Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies

2021

Educator and Parent Perceptions about Parent Involvement in an Elementary School

Jennifer Anne Cenatiempo
Walden University

Walden University

College of Education

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Jennifer Anne Cenatiempo

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
and that any and all revisions required by
the review committee have been made.

Review Committee
Dr. Mary Hallums, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty
Dr. Esther Javetz, Committee Member, Education Faculty
Dr. Timothy Lafferty, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost
Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University
2021

Abstract

Educator and Parent Perceptions about Parent Involvement in an Elementary School

by

Jennifer Anne Cenatiempo

MS, William Paterson University, 2009

MA, Walden University, 2006

BS, The Pennsylvania State University, 1998

Project Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2021

Abstract

Limited parent involvement in K-8 schools in the United States may be influencing student performance. A five-year strategic plan conducted at a K-8 elementary school with 550 students in the Northeast region of the United States highlighted the need to increase parent involvement. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents on current parent involvement and to gather input from them on how to improve parent involvement in the local school district. The study was guided by Epstein's framework of parental involvement. Research questions focused on the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents on parent involvement. Data were collected for this basic qualitative study using semi-structured interviews from one administrator, three teachers, and four parents. Open coding, inductive analysis, and deductive analyses were used to analyze the data. Themes that emerged from the coding process included constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement. The trustworthiness of the study was established through member checking, rich and detailed descriptions, and an audit trail. Findings revealed a discrepancy in the perceptions of parent involvement among administrators, teachers, and parents regarding the reason for the lack of parent involvement. The project deliverable was a policy recommendation with detail to provide the district with an actionable plan and resource guide to initiate alternative and inclusive parent involvement opportunities that support increased parent involvement. This study has implications for positive social change by the creation of a plan to increase parent involvement by providing alternate participation options for parents.

Educator and Parent Perceptions about Parent Involvement in an Elementary School

by

Jennifer Anne Cenatiempo

MS, William Paterson University, 2009

MA, Walden University, 2006

BS, The Pennsylvania State University, 1998

Project Study Submitted in Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2021

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving husband, children, and family.

Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge the support of my family and friends as I worked through the process of completing this doctoral project study. Thank you to my parents for giving me the gift of a quality education as a child and for instilling in me a love of learning. Thank you to my mother who took me to the bookstore each week to pick up the next books for me to read. Your grace and compassion are unparalleled. Thank you to my father for always being ready to do what was necessary to support our family. You are a hero to our family in every way possible. Thank you to my amazing children who understood the need for mommy to spend hours and hours writing. The questions about my work and the interest in what I was doing was heartwarming to observe. These young children are budding scholars as their appreciation and value for education is well beyond their years. Their love and patience gave me strength throughout this process. Special thanks to my amazing husband who has always been there for me throughout this journey. In moments of darkness, you were my light. In moments of weakness, you were my strength. Thank you for always believing in me. Thank you to my committee chair Dr. Hallums, committee member Dr. Javetz, and university research reviewer Dr. Lafferty for their diligence in supporting my success throughout this project. This accomplishment was a team effort with my family, my children, husband, and committee members serving as my cheerleaders, coaches, and mentors. I am truly blessed to have all of you in my life and will forever be grateful for your love and support.

Table of Contents

i

List of Tables

Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem that prompted this study involved a local school district with a 5-year plan to improve parent involvement which continued to have low parent involvement in school activities. The local school district involved in the project study is a single K-8 school in the northeastern part of the U.S. with 550 students enrolled. The local school district attempted to implement necessary state department of education (DOE) parent involvement activities but continued to demonstrate low levels of parent participation. As a result of this identified problem, the school district launched a strategic planning process to identify strengths and weaknesses and identified increasing parent involvement as an area of focus in the development of the 5-year strategic planning process. Strategic planning meeting minutes and presentation materials included on the district website provided evidence of the local problem and desire of administrators, teachers, and parents to increase parent involvement.

While low student achievement was a potential reflection of a myriad of issues, the state DOE highlighted parent involvement as a significant factor related to student achievement. The DOE stated that the intention of Title I legislation is to involve parents in a meaningful process to support student growth and achievement. The local school district Board of Education minutes on the district website demonstrated that the district accepts Title I grant funding. All schools which accept Title I funds must implement parent involvement requirements. The local school district had a Title I budget of approximately $94,000 annually to support parent involvement and student achievement.

Those funds were used for a variety of purposes, including parent involvement initiatives, staff salaries for remedial specialists, and programs that target struggling learners.

The local school district named parent involvement as a priority in addressing the low student achievement. At district strategic planning meetings, the superintendent stated that involvement of parents in their child's education is critically important for the success of students in the school district. The district mission statement demonstrated a clear alignment between student achievement and parent involvement. According to the district narrative published by the DOE, it was of critical importance to develop relationships between the school and families to support all learners to succeed at school.

The superintendent at the local school district stated that the local school district attempted to engage administrators, teachers, and parents to support student achievement by implementing the necessary DOE parent involvement activities to support student achievement, including an active parental involvement policy, school to parent compact, annual meeting regarding Title 1, and parent notification. The parent involvement policy was a formal policy which defined the role of parents as central figures in promoting the success of all students. The school to parent compact was a required contract between the school and parents which outlines the role and responsibility of each party to best support the success of students. The annual meeting with Title 1 staff involved discussing the program and types of interventions that were planned for students in the upcoming school year. The parent notification provided parents with all relevant district information about the program as well as information regarding the identification of learners for the Title 1 program.

A review of the school district website provided evidence of current parent involvement which existed in various forms at the local school, including parent teacher conferences, parent teacher organization meetings, board of education meetings, and other student-centered activities. The district strategic plan website noted the goal of increasing parent participation in school activities to support the creation of an educational environment that promotes overall health and wellness of students, faculty, and staff through positive learning experiences. Additionally, parent academies and parent math and reading nights were scheduled to support parents' awareness of curricular initiatives and strategies within the district. Evidence of parent meetings and involvement events on the district website demonstrated that the local school district had completed requirements for parent involvement in the Title 1 program. Notwithstanding the completion of required meetings and events for parent involvement, state assessment evidence of student achievement at the local school district represented low levels of student achievement, with 32-79% of students failing.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Failing the State Mandated Assessment in ELA and Math

| | 15/16 School Year | | 16/17 School Year | | 17/18 School Year | |
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Grade 3	68	55	51	39	55	54
Grade 4	44	69	65	65	36	42
Grade 5	62	62	44	69	44	50
Grade 6	61	76	48	65	42	72
Grade 7	41	82	58	54	32	62
Grade 8	49	NA	39	90	54	79

The research and legislation herald parent involvement as an underpinning of the development of high levels of student success. Parent involvement is vital in creating learning environments for students to thrive within school (Henderson et al., 2007). Parent involvement has been touted as an essential component to reaching high levels of student achievement (Stitt & Brooks, 2014).

Federal guidelines outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require parent involvement as a component of a high-quality program to support student achievement. According to the DOE, the importance of parent involvement in the school setting cannot be overstated in terms of its importance to increasing student achievement. The DOE cites stakeholders as parents, family members, educators and school staff, school leaders and administration, local organizations, community schools, early childhood centers, and institutions of higher learning as individuals or institutions which may be directly or indirectly involved in the school community. The discrepancy between DOE guidelines on parent involvement as required by Title 1 regulations and lack of parent involvement at the local school district is a gap in practice.

Rationale

Due to feedback from administrators, teachers, and parents gathered during strategic planning meetings, the local school district was considering ways in which to increase parent involvement. Generating an accurate perspective of parent involvement currently within the district supports the future development of parent involvement opportunities of all parents regardless of their race, socioeconomic status, or other factors. The local school district has 39% of students economically disadvantaged and

25% of students with disabilities. School districts should conduct needs assessments and directly connect to parents, especially those of low socioeconomic status, to determine the best course of action (Kuru Cetin & Taskin, 2016).

The local school district engaged in strategic planning meetings which included administrators, teachers, and parents to discuss current needs and plans for the school district. Meeting notes from those sessions posted on the district website provided evidence of concerns including lack of parent involvement. The meeting notes demonstrated a need for increased transparency and communication between the school district and parents. Parents attending sessions expressed an interest in being a greater part of their child's learning and success.

Positive social change for this project study was increased parent involvement via newly established protocols as informed by basic qualitative study findings. Analysis of interviews was used to examine current parent involvement and explore challenges and barriers preventing parent involvement. Positive social change involved the strategic planning goal of using increased parent participation in school initiatives to foster a learning environment that is supportive of all students in the district.

Current parent involvement activities provided by the school may not align with perceptions of parents within the school. Understanding why parents become involved and how schools foster connections between parent involvement and student achievement has been widely researched. Investigation of parent involvement provides an opportunity to gain an awareness of the types of activities occurring within schools that positively influence parent involvement. Parent involvement can include a broad array of active and

passive relationships and connections to the school (Fisher, 2016). Intervening to promote and improve parent involvement may be indicative of creating increased student achievement (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents on current parent involvement and gather input from them regarding how to improve parent involvement at the local school district.

Definition of Terms

Educator: All education professionals working within local school districts with appropriate certifications to serve in the roles of teacher, supervisor, principal, or superintendent.

Parent involvement: A variety of attributes, attitudes, or actions that may occur in the home or school to support the success of students and promote student achievement either directly or indirectly (Fisher, 2016).

Parent partnerships: Connections between parents and schools that support students in their learning (Young et al., 2013). Partnership requires a collaborative model of interaction and support between parents and the school which fosters long-term relationships and increased student prowess within the school environment (Nitecki, 2015).

Perceptions: The held beliefs of individuals on topics which have been constructed over time as a result of learning, knowledge, experiences, and interactions within and regarding the local system and other systems (Vygotsky, 1978).

Significance of the Study

Generating a high level of contact and comfort between the teacher and the parent supports student achievement (Herman & Reinke, 2017). Heightened awareness of the importance of parent involvement provided the basis for potential revisions and alterations to involvement protocols. Insights rendered from the interpretation of the basic qualitative study are useful in making determinations about the current success of parent involvement activities designed to support the school's objective of strengthening parent involvement.

Understanding parent involvement is challenging as it involves school engagement, home engagement, and home to school communication (Schueler et al., 2017). Not all families have access to the same level of resources to support their child's education; schools play a vital role in supporting the success of all students via explanation of expectations and provisions of resources for parent and child involvement (Berkowitz et al., 2017). In many instances, families can experience marginalization because they deal with seemingly arbitrary school parameters, have limited choice or input within the school, or are from low socioeconomic backgrounds (Yoder & Lopez, 2013). School districts must work within their local settings to address these issues and promote the involvement of all parents (Epstein et al., 2011).

Parent involvement is proven to support student achievement of all students regardless of individual differences that exist given student ability and current achievement level (Epstein et al., 2011). The project study directly supported the development of increased parent involvement at the local school district. This project

study is germane to all schools who are interested in developing parent involvement in their own systems. This project study adds to the body of existing research on qualitative studies related to increasing parent involvement. Interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents regarding existing parent involvement and potential revisions of current parent involvement protocol provided information regarding increasing parent involvement.

Research Questions

The local school district identified limited parent involvement as an area of focus in the development of a 5-year strategic planning process. Involved parents are associated with increased student motivation and achievement (Cecilia Sin-Sze & Pomerantz, 2012). One strategy to build awareness of context at a local school was to ask questions via an interview protocol to gauge a starting point and action plan to bring a group to an agreed upon goal or objective (Brandt, 1989). This project study was intended to question administrators, teachers, and parents about current and possible future parent involvement and gathering input on how to improve their involvement as noted in research questions:

RQ1: How do administrators perceive current parent involvement, and what are options for improvement in their view?

RQ2: How do teachers perceive current parent involvement, and what are options for improvement in their view?

RQ3: How do parents perceive current parent involvement, and what are options for improvement in their view?

Review of the Literature

Due to the multifaceted nature of learning and student achievement, it is critical to involve the family and school in instructional experiences (Epstein et al., 2009). Parent involvement occurs by engaging in trusting relationships that are built upon shared responsibility, meaningful involvement, and culturally responsive approaches to addressing the needs of all students within the school (Francis et al., 2016a). The development of trusting relationships involving communication, belonging, professionalism, and family leadership support successful parent involvement (Francis et al., 2016a).

Conceptual Framework

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement served as the conceptual framework for this project study and has proven the value of parent involvement in supporting student achievement. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement involves six components of parent involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2010a). The project study involves using Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement to explore the topic of increasing parent involvement at the local school district to determine areas of strength and weakness from the perspective of administrators, teachers, and parents. The framework supports educators in developing school and family partnership programs. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement places the student at the center and recognizes the critical value of

creating connections and relationships between the family and school for the benefit of the student (Epstein, 2010a).

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement offers a US centric approach to parent involvement as related to policy within the U.S. The Epstein parent involvement framework highlights basic responsibilities of families and schools. The school, family, and community create overlapping spheres of influence during the life, growth, and development of a child (Epstein et al., 2011). Each of the six areas of involvement in Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement create potential results for students by creating a dynamic support and enrichment mechanism to support every student to reach their potential (Epstein et al., 2009).

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement is a tested model that has been implemented to bolster parent involvement in school districts. Epstein's framework is part of the work of the National Network of Partnership Schools via John Hopkins University. The National Network of Partnership Schools includes over 150 school districts who are implementing Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement and working to meet diverse demands of their school environment with the common goal of raising student achievement. Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement provides a guide to action for local school districts via the formation of action teams for parent involvement (Epstein et al., 2009). Action teams can be implemented within school districts to provide essential supports that foster improved outcomes for students (Epstein & Salinas, 2004).

Type 1 Involvement: Parenting

This type of involvement involves the importance of supporting parents to become better equipped to manage the needs of their children as students. Type 1 activities are tailored to support parents in a specific district and develop awareness of child development among parents. Type 1 activities involve bridging home to school understandings between teachers and parents. Type 1 involvement also involves supporting students when they are outside of the school environment at home (Epstein et al., 2009).

Type 2 Involvement: Communicating

Type 2 involvement involves the communications that are sent from the school to the home. Attention is placed on quality of communication, ease of use, and clarity of publications. Input from community members and parents supports the success of this type of involvement (Epstein et al., 2009).

Type 3 Involvement: Volunteering

Type 3 involvement includes volunteering in and for the school. The definition has been broadened to include any person who supports the school from any location, including the school and the home. The intention of volunteering involvement is to create structures that empower all families to feel welcomed and supported in schools (Epstein et al., 2009).

Type 4 Involvement: Learning at Home

Type 4 involvement involves ways to foster learning when students are at home, including the completion of homework and curriculum-related activities. This includes supportive discourse regarding school and learning, encouragement of students to do their

best in school, and a recognition that all families can be an active part of their child's education (Epstein et al., 2009).

Type 5 Involvement: Decision Making

Type 5 involvement involves parent participation and shared decision making among stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Decision-making should be an inclusive process for all families and parent leaders. Parent leaders can include parents who are willing to share ideas from other families as well as overtly involved parent leaders within specific organizations (Epstein et al., 2009).

Type 6 Involvement: Collaborating with the Community

Type 6 involvement involves the importance of encouraging community involvement beyond families who have students enrolled at schools. It is critical that school districts leverage all available resources to enhance the school experience for all learners. Underused resources include financial supports and human capital (Epstein et al., 2009).

Schools and homes are the main contexts for children's knowledge development, and greater collaboration by people in these environments benefits children's learning and development via overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein, 2011).

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement relates to the study approach and key research questions as the focus on parent involvement is central to the project study. Epstein has granted permission for the use and modification of survey tools which use the conceptual framework for the purpose of this project study. Research questions are directly aligned with Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent

Involvement which address parent involvement. The interview questions were adapted from the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework as noted in the reference at the end of the interview document with permission from Epstein. The Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework was selected for the interview questions to gather feedback on the 6 types of parent involvement included in Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement.

Review of the Broader Problem

There is a plethora of research on the importance of parent involvement. The review of literature provided an opportunity to explore current research as it related to parent involvement and perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents. Research published prior to 2014 was studied but not included for this review. The review begins with a detailed explanation of Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement as grounding principles for this project study. Literature addresses the critical importance of increasing parent involvement in school settings to support students.

Topics in this literature review include parent involvement in relation to student achievement, legislation, academic success, lack of participation, socioeconomics, and achievement. Literature for this review was located via Education Research Complete, ERIC, ProQuest, Google Scholar, Thoreau. Research was published between 2014 and 2019, although some studies were included outside of that range. Key search terms were *parent*, *involvement*, *student*, *achievement*, *partnership*, *team building*, *perspectives*, *perceptions*, *school climate*, and *school culture*. All resources were full text and peer-reviewed articles.

Parent Involvement

Critical Review of Parent Involvement and Student Achievement

The challenge of addressing parent involvement to raise student achievement is multi-faceted. While many studies have been conducted to examine relationships between achievement and parent involvement, student achievement is an elusive concept. The connection between student achievement and parent involvement requires further investigation. Ferguson et al. (2008) said that an inherent challenge in school and family partnerships is acknowledging myriad factors that have a potential influence on interventions, including location, prior learning experiences, level of learning completed, culture, and socioeconomics.

The relationship between parent involvement and student achievement is complex as it may be influenced by factors including socioeconomics, gender, race, ethnicity, past learning experiences, expectations, and involvement (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). Level of parental involvement within school districts may be reflective of cultural capital, related norms, values, and expectations formed over time (Okeke, 2014).

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2017) said stagnation in terms of student achievement growth existed nationally. The NAEP assessment measures student ability on grade level content in identified areas via a cross section of students from a variety of states in the United States, including math and reading. Grade 4 math scores on the NAEP assessment showed no growth. Grade 4 reading scores on the NAEP assessment was down one point between the 2015 and 2017 assessments (NAEP,

2017). Grade 8 math scores on the NAEP assessment increased by one point and reading increased by two points between the 2015 and 2017 assessments (NAEP, 2017).

Educators, legislators, and education advocates are calling for greater parent participation and increased attention in terms of student achievement at both the national and local levels as evidenced by reports released by the United States Department of Education (USDOE, 2017). Studying parent involvement from the perspectives of parents and teachers offers insights into the school climate which influences student achievement

Legislation Governing Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is not a new concept in education. In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed by President Lyndon Baines Johnson as a civil rights law that was designed to provide equal opportunities to all students. The ESEA prescribed use of funds to support underperforming groups of students. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act enacted in 2002 by President George W. Bush further substantiated the ESEA via the inclusion of accountability measures which exposed areas of weakness and required action plans to close achievement gaps and foster rigorous experiences for all students (McNeal, 2014). The ESEA provides approximately $14.4 billion to support 21 million disadvantaged students and is the most significant investment from the federal government (Egalite, 2016).

The purpose of the ESEA and NCLB was to mitigate effects of socioeconomics and access to opportunity so that every child could reach their greatest potential (USDOE, 2017). According to Epstein (2005a), each school or local educational agency (LEA) must include a parent involvement policy which is designed to involve parents in

the education of their children so that all students are empowered to reach success via

equal opportunities in terms of learning and educational resources. The ESSA further

substantiates the critical need for LEAs to create assessment and accountability systems

and interventions to support the continued development and success of all learners in the

school system (USDOE, 2017).

A state plan for implementation of ESSA has been developed in consultation with

educators and other stakeholders including parents to determine level of expectation of

LEAs (NJDOE, 2017). According to ESSA, parent involvement is required as an

elemental component (NJDOE, 2017). School districts which accept Title I Part A funds

must provide parents with opportunities to become involved in schools (NJDOE, 2017).

Title I Part A requires school districts to provide parents with written notice and

in person meeting opportunities. Parents must be provided in writing with a Parent's

Right to Know guide, information regarding limited English proficiency services, Title I

program information, the school-parent compact, information regarding the parent

meeting, and parent involvement policies for the district and school (NJDOE, 2017).

Each of these documents provides details about how an individual school district involves

parents and shares information to support all students. School districts are required to

meet all these requirements annually with the purpose of supporting student achievement

(NJDOE, 2017).

Defining Parent Involvement

The definition of parent involvement has a controversial and complex history that

is rooted in research, theory, and value systems of the individuals within the very

institutions where involvement may or may not be occurring. In the research, parent

partnership and parent involvement are often used interchangeably. Parent involvement is

different things depending upon the role and perception of the individual providing the

definition (Young et al., 2013).

Parent involvement can be defined in a variety of ways including active support

via the completion of homework and passive support via conversation related to school

topics (Cabus & Ariës, 2017). For many educators, parent involvement means having a

partnership with the school, supporting a student with homework, and promoting the

school messaging of learning as an important part of the child's experience (Young et al.,

2013). For many parents, involvement has more to do with getting students to school and

dealing with home issues so that a child is ready to learn when then are at school (Young

et al., 2013). Parent involvement includes a variety actions that may occur within the

home or school to support the success of the child either directly or indirectly in their

academic pursuit (Fisher, 2016).

Parent Involvement and Academic Success

Utilizing public data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study, a

nationally representative database including data since 1988 on a biannual collection

cycle, it was determined that the type of parent interaction with the school directly

influenced the result on student achievement results for children (McNeal, 2014). In this

study, 12,101 cases, which included public school students who completed baseline and

follow-up achievement tests as well as parent questionnaires, were analyzed to determine

that direct parent to child intervention and discussion has a significantly greater influence

on achievement than other more passive involvement options such as membership in

parent and teacher groups and interactions (McNeal, 2014). The frequency of interactions

between home and school beyond the traditional involvement activities can shift the

home to school relationship in a positive direction as parents are provided with insights

into the learning experiences of the classroom as well as a stronger awareness of their

own child's progress with the content (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003).

Parent involvement and support influence students' success as adolescents and

future college graduates. A cross-national analysis of the Programme for International

Student Assessment (PISA) data reflects a positive correlation between parent

involvement and student literacy skills in reading (Hampden-Thompson et al., 2013),

while a meta-synthesis of 9 meta-analyses found a positive correlation between parent

involvement and student achievement with parent expectations for learning and

achievement demonstrating the strongest relationship to increased student performance

(Wilder, 2014). In a meta-analysis of 52 empirical studies representing 390 correlations,

it was determined that regardless of whether the father or the mother participated in the

school involvement, a positive relationship was noted between parent involvement and

student achievement (Sung won & Hill, 2015). In a longitudinal study of 1,452 7th grade

students, their parents, and relative parenting practices including monitoring, warmth, and

autonomy support, there was evidence of a significant indirect effect of parenting

practices on student achievement and college enrollment three years post high school

(Hill & Wang, 2015).

Parent involvement for the entire school and parent involvement for individual students are important factors in supporting achievement for students in different ways (Park & Holloway, 2017). Existing research provides evidence of the importance of parent involvement to promote student achievement. In a review of literature that included a final analysis of 77 pertinent studies, a positive relationship between parent involvement and student achievement was found as well as a claim for causality (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). In a quasi-experimental study using a pre-test and post-test model, an intervention and control group of students was utilized to determine that student achievement in reading improved when parents were provided with interventions to support the students outside of school (Reglin et al., 2012).

Parent partnerships rely upon a culture within the school that promotes respect, a sense of belonging, inclusion, positive interactions, opportunities for involvement, and administrative leadership that focuses on developing positive interactions and relationships with parents (Francis et al., 2016b). Parent involvement encompasses involvement for the public good, private good, and networking opportunities with other parents (Park et al., 2017). Parents at various grade levels and students with varied success rates in school may experience different expectations for involvement with the district and teachers (Hill et al., 2018). Parent involvement of students with special needs and other circumstances may be different than the involvement of a general education student (Damianidou & Phtiaka, 2018). In a review of 75 studies pertaining to parent involvement and student achievement, four common themes emerged which correlated to increased student achievement including reading at home, parents with high expectations

for their children, communication between the parent and the child, and parent

engagement and support for learning in the home (Boonk et al., 2018).

Lack of Parental Involvement

Lack of parent involvement is not necessarily an indication of indifference on the

part of parents (Alexander et al., 2017). The focus on developing parent partnerships that

embed evidence of student growth within a supportive school atmosphere is critical to the

success of parent empowerment (Hindin et al., 2017). The perceptions of parents on

schools and teachers can have a significant influence on the educational success of

students (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Parent attitudes towards school can

influence modeling by the parents and associated student achievement results (Bubic &

Tošic, 2016).

Parent partnerships are situated along a continuum with varied levels of

involvement. Parent involvement is a different construct to different families based upon

significant variations in communities, socioeconomics, educational level, and comfort

with the school (LaRocque et al., 2011). Traditional parent involvement is inherently

restrictive for many individuals who are not mainstream family structures (McKenna &

Millen, 2013). School-centric activities such as parent – teacher conferences are limited

conceptions of parent involvement (Stitt & Brooks, 2014). Parent involvement from both

mothers and fathers influence student achievement in a positive way notwithstanding the

potential differences in gender roles, expectations, and approaches to school participation

that may occur because of the cultural and familial expectations (Sung won & Hill,

2015). Parent involvement should include parent voice and parent presence where parents

are actively sought out for input and are valued for the variety of socio-cultural learning that is maintained to foster the well-being of the children (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

School districts must work to create tailored opportunities to bridge the divide between home and school to foster student success (Epstein, 2010a). The attention to supporting the home to school connection is important in fostering a school culture that it conducive to learning for all students (Park et al., 2017). The educational journey that students traverse between preschool and graduation from college is challenging and requires the provision of necessary transitional supports throughout the process including parent involvement to promote student success (Kealey et al., 2015).

There is a strong relationship between parent demoralization and student readiness (Okado et al., 2014). School districts must acknowledge the "ghosts in the classroom" that past experiences have left behind for many parents and work to build a collaborative environment that is rooted in the success of every child (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2003). Knowledge development is an active process that is informed by experiences and language set within a social context (Vygotsky, 1978). This process is critically important for learners of all ages, but the importance of understanding and valuing the life experiences that an adult possesses cannot be overstated as adult experiences can define who a person is and will influence future experiences (Knowles et al., 2012). Parent support and direct training can mitigate the influence of parent demoralization to improve student readiness and overall student attainment (Okado et al., 2014). The success of parent support and intervention for learning is linked to student

motivation, student self-selection, and parent training on the interventions utilized (Daly & Kupzyk, 2012).

Socioeconomics and Involvement

The Coleman Report of 1966 provided a comprehensive 737-page report which analyzed American education and found that socioeconomics and family background had a greater influence on student achievement than other variables within the school system such as class size or resources (Egalite, 2016). While parents of all socioeconomic backgrounds are interested in supporting their child's education, lower socioeconomic status may influence the way the school and teachers interact with these parents (Ankrum, 2016). Perceived barriers and low expectations may create a self-fulfilling prophecy of low achievement for low socioeconomic families and students (Wang et al., 2016). Partnership activities may be reflective of various sociodemographic factors which rely on parent involvement in the home in place of the school (Park & Holloway, 2013).

Parents of low socioeconomic students cite lack of access to resources, limits placed by the American school system, and the standards based educational movement as constructs which continue to favor classism within the confines of school systems (Renth et al., 2015). In a study including 551 Head Start students and their parents from primarily low socioeconomic neighborhoods, it was determined that the neighborhood socioeconomic status (SES) was related to children's literacy skill development and prowess because of home literacy factors (Froiland et al., 2013b). In an analysis of two neighboring school districts of contrasting socioeconomic status over a ten-year period, a high socioeconomic neighborhood provided significantly greater resources, access to

knowledge, and parent support when compared to the low socioeconomic neighborhood nearby which influenced the literacy achievement and future trajectory of the students in their academic lives (Neuman, 2013). By providing direct remediation and support to at risk students, the impact of socioeconomic status is reduced (Froiland et al., 2013b).

Socioeconomics have an influence on the classmate relationships with high socioeconomic students having significantly greater resources than their low socioeconomic peers (Chiu & Chow, 2015). Parents of middle to upper class socioeconomics will leverage a culture of advancement and privilege to ensure their children have the necessary opportunities and supports to succeed which effectively perpetuates the disparity between upper and lower socioeconomics and corresponding student achievement results (Galloway & Conner, 2015). Best practices can be instituted to remedy the disparity that socioeconomics creates such as the inclusion of training for local neighborhood resources including libraries, the direct involvement of parents in their child's academic life, and the leveraging of human resources to combat the unfair advantage that many affluent learners have over their less wealthy peers (Neuman, 2013).

Parent networks can mitigate the influence of other factors such as disadvantaged neighborhoods (Li & Fischer, 2017). The design of parent organizations may create boundaries for involvement with parents of diverse socioeconomic groups as the social networking embedded in these groups reflect a set of norms that may not align to the experiences of the parents (Wanat, 2012). Parents who suffer from mental illness and other limitations may also benefit from support networks within the school, community and via governmental agencies to bolster their ability to provide educational experiences

that will support a child's formal education in school (Loch, 2016). There are many

parent groups such as the national Parent Teacher Association, local Parent Teacher

Organizations, and grassroots parent advocacy groups such as Education Reform Now,

Stand for Children, and Parent Revolution that provide parents with opportunities to have

their voices heard as they work to reform education for their children (Manno, 2012).

Parent Involvement and Achievement

Achievement can be linked to the expectations set forth by parents for students as

early as Kindergarten (Froiland et al., 2013a). Parents are students' first teachers who can

express the desire to read for pleasure and build strong reading habits with young

children (Bano et al., 2018). The establishment of positive reading experiences at an early

age helps to sustain students over time as they develop their skill and ability in a literate

world around them (Sukhram & Hsu, 2012). At a primary level, storybook reading with

young children has a long-term influence on the overall reading success of students in

both receptive (vocabulary and listening comprehension) and emergent (alphabet

knowledge, decoding, and invented spelling) reading skills (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Parent expectations have a bidirectional association with student achievement

which develop strong connections in elementary school and become an indicator for

student achievement in later years of school (Loughlin-Presnal & Bierman, 2017). The

students themselves have a great deal of influence on their own success as their

implementation of self-efficacy, goal valuation, and environmental perceptions coupled

with a myriad of other factors including self-regulation influence achievement (Del

Siegle et al., 2017). Teachers perceive the achievement gap to be caused by lack of

parenting techniques, low student motivation, negative student behaviors, and low family income (Ratcliff et al., 2016).

Partnership activities foster long term collaboration with parents and schools working as partners to promote student achievement beyond the traditional parent involvement support activities (Nitecki, 2015). There may be low cost, high return activities that schools can implement to increase parent involvement and student achievement (Kraft & Rogers, 2014). Schools may assign students work that requires their parents or family members to provide their opinions on a variety of topics related to the content being covered in the classroom (Wysoczynski, 2018).

School districts have experienced a societal shift in which active participation by citizens within public institutions has decreased and requires a focused effort by district leadership to foster increased interest in the school system (Poynton et al., 2014). Historically, parent involvement has occurred with students relying upon their parents for early educational experiences (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Parent input and relationships with their children will change over time which will influence the nature of the correlation between parent involvement and student achievement (Pinquart, 2016). Collecting information from parents regarding their perceptions of the school may promote parent engagement within the school (Ball et al., 2017).

While there are many factors which will influence student achievement, parent involvement has been proven to correlate to improved student achievement outcomes. The legislation regarding parent involvement has developed over time with the intention of supporting the success of all learners in the school setting via the inclusion of the

parents in the learning process. The development of a clear definition of parent involvement coupled with expectations for parent involvement are essential to the success of all students. School districts must provide appropriate trainings and supports to reach all parents including unengaged and low socioeconomic parents. Communicating to parents and developing strong relationships between the home and school will bolster student achievement.

Implications

Student achievement has been the central focus of study for decades at local and national levels. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 mandated the Coleman Report to delve into the current status of schools in creating an equal educational opportunity for all learners. This report yielded a 737-page analysis of public education exposing the inequality which exists in public education in the United States with socioeconomics, race, and environmental factors playing a significant role in terms of influencing student achievement (Egalite, 2016).

Since the publication of the Coleman Report, the topic of supporting student achievement has remained a central focus at both the policy and district level with numerous areas implicated for increasing student achievement (Hanushek, 2016). Instructional time may be linked to increased student achievement outcomes (Jez & Wassmer, 2015). Academic optimism of teachers has been linked to increased student achievement in mathematics (Strakova et al., 2018). Teacher academic content knowledge can support student achievement (Gess-Newsome et al., 2016). There are many potential influences on student achievement (Hanushek, 2016).

There is not a single corrective measure to address low levels of student achievement, but parent involvement has been linked to increased student achievement (Hill & Wang, 2015). This axiom is widely held and supported by a significant number of studies as noted in the review of literature (Egalite, 2016). There are numerous studies which provide evidence of a correlation between parent involvement and student achievement (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). The state DOE purports the critical nature of parent involvement to drive student achievement and has enacted legislation which requires parent involvement as a part of the Title 1 requirements (New Jersey State Department of Education, 2017).

As parent involvement is critically related to student achievement, school districts should value nurturing the parent to school relationship (Huat See & Gorard, 2015). Parent involvement plays a significant indirect role in the success of students (Hill & Wang, 2015). Parents may benefit from training to support their increased participation in the school setting (Cunningham et al., 2012). Providing authentic training opportunities to parents can provide a critical opportunity to educate the parents on content in subject areas which may lead to greater interest and support towards education in the home (Knapp et al., 2017).

Guides to family and school partnership have been generated to provide prescriptive methods of leveraging the importance of parents in student achievement (Henderson et al., 2007). As the director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships and National Network of Partnership Schools via Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland, Epstein and associates have demonstrated, a

positive correlation between the utilization of research-based practices designed to empower family and school partnerships and increased student achievement (Epstein, 2010b). A meta-synthesis of 9 meta-analyses found a positive correlation between parent involvement and student achievement with parent expectations for learning and achievement demonstrating the strongest relationship to increased student performance (Wilder, 2014).

Based upon the research noted and the findings of the data collection and analysis, the project deliverable was a policy recommendation with detail. The policy paper provides the district with an actionable guide to reevaluate and redefine the current perception of the school district as a partner in learning with every family. The policy paper provides current research and roots the action plan in best practices for fostering parent involvement in today's world by expanding the definition of traditional involvement beyond the school day and campus with a focus on inclusion and empowerment of all families within the system.

Summary

The local school district identified a lack of parent involvement as a weakness that must be addressed. A strategic planning process was implemented within the local school district. The local school district held meetings and posted information on their website which stated the value of parent involvement. The local school district attempted to engage administrators, teachers, and parents by implementing the DOE requirements for parent involvement as outlined in Title 1 legislation.

The local school district took steps to follow the prescribed DOE requirements for parent involvement. The local school district utilized the Title 1 funding to support parent involvement activities and staff costs for remediation of targeted skills for students with low achievement levels. The local school district believed in the value of parent involvement with such conviction that the district narrative published by the state DOE cited the critical importance of developing relationships between the school and the families to promote success for all students.

Understanding parent involvement in the local setting will promote higher levels of parent involvement. The literature provides a working definition of parent involvement and highlights strengths and weakness of parent involvement. Parent involvement can be difficult to foster in certain settings as socioeconomics, school expectations for participation, and parent perceptions of school can negatively influence those partnerships.

The project study was based upon the tenet that parent involvement was important to the success of the students. The local school district espoused this belief system and attempted to make parent partnership a central component to their strategic planning. The project study acknowledged the local school district's concern for a weakness with parent involvement and was designed to gather information to support their desire of addressing that weakness at the local school. The investigation of the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents regarding current and potential future parent involvement provided information for the district to utilize in evaluating their practices. The heightened awareness garnered from this analysis regarding current parent involvement as well as

potential new ideas shared by administrators, teachers, and parents within the local school district will support the ability of the district to promote the success of every learner within the local school system. This data will allow the local school district to review their current procedures with a critical lens as well as innovate new practices based upon the feedback collected from administrators, teachers, and parents.

Section 2 provides the methodology of the project study. A description of the qualitative research design and justification of that design are provided. Information regarding the participants, criteria for selection, and protection from harm is detailed. The data collection process is explained. The project study will utilize interviews to gather the information. The methods for data analysis are explained as well as the procedure for discrepant cases.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

In order to study parent involvement occurring at the local school district, a basic qualitative study approach was used. A basic qualitative study analysis of a single bounded system provided an interpretation of themes that emerged from interviews via the integration of thick descriptions culled from a range of complex socially constructing belief systems. Data involved administrator, teacher, and parent perceptions of current parent involvement as well as options for improvement in their view.

Description of Qualitative Research Design

The basic qualitative study is a bounded system with a finite data collection that involves rendering a "rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study" (Merriam, 2009, p. 43). The basic qualitative study design provides for the collection of detailed descriptions and subsequent analysis of themes present within a bounded system (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The design provides context for descriptive events that culminate in awareness of the complexity of a multitude of perceptions related with the central phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). The basic qualitative study methodology has been used to determine the perceptions of parents to gauge the success of districts in terms of parent partnerships.

Justification of Qualitative Research Design

The basic qualitative study design is intended to address bounded systems that this study will examine and uncover. The basic qualitative study design was selected as the methodology for the study after reviewing a variety of other methods including

ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenological design. The basic qualitative study design provides for the collection of rich descriptions and analytics that are not grounded within a set of procedural steps that generate the creation of categories and development of a theoretical model as opposed to the grounded theory (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Parent Involvement provides a construct for the development of parent involvement. Each administrator, teacher, and parent involved or connected to the school has constructed knowledge about the system given their diverse experiences, communications, and interactions with the school system. This basic qualitative study involved interviews with administrators, teachers, and parents to understand their perceptions of current and future parent involvement.

Participants

Criteria for Selection

The school district involved in the project study is in the northeastern part of the U.S. There is one K-8 school within the school district and 550 students enrolled in the district. The administration is comprised of one superintendent, one building level principal, a curriculum coordinator, a business administrator, and a director of special services. There are approximately 50 teachers on staff. I have no working relationship with this school district.

Purposeful nonprobability sampling was used in the project study. This approach was selected as there was a plan in place to identify specific members of the school community who have knowledge of events and activities that have occurred within the

school district (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Purposeful nonprobability sampling is not a random selection (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Criteria for selection of the projected sample included attendance at a minimum of five district functions within the past year to ensure participants had experience with current functions being held within the school district. Additionally, all participants were required to have a minimum of 3 years either working within the system or had their child attend the school to ensure that they had awareness of the culture of the school. Attention was given to selecting administrators, teachers, and parents with children in a variety of grade levels.

Justification of Participants

The projected sample size included 15 individuals. The sample included five administrators, five teachers, and five parents. While there is not a required sample size in basic qualitative study research, this sample size provides is designed to reach a point of saturation for the identified topic. The sample size was intentionally small, as time and resources available to complete the project study were limited. Given the basic qualitative study design, there was no minimum sample size, as no broad generalizations were formulated as a result of the project study. It is my desire to better understand active parents' perspective regarding parent to school relationships. Criteria for sample selection reflect an intent focus on locating individuals with firsthand knowledge of the school system.

Gaining Access to Participants

A letter of invitation was sent (see Appendix E) explaining the study and criteria

for selection to participate in the study as well as the informed consent form, which was

sent to all administrators, teachers, and parents who met the required criteria. The

informed consent form was returned or acknowledged before the invitee could be

selected as a participant. Participants were required to list events they attended. There

were not any further requirements to prove attendance at events beyond each participant

providing a list of events they attended, as there was no evidence of attendance such as

sign in sheets available. Potential participants were screened based upon their meeting the

required criteria and then selected at random. The selection of these participants allowed

for direct knowledge of the system being analyzed as each interviewee had direct

connections and contact with the school system.

Researcher-Participant Relationship

Developing an appropriate rapport between the interviewer and the participant is

critical to the success of interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interviewer must

maintain a stance of neutrality with no indication of feelings or beliefs (Yin, 2014).

Interviews may involve some structured questions coupled with open-ended probes to

maintain a conversational tone during interviews regarding the topic while collecting

valuable perspectives from interviewees (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

All participants were provided with information about their participation in the

study via a written statement as informed consent. Confidentiality was ensured as no

personal identifiers were utilized within the collection of the data. The interviews were

conducted via phone on an individual basis at a time that was convenient for each participant. Each participant was provided with a number, and the information gathered from that participant was collected, analyzed, and stored via that participant number. All participants were provided with information on protection from harm, stating that at no time in the interview should the participants feel uncomfortable and that their participation in the interview can conclude at any time.

The interview was approximately 1 hour in length. The interview addressed questions that covered various areas of involvement including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The interview was a semistructured interview. A semistructured interview included a list of predetermined questions as well as an opportunity to ask follow-up questions to delve further into the respondents' answers. The semistructured interview allowed for all respondents to be asked the same list of planned questions. It allowed the interviewer to utilize probes that follow up on something that the respondent shared which can add valuable data to the qualitative research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview was adapted from the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework as noted in the reference at the end of the interview document. There was a set of interview questions for each group of participants including administrators, teachers, and parents. All the interview questions followed the same topics and design, but the specific wording of the questions was revised for each group to provide clarity to the questions relative to the participant roles in the local school district.

Protection of Participant Rights

Prior to commencement of the interviews, appropriate permissions were rendered by various groups to ensure protections to the participants. Once the proposal was approved by the doctoral chairperson and second member, it was submitted to the University Research Reviewer for approval. After receiving University Research Reviewer approval, the proposal was submitted to the Institutional Review Board for approval. Walden University and Institutional Review Board were requested to review and approve the project study. Walden University's approval number for this study is 05-14-20-0103821 and it expires on May 13, 2021.

After receiving approval from the University Research Reviewer, Walden University, and the Institutional Review Board, the superintendent was contacted for approval of the project study. The permission request from local school district is included (see Appendix B). The permission approval from the local school district is included (see Appendix C). The request for approval and provision for use of Epstein's School Family, and Community Partnership Survey Tool is included (see Appendix D and Appendix E). The Letter of Invitation to the participants is included (see Appendix E).

Once all approvals were obtained, a Letter of Invitation (see Appendix E) detailing the study was provided to all potential participants via email. The letter explained the purpose of the study. If a participant was interested in participating in the project study, they were be requested to email me. Then I emailed the interested participant the Consent Form. Prior to each interview being scheduled, the informed

consent form was emailed back from the participant to me with the words "I Consent" as well as their phone number. I contacted each participant via phone and reviewed the informed consent form prior to scheduling the interview. The consent form noted that participants may print or save the consent form.

At the beginning of each interview, the informed consent form was reviewed. Each participant was made aware that they may request to end their participation in the interview at any point. The identities and names of the participants or the school district were never be published or revealed in any way. In the interview notes, the participants in the sample were identified by a numeric as in participant 1. The names of the participants were not included in the written report and analysis.

Data Collection

In a basic qualitative study, understanding your audience is an important component to successfully composing (Yin, 2014). The intended audience of the project study were the administrators, teachers, and parents within that system. The outcome of this project study meets the criteria of being meaningful and providing information that will support various audience members' awareness of the variables associated with the basic qualitative study within the system (Swann & Pratt, 2003). Purposeful nonprobability sampling was utilized as a sampling method to allow for an information-rich data collection from participants within the single bounded system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Data Collection Instrument

Interviews were utilized to gather information about the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents from the selected members of those represented groups. The interview included a semistructured guided selection of questions adapted from the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework (Epstein et al., 2009). The interview provided broad open-ended questions which support active listening and may lead to additional questioning that further illuminates the perspectives of the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The basic qualitative study design for this project study allowed me to gather data in the interview process to inform the picture regarding perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents (Ridder, 2017).

The interview structure was semistructured with open ended questions that allowed respondents the ability to share their experiences and understandings about parent partnerships within the district from their perceptions as an administrator, teacher, or parent. Interviews were conducted via phone on a one-to-one basis. The interview provided useful information about the participants' current and past experiences with the district. An interview guide was utilized to provide a general course of discussion with follow up questions to support the successful collection of relevant data (Cassell & Symon, 2004). Interview notes were taken and noted as primary material that was experienced directly by the participant or secondary material which the participant may have knowledge of from other individuals. The interview was conducted in a manner that avoided judgement and invited open dialogue regarding the focus of the project study.

The interview followed the shorter interview protocol and was conducted in one meeting for each participant with an interview guide and open-ended questions embedded in the experience (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Questions were posed to the interviewee in common, non-jargon laden language that allow for a participant to fully understand what was being asked of them. The interview questions followed an adaptation from the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework (Epstein et al., 2009). The interview addressed questions that include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The interview was a semistructured interview with a list of predetermined questions as well as an opportunity to ask follow-up questions to delve further into the respondents' answers. The interview protocol is included in Appendix E and provides specific questions, probing questions, and follow up questions for the three targeted participant groups which include administrators, teachers, and parents.

Sufficiency of Data

Data were collected from multiple participants to strengthen the overall basic qualitative study findings at the local school district (Yin, 2014). The sources of data included 8 interviews. The sources of data were selected with the intention of focusing on those people who are actively involved in the system and who will be able to share their perspective on that system from their knowledge base and experiences within the system. This "convergence of evidence" solidifies the research and creates a path by which an external observer can follow the methods, data collection, and summary findings of the study (Yin, 2014).

Process for Recording Data

All interviews were recorded via a lap top computer. The program Transcribe was utilized to record the audio directly to the hard drive of the computer while simultaneously providing a written copy of the audio. The software allows for slowing down, speeding up, or searching the audio and transcribed content. The audio and transcribed written data were saved to my home computer and backed up to an external hard drive. The written copy of the materials was secured in a locked and secure location within my home. The interviews occurred via phone. Materials were not carried around to the 8 interviews to ensure that participants are not able to view past responses by other participants. No names were be maintained on any documentation collected. A coding system was utilized to protect the identity of participants. The electronic copy of the audio was secured via a password protected account in the laptop computer.

Role of the Researcher

I serve as a superintendent of a neighboring school district. Given my profession and location of my job, I have a general awareness of the local school district in which the project study will occur. I guarded against the reliance on past knowledge of schools and systems and maintained an open mind in analyzing the data for themes. Additionally, given the small county atmosphere at the location of the project study, there were several administrators and parents who I have met through meetings and events in the community. These individuals will be avoided in the study and noted as part of the selection criteria for participants given the ethical considerations related to this project

study. Additionally, the parents with whom I had contact with via local involvement in

the community were also avoided to not create an ethical concern.

<div align="center">**Data Analysis**</div>

The qualitative data analysis of the study employed both a deductive process,

coming from theories and other sources, and an inductive process, moving from bits of

information to broader categories and themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The use of

Epstein's framework to generate the interview questions created a top down, or

deductive, process with the data analysis as Epstein's prior research and theory regarding

parent involvement influence the formulation of the data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). The

participant responses to the questions followed that deductive analysis as they are

influenced by the question design. A secondary inductive analysis of the data was

implemented to ensure that any additional ideas presented in the interviews beyond the

framework of the question were accounted for in the analysis (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). In

this way, the data analysis used of all data and incorporated all collected data into the

project study (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Deductive and inductive analysis are often jointly

utilized in the analysis of qualitative data (Ravitch & Carl, 2016).

Interview Protocol

The interview protocol that guided the interview was based upon a theory which

has been proven by Epstein's work which is deductive in nature (Creswell, 2014).

Epstein determined a theory and conducted a variety of studies to prove and support the

claims of the hypothesis (Epstein, 2011). I was not required to limit the data collection as

a result of the tenets espoused by Epstein. I collected data from the identified sources

even if it contrasted with the work of Epstein. All collected evidence was included in the theme development, analysis, and synthesis of the data.

When utilizing interviews as a mode for data collection, it is important to monitor for potential bias and lack of recall (Yin, 2014). The purposive nonprobability sampling ensured that the individuals with specific knowledge regarding the research questions were interviewed. The decision to implement a purposive nonprobability sampling aligned to the intention of the study as the scope of the project study was to gain a deep awareness of perception data within one school district.

Deductive Analysis

Given the use of Epstein's framework as the basis for the interview, the interview was inherently guided in a certain direction. The deductive analysis required me to look for categories that match the structure and design of the interview questions (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). While I entered the initial analysis with no preconceived notions about the perceptions of the participants as they related to the research questions, Epstein's framework was embedded in the project study and infused a predisposition regarding the importance of parent involvement in supporting student achievement. As the researcher, I recognized that the interview design influenced the responses in the interviews. I relied upon a deductive, or top down, approach to utilize the categories within the interview to analyze the data as aligned to the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership Framework (Epstein et al., 2009).

The major categories embedded in the interview design based upon Epstein's framework including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision

making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein et al., 2009). The categories served as an initial coding element in the qualitative narrative. The culmination of the narrative analysis was an interpretation of the findings on the central phenomenon of perceptions on the critical importance of parent involvement.

The coding process began with an initial category formation as in one or two-word phrases written in the margins of the transcribed audio, documents, or field notes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The initial classification of the categories was exhaustive; however, with each review, the categories were combined and reduced to generate a manageable number of categories (Merriam, 2009). The data were initially coded within one day of the interview to maintain clarity of that event for me.

Inductive Analysis

The inductive analysis of the data moved from specific observations to broader generalizations (Yin, 2014). The data collected via the interviews was inductive in that the responses of the participants were considered in total and analyzed to create the categories and themes (Creswell, 2014). The inductive analysis allowed for pieces of information to be collected initially with clusters of information and eventual themes to emerge from this data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The data informed the themes that emerged and are discussed (Yin, 2014).

Evidence of Quality, Accuracy, and Credibility

In order to support accuracy and credibility to the study, 8 respondents participated in the project study. The integration of member checking or revisiting some of the respondents with the final themes and findings to determine their level of

connection, belief, or disbelief to the findings supported the trustworthiness of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The interwoven display of various responses from the data sources created a clear awareness for the reader of the study about the bounded system and associated central phenomenon.

Discrepant Cases

Given the request to participate based upon knowledge of the perceptions held by the administrators, teachers, and parents, all participants had knowledge related to the established research questions. The data collected in the interviews illuminated discrepancies between the school employees, including the administrator and teachers, and the parents. While all the participants agreed that there was a lack of parent involvement, the underlying cause for the lack of parent involvement illuminated a discrepancy between the various participants' perceptions. The most significant discrepancy in the data centered on the impetus for the lack of parent involvement.

The local school district did plan and offer various opportunities for parents to attend and get involved in the district. The administrator, teachers, and parents cited a variety of school events, such as math nights, literacy nights, or Back to School Night. The administrator shared that some of those events are often better attended if the students are excited to come and push their parents to attend. The administrator noted that it was generally an "underwhelming" amount of people. The administrator stated, "I feel like there's a negative context as if (the school) is telling us how to parent and that's really not the case." When asked about level of parent involvement at school sponsored

events, Teacher 2 referred to them as "like a flop." Teacher 2 stated that, "I think it's more the fault a lot of times as a parent more than the administrators."

When discussing the same topic of the lack of parent involvement with the parents, there were reasons provided that presented potential barriers to parent involvement. Parent 1 stated that more notice and several notices of those activities should be sent out because people will forget. Parent 2 stated that she had observed a lot of grandparents at events that made her think they might be main caregivers and so perhaps there might be other emergent needs for that family. Parent 3 stated that the events often did not seem to apply to his family. Parent 3 offered the suggestion of making it more individualized to the needs of families such as phone calls home or interaction with the teachers beyond conference time.

This discrepancy of placing blame by the administrator and teachers and offering potential barriers to involvement from the parents demonstrates a lack of continuity of perception in the issue of limited parent involvement. The findings are detailed with specific responses from the administrator, teachers, and parents on the topic of parent involvement. Discrepant cases within the review of the noted data sources were held as an indication of truth in the research providing an opportunity to demonstrate potential limitations or areas in need of further study in future work (Booth et al., 2013). Any potential discrepant cases were included in the narrative analysis of the project study.

Generation, Gathering, and Recording of Data

The data were generated from interviews with consenting participants. The process of generating the participants started with the district sending a letter of invitation

to all parents and staff members on my behalf. The invitation explained that if they were interested in participating to contact me via email. Interested participants emailed me directly. Once their initial email of interest was received, I emailed them the Consent Form. Participants were required to consent to the study by emailing the words I Consent to me. In this way, it was clear to the participants that they were consenting to participate in the study with me.

The data were gathered via the use of phone interviews. All consenting participants were recorded during the interview. The participants were recorded via a personal laptop computer. Then interviews were submitted through Transcribe for an audio to written transcription. Transcribe inserts time stamps and speaker identifying labeling throughout the transcription. Each interview yielded a rich set of data that provided a deep insight into the perspective of the various participants.

Global Pandemic Influence on Project Study

Schools were placed on remote learning from March to June of 2020 throughout much of the United States. Administrators, teachers, and parents were required to stay home and shelter in place for an extended period placing a significant burden on everyone. Administrators, teachers, and parents were repeatedly tasked with the need to complete surveys and responses regarding pandemic related school inquiries. When the request for participation in this project study was sent out to administrators, teachers, and parents during this time of international crisis, it was received by most as an additional request on their already limited resources of time and energy. Additional requests have been made to garner additional participants through the summer and into the fall. There

were rolling closures throughout the fall in response to the pandemic crisis with individual school districts closing for two weeks at a time to manage the health emergency in their local community. There was limited additional interest from administrators, teachers, or parents in participating in the project study.

The original plan for the project study called for 5 administrators, 5 teachers, and 5 parents to be a part of the interview process. The timing of this project study was significantly influenced by the global COVID-19 pandemic as participants were exceptionally difficult to acquire. Multiple messages were sent to the community and school staff with limited response. In several instances, people articulated that they would participate, but then those individuals would not avail themselves for an interview. The most common response from people regarding not opting to participate was a general feeling of anxiety and overwhelming stress tied to the pandemic. For many potential participants, the 3 months of lock down and remote learning had drained their reserve finances and undermined mental health of many in the region. Sickness was widespread for months and reports of the count of sick individuals filling local hospitals became the daily newsfeed.

After 3 months of attempts to secure the originally planned for 15 participants, I had successfully interviewed 1 administrator, 3 teachers, and 4 parents. While the limited participation will be noted in the limitations of the project study, the data gathered in those interviews was extensive. Each interview lasted from 45 minutes to 75 minutes in length. The participants gave complete answers to the questions listed on the interview protocol. Throughout the interviews, I recorded the participant responses and took notes

during each session. The interviews provided a rich data set that encompassed over 100 pages of transcription and handwritten notes.

Findings Built from the Problem

The findings of this research provide critical input to the district as it works to increase parent involvement. The findings detail the participants' perception and options for improvement in the areas of general experience with the school district, opinions of the parent partnerships with the local school district, and experience with the six areas of parent involvement included in the interview. The differences noted in the perceptions of the administrators, teachers, and parents support the development of policy changes at the local level to further support parent involvement.

The analysis of the data provided crucial information on the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents on parent involvement. There were 12 major questions and 46 probing and follow up questions. The questions covered the same topics for all groups and were tailored to each participant identified as an administrator, teacher, or parent. Table 2 identifies the coding for the research questions and participants.

Table 2

Research Question and Participant Group

Research Question	Participant	Assigned Code
Research question 1	Administrator	Administrator 1
Research question 2	Teacher	Teacher 1
		Teacher 2
		Teacher 3
Research question 3	Parent	Parent 1
		Parent 2
		Parent 3
		Parent 4

Inductive Analysis

Table 3 provides a listing of the key words, categories, and themes. The analysis

rendered 32 key words, 18 categories, and 3 major themes from the data. The key words

were derived either directly from the interview transcripts of the 8 participants or in

summation of the sentiment shared by the participants without regard for their respective

role in the district during the initial coding. The key words were written on notecards and

spread out across a table. The words were considered individually and then analyzed as

part of a larger group or collection of terms. With each review of the key words, words

were pulled together to form categories of similar and supportive data. Then the

categories were synthesized and by similar process evaluated individually and

collectively in terms of all category data. The 18 categories were considered via

overarching themes that incorporated each piece of data. The themes which emerged

from the analysis included constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of

parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement.

Table 3

Key Words, Categories, and Themes

_____

Key Words	Categories	Themes
• Involvement • Collaboration • Parent involvement • Activities • Events • Partnership • Goals	• Parenting • Parent input • Parent involvement • School experiences • Learning at home	• Conflicting perceptions of parent involvement
• Accessibility • Low turn out • Teacher feelings • Left Out • Favoritism • Barriers • PTO/Same People • Communication • Special education • Sports	• Lack of parent involvement • Inclusivity • Decision making • Volunteering • Communicating • Barriers to involvement	• Barriers to Parent Involvement
• Social emotional • Helping parents • Struggle • Stressful • Frustration • Conflicting schedules • Working • Time of Events • Logistics • Valuation • Socioeconomics • Poverty • Apathy • Community outreach	• Support for parents • Busy Schedules • Building upon success • Atmosphere in school • Challenges to getting involved • Generating interest • Collaborating with the community	• Constraints on parent involvement

Deductive Analysis

Findings from RQ1

      Type 1 Involvement: Parenting. Administrator 1 stated that during the strategic planning process teachers and parents were directly involved in the partnership with the district, but that after some time that becomes less of a direct experience between the district and the parents. Administrator 1 stated, "I think giving more opportunity for people to participate and voice their opinions is always better. Unfortunately, we probably don't do it enough." The administrator went on to discuss the option of sending out parent surveys and providing opportunities for people to give feedback or their input as options to find out more about how people are feeling about the district.

      Administrator 1 stated that parent participation was desired. "We are always trying to look for other ways to get the parents involved in terms of supporting their children. You know to get a better understanding of what the curriculum is and be able to support their kids, but unfortunately we don't normally get a good turnout for those school events." Administrator 1 shared, "We have active parents on the PTO. However, the involvement in school activities from parents are never as robust as we want. I would say that overall the culture of the school is positive. The families are for the most part happy."

      Administrator 1 shared that parent partnerships "were something that we want, but it is very hard." The administrator detailed math nights, stem nights, and literacy nights and explained that those events generally turned-out greater numbers of parents if

the kids were excited to attend because they pushed the parents to attend. "We are always trying to look for other ways to get parents involved," stated the Administrator.

Administrator 1 shared frustration about the lack of parent involvement despite what was identified as numerous opportunities to engage parents in the school district. Specially noting events where only 2-3 parents attended, the administrator called the turnout at these events "underwhelming" given the 468 students enrolled in the district. The events with limited success were often events geared to educate the students and enrich the parents' experience. One event, a community forum with a local resource for parents, had a particularly low number of parent participants. There were a few events with relatively high numbers of parents in attendance including a preschool expansion meeting and an 8th grade graduation event. It was noted that the preschool expansion program attracted 12 families and offered a catered dinner. A local community resource was able to present at this meeting to the families during the dinner portion of the event.

When discussing working with all parents, not only those few who show up at the events, the administrator referred to the teachers as the main mode of communication to all parents. The district administration had not done that work in the past. The administrator offered that the administration does set up the events for parents to attend if they are interested. The administrator shared that any presentations or handouts are also posted in the digital backpack located on the district website. This is a link on the district homepage where parents can click to access information. Information is also posted to Facebook and sent out via the insta-alert message system which directly emails content to the parents.

The administrator discussed another community-based event that provided for a parent academy which was very poorly attended with only a single parent attending. The administrator felt that perhaps the reason for such low parent involvement at the events was that there was a negative context to the events as the district is telling the parents how parent. The administrator followed that comment up with the statement, "…that's really not the case though." The administrator shared that even when the district has had parents attend an event such as the literacy night it was very difficult to get the parents to be compliant and travel with their child to various established stations. The best turn out at an event was an evening event regarding a newly created free preschool program which included a dinner for the parents. According to the administrator, 12 families attended that event which was a large number in comparison to other events.

When asked directly if the administrator felt frustrated by the lack of parent involvement, the administrator responded by saying "absolutely!" According to the administrator, "I think it really comes down to priorities… if you are a big sports family at practice every single day you go out of your way to make sure (your child) if there and you are there for every one of the games, right? That's your priorities. The school offers an academic program that will held better support your child like a math night. We're going to go talk about ways to help your kids study and achieve in the program, and (the parents) don't show up."

Type 2 Involvement: Communicating. When discussing communication, Administrator 1 stated, "I think that when it comes to students needs on special education students who have learning disabilities, I feel like our child study team is very tied into

the families. They have a great understanding of them for that. General education students who don't really have concerns. We probably don't do enough of reaching out and that might be something that we could do more of. I think for the high-risk students we are definitely very much in the loop with their families and sometimes caseworkers and whatnot outside of school."

Communications are shared in a variety of places on social media and the district website. Administrator 1 shared that not all parents make it a priority to be engaged with the school. When questioned on asking parents about the strengths and weaknesses that they feel exist in the district, the administrator stated that there is a parent advisory committee that meets bimonthly to discuss concerns including involvement. The administrator stated, "We do push out questions like that to get feedback from that committee… We tried implementing things that they suggest; however, unfortunately, it's the same cluster of parents that are usually the supportive ones that are showing up."

The administrator shared that a survey had been sent out to the parents during the pandemic to determine how the parents thought the remote experience was going. An additional survey was being drafted to send out to the parents to follow up on the initial survey. The administrator expressed the desire to support the families but likened the experience of leading during the pandemic to building a plane while flying it. Administrator 1 shared information on methods of communication such as utilizing the district website, social media feeds, and email. Administrator 1 referenced increasing the number of parents at events via the posting of content on the district website, utilization of the district emailing and communication system, and social media.

Type 3 Involvement: Volunteering. Administrator 1 shared that the same cluster of parents tends to be a part of most events and in willing to get involved. "You know, we're willing to do whatever it takes every year. We try different things, but we don't usually get all that great of an outpouring of parent support for different activities." When questioned on whether the district was supportive of parents who are absent at these events and in terms of overcoming potential barriers to get these parents to attend, the administrator stated, "I think that is the tricky question. As a parent I think that they have to make it a priority." The administrator went on to clarify that "if the parent does not have flexibility to leave work or they're not taking a vacation day to make it a priority to be there it is kind of difficult." In terms of evening events, the administrator stated, "I guess we're making (the events) accessible to parents because we're offering it later at night when they are all off of work and we are posting material online." The administrator also discussed the idea of live streaming events in the future to reach a broader audience for volunteering.

Type 4 Involvement: Learning at Home. Administrator 1 noted beginning of the year orientations and an annual climate survey are used to gather community input. The administrator discussed Back to School Night as the main pathway that the district supports the needs of regular education students with learning at home. During Back to School Night, the teachers review expectations with the parents for learning at home including homework and classroom expectations. There was no information provided about how district administration supported learning at home from the administrator.

The administrator provided additional information on the extensive meeting and communication support for parents when addressing students with special education needs. The administrator shared, "I feel like a lot of support is given to those (special education) parents in terms of talking about the student goals and expectations for class but not for your average student." The administrator stated, "We probably don't do nearly as much as we could be doing (for our general education students)."

Type 5 Involvement: Decision Making. Administrator 1 provided details of a Parent Advisory Council which meets bimonthly to provide input to the district. The parent advisory committee offers ideas about what the district could be doing to better support the success of the students. The administrator noted that when those ideas are implemented often the same parents are involved.

Additionally, the administrator described a very active Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) in the district that was communicated with on a regular basis. The PTO had greater access to the administrator than the parent advisory committee. The PTO gets involved in decision making in terms of events for students such as discussion of events for the graduating 8th grade students. The administrator noted meeting 4-5 times with the 8th grade parents to keep everyone informed of the plans for that group of learners.

Beyond the parent advisory committee and PTO, the administrator shared that there is an orientation at the beginning of the year and in the summer "where we gather information from our parents and students in how the school is doing." A climate survey

is distributed once a year to gather feedback. The administrator stated, "Other than that, I would say that we probably don't do all that much more."

Type 6 Involvement: Collaborating with the Community. Administrator 1 provided a lengthy list of community resources that the school supports including Project Self Sufficiency, the Municipal Alliance, and the weekend bag meal distribution program. The administrator noted that there is not a lot of parents who utilize the provided outreach opportunities. One idea shared by the administrator was to work with other local districts in the region to coordinate these community resources to reach more parents.

Project Self Sufficiency is a county-based organization that supports families with work force development skills, housing supports, clothing supports, access to food pantries, and access to a network of free and supported resources to get families the help that they need to raise their families. The administrator discussed how the Project Self Sufficiency RV is often brought to the school during events as a mobile hub for these resources so that interested parents can have immediate support from the resources Project Self Sufficiency offers if they are interested.

The Municipal Alliance is a town-based resource that promotes health and drug free choices for students and the community. The administrator sits on the Executive Board of the Municipal Alliance for the township with the mission of revitalizing the township and creating a healthier, more vibrant community. Another organization that is relied upon by the district to support the community is the weekend bag food distribution

program. This program sends home food to needy families in backpacks for meals over the weekend.

The administrator noted that he is very involved in additional organizations in the town such as the historical society and the town council. The administrator stated, "I feel like we're a very tight community there everyone is willing to support each other and we're very, I don't know, collaborative and communicative I guess in my mind." Administrator 1 shared that the district did whatever it could to support the families in the community.

Findings from RQ2

Type 1 Involvement: Parenting. The sentiment of limited parent involvement was echoed by Teacher 1, Teacher 2, and Teacher 3 in various ways.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 shared that coming from a private school, there was a lot more involvement of parents as they were all called weekly. In the local public school, Teacher 1 shared that while more parent involvement would be great, "you also have to meet the parents at what they are able to do. Some of these parents that don't work with their kids… work three jobs or they have four other kids that they have to take care." Teacher 1 shared that it takes a village, and that collaboration is key. "I want the parents to be involved as much as possible."

When asked about whether the district reaches out to the parents to find our more information about students' strengths and weaknesses, Teacher 1 stated, "I think that there could definitely me more." Teacher 1 discussed contractual hours as a potential barrier to this work noting that in the private school there was not a union. Teacher 1 felt

that this business model of the private school encouraged teachers to really work to meet the students' needs. In the public school, the teacher noted that there are 5 events contractually. These events are times when parents and students get to see their teachers and collaborate. Teacher 1 stated that she thought an additional family event could be a good idea but conceded that the PTO has a hard time getting other parents involved. "You know, it's you can lead a horse to water," according to Teacher 1.

Teacher 1 explained the specific activities that she did with her students and parents to make the learning process more attainable for students with diverse needs. Teacher 1 felt that it was important to make connections to parents via email or phone to build the partnership between the home and the school. "They (parents) just want to vent as well so I have had phone conversations with parents. I am more apt to have a phone conversation than I am to go back and forth with email, you know, because then you can hear the inflection in someone's voice."

When questioned about the way the district has provided resources for teachers to support parents and families to understand their child's development, Teacher 1 stated, "There is always a disconnect between having the parent involvement and the teachers in the classroom. I think that comes down the line with teachers having the responsibility to teach the academics whereas a lot more nowadays I feel is more geared for social and amotions." Teacher 1 felt that a lot of the supports for parents were left to the teachers. Teacher 1 felt that some teachers would give workshops to parents but noted that "I think you would probably end up seeing the same parents who come to everything else.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 shared that she has seen the district attempt to offer parent events to get parents involved such as a math night experience where kids and their parents are invited to the school. According to Teacher 2 this type of event where the students can attend is easier to get parents to attend as they do not need to find a babysitter. Teacher 2 shared that other events "are like a flop" where hardly anyone will come. Teacher 1 shared that she did wish parents were a little more involved. Teacher 1 shared, "I think it's more the fault a lot of times as a parent more than the administrators." When asked about working to improve parent involvement, Teacher 2 stated, "To be honest, we should do it more often than we do. It gets stressful. It is kind of stressful trying to get them (the parents to come) and we know that they really don't want to come."

In discussing the parent involvement in her own classroom, Teacher 2 shared that having parents in did not happen that much anymore. Years ago, with an old administration Teacher 2 felt that there was more involvement in the classroom. Teacher 2 shared that she understood the current administrator is coming from a place of safety and parents into the classroom is "not welcomed as much as it used to be, say five years ago and further." Teacher 2 shared, "Where now I feel like it's frowned upon, they really don't want people you know, roaming around the building, you know what I mean? Just because of safety… they don't want people, strangers, whatever, in the building. It is kind of sad, but that's the truth."

Teacher 2 shared that at Back to School Night she requested information from parents about their kids' strengths and needs. Teacher 2 was not aware of the school

doing anything like that. Beyond this event, Teacher 2 shared that she felt parents did not come to the school because "they just don't feel like it." Teacher 2 elaborated to identify barriers to involvement including parents working all day and just wanting to come home at the end of the day and "feed their kids dinner and make sure homework gets done." Teacher 2 stated, "I don't feel like they feel they are not welcome in the school. You know we try and make it a welcoming atmosphere, so I don't think that is the problem." "I don't feel like education is really as high of a priority as it should be," according to Teacher 2. Teacher 2 was shocked to hear that parents did not even know who the teachers were at a grade level. In her opinion, there was not a tremendous value on education for many of the parents.

Teacher 2 shared that there was a lot of help for struggling kids with resources that would make accommodations for learners who have a hard time focusing or learning in the classroom because of behavioral issues. According to Teacher 2, the guidance counselor really works with the parents and the teachers to help kids. The guidance counselor generally reaches out to the parents individually to support their ability to help their child in school.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 shared that the district provided ample opportunities for parent involvement, but that it was the parents themselves who refused to engage with the district. According to Teacher 3, "I think based on the demographics of our school it's a little bit difficult." Teacher 3 noted that there are not helicopter parents that you might have in other districts. There are a few groups who try to make things happen.

When questioned about getting parents involved and supporting parents in the school, Teacher 3 shared, "I think there is a little bit of an assumption. There is a double-edged sword with us being a preschool to eighth grade school. We know families and we understand the dynamic in the family. Sometimes there is an asocial that like, well, their parents didn't even finish High School." Teacher 3 said that some people have lower expectations for those students, but that she feels they need to be pushed because they might have a lot of potential.

Teacher 3 shared that she did not see the district supporting families with resources. Teacher 3 shared that she wished her administrator would look at what is working in other more urban districts to better understand what type of resources might be needed in the local school district. Teacher 3 stated, "I think that we have a population (of parents) that are working really hard and trying to make it." Teacher 3 noted that some of the parents may have had bad experiences in school. Teacher 3 also noted that there is an increase in English as a Second Language Learners. Teacher 3 shared that sometimes these learners are perceived as not smart because they do not know English. In these cases, the family is not being supported either according to Teacher 3. Teacher 3 stated that when parents are struggling with something "I just feel like sometimes they feel exhausted by something."

Teacher 3 shared that the district did put out parent involvement options but that is was the choice of the parents to get involved or not. Teacher 3 described the issue of hosting conferences only to have the parent that you really wanted to meet with not attend. Teacher 3 thought that it would be helpful if the district took a team approach to

managing students who were struggling and get the family engaged with the district.

Teacher 3 stated, "It is so hard because everybody has different schedules." Offering

more times to meet beyond conferences where people could mingle like an ice cream

social type of event would be helpful so that the parents could make a connection to the

teacher on a human level beyond a certificate would be an important option according to

Teacher 3.

Teacher 3 shared that she believed there was a disconnect between the parent

involvement and the classroom. Teacher 3 discussed the level of need of so many

students in terms of the social and emotional issues. "You know, we have so many more

things that we do for students even in the way that you set up a classroom to deal with the

social emotional. I think that there are teachers who are new and then there are teachers

who have been teaching for a really long time and may not feel as if the social emotional

is really the responsibility of the teacher." Teacher 3 stated, "I have seen a lot in my 15

years. I think that education has kind of transformed in a lot of different ways." Teacher 3

was concerned about certain areas of instruction being glossed over in favor of tested

areas of instruction.

Type 2 Involvement: Communicating.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 felt that communication from the district relied on parents

going to look for the information. "I don't think that is plainly transparent," stated

Teacher 1 when discussing the locating of information. Teacher 1 explained that there is

information which can be accessed on the district website, but "if you're not an advocate

for your kid or you're just struggling to stay above water, it might not be right in front of

you." Teacher 1 elaborated to explain the fact that as an educator she was well versed in the systems that the district used, but if she was an outsider to the system, she might find it more challenging. Teacher 1 explained that a parent might not have the time to navigate to the website and locate information when they are worried about holding down their jobs and taking care of their family. Teacher 1 shared that she communicated often with the parents in her classroom regarding the students.

In terms of communicating with the individual teachers about meeting their students' needs, the district has not asked Teacher 1 what they could be doing differently to address any strengths or weaknesses. Teacher 1 described her program as unique within the district as it served a specific group of learners with identified needs. Teacher 1 felt that her students were provided for by the district but did not necessarily think that level of attention was given to all teachers and students.

Teacher 1 stated, "I think they definitely ask the teachers as far as what (our goals) are at the beginning of the year." Teacher 1 shared that she did not see that sort of conversation with the parents. In her program parents did have communication about their child's specialized programs. Teacher 1 did not observe the district asking parents to provide feedback on how the district was doing in terms of support the success of the students.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 shared that she did not observe the district ever asking anyone for suggestions or ideas about raising student achievement. Teacher 2 shared that her goals for the year always center on growth for the students. This is especially important for the lower achieving students. Teacher 2 explained that she works to have

those lower achieving students "bump up even more." Teacher 2 also makes it a point to support the higher achieving students as well as those students are often slightly ignored as well. Overall, Teacher 2 shared, "I guess my goal is to have everyone enjoy learning and to make a real improvement." Part of this success is based on the kids being happy and so she attempts to pick things that will interest the students and "get them on her side."

Teacher 2 said that she did not see any communication from the district asking parents about their goals or hopes for the children for the year. "I feel bad that I can't think of that," shared Teacher 2. Teacher 2 utilized Back to School Night to request input from parents about their hope for the year. Teacher 2 said that parent responses are generally about the kids having fun as opposed to being about content.

Teacher 2 shared that she communicates with the parents often via email, reminder applications that message parents, and phone calls. Teacher 2 explained that it is always her goal to provide a lot of positive messages and feedback to the parents, but as the year progresses, that often slows down. In terms of the district communication to parents, Teacher 2 stated that she was sure they did communicate although was unable to provide any specifics about this communication. Teacher 2 shared that middle school seemed to have more communication than the elementary school. Teacher 2 shared that she felt most communication happened when there was an issue.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 shared that her goals for the year centered on the students growing as individuals and feeling confident. Teacher 3 shared that no one asked her what her goals were for her students. She did not believe that the district discussed goals

for students unless there was a problem that had occurred. Teacher 3 shared that she thought "it would be awesome" to spend time discussing individual students and making plans for them based off the past year's experiences. "There is not so much for kids who are really on top of it, you know, and then the ones who are in the middle are kind of like a just breezed by."

Teacher 3 felt that there was so much put on teachers right now that it is hard to make a good phone call. "Communication is always a little bit more on the oops, we got a problem here. Let's work this out." Teacher 3 shared that often those calls do end up positively. Teacher 3 said a barrier to communication was a lack of time.

In terms of district communication, Teacher 3 shared that there were some surveys sent to parents and messages about events were sent out. Teacher 3 did not think there was a feedback loop where parents could give their full opinion. Teacher 3 expressed an understanding of the challenge for the superintendent by saying that you will never please everyone. "There is not much insight from the teachers of what communication is happening between the (administration and the parents) which I feel is kind of difficult and awkward at times." Parents have known about things before the teachers. "Sometimes communication is lost where we are not included in it." Teacher 3 stated, "Sometimes communication is a little bit of a flop…" This breakdown of communication made Teacher 3 feel dismissed by the administration at times.

Type 3 Involvement: Volunteering.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 shared that there was a lot of volunteering from the PTO. "There is a core group of people that volunteer… in fact a lot of times those who

volunteered ended up becoming part of the staff as paraprofessionals," stated Teacher 1.

Teacher 1 shared that they do not have enough parent volunteers because there is only a

core group of people. Teacher 1 attributed the lack of parent involvement to

demographics and the struggle for some people to make ends meet. "I just don't know if

a lot of parents have the time to volunteer," stated Teacher 1.

When questioned on the actions of the district to reduce barriers for parents to

volunteer, Teacher 1 stated that while there are some activities that only happen during

the day, there are other events such as sports and performing arts that parents can attend.

Teacher 1 did note that the district saw a much bigger turn out for non-academic based

activities. According to Teacher 1, some parents get their kids to school just to be

complaint with the requirements rather than to optimize the experience for the students'

learning.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 shared that she spent time working with the students beyond

the normal school day hours. Teacher 2 felt like some parents may be working and may

not be available to attend. This educator felt that for some parents they just did not feel

like making school events a priority. Teacher 2 shared her experiences with the school-

based fundraisers such as a raffle of donated items referred to as a tricky tray in the

district. "I think that it's kind of nice because it is the teachers, administration, and

parents all working together for a common goal."

Teacher 2 did share that they are always looking for more volunteers at these

sorts of events. Evening events could pose an issue for potential volunteers who might

have more availability during school hours as Teacher 2 stated, "They don't really let

people in the building that much anymore." Teacher 2 added that parents might be permitted into the building for a meeting or a book fair, but beyond that the volunteering options are really limited by the district during the school day. Teacher 2 shared that "I don't feel like it's as welcomed as it should be because he (the superintendent) has a thing about letting people in the building."

A contrasting perspective on the idea that the same group of parents are somehow the favorites was offered by Teacher 2. She shared that sometimes people use it more as an excuse to not get involved because they would say that it is always the same people showing up." Teacher 2 felt that those who are super involved are always looking for other people to get involved and shared that she would like for people to give something a try before deciding to pass judgement and not show up to volunteer.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 shared that volunteering at events had changed over the years with the same group of parents generally getting involved as the district moved away from parents in the building which has greatly reduced opportunities to volunteer. Teacher 3 noted a social clique exists with some people having been at the school for a long time and everyone kind of signs up for the same events with the same people each year. Teacher 3 shared how the elementary teachers seemed to really stick together, and middle school teachers tend to stay as a group as well. Teacher 3 shared an experience when a colleague had put in to be a part of a summer camp program and was told that there were enough teachers already only to see who had been chosen as the favorites on the staff. Teacher 3 furthered discussed her opinion of what is perceived as favoritism by

the administration explaining that some people are easy to work with which leads to their selection.

Teacher 3 described how the administration may have relationships with certain families and therefore the connections are stronger for those families to encourage involvement. Teacher 3 noted that it felt like certain families are often "rubbing elbows with the administration which creates a sour taste in the mouth" for her and others. Teacher 3 discussed feelings of favoritism as certain parents always seemed to be at the events stating that "it almost seems like a select population." This notion of favoritism was not stated in the planned interview questions, but it presents a salient point that must be explored further.

Teacher 3 was asked about the way in which the district helps to involve everyone, even those parents who may be marginalized for some reason. Teacher 3 stated, "It is just sort of the way it is, and those parents do not come. I will say I have seen that when there are meetings." Teacher 3 explained that at some meetings babysitting has been offered to support parent attendance, although Teacher 3 had not attended those experiences to determine if the babysitting encouraged better attendance. Teacher 3 expressed hope that now that everyone was more comfortable with video streaming services and offering remote meeting options perhaps more events could follow that format to generate greater participation.

Type 4 Involvement: Learning at Home.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 shared that leading into the COVID-19 school closure the staff had 3 days to prepare for the remainder of the year. This presented significant

challenges. Teacher 1 shared that she was just trying to get her students to complete whatever they were able to complete. Teacher 1 stated that she was left to support the kids and their learning at how because "a lot of other teachers don't understand them (the students), and administration doesn't really either because of their social emotional needs."

Teacher 1 described how difficult working with these students is for their parents. The parents look forward to the students being in school and working with the teacher online. Teacher 1 shared that she does work on curricular based projects and activities but at a very different pace and in a much more hands-on format given the needs of her students. Teacher 1 attempts to help the students and families, but it was very hard with the remote learning. Teacher 1 did not share any types of activities that parents are expected to complete with their children at home.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 felt that parents were generally supportive of making sure homework is completed and turned in. According to Teacher 2, some parents are great at checking over everything while others are not. Teacher 2 explained that a quarter of the class has parents who are very actively involved in checking the homework. A second quarter of the class has parents who glance over it to ensure it is done but do not generally correct it. Teacher 2 explained that there is another group of people who are not really engaged. These students come to school with it either incomplete or with answers that do not make any sense. There are some students who are not supported at home in their learning at all.

Teacher 2 explained in detail a class project that the parents are generally very supportive of that is completed primarily at home. The students research a state and then dress up as a famous person from that state. Teacher 2 shared that in her experience parents tend to get pretty into the project.

Teacher 2 shared that she did not want to come across in a "snobby way," but felt that parents who cared a lot about education were generally the parents who themselves had continued their education to college. Teacher 2 shared that the children of these college educated parents tended to seem that the kids would probably go to college as well. Teacher 2 expressed the desire to "reach the other ones" that she is not sure about in terms of college. Teacher 2 said that she is always preaching to these students about the importance of school and homework to try to support their success as they get older.

Teacher 2 did not have any examples to offer about how the district helped parents to better support their children with learning at home. There was not any feedback provided about goal setting with the parents. Teacher 2 shared a perspective on learning at home that was limited to parents helping the students complete homework and assigned projects.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 discussed how she does not really run into learning at home as she instructs a special area of instruction that does not typically assign any outside of schoolwork. If anything, Teacher 3 will provide extension activities for families to consider, but these activities are always voluntary. Teacher 3 shared that she has had conversations with individual parents about how to extend their child's learning if they have an interest. Teacher 3 will also take time to review simple ideas for parents to do at

home with their child to support their success in her classroom and program. Teacher 3 did not have any information to share relative to the district supporting parents and students in learning at home.

Type 5 Involvement: Decision Making.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 stated, "I don't believe a lot (of decision making) has parents involved." Teacher 1 expressed a need for the district to provide parents with an opportunity to learn about programs such as the district reading program to better support their students. Teacher 1 felt that the district should be engaging more with the parents about academic topics and provide options for short, 30-minute presentation on topics related to learning in either a live or recorded and posted format.

According to Teacher 1, the district does attract parents to get involved for events such as Field Day, which is a school day filled with physical games and competitions generally played outside, sports, or performing arts. Parents are much less likely to attend an academic event. The notion of parent involved in the decision making was not a focus of the district according to Teacher 1. Teacher 1 thought that it would be a good idea for the administration to reach out to many of the parents who are not attending.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 shared that parents were not too involved in decision making. Teacher 2 thought that parents are just not that interested in getting involved in academic type activities. Teacher 2 shared that she knew the group met in the library once a month, but she added that "I don't really have anything to do with it." Teacher 2 shared that the parent group is referenced a lot from the administration. Teacher 2 had heard about it, but she did not know who was on the council or what they did exactly.

Teacher 2 did not think that there were a lot of parents involved, but it seemed like the parents who were involved had the opportunity to make decisions for the school. Teacher 2 thought that this was a great program.

Teacher 2 expressed that it is often the same parents who get involved repeatedly in the school. There are other parents who Teacher 2 would like to see involved, but "majority of the time it is the same parents over and over again." Teacher 2 explained that sometimes people use that fact, that there are the same people who are involved all the time, as a reason or excuse to not get involved. According to Teacher 2, before even trying to get involved in the district, a lot of people will form an opinion about involvement in the school.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 expressed her awareness of how difficult it must be to be an administrator in a school district. Teacher 3 shared, "I think that's definitely a challenge and you try to give parents as much voice as you can without there being a complete overhauling of the school, but I think in the same breath that more can be done in a smoother way if there was more teacher involvement. Teachers sharing opinions because we are the heart of it." Teacher 3 shared that teachers should have a greater input as she felt that the teachers are "the blood pumping through." Teacher 3 expressed a desire to build the teachers up and then that might in turn positively influence the parents and the overall school. Teacher 3 shared that she felt marginalized by the decisions of the district in some ways and was not valued. When asked if she had ever articulated that feeling to the administration, she had not done so.

Teacher 3 detailed her experience of having had many different administrators with different perspectives and values which impacted the way her program was valued over time. According to Teacher 3, where there is a will there is a way, but unfortunately for her program within the school do not seem to be a high priority. Teacher 3 shared frustration for having many years of experience and advanced degree and not being listened to by administration.

Teacher 3 did not have any comments on parent involvement in decision making. Her perspective was that she was not valued for her own contributions to the school community. Teacher 3 described methods to improve decision making including the staff in a larger way.

Type 6 Involvement: Collaborating with the Community.

Teacher 1. Teacher 1 felt that this was an area that could "definitely be something to build upon." Teacher 1 felt that the district was not a wealthy district. Teacher 1 expressed the feeling that for some people they were living hand to mouth, "just king of making ends meet."

Teacher 1 felt that the district could provide more resources for these families. Teacher 1 did not express ideas about any specific opportunities that the district offered for the students and their families. Teacher 1 did not offer any specific supportive network of resources for the students and their families.

Teacher 2. Teacher 2 was unsure of the questioning related to the school's collaboration with the community and requested clarification. Teacher 2 shared that she thought the district helping families who needed to get technology for the kids during the

pandemic. Teacher 2 explained how the distributed the computers and hot spots to the students who needed them. Teacher 2 explained how the district ensured that all the students were able to pick up the lunches that they needed during the pandemic closure to support the food security of all students. Teacher 2 stated, "Our district tends to be kind of poor, so a lot of people relied on the school lunch."

Teacher 2 shared that the child study team is very good and offered to meet with parents via virtual meetings during the pandemic crisis. Teacher 2 shared that she was not sure about the supports for the families over the summer. Teacher 2 felt that the district did provide information about different programs in the county. Teacher 2 shared that at meetings resources are often discussed so that parents can reach out to them for their families.

Teacher 3. Teacher 3 discussed the way she saw the district moving in the direction of acting more like a community hub. Teacher 3 shared that in the past there were more evening nights to showcase the students which was important in bringing the community together, but that as the years have progresses that seems to be less. Teacher 3 stated, "You cannot burn both ends of the wick so much or else you are going to die out."

Teacher 3 explained that she recalled an organization that helped the parents with resources but could not recall the name. Teacher 3 shared that it is always the same small pocket of people who get involved. Teacher 3 was not able to share specific methods or opportunities that the district utilized to strengthen the collaboration with the community in terms of interweaving agencies or support networks. There were no descriptions of

community outreach via her classroom beyond supporting individual parents with suggestions to extend specific students' learning when requested.

Findings from RQ3

Type 1 Involvement: Parenting.

Parent 1. Parent 1 noted that she had been involved in the school district for 18 years and had seen a lot of different activities offered. Parent 1 was concerned that people may not be aware of the various activities offered. "I do see that a lot of people aren't always on social media or the website. They don't look at the school calendar." Parent 1 suggested that the district should send out paper notices to help parents to remember about important events coming up.

Parent 1 questioned the district's sincerity and desire to have parents become partners in the student learning experience. Parent 1 felt that the district did not really want to communicate, but rather "pushed off" a lot of issues. "I know quite a few parents who felt pushed off by the administration. A few even went to a board meeting and felt pushed off." Parent 1 explained that even as the administration has changed a few times while her children have been enrolled, it is always the same style. Parent 1 noted that the district offered many opportunities to parents to get involved but questioned how genuine the district really was to get parents involved. Parent 1 shared perceived lack of genuine interest in parent involvement in the district in terms of the way the district thanked the parents stating, "I just feel like it's not a sincere thank you of appreciation."

When asked about the way the district reached out to parents to learn about the students' strengths or needs from parents directly, Parent 1 stated, "I don't think they ever

reached out to ask anything like that." Parent 1 expressed the feeling that the reason there was not a lot of parent involvement had to do with what Parent 1 referred to as below middle class. Parent 1 explained that the people who generally get involved are the moms who do not work. Parent 1 stated, "They (the district) make it hard for working parents, like activities start at 6:00." Parent 1 explained that if she can get her kids interested enough to attend an event, their dad does not get home until 6:30 at night.

Parent 1 explained that the district had been putting out a lot of information during the pandemic for families. Parent 1 noted, "I wouldn't actually read it because my kids are pretty good and but again not everybody is on social media to see this." Parent 1 explained that she also gets phone messages, emails, and has access to a digital backpack which is a location on the district website where notices are posted for parents. Parent 1 was asked about what the school district could do better to reach parents. Parent 1 felt that it would be easier if all the information were in one place as opposed to all the different locations. According to Parent 1, different social media and website locations had different information posted.

Parent 1 shared that the district had never reached out to her to ask for her opinion about how to improve the parent involvement. Parent 1 did offer the example of planning for last year's 8th grade class as a more collaborative process between the administration and the community. Parent 1 articulated that even those meetings seemed to be heavily run by administration with their ideas being selected.

Parent 1 did not have anything to share about the district asking her about her hopes and goals for her child for the year. Parent 1 mentioned that there was a parent

advisory committee, but she was not sure about the committee. Parent 1 did not feel that the district collected information about what the parents needed to support their children. There was not a lot of back and forth between the district and the parents.

Parent 2. Parent 2 share that she has had a very positive experience with the district. Her children required special education supports, and the district had been good at providing supports and meetings to discuss the supports, as necessary. Parent 2 explained that there are events and things to attend but due to conflicts with sports or her own coaching schedules it can be hard to fit attending those events into the experience. Parent 2 shared that the district did offer a math night and a literacy night a few times a year. Parent 2 also described events such as Back to School Night, parent conferences, and guest speaker events.

When asked directly about whether the district does enough to get the parents involved, Parent 2 stated, "I think they do. I mean they advertise it. They have it on their social media accounts. I think it's out there." Parent 2 shared, "I think there is obviously all different kinds of clientele. You have people that are really interested in their kids' education and some that maybe not so much, but I think they do a nice job of trying to you know." Parent 2 went on to explain about how the district offered prizes to those in attendance to attempt to increase attendance at events.

Parent 2 discussed the way the Child Study was so diligent in following up with her on meeting the needs of her children. Parent 2 expressed thanks to the team when they would call to fill her in on how her children were doing at school. Parent 2 stated that there was a difference between her child with special education and her child in

general education in terms of the experience of parent involvement in the district. Parent 2 shared that she gets frequent updates and supports for her child in special education, and less frequent updates from her general education child.

When asked why the parent involvement in the district was low, Parent 2 shared that "everybody is busy running around." Parent 2 stated that there were times when she would have liked to attend an event, but she was unable to give the need to be at a different event for sports or other activities. Parent 2 noted that there was a wide variety of clientele at events when she did attend which she attributed to various family back stories. Parent 2 explained that there were sometimes different groups with a different focus such as special education, or perhaps there were grandparents raising young children for whatever reason.

Parent 2 felt valued as a parent and member of the school community and had been asked to sit on a committee regarding the needs of her child in preschool as part of special education. Parent 2 explained how the district supported the families with students with special needs and provided the example of how at winter holiday time those learners could attend the event earlier than the rest of the students to avoid sensory overload which is an issue for some of the children.

In terms of the district providing resources to support their child in school, Parent 2 explained that the district posts materials from events on social media. Parent 2 also shared that the district offered different nights with speakers for parents to attend to help support their child. Topics such as supporting your child's mental and emotional well-being and how to deal with your child with some tips were part of the speaker series

offered by the district. Parent 2 felt that the school had gone above and beyond in attempting to get people involved. "I really think that they try to do things that involve families."

Parent 3. According to Parent 3, "You really don't have much interaction unless your child has disciplinary issues." Parent 3 shared that there is not a lot of feedback between the home and school about how things are going and what the district could do better for general education students beyond the annual Parent Teacher Conferences. According to Parent 3, "For the most part, my two kids are strong in school, and they don't struggle with the subject matter. They are good with interacting with others." In terms the frequency of being invited to district events, Parent 3 stated, "For the most part, I guess the interaction would be minimal on my part. Most of the interaction would be at the board of education meetings or PTO meetings which I do not attend."

Parent 3 defined parent partnership as the partnership between the school and the parents. Parent 3 mentioned the child development at the school and partnership through feedback received from the school. Parent 3 felt that parent partnership should also include a constant feedback loop between the school and the parents.

Parent 3 identified monthly meetings held by the school as opportunities for involvement. He felt that there needs to be a balance between the home and the school. Parent 3 stated, "It is not a strong push from the administration, but then I also think the community at large has a kind of passive approach when it comes to involvement at the school."

When asked about how the district might be able to support the parents better, Parent 3 stated, "I think if they had some more parent events at school where there could be more interaction with say the teachers outside of, you know, once or twice a year at a conference. I think that would be beneficial. It could be not even just coming to school, but a phone call, maybe like once a month just as a touch in to see how your kids are doing."

Parent 3 shared that for the most part he does not provide information to the district about his child's strengths or weaknesses. Because his children are doing well in school, Parent 3 felt that he did not receive a lot of feedback from the school district. Parent 3 offered the idea of the district catering the curriculum to the students' levels more than their grade level as the children are beyond the grade level work.

Parent 3 felt that the level of parent involvement was low in the district because "people are caught up in their day to day at work and things that are going on at home." Parent 3 also offered the observation that perhaps it is the culture is not fostered at this point. Parent 3 felt that he was welcomed at the school, but "in terms of activities and open lines of communication those could probably be fostered and built a little better in order to build that circular feedback loop." Parent 3 shared that the communication about the upcoming school year was minimal which created confusion and anxiety.

Parent 4. Parent 4 shared that her child had received a lot of support from his classroom teacher. Parent 4 stated, "I haven't really had much support. I know (my child) gets frustrated because the teacher has shared that with me." Parent 4 felt that the teachers were wonderful and that in previous years there was a good amount of opportunity to

participate in school events. Parent 4 shared that she knew when board meetings were and understood how to participate.

Parent 4 defined parent partnership as working alongside the teacher to create the best situation for her child. Parent 4 described how her son's teacher reaches out and helps her as best she can. Parent 4 shared that her son was struggling with the pandemic and performing worse than before the pandemic in school. When asked about how the school works to get parents involved, Parent 4 shared that in a typical year there would be different events such as a math night with administration and teachers in attendance alongside the parents and students. Parent 4 described how the pandemic had made the connection between the home and the school challenging.

Parent 4 stated that the reason for the low levels of parent involvement at the school were "because of work schedules and stressors." Parent 4 stated that she felt valued by the district as a parent. Parent 4 described the way the teacher sends out information and websites to try to help parents to better support their kids. According to Parent 4, "Times are so weird right now. Everything is so strange… I think that they (the district) have been providing everything that they can." Parent 4 shared that even with the district offering help presently, it had been a difficult time during the initial months of school closure with limited district support.

Type 2 Involvement: Communicating.

Parent 1. Parent 1 thought that the district needed to provide "more notice and several notices of these activities because people will forget about it." Parent 1 felt that communication was an issue as the district did not do enough to publicize the events.

When asked whether the district should revert to paper distribution of notices regarding events, Parent 1 stated, "I think so because I think that it helps a lot of people. I don't know if it would actually involve more people, but I think that an actual physical notice of something does help."

When questioned about how parents can ask for help if they have a question, Parent 1 stated that the district would "push you off a lot… I've heard of parents who have been pushed off with concerns about things whether minor or not minor." Parent 1 shared that during the normal school year the district would communicate 1 time per grading period but noted that there has been a lot more communication due to the pandemic.

Parent 2. Parent 2 provided insights into the level of communication that she had received as a parent of a child with special needs. She felt that the teachers and the child study team were very responsive to her child's needs and were quick to communicate with her as a parent. The parent shared an example of a direct exchange between the district and herself and felt that she received a standard response thanking her for her input.

Parent 2 explained that during the pandemic there were many surveys sent out to the parents. Parent 2 stated, "I think they really try to have things for the families. I think they try to get everybody involved. I think they do a nice job of that." Parent 2 discussed a time she was upset with the district when a teacher was let go that she thought was excellent. She did attend a Board of Education meeting to express her concerns. Parent 2

shared that she also received an email response thanking her for her perspective and taking her concerns under consideration.

According to Parent 2, the district did not ask about her hopes and dreams for her children in district. Parent 2 added that she hopes for her children to be able to grow in their confidence and adapt to whatever the year throws at them. Parent 2 noted that it was different for her child with special needs as those goals are more specific to her needs.

Parent 2 explained that the district relied upon the phone call system, email, social media, and the district website to communicate. Parent 2 felt that the communication was helpful. When questions arise, she reaches out to the teachers first and then administration if necessary. Communications are sent out weekly or placed on a district calendar for parents to use to be notified of events.

Parent 3. Parent 3 shared that she was not aware of any communication from the district to her providing opportunities to share concerns or thoughts with the district. Parent 3 noted that Board of Education meetings could be attended by parents. When asked about if the school district ever communicated with the parents about their hopes and dreams for their child for the year, Parent 3 responded that they did not.

Parent 3 shared that there are email updates that are sent out to parents, but Parent 3 did not find this to be effective. Parent 3 stated, "I tend to ignore those emails for better or worst. They are pretty high level in nature in terms of activities going on, but they don't foster any type of willingness on my part to be more engaged." Parent 3 explained that it would be more helpful to have a better awareness of what is going on in the classroom with more tailored communications.

Parent 4. Parent 4 shared that sometimes the information was just too much and not really tailored to the age or needs of her child. Parent 4 offered the suggestion of creating an elementary age communication page and a middle school communication page so that parents could receive information related to their child. Parent 4 felt that increasing parent involvement was difficult because parents must work. Parent 4 noted that a better use of social media by grade spans could help. Parent 4 shared that she thought the school was great, but that she wished there were more outside activities for the students. In terms of negatives about the school, Parent 4 cited a general lack of resources in the district.

Type 3 Involvement: Volunteering. Parents offered concerns for why more parents were not involved that represented a more pragmatic stance noting conflicts, limited resources, and responsibilities that were limiting the parent's ability to participate. Multiple parents shared that the biggest obstacle was that parents are busy. The time of day for the activities was brought up as an issue by parents as it conflicted with work or sports and activities after school. Parent 1, Parent 2, Parent 3, and Parent 4 shared that it was often the same parents who volunteered repeatedly which was a source of concern. All parent participants expressed volunteering as a function of showing up at events.

Parent 1. Parent 1 shared that she had the experience of volunteering in the district at the father-daughter dance, book fairs, class trips, and class parties. According to Parent 1, it was often the same parents in attendance at these events. When asked about the quality of the experience, Parent 1 stated, "It's nothing fabulous." Parent 1 shared that she never felt judged by teachers or administrators at events but noted that it was mostly

PTO parents. Parent 1 expressed how when chaperoning a dance all the other parents were members of the PTA group. Parent 1 stated that "they're asking like the day before for their volunteers and then its disorganized." Parent 1 attributed the lack of parent volunteerism to the fact that some parents have smaller kids at home, work, or just do not want to get involved.

Parent 2. Parent 2 felt welcome and supported but described potential challenges to get to events with other conflicting activities and responsibilities for parents. Parent 2 said that when her child was in Kindergarten the parents were able to attend the field trips, but then the following year that changed. Parent 2 stated, "I don't know if that changes as they get older and security wise. I know it is obviously a lot tighter than when we were in school with everything that goes on during the day." Parent 2 also detailed the way the PTO was always asking for volunteers. Parent 2 said that the PTO is interested in attracting new parents to get involved. Parent 2 shared that she felt that the PTA was an inclusive group. "They are always trying to get like new people to join." Parent 2 shared that items were posted on the Facebook page including the date, time, location, and invitation for everyone to attend. The cost of becoming a member is incredibly low and is not a real barrier to be a member according to that parent.

When asked about how the district reduces barriers to get parents involved, Parent 2 noted that parent teacher conferences are offered at a variety of times. The teachers will work with the parents to set up a time to meet. Additionally, they have held some events on Friday nights and other nights of the week which helps people to be able to attend. Additional conflicts such as student sporting events after school hours also limit

attendance. Parent 2 stated, "Oh I wish we could go but we just can't because we have hockey practice." Parent 2 explained that everyone had their own schedule which impacts their ability to attend.

Parent 3. Parent 3 noted that he traveled quite a bit for work and that made it exceedingly difficult to attend weekday and after school events. Parent 3 did share one experience with volunteering and described the experience as "chaotic and haphazard at best." According to Parent 3, there was little administrative presence as the event was run by the parents. Parent 3 shared that the timing of the events is very difficult for working parents. Parent 3 noted that events were sometimes limited to the class parent. Parent 3 stated, "It seems like the same individuals are chosen over and over again." Parent 3 felt that there was not equal opportunity for everyone to get involved.

Parent 4. Parent 4 stated that because she normally works it is difficult to attend classroom parties and events. Parent 4 described that there are barriers to getting involved due to work. According to Parent 4, she was not sure if it was always the same people at events because they were available to get involved or had the time to be at the school. Parent 4 shared that she longed to be part of what she perceived as the "in crowd" of parents who were always ready and able to show up at the school and spend hours helping at book fairs or other events. Parent 4 wished she were in a different place professionally and financially to help with these events and be there for her child. "I feel like teachers sometimes favor those kids, the children of the parents who are involved. I could never be that involved so I just kind of put that aside." Parent 4 was asked to clarify her comments further and she explained that there was a desire to be involved, but that it

just is very difficult to get involved when she is working. Parent 4 felt badly for not being able to be more involved stating, "I wish I could have been that parent who, you know, did everything and was able to go to every single party."

Type 4 Involvement: Learning at Home. Learning at home was a generally addressed by the parents reaching out to the teachers when problems or issues would arise. This was exceedingly difficult during the pandemic with the learning happening exclusively online and at home. The parents felt that the learning at home was dependent upon the needs of their children to be successful in learning and school.

Parent 1. Parent 1 shared that the school district did not give parents a lot of information on how to help their child in their learning directly, but that the school district did post many links and resources on the district website. Parent 1 stated that her children were self-sufficient which was a big help during the pandemic. Parent 1 stayed on top of the kids' need by communicating with the teachers and spending a great deal of time checking to keep up with everything on the parent portal to access the students' grades and completion of assignments.

Parent 1 felt that the district did give information on how families could help their kids by posting information on social media and providing links to the county library system. Parent 1 was concerned that if a parent was not on social media, it would be hard for the family to benefit from these resources. Parent 1 felt that there was a lot left to parents to contacts the students' teachers.

Parent 2. Parent 2 had experienced the special education supports in the district Parent 2 able to provide more specific instances of the district supporting the learning of

all students while at home. Parent 2 felt that the district was very responsive and actively worked to meet the needs of her child. "You have people that are really interested in their kids' education and some maybe not so much, but I think that they do a nice job trying to you know get people involved."

Parent 2 shared that learning at home "was just definitely a challenge with me and the two kids." She described the schedule that she had for at home learning during the pandemic. Parent 2 described how the teacher would call to give support to the implementation of the learning at home in the pandemic. "It was an all-day affair just trying to balance everything." When questioned about what the district could have done differently to support parents, Parent 2 stated, "I feel like they did the best they could. I mean it was tough."

Parent 2 shared that the goals for her child with special needs were specific. A clarifying question was posed about explaining the difference the parent experienced between her child in general education and special education. Parent 2 described how specific supports were given if you attended various family nights. Beyond that the support was essentially from the classroom teacher.

Parent 3. Parent 3 described how there was limited support for kids who are advanced. Parent 3 described his children as self-starters who did well on their own. Parent 3 noted that some days after a full day of school the children needed some encouragement to get their work completed. Parent 3 shared that his children were involved in an outside of school tutoring program to enhance their learning. Parent 3 providing an example about how the school district was unable to meet the children

where they were academically in math as they are advanced beyond the grade level content. Parent 3 expressed concern that to support his children's success he has had to locate outside school resources to appropriately challenge and support their learning.

Parent 4. Parent 4 stated that her child's teachers have been excellent. "Obviously, my son had certain zoom times with his teacher, and she gave us the heads up for the week," shared Parent 4. Parent 4 shared that if your child was "pretty good" that you would not receive a lot of communication or support. Parent 4 explained that during the pandemic she shifted her focus to include more real-life learning about topics of interest to her son such as agriculture and industrial areas. Parent 4 explained how he would attempt to take a pattern or type of classroom learning and apply it to something else that would be more interesting for her child.

Parent 4 explained that at times learning at home was stressful. Parent 4 expressed the desire to support her child to be more independent which was in line with the teacher's wishes, but that it was hard as her son had lost half of 2nd grade to a remote experience in the pandemic. Parent 4 shared, "I haven't seen anything come up with that yet. I know when everything was pulled last year, they distributed something, and I still haven't had the chance to look at it." Parent 4 expressed that she had left her job to care for her son in the pandemic. Parent 4 stated, "I am sure they've distributed something."

Type 5 Involvement: Decision Making.

Parent 1. Parent 1shared that attending a Board of Education meeting was a main method of being a part of the district decision making process. Parent 1 stated, "I could be totally wrong because I don't like to really get involved with that stuff because I know

how the administration is." Parent 1 felt that she would be "pushed off" by the district

leadership team. In the 18 years that the parent had been involved in the district, she had

never attended a Board of Education meeting.

Parent 1 shared that some people do go on social media and post negative things

on social media. Parent 1 said that there had been quite a bit of anger about the 8th grade

class with parents and the district. The parent described how the parents had tried to push

for a regular graduation over the summer after some of the restriction on gatherings had

been lifted, but that the district was not responsive to the parents. Parent 1 described how

she had been on a virtual planning meeting when a parent was upset because the parents

could not decide when it was clearly stated that the district was giving the decision to the

students.

Parent 2. Parent 2 discussed a time that she had been involved in a committee

with the school and had the chance to offer input. She was not sure if there were other

opportunities for parents to be involved in decision making beyond being on the Board of

Education. Parent 2 explained that she may have missed something though about decision

making. Parent 2 felt that the PTO President was likely involved in decision making in

the district. Parent 2 expressed the possibility of the district offering more opportunities

and her just not being aware of them. Parent 2 shared that, prior to the pandemic, the

district did not reach out to parents to survey them on the climate of the school.

Parent 2 also attended a Board of Education Meeting to voice a concern about a

staff member being nonrenewed by the district. The parent noted that her input did not

change the outcome. Parent 2 explained that while presenting to the Board of Education,

it felt like the board was not "really seeing all of the good stuff" that the parent was presenting about the teacher.

Parent 3. Parent 3 highlighted a feeling that the culture of involvement was not fostered at this point and that there needed to be a circular feedback loop between the home and the school. Parent 3 felt that the district did not involve parents in decision making.

Parent 4. Parent 4 discussed a lack of involvement in the decision making. She noted that she did not think parents were involved in the decision-making process. When asked directly about involving parents in decision making, Parent 4 stated, "I don't really feel that they do." Parent 4 recalled that there was a survey sent out about learning and how things were going with the pandemic a few months earlier, but she was not sure if the results had ever been shared out with the community. Parent 4 stated that she knew about the PTO but that was really the only group that she was aware of in terms of decision making.

Type 6 Involvement: Collaborating with the Community.

Parent 1. Parent 1 believed the community needed to reassess where the needs were and support from that place. This parent expressed concerns over the perceived lack of clarity from the district in terms of resources for the community. Parent 1 used the word "survival" when describing where some families were at and felt that the district was out of touch with many of these families. Parent 1 stated, "I think (the district) needs to listen to more parents…I mean I know everybody wants to be digital, but I think for the most part in our town not a lot of people are very much on digital or into checking the

website." Parent 1 described how the town has some sports and activities but did not detail any agencies or other resources.

Parent 2. Parent 2 shared an awareness of the list of activities. Parent 2 felt that the district had been involved in a good amount of collaboration with the community during the pandemic offering opportunities for lunch and computer pick up at the school. Parent 2 also shared that while she had a positive experience, she had friends in the district who expressed an almost opposite experience which included a general lack of response from the district to parent concerns. Parent 2 felt lucky that her experience was such a positive one.

Parent 2 explained that the administration is always out in the front of the building in the morning greeting the students. Parent 2 noted that the administration knew the students' names and was very visible. This sort of hands-on leadership was also observed at other district events where the parent observed administrators at events.

Parent 3. Parent 3 shared that he was financially well off and did not need to access any community resources to support his family. Due to this point, Parent 3 shared that he was not aware of the community resources available as he had not given any attention to it. A suggestion from Parent 3 was to provide a greater number of resources to the school parents so that they could have a general awareness of resources that may be helpful to someone they know of in need.

Parent 4. Parent 4 shared that there were relatively few resources for our community, but that they were available for parents to learn more about at some events. Parent 4 stated that there were counselors and the YMCA at various events. Parent 4 also

noted that there were email communications that included information about resources that were available from time to time.

Evidence of Quality of the Study

The project study was conducted within the guidelines approved by IRB for ethical procedures. Trustworthiness was ensured via the following measures to ensure credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was established via the integration of member checking. In member checking, some participants are solicited to provide their feedback on emergent findings and determine if they can recognize their experiences in the interpretation or suggest edits to better represent their perspective (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I sent the synopsis of the themes to all 8 participants to conduct member checking. Dependability was established via the integration of an audit trail. An audit trail provides a detailed explanation of how the study and analysis of the data were implemented (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Confirmability was established by providing all the interview responses so that an outsider to the research could review all the collected data and come to the same results and findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Transferability was established via the inclusion of "rich, thick descriptions" of all interviews with extensive quotes from the interviews included (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

A letter of invitation was provided to the participants as noted in Appendix E. Participants were provided with the informed consent. The appropriate protocols were reviewed at the onset of each interview. All participant interviews were transcribed and analyzed. Each interview was conducted via the phone on an individual basis. The

interview was based upon the work of Epstein and approval of this interview protocol can be found in Appendix D. Each interview was conducted per the guidance and questions included in Appendix F. All the identities of the participants were protected and only the terms administrator, teacher, or parent were utilized throughout the discussion and analysis of the data. Multiple participants with various roles in the district were included in the study. The data were fully examined, and all salient points are represented in the analysis. A deductive and inductive analysis were conducted as planned and provided 1 additional insight as noted.

Summary of Inductive and Deductive Analysis in Relation to Research Questions

The data collected in the project study provided for an in-depth exploration of the school district and parent involvement from the perspectives of an administrator, teachers, and parents. The current perceptions of each of these stakeholders are well documented in 18 categories throughout the findings. The interview protocol was mirrored for each participant with individual statements revised per their role as an administrator, teacher, or parent. The way the interviews were conducted and formatted created an expansive comparison of perspective on each identified question and rich analysis of the data in relation to the research questions.

The problem which prompted this project study was limited parent involvement at the local school district. The six types of involvement were addressed in the interview. The common themes that were alluded to throughout the data collection reflected constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement.

Theme 1: Constraints on Parent Involvement

While there is a discrepancy between participants regarding the reason for the lack of involvement, all participants expressed concerns regarding barriers to involvement. Participants shared the perception that parent involvement was important to the success of the district. There were many value laden statements made by the administrators and teachers that demonstrated a yearning for a heightened level of parent engagement. Comments from both the administrator and teachers highlighted feelings of frustration and disappointment and referenced a general lack of interest on the part of the parents in terms of getting involved in their child's education. The parents shared a much different picture of challenges that parents face in getting involved in the school district.

The notion of physical presence in the school as evidence of educational valuation according to the administrator and teachers is a misnomer. The parents did not express that they did not care or did not have their child's interest at heart. Quite the contrary, all parents were deeply committed to their child's education. It was not for lack of caring, but rather a lack of relevance on the part of the school that was identified by the parents in the data.

The school as the central hub of the community seemed to fall flat in the face of the issues' parents are up against daily. Rigors of work, child rearing, managing various other responsibilities, and maintaining a home were all that the parent participants could muster on most days. It was stated in various forms in each parent interview including people are stretched thin, schedules are busy, traveling for work, working off hours, grandparents raising little kids, and more. All those sentiments are part of the narrative

that these parents are living each day, where carving out time to attend an after-hours school event could not compete with the limited resource of time.

This reality is not necessarily the only driving force that has changed the landscape of parents as partners in schools. It was noted that over time the school had shifted away from parents as central and on site throughout the day due to the safety issues that had become a priority in recent years. Schools are charged with maintaining the safety and well-being of students and staff each day. According to a teacher the school no longer invites parents into the building because of safety concerns. Locked down buildings are the landscape of education today, and parents are outside of that safety paradigm.

Notwithstanding the tremendous responsibilities placed upon parents or the shift in schools to prevent parents from coming and going freely at school to support the daily learning in the classroom, the belief that the parents are somehow disenfranchised from the school was articulated by the administrator and teachers in the data. The administrator and teachers were frustrated by the perceived malaise and indifference of parents towards being more of a part of their child's learning.

Superficially, the institution of public education looks largely the same as it did for the past 50 years with students coming to learn each day as teachers and administrators fill their minds with facts and figures. The absolute best schools hope to light a passion along the way and support the development of a strong sense of self for each child. Back to School Nights and traditional school experiences of grading, daily attendance, and big yellow school buses are the elements that are easily seen and

quantified. The infusion of technology and safety features are perhaps the most notable

changes in the field these past few decades.

As much as schools have stayed the course throughout the years, the fabric of our

families and communities which our schools are nestled within assimilated significant

shifts in the times and values reflective of the current societal norms. The makeup of

families is vastly different. The home lives, expectations, responsibilities, and challenges

that our students experience differ in many ways from those of years past. Parents are

living and working in that new world of demands. Children are being raised in it as well.

The school district is harnessing some of the new technology via their

communication platforms, but the messaging and events that are being posted are

antiquated to the current reality of a fast-paced world with countless obligations for

students and adults alike. Schools have greater opportunities for frequent communication

and connection with the advent of social media and technology, and yet the disconnect

between perceptions on involvement is pervasive.

Most interesting is the lack of direct conversation about this change in times and

values between the school and the community. Notwithstanding the tremendous

responsibilities placed upon parents or the shift in schools to prevent parents from

coming and going freely at school to support the daily learning in the classroom, the

belief that the parents are somehow disenfranchised from the school was articulated by

the administrator and teachers in the data. The administrator and teachers were frustrated

by the perceived malaise and indifference of parents towards being more of a part of their

child's learning. There was considerable evidence in the interviews supporting the fact

that the administrator and teachers feel the parents are the problem with not getting involved in their child's education. It is in that frustration to a perceived lack of involvement that the answer to the issue arises. Involvement at its core must be redefined to reflect the changed times and values of the clientele that the district is serving with a deep awareness of the constraints on parent involvement that exist.

Theme 2: Conflicting Perceptions of Parent Involvement

While the average length of time for each interview sessions was 60 minutes, it was remarkably interesting to note that within a few minutes of the start of the interview, all participants had expressed a latent perspective that parents must be on site at the school to be a part of the partnership between the home and the school. This notion of physical presence as an indicator of involvement was pervasive in the interview. All participants discussed attendance, or the lack thereof, at on site events as evidence of limited parent involvement and cause for concern.

Administrators and teachers demonstrated frustration and irritation with parents about their lack of commitment to the school. When an administrator or teacher plans an event and has limited attendance, it seems to leave a strong negative impression on the staff. The lack of showing up at events drew near criticism from the administrator and teachers and created some apologetic remarks from one parent about how it can be extremely hard to motivate her children to want to attend these school-based events. This is worrisome as the lack of attendance may breed a reluctance to host events in the future to avoid a similar response rate from the parents.

The data collected from the administrator, teachers, and parents demonstrated the perception of the participants that attendance equated to caring about their child's education and partnering with the school district. The notion that showing up and sitting in a school as the sole or most critical evidence of involvement creates a very narrow definition of parent partnership. This singular focus on getting people to attend events as a means of building the school community lacks evidence and reason to substantiate the claim.

In contrast to these responses, the definition of terms in this project study defines parent involvement as a variety of attributes, attitudes, or actions that may occur in the home or school to support the success of the students and promote student achievement either directly or indirectly (Fisher, 2016). The definitions included in this project study for parent involvement and parent partnership need not be relegated to physical presence at the school to generate the critical value of creating connections and relationships between the family and the school for the benefit of the student (Epstein, 2010a). Parent partnership is defined as connections between parents and the school that support students in their learning (Young et al., 2013). Parent partnership is further explained as requiring a collaborative model of interaction and support between parents and the school that promotes a long-term relationship that fosters increased student prowess within the school environment (Nitecki, 2015).

While there are many reasons that a parent may or may not be able to come to the school during a prescribed time or event, it is essential to build an understanding that lack of physical presence does not necessarily correlate to a lack of interest or support for a

child and their learning (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). Further this limited definition of

parent involvement creates barriers and further stratifies parents based on their

availability. Such a metric for valuation of parents creates an imbalance within the school

district that artificially raises the value of parents who have the resources to attend such

events rather than complete other necessary commitments such as work, the provision of

supports to their other family members, or other critical roles. Part of overcoming

conflicting perceptions of parent involvement must be creating an inclusive school

community that empowers all families to be a part in their child's education in a way that

honors the needs and resources of each family while suspending judgement and ridicule.

Theme 3: Barriers to Parent Involvement

All the teacher and parent participants expressed a desire to feel valued, listened

to, and included within the school community. The interview data collected from the

administrator and teachers demonstrated an awareness of the fact that parent involvement

was low. The interview data collected from the parents expressly stated that there are a

lot of barriers to parent involvement that exist in the school. All participants agreed that

the parent involvement was limited and a source of concern for the district. The

frustration about a lack of involvement and the need to generate interest in involvement

contribute to the overarching theme of barriers to involvement.

While the administrator spoke positively of the commitment of some parents to

participate in the school district, a common thread that ran through the teacher and parent

interviews was one of perceived favoritism among certain parents. There were no

deductive questions aligned with the framework that directed discussion in that regard,

and yet multiple parents and teachers expressed feelings of certain people having more value than others in the district. This perception made some teachers and parents feel sour towards the experiences of partnership and turned some parents away from the school as they felt that they were not wanted at the school.

The administrator and teachers noted the fact that certain parents are the ones who always volunteer as a characteristic of being committed to supporting the school district. The PTA was a group that was frequently brought up regarding managing volunteers in the district. Some participants shared that they felt the PTA was a group always looking for more help and support. Other participants felt that the nature of the PTA was exclusive and remarked about longing to be part of the perceived in crowd. Parents and teachers could identify the select few who were the involved parents in the group of perceived favorites.

This identification of the district favorites, whether real or perceived, was articulated by all the parent participants. One parent expressed her deep feelings of inadequacy as a district volunteer as she was forced to choose between providing for her family by working or being able to be one of the chosen few mothers who were always available to help at all the events. There are those who are on some sort of inner track, and then there are the rest of the parents.

Beyond the feelings of favoritism that exist within the school district, there were also indications of classism. The level of formal education of a parent has no bearing on the enrollment of students in this public-school setting. A comment made by a teacher regarding her thoughts on college educated versus non-college educated parents was

quite provocative. The teacher shared that parents who were not themselves college graduates may not value education provided for a significant insight into that teacher's perception of the parents. If the district is committed to reducing barriers to involvement, it will be of critical importance that the teachers are aware of their latent feelings towards the parents. This statement of educational superiority for those parents with a college education versus those without must be addressed directly with education for the teachers on how their beliefs will influence the way they perceive and potentially work to include everyone in their classroom.

Socioeconomics was not the focus of any questions within the interview but were frequently mentioned by the participants as a potential source of the lack of involvement by certain groups of parents. Factors of wealth and conversely poverty were present as latent concerns and background for many responses from teachers and parents. This is perhaps representative of the district which has a wide range of socioeconomics present within the district.

The level of wealth of a parent does not dictate their level of concern or interest in their child's educational success or prowess in the school context. On the contrary, a parent who has an hourly position without the perks of vacation time and flexible hours to attend events may have a deep interest in the success of their child. School is the greatest equalizer within a society, and labeling families with lower socioeconomic status as parents who do not value education is unacceptable. Assumptions of wealth and relational interest in their child are ill fitting to any school system and perpetuate dangerous misrepresentations.

Project Deliverable

The value of parent partnership in supporting student achievement cannot be overstated. Notwithstanding the critical importance of parent partnership to support student learning and achievement, the data collected in this project study illuminated a broad, albeit covert, understanding held by the administrator, teachers, and parents that draws largely on past notions of parent involvement, incorrectly defines parent partnership, and limits the inclusive nature of the district. These latent tenets undermined the good work that the district was attempting to implement to support parent involvement. Parent involvement is built upon shared responsibility and meaningful involvement to address the diverse needs of all students (Francis et al., 2016a). The findings in this project study indicated that the way the district needed to address the parent involvement policy to reflect the constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement.

In response to addressing the disconnects between the administrators, teachers, and parents, the project deliverable was a policy paper. The intention of the policy paper was to provide the district with the resources necessary to strengthen parent involvement. The project deliverable included a background of the problem, review of current literature, summary of the findings, recommendations for improvements, and an actionable plan and timeline for implementation for these revisions.

When implemented, the project deliverable will guide the reevaluation and analysis of the current perception of the school district as a partner in learning with every family while addressing the need to analyze critical areas outlined in the summary analysis including constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement. The policy paper provides current research and draws on this information to implement best practices for fostering parent involvement in today's world. The definition of traditional involvement beyond the school day and campus was expanded to include a focus on inclusion and empowerment of all families within the system. The policy paper provided an alternate paradigm to foster renewed relationships between the administrator, teachers, and parents to increase parent involvement.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project deliverable was a policy paper. The policy paper included a background of the existing problem and summary of findings at the local school district. A summary of major evidence from literature and research was included. An outline of recommendations connected to evidence and an actionable plan and timeline were provided for the school superintendent to use in conveying this to the school district.

Rationale

The policy paper project genre was selected to meet needs of the district to address an area of policy that has negatively influenced the ability of the district to foster parent involvement. A policy paper was selected given considerations and data analysis included in Section 2. The school district must reevaluate existing policies on parent involvement and revise to address constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to involvement in the district.

The policy paper provided recommendations for improving parent involvement by reevaluating and redefining current perceptions of parent involvement within the school district to bolster parent involvement. An actionable plan and detailed timeline guided the implementation of the revised parent involvement policy at the district and classroom level. The plan will serve as the basis of the presentation of this project to the Board of Education or other critical stakeholders to support the increase of parent involvement in the district.

Review of Literature

The literature review provided an opportunity to examine current research on barriers to parent involvement. Developing an awareness of barriers to parent involvement is critical to crafting necessary policy revisions to reduce barriers at the local school district. The policy paper genre is appropriate to address the problem as the local school district will use the policy paper to guide their discussions involving the development of revised policies for parent involvement.

The literature review begins by addressing equality versus equity. Additional topics of exploration include traditional parent involvement bias, maintenance of educational equity during the pandemic, addressing bias in schools, building connections with nondominant groups, and overcoming barriers to parent involvement. Key search terms were *bias*, *nontraditional parent involvement*, *equity*, *equality*, *parental dispositions to involvement*, *barriers to involvement*, and *school culture*. The literature for this review was located via Education Research Complete, ERIC, ProQuest, Google Scholar, and Thoreau. All sources were published between 2016 and 2021. All resources were full text and peer-reviewed articles.

Equity in Education

Public schools provide education to all students Kindergarten to grade 12. Education is a guaranteed right to all children in the United States. Education provides opportunity to all students regardless of their social status, socioeconomics, race, or gender. Equality is the equal access to the same resources and supports for all. Equity is the direct identification and correction of systematic disparities which exist based upon

race, wealth, power, and non-dominant family status. Equality and equity are two terms

that have become frequently discussed in modern public schooling (Barajas-López &

Ishimaru, 2020). Despite the need for inclusive school programming, existing practices

and policies are highly restrictive for parents and relegate them to a predetermined

contextual role (Parsons et al., 2018).

Traditional Parent Involvement Bias

Families come in many different forms, and all students have a unique set of

circumstances at home which may influence their development. There are often implicit

biases held by educators and parents which can influence relationships between school

and the home (Arce, 2019). Traditional measures of parent involvement within the

context of school activities could be quantitatively measured using attendance records

and sign-in sheets collected from onsite school events (Epstein, 2011).

Nondominant non-Western families may not fit neatly into traditional school-

based expectations for attendance at Parent Teacher Association meetings and open

house events (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020). Cultural and structural inequities exist

as nondominant non-Western families are often categorized as deficient and in need of

remediation and support from the school district (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020).

Current approaches employed by school administrators often fail to increase parent

involvement as they are based upon the notion that the norms of White middle-class

America are reflective of all parents, leaving out diverse parents as valuable resources for

the district (Parsons et al., 2018). It is incumbent on school leaders to reduce school-

based barriers without blaming parents for their perceived lack of care towards the child (Henderson et al., 2020).

Parents who value student achievement may have students who achieve at greater levels than those parents with high expectations who do not value student achievement (Petridou & Karagiorgi, 2018). The characteristics and resources of the parents and students influence student achievement (Wasserman, 2020). Each family has a unique history and set of strengths that provides a tremendous resource for supporting the success of diverse students in the classroom.

Maintaining Educational Equity During the Pandemic

Equity between dominant and nondominant communities is under additional strain because of the COVID-19 pandemic, with marginalized groups being left further behind due to emergency remote instruction (Aguliera & Nightengale-Lee, 2020). Preexisting inequalities created by socioeconomic status will likely be exacerbated as a result of the pandemic on marginalized groups of students (Haeck & Lefebvre, 2020). Technology integration is essential during this time, and parents may not understand how critical their role is in supporting their child to be successful in school (Borup, 2016).

Racial Perspectives in Schools

A parent's racial identify influences their sense of trust in teachers and school and therefore parent involvement (Ross et al., 2018). Racism and race may influence the diverse families' perceptions of schools (Marchand et al., 2019). In some school settings, it is assumed that diverse parents who are not involved in traditional school experiences are deficient in terms of their level of care and concern for their child's education

(Marchand et al., 2019). While race and racism may be a component of the disconnect between schools and families, there may also be a cultural mismatch or general lack of understanding about diverse people who have unique values, norms, and priorities. The intentional focus on a pragmatic solution to involving all parents is important in conjunction with supporting the cultural awareness within the school system to build connections to these nondominant groups.

Building Connections to Nondominant Groups

Social justice for all families involves the equitable inclusion of all children and families regardless of their social identify group (Bell, 2016). Schools have default options in place that control the system of class progressions, involvement, and participation in programs. The default options can influence the equitable inclusion of all students within the system (Damgaard & Nielsen, 2018). School districts must actively seek new and innovative methods to engage marginalized groups in the involvement of their child's education through a variety of methods which may include the integration of focus group and parent advisory councils (Latunde, 2018). Through the integration of programs such as the Parent Mentor Program, parents of nondominant groups are invited to become active participants in schools, fostering a collective understanding and empowering strong advocates for equity in terms of the school experience (Yull et al., 2018).

Overcoming Barriers

The process of creating a more equitable school environment must include an analysis of existing barriers to parent involvement and then the deliberate creation of

school and community-based activities that bring together stakeholders in an environment of mutual trust, collaboration, and empathy (Housel, 2020). Mitigating potential barriers due to diverse languages spoken by families and students can include more parents in the school (Burke, 2017). While parents and school personnel recognize and label barriers to parent involvement, it is the responsibility of the school district to reinvent the traditional definition of parent involvement to foster a multifaceted concept that incorporates a broad spectrum of engagement options (Baker et al., 2016). Explicit training and professional development for teachers is critical to building a positive rapport with students and demonstrating sensitivity to the students' varied cultures and lived experiences (Bradshaw et al., 2018).

Project Description

In order to facilitate the project, the local school district will require resources in terms of current literature and findings from the local research on reducing the barriers to parent involvement. The information provided must be rooted in the literature, but reflective of the local issues and concerns as presented in the research. Additional resources will provide actionable guides to reevaluate and redefine parent involvement at the district and classroom level, a detailed timeline with guidance for implementation to present at a Board of Education meeting, and a list of suggestions for expanding beyond the current parent involvement model in district.

Existing Supports for Parent Involvement in District

The local school district has existing supports for the implementation of parent involvement. The school district accepts Title I funds and meets the requirements of those

funds including maintaining the provision of a parent compact and a parent involvement meeting to learn about the Title 1 program. The local school district also implements annual activities such as Back to School Night, Parent Teacher Association meetings, Board of Education meetings, and Parent / Teacher Conferences.

Potential Barriers to Implementation

While the school district has articulated the desire to increase the parent involvement, there may be barriers to the policy recommendations. The project will present new, viable options to expand the current models of parent involvement and encourage non-dominant, non-traditional methods of garnering greater parent involvement in the school district. Limited parent involvement must not be viewed as a deficit on the parents (Henderson et al., 2020).

The policy recommendations address parent involvement and espouse the belief that parent involvement need not be limited to district created events wherein the parents are taught to do something better for their children. The policy recommendations encourage the sharing of new ideas and the leveraging of parents as experts in their own families, respective cultures, occupations, and lived experiences. The policy also recommends broadening parent involvement at both the district and classroom levels.

Potential Solutions to Barriers

While these changes may be met with hesitation by district administration, teachers, and some parents who articulated frustration about the lack of parent involvement in district sponsored activities, it is critical that a basis of trust and mutual appreciation of the goal of raising student achievement be at the center of the focus as

new initiatives are implemented. There is no good that will come from casting blame as to past failures or challenges. The conversation must remain focused on the need to do more to support all learners in the district, especially those that are marginalized by the current design of parent involvement.

It should also be noted that parents may be hesitant to actively engage with the district in these new forums as they may be perceived as outside of the district norm and therefore raise scrutiny and concern. The plan calls for both district level and classroom level involvement. The classroom level events will help to reduce the high stakes nature of the involvement for parents who may be initially reticent to join in larger scale district events. Small acts of parent involvement rooted in classroom experiences such as reading a story to the class or accompanying a class on a nature walk around the school grounds provide gentle points of entry as partners with the school district. The messaging associated with the hosting of these events will be critical in framing the purpose of these events and reimagining the role of parent involvement in the district. By actively encouraging the classroom involvement strategies, the district will demonstrate that all parent involvement is valued.

Proposed Timeline for Implementation

The updated parent involvement policy can be implemented over the course of a school year. The initial discussion of the revised policy would occur with the Education Committee and Policy Committee of the Board of Education. Then the policy would be brought to the full board for discussion and review. At the following month's meeting, the Board of Education could vote to adopt the revised policy on parent involvement.

After the approval was rendered by the board, it is recommended that the school district engage the teachers, staff, and parents in an iterative process of planning events and implementing events on a month-to-month basis at the district and classroom level.

The district level parent involvement plan requires 4 planning sessions in September, November, January, and March. The district level parent involvement plan incorporates 4 parent involvement events to be held in October, December, February, and April. A final debriefing session to review the experiences created throughout the year as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the program would be implemented in May. A final board briefing on the overall experience of the program would occur in June.

The classroom level plan requires all teachers to plan for 4 parent involvement activities a month. This classroom level plan creates a weekly parent involvement experience. The classroom teacher is expected to manage the classroom activities and align them to the current instructional focus relative to the grade level and course of study. Specific areas are detailed in the project for implementation. These areas may be revised to allow for greater flexibility and inclusivity of all parents, but the frequency of the events should be maintained. Evening and weekend events are important to include as a method of reducing the constraints and barriers to parent involvement that were noted in the interviews. At 4 parent involvement activities over a 10-month school year, each classroom will offer 40 opportunities for parent involvement in the classroom.

Table 4

Timeline for Implementation of District Level Project Deliverable

Month	Activity	Participants
July	Initial discussion of the new policy in Board of Education committee meetings Discussion of new policy with the full Board of Education at a general meeting	Superintendent, Education Committee, Policy Committee
August	Approval of new policy at Board of Education meeting	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants
September	Turnkey new policy to the teachers at school meeting Plan events aligned to the new policy on parent involvement with attention to adding a quarterly event that aligns with revised parent involvement policy	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants, Teachers
October	Implementation of quarter 1 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
November	Debriefing of quarter 1 parent involvement meeting and planning for quarter 2 event to occur in December	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
December	Implementation of quarter 2 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
January	Debriefing of quarter 2 parent involvement meeting and planning for quarter 3 event to occur in February	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
February	Implementation of quarter 3 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
March	Debriefing of quarter 3 parent involvement activity and planning for quarter 4 event to occur in April	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
April	Implementation of quarter 4 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
May	Meeting to debrief the year of events, propose edits to the plan, analysis on the strengths and weaknesses	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
June	Summative presentation to the Board of Education on the efficacy of the new parent involvement program throughout the year	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants

Roles and Responsibilities of Participants

It is the responsibility of district administration to lead this initiative by presenting

the initial plans to the Board of Education in committee and then at the general meeting.

Once approved by the Board of Education, the district administration will serve as the

guide of the process and will work to empower staff, parents, and community members to

be an integral part of the planning and implementation of the district and classroom

parent involvement opportunities. At the district level, all administrators, teachers, and

parents will have the opportunity to volunteer to serve on the planning team for this

initiative. At the classroom level, all parents and guardians within the classroom will

have the opportunity to volunteer.

As noted in Appendix A, there is a menu of possible events for the district and

classroom level to consider implementing to encourage parent involvement. Depending

upon the inclination of the administrators, teachers and staff, parents, and community

members, the activities will be selected. A group consensus will be utilized to determine

the district events that will be implemented. The classroom teacher will have the

opportunity to determine the activities that are planned for the classroom experiences in

conjunction with the parents and guardians.

<div align="center">

Project Evaluation Plan

</div>

The project deliverable will be evaluated via formative and summative feedback

at the district and classroom levels. Formative feedback will be collected via discussions

with the participants during the events as well as through the implementation of an

anonymous, 2 question survey to all participants provided after each event. Summative

feedback will be collected at the yearend debriefing meeting via discussion as well as through the implementation of an anonymous year end survey.

Formative Feedback

Throughout the year, all participants in attendance at the events will be requested to provide an email address at the point of sign in to be utilized in collecting formative feedback via an anonymous survey. The survey will request the participants to rate the event on a 1-5 star scale with 5 stars being the highest ranking and one star being the lowest. An open-ended text box will also be provided for parents to offer suggestions, share their thoughts, and express their feelings about the event attended. This two-question survey will be sent out to all participants after district and classroom events.

The collected data will be shared at the district planning meetings and in the weekly classroom updates. With each meeting, the administrators, teachers, and parents will serve as a litmus test for district level events in terms of how the events should be designed prior to implementation. An important component of the process is the debriefing and planning meetings which are to occur before and after each event. All administrators, teachers, and parents will have the opportunity to volunteer to serve on the planning team for this initiative. At the classroom level of implementation, the teacher will communicate via weekly communication to parents to send out information and updates and to seek feedback regarding how the parent involvement experience is working for the parents.

Summative Feedback

At the conclusion of the year, there will be a debriefing meeting at the district and classroom levels to gather feedback from administrators, teachers, and parents. Additionally, there will be a 10-question survey provided to all stakeholders. The anonymous survey will request the participants to rank the success of the district in meeting the six areas of parent involvement included in the original data collection. Each area will be scored on a scale of 1 to 5 stars with five stars representing exceptionally successful in an area and 1 star representing limited success in an area. The survey will also provide parents with four open ended text boxes to express their opinion of parent involvement in the district, express any challenges to parent involvement, express any areas of strength in the area of parent involvement, and offer suggestions to continue to improve parent involvement in the district.

Justification of Evaluation Type

The iterative process of program implementation, debriefing of events, planning for upcoming events, and weekly communication within the classroom will allow for the school district to be responsive to the needs of the community and develop trusting relationships in partnership with the various stakeholders in the district. Both the district and classroom plans will utilize formative discussion and survey data to inform the success or failure of the programming. The district level plan will rely upon the bimonthly formative discussions regarding the parent involvement sessions as part of the critical feedback loop that is utilized to increase parent involvement at future events. The district level survey data will be part of the debriefing model to occur 4 times a year. The

classroom teacher will engage in real time discussions and feedback requests from parents on a weekly basis to maintain a clear awareness of the current feelings regarding parent involvement. The classroom level survey data will be shared on a weekly basis to improve the offerings and create a responsive approach to best meeting the parents' needs. The summative analysis will occur in May to review the overall program implementation and yearlong experience at the district and classroom levels. Both the formative and summative analysis and review will be completed the administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the project.

Overall Goal of the Project

The overall goal of the project is to increase parent involvement at the local school district. The formative and summative analysis project evaluation design is being utilized to capture the most authentic feedback on the project with the intention of reinvesting that knowledge and feedback into the future design of additional parent involvement sessions. The total number of participants at the district and classroom levels will provide some data on the level of success of each event as the district has previous data on parent involvement on traditional events which could be used for comparison.

The data on involvement will be reviewed at each planning and debriefing session. All administrators, teachers, and parents involved in the project will be provided with the data on attendance of current events as well as comparison data from previously held traditional events. The rating of each event throughout the year, the summative data collected on the six areas of parent involvement, and four additional open ended response items in the survey will be aggregated to provide a complete assessment picture of the

stakeholder feedback on parent involvement in the district throughout the course of the year.

The data collected will be utilized to plan for the following school year. Areas of weakness will be restructured to better meet the needs of all stakeholders. Areas of strength will be identified and will be implemented in the following year as well. Feedback offered in the open ended questions will be utilized to develop the revised methods of supporting increased parent involvement in the following school year.

Project Implications

This project is important to advancing social change at the local level as it targets increasing parent involvement of all parents regardless of any preconceived notions. Often the parents who are not involved in traditional methods of parent involvement are underrepresented, nondominant, nontraditional parents in the school community. Any increase in the support and acknowledgment of these important members of the school community will strengthen the connection between home and school thereby better supporting the children who move between those spheres of influence each day.

Based upon the review of literature regarding the project deliverable, in a larger context there are layers of potential bias that create structures to limit the underrepresented parents in school systems. Frequently held as truth by district employed personnel is the implicit bias that suggests non-dominant families who are not coming to the school for school sanctioned functions, trainings, and parent involvement events are deficient in their parenting and level of care of their children's education (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020). The literature and the research do not bear this out as truth, but rather

as further delimiting important groups of parents (Parsons et al., 2018). These parents may be fierce advocates for their child, albeit not within the realm or purview of school (Marchand et al., 2019). It is through projects such as this parent involvement series that new understandings between the home and the school can form altering the existing dynamics and creating positive social change through connection, collaboration, and acceptance of difference for the purpose of raising student achievement for all students (Baker et al., 2016).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Discussion of the Project

The project deliverable includes instructions for positive change at the local

district, as well as a concise profile of the local problem, and summarizes the body of

research related to increasing parent involvement to bolster student achievement. The

project identifies existing policies on parent involvement and a summary of findings.

Major evidence from both the research and the literature are detailed in the findings and

review of literature. In order to create a more equitable school environment, barriers to

parent involvement must be examined, and there must be intentional action to foster

increased involvement through mutual collaboration between the home and school

(Housel, 2020). Recommendations, an actionable four step district level plan, monthly

classroom plan, and timeline to fully implement a revised parent involvement policy in

the school district within a single school year are included.

Project Strengths

The strength of the project deliverable is its accessibility to users. The project

deliverable can be presented at a Board of Education meeting and can be immediately

implemented within the local school district. The project deliverable directly addresses

identified needs at the local school district as evidenced by research with focus on

constraints, conflicting perceptions, and overcoming barriers to parent involvement at the

school district.

Results are based on extensive research and resources. A school superintendent at

the local district will review the entire project study including the of literature review.

Other members of the public who attend the public meeting and Board of Education may not have the time to review such a lengthy document that addresses critical needs of the district.

The project deliverable includes succinct and simple to follow steps to make significant revisions to existing policies on parent involvement. With a brief outline of the full project study, the goal is for a reader to grasp the entirety of issues and solutions in less than an hour. The integration of Table A1, Table A2, and Table A3 provide easy to read lists of options and actions that clarify the steps that can be taken to alleviate the parent involvement challenges.

Limitations of the Project

A limitation of this project is reliance on the school district, administrators, teachers, and parents to maintain the project over time. Effecting long term change in a system requires consistent attention to meet objectives involving increasing parent involvement to bolster achievement of students. If the project is implemented in a sporadic format or without identified planning, meeting, and debriefing structures, results could be limited without clear data in terms of effectiveness.

Another limitation is the lack of time provided in the project for administrators, teachers, and parents to be a part of this work. It would be optimal for parent involvement committee members who are involved in planning for district events to attend meetings once a month during normal business hours. In sectors outside of education, there are often frequent opportunities for retreats, meetings, and other functions that address short- and long-term goals that offer paid release time to attend those events. The project is

reliant on the ability of volunteers to set aside additional time beyond their traditional workday to facilitate activities included in project implementation.

A final limitation is reliance on teaching staff to implement this project. The plan calls for 40 parent involvement opportunities, weekly outreach, and collection and distribution of formative discussion and survey data add a considerable amount of work for the teaching staff. It would be optimal for teachers involved to be compensated at their hourly rate for any work or events completed beyond the traditional school day to encourage participation and reward with additional salary.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to address the problem of the study would be to shift from after hours to a part of the normal school day. If increasing parent involvement is essential to student success, then participants should be given the necessary time during the school day when people are not forced to make a choice between a variety of responsibilities.

To facilitate this work during the school day, the district would identify release time, allowing teachers to leave the classroom for the day to be involved in the committee work. The district could also establish funds for fellowships for members of the parent involvement committee to compensate them for their partnership and expertise. The school district could release administrators and teachers from their normally scheduled duties 1 day per month to focus on district level work. Parent volunteers could be compensated for missed days either financially through a fellowship or a commitment between the district and parents' workplace which would permit 1 day a month to support

important work at the district. This strategy would move the work of the project from after hours to the workday.

Another alternative approach would be for the district to create a new position: parent involvement coordinator. Parent involvement often becomes an added responsibility to already established roles in the school district. By identifying funds and hiring a person to address barriers and create innovative opportunities to involve parents, level of parent involvement would increase. Greater frequency of parent involvement opportunities that extend beyond the physical school including community outreach and local groups would help reduce barriers to parent involvement. Career building for parents and skill development are examples of alternative options for parent involvement.

Alternative Definition of the Problem

Defining parent involvement is a challenge, as it can be explained in many ways through a variety of lenses. The definition of parent involvement at the local school district which prompted the project study was limited, with a heavy focus on quantitative perspectives that counted the number of people at events. Parent involvement need not be judged by an artificial constraint such as attendance (Marchand et al., 2019). Many parents never enter inside of a school building yet care deeply about their child's success (Baker et al., 2016). The issue is in part due to traditional definitions as parent involvement has historically been on the school district's terms.

A new paradigm for parent involvement could involve the school going to the community as opposed to the community going to the school. The school could show up where parents already are and engage in community work. Events such as weekend

festivals, sports tournaments, and football games draw large crowds of parents who are there to support their children and family.

If the school is committed to building relationships with parents, it can start by examining how parent involvement is defined and then moving beyond the model that identifies parents as lacking and in need to guidance. A more fruitful definition will include various modalities of attendance or commitment to an identified cause that is important to the success of a system within the school (Baker et al., 2016). The notion that parents are deficient has long been embedded in the way schools define parent involvement as in training parents to be better parents (Marchand et al., 2019). Perhaps the new definition of parent involvement is one in which the parents train the schools to be better schools.

Alternative Solutions to the Local Problem

An alternate solution to the problem would begin by examining the way the problem was conceived at its onset. A strategic planning experience occurred and invited various stakeholders to come together to share perspective and make suggestions about the school district that they wished was their own. A series of meetings were held, and basic tenets were established. This work was authentic and guided by mutual respect of all participants. A plan was conceived and laden with values of the community for their school district.

This is the real involvement of people when they are valued, listened to, and provided a seat at the decision-making table. If we are to expect parents to be involved members of our school communities, then this seat at the table must always remain

available for parents to fill. Too often, and as was the case in the research from the local school district, that seat becomes filled by an influential few who have the time or inclination to be a part of the district. The seat could just as easily be filled by others, but barriers tend to form and leave many parents without an invitation to the table.

If a district is deeply committed to being an environment where parent involvement is valued as essential to the success of the students and district, the culture of the district must evolve beyond the traditional conception of parent involvement. Parents as partners should be the motto of all schools and as such should be contributing members of the educational team whereby every child has fierce advocates for their learning both at home and in school. Schools know a portion of the learning that a child receives throughout their life. Those facts and figures are important. Equal to this is the value of family, community, faith, and other areas of interest in the life of a child.

When school districts realize that everyone must be included and that parent involvement needs to be redefined, the districts will ask the parents for help, guidance, and collegiality. Our parents are untapped resources and the seat at the table must be provided to each parent even if that seat happens to be at a faith center or a hair salon. The district must traverse the community to seek out parents who have opinions and ideas about how to improve their child's experience at school.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Throughout this doctoral process, I learned a tremendous amount regarding the way in which current literature can be harnessed to drive best practices within a school setting. The amount of information available via the internet is daunting, and it can be

difficult to deduce research and fact from opinion and hearsay. The work that I have been engaged in throughout this doctoral process has caused me to develop a newfound sensibility to determine with ease the credibility and validity of an article. It has afforded me with a new lens with which to view the world as a discerning researcher.

This knowledge is powerful and can be leveraged for good in our local communities. Being able to list problems is simple and does not require any specialized learning or awareness. We are living in a time when social media provides a platform for people to share their grievances about all aspects of life, education and school included. While formulating a litany of issues is easy, solving those problems is challenging. The field of education is facing so many significant issues including inequity based on race, socioeconomics, and gender. Concerns about achievement gaps and equal access to high quality educational programs abound while budgets and staffing are reduced. It is a time of doing more with less in an increasingly diverse society, and knowledge is the key to balance this equation for the betterment of our students and school districts.

There is a wealth of knowledge to stand upon as we traverse the tenuous landscape of education and push for positive social change. Schools are microcosms of the larger world around us. There are historical reference points that give us an awareness of what has been in place traditionally, and then there is a vast body of research and knowledge available with the quick search of the internet that allows me to innovate and expand opportunities for those in need of that opportunity.

The component that must be in place to leverage the array of resources available is the ability to find relevant research based, peer reviewed articles to ground the work of

innovation and renewal of our field. The research will not eliminate the challenges that we face, but the research will generate deeper awareness of existing solutions. Furthermore, a body of research on a topic of importance within a school district can be the catalyst for the efforts in creating social change and fostering opportunities to enlighten the practices creating the issues at the local level.

As an educator, I have had the experience of working on solutions to challenging problems throughout my career. My refined awareness of leaning on research when addressing challenges has proven indispensable. There is confidence in being able to read through voluminous reports to determine the value of such research to a local issue. The work of the doctorate has afforded me the greatest training I have ever had on creating a bridge between what has come before, what is being done presently, and what is possible in the future. Accessing research with a targeted focus amplifies the potency of the solutions that we can offer to create the greatest positive social change for our students and local communities.

The experience of completing this doctoral process and associated project deliverable has been highly rewarding. The work will support the success of another school district who had previously taken the first steps towards social change. Being able to positively grow as an educator is valuable but being able to turnkey that growth into an actionable guide for someone else extends the influence and broadens the reach of that good work. Further, learning how to craft a project study and then distilling it to a manageable document that rests on the research and literature is a skill that will forever

add value to the work that I am able to do to support the success of students and school districts throughout my career.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

The positive social change is aligned to the strategic planning goal of utilizing increased parent participation in school initiatives to foster a learning environment that is supportive of all students in the district. This work mobilizes the administrators, teachers, and parents as an active part of the solution. Empowering people within a system to generate authentic experiences provides a clear pathway for renewal at the local level. The local school district will be able to run this yearlong endeavor and improve from within. This is of utmost importance that the people within the system have the power to make their own system better and create growth among the students as a byproduct of the system upgrades. This scenario breeds ownership and commitment to a common cause.

The research is clear that parent involvement matters and is directly correlated to increased student achievement. Notwithstanding the voluminous research supporting the value of parent involvement, the barriers to parent involvement are undeniably articulated in the research as well. The work of this doctoral project study created a connection between the problem and solution through the research and literature. The interviews provided valuable insights into the perception of parent involvement from the role of administrator, teacher, and parent. It was apparent that, while all participants felt that parent involvement was lacking, the reasoning for those feelings represented a vast discrepancy. Without this project study, the district may have continued to operate under a status quo perpetuating weakness in the local system. With the infusion of the project

deliverable grounded in the extensive body of literature and research data, the district can now realign its practices to navigate an alternate paradigm in the realm of parent involvement that addresses constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and includes everyone within the system.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

The potential influence for positive social change is significant at the family and school levels. The project will provide an opportunity for many families to become partners with the local school district in ways that have never occurred. The project identifies parents as invaluable members of the school community. Parents are highlighted as experts in their own histories and lived experiences that must be shared with the larger school community to bridge the cultural and socioeconomic divides that were identified in the research. The project calls for a redistribution of value to all people regardless of their ability to attend school created events in favor of a wholistic approach that celebrates the possible contributions of all people in the system.

As this work elevates the vital importance of the parents as partners in a child's education, it also raises the assessment of the school district that is open to such endeavors for the parents in that system. The project deliverable mobilizes the district to seek out others to bring to the table through honoring their unique contributions. The one size fits all mindset is erased in this model, and parent involvement becomes tailored to the individual. This personalization of parent involvement mirrors that which schools have espoused about the value of differentiation and celebration of differences. If we are to stand upon such lofty ideals for our students, then the local school district must

acquiesce and engender the parents of those children in much the same regard. This work is a movement that brings the community forward to a place of equality and equity. Positive social change at both family and school levels is attainable in these small ways because the project creates value for each contribution and actively seeks such additions to the district as part of the mission to increase parent involvement.

Conclusion

Parent involvement is an effective, research-based intervention that school districts can implement to support the growth and achievement of all students. Regardless of where a child lives and what resources that child may have access to in their life, the simple act of having a parent engage with the school district can boost that student's success. There is vast collection of literature and research that has been conducted to validate the critical importance of parent involvement. While parent involvement may not be the panacea to eradicate low achievement for all struggling learners, parent involvement is a significant component to building strong school communities and driving growth for all students.

The project study provided an important opportunity to gather data from an administrator, teachers, and parents. The data collected provided insights into the beliefs and experiences of the participants. A detailed analysis rendered a broad view of strengths and weaknesses within the local district. Three themes emerged from the data including constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement. The project deliverable was developed in alignment with the articulated themes. The result was the creation of an actionable plan

that reinvents parent involvement and shifts beyond the traditional definition throughout the course a school year. The implementation plan seeks new participants and ideas as it values alternative forms of parent involvement and creates an iterative cycle of discussion and reflection that will be used to inform the next steps of the plan for the local school district. The plan is flexible in nature and is designed to empower parents to emerge as partners with the school district and leaders within their community.

As schools around the country grapple with the massive influence of COVID-19 on education and schooling, this work is more pertinent than ever. School districts are in the midst of recalibrating their practices and considering alternatives to accelerate learning and reduce loss that may have occurred as a result of this national crisis. Parents have been required to step into the role of at home teachers as so many of our nation's children have shifted to remote education. The partnership can be readily made between the home and school as the groundwork has been constructed.

Necessity has changed the landscape in education. It is incumbent on school districts to use this crisis as a pathway forward wherein parents and school districts work in tandem to meet the needs of all learners. The pandemic crisis took a great deal from us as a nation, but it also illuminated a more perfect option for parents as partners that has been heralded by the research and the literature for decades. The crisis has paved a new road, and the literature garnered from decades of research can be used to light the way so that our education system is stronger because of it. There is much work to be done that it not expensive or complicated.

Districts have long expressed latent feelings of superiority in educating students. There is no doubt that the content and knowledge of a trained teacher is different than that of a parent, but it is not less than that of a parent. If our society can accept that as truth, then the history of our educational system is being rewritten at this very moment. Schools have been the deficit in the equation and that reality has been made clear by this crisis. There is greatness is being in the arena working each day to support every child no matter their circumstances. Our educators had been alone in this work, but times have pushed our parents into the arena as well.

This is the time for a call to action for both schools and parents to unite in the face of this crisis and rise as a reformed institution that distills the work of ages into a simple tenet. Parent involvement is essential to the collective success of all students. It is an almost limitless resource that costs nothing and is readily available. Our schools have leaned on our parents to be our partners these last 11 months without another option. As we go forward, it is time to accentuate these alliances forged out of necessity into partnerships that can continue in perpetuity.

References

Aguliera, E., & Nightengale-Lee, B. (2020). Emergency remote teaching across urban

and rural contexts: perspectives on educational equity. *Information and Learning*

Sciences, *121*(5/6), 471–478. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1108/ILS-

04-2020-0100

Alexander, J. D., Cox, R. J., Behnke, A., & Larzelere, R. E. (2017). Is all parental

"noninvolvement" equal? Barriers to involvement and their relationship to Latino

academic achievement. *Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences*, *39*(2), 169-179.

Ankrum, R. J. (2016). Socioeconomic status and its effect on teacher/parental

communication in schools. *Journal of Education and Learning, 5*(1), 167-175.

Arce, S. (2019). Exploring parent and teacher perceptions of family

engagement. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership*, *10*(2), 82-94.

Baker, T. L., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating

solutions to improve family engagement. *School Community Journal*, *26*(2), 161-

184.

Ball, A., Bates, S., Amorose, A., & Anderson-Butcher, D. (2017). The parent perceptions

of overall school experiences scale: Initial development and validation. *Journal of*

Psychoeducational Assessment, 37(7), 1-12.

http://doi:10.1177/0734282917742310

Bano, J., Jabeen, Z., & Qutoshi, S. (2018). Perceptions of teachers about the role of

parents in developing reading habits of children to improve their academic

performance in schools. *Journal of Education & Educational Development, 5*(1), 42-59.

Barajas-López, F., & Ishimaru, A. M. (2020). "Darles el lugar": A place for nondominant family knowing in educational equity. *Urban Education, 55*(1), 38-65. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/0042085916652179

Bell, L. A. (2016). Theoretical foundations for social justice education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (pp. 3–26). Routledge.

Berkowitz, T., Schaeffer, M. W., Rozek, C. S., Beilock, S. L., & Levine, S. C. (2017). The parent connection. *The Psychologist, 30*, 28-32. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Christopher_Rozek/publication/320690324_The_parent_connection/links/5a16e7444585155c26a7655f/The-parent-connection.pdf

Boonk, L. l., Gijselaers, H. J., Ritzen, H., & Brand-Gruwel, S. (2018). A review of the relationship between parental involvement indicators and academic achievement. *Educational Research Review, 24*, 10-30. https://doi:10.1016/j.edurev.2018.02.001

Booth, A., Carroll, C., Ilott, I., Low, L. L., & Cooper, K. (2013). Desperately seeking dissonance: Identifying the disconfirming case in qualitative evidence synthesis. *Qualitative Health Research, 23*(1), 126-141. https://doi:10.1177/1049732312466295

Borup, J. (2016). Teacher perceptions of parent engagement at a cyber high

school. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *48*(2), 67-83.

Bradshaw, C. P., Pas, E. T., Bottiani, J., Debnam, K. J., Reinke, W., Herman, K., & Rosenberg, M.S. (2018). Promoting cultural responsivity and student engagement through double check coaching of classroom teachers: An efficacy study. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(2), 118–134. https://doi:10.17105/SPR-2017-0119.V47-2

Brandt, R. (1989). On parents and schools: A conversation with Joyce Epstein. *Educational Leadership*, *47*(2), 24-27.

Bubic, A., & Tošic, A. (2016). The relevance of parents' beliefs for their involvement in children's school life. *Educational Studies, 42*(5), 519-533.

Burke, M. M. (2017). Examining empowerment, family-school partnerships, and advocacy among rural and urban Latino families of children with disabilities. *Rural Special Education Quarterly*, *36*(2), 56–63.

Cabus, S. J., & Ariës, R. J. (2017). What do parents teach their children? The effects of parental involvement on student performance in Dutch compulsory education. *Educational Review, 69*(3), 285-302. https://doi:10.1080/00131911.2016.1208148

Cassell, C., & Symon, G. (2004). *Essential guide to qualitative methods in organizational research.* Sage Publications.

Cecilia Sin-Sze, C., & Pomerantz, E. M. (2012). Why does parents' involvement enhance children's achievement? The role of parent-oriented motivation. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *104*(3), 820-832. doi:10.1037/a0027183

Chiu, M. M., & Chow, B. W. (2015). Classmate characteristics and student achievement in 33 countries: Classmates' past achievement, family socioeconomic status, educational resources, and attitudes toward reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *107*(1), 152-169.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Sage.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.)*.* Sage.

Cunningham, S. D., Kreider, H., & Ocon, J. (2012). Influence of a parent leadership program on participants' leadership capacity and actions. *School Community Journal, 22*(1), 111-124.

Daly, E. I., & Kupzyk, S. (2012). An investigation of student-selected and parent-delivered reading interventions. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, *21*(4), 295-314.

Damgaard, M. T., & Nielsen, H. S. (2018). Nudging in education. *Economics of Education Review*, *64*, 313–342.

Damianidou, E., & Phtiaka, H. (2018). Co-operating with parents for equal opportunities in education. *International Journal About Parents in Education*, *10*(1), 91-102.

Del Siegle, D., McCoach, B., & Roberts, A. (2017). Why I believe I achieve determines whether I achieve. *High Ability Studies, 28(1)*, 59-72, https://doi:10.1080/13598139.2017.1302873

Egalite, A. J. (2016). How family background influences student achievement: Can schools narrow the gap. *Education Next*, *16*(2), 70-78.

Epstein, J. L. (2010a). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we

share. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(9), 81.

Epstein, J. L. (2010b). Teamwork is the key: The national network of partnership schools.

National Civic Review, 2, 21.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators

and improving schools. Westview press.

Epstein, J. L., Galindo, C. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2011). Levels of leadership: Effects of

district and school leaders on the quality of school programs of family and

community involvement. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 47*(3), 462-495.

Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. C. (2004). Partnering with families and communities.

Educational leadership, (8), 12-18.

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis,

F. L., Martin, C. S., Thomas, B. G., Greenfield, M. D., Hutchins, D. J., &

Williams, K. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook

for action* (3rd ed.). Corwin Press.

Ferguson, C., Ramos, M., Rudo, Z., & Wood, L. (2008). *The school-family connection:

Looking at the larger picture*. National Center for Family and Community

Connections with Schools.

Fisher, Y. (2016). Multi-Dimensional perception of parental involvement. *Universal

Journal of Educational Research, 4*(2), 457-463.

Francis, G. L., Blue-Banning, M., Haines, S. J., Turnbull, A. P., & Gross, J. S. (2016a).

Building "our school": Parental perspectives for building trusting family-professional partnerships. *Preventing School Failure, 60*(4), 329-336.

Francis, G. L., Blue-Banning, M., Turnbull, A. P., Hill, C., Haines, S. J., & Gross, J. S. (2016b). Culture in inclusive schools: Parental perspectives on trusting family-professional partnerships. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, *51*(3), 281-293.

Froiland, J. M., Peterson, A., & Davison, M. L. (2013a). The long-term effects of early parent involvement and parent expectation in the USA. *School Psychology International, 34*(1), 33-50. https://doi:10.1177/0143034312454361

Froiland, J. M., Powell, D. R., Diamond, K. E., & Son, S. C. (2013b). Neighborhood socioeconomic well-being, home reading, and early reading skills of at-risk preschoolers. *Psychology in the Schools, 50*(8), 755-769.

Galloway, M., & Conner, J. (2015). Perpetuating privilege: Students' perspectives on the culture of a high-performing and high-pressure high school. *The Educational Forum, 79*(2), 99-115, https://doi:10.1080/00131725.2014.1002592

Gess-Newsome, J., Taylor, J. A., Carlson, J., Gardner, A. L., Wilson, C. D., & Stuhlsatz, M. (2016). Teacher pedagogical content knowledge, practice, and student achievement. *International Journal of Science Education, 41*(7), 944-963, https://doi:10.1080/09500693.2016.1265158

Gonzales, S. M., & Gabel, S. L. (2017). Exploring involvement expectations for culturally and linguistically diverse parents: What we need to know in teacher education. *International Journal of Multicultural Education, 19*(2), 61-81.

Haeck, C., & Lefebvre, P. (2020). Pandemic school closures may increase inequality in

    test scores. *Canadian Public Policy*, *46*(S1), S82.

Hampden-Thompson, G., & Galindo, C. (2017). School–family relationships, school

    satisfaction and the academic achievement of young people. *Educational*

    Review, *69*(2), 248-265. https://doi:10.1080/00131911.2016.1207613

Hampden-Thompson, G., Guzman, G., & Lippman, L. (2013). A cross-national analysis

    of parental involvement and student literacy. *International journal of comparative*

    sociology, 54(3), 246-266. https://doi:10.1177/0020715213501183

Hanushek, E. (2016). What matters for student achievement. *Education next, 16*(2).

Hasnat, M. A. (2016). Parents' perceptions of their involvement in schooling activities: A

    case study from rural secondary schools in Bangladesh. *Studia Paedagogica.*

    21(4), 137. https://doi:10.5817/SP2016-4-7

Henderson, A., Mapp, K., Johnson, V., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The*

    essential guide to family-school partnerships. The New Press.

Henderson, L. J., Williams, J. L., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2020). Examining home-school

    dissonance as a barrier to parental involvement in middle school. *Preventing*

    School Failure, *64*(3), 201–211.

Herman, K. C., & Reinke, W. M. (2017). Improving teacher perceptions of parent

    involvement patterns: Findings from a group randomized trial. *School Psychology*

    Quarterly, 32(1), 89-104.

Hill, N. E., & Wang, M. (2015). From middle school to college: Developing aspirations,

    promoting engagement, and indirect pathways from parenting to post high school

enrollment. *Developmental Psychology*, *51*(2), 224-235.

Hill, N. E., Witherspoon, D. P., & Bartz, D. (2018). Parental involvement in education

during middle school: Perspectives of ethnically diverse parents, teachers, and

students. *Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(1), 12-27.

https://doi:10.1080/00220671.2016.1190910

Hindin, A., Steiner, L. M., & Dougherty, S. (2017). Building our capacity to forge

successful home-school partnerships: Programs that support and honor the

contributions of families. *Childhood Education*, *93*(1), 10-19.

Housel, D. A. (2020). Supporting the engagement and participation of multicultural,

multilingual immigrant families in public education in the United States: Some

practical strategies. *School Community Journal*, *30*(2), 185–209.

Huat See, B., & Gorard, S. (2015). The role of parents in young people's education—a

critical review of the causal evidence. *Oxford Review of Education*, *41*(3), 346-

366. https://doi:10.1080/03054985.2015.1031648

Jez, S. J., & Wassmer, R. W. (2015). The Impact of learning time on academic

achievement. *Education and Urban Society*, *47*(3), 284–306.

Kealey, J., Peterson, R., Thompson, A., & Waters, K. (2015). Paving the road for student

success: Building a case for integrated strategic planning from pre-k to post-doc.

College and University, 90(4), 8-14.

Knapp, A., Landers, R., Liang, S., & Jefferson, V. (2017). We all as a family are

graduating tonight: A case for mathematical knowledge for parental

involvement. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 95*(1), 79-95.

https://doi:10.1007/s10649-016-9741-4

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2012). *The adult learner*: *The*

definitive classic in adult education and human resources development.

Routledge.

Kraft, M. A., & Rogers, T. (2014). Teacher-to-parent communication: Experimental

evidence from a low-cost communication policy.

https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED563011

Kuru Cetin, S., & Taskin, P. (2016). Parent involvement in education in terms of their

socio-economic status. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, *(66),* 105-122.

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link

in school achievement. *Preventing school failure, 55*(3), 115-122.

Latunde, Y. C. (2018). Expanding their opportunities to engage: A case of the African

American parent council. *Journal of Negro Education*, *87*(3), 270–284.

Lawrence-Lightfoot, S. (2003). *The essential conversation: What parents and teachers*

can learn from each other. Ballantine Books.

Li, A., & Fischer, M. J. (2017). Advantaged/disadvantaged school neighborhoods,

parental networks, and parental involvement at elementary school. *Sociology of*

Education, 90(4), 355 – 377.

Loch, U. (2016). The family as a place of education between a school-centered focus on

education and family needs. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 6*(4),

93-113.

Loughlin-Presnal, J., & Bierman, K. (2017). How do parent expectations promote child academic achievement in early elementary school? A test of three mediators. *Developmental psychology, 53*(9), 1694-1708. https://doi:10.1037/dev0000369

Manno, B. V. (2012). Not your mother's PTA. *Education Next, 12*(1), 42-50.

Marchand, A. D., Vassar, R. R., Diemer, M. A., & Rowley, S. J. (2019). Integrating race, racism, and critical consciousness in Black parents' engagement with schools. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *11*(3), 367–384. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1111/jftr.12344

McKenna, M. K., & Millen, J. (2013). Look! Listen! Learn! Parent narratives and grounded theory models of parent voice, presence, and engagement in K-12 education. *School Community Journal, 23*(1), 9-48.

McNeal, R. J. (2014). Parent involvement, academic achievement and the role of student attitudes and behaviors as mediators. *Universal journal of educational research*, *2*(8), 564-576.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.

National Assessment of Educational Progress. (2017). *The nation's report card - 2017 NAEP mathematics and reading assessments*. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/

Neuman, S. B. (2013). The American dream: Slipping away. *Educational Leadership*, *70*(8), 18-22.

New Jersey State Department of Education. (2017). *Local stakeholder engagement under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): A guide for local district and school leaders.*https://www.state.nj.us/education/ESSA/guidance/njdoe/StakeholderGuidance.pdf

Nitecki, E. (2015). Integrated school-family partnerships in preschool: Building quality involvement through multidimensional relationships. *School Community Journal, 25*(2), 195-219.

Okado, Y., Bierman, K. L., & Welsh, J. A. (2014). Promoting school readiness in the context of socio-economic adversity: Associations with parental demoralization and support for learning. *Child & Youth Care Forum, 43*(3), 353-371.

Okeke, C. I. (2014). Effective home-school partnership: Some strategies to help strengthen parental involvement. *South African Journal of Education*, *34*(3).

Park, S., & Holloway, S. D. (2013). No parent left behind: Predicting parental involvement in adolescents' education within a sociodemographically diverse population. *Journal of Educational Research, 106*(2), 105-119.

Park, S., & Holloway, S. D. (2017). The effects of school-based parental involvement on academic achievement at the child and elementary school level: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Educational Research*, *110*(1), 1-16. https://doi:10.1080/00220671.2015.1016600

Park, S., Stone, S. I., & Holloway, S. D. (2017). School-based parental involvement as a

predictor of achievement and school learning environment: An elementary

school-level analysis. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *82,* 195-206.

https://doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2017.09.012

Parsons, A. A., Walsemann, K. M., Jones, S. J., Knopf, H., & Blake, C. E. (2018).

Parental Involvement: Rhetoric of Inclusion in an Environment of

Exclusion. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *47*(1), 113–139.

https://doi:10.1177/0891241616676874

Petridou, A., & Karagiorgi, Y. (2018). Parental involvement and risk for school

failure. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *23*(4), 359–380.

https://doi:10.1080/10824669.2018.1523733

Pinquart, M. (2016). Associations of parenting styles and dimensions with academic

achievement in children and adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Educational

Psychology Review, 28*(3), 475-493. https://doi:10.1007/s10648-015-9338-y

Poynton, J., Makela, C., & Haddad, D. (2014). Organizational training and relationship

building for increasing public participation in a public school

district. *Administrative issues journal: Education, practice, and research*, *4*(1).

Ratcliff, N., Costner, R., Carroll, K., Jones, C., Sheehan, H., & Hunt, G. (2016). Causes

of and solutions to the achievement gap: Teachers' perceptions. *Teacher

educators' journal*, *9*97-111.

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual,

theoretical, and methodological*. Sage.

Reglin, G., Cameron, H., & Losike-Sedimo, N. (2012). Effects of a parent support

reading intervention on seventh-grade at-risk students' reading comprehension scores. *Reading Improvement*, *49*(1), 17-27.

Renth, B., Buckley, P., & Puchner, L. (2015). Academic performance gaps and family income in a rural elementary school: Perceptions of low-income parents. *Education Leadership Review of Doctoral Research*, *2*(1), 70-84.

Ridder, H. (2017). The theory contribution of case study research designs. *Business Research*, *10*(2), 281-305. https://doi:10.1007/s40685-017-0045-z

Ross, L. L., Marchand, A. D., Cox, V. O., & Rowley, S. J. (2018). Racial identity as a context for African American parents' school trust and involvement and the impact on student preparation and persistence. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*. Advance online publication. https:// doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2018.07.003

Schueler, B., McIntyre, J., & Gehlbach, H. (2017). Measuring parent perceptions of family-school engagement: The development of new survey tools. *School Community Journal*, *27*(2), 275-301.

Sénéchal, M., & LeFevre, J. (2002). Parental involvement in the development of children's reading skill: A five-year longitudinal study. *Child Development*, *73*, 445–460. https://doi: 10.1111/1467-8624.00417

Stitt, N. M., & Brooks, N. J. (2014). Reconceptualizing parent involvement: Parent as accomplice or parent as partner? *Schools: Studies in education*, *11*(1), 75-101.

Strakova, J., Simonova, J., & Greger, D. (2018). The impact of teacher attitudes on

student achievement. *Sociologicky Casopis-Czech Sociological Review*, *54*(5),

727–748. https://doi:10.13060/00380288.2018.54.5.421

Sukhram, D. P., & Hsu, A. (2012). Developing reading partnerships between parents and

children: A reflection on the reading together program. *Early Childhood

Education Journal*, *40*(2), 115-121.

Sung won, K., & Hill, N. E. (2015). Including fathers in the picture: A meta-analysis of

parental involvement and students' academic achievement. *Journal of Educational

Psychology*, *107*(4), 919-934.

Swann, J., & Pratt, J. (2003). *Educational research in practice: Making sense of

methodology.* Continuum.

U.S. Department of Education. (2017). Every student succeeds act.

https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=ft

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society.* Harvard University Press.

Wanat, C. L. (2012). Home-school relationships: Networking in one district. *Leadership

and Policy in Schools, 11*(3), 275-295.

Wang, Y., Deng, C., & Yang, X. (2016). Family economic status and parental

involvement: Influences of parental expectation and perceived barriers. *School

Psychology International, 37*(5), 536-553. https://doi:10.1177/0143034316667646

Wasserman, M. (2020). The disparate effects of family structure. *Future of

Children*, *30*(1), 55–81. https://doi:10.1353/foc.2020.0008

Wilder, S. (2014). Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: A meta-

synthesis. *Educational Review*, *66*(3), 377-397.

https://doi:10.1080/00131911.2013.780009

Won Kim, S. (2017). Parental involvement in developing countries: A meta-synthesis of

qualitative research. *International Journal of Educational Development.*

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059317304376

doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.07.006

Wysoczynski, A. (2018). Community connections: Involving family in

homework. *Science Scope*, *42(2),* 90-93.

Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.)*.* Sage.

Yoder, J. Y., & Lopez, A. (2013). Parent's perceptions of involvement in children's

education: Findings from a qualitative study of public housing residents. *Child &*

Adolescent Social Work Journal, 30(5), 415-433. https://doi:10.1007/s10560-013-

0298-0

Young, C. Y., Austin, S. M., & Growe, R. (2013). Defining parental involvement:

Perception of school administrators. *Education, 133*(3), 291-297.

Yull, D., Wilson, M., Murray, C., & Parham, L. (2018). Reversing the dehumanization of

families of color in schools: Community-based research in a race-conscious

parent engagement program. *The School Community Journal*, *28*(1), 319–347.

Appendix A: The Project

The project deliverable is a policy recommendation with detail to provide the district with a background of the problem, a review of current research, a summary of the findings from the project study, recommendations for improving parent involvement, a 4-step district level plan of action, a monthly classroom action plan, and timeline for implementation. Administrators, teachers, and parents will utilize the knowledge of one another's perceptions regarding current and future parent involvement to improve parent involvement within the school district. The project will address the constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement.

Background of Existing Problem

The local school district conducted a five-year strategic plan to delve deeper into the priorities of the school district. The five-year strategic planning process generated a dialogue as to how to build upon the strengths in the district and reduce areas of weakness for the betterment of the students. Various stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and parents were included in this strategic planning exercise.

Due to the feedback from administrators, teachers, and parents gathered during the strategic planning meetings coupled with the low levels of student achievement on the state assessment, the local school district recognized that raising student achievement was a critical focus for the district. Further discussion in the strategic planning process rendered the issue of low levels of parent involvement. The problem that prompted this project study was limited parent involvement at the local school district.

The school district valued parent involvement as a key component in building the relationship between the home and school to support student progress in the classroom. Parent involvement was included as a basic principle to increase student achievement results for all learners in the strategic plan. The local school district had existing supports for the implementation of parent involvement. The school district accepted Title I funds and met the requirements of those funds including maintaining the provision of an active parent involvement policy, a school to parent compact, an annual meeting about the Title I program, and a parent notification about the Title 1 program. The local school district also implemented annual activities such as Back to School Night, Parent Teacher Association meetings, Board of Education meetings, and Parent / Teacher Conferences. Notwithstanding these existing supports, parent involvement remained lower than desired with limited numbers of parents getting involved.

Implementation of the Project Study

The purpose of this basic qualitative project study was to investigate the perceptions of administrators, teachers, and parents on current parent involvement and gather input from administrators, teachers, and parents on how to improve the parent involvement at the local school district. The project study included 1 administrator, 3 teachers, and 4 parents. The project study involved the implementation of interviews to collect data from administration, teachers, and parents. The interview protocol was mirrored for each participant with individual statements revised per their role as an administrator, teacher, or parent. The way the interviews were conducted and formatted created an expansive comparison of perspective on each identified question and rich

analysis of the data in relation to the research questions. There were questions in 6 main areas of parent involvement including parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Each participant was interviewed individually via phone. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded.

Conceptual Framework of the Project Study

The qualitative data analysis of the study employed both a deductive process, coming from theories and other sources, and an inductive process, moving from bits of information to broader categories and themes (Ravitch & Carl, 2016). Key words, themes, and categories were determined as a result of this analysis. Epstein's work serves as the conceptual framework for this project study and has proven via numerous studies the value of parent involvement in supporting student achievement (Epstein, 2011). Epstein's framework for parent involvement places the student at the center and recognizes the critical value of creating connections and relationships between the family and the school for the benefit of the student (Epstein, 2009). Epstein's framework explores six components of parent involvement which include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2009). Epstein's framework has been utilized as a conceptual framework for qualitative studies that address parent involvement in practice with each of the six areas explained (Hasnat, 2016).

<div align="center">

Summary of Findings

</div>

The data collected in the project study provided for an in-depth exploration of the school district and parent involvement from the perspectives of an administrator,

teachers, and parents. The current perceptions of each of these stakeholders are well documented in 32 key words, 18 categories, and 3 themes articulated throughout the findings. Although there is a discrepancy between participants regarding the reason for the lack of parent involvement, all participants shared the perception that parent involvement was important to the success of the school district. All the participants expressed concerns regarding barriers to involvement.

While the average length of time for each interview sessions was 60 minutes, it was remarkably interesting to note that within a few minutes of the start of the interview, the administrator, teachers, and parents had expressed a latent perspective that parents must be on site at the school to be a part of the partnership between the home and the school. The data collected demonstrated the perception of the administrator and teachers that attendance equated to caring about their child's education and partnering with the school district. The parent interviews discussed constraints on parent involvement and barriers to parent involvement. The administrator, teachers, and parents discussed attendance, or the lack thereof, at on site events as evidence of limited parent involvement and cause for concern.

Administrator and Teacher Perspectives

There were many statements made by the administrator and teachers that demonstrated a concern about the lack of parent involvement. Comments from both the administrator and teachers highlighted feelings of frustration and disappointment and referenced a general lack of interest on the part of the parents in terms of getting involved in their child's education. Throughout the analysis of the data, the administrator and

teacher expressed concern for the low percentage of parent involvement from the parents in the school community.

When an administrator or teacher planned an event and had limited attendance, it left a strong negative impression on the staff. The lack of showing up at events drew near criticism from the administrator and teachers. The administrator and teachers were irked by the perceived malaise and indifference of parents towards being more of a part of their child's learning. Notwithstanding the tremendous responsibilities placed upon parents or the shift in schools to prevent parents from coming and going freely at school to support the daily learning in the classroom, the belief that the parents are somehow disenfranchised from the school was articulated by the administrator and teachers in the data.

Parent Perspective

The parents shared a much different picture of challenges that parents face in getting involved in the school district. The school as the central hub of the community seemed to fall flat in the face of the issues' parents are up against daily. Rigors of work, child rearing, managing various other responsibilities, and maintaining a home were all that the parent participants could muster on most days. Parents offered insights into the various challenges which included conflicting schedules, feeling like an outsider or uninvited to attend the district events, and a lack of notification. It was stated in various forms in each parent interview including people are stretched thin, schedules are busy, traveling for work, working off hours, grandparents raising little kids, and more. All those sentiments were part of the narrative that these parents were living each day. For

many parents, carving out time to attend an after-hours school event could not compete with the limited resource of time.

The notion of physical presence in the school as evidence of educational valuation according to the administrator and teachers was a misnomer. Parents expressed that they care, and that they always operate from what they believe is in their child's best interest. All parents were deeply committed to their child's education. It was not for lack of caring, but rather a lack of relevance on the part of the school that was identified by the parents in the data.

Presentation of Major Evidence from Literature and Research

Parent partnerships are strongest when all stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and parents are working together to plan for school climate and culture that embed parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2006). Parent involvement is fostered when there is shared obligation between the home and the school to support all diverse learners (Francis et al., 2016). Diverse parents are a valuable resource for the school district to engage in discussion about parent involvement (Parsons et al., 2018).

School districts must analyze the current systems and actively work to identify the barriers within the school environment (Housel, 2020). It is critical that school districts relinquish the perception that parents who are not in attendance at school events are somehow deficient and in need of remediation (Marchand et al., 2019). School leaders must reduce the barriers preventing parents from involvement without casting blame on the parents for a perceived lack of interest in their child's educational experience

(Henderson et al., 2020). The identification of barriers must prompt a deliberate course of action for school districts wherein activities are designed to counteract these impediments to parent involvement (Housel, 2020).

While improving parent involvement has been identified on a national level, the inclusion of nondominant families as more than beneficiaries of the system in favor of adding value through their diverse lived experiences has largely been untouched in the educational realm (Barajas-López & Ishimaru, 2020). Overt professional development and training for all staff members on how to integrate various cultures and the lived experiences of diverse students and parents builds a positive school relationship between all members of a school community (Bradshaw et al., 2018). The school district has a responsibility to generate a multifaceted approach to parent involvement that transcends traditional parent involvement definitions (Baker et al., 2016).

Recommendations

As a result of the literature and research conducted at the local school district, it is recommended that the school district implement a revised parent involvement policy. The three themes that emerged from the research included constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and barriers to parent involvement. The revised policy will directly address those identified areas as part of the actionable plan and timeline for implementation.

The actionable plan provides guidance for addressing district level and classroom level parent involvement. At the district level, the plan is organized into 4 major activities including the notification to the Board of Education, development of a parent

involvement committee comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents,

implementation of the 4 parent sessions, and debriefing of the year-long endeavor at a

parent involvement committee meeting and Board of Education meeting. Community

members may attend Board of Education meetings and are therefore involved in the

events related to this level of activity. At the classroom level, the plan requires teachers to

engage in weekly correspondence and 4 monthly activities that immerse parents into the

curricular experiences.

District Level, Activity 1 - Notification to the Board of Education

Policy making is a critical role of the Board of Education. Generating awareness

of the initiatives, concerns, and action plans for the district at the Board of Education

level will support the success of a new policy. The local school district has a current plan

and policy for parent involvement which was previously approved by the Board of

Education. The purpose of the project deliverable is to extend and refine the existing

board policy to require greater opportunity for a more diverse parent involvement

experience for all parents.

The Board of Education is responsible for overseeing the district and must agree

to the annual budget and personnel recommendations made by the Superintendent. The

project will leverage some of these resources as part of the implementation. Bringing the

members of the Board of Education in on the initial planning is important to building

momentum behind the initiative. The intention of this initial step is to include a provision

to authorize the administration and other identified groups such as the teachers to create

new pathways for involvement that target the identified themes with specific, measurable, and attainable goals and plans.

District Level, Activity 2 - Development of a Committee

The development of a committee is critical to acknowledging the various themes outlined in the research. The committee will be comprised of administrators, teachers, and parents. The purpose of the committee will be to reimagine the parent involvement experience and create a program for parent involvement that responds to the data collected in the research. The project calls for 4 main parent involvement activities throughout the school year. These activities will platform a new approach to getting parents involved in the school setting. After each activity, the parent involvement committee will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the programs and identify the activity for the following month. This process of planning, implementing, and debriefing the parent involvement activities over the course of a year will generate discussion about how to best support the development of parent involvement at the local level with real time data and feedback.

Table A1 provides a list of parent involvement activities that relate to the collected evidence in the research. The listing activities offer parents opportunities that go beyond traditional parent involvement expand the definition of parent involvement. The district parent involvement planning committee may select from this list or create a unique activity on their own to support the needs of the local district. The parent involvement activities listed acknowledge the talents and skills of the parents to directly support the district and create an important connection between the home and the school.

District Level, Activity 3 - Implementation of Parent Sessions

A critical component of this recommendation is the monthly planning and debriefing expectations which are embedded in the timeline for implementation as noted in Table A2. Administrators, teachers, and parents must come together on a frequent basis to reevaluate and redefine the plans for improving parent involvement through the lens of outlined research and literature. These meetings must remain open to all members of the school community who are interested in serving on the committee. The work of this group is to directly address the underpinnings of the project study by acknowledging the constraints on parent involvement, conflicting perceptions of parent involvement, and overcoming barriers to parent involvement.

The format of these meetings should remain flexible and allow for parents to provide comment and insights while at the meeting on site, digitally prior to and after the meeting, streaming from another location, and recorded and posted to the district website for feedback within a few days of the meeting. By creating multiple avenues to allow parents to be a part of the meeting, the committee includes everyone and reflects the

Table A1

District Level Parent Involvement Activities

Conflicting Perceptions of Parent Involvement	• Invite parents to present a family or cultural tradition • Request parents to demonstrate their skills as part of the community such as painting the front sign of the building • Ask parents to lead projects within the school that are student centered such as the class poetry parent share event • Tap into the strengths of the parents by creating microevents such as planting flowers along the front walkway of the school
Constraints on Parent Involvement	• Host parent meetings virtually to allow for parents to login from wherever they are to join the meeting • Digitally record the meeting and post to social media for parents to watch at a convenient time • Provide an advanced agenda and seek questions and concerns in advance of the meeting to be prepared to offer solutions and feedback as necessary • Identify another parent group to lead the meeting • Offer parent continuing education classes to support increased skills acquisition for parents • Provide free dinner and babysitting during events • Empower students to run the meeting and have topics of interest be presented from the students' perspective • Offer AM drop off, PM pick up, and weekend office hours to allow for parents to stop by outside normal hours • Provide free resources, food, materials for pick up at the school such as a local farmer's market
Barriers to Parent Involvement	• Ask for volunteers to teach something to the rest of the school community as related to the content of the curriculum such as baking bread, understanding the stock market, or sewing • Walk the neighborhoods of our students and talk to people • Invite people to celebrate the success of their children • Ask for help and allow the community to come to your aid • Survey the community about the needs and wants and post the results back out to the community • Use the survey results to drive the practices within the district for parent involvement

changing times that parents face each day. The research showed that people are busy and may struggle to attend in person events. By generating these alternate pathways, it fosters increased parent involvement and reduces the perception of favoritism of those who can attend events in person.

District Level, Activity 4 – Debriefing the revised policy

The final activity to support the implementation of the parent involvement policy is to discuss the year of revised parent involvement activities at the district and classroom levels. At the district level, the members of the committee and the Board of Education will convene a meeting to discuss the year of revised parent involvement activities. It is recommended that surveys be completed for all groups involved in the parent involvement planning, sessions, and committee. It is critical to also survey the parents of the district who may or may not have attended the events. At the classroom level, the teacher can informally communicate with the parents and gather their feedback to submit to district administration for presentation to the Board of Education. Generating a list of possible barriers and areas of strengths will support the continued effort for the following year of planning and implementation.

Parent involvement is not just a one-time training and implementation type of initiative. Maintaining attention to increasing levels of parent involvement is a challenge as there are many variables which will influence the success of the parent involvement policy. For example, as students enter Kindergarten or graduate from the district, you gain and lose parents who potentially have no concept of the work that the district engaged in throughout the year. As children mature throughout their school experience,

parents often take a different approach to being involved. Changes in the teaching staff should also be expected. For example, teachers may retire or be newly hired in the following year of implementation.

Sustainability of the initiative will be the focus of the following year for the parent involvement committee. Creating a culture in the district where many parents are actively involved in the education of their child and their child's school district will take time to evolve. The initial years will be the time to lay the groundwork to continuously address the critical role of parent involvement as a means of supporting student achievement. The revised policy coupled with the integration of a strong committee model with annual meetings and debriefing sessions will foster high levels of parent involvement in the district regardless of the unique challenges that arise.

Classroom Level, Activity 1 – Weekly Correspondence

The classroom level activity addresses the critical value of involvement in daily experiences that relate to the students in the district. The data collected from the project study demonstrated that parents had a vested interest in their child's success at school. While parents may not prioritize attendance at large scale district level functions, there was a consensus among the parents that they wanted to support their child. Classroom level parent involvement will foster small moments of interaction between the home and the school which may nurture a positive home to school connection.

Weekly correspondence between the classroom and the home will support parent involvement by giving parents insights into the activities and learning experiences planned for the students. The communication can be used to share what was taught in the

previous week to encourage the parents to engage in discussion with their child about their school experience. Weekly correspondence can also be utilized to provide a preview for the week ahead for parents and students. This advanced notice of upcoming events may serve as a catalyst to generating parent interest in the classroom. Opportunities for parent engagement related to curricular lessons can be communicated in this communication to encourage parent involvement at the classroom level.

Classroom Level, Activity 2 – Monthly Curricular Activities

Developing classroom activities that enlist parents as partners will help to boost parent involvement for each classroom. By creating monthly curricular activities across the district, a higher number of parents will have opportunities to directly engage in their child's educational experience. If done throughout the entire district in all classrooms, these classroom level parent involvement opportunities can support the development of positive school interactions in a significant way.

Table A3 provides a framework of options that can be tailored to monthly instructional topics in four areas of instruction. The four core areas represented in the table include literacy, arts, math, and science. Teachers should be encouraged to set a goal of addressing each of the four areas monthly. The parent activity can be rather parent created or teacher provided for the parent to bolster parent involvement and range from simple activities to complex activities for each experience depending upon the parents' interest. The teacher will extend the parent involvement activity into the realm of curricular connection per the appropriate standards for each grade level. The activities can be completed in person, online, or via an interactive hosting site that allows for real

time interaction between students in the classroom and parents at another off-site location.

Given the 10-month school year, the infusion of 4 parent involvement curricular activities will generate 40 parent interactions for each classroom annually. Each grade level has 3 sections creating 120 parent involvement experiences per grade level annually. Across the entire district K-8, this monthly parent involvement experience will generate 1,080 parent involvement opportunities for the district supporting the mission of increasing parent involvement to bolster student achievement.

Proposed Timeline for Project Implementation

The project timeline addresses the district level parent involvement via an iterative 12-month process to seek input, host 4 parent involvement sessions, plan and debrief with stakeholders, and formalize the experiences of the year with a summative report on the strengths and weaknesses of the program to the Board of Education. It is the responsibility of district administration to lead this initiative by presenting the initial plans to the Board of Education in committee and then at the general meeting. Once approved by the Board of Education, the district administration will serve as the guide of the process and will work to empower staff, parents, and community members to be an integral part of the planning and implementation of the four parent involvement sessions. All administrators, teachers, and parents will have the opportunity to volunteer to serve on the planning team for this initiative.

The updated parent involvement policy can be implemented over the course of a school year. After the approval was rendered by the board, it is recommended that the

school district engage the teachers, staff, and parents in an iterative process of planning events and implementing events on a month-to-month basis. This will allow for 4 planning sessions in September, November, January, and March. The four parent involvement events will be held in October, December, February, and April. A final debriefing session to review the experiences created throughout the year as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the program would be implemented in May. A final board briefing on the overall experience of the program would occur in June.

The classroom level parent involvement requires weekly communication and 4 monthly activities to be implemented in each classroom. The classroom teacher is expected to plan these activities with the parents and provide alignment between the parent involvement activities and the classroom learning experiences. The classroom level parent involvement activities may diverge from the sample activities identified in Table A3, but the frequency of parent engagement at the classroom level should remain at a minimum of four opportunities a month for each classroom.

Table A2

Project Implementation Timeline

Month	Activity	Participants
July	Discussion of policy in Board of Education committees Discussion of new policy with the full Board of Education at a general meeting	Superintendent, Education Committee, Policy Committee
August	Approval of new policy at Board of Education meeting	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants
September	Turnkey new policy to the teachers at school meeting Plan events aligned to the new policy on parent involvement with attention to adding a quarterly event that aligns with revised parent involvement policy	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants, Teachers
October	Implementation of quarter 1 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
November	Debriefing of quarter 1 parent involvement meeting and planning for quarter 2 event to occur in December	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
December	Implementation of quarter 2 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
January	Debriefing of quarter 2 parent involvement meeting and planning for quarter 3 event to occur in February	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
February	Implementation of quarter 3 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
March	Debriefing of quarter 3 parent involvement activity and planning for quarter 4 event to occur in April	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
April	Implementation of quarter 4 parent involvement activity	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
May	Meeting to debrief the year of events, propose edits to the plan, analysis on the strengths and weaknesses	Administrators, Teachers, Parents
June	Summative presentation to the Board of Education on the efficacy of the new parent involvement program throughout the year	Superintendent, Board of Education, Meeting Participants

Table A3

Monthly Classroom Parent Involvement Curricular Activities

Subject Area	Monthly Parent Involvement Activity	Teacher Led Curricular Connection
Literacy	Read aloud to the class	Discussion of story elements, character, plot, and theme
		Make connections between various authors and illustrators
		Address standards related to literature
Arts	Lead the class in a craft or activity related to the arts	Paint or draw something related to current focus or study in the classroom
		Complete an arts and crafts projects that supports instructional themes
		Address standards related to the arts
Math	Cooking demonstration	Include no bake recipes with measurement and multi-step directions
		Supply ingredients for students to follow along and make their own
		Discuss measurement and volume
		Address standards related to math
Science	Experiences in nature such as a nature walk or outside activity	Discuss the weather and identify patterns
		Identify plants and animals
		Address standards related to science

Conclusion

As schools around the country grapple with the massive influence of COVID-19 on education and schooling, this work is more pertinent than ever. School districts are in the midst of recalibrating their practices and considering alternatives to accelerate learning and reduce loss that may have occurred as a result of this national crisis. Parents have been required to step into the role of at home teachers as so many of our nation's children have shifted to remote education. The partnership can be readily made between the home and school as the groundwork has been constructed.

Necessity has changed the landscape in education. It is incumbent on school districts to use this crisis as a pathway forward wherein parents and school districts work in tandem to meet the needs of all learners. The pandemic crisis took a great deal from us as a nation, but it also illuminated a more perfect option for parents as partners that has been heralded by the research and the literature for decades. The crisis has paved a new road, and the literature garnered from decades of research can be used to light the way so that our education system is stronger because of it.

This is the time for a call to action for both schools and parents to unite in the face of this crisis and rise as a reformed institution that distills the work of ages into a simple tenet. Parent involvement is essential to the collective success of all students. It is an almost limitless resource that costs nothing and is readily available. Our schools have leaned on our parents to be our partners these last 11 months without another option. As we go forward, it is time to accentuate these alliances forged out of necessity into partnerships that can continue in perpetuity.

References

Baker, T. L., Wise, J., Kelley, G., & Skiba, R. J. (2016). Identifying barriers: Creating solutions to improve family engagement. *School Community Journal*, *26*(2), 161–184.

Barajas-López, F., & Ishimaru, A. M. (2020). "Darles el lugar": A place for nondominant family knowing in educational equity. *Urban Education*, *55*(1), 38-65. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1177/0042085916652179

Bradshaw, C. P., Pas, E. T., Bottiani, J., Debnam, K. J., Reinke, W., Herman, K., & Rosenberg, M.S. (2018). Promoting cultural responsivity and student engagement through double check coaching of classroom teachers: An efficacy study. *School Psychology Review*, *47*(2), 118–134. https://doi:10.17105/SPR-2017-0119.V47-2

Epstein, J. L. (2006). Families, schools, and community partnerships. *YC: Young Children*, *61*(1), 40.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools. Westview press.

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis, F. L., Martin, C. S., Thomas, B. G., Greenfield, M. D., Hutchins, D. J., & Williams, K. (2009). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action* (3rd ed.). Corwin Press.

Francis, G. L., Blue-Banning, M., Turnbull, A. P., Hill, C., Haines, S. J., & Gross, J. S. (2016). Culture in inclusive schools: Parental perspectives on trusting family-

professional partnerships. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, *51*(3), 281-293.

Hasnat, M. A. (2016). Parents' perceptions of their involvement in schooling activities: A case study from rural secondary schools in Bangladesh. *Studia Paedagogica. 21*(4), 137. https://doi:10.5817/SP2016-4-7

Henderson, L. J., Williams, J. L., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2020). Examining home-school dissonance as a barrier to parental involvement in middle school. *Preventing School Failure*, *64*(3), 201–211.

Housel, D. A. (2020). Supporting the engagement and participation of multicultural, multilingual immigrant families in public education in the United States: Some practical strategies. *School Community Journal*, *30*(2), 185–209.

Marchand, A. D., Vassar, R. R., Diemer, M. A., & Rowley, S. J. (2019). Integrating race, racism, and critical consciousness in Black parents' engagement with schools. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, *11*(3), 367–384. https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1111/jftr.12344

Parsons, A. A., Walsemann, K. M., Jones, S. J., Knopf, H., & Blake, C. E. (2018). Parental involvement: Rhetoric of inclusion in an environment of exclusion. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *47*(1), 113–139. https://doi:10.1177/0891241616676874

Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2016). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage.

Appendix B: Permission Request for Local School District

Jennifer Cenatiempo
Doctoral Student
Walden University
11 Doe Run
Stockholm, NJ 07460
973-903-5775
jennifer.cenatiempo@waldenu.edu

March 7, 2019

Mr. Smith
Superintendent
Apple Hill School District

Dear Mr. Smith:

I am a Doctoral Student attending Walden University in the Doctor of Education, Administrator Leadership for Teaching and Learning Program. I am writing to request the opportunity to complete my final doctoral study in your school district. I am requesting to complete my doctoral study in your district because I believe that the focus of my study would support the great work already occurring in your school district. The Apple Hill School District has a strong history of supporting a diverse population of students to reach their potential as members of the school community. The implementation of strategic planning and parent involvement initiatives noted on your website are evidence of the district's intention to leverage parent perceptions to support student achievement. Furthermore, there is evidence that your programming is intentional in its design to support parent involvement in student learning and achievement.

The purpose of this qualitative single, bounded basic study is to understand how administrators, teachers, and parents within the local system perceive parent partnerships. Epstein's Framework of Parental Involvement, which includes communicating, volunteering, and decision making, provides the theoretical framework for this study. The project study will utilize interviews to collect data. The data will be analyzed to explore the themes that emerge from the responses. The projected sample size will include 5 administrators, 5 teachers and 5 parents. Additional data will be collected from attending 10 school sponsored functions such as Board of Education or PTO meetings as a silent observer and analyzing publicly shared data and information from the district website.

As a result of the doctoral study data collection and analysis, a proposed course of action to further support the school district's mission of raising student achievement will be provided for the district to use as they see fit. Resources will be provided for the district to utilize to advance the mission of fostering student achievement in alignment with the study findings. The confidentiality of the district and participants will be maintained as all identifiers of the school district and study participants will be redacted from the final study. The culmination of the narrative analysis will be an interpretation of the social influence of the findings on the central phenomenon of perceptions on parent partnerships. Administrators, teachers, and parents may be able to utilize the knowledge of one another's perceptions to improve parent involvement by strengthening the parent partnerships within the school district.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this request. If you would like to meet to discuss the doctoral study in greater depth, please let me know.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cenatiempo

Appendix C: Letter Requesting Use of Interview Protocol to J. Epstein

11 Doe Run
Stockholm, NJ 07460

January 7, 2019

National Network of Partnership Schools
Johns Hopkins University
Joyce L. Epstein, PhD
2701 N. Charles Street, Suite 300
Baltimore, MD 21218

Dear Dr. Epstein:

I am a doctoral candidate attending Walden University. My doctoral project study Administrator, Teacher and Parent Perceptions of Parent Partnerships to Improve Student Achievement cites your work via Johns Hopkins University and the National Network of Partnership Schools as the theoretical basis for the project study. I am writing to request use of the survey tools in the following texts for the project study. The survey tools will be adapted to interview questions for the doctoral project study.

Appropriate references and citations will be provided for all interview questions utilized as a result of the adaptation of the surveys including the authors of the texts in the interview instrument and reference list.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools. Boulder, CO: Westview press.

Epstein, J.L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis, F., Martin, C., Thomas, B., Greenfeld, M., Hutchins, D., & Williams, K. (2009). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (Third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cenatiempo

Appendix D: Letter Approving Use of Interview Protocol

2-28-19

To: Jennifer Cenatiempo

From: Joyce Epstein

Re: Permission granted

Per your letter of January 7, 2019, this is to grant you permission to use, adapt, and/or translate the survey tools included in my textbook (Epstein, 2011), and/or handbook (Epstein, et al., 2009), as listed in your letter.

All that we require is that you include a full reference to the original work in your bibliography.

I understand that our tools will be adapted for interviews in your doctoral study at Walden University, entitled, *Administrator, Teacher, and Parent Perceptions of Parent Partnerships to Improve Student Achievement.*

Best of luck with your project.

Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.
Director, Center on School, Family, and
  Community Partnerships and
  National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS)
Professor of Education and Sociology
2800 North Charles Street, Suite 420
Baltimore, MD 21218

Phone: (410) 516-8807
Fax: (410) 516-8890

Email: jepstein@jhu.edu
Web: www.partnershipschools.org

Appendix E: Letter of Invitation

Invitation to Participate in the Project Study titled: "Understanding Parent Involvement to Bolster Student Achievement"

To Whom It May Concern:

I am conducting interviews as part of my doctoral project study to collect data from administrators, teachers, and parents regarding parent involvement to bolster student achievement. The purpose is to understand current parent involvement and gather input from administrators, teachers, and parents on how to improve the parent involvement to positively impact student achievement.

The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be held via phone. The interview will address questions that cover six areas of involvement including general experiences within the school district, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Your responses will be recorded using a recording device on the computer.

The identities and names of the participants or the school district will never be published or revealed in any way. The criteria for participants include attendance at a minimum of five district functions within the past year and a minimum of three years working in the district or having their child attend the school to ensure that they have an awareness of the culture of the school.

A $5 Dunkin Donuts gift card will be provided to each participant as a thank you for giving your time and sharing your perspectives with the me.

If you are interested in participating in this doctoral project study, please email me to express your interest at Jennifer.cenatiempo@waldenu.edu. If you choose to participate in this project study, I will email you a consent form that contains additional information about the study. Please feel free to email me with any questions regarding this invitation to participate in this project study.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Cenatiempo
Doctoral Student
Walden University

Appendix F: Interview Questions

Administrator Interview - Understanding Parent Involvement to Bolster Student

Achievement

The purpose of this basic qualitative project study is to understand current parent involvement and gather input from administrators, teachers, and parents on how to improve the parent involvement to positively impact student achievement.

Recording Responses
Your responses will be recorded using a recording device on the computer. Additional notes will be taken by the interviewer during the interview.

Criteria for selection
Attendance at a minimum of five district functions within the past year.
A minimum of having worked in the school or having their child attend the school for a period of 3 or more years to ensure that they have an awareness of the culture of the school.

Informed Consent
At the beginning of each interview, the informed consent form will be reviewed. Each participant will be made aware that they can end their participation at any point.

Protection from Harm
The identities and names of the participants or the school district will never be published or revealed in any way.

Interview
The interview will be approximately 1 hour in length. The interview will address questions that cover six areas of involvement including general experiences within the school district, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

1. As an administrator, tell me about your experience with the local school district. What is your district like? How would you describe the way your school district runs each day?
    Probing Question - Do you feel that your opinion is valued in the district?
    Follow Up Question – What additional things could the district do to make your experience as an administrator in the district better?
    Follow Up Question - How frequently do you discuss the concept of working with teachers or parents to support student achievement?

Follow Up Question – Tell me about your relationship with the school board in terms of bringing administrators, parents, and teachers together to support student achievement.

Follow Up Question – How successful are the students in your school district as they work to meet goals set by either the district or classroom?

2. As an administrator in the local school district, what is your opinion of parent partnerships with the local school district?

Probing Question - Tell me about your experience with the local school district. How often are you invited to attend events that bring together administrators, teachers, and parents?

Probing Question – When you hear the term "parent partnership" what does that mean to you?

Follow Up Question – Do you feel that the school does enough to get parents involved?

Follow Up Question – What types of things do you wish the district did to support you as an administrator in the school?

Follow Up Question – From your perspective as an administrator, what are some challenges and strengths within the district that impact parent partnerships?

Type 1 Involvement – Parenting

3. Parents know their own kids best. When dealing with parents, do you feel that the district asks questions and reaches out to parents to really understand the students' needs and strengths?

Probing Question – What should the district do differently to find out more about each student's needs?

Follow Up Question – What would you say is the most important thing that the district does to support the students' success in school?

Follow Up Question – What do you wish your district did differently to support the students' success in school?

4. Tell me about the way the district has supported families to understand child and adolescent development and establish home environments to support children as students.

Probing Question – How does the local school district provide information to all families who want or need it and not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school district?

Follow Up Question – How does the district ask families for information about children's goals and strengths to support their achievement in school?

5. The amount of parent involvement is lower than the district would like. Why do you think so few parents are coming into the school and being a part of the educational experience?

Probing Question – How has the district provided the parents with information even when they are unable to attend workshops or meetings at the school district?

Follow Up Question – How does the school district make parents feel valued in the district?

Follow Up Question - Has the district offered information on what to do if a student struggles with school or has difficultly in the classroom?

Type 2 Involvement – Communicating

6. Student achievement is low in the district, and the district has decided to focus on developing parent relationships to support better results with the kids. How can the district get more parents involved in the school?

Probing question - Does the school district ask you for your ideas and provide opportunities for you to share your thoughts and concerns? If so, please describe these activities.

Follow Up Question – Describe any strengths that you feel make your school the best fit for your students.

Follow Up Question – Describe any weaknesses that you feel make your school less effective in reaching the needs of your students.

7. As educators, we all have hopes and dreams for our students. A quality education is an important part of getting the students to be successful in life. As an administrator in the school, what is your goal for your students for the upcoming school year?

Follow Up Question - Has anyone from the district discussed your goals for your students?

Follow Up Question - Do you think that the district does a good job of asking parents for their ideas and opinions about their goals for their children?

Follow Up Question – How does the district ask for your opinion?

8. As an administrator, tell me about your feelings on the use of communication between the district and the parents.

Probing Question – In what ways is the communication going back and forth between home and school?

Follow Up Question – What do you see as the issue with the way the communication occurs?

Follow Up Question - What happens if a parent has a question about the communications sent home?

Follow Up Question - How frequently is information communicated between the home and the school?

Follow Up Question – What types of communication to you utilize to communicate with parents?

Type 3 Involvement – Volunteering

9. Tell me about your experience with volunteering in the school district.

        Probing Question – How many parents get involved in events related to volunteering?

        Follow Up Question - How does the district reduce barriers to parent participation in volunteering?

        Follow Up Question - There are a lot of reasons why parents can't attend events. Do you feel that the school is supportive when parents are absent at these events?

        Follow Up Question - How does the district encourage family and community participation?

        Follow Up Question – How are parents who work during the day or night able to get involved in the school?

        Follow Up Question – What types of activities are parents permitted to volunteer for in the district?

        Follow Up Question – What should the district do differently to encourage greater volunteerism of parents within the district?

Type 4 Involvement – Learning at Home

10. Tell me about how you provide information to families on how to help students with homework and other curricular-based projects and activities.

        Probing Question - Does the local school district provided information to families on how to help students with homework and other curricular-based projects and activities? If so, how is that information shared?

        Probing Question – How has the school district helped parents to set and achieve academic goals for your children?

        Follow Up Question – In what ways have parents been provided with specific information on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve upon?

        Follow Up Question – What should the district do differently to support learning at home?

Type 5 Involvement – Decision Making

11. Tell me about your opinion on how the school district involves parents in school decisions to develop parent leaders and representatives.

        Probing Question - How does the local school district include parent representatives on the school council, district advisory council, or other committees?

Follow Up Question - How does the local school district develop the school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others?

Follow Up Question – What should the district do differently to involve parents in the decision-making process?

Type 6 Involvement – Collaborating with the Community

12. Tell me about how the local school district coordinates resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school.

Probing Question – How does the local school district provide the resources necessary to develop partnerships with the school, community health agencies, recreation departments, and other available resources?

Follow Up Question – How does the local school district involve families and community agencies in working together to create a supportive network of resources for the students?

Probing Question – Describe the opportunities that have been offered in the district for students to benefit from community resources.

Follow Up Question – In what ways does the school need to improve to provide additional community resources to support the school district.

Epstein, J.L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis, F., Martin, C., Thomas, B., Greenfeld, M., Hutchins, D., & Williams, K. (2009). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (Third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Teacher Interview - Understanding Parent Involvement to Bolster Student

Achievement

The purpose of this basic qualitative project study is to understand current parent involvement and gather input from administrators, teachers, and parents on how to improve the parent involvement to positively impact student achievement.

Recording Responses
Your responses will be recorded using a recording device on the computer. Additional notes will be taken by the interviewer during the interview.

Criteria for selection
Attendance at a minimum of five district functions within the past year.
A minimum of having worked in the school or having their child attend the school for a period of 3 or more years to ensure that they have an awareness of the culture of the school.

Informed Consent
At the beginning of each interview, the informed consent form will be reviewed. Each participant will be made aware that they can end their participation at any point.

Protection from Harm
The identities and names of the participants or the school district will never be published or revealed in any way.

Interview
The interview will be approximately 1 hour in length. The interview will address questions that cover six areas of involvement including general experiences within the school district, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

1. As a teacher, tell me about your experience in the classroom. What is your classroom like? How would you describe the way your classroom runs each day?
   Follow Up Question – How successful are the students in your classroom as they work to meet your goals?
   Follow Up Question – What happens if a child is struggling with a concept in school?

2. Tell me about your experience with the local school district.
   Follow Up Question – If you have an issue, what is the district expectation for addressing the concern?

Follow Up Question – How does the school district make you feel valued as a teacher in the district?

Follow Up Question – Describe the issues / successes that you have had with the district.

Follow Up Question – What types of things do you wish the school did to support you as a teacher in the school?

Follow Up Question – What makes you happy about your school?

Follow Up Question – What do you wish you could change about your school?

3. How often are you invited to attend events that bring together administrators, teachers, and parents?

Probing Question – When you hear the term "parent partnership," what does that mean to you?

Follow Up Question - How frequently do you discuss the concept of working with administrators, teachers, or parents to support student achievement?

Follow Up Question – Do you feel that the school does enough to get parents involved?

Follow Up Question – What type of activities are parents included in at the local school district?

Follow Up Question - What is your opinion of parent partnerships with the local school district?

Probing question – How are the parent partnerships with the school district supporting student achievement?

Follow Up Question – What types of parent partnerships exist in your classroom.

Type 1 Involvement – Parenting

4. Parents know their own kids best. When dealing with the parents, do you feel that the school asks questions and reaches out to parents to really understand the kids' needs and strengths?

Probing Question – What should the district do differently to find out more about each student's needs?

Follow Up Question – What would you say is the most important thing that district does to support the students' success in school?

Follow Up Question – What do you wish your district did differently to support the students' success in school?

5. Tell me about the way the district has provided resources to teachers for the purpose of supporting families to understand child development and establishing home environments to support children as students.

Probing Question - The amount of parent involvement is lower than the district would like. Why do you think so few parents are coming into the school and being a part of the educational experience?

Follow Up Question – How do you as the classroom teacher provide information to all families who want or need it and not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school district?

Follow Up Question – How do you as the classroom teacher ask families for information about children's goals and strengths to support their achievement in school?

6. Tell me about how the district has provided resources to parents to make parenting a little easier for them. For example, has the district offered information on what to do if a student struggles with school or has difficultly in the classroom?

Probing Question – How has the district provided the parents with information even when they are unable to attend workshops or meetings at the school district?

Type 2 Involvement – Communicating

7. Student achievement is low in the district, and the district has decided to focus on developing parent relationships to support better results with the kids. How can the district get more parents involved in the school?

Probing question - Does the school district ask you for your ideas and provide opportunities for you to share your thoughts and concerns regarding communication with parents? If so, please describe these activities.

Follow Up Question – Describe any strengths that you feel make your school the best fit for your students.

Follow Up Question – Describe any weakness that you feel make your school less effective in reaching the needs of your students.

8. As educators, we all have hopes and dreams for our students. A quality education is an important part of getting them to be successful in life. As a teacher in the school, what is your goal for your students for the upcoming school year?

Follow Up Question - Has anyone from the school discussed your goals for your students?

Follow Up Question - Do you think that the school does a good job of asking parents for their ideas and opinions?

Follow Up Question – How does the school ask for your opinion?

Follow Up Question – What would you tell the district if they asked for your opinion of how things are going in the district for your students?

9. As a classroom teacher, tell me about your feelings on the use of communication between the district and the parents.

        Probing Question – In what ways is the communication going back and forth between home and school?

        Follow Up Question – What do you see as the issue with the way the communication occurs?

        Follow Up Question - What happens if a parent has a question about the communications sent home?

        Follow Up Question - How frequently is information communicated between the home and the school?

        Follow Up Question – What types of communication to you utilize in your classroom to communicate with parents?

Type 3 Involvement – Volunteering

10. Tell me about your experience with volunteering in the school district.

        Probing Question – How many parents get involved in events related to volunteering?

        Follow Up Question – Have you ever had the opportunity to volunteer?

11. Was it a good experience or a bad one?

        Follow Up Question - How does the local school district reduce barriers to parent participation in volunteering?

        Follow Up Question - There are a lot of reasons why parents cannot attend events. Do you feel that the school is supportive when parents are absent at these events?

        Follow Up Question - How does the local school district encourage family and community participation?

        Follow Up Question – How are parents who work during the day or night able to get involved in the school?

        Follow Up Question – What types of activities are parents permitted to volunteer for in the district?

        Follow Up Question – Describe the parent participation in your classroom.

Type 4 Involvement – Learning at Home

12. Tell me about how you provide information to families on how to help students with homework and other curricular-based projects and activities.

        Probing Question - Does the local school district provided information to families on how to help students with homework and other curricular-based projects and activities? If so, how is that information shared?

        Probing Question – How has the school district helped parents to set and achieve academic goals for your children?

Follow Up Question – In what ways have parents been provided with specific information on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve upon?

Follow Up Question - Describe the types of activities that parents are expected to complete with their children at home.

Type 5 Involvement – Decision Making

13. Tell me about your opinion on how the school district involves parents in school decisions to develop parent leaders and representatives.

Probing Question – Have you ever had the chance to provide input on school decisions?

Follow Up Question - How does the local school district develop the school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others?

Follow Up Question – What should the district do differently to involve parents in the decision-making process?

Type 6 Involvement – Collaborating with the Community

14. Tell me about how you support the needs of the students in your classroom via the coordination of resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school.

Probing Question – Describe the opportunities that have been offered in the classroom for students to benefit from community resources.

Follow Up Question – Describe any classroom events and field trips that incorporate community resources?

Follow Up Question – In what ways does the school need to improve to provide additional community resources to support the school district.

Follow Up Question – How are families and community agencies working together to create a supportive network of resources for the students?

Epstein, J.L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis, F., Martin, C., Thomas, B., Greenfeld, M., Hutchins, D., & Williams, K. (2009). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (Third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

Parent Interview - Understanding Parent Involvement to Bolster Student

Achievement

The purpose of this basic qualitative project study is to understand current parent involvement and gather input from administrators, teachers, and parents on how to improve the parent involvement to positively impact student achievement.

Recording Responses
Your responses will be recorded using a recording device on the computer. Additional notes will be taken by the interviewer during the interview.

Criteria for selection
Attendance at a minimum of five district functions within the past year.
A minimum of having worked in the school or having their child attend the school for a period of 3 or more years to ensure that they have an awareness of the culture of the school.

Informed Consent
At the beginning of each interview, the informed consent form will be reviewed. Each participant will be made aware that they can end their participation at any point.

Protection from Harm
The identities and names of the participants or the school district will never be published or revealed in any way.

Interview
The interview will be approximately 1 hour in length. The interview will address questions that cover six areas of involvement including general experiences within the school district, parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

1. Tell me about your child and their experience in the school. What sort of thing do they come home talking about at the end of the day regarding their school?
   Probing Question – Is your child feeling successful in school?
   Follow Up Question – What happens when your child struggles with something in school?

2. Tell me about your experience with the local school district. How often are you invited to attend events that bring together administrators, teachers, and parents?
   Probing Question – When you hear the term "parent partnership" what does that mean to you?

Follow Up Question – Do you feel that the school does enough to get parents involved?

Follow Up Question – What type of activities does the district include you in as a parent?

Follow Up Question – What types of things do you wish the school did to support you as a parent in the school?

Follow Up Question – What makes you happy about your school?

Follow Up Question – What do you wish you could change about your school?

Follow Up Question – If you were the administration in the district, what would you do differently?

Type 1 Involvement – Parenting

3. Parents know their own kids best. When dealing with the school, do you feel that they ask questions and reach out to parents to really understand the kids' needs and strengths?

Probing Question – What should the district do differently to find out more about each student's needs?

Follow Up Question – How do you as the parent provide information to the district regarding your children's goals and strengths to support their achievement in school?

Follow Up Question – What would you say is the most important thing that district does to support your child's success in school?

Follow Up Question – What do you wish your district did differently to support your child's success in school?

4. The amount of parent involvement is lower than the district would like. Why do you think so few parents are coming into the school and being a part of the educational experience?

Follow Up Question – If you have an issue, what is the district expectation for addressing the concern.

Follow Up Question – How does the school district make you feel valued as a parent in the district?

Follow Up Question – Describe the issues / successes that you have had with the district.

5. Tell me about how the district has provided resources to you as a parent to make parenting a little easier for you. For example, has the district offered information on what to do if a student struggles with school or has difficultly in the classroom?

Probing Question – How has the district provided you, as the parent, information even when you are unable to attend workshops or meetings at the school district?

Follow Up Question – Describe the supports that the district provides to support your success as a parent.

Follow Up Question – What additional things could the district do to make your experience as a parent in the district better?

Type 2 Involvement – Communicating

6. Student achievement is low in the district, and the district has decided to focus on developing parent relationships to support better results with the kids. How can the district get more parents involved in the school?

Probing question - Does the school district ask you for your ideas and provide opportunities for you to share your thoughts and concerns? If so, please describe these activities.

Follow Up Question – Have you ever been invited to the school to give your ideas to the administrators? If so, please describe that experience.

Follow Up Question – Describe any strengths that you feel make your school the best fit for your child.

Follow Up Question – Describe any weaknesses that you feel make your school less effective in reaching the needs of your child.

7. As parents, we all have hopes and dreams for our kids. A quality education is an important part of getting them to be successful in life. As a parent in the school, what is your goal for your child for the upcoming school year?

Probing Question - Do you feel that your school wants to know about your goals and your child's goals in school and beyond?

Follow Up Question - Has anyone from the school discussed your goals for your child?

Follow Up Question - Do you think that the school does a good job of asking parents for their ideas and opinions?

Follow Up Question – How does the school ask for your opinion?

Follow Up Question – What would you tell the district if they asked for your opinion of how things are going in the district for your family?

8. Tell me about your feelings on the use of communication between the district and the parents.

Probing Question – In what ways is the communication going back and forth between home and school?

Follow Up Question – What do you see as the issue with the way the communication occurs?

Follow Up Question - What happens if a parent has a question about the communications sent home?

9. How frequently is information communicated between the home and the school?

Type 3 Involvement – Volunteering

10. Tell me about your experience with volunteering in the school district.
Probing Question – How many parents get involved in events related to volunteering?
Follow Up Question – Have you ever had the opportunity to volunteer?

11. Was it a good experience or a bad one?
Follow Up Question - How does the local school district reduce barriers to parent participation in volunteering?
Follow Up Question - There are a lot of reasons why parents cannot attend events. Do you feel that the school is supportive when parents are absent at these events?
Follow Up Question - Have you ever felt judged by a teacher or administrator?
Follow Up Question - How does the local school district encourage family and community participation?
Follow Up Question – How are parents who work during the day or night able to get involved in the school?
Follow Up Question – What types of activities are parents permitted to volunteer for in the district?

Type 4 Involvement – Learning at Home

12. Tell me about how you help your child to learn and succeed at home. Do you help your child to learn? How do you help your child to learn?
Probing Question - What types of family activities do you engage in with your child at home that support their learning and development?
Probing Question – Do you sit with your child to complete schoolwork?
Probing Question - Does the local school district provide information to families on how to help students with homework and other curricular-based projects and activities? If so, how is that information shared?
Probing Question – How has the school district helped you to set and achieve academic goals for your children?
Follow Up Question - Describe the types of activities that parents are expected to complete with their children at home.

Type 5 Involvement – Decision Making

13. Tell me about your opinion on how the school district involves parents in school decisions to develop parent leaders and representatives.

       Probing Question – Have you ever had the chance to provide input on school decisions?

       Follow Up Question - How does the local school district include parent representatives on the school council, district advisory council, or other committees?

       Follow Up Question - How does the local school district develop the school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others?

       Follow Up Question – Describe the use of public forums and social media in the school district to keep parents informed of decision making.

Type 6 Involvement – Collaborating with the Community

14. Tell me about how your school supports the needs of your children in terms of community resources and activities.

       Probing Question – Describe the opportunities that have been offered in the classroom for students to benefit from community resources.

       Follow Up Question – Describe any classroom events and field trips that incorporate community resources?

       Follow Up Question – In what ways does the school need to improve to provide additional community resources to support the school district.

       Follow Up Question – How are families and community agencies working together to create a supportive network of resources for the students?

Epstein, J.L., Sanders, M., Sheldon, S., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., Van Voorhis, F., Martin, C., Thomas, B., Greenfeld, M., Hutchins, D., & Williams, K. (2009). School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (Third edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press