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1/4 OF PARENTS NOT ACTIVE IN CHILD'S EDUCATION

About one-quarter of parents have done nothing to get to know their children's teachers nor done anything to help teachers understand the needs of their children, according to a new study.

Twenty-six percent of Michigan parents polled in the survey said they had done nothing to get to know their child's teachers, slightly more than the 21 percent who said they had done nothing in the average of all states surveyed. The study, paid for by an education group called Your Child, covers Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Your Child is a coalition of several education and family organizations: the Michigan Education Association, The Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice, Middle Cities Education Association, Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association, Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals and the Michigan Alliance for Gifted Education.

Parents who have not made an effort to get to know their child's teacher are less likely to feel like a full partner in education, believe teachers fully understand what's expected of them and belong to parent-teacher groups, according to the survey.

"Educators must make every effort to reach every parent, especially those who do not raise their hand and say, 'What about my child?'" said MEA President Lu Battaglieri. "We cannot let any parents fall through the cracks because the likelihood is that their children will as well."

The poll, conducted in early October among 1,700 parents in the six states by the Lansing-based polling firm EPIC/MRA, has an error margin of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Michigan parents also communicate the least with teachers, raise the fewest questions about their child's education and have the lowest level of satisfaction about the quality of education their child is receiving, the poll said in comparing Michigan to the other five states surveyed.

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