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The Effects of Parent Involvement on Student Outcomes in a Minority-Serving Charter High School

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Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Researchers have associated parent involvement in primary schools with the improvement of grades, attendance, and the decrease of negative social behaviors. Consequently, parent involvement has improved in many primary schools. However, in secondary schools, parent participation continues to be deficient, particularly among Latino and African American communities due to language barriers, low incomes, and lack of social networks. Research is needed on how parent participation affects student achievement in secondary schools with underserved populations. Social capital theory provided the conceptual framework to help determine if parent involvement could create parent-school relationships that would lead to improved student academic and behavioral outcomes in a predominantly minority urban charter high school. The quasi-experimental observational study used program data and pre and post archived student records provided over a 2-year period from a convenience sample of 83 continuously enrolled students. Epstein's framework was used to categorize types of parent involvement, which constituted the independent variables. T tests and chi-squared analyses were used to test the association between the independent variables and dependent variables. The study found a limited association between GPA and ELA grades and certain types of parent participation activities for students overall, but not for English Language Learners. Attendance was not found to be affected significantly and data were lacking on suspensions and expulsions. The results of this study informs administrators who seek to increase parent involvement in order to improve student achievement and decrease the drop-out rate in high schools serving at risk students.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my Father Robert Ricks who encouraged me to complete my Ph.D. and loved me unconditionally. He is now with the Lord but I know he is looking upon me from heaven and proud of this accomplishment. I also want to dedicate this to all the students I have served in my professional career I hope this dissertation will contribute to creating models used to serve at-risk youth.

Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my committee members Dr. Andrew Thomas and Dr. Jennifer Smolka for their help and assistance throughout this process. I especially want to give a special thank you to Dr. Thomas for being my Chair and having patience during this journey. Next, I want to give a special thank you to my Mother Thelma Ricks who raised me and prays for me each day and provided me with the encouragement to stay the course. Finally, I want to thank my husband and children for the sacrifice they have endured in order for me to attend Walden University and complete this Ph.D. program.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Parent involvement is the volunteer service of parents at school or at home for the purpose of improving a child's education (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Parent participation is a critical component of academic success and social development (Mautone et al., 2015; Yingqi, 2015) Parents that are active in their child's schools has shown positive effects including increased academic achievement, positive social behavior, augmented resources and social networking opportunities (Bower & Griffin, 2011; Garbacz et al., 2015). Past researchers on parent involvement have focused on elementary and middle schools (Anfara & Mertens, 2008; Hornby &Witte, 2010; Shiffman, 2013). Much less is known about the effects of parent involvement in public high schools and charter high schools. Such knowledge could be used to assist school officials in implementing research-based parent involvement activities that hold the potential for increasing achievement in traditional and charter public high schools. Results of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge on parent involvement by revealing whether parent participation in various school-organized activities is associated with positive student outcomes at one, minority-serving charter high school.

Chapter 1 consists of several sections beginning with the background of the study, which outlines the history of parent involvement in schools. The chapter includes the research problem and explains the need to further study the effects of parent involvement activities and their correlation to student outcomes. The research questions and hypotheses are stated. Following these sections is a discussion of social capital theory, which provides the theoretical foundation of the study. The nature of the study is then

explained. Chapter 1 ends with assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, significance, and a summary.

Background

Parent involvement has been studied extensively at the elementary and middle school level. Researchers have associated parent involvement with the improvement of grades, GPA, attendance, and the decrease of negative social behaviors. Parent involvement is correlated to student success in academic achievement (Banerjee, Zaje, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Malone, 2015). Active participating parents in schools helps to increase the potential for students to be actively engaged, absorb learning objectives and obtain measurable outcomes (Bailey, 2006; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2015; Marshall, & Jackman, 2015; Wang 2015). Parent involvement is also known to decrease negative student behaviors and promote positive social development in school age children (McNeal, Jr, 2014).

An evaluation of parent involvement in primary schools identified parent involvement to be a significant contributor to the mental capacity, social and cognitive behavior of students (Hornby & White, 2010; Nitecki, 2015). It was determined that parent involvement increases the likelihood that students will come to school more prepared (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011). Parents who participate in school and home activities increase learning outcomes for their children (Berthelsen & Walker, 2008; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2015). Ultimately, parents who assist students at home with homework not only contribute to their child's preparedness, but also their ability to articulate prior knowledge and grasp new concepts. A parent's connection to

school staff increases the likelihood of students raising academic achievement and social outcomes (Mautone et al., 2015; Oyserman, Brickman, & Rhodes, 2007; Rose & Stein, 2014).

Although parent involvement is associated with improved cognitive development particularly among minority students (e.g. Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011), significant barriers still exist with parent participation among minority parents (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Minority students compared to nonminority students have experienced significantly lower parent involvement then their peers (Shah & College, 2009; Wang, Hill, & Hofkens, 2014). Barriers to parent involvement specifically for minority students expand over a wide range of issues depending on ethnicity (Banerjee et al., 2009; Wang et al., 2014). Barriers to parent involvement found most frequently among minorities are language communication, poverty, school climate, teacher apprehension, work related obligations, and lack of understanding of the parents' role within the academic environment (Mendez, 2010).

Many charter school operators regard parent involvement as the central tenet of their instructional model. While some researchers have shown parent involvement to be significantly higher in charter elementary schools compared to traditional public elementary schools (Bifulco & Ladd, 2005; Rose & Stein, 2014), researchers studying parent involvement activities used Epstein's (1987) model found that "parent involvement remains a significant challenge" for charter high school leaders (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011, p.71). It is important to discover the association between parent involvement in charter high schools and variables that indicate

achievement, including grades, attendance, and measures of behavior including suspensions and expulsions.

Problem Statement

Parent involvement continues to be a major struggle in secondary schools among Latino and African American communities, as minority parents face obstacles that prevent participation due to language, school relationships, income and lack of established social networks. I addressed this problem by analyzing student outcome results, among at-risk minority students, in one charter school that used organized parent involvement plans to increase academic achievement in terms of improved grades, grade point average or changed behavior, such as better attendance or decreased number of suspensions and expulsions compared to a time when parent involvement activities were not purposeful. Not only would charter school administrators, teachers, and families benefit from knowing more about the relationship between parent involvement implementation and student outcomes, but this issue is critical for educational policy in general. Charter schools are often regarded as test beds for educational innovation; if they succeed in the area of minority parent involvement where regular public schools have not, educational policymakers should know about it (Rose & Stein, 2014).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold, first it was to test whether there was an association between a change in parent involvement activities and student academic achievement and social behaviors in an inner city charter high school from one year to the next. The second purpose was to explore differences in levels of parent

participation during the program year and what, if any, effect these differences had on student outcomes for English-only speaking students and English language learners. Finally, differences in student outcomes between years as well as within the program year were examined.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following main research question guided analyses: Does increased participation of parents at organized parent involvement activities have a positive effect on student achievement and behavior at this charter school?

The four sub questions were:

1. Did overall student achievement and behavior outcomes for students improve in the year of the parent involvement initiative at the charter school, compared to one year earlier?

$H1_0$: Student behavior and student achievement outcomes are not significantly different from the baseline year to the program year.

$H1_A$: Student behavior and student achievement outcomes are significantly different from the baseline year to the program year.

2. Are total parent participation in parent involvement activities in 2014-15 associated with student achievement and behavior?

$H2_0$: Total parent participation is not significantly correlated with increased student achievement and behavior.

$H2_A$: Total parent participation is significantly correlated with increased student achievement and behavior.

3. Does participation in different levels of parent involvement activities (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) differentially affect student achievement and behavior?

$H3_0$: Participation in different levels of parent involvement (level 1 vs. level 2 vs. level 3) is not significantly correlated with student achievement and behavior.

$H3_A$: Participation in different levels of parent involvement (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) is significantly correlated with student achievement and behavior.

4. Are there differences between English Language Learner (ELL) and English-only (EO) subgroups in terms of parent participation and its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts?

$H4_0$: English Language Learners and English-only student are not significantly different from each other in terms of parent participation or its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts.

$H4_A$: English Language Learners and English-only student are significantly different from each other in terms of parent participation or its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts.

Nature of the Study

The method of inquiry of this study was quantitative, using a quasi-experimental design for the purposes of analyzing and comparing relationships between the parent involvement activities and student outcomes in a baseline and program year. The research questions were addressed by analyzing data from a charter high school serving minority students in Grades 7 through 12. The charter school has organized parent involvement

activities guided by Epstein's (1987) model of parent involvement, which divides activities into three levels. Level 1 consists of parent participation in parent conferences, home work, fundraising, fieldtrips, and sporting events. Level 2 involves more extensive participation, as parents are involved in student career plans, workshops, informational meeting regarding career pathways, curriculum and instruction. Level 3 describes parent participation in shared governance opportunities including parent advisory, school site council, District English Learner Advisory Committee (DELAC), and board of directors. Level 1 is ranked as minimum involvement and Level 3 is ranked as the most involved. The charter school in the study has a low-income parent and student population living in the inner city. The research was conducted via a quantitative study that was designed to analyze the school's existing archive student data, correlating student outcome data to organized parent involvement participation data, and controlling for demographic and other factors.

Archival data were extracted from the school's student information system (Aeries). The school provided archival data in a format that did not identify parent and student names. This data established baseline indicators for both semesters of the 2013-2014 school year. Additionally, nonidentifiable archival data were provided from both semesters of the 2014-2015 school year. The data for each student included gender, eligibility status for free and reduced lunch, ethnicity, English Language Arts grades, GPA, suspensions, and expulsions from both school years. The data were compiled to a spread sheet, then imported to SPSS, where it was tabulated to determine the difference in student outcomes between years. Statistical analysis was then conducted to determine

the association between parent involvement activities and student outcomes. An analysis of the independent variable and dependent variables was performed by using *t* tests, Chi-squared tests, and correlation (Pearson's *r*).

Conceptual Framework

At the onset of this study, little was known about whether minority-serving charter schools that hold parent involvement to be central tenets of their educational programs and that implement organized parent involvement plans actually see results in terms of improved student academic achievement and social development. However, it may be that schools can promote an environment in which parents are able to provide valued input and make a difference in their children's education through the promotion of organized parent involvement activities guided by models such as Epstein's (1987). The use of Epstein's model to guide parent involvement may assist parents in developing positive relationships with staff and build trust (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Once parents build trust, they seek to become more involved in student/parent activities within the school. These trusting relationships between parents and school staff comprise social capital, an individual resource that parents can utilize to improve their children's educational outcomes.

Social Capital Theory

Social capital theory suggests that the building of interpersonal relationships between parents and schools increases trust and the sharing of norms, resulting in increased parent participation and positive student outcomes (Sil, 2011; Stevens & Patel, 2015). Social capital is defined as a collection of resources developed from relationships

between parents, students, and schools (Wanat, 2010). Activities that bring parents and school staff together to share information or work on projects together build interpersonal connections and trusting relationships. These relationships can help parents feel empowered, which creates a feedback loop in which parents feel increasingly comfortable participating in school activities. Part of the benefit of these interpersonal relationships is that they provide channels through which information can be shared and disseminated between school staff and parents, which can increase the assistance and expertise available to students (Sil, 2011; Stevens & Patel, 2015).

Each level of parent involvement activities in Epstein's model affects social capital. Level 1 builds communication between parents and teachers through parent participation in meetings, student homework, and school events. Level 2 engages parents in developing social capital through informative workshops and learning about their child's career and academic plan. Level 3 provides the highest level of social capital, as it facilitates shared governance for parents with all the major stakeholders that influence the decisions implemented at their child's school.

Operational Definitions

No Child Left Behind: This law was developed from the Elementary and Secondary Act of 2002. Better known as NCLB the law was enacted by the federal government in 2001 (U.S Department of Education, 2002). The purpose of the law is to mandate regulations for disadvantaged children including teacher qualifications, standards, and parent involvement (U.S Department of Education, 2002).

Parent involvement: Parents voluntarily participating in different types of school-related activities to help their children at school or at home (Wanat, 2010). Bower and Griffin (2011) defined parent involvement as volunteer participation by a parent in their child's education at home or at school.

English language learners: Individuals that speak another language other than English at birth. For the purpose of this study, English language learners are students, though their parents are assumed to be migrant and are usually non-English speaking (Vera, et al., 2012).

Barriers: Refers to obstacles preventing or inhibiting parents from becoming involved in school related activities to help their children (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & DePedro, 2011). Barriers included in this study are language obstacles, lack of time, parental work conflicts, poverty, unfriendly school climates, neighborhood violence, and recruitment issues (Mendez, 2010).

Charter Schools: Public schools that provide parents with an alternative school choice to the traditional school system (CDE, 2006).

Student grades: Letters of measurement that confirm a student's progress on projects, assignments, and test. Grades are used as a final reporting mechanism on report cards and evaluations. Grades are viewed as a single indicator of academic achievement (Smith et al., 2011).

Student attendance: Attendance is documented and recorded as the number days a student attends school (CDE, 2006).

Student behavior: Defined as a social action that occurs as a result of a student's cognitive development and reasoning (Wang et al., 2014). According to Banajee et al. (2011), behavior is a cognitive outcome. Student behavior is also labeled as a social interaction between peers (Koone & Harper, Jr., 2005)

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

It was assumed that parents had very little to no involvement in their school in the year prior to the introduction of the program guided by Epstein's (1987) model. It was assumed that the opportunities for involvement were comparable from year to year.

The statistical assumptions of the study were as follows:

1. The relationship between parent participation levels and student outcomes is linear.
2. Parent participation and student outcomes will be measured reliably, with minimal error.
3. The variance or the regression errors will be homogenous across levels of parent participation.

The study was limited by that fact that it only included one school only. For this reason, the study was limited as far as being generalizable beyond the charter school where the study took place. A further limitation was the absence of information regarding the number of events at each level the school offered either at baseline or initiative. In addition, reliability of the parent participation records that do exist may have been limited because staff must collect sign-in sheets for parent activities at the school site and it was difficult to control the quality of this staff reporting. Also, information on how many

parents per child attended events was not recorded (e.g. when mother and father of a student both attended an event, it was counted as only one occurrence).

The scope of the study was parent involvement activities during one year at one charter school. I used baseline information from the 2013-2014 school year, including sign-in sheets from limited activities and student achievement and demographic data, which was nonrandomized existing information. Nonrandomized archival data was used from two separate school years to analyze the relationship between student outcomes and an existing parent involvement program.

Significance

This research contributes to the literature on parent involvement by addressing parent involvement in charter high schools with at-risk students where presently little or no research exists. The research provides an understanding of how organized parent involvement activities in charter high schools can contribute to student performance outcomes. Results will contribute to the body of knowledge related to parental involvement, charter schools, academic achievement, and student behavior. The study also may help inform charter high schools in their development of guided parent involvement activities that can improve attendance, behavior, and grades of high school students. The ultimate goal of the study was to affect social change by contributing to research on parent involvement and its subsequent improvement of student outcomes in charter high schools serving at risk students.

Summary

This study was needed because it filled the gaps in literature by providing research on the effects of parent involvement with at-risk charter high school students. In order to research this problem, the study's design called for the collection of data to answer the research questions regarding whether organized parent involvement has a positive effect on student attendance, GPA, ELA grades, suspensions, and expulsions. The research design was quantitative, casual comparative, and correlational. Multiple linear regression was used to analyze the data. I also provided data already archived by the school on parent participation and correlated this information with archived student acheivement, attendance and behavior data. The school's chief academic officer provided the data to me in a format that did not provide any personally identifiable information about the parents or students included in the study. The study is important because it shines a light on charter high school parent participation, which is an under-researched area in the parent involvement literature.

Chapter 2 is a review of literature related to barriers, types, networks, and partnerships that guide parent involvement in schools. Chapter 3 is a description of the design, setting, sample size, treatment, instrument, and data analysis. Chapter 4 is a report of the original data and Chapter 5 is an analysis of those data.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Although there is a significant about of literature at the elementary level demonstrating the positive effects of parent involvement, there is much to be learned regarding what specific parent involvement activities are correlated to student outcomes, particularly at the high school level, which demonstrates the need for this study. The purpose of this quantitative study is to correlate parent involvement activities to improved student academic achievement and social behaviors in an inner city charter high school. Articles within this literature review are examinations of how activities of minority parents (Latino and African American) were correlated to positive student outcomes. This chapter includes a comparison of scholarly articles on methods, models and frameworks that provides ways to understand how parent involvement affects student academic performance and social behavior.

The literature review covers the history of parent involvement from the 19th century to current. The review then compares best practices and the different types of parent involvement. Next the review is an examination of the benefits of parent involvement. The review is also an analysis of barriers associated with parent involvement, including culture, economics, governance, gender, race, and language. The results of the literature review will provide a foundation by examining various theories and models that will drive the purpose of the study. The review will conclude with an analysis and comparison of the conceptual framework along with social capital theory and its relevance to the review.

Literature Search

In order to locate articles appropriate for this study, an exploratory analysis of the Walden Universities Library and public libraries was conducted. Databases used to formulate the review included ERIC, Academic Search Complete, Education Research Complete, Psychology, and ELibrary. Key terms searched within the education databases were *parent involvement, social development in schools, academic outcomes, parents in charter schools, parent governance, parent barriers, English and reading literacy, grade point average, English Language Learners, minority parents, at-risk students, dropout rates, school attendance, social network theory, social capital theory,* and *parent partnerships in schools.* The search parameters included articles from 2006 to 2016. Articles more than 5 years old were used in order to get the full history of Epstein's work and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind bill which includes legal requirements for parent involvement in schools.

Parent Involvement

Parent involvement in schools is defined by this study as the voluntary participation of parents in different types of activities to help their children succeed (Wanat, 2010). Parent participation in their children's education continues to be defined in the literature in a variety of ways. Bower and Griffin (2011) defined parent involvement as a method of parent participation that requires interaction with children at home and at school. Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2011) provided an explanation for parent involvement that focused on cognitive and mental behaviors that enhanced parent participation. Levin and Sutherland (2013) concurred with this concept

by defining parent involvement as the sum of perceptions inspired by a parent's thoughts, beliefs, and values concerning their child's education. Parent motivation to become involved is fostered by a positive school climate and an inviting school staff. The way parents perceive the school determines the level of involvement in school activities. Bailey (2006) and Ndebele (2015) defined parent involvement as the act of assisting children with their homework. Walker et al. had a similar definition as they explained parents are more motivated to assist students in the home than at school.

McNeal, Jr. (2012) explained parent involvement as the way parents support their children at school and at home. Parent support is further defined as parent involvement at a variety of levels including classroom volunteering, evaluating student progress, attending school activities, and working with children in the home (Bower & Griffen, 2011; Cheung & Pomerantz, 2015; Garbacz, 2015). Parent involvement can be broadly defined as the active concern for a child's wellbeing and academic success (McNeal, Jr., 2012). Parents are generally concerned about their children's progress in school as it relates to their future goals and success in life.

Parent involvement was defined by the amount of interaction between the school and parent. Interaction is associated with the inquiry of student progress (Mitchell, 2009). Parent interaction is described as the relationship between parents and teachers that can promote or decrease parent involvement (Mitchell, 2009; Rodriguez, Blatz, & Elbaum, 2014). Both Mitchell and Ndebele (2015) explained interaction as their involvement in their children's home assignments. A parent's interaction with their children at home is seldom recognized as parent involvement although it has a significant bearing on a

child's behavior at school. Mitchell concluded that the environment a parent establishes at home affects a child academic success at school.

Types of Parent Involvement

The literature includes descriptions of various types of parent involvement that has shown effectiveness in improving student achievement and social skills (Alameda-Lawson, & Lawsons, 2010; Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Beauregard, Petrakos, Dupont, 2014; El Nokali, Bachman, &Votruba-Drzal, 2010). The majority of the different types of parent involvement have been analyzed at the elementary level and a lack of information is found on the subject at the middle and high school level (Marshall & Jackman, 2015; Ouimette, Feldman, & Tung, 2006; Ross, 2016). It is critical to research what type of parent involvement works at the high school level since the literature is absent of information on this subject.

The different types of parent involvement may require parents to be involved in school activities at various degrees and levels. The amount of time that parent involvement requires depends on the type of parent involvement activities and whether the activity is at school or at home. Certain types of activities get more support than others depending on the time required by parents to be involved. These types include volunteerism and fundraising. Volunteerism includes active involvement in the classroom and the fundamental operations of the schools. Fundraising is another type of involvement that many parents enjoy. Schools promote parents to be involved in fundraising to assist the school in obtaining resources for the benefit of students.

The most common type of parent involvement is communication with children regarding their day at school (Vera et al., 2012). Home involvement was the first type of parent participation discovered in the research findings (Okeke, 2014; Tekin, 2011). Home involvement includes assisting children with homework, reading, inquiring about a child's school day, and reviewing information sent home by the school. The least common type of involvement is using outside resources other than what is offered at the school (Vera et al., 2012). Other types of parent involvement work better with some parents depending on language barriers, finances, transportation, daycare, and work obligations (Altschul, 2011). Finally, factors that lead to different types of parent involvement are race, education, training, school relationships, and resources (Malone, 2015; Vera et al., 2012).

History of Parent Involvement

In the early 19th century, teaching was primarily done in the home by parents (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). In the United States, Caucasian parents primarily educated their children at home unless the family had more wealth, in which case students were able to attend private schools. In the 19th century, the first public schools were erected along with the education of students of all grades. Parents were highly involved in building the one room schoolhouse for students. The townspeople would hire a teacher by electing a person through public vote to instruct their children (Anfara & Mertens, 2008). The one room school house lacked the resources of today's schools and this enabled parents to continue home tutoring and home involvement efforts. Children were provided

parent assistance at home while being taught by a teacher at school. This assisted the school in saving money and was less of a burden on the township (Tekin, 2011).

Organized parent involvement. Organized parent involvement is identified with the latter part of the 19th Century (Tekin, 2011). The change in parent involvement moved from parents assisting in the development of instruction by integrating lessons at home to the teacher becoming the primary provider (Anfara & Mertens, 2008; Okeke, 2014). As teachers became the primary provider, parent involvement gradually moved from the home and more toward school recognized activities. The voice of the parent appeared to be less important in the 20th century as parent involvement was delivered in a more organized manner.

As child care systems were created for women entering the workforce and attending college campuses, this changed the role of parents wanting to be involved. Parents who were domestic providers in the home were encouraged to assist the teacher in the first child care facilities (Tekin, 2011). During this century, the socioeconomic classes began to separate and this was reflected in the class of parents that were involved in schools (Tekin, 2011). The division of schools and home began to place the weight of parent participation solely within the teacher's control (Antara & Mertens, 2008). Tekin also expressed that parents were only allowed to participate in student activities as a form of lending support to teachers as needed. The urgency for parent involvement began to fade as teachers began to set the pace and regulate what was best for the classroom. Schools toward the end of the 19th century began to alienate parents and viewed teachers as the sole experts in education.

Laws established. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 comprised the next set of regulations that recognized parent involvement as an essential part of student success in the 20th century (Wallace, 2013). The ESEA was the first of its kind to recognize the importance of parent involvement for English Language Learners and parents (Antara & Mertens, 2008; Baird, 2015). The ESEA also required schools to reach out to parents of various nationalities, cultures, and languages. Schools responded to the ESEA by finding ways to develop materials in various languages and diversifying staff to be able to communicate with parents.

The ESEA of 1965 eventually evolved into Goals 2000, which pushed further regulations for schools to develop programs that encouraged parents to become involved in the United States school system (Tekin, 2011). One part of Goals 2000 was to develop parent agreements/compacts to encourage family-partnership and school connections.

No Child Left Behind. The ESEA was rewritten again in 2001 and became the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (Tekin, 2011). The No Child Left Behind Act provided parents with legislation that ensured public districts provide multiple opportunities to involve parents in schools (Altschul, 2011; Ross, 2016; Tekin, 2011). The No Child Left Behind Act mandated schools serving at-risk students who are in danger of educational failure to open their doors to an array of services for parents (Altschul, 2011; Ross, 2016). Before the No Child Left Behind Act, schools were not obligated to ensure parents had opportunities to be involved in their child's education.

Under No Child Left Behind, school districts that receive Title 1 funds are required to develop parent involvement policies. Schools are mandated to include parents

in discussions concerning school policies and certain parent involvement activities are mandated. The No Child Left Behind law pushes for parents to be involved in the shared governance of curriculum and instructional decisions (Tekin, 2011). The purpose of the No Child Left Behind regulations governing parent involvement is to ensure schools have a parent involvement plan in order to increase student academic proficiency (Price-Mitchell, 2009; Ross, 2016). Finally, No Child Left Behind ensures that schools evaluate the effectiveness of their parent involvement policies including ensuring parents are involved in all recommended changes (Tekin, 2011).

The No Child Left Behind law also regulated larger school districts to develop family centers that provide parents with training (Tekin, 2011). Family centers foster home to school partnerships along with early literacy programs to increase student achievement (Antara & Mertens, 2008; Ferrara, 2015). Parent centers were also beneficial in building social networks and parent organizations (Bower & Griffin, 2011). The No Child Left Behind Act has ensured schools establish parent partnerships and parent training centers. These centers promote social capital that encourages the increased of parents engagement in schools.

No Child Left Behind parent involvement policies also provide opportunities for limited English speaking parents. The No Child Left Behind law ensures parents receive information predominately in languages spoken in the home. Schools with high numbers of limited English speaking parents are required to hold forums that specifically address the needs of English learners (Tekin, 2011). Parent involvement plans must include activities that provide limited English speaking parents with training, and partnerships

that strengthen parent and school connections. Although No Child Left Behind has provided parents with mandated programs to increase parent involvement, parents still report major barriers to becoming involved in their children's schools (McNeal Jr, 2014; Mendez, 2010).

Benefits of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is a community resource that encompasses social change in education. Parents are the authority figures to their children. Parents are considered to be the first role model in their children's lives (Tekin, 2011). Parents who nurture their children by becoming actively involved in their education discover their involvement to be a critical factor in that child's academic stability.

Parent involvement is regarded as the single most powerful contributor to a child's academic success (Banerjee et al., 2011; Egalite, 2016; Koonce & Harper, 2005; Vera et al., 2012; Yingqi, 2015). Parents that are involved with their children are regarded as social capital that should be treated differently based on their level of school involvement (Sil, 2007, p. 113; Stevens & Patel, 2015). Schools that seek to increase high levels of parent involvement have a higher academic performance than schools with decreased efforts to keep parents involved (Marschall, 2006). Parent involvement is also critical to student participation and engagement (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2015; Ruiz, 2009). Schools that embrace parent involvement can change the outcomes associated with student achievement.

Parent involvement is considered to be the most important factor that changes the outlook of activities associated with schools such as performance, attendance, and study

skills (Koonce & Harper, Jr., 2005; Okeke, 2014). Parent participation in schools increased positive student attitudes, study habits and academic performance (Adamski, Fraser, & Peiro, 2013; Banerjee et al., 2011). The study revealed that parent involvement is associated with grade promotion and a positive student transition from one grade level to the next (Banerjee et al., 2011; Nitecki, 2015). One of the most important benefits of parent and school partnerships is the improvement of student reading literacy (Baroon, 2011).

Benefits to Minority Students

Parent involvement among African American parents deserves investigation as it changes the treatment of students by school administrators and teachers (Hayes, 2011). African American students with strong teacher support and communication were found to have fewer behavior problems reported (McCormick et al., 2013). Parent involvement is also associated with improved discipline, including decreased suspensions and expulsions (Menedez, 2010). Increased parent involvement by African American parents has been associated with improved attendance, GPA, better student grades, and self-esteem (Hayes, 2011; McNeal Jr, 2014; Wang et al., 2014). Parents who are active influence decisions that are made by administrators and the level of services provided to their children.

Latino parents have an investment in their children to help them become highly successful. Although Latino parents are involved in the education of their children, their involvement remains under-reported (Luis, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014). The majority of Latino parent involvement activities occur in the home or at outside events other than the

school grounds (Baird, 2015; Luis et al., 2014). Additional benefits such as improved reading fluency have been correlated to Latino parent involvement (Mendez & Westerberg, 2012). Latino parent involvement has also been associated with cognitive development and positive behavior patterns (Luis et al., 2014). Parent involvement is critical to the progress of Latino students to improve language, communication, and ultimately academic achievement.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

The majority of parents are met with several obstacles as they explore parent involvement opportunities. Parent involvement barriers are examined within this study in order to provide further insight. Barriers infringe on a parents' ability to be involved in their child's education. Barriers often result in negative outcomes for parents (Vera et al., 2012). Researchers identified barriers including language obstacles, teacher attitude, lack of time, parental work conflicts, poverty, school climate unfriendly, neighborhood violence and recruitment issues (Altshul, 2011; Mendez, 2010; Peterson, 2016,; Shah & College, 2009; Vega, Moore, & Miranda, 2015; Vera et al., 2012). Some barriers are particular to race and environment. An example is parents who are English Language Learners (ELL) or African American parents in poverty environments (Vega et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2014).

Barriers for Latinos. Latino immigrants are the largest growing minority students in the United States school system (Vega et al., 2015; Vera et al., 2012). Latino immigrants also have the highest poverty rate and tend to fall behind all other minority students on state standardized testing (Ruiz, 2009; Vega et al., 2015). Latino students also

have the highest risk factors of dropping out of school followed by African American students (Altschul, 2011; Vega et al., 2015). Consequently, Latino students are most at risk of leaving high school without a diploma. Latino immigrants with no diploma have the highest rate of unemployment and minimum wages (Jasis & Marriott, 2010). Finally, the literature lists many reasons for schools to provide more opportunities for parent involvement.

Parent involvement for Latino parents is an urgent matter that needs to be addressed in order to reach gains for Latino migrant students (Jasis & Marriott, 2010). Latino parents have the least parent participation compared to other minority parents (Poza, Brooks, & Valdés, 2014; Shah & College, 2009). Latino students are the largest minority population in North America (Vega et al., 2015; Vera et al., 2010). Latino students are currently scoring below the national average which is attributed to many factors including lack of parent involvement (Driessen, Smit, & Klaassen, 2010; Vega et al., 2015). Parent involvement is critical to fostering student learning among Latino students (Jasis &Marriott, 2010; Poza et al., 2014).

A significant challenge for Latinos is reducing barriers for parents whose language is not English (Vera et al., 2012). Language obstacles have had a severe impact on ELL parents' ability to be involved in school site activities (Vera et al., 2012). ELL parents see their involvement in their child's education as useless due to their inability to communicate (Baird, 2015; Shah & College, 2009). The apprehension of ELL parents to be involved has resulted in teachers decreasing efforts to reach out to ELL parents due to

the false belief that ELL parents are not interested in their children's education (Altschul, 2011).

It has been concluded that Hispanic parents experience the most adversity when trying to develop active relationships with school officials and activities (Altschul, 2011; Becerra, 2012). In a study conducted with Hispanic parents, it was found that their children's classrooms were unfriendly and non-inviting (Becerra, 2012; Shah &College, 2009). Hispanic parents are less active than White parents as a result of the obstacles preventing involvement (Becerra, 2012; Shah & College, 2009). Barriers are compounded for Hispanic parents as multiple job obligations including migrant farming further impedes their ability to be able to take advantage of parent involvement opportunities (Becerra, 2012; Jasis & Marriott, 2010).

Barriers for African American parents. There were several differences in experiences between African American parents and Hispanic ELL parents. African American students suffered an early history of being denied the right to an education, including the right to school choice. African American students were not allowed to fully integrate into the same schools as Caucasian students until many years after the Brown versus the Board of Education of Topeka US Supreme Court case (Fields-Smith, 2005). The landmark case was significant because it ended segregation in schools and opened up the opportunity for African Americans to have the same education as Caucasian students. During the time of segregation before the case became law, African American parents were documented as serving several roles that provided strong parent involvement (Fields-Smith, 2005). These roles included teaching, drivers who delivered children to

school, fundraisers for school materials, and serving on governing bodies of the school making critical decisions that establish school policy (Fields-Smith, 2005). After segregation was abolished, a decline in African American parent involvement in schools became evident (Fields-Smith, 2005). Changes in education for African American students contributed to what is now termed the achievement gap between African American students and Caucasian students (Hayes, 2011; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013).

Involving parents of various backgrounds in schools began to emerge as a part of Head Start programs in the late 1960s (Tekin, 2011). Head Start encouraged early childhood education geared for minority children within a prekindergarten model. Head Start was developed as a result of research indicating that minority children were falling behind their peers in school. Lawmakers believed parent involvement was the missing component to curing this issue (McNeal, Jr. 2012). The Head Start law influenced parent involvement by providing early intervention leading to the cognitive development of small children (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

African American parents with lower socio economic status struggled to be involved with their children's schools (Banerjee et al., 2009; Vega et al., 2015) and African American parent participation is low (Banerjee et al., 2009; Vega et al., 2015). Poverty may keep parents from having the resources to attend school activities. Other effects of poverty are the challenges many African American single mothers endure, including conflicts with work schedules and school activities (Mendez, 2010). Another analysis determined that children of single parents had lower academic achievement levels than children from two parent homes (Sang Min, Kushner, & Ho Seong, 2007).

Poverty caused barriers among African American parents such as mental illness, illiteracy, and pressure from multiple work related obligations (Mendez, 2010). Parents of color depending on their background faced barriers due to education level (Hanushek, 2016).

The most common barriers reported within the literature were among at risk students including African American and Latinos located in low socio economic disadvantage areas. Parent involvement was reported extremely low among students of color (Ouimette, Feldman, & Tung, 2006; Vega et al., 2015). Schools with higher numbers of at-risk high school students with below poverty incomes tended to have the lowest parent involvement rates (Hoglund et al., 2015; Ouellette & Wilderson, 2008). Similar barriers reported in the literature included issues with parent outreach, time constraints, sustainability, and accessibility of parent involvement programs (Ferrara, 2015; Ouellette & Wilderson, 2008). As a result, parent outreach in poverty-affected schools has been ineffective due to parent constraints to attend events and lack of publicity involved in ensuring parents know when and where activities are occurring (Lawson, Lawson, & Lawson, 2010). Sustainability and accessibility continues to be an issue as schools evolve to meet the demands of meeting parent involvement mandates along with the parent's ability to be able to overcome barriers such as transportation and funding that prevents accessibility.

Overcoming barriers to increase parent participation deserves future research due to the implications to provide more effective parent involvement opportunities. Opportunities to break down barriers for disenfranchised populations means to find

creative ways to communicate with parents that have language limitations and ensure parents feel welcomed through language appropriate materials and announcements. Parents need school activities that work with their schedules. Open communication between school staff and parents, along with accessible school information resources is critical to promoting parent participation and ensuring parent accessibility to school functions (Malone, 2015). Building culturally diverse environments that invite the community into the school is the most effective way to eliminate barriers for parents from disadvantaged environments (Malone, 2015).

Challenges in Charter Schools

Many charters schools include as part of their mission providing parents with the option to be involved with every intricate part of the charter school's operations and parent participation in charter elementary schools is typically higher than in public schools (Rose & Stein, 2014). However, charter high schools face significant challenges when trying to increase parent participation (Smith, Wohlstetter, Kuzin, & De Pedro, 2011). Minority high school charter parents have reported issues with their need to work and not having the available time to participate in school activities (Smith et al., 2011). With the increased number of charter schools, interest in mirroring the success of elementary charter schools at the high school level has grown.

Conceptual Framework

In the 21st century, innovative models of parent involvement are required to develop the best strategies to influence parent decisions to become involved in their children's education. One strategy schools are using to involve parents is technology.

Technology has changed the way parent involvement is viewed and evaluated (Hartas, 2015; Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2008). Technology offers a way to expand parent involvement opportunities. Twenty-first century technologies provide ways for working parents to seek active involvement in their children's education (Zieger & Tan, 2012). Olmstead (2013) reported that "36% of families stated teachers use the internet to communicate with parents" (p. 30). Many schools have found technology to be useful in contacting parents including using automated call systems, electronic gradebooks, e-mail messaging, and school and teacher developed websites.

In a global society, technology is used on a daily basis through phones, computers, the Internet, and social networks. Parents and students are well informed regarding the use of Google mail, Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, and all other forms of building social capital through technology (Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2008). Although students have access to technology at school, many socioeconomically disadvantage families still fall victim to the digital divide at home and are not equipped with the Internet as a readily available resource. Olmstead (2013) reported that although some parents do not have access to technology at home, they have access to technology at their place of work.

In the new age of technology, parents report using e-mails and auto voice systems to keep updated on the progress of their children (Olmstead, 2013). Several schools in the United States have encouraged parent involvement by giving parents the ability to access student electronic gradebooks in order to be more involved in the academic process (Alcena, 2014; Zieger &Tan, 2012). Zieger and Tan's findings were

similar to Olmstead's outcomes which concluded that parents with significantly busy schedules were more adapt to using various forms of technology to track student progress. Parents found it acceptable to initiate communication through e-mail with teachers in order to request information or ask questions regarding student grades or assignments viewed electronically (Olmstead, 2013).

Increasing parent involvement by using Internet resources is one of the newest innovations. Video conferencing and Skype are relatively new technologies that can promote increased parent involvement by being able to be anywhere in the world and talk to your children's teacher or staff (Marshall & Jackman, 2015; Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2008). Other forms of communication such as texting, Twitter, chatting are the preferred method of communication for some parents (Olmstead, 2013). The use of e-mail was found to be equally effective in fostering electronic communication among parents (Olmstead, 2013). The use of the Internet and social networks can build social capital between parents and teachers (Sil, 2011). However, these efforts cannot be successful without training for parents on how to use technology to effectively assist their children (Alcena, 2014).

Epstein's Model of Parent Involvement

The most widely researched model of parent involvement is Epstein's framework for parent involvement (Epstein, 1987). The model involves six types of organized parent involvement activities (Epstein, 1987). The first type covers the basic needs of children by having parents involved in routine activities such as preparing their child for school (Smith et al., 2011). Activities that require the minimum involvement would best

describe Type 1. Type 1 activities include parents ensuring students attend school ready to learn. Vera et al. (2012) equated Type 1 activities with simple activities such as establishing a home environment that promotes learning by establishing structure for children before and after school.

Epstein's second type includes all forms of communication between the school and parent (Epstein, 1987). According to El Nokali et al. (2010), parents' best support their child's educational success by having home and school communication. Type 2 activities are essential for English Language Learner parents as communication barriers plague progress in this area. Vera et al. (2012) stated that schools must establish Type 2 activities for ELL parents by creating a positive forum of two-way communication between teachers and parents. In order to establish this two-way communication, parents must have language appropriate materials and teachers must be culturally sensitive (Baird, 2015).

Type 3 of Epstein's model involves parents being involved in the activities of the school by performing volunteer duties on behalf of their child (Epstein, 1987). It is important for schools to develop several opportunities for parents that foster accessibility to be able to perform volunteer opportunities and stay involved in the day-to-day of the school environment. Parent volunteer activities are resources to the school that promotes self-confidence and socialization among children (Banerjee et al., 2011).

The fourth type of parent involvement consists of home activities related to school (Epstein, 1987). In a study by Altschul (2011), the effects of parent involvement were analyzed and found to be more effective using home activities rather than active school

involvement. Altschul reported Latino parents felt school environments were uninviting and therefore it was easier for parents to help their children at home rather than feel unwanted at their child's school. Vera et al. (2012) revealed that ELL parents were most comfortable with Type 4 activities, due to language barriers and obligations of migrant parents to work during school hours preventing participation at their children's schools.

Parent participation in parent associations, school boards, and committees represents the fifth type of parent involvement in Epstein's model (Epstein, 1987). The majority of organized school committees and associations—such as Parent-Teacher Organizations (PTOs) and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) branches are established for the purpose of fundraising rather than shared governance of the school. Due to schools' administration opposition to sharing decision making, parents often have no clear role to play in the educational decisions of the school (Lareau & Munoz, 2012). However, an argument can be made that parents who lend their time to parent associations such as the PTA, Parent clubs, committees, and school boards should have the opportunity to participate in shared decision making opportunities alongside school teachers and administration and that this would benefit the students and the school.

The involvement of parents in school governance is critical to providing parents with a voice. In order to enhance the education of children, parents need to be representatives of the schools' governance structure (Yolcu, 2011). Parents want to volunteer on boards and committees at their local schools but need to be invited by the school to share in the process. In order to increase the number of parents in shared governance it is critical for schools to develop goals that increase parent governance

(Gallagher et al., 2012). Out of the six types of parent involvement, parents want to be a part of the shared governance of their child's education including classroom decisions that affect their child's learning (Wanat, 2010).

Parents connecting to community organizations and utilizing community resources is the sixth and final type. The sixth type provides the ability of parents to connect with outside resources that will enhance their child's education (Smith et al., 2011). According to Finn-Stevenson, (2014), community-based organizations (CBO) provide value to schools in low income neighborhoods. CBOs assist schools by helping parents to have accessibility to resources in order to be more engaged in their child's learning (Finn-Stevenson, 2014; Warren et al., 2009). CBOs are able to provide resources that schools may lack or be unable to provide for parents such as medical, shelter, food, jobs, after school programs or social networking. Encouraging parent involvement by partnering with CBOs fosters a holistic approach to resources along with extended social networks for parents. Parents are responsive to services that provide them with extended resources including program training (Ouellette & Wilkerson, 2008).

Epstein's (1987) model was more successful when parents were happy with their school to home relationships (Wanat, 2010). Parents who had effective communication and solid relationships with school officials were excited to participate in Epstein's Types 1 to 6. Wanat (2010) examined how teachers' negative attitudes affected parents' type of involvement. Parents who were unhappy with school officials stayed away from school activities and only participated in Type 1 and 4 activities (Wanat, 2010). Tekin (2011) concluded that Epstein's model was more appropriate to be used as a guide or handbook

for educators. It was further elaborated that the model although good for educators it does not provide an in-depth point of view of why parents choose to be involved or not (Tekin, 2011). The model showed some inconsistences in correlating some of the types of parent involvement to student achievement (McNeal, Jr. 2012).

Epstein's Model Used in Charter Schools

Smith et al. (2011) performed a study at 12 charter schools using Epstein's model. Charter schools within the study reported parents willing to take advantage of Types 1 through 4 of Epstein's model (Smith et al., 2011). Parents within the charter schools had positive responses to parent involvement due to the staff members' efforts to encourage parents to participate in each type. Findings further illustrated that Types 5 and 6 had limited participation depending on the administrators' abilities and capacity to set up governance opportunities and resources in the community (Smith et al., 2011).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's Parent Involvement Model

The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model provides a cognitive perspective that explains why parents elect to become involved and how involvement leads to increased academic achievement (Tekin, 2011). The Hoover-Dempsey model has five levels. These levels take into account psychological beliefs, contextual motivators, cognitive behaviors, and perceptions of life-context variables (Walker, Ice, Hoover-Dempsey, & Sandler, 2011). The model deals with psychological reasoning as the sole foundation of its framework (Tekin, 2011). Level 1 of the model begins with parent circumstances, reasoning and beliefs, and their understanding of why their involvement is important to their children's education. The concept here is that parent perceptions and motivating

beliefs (e.g. does the parent believe he or she can effectively help the student succeed?), as well as the parent's life context, including his or her skills, capacity to invest time and family culture, affect the way a parent becomes involved in his or her child's education and school.

The second level of this model addresses motivation by examining the thought process of parents and what inspires them to want to be involved (Tekin, 2011). The model suggests that parent involvement only occurs when a parent has a sense of purpose and motivation to become involved. Motivators consisted of special requests by school staff and the encouragement of teachers to initiate parent involvement in the school. In addition, parents being recognized and rewarded for their efforts also sparks further motivation. Walker et al. (2011) concluded that schools have the power to motivate parents through communication, announcements and changing their opinions of the school.

The third level of this model provided focus on variables that influenced student achievement (Tekin, 2011). When parents believe that their services matter in their child's education, they can overcome barriers that would normally impede a parent's ability to be involved (Walker et al., 2011). Whenever parents increase involvement it can improve student achievement because parent actions affect student perceptions about the importance of academic success (Tekin, 2011).

Level 4 of this model focuses on tempering/mediating constructs, such as parent activities at home and at school (Tekin, 2011). At this level, parents build their child's cognitive level by assisting their children in the areas they deem most important

according to their perceptions and influences. Walker et al. (2011) noted that Level 4 variables lead to Level 5, which is academic achievement (Christianakis, 2011).

Christianakis (2011) used the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model to explain improved cognitive behaviors among young children. Walker et al. (2011) performed a similar study using the same model and concluded that parents visiting the classroom had an effect on minority children's social behaviors. Other researchers who used the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model to guide research found that parent involvement added to teacher productivity due to the willingness of parents wanting to be involved in the classroom (Christinakis, 2011). Notably, findings were that parent involvement benefited minority parents by helping them become a social group with shared beliefs. Parents became strong in their collective efforts and as a result were able to articulate why their involvement was critical to the school and their child's education (Christinakis, 2011).

Parent Training and Partnership Models

Further researchers revealed that parents want schools to deliver more programs and resources in order for them to access and be involved in their children's education (Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2013). Ouellette and Wilkerson (2008) examined the latest innovation in parent involvement by evaluating parent partnership programs and parent management training models. In addition, schools with minority students have shown success by developing parent partnership programs that increase parent resources (Lim, 2012). It is equally important to recognize parent training programs and their contribution to the success of children (Nitecki, 2015). The partnership programs helped parents to

expand their knowledge base on how to deal with issues that may occur when guiding their children.

Parent partnership models are developed by schools and parents for the following reasons as described below (Christianakis, 2011; Lim, 2012; Reece, Staudt, & Ogle, 2013, Shiffman, 2013):

1. To build resources for parents
2. To empower parents
3. To share decision making and governance structures
4. To deliver social networks and social capital
5. To develop parent advocacy groups
6. To increase parent involvement efforts
7. To implement parent training programs
8. To unite parent collaborations
9. To encourage learning in the home
10. To develop community connections

Each partnership model serves a different purpose. Community partnerships form alliances with parents and set up community resources through a consortium of partners such as nonprofits and school extended services (Reece et al., 2013). It is recognized that two forms of partnerships exist including parent-teacher partnerships and parent empowerment partnerships (Christianakis, 2011). Parent-teacher partnerships form parent-teacher compacts that encourage parent participation at home and at school. Parents are encouraged to attend trainings that foster collaborations between teachers and

parents and design activities to increase student achievement (Christianakis, 2011). Parent empowerment partnerships invoke shared governance in schools. Parents are empowered to establish accountability practices in the areas of curriculum, policies, and school structures (Christianakis, 2011). Each model encourages parent involvement by making parents stakeholders and building support systems that develop social capital (Shiffman, 2013).

Social Capital

In each parent involvement model, including Epstein's, the key component is parents building social capital in order to gain resources provided by social networks. Parent involvement increases social capital through social connections between parents, students and school staff. Social capital can build parent and student support therefore increasing parent input (Sil, 2011). Social networking builds social capital as parents navigate their way through their children's educational system (Wanat, 2010). Parents who feel empowered and trust their school environment are more comfortable participating in school activities. Parents gain social capital from the sharing and dissemination of information from school staff, which lends assistance and expertise to students (Sil, 2011). Social capital is sustained through parent and school partnerships along with community organizations (Finn-Stevenson, 2014; Wanat, 2010). Social networks are established through building community and capacity building among individuals with the same common cause (Patricia & Cook-Craig, 2010; Stevens & Patel, 2015).

Summary

The chapter included a review of literature related to parent involvement and how it can be expected to improve student outcomes such as academic achievement and social development. The review included an in-depth description of the history of parent involvement, barriers, best practices, types of parent participation, research-based models, partnerships, training resources, and social capital theory.

The study fills more than one gap in the literature as it will investigate if organized parent involvement in charter high schools is correlated to increased achievement and social behaviors of students. Chapter 3 is a description of data collection and analysis. In this quasi-experimental design, I used archival student-level data, which included demographic characteristics, ELA grades, GPA, attendance, suspensions, expulsions, and the involvement of students' parents in the charter school's activities, as recorded on sign in sheets.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this research study was to associate parent involvement activities to student academic achievement and social behavior in a charter high school. This chapter is a description of the research design, the setting of the study, the sampling strategy and sample size, and the planned parent involvement program. This chapter contains a description of the data collection procedures and the data analysis plan.

Research Design and Rationale

This study was a quantitative analysis of data from parent involvement activities using Epstein's model and student outcomes in an inner city charter high school. The school developed organized parent involvement activities as an intervention to improve student outcomes. The study was conducted within a 2-year period from 2013-2014 to 2014-2015. Variables were analyzed to determine whether an association existed between parent participation in school activities and student outcomes, including ELA grades, GPA, attendance, and suspension and expulsions. The quantitative method was chosen because it allowed collected data to be correlated in order to develop findings that answer the research questions and test the hypotheses.

The quasi-experimental design was chosen for this study because the sampling was nonrandom. The nonrandom approach was necessary in order to analyze archival data of parent participation activities and student outcomes. Regression analysis was used to control influential variables that may potentially affect the study. It was essential to have a strong quasi-experimental design in order to properly control for variables besides parent involvement that may influence the outcomes of the treatment group (Randler &

Bogner, 2008). This study was planned with the protection, privacy, and the confidentiality of participants in mind.

Methodology

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold: first it was to test whether there was an association between a change in parent involvement activities and student academic achievement and social behaviors in an inner city charter high school from one year to the next. The second purpose was to explore differences in levels of parent participation during the program year and what, if any, effect these differences had on student outcomes for English-only speaking students and ELLs. I examined differences in student outcomes between years as well as within the program year. When analyzing the parent participation and archival data of parents and students within one charter school, I expected to find associations between parent involvement and student outcomes.

Population and Sample

The population for this study was secondary charter school students. The setting was a charter school located in the business district of a downtown area of a medium-sized urban area. Many of the students lived within a 10-mile radius of the school. Students enrolled in the charter are from low-income families; 98% of students qualified for free or reduced price lunch. The charter school had an annual enrollment in 2013-2014 of 222 students Grades 7 through 12. In the initiative year, 2014-2015, the annual enrollment was 197 students. The population in this study was at-risk students including 59% Hispanic, 38% African American, 2% Caucasian, and 1% Asian.

The sample was a convenience sample of students enrolled in a charter school. Power analysis for an independent groups two-tailed *t* test conducted for an effect size (Cohen's d) of .5, and Type I error probability of .05 computed with G* power 3.1 software indicated a needed sample size of 105 students in each group in the analysis. This would mean that, to achieve this level of power, there would need to be 105 students in the baseline year and program year and there would also need to be at least 105 students in any subgroups included in the analysis. The charter school enrollment should have been more than sufficient to achieve this level of statistical power. However, as explained in the results chapter, the sample sizes for groups were smaller than 105, which affected the power of the analyses.

Parent Involvement Program

The school conducted recruitment to boost parent involvement throughout the Fall 2014 semester by using the school newsletter, school calendar, parent announcements, e-mails to stakeholders, school bulletin boards, phone announcements, and the school's Facebook page. The school informed parents of a need to improve parent participation by following Epstein's framework. The school ensured its programs catered to the cultural differences and diversity of its population. Each student and parent was offered the same encouragement and notifications to attend events.

Various parent activities were offered and these activities can be categorized, according to Epstein's framework, into three levels: Level 1 includes parent conferences, homework review, and attendance at fundraisers, fieldtrips, and sports events. Level 2 includes participation in student Individualized Career Plans, teacher informational

meetings on curriculum, career pathways and senior meetings. Level 3 was parent participation in shared governance including parent council, DELAC, School Site Council and Board of Directors. Each level progressively involved more activity and time by parents at the school site.

Procedures for Data Collection

The study included data from all parents and all students in Grades 7-12 in the years 2013-14 and 2014-15. The dependent variables were student attendance (averaged daily), suspension, expulsions, ELA grades, and overall GPA. The independent variables were a parent involvement program indicator (0 for baseline year, 1 for program year), and a three-category parent involvement variable. Student language classification (ELL or EO) will serve as a moderating variable. All variables were constructed using data from parent participation rosters and the student information system (Table 1).

The charter school used software called Aeries to input student English Language Arts (ELA) grades, attendance, suspension, expulsions and student demographic information including language classification. The parent activity data were recorded through sign-in sheets and tracking logs, which were then transferred to Goggle Docs by the CAO. Using a numeric student ID unknown to me, the school matched the student data record with the parent activity data and provided a combined data set.

Archived information on student outcomes as well as sign-in sheets at parent events from the 2013-2014 school year before the Epstein model was implemented would provide baseline data. The comparison archive data were sign-in sheets and the same

student outcomes from the 2014-2015 year after the implementation of Epstein's Model. Table 1 lists all variables in the data set.

Table 1

Independent Variables

Variable	Description of Variable	Variable Type	Tracking Instrument
Conference	Level I: Parent Conferences	Ordinal	Parent attendance tracked through sign-in sheets
Homework	Level I: Homework review	Ordinal	Parent review and signature on homework form
Events	Level I: Attendance at fundraising, fieldtrips, and sports events.	Ordinal	Parent attendance tracked through sign-in sheets
Career Plans	Level II: Attendance and participation in student Individualized Career Plans.	Ordinal	Parent attendance tracked by sign sheets
Workshops	Level II: Attendance at parent workshops.	Ordinal	Parent workshop evaluations forms
Curriculum	Level II: Attendance at teacher informational meetings on curriculum, career pathways and credits.	Ordinal	Parent Attendance tracked through sign-in sheets.
Governance	Level III: Parents attendance and participation in shared governance including parent advisory, DELAC, School Site Council and Board of Directors.	Ordinal	Parent Attendance tracked through sign-in sheets.
Attendance	Average Daily Attendance=Days of attendance in a 20 period excludes non-school days by the number of days enrolled.	Ordinal	Aeries Student Information System
ELA Grade	Letter grades in English Language Arts ranging from A, B, C, D, or R for repeat course.	Ordinal	Aeries System
GPA	Points associated with a letter grade based on an average calculate a grade point average.	Ordinal	Aeries System
Suspension	Education Code Violations followed up by mandatory days out of school 3 to 5 days.	Ordinal	Aeries System
Expulsions	Expulsions are violations of the zero tolerance policy and Ed code leading to 30 days out of school, administrative hearing, and no return to school of enrollment for a period up to 1 year.	Ordinal	Aeries System
Language Classification	Students are classified according to language spoken at home and performance on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT)	Ordinal	Aeries System

The parent involvement activities are measured as occurrences (each parent is marked 1 for every time he or she attends or participates in an activity or event).

Data Analysis Plan

Once the data had been entered in SPSS, data cleaning and exploratory data analysis began. I checked for normal distribution of the independent variables (O'boyle JR & Aguinis, 2012). Outliers were reviewed to determine if the data had errors or if the outliers were caused by extreme events (Rahman & Amri, 2011). The following main research question guided analyses: Does increased participation of parents at organized parent involvement activities have a positive effect on student achievement and behavior at this charter school?

The data would allow exploration of this question in several ways, guided by the following sub questions:

1. Did overall student achievement and behavior outcome for students improve in the year of the parent involvement initiative at the charter school, compared to 1 year earlier?
2. Is total parent participation in parent involvement activities in 2014-15 associated with student achievement and behavior?
3. Does participation in different levels of parent involvement activities (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) differentially affect student achievement and behavior?

4. Are there differences in English Only and English Language Learner subgroups in terms of parent participation and its relationship to English Language Arts literacy?

For the first research question, outcomes were simply compared between the baseline year and the program year. Separate analyses were conducted for each of the five outcome variables (ELA grade, overall GPA, attendance, suspensions, and expulsions). Baseline and program outcomes were tested for significant change from year to year using either *t* tests (attendance and GPA) or Chi-squared tests (ELA grade, suspensions and expulsions).

For Research Question 2, the independent variable was total organized parent involvement, which was measured by the frequency of parent participation in all seven activities (conference + homework + events + career plans + workshops + curriculum + governance). Separate analyses were conducted for each of the five outcome variables. The Pearson *r* correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between parent involvement activities and student outcomes by testing for .05 level to determine if there are significant differences. Question 3 was analyzed per each level. The chi-squared test was the statistical test for Question 3 in order to determine if the frequency of attendance at each level of event affects categorical and continuous student outcomes. Question 4 was analyzed using chi-squared tests.

Threats to Validity

In quasi-experimental designs, threats to external and internal validity have to be controlled. External validity refers to scientific proof that the treatment has an effect both

in the case tested and in general. A study can have external validity only when its design includes random selection of participants and random assignment of treatment to those participants. Since this study is nonrandom, it will not produce externally valid results.

Participant Protections and Ethical Procedures

I gained all the necessary approvals to conduct the study as outlined in the IRB process and documentation. Permission was gained from the school's Board of Directors to conduct the study. The Board of Directors resolution will be kept on file electronically for the duration of the required period after the study is concluded. The electronic file will be kept on a thumb drive password protected both thumb drive and hard copy will be stored in a locked file cabinet in which only I will have the key. I will also keep a PDF file on a home computer encrypted with password protection for security. Documents will be destroyed upon the end of the retention period designated in the IRB documentation.

The school provided archival data from two school years. The school exported the information for the study including grades, attendance, suspensions, and expulsions, and did not reveal names of students or parents in the study. The school tabulated sign-in sheets and tracking logs to extract the number of times parents participated each type of activity. Neither the names of the parents, nor the students were connected to the data. Thus, the study was anonymous.

Summary

Chapter 3 was a description of the research methodology and design of the study. I used a quasi-experimental design using nonrandom selection, assignment, and archival

data. Independent variables were parent activities and dependent variables were student outcomes.

The setting was a charter school with a total population of 197 students. I analyzed whether there is a correlation between frequency of participation in parent involvement activities and various student outcomes such as ELA grades, GPA, attendance, suspension, and expulsions. Data analysis entailed *t* tests, chi-squared tests, correlation (Pearson's *r*), and ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regressions for each dependent variable.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold: first it was to test whether there was an association between a change in parent involvement activities, student academic achievement and social behaviors in an inner city charter high school from one year to the next. The second purpose was to explore differences in levels of parent participation during the initiative year and what, if any, effect these differences had on student outcomes for English-only speaking students and English language learners. In sum, this study will examine differences in student outcomes between years as well as within the program year.

The research questions and hypotheses were:

1. Did overall student achievement and behavior outcomes for students improve in the year of the parent involvement initiative at the charter school, compared to 1 year earlier?

$H1_0$: Student behavior and student achievement outcomes are not significantly different from the baseline year to the program year.

$H1_A$: Student behavior and student achievement outcomes are significantly different from the baseline year to the program year.

2. Are total parent participation in parent involvement activities in 2014-15 associated with student achievement and behavior?

$H2_0$: Total parent participation is not significantly correlated with increased student achievement and behavior.

$H2_A$: Total parent participation is significantly correlated with increased student achievement and behavior.

3. Does participation in different levels of parent involvement activities (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) differentially affect student achievement and behavior?

$H3_0$: Participation in different levels of parent involvement (level 1 vs. level 2 vs. level 3) is not significantly correlated with student achievement and behavior.

$H3_A$: Participation in different levels of parent involvement (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) is significantly correlated with student achievement and behavior.

4. Are there differences between English Language Learner (ELL) and English-only (EO) subgroups in terms of parent participation and its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts?

$H4_0$: English Language Learners and English-only student are not significantly different from each other in terms of parent participation or its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts.

$H4_A$: English Language Learners and English-only student are significantly different from each other in terms of parent participation or its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts.

Chapter 4 is a report of the analysis of parent involvement activities in the baseline and initiative year. The association between parent involvement activities and student attendance, suspensions/expulsions, GPA, and ELA grades was tested. Student demographics also are presented. The findings from the analysis revealed mixed results

across all four research questions. Significance was found for some hypotheses, but not all. If significance was not found, there were times when results informed the study, but could not be generalizable to other schools.

Data Collection

The study population was students enrolled in one charter high school over 2 school years: 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The school increased the number of parent activities offered within the initiative year from August 19, 2014 to June 5, 2015. The school made this change with the hope to impact student outcomes by actively recruiting parents to attend multiple activities. In order to promote parent participation, the school conducted recruitment activities by passing out flyers, phone calls, and home visits. The school also added a new career pathways program during the 2014-15 school year. Finally, information was provided in multiple languages to parents in order to promote activities for Limited English speaking parents.

The parent participation data set included archived frequency and level of parent involvement. The student outcome data included ELA grades, GPA, suspensions, expulsions, and attendance from both school years. In July of 2015 the CAO de-identified the 2 years of data in order to protect the identity of students. Finally, the extracted 2 years of data were provided to the author in one large dataset.

Discrepancies in Data Collection

As reported in Chapter 3, a power analysis for independent groups two-tailed *t*-test conducted for an effect size (Cohen's d) of .5, and a Type I error probability of .05 computed with G* power 3.1 software indicated a needed sample size of 105 students in

each group (both baseline year and initiative year). In order to be included in the sample, data for each student needed to be available for both school years. I was able to collect 2 years of data on a sample of only 83 students. This decrease in sample size produced a corresponding decrease in achieved power from .95 to .89 in a post hoc test of power for *t*-test comparison of means. In post hoc tests of power for correlations and Chi-squared, a sample size of 83 for each group was sufficient to maintain power over .95. In post hoc tests of power for correlations involving the English Language Learner subgroups (English only *n*=48, and English Learner *n*=22), power was reduced even further to .61, meaning that the chance of a Type II error or false negative was as high as 39%. This smaller sample size reduced the chances that any particular test would be significant. Categories such as attendance and suspensions would have possibly provided more meaning with a larger sample size.

Characteristics of the Sample

All characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Characteristics of the Sample

	Grade Level		*n*	**%**
	2013-2014	2014-2015		
Gender				
Female			49	59%
Male			34	41%
Student Cohorts				
Cohort A	Grade 7	Grade 8	13	16%
Cohort B	Grade 8	Grade 9	1	1%
Cohort C	Grade 9	Grade 10	4	5%
Cohort D	Grade 10	Grade 11	34	41%
Cohort E	Grade 11	Grade 12	31	37%
Race/Ethnicity				
African American			15	18%
Hispanic			65	78%
White			3	4%
Language Proficiency				
English Only			48	58%
English Language Learners (ELL)			35	42%
English Learners (EL)			22	27%
Initial Fluent English Proficient (IFEP)			5	6%
Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP)			8	10%
Special. Education			11	13%

Note: *n*=83

Gender. This sample included 49 females and 34 males. Females were 51% of the sample while males were 41% of the sample. The larger number of female students reflects the larger population of the school.

Grade level. The majority of the 83 students in the initiative year were in grades 11th and 12th (65). The grade level composition within the students sampled reflects the fact that many students come to the charter school to regain their credits and leave to return to the district in various different grade levels. Additionally, the school works with a transient population of students. Students come to the school in 7th and 8th usually on previous expulsion once the expulsion is concluded students move back to their home school within the traditional school district. Knowing this factor explains the low percentage of students moving from the 8th grade to the 9th grade at 1%.

Ethnicity. The race and ethnicity break down in the sample was extremely close to the break down by percentage of the total population at the school, with the majority of the students being minority. Students of Hispanic descent made up 78.31% of the sample. The second highest ethnicity was African American at 18.07%. Finally, the White population only comprised 3.6% of the total sample.

English proficiency. A noticeable contrast within the demographics was the population of students with limited English proficiency. English-Only (EO) students comprised of 58% of the population. The categories for English Language Learner (ELL) students are associated with the California English Language Development Test. The CELDT test is administered annually to students who have a Home Language Survey identifying English as their second language. The purpose of the test is twofold: first the

test measures the development of EL students' English learning according to California's standards. Second, it determines whether students are reclassified as English Proficient RFEP (CDE, 2010). The ELL categories are English Learner (EL), Initial Fluent English Proficient IFEP, and Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP). English Language Learners (ELL) comprised 42.17% of the total sample including EL, IFEP, and RFEP: EL at 27%, IFEP at 6% and RFEP was 10% of the total sample. For the purpose of this study, the English Learner (EL) group was analyzed for student outcomes because IFEP and RFEP have been classified as English-Proficient and therefore do not receive ESOL instruction.

In addition to the above-stated characteristics of the sample, 98% of the students in the study were low-income, as indicated by their eligibility for free or reduced price lunch. Additionally, 13% of the students are designated special education. These demographic characteristics indicate that the school faced challenges to academic success. Finally, the demographic information provides a picture of the sample, which is representative of the entire population of the school.

Data Analysis and Results

In order to respond to the four research questions, several tests were run, including the *t*-test, chi-squared, and Pearson's *r*.

Parent Involvement Activities

Table 3 provides descriptive analysis of the data involving each parent's participation in multiple events within different categorical levels throughout both the baseline year of 2013-2014 and the initiative year of 2014-2015. Attendance at parent

involvement activities was recorded during the baseline and initiative year and then categorized into three levels. Level 1 includes parent conferences, homework review, and school events (i.e., fundraisers, fieldtrips, or sports). Level 2 includes participation in student Individualized Career Plans, teacher informational meetings on curriculum, student career pathway meetings and senior academic status meetings. Level 3 is parent participation in shared governance (for example parent council, DELAC, School Site Council and Board of Directors). Parents whose participation was recorded in the study either attended one or more of Level 1-3 activities or did not participate in any events. The school tracked parent participation through sign-in sheets that were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. A limitation of the study was that it did not include information that indicated the total number of *possible* events parents could have attended, either overall or by level. In the absence of this information, an assumption was made that parents had similar opportunities to participate at each level from baseline to initiative. It is worth noting here that the initiative itself was concerned with additional promotion and outreach around existing opportunities, rather than creating new opportunities for involvement.

Table 3

Parent Participation Baseline to Initiative Year

	Participation (Participation Rate)	Total Participation Occurrences	Events per Participating Parent
Baseline (2013-2014)			
No Participation	14 (17%)	0	0
Overall Participation	69 (83%)	117	1.7
Level Participation			
Level 1	26 (31%)**	26	1.0
Level 2	60 (72%)	60	1.0
Level 3	13 (16%)*	31	2.4
Initiative (2014-2015)			
No Participation	15(18 %)	0	0
Overall Participation	68 (81%)	116	1.7
Level Participation			
Level 1	39 (46%)***	43	1.1
Level 2	62 (74 %)	68	1.1
Level 3	5 (6%)*	5	1.0

* $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .0001$.

Participation. A binary (0/1) variable was created for each student who had a parent attend at any event at any level**.** The participation rate is calculated by dividing the number of parents who participated in any event divided by the total number of parents (*n*=83). The first noticeable change in participation that occurred between the baseline year and the initiative year was that overall participation rate was 83% This was surprising as the school works with an at-risk population with parents that have several challenging barriers.

Level participation. A binary variable was created for each student to document which parents attended any event within each level. Levels 1 and 2 displayed a noticeable change with a difference of level 1 participation increasing by 15% in the initiative year

compared to the baseline year. Level 2 participation showed a small increase of 2% by the end of the initiative year. Level 3 participation revealed a decrease in participation of 10%; this may be attributable to the school experiencing a charter renewal the previous year and parents attending more governance meeting to stay informed of the progress of the renewal.

Total participation occurrences. Total or overall parent involvement is all participation in any of the seven activities (conference + homework + events + career plans + curriculum + workshops/parent trainings + governance). A variable was identified for each level and coded as the number of times parents attended an event in that level. For the 2013-2014 school year, the maximum total participation was 117 and in the 2014-2015 school year the maximum total participation was 116. Activities were not tracked by the school in hours or minutes.

Summary. It is evident from the data in Table 2 that, from baseline to initiative year, while the overall parent participation rate slightly changed, the Level 1 and 2 participation rates increased, and Level 3 participation rates decreased. The percentage of parents who participated in Level 1 events in the initiative year (49%) increased significantly from the percentage of parents who participated in the baseline year (31%, $\chi^2(1, N = 83) = 13.62, p = .00$.) The increase in Level 2 events was not significant, and the percentage of parents who participated in Level 3 events in the initiative year (6%) decreased significantly from the percentage of parents who participated in the baseline year (15%, $\chi^2(1, N = 83) = 7.92, p = .005$.)

A possible explanation for the decrease in attendance at Level 3 could be the school engaged in the charter renewal process during the baseline year and parents were especially aware of Level 3 type events as a result. In baseline, parents may have attended more of the governance activities of Level 3 in order to stay informed of the charter renewal process and the school's status throughout the year.

It appears that during the initiative year, the staff's efforts to increase Level 1 and 2 parent involvement activities by increasing promotional activities, materials in multiple languages, and organizing the activities according to Epstein's Model reached more parents. A closer look at the attendance data reveals that certain activities are more popular or parents may feel more comfortable participating in them. Level 1 activities provided the most substantial increase in participation and Level 2 activities only saw a slight, but statistically significant increase.

Research Question 1

The next level of inquiry involved Research Question 1: Did overall student achievement and behavior outcomes for students improve in the year of the parent involvement initiative at the charter school, compared to one year earlier? The analysis examined whether there was a significant difference in the student outcomes between the baseline school year and the initiative year. Research Question 1 required several *t*-tests be run in order to analyze a potential change in the student outcomes including English Language Art (ELA) grades, GPA, student attendance, and suspensions/expulsions. A paired *t*-test was run for each of these student outcomes, based on the descriptive statistics for each year by student outcome. Research Question 2 analyzed the differences

between groups of participation or nonparticipation for academic achievement and behavior.

English language arts. Student grades for ELA were available in the data and distributed as shown in Table 4. These letter grades were transformed to grade points according to the scale shown and used to test for significant differences from baseline to initiative year.

Table 4

ELA Grade Distribution in Sample, and corresponding grade point values, from Baseline to Initiative

		Baseline		Initiative	
ELA Grade	ELA Grade Point	#	**%**	#	**%**
A+	4	3	4%	4	5%
A	4	4	5%	4	5%
A-	3.7	5	6%	4	5%
B+	3.3	3	4%	4	5%
B	3	10	12%	7	8%
B-	2.7	7	8%	8	10%
C+	2.3	3	4%	5	6%
C	2	4	5%	10	12%
C-	1.7	6	7%	7	8%
D+	1.3	2	2%	4	5%
D	1	3	4%	6	7%
D-	1	10	12%	6	7%
R	0	23	28%	14	17%

Students with a grade of C or better make up 72% of the sample, while 36% of students within the sample are near failing or failing with a D or below. Table 4 also presents some interesting highlights. For instance, there was a decrease—from 28% to 17% – from the baseline to initiative years in the number of students receiving Rs and having to repeat the class. A letter grade of R represents the equivalent of receiving a F,

generally students will need to repeat the class. In the initiative year, fewer students failed than in the baseline year, but this difference was not statistically significant.

Table 5 compares the mean ELA-GPAs in baseline and initiative. Although the ELA-GPA's went up from approximately a C- on average to a C, the increase was not statistically significant ($p = 0.0704$, $t = 1.487$). Research Question 2 would provide additional analysis to determine the differences between the participation groups.

Table 5

ELA Grades Comparison of Means

	2013-14	2014-15
Sample mean	1.759	1.966
Standard deviation	1.410	1.270
n	83	83

t-score: 1.487
p-value: 0.0704

Overall grade point average. A paired *t*-test was completed to compare the change in baseline to initiative for overall GPA as well, as displayed in Table 5. Research question 2 would provide additional analysis to determine the differences between participation groups.

Table 6

Overall GPA Comparison of Means

	2013-14	2014-15
Sample mean	1.977	2.286
Standard deviation	0.957	0.716
n	83	83

$t = 3.942$
$p = 0.0001$

The *t*test revealed a t score of 3.942 and the *p*-value of 0.0001. Unlike the ELA grades, it is highly likely that the change in overall GPA between the two school years did not occur by chance. However, the difference in GPA could not be determined if it was correlated with parent participation or from some other factor.

Attendance. For the third student outcome of school attendance, data was calculated using the number of days that each student attended divided by the number of days each student was enrolled, producing a percentage treated as an interval-ratio variable. One factor that affected the data was that many students started at different points in the academic year, which is consistent with the school serving a transient at-risk population. This transient dynamic was accounted for by comparing all students' rates of attendance. The attendance data were, therefore, made comparable across students who had different enrollment and average daily attendance sums. A paired *t*-test was run to test whether a significant change occurred in the attendance rate from year to year (Table 6).

Table 7

Attendance Comparison of Means

	2013-14	2014-15
Sample mean	0.975	0.956
Standard deviation	0.057	0.092
n	83	83

t-score: -1.857
p-value: 0.0669

The mean attendance rate in the initiative year (95.6%) was actually less than the mean attendance for baseline year (97.5%). However, the decrease from year-to-year was

not statistically significant. Hence, change in attendance was not large enough to reject the null hypothesis.

Suspensions and expulsions. The final student outcome analyzed was suspensions and expulsions, which did not provide enough data to test significance with a *t*-test. Too few students out of the sample were suspended and none were expelled in the initiative year. This study could not move forward in testing whether or not there was a change in suspensions/expulsions as a result of parent involvement. The data set displayed other information pertinent to this explanation, though, including very low suspensions and no expulsions in both school years. Although the low number of suspensions and expulsions is an asset to the school's data and the public, it did not provide enough data to determine statistical relevance for this study.

Table 8

Suspension/ Expulsions Within the Sample

	Baseline		Initiative	
	#	%	#	%
Suspensions	6	8%	3	4%
Expulsions	0	0%	0	0%

n=83

Summary. The answer to Research Question 1 is mixed. There is evidence that a statistically significant change occurred in overall GPA at the *p*-value of 0.01. However, changes in ELA and attendance rates were not statistically significant year to year. Finally, suspensions and expulsions could not undergo examination with a *t*-test due to the minimal incidents of suspensions/expulsions during the study years.

Research Question 2

The next procedure was performed for Research Question 2: Is total parent participation in parent involvement activities in 2014-15 associated with student achievement and behavior? The student outcomes were overall GPA, ELA grade point average, and attendance. Each of the outcomes measured showed an increase or decrease between the baseline and initiative years. The total participation was measured by the variable for the total participation occurrences, which accounts for individual parents attending more than one event.

Table 9

Pearson Correlation of Student Outcomes and Total Parent Participation

		Parent Participation
GPA	Pearson Correlation	.135
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.22
	N	83
ELA	Pearson Correlation	.287
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009*
	N	83
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	-.056
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.618
	N	83

*$p < .01$.

Grade point average. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between GPA and the total number of attended events by parents (across all three levels). The relationship between GPA and parent involvement was not significant, $r(83)=0.135$, $p=0.22$. This, the correlation testing failed to reject the null hypothesis.

English language arts grade. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between ELA grades and parent involvement, which indicated a small correlation, $r(83)=0.287$, $p \leq .01$.

Attendance. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to evaluate the relationship between attendance and parent involvement. No statistically significant correlation existed between attendance in 2015 and parent participation in the initiative year, $r(83)=-0.056$, $p = .618$.

Summary. The answer to Research Question 2 is mixed. There is evidence that a statistical significance occurred between parent involvement and ELA grades at the *p*-value of ($p \leq .01$). However, changes in GPA and attendance rates were not statistically significant in the initiative year. Finally, only GPA, ELA and attendance were tested with Pearson's *r* since suspensions/expulsions could not be examined for significance due to the minimal incidents of suspensions/expulsions during the study years.

Research Question 3

In order to examine Research Question 3: Does participation at different levels of parent involvement activities (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) differentially affect student achievement and behavior? A Pearson product moment correlation was used to assess whether parent participation at any of the levels was associated with overall student outcomes. Parent participation at each level was a continuous variable based on the number of events attended.

Table 10

Pearson Correlation of Student Outcomes and Parent Participation Levels 1, 2 and 3

		Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
GPA	Pearson Correlation	.034	.221*	-.033
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.763	.044	.768
	N	83	83	83
ELA	Pearson Correlation	.184	.274*	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.095	.012	.501
	N	83	83	83
Attendance	Pearson Correlation	.031	-.144	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.778	.194	.892
	N	83	83	83

*$p < .05$.

Grade Point Average. Table 10 shows GPA increased significantly as the amount Level 2 activities increased. GPA increased approximately 20% for every unit of increase found in Level 2 parent participation. The correlation for GPA showed significance, $r(83)=.221$, $p \leq .05$. However, GPA was not significantly associated to Level 1 or Level 3 parent participation.

English Language Art Grades. ELA grades also improved significantly as Level 2 activities increased. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to test the relationship between the ELA grade point average and level 2 parent participation. Results showed a significant, but weak relationship, $r(83)=.274$, $p \leq .05$. As with overall GPA results, ELA grades did not show significance for Level 1 and 3 parent participation.

Attendance. A Pearson's product-moment correlation was run to assess the relationship between student attendance and parent participation at Levels 1, 2, and 3. However, no statistically significant association was found (see Table 10).

Summary. Research Question 3 revealed promising results for Level 2 parent participation. Level 2 activities included student individual career plans, workshops/parent trainings, informational meetings regarding career pathways, curriculum and instruction. Statistical significance occurred between parent participation GPA and ELA grades. The significance occurred at Level 2 parent participation but was found to be non-significant at Levels 1 and 3. No correlation was found between parent participation and attendance.

Research Question 4

This study concluded its testing by answering Research Question 4: Are there differences between English Learner (EL) and English-only (EO) subgroups in terms of parent participation and its relationship to student outcomes for English Language Arts? To respond to this final question, I divided it into its constituent parts. I examined whether students in each of the ELL language groups showed improved outcomes from the baseline to initiative year. While the data showed that ELs improved significantly in terms of overall GPA, they did not improve in ELA grade point average. English-Only students showed significant gains in improving ELA grade point average from the baseline year to the initiative year.

Overall GPA. The summary of GPA between ELL subgroups and EO is in Table 9. The overall GPA for EL students in baseline year was 1.587. In the initiative year, it

was 2.27. This .683 change was statistically significant $t(81) = -3.05$, $p = .002$ as compared to the total population. English-only students did not demonstrate the same level of academic improvement as compared to EL students in terms of overall GPA. The EO students earned a 2.10 GPA in baseline and 2.25 in the initiative year. This increase of .147 was significantly less than the increase of .533 of total population students earned.

Table 10

Overall Grade Point Average for EL, English-Only, IFEL and RFEP Students

		GPA 2013-2014	GPA 2014-2015	GPA Gain
EL	Mean	1.587	2.27	.683*
	Standard Deviation	.9164	.6267	
	N	22	22	
English Only	Mean	2.101	2.248	.147*
	Standard Deviation	.8968	.7159	
	N	48	48	
	N	13	13	
IFEP and RFEP	Mean	2.175	2.454	.278
	Standard Deviation	1.122	.8762	
	N	13	13	

*$p \leq .05$

English language arts GPA. The ELA GPA is summarized in Table 11. The ELA GPA for EL students was 1.791 in the baseline year and 1.641 or the equivalent to a D letter grade in the initiative year, which was a decrease that did not differ significantly from the change in the total population, $t(81) = -4.04$, $p = 0.71$. The EO ELA GPA in the baseline year was 1.669, or the equivalent to a D letter grade, and 2.104, the equivalent of a C letter grade, in the initiative year, indicating an increase in ELA grades across the 2

years for English-only students. However, this increase of .435 was not significant as compared to the entire population. Neither of the other two groups improved in terms of either overall GPA or ELA grade point.

Table 11

ELA Grade Point Average for EL, English-only, IFEP and RFEP Students

		ELA 2013-2014	ELA 2014-2015	ELA Gain
EL	Mean	1.791	1.641	-.15
	Standard Deviation	1.294	1.268	
	N	22	22	
English Only	Mean	1.669	2.104	.43
	Standard Deviation	1.410	1.223	
	N	48	48	
IFEL and RFEP	Mean	2.038	2.008	-.03
	Standard Deviation	1.654	1.440	
	N	13	13	

The next step in answering Research Question 4 was to determine whether the language subgroups participated differently in parent involvement activities. Table 12 depicts the rate of total parent participation occurrences by student language groups, including duplicate parent counts for attending multiple activities. Although English-only had a higher amount of students within the study with $n = 45$ the data were not sufficient to demonstrate that any language group participated more or less than another in terms of Level 1, 2 or 3 activities, or overall. Even though ELL students improved their GPAs from year-to-year, their parents did not participate more than other parents, making it difficult to claim that parent participation was linked to grade improvement.

Table 12

Number of Parents Attending Parent Events by Level in 2014-15, by Language Group

	Participation (Participation Rate)	Total Participation Occurrences	Events per Participating Parent
All Sub-groups (*n*= 83)			
No Participation	14 (17%)	0	0
Overall Participation	69 (83%)	117	1.5
Level Participation			
Level 1	26 (31%)	26	1.0
Level 2	60 (72%)	60	1.0
Level 3	13 (16%)	31	2.4
English Learners (*n*=22)			
No Participation	6 (27%)	0	0
Overall Participation	16 (72%)	24	1.1
Level Participation			
Level 1	8 (36%)	8	1
Level 2	14 (66%)	14	1
Level 3	2 (.09%)	4	2
English Only (*n*=45)			
No Participation	5 (10%)	0	0
Overall Participation	40 (83%)	69	1.75
Level Participation			
Level 1	14 (30%)	14	1
Level 2	37 (77%)	37	1
Level 3	8 (17%)	18	2.25
IFEL and RFEP (*n*=13)			
No Participation	2 (15%)	0	0
Overall Participation	11 (85%)	22	2
Level Participation			
Level 1	4 (31%)	4	1
Level 2	9 (69%)	9	1
Level 3	3 (23%)	9	3

Summary

Three statistical tests were used in the analysis of various data for this study: *t*-tests, Chi-squared and Pearson's *r* product-moment correlations. Some of these tests were statistically significant and indicate areas that should be further researched, but the majority of the procedures testing hypotheses showed results with no statistical significance.

A positive result was the significant change in Level 2 parent involvement activities (Table 2). This finding suggests that the parent involvement initiative and parent participation opportunities—which focused on promoting events of this type—may have driven the increased parent involvement in this category in the initiative year.

This chapter was an explanation of four research questions. The first asked whether overall student achievement and behavior outcomes for students improved in the year of the parent involvement initiative, compared to one year earlier. Answering this question required several *t*-tests be run. Student academic outcomes and behaviors tested included ELA grade point average, overall GPA (including all courses and subjects), student attendance, and suspensions/expulsions between the school years 2013-2014 and 2014-2015. The two-tailed *t*-test was run for each of the student outcomes. The only student outcome that improved significantly was overall GPA. ELA grade point average and attendance did not improve, and suspensions/expulsions were so few that this study could not assess this final student outcome. Improvements in GPA from one year to the next were statistically significant.

The second research question asked whether total parent participation in parent involvement activities in 2014-15 was associated with student achievement and behavior. To answer this question, each student outcome was compared to the total number of attended events by parents (across all three levels). Using the Pearson product moment correlation test, statistical significance was found between ELA grades and total parent attendance. Overall GPA was not statistically associated with overall participation, even though GPA did increase significantly from year-to-year, which suggests two things: the growth in overall student grades was attributable to courses other than English, and other forces besides parent participation influenced this improvement. Together, the testing for the Research Questions 1 and 2 suggest that though an improvement did not occur in ELA grades from year-to-year, these grades are correlated to parent involvement for individual students.

Research Question 3 asked whether participation in different levels of parent involvement activities (Level 1 vs. Level 2 vs. Level 3) differentially affect student achievement and behavior. In order to answer this research question, a Pearson correlation was run for GPA, ELA grades, and attendance. A statistical significance was found at Level 2 for ELA grades and GPA. Data showed that GPA increases approximately 20% for every unit of increase found within parent participation Level 2. Significance was not found at Levels 1 and 3, nor was significance found with attendance.

Research Question 4 was concerned with the three language groups: ELL, English-only, and IFEL/RFEP. The English-only group improved its overall GPA, but

significantly less than the other language groups. The ELLs, on the other hand, significantly improved their overall GPA from year-to-year, compared to the other groups. No group significantly improved its English Language Arts average grade point. And there was no significant improvement of outcomes for IFEP/RFEP students compared to other students. However, perhaps most important for the answer to Research Question 4 was that no group participated in parent involvement activities more or less than any other group, making it hard to argue that parent participation was responsible for increases in the average GPA of the ELL group.

Chapter 4 presented mixed findings for the research study. Significance was found for some hypotheses, but not all. ELA grades did not change from baseline to initiative, but they were correlated significantly to the number of attended events. In particular, ELA grades were correlated to attendance at Level 2 events. Overall GPA, however, did change from baseline to initiative, and, though not associated with events attended overall, was significantly correlated to parent attendance at Level 2 events. There did not appear to be a relationship between the language groups and parent participation. Though parents of English-only students participated at a greater rate than other parents, the sample size did not allow this study to show a statistically significant difference. Moreover, English-only students did not show more year-to-year improvement on average than other students. On the other hand, ELLs did show year-to-year improvement, but their parents did not participate in parent involvement activities at differentially higher rates than other parent groups.

Where significance was not found, there was at times information that informed knowledge about parent involvement. For example, English-only parents and parents of students with Bs and Cs typically attended more events. In Chapter 5, the study concludes with an interpretation of findings and implications for the future. The chapter also explores the limitations of the study. Recommendations for social change are discussed along with the implications and conclusions of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this quantitative study was twofold, first it was to test whether there was an association between a change in parent involvement activities and student academic achievement and social behaviors in an inner city charter high school from one year to the next. The second purpose was to explore differences in levels of parent participation during the program year and what, if any, effect these differences had on student outcomes for English-only speaking students and English language learners. In the study differences of students outcomes between years was examined.

The findings in this study revealed an overall decrease in parent participation from 2103-2014 to 2014-2015, Each level from 1-3 was individually tested for significance, the results showed Levels 1 and 2 as increasing while Level 3 decreased. Academic performance was also a finding. Moreover, the study provided information that showed positive results with student outcomes including GPA, and ELA grades. However, attendance and suspensions/expulsion did not show the same results. Chapter 5 presents a discussion or interpretation of the findings detailed in Chapter 4. In addition, this chapter describes the limitations of the study, contains recommendations for further research, and outlines implications for social change.

Interpretation of Findings

Parent involvement is significantly correlated to student outcomes, including student engagement and social development (Egalite, 2016; Mautone et al., 2015; Ross, 2016; Yingqi, 2015). Results of this study informed future research; but, findings were

limited as the study could not be generalized among other schools. However, the study provided unexpected results that are discussed in order to explain the findings.

Decrease of Participation

The first unexpected result was that the overall participation decreased between the two years. However, when the data was disaggregated to show participation based on each level, Levels 1 and 2 increased and Level 3 decreased. Level 1 participation increased by 15% in the initiative year compared to the baseline year. Level 2 participation increased by 2%. Level 3 participation, however, dropped by 10%. This drop could be attributed to the school experiencing a charter renewal process in the baseline year, which resulted in parents attending governance meetings to stay informed of the progress of the renewal. There were no such meetings at Level 3 in the initiative year.

The Epstein model was used to show positive results and organize activities at Level 1, 2, and 3, but of these levels only 1 and 2 provided significant results. Beauregard, Petrakos, and Dupont (2014) also used Epstein's model to influence and monitor parent participation when comparing their results with this study it was revealed that Level 1 activities created the highest participation. Subsequently, both studies showed a decrease in results under governance events such as parent participation on governing boards. Another study exhibited similar findings while using Epstein's model to increase parent participation, with the exception of more parents participated in home activities (Smith et al., 2011). This combination of increases and decreases resulted in a net loss of participation, but did not necessarily indicate that efforts to engage parents

were ineffective. It appears that during the initiative year, the staff's efforts to increase Level 1 and 2 parent involvement activities by increasing promotion, participation opportunities, materials in multiple languages, and organizing the activities according to Epstein's Model reached more parents. Another critical point is there were more Level 1 and Level 2 activities in the initiative year then the baseline year. A closer look at the attendance data reveals that certain activities were more popular and parents may have felt more comfortable participating in them.

Academic Performance

The next finding answered the question of whether academic performance changed from year to year and, if so, whether it was associated with attendance at parent participation events. First, ELA grades did not show significant improvement from baseline to initiative years, but ELA grades in the initiative year were significantly correlated to the number of attended events—in particular, to Level 2 events, which included participation in student Individualized Career Plans, teacher informational meetings on curriculum, student career pathway meetings and senior academic status meetings. Yingqi (2015) and Ross (2016) both revealed in separate research studies that student outcomes such as English, reading, and mathematics were correlated with parent involvement and participation in activities.

Overall GPA (all subjects) did change from baseline to initiative, and though not associated with events attended overall, it was significantly correlated to attendance at Level 2 events. There was evidence that parent participation at these events connected to students' academics was associated positively with achievement measures. There did not

appear to be a relationship between the language groups and parent participation. Though parents of English-only students participated at a greater rate than other parents, the sample size did not allow this study to show a statistical significance. Moreover, English-only students did not show more year-to-year improvement on average than other students. On the other hand, ELLs did show year-to-year improvement, but their parents did not participate in parent involvement activities at differentially higher rates than other parent groups. The findings in this study were consistent with the literature as several studies reported mixed results concerning academic achievement (Hoglund at el., 2015; McNeal, Jr, 2014; Sottie, Dubus, & Sossou, 2013; Vega et al., 2015). The mixed results in the literature provided some explanation including lack of training of parents, parent perceptions, socio economics and language barriers (McNeal Jr, 2014; Ndebele, 2015; Vega et al., 2015) Also, research has shown that EL parents do not attend school events in strong numbers, but due to their participation with their children in the home, positive results were associated with student outcomes (Poza et al., 2014; Vera et al., 2012).

Overall, the push for increased participation seems to have reached more parents, but not to have made a discernible difference in overall achievement of the students. In this sense, the parent involvement project at the participating research site had yet to show demonstrable impact by the end of the research period. However, the study did provide additional evidence that parent involvement can correlate with student performance and may be therefore worthwhile for schools to pursue. In particular, those activities—such as IEP meetings and teacher conferences—that relate most closely to a student's academic work make the most difference.

Social Development

This study included the analysis of attendance and suspensions/expulsions as indicators of social development. Students within the sample did not have a significant change from year to year in attendance. In terms of suspensions and expulsions, insufficient data was available to allow for the determination of significant difference between years. Too few students out of the sample were suspended and none were expelled in the initiative year. The data for social development in this study were not sufficient to test the hypotheses related to social development. The literature provided significant research validating the correlation between parent involvement and decreased negative student behaviors (Adamski et al., 2013; Hoglund, et al., 2015; Mautone et al., 2015; McNeal Jr, 2014; Wang et al., 2014) Other studies from the literature did not agree with this study's attendance findings due to insufficient findings. Furthermore, there were not sufficient findings within the study, to agree with the findings in the literature, that state parent involvement is typically associated with preventing high school dropouts through positive attendance outcomes (Ross, 2016, Sottie et al., 2013; Uiñones & Kiyama, 2014).

Limitations

Four limitations speak to the mixed results of this study and potential future research. First, this study defines parent involvement with strict parameters. That is, parent involvement is indicated by whether parents attend prescribed events. This study did not include additional indicators of parent involvement such as multiple ways to communicate with teachers and other school personnel outside of the prescribed events.

Similarly, parent involvement for this study included limited parent engagement in the home setting. A study that includes wider boundaries for defining parent involvement could measure additional gains in student outcomes. Thus, nothing from this study answers broader questions about how types of activities or greater degrees of parent involvement might affect academic performance as the results could not be generalized among other schools.

Second, the participation sign-in data lacked quality control for tracking length of time of events and exact number of events offered, as well as number of parents per student attended. Information that showed an increase in the number of open house events, informational meetings, and career pathway trainings for parents (all Level 2 events) would have been invaluable for this study. This limitation is beyond the control of a researcher, who relied on school staff to report the participation data. However, various levels of parent events offered can be tracked by sign-in sheets and school records. The duration of events can be recorded and could serve as indicators of dosage in carefully designed and implemented further studies. Future researchers would benefit from having access to data that indicate who (school personnel) is involved in different types of events, when events are held, and the relationship-building components of events. These aspects of parent involvement in school events could produce additional meaningful results.

The study's sample size was 83 parents. Originally the study predicted that 105 participants were needed in each for strong statistical power to test the hypotheses in Research Questions 1-4. In order to track change over time, students had to be enrolled

both years in order for parent involvement within prescribed events to be included in the study. A larger sample would provide more power as well as allow for outcomes such as attendance and suspension/expulsions to potentially show significance.

The study was conducted only at one school. Consequently, the results could not be generalized to other schools. Initially, the charter district discussed data at multiple schools; but, the labor to compile the data at multiple schools by staff was not available. As a result, only one school's archive data was used for the study. Collecting and testing data from multiple schools would have expanded the sample size and provided additional comparable data. Multiple schools participating in the study may have increased the external validity of the findings and provided additional power to detect whether or not the differences between student outcomes were statistically significant.

Recommendations

Recommendations for improved future research included several critical points. The first recommendation is to diversify the sample by expanding the study within a variety of schools possibly leading to increased statistical power, as well as a increase in external validity and possibly the generalizability of the results. The difference in sample size may contribute to positive results specifically in the area of attendance, and suspension/ expulsions.

The second recommendation is to conduct a study using a quantitative survey method. This approach would enable a larger sample, possibly even a random sample, which could provide more power to test hypotheses. More reliable methods can be used to record parent participation at events.

The third recommendation should explore whether parents have a preference related to parent activities or events in order to increase their participation. The study revealed Level 2 activities as significant in producing increased student outcomes. Additionally, more Level 2 activities thereby provided more opportunities for parents to participate. It seems to be a greater power at Level 2 to detect statistically significant differences. However, it should be mentioned that 83% of parents participated in the schools activities this is critical as the school serves an at-risk population. Level 1 activities displayed results showing higher parent participation. Further researchers could provide more insight into how schools could set up a parent involvement model that has more appeal to parents of at-risk students and makes them feel more comfortable becoming involved in school events they like; therefore, increasing student outcomes. Epstein's model was prescribed within the study, but of the six types of parent involvement, there is nearly no research that describes the best activities within the model to set up for parents. This study begins the work but was not originally set up to capture the benefits of this information and how it could contribute to future research.

The final recommendation should review untraditional avenues to build awareness of parent participation activities in order to increase parent involvement. The school in this study used the same traditional ways to reach parents such as mail, phone, automated calling service, and community events. The school also used materials in multiple languages to capture ELL families. The school did not use nontraditional methods to build awareness as discussed in the literature review including the internet and social media sites such as Facebook, twitter, and the school's own website. Using

social media increases the amount of participants that can be reached significantly versus traditional methods to capture parent participation (Olmstead, 2013; WEJR, 2014). It may have also reached parents that traditionally do not participate such as younger parents that use social media as a part of their everyday life.

Implications for Social Change

I initially argued that this study would contribute to social change by contributing to the understanding of parent involvement and subsequently improve student engagement in charter high schools serving at risk students. The findings from this study suggest parent involvement does matter and could help to improve academic achievement among students. Although significance was not found in each of the tests, parent attendance at various events was correlated to the increase in English Language Arts and overall grade point averages. The results of the study provide critical information for the school including knowing organized parent involvement activities according to Epstein's model and fostering social change by increasing the number of students improving academic achievement. The school can build on this information by providing parents researched based information showing how their involvement in the school can raise student achievement and therefore promote increased numbers of at-risk students becoming engaged in school and decreasing the number of students dropping out of school.

The second recommendation for practice would be to develop a model focused on parent involvement activities that are most effective to gain parent participation. The model could be used in several school districts serving at risk students. Finally, other

charter schools serving impoverished communities could serve as incubators in order to show effective practice within these models and assist school districts and other charters start the model within their school therefore fostering social change at the macro level.

Conclusion

This study was conducted in order to fill the gaps in literature by providing research on the effects of parent involvement with at-risk charter high school students. I found evidence that certain kinds of parent involvement in schools are associated with limited higher academic achievement among students. The initiative under study seems to have worked to improve participation in Level 2 activities, which were correlated with GPA. This finding was consistent with prior research. Finally, the study fostered social change by providing information that may help to positively affect ELA grades and GPA for students in disadvantaged communities.

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