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Factors Affecting Involvement of Urban School District Parents in their Child's Education

Megan Stewart
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Megan Stewart

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Walden University
2016

Abstract

Factors Affecting Involvement of Urban School District Parents

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by

Megan Stewart

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

January 2016

Abstract

Parental involvement in children's education has been found to have a positive impact on academic achievement. Because the state has mandated that academic achievement in the study district needs to increase, identifying means of increasing parental involvement is important. Guided by the work of Epstein, this quantitative study was conducted to explore demographic factors related to parents' involvement in the education of their children. Specifically, research questions examined differences in parental involvement by socioeconomic status (SES), barriers to involvement for parents, and school strategies to improve parental involvement. Parents of all 5th grade students ($n = 935$) from a large East Coast urban district were surveyed using the Scale of Parental Involvement to address the research questions. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics as well as an independent-samples t test to determine the differences in involvement by SES. A significant difference in parental involvement between low- and high-SES parents was not obtained. Parents reported that barriers such as work hours, lack of feeling appreciated, culture, transportation, and child care prevented full participation in the education of their children. The findings also suggested that districts might increase parental involvement through engaging in more frequent communication with parents; providing more activities to do at home; and providing more time for training, teaching, and meeting. Implications for positive social change include providing research findings to the local district on how to increase the involvement of parents in their children's education.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

Parental involvement has been defined by Barge and Loges (2003) as any interaction between parents and the education of their children, from working on homework at home to working in the school building with teachers and education staff. The positive impact of parental involvement in education on student success is multifaceted, including benefits such as improvement in student behavior (Monastersky, 2007; Swick, 2006), higher expectations of educators and parents for addressing student behavior and academic improvements (Desforges & Abouchar, 2003; Desimone, 1999), increased academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Mapp, 2002) and higher student motivation to succeed (Polovina & Stanasic, 2007; Seda, 2007; Smith, 2006; Stewart, 2008). Parents directly affect academic, behavioral, and social success in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

While the benefits of parental involvement in children's education are numerous (Epstein, 1987, 1992; Epstein et al., 2009), involvement still needs to be increased (Epstein, 2001; Parent Teacher Association of Connecticut, 2008; Quiocho & Daoud, 2006; Swick, 2006). As academic achievement increases (Epstein, 2001; Swick, 2006) cognitive development increases (Parent Teacher Association of Connecticut, 2008) when parents are involved. When communication and expectations are clear, student achievement will increase as a result of increased parental involvement (Quiocho & Daoud, 2006). One study found that parental involvement was at its greatest when students were in trouble and the communication was required, and by default, only

negative communication was achieved (Polovina & Stanisic, 2007). Another example of the need for more involvement was explained in O'Bryan's study (2007), which addressed the need for positive involvement of both educators and parents. This, O'Bryan said, might take the form of an activity that is less intimidating than academics, such as extracurricular activities. The studies referenced above all indicate that involvement is the key to student success. Success could take the form of academic achievement or cognitive development, but the key in every study has been the level of parental involvement. As involvement increased, the benefits increased proportionally as well.

This is particularly true for low-income parents. Parents of students who come from a low socioeconomic demographic often see the world through a different lens than those who are considered to be in a higher socioeconomic demographic (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Arzubiaga, Rueda, and Monzo (2002) found that the amount of work scheduled as well as the hours worked differed for parents who were of low socioeconomic status, and this took time away from their students' education. Such parents did not exhibit a lack of caring about their children or their education, but an inability to schedule time for involvement in any consistent way. Arzubiaga et al. found no evidence that lower income parents are less involved than higher income parents in their children's education, only that the former experience greater hindrance to involvement. This lack of evidence was further rationale for the current study.

Lower levels of parental involvement among low-income parents are worthy of concern because they may contribute to the well-documented achievement gap between low- and high-income students in the United States. Researchers have concluded that

there are lower levels of academic achievement among low-income students (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998), but the solutions that educators could use in an effort to address this problem are limited. Additionally, Fan and Chen (1999) concluded that many studies addressing the relationship between parental involvement and achievement are difficult to compare or draw conclusions from because of the many differing definitions of parental involvement.

Despite these findings, research on factors that prevent low-income families from becoming more involved in the education of their children and the specific strategies districts could take to address these barriers are limited. One of the major limitations is the very meaning of *involvement*, for which there is no singular, consistent definition (Fan & Chen, 2001). For example, *involvement* has been defined as parents being involved both in the school building for general school functions, as well as assisting in homework at home (Child Trends Data Bank, 2003), whereas Barton Drake, Perez, St. Louis, and George (2004) described how parental involvement has been defined as coming into the school building to volunteer but said that the true definition should include parental motivation to interact with the educational culture. Epstein (2001) created categories or levels of involvement.

Additionally, while studies have addressed the need for involvement, few have offered solutions. To improve achievement, it is clear that there is a need for involvement (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005), as well as a need for solutions.

Background of the Study

The school district under exploration consists of several schools that are in the *restructuring phase*. This phase is defined by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) as the accountability status of a school that has failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English language arts, mathematics, or both subjects in the aggregate or for student subgroups for 5 or more consecutive years or for 1 or more additional years after being identified for corrective action (DESE, 2008). The *corrective action phase* is defined by the state as the accountability status of a school that has failed to meet AYP in English language arts, mathematics, or both subjects in the aggregate or for student subgroups for 4 consecutive years or for 2 or more nonconsecutive years while in identified for improvement accountability status (DESE 2008), or in the identified for improvement status. This status is defined as a school that has not met AYP in either English language arts or math or both subjects. This definition is based on the overall performance of all students in the school, or of student subgroups for 2 consecutive years (DESE, 2008). Several schools in the district are not making the needed improvements, and as a result, are achieving below the state's performance levels.

Not only are several schools in the district in the restructuring phase, but the entire district's performance level percentages are below the state's performance level percentages at every grade level, from third to 10th grade, at every subject level (DESE, 2008). This district has many schools in trouble and in need of improvement in many areas, including parental support. The academic performance of students in the district

under exploration is lower than the state's performance across every grade level, and furthermore, the population of students in this district is distinctly different, both culturally and economically, from the state's overall population of students.

The student body comprised a population that was 89.1% Hispanic, 6.3% White, 1.9% African American, and 2.6% Asian in the 2008–2009 school year (DESE, 2009). In comparison, the state population percentages are 14.3% Hispanic, 69.9% White, 8.2% African American, and 5.1% Asian (DESE, 2009). The Hispanic population, because of its majority presence in this entire district, must be a key component in any school's improvement plan that includes parental involvement, as instructed by the superintendent. In addition to the population, another key consideration is language. The state considers 80.7% of the students in the district to speak a first language other than English, and 22.8% of the students are classified as limited English proficient (DESE, 2009).

The socioeconomic composition of the district also differs from that of surrounding areas. The state's rate of low-income-household students is 30.7%, and this district has a low-income rate of 87.1% (DESE, 2009). Students who apply for and receive free or reduced-price lunches through the school determine low-income categorization. Of the student population in this district, 77.7% receive free lunches, and 9.4% receive reduced-price lunches; the state percentages are 25.2% and 5.5%, respectively. According to an administrator in the district (personal communication, October 20, 2005), the demographic features of the urban school district in this study have resulted in certain strategies designed to encourage parental involvement, which she

feels may contribute to positive social change by fostering student, parent, teacher, and community success.

One strategy established by the school district to encourage parent participation is the paid, full-time position of parent liaison, a person whose sole job is to link the school and parents. The liaison is usually a bilingual individual who can bridge the language gap in this district if needed. Although the job posting lists no bilingual requirement for the position, every liaison in this district is bilingual because of the population of the students who attend the schools and their parents. The liaison is the first to personally greet all parents at the front door of the school every school day, as well as the person who translates in all parent-teacher meetings when translation is needed. A school administrator who works at one of the research sites, who has been in the district since the mid-1980s, recalled the position being present for, in her words, “at least 15 years” (Administrator, personal communication, March 28, 2008).

A major component of the liaison’s job description is to monitor attendance. The liaison is responsible for recording truancy and tardiness, and when attendance issues arise, for making daily phone calls or home visits to parents to improve attendance. The liaison also explains school district procedures, disseminates information regarding community and district offices such as the Department of Transition and the Department of Social Services, facilitates classes on parenting, offers suggestions on parental involvement in the education of children, and advises parents on the use of community resources. In lieu of an additional administrative assistant, the liaison performs many

administrative duties as well, as they are frequently tied into the translation piece of this position.

Unfortunately, this major undertaking by the school district has not proven to be as effective as district leaders would like it to be, as parents are still not participating as much as desired in the school buildings or in homework time with their children. Parents are still asking for afterschool support programs for their children's homework. The liaisons report that parents are not reaching out to use the resources or attending the meetings that are facilitated (personal communication with liaison spokespersons, October 8, 2007; February 20, 2008; May 16, 2009; July 16, 2010). One possible explanation for this suggested by liaison spokespersons is that parents are uncomfortable with participating because of the language and cultural differences, but this has not been studied or anecdotally recorded within the district. While liaisons cannot solve every problem, they are designed to bring parents into the schools to be involved in the education of their children. With the gap between educators and parents still looming, students are the ones who suffer as a result of the lack of communication.

Problem Statement

Researchers who have studied parental involvement agree that when parents are involved in their child(ren)'s education, there are positive results, from improved academic achievement to improved behavior to improved communication from school to home and home to school. However, little research has been done on low-income urban settings and the barriers to parental involvement that arise in them. This quantitative

study was needed to examine the relationship between income and level of parental involvement.

Nature of the Study

This quantitative study identified the factors that may impact the involvement of parents in their students' education at home and at school. Factors were isolated as significant through the statistical analysis of data gained by surveying parents, allowing educators to work on specific parental involvement plans, and relationship-building with parents, knowing which factors lead to their lack of involvement. The dependent variable was the self-reported involvement of the parents, and the independent variables were the demographic factors of the parents, such as ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic status.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The research questions that guided this study were as follows.

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between parental involvement based on the socioeconomic status of the parents?

H₁: Parents with a family income over \$50,000, an income level that places most families at the federal poverty level (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2014), will exhibit significantly more involvement in children's education as measured by responses to the Scale of Parental Involvement (Cage, 1995) than those with a family income of \$50,000 or less.

H₀: Parents with a family income over \$50,000 will have no difference in involvement in children's education as measured by parent self-reported involvement than those with a family income of \$50,000 or less.

RQ2: What barriers prevent parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status (those with a family income of \$50,000 or less) from being involved in their children's education?

RQ3: What school district strategies do parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status feel would minimize barriers to involvement of in their children's education?

Because Research Questions 2 and 3 were exploratory in nature and were addressed using descriptive statistics, no hypotheses were proposed for them. These questions were studied using data from a survey completed by parents in the district that was sent to them in the mail. Parents anonymously completed the survey and mailed it back to me. Results were analyzed using only data from respondents with an income of \$50,000 or less.

Researchers (Jeynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005) have found that parents have a strong influence on their children's success academically, behaviorally, and socially in school. Knowing these data, leaders in the school district in this study long for parental support. This study identified factors that contribute to parental involvement or noninvolvement in students' schooling and education by examining the socioeconomics of the parents so that the benefits associated with success might be pervasive in the school community and the community at large.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to use Epstein's model (1995, 2001, 2009) to identify barriers to involvement and strategies to improve involvement among low-income parents. For this reason, the district being examined was ideal because it has a high proportion of low-income students. This district is urban, with a high percentage of Hispanic families and households that are low income. The dependent variable was the self-reported involvement of parents. The independent variable was the demographic factor of the parents' socioeconomic status. Significance in the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable provided information that can be used to understand and subsequently increase the level of parental involvement for the success of students.

Theoretical Framework

Parental involvement research lacks frameworks with which researchers can universally define parameters based on their own perspectives, backgrounds, and perspectives on education. Because of discrepancies in ideas from researcher to researcher, the work of Epstein (2001) was used as an umbrella to create a solid, theoretical foundation upon which unifying understanding may be used to communicate. Other researchers and theorists have addressed different aspects of parental involvement and focused on specifics; Epstein was more inclusive. The work of Epstein was used because of the categories of involvement for parents: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. Each of Epstein's categories is to be considered parental involvement. Parents can be

considered involved in education when they are helping with homework in the home, not just when they are helping in the classroom. Epstein's research has been validated from the first study published in 1995 until the more recent studies in 2001. These ideas allow parents the benefit of true involvement, giving credit for every level of participation in their children's education. While Epstein unified the underlying theory, there are some terms that need specific determination of meaning.

Operational Definitions

The definitions of terms used in this study are as follows:

Education: For this study, *education* is defined as the grade or degree last completed.

Educator: In the state of Massachusetts, educators are considered to be teachers, administrators, specialist teachers (teachers for special education students, students with any disabilities, etc.), professional support personnel (counselors, nurses, psychologists, etc.), vocational educators, adult basic education teachers, and instructional paraprofessionals (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2008).

Ethnicity: For this study, and for purposes of categorization in the state, *ethnicity* can be defined as the origin of family ancestry (Massachusetts Department of Education, 2010).

Hispanic: The U.S. Census Bureau (2000) defined *Hispanic* on the census as "Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano," "Puerto Rican", or "Cuban", or as being from Spain or another Spanish-speaking country in South or Central America or the Dominican

Republic. For this study, the term *Hispanic* refers to Caribbean-American culture, specifically those who have immigrated from the Dominican Republic or from Puerto Rico, the two primary cultural backgrounds of the population in this city.

Parent: The term *parent* applies to all those who are involved in a child's education, including foster, step, and biological parents, as well as other adult family members who assume the role of parent in the life of the student. In this study, guardians were considered parents as well, because, according to the National Parent Teacher Association, "other adults ... may also carry the primary responsibility for a child's education and development" (Parent Teacher Association of Connecticut, 2008).

Parental involvement or parental participation: Parents being involved in the education of their children, including involvement in the school building for general school functions, meeting with a teacher, participating in a school event, volunteering, or serving on a committee (Child Trends Data Bank, 2003), as well as assisting in homework at home.

Socioeconomic status: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2010) delineated between students who are low income and those who are not by identifying students who receive free or reduced-price lunch, who receive Transitional Aid to Families benefits, or who are eligible for food stamps as low income. This category is used in reporting achievement data, in reporting attendance data, and in overall district accountability. For the purposes of this study, a family income of less than \$50,000 is defined as low income because it encompasses all levels of the poverty guideline outlined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014).

Urban: The U.S. Census Bureau defined an *urban* or *urbanized* area as having at least 1,000 people per square mile (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

Assumptions

1. Parents accurately and honestly responded to the survey questions.
2. Barriers to involvement in children's education experienced by the low-income parents in this sample are experienced by other low-income parents.
3. Strategies for improving parental involvement that were supported by the low-income parents in this sample would also be viewed favorably by other low-income parents.

Limitations

The limitations of this study included the following.

1. Parent involvement decreases as each student progresses through school (Child Trends Databank, 1999; Desforges & Abouchar, 2003). This was a limitation because conclusions were drawn based on a sample that did not represent parents of students older or younger than fifth grade.
2. I was a teacher in the district. If parents in the sample knew me, their responses might have been altered based on their opinion of me.
3. Surveys were mailed to homes, but not all addresses given by the district were guaranteed to be correct. Consequently, the method of administration might have affected the response rate, thereby diminishing the generalizability of the findings.

4. The population being sampled was 89% Hispanic. This made ethnicity a variable that could not be examined in this study because the non-Hispanic portion of the sample was too small.
5. The original survey was translated by a district translator who translated all documents sent home to parents. It was checked by a second translator. It was not validated as the original was.
6. When validated by the original author (Cage, 1995), the measurement was not validated on parents of fifth graders specifically.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of this research was somewhat limited and applicable to a significant majority Hispanic population and other urban environments, given the socioeconomics of many cities. Hispanic students comprised 88% of the overall population of the district, while the populations of Whites, Asians, and Blacks were approximately 7%, 3% and 2%, respectively. While the population used in this study created issues with delimitations, it also had the potential to provide significant information for other districts with similar population densities.

Significance of the Study

Involvement of parents in their children's education has been found to be beneficial but is lacking particularly among low-income students. Increasing parental involvement may minimize the well-documented gap in achievement between low and higher income students, thereby leading to positive social change. The study addresses any urban school district that struggles with parental involvement in schools, with low-

socioeconomic-status populations, and with Hispanic populations, to create a positive impact on parental involvement levels.

The population in the district was composed of parents who appeared uninvolved. The findings of this study may contribute to positive social change by making it possible to identify factors that lead to or restrict parents' involvement in the schooling of their children.

Another respect in which this study is significant is that it offers educators further exposure to the idea that parental involvement at home is highly valuable and not to be ignored. Often, teachers and administrators limit the idea of parental involvement to the four walls of the school building, assuming that parents are not involved at all if they are not coming into the building itself. Exposure to this idea, that homework help is just as important as volunteering inside the building, remains a valuable and significant rationale for furthering research in this area.

Overall, the idea that parents could be part of the educational process is psychologically and culturally beneficial. When parents are involved in education, students improve in their academics and behavior, and the community as a whole is drawn together (Barrera & Warner, 2006). In this study, I examined factors that may be limiting parents from school involvement. Use of the study findings may now enable the educators of the district and members of the community to problem solve together, starting the process of building a new interconnected community of learners, educators, students, parents, and businesses, resulting in improved student success. This study could change how the education of children is addressed within society at large.

This study has the potential to ripple throughout this geographical area, as there are several schools and/or districts with this type of population, particularly in that the study district has a significantly dominant minority population. In other urban areas, a similar demographic population is present and could benefit greatly from the results gathered from this study.

The ability to share the perspectives of the parents and their responses to the survey with district leaders may lead to greater insight into the issue of parental involvement. Greater understanding may develop among educators concerning parental realities and challenges and, ultimately, new approaches to communications and connections.

Summary

Parental involvement has been found to increase academic achievement, which is a priority for educators. To increase achievement, schools need to increase parental involvement, especially in low-income areas where the achievement gap is greater. The lack of involvement in these low-income areas could be a key reason for the achievement gap. This research is needed to identify specific barriers to involvement that low-income families face. Section 2 provides an overview of the research and literature that has been published regarding parental involvement. Section 3 addresses specific information about the research design, including the setting and sample used in the research, instrumentation and materials, and data collection and analysis. Section 4 focuses on the actual findings, the research tools, and the specific data analysis used in the study, and

Section 5 summarizes the purpose of the study and contains a discussion of interpretations and implications of the findings for future study and social change.

Section 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The leaders of the district in this study seek more parental involvement. This study surveyed parents to determine their reasons for involvement or noninvolvement in the education of their children. In this section, the research is organized to explore the many benefits of involvement. Definitions of *parental involvement*, challenges to becoming involved as a parent, and literature on specific topics relevant to parental involvement, such as the perceptions of different stakeholders (parents, students, and teachers), are provided. Epstein's work is reviewed, along with the effects of different demographic factors (socioeconomics, family issues, and culture and ethnicity) on parental involvement.

To obtain literature about the involvement of parents, the limitations of involvement for parents, and data about the demographic factors of socioeconomic status of families and Hispanic ethnicity, searches with keywords such as *parental involvement*, *education*, and *socioeconomics* were used. Resources were chosen based on relevance to this study's population and its demographic factors, such as socioeconomic status and culture. I sought to build an understanding of research on parental involvement from early research to research done as recently as possible. Of the selection of references, seven were published after 2010, 48 were published between the years 2006-2010, 32 were published between the years 2000-2005, and 19 were published before 2000, providing a historical foundation for an understanding of the role of parental involvement.

The literature review for this study encompassed many areas, including the theoretical background of parental involvement, definitions of parental involvement, creating community between parents and educators, the benefits of parental involvement, perceptions of parental involvement, communication between school and home, Epstein's work, socioeconomic status, successful parental involvement programs, and previous research. These support the idea that nationally, parents are deeply concerned about the success or nonsuccess of their children as students and citizens behaving appropriately. Leaders in the school district under exploration have expressed interest in increasing parental involvement as a means to increase the success of students academically and behaviorally. The literature research about parental involvement supports this endeavor; when parents are involved at any level, there is increased academic student success.

Theoretical Background

The work of Epstein (1995, 2001, 2009) provided the foundation for this study because it allowed me to easily categorize the parents: Parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community were the "levels" of involvement. Epstein's research allows for varying levels of involvement, both inside and outside the classroom. This work has provided the foundation for many programs in schools and organizations that are working on involving parents in the education of their children.

Working with James Madison University, Epstein created the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), an organization designed to improve the school-home relationship. Epstein is credited with designing a framework with which schools and

parents can create strong home-school relationships. The descriptions that follow are taken from Epstein's NNPS website (NNPS, 2010), in addition to Epstein's work.

Parenting is the first level of Epstein's parental involvement and encompasses activities that encourage parents at home: classes on how to further the parents' own education (GED, college classes, etc.). Parenting could take the form of home visits at the start of a school year and personal communication outside the school in the home of the student. In short, it is communication that allows the parents to access information that they might not seek out themselves.

Epstein's second level, *communicating*, focuses on increasing and maintaining solid transfer of information between home and school, with both sides being equal participants. This level involves conferencing, translating when needed, and sending notes back and forth between home and school to make sure that both parents and educators are well informed about the students and their education.

The third level of involvement, *volunteering*, entails parents and teachers working together. Volunteering could take place in school, with the parent serving an assistant, or out of school, with the parent acting as a field trip coordinator or supervisor. This involvement is more intense, as it requires more time and involves dealing with more children than just the parent's own child.

In the fourth level of involvement, *learning at home*, the school gives parents ideas, suggestions, assistance, and recommendations to strongly encourage them to be involved in the homework situations of their children. This might include the process of completing the homework, or it could involve the provision of information on how to set

up an area for the greatest productivity—whatever the parent needs is what the school provides to help the parent and student succeed in achieving positive homework results.

Decision making is the fifth level, in which parents become increasingly involved in the functions of the school and its decisions. This could involve a parent-teacher organization, a school council, or anything that allows parents to be a part of major decisions made by the school that impact the learning of the children.

In the sixth and final level, *collaborating with the community*, parents and educators are both looking for and working with any potential community resource that could benefit the students. Parents are often the greatest resource and networking ally of the school and can provide wonderful information to add to a “bank” of resources and services that everyone can use together and benefit from. This creates a true community where everyone helps everyone else.

Each category allows for involvement, but with each move from parenting toward collaborating with community, parents have more investment. This study was conducted to determine whether there is a reason for or whether there are factors that lead to the decision of parents to become more or less involved in the education of their children.

Epstein’s categories of involvement are all-inclusive. They allow for the categorization of parents who are minimally involved in the education of their children (those parents who are maintaining their job as parents), all the way up to the parents who are involved to the fullest extent (those parents who are involved in everything from school to home to the community). While Epstein has established clear categories of parental involvement for research, not all researchers have followed suit. Views about

and definitions of parental involvement are varied, creating difficulty in making this topic easily understood. The following section addresses definitions of parental involvement used in educational research.

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement, described by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), is both home and school based, with parents becoming players in the lives of students at home, with school work, and at school, with activities in the school building. When parents become players in the education of their children, the students are more likely to value that education as well (Jeynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005) and will be likely to achieve academically (Jeynes, 2005).

Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007) addressed the motivations of parents in their involvement in their children's education both at school and at home. This research showed that parents were most likely to become involved in school if they were specifically asked or invited to do so by their child or a teacher, whereas general invitations were ignored. Involvement decreased as the age of the child increased, but at every age, the invitation of a child was the pivotal factor in involvement (Green et al., 2007). Few solutions to the problem of low parental involvement in education have been suggested in research, so this study is of great importance.

Barton, Drake, Perez, St. Louis, and George (2004) researched parents' backgrounds and how they affected parents' ability and decision to be involved in their children's school and education. They described parental involvement as a "dynamic, interactive process in which parents draw on multiple experiences and resources to define

their interactions with schools and among school actors” (p. 4). Parental involvement is not merely the act of coming into the school building to volunteer to do what a teacher needs to have done. It is “a desire, an expression, and an attempt by parents to have an impact on what actually transpires around their children in schools and on the kinds of human, social, and material resources that are valued within schools” (Barton, Drake et al., 2004, p. 8). The researchers studied the effects of culture, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomics on parental involvement and formed a definition of how parents are involved based on their circumstances, relationships, and events that surround the interaction.

On its website, Child Trends DataBank (2003) defined parental involvement as “parent reported participation at least once during the school year in attending a general school meeting; attending a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher; attending a school event; or volunteering in the school or serving on a school committee”. The Family Strengthening Policy Center (2004) uses the following definition: “parental involvement occurs when parents actively, critically, resourcefully and responsibly contribute to promoting and developing the well being of their communities” in its website communication with parents and community members.

Epstein (2001) used a strategy of defining parental involvement with six strands: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. Although those definitions have been used in research, the one definition educators are required to follow and adhere to is the statutory definition given in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. It states that parental involvement is

regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring that parents play an integral role in their children's learning; That parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; That parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making, and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child. (Section A-1, No Child Left Behind [NCLB], 2002)

Psychologically speaking, children have a need to be spoken to, to have interaction with others, and to have relationships (Monastersky, 2007; Strother, 2007). Taken from a federal policy guide for assisting local agencies (U.S. Department of Education, 1996), the following shows the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships between schools and homes: "When schools work together with families to support learning, children are inclined to succeed not just in school, but throughout life" (p. xx). Parents working as partners in the education of their children are not just a mandate of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), but also part of district research and educational policy.

Creating Community Between Parents and Educators

Significant research reiterates the importance of parents in schools (Cordry & Wilson, 2004; Epstein, 1992, 1994, 1995; Hill & Taylor, 2004; Legace-Seguine & Case, 2010; Olatoye & Agbatagun, 2010; Ramirez, 1999, 2001; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Teachers and other members of the education community work very hard to foster academic success in children, but parents can play a much more valuable role on an

individual level, consequently making a larger academic impact than the school itself (Stewart, 2008). Parents who take active roles in their children's lives are likely to improve their children's attitude, behavior both in school and at home, and academic success (Carignan, Pourdavood, Feza, & King, 2006; Cheung, 2009; Hill & Tyson, 2009;).

Swick (2006) discussed the need for parents and schools to work together to create a culture of caring children, where educators should ideally welcome, honor and connect with families; where relationships are built; and where modeling of caring occurs so that families can literally see what caring means. Seda (2007) cited a study with a great summary of the benefits of parental involvement: "Children whose parents are involved with school are characterized by higher attendance rates, positive attendance rates towards school, positive behavior and increased positive interactions with peers" (Koonce & Harper, 2005, p. 56).

Other research has suggested that no matter what a community consists of, and no matter how it changes, improvement is possible. If schools and educators are consistent about maintaining a positive climate, work with all parties involved to have constant collaboration, and have the clear communication from the beginning of the year, the parents of students in the educational community will be involved in that community as well (Barrera & Warner, 2006).

Reducing mixed messages and miscommunication between school and home is one way in which parental involvement benefits students, parents, and schools. It also allows parents to reinforce teachers' messages about grades and the importance of

success overall. Working toward united goals at home and school improves academic achievement and lessens dropout rates (Weaver, 2007).

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Hill and Taylor (2004) listed two positive impacts of involvement that affect the whole family and school: an increase in social capital and social control. An increase in social capital involves an increase in the skills of the parents, which leads to improved ability to help their children with school and improved understanding of what the school expects as far as academics and behavior. The ability and desire to interact with the school community is a great benefit to both parent and child alike. Social control involves parents' ability to reiterate the school's expectations for behavior in the home. This allows consistency for the student and gives a clear message concerning what is important, which allows children to understand what is expected of them to be positive members of society.

The NCLB Act (2001) mandates that schools involve parents and be held accountable for that involvement. Some schools have changed their whole schedule or style of approaching parents and meetings with parents to improve the way in which parents understand the teachers, the school environment, and expectations (Comer, Ben-Avie, Haynes, & Joyner, 1999; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, & Hernandez, 2003).

It is important for parents to be involved in schools when their children are at a young age, and for that involvement to continue (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). This is very difficult, however. The trend of parental involvement drops off by 10%, from 77% to 67%, when children move from elementary to middle school; yet of the students who

graduate from high school, 88% still credit their parents as a factor in their accomplishment (Child Trends Databank, 1999). Students gain greatly from their parents' involvement in their academic lives, as seen by students graduating from high school crediting their parents. When parents are involved in education, the benefits to children include success academically and socially, as seen in the next section.

Research has shown the positive impact of parental involvement on parents, teachers, the community, and students. Parents grow in their relationship with their children and with the school system; teachers see overall growth academically and have a positive culture within the classroom as students are more invested; and positive relationships develop among parents, teachers, and the community.

For students, the positive impact of the involvement of their parents is reflected academically as they advance, and in the community as bridges and relationships between generations and different cultures are built (Barge & Loges, 2003; Cordry & Wilson, 2004; Epstein, 1992, 1994, 1995; Hill & Tyson, 2009; Olatoye & Agbatagun, 2010; Ramirez, 1999, 2001). Carpenter and Ramirez (2007) showed that parental involvement in education not only affects the students in the aforementioned areas, but also decreases dropout rates and is a significant factor especially for Hispanic students' academic success.

There are now federal mandates in place, namely NCLB (2001), which includes portions that insist that schools involve parents. This involvement is mandated to directly improve behavior, academic achievement, and school culture.

Shen, Washington, Palmer and Xia (2014) found that if parents were involved in open houses, parent-teacher conferences and any special events sponsored by the school, that school was much more likely to meet their adequate yearly progress goals. Improving parental involvement improves the school and the students, although there are challenges.

Differing Perceptions of Parental Involvement

While many researchers have applauded the benefits of parental involvement, conducting the research that explores parental involvement has proven to be difficult. Fan and Chen (2001) described some challenges associated with assessing studies conducted in the area of parental involvement. They delineated differences in definitions and levels of parental involvement upon which studies have been based, and included their final conclusion that the definition of parental involvement should encompass a wide variety of actions. These actions range from volunteering in school to including parents in decision-making, from parents conveying the importance of academics to their children to communicating with the children's teachers.

Fan and Chen (2001) highlighted discrepancies in literature and research on parental involvement, based on varying measurements of academic success, and varying measurements of involvement on the parents' part. Researchers have yet to standardize their own approaches to studying this school involvement aspect of parental behavior. Most studies are not empirical, leading to great misunderstanding and inaccurate generalizations. Fan and Chen conducted a meta-analysis of the correlation between parental involvement and the academic success of students. Their findings indicate that

there is great inconsistency in the research and literature. A greater correlation was found between involvement and a broad measurement (overall GPA) than between involvement and a more specific measurement (a specific class grade). Additionally, parents' expectations for success had a significant correlation with actual achievement. While both of these results are positive, discrepancies make reviewing and categorizing research difficult for others. Summarizing or drawing conclusions about parental involvement can be difficult as well, as all researchers are not using the same definitions or measurements. Although this problem presents itself as a data collection and analysis issue, there are other possible problems that arise when human perception has to be measured.

Perceptions of Stakeholders on Parental Involvement

Another potential problem with measuring parental involvement in schools is the perception of that involvement, from the perspectives of stakeholders (parents, teachers, students). Parents were found to perceive involvement as, in order of importance: monitoring academic progress, creating and maintaining personal relationships with the child's teachers, taking advantage of extracurricular activities offered, and developing community support systems (p.144). Students' perceptions of parental involvement were, again, in order of importance: helping with homework, encouragement, and interaction with the school. The student discussions clarified an interesting perspective on the least helpful forms of involvement: Students found it more of a hindrance than help when parents interacted with the school on a defensive level, criticizing the school or teacher for something. Finally, teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in levels of importance were communication with the school and with the students about school,

participation in educational activities, such as homework, supervising and parenting students, and discipline for the student (Barge & Loges, 2003). Communication is paramount, from the perspectives of students, parents and teachers.

Ramirez (2001) corroborated this finding, saying that the dominant topic of discussion among teachers about parents in school was communication. The negative aspects of parental involvement from the perspective of a teacher in Barge and Loges' study (2003) were negative communication, lack of support for the school and student, and lack of parenting skills. Students, parents and teachers all agreed (Barge & Loge, 2003) on what constituted successful environments and programs in this same study. All students, parents and educators agreed that academic grades were important. Also essential were personal goals for the students' futures, behavioral life skills, and interaction with positive, adult role models from the community and school.

Additionally, Claeson's study (2014) found that communication could solve many of the barriers to involvement perceived by parents. Communicating on a regular basis to include opportunities to be involved and relating to parents on a professional level were two of the findings.

The goals of students, parents and educators are clear, but the path to get there is still somewhat muddled. Building paths of communication must improve to allow the interaction between home and school to improve.

Communication Between Educators and Home

Communication between school and home is imperative for information passed regarding academics, such as report cards, for behavior—positive as well as negative, as

is communication regarding school events, such as field trips, concerts, or ceremonies. Tobolka (2006) noted that the teacher is required to send a great amount of information home by default, and calling home or work when students have forgotten or lost documents or information is an inconvenience. Tobolka gave parents a tutorial in the computer lab at her school, and was able to, thereafter, use the internet to communicate her information through email. When parents received more frequent contact through email, they were in the school building more often, students were completing and turning in homework more often, and wanted to make sure the teacher was sending home positive notes regarding their progress.

A relationship between parents and schools increases the academic achievement, the grades in conduct, and decreased the excused and unexcused absences from school (Laroque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011; Polovina & Stanistic, 2007). Unfortunately, the main reasons that the parents in this particular study had a relationship with the school were to make excuses for the students' absences, or to find help for failing students through the resources offered through the school; Parents were only involved when their children were in trouble. To offset the negative communication between school and home, O'Bryan (2006) advised schools start with communication about and an invitation to participate in extra-curricular activities. These activities tended to be less intimidating and less stressful for both parents and students than academic activities, and created a positive experience to build upon for future, academic conversations.

Weaver (2007) added that while teachers sometimes assume that parents are uninformed, ignorant or uncaring, reasons such as other responsibilities, health issues,

previous experiences and lack of communication may have significant influences on a parent's decision to be, or not to be, involved in school. Parents were not always choosing not to be involved or communicate; sometimes they were unable to do so. Teachers are not able to gauge the background experiences of parents. If parents had problems with other educators or environments in the past, they were, consequently, not as willing to actively participate in the education of their children. These problems cannot be changed, but could have been prevented to improve involvement.

Padgett (2006) suggested that if schools implemented specific policies, clear plans to improve parental involvement, and if the schools also identify and eliminate obstructions to parents being involved, such as time constraints (such as parents being unable to meet with teachers at the specific times offered by the school), the parental involvement in schools would improve greatly. The third step, according to Padgett, is to continually assess and revise the policies and plans so that they are as accurate and effective as possible. Finally, schools could fully involve the whole community. Businesses, who are members of the community although not parents, should have their opinions secured, thus making them a part of the school community, not merely the geographical community. Involving the broader community will assist in establishing greater connectivity with parents by building an investment of other stakeholders in the community, those other that work in the school building. Lines of communication are one of the most important areas to improve, a point agreed on by many researchers, including one of the leading in the field, Epstein, which is the theoretical foundation guiding this study.

Epstein's Work

While there are many differences in studies on parental involvement, there are areas of agreement. One of the most prevalent researchers in the field of parental involvement is Epstein who created categories (1995, 2001) that educational researchers can at least agree upon, or use as a basis for their own measurement of parental involvement in education. She gave six categories: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with community. These range from home-based involvement, such as parenting at home, providing for basic needs, raising children in safe environments, and giving children a foundation that will allow for success at school, even before they enter the doors their first year of kindergarten. Along with the basic needs being met comes communicating with the school from home, *and with the home from school*, which is a link sometimes missed. If communication is solid, involvement can then move to community-based, making school decisions as a parent leader, volunteering in the school community. This is a major transition, and can be made based on clear trust being built beforehand. Additional levels of Epstein's involvement in education are helping out at home with homework, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, helping everyone see their part in the education of the future society.

While Epstein's categories seem like an obvious progression of involvement from home to school, several limiting factors apply to urban parents being involved in the education of their children. These limitations may be in the form of socioeconomic situations, or a cultural or ethnic divide between school and home.

Socioeconomic Status of Families

One of the most important factors affecting parental involvement in schools is the socioeconomic status of the parents. Martin (2015) found that in low socioeconomic areas, educators recognized that the school culture was not inviting to parents, who did not feel welcome in many schools. Educators acknowledged that they did not recognize the smaller, less obvious involvement of these parents in the schools, and they wanted to improve in that aspect.

The effects of socioeconomic status are academic, in that the students tend to develop skills at a much slower rate, as well as far-reaching (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Children of low socioeconomic backgrounds struggle with the academic life required, but they also battle the quality of friends and the entire school and neighborhood environment that they are surrounded by (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

In the district highlighted in this particular study, 87.1% of families fall into the dramatically low socioeconomic category (DESE, 2009). In one study, there was a direct correlation between socioeconomic status and parent participation in school. Part of the reason that the socioeconomic status directly affects education is that the parents see no correlation between a better education and a better job or better social status later on in life. The expectation for the future is low. Students naturally absorb this low expectation from their parents and community (Reynoso & Tidwell, 1996).

Ruby Payne (2007) published work used by many school districts that addresses the role of poverty in education, how educators can deal with it, and how they can teach students to overcome it. The premise of her aha! Program is respect: respect for self,

respect for others. Her guiding principles include, among others, statements that all children can be educated, especially those in poverty; that people are our most important resource, regardless of race or culture; and relationships and education are necessary for children to move out of poverty (<http://www.ahaprocess.com/>).

The Indiana Project for Latin American Cultural Competency (IPLACC) at Indiana University also saw poverty and socioeconomic status as an issue for student academic success, but disagreed with Payne's approach, and the fervor with which she has been embraced by the educational community in their research entitled "The Trouble with Ruby Payne: How the aha! Process Works Against Developing Cultural Competency for Educational Success". They agreed with Payne in that working on understanding their students and the backgrounds from which they come is valuable. Schools should be empowering their students and giving them the tools with which to academically and socially succeed. The professional development of teachers and administrators in these areas is essential, teaching educators how to see differently. It allows teachers to see both their own perspective and the perspective of the families of the students. With only the lens of their own perspective, any comprehension of the students' situations or perspectives is unlikely. Teachers are expecting families to understand the education system, but are refusing to be educated themselves about the family systems impacting their work. Basing those professional developments and the consequent mindsets of teachers on the "culture of poverty" is one issue that the authors disagree with, saying that when a "culture of poverty" is inferred or stated, blame on the entire culture is also inferred or stated. Those who are a part of the culture are

automatically assumed to be responsible for getting into, and out of, the poverty. It is not the responsibility of anyone else but those involved to get out of the conditions of poverty. This leads to the teachers, who are generally middle- to upper-class socioeconomically, not caring as much because they are not personally involved in the struggles of a poor family. It is not their culture.

The Indiana Project for Latin American Cultural Competency research (2007) also stated that a “culture of poverty” is in effect and African American and Latin American families and cultures are seen as having less to offer, as they are a greater proportion of the poverty statistics than Caucasian families. The authors maintained that once again, these cultures are overlooked simply because of their differences in socioeconomics; the “richer” families are perceived as more important somehow. Inferiority is equated with poverty, a basic premise that must be changed. Addressing the issue of poverty is imperative if we as educators are to overcome it, but there must be a definite level of respect that is not merely respect for one aspect of a person’s life. Socioeconomic status is a major factor for many students, and although the rest of society may see poverty as a culture, the school system should not.

Socioeconomic status plays a major role in the way parents perceive the world. It changes perception of the world as they grow up, as they experience their own lives, and how they expect to be treated in the future. Unfortunately, that expectation is passed on to the education system (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). It is not the fault of the education system, but it is an expectation that educators have to deal with. Background knowledge is just as important outside the classroom as it is in a lesson.

Socioeconomic status affects the involvement of parents in different ways.

Arzubiaga, Rueda and Monzo (2002) found that the motivation and success of students is directly linked to the workload of the family. This study goes into even more detail in describing the workload, as students also have a workload themselves. Many older children are responsible for the younger siblings after school, decreasing the time and motivation to do homework. The basic need for the family is to enable the working family members to keep their jobs. Parents did not appear to realize that home environments should also be conducive to learning, specifically reading and literacy, and for education to be a priority.

In a similar study, Singh (1998) found that when the students worked, it impacted the academic achievement. Families too often had limited access to understanding the school and its accessibility, which unfortunately resulted in creating an environment of misunderstanding and miscommunication by default (Arzubiaga et al, 2002). Parents may have had a different perspective if there was a better relationship with the school community. The support of family being paramount, the home environment is one aspect of the family support that creates an even more supportive or non-supportive environment for students' academic success.

Successful Parental Involvement Programs

Civil and Bernier (2006) found that parent-led, parent advocated workshops were highly effective modes for not only involving parents, but allowing parents to learn the material, namely mathematics, that was highly intimidating before the workshops. This venue allowed parents to make mistakes in a safe environment, while at the same time,

bonding and growing in leadership as parents and community members. Parents were at the same level as the teachers, a change and improvement for many parents' self-esteem after a few meetings and classes. This research is a complete paradigm shift from the PTA President's quote, given earlier, and allows parents to be much more effective and play a much more important role.

Another approach to improving involvement is given by Logan and Feiler (2006). They studied teaching assistants going to the home (instead of parents coming to the school) and found that when the relationship between school and home was made in this way, on familiar ground for the parents, it was highly successful. Communication lines were opened in new ways so that parents were aware of events, routines, and even messages from teachers that they were unwilling to speak to in person. The face of the teaching assistant proved to be more trustworthy, friendly, and approachable.

Knowing the background and the struggles of their children, it is a struggle for many schools to identify strategies to involve parents. Even knowing the benefits of involvement, some parents cannot find the time or ability to come to school functions or to volunteer. At best, they can assist with schoolwork at home. One area that researchers are working on is out-of-school education involvement. Including this idea in their definitions of parental involvement is a focus that some researchers believe is important. This current study has taken into account the research of previous studies: the successful research, and those that brought underlying issues to light, such as that conducted by researchers finding that the different perspectives of parents may skew results unless planned for ahead of time.

Epstein and Sheldon (2006) summarized that programs to improve the involvement of parents, the community and the school must have seven specific qualities to be successful. Before all else, the researchers say that the programs must be termed “school, family, and community partnerships” so that all stakeholders realize how important they are. The term “parental involvement” puts the responsibility solely on the parent.

Secondly, the programs must be focused to solve specific problems, not to generalize and merely identify complaints. The programs must be acknowledged as integral pieces to the classroom and school environments and communities. They are not a separate entity, unrelated to the place in which they draw their life’s breath.

Successful programs of school, family and community partnerships are about equity. With that equity is a requirement for different levels of accountability as well as leadership at district and state levels. This ensures that outside, objective eyes can look at the progress being made by the program and give feedback on what is successful, and what needs to be refocused.

Finally, these programs must identify student success as a goal, and work toward increasing achievement and student improvement through the program. This is certainly the goal of every parent, teacher and community member, but identifying it clearly as a goal maintains clarity and vision of the purpose of the program. The success of the children must be the overarching goal.

The success of a program is not limited to Epstein and Sheldon’s clear plan for implementation. This research is exceptionally clear though, and sets a standard for other

researchers and educators to follow. Others can replicate the same ideas easily, which is important for the validity and reliability of research.

Another aspect of a successful parent involvement program, according to Strickland (2015) is making intentional, personal invitations to become involved. Increasing these invitations resulted in a strong, positive impact on involvement that takes place within the school, as well as a positive impact on home-based involvement in education. Instead of an expectation of involvement, the invitation to be a part of the educational community is one that is easier for parents to accept. Higher levels of school involvement, including support and resources, led to higher involvement on the part of parents (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

When parents initiate the interaction and involvement with school, programs are much more successful than programs that are initiated by the teacher or school because those schools are meeting their adequate yearly progress goals, and are staying off the lists of schools that need improvement (Ma, Shen & Krenn, 2013). The research in this field is difficult to sort through though, as not all researchers have the same perspectives.

Bringing Clarity to Previous Parental Involvement Research

Besides giving clarity to benefits of parental involvement, Hill and Taylor (2004) also cautioned future researchers in areas of involvement. They advised researchers to consider taking the perspectives of parents, teachers, and students to get a solid evaluation of parental involvement in schools. They also mentioned that parental involvement looks different in elementary schools than it does in high schools, and that difference should be considered when assessing how involved parents truly are.

Other research agreed that it is important that high school parental involvement not be compared to elementary school parental involvement (Machen, Wilson, and Notar, 2005). The students are in two very different age ranges, and while in elementary school, a child's parents are more likely to volunteer in the classroom, but in high school, the student's parents are more apt to help out with extracurricular activities. Students of both ages benefit greatly from the participation and activity in their lives. No matter how they participate, the participation of parents at any level is beneficial, and helping students succeed is the ultimate goal.

Socioeconomics plays a major role in the perceptions of relationships between school and home, according to Hornby & Lafaele (2011). These researchers found that parents who are in a working class family see a separation between themselves and the educational community, but middle class families perceive an interconnected relationship between themselves and the educational community. This creates a major barrier to the involvement of parents who are lower socioeconomic status. The study also found that on a larger scale, parental involvement programs that are well-funded have a higher success rate than those that receive little money (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). These programs provide more options to overcome the barriers, specifically of socioeconomics.

No one involved with education, students, parents, teachers, or administrators dispute the fact that it is a common goal to have students succeed academically. There are questions about how to support that academic success at different ages, in different demographics. This study highlighted a particular population of low socioeconomic,

urban families, and the involvement of the parents of the students that attended the schools in the district.

Summary

Increased parental involvement will bring increased academic success among other benefits. The discussion is about two different issues: why parents are not more involved than they are, and how schools and educators create the desire for parents to become involved. While parental involvement has been defined in research many different ways, Epstein (2001) has provided a means for categorizing the involvement of parents from working on homework with their children to working with and in the school to involving themselves in the community for the good of the education community and culture to which their child belongs. The culture and socioeconomic status of the population may affect the decision to become involved.

Communicating between home and school consistently is a positive solution to many of the problems that arise from misunderstandings because of cultural or socioeconomic differences between families and educators. Programs that have been successful in involving parents have been founded on good communication.

The next section describes the research methods research methods that were used in this study, methodology and specific details about the process of collecting and analyzing the data for the proposed study. The Section 4 reports on the actual findings of the study, and Section 5 reflects on the study, giving direction for future research.

Section 3: Research Method

Introduction

This study identified different aspects of parental involvement of parents of 5th graders in a school district based on Epstein's (1995) theoretical involvement model (parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community). It also identified factors that may relate to parents' choice to become involved or noninvolved in those categories.

This section focuses on the research methodology used in this study, including the research design and approach (i.e., a survey that was completed by parents) and the methods and procedures used to analyze the data obtained by the survey instrument. Additionally, the setting and sample are discussed, with a description of the population from which the sample was drawn, a rationale for the sampling method and sample size, and the eligibility for participants.

The instrumentation and materials used are also discussed in detail, including the name, type, and concepts measured by the instrument; how the scores were calculated; and how reliability and validity were assessed. This section also addresses how the instrument was completed by the participants, and how to access the resulting data when available. Finally, a description of the data that comprised each variable is provided, and the means for data collection and analysis are outlined in relation to the statements of hypotheses for the research questions. Finally, in this section, the protection of participants' rights is reviewed; the roles of the researcher, both past and present, are clarified; and those roles are addressed as to how they could impact the collected data.

Research Design

Kalof, Dan, and Dietz (2008) and Creswell (2003) argued that surveys provide researchers with measurable values of trends, opinions, or attitudes of a population by gathering information from a sample of that population. In this quantitative study, I used a survey to gain what Kalof et al. and Creswell called “data which tested a theory, not developed one” and gathered statistical information using a predetermined instrument. The quantitative design was chosen because of the basic premise that it is quantifiable, eliminating the need for anecdotal records to be kept and recorded and the variety of answers that could be given by subjects.

The data for this study needed to be representative of the entire city’s population. Given that obtaining data from every parent was not a rational research plan, a sample of parents was used to represent the population. The parents were given a survey designed by Cage (1995). This instrument had been used in other research (Anthony, 2008) and had been validated by the author, Cage. The survey has seven sections consisting of Likert-type scale questions and multiple-choice questions. The questions are categorized in different sections and seek demographic information about parents as well as parents’ feelings about school, activities for involvement, barriers that affect involvement, and a strategic plan for the future. The options for subjects’ answers are set up to facilitate the collection of clear data about demographic factors and parents’ opinions of school activities, allowing for a statistical analysis of any relationship between the two. The survey instrument allowed me to easily collect and process the data numerically, as it was more uniform than open-ended questions would have been (Babbie, 2004).

Setting and Sample

The research was conducted in a public school district in an urban area in northeastern Massachusetts. In this district, there are 15 elementary schools, seven middle schools, and eight high schools that serve 12,000 students. For the purpose of this study, the focus was on 11 elementary schools with fifth grade classrooms. There are approximately 8,900 students in prekindergarten through Grade 8. I chose to use the fifth grade as a sample of the elementary school because the parents of fifth graders are more likely to be involved in their children's education than the parents of older students (Hill & Tyson, 2009) and were therefore more likely to respond to the survey. The number of fifth grade students in the 11 elementary schools within the district was approximately 935. Based on a sample the Scale of Parental Involvement (Cage, 1995), standard deviation of 10.00, a sample of 50 was needed to detect a between-group difference of involvement between low and higher income parents of 10.00 with a power level of .80 (Lenth, 2015).

A convenience sampling method was used because of financial limitations restraining me and the district. Other sampling methods, such as giving surveys to all students in the elementary schools, would have been too inconvenient for all of the teachers involved, and the district mailing surveys to all students in the elementary schools would have been too costly. Other sampling methods were considered, but the great inconvenience to the district was taken into account, and those methods were consequently not chosen.

The data for the district's enrollment by race and gender were not available by grade, but according to information obtained from the district, 52.75% of the overall district is composed of male students while 47.25% of students are female. In the district, enrollment by race is as follows: 89.1% Hispanic, 6.3% White (not Hispanic), 2.6% Asian, 1.9% African American, and 0.1% Native American.

Instrumentation and Materials

The instrument used in this study, the Scale of Parental Involvement (Appendix A), was designed by Cage and has been used in several other districts to survey parental attitudes (Anthony, 2008; Cage, 1995). Used in several similar research studies, the instrument was designed to ascertain parents' views of education, demographic data, and reasons for involvement or noninvolvement in education. The instrument has been found to be both valid and reliable. A full review of the psychometric properties of this measure is presented in the Reliability and Validity subsection below. Based on other research using this survey (Anthony, 2008), it was chosen as the instrument most appropriate for this study. The survey measures several different attitudes about education from a parental perspective. The survey uses 67 questions to assess the opinions and backgrounds of fifth grade parents for the purpose of determining the factors affecting their involvement or noninvolvement in the education of their children. Reliability, the instrument's consistency, and validity, a measure of how well the instrument is measuring what it is intended to, were determined for this survey using the test-retest method. The results of this reliability assessment are summarized in detail in the Reliability and Validity subsection below.

First, the survey presented questions about personal information, such as the respondent's relationship to the student (parent, grandparent, foster parent, etc.) and demographic questions concerning age, race, education, and socioeconomics. There was also a question regarding languages spoken at home. Each of the questions in this section was multiple choice with predetermined answers to choose from, such as *African-American, Caucasian (not Hispanic), Asian, Hispanic, or Native American*.

In the second section of the survey, the respondents were asked to answer 10 questions regarding their opinions about school with an agreement choice: *strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree*. The questions in this section refer to the parents' feelings of comfort in dealing with the school, the school environment, and their roles in the school, such as volunteering in the classroom or feeling welcomed in the school environment, all of which would be considered Epstein's parenting, communicating, and volunteering.

After completing the section on their feelings about the school, parents completed the third section regarding the extent to which they were involved in educational activities. Questions addressed activities such as reading to their children, monitoring homework, and attending parental workshops, as well as the frequency of attendance of school meetings or activities. These questions were answered with the same agreement scale as in Section 2. Additionally, in Section 3, parents were given the opportunity to identify in the form of a checklist activities that they had been part of, or were planning to be part of. These questions dealt with several of Epstein's categories: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, and decision making.

In Section 4, the parents answered questions related to Epstein's category of volunteering, in the context of barriers to involvement such as activities, their work hours, and communication between home and school that may inhibit parents from participating in their children's education more frequently, or in greater depth.

Finally, in the last section, parents were given an agreement scale and asked whether different options, such as time of day, would allow them to participate more. This section worked to identify strategies to improve involvement.

To score and calculate the responses to the survey, Likert-type scales were used. Because every question was either multiple choice or on a scale of some sort, a number was assigned to each answer, as there were no open-ended questions. For example, items in the first section had answers that were multiple choice. To score these answers, I assigned 0 to blank answers, 1 to the first choice, 2 to the second choice, 3 to the third, and so on.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of this instrument was established by Cage (1995), using test-retest with 10 parents filling out the survey, which was administered twice, 1 week apart. After the 10 parents filled it out, 72 parents were given the instrument, and based on this third administration, revisions were made (Cage, 1995). Finally, 30 parents were given the survey 1 week apart, and Pearson product-moment coefficients were computed and found to be reliable (Cage, 1995). Using a test-retest method of determining reliability, the r value for the comfort factors ranged from .67 to .94, $m = .82$. Cage determined that the r value for the communication items ranged from .83 to .96, $m = .90$, and the r value for

the involvement items on the survey ranged from .76 to .96, $m = .89$, and finally, the r values for the barrier items ranged from .46 to .94, $m = .85$. The r value for the activities completed was .97. The population tested by Cage in determining reliability was not the same as in the current study and is listed as a limitation. However, given the very high reliability coefficients obtained in that study, even if a somewhat lower level of reliability was obtained for the present study's sample, it would still be relatively high.

Finally, Carmines and Zeller (1979) stated that reliability reduces error variance, which increases the likelihood of rejecting the null when it is false. As a result, low levels of reliability will make obtaining a significant finding more difficult and will not contribute to a Type 1 error.

Creswell (2013) as well as Brewer (2014) discussed several types of validity. *Internal validity* is used to describe the “truth value” in a concluded cause-effect relationship between the independent and dependent variables—the degree to which a researcher can be sure that the changes in dependent measures were caused by the independent measure. *External validity* is used when referring to the “generalizability” of a study's results, or their ability to be replicated. Overall, the authors use validity to determine relevance and true representation of data.

To establish content validity, Cage (1995) consulted four university faculty members and a field practitioner, and based on their input, revised items. The instrument was then distributed to 30 parents, who gave feedback on the quality, clarity, and readability of each item.

Data Collection

To conduct research in this district, the research design for the study was approved by the superintendent's office. The district approval was given in the form of an approval letter (Appendix D). With the superintendent's permission, the survey (Appendix A) and information letter (Appendix B) were mailed home to parents of each fifth grade student, with completion implying consent.

Approval was based on some restrictions, which included initially not having access to names or addresses, (printed envelope labels or lists of addresses were requested) which resulted in the inability to mail surveys. After the first IRB approval from Walden, the district changed its position and granted access to names and addresses for each student. Consequently, after a second IRB approval based on the new distribution method, introduction letters and surveys were mailed out to every household with a fifth grade student.

The introduction letter, in both Spanish and English, gave background information on myself and the study, in addition to explaining the rights of the participants. The parents were asked to answer each question on the survey and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope to me by the date requested, which was a week after distribution. A week later, a reminder to respond to the survey was sent to each parent.

Research Questions

To maintain the focus of the study, these questions and hypotheses pertaining to parental involvement in children's education were used to guide the research:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference in parental involvement based on the socioeconomic status of the parents?

H₁: Parents with a family income over \$50,000 will exhibit significantly more involvement in children's education as measured by parents' self-reported involvement (Cage, 1995) than those with a family income of \$50,000 or less.

H₀: Parents with a family income over \$50,000 will have no difference in involvement in children's education as measured by parents' self-reported involvement (Cage, 1995) than those with a family income of \$50,000 or less.

RQ2: What barriers prevent parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status (those with a family income of \$50,000 or less) from being involved in their children's education?

RQ3: What school district strategies do parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status feel would minimize barriers to involvement in their children's education?

As noted above, Research Questions 2 and 3 were exploratory in nature and were addressed using descriptive statistics. As a result, no hypotheses were proposed for either question.

Gall, Gall, and Borg (2003) stated that quantitative research is designed to gain and analyze data quickly, with validity and reliability. Surveys, the researchers said, are excellent ways to gain data about a large population by questioning a sample of that population and then drawing conclusions based on the data gathered and analyzed. In this study, the data were analyzed and conclusions drawn based on the involvement or

noninvolvement of parents, and if that involvement or noninvolvement correlated with any of the demographic factors.

Data Analysis

RQ1: What is the relationship between socioeconomic status and involvement in children's education?

This question was examined through a statistical test of H1: Parents with a family income over \$50,000 will exhibit significantly more involvement in children's education as measured by parents' self-reported involvement than those with a family income of \$50,000 or less. A one-tailed independent-sample *t* test was used to determine if higher income parents reported significantly higher levels of involvement ($p < .05$) than did lower income parents.

RQ2: What barriers prevent parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status (those with a family income of \$50,000 or less) from being involved in their children's education?

RQ3: What school district strategies do parents with lower levels of socioeconomic status feel would minimize barriers to involvement in their children's education?

As noted previously, only data obtained from participants with incomes of \$50,000 or less were examined for Research Questions 2 and 3. Additionally, because these were exploratory research questions, they were addressed through examination of the descriptive statistics for the items pertaining to barriers to parental involvement. Specifically, responses to Section 4, Items 34-48, which examined the barriers that effect parental involvement, were examined. Each of these items began with "I would volunteer

if ...” and finished with different hypothetical situations for parents to consider, such as “if they gave me more important work to do” (Appendix B).

The third research question used the final section, called the strategic plan by Cage, to identify different strategies that would improve parental involvement, or minimize barriers. The final Items, 49-67 gave 19 ways for schools or teachers to help parents become more involved. These included options such as Item 49, “Send more information home about ways I can be involved,” and Item 53, “Give me activities I can do at home with my child.”

Protection of Participants’ Rights

Research was conducted only after permission was granted from Walden University, IRB # 09-13-11-0101072. When parents received the survey to fill out, they also received a letter clearly delineating the study and their right to participate or not participate in it. I introduced myself, and my relationship to the school district as a teacher was clearly stated. The letter described the purpose of the study, and the negative and positive consequences for participating in the survey. The letter stated that participants would remain anonymous and that their answers to the survey would be confidential.

All communication was given in both Spanish and English to clarify for the Spanish-speaking parents, and a contact number was given if there were further questions. The translation was completed by a Spanish-speaking liaison from one of the schools in the district. Confidentiality was ensured by not numbering or in any way identifying the printed documents received or filled out by the participants. Surveys were

collected without names or other identifying data as they were mailed back to me, and stored them in a locked cabinet at my home office where they will remain for five years.

Summary

In this section, I have reviewed the methodology for the study. The instrumentation, materials, research design, setting and sample, data collection and analysis, and participant privacy protection were discussed. The next section describes the research itself and the tools, and data analyses used to answer the research question.

Section 4: Results

Description of Sample

The survey was distributed to all parents of fifth graders in the district in the spring of 2011. The total number of surveys distributed was 994, and the total number of surveys returned was 134, with seven of the returned surveys left blank. Of the surveys returned, 127 gave valid data to be analyzed. This resulted in a response rate of 13%. The acceptable response rate for mailed surveys is 50% based on the University of Texas at Austin research (2007). The response rate for this study was clearly below that recommendation so may not be representative of the population studied. Of the 127 participants who responded with completed surveys (seven surveys were returned completely blank), one person did not answer Question 2 about gender. Four people left the question about age blank, eight left the question about ethnicity blank, and eight left the education level question blank. The frequency and percentages of answered questions are delineated in Table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Data as a Percentage of the Sample

Characteristic	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	13	9.7
Female	113	84.3
Age		
20-25	0	0
26-30	18	13.4
31-35	45	33.6
36-40	32	23.9
41-45	17	12.7
46 or more	11	8.2
Ethnicity		
African American	2	1.5
Asian	2	1.5
Caucasian (not Hispanic)	10	7.5
Hispanic	111	82.8
Native American	1	.7
Other	0	0
Education level		
Eighth grade	14	10.4
High school	56	21.8
College courses	28	20.9
AA degree	7	5.2
BS/BA degree	10	7.5
MA/MS degree	2	1.5
PhD/EdD/MD	2	1.5
Yearly income		
Below \$50,000	114	91.3
\$50,000 and above	9	8.7

Respondents were asked a question regarding their yearly income (Table 2). Of all the participants who answered the question, 91.3% were categorized as having an income under \$50,000, and 8.7% were under \$50,000 in income.

Two respondents (1.5%) did not answer the question about what languages were spoken at home, but of those that answered, 94 (70.1%) answered that they spoke Spanish at home, 29 (21.6%) answered that they spoke English at home, and two (1.5%) responded that they spoke a language other than English or Spanish at home. Participants were not asked if they exclusively spoke a language other than English at home. These data are found in Table 2.

Research Question 1: Socioeconomic Status and Involvement

Data from the 134 participants were analyzed to determine the relationship between socioeconomic status and involvement. Seven of the respondents did not complete the survey but sent a blank copy back to me. Additionally, it was found that some participants did not answer all questions. These surveys were not discarded, but the data from completed questions were included in the analysis, regardless of sample size, which differed from question to question.

First, the income question was analyzed. To determine low income for this status, the Government Poverty Guidelines (Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, 2014) were used. In looking at Massachusetts's guidelines, it was determined that any family under \$50,000 would be determined to be in poverty. The guidelines are dependent upon number of children in the family, and the selection of \$50,000 was used because no

matter how many children there were, \$50,000 was the highest possible value of income for the family. This income cut-off then reflected any family making less than that.

To analyze the data from participants with an income of \$50,000 or less, involvement needed to be summarized. To do this, the data were divided into two groups: participants with an income of over \$50,000 or more in one group, and participants with an income of \$50,000 or less in another group. The survey questions regarding involvement were summed for each participant, and an independent-samples *t* test was performed. This information is summarized in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2

Group Statistics

Income group	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Std. err
Under \$50,000	116	43.16	9.25	.85
Over \$50,000	11	40.82	17.12	5.16

Note. *n* = number of participants in each income group, Mean = summed mean of Scale of Parental Involvement (Cage, 1995) scores, *SD* = standard deviation, and Std. err = standard error mean. Entries under *n* do not contain data from participants who left this information blank.

Table 3

Independent-Samples t Test

	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Significance (1-tailed)	<i>SE</i>
Equal variances not assumed	.447	10.5	.664	5.23

When the *t* test was performed, Levene's test for equality of variances was assessed to determine if the level of variance in the two income groups was significantly

different. A statistically significant difference in variance was obtained ($p < .001$). As a result, it was necessary to use the degrees of freedom adjustment required when equal variances in the two conditions cannot be assumed. The resulting t value (.447) was not statistically significant ($p = .447$), so the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The results do not indicate that the level of involvement for the participants making more than \$50,000 was greater than it was for participants making less than \$50,000.

Research Question 2: Barriers to Involvement Among Low-SES Participants

To determine what the barriers were for low-SES participants' involvement, descriptive statistics for each of the Scale of Parental Involvement items relating to this were analyzed for that group of participants. The scale used for each item was as follows: 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *disagree*, and 4 = *strongly disagree*. The results are shown in the table below:

Table 4

Mean Agreement Levels for Barriers That Affect Parental Involvement Among Low-SES Parents

Barrier	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Don't like school and teachers	106	3.06	.84
Need to have important work to do	105	3.06	.74
Cultural heritage	106	2.92	.76
Need to feel appreciated	110	2.87	.81
Need to contact teacher easily	107	2.66	.85
Transportation	108	2.64	.88
Need encouragement from school	109	2.63	.87
Child care	109	2.56	.93
Being tired	110	2.55	.91
Confidence in skills	108	2.47	.91
Need to be asked	113	2.42	.84
Need messages from teacher	111	2.34	.86
Need to feel needed	110	2.20	.85
Flexible schedule to be involved	109	1.91	.71
Work hours	112	1.76	.81

Note. 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*.

Analysis of these data suggests that the barrier with the greatest impact on ability to be involved was the work hours of parents, followed closely by the need for flexible scheduling that would allow the parents to be involved. Parents did not see the teachers or schools to be barriers and did not feel that they needed to have important work to do. These results show work and available hours of involvement to be greater barriers than opinions about educators or the educational environment.

Research Question 3: Minimizing Barriers

Participants' views of how schools could help involve them more were assessed using descriptive statistics. Items on the Scale of Parental Involvement relating to strategies for minimizing barriers asked respondents to rate how much they agreed that

each strategy would increase their involvement in their children's education. Agreement was assessed using a scale of 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *disagree*, and 4 = *strongly disagree*. The strategies with the lowest agreement levels were allowing parents to call the teacher at home, taking steps to make parents feel more welcome, and asking parents how they would like to be involved. Strategies with high agreement levels included sending information home more often and providing training of different varieties. Parents said that they desired training in understanding the content being taught, in how to be a leader, and in monthly seminars with topics chosen by the parents themselves.

Table 5

Mean Low-SES Parent Agreement Levels for Parental Involvement Improvement Strategies

Improvement strategy	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Allow parents to call teacher at home	103	2.57	1.00
Make me feel more welcome	107	2.39	.83
Ask how I want to be involved	108	2.04	.72
Send information more often	110	1.98	.81
Provide monthly seminars	92	1.89	.58
Provide parent training, topics chosen by parents	105	1.87	.64
Help me understand content being taught	112	1.82	.63
Teach parents how to serve in leadership positions	103	1.80	.58
Hold meetings for parents and teachers to meet	105	1.78	.69
Consider single-parent, divorced, blended families	103	1.77	.69
Provide methods and materials for me at home	111	1.76	.66
Allow me to "shadow" my child for a day	109	1.76	.65
Activities with parents, children and teachers	104	1.73	.54
Give me activities to do at home	114	1.73	.73
Provide more activities for parents of at-risk	102	1.72	.65
Plan activities around parents' work hours	106	1.67	.62
Students understand importance of involvement	110	1.66	.62

Note. 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*, 4 = *disagree*, 5 = *strongly disagree*.

Summary

This study addressed three research questions revolving around the topic of parental involvement. The first research question examined socioeconomic status and tested it as an indicator of involvement to determine if the level of involvement of parents whose income was greater than or equal to \$50,000 was greater than the involvement of parents whose income was less than \$50,000. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference in amount of involvement between the two groups when divided by income. The second research question focused on parents' barriers to involvement. The greatest barrier was work hours, though participants rated all barriers as "important." Finally, the third research question addressed possible strategies for improving involvement. Parents identified many options that they thought would improve involvement, including more frequent communication, providing more activities and instruction to do at home, and providing more time for training, teaching, and meeting.

Section 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to use Epstein's model (1995, 2001, 2009) to identify barriers to involvement and strategies to improve involvement among low-income parents. Section 5 contains the research questions, hypotheses, a summary of the study, findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future studies. The research questions addressed whether and how socioeconomics impact involvement. Specifically, I examined opinions about school, activities for involvement, barriers to involvement, and strategic planning for involvement.

Discussion

Parental involvement is important because of its benefits academically, socially, and behaviorally (Polovina & Stanistic, 2007; Smith, 2006; Stewart, 2008). Parents directly affect students' academic, behavioral, and social success in school (Hill & Taylor, 2004; Jeynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). This connection between home and school is of paramount importance in a district in crisis. Academic achievement as measured by state test scores in this district is consistently not meeting the levels of AYP established by the state.

Research shows that while NCLB (2002) requires parental involvement to be a part of every school's improvement plan, the relationship and communication between home and school build the bridge and relationship that lead to student success (Carignan, Pourdavood, & King, 2006; Cheung, 2009; Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Epstein (1995, 1998, 2001, 2005) studied parental involvement in a way that was categorical, including the involvement of parents in different ways, such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. In relation to this study, these categories allow a broadening of involvement to include working on homework with the child, supervising and chaperoning fieldtrips, and making decisions about the school with other members of the community.

The ideas of Epstein were the foundation for the survey (Cage, 1995) used to answer the research question “do the factors of ethnicity, education, and socioeconomics impact involvement,” looking specifically at attitudes about school, activities for involvement, barriers to involvement, and strategic planning for involvement. The data collected from the surveys were analyzed using SPSS.

Findings

This study used a survey based Epstein’s model (1995, 2001, 2009) to identify barriers to involvement and strategies to improve involvement among low-income parents. All participants felt that involvement was important and that they wanted to be an important part of the education of their child(ren). Results obtained from the analyses conducted for each research question are discussed below.

RQ1: Is there a difference in parental involvement based on the socioeconomic status of the parents?

Research Question 1 was addressed using an independent-groups *t* test. The second and third research questions were examined in Sections 2-5 of the survey. Parents

answered the section about their feelings about school, their thoughts about activities for involvement, the barriers to involvement, and strategic plans for future involvement by generally agreeing with the statements in those sections. With regard to H1, the findings did not support rejection of the null hypothesis. Results obtained from an independent-samples *t* test provided no evidence that income has an effect on parental involvement.

It is very possible that the null hypothesis could not be rejected because of a large portion of the sample being below the poverty line. In this study, 90% of the participants were at or below the poverty line. As a result, even the top half of the sample would still be considered low income. In the future, both low- and high-income participants will be needed so that comparisons based on groups of equal size across the full range of socioeconomic status can be examined.

RQ2: What barriers prevent parents from being involved in their children's education?

Although the income range obtained in the sample made it difficult to test the hypothesized effect of income on parental involvement, it did provide descriptive statistical data that can be applied to this population. It can be noted that every barrier presented to parents was verified as an obstacle to involvement, with work hours having the greatest impact. Additionally, participants wanted more flexible hours in which to be involved. Parents did not see their liking of the school and teachers as a barrier, nor did they feel that needing important work when they were involved was a barrier for them.

RQ3: What school district strategies do parents feel would minimize barriers to involvement in their children's education?

Among the potential strategies for increasing parental involvement included in the survey, parents liked the idea of more information being sent home more frequently. They also identified several types of training as means for minimizing barriers: monthly seminars, parent training in areas that they as parents identified as important, and content training so that they understood what was being taught in the classroom. Participants identified these factors as being the most important strategies to help them become more involved. Specific means by which districts can implement the strategies found to be important are noted below.

Recommendations for Further Study

In analysis, more questions were created than answered. This study must be read as in introduction to parental involvement in this district. More research must be conducted to analyze the barriers individually, as well as the strategies schools could use to improve involvement. This study has provided an introduction. Further research must address both the barriers and the possible solutions that parents advocated.

In the larger picture, because the null hypothesis could not be rejected, it is possible that the further research addressing the recommendations of barriers to avoid and strategies to improve involvement could be applied to both low- and high-income families.

Implications for Social Change

The findings of the study may contribute to positive social change because they suggest that there is no need to start with explaining the importance of parental involvement because parents understand this. Moreover, there is no need to encourage further parental participation because parents already desire this. The major change that is needed is to find a way to implement that involvement in a way that is accessible to all parents. In this study, parents identified areas that can be addressed to minimize barriers to their involvement, as well as strategies schools might try to improve parental involvement. In addressing the issues brought to light in this study, it is possible that both low- and high-income families will benefit from any changes brought about.

Recommendation for Action

The results of this study indicated that all parents desired to be involved, regardless of their income. The educators in this district, knowing this information, can now move ahead with encouraging professional development for teachers. As the front line of communication between home and school, teachers hold a great amount of power in their hands. Specifically, the findings for Research Question 3 suggest that districts should implement the following strategies to maximize parental involvement.

1. *Send more information home more often.* More frequent information sent home is needed for parents to engage in discussion and assistance on homework.

2. *Ask parents how they want to be involved.* A short survey asking parents to identify what they can bring to the education community would identify strengths for schools to work with.
3. *Help parents understand content being taught.* Short tutoring sessions for parents would help communication between home and school and would help parents assist in homework.
4. *Provide methods and materials for parents to use at home.* When possible, allow parents to have access to notes and materials used in content instruction in the classroom.
5. *Provide monthly seminars.* A monthly seminar would allow for parents to receive information and have breakout sessions to meet specific needs (e.g., provide content instruction, access to community resources, or discussion of upcoming events).
6. *Allow parents to “shadow” their child for a day.* Parents will be able to have better conversations about school when they know what it looks like and feels like. This also allows for transparency on the part of the classroom teacher.
7. *Hold meetings for parents and teachers.* Intentionally setting aside time for face-to-face communication is important.
8. *Teach parents how to serve in leadership positions.* Train parents in what leadership looks and sounds like so that expectations are clear and the vision of the school is understood and followed through on their level as well.

9. *Consider single-parent, divorced, and blended families when designing and implementing strategies.* Make it clear that strategies presented will work with any family dynamic. Do not assume anything about family dynamics.
10. *Provide activities that parents, children, and teachers can do together.* Give opportunities for cooperative learning, not just in the classroom, but also in the home.
11. *Plan activities around parents' work hours.* Offer meeting times that are later in the day, not right after school, or early in the morning, so that parents can be involved either before or after work.
12. *Provide parent training, with topics chosen by parents.* Have parents identify what is important to them, and follow through with training in those areas.
13. *Provide more activities for parents of at-risk students.* Allow parents and students to have responsibilities and be physically involved in the school building before or after school, when risk is higher.

In addition to these specific actions, it is important to note that parents made the point of desiring more information more often. Professional development needs to involve background instruction about the value of the connection between the home and school environments for the student, explaining the benefits of a strong connection and the problems that can arise from a weak connection. Time should be given to teachers early in the school year to establish connections with students' parents or guardians, to initiate a connection before any trouble arises in school. This time given to teachers can underscore how valuable it is to make this connection. It is not a waste of time, but an

investment for the future. Establishing a strong connection sets up a healthy classroom and learning environment and sets the foundation for a healthy community.

Recommendation for Future Study

With this study as a starting point, it is clear that there is a need for future research on how to bring parents opportunities to be involved. More attention needs to be given to the identified factors that create barriers to parents being involved. Schools must know what different options to present. What factors could make the biggest difference? The barrier of work hours must be considered.

If the desire is to have parents participating in activities in the school building, those activities may need to be scheduled after work hours. Parents identified work hours as the primary impediment to involvement, so it would make sense to address this barrier first. Do parents need more opportunities to be involved with homework in a capacity beyond just checking it? Schools must give instruction in how to be involved in this area. Identification of the goals that parents have and the goals that schools have for parental involvement should intersect with acknowledgment of work hours as an important scheduling consideration.

Do parents need more communication between school and home, or do they need better communication? Is communication not in the parents' language? Is it getting sent home in a backpack and not being delivered to the parents? What are the stumbling blocks to involvement? The parents who were a part of this study made it clear that they were willing participants in the social change that is called for. They just need the chance

to take part. Understanding the background reasons for noninvolvement may lead to answers about how to involve parents and avoid pitfalls that waylay the best laid plans.

Another step that should be taken is moving toward educating parents. In their responses, parents identified the need for activities for “at-risk” students and families. They also requested training in areas that were self-identified. Parents need to have input regarding the offerings of classes. To make these classes empowering, ownership of topics must be given to parents.

This study identified areas of weakness in how schools currently approach parental involvement. The participating parents were able to clearly identify impediments to their involvement, and they gave responses that showed their desire to be a part of their children’s education. While this information is valuable, it is far from conclusive. Further study is required to address each of the barriers individually, in addition to working with a more inclusive sample.

To start, a study containing both low- and high-income parents must be considered. It is important to compare the findings of this study of primarily low-income participants to a study of a more diverse sample. One additional consideration that should be addressed in future research is validating the survey used here in its Spanish translation. Making sure that the translation used is the same as would be spoken at home would allow both the English and Spanish versions to be assured of valid results. The current study gave good information, but it is merely a starting block for further research. While the educational level of the parents was not examined in this present study, it could

be an important factor because parents with low educational levels may lack the ability to assist their children with homework.

Conclusion

There is no question that parental involvement is important to the success of children in school. Research throughout the years has come to the same conclusion: Parents who are involved in their children's education help to increase academic achievement, positive behavior, and motivation to improve (Epstein, 1987, 1992, 2001; Jaynes, 2011; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).

Creating an educational environment and culture that are conducive to parental involvement has been difficult. The leaders of the district in this study have consistently desired involvement but have lacked the information needed to make that involvement a reality. The results of this study can be a foundation for conversations and discussions about moving forward with knowledge of what parents have identified as factors that encourage or discourage them from being a valuable part of their children's schooling.

Parents who participated in this study identified work hours as a hindrance to their ability to participate in school events, meetings, and activities. They requested more activities that they felt were more appropriate to their needs, such as activities for "at-risk" students and families. They wanted to be part of the decision-making process for the content of trainings and classes offered to them. They desired to be part of the education of their children by becoming more educated themselves, and they wanted to be important to the process as decision makers.

Knowing that parents want involvement that is meaningful provides the perfect first step for the district. Providing activities that occur before or after work hours, asking parents what they would like for classes, and allowing parents to serve in leadership positions in the educational culture are starting points for increasing involvement. If parents feel empowered, if they feel that they are important to the schools, they will be more likely to fulfill important parental involvement roles.

Moving forward, further studies should include samples of low- and high-income participants and should address barriers one by one, isolating each to find more specific information about each individually. It would also be valuable to follow the process the district, or even specific schools, use to improve parent involvement and the consequent success of students. Turning this study from fact-finding research to a success story involves more than just identifying data, and a case study following the process would be valuable to other schools for future use.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation to Participate (English)

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a parent of a fifth grade student, you are invited to participate in a research study being done by a former teacher in the district. This study is about Parental Involvement and the goal is to help schools reach parents and therefore help students succeed!

Please read this entire letter so you will know what the study is about, and what your rights are as a participant. The researcher is Megan Stewart, a doctoral candidate at Walden University and former 8th grade math teacher in the district. I am hoping to learn more about how schools can work with parents and the community to help students do their very best in school, and this survey will help me get that information.

As a participant...

Your role:

You will be asked to fill out a survey mailed to you. The survey will be in both English and Spanish, you may choose the survey most convenient for you to fill out. Please complete the survey thoughtfully, as this information is very valuable to me as an educator and as a student. The survey should take about fifteen minutes to complete.

After you fill out the survey, place the survey in the envelope given to you, and mail the survey, in the stamped, self-addressed, sealed envelope to the researcher.. This will ensure that your answers will remain anonymous. Please complete the survey within one week.

You are a volunteer:

Your participation is not required; it is completely voluntary. There are no negative consequences for choosing not to participate in this study. You are not required to answer every question. If you do not understand a question or are not comfortable answering a question, please call me at the number listed below, or you may skip that question.

Risks and benefits:

You should know that some of the questions ask for somewhat personal information. This data is anonymous and will not be connected to you or your family in any way. It will be used only for this study.

The benefits of filling out this survey are that the results will be used to help the schools learn how to better reach parents and help them be involved. There will be no compensation for your participation.

You will remain anonymous, and your information confidential:

This study has been approved by the district, and the surveys, when filled out, will be placed by you, in a sealed envelope. This envelope will be opened by no one other than the researcher, who will keep all surveys locked in a cabinet, and the computer files will be password protected. The information gained from this study will be used for no other purpose but this study.

The researcher:

The researcher is Megan Stewart, and if you have any questions about this study, you can contact her by calling 978.686.2899, or email her at megan.stewart@waldenu.edu. Her chair at Walden University is Dr. Stephanie Helms, who can be reached at shelms@waldenu.edu. Walden University's Research Participant Advocate is Dr. Leilani Endicott, 800-925-3368, ext. 1210. If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Dr. Endicott. Walden University's approval number for this study is **09-13-11-0101072** and it expires on **September 12, 2012**.

In order to protect your privacy, no signatures will be collected, and your completion of

the survey will be your consent if you choose to participate.
You may keep this consent form, or make a copy for your records.

Appendix B: Parental Involvement Survey (English)

**PART 1
PERSONAL INFORMATION****DIRECTIONS: Please describe yourself by checking your answer(s) to each item.****1. Your relationship to students(s):**

- Mother
- Father
- Stepmother
- Stepfather
- Foster mother
- Foster father
- Aunt
- Uncle
- Grandmother
- Grandfather
- Guardian

2. Gender:

- Male
- Female

3. Age:

- 20-25
- 25-30
- 30-35
- 35-40
- 40-45
- 45 and above

4. Race:

- African-American
- Asian
- Caucasian (non-Hispanic)
- Hispanic
- Native American

5. Marital Status:

- Married
 Divorced
 Widow/Widower
 Single

6. Level of Schooling:

- Eighth Grade
 High School
 College courses
 AA degree
 BA/BS degree
 Graduate courses
 MA/MS degree
 Ph.D., Ed.D., M.D.

7. Employment:

- Unemployed
 Employed Part-time
 Employed Full-time

8. Household Income

- \$30,000 and below
 \$30,000-40,000
 \$40,000-50,000
 \$50,000-60,000
 \$60,000-70,000
 \$70,000-80,000
 \$80,000-90,000
 \$90,000 and above

9. Grades in which you have children attending:

- Kindergarten
 1st
 2nd
 3rd
 4th
 5th

10. The language spoken at home is:

- English
 Spanish
 Other (What language is spoken?) _____

PART 2
YOUR FEELINGS ABOUT SCHOOL

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate how much you agree with each item. Circle:

(SA) Strongly Agree
(A) Agree
(D) Disagree
(SD) Strongly Disagree

11. I usually feel comfortable when I am in my child's school.

SA A D SD

12. I usually feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher.

SA A D SD

13. I should be more involved in my child's school activities.

SA A D SD

14. My involvement in school activities is important to making my child feel good about school.

SA A D SD

15. My child's school is preparing my child well.

SA A D SD

16. I feel that the school has enough volunteers.

SA A D SD

17. I do not have the time to be involved in my child's activities at school.

SA A D SD

18. I would like to be more involved in my child's activities at school.

SA A D SD

19. The school makes parents feel welcome.

SA A D SD

20. The school welcomes volunteers.

SA A D SD

PART 3
ACTIVITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

DIRECTIONS: Please indicate how much you agree with each item. Circle:

(SA) Strongly Agree

(A) Agree

(D) Disagree

(SD) Strongly Disagree

21. I read to my child in the evening.

SA A D SD

22. I take my child to the library at least once a month.

SA A D SD

23. I monitor homework most evenings

SA A D SD

24. I attend assemblies, concerts, sports events and other special activities that the school sponsors.

SA A D SD

25. I attend parent workshops.

SA A D SD

26. I talk with my child every day about school/class activities.

SA A D SD

27. I stay in close contact with my child's teacher.

SA A D SD

28. I attend PTA meetings

SA A D SD

29. I participate in school activities weekly.

SA A D SD

30. I participate in school activities monthly.

SA A D SD

31. I participate in school activities when needed.

SA A D SD

32. I volunteer to help at school.

SA A D SD

33. Check each activity for which you have/will volunteer at your child's school.

- Chaperon field trips
- Reading tutor
- Book fair helper
- Storytelling
- Library helper
- Room parent
- Fundraising
- Preparing materials for the teacher
- Organizing classroom parent volunteers

PART 4
BARRIERS THAT EFFECT PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Please indicate how much you agree with each item. Circle:

(SA) Strongly Agree

(A) Agree

(D) Disagree

(SD) Strongly Disagree

34. I would volunteer more if I did not work during the day.

SA A D SD

35. I would volunteer more if school activities were more flexibly scheduled.

SA A D SD

36. I would volunteer more if I had a way to get to the school.

SA A D SD

37. I would volunteer more if I were not so tired.

SA A D SD

38. I would volunteer more if I had child care.

SA A D SD

39. I would volunteer more if the school had activities related to my heritage.

SA A D SD

40. I would volunteer more if I received encouragement from the school.

SA A D SD

41. I would volunteer more if I were asked.

SA A D SD

42. I would volunteer more if I received messages from the teacher.

SA A D SD

43. I would volunteer more if I could contact the teacher easily.

SA A D SD

44. I would volunteer more if I felt needed at the school.

SA A D SD

45. I would volunteer more if I were sure that I had the skills.

SA A D SD

46. I would volunteer more if my help was appreciated.

SA A D SD

47. I would volunteer more if I liked the school and teachers.

SA A D SD

48. I would volunteer more if they gave me important work to do.

SA A D SD

PART 5
STRATEGIC PLAN

In order to identify strategies that will improve parental involvement, please indicate how much you agree with each item.

(SA) Strongly Agree
(A) Agree
(D) Disagree
(SD) Strongly Disagree

49. Send more information home about ways I can be involved.

SA A D SD

50. Send information home more often.

SA A D SD

51. Make me feel more welcome in school.

SA A D SD

52. Ask me in what ways I would like to be involved.

SA A D SD

53. Give me activities I can do at home with my child.

SA A D SD

54. Help students to understand how important it is to have their parents involved

SA A D SD

55. Help me understand the subjects that are being taught.

SA A D SD

56. Provide a “shadow day” so I can go through a typical school day with my child.

SA A D SD

57. Provide methods and materials for me to use at home.

SA A D SD

58. Send home questionnaires periodically so I can evaluate my child and offer my ideas.

SA A D SD

59. Hold informal meetings where parents and staff can get to know each other.

SA A D SD

60. Plan more school activities at times when working parents are available.

SA A D SD

61. Have more activities to help single-parent, divorced, and blended families.

SA A D SD

62. Allow parents to call the teacher at home.

SA A D SD

63. Provide more activities which include parents, children and teachers.

SA A D SD

64. Provide more activities for parents of children who are at-risk.

SA A D SD

65. Provide parent training on topics chosen by parents.

SA A D SD

66. Teach parents how to serve in leadership positions.

SA A D SD

67. Provide monthly seminars.

SA A D SD

PLEASE RETURN THE SURVEY WITHIN 7 DAYS.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Appendix C: Invitation to Participate (Spanish)

Estimado Padre/guardian,

Como padre de un alumno(a) del quinto grado, usted esta invitado a participar en un estudio de investigacion realizado por una ex maestra en el distrito. Este estudio es sobre la participacion de los padres y la meta es ayudar a las escuelas a contactar a los padres y asi ayudar a los estudiantes a tener exito!

Porfavor lea esta carta completa para que pueda entender de que se trata este estudio de investigacion, y cuales son sus derechos como participante. La investigadora es Megan Stewart, candidata a un doctorado en la Universidad de Walden y ex maestra de matematicas de 8vo en el distrito. Yo espero aprender mas sobre como las escuelas pueden trabajar con los padres y la comunidad para ayudar a los estudiantes a dar lo mejor de ellos en la escuela, y esta encuesta me ayudara a obtener esta informacion,

Como participante...

Su parte:

Se le pedira llenar una encuesta que fue enviada a usted. La encuesta sera en Ingles y Espanol. Usted puede escoger el idioma que sea mas conveniente para usted. Por favor complete esta encuesta con precausion, ya que la informacion es de mucho valor para mi como educadora y como estudiante. La encuesta le tomara alrededor de quince minutos en completar.

Despues de llenar la encuesta, coloquela en un sobre que se le dara sello y envio a la investigadora a la direccion estampada en el sobre. Esto asegurara que sus respuestas se mantengan anonimas. Por favor complete la encuesta en una semana.

Usted en un voluntario:

Su participacion no es obligatoria; es completamente voluntaria. No Habra ninguna consecuencia negativa si usted decide participar en este estudio. Usted no tiene que contestar todas las preguntas. Si usted no entiende una pregunta o no se siente comodo contestando las preguntas, por favor llameme al numero indicado al final de la carta, o usted puede evadir la pregunta si asi lo desea.

Riesgos y Beneficios:

Usted sabe que algunas de las preguntas son un tanto personal. Estos datos son anonimos y no seran conectados con usted o su familia en ninguna manera. Solo sera usado para realizar este estudio.

El beneficio de llenar esta encuesta es que el resultado ayudara a las escuelas a aprender como contactar a los padres y ayudarlos a que se involucren mas con sus hijos. No Habra compensacion monetaria por su participacion.

Usted continuara anonimo, y su informacion totalmente confidencial:

Este estudio ha sido aprobado por el distrito, y la encuesta una vez llena sera colocada por usted en un sobre totalmente sellado. Este sobre sera abierto solamente por la investigadora, quien mantendra las encuestas cerradas en un gabinete, y la informacion sera protegida en la computadora con una contrasena. La informacion obtenida solo sera usada con el solo proposito de realizar este estudio.

La investigadora:

La investigadora es Megan Stewart, y si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio, usted puede contactarla llamando al 978. 686.2899, o envíe un correo electronico a megan.stewart@waldenu.edu. Su supervisora en la Universidad de Walden es Dr. Stephanie Helms, quien puede ser contactada en Shelms@waldenu.edu. Dra Leilani Endicott mediadora de los participantes en investigaciones de la Universidad de Walden. 800-925-3368, ext. 1210. El numero de aprobacion por Walden University por este estudio es **09-13-11-0101072** y esto expiro en **12 de Septiembre de 2012**.

Con el fin de proteger su privacidad, no firmas se recogerán, y la realización de la encuesta será su consentimiento si decide participar
 Usted puede quedarse con la forma de consentimiento, o puede hacer una copia para sus archivos

Estimado Padre/guardian,

Como padre de un alumno(a) del quinto grado, usted está invitado a participar en un estudio de investigación realizado por una ex maestra en el distrito. Este estudio es sobre la participación de los padres y la meta es ayudar a las escuelas a contactar a los padres y así ayudar a los estudiantes a tener éxito!

Por favor lea esta carta completa para que pueda entender de que se trata este estudio de investigación, y cuáles son sus derechos como participante. La investigadora es Megan Stewart, candidata a un doctorado en la Universidad de Walden y ex maestra de matemáticas de 8vo en el distrito. Yo espero aprender más sobre como las escuelas pueden trabajar con los padres y la comunidad para ayudar a los estudiantes a dar lo mejor de ellos en la escuela, y esta encuesta me ayudara a obtener esta información,

Como participante...

Su parte:

Se le pedirá llenar una encuesta que fue enviada a usted. La encuesta será en Inglés y Español. Usted puede escoger el idioma que sea más conveniente para usted. Por favor complete esta encuesta con precaución, ya que la información es de mucho valor para mí como educadora y como estudiante. La encuesta le tomará alrededor de quince minutos en completar.

Después de llenar la encuesta, colóquela en un sobre que se le dará sellado y envíelo a la investigadora a la dirección estampada en el sobre. Esto asegurará que sus respuestas se mantengan anónimas. Por favor complete la encuesta en una semana.

Usted es un voluntario:

Su participación no es obligatoria; es completamente voluntaria. No habrá ninguna consecuencia negativa si usted decide participar en este estudio. Usted no tiene que contestar todas las preguntas. Si usted no entiende una pregunta o no se siente cómodo contestando las preguntas, por favor llámeme al número indicado al final de la carta, o usted puede evadir la pregunta si así lo desea.

Riesgos y Beneficios:

Usted sabe que algunas de las preguntas son un tanto personal. Estos datos son anónimos y no serán conectados con usted o su familia en ninguna manera. Solo será usado para realizar este estudio.

El beneficio de llenar esta encuesta es que el resultado ayudara a las escuelas a aprender como contactar a los padres y ayudarlos a que se involucren más con sus hijos. No habrá compensación monetaria por su participación.

Usted continuará anónimo, y su información totalmente confidencial:

Este estudio ha sido aprobado por el distrito, y la encuesta una vez llena será colocada por usted en un sobre totalmente sellado. Este sobre será abierto solamente por la investigadora, quien mantendrá las encuestas cerradas en un gabinete, y la información será protegida en la computadora con una contraseña. La información obtenida solo será usada con el solo propósito de realizar este estudio.

La investigadora:

La investigadora es Megan Stewart, y si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de este estudio, usted puede contactarla llamando al 978. 686.2899, o envíe un correo electrónico a megan.stewart@waldenu.edu. Su supervisora en la Universidad de Walden es Dr. Stephanie Helms, quien puede ser contactada en Shelms@waldenu.edu. Dra Leilani Endicott mediadora de los participantes en investigaciones de la Universidad de Walden. 800-925-3368,

ext. 1210. El numero de aprobacion por Walden University por este estudio es **09-13-11-0101072** y esto expiro en **12 de Septiembre de 2012.**

Con el fin de proteger su privacidad, no firmas se recogerán, y la realización de la encuesta será su consentimiento si decide participar

Usted puede quedarse con la forma de consentimiento, o puede hacer una copia para sus archives

Appendix D: Parental Involvement Survey (Spanish)

Primera parte
Información Personal

Dirección: Por favor describese marcando su respuesta en cada espacio

1. Su relación con el estudiante (s):

- Madre
- Padre
- Madrastra
- Padrastro
- Madre de crianza
- Padre de crianza
- Tía
- Tío
- Abuela
- Abuelo
- Guardián

2. Género:

- Masculino
- Femenino

3. Edad:

- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-45
- 46 o más

4. Raza:

- Africano-Americano
- Asiático
- Blanco (no- Hispánico)
- Hispánico
- Nativo Americano
- Other: _____

5. Estado Civil:

- Casado (a)
- Divorciado (a)
- Viudo/Viuda
- Soltero (a)

6. Nivel Escolar:

- Octavo Grado
- Escuela Secundaria
- Titulos de Universitario
- Asociado

- Licenciatura
 Titulo de postgrado
 Maestria
 Doctorado

7. Empleo:

- Desempleado
 Empleado Tiempo parcial
 Empleado Tiempo completo

8. Ingreso del Hogar

- \$31,000 o Menos
 \$31,000-40,999
 \$41,000-50,999
 \$51,000-60,999
 \$61,000-70,999
 \$71,000-80,999
 \$81,000-90,999
 \$91,000 o Mas

9. Niveles en los cuales sus niños (a) asisten:

- Kindergarten
 1st
 2nd
 3rd
 4th
 5th

10. idioma que se habla en el hogar:

- Ingles
 Espanol
 Otro(Que idioma se habla) _____

Segunda Parte

Sus sentimientos sobre la Escuela

Direccion: Por favor indique que tan de acuerdo esta con cada pregunta. Circule:

- (SA) Extremadamente de acuerdo
 (A) De acuerdo
 (D) Desacuerdo
 (SD) Extremadamente en desacuerdo

11. Usualmente me siento comodo (a) cuando voy a la escuela de mi hijo (a).

SA A D SD

12. Usualmente me siento comodo (a) cuando hablo con el maestro(a) de mi hijo.

SA A D SD

13. Deberia estar mas envuelto en las actividades Escolares.

SA A D SD

14. Mi Participacion en las actividades es importante para hacer que mi hijo(a) se sienta bien en la escuela

SA A D SD

15. La Escuela esta preparando bien a mi hijo.

SA A D SD

16. Creo que la escuela ya tiene suficientes voluntarios.

SA A D SD

17. No tengo tiempo para participar en las actividades escolares.

SA A D SD

18. Me gustaria poder participar mas en las actividades de la escuela.

SA A D SD

19. La escuela hace que los padres se sientan bienvenidos.

SA A D SD

20. La escuela da la bienvenida a los voluntarios.

SA A D SD

Tercera parte
Actividades para Participar

DIRECTIONS: Por favor indique que tan de acuerdo esta con cada pregunta. Circule:

(SA) extremadamente de acuerdo

(A) De acuerdo

(D) Desacuerdo

(SD) Extremadamente Desacuerdo

21. Leo con mi hijo (a) todas las noches.

SA A D SD

22. Llevo a mi hijo(a) a la biblioteca por lo menos un vez al mes..

SA A D SD

23. Superviso las tareas casi todas las noches

SA A D SD

24. Asisto a las asambleas, conciertos, eventos de deportes y otras actividades especiales que la escuela patrocina.

SA A D SD

25. Asisto a los talleres de padres.

SA A D SD

26. Hablo con mi hijo(a) todos los dias sobre la escuela/ actividades en la clase.

SA A D SD

27. Mantengo contacto con el maestro(a) de mi hijo(a).

SA A D SD

28. asisto a las reuniones de PTA (Asociacion de padres y maestros)

SA A D SD

29. Participo en las actividades de la escuela semanalmente.

SA A D SD

30. Participo en las actividades de la escuela mensualmente.

SA A D SD

31. Participo en las actividades de la escuela solo cuando es necesario.

SA A D SD

32. Ayudo como voluntario(a) en la escuela.

SA A D SD

33. Marque las actividades en la cual ha participado le gustaria participar en la escuela.

___ Chaperon en los Paseos

___ Tutor de lectura

___ Ayudante en las ferias de libros

___ Leer cuentos

- Audante en la libreria
- Salon de padres
- Recaudacion de fondos
- Preparar los materiales para los maestros(a)
- Organizar el salon de padres voluntarios

Cuarta parte
Barreras que afectan la participacion de los padres

Por favor indique que tan de acuerdo esta con cada pregunta. Circule:

- (SA) Extremadamente de acuerdo
- (A) De acuerdo
- (D) Desacuerdo
- (SD) Extremadamente desacuerdo

34. Participaria mas como voluntario si no trabajara durante el dia.

SA A D SD

35. Participaria mas como voluntario si el horario de las actividades escolares fuera mas flexible.

SA A D SD

36. Participaria mas como voluntario si tuviera alguna manere de llegar a la escuela.

SA A D SD

37. Participaria mas como voluntario si no estuviera tan cansado(a)

SA A D SD

38. Participaria mas como voluntario si tuviera cuido de nino.

SA A D SD

39. Participaria mas si las actividades de las escuela se relacionara mas sobre mi cultura.

SA A D SD

40. Participaria mas si recibieras mas animos de parte de la escuela.

SA A D SD

41. Yo Participaria como voluntario si me preguntan.

SA A D SD

42. Participaria como voluntario si recibiera mensajes del maestro(a).

SA A D SD

43. Participaria mas como voluntario si contactar al maestro(a) fuera mas facil.

SA A D SD

44 Participaria como voluntario si sintiera que la escuela lo necesita.

SA A D SD

45. Participaria como voluntario si estuviera seguro(a) que tengo la capacidad.

SA A D SD

46. Participaria como voluntario si mi colaboracion fuera mas apreciada.

SA A D SD

47. Participaria como voluntario si me gustara la escuela y los maestros(a).

SA A D SD

48. Participaria mas como voluntario si me dieran trabajo importante que hacer.

SA A D SD

Quinta parte
Plan estrategico

Con el fin de identificar estrategias que mejoren la participación de los padres, por favor indique que tan de acuerdo esta con cada pregunta

(SA) Extremadamente de acuerdo

(A) De acuerdo

(D) Desacuerdo

(SD) Extremadamente desacuerdo

49. Enviar mas informacion a la casa sobre la manera que puedo estar mas involucrado.

SA A D SD

50. Enviar informacion a la casa con mas frecuencia .

SA A D SD

51. Quiero que me hagan sentir bienvenido en la escuela.

SA A D SD

52. Preguntenme de que manera me gustaria estar involucrado.

SA A D SD

53. Deme actividades que yo pueda hacer en casa con mi hijo(a).

SA A D SD

54. Ayudar a los estudiante a enternder que tan importante es tener a sus padres invoulcrados en la escuela.

SA A D SD

55. Ayudeme a comprender las materias que se estan enseñado.

SA A D SD

56. Organizar un "dia de sombra" para que pueda pasar un dia tipico en la escuela de mi hijo

SA A D SD

57. proveer metodos y materiales que yo pueda usar en casa.

SA A D SD

58. Envieme a la casa cuestionarios periodicamente para yo pueda evaluar a mi hijo y proveer ideas.

SA A D SD

59. Organizar reuniones informales donde los padres y maestros tengan la oportunidad de conocerse.

SA A D SD

60. Planear las actividades a la hora en que los padres estan disponibles.

SA A D SD

61. Organizar actividades para ayudar a padres solteros(a), divorciados y familias mezcladas.

SA A D SD

62. Permitir que los padres llamen a los maestros(a) a la casa.

SA A D SD

63. Organizar mas actividades que incluyan a los padres, maestros y ninos.

SA A D SD

64. Organizar mas actividades para los padres de ninos que se encuentran en cualquier tipo de riesgo.

SA A D SD

65. Proveer entrenamiento en temas escogidos por padres.

SA A D SD

66. Enseñar a los padres como servir en posiciones de liderazgo.

SA A D SD

67. Proveer seminarios mensuales.

SA A D SD

Por favor devuelva esta encuesta a la investigadora en un plazo de 7 días

Muchas Gracias

Appendix E: Permission to Use Instrument

Subject : Survey

Date : Mon, Aug 23, 2010 05:10 PM CDT

From : cherylcecage@aol.com

To : megan.stewart@waldenu.edu

Yes, you may use my survey for your dissertation. It has been 15 years since I designed it. Also you may cite me as you stated. Great luck with your work.

Dr. Cheryl Cage

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry