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Narrowing the academic achievement gap among high school Latino students through parental involvement

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This is to certify that the doctoral study by

Douglas Parry

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ABSTRACT

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M.S., University of Utah, 1992
B.S., University of Utah, 1982

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
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ABSTRACT

The low academic achievement among Latino students in many inner city high schools leads to higher failure, dropout, and absenteeism rates, as well as lower standardized test scores and graduation rates. The purpose of this study was to explore whether Latino parental attitudes toward and perceptions, level of, and form of involvement may be linked to this low student achievement. The theoretical framework for this study was Epstein's parental involvement model. The research questions investigated the relationship between Latino parental attitudes toward and perceptions, level of, and form of involvement and student academic achievement. Fifty-eight parents participated in a parent survey for this mixed methods study. Ten parents were interviewed to obtain the qualitative data. Based on Pearson's product-moment correlation, the survey data revealed that there were no statistically significant relationships between Latino student academic achievement and parental attitudes toward and perceptions, level of, and form of involvement. Parent interview data identified parent work schedules, the inability to communicate in English, and parents' lack of education as potential barriers to their involvement. Parent recommendations to overcome these barriers included adjusting school office hours, providing bilingual school personnel, and offering parenting classes that may make high schools more accessible for Latino parents and, by extension, may challenge school personnel to better understand and address the needs of their students' parents in an attempt to promote educational equity.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Noreen, and my daughter, Courtney, for their unwavering support and encouragement during my doctoral degree journey; my mom and dad, Duane and Thelma Parry, for instilling a strong work ethic in me since childhood; my father-in-law, Dr. Gerry Byrne, for being such an outstanding role model as a lifelong learner; and Dr. Jane Miner, a dear friend, mentor, and colleague, for your inspiration in helping others to achieve their dreams.

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SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH STUDY

Introduction

The school of focus for this study is an inner city high school located in the western United States that has a population of almost 1,200 students. It is the oldest high school in the city and celebrated its 102nd graduating class in 2009. The school has enjoyed a rich tradition of both academic and extracurricular activity excellence in the past and a veteran teaching staff, approximately 25% of whom are alumni. When two new high schools opened in the district during the 2001-2002 school year, the demographics of the school changed significantly resulting in a high minority population. The school's Latino population is the predominant ethnic group. The student body comprises 60% Latinos, 27% Caucasians, and 13% Blacks, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans. Half or more of the school's population is on free or reduced lunch, as is typical of many inner city high schools in 2010 (Fruchter, 2007; Kopp, 2008; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Sirin, 2005). The socioeconomic background of the majority of the schools' families is low middle class to lower class (School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009). As a result of the change in ethnicity and socioeconomic background over the past 9 years; lower student standardized test scores, higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, and minimal Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), a federal mandate of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) that requires all states to establish a performance-based accountability system to measure student academic progress, the school learning community is challenged to discover ways to raise student achievement among all subgroups. Based on the increased growth of its Latino population in the

school and district wide, the school's staff and administration must address the needs of this subgroup in particular in order to narrow the academic achievement gap between its Latino and White student populations.

The school has the highest population of Latino students of any high school in the district (School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009), as well as the highest rate of growth among this population. District wide, Latino students account for approximately 33% of the total district enrollment, compared to 60% at this high school. In addition, the Latino enrollment at this school continues to increase approximately 2% each school year. District wide, the current growth trend encompasses approximately a 1% increase in Latino enrollment annually. As a result of the increasingly diverse population in U.S. schools, and in urban high schools in particular, as well as current legislation in the form of NCLB (2001)and AYP which requires that students of all subgroups demonstrate adequate academic progress, educators face a major challenge in raising academic achievement among all students.

According to the school's 2008-2009 Accountability Report (2009), the following points indicate the pertinence of this research topic at this high school: (a) The average daily attendance rate among Latino students (94.6%) is second to the highest among all ethnic groups, but is slightly lower than school district (95.2%) and state (94.7%) averages; (b) the graduation rate among the Latino population (63.6%) continues to lag significantly behind all but one other ethnic group; (c) the Latino dropout rate (3.5%) is significantly higher as compared to White peers; and (d) standardized test scores among Latino students continue to trail those of other ethnic groups as well as at district and state levels.

Nationally, the number of school-aged children in U. S. public schools increased by 4.7 million from 1993 to 2003, the largest surge since the baby boomers – children born during the post-World War II era between 1946 and the early 1960s – started school. This increase was fueled in part by the burgeoning Latino population in the United States (Fry, 2006, 2007). Latino students accounted for 64% of the total growth, or 3 million children. Latinos in 2005-2006 accounted for 19.8% of all public school students, up from 12.7% in 1993-1994 (Fry, 2006, 2007). According to Sack-Min (2008), when schools opened in the fall of 2008, approximately one in five students were Latino.

These statistics (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009) affirm that the Latino population locally and nationally continues to rise. Quintanar and Warren (2008) pointed out that "Latinos constitute the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the United States" (p. 119). As a result of the high number of Latinos in inner city high schools today, educators must be prepared to deal with the following academic achievement concerns, which include a decrease in student standardized test scores, higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, and failure to attain the federally mandated AYP, in order to meet the academic needs of all students (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009).

NCLB (2001) and AYP legislation do not allow for the continued lack of academic success among minority students, which has contributed to the academic achievement gap between Black and Latino students and their White and Asian peers (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003). Beyond the risk of sanctions to schools and districts that fail to reach AYP annually, the personal toll that an inadequate education has on Latino students creates great concern. When compared with their peers, Latino students

nationwide showed lower academic achievement, lower standardized test scores, lower grades, higher dropout rates, lower graduation rates, and a lower percentage who elect to go on to or complete college. All of these factors are pointed out as detriments for these young people's future (Quintanar &Warren, 2008). NCLB (2001) was created to address the unsatisfactory learning outcomes of U. S. students (Fruchter, 2007; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan; Kopp, 2008; Lee, 2004; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; McCall, Hauser, Cronin, Kingsbury, & Houser, 2006; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006; Swanson, 2003), especially minority and economically disadvantaged students who continue to perform at significantly lower levels than their peers (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009).

According to Payne (2005), Black and Latino students are more likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. They are also more likely to be poor for a longer period of time. Factors that contribute to poverty include: poor education, obsolete skills, ill health, divorce, desertion, and alcohol and drug abuse. Payne also pointed out that first-generation immigrant children are twice as likely to be poor as native-born children. Other alarming concerns related to economically disadvantaged students include: developmental delays in learning, entering school with less background knowledge, fewer family supports, a higher rate of dropping out of school, and a higher rate of teenage students giving birth (Payne, 2005, 2008). In a 2003 census, Latino students ranked third in the percentage of children living in poverty at 29.7%, as compared to 14.3% of White children. As Payne (2005) stated, "While the number of Caucasian children in poverty is the largest group, the percentage of children in poverty in most minority groups is higher" (p. 6). It appears that not only does ethnicity seem to

play a role in the academic achievement gap, poverty also acts as a deterrent to student academic achievement. In addition, Orozco (2008) observed that educators are sometimes too quick to judge low-income immigrant parents as being indifferent to their children's schooling, which may further compromise the parent-school partnership

The academic achievement gap between Black and Latino students and their White peers continues to increase (Quintanar & Warren, 2008). Noguera and Wing (2006) stated that lawmakers and educators need to continue to address the disparity in academic achievement that corresponds with race and socioeconomic class backgrounds. Otherwise, America remains a "deeply divided nation, a place where the lines of separating the haves and have-nots are manifest in every facet of our lives" (Noguera & Wing, 2006, p. x). Fulfilling the promise of an appropriate education has tested our "nation's proclaimed commitment to equality and justice for all" (Noguera & Wing, 2006, p. x). Only through a committed effort on behalf of all stakeholders, including educators, law makers, community members, parents, and students, will the necessary resources be available to narrow the academic achievement gap among Latino students compared to their White and Asian peers. Lee (2004) stated that until this goal is reached, the academic achievement gap will continue to be viewed as a serious breach of the principle of equity and social justice for all.

As a result of the NCLB Act (2001), educators in the early 21st century are being held more accountable than in previous years to answer the question of why minority students and students from impoverished backgrounds struggle more in school compared to their White peers (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; Swanson, 2003). School administrators and teachers are faced with challenges as a result

of federal and state mandates to ensure all students are learning. Educators and lawmakers continue to look for answers to address the disparities in the academic achievement gap of Black and Latino students as compared to their White classmates. In the views of Lee (2004) and Williams (2003), the achievement gap remains apparent in a range of educational success indicators such as: grades, test scores, dropout rates, graduation rates, and college entrance/completion rates and in every kind of school district and socioeconomic group. Furthermore, their studies indicated that despite recent mandated legislation in the first decade of the 21st century, the academic achievement gap continues to exist, especially in urban schools.

Rogers-Polliakoff (2006) cited a number of both internal and external factors that can affect student learning. Internal, school-related factors include the type of curriculum selected, teacher quality, and the learning environment. External factors are associated with the home environment that have an effect on student readiness for entering school before a student enrolls in kindergarten, and then during the school years (Payne, 2008; Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006). These internal and external influences may negatively impact Latino student academic achievement. Rogers-Polliakoff (2006) pointed out these internal and external factors cannot be addressed by schools alone; rather, the responsibility for education extends beyond the school (Lee, 2004; Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006), necessitating a comprehensive set of strategies that actively invite parents, families, communities, and businesses onto the school campus. Lee (2004) urged schools to more actively and willingly invite these entities as partners into the process of education. Though progress has been made in narrowing the achievement gap between

students of color and their White peers, Lee (2004) indicated this progress still remains insufficient to eradicate the inequality in the education among all ethnic groups.

Parental involvement continues to be condidered a possible means to narrow the academic achievement gap between minority students and their White and Asian American peers (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield, & Quiroz, 2001; Warner, 2002). Jeynes (2003) stated, "Parental involvement has emerged as one of today's most important topics in educational circles" (p. 202). In addition, DePlanty, Coulter-Kern, and Duchane (2007) and Quintaner and Warren (2006) added that the NCLB Act (2001) includes defined language expressing the expectation that schools be more proactive when it comes to involving parents in their children's education.

Nationwide, due to the high number of Latino-students in schools during the first decade of the 21st century (Fruchter, 2007; Kopp, 2008; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Sirin, 2005), it remains important for educators to better understand how to involve Latino parents in their children's educational experiences. This knowledge includes educators acquiring a better understanding of how Latino parents view their role in their child's education as well as educators reaching out to better involve parents in the parent-school partnership (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006). The literature continues to reflect an overwhelming consensus regarding the value of parental involvement in helping raise academic achievement among Latino students (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006; Trumbull et al., 2001; Warner, 2002). However, Quintanar and Warren (2006) cited studies that indicate the lack of effectiveness of schools to reach out to minority students. Thus, the challenge to

educators remains how to effectively engage Latino parents in their children's education in order to raise their children's academic achievement.

Problem Statement

Latino students in many inner city high schools are struggling with low academic achievement. This problem results in lower graduation rates, higher failure rates, increased dropout rates, lower standardized test scores, and higher absenteeism rates. Despite mandated legislation in NCLB (2001) and AYP, Latino student academic achievement continues to lag behind that of their White and Asian American peers. This problem potentially has a negative impact on school AYP and student postsecondary opportunities, and can foster an uneducated community. There are many possible factors contributing to this problem, among which are lack of parental involvement, poor attendance, language barriers, and lack of student motivation (Delgado Gaitan, 2004). This study measured parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement via data collected comparing parent survey and interview responses of high versus low performing Latino students. The parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement were the independent variables, and the level of student academic achievement was the dependent variable.

Nature of the Study

This mixed methods study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem outlined above by determining the effects Latino parental involvement may have on student academic achievement based on both internal and external factors that affect parental involvement (Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006). Data were

collected and analyzed related to perceptions and attitudes of senior Latino students' parents in the graduating class of 2010 regarding their involvement in their children's educational experiences at an inner city high school located in the western United States.

The quantitative portion of this study measured parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement via data collected comparing parent survey responses of high versus low performing Latino students, and comprised the independent variables. The independent variables included parental attitudes, perception, level of, and form of involvement. The level of student academic achievement was the dependent variable.

The qualitative focus of this study involved interviewing Latino parents regarding specific barriers they perceived as impeding Latino parental involvement at the high school level. These data were then coded and compared to the quantitative data and provided a greater understanding as to the effect Latino parental involvement may have on student achievement in an urban high school.

The collection of quantitative data involved a three-step process. Step 1 consisted of collecting academic achievement data of senior Latino students in the class of 2010. Data collected included High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) math, reading, and writing scores; the total number of classes failed from freshman year through their junior year; and cumulative academic grade point average (GPA) through the 2008-2009 school year. These data were collected with the assistance of the high school's registrar and a data analyst in the school district's Public Policy, Accountability, and Assessment (PPA&A) Office. Step 2 involved identifying those Latino students in the class of 2010 whose scores fell in the top and bottom quartiles based on the student academic achievement data collected in Step 1. Step 3 involved administering a copyrighted parent

survey with the assistance of the Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (CEE) located in Redmond, Washington.

Surveys were mailed to the students' homes with a return self-addressed stamped envelope and an explanation of the purpose of the survey. Parents who participated in the survey constituted a purposive sample (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) determined by student academic achievement data noted in the first step of the data collection process.

Every attempt was made to ensure that there was a good representation of parent surveys returned from both high and low achieving student groups. Because surveys were coded for each student achievement group, results were monitored by the number returned. A goal of 40% return for each group was set. Two follow-up attempts were made to ensure a higher survey return. A $5.00 bill was included with each survey as an incentive to encourage a higher parent survey return. The total parent survey return was 71.6%.

The qualitative portion of this study involved interviewing Latino parents in order to gain a better understanding of the Latino culture and insights regarding how Latino parents view their role in their children's high school education. Barriers that tend to impede Latino parental involvement were also examined. Parents had the option of being interviewed in their home, in the school, or at another location of their choosing. A bilingual (English/Spanish) teacher at the high school agreed to serve as an interpreter and helped conduct 9 of the 10 interviews. All interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed for data analysis purposes.

Specific Research Questions

In this study I investigated the following questions through student data analysis, parent survey results, and parent interview transcriptions:

1. Do parental attitudes and perceptions in regards to their children's educational experiences in an urban high school have any effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?
2. Does the level of or form of parental involvement at the high school level, both in and out of the school building, have any kind of effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?
3. Are there specific barriers Latino parents perceive as having a negative effect on student academic achievement in an urban high school with a high Latino population?
4. What suggestions do Latino parents have for educators to more productively involve them in their children's high school education?
5. Do parents of Latino students feel encouraged by school employees to participate in their children's education? If so, in what ways?

Hypotheses

The following null (HO) and alternative hypotheses (HA; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005) were established for this study:

HO^1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^1: There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^2: There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^2: There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^3: There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^3: There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical test was used to support the hypotheses or the null hypotheses (Gravetter, 2005; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). Correlation is a statistical technique that is used to measure and describe a relationship between two variables and explains the rationale for the use of this statistical test.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to use quantitative approaches to measure attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement in high schools and qualitative methods to probe specific parental concerns about school involvement. The data were used to analyze the relationship between parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement and the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. Student academic achievement data collected included HSPE math, reading, and writing scores; the total number of classes failed from freshman year through the junior year; and cumulative academic GPAs through the 2008-2009 school year. Latino parental attitudes, perceptions, and level of involvement in their children's high school education were compared to the student academic achievement data of high- and low-achieving Latino students. Parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement were measured via data collected from a parent survey provided by the Center for Educational Excellence, Inc. and parent interviews. Barriers that currently impede Latino parental involvement from their viewpoint were identified. In addition, I analyzed strategies to improve the parent-school partnership.

Theoretical Framework

Epstein (Epstein, 1987; Epstein, 1995; Lightfoot, 2004) and her colleagues provided some of the earliest research on parental involvement in schools and its effect on student academic achievement. Epstein's 1987 study was one of the first that illustrated the importance of parental involvement as a component of effective schools and Epstein's research still appears in studies (Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram, Wolfe, &

Lieberman, 2007; Lightfoot, 2004; Piper, 2005) in the area of parental involvement. The value of parental involvement in a child's education continues to be identified (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; DePlanty et al., 2007; Epstein, 1987, 1995; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2004; Jeynes 2003, 2007;) as a critical factor contributing to student success in school, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status. When parents engage with their children in learning activities at home, provide for basic needs, and communicate regularly with the school, their involvement can help offset the sometimes negative effects of poverty or cultural barriers, which can precipitate dropping out of school. As a result of the diverse population in schools in 2010, it is important for educators to gain a better understanding of how to involve Latino parents in their children's educational experiences (Olivos, 2006). Effective parental involvement strategies may include: (a) Having a better understanding of the effects of Latino parental attitudes, perceptions, level of , and form of parental involvement have on student achievement; (b) having a better understanding of how Latino parents view their role in their children's high school education; (c) identifying barriers that impede Latino parental involvement; and (d) educators having a clearer understanding of ways to better involve them in the parent-school partnership (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006; Quintanar & Warren, 2006).

Operational Definitions

The following definitions were used in this study:

Academic achievement. Educational progress a student makes in the educational setting as measured by criterion-referenced test (CRT) scores, cumulative grade point average (GPA), and academic grades (Hickman, 2007).

Academic achievement gap. The difference between the academic performance of students in poor and wealthy schools and between minority and non-minority students (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006).

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Federal mandate that all states establish performance-based accountability systems that include: clear standards and goals for school improvement; rigorous methods of measuring progress towards established performance targets; and high-stakes consequences for both individual schools and school systems that fail to make sufficient progress in reaching the goal of universal student performance (Swanson, 2003).

High school. Educational setting that consists of students in grades 9-12.

Latino. A person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin. The terms Hispanic, Latino, and Spanish are used interchangeably to describe this ethnicity (Hispanic-American Families, 2008).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). Federal law that attempts to decrease academic disparities between minority students and their White and Asian peers signed into law by former President George W. Bush on January 8, 2002 (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004).

Parent. An individual who is the legal caretaker of a child (Hickman, 2003).

Parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement. The information gained from parent surveys and interviews.

Parental involvement. Parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children (Jeynes, 2007).

Perception. "An individual's viewpoint or disposition toward a particular object (i.e. person, a thing, an idea, etc.)" (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 273).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were established for this study: the high school and the school district would fully cooperate by providing the student achievement data indicators and contact information for study participants; parents would be prepared for the survey and interviews and would have access to them in their native language if they request it; the parent survey instrument would meet reliability and validity requirements; parents would respond candidly to the survey used and interviews; the CEE would provide accurate data based on survey responses; the interpreter would give accurate information in the interview and transcription process; and the interpreter would keep all data confidential.

Limitations

Any conclusions from this study were limited by the following factors: participants in this study and the data collection results may not be representative of other high schools in the school district, or high schools in other public school districts; the results may not be generalized to smaller or larger populations; the scope of the study included only parents of Latino students attending one secondary high school; the purposive sampling procedure may have decreased the generalizability of the findings; the findings of the study only reflected the survey and interview responses of Latino parents

based on achievement data of high- and low-achieving students as identified in the top and bottom quartiles; and the findings could be subject to other interpretations.

Scope and Delimitations

This study was delimited to research collected at one public high school in the school district. The scope was that the study was conducted during 2009; therefore, the findings may not be used to generalize parents' attitudes, perceptions, or level of involvement in subsequent years.

Significance of the Study

Due to the increasingly diverse population makeup in urban high schools in particular, and current legislation in the form of NCLB (2001) and AYP which requires that students of all subgroups demonstrate adequate academic progress, educators face a major challenge in raising achievement among all students. In this study I specifically evaluated the role attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement may play in helping to raise student academic achievement among at-risk Latino students attending an urban high school. Educators must seek ways to better understand how to involve Latino parents in their children's educational experiences as a possible means of increasing student academic achievement. This study also looked at identifying barriers that prevent Latino parents from becoming more involved in their children's education in high school. Sack-Min (2008) argued that Latino students have in the past underperformed and continue to underperform in contrast to their White and Asian-American peers. Sack-Min cited a statement from Peter Zamora, a regional counselor for the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), in the

Washington Post, "When Latino students were a small percentage of the population; this maybe didn't need to be a significant concern of policymakers. But when one out of five students is Hispanic, this isn't a Latino issue, this is an American issue" (p. 7). Until high school graduation rates among students from all ethnic groups increase, the current educational system will continue to fail students in its quest to provide all students with a quality education and prepared for any number of post-secondary opportunities.

It is hoped that this study will augment to the literature (De Gaetano, 2007; Delgado Gaitan, 2004; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2007; Jeynes, 2003; Lightfoot; 2003; Quicocho & Daoud, 2006) on Latino parents' involvement in their children's education and on educators' efforts to involve these parents in the parent-school partnership (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006). The study is significant because it has attempted to help educators better understand the Latino culture and identify specific ways in which parental involvement can and does contribute to Latino student academic achievement. In addition, I probed specific parental involvement activities that tend to promote Latino student academic achievement more than others. Data from this research may benefit school administrators and teachers as they include parental involvement activities as part of their school improvement plan. The findings may give educators a better understanding of which parental involvement activities appear to be the most beneficial in increasing Latino parental involvement at the high school level. In addition, the research findings may have identified strategies, interventions, and parental involvement models that can be integrated into urban high schools to enhance Latino student achievement.

Summary

In chapter 1 I included an introduction, problem statement, nature of the proposed study, specific research questions, purpose of the study, theoretical framework, operational definitions, assumptions, limitations, delimitations, scope of the study, and significance of the study. I also provided a context for the study. In chapter 2 I synthesize relevant literature and research regarding Latino parental involvement and student academic achievement while in Chapter 3 I address the methodology of the study including the research design and approach, setting and sample population, the sequence for data collection for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study, data analysis and validation procedure, and measures taken for protection of participants' rights. In chapter 4 I examine the data. In chapter 5 I present a summary, findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

SECTION 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to analyze the potential relationship between a range of parental factors related to school involvement and the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. The study also addressed barriers that currently impede Latino parental involvement from the parents' viewpoint and synthesize strategies that improve the parent-school partnership.

This chapter begins with a review of the current literature that addresses the academic achievement gap that exists in U.S. schools today. The topics included are: (a) the academic achievement gap and minority student achievement, (b) the extent of the academic achievement gap, (c) definitions of the academic achievement gap, (d) indicators of the academic achievement gap, (e) roots of the achievement gap, (f) poverty's effect on the achievement gap, and (f) the role of the NCLB Act (NCLB) of 2001 in the academic achievement gap among minority students. The literature on parental involvement is also analyzed along with the importance of parental involvement as a factor in narrowing the academic achievement gap. Different forms of parental involvement activities are also identified, including those that may be of particular benefit in the attempt to better involve Latino parents in the school-family partnership.

Key words used in the literature review included *achievement gap*, *NCLB(2001) and AYP*, *parental involvement and academic achievement*, and *Latino parental involvement*. The literature review comprises peer reviewed, scholarly journals, searches on the World Wide Web using a variety of databases, and textbooks as demonstrated in

the reference section. Specific research databases used included: Academic Search Premiere, Education: A Sage Full-Text Collection, Education Research Complete, and ERIC – Educational Research Information Center.

Latino Population Growth and the Achievement Gap

In the 21st century, the Latino population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States (Quintanar & Warren, 2008). Nationwide, when schools opened in the fall of the 2008-2009 school year, approximately one in five students were Latino (Sack-Min, 2008). Therefore, educators must be prepared to meet the academic needs of Latino students if schools are going to fulfill the requirements of federal legislation related to NCLB (2001) and AYP. To complicate matters, Payne (2005) pointed out that Black and Latino students are also more likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, which further inhibit the academic success of minority students. Parental involvement continues to be looked upon as a possible means to narrow the academic achievement gap between minority students and their White and Asian American peers (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006; Trumbull et al., 2001; Warner, 2002). In addition, NCLB (2001) has defined language written in the law stipulating that schools are expected to be more proactive when involving parents in their children's education (DePlanty et al., 2007; Quintanar & Warren, 2006). Nationwide, due to the high number of Latino students in public schools during the first decade of the 21st century (Fruchter, 2007; Kopp, 2008; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Sirin, 2005), it remains important for educators to better understand how to involve Latino parents in their children's educational experiences. This understanding includes

acquiring a better appreciation of how Latino parents view their role in their children's education as well as educators reaching out to better involve parents in the parent-school partnership (Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006). The literature (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Lunenburg & Irby, 2002; Olivos, 2006; Trumbull et al., 2001; Warner, 2002) continues to reflect a consensus regarding the value of parental involvement in helping raise academic achievement among Latino students. This study attempted to help educators better understand the Latino culture and identify specific ways in which parental involvement contributes to Latino student academic achievement. This study adds to the body of research in this area so that all students, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status, can be prepared to be productive citizens in society.

The Academic Achievement Gap and Minority Student Achievement

The difference between the academic performance of poor students and wealthy students and between minority and nonminority students is referred to as the academic "achievement gap" (McCall et al., 2006, p. 15). Despite efforts to narrow this lack of equity among all students, an academic achievement gap exists and has persisted between minority students and their White classmates (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Lee, 2004; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004; McCall et al., 2006; Swanson, 2003; Williams, 2003).

Nationally, the number of school-aged children in U. S. public schools has increased by 4.7 million students from 1993 to 2003, the latest surge since the 1950s (Fry, 2006, 2007; Rolon, 2005). Latino students accounted for 64% of the total growth, or 3 million children. Latinos in 2005-2006 accounted for 19.8% of all public school students, up from 12.7% in 1993-94 (Fry, 2006, 2007; Rolon, 2005). Approximately one

in five students attending public schools during the 2008-2009 school year was Latino (Sack-Min, 2008). In many urban high schools, the minority has now become the majority (Sack-Min, 2008). Latinos constitute the fastest growing student group in the United States (Pérez Carreón, Drake, & Calabrese Barton, 2005; Quintanar & Warren, 2008; Rolon, 2005). Therefore, educators must be prepared to address the educational shortcomings such as a decrease in student standardized test scores, lower graduation rates, higher dropout rates, and failure to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of this subgroup (Fry 2006, 2007; Quintanar & Warren, 2008; Rolon, 2005; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009).

As the growth continues among minority students who enter public schools nationwide, the need to address the disparities in academic achievement of minority children compared to White and Asian-American students persists. The aforementioned statistics (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009) reaffirm that the Latino population continues to rise. As a result of the high number of Latinos in inner city high schools today, educators must be prepared to address the following academic achievement concerns before it can be said that schools are meeting the academic needs of all students (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report, 2009). The reported concerns include: (a) higher failure rates, (b) lower graduation rates, (c) higher dropout rates, (d) higher absenteeism, and (d) lower standardized test scores (Fry, 2006, 2007; Sack-Min, 2008; School 2008-2009 Accountability Report). As a result of federally mandated legislation such as NCLB (2001) and the AYP standards educators are expected to meet, schools can no longer allow the lack of academic success among minority students to be excused without

risking sanctions (Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003). Beyond the risk of sanctions at both individual school and district levels, the personal toll that an inadequate education has on Latino students is also of great concern.

The Extent of the Academic Achievement Gap

The literature (Billig, Abrams, Fitzpatrick, & Kendrick, 2005; Evans, 2005; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Laitsch & Rodi, 2004; McCall et al., 2006; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006; Rogers-Poliakoff, 2006; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003) addresses concerns regarding the academic achievement gap and the discrepancy in equity in schools when examining the differences as to why some students in the United States succeed in school while others do not. Rothstein (2004) viewed the large achievement gap between White and minority students as "a failure of the U.S. education system" (p. 40). Since the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* , which formally desegregated public schools in the United States in 1954 (Alexander & Alexander, 2008), there has been some progress in the academic success of minority students, particularly Black students, in the areas of successful completion of high school, improved test scores, increased college enrollment, and attainment of advanced degrees. This group of students has also gained full access to and participation in all areas of employment. Some of these changes reflect legislation enacted as a result of a follow up *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka II* case, which stipulated a desegregation timeline of implementation, a timeline the Court referred to as "with all deliberate speed" (Laitsch & Rodi, 2004, p. 3). In addition, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Laitsch & Rodi, 2004) addressed public segregation, strengthened voting rights, increased employment opportunities, and reduced federal aid to discriminatory programs.

The desegregation of Black students has since been broadened to include Latinos, Asians, and other ethnic groups, as well as disability groups, and students from impoverished communities.

The academic achievement gap narrowed in the 1970s and 1980s when Black and Latino students improved in reading and math and outperformed their White peers (Lee, 2004). Despite some evidence of success and positive progress by Black, Latino, and socioeconomically disadvantaged students from 1970 to 1988, Lee reported education reform efforts during the 1990s neither enabled significant numbers of students to become educationally competitive nor closed the gaps in academic achievement among all ethnic groups and socioeconomic classifications. The data from the 1990s showed declines in minority student academic improvement and the achievement gap widened again, raising new concerns about racial and ethnic equity (Lee, 2004). According to Lee, the achievement gap may be viewed as a more serious breach of the principle of equity and social justice to the extent that the following conditions are not satisfactorily being met: (a) Minority students receive equal educational opportunities (equity); (b) minority students achieve at a minimum level of competency (adequacy); and (c) minority students learn in a racially integrated school (reciprocity). According to Lee (2004) and Williams (2003), the achievement gap remains apparent in a range of educational success indicators: grades, test scores, dropout rates, graduation rates, and college entrance/completion rates and in every kind of school district and socioeconomic group. Furthermore, these studies indicated that despite recent mandated legislation in the first decade of the 21st century, the academic achievement gap continues to exist, especially in urban schools with high populations of minority students.

The academic achievement gap between students of color and their White peers continues to increase according to Quintanar and Warren (2008). Noguera and Wing (2006) stated that lawmakers and educators still have a long way to go to fulfill the promise of public education for all by closing the achievement gap. The disparities in academic achievement that correspond with race and socioeconomic status serve as a reminder that America is still a deeply divided nation of haves and have-nots. Noguera and Wing (2006) stated, "While we may not yet have the wherewithal or commitment as a nation to close the gap in income, health, housing, or criminal justice, many Americans believe that we should be able to do it in education" (p. X). Whether the United States succeeds in its efforts to narrow the academic achievement gap among all students may constitute a test in its commitment to equality and justice for all (Noguera and Wing, 2006).

Defining the Academic Achievement Gap

The existence of an achievement gap between groups of students in public schools seems to point to inequities in the education of young people in the United States. Rogers-Poliakoff (2006) defined the academic "achievement gap" (p. 2) as the difference between the academic performance of students in poor and wealthy schools and the difference between minority and non-minority students (Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006). What the achievement gap actually shows is that poor, Black, and Latino students are disadvantaged when compared with their White, affluent peers by a range of factors that tend to inhibit academic achievement. Documentation by the U.S. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), as well as other statistical analyses of state assessments, grades, course selection, and dropout rates (Rogers-

Poliakoff, 2006), showed that persistent gaps remain in the measurement of academic achievement among students of different subgroups. This discrepancy in student academic achievement contradicts the fundamental U.S. belief that all students can achieve regardless of socioeconomic status, skin color, or country of origin.

What the Academic Achievement Gap Indicates

Recent studies (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2002; Kingsbury, 2006; McCall et al., 2006; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006) have continued to address the academic achievement gap between specific populations of students as well as how socioeconomic status impacts student achievement. Hanushek et al. and Kingsbury concluded that minority students (particularly Blacks and Latinos) start out in school trailing their White counterparts, learn less over the course of the school year, and fall further behind as they progress through school. In addition, the achievement gaps found between Black and White students, Latino and White non-Latino students, and poor and wealthier students started out small but grew up to 10 times larger by the time students left school. An achievement gap existed between White students and Black and Latino students in each grade and subject level as reported by McCall et al. Machtinger (2007) concluded that evidence suggests that an academic achievement gap between minority students and their White peers exists regardless of socioeconomic status. In other words, the achievement gap is at least as high between middle class African Americans and Latinos and middle class whites and Asians as it is between high poverty minority children and high poverty Whites. Therefore, it appears that ethnicity plays a larger role in student academic achievement than socioeconomic status does, but this does not completely dismiss the ill effects poverty may have on student learning. In addition, the research data cited

indicated that Black, Latino, and poor students tended to lose academic ground over the summer when they were out of school. McCall et al. further pointed out additional findings from Kingsbury's study. When growth data are disaggregated by initial skill, students in minority groups and those in high poverty schools show less progress during the school years than their peers. An achievement gap also exists between nonminority students, Latino students, and Black students in schools with similar levels of poverty. In mathematics, students enrolled in high poverty schools tended to grow less academically during the school year than students enrolled in low poverty schools. Students enrolled in high poverty schools lose more achievement during the summer than similar students who were enrolled in low poverty schools. Overall, these findings were observed by McCall et al., Hanushek et al., and Kingsbury at each grade level in the entire educational system (K-12). Lee (2004) pointed out in her findings, based on the 2000 NAEP assessment results, that math and reading progress stalled during the 1990s among Blacks and Latinos in basic knowledge and skills development. As of 1999, 27% of Black and 38% of Latino 17-year-olds performed at or above Level 300 in mathematics. A score level of 300 is considered minimally adequate. However, the corresponding figure for their White peers was 70%. Lee further noted that if one takes into account students who dropped out of school and did not take either the math or reading tests, the NAEP results of Black and Hispanic high school students' achievement are even more discouraging. The Hispanic dropout rate almost doubled that of Black students, 30-35% versus 15-20% respectively.

The Roots of the Achievement Gap: Beyond Demographics

Barton (2004) cited two groups of factors that correlate with student achievement. The first group included factors before and beyond the scope of school, such as (a) birth weight, (b) exposure to lead poisoning, (c) hunger and nutrition, (d) reading to young children in the home, (e) the amount of television watched in the home, (f) parental availability, (g) student mobility and transiency, and (h) parental involvement. The second group, in-school factors, included (a) the rigor of curriculum, (b) teacher experience and attendance, (c) teacher preparation, (d) class size, (e) technology assisted instruction, and (f) school safety. According to Rogers-Polliakoff (2006), school related factors may have a detrimental effect on Latino student academic achievement. A Pew Hispanic Center report, *The High Schools Hispanics Attend* (Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006), found that Latinos are more likely than both White and Black students to attend large public high schools with greater concentrations of low income students and strikingly higher student to teacher ratios. In addition to larger class sizes, Machtinger (2007) noted that high poverty schools have significantly fewer highly qualified teachers, a higher teacher turnover rate, less experienced teachers, and more teachers teaching out of licensure area. Principal quality, school safety, and lack of parental involvement were also listed as potential barriers to students receiving a quality education in what was termed a high poverty school (Machtinger, 2007). Previous studies such as Rogers-Polliakoff's (2006) have linked these factors to lower student achievement. The Pew study found the factors hindering academic achievement in high school among Latino students "fall heavily and disproportionately" (Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006, p. 4) on them. Being Latino is not itself a variable that independently produces lower academic

achievement. However, something else does, namely any one of the number of factors cited above (Barton, 2004).

The 2003 Educational Testing Service (ETS) report, *Parsing the Achievement Gap* (Barton, 2003), identified a number of factors correlated with academic achievement and explored how these play out in the lives of children from various racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006). Similar to Barton's (2004) factors listed above, the report data indicated that a number of factors weigh against school achievement of racial and ethnic minority students and that most weigh against children from poor families. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD; Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006) placed these factors into two groupings: first, internal school factors that operate *within the school*, and second, external, non-school factors that operate *before and beyond the school*.

Internal school factors.

Rogers-Polliakoff (2006) cited elements of schooling that affect student achievement such as the type of curriculum selected, teacher quality, and the learning environment. According to Rogers-Polliakoff, the learning environment includes: (a) a school's physical, social, and cultural environment; (b) whether students and staff feel safe; and (c) cultural factors that deal with respect and expectations. Rogers-Polliakoff and Lee (2004) concurred that students from poor and minority backgrounds are more likely to attend schools where the curriculum is weak, teachers are ill-prepared, and the environment fails to support academic achievement. In addition, school districts that predominantly serve Black and Latino students tend to spend less money on education than their predominantly White counterparts (Lee, 2004; Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006). A

study by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF; Perkins-Gough, 2004) found, based on 3,336 survey responses from a random sample of teachers, that schools serving large numbers of low-income and minority students were more likely to have: (a) unprepared teachers; (b) serious teacher turnover problems; (c) teacher vacancies and a large number of substitute teachers; (d) inadequate facilities, including dirty, locked, or inoperative student bathrooms; (e) evidence of cockroaches, mice, and rats in school buildings; (f) limited access to computers and the Internet; (g) inadequate science equipment; and (h) insufficient classroom materials and supplies. Based on evidence cited by teachers, the NCTAF report (Perkins-Gough, 2004) concluded that at-risk children are not being afforded the same opportunity to learn that is equal to that of children from more privileged families. Perkins-Gough concluded, "The fact is, we have organized our education system in this country so that we take children who have less to begin with and then turn around and give them less in school, too" (p. 87). The cited reports indicated that children from impoverished communities do not enjoy the same educational advantages that provide them with a quality education.

External factors.

Rogers-Polliakoff (2006) identified a variety of factors outside of the school setting that may affect academic achievement that contributes to the broadening of the achievement gap. These include: (a) By the age of four, children of professionals have larger vocabularies compared to children from families on welfare and 50% larger than those of working class peers; (b) in tests of general knowledge as well as reading and math skills, Black and Latino kindergarteners trail their White and Asian peers; (c) children's physical, emotional, and cognitive development are profoundly shaped by the

circumstances of their preschool years; (d) excessive television watching, little exposure to conversation or reading opportunities, parents who are absent or distracted, and inadequate nutrition further compromise early child development; (e) transience due to families moving frequently because of the shortage of affordable housing hinders not only their own children's academic achievement but also that of other children as teachers deal with the influx of new students; (f) cultural attitudes may encourage or discourage academic achievement; and (g) a child's desire for peer approval can undermine parental efforts to support and promote their children's academic success. Lee (2004) added that language barriers may also be a significant problem for minority immigrant parents who do not speak English in communicating with the school. Lack of student motivation is another factor that affects minority student academic achievement.

From their studies of internal and external factors that may influence student learning, Barton (2003, 2004), Lee (2004), and Rogers-Polliakoff (2006) concluded that educators alone cannot solely address the achievement gap that exists in schools. In their views, responsibility for education extends beyond the schools, necessitating a comprehensive set of strategies that actively invite families, communities, and businesses onto the school campus. They urge schools to more actively and willingly invite new partners into the process of education. The cited data (Barton, 2003, 2004; Lee, 2004; Rogers-Polliakoff, 2006) suggest that Latino students' academic achievement can be doubly affected by the educational opportunities that they face both at home and at school. Lee stated, "The problems with less adequate instructional resources and less qualified teachers in predominantly minority schools are no less significant than the challenges posed by minority students' relatively disadvantaged learning environment"

(pp. 60-61). Laitsch and Rodi (2004) similarly stated that in order to address many of the external factors affecting the academic achievement of minority students, reform efforts should also be broadened from an exclusive focus on schools to a focus on schools as part of a larger learning community. Although community factors are not an excuse for low student expectations, ignoring these factors is not responsible policymaking. The community schools movement may help to improve the quality of education available to all students, particularly those who face the added challenges of community-wide poverty. Such schools seek to help place education in a broader context and unite a variety of disparate social and educational programs into a unified whole. Rothstein (2004) offered the following suggestions for narrowing the achievement gap between wealthy and poor students and White and minority students: (a) Provide a rigorous curriculum that holds all students to high expectations; (b) expand the school day, week and year for students at risk; and (c) pressure governmental groups to provide health services, housing, and higher wages for working parents with children.

Lee (2004) argued the need to look beyond school factors to determine what contributes to the academic achievement gap between minority students as compared to their White peers. He posited that the lack of educational opportunities within the home may create a "disadvantaged family learning environment" (p. 60). Perkins-Gough (2004) indicated that the breadth of the achievement gap extends far beyond school. Low-income and minority preschoolers may begin at a disadvantage from the start due to inadequate health care, poor nutrition, parents with low education levels, excessive television watching, and barriers in proficiency with the English language. Lee acknowledged that despite progress in the above areas over the past 3 decades, issues

such as poverty, single parent families, and parents who have a lower level of education continue to be insufficient to eradicate all inequalities in minority households.

Poverty and the Academic Achievement Gap

According to Payne (2005), Black and Latino students are more likely to come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds than their White peers. Ramirez (2003) indicated that it is not uncommon that in schools with a high Latino population, more than half receive free or reduced priced lunches. They are also more likely to be poor for a longer period of time. Payne used the term *generational poverty* when describing poverty that lasts for at least two generations. In her view, factors that contribute to poverty include poor education, obsolete skills, ill health, divorce, desertion, and alcohol and drug abuse. Payne referred to *situational poverty* as a state which is caused a lack of resources due to a particular event. She also pointed out that first-generation immigrant children are twice as likely to be poor as native-born children. Payne further acknowledged that when compared to other ethnic groups, a Latino family generally has both parents present.

Poor people suffer the effects of nearly every major social ill in disproportionate ways. They lack access to health care, decent paying jobs, safe and affordable housing, clean air and water – all of which combine to limit their ability to achieve at their full potential (Gorski, 2008). Other alarming concerns related to economically disadvantaged students include: developmental delays in learning, entering school with less background knowledge, fewer family supports, higher rates of dropping out of school, and a higher rate of teenage students giving birth (Payne, 2005, 2008). According to Machtinger (2007), students attending high poverty schools are below average in student achievement

and have lower graduation rates. Black and Latino children under the age of 18 are also about three times more likely to be hungry and insecure in their food supply than White children (Barton, 2004). Based on the above cited research, not only does ethnicity seem to play a role in the academic achievement gap, poverty is also a deterrent to student academic achievement. In addition, Orozco (2008) acknowledged that educators are sometimes too quick to judge low-income immigrant parents as being indifferent to their children's schooling, an attitude that may further compromise the parent-school partnership.

Poverty lasting over two generations (Payne, 2005) has its own culture, hidden rules, and belief systems. The hidden rules include the unspoken cues and habits of a group and vary according to the socioeconomic class with which a person identifies such as poverty, middle class, or wealth (Payne, 2005). Payne concluded that generational poverty corresponded to entertainment and relationships. In her analysis, the middle class judged most of their decisions in relation to work and achievement while the wealthy focused on ramifications related to financial, social, and political realms. According to Payne, an educator's understanding of these hidden rules can have a positive impact on student achievement and success in school. Payne further pointed out that poverty stems from a lack of resources besides money. In her view, educators can influence some of the non-financial resources that could make a difference in their students' lives.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001

Federal law has attempted to decrease the cited disparities between minority students and their White and Asian peers through the passing of the NCLB Act of 2001. Essentially, NCLB (2001) is a further refinement of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary

Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 that was adopted into law during Lyndon Johnson's presidency (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004). NCLB (2001; Joftus and Maddox-Dolan, 2003) has promulgated attempts to improve K-12 education and holds schools accountable for high academic achievement of all students. The NCLB (2001) requirements for high schools fall into four primary areas including *highly qualified* teachers in core academic subjects, testing, prescribed graduation and graduation rates, and AYP. NCLB (2001) was created to address the unsatisfactory learning outcomes of U.S. students, especially minority and poor students who continue to perform at significantly lower levels than their peers.

NCLB (2001) set the year 2014 as the deadline by which schools are to close the achievement gap between minority and White students and poor versus wealthy students (Machtinger, 2007). Swanson (2003) described other components of NCLB (2001) to which all schools are held accountable such as mandates that all states establish performance-based accountability systems that include clear standards and goals for school improvement, rigorous methods of measuring progress towards established performance targets, and high-stakes consequences for both individual schools and school systems that fail to make sufficient progress (AYP) in reaching the goal of universal student performance. One aspect of the law is that all students be held to the same high standards. Each state must establish an accountability system that has separate performance goals in reading and mathematics (and science beginning with the class of 2010) with all schools reaching 100% proficiency in each area by the year 2014. To avoid identification as *needing improvement*, schools must meet annual academic proficiency goals established by the state that are designed to make steady progress toward universal

proficiency. In addition, the accountability system holds schools and districts responsible for the AYP of all students in specified subgroups, including the major racial and ethnic groups.

School reform has been part of the academic setting since the 1960s. Since 1990, the declaration that *all children can learn* has continued to characterize American education (Lunenburg and Ornstein, 2004). All states and school districts are now required to report on their progress in closing the achievement gap between minority students and their White peers. NCLB (2001) called for the development of accountability systems that hold schools responsible for improved student achievement based on the outcomes of a specific population or subgroup, along with increasing overall levels of academic achievement. Achievement data are used to identify schools needing improvement and to make informed decisions ranging from adjusting lesson plans at the local level to targeting resources at the state level. In this era of accountability, the performance of all students is counted and it is the responsibility of schools to help every student to succeed (Billig et al., 2005). NCLB (2001) also calls for schools to work cooperatively with parents in order to support a child's education (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007). DePlanty et al. (2007) noted that the law recognizes that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, and for students to succeed in school, parents must be active participants in their children's academic lives. This involvement includes parents maintaining their involvement in their children's education during the adolescent years.

Lee (2004) pointed out that school administrators and teachers are faced with challenges consequent to the federal and state mandates, which hold educators more

accountable to ensure all students are learning. Educators will no longer be allowed to make excuses for why minority students and students from impoverished backgrounds cannot learn.

Parental Involvement as a Means of Narrowing the Achievement Gap

Lightfoot (2004) pointed out that parental involvement, used repeatedly by educators as an answer to improving student academic achievement, may be two of the most misunderstood words. Jeynes (2007) defined parental involvement as "parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children" (p. 89), while Lightfoot (2004) preferred the words, "parental empowerment" (p. 95) when describing parental involvement, and Pérez Carreónn et al. (2005) used the term "parental engagement" (p. 469). Whatever the term used, parental involvement remains a topic of research. When children have the benefit of living with one or both parents, or with a guardian, researchers (Chrispeels and Rivero, 2001; DePlanty et al., 2007; Epstein, 1987, 1995; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2007; Jeynes, 2003, 2007) agree that it is important that parents be actively involved in their children's education, including at the high school level. Over the past 4 decades, the stability of the typical American family has diminished (Jeynes, 2007), which has caused educators and researchers to become increasingly concerned about the degree to which parents are involved or not involved in their children's education. If Jeynes (2007) is correct, and parental involvement is indeed a predictor of student academic success in school in all grades, what responsibility will educators assume in reversing the reported decline in parental involvement?

Henderson et al. (2007) suggested that all families and communities have something great to offer schools. Therefore, educators should do everything possible to work closely together with parents and the community to make sure all students succeed. They view this family- and community-partnership with schools as consisting of five factors: building relationships, linking activities to learning, addressing differences, supporting advocacy, and sharing power. They went on to conclude that no matter a family's income, race, education, language, or culture, all parents can make a contribution to their children's learning. Jeynes (2007) identified seven parental involvement variables described by educators as most frequently practiced by parents: (a) *general parental involvement*, (b) *specific parental involvement*, (c) *parental expectations*, (d) *attendance and participation*, (e) *communication*, (f) *homework*, and (g) *parental style*.

Researchers (Barrera & Warner, 2006; Billig, et al., 2005; Evans, 2005; Joftus & Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Laitsch & Rodi, 2004; McCall et al., 2006; Northwest Evaluation Association, 2006; Rogers-Poliakoff, 2006; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 2003) have persisted in their search for a rationale to explain why approximately half of all students are successful and graduate from high school while the other half fails to either finish high school or receive a diploma. The data appear to demonstrate that parental involvement is correlated to student success in Grades K-12. So the question arises whether this viewpoint holds true for minority students. If so, school officials might capitalize on parental involvement in order to improve academic achievement, particularly among Latino students with the goal of narrowing the achievement gap.

Epstein (1987, 1995; Lightfoot, 2004) and her colleagues provided some of the earliest research in studying parental involvement in schools and its effect on student academic achievement. Her 1987 research illustrated the importance of parental involvement as a component of effective schools. Much of her research appears in studies still cited (Epstein, 1987, 1995; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2007; Lightfoot, 2004; Piper, 2005). These researchers identified six types of parental involvement associated with student success in school: (a) basic obligations of families with respect to food, clothing, shelter, safety, and health, and the need to supervise, discipline, and give children direction during the school years; (b) basic obligations of schools to inform parents about the school, its policies, and the progress of their children (grades, academic progress and parent-teacher conferences); (c) parental involvement at the school; (d) parental involvement in learning activities at home; (e) parental involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy at the school; and (f) collaboration and exchange with community organizations, agencies, and businesses that enable the community to contribute to the school, children, and families.

DePlanty et al. (2007), in a study of parental involvement at the junior high school level, also indentified several types of parental involvement factors correlated to increased student academic achievement. Twenty-two teachers and staff members, 234 students, and 301 parents from a junior high school in a rural county of a Midwestern state completed a survey that identified different forms of parental involvement activities related to their children's schooling experiences. Based on parent, teacher, and student survey results of 15 types of parental involvement items, the following parental involvement activities were ranked highest to lowest in order of importance: (a) making

sure a child is at school regularly, (b) attending parent-teacher conferences regularly, (c) talking with a child about school, (d) checking on homework completion, (e) balancing school work and school activities, (f) having a variety of reading materials in the house, (g) balancing schoolwork and time with friends, (h) having a set time for homework, (i) attending activities at school, (j) limiting the amount of time a child watches television, (k) reviewing a child's weekly planner, (l) regular communication with a child's teachers, (m) talking to other parents about school, (n) observing a child's classes, and (o) volunteering in school. DePlanty et al. concluded, as a result of their data, that schools should focus on persuading parents to participate in the activities that schools identify as important to the degree that teachers and students begin to notice a difference.

Jeynes (2003) defined parental involvement as consisting of four components: parental expectations, parental interest, parental involvement in school, and family community. Of the four components, his meta-analysis of 26 research studies of others, dating back to the late 1990s, indicated parental expectations may be the most important factor in student academic achievement. However, based on the research of Zellman and Waterman (1998), Jeynes (2003) suggested that parental expectations may backfire if parents do not maintain a positive approach in promoting high expectations. On the other hand, in the context of a less supportive parenting style, high expectations may place an unmanageable amount of unnecessary pressure on a child. Based on his meta-analysis that involved a total of 26 studies, Jeynes's findings indicated a positive correlation between parental involvement and academic achievement among minority students, which can be summarized as follows: (a) the positive effects of parental involvement held across all ethnic groups; (b) students had higher GPAs; (c) students had higher

standardized test scores; and (d) the school atmosphere was characterized by a more positive relationship between parent and teacher, a better sense of teamwork between home and school, and an acknowledgement by the teacher of parental efforts. In a follow up meta-analysis study, Jeynes (2007) reaffirmed findings of his previous study and the data affirmed other points. The second group of findings included: (a) parental involvement supports academic achievement among all ethnic groups, (b) not only does voluntary parental involvement have a positive effect but parental programs do as well, (c) among the most important aspects of parental involvement are parental style and parental expectations, and (d) parental involvement tends to have a greater impact on student grades earned rather than on standardized tests. Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) indicated that high levels of parental involvement have been shown to correlate with improved academic performance, higher test scores, more positive attitudes towards school, higher homework completion rates, fewer placements in special education, academic perseverance, lower dropout rates, and fewer suspensions. Table 1 on page 44 shows a comparison of parent activities found to have a positive influence on student success in school based on the above research.

The importance of parental involvement in a child's education continues to be identified as a critical factor contributing to student success in school (Barrera & Warner, 2006; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; DePlanty et al., 2007; Epstein, 1987; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2004; Jeynes, 2003, 2007). Machtinger (2007) acknowledged that most researchers agree on the positive effects that parental involvement has on student success; however, not as well defined is the appropriate role of parental involvement. When parents engage with their children in learning activities at home, provide for basic

needs, and communicate regularly with the school, their involvement can help offset the sometimes negative effects of poverty or cultural barriers which can precipitate dropping out of school (Barrera & Warner, 2006; Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; DePlanty et al., 2007; Epstein, 1987; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2004; Jeynes, 2003, 2007;). Therefore, the mission of schools should be to encourage parents to participate in parental involvement activities schools deem as important (DePlanty et al., 2007). Barton (2004) concluded that schools need to establish a culture that connects parents to their children's education, paying particular attention to involving low income and single parent families. DePlanty et al. identified four ways schools can better involve parents in their children's education in order to accomplish this goal: (a) identifying the most important behaviors that tend to influence student academic achievement; (b) discussing the importance of having regular, open communication with children about their school experiences and educational program; (c) sending home parental involvement suggestions in a variety of forms; and (d) conversations with parents about the importance of parental involvement at parent-teacher conferences and back to school nights. Barrera and Warner (2006) discussed three components that are essential to successful programs that involve families in education settings: (a) effective parental involvement programs that match the needs of school and community in creating a positive school *climate*; (b) *communication* about school activities and programs, discipline codes, learning objectives, and children's state of knowledge between home and school that constitute the foundation of a solid partnership; and (c) parental involvement programs that schedule ample time for open-ended, parent-dominated discussions and *collaboration* that fosters positive school climate and communication.

Table 1

A Comparison of Types of Parental Involvement Associated With Student Success in School

Jeynes (2007)	Epstein,(1987, 1995); Grant & Wong (2004); Ingram et al. (2007); Lightfoot (2004); Piper (2005)	DePlanty et al. (2007) *(Ranked in order of importance)*
General parental involvement: an overall measure of involvement	Basic obligation of families with respect to food, clothing, shelter, safety, and health, and the need to supervise, discipline, and give children direction during the school years	Making sure a child is at school regularly
Specific parental involvement: a specific measure of involvement	Basic obligations of schools to inform parents about the school, its policies, and the progress of their children (grades, academic progress and parent-teacher conferences	Attending parent-teacher conferences
Parental expectations: the degree that parents hold their children to high expectations of academic achievement	Parental involvement at the school	Regularly talking with a child about school
Attendance and participation in school activities	Parental involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy at the school	Checking on homework completion
Communication: the extent to which parents interact about school activities	Collaboration and exchange with community organizations, agencies, and businesses that enable the community to contribute to the school, children, and families	Balancing school work and school activities
Homework monitoring: the extent to which parents monitor their children's work at home		Having a variety of reading materials in the house
Parental style: the extent to which a parent demonstrated a supportive and helpful parenting approach		Balancing schoolwork and time with friends
		Having a set time for homework

Table 1

A Comparison of Types of Parental Involvement Associated With Student Success in School (continued)

Jeynes (2007)	Epstein,(1987, 1995); Grant & Wong (2004); Ingram et al. (2007); Lightfoot (2004); Piper (2005)	DePlanty et al. (2007) *(Ranked in order of importance)*
		Attending activities as school
		Limiting the amount of time a child watches television
		Reviewing a child's weekly planner
		Regular communication with a child's teachers
		Talking to other parents about school
		Observing a child's classes
		Volunteering in school

Latino Parental Involvement

One administrator and teacher-held belief is that parents of Latino students are not really interested in their children's education (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006) and lack involvement in their children's schooling (Delgado Gaitan, 2004; Ramirez, 2003). Language barriers, cultural differences, and socioeconomic status are often blamed for Latino students' underachievement. School officials feel that if Latino parents are not directly involved in their children's schooling, they are indifferent to their children's school lives (Delgado Gaitan, 2004). Quiocho and Daoud argued this perception may be due to the opinions that Americans generally have of immigrants. Some Americans also

hold the belief that the children of immigrants either cannot or will not assimilate into American culture by learning the language, getting a permanent job, and becoming established in the community (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). Lightfoot (2004) described opinions some middle-class Americans have when comparing themselves to low-income or immigrant parents. Metaphors used include *empty* as opposed to *full* and those who *take* versus those who *give*. Stated another way, many times low income minority parents are perceived as takers or as empty containers when it comes to parental involvement. Analogies such as these may make it even more difficult to imagine inviting minority parents into schools to share their ideas or expertise. This perspective by educators of low-income and minority parents limits the possibility that they are seen as equal partners in their children's schooling. Many parental involvement programs, particularly those directed at minority parents, are flawed because they are based on the assumption that low-income and minority parents lack what middle-class White parents have (Lightfoot, 2004). In other words, these perceptions by educators imply that non-English speaking, minority, and low-income parents lack the necessary tools that White middle class, English speaking parents have when it comes to effective parenting (Lightfoot, 2004). These stereotypical views of low-income, non-English speaking, and minority parents can harm efforts to establish effective school-family partnerships that support student learning. Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) and Ingram et al. (2007) both described the challenge that many Latino parents face when it comes not only adjusting to the U. S. culture in general, but also in learning the American school system. When parents do not understand the education system, it is hard for them to participate in decision making (Ingram et al., 2007). Immigrant parents have limited knowledge of the "invisible codes

of power" (Pérez Carreón et al., p. 470) embedded in school cultures, a limited understanding of the curriculum and organization of U.S. schools, and lack awareness of their rights as parents. These factors may inhibit them from asking questions or providing input about their children's schooling.

Quiocho and Daoud's (2006) study, based on interviews, examined two schools in large unified school districts in southern California where teachers, administrators, and school staff members had low expectations of Latino children and their parents. The following themes emerged from interviews with teachers: (a) the belief that Latino parents not only were unreliable, but they refused to volunteer in the classroom; (b) Latino parents did not support the school's homework policy because they would not help their children with homework; (c) Latino parents did not care about their children's schooling; and (d) Latino parents were unskilled and unprofessional. In a related study, De Gaetano (2007) listed several barriers to Latino parent interaction with schools including a mistrust of the large bureaucracies, dramatic differences between what is expected of parents in the United States and the parents' countries of origin, negative attitudes of school administration and school personnel toward Latino parents, and lack of personnel who speak the parents' language. Marginalization of Latino parents due to race, class, and cultural differences, as mentioned above, is considered another compelling reason for the lack of school involvement of Latino and other minority group parents. Ingram et al. (2007) also cited formidable barriers to minority parental involvement, some of which are similar to De Gaetano's list. DePlanty et al. (2007) indicated that lack of teacher efficacy can in itself be a barrier to parental involvement. High efficacy teachers tend to promote and receive more parental involvement than do

lower efficacy teachers. DePlanty et al.'s study also included Latino parents' responses as to what they perceived as barriers in the school environment to the academic achievement of their children. The parents noted the following needs: (a) help for their children and themselves so students learn the academic content, (b) improved communication via timely and frequent communication between school and family, (c) respect for their children by teachers and other school staff members, (d) access to the core or grade-level curriculum, and (e) a partnership with the school to support student learning, including making resources available to parents to help their children. Pérez Carreón et al.'s (2005) study asked parents what they wanted from an involvement standpoint in their children's school. The most common answers parents offered referred to more power in decision-making processes and a more equal partnership with the school that did not center on fault finding conversations.

In addition to their own study, Quiocho and Daoud (2006) cited similar studies that tended to dispel the concerns of teachers and administrators and that appeared to be based on assumptions rather than on facts. These studies revealed that Latino parents actually do have high expectations for their children's education in a new country and want to participate in their academic success and moral development. Gorski (2008), Grant and Wong (2004), and Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) cited research that immigrant parents care deeply about their children's education, but may be reluctant to have much interaction with the school because of the language barrier and the lack of familiarity with American educational expectations. Part of the problem the teachers and administrators perceived as a lack of interest on behalf of Latino parents has been that they are confused as to the role they play in their children's education due to the school's

lack of defining what parental involvement looks like at the high school level (Grant & Wong, 2004). Grant and Wong further pointed out that Latino parents will only meet school expectations and become more involved in their children's education when schools define what parental involvement means.

De Gaetano (2007) supported Grant and Wong's (2004) findings as a result of her study and pointed out that Latino parental involvement cannot be measured only by whether parents are physically present in the school building. Ingram et al.'s (2007) research found that some forms of parental involvement such as communicating with the school, volunteering, and attending school events may have little positive effect on student achievement, especially in high school. Parent participation may be more informal and include homework support, engaged discussions about their child's school day, providing a home environment that supports student learning, and parent role modeling. Lightfoot (2004) argued this may be especially important in addressing parental involvement opportunities with urban, minority, and/or low-income parents. In other words, school officials must define what parental involvement means. With respect to the role of parents in high-achieving schools serving low-income, at-risk populations, research indicated that schools investing resources and efforts into encouraging effective parenting and learning at home will yield the most significant results when it comes to raising student academic achievement (Ingram et al., 2007). Auerbach (2006) contributed that any form of parental involvement and support is better than nothing at all. Indirect, moral parental support at home should be honored as involvement rather than measuring parental involvement only by how often a parent is physically present in the school. Auerbach (2007) further cited studies for the propensity of Latino immigrant parents to

provide *noninterventionist* moral support and *indirect guidance* when it comes to supporting their children's education. In many instances, when Spanish-speaking Latino parents discuss parental involvement in education they speak in terms of *apoyo* (support) rather than *involvement*. Latino parents also talk about sharing *consejos* (cultural narrative advice and teachings) to reinforce learning. Another aspect of *consejos* involves Latino parents talking to their children about doing better in school than they did and the importance of choosing the right path for a more successful life than they have had. Auerbach 2007) concurred with other researchers (De Gaetano, 2007; Grant & Wong, 2004; Ingram et al., 2007; Lightfoot, 2004) on the reasons educators tend to overlook Latino parents' involvement. Gorski (2008) acknowledged that many poor adults must work two, three, or four jobs just to provide food, shelter, and clothing for the family, which makes Latino parents' presence at school impossible, especially if they work evenings or have jobs without paid leave. In addition, from a Latino parent's perspective, they often feel marginalized by the school system due to their race, class, cultural differences, and the perception schools have of them as not caring and not seeking involvement in their children's education (De Gaetano, 2007). Ramirez (2003) offered that even in communities with high Latino populations, many parents expressed the belief that schools do not listen or care to listen to their needs as parents.

Jeynes (2007) examined the effects of parental involvement by race and socioeconomic status in his 52-study meta-analysis. His findings indicated that the influence of parental involvement overall is significant for secondary school children. The positive effects of parental involvement apply for both White and minority secondary school children. Jeynes further stated that in urban areas, in particular, parental

involvement may be even more important due to factors in the home environment such as high family dissolution rates, numerous two-parent working families, and unique sociological pressures on children.

Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) cited the following factors where parental involvement may play a positive role in academic achievement among Latino students. The parents engage with children in learning activities at home, provide for basic needs, communicate regularly with the school, and offset the sometimes negative impacts of poverty or cultural barriers as a means of preventing students from dropping out of school. Ingram et al. (2007) researched studies that investigated the critical elements of parental involvement as this involvement related to children's improved academic achievement. Survey data collected from parents whose children attended three Chicago public elementary schools that serve minority, low-income populations suggested that schools struggling with unsatisfactory student achievement may benefit from focusing on parental involvement efforts that build parenting capacity and encourage learning-at-home activities. Though this study involved parents of elementary school children, there may be merit to its applicability at the high school level. Ingram et al. (2007) listed the following potential benefits of parental involvement with children in high-minority schools: (a) higher grades, test scores, and graduation rates; (b) better school attendance; (c) increased student motivation; (d) improved self-esteem; (e) lower rates of suspension; (f) decreased use of alcohol and drugs; (g) fewer instances of violent behavior; and (h) greater enrollment rates in postsecondary education. Ramirez (2003) also analyzed benefits of Latino parental involvement in their children's education and named the following as examples: (a) sustained gains in academic achievement, (b) enhanced

English language skills, (c) increased student cognitive growth, (d) improved student behavior in school, (e) enhanced home – school relationships, (f) produced more favorable attitudes toward school, and (g) enhanced self-esteem. Auerbach's (2006) research also demonstrated the pivotal role Latino parents play in encouraging their children to attend college.

In addition to traditional methods of parental involvement discussed previously, Ramirez (2003) offered additional suggestions schools should consider to strengthen the home and school relationship, particularly involving Latino parents in the school-family partnership. He suggested (a) visiting students' homes and communities to learn about the funds of knowledge in their families and cultures; (b) participating in community events and celebrations unique to the Latino culture; (c) developing relationships with adults in the students' communities; (d) bringing family members into the classroom; (e) offering parenting classes and other activities for family members; (f) hiring and supporting the hiring of staff members from the language and cultural backgrounds of the students; (g) learning more about Latino families' belief systems and asking parents for their input for their children's education before developing long-range goals for the school or making changes in the curriculum; and (h) providing programs such as family English literacy projects, intake interviews and processes, home-school liaisons, parent centers, orientation workshops, and courses for parents (English as a Second Language [ESL], literacy, immigration issues). Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) indicated that for Latino parents to feel empowered, parents need to be given more power in decision-making processes and an equal partnership within the school. De Gaetano (2007) discussed the importance for schools to have bilingual staff members readily available in order to

communicate with non-English-speaking parents when they visit or call the school. In addition, De Gaetano argued that college preparatory programs need to expand beyond the traditional curricula in teacher preparation programs (i.e., educational theories of learning or methods of teaching) and prepare teachers and administrators to be proactive with parents in culturally sensitive ways. As the demographics in schools continue to change over time, educators must also make changes in instructional and assessment practices so all students have equal access to the curriculum and learning outcomes.

Summary

In this chapter I have presented literature that reports the ongoing, academic achievement gap among students of color as compared to their White and Asian American peers despite attempts over the past 50 years to narrow it. The research defined the academic achievement gap and possible contributing factors. The effects of poverty, as it relates to the achievement gap, and barriers to effective parental involvement were also discussed.

The review of the literature defined parental involvement and focused on the importance of parental involvement as a possible contributor to narrowing the academic achievement gap. Several studies were presented that catalog the potential benefits of increased parental involvement in a child's educational experiences. It was also pointed out that parental involvement does not necessarily mean a parent being physically present in the school. The research cited offered recommendations regarding ways that Latino parents can become more involved in their children's education at home, particularly at the high school level. Research was also presented as an antidote to the myth that parents

of Latino children are not really interested in their children's education. Different forms of parental involvement activities were identified, including those that may be of particular benefit in the attempt to better involve Latino parents in the school-family partnership.

In chapter 3 I present the methodology of this doctoral study. In addition, I discuss the research design and approach, the setting and sample population, the sequence for data collection for both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the study, data analysis and validation procedure, and measures taken for protection of participants' rights.

SECTION 3:

RESEARCH METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to use quantitative approaches to measure parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement in high schools and qualitative methods to probe specific parental concerns about school involvement. In the study I examined parental perceptions of parental involvement, potential barriers that may impede Latino parents from being more involved in their children's high school educational experiences, and strategies that may improve parental involvement and create a stronger partnership between parents and school at the high school level.

The research methodology that was utilized in this study is provided in this chapter. A description of the parental-involvement survey instrument that was used in the quantitative phase of the study is presented and the qualitative questions for parents are also delineated. In addition, the research methods, setting and sample population, data collection and data analysis procedures, and measures taken to protect the rights of all participants are outlined. A mixed methods research design (Creswell, 2003) was employed to address the research problem and incorporated the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods to address the research problem and questions posed.

Research Methodology

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) described quantitative research as "data in closed-ended information such as that found on attitude, behavior, or performance instruments" (p. 6). They further defined quantitative research as the intent to see how

data from selected participants fits into current theory. The objective of using the parental-involvement survey in this study was to analyze the relationship between parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and forms of parental involvement as a predictor or correlate to the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. Creswell and Plano Clark contrasted qualitative research as data consisting of "open-ended information that the researcher gathers through interviews with participants" (p.6). Qualitative research is used to learn participants' views in regards to a particular phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Hickman (2007) stated that qualitative research is used in educational settings so that a researcher can investigate topics that he or she is curious and passionate about understanding. In this study I asked Latino parents open-ended interview questions that related to barriers they perceived as having a negative impact on their involvement in their children's high school education. Both research designs were used to clarify subtleties and cross-validate the findings. Figure 1 shows the order of the data collection and how the data were mixed by connecting the datasets together in order to better understand the research questions related to this explanatory sequential study.

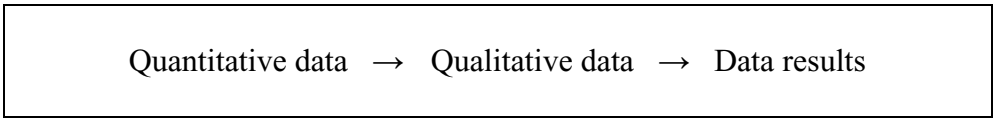

Figure 1. Connecting the data. Adapted from *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. W. Creswell and V. L. Plano Clark, 2007, p. 63. Copyright 2007 by Sage Publications, Inc.

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that by mixing the data from both research designs, the researcher gains a more thorough understanding of the research problem as opposed to when only one dataset is used. In the case of this study, the

qualitative data were used to help further the understanding of parental attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions as they relate to student academic achievement among Latino high school students. Those selected for the parent interviews were randomly selected. This sequence afforded me the opportunity to use qualitative data from the parents' interviews to enhance my understanding of the quantitative findings from the survey.

Research Design and Approach

A mixed methods research design was used for this study and thus combined both quantitative and qualitative data to help address the research problem and research questions (Creswell, 2003). In a mixed methods study a researcher attempts to consolidate concepts, designs, and methods by linking both quantitative and qualitative research designs into a single study (Cohen, 2008; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that the goal of mixed methods research is not to replace either quantitative or qualitative approaches, but rather to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of both when conducting research. They further illustrated that mixed methods research falls in the middle ground between quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

For this study, the particular type of mixed methods employed was an explanatory sequential design (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) for data collection. According to Creswell, this design is the most straightforward of the six major mixed methods approaches. When using a sequential approach, the results of the first data collection inform the second step in the data collection. Creswell and Plano Clark described the use of a notation system to show the sequence of events that occurred in

this study. The research methods used were followed in a sequence in which the quantitative dataset was collected first and the quantitative methods were then emphasized more in the study (Aldridge, Fraser, & Huang, 1999; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Figure 2 illustrates an explanatory research design.

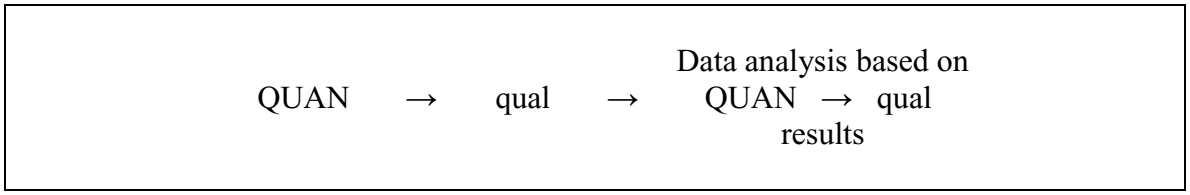

Figure 2. Notation of an explanatory sequential design. Adapted from *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. W. Creswell and V. L. Plano Clark, 2007, p. 73. Copyright 2007 by Sage Publications, Inc.

For this study, the initial student academic achievement data collected determined which parents were selected to participate in the parental-involvement survey, which was the second step in the quantitative portion of the data collection. After analyzing the survey data, I then randomly selected Latino parents to participate in the parent interviews, which encompassed the qualitative phase of the proposed study.

Setting and Sample

The population for this study was limited to Latino parents with children who attend an inner city high school located in the western United States and are members of the graduating class of 2010. According to the School 2008-2009 Accountability Report (2009), the Latino student population at the high school comprises approximately 60% of the student body. Many of these students also come from impoverished backgrounds with approximately 60% of students who attend this high school qualifying for free and reduced lunch prices. The high school chosen for this particular study has the highest population of Latino students in the district. In addition, the school has the second highest

population of students among high schools in the district who qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The school has approximately 220 seniors in the class of 2010, of which about 135 students are Latino. Student achievement data were collected on these 135 Latino students in order to determine high versus low achieving quartiles. Eighty-one parents were then selected to participate in the survey from the top and bottom quartiles as a purposive sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). According to Teddlie and Yu, "Purposive sampling techniques involve selecting certain units or cases based on a specific purpose rather than randomly" (p. 80). Purposive sampling, also known as "outlier sampling" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 81), involves looking at data near the "ends" (Teddlie & Yu, 2007, p. 81) of the distribution of cases of interest. In this study, I used the distribution of academic achievement data at the end of the junior year to determine the top and bottom quartiles. From these two points, the students' names were drawn and their parents were invited to participate. The process for selecting participants is delineated in the Data Collection Procedures section.

The qualitative portion of this study involved randomly selecting and interviewing five sets of Latino parents of high and low achieving students who completed the survey in order to gain a better understanding of the Latino culture and insights regarding how Latino parents view their role in their children's high school education. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that when purposeful sampling is used, researchers intentionally select the participants who possess the central phenomenon or the key concept of a study. Parents were given the option of being interviewed in their home, the school, or at another location of their choosing. A Spanish-speaking teacher at the high

school agreed to serve as an interpreter to help in the conducting of interviews if parents were only fluent in Spanish. Additional parents were randomly selected from the appropriate quartile if any of the initial parents selected to participate in the interviews declined. Interviews were recorded with a digital audio recorder and later transcribed for data analysis purposes.

I was the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis and collected all student achievement record data in phase one of the study with some assistance from the school's computer technology specialist, school registrar, and the school district's Public Policy, Accountability, and Assessment (PPA&A) Office. I distributed and collected the surveys and conducted all interviews at a location found acceptable to the parents with the help of a bilingual interpreter. I used open-ended questions for the interviews, audio recorded them, made field observations, and collected and transcribed all data with the use of a computer for this portion of the study. As indicated in the previous paragraph, I made arrangements to obtain a Spanish-speaking interpreter as needed to interview parents who did not speak English.

Instrumentation and Materials

Quantitative data were gathered and analyzed first in this study, followed by the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. Creswell (2003) and Mohr et al. (2004) acknowledged ways in which quantitative and qualitative data complement each other when synthesizing the data during the interpretation phase. Figure 3 illustrates the specific steps involved when utilizing a sequential explanatory design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

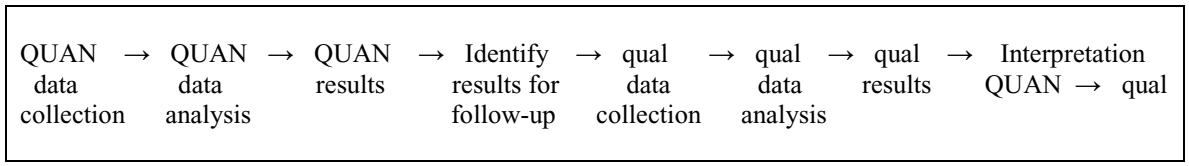

Figure 3. Steps involved in an explanatory sequential design. (Adapted from Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Adapted from *Designing and conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. W. Creswell and V. L. Plano Clark, 2007, p. 73. Copyright 2007 by Sage Publications, Inc.

Permission to conduct this study came from this researcher's doctoral study committee, the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB; 09-11-09-0342242), and from the school district's Public Policy Accountability and Assessment office (PPA&A). No data collection or research was conducted until all parties listed gave their permission for this study to begin.

Data Collection Procedures

Quantitative Research Data

For this study, two sets of quantitative data were collected and disaggregated. The quantitative research data in this study were collected in two phases. Academic achievement data were based on student cumulative report card grade point averages (GPA) through six semesters of high school; raw scores on the State High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) in the areas of reading, writing, and math; and the total number of classes failed during the first six semesters of high school. Internal validity threats were reduced by ensuring that accurate student record data were queried out of individual Latino students' SASI records in the senior class of 2010. According to Creswell (2003) external validity threats are minimized by basing the analysis and

conclusions of this study on Latino students and their parents only, as this was the subgroup being investigated.

The second set of quantitative data that were collected involved administering a copyrighted Parent Survey with the assistance of the CEE located in Redmond, Washington. The survey was used to gather data regarding Latino parents' attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement as possible indicators contributing to Latino student academic success in high school. A permission letter from the CEE to use both English and Spanish versions of the parent survey is located in Appendix A while the initial e-mail correspondence with the CEE to arrange to use the parent survey as well is found in Appendix B. Surveys were distributed to all parents of Latino students identified in the top and bottom quartiles based on the academic achievement indicators described in the previous paragraph. Gall, Gall, and Borg (2002) stated that surveys are used to collect data from a sample population so that findings can be generalized. The survey consisted of a total of 46 closed-ended questions (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) that used a Likert-type summative scale (Funk, 2006) for parents to respond. Likert scaling, which asks for the extent of agreement with an attitude item, presumes the existence of an underlying continuous variable whose value characterizes the respondents' attitudes and opinions (Clason & Dormody, 2006). The Likert scale in the parent survey was precoded as follows: *almost always true*, *often true*, *sometimes true*, *seldom true*, and *almost never true*. This parent survey, developed by the CEE, is included in Appendixes C and D. The reader will note that both English and Spanish versions of the parent survey were made available. The primary construct validity of this survey was based on an external panel of experts. The CEE uses a Microsoft Excel

program that computed confidence intervals using Cronbach's coefficient alpha for scale reliability. According to Barnette (2005), Cronbach's coefficient alpha was based on Pearson *r* (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005) correlations (e.g., those used as test-retest and alternative forms score reliability measures), and reliability coefficients based on the split-half approach.

Qualitative Research Data

Qualitative data involved interviewing five sets of Latino parents identified with a student in the top or bottom quartile who completed the survey in order for me to gain a better understanding of the Latino culture and insights regarding how Latino parents view their role in their children's high school education. A total of 10 sets of parents were interviewed. Both the mother and the father were present for 50% of the interviews. However, some families only had a single parent living in the home, or one of the parents was not available. One of the major advantages of conducting interviews, as opposed to survey research, is that in qualitative interviews, the researcher is not tied to asking only certain questions. The conversation during the course of the interview can take the direction that a parent is willing to share (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The purpose in conducting interviews with Latino parents in this study was to ask open-ended questions to probe for a deeper understanding of how Latino parents view their children's educational experiences and to clarify responses that may have arisen from the survey data. A bilingual translator was used in 9 of the 10 interviews. Appendix E includes an e-mail correspondence from the Walden University Internal Review Board (IRB) granting permission to use an interpreter to interview Spanish-speaking parents. As Rubin and

Rubin (2005) recommended, all interviews were digitally audio recorded and later transcribed for data analysis.

Parents who were asked to participate in the parent interview were selected based on a simple random sampling (Fink, 2006). Six open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) were selected for use in the parent interviews. These questions were based on the research of Dr. Joyce Epstein (1995), Co-Director of the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning, at Johns Hopkins University. Piper (2005) conducted a study on the role of parental involvement of high- and low-achieving students using parents from 55 elementary schools in the Pittsburgh School District. She developed an Interview Question Guide, which consisted of 13 questions designed to elicit responses that related to Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence in her six types of parental involvement model (STPI) (Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1995; Piper, 2005). Table 2 shows a brief synopsis of Epstein's STPI model.

Table 2

Epstein's (1995) Framework of Six Types of Parental Involvement (STPI)

Type	Definition
1. Parenting	Help all families establish a home environment to support children as students.
2. Communicating	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
3. Volunteering	Recruit and organize parent help and support.
4. Learning at home	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
5. Decision making	Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
6. Collaborating with community	Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

I selected questions from the original 13 questions Piper (2005) used in her study. She had piloted the interview questions with six parents to enhance the validity and reliability of the Interview Question Guide. After the pilot interviews, slight revisions were made to the Interview Question Guide. Table 3 shows the six interview questions and their relationship to the STPI model that were used during the interview portion of the study.

Table 3

Parent Interview Questions and Their Relationship to the STPI Model (Piper, 2005)

Parent Interview Question	STPI Category
1. What has helped you become involved in your child's educational progress?	1. Parenting practices. 2. Basic obligation of schools. 5. Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy. 6. Collaboration and exchanges with community organizations.
2. What roles or responsibilities should parents have in the school relationship?	1. Parenting practices. 3. Parent involvement at school. 5. Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy
3. In what ways can the school help to increase your level of involvement in your child's education?	2. Basic obligations of schools. 5. Involvement in decision-making, governance, and advocacy.
4. Do you have activities that you do at home to help your child with school? What are they?	4. Involvement in learning activities at home.
5. Are there any barriers that prevent you from being more involved in your child's education? If so, what are they?	1. Parenting practices. 3. Parent involvement at school. 4. Involvement in learning activities at home.
6. Please share additional comments regarding parental involvement and the school.	

All parent interviews were transcribed into a written document and the data was then coded based on similarity of responses, called data units (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Creswell, 1998) were used to establish a typology (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) of related concepts that were established for data

analysis. In the open coding (Creswell, 1998) I selected categories that focused on parental expectations, interest, encouragement, support, appreciation, and barriers as well as school support and expectations based on parent interview responses. I then used axial coding (Creswell, 1998) to assemble the data in new ways. Finally, through selective coding (Creswell, 1998), I developed a *story line* that integrates the categories I created in the axial coding model.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analyzing the Quantitative Data

The student version 15.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze data collected in this study (SPSS Inc., 2006). SPSS 15.0 is a comprehensive system that can take data from almost any type of file and use them to generate tabulated reports, charts, and plots of distributions and trends, descriptive statistics, and complex statistical analysis.

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical test was used to test the hypotheses (Gravetter, 2005; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). Correlation is a statistical technique that is used to measure and describe a relationship between two variables and explains the rationale for the use of this statistical test. Usually the two variables are simply observed as they exist naturally in the environment. There was no attempt to control or manipulate the variables, which was true in this study. Latino parental attitudes towards their children's education and the degree of involvement in their children's high school educational experiences were the independent variables. The level of academic achievement among Latino students in high school was the dependent variable.

The most common correlation is the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient, which measures the degree and the direction of the linear relationship between two variables. The Pearson correlation measures the degree to which a set of data points form a straight line relationship. The Pearson correlation coefficient is symbolized as *r* and is usually reported in two decimal places. The Pearson correlation formula (Gravetter, 2005; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005) is presented in Figure 4.

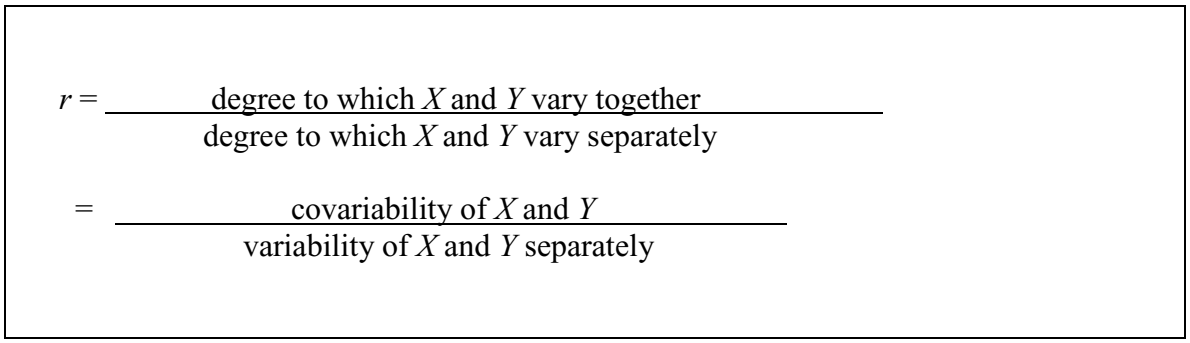

Figure 4. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient. Adapted from *Essentials of Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (5th ed.)*. F. J. Gravetter and L. B. Wallnau, 2005, p. 415. Copyright 2005 by Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Analyzing the Qualitative Data

In order to validate the interview data collected, Rubin and Rubin's (2005) coding system, which involved labeling each concept, theme, event, or topical marker into a specific category, which was described in the Qualitative Research Data section was employed. This involved the use of open, axial, and selective coding (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). A story line was then created based on the coding system implemented.

The final step in analyzing the data was to connect the research findings between both the quantitative and qualitative research designs within this mixed methods research design. Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) stated that "connecting the data occurs when the analysis of one type of data leads to (and thereby connects to) the need for the other type

of data" (pp. 83-84). The findings from this study were shared with faculty and staff members at the high school as well as with district administrators, and possibly, staff members at other district schools with similar demographic populations. In addition, the data were shared with the CEE as agreed upon in order to use the copyrighted parent survey.

Protection of Participants

Careful measures were taken to protect the participants in this study. The participants were informed of the intentions of this research study and that their participation was voluntary. They were also given assurance of privacy and confidentiality. The results of the study were made available to all participants upon request.

Parents selected to participate in the survey and interviews received a Consent Form Letter requesting their participation in this study (Appendixes F and G). Letters were distributed in both English and Spanish versions. The form introduced me, provided an explanation and the purpose of the study, and described risks and benefits of participation. In addition, a description of the survey instrument, and contact information for me and my faculty advisor were provided. An accompanying cover letter (Appendixes H and I) was also mailed with the consent form. Participants were asked to return the survey within two weeks. All participants were guaranteed confidentiality and no one was identified by name in any printed documents. Parents who did not return the survey within two weeks were mailed a reminder letter encouraging their participation.

To protect the privacy and confidentiality of student academic achievement data, student names were removed as soon as the top and bottom quartiles were determined (high- versus low-achieving students) in order to select the parents to participate in the survey. The document with these names was shredded.

Summary

A mixed methods research design was utilized in the study to address the research problem and to respond to the research questions posed (Creswell, 2003). The selection of the participants, the description of the instruments that were used, reliability, validity, data collection, data analysis, and considerations for protecting the participants were discussed in this chapter. Upon approval of this researcher's committee, the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB), and the school district's Office of Public Policy, Accountability, and Assessment, I proceeded with the data collection portion of the study. In chapter 4 I have displayed the findings collected from the surveys and interviews. In chapter 5 I present my interpretations of the findings, recommendations, and conclusions.

SECTION 4:

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to use quantitative approaches via a parent survey to measure attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement in high schools, and qualitative methods using interviews to probe specific parental concerns about school involvement. The data were used to analyze the relationship between the attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement among parents, and the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. Barriers that currently impede Latino parental involvement from their perspective were identified. In addition, strategies to improve the parent-school partnership were drawn from the data.

The following research questions were used to gather data from the parent surveys and interview data:

1. Do parental attitudes and perceptions in regards to their children's educational experiences in an urban high school have any effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?
2. Does the level of and form of parental involvement at the high school level, both in and out of the school building, have any kind of effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?
3. Are there specific barriers Latino parents perceive as having a negative effect on student academic achievement in an urban high school with a high Latino population?

4. What suggestions do Latino parents have for educators to more productively involve them in their children's high school education?
5. Do parents of Latino students feel encouraged by school employees to participate in their children's education? If so, in what ways?

In order to obtain answers to these five questions, three hypotheses were established for this study:

HO^1 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^1 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^2 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^2 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^3 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement. and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^3 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

Quantitative Data Collection

Two sets of quantitative data were collected and disaggregated. The identified sample population for this study included approximately 220 seniors in the class of 2010 who attend an urban high school in the western United States. Student academic achievement data were collected on 135 students identified as of Latino descent, according to the district's SASI database, in order to determine high- versus low-achieving quartiles. Academic achievement indicators included: cumulative grade point averages (GPA) through six semesters of high school; raw scores on the State High School Proficiency Exams (HSPE) in the areas of reading, writing, and math; and the total number of classes failed during the first six semesters of high school. Eighty-one parents were then selected to participate in the survey from the top and bottom quartiles as a purposive sample (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Yu, 2007). All parent participants resided in the school's zone at the time of the survey administration. All participants have senior students in the graduating class of 2010 and all 58 participants identified themselves on the survey as being of Latino descent.

After the identification of the sample population, 81 surveys were mailed; 40 surveys were mailed to parents in the top quartile and 41 to parents in the bottom quartile. The copyrighted parent survey instrument (2003), used with prior permission, was developed by the CEE located in Redmond, Washington. English and Spanish versions of

the survey were included in the mailing packet. Copies of both survey versions may be found in Appendixes C and D. Parents were asked to respond to 46 closed-ended questions (Johnson & Christensen, 2004) using a five-point Likert-type summative scale (Funk, 2006): *almost always true*, *often true*, *sometimes true*, *seldom true*, and *almost never true*. *Almost always true* and *often true* are considered as positive parent perceptions for each item. The CEE considers parents who answer items as *sometimes true* are in the "land of opportunity," meaning these parents may be influenced to positive side or if left alone become disconnected and move to the negative side. *Seldom true* or *almost never true* are considered to be negative parent perceptions to specific survey items.

Fifty-eight of the 81 parent surveys that were mailed were returned accounting for a 71.6% overall return rate after two reminders. Thirty-three surveys were returned from parents in the top quartile (82.5%) and 25 surveys were returned from parents in the bottom quartile (60.9%). The total survey return was 71.6%. Fifty-five percent of the parents who participated in the survey used the Spanish version.

Quantitative Data Results

The CEE survey results reported Latino parent responses in eight categories based on common characteristics of high performing schools (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2003): clear and shared focus; high standards and expectations; effective school leadership; collaboration, communication, and community; parent and community involvement; supportive learning environment; frequent monitoring of teaching and learning; and high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Table 4 provides a

brief summary of each of the eight categories of high performing schools measured in the survey.

Table 4

Eight Categories of High Performing Schools (CEE, 2009)

Characteristics	Description
Clear and Shared Focus	Everybody knows where they are going and why the school's vision is shared, everybody is involved and all understand their roles in achieving the vision. The vision is developed from common beliefs and values, creating a consistent focus.
High Standards and Expectations	Teachers and staff believe all students can learn and that they can teach all students. There is a recognition of barriers for some students to overcome, but the barriers are not insurmountable. Students become engaged in an ambitious and rigorous course of study.
Effective Leadership	Effective leadership is required to implement change processes within the school. This leadership takes many forms. Principals often play this role, but so do teachers and other staff, including those in the district office. Effective leaders advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
High Levels of Collaboration and Communication	There is a constant collaboration and communication between and among teachers of all grades. Everybody is involved and connected, including parents and members of the community, to solve problems and create solutions.

Table 4

Eight Categories of High Performing Schools (CEE, 2009;continued)

Characteristics	Description
High Levels of Parent & Community Involvement	There is a sense that all educational stakeholders have a responsibility to educate students, not just the teachers and staff in schools. Parents, as well as businesses, social service agencies, and community colleges/universities all play a vital role in this effort. It is essential that parents be informed and involved in decision-making to support their student's educational experience.
Supportive Learning Environment	The school has a safe, civil, healthy and intellectually stimulating learning environment. Staff feels supported, respected and valued and students feel respected and connected with the staff, and are engaged in learning. Instruction is personalized and small learning environments increase student contact with teachers.
Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning	Teaching and learning are continually adjusted based on frequent monitoring of student progress and needs. A variety of assessment procedures are used. The results of the assessment are used to improve student performances and also improve the instructional program.
Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Aligned Standards	Curriculum is aligned with the state standards for learning. Research-based materials and teaching and learning with strategies are implemented. There is a clear understanding of the assessment system, what is measured in various assessments, and how it is measured.

From "EES – Parents View: Top Quartile," by Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc., 2009, *Educational Effectiveness Survey – Parent v2.2*, pp.1-16. Copyright 2009 by Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Parent survey data were segregated and analyzed by top and bottom quartiles. A codebook was used to simplify data input and representation prior to entering it into the student version 15.0 of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) data file (Kirkpatrick & Feeney, 2007). This was done to determine whether there was a

significant correlation between the attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement of the Latino parents and student academic achievement. The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Statistical test was used to test the hypotheses (Gravetter, 2005; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). Pearson's product-moment correlations were calculated to examine the relationship between the two variables of interest – Latino student academic achievement using students' cumulative grade point average (GPA) through six semesters in high school (the dependent variable) and parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement (the independent variable). In Table 5 are displayed the mean and standard deviation of the GPA and parent survey data of both quartiles. In Tables 6 and 7 are presented the mean and standard deviation of student GPA and parent survey data by top and bottom quartiles.

Based on Pearson's product-moment correlation data presented in Table 8, comparing the dependent (student GPA) and independent variables (parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement), there was not a significant correlation between the two variables ($r = .085$, $n = 58$, $p < .05$, one tail). To have been significant, the critical value for the Pearson correlation with a degrees of freedom of 56 ($df = n - 2$) and an alpha level of .05 for a one-tailed test, r had to equal .221 or higher (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). A further analysis of the regression statistics is presented in the Model Summary in Table 9.

Table 5

Student GPA and Parent Survey Mean and Standard Deviation – Both Quartiles

Descriptive Statistics – Both Quartiles			
	M	*SD*	*N*
GPA	2.8317	1.02591	58
Survey	3.9447	.68554	58

Table 6

Student GPA and Parent Survey Mean and Standard Deviation – Top Quartile

Descriptive Statistics – Top Quartile			
	M	*SD*	*N*
GPA	3.6295	.41691	33
Survey	3.986	.68157	33

Table 7

Student GPA and Parent Survey Mean and Standard Deviation – Bottom Quartile

Descriptive Statistics – Bottom Quartile			
	M	*SD*	*N*
GPA	1.7783	.48640	25
Survey	3.8900	.70093	25

Table 8

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Statistical Test Results Comparing Latino Student GPA and Parent Survey Results

Correlations

		GPA	Survey
Pearson Correlation	GPA	1.000	.085
	Survey	.085	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	GPA	.	.264
	Survey	.264	.
N	GPA	58	58
	Survey	58	58

Table 9

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Statistical Test Model Summary Comparing Latino Student GPA and Parent Survey Results

Model Summary

Model	*R*	*R Square*	*Adjuster R Square*	*Std. Error of the Estimate*
1	.085(a)	.007	-.011	1.03132

A Predictors: (Constant), survey

Since $r = .085$ in the above data, no significant correlation is indicated between Latino student academic achievement and parent survey results. Therefore, the null hypotheses cannot be rejected. The hypothesis can be displayed as H_0: $p \leq 0$, which indicates there is not a significant positive correlation. In Figure 5 a scatterplot of the two variables is displayed as a means of showing a visual analysis of the regression. The parent survey responses between the two quartiles are similar regardless of student cumulative grade point averages.

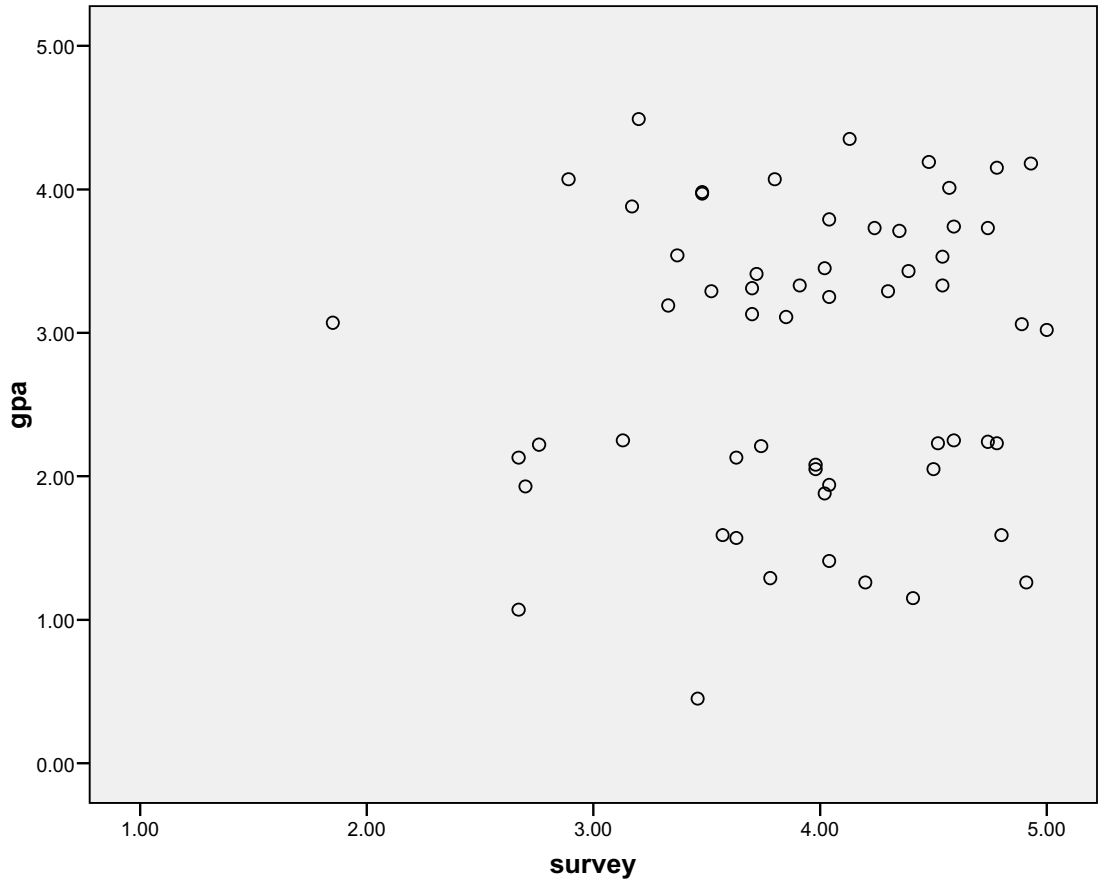

Figure 5. A scatterplot comparison of the two variables showing a near zero correlation.

A cross tabulation of survey results compiled by the CEE (Figure 6) similarly indicates that parents of students in the top and bottom quartiles, based on students' cumulative grade point averages through the first six semesters of high school, responded similarly to the parent survey items, which were adapted from the nine characteristics of high performing schools (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2003). The exception was in the category *high standards and expectations*. Parents of students in the top quartile responded to survey items with 64% *almost always true* and 30% *often true* (representing positive parent perceptions), as compared to parents of students in the bottom quartile who responded 48% *almost always true* and 28% *often true*. Parent responses of students in the top quartile responded much higher with *almost always true* or *often true* (94%) compared to parent responses of students in the bottom quartile (76%). In Figure 7 is displayed a comparison of individual survey items in this category.

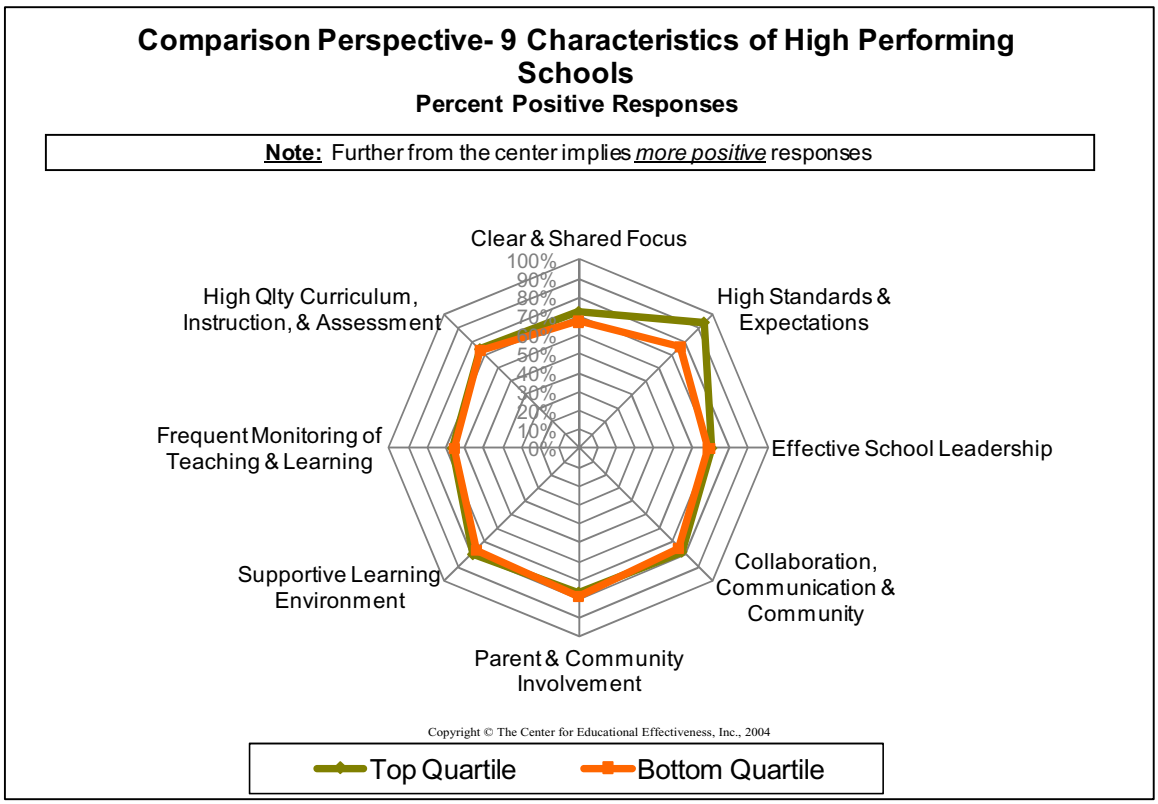

Figure 6. A comparison of Latino parent survey responses in the top and bottom quartiles. Adapted from "EES – Parents View: Washoe Top vs. Bottom Quartiles," by Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc., 2009, *Educational Effectiveness Survey – Parent v2.1*, p.3. Copyright 2009 by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

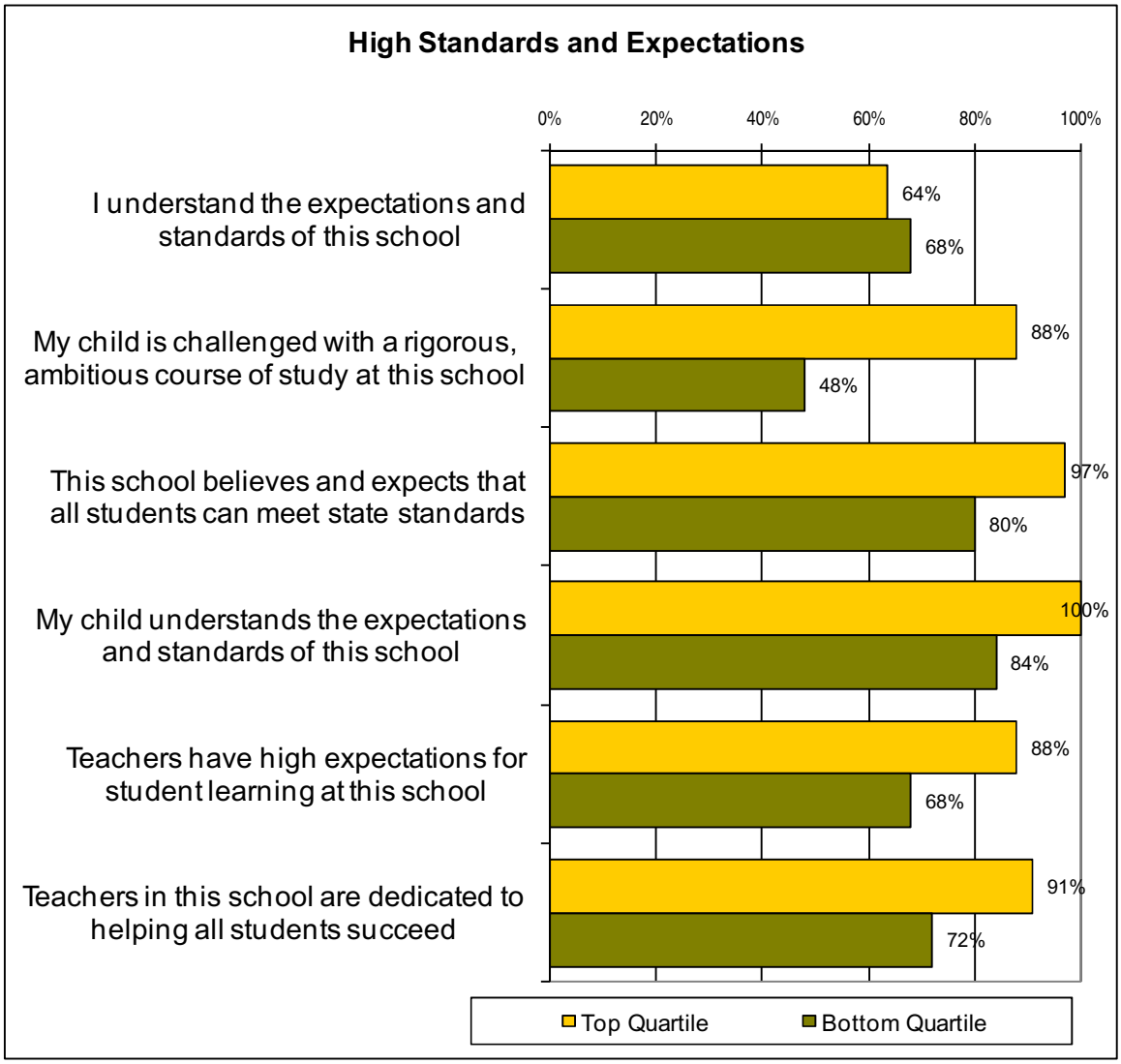

Figure 7. A comparison of top and bottom quartile parent responses to high standards and expectations category. Adapted from "EES – Parents View: Washoe Top vs. Bottom Quartiles," by Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc., 2009, *Educational Effectiveness Survey – Parent v2.1*, p.7. Copyright 2009 by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

In the category *clear and shared focus*, survey responses were similar between the two quartiles with the exception of two notable areas. Eighty-five percent of parents with students in the top quartile responded more favorably to the item that the staff demonstrates commitment to the mission/purpose of the school compared to 76% of

parents of students in the bottom quartile. In addition, parents with students in the top quartile indicated that important decisions by school staff are based upon the mission/purpose of the school with a more positive perception compared to the bottom quartile, 70% to 52% respectively.

Only one survey item in the area of *effective leadership* showed a significant difference in responses between the two quartiles. Parents of students in the top quartile rated the principal much higher on how active and involved he is in the community. Top quartile parents gave a positive perception of 85%, whereas, parents with students in the bottom quartile responded with a favorable perception of 68%.

There were three notable differences in responses of parents in the category *high levels of collaboration and communication*. Parents of students in the top quartile reported that parents and school personnel talk respectfully with one another with a 91% positive response, as compared to parents of students in the bottom quartile who gave an 80% rating. Top quartile parents claimed to be much more informed about what goes on in the school, 82% to 60%. This same group also indicated, 91% versus 84%, that it is easy to communicate with the school. Two survey items in this category were scored with more favorable responses by parents of students in the bottom quartile. The first item, *parents are involved in the decision making process at this school*, yielded a 64% favorable response by parents in the bottom quartile compared to a 55% response from parents in the top quartile. Another item asked parents how strongly they feel that the school communicates effectively with all families. Seventy-six percent of parents in the bottom quartile responded with a positive perception compared to 67% of top quartile parents. However, this item is in disagreement with an earlier item in which parents of

students in the top quartile rated the school much higher in how informed they were as to what is going on at the school.

In the category *high levels of parent and community involvement*, there were two notable differences in responses between the two quartile groups. Parents with students in the bottom quartile responded with a more favorable rating, 68% to 39%, as to ways they feel they can be more involved in the school. Parents in the top quartile indicated a more favorable perception with a 76% response rate that they feel that when they share their concerns with their child's teacher that he/she will listen, as compared to at 68% response by parents in the bottom quartile. Both quartiles of parents gave high response ratings in the areas of parents feeling welcome to visit the school at any time, the staff respects the different cultures represented in the community, and the school has activities to celebrate these diverse cultures.

Both quartiles of parents gave similar and high ratings in the area of *the school providing a supportive learning environment*. Two survey items are notable in this category. The first item asked parents if they felt their child feels safe at school. Ninety-seven percent of parents with students in the top quartile gave a favorable perception. In contrast, 80% of parents in the bottom quartile responded favorably. The second item asked parents if most students at the school are well behaved. Again, 58% of parents in the top quartile gave a favorable rating compared to 36% of parents with students in the bottom achievement quartile.

In the category *monitoring of teaching and learning*, parent responses between the two quartiles were very similar with the exception of two items. Parents with students in the top quartile gave a higher rating, 85%, when asked if additional help is available to

their child when he/she needs it, compared to 72% in the bottom quartile. Bottom quartile parents gave a more positive perception, 68%, compared to 58% in the top quartile, when asked if they are given opportunities to discuss their child's progress with staff members.

The last category of the parent survey addressed the area of *high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment*. The responses of parents were very similar between the two quartiles with one notable difference. Parents of students in the bottom quartile gave a more favorable rating, 76%, as compared to parents in the top quartile, 67%, when asked if teachers provide students with a variety of learning opportunities. The presentation of parent survey results by quartile is located in Appendix J.

Qualitative Data Collection

In this section the qualitative data collected from 10 parent interviews are described. All parent participants resided in the high school's zone at the time of the interviews and all have senior students in the graduating class of 2010. All 10 sets of participants identified themselves on school demographic records as being of Latino descent. Five sets of parents from both the top and bottom quartiles participated in the semi structured interviews based on the same student academic achievement indicators as for the parent survey participation. Seven of the ten parents randomly selected for interview participation had also completed and returned the parent survey. Nine of the ten sets of parents interviewed spoke Spanish only, which required the assistance of a high school Spanish teacher for translation.

Parents were asked six open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) designed to elicit responses that relate to Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence in

the six types of parental involvement model (STPI; Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1995; Piper, 2005). Piper test piloted and used these six questions in her study, which enhanced the validity and reliability of the interview questions used in my study.

Interviews were conducted at a time and place decided by the participants. A protocol was established to record the date and time of the interviews. A number was randomly assigned to each interviewee for confidentiality purposes. All interviewees decided to meet at the school to participate in the interviews. Eight of the ten interviews were done in a timely fashion. However, two interviews of parents of students in the bottom quartile had to be rescheduled over a two week period of time due to a cancellation and one no show. All parents appeared comfortable with the interview setting and had no problem signing the parent consent form to participate in the interviews.

Evidence of Quality

To assure accuracy of the interview data, all interviews were audio taped using a digital recorder. Parents were provided with a copy of the interview questions, in English or Spanish, for their reference as the questions were read to them. Recordings were translated and transcribed immediately after the interviews. Nine of the ten recordings required translation from Spanish to English followed by transcription. A copy of the transcription was sent to each interviewee in order to confirm accuracy and add to the validity of the data. No corrections were necessary.

Following transcription, data were coded based on similarity of responses, called data units (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). Open coding, axial coding, and selective coding

(Creswell, 1998) were used to establish a typology (Rubin & Rubin, 2005) of related concepts. Each open code was color coded to aid in the data analysis and in theme development based on parent responses. The following categorical themes were established based on parent interview responses: (a) parental appreciation, (b) parental barriers, (c) parental communication, (d) parental encouragement, (e) parental expectations, (f) parental interest, (g) parental support, (h) parental concerns about the school, (i) parental expectations of the school, and (j) parental views of support from the school. An example of a coded interview transcription may be found in Appendix K. The interview data support the parent survey data, which further enhances the quality of my study.

Qualitative Data Results

In the first interview question parents were asked what has helped them become involved in their child's educational progress. All five sets of Latino parents of students in the top quartile indicated a need to be involved in their children's high school education. Parent responses centered on taking an interest in their students' educational experiences, showing parental support, and communicating with them about what they are doing at school. One parent stated, "Being in communication with him, participate of what he does at school, knowing what he doesn't do, knowing how he feels, his interests, and being at the top of, being in communication." Another stated, "Coming constantly to the school and knowing how he is doing, what is he doing, and what he is doing wrong." One mother indicated parental involvement also includes supporting her daughter in extracurricular activities (i.e., sports participation) the high school offers. Every parent of

students in the bottom quartile all mentioned how supportive the school is when it comes to having bilingual personnel, particularly in the school's offices, available so Spanish speaking parents can better communicate about their students' education and how they are doing in school. One mother stated, "I think the best help has been the bilingual personnel at the high school." Another said, "There are people who speak two languages at school. I like that very much. It makes it easier for me to come to the school, and they always give me good attention." Another parent offered, "It has helped me that I can come to school at any moment and ask about anything. The school can communicate with me in my language if I cannot speak English well."

In the second interview question parents were asked what roles or responsibilities parents should have in the school relationship. Parents of students in the top quartile talked about the parenting role as one of providing support and encouragement. One parent stated,

> The responsibilities that we parents should have, I think support them, our sons and daughters, impel them day to day, and instill them that they should go to school and not miss out. And as parents, be there for them when we can in their activities.

Two sets of parents described this role as being a "50-50" or a "shared commitment" between parents and the school. However, 3 of the 5 parents from the top quartile indicated that their children's education begins at home. One mother stated, "Absolutely, it is a shared commitment in my view point. We need to, as parents, first of all, involve ourselves in our kids' education. Of course, also support the school, but for me, education begins at home." Another parent indicated, "I think it is a shared commitment; you get

your primary education at home, and the school is a support, but your main education is at home." One father added,

> It is a shared commitment, and some people say it goes 50-50, but I believe parents should bear a little more. I think the school does more than enough by educating them in academics, so we should put an extra effort there.

Comments from parents of students in the bottom quartile shared the same messages: a parent as a supporter, offering encouragement, and it is not just the teacher or school's responsibility to hold students to a certain level of academic expectations. One mother shared,

> No, it's a shared task, both of the teachers and parents. It is a responsibility of the teachers and, more importantly, the parents I imagine, to check homework, the education of our kids, and I think it is responsibility of both."

One mother indicated,

> It is a compromise of watching over your children. Asking how they are doing with their homework, knowing if they have a special homework or a special project. It is not just the teacher's responsibility, it is the parent's responsibility as well – that way they will get better grades and show progress in school.

Another mother stated,

> I think it is a shared commitment because we have to educate our children at home. We have to advise them at home, and the teachers are helping us at school with their education. As parents, we always need to know what's going on with them. We should call the school on a regular basis just to know how they are doing and if they are indeed at school.

One mother expressed her concern about her inability to control her children because she is a single mother raising several children, which diminishes her role in supporting her children with their school work.

Parents were asked in Question 3 to indicate the ways in which the high school can increase their level of involvement in their children's education? Four of the five parents with children in the top quartile all indicated that the school is doing enough already. Having bilingual office staff to assist non-English speaking parents, Ed-line for parents to check their students' academic progress online, and teachers who make themselves readily available to parent questions and concerns are already offered by the school. One parent may have summed up the other parents' comments in these words,

> Well, they already have many ways to help us, like having bilingual people to help us when we come to a meeting or come to talk about our kids with the teachers, and other people from the school. Yes, all types of things.

Parents with students in the bottom quartile indicated that the school is currently doing a good job of involving parents, which is in agreement with top quartile parent responses. One mother stated, "Well, right now, I think that what the school has is perfect. They have activities for the parents and kids. I don't have one right now, but if I did, I could share it with you." Another mother shared,

> I think they do it when we have meetings or when they call us to let us know that they are having a problem in certain subject or when they spend some evening at the school. That would be the way of interacting with the teachers, asking about their progress, and what is the reason of the failure. We should be in contact with the teachers.

Two parents offered suggestions such as offering more field trips to enrich students' educational experience and simplifying computer generated attendance reports that are mailed home so they are easier for parents to understand. One mother suggested that the school should expand its office hours so staff members are more accessible to parents who often times cannot visit or call the school during her work hours.

In Question 4 parents were invited to share the activities they do at home to help and support their children's high school education. Two parents indicated they don't need to do much to support their children because they are already responsible, motivated, and committed to their high school education. Three parents discussed the importance of communicating and having regular conversations at home to monitor their children's educational progress. One father offered,

> The communication—making sure they do their homework. I talk to Juan (pseudonym) and my other children about the school—how school used to be when I was a student and what I used to do. I give them examples and tell them that studying in Mexico is more difficult because the support, the relationship between teachers, and school here for me is there are plenty of opportunities here.

A mother and father also commented on the importance of communication regarding their daughter's progress at school. They said, "Yes, we talk about everything that is happening, the news, and we share our opinions." Two mothers of students in the bottom quartile stated they do not get very involved in their children's schooling at home because neither of them speaks English. One mother shared, "We don't do that because of the language issue. Sometimes I would ask about their homework, but I am unable to help because of the language—because of the English." Another mother said,

> I haven't been able to teach them any subject because I don't speak English. I only taught them how to speak Spanish. I cannot help my children with their school work. When I ask them if they have any homework they always tell me no. They did it at school. I know this isn't always the case.

Another mother shared that their family has leisure time together and she always

asks them after they get home from school if they have any homework. She gets around the language barrier when she wants to help her children with homework by asking other people in their church congregation to assist her children with their English homework.

In the last interview question parents were asked if there are any barriers or obstacles that prevent them from being more involved in their children's education. Across the board, parents of students in both the top and bottom quartiles indicated that their work schedules and the language barrier are the two biggest obstacles that affect their level of involvement in their children's high school education. One parent with a student in the top quartile shared,

> Well, in my case, language has been very very important and difficult for me in order that I get involved as much as I would like in my son's education. Thankfully though the school also gives us support in translating and through this, we can express ourselves, but definitely if I knew English, I think that it would be better still for me and my family.

A parent with a student in the lower quartile offered similar concerns,

> Well, that would be the language. It is not easy to talk to people, professional people like you. It is not easy to understand the language. I am making an effort. I am going to school to learn English. I know just a little bit, but I need more practice.

A top quartile parent presented the following comments about the work barrier,

> Well, work sometimes, because sometimes one works and cannot assist one's kids' activities due to time conflict with work, or sometimes one is tired. Some parents work two jobs so even if they want to, they cannot attend. Another very important thing is that sometimes there is not enough communication between parents and their kids. I am fortunate, not daily, but my daughter tells me how her day went, or I ask and she tells me how her day was, what she learned, and in whatever I can help her. If she needs to go somewhere, I take her, and in that way, like I tell her, I can help you out.

One mother and father with a child in the bottom quartile indicated that not only is the language barrier an issue, but their own lack of education makes it difficult to assist their daughter in the American school system.

> Mainly the language, English, because I speak Spanish, so that would be one of the barriers. We can't communicate when it's about the educational level. There are parents coming from Mexico, like us, and we don't have the educational level. They would ask us to help them solving a problem and we can't help because we don't have the knowledge to be able to help.

A father and mother with a student in the bottom quartile also described how their schedule keeps them away from home in the evenings. "Sometimes my schedule doesn't match with their schedule. We would work in the morning, we would rest in the mornings, and we would work in the evenings. You get home at night and you don't get to see them."

Two parents in the bottom quartile pointed out that a barrier they have is that their personal and work schedules do not align with the school's schedule. One mother remarked, "Well, everyone's gone after 3:00, so I can never get a hold of anyone. I got a call the other day, and I called back, but she wasn't there anymore, and so, if, maybe some had a cell phone." Another stated,

> My biggest problem is I work all of the time when the school is open. It is very difficult for me to communicate with the school because they have all gone home by the time I am off of work. At least it would be important to be able to talk with someone at the school in the late afternoon in person or by phone once per week. The school is closed when I get home. When working, we can't do this.

A parent of a child in the top quartile also expressed this same concern. A father indicated, "Instead of closing the office at 3:00, maybe we could hold it longer because the parents have a different schedule."

Parents were given the opportunity at the end of the interview questioning to add any additional comments. Parents from both quartiles added, overall, they are pleased with the education the faculty and staff at the school is providing their children. Parents were also appreciative of having an opportunity to sit down for this interview and share their views. One mother of a student in the bottom quartile commented, "I think what you are doing is great. I really liked it. I like what you are doing, and I am glad that he (the principal) is doing this research. I hope everything goes well with it." Another mother of a child in the bottom quartile expressed her appreciation for what staff members at the school are doing to support his son's education,

> I am very happy because right now I had problems with my son, Miguel (pseudonym), which is here right now. They are helping me a lot with him. After he gets out of class, Mrs. Espinoza (pseudonym) is helping me with him, and he is improving very much, so I am satisfied. If I have any ideas, I will share them with you with complete trust.

Two parents of children in the top quartile shared similar feelings. "I want to thank you for the opportunity that you are giving me to be able to express what I feel like a mother." Another mother stated, "I wanted to thank the principal and all the teachers because I really appreciate what they do for my kids and for other students. They wouldn't be able to progress without them."

One mother of a student in the top academic quartile expressed her concern regarding whether classes are rigorous enough for her son.

> Sometimes teachers, through the process of trying to help, get stalled a bit and sometimes the classes are not very competitive. The classes are very important in my opinion. I think that if the classes were made to be at a level more competitive, then the kids will put in more effort. Sometimes what happens is that those that are behind fall even further behind and then it's almost impossible

> to catch up to others at the competitive level. It is there that the teacher has to do their job, of course, along with the parents.

As was presented in the parent survey results, the one area within the nine characteristics of high performing schools (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2003) in which there was a greater difference in the survey responses between parents with students in the top and bottom quartiles was in the area of high standards and expectations.

Summary

In this mixed methods study parent survey results and interview responses were analyzed to determine if there was a marked difference between the attitudes, perceptions, and level of involvement of Latino parents and their children's degree of academic achievement in an urban high school with a high Latino population. Survey and interview responses were used to answer the research questions stated at the beginning of this chapter.

Cumulative grade point averages of Latino students were used to identify high and low academic achieving students and to establish top and bottom quartiles. The mean cumulative GPA of students in the top quartile was 3.6295 as compared to students in the bottom quartile, low achieving students which was 1.7783. However, parent survey responses were very similar between the two quartiles. The mean survey response was 3.9861 for parents with children in the top quartile and 3.8900 for parents with children in the bottom quartile. The only significant difference in parent survey responses was in the category of high expectations and standards. Pearson's product-moment correlation, comparing the dependent variable (student GPA) and independent variables (parental attitudes, perceptions, and involvement), was .085.

Parent interview responses were also similar and supported the parent survey findings. Parents with children from both quartiles commented on the importance of being involved in their children's high school educational experiences. Common barriers stated by both groups of parents included work schedules, language difficulties, and the lack of their own education as affecting their level of involvement in their children's high school education.

Further discussion and interpretation of the findings will be presented in chapter 5. The findings will be analyzed relative to the literature collected on the topic including the conceptual theoretical framework and the research questions established for the study. Conclusions as well as recommendations for action and for further study will be presented as well. Implications from this study that may contribute to positive social change will also be discussed.

SECTION 5:

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this mixed methods study was to analyze the relationship between the attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement among Latino parents, and the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. Barriers that currently impede Latino parental involvement from their perspective were also identified. The study involved collecting 58 parent surveys of senior students identified as high and low achieving based on scholastic achievement indicators established for this study. The study also included conducting ten interviews of Latino parents from the same sample to further clarify the attitudes, perceptions, and barriers they perceived as negatively affecting their involvement in their children's high school education. In addition, strategies and recommendations for strengthening the parent-school partnership were drawn from the data.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, research questions, hypotheses, findings, recommendations, recommendations for future research, and conclusions. In addition, implications from this study that may contribute to positive social change will also be discussed.

The following research questions were used to gather data from the parent surveys and interviews:

1. Do parental attitudes and perceptions in regards to their children's educational experiences in an urban high school have any effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?

2. Does the level of parental involvement at the high school level, both in and out of the school building, have any kind of effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?
3. Are there specific barriers Latino parents perceive as having a negative effect on student academic achievement in an urban high school with a high Latino population?
4. What suggestions do Latino parents have for educators to more productively involve them in their children's high school education?
5. Do parents of Latino students feel encouraged by school employees to participate in their children's education? If so, in what ways?

In order to obtain answers to these five questions, three hypotheses were established for this study:

HO^1 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^1 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes and perceptions, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^2 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^2 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the level of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HO^3 There is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement. and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

HA^3 There is a statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, the form of parental involvement, and the dependent variable, Latino student academic achievement in high school.

Summary of the Study

In this study I have attempted to help educators better understand the Latino culture as it pertains to the role of parents and children in the process of education and identify specific ways in which parental involvement contributes to Latino student academic achievement. I also sought to augment the body of research in this area so that all students, regardless of ethnicity or socioeconomic status, are prepared for college or career after the successful completion of high school.

Permission to conduct this study was granted by the school district's Public Policy, Accountability, and Assessment Office (PPA&A). Previous written permission by the CEE was given to use the copyrighted parent survey. Parent consent forms were provided in both English and Spanish versions for participant signatures.

The sample population for this study was limited to Latino parents with children who attend an urban high school in the western United States and are members of the

senior graduating class of 2010. Based on student academic achievement data indicators (cumulative GPAs, HSPE exit exam results, and number of classes failed during high school), students were placed into four quartiles. Eighty-one parents were offered an opportunity to participate in the survey. Fifty-eight parents (33 parents in the top quartile and 25 parents from the bottom quartile) actually participated in the Parent v2.2 Survey developed by the CEE. The CEE survey results reported Latino parent responses in eight categories based on common characteristics of high performing schools (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2003). Survey results were analyzed and presented using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient Statistical Test (Gravetter, 2005; Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005) and cross-tabulation.

Following the quantitative data collection, five sets of parents from both the top and bottom quartiles were randomly selected from the same sample population to participate in semi structured interviews, which gave parents a voice in this study. Parents were asked six open-ended questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) designed to elicit responses that relate to Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence in the six types of parental involvement model (STPI; Brandt, 1989; Epstein, 1995; Piper, 2005). To assure accuracy of the interview data, each interview was audio taped, translated, transcribed immediately after the interviews, and coded based on parent responses.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

The first question asked, "Do parental attitudes and perceptions in regards to their children's educational experiences in an urban high school have any effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?"

In this question I addressed whether parental attitudes and perceptions in regards to their children's educational experiences in an urban high school have any effect on the academic achievement of Latino students. As Delgado Gaitan (2004), Quicho and Daoud (2006), and Ramirez (2003) pointed out in the literature review, one common belief of administrators and teachers is that parents of Latino students are not really interested in their children's education. However, the research of Quicho and Daoud and others (Gorski, 2008; Grant & Wong, 2004, Pérez Carreón et al., 2005) has helped dispel this myth and demonstrated that, in fact, parents of Latino students actually do have high expectations for their children's education and want to participate in their academic success and moral development.

In the current study, the CEE survey results reported Latino parent responses in eight categories based on common characteristics of high performing schools (Marzano, 2003; Shannon & Bylsma, 2003). The characteristics are: clear and shared focus; high standards and expectations; effective school leadership; collaboration, communication, and community; parent and community involvement; supportive learning environment; frequent monitoring of teaching and learning; and high quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Parent survey data were disaggregated separately by top and bottom quartiles as well as a comparative analysis of both quartiles. Based on the quantitative

data collected from survey results, the mean parent responses for the top quartile (academically high achieving students) was 3.99 while the mean parent responses for the bottom quartile (academically low achieving students) was 3.89 on a 5.0 scale. The findings in this study support the research work of Quicho and Daoud (2006), Grant and Wong (2004), and Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) that the greater majority of Latino parents do have positive perceptions and beliefs and want to be involved as much as possible in their children's high school education. According to the data from this study, this point held true regardless of students' academic achievement status.

Based on the mean responses and cross tabulation of parent survey responses from this study, not only did most of the Latino parents see value in their children's education, even parents of low achieving students indicated an interest and want them to be successful in school. Pearson's product-moment correlation data and cross tabulation of parent survey responses, comparing the dependent variable (student GPA) and independent variables (parental attitudes, perceptions, and involvement), validated these data. Findings showed that there was not a significant correlation between the two variables ($r = .085$). For there to have been a significant correlation between the two variables, the critical value for the Pearson correlation with a degrees of freedom of 56 ($df = n - 2$) and an alpha level of .05 for a one-tailed test, r had to equal .221 (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2005). Therefore, the null hypothesis, *there is no statistically significant relationship between the independent variable, parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement*, could not be rejected. In other words, these data showed that parents from both quartiles answered the survey questions similarly regardless of their children's current academic achievement level.

The Pearson's product-moment correlation data were also validated in the cross tabulation of the parent survey data. Only in one category of the eight in the survey, *high standards and expectations*, was there a noticeable difference in the attitudes and perceptions between parents in the top and bottom quartiles. Survey items in this category included: *I understand the expectations and standards of this school*; *My child is challenged with a rigorous, ambitious course of study at this school*; *This school believes and expects that all students can meet state standards*; *My child understands the expectations and standards of this school*; *Teachers have high expectations for student learning at this school*; and *Teachers in this school are dedicated to helping all students succeed*. With the exception of the first item listed above, parents of students in the top quartile responded an average of 22.4 percentage points higher than that of the parents in the bottom quartile. This finding would imply that parents of students in the upper quartile have a more favorable opinion that the school and its teachers are providing a rigorous and challenging curriculum based on high student expectations. Of note, 100% of parents in the top quartile responded that their children understand the expectations and standards of this school.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked, "Does the level of parental involvement at the high school level, both in and out of the school building, have any kind of effect on the academic achievement of Latino students?" Jeynes (2007) examined the effects of parental involvement by race and socioeconomic status in his 52-study meta-analysis. His findings indicated that the influence of parental involvement overall is significant for secondary school children. The positive effects of parental involvement apply for both

White and minority secondary school children. Jeynes (2007) further stated that in urban areas, in particular, parental involvement may be even more important due to factors in the home environment such as high family dissolution rates, numerous two-parent working families, and unique sociological pressures on children. Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) also cited factors wherein parental involvement may play a positive role in academic achievement among Latino students including: parents engaging with children in learning activities at home, provide for basic needs, communicate regularly with the school, and offset the sometimes negative impacts of poverty or cultural barriers as a means of preventing students from dropping out of school. Ingram et al. (2007) looked at survey data collected from parents whose children attended three Chicago public elementary schools that serve minority, low-income populations and suggested that schools struggling with unsatisfactory student achievement may benefit from focusing on parental involvement efforts that build parenting capacity and encourage learning-at-home activities.

Although Ingram et al. (2007) focused on parents of elementary school children, there may be merit to their findings as to the potential benefits of parental involvement at the high school level as well, particularly among minority and low-income populations. Ramirez (2003) analyzed benefits of Latino parental involvement in their children's education such as sustained gains in academic achievement, enhanced English language skills, increased student cognitive growth, improved student behavior in school, and enhanced home-school relationships. He concluded that parental involvement was important to produce more favorable attitudes toward school, and enhanced self-esteem.

Auerbach (2006) also demonstrated the pivotal role Latino parental involvement plays in encouraging children to attend college.

Survey data from my study support the research of Ingram et al. (2007), Jeynes (2007), and Ramirez (2003). I learned that parents of high achieving Latino students responded more positively to survey items in the category *high standards and expectations*. Parents of students in the top academic quartile rated the school as having higher standards of expectations as compared to students in the lower quartile. In the area of *high levels of collaboration and communication*, high academic achieving students' parents gave the school more favorable ratings to the following two survey items: *I am informed about what is going on at this school*, and *it is easy to communicate with this school*. These findings imply that parents of high academic achieving students feel more involved in what is happening at the high school and feel comfortable communicating with school personnel. However, in contrast, parents of low achieving children responded with more favorable ratings in the category *high levels of parent and community involvement*. Based on these findings, parents of top quartile students appear to be more informed as to what is happening at the school, but may not know how they can be more formally involved. In addition, it could be that although the top quartile parents are not physically present in the building, they stay well informed from home about happenings at the school and monitor their children's academic status from home. Both quartiles of parents responded favorably when asked if they feel welcome to visit this school at any time. This finding has positive connotations in that unless parents feel welcome and respected when they visit the school, they are less likely to visit. By not visiting a school

parents can affect their students' academic achievement if parental involvement is tied to student academic success as these findings indicate.

When parents were asked during the interview process ways the school could help increase their involvement in their children's high school education, 4 of the 5 parents of students in the top quartile already expressed that the school is doing enough with its present practices to encourage more parental involvement. This statement has implications that parents in the top quartile likely perceive themselves as already being involved in their children's high school educational experiences. Parents from both quartiles offered five suggestions to encourage Latino parental involvement at school: (a) continue to provide bilingual staff to assist non-English speaking parents, (b) continue to provide Ed-Line so parents can check their students' academic progress online, (c) consider simplifying some district and school forms that are sent home so they are easier to understand from a parent's perspective, (d) distribute district and school forms in Spanish, and (e) continue to encourage teachers to maintain open communication with parents in order to answer their questions and address their concerns.

Based on parent responses to question 2 regarding what roles or responsibilities parents should have in the parent-school partnership, both quartiles of parents held themselves responsible for supporting their children and offering them encouragement. They concurred that it is not just the teacher's or the school's responsibility to initiate parental involvement. Parents from both quartiles indicated that a child's education begins in the home. Based on these findings, it appears that schools could better take advantage of parental attitudes in this area and develop strategies that parents can use at

home to better support their children's academic progress, particularly at the high school level where it is less likely parents may actually volunteer in the school building.

Research Question 3

The third research question asked, "Are there specific barriers Latino parents perceive as having a negative effect on student academic achievement in an urban high school with a high Latino population?" Ingram et al. (2007) and Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) described the challenge that many Latino parents face when it comes not only adjusting to the U.S. culture in general, but also in learning the American school system. When parents do not understand the education system, it is hard for them to participate in decision making (Ingram et al., 2007). Pérez Carreón et al. (2005) described the following barriers that Latino parents face with children in U.S. public schools: (a) limited knowledge of American school cultures, (b) limited understanding of the curriculum and organization of schools, and (c) lack of awareness of their rights as parents, all of which may inhibit them from asking questions or providing input about their children's schooling. De Gaetno (2007) also listed several barriers to Latino parent interaction with schools: (a) a mistrust of large bureaucracies, (b) dramatic differences between what is expected of parents in the United States and the parents' countries of origin, (c) negative attitudes of school administration and school personnel toward Latino parents, and (d) lack of personnel who speak the parents' language. DePlanty et al. (2007) also included Latino parents' responses as to what they perceived as barriers in the school environment to the academic achievement of their children. They listed five barriers: (a) lack of help for their children and themselves so students learn the academic content, (b) the need for improved communication via timely and frequent

communication between school and family, (c) lack of respect for their children by teachers and other staff members, (d) lack of access to the core or grade-level curriculum, and (e) lack of a partnership with the school to support student learning, including making resources available to parents to help their children.

Parental interview responses from both quartiles in my study regarding barriers indicated that there are two: (a) their work schedules and (b) the inability to speak the English language. These findings directly and indirectly support the literature just cited by De Gaetno (2007), DePlanty et al. (2007), Ingram et al. (2007), and Pérez Carreón et al. (2005). Two parents stated that they can never contact the school during its hours of operation because they are not allowed to use the telephone on the job or, by the time they get off work, school personnel have gone home. Eight of the ten sets of Latino parents interviewed stated their inability to speak fluent English makes it hard for them to be very involved in their students' education at home and at school for that matter. Though language is a barrier for many Latino parents when it comes to communicating with the school, many parents of students attending this high school were grateful that the school has at least one bilingual person in every office to help Spanish speaking parents to better communicate with the school regarding their children's education.

A third barrier discussed during the interviews was the parents' own lack of education when it comes to being able to assist their children with homework. One mother and father indicated that, in addition to not being able to speak English, their lack of education makes it difficult for them to assist their daughter. They stated:

> We can't communicate when it's about the educational level. There are parents coming from Mexico, like us, and we don't have the educational level. They would ask us to help them solving a

> problem and we can't help because we don't have the knowledge to be able to help.

Another mother had a similar comment, "Sometimes Ana (pseudonym) asks me—for example, Spanish classes—'Ana, this is the proper way to write it.' 'No, but the teacher said I should do it this way.'"

These barriers, as well as others cited in the literature, need to be addressed by school personnel if schools are going to be able to maximize parental involvement in order to better support their children in high school. Keeping the school open for extended hours to better meet parents' work schedules, offering survival English classes for parents that can help them better understand the language associated with their children's schooling so they can better communicate with the school, and providing resources for parents who cannot help their children due to the language barrier (i.e., before school, after school, or Saturday tutoring by school personnel and peer tutors) are a few ideas that can enhance parental involvement at the high school level as a result of this study.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question asked, "What suggestions do Latino parents have for educators to more productively involve them in their children's high school education?" Based on the barriers that Latino parents identified in research question 3, they were asked what suggestions they had for educators to more productively involve them in their children's high school education. Their responses are presented next.

Two parents shared that their work schedules interfere with their ability to contact or visit the school during school hours. Parents from both quartiles indicated that perhaps

administrators should extend the hours of operation and schedule staff for different hours such as the late afternoon or early evening hours so parents can more easily communicate with the school. As one parent stated, “Instead of closing the office at 3:00, maybe we could hold it longer because parents have a different schedule.” Parents shared their frustration that when they attempt to initiate contact with the school in the late afternoon or return a teachers’ telephone call, many times they get the school answering machine message indicating that the school office is closed. By providing a small number of office employees who will staff key offices until 4:30 or 5:00 p.m., schools can help parents who work during the traditional school day have the opportunity to talk to someone in the late afternoon.

At least half of the parents interviewed stated how appreciative they were that the high school has bilingual office staff in its attendance office, main office, discipline office, and administration office to assist non-English speaking parents. Therefore, another parent recommendation is that schools with high numbers of Spanish speaking parents staff their offices with bilingual employees whenever possible, particularly in those offices that are first contacts for parents when they call or visit.

Parents shared that the Ed-line grade check program has been a helpful means for them to check their students’ academic progress online. Teachers’ practice of making themselves available to respond to parents’ questions and concerns and responding to them in a timely manner were also mentioned by parents as ways that help their children, particularly when they are struggling in one or more classes. Lastly, one parent of a child in the bottom quartile expressed her displeasure with the confusing wording in some of the school forms and information pieces. This mother was particularly concerned about a

student attendance report that the school sends home. Based on the parents' data in this study, it appears that if schools want parents to read what they send home, schools and districts should produce more user-friendly materials by using a wider audience to review them prior to their distribution. Parents also stated that they appreciate it when teachers or counselors contact them via a telephone conversation or invite them to school for a meeting when it appears their children are struggling academically.

As De Gaetano (2007) and Grant and Wong (2004) cautioned, Latino parental involvement cannot be measured only by whether parents are physically present in the school building. In fact, as Ingram et al. (2007) noted in their research, volunteering and attending school events, while they may have merit, may be practices that have little positive effect on student academic achievement, especially in high school. Therefore, schools should possibly consider offering parenting classes to discuss more informal practices that may have a greater impact on student achievement at the high school level. The practices to present might include: encouraging parents to ask their children how their day in school was, checking if students have homework, and providing a home environment that supports student learning. These suggestions, as well as schools doing their best to eliminate the potential barriers Latino parents described in this study, have important implications for teachers, administrators, and staff members when it comes to supporting and encouraging Latino parental involvement at the high school level.

Research Question 5

The fifth research question asked, "Do parents of Latino students feel encouraged by school employees to participate in their children's education? If so, in what ways?" Four of the five parents in the top quartile indicated that the school is doing enough

already in offering support to them to be involved in their children's education. This viewpoint was echoed by parents of students in the bottom quartile as well. One parent with a child in the bottom quartile remarked, "Well, right now, I think that what the school has is perfect. They have activities for the parents and kids. I don't have one (a suggestion) right now, but if I did, I could share it with you."

Based on the survey data and parent interview responses, and regardless of student academic achievement standing, Latino parents in this study seem to have a positive perception of the importance of their children's education and want to be involved. These findings have important implications. School officials should not discount Latino parents' interests or concerns about their children's education or consider them indifferent or not caring. Gorski (2008), Grant and Wong (2004), Pérez Carreón et al. (2005), and Quiocho and Daoud (2006) cited research findings that immigrant parents do care deeply about their children's education. Therefore, school officials need to examine ways to remove any barriers that may interfere in their mission to support their children in school in order to strengthen the school-parent partnership.

Implications for Social Change

The overall contribution to positive social change that I believe this study offers is drawn from the data that indicate the impressions and recommendations of Latino parents. Their input suggests that meaningful parental involvement will not be achieved unless schools and families demonstrate mutual respect and depend on each other as equal partners in the education of all children. My study reaffirms findings from other studies (Gorski, 2008; Grant & Wong, 2004; Pérez Carreón et al., 2005; Quiocho &

Doud, 2006) that further help to dispel the myth held closely by some administrators and teachers that Latino parents are disengaged and indifferent when it comes to their children's education. To the contrary, Latino parents do care deeply about their children's education, but work schedules, language differences, and their own lack of an education can be barriers to them being more actively engaged in their children's education. The recommendations parents offered to help overcome these barriers need to be taken into consideration when school officials write parental involvement strategies into their annual school improvement plans. These recommendations can make high schools more accessible for Latino parents and by extension, the ideas can challenge school personnel to better understand and address the needs of their students' parents in an attempt to promote educational equity and positive social change.

Recommendations for Action

In this mixed methods study, I focused on Latino parents whose children attend an urban high school where approximately 60% of the school's population is Latino and approximately 60% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch prices. Both quantitative (i.e., parent survey) and qualitative (i.e., parent interviews) approaches were used to give voice to these parents' attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement. The recommendations listed in this study have implications for district-level school officials, administrators, teachers, and staff members who seek to build a better partnership with Latino parents. In addition, the recommendations I offer can be used by schools to proactively address the barriers that parents identified in this study such as non-English speaking parents, parental work schedules, and parents' own lack of education and

systematically remove the barriers to encourage parental involvement both at home and in the school. Based on survey and interview data findings from this study, and the research of others cited in the literature review, I offer seven recommended actions to develop a stronger parent-school partnership among Latino families and schools.

Recommended Action #1: Reduce the Myths

The first recommendation centers around continuing to dismiss the myth many school employees have of Latino parents that they do not care about and are disengaged in their children's education (Delgado Gaitan, 2004; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Ramirez, 2003). My study data supports the research of Gorski (2008), Grant and Wong (2004), Pérez Carreón et al. (2005), and Quicho and Daoud (2006) in dispelling this myth. Based on the survey and interview data, parents of Latino students actually do care deeply about their children's high school education, have high expectations of them, and want to participate in their academic success and moral development. Parents of both high- and low-achieving students perceive a value in their children receiving a quality education. The challenge for school officials is to better define for Latino parents ways their involvement can support their children's high school education.

Recommended Action #2: Reduce the Physical Barriers

The second recommendation addresses what schools need to do to better overcome the language barrier that prevents Latino parents from being able to more effectively communicate with the school. In this study, parents pointed out during the interviews how grateful they are that their children's school provides a number of bilingual employees, particularly in its offices, to help overcome the language barrier. Since most high schools have more than one main office (i.e., administration office,

attendance office, discipline office, health clinic, etc.), those with high numbers of non-English speaking parents should consider having at least one bilingual staff member in each office so parents feel more inclined to call or visit the school as necessary when they have a need to communicate regarding their son's or daughter's education. In addition, the more administrators, teachers, and counselors who can speak Spanish, the better the communication can become between the school and parents. Bilingual personnel makes it possible to eliminate the third person, which helps make conversations with Spanish speaking parents more informal and authentic since there is a direct one-on-one conversation without the use of a translator.

Two parents suggested that schools should consider offering survival English classes for non-English speaking parents to help them develop a vocabulary centered on learning words that will help them discuss their children's educational progress with school staff members. They indicated that these classes can be more effective than school employees taking survival Spanish classes to better communicate with Spanish-speaking parents. This recommendation holds true at all grade levels, K-12. Another recommendation that can be used to address the language barrier is to produce and disseminate all written correspondence home (letters, announcements, parent newsletters, and forms) and to provide telephone messages in both English and Spanish.

Recommended Action #3: Adjust Office Hours

My study pointed out that many Latino parents' work schedules do not coincide with the school's traditional operating hours; therefore, parents in this study suggested that schools extend their office hours into the late afternoon or early evening because of their frustration with the traditional hours of operation. By extending office hours, school

employees can also attempt to make contacts with parents in the early evening when it is possible that more parents may be at home to improve parent-school communication. Schools should consider staggering employees' hours so not all office staff members report to work and leave at the same time. Quite possibly, one or two employees could come in two hours later so there is office coverage into the late afternoon and early evening in order to provide better customer service to Latino parents.

Recommended Action #4: Offer Support Services for Latino Families

A fourth recommendation I offer is to encourage parent involvement by providing both school and community support services for Latino families. Seventy-five percent of the parents who participated in this study were born in Mexico or other countries in Central or South America. Therefore, the education they received in schools they attended in their home countries differs from the American public school system their children attend. Approximately 50% of parents of Latino descent who participated in the interview portion of this study stated they only attended school through the sixth grade in their native country; 20% not even that. Given this possible educational gap in the parents, it is important for high schools in the United States with high Latino populations to make parents more aware of school and community support services available to them. A school could offer newcomer programs for new immigrant parents to orient them to the American public school system. Elizalde-Utnick (2010) recommended five services to assist Latino parents in the acculturation process: (a) free and reduced lunch programs for students who qualify to ensure good nutrition; (b) after school tutoring programs that provide homework support for students; (c) family involvement programs and parenting workshops; (d) English Second Language (ESL) classes for parents as well as translators;

and (e) materials that describe in Spanish the community, school, and culturally based social service agencies. One organization that might be replicated is the Parent School Partnership (PSP) program sponsored by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF). This organization educates parents about the tools to become effective in improving their children's educational attainment.

Recommended Action #5: Learn the Cultures of School Parents

A fifth recommendation to foster parental involvement is for school personnel to take the initiative to learn as much as they can to better understand the Latino culture or the predominant culture in their school. An increased understanding of Latino parent childrearing beliefs and their role in helping to educate their children is important for teachers, administrators, counselors, and other staff members. Elizalde-Utnick (2010) shared that a common belief of many Latino parents is that the family is responsible for *socializing* the child while the school is responsible for *educating* their children. Parents echoed this same sentiment in the data reported in this study. Respecting and having a better understanding of the Latino culture on behalf of school employees will facilitate collaboration and build bridges in promoting Latino parental involvement, even at the high school level. Latino students and parents are proud of their heritage. Schools should recognize and celebrate the Latino culture as being a valuable asset in the school community. Ramirez (2003) suggested that schools also need to view Latino parents as equal partners in their children's educational journey.

Recommended Action #6: Foster a Culture of Parental Involvement

The sixth recommendation I offer for high schools to facilitate better parental involvement, including Latino parental involvement, is to integrate and embed Epstein's

(1995) six types of parental involvement into its culture. The six types of involvement include: (a) helping families to establish a home environment that supports their children's education, (b) designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication, (c) recruiting parents' help and support, (d) providing ideas to parents about how to help and support their children's education at home, (e) empowering parents in school decisions, and (f) utilizing community resources to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning. In addition, as Grant and Wong (2004) shared, it is important that schools clearly define the role Latino parents are to play in their children's education.

Recommended Action #7: Teach Parents Strategies to Use at Home

Finally, since many Latino parents due to their work schedules cannot show their support by physical presence in high schools, I suggest that high schools provide parents with strategies that they can share with their children at home. DePlanty et al. (2007) offered these strategies: (a) ensuring that a child is at school on a consistent basis, (b) attending parent-teacher conferences (in person or by telephone), (c) regularly talking with their child about school, (d) checking on homework completion, (e) balancing school work and school activities, (f) balancing schoolwork and time with friends, (g) having a set time for homework, (h) limiting the amount of time a child watches television, and (i) reviewing a child's weekly planner.

Recommendations for Further Study

My study used quantitative approaches to measure attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement in high schools and qualitative methods to probe

specific parental concerns about school involvement. I offer six recommendations for further study. First, I suggest that this study be expanded to compare the attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement of high- versus low-achieving Latino students in other urban high schools in the school district. My study sample strictly focused on only 80 parents of current senior students in the class of 2010 who indicated they were of Latino descent based on school demographic data base information. Second, I suggest that the study be replicated in high schools in other parts of the country with similar population demographics, most notably, high Latino populations. A similar study sample could be used to determine if parental attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of involvement, and potential barriers identified in my study are replicated in other geographical regions of the country. Third, I suggest that additional or other student academic achievement data criteria be used to determine high- versus low-achieving students, including participation in honors classes, Advanced Placement (AP) classes, PSAT test scores, and SAT/ACT test scores. These data indicators are typical of high school students on an academic track to attend college. Would parents of high school seniors with students bound for college have answered the survey questions and interview questions differently than just using students' cumulative grade point averages, High School Proficiency Exam (HSPE) scores, and the total number of classes failed during their first six semesters in high school as the student academic achievement indicators as were used in my study? Fourth, I suggest that the study population be expanded beyond just the senior class that was the sample of focus in my study. Future studies should be expanded to include parents of underclassmen. Fifth, I suggest that the study be replicated to determine if there is a relationship between Latino parental attitudes, perceptions, level

of, and form of involvement based on the gender of the parent and/or the child. In other words, would conducting a similar study to mine, but disaggregating the data based on the gender of the parent or student change the outcome of the study results? Lastly, since the data for this study were collected in late 2009, future longitudinal studies should be conducted to determine the extent to which these findings may change over time.

Reflection

The findings in this study surprised me in a couple of ways and changed my thinking process as well as a few of my own preconceived notions in relationship to Latino parental involvement. Since the study data were gathered in the same high school in which I work, I learned firsthand more about the views of our Latino parents and how they view their involvement in their son's or daughter's high school education.

The first surprise related to the findings from the parent survey, which showed that there was no significant difference in the attitudes, perceptions, level of, and form of parental involvement between the two achievement groupings of Latino students. The other area that surprised me was the nature of the comments during the interview portion of the study. I was moved by the sentiments of appreciation that, as the principal of the school, I would take the time to listen to them express their views and concerns regarding their children's high school education. In addition, parents were also very candid and appeared to feel comfortable carrying on a dialogue with the help of a translator.

It is my hope that this research will help other educators to better understand the culture of Latino parents as it relates to their children's education at the high school level. I also hope that teachers and administrators will consider the recommendations presented

in order to better involve parents in their children's high school education in order to help strengthen the parent-school partnership between Latino families and schools.

Conclusion

In this study I attempted to better understand the Latino culture and how Latino parents view their role in supporting their children's high school education. Based on parent survey and interview responses, I learned that regardless of the level of student academic achievement, most Latino parents recognize the importance of and want to be more involved in their children's high school education. However, many of the parents were unsure about the steps to take in order to support their children's educational experiences. Barriers such as the inability to speak fluent English, long work hours, and the lack of their own education stifle Latino parental involvement in their children's education, including at the high school level. Schools need to consider the recommendations these parents offered in order to more effectively involve all parents in supporting their children's education. Schools can also offset some of these barriers by recognizing, honoring, and celebrating the Latino culture and by taking advantage of its rich traditions in our schools in order to enhance Latino parental involvement.

Meaningful parental involvement will not be achieved unless schools and families demonstrate mutual respect and depend on each other as equal partners in the education of all children. Both parents and schools are responsible for removing the barriers presented in my study to allow for meaningful participation and address the essential issue that will lead to educational reform—that all members of the school community share the core value of building and sustaining engagement with all families.

Empowering parents of all ethnic groups to be more involved in their children's education, including at the high school level, by incorporating the parent recommendations for greater parental involvement presented in my study is hopefully one more resource educators can use so that educational equity can be realized among all students.

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APPENDIX A:

Permission Letter To Use The Parent Survey

Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc.
Redmond, Washington

data–centric tools, research and educational services

April 7, 2009

Doug Parry
Walden University

Dear Mr. Parry;

It has come to my attention that you will be using the EES Parent Survey instrument from the Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (hereafter referred to as "The Center") in your current research for your personal doctoral project. In addition, you have requested the one-time use of the EES Parent data repository, owned by The Center, for research purposes contained within your doctoral project.

This letter is to acknowledge that you have been given permission, by the Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc., to use both the instrument and the data repository. By signing and returning this document, you guarantee that you are the only user of this instrument and the data contained within the data repository you will be sent. You also agree to share your findings with The Center and allow The Center to publish selections of your findings, as related to other work The Center is involved in, with proper accreditation given to you.

At the conclusion of your research, you will destroy all copies, electronic and otherwise, of the data repository and the EES Parent instrument.

The Center is very excited for your work and to see your results. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further needs. A part of our mission is to encourage research and disseminate findings to develop best practices in support of K-12 public education improvement.

Sincerely,

Sue Mills

Sue Mills, Executive Director

I agree to the above conditions as set forth by The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc.

Doug Parry _____ 4/14/09

Doug Parry Date

APPENDIX B:

Initial E-mail Correspondence
With The Center For Educational
Effectiveness, Inc. (CEE) To Use
The Parent Survey

To: Douglas Parry douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

From: Greg Lobdell Greg@effectivenessinstitute.com

CC: Karin Treiber karin.treiber@waldenu.edu

Subject: RE: Possible Use of Your Parent Survey for My Doctoral Study

Date: Tue, 17 Feb 2009

Doug,

My comments / answers are embedded within your questions – delineated with ">>>>".

By the way—use this email not the effectiveness.org email address – we have recently been having delivery issues with our .org email system.

Following are questions that we briefly discussed last Friday to recap what I am looking for in using your company to help me conduct my research:

1. I'm interested in using your Parent Edition Survey written in both English and Spanish. Is edition V2.0 that we used two years ago in the XXXXX County School District still the most current edition?

YES- v2.0 is the latest version we have with full translations (Spanish, Russian/Ukrainian, Punjab, Korean, and Vietnamese). NOTE—the Spanish translation was done by a WA State Certified Translator (i.e. certified to translate in legal proceedings in WA state and local courts). The translation was reviewed by a panel of experts from the Educational sector. Emphasis was on a translation of the Parent survey targeted at 6th grade literacy levels. Our research, district level research, and NCES/Census bureau data indicate a couple things. WA State's immigrant Latino population is approximate 90% from one specific Mexican state- Michoacán and surrounding

states. The Adult educational attainment is about 6.25 years – hence the target at grade 6 literacy levels for phrasing & vocabulary.

2. I am excited that your company will work with me as I complete my doctoral study!

We are as well. We open our systems and database to doc students frequently (this is one of our core values) and we have several underway right now.

3. I also wanted to reconfirm that you can provide me with data as to the reliability, validity, etc. that I will be required to provide in my study proposal and dissertation?

YES. Although the primary construct validity was based on external panel of experts—we still perform standard internal statistics (such as Cronbach's Alpha for Scale Reliability).

4. Will you be able to collect and disaggregate the data and provide me with both a hard copy and a CD of the results like you did two years ago when your company worked with our school district?

YES—we will send you an XL spreadsheet with explanations for data entry—which we are assuming that since this is pro bono you will be doing the data entry. You return the spreadsheet to us and we will run the reports.

We operate as a non-profit—so if you want us to do the data entry there's a $25 / 100 surveys cost (just a pass through of our data entry cost). We do HAND data entry – so often we get non-English parent surveys back with Pen, pencil, el-marko, crayola…etc and we want to honor their time and not throw out any responses.

5. It will be important that we can code the parent surveys in order to keep those students' parents identified in the top quartile of academic achievement separate from those students' parents identified in the bottom quartile of academic achievement. Any thoughts on how we can assure this? However, at NO TIME do I want to identify an actual student or parent's name with the survey for both confidentiality and ethical purposes.

My recommendation: We encode something ON the survey that indicates Top Quartile or Bottom – implying you will have TWO identical surveys with different identifiers. For example—in the "Top Quartile" Survey we add "TQ" to the version number at the bottom of the page. We add "BQ" (for bottom quartile) to the version number for the others. You then have to make sure get the right survey to the right subset of your sample but that should be manageable. As and alternative—you could use different color paper for copying each survey (remember that the impact of color selection is different across cultures).

6. What will be the approximate turn around time from the time I return the surveys to you and I will receive the data with the results?

If you do data entry it is one day after we get the spreadsheet back. If we do it—10 working days from when we receive the paper surveys you will have reports.

7. What am I looking at from an approximate cost standpoint to use your survey and have you collect and disaggregate the data?

Use of the survey for doctoral students is at no cost. As I mentioned above—if we do the data entry it is $25 per 100 surveys. We'll run you one full color copy of the report and provide electronic reports on CD in PPT and Acrobat format at no cost. The work we are all doing in public education is too valuable to not encourage advanced studies.

8. As we talked on Friday, I would also be very interested in looking at accessing some of the data in your repository as to the results of Latino parent surveys you have conducted in Washington and Idaho in communities where there is a high population of Latinos. I feel this additional data will add credibility to my study since I can compare the survey results in my locale with data from other states. This will also be another valuable resource of data to compare my study results to that of previous research that other researchers have collected in this area as cited in the literature.

Our Parent repository for the western states currently stands at just under 300,000 guardians/parents with approx 31% in homes where English is not the primary language. For this "Not English at home" group—approximately 90% speak Spanish at home. We can make all or part of this available for research purposes – first step is to get you our information sharing and non-disclosure agreement; will drop one in the mail ASAP.

Let me know if you have further questions. Regards,

Greg Lobdell • DIRECTOR OF Research

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, INC.
Partners in Improving School Performance
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Redmond, WA 98052
T: 425.283.0384 ext 2#
F: 425.747.0439
E: greg@effectiveness.org
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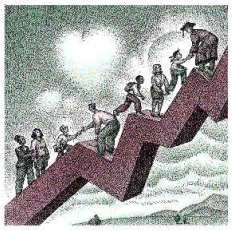
APPENDIX C:

Center For Educational Effectiveness
2003 Parent Edition V2.0 Survey
(English)

Educational Effectiveness Survey™

Parent Edition V2.0



Within a school there are certain practices and characteristics that affect student learning and the overall performance of the school. To change or improve, it is first necessary to understand what is happening in your school. Parents are a critical link in the educational process. Your feedback will help us ensure that we provide the best possible education for your child.

This survey is confidential and anonymous.

Marking Instructions

- ➔ Use pen or pencil
- ➔ Make solid marks that fill in the response completely
- ➔ Erase cleanly any marks you wish to change
- ➔ Leave BLANK any questions you don't have an opinion on

Think about the following statements and decide to what degree you think each statement is ALMOST ALWAYS TRUE, OFTEN TRUE, SOMETIMES TRUE, SELDOM TRUE, or ALMOST NEVER TRUE in your school.

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Seldom True	Almost Never True
This school communicates with me about my child's progress	○	○	○	○	○
This school's mission/purpose is regularly shared with all parents	○	○	○	○	○
I am comfortable expressing my ideas or concerns to this school's administrators	○	○	○	○	○
The staff demonstrate commitment to the mission/purpose of this school	○	○	○	○	○
Important decisions are based upon the mission/purpose of this school	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the expectations and standards of this school	○	○	○	○	○
The principal at this school is active and involved in our community	○	○	○	○	○
The principal at this school is easy to access	○	○	○	○	○
My child is challenged with a rigorous, ambitious course of study at this school	○	○	○	○	○
This school believes and expects that all students can meet state standards	○	○	○	○	○
Parents and school personnel at this school talk respectfully with one another	○	○	○	○	○
The principal or other administrators at this school listen to my ideas/concerns	○	○	○	○	○
My child understands the expectations and standards of this school	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers have high expectations for student learning at this school	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the mission/purpose of this school.	○	○	○	○	○
Parents are involved in the decision making process at this school	○	○	○	○	○
Teachers in this school are dedicated to helping all students succeed	○	○	○	○	○
I am informed about what is going on at this school	○	○	○	○	○
School employees are respectful and courteous of one another	○	○	○	○	○
When appropriate, I am encouraged to be a part of problem solving at this school	○	○	○	○	○
Additional help is available to my child if he/she needs it	○	○	○	○	○
This school is doing a good job of preparing students for a successful future	○	○	○	○	○
When I share concerns with my child's teacher, he/she listens	○	○	○	○	○

	Almost Always True	Often True	Sometimes True	Seldom True	Almost Never True
This school provides a caring/supportive environment for my child	O	O	O	O	O
It is easy to communicate with this school	O	O	O	O	O
This school has clear behavior rules that are consistently applied to all students	O	O	O	O	O
Struggling students receive early intervention and additional help at this school	O	O	O	O	O
My child feels safe at school	O	O	O	O	O
This school is orderly and supports learning	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers accommodate my child's special needs by adjusting instruction	O	O	O	O	O
Parents have input into the school improvement planning process	O	O	O	O	O
My child's teacher informs me, in a timely manner, of the expectations of my child	O	O	O	O	O
I am given opportunities to discuss my child's progress at school	O	O	O	O	O
I am encouraged to collaborate with my child's teachers about my child's learning	O	O	O	O	O
Most of the students at this school are well behaved	O	O	O	O	O
In this school, time is spent doing work that students find useful and interesting	O	O	O	O	O
Teachers in this school provide students with a variety of learning opportunities	O	O	O	O	O
I know many ways that I can be involved in this school	O	O	O	O	O
Parents and families participate in important decisions about their children's education	O	O	O	O	O
This school respects the different cultures represented in our community	O	O	O	O	O
This school schedules events at times convenient for parents	O	O	O	O	O
This school celebrates student success	O	O	O	O	O
I feel welcome to visit this school at any time	O	O	O	O	O
This school has activities to celebrate different cultures, including mine	O	O	O	O	O
This school communicates effectively to all families	O	O	O	O	O
My child learns about the cultures of our community at his or her school	O	O	O	O	O

Please take a moment and tell us a little about yourself. This information is OPTIONAL.
This information will help us better serve the needs of your child.

Is English Your Primary Language at Home?
- O YES
- O NO

Is your child in a special program?
- O Special Education Program
- O English Language Learner Program
- O No program
- O Other

What is Your Ethnicity?
- O African-American
- O American Indian / Alaskan Native
- O Asian/Pacific Islander
- O Hispanic (Latino/Latina)
- O White - Caucasian
- O Multi-racial
- O Other

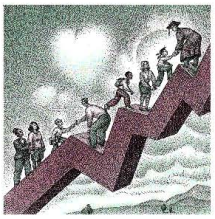
Name of Your School?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

APPENDIX D

Center For Educational Effectiveness
2003 Parent Edition V2.0 SU
(Spanish)

9 Características de Escuelas con Desempeño Superior
Encuesta para Padres



Dentro de la escuela hay ciertas prácticas y características que influyen en el aprendizaje del estudiante y en el desempeño general de la escuela. Para cambiar o mejorar, primero es necesario entender lo que esta sucediendo en su escuela. Los padres son un enlace muy importante en el proceso educativo. Su opinión nos ayudará a asegurar que estamos ofreciendo la mejor educación posible para su hijo.

Esta encuesta es confidencial y anónima. Nadie de su escuela verá esta encuesta.

Instrucciones

- ➔ Use pluma o lápiz
- ➔ Marque fuertemente y llene la respuesta completamente
- ➔ Borre cualquier marca que desee cambiar
- ➔ Deje en BLANCO cualquier pregunta que no desee contestar

¿Nombre de su escuela?

Piense en las siguientes declaraciones y decida hasta que grado, en su escuela, piensa que cada declaración es: CASI SIEMPRE CIERTA, FRECUENTEMENTE CIERTA, A VECES CIERTA, RARAMENTE CIERTA O CASI NUNCA CIERTA.

	CASI SIEMPRE CIERTA	FRECUENTEMENTE CIERTA	A VECES CIERTA	RARAMENTE CIERTA	CASI NUNCA CIERTA
En esta escuela se comunican conmigo sobre el progreso de mi hijo.	○	○	○	○	○
La misión/ propósito de esta escuela se comparte regularmente con todos los padres	○	○	○	○	○
Me siento cómodo expresando mis ideas o preocupaciones a los administradores de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
El personal demuestra compromiso con la misión/propósito de la escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
Las decisiones importantes se basan en la misión/propósito de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
Entiendo las expectativas y estándares de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
El director de esta escuela es activo y participa en nuestra comunidad.	○	○	○	○	○
Es fácil hablar con el director de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
En esta escuela mi hijo es desafiado con un curso de estudio riguroso y ambicioso.	○	○	○	○	○
En esta escuela se cree y espera que todos los estudiantes puedan cumplir con los estándares del Estado	○	○	○	○	○
Los padres y el personal de esta escuela se hablan respetuosamente	○	○	○	○	○
El director u otros administradores de esta escuela escuchan mis ideas/preocupa	○	○	○	○	○
Mi hijo entiende las expectativas y estándares de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
Los maestros en esta escuela tienen altas expectativas y estándares para el aprendizaje del estudiante.	○	○	○	○	○
Entiendo la misión/propósito de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
En esta escuela los padres participan en el proceso de toma de decisiones.	○	○	○	○	○
Los maestros de esta escuela están dedicados a ayudar a que todos los estudiantes tengan éxito.	○	○	○	○	○
Se me informa lo que está pasando en esta escuela	○	○	○	○	○
Los empleados escolares son respetuosos y corteses unos con los otros.	○	○	○	○	○
Cuando es apropiado, se me anima a que sea parte de la solución de problemas de esta escuela.	○	○	○	○	○
Hay ayuda adicional en caso de que mi mi hijo(a) la necesite.	○	○	○	○	○

	CASI SIEMPRE CIERTA	FRECUENTEMENTE CIERTA	A VECES CIERTA	RARAMENTE CIERTA	CASI NUNCA CIERTA
Esta escuela está haciendo buen trabajo preparando a los estudiantes para un futuro de éxito.	O	O	O	O	O
Cuando comparto mis inquietudes con el maestro de mi niño, el/ella me escucha	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela ofrece un ambiente de atención/apoyo para mi hijo.	O	O	O	O	O
Es fácil comunicarse con la escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela tiene reglas de comportamiento claras que se aplican consistentemente a todos los estudiantes.	O	O	O	O	O
En esta escuela los estudiantes con problemas reciben intervencián temprana y ayuda adicional.	O	O	O	O	O
Mi hijo se siente seguro en esta escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela es ordenada y apoya el aprendizaje.	O	O	O	O	O
Los maestros se adaptan a las necesidades especiales de mi hijo ajustando la instrucción.	O	O	O	O	O
Los padres tienen voz en el proceso de planeamiento para mejorar la escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
El meaestro de mi hijo me informa, puntualmente, de las expectativas de mi hijo.	O	O	O	O	O
Se me ofrecen oportunidades para discutir el progreso de mi hijo en la escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
Se me anima a colaborar con el maestro de mi hijo sobre el aprendizaje de mi hijo.	O	O	O	O	O
La mayoría de los estudiantes en esta escuela se comportan bien.	O	O	O	O	O
En esta escuela, se pasa tiempo haciendo trabajos que los estudiantes encuentran útiles e interesantes.	O	O	O	O	O
Los maestros de esta escuela ofecen a los estudiantes una variedad de oportunidades de aprendizaje.	O	O	O	O	O
Conozco varias maneras en las que puedo participar en esta escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
Los padres y familias participan en decisiones importantes sobre la educación de sus hijos.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela respeta las diferentes culturas representadas en nuestra comunidad.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela programa eventos a horas convenientes para los padres.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela celebra el éxito del estudiante.	O	O	O	O	O
En cualquier momento, me siento bien recibido cuando visito esta escuela.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela tiene actividades que celebran las diferentes cultura, incluyendo la mia.	O	O	O	O	O
Esta escuela se comunica de manera efectiva con todad las familias.	O	O	O	O	O
Mi hijo aprende en su escuela sobre las culturas de nuestra comunidad.	O	O	O	O	O

Favor de tomar un momento para decirnos un poco de usted mismo. Esta información es OPCIONAL. Esta información nos ayudará a servir mejor las necesidades de su hijo.

¿Es el inglés el idioma principal que se habla en su hogar?
- O SI
- O NO

¿Su hijo está en algún programa especial?
- O Programa de Educación Especial
- O Programa de Aprendizaje del idioma Inglés
- O No Programa
- O Otro

¿A cuál etnnia pertenece?
- O Afro-Americana
- O Nativo Americano / Nativo de Alaska
- O Asiático / Isleño del Pacífico
- O Hispano (Latino/Latina)
- O Blanco - Caucásico
- O Multi-racial
- O Otro

APPENDIX E

IRB Correspondence With Permission
To Use An Interpreter When
Interviewing Spanish-Speaking Parents

Date: Thu, Jan 29, 2009 11:10 PM CST

From: douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

To: IRB@waldenu.edu

Reply To: douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

CC: karin.treiber@waldenu.edu

Subject: Re: IRB Question

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your informative response. I appreciate your time and assistance.

Doug

---- IRB@waldenu.edu wrote:
Dear Mr. Parry,

Yes, it is acceptable to have a translator present, especially in an attempt to reach a more representative sample of the desired population. You will need to have that person sign a confidentiality agreement and submit that form with your IRB materials. Be sure to explain in your IRB application as well, why you will be using the translator (just so that it is a part of the application itself).

Sincerely,
Jenny Sherer, M.Ed.
Operations Manager
Office of Research Integrity and Compliance
irb@waldenu.edu
Toll free: 800-925-3368 ext. 2396
Fax: 626-605-0472
Office address for Walden University:
155 5th Avenue South, Suite 100
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Information about the Walden University Institutional Review Board, including instructions for application, may be found at this link:
http://inside.waldenu.edu/c/Student_Faculty/StudentFaculty_4274.htm

douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

01/08/2009 12:57 PM
Toirb@waldenu.edu

Subject: IRB Question

1/8/09

Dear Walden IRB Review Board,
My committee chairperson, Dr. Karin Treiber, asked me to write you for clarification as to a question I have. I am in the process of preparing the first three sections of my doctoral study proposal for my EdD degree. I am planning to conduct a mixed-methods research study. Briefly, this is the plan for my study as I want to address the correlation between the effects of academic performance of Latino high school students as compared to the attitudes, perceptions, and degree of parental involvement in their children's education:

1. Collect student achievement data based on test scores, grades, and attendance to determine high versus low performing Latino students.

2. Send out a survey for parents to complete that measures parent attitudes, perceptions, and degree of involvement. I will be looking for any correlation between survey results of parents and student academic achievement to see if there is a relationship between Latino parent attitudes, perceptions, and involvement and student academic achievement.

3. I would like to follow up by conducting interviews with parents to hopefully find out a little more information and to clarify any questions I may still have based on parent survey responses. At no time will names be used or associated with parent answers.

My question is this, a number of our Latino parents do not speak English. My question I had for Dr. Treiber was would it be acceptable for me to use a trusted staff member who is on my teaching staff to assist me in helping me to conduct the interviews and help with the transcription process of any parent who does not speak English? This teacher is a Native Spanish speaker and has a tremendous rapport with our Spanish speaking parents. My Spanish is extremely limited. Therefore, there would be no way for me to try to conduct these interviews due to my limited Spanish.

Beyond the collection of quantitative data by administering the survey, which I have both Spanish and English versions of, I think the qualitative data via parent interviews could enhance my study by adding a more personable and humanistic piece to my data collection.

Thank you in advance for your time and response.

Sincerely,

Doug Parry
EdD Student
Walden University
douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

APPENDIX F:

Parent Consent Form:
Survey And Interview
(English)

PARENT CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study regarding the relationship between parent attitudes, perceptions, and level of involvement to the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. You were chosen for the study because your son or daughter is a student at XXXXX High School. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Doug Parry, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. Mr. Parry is also the principal of the high school where your son or daughter attends school.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to analyze the relationship between parent attitudes, perceptions, and level of involvement to the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a parent survey which will consist of 46 closed-ended questions, which should only take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.
- You may also be asked to participate in a follow-up interview with Mr. Parry after you return your parent survey. The interview will take approximately 20-30 minutes at a location of your choice.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Your participation in this study is voluntary. This means that everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you want to be in the study. No one at the high school or the school district will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Careful measures will be taken to protect the participants in this study. At no time will your name or your child's name appear in the study. All survey and interview data will be confidential and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. The results of the study will be made available to all participants upon request.

Compensation:
As a show of appreciation for your time, the parents who complete the parent survey and participate in the interview portion of the study will be given a $10.00 Starbucks gift card, which will be presented to you at the conclusion of the interview. The results of the study will be made available to all participants upon request.

Confidentiality:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study. All survey and interview data will be kept confidential and will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via telephone at 333-3401or by e-mail at douglas.parry@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **09-11-09-0342242** and it expires on **September 10, 2010**.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant _____

Date of consent _____

Participant's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Researcher's Written or Electronic* Signature _____

Electronic signatures are regulated by the Uniform Electronic Transactions Act. Legally, an "electronic signature" can be the person's typed name, their email address, or any other identifying marker. An electronic signature is just as valid as a written signature as long as both parties have agreed to conduct the transaction electronically.

APPENDIX G:

Parent Consent Form:
Survey And Interview
(Spanish)

FORMULARIO DE CONSENTIMIENTO DE LOS PADRES

Ustedes están invitados a participar en una investigación pedagógica para establecer la relación entre las actitudes, percepciones y nivel de participación de los padres y los logros académicos de los estudiantes latinos en una escuela preparatoria urbana. Usted ha sido elegido/a para este estudio porque su hijo/a es un estudiante de la escuela preparatoria de XXXXX. Este formulario es parte del proceso conocido como **"consentimiento informado"** que le permitirá entender el estudio antes de decidir si va a tomar parte en el mismo.

La persona encargada de la investigación es Doug Parry que está haciendo su doctorado en la Universidad de Walden. El señor Parry es además el director de la escuela preparatoria de XXXXX donde su hijo/a asiste a la escuela.

Antecedentes:
El propósito de este estudio es analizar la relación entre las actitudes, percepciones y nivel de participación de los padres y los logros académicos de los estudiantes latinos en una escuela preparatoria urbana.

Procedimientos:
Si decide participar en este estudio se le pedirá lo siguiente:

- Completar una encuesta de cuarenta y seis preguntas de "Si" o "No" que tardará aproximadamente diez o quince minutos en completar.
- Quizás se les pedirá que participen en una entrevista de seguimiento con el señor Parry una vez que hayan entregado la encuesta. La entrevista durará aproximadamente unos 20 ó 30 minutos en el lugar que usted desee.

Carácter voluntario del estudio:
Su participación en este estudio es completamente voluntaria. Cualquiera que sea su decisión será totalmente respetada. Nadie de la escuela de XXXXX o del distrito del condado de XXXXX lo va a tratar de forma diferente si decide no participar en este estudio. Si decide participar ahora, y luego cambia de opinión durante el estudio, su decisión será respetada. Si se encuentra estresado/a durante el estudio también podrá abandonarlo en cualquier momento. Tampoco tendrá que contestar aquellas preguntas que crea que son demasiado personales.

Riesgos y beneficios por participar:
Se tomarán medidas cuidadosas para proteger a todos los participantes en este estudio. En ningún momento aparecerá su nombre o el de su hijo/a en el estudio. Todas las encuestas y entrevistas serán confidenciales y se destruirán al finalizar el estudio. Los resultados del estudio estarán a su disposición si usted lo desea.

Indemnización/Compensación :
Como muestra de apreciación por su tiempo, los padres que completen la encuesta y participen en la entrevista recibirán una tarjeta regalo de "Starbucks" de $10.00 al finalizar la entrevista. Los resultados del estudio estarán a su disposición si usted lo desea.

Totalmente Confidencial:
Toda la información que nos proporcione será confidencial. El investigador no usará su información para ningún otro propósito fuera del proyecto de investigación. También el investigador no incluirá su nombre, o nada que pueda identificarlo en el informe final. Toda la información de la encuesta y entrevista será confidencial y se destruirá al finalizar el estudio.

Contactos y preguntas:
Si tienen algunas preguntas ahora, pueden hacerlas, y si tienen preguntas después pueden contactar con el investigador llamando al teléfono 333-3401 o mediante correo electrónico douglas.parry@waldenu.edu. Si quiere hablar en privado sobre sus derechos como participante, puede llamar al Dr. Leilani Endicott. Ella es la representante de la Universidad de Walden y puede hablar sobre esto con usted. Su número de teléfono es 1-800-925-3368, extensión 1210. El número de investigación de la Universidad de Walden es **09-11-09-0342242** y caduca el día **10 de septiembre del 2010.**

El investigador le dará una copia de este formulario.

Declaración de consentimiento:
Declaro que he leído la información mencionada arriba y creo que entiendo el estudio lo suficientemente bien para tomar una decisión sobre mi participación. Al firmar abajo, confirmo que estoy de acuerdo con los términos descritos arriba.

Nombre del participante en mayúsculas _____

Fecha de consentimiento _____

Firma del participante (Escrita o electrónica)_____

Firma del investigador (Escrita o electrónica)_____

Las firmas electrónicas están reguladas por el *Uniform Electronic Transactions Act.* Legalmente, una "firma electrónica" puede ser el nombre de la persona mecanografiado, su dirección de correo electrónico o cualquier otra forma de identificación. Una firma electrónica es tan valida como su firma escrita, siempre y cuando ambas partes estén de acuerdo en hacer la transacción de forma electrónica.

APPENDIX H:

Parent Survey Cover Letter
(English)

Date

Parent Name
Street Address
City, State Zip Code

Dear Mr. and Mrs. _____,

You are invited to participate in a research study regarding the relationship between parent attitudes, perceptions, and level of involvement to the academic achievement of Latino students in an urban high school. This study is being conducted by a researcher named Doug Parry, who is a doctoral student attending Walden University.

Enclosed you will find a Parent Survey in both English and Spanish versions and a Parent Consent Form in English and Spanish as well. If you agree to participate in this survey, I would ask that you read and complete the Parent Consent Form and provide a signature as an agreement for your participation in this study. I would also ask you to take a few minutes to complete the Parent Survey.

I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience. Once you have completed the survey, please place the Parent Consent Form and Parent Survey in the enclosed envelope and mail it back to me at your earliest convenience.

To protect your privacy, you may participate in the Parent Survey *without returning the Parent Consent Form*. Your completion of the Parent Survey will indicate your consent to participate.

I have also enclosed a $5.00 bill as a small token of my appreciation for your time in completing this survey. However, your participation is completely voluntary. In addition, your responses will remain confidential and I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in any reports of the study.

I would like to thank you in advance for your willingness to participate in this study by completing and returning the Parent Survey. Your participation will certainly contribute to the success of this study. If you have any questions, please call me at XXX-XXXX.

Sincerely yours,

Doug Parry
Walden University Doctoral Student

Enclosure

APPENDIX I:

Parent Survey Cover Letter
(Spanish)

Fecha

Nombre de los padres
Dirección
Ciudad, Estado y Código postal

Estimados Sr. y Sra. _____,

Ustedes están invitados a participar en una investigación pedagógica para establecer la relación entre las actitudes, percepciones y nivel de participación de los padres y los logros académicos de los estudiantes latinos en una escuela preparatoria urbana. La persona encargada de la investigación es Doug Parry que está haciendo su doctorado en la Universidad de Walden.

Adjuntada encontrarán una encuesta de los padres en ambos inglés y español, y un formulario de consentimiento de los padres en inglés y español también. Si ustedes aceptan participar en esta encuesta, les pido que lean y completen el Formulario de Consentimiento de los Padres y lo firmen como un acuerdo para su participación en este estudio. También quiero pedirles que tomen unos minutos para completar la Encuesta de Padres.

He adjuntado un sobre auto-dirigido y con las estampillas de correos para su conveniencia. Una vez que hayan completado la encuesta, por favor, coloquen el Formulario de Consentimiento de los Padres y la Encuesta de los Padres en el sobre adjunto y envíenlo de nuevo a mí lo antes posible.

Para proteger su privacidad, ustedes pueden participar en la Encuesta de los Padres <u>sin devolver</u> el Formulario de Consentimiento de los Padres. Al completar la Encuesta de Padres indicarán su consentimiento para participar.

También he incluido un billete de $ 5,00 dólares como una pequeña muestra de mi agradecimiento por su tiempo en completar esta encuesta. Sin embargo, su participación es completamente voluntaria. Además, sus respuestas se mantendrán confidenciales y no voy a incluir sus nombres o cualquier otra cosa que pueda identificarles en los informes del estudio.

Me gustaría darles las gracias de antemano por su disposición a participar en este estudio, completando y devolviendo la Encuesta de Padres. Su participación contribuirá sin duda al éxito de mi estudio. Si ustedes tienen alguna pregunta, por favor llámenme al XXX-XXXX.

Atentamente,

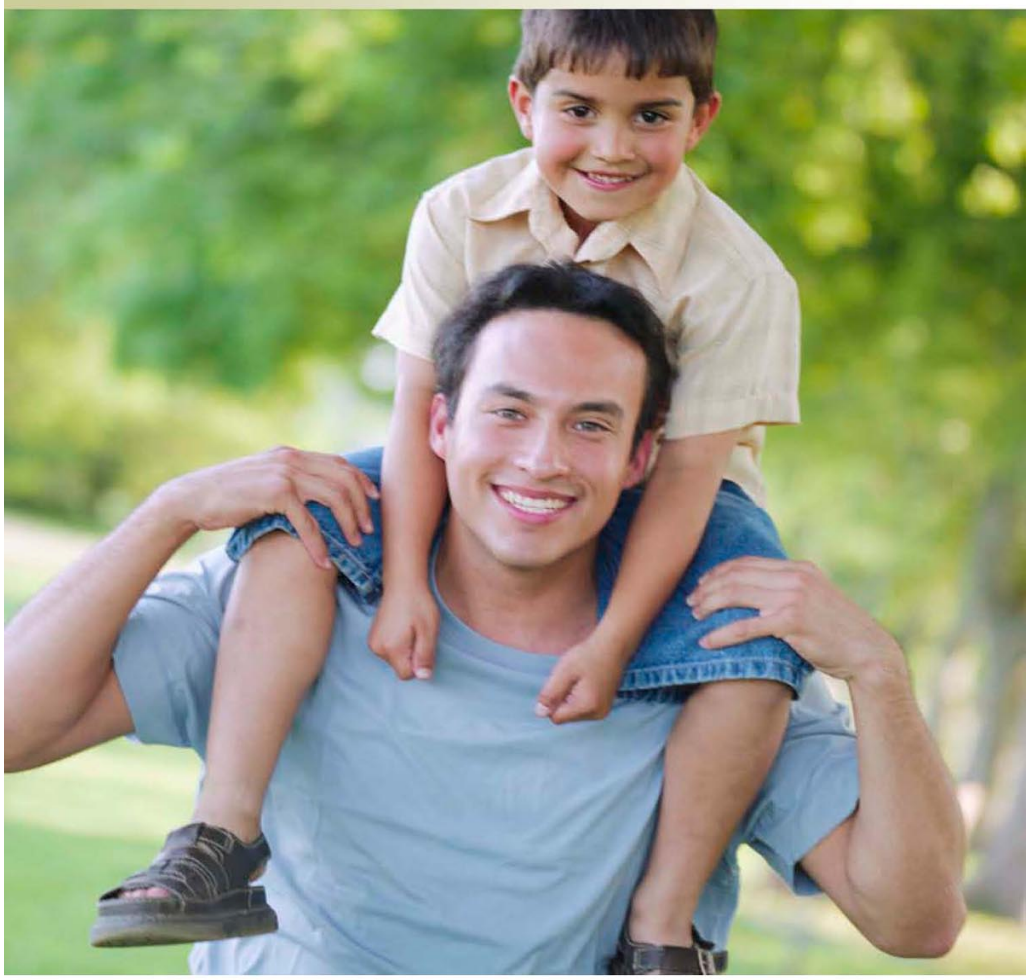
Doug Parry
Walden University Doctoral Student

Adjunto

APPENDIX J:

Parent Survey Results Comparison
By Top And Bottom Quartiles

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS, INC.



EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS SURVEY - PARENT v2.1

Washoe Top vs Bottom		
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc.

The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) is a service, consulting, and research organization dedicated to the mission of partnering with K-12 schools to improve student learning.

NOTICE

The Center for Educational Effectiveness, Inc. (CEE) makes substantial effort to ensure the accurate scoring, analysis, and reporting of the results of the Educational Effectiveness Survey. However, CEE makes no warranty of any kind with regard to this material, including, but not limited to, the implied warranties of merchantability and fitness for a particular purpose. CEE shall not be liable for errors contained herein or for incidental or consequential damages in connection with the furnishing, performance, or use of this material.

Published by:
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Printed in the U.S.A.

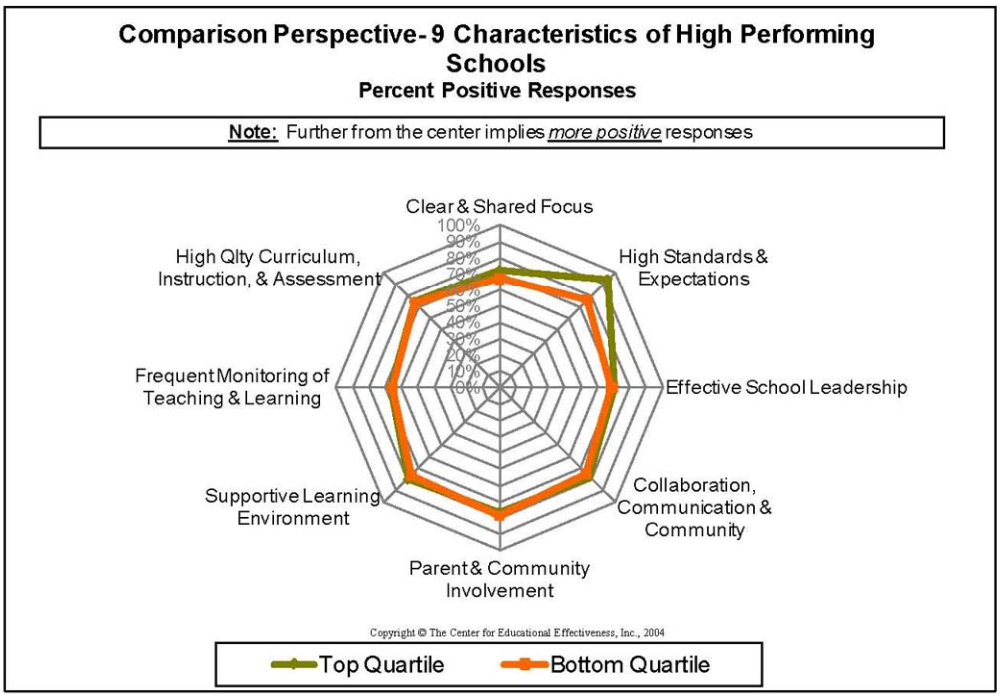
Contact Information:

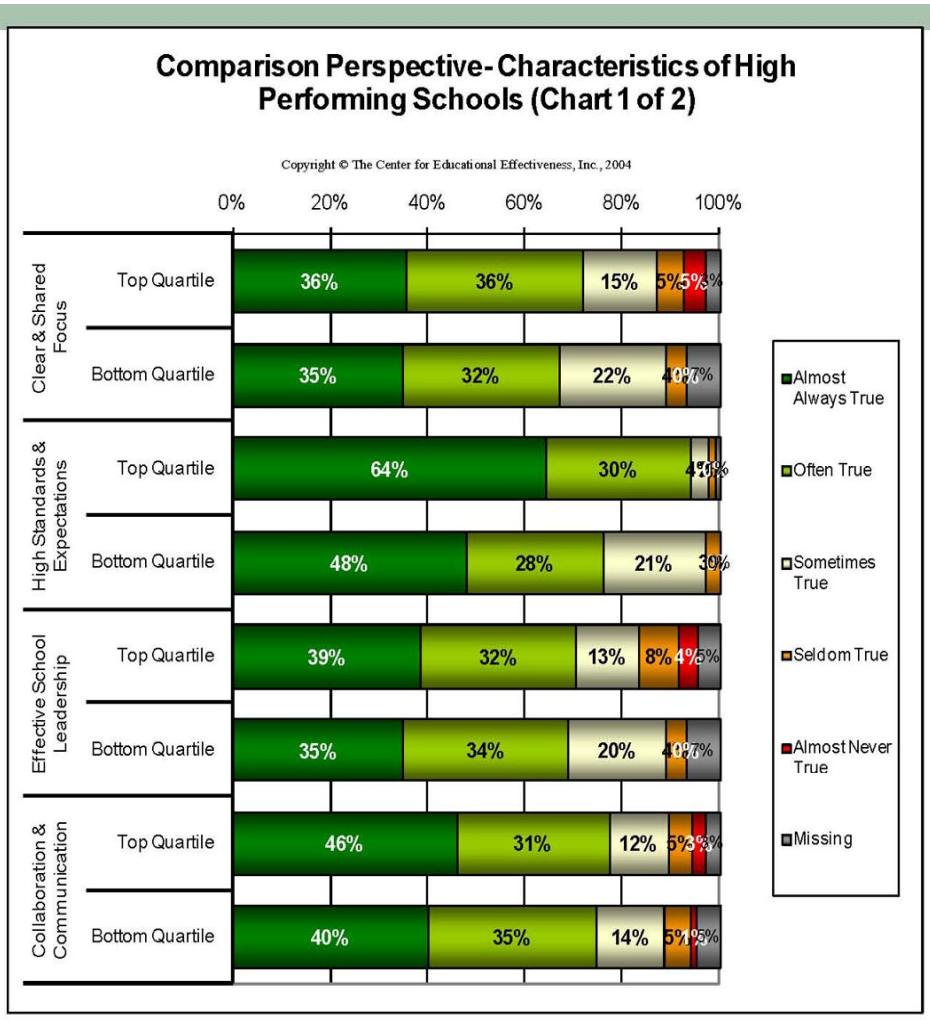
Phone: 425-283-0384
Fax: 425-747-0439
www.effectiveness.org

Better Data. Better Decisions. Better Schools.

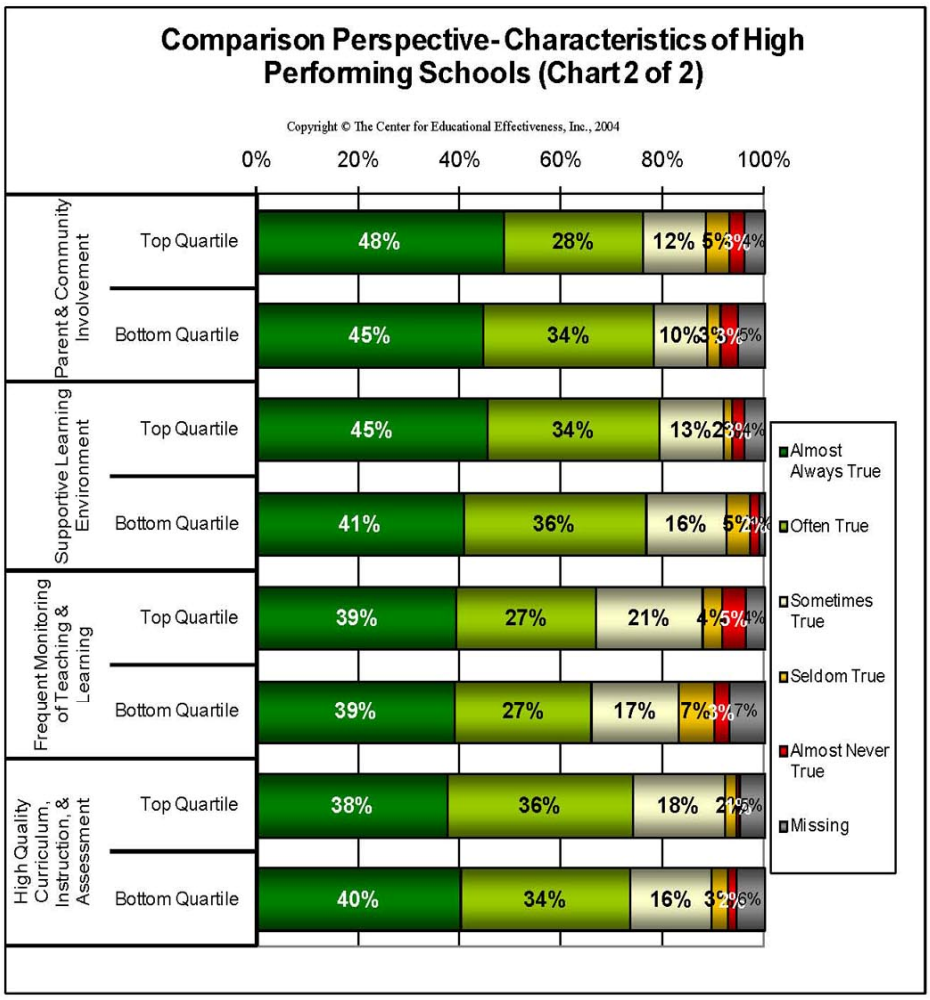
This report represents a comparative perspective on your EES Parent data (i.e. a cross tabulation).

Washoe Top vs Bottom		
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

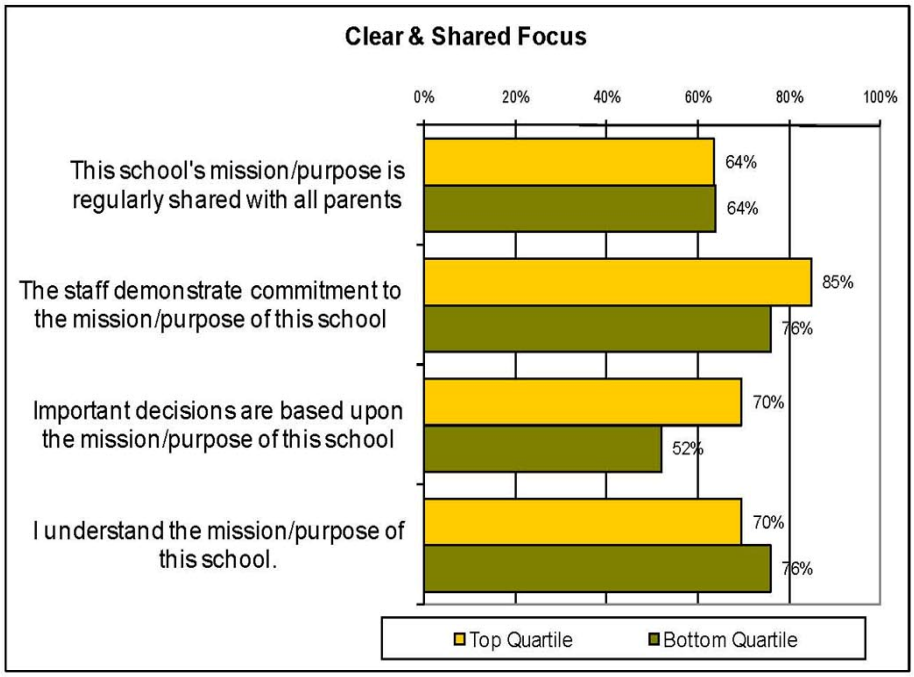




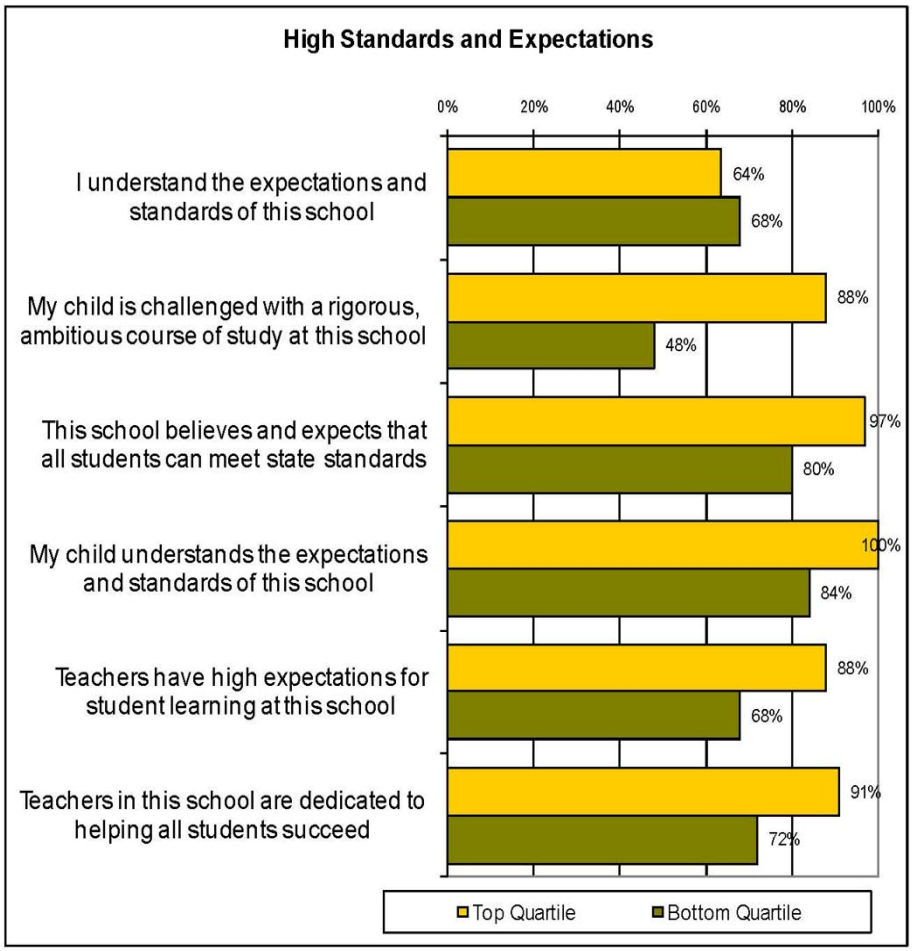
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



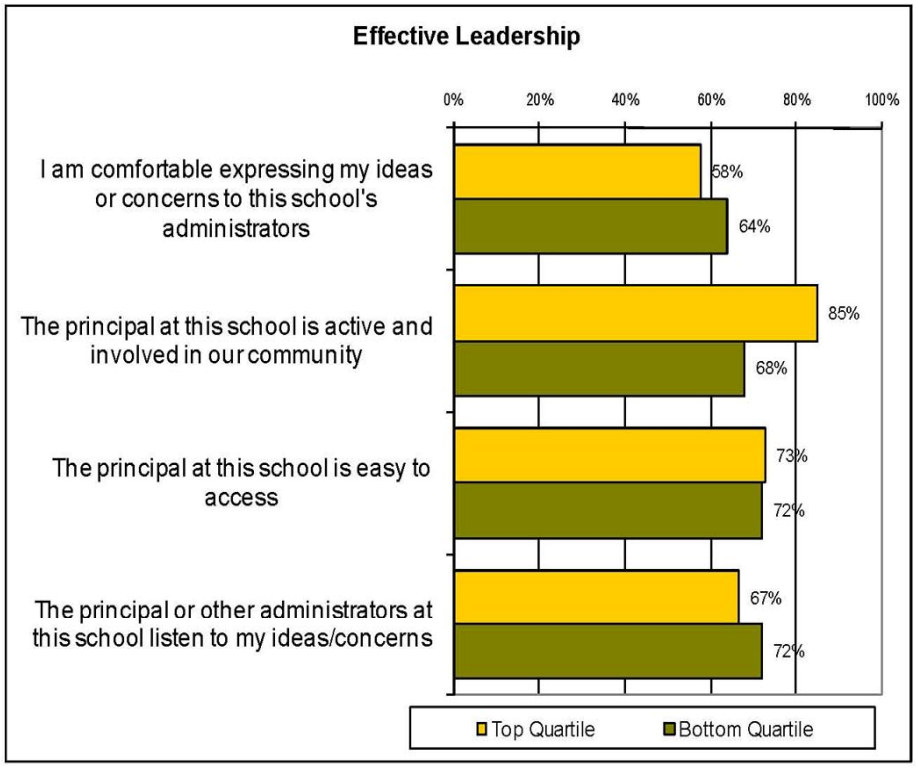
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



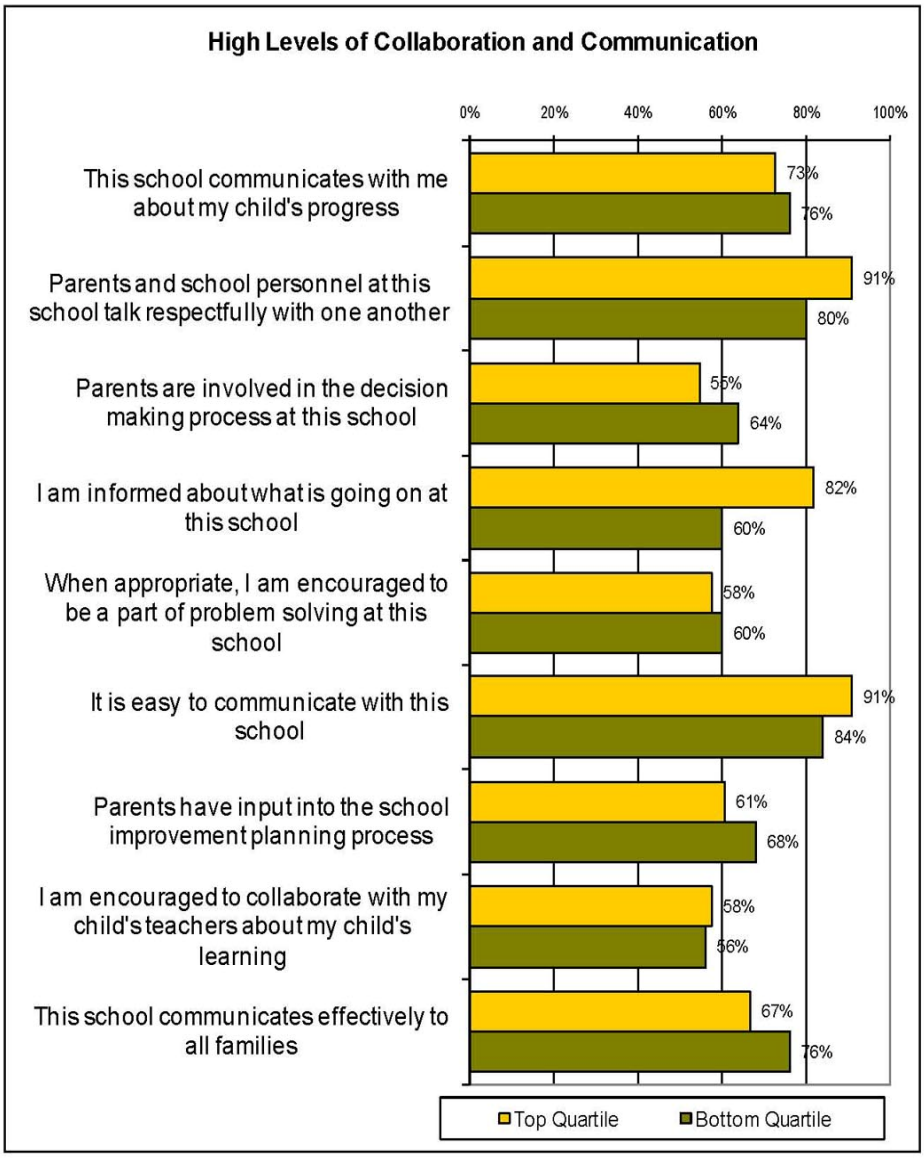
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

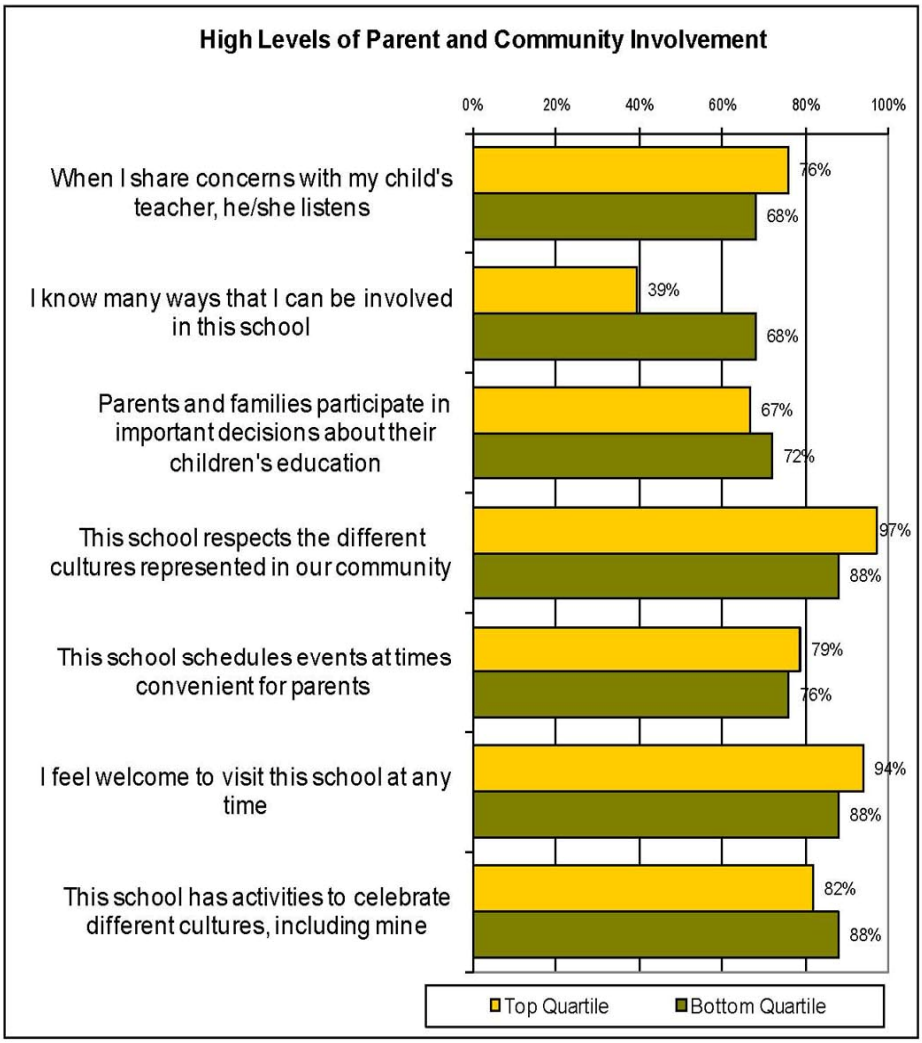


Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

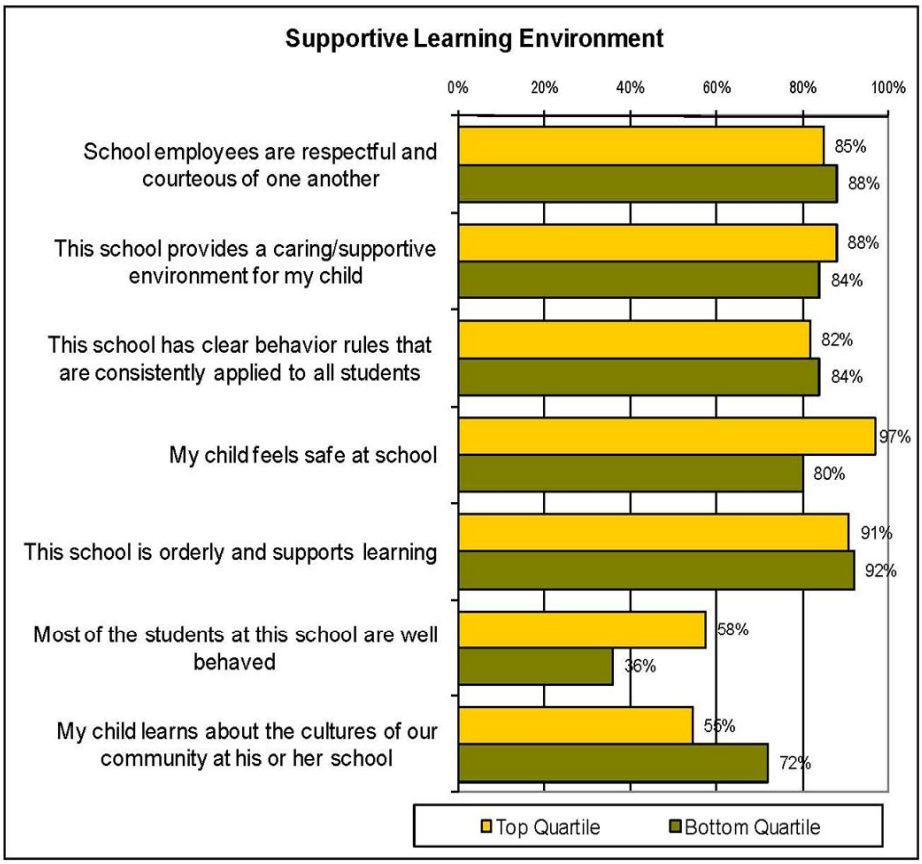


Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

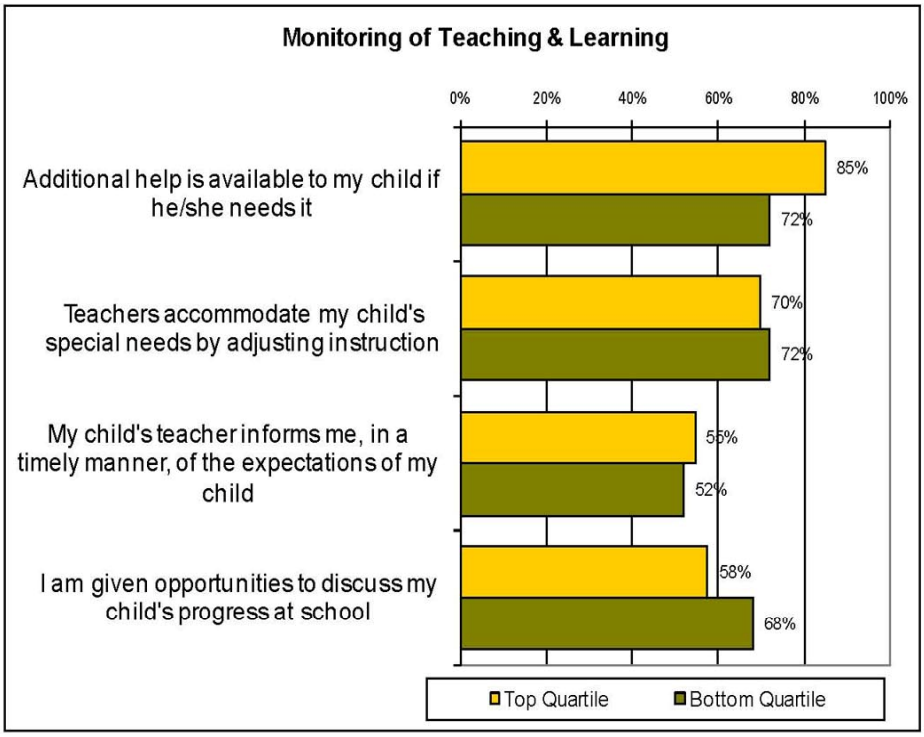
9



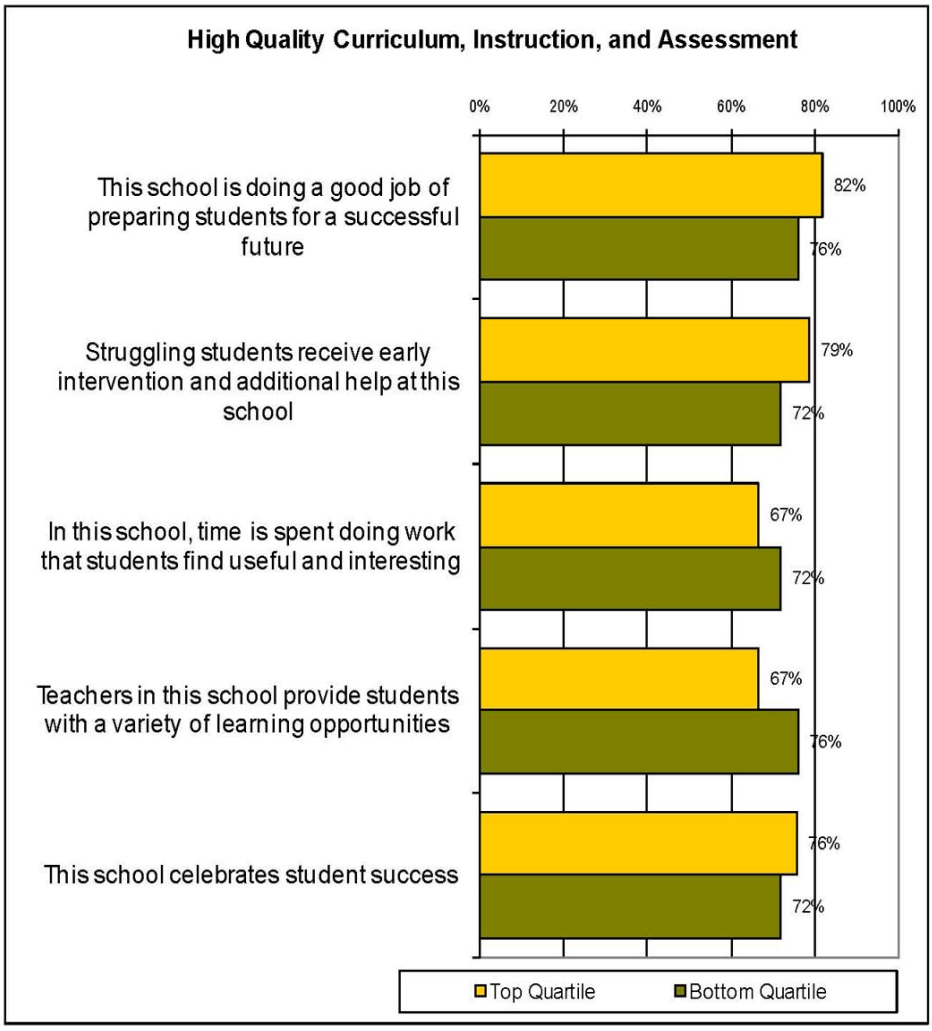
Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25



Top Quartile	N=	33
Bottom Quartile	N=	25

13

APPENDIX K:

Parent Interview Transcription And Coding Sample

Interviewer:	Good morning, thank you very much for coming. First question, what has helped you to participate in your son's educational progress?
Male:	Being in communication with him **[par.int]**, participate of what he does at school – knowing what he doesn't do, knowing how he feels – his interests, and being at the top of – being in communication **[par.sup]**.
Interviewer:	Do you want to add anything else?
Female:	It would be pretty much the same answer. It is important for me to support them so they are always motivated **[par.sup]**, and if you don't have the economical means at least you should morally encourage them **[par.enc]** so they keep going ahead.
Interviewer:	Thank you, what's the role or responsibility that parents should have in regards to school?
Male:	Working along with the school and teachers focused on the student's education **[par.sup]** – that would be one of the main things –
Interviewer:	So you believe this is a shared commitment?
Female:	Of course it is. It is very important **[par.sup]**.
Male:	It is a shared commitment **[par.sup]** **[sch.sup]**, and some people say it goes 50 - 50, but I believe parents should bear a little more because – **[par.exp]**
Female:	More than the school –
Male:	Exactly, I think the school does more than enough by educating them in academics **[sch.exp]** – so we should put an extra effort there.
Interviewer:	Thank you very much, what could the school do to increase your participation level regarding your son's education?

Male: I think the school does enough, and it shouldn't have to do more. As parents we should get more involved with the school **[par.exp]**, because sometimes as parents we focus more on material stuff rather than the family, which is the main thing. I think that would be the main thing.

Interviewer: Would you like to add something else?

Female: No, that would be my answer as well.

Interviewer: Uh, do you practice any activity at home to help your child with the school work? Give me some examples of those activities.

Male: The communication – making sure they do their homework **[par.exp]** **[par.sup]**. I talk to Juan (pseudonym) and my other children about the school – how school used to be when I was a student and what I used to do. I give them examples and tell them that studying in Mexico is more difficult because – the support – the relationship between teachers and school – here for me is – there are plenty of opportunities here **[sch.sup]**.

Female: – here in this country.

Male: I always tell them that so they realize the importance of being at school and stay at school **[par.exp]**.

Female: And the most important thing for them and for us is seeing them making progress and focused on the future and their studies so they can achieve a good education **[par.exp]**.

Interviewer: Very good, are there any barriers or obstacles keeping you from participating or being more involved with your children's education? If that is the case, what are those obstacles?

Male: Not for me, maybe for my wife – like she said, the language **[par.bar]**, but not for me.

Female: Nevertheless is not that difficult, because I always find the way around – I always look for an interpreter so I can understand what's going on with them – keeping them from taking a different path **[par.bar]**.

Male: And the other thing I could mention would be my work **[par.bar]**, but that is – we can't put it aside because we have to work in order to subsist.

Interviewer: Very good, and the last one, feel free to share with the principal your ideas or comments about the parent's participation in the educational task.

Male: What do you think?

Female: Well, as I mentioned before, it is difficult for me to help them with their homework **[par.exp]**, but I always make sure that they do their job at school – there is something else that I would like to comment – they should always be respectful with their teachers and their classmates **[par.exp]**, because if they don't have respectful relationships things get difficult and – that is something very important for me, and that's what I've taught them.

Male: Communication with the teachers **[par.sup]** **[sch.sup]** is very important for me – that way we get more involved in the academic education of the student.

Female: Yes.

Interviewer: Very good, anything else?

Male: No, actually, thank you very much for everything and for everything you do for the students.

Female: I wanted to thank the principal and all the teachers **[par.app]** because I really appreciate what they do for my kids and for other students **[par.app]**. They wouldn't be able to progress without them.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for coming.

Male: You are very welcome.

[End of Audio]

Duration: 7 minutes

CURRICULUM VITAE

Douglas Parry
douglas.parry@waldenu.edu

EDUCATION

Ed.D., Doctor of Education — Anticipated August 2010
Administrator Leadership for Teaching & Learning
Walden University (Baltimore, MD)

Nationally Certified Athletic Administrator (CAA) — February 2006
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
(NIAAA) (Indianapolis, IN)

K-12 Administrator Endorsement — June 2003
University of Nevada, Reno, College of Education (Reno, NV)
Educational Leadership Department

M.S., Master of Science — June 1992
University of Utah, College of Health (Salt Lake City, UT)
Major: Exercise & Sport Science

Utah Teacher Certification — June 1983
Weber State University, School of Education (Ogden, UT)

B.S., Bachelor of Science — December 1982
University of Utah, College of Health (Salt Lake City, UT)
Major: Physical Education Minor: Health

RELATED EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Larry Bell's Multi-Cultural Education Closing the Achievement Gap Seminar — December 2009
San Diego, CA

SIOP for Administrators Conference — November 2009
Santa Fe, NM

The Principals' Partnership 2009 Summer Leadership Institute — July 2009
Phoenix, AZ

Student Motivation Workshop — January 2009
Las Vegas, NV

18th Annual Pegasus Conference - Synergy at Work: Gathering Momentum for Meaningful Performance — November 2008
Boston, MA

ASCD Conference on Teaching & Learning: Professional Practices That Work — October 2008
Los Angeles, CA

The Principals' Partnership 2008 Summer Leadership Institute — July 2008
Palm Desert, CA

CATESOL State Conference — April 2008
Sacramento, CA

"Transforming Instruction & Assessment in the Diverse Classroom" In-Service — April 2007
Dr. Eleanor Renée Rodriguez
Reno, NV

Crisis Prevention Institute (CPI) Instruction/Certification Class — March 2007
Reno, NV

Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference — February 2007
Las Vegas, NV

National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) — February 2007
Leadership Training Course 590: Leadership Training Instructional Methods & Techniques
Las Vegas, NV

37th Annual National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association — December 2006
(NIAAA) Conference
Anaheim, CA

7th Annual Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA) Conference — March 2006
Sparks, NV

Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference — February 2006
Reno, NV

36th Annual National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association — December 2005
(NIAAA) Conference
Orlando, FL

National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) — December 2005
Leadership Training Course 501: Philosophy, Leadership Organizations & Professional Programs
Orlando, FL

National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) — December 2005
Leadership Training Course 509: Communications, Leadership & Decision-Making Concepts, Methods & Applications for Athletic Administrators
Orlando, FL

National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) — December 2005
Leadership Training Course 511: Interscholastic Athletic Budget Concepts and Supplemental Fund Raising
Orlando, FL

Intercollegiate Athletics Administration Class — Fall 2005
University of Nevada, Reno, College of Education (Reno, NV)
Educational Leadership Department

Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference Las Vegas, NV	February 2005
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Leadership Training Course 502: Principles, Strategies & Methods Las Vegas, NV	February 2005
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Leadership Training Course 506: Legal Issues – Title IX, Sexual Harassment, ADA, & Employment Law Las Vegas, NV	February 2005
Technology for Administrators In-Service Class Reno, NV	Jan./Feb. 2005
Implementation of the New ITBS/ITED NRTs & Analysis of District Mandated CRTs Certification Reno, NV	July 2003
Guiding Principles to Improve Student Achievement In-Service Class Reno, NV	August 2003
Fourth Annual Learning Renaissance National Conference Nashville, TN	February 2003
Administrator Walk Through In-Service Class Sparks, NV	November 2002
Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference Reno, NV	February 2002
Behavior Management In-Service Class Reno, NV	November 2001
Healthy Ideas for the New Health Standards In-Service Class Reno, NV	August 2001
Louis Mangione Block Scheduling In-Service Class Sparks, NV	February 2001
Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference Reno, NV	February 2001
National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Leadership Training Course 504: Legal Issues In Athletic Administration I: Risk Management Reno, NV	February 2001
ASEP/NFICEP Citizenship Through Sports Course American Sport Education Program Champaign, IL	February 2000

31st Annual National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) Conference — December 2000
San Diego, CA

Technology for Today's Teachers In-Service Classes — May 2000
Sparks, NV

Coaching in the 21st Century Course — Spring 2000
California Baptist University
Riverside, CA

ACEP Certified Coach - Level 1 — April 1990
American Coaching Effectiveness Program
Champaign, IL

EMPLOYMENT

Principal — 2007-
Sparks High School, Washoe County School District

Lead Assistant Principal — 2004-07
Assistant Principal — 2003-04
Athletics, Buildings & Grounds, & Attendance
Spanish Springs High School, Washoe County School District

Assistant Principal — 2002-03
Athletics, Curriculum, Discipline, & Testing Coordinator
Procter Hug High School, Washoe County School District

Athletic Director — 2000-02
Academic Coordinator: P.E./Health/R.O.T.C.
Contract Teacher: Health Education
Spanish Springs High School, Washoe County School District

Physical Education Department Chairman — 2000-01
Head Varsity Football Coach — 1997-00
Contract Teacher: Physical Education — 1997-01
Edward Reed High School, Washoe County School District

Healthy Lifestyles (P.E.) Department Chairman — 1996-97
Head Varsity Football Coach — 1992-97
Contract Teacher: Physical Education — 1992-97
Assistant Baseball Coach — 1993-96
Head Boys Track Coach — 1992-93
Bear River High School, Box Elder County School District

Assistant Varsity Football Coach — 1985-92
Assistant Baseball Coach — 1985-91
Murray High School, Murray City School District

Physical Education/Health Department Chairman 1991-92
Contract Teacher: P.E., Health, Biological Sciences 1985-92
Riverview Jr. High School, Murray City School District

Head Varsity Football Coach 1983-85
Head Boys Track
Contract Teacher: Special Education, P.E., Biological Sciences
Dugway High School, Tooele County School District

RELATED WORK EXPERIENCE

WCSD/WestEd Data Collaboration Steering Committee Member 2010

WCSD Superintendent's Strategic Planning Input Committee Member 2010
Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, & ESL

Washoe Schools Principals Association (WSPA) Secondary Representative 2007-09

WCSD "Fierce Conversations" Professional Development for Administrators 2007-08
Facilitator

WCSD Athletics/Attendance Assistant Principals Monthly Collegial Meetings 2007-08
Facilitator

Nevada Athletic Directors' Association (NASA) Conference Planning Committee 2005-07
Member

NIAA/ASEP Coaching Principles Nationally Certified Instructor 2002-07
American Sport Education Program (Champaign, IL)

Year of the Option (YOTO) Small High Schools' Committee Member 2002-03
WCSD County School District

HSPE Testing Assistant 2002
Spanish Springs High School, Washoe County School District

Tournament Director
2007 NIAA 4A Northern Regional Boys' & Girls' Basketball Tournament 2007
2002 NIAA 4A Northern Regional Boys' & Girls' Basketball Tournament 2002
Spanish Springs High School

Site Director 2001
2001 NIAA Class 2A/3A State Football Championships
Spanish Springs High School

Site Director 2001
2001 NIAA Class 4A Regional/State Boys' & Girls' Soccer Tournament
Spanish Springs High School

UHSAA/ASEP Coaching Principles/Sport First Aid Nationally Certified Instructor 1995-97
American Sport Education Program (Champaign, IL)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)	2007-
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)	2005-
Nevada Association of School Administrators (NASA)	2002-
Washoe Schools Principals Association (WSPA)	2002-

CONFERENCE/CLINIC SPEAKER

Nevada Athletic Directors Association (NADA) Conference — February 2001
"Promoting the Multi-Sport Athlete in High School"
Reno, NV

Douglas High School Football Clinic — June 2000
"Quarterback Techniques & Drills"
Minden, NV

Max Miller's Clinic of Champions — February 2000
"The Little Things Make the Difference"
"The 3-Step Fire Series Passing Game"
"Hawk Punt Coverage"
Reno, NV

Douglas High School Football Clinic — June 1999
"The 3-Step Fire Series Passing Game"
Minden, NV

PUBLICATIONS

"The Football Coach and the Law" — Fall 1997
Gridiron Coach Volume 7 – Issue 4
Pleasanton, CA

AWARDS

Celebrate Literacy Award Recipient for Exemplary Service in the Promotion of Literacy — 2009
The International Reading Association and the Sierra Nevada Council
Reno, NV

Who's Who Among America's Teachers (Seventh Edition: Volume VI) — 2002
Spanish Springs High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Nominee for 4A Northern Nevada Athletic Director of the Year — 2001-02
Spanish Springs High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Who's Who Among America's Teachers (Sixth Edition: Volume IV) — 2000
Edward Reed High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Edward Reed High School Coach of the Year — 1998-99
Edward High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Daily Sparks Tribune All-Metro Football Coach of the Year 1998
Edward Reed High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Daily Sparks Tribune All-Metro Football Coach of the Year 1997
Edward Reed High School, Washoe County School District (Nevada)

Region 5 Northern Utah Football Coach of the Year 1994
Bear River High School, Box Elder County School District (Utah)