “strongly agree” the cost of participating in school activities keeps them from participating as much as they would like to.

The percentage of teens who “strongly agree” rules in their school are fairly enforced drops steadily from over 43% of 7th graders to less than 13% in 12th grade.

Thirty percent (30%) of all males and 36% of all females “strongly disagree” when asked if they enjoy going to school.

FEELINGS ABOUT TEACHERS

Students who “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” with the following statements about teachers at their school:



Key Findings:

Approximately 75% of all students “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that teachers and students really care about them.

More 7th and 8th grade students “*strongly agree*” that teachers at their school have high expectations of them and respect and listen to them than 9th-12th graders.

Other Notable Findings:

More than 80% of all students “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that teachers at their school have high expectations of them and teachers at their school respect and listen to them.

Seventy-two percent (72%) of males and 77% of females “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that teachers and student really care about them.

GRADES IN SCHOOL vs. ATTITUDES ABOUT SCHOOL AND TEACHERS

Percent of students who report getting “*mostly A’s*”, “*half A’s and half B’s*” and “*mostly B’s*” compared with attitudes about teachers and school:

	Percent of students in each category who report grades of A’s and B’s:			
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The rules at my school are fairly enforced.	71%	70%	65%	51%
I enjoy going to school.	78%	68%	50%	49%
Teachers in my school respect and listen to me.	75%	71%	55%	37%
Teachers in my school have high expectations of me.	77%	70%	46%	41%
<hr/>				
The costs of participating in school activities keeps me from participating as much as I would like to.	56%	58%	68%	74%
Teachers and students at my school really care about me.	76%	72%	55%	45%

Key Findings:

In general, the more students agree that rules in their school are fairly enforced, that they enjoy going to school, that teachers respect and listen to them, that teachers really care about them, and that have high expectations of them, the higher the likelihood that they will also report getting average grades of B’s or higher in their course work at school.

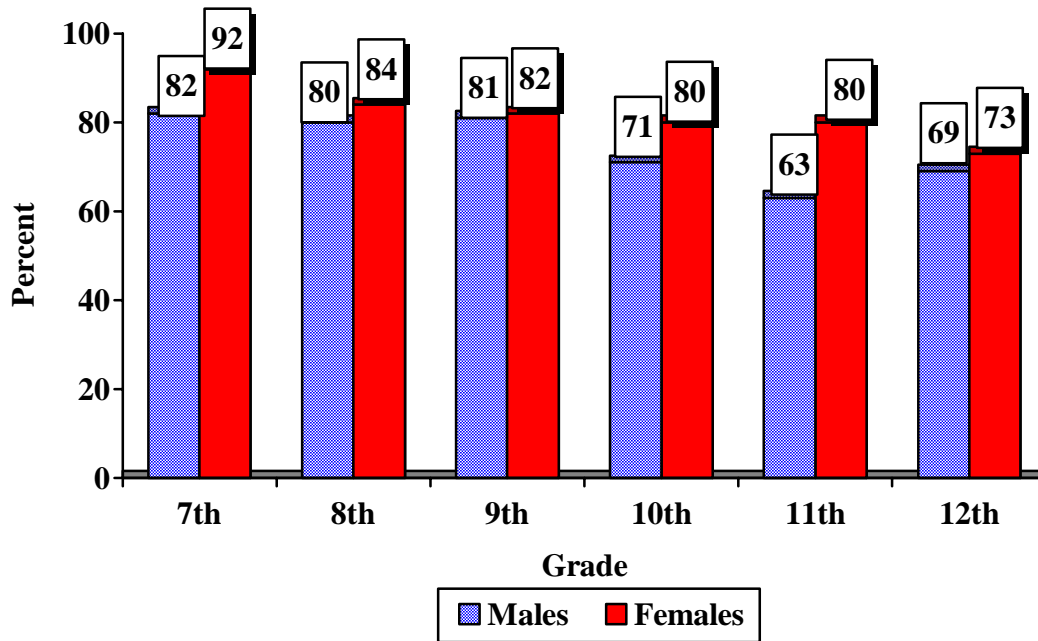
In general, the less students agree that the cost of participating in school activities keeps them from participating as much as they would like, the more likely they are to report getting average grades of B’s or higher in their course work at school.

Other Notable Findings:

Thirty-one percent (31%) of students who “*strongly disagree*” that they enjoy going to school, 23% of students who “*strongly disagree*” that rules in their school are fairly enforced, 35% of students who “*strongly disagree*” that teachers have high expectations of them and 35% of the students who “*strongly disagree*” that teachers respect and listen to them, report getting C’s or lower in their course work at school. Overall, 13% of students report getting average grades of C’s or lower in their course work at school.

I CARE ABOUT MY SCHOOL

Teens who “strongly agree” and “agree” with the statement, “I care about the school I go to”:



Key Findings:

Generally, over 78% of teens “strongly agree” or “agree” they care about the school they attend.

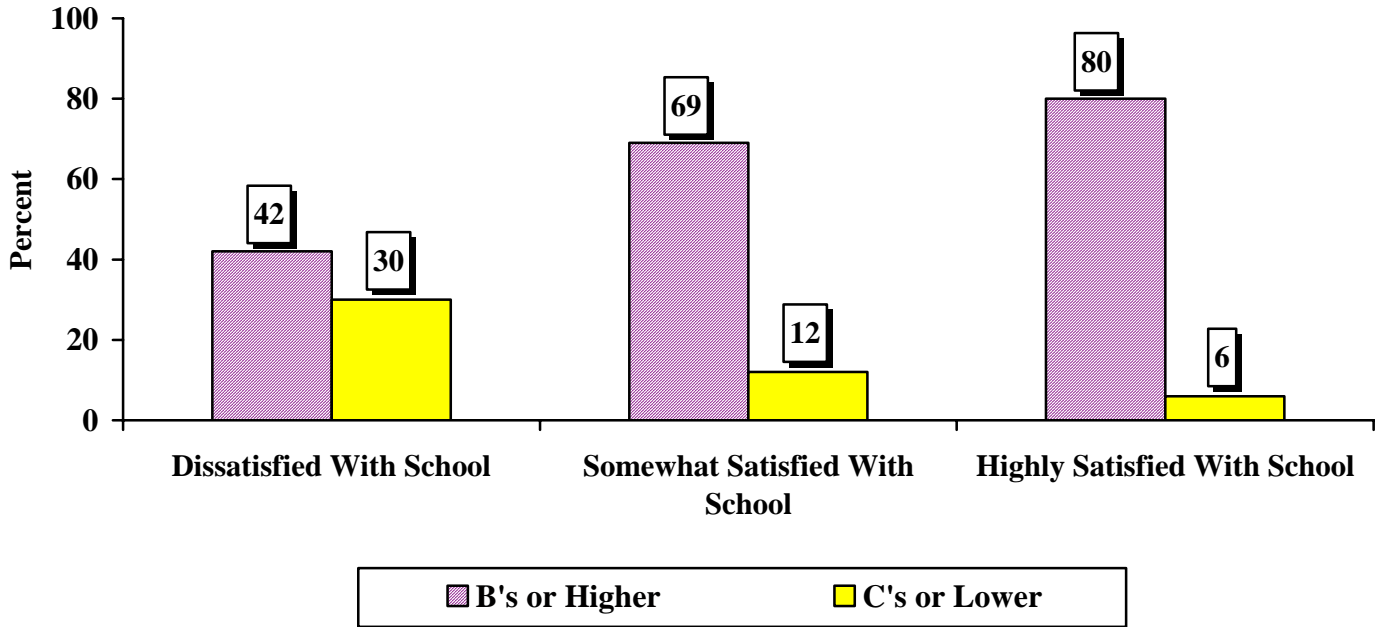
At every grade level, more females than males report they care about the school they attend.

Other Notable Findings:

Overall, 14% of students “disagree” with the statement, “I care about the school I go to.”

Overall, 8% of students “strongly disagree” with the statement, “I care about the school I go to.”

SCHOOL SATISFACTION SCALE* vs. GRADES** IN SCHOOL



* The school satisfaction scale measured the teen's overall satisfaction with their school and was computed using seven questions related to how teens felt about school. Higher scores correspond to greater satisfaction with school.

** Twenty percent of all teens report getting about half B's and half C's in the courses at school. These youth are not included in this graph.

Key Findings:

Eighty percent (80%) of students who are highly satisfied with school report getting average grades of B's or higher in their course work at school.

Thirty percent (30%) of students who are dissatisfied with school report getting average grades of C's or lower in their course work at school.

Other Notable Findings:

Twenty-one percent (21%) of students are highly satisfied with school, and 64% are somewhat satisfied.

Fifteen percent (15%) of students are dissatisfied with school.

TIME STUDYING COMPARED WITH GRADES*

Grades in school compared with average hours per week spent in the following activities:

		Percent of students in each category who report grades of A's and B's:				
		Under 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4 hours +
Time spent doing homework		63%	69%	70%	75%	72%

		Percent of students in each category who report grades of C's or lower:				
		Under 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4 hours +
Time spent doing homework		17%	11%	12%	10%	9%

* Twenty percent of all teens report getting about half B's and half C's in the courses at school. These youth are not included in these tables.

Key Finding:

In general, students who report spending at least one hour doing homework, report getting higher grades in their course work at school.

Other Notable Finding:

Seventy percent (70%) of the females report spending more than one hour per day doing homework, while 58% of the males report spending more than one hour per day doing homework.

TIME COMMITMENTS COMPARED WITH GRADES*

Grades in school compared with average hours per week spent in the following activities:

	Percent of students in each category who report grades of A's and B's:				
	None	Under 3 hours	3-9 hours	10-15 hours	15 hours +
Activities outside the classroom (sports, clubs, student government, 4-H, Scouts, etc.)	49%	64%	72%	81%	79%
Going to religious groups or services	57%	78%	79%	69%	79%
Helping people without pay	63%	74%	73%	68%	66%
Doing chores at home	52%	70%	71%	66%	64%

	Percent of students in each category who report grades of C's or lower:				
	None	Under 3 hours	3-9 hours	10-15 hours	15 hours +
Activities outside the classroom (sports, clubs, student government, 4-H, Scouts, etc.)	24%	11%	10%	8%	8%
Going to religious groups or services	18%	7%	7%	10%	8%
Helping people without pay	15%	10%	11%	13%	16%
Doing chores at home	24%	11%	9%	15%	14%

* Twenty percent of all teens report getting about half B's and half C's in the courses at school. These youth are not included in the tables on this page.

Key Finding:

In general, students who report spending at least some time in activities, outside the classroom, at church activities, volunteering, and doing chores at home, report getting higher grades in their course work at school.

Other Notable Findings:

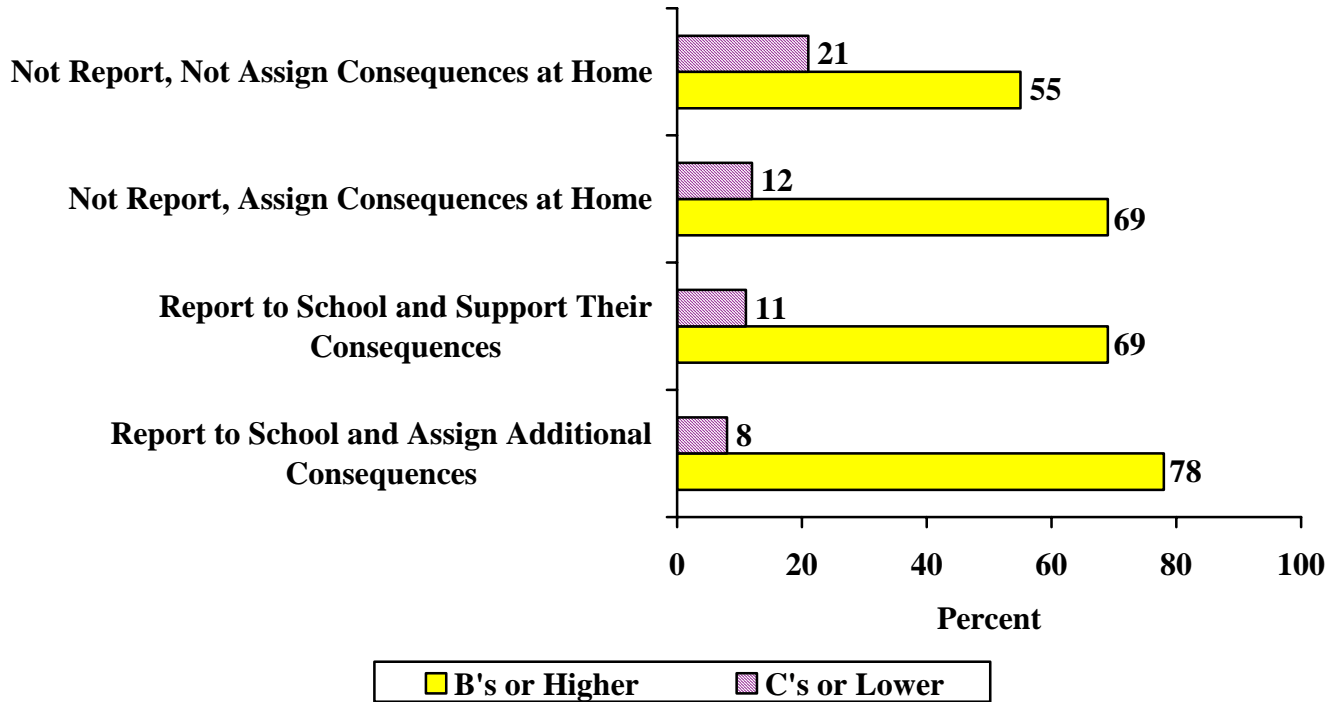
Students report spending their time in the following activities:

	Percent of students in each category who report grades of C's or lower:				
	None	Under 3 hours	3-9 hours	10-15 hours	15 hours +
Activities outside the classroom (sports, clubs, student government, 4-H, Scouts, etc.)	24%	27%	18%	19%	12%
Going to religious groups or services	51%	43%	4%	1%	>1%
Helping people without pay	54%	39%	5%	1%	1%
Doing chores at home	10%	63%	17%	4%	6%

Teens who report spending more than 20 hours per week working at a job report significantly lower grades in their course work at school.

PARENTAL SUPPORT OF SCHOOL CODES COMPARED WITH GRADES*

Teen responses to the question, “If you violated a school code (behavior, academic, athletic or activity) and your parents found out, what would they most likely do?” compared with grades in school:



* Twenty percent of all teens report getting about half B's and half C's in the courses at school. These youth are not included in this graph.

Key Finding:

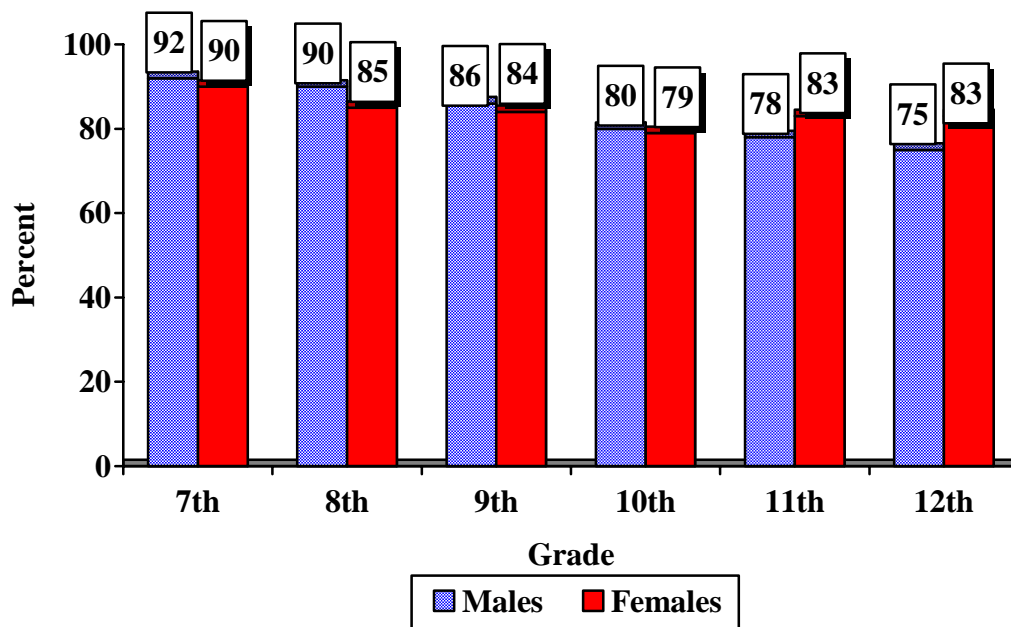
In general, if teens feel their parents will report a school code violation to school officials, they also report higher grades in their course work at school.

Other Notable Finding:

When asked, “If you violated a school code (behavior, academic, athletic or activity) and your parents found out, what would they most likely do?” 22% indicate their parents would not report them to school officials or assign consequences for their behavior, 34% indicate their parents would not report them to school officials but would assign consequences for their behavior privately, 21% indicate their parents would report them to school officials and support the consequences assigned by the school and 22% indicate their parents would report them to school officials and assign additional consequences.

PARENTS ARE INTERESTED IN SCHOOL

Teens who “*strongly agree*” and “*agree*” with statement, “*My parents are interested in what I learn and how I am doing in school*”:



Key Findings:

Generally, anywhere from 75-92% of teens “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that their parents are interested in what they learn and how they are doing in school.

Nine out of ten 7th graders (92% males, 90% females) “*strongly agree*” or “*agree*” that their parents are interested in what they learn and how they are doing in school.

Other Notable Findings:

Overall, 11% of students “*disagree*” with the statement, “*My parents are interested in what I learn and how I am doing in school.*”

Overall, 6% of students “*strongly disagree*” with the statement, “*My parents are interested in what I learn and how I am doing in school.*”

GRADES IN SCHOOL vs. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL

Percent of students who report getting “*mostly A’s*”, “*half A’s and half B’s*” and “*mostly B’s*” compared with attitudes about parental involvement in their education:

	Percent of students in each category who report grades of A’s and B’s:			
	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
My parents are interested in what I learn and how I’m doing in school.	74%	67%	56%	45%

Key Finding:

In general, the more students agree that their parents are interested in what they learn and how they are doing at school, the greater the likelihood that they will also report getting average grades of B’s or higher in their course work at school.

Other Notable Findings:

Twenty-six percent (26%) of students who “*strongly disagree*” that their parents are interested in what they learn and how they are doing at school report getting C’s or lower in their course work at school.

Eighteen percent (18%) of students who “*disagree*” that their parents are interested in what they learn and how they are doing at school report getting C’s or lower in their course work at school.

Overall, 13% of students report getting average grades of C’s or lower in their course work at school.