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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY
OF URBAN HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

By
Jared Thompson

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

Gardner-Webb University
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Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Jared Thompson under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School 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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Last, I am indebted to my school district, its employees, and families for their willingness to support this research. I believe the educators and families who make up this district have the capacity to be at the forefront of a new age in American public education.

Abstract

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND ACCESS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF URBAN HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITIES. Thompson, Jared, 2019: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University.

In an urban school district, four high schools were studied in an effort to assess how Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement were currently being experienced by parents. In a phenomenological study, this research gathered data on how parents of secondary students are currently experiencing their involvement with the high school. The research gathered quantitative and qualitative data from 443 parents through the use of a survey and focus group sessions over the course of 4 weeks. Parents expressed their current experiences with how they engage with the school concerning parenting practices, communication, learning at home, volunteering, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Data exhibited schools in the setting have a strength in communicating noninstructional activities such as plays, musicals, and sporting events; however, recommendations were made on how these high schools could implement a more holistic approach to establishing Epstein's (2001) School-Family-Community Partnership Model. Data from this setting, along with the findings and recommendations, are applicable to other urban school districts that are seeking to strengthen their communication and collaboration with outside stakeholders.

Keywords: involvement, learning, collaboration, secondary schools, urban

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For far too long, parents of young people have relinquished themselves from the educational process that is so instrumental to their child's future. These problems could consist of the parent who is hesitant to give feedback on homework after dinner, the teachers who do not have the self-confidence to make their lesson transparent to the community they serve, or the administrators who solely want to establish the typical curriculum nights, open houses, and parent-teacher conferences. The exchange of communication and collaboration of the arguably most important maturation process in which every American citizen partakes can be improved. Both public and private schools are beginning to incorporate more parental involvement programs and initiatives into their organizations that lead to students increasing their academic performance.

A bridge that extends from an adolescent's homelife to their school is critical for the fostering of academic growth. As education becomes more integrated with technology and a focus is put on students being college and career ready, parents are often a secondary resource and afterthought when it comes to a child attaining academic knowledge, especially at the secondary (6-12 grade) level. The research presented in this study will show that parental involvement can be so much more than "how was your day, sweetie" or "what did you learn in school today?"

The idleness of schools to reach out for assistance in curriculum implementation, along with the subsequent hesitation of parents to engage in content with a variety of excuses, can no longer continue in 21st century schools. Resources are becoming more abundant for parents and students to take more ownership of the content they attempt to master as teachers facilitate learning across multiple mediums. This process of engaging

outside stakeholders needs to be defined and consistent. The collaboration must be an intentional practice that both sides create, participate in, evaluate, and reflect on.

Parental involvement in education is well studied, presenting a wide range of effects on a child's achievement level in both the primary and secondary levels. It is clear that parent motivation and willingness to become an engaged partner in their child's educational journey has a direct effect on his or her academic success. Parents are often quick to assist their child with struggles of a sore foot, a tooth that needs to be pulled, an empty stomach, or an ear ache; however, when children in schools struggle to read or write, parents can become more hesitant. They do not know the exact steps to solve that problem like give their daughter ear drops and take them to the doctor. The process for helping their own child is less clear because there is no roadmap for a desired result. Establishing practices and procedures for parents to increase their ability to foster learning outside of school creates an immensely powerful network of growth and scholarship.

Epstein (2001) created the School-Family-Community-Partnership Model to help educators better understand this interconnectedness of stakeholders around education. Epstein (2001) cultivated an important research-based approach to how schools engage the community and how schools involve parents. This ignited more research on the topic of parent involvement in education. Epstein's model has two main components: spheres and interactions (the six types of involvement; Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

The first component is the collaboration of schools, families, and communities. These are seen as three spheres that overlap, illustrating their need to be intertwined together. The three spheres are overlapping to provide imagery that student achievement

is best when all three components are working together. The framework also overlaps in equal shapes to illustrate that all three components (each sphere) are of equal value, meaning they are all equally significant to the child's educational outcomes (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002). Epstein (2001) went on to identify factors that determine the amount of overlap between those three spheres. The first factor is time. Time refers to the amount of time in schools and the age of the child. The second factor is experience. Experience refers to the experience of the student while he or she is in school and in the family (homelife) and measures the amount of mutual interests for the child. Using this Partnership Model and its two main components, most parents would experience a larger overlap of parents and schools for a primary grade student compared to a secondary grade student (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

Epstein's (2001) Partnership Model then identifies how interpersonal relationships influence a student's education. The Partnership Model presents two different forms of interaction: One is within the organization and the other is between organizations (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002). Between both types of interactions, there are varying levels of interactions: Interactions that include school report cards, grade-level newsletters, and flyers are called standard forms of communication. These are interactions that occur between the family organization and the school organization. Interactions that are individualized between parents and teachers and called specific forms of interactions. These can be notes on a student's performance sent home from the teacher or conferences between the family and teacher at the school. The third sphere of the model is the student, who is interacting between the family (homelife) and the school. The student is continuously affected by varying interactions between both organizations

and changes because of these two other spheres. In the Figure, Epstein (2001) illustrates the three spheres of the School-Family-Community Partnership Model.

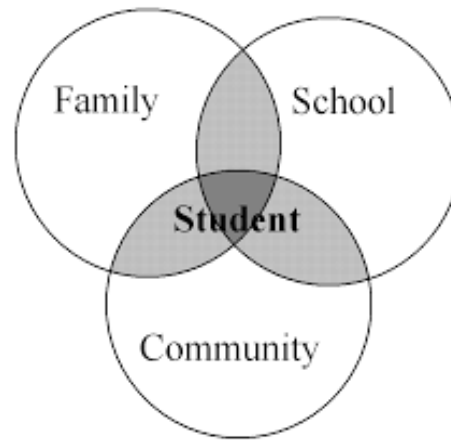


Figure. School-Family-Community Partnership Model (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

In Epstein's (2001) Partnership Model, she highlights that mutual interests and influences in a child's education must come from both organizations (the family and the school). The collaborative interactions and motivation of both the internal and external stakeholders can be emphasized when both sides maintain the continuous shared interest. Educators today would not find this to be groundbreaking, but Epstein's (2001) framework suggested that earlier models on parent-school relationships deemed the two parties to have different responsibilities. Epstein's focus is to suggest the two parties have the same common interest and responsibilities, and the workload of these responsibilities must be shouldered by both sides (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

Last, Epstein (2001) suggested the overlapping spheres of influence share similar characteristics within both organizations. Two terms are identified by Epstein (2001) to

put a focus on these shared characteristics: “school-like families” and “family-like schools” (p. 32). School-like families means that parents are rewarding of accomplishments in academics, similar to what schools do with A-B honor roll and other celebrations. The parents also seek to help with homework and continuously ask about their child’s school assignments. The focus of education at home is consistent, just like the focus on academics is consistent throughout the school day. A child goes through a typical day engaged in his/her school, both at the physical school building and at their homes. Family-like schools, like the ideal family at home, adopt practices that make students feel like they are cared for. They receive instruction that meets their diverse needs; they are welcomed into a warm environment and feel as though they are safe. These students possess their own voice in the classroom, this being parallel to the confidence of that same voice at home. Family-like schools are equitable and provide appropriate supports to students based on specific needs (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

Problem and Purpose

This dissertation contains research on how substantial of an impact parent involvement is with raising a student’s academic achievement and what components of involvement are proven successful in raising achievement. It determined what systems are being implementing around the United States to increase parent involvement and how this research can identify parent perceptions and experiences on current best practices. Epstein et al.’s (2002) research was the guiding framework for this research. School districts and organizations have increasingly focused their efforts to connect the communities they serve to their instruction. Epstein (2001) gave each tenet of the

framework a definition and provided examples for each type of involvement:

Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.

Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.

Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.

Learning at Home: Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.

Decision-Making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community (p. 165).

This research utilized Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement as a framework for research on current best practices. It also presents coinciding research that supports the integration of each of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement into a particular school or school district. The problem this study focused on is that the lack of parental involvement in a student's education decreases his or her chance to reach their academic potential. The purpose of this study was to identify the experiences of parents in how their school engages or solicits their involvement. Utilizing Epstein's (2001) research on how the six types of involvement increase student achievement, this study analyzed parental experiences in how these types of involvement are being implemented in the high schools their children attend. After analyzing the current experiences of parents and their involvement in schools, this study identified which component(s) of Epstein's (2001) involvement schools need to address in order to increase student achievement. This study allows school leaders to understand how parents can help their children at home, how they currently feel engaged by the school, and how schools can facilitate more parent involvement.

Diving more into the problem presented, an aim in this research was on secondary schools and how across the nation these schools experience a drop in parental involvement in a phenomenon labeled the "secondary slump." Marshall and Jackman (2015) studied the apparent drop in parental involvement as their children reach the secondary level. When Marshall and Jackman described their finding as the secondary slump phenomenon, they identified a

consistent decline in the student-reported active engagement. More specifically, students tended to rate their level of active engagement highest at the start of their

first year of secondary school but as the students progressed from their first through third years, they reported decreasingly lower levels of active engagement practices. No significant gender differences were revealed at any of the year levels. (p. 90)

This study examined the secondary slump phenomenon with data collection over a 3-year period. In the setting of the study, children transition into the secondary level of their schooling at age 11. Marshall and Jackman (2015) sought to determine the factors that would influence parent involvement in their child's school. They also examined the relationship between the tenets of parental involvement and student achievement for students in middle or high school. Students completed a survey and rated their parent's level of involvement based on four principles: modeling, instruction, encouragement, and positive/negative reinforcement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2005; Marshall & Jackman, 2015).

From September 2012 to June 2014, 160 students in middle school were researched. Students completed the Hoover-Dempsey Sandler Parental Involvement Project–Student Questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection in the study. The Hoover-Dempsey Sandler Parental Involvement Project–Student Questionnaire consists of over 60 items, primarily measuring parental involvement and student achievement (Marshall & Jackman, 2015). The results of the study provided strong evidence that there is a relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. As students transitioned from year to year in middle school, they perceived a steady decline in their parent's participation in their education (Marshall & Jackman, 2015). The results indicated that students perceived a steady drop in the four areas that

were analyzed. As the students transitioned from year to year in middle school, their perceptions of their parents' participation deteriorated, further reinforcing the characteristics and concept of the secondary slump (Marshall & Jackman, 2015).

Marshall and Jackman (2015) continued to research parental involvement in secondary schools after initial research was conducted by Comer (1995). Comer, too, studied parental involvement during the primary and secondary stages; he found that involvement at the primary level led to the increase of parent understanding of the grade-level instruction (Comer, 1995). This mainly consisted of classroom visits and interaction with teachers to increase their ability to help with curriculum at home. In the secondary level, parent participation and involvement consisted of activities and functions the school hosted. This led to the decline in the capacity for parents to provide assistance and motivation to students in their coursework at the secondary level (Comer, 1995).

Like Comer (1995) and Marshall and Jackman (2015), Mac Iver, Epstein, Sheldon, and Fonseca (2015) also studied parental involvement declining in secondary schools. Mac Iver et al.'s research reinforces the presence of the secondary slump phenomenon. While this drop-in involvement is worrisome for educators, the existence of this phenomenon leads school districts and school leadership teams to rethink traditional modes of parental involvement. The research on the secondary slump should serve as a catalyst for educational leaders to reflect and revise their efforts to solicit parental involvement to more contemporary frameworks and initiatives.

Research questions. Using Epstein's (2001) types of involvement as a basis, this study examined the question, "how do parents experience involvement with their child's

high school?” With this as the basis, the following subset of questions was explored:

1. Using Epstein’s six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are least experienced?
2. Using Epstein’s six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are most experienced?
3. Using Epstein’s six types of involvement, what should schools intentionally address to facilitate increased levels of parental involvement?

Significance of this Study

The significance of this study was to provide secondary schools and their leadership teams data and suggestions to draw upon when attempting to increase their transparency and levels of parental involvement within their respective communities. Findings, through the use of parent surveys and focus group feedback, presented how data from four urban comprehensive high schools showed any gaps in collaborating with parents and outside stakeholders and, in turn, provided suggestions for area secondary schools to consider when seeking external collaboration. Additionally, these findings provided research for secondary schools across the nation to study in their own attempts to bridge the home-to-school divide for their school communities.

Research shows that when schools implement systems to increase parent involvement, outcomes show a variety of positive results. Increased student achievement can be linked to parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2002). A student’s classroom behavior can improve with increased parental involvement (Fan & Chen, 2001; National Middle School Association [NMSA], 2003). Students whose parents are more involved are more likely to be present at school. Last, parents putting forth effort to be involved in

their child's education improves the odds that they understand exactly how and when to assist their child with their schoolwork (Epstein et al., 2002).

Methodology

This researcher conducted a phenomenological study for the methodology. The focus of the phenomenological inquiry was assessing what families have experienced concerning parental involvement solicited by the high school and how they currently *feel* about their accessibility to their child's curriculum and educational outcomes. This study analyzed how parents feel about the implementation of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement without parents themselves needing a background on this research to express their experiences. Using Epstein, Connors, and Salinas's (1993) research-based survey and focus groups on parents' current experiences, the researcher sought to determine what schools could do to increase parent involvement and close the gap between the community and the school/organization.

Participants in this study were parents and/or guardians at the four high schools studied. Epstein et al. (1993) provided a research-based survey which was used to assess current attitudes of the high school and present levels of family participation, what an ideal school looks like, how families perceived school efforts to solicit their involvement, requests for workshops, experiences with community service, time spent on homework by the student, perceptions of their child's abilities in school, and their family demographics (Epstein, 2001). Epstein et al.'s (1993) survey analyzes a parent's desire to be involved or how the school should solicit their engagement. Additionally, the researcher used focus groups to collect qualitative data. Focus groups of high school parents were assembled that represented each of the four high schools studied. This

research took Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement and collected data on how parents are *currently experiencing* these types of involvements and provided urban educators around the country data to further their practices of overlapping Epstein's (2001) spheres in the Partnership Model.

Setting

In a metropolitan school district in North Carolina, four comprehensive high schools within the 17th largest school district in the United States were studied on their current practices in the implementation of Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement.

Table 1 is an overview of the four high schools that were studied.

Table 1

Setting, Four High Schools' Populations

School	Population	Specialty Programs	Demographic Breakdown	Students from Low Income Families
1	3,100 students	Partial International Baccalaureate (IB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% White • 25% African-American • 9% Hispanic • 4% Asian 	31%
2	1,860 students	Partial International Baccalaureate (IB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 46% African-American • 22% White • 20% Hispanic • 8% Asian 	58%
3	3,000 students	World Languages Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39% White • 27% African-American • 27% Hispanic 	45%
4	2,300 students	Academy of Engineering, Academy of International Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33% White • 31% African-American • 26% Hispanic 	55%

High School 1 is a comprehensive high school with 3,100 students. High School

1 has a demographic breakdown of 60% White, 25% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. Thirty-one percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 1 also holds a partial International Baccalaureate (IB) program. High School 1 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 83. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 94.2%. The area that surrounds High School 1 has a median household income of \$67,529.

High School 2 is a comprehensive high school with 1,860 students. High School 2 has a demographic breakdown of 46% African-American, 22% White, 20% Hispanic, and 8% Asian. Fifty-eight percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 2 also holds a partial IB program. High School 2 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 71. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 91.0%. The area that surrounds High School 2 has a median household income of \$35,635.

High School 3 is a comprehensive high school with 3,000 students. High School 3 has a demographic breakdown of 39% White, 27% African-American, and 27% Hispanic. Forty-five percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 2 holds a World Languages Academy. High School 3 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 81. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 93.0%. The area that surrounds High School 3 has a median household income of \$60,339.

High School 4 is a comprehensive high school with 2,300 students. High School 4 has a demographic breakdown of 33% White, 31% African-American, and 26% Hispanic. Fifty-five percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High

School 4 holds an Academy of Engineering and Academy of International Studies. High School 4 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 77. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 92.0%. The area that surrounds High School 3 has a median household income of \$54,928.

Definition of Terms

Urban. Areas representing densely developed territory of over 50,000 people and encompassing residential, commercial, and other nonresidential urban land uses (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012).

Parent involvement. The Association of Middle Level Education defined this as having an awareness of and involvement in schoolwork, understanding of the interaction between parenting skills and student success in schooling, and a commitment to consistent communication with educators about student progress. The term “parents” refers to biological parents, adoptive and stepparents, and primary caregivers (e.g., grandmother, aunt, brother; Pate & Andrews, 2006).

Family-like schools. Schools that treat their students as a family would treat its children. Often, these schools turn their attention toward the individual student and his/her personal needs (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

School-like families. Families who engage their children in academic-related activities within the home (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002).

Phenomenology. The meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon (Creswell, 1998, p. 54).

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations. The researcher is an employee of the district but not of the specific

schools being studied. This research gathered data from parents of high school students and not the students themselves or the teachers. The survey instrument used does have the ability to gather experiences from students and teachers. All parents and guardians in the four high schools had the opportunity to complete this survey; however, the data will only reflect those who chose to give feedback.

This study presented the opportunity to complete the survey; but respondents may consist of those who are already more involved in the schools than others, thus gathering data from parents who are more apt to be involved previously. This survey was also deployed over email and online mediums, leaving some parents without access; however, paper copies of this survey were available to parents without internet access.

With a phenomenological study, some policy makers and readers may give less credibility to the study that is based on human experience and not concrete data. In addition, with a phenomenological study, participants had to express their thoughts and feelings. This may be difficult when considering language barriers, age, and other factors.

The majority of participants in this study were White, and survey participants did not represent the demographic makeup of each school. While the majority of participants were White, they were also parents of high-achieving students, those making mostly As and Bs.

Delimitations. This study was confined to public high schools in the setting. The study was also confined to one particular school district.

Conclusion

The research presented in this dissertation seeks to help close the traditional

divide between the neighborhood public school and the community in which it rests. Through analysis of how parents currently experience their involvement in education, school leaders can reconstruct their priorities and initiatives to maximize the instructional efforts of outside stakeholders. Once parent experiences were gathered, the researcher could identify things parents needed to help with in an effort to bridge the gap between the schoolhouse doors and neighboring homes.

The research is clear that an increase in parental involvement leads to higher student achievement. This study sought to identify which components of Epstein's (2001) involvement are deficient in the current urban high school setting. Because of the diversity of the school district and the four comprehensive high schools being studied, the researcher believes research findings and discussions can be relevant to other school systems throughout the United States. Using this data from community experiences and perceptions, the researcher determined what parents needed from the high school(s) and the school district to increase their involvement.

The researcher identified trends in responses and justified what type of involvement needed more emphasis from the schools. When involvement needs can be identified for parents and community members, a plan of action can be developed to close the gap between school-based professional learning communities and Epstein's (2001) idea of a holistic school learning community. This study allows school leadership teams to create a plan of action to further equalize the size of the spheres of influence in the School-Family-Community-Partnership Model. This will lead to the fostering of more collaboration, thus leading to increased student achievement through additional support outside of the school day and facilities.

This study presented areas of growth in soliciting parent involvement. In turn, schools will have the ability to use this research to improve their own practices; raise student achievement; and increase the engagement, support, and culture of their communities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this research was to assess high school parents' experiences with Epstein's (2001) framework of involvement. Epstein (2001) suggested that recent strides in collaboration within education, such as the establishment of professional learning communities, are still falling short in making the educational institution a true *community*. Professional learning communities seek to improve the collaboration and efficiency of teachers, administration, and school-based staff. This needed framework of planning enhances the intentionality of instruction and fosters collaboration on best practices between staff to increase student achievement (Epstein, 2001).

Epstein (2001) believed a critical group of people are missing from this model – the community. Epstein (2001) believed that professional learning communities need to shift to a *school learning community*. A school learning community is a team that facilitates partnerships to increase student achievement and experiences. Programs and outside stakeholder involvement aim to enhance student abilities and talents. This can be implemented during the instructional day and after school, while including, family, and external stakeholders (Sanders, 2001; Sanders & Harvey, 2002).

Epstein (2001) gave each tenet of the framework a definition and provided examples for each type of involvement:

Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.

Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and

student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.

Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.

Learning at Home: Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.

Decision-Making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community (p. 165).

This literature review uses Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement as a framework for research on current best practices. It also presents coinciding research that supports the integration of each of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement into a particular school or school district.

Parenting

Current studies on parental involvement in education indicate that the more

parents are involved in their child's academic life, the more probable the child will succeed (Ballantine, 1999). A plethora of research indicates that parents who are more involved increase the likelihood that their child obtains higher test scores on standardized exams, attends school more regularly, is more likely to graduate high school and attend an institute of higher learning. Their children are also more likely to establish better study habits and have higher expectations and self-esteem (Ballantine, 1999). Parents themselves are found to gain a sense of accomplishment and continue their own education as a benefit. Parents have the innate ability to not only change their own child's academic success but the power to be a change agent for their particular school. Still, even with the considerations of higher achievement for their children, parents are still hesitant to join the educational institution (Ballantine, 1999).

Deslandes, Royer, Turcotte, and Bertrand (1997) conducted groundbreaking research on three factors of parenting that contribute to achievement outcomes in school: acceptance, supervision, and psychological autonomy granting. These researchers sampled 525 students from two secondary schools and used their end-of-year point averages as the dependent variable. The independent variables of the study were the factors they believed to affect student achievement: parenting style and parent involvement in school. Parenting style was measured using three different Likert scales. The subscales align with the three parenting characteristics that Steinberg, Lamborn, Oornbusch, and Darling (1992) studied: warmth-acceptance, behavioral control, and psychological autonomy granting. Warmth-acceptance is how children experience their parents as being loving. Parental monitoring and supervision pertain to behavior control. Last, the third subscale analyzed how a child perceives his or her parents as being fair

and impartial toward discipline and allow them to show off their individuality (Deslandes et al., 1997). The independent variable of parent involvement in school used a measure that was created by Epstein et al. (1993) from the Center on Families, Communities, Schools and Children's Learning of Johns Hopkins University. This scale uses 20 different parent involvement activities with sample items such as “A parent attends activities that I am in at school (sports, music, drama, etc.).”

The result of this study provided concrete evidence that parental involvement has a beneficial impact on student grades (Deslandes et al., 1997). With regard to the variable of parenting style, the study found that behavioral control is most directly linked with a child's potential achievement in school. Following this was psychological autonomy granting and warmth-acceptance. Research concluded that adolescents who experience their family as being firm, loving, involved, and fair obtain higher academic achievement compared to their classmates who do not (Deslandes et al., 1997).

Steinberg et al. (1992) also looked at what role authoritative parenting, parental involvement in school, and parental encouragement have in a child's academic achievement. This study looked at students aged 14-18 in an ethnic and socioeconomic heterogeneous sample of 6,400 American pupils. After 3 years of linear data collection, the study concluded that parents who are taking on the role as an authoritative parent (high acceptance, supervision, and psychological autonomy granting) led to higher student engagement and academic achievement, specifically during the high school years. An interesting finding from this study is the relationship between the authoritative parent and student success could also (and likely would) be reciprocal. This study also provides evidence to refute a previous stereotype that the older the student is in their education, the

more impervious he or she is to the influence of their parents. This research pertaining to the high school years provides evidence that this stereotype is false and students who are still maturing into late adolescence still need and yearn for parental guidance (Steinberg et al., 1992).

Reflecting similar results as the studies previously discussed, Keith et al. (1993) determined parental involvement has a small but important effect on the change in academic outcomes from eighth to 10th grade. When comparing the parental involvement levels of high- and low-achieving students, this study concluded that students achieve more when their parents communicate with them often and have higher educational aspirations. Conversely, lower levels of communication and aspirations are linked to lower achievement. Similar to the findings of Steinberg et al. (1992), Keith et al. also concluded that high achievement seems to foster involvement which in turn fosters increased or consistent achievement. With this study looking into geographical differences of parental involvement and student success, it also presented data outlining the contrast in the amount of involvement between races. In White and Asian racial groups, parents and students reported less involvement than other parents (Keith et al., 1993).

Attempting to disseminate so much research on parental involvement affecting student achievement levels, Hill and Tyson (2009) provided a meta-analysis of current research using the large extant of literature and concluded that parental involvement was, in fact, positively associated with student achievement. Through their meta-analysis, they also determined which components of parental involvement have more of a positive correlation to student achievement. At the secondary level in middle school, academic

socialization had the greatest impact related to student success. Academic socialization included the value of achievement to the parent and their expectations for academic success. This is compared to school-based structures to raise the level of parental involvement that have an influence on achievement but less so compared to the particular family's reinforcement of their values (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

The key component to academic socialization is instilling aspirations for educational and occupational success to intrinsically motivate students. Hill and Tyson (2009) went on to elaborate on their definition of academic socialization to include strategies that assist with adolescents' newfound ownership of autonomy, independence, and cognitive abilities. This type of involvement leads secondary students to having the ability to harness intrinsic motivation instilled by their families and make developmentally appropriate decisions that will align with their goals in career or college pathways (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

In another meta-analysis, Jeynes (2007) analyzed 52 studies to determine the significance parental involvement had on student academic outcomes. Jeynes also looked at several different measures of educational outcomes in urban secondary schools. These measures included class grades, standardized tests, and other measures that teachers used to assess academic and behavioral success. Pertinent to this literature review, Jeynes sought to answer some key questions concerning students in urban secondary schools. The key questions he asked related to how urban students' academic outcomes were linked to parental involvement. Jeynes asked if programs sponsored by the urban schools positively affected those students, if there was a significant effect between student outcomes and involvement across ethnic populations, and which components of

involvement were most beneficial to urban students. In Jeynes's meta-analysis, the largest effect size was determined to be parental expectations at home. The areas of parental expectations positively affecting student achievement led the confidence intervals to be narrow. Another consistent effect size across multiple measures was parenting styles, with the second largest effect size overall followed by parent communication. With a similar effect size to communication, checking homework in the evening had a similar impact on student achievement (Jeynes, 2007).

Jeynes's (2007) disaggregation of previous research concluded that across the United States, the influence and impact on overall parental involvement held relatively steady across all cultures and races. Parent involvement programs implemented by schools also had a positive effect on student achievement but with a smaller effect than the overall parent involvement. This is because the act of parents voluntarily being involved in a child's education is more beneficial compared to school-based programs established to generate the same type of involvement. Jeynes then analyzed different tenets of involvement to compare and rank these factors on which would have the greatest influence on academic achievement.

One of Jeynes's (2007) findings that was established aligned with the research conducted by Hill and Tyson (2009). The components of involvement, like parenting styles and expectations, carried a larger effect compared to families simply being present at school programs and events, for example. Parent communication also had a lower statistical significance compared to establishing expectations and parenting style. Jeynes also noted parents merely taking part in a school's programs or functions does not mean they can effectively provide assistance to students who are trying to understand

curriculum, which will affect their grade. Instead, when parents are participating in school activities that strengthen their relationship to their child's teachers, it can lead to the natural transferring of knowledge about the content. When parents have a better understanding of this content, they are more apt to be a positive influence on their child in terms of academic knowledge. Jeynes presented a clear distinction between simply attending programs and activities in their child's school versus authentically participating to gain knowledge.

One researcher studied the secondary level in the Middle East to give a worldwide perspective, creating a model that explains the correlation between involvement and student achievement (Al-Alwan, 2014). A total of 671 ninth- and 10th-grade students from 11 different schools in Jordan participated in two components of this study: "parental involvement" and "school engagement" at their respective schools (Al-Alwan, 2014). The Assessment of School Engagement scale (Wang, Willett, & Eccles, 2011) was utilized to determine student engagement in their classes. The Parental Involvement in Schooling Scale (PISS) (Al-Rawwad, Al-Taj, & Al-Tal, 2016) was then utilized by Al-Alwan (2014) to rate family involvement. Through this Likert scale, Al-Alwan's research concluded that student achievement directly correlates to the increased use of the components in the Assessment of School Engagement scale. This scale focuses on multiple forms of engagement that align to behavior, emotion, and cognitive impact.

Al-Alwan (2014) found that when families are involved and participating in the school, their son or daughter conducts less disruptive behaviors, reduces his/her levels of aggression, has fewer absences, and is compliant with the expectations for conduct. Second, when families are involved in their child's education, the student will have a

higher likelihood to perform better in the classroom. Generally, families who are participating in their child's education are more likely to see their child become more responsible for their actions and conduct, thus influencing their learning (Al-Alwan, 2014).

Al-Alwan's (2014) research not only focused on measurable academic achievement but also student engagement. He suggested that when parents show interest in their child through positive praise, they directly influence their child's perception of self and boosts his/her level of academic engagement. Also, when parents communicate regularly with their children about their academic lives, they better identify to their classes and instruction. Al-Alwan asserted that when a student's sense of control is improved, his/her intrinsic motivation to be engaged in proper conduct and instruction is enhanced.

Communicating

Research within recent decades has profoundly linked parental involvement to a student's academic achievement. One has to wonder why this functional relationship is not more consistent throughout the educational institution. If decreased (or lack of) parental involvement lowers the likelihood of academic success, the corresponding problem has to be why parents are choosing not to engage with the academic organization. A study by Dauber and Epstein (1993) sought to determine school-based practices designed to involve parents and parental attitudes towards these practices. This study used data from 2,300 parents in eight Baltimore, Maryland, elementary and middle schools (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). Survey questionnaires were used with over 75 items that included family attitudes towards the school, preferred subjects, how effective

school-based initiatives were at relaying information, when parent-teacher meetings should take place, time spent on work outside of school by the student, how parents helped with assignments at home, and gathered demographic data on the family's makeup.

According to this research, Dauber and Epstein (1993) generalized several findings from the analysis of families. Generally, the parents who are believed to be more involved in the school were more likely to have a positive view of the school their child attended and vice versa. Most importantly, parents stated there was not a lot of current participation or involvement in the school building. Work responsibilities tended to be the most expressed reason families do not participate during the school day. Others stated that they have not been solicited by the school to become volunteers but would like to be. Parents in all the schools sampled were curious to know just how to help their student in the home environment. This is often the case with parents not understanding where to even begin when trying to assist their child completing assignments. Additionally, parents urged schools to do a better job of providing specific instructions with how to assist with homework in the core content areas like English, social studies, science, and math (Dauber & Epstein, 1993). These parents were looking for that "first step" in what exactly they needed to know and what teachers were expecting them to help with at home. They placed emphasis on proper communication channels to relay information.

In efforts to better facilitate communication between schools and parents, Wherry (2009) stated, "the answer is to stop treating parents like 'clients' and start treating them like 'partners' in helping children learn" (p. 7). Wherry, president of The Parent Institute

in Fairfax, Virginia, discussed how communication is critical between the home and school staff. Wherry suggested teachers and administrators should not delay in communicating with parents. When problems with behavior or academics arise, Wherry stated that communicating with the student's family solely in that moment is too late. Communication between the two entities should be established and maintained regularly so that when conflicts or delays in mastering content occur, relationships are previously established and the lines of communication have already been established. This previously established trust and collaboration between school personnel and parents can assist in finding a common remedy or solution to a variety of roadblocks a student may encounter.

In regard to minority families in an urban setting, Reynolds, Crea, Medina, Degnan, and McRoy (2015) researched how the role of what they labeled "construction and self-efficacy" and "invitations" influences a family's likelihood to become involved in the education of their child. Their findings from focus groups and surveys put an added emphasis on how important invitations are for outside involvement and the consideration of culture when soliciting family engagement. Construction and self-efficacy are a parent's perception of just how they should be involved compared to the setting's social norms. Parents draw on the cultural expectations of their role in education and align their level of involvement and decision-making to this norm. Effective communication of expectations and procedures helps define these roles to be more substantial.

This research also pulls from Bandura's (1977, 1997) well-known studies on self-perception and self-efficacy of parents. Bandera's studies on these two phenomena

further impact a parent's choice to be engaged in the educational process (Bandura 1977, 1997). Along with construction and self-efficacy from Reynolds et al. (2015), one researcher uses invitations as a reliable indicator on stakeholder engagement and the ability to form school-to-community partnerships. Invitations are described as "direct requests and obligations on behalf of schools and students for parents to participate" (Reynolds et al., 2015, p. 752). These are direct lines of outreach and communication.

The results of the Reynolds et al.'s (2015) study led the researchers to believe both construction and self-efficacy, along with invitations, are able to forecast the presence of parental involvement in schools. Additionally, this is particularly important for school-based staff as it emphasizes that invitations are extremely useful when soliciting parental involvement. Parallel to the majority of the research presented in this literature review, that act of metaphorically reaching out to families can result in increased engagement by families. Instead of relying on the social norms of involvement in a school's particular community to affect the rate of involvement, schools would be wise to devise certain outreach programs, activities, and initiatives to solicit involvement (Reynolds et al., 2015).

This study on self-efficacy is aligned with a number of other research articles; however, a new finding Reynolds et al. (2015) presented is that there are clear and distinct differences in what exactly involvement looks like between teachers and parents. Teachers reported distinguishable differences in experiencing parents who are engaged and those who are not. Parent perspectives are different; they list additional opportunities to connect beyond school-based interactions. Parents often feel examples of involvement, like assisting schoolwork or making sure their student is not tardy, motivate

their levels of participation in their student's education. Classroom teachers put more emphasis on conduct in school, grades, phone calls, and meetings when describing parental involvement; this disconnect leads us to the importance of developing intentional strategies to make connecting home and school more defined (Reynolds et al., 2015).

In 2018, a study examined two school districts in Virginia to gather teacher and parent perceptions on communication. Lipscomb (2018) conducted a nonexperimental quantitative study that compared the differences between parent and teacher perceptions of effective communication. She surveyed parents and teachers using a Likert scale and the survey data were compared through the use of the *t*-test statistic and a one-way analysis of variance (Lipscomb, 2018). Lipscomb found through her study that teachers and parents at the two different schools both acknowledge how important communication is and both schools have similar perceptions on what effective communication is. An interesting difference in perceptions discovered was the use of technology as a means of communication. Teachers stated they regularly used technology, but parents stated they only occasionally used technology to communicate. Teachers stated that the frequency of the communication was a challenge, especially in the area of phone calls (Lipscomb, 2018). Lipscomb concluded several implications from her study on school-to-parent communication. Her results supported that schools are encouraged to disseminate information in multiple mediums to parents to ultimately increase participation. Also, schools should encourage teachers to be communicating with parents consistently to improve response rates, and school leaders must strategize and implement methods that will encourage parents and teachers to communicate regularly (Lipscomb, 2018).

Mathern (2009) conducted research on the effect on parent-school communication

through technology mediums and specifically online gradebooks. The study looked at the use of online platforms like electronic gradebooks outside of school and its correlation to grades, attendance, and communication between home and school. Using Epstein's (2001) spheres in the Partnership Model, Mathern conducted a qualitative study. Through his research on electronic gradebooks and their effect on a student's grade point average (GPA), Mathern found that there was little to no evidence that a relationship existed between access to an electronic gradebook and a student's GPA. Second, there was also no significant evidence that electronic gradebooks helped facilitate better student attendance. This is important to remember so that school leaders do not rest on communication methods that are available through technological advances. This discourages substituting online gradebooks for direct communication lines being open for parents and teachers to converse regularly.

When studying specific subgroups of students of lower socioeconomic status (SES), there was positive, significant evidence between changes to GPA and gradebook access. Mathern (2009) also provided evidence that communication between all educational stakeholders (student, teacher, parent) increased for Pinnacle Internet Viewer (PIV) users. PIV is the online gradebook similar to other popular portals such as PowerSchool. Students and parents checked grades and attendance more frequently using this system. Parents and students also increased their communication with their teachers. The quality of communication also increased. Each group studied increased their tracking of homework, completion of assignments, and keeping updated with pertinent information.

The perception of students and teachers taking ownership and responsibility of

their work increased. Mathern (2009) concluded that his observations are reflective of Epstein's (2001) spheres of influence in the Partnership Model. Online gradebook access, a form of parental involvement (communication) accessed at home, is able to raise teacher, student, and family perceptions about the frequency and quality of communication between the two entities (Mathern, 2009).

Volunteering

Epstein's (2001) involvement framework includes volunteering with parent and support activities. Epstein (2001) stated that volunteering enables families to share their time and talents to support the school, teachers, and students. Volunteers may conduct activities at school, in classrooms, at home, or in the community. Family volunteers may assist individual teachers or help in the library, the family room, the computer room, the playground, the lunchroom, after-school programs, or other locations. Families also give their time to attend student performances, sports activities, assemblies, celebrations, and other events. (p. 51)

Principals and school leaders must foster a culturally diverse, welcoming school environment to foster community parental involvement (Burke, 2001). A school that is inviting and warm for parents has tidy grounds, a courteous faculty, and multiple mediums of communication to keep the school's programs and policies transparent. Based on previous research (Burke & Picus, 2001), there are established best practices a school can implement to increase and sustain volunteers in their day-to-day operations. These include

- School site meet and greet volunteer recruitment programs

- Middle/high school volunteer literacy programs
- Cultural relevancy training for volunteers on how culture and language must be incorporated in all facets of a student's learning
- Volunteer education classes on child development and age appropriate child rearing practices
- Middle/high school classroom participation training to assist teachers in the classroom with academic content and enrichment activities
- Volunteer grade-level meetings on academic content, student academic support strategies, and make-and-take academic support activities
- School sponsored service learning projects in the community that train volunteers and students about civic responsibility in relation to learning
- Training to help volunteers develop skills for serving on middle/high school advisory committees
- Training to help volunteers assist the school in creating new community partnerships and academic support programs to increase student achievement
- Training on how volunteers can write grant proposals and leverage community resources to support the school's academic and enrichment programs (Burke & Picus, 2001, p. 48).

An important note about this component of the literature review: While this study is focused on parent involvement, the following research supports that schools developing volunteer programs with parents and community members are beneficial to student achievement. This research seeks to validate the significance of implementing volunteer programs at the school level, using parents and/or community members.

Burke (2001) cited that school administration expresses concerns with how to keep volunteer participation constant in a school building without yielding any power of the initiatives that are already in place. Nevertheless, school-based leaders should implement programs to recruit, train, and maintain parent and community volunteers to form healthy partnerships with outside stakeholders. In secondary schools, this includes scheduling weekend and evening meetings concerning school programs and practices, having translators present, providing some form of childcare such as before and after-school programs, providing a means for the parents to get to and from events, and facilitating home visits (Burke & Picus, 2001).

In 2004, some researchers studied the short-term impact of older adult volunteers working with urban elementary school students. They sought to study the impact on academic achievement and classroom behaviors (Rebok et al., 2004). In Baltimore, the Experience Corps initiative was developed in order to help and assist primary-aged kids in kindergarten through third grade. The Experience Corps also felt the need to simultaneously promote a healthy and active lifestyle to elderly participants. Rebok et al. (2004) predicted that younger students taking part in this initiative would be more likely to exhibit growth in oral speaking skills. This study set up a control group, and they primarily analyzed the growth in younger primary-aged students. The study included over 1,000 students in the primary grades, coming from six urban schools. Students in the schools that implemented the Experience Corps program showed greater achievement on standardized tests when comparing to the control group in reading. Kindergarten children in the intervention schools had higher alphabet recognition test scores, and three of those intervention schools increased over the year; however, the control group saw

some declining test scores over the same time period (Rebok et al., 2004). Write-ups for student misconduct declined in the participating schools. Control schools saw write-ups remain the same as previous years. Additionally, based on staff surveys, the Experience Corps initiative did not burden faculty as they implemented the program. The staff saw substantial academic growth without getting frustrated or overworked with the volunteers (Rebok et al., 2004).

A similar study examined 1,000 students from 71 schools across the United States. This study sought to further find the benefits of mentoring on site and its effect on student outcomes (Bayer, Grossman, & DuBois, 2013). The study defined on-site mentoring as volunteers who engage consistently with students on campus. School-based mentoring programs increasingly are being implemented across the country. As of 2005, school-based mentoring programs were the fastest growing type of mentoring in the United States. Over 850,000 adults partnered with schools and students under the umbrella of a variety of different programs (Mentor, 2006).

Study participants were recruited by the Big Brother, Big Sisters of America (BBBSA) agencies across the United States, all having more than 4 years of school-based mentoring previously. Referrals by school staff mostly led to students being selected for the mentoring and only students in fourth grade to ninth grade were eligible. Data were disaggregated to judge the effectiveness of mentoring programs on student achievement, the quality of work, completion of schoolwork, and academic efficacy. One- to five-point scales were used; and in all cases, the higher scores indicated better outcomes. The study also used four explanatory variables of school-based mentoring programs like closeness ("How close do you feel to your mentor"), match status (the mentee's original

mentoring match at the end of the school year), match length, and teacher relationship. Teacher relationship was assessed using student ratings based on connectedness (Karcher, 2003) and quality of the student-teacher relationship (Bayer et al., 2013).

The interesting finding that Bayer et al. (2013) concluded is that placing emphasis on academic progress had no greater impact on academic achievement than those school-based mentoring programs that focused equally on social maturation. They found that school-based mentoring programs could take certain steps for the mentor and student to form more concrete relationships, which led to higher outcomes on their ratings on effectiveness. Close relationships were more likely to be fostered by having these meetings take place in different areas of the school building and at different times during the school day. It was also more effective when mentors did not have concrete activities or tasks to complete with their mentees; instead, holding organic conversations about school and curriculum (Bayer et al., 2013). Programs that created a closer bond between mentor and mentee developed regular, frequent visits and facilitated time for one-on-one communication. Another suggestion is for these key takeaways to be implemented as best practices, not only for BBBSA but all school-based mentoring programs (Bayer et al., 2013).

While evidence continues to suggest that volunteers and mentors positively affect student achievement and maturation, limited research has been conducted on what motivates volunteers and what they perceive as benefits to volunteering. Caldarella, Gomm, Shatzer, and Wall (2010) conducted a study to define what motivates volunteers to be engaged in school-based mentoring programs. This study used a newly founded relationship between a higher education institution and its neighboring school system.

This new program solicited volunteers from nearby businesses and corporations to enroll as mentors. All locals that were interested were asked to complete a standard application and interview with the program, followed by a background check. Volunteers came from a variety of organizations and connected with mentees based on their interview process. Of the 34 volunteers who served as mentors for the joint venture program, 31 in total participated in this study (Caldarella et al., 2010).

The authors used the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI; Clary et al., 1998) to determine motivating aspects of the volunteers enrolled. They first used this survey in November, then used this same self-report instrument as the postsurvey (in May). This helped determine if the volunteers'/mentors' initial motivations were used and if they were fulfilled by the program's implementation (Caldarella et al., 2010). The survey in May also included multiple items to assess a volunteer's level of satisfaction when taking part in the program. The May survey also asked several questions to determine the volunteers' intentions on volunteering in the future. Using a one-way ANOVA, the researchers studied the answers that would motivate the volunteers the most.

Participants were more likely to mentor and volunteer in the program if they had the ability to teach certain values that were important to them to the mentees. They also indicated that through participating in this program they could find out a little bit more about themselves through mentoring (Caldarella et al., 2010). When mentors were younger in age, the results showed that those individuals were participating to gain experience in the field; this was not usually the case for older mentors who were retired or approaching retirement. A key discussion item Caldarella et al. (2010) brought to attention is the programs that are trying to recruit volunteers are more likely to be

successful if they can somehow link the intrinsic motivations of the volunteers to their role as a mentor in that program. For example, marketing that is directed at college students/young professionals might mention gaining experience in that field that could prove useful to them as they enter the workforce. It is focusing on providing experiences to volunteers in school-based mentoring programs that volunteers themselves can use in the future (Caldarella et al., 2010). Also, volunteers who are gaining these experiences would be more likely to be retained from year to year. Although it seems like this discussion takes away the true nature of why one would volunteer, it is important for these programs to be intentional about recruitment or they may see volunteer numbers remain stagnate.

Suggestions were presented when recruiting or obtaining volunteers. It may behoove the leaders within that program to gather the motivations of the volunteers upfront, before connecting them with their mentees. This will help guide how they implement the mentor program, allow them to reflect on how to retain mentors they have, and increase this sense of fulfillment and pleasure that the volunteers are seeking. This study determined that if volunteers were motivated by social contexts, participating in a program where mentors met frequently with one another or worked together in large groups would be effective. Conversely, if a volunteer expressed motivation to mentor based on value, he or she may be seeking the experience of working with at-risk youth in a one-on-one setting (Caldarella et al., 2010). This research remains linked to the understanding that the increased participation of school-based volunteers and mentors leads to greater positive impact on a student's academic and social progress.

In a 2009 analysis, Ritter, Barnett, Denny, and Albin assessed the productivity

and overall effectiveness of tutoring programs for raising student achievement.

Volunteers worked in public schools with students in grades kindergarten through 8.

This research further examined how volunteering and tutoring can be effective measures to improve student growth. The authors studied 21 research articles concerning volunteer tutoring programs to find commonality in each and made efforts to conclude if like-tutoring programs are beneficial to student growth (Ritter et al., 2009). The goal of this research was to study the results of the small-scale research that had been conducted and pool together these studies and enhance their overall statistical power (Ritter et al., 2009). This research included over 1,600 students, split between those receiving and participating in tutoring and a control group. The strength of this meta-analysis was to substantiate the small-scale studies that have yielded like results when accessing the value of volunteer tutoring programs in schools, extremely important to legitimize the need for these volunteer programs in schools.

These researchers concluded that through these school-based volunteer programs and individual research articles, student achievement in the subject of reading was positively affected (Ritter et al., 2009). Participation in these volunteer programs were beneficial to student assessment scores in reading. Overall, participants who were matched with volunteers had higher achievement in reading, writing, and verbal assessments compared those 800 students in the control group (Ritter et al., 2009). It is research like this that places increased emphasis on this type of involvement in Epstein's (2001) framework. One of the main conclusions drawn from this meta-analysis is that policy makers and educational professionals should not ignore this body of research when weighing the options on whether or not to expend resources to create tutoring programs.

These tutoring programs provide a means to increase reading achievement in young students (Ritter et al., 2009).

Christianakis (2011) wrote about the concept of parents being “help labor” to teachers. Christianakis studied a group of racially and linguistically diverse teachers and gathered their perceptions of parent volunteers. She studied a school in northern California where the student population was predominately African-American, Asian, and Hispanic. Christianakis wrote this article in the *Teacher Education Quarterly* to debunk past stereotypes on why minority families were less involved than predominantly White communities. One of the findings this article presented supports teachers’ need and appreciation for volunteer to work in their schools.

According to teacher responses in this study, being present and available on site at the school, coupled with being proactive in communication on student academic progress, helped accomplish their goals in the classroom (Christianakis, 2011). The majority of teachers who were researched noted that they appreciated and took advantage of “instructional labor.” This type of labor, as Christianakis (2011) described, is centered on teacher assigned work like tutoring small groups or individuals. Instructional labor also included facilitating a station when groups rotated, proctoring tests and quizzes, assisting with a special needs child, or translating an assignment into another language.

Teachers emphasized how they saw benefit to assigning these volunteers to students with special needs. When this particular school district eliminated some teacher assistant positions or these positions were vacant because of the low pay they offered, teachers found that these volunteers could help fill this void within the classroom. Volunteers would help special needs students focus on the lesson by giving them one-on-

one engagement while the teacher taught the main lesson. With or without special needs students, 100% of teachers who were studied implored at least one parent to act as a teacher assistant in the classroom. These volunteers would assist with technology, lead a reading assignment, manage managerial tasks, or read to small groups. They concluded their qualitative feedback by expressing how helpful and valuable these volunteers were with instructional efforts and clerical work, like making copies and organizing the classroom (Christianakis, 2011).

Epstein (2001) argued that to create a holistic school learning community, the six types of involvement must be incorporated in order to maximize efficacy and outcomes. Park, Stone, and Holloway (2017) authored a research article that concluded,

A more stimulating learning environment in schools where a greater number of parents were involved in school activities and where parents had formed a more extensive peer network. Schools characterized by high levels of parent participation in PTA, PTO, volunteering, and fundraising activities were more likely than other schools to have higher percentages of students meeting or above national, state standards in math and reading achievement. (p. 202)

Park et al. (2017) wrote about the current shift in educational practice that puts emphasis on parental involvement at home as the greatest predictor for academic success; and with research presented in this literature review, this type of involvement is vital. However, this research indicated that parent involvement activities that focus on school-based practices, like garnering volunteers and creating a social network for parents to participate in, can predict academic outcomes versus schools that do not create these structures.

This research divided involvement into three distinct components when classifying parental involvement in schools. First, Park et al. (2017) labeled “public-good” parental involvement. These types of involvement are classified as practices that are directed to the school as a whole, like volunteering. Opposite of public-good is “private-good” parental involvement, practices that align to benefit the particular student or child, usually taking place outside of school. Some private-good practices would fall under Epstein’s (2001) learning at home component of involvement that is presented in the next section. Last, Park et al. wrote on parent networks that schools can establish. Organizations like Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), a men’s group, or booster clubs are structures that create a social network for external stakeholders.

Using data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2001), this study used longitudinal data from over 21,000 students in 914 public schools across the country. Parents and school employees completed surveys, and these were cross-referenced with that particular school’s student achievement data. Park et al. (2017) concluded that schools with increased levels of participation in PTA/PTO organizations or with greater participation in volunteer activities held higher student achievement than schools that did not. This also took into account the parent involvement that was measured at home (private-good parental involvement). While rates of private-good parental involvement were factors in predicting achievement outcomes, public-good parental involvement exhibited higher significance in correlation with achievement data (Park et al., 2017).

This research also found that schools that established broader social networks for

parents to communicate and volunteer were likely to show higher success in math and reading (Park et al., 2017). When analyzing the data, a discussion item came about that previous research rarely addresses. In this study, public-good parent involvement initiatives like volunteering not only positively affected the student achievement of the volunteer's individual child but of the school body as a whole. This presents a powerful conclusion that public-good involvement in a school, like volunteering, positively affects the children whose parents are not engaged themselves. Pupils do not have to depend on their parents to volunteer in these practices to reap benefits; instead, students are positively affected in the classroom by the average rate of participation of all parents at the school (Park et al., 2017). These public-good parental involvement structures are exactly what Epstein (2001) referred to in her volunteer component of the framework of involvement. The findings from this study, particularly that volunteering affects all students in a school and not merely a few, supports Epstein et al.'s (2002) notion that schools should transition away from professional learning communities and instead adapt a rich and transparent school learning community.

Learning at Home

The fourth type of involvement in Epstein's (2001) framework is learning at home. Epstein (2001) described learning at home as,

Activities that provide information and ideas to families 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 increase teacher-parent communications and parent-child discussions at home through reviewing student work, practicing skills to pass a course, monitoring and

discussing homework, choosing courses, and conducting other academic and curricular activities. (p. 55)

In an urban district in the northeastern United States, 1,200 students were studied over the span of 3 years. This study concluded that parental involvement inside and outside of school was beneficial to raising student achievement. Izzo, Weissberg, Kasprow, and Fendrich (1999) followed random sampled students from kindergarten to third grade. This sample size included 27 schools in the region. The study included yearly surveys for teachers who had the opportunity to rate their parents using multiple criteria like the amount of parent-teacher communication, parent engagement in school functions, and parents teaching or assisting with schoolwork at home. Compared to the other types of involvement, data revealed it was learning activities in the home that was most effective when raising assessment scores in math and reading. This study also provided evidence that parents were more likely to remain engaged with their child's education in the home setting, like assisting with homework, compared to the expectation that they consistently attend school functions over time. They concluded that this may be the reason learning activities at home has the greatest impact on testing and student academic achievement levels (Izzo et al., 1999).

Facilitating not only student learning but parental learning has shown success when schools attempt to expand their practices to help learning take place at home. Robles (2012) sought to find the impact on a parent Saturday school. This Saturday school served primarily Latino parents (90% of the participating parents). The school, in central New Jersey, used their already allocated after-school funds and small donations from private donors.

Participating parents and students were organized into focus groups, and individual interviews were held after a 4-year span of program implementation. Robles's (2012) interviews concluded some key discussion points including parents generally feel more comfortable attending and engaging in school functions and programs if the program was available in their native language. Parents reported that when this was available, they felt more confident to attend. Parents who were trying to better their English-speaking skills and were engaged in programs that provided lessons at school were more apt to be able to assist with schoolwork at the home.

Parents also reflected on how they perceived their child as engagement increased at the school. Parents felt the more they engaged in school functions and programs, the more appreciative and proud the children became. As they became more confident in the English language so did their children. The learning environment was not only raising the efficacy of the student but also the parent. Last, families began breaking down this metaphoric wall between their house and the neighborhood school. Parents began seeing the school as a place of opportunity. This shift in outlook led to the whole family conversing at home about what everyone was learning and studying (Robles, 2012).

Sammons, Toth, Sylva, Melhuish, Siraj, and Taggart (2015) also wrote research on how home learning environment (HLE) affects academics. Sammons et al. studied the early years of HLE and the activities completed by parents at the home that facilitated academic learning. Sammons et al. set out to study the significance of different components of HLE in four stages of the child's schooling – ages 3, 6, 11, and 14. The 17-year study included over 3,000 kids who ranged from ages 3-16. These measures were correlated to the student's academic attainment in secondary school (Sammons et

al., 2015). This study investigated ways in which HLE changed as the students progressed from grade to grade in the four different checkpoints to which the student progressed. As students were studied at those identified age groups, researchers concluded that certain components of HLE were more strongly linked with academic achievement in that particular age group (Sammons et al., 2015).

This study determined home learning characteristics in multiple ways including basic demographic information, classroom conduct referrals, the tracking of any developmental delays, and family wealth. While HLE was critiqued using a plethora of data points, families' responses to what they were doing to assist with academic work determined how much learning at home was taking place for that particular student. Parents could check off different items if they were doing a variety of activities outside of school like reading with the family at home, going on educational visits around town, rehearsing children's songs with an academic focus, working on the computer, or facilitating physical activity. The dimensions also included educational computing, having students read for fun, conversing with the family about different content areas, families asking about a particular assignment or subject, lending a hand with schoolwork that was challenging, and putting procedures in place like checking a student's daily agenda (Sammons et al., 2015).

Results showed that students who have a strong and effective HLE in their younger years help educators to forecast that same child's scholastic achievement as they progress to higher grades, thus proving that these years are critical for students to remain on grade level when they transition into high school. Also, children who were raised in a more favorable HLE in younger ages received significantly better grades in English,

math, and science at the end of middle school compared to children who did not have a productive HLE growing up (Sammons et al., 2015).

At age 16, and taking into account other significant predictors, the same children were performing better overall compared to children who did not have as productive of an HLE. Data and observations expressed the children raised in a productive HLE were nearly three times more likely to make an A through C grade on the English and math benchmark measures. When predicting how a child will perform as they reach the middle school and high school levels, educators can easily look at the HLE in the primary stages of education to best predict their individual outcomes as they transition to high school (Sammons et al., 2015). It seems this research is critical to school systems that want to raise test scores right away but fight an uphill battle as teachers scramble to make up for lost time and resources a student did not have in their more formative years.

Peacock-Chambers, Martin, Necastro, Cabral, and Bair-Merritt (2017) studied sociodemographic criteria that dealt with the self-efficacy of parents and determined how a parent's efficacy and control effect the HLE in which their child is raised. This study compiled 144 participants; of those parents who were researched, a quarter were White, over 60% were not from the United States, and just over 30% were Spanish speaking (Peacock-Chambers et al., 2017). These demographics can match favorably to the participants of this dissertation. The authors used a survey in multiple languages and offered it to parents who were over 18 years old and have a toddler between the ages of 1 and 2. Their goal was to rate the efficacy of parents, perceived control, HLE, and demographic makeup.

When finding parallels with student achievement and HLE, this study saw

demographic predictors and wealth as most closely related to a parent's self-efficacy (Peacock-Chambers et al., 2017). Parents from the United States and those parents who had attained greater levels of their own education had a greater average score of self-efficacy and perceived control scores. Parents who had greater levels of efficacy were associated with a positive change in the HLE score in the model (Peacock-Chambers et al., 2017). This study may be particularly important to those school districts attempting to increase learning at home. Programs, policies, and resources must be in place to increase parent self-efficacy to facilitate more authentic learning outside of the school.

Niklas, Cohrsen, and Tayler (2016) studied HLE and that environment's effect on student cognitive outcomes and growth. The study investigated the significance of implementing intervention plans to raise the effectiveness of literacy and numeracy interactions in the HLE. This took place by having a sample of families who know the significance of HLE and the foundations of numeracy and dialogic reading (Niklas et al., 2016). This study is particularly interesting in that it sought to determine how academic interventions can be successful at home and how a child's academic achievement can increase when parents have the knowledge of how home learning is important *before* the study is conducted (Niklas et al., 2016).

In Melbourne, Australia, 113 children were studied in the primary grade years and their parents were invited to speak with early childhood coordinators, directors, and educators about HLE and its impact on achievement outcomes. Parents also completed a survey before the children began asking about the aspects of their HLE up to this point in their maturation. Researchers broke this survey into two parts: literacy and number practices taking place at home (Niklas et al., 2016).

Both the literacy and numeracy practices taking place in the home were assessed using 10 question surveys. Questions asked if parents took the time to integrate literacy and numbers into everyday household tasks like cooking, cleaning, and family board games. The researcher found this very interesting because the HLE in these questions is simplistic, talking through typical tasks completed around the house while taking advantage of these to present content. Niklas et al. (2016) posed questions like, “How often do you read to your child,” to gather this data from parents. Following these surveys, the intervention programs at home were implemented before data were gathered on their impact on children achievement data (Niklas et al., 2016).

Using the Woodcock-Johnson III tests of cognitive ability, data showed that HLE criteria was linked to student achievement measures on the Woodcock-Johnson II tests. Students practicing numbers in HLE were more likely to exhibit higher intelligence in the areas of number and letters. Students who practiced reading in HLE led them to receive higher scores on literacy problems and cognitive questioning; however, the same reading practices did not improve their individual letter or numbering abilities. The literacy practices taking place outside of school could accurately estimate the student’s ability to master comprehension strategies. Conversely, only number practices taking place in HLE could estimate greater achievement in numbering and alphabet understanding (Niklas et al., 2016). This research is critical for leaders to know and understand how systems and procedures in place for parents can help determine content retention. It is difficult to perceive just how great of an impact it could be to get a community of parents in a professional development before school starts to talk about how to best help their child in reading and math.

Galindo and Sonnenschein (2015) also conducted similar research, studying the HLE effects on academic achievement. Galindo and Sonnenschein took a different approach to this type of involvement, citing that there is a mountain of research that has viewed SES as a predictor of a student's academic achievement. They decided to conduct research on how HLE and SES of a particular student can affect that student's academic development (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015). This study sought to answer three questions: How does a kindergartener's math knowledge and SES as they enter school effect their scores at the end of that school year; after assessing their math knowledge as they enter the school, does HLE and SES effect potential growth in that subject at the year's end; and how does socioeconomic standing effect a child's achievement even with a strong HLE and knowledge attained over the course of kindergarten (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015)?

Galindo and Sonnenschein (2015) used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K). This study used over 20,000 kindergarteners in 1,000 schools across the United States (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015). Using this data source and surveys, they concluded that all aspects that pertained to HLE had a significant effect on a child's math knowledge. When all levers of the study were made equal (i.e., controlled SES), students whose families were involved in the school, had more access to educational activities at home, read more, and had higher educational expectations from their families scored higher on math assessments in kindergarten. (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015). This rise in achievement measures were made regardless of the child's present SES.

Galindo and Sonnenschein (2015) presented that HLE had four important

components: reading with children, learning tools, parent expectations, and involvement at school. The home learning aspects represent the academic motivation of families by assessing the expectations put on school by the families and how they presented and initiated learning opportunities in the home with their child (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015). A parent's academic expectation influenced the learning experience of their child and the adaptability of HLE consistently matched to their child's academic needs. Also, having available reading materials and computers in HLE is critical for the parents to teach steps in solving various mathematical problems while the child engages in learning through tasks that are not solely educational (Galindo & Sonnenschein, 2015). This study further concluded that holistic and comprehensive family-school partnerships at the school level can lead to families implementing an effective HLE that will in turn raise a child's academic achievement.

Decision-Making

Epstein et al. (2002) redefined decision-making as “a process of partnership, of shared views and actions towards shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas” (p. 15) and “a parent leader is a real representative, with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families” (p. 15). Decision-making practices include an active PTA or PTO and advisory councils or groups of external stakeholders who engage in educational lobbying practices, push for school reform through local and national politics, establish groups to advocate for a particular student subgroup, or establish procedures to interconnect citizens through their shared experience of the neighborhood school (Epstein et al., 2002).

A great example of the power of such decision-making comes from a study in

2008. People for Education scheduled multiple forums to discuss the current policies taking place in Canadian public education. People for Education was established as a grass-roots, parent-led organization with goals to lift up and promote public schools in Ontario, Canada. This organization established broad teaching practices for communicating with the public including conducting surveys annually of public schools across the province, collecting data on education resources and activities available, providing resources and support to parents, conducting and publishing research on education topics, collaborating with local governments and education boards, hosting online forums about current educational topics, and encouraging local people to become actively engaged in education in their communities (People for Education, n.d.a).

People for Education began as a part of the parent association in a Toronto school and has since grown into a provincial organization (People for Education, n.d.a). People for Education's perspective on education issues is requested by media, educational stakeholders, and Ontario's Ministry of Education (Winton, 2010).

People for Education members hold spots in integral, policy-making task forces in Ontario that increase the lobbying power for the entire organization (Winton, 2010). Similar political clout could be compared to the National Education Association (NEA) in the United States. Organizations like People for Education establish events and hold forums for parents to become involved in their child's education, this even when local school-based practices have yet to be established.

In a study that focused on school-based management teams, Smith (2016) conducted a qualitative case study to determine parent involvement in school governance through interviews with five principals, three school leadership team parent

representatives, four PTA representatives, and two parent coordinators. Smith analyzed the information gathered from five predominately African-American Title I secondary schools in New York City to compare each school's current leadership structures and how they facilitate parental involvement with their communities. Similar to this dissertation, Smith used Epstein's (2001) six types of parental involvement as a basis for his research.

Of the five total schools studied, three obtained higher graduation rates than the national average and two others had graduation rates below the national average. According to the United States Department of Education (2015), in the 2013-2014 school year, the nationwide graduation rate was 82%, compared to 72.5% for the African-American subgroup. During this study, Smith (2016) researched the characteristics that school administrators used to determine trends and study the structures in place to know how they affected community engagement in the neighborhood schools. While examining the criteria, Smith used excerpts from the one-on-one interviews to identify their background, training, and preparation that ultimately led to their capacity to cultivate parent leadership in their school. Smith wanted to see if school leaders wanted to involve parents to begin with, rather than easily persuading them on school issues that align to their own or internal staffs' interests.

Smith (2016) concluded that principals are expected to create school-based management teams that include parents and community members as decision makers. When analyzing the data, Smith also concluded that school-based leaders do not receive enough training to increase collaboration with parents and community members on school leadership teams. When district leaders use best practices and facilitate site-based

professional development, school principals will be able to experience hands-on support to implement school governance protocols that empower outside stakeholders to be informed decision makers (Smith, 2016). Recommendations were made that district leaders provide parents with the policy information in the local, state, and federal governments to ensure that parents are adequately aware to make informed decisions (Smith, 2016).

Smith (2016) also indicated that parent voice matters in school governance, based on the data collected through his study. Smith recommended that school districts create opportunities for schools to share best practices and assist principals in developing protocols to ensure parent voices are included in the decision-making process. Smith also concluded through his research that the more equitable parent representation is on the school leadership team, the more beneficial it becomes when engaging the community. Last, Smith found that 80% of school leaders formulated their school's budget without the aid from school-based leadership teams.

With an increase in shared decision-making in schools and the effort to include parents, Epstein (2001) noted a challenge is incorporating external leadership from all ethnicities and socioeconomic populations. To better grasp the significance of including minority or diverse parents in school-based leadership teams, Shah (2009) studied the effects of Latino participation on school-based leadership teams. Shah hypothesized that Latinos in school leadership positions go a long way to providing a visible and relatable representation of their community in the school. This cue would ultimately change their motivation to participate in the school and consequently manifest as increased school involvement (Shah, 2009).

Shah (2009) surveyed a total of 374 Chicago parents who were Hispanic. With the focus on this urban setting of Chicago, Shah tested multiple facets of Latino parental engagement. School improvement was the first component studied. Shah gathered data from parents to determine their access to the school and its current engagement structures. He gathered survey results that determined how often they spoke with their students' teachers and administrators. He also asked if they were engaged in any school-based volunteer work and leadership teams (Shah, 2009). The second indicator determined more specifically their engagement in what Shah called the local school council. A local school council is likened to a local school leadership or school-based management team, comprised of a variety of internal and external stakeholders. Local school council participation was measured by if the parent was a voting member of the team, have they attended any meetings or the most recent meeting, and have they run for a specific leadership position within this council. These questions were then posed with hypothetical follow-ups that if a determined position (administrator, local school council member, teacher) was filled by a Latino, would this cause them to participate more than their current level?

Shah's (2009) research affirmed her hypothesis that Latino representation in schools has an impact on what Shah labels psychological orientation. This term meaning parents shift their motivation and outlook on engaging in the school community as they see their ethnic peers providing leadership and guidance to all stakeholders. Latino parents are then more inclined to volunteer in the school and join these leadership teams themselves (Shah, 2009). When concluding her findings from the data received, Shah found that Latino parents, traditionally characterized as disengaged with school, are more

apt to immerse themselves in the school community and increase their present levels of involvement. Placing minorities in these positions of power or effectively matching school leadership teams to the demographics they serve effectively raises those parents' self-efficacy and increases a minority parent's confidence to engage in their child's schooling (Shah, 2009).

Collaborating with the Community

Last, Epstein's (2001) framework of involvement includes collaborating with the community. Epstein (2001) defined collaborating with the community as "coordinating community resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community" (p. 165). Some sample practices Epstein et al. (2002) included to implement are providing resources and information about improving one's health (socially, culturally, and medically) and building systems that connect community programs together to help streamline a parent's way of bettering themselves and their family. Additionally, collaborating with the community includes service integration through school partnerships. These services to the community include student-run organizations in the areas of art, recycling, drama, music, and other activities for seniors (Epstein, 2001).

Sanders (2009) sought to improve collaborative practices between the schools and their communities. Sanders (2009) studied the relationship between a school system's parental engagement expectations and with what he describes as the local community-based parent involvement organization (CPIO).

Sanders (2009) designed her research using a phenomenological study similar to the methodology this study implored. Sanders (2009) studied specific school system

employees and gathered qualitative data by using surveys, organizing focus groups, and attending relevant district meetings. Sanders (2009) also scheduled time to get into the specific schools she was studying and conducted visits to further gather qualitative data. This research included a total of four school systems (Sanders, 2009).

The CPIO started as an informal, loosely connected body of community leaders in the school system. These parents did not have a concrete team or organized structure but would meet to discuss concerns in schools and formulate plans for school-community interactions. This group would also come together on rare occasions and raise important questions during school board meetings (Sanders, 2009). The CPIO then became structured as to provide consulting and a voice to the local school boards on current parental engagement initiatives taking place. Through its growth, the CPIO continued lobbying for systems they felt met the needs of the community with connecting to schools and eventually led them to promote specific candidates in local school board elections (Sanders, 2009).

Sanders's (2009) data collections found that the collaboration between the CPIO and school system leaders helped provide a shift in how a school engaged the community, primarily in three different ways. The first reform was providing free workshops on how to be a parent volunteer and leader for school-based management teams. The CPIO gave members the opportunity to attend the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) conference. When parents attended the NNPS conference, they were afforded the opportunity to learn more about Epstein et al.'s (2002) six types of involvement and take best practices back to their local schools in efforts to increase levels of engagement (Sanders, 2009). Second was collaborating with the school system to pair

community events and initiatives with the school and create a more open dialogue about how both entities collaborate. This partnership led to the implementation of a district-wide conference for community members in the spring of 2007. The CPIO created time for monthly meetings with the superintendent and school leaders in efforts to maintain the priority of increasing parental involvement and student achievement through this practice. Previous leaders within the school system were invited as well, allowing the team to reflect on past practices and plan for the future (Sanders, 2009).

Drawing from the qualitative research, Sanders (2009) concluded both the CPIO and the school system made great strides in building a bridge between the community and school, and parent engagement initiatives were more sustainable and productive; eventually leading to each organization overlapping their objectives to best meet the needs of the community, student bodies, and schools (Sanders, 2009).

Sanders (2008) also previously researched collaboration between school sites and the communities they serve. Sanders (2008) studied how parent liaisons assisted external partnerships for schools. This research on the role and effect of parent liaisons used the same qualitative data that Sanders (2008) gathered from the research above, using the same four school systems. Sanders (2008) sought to answer two questions: How do school systems monitor and support external collaboration and how does the school system's activities effect the development of school-based parent leadership teams?

Through his qualitative data analysis, Sanders (2008) discovered four main roles for parent liaisons to promote collaboration between all stakeholders. These four main roles also take into account parents of different socioeconomic backgrounds and culture. Parent liaisons helped organized support to vulnerable families, orchestrated systems that

would help teacher-parent communication, and provided structures to increase partnerships with the community (Sanders, 2008). When studying how these liaisons provided support to vulnerable families, Sanders (2008) studied parents who were supporting the district's lowest achieving school and their families. School administrative teams picked families based on a student's academic achievement scores or a perceived need. Other families were chosen by a student's attendance rate during the school year and if the student had difficulties completing academic work at home (Sanders, 2008).

Results from 30 families surveyed from this section included liaisons being scored high on offering support and guidance to families in the community who were disenfranchised and vulnerable. Liaisons also received favorable marks when asked by respondents if they were satisfied with this program overall. When respondents were asked the open-ended question to describe if a liaison has been helpful, they highlighted that liaisons helped in several different ways like providing clarification on curriculum, general encouragement, and helping families attain the appropriate supports in place within the neighborhood and school (Sanders, 2008). This further concluded that these established liaisons provided needed guidance and resources to otherwise disengaged families of at-risk students.

In the area of supporting teacher-parent communication, Sanders (2008) noted the inexperience and lack of knowledge for teachers to properly collaborate with diverse families was not beneficial to student growth. In this capacity, liaisons assisted school staff in connecting with families of a different background and culture. They established themselves as a bridge and modeled ways for the staff member to be more confident in

conversing with culturally different families. Sanders (2008) also observed four schools and their partnership team members, gathering positive feedback from focus groups on events hosted by the school partnership teams. These events included going to where minority parents lived in order to spread the word about literacy practices at home and to promote attendance incentives (Sanders, 2008).

Last, district specialists took data to evaluate how successful the role of a parent liaison was in a school. To gather these data, each parent liaison tracked their work by logging hours and events in which they participated and then assigned the task or specific day, according to Epstein's (2001) framework of involvement (Sanders, 2008). Liaisons additionally tracked the grades of the students with whom they were working to assess the impact on content knowledge. The data collected allowed the leaders of this program to promote its value and impact on a student's academic standing and gave legitimacy for the request to expand this program and obtain more parent liaisons for other schools and a broader range of students who would benefit from this support. Since data collected showed student growth, a recommendation was made to increase the amount of time liaisons spent working with students in need, along with hiring more liaisons for this increased workload. Sanders's (2008) study proved that specific community-based personnel can positively affect student growth, while few others have identified how and why. Sanders (2008) clearly presented that the implementation of community liaisons will promote schools to better engage their families and improve home-school relations.

Chapter 2 Summary

When summarizing the research presented in this literature review, educators who prioritize parental involvement with the same fervor as hiring highly qualified teachers or

providing instructional coaching are more apt to creating a holistic school learning community and increasing student achievement. Each component in Epstein's (2001) framework of involvement presented relevant research that support's Epstein's (2001) vision for how schools should engage the communities they serve.

Each component of involvement presented has its own meaning and value to a school and its staff. Research presented in Chapter 2 supports the integration and growth of each type of involvement to cultivate and challenge parent and community stakeholders to add value and support to their local schools. As technology applications make school calendars, assignments, and grades more transparent, families may find it easier to keep a watch on their student and their assigned school from a distance. As the 21st century rolls forward, it is the authentic and intentional practices of engaging a community that school leaders need to focus on now more than ever.

There is much that parents can contribute to their local schools, but initiatives that are developed by leaders without knowledge of prior research or aptitude on how to expand beyond a traditional open house and newsletter can stall all potential success and academic outcomes.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study investigated the issue that the lack of parental involvement in education decreases the chance for a child to reach their academic potential. The purpose of this study was to identify the experiences of parents in how their child's school engages their involvement. Utilizing Epstein's (2001) research on how the six types of involvement increase student achievement, this study analyzed parental experiences in how these types of involvement are implemented at the high schools attended by their children.

This research conducted a phenomenological study for the methodology. The focus of the phenomenological inquiry involved assessing what families have experienced concerning parental involvement solicited by the high school and how they currently *feel* about their accessibility to their child's curriculum and educational outcomes.

Creswell (1998) described phenomenology as "the meaning of the lived experiences for several individuals about a concept or the phenomenon" (p. 54). Phenomenological research observes, records, and interprets lived experiences through detailed descriptions (Creswell, 1998). Phenomenological research was created by Husserl in 1913 and is designed to attain data that describe the phenomena or essences of a specific human experience (Moerer-Urdahl & Creswell, 2004). Creswell (1998) went on to describe phenomenology as a process of reflection people use to recount a lived experience.

Research Questions

This study analyzed how parents feel about the implementation of Epstein's

(2001) types of involvement without parents themselves needing a background on this research to express their experiences. Using Epstein's (2001) types of involvement as a basis, this study examined the question, "how do parents experience involvement with their child's high school?" With this as the basis, the following subset of questions was explored:

1. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are least experienced?
2. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are most experienced?
3. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what should schools intentionally address to facilitate increased levels of parental involvement?

The Researcher

The researcher was a current school administrator in the school district being studied. He has 6 years of experience in education. The researcher is not employed at any of the four high schools being studied and only holds a collegial relationship with the principals of the four high schools being studied. His primary role in this study was to facilitate the delivery of the research-based survey and conduct a focus group session in the four respective communities. The researcher then analyzed the data from the responses.

Setting

In a metropolitan school district in North Carolina, four comprehensive high schools within the 17th largest school district in the United States were studied on their current practices in the implementation of Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement.

Table 1 is an overview of the four high schools that were studied. High School 1 is a comprehensive high school with 3,100 students. High School 1 has a demographic breakdown of 60% White, 25% African-American, 9% Hispanic, and 4% Asian. Thirty-one percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 1 also holds a partial IB program. High School 1 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 83. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 94.2%. The area that surrounds High School 1 has a median household income of \$67,529.

High School 2 is a comprehensive high school with 1,860 students. High School 2 has a demographic breakdown of 46% African-American, 22% White, 20% Hispanic, and 8% Asian. Fifty-eight percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 2 also holds a partial IB program. High School 2 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 71. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 91.0%. The area that surrounds High School 2 has a median household income of \$35,635.

High School 3 is a comprehensive high school with 3,000 students. High School 3 has a demographic breakdown of 39% White, 27% African-American, and 27% Hispanic. Forty-five percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 2 holds a World Languages Academy. High School 3 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 81. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 93.0%. The area that surrounds High School 3 has a median household income of \$60,339.

High School 4 is a comprehensive high school with 2,300 students. High School 4 has a demographic breakdown of 33% White, 31% African-American, and 26%

Hispanic. Fifty-five percent of this high school receives free, reduced lunch. High School 4 holds an Academy of Engineering and Academy of International Studies. High School 4 has a current North Carolina Report Card Grade of a B, with an achievement score of 77. Its 4-year graduation rate is currently 92.0%. The area that surrounds High School 3 has a median household income of \$54,928.

These schools were selected by the researcher to gather data from schools with a diverse population. This allows findings to be relevant to readers and educational leaders across the United States.

Instruments

The participants in this study were parents and/or guardians at the four high schools studied. Epstein et al. (1993) provided a research-based survey which was used to assess attitudes about the school, present family involvement, present and desired school outreach to involve families, requests for workshops, topics and community services, time students spend on homework, perceptions of student abilities and success in school, family demographics, and parent comments (Epstein, 2001). Epstein et al. (1993) implemented the original survey in 1993 in 15 inner-city Baltimore schools. The original sample of this study consisted of 243 teachers and 2,115 parents. Cronbach's alpha (α) supported internal consistency, with scales ranging from .44 to .91, resulting in an estimated reliability mean of $\alpha = .81$. In addition, the survey also produced low standard errors of measurement (Epstein et al., 1993).

The researcher purchased this survey, which contains sections with Likert-style questioning, along with multiple-choice questions. This survey was intended to take approximately 20 minutes to complete. At each school site, the researcher conducted

focus groups to collect additional qualitative data on parental experiences with involvement.

On August 13, 2018, the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships granted the researcher permission to use and adapt this survey for the purposes of this dissertation (Appendix A). In Appendix B, the *High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents* (Epstein et al., 1993) is presented. The survey questions asked parents respond to each particular question with their experiences in the past year. This was inclusive of every grade level a student may be in at the high school and focused on current practices the school had established.

In regard to parent involvement, the survey responses allowed the researcher to answer what is currently being done well in the urban high school setting, what could be improved, and what type of involvement school leadership teams should prioritize. The focus groups conducted added additional qualitative data to the research and strengthened conclusions drawn from this study.

Question 1 of the survey asked parents their current attitudes towards the school and parent involvement. Questions 2 and 3 asked parents how they are presently involved with their teenage child. Question 4 asked how parents are currently involved with the school. This question provided a profile for parents to complete on what current school programs are strong and which ones could use improvement. Each item parents rate “not important,” “should start,” “could do better,” or “does well,” aligns with one of Epstein’s (2001) types of involvement.

Questions 5, 6, and 7 asked parents how the school has involved them in the past year. Question 5 asked parents how the school has contacted them about seven different

aspects of their child's education. In Question 6, parents reported how often the school has contacted them using different communication methods. Question 7 asked how parents receive information.

Question 8 listed 19 different topics for workshops parents could attend. Questions 9 and 10 asked parents the best time of day to be involved or participate in events at the school. Question 11 asked what community programs parents would like more information regarding. Question 12 asked parents several questions about their child including age, homework participation, and their interdependence and responsibility. In addition, in Question 12, this survey asked parents how they identify themselves by race. The researcher used the responses to further identify themes in the qualitative data. Using the survey responses, coupled with focus group questions, the researcher sought to use these data to answer the research questions.

At each school site, a focus group of parents, sampling the demographic makeup of the population attending each school, was formed. A focus group of five to 10 parents was used to gather further qualitative data. The researcher asked eight questions to each focus group:

1. In what ways can this high school help you support parenting practices at home?
2. How does this high school best communicate with you about your child's education?
3. At this high school, what ways of volunteering intrigue you?
4. What do you think this high school can do to better assist your child with schoolwork at home?

5. In what instances would you like to be involved in school-wide decision-making?
6. What types of programs would you like to receive more information about in your community?
7. What can this high school do to help you become more involved in your child's education?
8. Are there any other ideas or suggestions you would like to add?

The above focus group questions aligned with the research questions and the six types of involvement Epstein (2001) has established: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community.

The researcher validated these questions on October 31, 2018 with an expert group. This group was established by the researcher and was comprised of seven educators with high school teaching and/or leadership experience. The researcher selected these individuals based on their background knowledge and experience with high school students and their parents. Each participant of this expert group provided feedback on each individual question. This group determined if each question was clear and concise, thought provoking and open-ended, aligned to the research question, and in easily understood language. This group reworded any questions they deemed flawed.

During this validation process, two changes were made to the original focus group questions. In Question 1, the word *support* replaced the original word of *improve*. Six of the seven participants suggested and agreed upon this revision. The majority stated that improve would imply current parenting practices were not effective or sound. In Question 6, the researcher added *types of* in the beginning of the question after five of the

seven participants suggested this revision. The participants agreed that asking *what types of programs would you like to receive more information about in your community* would allow the parents to provide their thoughts on community programs even if they did not know the specific name or title of the company or program.

Participants

The exact number of participants was contingent on the parent response rate. The *High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents* was sent electronically through email to all families whose contact information is held by the participating high school and not limited to one per household, to take into account separate parental experiences with a particular child. The survey directions included that the parent or guardian who is primarily involved in their child's education should complete the survey. With the research encompassing such a diverse population in an urban area, the researcher felt this sample size was adequate. With the instrument being used and the intentional selection of this particular sample size in an urban area, the researcher felt the appropriateness of this study was sufficient.

A total of 443 high school parents completed the survey in a 3-week window. Of the 443 parents surveyed, 84.31% said they were White. Approximately 3% described themselves as Hispanic, and 1.46% described themselves as African-American.

Sixty-four percent of participants currently work full time, 18.57% work part time, and almost 18% stated they were not currently employed. Just over 52% of the participants had a female student, and 47.48% had a male student. Of the parents who participated, there was a somewhat equal distribution of grade levels their teenager was in currently. Approximately 25% of respondents had either a 15- or 16-year-old, 30% of the

participants had a 15-year-old, and 12% had a 14-year-old. Freshmen and sophomore parents were more represented in this study in comparison to parents of juniors and seniors in high school.

When asked about family demographics, over 80% of participants stated there were two adults living in the home currently, with approximately 9% saying it was a single parent household. Approximately 50% said there were two children living in the participants' households. Twenty-nine percent said there was only one child living in the household.

When asked about their own educational background, 89% of respondents either obtained a college degree or an advanced degree. Eight percent said they had some college classes, and just over 1% said they had other training or education. When asked if they themselves liked high school when they were a teen, parent participants overwhelmingly (60.36%) said they liked high school "a lot." Twenty-six percent said they liked high school some, and only 6% said they did not like high school much or at all.

The researcher scheduled at least five participants for a focus group session at each school site. Of the 22 total focus group participants, six were African-American (27%), two were Hispanic (9%), and 14 were White (64%). There was only one male participant in the focus group. These focus groups were conducted on the high school's campus in a common meeting location (classroom, conference room), and the school's principal determined the location. Parents acknowledged their willingness to participate in a focus group on the last question of the survey used. If they respond "yes," they would be willing to participate and be audio recorded in a focus group study about parent

involvement at their high school; the researcher collected and secured their contact information. Once the survey window closed, the researcher randomized the list of parents who acknowledged they would be willing to participate in the focus group and selected the participants. Each school site had ample volunteers to elect to participate in the focus group sessions, and further invitations were not needed to obtain at least five participants at each site.

The qualitative data collected from focus group participants did not include the participant's name to ensure anonymity. On the transcripts created from the focus group conversations, the participants' names were redacted and a labeling of "Parent 1, 2, 3" was assigned to the participants.

Data Collection

The initial step to the data collection process was to distribute the above survey to participating parents; this was done through a variety of methods. The researcher, with the help of each respective high school's principal, advertised the adapted *High School and Family Partnerships: Surveys and Summaries Questionnaires for Parents* through the district's Connect5 messaging system, on their school website, and through any other specific medium of communication that school used regularly. Parents accessed this survey through an online hyperlink that was shared through email and the primary forms of communication the school used. Parents were also asked to complete the corresponding consent form (Appendix C), acknowledging that participation was voluntary and anonymous. The window for parents to access the survey was 3 weeks from the initial invitation to complete the survey. This timeframe was intended to ensure parents had enough time to hear information about this survey and complete the survey.

Through the permission granted to use and adapt the research instrument, this survey was distributed to participants electronically but was also available in hard copy form at each respective school's front office. The researcher attempted to gather as many parent responses as possible, and the delivery of this survey through electronic mediums increased participation. Conversely, the researcher did not want to eliminate from participation parents who were not equipped to receive the survey in electronic form and provided each school 150 hard copy surveys to be available in the front office. Communication about this research and survey procedures included information on how to participate in both methods. The consent form (Appendix C) was available in both the electronic and print medium used by parents. Focus group sessions were scheduled for a time slot 2 weeks after the survey window had closed. The researcher only conducted a single-session focus group at each school site.

Data were collected electronically as surveys were completed by parents in the 3-week window. Electronic survey results were shown on an Excel spreadsheet for the researcher as raw data. The researcher collected hard copy surveys that were completed and returned to the school's main office. Focus group conversations were recorded by a Sony ICD-ux560 audio recorder. The recorded audio was converted by the researcher to a written transcript of the session. This written transcript of responses was converted by the software system Trint (trint.com).

Data Analysis

After raw survey and focus group data were collected, the researcher then analyzed these data to draw conclusions. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the survey data collected. Each question was summarized by the percentage of each different

response to that question. Mean scores were used when analyzing each question. By using mean scores, the researcher was able to identify responses from participants and answer the research questions presented. The percent of certain responses also led the researcher's discussion on the responses. For instance, if 70% of respondents selected they receive communication in a particular way, that information was used in discussion on how that particular form of communication is widely used in the setting. These basic descriptive statistics allowed the researcher to identify themes in this study.

Focus group audio was transferred to transcripts using Trint.com from each school's session. The researcher analyzed these transcripts to find certain tendencies with the responses. Responses were analyzed by the ideas and themes they presented. This analysis was done by concluding trends and concepts that came about from the collection of responses. This collection may have cut across the various discussions each individual question presents.

The themes of these data were concluded by the researcher first identifying key-words-in-context (KWIC). The researcher identified key words presented in the transcript and found other instances where the word was used. For instance, the researcher may have identified "helpful" as a key word and searched responses that contain this verbiage in its immediate context. When like terms could be categorized, the themes of responses could be developed.

Additionally, the researcher identified themes by cutting and sorting responses. This involved reading the text additional times to find important responses and quotes that aligned to the research questions. The researcher pulled that quote or phrase, in the same context in which it occurred, and placed it in a specific area. Those quotes or

phrases were labeled by where they were stated in the text and which labeled parent stated it. Actual names of the participants were not used. After the researcher combed through the text and pulled out these key quotes and phrases, he reread each item and began to sort them by topic or type of involvement. Each sorted pile of responses created a specific theme based on their connectedness in the context.

Data Display

Findings were displayed by aligning the descriptive statistics and identified themes to the research questions.

Research Question 1: Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are least experienced? Using the data from the survey, along with focus group themes presented, the researcher identified what type of involvement parents least experience, specifically using Questions 2-7 on the survey.

Research Question 2: Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are most experienced? Using the data from the survey, along with focus group themes presented, the researcher identified what type of involvement was most experienced by parents, specifically using Questions 2-7 on the survey.

Research Question 3: Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what should schools intentionally address to facilitate increased levels of parental involvement? Using the data from the survey, along with focus group responses, the researcher identified themes in response to this question.

Descriptive data that were collected from the survey responses were organized

into graphs and charts for the reader to analyze. Percent of responses were presented for each question; and with this information presented in a table, the reader could better identify the trends and themes that were presented.

The themes that were identified by the researcher were summarized in a table that cross-referenced the type of involvement to which it may have aligned. For instance, if the theme of “parents are not able to assist with schoolwork at home” was presented, this was aligned with Epstein’s (2001) learning at home type of involvement.

Summary

Survey and focus group data were collected and findings showed if any existing gaps in collaborating with parents and outside stakeholders were present and, in turn, provided suggestions for area secondary schools to consider when seeking external collaboration and authentic partnerships. Additionally, these findings provided research for secondary school leaders across the nation to study in their own attempts to bridge the home-to-school gaps for their communities. Using Epstein et al.’s (2002) framework to increase parental involvement, supported by the research in Chapter 2, schools have the ability to create a more holistic school learning community and raise their student achievement measures.

Through phenomenological research, this dissertation gathered current parental experiences on how their child’s comprehensive high school is engaging their involvement and how they currently feel about their accessibility to their child’s curriculum and educational outcomes. With the immense diversity of the schools, students, and parents in this study, the data and conclusions presented have far-reaching implications as educational leaders from around the country may find this research and its

participants relevant to their current practices. When analyzing the data, the researcher was able to determine what type of involvement the participants least experience and most experience. Additionally, the researcher was able to disaggregate the data to determine the types of involvement needing to be addressed by school leadership teams in urban high schools.

Chapter 4: Results and Findings

This research utilizes Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement as a framework for best practices. Chapter 2 delved into research that supports the integration of each of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement into a particular school or school district. The problem this study focused on is that the lack of parental involvement in a student's education decreases his or her chance to reach their academic potential. The purpose of this study was to identify the experiences of parents in how their school engages or solicits their involvement. Utilizing Epstein's (2001) research on how the six types of involvement increase student achievement, this study analyzed parental experiences in how these types of involvement are being implemented in the high schools their children attend. In this chapter, qualitative and quantitative data are presented to lead discussion on which component(s) of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement schools need to address in order to increase student achievement. These findings and the coinciding discussion will allow school leaders to understand how parents can help their children at home, how they currently feel engaged by the school, and how schools can facilitate more parent involvement.

Using Epstein's (2001) types of involvement as a basis, this study examined the question, "how do parents experience involvement with their child's high school?" With this as the basis, the following subset of questions was explored:

1. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are least experienced?
2. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are most experienced?

3. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what should schools intentionally address to facilitate increased levels of parental involvement?

Each question from the survey distributed aligned with one or more of Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement. Common, or frequent, responses in the focus group data are also presented following the quantitative data gathered in the survey. Each of the focus group questions also aligns with not only Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement but with the questions asked in the survey distributed to parents. The quantitative and qualitative data gathered will provide readers current parental experiences with the six types of involvement and what areas of need were established based on the feedback.

Question 1 in the survey distributed assessed parents' current attitudes about the school and parent involvement. Parent responses are exhibited in Table 2.

Parent Attitudes About the School

Table 2

Question 1 Results, Parents' Attitudes About the School

Question n=443	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Weighted Average
This is a very good high school.	2.42%	13.49%	55.36%	28.72%	3.1
The teachers here care about my teenager.	3.13%	12.50%	59.72%	24.65%	3.06
I need more information from the school to talk with my teen about schoolwork.	8.65%	44.29%	31.49%	15.57%	2.54
I feel welcome at this school.	1.38%	14.48%	57.59%	26.55%	3.09
My teen is learning as much as he/she can this year.	5.92%	27.18%	51.92%	14.98%	2.76
This school works hard to get parents involved.	5.94%	30.77%	51.75%	11.54%	2.69
Parents do not need to be involved much in their high school child's education.	47.40%	42.91%	8.30%	1.38%	1.64
I only hear from the high school when there are problems.	21.53%	55.90%	15.97%	6.60%	2.08
I often talk with other parents about our teenagers and the high school.	5.52%	20.34%	50.34%	23.79%	2.92
My teen talks about school at home.	2.76%	10.69%	59.31%	27.24%	3.11
This school and I have different goals for my teen.	22.61%	61.48%	13.43%	2.47%	1.96
This school gave me good information about its	8.83%	21.55%	54.77%	14.84%	2.76

(cont.)

Question n=443	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Weighted Average
programs when my child was in ninth grade.					
I want to be more involved than I am now in my teen's education.	4.15%	40.83%	44.29%	10.73%	2.62
This school wants to learn what I know about my teen.	15.03%	54.20%	29.72%	1.05%	2.17
This school is a good place for students and for parents.	3.51%	14.74%	65.61%	16.14%	2.94
I almost always know where my teen is, day or night.	.69%	2.41%	30.00%	66.90%	3.63
Most days I do not have enough time to talk with my high school student.	45.86%	42.07%	11.03%	1.03%	1.67
This is a safe community for my children.	3.82%	22.57%	64.24%	9.38%	2.79
The community has many good activities for teens.	3.82%	23.96%	58.68%	13.54%	2.82
The community supports this high school.	2.45%	17.83%	65.38%	14.34%	2.92

Parents were asked whether this is a good high school; and 28.72% strongly agreed and 55.36% agreed. Over 59% of parents agreed that their child's teacher cared about them, and 57.59% felt they were welcome at the school. When asked if they need more information from the school on how to talk with their teen about schoolwork, 44.29% disagreed and only 15.57% strongly agreed. Parents were also asked if the school works hard to get parents involved; and 11.54% strongly agreed, while 30.77% disagreed.

With only a little over 9% strongly agreeing or agreeing that parents do not need to be very involved with their high school student, 47.40% of parents strongly disagreed. Only 6.60% strongly agreed that they only hear from the high school when something is wrong or a problem arises, and 55.9% of parents disagreed. When asked if they want their current level of involvement to increase with regard to their child's education, 44.29% agreed and 40.83% disagreed. These response data are reinforced with focus group responses as well.

Only 1.05% strongly agreed that the school wants to learn what parents know about their own teen, with 54.2% of parents disagreeing with this statement. Over 66% of parents strongly agreed that they almost always know where their teen is, day or night. When asked if their surrounding community has good activities for their teen to engage in, 58.68% of parents agreed, with 23.96 disagreeing.

Parents then expressed their experiences with their child's learning and interactions about school and curriculum at home. Only 14.98% strongly agreed that their teen is maximizing their learning opportunities this year, with 51.92 agreeing with this statement as well. Just over 27% of parents disagreed that their child is learning as much as he/she can this year. Additionally, 27.24% of parents strongly agreed that their student talks about school at home, with 59.31 also agreeing. Last, when asked whether the school and family have different goals for their teen, 22.61% strongly disagreed and 61.48 disagreed; 65.61% stated they agree that this high school is a good place for students and parents.

The items that carried the highest weighted averages, meaning the majority of parents responded agree or strongly agree, were "I feel welcome at this school," "my teen

talks about school at home,” and “I almost always know where my teen is, day or night.” The statements that carried the lowest weighted averages, with the most disagreement, were “the school and I have different goals for my teen,” “most days I do not have enough time to talk to my high school student,” and “parents do not need to be involved much in their high school child’s education.”

The percent of agreement with certain items in Question 1 suggests that the four high schools studied are generally well thought of by the participating parents. Overall, the majority of parents support their high school and its programs. The data from participating parents also show they are attempting to monitor and guide their child’s work and behavior in high school.

There are a few items that parents express they want or need more information on. With 54.20% of parents disagreeing that their high school wants to learn what the parents know about their teen, the majority of parents express their input on their specific child’s ability or potential may need to be solicited more. Also, there was more parity with the responses if the school works hard to get their parents involved, suggesting there is ample potential for growth in how the school extends invitation or promotes engagement. Last, with over 47% of parents either agreeing or strongly agreeing they need more information from the school on how to talk to their child about schoolwork, the participants have shown that even when parents generally approve of the school, they still want more information on curriculum and assignments.

How Are Parents Presently Involved with Their Teen?

In Questions 2 and 3, parents expressed how they are presently involved with

their teen. Question 2 results, in Table 3, express which of the 13 ways a parent is involved with their child's education at home are more prevalent. This relates to type 4, Learning at Home (Epstein, 2001).

Table 3

Question 2 Results, How are Parents Presently Involved with Their Teen?

Practice n=443	Never	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Weighted Average
Talk to my high school student about school.	0.69%	0.00%	0.00%	8.65%	90.66%	3.89
Listen to my teen read something that he/she wrote.	9.38%	25.69%	34.03%	25.00%	5.90%	1.92
Talk about a homework assignment.	0.69%	3.81%	3.11%	40.83%	51.56%	3.39
Help my teen with homework.	21.45%	25.26%	22.15%	25.61%	5.54%	1.69
Discuss grades on tests and schoolwork.	0.35%	0.70%	8.71%	50.52%	39.72%	3.29
Check that my teen goes to school	16.67%	0.69%	0.69%	4.17%	77.78%	3.26
Talk about a TV show with my teen.	3.50%	9.44%	18.18%	54.55%	14.34%	2.67
Help my teen solve a personal problem.	0.70%	10.84%	31.47%	39.86%	17.13%	2.62
Help my teen plan time for homework, chores, and other responsibilities.	4.17%	6.25%	10.42%	46.18%	32.99%	2.98
Talk with my teen about next year's courses.	0.69%	34.60%	40.48%	17.30%	6.92%	1.95
Talk with my teen about future plans for college or work.	0.00%	6.92%	35.29%	45.33%	12.46%	2.63
Tell my teen how important school is.	2.44%	1.74%	12.54%	38.68%	44.60%	3.21

(cont.)

Practice n=443	Never	1-2 Times	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Weighted Average
Attend a community event with my teen.	5.57%	27.18%	48.08%	17.42%	1.74%	1.83
Talk to my high school student about school.	0.69%	0.00%	0.00%	8.65%	90.66%	3.89
Listen to my teen read something that he/she wrote.	9.38%	25.69%	34.03%	25.00%	5.90%	1.92
Talk about a homework assignment.	0.69%	3.81%	3.11%	40.83%	51.56%	3.39

Over 20% or more of parents stated they never help their teen with a homework assignment. Over 20% of parents also expressed they only listen to their teen read something they wrote, help with homework, talk with their teen about future courses, or attend a community event with their teen once or twice a month. Over 50% or more of parents stated they discuss grades on tests and schoolwork weekly. Additionally, 54.55% of parents stated they also talk about a TV show with their teen weekly. Over 90% of parents stated they talk to their high school student about school daily. Slightly over 50% of parents expressed they talk daily about homework assignments. Last, 77.78% of parents check that their child goes to school each day.

The two practices parents stated they do most often were talking with their child about school and homework assignments. The two practices they were least likely to do on a consistent basis were to help with homework or attend a community event with their teen. With schools adequately communicating with the parents with regard to assignments, there are still deficiencies in parents actually *assisting* with the assignments outside of school. The data exhibited show parents are apt to discuss and probe students

about their curricula; however, they still do not sit down to provide support and assistance with these assignments.

In Question 3, parents rated how often they became involved in the physical school in the past year. Table 4 shows the data for each of those practices.

Table 4

Question 3 Results, How are Parents Presently Involved at the School?

Practice n=443	Never	1-2 Times	A Few Times	Many Times	Weighted Average
Go to a high school PTA/PTO meeting	52.76%	25.52%	13.79%	7.93%	0.77
Help with fund raising for the high school	35.42%	29.17%	23.96%	11.46%	1.11
Attend open house or curriculum night	7.59%	41.03%	20.00%	31.38%	1.75
Attend a parent-teacher conference	50.52%	25.44%	13.24%	10.80%	0.84
Work as a volunteer at the high school	43.79%	17.59%	16.21%	22.41%	1.17
Attend a committee meeting at this school	62.72%	14.29%	11.50%	11.50%	0.72
Give the school information about special circumstances at home	54.01%	28.92%	11.85%	5.23%	0.68
Thank someone at school for something he/she did for my teen	12.80%	31.83%	36.68%	18.69%	1.61
Attend a high school sports event, play, concert, or other performance	15.57%	15.92%	21.45%	47.06%	2
Go to a high school PTA/PTO meeting	52.76%	25.52%	13.79%	7.93%	0.77
Help with fund raising for the high school	35.42%	29.17%	23.96%	11.46%	1.11
Attend open house or curriculum night	7.59%	41.03%	20.00%	31.38%	1.75

Over 40% of parents stated they never go to a PTO/PTA meeting (52.76%),

attend a parent-teacher conference (50.52%), work as a volunteer at the high school (43.79%), attend a committee meeting (62.72%), or give the school information about special circumstances at home (54.01%).

On the other hand, over 30% of parents expressed they thanked someone at the school for something he/she did for their child and attended an open house; curriculum night; or a high school sports event, play, concert, or performance a few times or many times a year. Attending a sporting event, play, concert, or other performance was the practice that drew the most participation, with 47.06% of parents stating they go many times.

Parents reported on their own involvement at home and in the school in Questions 2 and 3, suggesting that they are much more likely to go to the school grounds for a noninstructional event. Also, parents are willing to communicate with their child and school about schoolwork, but sitting down to assist with these assignments is far less common at home.

In Table 5, respondents created a profile of what they currently feel the school does well with parental involvement and engagement. Each type of involvement listed in Question 4 directly aligns to Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement that are best practice.

How Well Does the School Involve Families Now?

Table 5

Question 4 Results, How Well Does the School Involve Families Now?

Type of Involvement n=443	Not Important to Me	School Should Start	School Could Do Better	School Does Very Well	Weighted Average
Help me understand teen problems and development.	11.83%	20.43%	48.03%	19.71%	2.76
Help me help my teen become independent and self-confident.	6.83%	16.91%	41.37%	34.89%	3.04
Give me information on how my teen may qualify for scholarships or loans to college.	4.63%	17.08%	54.80%	23.49%	2.97
Provide me with information about school programs my teen can choose (college prep, vocational, etc.)	0.70%	11.23%	50.18%	37.89%	3.25
Give me information about how report card grades are earned.	4.91%	9.82%	37.54%	47.72%	3.28
Include my teen in a parent-teacher conference each year.	16.55%	42.81%	28.06%	12.59%	2.37
Contact me if my teen is having problems.	5.62%	17.98%	39.70%	36.70%	3.07
Contact me if my teen does something well or improves.	6.99%	34.56%	47.43%	11.03%	2.63

(cont.)

Type of Involvement n=443	Not Important to Me	School Should Start	School Could Do Better	School Does Very Well	Weighted Average
Give information on courses required for graduation from high school.	1.79%	8.21%	33.57%	56.43%	3.45
Ask me to volunteer at the school.	14.34%	5.73%	24.73%	55.20%	3.21
Provide ideas on how I could keep track of my teen's homework.	19.00%	17.56%	35.13%	28.32%	2.73
Provide ideas on how to help my teen at home on skills in specific subjects.	14.49%	26.09%	47.46%	11.96%	2.57
Give information on what my teen is required to learn to pass each subject.	10.32%	14.59%	38.43%	36.65%	3.01
Assign homework that requires my teen to share ideas and talk with me.	21.38%	25.72%	37.68%	15.22%	2.47
Invite me to PTO/PTA meetings.	15.05%	5.73%	19.00%	60.22%	3.24
Include parents on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement.	12.68%	10.14%	26.09%	51.09%	3.16
Provide information about community services to assist my teen and family.	17.27%	16.19%	33.09%	33.45%	2.83

The practice that 21.38% of parents stated was not important to them, the largest percentage of respondents, was assigning homework that requires their teen to share ideas and talk to them. Nearly 35% of parents responded that their school should contact them

if their teen does something well or improves. Also, 42.81% of parents said they would like to see the school include their teen in parent-teacher conferences.

Over 40% of parents expressed that the school could do better in helping their teen become more independent and self-confident, provide them ideas on how to help their teen at home with specific subjects, and help them understand teenage problems and development. Over 50% of parents stated they would like to see the school do a better job of providing them information about school programs their teen can engage in and giving them information on how their teen could qualify for scholarships and loans for college.

Over 47% of parents said the school does a good job giving them information about how report card grades are done. Over 50% of parents expressed the school does a good job providing them information on course requirements and including them on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement. Also, 55% of parents stated the school does a good job asking them to volunteer at school. Last, 60.22% of parents stated the school does a good job inviting them to PTO/PTA meetings, the highest rated item of this question.

These responses, shown in Table 5, directly relate to Epstein's (2001) types of involvement. Over 40% of parents stated the school could do a better job with types 1, 2, and 4 in this question. Type 1 is parenting, type 2 is communicating, and type 4 is learning at home (Epstein, 2001). Over 40% of parents expressed that their high school presently does a good job with types 2, 3, and 5 within Epstein's (2001) involvement framework. Type 3 is volunteering, and type 5 is decision-making (Epstein, 2001).

How Has the School Involved Parents in the Past Year?

In Questions 5, 6, and 7, parents express how the school has contacted them through various means in the past year, relating to type 2 (Communication) in Epstein's (2001) types of involvement. In Question 5, parents stated their current experience with how the school has contacted them in the past year in seven different aspects. The results of Question 5 are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Question 5 Results, On What Topics Did the High School Contact Families?

Practice n=443	Never	1 Time	2-3 Times	4 or More Times	Weighted Average
My teen's grades	70.88%	9.47%	11.23%	8.42%	0.57
The courses my teen can choose next year	39.37%	26.13%	24.39%	10.10%	1.05
How I could help with fund raising	24.83%	11.54%	32.52%	31.12%	1.7
How I could volunteer at the school	23.08%	11.89%	30.42%	34.62%	1.77
Asking me to come to a sports event, show, concert, or other event	21.68%	5.94%	25.17%	47.20%	1.98
Asking me for information about my teen	67.48%	16.43%	13.99%	2.10%	0.51
The school's homework policies	67.48%	17.48%	11.54%	3.50%	0.51

Almost 40% of parents rated they have never been contacted about the courses their child can select for the next academic year. When the parent participants were asked if the school has contacted them asking for information on their teen or if they were contacted about the school's homework policy, 67.48% stated this has not happened. Just

over 70% of parents expressed they have never been contacted about their teen's grades this year. This is a large number of participants; however, it is important to note that each of the high schools utilize the state's PowerSchool Portal and parents have continuous access to their child's online gradebook for each class.

Over 30% of parents said the school has contacted them more than once in the past year about how they could help with fundraising and how they could volunteer at the school. Forty-seven percent of parents said the school has contacted them more than once asking them to come to a sporting event, show, concert, or other event.

In Table 7, the data from Question 6 is displayed. Question 6 asked parents how often did the high school student's teacher(s) contact them in these ways in the past year. It is important to note that this question asks parents about communication with their child's teacher, not communication through the school's overall means.

Table 7

Question 6 Results, What Forms Were Used to Contact Families?

Practice n=443	Never	1 Time	2-3 Times	4 or More Times	Weighted Average
E-mail	36.84%	18.95%	26.67%	17.54%	1.25
Phone calls	80.07%	12.94%	3.50%	3.50%	0.3
Open house or curriculum nights	31.12%	30.42%	33.22%	5.24%	1.13
Informal meetings with teacher	82.17%	9.79%	7.34%	0.70%	0.27
Formal parent-teacher conference with one teacher	86.32%	12.28%	1.40%	0.00%	0.15
Formal parent-teacher conference with all of my teen's teachers	94.37%	4.23%	1.41%	0.00%	0.07
Meetings in the community (not at school)	91.61%	3.15%	4.55%	0.70%	0.14
Report card pickups by parent	97.90%	0.70%	0.35%	1.05%	0.05
Visits at the home by teachers or school staff	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0

The only form of communication that over 30% of parents expressed has happened more than once is when teachers reach out about an open house or curriculum night. One hundred percent of parents stated no school staff member has visited them at home, 97.9% of parents stated they never hear about report card pick up information, and 94.37% of parents stated they have never been contacted by the teacher about arranging a parent-teacher conference with all of their child's teachers. Just over 91% of parents said they have never been invited by the teacher for a community meeting. Last, over 80% of

parents said they have not been contacted by their child's teacher by phone or through invitations to an informal or formal parent-teacher conference/meeting.

In Question 7, parents were asked to select the ways that they personally received information from the high school in the past year. Table 8 shows the results from parent participants in Question 7.

Table 8

Question 7 Results, What Forms Were Used to Contact Families?

Form of Communication n=443	Responses
School newspaper (edited and written by students)	23.32%
Newsletters for parents (from administration)	60.07%
Calendar of events, holidays, tests	50.53%
Advance notice of special deadlines (e.g., for fees, trips, tests)	42.05%
Interim reports about your teen's grades	43.82%
Handbook on high school rules and programs	29.68%
Other (please specify)	31.10%

The means of communication that were least selected by parents were receiving a student written or edited school newspaper (23.32%), and access to the handbook on high school rules and programs (29.68%).

The most selected items from the forms of communication listed were newsletters for parents that were crafted by the school's administration (60.07%) and a calendar of events that included holidays and testing dates (50.53%).

Forms of communication that parents responded with under "other" were weekly phone calls, the school's social media accounts, text messages from administration, weekly Connect5 messaging (automated phone calls), PTSO newsletter, PowerSchool, principal's weekly newsletters, weekly emails, PTSA updates on social media, and the sign in the front of the school (marquee).

In Questions 5, 6, and 7, parents express there is room for improvement in how the school can assist with parenting at home, facilitating meetings between themselves and their child's teacher, and clarifying certain expectations that they should be aware of for their child, including student-parent handbook information like a school's homework policy.

Topics for More Information or Workshops

In Question 8, parents selected which topics they would like to receive more information or attend a workshop on, aligning with the Collaborating with the Community type of involvement (Epstein, 2001).. In total, there were 19 topics to choose from including a section for parents to respond under "Other." The results of Question 8 can be found in Table 9.

Table 9

Question 8 Results, What Topics Would You Like More Information About?

Form of Communication n=443	Responses
How teenagers grow and develop	23.70%
Peer pressure in adolescent	35.19%
How to discipline teenagers	27.41%
How to talk about teen health and sexual behavior	34.81%
Preventing drug and alcohol abuse	41.48%
Preventing teen suicide, runaways, and other serious problems	34.07%
Helping teens study for tests	56.30%
Improving report card grades	25.93%
Doing better on homework	31.48%
How to help my teen develop his, her talents	52.22%
Planning for the future – college or work	72.59%
Preventing failure and dropping out	8.15%
How to deal with stress	67.78%
Adult education (such as GED) for parents	1.48%
Job training for parents	2.22%
Learning more about using computers	1.48%
Raising a teen as a single parent	4.81%
Workshops that parents and students attend together on topics they choose	31.11%
Other (please specify)	n, a

Over 50% of participating parents stated they would like to receive more information or attend a workshop on how to help their teen develop their talents and how to help their teens study for tests. Over 67% of participating parents want more information on how to help their child deal with stress. Last, 72.59% of respondents want more information on how to help their child plan for the future, either for college or entering the work force.

Common responses parents said under “other” included depression and anxiety, helping the introverted child, social media issues, ACT/SAT prep, life skills classes, cell phone, technology addiction, stress management, drug awareness, financial wellness, time management, and organizational skills.

When Can Parents Attend Meetings or Events at School?

Questions 9 and 10 probed parents to list their ideal time to be involved in a meeting or event at the school and if they need any transportation or childcare accommodations to attend. Table 10 shows the results of Question 9.

Table 10

Question 9 Results, When is the Best Time to Come to School?

Time of Day n=443	Responses
Early morning	41.96%
Mid-morning	34.97%
Lunch time	37.76%
Afternoon	36.36%
Early evening	67.48%
After dinner	49.65%
Weekends	45.45%
Cannot attend ever	0.70%

The majority of parents, 67.48%, selected early evening as the best time to attend a meeting or event at the school. Nearly 50% of parents also stated that after dinner would be an ideal time to come to the school as well. Parents expressed that mid-morning through the afternoon would not be an ideal time to come to the school.

Question 10 asked parents if they needed transportation or childcare in order to attend a meeting or conference at the high school. Ninety-eight percent of parents selected they had no special needs, 1.06% stated they needed transportation to and from the school, and 1.42% said they would need childcare for young children at school. Only one response was given under “other,” responding “No, but I hope it is offered so others can participate.”

Information About the Community

Question 11 asked parents which type of services, resources, and information they would like to know about in their community. Question 10 responses are shown in Table 11.

Table 11

Question 11 Results, Which Services in Your Community Would You Like to Know More About?

Community Services n=443	Responses
Health care for teens and for families	11.33%
Social services	2.34%
Job training for teens	35.16%
Family counseling	13.28%
English language skills	0.78%
Job training for parents, guardians	2.34%
Adult education	1.17%
Parenting classes	4.30%
Child care	0.78%
After-school tutoring	37.11%
After-school sports activities	17.19%
Other after-school clubs to lessons to develop talents	37.11%
Community service that teens do	56.64%
Part-time jobs for teens	56.64%
Summer jobs for teens	66.80%
Summer programs for teens	54.30%
Information on museums, shows, and events in our community	32.81%
Other (describe the community information you need)	n, a

Over 66% of parents requested more information on services pertaining to summer jobs for their teens in the community. Over 50% of parents stated they would like to receive more information concerning summer programs for teens, part-time jobs for teens, and community service jobs for teens to do in their community.

Under “other,” parents responded that mental health screenings, summer academic opportunities, executive function, and college prep services would also be

useful for their teen.

About Their Teen

Questions 15-21 asked parents for information about their teen. While Questions 12 through 14 gathered data to be used to explain the demographics of participants, the questions that followed asked parents about their child's homework habits and other experiences in school and at home. In Table 12, parents expressed how much homework their teen completes on an average night.

Table 12

Question 15 Results, About How Much Time Does Your Teen Spend on Homework on An Average Night?

Amount n=441	Responses
No homework	1.78%
Less than 1 hour per night	15.66%
1 hour	18.86%
2 hours	37.37%
3 hours	18.15%
4 or more hours per night	8.19%

The majority of parents, over 37%, said that their teen typically does 2 hours of homework each evening; however, there is a fairly equal amount, 15-18%, of parents who said their teen averages less than 1 hour, 1 hour, or 3 hours per night.

In Table 13, participating parents expressed how they perceive their teen is performing in school currently. Over 52% of parents stated their child is an excellent student, receiving mostly As on their report cards and progress reports. Thirty-two percent of parents said their teen is a "good" student, making mostly Bs in class.

Table 13 speaks to the participants in this study who represent the population of parents who have successful high school students, thus limiting the feedback of parents

whose children may not be having the same experience in high school.

Table 13

Question 16 Results, How Is Your Teen Doing in School This Year?

Answer Choices n=441	Responses
Mostly As – excellent student	52.84%
Mostly Bs – good student	32.27%
Mostly Cs – average student	12.77%
Mostly Ds – fair student	1.42%
Mostly Fs – poor student	0.71%

With results aligning with Question 15, in Question 17 parents rated how satisfied they were with their teen’s progress. Over 60% of parents stated they were very or mostly satisfied and that their child is having a great or good school year currently. Just over 12% stated they were mostly or very dissatisfied.

In Question 18, parents were asked how much their teen liked school, and 42% stated “some.” Twenty-eight percent said their teen likes school “a lot,” and only 16% stated their child does not like school much or at all.

Aligning with the first type of involvement in Epstein’s (2001) framework of involvement, parents were asked in Question 19, “how do you and your teen make most decisions?” Nearly 58% of parents said that they decide on rules with their teen together. Over 41% of parents said as the parent they decide most rules for their teen. Only 1.06% of parents said they leave most of the rules up to the teen to decide.

Table 14 shows response data for how much time parents could spend working with their teen on homework on an average night. This question relates to Learning at Home, type 4 of Epstein’s (2001) framework.

Table 14

Question 20 Results, How Much Time Could You Spend Working with Your Teen on Homework on An Average Night?

Amount of Time (In Minutes) n=441	Responses
None	12.77%
5-10	5.67%
15-20	4.26%
25-30	17.38%
35-45	14.54%
50-60	13.83%
Over 1 hour	31.56%

Question 20 had some of the more balanced responses of any question on the survey distributed to parents. Almost 13% of parents said they had no time available to help their teen with homework. Over 17% of parents said they could spend 25-30 minutes assisting with homework on an average night. The largest response, 31.56% of parents, said they could help their teen with homework for more than 1 hour per night.

The last question was all encompassing in regard to parents' current involvement in their child's education. Parents were asked in Question 21 how many hours per month are they involved in their child's education? The word involved in the question was clarified to mean communicating with school staff about their child's education; attending PTO, school leadership, or parent committee meetings; volunteering at school; collaborating with the school; or any activities that are linked to their child's academic studies. Table 15 displays the results to Question 21.

Table 15

Question 21 Results, On Average, How Many Hours Per Month Are You Involved with Your Child's Education?

Amount of Time n=438	Responses
0-3 hours	44.33%
3-6 hours	23.40%
6-10 hours	14.18%
10-15 hours	9.22%
15+ hours	8.87%

When parents were asked how many hours per month they are involved with their child's education, the overwhelming majority of parents stated 0-3 hours. Twenty-three percent of parents stated they spend 3-6 hours per month, and 14% said 6-10 hours per month.

Focus Group Responses

In Table 16, the focus group participants' names are redacted and identified numerically. Focus group participants are referenced using their numeric identification. The researcher scheduled at least five participants for a focus group session at each school site. Of the 22 total focus group participants, six were African-American (27%), two were Hispanic (9%), and 14 were White (64%). There was only one male participant in the focus group. Focus groups were conducted on the high school's campus in a common meeting location (classroom or conference room), and the school's principal determined the location. Parents acknowledged their willingness to participate in a focus group on the last question of the survey used.

Table 16

Focus Group Participants

Participant	High School
Parent 1	1
Parent 2	1
Parent 3	1
Parent 4	1
Parent 5	1
Parent 6	2
Parent 7	2
Parent 8	2
Parent 9	2
Parent 10	2
Parent 11	3
Parent 12	3
Parent 13	3
Parent 14	3
Parent 15	3
Parent 16	3
Parent 17	4
Parent 18	4
Parent 19	4
Parent 20	4
Parent 21	4
Parent 22	4

When the researcher hosted focus group sessions, the responses were analyzed by the ideas and themes they presented. This analysis was done by concluding trends and concepts that came about from the collection of responses. This collection may have cut across the various discussions each individual question presented.

The themes of these data were concluded by the researcher first identifying KWIC. The researcher identified key words presented in the transcript and found other instances where the word was used. For instance, the researcher may have identified “helpful” as a key word and searched responses that contain this verbiage in its immediate context. When like terms could be categorized, the themes of responses could

be developed.

Additionally, the researcher identified themes by cutting and sorting responses. This involved reading the text additional times to find important responses and quotes that aligned to the research questions. The researcher pulled that quote or phrase, in the same context in which it occurred, and placed in a specific area. Those quotes or phrases were labeled by where they were stated in the text and which labeled parent stated it. Each question posed for the parent participants aligned with Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement. These questions and the type of involvement they include are presented below.

Parenting

When asking parents "In what ways can this high school help support you with parenting practices at home," a theme in responses dealt with learning about their child's strengths and weakness in the classroom to better facilitate conversations on schoolwork at home. Parent 2 in one of the focus groups stated,

I would like to hear from the teacher about his grade, but I would also like to hear, I think this is a strength for your child or this is a weakness they are going to struggle with in this area. Here is how they compare to the other students that they think of as peers. I mean that would be a hard thing to communicate, but that is really what we are looking for. I mean a coach is willing to tell you that about your kid's athletic play, they get realistic real fast so we can set realistic expectations. They get realistic real fast so we can set realistic expectations, and it's almost like that's what I could use as a parent.

Several other parents agreed with the above statement; and in other focus groups,

the wording of a child's "strengths and weaknesses" were expressed several times.

Another topic parents stated they would like more support from the school on was social media trends; Parent 17 summarizing, "it gets really hard for parents to stay on top of what the apps are, how are they used, and how are they used appropriately." In multiple instances, parents wanted more support on how they could support their teen with self-advocacy. Parents in each focus group were concerned about when was the appropriate time to step in and communicate with a teacher, versus the students "advocating" for themselves. Parent 14 stated,

We could help them, or do they want us to help them, or in what ways do they want us to be involved and in what ways did they want us to stay away. In the end what is healthy? ... In high school I am way more in the dark than I have ever been.

Overall, the first focus group question asking what parenting practices could the school support often turned to feedback on other types of involvement such as communication and learning at home. This feedback was more relative to other types of involvement compared to the act of "parenting."

Communication

Parents who participated in the focus group repeatedly said they received information on noncurricular activities more often than updates on their child's academic progress. This came about from Question 2 posed to the focus group, "How does this high school best communicate with you about your child's education?"

Parents may be more apt to attend these noninstructional events because they receive more information about these events in comparison to academic updates. Parent

20 stated,

I think that we get a ton of communication about globally what is going on in school. Ninety-eight percent of it I do not care about. I do not care that there is a soccer game. There is very little communication that ever comes from teachers.

Parents were overwhelmingly in support of emails from the teachers themselves.

In the focus group session held at High School 3, parents began the focus group by citing an email that a particular teacher had sent that day. Four of the focus group participants in this session received the email they were referencing and their conversation that centered on this particular email resonated with other parents' feedback at different schools. Parent 5 at High School 3 stated, in reference of the above email from a teacher,

A lot of us in the room appreciated the teacher said, you know, your kids are stressed it is junior year they are not getting enough sleep. They are all falling apart and this is normal. We are all really happy with that e-mail because we know our kids are not alone in this [their current situation]. I was comforted by hearing this is the third quarter and they [students] have not had break in a long time and this is a normal spot. If we [parents] have not been through this before we do not know what to look for it. But also it just makes you feel good, to be periodically updated by the teacher on how are kids are feeling.

In addition to the comment made by Parent 5, Parent 1 added, "but getting that personal email really hit home." This experience at High School 3 sparked additional comments on how emails from teachers helped establish two-way communication.

Multiple parents at other schools stated similar experiences; and one participant noted, "I

think just having those e-mails which are one sided gave me the opportunity that if I had a question I could e-mail back,” and adding, “I think they are using that e-mail as a tool to build a relationship which might make parents more comfortable to reach out and ask a question if they have one.”

Emails from teachers were preferred in each focus group when compared to just relying on online gradebooks to be updated. These two-way communications were also noted to change the perception of that particular teacher. Parent 19 said,

I think it does influence my opinion of the teacher, I think fairly or not fairly, if they care that much to communicate outside the classroom I feel that they are probably doing a good job communicating inside the classroom as well.

This statement led to each participant in that particular session agreeing.

Parents in every focus group expressed that they receive the majority of communication from PowerSchool, the online gradebook system that is used in the district participating in this research. Parents had differing thoughts on how effective this form of communication was in keeping them updated with their child’s academic progress. Some parents spoke on PowerSchool as an effective tool to help them see up-to-the-minute grades in a particular class and that the online gradebook keeps them informed on progress. One parent cited their experience with Powerschool as,

That is how we find out everything that is going on with my kids. And I guess it is good that I'm not hearing from the teachers, but I guess the kids need to be responsible to be the communicators with the teachers.

Another participant added, “The only way they [teachers] communicate would be through PowerSchool.”

A parent who expressed they do not like PowerSchool as the sole means to receive academic progress stated,

Yes, it [PowerSchool] can be horrible. With the assumption that the teachers are updating it regularly, it is awesome. But it also puts the burden on the parents to initiate contact if grades are not updated. With all the positive things that were just said the burden is on the parent to decide whether or not it's age appropriate to initiate contact with the teacher and or the counselor.

The above comment was also met with agreeance from other participants and aligns with parents from other high schools who complained that it is not an effective tool for communication if it is not updated regularly, a common problem that was expressed.

Other commonalities in responses regarding communication included parents preferring more open house and curriculum nights that “were not rushed” and “every teacher attended.” In addition, the idea of recording lectures and events and putting these recordings online or on the school website was suggested multiple times in different focus groups.

Volunteering

In Question 3, focus group participants were asked, “At this high school what ways of volunteering intrigue you?” The most common response came from parents who have previously served in the role as an end-of-year testing proctor. Collectively, this was a negative experience for those who have participated in this volunteer opportunity. Parents cited that this was usually the biggest event that solicited volunteers; however, the mundane nature of proctoring an exam was not something they looked forward to doing or intrigued them in the future. Instead, multiple parents expressed they looked

forward to volunteer opportunities that gave them the ability to see how the larger school organization functioned. Several parents in the focus groups said the front office volunteer opportunities were preferred because they learned more of the innerworkings of the school and had personal interaction. Parent 16 summarized the pattern, saying,

Parents more want to see the overview of the governance, and the strategy in how the school is working. You know, identifying and solving the problems that are out there to make this the best experience possible for students and for faculty and staff. That is the kind of work that interests me, and that is why I am here today.

Other common responses in what events or opportunities would intrigue parents were teacher appreciation events. However, one parent clarified their intention that was met with agreement from the group: This did not include simply dropping off items for a staff luncheon or meal. Parent 6 best summarized the common response concerning staff appreciation, stating,

Anything that can do to make the teachers feel loved. Because I feel like it [the school] is so big and they are probably feeling like we don't even think about them. So anytime there is like, bring this for teachers, I am all over it. Because I feel like you can do that without having to spend your whole afternoon or your morning, doing something and it hopefully makes an impact for the teachers to know much the parents care.

Also, parents would be more willing to volunteer if the volunteer opportunities were better organized and accessible. Parent 1 expressed,

Sometimes it is a little bit easier if it is just here is something that we need help with, a big master list or something like that on the front of their website.

Something that would make it really easy for people to do whether you are working full time or a stay at home mom, or somewhere in-between that parent. It would be really nice if it was easier to find ways of volunteering versus searching.

Last, High School 3's focus group agreed that the parents available for high schools to use are "vast and full of different expertise that should be capitalized on." One parent said,

Parents are used to being involved and their involvement starts to dissipate from elementary to middle to high. There is often the expectation that they will not be involved in high school. And I think that is a loss of opportunity. I think high schools can really still benefit from parents and then when they do need folks, they have a great base to pull from.

Learning at Home

Focus group participants were asked, "What do you think this high school can do to better assist your child with schoolwork at home?" Parent participants identified that facilitating work at home was harder when their teen's schoolwork and directions were on different online platforms. Parents spoke of their experience in trying to help their child organize their work and being met with the hurdle of checking different teacher webpages, online classrooms, and syllabus layouts. Parent 22 said,

What I hear from my children is that some teachers post their assignments on this kind of platform, and some teachers post their assignments on this kind of platform. I do not understand why it cannot all be one place. I would just love to see the school adopt one platform and then they can kind of look at everything

and in one place.

The same parent added,

I think that also speaks to how you are modeling organization for them [students] because that is something that students struggle with, and it would be great to say, the way you organize information helps you perform the duties required out of that, which would be important.

The above statement was a common theme in the focus groups; parents themselves struggled to understand where to find required assignments and directions from multiple online mediums.

Another pattern that emerged from participants was the act of reviewing what their child got wrong on a test or assignment would be beneficial. In solidarity, parents stated they see the grades easily but never any comments or feedback on why the student earned that grade. Several participants stated that they would be more willing or able to review coursework with their child if they knew what they were struggling with. Parent 4 stated,

Sure, they may score a 35, you still don't tell me how to get to that right answer, and to Parent 3's point, I as a parent agree I don't want to do their homework, but it feels like when you take an online test and it is over you never know what the answer was or why. So I do not understand that. That would be helpful just to understand and talk about what the right answer was.

To better facilitate learning outside of school, multiple parents cited that lessons that could be rewatched alongside their child would be beneficial. Parent 2 from High School 1 said, "It is done here and there, but I care if you could either rewatch the lecture

or watch it if you did miss it.”

Last, going back to organization skills, parents expressed that their child could benefit if parents understood how to best help them organize. With the vast amount of curriculum being online, parents also presented this as an obstacle and expressed support of having hardcopy notes and textbooks. Three of the four focus groups mentioned gripes with the digital age and how to reference information. Parent 11 said,

I was actually thinking that I long for like the days of textbooks where kids were home with books and you could say the answer is in there, in Chapter 8. I realized that is kind of outdated. And I am not even going to say I think we should go back to that because it is not going to happen, but we are really pushing this information age.

Decision-Making

When parents were asked, “In what instances would you like to be involved in school-wide decision-making,” the initial response from each focus group was hesitant and aligned with Parent 2, who stated,

I'm going to go out on a limb and I don't think the school should involve parents and school wide decision-making because I think everybody has a different opinion. I think too many cooks in the kitchen and a lot of people who are not experts, we do not know a lot about education.

This same participant later added,

They do not need to have a town hall meeting for all of us to repeat our opinions over and over, but surveys are always good. Nothing is going to be perfect because it is such a huge school and district. But you know I always like it when

there is a survey asking our opinion because I need to at least feel like I'm able to give my input.

Another respondent said,

Seeing how administration makes decisions, it builds competence in the school. I think that most decisions belong to administration and faculty and not to parents. I appreciate the act of being at the table to see how the decisions are made with the experts [administration].

Parents in each focus group preferred understanding how decisions were made and the processes being transparent. This idea was well supported once originally stated, and the researcher identified that parents were more satisfied and content when they knew the door was open to providing input or they understood why a particular decision was made to begin with. Parents were more likely to want to be engaged in a decision if it was going to directly affect their child. Two of the four focus groups spoke on the experience of assisting with student parking dilemmas and processes. Both focus groups had positive experiences with these decisions and the changes that were established.

Other patterns identified by the researcher relating to decision-making were parents preferring to be involved with establishing student and staff expectations, like communication guidelines and turnaround time for staff to reply to emails.

Collaborating with the Community

When parents participating in the focus group were asked, “What type of programs would you like to receive more information about in your community,” many responded with college admissions guidance and scholarship opportunities. In three of the four focus groups, parents acknowledged that school counselors are overwhelmed and

do not have the “capacity,” or “bandwidth” to effectively guide each student. College prep was among the most spoke about topics in the focus groups, and multiple parents expressed there could never be enough opportunities to plan for college or career pathways.

Other topics multiple groups and parents spoke on was financial wellness/literacy resources being offered and that there is a benefit to living in this urban community, with it holding a multitude of outside organizations and access to resources on “just about anything.” A few parents spoke to how the school does a good job at bringing in speakers and organizations but that it was in a “check the box” fashion and that it would best serve the school community if these were regularly occurring and scheduled in a rotation.

Parents were in favor of schools relaying more information on volunteer opportunities in the county. Parents said some volunteer opportunities that were promoted by the school, like assisting with a local golf tournament, were not meaningful and that more access to “job-building” volunteer opportunities would be appreciated.

Other responses also referred to the need for more home economic practices; summer job information; depression and anxiety coping skills; outside help with study habits and note-taking; and last, the need for all pertinent community resources to be located in one place. This aligns with volunteer opportunities being located in one accessible area. Parent 1 best summarized this sentiment, “it would just give you some resources so if something is going on who do I talk to or call? That would be something that, from my family's perspective, would be really helpful.”

Help Increase Involvement and Any Other Ideas

Questions 7 and 8 were all encompassing, asking parents, “What can this high school do to help you become more involved in your child’s education” and “Are there any other ideas or suggestions you would like to add?” Parents acknowledged that they hold the responsibility of being open and proactive in how they engage with their child’s studies and school. Parent 18 in one focus group commented, “I would become more involved if I knew what I could become more involved with. And yes, I probably could dig deeper and ask more questions.”

Parents in High School 3 all spoke on the need for an effective typing curriculum to be implemented in the schools. Several stated their child “pecks,” and this should be an emphasis at school and at home.

Parents were overall pleased with their current levels of involvement and the school’s current practices of soliciting engagement. Many remarks made after Questions 7 and 8 were asked aligned with one of the first six questions, and these data were transferred to those appropriate sections of the transcript to better identify patterns in responses.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Epstein et al.'s (2002) research was the guiding framework for this research. School districts and organizations have increasingly focused their efforts to connect the communities they serve to their instruction. Epstein (2001) gave each tenet of the framework a definition and provided examples for each type of involvement:

Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.

Communicating: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.

Volunteering: Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.

Learning at Home: Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.

Decision-Making: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community: Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community (p. 165).

This study analyzed how parents feel about the implementation of Epstein's (2001) types of involvement. Using Epstein's (2001) types of involvement as a basis, this study examined the question, "how do parents experience involvement with their child's high school?" This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

1. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are least experienced?
2. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what type(s) of involvement do parents of high school children feel are most experienced?
3. Using Epstein's six types of involvement, what should schools intentionally address to facilitate increased levels of parental involvement?

This chapter includes discussion on the major findings as related to the above research questions, along with recommendations to facilitate increased levels of parent involvement in urban high school communities. Some of the discussions and recommendations written will be linked to current research supporting that particular recommendation or topic.

Overall, the findings presented in Chapter 4 support that survey and focus group participants in the setting are generally pleased with their current high school and their accessibility. Participants identified growth opportunities in both the survey responses

and focus group sessions. These opportunities for growth include more personal, two-way communication from staff; better organization of resources and volunteer opportunities; and the ability to assist with academic work at home. The focus group data largely supported the quantitative data that came from the surveys distributed and easily provided the researcher recommendations to facilitate increased levels of involvement in the setting.

Discussion of Findings

For each of Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement, the researcher has identified what parents are least and most experiencing in relation to that specific type of involvement. Recommendations to increase that particular type of involvement will also be made, citing research that was discussed in Chapter 2 or linking to other research-based practices that could be established.

Parenting

Overall, parent participants rated themselves favorably with their parenting practices at home and keeping communication lines open with their teenagers. Nearly 58% of parents said they decide the rules with their teen together. Over 41% of parents said they decide most rules for their teen, while only 1.06% of parents said they leave most of the rules up to the teen to decide. The majority of parent participants have conversations at home and are available for their teen.

Quantitative and qualitative data did exhibit room for growth with this specific type of involvement. Survey data and focus group session feedback both led to the finding that parents would like their child's teacher to communicate more about their child's specific strengths and weaknesses. This would allow parents to better facilitate

conversations at home about their child's academic and social needs, along with praising them and capitalizing on their strengths. Conversely, over 54% of parents disagreed that their high school wants to learn what the parents know about their teen. The majority of parents expressed that input on their specific child's ability or potential may need to be solicited more from the teachers. This is an interesting finding in that parents expressed that they want to know their child's strengths in school and still feel they have more information on their teen that the school can benefit from.

Waters (2017) wrote on "strengths-based parenting" in her work grounded in positive psychology. Waters wrote that the act of parenting and raising a well-rounded teen can best be done by capitalizing on a child's strengths compared to his or her deficits. Waters defended that deficit-based parenting, that of raising a child to be happy and productive based on improving faults or flaws, is not as effective as strength-based parenting. Strengths-based parenting capitalizes on a child's leading qualities or strengths. In order for this type of parenting to take place, the parents must be knowledgeable about all of their child's abilities, including academically and socially while at school. With this information, parents can communicate and raise a child on their strengths that may not be as noticeable outside of the school or the educational environment.

Data showed parents would like to receive more support on the ability to promote self-advocacy in their teen. Forty percent of parents expressed that the school could do better in helping their teen become more independent and self-confident, along with helping them understand teenage problems and development. This also coincides with focus group feedback where "self-advocacy" was stated several times in different focus

group sessions when asked what parents would like more support with regarding parenting.

Doren and Kang (2016) researched autonomy, self-realization, and self-advocacy. Doren and Kang contended that teachers, parents, and other adults who receive professional development activities on techniques, strategies, and methods of providing “autonomy support” are more likely to “encourage students/children to use information to learn or solve problems in a variety of ways” (p. 140). This research asserted that adults who provide more autonomy support are more likely to facilitate positive academic, career, and life outcomes. It could be worthwhile for schools to integrate programs and embedded character education centered on self-advocacy, determination, and autonomy. This would be met with praise from parents in this particular setting.

Last, another item parents stated they would like more information on was social media use. Several parents expressed, both in the open-ended section of the survey and in focus groups, that social media best practices would be welcomed from the school. This is an ongoing concern for parents around the country as the digital age is continually shaping our youngest generation. The school or school’s student services department should always communicate consistent and regular information regarding social media dangers and uses.

Communication

Parents had several favorable remarks in the area of communication, Epstein’s (2001) second type of involvement. The most selected items from the forms of communication listed in the survey were newsletters for parents that were crafted by the school’s administration (60.07%) and a calendar of events that included holidays and

testing dates (50.53%). Parents are well informed of any sporting event, play, concert, or other performance. Survey and focus group data showed communication regarding these events were received the most. Just over 47% of parents stated they attend these events “many times.”

Other communications parents rated they received most were information on course requirements and information concerning an open house or curriculum night. Over 50% of parents expressed the school does a good job in providing them information on course requirements. The only form of communication that over 30% of parents expressed has happened more than once is when teachers reach out about an open house or curriculum night. These are traditional events and information that schools typically relay to parents. It is the researcher’s suggestion to expand upon these typical forms of communication and begin a more comprehensive approach to what information the school is distributing to parents.

Survey data and focus group sessions led to the suggestion of a few growth opportunities for high schools to consider when communicating with parents. Parents in all high school studied, in both survey and focus group responses, resoundingly support the integration of more two-way personal communication between the teacher and home. Forty-three percent of parents said they would like to see the school include their teen in parent-teacher conferences. Over 94% of parents state they have never been contacted by the teacher about arranging a parent-teacher conference, and 91% have never been invited by the teacher for a community meeting. Last, over 80% of parents said they have not been contacted by their child’s teacher by phone or through invitations to an informal or formal parent-teacher conference/meeting. Direct email communication was

preferred by parents in each focus group and even sparked positive responses and perceptions of the teacher when emails were sent to the families.

In Chapter 2, the researcher cited Wherry (2009), and his study became applicable to the findings of this research. Wherry stressed that parents must be engaged and revered as partners in education, not merely clients. When problems with behavior or academics arise, Wherry stated that communicating with the student's family solely in that moment is too late. Communication between the two entities should be established and maintained regularly so that when conflicts or delays in mastering content occur, relationships are previously established and the lines of communication have already been created.

A pattern of responses was identified when parents referred to the usage and benefits of PowerSchool, the online gradebook software utilized in the setting. Parents acknowledged the benefits of the online gradebook and praised the act of making numeric grades transparent to families at home. It lacked, however, the communication of qualitative feedback and teacher accountability for keeping the grades up to date. Online gradebooks and parent portals are not a cure-all and should be coupled with the direct communication of the classroom teacher. Adopting PowerSchool alone will not help raise student achievement and communicative means at home. Mathern (2009) found that there was little to no evidence that a relationship existed between access to an electronic gradebook and a student's GPA. Second, there was also no significant evidence that electronic gradebooks helped facilitate better student attendance. This is important to remember so school leaders do not rest on communication methods that are available through technological advances.

When considering communication practices between the school and parent, it is important to keep in mind the perceptions and self-efficacy of the student's parent. Reynolds et al. (2015) researched how the role of what they labeled "construction and self-efficacy" and "invitations" influence a family's likelihood to become involved in the education of their child. Their findings from focus groups and surveys put an added emphasis on how important invitations are for outside involvement and the consideration of culture when soliciting family engagement. Construction and self-efficacy are a parent's perception of just how they should be involved compared to the setting's social norms. Parents draw on the cultural expectations of their role in education and align their level of involvement and decision-making to this norm. Effective communication of expectations and procedures help define these roles to be more substantial.

Schools should consider adopting more consistent practices of communicating between the teacher and the parent. Epstein (2001) labeled these "specific" forms of communications. Parents in this setting were more apt to receive invitations and communications about noninstructional events at school, presenting a need for school-based leadership teams to organize and deliver a more holistic view of all that is happening at the school, both globally and tailored to the individual student. Comer's (1995) study on the secondary slump phenomenon found that a shift to invitations and communications about noninstructional events in the high school setting contributes to the parent's disengagement in their child's academic studies. Without receiving information concerning content and instruction, parents may be weary to engage in conversations with their child concerning coursework outside of school (Comer, 1995).

Volunteering

Quantitative and qualitative data showed parents were generally willing to participate at the school but were unsure of all the opportunities the school offered. The event garnering the most attention was end-of-year testing and the need for parents to serve as classroom proctors during the exam. While exam proctoring is undoubtedly essential in schools, the researcher suggests leadership teams at each school present volunteer opportunities as a comprehensive list of availabilities and encourage parents to select duties that would align to their wants and needs as a volunteer.

While survey results indicated over 50% of parents expressed the school does a good job at asking them to volunteer at school, the focus group data emphasized it was the type of volunteer activities that needed to be addressed. Parents expressed their current realities with volunteering at the school, and the majority of focus group participants were volunteers at the school periodically. The overarching suggestion made was to diversify volunteer opportunities and create a master list of all the offerings to volunteer at the high school. Parents stated this would help them identify what they would like to do if they were going to spend their time volunteering.

The welcome desk and front office clerical work were voiced to be most intriguing by participants. Several parents stated it was the ability to see the organizational structure of the school that was appealing, along with knowing the interworking of how the school ran day-to-day operations. A key discussion item in Chapter 2 that Caldarella et al. (2010) brought to attention is the programs that are trying to recruit volunteers are more likely to be successful if they can link the intrinsic motivations of the volunteers to their role in the school. Although it seems like this act of

identifying what volunteers want to do takes away the true nature of why one would volunteer, it is important for these schools to be intentional about recruitment or they may see volunteer numbers remain stagnant. Suggestions were presented that when recruiting or obtaining volunteers, it may behoove the leaders within that program to gather the motivations of the volunteers upfront before limiting access to only certain duties.

Additional research written about in Chapter 2 also found that schools that established broader social networks for parents to communicate and volunteer were likely to show higher success in math and reading (Park et al., 2017). In Park et al.'s (2017) study, public-good parent involvement initiatives like volunteering not only positively affected the student achievement of the volunteer's individual child but of the school body as a whole. This presents a powerful conclusion that public-good involvement in a school, like volunteering, positively effects the children whose parents are not engaged themselves.

Another commonality in focus group responses that was established by the researcher was the need for all volunteer opportunities to be presented in one central, preferably online location. These small tweaks to volunteer systems currently in place would serve principals and districts best when parent motivational factors are taken into account.

Learning at Home

Epstein's (2001) fourth type of involvement centers around learning at home, including how parents facilitate learning outside of school hours. The data in the research suggested parents are willing and able to engage with grade-level content at home or outside of the instructional day, while providing areas of growth that should be

considered.

Only 13% of parents said they had no time available to help their teen with homework. Just over 17% of parents said they could spend 25-30 minutes assisting with homework on an average night. The largest response, 31.56% of parents, said they could help their teen with homework for more than 1 hour per night. When parents were asked how many hours per month they are involved with their child's education, the overwhelming majority of parents stated 0-3 hours. Twenty-three percent of parents stated they spend 3-6 hours per month. This finding leads the researcher to believe the majority of parents have the time available to assist their child with schoolwork and the learning process at home; however, the time actually spent with their child does not match their availability. There seems to be some lost opportunity in how teachers and school-based administration can utilize parents in practicing content skills.

When asked about the frequency of school-related conversations with their child outside of school, 90% of parents stated they talk to their teen about school daily. Parents stated they held conversations with their child about school and homework assignments most often. It is evident with most participants in this study that the family structure and support is available and could be built upon with a systematic and proactive approach to learning at home. Patall, Cooper, and Robinson (2008) also wrote on the need for more systems and processes to be available for parents to engage with coursework at home. In a meta-analysis on the effects of parents engaging with homework outside of school, this research concluded that having available trainings for parents on how to be involved in their child's homework resulted in schoolwork being completed more often, fewer problems with the work, and a possible increase in academic performance (Patall et al.,

2008).

A practice that parents were least likely to do on a consistent basis was to help with homework. Parents are apt to discuss and probe students about their curricula; however, they still do not sit down to provide support and assistance with these assignments. Parents who participated in both the survey and focus groups led the researcher to conclude that families are willing to be more engaged with academic work outside of school but sometimes lack the direction on *how* to be involved. Parent engagement with learning at home will remain stagnate if they are not taught or exposed to strategies that can be used outside of school. Districts and secondary schools would be wise to consider the resource they have in parents at home and look for ways to incorporate more training or tips for those stakeholders to utilize.

A pattern that was discovered in the quantitative and qualitative data was the need for more feedback on specific assignments from teachers. Parents again cited that the reliance of PowerSchool and the numeric grades it showed did little for parents to actually discuss the assignment with their child, other than the “Oh, I see you got a 70 on the science quiz.” Parents voiced that they would like to see more feedback on what or why the student performed well or poorly on an assignment. They expressed that they would be more engaged with the curriculum if they knew what parts or skills their child was struggling with.

The need for students and their guardians at home to have access to teacher feedback on a particular assignment or exam is not only a preference found in this research, but also that of past studies conducted on adolescent/teenage motivation. Pulfrey, Buchs, and Butera (2011) came to the conclusion that students were not as

motivated to perform well on a difficult assignment when they anticipated a numeric grade. Conversely, when students were anticipating a teacher comment on the assignment, they were more likely to have more motivation to tackle a difficult task.

Webber and Wilson (2012) wrote on the importance on having steady conversations with parents about their child's academic progress, not just one-way communication. This coincided with the communication type of involvement but it more aligned with learning at home through productive conversations about education that can be learned outside of class. Webber and Wilson wrote about the benefits of holding conversations and being communicative two-way rather than parents receiving feedback through one-way, numeric means like an online gradebook. Webber and Wilson's research contended that online gradebooks as a sole means of communication

provide no forum for parents or teachers to describe what they know about a child's struggles, interests, or achievements. They do not facilitate the exchange of stories that parents or teachers might use to build careful generalizations about kids as learners, nor do they serve as a check against generalizations made with haste or even prejudice. Simply, they do not allow parents to participate at all, except as consumers of a report. (p. 34)

This research showed parents valued student work and teacher feedback/ observations over traditional grades and test scores (Webber & Wilson, 2012). It is a recommendation that this research be coupled with the present study for leadership teams to consider when evaluating or creating the structures of how parents can facilitate learning at home.

Last, another item that should be mentioned based upon parent responses in

survey and focus group data is the use of hard copy textbooks. Textbooks and hard copy mediums of curriculum were preferred over online mediums. Parents strongly felt that going back to textbooks in classes would allow students to reference material easier. Although it combats how districts and schools are aligning their curriculum to the digital age of one-to-one technology, it is worth future consideration as parents may be growing frustrated with the technology through which that instruction is facilitated.

Decision-Making

When analyzing participant responses concerning decision-making in the school or access to decision-making structures, parents were pleased overall with their current experience. Over 50% of parents expressed the school does a good job including them on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement. Sixty percent of parents stated the school does a good job in inviting them to PTO/PTA meetings, the highest rated item on Question 4.

In one of the more interesting findings of this research, decision-making was not a priority compared to improving structures of communication and learning at home for parents. Each focus group began their conversation around decision-making with a pause and an almost rehearsed reply of being unsure that they *should* be at the decision-making table. Through the focus group conversations, it was made clear that decisions that impacted curriculum and instruction were to be made by the school administration as the established “experts.” When probed as to when they would like to be involved in school-wide decisions, it was inferred that more managerial, or as one parent described as “material,” items that affected their child specifically are preferred. For example, two of the four focus groups brought up experiences with reorganizing how student parking was

assigned. Items such as student parking, expectation for staff with email turnaround time, and teacher appreciation activities were all voiced as items they as parents would like their input solicited.

Though parents were hesitant to express when they would like to be involved as decision makers, a pattern of responses that was discovered was that when school-wide decisions were made, the structure of having outside stakeholders present was appreciated. One parent framed up the group thought well when she described that knowing about how school-wide decisions are made or being present to witness how they are made builds parent perception of competence in the school's administration. The researcher believes this to be one of the more powerful findings in this study, as it shows how school-based practices alone and how they are facilitated and promoted within their community can increase the level of involvement and satisfaction for their students' parents.

Last, the mere fact that parents were unsure of how they are expected to be decision makers in school leadership groups suggests that administrative teams within the setting and alike districts would benefit from further training and calibration of soliciting community partners in decision-making. In Chapter 2, these findings further reinforce recommendations made by Smith (2016). Smith also concluded that school-based leaders do not receive enough training to increase collaboration with parents and community members on school leadership teams. Smith also cited that school leadership teams that included parents as decision makers regularly for improvement policies, in turn, had higher graduation rates compared to those who did not.

Collaborating with the Community

The sixth and last type of involvement in Epstein's (2001) framework of involvement centers on the school collaborating with the community. When parents' current experiences were analyzed, there was an immense amount of feedback aligned to college and career preparation, community jobs for teens, and financial literacy.

Parents did not praise the school's current practices of collaborating with the community compared to the other types of involvement. Over 50% of parents stated they would like to see the school do a better job of providing them information about school programs in which their teen can engage. Over 50% of participating parents also stated they would like to receive more information or attend a workshop on how to help their teen develop their talents and how to help their teens study for tests, this linking to the parenting type of involvement discussed prior.

Sixty-six percent of parents requested more information on services pertaining to summer jobs for their teens in the community. Fifty percent of parents stated they would like to receive more information concerning summer programs for teens, part-time jobs for teens, and community service jobs for teens to do in their community. The need for meaningful community service opportunity and summer jobs was voiced in each focus group session as well. Parents brought up this need for two primary reasons, to teach their child about finances and gaining employment to teach about work ethic and to make their child more marketable for college entrance applications.

Parents expressed that it would be convenient for community jobs to post their opportunities through a common medium at the neighborhood school, filled with prospective employees for each business. In addition, parents were concerned that

typical volunteer hours that students were completing were meaningless, like working for a local golf tournament. Besen (2006) researched the importance of teens partaking in summer employment. The findings from Besen's study showed that from the perspective of the teen, summer jobs that actually promote teenage creativity and social maturation are experienced as fun, social, and empowering. This was true in jobs that were thought of as exploitive or laborious jobs as well. Besen's research, set in a suburban environment, gave an additional insight into how beneficial it may be for teenagers to have access to a wide variety of job opportunities in their community.

Last, 72.59% of respondents want more information on how to help their child plan for the future, for either college or entering the work force. This was one of the more common responses for parents when asked what the school could do better with collaborating with community partners and communicating to parents. Parent 12 said, "we can never receive enough information on college prep, and it would be great for kids to receive information on certain trade skill jobs too." This resonated throughout the focus group participants as high school parents are continuing to grapple with the stresses of prepping their child for college entrance requirements and several even mentioned using the private paid services that are available to assist their family. It is the researcher's recommendation that school-based administration make every possible resource available to parents and students through one common medium.

Having these resources is not only beneficial for the parent to access, but a study by Rowan-Kenyon, Perna, and Swan (2011) found the career or occupation a student is interested in and the competence of the education requirements are connected to the resources found in school. This results in the unintended shaping of students' career

aspirations with their reliance on the career resources and information found at the school. If efforts are made for school administration and the student services department to present a wide range of career opportunities and their prerequisite requirements, students could explore and consider trades and career paths that truly interest them.

Parents need to receive college and career prep information more than once a year, at a college fair for example, and the means to visit the resources regularly so every opportunity is available to them. In a few cases, parent participants cited how counselors have too much on their workload to realistically provide each student with a tailored college and career plan. This was not an indictment of the counselors' work ethic or role, and all confirmed these large high schools are just too big and complex for their child to get that kind of attention. This should further emphasize the need to make all college and career preparation programs/resources readily available for families.

Implications for Practice

Because of this study's setting, these data and the study's findings will be applicable to educators in other large urban school districts. The four high schools studied presented the researcher with a large population to draw current high school parental involvement experience. The survey and focus group data show current parental experiences in how they feel engaged and involved with their student's high school. This study creates a new opportunity for school-based leadership teams, district officials, and higher education faculty to draw upon when considering how to better involve the vast number of outside stakeholders who surround public high schools. The resources, expertise, and experience these stakeholders have would be best served if they were heavily involved in their student's high school.

This study identified trends in responses and justified what type of involvement needed more emphasis from urban high schools. When involvement needs can be identified for school leaders and community members, a plan of action can be developed to close the gap between school-based professional learning communities and Epstein's (2001) idea of a holistic school learning community. This study allows school leadership teams to create a plan of action to further equalize the size of the spheres of influence in the School-Family-Community-Partnership Model (Epstein, 2001). This will lead to the fostering of more collaboration, thus leading to increased student achievement through additional support outside of the school day and facilities.

The recommendations derived from this study include

- Improving a parent's capacity to help keep their child be organized with schoolwork. With the vast amount of curriculum begin online, parents also present the obstacle of everything being online and expressed the support of hard copy notes and textbooks
- Considering the utilization of more hard copy materials for children to reference
- Creating structures in teacher communication to relay a student's academic/ social strengths and weaknesses to parents. In turn, teachers receiving more information from the parent about their teen. These identified strengths can assist parents in strength-based parenting practices at home, which may lead to better academic and life outcomes (Waters, 2017)
- Schools integrating programs and embedded character education centered on self-advocacy, determination, and autonomy

- Schools and districts beginning a more comprehensive approach to what information the school is distributing to parents, with an added emphasis on communications that deal with academics and instruction
- Schools adopting more consistent practices of communication between the teacher and the parent. Parents in this setting were more apt to receive invitations and communications about noninstructional events at school, presenting a need for school-based leadership teams to organize and deliver a more holistic view of all that is happening at the school, both globally and tailored to the individual student
- Presenting volunteer opportunities as a comprehensive list of availabilities and encourage parents to select duties that would align to their wants and needs as a volunteer
- When recruiting or obtaining volunteers, gather the motivations of the volunteers upfront before limiting access to only certain duties
- Presenting all volunteer opportunities in one central, preferably online location
- Leadership teams considering the resource they have in parents and establishing ways to incorporate more training or tips for those stakeholders to utilize in assisting with schoolwork at home
- Creating systems or structures for parents and students to access teacher feedback on a particular assignment or exam. This feedback should extend beyond the numeric grade assigned by the evaluator
- Creating and maintaining decision-making structures that allow parents access

to participate in or simply understand how school-wide decisions are made

- Further training and calibration for school leadership teams on soliciting community partners in decision-making
- Delivering more information concerning summer programs for teens, part-time jobs for teens, and community service jobs for teens to do in a school's community
- Implementing consistent opportunities for parents to receive information on college prep or trade-based careers
- School leadership teams making every possible resource available to parents and students through one common medium.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is recommended that further research be conducted in the secondary setting, primarily in the high school grade span, where parents traditionally lose engagement and involvement motivation. Future studies that would target learning at home, type four in Epstein's (2001) framework, are encouraged because of the amount of research that has been conducted on its effect on student achievement. It is the researcher's recommendation that communication and learning at home practices be researched in future studies. With these two forms of involvement improved, it would keep high schools centered on curriculum and academic progress.

Additionally, while this study focuses on urban high school communities, it would be beneficial to conduct research in more rural areas to expand the scope of how parents are currently experiencing parental involvement in the secondary setting. The setting for this study was in a large metropolitan area in the United States, but findings

from population centers that differ from this setting would expand implications for practice. This setting is certainly applicable to other urban areas in the country, and future studies that garner parent experiences should also include those from suburban and rural areas.

To provide a more comprehensive view of current levels of parental involvement, future research that targets school-based staff is suggested. By studying the current parental involvement experiences of school administration and faculty, educators can piece together and identify gaps in collaboration. Additional research that studies internal stakeholders would be a valuable addition to current literature on parent involvement.

Additional research is also suggested in identifying parental involvement's effect on student achievement. This research cited numerous studies that linked increased levels of parental involvement to increases in student achievement; however, there is limited research on the effect on student achievement at the secondary level. Additional research on ninth- through 12th-grade families could further emphasize and validate the need for school leadership teams to evaluate their current methods of engaging their parents.

Last, it is recommended that future studies be confined to participants where the data gathered are a direct representation of the population being studied. The research participants in this study were mostly White females. Future research that solicits parent feedback on parental involvement should be more controlled and study subgroups who were largely underrepresented in this research.

Limitations and Delimitations

A limitation to this study is the researcher is an employee of the district but not of the specific schools being studied. This research gathered data from parents of high school students and not the students themselves or the teachers. All parents and guardians in the four high schools had the opportunity to complete this survey; however, the data only reflect those who chose to give feedback.

Additionally, this study presented the opportunity to complete the survey; but respondents may consist of those who are already more involved in the schools than others, thus gathering data from parents who were more apt to be involved previously. This survey was also deployed over email and online mediums, leaving some parents without access; however, paper copies of this survey were available to parents without internet access.

With a phenomenological study, some policy makers and readers may give less credibility to the study that is based on human experience and not concrete data. In addition, with a phenomenological study, participants had to express their thoughts and feelings. This may be difficult when considering language barriers, age, and other factors.

In this study, the majority of participants were White and had children who were already high achieving in the high school, a limitation that was discovered when analyzing the data. The populations that were least represented in this research were African-Americans, Asian-Americans, and Hispanics. Also, in the future, it would be wise to research parents of students doing poorly in school and those with lower levels of educational attainment. Future studies on these populations in an urban setting would

couple these findings to provide a more comprehensive view of all parental experiences. The researcher felt the diversity boasted in this setting would yield a wide variety of participants, with each of them expressing their unique experiences in regard to parent involvement. Instead, future researchers may be better served targeting a population and setting where the data collected would ensure the participants are aligned to the population of the study.

An identified delimitation to this study is that it was confined to public high schools in the setting. The study was also confined to one particular school district.

Conclusion

Research shows that when schools implement systems to increase parent involvement, outcomes show a variety of positive results. Increased student achievement can be linked to parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2002). A student's classroom behavior can improve with increased parental involvement (Fan & Chen, 2001; NMSA, 2003). Students whose parents are more involved are more likely to be present at school. Last, parents putting forth effort to be involved in their child's education improves the odds that they understand exactly how and when to assist their child with their schoolwork (Epstein et al., 2002).

The findings and discussions presented in this study provide current experiences of parents who may represent a large number of outside stakeholders in urban areas across the United States. Epstein's (2001) six types of involvement provide educators a framework to truly maximize the school community and limit the obstacles for a student to reach their academic potential. Even with the above limitations and delimitations regarding research participation expressed, the data from the 443 parents still add value to

the overall research on parental involvement and could be analyzed through the lens of how our *most* involved parents in the secondary setting are currently experiencing their engagement. It is the researcher's goal for this study to be impactful as we shape our educational institutions into meaningful networks of engaged stakeholders, all focused on the common goal of promoting academic achievement for every child.

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Appendix A

Research Permission

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

Johns Hopkins University • 2701 North Charles Street, Suite 300 • Baltimore MD 21218
TEL: 410-516-2318 • FAX: 410-516-8880 • nnp@jhu.edu

August 13, 2018

To: Jared Thompson

From: Joyce L. Epstein & Steven B. Sheldon

Re: Permission to use:

- 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, or reprint the survey(s) noted above in your dissertation study.

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

Best of luck with your project.

Appendix B
Survey Instrument

HIGH SCHOOL PARENT SURVEY

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Our high school is working to learn more about how schools and families work together to help each other and to assist all students through the high school years. We would like your ideas about this. As you complete the survey, think about your experiences with the school and your high school student in the past year. Everyone is important in our partnership – students, families and schools. We are counting on you to give ideas so that future plans and projects will be useful to all families. Please complete the survey as soon as possible.

Your responses are completely confidential. They will be grouped together with those of many other families. No individual will ever be identified. Of course, you may skip any question, but we hope that you will answer them all. Thank you very much for your help!

Sincerely,
Jared C. Thompson

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me by email or phone:
jared1.thompson@cms.k12.nc.us or
704-657-6945

***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 high school about your teen. This survey is not limited to one response per household if multiple parents, guardians are in contact with the high school.

Question 1

We would like to know how you feel about this high school right now. Please select **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.				
I feel welcome at this school.				
My teen is learning as much as he/she can this year.				
This school works hard to get parents involved.				
Parents do not need to be involved much in their high school child's education.				
I only hear from the high school when there are problems.				
I often talk with other parents about our teenagers and the high school.				
My teen talks about school at home				
This school and I have different goals for my teen.				
This school gave me good information about its programs when my child was in ninth grade.				
I want to be more involved than I am now in my teen's education.				
This school wants to learn what I know about my teen.				
This school is a good place for students and for parents.				
I almost always know where my teen is, day or night.				
Most days I do not have enough time to talk with my high school student				
This is a safe community for my children				
The community has many good activities for teens.				

The community supports this high school.				
--	--	--	--	--

Question 2

Parents get involved in different ways with their high school students **at home**. About how often have you done the following with your high school student?

Statement	Never	1-2 times	Monthly	Weekly	Every Day
Talk to my high school student about school.					
Listen to my teen read something that he/she wrote.					
Talk about a homework assignment.					
Help my teen with homework.					
Discuss grades on tests and schoolwork.					
Check that my teen goes to school					
Talk about a TV show with my teen.					
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 a community event with my teen.					

Question 3

High schools have different ways to involve families. Select **one choice** on each line to tell how you think your high school does the following:

This year how often did you...	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times
Go to a high school PTA/PTO meeting				
Help with fund raising for the high school				
Attend open house or curriculum night				
Attend a parent-teacher conference				
Work as a volunteer at the high school				
Attend a committee meeting at this 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 performance				

Question 4

High schools have different ways to involve families. Select **one choice** on each line to tell how you think your high school does the following:

Statement	Not Imp To Me	School Should Start	School Could Do Better	School Does Very Well
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 to 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 conference each year.				
Contact me if my teen is having problems.				
Contact me if my teen does something well or improves.				
Give information on courses required for graduation from high school.				
Provide information on how to help my teen plan for college or work.				
Ask me to volunteer at the school.				
Provide ideas on how I could keep track of my teen's homework..				
Provide ideas on how to help my teen at home on skills in specific subjects.				
Give information on what my teen is required to learn to pass each subject.				
Assign homework that requires my teen to share ideas and talk with me.				
Invite me to PTO/PTA 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

Since the school year began in August, how often has the **school** contacted **you** about the following? Select **one choice** on each line.

This year the high school contacted me about...	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 help with fund raising				
How I could volunteer at the school				
Asking me to come to a sports event, show, concert, or other event				
Asking me for information about my teen				
The school's homework policies				

Question 6

How often did your high school student's teacher contact **you** in these ways in the past year?

Ways	Never	1 time	2-3 times	4 or more times
E-mail				
Phone calls				
Open house or curriculum nights				
Informal meetings with teacher				
Formal parent-teacher conference with <u>one</u> teacher				
Formal parent-teacher conference with <u>all</u> of my teen's teachers				
Meetings in the community (not at school)				
Report card pick-ups by parent				
Visits at the home by teachers or school staff				

Question 7

Schools give information in different ways. **Select** the ways that **you**, personally, received information from the high school in the past year.

- School newspaper (edited and written by students)
- Newsletters for parents (from administration)
- 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

Question 8

Now that your child is a teenager, what topics would you like more information about? **Select** all that you are interest in.

- How teenagers grow and develop
- Peer pressure in adolescent
- How to discipline teenagers
- How to talk about teen health and sexual behavior
- Preventing drug and alcohol abuse
- Preventing teen suicide, runaways, and other serious problems
- Helping teens study for tests
- Improving report card grades
- Doing better on homework
- How to help my teen develop his, her talents
- Planning for the future – college or work
- Preventing failure and dropping out
- How to deal with stress
- Adult education (such as GED) for parents
- Job training for parents
- Learning more about sing computers
- Raising a teen as a single parent
- Workshops that parents and students attend together on topics they choose
- Other topics you want (write in) _____

Question 9

When can you attend conferences, workshops, meetings or other events at school? **Select** all that apply.

- Early morning
- Mid morning
- Lunch time
- Afternoon
- Early evening
- After dinner
- Weekends
- Cannot attend ever

Question 10

Do you need transportation or childcare in order to attend meetings and conferences at the high school? **Select** all that apply.

- No special needs
- Transportation to and from school
- Childcare for young children at school
- Other needs (please describe) _____

Question 11

All communities have information that would help families. Which services in your community would you like to know more about? **Select** all that apply.

- Health care for teens and for families
- Social services
- Job training for teens
- Family counseling
- English language skills
- Job training for parents, guardians
- 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 teens do
- Part-time jobs for teens
- Summer jobs for teens

Summer programs for teens

Information on museums, shows, and events in our community

Other (describe the community information you need) _____

The last few questions will help us plan new programs to better serve your family and families like yours at this high school

About your teen

Question 12: What gender is your child?

Question 13: How old is he/she?

Question 14: What grade is he/she currently in?

9th

10th

11th

12th

Question 15: About how much time does your teen spend on homework on an average night?

No homework

Less than one hour a night

One hour

Two hours

Three hours

Four or more hours a night

Question 16: How is your teen doing in school this year?

Mostly A's – excellent student

Mostly B's – good student

Mostly C's – average student

Mostly D's – Fair student

Mostly F's Poor student

Question 17: How satisfied are you with your teen's progress in high school this year?

Very satisfied – great year

Mostly satisfied – good year

Pretty satisfied – OK

Mostly dissatisfied – disappointing

Very dissatisfied – bad year at school

Question 18: How much does your teen like school this year?

A lot

Some

A little

Does not like it much

Does not like it at all

Question 19: How do you and your teen make most decisions?

As a parent I decide most rules for my teen

We decide rules together

I leave most rules up to my teen to decide alone

Question 20: How much time **could you spend** working with your teen on homework on an average night? (Minutes I **could** spend):

None

5-10

15-20

25-30

35-45

50-60

over 1 hour

Question 21: On average, how many hours per month are you involved with your child's education?

*Involved meaning: communicating with school staff about your child's education; attending PTO, School Leadership, or parent committee meetings; volunteering at school; collaborating with the school; or any activities that is linked to your child's academic studies

0-3 Hours

3-6 Hours

6-10 Hours

10-15 Hours

15+ Hours

About your family

Question 22: How many adults live in the house? (including yourself)

Question 23: How many children live at home?

Question 24: What's your education?

Did not complete high school

High school diploma

Other training or education

Some college

College degree

Advanced degree

Question 25: How did you like high school when you were a teen? (Check one)

Did not go to high school

Liked it a lot

Liked it some

Liked it a little

Did not like it much

Did not like It at all

Question 26: Are you employed now?’

Full-time

Part-time

Not employed

Question 27: How would you describe yourself?

African-American

Asian-Asian American

Hispanic-American

White

Other: _____

Appendix C
Informed Consent

Informed Consent

Parent participants must agree that they have read the consent form and understand their voluntary role in this research before beginning the survey.

[SURVEY PREVIEW MODE] Parent x +

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Preview/?sm=UqAbvL6gi92w7K3q0wxDqiU_2FsDJEjzWW_2Fztl_2BQz5umLFKuTjUArfqazYXBgFuW

Apps CMS Email Intranet GMAIL GWU Portal ESPN Charlotte Observer Thompson Weebly MyTalent Save to RefWorks RefWorks CNN Statesville

Preview & Test INVITE

This question requires an answer.

*** 1. Voluntary Consent by Participant**

I have read the information on the [consent form](#) and fully understand the contents of this document.

☐ I agree to participate in this confidential survey and have read the consent form.

NEXT

0 of 31 answered

DESKTOP PHONE

Type here to search

6:50 PM 5/14/2019

The Informed Consent Form is below.

Informed Consent Form

Please read carefully

Title of Study

Parental Involvement and Access: A Phenomenological Study of Urban High School Communities

Time Required

It is anticipated that the study will require about 20 minutes of your time. Focus group sessions will require approximately 40 minutes of participants' time.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. You also have the right to refuse to answer any question(s) for any reason without penalty. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identified state.

Confidentiality

Data collected from the survey does not include any personal information on the subject (see attached). Raw data collected from this survey only pertains to current experiences without the need for contact information. Electronic survey results will be shown on an Excel spreadsheet for the researcher as raw data. This data will be available to the researcher through an online portal that is password protected. The researcher will collect hard-copy surveys that are completed and returned to the school's main office.

Focus group conversations will be recorded by a Sony ICD-ux560 audio recorder. The recorded audio will be converted by the researcher to a written transcript of the session. This written transcript of responses will be converted by the software system Trint (trint.com).

The qualitative data collected from focus group participants will not include the participant's name to ensure confidentiality. On the transcripts created from the focus group conversations, the participants' names will be redacted and a labeling of "Person 1, 2, 3" will be assigned to the participants.

Data Linked with Identifying Information

The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. All audio recorded from the focus group sessions will be destroyed and names redacted in the transcripts.

Confidential Data

The information that you give in the study will be handled confidentially. Because of the nature of the data, it may be possible to deduce your identity; however, there will be no attempt to do so, and your data will be reported in a way that will not identify you.

Confidentiality Cannot be Guaranteed

In some cases it may not be possible to guarantee confidentiality (e.g., an interview of a prominent person, a focus group interview). Because of the nature of the data, I cannot guarantee your data will be confidential and it may be possible that others will know what you have reported.

Risks

There are no anticipated risks in this study.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits associated with participation in this study. The Institutional Review Board at Gardner-Webb University has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants.

Payment

You will receive no payment for participating in the study.

Right to Withdraw From the Study

You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If the research design of the study necessitates that its full scope is not explained prior to participation, it will be explained to you after completion of the study. If you have concerns about your rights or how you are being treated, or if you have questions, want more information, or have suggestions, please contact:

Dr. Sydney Brown
IRB Institutional Administrator
Gardner-Webb University
Boiling Springs, NC 28017
704-406-3019
skbrown@gardner-webb.edu