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A Case Study on Parent's Perceptions of Their Role in the Educational Process

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Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

 A school district in rural Alabama has encountered a lack of parental involvement, which

research shows could have a deleterious effect on student achievement. The purpose of

this qualitative case study was to explore parents' perceptions about their involvement

and the impact of that involvement on students' academic achievement. The conceptual

framework that informed this study was Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism. The

research questions addressed the parents' perceptions of their role in the education

process as well as the effectiveness of the district's 2 parental involvement programs. A

purposeful sample of 6 parents of students at an elementary school in Grades 3 through 5

participated in open-ended interviews. Data were transcribed, member checked, and then

inductively coded for emergent themes. The findings suggested that parents believed their

involvement was important, as was a strong home and school relationship. These themes

were used to develop 3 days of parental involvement workshops, designed to help

improve participation in the district's parental involvement programs and improve family

and community relations. This study may help students, teachers, administrators, parents,

and community agencies identify strategies to reduce the lack of parental involvement

and increase student academic success.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my husband, Leroy Miles, Jr., and my daughters, Jo'n-nae and Brianna Miles. I can never thank you enough for all of the love and support you have given me throughout this journey. The three of you have been my cheerleaders from the very beginning. When I wanted to give up, you guys were always there to say, "Come on, you can do it." I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the sacrifices that were made for me to be able to take this educational journey. God blessed me with the best husband and daughters. I will always love you.

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I would like to acknowledge my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for all the wonderful things he has done in my life.

I would like to thank my wonderful husband, Leroy, for his unconditional love, his words of encouragement, and for being my #1 cheerleader when I wanted to give up.

A special thanks to the Wind beneath my Wings, Jo'n-nae and Brianna. I thank you for being understanding and helping me through this journey. I am very blessed to have you all call me mama.

I would like to thank Dr. Dennis Lawrence, my committee chair, for being my shoulder to lean on and my sounding board. Thanks to my committee members, Dr. Lynn Varner and Dr. Sydney Parent, for all the suggestion and comments. Some suggestions and comments caused some tears to flow, but I know they were to improve the final project. I would also like to acknowledge my sisters, Nan, Veronica, Janet and Karol, my best friend, Sequita, and my Dallas County Schools family Hattie and Ebony, for all of their love and support.

Table of Contents

iii

Section 1: The Problem

Introduction

Parental support and involvement can be an important adhesive that binds a community and its educational institutions. While working in a rural area, I observed a number of academic deficiencies that might have been attributed to the lack of support from parents. Programs have been developed to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education as well as strengthen their perceptions about parental involvement. The purpose of this qualitative research was to gather parental perceptions about parental involvement and to identify ways to effectively implement parental involvement programs to help improve academic achievement in a rural Alabama school district. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) defined *parental involvement* as "the participation of parents in regular two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities" (NCLB, 2002, p. 1). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2010) described parental involvement as activities such as assisting a child with homework, financial support, moral support for the teacher, and emotional support for the student. Many causes, such as living in low-socioeconomic, financially depressed, poverty stricken neighborhoods in the area, could be a source of the decrease in engagement of parents in this community (Rapp, 2012).

Because of a lack of parental involvement, the school district in this study hired two parent facilitators to implement a pair of parental involvement programs. The programs, called Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (H.I.P.P.Y) and "I Care," were designed to motivate families to take part in the educational process. This project study provided a series of three 8-hour parental involvement workshops

(Appendix A) to the school district on how to improve parents' involvement and their perceptions about the value of their involvement in the educational process. The study was conducted to gain knowledge of parental perceptions in an intermediate elementary school that serves students in Grades 3 through 5. The participants in this case study were parents of the students enrolled in this school. These participants were chosen in light of Cripps and Zyromski's (2009) observations that parental involvement declines as students mature. According to Cripps and Zyromski, when students are in primary school, parental involvement is more prevalent than when students are in the higher grade levels. As students' levels of maturity progress through middle school, parents begin to relinquish some parental control by creating opportunities for students to become more independent and self-sufficient, thus releasing some of their involvement in student activities (Cripps & Zyromski, 2009). The children in this study fell into the time period when the decline begins.

Definition of the Problem

Parents play the primary role of educator in the early years and can have a great influence throughout their child's education by involvement in schools (The Impact of Parental, 2008). Involved parents can have an immensely positive impact on their child's learning and overall school experience (Coleman & McNeese, 2009). When children know their parents' expectations, they will usually strive to meet those expectations and make their parents happy. Parental involvement has a substantial effect on the success from adolescence even into adulthood (Peters, 2008). According to Hornsby and Lafaele (2011), barriers to involvement that parents face include having insufficient time to take

on other responsibilities by participating in their children's education, or feeling uncomfortable with the school staff.

Thus, although a parent being actively involved is an integral part of a student's academic performance, one school system located in rural Alabama lacked the support of parents in the educational process of enrolled students. Locally collected data suggested that parents were not committed in helping to educate their children ("I Care Now," 2013). An indicator of the lack of parental involvement at this elementary school in rural Alabama was the annual fundraisers. Parents' volunteering efforts were declining with every sale. The sign-in sheets from the monthly parenting meetings and parent-teacher organization (PTO) meetings reflected low participation. To change the downward trajectory of involvement, the district initiated two programs to encourage parents to participate more effectively in the educational process. To assist in combating the problem, the school district implemented two parental involvement programs. One of the programs implemented by the school system is called "I Care."

The "I Care" curriculum "is a comprehensive curriculum enabling families, schools and communities to simultaneously teach, reinforce, and model good character" (Solomon, 2010). "I Care" measures critical success factors such as parental participation, parental involvement, parental training, effective teacher-parent interactions, dominance of character, and public engagement in individual improvement. Although this program is offered to parents, one intermediate elementary school in this area, with 248 students in Grades 3 through 5, struggles with parental involvement. According to the longitudinal data over a 2-year academic period of 2010-2011 and

2011-2012, this school district's "I Care" program showed a 16% increase over the 2 years that parents were involved in educating their children (I Care Now, 2013).

A second established program within the school district targeted the idea of motivating parents to partake in the academic achievement of their students is the H.I.P.P.Y. program. Two appointed parent facilitators within the school district oversee the H.I.P.P.Y. program. The H.I.P.P.Y. coordinator and two facilitators educate parents so they can become more involved in their children's education. The parent facilitators hold monthly meetings with parents about topics in education to keep them abreast of the latest trends, and they also hold weekly computer education classes provided at surrounding schools to educate parents of early adolescents in an effort to bridge home and school community relationships. In working with parents, the H.I.P.P.Y. coordinator and parent facilitators stress the importance of parents' presence at the schools and importance of parents reinforcing school policies and procedures with their children.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2010) described parental involvement as occurring when parents are assisting in children's education by being actively involved at the school level in ways, such as serving on advisory committees and helping with the decision-making process. The "I Care" program provided monthly reports of events and opportunities for parental involvement and provided the district with results of the various family activities the parents and students were participating in each month. In this study, six parents were interviewed to obtain their perceptions on the efficacy of the parental involvement programs as well as other questions about how to improve parental involvement as part of the case study.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

The study's rural school district is located in south central Alabama. Data from the parental involvement survey revealed many of the students in this area, known as the Black Belt for its fertile black soil and agricultural history, live in impoverished low socioeconomic communities with a large African American population. The adults in the community have for the most part a low educational level; many are high school drop-outs. The district school system has three high schools, three middle schools, and six elementary schools. One elementary school in this district was the school of focus in this case study. According to the Alabama State Department of Education, this school serves 248 students, and the poverty rate is 97.14% (Alabama State Department of Education/Report, 2011). The participants in the research were the parents of the third through fifth grade students in this school.

The local problem the school faced was that parents were not actively participating in school-related programs; they were slow to take advantage of the H.I.P.P.Y. program and the" I Care" program. Both the H.I.P.P.Y and "I Care" programs exist solely to encourage and support parental involvement. The sign-in sheets from the local school's monthly parenting meetings, PTO meetings, zone meetings, and local school- related activities all showed a lack of parental involvement. Through open-forums with parents across the district, supervisors had identified reasons parents were not involved enough, including working more than one job to provide for their families. An analysis of the monthly feedback forms and parent questionnaires from the "I Care"

program over a span of 3 years suggested that some parents lacked the knowledge to assist their children with school activities.

A study on the "I Care" program was conducted by Elliott (2011) at three schools across several states with more 300 students involved. The results showed that when the students of parents who were engaged in the learning process showed greater gains in English and math than children whose parents were not involved (Elliott, 2011). According to Epstein (2009), data from studies has suggested "that school may be able to increase student attendance in elementary school by implementing specific family and community involvement activities" (p. 308). Epstein (2009) also suggested "the most effective forms of parental involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children in learning activities at their perspective schools" (p. 40).

The district used "I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y. to help prepare parents to make sure that students are being supported at all levels. Solomon (2010) stated that the "I Care" program is used to see what positive activities the parents and children are involved in monthly. Students were given parental involvement questionnaires at the start of school year. Questionnaires were sent home to be completed and required a parent's signature prior to being returned to homeroom teachers. The monthly district parental involvement reports and student questionnaires from the "I Care" program indicated that parents were not spending positive and productive time with students outside of school ("I Care," 2013). The purpose of this study was to interview six parents of students in Grades 3 through 5 at one of the elementary schools in the district to identify their perceptions of the two parental involvement programs and their role in the educational process. From these data, the district developed strategies and techniques that could be effective in

helping parents comprehend the crucial duties they have in the scholastic achievement as well as evaluating the programs being used by the school district.

Evidence of the Problem from the Professional Literature

Dauber and Epstein (1993) conducted a study with 2,300 inner-city elementary and middle school students to see how the school district promoted parental involvement. Attitudes and actions of the school personnel had a more noteworthy effect on parental contributions than the parents' financial status, levels of education, race, or previous school volunteering experience (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). A positive school community partnership is essential to impact parental involvement.

Lagace and Case (2010) explored the correlation between parents being involved and how participation in extracurricular activity could affect a child's well-being and scholastic achievement in elementary school. Seventy-two children participated in the study, with an average age of 10, and their parents participated. The results projected children's happiness and academic abilities with a little parent pressure and support, along with additional activities. In a follow-up study, Lagace and Case (2010) evaluated the difference between those children with the least amount of activities compared to those children with the greater amount of activities. The results were analyzed to determine the impact of extracurricular activities and parental involvement on the positive outcomes in childhood.

Radzi, Razak, and Sukor (2010) directed an initial study of early elementary school teachers' observations and concerns about inspiring parents' participation in an effort to increase academic achievement. The study focused on the following areas of parental involvement: correspondence, child rearing, volunteering, home engagement,

school governance, helping with decision making, and community involvement. Based on the data gathered from the participants' responses to the survey, the level of parental involvement was adequate. The respondents indicated the area of preference was parent communication.

Loera, Rueda, and Nakamoto (2011) concentrated on demonstrating the connection between parents being involved in reading and the student's motivation. The research questions guiding this study were the following: (a) to what degree are Latino parents engaged in educating their child? (b) How is Latino parental involvement linked to their children's education (Loera et al., 2011)? Analysis of the results showed that the Latino parents showed a balanced level of participation in their child's literacy and education (Loera et al., 2011).

Trask-Tate and Cunningham (2010) identified the societal encouragements in the lives of Black teenagers that impact strong academic outcomes. Two hundred and six Black students were studied to decide if parental involvement is a barrier in relation to inadequate school support and high academic expectations (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010). According to the findings high levels of educational support and parental engagement enabled the improvement of high educational potential. For males, low parental involvement and high SES positively influenced academic expectations. The findings also indicated that the parental involvement has conflicting effects on academic outcomes for African American males and females (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010).

Coleman and McNeese (2009) examined the interrelationships between the academic success of fifth grade students, the guardians' engagement, and the students' enthusiasm. Data revealed that scholarly success and student inspiration were directly

related, signifying that increasing the motivation was possibly connected to increasing academic achievement (Coleman & McNeese, 2009). On the other hand, the inverse relationship linking parental involvement and student achievement suggested that a growth in parent participation was related both to assessing both student motivation and academic achievement (Coleman & McNeese 2009). Thus, results revealed a need for policy reform and practice. For example, guardians should consider the effect of their contributions on their students in primary school and start to survey whether their students' success is based on their support. Participants should be urged to consider these variables from their individual encounters.

According to Theodorou (2008), the idea of parental involvement has been progressively growing with philosophers and politicians in different countries as a way to enhance student academic performance. Considering ethnographic data, Theodorou investigated the kind of modern procedures and philosophies of parental engagement in Cyprus. Collecting research data on parent perceptions of parental involvement programs and the parents' influence on student academic success is essential. This study was done by exploring teacher and parental perceptions of immigrant parents' involvement in the educational process (Theodorou, 2008).

George and Mensah (2010) explored the effect of parental contribution in homework on children's scholastic achievement. The authors also looked at the contributions of the parents in activities of the students both in and out of school as parental involvement (George & Mensah, 2010). Better relationships among the parents and school would promote improved student's attitude, attendance, and academic success (George & Mensah, 2010).

Jacobson and Ramisetty-Mikler (1999) studied the H.I.P.P.Y. program and how the parents take part in the child's learning process, the educational opportunities provided by the parent to the student, and the manner in which the student's school adapts and functions at school. The participants in the study consisted 353 parents and 94 teachers. Parents were seeing their children reading and looking at mores books but the students were doing it without encouragement from their parents (Jacobson & Ramisetty-Mikler, 1999).   The study revealed that 85.5% of parents stated that the H.I.P.P.Y. program has helped them become more aware of the importance of reading (Jacobson & Ramisetty-Mikler, 1999).

This case study gathered parents' perceptions to find strategies to increase involvement in the H.I.P.P.Y and "I Care" programs. These two parental involvement programs that are in place utilize the following strategies: parental involvement support classes at a convenient time and parent volunteer program which will allow the parent to come into the schools and work with the faculty and students. A critical goal of NCLB federal legislation was to increase parental involvement in the school (NCLB, 2002).

Definitions

Academic performance: Academic performance the number of students scoring proficiently in the areas of reading and math (Alabama Department of Education, 2011).

ESEA: The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) is the U.S. federal legislation creating academic accountability in the state school systems. (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2010).

H.I.P.P.Y.: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (H.I.P.P.Y) is a program that works with families to help prepared children to enter into kindergarten (H.I.P.P.Y USA, 2012).

"I Care" is a character education curriculum and parental involvement program that engages the home and schools to works collectively in building good character and improve academic achievement (I Care Now, 2013).

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB): NCLB was a bill signed into law in January 2002. Its purpose was to help close the accomplishment gap linking the underprivileged and minority children and their companions in the state funded schools (NCLB, 2002).

Parental involvement: Parental involvement is the active engagement of parents in the educational process (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2010).

Socioeconomic: Socioeconomic status (SES) is often measured by an individual's education, income, and occupation (American Psychological Association, 2005).

Student learning: Student learning includes varied levels of educational experiences and abilities that are reached as a result of students' engagement in the learning experiences (Ewell, 2001).

Transition: Transition takes place when students move through the different stages of learning. Transition can take place with the one building from grade to grade or throughout the different levels of the learning process (Coleman & McNeese, 2009).

Significance

During this study I gathered parents' perceptions of the parental involvement programs called H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care," and parents' perceptions of their role in their

children's education in an elementary school in rural Alabama. Parents of students in this school were randomly selected to take part in this case study to help develop an understanding of what can be done to enhance parental involvement. Jeynes (2011) discovered that parenting approaches and expectations have an enormous influence on student success, compared to the influence of parent rules. Additionally, Jeynes noted that parental engagement in school activities matters as far as school academic achievement.

The NCLB Act (2002) mandated that school systems make every effort to have parents engaged in the educational practices of school age children. In order to meet that mandate, an effective tool must be in place. Not only did the NCLB Act recognize the importance of parents participating in the formal educational undertakings; it also alerted schools, districts, and state education agencies about parent involvement requirements (NCLB, 2002). According to NCLB (2002), its accountability system was based on the intention of creating high performing schools by holding states responsible to have all students in state funded schools proficient in reading and math by 2014. The authors of NCLB also noted parent involvement as an important element to improve student academic success and to move schools from school improvement status (NCLB, 2002). The results from my study will help the school and school district develop strategies to strengthen the parental involvement program to ensure that the services provided are effective.

Guiding/Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to gather perceptions about the effectiveness of the parental involvement programs, H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care," at an elementary school in rural

Alabama. This study resulted in recommendations to the school district on how to improve these programs based on the parents' perceptions about them and their own perceptions about their involvement in the educational process of their child. The research questions follow:

1. What are the perceptions of parents regarding their role in their children's education?

2. What are the perceptions of parents about the effectiveness of the "I Care" program and the H.I.P.P.Y. program in effectively involving them in their children's education?

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to gather parents' perceptions about the effectiveness of the parental involvement programs, H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care" and their perceptions about their involvement in the educational process of their child. The results of this qualitative case study were used to design parental involvement workshops that would be used provide recommendations to the school district on how to improve the parents' experiences and their perception about their involvement in the educational process. A review of literature for this study focused on how parental involvement increases academic achievement. Peer-reviewed sources related to increasing parental involvement to help increase academic achievement were found using three databases in the Walden University Library: ProQuest, ERIC, and EBSCO. The keywords used in the search were *parental involvement, student achievement, academic achievement,* and *student learning.*

Students who come from families that are educated at different levels tend to score at higher proficiency levels, and these families tend to be more engaged in the learning process (Epstein, 2009). Because education begins at home, involvements of the primary caregivers are essential. In addition to providing the children with instruction at home, the parent or guardian must provide a nurturing household filled with love with developmentally appropriate learning experience (Epstein, 2009). As children start school, additional parental support includes encouragement and positive attitudes about learning (Mellon, 2009). According to Brock and Edmunds (2010), practices such as helping children with homework, establishing academic goals, and discussing students' progress with teachers are important because these principles indicate to children that parents care and support their efforts at school.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that drove this study was social constructivism. According to Lodico (2010), social constructivism views scientific inquiry as value-bound and not value-free. In other words, no one can assume that the experiences that a person has had will overlap to a considerable degree. Social constructivists questions the scientific realist theory, which suggests that reality can be reduced to its component parts (Lodico, 2010). The concept of discovery learning suggests that students build their own knowledge for themselves (also known as a constructivist approach) (Lodico, 2010). The only way to achieve this understanding is for the researcher to have the experience of the participants and interact with them in more inspiring ways. Those interactions provide an opportunity for shared impacts and allow the researcher to see the world through the eyes of the participants (Lodico, 2010).

According to Vygotsky (1978), learners create meaning from reality but do not inactively receive what is being communicated in their learning environment. Vygotsky (1962) believed social interaction and cultural influences have an immense effect on how learning occurs. Knowledge construction occurs within Vygotsky's social context which includes student and expert-student collaboration on real-world issues or tasks that are constructed on each person's language, skills, and experience created by each individual's culture (Vygotsky, 1962).

Parents' Impact on Academics

Mellon (2009) investigated the effectiveness of the perception of parental involvement on their children's education. The difference observed in relations between parents being involved at school and their children's scholastic success may be based, to some extent, on the difference in the kind rather than the unqualified amount, of parents' participation in the educational process.

Traditionally, parental involvement in schooling consisted of support offered to their children's activities at home, such as supporting with home assignments, aiding children with reading, encouraging school attendance and offering support to school events like being present at school conferences, parenting sessions, and taking part in fundraising projects (George & Mensah, 2010). Hixson (2006) observed that the contribution of parents as important stakeholders in decision making is often mentioned as a significant avenue to enhancing public schools. Parental involvement has had an impact on the collaboration between parents and the school, and on students' mindset, attendance, and learning (Hixson, 2006). Parental involvement also promotes academic success by allowing the collaboration of parents and schoolteachers to assist their child.

In recognizing the value of parents being actively engaged in their child's education, NCLB (2002) developed a set of requirements designed to enhance parental involvement and increase student achievement. Accountability and responsibility are the aim of the NCLB reform, and that reform is focused toward developing schools that are self-directed and have students performing at high levels of learning (NCLB, 2002). The transformation mandated by NCLB was designed to close achievement gaps so that all students perform on high functioning levels of learning.

Olender, Elias, and Mastroleo (2010) stated that if it is recognized that family units have a vital responsibility as partners in academic success, then the educators must do whatever is necessary to bring parents into the educational schema. Educators must urge parents to be energetic participants in the schooling of their children to connect the home, school, and community in order to offer our children a concrete education.

Despite almost universal agreement on the positive impact of parental involvement, there are significant barriers for schools reaching out to parents (Epstein, 2009). In communicating with parents, educators must communicate on a level in which parents do not feel intimidated and give the parents a fair or accurate report on the academic progress of their children or the quality of their schools. The "I Care" program seeks to strengthen the relationship connecting home and school. According to Solomon (2010), positive parenting improves the parent/child relations by involving students with the greatest teachers they will have, their parents. Furthermore, parental involvement raises academic success and opportunities for the future; inspires self-esteem and self-assurance, and decrease behavior problems and school absenteeism (Solomon, 2010)

Relationships Between Parents and School

The relationships between schools and families should be strong. The schools are providing formal schooling to the students and preparing them for society. According to Olender et al. (2010), while the child's academic success is certainly the most important reason to continue to build a strong, positive parent-teacher relationship, benefits extend beyond those gained by the individual child. The relationships to build strong parental involvement should not only be inclusive of the family and school but also the community-based organizations. Hixson (2006) explained that when parents are involved in decision making it is often viewed as the most imperative approaches to upgrade state funded schools. The benefits of parental involvement consist of enriched academic achievement, decreased absenteeism, amended school behavior, improved academic motivation and lower dropout rates (Olender et al., 2010).

Jeynes (2011) stated, "Educators are often unaware of how they come across to low-income families" (p. 38). Parents with limited resources often perceive teachers and principals as requiring a great deal from them and offering them little in return. Assisting families of low-socioeconomic status has shown that the most ideal ways for schools to inspire families to become active participants with the schools is to help the whole family, not just help the students (Jeynes, 2011). Poor and minority parents will become involved if they believe they are valued and loved by schools (Jeynes, 2011). Educators need to apply the proverb of treating others as they would want others to treat them. The need is to reach out in an attitude of love and warmth, offering opportunities to parents to involve themselves in ways parents can clearly identify as acts of love.

Parents who are actively involved can join with the teachers to ensure that their child experiences academic success in school. According to Bokhorst-Heng (2008), the influence that parents have on the educational process is overwhelming, and research shows that with just a little assistance, encouragement and guidance from the school, parents can provide even more to their children's success. Parental involvement does not occur in isolation but in community and cultural context, which can make it difficult sometimes to achieve (Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). The results from the case study on parental perceptions of the "I Care" program and the parent's role in student academic achievement resulted in a recommendation to the school district to help increase parental involvement and use the "I Care" program more effectively.

A report from the U.S. Department of Education (2010) cited numerous explanations for the decrease in parental involvement as children grow older. Parents in rural, low socioeconomic communities tend to perceive that older children have the competency to complete assignments without the assistance of an adult; the students should have the ability to be independent and self-sufficient. This view is a result of the parent's education level, perception of the community, and personal relationships with education. The "I Care" program seeks to bridge the home and school community relationship to increase the parent's role in academic achievement.

Researchers from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (1999) conducted a study to establish the influence of H.I.P.P.Y on third- through sixth-grade students who finished the 2 years of activities (Bradley, 2002). During the study the researchers explored the development of the learning of children for skills taught at specific times during the H.I.P.P.Y. curriculum. The sample was comprised of 1,032 children; 516 were

H.I.P.P.Y children and 516 were matched comparison children. Student results were observed in different areas: (a) attendance; (b) administrative engagement; (c) academics; (d) standardized achievement test scores; and (e) student conduct (Bradley, 2002). The research showed how parental involvement in these areas can lead to improved student success.

Jacobson and Ramisetty-Mikler (1999) also examined the area of parental engagement in the children's education, as the experience shared together by the student and parent, and the student's competence level to adapt to school. The sample population included 353 parents and 94 teachers (Jacobson & Ramisetty-Mikler, 1999). The findings revealed that families participating in the study reported witnessing their students regularly participating in reading activities and glancing through countless books or reading signs (Jacobson & Ramisetty-Mikler, 1999). More than 60% of the participants reported that they would encourage their children to explore books or any other printed materials; in addition, 85% of families talked about the knowledge they gained about the value of literacy. Parents participating in the H.I.P.P.Y. program learned the importance of literacy and used it to help their children with reading.

Parental Involvement on Student Motivation

Coleman and McNeese (2009) explored the interrelationship with fifth grade students' academic success, family's participation, and the student's inspiration. Involved guardians can have an immense positive influence on their child's learning and overall school experience (Coleman & McNeese, 2009). Bokhorst-Heng (2008) argued that parental contributions, in the structure of a supportive home environment, are more important than factors such as "the family's income, education level, or cultural

background" (p.40). Bokhorst-Heng found that the effects of such involvement may include higher achievement scores across the curriculum, improved behavior and attitudes, and higher goals and achievements beyond grade school.

An expanding assortment of explorations supports the perspective that parents' opinions, practices, and events associated with their child's learning experiences impacts the child's scholastic success (Huang & Mason, 2008). To assist in developing a strong parental involvement program, administrators of educational institutions are urged to develop workshops that focus on strong home and school relationships, make an impact on student learning, and provide opportunities for families to support student achievement (Huang & Mason, 2008).

Reilly (2008) showed that the resources on parent involvement can be categorized as activities in the home and the school. Epstein's (2009) three categories included parenting activities in the home, collaboration between the home and school, and the exchange with the community. According to Epstein (2009), parents should be knowledgeable about the themes the students are studying and provide a time and a study place for the student, and then monitor progress on homework. Parents should also be aware of the proficiency levels their child should obtain by the end of each grade level (Epstein 2009).

Trask-Tate and Cunningham (2010) acknowledged the community collaboration in the lives of Black adolescents that impacted strong educational results. The authors observed 206 Black students to distinguish the responsibility of parental engagement as a barrier in the relationships connected to inadequate school assistance and high academic expectancies (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010). Findings revealed that high levels of

school assistance and parental involvement facilitated the progress of high academic expectancies. According to Trask-Tate and Cunningham, researchers and educators both agree that parents are a dynamic force in student development. This is largely because parents, unlike educators, counselors, and other professionals, serve as a continual, persistent, and stable resource for their children throughout their lifespan (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010).

According to Bartel (2010), research indicated that the educational process is greater for children when their parents are directly engaged. Hoover-Dempsey (2005) reported that whether the parental involvement was constructed as home activities (e.g., supporting with assignments), school activities (e.g., attending events), or communication (e.g., having conversation with the teacher about homework), it has been associated to indicators of students' success, involving teacher rating of student competence, grades, and achievement test scores. Beliefs about parental roles and their thoughts about life context regularly revealed that these high-school-educated, Black parents in a low-income school were participating in the scholastic activities of their elementary age children, both at home and school. Educators' positive attitudes about assisting parents showed a growth in assisting parents in establishing home settings more conducive to assist children, more consistent communication, and engagement of parents in decision-making and more involved in the community.

Hornby and Lafaele (2011) suggested that the difference between written expression and reality in parental involvement has arisen because of the impact of parents, and society that act as barriers to increase the effectiveness of parental involvement. One barrier noted was how parents viewed the part they contribute to the

educational process. Parents who thought the only part they played was to get children to school were less enthusiastic about participating in either school or home parental involvement activities (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Rapp (2012) stated, "Parental involvement is an important indicator of students' success in school" (p. 2). When families are engaged by schools in a way linked to improving learning, students will show greater academic growth. Also, according to Rapp (2012), an essential component to increasing student achievement is to have an effective parental involvement model in place.

Family engagement in the students' scholastic success occurs in countries such as Japan, Great Britain, and the United States (Radzi, Razak, & Sukor, 2010). Radzi et al. (2010) suggested research conducted in these countries has provided evidence that schools with parental involvement programs were more likely to excel academically than schools without such programs. Because parents play the role of the earliest teachers in educating their children, their involvement is crucial to student success.

This case study gathered the parents' perceptions about their role in educating children in an attempt to make a recommendation of strategies to help further improve parental involvement in the H.I.P.P.Y and "I Care" programs. One strategy was to offer parental involvement classes at a convenient time and to set up a parent volunteer program that allows the parents to come into the schools and work with the faculty and students. Another strategy was to give parents the opportunity to participate on more committees that required them to take part in making important decisions in the school district.

Implications

This case study helped gather ideas from parents on how to increase and strengthen parental involvement in a rural school district in Alabama. It also helped develop activities that were more flexible for parents to increase their involvement at the school. The goal was to hold parenting sessions on effective implementation of the parental involvement programs in the school district in order to understand their perceptions, with suggestions for how to improve parental involvement. The case study may have an effect on parental involvement programs and allow the school district and school an opportunity to revisit the approach they take when involving the parents, as well as student achievement in all grades in this school district.

Summary

Section 1 gave an overview of how parental involvement has helped improve student achievement by fostering relationships with parents and district programs and provided a review of the literature. Section 2 focuses on the methodology, including an in-depth look at the qualitative research case study, participants, setting and instrumentation, the data collection, and analysis. Section 3 analyzes the presentation of the proposed project, an evaluation plan based on the research findings, the support from scholarly literature that addressed the problem, and necessary resources used with the project. Finally, Section 4 summarizes the study and offers further implications and reflections.

Section 2: The Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain the perception of parents on parental involvement in a rural county located in south central Alabama. The school district serves approximately 1,400 students and consists of three high schools, three middle schools, and six elementary schools. One elementary school in this district was the primary school of focus. According to the Alabama State Department of Education (2011), the poverty rate at the focus school, which serves 248 students, is 97.17%. The research participants consisted of six parents of third through fifth grade students. The problem that this school faces is a lack of parental involvement in their children's education. To enhance parental involvement, the district uses "I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y. to help prepare parents for their child's transition into public school and to help ensure that students are being supported at all levels. The "I Care" program is used to monitor positive activities parents and children are involved in monthly (Solomon, 2010). Education is successful when it has prepared students to be productive citizens by discovering and fostering interest and abilities, revealing limitations, and preparing students to network in a significant manner.

H.I.P.P.Y. works with families in the home setting to ensure that parents understand their critical position as the first teacher to their children. H.I.P.P.Y is based on the principles that all children can learn and that all adults want what is best for students (Jacobson & Ramisetty-Mikler, 1999). The purpose of this case study was to gather parents' perceptions of the parental involvement programs and the role parents play in student academic achievement. This case study recommended strategies and

techniques to the school district that would be effective in helping their parents see the important role they play in the educational process.

Research Design

A qualitative case study research design was selected to explore the parents' perception of their role in the educational process. Creswell (2012) wrote that a qualitative research design is a "means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 232). Merriam (2009) stated that, "qualitative research is interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p. 5). A case study gives researchers a holistic depiction of events. The purpose of this qualitative research design was for the researcher to explore the phenomenon through interacting with the participants involved in this study, the parents at the elementary school. In order to effectively answer the research questions concerning the case study, there is some urgency for the data concerning the parents' perception. I gathered parental perceptions of the parental involvement programs and services, the role parents play in student academic achievement, their own cultural behavior and beliefs, and sought to determine how those perceptions affect their child's educational progress and academic success.

"I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y. are the parental involvement programs used by the school district within this small rural school system. The "I Care" program was designed to encourage parents to document positive activities on a feedback form from a list of suggested activities sent home by the school at the beginning of each month (Solomon, 2010). Monthly feedback forms contain information about the families various activities

(for example, church, trips, sporting events, etc.). This documentation can be used by the teachers in lessons to help build on prior knowledge of the students. According to Solomon (2010), the information that parents provide has helped the educators as they are able to get a closer look into each child's home life.

Lodico (2010) wrote that a case study is a form of qualitative research that attempts to learn meaning, to explore procedures, and to obtain a greater understanding of an individual group or situation. Case studies are explorations of different components, such as persons, occasions, periods, projects, policies, institutions, or other practices that are studied holistically by one or more methods. Creswell (2012) stated that the case may be conducted on a single individual, several individuals at different times or in a group, it can take an in-depth look at a program or activities. Phenomenological research would be good to use because it takes a close look at individuals' interpretation of their experiences (Lodico, 2010).

Participants

The population targeted for this study was the parents of students in Grades 3 through 5 in a school district in rural Alabama. The focus was on one of the elementary schools in the district that serves 248 students. This school was chosen because these students will leave this elementary school and go on to middle school, and Grades 3 through 5 are critical years in the educational process. The parents were purposefully selected to participate in the study by the principal based on concerns about students' academic performance, behavior, and attendance. To explore the extent to which the district was meeting the needs of the parents, I interviewed parents about their perceptions of the programs and changes they felt were needed. According to Creswell

(2012), in purposeful sampling, researchers by design select places and individual personalities to learn about. In any qualitative study, the researcher may decide to study a location, several locations, individual personalities, or some combination.

After receiving a list of suggested participants from the principal, I called each participating parent to establish a working relationship. I introduced myself and explained the process by which they were chosen to participate in this case study. I also set up a time to meet face to face with each participant. Five days after the phone conversation I met each participant one on one in the conference room at the school. I explained the project study and the consent form. I asked the parents to take a few days to decide if they wanted to participate in this project study. Each participant was asked to give me a call on the third day to let me know their decision so I could clarify any of their questions. During the ensuing phone conversation I set up the face-to-face interview sessions. In order to gain in-depth knowledge, I limited the sample size to six participants.

Protection of Participants

A request was submitted to the district superintendent's office and the principal to conduct the research with the parents of this school. All participants received and signed consent forms (see Appendix B).

After receiving approval from the superintendent's office, I provided the principal with the letter of approval. Each participant received a cover letter (see Appendix C) with the purpose and design for the research. The letter and consent form (see Appendices B and C) explained this research is voluntary and that they could opt out. The consent form also stated the purpose of the study and any risk involved. The participants also had an

understanding that the data collected would be used for the purpose of completing this project study. The consent form given to the participants stated that all data collected for this project would be kept confidential but would be used to improve the school's academics through the parents' perceptions of involvement in the educational process. I asked each person to take the consent form home, read it over, and give me a call within 2 to 3 days if they agreed to participate. Also, the participants were informed that none of their demographics would be used to help identify them. After hearing from each participant, I set up interviews in the auditorium at the Dallas County Learning Resource Center.

Data Collection

This qualitative case study research used interviews as the source of data. Each participant offered data in a one-on-one interview concerning her perceptions of parental involvement in the school district. Initial interviews and follow-up interviews were scheduled over a 3-week period. Creswell (2012) stated, "A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system process or individual based on extensive data collection" (p. 465). The expression *bounded* is defined as the separation for research in phases such as time, place, or some physical boundary (Creswell, 2012). The physical limitations for this case study were the school and home environment.

Data for this qualitative study were collected through interviews with each of the participants. The interview format was used to get a deeper understanding of the parents and their perception of their role in the educational process. Open-ended questions were asked so the participants could express themselves. An open-ended response to a question allows the participant to create the options for responding (Creswell, 2012). With

participants' permission, all interview questions and responses were recorded and transcribed.

For this case study, parents were interviewed, and reflective notes were taken on their perceptions of parental involvement to ensure that the researcher gained a clear understanding of what was said by the participant. Before beginning the interview process, consent was gained from the participants protecting them from harm. Each participant in the study received a letter of invitation explaining what the study was about. To ensure that ethical procedures were in place during data collection a consent form must be obtained to gain access to interview the participants at the research site (Creswell, 2012). Prior to collecting data a signed consent from each participant was collected. The Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval number was 12-11-14-0196681 (see Appendix D), and the school district both gave permission to conduct the research.

The validity and reliability of a study depends upon the ethics of the research (Merriam, 2009). After serving as a building principal in the school district for 7 years, I had many experiences with parental participation. Now that I serve as the transformational specialist for the school district, I have fewer opportunities to meet with parents but this has not decreased my desire to increase parental participation. That desire formed the ethical foundation for this study and ensured that all ethical requirements were met. A researcher should expect to exhibit ethical behavior while conducting a study (Creswell, 2012).

The participants selected for this study were not parents who I had dealt with in my past or present role as an administrator. To avoid any bias, during the interview

sessions my own opinions or views were not discussed. It was imperative that the

participants knew that everything that was done with the case study was ethically correct.

It was also important to respect the participants and do nothing to cause them harm.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began with the first interview in the study. The data set

for analysis included the interviews from the parents at the elementary school, and I used

reflective notes, included in the Interview Transcript documentation (Appendix E). After

collecting all of the data, I began the data analysis process by analyzing the data from the

interviews.

 According to Creswell (2012), because of the large amount of data associated

with qualitative research it is critical to have it organized during the study. First, I

transcribed the audiotape recordings from my iPad, converting into text data (Creswell,

2012). Next, interview session notes were printed and organized into computerized file

folders. I analyzed the data by hand. Color coding was used to help categorize the data

obtained across participants to determine where the themes fit and identify important

points. The coding process that was used is called lean coding. According to Creswell

(2012), the first time through a manuscript, the researcher uses limited codes. For

example, a 20-page manuscript might only have 10 to 15 codes inserted in the initial

analysis of the information. After coding the transcripts, a list of codes was developed

and put into themes.

After the interviews, all recordings were transcribed, and a member check was

done to ensure internal validity or credibility. The member checks were conducted in

private sessions with the participants to ensure confidentiality. The participants each

received a copy of the interview transcripts and were asked to review it to ensure accuracy. I conducted the member check once for this case study to make sure the transcript accurately reflected the interview. According to Maxwell (2013), "Member check is an important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, it also helps to identify your own biases" (p. 111). Having the participants check their own transcript not only provided this study with accurate transcripts but also provided an accurate record of the conversation and its meaning. Each participant had opportunity to clarify any misspoken statements.

According to Lodico et al. (2010), "Most qualitative research is reported in a narrative manner" (p. 311). This study used the narrative format to present the findings to share the themes clearly. According to the data from the research findings, all data received was related to the four themes developed, and there were no discrepant cases. The results from this study can be shared with each of the parents, and were used as the foundation for the project, parental involvement workshop.

Research Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain the perception of parents on parental involvement in a rural county located in south central Alabama. With participants' permission, all interviews were recorded with an iPad, and I also took notes. The data from those notes and the transcribed interviews from six parents were analyzed. Participants were quoted in the research findings because, according to Lodico et al. (2010), qualitative studies often include quotes from the participants to build the reader's confidence in the data being presented. Pseudonyms were given to each of the

participants to protect their confidentiality. A brief background description of each participant is provided. The six participants interviewed for this project study came from many different walks of life. Although their life experiences were different, they all had the same goal: to make sure their child was getting the best education possible. The following people, listed by pseudonym, participated in this study.

Marie (BKC #1): Marie is a married mother of three who is currently unemployed and has a lot of free time on her hands. Marie began her interview by talking about how important it is to her for her children to get an education. When her older children were in school she had to work a lot and could not be at the school as much as she would have liked, but now Marie has more time to spend at the school and helping her children.

Shawanda (BKC #2): Shawanda is a married mother of two who values time with her daughters and wants only the best for them. She works 50 miles from her home but makes every effort to take part in school-related activities with her children and tries to communicate with the school via notes and phone calls. Shawanda also stated that anything she cannot be there for, "I make sure that my husband is there to help."

NaTasha (BKC #3): NaTasha is a single mother of two girls. Her job works on a point system, and if she leaves early, she loses points or money. She believes that if the school would communicate with the parents about things going on at the school in enough time, the parents could take time off from work without being penalized. Although she works hard as a single parent, she makes sure to build a strong relationship with the school and administrator.

Adrienne (BKC #4): Adrienne is a single parent of a little boy and believes that the school's role is important but parents are responsible to support the school. She makes sure to keep an open line of communication between herself and her son's teachers. Although Adrienne works two jobs, she makes time to visit the school as much as possible.

LaTonya (BKCP #5): LaTonya, a married mother of four children, works about 25 miles from the city but tries to make all parent-teacher conferences and has served as a PTO president. LaTonya's three older children have come through this school, and she has a good relationship with the teachers and staff.

Tabitha (BKCP #6): Tabitha is a single parent who works two jobs that take up much of her time, but she wants what is best for her son. She only communicates with the school when it is necessary but has provided the teachers with her contact information if they needed her.

Theme 1: Parents Considered Parental Involvement as an Important Factor

The key subquestion under this theme was, "How do you define parental involvement?" The lives of the six parents involved in this case study were all different. Some parents were single, some worked two jobs, and some were stay-at-home parents, but they all had opinions about parental involvement. During the interview process, a common response from the parents about parental involvement was that they considered parental visits to the classroom and help with homework as involvement in the educational process. George and Mensah (2010) stated parental involvement can include support to student's out of school activities such as assisting with projects and assignments, nurturing reading in the home, and encouraging students to attend school as

well as attending school events which could include PTO gatherings, parent conferences, and taking part in fundraising opportunities. Parent BKCP #1 stated, "Parental involvement is going to talk to the teachers to see what I can assist with. . . . Involvement could also mean me making visits to the school to see if there is something I can help out with in the class or office." Parent BKCP #2 defined parental involvement as going to the school to check on the child in the classroom and helping with homework. Another parent, BKCP #3, felt like being able to help her child with his work and keeping in touch with his teacher was a good way to be involved. BKC P#4 stated, "Parental involvement included interacting positively with your child at home and at school." Parent BKCP #5 defined parental involvement as parents working with the teacher to ensure that the students get a good education.

While all participants were aware of the importance of parental involvement, they all had different definitions of parental involvement and how to help the school. BKCP #1 shared, "The importance of parents being involved at the elementary school level is because the students do not want parents around at the high school level." Even though the parents' presence is important most parents just do not have the time because they are working multiple jobs to make ends meet (BKCP #5).

All six participants agreed that there are many definitions of the words *parental involvement*. Most of the parents believed that their involvement only takes place when helping with homework or dropping by to visit the classroom. However, other parents shared that involvement should include helping with homework, attending parent-teacher conferences, programs, and parent-teacher organization meetings as well as introducing their children to educational activities outside of the school.

Theme 2: All of the Parents Interviewed Expressed the Importance of Communication Between Home and School

The key subquestion that addressed this theme was, "What are your thoughts on the relationship between the parents, and teachers/the school?" The participants discussed what they thought a good relationship with the school would look like. All six participants agreed that the most important part of a relationship is communication. Parent BKCP #3 stated,

Communication is key. . . . As long as parents, teachers, and other school staff keep the lines of communication open, educating our children would not be a problem but if the school does not make the parents feel wanted when they come to visit then they will not come.

BKCP #1 thought it is very important for the parents to develop relationships with everyone at the school, because their child is with these people seven hours a day. BKCP #4 shared, "If you build a strong relationship with the school (teachers & office staff) they will know your expectation and make sure your child lives up to them in your absences." Several of the parents were of the opinion that students do not like for parents to build relationships with different people at the school because they know someone is always watching them.

Parent responses also indicated that because we live in an era of technology building a strong relationship with the school should not be a problem. Parents BKCP #2 and BKCP #6 believed that students do not want their parents to build a relationship with the schools. BKCP #3 stated "Our relationship might not be face to face because so many parents are working we may have to communicate via the computer." BKCP #1 stated,

"The school system has started using a program that allows us to have access to our children's grades and I look at my child's grades weekly." According to BKCP #5, technology can be a solution in helping with the problem of parent involvement because teachers can keep the parents informed about what is going on at the school or in the classroom via the computer.

All the parents indicated that communication is important in the educational process. The parents stated that without good communication, they could not assist with any problems or issues that may arise. One parent talked about how she has to work and cannot always attend parent-teacher conference or the PTO, but because she has established a great line of communication with her child's teacher she is informed about assignments and activities. Responses from the interview questions revealed that, although while these parents cannot always attend activities at the school, they still try to keep in touch with school (teachers and office personnel).

Theme 3: All Parents Included Opinions About the Lack of Parental Involvement

The key subquestion concerning this theme was, "Why do you feel there is a lack of parental involvement at your child's school?" All participants interviewed agreed that parents today are not as active as some of their parents were when they were children. BKCP #1 thought that parents are too busy to take part in what the schools are doing. A second parent BKCP #3 stated, "Most parents are working because I work two jobs but I try to make time to visit the school." These parents judged that some parents "are just plain lazy" for the reason they are not taking an active role in their child's education. Another parent, BKCP #5, shared that parents today started having children during their teenage years and really do not have an interest in what is going on at the school.

Two of the parents said there are not enough opportunities to attend the activities at the school. They suggested meetings need to be held at times that would allow the parents who work shift jobs to attend (BKCP #2 and BKCP #6). Parent BKCP #4 indicated,

Most of the time the school activities conflict with my work schedule or school schedule. As a single parent it's hard for me to take off work but if I know about the meetings or program in advance, I can make the necessary arrangements to attend.

Parent BKCP #6 cited lack of transportation as a reason for lack of parental involvement. Many parents have smaller children at home and cannot find care, which could also be a reason for parents not participating in activities (BKCP #3). In essence, parents want to do more to help educate their children but they face many barriers.

Theme 4: The Effectiveness of "I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y.

The key subquestion related to this theme was, "What is your perception about the effectiveness of the "I Care" program and H.I.P.P.Y. program in effectively involving parents in their child's education?"

Parents had a common response about the H.I.P.P.Y. program: They had no opinion about the effectiveness of this program because they had no children enrolled in it. PBKCP #5 stated, "I really do not see the purpose of "I Care." She suggested that they take that money and hire someone to do something else in the school district (BKCP #5). BKCP #1 shared, My family likes the "I Care" program and the activity sheet because it gives ideas of things we can do. However, I was not sure if our activities were appropriate because not much was on the feedback form.

On the other hand, BKCP #2 stated, "This program is a waste of paper. Our routines never change. My child comes home does homework, eats, gets a bath, and goes to bed." BKCP # did, however, mention, "This program probably would be better if we were given an orientation on how to complete the feedback forms and how to include our family activities."

Parents are more likely to be involved when they are aware of what their children are learning, and receive a request from the teachers to become more engaged in assisting with home assignments (Olsen & Fuller, 2011). BKCP #4 said, "The program is okay, but the activity suggestions never really change." She would like to see the schools give more surveys to find out how parents would like to be involved (BKCP #4). Two parents, BKCP #3 and BKCP #6, both felt like the "I Care" program gave them ideas of activities they would not normally do with their families.

These parent participants were putting forth an effort to work with the program without a full understanding, yet some were experiencing success, while others thought it to be a waste of paper and money. Parental education and good communication would probably help the parents have a more positive opinion about the program.

Summary

LaRocque et al. (2001) stated, "The value of parental participation is widely accepted, but participation is difficult to promote and maintain" (p. 117). The research findings indicated that most parents are taking an active role in educating their child/children in ways they think are appropriate and helpful. Parents can serve as an effective resource for improving student achievement; furthermore, parent engagement has a positive results on students, educators, and school environment (Rygus, 2009).

According to the findings, the parents' idea of parental involvement was an occasional classroom visit or helping their child/children complete homework. The findings also suggested that parents want better lines of communication between the school and home so the parents who are working will have knowledge of what is going on. The findings suggested that there is a lack of parental involvement; however, barriers contribute to this problem. In addition, the research findings suggested that in order to gain effective parental involvement in the "I Care" program, an in-depth orientation and overview of the program needs to be provided to parents and school faculty so that all parties involved are getting the same educational training.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research describes the researcher's ability to check for accuracy of the findings in the study. This study used a member checking and triangulation of the data to check for the credibility. Creswell (2012) noted, "Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collections in description and themes in qualitative research" (p.259). The data used for the present study included different parent interviews. Through triangulation of data, such as parent interviews from six different parents, validity was gained.

Additionally, member checking was included to ensure validity. Member checking is one method of eliminating the chance of misconstruing the connotations of the participant's perception. It is also an essential means of recognizing their prejudices and misinterpretations (Merriam, 2009). However, member checking was only used for clarification of the gathered data to ensure that the interpretation was representative of the

participants' answers. Subsequent to the second parent interviews, each of the participants were provided a transcription of their interview for them to review. The purpose of the participant reviewing their transcript was to ensure that there were no discrepancies noted or reported. According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), data that provide an alternate perception is a discrepant case. It is easy for a researcher to accept or embrace an initial idea and fail to explore counter evidence. This process offers a balance to the tendency to stick with initial impressions. Discrepancies in cases would affect the validity. Upon completing the review of the transcripts for this study, there were no discrepant cases reported.

Limitations and Delimitations of Study

The research study was conducted within the parameters of several limitations: the small size of the group, the location of being conducted in a single school, in a single school district, being conducted only in elementary school instead of a wider range of student ages. Some parents could have collaborated on their answers ahead of time or might not have answered honestly. Six parents' perceptions were shared about the role of parental involvement in the educational process. The results may not have been the same with a wider group of parents within this school or across the district. The study focused primarily on one elementary school; therefore, the findings might have been different in other areas of the district. Because the interviews were conducted with parents from only one elementary school, any generalizations made would only reflect the group being studied, not the district's parental involvement climate.

Implications for the Project Study

Parental involvement plays a vital part in children's academic success. School-parent relationships do not happen in isolation but in community and cultural contexts. The lack of parental involvement not only affects the student academically; it can disrupt the school's culture and climate. Because parental involvement activities are important to the school and are often highlighted in the media, school leaders and parents must have shared beliefs and a strong vision about the school.

School leaders, teachers, and parents need to collaborate to ensure that parents understand their important role in educating their children. Although families and schools have been partners since the beginning of formal schooling, the nature of that collaboration has progressed over the years (Epstein, 2009). School leaders should take the initiative in providing opportunities for teachers and parents to have conferences or school programs at a time that is convenient for parents who have to work several jobs to provide for their families.

Based upon the research findings, parenting workshops, consisting of three 8-hour days of activities for the entire school district, were developed to be offered in the future over a period of 9 months. These workshops will include parents, teachers, and the community who worked together to define and understand parental involvement. Because they will take place over an extended period of time, participants can actively engage in discussion and activities centered on improving their involvement in the educational process and building relationships. The workshops were divided into sessions so participants could see the important role of parents, identify parental involvement barriers, and help identify ways to overcome the barriers. The parenting workshops also

provided proper training for the parental involvement program "I Care." An opportunity for open dialogue between the parents and school personnel took place at the end of the workshops during the group discussion regarding parental involvement and effective implementation of the parental involvement program.

Conclusion

This qualitative case study was conducted to explore parents' perceptions regarding their role in the educational process and the effectiveness of the parental involvement programs in the district. Prior to data collection, all ethical protocols were reviewed to ensure the protection of all participants. A qualitative research design was selected to collect data from a purposeful sample, which consisted of parents from one elementary school in the school district.

Data collection included interviews with six parents. The findings indicated that parents were actively involved in their children's education in ways they thought were appropriate and helpful. The findings can help the school and parents to develop a stronger relationship and gain a better understanding of how to effectively use the parental involvement program already in place. By attending the parental involvement workshops being developed as a result of this study, parents can participate in an in-depth orientation and ask questions about the parental involvement programs.

Section 3 of this study describes the Southern Zone Parental Involvement Workshop. In addition, the section includes a review the literature that supports the parental involvement workshop as a means to address the themes that emerged from the interviews. Finally, Section 3 discusses the implementation and proposed evaluation of

the project and implications for social change within the local and larger educational

context.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

In light of the findings of this parental involvement study, a project was developed and will be implemented to bring about a better understanding of parental involvement for parents and teachers. Community stakeholders and school administrators will be brought in as well to enhance the collaboration among all stakeholders to best educate children. The Southern Zone Parental Involvement Workshop was developed to encourage communication among stakeholders and to eliminate barriers that parents face in being involved in their children's education. The workshops will be scheduled for parents in August, December, and April, with follow-up parenting sessions. Section 3 explains the project in detail, including the goals of the project, the rationale for the project, and supporting literature. The project development is shown including information on how to duplicate it in other school districts.

A workshop was chosen for the project (see Appendix A) as a practical way to enhance parental involvement and will include an audience of parents, educators, and other community members. A workshop is defined as "a vast range of educational activities that can increase a person's knowledge and skills, and contribute to their personal, social and emotional growth" (Desimone, 2011, p. 68). Shankland et al. (2014) stated, "Many educators express a desire to work with families to develop stronger home-school partnerships but report that they do not know how to accomplish this" (p. 2). To develop strong parenting programs, training for the educational community is important, as is establishing a warm and inviting setting where parents can learn to support their children's academic success (Boethel, 2013). Based on this research, a workshop was

created to provide a platform for educators, parents, and other agencies, and collaborate to address parental involvement.

The findings indicated that parents wanted to be more involved with their children's education, but they were not sure what the district should do to solve this problem. To avoid further gaps between schools and families, the district should see family engagement as an area of practice, and the parental involvement workshop will be the framework for continued engagement with one another. It is not an individual strategy.

Previous findings suggest there is a strong connection linking parent engagement and school academic success in secondary schools. Lloyd-Smith and Baron (2010) stated, "The importance of parental involvement for students of all ages has been documented by researchers and acknowledged by practitioners" (p. 23). Principals are mindful that parent engagement activities weaken when children progress through school, because other obstacles are present (Lloyd-Smith & Baron, 2010). For parents who may become relaxed in taking part in their child's education or schooling, workshops or job-embedded professional development could focus on strengthening leadership skills and preparing families to be voices in the school system so that parents will understand when and how to make suggestions to the school. The parental involvement workshops will also allow parents and educators a platform to collaborate on building a strong home-school relationship. The workshops will be held at various times and days and over a period of time to give parents options on attending the workshops. An online version of the workshops will also be available for parents who cannot attend any of the on-site sessions. The school district, school, and community agencies will work together to

provide resources to help parents understand how important they are to their children and education.

By partnering with other local agencies, such as Family Justice Center, Department of Human Resources, and local colleges, workshop leaders can present information that might enhance their understanding of parental involvement and provide an opportunity for parents to see what services the community agencies have available. The parental involvement workshops will include information about how to identify and overcome barriers to parental involvement, as well as resources to educate parents and school personnel more about parental involvement. The workshops will also provide information for administrators and teachers about the importance of building a strong relationship between the home and school. Resources will include handouts about parental involvement and information on referral services provided by agencies outside of the school district. The results of this study suggested parents need to know about resources available them outside of the school district (e.g., getting a GED, learning parenting skills, or job preparedness) that could assist them in being more involved in the educational process by alleviating some of the barriers they may face. Hence, the overarching goal of the parental involvement workshops is to provide parents with information on the important role they play in the educational process of their children.

Description and Goals

The project design is for all-inclusive parental involvement workshops involving parents, teachers, and administrators. The workshops will be offered in three sessions. The initial workshop will focus on the importance of parental involvement and the effects of the lack of parental involvement. The second session will focus on identifying

potential barriers to parental involvement. The final session will focus on identifying

ways to overcome the barriers and effectively implementing the parental involvement

programs. The workshops will also provide parents with information about opportunities

to serve on committees to help with decision making about activities at the school. In

addition, parents can collaborate about effectively meeting the needs of the students. The

parental involvement workshops will equip parents with the knowledge they need to

assist them in becoming more active with the school and help teachers make parents feel

valued in the educational process. Although many parents are not receiving the

communication from the school to comprehend their valuable role in their children's

academic success, they still want to effectively satisfy their role in the educational

process (Westmoreland et al., 2009). Thus, collaboration between the school and home

must be established, and the workshops will be a catalyst to strengthen parental

involvement.

<div align="center">**Rationale**</div>

The interviews revealed that parents involved in the study wanted to be more

actively engaged in the educational process of their children. The breakdown between the

home and school could lead to low academic success for the students and school. Parents

are effective resources for improving student achievement; furthermore, parental

engagement has a positive impact on educational arena (Rygus, 2009). Hence, the home-

school connection is paramount for students' success (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). The

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (2010) concluded that children with actively

involved parents have improved academic success in elementary and secondary school.

School district administrators, school officials, and parents must have a shared vision of

what parental involvement is to ensure that the students are getting support from all stakeholders.

Parental involvement in the educational process may strengthen academic success, attendance, and attitudes about school (Shankland et al., 2014). According to Brock and Edmunds (2010), despite the unclear definition of what constitutes parent engagement, educators' attempts to enhance participation is usually focused on two methods: (a) encouraging increased interaction linking the family and school in order to support this relationship, and (b) urging parents to require behaviors in the home setting that will reflect in the learning process. The parental involvement workshops will demonstrate the school and school district's efforts to develop a strong relationship between the home, community, and schools. The workshops will be used to develop strategies to enhance the relationships between the school and parents.

Review of the Literature

Based upon the research findings, a parental involvement workshop was chosen as the project type to provide the school, school district, parents, and community the best opportunity to collaborate in understanding the importance of parental involvement in the educational process. Administrators, teachers, and parents can work together to change the climate of education when change is needed (Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 2010). An important indictor in a student's success is parental involvement (Rapp, 2012). Rapp (2012) found student achievement increased as parents and teachers become a team and work together. Parents want to know what the schools are doing to prepare their children for the next level. "In the era of accountability, the potential of increased academic gains, especially with respect to the achievement gap, places the need to

increase and improve parent involvement in children's education in a powerful position"
(Bower & Griffin, 2011, p.79). Communities contain many resources that could enhance
home and school activities (Epstein, 2009). Educators, parents, and the community
leaders can promote strong relationships between the school and home.

Current research supported the parental involvement workshops, specifically,
school and community partnerships to address parental involvement. The research for this
literature review was based upon peer-reviewed scholarly resources from the ERIC and
ProQuest databases within Walden University Library. The key search terms used
included *parental involvement, academic achievement, collaboration,* and *home-school
involvement.*

Parental Involvement

Generally, the main educators in children's lives are their parents and their
teachers. Parents are the initial teachers and role models for children, and they have a
significant effect on their children's developmental growth (Enemuo & Obidike, 2013).
As more parents are employed, parental involvement in the educational process declines
(Jeynes, 2011). According to Khodayarifard, Kleiman, and Darling (2010), parental
involvement is comprised of five components. These components include parenting,
supporting with homework, conversations and interaction linking the home and school,
committing to volunteer in the classroom, and participating on committees that share in
decision-making (Khodayarifard et al., 2010). Epstein (2009) suggested a sixth
component: increasing relationships with community members or involvement. Chang,
Park, Singh, and Sung (2009) found that not all support will look the same. While parents

of differing cultural backgrounds support their children scholastically, their assistance sometimes has another appearance than other parents.

A National Center for Education Statistics study (as cited in Nokali et al., 2010) revealed that nearly 95% of parents of elementary school children attended PTO and parent-teacher conferences at the Center school. Herrold and O'Donnel (2008) reported that close to 80% of the parents surveyed said they attended school sponsored events, and more than half of the parents volunteered in their child's classroom. Nokali et al. (2010) stated that, in order for parental involvement to influence a child's academic growth, the home and school environments must be linked during the early stages of child development. Nokali et al. described parental involvement as the outcome of the impact of the interaction connecting the home-based and school-based environments.

Topor et al. (2010) examined the ability of children's perceived cognitive competence levels along with the quality of the relationships between the student and teacher. According to Topor et al., "The influence of parental involvement on academics success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational policy initiatives" (p. 184). The pupil – educator rapport was explored for its capacity to clarify the connection between parent contributions and a student's scholastic achievement.

The places with the most impact on a student's academic growth are the home and classroom (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Galindo and Sheldon found that schools have significant influences on family engagement. When schools make strong efforts to engage parents, the parents will be more eager to take part in the education of their child.

(Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). According to Dampson (2010), positive parent engagement has a huge impact on a student's state of mind, involvement, and scholarly accomplishment. This engagement also allows families and schools to form a partnership in efforts to assist in helping the children have academic success. Jeynes (2011) suggested that parents who have completed more levels of education tend to reach higher socioeconomic status, and are better able to assist students academically because they understand that a good education is essential to having a successful life. The research findings suggested parents are already doing what they consider to be parental involvement, but they feel that there is more that they should be doing. The parental involvement workshops will help the parents clearly understand what parental involvement is and equip them to be more effective at assisting their children in learning.

The home environment has an impact on a child's capability for success. It is the home setting where children learn the skills, attitudes and behaviors that mold them into being practical and successful students (Vellymalay, 2012). LaRocque and Darling (2011) found that students tend to improve in school and stay in school longer when there is collaboration between the stakeholders working together to assist in the educational process. Shankland et al. (2014) noted that a greater academic success happens when schools positively interact with families in ways that enhance academics and strengthen parent engagement both at home and school. Schools should build relationships with families that address parent concerns, as well as honor their contributions and share decision-making. According to Patte (2011), positive outcomes of family-school partnerships include higher academic achievement, children sense of security, improved student attendance, better perception of school climate and better student behaviors. Most

of the parents in the current study had developed a partnership with the school's

administrative staff and teachers; however, they wanted to strengthen that relationship to

better support their children. The parental involvement workshops were designed to help

parents and school staffs strengthen their relationship by offering opportunities to

collaborate on a regular basis at times that work best for all participants involved.

Home-School Relationships and Communication

Many factors affect the growth and value of the partnership connecting family and

school. According to Cankar (2012), local customs and the financial status of the

community assume a crucial part in the type of support the school district receives from

families. Booth and Dunn (2013) found it important to think about the characteristics of

the school and teacher that affect parental involvement. Dauber and Esptein (1993)

suggested that opportunities that the schools offer as activities are primary influences on

parental engagement. Parents must believe that schools are providing activities that

include them, so they will participate more in the education of their children (Booth &

Dunn, 2013). Weiss et al. (2010) correlated family involvement with levels of scholastic

success; however, it is seldom considered as an important section of the policies of the

local school board. According to Jeynes (2011), parenting styles and expectations have a

greater impact on academic success than things such as rules set by the parent. Children

want to please their parents and will try to live up to their parents' expectations. Parental

engagement in school activities specifically impacts grades and help to address the gaps

created by low-socioeconomic and specific subgroups of students. Jeynes also indicated

that parents participating in activities related to education have an essential role in terms

of the success of the school. Griffiths-Prince (2009) stated that the most important aspect

of successful parent-teacher relationship is acknowledging that all parents have hope for their children, and it is important to encourage parents to make their voices heard within the relationship.

Griffith-Prince (2009) stressed the need for continuity between home and school increasing during the intermediate and high school years. Parents tend to feel less confident in their abilities to help high school aged children, and this is a time when children naturally begin to separate themselves from family (Griffith-Prince, 2009). According to the parents interviewed in this study, as children grow older, they do not want their parents at the schools. Two of the parents interviewed discussed how they could see their children starting to pull away as they approached middle school age; the students did not want them at the school or helping with the homework activities. The workshops developed as the project study will allow parents to develop strategies to help their children regardless of the age or school level.

Failka et al. (2012) utilized dance as a metaphor to explain parent-professional relationships. Some relationships are not as graceful as they should be because the absence of shared music and familiar steps causes collisions (Failka et al.). Effective partnerships take time to trust, garner respect, and to know and value. Although partnership is a recurrent theme throughout the field of education and human services, the broader definition can be elusive (Failka et al., 2012). According to Failka et al., with time and resources families can move onto the dance floor having choreographed their own educational "dance moves" based on family values, preference, and strengths.

Hill and Torres (2010) indicated that while school administrators are trained to manage their school buildings, they are not trained to have much regard for parental

engagement. Hill and Torres stated, "There's a lack of training and accountabilities for involving parents, and for engaging parents for whom English is a second language and have no idea of the expectation of the United State school" (p. 98). The Consortium on Chicago School Research conducted a study that recognized a close connection with families and communities as an important factor in the support system for school improvement (Hill & Torres, 2010). The study highlighted how important all educational supports are to the school improvement process. If one support is missing, it will alter the findings (Bryk, 2010). According to Bryk (2010):

> The absence of vital ties between schools, families, and the community is a problem: their presence is a multifaceted resource for improvement. The quality of these ties links directly to students' motivation and school participation and can provide a critical resource for classroom. (pp. 24-25)

The relationship connecting the home, school, and community has a vital role in the educational process. The parental involvement workshops were designed to foster the relationship between the homes, schools, and community by allowing community agencies the opportunity to take part in the workshops. During each phase of the workshops, community agencies will set up stations that will offer parents services and assistance. The services include Dallas County Parent Facilitators, Family Resource Center, Department of Human Resources, Wallace Community College Adult Education Program, and Career Links. These resources will be made available for parents who might need assistance getting a GED, child care, or other resources they might need to become successful and involved parents.

Parental Involvement Programs

One of the parental involvement programs implemented in this school district, in response to parents needing ideas and suggestion of how to be involved in the educational process is "I Care". The "I Care" parental involvement program was designed to provide activities to enhance character in their children on a monthly basis (Solomon, 2010). According to Epstein (2010), the Center on Families, Communities, Schools, and Children's Learning at Johns Hopkins University found that "parents who receive frequent and positive messages from teachers tend to become more involved in their children's education than do other parents" (p. 81). When there is a cultural and educational difference between the students and teachers, and when teachers teach a substantial number of students, they might not know each student's parents; therefore, those teachers are more probable to believe that the families will not take an active role as parents or do not want to be involved. When educators feel that parents are uninterested in taking part in their children's education, the educators make fewer attempts to communicate and develop working relationships, particularly those who are difficult to get in touch with (Epstein, 2009).

The "I Care" program urges families to provide the school with detailed activities once a month by completing a feedback form with positive activities. The feedback forms that parents shared have proven to be instrumental in helping the school take a closer look into the children's living environment (Solomon, 2010). "I Care" (2013) was developed on the premise that the exercises that the families complete with their students outside of the school setting are the best in assisting kids with being effective in school and out in the community. The foundation of the "I Care" Program is the family activities

that are the major emphasis in the program. However, the parents interviewed in the project study do not feel the same way Solomon does. According to the parents interviewed, this parental involvement program does not offer any suggestion for new activities during the month, nor does it offer ways to strengthen the relationship with home and school.

Solomon (2010) noted that "I Care" befits students, parents, school, and the community. Families document their activities with the students in the home setting, and teachers demonstrate and model moral character consistently with what the families and community partners are modeling. That, in turn increases positive parent-child interactions at home. Studies have indicated that parents "want to know how to help their children at home and what they can do to help their children succeed" ("I Care," 2013). One of the topics covered in the parental involvement workshops will be a proper orientation to this parental involvement program to assist in developing their parenting skills and activities to enhance learning.

Another program used in the school district is the H.I.P.P.Y. parental involvement program. Nievar et al. (2011) led a study investigating the influences of H.I.P.P.Y, a home visiting program using paraprofessionals to work on preparing preschoolers for school. Low-income, Spanish-speaking families were served by this program. The mother participants were about 31 years old and the preschoolers were 3 to 4 years old. Participants had more family values and more developed backgrounds than the other preschool children wanting to participate. The lack of participation in parenting intervention was a stronger indicator, rather than the mother educational levels in a weak home environment. A follow-up of third-grade students participating in the program

revealed improved mathematical successes than third- grade low-socioeconomic Latino students in the same school system. The results indicated that the H.I.P.P.Y. curriculum allows parents to gain confidence teaching their child through the cultural consideration of H.I.P.P.Y. The results also indicated that the parents and students benefited from the program through the knowledge and experience gained.

Parental involvement has had many meanings, and it has been operationalized in many ways. It is imperative that educational administrators and teachers understand what enhances or detracts parents from being involved in their schools. The parental involvement workshops will provide parents and school staff the opportunity to collaborate with each other about the educational process as well as start to build and/or strengthen home-school relationships.

Project Genre

The project genre of a parental involvement workshop was chosen based upon the research findings that the parents and schools do not share the same understanding of what effective parental involvement can do to help their children succeed academically. Wei et al. (2010) found that workshops give teachers and parents an opportunity to work regularly together to improve teaching practices and implement strategies to meet the needs of the students. According to Capes, Lopes, Chu, and Weiss (2011), teachers must develop the competencies to engage families as partners in learning to improve student academic success. These necessary skills are more likely to be imparted when family engagement is embedded in a system of training and professional learning. To be effective, teachers must be prepared to collaborate with families to support student success. According to Baeck (2010), parental involvement in schools can happen in a

variety of ways, such as participating in parenting meetings, establishing good workplaces at home, assisting with homework, or just showing an interest in the things that happen at the school. Parents participating in the parental involvement workshops would be better equipped to assist their child because findings from this study indicated that the parents were doing what they thought was in the best interest of the children. Bower and Griffin (2011) found that implementing strategies for parents to help in students' learning would work better if the parents were provided with tools to be successful. This could be done in the workshops by focusing on efforts to empower the parents to be educational partners within the home, which would then shift into the school (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

The parental involvement workshops will be a collaborative effort of the school, school district, parents, and community partners to address effective parental involvement. Topor et al. (2010) stated, "The influence of parental involvement on academics success has not only been noted among researchers, but also among policy makers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parent involvement into broader educational initiatives" (p.184). The workshops will provide opportunity for open dialogue between the school and parents and show parents the available school and community resources. Bryan and Henry (2012) indicated that school-family-community partnerships are collaborative initiatives that strengthen resilience and help children to be well rounded. Workshops provide for collaboration, planning, and coordination that are vital for partnerships with the community (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

While some schools and community agencies may provide training for parents of school-age children or parenting education, schools generally do not provide professional

development for parents (Mizell, 2010). The parental involvement workshops developed

for this project will be a platform allowing the school district to focus on the parents as

well as the educators gaining knowledge to help the students to excel academically.

According to Patte (2011), strong family-school relationships are critical for student

success. The project genre of a series of parental involvement workshops will provide the

school, school district, parents and community an opportunity to work together in

addressing parental involvement issues and developing an understanding of their

importance.

<div align="center">**Implementation**</div>

Resources and Existing Supports

There are numerous resources and supports relating to parental involvement that

exist, and this information must be communicated to parents and educators. Research

findings and other information will be available to present to parents to inform them on

the important role they play in the educational process. The school district has several

supports in place. Two parent facilitators assist parents with getting legal documents for

school registration. The "I Care" program helps with character education. The H.I.P.P.Y.

program is offered to the parents of 3-year-old children to prepare them for school.

Computer classes are offered to the parents and grandparents. The parental involvement

workshops are a proper platform for educators and parents to collaborate about parental

participation. Resources needed for the parental involvement workshop include a venue

to meet for the three chosen dates in August with an introductory session; in December

with a follow-up to the introductory session; and in April, to complete the project. The

location needs to be comfortable and large enough to accommodate all participants. Other

resources needed are laptops, projector screens, LCD projectors, and tables for the five community partners relevant to their presentation. The final resources that will be needed are the props and materials for the theater instructor to be able to conduct the skit performed by the high school students.

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers to the success of the project would be lack of parental participation in the workshops or breakout sessions. Another potential barrier could be professional constraints, such as teachers not wanting to participate in the parenting workshops or the school district not wanting to fully implement all parts of the parental involvement workshops. Harris and Goodall (2009) stated, "Parents constantly face time issues and competing commitments, so many parents may not consider the parental involvement workshop as a top priority" (p. 10). The findings in this study indicated that the parents are working one or more jobs and have other family obligations.

In addition, many parents may not consider parental involvement as lacking at the school because they are working with school by participating in different activities and communicating regularly with their child's teacher. These parents may believe that the workshops do not directly affect them or their children and consequently will not participate. The parental involvement workshops were designed to be offered at times that meet the schedule of the parents and address the needs of all parents. The workshops will also be available online via Skype and through Adobe Acrobat for parents who cannot make sessions on the days they are provided. The parental involvement workshops will also be offered by the district parent facilitators throughout the school year to continue to build the involvement between home and school.

Other barriers may include a lack of involvement or interest by the educators. Although the educational arena is the backbone to this project, it does not mean that all educators will want to participate. However, every effort will be put forth to make sure they understand how important they are to the project. Therefore, a potential barrier to the parental involvement workshop would be a lack of participation by both parents and educators.

Proposal for Implementation

The project will be implemented on three different dates during the school year in August at the beginning of school as an introductory session, in December as a follow-up to the introductory sessions, and in April with culminating events. In addition, the parental involvement workshop will have an interactive online version available for parents who cannot make the scheduled meetings. Parents will also have an opportunity to participate in the workshop through the use of Skype and Adobe Acrobat Pro. The entire parental involvement workshop will be broadcast live via Skype. The parents unable to attend the live or Skyped workshops can download the PDF version with embedded activities from the Internet to participate and learn at their leisure or when they can access the web.

Research from the study indicated that most parents have Internet access, and this interaction via the Web would be another way to build the parent-school relationship. The workshops can also be conducted at other schools or zones at the request of the principals or superintendent. The schools or district would provide parents with written notification of the parental involvement workshops and breakout sessions. The timeline of the project was designed to give the presenters the opportunity to provide necessary

information at different times during the school year, to allow the schools and school district a chance to make every effort to improve parental involvement.

Roles and Responsibilities

Participation of the school administrators, teachers, district-level personnel, parent facilitators, parents, and community partners will be a major part of the success of the parental involvement workshops. The school administrators will be responsible for getting information to the parents by sending fliers and phone calls, and placing the workshop on the school's website. Teachers will assist in communicating the information to students and will be active participants in the workshops. The district's parent facilitators and I will present detailed information about the two parental involvement programs used by the district and other parental involvement opportunities. The district level personnel will play an important role as facilitators in the break-out sessions and also by encouraging the parents to attend the workshops. The school district personnel will work collaboratively with partners in the workshops to bring about its success. The parents will be able to take what they learned from the workshop and put it to work to help their students and school.

<div align="center">

Project Evaluation

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This project will use outcome-based evaluation with the overall goal of measuring whether there is an increase in parental involvement in the schools and in the H.I.P.P.Y and "I Care" programs. According to Royse et al. (2015), outcome-based evaluation is a systematic way of examining a program to ensure that it has achieved the intended results. The outcome-based evaluation will be used in this project to determine if after the workshops there is increased parental involvement in the H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care"

programs and also to determine if there is increased involvement in parental volunteering and visitation in the school. Attendance sheets will be used to measure the outcomes. Attendance will be collected each month of the school year for the different parental involvement activities. By comparing data from month to month, it can be determined if there is an increase in parental participation. Each month different activities and meetings will be held and data will be collected over a period of nine months. The data will be recorded in longitudinal format for each month. For example, if two more parents participated in activities one month than the previous month, that data would be recorded as an increase. If there is a continued increase from month to month that could indicate the workshops helped to increase parental involvement. At the end of the year, the data for each month would be revisited along with taking other possible variables that could affect attendance into consideration. For example, attendance might be less in busy times of the year such as the holiday season. The effectiveness will be determined through an increase in parental involvement programs and an increase in parent volunteering.

Another outcome of the project is to determine if the workshops increase parental involvement in the "I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y programs. Attendance sheets will be circulated in H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care" meetings. I will collect the attendance sheets and analyze data monthly to determine the level of parent participation in each program and use the same method for analyzing the monthly data described above. A successful outcome would be increased attendance.

Another outcome of the project is to increase parental involvement in the school. The school will maintain parent volunteer logs and parent visitation logs as documentation within the school. I will collect the attendance sheets and analyze data

monthly to determine the level of parent volunteering or visitation in the school. Again, the same method of collecting and analyzing data as described above will be used. A successful outcome would be increased volunteering and visitation.

The key stakeholders in the project are parents, educators, and students. The parents of the students in the school district will be one group of stakeholders. The outcome is to seek to increase the parents' participation to improve the students' education. Another group of stakeholders will be the educators. If parental involvement does increase as a result of the workshops, then educators will be the keys in making sure that participation is meaningful. Students are the key stakeholders, because the project goal is to increase parental involvement to assist them in their academic success. With increased parental involvement there will changed relationships among the students, parents, and schools.

Implications Including Social Change

Local Community

Social change is defined as "involvement in activities that make improvement in the lives of individuals and communities locally and around the world" (Walden University, 2011). The area in which this study took place is rural, and the community is made up of many low income and single-parent households. Although the community faces difficult economic challenges, the people in the community are close knit and work with the resources available to them. Many of the parents are young and inexperienced in their role as parents, and activities provided by the workshops can teach parents how to help their children succeed in school.

The workshops will address the needs of the parents and students in the community by engaging parents and local educators in conversation about parental involvement and how to increase it. When parents and educators collaborate, it often builds trust among all involved and enhances the learning environment. The parents in the study previously attended the same schools and spoke highly of the schools. However, their life and family obligations do not allow them to be actively involved in their children's education as they wish to. Utilizing the parent workshops would allow parents to develop strategies to become more involved and opportunities for a change in the relationship between them and the school. The workshops will give parents and educators insight into how to develop parenting plans and how to use them effectively.

The lack of parental involvement in any public or private K-12 school setting is harmful to the educational process. Although the school administrators and teachers are doing all they know to do, that does not address the need of the missing parent. The study was not intended to determine who is at fault for parents not being involved in the education process. Rather, the intent is to understand the perception of the parents and identify strategies to strengthen the relationships. Thus, the project will assist the district in addressing the perceptions of the parents and the role they play in the educational process. The parental involvement workshops will bring collaboration between the parents, teachers, and administrators, giving an opportunity for all voices to be heard and all stakeholders to come to consensus about education. The workshops will help to strengthen the home-school relationship among all participants. The possibilities for positive social change are based on the workshops increasing parental involvement and improving students' academic success.

Far-Reaching

Parental involvement is not just a local problem facing this local school district. Many school districts across the United States need to improve parental involvement policies and activities. According to Shankland et al. (2014), school systems should need to hold administrators and teachers responsible to ensure that parental involvement becomes an essential component of the school district's mission and expectations. The project will help the local district's parent facilitators with ideas and activities to increase parental involvement throughout the school district. Additionally, the project will become a way to make sure that the district's two parental involvement programs, H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care," are being implemented effectively. The project will enhance the impact of the two programs in several ways. First, it will provide opportunities to identify effective strategies to achieve significant increases in parental involvement, as well as provided opportunities for facilitators to determine if the programs are meeting the goals for which they were chosen. Next, the district leadership team will be able to identify ways to assist the schools in improving the connection between the home and school. The school administrators, teachers, and other district personnel will make every effort to keep abreast of the changing educational reforms with parental involvement and make every effort to communicate with the parents efficiently and effectively.

Conclusion

The parental involvement workshops described in this section for parents and educators were designed to help parents see the important role they play in the educational process and build a stronger relationship between the home and school. This section also had an extensive literature review that supports the project and that workshops will be held to increase home- school relationships. It also contained a rationale, an implementation plan and a project evaluation, as well as a discussion on the value of the project brings to establishing and implementing social change at the local level as well as larger levels. Section 4 will describe the strengths and limitation of the project. In addition, this section will provide reflections about the project as well as what I learned about scholarship, leadership, and research, and as a project developer. Finally, Section 4 discusses application of the study within the area of education and the potential impact on social change, recommendations, and a conclusion.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusion

Introduction

Section 4 describes the project strengths, the limitations of the project, and what I learned from the development of the project. In addition, this section also describes what I have learned about scholarship and leadership. This section provides a framework for reflection by me as a practitioner, as a scholar, and as a project developer. Section 4 concludes with the potential impact on social change and the implication on future research within education.

Project Strengths and Limitations

The first strength of the project is that it addresses the parental involvement issue facing school district leaders, school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. It provides information for parents and school officials to work collaboratively on parental involvement and also identifies strategies to enhance parent engagement. Bower and Griffin (2011) discovered that increasing parental involvement will lead to closing the achievement gap and increased educational success. Many parents are reluctant to participate more in their children's education or communicate with school personnel due to their perception of negative response by school personnel (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). This project provides an opportunity for school officials and parents to discuss the crucial role parents play in the educational process. Possibly the greatest strength of the project design is that it allows community partners to add insight and resources to address barriers that parents face in becoming actively engaged in the educational process.

The parental involvement workshops were designed to involve school personnel, parents and community partners such as the Family Resource Center, Community

College Adult Education Program, Career Links, and Dallas County Parent Facilitators to address the challenges of getting parents actively involved in the educational process, thus increasing academic success for the students. Smith et al. (2011) stated that research shows an in parental participation in education was most probable when students, parents, and all other stakeholders were involved in the decision making process. The workshops will provide parents with the skills and knowledge to assist with the decision making process. Hornby and Lafaelle (2011) found three factors that are barriers to effective parental involvement: (a) parent and family, (b) parent-teacher, and (c) societal levels. The parent-teacher relationship focused on the difference in agendas, attitudes, and language of these stakeholders. Finally, the parental involvement workshops were designed to allow a time for parents and educators to come together for a group discussion to ensure they have reached a mutual understanding of parental involvement and how it affects the academic success of their children.

According to Anderson (2010), the quality of research depends greatly on the skills of the researcher and can be influenced by the researcher's personal biases. One mistaken assumption that could limit the project could be commitment. Parents could feel that their opinions really will not matter, so they may not totally commit to all of the parts of the project. Jasis and Ordoñez- Jasis (2012) found that school personnel and parents often see parental involvement in a different manner and within varying boundaries. It is not unusual for educators to wonder why parents are not actively involved in certain schools. However, many of those same parents still may believe that their assistance at the school is unwelcome and their opinions are often dismissed by school personnel. If the parents do commit to serving on committees and taking part in making decisions on

behalf of the school, but do it with reservations about their opinions, it would limit the effectiveness of the project.

A second assumption that could limit the project could be even though parents want to commit, they may not be able to participate. According to Smith et al. (2011), barriers to parent participation are work schedules and a sense of disenfranchisement that has caused a lack of involvement by working parents and racial minorities. There are alternative ways to attend the workshops using technology, but parents may not be able to access the technology. If they do not participate, or if the participation is uneven or begins to decline, it would limit the effectiveness of the project since its goal was to increase participation.

Another mistaken assumption that could limit the project could be that educators may not completely commit to the project because of the lack of parental involvement that already exists. According to McCaleb (2013), some teachers are insecure in some school locations, and after a bad experiences with parents based on misunderstandings, they tend to withdraw their involvement. Educators could be of the opinion that the workshops are a waste of time. If some of the educators do not participate because of the lack of parental involvement that already exists, it would limit the effectiveness of the project.

The final assumption that could limit the project might be community partners may not commit to offering some of the resources needed by the school because they may be limited to certain resources they can offer. Fear, Fox, and Sanders (2012) stated, "Incorporating businesses, community-based organizations and support services into engagement strategies can be of particular benefit for youth who are considered to be at

high risk of poor academic performance" (p. 44). Fear et al. (2012) also found that

inclusion of the whole community in the educational process can help to increase the

overall community wealth and benefit the school with positive attitudes. The community

partners are very important to the success of the project. If they do not commit to offering

the resources that are needed, it could limit the effectiveness of the project because some

of their resources could help to assist the parents in becoming more involved.

Recommendations for Remediation

The school district and school personnel need to support the project and

encourage parents to participate in order for the project to be successful. The school

leaders must take an active role in promoting these parental involvement workshops by

promoting it to faculty, parents, and community. The home-school relationship will play

a vital role in the school leaders promoting the workshop and communicating the

important issues of parental involvement. Graham-Clay (2005) suggested that effective

two-way lines of communication connecting school personnel with families is

fundamental in their partnership to teach children and is required in building the

children's awareness of the relationship between home and school. Hence, educators

must continue to strengthen and increase their skills to effectively communicate with

parents.

Recommendations of Alternative Approaches

An alternative approach to the on-site parental involvement workshops is to offer

them online. The findings from this study indicated that some parents were interested in

communicating with the school via technology. For example, parents could utilize Skype,

FaceTime, or Oovoo to virtually attend meetings or events. Schools could also use the

school web pages to place videos of sessions on the web so the parents could view them when time permitted. The enthusiasm of school leaders, who are serious about building strong parental relationships, would be exhibited throughout the district and community.

Scholarship

The doctoral program at Walden University, and especially the project study, has enhanced my academic knowledge and given me that extra push to continue to expand my knowledge. According to Brew (2011), the scholarship of educating and learning integrated various assignments concentrating on recalling strategies on instruction and comprehension in some way. I have found that scholarship involves many processes that include teacher/student relationships, classroom instruction, reading and researching scholarly literature, and discussions and dialogue with colleagues.

Scholarship helps to build lifelong learners and includes processes such as teacher/student relationships, classroom instruction, reading and researching scholarly literature, and colleague discussions and dialogue. As a lifelong learner, I recognize a need for continued professional development and personal growth for myself and others. As an effective instructional/educational leader dedicated to scholarship I will be able to ensure that scholarship is promoted among colleagues in an educational environment. Kanuka (2011) wrote, "The scholarship of teaching and learning increases in recognition for its contributions to teaching and learning in higher education, it also becomes increasingly important that those making contributions are aware of how to conduct educational research" (p. 1). From knowledge gained through this doctoral project, I believe I am better equipped to lead in an educational arena committed to scholarship.

Project Development and Evaluation

This project will use outcome-based evaluation, a systematic way of examining a program to ensure that it has achieved the intended results (Royse et al., 2015). The outcome-based evaluation will be used in this project to determine if after the workshops there is increased parental involvement in the H.I.P.P.Y., "I Care" programs, and parental volunteering and visitation in the school. Attendance sheets will be used to measure for both. Comparing data from month to month will show an increase in parental participation. The effectiveness will be measured through an increase in parental involvement programs and an increase in parent volunteering.

Baseline data will be gathered before the implementation of the project and data will be gathered during the implementation and for the last 2 months of the school year. The expectations are that at least one more parent will be involved each month.

The first outcome of the project is to determine if the workshops increase parental involvement in the "I Care" and H.I.P.P.Y programs. Attendance sheets will be circulated at H.I.P.P.Y. and "I Care meetings. I will collect the attendance sheets and analyze data monthly to determine the level of parent participation in each program. A successful outcome would be increased attendance.

Another outcome of the project is to increase parental involvement in the school. The school will maintain parent volunteer logs and parent visitation logs as documentation within the school. I will collect the attendance sheets and analyze data monthly to determine the level of parent volunteering or visitation in the school. A successful outcome would be increased volunteering and visitation.

The goal of this evaluation is to see whether the workshops have increased the number of parents involved. If the numbers do not increase, then the workshops may need to be revised to provide for increase participation.

The key stakeholders in the project are parents, educators, and students. The parents of the students in the school district will be one group of stakeholders. The outcome is to seek to increase the parents' participation to better the students' education. Another group of stakeholders will be the educators. If parental involvement does increase as a result of the workshops, then educators will be the keys in making sure that participation is meaningful. Students are the key stakeholders because they are beneficiaries of increased parental involvement. With increased parental involvement there will changed relationships among the students, parents, and schools.

Leadership and Change

Marzano et al. (2005) noted that leadership is considered to be vital to the effective operation of a school and to stimulate change in an organization. As the researcher, I found that everyone has the ability to lead and be a change agent. There are many types of leadership and agents of change, and instructional leadership is one of the most effective. Effective leadership and a willingness to change are critical to the success of the educational process. Leaders have a great influence on student achievement by the hiring of competent educators, and by providing opportunities for educators to improve (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Thus, educational stakeholders must decide if they are going to be effective leaders of change regardless of their educational position, or will they be an ineffective leader in the learning process. These workshops provide the opportunity for growth in leadership that can promote and change among all stakeholders.

My journey through the doctoral program at Walden University and creation of the project study equipped me with the confidence to become an effective educational leader of change. With 21 years of service in teaching and leading, this doctoral program has developed me into a better educational leader. Hallinger and Heck (2010) found effective school leadership established an environment that fostered effective instruction and encouraged professional learning and change. My educational journey through this doctoral program has helped me to enhance my educational knowledge and increased my drive to become a better educational leader for change.

Analysis of Self as Scholar

I began this educational journey to show my two daughters that, regardless of age, people can be lifelong learners. Life experiences can sometimes provide learning opportunities more valuable than the traditional educational setting, and I have learned through my experience as an educator. In the profession of education there is always an opportunity for professional growth through formal education, and that is why I decided to start my journey on the doctoral path.

Prior to starting this doctoral program, I had attended two other universities for degrees and thought of myself as a scholar. I was young while attending those other universities, and my main goal was to finish the programs. My thoughts of being scholarly have changed over the years. As an instructional leader in a school district, I knew the importance of expanding my knowledge to help me better serve the students and teachers of my district. According to Avalos (2011), professional opportunities such as classes and educational trainings may assist in helping to prepare the scholar. During my journey toward scholarship, I met many challenges, especially toward the end. When

I started I was merely an instructional leader, but I am finishing the process as a better prepared scholar. I see this educational opportunity as a chance to continue my professional growth and expand my knowledge to better my practice. Being a lifelong learner has helped me on the educational journey by build my knowledge and skills to continue on the path of becoming a strong educational scholar.

Analysis of Self as Practitioner

I began my professional career as an educational practitioner over 21 years ago. I have served as a teacher, lead teacher, assistant principal, principal, and now district supervisor. I thought with the experience I had in education it would enhance my growth as an educator by starting the journey toward a doctoral degree. As my journey progressed and I finished all my courses and started the project study, I was able to put the academic and practical lessons I learned to use to become a better practitioner. I have learned as a practitioner that the learning process is forever changing and never ends. Although I faced some obstacles and challenges along my journey, I thought it necessary to continue with this process to prove to my fellow educators, children, and myself that with hard work anything is possible. Throughout this educational journey I have learned effective strategies and techniques to use in my current position and new educational trends to share with my colleagues. Avalos (2011) noted specialized learning is a difficult procedure, one requiring the involvement of both the intellectual and the emotions of the learners as a whole, the ability and willingness to explore each person's positions on beliefs, and the examination of appropriate options for improvement or change. The relationships developed with other professional educators and practitioners have been an

invaluable experience and a much needed catalyst for me in developing into a better educational practitioner.

Analysis of Self as Project Developer

As I reflect as a project developer, I found that developing this project to expand over a period of time was a greater challenge than I thought. The purpose and intent of the project was to develop a platform to allow parents and educators an opportunity to collaborate together to build a strong home-school relationship. As a developer, I quickly realized the importance of developing strategies that would be effective in implementing this project. The first strategy I used was to collaborate with my colleagues on examining issues of the school district to identify a topic for my project. Another strategy used was to patiently learn to overcome obstacles and persevere in my endeavors. This taught me that flexibility is critical as a project developer. However, keeping in mind the purpose and intent of my project made the process easier. The purpose and my dedication to completing the project remained steadfast throughout development.

Reflections on the Importance of the Work

According to Ahlquist (2014), social change occurs as leaders have and act on visions and concerns that affect others in society. The leader has to be able to integrate daily activities that challenge limitations, positions, and educational potentials worldwide. The lack of parental involvement is an issue within many school systems and should be addressed by social change leaders and educators. Parents should be provided with every opportunity to be a part of the educational process. Parental involvement in schools can have a profound effect on students' academics, attendance, and behavior. This qualitative case study explored the parents' perception of their role in the

educational process. The research findings indicated that the parents were working several jobs to provide for their families, some were not interested and others thought what they were doing was effective. The workshops took this into consideration and were designed to address these issues that limited parental involvement.

A positive outcome of the project study will be an increase in parental involvement. As well, all stakeholders will have a clear understanding of effective parental involvement and enjoy a new strong relationship between home and school. When parents believe that their opinions are valued and they are important to the educational process, positive social change can then take place. Hence, it is imperative for the school leaders to acknowledge the lack of parental involvement at their schools and develop activities and strategies to increase the involvement. Social change, improving lives of individuals within the local community (Walden University, 2011), can start at the local school by increasing parental involvement.

Implications, Application, and Direction for Future Research

Although there is much literature and research on the importance of parental involvement, the literature is limited on strategies and ideas on how to effectively increase parental involvement. The data gathered in this study indicated that school officials and parents have different understandings of parental involvement, which can cause friction between the home-school relationships. The data also indicated a need for better means of communication and opportunities that would allow activities to take place at various times to allow for more participation. The data collected can help the practitioner be more proactive when planning events and parental involvement activities for the start of school every year.

Educators agree that the role of parents in the educational process is important. Although many teachers believe they do not receive eno0ugh support from some of the parents, it is still the responsibility of the educator to ensure they are giving the students the best education possible. Thus, the educators must remain vigilant about developing a strong home-school relationship. The parental involvement workshop platform could produce social change in the school and school district on many different levels.

One social change that the project may bring about could be improved economic stability due to the development of a well-qualified work force. This outcome will occur when students receive a quality education that prepares them to enter the workforce with no further preparation. Another social change that could occur is a reduction in the number of juvenile referrals to Youth Services by the school district. The organizational change that may occur is a more cohesive support system for all learners through increased parental involvement. An individual change would be students who are adequately prepared to enter college or the workforce. In addition, educators know the absences of parents in their children's education has several adverse effects, which includes poor academic performance, inappropriate behavior, and poor attendance; therefore, educators must ensure when parents come to visit the school or classrooms they are made to feel welcome and appreciated for their value in the educational process.

The lack of parental involvement is an issue that continues to be a serious concern for educators. Continued research on parental involvement issues is needed to continue to provide educators with new trends and ideas on continuing to increase parental involvement. Furthermore, as school and home develop a stronger relationship, research is necessary to help school personnel in choosing an effective parenting programs and

developing effective strategies to increase parental involvement. The findings of this study suggest that parents would like the highest-quality education possible for their children and desire to be involved in the educational process, but they are not sure how to bring it about. Thus, continued research is warranted on new topics in parental involvement to ensure that the schools and school district continue the efforts to develop relationships with the parents and community partners.

To ensure that the school continues to address the parental involvement needs, I will work with the parent facilitators and schools to continue to identify effective strategies to increase parental involvement. Research will be continued through my reading of professional journals and books, and attending conferences emphasizing effective parental involvement activities. The information obtained could result in more programs implemented throughout the school district, and data could be collected and analyzed to identify which strategies were most effective across the district.

Conclusion

Parental involvement is a problem school districts have been facing for many years. Many parents are apprehensive about getting involved at the school because they are not comfortable or they do not feel valued. The Parental Involvement workshop project was designed to bring school personnel, school district officials, parents and community members into collaboration and develop relationships that will foster a commitment to increasing parental involvement. According to Fullan (2003), "Collaboration, by definition, occurs only when two or more individuals share meaningful responsibility for producing a choice" (p. 68). Social change must be a

collaborative effort by the school district, school personnel, and parents to ensure the students develop emotionally and academically.

Section 4 described the strengths, limitations, and development of the project. The section also contained my reflections on scholarship, project evaluations and leadership and change. Section 4 described me as a practitioner, scholar, and a project developer throughout this educational journey. Finally, Section 4 concluded by taking a look at the potential impact of the project on social change and the implications for future research within the educational setting.

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Appendix A: Project

The project is a parental involvement workshop for educators and parents to address the barriers to active parental involvement and establish a stronger home-school relationship to enhance the academic success of the students. The research findings indicated that the parents' and educators' understanding of parental involvement differed, but all agreed that parents play a very important role in the educational process.

The overall goal of the parental involvement workshop is to prepare parents with the knowledge and skills necessary to become more actively involved, and to prepare the educators to collaborate more effectively with parents for academic success. The parental involvement workshop will be broken into three sessions. The sessions will be offered over a period of a year, at times that are convenient for the parents, educators, and other stakeholders. Session 1, which will focus on educating the parents on the important role they play in the educational process, will stress the importance of a strong home-school relationship.

Session 2 will focus on identifying barriers to parental involvement. The current research suggested several reasons why parents cannot or will not be involved. During the second session the participants will have the opportunity to work in teams using a T chart graphic organizer to identify potential barriers that could cause parents not to be as involved in their child's education. During this session an overview of Session 1 will be given as refresher, and the focus for this session will be developing a list of potential barriers at the individual schools. Once this list is developed, the participants will have table talk and team discussions about possible strategies their school can implement to overcome the barriers.

Session 3 will be a continuation of Sessions 1 and 2. This session will continue to look at the potential parental involvement barriers, but it will also develop strategies to

overcome this barriers. To engage all stakeholders, the parental involvement workshop begins with a skit performed by the high school students, displaying how important parents are to the schools and students. A PowerPoint presentation will follow the skit. The presentation for parents and educators will be on parental involvement and its importance, barriers common to parental involvement, "I Care" implementation, and parenting resources. Next, the community partners will do a short presentation on the resources they have to offer the parents that impact the academic success of their children.

The participants will continue to work as school teams using a decision-making graphic organizer to look at the pros and cons of the identified strategy. Once each team identifies which strategy is best for overcoming the particular barriers of the school, we will return to general session to compile a list of the effective strategies to be used in the district's parental involvement plan.

The evaluations process will take place at the end of each session. We will solicit feedback, suggestions, and comments to help improve the parental involvement programs throughout the school district. All participants attending the workshop will be provided with informational brochures on parental involvement and suggested activities/ideas that the parents can use with their children.

Southern Zone Parental Involvement Session
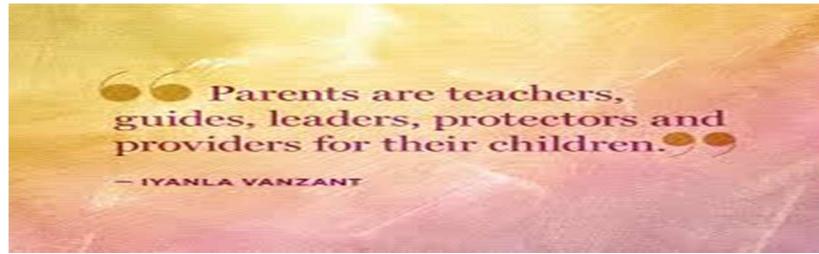
Agenda

1. **Welcome and Introduction**

2. **Skit "If You Really Cared"**

3. **PowerPoint presentation on Parental Involvement**

4. **Community Resources:**

   a. **Family Resource Center**

   b. **Dallas County Schools Parent Facilitators**

   c. **Department of Human Resources**

   d. **Wallace Community College Adult Education Program**

   e. **Career Links**

5. **Breakout Session (30 Minute Rotations):**

   1. **Wanted Excited, and Energetic Parents**

   2. **Parents helping Parents**

   3. **Purpose of "I Care"**

6. **Question and answer session**

7. **Evaluations**

8. **Conclusion**

Southern Zone Parental Involvement Session #1
Breakout Session Schedule
8:00 am – 4:00 pm Tuesday & Saturday
10:00 am –6:00 pm Saturday

Activities	Presenters	Timeframe
Participant Check Welcome & Introduction	Researcher and Parent Facilitators	8:00-8:15 (T & S) 10:00-10:15 (Th)
Skit	Southside High School Drama Department	8:15-9:15 (T & S) 10:15 – 11:15 (Th)
Break		9:15-9:30 (T & S) 11:15:11:30 (Th)
PowerPoint Presentation	Researcher	9:30-10:00 (T & S) 11:30-12:00 (Th)
Dallas County Family Resource Center	J. Justice	10:00-10:15 (T & S) 12:00-12:15 (Th)
Dallas County Parent Facilitators	D. Irvin S. Edwards	10:15-10:30 (T & S) 12:15-12:30 (Th)
Department of Human Resourcss	J. Hickman	10:30-10:45 (T & S) 12:30-12:45 (Th)
Career Links	R. Brown	10:45-11:00(T & S) 12:45-1:00 (Th)
Wallace Community College Adult Education	M. Page	11:00-11:15 (T & S) 1:00-1:15 (Th)
LUNCH	Provided by Researcher	11:15 -12:30 (T & S) 1:15-2:30 (Th)

Session Name	Objectives	Equipment Need	Timeframe
Wanted: Excited and Energetic Parents	Discuss and develop tricks to overcoming the barriers to parental involvement.	Projector Computer Handouts	12:45-1:45 (T & S) 2:45-3:45 (Th)

Parents Helping Parents	Discuss ideas and strategies parents believe will encourage parents to become consistently involved.	Projector Computer	1:45-2:45 (T& S) 3:45-4:45 (Th)
Effective Use of "I Care" Parental Involvement Program	Discuss how the "I Care" home connection materials can help student academic achievement	"I Care" Handbooks Projector Computer	2:45-3:45 (T & S) 4:45-5:45 (Th)
Closing Session	Question and answer session. Share schedule for follow up sessions	Calendar	3:45-4:00 (T& S) 5:45-6:00 (Th)

IF YOU REALLY CARED

ACT ONE

Scene 1: Lack of Participation in English Class

      Setting: Mrs. Smith's classroom

      Cast: Assistant Principal, Mrs. Smith, and Tommy

      Extras – boys and girls in the classroom

Tommy - an excellent high school mathematics student, a reluctant learner in his
   English Class

      Mrs. Smith - an excellent motivator, a provider of challenging curriculum and
      tasks

      Assistant Principal - an instructional leader, a child advocate, and a firm
      disciplinarian

Scene opens: Mrs. Smith is standing in close proximity to Tommy and encouraging him
to begin the task of analyzing the poem the class has been reading.

Mrs. Smith:	"Tommy, you really need to start the analysis of the poem. "
Tommy: already	"I don't know what you want me to do with this poem. The author has written it."
Mrs. Smith: with	"Remember, the homework assignment on Tuesday was to read the poem your parents and tell them what you think the author is saying."
Tommy:	"Yes" Mrs. Smith: "What did you and your parents say the poem was about"
Tommy:	"I don't know. That's why I don't even write poems when you assign them"
Mrs. Smith: how	"In class on Tuesday, we discussed the literary devices in the poem, and we knew what each one was."
Tommy: "Why	"I didn't understand it then, and I don't understand you now." *(loudly)* don't you just leave me alone?"
Mrs. Smith:	"Please come to my small group table, and I will help you develop an analysis of this poem."

Tommy: *(Even louder)* "Didn't I just ask you to leave me alone?" *(Turns his back to teacher)*

Mrs. Smith: *(Buzzes assistant principal)* "Can you come to my classroom, please?"

Assistant Principal: "I am sending the interventionist to your class to monitor them. \ Please come to my office."

Scene 2: Inappropriate Behavior
        Setting: Assistant Principal's office
        Cast: Assistant Principal, Counselor, Mrs. Smith, and Tommy

Tommy, an excellent high school mathematics student, a reluctant learner in his English
        Class
        Mrs. Smith, an excellent motivator, a provider of challenging curriculum and
         tasks.
        Counselor, a child advocate, a certified behavior specialist, a supporter of
        instruction.
        Assistant Principal, an instructional leader, a child advocate, and a firm
        disciplinarian.

Scene opens: Mrs. Smith and Tommy enters the office where the assistant principal and
        counselor are having a meeting.

Tommy: (Yelling) "Every time I don't do what you want me to do you drag me to the
office. "I am so sick of this. I don't understand the stuff that you have us reading, and…"

Assistant Principal: *(Interrupts in a quiet voice)* "Tommy, you know we do not yell in the
hallway or as we enter classes or offices in our school. So, before we begin I want you to
take about five deep breaths and prepare to talk to us."

Tommy: "Yes, ma'am" *(Calmly sits at conference table)*

Assistant Principal: "Ok, Mrs. Smith. Would you like to share with the counselor and I
                the reason for this conference."

Mrs. Smith: "Yes, I will. In previous meetings with the counselor and Tommy I have
        discussed his refusal to begin any challenging task that involves reading, writing,
        or speaking. I have done everything I know to encourage him. I have developed
        a behavior contract, created an incentive plan, attempted to provide one-to-one
        instruction, and attempted to make parental contact."

Assistant Principal: *(Turns to counselor)* "Can you provide any insight to the problem?"

Counselor: "We have met about Tommy's behavior in the English class on several
occasions, and I have been providing on going monitoring of his response to the methods
included in his behavior modification plan. I have also held weekly sessions with him to

discuss the importance of Language Arts to his academic future, but to no avail. As I was sharing with you earlier, it is impossible to get his parents to respond to any attempts to schedule a conference."

Tommy: *(Raises his hand)* "May I speak, please. You are talking like my mom don't care, but the real problem is that my mom is usually at work when I wake up in the morning and when I go to bed at night. She is the only person providing for me and she doesn't have time to help me with any work. My grandma tries to help me, but she never was a "good reader herself" is what she told me. Mrs. Smith want to ask me in front of the whole class what I remember, but she really don't care about me or whether I learn this stuff or not. No one has ever cared about whether I understood what I read or not. *(Begins crying)*

Mrs. Smith: "Tommy that is not true. I really do care about you, and I want you to learn. What can I do differently to help you improve your Language Arts skills?"

Tommy: "If I can get some help after school, and maybe if someone could be my mom at school and be there for me like James' mom and dad do at events. Then, I would not be   picked on by the kids in class who parents come to check on their grades. It's not that I don't want to learn. Maybe, you could have conferences by phone around 4:00 when my mother is between jobs.

Assistant Principal: "Those are good ideas, Tommy. What can the counselor and I do to help you succeed in Mrs. Smith's class?"

Tommy: "I don't know…cause you guys don't even teach a class." *(Smiling)* "You just suspend people, and she just asks me a whole lot of questions."

(In unison)

Counselor and Assistant Principal: "Luckily for you, we both taught Language Arts before we became an administrator or a counselor. Maybe, we can each give you one day of our time after school for two hours with your mother's permission."

Tommy: "That would be great." (*Looks at Mrs. Smith with a huge smile)* "I apologize Mrs. Smith for my behavior in your class. I really thought you didn't want me there, and you just wanted me out no matter what it took."

Mrs. Smith: "I accept your apology, and I will work on not responding to your frustration in a negative way; how – ever, I do want you to show your interest in improving by reporting to reading intervention to improve you comprehension skills."

Tommy: "After all you have agreed to do for me, it will be a snap. I will go to intervention."

Scene Closes: Tommy shakes hand with Mrs. Smith, and they leave the office with
                       smiles on their Faces

Southern Zone Parenting
Workshop

Tanya S. Miles
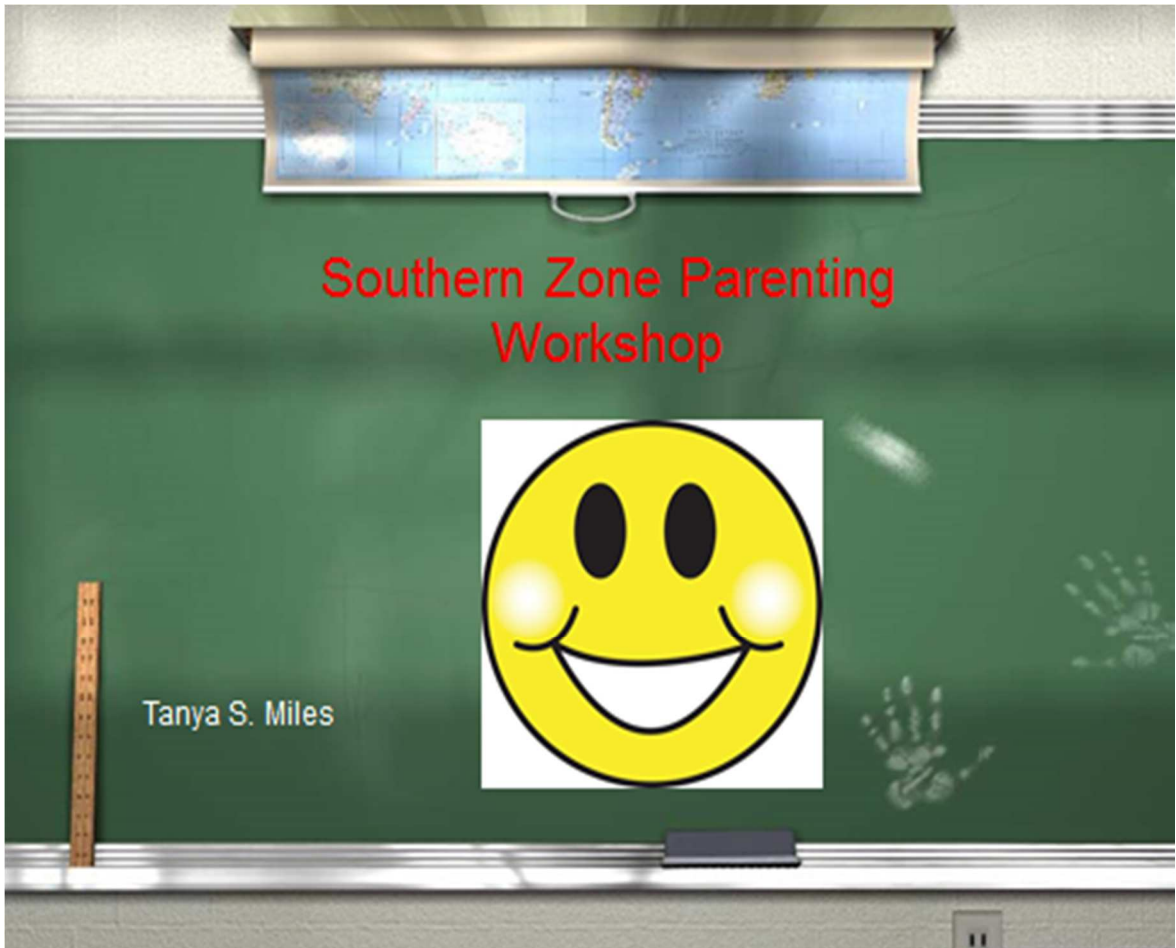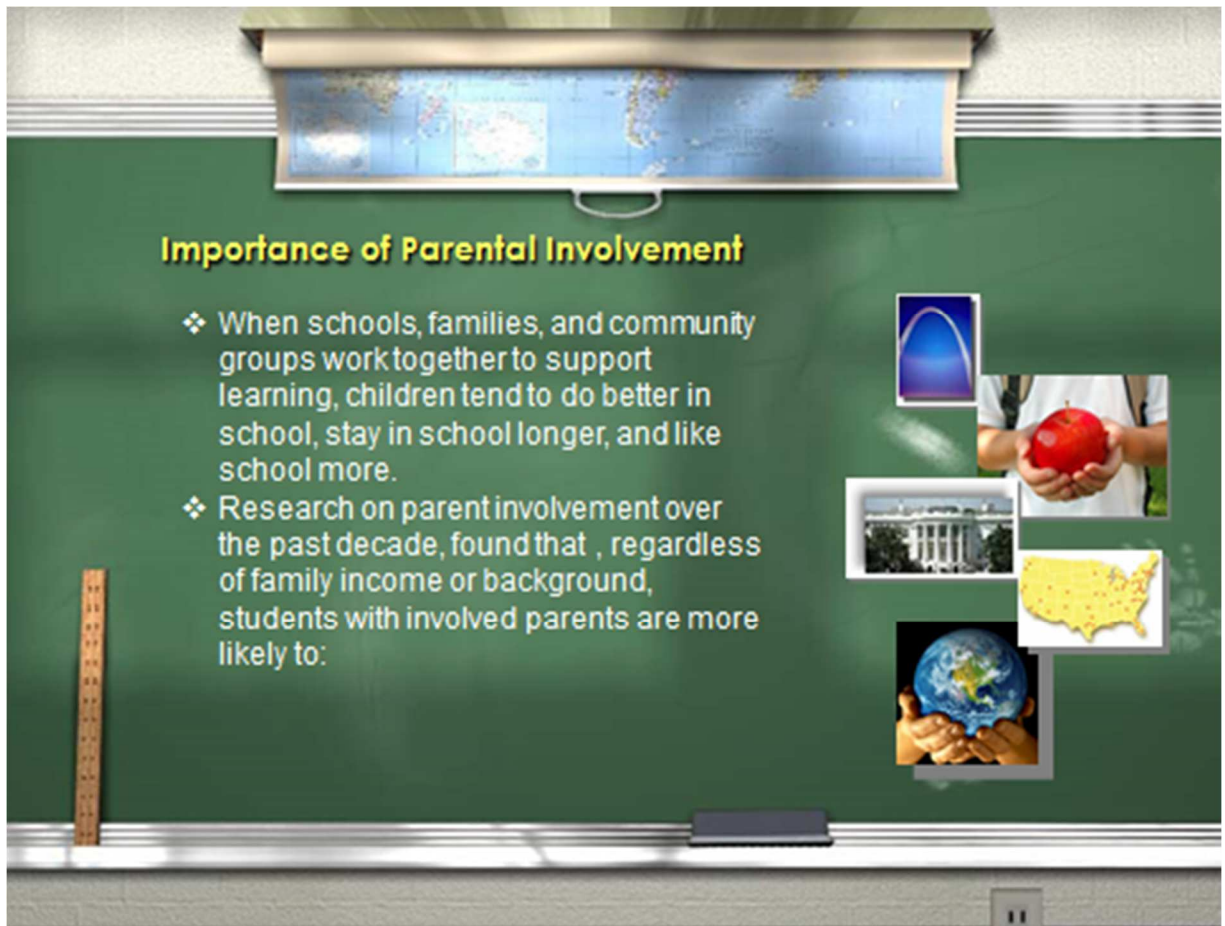
Explain to the participants that this portion of the workshop will give them a look at the
definition of parental involvement and learn their value in the educational process.
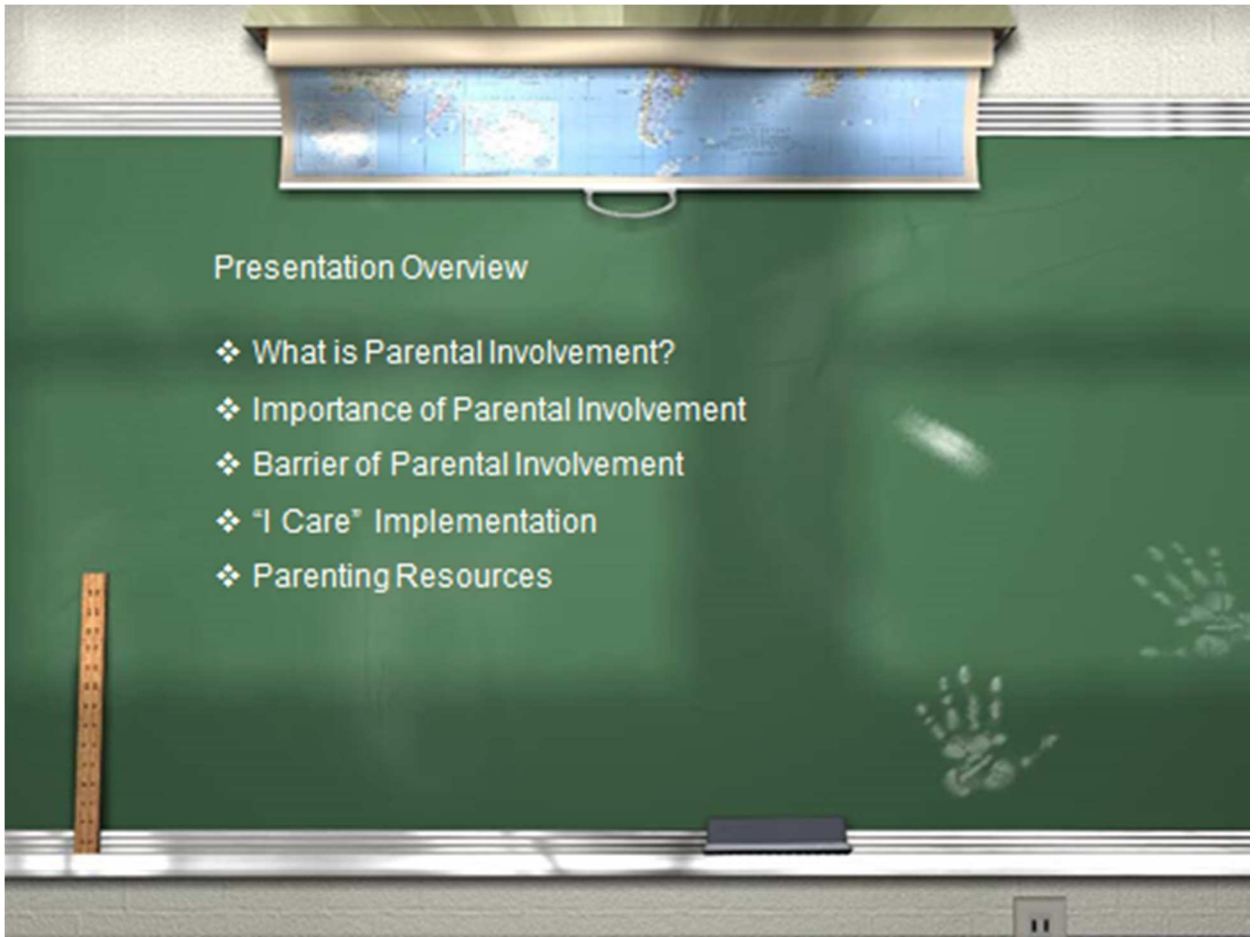
Give an overview of the PowerPoint presentation.
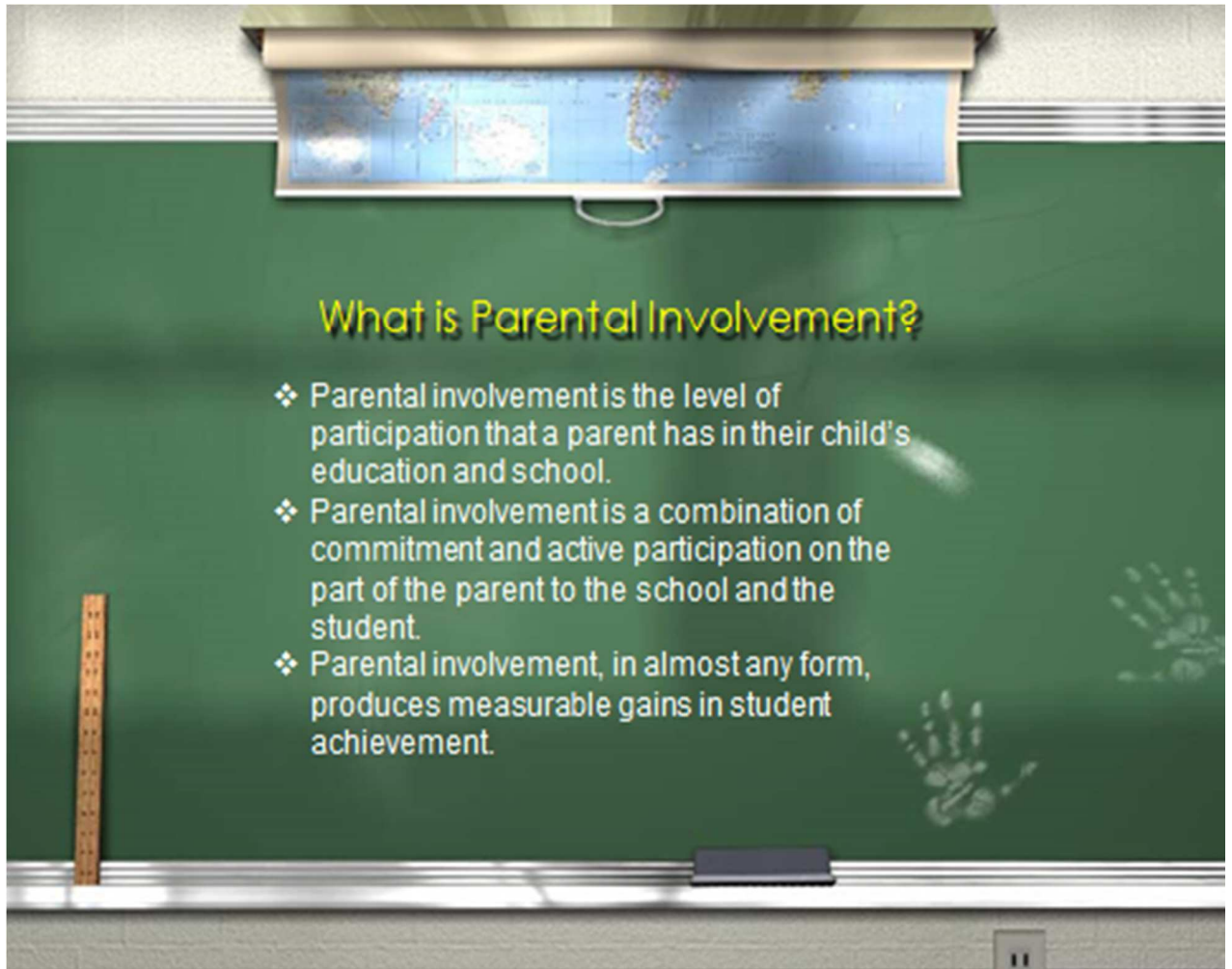
Use this slide to discuss parental involvement. This slide is important to let the parents know that they are an important piece of the process.
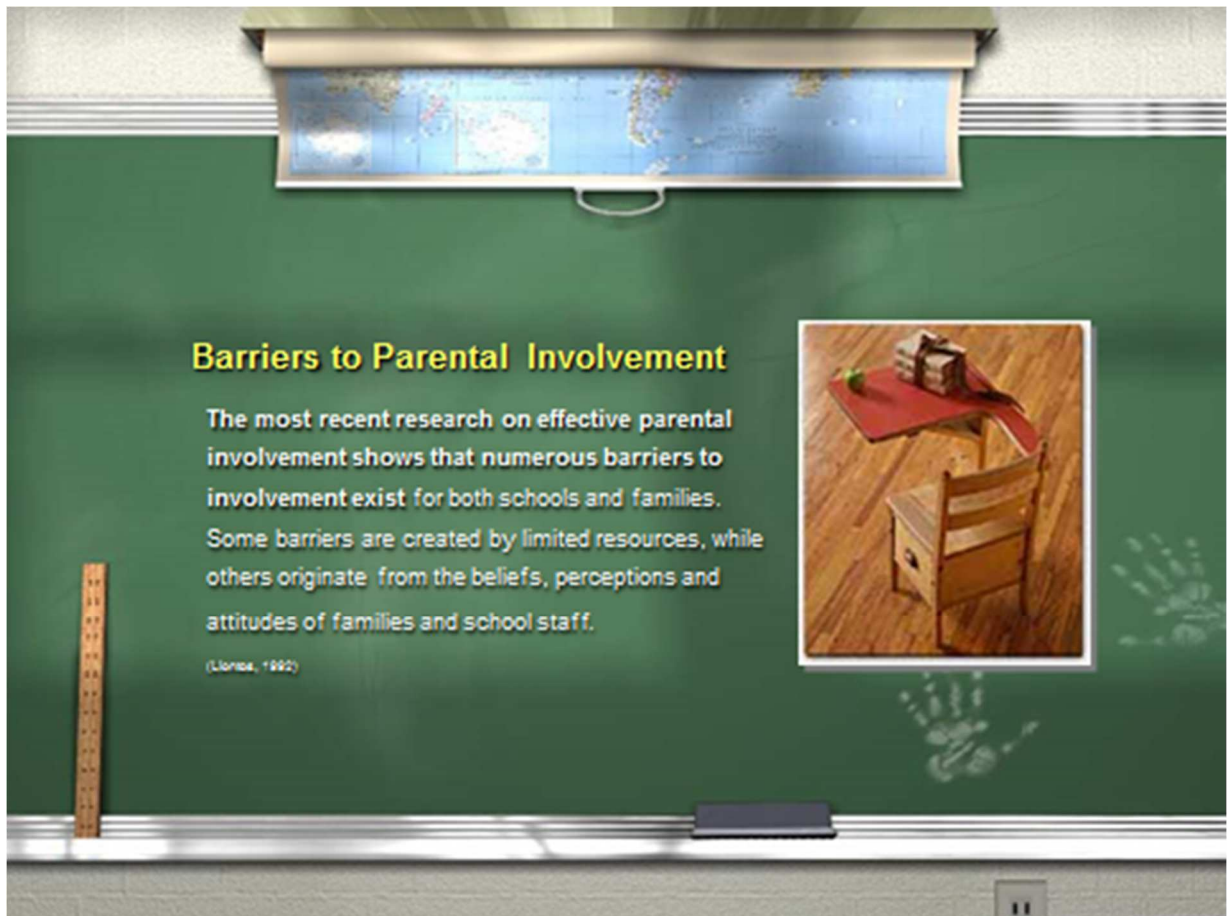
Talk about the importance of building a strong home-school relationship and the benefits.

Talk about the importance of building a strong home-school relationship and the benefits
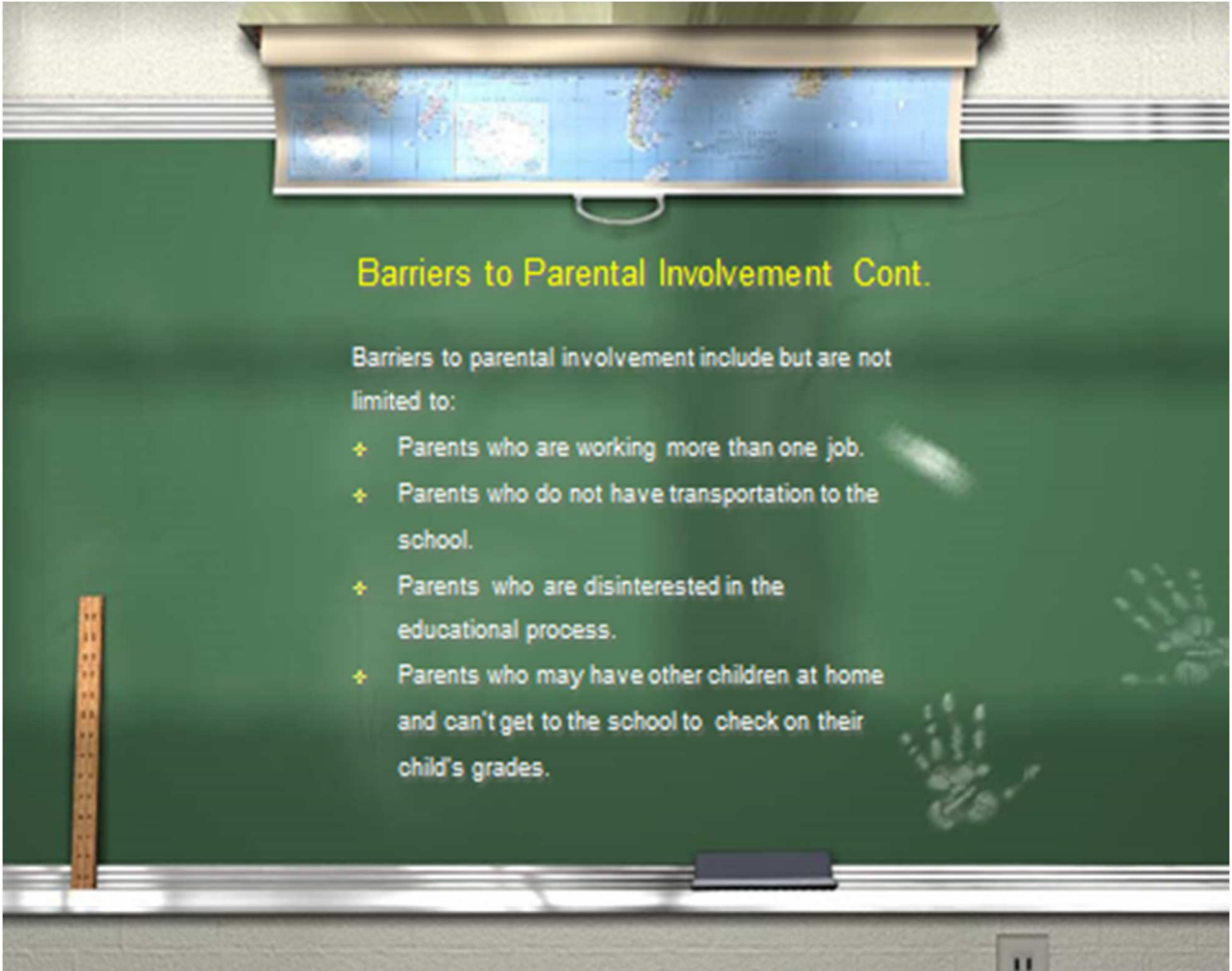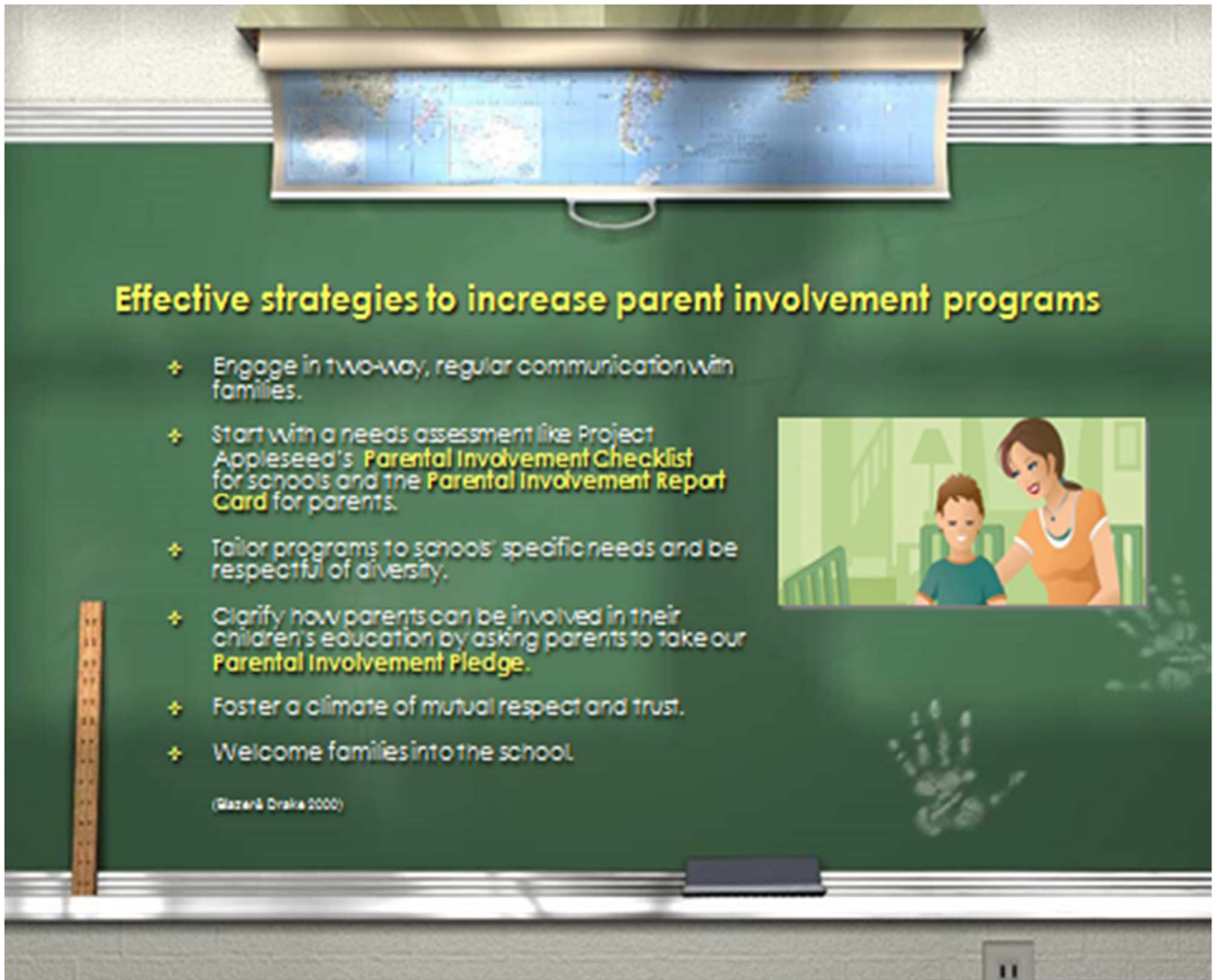
Use this slide and the next one to introduce barriers to parental involvement. The barriers to parental involvement will also be discussed in the parental involvement sessions # 2 & 3.

Barriers to Parental Involvement Cont.

Barriers to parental involvement include but are not limited to:

+ Parents who are working more than one job.
+ Parents who do not have transportation to the school.
+ Parents who are disinterested in the educational process.
+ Parents who may have other children at home and can't get to the school to check on their child's grades.
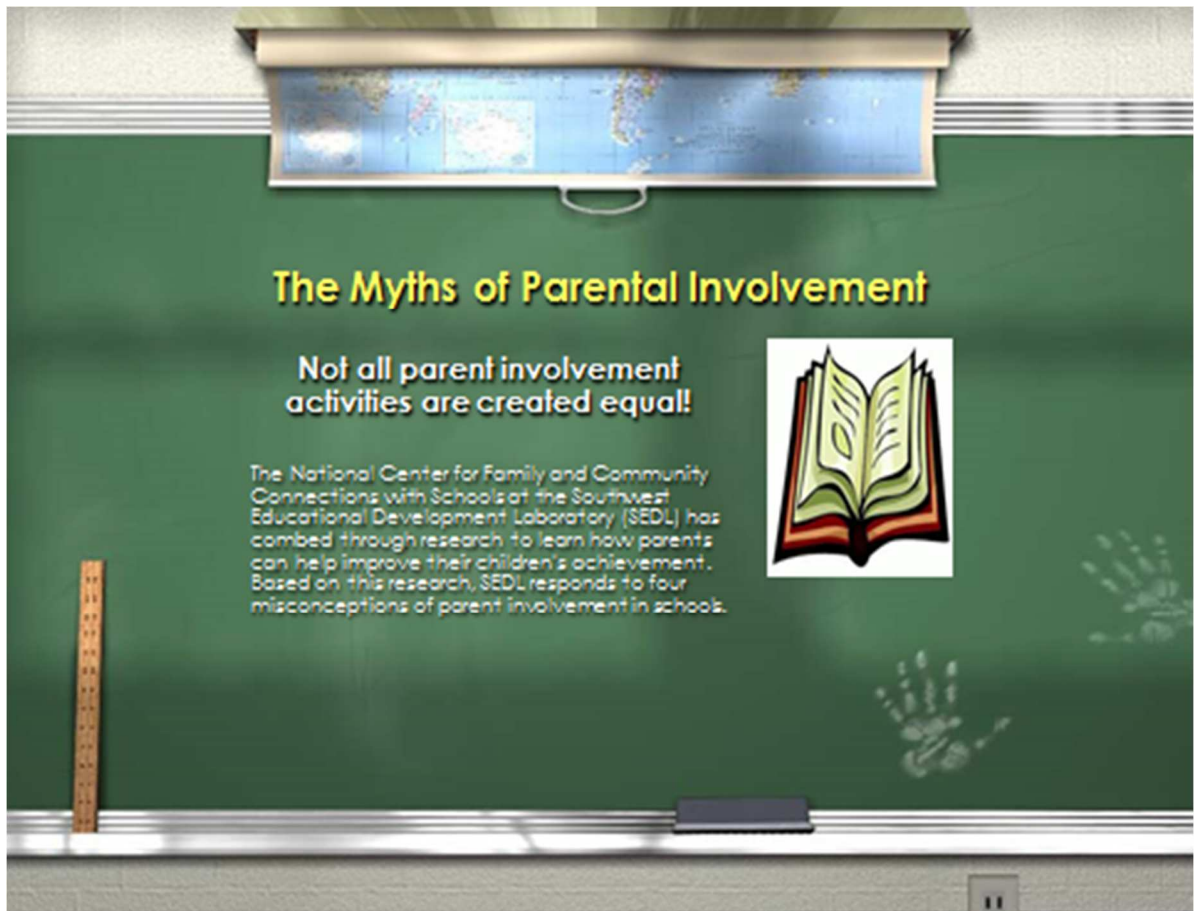
The facilitator will use this slide to discuss strategies and ways to increase parental at the school and in the district.

The research identifies certain types of parental involvement and specific strategies as effective in supporting student learning.

- Increasing the number of contacts between the school and the parent does appear to stimulate parent volunteerism.

- Parent communication with school and parent participation in a PTO/PTA can be influenced by schools. A study found that increased school-initiated contact resulted in reciprocal parent contacts.

- Thus, enhanced school contacts with parents should increase the parents' contacts with school.

- Creating opportunities to engage parents to a greater degree in school can increase their involvement in the school's organizational structure.

(Bourdieu 1990 & Feuerstein 2000)

Use this slide and the next four to discuss the myths about parental involvement and think about ways to take these myths and make them effective practices.
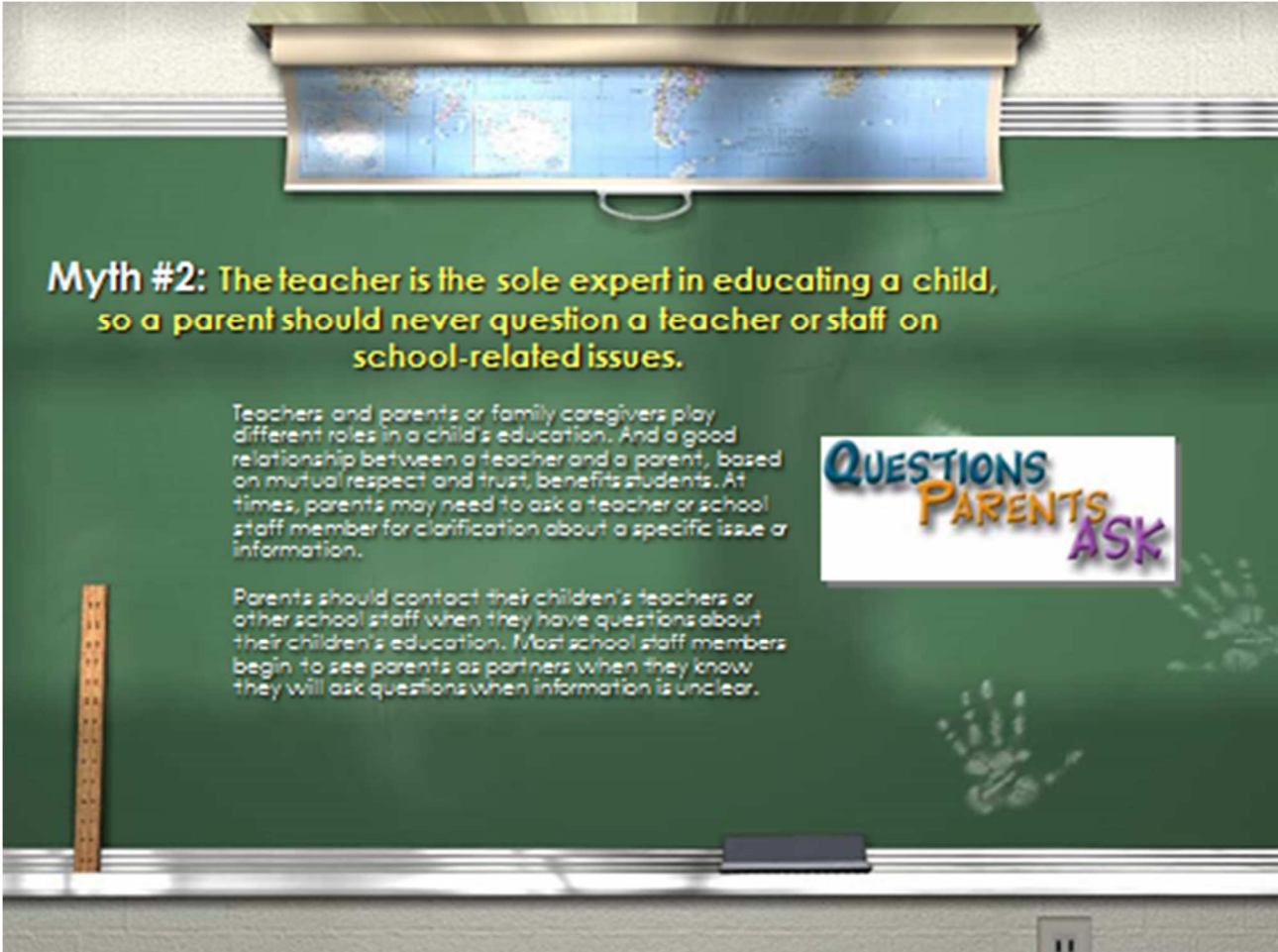
Myth #1: As a parent, the best way to get involved in my child's education is by joining the local parents' organization.

Parents who are dues-paying members of their children's school PTA are supporting the oldest and largest child advocacy organization in the United States. But being a member alone doesn't ensure effective involvement in a child's learning.

To support achievement, research suggests the most effective parental involvement focuses on learning activities—reading to children, letting them figure prices at the grocery store or setting aside time and space to do homework and projects.

There are benefits in joining an organization like the PTA or PTO, such as the opportunity to share experiences and information with other parents and access to organizational resources. Just the same, parents can provide the support needed at home for their children to be successful in school without joining a local parent organization.
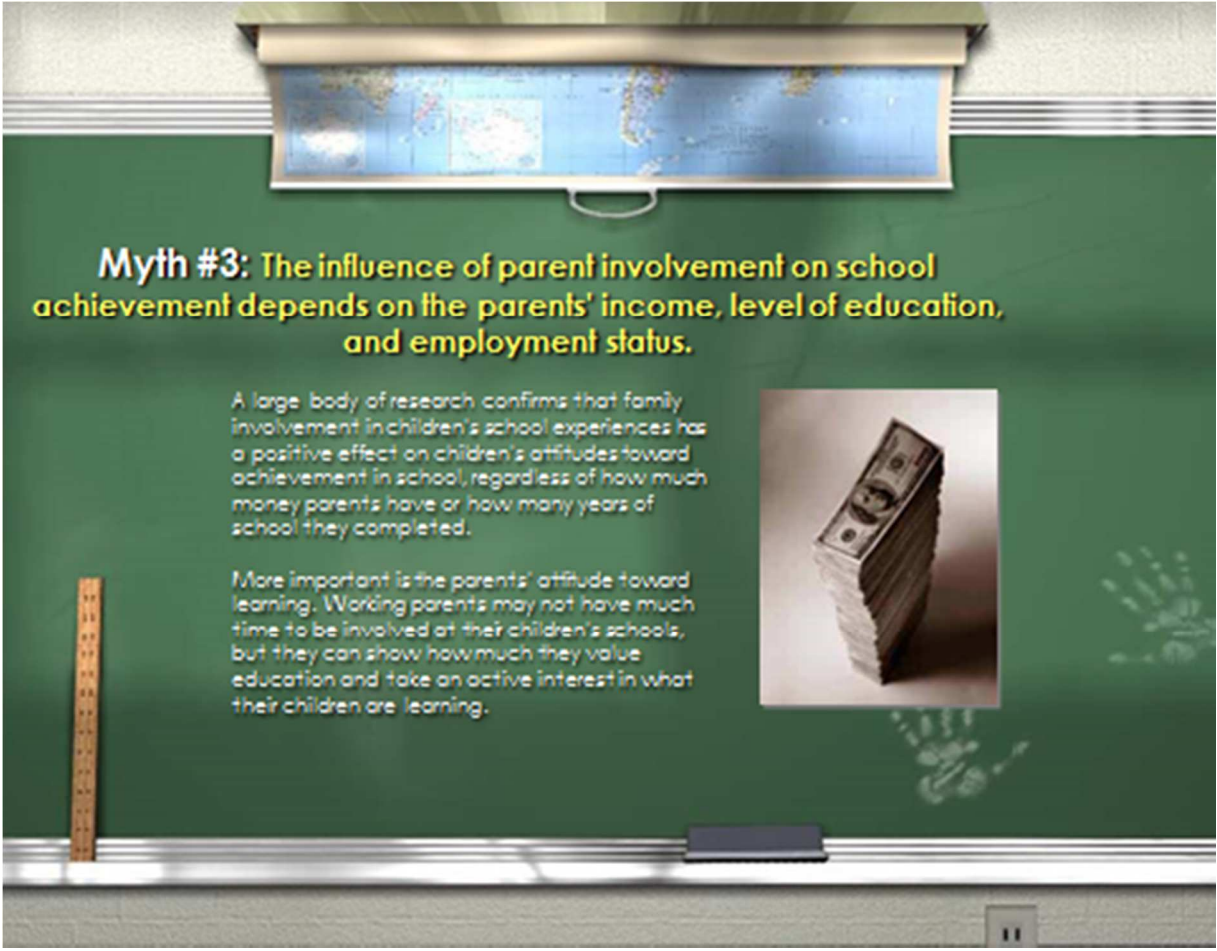
Myth #2: The teacher is the sole expert in educating a child, so a parent should never question a teacher or staff on school-related issues.

Teachers and parents or family caregivers play different roles in a child's education. And a good relationship between a teacher and a parent, based on mutual respect and trust, benefits students. At times, parents may need to ask a teacher or school staff member for clarification about a specific issue or information.

Parents should contact their children's teachers or other school staff when they have questions about their children's education. Most school staff members begin to see parents as partners when they know they will ask questions when information is unclear.

QUESTIONS PARENTS ASK

Myth #3: The influence of parent involvement on school achievement depends on the parents' income, level of education, and employment status.

A large body of research confirms that family involvement in children's school experiences has a positive effect on children's attitudes toward achievement in school, regardless of how much money parents have or how many years of school they completed.

More important is the parents' attitude toward learning. Working parents may not have much time to be involved at their children's schools, but they can show how much they value education and take an active interest in what their children are learning.
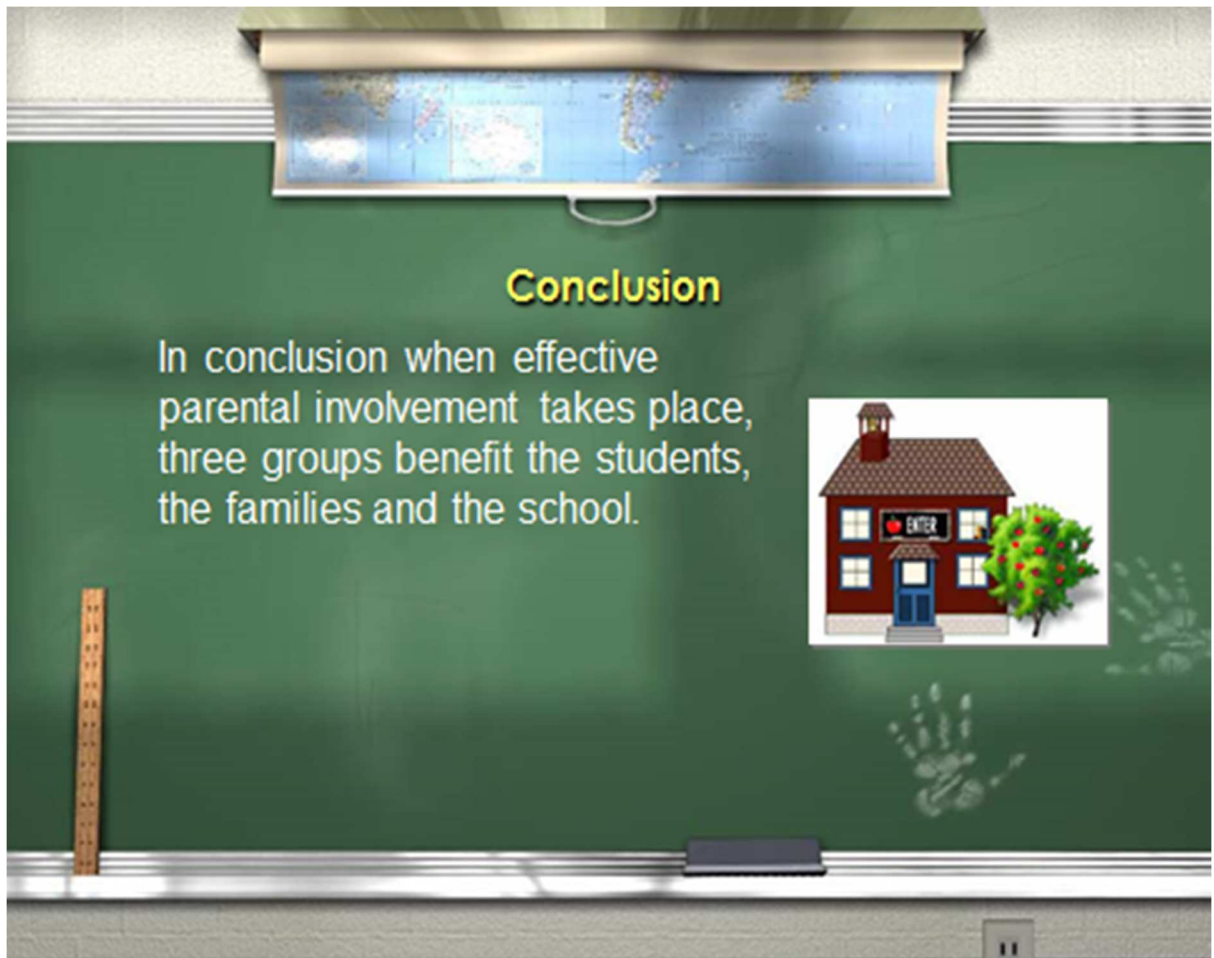
Myth #4: The key factors in parent involvement are the teacher, parents or family, and the student.

Meaningful and successful parent involvement is not limited to partnerships between parents and teachers. Parents and family caregivers should think of the following educators and decision makers as participants in their children's educations-teachers, the principal, the school board, the superintendent, and public officials.

Parents can influence school board members and public officials by participating in meetings, voting, and engaging in discussions of education matters and child advocacy issues.

Training Proposal Form

CONSULTANT NAME: Melanie T. Wright

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP   429 Lauderdale Street Selma, Alabama 36701

HOME PHONE:_____   CELL PHONE   334-872-6251

VENDOR#_____ N/A _____   EMAIL ADDRESS   wrightmt@dallask12.org

TITLE OF WORKSHOP: Wanted Excited and Energetic Parents

Intended Grade (s): Teachers and Parents

**Please provide a brief abstract describing the focus and expected outcome of your workshopAlso, include other training needs: technology needs, copies of handouts, internet connection, etc.

The purpose of the workshop is to have open dialogue between families and schools. A Facilitator, I will guide meaningful dialogue to allow the families an opportunity to express

their opinions and feels about being involved in the educational process. This session will also allow the educators (Teachers & Administrators) an opportunity to hear how the parents feel and offer suggestions of things the parents could do to assist in the education process. The participants will also take part in an Icebreaker Circle of Friends Game. This icebreaker is great for greeting and departing for a large group who will be attending a seminar for more than two day

TRAINING NEEDS: None

(Example: internet connection, projector, etc.)

Timeframes for the workshops are listed below. Please indicate date and time of your workshop. If there is a conflict in times, you may have to be flexible with the scheduling.

DATE OF WORKSHOP: August 2015

TIME OF WORKSHOP:
12:45 P.M. – 1:45 P.M._____
2:45 P.M. – 3:45 P.M._____
9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M._____(Saturday Only)

Training Proposal Form

CONSULTANT NAME: Brittany Soloman and Ebony Cox

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP___7975 Highway 80 East, Selma, Alabama 36701___

HOME PHONE:_____ CELL PHONE___334-872-0518___

VENDOR#_____N/A_____ EMAIL ADDRESS coxe12@ yahoo.com___

TITLE OF WORKSHOP:____Parents helping Parents___

Intended Grade (s):__Teachers and Parents

**Please provide a brief abstract describing the focus and expected outcome of your workshop. Also, include other training needs: technology needs, copies of handouts, internet connection, etc.

In this break out session parents will have the opportunity to hear from parents that are juggling busy

schedules but still find the time to be actively involved their child's education. This session will be

very informal and will used to build capacity between the parents. This session will also be used as a

time to start developing leaders within the parents by finding out the different talents and skills.

TRAINING NEEDS: None

(Example: internet connection, projector, etc.)

Timeframes for the workshops are listed below. Please indicate date and time of your workshop. If there is a conflict in times, you may have to be flexible with the scheduling.

DATE OF WORKSHOP:___August 2015___

TIME OF WORKSHOP:
12:45 P.M. – 1:45 P.M._____
2:45 P.M. – 3:45 P.M._____
9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M._____(Saturday Only)

Training Proposal Form

CONSULTANT NAME: Dorothy Irvin and Shirley Edwards

ADDRESS/CITY/STATE/ZIP 5570 Water Ave. Selma, Alabama 36701

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE 334-872-6251

VENDOR# N/A EMAIL ADDRESS irvindr@dallask12.org

TITLE OF WORKSHOP: Effective Use of "I Care"

Intended Grade (s): Teachers and Parents

**Please provide a brief abstract describing the focus and expected outcome of your workshop. Also, include other training needs: technology needs, copies of handouts, internet connection, etc.

In this break out session District parent facilitators will have the opportunity to share important facts about the "I Care" parental involvement program. The parent facilitators will also use this as an opportunity to make sure the parents and teachers have a clear understanding of how to use the program. The parent facilitators will also discuss the H.I.P.P.Y program with the parents and answer any question they might have about the program.

TRAINING NEEDS: "I Care" handout, H.I.P.P.Y. handout Laptop and projector

(Example: internet connection, projector, etc.)

Timeframes for the workshops are listed below. Please indicate date and time of your workshop. If there is a conflict in times, you may have to be flexible with the scheduling.

DATE OF WORKSHOP: August 2015

TIME OF WORKSHOP:
12:45 P.M. – 1:45 P.M. _____
2:45 P.M. – 3:45 P.M. _____
9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. _____ (Saturday Only)

Focus Group Questions

1. What does your child like about school? What do you like about your child's school?

2. How does the school ask you to be involved?

3. How does this work for your family?

4. What do you do to prepare your child to do well in school?

5. Are satisfied with how often and in what way school staff communicate with you about your child?

6. Do you feel welcome in your child's school? If yes, what does school staff do that shows you that you are welcome? If no, what could the school do differently that would make you feel welcome?

7. What trainings/professional developments could the school offer to better equip you to work with your child?

8. What could the school do to help you be more involved?

9. What kind of things has the school done that helped you to help your child more at home?

10. Is there anything else you would like to us know about what is important to you as a family about your child's education?

The Dallas County Family Resource Center will improve the quality of life for children and families in Selma Dallas County. The primary goal of the family resource center is to help individuals and families "connect" to Alabama health and human services through an intake, assessment, and referral process. It is not intended to duplicate services already provided in the community.

Who We Are

- **Mission Statement:**
- The Dallas County Family Resource Center will provide the programs and referral services designed to improve the quality of life and promote the safety and well-being of the children and families in the community.
- **Purpose:**
- To create programs where there are gaps in available local social needs, as well as provide referral services and information to connect those in need with available service providers. The Family Resource Center will also develop and maintain a website with easy access to information about health and human services in the community.

We will provide:

- Intake, Assessment, and Referral to existing services
- Create Programs when there are gaps in services
- Develop an accessible community resource directory

We will be Unique, Effective, and Efficient:

- Address the root causes of problems
- One central location for people seeking help
- Intake, assessment and referral to existing services and programs
- Reduce duplication of services by making referrals
- Create programs for gaps in services

Service Provided:

Education and Training

- Life Skills Education
- Computer & Related Technology Classes
- Literacy Programs
- College/University Entrance Support
- School Readiness Program
- Tutoring Service

Family/Community Services

- Mentoring Services
- Parenting Services
- Parent Counseling
- Parent Support Group
- Parent Education
- Internet Safety Education
- Child Abuse Preventions

The Benefits of Obtaining Your GED

*Get a Better Job

The overwhelming majority of jobs in this country require a high school diploma. A GED certificate is accepted by employers— just like a high school diploma.

*Continue Your Education

A GED Certificate is accepted at most colleges and universities across the country as proof that you have completed your high school education.

*Feel Better About Yourself

By earning their certificate, many GED graduates experience a remarkable improvement in how they feel about themselves and their lives. It makes a difference!!

*Increase Your Income

Incomes increase with your level of education. Obtaining your GED can mean better pay.

*Invest in the Future

Earning a GED Certificate is an investment in yourself and the future of your children.

WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SELMA
ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

Wallace Community College Selma
Adult Education Department
3000 Earl Goodwin Parkway
P.O. Box 2530
Selma, AL 36702-2530

Phone: 334-876-9369
Fax: 334-876-9343

Wallace Community

ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM

What can we do for you today?

EDUCATION

We can help you get your GED!!

Don't delay, call us today!
334-876-9369
Ask about the Official
GED Practice Test
&
WorkKeys Testing

How do I obtain a GED certificate?

Getting your GED Certificate involves taking a series of tests that are designed to measure the required standards of a high school education. These tests measure:

* Reasoning Through Language Arts
* Social Studies
* Science
* Mathematics

The questions on the GED test are multiple choice, drag and drop, drop down items, extended response, short answer and other technology enhanced items. To pass the GED test in Alabama, a student must score a minimum of 150 on each of the four parts.

Are there any requirements to meet?

To take the GED test, all candidates must:

* Not be enrolled in a public or private school registered with the State Department of Education.

* Not have earned a high school diploma.

* Be a legal resident of Alabama or a military member stationed in Alabama.

* Meet one of the following age requirements:

1. 18 years of age or older.

2. 17 years of age:
   * Student Exit Interview Form
   * Notarized Permission Letter

3. 16 years of age:
   * Certificate of Exemption
   * Notarized Permission Letter

Where can I register for the GED Test?

To register, go to: www.ged.com
You must bring to the testing center:
*Picture ID
Testing Fees:
*New Tester: $30.00 per part
Re-Tester: $10.00 per part
*Vouchers are available provided criteria are met.

How do I prepare for the GED Examination?

The GED test requires some preparation. Although it may look a little intimidating at first, the test covers material that is reviewed carefully in preparation classes, such as those provided at the Wallace Community College Selma Adult Education Program.

Where can I take Adult Education classes, and how much do they cost?

Wallace Community College Selma Adult Education Program offers classes FREE OF CHARGE in the following counties:

* Chilton County
* Dallas County
* Lowndes County
* Perry County

You could also study for your GED online! For more information, call 334-876-9369.

WCCS ADULT EDUCATION CLASSES

DALLAS COUNTY
WCCS Main Campus
Administration Building Room 114
Monday-Thursday 8:00 am–12:00 pm
and/Or
Monday-Thursday 12:00pm–3:30p.m.
Administration Building Room 115
Monday–Thursday 8:00 am–12:00 pm
Evening: Tuesday & Thursday 4:00 pm–7:00 pm

CareerLink
Monday–Thursday 8:00 am–12:00 pm

Selma/Dallas County Library
Monday–Thursday 8:00 am–11:45am

CHILTON COUNTY
Clanton
1114 Fifth Avenue North
Morning: Tuesday & Thursday 8:00 am–12:00 pm
Evening: Tuesday & Thursday 5:00 pm– 8:00 pm

LOWNDES COUNTY
Hayneville
R.I.T.E Center
Monday –Wednesday 8:30 am–12:30 pm

Our Program

Our program provides parents with the tools to prepare their preschool children to learn. The program depends on the cooperation and availability of the parents and their child. We have had several successful years of preparing youngsters for a successful education, as well as preparing parents to support their child's learning process.

H.I.P.P.Y

DCSS HI.P.P.Y Program

5570 Water Avenue
Selma, AL 36701

HI.P.P.Y Program

H.I.P.P.Y

**Home Instruction for Parents
of Preschool Youngsters**

We dream.

Contact: Ms. Linda Cook, Coordinator

Tel: 334-872-8251

What Does HIPPY Mean?

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

This program is designed to educate children 3 to 5 years old with the skills they will need to be successful when they enter the school setting. HIPPY is a model approach that is used in the home by the parent to teach their child basic learning skills. The parent is trained by HIPPY Home Visitors on how to teach the Lessons to their child.

Who is Eligible

Any family who live in Dallas County with children ages 3, 4, or 5 that are not served by a structured preschool program.

The child must be 3 years old by October 1st.

The HIPPY Program is free to the parent and the child. All materials (books, pencils, glue, crayons, shapes, etc.) are furnished by the program.

To sign up or for more information call : 334-872-6251

Visit our national website www.hippyusa.org

Follow us on Facebook Hippy Dallas

How can HIPPY help Parents?

The HIPPY program seeks to support parents who may not feel sufficiently confident to prepare their children for school, and is designed to remove barriers to participation in the education process. Parents gain confidence and eventually become comfortable expanding the activities and broadening the learning experiences for their child.

How can HIPPY help Parents?

HIPPY focuses on language development, problem solving, logical thinking and perceptual skills. The curriculum fosters social/emotional and physical development. HIPPY's primary goal is to increase vulnerable children's success in school and, ultimately life.

Overview of the "I Care" Parent Engagement Curriculum Model for Families, Schools & Communities

The System

- Supports the importance of parents as the primary educators of their children
- Designed to bring parents, school, and community together for the purpose of raising children with character
- Implementation materials enable family, schools, and communities to focus on the same pillar of character each month
- Defines parental involvement as the number of times parents are positively engaged with their children at home, at school, and in the community

The Curriculum

- Pre-K through 12th Grade curricula are built around the 12 Pillars of Character. As an example, elementary students will practice *respect* in the form of *courtesy*, *politeness*, *fairness*, *patience*, *honor*, and *open-mindedness* based on their grade level. Over time, they will gain a deeper understanding of respect.
  - o Enables all grades levels to study the same pillar each month, though each grade is practicing a different trait related to the pillar. This is a school-wide approach to character education.
- Based on sound principles of learning:
  - o New field of positive psychology
  - o Conditions of learning: reception, availability, and activation
  - o Open-ended questions; multiple learning styles
  - o Connectedness to real life
- One trait a month, instead of one per week
  - o Enables coverage of the 12 Pillars of Character annually
  - o Provides variety to keep parents, teachers, and students interested and motivated
- Includes:
  - o Five monthly Character-Building Parenting Activities
  - o Monthly Teacher Lesson Plans

- o Monthly Bulletin Board Messages and posters
- o Monthly Character Mastery Activities
- o Monthly Independent Student Study Character Activities (for middle and high school students)
- o Documentation and Assessment Tools
    - ▪ On-Line Parental Involvement Data Collection and Evaluation Service
- Optional book packs
- Optional Character-Building Parenting Workbooks

Parents

- We believe that parents are the missing link in character development programs.
  - o Research is clear about the positive impact of parental involvement on character development
- Components:
  - o Annual parent training (only takes 15 minutes)
  - o Five activities to do with their child each month
  - o At the end of the month, parents return a Feedback Form to the school indicating how many activities they did at home.
    - ▪ Encourages parent accountability
    - ▪ Provides teachers with information they can use in making monthly positive comments to parents
- Benefits:
  - o Provides parents with new ideas and strategies to help their children at home
  - o Increases communication from home to school and from school to home

School

- Includes not only families with children in school, but also citizens who are interested in and affected by the quality of education
  - o Trains teachers, parents, and the community partners
  - o Sends monthly character-building parenting activities and Feedback Forms to parents
  - o Teachers teach at least one lesson related to the character trait; post and reference the bulletin board messages and posters throughout the month

- o Teachers communicate a positive (with no negatives) comment about their students to each parent monthly
- o Provides Student Character Mastery Activities at the end of each month
- o Provides Student Independent Study Character Activities at the beginning of each month (Middle & High School)
- o Staff inputs monthly data into the On-Line "I Care" Data Management System to document parental engagement

- Benefits:
- o Meets and exceeds *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) parental involvement requirements
- o Feedback Forms help teachers better understand families' lifestyles and cultural background

Community

- Includes not only families with children in school, but also citizens who are interested in and affected by the quality of education
- o Chamber of Commerce
- o Local businesses
- o Local government
- o Faith-based organizations
- Benefits:
- o Provides common ground for a discussion of integrity, character, and ethics
- o Reinforces ethics in the workplace
- o Improves communication between school and community
- Components:
- o Partnerships with schools
- o CD-based training presentation for the workplace
- o Monthly character posters illustrating the pillar of character being studied and practiced in the schools and at home
- o Mentoring training presentation

Join Now for Free the "I Care" Parental Involvement Network!

Parent Involvement Checklist

This checklist is an inventory intended to help you assess your own involvement in your child's education. The level of your involvement in your child's schooling has a direct impact on his or her success as a student. Place a checkmark beside every statement that you do or have done.

Home Support

☐ I read to my child daily or know my child is reading at home daily.
☐ There is a regular time and place for homework in our home.
☐ I provide my child with nutritious meals.
☐ My child gets adequate sleep.
☐ I am selective about television programs shown in our home.
☐ I limit my child's television time and suggest activities in its place.
☐ There are books available in my home.
☐ I listen to my child talk about school every day.
☐ I discuss the value of education with my child.
☐ I monitor my child's homework.

Communication

☐ The school has my current address and phone number.
☐ I know the names of my child's teachers and principal.
☐ I ask for and read school notices daily.
☐ I read and understand my child's report card.
☐ I have read and support the district's Code of Conduct.

Participation

☐ I attend Parent/Teacher Conferences.
☐ I have or plan to attend a school event.
☐ I insist that my child exhibit good work habits such as neatness, promptness, and independence.
☐ I have inquired about volunteering at school.

Key
Total number of checkmarks:
16–19
I am very involved in my child's life at school.
11–15
I am involved in my child's life at school.
0–10
I will find ways to become more involved in my child's life at school.

Test-Taking Tips

Students: Use these tips to help prepare for a test.

Before the Test

❏ Develop a positive attitude. Tell yourself, "I will do my best on this test."

❏ Get a good night's sleep the night before the test.

❏ Get up early enough to avoid hurrying to get ready for school.

❏ Eat a good breakfast and lunch, if your test is in the afternoon.

During the Test

❏ Stay calm.

❏ Listen carefully to directions from the teacher.

❏ Ask questions if you don't understand what to do. Make sure you know whether the test is a timed test or whether you will have as much time as you need to complete it.

❏ Make sure you know whether it is OK to guess if you are not sure of an answer.

❏ Before you read an item on the test, preview the questions that follow for tips to help you focus your reading.

❏ After reading an item, read the entire first question and all the answer choices. Stop and think of an answer. Look to see if one of the choices is similar to your answer.

❏ Read each test question and all the answer choices carefully. Try to analyze what the question is really asking.

❏ Pace yourself. If you come to a difficult question, it may be better to skip it and go on. Then come back and really focus on the questions you find difficult one at a time.

❏ If you are not sure of an answer to a question, try these tips:

    ❏ Get rid of the answers you know are not correct and choose among the rest.

❏ Read through all the answers very carefully, and then go back to the question. Sometimes you can pick up clues just by thinking about the different answers you have been given to choose from.

❏ If it is OK to guess on the test, try to make your best guess, but make sure you answer all the questions.

❏ Make sure you have marked an answer for every question, even if you had to guess.

❏ Make sure your answer sheet is clearly marked with dark pencil. Erase any stray marks.

❏ Don't worry about the test once it is finished. Go on to do your best work on your other school assignments.

At the End of the Test

❏ Before you turn your test in, check it over. Change an answer only if you have a good reason. Generally, it is better to stick with your first choice.

Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

That's a record! Suggest that your youngster start a notebook of personal records to keep track of her accomplishments. For instance, maybe she did five pull-ups in PE or got 100 on her spelling test two weeks in a row. Challenge her to beat her own records, and she'll learn to set and work toward goals.

Backpack safety

To avoid straining his back, encourage your child to bend his knees (not his waist) when he picks up his backpack. Also, the weight of his backpack should be less than 15 percent of his body weight. *Hint:* Have him pack items so the weight is evenly distributed.

Celebrate spring

Spring begins March 20. As a family, plan a mini celebration to ring in the new season. Your youngster could make invitations ("Meet in the living room on Friday after dinner") and check out library books of spring crafts to do together. You might bake cookies or cupcakes that family members can decorate with flowers or raindrops.

Worth quoting

"Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best."
Henry van Dyke

JUST FOR FUN

Tyler: I can tell you the score of tonight's big game before it starts.

Dad: Really? What is it?

Tyler: Zero to zero!
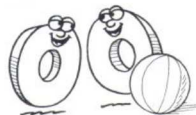
Respect at home, respect at school

A child who treats people with respect at home is more likely to be respectful in school. These tips can help your youngster learn what respect is and inspire him to show it.

Define

Explain that respect includes valuing others' needs and wishes, showing consideration for people, being tolerant of differences, and using good manners. Then, have your youngster write his own recipe for respect. *Example:* "Mix together $\frac{1}{4}$ cup caring, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup good manners, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup self-control, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup tolerance. Makes as many servings as you need—and stays good forever!"

Spot

"I spy…respect." Together, look and listen for people showing respect. Your child may notice students listening quietly as the media specialist reads a book or classmates speaking politely to each other. Have him name someone he respects at

school, like a teacher or classmate—why does he respect that person? Also, as he reads or watches movies, he could be on the lookout for characters he thinks are worthy of respect.

Show

Can your youngster think of instances where he was or wasn't respectful this week? Encourage him to come up with three ways he will behave respectfully at home and at school next week. For example, he could ask his sister before touching her guitar or wait patiently for smaller kids who need more time to cross the playground monkey bars. ♥

Test-week success

How can you help your youngster stay focused yet relaxed during standardized test week? Share these strategies:

● Suggest that she pack a "test kit" the night before each day of testing. She should put in everything that she'll need, such as sharpened pencils, a calculator, a water bottle, and a snack. *Tip:* Make sure she gets 10–11 hours of sleep so she'll be alert.

● Let your child plan enjoyable activities for after school. She may not have homework during test week, so she could use that time to unwind by playing board games, reading comic books, or visiting a park. ♥

Home & School CONNECTION®

When I grow up…

Help your youngster see the connection between what she's learning in school and the future career she dreams of with these ideas.

Think about jobs. How could your child use reading, math, or science in a future career? Ask her to name a job she might enjoy and match it with a skill she learned in class. For example, reading with expression will come in handy if she becomes a TV news anchor

someday. Or if she'd like to be a fashion designer, the measurement unit she's doing in math can help her measure fabric correctly.

Talk to workers.
Let your youngster interview people about their jobs. Maybe your neighbor is an electrician or your sister is an orthopedist. Encourage her to ask how they use school subjects at work.

She may discover that electricians read manuals and diagrams and that orthopedists need science to understand patients' bones and to diagnose and treat injuries.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Put salad on the map

What does your child's dinner salad have to do with geography? Make one together, and he can find out.

1. Ask your youngster to write a shopping list for salad ingredients.

2. At the grocery store, have him read stickers to learn where each ingredient comes from (tomatoes from Mexico, cucumbers from California). Can he find anything grown in your area?

3. At home, encourage him to look at a world map and locate the state or country where each ingredient was grown. He could sketch each food on a sticky note and place it where it belongs on a globe, an atlas, or a map.

4. Let your child help you wash the vegetables, slice them, and toss with his favorite dressing. Now it's time to eat!

Idea: Next time, let him make and map a fruit salad.♥

Q&A Keeping track of papers

Q: *My son's room is a mess—which wasn't a big problem until he started losing schoolwork and getting frustrated when he couldn't find things. How can I help?*

A: The good news is that even if your son's room is cluttered, he won't lose papers if he keeps them in his backpack.

He should take homework assignments out of his bag when he's ready to work on them and put them right back in after he's finished. If he has a graded test or a permission slip for you to sign, have him hand it directly to you instead of putting it in a pile where it may get overlooked.

You could also help your son develop a system for organizing work that he needs to keep. He might use stacked plastic trays or file folders—one for each subject.

Once he sees how much easier it is to find papers, he just may be ready to tackle the rest of his room so it's organized, too!♥

A co-parenting team

If you're divorced, you may worry about how the situation will affect your child's schoolwork. Youngsters tend to adjust better if they see their parents working as a team, so try these suggestions for building a good co-parenting relationship:

● Find a way to communicate about your child's schooling. For example, some parents feel email works best. *Tip:* Mention your conversations to your youngster. ("I told your dad about your citizenship award. We're both proud of you!")

● Attend school events. Your child will probably want to hang out with both of you during a math night or an art fair. Focus on her, and avoid bringing up difficult subjects (finances, custody).

● Be sure to both look over report cards and other important papers that come home. You might make a copy for the other parent or ask if the school will send home duplicates. Try to agree on a plan for handling grades.♥
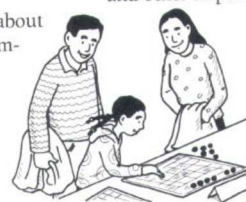
Websites for Parents and Students

www.kidscanlearn.com (links to homework help, games, recipes, contests, parent info and more)

www.billybear4kids.com (parent section, games, cards stationary, holiday ideas)

www.nickatnite.com

www.pbs.org

www.weather.com

www.funbrain.com

www.researchpaper.com

www.temmis.org (Tennessee Aquarium)

www.outofservice.com (personality tests)

www.yahooligan.com (games and homework help)

www.crayola.com (fun, game activities, coloring sheets, etc.)

www.highlights.com (fun activities just like in the magazine)

www.nasa.gov (all kinds of info about space)

www.math.com (most all subjects, tutorials and worksheets)

www.abcteach.com (fun activities and worksheets)

www.algebra.help (lessons and worksheets)

www.zdnet.com (a little bit of everything)

www.netLibrary (books on line)

www.marcopolo.com (info on a variety of subjects, good parent section)

www.worldatlas.com (info about most countries, nations, states, cities, etc)

www.maps.com (Maps of just about everywhere, great games; get directional maps for your trip)

www.homeworkspot.com (great help with homework)

www.edweb.sdus.ed/webquest/matrix.html (activities for kids to do using the internet)

www.classicnote.com (summaries of novels, etc)

www.alex.stte.al.us (courses of studies)

Dallas County School System Parental Involvement Session # 2
Monday 8:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

Activities	Presenters & Materials	Timeline
General Session Welcome Introduction & Purpose	Tanya Miles	8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Recap of Session #1 Identify Barriers to Parental Involvement	Give a brief recap of Session # 1 Parental Involvement Workshop. Work together as a team to identify Barriers to Parental Involvement.	8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
Identify goals & outcomes	Hattie Shelton Materials & Supplies: Chart Paper, Tape, Markers and a laptop per group	9:15 a.m. -9:30 a.m.
Divide schools and parents into teams.	Researcher and District Leadership Team will work to divide the parents and schools into collaborative teams to work on identified parental involvement barriers.	9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
Identify five barriers # 1 & # 2	Work collaborative as a team to identify barriers that the school team feel they can overcome.	9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Break		10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.
Identify five barriers # 3 & # 4	Continue working on barriers as a team.	10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Networking Lunch		11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
Identify barriers # 5	Continue working on barriers and start with closing ideas.	12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
General Session	Come back together to discuss system-wide identified parental involvement barriers and ways to overcome them. This session will be continued in Session #3.	1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Question & Answer Evaluation	Tanya Miles	3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

This parental involvement session will begin with an overview of session #1. The facilitator will remind the participants of the purpose of parental involvement and remind them of the important role they play as parents in the educational process.

Go over the objectives and expectations of workshop session #2.

Discuss with the participants the benefits. These benefits will be a refresher from Session #1. As you discuss each benefit, stop and give the participants time to talk about their thoughts on them. Use this slide and the next slide to discuss the benefits and the impact.

Benefits for Students, Families, & Schools

- Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.

- Educators hold higher expectations of students whose parents collaborate with the teacher. They also hold higher opinions of those parents.

Explain to the participants how they will be divided into groups of parents, teachers and community stakeholders to identify parental involvement barriers. Also explain to the participants how they will use the packet of T-Chart graphic organizers to identify potential barriers and identify some possible out comes to use in session #3. You have this PowerPoint as a handout, however I need you to focus on the questions on the next slide.

Barriers to Family Involvement

- What are some of the barriers to family involvement?

- Discuss your ideas with your team.

- Compare your ideas with the ones that appears in the next slide.

Use this slide and the next to identify parental involvement barriers as well as have discussion about the barriers.

Sight some examples of possible barriers: Delineated which means the parents have a certain and the teachers have a certain. In the mind of all stakeholders the roles could are very well defined. Example: parents believe all educational decisions should be made by only the teachers and parenting decisions should be made by parents.

Use this slide to have conversation about ways to understand the barriers.

This slide will be used during the general session of workshop #2. Have conversations about possible solutions to parental involvement barriers. This slide will lead into session #3. Improving Communication means having a conversation that the parents can understand and talking using educational jargon. Have two-way communication between the parent and teachers.

Partnerships with Families

- Represent a major shift for schools from merely delivering services to students to taking active, integrated roles that validate the cultural and social experiences of families.

This slide will also be used during the general session of workshop #2. Have the conversation about the importance of partnerships because in session #3 we will talk about how to develop strong partnerships with the families.

This T-Chart Graphic Organizer will be used in Session #2. The participants will work in teams to identify possible barriers to parental involvement. The left side of

the chart will be used to document possible barriers and the right side will be used to identify possible outcome to use in session #3.

Possible Barriers to Parental Involvement and Suggested Solutions

School: _____   Date_____

Possible Barriers	Possible Outcomes

Dallas County School System Parental Involvement
Session # 3
Wednesday 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Activities	Presenters & Materials	Timeline
General Session Welcome Introduction & Purpose	Vickie Poe	8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.
Recap of Session #2 Identify Barriers to Parental Involvement	Give a brief recap of Session # 2 Parental Involvement Workshop. Discuss identified parental involvement barriers from Session # 2	8:30 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.
Identify goals & outcomes	Tanya Miles Materials & Supplies: Chart Paper, Tape, Markers and a laptop per group	9:15 a.m. -9:30 a.m.
Divide schools and parents into teams.	Hattie Shelton The team will be comprised of teachers, parents and community stakeholders from each school site to find strategies to best overcome the barriers for the school site.	9:30 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.
Identify strategies to overcome the five barriers # 1 & # 2	Work collaborative as a team to find strategies to overcome identified barriers at the school level.	9:45 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Break		10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

Identify strategies to overcome the five barriers # 3 & # 4	Continue working on ways to overcome barriers as a team.	10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
Networking Lunch		11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.
Identify strategies to overcome the five barriers # 5	Continue working on ways to overcome barriers and start with closing ideas.	12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
General Session	Come back together as a district team to discuss system-wide identified parental involvement barriers and ways to overcome them. Develop a District plan.	1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Question & Answer Evaluation	Tanya Miles	3:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

"What can we do to get you involved?"

Overcoming barriers to parent engagement

Tanya S. Miles

Hello and welcome to the third parental involvement workshop of the Dallas County School System. We have used these workshops to help develop strategies and ideas to help increase parental involvement in the school district.

Agenda

▶ What is parent engagement and why is it important?

▶ What are the challenges and barriers related to parent engagement?

▶ How can I help parents at my site overcome these barriers?

The presenter will go through and have a group discussion about each of the above questions. The first two questions are refresher questions from sessions 1 & 2. The participants are still working with the teams developed during session 2.

4 versions of partnership

Review the four versions of Family-School Partnerships

▶ *Partnership School*

▶ *Open-Door School*

▶ *Come-if-We-Call School*

▶ *Fortress School*

Now here some table talk about the 4 versions of Partnership.

▶ Where does your school fit?

▶ Where does your program fit?

▶ Is there a difference?

▶ Share your results with your table mates.

Partnerships Schools often are referred to as collaborations. Collaboration involves more than simply working together. It is more than a process to enhance cooperation and coordination.

Open-Door School is a recognized right of admittance: freedom of access; *also*: a policy providing such freedom

Come-if-We-Call School – parents only come and visit or take part in school related activities if they are invited to by the school.

Fortress is referred to as a place protected from attack. This type of partnership would only allow the stakeholders to come when invited and get information on an as needed basis.

Team Work

▶ On every table is a packet for the teamwork activity.

▶ Every group will have a leader, a recorder and a time keeper.

  ▶ The Leader's job is to make sure that the group has everything they need to complete this task.

  ▶ The Time Keeper's job is to keep the group on task and ensure they are not spending to much time one barrier.

  ▶ The Recorder's job is to take accurate notes and write down the different ideas the group had about overcoming the barriers.

Each table has a school represented at it with teachers, parents, community stakeholders and district level supervisors.

The packets at the table contain five Decision Making graphic organizers. One sheet for each of the five identified parental involvement barrier.

The team will identify the barrier and solution on each organizer and then list the pros and cons as to why it can be overcome to help decrease the barrier.

Why involve families?

❖ Boost grades and test scores

❖ Improve attendance

❖ Foster positive social skills

❖ Increase graduation rates and increase higher education attainment

❖ Improved relationships between parents and kids

These are just some ideas of why it's important to involve parents and families in the educational process.

Partnerships with Families

▶ Represent a major shift for schools from merely delivering services to students to taking active, integrated roles that validate the cultural and social experiences of families.

In order to have effective involvement, it is important to build some partnerships and relationships. Continue to have the conversation about the importance of the families in the educational process but have all stakeholders in the conversation. (Parents, Teachers, Administrators, and community partners)

Establishing Partnerships

▶ Hold the first meetings outside of school, preferably at sites that are familiar to the families.

▶ Make first meetings social events; unsuccessful ones are formal events at school, with information aimed "at" the families

▶ To retain the involvement of families, every meeting has to respond to some needs or concerns of the families.

The facilitator will start the conversation with the teams about establishing strong partnerships with the families. Listed on this slide is some suggestions but the teams will use chart paper to create new list to use when developing the parental involvement plan.

Group Discussion

▶ Parents without adequate resources often feel overwhelmed. Families suffering from economic stress must address their own needs for food, clothing, and shelter before they can see clear to become more involved in their children's education.

▶ Brainstorm some strategies with your group.

The groups will continue to make list of strategies with the pros and cons of barriers and how to overcome them. The groups will also use chart paper to list their top barriers and how to overcome them to use in the general session in the planning process.

Establishing Partnerships

▶ Ongoing partnerships need evaluation and checkpoints to see if goals and objectives are being met and if goals and objectives are still appropriate.

▶ Keeping programs flexible helps everyone adjust to changes within the student body, families, the school staff, and the community.
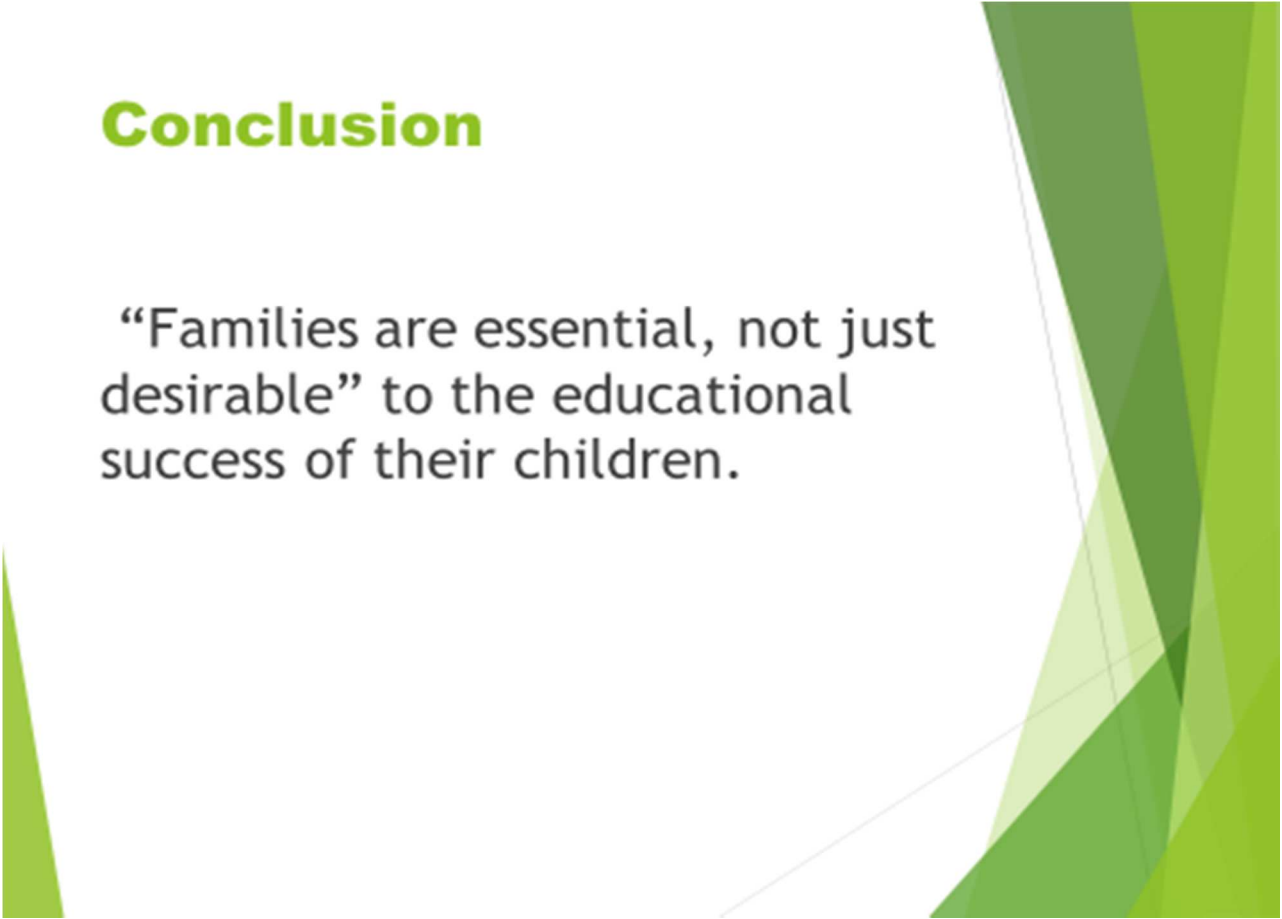
The teams will have a conversation about what it will take to keep the partnerships going once established. The next slide will be used with this slide to make sure the participant understand the benefits to all involved when establishing parental involvement partnerships with the schools.

Benefits for Students, Families, & Schools

▶ Students whose parents are involved in their lives have higher graduation rates and greater enrollment rates in post-secondary education.

▶ Educators hold higher expectations of students whose parents collaborate with the teacher. They also hold higher opinions of those parents.

Conclusion

"Families are essential, not just desirable" to the educational success of their children.

Thank you so much for participating this Southern Zone Parental Involvement Workshops.

Decision-Making Chart

School: _____   **Date:** _____

Barrier # ____:

Solution 1:

Pros:	Cons:

Solution 2:

Pros:	Cons:

Solution 3:

Pros:	Cons:

Chosen Solution:

You are cordially invited to participate in the Dallas County Schools Southern Zone
Parental Involvement Sessions 1-3
Hosted by the Southern Zone Principals: B. Taylor (Southside Primary), S. Cowart (Bruce K. Craig Elementary), J. Merriweather (Tipton-Durant Middle School), and C. Jones (Southside High School)
Session #1-August 12, 14 & 16, Session #2-December 8, and Session #3-April 15 in the Tipton-Durant Middle School Gymnasium
Family tips and ideas for student learning will be shared!
Door prizes and light refreshments provided.
"I Care & H.I.P.P.Y. Programs
Family Resources
Student Achievement
Funding

Parental Involvement

Dallas County School System
Parent Involvement Session

Location: Southern Zone Schools
Trainers: Tanya S. Miles
Date:

The purpose of this survey is to improve Parent Involvement services in the Dallas County School System. Your responses will help us to provide quality sessions in the future.

Please indicate your impressions of the items listed below.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The training met my expectations as a parent.	○	○	○	○	○
2. I will be able to apply the knowledge learned.	○	○	○	○	○
3. The training objectives for each topic were identified and followed.	○	○	○	○	○
4. The content was organized and easy to follow.	○	○	○	○	○
5. The materials distributed were pertinent and useful to me as a parent.	○	○	○	○	○
6. The trainers were knowledgeable.	○	○	○	○	○
7. The trainer met the training objectives.	○	○	○	○	○
8. The trainer encouraged participation and interaction during this parenting session.	○	○	○	○	○

9. How do you rate the training overall?

Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Very poor
○	○	○	○	○

10. Describe one strategy or concept you can apply to parental involvement?

11. Other comments

Appendix B: Consent Form for Parents

CONSENT FORM

You are invited to take part in a research study of parents' perception of their role in the educational process. The researcher is inviting parents of the $3^{rd} – 5^{th}$ grade students in the southern zone to be in this study. This form is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Tanya S. Miles, who is a doctoral student at Walden University. You may already know the researcher as the former principal of Bruce K. Craig Elementary School. I now serve as the Transformation Specialist for Dallas County School District, but this study is separate from those roles.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to explore the parents' perception of their role in the educational process and their perception of the effectiveness of the parental involvement programs that the district have in place which involves their children.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
- Participate in an interview that would last about 45 minutes. The interview will be held in the Learning Resource Auditorium. A digital recorder will be used to record my interview questions and your responses.
- Participate in a second parent interview which will be a follow-up interview. This interview will last approximately 30 minutes. During this meeting you will be given a written summary of the first interview so that you can look over it and let me know I interpreted your responses correctly. Follow-up questions will be asked.

Here are some sample questions:
1. How do you define parental involvement?
2. What is your idea of an actively involved parent?
3. What are your thoughts on the relationship between the parents, teachers or the school?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. Neither I nor anyone in Dallas County School District will treat

you differently if you decide not to participant in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind during or after the study. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as feeling a little uncomfortable when answering some of the interviewers questions. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or well-being. This study might help you and other parents become more actively involved in the educational process of their child/children.

Payment:
There is no payment for participating in the study.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure by locking it in a file cabinet that locked in my office. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You may ask any questions you have now. Or if you have questions later, you may contact the researcher via email at _____ or by telephone at _____. if you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 1-800-925-3368, extension 3121210. Walden University's approval number for this study is _____and it expires on **December 10, 2015.**

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

Statement of Consent:

I give my permission and consent of Tanya Miles to record this interview for the purpose of educational research within the guidelines of Walden University and the Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent   _____

Participant's Signature   _____

Researcher's Signature   _____

_____

Appendix C: Cover Letter:

September 1, 2014

Tanya S. Miles

Dear _____,

I am conducting a research project on parents' perception of their role in the education process. The project is entitled *A Case Study on Parents' Perception of Their Role in the Educational Process.* You may already know me as the former principal of Bruce K. Craig Elementary or the Transformation Specialist of Dallas County Schools, but this study is separate from that role. I am also a doctoral student at Walden University.

I am hereby inviting the parents of 3rd-5th grade students in the southern zone to participate in this project study.

The principal of your child's school has provided me with your contact information. However, your participation will be voluntary, and I will respect your decision whether you choose to participant or not. The principal will not be informed of your decision. If you're interested in participating in this study please read the consent form included as an attachment to this email. After reviewing the consent form please sign and return it to my office within one week from the receipt of this letter via email or in person.

If you have any questions or need further explanation about the study, do not hesitate to contact me by email at_____ or by telephone at _____.

Sincerely,

Tanya S. Miles

Appendix D: IRB Approval Notification

Dear Mrs. Miles,

This email is to notify you that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has approved your application for the study entitled, "A Case Study on Parents' Perception of their Role in the Educational Process."

Your approval # is _____. You will need to reference this number in your doctoral study and in any future funding or publication submissions. Also attached to this e-mail is the IRB approved consent form. Please note, if this is already in an on-line format, you will need to update that consent document to include the IRB approval number and expiration date.

Your IRB approval expires on December 10, 2015. One month before this expiration date, you will be sent a Continuing Review Form, which must be submitted if you wish to collect data beyond the approval expiration date.

Your IRB approval is contingent upon your adherence to the exact procedures described in the final version of the IRB application document that has been submitted as of this date. This includes maintaining your current status with the university. Your IRB approval is only valid while you are an actively enrolled student at Walden University. If you need to take a leave of absence or are otherwise unable to remain actively enrolled, your IRB approval is suspended. Absolutely NO participant recruitment or data collection may occur while a student is not actively enrolled.

If you need to make any changes to your research staff or procedures, you must obtain IRB approval by submitting the IRB Request for Change in Procedures Form. You will receive confirmation with a status update of the request within 1 week of submitting the change request form and are not permitted to implement changes prior to receiving approval. Please note that Walden University does not accept responsibility or liability for research activities conducted without the IRB's approval, and the University will not accept or grant credit for student work that fails to comply with the policies and procedures related to ethical standards in research.

When you submitted your IRB application, you made a commitment to communicate both discrete adverse events and general problems to the IRB within 1 week of their occurrence/realization. Failure to do so may result in invalidation of data, loss of academic credit, and/or loss of legal protections otherwise available to the researcher.

Both the Adverse Event Reporting form and Request for Change in Procedures form can be obtained at the IRB section of the Walden website: http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/orec

Researchers are expected to keep detailed records of their research activities (i.e., participant log sheets, completed consent forms, etc.) for the same period of time they retain the original data. If, in the future, you require copies of the originally submitted IRB materials, you may request them from Institutional Review Board.

Appendix E: Invitation to Superintendent

October 1, 2014

Tanya S. Miles
XXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX
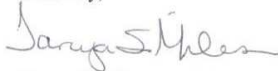
Dear Superintendent Don Willingham,

Parental support and involvement can be an important adhesive that binds the community to the educational entity. Working in a rural area has revealed several academic deficiencies that can be attributed to the lack of support from parents. Presently, there is research revealing how parental involvement could have an effect on student achievement. I am a student at Walden University in the Doctoral Program. I am conducting a research project on the parents' perception of their role in the educational process. The project is entitled *Parents' Perceptions of their role in the educational process of their children.*

After researching the schools in rural Alabama, I realized that Dallas County School System was experiencing problems with parental involvement in the elementary schools. This research will give your district an opportunity to understand the parent's perception of the role they play in the education of their child. Therefore, I would like your permission to invite the parents of students in grades 3rd-5th to be participants in this study. All names will be anonymous and no students would be interviewed. Participants would be given semi-structured interview questions. The interviews would last a maximum of 45 minutes. Data would be published in academic journals. Your district's participation in this project would not only be greatly appreciated, but would add to the literature in this area and would help other practitioners in the field.

If you consent to your district participating in this research, please have the attached letter giving your permission for the parents of the 3rd-5th grade students to volunteer as participants in this study written on your school's letterhead addressed to me at the given address. If you have any questions or need further explanation about the study, do not hesitate to contact me by email at XXXXXXXXXXXXXX by telephone at (XXX) XXX-XXXX XXXXXXXXX

Sincerely,

Tanya S. Miles

Tanya S. Miles

Appendix F: Sample Interview Transcript

Interview of BKCP# 1
December 18, 2014
P#1

Transcribed by TM on December 19, 2014
RR: I am going to ask you some questions about parental involvement in your child/children's school.
RR: How do you define parental involvement?
BKCP#1: I define parental involvement as a parent that is taking part in their children education. I like going to talk to the teachers to see what I can assist with. I like assisting with field trips, PTO meetings and helping with homework. I feel that more parents should attend more meetings. I feel that it's important at the elementary level because the high school students don't want parents to be there. I also think parental involvement include helping with homework. My son's teacher is real good about sending projects so parents can help the students' learning.
RR: What is your idea of an actively involved parent?
BKCP#1: Someone that volunteers to help the teacher, volunteers to be on the PTO, and parents that come to school for conferences. An actively involved parent is on that help their child with homework and different projects assisted by the teacher.
RR: What are your thoughts on the relationship between the parents, teachers or the school?
BKCP#1: All parents should get to know all the staff at the school. When I enter the building I speak to everybody. They just have to build the relationship because their kids are with these people every day. Everyone at the school I have dealt with has been nice. I noticed that at the High school the students complain that the teachers will not help them. The problem is the teachers feel like they don't want help but because they are in high school they still need help.
RR: How many parent –teacher conferences, PTO meetings or classroom visits have you attended in the past two years?
BKCP#1: WOW!!!! Last year because my son was at SSP, I visited the classroom a lot. However, because he is older this year he doesn't want me to come to his class as much. I have attended about ten PTO meetings in the past two years. We have only had two PTO meetings this year. I talk to his teacher at least once a week and his teacher knows how to make contact with me.
RR: Why do you feel that is a lack of parental involvement at your child's school?
BKCP#1: I think parents are too busy. I guess when kids get older the parents stop coming as much. Most parents are probably working because it takes two income or more to make it. Some might not have a ride. I have offered to take parents in my neighborhood but they don't want the ride.

RR: What are some barriers that prevent parental involvement?

BKCP#1: Parents work, they not have a ride, and students just don't want their parents at the school.

RR: What kind of parental involvement activities would you attend at your child's school?

BKCP#1: More PTO meetings, more parent-teacher conference, more meet & greet more fundraisers. Fundraisers would get more parents involved because their child is going to want to win whatever the top seller get and parents like selling stuff for their kids. Having a Fall Festival or May would bring the parents outs. Just invite parents to the school to take part in everyday activities.

RR: Are you willing to volunteer hours at your child's school? How many days and hours a week or month?

BKCP#1: Yes, I would be able to volunteer as many as they need. If I have an emergency I would let the school know so they could make our arrangements. When my girls were younger I couldn't volunteer as much because I had to work. Now that I'm not working, I have more time to volunteer at the school.

RR: What do you think about the effectiveness of the "I Care program or the H.I.P.P.Y. programs?

BKCP#1: I like the "I Care" program. The "I Care" program gives us ideas what we can do as a family. We don't fill out as much at the bottom because I wasn't sure if the activities we appropriate.

Appendix G: Superintendent Letter

DALLAS COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
POST OFFICE BOX 1056
SELMA, ALABAMA 36702-1056
TELEFAX 334-876-4493 TELEPHONE 334-875-3440

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PEGGY D. WILLIAMSON
CAROLYN C. BATES
WILLIAM D. MINOR

October 22, 2014

Tanya S. Miles
XXXXXXXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Dear Mrs. Miles:

As a district, I understand the value of parental involvement in the academic achievement of our students. I would be highly interested in learning our parents' perception of their role in the education of their children. Therefore, it is an honor and a privilege to give permission for you to request parent volunteers of students in grade 3-5 to participate in the interview process to gather your research data.

Sincerely,

Don Willingham
Don Willingham

"Where Great Things Happen"

Appendix H: Interview Protocol

Topic: A Case Study on Parents' perception of their role in the Educational

Process

Time of Interview: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer: _____

Interviewee: _____   Pseudonym_____

Hello. My name is Tanya Miles. Thank you for participating in this research

study. The purpose of this interview is to understand, from your perspective the

role you play in the educational process. Your responses will be kept confidential.

You do not have to answer any question you wish during the interview.

1. How do you define parental involvement?

2. What is your idea of an actively involved parent?

3. What are your thoughts on the relationship between the parents, teachers or

    the school?

4. How many parent-teacher conferences, PTO meetings or classroom visits

    have you attended in the past two years?

5. Why do you feel there is a lack of parental involvement at your child's

    school?

6. What are some barriers that prevent parental involvement?

7. What kind of parental involvement activities would you attend at your child's school?

8. Are you willing to volunteer hours at your child's school? How many days and hours a week or month?

9. What do think about the effectiveness of the "I Care program and the H.I.P.P.Y. program?

Thank you again for participating in this interview. Your information will be confidential and secured. A follow-up interview will be scheduled to review your responses and to check for accuracy.

Appendix I: Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

During the course of my activity in collecting data for this research: "A Case Study on Parents' perception of their role in the Educational Process" I will have access to information, which is confidential and should not be disclosed. I acknowledge that the information must remain confidential, and that improper disclosure of confidential information can be damaging to the participant.

By signing this Confidentiality Agreement I acknowledge and agree that:
1. I will not disclose or discuss any confidential information with others, including friends or family.
2. I will not in any way divulge copy, release, sell, loan, alter or destroy any confidential information except as properly authorized.
3. I will not discuss confidential information where others can overhear the conversation. I understand that it is not acceptable to discuss confidential information even if the participant's name is not used.
4. I will not make any unauthorized transmissions, inquiries, modification or purging of confidential information.
5. I agree that my obligations under this agreement will continue after termination of the job that I will perform.
6. I understand that violation of this agreement will have legal implications.
7. I will only access or use systems or devices I'm officially authorized to access and I will not demonstrate the operation or function of systems or devices to unauthorized individuals.

Signing this document, I acknowledge that I have read the agreement and I agree to comply with all the terms and conditions stated above.

Signature: _____   **Date:** _____