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Arizona Education Policy Initiative

**\*\*\*NEWS RELEASE\*\*\***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Arizona Education Policy Initiative Releases Statewide Survey**  
*Parent Attitudes about Education in Arizona: 2005*

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Monday, May 2, 2005)—A statewide survey conducted to obtain Arizona parents' opinions about pre-K-12 education in the state has revealed for the second-consecutive year that parents view inadequate funding as the biggest challenge facing Arizona's public schools.

“The survey suggests that Arizona parents do not point to school-related policies and practices as the primary cause of low test scores and student dropout rates, but rather view home and family factors as more likely reasons for student academic difficulties,” said David Garcia, Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Assistant Director of the Education Policy Studies Laboratory at Arizona State University.

The Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI) is a collaboration of ASU, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona. AEPI is administered by the ASU Education Policy Studies Laboratory. Launched in September 2003, AEPI utilizes the expertise of faculty at Arizona's public universities to provide policy makers and the public with high-quality information about Arizona education policies and practices. The survey was conducted for AEPI by Garcia; Alex Molnar, ASU Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies and Director of the Education Policy Studies Laboratory; and Bruce Merrill, ASU Professor in the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism.

The survey was administered via telephone in March to a random statewide sample of 398 Arizona parents and an additional statewide sample of 93 Hispanic Arizona parents with children attending public schools. Results were separated by Anglo and Hispanic parents, making it possible to compare differences in opinion between Arizona's two largest racial/ethnic groups.

The results offer a broad glimpse of Arizona parents' opinions in 2005 as provided in a report released Monday titled: *Parent Attitudes about Education in Arizona: 2005*.

When asked to rate their schools, the Arizona parents surveyed exhibited a pattern consistent with parents nationally. The survey suggests that Arizona parents perceive the schools that their children attend more favorably than Arizona public schools in general, with more than three-fourths of the respondents grading the school their oldest child attends an "A" or a "B" while only 39 percent of those surveyed graded all Arizona public schools an "A" or a "B."

"The majority of parents continue to oppose private school vouchers," Molnar said, "perhaps because they do not regard vouchers as a means of improving public schools." This conclusion is supported by the finding that a considerably larger percentage of parents this year expressed the belief that providing public dollars to private schools will have a negative effect on public schools. Support for tuition tax credits, however, has increased compared to last year.

As the debates continue in legislative circles about the merits of full-day kindergarten, over 75 percent of the parents surveyed expressed their support for publicly-funded, full-day kindergarten with an even higher level of support among Hispanic parents.

Parents favor the use of standardized testing to hold schools accountable and a slim majority of parents remain supportive of students passing AIMS as a prerequisite of high school graduation. But there is increased sentiment against high-stakes testing for students.

The survey report and the technical appendices, which contain the survey methods, survey questions, and technical information about the tables in the report, are available on the Education Policy Studies Laboratory Website at:  
[http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/ AEPI/AEPI\\_2005\\_annual\\_survey.htm](http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/ AEPI/AEPI_2005_annual_survey.htm)

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The Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI) is a collaborative project of Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, and the University of Arizona, launched in September 2003. AEPI's projects utilize the expertise of Arizona's public universities' faculty to contribute to Arizona education policy and practice.

Visit the AEPI website at <http://arizonaeducationpolicy.org>

The Education Policy Studies Laboratory (EPSL) at Arizona State University offers high quality analyses of national education policy issues and provides an analytical resource for educators, journalists, and citizens. It includes the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI), the Commercialism in Education Research Unit (CERU), the Education Policy Research Unit (EPRU), and the Language Policy Research Unit (LPRU). The EPSL is directed by Professor Alex Molnar.

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