



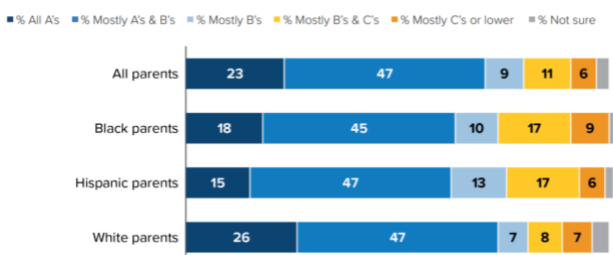
B-flation: How Good Grades Can Sideline Parents

In fall 2023, Learning Heroes partnered with Gallup to explore how parents perceive, evaluate, and support their children's academic progress. Families play a critical role in learning, yet these findings reveal an alarming disconnect between parent perception and reality when it comes to student achievement.

Using the Gallup Panel, the study surveyed nearly 2,000 K-12 public school parents nationwide. Survey results underscore that, *without a more comprehensive understanding of student achievement—combining classroom performance, teacher feedback, and standardized assessments and other measures—parents may miss key opportunities to support their children's learning and development.* These data also highlight the need for teachers to be trained in engaging families so that homes and schools can effectively team up around student success. Below are some highlights:

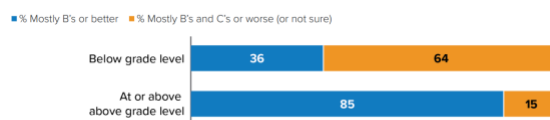
Parents' perceptions of student performance are largely based on report cards but are misaligned with other measures.

- Almost nine in 10 parents say their child is at or above grade level in reading (88%) and math (89%). This deviates sharply from other measures, including standardized test scores, which suggest that less than half of children are performing at grade level, and recent NAEP data, which indicates that only 30% of 8th graders are proficient and above in reading and math.
- Sixty-four percent of parents cite report cards as an important measure to know how their child achieves, suggesting parents rely on report cards as a primary measure of their child's progress. With 79% of parents saying their child receives mostly B's or better, parents may need more measures beyond report cards to know when they should step in.
- In 50CAN's national survey of 20,000 parents, respondents said they trust communication from their children's teachers more than any source of information to gauge whether their children are on track. This data underscores the need for educator training and tools to have difficult conversations with parents.



Among parents who say their child is below grade level in reading, about one-third see mostly B's or better on their child's report card.

When you think about your child's report cards, what grades does he/she typically get?





When parents realize their child is not performing on grade level, they have different concerns and are more likely to act.

- Ninety-seven percent of parents who know their child is below grade level in math are worried about their child's math skills, compared with 22% of all parents who say their child is at or above grade level.
- Seventy-four percent of parents who know their child is below grade level in math and have had conversations with their child's teacher say they've discussed their concerns about their child's academic progress. This compares with 50% of all parents who have talked to their child's teacher.
- In a hypothetical scenario where their child receives a B in math but has two math test scores indicating they are below-grade-level (a year-end test and a district-wide benchmarking test), over half of parents say they would be very or extremely (56%) concerned. This suggests that recognizing low test scores might alert parents to academic challenges, even when their child continues to receive a B or better on their report card. Trusting partnerships with teachers could be key to translating standardized and benchmarked test scores for parents, and to helping them understand their child's performance.
- In Learning Heroes' Go Beyond Grades campaign highlighting the disconnect between parent perception and reality, parents who specifically recalled the campaign messaging were almost twice as likely to take specific actions, including asking the teacher if their child is at grade level, having a conversation with the child's teacher to learn where their child needs support and relying on multiple measures in addition to grades to understand their child's achievement.

Key Takeaways

- **Families see reading & math as key to their child's success** | Parents overwhelmingly believe that strong reading and math skills are necessary for success beyond high school.
- **Lean into strong parent-teacher relationships** | Research shows that parental involvement, in partnership with their child's teacher, has a powerful impact in supporting a child's academic progress throughout the year.
- **Connect parents with multiple measures of achievement** | Families would welcome multiple measures of student progress that are accessible, understandable and timely.
- **The College Dream Is Evolving** | 57% of parents said it was absolutely essential or very important to get a degree. The number of parents who believe this dropped by 20 points between 2022 and 2023.



About Learning Heroes

Learning Heroes' mission is to accelerate meaningful family-school partnerships that drive student achievement, school success, and thriving communities. For more information, visit www.bealearninghero.org.

For additional data and information visit: www.bealearningheroes.org/research and scroll to "B-
flation: How Good Grades Sideline Parents."