

Academy for Academic Excellence
1999 Family Survey
Demographic Findings and Relationships

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Introduction

The California Educational Research Cooperative (CERC) recently collaborated with the Lewis Center for Educational Research (LCER) in the administration of an electronic Family Survey to the Academy for Academic Excellence (AAE) parent/teachers. The purpose of the survey was twofold. First, in the ongoing LCER/CERC research it was determined that there is a need for demographic data about the AAE students and parents not currently being collected. These data serve a critical part in the information management system currently being designed for use at the AAE. Second, the survey allowed the LCER to introduce the AAE parents to a new electronic information technology. The LCER plans on digitizing the majority of the information routinely collected from the parents and the Family Survey was an excellent opportunity to illustrate this technology to the parents.

The Family Survey was administered to all students' primary parent/teachers throughout November and early December 1999 as part of their monthly Academic Advisor meetings. The survey was constructed in Microsoft Access®, a popular database program. The final instrument combines an attractive, user-friendly interface with sophisticated data storage and retrieval linked to the AAE's current database. Overall, the survey was a tremendous success. From all accounts, the parent/teachers were excited about the electronic format of the survey and appreciated the opportunity to give the LCER some feedback about their AAE experience. The response rate clearly exceeded social science standards as an impressive 98% of AAE primary parent/teachers participated in the Family Survey. The survey consisted of approximately 50 questions.

Enrollment Motivations

One of our main interests was to determine why the AAE parents have chosen to enroll their child(ren) at this particular school. In many ways, this is the most important piece of demographic information about this particular population. By knowing *why* the parents chose the AAE, we have a better idea about *who* they actually are. Such information indirectly taps into the parents' teaching philosophy and worldviews, illuminating their commitment to student achievement. Moreover, by knowing who their population is, the AAE will have a better basis for designing programs to meet family needs and to recruit new families.

Since the AAE is a unique combination of home educating and onsite courses, we have little prior basis from which to hypothesize about family motivation. While there is some previous research in respect to home schooling, this evidence is not entirely applicable. The AAE parents have explicitly entered into a partnership with the school and are thus likely to be significantly different than the independent, traditional home schoolers. After several brainstorming sessions we generated a total of 21 questions which appear to exhaust the major motivations behind the parents' decision to enroll their child(ren) at the AAE.

Respondents were asked to:

Please consider how important each of the following reasons are in your decision to take direct responsibility in your child(ren)'s education and to enroll them at the AAE. Rate each item on a scale from 1 to 5 with "1" meaning that the reason is not important at all (or not applicable) and "5" meaning that the reason is extremely important.

Table 1 ranks the items in descending order according to the average response. The bold lines between the means indicate that the mean scores of those two items are statistically different from one another. These are significant "breaks" where the items become more or less influential in the parents' decision. The items with the bracket are a homogeneous set which do not statistically differ from one another. Therefore, these items are on average, of equal importance in the parents' choice. In the case of the other items (without bold lines or inside the bracket), statistically significant differences are found among nonadjacent items. That is, neighboring items are not different, but the next item down in each group is significantly less important.

Table 1: Motivations for Attending AAE	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Mean</i>
a. Concerned about the quality of teaching at other schools	4.50
b. Concerned about the cultural environment/negative influences at other schools	4.46
c. It provides me with the opportunity to use diverse and innovative curriculum	4.38
d. Concerned about the curriculum at other schools	4.33
e. At home during the day regularly and want to provide guidance to child(ren)	4.23
f. Concerned about the safety and security of my child(ren) at other schools	4.21
g. The AAE's educational program is of superior quality	3.97
h. It provides me with the opportunity to give my child(ren) religious instruction	3.90
i. The AAE's strength and focus on science education	3.67
j. It supports my religious beliefs	3.58
k. It provides me with the opportunity to use liberal, nontraditional curriculum	3.58
l. I do not trust the government's ability to provide an adequate education	3.53
m. I have always believed in the philosophy of home schooling	3.53
n. My child(ren) have unique abilities that would not be fostered in other schools	3.33
o. The testing programs at other schools are inappropriate	3.18
p. It is not the government's responsibility to provide public education	3.07
q. My family has close friends whose children are also enrolled at the AAE	2.64
r. The scheduling of other schools is too inflexible for my family's situation	2.55
s. My child(ren) have special learning needs that cannot be met in other schools	2.32
t. Child was often treated poorly by other children at his/her previous school	1.99
u. Child was often in trouble for treating other children poorly at previous school	1.18

As is evident in Table 1, the AAE parents are overwhelmingly concerned about the quality of teaching and the cultural environment and negative influences at other schools. Next we see that the opportunity to use diverse and innovative curriculum is very important as well. Concerns about the curriculum and safety and security at other schools also receive high mean scores. Finally, also greater than 4.0 on the 5-point scale, many AAE parents responded that they are regularly at home during the day and want to provide guidance to their child(ren). The dominant theme here is that parents are joining the AAE expressly to get away from other schools.

The section group of items (g and h), indicate that the superior quality of the AAE program and the opportunity to provide religious instruction are also quite important factors in parents' choice. This opportunity to provide religious instruction is rated significantly higher than the item asking whether the AAE "supports" the family's religious beliefs (item j).

The next grouping of the five items (i through m) with the bracket represent the middle range of the responses. These items are "moderately" important (ranked somewhat below the previous ones). This grouping contains a mixture of things including: the AAE's strength in science, the supporting of personal religious beliefs and the philosophy of home schooling, the ability to use nontraditional curriculum, and a lack of trust in the government's ability. Central to this cluster is a broad embrace of the AAE cultural norms of independent thinking, religious freedom, and dedication to science.

The next set of three items (n, o, and p) are still less important to the average respondent's decision to enroll their child(ren) at the AAE. Nonetheless, they have average scores above the midpoint of the 5-point rating scale and elicited the "extremely important" rating from some families.

At the bottom of the table are three items that steadily become less relevant for the average parent. However, these items concerning special learning needs and the way in which the parents' child(ren) interacted with other students at their previous school were reported to be quite important for a very small number of AAE parents.

Given this general sense of why people come to the AAE, we can begin to think about other factors that may effect parental motivation. Are these motives connected to parents' history of home educating experience? To their own education? To family income? To other factors that ordinarily shape family values and interests?

Demographic Profile

The target population for the Family Survey was the primary parent/teacher. Typically the parent who is most responsible for home educating attends the monthly meetings with AAE's Academic Advisors. It is expected that this person will have the greatest impact on the education of their child(ren). In order to identify whether the primary parent/teacher was indeed completing the survey, a question was asked about the percent of average home instruction (independent of the AAE coursework) each respondent provides to their child(ren). We consider those who provide more than 50% of the home instruction as the primary parent/teacher.

Table 2 tabulates the relationship between primary parent/teacher identification and gender. At 77.6%, the vast majority of the respondents are females who are the primary parent/teachers. There are only 9 male primary parent/teachers at the AAE. About 9% of the respondents indicated that there is no primary parent/teacher as they are responsible for exactly 50% of the home instruction. Finally, only 9.6% of the respondents are women who indicated that they provide less than 50% of the home instruction.

Therefore, our target population was largely represented in the Family Survey. Unfortunately, we do not have any other information about these last 25 women. We cannot infer that their partners are the primary parent/teacher since it could be a grandmother/father or there could be more than two people providing home instruction (making our 50% or greater rule problematic). Nevertheless, we are confident that the survey was overwhelmingly successful in reaching the appropriate people.

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Female primary parent/teacher	201	77.6	77.6
Male primary parent/teacher	9	3.5	81.1
No primary/evenly divided (21 F, 3 M)	24	9.3	90.4
Female respondents/not primary	25	9.6	100
TOTAL	259	100	

Gender is clearly an important aspect of the AAE population. Primary parent/teachers are mostly female. Only 4.3% (9/210) of the primary parent/teachers are males. With this basic information, we can now move on to look at more of the background of the respondents.

Table 3: Years of Home Educating Experience			
<i>Years</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
1	38	14.6	14.6
2	53	20.3	34.9
3	40	15.3	50.2
4	27	10.3	60.5
5	17	6.5	67.0
6	17	6.5	73.6
7	23	8.8	82.4
8	17	6.5	88.9
9 or more	29	11.1	100
TOTAL	261	100	

Table 3 reports responses to a question asking respondents how many years (including the present year) they have been home educating. The figures in the cumulative percent column indicate that half of the respondents have three or less years of home educating experience. On the other hand, a notable proportion of the AAE primary parent/teachers have considerable home educating experience. More than a quarter of the respondents have 7 or more years experience and 11.1% have 9 or more years of home educating experience. As evident, there is significant variation across the population.

Table 4 reports the marital status of the respondents. The vast majority, 90.4%, are married. Only 3.5% of the primary parent/teachers are single and 6.2% are either divorced, separated, or widowers. This marriage rate is certainly higher than the overall American population with school-age children. Given the substantial time commitment required, it is quite likely that a dual-parent household is a near necessity for home educating.

Table 4: Marital Status			
<i>Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Single	9	3.5	3.5
Married	235	90.4	93.8
Divorced, Separated, or Widower	16	6.2	100
TOTAL	260	100	

Table 5 presents the educational attainment of the primary parent-teachers and their spouse's. Overall, this population is quite educated. Over half of the respondents have attended some college and 22.8% have some form of degree. Only about 4% of the primary parent/teachers did not graduate from high school. Overall, the spouses are significantly more educated as nearly 30% of them have some form of degree. Since the vast majority of the primary parent/teachers are women, most of these spouses are men.

<i>Education</i>	<i>Educational Attainment</i>			<i>Spouse's Education</i>		
	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Not high school graduate	10	3.9	3.9	11	4.8	4.8
High school graduate	59	22.8	26.6	40	17.3	22.1
Attended some college	131	50.6	77.2	111	48.1	70.1
Earned Bachelor's degree	38	14.7	91.9	36	15.6	85.7
Earned Master's degree	9	3.5	95.4	20	8.7	94.4
Other graduate degree	12	4.6	100	13	5.6	100
TOTAL	259	100		231	100	

Table 6 reports the extent to which primary parent/teachers and their spouse's hold teaching credentials. Obviously, the majority do not. Only 8.8% of the respondents have a valid credential and 3.1% have a credential that is not currently valid. The spouses are even less likely to hold a credential as just over 90% do not.

<i>Credential</i>	<i>Teaching Credential</i>			<i>Spouse's Credential</i>		
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
None	230	88.1	88.1	207	90.8	90.8
Valid credential	23	8.8	96.9	14	6.2	97.0
No longer valid credential	8	3.1	100	7	3.0	100
TOTAL	261	100		228	100	

Table 7 provides the total annual household income that the respondents reported. Only 4.1% of the primary parent/teachers marked "decline to state" their income, another 18 respondents completely skipped the question. Figures in the table suggest that the median family income is about \$39,626. Since we do not know how much over the \$100,000 mark the highest income groups reach, it is not possible to estimate the average annual income.

Table 7: Household's Total Annual Income			
<i>Income</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Less than \$15,000	10	4.1	4.1
\$15,000-\$19,999	12	4.9	8.9
\$20,000-\$24,999	9	3.7	12.6
\$25,000-\$29,999	6	2.4	15.0
\$30,000-\$34,999	23	9.3	24.4
\$35,000-\$39,999	20	8.1	32.5
\$40,000-\$49,999	41	16.7	49.2
\$50,000-\$59,999	51	20.7	69.9
\$60,000-\$74,999	43	17.5	87.4
\$75,000-\$99,999	17	6.9	94.3
\$100,000 and over	4	1.6	95.9
Decline to state	10	4.1	100
TOTAL	246	100	
Estimated Median Family Income = \$39,626			

About 13% (31/236) of the AAE households earn less than \$25,000 a year. In accordance with the federal government guidelines, these families can be considered as living below the poverty line. At the other extreme, about 9% (21/236) of the households earn \$75,000 or more per year. This clearly indicates membership in the upper middle class. Access to material resources, or income, has historically been one of the most important determinants of student achievement. Throughout the remainder of this project we will be paying close attention to the role of income.

Table 8: Regular Employment (Part-time or Full-time)				
<i>Job</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cum. Percent</i>
No	Men	4	1.5	1.5
No	Women	161	61.0	62.5
Yes	Men	8	3.0	65.5
Yes	Women	91	34.5	100
TOTAL		264	100	

Table 8 looks at whether the primary parent/teachers are employed (in either a part-time or full-time job) and divides the results according to the gender of the respondent. Employment is particularly important to consider. The families of the AAE have made the commitment to home educate their children. While employment is a routine part of family life, it can infringe on and compromise the quality of the education in this case.

When the primary parent/teacher works, there may be less time for home instruction. Overall, 37.5% are employed. Of the female primary parent/teachers, 36% (91/252) are

employed while 67% (8/12) of the male primary parent/teachers hold some form of regular employment.

In Table 9, we investigate the time devoted to these jobs. The average weekly hours of employment for primary parent/teachers with jobs is 24.7 hours per week (note shown on the table). As indicated on the table, 37.7% of the employed respondents work less than 20 hours a week. However, about 20% work 40 hours a week and another 8.2% work more than 40 hours a week. This may be problematic as these parent/teachers have limited time for home educating their child(ren). Nonetheless, this is only 10.6% (28/264) of all of the primary parent/teachers.

<i>Hours</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Less than 10	17	17.3	17.3
10 - 19	20	20.4	37.7
20 - 29	19	19.4	57.1
30 - 39	14	14.3	71.4
40	20	20.4	91.8
More than 40	8	8.2	100
TOTAL	98	100	

<i>Total Hours</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
40 or less	8	3.7	3.7
40	61	28.2	31.9
41 - 50	51	23.6	55.5
51 - 60	42	19.4	74.9
61 - 79	27	12.5	87.4
80	19	8.8	96.2
More than 80	8	3.7	100
TOTAL	216	100	

Table 10 reports the total hours per week spent in paid employment by both the primary parent/teacher and their spouse (if applicable). It is evident that this population does work a lot. 44.4% of the households work more than a total of 50 hours a week and 12.5% of the households work 80 or more hours per week. In these cases, providing adequate educational time for the child(ren) would be quite challenging and requires both dedication and efficiency on the part of the parents.

Table 11 helps us to address the question of time spent on home instruction. This table presents the total average daily hours of home instruction that AAE students receive. Nearly 12% of AAE students get 2 or less hours of direct home instruction per day. Five hours per day is the modal category (the one with the most responses) reported by 23.4% of the respondents. The next most popular response is 4 hours per day (21.3%). Slightly more than 9% of the respondents reported that their children receive 8 or more hours of daily instruction. Perhaps these respondents misunderstood the question and also included AAE courses in the amount of hours (or think of “instruction” very liberally). Otherwise, these students are the objects of *very* intensive instruction.

Table 11: Total Average Daily Hours of Home Instruction			
<i>Hours</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
2 or less	29	11.9	11.9
3	43	17.6	29.5
4	52	21.3	50.8
5	57	23.4	74.2
6	28	11.5	85.7
7	12	4.9	90.6
8	15	6.1	96.7
9 or more	8	3.3	100
TOTAL	244	100	

Since the AAE has some plans for online data collection, respondents were asked whether they owned computers and if so, if they currently have internet access. Table 12 (below) presents the results. A remarkable 91.2% of AAE families have computers. Moreover, three-quarters of the population currently have computers with internet access. This suggests that access to the internet will not be a big problem for the AAE's data collection plans.

The last piece of important demographic information is the racial composition of the AAE students.

The primary parent/teachers were not asked to report the racial background of their students since this data is readily available elsewhere. Reported in Table 13 are the racial characteristics from the 1998 STAR results. The AAE students are overwhelmingly white (83.2%). About 9% of the students are Latino and about 5% are African American. The remaining racial groups are extremely small.

Table 12: Computer Ownership			
<i>Computer</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Yes, internet	197	75.5	75.5
Yes, no net	41	15.7	91.2
None	23	8.8	100
TOTAL	261	100	

Table 13: Student Race (from 1998 STAR)			
<i>Race</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
African Americans	17	4.8	4.8
Latinos	31	8.8	13.6
Asian American/Pacific Islander	8	2.3	15.9
American Indian	1	.3	16.2
White	292	83.2	99.4
Other	2	.6	100
TOTAL	351	100	

Demographic Factors and Enrollment Motivations

Next, we briefly explore some of the relationships between the parents’ demographic factors and their enrollment motivations. We began by computing correlations between each of the 21 enrollment motivation questions and each of the demographic variables. In the cases in which the variables are significantly correlated, we computed mean scores for the enrollment motivation item for each category of the demographic variable. Thus, each of the graphs described in the remainder of this section represents a statistically significant link between family demography and the decisions made to enroll children in the AAE.

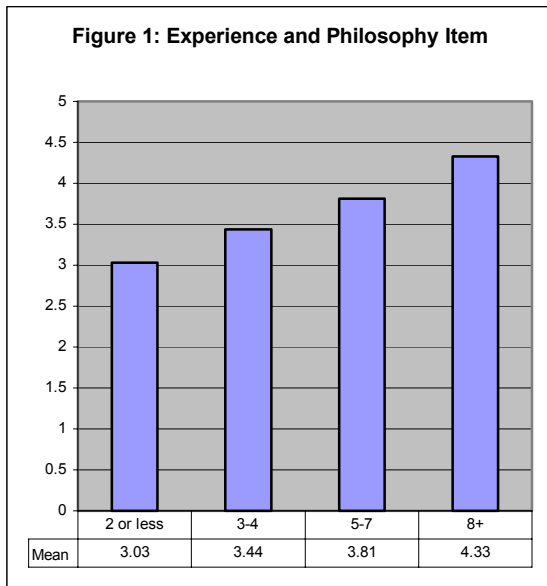
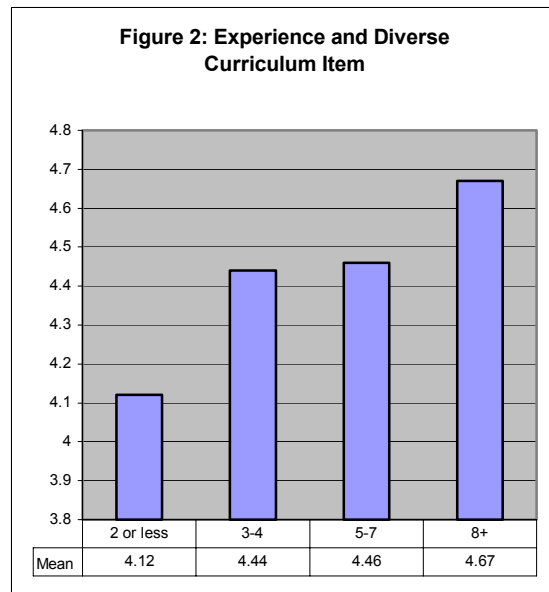


Figure 1 presents the relationship between home educating experience and the belief in the philosophy of home schooling as an important motivation for joining the AAE. The vertical Y-axis is the 1 to 5 scale of the original motivation questions. Across the horizontal X-axis you can see the four categories of the years of home educating experience and the average score on the 1 to 5 scale for each group. As is evident, belief in the philosophy of home schooling increases as an important motivation with experience. Those with less home educating experience do not appear to be attracted to the AAE on the basis of a belief in the philosophy of home schooling.

Figure 2 also reveals a linear relationship between years of home education experience and a belief that enrolling in the AAE allows families to experience a more diverse curriculum. The variability in answers is modest because most AAE primary parent/teachers find this reason to be quite important. Nonetheless, diverse curriculum becomes more important as families acquire more home educating experience.



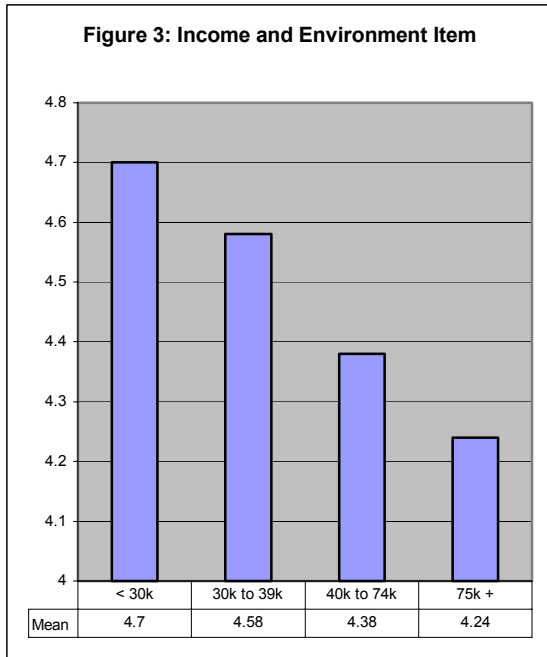
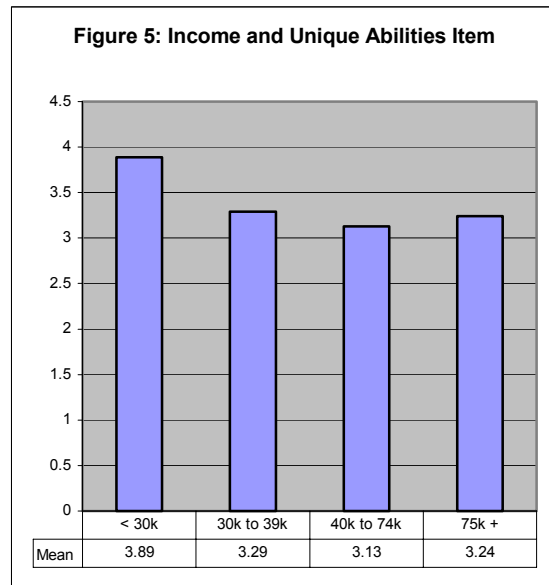
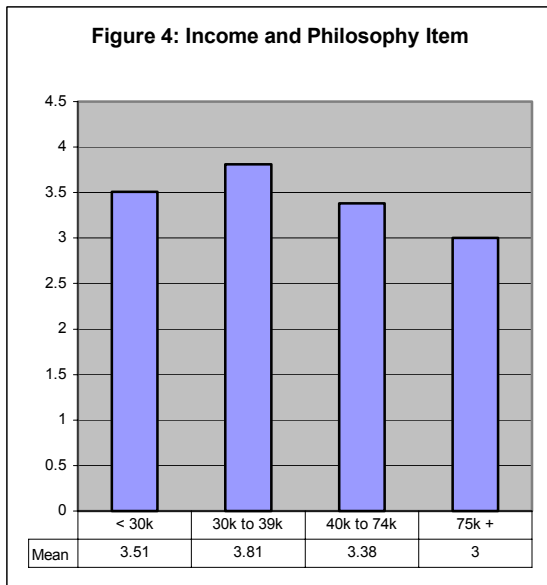


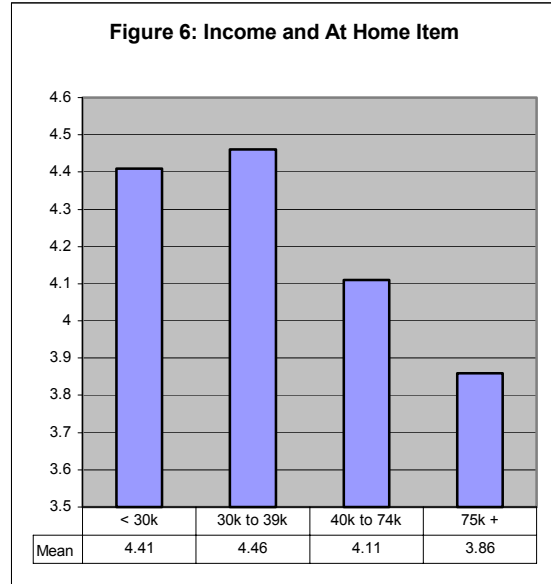
Figure 3 displays the relationship between household income and the concern about the cultural environment and negative influences at other schools. While this motivation is quite important for all the respondents, it is less important for those with higher household incomes. Those who earn the least are the most concerned about these issues.

Figure 4 illustrates the relationship between household income and the home schooling philosophy item. Those with household incomes between \$30,000 and \$39,999 find the philosophy item most important. This enrollment motivation becomes less salient for those with higher incomes.

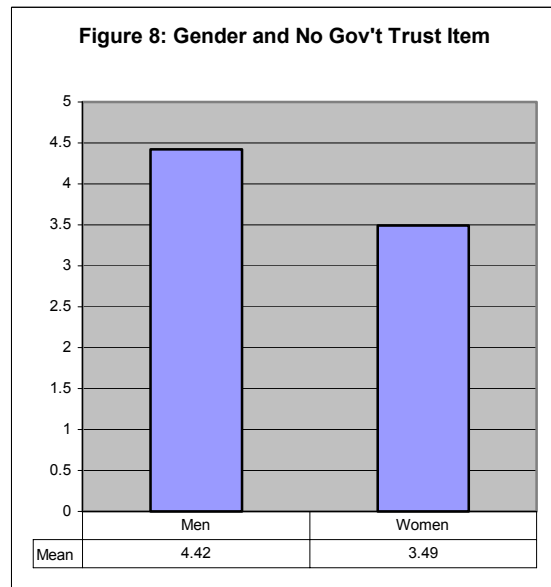
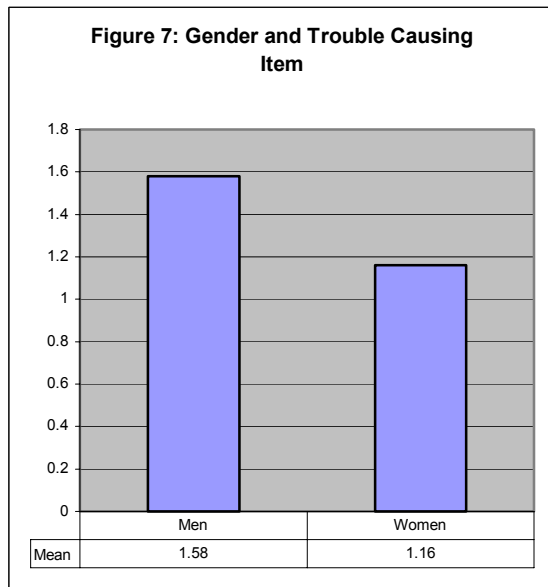
The relationship between income and the unique abilities item is displayed in Figure 5. Those who earn the least are the most likely to have joined the AAE because they believe that their child(ren) have unique abilities that would not be fostered in other schools.



The last significant relationship between income and enrollment motivations is found with the “at home regularly” item. This item is quite important for the first two groups (those earning less than \$39,999). This motivation quickly becomes relatively unimportant among those with higher incomes. One partial explanation for this trend is rather simple - primary parent-teachers who live in households with higher annual incomes are more likely to be employed. Therefore, they are less likely to be at home regularly, making this largely irrelevant as a motivation for enrolling at the AAE. Another significant relationship with enrollment motivations is the gender of the primary parent/teacher.

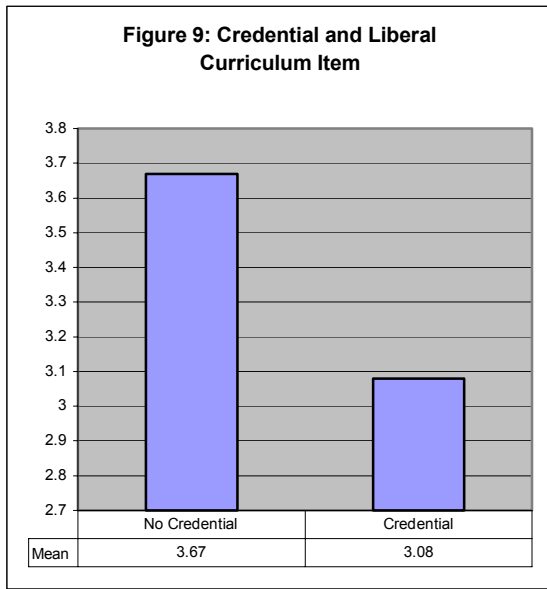


Figures 7 and 8 display the two significant relationships of gender. First, while very few individuals reported being motivated by their children experiencing problems in other schools, men are more likely than women to report that their child was often in trouble for treating other children poorly at a previous school.



On an item of more general importance, men were also more likely than women to report enrolling their child(ren) at the AAE because they do not trust the government’s ability to provide an adequate education. There are, as noted previously, very few male primary parent/teachers. Thus, it may be that families with troublesome children are more likely to choose the father to be the primary parent/teacher. The governmental ability item may

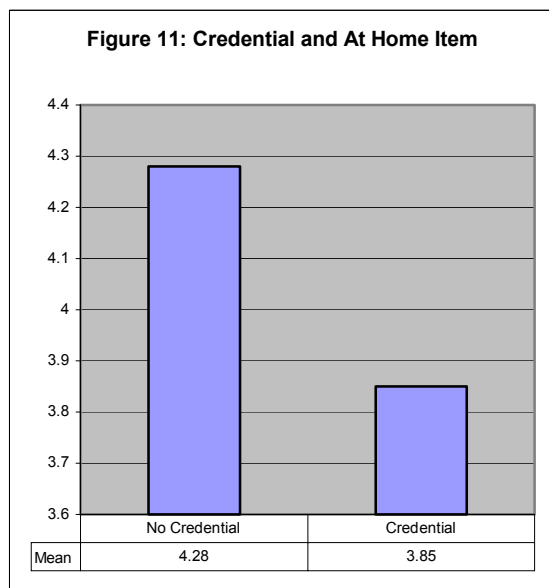
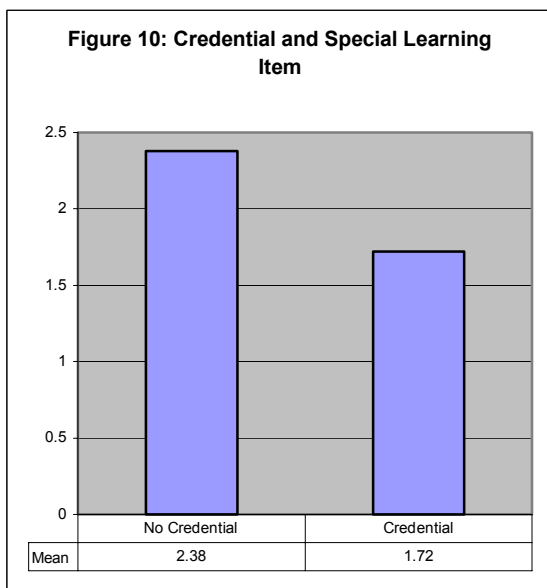
simply reflect the general tendency of men being more politically conservative than women (a finding well documented in other research studies).



Whether the primary parent/teacher has a teaching credential is significantly related to three of the enrollment motivation items. Figure 9 illustrates that those with credentials are less likely to have chosen the AAE because of the opportunity to use liberal, nontraditional curriculum. It is very likely that those with credentials have teaching experience in the traditional, public school environment. Perhaps this experience has caused these teachers to accept and employ more traditional curricula.

Figure 10 shows that the primary parent-teachers with teaching credentials are less

likely to have chosen the AAE because their child has special learning needs that cannot be met in other schools. Figure 11 illustrates that those with credentials score significantly lower on the at home regularly item. In each of these three instances, having a teaching credential has made the item less important. So, we do have a better idea about what reasons are unimportant in the enrollment motivations of those with credentials. There were no items on which those with credentials scored higher than those without. Next, we move on to analyzing the overall patterns of motivation that have encouraged parents to choose the AAE for their children's education.



AAE's Four Groups: Cluster Membership

While the total groups' average scores on each of the 21-motivation questions (discussed in relation to Table earlier in this report) provide a useful overall picture of why families have chosen AAE for their child(ren)'s education, it is important to recognize the significant sub-group differences among the AAE families. The appropriate statistical technique for identifying important sub-populations and describing how their views differ from one another is called "cluster analysis." Cluster analysis is a statistical procedure that detects groupings in data. It is an exploratory approach that assigns each respondent to sub-group that answer the enrollment motivation items similarly.

After numerous analyses, we have found that four distinctive sub-groups are represented in the AAE enterprise. In order to see which enrollment motivations are the most salient determinants of group membership, we performed discriminant analysis on the four groups. This enables us to accurately identify each group. With four different groups, there are three different functions (or patterns of responses to the motivation questions) which "discriminate" the groups from one another.

The four groups do not equally comprise the AAE population. Table 14 provides the distribution. We have given shorthand nick-names to the four groups - religious liberals, libertarians, independents, and religious conservatives.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Cumulative Percent</i>
Religious Liberals	91	34.5	34.5
Libertarians	28	10.6	45.1
Independents	45	17.0	62.1
Religious Conservatives	100	37.9	100
TOTAL	264	100	

Religion was important for the first and fourth groups. One of the reasons that the first group of respondents chose the AAE is so they could provide their children with religious instruction. Home education supports their religion. This group is relatively unconcerned with the testing programs and the quality of teaching in other schools and do not feel that their children have unique abilities. We refer to this group as the "religious liberals."

The second group is characterized by its clear rejection of religious education. These people enjoy the scheduling flexibility that the AAE offers them and believe that it is not the government's responsibility to provide public education. This group simply wants to teach their own children, whenever they want to. We refer to this group as the "libertarians."

The members of the third group are concerned about the testing programs, the quality of teaching, and the cultural environment at other schools. They also feel that their children have unique abilities and they are likely to be at home regularly anyways. This group wants to liberate their children from the institutionalization of the public schools. We refer to these people as the “independents.”

The last group is the most supportive of religious education. They are also concerned with the testing programs and quality of teaching at other schools and do not believe it is the government’s responsibility to provide their children’s education. This group believes that their children have unique abilities and also appreciate the scheduling flexibility that the AAE offers. We will refer to this group as the “religious conservatives.”

As indicated in Table 14, the religious conservatives and religious liberals are clearly the largest groups. This means that religion plays an important role in the decision to enroll at the AAE for 72.4% of the primary parent/teachers. The libertarians, who reject religious education, are only 10.6% of the population. The independents, who occupy a middle ground on religion and want to liberate their children from the public schools, make up 17% of the AAE’s population.

Demographic Description of Four Groups

Once the four groups that comprise the AAE population are identified, it is possible to go back to the demographic variables to describe each of the groups. While we previously analyzed the relationship between the individual enrollment motivations and demographic factors, the cluster groups are more substantively important since they represent groupings around multiple enrollment motivations. Moreover, statistically the results are more reliable and less prone to error since we are no longer depending solely upon individual variables.

Table 15: Clusters and Gender, Teaching Credentials, and Employment			
<i>Group</i>	<i>Percent of whom are men</i>	<i>Percent of whom have credential</i>	<i>Percent of whom are employed</i>
Religious Liberals	2.2	14.4	28.6
Libertarians	3.6	18.5	53.6
Independents	8.9	15.6	48.9
Religious Conservatives	5.0	6.1	36.0

Table 15 presents three different characteristics of the cluster group members. Since there are so few male primary parent/teachers in the population, we should interpret the gender results cautiously. Nevertheless, men are most likely to be independents as they

comprise nearly 9% of that group. They are least likely to be religious liberals. In respect to teaching credentials, we see that religious conservatives are by far the least likely to hold them. On the other hand, 18.5% of libertarians are credentialed. As far as employment is concerned, only 28.6% of religious liberals and 36% of religious conservatives are employed. This is contrasted with the libertarians of whom 53.6% hold regular jobs.

Figure 12 illustrates the average years of home educating experience for each cluster group. On average, the religious liberals have the most experience, 5.3 years. The religious conservatives have slightly less experience and then we see a decrease of more than a year with the libertarians. The independents have the least amount of experience at 3.27 years.

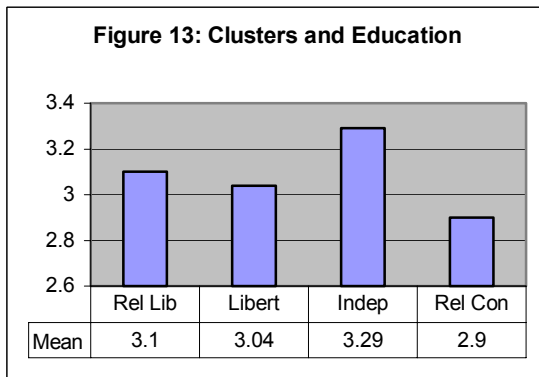
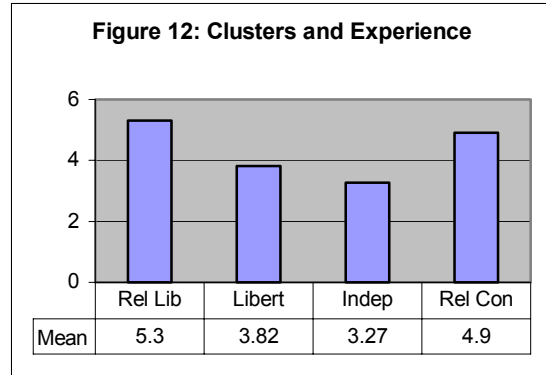


Figure 13 shows the educational attainment of the various groups. In the education item, the “2” category is “high school graduate” and the “3” category is “attended some college.” As you can see, the independents have the highest educational attainment while the religious conservatives have the lowest.

Figure 14 illustrates the average income attainment of the four groups. At \$43,200 per year, the libertarian households tend to earn the most. The annual income of the religious liberals is \$40,000 and despite the fact that they are the most educated, the independents are slightly lower at \$39,650. On average, the religious conservatives earn the least at \$37,699.

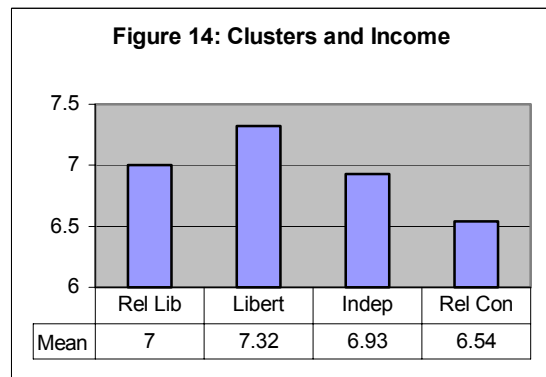


Figure 15 presents the household total weekly hours spent in paid employment for each of the cluster groups. Independents work the most hours at nearly 60 per week. The religious liberals work the least amount of hours, about 50 per week.

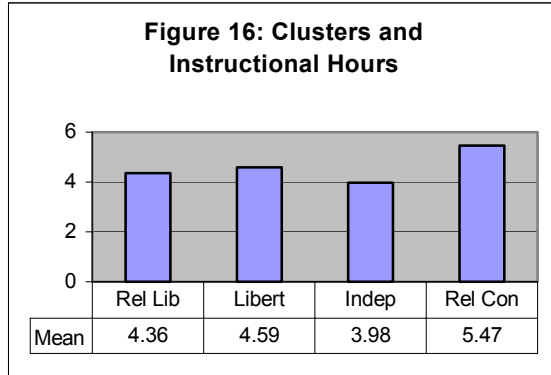
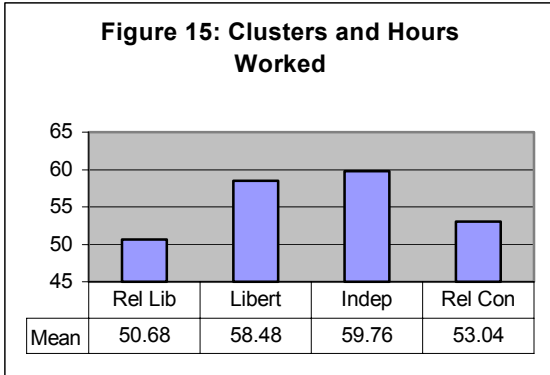
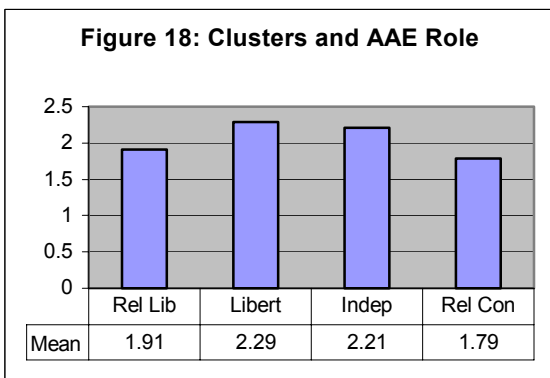
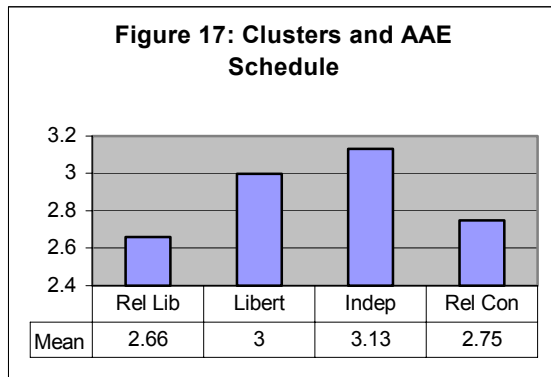


Figure 16 provides the average daily home instructional hours that the children of the various cluster group members receive. On average, children of the religious conservatives get 5.47 hours of home instruction per day. This is contrasted with the children of the independents who tend to only get about 4 hours a day.

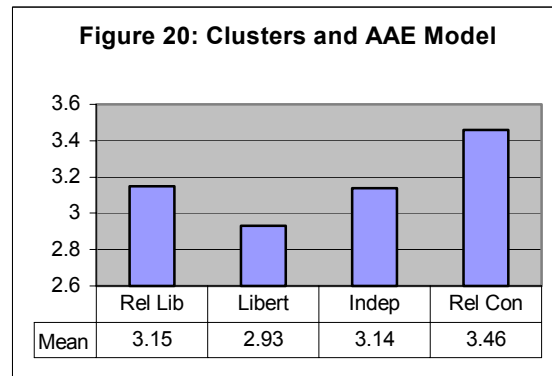
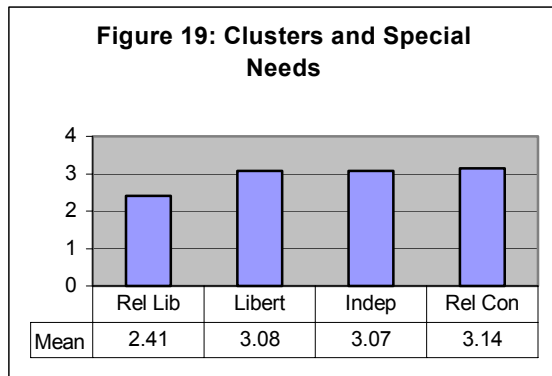
Respondents of the Family Survey were also asked several attitudinal questions regarding the AAE in particular. The items which are significantly correlated with cluster group membership are reviewed in the next four charts.

Since the AAE offers a variety of onsite courses, we asked the primary parents to what extent they rely on the AAE classes to guide the instruction that their children receive. This question was scaled from “1” (not at all) to “4” (to a great extent). Figure 17 reports the average cluster group score on the item. Independents are the most likely to rely on the AAE courses while the religious conservatives and religious liberals are the least likely.



Respondents were also asked about how they view the AAE’s role in their child(ren)’s education versus their own role. The first choice (scored as “1”) was “I am completely responsible,” the second option was “I am largely responsible, the AAE only supplements my child(ren)’s education,” and the third choice was “the responsibility is evenly divided between the AAE and myself.”

As Figure 18 shows, the libertarians and independents scored the highest, indicating that they give the AAE more weight in their children’s education. The religious conservatives have the lowest mean score as they see themselves as almost completely responsible.



We also asked the primary parent/teachers about the extent to which their children’s special learning needs are being met by the AAE. Similar to the AAE scheduling question, the responses are scaled from “not at all” to “to a great extent.” As you can see in Figure 19, the libertarians, independents, and religious conservatives all have comparable mean scores. The religious liberals are notably lower and are less satisfied with the AAE meeting their children’s special learning needs.

Finally, we asked the respondents whether the AAE’s educational model is clear to them. As Figure 20 indicates, the religious conservatives are the most confident that they understand the model. The libertarians have the lowest mean score, indicating that they are the least likely to feel that they understand the model.

Conclusion

The AAE Family Survey has been very useful in describing the population. We began this report by considering the enrollment motivations of the primary parent/teachers. Next we provided a demographic profile of various characteristics of the population. We then explored the significant relationships between the demographic factors and the enrollment motivations. The following cluster group membership analysis uses the enrollment motivation questions to create groups of people with similar responses. After presenting the clusters we provided a demographic description of the four groups.

As reported, we find that parents often join the AAE to get away from other schools. The primary parent/teachers vary considerably in their home educating experience. Moreover, we see that a notable minority of the AAE families are in paid employment for a significant portion of the week. Providing sufficient time for home instruction is clearly quite challenging for some families. We find that home educating experience, household income, gender of the primary parent/teacher, and credential-holding are each significantly related to various enrollment motivations.

The cluster group analysis illustrates that religion plays an important role in the decision to join the AAE for nearly three-quarters of the respondents. Consequently, two of our cluster groups are identifiable primarily by religion. The religious liberals are the least likely to be employed and work the fewest hours, have the most home educating experience, are the least likely to rely on the AAE's schedule, and are the least likely to feel that the special needs of their children are being met by the AAE. The libertarians are the smallest group at the AAE, are the most likely to have credentials, the most likely to be employed, have the highest household incomes, give the AAE (compared to themselves) the most weight in the education of their children, and are the least likely to understand the AAE's model. The independents are the most likely to be men, are the most educated, work the most hours, home instruct their children for the least amount of hours, and rely the most upon the AAE's schedule. Finally, the religious conservatives are the largest group at the AAE, are the least likely to have credentials, are the least educated, have the lowest incomes, provide their children with the most home instruction, give the AAE the least amount of weight in their children's education, are the most satisfied that the AAE is meeting the special needs of their children, and are the most likely to understand the AAE model.

Finally, it is evident that the AAE parents are a diverse group. This diversity has arisen as people have chosen to home educate their children with the AAE for a variety of reasons. This diversity, no doubt, affects the ways in which families evaluate their AAE experiences and probably influences their approach to teaching their children. In the next phase of this research project, UCR staff will be working with LCER and AAE staff to find ways to help diverse families to develop the most appropriate program planning procedures and educational acquisition processes to assure successful student achievement.