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Arizona Education Policy Initiative

*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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**SURVEY: PARENTS APPROVE OF AIMS GRADUATION REQUIREMENT;
HISPANIC PARENTS WANT STRONGER ACCOUNTABILITY**

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TEMPE, Ariz. (Wednesday, May 17, 2006) —Arizona parents support the use of the AIMS (Arizona Instrument to Measure Standards) test as a graduation requirement, according to “Parent Attitudes about Education in Arizona: 2006,” the third-annual survey conducted by the Arizona Education Policy Initiative (AEPI) and the Education Policy Studies Laboratory.

The survey gauges the opinions of Arizona parents on key education issues such as standardized testing (AIMS), school accountability, school choice, minority education, language acquisition, and early education. In past AEPI parent surveys, parental support of the AIMS graduation requirement was middling and declining. This year, however, parents reversed course; 61 percent now favor the test as a graduation requirement, a 10 percent increase from last year and an 18 percent increase from 2004.

The AEPI parent survey also monitors the opinions of Anglo and Hispanic parents. For the first time in the three years of the survey, the opinions of Hispanic parents have diverged in a clear and consistent direction away from those of Anglo parents.

When compared to the opinion of Anglo parents, Hispanic parents are:

- More likely to favor creating an alternative public education system rather than changing the current system;
- More likely to favor more stringent accountability policies for students and schools;
- More likely to hold a favorable opinion of the No Child Left Behind Act;

- Less likely to believe that they can choose the best school for their child in the existing public school system; and
- Not as opposed to state takeover as a school reform strategy for underperforming schools.

In addition, the survey also found:

- Seventy-three percent of parents support publicly-funded, full-day kindergarten.
- Less than 40 percent of parents approve of using public money for students to attend private schools whether through vouchers or scholarships.
- Sixty-six percent of parents said they are knowledgeable about tuition tax credits, and of those who are knowledgeable, 62 percent were in favor of tuition tax credits. Overall, 41 percent of parents are in favor of tuition tax credits.
- In a reversal of the 2005 results, parents consider placing English Language Learners in classrooms where both English and their native language are spoken as the best way to teach students English.
- As in the previous two surveys, parents still consider inadequate funding as the biggest challenge facing Arizona schools.
- Fifty-seven percent of parents hold a favorable view of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, but 80 percent oppose withholding funds from underperforming schools that don't improve.

Find the survey on the web at:

http://www.asu.edu/educ/eps/ AEPI/AEPI_2006_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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