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Parents More Comfortable Talking Drugs Than Science

Intel Survey Reveals Majority of Parents of Teens Find It Difficult to Help Their Kids With Math and Science

SANTA CLARA, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- NEWS HIGHLIGHTS:

- The News: A recent Intel Corporation survey found that parents feel more equipped to talk about drug abuse than math and science with their children.
- The Context: Despite a perceived importance of math and science for success, and an overwhelming willingness to be involved, the survey results reveal that parents, particularly those of teenagers, often find themselves with little more understanding of these subjects than their children and without the necessary resources to bridge this gap.
- Why It Matters: A strong background in math and science is increasingly critical for American prosperity, security, health, environment and quality of life. And yet, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress report released last week, less than 40 percent of fourth- and eighth-graders are proficient in math. Intel believes that to better engage America's future innovators, we need to understand and appreciate the role that parents play in education and help them inspire their children to take an interest in math and science.

When it comes to talking with their kids, parents say the topics of math and science are harder to discuss than drug abuse, according to a survey released by Intel Corporation today.

The survey found that although more than 50 percent of parents rank math or science as the subjects most critical to their children's future success, they report discomfort talking to their children about these subjects. In fact, nearly a quarter of parents who admit to being less involved in their child's math and science education than they would like say that a key barrier is their own lack of understanding of these subjects.

Last week, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly called the "nation's report card," revealed that fewer than 40 percent of fourth- and eighth-graders in the United States are proficient in math. The NAEP report also found that fourth-graders have not improved since the last test was given in 2007, even though fourth-graders had improved on every NAEP math test since 1990.

"The link between math and science education and American innovation and competitiveness is more apparent than ever," said Shelly Esque, vice president of Intel's Corporate Affairs Group. "Our survey points to a difficult reality for our nation's parents: While they may recognize the importance of math and science, they are unable to engage with their children around these subjects due to limited understanding of the topics and

scarcity of resources to help. We need to help parents help their kids make the best choices, including taking math and science courses so they are prepared to succeed."

Key Survey Findings

The survey also found that American schools are falling far short of parents' expectations, with nearly 9 in 10 parents saying they believe the U.S. lags behind other countries in math and science, even though 98 percent of parents say these subjects are critical to America's future.

Parents clearly want to be part of the solution. Ninety-one (91) percent of parents believe parental involvement is crucial to their children's academic success, with nearly 9 in 10 (89 percent) saying that talking to their children about the importance of math and science in the real world would help improve their children's performance and interest.

Among the findings:

-- Despite recognizing the importance of math and science, parents say they are uncomfortable addressing these subjects with their children. More than 50 percent (53 percent) of parents of teenagers admit that they have trouble helping their children with math and science homework. Parents of high school students are also more likely than parents of younger kids to express disappointment in their own ability to help their child with these subjects.
-- Nearly a quarter of parents (23 percent) who admit to being less involved in their child's math and science education than they would like say their own lack of knowledge in these subjects is a key barrier.
-- Another 26 percent of parents who are less involved than they would like wish there was a one-stop shop with materials to refresh their existing, but unused math and science knowledge so they can better help their kids.

Intel believes that young people are the key to solving global challenges, and a solid math and science foundation coupled with skills such as critical thinking, collaboration and digital literacy are crucial for their success. Over the past decade alone, the company has invested more than $1 billion, and its employees have donated more than 2.5 million hours toward improving education in 50 countries. The results of this survey help Intel, and others, better understand the role parents play in inspiring today's youth to take an interest in math and science. To learn more about the Intel Education Initiative, visit www.intel.com/education. To join Intel's community of people sharing their stories with the hope of becoming a catalyst for action and a voice for change in global education, visit www.inspiredbyeducation.com.

This survey of parents in the United States was conducted online between Sept. 23 and 28, 2009 by Penn, Schoen and Berland Associates on behalf of Intel. Participants included 561 adults with children ages 5 to 18. The margin of error is +/- 4.14 percent.

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