

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs

# California GEAR UP

**Gear UP Report:**  
**Parent Survey: Three Year Comparison Data (2001-2004)**

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**Introduction**

One of the goals of the GEAR UP program is to reach out to parents of students and help them support their children's college aspirations. During the course of the GEAR UP program, parents were typically invited to go to college field trips, attend college informational sessions, and encouraged to talk to their kids about going to college. In addition, parents were given a survey asking them about their expectations for their children, their views on teachers, school administrators, and the level of conversation they have with their children about college. This survey aimed to gauge changes in parent expectations from year to year, and gain a sense of parent attitudes towards college.

The following report presents the findings from the survey for all three years. It should be noted that in Year 2 of survey administration certain items were not included, that were present in the first and third year administration. Meaning that for some items there can only be a Year 1 and Year 3 comparison, because some questions were not asked on the survey in Year 2. The report will be divided into four sections grouped around thematic similarities in the survey. The first section will highlight parent demographic information (e.g. SES, ethnicity, relationship to child, etc.). The second section looks at parent perceptions and expectations for their children. The third section focuses on parent perception of teachers, administrators and the school. The final section looks at the level of parent involvement in their children's academics.

**Section 1: Demographics**

The number of parents who took the survey changed from year to year. In Year 1 70 parents completed the survey, in Year 2, 116 parents completed the survey, and in Year 3, 57 parents completed the survey. These changes may affect parent responses, especially if surveyed parents differed demographically from year to year. Looking at the parent demographics, we see that in Year 1, all the parents surveyed were Latina/o (Table 1). This changed in Year 2 and 3, where there was a more even mix between African-American and Latina/o parents (Table 1). Most of the parents were also the biological

parents to students in the program (Table 2). In addition, almost 90 percent of parents in Year 1 were immigrants to the United States, and about half indicated that they were immigrants in Years 2 and 3 (Table 3). The main language spoken at home was Spanish in Year 1, and then about half of that in Years 2 and 3 (Table 4). Please note that the immigration statistics and home language statistics reflect the fact that only Latina/o parents were part of the Year 1 survey.

In terms of level of education and income, most parents in Year 1 and 2 indicated that high school was their highest level of education (Table 5). However in Year 3, many parents indicated that they have had some college as their highest level of education (Table 5). This is interesting to note because the Year 3 parents, in general, tended to report earnings of more than \$50,000 (Year 1= 0%, Year 2= 5%, Year 3= 19%, Graph 1). In addition, a higher percentage of Year 3 parents reported not being eligible for the free or reduced lunch program for their children (Year 1= 7%, Year 2= 9%, Year 3= 28%, Graph 2). It appears that relative to other years, Year 3 parents, in general, tended to have a higher level of education and earned a higher income.

***Table 1. Ethnic distribution***

	<b><u>Year 1</u></b>	<b><u>Year 2</u></b>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b>
African-American	0.00%	47.06%	40.35%
Asian American	0.00%	1.68%	1.75%
Latina/o	100.00%	47.06%	52.63%
Native American	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
White	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Mixed ethnicity	0.00%	2.52%	1.75%
Other	0.00%	0.84%	3.51%

***Table 2. Parent relationship with students***

	<b><u>Year 1</u></b>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b>
Biological parent	97.14%	96.49%
Grandparent	1.43%	1.75%
Adoptive Parent	1.43%	1.75%
Total	100%	100

**Table 3. Did you immigrate to the US?**

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
No	3.08%	50%	40.35%
Yes	96.92%	50%	52.63%
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

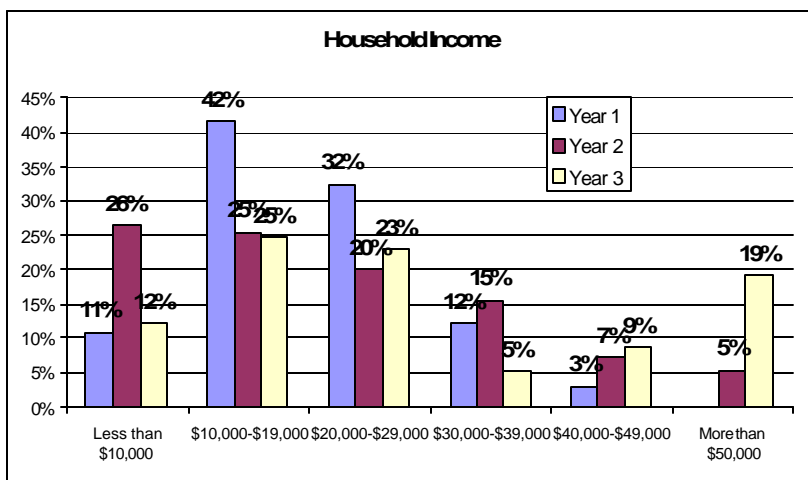
**Table 4. Primary language spoken in you home**

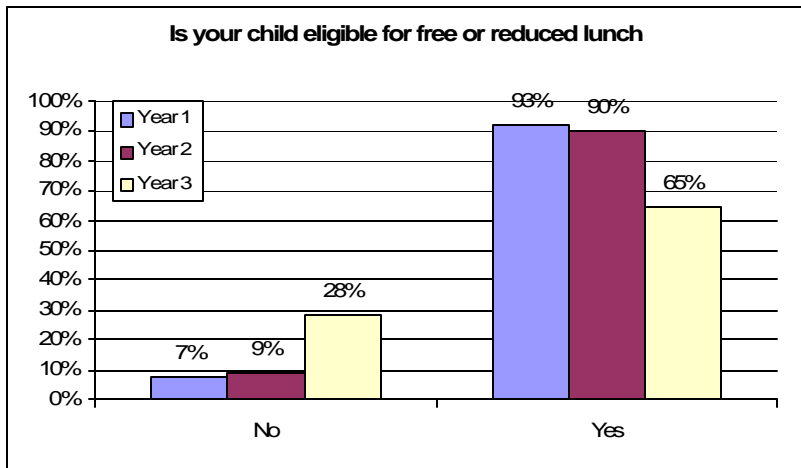
	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
English	3.08%	56.14%	49.12%
Spanish	95.38%	43.86%	43.86%
Other	1.54%	0.00%	7.02%
Total	100%	100%	100%

**Table 5. Highest level of education?**

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>
Elementary school	35.29%	10.19%	8.77%
Some high school	7.35%	13.89%	28.07%
Graduated high school	51.47%	29.63%	12.28%
Trade school	0.00%	7.41%	5.26%
Some college	0.00%	22.22%	29.82%
Associates degree	1.47%	4.63%	5.26%
Bachelors degree	0.00%	7.41%	5.26%
Masters degree	0.00%	4.63%	5.26%
Total	100	100	100

**Graph 1.**



**Graph 2.**

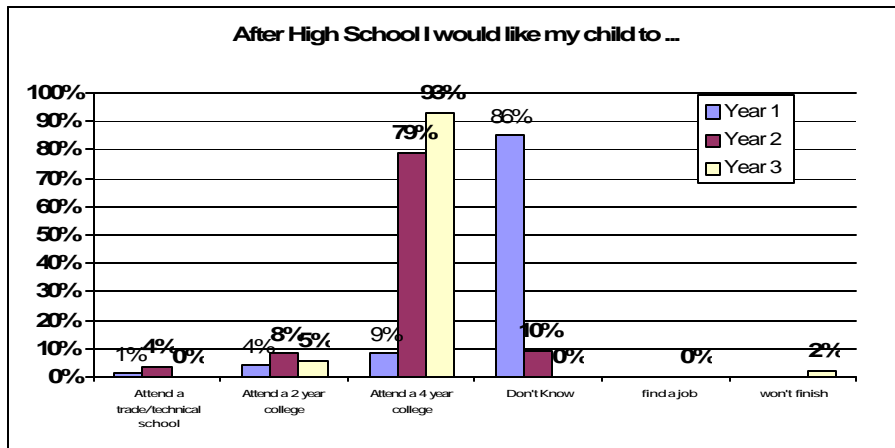
### **Section 2: Parent expectations for their children**

Parents were asked about what they wanted their children to do after completing high school. Most parents, in Year 2 and indicated that they would like for their children to go to a four year college (Year 2= 79%, Year 3= 93%, Graph 3). In contrast, during Year 1, parents were asked about what they wanted their kids to do, most (Year 1= 86%) indicated that they did not know what it is that they hoped for their children's future (Graph 3). This is an interesting contrast, because it appears that in later years, when a more diverse parent population was surveyed, parents seemed more dedicated to having their children go on to college, especially parents surveyed in Year 3 (who, as mentioned previously, were more affluent and had higher educational levels).

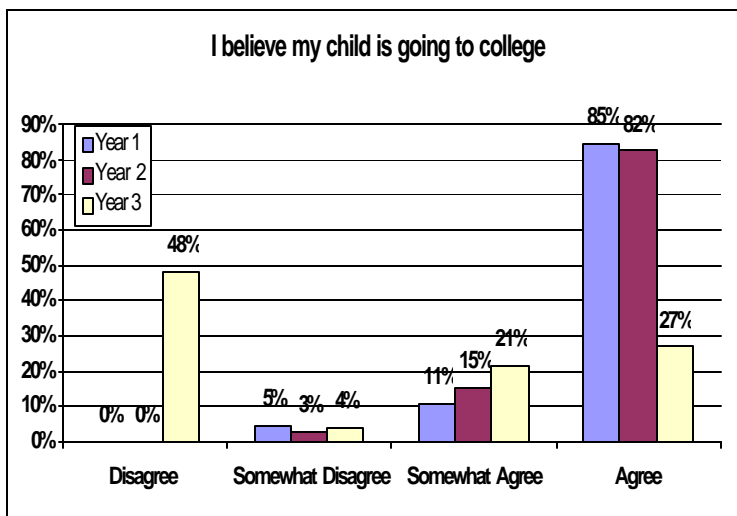
When parents were then asked if they *believed* or *expected* their children to go to college, most parents in Year 1 (85%) and Year 2 (82%) agreed with this statement (Graph 4). In contrast, many parents (48%) in Year 3 did not believe or expect their children to go to college (Graph 4). This contrast is not consistent with the results of what parents want for their children (previous paragraph). On the one hand, Year 3 parents hoped that their children would go on to a four year college, and on the other hand, these parents did not expect their children to make it to college. This should be explored further to try to understand the reasons underlying this contradiction. It could be the case that many Year 3 parents hope the best for their children, but know about the reality or obstacles (e.g. financial) that need to be overcome in order to attend college. This explanation is supported by another survey item. When parents were asked if they

believed that their children could not attend college because it was too expensive, the majority of Year 3 parents (69%) agreed with the statement (Graph 5). In contrast, the majority Year 1 parents (57%) disagreed with the same statement (Graph 5). So, it appears that Year 3 parents want their children to go to college, but believe that it is a difficult goal to attain. Further conversations and information is needed to get to the underlying reasons behind this trend.

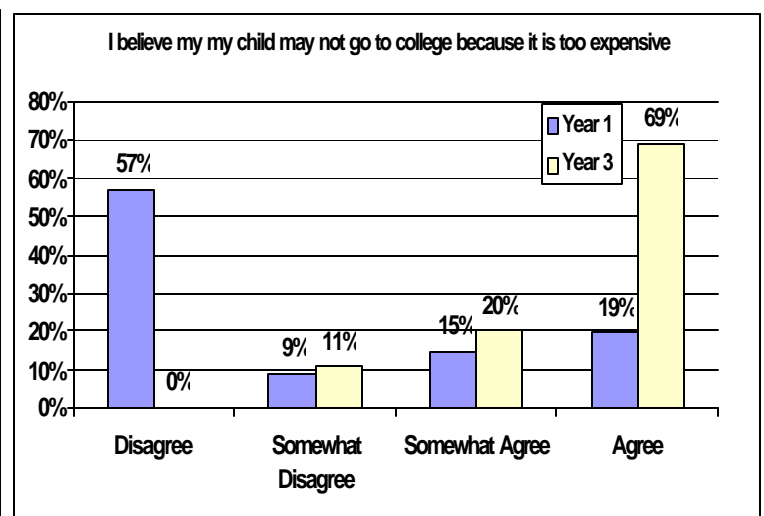
**Graph 3.**



**Graph 4.**



**Graph 5.**



### **Section 3: Parent perceptions of teachers, administrators, & the school**

This section encompasses many parent perspectives about teachers, administrators and the school. For this reason this section will be divided into three subsections addressing each group individually. The first subsection will focus on parent perceptions

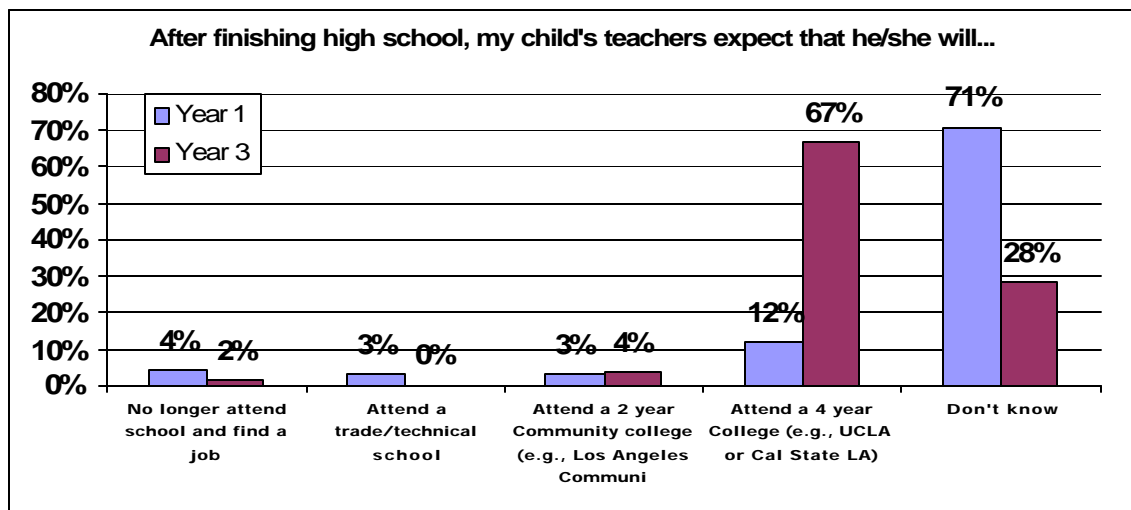
of teachers. The second subsection looks at how parents view school administrators, and the final subsection looks at how parents view the school.

### **Subsection 3A: Parent perceptions of teachers**

When parents were asked about their views of teachers, the majority of them believed that teachers were good teachers who cared about their children and their learning. These results declined from Year 1 to Year 3, but they still remained in a majority. Looking at what parents believe is teachers' expectations for their children, we find that in Year 1 most parents (71%) could not guess or infer what teachers expected of their children (Graph 6) (it should be noted that Year 2 was not included because this question did not appear on the Year 2 survey). In contrast, most of Year 3 parents (67%) believed that teachers expected their children to go to a four year college after finishing high school (Graph 6). This difference could be due to the differences in the parent population from Year 1 to Year 3. Further investigation is needed to understand the reasons behind this shift.

Parents were also asked other questions about teachers at the school (Table 6). Most parents, in both Year 1 and Year 3, believed that teachers were good teachers, who were committed to their children and their jobs, and able to support and impact students academically (Table 6).

**Graph 6**



***Table 6. Parent perceptions of teachers***

	<b><u>Year 1</u></b> <i>Disagree/Somewhat Disagree</i>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b> <i>Disagree/Somewhat Disagree</i>	<b><u>Year 1</u></b> <i>Agree/Somewhat Agree</i>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b> <i>Agree/Somewhat Agree</i>
The majority of teachers here are good teachers	0%	24%	100%	76%
The majority of teachers here are committed to the job	3%	27%	97%	73%
The majority of teachers here are committed to students	2%	23%	98%	77%
The majority of teachers here are able to engage students in a rigorous curriculum	3%	37%	97%	63%
The majority of teachers here are able to build relationships with students	2%	25%	98%	75%
The majority of teachers here are able to make an impact on students academically	3%	24%	97%	76%
The majority of teachers here are able to support literacy development in students	3%	27%	97%	73%
The majority of teachers here are requiring students to study hard	2%	36%	98%	64%

***Subsection 3B: Parent perceptions of administration***

In terms of how parents viewed the administration, many parents, in Year 1 believed that parents were doing an average job in building relationships with parents, and commitment to improving the school (Table 7). Although in Years 1 and 3 many parents believed that administrators were committed to their jobs (Table 7), in Year 3, there was a drop, and many parents rated the administration as below average in their commitment to the school and building relationships with other parents (Table 7).

***Table 7. Parent perceptions of administrators***

	<b><u>Year 1</u></b>			<b><u>Year 3</u></b>		
	<b><u>Below average</u></b>	<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b><u>Above average</u></b>	<b><u>Below average</u></b>	<b><u>Average</u></b>	<b><u>Above average</u></b>
commitment to the job	9%	49%	42%	24%	49%	27%
ability to build relationships with parents	16%	61%	23%	40%	35%	25%
committed to improving the school	17%	61%	22%	36%	33%	31%



### **Subsection 3C: Parent perceptions of the school**

Parents were also asked about their views of the school and classrooms. Most parents viewed their children's classrooms as good places to learn (Year 1= 99%, Year 3= 73%, Table 8), with few disruptions (Year 1= 67%, Year 3= 78%) (Table 8). Additionally, in Year 3 most parents (96%) believed that their children have enough textbooks to use and take home. This is encouraging because in the first year most parents (62%) indicated that their children did *not* have enough textbooks to use and take home (Table 8).

In terms of how well the school prepares students, most parents in the first year believed that the school prepared their children to succeed in high school (92%), and that it was easy for their children to receive extra help at the school (82%) (Table 8). These results were reversed in Year 3. In Year 3, the majority of parents believed that the school was not preparing students for success in high school (78%), and the school did not make it easy for students to get extra help with homework (76%) (Table 8). These results indicate a shift in views about the quality of education at the school from the parent perspective; it appears that Year 3 parents did not believe that the school is doing as good a job as it could be with students. But there is an interesting contrast that emerged when parents were asked about the school's ability to prepare their children for college. In Year 1, 52% of parents believed that the school was not preparing their children for college , while in Year 3, 93% of parents believed that the school was doing a good job at preparing students for college (Table 8). So parents surveyed in Year 3 held on to the belief that the school was not preparing students for high school, but preparing them for college. This inconsistency in responses needs further attention and investigation to understand why parents in the third year had these contradictory views.

***Table 8. Parent perceptions of the classroom and school***

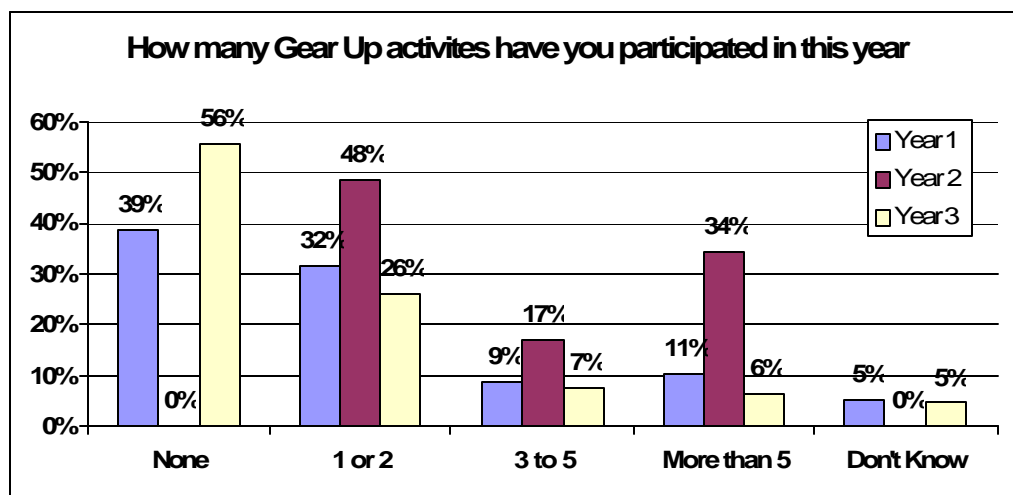
	<b><u>Year 1</u></b> <b><i>Disagree/Somewhat</i></b> <b><i>Disagree</i></b>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b> <b><i>Disagree/Somewhat</i></b> <b><i>Disagree</i></b>	<b><u>Year 1</u></b> <b><i>Agree/Somewhat</i></b> <b><i>Agree</i></b>	<b><u>Year 3</u></b> <b><i>Agree/Somewhat</i></b> <b><i>Agree</i></b>
The classrooms at this school are good places to learn.	1%	27%	99%	73%
There are few disruptions in my child's classes.	33%	22%	67%	78%
In most of my child's classes, he/she is assigned a textbook to use and take home.	4%	62%	96%	38%
The instruction my child receives at this school prepares him/her to be successful in High School.	8%	78%	92%	22%
At this school, it is easy for students to get extra help with their school work.	18%	76%	82%	24%
I believe my child may not go to college because the schools he/she attends do not prepare students to get into college.	52%	7%	48%	93%

***Section 4: Parent level of involvement and student study habits***

Parents were asked a series of questions about their level of involvement in their child's education. Parents in Year 1 indicated that they talked to teachers "a lot" about their children's academic work (45%), behavior and attitudes (47%), and how to get them ready for college (48%) (Table 9). This level of conversation between parents and teachers dropped in Year 3. The majority of parents in Year 3 indicated that they talked to teachers "sometimes" about their children's academic work (72%), behavior and attitudes (63%) (Table 9). In addition, many parents in the third year indicated that they have never talked to teachers about how to get their children ready for college (42%) (Table 9). This trend indicates that Year 3 parents are, either, not as involved in their child's education, or they feel uncomfortable approaching teachers to talk about their child's education. When asked about their level of involvement in GEAR UP activities, we see a similar pattern emerge (Graph 7). Most parents in Year 3 (56%) indicated that they have never attended any GEAR UP activities in the past academic year (Graph 7). In contrast, many Year 2 parents (48%) indicated that they have attended at least 1 to 2 events during the course of the academic year, and even 34% of them indicated that they have attended 5 or more (Graph 7). The reason for the drop is unknown, and should be looked into further.

**Table 9. Parent level of conversation with teachers**

	<u>Year 1</u>				<u>Year 3</u>			
	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Don't know</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
How often do you talk to your child's teachers about his/her academic work	16%	37%	45%	1.49%	7%	72%	18%	4%
How often do you talk to your child's teachers about his/her behavior or attitude	19%	31%	47%	3%	18%	63%	18%	2%
How often do you talk to your child's teachers about how he/she might get ready for high school or college	22%	24%	48%	5.97%	42%	37%	16%	5%

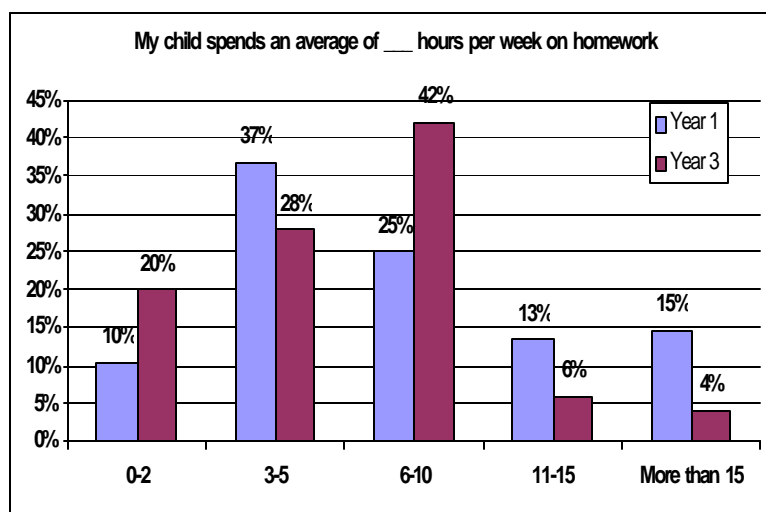
**Graph 7.**

Parents were also asked a series of questions about the amount of time their children spend on homework, and the amount of time they should be spending to get ready for college. Results of the survey indicated that Year 3 parents reported that their children were doing more homework per week, than Year 1 parents. Year 3 parents also believed that their children needed to be spending even more time on homework to get ready for college than Year 1 parents.

Many Year 1 parents (37%) indicated that their children spend about 3-5 hours on homework a week (Graph 8). In addition, parents in Year 1 (49%) also indicated that their children need to be doing 6-10 hours a week to prepare for college (Graph 9). These numbers increased in Year 3. Almost half of the parents in the Year 3 (42%) indicated

that their children were doing 6-10 hours of homework a week (Graph 8), and many more Year 3 parents (30%) believed that their children needed to do more than 15 hours of homework a week to prepare for college (Graph 9). These results are interesting because it reflects the differences in educational levels of parents in Year 1 versus parents in the Year 3. Parents in Year 3 tended to be more educated, thus, they seem to know more about the amount of work needed to get ready for college. Further study is needed to understand some other factors that may have contributed to these differences in responses.

**Graph 8.**



**Graph 9.**

