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PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN A RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN EASTERN NORTH  
CAROLINA: INVESTIGATING STRATEGIES THAT WILL INCREASE THE  
ENGAGEMENT OF HIGH-POVERTY FAMILIES IN RURAL DISTRICTS

By  
Lutashia J. Dove

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Gardner-Webb University College of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University  
2022

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Lutashia J. Dove under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University College of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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The process of completing this dissertation has come with its share of challenges. Between work, school, church, and family, there were times I did not think I could complete the journey, but God sustained me. I am thankful to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. During this period, I held on to this scripture, Proverbs 3:5-6:

Trust in Lord completely, and do not rely on your own opinions. With all your heart rely on him to guide you, and he will lead you in every decision you make.

Become intimate with him in whatever you do, and he will lead you wherever you go.

I cannot thank my family enough, my husband Kyle, and my two beautiful daughters, Sadeja and Kyla. You are the “wind beneath my wings.” Kyle, thank you for encouraging me, allowing me time to work all the time, staying up with me to write, and covering me in your prayers. You never let any household or family things go lacking. You always stepped in and stepped up. Thank you to my mom, dad, siblings, sisters-in-love, brothers-in-love, and my spiritual parents. You always inspire me to press forward and keep pushing. Quitting was not an option.

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each of you.

## **Abstract**

PARENT ENGAGEMENT IN A RURAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA: INVESTIGATING STRATEGIES THAT WILL INCREASE ENGAGEMENT OF HIGH-POVERTY FAMILIES IN RURAL DISTRICTS: Dove, Lutashia J., 2022: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

Parent engagement continues to be problematic in schools. Although many schools have attempted to implement parent engagement programs, there are still significant challenges recruiting parents to engage with the school. Numerous studies have proven a strong relationship between parent involvement and student academic outcomes. Despite the vast research on parent engagement, schools continue to struggle with developing a parent engagement program inclusive of all stakeholders. The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies to increase parent engagement in small, rural elementary schools and a 6-12 high school in eastern North Carolina. The participants in this study were parents/guardians, teachers, and school administrators. The data collected and analyzed will support researchers, school administrators, and teachers in knowing specific strategies to increase parent engagement in rural communities. Epstein (2011) provided a comprehensive framework consisting of six tenets for use in developing a parent engagement program. Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework was used to study the experiences of parents and educators in this rural district. I gathered qualitative and quantitative data through surveys and focus group interviews. The data showed the school community has a strength in parent willingness to participate; however, a parent engagement framework has not been established in the district. Recommendations were made to develop a plan that encompasses communication, collaborating with the

community, and shared decision-making.

*Keywords:* rural, poverty, involvement, collaboration

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

There is substantial evidence to support the idea that parent involvement in children's learning (e.g., discussing children's schoolwork, attending parent-teacher conferences, collaborating with teachers on how to best support their child) facilitates children's learning and ultimately their success (Pomerantz et al., 2007); however, parent engagement can be difficult to implement and sustain at a school. The value of parental participation is widely accepted, but actual participation is difficult to promote and maintain because "schools are becoming more diverse, and a great challenge facing educators is meeting the needs of all students" (LaRocque et al., 2011, p. 115). Although teachers know family support is significant, they are perplexed about supporting parents who come from diverse backgrounds. According to LaRocque et al. (2011), families play an important function in the success of their child's education. Parenting practices, such as parental monitoring, have been linked positively to academic outcomes among minority youth (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013). Amiable parent-child relationships also have been greatly influential to minority youths' academic outcomes (Topor et al., 2010).

Jefferson (2015) stated that educators and parents must shift their thinking about the purpose of parent engagement and embrace the idea that parent/family engagement must be to develop relationships between school and homes. Having a clear, well-defined parent engagement policy is a critical step in supporting parents who want to get involved. Parent engagement policies provide a clear, defined roadmap for parents to know their responsibilities and navigate within and outside the school (Jefferson, 2015). More recently, Mapp et al. (2017) found parents are more receptive to engagement when they feel fully empowered to get involved through intentional methods that demonstrate the

school's willingness to involve parents in the school.

According to McKenna and Millen (2013), educators have an expectation and understanding of parent involvement that differs from the reality of a student's life and home life. Olivos (2010) found the public school system has consistently been unsuccessful in establishing authentic relationships with the communities it serves, particularly "hard-to-reach" parents—African-Americans, Latinos, immigrants, and low-income parents. Research shows that increasing parent engagement contributes to children's academic and social success (Henderson et al., 2007), and that assessment coincides with the academic gap between students who fit into one or more of those demographics and students who do not.

Demographic trends indicate diverse populations will continue to grow in rural America. With these ongoing demographic shifts, it is essential educators learn how to encompass social norms, cultural values, and tactics beneficial to engaging with parents (Edwards, 2016), yet Anfara and Mertens (2008) found parent engagement strategies have not been clearly defined. Assumptions have been made that parents should know how to get involved and support their children in school. Epstein et al. (2018) argued educators need to understand the context of how their students live, interact, work, play, and communicate. When educators do not have this understanding, they are not working in concert with parents; therefore, partnerships are not formed.

As parent interest begins to grow and parent engagement becomes a focus, schools must measure parent perceptions of the school and determine how to best meet their needs. Parent perceptions of their child's school may influence their child's perception of that school (Schueler et al., 2014). If parents do not feel welcome and do not experience a

positive atmosphere, this attitude may trickle down and directly influence how their child performs in school. The National School Climate Council (2007) recommended school climate and specifically a positive and sustained school climate be defined in the following ways:

*School climate* is based on patterns of people's experiences of school life and reflects norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures. A sustainable, positive school climate fosters youth development and learning necessary for a productive, contributive, and satisfying life in a democratic society. This climate includes norms, values, and expectations that support people feeling safe socially, emotionally, and physically. People are engaged and respected. Students, families, and educators work together to develop, live, and contribute to a shared school vision. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits of and satisfaction from learning. Each person contributes to the operations of the school as well as the care of the physical environment. (p. 5)

Parent engagement is often hindered by parent perceptions of how educators view them (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Class and ethnicity are also barriers that play a role in how parents perceive schools and determine if they would like to be involved in their child's education. In high-poverty school districts, parents are less likely to get involved based on their perception of the school and how they are received (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). According to Nelson (2010), many traditions and celebrations in rural districts are highly valued in the community and are deep-rooted. Many families new to rural settings struggle with finding their place within the community and are not familiar with all

traditions, nor do they understand why schools try to connect with families. With the morphing demographic of rural communities, it is necessary to analyze some current practices to see if they meet the needs of the diverse families or if they are possibly offensive. Although rural school districts have these traditional norms, they can be unhealthy when changing the infrastructure and increasing parent/community engagement. Often, those viewed as "outsiders" are not accepted and face resistance when it comes to changing the current school culture to be more inclusive. Nelson suggested that as a consultant, educators spend time listening and observing, finding metaphoric stories to share to help shape the change that needs to take place.

Parent engagement is believed to be related to teacher efficacy and their ability to connect with families. Empowered parents are more likely to participate in workshops to obtain the skills needed to support their children; therefore, parents should be encouraged to build efficacy and understand what it means to support their children in school. Parents also need the opportunity to cultivate advocacy skills, develop internal beliefs that focus on positive outcomes, and build social/emotional skills that foster growth resulting in interpersonal skills linked to increased parent engagement (Swick & Broadway, 1997); however, according to Constantino (2015), efficacy is not about possessing certain skills or knowledge; instead, it is about empowering families to know how to approach problems or tasks and access needed support.

Comparatively, teachers also need empowerment through training that addresses differences and challenges their implicit biases to embrace all families (Henderson et al., 2007). According to Johnson (2014), schools must create an environment where parents can navigate as educational partners. School staff must see families as resources and

respect their cultural and community norms. When this type of partnership is developed, one can begin to see the culture of the students integrated into the curriculum. Educators working with students and parents often use norms of middle class White families to assess parents from low-income, racial/ethnic minority, and English-As-A-Second Language (ESL) families (Delpit, 2006). The placing of one's personal culture as an overall standard can be alienating to those unfamiliar. Much of what we do as educators and how we engage families are influenced by our beliefs about them as a group of people or what we believe about their community (Mapp et al., 2017). Suppose teachers cannot see beyond their personal life experiences to embrace diversity. They will fail to fully connect with the students and families who do not share the same culture and traditions.

Moreover, and often not recognizable until retrospection, past experiences and relationships tend to sway how we presently interact with others. Educators must examine their biases and assumptions about families to effectively engage them in schools (Mapp et al., 2017). As teachers gather information about their families and students and learn what it is parents need to increase parent engagement, they must collaborate with the families to develop workshops and activities parents will support (Edwards, 2016).

Educators agree parent engagement is essential for the success of schools; however, few of them enter the educational arena equipped with the skills needed to foster successful partnership programs (Patte, 2011). Staff development opportunities are recommended to support teachers in seamlessly and effectively communicating with families to garner parent engagement (Edwards, 2016). Epstein et al. (2018) expounded that professional preparation for collaboration is necessary to support educators in developing the skills and capacity to work collaboratively with students' families and

communities. Collaboration via in-service training should be ongoing to foster developing strategies to build successful partnerships.

### **Purpose of Study**

Edwards (2016) admonished educators to intentionally examine their own biases to become culturally responsive practitioners, suggesting school leaders have each teacher write their racial autobiography and reflect on their life experiences and compare them to the students and families they interact with daily. Because there is a cultural paradigm shift in schools, teachers need assistance in internalizing knowledge related to their school's quickly changing demographics.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) states provisions must be put in place to engage parents in the school environment. ESSA mandates schools make inclusive efforts to engage *all* families (Henderson, 2015). This engagement includes serving on committees, providing activities on campus, developing home-based programs, disseminating information, collaborating with community organizations, and/or other activities that align with the particular school district's engagement policy.

When parents engage, they provide essential information to the school that allows insight into which resources are most beneficial to the success of their children; they understand parent engagement is a critical element needed to strengthen the family unit and provide necessary information on how to support the family unit in the school (Finch, 2011).

Constantino's (2015) study found parent/family engagement must be ongoing and cannot be a one-time event. Constantino stated, "It is a commitment to change school culture and, as such, is ongoing and never-ending" (p. 9). He noted not every staff



member or school district will see parent engagement as a necessary paradigm shift and will likely oppose the idea. He encouraged school administrators to share strategies and resources that have proven to work between teachers, so they are more willing to take risks and replicate success.

To increase parent engagement in rural school districts, Gross et al. (2015) asserted several factors must be considered. Studies found parents want the following aspects of parent engagement to fully understand what is needed from them and how they can partner with the school: (a) strong leadership where the principal has a vision of being present with the students and inclusive of the school community. Parents described the ideal principal as having "special talent for nurturing relationships with parents, with teachers, with community partners" (Gross et al., 2015, p. 23); (b) An inviting school culture was critical to increase parent engagement and having an environment where the community was included. Parents want schools that have an "open door" policy and allow them to participate in school projects and share ideas for making school events better; (c) Teacher commitment to student success was also a factor in helping parents engage with the schools. Parents want to know teachers genuinely believe in their children. They want teachers who motivate students to learn, have clearly defined goals, and believe every child is capable of learning; (d) Clear, concise communication and collaboration were also key points in increasing parent engagement. Parents want to know what you need from them and how to get the task accomplished. Parents noted teachers often limited collaboration by the non-inclusive actions that limit parents and community partners. They want frequent communication from teachers and school leaders.

Ferguson et al. (2010) implored school leaders to also examine the following

factors when discussing parent involvement: clearly define parent engagement; clarify why parent engagement is important and how students will benefit from parent participation; and identify cultural influences, norms, and traditions in families and work to understand and appreciate the cultural differences. The results will positively affect how parents engage in their child's school.

As rural schools continue to define or redefine parent engagement, they must examine what causes student success across settings. According to Edwards (2016), engagement that contributes to student success reaches far beyond volunteering, school governance, and fundraising. True parent engagement involves parents and teachers as learners. When this type of partnership is formed, success is more likely for the pupil. In addition, teachers learn about home life and culture and what support the students have in place to ensure success.

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies that will increase the engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts of North Carolina. The following questions guided this study:

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their involvement at the school where their children attend?
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

## **Significance of Study**

Rural school districts are positioned to develop positive, nurturing relationships with families. Schools in most rural districts are celebrated and seen as a place to gather for numerous community events, with teachers and leaders often present and serving the community. School principals are frequently visible in the school community, at church and civic events. Although these factors are positive contributors to the community, it does not negate the fact that many rural districts have high levels of poverty and limited resources for students. Limited resources in rural schools provide a major reason why school and family partnerships are critical for the success of students. Families in rural communities also have numerous social/emotional issues not being addressed due to little or no resources; therefore, parent engagement is very necessary to meet the varying needs of the students.

Parents are key stakeholders in connecting with students and partnering with the whole family. Many rural schools have systems and sustainable programs in place; however, with the rapidly changing demographics, leaders are challenged to find ways to create sustainable partnerships with families. Leaders and teachers are often charged with make-shifting ways to provide needed resources for students (Witte & Sheridan, 2011). One benefit of being in a rural school is connecting with families at community events such as football games, church occasions, and carnivals. Because of these interactions, parents are more likely to establish trusting relationships with teachers. District leaders must unearth ways to capitalize on these interactions to connect with families.

The National Center for Education Statistics (2007) found that 54% of rural parents are satisfied with teacher interactions with them therefore, rural educators, including

district leaders, need to be trained in culturally relevant, pedagogical communication practices to meet the needs of their community (Witte & Sheridan, 2011).

According to the North Carolina Rural Center (2021), rural districts make up a significant portion of North Carolina: 80 of 100 counties were considered rural, which means they have a population density of no more than 250 people per square mile or less. The 2020 trends in racial composition show North Carolina is becoming more racially diverse. The Hispanic population grew from 8.4% in 2010 to 10.7% in 2020; the Asian population grew from 2.2% in 2010 to 3.3% in 2020; the Black population dropped by 1%; and the White population dropped by 7% (North Carolina Rural Center, 2021). With the changing demographics, cultural demographics make it difficult for teachers to connect with students, which affects the impact of instruction students may receive. Because of the cultural misunderstandings, families are not being engaged, and expectations are often lowered for students of color.

Teacher preparation programs prepare preservice teachers to provide high-quality instruction to students and engage with diverse families (Marchitello & Trinidad, 2019). Epstein (2010) challenged educators to build healthy partnerships and not have school and family life parceled off. By segregating the two, the life of the child is not wholly addressed, and their home/community life is alienated at school, eliminating support from their social environment (Epstein, 2010). This understanding is critical not only for teachers but district leaders too. District leaders must research and recognize the changing district demographics to effectively respond to the needs of their school's population. This information is integral when preparing to initiate change and engage families in the schools; hence, leaders must use these data when making decisions on communication,

meetings, curriculum nights, strategic plans, and professional development for staff and community leaders (Edwards, 2016).

### **Context**

This study took place in rural eastern North Carolina. The district serves the educational needs of 1,170 students daily from PreK-12<sup>th</sup> grade. Of the 1,170 students, 98% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The studied district has a diversity score of 0.54, which is higher than the state rate of 0.46. The diversity score represents a sampling of students randomly chosen who represent different ethnic groups. Fifty-four percent of the students enrolled in the district are minority students, primarily Black. The district has six schools deemed Title I schools: four elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. According to the educational programs director (Anonymous, personal communication, 2018), the district has revenues of approximately \$500,000 in funding; however, approximately 42% of the children live in single-parent households and 26.4% of the population lives in poverty, which is higher than the national average of 13.1%, with 34.8% of children ages 0-17 living in poverty.

### **Methodology Overview**

The study focused on qualitative data collected from employees and parents or guardians of students in the school district. The study focused on the four elementary schools and the one 6-12 high school. The data were gathered via surveys, questionnaires, and focus group interviews.

### **Definition of Terms**

The terms defined in this section are used throughout the study and help to provide an understanding of the research.

***Challenges***

Perceived barriers to hinder parent engagement (Gerzel-Short, 2018).

***Collaboration***

How schools and families function together (Gerzel-Short, 2018).

***Parent Engagement***

Parents and teachers working together to improve the outcomes for students. A shared responsibility where all school members are committed to engaging parents (Steiner, 2015).

***Partnerships***

Relationships complement each other and are grounded in trust (Mapp et al., 2017).

***Poverty***

Poverty in schools is determined by the number of students who are eligible to receive free or reduced lunch (Parrett & Budge, 2015).

***Rural Schools***

Schools characterized by their geographic location and size (Rural Schools, 2021).

***Title I School***

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by ESSA, provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (U.S. Department of Education, 2018).

**Conclusion**

This study investigated strategies to increase parent engagement in a small rural school district in eastern North Carolina. The participants in this study were parents/guardians, teachers, and school administrators. The data collected and analyzed will support researchers, school administrators, and teachers to identify which strategies increase parent engagement in rural communities. Findings in this study will support research regarding parent engagement in low socioeconomic status rural communities, helping educators identify and implement parent engagement initiatives that will support engaging parents and keeping them engaged as students matriculate from elementary to high school.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of parent engagement in a rural, high-poverty school district on student achievement. Parent engagement has historically been proven to have a positive impact on student achievement. Research indicates children tend to enjoy being a part of their learning community as a result of parent engagement as they matriculate through school. (Henderson et al., 2007). Further research suggests when parents are involved in the home and school organizations such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and school improvement team membership, their children perform better (Goldkind & Farmer, 2013; Green et al., 2007; Walsh, 2010, as cited by Fan & Chen, 2001).

Price-Mitchell (2009) suggested parent engagement must be reframed to fully understand how to build sustainable partnerships with families. Her study proposed schools and communities must invest time learning how to address the varying needs that embody the school community, families, and the broader community. The need for strong partnerships between educators and families has been increased due to changes in student learning complexities and the increased influence of societal factors on the emotional well-being of students. Parents are a valuable asset to educators as they address these compounding issues (Prince-Mitchell, 2009).

Over time, the evolution of parenting has challenged schools to reevaluate their approaches to connecting with families (Stuart, 2019). According to Stuart (2019), for varying reasons, including work, school, or pleasure, a great deal of a parent's time may be spent using an electronic device, which causes them to be distracted and less engaged



with their children. As the parent remains focused on their device, a child's interference in this time could feel like a frustrating distraction. This ultimately results in the displacement of the parent's frustration onto the school, which presents itself in negativity via social media. When schools overwhelm families with information via social media, this furthers their frustrations, especially when the information is not current. Stuart argued that because schools have added digital media to their communication avenues, in some cases negating their ability to improve their interpersonal connections with families, they ignore the need for person-to-person interactions. Strong person-to-person interactions are essential when building relationships and garnering the support of families in schools. The keys to a robust parent-school relationship are willingness to investigate needs and the receptiveness to the feedback provided. Stuart explained that when planning, schools should host meetings in neutral settings that establish comfort and safety for all parties. To increase parent engagement, educators in schools must be willing to utilize systems that deepen their understanding of their families and communities.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Joyce Epstein, a leading researcher on family and community engagement, is best known for supporting school and state leaders in developing research-based programs to develop family and community connections (Epstein et al., 2018).

Epstein (2011) provided a comprehensive framework for developing a partnership program. Her framework outlined six tenets for parent engagement:

1. Parenting: Helps all families establish a home environment to support children as students.
2. Communicating: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-

school communications about school programs and their children's progress.

3. Volunteering: Recruit and organize parent help and support.
4. Learning at Home: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
5. Decision-Making: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
6. Collaborating With the Community: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.

This literature review used Epstein's (2011) comprehensive framework on school, family, and community partnerships to research best practices that support parent engagement programs. The study also integrated research that supports this framework.

### **Parenting**

Current studies show parent engagement is a large determinant in children's academic success (Pomerantz et al., 2007). The research indicates student matriculation through school increases when parents participate in a child's education (Pomerantz et al., 2007). Research suggests parent engagement in homework and home activities supports students in developing better study habits, having higher expectations, and having a better overall view of their self-worth (Ballantine, 1999; Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Because learning is not one dimensional and occurs over multiple settings, parents are critical to ensuring success over numerous domains, such as academic and social (Esler et al., 2008, as cited in Jarmuz-Smith, 2011). Parent engagement falls into varying levels of

participation, ranging from inactive to highly engaged. Research indicates there is a direct positive correlation between the level of engagement of a parent and the levels of achievement for a student. Parents are highly influential partners in education. When parents are present and engaged at school and have positive relationships with the teachers, it impacts their children positively (Ballantine, 1999).

Cotton and Wiklund (1989) stated the most effective parent engagement is present when parents work on home projects, communicate regularly with teachers, receive phone calls, and regularly participate in parent-teacher conferences. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012), students whose parents/guardians are involved are more likely to have a positive school trajectory. Schools and communities must come together to develop a framework to bridge the gap between home and school. This type of intensive engagement has been shown to increase academic outcomes in all areas. Although indirect passive engagement has impacted student achievement in some forms, the more active, present engagement is recommended for greater success. Research also shows the earlier parents get engaged in their child's education, the better their educational outcomes are.

Ishak et al. (2012) examined the impact of parenting styles on educational outcomes. In the study, the researchers surveyed 493 students from public schools; 284 of the respondents were from urban schools, and 209 respondents were from rural schools. Four rural secondary schools were studied, and four urban secondary schools were studied during the first study stage. The second stage of the research conducted used a random sampling of 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students. Researchers used a self-administered four-part rating scale to collect data. In their study, they focused on three types of parents:

1. Authoritative: Parents are high in responsiveness and demandingness. They monitor and impart clear standards for their children's conduct.
2. Authoritarian: Parents are high in demandingness but low in responsiveness. These parents provide a well-ordered and structured environment with clearly labeled rules without explanation.
3. Permissive: Parents are high in responsiveness but low in demandingness. They are lenient, non-directive, and do not require mature behavior.

Based on the study, parenting styles can produce results that directly impact self-esteem and academic achievement. For school-age children, the most effective parenting style is the authoritative style. The parenting style perceptions were as follows: 308 respondents perceived their parents as authoritative, 175 as authoritarian, and 10 as permissive. The data analysis suggested both authoritarian and authoritative parenting styles are effective; however, authoritative parenting resulted in a well-rounded child with positive academic and overall self-esteem characteristics. This study showed authoritative parenting is preferred because it produced children who can cope academically and socially.

Authoritative parents tend to provide love, accept uniqueness, and respect the overall child. Parents who practice this type of parenting style make it safe for children to be resilient learners with a growth mindset (Ishak et al., 2012).

According to Chao (2001), the authoritative style is the most impactful when children are in the child-rearing domain. Steinberg et al. (1992) showed authoritative parenting impacts student achievement due to direct parent engagement. These parents encourage students by supporting them with homework, attending school events, and helping them navigate their school matriculation. This research shows the most impactful

time for a parent to become engaged is during the early elementary school years. Students appear more receptive to the support and mimic their parents' responsiveness and behaviors related to school. Steinberg et al. indicated authoritative parenting must be a part of the home's authoritative parenting style to be effective versus a non-authoritative home. Parent engagement will only be significant if parents are intentional about being a part of their child's educational journey.

Parents have to decide to become engaged in their child's education. According to Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005), parents have certain convictions about their engagement that contribute to if and how they decide to become involved. A parent's self-efficacy determines whether the parent chooses to become actively engaged in their child's education. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) based her definition of self-efficacy on Bandura's (1997) theory that one's level of achievement is based on their belief about their level of attainment. Based on this theory, parent engagement stems from whether parents think they have something valuable to offer the child and their school experience (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Bandura, 1997; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Role theory suggests parents must understand their roles in schools around the social context. They must understand their rights, duties, social constructs, and obligations (Biddle, 1979, as cited in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Biddle (1979, as cited in Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005), suggested parents based their decision to be involved on past experiences or constructs built from watching others within their social systems. Many parents found their constructs firmly rooted in their observations of their present or past experiences. The various roles within a school community, including school administration, staff, and students, play a significant role in parent perceptions of

the school and their ability to become engaged at that particular school. Parent engagement is either hindered or encouraged by the actions of the school community. The overall school climate must breed parental participation from all levels, as demonstrated by administrators, teachers, students, and community members. Schools must provide a framework that explicitly outlines the school's social system and establishes norms and expectations. The traditions and practices of the school shape and exhibit the school's culture, and parents use this culture to take cues regarding a school's attitudes about parents and families (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013).

Anthony and Ogg (2019) conducted a study to show how parent engagement affects student achievement. The study outlined three theoretical factors of communication that impact student achievement: home-based, school-based, and home-school communication. The study included a sample of students from kindergarten to eighth grade. The researcher collected data from the fall of kindergarten and the spring of first and third grades for each type of parent engagement. Based on the research, each factor produces a different outcome on parent engagement. Home-based parent engagement involves the parents supporting their children both academically and socially. Based on the meta-analysis study, this type of engagement had a small overall effect on student achievement. School-based engagement is a more hands-on approach in which parents are visible and present within the school. The meta-analysis data showed school-based has the broadest impact on student achievement. Home-school community engagement was the least impactful on student achievement and in some cases, negatively impacted student achievement. This type of engagement does necessitate contact between the parent and the teacher; however, the communication is typically through email and on

occasion, face to face. Xu et al. (2010) argued home-school communication, such as homework support, could adversely affect student achievement, especially if parents do not understand the learning objective or know how to support the student.

Parent engagement is a strategy to increase student achievement and decrease the achievement gap (Bower & Griffin, 2011). This strategy is two-dimensional as it causes school leaders to look for ways to engage families and puts the onus on families to engage and support their children. Lack of parent engagement seems inadvertently to be one of the reasons the gap continues to widen (Bower & Griffin, 2011). According to Bower and Griffin (2011), all stakeholders must clearly define and understand parent engagement. Traditionally, parent engagement involves inviting parents to view or participate in school activities or events. Epstein (2011) defined parent engagement as a "process or system that assist families by helping them create home environments that will allow them to support children as students" (p. 397). Parent engagement encompasses various tasks, including, but not limited to, volunteering, communicating with teachers, supporting homework completion, and attending parent-teacher conferences. Inadvertently, schools continue to operate using the traditional narrative; parents are expected to help students succeed in schools under the umbrella of being in the "school building." Furthermore, the school offers no additional support to the family unit, leaving them without resources to support the student at home (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Mapp et al. (2017) and Henderson et al. (2007) suggested school leaders consider developing partnerships with families and create partnership schools committed to engaging and partnering with all families.

School leaders are critical when it comes to developing effective parent engagement strategies. They must be visionaries who can clearly articulate their vision. A

common factor in schools where parent engagement has been successful is a strong leader committed to having a school that is inclusive of families (Constantino, 2015; Gee, 2006). The principal sets the school's tone and is seen as the one who leads the work to support parents (Barr & Saltmarsh, 2014).

Constantino (2015) has developed a Five Simple Principles Logic Model to engage families and develop partnerships.

### Figure 1

*Five Simple Principles Logic Model*



Constantino (2015) found positively empowering parents contributes to an environment in which parents become engaged in the school community, desire to participate in decision-making, and support the learning environment. Equipping parents with the resources and strategies necessary to help their children gives parents lasting skills that could change the trajectory of their child's education (Pstross et al., 2016). Constantino's model demonstrates how five family engagement principles are interconnected and interdependent. Kane et al. (2016) stated, "climate is how people feel in the school, and culture is a deeper sense of how people act in the school" (p. 2).



Constantino (2015) stated all parents must be empowered. Schools must provide parents with the tools and resources to engage fully. He believed schools have taken the next step in developing sustaining parent engagement systems when parents are empowered. Ferrara (2015) communicated, "To be successful in a school environment, families need to have learning resources and a wealth of social capital to help with achievement goals" (p. 33). Edwards (2016) stated,

Developing positive relationships with parents is critical to providing the best education possible to their children. Parents are the most important people in children's early lives and are, therefore, the best people to assist school leaders and teachers in getting to know the children. (p. 21)

### **Communicating**

Epstein et al. (2018) defined communicating as "activities to improve two-way connections about school programs and students' progress" (p. 64). Epstein et al. believed two-way communication demonstrates the relationship between the teacher, parents, and students. When students see parents and teachers are communicating and on the same page, they are more likely to succeed and want to please the teacher. Epstein et al. also believed communication must be useful to parents and provide them with information that allows them to assist their students with school.

According to Waterford.org (2021), parent communication serves as a conduit to implore parents to actively engage in schools. When teachers and parents collaborate, the chances for students to excel academically are increased. A trusting relationship develops, and parents and teachers tend to feel happier moving forward together. Schools must develop strategies to effectively communicate with parents their plan for executing a

parent engagement system in which parents feel like partners in education. Numerous approaches must be explored to determine which method works better for a particular school community.

Waterford.org (2021) also explored the difference between one-way and two-way communication for effective engagement. One-way communication involves parents receiving information and not engaging in a conversation. Parents are the listeners who simply receive information without responding or offering feedback. When parents only obtain this type of communication, schools and parents are working in isolation. Two-way communication catalyzes parents to interact with the school in a reciprocal format. Teachers are encouraged to engage parents in collaborative ways, allowing parents and teachers to be equitable partners in the students' education.

Benner and Quirk (2020) stated, "Clear and consistent communication channels are an important means for schools to empower families to engage and support student achievement" (p. 6). In 2019, the Center for American Progress surveyed a school community consisting of over 900 public school parents representing the school population and more than 400 teachers and 400 school leaders, including principals and other administrative leaders. The survey administered reviewed how schools and teachers communicated with parents. The data disaggregation helped researchers understand what type of communication best met the needs of families. The survey findings indicated both parents and teachers found communication practical and able to meet the school community's needs. Parents and teachers sought more frequent and consistent communication. As the researchers analyzed the data, each group shared their ideas about more effective communication practices. Grade-level specific needs showed the most

statistically significant difference in the data. The data disaggregation revealed three fourths of the parents, teachers, and administrators surveyed agreed communication to engage parents was action-oriented and timely; while 92% of parents surveyed agreed or strongly believed the received information allowed them to be actively engaged in their child's educational experience. Benner and Quirk reiterated school leaders are the forerunners in this work. Parent engagement starts with the school leader, which influences the support and participation of all stakeholders.

Conversely, only 64% of teachers and school leaders agreed parents were actively engaged in their child's education. Further disaggregation of the data uncovered the data disparities were in relation to individual grade levels with varying needs. For example, the data analysis for parents surveyed at the elementary level indicated parents felt empowered and were able to help their students. Contrarily, results from the secondary level revealed parents do not find the communication helpful in supporting the school. These research findings make it clear parents seek timely and frequent communication related to more topics than homework and school events. Parents request information concerning discipline, attendance, homework, student achievement, opportunities, teacher qualifications, and resources.

Over the past 35 years, numerous studies have been conducted to show parent engagement hinges on a family's socioeconomic status (Christianakis, 2011; Moles, 1993; Vaden-Kiernan & McManus, 2005). Mapp et al. (2017) prompted educators to examine their core beliefs about families. Families must be viewed as equal partners in the critical work done for students. Rimm-Kaufman and Pianta (2005, as cited in Santiago et al. 2016), explained the parent-teacher relationship is crucial for student success and must be

well established to promote positive academic outcomes for students. In a research study conducted by Murphy (2009), data collections examined parent perceptions of teacher communication. Murphy conducted a nonexperimental quantitative research design through survey data. Analysis of data was completed using statistical procedures and hypothesis testing. Parents and teachers were surveyed using questionnaires and closed-ended questions. Data evaluation was completed to explore the correlation between mean scores of perception and effective school-to-home communication. Through her study, Murphy found teachers believed school-to-home communication was clear and consistent, contrary to the data collected from parents that showed a significantly lower data rating regarding school-to-home communication. The data concluded parents have differing views about what communication looks like, indicating teachers should survey parents to determine their preferred communication method (Murphy 2009). Based on the study results, recommendations were provided to teachers on how to modify their communication methods to meet their families' varying needs. The communication discrepancies were shared with the administrative team to help guide teachers in revising their current practices. Cary (2006) stated, "Communication is the heart of education" (p. 6). Cary urged school leaders to develop methods that seek guidance and feedback from stakeholders to communicate information. School leaders are encouraged to use survey data to determine which delivery method is most useful for families and disseminate the findings to the school community.

Olmstead (2013) researched to examine the impact of technology on parent engagement and student achievement. The study was conducted via surveys and focus groups. Olmstead surveyed 240 parents of students in fourth to sixth grades from diverse

socioeconomic backgrounds. He also surveyed seven teachers with at least 10 years of teaching experience. All the teachers had been teaching at the same school for at least 10 years. The data were disaggregated to review the three research questions:

1. How does teacher communication through the use of technology promote parent engagement in their children's academic lives?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers regarding the effectiveness of technology to promote parent engagement?
3. What are the perceptions of parents regarding the effectiveness of technology in promoting their connectedness with their child's teacher and school?

A mixed methods approach was used to collect the data. The study revealed both parents and teachers emphasized parent engagement to ensure the child's success. Parent engagement does not need to be within the school building for parents to be a part of the school environment. As technology expands, school leaders and parents are exploring how technology can support innovative methods to engage parents. Based on the data, Olmstead (2013) determined proactive parent engagement can be fostered through technology. According to the data, parents and teachers viewed technology as an effective means to communicate with parents. Technology presents several different modalities to communicate with parents, for instance, text messages, email, phone calls, robot calls, etc. Teachers and school leaders must be proactive in developing systems to eliminate communication barriers (Olmstead, 2013).

According to Natale (2018), the traditional means of communicating via notes and bulletin boards is becoming obsolete, as teachers and parents rely more on technology. Technology usage by teachers allows parents to receive information timely and has less

chance of getting lost. Although communication between parents and teachers should be dynamic and not static, teachers can use technology resources to communicate mass messages and individual student messages. Natale conducted a study to analyze how to make communication via technology more applicable to the school community. The research was conducted using the following two questions:

1. What are current technology communication patterns between families and teachers, and how are these existing patterns perceived?
2. According to families, what are some ways to improve technological communication (i.e., advice from families)?

The study was conducted via surveys of parents, giving them an option to complete them either electronically or via hard copy. A mixed methods statistical analysis was used to interpret the data. The participants in this study were families from an elementary school in New Jersey. Twenty-eight families with students in kindergarten through third grade responded to the survey. The data trends suggested (a) parents and educators are using more technology to communicate, and (b) parents would like to see additional platforms implemented such as Google Classroom, Remind App, or other apps that will support families with communication. The overall theme of the data concludes teachers and parents need communication to meet their students' needs effectively. To do this, communication expectations shared with families must be clearly outlined and defined (Natale, 2018).

"Communication apps are breaking down barriers that have limited parent engagement in the past" (Minero, 2017, Introduction section, title). According to Thomas (2019), who cited Guidera (2015), parents have tools through smartphones, iPads, etc. to

communicate with teachers. Minero (2017) stated innovative ways to communicate with families give parents an in-depth look at their child's academic and social performance. Text-based apps conveniently provide parents with an avenue to engage with teachers in real-time throughout the day and evening. Rodgers (2020) noted using technology to connect with parents is a strategy that engages all families. Minero found that many educational apps are used to extinguish language barriers between teachers and parents, as the apps have translation capabilities to support communication.

### **Volunteering**

Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework includes volunteering as a component to help build the school-family partnerships. Epstein et al. stated,

“Volunteer” to mean anyone who supports school programs and students' activities in any way, at any place, and at any time---not just during the school day at the school building; including those who are audience members for student events, sports, activities, performances, etc. (p. 20)

Snyder and Omoto (2008) described volunteerism using six identifying characteristics:

1. Volunteers are just that; volunteers. They participate out of the choice of wanting to be involved. Volunteers typically do not have to be coerced to participate. They begin to develop relationships with individuals managing the project and become a part of the organization.
2. Volunteers participate as an intentional decision and not because they are forced due to necessity.
3. Volunteer participation occurs over a period and is not a one-time event.

4. Volunteerism is based on an individual's personal goals and will to be involved. Volunteers participate without seeking compensation.
5. Volunteers look for individuals or agencies wanting assistance and desiring support.
6. Volunteers participate in organizations. The overall premise of volunteerism is grounded in choice, personal satisfaction, and values. Volunteers are motivated by what they value and become actively involved based on their desires.

Recruiting volunteers and increasing parent engagement are predicated on the actions of school leaders and teachers. School leaders play a vital role in creating and maintaining an environment in which parents feel welcome and want to get involved. A school leader's actions can be felt directly and indirectly based on the interactions put forth to recruit volunteers (Yulianti et al., 2020).

Epstein et al. (2018) admonished school leaders to develop a framework for volunteers to actively participate in the learning environment that will help mitigate challenges parents may have with volunteering. This work begins with addressing challenges that may prevent parents from volunteering. Epstein et al. identified the following challenges:

- recruit volunteers widely so all families know their times and talents are welcome
- make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable employed parents to participate some of the time
- organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school,



teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so participants are productive

- inform families they are volunteers when serving as an audience for student events, sports, and other presentations

According to Epstein et al. (2018), the above challenges are countered by addressing the needs via a plan. He divided the plan into eight essential components to have a successful partnership:

- leadership
- teamwork
- written plans
- implementation
- evaluation
- adequate funds
- collegial support
- networking

Griffith (2001) stated principals are key to getting non-involved parents engaged. He believed this is because of the role they play within the school. Bass (2000) believed when leaders can produce a following, they exhibit transformational leadership qualities. Transformational leaders develop a platform that explicitly models the organization's goals and vision, emphasizing a team's first approach (Bass, 2000). According to Bass, transformational leaders can affect their followers in a way that inspires them to exhibit a positive attitude. This type of leadership is key when it comes to effecting change, as most do not respond well to "top-down" leadership (Fullan, 2009). Leaders are responsible for reshaping or restructuring the culture around them to change others'

perceptions (Bass, 1990, as cited in McCallum & O'Connell, 2009).

Epstein et al. (2018) described teamwork for schools as all stakeholders (teachers, parents, administrators, students, and community leaders) partnering together for a common plan for the school's success. Epstein et al. implored school leaders to create a team to develop a comprehensive plan to implement, evaluate, and look for continual opportunities to engage parents. Implementation of effective volunteer programs is built on training, recruitment, and creating a welcoming school climate (Burke & Picus, 2001; Epstein et al., 2018). Epstein et al.'s research iterated the necessity of schools to develop an Action Team for Partnerships to initiate the plan for volunteers in the school. This team is not led by the principal, but rather a school and community leader. This team's fundamental goal is to activate parents by engaging them in the school's goals. This team is made up of subcommittees that are responsible for various parts of the School Improvement Plan. The committee chairs monitor goals, support the implementation of the action steps, and analyze data for their particular goals (Epstein et al., 2018).

Mapp and Kuttner (2013) conducted a case study on an elementary school in Washington, DC. The school had been identified as a low-performing school based on standardized testing data. In addition to low test scores, the students had a high suspension rate and low parent participation, as indicated by the 12% parent conference rate. In 2011, the school received a school improvement grant to pilot parent-teacher home visits and pilot the parent-teacher team model. The teachers received training and began to implement the first phase of the pilot. The second phase of the pilot introduced the academic parent-teacher teams. The team focused on building relationships with parents, training parents to support students, collaboration, and group learning. This team

focused on building parent efficacy by increasing their confidence in supporting their children while expanding teacher capacity in knowing how to partner with parents as volunteers. The case study proved to increase math scores by more than 18 percentage points and reading scores by more than 9 percentage points. By the end of the school year, 55% of parents attended all three conferences (Mapp & Kuttner, 2013). Mapp et al.'s (2017) research on the dual capacity framework supported the notion that parent volunteers engage when the following five conditions are met:

1. Linked to Learning
2. Relational
3. Developmental
4. Collaborative
5. Interactive

The learning for families must be aligned with the learning of their children. Parents should walk away from a conference or meeting feeling empowered to support their children (Mapp et al., 2017). Fiore (2016) concluded school leaders must utilize relational skills to foster an environment that encourages parents to participate and engage with the school community. Teachers and school leaders must view parents as equal partners in the school's important work and build on their strengths as they engage in volunteer activities and collaborate with teachers to support their children and the school. School leaders have a charge to cultivate an environment where exchanges are interactive, and two-way conversations are valued (Mapp et al., 2017).

Epstein et al. (2018) asserted evaluation is a critical part of any volunteer program. Leaders are responsible for evaluating the quality of the program to determine the next

steps and provide feedback to stakeholders. The focus for evaluation must be continuous improvement, thus discussing areas where goals were not met. Epstein (2010) conducted a research study to show leadership support for families and community engagement for schools contribute to implementation, collaboration, and family engagement.

### **Learning at Home**

The fourth type of parent engagement in Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework is learning at home. Epstein et al. described learning at home as,

Activities that provide families with information about the academic work that their children do in class, how to help their children with homework, and other curriculum-related activities and decisions. Learning at Home activities also may guide parents to help children practice and master specific skills at home; discuss their work in a particular subject; complete homework; choose courses, summer programs, or other learning opportunities and plan for post-secondary education. (p. 65)

Constantino (2015) found when families decide to be involved in their children's education, their participation makes a difference in their educational trajectory. These families see academic challenges as opportunities to engage with the school and teachers and hold their children to high expectations. Engaged families are families that are empowered by personal skills and abilities to support their children effectively.

Parent engagement in schooling has been linked to a significant indicator of children's academic success. Parent engagement can be examined through two lenses: the "school front" and the "home front." Home-front engagement often takes place in the home but can be exhibited outside the home. This engagement presents in many forms:

encouragement, academic support, goal setting, and discussions (Barger et al., 2019).

According to Barger et al. (2019), when parents participate in home-front engagement, they are broken into two categories: cognitive intellectual involvement and homework involvement. Grolnick et al. (2000) and Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) asserted cognitive and academic involvement encourages parents to create a stimulating environment that employs children to read and participate in library trips and engages children in conversations geared toward current events.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) claimed a parent's role in homework is built off personal constructs. Often parent beliefs and personal experiences drove their level of engagement. A parent's involvement in their child's education was typically based on three tenets: (a) the parent's belief about their place in their child's life, (b) the parent's self-efficacy or ability to support their child in school, and (c) opportunities for parent engagement from the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Sammons et al. (2015) studied the effects of the home learning environment on academic outcomes. Sammons et al. contended the home learning environment has the most impact on developing a child's readiness and outlook on learning, impacting the attainment of educational outcomes. A longitudinal study conducted by Sammons et al. showed how the home learning environment affected students beginning in preschool. This study showed the home learning environment influences how students from early years of education are influenced to further their educational aspirations, typically beyond the level of education their parents attained, which could also change their current socioeconomic trajectory. The study was conducted over a 17-year period and included children ranging in age from 3 to 16 years old. The study used a comparison group of

students who had not attended preschool. These students represented the "no preschool (home)" group. In this study, the home learning environment was studied at four checkpoints: preschool, age 7, age 11, and age 14. The research indicated high correlations of specific components that lead to educational success (Sammons et al., 2015).

The research presented several data points that concluded how the home learning environment affected student success throughout their schooling. Sammons et al. (2015) revealed several factors to help a child excel or cause them to fail to reach their full potential. These characteristics include income, parent qualifications to support students, parent education levels, the number of books in the home, access to the Internet, and parent academic supervision. The study showed students who have a firm grounding from preschool forward through their home learning environment are more apt to succeed throughout education. Students who presented with a robust home learning environment from their early years of education have the potential to excel academically, proving that a home learning environment beginning in preschool is a critical factor in the success of students as they matriculate through school (Sammons et al., 2015).

Sammons et al. (2015) provided significant evidence that the home learning environment can support cognitive and social development. The research provided evidence the home learning environment measured at different ages shows long-term effects on educational attainment levels. Access to literature was a critical factor that predicts higher academic success. Children must read at home, have someone read to them, or have access to books. Reading has shown to be the "net" of all the factors, including income, parent qualifications, and education.

According to Niklas et al. (2016), families are the most critical factors in a child's educational trajectory. The home learning environment can create constructs that support the learning, development, and well-being of children. During early childhood, the interaction young children have with adults begins to sharpen their cognitive and social development. As caregivers observe the child, they determine how they will support the child by adjusting their support based on their skill level. Children make meaning of the world around them by practices exhibited in their homes. Exposing children to various learning opportunities supports their propensity to develop numeracy and literacy skills (Niklas et al., 2016).

Parents are the most significant predictors of a child's literacy competency (Bingham, 2007, as cited in Niklas et al., 2016). The home literacy environment is often modeled by how the parents engage with literature. Books serve as a tool to support children with broadening their vocabulary and tend to stimulate their cognitive abilities. Children who are exposed to rich literature in the home learning environment have a more expansive vocabulary. A child's vocabulary is a predictor of their word-reading ability throughout school (Juel, 2005, as cited in Niklas et al., 2016).

Niklas et al. (2016) conducted a study to show how interventions in the home learning environment affected literacy and numeracy. The research sought to answer the following questions:

1. Are the literacy and numeracy environments associated with the child and family characteristics?
2. Are specific aspects of the home learning environment also specific in their predictions of children's literacy and numeracy abilities when child and family

characteristics are controlled form?

3. What are the parents' opinions of the value and novelty of a non-intensive but targeted intervention in the home, and do they plan to change the home learning environment accordingly?

One hundred thirteen students who attended early childhood programs participated in the study. The study was conducted on 4-year-old students. The students' parents invited to participate in the study completed a survey on their home learning environment. Parents also engaged in dialogue with the directors and educators involved in the research. The students engaged in three rounds of assessments in the early childhood education center.

The literacy and numeracy environment was measured in 10 questions. These questions measured various aspects of the home learning environment. Both assessments focused on the activities in the home and the frequency of each one. Parents were asked probing questions so researchers could better understand how literacy and numeracy are demonstrated in the home through learning activities. Based on the responses to the questions asked during the interviews, interventions were enacted to support students. Parents were trained on how to administer the interventions in the home learning environment (Niklas et al., 2016).

Students participating in an in-home learning environment were tested using the Woodcock-Johnson III cognitive ability test. Data were collected on students in an intervention group and a non-intervention group. The data collected on students showed that students in households with higher social-economic status scored significantly higher in their intervention group than students in the non-intervention group. They scored



higher in letter knowledge, rhyming, and comprehension as well as numeracy. The study showed students with lower social-economic statuses and English as a second language scored significantly lower in verbal comprehension but not letter identification.

Comparably, this was not true for home numeracy. The research suggests home-based interventions can increase literacy and numeracy skills (Niklas et al., 2016).

Khanolainen et al. (2020) studied the home learning environment and its effects on reading in math development. The home learning environment is divided into two components: the home learning environment and the home numeracy environment. Khanolainen et al. referred to the home learning environment as "the interaction between parents, children, parental attitudes, and at-home materials related to literacy" (p. 2). This study examined if parental difficulties in reading and mathematics impacted student achievement via the home learning environment.

The study examined whether familial risks in the home learning environment have an impact on literacy and mathematical attainment. This study sought to answer the following questions:

1. Does family risk for reading/mathematical difficulties predict the reading and mathematical development of children from grades one to nine?
2. Do home environment factors (Literacy teaching, numeracy teaching, and shared reading) predict the reading and mathematical development of children from grades 1-9?
3. Does familial risk (FR) for reading and mathematical difficulties predict the home learning environment?
4. Are the effects of familial risk (FR) on children's reading and mathematical

development mediated by the home environment factors? (Khanolainen et al., 2020, p. 4)

This study examined reading fluency, reading comprehension, and math fluency. The parents of the students involved in the study were administered a questionnaire when the participating students were in kindergarten. They simply had to respond to one question on their own reading difficulties and their mathematical difficulties and two regarding their spouse. A child was considered to have familial risk if they had at least one parent with some problems. Questionnaires were also administered to parents to gather data on home learning activities. The questionnaires gathered information on shared reading and reading activities (Khanolainen et al., 2020).

A longitudinal study was conducted to show the relationship between familial risk, home activities, and children's skillsets. The results of the study showed significant effects on parental skills and children's skill levels. The evidence was particularly defined for students who have two parents with mathematical difficulties. The data also showed children with fathers who struggled with literacy were also more apt to have poorer reading fluency performance. Conversely, this was not true for students whose mothers struggled with reading and did not predict any of the children's skills in the study. Some evidence suggests students with a two-parent familial risk had a significant increase in at-risk academic failure (Khanolainen et al., 2020).

The home learning environment data did not support the hypothesis that teaching at home significantly impacted student outcomes. The study showed both parents' engagement in shared reading influenced children's reading comprehension, particularly in elementary school. These results were not the same for reading fluency and

mathematics, which suggested that informal meaning activities do not impact decoding, symbolic number knowledge, or non-symbolic mathematical skills (Khanolainen et al., 2020). Because this study was counterintuitive, additional research is needed to understand how to support learning activities for students who may be in homes that are less privileged and support to propel their children forward before starting school (Khanolainen et al., 2020).

### **Decision-Making**

The fifth type of parent engagement in Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework is decision-making. Epstein et al. defined decision-making as, "Activities that enable families to participate in decisions about school policies, programs, and practices that affect their own and other children" (p. 65). Epstein et al. stated, "Type 5 activities include the work of parent representatives who serve on the School Improvement Team, Action Team for Partnerships other committees, PTA, PTO, or other parent engagement organizations" (p. 65). Decision-making practices aim to increase parent participation and input. Parents provide information on how to develop the 1-year action plan for partnerships. They administer surveys to know the school community's interest, specifically what topics or support they need to support their child with at-home learning (Epstein et al., 2018).

According to Constantino (2015), schools and districts must ensure parents know their input is welcomed and valued. School districts must make a concerted effort to garner the opinions of all stakeholders across the school, as the response will be diversified and represent the needs of the community holistically.

In a study focused on the relationship between principal perceptions of parent

engagement and student achievement, Gaston (2013) conducted quantitative research to help school leaders create effective school, family, and community partnerships that impact student achievement. The study focused on the six tenets of Epstein et al.'s (2018) parent engagement framework: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community. The participants involved in the research were secondary school administrators or parent engagement designees from Southern California. A caveat to participating in the study was the focus on parent engagement at the school level and the number of students receiving free/ reduced lunch. Most of the schools for this research had an enrollment of 400 or fewer students.

During the fall of 2010 and spring of 2011, parent engagement surveys were administered; of the surveys collected, only 93 responses were used in the data analysis (Gaston, 2013). Gaston (2013) was looking to see how school leadership initiatives impacted parental participation. There are four strands from the survey that were pillars for the study: (a) instructional program awareness, (b) collaboration and communication, (c) active engagement, and (d) time allocation. During the data analysis, survey questionnaires were distributed to participants with different demographic backgrounds to support his research findings. Gaston's (2013) intention was to see if school leaders wanted to establish a culture that provided opportunities for parents to get involved by creating an inviting atmosphere, communication, and learning opportunities, and by being a leader accessible to the school community.

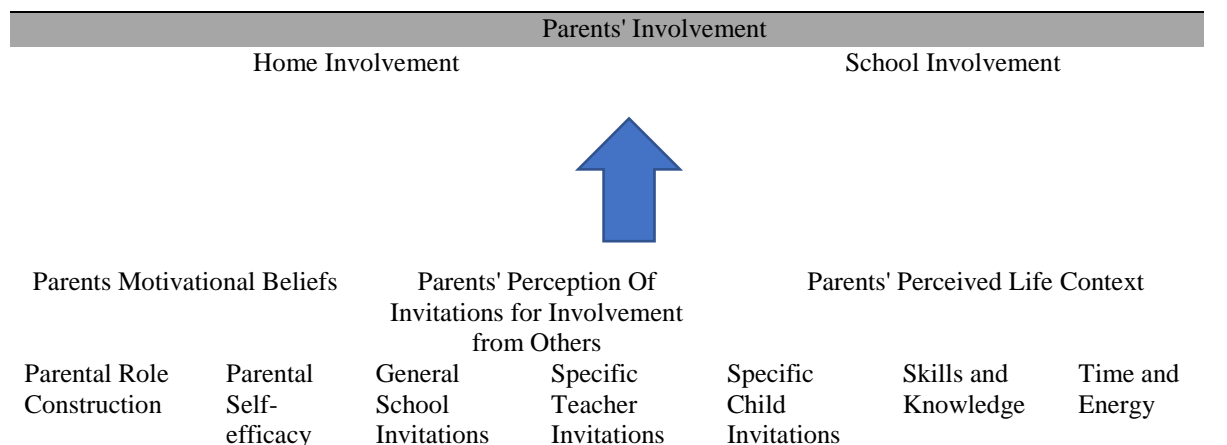
Gaston (2013) concluded parent involvement in decision-making is critical and has a significant effect on student achievement. Parents must have a role in the daily

decision-making at the ground level. Leadership must cultivate a culture that is welcoming and has a place for parent voices. School leaders empower families when they give them a role within the school and some autonomy in decision-making.

All school community members need information about what is being proposed in the schools and should have an opportunity to provide feedback to the leaders. School community representatives must be vigilant about sharing information and reporting the findings back to the school team. These parent representatives must mobilize parents and learn how to lead and advocate for policies and programs (Epstein et al., 2018).

Constantino (2015) also emphasized leaders must make the decision-making process inclusive of all essential stakeholders. According to Kotter et al. (2004), change within an organization is a process that goes through various stages before stakeholders grasp the need for the change. He stated one critical step in change is to empower to action. Constantino denoted that working through the steps is a process and can be time-consuming; however, the result will likely be transformational when each issue is addressed.

Figure 2 explains how parent beliefs are motivated by what they think they should do concerning their child's education. The model provides a concrete example of parental constructs developed as parents experience schooling (Green et al., 2007).

**Figure 2***Revised Theoretical Model for Parent Involvement*

Green et al. (2007) made the argument that parent motivational beliefs are socialized based on their role construction that encompasses ideas about how they should respond to their child's education. These constructs are founded on individual background criteria, such as their schooling experiences, how they believe child-rearing looks, and their child's need or lack of support. Green et al.'s (2007) framework outlined parent motivation for involvement in their child's education.

Green et al. (2007) conducted a study with 853 parents with students enrolled in Grades 1-5. All families participating in this study came from diverse backgrounds, including socioeconomic status and ethnicity. The families were surveyed on two separate occasions via surveys sent home with students. If a parent had more than one child in the school, they only completed the oldest child's survey. The questionnaires collected data on parent motivational beliefs, parent perceptions of invitations to others' involvement, and parent perceptions of life context variables. A section was embedded specifically asking parents about their skills, knowledge, time, and energy. Lastly, questions were

asked about parent engagement practices, age-related differences, and the social-economic status of each parent group.

The survey data were analyzed using all the indicators from the questionnaires. Researchers agreed parent engagement pays positive dividends for student achievement; however, little is known about motivating parents to get involved. Researchers predicted the psychological constructs significantly impacted parent decisions to get involved. The research team isolated social-economic status and assessed how the model could be used to predict age-related involvement. The model studied suggested parents are motivated by prompts shared in the framework for home-based involvement and school-based involvement. Parent beliefs and perceptions to decide to get involved are grossly inspired by the perception of invitations from others (specifically teachers), motivations, beliefs, time, energy, skills, and knowledge. These factors are particularly evident in the parent's decision to become involved at the school level. Home-based involvement was mainly motivated by the student, student invitations, self-efficacy, and time. Ironically, the research revealed the same constructs were barriers in parents deciding to participate at the school level. These constructs were evident in all surveys, regardless of income levels or education.

The findings suggested parental involvement is based on a social context. If you isolate socioeconomic status, you find parents are motivated by relationships with the children and teachers. This model is believed to be relevant for all and can be applied across all socioeconomic backgrounds (Green et al., 2007).

Constantino (2015) contended every parent should have a "voice" in the school and be a part of the school governance. Parents must have various avenues to advocate for

their school and engage in the school community. Parent engagement, including decision-making, cannot be overlooked. Intentionality is needed when implementing an effective family engagement plan that allows all stakeholders to get involved in the school community.

Decision-making activities must focus on bringing parents to the school and giving them an opportunity to make decisions about the school's governance. Increasing parents' voices may motivate them to get involved and become rooted in the fabric of the school by seeing themselves as partners in the school community (Epstein et al., 2018).

### **Collaborating With Community**

Conclusively, Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework for engagement is collaborating with the community. Epstein et al. defined collaborating with the community as,

Activities that encourage the cooperation of schools and families with community groups, organizations, agencies and individuals. Connections are made in both directions; community resources may assist and enrich the school, students and families. Schools, students and families are important entities and may assist and enrich the community. (p. 66)

Epstein et al. (2018) believed all communities have resources that could help strengthen schools and help students succeed. He admonished school leaders to identify their community resources to determine available resources to support teachers, families, and students. Epstein et al. encouraged leaders to look for organizations to collaborate with financial resources, student internships, service projects, and special projects.

Edwards (2016) believed school leaders must extinguish the "ghost" in the room when collaborating with the community. Historically, community collaboration was



rooted in the structures of the schools in the early 1950s and 1960s. Because schools were segregated, community leaders (especially African American leaders) collaborated with the schools. After desegregation, African American community leaders did not have a place in the school, as they were not included in PTA meetings and decision-making at the school level. This shift created a void in the representation for all community stakeholders to collaborate with the school. Edwards rallied leaders to examine why families do not participate and begin to explore the historical context of community involvement. It is imperative educators spend time studying barriers that prevent community leaders from collaborating with the school. Edwards suggested relationships are a critical factor in building bonds with the community and creating a culture where all feel welcomed.

Constantino (2015) urged us to "engage the greater community" (p. 45). Schools have always had a focus on developing strong community partnerships that could provide access to external resources. School communities have a plethora of resources available to students and teachers, while schools should be a central focus for communities to gather and work toward the school community's greater good. Schools engaging with their communities build partnerships with organizations that create opportunities within the community and provide an outlet for students to have access to internships, service projects, tutors, and other activities. When these partnerships develop, the school becomes a focal point for learning for students and the entire community. Christenson and Sheridan (2001, as cited in Constantino, 2015), found student success depends on the connection between the student's community and the child's education. Because so many social norms, cultural experiences, socioeconomic health, and family needs are embedded in the

community, the need to have a strong connection with the community is necessary for the success of all students, especially when trying to understand how to support them (Constantino, 2015).

Hauseman et al. (2017) studied the specific impact of community involvement on a principal's work in the school. The study was conducted with 1,400 principals, focusing on opportunities for community engagement within the schools. The study's purpose was to investigate how school-community involvement can be used as a strategy to achieve school goals and develop long-term relationships with the community.

Hauseman et al. (2017) conducted a mixed method research design consisting of three different focus groups containing eight principals each and an online survey. The principals came from various backgrounds and represented diversity in experiences. The principals involved in the focus group were used to gauge the pertinence of the survey questions. The research team sent invitations out to all public school principals to gather feedback. The principals came from various backgrounds and represented diversity in experiences. They received 62.8% of the surveys from females, 37.2% from males, with 77.3% working in elementary schools, 16.4% as secondary principals, and 2.9% working at both levels. The average years of experience for all returned surveys was 7.6 (Hauseman et al., 2017).

The qualitative data involved two phases: qualitative data from the online survey, with the other portion analyzing community involvement questions. The qualitative data indicated principals see community as part of their daily job responsibilities and noted how they could see the positive impact of community on the school community.

Hauseman et al.'s (2017) data did not indicate a significant difference in how school-

community varied based on urban, rural, or suburban variables. The data showed differences in school-community by levels, as it appears that secondary school leaders are involved in an average of 6.9 school-community activities versus 3.9 for elementary school leaders. Secondary schools offer more opportunities for community members to be involved in the school community. Principals noted providing community programs is time-consuming but greatly enhances student outcomes. Students benefit from the partnerships and programs, and the community bolsters a positive culture that is inclusive to all. Programs offered to help the community are necessary to support student success (Hauseman et al., 2017).

School leaders must know their school community's needs and respond to internal and external issues that affect that community specifically. Developing strong community partnerships is necessary for the success of the school. Leaders must be willing to build positive relationships with diverse leaders in the school community to garner the support needed to move the school forward (Kladifko, 2013).

Epstein (2011) noted schools are isolated from businesses, churches, and other agencies that could help develop partnerships within the school community. Kladifko (2013) also pointed out that most principals do not communicate with external agencies or advocate for support; however, communication with the external community could bring resources to the school and help the leader understand its larger context.

Kladifko (2013) contended principals must be vigilant to understand their school community, be the school's voice by sharing the vision with all stakeholders, be active in the community by inviting leaders to events, and develop relationships with businesses. Relationships should be based on the premise of improving conditions for the student

while creating systems that are beneficial for everyone. Staff must understand the importance of engaging the community by collaborating with them through various opportunities at the school level (Kladifko, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

The research presented in this literature review supports the six tenets in Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework on improving school climate and student success. Parent engagement is a critical element in developing schools focused on making a positive difference in student lives. School administrators need to be transparent and genuine in their desire to involve families in schools to increase student achievement.

Mapp et al. (2017) urged leaders to examine their beliefs about parent engagement to help them move forward and begin the work of developing partnerships with families. Because this work is crucial to the future of education, we cannot tarry any longer in implementing intentional practices that will positively affect our school community.

Parents have a well-spring of experiences to share with school communities. Their contributions should not be ignored, as they are part of the school community. We need our students' parents, and they need us. Let us challenge mindsets, partner with our communities, and make the necessary changes for all students' success (Constantino, 2015). As stated by Patricia Vitale Reilly, "We can cultivate family engagement three ways: by building relationships, by fostering communication, and by engaging in meaningful collaborations" (Ferlazzo 2016, last blog entry).

### Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies designed to increase the engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts of North Carolina. Epstein's (2011) research on engaging families investigated six types of engagement to increase parent engagement, thus impacting student achievement. Constantino (2015) believed building positive school cultures and establishing positive relationships with families foster parent engagement. His research supported the belief that schools must develop a framework founded on relationships and sustained via communication to eliminate barriers and foster parent engagement.

For this study, I implemented a research design using a mixed methods approach, where both a Likert scale survey and focus group interviews were incorporated. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) defined mixed methods design as "a way to simultaneously collect both qualitative and quantitative data" (p. 551). Surveys have been widely used in social research in higher education institutions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). According to Creswell and Guetterman, focus group interviews are "a process of collecting data through interviews with a group of people" (p. 218). Focus group interviews can be helpful when the interviewees are similar and cooperative with each other. The interviewer is tasked with encouraging all participants to interact with the group by talking and taking turns responding. Additionally, the interviewer must facilitate the discussion and control the dialogue (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019, p. 219).

#### Research Questions

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their engagement at the school where their

children attend?

2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

### **The Researcher**

I am a current public school administrator North Carolina. I have 23 years of experience in education. I am not employed by the district being studied and do not know the administrators at the schools. My primary role in the study was to facilitate the research-based survey and conduct the focus groups at the schools studied. The focus groups were held via Zoom. I analyzed the data responses.

### **Setting**

This study took place in rural eastern North Carolina. The district serves the educational needs of 1,030 students daily from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Of the 1,030 students, 98% are eligible for free or reduced lunch. The studied district has a diversity score of 0.54, which is higher than the state rate of 0.46. The diversity score represents a sampling of students randomly chosen who represent different ethnic groups. Fifty percent of the students enrolled in the district are minority students, primarily Black. The school district has five Title I schools, four elementary schools, and one 6-12 high school. According to the educational programs director, approximately 42% of the children live in single-parent households, and 26.4% live in poverty.

Elementary School 1 has 93 students enrolled. Elementary School 1 has a demographic breakdown of 8% African American, 91% White, and 1% Hispanic. One

hundred percent of the students at Elementary School 1 receive free/reduced lunch.

Elementary School 1 has an achievement score of 61, with 81% of its students meeting growth.

Elementary School 2 has 96 students enrolled. Elementary School 2 has a demographic breakdown of 64% African American and 36% White. One hundred percent of the students at Elementary School 2 receive free/reduced lunch. Elementary School 2 has an achievement score of 61, with 80.6% of its students meeting growth.

Elementary School 3 has 93 students enrolled. Elementary School 3 has a demographic breakdown of 41% African American and 59% White. One hundred percent of the students at Elementary school 3 receive free/reduced lunch. Elementary School 3 has an achievement score of 63, with 74.4% of its students meeting growth.

Elementary 4 has 151 students enrolled. Elementary School 4 has a demographic breakdown of 68 % African American and 32% White. Elementary School 4 has students from preschool to fifth grade.

All the elementary schools being studied have a North Carolina report card grade of C. Pre-K students are enrolled at all four elementary schools and have a demographic makeup of 61% African American and 39% White.

High School 1 has 544 students enrolled with a demographic breakdown of 52% African American and 48% White. High School 1 serves students from sixth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, with 244 students representing Grades 6-8. Ninety-one percent of the students at High School 1 participate in career and technical education. High School 1 has a report grade of B, with a 4-year graduation rate of 95%, higher than the state average of 87.6%.

## **Instruments**

Epstein (1993) provided research-based surveys to assess and evaluate beliefs, attitudes, perceptions, and desired school-based outreach programs to engage families. The participants in her study were parents/guardians and teachers in inner-city Maryland schools. Epstein (1993) used the survey to garner feedback from parents and teachers on beliefs, perceptions, current parent engagement, and desired methods of parent engagement for the schools. I was granted permission from the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships to use the surveys on August 10, 2021, and adapted the surveys for this dissertation (Appendix A).

The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers (Epstein, 1993) is presented in Appendix B. This survey asks parents and teachers to respond with information about their experiences and perceptions of their school. The parent portion of the questionnaire asks questions that allow parents and teachers to express types of engagement that would be beneficial for engaging families. The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers surveys were initially administered in 1993 in elementary and middle schools in Maryland to 1,269 students from Grades 1, 3, and 5 and 171 teachers in five elementary and three middle schools. Parents were asked to complete the survey and return it by mail. The survey had a 59% return rate. The teacher portion of the questionnaire asked questions that allowed teachers to express types of involvement that would be beneficial for engaging families. The original sample size for this study was 395 parents; Cronbach's alpha results range from .72 to .96, which supports the reliability of the survey.



The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries (Epstein, 1993) is presented in Appendix B. This survey contains open-ended questions for parents and teachers to share personal expectations and opinions. The survey asks parents and teachers questions to develop better family engagement processes to engage all said stakeholders.

The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries (Epstein, 1993) was also administered in Maryland in 1993. The survey was conducted in two urban, two suburban, and two rural schools. The sample included 150 teachers, 420 parents, and 1,300 students. The Cronbach's alpha results range from .53 to .91, indicating survey reliability (Epstein, 1993).

Both parent engagement surveys asked open-ended questions that allowed families to share information on current practice, what could be improved, and what they would like to see increase parent involvement. Question 1 of the survey asked parents to share how they currently feel about their school. Questions 2 and 3 asked parents to share how they currently support their child in school. Question 4 asked families to share how well the school does with communication. Each item could be rated as "does not do," "could do better," or "does well." Question 5 queried parents on different workshops they would be interested in attending. Question 6 asked how the school had involved families at school and home. Question 7 outlined various community outreach services and asked families to indicate their interest in knowing more about the services. Questions 8 and 9 asked families to share information about their needs and basic information about their family. Question 10 invited families to share any ideas they may have about how to increase parent engagement.

I facilitated a total of six focus interview groups. The groups were comprised of five to eight participants to gather qualitative data to support research. The focus group participants were chosen using a randomizer to allow the researcher to sample the demographic population at each school setting. I asked the following questions to the parent/guardian focus interview group at each level:

1. In what ways can your local school support providing resources to parents/guardians at home?
2. What is the best form of communication with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?
3. What can your local school do better to support students with homework?
4. What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?
5. In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?
6. In what ways can your local school support you in knowing how to help your child with homework and projects?
7. What prevents you from engaging in your child(ren)'s school?
8. What other ideas or suggestions would you like to share to engage families?
9. In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?

The following questions were asked to the teacher focus interview group at each level.

The teacher questions were worded differently to garner a different perspective.

1. In what ways can your local school support teachers with providing resources

to parents/guardians at home.

2. How do you communicate with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?
3. What can your local school do better to support students with homework?
4. What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?
5. In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?
6. In what ways can your local school support teachers in knowing how to help students with homework and projects?
7. What perceived barriers do you think prevent parents/guardians from engaging in their child(ren)'s school?
8. In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?

### **Participants**

This study included parents/guardians and teachers in the six rural schools in an eastern North Carolina school district. I submitted my IRB after my dissertation proposal to obtain permission to conduct my study. Once I had permission to move forward with the study, I contacted the educational program director to contact the principals at each site to share information about the research and send out information about the survey and focus group interviews (Appendices B and C). The principal emailed the survey out, and potential participants completed the survey as parent/guardian of students in the third, seventh, and 10th grades. According to The Life Solution Center of Darien (2019), third

grade is a transitional school year that often predicts the trajectory of a child's education. When students transition to third grade, they are tasked with applying skills learned in kindergarten through second grade and begin standardized testing. Third, seventh, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades represent the mid-point of elementary, middle, and high school. Parents completing the survey will have experience with the schools and know what parent engagement is present and what parent engagement they would like to see at their child's school.

The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers and The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries were emailed out to parents whose information is contained in the PowerSchool database at each school. The primary parent/guardian involved in their child's education was asked to complete the surveys and share feedback. The surveys were administered in English and Spanish (Appendix C). The surveys allowed parents to share basic demographic and biographical information. The survey collected basic data on primary/guardian interpretations of how they are involved in their child's education, perceived barriers, and how they would like to be involved in their child's education.

Currently, there were 74 third graders, 89 seventh graders, and 69 tenth graders in the district. The participation rate was expected to be at least 50% or better for third, seventh, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. All potential participants received an Informed Consent Form detailing the purpose of the study. The document outlined the required time commitment for participation in the study as well as informed the participants of their rights while participating. The potential participants were informed of strategies used to protect confidentiality during the study. If potential participants agreed to participate, they

reviewed the Informed Consent Form before beginning the survey. At the end of the Informed Consent Form, participants clicked a link that stated, "Completion of this survey indicates my consent to participate in this study."

The parent and teacher surveys for elementary and middle schools had eight questions that utilized the Likert scale, ranking questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. The surveys took the participants no longer than 20 minutes to complete. The parent survey for high school had 13 questions that utilized the Likert scale, ranking questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. The teacher survey had 10 questions that used the Likert scale, ranking questions, multiple-choice questions, and open-ended questions. The surveys took the participants no longer than 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the anonymous survey, participants had an opportunity to acknowledge their willingness to participate in the focus group interviews by clicking "yes" they would be willing to participate in a recorded focus interview group via zoom. If an answer of "yes" was indicated, a link was available for participants to add their contact information. The contact information consisted of participant name, email address, and school representation. While the anonymity of potential participants could not be achieved, all confidential information was secured in an electronic password-protected file. Potential participants were given an opportunity to provide a pseudonym of their choice to protect confidentiality. If the participants did not want to provide a pseudonym, I provided a pseudonym for them. The focus group interviews were conducted in a 2-week window after the survey window closed. I conducted six focus groups: elementary teachers, elementary parents, middle school teachers, middle school parents, high school teachers, and high school parents. The interviews were held after

school hours and lasted between 30-45 minutes. If participants did not have internet access, they could join the Zoom call via phone. The focus group members were chosen randomly using an online randomizer for equal school representation. I did not use the names of the focus group participants; instead, parents/teachers were given pseudonyms.

### **Data Collection**

I collaborated with each school principal on sending out messages to families encouraging them to complete the survey. The participants in the study were contingent upon the parent/guardian's response to the requested participation in the survey. The online survey took no longer than 20 minutes and was emailed out in English and Spanish. The surveys were accessible via a hyperlink. Parents/guardians were asked to complete the survey for third-, seventh-, and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students to garner feedback about their experiences. Each school had hard copies of the survey and stamped envelopes were provided by the researcher for participants who may not have had internet access. Parents/guardians shared basic demographic and biographical information. I collected basic data on parent/guardian interpretation of how they are involved in their child's education, perceived barriers, and how they would like to be involved in their child's education.

Parents/guardians were asked to complete a survey consent form to acknowledge participation in the study. The surveys were active for 3 weeks from the initial survey invitation. Voluntary focus group sessions were held via recorded Zoom meetings at the schools. The researcher conducted two sessions at the elementary school and four at the high school.

Because the surveys were collected electronically, the data were disaggregated on

an Excel document and used in the research. The hard copy surveys were collected and entered into the database to be included in the data. The focus group conversations were recorded and transcribed by an online transcription platform.

### **Data Analysis**

After the survey collection, I analyzed the data collected via the survey and evaluate the raw data on the spreadsheet looking for themes. Each question was summarized and given a percentage based on responses. I used lean codes to identify overarching themes and then reduced the codes to manageable themes within the data that aligned with the research questions.

In addition to using the themes from the data, I reviewed and analyzed the data several more times to find responses aligned to research questions. The data were validated using triangulation to align the data responses from the participants.

### **Data Display**

The findings were displayed by aligning the descriptive themes to answer the research questions. Table 1 displays the research questions, participants, the instrument used, data analysis, and how the data were displayed.

**Table 1***Data Display for Research Questions*

Research questions	Participants	Instrument	Analysis	Display
1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their engagement at the school their child(ren) attends?	Parents and teachers	The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers	I used the data from The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers along with data from the focus group questions. Specifically, I used Question 1-10B from the survey.	Descriptive data will be collected from the surveys and displayed in charts and graphs to show the findings. The researcher will provide specific recommendations based on the data findings.
		The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries	I used the data from The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries Questions along with focus group questions. Specifically, I will use Questions 1-12, A-D, Question 12, I&J, Question 13 and open-ended questions.	
		Focus Group Questions	Focus Group Questions 4 and 8 from the parent/guardian interview group.	
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?	Parents and Teachers	The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers	I used the data from The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers along with data from the focus group questions. Specifically, I used questions 1-4, Question 5, A-L, Question 6 A-R, Question 7, A-N, and 12, A, and E from the survey.	Descriptive data will be collected from the surveys and displayed in charts and graphs to show the findings. The researcher will provide specific recommendations based on the data findings.
		The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries	I used the data from The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries Questions along with data from the focus group questions. Specifically, I used questions 2, A-N, Question 3, A-O, Questions 4, 5, 9, and open-ended questions.	



Research questions	Participants	Instrument	Analysis	Display
		Focus Group Questions	Focus Group Question 4 from the teacher interview group.	
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?	Parents and Teachers	The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers	I used the data from The Elementary and Middle School Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents and Teachers along with focus group questions. Specifically, I used Question 4, K, M, and N from the survey.	Descriptive data will be collected from the surveys and displayed in charts and graphs to show the findings. The researcher will provide specific recommendations based on the data findings.
		The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries	I used the data from The High School and Family Partnership: Surveys and Summaries Questions along with data from the focus group questions. Specifically, I used open-ended questions E & F.	
		Focus Group Questions	Focus group Questions 7 and 8 from the parent/guardian interview group.	
			Focus group Question 7 from the teacher interview group	

The findings were displayed by aligning survey results and interview themes to the research questions.

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their engagement at the school their children attend?
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

The data from the surveys were displayed in charts and graphs. All themes identified by the researcher were displayed in a horizontal bar graph to identify the themes found through the focus groups and surveys. Focus group data were analyzed to determine major and minor themes and interconnect them with survey data.

### **Summary**

Survey and focus group data were collected, and findings showed disparities in how parents/guardians and teachers perceived parent engagement in the six schools. The data findings provided solutions to bridge the parent engagement gaps in the school community. Epstein et al.'s (2018) *School, Family and Community Partnerships* handbook guided me on increasing parent engagement and raising student achievement.

The dissertation gathered parent/guardian and teacher experiences in the six rural eastern North Carolina schools. The data were used to draw conclusions and provide best practices to administrators and school leaders around the country. I made recommendations to school leaders on how to mitigate barriers to increase engagement.

## Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies that will increase the engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts of North Carolina. The following questions guided this study:

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their involvement at the school where their children attend?
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

The research utilizes Epstein et al.'s (2018) six types of parental involvement as a framework to increase school, family, and community partnerships. Chapter 2 explained this research that supports the six tenets of Epstein et al.'s parental involvement. The study focused on investigating strategies to increase engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts. This study analyzed staff and parental experiences in how these six types of involvement are being implemented K-5 in the school system.

In this chapter, quantitative data are presented to generate a discussion on which component or components of Epstein et al.'s (2018) types of involvement the schools need to address to impact parent engagement in rural schools. The findings will allow school leaders to understand how parents can support their children at home, participate in the school, and how they currently feel about parent engagements. The findings will also allow school leaders to understand how staff members view parent engagement and their

recommended strategies to increase parent engagement.

In addition, focus groups were presented questions that included elementary parents, middle/high school parents, elementary teachers, and middle/high school teachers. The questions used in the focus groups aligned with the survey questions distributed to parents and teachers. The quantitative and qualitative data collected provide additional data on parental and educator experience with the six tenets of Epstein et al.'s (2018) parent engagement and give insight into opportunities or programs needed for district improvement in this area.

Questions 1-5 in the elementary/middle school parent survey asked for the demographic information of the parents/guardians and others, including stepmother, stepfather, aunt, uncle, grandmother, and grandfather. In Question 1, parents were asked to share who completed the survey. Table 2 displays data for those who completed the parent survey for their children.

### **Elementary Parent Responses**

**Table 2**

*Question 1 Results*

Who is filling out the survey? N=31	Mother	Father	Stepmother	Other
	93.55%	3.23%	3.23%	

The data show that 94% of the surveys were completed by the mother, 3% by the father, and 3% by the stepmother.

In Question 2, parents were asked to share how many students attend the school this year. Table 3 displays the number of children in the family for survey participants.

**Table 3***Question 2 Results*

How many children go to this school this year? N=31	One	Two	Three	Four	Five or more
	45.16%	38.71%	16.13%	0%	0%

The families completing the survey had a minimum of one child and a maximum of three.

Table 4 displays the data for Question 3, showing the number of families completing the survey with students at varying grade levels from elementary to middle school.

**Table 4***Question 3 Results*

What grades are your children in this school year? Check all the grades of the children in school. N=31	Responses
Pre-K	9.68%
Kindergarten	12.9%
First	9.7%
Second	9.68%
Third	35.5%
Fourth	16.1%
Fifth	16.1%
Sixth	3.23%
Seventh	38.8%
Eighth	3.23%

Parents/guardians were asked to share the grade levels of the students enrolled in the schools. Students in the school ranged from kindergarten to eighth grade. The data show that the third and seventh grades had the highest parent participation levels.

Table 5 outlines the ethnicities of the families participating in the survey.

**Table 5***Question 4 Results*

How do you describe yourself? N=31	Asian American	Black or African American	White or Caucasian	Hispanic or Latino (a)	Other
	3.2%	38.7%	51.61%	3%	3%

The data displayed in Table 5 show that 51.61% of the families that completed the survey are White/Caucasian, 38.7% are Black, and 3% are Hispanic or Latino.

Table 6 displays the data for the primary language spoken by the families completing the survey.

**Table 6***Question 5 Results*

What language do you speak? N=31	English	Spanish	Hmong	Other
	96.7%	3.23%	0%	0%

Most of the families completing the survey are English speaking. Only 3.2% of the families spoke Spanish.

Question 6 represents families' feelings about their child(ren)'s current elementary/middle school. Responses for Question 6 are found in Table 7.

**Table 7***Question 6 Results*

How do you feel about your child's elementary/middle school right now? N=31	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This is a very good school.	0%	0%	64.52%	35.48%
I feel welcome at the school.	0%	3.33%	50%	46.67%
I get along well with my child's teacher(s).	0%	0%	58.84%	41.94%
The teacher at the school cares about my child.	0%	0%	54.84%	45.16%
This school views parents as important partners.	0%	3.23%	61.29%	35.48%
The community supports this school.	0%	6.46%	67.74%	25.81%
This school is one of the best schools for students and parents.	0%	12.9%	64.52%	22.58%

In Question 6, parents used a 4-point Likert scale to convey their overall feelings about the elementary/middle school learning environment related to the culture. Parents were asked whether this is a good elementary/middle school; 35.5% strongly agreed, and 0% disagreed. Parents were asked if the school was the best for students and parents; 65% agreed, while only 13% disagreed. Approximately 50% of the parents strongly agreed that the school felt welcoming, and over 50% felt that their child's teacher cared about them. Over 60% of parents agreed that the school views them as essential partners, and over 65% of parents agreed that the community supports the school.

Survey Question 7 relates to Epstein et al.'s (2018) Type 4, learning at home. In Survey Question 7, parents express subjects they want to know more about to support

their children at home. Question 7 results are displayed in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Question 7 Results*

What subjects do you want to know more about to help your child? N=31	Responses
Math skills	77.8%
Reading skills	81.4%
Writing skills	44.4%
Spelling	29.6%
Social studies/science	33.3%
Speaking skills	22.2%
Study skill/social emotional	37%

According to the data in Table 8, math and reading skill support is a high need for parents. Over 75% of parents need support with math skills, and over 80% need help with reading skills. Parents were also asked to share their need for study skills/social-emotional skills; 37% of families expressed a need for support in that area.

In Questions 8 and 9, parents share how they are currently involved with their child's education. The data displayed in Table 9 show the most common ways parents engage with their child(ren) at home.



**Table 9***Question 8 Results*

How are parents involved with their children at home? N=31	Every day or most days	Once a week	Once in a while	Never
Read with your child?	41.94%	19.35%	29.03%	9.68%
Volunteers in the classroom or at school?	0%	3.23%	16.13%	80.66%
Work with your child on homework?	77.42%	6.45%	16.13%	0.00%
Review and discuss the school work your child brings home?	70.97%	16.13%	9.68%	3.23%
Help your child with math?	67.74%	3.23%	29.03%	0.00%
Visit your child's school?	9.68%	19.35%	45.16%	25.81%
Talk to your child's teacher?	9.68%	9.68%	64.52%	16.13%
Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school?	83.87%	9.68%	6.45%	0.00%
Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting	6.45%	0.00%	77.42%	16.13%
Check to see if your child finished his homework?	90.32%	6.45%	3.23%	0.00%

Over 95% of parents expressed they volunteered once in a while or never. When parents were asked if they read with their child, 41.94% read with their child every day, 29.03% never read with their child, and 19.35% read once weekly. This question relates to Epstein et al.'s (2018) Type 4, learning at home. Parents expressed that 83.87% work with their children on homework daily or at least once weekly. When asked if they review and discuss the homework their child brings home, 70.97% of parents expressed they review and check homework every day or most days, while only 3.23% never reviewed or checked homework.

Almost 70% of families agreed that they support students with math homework every day or most days; conversely, 29% of families checked once a week. Parents were

asked how often they visit the school; 10% of families visit the school every day or most days, while 70% only visit once in a while or never. The remaining 20% of families expressed they visited the school at least once weekly. Parents expressed their interactions with their children's teachers. Only 19% of the families surveyed communicated with their children's teacher every day or at least one time weekly. On the other hand, 80% of the families surveyed never or once in a while interacted with the children's teacher.

Parents were asked if they asked their children about how they were doing in school; 84% of parents asked daily, 10% once weekly, and 6% once in a while. Over 97% of parents check to see if their children complete homework, while 3% never check. Only 6% of parents attend school events, and 94% of parents attend once in a while or never.

In Question 9, Table 10, parents rate how often the school communicates to engage them in various facets of the school.

**Table 10***Question 9 Results*

How does the school communicate with families in various areas? N=31	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Helps me understand my child's stage of development.	9.68%	6.45%	61.29%	22.58%
Tells me how my child is doing in school.	9.68%	6.45%	58.07%	25.81%
Asks me to volunteer at the school.	9.68%	54.84%	29.03%	6.45%
Explains how to check my child's homework.	9.68%	35.48%	45.17%	9.68%
Sends home news about things happening at school.	3.23%	9.68%	54.84%	32.26%
Tells me what skills my child needs to learn in: Math	6.45%	32.26%	38.71%	22.58%
Reading/Language Arts	9.68%	16.13%	45.16%	29.03%
Science	12.9%	16.13%	48.39%	22.58%
Provides information on community services that I may want to use with my family.	6.45%	25.81%	51.62%	16.13%
Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings.	3.23%	25.81%	51.61%	19.35%
Asks me to help with fundraising.	3.23%	25.81%	48.39%	22.58%
Has a parent-teacher conference with me.	6.45%	22.58%	58.06%	12.9%
Includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees.	12.9%	29.03%	41.93%	16.13%
Provides information on community events that I may want to attend with my child.	6.45%	19.35%	48.39%	25.81%

Over 80% of families surveyed agree or strongly agree that the school helps them understand their children's stage of development. Eighty-four percent of families agree or strongly agree that the school communicates how their child is doing in school, while 45% disagree that the school explains how to check their child's homework. When parent participants were asked if opportunities were offered to them to volunteer at the school, 65% of the parents surveyed disagreed that opportunities were provided. Sending home news about things happening in school had a rating of 87% of families agreeing that this

type of communication was present in the school. Almost 70% of parents rated they feel the school tells them what skills their children need to learn for math, reading/language arts, and science, with 30% of families rating the school as not telling them what skills their children need for math, reading/language arts, and science.

Less than 20% of the families surveyed rated the school as providing information on community services families may want to use. Forty percent of families said they are included on committees and improvement committees, with more than 70% of families indicating the school provides information on community events for children. Just over 70% of families expressed they are invited to PTA/PTO meetings, with 70% expressing that the school asks for help with raising funds. In contrast, under 20% of families surveyed indicated they had not been offered a parent-teacher conference. This question supports Epstein et al.'s (2018) Type 2, communicating; Type 3, volunteering; Type 4, learning at home; Type 5, decision-making; and Type 6, collaborating with the community.

This question supports one of Epstein et al.'s (2018) six types of parent engagement, collaborating with the community. In Question 10, Table 11, parents select workshops or share topics they would like to know more about to support parent engagement. The parents had 10 topics to choose from, including an opportunity to respond as "other" to share topics of interest. The results from Question 10 can be found in Table 11.

**Table 11***Question 10 Results*

Workshops or topics you would like to know more about. N=29	Percent of responses
How children grow and develop at my child's age	34.48%
How to discipline children	20.69%
Solving school problems and preventing dropping out	13.79%
Preventing health problems	10.34%
How to deal with stress	34.48%
Raising children as a single parent	24.14%
How to help my child develop her/his talents	41.38%
Helping children take tests	44.83%
Understanding middle schools	27.59%
How to serve on a school committee	17.24%

In Question 10, Table 11, 45% of parents expressed interest in helping children take tests. Almost 40% of families indicated they are interested in helping their children develop their talents. Thirty-four percent of families are interested in workshops on dealing with stress and how to help children grow and develop. Only 14% of parents are interested in workshops on solving school problems and preventing dropping out of school. Less than 20% of families surveyed are interested in workshops on preventing health problems.

Question 11 examines how the schools have involved learning at home.

**Table 12***Question 11: Results*

How much has your child's school involved you at school and home? N=30	Percent of responses
School involved me less this year than last	16.67%
School involved me about the same both years	56.67%
School involved me more this year than last	16.67%
My child did not attend this school last year	10.00%

Just over 50% of families expressed that schools involved them about the same over the last 2 years. Only 17% of families surveyed said schools involved them more this year than last. Ten percent of families indicated that they did not attend school last year.

Question 12, surveyed families and asked parents to express which type of services or resources in their community they would benefit from knowing more about to support their children. Parents were given 10 choices to rate and were offered an opportunity to provide additional ideas for resources and services they would like in their community. The responses to Question 12 are shown in Table 13.

**Table 13***Question 12 Results*

Which services in your community would you like to know more about? N=28	Responses
Health care for children and families	14.29%
Social services	7.14%
Family counseling	21.43%
Job training for parents/adults (adult education)	10.71%
Parenting classes/childcare	3.57%
After-school tutoring	42.86%
After-school sports activities	35.71%
Other after-school (clubs or lessons to develop talents and community service children can do)	42.86%
Summer programs for children	50%
Information on museums, shows, and events in the community	46.43%

In Question 12, Table 13, 50% of the families surveyed expressed interest in summer programs for children. Almost 45% of families wanted information on after-school tutoring and other after-school community services for children. Only 3.57% of families stated they wanted information on parenting classes/childcare.

In Questions 13-17, parents were asked to respond to questions about their children's homework habits and the support needed at home to complete assignments. Table 14 displays results for this Question 13.

**Table 14***Question 13 Results*

About how much time does your child spend on homework? N=31	Responses
None	6.45%
5-10 minutes	19.35%
25-30 minutes	22.58%
35-45 minutes	22.58%
50-60 minutes	9.68%
Over 1 hour	19.35%

Parents surveyed said 45% of their children spent 25-45 minutes on homework most school days. Less than 10% of families expressed their children spend at least 1 hour on homework.

In Table 15, Question 14, participants were asked to share the amount of time they spend supporting their children with homework.

**Table 15***Question 14 Results*

How much time do you spend helping your child with homework on an average night? N=30	Responses
None	13.33%
5-10 minutes	26.67%
15-20 minutes	16.67%
25-30 minutes	16.67%
35-45 minutes	13.33%
50-60 minutes	0.00%
Over 1 hour	13.22%

Seventy-three percent of participating parents expressed they spent 0-30 minutes supporting their children with homework, and no parents spent 1 hour on homework support; however, 13% spent over 1 hour.



In Question 15, parents were asked how much time they spend helping their children with homework on an average night. The data for Question 15 are displayed in Table 16.

**Table 16**

*Question 15 Results*

How much time could you spend working with your child if the teacher showed you what to do? N=31	Responses
None	16.13%
5-10 minutes	6.45%
15-20 minutes	6.45%
25-30 minutes	22.58%
35-45 minutes	9.68%
50-60 minutes	12.90%
Over 1 hour	25.81%

Almost 50% of participating parents expressed they could spend 35 minutes to over 1 hour supporting children on homework when the teacher gives explicit instructions.

In Question 16, parents are asked to rate how much time they spend on weekends to work on projects or homework for school. Table 17 displays the data.

**Table 17**

*Question 16 Results*

Do you have time on the weekends to work with your child on projects or homework for school? N=30	Responses
Yes	93.3%
No	6.67%

Ninety-three percent of parents surveyed said they have time on the weekends to work with their children on projects or homework. Only 7% said they could not provide

homework support on the weekend.

In Question 17, parents are asked to rate their child's current academic performance. Table 18 displays the results for Question 17.

**Table 18**

*Question 17 Results*

How is your child at this school doing in schoolwork? N=31	Responses
Top student	22.58%
Good student	41.94%
Okay, average student	25.81%
Fair student	6.45%
Poor student	3.23%

Of the parents surveyed, 65% rated their child as a top or good student. Twenty-six percent of families rated their child as okay or average and 10% as a fair or poor student.

In Question 18, parents were asked to share their child's current opinion of the school. The data for Question 18 are displayed in Table 19.

**Table 19**

*Question 18 Results*

How does your child at this school like school this year? N=31	Responses
Likes school a lot	70.97%
Likes school a little	19.35%
Does not like school much	6.45%
Does not like school at all	3.23%

Over 70% of parents stated their children like school a lot, while 10% stated their children do not like school much or at all.

Question 19 asked parents how promptly their oldest child delivers notices at

home. Table 20 displays the results for Question 19.

**Table 20**

*Question 19 Results*

How often does your child deliver notices promptly? N=31	Responses
Always	58.06%
Usually	32.26%
Once in a while	3.23%
Never	6.45%

Ninety percent of parents expressed their children always or usually deliver notifications at home promptly. Only 10% of parents receive messages once in a while or never.

In Question, 20 parents are asked how often their children complete homework on time. Table 21 displays the results for Question 20.

**Table 21**

*Question 20 Results*

How often does your child at this school complete all homework on time? N=31	Responses
Always	70.97%
Usually	29.03%
Once in a while	0.00%
Never	0.00%

Over 70% of the parents indicated their child always completes homework on time. No parents stated their children never complete their homework. Less than 30% of the students usually complete their homework assignments.

In Question 21, parents are asked to share the most convenient time to engage in meetings or workshops at the school. Table 22 shows the results of Question 21.

**Table 22***Question 21 Results*

What is the most convenient time for you to engage in meetings or workshops? N=31	Responses
Early morning	19.35%
Mid-morning	12.9%
Lunch time/afternoon	19.35%
Early evenings	16.13%
Weekends	9.68%
I cannot attend	3.23%
Other	19.35%

About 35% of the parents opted to participate in meetings during lunch or early evenings, 32% early morning or mid-morning, and 19.35% stated other. Only 3% of parents said they could not attend workshops or meetings.

**Elementary/Middle School Educator Responses**

Elementary and middle school educators were asked to complete the survey on parent engagement in their elementary and middle schools. The elementary/middle school survey consists of 20 questions that support Epstein et al.'s (2018) six facets of parent involvement. Questions 1-7 asked basic background information about the educators.

Question 1 asked educators to share their experience and background. Twenty-two elementary and middle school educators responded to this question.

In Question 2, educators were asked how many years of experience they have in teaching or administration. The data from Question 2 are displayed in Table 23, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 23***Question 2 Results*

How many years in teaching or administration? N=34	Responses
0-4 years	17.65% (6)
5-10 years	20.59% (7)
11-15 years	5.88% (2)
16-20 years	20.59% (7)
21-25 years	11.76% (4)
25+ years	23.53% (8)

Almost 25% of the educators have at least 25 plus years of experience in education. Twelve percent of educators have more than 21 years of experience but less than 25 years. Less than 10% of educators have between 11-15 years of experience.

In Question 3, educators are asked to share their highest level of education. The data from Question 3 are displayed in Table 24, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 24***Question 3*

What is your highest level of education? N=34	Responses
Bachelor's degree	26.47% (9)
Bachelor's degree plus credits	23.53% (8)
Master's degree	41.18% (14)
Master's degree plus credits	8.82% (3)
Doctorate	0%
Other	0%

In Question 3, 41% of the educators stated they have a master's degree, and 8.8% have a master's degree plus some credits. Almost 30% of the educators have a bachelor's degree.

In Table 25, Question 4, educators are asked to describe their daily teaching responsibilities.

**Table 25**

*Question 4*

What best describes your teaching responsibilities? N=34	Responses
I teach several subjects to one self-contained class.	58.82% (20)
I teach ONE subject to several different classes of students in a departmentalized program	11.76% (4)
I teach MORE than one subject to MORE than one class in a semi-departmental or other arrangement.	29.41% (10)

The majority of elementary/middle school educators, 58.82%, teach several subjects to one self-contained class. A little over 10% of the educators, 11.76%, teach one subject to several different classes of students in a departmentalized program. Twenty-nine percent of educators teach more than one subject to more than one class in a semi-departmental arrangement.

Question 5 asked educators to check all subjects they teach in an average week. The data from Question 5 are displayed in Table 26, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 26***Question 5*

Please check all subjects you teach in an average week. N=34	Responses
English/language arts/reading	64.71% (22)
Math	76.47% (26)
Science/social studies	82.35% (28)
Health	11.76% (4)
Art	5.88% (2)
Music	8.82% (3)
Advisory	11.76% (4)
Physical education	5.88% (2)
Home economics/industrial arts	5.88% (2)

In Question 5, 34 educators responded to the questions. Due to elementary teachers being more generalists than subject-specific, 76% of the educators indicated they teach math, and 65% teach English/language arts/reading. Over 80% of the educators teach science/social studies, while less than 10% teach art, physical education, or home economics/industrial arts.

In Question 6, educators were asked if they worked with other educators on a formal interdisciplinary team. The data from Question 6 are displayed in Table 27, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 27***Question 6 Results*

Do you work with other teachers on a formal, interdisciplinary team? N=34	Responses
Yes	52.94% (18)
No	47.06% (16)

In Question 6, Table 27 a little over 50% of the educators stated work on an interdisciplinary team. If educators responded "Yes" to Question 6, they were asked if

they have a common planning time. Over 80% of the educators expressed they do not have common planning for the interdisciplinary team.

In Question 8, educators shared the amount of homework assigned most school days. The data from Question 8 are displayed in Table 28, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents

**Table 28**

*Question 8*

On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign on most school days? N=34	Responses
None	26.47% (9)
5-10 minutes	29.41% (10)
25-30 minutes	41.18% (14)
35-45 minutes	2.94% (1)
50-60 minutes	0%
Over 1 hour	0%

In Question 8, Table 28, the largest percentage of educators, 41%, send home 25-30 minutes daily of homework; only 3% send home more than 30 minutes of homework.

Question 9 asked educators to share how many hours they spend each week contacting parents. The data from Question 9 are displayed in Table 29, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.



**Table 29***Question 9*

What are the average hours you spend each week contacting parents?N=34	Responses
None	0%
Less than 1 hour	38.24% (13)
1 hour	59% (17)
2 hours	5.88% (2)
3 hours or more	5.88% (2)

In Question 9, Table 29, 59% of educators shared they spend 1 hour contacting parents/guardians. Less than 10% of educators spend 2-3 hours or more contacting parents/guardians, while 38 % spend less than 1 hour.

In Question 11, educators are asked to identify specific demographic identifiers for their students: special education, gifted and talented, and income threshold, by their lunch status. The data from Question 11 are displayed in Table 30, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 30***Question 11*

Please identify the status of your students. N=34	0%	10%	20%	30-50%	60-80%
Special education	5.88% (2)	44.12% (15)	26.47% (9)	14.71% (5)	8.82% (3)
Gifted and talented	48.28% (14)	34.48% (10)	13.79% (4)	3.45% (1)	0%
Free or reduced lunch	0%	0%	0%	3.30% (1)	96.67% (29)

The data in Table 30, Question 11, asked educators to identify demographic data

about their students. Nine percent of educators indicated that 60-80% of their students are identified as special education students. Forty-four percent of the educators expressed that 10% of their students are identified as special education students. About 20% of educators stated that 20% of their students are identified as special education students. Almost 50% said they have no gifted and talented students. Only 3% of the educators have 30-50% of their students identified as gifted and talented. Ninety-seven percent of the educators noted that 60-80% of their students are identified as free or reduced lunch.

In Question 12, educators are asked to indicate what grade level they are teaching. The data from Question 12 are displayed in Table 31, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 31**

*Question 12*

What grade levels do you teach? N=34	Responses
Pre-k	11.76% (4)
Kindergarten	20.59% (7)
First grade	17.65% (6)
Second grade	11.76% (4)
Third grade	17.65% (6)
Fourth grade	23.53% (8)
Fifth grade	26.47 (9)
Sixth grade	8.82% (3)
Seventh grade	5.88% (2)
Eighth grade	11.76 (4)
Other	14.71% (5)

Seventeen percent of the educators said they teach third grade; only two teachers, 5.88%, said they teach seventh grade; and fifth-grade teachers had the highest percentage at 26%.

In Question 13, educators were asked to share their opinion on parent involvement

at their school. The data from Question 13 are displayed in Table 32, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 32**

*Question 13*

What is your opinion about parent involvement at your school? N=34	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Parent involvement is important for our school.	0% (1)	2.94% (1)	26.47% (9)	70.59% (24)
Parent involvement is important for student success in school.	0% (1)	3.03% (1)	21.21% (7)	75.76% (25)
Teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices.	6.06% (2)	21.21% (7)	60.61% (20)	12.12% (4)
Teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways.	18.18% (6)	51.52% (17)	24.24% (8)	6.06% (2)
This school views parents as important partners.	0% (0)	0% (0)	51.52% (17)	48.48% (16)
Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	3.03% (1)	0% (0)	42.42% (14)	54.55% (18)
This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO).	36.36% (12)	45.45% (15)	15.15% (5)	3.03% (1)
The community supports this school.	0% (0)	21.21% (7)	60.61% (20)	18.18% (6)
Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels.	12.12% (4)	45.45% (15)	42.42% (14)	0% (0)
Mostly when I contact parents, it's about problems or trouble.	15.15% (5)	57.58% (19)	27.27% (9)	0% (0)
This school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school.	6.06% (2)	30.30% (10)	42.42% (14)	21.21% (7)

In Question 13, Table 32, educators are asked to provide their professional judgment about parent involvement. Three percent of educators disagree that parent involvement is important for the school and students, while 72% of educators strongly agree parent involvement is important for the school and about 76% agree that it is important for student success. Sixty percent of educators agree teachers need professional

development on effective parent engagement practices. Twenty-four percent of educators agree that they do not have time to involve parents, while 52% of educators disagree with that statement. All educators, 100%, view parents/guardians as important partners and believe parent involvement can support effectiveness with students. Over 80% of educators disagree or strongly disagree that the school has an effective PTA/PTO. Most educators, 60%, agree the community supports the school, while just over 20% disagree.

The majority of educators, 57%, disagree or strongly disagree that parents want to be involved in the school. Nearly 30% of the educators noted they mostly contacted parents/guardians about problems or trouble, while 73% disagreed. Over 50% of the educators agree or strongly agree the school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school; 30% disagree.

Question 14 asked educators to share the different ways they contact students' families. The data from Question 14 are displayed in Table 33, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 33***Question 14*

Please estimate the percentage of your students' families that you contacted this year in various ways. N=34	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%	NA
Letter/memo	0%	12% (4)	9% (3)	12% (4)	12% (4)	9% (3)	9% (3)	33% (11)	3 % (1)
Telephone	0%	0%	6% (2)	24% (8)	15% (5)	15% (5)	15% (5)	15% (5)	0%
Meeting at school	13% (4)	13% (4)	23% (7)	10% (3)	13% (4)	10% (3)	0%	3% (1)	3% (1)
Scheduled parent-teacher conference	13% (4)	13% (4)	22% (7)	9% (3)	22% (7)	6% (2)	0%	3% (3)	6% (2)
Home visit	45 (14)	10% (3)	10% (3)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	35% (11)
Meeting in the community	30% (9)	13% (4)	13% (4)	0%	3% (1)	0%	0%	0%	40% (12)
Report card pick-up	20% (6)	7% (2)	13% (4)	0%	13% (4)	10% (3)	0%	13% (4)	23% (7)
Performances sports or other community events	39 % (12)	3% (1)	19% (6)	6% (2)	0%	6% (2)	0%	3% (1)	22.58% (7)

Elementary teachers used letters and memos along with telephone calls as the most popular modes of communication with parents. Home visits, parent-teacher conferences, in-person meetings, and community meetings are conducted but much more rarely, with home meetings, community meetings, and sports performances not conducted at all for many.

In Question 15, educators are asked how they use parents as volunteers in the classroom. The data for Question 15 are displayed in Table 34, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 34**

*Question 15*

How do you use parent volunteers in your classroom? N=33	Responses
I do NOT use classroom volunteers	58% (19)
Read to the children/listen to children read aloud	9% (3)
Grade papers	0%
Tutor children in specific skills	0%
Help on trips or at parties	12% (4)
Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.)	15% (5)
Other	27% (9)

In Question 15, 58% of the educators stated they do not use volunteers. Fifteen percent use volunteers to give talks in the classroom; 12% for parties; and 27% said other.

Question 16 asked educators to share how they use volunteers at the school building. The data from Question 16 are displayed in Table 35, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 35**

*Question 16*

How do teachers involve parents/guardians as volunteers in the school building? N=34	Responses
Volunteers are not used	85% (29)
Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas	0%
Work in the library, computer lab or other areas	2.94% (2)
Teach mini-courses	0%
Teach enrichment/clubs	0%
Check attendance	0%
Work in "parent room"	0%

In Question 16, educators were asked how they use volunteers; 85% stated they do not use volunteers in the school; 3% said they use them in the library or computer lab. Twenty-six percent of educators stated other, noting they are not using volunteers due to COVID.

Question 17 asked educators to share how many volunteers help in their classrooms in a typical year. On average, most educators had one volunteer in their classroom in a school year.

Question 18 asked educators to estimate the percentage of families who attend school events in a typical year. The data from Question 18 are displayed in Table 36, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 36**

*Question 18*

Estimate how many families participate in school events in a typical year. N=33	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Attend workshops	58% (18)	9% (3)	13% (4)	9% (3)	3% (1)	3% (1)	3% (1)	3.32% (1)
Check daily that homework is done	9% (3)	9% (3)	21% (7)	12% (4)	30% (10)	15.15% (5)	9% (3)	0%
Practice schoolwork in the summer	30% (10)	18% (6)	21% (7)	21% (7)	6% (2)	3% (1)	0%	0%
Attend PTA meetings regularly	66.67% (22)	18% (6)	6% (2)	3% (1)	6% (2)	0%	0%	0%
Attend parent-teacher conferences	9% (3)	15% (5)	21% (7)	15% (5)	21% (7)	9% (3)	9% (3)	0%

Most educators surveyed, 90%, estimated that most parents/guardians practice

schoolwork less than 50% of the summer. Over half of the educators, 58%, noted that parents/guardians do not attend workshops. Thirty percent of the educators surveyed said parents/guardians check homework folders 50% of the time. Nearly 85% of the educators noted that parents/guardians do not regularly attend PTA meetings, and 9% stated that parents/guardians do not attend parent conferences.

In Question 19, educators stated that 100% of parents/guardians have skills to support children with reading, writing, and math skills at grade level.

Question 20 asked educators to use their best judgment about specific ways to involve parents/guardians at their school. The data from Question 20 are displayed in Table 37, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.



**Table 37***Question 20*

Use your judgment about specific ways the school should involve families at your school. N=34	Not important	Developing	Needs improvement	Strong program
Workshops for parents to build skills in parenting and understanding their children at each grade level.	5.88% (2)	64.71% (22)	20.59% (7)	8.82% (3)
Workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning.	2.94% (1)	64.71% (22)	23.53% (8)	8.82% (3)
Communications from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.	0%	26.47% (9)	29.41% (10)	44.12% (15)
Communications about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs.	0%	17.65% (6)	35.29% (12)	47.06% (16)
Parent-teacher conferences with all families.	2.94% (1)	14.71% (5)	35.29% (12)	47.06% (16)
Surveying parents each year for their ideas about the school.	11.76% (4)	38.24% (13)	29.41% (10)	20.59% (7)
Volunteers in classrooms to assist teachers and students.	17.65% (6)	47.06% (16)	23.53% (8)	11.76% (4)
Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.	5.88% (2)	44.12% (15)	32.35% (11)	2.94% (1)
Volunteers to help in other (non-classroom) parts of the school.	14.71% (5)	58.82% (20)	17.65% (6)	8.82% (3)
Information on how to monitor homework.	2.94% (1)	50% (17)	29.41% (10)	17.65% (6)
Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class.	8.82% (3)	35.29% (12)	41.18% (14)	14.71% (5)
Information for parents on how to help their children with specific skills and subjects.	5.88% (2)	38.24% (13)	38.24% (13)	14.71% (5)

Eight percent of educators rated the school as strong in offering workshops for parents to build parenting skills and understand their children at each grade level; 20% stated improvement is needed in this area, and 5% said this area was not important. Two

percent of educators said workshops for parents on creating home conditions for learning is not important, while 23% said this is an area that needs improvement; only 8% stated this is a strong area for the school. Forty percent of educators believe communication from school to home is strong; however, almost 29% of the educators rated this area as needing improvement. Thirty-five percent of educators responded that communication about report cards so parents can understand student progress and needs is an area that needs improvement, and 47% rated this as a strong area for the school. Forty-seven percent of the educators rated parent-teacher conferences with families as a strong area for the school, but 35% see this area as needing improvement. Just over 10% of the educators participating in the survey said surveying parents about ideas for the school was not important; 21% said this was a strong area for the school. Seventeen percent of educators rated volunteers for the classroom as not important, 23% as needing improvement, and 11% as strong. Providing specific resources for parents to support students with improving their grades was rated as an area for improvement by 32% of educators; only 2% of educators said this was a strong area for the school. Educators stated that information on monitoring homework needed improvement, as indicated by a 29% rating. Fourteen percent of educators noted that working with community members for classroom opportunities was not important. Seventeen percent of the educators stated that using volunteers to help in non-classroom areas needed improvement. Educators said information for parents to help their children with specific skills is an area that needs improvement, as indicated by a 38% rating.

Question 21 asked educators to rate the importance of certain activities to assist parents/guardians. The data from Question 21 are displayed in Table 38, and the number

in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 38**

*Question 21*

How important are each of the activities for you to conduct at your grade level? N=34	Not important	A little important	Important	Very important
Have a conference with each of my student's parents at least once a year.	5.88% (2)	64.71% (22)	20.59% (7)	8.82% (3)
Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops at school.	2.94% (1)	64.71% (22)	23.53% (8)	8.82% (3)
Contact parents about their children's problems or failures.	0%	2.94% (1)	47.06% (16)	50% (17)
Inform parents when their children do something well or improve.	0%	0%	35.29% (12)	64.71% (22)
Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom.	14.71% (5)	26.47% (9)	52.94% (18)	5.88% (2)
Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject.	0%	2.94% (1)	35.29% (12)	61.76% (21)
Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class.	0%	5.88% (2)	44.12% (15)	50% (17)
Provides specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.	0%	2.94% (1)	50% (17)	47.06% (16)
Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents.	8.82% (3)	29.41% (10)	41.18% (14)	20.59% (7)
Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.	0%	20.59% (7)	50% (17)	29.41% (10)

The most important activities between parents and teachers are activities to improve grades and skills to pass the subject. Also, contact is needed regarding both good and poor performance. The least popular were opportunities to volunteer in the classroom and evening workshops.

Question 22 asked teachers if parent engagement opportunities have changed since COVID. The data from Question 22 are displayed in Table 39, and the number in

parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 39**

*Question 22*

How has parent involvement changed since the onset of COVID? N=34	Response
School involved parents less this year than last	20.59%
School involved parents about the same in both years	55.88%
School involved parents more this year than last	11.76%
Don't know, I did not teach at this school last year	11.76%

Over half, 55.85, of educators expressed that schools involved parents about the same in both years, pre-COVID and during COVID. Less than 25% of educators said the school involved parents less this year than last, and 11.76% noted schools involved parents more this year than last year.

Question 24 asked educators to share ways that better partnerships could help them as a teacher. Nineteen teachers responded to this open-ended question, and duplicate responses will not be recorded. Following are the partnerships suggested by educators:

- not assigning homework due to stress that homework causes families
- engaging parents
- parents place a priority on education
- extra support for home activities
- support to understand the needs of children
- more support for teachers
- not sure
- parent advisory board
- consistent behavior management plan

- more programs in the community

### High School Parents Survey Findings

The high school parent survey consisted of 22 questions. Questions 1-6 collected basic demographic information about the families completing the survey.

Question 1 asked who was completing the survey. From the list, participants had nine options from which to choose. The data from Question 1 of the high school parent survey are displayed in Table 40. The number in the parenthesis represents the number of parents responding to the question.

**Table 40**

#### *Question 1 Results*

Who is completing the survey? N=10	Responses
Mother	90% (9)
Father	0%
Guardians	10% (1)
Stepmother	0%
Stepfather	0%
Grandmother	0%
Grandfather	0%
Other relative	0%

The survey data expressed 90% of the survey questions were completed by mothers, with 10% completed by guardians.

Question 2 asked respondents to share the number of adults living at home. The data from Question 2 are displayed in Table 41, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 41***Question 2 Results*

How many adults live at your home? N=10	Responses
One	40% (4)
Two	30% (3)
Three	10% (1)
Four	20% (2)

The data represented in Table 41 show that the average home has 2.1 adults living there. Forty percent of the families have only one adult living in the home, while 20% have four adults. An average of 10% of families indicated they have two or three adults in the home.

Table 42, Question 3, displays the number of children living at home. This question asked participants to include all children in the home, including school-age and non-school-age children, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 42***Question 3 Results*

How many children live at home (include all children)? N=10	Responses
One	30% (3)
Two	20% (2)
Three	30% (3)
Four	20% (2)

In Question 3, Table 42, 10 families responded. Of the 10 respondents, 30% of the families had one child at home, 20% had two, 30% had three, and 20% had two children living at home.

Table 43, Question 4, represents the education level of the parents completing the survey. The data from Question 4 are displayed in Table 43, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 43**

*Question 4 Results*

What is your highest education level? N=10	Responses
Did not complete high school	10% (1)
High school	10% (1)
Some college	40% (4)
College degree	30% (3)
Advanced degree	10% (1)
Other training or education	0%

Table 43 shows that of the parents completing the survey, 10% of them have an advanced degree, 10% of the parents or guardians completing the survey did not complete high school, and 10% completed high school. Seventy percent of the parents completing the survey expressed they had completed some college or had a college degree.

In Table 44, the data represent the parent/guardian current employment status. The data from Question 5 are displayed in Table 44, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 44***Question 5 Results*

What is your current employment status? N=10	Responses
Employed full-time	80% (8)
Employed part-time	20% (2)
Not employed	0%

The data in Table 44, Question 5, indicate that of those completing the survey, 20% are employed part-time, while 80% are employed full-time.

Question 6 asks parents/guardians to describe themselves based on ethnicity. The data from Question 6 are displayed in Table 45 and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 45***Question 6 Results*

How do you describe yourself? N=10	Responses
African American/Black	40% (4)
Hispanic/Latino	10% (1)
White/Caucasian	0%
Asian	0%
Other	50% (5)

In Question 6, parents/guardians are asked to describe themselves based on ethnicity. The shared data indicated that 50% of the parents/guardians completing the survey identify themselves as others. Forty percent identify as African American/Black, and 10% identify as Hispanic/Latino.

Question 7 represents data on how parents feel about high school. The data from Question 7 are displayed in Table 46, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents



**Table 46***Question 7 Results*

How do you feel about this high school? N=10	Strong disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
This is a very good high school.	0% (0)	0% (0)	30.00% (3)	70.00% (7)
The teachers here care about my teenager.	0% (0)	0% (0)	40.00% (4)	60.00% (6)
I need more information from the school to talk with my teen about schoolwork.	0% (0)	40% (4)	10% (1)	50% (5)
My teen is learning as much as he/she can this year.	0% (0)	0% (0)	40% (4)	60% (6)
This school views parents as important partners.	0% (0)	0% (0)	40% (4)	60% (6)
I only hear from the high school when there are problems.	10% (1)	40% (4)	10% (1)	40% (4)
This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO).	30% (3)	10% (1)	30% (3)	30% (3)
My teen talks about school at home.	10% (1)	0% (0)	30% (3)	60% (6)
The community supports this high school.	0% (0)	10% (1)	40% (4)	50% (5)
The community has many good activities for teens.	30% (3)	20% (2)	20% (2)	30% (3)

Parents were asked how they feel about their high school. Seventy percent of parents/guardians strongly agree and 30% agree that it is a good high school. The data expressed that 60% of the parents/guardians feel the teachers care about their child, and 40% agree. Sixty percent of the parents/guardians participating in the survey expressed that they strongly agree that they need more information to talk to their child(ren) about

schoolwork. Conversely, 40% of the families strongly disagree that they need more information about schoolwork with their child(ren). Parents/guardians feel their children are learning as much as they can this year and that the school views them as important partners, as indicated by a response rate of 100% on both questions. Sixty percent of the parents/guardians who participated in the survey feel that the school only contacts them when there is a problem; however, 40% of parents/guardians disagree with this statement. Parents/guardians expressed that the school has an active PTA/PTO, as expressed by 60% agreeing or strongly agreeing to this statement. Survey participants were asked if the community supports the high school; 90% of parents/guardians surveyed believe they have community support, while 10% strongly disagree. Of the parents/guardians surveyed, 50% disagree or strongly disagree that the community has good activities for teens, while the other 50% agree or strongly agree that the community has good activities for teens.

Table 47 displays data for how parents/guardians participate at the high school level from a home vantage point. The data from Question 8 are displayed in Table 47, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents

**Table 47***Question 8 Results*

How do parents/guardians participate at the high school level at home? N=10	Never	1-2 times	Monthly	Weekly	Everyday
Talk to my teen about school.	0%	20% (2)	0%	10% (1)	70% (7)
Listen to my teen read something he/she wrote.	0%	11% (1)	11.1% (1)	33.3% (3)	44.4% (4)
Listen to my teen read something he/she wrote.	0%	10% (1)	0%	10% (1)	80% (8)
Check that my teen goes to school.	0%	0%	0%	10% (1)	90% (9)
Help my teen solve a personal problem.	0%	30% (3)	0%	0%	70% (7)
Help my teen plan time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities.	0%	20% (2)	0%	0%	80% (8)
Talk with my teen about next year's courses.	0%	50% (5)	10% (1)	0%	40% (4)
Talk with my teen about future plans for college or work.	0%	30% (3)	40% (4)	0%	30% (3)
Tell my teen how important school is.	0%	10% (1)	10% (1)	10% (1)	70% (7)
Attend community event with my teen.	0%	40% (4)	20% (2)	10% (1)	30% (3)

The data for Question 8 asked parents to share how often they participate in various activities at the high school level. According to the survey, 70% of the parents rated they talk to their teen about school every day, with 20% talking to their teen one to two times per week, and 10% only weekly. A large percentage of parents/guardians, 45%,

expressed that they listen to their teen read something they wrote daily. An average of 11% of the families only listened to their child read something they wrote one or two times per week or monthly. Nearly 35% of parents/guardians stated they listened to their teens read something they wrote weekly.

Eighty percent of parents expressed they talk to their teen about homework daily, 10% one or two times weekly, and 10% weekly. Most parents, 90%, check that their teens go to school every day, and 10% check weekly. Less than 50% of families indicated they help their teen solve personal problems; 70% express they help their teen solve problems every day.

Parents were asked how often they talk to their teens about courses: 40% expressed every day, 50% said one or two times weekly, and 10% said weekly. Only 30% of parents surveyed responded that they talk to their teens about college or future plans every day, while 30% expressed one or two times weekly, and 40% monthly. Only 20% of parents/guardians surveyed said they help their teens plan homework, chores, and other responsibilities; 80% indicated they support them every day. Seventy percent of families tell their teen how important school is, and an average of 10% of families attend community events with their teen.

In Question 9, parents/guardians express how often they participate in various ways at their teen's high school. The data from Question 9 are displayed in Table 48, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 48***Question 9 Results*

How do parents/guardians participate at the high school level? N=10	Never	1-2 times	Monthly	Weekly	Everyday
Go to school PTA/PTO meeting.	60% (6)	40% (4)	0%	0%	0%
Help with fundraiser for the high school.	40% (4)	50% (5)	10% (1)	0%	0%
Attend open house or back-to-school night.	0%	88.9% (8)	0%	11.1% (1)	0%
Attend parent-teacher conferences.	20% (2)	70% (7)	10% (1)	0%	0%
Attend committee meetings at the school.	60% (6)	40% (4)	0%	0%	0%
Give the school information about special circumstances at home.	60% (6)	40% (4)	0%	0%	0%
Thank someone at school for something he/she did for my teen.	0%	90% (9)	10% (1)	0%	0%
Attend a high school sports event, play, concert, or other student performance.	10% (1)	80% (8)	10% (1)	0%	0%

Parents/guardians were asked if they participate in their high school PTA/PTO meeting; 60% of parents indicated they never attend meetings and 40% attend one to two times. Over 50% of families indicate they participate in fundraisers for their high school, and 40% stated they never participate in fundraisers. Over 80% of parents/guardians expressed they attend open houses or back-to-school nights. Only 20% of parents/guardians stated they never attend parent conferences, while 70% attend one to two times.

The majority of parents/guardians, 80%, attend school events one to two times per

week. Sixty percent of families never attend committee meetings, while 40% attend one to two times per year. When parents/guardians were asked if they give the school information about special circumstances at home, 60% stated they never share information. Most parents, 90%, agree that they have thanked someone at the school one to two times for doing something for their teen.

In Question 10, parents express how they are involved in schools. Parents were asked to tell how well the high school involves them in certain aspects of schooling. The data from Question 10 are displayed in Table 49, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 49***Question 10 Results*

High schools involve parents/guardians in various ways. Tell me how you think your high school does in the following areas. N=10	Not important to me	School should start	School could do better	School does very well now
Help me understand teen problems and development.	10% (1)	10% (1)	40% (4)	40% (4)
Help me help my teen become independent and self-confident.	10% (1)	10% (1)	40% (4)	40% (4)
Give me information on how my teen may qualify for scholarships or loans for college.	10% (1)	10% (1)	40% (4)	40% (4)
Give me information on how school programs my teen can choose (college career, vocational, etc.).	10% (1)	10% (1)	20% (2)	60% (6)
Give me information about how report card grades are earned.	10% (1)	0%	30% (3)	60% (6)
Include my teen in a parent-teacher-student conference each year.	10% (1)	0%	40% (4)	50% (5)
Contact me if my teen is having problems.	10% (1)	0%	20% (2)	70% (7)
Gives me information on course requirements for graduation from high school.	10% (1)	0%	40% (4)	50% (5)
Provide information on how to help my teen plan for college or for work.	10% (1)	10% (1)	40% (4)	40% (4)
Ask me to volunteer at the school.	20% (2)	20% (2)	0%	60% (6)
Invite me to PTA/PTO meetings.	40% (4)	20% (2)	10% (1)	30% (3)
Include parents on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement.	30% (3)	30% (3)	0%	40% (4)
Provide information about community services to assist my teen and family.	30% (3)	20% (2)	10% (1)	40% (4)

Parents/guardians were asked to rate how well their high school involves them in different aspects of the school. At least 40% of families rated the school as doing well in helping them understand the teen problems and development; 10% of parents/guardians

stated the school start helping them in this area. Ten percent of parents/guardians expressed the school should do better with helping their teen become independent and self-confident, while 40% rate the school as doing very well supporting teens with developing self-confidence and independence.

Most parents/guardians, 60%, expressed the school does well providing programs such as vocational or college track options for their teen. Twenty percent of parents/guardians feel the school could start or do better providing these resources. Half of the parents stated that the school could do better providing information on scholarships or loans for college, and 30% feel the school does very well in providing this information. Thirty percent of parents/guardians feel the school could do better by providing information on how report card grades are earned; conversely, 60% of parents/guardians feel the school does very well. Including teens in parent conferences was rated not important by 10% of parents/guardians, 50% stated the school does very well in this area, and 40% stated the school could do better. The majority of parents/ guardians, 70%, expressed the school does very well contacting them if their teen has a problem; only 10% stated this was not important to them. Half of the families, 50%, feel the school does very well sharing information about requirements for graduation from high school, while 40% would like the school to do better, and 10% stated that information is not important to them.

Parents were asked if the school provides information on how to plan for college or work; 40% feel the school does very well now, and 40% feel the school could do better. Fifty percent of parents/guardians rated the school as doing very well in recruiting volunteers; only 20% stated that volunteering is unimportant. Less than 50% of parents/



guardians rated invitation to PTA/PTO as insignificant, while 30% feel the school does very well in this area. Forty percent of families feel the school does very well including parents on committees and providing information about community services to assist teens and families.

In Question 11, parents/guardians are asked about how often schools have contacted them about certain topics. The data from Question 11 are displayed in Table 50, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents

**Table 50**

*Question 11 Results*

How often has your high school contacted you about the following topics? N=10	Never	1-2 times	2-3 times	4 or more
My teen's grades	10% (1)	30% (3)	0%	60% (6)
The courses my teen can choose next year	40% (4)	10% (1)	0%	50% (5)
How I could volunteer at the school	50% (5)	20% (2)	0%	30% (3)
Asking me to come to a sporting event, show, concert, or other event	10% (1)	60% (6)	10% (1)	20% (2)
The school's homework policies	20% (2)	40% (4)	0%	40% (4)

Sixty percent of parents expressed the school has contacted them four times or more to discuss their teen's grades, 30% one to two times, and 10% never. Fifty percent of families stated the school had contacted them never or one to two times to discuss course choices for the next school year. Half of the parents, 50%, stated they have never been contacted to volunteer at the school, 30% of parents/guardians have been contacted four

times or more. Over 80% of parents/guardians stated they had been contacted one to four times to participate in a sporting event. Only 40% of families have been contacted about the school's homework policy, and 20% have never been contacted about the policy.

In Question 12, parents are asked to share how often the school contacts them using various mediums. The data from Question 12 are displayed in Table 51, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 51**

*Question 12 Results*

How often does the school contact you in these ways? N=10	Never	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more times
Memos or notices	20% (2)	0%	20% (2)	60% (6)
Phone calls	20% (2)	0%	20% (2)	60% (6)
Open house or back-to-school nights	0%	20% (2)	30% (3)	50% (5)
Formal parent-teacher conferences	10% (1)	30% (3)	10% (1)	50% (5)
Meetings in the community (not at school)	40% (4)	10% (1)	20% (2)	30% (3)
Report card pick-ups by parent	10% (1)	10% (1)	20% (2)	60% (6)
Visits at home by teachers or school staff	80% (8)	0%	0%	20% (2)

The majority of parents/guardians, 60%, noted that school contact is made via memos/notices or during report card pick-up time at least four or more times. Eighty percent of families noted they had never received a visit home by teachers or school staff.

Eighty percent of parents/guardians surveyed had formal parent-teacher conferences one to four or more times. Eighty percent of the parents/guardians expressed that they have been contacted about attending open houses and back-to-school events two to four or more times. Forty percent of families stated the school has never contacted them to attend meetings in the community; 30% said they have received correspondences from the school four or more times about meetings in the community.

In Question 13, parents/guardians are asked to share when is the best time they could meet for workshops or meetings. The data from Question 13 are displayed in Table 52, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 52**

*Question 13 Results*

How would you like to receive information from your high school? N=10	Responses
School newspaper (edited and written by students)	0
Newsletter for parents (from the principal)	10% (1)
Calendar of events, holidays, tests	30% (3)
Advance notice of special deadlines (e.g., fees, trips, tests)	80% (8)
Interim reports about your teens' grades	60% (6)
Handbook on high school rules and programs	80% (8)
Directory of addresses and phone numbers of families in the school	10% (1)

The data indicate that 80% of parents/guardians would like advance notice for special deadlines and a handbook outlining rules and programs. Only 10% of parents/guardians would like to receive a parent newsletter or family directory. Sixty percent of families indicated an interest in receiving interim reports about their teens' grades. Lastly, only 30% of families prefer to receive a calendar of events.

In Question 14, parents/guardians are asked to share the ideal time to meet or be involved in workshops. The data from Question 14 are displayed in Table 53, and the

number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 53**

*Question 14 Results*

When is the best time to meet for workshops or meetings? N=10	Responses
Early morning	40% (4)
Mid-morning	20% (2)
Lunchtime	10% (1)
Afternoon	40% (4)
Early evenings	20% (2)
Weekends	0%
Cannot ever attend	0%

The majority of parents, 40%, stated they could meet early morning or afternoon.

Twenty percent of parents/guardians preferred to meet mid-morning or early evenings.

Only 10% of families indicated they could meet during lunchtime.

Question 15 probed parents on the type of community services that would support their children inside and outside school. The data from Question 15 are displayed in Table 54, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 54***Question 15 Results*

What type of community services would support parents/ guardians with supporting their child inside and outside school? N=10	Responses
Health care for teens and families	0%
Social services	0%
Job training for teens	10% (1)
Family counseling	0%
English language skills	0%
Job training for parents/adults	10% (1)
Adult education parent classes/childcare	0%
After-school tutoring	50% (5)
After-school sports activities	10% (1)
Part-time jobs for teens	10% (1)
Summer jobs for teens	50% (5)
Summer program for teens	50% (5)
Information on museums, shows, and events in the community	30% (3)
Other (please specify)	0%

Most parents/guardians, 50%, indicated they would like more information on summer jobs for teens, summer programs for teens, and after-school tutoring. Less than 20% of parents/guardians would like information about job training for teens and parents/adults and part-time jobs for teens. Thirty percent of parents expressed they would like information about museums, shows, and events in the community.

Question 16 asked parents/guardians to share information about activities that involved them the most in the school. No parents/guardians who responded to the survey shared any activities that helped them out the most. Question 17 asked parents/guardians to share additional workshops or programs that would help them get involved more. One parent requested information on community college classes to support her child.

**School Educator Survey Responses**

The educator survey consists of 23 questions. Only four educators completed the

survey. Questions 1, 2, and 4 collected basic demographic information on the educators. Of the four respondents, one was an English teacher, one was an Exceptional Children's teacher, and two are CTE instructors. All the teachers completing the survey are female and White.

Table 55, Question 3, displays the educational level of the high school educators completing the survey. The data from Question 3 are displayed in Table 55, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 55**

*Question 3 Results*

What is your highest level of education? N=4	Responses
Bachelor's	0%
Bachelor's plus credits	25% (1)
Master's	75%
Master's plus credit	0%
Doctorate	0%

Twenty-five percent of the educators have a bachelor's degree plus credits, and 75% have a master's degree.

Question 5 asked high school educators to share the grade levels they teach. The grade levels range from sixth to 12<sup>th</sup> grade. The data from Question 5 are displayed in Table 56 and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 56***Question 5 Results*

What grade levels do you teach? N=4	Responses
Sixth	25% (1)
Seventh	25% (1)
Eighth	25% (1)
Ninth	50% (1)
10 <sup>th</sup>	75% (3)
11 <sup>th</sup>	75% (3)
12 <sup>th</sup>	75% (3)

One teacher has students in Grades 6-8. Three teachers have students in Grades 9-12. Only one educator stated she teaches ninth grade. Only one educator said she solely teaches ninth grade.

Question 6 asked high school educators to check all the subjects they teach in an average week. The data from Question 6 are displayed in Table 57, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 57***Question 6 Results*

What subjects do you teach in an average week? N=4	Responses
Reading	50% (2)
Language arts/English	75% (3)
Math	25% (1)
Science	25% (1)
Social studies	25% (1)
Health	0%
Art	0%
Music	0%
Advisory	50% (2)
Physical education	0%

Table 57 displays data that three of the high school educators teach language arts,

two reading, two advisory, one math, one science, and one social studies.

Questions 7 and 8 asked educators how much homework they typically assign on school days and if they assign homework on the weekend. One hundred percent of the educators stated they only give 5-10 minutes of homework nightly, and they do not assign weekend homework.

Question 9 asked high school educators how much time they spend contacting parents/guardians. The data from Question 9 are displayed in Table 58, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 58**

*Question 9 Results*

How many hours do you spend each week contacting parents? N=4	Responses
None	25% (1)
Less than 1 hour	25% (1)
2 hours	25% (1)
3 or more	25% (1)

Half of the educators stated they give less than 1 hour of homework weekly; while the other half said they give more than 1 hour of homework weekly.

Question 10 asked the high school educators how many students they teach each day. The educators teach an average of 102 students daily.

Question 11 asked high school educators to share their opinion of the importance of parent involvement at the high school. The data from Question 11 are displayed in Table 59 and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.



**Table 59***Question 11 Results*

Is parent involvement important for a good high school. N=4	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Most parents of high school students do not know how to talk with their teens about schoolwork at home.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase their teen's success in high school.	0%	0%	100% (4)	0%
Parent involvement can increase teacher effectiveness.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (2)
Parents of students at this school want to be involved more than they are now.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
High school teachers do not have the time to involve parents in a very useful way.	0%	100% (4)	0%	0%
High school teachers need in-service PD to implement parent involvement.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25%
Parent involvement is important for student success in high school.	0%	0%	75% (3)	(2)
This school views parents as important partners.	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (2)
The community values education for all students	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (2)
This high school is known for trying new things to improve the school	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%

In Question 11, educators share their opinion on the importance of parent involvement. Half of the educators disagree that most parents of high school students know how to talk to their teens about schoolwork at home. Fifty percent agree that most

parents know how to talk to their teens about schoolwork. All high school educators agree that every family has strengths that could be essential to their teen's success. All educators at least agree that parent involvement can increase teacher effectiveness. Fifty percent of educators disagree that parents of students want to be involved more than they are now. All high school educators disagree that they do not have time to involve parents. All high school educators agree they need more in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices.

Seventy-five percent of high school educators agree parent involvement is important for student success. Seventy-five percent of educators agree that the community values education for all students and that the school is known for trying new things.

In Question 12, educators are asked to judge the type of parent involvement that is important for the school, needs to be improved, or already exists in the school. The data from Question 12 are displayed in Table 60, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 60***Question 12 Results*

Please rate the importance of specific ways of involving 10th-grade families. N=4	Not important to me	Developing	Needs to be improved	Strong program
Home visits	25% (1)	25% (1)	50% (2)	0%
Meeting in the community	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Report card pick-up	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Performances, sports, or other events	0%	50% (2)	0%	50% (2)
Information to parents on parenting skills and adolescent development.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Surveys of parents each year on their ideas about school.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Communication from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)
Parent-teacher conferences with all families	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Parent and other volunteers in school.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Information to assist parents to monitor their teen's homework	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Information to parents on parenting skills and adolescent development.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Surveys of parents each year on their ideas about the school.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Communications from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)
Communications about report cards so that parents understand their teen's progress and needs.	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Parent-teacher conferences with all families.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Parent and other volunteers at the school.	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)	0%
Information to assist parents to monitor their teen's homework.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Information to assist parents to talk with their teen about classwork, skills, and subjects.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%

(cont.)

Please rate the importance of specific ways of involving 10th-grade families. N=4	Not important to me	Developing	Needs to be improved	Strong program
Homework for students that requires them to talk with someone at home about their classwork.	0%	66.67% (2)	33.33% (1)	0%
Committees involving parents to review school policies.	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)	0%
Business and community partnerships to enrich school programs.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%

Only 1 teacher viewed home visits as unimportant, while two viewed home visits as needing improvement. All educators rated meetings in the community and report card pick-up as needing improvement. Performances and sporting events were rated as strong programs by half of the educators. Half of the educators said information to parents on parenting and adolescent development and sending surveys to parents to garner ideas about the school are areas that need improvement.

Communication from school to home was noted as a strong program by one of the educators; two stated this was an area that needed improvement. Two educators said parent-teacher conferences with families and having parents and other volunteers in school need improving. Three educators stated information to assist parents to monitor their teen's homework and communication about report cards so parents understand their teen's progress and needs needed improvement. Two of the educators said information to parents on parent skills and adolescent development and surveys to parents each year on their ideas about the school is an area that needs improvement. Parent-teacher conferences with families and information to assist parents in talking with their teen about classwork, skills, and subjects are rated as needing improvement by two of the educators. Most high school educators said involving parents on committees and reviewing policies was an area

needing improvement. Half of the high school educators said business and community partnerships to enrich school programs need improvement.

Question 13 asked high school educators to share how they contact families and estimate the percentage of families they contact through the various methods. The data from Question 13 are displayed in Table 61, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 61**

*Question 13 Results*

How do you contact families? Estimate the percentage of time you contact families the various ways. N=4	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%	NA
Letter or memo			25%	25%					50%
			(1)	(1)					(2)
Telephone		25%			50%			25%	
		(1)			(2)			(1)	
Meeting at school				50%		50%			
				(2)		(2)			
Scheduled parent-teacher conference	25%	25%	0%	0%	25%	25%	0%	25%	0%
	(1)	(1)			(1)	(1)		(1)	

The most popular methods of contact are phone and in-person meetings, particularly scheduled parent conferences.

Question 14 asked educators to choose activities to assist students. Educators had to rank the importance of each activity. The data from Question 14 are displayed in Table 62, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 62***Question 14 Results*

How important is it to conduct each of the following activities with your 10 <sup>th</sup> -grade students. N=4	Not important to me	A little important	Important	Very important
Have at least one conference with a parent of each of my students.	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Include students in conferences with parents.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Contact parents when their teen has problems or failures.	0%	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)
Inform parents when their teen improves.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Involve parents as volunteers.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Inform parents of the skills required to pass my class.	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	50% (2)
Inform parents how students earn report card grades in my class.	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	50% (2)
Provide ideas to help parents talk with their teen about what they learn in my class.	0%	50% (2)	25% (1)	25% (1)
Provide specific activities that parents can do to help students improve their grades.	0%	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)
Assign homework that requires students to talk with someone at home.	25% (1)	0%	75% (3)	0%
Request information from parents about their teen's talents, interests, or needs.	0%	0%	100% (4)	0%
Work on school policy committees with parents.	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)
Work with businesses for volunteers, donations, or other resources to improve programs for my students.	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	25% (1)

Seventy-five percent of high school educators said it is important to have a least one conference with a parent of each student, include students in conferences with parents, and have at least one parent conference with each of their students when their teen has problems and when they improve to inform parents. Fifty percent of high school educators said it is important to involve parents as volunteers. Informing parents of the skills required to pass a class and how grades are earned was important to 25% of the educators. Fifty percent of educators said providing parents with specific activities to help improve their child's grades is important. Twenty-five percent of educators said it is not important to assign homework that requires students to talk to someone, while 75% stated it is important. All educators said requesting information about your students from parents is important. Fifty percent of educators said involving parents on committees, school policies, and working with businesses for volunteers and donations are important.

Question 15 asked educators for their professional opinions about activities that parents of 10<sup>th</sup> graders should conduct. Educators had to rank the importance of each activity. The data from Question 15 are displayed in Table 63, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 63***Question 15 Results*

Choose activities that should be conducted by parents/guardians in the 10 <sup>th</sup> grade. N=4	Not important to me	A little important	Important	Very important
Have at least one conference with a parent of each of my students.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Include students in conferences with parents.	0%	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)
Know what their teen is expected to learn each year.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Check regularly that homework is done.	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Talk with their teen at home about what they are learning in class.	0%	0%	100% (4)	0%
Encourage teen to participate in class.	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to talk with their teen about homework.	0%	0%	100% (4)	0%
Talk to teachers about problems their teen is facing at home.	0%	25% (1)	75% (3)	0%
Attend assemblies and other special events.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)
Talk to their teen about the importance of school.	0%	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)
Monitor their teen's progress and needs in each subject.	0%	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)
Volunteer to help the school.	0%	50% (2)	50% (2)	0%
Join a parent organization or school committee	25% (1)	0%	75% (3)	0%
Encourage their teen to participate in community activities.	25% (1)	0%	75% (3)	0%
Help their teen plan for future work or schooling.	0%	0%	75% (3)	25% (1)

Question 15 asked educators to rate the importance of parental activities to support their teens. All high school teachers found several activities to be important or very important: conferencing, setting expectations, attending special events, working with



homework, monitoring progress, and helping plan their future. Volunteering, joining the parent organization, and encouraging their teen to participate in community activities were the least popular.

Question 16 asked educators to estimate the percentage of their 10<sup>th</sup>-grade families who provided various levels of support at home. The data from Question 16 are displayed in Table 64, and the number in parentheses represents the number of respondents.

**Table 64**

*Question 16 Results*

Estimate the amount of time your 10th-grade families support students in the various areas? N=4	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%	NA
Supervise their teen's behavior	0%	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	0%	25% (1)	0%	0%	25% (1)
Attend parent-teacher conferences with you	0%	0%	0%	25% (1)	0%	50% (2)	0%	0%	25% (1)
Attend sports or music events or other assemblies	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	0%	25% (1)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Talk to their teen regularly about classwork in your subject	50% (2)	0%	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	0%	0%	0%	50% (2)
Joined the PTA/PTO and attend meetings regularly	50% (2)	0%	0%	25% (1)	25% (1)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Know and use services in the community to assist their families	25% (1)	0%	0%	25% (1)	50% (2)	0%	0%	0%	0%

In Question 16, educators estimate the amount of time 10<sup>th</sup>-grade families support

their teens through participating in various activities. The most time spent by parents in activities, as estimated by teachers occurred with community services, teacher conferences, and talking with teens about their school work. There were differing opinions regarding participation in PTA and speaking regularly with their teen about schoolwork.

In Question 17, high school educators were asked to estimate their 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students' performance. All survey participants indicated they have students above, average, and on grade level.

In Question 19, educators were asked to share if their 10<sup>th</sup>-grade students deliver memos home promptly and complete their homework. All participants shared that their students promptly deliver memos and complete homework assignments.

Question 20 asked participants to share their most successful practices to involve parents/guardians in the school. Two of the four responders use social media and texting as a successful method to involve parents. One educator expressed using Wednesdays as parent contact days via telephone, and the last educator stated she uses various forms of communication such as phone calls, text, and emails.

### **Focus Groups**

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies that will increase the engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts of North Carolina. The following questions guided this study:

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their involvement at the school where their children attend?

2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

The research utilizes Epstein et al.'s (2018) six types of parental involvement as a framework to increase school, family, and community partnerships. Chapter 2 explained this research that supports the six tenets of Epstein et al.'s parental involvement. The study focused on investigating strategies to increase engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts. This study analyzed staff and parental experiences in how these six types of involvement are being implemented K-12 in the school system.

In this chapter, quantitative data are presented to generate a discussion on which component or components of Epstein et al.'s (2018) types of involvement the schools need to address to impact parent engagement in rural schools. The findings will allow school leaders to understand how parents can support their children at home and participate in the school and how they currently feel about parent engagements. The findings will also allow school leaders to understand how staff members view parent engagement and their recommended strategies to increase parent engagement.

In addition, focus groups were presented questions that included elementary parents, middle/high school parents, elementary teachers, and middle/high school teachers. The questions used in the focus groups aligned with the survey questions distributed to parents and teachers. The quantitative and qualitative data collected provide additional data on parental and educators' experience with the six tenets of Epstein et al.'s (2018) parent engagement and give insight into opportunities or programs needed for

district improvement in this area.

## **Elementary Parent Focus Group**

### ***Collaborating With the Community***

Interview Question 1, asked parents, "In what ways can your local schools support providing resources to parents/guardians?" A reoccurring theme surfaced around communication. Parent 1 in the focus group stated, "Constant communication helps." Several other parents agreed with the statement.

Parent 3 agreed with other parents, and added,

Communication is one of the big things and having that constant communication, whether it be a phone call or email or just a quick text, sometimes I know at the high school we had this text program where we can text directly to parents if there's a concern or issue that we need to talk about. So I think constant communication between the parents and parents also respond to the teachers is a big thing.

Parent 4 stated,

Well, some ways they provide resources is via the computer and also doing like phone messages with different resources that we have available. And then, of course, you know, if they call it a nurse's station and get different resources for like health services that we have. If they need, like some mental health services and all that kind of stuff, they can just either contact like the counselors or the nurses, or we can also have a lot of stuff, via the computers like, we have different tabs set up with information in.

Overall, the first question for the elementary parent focus group was more relative

to another type of parent involvement, such as communication. In addition to communication as a resource, Parents 4 and 6 mentioned "mental health services" provided by the community.

### ***Methods of Communication***

Interview Question 2 asked parents, "What is the best form of communication with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?" Parents who participated in the group repeatedly stated they would prefer to be communicated with via text. Parent 1 stated,

I'm thinking I would like to think that most folks have phones, so text is probably and calling, but I know that there are some that do not and that they don't have the plans to be able to have all text and such. But I still think it's probably through phone or text. Because I don't know that everyone checks emails, you know, constantly, personally on personal accounts.

Parent 2 concurred with Parent 1 and added,

I think the majority of parents do have some type of text message on their phone, so like if the teacher wants to send a message, my phone is going to be right there with me, so I am going to get that message immediately, even when I'm on my job. So I mean, I think texting.

Text messaging or phone calls were a common thread in the responses. Five of the six parents preferred using text messages. The majority of the parents expressed a need for this type of communication.

### ***Learning at Home***

Learning at home was addressed in Interview Question 3 and Question 6. In

Question 3, parents were asked, "What can your local school do better to support students with homework?" Parents shared their experience of not knowing how to help their students due to limited understanding of a textbook to provide examples, as they are struggling to understand the content. Parent 3 stated,

Maybe like some kind of textbook that might show some step-by-step examples of things that they're working on in class or even, you know, some class worksheets to go along with the homework so that the parent know, okay, we did this this way today. And I think also sending home homework of things that the kids have learned how to do versus necessarily something brand new where they still need time to master before you send on homework.

Parent 4 agreed and added,

I think having a child nowadays is like, they don't have books. Everything is just like a piece of paper. They come home with a homework sheet, but we don't have a book to go along with most of the information. So luckily, we have Google to help to figure out what they have to do to help them with their homework. I think we need to get back with some books so we can have some examples. So we as a parent...because if a parent is not highly educated or really wasn't a good student and don't know what's going on. They don't have no example, no nothing to go by, to try to help their child understand what they have to do for homework.

### ***Learning at Home***

In Question 6, parents were asked, "In what ways can your local school support you in knowing how to help your child with homework and projects?" Parents shared their experience with not knowing how to help their students due to limited

communication about the homework or project and needing a rubric. Parent 3 stated,

I think it goes back to communication, just being in contact or being able to send out what they may be working on right now or just constant communication. I really feel like that way we know what's going on and we can make sure we help the child on our end as well.

Parent 2 also agreed and added,

Along with that, communication, especially if it is for like a project, if the students have a rubric or something that they have in their hands to follow. I think that would be more helpful for parents because the parents can say, Oh, well, this says you need this, this and this, but I only say that you have this. So they're able to help more because they know exactly what the expectation is."

Parent 3 summarized and provided a relevant example:

My son is doing a project right now, and a paper wasn't sent home specifically what his project should entail. So if we had the clear, concise communication about what to expect or what to put in the project. You know, it will be easier to help them.

Parents expressed the need for clear, concise communication and guidelines for homework assignments, including a rubric. Communication is vital for elementary families, as parents have expressed this need in several questions. Much of this feedback turned to feedback on another type of parent involvement, such as "communication."

### ***Collaborating With the Community***

Question 4 also focused on collaboration with the local community. Parents were asked, "What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to

students/families?" Parents shared the need for after-school programs to help remediate learning loss. Parent 2 stated,

I also know that there are some after-school programs that are being done right now for certain grade levels. Like at our school, the after-school program is for third and fourth grade, but I think maybe that needs to be extended to the fifth grade sixth grade because they're having issues too. And we're saying, you know, that a lot of our kids lost some learning skills here in the COVID stuff that we kind of need to fill in the gap with.

Parent 3 agreed with this need and added, "You know, a homework club or homework help so that, you know, parents can reach out or have access to helping their kids with their homework and after school study."

Parenting was another theme in the focus groups. Parents shared the need for workshops to help parents support their children in school. Parent 4 stated,

If they had some classes, like some, maybe some parenting classes, just because a lot of the kids don't have a lot of parent support. You know, so maybe some classes to teach them how to actually be parents or some of the things, you know, that have changed and they need, you know, just some basic parenting stuff.

Parent 6 piggybacked and added,

I agree with that. I know, like on base, they teach like new parents support. I think our community could benefit greatly from that because many deal with trauma. I know we've started things like this. I mean, we've got some sort of mental health supports and stuff, but I think we need to focus on social-emotional things within the schools, not just for the students, but maybe workshops for the parents to help



deal with maybe trauma kids might be facing. Or just emotions dealing with behaviors, supports in that way, even simple hygiene things or, you know, health workshops some parents maybe don't know. You know, there are different standards of health, wholeness or cleanliness, and just giving those supports, provide resources and information for dealing with puberty.

Several parents agreed with the need for an after-school program to support students with homework and remediation. Parenting workshops were also discussed as a means of support to parents.

### ***Decision-Making***

Interview Question 5 asked parents, "In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?" Parent 1 responded, "Maybe surveys. I know that decisions have to be made by people that know the whole, everything around them, but surveys might help give you an idea of what parents are thinking." Parent 2 agreed and said,

Well, surveys are a good idea. I think that also maybe when teachers communicate with parents, maybe ask them, "What are your feelings about the homework?"

You know assigning too much homework for this grade level or you know, is there something I can do differently to maybe help some parents out? Because a lot of our, you know, a lot of the parents might have jobs where they don't get home until later. And so even if there was some type of way that they could call somebody, you know, that might be closed down by the time the parents, actually they're working with the kids. So maybe just teachers asking, you know, what can I do to help you with this homework situation?

Parent 3 stated, "I think just to voice their opinion or their concern about, you know, the things that they feel like might need to be done to help the school community." Parent 6 shared,

I feel like our school, they try to give parents opportunities to be involved, and unfortunately, what I've noticed within our community is that there is not a lot of desire for involvement, so we start up PTOs, but then no one shows up. And so I don't know that our district really has an issue with letting parents make decisions. I think just with the community we live in, there is not a lot of desire to be involved.

Parents had mixed opinions on decision-making opportunities. Parents 4 and 6 expressed that parents have a voice; however, they have chosen not to use it. Parents were looking for a way to communicate feedback anonymously via surveys. Communication and learning at home resurfaced in this question, as Parent 2 reiterated the need for parent input for homework support.

### ***Volunteering***

In Question 7, parents were asked, "What prevents you from engaging in your child(ren)'s school?" Most parents identified time as a barrier for volunteering and COVID. Parent 1 said, "I try to when I can, but I work, I mean, full-time work. As far as volunteering or just being present, I would probably say job." Parent 3 agreed with the work schedule but also added,

The work schedule is something that it would get in my way of actually being more involved in my son's class. But I also think that I mean not just for me, but I think that COVID has scared a whole lot of people away and they've said, I just

don't want to come and volunteer just because they're scared that they're going to get sick just from being in the building.

Parent 3 continued with the theme of work and schedule: "It's kind of hard to find the energy to really engage in, you know what your kids need in the afternoon." Parent 4 said,

Well, nobody prevents me because I'm going to be there for my daughter. But some people, I just think it's a lack of not wanting to be involved because I think if you really care about your child, you're going to do and be. You can put them in sports, you know, and then go to the games to support them. I mean, so if you are just a concerned parent, I think nothing will prevent you from being involved. Nothing would prevent me. I just think you don't want to do it, just lazy or whatever.

Parent 6, added,

I also think another thing that might prevent volunteering is we've got a lot of single parents who are maybe working and don't have the schedule flexibility to be able to attend or participate in things. I know for me as a parent, my kids do dance class, so sometimes there will be a PTO meeting that happens to fall during dance. There's just scheduling conflicts and things like that. So I agree that the majority of our parents lack the desire to be involved. And then, unfortunately, the ones who do want to be involved, they're either working hours or schedules conflict, so they're unable to.

Both Parents 4 and 6 stated that the majority of families "lack motivation." The most common response to this question was work schedules. Parents explained that it is difficult to get involved when you work a full-time job.

*Other suggestions or Other Ideas to increase parent engagement*

In Question 8, parents were asked, "What other ideas or suggestions would you like to share to engage families?" This allowed parents to share all topics or ideas they would like to see available to families in the county.

Parent 1 stated,

I think the parent nights or parent-teacher nights. That I know this goes back to pre-COVID, but those were very helpful. Being able to meet with the teachers, even if it's quarterly or every so often. That was always nice to just be able to discuss with, you know, how they were doing and such.

Parent 2 shared,

Parent nights were really helpful because that gave you the one-on-one time with the teacher that your kid is in there with. But then it also gave you the opportunity to talk to a bus driver or a principal about, you know, anything that you might have like in the back of your mind that you wanted to share with them.

Parent 3 said, "The more opportunities and programs that we have to invite the parents to come see what's going on in the classroom or voice any concerns." Parent 6 summarized the recurring theme, stating,

I don't know necessarily that I can think of ideas. I know what I'd like to see. I feel like the problem is getting parents to want to be involved. And so I wish there was a way we could come up with something that would get parents to buy in and want to play an active role in the community and with their students. It's hard coming; I'm looking at this as a parent and as the teacher, and so I think there's just the lack of that desire to have involvement. So I wonder if we did more family-oriented

things like a game night at the school or homework Thursdays or something where parents can bring their kids and get help. Not just drop the kids off for homework, but both of them sit there. You know, in a realistic world, I mean, we would have the funds to do something like that where teachers stay late and stuff like that. But maybe just activities or ways to get parents to actually want to be involved and play a role and make it fun for everyone and be very family-oriented to bring families together, too. Because I feel like in our community, we do have an impoverished demographic. And so I think if there were ways to, I don't know, to make it more appealing, parents might want to.

For Question 9, parents were asked, "In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?" Parent 1, shared,

I think it would be more all events kind of obviously dropped off for reasons, but I think just having the school events that we were used to, where there'll be parents night or plays or, you know, just events that we were used to going to and interacting.

Parent 2 expressed,

Pre-COVID, the schools actually tried to invite parents to come out. I mean, if it wasn't every other month, you know, it was at least quarterly, and you felt comfortable going out there. Your kids were with you, so they heard the conversation you were having pre-COVID. If I had a question, then I could make an appointment to come and conference with the teacher. But since COVID has happened, it's more standoffish. You only want to communicate like through a Zoom meeting or over the phone. The kids are not generally in your presence

when you're doing that, so they're not hearing the conversation. I think that kids really need to know my parents are concerned enough that they're talking to my teacher. Then, we can actually involve the kids in the conversation about, you know, what our concerns are, whether it's academic or behavior or whatever it is.

Parent 3 shared,

I think before COVID, it's almost like the open door you could come in, you know, speak to a teacher, whether it be the first few minutes of the day. It was an open door, you know, interaction between school and home. But now it seems like, it's kind of closed off. Everything is, you know, through email or through text, and nobody really comes and have that real engagement, you know, from interacting.

Parents 1, 2, and 3 agreed that parent engagement has changed since COVID, and the schools seem more isolated from home and the community. Parent 4 stated,

For my family, it has stayed the same. We have been involved in basically all our kids and whatever they want to do, like she said, my daughter also does dance. So we take her to dance. We help with homework. If they have games or if they're getting awards at awards days. I mean, it hasn't changed.

Parent 5 agreed, stating, "It has not changed, it's the same." Parent 6 said,

For my perspective, I think it's changed in the sense having awards ceremonies, it was virtual, so we weren't able to attend in person. A lot of times when we want to do things like, you know, your kid's birthday, you want to come and bring treats and things. We weren't allowing visitors at one point, so you could just drop things off that you couldn't really participate with your child. I think those are the

main differences. A lot of things have either been moved to be virtually or you're just unable to do it because there's a spike in cases. So you can't have visitors, visitors are not allowed in the school for things like parent conferences or you have to meet outside. This [meeting outside] changes the feel in the atmosphere because it seems a little less personal and less professional. For me, I feel like it's different.

I asked parents, "So when you have done things virtually, would you say there is great participation?" Parent 6 stated,

It's sort of a Catch 22 because, with one respect, it kind of makes it more feasible because you're able to be two places at once, essentially. So I was still able to work but zoom in to watch my kids' awards, so that was a plus because you're not having to take off work. So you would think participation would increase because you're able to kind of multi-task and participate and still work. But again, I feel like just with the community we live in, there's just not a lot of parent involvement anyway. And I don't know that that's necessarily a COVID thing. I think that's just a county thing.

Overall, most of the parents noted that parent engagement has changed since COVID. Several parents expressed a disconnect between families and schools since COVID, and parent involvement was not any better virtually.

### **Elementary Educators Focus Group**

The elementary educator focus group was asked eight questions. The questions were based on Epstein et al.'s (2018) research on parent involvement. The zoom session was recorded and uploaded to Trint, a secure transcription web-based platform. All

responses were analyzed using thematic analysis and KWIC (keyword in context). Each question is presented under one of Epstein et al.'s types of parent involvement. The data are used to analyze the following questions.

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their involvement at the school where their children attend?
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child's school, and how can the schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

### ***Collaborating With the Community***

In Question 1, educators were asked, "In what ways can your local school do better to support teachers with providing resources to parents/guardians at home?"

Educators expressed the need for resources. Resources was a key word expressed for this question. Educator 1 stated, "Purchase supplies." Educator 2 agreed with supplies but also added "hotspots." Educator 2 continued,

I was thinking along the same lines like supplies because a lot of my children don't have supplies. I always buy my children pencils and provide them like note cards and flash cards and that kind of thing. But also, I know when we had COVID, they had hot spots and that was very important. I don't know if we have hot spots now.

Educator 5 stated, "I was thinking about doing parent workshops. Some of our parents don't know how to do the curriculum and all that stuff, so provide them with some workshop to help what resources?" Educator 6 shared the theme of resources too:



“Providing little decodable books that they [students] could take to and from school. You read one a night with your parents, they sign it, and you bring it back the next day. So lots of little decodable books.” Educator 7 shared,

They [parents] don’t know what the kids are expected to do when they [students] come to school. I think having an online zoom with them [parents] to help them on skills that they don't really understand. I'll meet with parents after school or during special time and show them how to work the stuff that we're doing. But also online, you know, letting them [parents] know that they can have a Zoom session even while their kids are in remote learning, they can set up a session too. We try to set up packets to talk to them [parents] about the EOG for third, fourth, and fifth grade. You know, give them samples of the types of questions and send home newsletters about tips for helping their child do homework.

The majority of the feedback was aligned around other types of involvement such as learning at home, communication, and parenting. Overall, most educators stated there is a need for resources at home to support parents and engage them in their child's education.

### ***Methods of Communication***

Interview Question 2 asked educators, "How do you communicate with parents/guardians to keep them informed about their child's education?" All educators indicated they communicate using some form of daily communication, such as a newsletter, dojo, and text message. Educator 1 stated, “I send home daily folders, a daily folder that I write notes in and on Class Dojo where I contact parents individually so we communicate back and forth.”

Educator 2 said, "I have a daily calendar and I can write notes in there. I call my parents, text my parents, and I send them letters." Educator 3 also stated,

I have a behavioral report that we sent home daily and also we have a journal that we write in daily so that we can correspond back and forth with the parent. And I also use phone calls and text messages, so if they need to contact me or if I need to contact them.

Educators 4 and 5 said they use all the methods given. In addition, Educator 5 said, "If I have Hispanic students, I communicate with our ESL teacher, and she will make contact for us." Educator 6 said, "I send home a weekly newsletter letting them know what the student has done that week, and then they have to sign it and bring it back." In addition, Educator 7 said,

Students have a practice reading and math log that they're (parents) supposed to sign every day to show that their kid has completed it. I give parents my phone number at the beginning of the year and throughout the year to call or text if they have a question and I text, I email whatever I need to do to get up with them.

All educators stated they send home some type of written communication daily to keep parents informed, along with some sort of electronic communication.

### ***Learning at Home***

Learning at home was addressed in Interview Question 3 and Interview Question 6. In Question 3, parents were asked, "What can the local schools do to support students with homework." Educator 1 stated,

That's a hard one, but other than like coming up with like a homework time. You know, like a little club. I mean, like an incentive, we can come up with to

encourage students to do their homework. And then you know, they can possibly be rewarded after a certain amount of time.

Educator 2 said, "I am going to piggyback on what Educator 1 said." Educator 3 stated, I would like to see after-school programs to help those students with homework. Most of the time, homework is not being done because the parent is not available, sometimes in the afternoon. If they [school district] had an after-school program where the kids could go and some certified staff and non-certified staff were there to assist with homework.

Educator 7 agreed with implementing a before- and after-school program but also stated, I think one thing that's important is to explain to parents that homework isn't about getting a hundred. It's about letting their kids show us what they remember from that day's lessons. So, if they do have a misconception, we can pick that up when we look at their homework. Homework is practice, not a test.

All but one educator agreed that the schools need to implement a before or after school program to support homework needs. This type of involvement is relative to collaborating with the community, compared to learning at home.

### ***Learning at Home***

Interview Question 6 asked educators, "In what ways can your local school support teachers in knowing how to help students with homework and projects?"

Educator 1 stated,

Well, like with projects. I don't do a lot of projects because the kids don't have the supplies at home if they have to do something. Not all parents are going to go out and purchase poster board or whatever, so that goes back to giving us supplies.

You know that any materials that the kids might need to be able to do their work give the manipulatives that the kids can utilize at home and also utilize here at school. And actually, you know, providing us more books too.

Educators 4 stated,

I guess they don't have transportation with the kids to stay here at the school to work on projects and do research. We have to give extra time, but like I said, we know the reality of that. They don't have transportation. We could allow that, but the parents have to be required to pick this child up if the teachers are going to stay. How they could support us is give us supplies. I mean, a lot of the teachers spend money like me to have supplies for the kids. So if they have supplies or extra paperwork or material, things like that, I think the project would be done here in the school versus trying to get it at home.

Resources have become a theme in the data. Educators are expressing the need for resources. Most of the feedback in this section was more relative to other types of parent involvement, such as "collaborating with the community."

### ***Decision-Making***

In Question 5, educators were asked, "How would you like to be involved in the decision-making in your school?" Overall, most of the educators stated they felt empowered and able to help make decisions because of their position on the School Leadership Team. Educator 1 said,

Well, we're actually all on the school improvement team, so we can all have a voice you know, any concerns we might see or anything suggestions we might have and share. We come together and try to make overall decisions for the

school.

Educator 2 stated, "The only thing I can think of is picking the curriculum, the books, you know, the material." Educator 4 added,

I think maybe a survey would be good and I also think we should have focus groups. I think communication is key for us to be all on the same page. So I think if each grade level would talk and discuss how we could as a grade level make things better and then take it to, I guess, the higher authorities.

Educator 7 agreed with the others and stated,

We're such a small school that gives everybody a chance to participate and be heard. I think that it would be wise for all teachers to cast a vote on the materials that we are adopting to support our curriculum. Because right now we don't. We have a group that decides and that's at the county level.

Communication was stated again, which is more relative to another type of parent involvement such as "communication."

### ***Volunteering***

In Question 7, educators were asked, "What perceived barriers do you think prevent parents/guardians from engaging in their child(ren)'s school?" Educator 1 stated, "Part of it now is like with Math, it's typically not taught the way that we were taught. So the parents do not know how to do the problem. They [parents] lack knowledge. Educator 3 shared,

With working with students in my self-contained classroom, a lot of parents feel that because their kids have intellectual disabilities, they feel that the kids are not capable of doing anything extra. They feel like it's not important because they

have a disability. They just don't feel like that isn't as important as if the child was a regular student.

Educator 4, expressed,

Time to do it, I think, work schedules. It might be difficult for them [parents] to help their child if they're not there or if they have an older parent or grandparent or someone watching, and they might not know the information to teach them—the value of education. I mean, it's like I send you to school to get it from the teacher. I'm not the teacher, so you need to learn it, and I can't help you. So I'm not sure, you know, I guess the attitude or behavior that they display to the child. I agree with other responses too. If they're far removed from the information, I mean to go back to kindergarten and letter sounds or in first grade or second grade, the parents might be very far removed from that too, you know. They might not know how to read or write or spell or how to transfer information or help their child with that same level of knowledge. It might be hard for them to do. If they have to help their child it might be a challenge for them to do it. So again, I think it's they're very far removed from this.

Educator 6 stated,

Not all parents/guardians value education the same and see schools where learning should occur. I just think if they would simply read with their child, that would help the most. I mean, they're not going to know how to do the math or any of the other stuff, more than likely, and that would just frustrate them. But just like doing bedtime stories for them. Because they can't do it, so they won't do it. Or also like they were saying, they've worked all day, they come home, they've got to get

dinner ready, they've got to get kids ready for bed, they've got to wash clothes. They don't have time to be doing our job because that's what they send them [students] to school for. So if all they had to do was read with their child, that could be fun. They would enjoy that and that might carry over into other aspects and they would want to help. But for the most part, I just don't think they can because they don't have time.

Educator 7 noted,

I think that not knowing how we do it is intimidating to a lot of parents. They feel uncomfortable trying to engage with their kids on that. I think that lack of time is the other big factor because they're trying to keep their household running and they don't feel like they've got enough time to keep them fed and get them to bed on time, much less to practice with them.

Overall, the educators expressed a lack of time and ability prevents parents from engaging in the schools.

In Question 8, educators were asked, "In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Has it changed?" Educator 1 stated,

I've noticed that it somewhat has changed. You get more involvement in lower grades, kindergarten, first grade, maybe second grade, but then as you go up, it dwindles. You know, they don't take as much time and they don't care. I don't want to say they don't care, but they just don't put it as a priority to get involved. It is like they do when they're first starting school. It has not changed as a result of COVID.

Educators 2 said,

Parents used to come out to the school a lot more, so it has changed. Parent involvement now is parents text me. I have some parents that text me every single night. I have some that I have never received a text from, but I would say the majority of my parents I have contact with at least once a week. It was more before COVID. It has changed since COVID because they used to come out to the school. We used to have parent night, and we used to have parents come visit the school like for children's birthdays. Like Educator 1 said, they are more involved in kindergarten, but it has changed because parents can't freely come out like they used to, so it has changed. I still have parent involvement, but it's not as much as it used to be.

Educator 3 expressed,

I think before COVID I've always had good parent involvement, I mean, attending IEP meetings, making contact both ways with them and them making contact with me. After COVID it was even better because I think parents got to see the things that their child needed to work on as far as classroom assignments. I think they got to see that more so during the time of COVID than they did before COVID. They got to actually see and put their hands into it, when we were doing remote learning. They got to see what it took to get the kids where they needed to be or to get them to master a task, so they saw what it took. So now I say the involvement is better because they know what it took. They are more supportive.

According to Educator 4,

During pre-COVID, parents were much more visible. So parents would come out before COVID. They would have birthday parties, they would come and help



celebrate or even come to eat lunch with their child. That made them [children] feel special or even bring them lunch if they could. They would be very involved if we had the fall festival or plays or programs. They really, really would come out. I mean, in droves before COVID, they would come out a whole lot, and they really enjoyed it. There are academic programs for graduation, and they [parents] will definitely support that. Their involvement now, of course, is not as much you don't see them yet. I think again, their work schedule could be a reason why they're not as involved. You can't really have the freedom like it used to be. Maybe it is not the priority anymore because they're so limited in what they can do in the school nowadays.

Educator 5, stated, "Before, it was a lot of parent involvement, but it has changed since COVID because the kids' parents can't come out. They [parents] don't know what's going on and some of them [parents] schedules are totally different." Educator 7 said,

Before COVID, we had at least monthly family reading night, family Math night, Social Studies wax museum, Science fair, Christmas play, and choral performances. You know parents were much more involved. We would have events and we would invite them to during the day, not a whole school, but just classroom-wide and parents would show up for that. Now without parents really being allowed in the building, that takes all of that away. I think parents feel more isolated from the school than they did, even though they understand. They don't want their children to hear that they don't feel safe and don't want to endanger anybody else. I think they feel more isolated.

Educators shared that parents are more involved with students in K-2 and since

COVID, they have seen a decrease in the level of involvement.

### **Middle and High School Parent Focus Group**

#### ***Parenting***

In Question 1 of the parent focus group, parents were asked, "In what ways can your local school support providing resources to parents/guardians at home?" Parent 1 stated,

Well, I think maybe having classes for some of the parents, I know they do that for pre-K, but we're not required to take any classes later. And, of course, middle school years, those get more difficult than high school years. We have other challenges, so maybe parenting classes. I know for some of our parents, It would probably help.

Parent 2 shared,

I personally feel like mental health is a big issue now with a lot of our students. So I guess like giving us a class, like a class of the signs of certain mental health issues. We could talk to about an issue that we may have concerning our kids' mental health or any other specific issues dealing with it. Or say, we have concerns about our students, if there's someone at the school specifically that you know and can talk to about your child.

Parent 3 stated,

That's the same thing we've talked about before, and we talked about classes like Parent 1 said. I think you can have them [classes] when they're younger, but we really don't have it for the older ones. We talked about a resource night at one time where we could have different people from different specialties come in like that.

So maybe not necessarily a class structure, but an information night where certain people could come in. So like, if mental health or social-emotional learning was important, you'd have somebody come out from that venue. So I think that's a good idea.

All three parents agreed that workshops are needed for parents and students to address mental health issues, social-emotional learning, and parenting classes. All ideas could be addressed under this type of involvement. Parenting information could also be addressed under another type of parent involvement such as "parenting."

### ***Methods of Communication***

Interview Question 2 asked parents, "What is the best form of communication with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?" Parent 1 stated,

I personally like text because I don't like talking on the phone or listening. I know the robocalls, we do get the phone message, but it also will get a text message. I decline the phone call half the time, and I just read the text when I can because I can always refer back to it. That's just my preference.

Parent 2 agreed with Parent 1 and added,

With the robocalls, not only do you get a call, you get a text, and they send emails. So I don't understand how parents say they are not getting the messages because if you have all that information on file, it goes to all three. So I mean, as far as communicating and letting us know things as long as we have updated information, I think we're good there.

Parent 3 agreed with Parents 1 and 2 and added,

I will say it just as an added, thing. A lot of times they [educators] think parents are on all these social media and I will say that I don't think that's a good idea. A lot of our parents just don't interact like that. So definitely against social media, Facebook, different things like that. I would say text messaging is probably the best.

All parents agreed that text messages are probably the best form of communication as most parents have access to mobile devices.

### ***Learning at Home***

For Question 3, parents were asked, "What can your local school do better to support students with homework?" Parent 1 said,

All my children really haven't had a problem with homework. I think being a parent, if they have a schedule to come home, they know they get a snack and then they do their homework. It's kind of second nature. But if they ever did have problems, there were websites that the teacher said for Math, Khan Academy and sometimes the teachers, actually use Remind, which was how they could text a question to the teacher. The teachers usually responded fast.

Parent 2 added,

*Mine*, never really had an issue with homework, so I don't know. The teachers offer tutoring at the school if the student wants it. So, I mean, it's always available to us. Maybe if there was a specific day that a teacher from each department like Math or Science stay after school if somebody needs assistance. You know, I think that might be a good idea.

Parent participants for the middle school and high school stated teachers have

processes in place to support students with homework. It was suggested that maybe additional tutoring time be offered at the school for students to take advantage of.

### *Collaborating With the Community*

In Question 4, parents were asked, "What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?" Parent 1 stated,

Well, I just wish we had more things that kids could do after school. We don't have one, well, Maysville has a park, but if we had a park, maybe in Trenton. I mean, I know there is one, but I've gone to other places like Winterville they have a nice park. Ayden has a walking trail and everything and a little splash pad. So we don't have those types of things in this county. Also, transportation is also a problem for a lot of parents if they're working. They don't have a way to come pick their kids up, so they can't stay.

Parent 4 agreed with the comments from Parent 1 and also expressed,

If they could provide like a small bus or something to bring the kids home afterwards. But I know what becomes the issue is trying to find someone who is willing to drive it or have the money to pay someone to do that. But that would help out a lot because, like you said, a lot of our kids don't have transportation. Parents don't have transportation to come pick them [students] up at the school, but a lot of them know that their kids need it. So it makes it kind of hard for kids to stay after and get the help they need. I've noticed there are a lot of elderly, like grandparents taking care of their great-grandkids or grandkids now. They don't know a lot about certain things that are available like technology and things of that nature. So back to the other question, I didn't think about it to just now. A class for

some of the people that are not familiar with using basic computer skills.

Parent 3 continued in the thread with transportation and added some additional thoughts:

Same thing, like with transportation, I know having a club after school, it's really hard, a lot of the kids want to be a part of it, but the stumbling block is going to be transportation. But then, like we've already said, we struggle so much in the county with transportation, you know, with getting bus drivers and stuff. I know that's how hard I know in other counties that I've interacted with FSA and such. They have a community service building where their kids can pool in one place. And I know we don't have that in this county. That would be really nice if we had something like that and maybe foster some type of partnerships with some of the larger things in the county that some of my kids spill over with, like FFA ties in real hard with 4-H. So maybe working together with a partnership for something like that might would help. But I totally agree with the transportation. A lot of the stuff we've come up with and ideas get squashed when you just can't get the kids to and from.

Based on the information shared in this type of involvement, "collaborating with the community" several ideas related to transportation and after-school support for students surfaced. Educators expressed their need for additional support from the community in the form of partnerships to support the students' varying needs. Parent 4 also referred back to Question 1 on parenting and expressed additional suggestions.

### ***Decision-Making***

In Question 5, parents were asked, "In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?" Parent 1 said,

I think just the classes that are offered. I know we used to have the Foods class and now we don't have that. And I know when I was in middle school, we had Woodshop. Well actually, I made a little stool, that's pretty much like a plant stand. But those are things that kids are missing out on now. I know we are coming away from that now, but it gets them into things and out of their comfort zone, pretty much. And I don't remember what else I was going to say.

Parent 2 agreed with offering CTE classes and added,

Let's see, well, I guess, as you said, Home Economics is very important, so it teaches you basic skills on how to sew. Being able to choose what some of the extracurricula CTE classes, that become available for my kids is important. A lot of them may not go to college, so they need to find a trade of something that they can use to make money a substantial amount of money. You know, after they graduate from high school, I know we have auto mechanics, we have agricultural, welding or something like that. Well, I think one teacher teaches entrepreneurship. So, yeah, stuff like that. Just something that they can fall back on if they're not college ready or it's just not the route they want to take.

Parent 3 said,

Parents need to be involved when students are choosing their pathways in high school. As far as a parent, the kids sit down once a semester with the guidance counselor and like the CT director, and they fill out a career plan. So, for example, if they are interested in any kind of mechanics, they'll say, okay, well, we offer auto mechanics and we offer ag mechanics, and it gives them an opportunity to say the things they [students] think they'd like to do. It's great that the kids have a

say-so like that, and it's kind of like Parent 2 said. We don't have all the pathways open to culinary now, but I know a lot of parents and kids have mentioned that they'd like to see that offered at our school. I think it would be good if they could have some sort of input like that to decide what pathways they could take. We're going to have stumbling blocks like right now with culinary. We interviewed for it and there was no one that was qualified to fill the spot. So there's going to be times that happens, but it gives them a little bit more of a leeway. So if welding is something that's known that they like, we could work something where they could do something like welding. I'm a proponent also that four-year college is not for everybody, and I push trade schools too. I've got a lot of kids that this past year went off to electrical and schools like that because they can get a two-year degree, they can do a pretty good job at it. So I think if the parents felt like they had a little bit more space maybe to play in a study, I don't know how that really would fit into it if they'd really have that much authority with it. But it will be good if the parents feel like they had more say so in what classes the kids could choose.

### ***Learning at Home***

In Question 6, parents were asked, "In what ways can your local school support you in knowing how to help your child with homework and projects?" Parent 1 said,

I think that goes to just the relationship the teachers have with the parents and the students, because if they know your child, then they'll know what their needs are. It'll be easier to say, okay, well, you can do this and or you need to look here or, you know, they'll tell us where we can go for extra help. If they don't have a clue, they just give you general answers that may not fit your child.



Parent 3 added,

Resources-wise, I'm thinking about it from being a parent sitting at the kitchen table saying, okay, what project do you have to do? I don't like it as a parent when I have to ask the teacher, specifically asking the teacher three or four times what to do. So I think the communication with the parent letting them know from the teacher on some sort of form exactly what they need or giving them an option if they can afford it and always having that light, recyclable option. So the kid feels like they can make the grade they need to make but not necessarily have to put a lot into the project.

Communication and relationships were themes for this type of parent involvement. Parents want to know how, when, and what. They all expressed that relationships between the teachers, students, and families are essential. They strongly feel that if resources are needed, the school should provide them. They all suggested having a parent resource page on each teacher's website and only asking for resources students will not have to purchase.

### ***Volunteering***

Interview Question 7 asked parents, "What prevents you from engaging in your child(ren)'s school?" All parents participating stated that relationships and communication are barriers that prevent parents/guardians from volunteering. Parent 1 said,

Okay, I can answer this because I'm the ESL teacher as well, so I deal with the Hispanic population. I'm kind of the voice for them. So if they have questions, they have to come through me to ask the teacher or, you know. Most of the time, I can just answer them myself. But a lot of people just don't realize, how much

school has changed since we were in school. And then if you think about the grandparents, this change is even more. I think just feeling at ease, asking the questions when there's something, there's a concern or, you know, there's just something going on with their child.

Parents 2 and 3 agreed with Parent 1. Parent 1 reiterated, "Teachers are too blunt."

Interview Question 8, asked parents, "What other ideas or suggestions would you like to share to engage families?" Parent 1 suggested, "Doing an open house for parents to come and see the school in action during the day." Parents 2 and 3 expressed the need for a "PTA/PTO, structured curriculum night, spaghetti dinners, and student showcases."

Interview Question 9 asked parents, "In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Has it changed?" Parent 1 said,

This goes back to what everyone else had mentioned about the PTOs. We did have one, that's where we'd have the parent night, we'd have the math night or whatnot, and the parents could come and see the teachers and then talk to them. But we haven't been able to do that. And I think that's a divide between the teachers and the parents because the parents don't feel as welcome. There was a lot more apparent attendance and parent involvement at the elementary level, but then when they get to middle school and high school, we just see a big drop. Parents are just not involved. And when they get to high school, it's even worse because the parents think, "Oh, my kids can drive, I don't need to go." They can get a report card and they don't seem to care. I mean, I know they care about their kids, but they [parents] don't seem to have the time or I don't know.

Parent 2, noted, "Parent engagement has not changed much since the onset of COVID but

noted it is desperately needed.” Parent 3 said,

We used to have really good parent volunteers that would come out. Once again, speaking on the CTE end of it and having an active SSA. Some of my biggest tail was my parents. I would have parents who would be really gung ho about volunteering time or donating stuff for practices. And when COVID happened, it's like we had to shut the doors and they really wanted to come. They understood that they [parents] couldn't come in, but they really miss that volunteer part. I really didn't realize how much they missed it until we put together a C-PAC, a little committee of parents and an advisory board so we could get the parents back in the building. You would be amazed at the amount of parents. It was like, look, if you have a dance, call me, let us know we want to be there. We want to give you cookies and drink or we want to chaperon. So I think pre-COVID, we really didn't realize how much the volunteering from the parents helped them. It all fell on us and like you said, we were teaching all day and we were doing after-school stuff at night and it was a little exhausting. So I do think that before COVID, the volunteers helped and we just have missed that since COVID started. I know some parents really dropped their kids off, and that's the end of the discussion, but you do have some parents who really want to be intertwined in it. We've just really had to shut them out. I think the biggest thing is for the health of the students. We just had to say, look, you just can't come into the building and I think we've missed that.

All parents indicated the need for parent engagement in the schools.

Communication was a common thread mentioned in the responses. Parents expressed they

want to feel “wanted” at the school and have detailed communication.

### **Middle School and High School Educators Focus Group**

#### ***Collaborating With the Community***

Interview Question 1 asked middle and high school teachers, “In what ways can your local school support teachers with providing resources to parents/guardians at home?” Educator 1 stated,

There's a lot of times where, we have very much moved into a digital age, and so much of what we do involves access to the internet. And that begs the question of whether or not the internet is a resource that the school should be responsible for helping to provide or whether or not that is something that communities should start providing as a utility. During the pandemic, we provided hotspots for students with connectivity issues. But that does not solve a problem in a very rural area like ours, where cell service is spotty, and the internet is not very good because there is no incentive for that utility company to increase its coverage or better its service. So the internet is a very strong resource for being able to engage parents and families. Teachers need access to print documents to be able to send home like progress reports, and information pamphlets. Not necessarily having a restriction on the amount of paper that we utilize has been, to a large degree, very beneficial for us when it comes to printing out things like that. If we do have a paper cap, I don't know that I've ever hit it. Those are the two main things I can think of off the top of my head. I may have other ideas as other people go forward.

Educator 2 echoed Educator 1 and said, “The hot spots in our area have not been helpful because the cell service is not something that all of our families can have access to.”

Educator 3 agreed with the other educators and added,

But one thing that the school could do to be more supportive of educators and parents is, as Educator 1 mentioned, having the mobile hotspots, which was a big hit. But another thing that we could do is possibly have some type of family night, so schools can try to find out from the parents what they need to help their students be successful. If we have resources available to send home to parents, or maybe we can help parents work on the computer or learn how to navigate a computer, some parents don't know. So we can have some type of classes so that they can better be equipped to help their student. They can learn how to go on Schoolnet, see the grades, see what the assignments are in Google Classroom, and things like that to be a better help to their students.

Educator 4 agreed with Educator 3 and added,

So again, I love what I've heard thus far. I'm just going to add some additional things that could support our parents and students. I want to piggyback on what Educator 3 stated. I think workshops or some type of parent night or family night so that we could maybe have some surveys done and find out what the needs are. And then, you know, based on whatever the needs are, work towards providing support.

Educator 1 shared additional information for Question 1:

So we also utilize Cpacts. Educator 3 can probably speak to that more, but it was a way that we were uniting both the community, parents, and teachers to say things that we can help with. Also, PTOs, I don't know that I have seen a PTO active in the middle and high school grades. I think that I don't know if that's supposed to

be just an elementary thing or not, but that would also be an excellent way of being able to build relationships with family members in the community. We've got some parents that are very willing to volunteer and give up their time. They just don't know what we need and it's hard to remember from our first time meeting at Open House.

All the high school educators were very open to collaborating with the community. Hotspots and internet connectivity were keywords mentioned by all educators. All educators expressed an interest in the community providing an infrastructure for faster, more reliable internet. Several other topics were noted that are more relative to parenting, volunteering, and decision-making.

### ***Methods of Communication***

Interview Question 2 asked high school teachers, "How do you communicate with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?" Educator 1 said,

I am in contact with parents for the betterment of their student. I use Remind. It operates very similarly to a text message, but it sends it out as either a blast message to everybody that is in my group that I have set up, or I could message an individual parent one on one. I can deal with issues and it also documents the language that is being utilized back and forth with parents to make sure that I've got a record of what has been said has not been said. To the same effect, email is also a tremendous thing that I utilize and some parents use that more than they do remind. I frequently send progress reports and have those signed and the kids bring them back. I usually give them an extra credit grade as well to incentivize

them, showing it to their parents, even if their grades are not good. Those are the three main ways that I contact parents. I wish I could say I called more. I am terrible on the phone, and I also frequently forget the results of things, or it's very easy for someone to say that something happened in a phone call that didn't. So that's why I'm a little leery of the phone conversations unless there is something that desperately needs me to make a phone call.

Educator 2 said,

Okay, I would like to add more to Question 1. I was on a part of the strategic planning meeting, where they had strategic planning meetings at each school. I believe the high school meeting was last week, and I heard that there was some input from families and an opportunity for them to be very honest and share things. But I think by having that, it can help encourage PTOs. I would agree that would be a huge thing. And then report card pick-ups and progress reports like anything in person that we can do because we have been limited these last few years with COVID. Anything that we can do in person is helpful. I know we're having the middle school sweetheart dance and I think I heard about an oyster roast with FFA. So, you know, I think they're happy to have events. It's just we need to do our part in making sure the word is out there and that we're planning them as often as we can. We're trying to do some scholarship and financial aid nights, at least two more evening events for the remainder of this school year. Unfortunately, they really only cater to junior and senior families based on the topic. But I think the more we can get them out here, the better input we will have. This information is all for Question 1. So as far as when I'm communicating with

families, it's typically phone calls on my end of things. I also use email, text and I have a Google Voice. I have a Remind with the seniors and there's only a handful of parents that are up there. But I have a lot of parents' phone numbers and I text them through my Google Voice. And we have used the whole school phone connect messages.

Educator 3 agreed with Educators 1 and 2 and added,

But I do think that once we get to know the parent or their involvement with the child's progress in school, because believe it or not, some parents just don't even care to get their phone call or they don't even care to know. They just know that the kid is going to school. And then you have some that would love to hear something every day. So, once you figure out what type of parent you're dealing with and how they would prefer to be contacted via email texts, phone call, then that's just what you do. Just try to make that connection to each parent and make sure that they are receiving what they would like to receive. Now, the ones that just don't want any involvement, we still want to make sure that we are communicating with them. Whether sending home that progress report and making sure they come back or sending them an email once a month, we just want to make sure we keep a connection.

Educator 4, said,

I think most of you have already touched on several ways of communication to keep parents informed. One thing that I've done in the past is for the Health Science department and the whole school is we've created newsletters. Tonight, we're having a parent night. We also have a website, that's another way of keeping



parents informed. But I think all my colleagues have touched on one of the main ways of keeping parents informed.

Overall, the group shared various ways to communicate with families and share information. Multiple means of communication were shared as a means to communicate with families. Educator 2 also shared feedback that was more relative to other types of involvement, such as collaborating with the community and volunteering.

### ***Learning at Home***

In Question 3, high school teachers were asked, “What can your local school do better to support students with homework?” Educator 1 stated,

Sorry, I write down so that way I have it to refer back to. Oh, I'm going to circle back to the second question really fast. I'm sorry, I keep thinking, the use of social media was also one way that we were keeping families updated. But one of the concerns that we have run into recently is making sure that the social media is consistent and controlled at the admin not the county level so that we can successfully update the page. That way you're building a community and it's not changing hands every so many years and having to rebuild it again with new people to make sure everybody is aware of what's going on. And that's something that comes in handy. Like the social media I'm thinking of is Instagram, which is really big with the kids and Facebook, which is usually bigger with adults. As far as school systems to support homework, I fall into this really weird camp of my kids don't have homework unless they don't use their time wisely in class, with the exception being vocabulary notebooks. I still provide time in class for them to do them, but there is no guaranteed time for them to be able to complete the task

during my class time. So when it comes to homework, one of the big things I always get concerned with is students being overwhelmed with too much of it. Because I remember back in the day where I was assigned chapters to read and math pages to do and do pages 76 through 80, do all the even math problems on this page, all the odd math problems on this page, and it took me hours to complete. And then that's also with me being somebody that was active with extracurriculars. But I see the benefits of homework when it comes to practicing and rehearsing skills. A lot of those [students] need that kind of repetition and practice. I'm not sure what the school or the system involvement with that needs to be. I feel like that is very much more on teachers. And when you're dealing with middle school teachers and elementary teachers, it is much easier to talk to your teammates that are also doing the instruction and saying, okay, how much homework are you assigning tonight? So that way, you're not overwhelming the kids and the families because some of these parents forgive me for saying so probably can't do seventh-grade math, probably can't do math one when you hit eighth grade. So we're sending these kids home without necessarily the resources to be able to complete the tasks. Something that can be done is putting in a tutoring budget for teachers that stay after school to do after-school tutoring, instead of making that part of our contract. If we're staying and offering tutoring, offer incentives for teachers to stay after, to work with students that need assistance. Do we have the budget to do so? So that goes a little bit beyond school and system. It's being able to find the money to be able to make that sort of thing happen. And then you hit rural communities needing transportation. If students

stay after school for tutoring and no transportation for just running a single bus is astronomical around our county because it takes a lot for us to get our kids home, and our kids are spread hither, thither, and beyond all over the county.

Educator 2 agreed with Educator 1 and added,

So I was kind of thinking along the same lines, even if we could offer a study hall or peer tutoring session for after school even if it's a once a week or the same day each week. Like peer group tutoring, the kids to have study hall peer groups, something for them to work together. You know, again, I think the willingness is there or here on behalf of the staff. If we knew that it could be carried out with fidelity, so again, the transportation, because those who need it aren't going to stay if there's not a bus to take them home. The teachers who want to help our staff who would be willing to help. We just need to make sure there are enough bodies to do the job for supervision and help with this subject and that subject. I think that would be beneficial if we could offer that just for some additional curriculum boosting. You know, especially for some of our students who like to play sports and athletics. Well, if they're struggling in the classroom, if we can offer this once a week and it's still after school with the transportation, it might continue to be something that's combined with athletics like the first 30 minutes before they go to practice, because some of these teams don't practice until 3:15 or 3:30, and they're here. But I don't know. I think if others in the district knew the need is there, then maybe we can get the word out.

Educator 3 agreed with Educator 1 regarding the homework and added,

Well, I like what Educator 1 said about only assigning homework if they don't

complete it in class because I think that sometimes, especially on the elementary level, there is absolutely too much homework assigned. Parents are struggling with the child at the kitchen table for hours trying to do homework. So I think the whole homework idea should be looked at and make sure that people understand anything sent from home where it should not take more than X amount of minutes. But how can the district support homework? I think we have one-to-one devices so students can take their computers home or their iPads home, and they can use those to complete homework assignments. We also have the mobile hotspots for the ones that don't have internet. So I think that they're probably doing all they can to help support homework on a district level, which is supposed to be technically done at home. There should be some support for some parents just in case they don't understand or if they want to learn more so they can better help their student, then maybe there should be some support there. Or maybe they have some homework nights once or twice a week where you can actually come back to the school and get some help with the homework if you need it.

Educator 4 shared additional information to support Educators 1 and 2:

Just to piggyback off Educators 1 and 2. As a teacher, I offer time in my classroom for my students to complete assignments so that I'm available to answer questions to help them as needed. And if they need to take the assignment home to complete, I make them aware that they can send me an email. They can send me a message via Google Classroom because all my assignments are posted on Google Classroom and I try to follow up as needed and be available not only to my students, but for my parents. Also, some parents, you know, as previously stated,

need support and the tools to understand some of those assignments that are being sent home.

Most of the information shared for this question supports feedback on other types of involvement, such as parenting, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

### ***Collaborating With the Community/Community Support***

Interview Question 4, asked educators, "What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?" Educator 1 said,

And so many of the things that we've said or are going to say have been hindered by us not being able to do as many in-person activities. So parent nights, open houses, report card pickups. All of those are things that we want to see. However, we've not been able to do them because of restrictions of letting personnel or people outside of the school building come in. I would love to see a late bus operate for us to be able to do things like a tutoring bus or a clubs bus. Even if we as an example, take one day a week and offer clubs that one day a week, the busses just ran late that one day each week. We would offer students the opportunity to explore an avenue that they otherwise don't get to with their teachers. It gives them an opportunity to stay and go to tutoring if that is not something they currently need and need more attention elsewhere. I will probably think of something else like I've done every other time. Educator 2 agreed with Educator 1 and did not share additional information.

Educator 3 expressed,

I kind of play a dual role here as the media specialist at school. I see a lot of things

and have the opportunity to look at a lot of grants that may be possible for the school. But on the same token, I also am a member of \_\_\_\_\_ County Community Hope, which is a community nonprofit. And so one of the grants that I found was for want to see three organizations to provide support to school systems. So I wrote two grants. One was for a high school level tutoring to try to make up for some of the learning loss that we had when schools closed due to COVID. And I wrote one on an elementary level. Well, we did not receive the grant for the high school level, but we did receive it for the elementary level. So we currently have a program called Closing the Gap, and we currently bring in three retired educators and they come in and work with third and fourth graders trying to close some of that learning gap that, you know, happened during COVID. Now the problem with that program is the transportation, and we talked about how expensive it is to move a bus, and it was impossible to provide bus transportation with the budget that we had. So the parents have to pick the kids up. So we have 12 students enrolled in a program. We probably could have had as many as 30 if we had the transportation. But currently the parents are willing to come out and pick up the children when the program is over. So the community as a whole are looking at ways to support the school and to help the school. I know that the county is kind of committed to help this, and I know that there are programs at the public libraries. There are programs in the community to help students who suffer some learning loss. So I think the community is stepping up a little bit in trying to help.

Educator 4 stated,

Yes, ma'am. I would love to see some type of program at each precinct in this county. Some form of resource center so that kids and parents would have the opportunity to have internet access, be able to work on projects, some of the students have to have certain things printed and they don't have that resource at home. And so I wish we had some type of resource available again at each precinct that kids could kids and parents could utilize to help them.

Overall, the group shared ideas that would support collaborating with the community. Many of the suggestions closely aligned with other forms of parent involvement, specifically decision-making and parenting.

### ***Decision-Making***

In Question 5, educators were asked, "What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?" Educator 1 said,

I feel like a lot of the people you currently have in this meeting are already involved in a lot of the meetings. It feels like there are a lot of meetings. The question then becomes, are the meetings fruitful? Does anything actually result from the meetings being held? So while our voices may be heard, there is a lack of follow-through. The involvement is not missing, but there is something missing from the involvement in carrying out or implementing the ideas that we are coming up with. And it sounds like I'm throwing people under the bus, and that is not my intention, but that is what it feels like is happening. We are saying that we need these things and that these are things that can help, like all of those ideas that we have just mentioned have been brought up in those meetings. We've talked about all of those things being necessary to support our students. But we hit some

sort of stopgap, or it does not make it up the ladder where it needs to go in order for us to be able to implement them again with fidelity. So that's the problem, you've got teachers that have great ideas, we're just stuck. If that makes any sense, not having the ability to go ahead and make them happen?

Educator 2 said, "I echo Educator 1," and added,

I know we're all on our school leadership team and I believe we're all on the school improvement team as well. At times when we are given the opportunity, we have discussed these same concerns, and just as Educator 1 said, to be able to carry things out with fidelity has seems to have been a struggle and getting our voice to the top of the ladder where it needs to be heard. So I was just thinking of, you know, the board members make most of the decisions and approval for funding and what have you. Maybe they should give the educators and the families of our students a survey and if they could get true and honest input from those of us who are here in the building, this beautiful building with their children, you know? If a survey is even possible, I just think if they, if a survey is even possible, you know, from the family standpoint, the parent standpoint, but especially the staff, you know, we're here in the trenches and. And it could be helpful and eye-opening for them because we have a lot of good, we really do. And sometimes we just have to focus on the good. But, you know, we want to be honest and transparent about what we need. I think that maybe there's a missing link in our communication with those decision-makers. If that echoes slightly what Educator 1 was saying. I'll try to leave it that.



### *Learning at Home*

In Question 6, educators were asked, "In what ways can your local school support teachers in knowing how to help students with homework and projects? Educator 4 stated, Professional development and conferences that are related to my program of study, and that helps me as a teacher. And that also helps all my students to be able to provide them with the current content and curriculum. It would be great if the district could offer some form of cultural diversity training. I think that not just for different cultures, even the LG. I want to get this acronym right. It is the LGBTQ community. I think it would be great for teachers to obtain that training so that we can better understand, so that we can better communicate and offer support and safe places. So I think that would be great for the district to be able to offer all teachers.

Educator 2 shared,

And I will echo that. And like, earlier I was talking about a survey. When we're in the building and we see the students we're working with and the families we're working with and the differences and the diversity and what's going to help us and help our district to reach these families. We've been talking about the diversity training, cultural diversity and LGBTQ trainings within the school for two years and we haven't been able to get very far. So if the district understood the need, it's not just at the high school their siblings are at the elementary schools, their families are impacting the students that we will have in just a few years. So having the district see firsthand our need for that [professional development], we would better relate to the students.

Educator 4 added additional information:

Another thing that we could add is a full-time therapist. We have amazing counselors and Miss \_\_\_\_\_ can chime in on this if she feels like she needs to. But, we have had a lot of mental health crises. And again, our counselors do an amazing job, but I wish our district could possibly provide us like with a full-time licensed therapist.

### ***Volunteering***

In Question 7, educators were asked, "What perceived barriers do you think prevent parents/guardians from engaging in their child(ren)'s school?" Educator 1 stated, I feel like the big obstacle that we've had of late is COVID, and it preventing us from being able to get people in here to have face-to-face meetings. So there feels like there is this disconnect because we can't meet with them [parents/guardians]. I feel like that's the first hurdle that we're going to have to overcome when we start to get into this more in person. I feel like another barrier is disinterest. I feel like we have a lot of adults that have children, that they are just not interested in what the child is learning and seeing. I can't tell you how many times we are given a bogus phone number or a bogus email, and I get a call, I call and the line is disconnected. That is one of the most disheartening things is where we're given a bad number and there's no way to get in touch with any adult on the demographics roster. Those are my two big things that I think are reasons for barriers.

Educator 3 shared,

Oh, I feel like a barrier for this day and time is rampant drug use, opioid, all over. It's invading all races. So we have a high level of students that need extra attention

and have behavior problems because they are children of people who are addicted to one substance or another. And a lot of parents, I think they don't know the best way to deal with students when they have those type of problems or issues, and it flows over into the educational system, and we do the best we can with what we're given. But if you can look back at data from, I would say, from 20 years ago to now, the level of E.C. and behavior problems and ADHD has almost tripled. And I think a lot of that has to do with environmental issues. Children being born that exposed to things when they were still in the womb. So we're starting out at a big disadvantage. A lot of parents are younger, they don't have a clue as to how to parent. They think the students are supposed to make all the decisions instead of actually being a parent and making the best decisions for them. It's just I don't know, I don't want to sound disheartening, but it is a lot of times because the students only have what we can give them, and there's not a whole lot after that being given at home. And that's the thing, but that's reality.

Educator 4 stated,

I think some of this has already been stated, but limited education with parents and education not being at the forefront of their minds. It is not the center. And I think we've already set a toxic environment, so when you get a combination of that, it's not a good outcome sometimes, and it can be a challenge from an educator's perspective.

Educator 4 summarized the key topics for this type of parent involvement: "Parents do not have the efficacy and motivation to get involved."

In Question 8, educators were asked, "In a non-COVID environment, what does

parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?” Educator 2 stated, “Since COVID, it seems that the family engagement has become more complacent, like in an email or a text message. Yes, they are great. They can get the job done, but they are not the same.”

Educator 3 stated,

Pre-COVID, parents had more opportunity to come to school and attend meetings Post-COVID, not so many. We see what happened with their involvement when they really had to be involved when the school was closed during COVID and they actually had to take an interest and help their kids with their work. That didn't turn out so well. So of course, there's a big difference between Pre-COVID during COVID and Post-COVID with family involvement because there are restrictions on what you can and cannot do.

Overall, middle and high school educators agreed that COVID negatively affected parent engagement and enabled non-participatory behaviors. Most educators agreed that pre-COVID, a few parents would participate in some activities; since, engagement seems more like email or text messages.

During the interview focus groups, I interviewed parents and educators from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. The interview sessions showed commonalities in the data around the ideas such as collaborating with the community, volunteering, and parenting. All groups expressed the need for increased parental involvement.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate strategies that will increase the engagement of high-poverty families in rural districts of North Carolina. The study integrated research that supports Epstein's (2011) comprehensive framework for developing a partnership program. Joyce Epstein, a leading researcher on Family & Community Engagement, is best known for supporting school and state leaders in developing research-based programs to develop family and community connections (Epstein et al., 2018). Her framework outlines six tenets for parent engagement:

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

The participants in the study included parents/guardians and teachers in the six rural schools in an eastern North Carolina school district.

## **Research Design**

This chapter discusses and makes recommendations related to the research on parent engagement in high-poverty rural schools. This chapter is grounded in current research on best practices for parent engagement in high-poverty schools. The research design is a mixed methods approach, incorporating both a Likert scale survey and focus group interviews. Creswell and Guetterman (2019) defined mixed methods design as “a way to simultaneously collect both qualitative and quantitative data” (p. 551). Surveys have been widely used in social research in higher education institutions (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What types of parent engagement strategies do Title I parents suggest would be most effective in enhancing their involvement at the school where their children attend?
2. What strategies do educators believe are most effective when engaging parents in rural communities?
3. What barriers prevent parents from engaging in their child’s school, and how do schools work within those barriers to increase parent engagement?

## **Discussions and Findings**

Using Epstein’s (2011) framework on the six types of parent involvement, I identified what parents are experiencing concerning the specific types of parent involvement. The findings in Chapter 4 support that survey and focus group participants are mostly satisfied with their elementary, middle, and high school; however, areas of growth opportunities were identified via the survey and focus groups. The growth opportunities include two-way communication such as text messages and emails,

collaborating with the community by providing transportation and tutoring programs for the students, reliable internet, and resources to support homework. These growth opportunities were confirmed across the grade spans. The focus group data supported the quantitative data collected via the surveys. All three research questions were answered through survey and interview data, along with research-based practices provided in Chapter 2.

### **Elementary Research Questions for Parents**

***Research Question 1. What Types of Parent Engagement Strategies Do Title I Parents Suggest Would Be Most Effective in Enhancing Their Involvement at the School Where Their Children Attend?***

Overall, parents said they were interested in workshops to help their child(ren) take tests and develop their talents. Forty-five percent of elementary parents said they are interested in participating in the test preparation workshops,

The quantitative and qualitative data did exhibit this as an area for growth. The interview focus groups expressed a need for parent nights. Parents want an avenue to meet with teachers. One parent said, “Parent nights give you that one on one time with the teacher.” This type of parent involvement would allow parents/guardians to discuss academic concerns with the teacher, seek support for their child, and ask questions. Focus group sessions and survey feedback led to the finding that parents would like an opportunity to engage at the school level more to understand their children’s academic and social-emotional needs. Parents expressed the need to visit the school during the day for an open house, sit in classes, and see school in action. The majority of the parents expressed a need to have face-to-face time to develop a relationship with the teacher and

have more family-oriented activities to involve parents/guardians. Having face-to-face meetings would allow parents to understand better how to support their children at home and develop a more inclusive relationship with the teacher. Fifty percent of high school parents surveyed expressed the need for more information to talk with their teens about schoolwork, supporting the data that over 80% of parents attend open houses and workshops or would attend open houses and workshops.

In Chapter 2, I cited Ballantine (1999), and her study is applicable to the findings. Ballantine found when parents are present and engaged at school and have positive relationships with the teachers, it impacts their children positively. Educators agree parent engagement is essential for the success of schools; however, few of them enter the educational arena equipped with the skills needed to foster successful partnership programs (Patte, 2011). Cotton and Wikelund (1989) presented the most effective parent engagement is present when parents work on home projects, communicate regularly with teachers, receive phone calls, and regularly participate in parent-teacher conferences. For this type of parent involvement to be present, the school must take a proactive approach and be intentional about planning quarterly conferences and parent nights where families can discuss academics and enjoy an evening in the school environment with their children and school staff.

Data showed parents would like to have parent nights where parents come out to the school and participate in games or non-threatening activities such as game nights or spaghetti dinners. Focus group session participants expressed that the schools could better facilitate opportunities for families to come together as a community. These data are true for all school levels.



Kladifko (2013) contended principals must be vigilant to understand their school community, be the school's voice by sharing the vision with all stakeholders, be active in the community by inviting leaders to events, and develop relationships with businesses. Relationships should be based on the premise of improving conditions for your student while creating systems that are beneficial for everyone. Staff must understand the importance of engaging the community by collaborating with them through various opportunities at the school level (Kladifko, 2013).

Last, parents stated they would like to know more about the local community college resources. The focus group stated they want to know how to access classes available to their children. This type of information could be shared during a parent open house or through the school's student services department.

School leaders must know their school community's needs and respond to internal and external issues that affect that community specifically. Developing strong community partnerships is necessary for the success of the school. Leaders must be willing to build positive relationships with diverse leaders in their school community to garner the support they need to move their school forward (Kladifko, 2013).

***Research Question 2. What Strategies Do Educators Believe Are Most Effective When Engaging Parents in Rural Communities?***

Educators stated that providing ongoing, consistent communication is a strategy to engage students in school. During the focus group interviews, all educators said they send home some type of written communication daily to keep parents informed, along with some sort of electronic communication. Most educators write in daily communication folders to correspond back and forth. Educators said the purpose of the daily

communication is for families to get a clearer picture of the daily learning and know how the day went. The survey data show that 58% of families said their child always delivers notices at home. This type of communication is traditional and may not reach all families, as many educators expressed that even when they require a signature, most folders come back without a signature.

Focus group data expressed the overwhelming need for two-way parent communication via text messages. Parents admitted that when they receive a memo or phone call, they do not respond, as phone calls typically come in during the evening hours. Parents overwhelmingly expressed their desire to receive text messages, stating that text messages provide them a way to go back and access the information. Educators also said they provide their phone numbers to parents/guardians to streamline communication and have open two-way communication. I would suggest developing an infrastructure where parents can update their phone numbers, so teachers can reach them and receive communication from the school. Teacher focus group participants expressed frustration with having “bogus” phone numbers, leaving them without means to engage families.

According to Waterford.org (2021), parent communication serves as a conduit to implore parents to actively engage in schools. When teachers and parents collaborate, the chances for students to excel academically are increased. A trusting relationship develops, and parents and teachers tend to feel happier moving forward together. Schools must develop strategies to effectively communicate with parents their plan for executing a parent engagement system in which parents feel like partners in education. Numerous approaches must be explored to determine which method works better for a particular

school community.

Although not the most popular mode to engage families, educators agreed text messaging is more convenient and timely. Educators also stated they provide their phone numbers to parents/guardians to streamline communication and have open two-way communication.

A pattern of responses identified in the focus interview data showed that educators engage parents/guardians in the schools by inviting them to be volunteers at the school. In Chapter 2, I cited Epstein et al.'s (2018) framework on parent involvement. Epstein et al. stated,

“Volunteer” to mean anyone who supports school programs and students’ activities in any way, at any place, and at any time---not just during the school day at the school building; including those who are audience members for student events, sports, activities, performances, etc. (p. 20)

Parents/guardians would accompany classes on field trips as chaperones. According to focus group feedback, many parents volunteered at the school before COVID. Since COVID, participants stated they have been unable to access volunteers to participate in field trips. Educators said, “Pre-COVID parents had opportunities to come to the building and engage more.” Volunteers were used to help with after-school events, such as assisting teachers with setting up/tearing down for club events and providing resources, such as plastic wear and food. Educators stated parents would volunteer at fall festivals, family reading night, and family math night, and support other academic programs.

Epstein et al. (2018) implored school leaders to create a team to develop a comprehensive plan to implement, evaluate, and look for continual opportunities to

engage parents. Implementation of effective volunteer programs is built on training, recruitment, and creating a welcoming school climate (Burke & Picus, 2001; Epstein et al., 2018). Fiore (2016) concluded school leaders must utilize relational skills to foster an environment that encourages parents to participate and engage with the school community. Teachers and school leaders must view parents as equal partners in the school's important work and build on their strengths as they engage in volunteer activities and collaborate with teachers to support their children and the school. School leaders are responsible for cultivating an environment where exchanges are interactive and two-way conversations are valued (Mapp et al., 2017).

The qualitative data feedback from the educator focus group noted that more parents/guardians tend to participate and engage more at the K-2 elementary level. Parent-teacher conferences were also identified as a means to engage parents. About 45% of high school educators stated they have parent-teacher conferences to engage parents in knowing the academic outcomes for their students. Middle and high school educators expressed an interest in having more parent conferences via face-to-face meetings but struggled due to COVID guidelines.

Epstein et al's (2018) research iterates the necessity of schools to develop an Action Team for Partnerships to initiate the plan for volunteers in the school. This team is not led by the principal, but rather a school and community leader. This team's fundamental goal is to activate parents by engaging them in the school's goals. This team is made up of subcommittees that are responsible for various parts of the School Improvement Plan. The committee chairs monitor goals, support the implementation of the action steps, and analyze data for their particular goal (Epstein et al., 2018).

***Research Question 3. What Barriers Prevent Parents From Engaging in Their Child's School, and How Do Schools Work Within Those Barriers To Increase Parent Engagement?***

The focus group data for parents and educators show that COVID has instigated fear in most volunteers, as they are afraid of contracting the virus. Since COVID, parents have not engaged in person, except for attending extracurricular activities such as sports. When schools were closed and then reopened, strict guidelines limited parents from attending in-person events. Educators shared that parents did not participate via Google or Zoom when students were virtual. Parents and educators agree that COVID negatively affected parent engagement and enabled non-participatory behaviors. Since the onset of COVID, educators have been tasked with developing structures that will allow parents to engage that will probably not look like traditional parent engagement.

Educators expressed that most parents/guardians have limited education and understanding of the curriculum, and they do not know how to help their child at home or in school. As a result, it appears that most parents/guardians “lack motivation” to get involved. Some educators shared that they believe parents do not want to get involved or engage with the school and see “schooling” as their job and have no interest in supporting their children in school or at home. The survey data support this belief as 80% of families stated they never volunteer in the classroom or at school, 65% of families stated they only talk to their child's teacher once in a while, and 77% said they only go to school events once in a while.

Hoover-Dempsey et al.'s (2001) study was applicable to the findings of this research. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) stated a parent's role is built off personal

constructs. Often, parent beliefs and personal experiences drove their level of engagement. A parent's involvement in their child's education was typically based on three tenets: (a) the parent's belief about their place in their child's life, (b) the parent's self-efficacy or ability to support their child in school, and (c) opportunities for parent engagement from the school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Additional focus group responses from parents and educators alike expressed that most parents in the area work full-time jobs. The survey data support this information as 80% of families shared they work full-time jobs. The survey data showed that parents find it challenging to engage with teachers during the day and early evenings. Most parents indicated that their evenings are devoted to family duties which prevent parents from engaging. The survey data showed that many parents could attend meetings and conferences; however, times must be flexible to accommodate their schedules. Structures are needed to allow flexibility with meeting times and opportunities for parents/guardians to attend. Epstein et al. (2018) admonished school leaders to develop a framework for volunteers to actively participate in the learning environment that will help mitigate challenges parents may have with volunteering. This work begins with addressing challenges that may prevent parents from volunteering. Epstein et al. identified the following challenges:

- Recruit volunteers widely so that all families know their times and talents are welcome
- Make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable employed parents to participate some of the time
- Organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school,

teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so that participants are productive

- Inform families they are volunteers when serving as an audience for student events, sports, and other presentations (Epstein et al., 2018)

### **Implications for Practice**

This study allows school leaders and leadership teams to create a plan to engage families in the schools. The study identified trends and patterns to determine how to engage parents in a rural setting. School leaders must identify challenges that would prevent parents from engaging or getting involved (Epstein et al., 2018). When the parent involvement needs or barriers are identified, school leaders can develop a plan to mitigate disruptions in parent engagement. Parent involvement must be clearly defined for parents and teachers to eliminate the gap in understanding what involvement looks like at the school level. A framework must be established to develop a comprehensive plan to bring the school and community together. Epstein et al.'s (2018) research iterated the necessity of schools to develop an Action Team for Partnerships to initiate the plan for volunteers in the school. This partnership will foster more communication, collaboration, and decision-making, leading to increase community/parent participation thus impacting student outcomes.

The recommendations resulting from this study include the following:

- Schools must adopt more consistent practices between the school (teachers) and parents. Parents in this setting were more open to receiving texts than emails or phone calls. Parents expressed a desire to receive text messages as the primary means to communicate school-wide messages as well as daily

teacher communication. One parent said,

I personally like text because I don't like talking on the phone or listening. I know the robocalls, we do get the phone message, but it also will get a text message. I decline the phone call half the time, and I just read the text when I can because I can always refer back to it.

- Schools should have a system where parents/guardians can upload their phone number changes and the Powerschool representative can access the document and make the necessary changes. The system allows ongoing changes to be made without families coming to the school. Educators noted that when they try to contact families, they often do not have correct contact information. Because this has been frustrating and as one educator said, “disheartening,” if the school had a system in place where parents could access from the website that went directly to the Powerschool administrator, phone number and email changes could be done without lag.
- The schools and district team must begin to develop an Action Team Partnership to initiate a plan for volunteers (Epstein et al., 2018). Parent and educator participants noted there is no structured plan to support volunteers in the school system. Having a clear, well-defined parent engagement policy is a critical step in supporting parents who want to get involved. Parent engagement policies provide a clear, defined roadmap for parents to know their responsibilities and navigate within and outside the school (Jefferson, 2015). More recently, Mapp et al. (2017) found parents are more receptive to engagement when they feel fully implored to get involved through intentional



methods that demonstrate the school's willingness to include parents in the school. Several parents expressed during the focus interviews that they do not feel comfortable attending school events due to lack of knowledge or feeling unwelcomed by staff members.

- Share volunteer opportunities with parents and clearly explain what it means to volunteer. Epstein et al. (2018) defined

“Volunteer” to mean anyone who supports school programs and students’ activities in any way, at any place, and at any time---not just during the school day at the school building; including those who are audience members for student events, sports, activities, performances, etc. (p. 20)

Based on the interview sessions and survey data, there is no clear understanding of what volunteering looks like in the schools. During the educator interview sessions, educators explained that numerous parents attend extracurricular events such as sporting events; however, this was not seen as volunteering.

- Schools should have all volunteer opportunities located in a central place on the individual school's websites so parents and guardians know what volunteer opportunities are available. Parents expressed limited knowledge regarding what opportunities were available for them to get involved in the schools. Parents want to know what is needed from them and how to get the task accomplished. Parents noted teachers often limited collaboration by the non-inclusive actions that limit parents and community partners.
- Due to limited connectivity in rural areas, provide parents with hard copy

materials such as textbooks for parents and children to reference. Several parents expressed the need for textbooks. One parent said, “I do not know how to help my child and need examples, like those provided in textbooks.”

Another parent said, “A textbook would help and might show some step-by-step examples of things that they’re working on in class.”

- District leadership and local community leaders should consider developing a partnership with their local utility companies and internet providers to create an infrastructure that provides stable internet and connectivity. Many parents and educators expressed their frustration with limited connectivity. They noted that cellular and internet services are spotty at best and are not stable.

Educators were not sure this could be accomplished at the school level but were adamant that the superintendent and his leadership team should explore options, such as incentives for utility companies to bolster the services in the area. Kladifko (2013) also pointed out that most principals do not communicate with external agencies or advocate for support; however, communication with the external community could bring resources to the school and help the leader understand its larger context.

- School leaders should know their community’s strengths so all stakeholders are motivated to get involved when presenting volunteer opportunities. For example, some parents may not have the academic capabilities to support the classroom teacher by helping in the classrooms, but they could support the school by bringing resources to after-school events or chaperoning a field trip.
- School leadership teams should consider the available resources within their

schools and develop a way to provide workshops to parents, increasing their efficacy to understand the curriculum better and help their child(ren). Kladifko (2013) said school leaders must know their school community's needs and respond to internal and external issues that affect that community specifically. Developing strong community partnerships is necessary for the success of the school. Leaders must be willing to build positive relationships with diverse leaders in their school communities to garner the support they need to move their schools forward.

- The school leadership team should develop a year-long calendar that specifies dates for all events prior to the start of the school year. Parents would be able to pre-plan and possibly attend more events. Pre-planning would allow for more flexibility in the calendar. Work schedules were presented as a barrier that impedes parents/guardians from getting involved in their child's schools. If school leaders were proactive versus reactive, many scheduling conflicts for events with parents could be prevented. Mapp et al. (2017) urged leaders to examine their beliefs about parent engagement to help them move forward and begin the work of developing partnerships with families. This includes developing teams that are inclusive of parents, so they can share input on the various activities and provide feedback on the schedule.
- School leadership teams must work together with teachers to develop a structure to meet with families even during COVID. Educators must be intentional about structuring a plan for quarterly parent-teacher conferences. All educators expressed the shift that COVID caused within schools. COVID

cannot be the reason why educators and parents choose not to meet. Several online options will allow families to meet with their child's teachers and have a conversation about their child's academic and social status. The district must invest in resources so teachers can contact families and share data. Many rural districts are using a paid Zoom subscription or a paid Google subscription to support teachers with providing adequate instruction and connection with families.

- I would suggest parents organize a PTO/PTA to support the schools and have a voice with the school leaders. If a parent organization is started, parents could partner with the teachers and help advocate for parent and community events. Parents and educators expressed the need for a PTO/PTA at the elementary, middle, and high school levels to act as a liaison between the school staff and the parents. One educator said, "I don't know that I have seen a PTO active in the middle and high school grades." Epstein et al. (2018) stated, "Type 5 activities include the work of parent representatives who serve on the School Improvement Team, Action Team for Partnerships other committees, PTA, PTO, or other parent engagement organizations" (p. 65). Decision-making practices aim to increase parent participation and input.
- I suggest that school leaders work with social workers, school counselors, teachers, and community leaders to develop alternative methods to engage parents/guardians. Perhaps the schools could schedule online Zoom sessions with parents or secure a neutral space in the community where parents can learn how to volunteer or share needs they may have. Stuart (2019) explained

that schools should host meetings in neutral settings that establish comfort and safety for all parties. A support staff team is needed to facilitate this conversation and provide a safe atmosphere for all parties to speak freely. Many educators shared the need for mental health support for students and parents. One parent stated, “I think we need to focus on social-emotional things within the schools, not just for the students, but maybe workshops for the parents to help deal with maybe trauma kids might be facing.” Studies show that small, rural communities have numerous social-emotional issues that are not addressed due to little or no resources; therefore, parent engagement can at least help support the students’ varying needs.

### **Recommendation for Future Research**

It is recommended that further research be conducted in rural elementary and high schools where parent engagement seems to be more challenging to sustain. Future studies would target Epstein et al.’s (2018) framework for implementing a sustainable parent engagement model. Epstein is a proven researcher with years of experience studying parent engagement. I would recommend studying the concepts of collaborating with the community, communication, and learning at home in order to improve parent engagement and hopefully positively impact academic achievement.

This study focused on a small, rural community in eastern North Carolina. The current setting is not unique to this one area and could be conducted in other rural areas with a similar demographic or in a mid-size suburban area. This study could be conducted in other areas with similar schools and demographics.

Future research could provide another viewpoint on parental involvement by

including high school freshmen and seniors. Each group would be given a survey upon their entrance into high school and when they graduate. The students would share their perspectives on parent engagement via surveys and focus group interview questions. The research would identify gaps between how the school-based staff views parent engagement versus how the students have experienced parent engagement. These data could provide additional implications for engagement.

Additional research could be designed to focus on school leader experiences with developing a volunteer framework in the school that encompasses parents, staff, and the larger community. To delve deeper into this study, you could allow staff and parents to share qualitative data around the perception of parent engagement based on race, gender, and socioeconomic status.

### **Limitations and Delimitations**

A limitation in this study was the presence of COVID. As the researcher, I could not physically go to the schools to share the purpose of the research and how data would be collected. Many of the staff members contracted COVID, and the school staff was operating with limited personnel. The schools were closed or operating under strict parameters that did not allow visitors inside the building. I had to schedule Zoom meetings with the principals at various times to accommodate their schedules. Meeting participation was challenging because the internet service in the area is limited and not stable. Because of this, parents were delayed in receiving the information about the survey, and communication was not shared promptly.

Additional challenges were met when the surveys were sent out. It was difficult to get parents and staff to complete the survey and secure focus interview group participants.

The school leaders did not have up-to-date family contact information and were hesitant about sending the surveys out. Because of this, the surveys had to be deployed via social media and paper copies.

In this study, focus group participants lost anonymity but were given code names. The participants chose their words carefully and appeared to be guarded when answering questions. Some of them appeared hesitant to speak freely about parent engagement for fear of judgment by their peers.

Another limitation to this study was limited participation from parents and educators. Many parents did not receive the survey with directions on why it was being sent and were hesitant about sharing information. The educators at all levels were also reluctant to complete the survey and had to be prompted several times. The administrative teams seemed anxious about their parent and staff completing the survey and continuously shared that they have limited parent involvement in their district.

## **Conclusion**

This research shows that the implementation of the parent involvement framework is important to the sustainability of schools. Parents are key stakeholders in connecting with students and partnering with the whole family. Many rural schools have systems and sustainable programs in place; however, with the rapidly changing demographics, leaders are challenged to find ways to create sustainable partnerships with families. Epstein (2011) provided a comprehensive framework for developing a partnership program. Her framework outlined six tenets for parent engagement. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012), students whose parents/guardians are involved are more likely to have a positive school trajectory.

Epstein et al. (2018) implored school leaders to create a team to develop a comprehensive plan to implement, evaluate, and look for continual opportunities to engage parents. The data represented in this study provide relevant information on the current state of parent engagement in a rural school district in North Carolina. Although limited due to a lack of participants, the data shared painted a clear picture of the state of parent engagement in the rural community. I desire that the findings in this research prompt a change in parent engagement strategies not only in the studied school district but in all schools/districts across North Carolina and the United States.



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**Appendix A**  
**Research Permission**

**Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships**

Johns Hopkins University • 2800 North Charles Street, Suite 420 • Baltimore MD 21218

TEL: 410-516-8800 • FAX: 410-516-5572 • [nnps@jhu.edu](mailto:nnps@jhu.edu)

August 10, 2021

To: Lutashia Dove

From: Joyce L. Epstein &amp; Steven B. Sheldon

Re: Permission to use:

- Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2007). *Parent and Student Surveys on Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades*. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L. & Salinas, K. C. (1993). *Surveys and Summaries: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in the Elementary and Middle Grades*. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.

This letter grants you permission to use, adapt, and/or translate the surveys noted above in your study.

We ask only that you include appropriate references to the survey and authors in the text and bibliography of your reports and publications.

Best of luck with your project.





## Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Johns Hopkins University • 2800 North Charles Street, Suite 420 • Baltimore MD 21218  
 TEL: 410-516-2318 • FAX: 410-516-8890 • [cnps@jhu.edu](mailto:cnps@jhu.edu)

August 10, 2021

To: Lutashia Dove

From: Joyce L. Epstein & Steven B. Sheldon

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- Epstein, J. L. & Salinas, K. C. (1993). *Surveys and Summaries: Questionnaires for Teachers and Parents in Elementary and Middle Grades*. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.
- Epstein, J. L., Connors-Tadros, L., & Salinas, K. C. (1993). *High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys for Teachers, Parents, and Students in High School*. Baltimore, MD: Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University.

This letter grants you permission to use, adapt, translate, and reprint the survey(s) or sections of the surveys noted above in your study.

We ask only that you include appropriate references to the original survey(s) and authors on the instruments that you administer and in the text and bibliography of your reports and publications.

Best of luck with your project.

**Appendix B**  
**Focus Group Questions**

### **Parent Focus Group Questions**

1. In what ways can your local school support provide resources to parents/guardians at home?
2. What is the best form of communication with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?
3. What can your local school do better to support students with homework?
4. What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?
5. In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?
6. In what ways can your local school support you in knowing how to help your child with homework and projects?
7. What prevents you from engaging in your child(ren)'s school?
8. What other ideas or suggestions would you like to share to engage families?
9. In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?

### **Educator Focus Group Questions**

1. In what ways can your local school support teachers with providing resources to parents/guardians at home.
2. How do you communicate with families to ensure all parents/guardians can stay informed about their child(ren)'s education?
3. What can your local school do better to support students with homework?
4. What types of programs would you like to see your local community provide to students/families?
5. In what ways would you like to be involved in decision-making at your local school?
6. In what ways can your local school support teachers in knowing how to help students with homework and projects?
7. What perceived barriers do you think prevent parents/guardians from engaging in their child(ren)'s school?
8. In a non-COVID environment, what does parent engagement look like for families? Does it change?

**Appendix C**  
**Survey Instruments**

## Elementary/Middle School Parent Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your local elementary school is learning more about how schools and families work together to help each other and assist all students through the elementary school years. We want your ideas about this. As you complete the survey, think about your experiences with your students and school connection. Everyone is essential for a thriving community/school partnership. We are counting on your feedback to give us ideas about plans for parent/guardian engagement. Your feedback will provide us useful information on how to plan future activities, projects, and support. Please complete the survey within one week of receiving the survey link or paper survey document.

Your survey responses are entirely confidential. Your responses will be grouped with many families, analyzed, disaggregated, and shared with your district team, and no individuals will ever be identified. Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Lutashia Dove

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone: XXX

\*NOTE: This survey is adapted from: ©1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors, and Karen Clark Salinas, John Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Baltimore Maryland. This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the elementary student. This survey is not limited to one response per household if multiple parents and guardians are in contact with the elementary school.

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## Elementary/Middle School Parent Survey

A. This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the MOST CONTACT with this school about your child.

Who is filling out the survey? Please check if you are:

<input type="checkbox"/> mother	<input type="checkbox"/> aunt	<input type="checkbox"/> guardian
<input type="checkbox"/> father	<input type="checkbox"/> uncle	<input type="checkbox"/> other relative
<input type="checkbox"/> stepmother	<input type="checkbox"/> grandmother	<input type="checkbox"/> other
<input type="checkbox"/> stepfather	<input type="checkbox"/> grandfather	

How many children in your family go to this school *this* school year?

<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 or
<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	more

What grades are they in this school year? Circle **all** the grades of the children in school?

<input type="checkbox"/> PreK	<input type="checkbox"/> Second Grade (2G)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fifth Grade (5)
<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> Third Grade (3G)	
<input type="checkbox"/> First Grade (1G)	<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth Grade (4G)	

If you have more than **ONE** child at this school, complete this survey for the **OLDEST** child only.

Is your oldest child a boy:  Boy or  Girl

### How do you describe yourself?

Asian-American

Black or African-American

White or Caucasian

Hispanic or Latino(a)

Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

### What language do you speak at home?

English

Spanish

\_\_\_\_\_ Hmong

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (describe)\_\_\_\_\_

### Question 1

We would like to know how you feel about your elementary school right now. Please select one choice for each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is a very good school?				
I feel welcome at the school?				
I get along well with my child's teacher(s).				
The teachers at this school care about my child?				
This school views parents as important partners.				
The community supports this school.				
This school is one of the best schools for students and for parents.				

### Question 2

Some families want more information about what their children are learning in each subject. CHECK which SUBJECTS you want to know more about to help your child.

\_\_\_ Math Skills

\_\_\_ Spelling

\_\_\_ Speaking Skills

\_\_\_ Reading Skills

\_\_\_ Social Studies

\_\_\_ Study Skills

\_\_\_ Writing Skills

\_\_\_ Science

\_\_\_ Social/Emotional Skills



**Question 3**

Families get involved in different ways at school or at home. Which of the following have you done this year with the OLDEST CHILD you have at your local elementary school? Please check one answer choice on each line to tell if this happens.

Everyday or Most Days (1), Once a Week (2), Once in a While (3), or Never (4).

<b>How often do you?</b>	<b>Everyday/Most Days (1)</b>	<b>Once a Week (2)</b>	<b>Once in a While (3)</b>	<b>Never (4)</b>
a. Read with your child?				
b. Volunteer in the classroom or at the school?				
c. Work with your child on with homework?				
d. Review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home?				
e. Help your child with math?				
f. Visit your child's school?				
g. Talk to your child's teacher?				
h. Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school?				
i. Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting?				
j. Check to see if your child finished his/her homework?				

**Question 4**

**How well has your child's teacher or someone at school done the following.**

Check **ONE** answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), or Strongly Disagree (4)

<b>My child's teacher or someone at the school...</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
a. Helps me understand my child's stage of development.				
b. Tells me how my child is doing in school.				
c. Asks me to volunteer at the school.				
d. Explains how to check my child's homework.				
e. Sends home news about things happening at school.				
f. Tells me what skills my child needs to learn in: math.				
Reading/Language arts.				
Science.				
g. Provides information on community services that I may want to use with my family.				
h. Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings.				
i. Assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class.				
j. Invites me to a program at the school.				
k. Asks me to help with fundraising.				
l. Has a parent-teacher conference with me.				
m. Includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees.				
n. Provides information on community events that I may want to attend with my child.				

### Question 5

Some families want to attend WORKSHOPS on topics they want to hear more about.

CHECK THE ONES that interest you . . . or suggest a few.

- (a) How children grow and develop at my child's age
  - (b) How to discipline children
  - (c) Solving school problems and preventing dropping out
  - (d) Preventing health problems
  - (e) How to deal with stress
  - (f) Raising children as a single parent
  - (g) How to help my child develop her/his talents
  - (h) Helping children take tests
  - (i) Understanding middle schools
  - (j) How to serve on a school committee or council
  - (k) Other topics you want? \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### Question 6

**Over the past two years, how much has your child's school involved you at school and at home?**

- (1) School involved me less this year than last
  - (2) School involved me about the same in both years
  - (3) School involved me more this year than last
  - (4) My child did not attend this school last year
- 

### Question 7

All communities have information that would help families with supporting their child inside and outside the school. Which services in your community would you like to know more about? CHECK the information you want.

- Health care for children and families
- Social Services
- Family counseling
- Job training for parents/adults
- Adult education
- Parenting classes
- Child care
- After-school tutoring
- After-school sports activities
- Other after-school clubs or lessons to develop talents

- Community service that children can do  
 Summer programs for children  
 Information on museums, shows, and events in the community  
 Other (describe the community information you need) \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 

### Question 8

The last questions will help us collect data on new programs to meet your family's needs. (Please answer these questions about your oldest child in this school.)

- a. About how much time does your child spend doing homework on most school days?

**Minutes my child does homework on most school days: (Check one)**

- |                                |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> none  |                                |                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10  | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-60 | hour                            |

- b. How much time do you spend helping your child with homework on an average night? **Minutes of my time: (Check one)**

None

- |                                    |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10      | <input type="checkbox"/> 25-<br>30 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-<br>60      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15-<br>20 | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-<br>45 | <input type="checkbox"/> Over 1<br>hour |

- c. How much time *could* you spend working with your child if the teacher showed you what to do? **Minutes I could spend: (Check one)**

None

- |                                    |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5-10      | <input type="checkbox"/> 35-<br>45 | <input type="checkbox"/> 50-<br>60      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15-20     |                                    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-<br>30 |                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> over 1<br>hour |

- d. Do you have time on weekends to work with your child on projects or homework

for school?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 9**

a. How is your child at this school doing in schoolwork?

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) TOP student

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) GOOD student

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) OK, AVERAGE student

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) FAIR student

\_\_\_\_ (5) POOR student

b. How does your child at this school like school this year?

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) Likes school a lot

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) Likes school a little

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) Does not like school much

\_\_\_\_ (4) Does not like school at all. How often does your oldest child at this school promptly deliver notices home?

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) Always

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) Usually

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) Once in a while

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) Never

d. How often does your child at this school complete all homework on time?

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) Always

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) Usually

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) Once in a while

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) Never

e. WHEN can you attend conferences, meetings, or workshops at the school? Check all that apply.

\_\_\_\_\_ Early Morning

\_\_\_\_\_ Mid-morning

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lunchtime
- \_\_\_\_\_ Afternoon
- \_\_\_\_\_ Early Evenings
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weekends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Cannot ever attend

f. How many adults live at home? \_\_\_\_\_ Adults (include yourself)

g. How many children live at home? \_\_\_\_\_ Children

h. What is your highest level of education?

\_\_\_\_\_ (1) Did not complete high school

\_\_\_\_\_ (2) Completed high school

\_\_\_\_\_ (3) Some college or training

\_\_\_\_\_ (4) College degree

**Question 10****WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR IDEAS . . .**

- a. What school practice to involve parents has helped you most, and why?

**Question 11**

I would like to be considered as a participant in your focus group interview. Please add your name, contact information and your school association. For example, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
School Association	

## Carta a los padres de primaria / secundaria

Estimado Padre o Guardianes,

Su escuela primaria local está aprendiendo más sobre cómo las escuelas y las familias trabajan juntas para ayudarse mutuamente y asistir a todos los estudiantes durante los años de la escuela primaria. Queremos sus ideas sobre esto. Al completar la encuesta, piense en sus experiencias con sus estudiantes y la conexión con la escuela. Todos son esenciales para una asociación próspera entre la comunidad y la escuela. Contamos con sus comentarios para darnos ideas sobre los planes para la participación de los padres / guardianes. Sus comentarios nos proporcionarán información útil sobre cómo planificar actividades, proyectos y soporte futuros. Complete la encuesta en el plazo de una semana después de recibir el enlace de la encuesta o el documento de la encuesta en papel.

Sus respuestas a la encuesta son completamente confidenciales. Sus respuestas se agruparán con muchas familias, se analizarán, desglosarán y compartirán con el equipo de su distrito, y nunca se identificará a ninguna persona. Muchas gracias por tu ayuda.

Atentamente,

Lutashia Dove

Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo por correo electrónico o por teléfono: [ldove@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:ldove@gardner-webb.edu) or (919) 480-2081.

NOTA: Esta encuesta está adaptada de: © 1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors y Karen Clark Salinas, Universidad John Hopkins, Centro de Familias, Comunidades, Escuelas y Aprendizaje Infantil, Baltimore Maryland. Esta encuesta debe ser respondida por el PADRE o Guardian que tenga más contacto con el estudiante de primaria. Esta encuesta no se limita a una respuesta por hogar si varios padres y guardianes están en contacto con la escuela primaria.

---



### Encuesta para padres de escuelas primarias / intermedias

Esta encuesta debe ser respondida por el PADRE o Guardian que tenga MÁS CONTACTO con esta escuela acerca de su hijo.

¿Quién está completando la encuesta? Por favor, compruebe si es:

madre     tía     guardián  
 padre     tío     otro pariente  
 madrastra     abuela     otro  
 padrastro     abuelo

---

¿Cuántos niños de su familia van a esta escuela este año escolar?

1     2     3     4     5 o más

¿Qué calificaciones están en este año escolar? Encierre en un círculo todos los grados de los

PreK     Segundo grado (2G)     Quinto grado (5)  
 Jardín de infancia     Tercer grado (3G)  
 Primer grado (1G)     Cuarto grado (4G)

Si tiene más de *UN* hijo en esta escuela, complete esta encuesta solo para el niño **MÁS MAYOR**.

¿Su hijo mayor es un niño?  Niño o  Niña

---

**¿Cómo te describes a ti mismo?**

Asiático americano  
 Negro o afroamericano  
 Blanco o caucásico  
 Hispano o latino (a)  
 Otro (describa) \_\_\_\_\_

---

**¿Qué idioma hablas en casa?**

Inglés

\_\_\_\_\_ Español

\_\_\_\_\_ Hmong

\_\_\_\_\_ Otro (describa) \_\_\_\_\_

### Pregunta 1

Nos gustaría saber cómo se siente acerca de su escuela primaria en este momento. Seleccione una opción para cada declaración.

Declaración	Fuertemente En desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Esta es una escuela muy buena.				
Me siento bienvenido en la escuela.				
Me llevo bien con los maestros de mi hijo.				
Los maestros de esta escuela se preocupan por mi hijo.				
Esta escuela ve a los padres como importantes socios.				
La comunidad apoya esta escuela.				
Esta escuela es una de las mejores escuelas para estudiantes y padres.				

### Pregunta 2

Algunas familias quieren más información sobre lo que sus hijos están aprendiendo en cada materia. MARQUE sobre qué ASIGNATURAS desea saber más para ayudar a su hijo.

\_\_\_ Habilidades matemáticas      \_\_\_ Ortografía    \_\_\_ Habilidades para hablar

\_\_\_ Habilidades de lectura    \_\_\_ Estudios Sociales    \_\_\_ Habilidades de estudio

\_\_\_ Habilidades de escritura    \_\_\_ Ciencias    \_\_\_ Habilidades sociales /emocionales

### Pregunta 3

Las familias se involucran de diferentes maneras en la escuela o en casa. ¿Cuál de los siguientes tiene

¿Hiciste este año con el NIÑO MÁS MAYOR que tienes en tu escuela primaria local? Marque una opción de respuesta en cada línea para saber si esto sucede.

Todos los días o la mayoría de los días (1), Una vez a la semana (2), De vez en cuando (3) o Nunca (4).

¿Con qué frecuencia?	Todos los días / la mayoría de los días (1)	(1) Una vez a la semana (2)	De vez en cuando (3)	Nunca (4)
a. Leer con su hijo/hija				
b. Ser voluntario en el salón de clases o en la escuela.				
c. Trabajar con su hijo/hija con las tareas.				
d. Revise y discuta el trabajo escolar que su niño/niña trae a casa.				
e. Le ayuda a su hijo/hija con las matemáticas.				
f. Visita la escuela de su hijo/hija.				
g. Hablar con el maestro de su hijo/hija.				
h. Le pregunta a su hijo/hija, qué tan bien le va en la escuela.				

i. Ir a un evento escolar (por ejemplo, deportes, música, teatro)				
j. Verifique si su hijo terminó su tarea.				

#### Pregunta 4

#### ¿Qué tan bien a hecho el maestro de su hijo/hija o alguien en la escuela este AÑO ESCOLAR?

Marque UNA respuesta en cada línea para saber si está totalmente de acuerdo (1), de acuerdo (2), en desacuerdo (3) o Totalmente en desacuerdo (4)

El maestro de mi hijo o alguien de la escuela ...	Fuertemente En desacuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo
a. Me ayuda a comprender la etapa de desarrollo de mi hijo.				
b. Me dice cómo le está yendo a mi hijo en la escuela.				
c. Me pide que sea voluntario en la escuela				
d. Explica cómo revisar la tarea de mi hijo.				
e. Envía noticias a casa sobre cosas que suceden en la escuela.				
f. Me dice qué habilidades necesita aprender mi hijo en:				
Lectura / artes del lenguaje				
Ciencia				
g. Proporciona información sobre los servicios comunitarios que quizás desee utilizar con mi familia.				
h. Me invita a las reuniones de PTA / PTO.				
i. Asigna tareas que requieren que mi hijo hable conmigo sobre lo aprendido en clase				

j. Asigna tareas que requieren que mi hijo hable conmigo sobre lo aprendido en clase.				
k. Me pide que le ayude con la recaudación de fondos.				
l. Tiene una conferencia de padres y maestros conmigo.				
m. Incluye a los padres en los comités escolares, como los comités de currículo, presupuesto o mejora.				
n. Proporciona información sobre la comunidad. eventos a los que pueda querer asistir con mi niño				

### Pregunta 5

Algunas familias quieren asistir a TALLERES sobre temas de los que quieren saber más. MARQUE LAS que le interesen. . . o sugiera algunos.

- (a) Cómo crecen y se desarrollan los niños a la edad de mi hijo  
 \_\_\_\_ (b) Cómo disciplinar a los niños  
 \_\_\_\_ (c) Resolver problemas escolares y prevenir la deserción  
 \_\_\_\_ (d) Prevención de problemas de salud  
 \_\_\_\_ (e) Cómo lidiar con el estrés  
 \_\_\_\_ (f) Criar a los hijos como padres solteros  
 \_\_\_\_ (g) Cómo ayudar a mi hijo a desarrollar sus talentos  
 \_\_\_\_ (h) Ayudar a los niños a tomar exámenes  
 \_\_\_\_ (i) Entender las escuelas intermedias  
 \_\_\_\_ (j) Cómo servir en un comité o consejo escolar  
 \_\_\_\_ (k) ¿Otros temas que desee? -----
-

**Pregunta 6**

**Durante los últimos dos años, ¿cuánto le ha involucrado la escuela de su hijo en la escuela y en el hogar?**

- \_\_\_ (1) La escuela me involucró menos este año que el pasado  
 \_\_\_ (2) La escuela me involucró casi igual en ambos años  
 \_\_\_ (3) La escuela me involucró más este año que el pasado  
 \_\_\_ (4) Mi hijo no asistió a esta escuela el año pasado
- 

**Pregunta 7**

Todas las comunidades tienen información que ayudaría a las familias. ¿Qué servicios en su

comunidad ¿le gustaría saber más? **COMPRUEBE** la información que desee.

- \_\_\_ Atención médica para niños y familias  
 \_\_\_ Servicios sociales  
 \_\_\_ Consejería familiar  
 \_\_\_ [formación en el trabajo](#) para padres / adultos  
 \_\_\_ Educación de adultos  
 \_\_\_ Clases para padres  
 \_\_\_ Cuidado de los niños  
 \_\_\_ Tutoría después de la escuela  
 \_\_\_ Actividades deportivas extracurriculares  
 \_\_\_ Otros clubes o lecciones extracurriculares para desarrollar talentos  
 \_\_\_ Servicio comunitario que los niños pueden hacer  
 \_\_\_ Programas de verano para niños  
 \_\_\_ Información sobre museos, espectáculos y eventos en la comunidad.  
 \_\_\_ Otro (describa la información de la comunidad que necesita) -----
- 

**Pregunta 8**

Las últimas preguntas nos ayudarán a recopilar datos sobre nuevos programas para satisfacer las necesidades de su familia. (Responda estas preguntas sobre su hijo/hija mayor en esta escuela).

a. Aproximadamente, ¿cuánto tiempo pasa su hijo/hija haciendo la tarea la mayoría de los días escolares?

Minutos que mi hijo hace la tarea la mayoría de los días escolares: (marque uno)

\_\_\_ ninguno    \_\_\_ 35-45    \_\_\_ mas que una hora  
 \_\_\_ 5-10    \_\_\_ 50-60  
 \_\_\_ 25-30

b. ¿Cuánto tiempo pasa ayudando a su hijo con la tarea en una noche promedio? Minutos de mi tiempo: (marque uno)

- ninguno
- 5-10
- 25-30
- 35-45
- 50-60
- 1 más de 1 hora

c. ¿Cuánto tiempo podría dedicar a trabajar con su hijo si el maestro le mostrara qué hacer? Minutos que podría gastar: (marque uno)

- 5-10
- 15-20
- 25-30
- 35-45
- 50-60
- over 1 hour

d. ¿Tiene tiempo los fines de semana para trabajar con su hijo en proyectos o tareas?

¿para la escuela?

Sí \_\_\_\_\_

No \_\_\_\_\_

### Pregunta 9

a. ¿Cómo le está yendo en el trabajo escolar a su hijo mayor en esta escuela?  
 (1) estudiante SUPERIOR

- (2) estudiante BUENO
- (3) estudiante SATISFACTORIO
- (4) estudiante JUSTO
- (5) estudiante INEPTO

b. ¿Qué le parece la escuela a su hijo mayor en esta escuela este año?

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1) Le gusta mucho la escuela
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2) Le gusta un poco la escuela
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3) No le gusta mucho la escuela
- \_\_\_\_\_ (4) No le gusta la escuela en absoluto

c. ¿Con qué frecuencia su hijo mayor en esta escuela entrega puntualmente avisos a casa?

- (1) siempre
- (2) Generalmente
- (3) De vez en cuando
- (4) Nunca

d. Con qué frecuencia su hijo mayor en esta escuela completa todas las tareas a tiempo?

¿CUÁNDO puede asistir a conferencias, reuniones o talleres en la escuela?  
Marque todo lo que corresponda.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Temprano en la mañana      \_\_\_\_\_ Temprano en la noche
- \_\_\_\_\_ Media mañana      \_\_\_\_\_ Fines de semana
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hora de comer      \_\_\_\_\_ Nunca puedo asistir
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tarde

f. ¿Cuántos adultos viven en casa? \_\_\_\_\_ Adultos (incluyete a ti misma/mismo)

g. ¿Cuántos niños viven en casa? \_\_\_\_\_ Niñas/Niños

h. ¿Cual es tu nivel más alto de educación?

- (1) No completó la escuela secundaria
- (2) Escuela secundaria completa
- (3) Alguna universidad o formación
- (4) Título universitario

### **Pregunta 10**

NOS GUSTARÍA TENER TUS IDEAS. . .

a. ¿Qué práctica escolar de involucrar a los padres le ha ayudado más y por qué?

### **Pregunta 11**



Me gustaría ser considerado participante en su entrevista de grupo focal. Por favor agregue su nombre, información de contacto y su asociación escolar. Por ejemplo, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Nombre	
dirección de correo electrónico	
número de teléfono	
Asociación Escolar	

## Elementary/Middle School Teacher Letter

Dear Educator:

Your school is working to learn more about how schools and families can assist each other to better understand and improve family and school connections. Many families are completing this survey too, as a first step toward improving their schools' practices of partnerships. We want your ideas about this. As you complete the survey, think about your experiences with your families and school connection. Everyone is essential for a thriving community/school partnership.

We are counting on your feedback to give us ideas about plans for parent/guardian engagement and building strong community relationships. Your feedback will provide us useful information on how to plan future activities, projects, and support. Your survey responses are entirely confidential. Your responses will be grouped with many teachers, analyzed, disaggregated, and shared with your district team, and no individuals will ever be identified. Thank you so much for your help.

All information you provide is completely confidential. Responses will be grouped to give this school a "portrait" of present practices, opinions, and trends. No one is ever identified individually. Of course, your participation is voluntary, and you may leave any question unanswered. To make the results useful for our school, however, we need all teacher's ideas and experiences. Please complete the survey within one week of receiving the survey link or paper survey document. We are counting on you to help.

The results of our surveys will be tabulated and shared with your district team.

Sincerely,

Lutashia Dove

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone:  
[ldove@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:ldove@gardner-webb.edu) or (919) 480-2081.

\*NOTE: This survey is adapted from: ©1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors, and Karen Clark Salinas, John Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Baltimore Maryland. This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the elementary student. This survey is not limited to one response per household if multiple parents and guardians are in contact the elementary school.

### Elementary/Middle School Educator Survey

What is your experience and background?

A. What is your experience?

\_\_\_\_\_ Years in teaching or  
administration

\_\_\_\_\_ Years in this school

B. What is your gender?

\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_ Female

C. What is your highest education?

\_\_\_ Bachelor's

\_\_\_ Bachelor's + credits

\_\_\_ Master's

\_\_\_ Master's + credits

\_\_\_ Doctorate

\_\_\_ Other (describe) —

D. How do you describe yourself?

\_\_\_ African American

\_\_\_ Asian American

\_\_\_ Hispanic American

\_\_\_ White

\_\_\_ Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_

A. Which best describes your teaching responsibility? (CHECK ONE)

\_\_\_\_\_ I teach several subjects to ONE SELF-  
CONTAINED CLASS.

\_\_\_\_\_ I teach ONE subject to SEVERAL  
DIFFERENT CLASSES of students in a  
departmentalized program.

\_\_\_\_\_ I teach MORE THAN ONE subject  
to MORE THAN ONE CLASS in a  
semi- departmental or other  
arrangement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please describe):

B. Check the subject(s) you teach in an average week (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

\_\_\_ Reading

\_\_\_ Language  
Arts/English

\_\_\_ Math

Science                       Music                       Industrial Arts  
 Social Studies               Advisory                   Other (Explain  
 Health                           Physical Education  
 Art                                   Home Economics

C. Do you work with other teachers on a formal, interdisciplinary team?  Yes  
 No

D. If **YES**, do you have a common planning time with all of the teachers on your team?  
 Yes  
 NO

E. On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign on most school days?  
 none                               25-30                       50-60  
 5-10                               35-45                       over 1 hour

F. About how many hours each week, on average, do you spend contacting parents?  
 (a) None  
 (b) Less than one hour  
 (c) One hour  
 (d) Two hours  
 (e) Three hours or more

G. About what percent of your students are:  
 % (a) African American  
 % (b) Asian American  
 % (c) Hispanic American  
 % (d) White  
 % (e) Other \_\_\_\_\_

H. About how many of your students are in (circle the estimate that comes closest):

(b) Special education	0%	10%	20%	30-50%	60-80%	90-100%
(c) Gifted and Talented	0%	10%	20%	30-50%	60-80%	90-100%
(d) Free or reduced lunch	0%	10%	20%	30-50%	60-80%	90-100%

---

## YOUR STUDENTS AND TEACHING

What grade(s) do you teach THIS YEAR? (Check all that apply.)

PreK\_\_\_\_\_ K\_\_\_\_\_ 1\_\_\_\_\_ 2\_\_\_\_\_ 3\_\_\_\_\_ 4\_\_\_\_\_ 5\_\_\_\_\_ 6\_\_\_\_\_ 7\_\_\_\_\_ 8\_\_\_\_\_

If you do not teach, give your position:

---

—

How many different students do you teach each day, on average? Number of different students I teach on average day =

---

### Question 1

The first questions ask for your professional judgment about parent involvement. Please select one choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experiences.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Parent involvement is important for our school.				
Parent involvement is important for student success in school.				
Teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices.				
Teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways.				
This school views parents as important partners.				
Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.				
This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO).				
The community supports this school.				
This school views parents as important partners.				
Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels.				
Mostly when I contact parents, it's about problems or trouble.				

This school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school.				
---	--	--	--	--

**Question 2**

Teachers contact their students' families in different ways. Please estimate the percent of your students families that you contacted this year in these ways:

	NA	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Letter Memo									
Telephone									
Meeting at school									
Scheduled parent-teacher conference									
Home visit									
Meeting in the community									
Report card pick-up									
Performance, sports, or other community event									

**Question 3**

- A. Some teachers involve parents/guardians as volunteers at the school building. Please check the ways that you use volunteers in your classroom and in your school (CHECK all that apply in both columns A and B).

**Column A: In my CLASSROOM, volunteers...**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I do NOT use classroom volunteers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listen to children read aloud
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read to the children
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grade papers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tutor children in specific skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Help on trips or at parties
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_Other ways (please specify)

**Column B: In our SCHOOL, volunteers...**

\_\_\_\_\_Are NOT USED in the school now

\_\_\_\_\_Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas

\_\_\_\_\_Work in the library, computer lab, or other area

\_\_\_\_\_Teach mini-courses

\_\_\_\_\_Teach enrichment or other lessons

\_\_\_\_\_Lead clubs or activities

\_\_\_\_\_Check attendance

\_\_\_\_\_Work in "parent room"

\_\_\_\_\_Other ways (please specify)

**Question 4**

In a TYPICAL SCHOOL YEAR, how many volunteers or aides help in your classroom or school?

B. Number of different volunteers who assist me in a typical week = \_\_\_\_\_

C. Do you have paid aides in your classroom? \_NO      \_YES

How many?

D. Number of different volunteers who work anywhere in the school in an average week? \_\_\_\_\_ approximately

**Question 5**

Please estimate the percent of your students' families who did the following in a **TYPICAL** school year:

Attend workshops regularly at	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Check daily that child's	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Practice schoolwork in the	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Attend PTA meetings regularly ·	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
Attend parent-teacher	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%

<b>Understand enough to help their child at home:</b>								
reading skills at your grade level	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
writing skills at your grade level	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%
math skills at your grade level	0%	5%	10%	25%	50%	75%	90%	100%

### Question 6

Schools serve diverse populations of families who have different needs and skills. The next questions ask for your judgment about specific ways of involving families at your school. Please

CHECK one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is:

NOT IMPORTANT	=> NOT IMP	(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, and SHOULD NOT BE.)
NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED	=> DEV	(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, but SHOULD BE.)
NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED	=> IMPRV	(Means this IS part of your school, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED.)
A STRONG PROGRAM NOW	=> STRONG	(Means this IS a STRONG program for most Parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS at your school.)

Statement	Not Important	Developing	Needs to be Improved	Strong Program
WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children at each grade level.				
WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING.				
COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.				
COMMUNICATIONS about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs.				



Parent-teacher CONFERENCES with all families.				
SURVEYING parents each year for their ideas about the school.				
VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students.				
Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.				
VOLUNTEERS to help in other (non-classroom) parts of the school.				
INFORMATION on how to MONITOR homework.				
Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class.				
INFORMATION for parents on HOW TO HELP their children with specific skills and subjects.				

### Question 7

Teachers choose among many activities to assist their students and families. CIRCLE one choice to tell how important each of these is for you to conduct **at your** grade level.

Statement	Not Important	A Little Important	Important	Very Important
Have a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year.				
Attend evening meetings, performances, and workshops at school.				
Contact parents about their children's problems or failures.				
Inform parents when their children do something well or improve.				
Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom.				
Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach.				

Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class.				
Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades.				
Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents.				
Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials.				

**Question 8**

Over the past two years, before COVID, how much has the school involved parents at school and at home?

- School involved parents less this year than last
- School involved parents about the same in both years
- School involved parents more this year than last .
- Don't know, I did not teach at this school last year

**Question 9**

In what ways could better partnerships with families help you as a teacher?

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**Question 10**

I would like to be considered as a participant in your focus group interview. Please add your name, contact information and your school association. For example, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
School Association	

## High School Parent Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our high school is working to learn more about how schools and families work together to help each other and assist all students through the high school years. We want your ideas about this. What are the most useful practices? We want your ideas about this. As you complete the survey, think about your experiences with your school and school connections. Everyone is essential for a thriving community/school partnership. We are counting on your feedback to give us ideas about plans for parent/guardian engagement. Your feedback will provide us useful information on how to plan future activities, projects, and support. Please complete the survey for the oldest child you have at the school. Please complete the survey within one week of receiving the survey link or paper survey document.

Your survey responses are entirely confidential. Your responses will be grouped with many families, analyzed, disaggregated, and shared with your district team, and no individuals will ever be identified. Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Lutashia Dove

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone:  
[ldove@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:ldove@gardner-webb.edu) or (919) 480-2081.

\*NOTE: This survey is adapted from: ©1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors, and Karen Clark Salinas, John Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Baltimore Maryland. This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the elementary student. This survey is not limited to one response per household if multiple parents and guardians are in contact with the elementary school.

## High School Parent Survey

**Note: This survey should be answered by the Parent or Guardian who has the most contact with the high school about your teen.**

A. Who is completing the survey? Please CHECK ( ) if you are.....

<input type="checkbox"/> mother	<input type="checkbox"/> father	<input type="checkbox"/> guardian
<input type="checkbox"/> aunt	<input type="checkbox"/> uncle	<input type="checkbox"/> other relative
<input type="checkbox"/> stepmother	<input type="checkbox"/> stepfather	<input type="checkbox"/> other (describe)
<input type="checkbox"/> grandmother	<input type="checkbox"/> grandfather	

### ABOUT YOUR FAMILY

How many adults live at your home (Include yourself)?

How many children live at home (Include all children)?

#### What is your education?

Did not complete high school

High school diploma

Advance Degree

Other training for education

Some college

College degree

#### Are you employed now?

Employed full-time

Employed part-time

Not employed

#### How do you describe yourself?

African American

Asian American

Hispanic American

White

Other

### Question 1

We would like to know how you feel about this high school right now. Your ideas will help us plan for the future. Please check one choice for each statement.

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
This is a very good high school.				
The teachers here care about my teenager.				

I need more information from the school to talk with my teen about schoolwork.				
My teen is learning as much as he/she can this year.				
This school views parents as important partners.				
I only hear from the high school when there are problems.				
This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO).				
My teen talks about school at home.				
The community supports this high school.				
The community has many good activities for teens.				

### Question 2

Parents participate at high schools in different ways. How often have you done the following at your teen's high school?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Everyday</b>
Talk to my teen about school.					
Listen to my teen read something he/she wrote.					
Talk about homework assignments.					
Check that my teen goes to school.					
Help my teen solve a personal problem.					
Help my teen plan time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities.					
Talk with my teen about next year's courses.					
Talk with my teen about future plans for college or work					
Tell my teen how important school is.					
Attend community event with my teen.					

**Question 3**

Parents participate at high schools in different ways. How often have you done the following at your teen's high school?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>	<b>Everyday</b>
Go to high school PTA/PTO meeting.					
Help with fundraiser for the high school.					
Attend open house or back-to-school night.					
Attend parent-teacher conferences.					
Attend committee meetings at the school.					
Give the school information about special circumstances at home.					
Thank someone at school for something he/she did for my teen.					
Attend a high school sports event, play, concert or other student performance.					

**Question 4**

High schools have different ways to involve families. Check one choice on each line to tell how you think your high school does the following:

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not Important to Me</b>	<b>School Should Start</b>	<b>School Could Do Better</b>	<b>School Does Very Well Now</b>
Help me understand teen problems and development.				
Help me help my teen become independent and self confident.				
Give me information on how my teen may qualify for scholarships or loans for college.				
Provide me with information about school programs my teen can choose (college prep, vocational, etc.).				
Give me information about how report card grades are earned.				
Include my teen in a parent-teacher- student conference each year.				
Contact me if my teen is having problems. Gives me information on course requirements for graduation from high school.				
Provide information on how to help my teen plan for college or for work.				
Ask me to volunteer at the school.				
Invite me to PTA/PTO meetings.				
Include parents on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement.				

Provide information about community services to assist my teen and family.				
--	--	--	--	--

### Question 5

How often has the SCHOOL contacted YOU about the following ? Check one choice on each line.

Statement	Never	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more times
My teen's grades				
The courses my teen can choose next year				
How I could volunteer at the school				
Asking me to come to a sports event, show, concert, or other event				
The school's homework policies				

### Question 6

HOW OFTEN did your child's teacher contact YOU in these ways?

Statement	Never	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more times
Memos or notices				
Phone Calls				
Open House or Back-to-school nights				
Formal parent-teacher conferences				
Meetings in the community (not at school)				
Report card pick-ups by parent				
Visits at home by teachers or school staff				

### Question 7

Schools give information in different ways. CHECK(✓) the ways that YOU, personally, received information from the high school.



- School newspaper (edited and written by students)
- Newsletters for parents (from the principal)
- Calendar of events, holidays, tests
- Advance notice of special deadlines (e.g., for fees, trips, tests)
- Interim reports about your teen's grades
- Handbook on high school rules and programs
- Directory of addresses and phone numbers of families in the school

### Question 8

When can you attend conference, workshops, meetings or other events at school? Check all that apply.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early morning | <input type="checkbox"/> Early evening      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mid morning   | <input type="checkbox"/> After dinner       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch time    | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cannot ever attend |

### Question 9

All communities have information that would help families with supporting their child inside and outside the school. Which services in your community would you like to know more about? CHECK the information you want.

(CHECK(✓) the information you want.)

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health care for teens and families | <input type="checkbox"/> Adult education                | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer jobs for teens                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social Services                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent classes                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Summer program for teens                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job training for teens             | <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Information on museums, shows, and events in the community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family Counseling                  | <input type="checkbox"/> After-school tutoring          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe community information you need)            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English language skills            | <input type="checkbox"/> After-school sports activities |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Job training for parents/adults    | <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time jobs for teens       |   |

### Question 10

To conclude, we would very much like your opinions on a few questions.

- a. What school activity to involve parents has helped you most, and why?
- b. Looking ahead to NEXT YEAR, what is the best thing this high school could do to help you become more involved in your tenth grader's education?

### Question 11

I would like to be considered as a participant in your focus group interview. Please add your name, contact information and your school association. For example, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
School Association	

## Carta para los padres de la escuela secundaria

Estimado padre o Guardianes,

Nuestra escuela secundaria está trabajando para aprender más sobre cómo las escuelas y las familias trabajan juntas para ayudarse mutuamente y ayudar a todos los estudiantes durante los años de la escuela secundaria. Queremos sus ideas sobre esto. ¿Cuáles son las prácticas más útiles? Queremos sus ideas sobre esto. Al completar la encuesta, piense en sus experiencias con su escuela y sus conexiones escolares. Todos son esenciales para una asociación próspera entre la comunidad y la escuela. Contamos con sus comentarios para darnos ideas sobre los planes para la participación de los padres / tutores. Sus comentarios nos proporcionarán información útil sobre cómo planificar actividades, proyectos y soporte futuros. Por favor complete la encuesta para el hijo mayor que tenga en la escuela. Complete la encuesta en el plazo de una semana después de recibir el enlace de la encuesta o el documento de la encuesta en papel.

Sus respuestas a la encuesta son completamente confidenciales. Sus respuestas se agruparán con muchas familias, se analizarán, desglosarán y compartirán con el equipo de su distrito, y nunca se identificará a ninguna persona. Muchas gracias por tu ayuda.

Atentamente,

Lutashia Dove

Si tiene alguna pregunta, no dude en ponerse en contacto conmigo por correo electrónico o por teléfono: [ldove@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:ldove@gardner-webb.edu) or (919) 480-2081.

NOTA: Esta encuesta está adaptada de: © 1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors y Karen Clark Salinas, Universidad John Hopkins, Centro de Familias, Comunidades, Escuelas y Aprendizaje Infantil, Baltimore Maryland. Esta encuesta debe ser respondida por el PADRE o Guardian que tenga más contacto con el estudiante de primaria. Esta encuesta no se limita a una respuesta por hogar si varios padres y guardianes están en contacto con la escuela primaria.

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**Encuesta para padres de escuela secundaria**

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A. ¿Quién está completando la encuesta? MARQUE ( ) si es ...

- madre     padre     guardián  
 tía     tío     otro pariente  
 madrastra     padrastro     otro (describir)  
 abuela     abuelo

---

**SOBRE TU FAMILIA**

¿Cuántos adultos viven en su casa (incluyéndose a usted mismo)?

¿Cuántos niños viven en casa (incluya a todos los niños)?

**¿Cuál es tu educación?**

- No completó la escuela secundaria  
 Diploma de escuela secundaria  
 Otra formación para la educación  
 Alguna educación superior  
 Título universitario  
 Grado avanzado

**¿Está trabajando ahora?**

- Empleado de tiempo completo  
 Empleado a tiempo parcial  
 Desempleado

**¿Cómo te describes a ti mismo?**

- Afro americano

\_\_\_ Asiático americano

\_\_\_ Hispano americano

\_\_\_ Blanco

\_\_\_ Otro

### Pregunta 1

Nos gustaría saber cómo se siente acerca de esta escuela secundaria en este momento. Sus ideas nos ayudarán a planificar el futuro. Marque una opción para cada declaración

<b>Declaración</b>	<b>Fuertemente En desacuerdo</b>	<b>En desacuerdo</b>	<b>Totalmente de acuerdo</b>	<b>De acuerdo</b>
Esta es una muy buena escuela secundaria.				
Los profesores aquí se preocupan por mi adolescente.				
Necesito más información de la escuela para hablar con mi hijo adolescente sobre el trabajo escolar.				
Mi hijo adolescente está aprendiendo todo lo que puede este año.				
Esta escuela ve a los padres como socios importantes.				
Solo escucho de la escuela secundaria cuando hay problemas.				
Esta escuela tiene una organización de padres activa y eficaz (por ejemplo, PTA o PTO).				
Mi hijo adolescente habla de la escuela en casa.				
La comunidad apoya esta escuela secundaria.				
La comunidad tiene muchas actividades buenas para los adolescentes.				

**Pregunta 2**

Los padres participan en las escuelas secundarias de diferentes maneras. ¿Con qué frecuencia ha hecho lo siguiente en la escuela secundaria de su hijo adolescente?

<b>Declaración</b>	<b>Nunca</b>	<b>1-2 veces</b>	<b>Mensual</b>	<b>Semanal</b>	<b>Todos los días</b>
Hablar con mi hijo adolescente sobre la escuela.					
Escuche a mi hijo adolescente leer algo que escribió.					
Hable sobre las asignaciones de tareas.					
Verifique que mi hijo adolescente vaya a la escuela					
Ayude a mi hijo adolescente a resolver un problema personal.					
Ayude a mi hijo adolescente a planificar el tiempo para la tarea, los quehaceres domésticos y otras responsabilidades.					
Hablar con mi hijo adolescente sobre los cursos del próximo año					
Hablar con mi hijo adolescente sobre planes futuros para la universidad o el trabajo					
Dígale a mi hijo adolescente lo importante que es la escuela					
Asistir al evento comunitario con mi hijo adolescente.					

**Pregunta 3**

Los padres participan en las escuelas secundarias de diferentes maneras. ¿Con qué frecuencia ha hecho lo siguiente en la escuela secundaria de su hijo adolescente?

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Nunca</b>	<b>1-2 veces</b>	<b>Mensual</b>	<b>Semanal</b>	<b>Todos los días</b>
Vaya a la reunión de la PTA / PTO de la escuela secundaria					
Ayuda con la recaudación de fondos para la escuela secundaria					
Asista a la casa de puertas abiertas o la noche de regreso a clases.					
Asista a las conferencias de padres y maestros.					
Asista a las reuniones del comité en la escuela					
Brinde información a la escuela sobre circunstancias especiales en el hogar.					
Agradezca a alguien en la escuela por algo que hizo por mi hijo adolescente.					
Asista a un evento deportivo, obra de teatro, concierto u otra actuación estudiantil de la escuela secundaria.					

**Pregunta 4**

Las escuelas secundarias tienen diferentes formas de involucrar a las familias. Marque UNA respuesta en cada línea para indicar cómo cree que su escuela secundaria hace lo siguiente:

<b>Declaración</b>	<b>No es importante para mí</b>	<b>La escuela debería comenzar</b>	<b>La escuela podría hacerlo mejor</b>	<b>La escuela lo hace muy bien ahora</b>
Ayúdame a comprender los problemas y el desarrollo de los adolescentes				
Ayúdame a ayudar a mi adolescente a convertirse independiente y seguro de sí mismo.				
Déme información sobre cómo mi hijo adolescente puede calificar para becas o préstamos para la universidad				
Bríndeme información sobre los programas escolares que mi adolescente puede elegir (preparación universitaria, vocacional, etc.).				
Dame información sobre cómo se obtienen las calificaciones de la boleta de calificaciones.				
Incluir a mi hijo adolescente en una conferencia de padres, maestros y estudiantes cada año.				
Contácteme si mi hijo adolescente está teniendo problemas.				
Me da información sobre los requisitos del curso para graduarme de la escuela secundaria				
Brindar información sobre cómo ayudar a mi hijo adolescente a planificar la universidad o el trabajo.				
Pídeme que sea voluntario en la escuela. invítenme a las reuniones de PTA / PTO.				
Incluir a los padres en los comités escolares tales como presupuestos, currículo y				



mejora de la escuela.				
Brindar información sobre los servicios comunitarios para ayudar a mi hijo adolescente y a mi familia				
Contácteme si mi hijo adolescente está teniendo problemas.				
Me da información sobre los requisitos del curso para graduarme de la escuela secundaria.				
Brindar información sobre cómo ayudar a mi hijo adolescente a planificar la universidad o el trabajo.				
Pídeme que sea voluntario en la escuela.				
Invítenme a las reuniones de PTA / PTO.				
Incluir a los padres en los comités escolares tales como presupuestos, currículo y mejorar la escuela.				
Brindar información sobre los servicios comunitarios para ayudar a mi hijo adolescente y a mi familia.				

### Pregunta 5

¿Con qué frecuencia la ESCUELA se ha comunicado con USTED acerca de lo siguiente?  
Encierre en un círculo una opción en cada línea.

<b>Declaración</b>	<b>Nunca</b>	<b>1 vez</b>	<b>2-3 veces</b>	<b>4 o más veces</b>
Las calificaciones de mi hijo adolescente				
Los cursos que mi hijo puede elegir el año que viene				
¿Cómo podría ser voluntario en la escuela?				
Pedirme que asista a un evento deportivo, espectáculo, concierto u otro evento.				
Las políticas de la escuela sobre las tareas				

**Pregunta 6**

¿CON QUÉ FRECUENCIA el maestro de su hijo se comunicó con USTED de estas formas?

<b>Declaración</b>	<b>Nunca</b>	<b>1 vez</b>	<b>2-3 veces</b>	<b>4 o más veces</b>
Memos o avisos				
Llamadas telefónicas				
Noches de puertas abiertas o de regreso a clases				
Conferencias formales de padres y maestros				
Reuniones en la comunidad (no en la escuela)				
Recogida de boletas de calificaciones por parte de los padres				
Visitas a domicilio por profesores o personal de la escuela				

**Pregunta 7**

Las escuelas brindan información de diferentes maneras. **COMPRUEBE** (✓) las formas en que USTED, personalmente, recibió información de la escuela secundaria este año.

\_\_\_ Periódico escolar (editado y escrito por estudiantes)

\_\_\_ Boletines para padres (del director)

\_\_\_ Calendario de eventos, festivos, pruebas

\_\_\_ Aviso anticipado de fechas, límite especiales (por ejemplo, para tarifas, viajes, exámenes) \_\_\_

\_\_\_ Informes provisionales sobre las calificaciones de su hijo adolescente

\_\_\_ Manual sobre las reglas y programas de la escuela secundaria

\_\_\_ Directorio de direcciones y números de teléfono de las familias en la escuela

**Pregunta 8**

¿Cuándo puede asistir a conferencias, talleres, reuniones u otros eventos en la escuela? Marque todo lo que corresponda.

- Temprano en la mañana       Temprano en la noche  
 Media mañana       Después de la cena  
 Hora de comer       Fines de semana  
 Tarde       Nunca puedo asistir

**Pregunta 9**

Todas las comunidades tienen información que ayudaría a las familias. ¿Sobre qué servicios de su comunidad le gustaría saber más? (MARQUE (✓) la información que desee).

- Atención médica para adolescentes y familias  
 Servicios sociales  
 Entrenamiento laboral para adolescentes  
 Consejería familiar  
 mejorar las habilidades de Inglés  
 formación en el trabajo para padres / adultos para padres / adultos  
 Educación de adultos  
 Clases para padres  
 Cuidado de niños  
 Tutoría después de la escuela  
 Actividades deportivas extraescolares  
 Trabajos de tiempo parcial para adolescentes  
 Trabajos de verano para adolescentes  
 Programa de verano para adolescentes  
 Información sobre museos, espectáculos y eventos en la comunidad  
 Otro (describa la información comunitaria que necesita)

**Pregunta 10**

Para concluir, nos gustaría mucho conocer su opinión sobre algunas cuestiones.

a. ¿Cuáles son sus dos mayores preocupaciones como padre de un adolescente?

B. ¿Qué actividad escolar para involucrar a los padres le ha ayudado más y por qué?

C. Mirando hacia el PRÓXIMO AÑO, ¿qué es lo mejor que esta escuela secundaria podría hacer para ayudarlo a involucrarse más en la educación de su estudiante de décimo grado?

**Pregunta 11**

Me gustaría ser considerado participante en su entrevista de grupo focal. Por favor agregue su nombre, información de contacto y su asociación escolar. Por ejemplo, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Nombre	
dirección de correo electrónico	
número de teléfono	
Asociación Escolar	

## High School Educator Letter

Dear Educator,

Our high school is working to learn more about how to develop better school and family partnerships. How should high schools try to involve families in their teen's education? What are the most useful practices? We want your ideas about this. What are the most useful practices? We want your ideas about this. As you complete the survey , think about your experiences with your school and school connections. Everyone is essential for a thriving community/school partnership.

We are counting on your feedback to give us ideas about plans for parent/guardian engagement. Your feedback will provide us useful information on how to plan future activities, projects, and support. Please complete the survey within one week of receiving the survey link or paper survey document. We are counting on you to help.

Your survey responses are entirely confidential. Your responses will be grouped with many families, analyzed, disaggregated, and shared with your district team, and no individuals will ever be identified. Thank you so much for your help.

Sincerely,

Lutashia Dove

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by email or phone:  
[ldove@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:ldove@gardner-webb.edu) or (919) 480-2081.

\*NOTE: This survey is adapted from: ©1993, Joyce L. Epstein, Lori J. Connors, and Karen Clark Salinas, John Hopkins University, Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning, Baltimore Maryland. This survey should be answered by the PARENT or GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the elementary student. This survey is not limited to one response per household if multiple parents and guardians are in contact with the elementary school.

## High School Educator Survey

What is your experience and background?

A. What is your experience?

\_\_\_\_ Years in teaching or  
administration

\_\_\_\_ Years in this school

B. What is your gender?

\_\_ Male

\_\_ Female

C. What is your highest education?

\_\_ Bachelor's

\_\_ Bachelor's + credits

\_\_ Master's

\_\_ Master's +

\_\_ Doctorate

\_\_ Other (describe) —

D. How do you describe yourself?

\_\_ African American

\_\_ Asian American

\_\_ Hispanic American

\_\_ White

\_\_ Other (describe) —

What grades do you teach this year. (Check all that apply)

\_\_ Ninth

\_\_ Tenth

\_\_ Eleventh

\_\_ Twelfth

**Total number of students in all grades that you teach each day:** \_\_\_\_ Total students

Check the subject(s) you teach in an average week (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

\_\_ Reading

\_\_ Art

\_\_ Language  
Arts/English

\_\_ Music

\_\_ Math

\_\_ Advisory

\_\_ Science

\_\_ Physical Education

\_\_ Social Studies

\_\_ Health

On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign on most school days

none

5-10 minutes

25-30 minutes

35-45 minutes

50-60 mins

Over an hour

Do you typically assign homework on the weekend?  Yes  No

About how many hours each week, on average do you spend contacting parents:

None

Less than one hour

One hour

Two hours

Three hours or more

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**Question 1**

**This question asks for your professional judgment about parent involvement. Please circle one choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experience.**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
Parent involvement is important for a good high school.				
Most parents of high school students do not know how to talk with their teens about schoolwork at home.				
Every family has some strengths that could be tapped to increase their teen's success in high school.				
Parent involvement can increase teacher effectiveness.				
Parents of students at this school want to be involved more than they are now..				
High school teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways.				
High school teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices.				
Parent involvement is important for student success in high school.				
This school views parents as important partners.				
The community values education for all students.				
This high school is known for trying new things to improve the school.				



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**Question 2**

High schools serve diverse populations of families with different needs and skills. The next questions ask for your judgment about specific ways of involving families of your ninth-grade student. Check one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is:CHECK one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is:

NOT IMPORTANT	=> NOT IMP	(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, and SHOULD NOT BE.)
NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED	=> DEV	(Means this IS NOT part of your school now, but SHOULD BE.)
NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED	=> IMPRV	(Means this IS part of your school, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHEN.)
A STRONG PROGRAM NOW	=> STRONG	(Means this IS a STRONG program for most Parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS at your school.)

Statement	Not Important	Developing	Needs to be Improved	Strong Program
Home visit				
Meeting in the community				
Repon card pick-up				
Performances, sports, or other events				
Information to parents on parenting skills and adolescent development.				
Surveys of parents each year on their ideas about the school.				
Communications from the school to the home that all families can understand and use.				
Communications about report cards so that parents understand their teen's progress and needs.				
Parent-teacher conferences with all families.				
Parent and other volunteers at the school.				
Information to assist parents to monitor their teen's homework.				
Information to assist parents to talk with their teen about classwork, skills, and subjects.				
Information to parents on parenting skills and adolescent development.				
Surveys of parents each year on their ideas about the school.				



**Question 4**

Teachers choose among many activities to assist their students. Please circle one choice of how important it is you to conduct each of the following activities with your tenth grade students.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>A Little Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Have at least one conference with a parent of each of my students.				
Include students in conferences with parents.				
Contact parents when their teen has problems or failures.				
Inform parents when their teen improves				
Involve parents as volunteers.				
Inform parents of the skills required to pass my class.				
Inform parents how students earn report card grades in my class.				
Provide ideas to help parents talk with their teen about what they learn in my class.				
Provide specific activities that parents can do to help students improve their grades.				
Assign homework that requires students to talk with someone at home.				
Request information from parents about their teen's talents, interests, or needs.				
Work on school policy committees with parents.				
Work with businesses for volunteers, donations, or other resources to improve programs for my students.				

**Question 5**

This question asks for your professional opinions about activities that you think should be conducted by the parents of the tenth graders you teach. Check the choice that best describes the importance of these activities for your ninth graders.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Not Important</b>	<b>A Little Important</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
Set up a quiet place and time for studying at home.				
Include students in conferences with parents.				
Know what their teen is expected to learn each year.				
Check regularly that homework is done.				
Talk with their teen at home about what they are learning in class.				
Encourage teen to participate in class.				
Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to talk with their teen about homework.				
Talk to teachers about problems their teen is facing at home.				
Attend assemblies and other special				
Talk to their teen about the importance of school.				
Monitor their teen's progress and needs in each subject.				
Volunteer to help the school.				
Join a parent organization or school committee.				
Encourage their teen to participate in community activities.				
Help their teen plan for future work or schooling.				

**Question 6**

Estimate the percent of your ninth graders' families who did the following this year.

	<b>N/ A</b>	<b>0 %</b>	<b>5 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>	<b>25 %</b>	<b>50 %</b>	<b>75 %</b>	<b>90 %</b>	<b>100 %</b>
Supervise their teen's behavior									
Attend parent-teacher conferences with you									
Attend sports or music events or other assemblies									
Talk to their teen regularly about classwork in your subject									
Joined the PTA/PTO and attend meetings regularly									
Know and use services in the community to assist their families									

**Question 7**

About what percent of your ninth graders are:

\_\_ % Above average in achievement

\_\_ % Average in achievement \_\_ % Below average in achievement

**Question 8**

About what percent of your ninth graders:

\_\_ % Promptly deliver memos or notices home from the school

\_\_ % Complete all of their homework on time

**Question 9**

In what ways could better partnerships with families help you as a teacher?

**Question 10**

What is the most successful practice to involve parents of tenth graders that you have used or that you have heard about?

**Question 11**

I would like to be considered as a participant in your focus group interview. Please add your name, contact information and your school association. For example, Trenton Elementary, Jones Senior High School, etc.

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	
School Association	