

INFORMATIVE— RESEARCH

Cheating in America

Did you know that 7 out of 10 students have cheated at least once in the past year? Did you know that 50 percent of those students have cheated more than twice? These shocking statistics are from a survey of 9,000 U.S. high school students.

Incredibly, teachers may even be encouraging their students to cheat! Last year at a school in Detroit, teachers allegedly provided their students with answers to statewide standard tests. Students at the school told investigators that they were promised pizza and money if they cheated on the test as told. Similar allegations at several schools in San Diego county have prompted investigation. A student at a local high school says she sees students cheating on almost every test, and the teachers don't do anything about it.

The kids claim that they're tempted to cheat because of peer pressure and intense competition to get top grades. Many kids also say that their parents are setting a bad example by "fudging" on income taxes, lying about age to pay lower admission prices, or cheating their way out of a speeding ticket. They are sending a message to their kids that it is okay to cheat and lie.

Finding solutions to this problem is difficult. In our school's math classes, each student has different problems on their test papers, so it is useless to look at someone else's answers. Teachers could also randomly mix the problems throughout the page. Another solution is for adults to lower their expectations. Chances are that students believe cheating is the only way to meet unreasonably high expectations. Perhaps it is time for parents and teachers to seriously examine whether higher test results are important enough to encourage cheating.