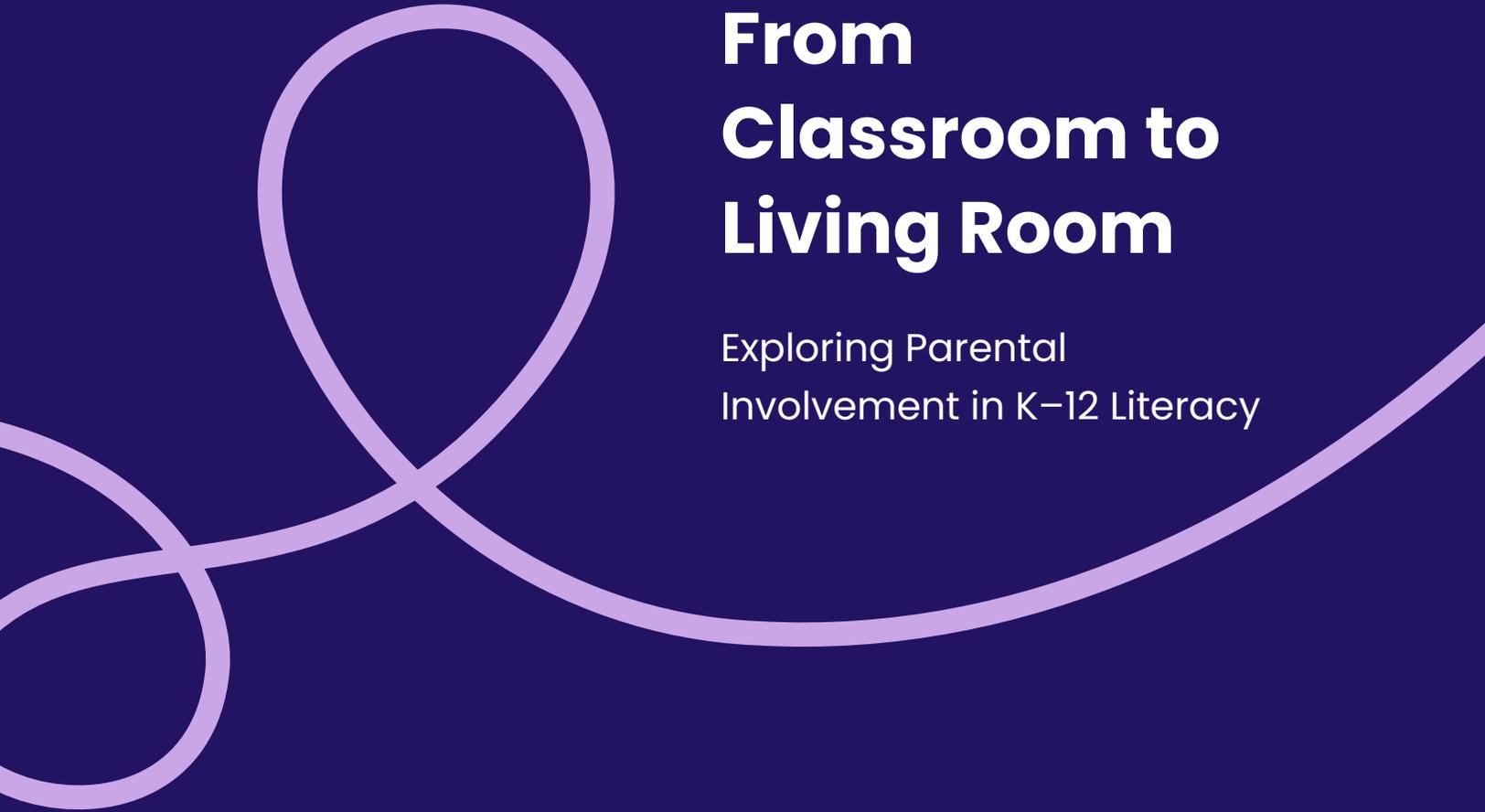


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LITERACY UPDATE

# **From Classroom to Living Room**

Exploring Parental  
Involvement in K–12 Literacy



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## Executive Summary

This report analyzes insights from the 2025 Back-to-School Teacher Survey, which examined teacher perspectives on parental involvement in reading development and the science of reading implementation. Based on responses from 1,518 teachers across K-12, the survey reveals significant challenges in effectively engaging parents in supporting student reading development at home.

Key findings indicate that while teachers recognize the importance of parental involvement, most report moderate to low levels of engagement from families. Teachers express a strong interest in the science of reading approaches but lack adequate support and resources to involve parents in these evidence-based practices. The data shows a clear need for more structured parent training, multilingual resources, and dedicated time for family engagement activities.

Survey respondents identify significant barriers to parental involvement, such as time constraints, language barriers, and parents' limited understanding of how to support reading at home. This emphasizes the need for comprehensive family literacy programs that connect classroom instruction with home support.

## Trends and Observations

Survey responses reveal a significant gap between teacher interest in engaging parents and the actual level of parental involvement achieved. Teachers are increasingly aware of science of reading principles but struggle to translate this knowledge into practical strategies for parent engagement.

Most teachers report using traditional communication methods, such as parent-teacher conferences and general newsletters. Fewer teachers utilize personalized, ongoing communication platforms that facilitate information flow between school and home. This indicates an opportunity for district leaders to invest in more dynamic communication technologies and training.

Teachers demonstrate significant interest in offering parents structured activities based on science of reading principles; however, many currently lack the necessary resources and training for effective implementation. This highlights the need for professional development that incorporates family engagement strategies.

The survey reveals parental work schedules and time constraints are the most significant barriers to involvement, followed by parents' limited understanding of how to support reading development. This underscores the need for flexible, accessible parent training options.



## Emerging Trends

**Resource accessibility and multilingual support** are being recognized as essential needs. Teachers point out that language barriers present a significant challenge, highlighting a trend toward more inclusive family engagement strategies.

**Technology-enhanced communication** is becoming a priority, as teachers show interest in platforms that promote more consistent home-school communication regarding reading progress.

**There is growing demand for Structured Literacy training for parents**, with teachers preferring to provide specific, evidence-based activities rather than general reading strategies.

**Professional development integration** reveals a trend toward connecting teacher training with family engagement, rather than treating these as separate initiatives.

Survey replies focus on:

- 1 Bridging communication gaps
- 2 Providing accessible parent training
- 3 Developing multilingual resources for diverse families

## Additional Insights

A more in-depth analysis of the survey results reveals several key insights for district leaders who want to enhance parental involvement in students' reading development:

- **Communication method diversification.** While most teachers use traditional methods like parent conferences and newsletters, there is growing recognition of the need for more personalized, ongoing communication. Teachers want technology platforms that enable real-time sharing of reading progress and specific home activities.
- **Barrier-focused solutions.** Identifying specific barriers—time constraints, language differences, and parent knowledge gaps—provides clear targets for intervention. Educators need flexible programming that accommodates working parents and multilingual families.
- **Science of reading translation.** Teachers show strong interest in the science of reading principles but need support in translating these concepts into parent-friendly language and activities.
- **Professional development gaps.** Many teachers report receiving little to no district support for parent engagement related to reading instruction and support. This suggests that current professional development programs may not adequately address family engagement components.
- **Resource accessibility.** Teachers consistently identify the need for decodable texts and Structured Literacy materials parents can use at home, indicating a market opportunity for educational publishers.
- **Evaluation challenges.** Most teachers lack systematic methods for evaluating the impact of parental involvement, relying primarily on anecdotal observations rather than formal assessment tools.



## Key Findings

Here are the specific findings from the survey, with detailed response breakdowns following in the next section.

### 1 Science of Reading Implementation Levels (Q1)

- **Primary trend:** Teachers show varying levels of confidence and training in the science of reading principles
  - 31% are very interested but want more professional development (477 responses)
  - 29% are fully trained and confident (441 responses)
  - 25% are aware but don't have it at their school (385 responses)
  - 14% are starting to incorporate some activities (215 responses)
- **Implication:** There is significant interest in the science of reading, but substantial training gaps remain.

### 2 Current Level of Parental Involvement (Q2)

- **Primary trend:** Most teachers report low to moderate parental involvement in reading support.
  - 39% report inconsistent involvement that varies widely (595 responses)
  - 38% describe involvement as moderate, with some engaged parents (570 responses)
  - 14% report low involvement, with few parents participating (220 responses)
  - Only 9% report very high involvement (133 responses)
- **Implication:** Parental engagement is inconsistent and represents a significant opportunity for improvement.

### 3 Communication Methods With Parents (Q3)

- **Current approaches:**
  - 56% use scheduled parent-teacher conferences (854 responses)
  - 55% provide regular personalized updates via email/text/apps (837 responses)
  - 46% use selective communications primarily for concerns (700 responses)
  - 35% send general classroom newsletters (531 responses)
- **Implication:** Teachers rely heavily on traditional communication methods, but there is an opportunity for more proactive, ongoing engagement.

#### 4 Barriers to Parental Involvement (Q4)

- **Key barriers:**
  - 79% cite parents' work schedules and time constraints (1,121 responses)
  - 66% identify a limited understanding of how to support reading (938 responses)
  - 59% report parents' own literacy challenges (842 responses)
  - 53% note language barriers (749 responses)
  - 46% cite lack of home resources (660 responses)
- **Implication:** Time constraints and knowledge gaps are the primary obstacles requiring targeted solutions.

#### 5 Current Science of Reading Support for Parents (Q5)

- **Support strategies:**
  - 35% recommend resources but don't explicitly connect them to the science of reading (495 responses)
  - 30% don't currently provide science of reading guidance (431 responses)
  - 20% share general strategies without explicit connections (283 responses)
  - 15% provide specific, structured activities aligned with principles (215 responses)
- **Implication:** Most teachers are not connecting parents effectively to science of reading practices at home.

#### 6 Most Beneficial Parent Training Resources (Q6)

- **Ranked preferences:**
  - In-person workshops explaining the science of reading basics (909 first-place votes)
  - Video tutorials demonstrating techniques (892 second-place votes)
  - Written communications about specific strategies (852 third-place votes)
  - Access to decodable texts and materials (792 fourth-place votes)
- **Implication:** Teachers strongly prefer interactive, hands-on training approaches for parents.

#### 7 Evaluating Impact of Parental Involvement (Q7)

- **Evaluation methods:**
  - 52% usually see improvement when families work on reading at home (705 responses)
  - 34% don't have a way to evaluate home reading progress (469 responses)
  - 14% use family feedback forms (192 responses)
- **Implication:** Most evaluation is based on observation rather than systematic measurement.

## 8 School/District Support for Parent Engagement (Q8)

- **Support levels:**
  - 34% of teachers receive little to no school support (469 responses)
  - 31% have received some resources and materials (430 responses)
  - 24% had professional development on family engagement (329 responses)
  - 10% have comprehensive family literacy programs (138 responses)
- **Implication:** District support for parent engagement in reading is inadequate in most cases.

## 9 Improving Parent-Teacher Collaboration (Q9)

- **Identified needs:**
  - 62% want more guidance on how parents can support reading (847 responses)
  - 53% need better multilingual resources (728 responses)
  - 49% want more time built into schedules (666 responses)
  - 48% desire better technology platforms for communication (662 responses)
- **Implication:** Teachers need multiple forms of support to improve family engagement effectiveness.

## 10 Grade-Level Distribution (Q10)

- **Teacher representation:**
  - 26% teach grades K-2 (352 responses)
  - 25% teach grades 3-5 (342 responses)
  - 25% teach grades 6-8 (342 responses)
  - 24% teach grades 9-12 (330 responses)
- **Implication:** Survey response represents balanced input across all grade levels.



## Conclusion

The Back-to-School Teacher Survey reveals both significant challenges and clear opportunities in engaging parents to support student reading development at home. While teachers recognize the importance of parental involvement and show growing interest in science of reading approaches, substantial barriers prevent effective implementation.

The data indicates successful parent engagement requires a multifaceted approach addressing time constraints, language barriers, and knowledge gaps. District leaders who invest in comprehensive family literacy programs, multilingual resources, and flexible training options are positioned to significantly improve reading outcomes.

Teachers are eager for support in translating the science of reading principles into practical parent guidance. This represents an opportunity for professional development providers and curriculum companies to fill critical gaps in the market.

The survey findings align with broader educational trends toward family engagement and evidence-based reading instruction, positioning district leaders to leverage parental involvement as a key strategy for improving literacy outcomes across diverse student populations.

## Survey Response Tables

### 1. Where are you on your science of reading journey?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
I'm very interested in the science of reading, and I'm using some strategies, but I would like some professional development to better understand it.	477	31%
I'm fully trained and confident in using the science of reading evidence to support my literacy instruction.	441	29%
I'm aware of the science of reading, but we don't have it at my school.	385	25%
I'm starting to incorporate some science reading activities, but it's not a primary focus at my school.	215	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>100%</b>

*The largest group of teachers (31%) expresses interest in the science of reading but desires more professional development, while 29% feel fully trained and confident.*

### 2. How would you describe the current level of parental involvement in supporting your students' reading development at home?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
Inconsistent—parental involvement varies widely across my classroom.	595	39%
Moderate—some parents are engaged, but many are not consistently involved.	570	38%
Low—few parents are involved in supporting reading.	220	14%
Very high—most parents are actively engaged and supportive.	133	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>100%</b>

*A majority (77%) of teachers report inconsistent or moderate parental involvement, with only 9% experiencing very high engagement.*

### 3. What methods do you currently use to communicate with parents about their child's reading progress?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
Scheduled parent-teacher conferences.	854	29%
Regular personalized updates via email, text, or app-based platforms.	837	29%
Selective communications primarily when there are concerns about reading progress.	700	24%
General classroom newsletters or updates that include reading information.	531	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals exceed the number of survey respondents due to "check all that apply" responses. Most teachers use multiple communication methods.*

#### 4. What barriers limit parental involvement in students' reading development?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
Parents' work schedules and time constraints.	1,121	26%
Parents have a limited understanding of how to support reading at home.	938	22%
Parents' own literacy challenges or negative experiences with reading.	842	20%
Language barriers between school and home.	749	17%
Lack of resources (books, technology) in the home.	660	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,310</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals exceed the number of survey respondents due to "check all that apply" responses. Work schedules and parent knowledge gaps are the most significant barriers.*

#### 5. How do you currently support parents in implementing the science of reading principles at home?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
I recommend resources (books, websites, apps) that support reading development.	495	35%
I don't currently provide science of reading guidance for home practice.	431	30%
I share general reading strategies but don't explicitly connect them to the science of reading.	283	20%
I provide specific, structured activities aligned with the science of reading principles.	215	15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,424</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Only 15% of teachers provide specific, structured science of reading activities for parents, while 30% provide no guidance at all.*

#### 6. What type of parent training or resources would be most beneficial for supporting at-home student reading development? (Rank order)

Rank	Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
1	In-person workshops	909	26%
2	Video tutorials	892	26%
3	Written communications	852	25%
4	Decodable texts	792	23%
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,445</b>	<b>100%</b>

*There is an even distribution of parent resources teachers regard as the most helpful for improving student reading development at home.*

## 7. How do you evaluate the impact of parental involvement on student reading progress?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
I usually see improvement when students work at home with their families on reading.	705	52%
I don't really have a way to evaluate reading at home progress.	469	34%
I use family feedback forms to gauge parental involvement.	192	14%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>100%</b>

*More than half (52%) of teachers rely on observational evidence, while 34% have no systematic evaluation method.*

## 8. How has your school or district supported your efforts to engage parents in the science of reading practices?

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
We receive little to no school support for parent engagement in reading practices.	469	34%
We've received some resources and materials to share with parents.	430	31%
We've had professional development on family engagement but not specifically for the science of reading.	329	24%
We have a comprehensive family literacy program aligned with the science of reading principles.	138	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Only 10% of teachers report having comprehensive family literacy programs, while 34% receive little to no support.*

**9. What would make your parent-teacher collaboration more effective in supporting student reading development?**

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
More guidance on how parents can support reading at home.	847	29%
Better resources in multiple languages to support diverse families.	728	25%
More time built into the schedule for parent communication and training.	666	23%
Technology platforms that facilitate more consistent home-school communication about reading.	662	23%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,903</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Totals exceed the number of survey respondents due to “check all that apply” responses. Guidance for parents and multilingual resources are the top priorities.*

**10. Which grade span reflects the grade you teach?**

Answer	Number Response	Percent Response
K-2	352	26%
3-5	342	25%
6-8	342	25%
9-12	330	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,366</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Survey responses are evenly distributed across all grade levels, providing balanced representation.*

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