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Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions of a Parental Involvement Component in Afterschool Tutoring

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Walden University

College of Education

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Ruth Lawton

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2017

Abstract

Parents' and Teachers' Perceptions
of a Parental Involvement Component in Afterschool Tutoring

By

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MA, Central Michigan University, 2003

BS, Central Michigan University, 1992

Doctoral Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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Abstract

This study examined an after-school tutoring and mentoring program that was implemented to help low-income students in the K-12 local district who were struggling with reading and mathematics. To date, the program has not been successful in improving student achievement. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to provide administrators and teachers with insights into parents' and teachers' perceptions of the program, with an emphasis on parental involvement (PI). Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism focused this study on the tenet that social interactions between parents, students, and teachers all impact the program students' construction of knowledge. The research questions focused on the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the tutoring program, parental involvement, and suggestions to improve the program. Detailed qualitative data was collected through seven parents and three teachers structured interviews that were transcribed, open-coded, and analyzed across participants to identify recurrent themes. There were 5 themes: PI is crucial, behavior problems, improving parent-teacher communication, inadequate PI, and improving PI. Participants had mixed opinions of the effectiveness of the tutoring program, emphasized the importance of PI, and had many suggestions to improve the program. The project white paper includes 6 detailed recommendations supported by data, a timeline for implementation and materials for a teacher training component and a teacher-parent collaboration component. Positive social change may result if the study helps increase the amount of interaction between teachers and parents, increases attendance at parent meetings, and these changes help increase student test scores.

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Dedication

I dedicate this study to all the people who have encouraged and guided me in my educational endeavors. The first person I would like to thank is my dad. My entire life my dad has encouraged me to finish college and attain the education he always wanted, but because of life circumstance was unable to obtain. I am so grateful to my children Arnold, Marilyn, Tommy; grandchildren Joshua, Tommy Jr. Jordan, Matthew and my youngest James who all have inspired me to reach this goal. You all believed in me and believed I would accomplish my lifelong dream, I say thank you. I would also like to thank my committee chair Dr. Weintraub who was a tremendous help and inspiration.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The problem that prompted this study was that student achievement in reading and mathematics has not improved for low-income students in a K-12 school district. After-school programs are a major strategy external to the school day intended to enhance children's education and development (Leos-Urbel, 2015). The main function of the programs is to close the persistent academic achievement gap between racial and socioeconomic groups. During the last 20 years, the number of after-school programs has increased in the United States via state, local and federal initiatives (Gardner, Roth, & Brooks-Gunn, 2009). Research findings on the effectiveness of after school tutoring programs have been mixed. Whereas several researchers have found improved behavioral and educational outcomes from participation in after-school programs (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Lauer et al., 2006; Vandell, Reisner, & Pierce, 2007), other studies have not found improved outcomes (Dynarski, James-Burdumy, Moore, Rosenberg, Deke, & Mansfield, 2004; James-Burdumy, Dynarski, & Deke, 2007).

Many urban students' school years are marred by below average academic achievement. These below average academic achievements are common among minority students and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. At the local research site, an after-school program was implemented to help students improve their language arts and mathematics skills. I looked at parental involvement and how it affected these students' achievement in that program.

A total of 112 students are enrolled in the program with a breakdown composite of 88 male and 34 female African American students and one Hispanic male student. Each student is scheduled to attend tutoring sessions 2 hours a week. Approximately 105 students (93.7%) received free lunch, four students (3.5%) received reduced price lunch, and three students (2.8%) paid full price for lunch. According to the program director, this program has not been studied.

In general, urban students perform poorly academically (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). Urban school administrators often experience multiple challenges including (a) a lack of instructional coherence, (b) low student achievement, (c) inexperienced teaching staff, and (d) low expectations of students (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). The challenges faced by urban school teachers often manifest by a significant number of students performing poorly on assessment tests and underperforming for their grade level (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). According to research by DeArmond, Denice, Gross, Hernandez, and Jochim (2015), students' academic performance in most cities across the nation has not improved in the 3 most recent years for which data are available (2014, 2013, and 2012). The findings suggest that "United States urban students' proficiency gains were less than the average proficiency gains in their respective state for more than two thirds of U.S. cities (DeArmond et al., 2015 p. 14)." DeArmond et al.'s research showed that students in 14 cities made gains in average reading proficiency, and students in 12 cities made proficiency gains in average math proficiency, meanwhile academic proficiency in as many as eight cities fell further below their state's average performance in reading, in

math, or in both subjects.

According to Leos-Urbel's (2015) study of 29 after school programs that served over 5,000 elementary students, there is a positive correlation between structured interactions, supportive environment, and test scores. His finding indicated that when after school programs provide students with environments that provide positive relationships and interactions student's academic progress improves. Leos-Urbel's findings suggested that after-school programs should focus on quality as it relates to students' development and academic success, and recommends a holistic methodology that considers both the strengths and capacity of the programs, as well as a students' wide range of need for developing success and motivation.

Rationale

Academic Achievement

The academic achievements of inner-city low-income public school students in Detroit, Michigan are further below the state's average achievement levels than other Michigan districts (Public School Review, 2016). In one Detroit district, an after-school tutoring and mentoring program was implemented to help low-income students who were struggling with reading and mathematics in the K-12th grade classes. The students are asked to bring in their report cards each school marking period. The program director keeps a record on of each student's report card grades, progress report, and standardized test scores. According to the program director, the program had not been successful in raising participants' reading and mathematics achievement scores or class grades as of

the end of 2015. The tutoring and mentoring program director supports conducting this program research.

The chairman of the Urban Education Institute believes that four things need to happen to improve academic achievement: greater concentration on strong leadership, a greater concentration on the quality of education, increased parent and community involvement; and less concentration on standardized tests (Higgins & Zaniewsk, 2016)..The Detroit, Michigan students enrolled in the program were experiencing the same challenges as many other urban school students (National Assessment of Education Progress [NAEP], 2013).

The NAEP (2013) report noted that the children in the local schools had some of the lowest scores of all those tested nationwide. Specifically, as indicated in Table 1, their mathematics scores were 78% below basic proficiency level as compared to 22% for the rest of the nation. The NAEP assesses mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for proficient work at each grade in reading and math (NCES, 2013).

Student progress is monitored by the NAEP, as shown in Table 1, through diagnostic tests given to students biannually. Student progress is also monitored by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) diagnostic test given to students yearly. In 2015, the students were given the M-Step assessment that replaced the MEAP.

Table 1

Comparison of Test Data District-Wide, State, and Nationally

Year	K-12 After-school Program	District	State	Nation Public Schools	Low Income Nationally
2011	M- 72% BB R-54% BB	M- 84% BB R-56% BB	M- 34% BB R-34% BB	M- 23% BB R-26% BB	18% BB
2012	M -68% BB R -50% BB	M- 70% BB R-64% BB	NA	NA	NA
2013	M- 78% BB R -50% BB	M- 84.1% BB R-42% BB	M- 23% BB R-36% BB	M- 22% BB R-21% BB	22% BB
2014	M 76% BB R 48% BB	M- 85.7% BB R-59% BB	NA	NA	NA
2015	M 74% BB R -46% BB	M- 84.7% BB R-57% BB	M- 25% BB R-22% BB	M- 24% BB R-27% BB	24% BB

Note: M= Math, R= Reading, BB= below basic proficiency test score, Low-income students are students who received reduce or free lunch nationally, NA=No National Educational Progress data

The proficiency test scores displayed in Table 1 illustrate that the students enrolled in the after-school program achieved reading and math proficiency test scores that showed a consistent pattern of underperformance from years 2011 through 2015. The after-school students' math scores were below basic proficiency score (BBP) for 72% in 2011, 68% in 2012, 78% in 2013, 76% in 2014, and 74% in 2015 indicating that most of the program's students were BBP since 2011. Compared to the state, the after-school math scores lagged behind from 2011 through 2015. It was 34% lower than the state in 2011, in 2013 and 2015 55% lower. At the national level, the after-school program have even wider BBP gaps. In 2011, the after-school math scores are 49% lower than the national BBP, in 2013 56% lower and in 2015 50% lower.

The after-school program students' reading scores are better than the math scores. In 2011, 54% of the after-school program's students scored BBP in math, while in 2012

and in 2013 50% scored BBP, in 2014 48% scored BBP and in 2015 46% scored BBP. In summary, the reading scores of the program's students have been BBP since 2011. The average reading scores for the district students' in 2011 are 2% worse than the after-school program, 14% worse in 2012, 8% better in 2013, 11% worse in 2014 and 11% worse in 2015. The program students have stronger scores than the district average (except in reading in 2013). Compared to the state, the program students 2011 reading scores are 20% lower BBP, in 2013 they were 14% lower BBP, and in 2015 they were 24% lower BBP. At the national level, the after-school program reading scores were 28% BBP in 2011. In 2013 the after-school program reading scores were 29% BBP. In 2015 the after-school program reading scores were 30% BBP.

On the local level, the after-school program data showed, based on the public-school students' diagnostic test scores collected every 2 months in 2014, that students improved an average of .02% in reading and math. Progress reports, report card grades, and diagnostic tests were also considered when evaluating student achievements. The report cards showed little or no improvement in class grades according to the program director.

Parental Involvement

In 2008, school administrators at the local research site began asking parents to complete a survey and sign an attendance form at each parent meeting. According to the program director, only about 20% of the parents signed and returned the progress report as well as attended the parent meetings and workshops. At meetings of the after-school

program staff, the director reported that the parents of children who were doing well academically were the parents who attended the meeting, participated in workshops, and returned progress reports.

Marshall and Jackman's (2015) research revealed that the more parents become engaged in their children's education, the more favorable the children's achievement outcomes. The challenge is for parents to stay involved in school activities through their children's school years. In addition, Marshall and Jackman reported that when parents often spoke about or demonstrated an interest in their children's school related matters, they directly cultivated students' level of school engagement, influenced students' perceptions of self, and increased students' feeling of identification with the school. The result of these parental actions was that students were motivated to engage both behaviorally and academically.

Rapp and Duncan's (2012) research also showed that parental involvement is a key factor in children's academic achievement. The Center for Public Education found that student achievements of United States schools were improved when a relationship was established between schools and parents who focused on academics (Dervarics & O'Brian, 2011). Developing and operating an effectual parental component of a learning program is essential to improving student success in school. When the relationship between a school and parents becomes more united, student academic accomplishments increase.

Many studies reported that community partnerships and family engagement

increased student performance, and also improved a student's attitude towards school (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013). Well-implemented and well-designed community collaborative programs can produce higher test scores and grades, better social skills, better attendance, improved behavior, higher proportions of students passing classes, and increased graduation rates (Van Voorhis et al., 2013). Van Voorhis et al. developed two main conclusions based on the studies they examined. The researchers' first conclusion was that family engagement is positively connected to children's math and literacy skills from preschool through the early elementary grades. Secondly, they reported that some studies also showed improvement in children's social-emotional skills.

According to the program director, one possible cause for the lack of academic improvement for students of the after-school program may be insufficient parental involvement in the tutoring and mentoring program. The after-school program administrators found that parents of children who attended either a charter or a private school demonstrated greater involvement.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate parents' and teachers' perceptions regarding the inadequate academic achievement of the students, with a focus on the importance of parental involvement. Students who are enrolled in urban schools and their families face several challenges. These schools have produced diminishing student accomplishments on state and federal mandated assessments (Table

1) and inconsistent teaching due to a continuous replacement of teachers (Catapano & Gray, 2015).

While reform efforts have focused on the traditional K–12 school day, it is essential to observe how out-of- school education can help increase the learning and knowledge of students and the talents they develop (Catapano & Gray, 2015). Tutoring and mentoring programs have been found to help fill achievement gaps and help the students who most need additional learning (Catapano & Gray, 2015).

Definitions

Achievement Gap: Notion that minority students, tend to lag behind their Caucasian counterparts in student achievement on standardized assessments (Orlich, 2004).

Perception: It is an individual’s point of view or stance about a particular person, thing, or idea (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

Urban School: A school located within a metropolitan area. In many cases nearly half of children receive free or reduced-priced lunches (Warshauer-Freedman & Appleman, 2009).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant to the local setting because of inadequate academic achievement and inadequate parental involvement. According to Trust (2014), many African American students’ academic performance remains far behind that of Caucasian students. Parents’ lack of involvement has been observed to be the chief determinant of

students' inadequate academic achievement (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). In both reading and math, African American students are likely to be twice as deficient in basic skills as Caucasian students (Trust, 2014). These gaps in learning leave African American students disadvantaged in coping with an array of socioeconomic problems. These socioeconomic problems could include the inability to graduate from high school, finding decent employment, and attending college (Jenkins, 2016). These problems decrease students' opportunities to move out of poverty and to help their children to escape poverty.

According to the program director, the program's vision is for the youths who reside in the local area to achieve academic success to the best of their ability. The program director's philosophy is that those who succeed in breaking out of poverty do so via education. In other words, improving education is the way to end the inter-generational cycle of poverty.

The director also believes that parental involvement is a chief determination of students' success and is essential in escalating student achievement in school (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). There are many documented advantages to increased parental involvement in academics, including improved academic gains, social competence in children, and a reduction in the achievement gap between low-income students and middle-income to high-income students (Grubbs, 2013). Improving parental involvement in schools may help to improve the relationships between students, schools, and parents. Parental involvement is critical for influencing the public school systems to adopt higher

standards (Karakus & Savas, 2012). In this study, I attempted to identify how parental involvement aspects of the program may help student academic achievement. I also identified some reasons low-income parents are less involved in their child's education.

This study could help educators identify problems and solutions that the program could implement to improve parental involvement. This would ultimately help students to become more prepared for high school and college. This research is needed to discover the possible causes and solutions to the lack of parental involvement in this after-school program. In this study, I examined these causes and proposes possible solutions to improve the program.

Research Questions

Poor academic achievement is common among minority students and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Wang et al., 2014). Parental involvement in student learning has been proven to be an effective tool for narrowing achievement gaps and improving academic achievement. In this study, I examined participant perceptions of possible causes for the lack of student achievement in the after-school program with a focus on parental involvement. The following questions guided this research:

1. What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the efficacy of the after-school program on students' academic achievement?
2. What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement?

3. What are teachers' and parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In this literature review, I examined past and current information on the topic of parental involvement in after-school programs. Key search terms that I used were: *after-school programs, parent and parental involvement, elementary education, urban schools, partnership in education, African American parental involvement, African American education, low-income students, low-income parents, and student achievement*. I assembled and synthesized information from a number of peer reviewed sources. These included Walden Library, professional journal references and information from ProQuest Central, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and other professional educational materials.

It is vital to provide quality education for every child living in the United States. Nevertheless, a civil rights report made public by the Department of Education (2011) pointed out that too many urban children are enrolled in a school defined as low performing. Worsening educational attainment has impaired many urban students' high school years (Wang, et al., 2014). Such declines in educational attainment are more prevalent among minority students and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds (Wang, et al.).

According to Robles (2011), the most important dynamic in student achievement

is parental involvement. Parental involvement in academics has been shown to cushion declines in educational attainment and has been shown to be a powerful tool for narrowing achievement gaps and improving academic achievement (Wang et al., 2014). Robles' (2011) examination of the students' inadequate academic achievements at an urban after school program revealed that as parental involvement increased student academic achievement improved.

This review will begin with examining the conceptual framework, followed by the achievement of urban school children. I will specifically examine issues related to minority students, urban minority principals, and urban minority teachers. Next, I will examine the importance of parental involvement. In regard to parental involvement, I will examine parental participation and school activities, parental involvement and the school, parental involvement and teachers, as well as parental involvement with adolescents. I will then examine parental encouragement. Finally, I will examine the causes of inadequate parental involvement and possible solutions to improve parental involvement.

Conceptual Framework

Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (ZPD) theories of social interaction was the conceptual framework of this study. The ZPD is the gap between students' capability to carry out a task under guidance and the student's capability to resolve a problem alone (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky believed that learning occurs in this zone. Vygotsky also believed that the community and cultural dynamics largely influenced children's learning and development. Vygotsky (1978) argued that social interaction was

necessary for learning to take place. In this respect, conducting this study to discover the tools parents and teachers need to assist students in meeting their academic requirements connects with ZPD.

The research questions and interviews were linked to social interaction and how they relate to parental involvement. The knowledge parents receive from this study may increase their understanding of parental involvement. According to Vygotsky (1978), social learning precedes development. He hypothesized that community is an essential factor in the process of students making sense of their world.

Vygotsky's (1978) academic framework for comprehending academic achievement is relevant to this study. According to Vygotsky, important learning by the child happens through interacting socially with a competent instructor. The student searches for understanding through the instructions or actions given by the parent or teacher and then internalizes the information. The internalizing of these instructions or actions direct the child's accomplishment and leads to advanced thinking skills.

Epstein (2009), a well known researcher on the subject of parental involvement, developed six types of parental participation that align with Vygotsky's social learning. Epstein's six types of participation were: communicating, parenting, volunteering, decision-making, collaborating with the community, and learning at home. According to a study conducted by Bower and Griffin (2011), the Epstein model is mainly what urban schools have chosen to use and it is largely the most referenced framework for parental involvement. Bower and Griffin's (2011) study revealed that through Epstein's approach

of supporting parents' involvement in their children's education no matter what the family's ethnic background, education level, or income, children are likely to earn higher grades and improve on tests. Vygotsky emphasized that crucial learning by the child happens through social interaction, indicating the need for an involved community and family.

Achievement of Urban School Children

The International Association for the Research of Educational Achievement (IEA), in December 2012, released an average national outcome report based on the U.S. International Mathematics and Science Study. The U.S. Secretary of Education called the outcomes “unacceptable,” because the scores in mathematics and science for U.S. students had failed to improve since the previous administration of the test (Carnoy & Rothstein, 2013, p. 1). The Secretary stated that the outcomes “underscore the importance of accelerating achievement in high school and the urgency of closing the large and persistent achievement gaps” (Carnoy & Rothstein, 2013, p. 1). Academic outcomes among disadvantaged urban African- American and Hispanic U.S. students showed even larger achievement gaps (Carnoy & Rothstein, 2013). The report showed that U.S. students higher in the social and economic class distribution performed better than students lower in the social and economic class distribution.

According to Heckman (2011), there are gaps between socioeconomically advantaged and disadvantaged students in cognitive skills and what he describes as noncognitive skills such as building interpersonal relationships, self-regulation,

motivation, the capacity to stay focused on tasks, and self-esteem. Williams and Sanchez's (2012) study has shown that children from socioeconomically disadvantaged families' cognitive and non-cognitive skills continue to lag behind their peers throughout their school years. Socioeconomically disadvantaged students of color have higher measures of academic failure and more school behavioral problems than their peers in higher income classes (Williams & Sanchez, 2012).

The urban minority student. Too many urban minority youths' high school years are stained by declining academic performance, symptoms of clinical depression, and increased problem behaviors (Wang et al., 2014). Described as "lost talent," such failures in adjustment are more common among minority and economically disadvantaged youths (Wang et al., 2014, p. 1). Urban minority students living in low-income communities face numerous factors that hamper their success in elementary school (Vukovic, Roberts, & Wright, 2013).

Gamble, Kim, and An (2012) examined the effectiveness of an after school program at an urban minority middle school. The school is located in a large urban district in California. The participants selected for the study were identified as low performing students with a grade point average below 2.0 on the California Standards Test. The study reviewed and analyzed pre- and post-student math assessments and post-survey answers related to attitude toward schooling, student engagement, and aspirations and academic progress. The findings indicated that participants in the program improved their interest in mathematics and their algebra readiness. Also, the research reported gains

in students' perception of assignment completion, goals for college, and attitudes toward learning.

Urban minority principals. While recent research has established the connections between effective principals, effective schools, and student academic success, many urban principals discover themselves starting their careers at unsuccessful schools with little or no knowledge of how to transform the school (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). In research conducted by Antoine (2012), it was found that principals of an urban school in the Midwest faced the challenges of low graduation rates, inadequate parent-teacher relationships, minimal family-school connection, and diminished school and community involvement to support active parental involvement. According to the study, one-fifth of new teachers and one-fourth of principals view their contacts with parents as unwelcomed and stressful.

Urban school leaders need to be willing and equipped to tackle inequality in access to opportunities provided for students. The continuing challenges for urban principals and schools include insufficient funding, balancing instructional leadership with school management, staying abreast of curriculum standards, low student academic performance, and potential termination if their schools fail to show immediate results (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). These circumstances have produced work related stress for many urban leaders, resulting in a deficiency of talented educators to run urban schools (Warren & Kelsen, 2013). Urban principals have trouble retaining teachers and struggle to fill vacancies causing a constant cycle of turnover as they seek to hire teachers who are

a good fit for the school (Simon & Johnson, 2013). Simon and Johnson (2013) reviewed data from six current studies that jointly suggested that teachers who abandon urban low-income schools leave because of the inadequate working conditions. The stakeholders in achieving student academic success must develop methods to retain and keep effective school leaders.

Urban minority teachers. Urban minority schools have seen high teacher turnover because of lack of resources, inexperienced leadership and too few support personnel (Catapano & Gray, 2015). While all schools face the challenge of hiring and retaining highly skilled teachers, the need is crucial in urban low-income districts. Such districts historically have experienced a shortage of qualified teachers (Williams & Sanchez, 2012). Urban schools have different issues from their rural and suburban counterparts, such as that the majority of enrolled students are poorly prepared academically as evidenced by inadequate performance on standardized tests. Most urban school students enter school with less than expected prior learning, have parents who are reticent to become involved in school, or do not have abundant resources and demonstrate discipline issues (Catapano & Gray, 2015).

In addition to students' low academic performance, school violence is another aspect of school climate that urban teachers must deal with (Murray et al., 2014). According to Murray et al., there is a higher rate of violent occurrences in urban schools compared to rural or suburban schools. Teachers who leave low-income minority schools are not escaping the students, but the inadequate working circumstances such as violence,

and/or inadequate books and supplies that make it almost impossible to meet the academic needs of their students (Simon & Johnson, 2013). With the many challenges confronting urban school teachers, which some of the teachers are not equipped to handle, it is understandable why the rate of teacher turnover is so high in urban schools.

The Need for Improvement

The need for academic improvement is crucial for large and small urban schools (Catapano & Gray, 2015). A majority of education stakeholders agree that reform should be a priority (National Center for Education Statistic, 2013). With so many challenges facing the community and the children enrolled in urban schools, it is not easy to know where to start (Catapano & Gray, 2015). The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) reported in 2013 that achievement levels for urban minority public school children were some of the worst recorded in the national assessment's history (National Center for Education Statistic, 2013).

Importance of Parental Involvement

Marshall and Jackman (2015) emphasized the positive connection between parental engagement and student academic outcomes. Their findings emphasize the importance of parental engagement and support in influencing student's academic success and also the importance of developing comprehensive school-parent partnerships. Supporting parents' participation in their children's schooling may be one method of decreasing the achievement disparity that exists between ethnic minority and Caucasian students from an early age (Vukovic et al., 2013).

According to Vukovic et al. (2013) parental involvement, in addition to conventional school-based activities, includes (a) parental expectations about learning, (b) interactions and activities between children and parents in their communities, (c) interactions at home such as daily conversations about school, (d) supervision and monitoring, and (e) visiting local institutions for learning purposes. This further comprehensive viewpoint of parental involvement is based on the knowledge that children's achievement in school is influenced by a number of contexts (e.g. school, home, and community). Expanding the concept of parental involvement to incorporate parent activities in the home, school, and community allows for increased chances for parents to encourage their children's academic success in multiple roles (Marshall & Jackman, 2015).

[[The above was the last page I edited thoroughly, so please be sure to continue through this section and make the appropriate changes, as they are indicated above.]]

Parental participation and school activities. Mirazchiyski and Klemencic's (2014) research demonstrated a positive connection between parental participation in school activities and student positive academic accomplishments in the Progress International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS] (PIRLS, 2011). This was evident in most of the 54 education organizations analyzed, where students registered in schools with high parental involvement were inclined to have high reading achievement levels (PIRLS, 2011).

The research also demonstrated a positive connection between the parental level of involvement and parental level of education. Parents with high education levels are likely to participate more in school than parents with low education levels. Mirazchiyski and Klemencic's (2014) research findings found that promoting parental participation may be a successful approach for improving reading achievement and that intervention could be relevant for schools with students whose parents have lower levels of education because better educated parents are more aware of knowing the benefits of being engaged in their child's education compared to lesser educated parents. Encounters and experiences within the school and home structures, uniquely and jointly, form the groundwork for developmental paths throughout students' educational routes. Families represent the primary vital structure and foundation of support for children's development and learning and function as a lasting resource for children (Kim et al., 2012).

Duncan and Rapp (2012), as well as Vukovic et al. (2013) and Marshall and Jackman's (2015), found that when parents are involved in their students' education, this generates the most favorable achievement effects. The challenge, therefore, is for parents to engage in continual parental involvement activities through their children's school years. In addition, Duncan and Rapp's (2012) findings showed that when parents demonstrated an interest in their children's school work, or often spoke with their children regarding school-related topics, they directly cultivated the student's level of school engagement. Parents interest influenced the student's perceptions of self, which

was a factor in students' sense of identification with the school. The effect was that students were motivated to engage both behaviorally and academically.

Hill (2015) examined the comparative strength of the relationship between educational participation of parents and achievement by kindergarten to 12th-grade students. She found that parental participation in education was strongly connected with K-12th grade student achievement. Hill also studied the effects of only fathers, only mothers, and both parent`s involvement. She found that in two-parent families, both parents involvement was apt to be correlated as members of the same family affect each other and are paying attention to the same child. Hill concluded overall, there was a positive relationship between parental involvement achievement for both fathers and mothers. Both the National Parent Teacher Association (2014) and the Center for Public Education (2011) asserted that when parents become engaged with their children at home and at school, then the children are more likely to be successful. Both organizations believe that these children are more successful socially as well as academically.

Parental involvement and the school. Increasing parental involvement in schools has been shown to help students to improve. In research conducted by Ross (2016), parental involvement in school was found to be related to lower high school dropout rates, greater trust between parents, students and the school, improved “on time” high school graduations, and “on time” grade completion. This study suggests that parental involvement in school is an important component in high school education. Parental involvement helps promote long-term positive effects beginning in early

childhood education and continuing through high school education.

According to Aldridge (2015), engaged parents usually appreciate what their child are learning in the classroom. They are more apt to continue the learning at home. When children see their parents showing an interest in their school, they acquire pride in the school and are more inclined to trust the teachers' and school's decisions. This cooperation allows for open communication and a team spirit to develop in the school. When children see teachers, administrators and their parents working together, their desire to do well increases (Aldridge)

Karakus and Savas (2012) and Aldridge (2015) agreed that when parents are engaged, teachers build up trust in their students and parents, and their increased trust levels guide teachers to form more humanistic orientations toward their students. Parental engagement and greater teachers' trust in their students and parents results in teachers employing better productive conflict solving strategies such as compromising, integrating, and obliging (Ross, 2016). Without parental engagement, teachers' tend to use more dominating strategies (Karakus & Savas, 2012). The results of Karakus and Savas' research seemed to imply that parental involvement is important in building the trust necessary for effectively solving the conflicts in the classroom. In this way, parental involvement can be important in influencing public school teachers to adopt higher standards (Karakus & Savas, 2012).

Parental involvement and teachers. According to Mungai (2015) communication between parents and teachers aid the teachers' ability in providing

helpful information to address students' individual learning needs that can help improve the student's outcomes. The research showed that when parents are involved the teachers have more free time to focus on the job of teaching children. Also, it showed that when parents are involved they are more likely to have a positive view of teachers, which results in improved teacher morale. The findings of Mungai's (2015) align with Aldridge's (2015) conclusion when discussing the way teachers' trust in students increases with greater parental involvement.

The Village Project was initiated in 2008 as a community-based tutoring project which connected community partners, a local university, parents, students, and pre-service teachers through after-school tutoring activities (Rattigan-Rohr, He, & Murphy, 2014). All stakeholders worked together to address the needs of the struggling students enrolled in the project. In addition, preservice teachers were given an opportunity to communicate with parents, to learn from parents, and to involve parents in developing educational activities for their children. The findings from the project indicated an improved understanding of the families and students, and recognition that communities and families are important factors that affect students' reading achievement (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). The Rattigan-Rohr study findings also showed positive student growth in confidence and reading achievement.

Parental involvement with adolescents. Outcomes from a number of studies have shown the importance of parental involvement (Coutts, Sherdian, Kwon, & Semke, 2012; Robles, 2011; Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). It is well

established that parental involvement is positively linked with the academic achievement of both adolescents and younger children (Robles, 2011). Elementary students gain greater social, academic, and language skills. High and middle school students have greater future aspirations and achievement and spend additional time completing homework (Robles, 2011).

Research shows that more important to an adolescent's success in academic pursuits than anything else is parental involvement; parental involvement is more important than their family's socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, or educational background (Robles, 2011). This is a very positive research result for people who did not win the birth lottery of being born into a well-educated, high income, dominant race, and dominant ethnic family. The other studies reported parental involvement is important, but don't give any indication how powerful parental involvement is in shaping a child's future. Robles' (2011) found that parental involvement is more powerful in shaping an adolescent's school success than all of the major negative factors combined. That would seem to make this research result an important basis for future educational policy formation. It is a key justification for my decision to focus on parental involvement. The Detroit, Michigan after school program students come from families that have not so highly educated parents, they are from families who are low in the income distribution, they are from the non-dominant ethnic and racial groups, yet according to the scientific research of Robles (2011) these kids have a way to significantly improve their socioeconomic position – if they are given the gift of parental involvement in the

educational and personal development.

Parents' involvement in their adolescent's education is associated with a variety of positive child outcomes (Coutts et al., 2012). The family is the chief vital structure and foundation for adolescents' learning and development and provides an enduring resource for children to facilitate positive youth development (Kim et al., 2012).

Wang and Sheikh-Khalil's (2014) study examined the effects of different categories of parental involvement with their 10th grade children on depression and achievement in 11th grade. They also examined whether parental involvement influenced youth outcomes by improving the student's academic commitment in school. A total of 1,056 adolescents participated in the study (40% African American, 53% European American, and 7% other). Parental involvement was found to increase emotional and academic performance among adolescents. Adding to this, parental participation predicted youth mental health and academic success both indirectly and directly through emotional and behavioral interactions. "Children of parents whose involvement is characterized by warmth and age-appropriate guidance (e.g., encouragement of educational goals) have greater behavioral engagement, which may act as a positive asset to promote academic success and emotional well-being" (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014, p. 613). Leonard's (2013) study revealed that parental engagement was positive for helping students increase college readiness skills for recruitment, enrollment, financial support, and emotional guidance.

Parental encouragement. Parents can direct their children's educational course

through the expectations they set for them, which can encourage the children academically (Hashmi, 2015). Parental academic encouragement includes discussing school matters, communicating expectations for achievement, preparing for the future and communicating learning strategies (Hashmi, 2015). Parental encouragement has a positive impact on educational achievement and success (Bashir & Bashir, 2016). Encouraging children starting in preschool increases the probability of their graduating from high school (Bashir & Bashir, 2016). According to Bashir and Bashir (2016), when urban adolescents received parental encouragement it leads to higher occupational and educational aspirations. The results from their study reveal a significant positive connection between urban African American students' educational ambition and parental encouragement (Bashir & Bashir 2016). This study also connects parental encouragement with a positive academic achievement for students across grade levels and cultures.

Research has shown that support and encouragement from parents have been seen to increase the educational aspirations of students (Hashmi, 2015). Educational encouragement from the father and mother has been found to be an important predictor of academic success (Khan, Ahmad, Hamdan, & Mustaffa, 2014). Hashmi's (2015) research found that parent engagement, through the monitoring of homework and through the behavior of communicating with school staff, is linked with higher rates of attendance, homework completion, student achievement, graduation, and college enrollment.

Studies have demonstrated a direct correlation between a) children's educational development, b) parental involvement, and c) student's subsequent intrinsic academic

motivation (Usher & Kober, 2012; Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014; Duncan & Rapp, 2012). Even if parents are not able to help their children with a particular skill or subject area they can nonetheless play a fundamental role by promoting their child's feelings of control, competence, and positive attitudes concerning academics (Usher & Kober, 2012).

Minority and low SES and parental involvement. Evidence has grown over since 200 that parental involvement may be one of the most effective ways to help at-risk African American children (Jeynes, 2011). McNeal Jr. (2014) noted that parental involvement was statistically linked to improved academic performance for African-American at-risk students. Jeynes' (2011) study focused on urban African American high school students and concluded that parental participation was connected with increased academic achievement. Jeynes' stated "through parents setting expectations, creating a supportive and loving environment conducive to learning and communicating with their child they are able to feel more comfortable in their child's classroom and learn the importance of their role in their child's education" (p.39). Hashmi's 2015 research revealed the critical role that low-income African American parents play in preparing their at-risk children for college enrollment and success. These students face challenges in preparing and planning for a college education and parental assistance can help to diminish these challenges (Hashmi, 2015).

Woodland (2014) conducted a study of an urban African American after school program in Chicago. He found that effective after-school urban programs can produce

positive outcomes for a number of participants through strengthening and mobilizing the parent/child relationship (Woodland, 2014). One program he studied with mostly low-income African American students included parents as equal collaborators in the daily operation, planning, and facilitation of program activities. The researcher found that after one year the student participants demonstrated considerable improvement in their reading skills (Woodland, 2014).

Dove, Neuharth-Prichett, Wright, and Wallinga (2015) implied that African American and Hispanic families frequently place responsibility on and in trust on teachers, and believe they should only participate in their children's school upon invitation. Wang et al. (2014) noted that African American and Hispanic families may expect teachers to be in charge of involving parents. Dove et al.'s review of research discovered that parents, regardless of ethnic groups, want to be participants in their children's classroom in different ways, such as being an audience member at a school play or doing home tutoring. Murray et al.'s study revealed that parental involvement decisions are influenced by three motivations: (a) parents' perceptions of requests to become involved, (b) parents' personal life context, and (c) motivational beliefs (2014). Murray et al.'s findings proposed that parental motivations for school participation may be challenged by a number of barriers.

Murray et al.'s research, which involved a sample of mostly low-income African American parents with low levels of educational accomplishment whose children attended urban public middle schools, suggests that lower socioeconomic status African

American parents may experience greater challenges such as work schedule and transportation barriers to parental involvement than Caucasian parents or more advantaged parents (2014). This finding highlights socioeconomic and cultural background as a possible factor influencing parental involvement (Wang et al., 2014). Karakus and Savas' (2012) research reviewed studies identifying how African American parents' view of racism may sway their motivation for parent involvement. For example, some parents believe that racism is endemic to American society and are consequently discouraged from becoming involved because of perceived discrimination. Another barrier to parental involvement is that parents of limited education sometimes lack the confidence to work with teachers (Murray et al.). For some low-income African American parents, their own negative school experiences and perceptions of racism may shape their self-efficacy and cause them to distance themselves from schools (Robles, 2011).

Rattigan-Rohr et al. (2014) conducted a study of a community-based after-school tutoring program, where families and children are participants together. Involved in the project are 50 family members, as some parents have several children enrolled. The goals of this study were to determine why parents enrolled their academically struggling children in the program, and how families can be incorporated into the program to assist teachers. Findings suggested that families engaged in the program had a positive account of the impact of the program on their children's growth in confidence and academic learning.

The study also found that there are common misunderstandings underlying

teachers' negative perceptions regarding the capacity and efficacy of low-income parents (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). These misunderstandings include the belief that low-income parents do not value education and were to blame for their students' inadequate academic achievement, and they are naive about the social and intellectual basic needs of their children.

Researchers have documented that work often functions as an obstacle for low-income parents; it prevents them from having free time to be present at school meetings, to participate in other parent involvement activities or to volunteer (Rattigan-Rohr et al., 2014). Even though work affects the capacity of parents to partake in school activities regardless of income status, work barriers affect low-income parents differentially. Low-income parents usually have multiple jobs, inflexible work schedules, and/or jobs lacking paid leave benefits (Murray et al., 2014).

Jack Jennings, President and CEO of the Center on Education Policy (2012) stated that a great deal of student achievement variance is explained by family and home factors. He said these factors include family income, parents' level of education and most importantly parental involvement in the child's learning. Jennings (2012) also stated that the Center on Education Policy should consider ways to promote greater parental involvement in their child's schooling. He also thought we should offer school services to make up for the economic and social inequities hampering some students' success. Jennings (2012) believes that parental influences are essential to securing a good education. Rapp and Duncan (2012) noted that the most dependable predictors of

student's educational and social successes are what the parent requires from the child's academic attainment at school.

Causes of Inadequate Parental Involvement

D'Angelo, Rich, and Kohm (2012) explained that the factors most low-income minority parents gave as reasons preventing them from being involved in their children's education are the demands of work and household responsibilities. The lack of transportation is another barrier shown to hinder parent involvement (Karakus & Savas, 2012). Actively involving low-income parents in their children's education, specifically minority parents in inner-cities, is one of the educators' utmost challenges (Williams & Sanchez, 2012). They conducted a qualitative study of the parental involvement of low-income inner city African American high school students. Interviewed in the study are 10 staff and 15 parents. The study found that the ways in which school staff communicated and interacted with parents played a role in parents' participation (Williams & Sanchez, 2012).

According to D'Angelo et al. (2012), lack of money, energy and time limits hinder underprivileged African American parents' levels of participation in their children's education. Parents in poor working families often do not have the free time to commit to their children's educational needs (Williams & Sanchez, 2012). Sometimes minority parents are reluctant to become engaged because of their own negative interactions and experiences with school during childhood (Williams & Sanchez, 2012). Some minority parents feel that they are not welcomed to participate their children's

schools and therefore do not participate in school events (Bryan & Henry, 2012; Epstein & Van Voorhis, 2011).

Another reason for inadequate parental involvement is that parental participation is difficult to promote and maintain (Larocque et al., 2011). Larocque et al. (2011) wrote that parental involvement is the missing link in school achievement. The finding from their study revealed that as schools become more diverse educators are facing the challenge of meeting the needs of all students (Larocque et al., 2011). The researchers also believe increasing student learning and closing academic achievement gaps requires the collaboration of community and most importantly parents. Parents play an important function in creating an academic program that meets their children's needs, yet teachers and administrators admit they have little knowledge or training about how to successfully work with diverse parents (Larocque et al., 2011). Parents, educators, and community groups each have a role to play in the educational successes of students (Cavanagh, 2012). It is essential that each stakeholder has a clear understanding of what each other's roles involve (Larocque et al., 2011).

Dor (2012) found that teachers and counselors realized the significance of parents' involvement in school, while each group articulated different advantages and support resulting from their interactions with parents. Teachers stated that they had personal difficulties interacting with some parents. For example some teachers are uncomfortable in trying to get parents to collaborate. Also some teachers' perception is that parents' mistrust them and therefore they feel disrespected. In addition teachers'

think some parents' over protect their children or question their authority (Dor, 2012). It is crucial that teacher education curricula include the subject of parents' involvement and be aware of training teachers for its challenges (Dor, 2012). These challenges include methods of communicating with diverse parents and encouraging parental involvement. This training should remain part of an ongoing in-service program for counselors and teachers (Dor, 2012).

Possible Solutions to Improve Parental Involvement

Some of the possible methods to improve parental involvement communication are a) lobbying parents to help the teachers in the classrooms, b) asking parents to volunteer, c) inviting parents by phone or in person to come to meetings, and d) getting parents cooperation by encouraging their input in school functioning (Coutts et al., 2012). Communication is an important component of promoting and facilitating parental involvement (Coutts et al., 2012). One way to increase communication is to have teachers make contact with parents regularly. Teachers should make contact with each student's parent at the beginning of the school year to introduce themselves and emphasize how vital it is for them to have open lines of communication throughout the school year (Coutts et al., 2012). Teachers can, at that time, encourage parents to attend meetings, and to participate in school activities. According to Coutts et al. when teachers of the Conjoint Behavior Consultation (CBC), a program for children with behavior problems, increased their requests for parent engagement, CBC saw an increase in parents' attendance at meetings.

Improved parental involvement occurred at an inner-city school in California composed of mainly Latino, African American, and Asian students when the under-resourced school used parents as “help labor” (Christianakis, 2011, p.11). Most of the teachers at this inner-city school did not have an aide, nor did they have state-authorized paraprofessionals to help differentiate instruction and support special education students (Christianakis, 2011). The parents helped by taking part in classroom projects, completing appointed tasks with children, by staying in touch with the teacher, by cleaning, and by organizing materials. Parents are more apt to engage in school activities when they feel empowered by their interaction with the school staff (Murray et al., 2014).

Kocyigit (2015) stated that teachers are responsible for ensuring family involvement. Teachers’ involvement of parents in school activities should be organized and planned to ensure the support of families, teachers, and students. Kocyigit stressed that it is essential for schools and the community as a whole to work with students, teachers, and families in policy-making decisions. The positive behaviors and attitudes shown by administrators and teachers play a critical role in ensuring suitable, active, and effective family involvement. Having parents view involvement as a responsibility and getting their cooperation is also important. The researcher cited three functions to involve families: a) educational family involvement activities, b) communication activities employed to maintain and establish communication between teachers and families, and c) involvement of parents in decision-making processes.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC), in a 2012 report, stated the primary

motivation for parents to become engaged seems to be the idea that their actions will enhance their children's well-being and learning. For that reason, school staff must demonstrate to parents how their children's education and health can be improved by the parents' participation in school health activities (CDC, 2012). Also, parents will be inclined to be involved if they see that both students and school staff expect and want their involvement.

The National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) is an organization established by Johns Hopkins University to provide research based strategies to organize and sustain programs of community and family involvement that can increase student achievement in school. NNPS has integrated six types of parental involvement into an agenda for working with states, districts, schools, and other organizations. The involvement agenda includes: a) assisting with parenting skills, b) offering effective communication from school to home, c) organizing volunteers to support student and school, d) involving parents with homework and academic related activities, e) include parents in school decision making and, f) collaborating with community (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). This agenda helps systematize and maintain parental engagement research-based programs needed to engage parents in increasing student education and health outcomes (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012). Employing activities that tackle all six types of parental engagement will improve the likelihood that more parents become involved in the education and health of their children at all grade levels. The CDC 2012 report also examined high-achieving African

American urban high school graduates' appraisal of what K–12th-grade students from urban high risk areas need to be successful academically despite statistically extreme financial, social, and educational barriers. The CDC findings emphasize six themes: parental involvement by any means, school counselors as transformation agents, shared responsibility for educational outcomes, natural support systems, being a part of the solution, and community teamwork to raise a scholar.

Implications

This study focused on parent involvement as it relates to the causes of inadequate academic accomplishment among K-12 students enrolled in an after school program. The program research was needed to understand why parents in the local context do not take a more active role in their children's academics. The results of this study indicated some ways that parental involvement is currently happening, instances in which it is not, possible reasons why it is not happening, and suggestions teachers and parents have for increasing parental involvement. Rapp and Duncan (2012) suggested that parental involvement is a key factor in children's academic achievement. This study may help parents in understanding why parental involvement is important and help administrators and teachers understand why some urban low-income parents are less involved in their children's education. Also, this research may help administrators and teachers to develop strategies to get more low-income public school student's parents involved in their children's education.

By examining the causes of inadequate academic performance, school

administrators may find techniques to improve academic performance in after-school programs in urban low-income communities. From the program research, a position paper will be created. That summary will offer suggestions for parents and teachers to use to work more effectively. Closing the achievement gap and raising student knowledge requires the collaboration of parents and educators. To address this issue, administrators and teachers require a more detailed understanding of why some parents are less involved in their children's education.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative case study research was to investigate a local after-school program. I studied the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the component of the parental involvement in an after-school program created to improve students' academic achievement. I investigated the unique problems urban low-income schools face, the ways parental involvement does or does not occur, some of the sources of inadequate parental involvement, and some possible strategies to increase the level and effectiveness of parental involvement. Based on the findings from investigating those factors, the project will propose possible methods and strategies from the research literature to improve the program.

Section 2: The Methodology

Qualitative Research Design and Approach

The focus of this study was to gain an understanding of parents and teachers perspectives concerning parental involvement as it relates to inadequate student achievement. The research design I used in this study was qualitative. The reason I chose the qualitative method above the quantitative method is that numerical data results do not have the important narrative information that is summarized in the collection of qualitative data (Mertens, 2014).

I selected to use a case study design because I wanted to study the teachers' and parents' points of view. This design allowed me to create a comprehensive explanation, based on the perceptions of the staff and parents, of why the students in this program have inadequate academic achievement. It also helped to determine if insufficient parental involvement is a part of the cause of inadequate student achievement. Viewing the program through the perceptions of the staff and students will allow beneficial informed recommendations to be made.

A qualitative case study is an all inclusive examination of a bounded system that may include an experience, activity, or process founded on data collection (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2013; Merriam, 2009). The bounded system for my case study was the after school tutoring program. Another aspect of qualitative research is the case study situation analysis. This study was a situation case study because in situation analysis, a specific event is studied from the viewpoint of the participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

I did not select a quantitative design as the focus of the study was to gain an understanding of parents' and teachers' perspectives concerning parental involvement as it relates to inadequate student achievement. and not to focus on statistical findings.

Quantitative research is used to measure a problem by means of generating statistical data that can be converted into useable information (Creswell, 2012). For example, a survey of teacher and parent behaviors and opinions regarding parental involvement in the after school program might have yielded some basic data. One problem with the survey approach in this situation is that the number of participants would likely be too low for inferential quantitative analyses. In contrast, qualitative research is suitable when describing, exploring, explaining or interpreting a central happening (Creswell, 2012). A quantitative method lacks the in-depth description found in a qualitative method. A method was required in which participants' narrative responses addressed research questions concerning their view of the program's parental involvement component.

One qualitative design is ethnography. I did not choose ethnography because it would not yield the specific information needed to improve or change the program. Ethnography's purpose is to investigate shared cultural occurrences of a group of people over time (Creswell, 2012). A grounded theory qualitative design purpose is to collect data to develop theories and is focused on the perception of each individual in the study regarding the research subject (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010).

Program research results have the key distinction of recommending changes to a program based on the data, which is different from other types of qualitative research

(Lodico et al., 2010). I investigated a program to establish its benefits and to make recommendations for program improvements, as well as to investigate understanding and meaning. According to Spaulding (2014) a program should be examined to determine its benefits and to make suggestions for program improvements, as well as to examine understanding and meaning. When program research is performed, the expectation is that decisions will be made to improve the program at the end of the research. Other qualitative designs enhance knowledge and provide information about a subject study, but the researcher does not perform the study with the goal of improving a program.

Over the course of the research, I collected data from teachers' and parents' interviews, with permission from the program director. The objective of this qualitative design was to investigate parents' and teachers' perceptions concerning the poor academic performance of the students and the impact issue of parental involvement as part of the after school program in the students' average achievement.

The case study process was used to answer the research questions:

1. What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students' academic achievement?
2. What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement?
3. What are teachers' and parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?

The goal was to provide a thorough research report of the after-school program's

parental involvement component to support students' academic requirements.

Participants

I interviewed two different groups of participants; seven of the total 77 parents and three of the six teachers. The sampling technique was purposeful and convenient. In purposeful sampling, the researcher deliberately selects sites and individuals that can best help to understand the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). The sample consisted of the parents of the students enrolled in the program and staff.

The after school program provides tutoring to students who are enrolled in the surrounding schools, which include two public high schools, two public middle schools, three public elementary schools, one charter K-12th school, one charter elementary school and one private school. I invited all parents of students enrolled in the after school program, as well as the teachers and administrators of that program to participate in an interview. I interviewed everyone who volunteered to participate. I attempted to select parents who had children enrolled in the program, some whose children's test scores are below their grade level and some parents who have children who are in the program whose test scores are above grade level.

By selecting parents of students who test either above or below grade level, I gathered varying parent perceptions to compare. I interviewed four parents of children enrolled in charter schools and three parents of students enrolled in public schools so that both were represented. The after-school program staff consists of four teachers (two public school teachers, one charter school teacher and one teacher who is a graduate

school student), one program director (also a public school teacher), and one executive director (retired educator). Three teachers were women and one was a man. The director and executive director were women. All staff members are African American.

The sample size was 10 and was composed of seven parents and three staff members. I ensured that I had a minimum of six parent participants and two staff. A qualitative study characteristically examines a small number of cases (Creswell, 2012). In order to give an in-depth analysis, I selected a small number of participants, because the value to a researcher in giving an in-depth analysis diminishes for each additional person (Creswell, 2012). The program is run by a nonprofit organization. I had permission from the Founder/CEO of the organization to interview the teachers and parents.

Participant Protection and Consent

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), near the start of the interview, the interviewer must inform the interviewee that everything said in the interview is confidential. I emailed the participants a copy of the informed consent form. At the beginning of the interview, I collected the signed form before starting the interview. I explained to participants that the interview was voluntary and they could excuse themselves from the research at any time. I reviewed with the participants the informed consent procedure described in the interview protocols (Appendix B for parents and C for teachers), confidentiality information, and explained how the data would be used. To protect confidentiality in the research I used pseudonyms instead of identifying data and all collected information will be secured in a locked cabinet or encrypted computer file

accessible only by me on a personal password protected computer.

Data Collection

I collected the data for this study through unstructured one-on-one interviews and parent meeting attendance records. The program director was employed by a nonprofit organization. I obtained written permission from the program founder/CEO to interview parents and staff. I created questions based on my administrative and academic experiences working with urban low-income communities. I developed appropriate questions to generate specific information needed to address the research questions.

Prior to the interviews, I sent the questions to the selected participants. In each participant's recorded interview, I used structured worded questions and allowed the participant to talk beyond the structured questions. During the structured interviews, I also noted my thoughts concerning participants' nonverbal responses. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. To take notes during the interviews and maintain structure I developed a data recording protocol. It is essential to have some method for structuring the interview and taking notes (Creswell, 2012). At the end of the interviews, I conveyed to the participants the possibility that I may need to ask additional questions later. I emailed each participant a copy of the transcription to examine for the correctness of information. After the interview process was over I consulted with a colleague to conduct a final review of the questions and answers.

Instrumentation

The instrument used in this study was one-on-one interviews. Interviews are

necessary for a researcher when exploring participant feelings or how participants interpret their world around them (Merriam, 2009). The interviews for this research were composed of open-ended questions (Appendix B for the parents and Appendix C for the teachers). According to Creswell (2012), open-ended responses allow the researcher to explore the reasons behind the response. Therefore, open-ended questions allowed me to probe for additional information. Probes are subquestions, under each question, that the researcher asks to elicit more information (Creswell, 2012). Probing allowed me to verify that the participants understood the questions. Parent meeting attendance forms were used to determine the level of each parent involvement and gather feedback from the parents during the interviews.

Each participating parent answered Interview Questions 1 through 3 (see Appendix B) to gather data relevant to Research Question 1. The answers to these questions revealed the parents' perceptions of the effectiveness of the program as it pertains to their children's academic achievement. Questions 4 through 11 requested data pertaining to Research Question 2 from each participating parent; their answers describe how they perceive parental involvement affects student academic achievement. Data collected to ascertain Research Question 3 comprised of parents' responses to Interview Questions 12 and 13. The responses revealed the parents' suggestions of how to improve the program and their own involvement. The goal was to provide a thorough research report of the after-school program's parental involvement component to support students' academic requirements.

Each teacher participating in an interview answered Interview Questions 1 through 3 (see Appendix C) to address Research Question 1. The answers to these questions revealed the teachers' perceptions of the effects of the program on academic achievement. Addressing Research Question 2, each teacher answered Interview Questions 4 through 9 to explain their perception of how parental involvement affects the student's academic achievement. Each teacher answered Interview Question 10 to determine Research Question 3. The responses to this interview question revealed what the teachers perceived as ways to improve parental involvement within the program.

Role of the Researcher

An organization, of which I was a member of the board of directors and one of the founding members, began conducting free parenting seminars and classes throughout an urban low income community. I retired from the board member position in 2015, but I have continued to work occasionally with the program director in an advisory capacity. The organization, working with the school district and community members, expanded to offer an after-school program for which I have volunteered on various occasions. While working as a volunteer, I developed a professional relationship with the administrator and some of the teachers. I have also helped the administrator to develop curricula for various workshops conducted by the after-school program, such as parenting workshops and GED.

The workshops have given me the opportunity to meet some of the parents. As a result of these meetings, personal bias could have developed. I asked parents and teachers

to participate in interviews. To ensure that my relationship with them did not affect the quality of the data collection procedure and to mitigate the possibility of bias, a peer debriefer reviewed all data interpretations at the conclusion of the research. The independent person checked all interview data for consistency and accuracy.

Additionally, to help reduce bias I asked a colleague to peer review the interview questions. According to Merriam (2009), a peer review process takes place when a peer knowledgeable about the topic and methodology reviews a study.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data I utilized Creswell's (2012) five steps of data analysis. The steps include (a) organizing, preparing, and interpreting the data (b) reading thoroughly all the data, (c) coding organized information into sections (d) coding to generate a description, (e) communicating the findings in a written narrative.

In Step 1, after I conduct the last interview, I organized all the documents from the interviews and the transcriptions of the interviews. In Step 2, I asked each of the participants to check the accuracy of the transcription of their interview. I read the interview answers and notes to gain an understanding of the information. I developed some tentative codes, which according to Creswell (2012), is called open coding. Open coding is initializing categories of data regarding the phenomenon being studied by organizing information. In Step 3, I reviewed the information thoroughly to see which themes were repeated most often, and sort and categorize them. In Step 4, I developed codes to identify those themes. A theme is an idea or perception that materializes from

examining the interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In Step 5, I organized the themes so that all perspectives could be reviewed, and developed meaningful conclusions from the data, including a list of discoveries that emerged while data was categorized, sorted and coded. I used the themes to provide the data to produce the position paper report.

The position paper report was the project designed after the completion of the data collection and analysis. The participant's responses were not particularly different from the responses of the majority of the participants.

An important aspect of research is providing a procedure to assure accuracy and credibility. I tested for credibility, biases, and accuracy, by conducting a member check. A member check is a process whereby participants are asked to examine the result of the interviews performed by the researcher (Lodico et al., 2010). I made certain the data I gathered was valid by performing a validity check. The validity check I used was triangulation. Triangulation is the technique used to ensure that the information is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed (Creswell, 2012). I conducted a data search for possible discrepancies, no discrepancies were found.

Limitations

There were limitations encountered in conducting this study. Out of 77 parents, only seven participated in this project study; three out of six teachers participated. The views of participating parents may not reflect those of the collective group of parents. Additionally, qualitative study data is not typically generalized to other settings (Creswell, 2012). The information collected from the interviews used in this study is

specific to one after school program in a low-income urban city school district.

Assumptions and Delimitations

The assumptions enumerated below underlie the results of this study. It was assumed that parents and teachers would answer the interview questions truthfully if they choose to participate in the study. Furthermore, it was assumed that themes would emerge through conducting interviews to identify essential perspectives to help this after school program improve. The delimitation of this project study is that a small sample population rather than a large sample population will be used in this study. The project study only focuses on students at one after school program in Detroit.

Data Analysis Results

To conduct this project study, I invited all the parents and teachers who were participants in the after school program to take part in an interview. I sent consent forms to the respondents consisting of 7 parents and 3 teachers. I received ten signed consent forms. All 7 parents and 3 teachers are African Americans. The participants included 3 single female parents, 2 married female parents, one married grandmother, and one unmarried male parent. The data was collected and analyzed with the purpose of finding themes in the data between the teacher and parent interviews. The themes that emerged were (a) parental involvement is crucial to academic success, (b) behavior is a problem for teachers, (c) need for improved teacher to parent communication, (d) inadequate parental involvement, and (e) suggestions to increase parental involvement.

I performed a validity check on my data results by using triangulation. Triangulation is the technique used to ensure that information is rich, robust, comprehensive and well-developed (Creswell, 2012). I tested for credibility, biases, and accuracy by conducting a member check. A member check is a process whereby participants are asked to examine the results of the interviews performed by the researcher (Lodico et al., 2010). A data search was conducted for possible discrepancies. I performed a transcript accuracy check by asking each participant to examine their respective transcription for errors or discrepancies; no discrepancies were reported. Lastly, a peer debriefing was performed to review all data interpretations at the conclusion of the research. The independent person checked all interview data for consistency and accuracy.

Introduction to the Participants

Participant 1 is an unmarried single father who worked full time and has a son who was in middle school. The parent stated that he enrolled his son in the program, “To keep him busy.” He thinks the program has helped his son. He has attended a few meetings but he stated, “The meeting moved too fast. It could have been a little longer. I could have spent a little more time talking to the teacher.” He believed parental involvement is important in children achieving academic success.

Participant 2 is a married mother who works full time and has a son who is in the Second Grade. She said she enrolled her son, “So that he could have extra curriculum activities.” She is not sure the program is helping her son. She has not attended any of the

meetings and stated she has no time in her schedule to attend the meetings. She does think parental involvement is important.

Participant 3 is a married mother who works full-time and has a daughter in high school. The parent stated that she enrolled her daughter in the program, "To get enrichment service." She thinks the program has helped her daughter a little. She has not attended any of the parent meetings. She stated, "I am only free on Saturday mornings." She thinks parental involvement is significant in a child's academic success.

Participant 4 is an unmarried single mother who works full time and has a daughter in high school. She stated that the reason she enrolled her daughter was that, "She was struggling with math. With the new math, I was not able to help her." She said the program has helped her daughter to improve in math. She believes parental involvement is crucial in children's education. She helps with homework when she can, but does not attend parent meetings.

Participant 5 is an unmarried single mother who works full-time and has a daughter in high school and son in middle school. She said she enrolled her children in the program, "So they could get further assistance with math and reading skills." She stated, "The program helped them in reading, but the comprehension I would say no." She stated that parental involvement is, "Important because the parent has to reinforce what the child has learned in school. You can't leave it all up to the school system." However, she has not been involved in the program.

Participant 6 is a married mother who does not work and has a son in middle

school. The parent stated she enrolled her son in the program, “Because it was dealing with building up his self esteem”. She thinks the program has helped her son. She stated, “He appears as though his self esteem has been built around others. His social activities with others have improved.” She has not attended any of the parent meetings, but believes parental involvement is important.

Participant 7 is a married grandmother who does not work and has custody of her two grandsons, one in high school and one in elementary school. The grandparent stated she enrolled her grandsons in the program to, “Let them keep stuff fresh in their minds, especially in the summer. And make it more fun in learning.” She thinks the program has helped one of her grandsons in math. When asked how effective she thought the program has been in improving your child’s math scores she stated, “It seemed to help some.” She has not attended the parent meetings. She believes in parental involvement “because if you are not involved you don’t know what they need help in.”

Teacher 1 is a female teacher who stated, “Student behavior was an issue. Students, when one student acted out, the other students would also act out. We usually at every session have to remove the same student.” When asked about parent involvement she stated, “I have only seen a couple of parents. The parents’ usual response is they missed the meeting because of their work schedule.”

Teacher 2 is a female teacher who stated, “The program helped with students learning new techniques in reading.” When asked about parent involvement she stated, “I look at parents as being the most effective person in that child’s life. A lot of parents in

our program have not completed high school themselves and can't help their children with homework. The parents need help so that they can help their children."

Teacher 3 is a female teacher who stated, "Parental involvement is an essential in the progress of our students. Also conferences have really gotten better, as far as, parents attending. I have found that communication is key. Make sure that you are communicating with parents weekly. It may be a weekly newsletter, text messages, emails, robocalls, etc."

Findings by Theme

Theme 1. The first theme was that parental involvement is crucial to academic success. The participants answered the question, "Do you think parental involvement is important in student academic achievement?" There was a unanimous consensus among parents and teachers that parental involvement was crucial to academic success. Participant 1 stated, "You should be involved in helping your kid to grow. It is for the betterment of your child." Participant 2 believed that parental involvement reinforces what a child learns in school. Participant 3 stated simply, "It helps to get parents involved." Participant 4 stated that "It is important because the children will be getting encouraged from home as well as school." The teachers were in agreement with the parents. Teacher 1 believed that when parents are involved they can relate better to their children. Teacher 2 stated that, "Parents are the most effective persons in that child's life." Teacher 3 stated that, "Parental involvement is essential in the progress of our students."

Theme 2. The second theme was that behavior is a problem for teachers. All three of the teachers expressed that there are student behavior problems. Teacher 1 stated that behavior was an issue. Teacher 2 believed that because some students have difficult relationships with other kids during school hours, that conflict is brought into the program. Teacher 3 stated, “The group session can be disorderly at times.”

Theme 3. The third theme was a need for improved teacher to parent communication. A number of parents complained that there was not appropriate communication between the teachers and themselves. Participant 1 stated he would like more one-on-one meeting with the teachers. Participant 3 would like the staff to schedule meetings on the weekends. Participant 4 stated that, “When I got to the meeting the teachers seemed like they were not prepared.” Participant 6 wanted to see invitations to the meetings distributed earlier. This would give parents more time to make arrangements to attend the meetings. Participant 7 stated, “I never received a progress report I can remember.”

Theme 4. The fourth theme was inadequate parental involvement. When parents were asked if they were involved with the program in any way, most said no. Only Participant 6 answered yes. Participant 1 expressed that he had attended some meeting. Participant 4 stated that one meeting she attended the teachers seemed liked they were not prepared.

Theme 5. The fifth theme was suggestions to increase parental involvement. The parent and teachers both had suggestions. Participant 3 want the teachers to schedule

meetings on the weekends. Participant 7 would like the program to have a social worker on site to help a parent with financial assistance. Teacher 1 suggested offering parents rewards for volunteering with the program, along with putting together an event to recognize or acknowledge parental involvement and address student behavior. Teacher 2 suggests offering support services to the parents. Teacher 3 suggested sending out weekly newsletters, text messages, emails, and robocalls. She also suggested having a “Fun Friday” at least once a month, inviting parents to stay for an informal visit such as having a snack with their child onsite.

Findings by Research Questions

RQ1 results. The first research question was: What are teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students’ academic achievement? The parents’ and teachers’ perceptions of the program efficacy appear to be mixed. Some of the parents viewed the program was helpful. One parent saw the program as “reinforcing what [the children] had learned in school.” Another parent expressed that the program helped her son in math, but not in reading. Contrary to the parents who saw positive benefits in student academic achievement after enrolling their children into the after school program, one participating parent stated the program simply “kept his son busy.” Another shared that she was unsure whether the program was helping her son - she enrolled her child into the program so that he could have extra curriculum activities.

Similar to the parents of the study, teachers offered divergent perceptions of the program’s efficacy in increasing student academic achievement. One of the teachers

stated, “The program provides the students with a little one on one time which has made a world of difference. Sometimes students are just too embarrassed to ask questions in class, whereas, in a smaller setting, the students are a lot more verbal and interactive.” However, another teacher offers insight on what happens if parents do not see benefits from the program reflected in their students’ academic achievement by stating, “Some of the parents would take their children out of the program to get more academic help if the progress reports were poor.”

RQ2 results. The second research question was: What are teachers’ and parents’ perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students’ academic achievement? All of the parents and teachers interviewed had the perception of parental involvement that it was important. In one parent’s opinion she “looks at parents as being the most effective person in that child’s life.” The single father amongst the participants believed that parents should be involved in helping their child to grow.

The program is for the betterment of the child academically. All of the teachers interviewed expressed the importance of parental engagement in children’s academic success. A teacher stated, “Parental involvement is essential in the progress of our students. Teachers cannot do this alone.” Another teacher said, “We need the parents to support us in every way possible. Not only for discipline, but to maybe inform us about their child's study habits, home environment, medication etc. All of this plays a vital role in how we educate their children.” One teacher stated, “Parent input can help build their children confidences by helping them build their self-esteem.”

RQ3 results. The third research question was: What are teachers' and parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program? Some of the suggestions offered by parents to improve parental involvement were:

1. Having a social worker on site to help parents with financial assistance.
2. Schedule meetings on the weekends or evening.
3. Making the program more interesting.
4. Send flyers out more consistently to remind the parents of the meeting.
5. Schedule more meetings, including more one-on-one meetings between parents and teachers.

Some of the suggestions offered by teachers to improve parental involvement were:

1. More parent support outside of school activities, including the after school program.
2. Communicating with parents weekly through emails, newsletters, text messages, and robocalls.
3. Whenever possible, when parents are picking up their children invite parents to come in for an informal visit and possibly a snack with their child.
4. Host a "Fun Friday" activity at least once a month based on academics.
5. Put together an event to recognize or acknowledge parental involvement.
6. Address student behavior.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

There is ample research that demonstrates parental involvement is the most important component of motivating student academic success (Rapp & Duncan, 2012, Holloway & Park, 2013, Vukovic, Roberts, & Wright, 2013, Mirazchiyski & Klemencic's, 2014). Research suggests students whose parents are actively involved in their children's education have higher academic achievement than those whose parents are not actively involved in their children's education. Despite the significance of parental involvement evidenced in the literature, the problem of low parental involvement continues to plague the after-school program hosted at the research site. Data collected from this study showed that parents of the after-school program agreed that their participation is important; however, most have not been involved in the program.

Data from the study revealed both parents and teachers believe that parental involvement was positively linked to students' academic achievement. In lieu of these results I developed a project that would provide suggestions to help increase the involvement of parents in the after-school program. This section includes a description of that project and its goals, the rationale, a review of the literature, a project description, an evaluation plan, and the implications for social change.

Description and Goals

The purpose of this study was to observe parents' and teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of the after-school program and parental involvement as it relates to academic

achievement. By examining these perceptions of parents and teachers, the directors of the program will have a better grasp of strategies to promote the involvement of parents in their child's education. An after-school program in the district was implemented to improve students reading and math scores. However, most of the students in the program did not show improvement in these areas. After analyzing the data and reviewing the literature review information, I chose a position paper as the project for the after-school program.

The goals of the position paper are to make recommendations that will aid in identifying barriers to parental involvement, provide guidance on adapting the program staff communications, and modify parent meetings and parent/teacher interactions to overcome past communication concerns. Collaboration between parents and teachers on efforts to improve parental involvement and communication may positively impact students' academic achievement. According to Morin (2016) the most successful approach to improving student academics is for parents and teachers to work together. The sharing of information between teacher and parent helps them both to gain a greater understanding of the child. By examining the perceptions of parents and teachers, the program directors will have a better understanding of strategies to promote the involvement of parents in their child's education. My plan for this position paper is to provide suggestions that ignite improved collaboration between parents and program staff. According to Aldridge (2015), once children see their parents, teachers, and administrators working together, their academic aspirations increase.

Participants of this study will receive a copy of the position paper – with the objective being to communicate the analysis of data results for enhancing the program. My goal for the report is to share information regarding the impact each program aspect has on student academic achievement. It is a necessity that teachers, parents, and administrators regard the academic growth of students as a joint effort (Kraft & Dougherty, 2013).

Understanding the barriers to parental involvement in the program is a crucial determinant in pursuing this study. This project was formed to conduct an analysis of the after-school program to promote initiative in addressing the program's requirements for a significant and methodical technique of encouraging an on-going devotion to improving parental involvement. The formative assessment was targeted to engage parents and teachers in meaningful discussions regarding student academics and parental involvement; culminating in suggestions from the participants on program enhancements.

I tested for credibility, biases, and accuracy of the data by conducting a member check of the accuracy of the transcriptions. I submitted a copy of the transcripts to respective participants and inquired about discrepancies; no participant noticed any. I submitted to the participants themes found within the data and asked them if they agreed with the themes presented; concurrence was found among participants. To check for data validity, I triangulated data from the parent and teacher interviews, notes taken during the interviews, and participants' confirmation of the transcription and themes accuracy. I conducted a data search for possible discrepancies and found none.

The following sections are included in the position paper: (a) introduction, (b) background of the existing problem, (c) evidence from an analysis of the study data evaluation results and the literature, (d) recommendations (e) conclusion, and (f) references. The intended audiences are the parents, teachers, and the administrator. This report will provide the parents and staff with findings regarding the current state of the after-school program and suggestions for improvement.

Rationale

I utilized the position paper report to present the findings of this study because it is an efficient and appropriate method for presenting data and making recommendations to educational staff and parents. The research questions were chosen to focus on the efficacy of the program and the importance of parental involvement. I developed interview questions which were focused on the important aspects of the program and are aligned to the research questions that were derived after reviewing the literature. I developed a case study as a compilation of the data provided by responses to the interview questions. Following the case study data analysis, which provides the foundation for this project study, I developed the position paper.

I designed the position paper to document participants' beliefs concerning academic achievement as it relates to parental involvement. The position paper should inform program staff of what they need to know and to do in order to address the identified problems. The recurring theme found in the data was a suboptimal level of parental involvement and the need for parents to engage in continual parental

involvement. The parents wanted better communication from the staff.

As I continued to accumulate, code, and synthesize the information, numerous themes of equal significance emerged. I chose to articulate the study findings in the form of a position paper as my doctoral project. The position paper would permit me to articulate all of the findings. The summary incorporates a description of the problems, summarizes the findings of the study for all stakeholders, and makes suggestions for improvements. The suggestions in the position paper report focus on parent/teacher communication, parental involvement, student behavior, barriers to parental involvement, parents and teachers expectations. Based on the summary report, teachers and administrators will be able to respond to the needs expressed by the parents with focused and specific action.

Review of the Literature

This section includes a review of the literature related to the major themes that emerged from data analysis and focused on in the position paper contents. Research to understand the impact of parental involvement on the after-school program was needed. The results of the study indicated that communication between staff and parents needs improvement. According to Dor (2012), parent-teacher collaboration is necessary for developing greater parental involvement. Collaboration between parents and teachers can lead to student success. Robbins and Searby (2013) stated that when informed parents are engaged in learning, teachers feel a partnership with parents that help the students to succeed.

Following the analysis of the parents' and teachers' transcripts, a total of five themes related to the after-school program emerged. The themes were: (a) parental involvement is crucial to academic success, (b) behavior a problem for teachers, (c) need for improved teacher to parent communication, (d) inadequate parental involvement, and (e) suggestions to increase parental involvement. I addressed these themes in the framework of peer-reviewed literature that is current. Each of the subheadings below is one of the themes listed here. Recommendations will be made to the after-school staff and parents based on research literature reviewed here.

I began my research for this literature review by searching for articles that focused on the components of parental involvement in after-school programs. I used the key search terms: *after-school programs*, *parent and parental involvement*, *parent/teacher communication*, *student behavior*, and *barriers to parental involvement*. I assembled and synthesized information from a number of peer reviewed sources. These included Walden Library, professional journal references and information from ProQuest Central, Education Resource Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, and other professional educational materials.

Parental Involvement is Crucial to Academic Success

Chohan and Khan (2010) conducted a study that examined the effect of parents' educational involvement on the academic success and self-concept of fourth grade public school students. The findings of the study disclosed that parents' input to their children's learning has a consistent and positive effect on their children's academic achievement and

self-concept. Studies reveal that a student's learning increases when their parents become involved with their education and that those same students then have higher academic achievement (Bui & Rush, 2016; Epstein, 2011; Rapp & Duncan, 2012).

The data analysis in the current study revealed that both parents and teachers agree that parental involvement is essential. One teacher stated, "Teachers cannot do this alone. We need the parents to support us in every way possible." A parent stated, "Because when parents are involved the children are not only getting the help they need in school but at home as well. They get out there and do better." Although parents may agree with teachers that parental participation is crucial, according to the interview data most parents are not regularly actively involved in their child's education. They do state they have helped with homework at one time or another, but not homework done for the after-school program. There is room for improvement with regards to parent involvement with this after school program.

The literature included suggestions for increasing parent involvement. For example, in a study conducted by Waters (2014), parental involvement increased when parents were involved in a pre-intervention meeting with teachers which discussed their student's academic needs. A helpful component of the pre-intervention meeting enabled the parents to receive regular phone calls and text message reminders. According to Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, Fox, and Civic (2013), planning homework to facilitate parents help will enhance parental support.

Characteristically, parents are a committed and lasting resource during their

children's lives. Research has established that the home surroundings parents provide for their children influence their children's academic success (Bui & Rush, 2016). Parental involvement also affects student learning at home. One of Epstein's (2009) six types of parental participation is learning at home. Parents may be involved in their children's learning by assisting or monitoring them with their homework (Waters, 2014). Data for the after-school program revealed that parents spent minimal time helping with homework. According to Strauss (2013), parents often feel obligated to help their child with the homework. A number of parents are not equipped to assist their child with homework (Strauss, 2013).

Homework gets more challenging as the child progresses to higher grade levels. Frequently the parent does not know, understand, or remember the material the child is being taught (Waters, 2014). One of the parents in the current study stated that she enrolled her daughter in the after-school program because she did not understand how to help her daughter with math. A participating teacher pointed out that many of the parents of students in the program have not completed high schools themselves, and subsequently cannot help their children with homework.

Parental involvement differs depending on socioeconomic status and sometimes after-school programs can be helpful. Cid (2014) researched an after-school program located in a poverty-stricken region of a developing country and found that particular after school programs were effective in raising children's academic achievement and improving children's behavior, highlighted particularly among children whose parents

were committed. Parental involvement appears to be critical. Additionally, Cid found that unwritten social customs of the low-income communities are sustained by an intense feeling of guilt and embarrassment, and that community members suffered from violating these customs. His finding showed that those who reach for upward mobility will possibly be mocked, teased, and reviled by their peers.

Consequently, parental identity can affect parent child relations and communications, and particularly parents' dedication to their children's education (Roy, 2016). According to Sadberry (2016) teacher training can strengthen school culture which can prevent children with social or educational differences from being left behind.

Community-based programs have been crucial to African American society since the early 1960s in the structure of community schools and after school programs (Baldrige, 2014). Learning in relaxed community centers has been proven to be beneficial to children, particularly those living in low-income neighborhoods (Baldrige, 2014). A supportive and relaxed environment gives students a sense of belonging (Leos-Urbel, 2015). Included in the position paper teacher training component will be information for parents and teachers on creating an environment that is both relaxed and conducive to learning.

Student Behavior as a Problem for Teachers

The teachers interviewed stated that they were experiencing behavior problems with some of the students. Some teachers believed the students may have been acting out because they were tired from being in school all day. One teacher stated that some

students have had non-positive relationships with other students during previous school hours. The students do not want to be grouped with students they have ongoing conflicts with. Research conducted by Roy (2016) supports the concerns expressed by the teachers. Roy concluded that children misbehave because they may be tired from spending all day in school or because behavior problems were tolerated during the regular school day.

Taylor's (2016) research revealed student behavior affects the learning environment and can be improved with parent and teacher communication. "As problem behavior escalates, student academic accomplishment tends to decline, because the educator is unable to provide effective and efficient academic instruction. These issues may result from communication gaps occurring between educators and parents that require help to resolve (Taylor, 2016, p. 8)." According to a study conducted by Skinner (2014), educators are reluctant to encourage parents to become engaged in their children's learning especially if they think the problem behavior originates from home. The position paper will include that teachers at the after school program should be encouraged to speak with parents regarding problem behaviors and supported by administration in facilitating productive conversations and action plans for improving behavior.

These conversations might benefit from research conducted by Colcord, Mather, and Zucher (2016), that had a six-point action plan which included caring, organization, honesty, respect, accountability, and safety that was used to combat student misbehavior in an urban school. After the plan was implemented the school saw a 50% reduction in

aggressive behavior in the first year. The number of aggressive behavior incidents fell from 88 in Year 1 to 44 in Year 2. Nonaggressive behaviors in the school were reduced by 57% the first year. The number of nonaggressive behavior incidents fell from 54 in Year 1 to 31 in Year 2. This action plan is a component of the teacher training in the position paper.

Need for Improved Teacher to Parent Communication

Vital to the communication between parent and teacher is a partnership founded on the basis that all learners should be part of a program that ensures success. Communication is one of the solutions to promote and facilitate parental involvement (Coutts et al., 2012). When information is not sent out effectively as part of the educational program then misunderstandings may develop between parents and teachers. The misunderstandings can lead to dissent within the learning environment, affecting the roles of both educators and parents, and creating difficulty for learners (Roy, 2016).

A parent in my study stated that she had received e-mails, but had not received an invitation to any open house. One parent complained that at the parent-teacher meeting she attended it seemed as if the teachers were not prepared. One parent complained the phone messages received from the program staff were not specific enough, and she stated she ignored them because they gave no important information. For parents in poverty who may work multiple jobs and have few free hours, the educational program's management of time and adequate communications is crucial to attracting or repelling parental involvement (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), educational program staff should embrace specific and frequent communication as the chief parental involvement strategy. It is important to be proactive because parents will often express themselves when they are frustrated and have feelings of disrespect due to lack of communication and resources at their children's school (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Gillanders, McKinney, and Ritchie (2012) discovered that teachers' and parents' perceptions of the others' roles were greatly different, and a lack of communication between the two groups only compounded the problem. The lack of communication often leads to confusion that can possibly hinder teachers' and parents' cooperation (Gillanders et al., 2012). The position paper will focus on proactive improved communication with parents to curtail these avoidable problems.

This is critical because when parents are faced with barriers, such as lack of communication between themselves and teachers, they are less likely to support their children's learning (Altinoz, 2016). Parents' low- income, limited educational achievement, limited time, low self confidence, and low tutoring skills, as well as the effectiveness of communication with the school, all influence parents participation and involvement (McKenna & Millen, 2013). When parents lack educational resources or knowledge about an educational process they are at risk for inadequate involvement (Wilson, 2015). Parents are sometimes hindered to participate or communicate significantly because of their educational, cultural, or social constraints (Wilson, 2015). A fundamental technique to improve parental engagement is to improve the interaction among teachers and parents.

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), teachers are going to have to make the first effort to make interaction better as parents do not have the skills and resources to do so. Dor's (2012) research discovered that school staff members are aware of the value of parents' involvement in school. The school staff articulated advantages and support as a result of their interactions with parents. Some teachers acknowledge that they have experienced personal challenges interacting with certain parents (Dor, 2012). Overall, teachers and parents alike acknowledge that the after school experience is better if parents are involved, but as a matter of organization the teachers must take the lead.

Effective parent/teacher communication will be part of the position paper teacher training component. According to Sadberry (2016), a part of teacher training should include effective communication processes, parent collaboration, and the building of relationships. Teacher educational training would also include encouragement of parental involvement as an ongoing topic (Dor, 2012). The results of Sadberry's (2016) study suggested that targeted teacher training should involve school, community, and parents sharing information to clarify the roles of administrators, teachers, community leaders, and parents. As information is shared, then trust and collaboration are built. These relationships may lead to increased African American parental involvement at the study after school program.

Inadequate Parental Involvement

According to the data analysis of the current study, 80% of the parents who participated in the current study did not attend parent meetings. One reason given was

their work schedule. Job requirements are part of a parent's life context. Life context can impede levels of parental participation by generating barriers to involvement. Life context consists of a number of factors including education, job requirements, mental wellness, and health. Other parts of life context that influence involvements are the energy and time parents bring to the potential of involvement all are considered in the decision a parent makes to be less or more involved in their children's education (Preller, 2015).

According to Manz, Gernhart, Bracaliello, Pressimone, and Eisenberg (2014), poverty can have damaging effects on parental involvement. There are a disproportionate number of families in poverty among ethnic and racial minorities. Teachers and parents from different socio-economic classes must strive to work together effectively; poverty adds an extra barrier to parental involvement. Benner, Boyle, and Sadler (2016) described the potential effects of poverty on parent's participation as following: the socioeconomic results of poverty bind parents' resources and hamper their emotional capacity to offer crucial learning experiences for their young children. Beginning at birth, parents' involvement in their children's education can shield poverty's threats to children's cognitive learning and social competencies. Consequently, those children lose out, beginning at birth, on the benefits of parents' involvement in their children's education, which can shield poverty's threats to children's cognitive learning and social competencies.

Manz et al. (2014) also described how the association between poverty and

parental involvement is an inverse relationship. Even though poverty can limit parental involvement, increasing parental involvement can counteract the harmful effects of poverty. It is evident that promoting parental participation is especially important in socioeconomically disadvantaged families. A number of low income parents in the study work long hours or have several jobs. This can restrict their availability during school hours. A low income parent's involvement is dependent on many factors. Because so many different factors can prohibit parents from engaging, the after school program must establish a trusting connection with the families and offer solutions to help them overcome their personal barriers (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Van Voorhis et al., 2013).

Suggestions to Increase Parental Involvement

These parents may need tutorial help so that they can assist their children with homework assigned by the after school program. The position paper will recommend the Homework Help Workshop and contain information on how to form homework help worksheets and workshops to assist parents in helping their children with homework. I suggest that a meeting is set between parent and teacher after a student is enrolled into the after school program to stimulate communication and foster parental involvement. Offering flexible meeting times, meals, and transportation to attend meetings may facilitate increased attendance.

A few recommendations included in the position paper are to (a) make childcare, transportation, and snacks available for the meetings (Antoine (2012), (b) provide an information table to display literature concerning educational and financial resources,

such as childcare assistance and adult literacy programs (Neuman, 2016), (c) ask the local Family Independence state agency to allow a social worker to visit the program and hold monthly counseling sessions with parents addressing resources available to overcome educational and socioeconomic barriers (Simon & Johnson 2013), (d) hire personnel from the neighborhood (Tadesse, 2014; Walker et al., 2010; Wiseman, 2010), (e) develop effective communication practices for foster more engaging parent and teacher relations to be included in teacher training (Roy, 2016), and (f) implement an action plan to address student behavior (Colcord, Mather, and Zucher 2016).

Hiring personnel from the neighborhood will further communication efforts because recruiting parent liaison and school staff that is a reflection of the community may break down cultural barriers (Tadesse, 2014; Walker et al., 2010; Wiseman, 2010). Studies have shown that for children of low income parents, parental involvement promotes long-term academic benefits (Manz et al., 2014). These benefits may result because active parental involvement guards children against everyday stressors (Benner et. al., 2016). Parental participation serves as a crucial protective factor by nurturing children's emotional and cognitive development. Therefore it is worthwhile to collect suggestions for increasing parental involvement.

The parents and teachers offered a number of suggestions to improve parental involvement. One parent suggested that the program could solicit the aid of a social worker who could help by providing financial advice to parents. According to Wang, Deng, and Yang (2016), low parental involvement happens frequently among financially

disadvantaged families. Understanding what caused the family financial stress and consequent low parental involvement is of special importance in encouraging educational achievement for low-income children. Parental involvement in education is acutely significant for children of financially disadvantaged families. According to Simon and Johnson (2013), if administrators of high-poverty educational organizations could hire support staff, such as parent coordinators, or a social worker which could complement the teachers' expertise and buffer students from the effects of poverty. A suggestion that will be incorporated in the position paper is to have administrators ask the local state agency to allow a social worker to come in once a month to interact with students and teachers as well as be available to parents to discuss various financial resources.

Another parent in the current study suggested that the program should conduct the meetings on the weekend when more parents are available. The parent stated that she worked during the week and that the only time she had available to attend a meeting was on Saturday morning. Murray et al.'s (2014) research included a sample of parents who were also entirely African American low income parents. The parents did not have high school education and their children attended urban public middle schools. The results of the study suggested that low income African American parents usually experience work schedule and transportation challenges as barriers to parental involvement. According to Wang et al. (2016), low-income parents often experience energy and time constraints connected to work. In the position paper, there is a recommendation that in the initial parent/teacher meeting, parent and teacher will agree upon a scheduled time to meet

when the parents are available and set up times to receive phone calls and text messages in the future. There is also a recommendation that parent meetings are scheduled when parents are available, offer childcare, and offer transportation assistance.

One of the teachers in the current study suggested that communication is key. She noted the staff and teachers should be communicating with the parents weekly. She suggested that the communication can be in the form of a weekly newsletter, text messages, emails, or automated calls. She stated that the staff and teachers needed to form a bond with parents that will make them want to be a part of their children's educational adventures. She suggested that parents whenever possible could be invited to stay when they come to pick up their child for an informal visit and maybe to have a snack with the student. The teacher suggested having a fun day at least once a month, with the fun day always based on academics, such as a movie about a book or math games. Parents could join their children to play the games for a few minutes when they come to pick them up. The teacher's suggestion of a fun day will be mentioned in the position paper as a way to connect with parents. Effectively communicating with a parent is a part of the teacher training component of the position paper.

Bergman (2012) acknowledged that joint teacher-parent communication is capable of leading to improved parental involvement, and consequently to enhance student academic achievement. Kraft and Rogers' (2014) research supports mounting research evidence confirming that having teachers provide parents with regular individualized reports concerning their child's schoolwork has a positive effect on

student achievement in school. Kraft and Rogers (2014) examined the results of teachers providing parents with weekly messages about their children's performance in school, and found that teacher to parent information was effective at improving students' achievements and behavior. At this time, the program provides monthly progress reports (P. Jones, personal communication, December 10, 2015). What is suggested in the position paper, in addition to monthly progress reports, is that teachers' will need to communicate with parent weekly concerning children's performance.

Conversing with parents is a task that each teacher faces every day in their occupation. It is an important task that, if handled appropriately, can help to improve parental involvement (Hornby, 2011; Walker & Dotger, 2012). Schools depend on teachers' communication capabilities as the main means of establishing effective parent/school partnerships (Symeou, Roussounidou, & Michaelides, 2012). Communication between teachers and parents are acknowledged as being crucial, but can also be a challenging encounter (Epstein, 2013).

The literature indicates that teachers are not equipped to handle the communication aspect of their profession, particularly communication with parents (Evans, 2013; Epstein, 2013). As noted above, students benefit when teachers start and maintain positive relationships with parents (Kraft & Rogers, 2014). As part of the position paper teachers will be trained in communicating with parents.

Project Description

The recipients of the position paper report will be the parents, teachers, and

administrators of the after school program. To present the position paper I will request a meeting with the administrators, teachers and invite parents. I will distribute a copy of the position paper, which will include a power point presentation, to all participants. I will address any questions the administrators, teachers or parents may have.

Included in the report is a timeline that can be used as a guide for the administrators. The report contains formative data analysis designed to help administrators modify changes immediately while the program is in progress. My suggestion is that the recommended changes start no later than 6 weeks after the presentation to the participants.

The position paper report shows students' inadequate academic achievement as it relates to parental involvement by presenting the results of an evaluation to program administrators, staff, and parents. Information captured from the parents, teachers, and literature in the form of narratives will be used in the position paper. I summarized in the position paper recommendations and suggestions to help the parents and teacher to work together to improve parental involvement, highlighting the themes that were developed during data analysis.

Resources

The resources for this project are provided by the school district and the after school program. The resources needed are Internet accessibility and a meeting room for the position paper presentation.

Potential Barriers

There are many barriers to implementing changes necessary for improved parental involvement within the after school program. One possible barrier for this project may be scheduling meetings with all relevant parties to present the findings of the position paper report. The session should occur at times that do not interfere with teachers and parents schedules. Secondly, the attendance of the participants in the meeting is necessary and low attendance may infer no acceptance of the position paper. Third, possible parent and teacher differences could discourage collaboration and inhibit the program's success. Lastly, there may be a financial hindrance in paying teachers for additional training and parent-teacher meetings.

Implementation and Timetable

Recommendations suggested in the position paper should start within 6 weeks of the presentation. In the position paper is an outline of a teacher training program to improve parent/teacher communication and collaboration. The program will require four sessions lasting 3 hours each.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Others

As the researcher in this project, my responsibility is to present the policy paper report to the participants and answer all questions the participants may have. The administrators, parents, and teachers are encouraged to attend as many of the nine sessions as possible. Parents and teachers are encouraged to work together in groups to promote ideas to improve communication between the groups. The administrators and teachers will participate in training. During Sessions 1-4 participants will lay the

groundwork for developing a homework help workshop, and learn techniques for positive parent/teacher interaction. During Sessions 5-9 administrators, parents, and teachers will work together in a cooperative group to develop a collaboration plan to improve parental involvement.

Project Evaluation Plan

Presented in the position paper are findings obtained from my project study on parents' and teachers' perceptions of parental involvement component in afterschool tutoring. After presenting my position paper, I hope to receive summative feedback from all participants. I will ask participants to complete a participant evaluation survey (Appendix D) to receive this feedback. The goal of this summative assessment is to determine if the position paper has achieved its goals to (a) identify the barriers to parental involvement, (b) recommendations for improved parental involvement, and (c) the findings of my research study.

After I distribute the position paper report to the attending participants, the participants will be allowed 20 minutes to read the report. I will then present the PowerPoint. After all participants have concluded that they have read the report and participated in the PowerPoint presentation, I will distribute the participants' evaluation survey. I will ask them to complete the participant evaluation survey. After I collect the participants' evaluation survey, I will utilize percentages to determine the percent of attendees that chose "strongly agree" to each of the questions. If at least 75% of the participants select the "strongly agree" choice to the questions in the evaluation survey,

then I will presume that the position paper was successful in achieving its goals.

Project Implications

The substance of this position paper addresses the problem of inadequate student academic achievement and poor behavior at the after-school program by presenting the results of an evaluation to the staff and parents. Before this research, the afterschool program did not have a structured parent component as part of the program. The theory that implementation of a structured parental involvement component will help to increase student academic learning is supported by a panoply of researchers (Epstein, 2013; Mirazchiyski & Klemencic, 2014; Park & Holloway, 2013; Rapp & Duncan, 2012; Vukovic et al., 2013).

The position paper and recommended training described within may be used by the staff to guide collaboration with parents to develop the parental component of the program. This report may also direct future decisions in continuing positive parental involvement. Teachers and parents may have more confidence in building a collaborative parental component when they understand that decisions about the program parental initiatives are being driven by qualitative analysis of the study results. An indirect goal of the project is that staff may share study findings with their teaching peers in the after school program to further growth in the community. Well-designed and well-implemented parental programs can produce better grades, higher test scores, better social skills, better attendance, improved behavior, higher proportions of students passing

classes, and increased graduation rates (Van Voorhis et al., 2013).

The overall social change this project may create is that the information produced by this project might help positive teacher/parent communication in urban after school programs. The information produced by this project was intended to positively affect and support student academic attainment and parental involvement. The results of the project teacher training and parent/teacher collaboration training could be shared within urban areas in Detroit and other cities.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

Introduction

This study was an evaluation of an after-school tutoring program located in a low-income urban area in the Midwest. I studied the effects of parental involvement on student academic achievements. The literature has confirmed that when parental involvement is inadequate students perform poorly in academics (Mirazchiyski & Klemencic, 2014.) What was learned from the literature was that after school programs in low-income areas are effective in improving students' academic performance and behavior when parents are committed to the students' education performance (Cid, 2014).

Project Strengths and Limitations

There is an abundance of research to substantiate that students who live in low-income communities struggle with reading and math (Grubbs, 2013; Karakus & Savas, 2012; Vukovic et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2014). Research has proven that parental involvement can be the answer to the problem (Wang et al., 2014), and the data in this study confirmed that parental involvement is needed. A collaborative parent-teacher component is needed for the program to address the needs of struggling students. An effective and collaborative partnership between participating parents and teachers can be achieved through increased communication – leading to improved student academic performance. The position paper report offers teachers and parents a training program where they can learn how to work together to construct a bond of trust to create a productive partnership to improve and sustain student educational success. Funding and

time restrictions pose limitations to implementing recommendations contained within this position paper.

Recommendation for Alternative Approaches

The ongoing concern of degrading student achievement in reading and mathematics for low-income students in a K-12 school district offers a plethora of ways to address this issue. Besides focusing on parental involvement, researching other causes such the program's teaching strategies or curriculum that approach student academic achievement from a different angle.

Another approach would be to research how the lack of a program evaluation prior to implementation of the current study has impacted the students' achievement. Lyons and Luginsland (2014) acknowledge a position paper provides crucial information to stakeholders to spark their interest and to persuade them of the achievability of accepting the recommendation. The findings of this study, such as need for improved teacher-parent communication and parental involvement, provide crucial information to participants of the after-school program. A position paper provides an avenue to present these findings and relevant recommendations in a persuasive manner that highlights the achievability of increased parental involvement with the program. These suggestions may help the tutoring program parental involvement in improving parent/teacher communication, student behavior problems, and parents helping their children with homework.

Scholarship, Project Development, and Leadership and Change

According to Anderson et al. (2015) scholars search through research seeking for essential information that other researchers have concluded from investigating the subject of study. Additionally, a scholar is reflective as the research progresses, seeking answers even after the research project has been completed and has a strong sense of who they are. “Scholarship properly communicated and critiqued serves as the building blocks for knowledge growth in a field” (Shulman, 1998, p. 5). I devoted myself to performing a comprehensive study to discover the answer to why some parents are less involved than others in their children’s education.

I began my research by reading the finding of materials that were peer-reviewed and influential. I learned as I was developing this project that a lack of parental involvement has been a problem for schools and after school programs for years. As I completed more research, I realized that low-income urban parents have a different set of barriers to parental involvement than other parent groups. This why this research was needed and important.

No research had been done for this program. As a result, a research project that addressed the needs of the parents and students in this program was needed. The previous literature on the topic illustrated how different cultural groups perceive parental involvement. The research has helped me to realize the importance of conducting studies to answer questions that bring societal change that can improve a community. This research has given me the insight to understand that most parents want to be involved in their children’s education and realize the importance of their involvement. Barriers are

what keeps them from being more involved. Helping them to overcome those barriers such as transportation must be built into an after-school program such as this one.

The literature review conducted for this study broadened my understanding of what attributes are required for scholarly research and work – namely perseverance, diligence, patience, and knowledge. I learned through this study process how to search for relevant literature and recognize themes and patterns during data analysis. The Walden Library was available to help me look for current information relating to my project study. I was grateful for the new information I learned as I went through the process of reading, studying, and analyzing data. I learned how different cultures define parental involvement. I learned some of the struggles of low income parents who are just trying to meet the needs of day to day living for their children and themselves. I learned to be more compassionate and sympathetic toward the parents as I read through the research. Through this research, I have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by low income parents.

Reflection on the Importance of the Work

Through the literature review, I discovered that many researchers have reached a research-based conclusion that parents are a vital factor for students' academic achievement. I discovered through the literature how much impact a parent's involvement has on a child's academics. I learned that even when a parent shows a slight interest in their child's education, such as asking him or her how their day was at school, they can have a positive effect on the child's academics. I also learned that even if a child is raised

in poverty, the parent involvement in their education can overcome that obstacle. I have gained a wealth of knowledge about the importance of parental involvement while working on the study.

Researchers and administrators have identified the necessity and lack of parental engagement found among minority children as a factor influencing the academic gap between Caucasian and minority children (Yull, Blitz, & Murray, 2014). Most parents agree with this research data. Many after school programs and school districts have tried to make advancement in increasing parental involvement programs. There continues to be communicative disconnect between teachers, schools, and families.

This study presented teachers' and parents' real and current data concerning the teacher-parent communication problem. This doctoral project study aims to lead efforts of improving communication between parents and teachers in furtherance of student academic growth. The social change implication from the project involves insight of the communication gap between parents and teachers that inhibit students' academic success.

Parents and teachers can work together in effective collaborations to increase awareness and understanding of their varying perspectives as they work toward improving student achievement. Participants must be open to sharing their views to build improved communication and increase parental involvement. Stakeholders within the community may find this project's findings and the teacher parent collaborative training successful when parent teacher communication improve and student achievement increases. This project offers parents and teachers the chance to partner in identifying

how to improve the academic performance of their students.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

According to Olmstead (2013), there are proactive parents who help with homework and monitor their child's educational progress, and reactive parents who attend the meeting and volunteer. Both reactive and proactive activities are needed for children's academic success. Implications for positive social change beneficial to the family include possibly more students completing their high school studies. This saves the family time and money when the student attains the ability to enter the workforce and contributes as a financial member of the family. The student could also have the opportunity to attend college which would also positively impact the family.

In this study, the after-school program was the primary recipient of the benefits of positive social change. Benefits to the after-school program start with program participants improving in math and reading, and eventually lead to improved SAT, ACT, and Michigan Assessment Test scores while narrowing the academic achievement gap between racial and socioeconomic groups (Wang et al., 2016). Having a greater number of students with improved academic scores might increase the program esteem and reputation. Society may benefit from positive social change with this parent component. People successfully break out of poverty through education; the key to breaking the inter-generational poverty cycle is by improving low income students' educational opportunities (Grady, 2016).

Implications for a future study would include a follow-up of this after-school

program to identify the extended effects of involving parents, teachers, and administrators in the program. Similarly, future researchers who seek to investigate communication in after school program need to engage all stakeholders connected with the program. While this study was entirely focused on one after school program, a study in the future could include the community schools. For example, a comparison of parent-teacher communication between middle income urban program and economically disadvantaged urban program may provide useful information for a parent and teacher training.

Conclusion

My goal was to investigate a local after-school program to study the teachers' and parents' perceptions of the parental involvement in the program. The study investigated the ways parental involvement occur within the program, unique problems faced by the after-school program as related to the parents, barriers to parental involvement, and suggestions by participants on improving the effectiveness of parental involvement. The results of this study lead me to conclude that (a) parental involvement is a crucial component to student academic success, (b) student behavior is a barrier to teacher effectiveness, (c) there is a need for improved teacher-to-parent communication, (d) inadequate parental involvement persists, and (e) suggestions by teachers and parents to increase parental involvement should be acknowledged. The data from the interviews confirmed my beliefs that a parent component should be implemented with input from parents, teachers, and administrators.

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Appendix A: Position Paper

Evaluation of an After School Tutorial Program

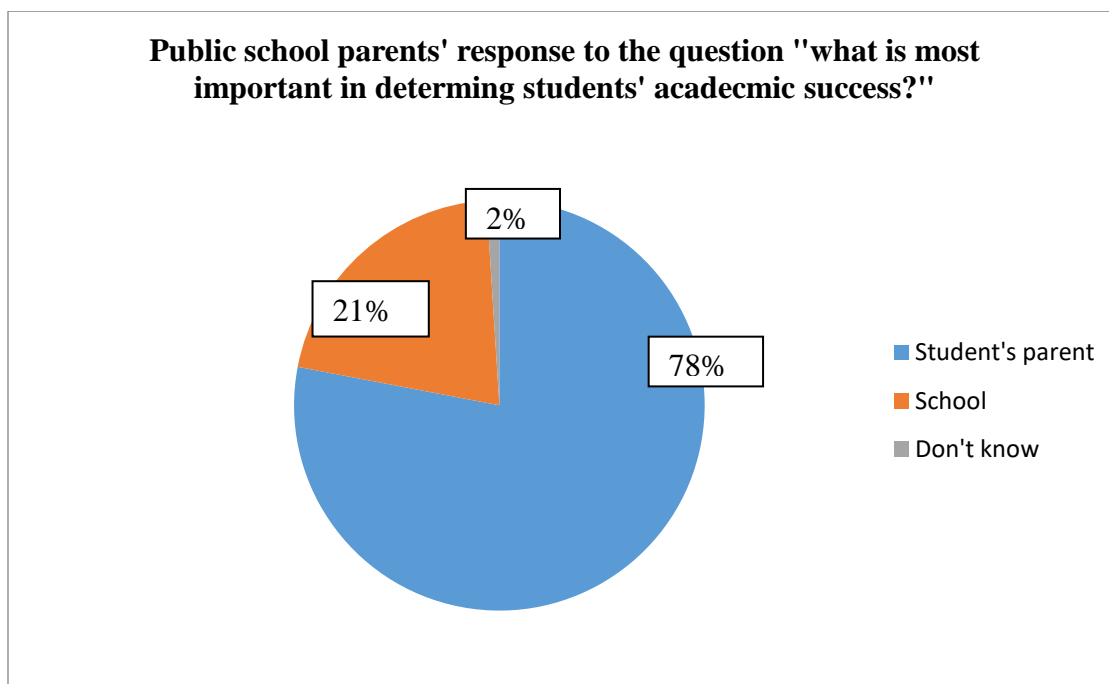
Introduction

The involvement of parents in their child's education is believed to be one of the most important aspects of academic achievement because students can achieve better in and out of the classroom with reinforcement from parents. This paper is designed to document participants' beliefs concerning academic achievement as it relates to parental involvement in an after-school program. The after school program was created to provide tutoring and support to K-12th grade students and their families to improve academic proficiency in mathematics and language arts. The researcher's goal was to focus on the effectiveness of the program and identify barriers to parental involvement. The goals of the position paper are to make recommendations to identify the barriers to parental involvement, adapt the program staff communications, and modify parent meetings and parent/teacher interactions to overcome those barriers. This position paper contains six sections pertaining to the after-school program parental involvement. In the position paper design the following are included: (a) an introduction, (b) background of the existing problem (c) summary of the analysis of the study data (d) recommendations, (e) conclusion, and (f) references.

The evaluation concludes with an overview of recommendations for administrators, parents and teachers consideration on possible improvements. Before this study, the afterschool program did not have a structured parent component as part of the

program. The data from the study conveyed the program's strength which is that both parents and teachers believed that parental involvement was positively linked to students' academic achievement. The program weakness is that parents agreed their participation is important; however most have not been involved in the program. Based on these results, this position paper was developed to provide suggestions to help increase the involvement of parents in the after-school program.

The chart below represented the attitudes that parents have concerning parental involvement in the United States, which aligns with the participants in this study. The research was conducted by Kettering Foundation in September of 2014. In their study the researchers found that almost 8 in 10 of the participants believed that parents are more crucial than schools in determining whether children learn.



Source: Kettering Foundation 2014

Background of the Existing Problem

Proficiency in reading and mathematics remains a challenge for low-income students within K-12 school districts. The academic achievement of inner-city low-income public school students in Detroit, Michigan are below the state's average achievement levels more than other Michigan districts (Public School Review, 2016). At the local research site, an after-school program was implemented to help students improve their language arts and mathematics skills. The primary function of the program is to combat the persistent academic achievement gap between ethnic and socioeconomic groups of disadvantage. To date, the program has not been effective in improving student achievement. The aim of this study was to observe parents' and teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of the after-school program and parental involvement as it relates to academic achievement. Despite the significance of parental involvement evidenced in literature, the problem of low parental involvement continues to plague the after-school program hosted at the research site. Data collected from this study found that parents of the after-school program agreed that their participation is important; however, most have not been involved in the program. The purpose of the position paper is to identify the barriers to parental involvement, and present recommendations to overcome those barriers.

Initiatives such as increasing parents' participation in meetings or teaching parents ways to help with homework are only part of the solution to significant improvement in children's academic performance according to Manz, Gernhart,

Bracaliello, Pressimone, and Eisenberg (2014). The researchers believed that in order to successfully raise children's academic performance through parental involvement programs should address the parents' concerns. In research by Manz et al., a successful program in Chicago was highlighted because it provided parents a wide range of services, including reading groups, health, and nutrition services. The researchers attributed much of the program's success to its approach to addressing some of the parents' concerns. This position paper aims to address solutions that resolve some of the parents' concerns. This report is presented and reviewed on the evaluation outcomes in terms of the research questions. The research questions that guided this study were (1) What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students' academic achievement; (2) What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement; and (3) What are teachers' and parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?

Problem Statement

Many urban students' school years are marred by below average academic achievement. These below average academic achievements are common among minority students and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The problem that prompted this study is student achievement in reading and mathematics has not improved for low-income students in a K-12 school district. The NAEP (2013) report noted that the children in the local schools had some of the lowest scores of all those tested nationwide.

Their mathematics scores were 78% below basic proficiency level as compared to 22% for the rest of the nation. The after-school program was implemented to enhance children's education and development. The programs' main function is to eliminate the persistent academic achievement gap between ethnic and socioeconomic groups. What was learned through this research was that a lack of parental involvement has been a problem for schools and after school programs for years.

Summary of the Analysis of the Study Data

There are 77 parents and six teachers involved in the after-school program. All teachers and parents were invited to participate in the interview; of which seven parents and three teachers completed. Following the analysis of the parent's and teacher's transcripts, a total of five different themes related to the after-school program emerged. The themes were (a) parental involvement is crucial to academic success, (b) behavior a problem for teachers, (c) need for improved teacher to parent communication, (d) inadequate parental involvement, (e) suggestions to increase parental involvement. One-on-one interviews with parents and teachers were used in determining needs for recommended program improvement.

Recommendations

The first recommendation: As parents are enrolling their children the teacher should schedule a pre-intervention meeting. In the meeting the teacher will discuss the student's academic needs, convenient times for parents to receive phone calls, e-mails and text messages, discuss behavior, parent meetings, flexible meeting times, testing and

progress report. Teachers should keep records on each pre-intervention meeting and parent should sign a form stating that they participated in the meeting.

The second recommendation: Make childcare, transportation, social worker, meals available for the meetings and hire personnel from the neighborhood.

The third recommendation: Make available to the parents an information table to display literature concerning educational resource, financial resources, such as childcare assistance, or medical assistance. The administration should ask the local Family Independence state agency to allow a social worker to come and meet with parents once a month to discuss various financial resources available to them.

The fourth recommendation: To develop effective communication between parent and teacher the following recommendations are suggested to be included in a teachers' training. Effective parent/teacher communication is an important part of any educational program success.

- 1) Training to help teachers understand the students' cultural norms.
- 2) Training teachers in creating an environment that is both relaxed and conducive to learning.
- 3) Inviting parents to informal visits, fun day, a plan events with students and parents as a way to connect with families.
- 4) Effectively communicating with parents regarding various common concerns.
- 5) In addition to monthly progress reports teachers' should communicate with parent weekly concerning children's performance.

6) Creating interesting and fun academic sessions

Below is a timeline to implement teacher training and the parent/teacher collaboration component.

Session/Week	Participants	Event/Activity		
1	Administrators Teachers	1. Discuss how to conduct pre-intervention meetings 2. Discuss behavior plan of action		
2	Administrators Teachers	1. The assessment tool completed and discussed 2. Effective communication processes, and the building of relationships, culture		
3	Administrators Teachers	1. Positive learning environments, families financial resources, social worker, acknowledgment events and Fun day, informal visit		
4	Administrators Teachers	1. Discuss homework help workshops presentation and structure		
5&6	Teachers Parents	1. Discuss the principal barriers to communication between parent and teacher. 2. How the barriers are affecting student Achievement		
7	Teachers Parents	1. Factors to improve groups discussed primary topics generated during Session 5&6		
8	Administrators Teachers Parents	Presentation of ideas/plan		
Plan	8-16	Implementation	Administrators Teachers Parents	Implementation of collaboration plan designed from parent /teacher development

Below is an assessment tool that should be used by the teachers to determine their attitude regarding, respect, culture, and inclusion. The assessment takes 3 to 4 minutes to complete.

The Assessment Tool

BUILDING A CULTURE OF RESPECT, AND EQUITY LEVEL**Yes/Don't Know**

1. Does your organization, have a stated policy to respect the diverse backgrounds of parents and caregivers, which may include but are not limited to ethnicity, race, immigration status, sexual orientation, religion, gender and socioeconomic status?
2. Does the organization offer a welcoming environment for all families and their culture?
3. Is there mutual respect between parents and staff?
4. Have all organizational practices been evaluated to ensure that no perpetuating inequities are being created?
5. Are the community unique strengths and challenges understood and guiding the actions of staff?
6. Is the organization working with parents to resolve problems and create an environment where different opinions are respected
7. Is the organization staff committed to having the needs, aspirations, voices of parents and communities drive the work?
8. Are staff members racially, culturally, and linguistically representative of the community?
9. Is addressing inclusion part of communication at staff meetings and built into performance reviews?
10. Do staff listen to parents and view them as diverse and unique individuals with dynamic and multiple roles who are experts in theirs' and their children lives?
11. Do the staff work with parents to find solutions to problems?
12. Does staff make an effort to meet parents in their homes or in a place of their choosing?

To address student behavior implement an action plan: The components of the action plan would involve: Instructing and Reinforcing Expectations – teachers will teach students all expectation and what the expectations look like within a routine. Below are the expectations.

Program Expectations	Classroom	Halls	Bathrooms	Playground	Snack Time
Caring	Help others, wait your turn, share and do your part in your group, address others by their names	If someone needs help, offer to help	Report any vandalism or graffiti to your teacher	Be a problem solver, learn new games and activities. Help others who need it	Eat only your food, use appropriate manners, use your inside voice
Organized	Do your best on all tests and assignments, ask questions leave your space better than you found it, if you borrowed equipment be careful with it return in the same condition as you received it	Stand in a straight line	Be patient with others while waiting use inside voice	Hang on to your belongings. End playing when you hear the bell ring; take all your things with you.	Be a good example to other students
Be Honest	If you need help ask for it, tell the truth do your own work,	Be considerate of yours and others' personal space	Return to you session promptly, report facilities problems to your teacher	Report bullying, report damaged equipment, be truthful	Be considerate of others. hands and feet should be kept to yourself
Respectful	Attend sessions regularly and on time, respect others personal space, obey procedures, keep space neat	keep to the right, use appropriate language, use inside voice, allow others to pass	Keep your area clean, flush toilet, put trash in trash cans, be respectful of others' personal space,	Line up at teacher first signal, invite others students who want to enter, exit and enter playground quietly, use polite	Push in your chair, deposit trash in Trash cans, be courteous to students and staff

				language, share materials	
Accountable	Perform your part of the work, always do the best you can, be proud of your accomplishments	Watch to leave sufficient time to arrive at your session	Let your teacher know when leaving for a bathroom break.	When walking to the playground, stay in a straight line, as soon as recess is over line up	Get your snack, eat your snack, And clean up after yourself.
Safe	Follow the teacher's directions	Walk, maintain personal boundaries	Walk to the bathroom, and wash your hands after using the bathroom	Play safe, use equipment for the intended purpose, engage in games that have been program approved, stay in areas program approved, Keep body to self	Keep your feet on the floor, maintain personal boundaries

Students should be provided examples of rule conforming to the routine. Teachers should allow students time to apply the expectations. After a student demonstrated an expectation, the student should immediately receive praise and tangible reinforcers, such as raffle tickets or stickers. Teachers awarded students with Happy Grams who consistently demonstrate the model behavior. The Happy Grams could be placed in a drop box for the student to be automatically included in a weekly raffle for recognition and prizes. Teachers should model performance expectations, and learners should be urged to exhibit these expectations.

Ongoing Formative and Summative Evaluations: The student behavior action plan will need to be monitored and improvements made as needed to ensure that the program is meeting the needs of the teachers and students. The plan can be evaluated by program administrator's observations, teacher interviews, and analyzing student behavior. It is recommended that program administrators conduct teacher/student observations once a month with the use of a pre-determined checklist of the programs desired expectations.

The fifth recommendation: Parent/teacher collaboration to improve communication after the teacher training development sessions are completed a collaboration group of parents and teachers will meet for once a week for two hours over a 5-week period, Sessions 5-9 In Sessions 5 and 6 the group participants will discuss the principal barriers to communication between them and how the barriers are affecting student achievement. At Session 7, the participants will discuss factors to improve communication. The teachers and parents group makes their presentation during Session

8 to the administrators. At the conclusion of the presentation, the participants will decide if the parent/teacher collaboration plan needs modification or to be implemented in its present form.

What will be incorporated in the parental collaboration is what was identified as four key areas of parental involvement by the Annie Casey Foundation study (Boots, Romano, & Hayes, 2016). The study reviewed parent engagement literature. The researcher conducted more than 40 one-on-one interviews with leaders in the field of parental involvement. The researchers also conducted 3 focus groups of parents. From the research identified were 4 key areas that consistently appeared when groups authentically and effectively engage parents. These four key areas denoted crucial aspects of building group capacity to better serve parents. What was addressed were the way groups (1) Constructs a culture of respect, equity, and inclusion to help shape the work the group does with families, (3) trains parents on their confidence and competence in their roles, working with parents as an alternative to just imparting information, and interacting and communicating with them in methods that help build their confidence, (3) listens to and cooperates with parents on how to design programs and train them on how to engage in leadership roles, and (4) works with other groups in the community to benefit parents by coordinating and collaborating with government agencies to present programs and services to maximize the resources for families (Boots et. al., 2016).

Below is a chart of the 4 key areas of the Annie Casey Foundation study that is recommended for the parental collaboration component.

Chart of the 4 key areas of parental engagement

Key One: Constructing a culture of inclusion, respect, and equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First step: The group takes the first important steps in creating a program, committed to promoting equity.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second step: The group develops deeper and takes more steps to foster equity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third step: The group focuses on creating an inclusive organization for parents.
Key Two: Training parents on their confidence and competence in their roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First step: Group works on solid ideas to build parents confidence and skills.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second: The group works to develop parent leadership opportunities.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third step: The group concentrates on coaching for parenting skills and confidence.
Key Three: Listening to and cooperating with parents on how to design programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First step: Group develops good practices and policies to listen to parents and community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second step: Group focuses on understanding parents and community needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third step: Group concentrates on building partnerships with parents.
Key Four: Works with other groups and communities to benefit parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First step: Group diligently works to meet parent needs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second step: Group works to link services for parents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third step: Group works closely with organizations in the community to produce change.

The sixth recommendation: Homework Help Workshops to assist parents in helping their children with homework. According to Balfanz, Bridgeland, Bruce, Fox, & Civic, (2013), researchers have concluded that designing homework so that parents can help will increase parental support. Homework offers a chance for collaborative interaction between parents, students, and teachers in order to build relationships. Teachers send homework home to reinforce the learning from the classroom that takes place during the school day. Parents have an opportunity to hold schools accountable, as well as engage in the learning process with children (Sadberry, 2016). The Parent Homework Help Workshops should be held in October, January and a Summer Learning workshop held in July. The summer learning workshops help the parent to identify methods to engage their children in learning through fun-filled educational projects over the summer. Parent will be provided suggestions on fun trip activities that they can do with their child. The workshops will last 3 hours and should be scheduled on a Saturday morning, which will allow more parents to attend. The parents' workshops should be broken up into 4 classrooms K-3, 4-6th, and 7th-9th and 10th – 12th.

What will be learned in the Homework Help Workshops is 1) The reason homework is important 2) How to help your child to be more effective at completing his or her homework? 3) What to expect in Math and reading? 4) Teaching children how to communicate with their teachers 5) keeping a homework notebook with assignment and deadlines 6) creating a quiet space in the home conducive to learning 7) Reading and Math strategies 8) Provide praise and encouragement 9) what to do if your child does not

understand or is stuck?

Parents should be provided a list of websites to help their children learning. Below are examples:

Math

www.mathwary.com

Solve Equation online step by step

www.amathsdictionaryforkids.com

A math dictionary

www.funbrain.com

Math arcade games for kids

www.thinkingblocks.com

Online Flash program, student model the relationships within math word problems using bright colored blocks

www.dosity.com

Interactive lesson and free printable worksheets for math and English

www.calculationnation.netm.org

Math

www.thatquiz.org

Create quizzes online in math, English, Science

<http://artofproblemsolving.com/videos/mathcounts>

Math for all ages

www.e-learningforkids.org

Math & English

Reading

www.literacycenter.net

Basic reading and counting

www.latticeworksw.com/roxabe.htm

Learn letters while playing cards

www.starfall.com

Help children learn to read

www.roythezebra.com

Guided reading and reading games

www.literactive.com

Interactive books, worksheets, and activities

www.enchantedlearning.com

Picture dictionary for children

www.secretbuilder.com

Literature

<http://www.starfall.com/>

Teaching children to read with phonics

www.mingoville.com

Reading as a second language

Spelling

<http://www.dictionary.com/fun>

dictionary

Geography

<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>

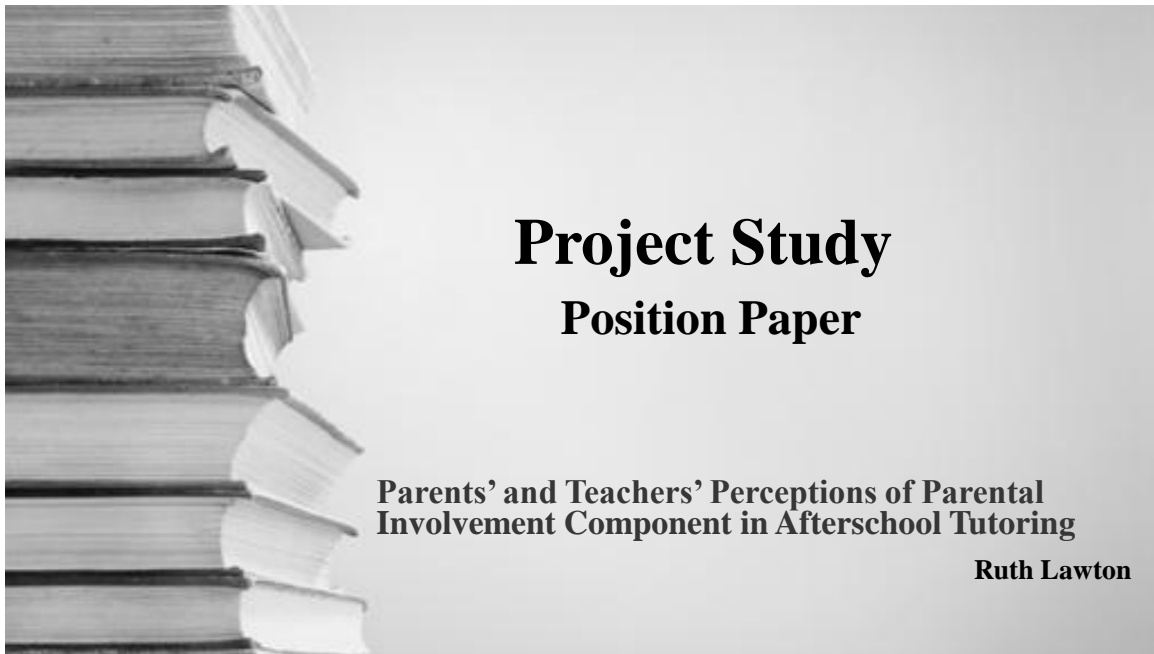
Uses tons of fun games, interesting videos, puzzles and cool photos to make the world feel like a smaller, exciting place.

Conclusion

This position paper was developed and presented for the benefit of the teacher and parents of an after school tutoring program located in the Midwest. The recommendations in the report were derived from the data analyst of the research conducted using the

parents and teachers interviews. The administration, parents, and teachers are encouraged to review and implement these recommendations to improve the program.

Power Point



Introduction

- A position paper was designed to document participants' beliefs concerning academic achievement as it relates to parental involvement in the after-school program.
- The goal of the researcher in the position paper was to focus on the effectiveness of the program and identify the barriers to parental involvement.
- In the position paper design the following are included: (a) an introduction, (b) background of the existing problem (c) summary of the analysis of the study data (e) recommendations, (f) conclusion, and (h) references.
- The position paper concludes with an overview of recommendations for administrators, parents and teachers for consideration on possible improvements.

The chart on page 2 of the position paper represent the research conducted by the Kettering Foundation in September of 2014. The researchers found that almost 8 in 10 of the participants believed that parents are more crucial than schools in determining whether children learn.

3

Background

- The after-school tutoring and mentoring program was implemented to help in the K-12 local district who were struggling with reading and mathematics.
- To date, the program has not been successful in improving student achievement.
- Parents, administrators and teachers believe parental involvement is important for student academic success, however, most parents have not been involved in the program.
- The purpose of the study was to identify the barriers to parental involvement using the data collected from the parents and teachers.
- The goal is to make recommendations to the parents and teachers to help improve parental involvement.

4

The Research Questions That Guided the Study

- What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students' academic achievement?
- What are teachers' and parents' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement?
- What are teachers' and parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?



5

Summary of the Analysis of the Study Data

Five different themes emerged.

Themes

- Parental involvement is crucial to academic success.
- Behavior a problem for teachers.
- Need for improved teacher to parent communication
- Inadequate parental involvement
- Suggestions to increase parental involvement.

6

Recommendations



The First Recommendation

As parents are enrolling their child(ren) the teacher should schedule a pre-intervention meeting. In the meeting the teacher will discuss the student's academic needs, convenient times for parents to receive phone calls, e-mails and text messages, discuss behavior, parent meetings, flexible meeting times, testing and progress report. Teachers should keep records on each pre-intervention meeting and parent should sign a form stating that they participated in the meeting.



The Second Recommendation

Make childcare, transportation, social worker and snacks available for the meetings.



9

The Third Recommendation

Make available to the parents an information table to display literature concerning educational resource, financial resources, such as childcare assistance, or medical assistance.



10

The Fourth Recommendation

To develop communication between parent and teacher, a teacher training on effective parent/teacher communication (page 6 of the position paper).



11

The Fifth Recommendation

- Parent/teacher collaboration to improve communication. The parent/teacher group discussions will include the principal barriers to communication between them and how the barriers are affecting student achievement.
- The participants will discuss factors to improve communication.
- The teachers/parents group will present their finding, using a chart of the 4 key areas of the Annie Casey Foundation study (page 9 and 10 of the position paper).



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The Sixth Recommendation

- Develop Homework Help Workshops to assist parents in helping their children with homework, and offers a chance for collaborative interaction between parents, students, and teachers in order to build relationships.
- The Parent Homework Help Workshops should be held in October, January and a Summer Learning workshop held in July.
- The summer learning workshops help the parent to identify methods to engage their children in learning through fun-filled educational projects over the summer.



Questions or Concerns



Position Paper References

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Appendix B: Parental Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in this research study. The information obtained during this interview will assist the program in gaining a more in depth understanding of parents' perceptions of the program. Would you agree if it becomes necessary, that I may contact you to clarify some of your answers to the questions? Do you have any questions I can answer at this time? Please let me know at any time during the interview process if any questions arise. Let's begin.

To address research questions (a) what are parents' perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students' academic achievement? (b) what are parents' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement? (c) what are parents' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?

1. Why did you enroll your son/daughter in this program?
2. How effective do you think the program has been in improving your son's/daughter's math scores? Why?
3. How effective do you think the program has been in improving your son's /daughter's reading scores? Why?
4. Do you think that parental involvement is important in student academic achievement? Why?
5. When the tutor send home and e-mail a progress report do you get the report?
6. How do you respond to the report?
7. Have you been involved with the program in any way? How?
8. How does the program ask you to be involved?
9. Have you helped your child with school work? If so, please describe an incident
10. The program director has sent home flyers and emails to get parents involved like this one. Do you remember this? Would you reply to this email if you got it today? Why or why not? How could these emails be improved?
11. The program director had a parent open house on 10/21. Here is the flyer that was sent home and emailed. Do you remember this? Did you attend? Why or why not? How could it be improved?
12. What are your barriers? What could be done to overcome them? Would free childcare help?
13. What are your suggestions?

Appendix C: Teachers Interview Protocol

Thank you for participating in this research study. The information obtained during this interview will assist the program in gaining a more in depth understanding of teachers' perception of the program. It may become necessary that I contact you at a later time in order to clarify some of your answers to the questions. Do you have any questions I can answer at this time? Please let me know at any time during the interview process if any questions arise. Let's begin.

To address research questions (a) what are teachers' perceptions of the efficacy of the after school program on students' academic achievement? (b) what are teachers' perceptions of the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement? (c) what are teachers' suggestions to increase and improve parental involvement in the daily operation of the after school tutoring program?

1. What is the structure of each day? What parts go well and not so well?
2. How effective do you think the program has been in improving students' reading scores? Why?
3. How effective do you think the program has been in improving students' math scores? Why?
4. Do you think that parental involvement is important in student academic achievement? Why?
5. Do the students return signed progress report?
6. Do the students talk about working with their parents on school work?
7. Do the parents attend Parent/Tutor Conference meeting? What happens at the meeting?
8. Do the parents attend Open House? What happens?
9. Have you talked to parents concerning attending Parent/Tutor Conference or Open House? If yes, what were the responses?
10. What are your suggestions to improve parental involvement?

Appendix D: Participants Evaluation Survey

Thank you so much for taking the time to provide me with your input to complete this Participants Evaluation Survey To answer the questions, please place an “Y” in the box next to the response that reflects your opinion of this position paper suggestions.

Date: _____

<i>Please rate the following</i>	Strongly Agree	Strongly Disagree
It is a good idea to have a parent/teacher meeting before the student begin sessions.		
Having childcare, transportation, meals available for the parent/teacher meetings is a good idea.		
Hiring personnel from the neighborhood.		
Provide Homework Help Workshops to assist parents in helping their children with homework		
Implement an action plan to address student behavior		
Provide an information table to display literature concerning educational resource, financial resources, such as childcare assistance should be made available,		
The administration should ask the local Family Independence state agency to allow a social worker to come and meet with parents once a month to discuss various financial resources available to them.		
Implementation a collaboration plan to develop effective communication between parent and teacher.		
A teaching training to develop effective communication between parent and teacher		

Additional comments
