East Tennessee State University

Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Student Works

5-2021

A Phenomenological Inquiry Exploring Parental Involvement at Alternative Schools in Eastern North Carolina

Irv Glenn II
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: https://dc.etsu.edu/etd

Part of the Educational Psychology Commons, Elementary and Middle and Secondary Education Administration Commons, Other Educational Administration and Supervision Commons, Secondary Education Commons, Student Counseling and Personnel Services Commons, and the Urban Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Glenn, Irv II, "A Phenomenological Inquiry Exploring Parental Involvement at Alternative Schools in Eastern North Carolina" (2021). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations.* Paper 3853. https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/3853

This Dissertation - unrestricted is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.

A Phenomenological Inquiry Exploring Parental Involvement at

Alternative Schools in Eastern North Carolina

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

---

by

Irving Gregory Glenn, II

May 2021

Dr. William F. Flora, Chair

Dr. Pamela H. Scott

Dr. Stephanie R. Barham

Keywords: Parental Involvement, Communication, Education

ABSTRACT

A Phenomenological Inquiry Exploring Parental Involvement at
Alternative Schools in Eastern North Carolina

by

Irving Gregory Glenn, II

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to discover the perceptions of caregivers and teachers regarding parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. The lack of parental involvement at some schools is a systemic issue that involves continued efforts by school staff to include caregivers in promoting student success. The difficulties of engaging parents of alternative students result in little interaction between caregivers and educators. It is essential to understand how caregivers and educators perceive parental involvement and assess the quality of parental participation in an alternative educational setting. A qualitative research method was chosen to comprehensively examine teachers' and caregivers' experiences and perceptions related to parental involvement in alternative school students' education. The researcher utilized criterion-based sampling for participant selection. To participate, caregiver participants must have been a caregiver of an alternative school student. Teacher participants needed to be fully licensed and the teacher of record for a class of alternative school students. Six teachers and six caregivers who met the criterion established for participation consented to be interviewed through Zoom. The findings include themes four key themes: school dynamics valued by caregivers, teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers, caregiver scheduling conflicts, and caregiver-teacher relationships. Through these findings, caregivers revealed that school culture, student services, academics, and scheduling

were all factors that facilitated their involvement. Teachers indicated that their personal experiences with parental participation, the lack of resources, and the quality of relationships they had with caregivers determined their engagement level with caregivers.

© Copyright 2021 by Irving G. Glenn, II

All Rights Reserved

DEDICATION

This dissertation is first dedicated to God for “with God all things are possible” (Mark 9:27) and “with Him nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37). From dropping out of high school to earning a doctorate, my life is a testament to those two passages of scripture. I also dedicate this work to my beloved grandmothers' cherished memories; the late Mrs. Shirley Foy Hill Minor and the late Ms. Gussie Lee Glenn, my loving great-grandmother, the late Ms. Emma Jane Hill, and my parents, Mr. Irving and Mrs. Evangelyn Glenn. I learned earlier in life from each of these individuals that I can succeed if I keep God first, play by the rules, and treat people right.

As a young child during the 1990s, my mother took me to her night classes at Craven Community College in New Bern, North Carolina. She had no one else to look after me, so her instructors allowed her to bring me with her to her evening class. It was there that I begin to take an interest in the idea of college. It took my mother approximately six years to complete her Associate degree, but she never gave up. My mother, a proponent for education, instilled in me the importance of finishing what I begin. Throughout this process, she has been an ardent supporter and a constant voice with a consistent message: “pursue and finish.” Foremost, I dedicate this dissertation to her. Mom, I can now say, “I am finally finished!”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While this degree is a significant feat for me, I must admit that I did not get here alone. I had some fantastic people who assisted, inspired, and encouraged me along the way. I would like to acknowledge these special people who have invested in me in one way or another. First, to all the participants who took the time to participate in this study – thank you. This discourse would not be possible without your valuable contributions.

My dissertation committee chairperson, Dr. Bill Flora, I remember telling you earlier in the program that I wanted to drop out. You encouraged me to finish; this day is possible because of you! Thank you for being patient and providing me with the support that I needed to finish. Your help and guidance were unwavering throughout my matriculation at ETSU – I am indeed grateful for you. Dr. Pamela Scott, my methodologist; you were patient, kind, responsive, and representative of a team player. I am thankful for your expertise and was blessed to have had you on my committee. Dr. Stephanie Barham, thank you for your willingness to serve on my committee.

Dr. Edward Earl Bell, my 6th-grade teacher, I called you with questions about each step of the dissertation, and you readily provided answers. Your advice was pragmatic and executable. As I wrote this dissertation, my mind reminisced when you would regularly reprove us as middle school scholars for submitting substandard and sloppy work to you. I remember you telling us, “it’s unacceptable, now put it in the trashcan because trash belongs in the trashcan.” This day is possible because of the seeds you planted over 20 years ago. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging me to “get it done!”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

ABSTRACT 2
DEDICATION 5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 6
TABLE OF CONTENTS 7
LIST OF TABLES 11
LIST OF FIGURES 12
CHAPTER 1 13
Theoretical Framework 16
Statement of the Problem 18
Statement of the Purpose 18
Research Questions 19
Significance of the Study 19
Definition of Terms 20
Limitations 21
Summary 22
CHAPTER 2 23
Alternative Schooling 23
Caregivers as Parents 25
Understanding Parental Involvement 26
    Parental Modeling 27
    Effective Parental Involvement 27
Teacher Perceptions of Parental Involvement 30
Teacher Engagement with Caregivers 39
    Home Visits 40
    Extracurricular Events 41
    Systems of Communication 41
Caregiver Perceptions 44
    Caregiver-Teacher Relationships 44
    Cultural Differences 47

Student with Disabilities 49
Differences in the Perceptions of Caregivers and Teachers 49
Factors Which Influence Parental Involvement 51
Parent Related Factors 51
Personal Experiences 52
Level of Education 52
Time Constraints 54
Socio-economic Status 55
School-Related Factors 56
School Culture 56
Student-Related Factors 58
Summary and Conclusion 59
CHAPTER 3 61
Introduction 61
Research Questions 61
Research Design 61
Role of the Researcher 62
Potential Bias 63
Ethical Considerations 64
Zoom 65
Sample 65
Sampling Strategy 66
Data Collection Methods 66
Data Management 67
Data Analysis 67
Assessment of Quality and Rigor 69
Credibility 69
Dependability 70
Confirmability 70
Transferability 71
Summary 71

CHAPTER 4 72
Introduction 72
Description of Participants 72
Interview Findings 73
Research Question 1 76
Research Question 2 78
Research Question 3 83
Research Question 4 93
Research Question 4 Summary 100
CHAPTER 5 101
Discussion 101
Conclusions 102
Research Questions 102
Research Question 1 102
Research Question 2 103
Research Question 3 104
Research Question 4 108
Recommendations for Practice 110
Recommendation 1: Resources 110
Recommendation 2: Provide Unconventional Opportunities for Involvement 111
Recommendation 3: Quality Staffing 111
Recommendations for Further Research 112
Recommendation 1: Quantitative Analysis 112
Recommendation 2: A Broader Sample 112
Recommendation 3: A Study Involving Other Types of Schools 113
Recommendation 4: A Study Exploring Alternative School Teacher Expectations 113
REFERENCES 114
APPENDICES 132
Appendix A: Caregiver Interview Guide 132
Appendix B: Teacher Interview Guide 133
Appendix C: Interview-Research Question Alignment 134

Appendix D: Researcher Flyer 135
Appendix E: Participant Letter 136
VITA 137

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Participant Profiles…………..…………………………………..……………………...73

Table 2 Participant-Theme Alignment………………………...……………………………...75

Table 3 Research Question-Theme Alignment...…………………………………………………75

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement……………………….……………….14

Figure 2 Indicators of Caregiver-Teacher Relationship Quality…………………………….....47

Figure 3 Parent and Family Involvement in Education: Results from the National Household....54

Figure 4 Percentage of Low-Income Parents Who Support Their Children …………………….56

Figure 5 Parental Ratings of their Children's Schools………….…………………...………...…57

Figure 6 Rates of Parent Participation Across Grade Levels……………………………….……59

Figure 7 Data and Analysis Process……………………..……………………………….……69

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Parental involvement is an essential element of education (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). Evidence to promote a link between student achievement and parental involvement exists. Jeynes (2003) documents that parent-family involvement is imperative for tackling the school dropout crisis. Barton (2003) stated that when teachers and caregivers work together to support education, students are more likely to thrive, as evidenced by their grades and attendance. Such evidence holds for students at both the elementary and secondary levels of learning regardless of parent educational attainment, family income, or background (Jeynes, 2003).

Teachers and caregivers have crucial roles in ensuring students thrive in school. Students need plenty of support to be academically successful. Herrell (2011) stated that parental involvement is vital to the academic, psychosocial, and emotional well-being of children. The perceptions and definitions of parental involvement vary by stakeholders. Epstein (2011) stated:

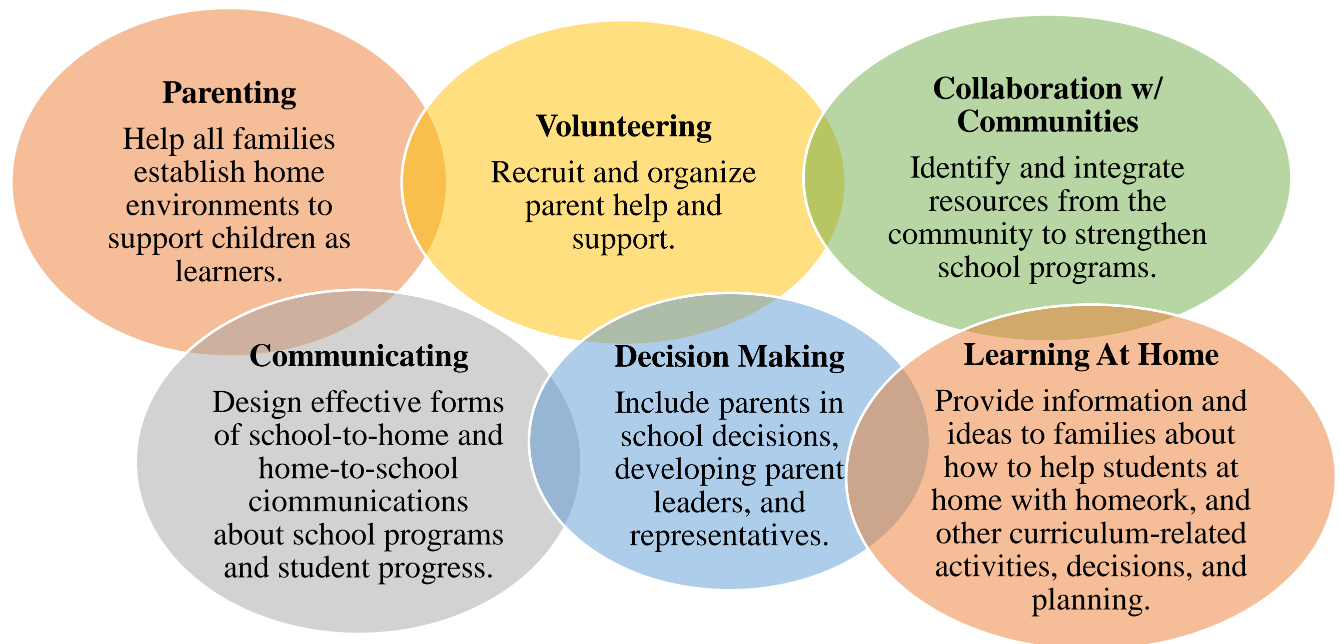
> In some schools, there are still educators who say, 'If the family would just do its job, we could do our job.' And there are still families who say, 'I raised this child; now it is your job to educate her.' These words embody a view of separate spheres of influence. Other educators say, 'I cannot do my job without the help of my students' families and the support of this community.' And some parents say, 'I really need to know what is happening in school in order to help my child.'

Epstein (2009) describes six types of parental involvement in education: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaboration. Epstein

(2011) refers to these six types of involvement activities seen in Figure 1 below as the overlapping spheres of influence.

Figure 1

Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement



Parental involvement may establish a necessary bridge between teachers and caregivers. Caregivers and teachers should cooperate and communicate to maximize learning. However, this interaction between caregivers and teachers does not always happen, primarily because there are many parental involvement obstacles. Families and parenting style may be another critical obstacle. There are many roadblocks to effective communication between parents and teachers. Because of this, many obstacles impede effective parent-teacher interactions. Among these obstacles is the blame game (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013). The blame game refers to a breakdown in communication when teachers and caregivers blame one another for the failed performance of students. Teachers insist that caregivers cannot help students at home, whereas

the caregivers contend that they could not teach (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013). Simultaneously, miscommunication persists, although both groups [caregivers and teachers] usually identify communicating as an essential aspect of involvement (Herrell, 2011).

There are also cultural differences and a lack of understanding, which can impede effective communication. For example, Murray (2012) indicates that the relationship between African American caregivers and Caucasian teachers is intricate because African American caregivers may perceive Caucasian teachers treat their children inauspiciously. Another example of a roadblock to effective communication between teachers and caregivers is the lack of awareness. Smith and Wohletter (2009) state that teachers lack understanding about caregivers of a lower socio-economic background. Consequently, teachers who lack awareness about poverty can undervalue the invisible efforts of minority and low-income parents that may not be discernable to the natural eye, discouraging parental engagement. Therefore, common misunderstandings between educators and caregivers tend to distort perceptions of parental involvement.

Expectations and perceptions of parental involvement differ among caregivers and teachers. Caregivers tend to overestimate the role of student learning at home, which is proven to be the most significant predictor of parent satisfaction in the parent-teacher relationship (Taylor, 2006). Teacher perceptions regarding parental involvement are considered to influence the academic performance of students; this implies that teachers expect parental involvement as a necessary part of academic success (Jackman, 2013). Gulevska (2018) indicates that teachers expect constant parental commitment and dedication of attention to the performance of students (Gulevska, 2018). However, school staff may overlook the role of parental involvement in education (Jackman, 2013). The need for educators to recognize and facilitate the role of

caregivers in the educational process and increase the sensitivity of educators depending on the specific context of each family.

Theoretical Framework

Epstein (2011) developed one of the most universally recognized conceptual models for parental involvement. The model includes parental involvement as an intersection of three spheres: family, school, and community (Epstein & Sheldon, 2009). Epstein (2009) suggests that parental involvement itself is not as decisive as a well-developed partnership of all sides: family, school, and society.

Epstein (2009) stated that parental involvement should include essential elements such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. This model accurately captures the scope of involvement, including (1) the basic obligations of caregivers as care-providers; (2) schools communicating with caregivers about school programs; (3) caregivers volunteering at school; (4) parental involvement in home learning; (5) the parent as decision-maker; and (6) parental involvement as community collaboration (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013). Two-sided collaboration between teachers and caregivers with students with disabilities, students from low socio-economic status, and students with unique gifts and talents are essential for student success (Gulevska, 2018). Jackman (2013) identified socio-economic status as a significant predictor of the parent-teacher relationship.

The deficit model includes the idea that the school is designed to fill up what the family cannot give (Murray, 2012). The difference model includes the idea that family and school are two different, non-overlapping spaces. The common practice of parental involvement has moved from the deficit model to the difference model (Shepard & Rose, 1995). From the difference model, parental involvement moved to the empowerment model, in which caregivers are the

primary source of development and upbringing of the child (Shepard & Rose, 1995). The relationship between school and home has become key to the academic success of the child.

The establishment of healthy school-home relationships is another major challenge of parental involvement in the learning process. Educators still tend to divide the very concept of parental involvement into two distinct parts: "caregivers' involvement in the life of the school and caregivers' involvement in support of the child at home" (Gulevska, 2018). It is necessary to find an appropriate balance between the two parts since the quality of school-home relationships is related to many advantages for students, families, and schools (Gulevska, 2018). Studies indicate that it can enhance learning opportunities for children, boost access to the knowledge that caregivers have of their children, allow for better decision-making, and build support for schools and educators. Parental involvement should include dialogue and partnership, not delegation or separation of responsibilities (Gulevska, 2018).

Therefore, for this study, the researcher's effort manifests from the central research questions, the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement, and the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement. The researcher sought to explore four of the six types of involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina through the research framework of Epstein (2009): (1) essential obligations of caregivers as care-providers; (2) schools [teachers] communicating with caregivers about school programs; (3) parental involvement in home learning and (4) the caregiver as decision-maker.

Statement of the Problem

According to Newman et al. (2019), children learn and grow through three overlapping spheres of influence: family, school, and community. This model may be utilized to demonstrate how diverse and crucial interpersonal relations and the patterns of influence exist between the child's caregivers, school, and community. Smith et al. (2008) suggest that the lack of parental involvement at some schools is a systemic issue that involves the continued intricacy by school staff to include caregivers in promoting student success.

Unfortunately, these complexities with parental involvement result in little interaction between caregivers and educators. There is miscommunication between caregivers and educators (Gulevska, 2018; Jackson, 2013). Because of the variation in understanding between caregivers and educators, it is vital to understand how both parties perceive parental involvement and assess the quality of existing parental participation in their educational setting, notably the alternative learning setting.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of caregivers and teachers regarding parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. Henderson and Mapp (2002) determined a positive correlation between parental involvement and increased student achievement. Mapp (2004) concluded that this is true for students of all ages regardless of their socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, and educational experiences. Results from this study will provide insight on the impediments to parental involvement at alternative schools as well as the expectations of parental involvement from alternative school instructors.

Research Questions

Research questions for a qualitative investigation should "reflect a problem-centered perspective of those experiencing a phenomenon and be sufficiently broad to allow for the flexible nature of the research method" (Birks & Mills, 2011, p. 21). The qualitative approach permitted the researcher to allow participants to share their experiences (Sieber, 2013). The research questions being explored by the researcher of this study are:

1. What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?
2. What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement?
3. What factors facilitate parental involvement?
4. What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it will lend to the existing research body on parent involvement in alternative school settings. It will also provide evidence of the need to establish relationships between caregivers and teachers and provides a specific understanding of parent-teacher relations in the alternative school setting. This research covers the main provisions of parental involvement in the educational process, which complement and strengthen existing theories. Conclusions from this research may serve as a foundation for recommendations for educational organizations regarding the enhancement of parent involvement strategies in alternative learning settings. Utilizing the findings from this study as a framework for understanding, academic administrators, and alternative teachers may be better able to assess the state of parental involvement in alternative learning settings within their respective school districts.

Definition of Terms

- *Caregiver:* The natural parent, the legal guardian, or other person standing in the position of the caregiver or legally responsible for the child, which may also include one who assumes the parenting role if natural parents cannot provide the necessary care. (Herrell, 2011, p. 18).
- *Parent-teacher relations:* Herrell (2011) defines it as the participation of caregivers in regular and meaningful two-way communication [with teachers] involving student academic learning and other school activities (p. 18).
- *Parental involvement:* Taylor (2006) defines parent involvement at school and at home to include activities such as parent-teacher conferences, communicating with the teacher via e-mail or phone, attending PTA meetings, volunteering at school, assisting with homework, checking student work at home, and checking grade reports at home.
- *SES*: "Socio-economic status; of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and economic factors" (Jackman, 2013, p. 12).
- *Teacher*. "An individual who has obtained a certificate to teach school and is currently teaching" (Herrell, 2011, p. 18).
- *Instructor involvement*: Carver (2019) defines instructor involvement as efforts by the teacher which involve caregivers such as making phone calls to caregivers, creating and deploying surveys to caregivers, arranging family conferences, scheduling or facilitating workshops for caregivers, and teaching curricula that provides families with the opportunity to share their histories and cultures.

Limitations

Rossman and Rallis (2011) explained that the limitations of a study depict the conditions which may weaken the study. Limitations of research in this study include the sample itself, secondary teachers. Since the research is conducted in alternative learning settings with only middle and high school students, there are only teachers and caregivers to secondary students.

The second limitation concerns the method in which the data was collected, utilizing video conferencing technology. Notwithstanding problems, such as participants not using the technology or having a poor Wi-Fi connection, video-calling is supplementary to face-to-face interviewing during a pandemic when social distancing is a legal mandate.

Delimitations

This study was delimited to teachers in an alternative learning setting with middle and high school students in Eastern North Carolina within one school setting. The perceptions of the teacher participants in this study may not represent those of teachers in the state, nation, or internationally. The perceptions of the caregiver participants in this study may not represent caregivers in the state, country, or internationally.

The dependability of the findings of this study could be transferable to teachers with three or more years of teaching experience who teach high or middle school students in an alternative learning setting in Eastern North Carolina. The findings of this study may be transferable to caregivers of middle or high school students enrolled in an alternative school or program. A recommendation for further research would be to explore the perceptions of elementary instructors and caregivers. Any repetition of this study may result in wide-ranging conclusions, as evidenced by the limitations and delimitations.

Summary

This phenomenological qualitative study includes five chapters. Chapter 1 consists of the statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definition of applicable terms, limitations, delimitations of the research, and the summary of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature on parental involvement, instructor involvement, and Epstein's (2011) theoretical framework on parental involvement. Chapter 3 explains in detail the methodology used in this study. Chapter 4 will include the research findings of this qualitative study to include the description of the participants, interview findings regarding the research questions, and embryonic themes. Chapter 5 will consist of a statement of purpose, an explanation of findings disintegrated by the research question, along with recommendations and conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature in this chapter is current and related to the perceptions of teachers and caregivers regarding parental involvement in the education of their children in an alternative school. The scope of the relevant literature was broad, and articles from credible journals and databases were examined to support the framing of the research and help achieve the objectives of this study. Literature and research utilized were current and addressed issues related to the central questions of research related to this study. The subsequent sections include a review and analysis of the literature and research related to this study.

Alternative Schooling

Alternative schools are institutions designed to meet the needs of learners who fail in comprehensive schools (Bascia & Maton, 2016; Brown & Addison, 2012; Jones, 2015). Jones (2015) states that alternative school staff generally provide education to students with behavioral or academic issues and significant gifts or talents. They cannot benefit from traditional school settings. It is likely that children with higher chances of antisocial behavior develop deteriorating relationships with teachers and consequently receive less support and increased criticism in classrooms, which is detrimental to their academic performance (Jones, 2015). Teachers reject these students, potentially contributing to a failure in developing coping and survival tactics necessary for social and academic success (Baker et al., 2019). These learners eventually become more likely to join deviant peer groups that reinforce academic failure and antisocial behaviors. Most of these children may find themselves in alternative schools because they do not thrive in conventional or special schools (Baker et al., 2019).

Jones (2015) argued that there needs to be a considerable collaboration with caregivers to ensure that alternative education is successful. Other students who attend alternative schools include suspended students, expelled students, and individuals at risk of committing juvenile crimes, school dropouts, students leaving juvenile correction facilities, students under the care of a psychiatrist, and students with a truancy history (Jones, 2015). Brown and Addison (2012) emphasized that the number of alternative schools continues to grow and that the increase has been accompanied by persistent concerns such as perceptions about the alternative school (Brown & Addison, 2012).

There is a general perception of alternative schools in which society views them compared to mainstream and conventional schools (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014). Because of the dominance of traditional schools in the United States, other forms of schools are perceived as inferior, lessor, or deviant (Thomson & Pennacchia, 2014). Individuals with these types of perceptions create stigmatization for those working in or attending these schools.

Alternative schoolteachers act as coaches, organizers, managers, and coordinators of customized learning for the students at alternative schools (Bascia & Maton, 2016). Bascia and Maton (2016) state that one-way alternative schoolteachers make innovative teaching is through large projects. In this approach, teachers allowed students to participate in hands-on experiences and focused reflections on expanding student knowledge, clarifying values, and ensuring values to students. Teachers give students complex and challenging activities, encourage them to take the initiative, provide answers to problems, and account for their actions. At the same time, teachers ensure that the physical and emotional safety of the learners is secure.

Caregivers as Parents

The concept of caregiving entails more than caring for one's biological child. Ordinarily, biological caregivers serve as the primary caregivers to their children. During care provision, strong bonds develop between children and those providing care, encouraging acceptance of caregivers in place of the actual caregivers.

The nature of the parent-child relationship plays a vital role in developing feelings of attachment between caregivers and their children. In the absence of biological parents, caregivers assume parental duties and responsibilities. As would actual caregivers, caregivers ensure health and safety and provide the necessary skills and resources to prepare them for adult life (Shirvanian & Michael, 2017). Caregivers that provide love, guidance, encouragement, appreciation, and acceptance are likely to earn the trust and acceptance of children under their care, enabling them to serve as replacements for the actual caregivers (Shirvanian & Michael, 2017). By providing special protection and nurturing context for children as they grow and develop identities and personalities and mature socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically, caregivers create an environment for validation and acceptance as caregivers in the absence of biological caregivers.

Kochanska and Kim (2013) stated that internal working models and attachment relationships in children have significant implications, both long-term and short-term, on their emotional and social competence. Providing a positive environment facilitates secure attachment development; therefore, the children can relate positively with their caregivers. The children learn to be self-confident, empathetic, and competent, vital to establishing secure connections with caregivers and their peers.

Understanding Parental Involvement

It should be noted that a single united definition of parent involvement is not present in the current literature. Barge and Loges (2003) explained that caregivers perceive academic monitoring to mean activities at home that assess academic performance. Still, the perception of teachers was that caregivers should also be involved in the classroom activities of their children.

McNeal, Jr. (2014) reports that caregivers must become involved in the educational matters of students with severe and persistent behavior and academic issues to avert possible negative consequences in the long term. Smith et al. (2014) noted that although a coercive parent-child relationship can lead to academic failure and antisocial characteristics for children. The transition to elementary school provides a fundamental opportunity to inhibit the development of behaviors that could be detrimental to traits that promote academic performance.

Whitaker (2018) developed a model that could explain the parental involvement process by exploring the mechanisms that influence parents to participate. While this model was developed in traditional learning environments, its applicability to alternative schools cannot be ignored. The model has been praised for its reliability and relevance to parental involvement. Caregivers utilize mechanisms within the model that involve behaviors and psychological antecedents that influence the performance of the students (Pettit et al., 2009). These mechanisms materialize during socialization between a parent and the student. Both are in a moment of shared thinking concerning the strategies of learning, education processes, engagement in education strategies, and education outcomes. These concepts also provide validation for parental involvement in alternative schools.

Parental Modeling

Pinquart and Ebeling (2020) state that parental modeling includes the lessons or learning that children learn and derive from the actions of their caregivers. Through these parental actions, children can reflect on their behaviors, academic capabilities, performances, and achievements to establish their level of development and what they could achieve in academics (Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020). Children learn from parental models through observation, and their performance will significantly improve if they observe active parental involvement in school activities for them (Wilder, 2014). When both caregivers and children have discussions that relate to participation in school activities, particularly those exchanges that entail behaviors related to learning and cognition; caregivers will have a positive influence on the performance and achievement of the child through the mechanism of parental modeling (Hoover Dempsey & Sandler, 2005). For example, caregivers assisting their children with homework, holding conversations about the school day, or attending extracurricular activities in support of their children.

Effective Parental Involvement

Parental involvement enhances the execution of six critical functions in a learning environment. First, an effective parental involvement exercise or program should enhance parenting (Gokturk & Dinckal, 2017). Helpful parental involvement initiatives should involve efficient communication between caregivers and teachers or between homes and schools (Gokturk & Dinckal, 2017). Third, a reasonable parental involvement practice should include the services of volunteer organizations (Erdener, 2016). Fourth, caregivers and teachers believe that a suitable parental involvement initiative helps learners and families identify and make fair use of learning opportunities within the home environment. Fifth, teachers and caregivers consider

parental involvement desirable only when it entails collaborative decision-making (Erdener, 2016). Finally, effective parental involvement should include integrating community resources and services into the learning process (Gokturk & Dinckal, 2017). These are the general attributes of effective parental involvement practices.

However, not all forms of parental involvement have the same effects; neither are they statistically significant. For example, Jeynes (2011) acknowledged that dialogue about school between caregivers and their children and parental volunteerism at the school have a statistically significant influence on the academic achievement of the student, while the effect of looking over homework assigned by the teacher is not statistically significant.

Home-based parental involvement

Home-based parental involvement includes any parent initiative to help learners in their academic activities within the home environment (Young et al., 2013). Ideal home-based parental involvement includes parent-oriented activities such as helping students work on their homework, ensuring that homework is completed in time, and creating a favorable learning environment (Young et al., 2013). Home-based involvement has been linked to positive outcomes in child education. For instance, studies on parental involvement among African-American students have shown that home-based involvement enhances preschool competencies among preschool children (Suizzo et al., 2012). It has been established through research that home-based involvement contributes significantly to learners' success (Young et al., 2013). These observations indicate that home-based parental involvement is one of the accepted parental involvement approaches. School-based parental involvement is a set of activities carried out by caregivers at the school level but can sometimes extend to the home environment.

School-based parent involvement

School-based parental involvement is initiated within the school environment. Murray et al. (2014) contend that school-based parental involvement occurs when parents contact a teacher to share some information with a school. Examples of school-based parental involvement activities include meeting with teachers, participating in school events such as conferences and PTA meetings, and communicating with teachers through appropriate means such as phone calls (Murray et al., 2014). Three approaches can always be used to execute school-based parent involvement. First, school-based parent involvement can be in the form of a private good. This parental school-based parent involvement category is a school-sponsored initiative executed by a parent to support their child (Park & Holloway, 2016). Examples of private-good school-based parent involvement include attendance of school parent meetings and parent-teacher conferences.

The second type of school-based parental involvement is public-good parental involvement, which is also a school-sponsored activity but focuses on benefiting the school in general. For example, caregivers may involve themselves in school activities through fundraising exercises, among other voluntary services. These initiatives are always expected to benefit all learners and families within a school (Park & Holloway, 2016). The last category of school-based parent involvement is parent-network. Parent-network comprises of a set of parent-based initiatives aimed at helping caregivers maintain regular contacts among themselves. Regular communication among caregivers allows them to share information about the school and learners' academic progress. It has been shown that parent-networking is a common practice among caregivers of well-performing children. Research has shown that caregivers with high achieving students tend to inquire about the welfare of their children's friends, leading to the establishment of a network of caregivers (Park & Holloway, 2016). Despite being one of the

recognized types of school-based parental involvement, parent-networking has adverse impacts on learners' performance (Park & Holloway, 2016). Most often, these networks of caregivers reinforce norms that are irrelevant in a learning environment.

Teacher Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement entails the actions of parents at school and home geared toward improving the performance of their students (Dor, 2013). Furthermore, scholars have examined the benefits of parental involvement in schools and have concluded that it leads to better performance, enhanced motivation, and improved behavior at home and school and on standardized tests (Afolabi, 2014; Dor, 2013; Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013; Núñez et al., 2015; Wilder, 2014).

Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement do not vary with teaching levels. Studies of elementary, primary, and high instructors show that teachers have common beliefs on parental involvement. Aslan (2016) investigated the perception of primary instructors on parental involvement and concluded that teachers value parental involvement and are always concerned about parent-teacher communication. Koutrouba et al. (2009) found that teachers recognize the importance of parental involvement. According to this study, most secondary instructors believe that parental involvement helps in understanding students, enhances parental awareness, and facilitates parental homework support.

Teachers perceive parental involvement as an essential aspect of schooling. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) explored the perception of teachers on parental involvement, focusing on the perceived importance of parental involvement to learners. Teachers perceive parental involvement as an essential input in enhancing the performance of students. "The teachers who were interviewed indicated that parental involvement could indeed help to improve learners"

(Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013, p. 221). Most of the interviewed teachers held that caregivers should guide their children to do well in classwork. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) also established that parental guidance could help learners master concepts taught in school. According to these teachers, parental guidance entails correcting learners whenever they are off the path and finding suitable school-related activities for their children. It is also manifest from the study that teachers view parental involvement as a source of encouragement to learners (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013).

Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) stated that teachers regard parental involvement as a basis for creating a favorable learning environment. These findings tally with those of other studies, one by Hill, Witherspoon, and Bartz (2016) and another by Koutrouba et al. (2009). According to Hill et al. (2016), teachers expect caregivers, especially low-performing students, to actively involve themselves in their children's academic activities. Koutrouba et al. (2009) observed that teachers consider parental involvement an essential practice in education since it enhances teachers' and parental awareness of learners' needs. Existing literature holds that teachers regard parental involvement as an essential input in a typical learning process.

Parental involvement can often take different forms. Teachers perceive parent-teacher communications as a beneficial form of parental involvement. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) conducted a study to discover the perceptions of teachers regarding parental involvement. Communication was frequently mentioned as the preferred form of communication among teachers who took part in the study. The identified forms of teacher-parent communication included contacting teachers regularly, school visits, and attendance of parent-teacher conferences. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) concluded that when parents maintain communication with the teachers of their children, they are deemed involved by teachers.

Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012) identified participation as another valid form of parental involvement from teacher perspectives, although caregivers can participate in their children's education in several ways. However, the study may show that teachers consider parental involvement in their students' homework as one of the most effective forms of parental participation. Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012) established that teachers consider parental support and engagement in school activities, for example, games, concerts, field trips, and PTA meetings, as other helpful forms of parental involvement. Furthermore, teachers admire when caregivers read together with their children because they believe that reading together with the children helps reinforce teachers' message about reading. Most teachers expect caregivers to check how their children work on their class assignments. Discipline is the last form of parental involvement identified during the study.

On the one hand, caregivers can fulfill the basic needs of their children positively. At the same time, on the other, the adults have no time to get involved in the learning activities of their children, which ultimately affects the performance and achievement of the pupils in their academics. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2010) have explained that caregivers who perceive their role as someone who should be involved in the school activities of their children tend to be more involved in school activities for their children.

In many cases, teachers instructing students who have severe behavioral and academic issues develop negative attitudes toward the students, the family members, and other persons with close links to such children (Stormont et al., 2013). The perceptions teachers have about children are essential given that a teacher's beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions about a child's caregivers, regardless of whether the attitudes or perceptions are accurate, may have a significant impact on the interactions the teacher has for both a child and the child's caregivers (McCoach et

al., 2010). For example, there are higher chances that teachers will have different interaction styles with caregivers whom they perceive to be more interested in the academic activities of their children than they do with caregivers whom they perceive to be less interested or involved in the scholarly activities of their children (McCoach et al., 2010). The consequence of these varying teacher-parent interactions influences caregivers' willingness, ability, and motivation to be involved in the academic activities of their children (Herman & Reinke, 2017, p. 2). Furthermore, according to El Nokali et al. (2010), it is not a surprise that the literature includes the idea that children hailing from disadvantaged homes have lower scores of parental involvement in the learners' academics and other learning-related activities. Cooper et al. (2010) emphasized that socio-economic barriers into other logistical barriers to parental involvement, such as transportation for some caregivers.

Teacher scores for parental involvement have been found to focus mainly on the level of contact that caregivers have with faculty and staff in a school. Those contacts can come from school meetings, school visitations, and volunteering in school activities (Herman & Reinke, 2017). Frequent contact between caregivers and school personnel increases comfortability. The level of comfort refers to the bond between staff at school and the caregivers at home. It denotes the quality of parent-teacher engagement and interactions in school activities and extends beyond how often caregivers visit schools (Herman & Reinke, 2017). Herman and Reinke (2017) have described one predictor of the interaction's comfort: the level to which teachers' perceptions of parental goals and expectations of a child's performance and achievement align with their values, goals, and objectives expectations for the learner.

While it is common to find that scholars treat comfort or contact levels as independent variables, their significance as co-occurring factors in providing necessary information regarding

teacher-parent interactions cannot be assumed (McCoach et al., 2010). For example, it is possible to view some caregivers as having low contact with school activities but still have a comfortable relationship with teachers (Herman & Reinke, 2017). According to Stormont et al. (2013), teacher ratings of parental involvement patterns are highly associated with the most favorable outcomes for students' performance and education. Conversely, some caregivers may have high levels and frequencies in visiting and maintaining contact with the school but are still perceived as unhelpful and intrusive concerning student performances and teacher work (Herman & Reinke, 2017). Therefore, these assertions in the literature indicate that neither comfort nor contact in isolation may determine the level of parental adaptability; instead, it is the combination of both comfort and contact.

Recent studies have found that combining these two elements, comfort, and contact, has a significant relationship with the success and performance of students in the school (McCoach et al., 2010; Stormont et al., 2013). For example, Stormont et al. (2013) have placed teacher-related comfort and contact into three profiles, namely, low contact and comfort, high contact and comfort, and low contact/high comfort. Students in the low contact/comfort category were associated with more serious behavioral problems at school and lower academic performance and achievement scores. In contrast, students in the profile for high contact and comfort were most likely to perform better in school. They had a high probability of having good behaviors and conduct in school activities.

Herman and Reinke (2017) state, teacher bias may be instrumental in undermining the ability and willingness that caregivers may have for getting involved and supporting their children's educational achievement, performance, and social development. Savacool (2011) indicated that it is difficult for caregivers to be involved at school, particularly if they feel that

such interaction would lead them to be judged. Biases and negative attitudes by other school workers may also make the school environment unwelcome to caregivers who might have intentions for significant levels of involvement. These biases could hurt the comfort and contact levels of the caregivers (Bridges et al., 2012). El Nokali et al. (2010) said it is common to find that children with associated behavioral problems, children from certain cultures, and children with academic issues are associated with lower school involvement levels from their caregivers. The impacts of this dynamic can lead to the development of an underachievement cycle.

Teachers have different beliefs on what influences how caregivers involve themselves in the learning activities of their children. Blackman and Mahon (2014) employed a multiple case study strategy to explore the perspective of teachers on factors influencing parental involvement. They observed that teachers categorize factors influencing parental involvement into two major categories: in-school factors and factors away from school. The in-school factors, in this case, refer to school dynamics that impact parental involvement. Blackman and Mahon (2014) reported that democratization is one of the critical in-school aspects that determine the level and nature of parental involvement from the teachers' points of view. Some teachers believe that teacher-dominated PTA is a significant obstacle to parental involvement. According to teachers, other in-school factors include the suitability of teacher initiatives and interests and parental attendance and participation in parent conferences and PTAs.

Out-of-school factors from the perspective of teachers include issues such as collaboration, coping abilities, and financial constraints. Blackman and Mahon (2014) argue that teachers believe that the level of collaboration between teachers and caregivers directly impacts the level of parental involvement. According to teachers, collaboration entails caregivers taking part in activities such as implementing educational programs, participating in extracurricular

activities, and engaging in teacher consultations. Caregivers who collaborate according to teachers are likely to experience high degrees of parental involvement. Moreover, according to this study, some teachers believe that some caregivers often find it hard to cope with their child's behaviors (Blackman & Mahon, 2014). Teachers also acknowledge that some caregivers fail to involve themselves in learning activities due to financial issues.

The quality of teacher-parent interactions served as a predictor of the quality of teacher-student relationships and interactions in school (Wyrick & Rudasill, 2009). Herman and Reinke (2017) suggested that if teachers have positive attitudes about parental involvement, teacher-student interactions would also improve. Thus, increasing the chances of a child's engagement level in their academic activities eventually promotes better student behaviors and improved performances. Ultimately, if teachers and caregivers have positive interactions, students will also have positive interactions with their teachers. These positive interactions will eventually promote both academic and social performance.

Greater involvement improves the cooperation between a teacher and the parent, which ultimately enhances the motivation of teachers. Epstein (2009) stated that it had been perceived that teachers only involve caregivers when a child exhibits poor behaviors, excellent performance, or during school conferences. Epstein (2009) concluded that a limitation to collaboration or involvement in a child's learning may deprive the benefits caregivers, students, and school staff stands to gain with greater collaboration and involvement.

Sethusha (2014) investigated the perceptions and experiences that teachers have regarding parental involvement in schools. In a qualitative case study, Sethusha (2014) examined teachers via semi-structured interviews. The researcher discovered that one of the respondents perceived parental involvement as a tool that enhanced continued learning even when they are at

home. Lack of cooperation between the child and teacher was viewed as an impediment to quality learning (Sethusa, 2014). Another teacher indicated that caregivers failed to get involved in school activities because they were satisfied with the learning activities and performances of the children. Overall, Sethusa (2014) concluded that parental involvement was a challenge in schools because there was little collaboration between teachers and caregivers. The scholar posited that teachers believed the education of children is their sole responsibility, which seemed impossible.

Dor (2013) also conducted a qualitative study that sought to examine the attitudes that teachers had toward parental involvement. Conducting interviews with 27 respondents, who consisted of 22 females and five males, the researcher found answers to the research questions and problems. The results indicated that teachers' perceptions of parental involvement related to volunteering activities where caregivers decided to help among the many parental involvement activities that caregivers chose. The study participants also cited other examples of involvement to include fundraising, accompanying the class on outside school activities such as field trips, and organizing fairs (Dor, 2013). Although the teachers had an overall perception of benefits coming from parental involvement, they had some reservations that they feared they might not meet the expectations of caregivers. In this regard, teachers limited the invitation of parental involvement to practical matters outside the professional duties of the teachers. The researcher also discovered a boundary beyond which a teacher could not invite caregivers to get involved unless there was a clear demarcation between the teacher and parent roles within the engagement.

Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) interviewed teachers regarding their perceptions, and the teachers generally perceived parental involvement to have positive impacts. The teachers alluded

to a significant role for caregivers in guidance, motivation, creating a conducive learning environment, learner encouragement, and communication between caregivers and teacher (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013). For example, teachers discussed the much-needed presence of caregivers to feel encouraged or to feel the caregivers had higher expectations about their children's performance. Furthermore, teachers described that as caregivers visit schools, they can detect problems with their children early and help them. Given all these benefits, the scholars concluded that teachers perceived caregivers as better positioned to assist students in some areas. So they should be involved in the education of their children. In other words, teachers perceived that caregivers had access to certain aspects of a learner than a teacher did not have, and it was only a parent who could help shape the learning of his or her child. However, the nature of interactions between teachers and children may be influenced by teacher perceptions about the parental expectations of the child, meaning that the perception of teachers of parental involvement is key to the performance of the child (Savacool, 2011). Teachers must be aware of the ideas that caregivers have about their participation in school.

The information from the above studies can be utilized to suggest that there is a strong link between teacher perceptions of parental involvement with students' academic and behavioral performance. Information in this section may also be used to propose that efforts to alter teachers' perceptions about parental involvement, particularly in the context of contact and comfort, maybe a significant starting point to improve outcomes of students at risk of poor academic and behavioral performance. Some of these high risks are in alternative schools, and efforts designed to change the perception of teachers about parental engagement in these institutions promise to improve parental engagement, participation, or involvement. The ultimate

achievement would be a better performance of the child in terms of behaviors and academic performance.

Teacher Engagement with Caregivers

Teachers can use several strategies to reach out to caregivers to promote parental involvement; one example is a caregiver evening; teachers and caregivers meet to learn about the school and the home environment. Caregiver evenings are typically held at the school during weekdays, but in the evenings to allow caregivers who work during regular school hours the time to attend. Caregiver evening may include an art show, singing by the school choir, presentation by the school administration, or a town hall question and answer session for caregivers.

In his study to examine the effectiveness of home-school partnership, Okeke (2014) established that parental evenings offer teachers the best opportunities to communicate with caregivers about their children. Okeke (2014) noted that teachers rely on the evening schedules of caregivers as an opportunity to solicit parental support in educating and motivating the learners. According to Okeke (2014), the evening schedules of caregivers tend to be formal meetings, and caregivers are always expected to make appointments to meet a teacher during the evening hours. A parental evening may last for about four to five minutes, and a parent is always expected to meet several teachers. Okeke (2014) concluded that caregivers' evenings are less effective and efficient than other parental involvement strategies due to some limitations. First, Okeke (2014) observed that caregiver evenings provide very little time for teacher-parent interactions. Thus, teachers may not have an opportunity to share enough information about the school, home, and the child. Second, some caregivers are often too committed to other activities and may not always fit into the school programs for a parental evening. Okeke (2014) acknowledges that schools have made considerable efforts to overcome this challenge through

the involvement of caregivers in the planning and scheduling of these parent's evenings. For instance, Okeke (2014) noticed that some schools send questionnaires to caregivers to seek their views on a suitable time to schedule the evenings. Third, some teachers find it challenging to balance formality and be informal when meeting teachers during these evenings. Despite the limitations, the study still may be utilized to show parental evenings as an effective way through which teachers can reach out to caregivers.

Home Visits

Teachers can also reach out to caregivers through home visits. As Hornby (2011) noted, a home visit is one of the useful ways through which teachers can connect home and school environments for purposes of effective learning. In a study to ascertain the effect of home visits on teacher beliefs regarding diversity and teaching, Lin and Bates (2010) determined that home visits positively impact teacher perceptions toward caregivers. Specifically, the study showed that home visits allow teachers and caregivers to share their experiences with the child and address relevant issues that might affect them. Home visits serve to address issues affecting a learner in addition to establishing a positive relationship between caregivers and teachers, which will, in turn, increase the involvement of caregivers in school activities. Precisely, Lin and Bates (2010) hold that home visits set the stage for active parental involvement.

Home visits are a preferred mode of teacher-parent interaction because they give teachers a first-hand experience with the home-related issues that might affect the learner's performance. As Okeke (2014) puts it, home visits provide teachers with a deeper understanding of learners' home environments and help build healthy relationships between teachers. On this note, Okeke (2014) argues that home visits can be as rewarding as formal teacher training in terms of the benefits that this strategy offers to teachers. Lin and Bates (2010) concluded that the home visit

is a suitable way of reaching a parent. Home visits are useful because they enable teachers to understand and appreciate other attributes that learners might bring to class from the home environment, for instance, cultural backgrounds. Lin and Bates (2010) determined that home visits are more suitable for early childhood programs than at any other learning stage.

Extracurricular Events

Sporting events constitute another widely recognized way through which teachers can reach out to caregivers. As Okeke (2014) admits, sports and games are inherently uniting, and it is for this reason, some schools often organize sporting events involving teachers and caregivers. Teachers can use sporting events as an opportunity to share with caregivers about their children's progress in school. Additionally, these sporting events serve as avenues or platforms for promoting unity and establishing cooperation frameworks that help build productive school-home relations (Okeke, 2014). The benefit of parental involvement in school sporting activities either as a player or supporter extends beyond academic works. Duerden et al. (2013) hold that parental involvement in children or youth sporting activities is fundamental to s success in sports. The main limitation of relying on sporting events is that it offers minimal attention to academic issues since it concentrates on extracurricular activities.

Systems of Communication

Successful parental involvement revolves around strong teacher-parent rapport and effective parent-teacher communication (Park & Holloway, 2016). However, various stakeholders with a schooling system hold slightly different views on what constitutes effective parental involvement. For instance, school administrators have a unique definition of what makes up a successful parental involvement. Generally, school administrators define ideal parental involvement based on three main attributes (Young et al., 2013). First, school administrators

believe that parental involvement is all about active parental engagement (Young et al., 2013). In this case, active engagement connotes parental participation in school activities, for instance, taking part in school decision-making processes and attending conferences. Second, school administrators define parental involvement based on the nature of parental support. Effective parental involvement offers adequate support to learners, for instance, help with homework and creating a learning environment at home (Young et al., 2013). Third, school administrators base their definition of parental involvement in the communication between caregivers and teachers. According to Young et al. (2013), most school administrators prefer two-way communication between caregivers and school.

Teachers can also reach out to caregivers through direct communication channels. Zhang and Hatcher (2011) categorize these communications channels as either formal (traditional) or informal communication forms. Traditional forms of parent-teacher communication, according to this study, include one-way or direct communication strategies such as personal notes, e-mails, letters, and phone calls. Formal communication methods, on the other hand, include parent-teacher nights and face-face-meetings. These direct communications are often mistakenly considered parental involvement but are usually strategies for informing caregivers (Zhang & Hatcher, 2011). This direct communication implies that teachers rely on direct communication to keep caregivers updated about learners' progress or issues. In this regard, most direct communications are designed to inform caregivers about the safety and security of their children in school. Additionally, direct teacher-parent communication often involves informing caregivers about the activities in which their children are engaged.

Various parent-teacher engagement strategies can be compared by categorizing and evaluating them as either one-way or two-way communication strategies. Ideally, all approaches

to parent-teacher engagement involve the sharing of information either in one-way or two-way directions. Each of these modes of interaction and communication has its unique strengths or weaknesses. Cooper et al. (2010) believe that one-way communication such as letters, e-mail, and newsletters are the most effective and efficient ways of providing valuable information to caregivers. The researcher attributes this assertion that most written communications are well organized and structured and include synthesized information, making it easy for caregivers to read and understand.

Nonetheless, one-way communications are generally one-sided and thus may not provide an excellent opportunity for teachers to learn more about students from their caregivers' point of view. For this reason, two-way communication is considered advantageous, especially whenever a teacher needs to dialogue with caregivers over issues regarding their children's well-being in school (Cooper, 2005). Two-way communication is also regarded as the best way of establishing parent-teacher partnerships.

Another factor discovered from the literature that could influence parental involvement in academics of children is the language used in school (LaRocque et al., 2011). Suppose the school uses academic vocabulary, and the staff has no other way of communicating to the caregivers without using the academic language. In that case, this factor becomes a basis for determining parental participation in school (Jafarov, 2015).

Although teachers and caregivers understand each other's language, teacher attitudes in communication can influence the level of parental participation in school activities (Pena, 2000; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In most cases, parental roles are not clear or known to caregivers, and therefore, the teachers must make such roles explicable, thus improving parental involvement

(LaRocque et al., 2011). It has been observed that if teachers have well-defined requests to caregivers, then the caregivers respond quickly to such requests (Jafarov, 2015).

Caregiver Perceptions

Just as teachers, caregivers have varied opinions regarding their involvement in the schooling activities of their children. These varied opinions can be broadly classified as either positive or negative. Caregivers who are optimistic about parental involvement believe that engaging in schooling programs and activities boosts the success of their children (Zhou, 2014). Caregivers associate parental involvement with student success. Caregivers believe that engaging in learning activities is the most suitable way of monitoring the academic progress of their children and intervening whenever there is a need. Compton (2016) revealed that monitoring students' homework and assignments are one of the most frequently cited beneficial parental involvement strategies among most caregivers. According to Compton (2016), caregivers believe that it is always vital to regularly monitor the kinds of homework their children have been assigned and check for other communications that come from the teacher. One caregiver who participated in a study conducted by Compton (2016) stated that he checks his daughter's homework. "I make sure that everything is signed and ready to be turned in for the next day," said the participant. Barge and Loges (2003) state that most caregivers believe that it is always necessary to check if learners have completed their homework or assignments on time and correctly.

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships

Caregivers also perceive parental involvement as beneficial because it helps in fostering personal relationships with teachers. Most caregivers assume that parental involvement is all about having good working relationships with teachers and that good parent-teacher relationship

always translate to better child treatment while in school. “If teachers and faculty know the caregivers, they treat the student better” (Barge & Loges, 2003, p.146). Ideally, strong teacher-parent partnerships help teachers to understand better their learners and hence treat them well. The role caregivers are expected to play in the education of their child may not be clarion, so it may be necessary for teachers to share with them what they are expected to do in a clear, concise manner (LaRocque et al., 2011). Even when caregivers fully understand the communication coming from the teacher and the expectations of them as a caregiver, the level of involvement will boil down to the attitude of the teacher (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Sheridan (2018) argues that it makes a big difference when a school or faculty understand that caregivers are involved in their children’s learning processes and care about their progress.

Caregivers associate parental involvement with learner well-being in school. Caregivers who keep close ties with teachers tend to be more confident that their children are safe and secure in school. Constructive connections between caregivers and teachers have revealed improved student academic achievement, social competencies, and emotional well-being. When caregivers and teachers work as partners, students do better in school and at home (Sheridan, 2018). Wanat and Zieglowsky (2010) suggested that a relationship of mutual trust and respect fosters increased parental involvement. Parents may be more persuaded to share in school-related events based upon their relationships with teachers.

Some African American parents believe their children are often the targets of teachers, according to Howard (2015). Murray (2012) explains this notion dubbed deficit thinking more clearly:

> Some parents believed African American children are disproportionately labeled as having attention disorders or other disabilities. They also believed the consequence of

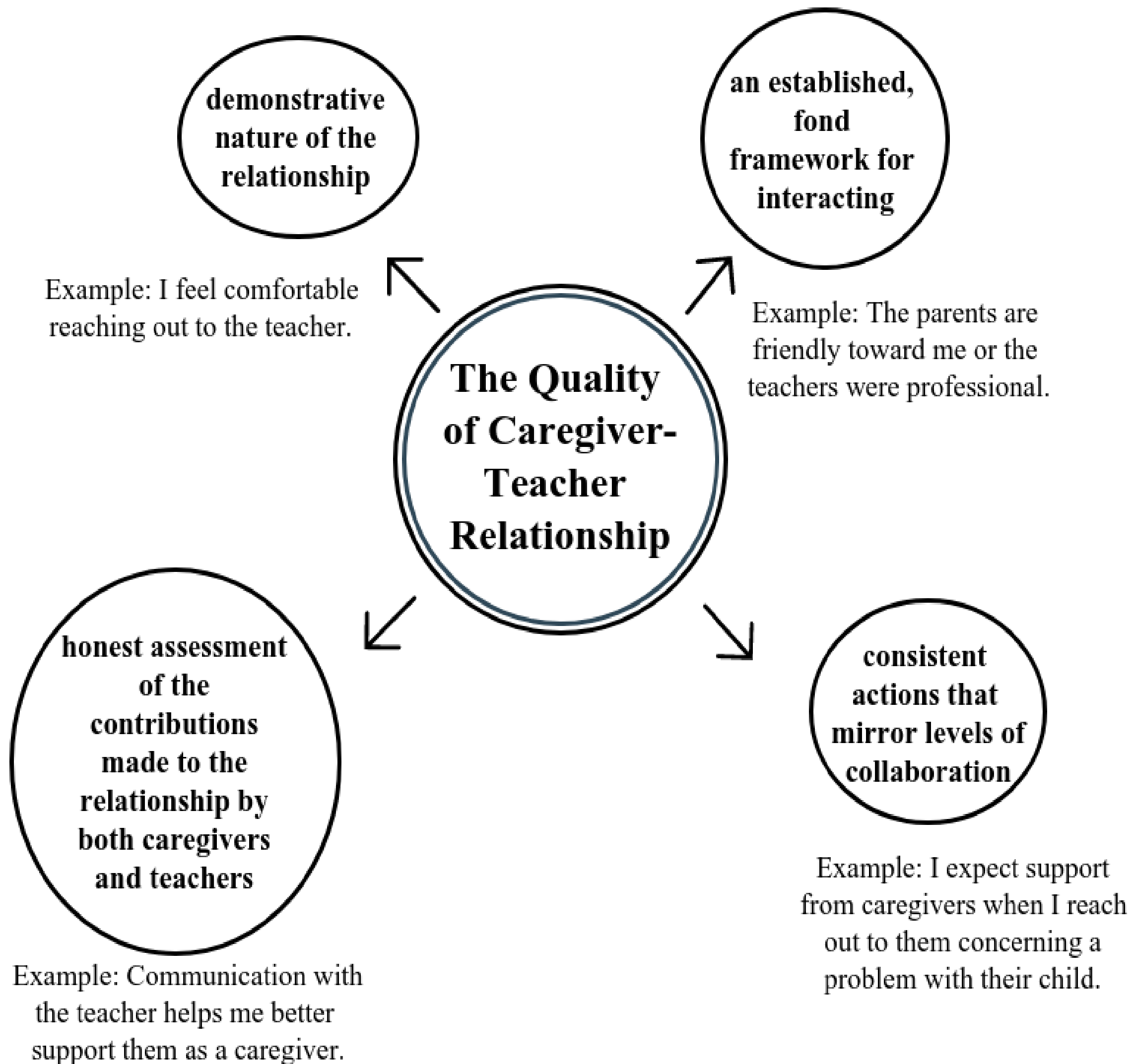
> labeling, especially around issues of behavior, prevents a child from having a second chance in which underlying issues remain unaddressed and low expectations follow a child from grade to grade.

McKenna and Millen (2013) conducted a qualitative study researching parental engagement and concluded "the understanding of parent participation in children's lives is fluid, robust, and specific to context and culture (p. 9). McKenna and Millen (2013) emphasized in their findings that parental engagement must be collective, social, and uniquely personalized.

> Engaging parents in a respectful, meaningful, reciprocal avenue of communication is a commitment to the civic-minded, democratic, community-centered principles out schools were founded upon, and we should put aside preconceptions about parenting and the abilities of children and their families based on race and class (McKenna and Millen, 2013, p. 44).

Figure 2

Indicators of the Caregiver-Teacher Relationship Quality



Cultural Differences

The impact of cultural differences on the perceptions of the teacher to the caregivers has been well documented in the literature. As one example, African-American parental involvement has been widely researched in the literature. In traditional society, school involvement practices were likened to modern techniques that have been influenced by the social segregation of black communities (Allen & White-Smith, 2018). Allen and White-Smith (2018) have theorized that

similar to those early days, African-American caregivers take their children to special schools for the political, economic, and social status of the child and that caregivers perceive involvement with high regard. Scholars have noted the current involvement practices in schools for black caregivers include volunteering, classroom participation, financial support for the children, the formation of parent groups, and school governance activities (Abel, 2012; Noël, 2014). While these practices have been discussed to be generally beneficial, scholars have argued that they prioritize the needs of the school at the expense of the community (Baquedano-López et al., 2013). Such practices signify the importance of economic incomes for a parent to get involved in school activities centered around their child. African-American caregivers who live in poverty may not be able to participate in various parental involvement methods in the education of their child (Allen & White-Smith, 2018). Also, varying work schedules and the cost of childcare services act as obstacles to African-American caregivers seeking involvement in the education of their children.

Coopersmith (2009), McGrady and Reynolds (2013), and Toldson and Lemmons (2013) assert that African-American caregivers who have time for school-based involvement face rejection and exclusion, mainly from white, female teachers and middle-class staff at the school. Scholars have posited that middle-class individuals and white teachers, among others, are more likely to value child-rearing practices that are associated with White culture, thus perceiving African-American rearing styles as embryonic (Coopersmith, 2009; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Toldson & Lemmons, 2013). School staff tends to misinterpret African-American caregivers' actions and behavior, thus dismissing any act of critique from African-American caregivers (Moultrie, 2016). As a result, African-American caregivers perceive school as one of the many places they feel excluded and unwelcome (Latunde, 2018), which leads to their disengagement

(Bridges et al., 2012) from school activities and a lack of parental involvement in school-based activities.

Student with Disabilities

Lalvani (2012) interviewed 33 caregivers of children with disabilities and provided significant insights by using various themes relating to parental participation as a role in student success. Some of the themes included caregiver perceptions of themselves as learners, educators, advocates, and their relationships with professionals (Lalvani, 2012). Finally, concerning the perceptions of caregiver roles in the education of their children, the caregivers had a notion of unequal partnership. Their educational involvement experiences indicated power imbalances, where some caregivers perceived themselves as followers of the professionals while others considered themselves leaders (Lalvani, 2012). However, taken together, there was a general perception of anger, frustration, conflict, stress, and institutional insensitivity for caregivers, which suggested the need for school improvement.

Differences in the Perceptions of Caregivers and Teachers

Ghysens (2009) described that both caregivers and teachers perceived parental involvement to be high, particularly for dimensions involving home-based activities. The scholar found that teachers were not sure which involvement activities took place at home, forcing them to consider various involvement activities as one (Ghysens, 2009). Ghysens (2009) also determined that teachers had a negative perception of non-native caregivers' involvement, caregivers with lower levels of education, caregivers from non-conventional families compared to others, including caregivers of higher economic status. Teachers tended to have stereotyped perceptions of caregivers with more inferior social, economic status, and teacher perceptions of involvement levels were lower than the perceptions of caregivers, particularly concerning

involvement activities at home. Furthermore, the factors that influenced the perceptions of caregivers varied. For example, the perceptions of parent involvement by teachers seemed to be influenced by the demographic variables of the parent and the characteristics of the child (Ghysens, 2009).

In contrast, Ghysens (2009) found that the needs of the child mainly influenced the perception of parental involvement by the caregivers. Finally, although it is not clear about the perceptions of parent involvement for caregivers with low achieving students, teachers perceived the involvement of caregivers of such children to below. Therefore, the scholar considered that teacher perceptions of parental involvement depended on the child's characteristics in school and class and the family background of the child.

The perceptions about parental involvement revolve around school activities, while caregivers extend it much wider to involvement at home and other child-rearing practices. Caregivers are much more involved in the education of their children if the teacher keeps the parent informed about the weaknesses and strengths of their learners, particularly if the teacher suggests methods for improving student performance (Caspe, 2003). Stanikzai (2013) explained that caregivers who believe that the school has a positive and inviting environment participate more in the education of their children. Parental involvement is almost sure to change when school personnel creatively look for ways to involve caregivers and offer parent education programs to train caregivers to become involved in their children's education (Chen, 2020). Parental involvement has its roots in the behaviors of the teacher, and those roots may be significant obstacles or facilitators to parental involvement (Duristic & Bunijevac, 2017; Hornby & Blackwell, 2018). Suppose a parent believes that the teacher is trustworthy, cares for the welfare of the child, and is more receptive to parent-initiated involvement activities; he or she

will become much more involved in the academics of their children (Burke, Mulvey, Schubert, & Garbin, 2014).

Factors Which Influence Parental Involvement

Parental involvement has been described as beneficial to many aspects of learning. Both caregivers and teachers have also been described in the literature as having the same perception that parental involvement is advantageous. However, numerous cases have been noted in the literature indicating many instances of caregivers failing to fulfill their beneficial parental involvement duties in a child's education. Explanations can be found in the literature, describing factors that facilitate parental involvement in school.

McQuiggan and Megra (2017) demonstrated that caregivers who had higher college degrees and participated more in school activities had greater expectations of their child performing better in school. They talked much more about matters involving school and education with their children. Bridges et al. (2012) indicated that low SES caregivers are less able to engage in school activities because of transportation issues; therefore, higher levels of successful engagement can be obtained through assisting with homework, checking folders, and so forth. Jafarov (2015) has revealed that a closer examination of the literature shows that factors influencing parental involvement in the education of children can be categorized into parental related factors, school-related factors, and student-related factors.

Parent Related Factors

Several social-political factors play a critical role in influencing parental involvement in schools. Such factors may include negative school experiences and the social-economic condition of caregivers (LaRocque et al.,2011). Some caregivers tend to reject the idea of

parental involvement despite the demonstrable vitality to student achievement. This pessimism can be accounted for using several factors.

Personal Experiences

Personal experiences are also critical factors in the role theory that influences parental participation. Caregivers utilize their own experiences as students to construct their perceptions about their roles and school roles regarding the education process of their children. Caregiver attitudes can be affected by current observations, memories, personal school experiences, involvement with teachers, evaluations of their childhood experiences, and any other relevant impact on past engagements or involvements (Gadsden et al., 2016). A combination of childhood involvement and current engagement work together to influence a parent's construction of his or her role in engagement and participation in school matters of learners (Kohl et al., 2000).

The reactive suggestion is another factor addressed in the literature that influences educator interaction with caregivers (McCormick et al., 2013). According to this, communication between caregivers and teachers is mainly focused on addressing the problems and difficulties of learners concerning discipline and academic issues (McCormick et al., 2013). Caregivers would view these communications as reactive but would prefer a proactive form of engagement in school activities (Bartel, 2010). Reactive parent-teacher communications result in a lower level of parental engagement and involvement in the education of their children. This problem is more severe and rampant in high-need urban schools.

Level of Education

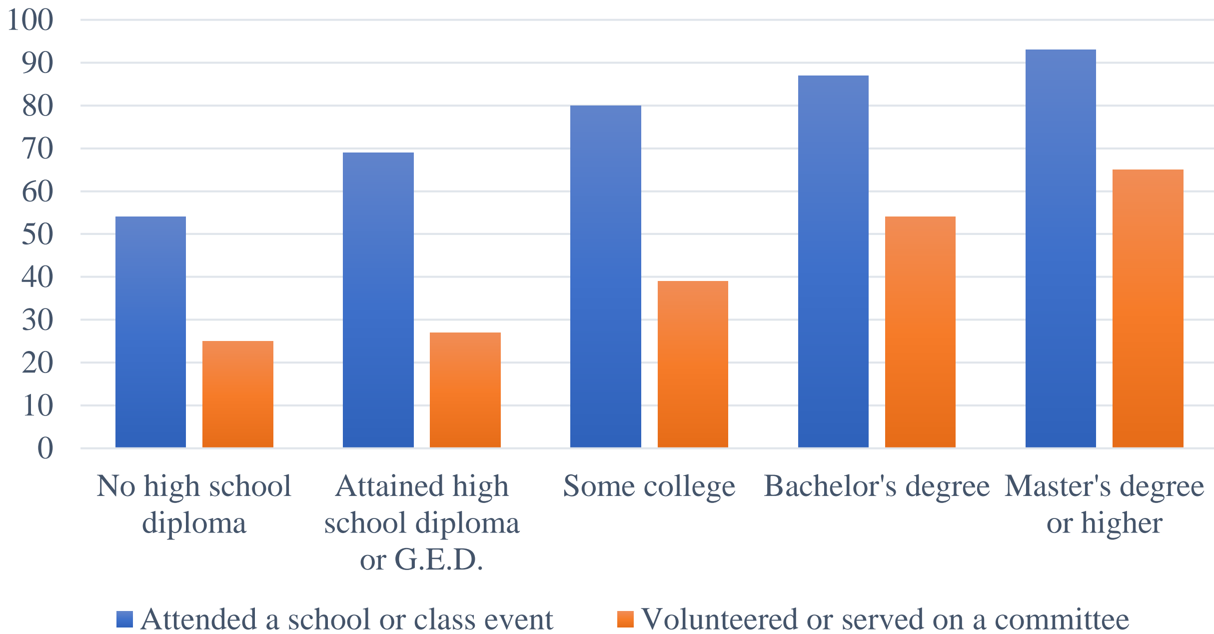
A portion of caregivers believes that they have no reason to involve themselves in the academic progress of their children because they have limited academic skills (Baeck, 2010). Such beliefs are common among caregivers who once had a negative experience with school

involvement either as learners or as caregivers. LaRocque et al. (2011) noted that caregivers who had negative school experiences might have lower levels of involvement in the education of their children.

Particular caregivers may lack the academic aptitude to help their children with academic assignments. As Murray et al. (2014) noted, caregivers with low self-efficacy concerning their capacity to help their children in school are always committed to engaging in school-based parental involvement. The level of education that the parent has attained is also a crucial factor that influences their participation in the educational matters of their children (Baeck, 2010). In 2016, more than 87 percent of caregivers with a baccalaureate degree or graduate school education attended a school or class event, likened to 54 percent of caregivers with less than a high school diploma. This disparity is even more extensive as it relates to volunteering or serving on a committee: 25 percent of caregivers who did not earn a high school diploma volunteered or served on a committee at their child's school, likened to 65 percent of caregivers who completed a master's degree or higher. Moreover, some caregivers contend that parental involvement can cause unnecessary teacher roles (Hill, 2016). Such caregivers believe that all academic matters rest with the teachers, and any attempt to intervene in the academic programs of a school is an encroachment upon the responsibilities of school personnel

Figure 3

Parent and Family Involvement in Education: Results from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2016



Time Constraints

Pessimism toward parental involvement among caregivers has also been linked to busy work schedules. Some caregivers operate on tight schedules, so any effort to interfere with their programs is deemed interference. Murray et al. (2014) mentioned that work and scheduling issues are among the most common barriers to parental involvement. Other than work schedules, some caregivers are overburdened with family responsibilities. Therefore, they are quick to reject the idea of parental involvement, as this would constitute an additional burden. According to Loughrey and Woods (2010), many caregivers believe that participation in their child's schooling is unnecessary because of other obligations such as work, family, and everyday tasks. Regularly, as Paylor (2011) stated, caregivers become content with the idea that teachers are in control of education. Baeck (2010) investigated factors that fostered parental involvement and discovered

that parents with a university degree showed a lack of time as the key factor which impedes their ability to be involved.

Socio-economic Status

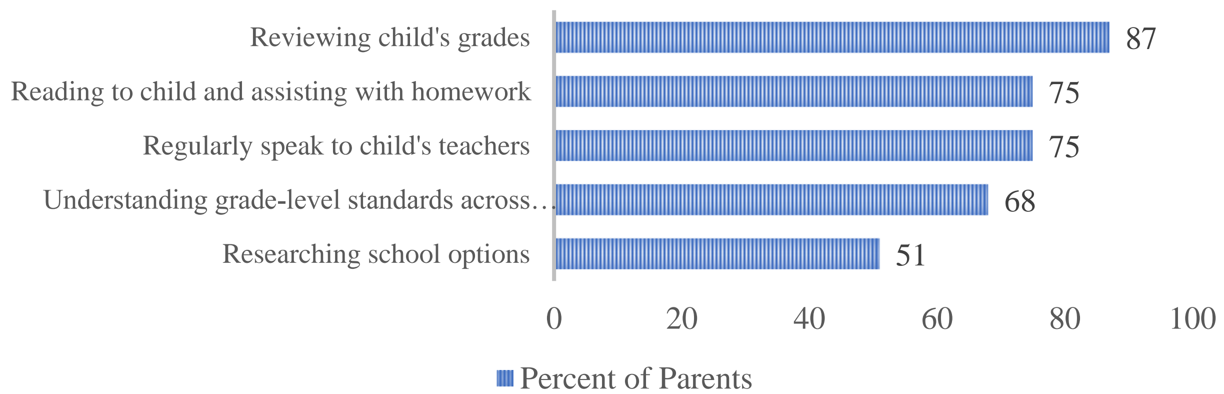
Jafarov (2015) stated that the level of income is not a primary factor influencing the caregivers' level of involvement or participation in educational matters of their children. Negative perceptions of parental involvement vary greatly between caregivers in rural and urban areas in some countries. In their research, Hasnat (2016) noted that caregivers in rural setups tend to be less accepting of parental involvement than their counterparts who dwell in urban areas. This difference can be accounted for using socio-economic disparities between caregivers living in these two environments.

However, LaRocque et al. (2011), in their research, found that parental involvement can be adversely impacted by the socio-economic condition of caregivers and the family of the student. Schnee and Bose (2010) found that caregivers from lower socio-economic backgrounds hold the school responsible for educating students academically and socially. Some caregivers from lower socio-economic backgrounds perceive that teacher expectations of involvement from them are lower because of their level of education and social class (Wanat, 2012). Smith and Wohletter (2009) asserted that a portion of teachers might lack the cognizance of parental effort from caregivers with lower socioeconomic statuses. A parental effort such as driving out of the community school district, so their children can attend better schools, restricting domestic chores to allow their children to focus on homework, and modeling hard work as a lesson for how to sustain. These actions are demonstrations that help show that cultural narratives are a form of parent involvement that may not be viewed as traditional models. This deficiency in awareness can diminish the imperceptible strategies that are used by caregivers with lower incomes.

In contrast, Bridges et al. (2012) found that low-income, African-American parents were very engaged in multiple ways. In their study, Bridges et al. (2012) found that 87 percent of the participants said they routinely checked grades, 75 percent routinely communicated with teachers, 75 percent assist students with homework assignments, and 68 percent try to understand better the state standards and expectations of their children in school. This can be seen in Figure 4, adopted from Bridges et al. (2012).

Figure 4

Percentage of Low-Income Parents Who Support Their Children in the Following Ways regularly



School-Related Factors

School Culture

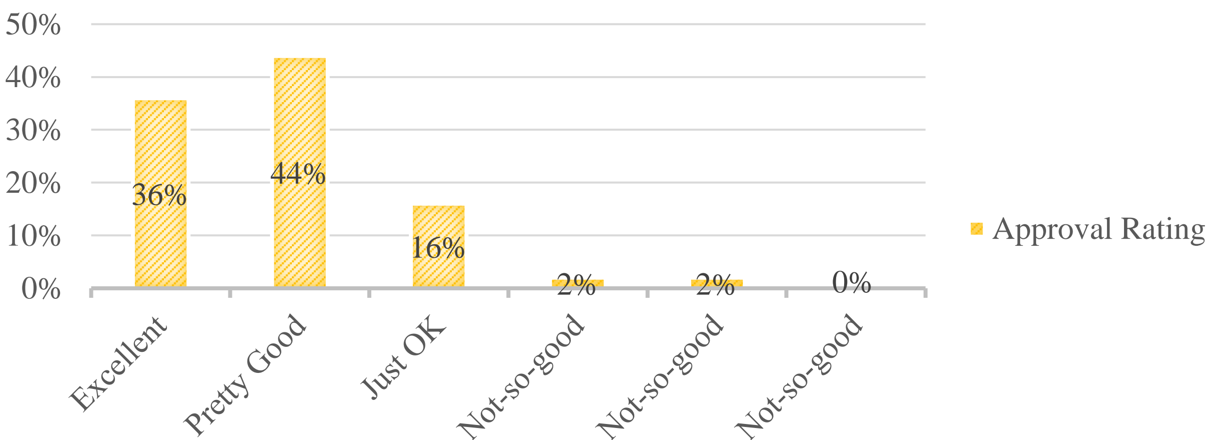
According to Deal and Peterson (2002), parental involvement plays a vital role in a school's culture. "A school, by its essential nature, must be an open system with highly permeable boundaries and parts of the school culture must reach out and connect with parents" (Deal & Peterson, 2002, p. 184-185). Whether or not caregivers are satisfied with the school their child attends shaping parental involvement (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). Stacer and Perrucci (2013) examined caregiver beliefs and discovered that if caregivers were not satisfied with the

school, they were more inclined to be involved from a distance. Friedman et al. (2006) noted that caregiver satisfaction might include satisfaction with multiple school facets such as school staff, culture and climate, a menu of services offered, and parental involvement opportunities. Bridges et al. (2012) found that most caregivers credit poor school performance to a substandard culture and inadequate staff. One caregiver in the study commented, "I think sometimes in our communities, we don't get the cream of the crop. We get the teachers nobody else wants."

Virtuous parent involvement reflects caregivers taking a hands-on role in their education of their children. If caregivers believe this, there is an augmented chance; they will involve themselves in the education of their child (Bracke & Corts, 2012, p. 190). Bridges et al. (2012) concluded that it is vital to help caregivers of minority learners make links between the family at home and the school staff. Simultaneously, Bridges et al. (2012) noted in their study that parent perceptions of their children's local school are more favorable than the local school system. In their research, Bridges et al. (2012) found that 80 percent of their parent participants felt their children's local school was either excellent or pretty good. This can be seen in Figure 5, adopted from Bridges et al. (2012).

Figure 5

Parental Ratings of Their Children's Schools

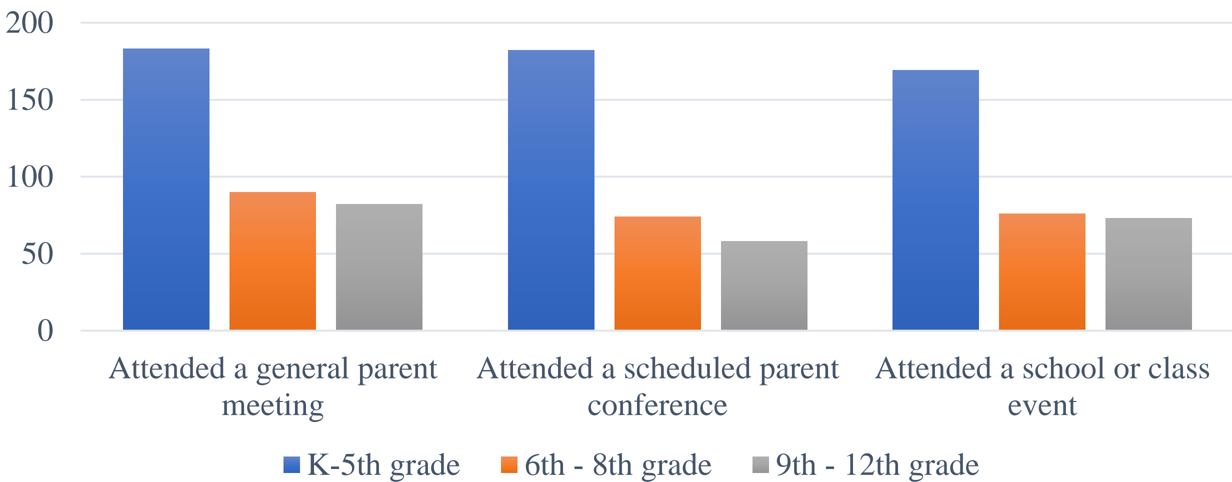


Student-Related Factors

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2001) have assessed that if caregivers rely on the fact that the student wants their involvement and participation, the adults respond quickly, particularly if they note that the student has a significant interest in his or her parent's participation. However, the student's demands for their parent's involvement can be allusive or conspicuous, depending on factors such as the feeling of freedom and academic performance (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2010). Hornby and Lafaele (2011) argued that although caregivers mention their respect for the freedom of their children as a concern when thinking of parental involvement, learners themselves find parental involvement beneficial and value it. A learner's age is also another factor that influences parental participation in school. Hornby and Lafaele (2011) have described this aspect by explaining the downward trend in parental involvement, where caregivers are much more involved in the education of learners in lower education levels than learners in higher education levels. According to McQuiggan and Megra (2017), caregivers have greater participation rates when their child is enrolled at the elementary or middle school levels. For example, in 2016, at least 90 percent of students from Kindergarten through eighth grade had a caregiver attend parent-teacher conferences likened to 82 percent of caregivers of high schoolers (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017). This information adapted from McQuiggan and Megra (2017) can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Rates of Parent Participation Across Grade Levels



This part of the literature may be used to suggest that the motivating factors to parental involvement include the age of the child, the level of education, student academic performance, and the learner's level of interest for their parental involvement. For the last factor, higher performance and younger learners motivate influence, while poor performance is a demotivating factor to parental involvement in schools.

Summary and Conclusion

This literature review sought to explore teacher and parent perceptions about parental involvement in the education of their children in alternative schools. After a critical analysis of the literature, it is apparent that parental involvement in education is an area that has drawn immense interest from scholars for many years. This study examined various topics related to teacher and parent perceptions about parental involvement in schools and provided a detailed analysis of what entails parental involvement. The chapter also offered an overview of alternative schools and how students become enrolled in such learning environments.

Based on the literature, it is apparent that parental involvement in a learner's education has significant positive impacts on performance. Both caregivers and teachers are aware of these benefits, and the literature indicates good parental involvement across various types of schools. Teachers and caregivers alike want the best for the child; however, not all agree on the effects of active parental involvement practices. While some teachers believe that the caregivers are not doing enough, most caregivers believe that their involvement level is appropriate, given the commitments and other responsibilities.

This review also closely examined the factors that influence parental involvement and attempted to relate these factors to teacher and parent perceptions about parental involvement in the education of learners. Important themes were developed from the review and included culture, family, and parental based factors. These factors have been described to be significant for shaping perceptions about parental engagement in the education of their children.

While the literature has explored parental involvement in special schools and conventional schools, there is little evidence relative to the perceptions of teachers and caregivers about alternative schools. All the same, since perceptions for traditional and special schools seem to align, the researcher in this study noted that the perceptions for all the schools could be similar to alternative schools, mainly because the needs of children in alternative schools are in between the two types of schools. While this study does not include specific literature examining teacher and caregiver perceptions of parental involvement in alternative schools, the researcher considered the perceptions of teachers and caregivers at other schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of caregivers and teachers regarding parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. This phenomenological study was developed and designed to discover the perceptions of teachers and caregivers concerning parental participation in an alternative learning environment.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?
2. What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?
3. What factors facilitate parental involvement?
4. What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Research Design

A phenomenological research method was used in this study. The researcher chose to employ the phenomenological research method as a framework for this study to distinguish developing themes by analyzing participant perceptions. Phenomenological studies describe how human beings experience a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is useful for describing a phenomenon utilizing the voices, perceptions, and experiences of the participants (Cordes, 2014). A structured interview approach was used for data collection and to study the research questions. The structured interviews were one-on-one interviews between the researcher and participants, using open-ended questions to guide the interview process.

The phenomenological research method was chosen to comprehensively examine the experiences and perceptions of teachers and caregivers of alternative school students. This research focused on identifying and exploring the participants' perceptiveness and investigating the factors that succor parental involvement in the alternative learning setting. Phenomenological research involves asking participants about their experiences of events in their lives; their lived experiences. Such a method allows researchers to understand what it feels like to be another person and understand a phenomenon as others experience it (Austin & Sutton, 2014). McMillian and Schumacher (2010) state that in-depth interviews are useful in allowing researchers to grasp how participants regard their world and internalize their experiences with phenomena.

Patton (2002, p. 21) stated,

> Qualitative findings are longer, more detailed, and variable in [the] content; analysis is different because responses are neither systematical nor standardized. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture other people's points of view without predetermining those points of view through [the] prior selection of questionnaire categories.

Role of the Researcher

Sutton and Austin (2015) state qualitative research should communicate why people have thoughts and feelings that may influence their decisions and how they behave. Qualitative research is utilized to acquire insight into the feelings and opinions of people, which may provide the foundation for a future separate qualitative study. The researcher's role in qualitative research is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

Palaganas et al. (2017) emphasized qualitative inquiry principles, including ensuring methodological cohesion, working inductively, being a responsive investigator, and acquiring an adequate and appropriate sample, and paying attention to relational ethics. Embedded within all these principles should be the concept and process of reflexivity. As a concept, reflexivity refers to the mindfulness of the researcher. Reflexivity necessitates self-awareness as a process. As a former alternative school administrator, the researcher established ideas of why caregivers of alternative school students may or may not be as involved as teachers may like based on reflective practice.

Potential Bias

Galdas (2017) asserted the acknowledgment and grasp of research bias are essential in determining how the findings and results will be used. Patton (2015) recommended that the researcher recognize likely biases and take the necessary steps to mitigate the influence stemming from those biases. The researcher acknowledges their interest in this study to grow as a school administrator and share findings with alternative school administrators seeking to boost parental involvement. The researcher worked as an assistant principal at an alternative school in a nearby school district. Because of their unique experiences in an alternative school, the researcher acknowledges that they may hold their own opinions and preferences concerning parental involvement in the alternative school setting. Even so, the researcher felt comfortable writing about the phenomenon of parental involvement in the alternative school and working with participants throughout the study. The research questions were a stringent guide for the researcher during the data collection process to avoid bias to sway the participants. As data were collected from interviews, the researcher punctiliously recorded the findings to avoid adding any of their inclinations.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought the approval of East Tennessee State University's Institutional Review Board before completing the research. The Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University has been established to approve, monitor, and review research involving human beings. The researcher received the Institutional Review Board (See Appendix A) to research the phenomenon of parental involvement in the alternative school setting.

The researcher explained to participants that their participation was optional, and they could choose not to participate in any step of the interview process. All participants were informed of the protocols of the study as well as their role in the study. An informed consent script (See Appendix B) was utilized with parent and teacher participants. The informed script included the following elements: description of the research and investigators conducting the investigation, explanation of the procedures to have the video being recorded, duration of the subject's participation, the extent to which confidentiality will be maintained, questions about the research process, and permission to begin the research. An informed consent document was attached, included with a recruitment letter and flyer. A copy of each packet was distributed to eligible participants who forwarded the packet to other potential participants who were eligible to participate. The consent form was signed or reviewed, not seen – that is to view before the participant contacting the researcher about participating in the study. However, a script with the same information was also presented at the initialization of the interview process, read again, questions answered if any, and verbal consent acquired for interviewing and audio recording.

A separate document that contained study codes correlation to the participants' identifying information was stored in a locked cabinet with restricted access to the researcher only. The researcher took the following precautions while collecting data via Zoom: use of a

password, share a link via a confirmed e-mail or other confirmed method (no public display of the link), and locked the meeting so no one else could join once the interview commenced. The Zoom recordings will be securely uploaded from the password-protected Zoom cloud to an external encrypted hard drive.

The caregiver participants participated in an interview (See Appendix C). The teacher participants also participated in an interview (See Appendix D). Both interviews included open-ended questions, which allowed for exposition. After the interviews were finalized, the researcher took the data and transcribed it. All participants were allowed to look over the researcher's transcriptions to ensure exactitude. The participants interviewed were not associated with the researcher by any means. None of the information collected from this study was linked to participants before, during, or after the finalization of the study.

Zoom

Al-Busaidi (2008) stated, "the aim of qualitative research is to develop concepts that can help us understand social phenomena in natural settings, giving emphasis on the meanings, experiences, and views of the participants." The researcher conducted interviews with teacher participants through video-conferencing technology, namely Zoom. The researcher conducted interviews with the caregiver participants through video-conferencing technology [Zoom]. The participants chose the interview times. Teachers were enthused about participating, as evidenced by their promptness and willingness to answer questions in depth. Data collection from the interviews took place in May of 2020.

Sample

Because qualitative research aims to understand from within the subjective reality of the study participants, the researcher chose not to sample a large, representative sample of

individuals. Instead, the researcher sought participants who could share their experiences and realities to exemplify the range of variation within the study (Jacobs, 2013). Teacher participants had to be fully licensed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and employed in an alternative learning setting in eastern North Carolina. Caregiver participants must have parented a child enrolled in an alternative learning program or school as a student in eastern North Carolina. All teachers were employed at various alternative schools in eastern North Carolina. All caregivers had children enrolled as students at the same school where the teacher participants were used.

Sampling Strategy

The researcher selected participants who met the specified criteria. To participate, caregiver participants must have been a caregiver of an alternative school student. Teacher participants needed to be fully licensed and the teacher of record for a class of alternative school students. The researcher asked other subjects to pass along letters that contained contact information for the researcher to prevent a breach of confidentiality or an invasion of privacy. Subjects were given a Snowball Recruitment Letter, equivalent to a flyer to pass along to other potential recruits along with the researcher's contact information.

Data Collection Methods

Face-to-face interviews have a distinct advantage in enabling the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and gain their cooperation. Interviews allow the researcher to clarify ambiguous answers and, when appropriate, seek follow-up information (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). Six teachers and six caregivers who met the criterion established for participation consented to be interviewed face-to-face. All interviews took place, one participant, at a time on different days, through Zoom. During the interviews, all participants

were informed about the research, its purpose, and components. The researcher asked a standard set of open-ended questions and provided structure to the interview process. Participants were also given information about their data and how it would be kept confidential. Before the interviews, participants were advised that the interviews could be longer due to the open-ended nature of the questioning.

The researcher utilized Zoom to audio record the interview. According to Al-Yateem (2012), recording research interviews is a wonderful way to capture qualitative data. While writing notes or observations is necessary, the researcher could miss data or details vital to the research. Because of the audio recording, the researcher asked participants to interview where it was quieter, and later playbacks could be heard unambiguously. Need to include transcriptions were made from the recorded interviews and checked for accuracy.

Data Management

Participants in this study were given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity. Data found on transcripts, notes, and other investigatory documents were stored digitally on a password-protected thumb drive. The digital copies were printed as back up hard copies. The hard copies were filed in a locked cabinet at the researcher's residence along with the informed consent paperwork. The researcher opted to employ study codes on data documents instead of classifying information to protect the identities of the participants. Separate documents with study codes correlation to identifying information were also stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher's residence, with limited access to the researcher.

Data Analysis

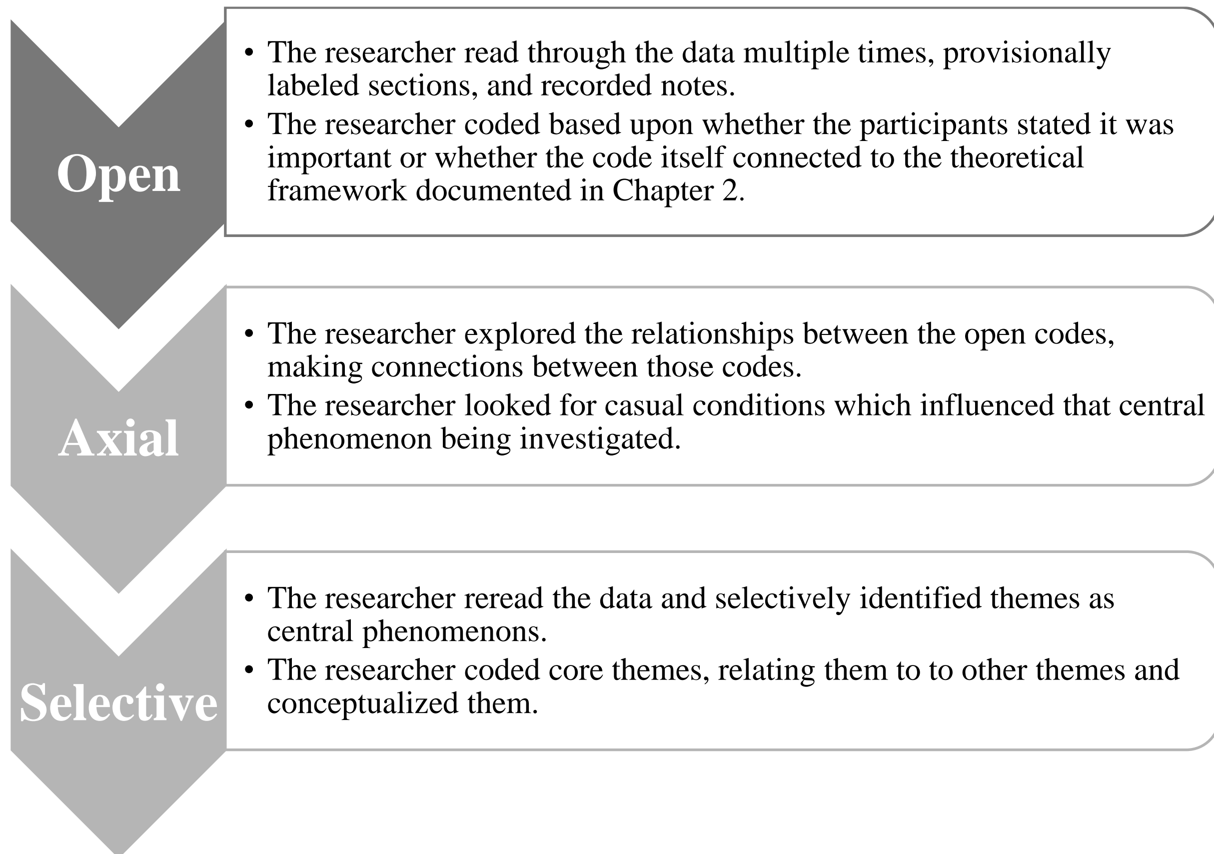
Data were analyzed from interview transcripts and notes. The researcher analyzed the data by developing and applying codes, identifying themes, patterns, and relationships within the

data, and summarizing it. Through content analysis, the researcher categorized data from interview transcripts around the research questions. Charmaz (2006) stated that initial qualitative codes are impermanent, relative, and grounded in the data. Further, the researcher must describe what is taking place and contend with what it means (Charmaz, 2006).

Open coding as a strategy was used first. During open coding, the researcher coded each line of each transcribed interview manually. Notes were taken, and the data were examined for more significant themes. The constant-comparative method was utilized to further expand data analysis and saturate the data (Tie et al., 2019). The researcher looked for instances that represented themes and continued to explore those instances until the inundation of themes was exhausted. In the next phase of coding, axial coding, the researcher identified relationships among the open codes and noted the connections between the codes. In this coding stage, the researcher searched for causal conditions that influenced the central phenomenon being investigated. Intervening conditions that may have shaped or facilitated strategies for addressing the phenomenon were also noted. In the final stage of coding, the researcher again read over the data, identified individual themes as a central phenomenon, and conceptualized those codes by relating the core theme to other themes and enhanced themes that needed tweaking. Figure 7 includes a summary of the data analysis process for this study.

Figure 7

Data Analysis Process



Assessment of Quality and Rigor

Credibility

Peer debriefing helps focus on the accuracy of the interpretation and suppositions due to the research findings. Peer debriefing also helps limit researcher-bias while providing proof of collaboration of stakeholders and allows circulation of findings (Hendricks, 2006). Peer debriefing was utilized to ensure the researcher's opinion was not at the research helm and help determine if the results aligned with the data collected. The researcher also implemented follow-up interviews (Hail et al., 2011). A copy of the interview transcripts was given to each participant during individual follow-up interviews. During follow-up interviews, participants

were allowed to augment information and or revise their statements from initial interviews. The researcher shared with participants a summary of findings upon completion of research to ensure the findings were accurate.

Dependability

An inquiry audit was arranged whereby an inquiry auditor scrutinized the method of the study to determine its appropriateness to the dependability of the study. The inquiry auditor examined the findings, data, interpretations, and recommendations to determine if the study was reliable and supported by data. The researcher utilized the code-recode strategy, which involved coding the same data twice with one week between them. The researcher compared each coding results to see any disparities (Chilisa & Preece, 2005).

Confirmability

"Confirmability refers to the quality of the results produced by an inquiry in terms of how well they are supported by informants (members) who are involved in the study and by events that are independent of the inquirer" (Williams, 2018). A qualitative researcher must examine the informants' (or participants) background and position to determine how confirmability influences the research methodology. As such, a reflexive journal was developed. The researcher made regular entries into this reflexive journal as the research took place. Within the entries, the researcher documented methodological decisions and the logic for those decisions, the coordination of the study, and reflection regarding their values, philosophies, and interests (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The research questions were placed beneath data categories and themes to determine if the data validated the findings and if they were enough for the researcher to interpret. Categories and codes were created and changed multiples times by the researcher. Doing so ensured accuracy as there were multiple sources of data.

Transferability

The representational inquiry depends on demonstrating solid descriptive data or thick description (Patton, 2002) to expand the transferability of analysis. The researcher generated descriptive but brief summary statements that emerged from the themes. The statements by the participants were then compacted into more transitory statements wherein the main idea was compressed into even briefer thematic statements. The constant-comparative method was utilized to expand further data analysis (Tie et al., 2019).

Summary

This chapter essentially mapped the methods that the researcher utilized to better understand parental involvement in an alternative learning setting. The research questions, research design, researcher's role, ethics, setting, participants, sampling approach, and methods for collecting, managing, and analyzing data were all synopsized in this chapter. The next chapter will include the research findings of this qualitative study to include the description of the participants, interview findings regarding the research questions, and embryonic themes.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of caregivers and teachers regarding parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. Henderson and Mapp (2002) determined a positive correlation between parental involvement and increased student achievement. Mapp (2004) concluded that this is true for students of all ages regardless of their socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, and educational experiences. Results from this study will provide insight on the impediments to parental involvement at alternative schools as well as the expectations of parental involvement from alternative school instructors.

Research Questions

A qualitative interview guide was written and comprised of open-ended, structured questions with the following questions at the core:

1. What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?
2. What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?
3. What factors facilitate parental involvement?
4. What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Description of Participants

Twelve participants were interviewed for this study. Six of the participants were caregivers to students enrolled in an alternative school in eastern North Carolina. The remaining six were teachers of students enrolled in an alternative school in eastern North Carolina. All

caregiver participants were females; five identified as African American while one identified as Hispanic. Two of the teacher participants were African American males, while the remaining four were Caucasian females. All teachers were employed in an alternative school. Likewise, the caregiver participants had children who were enrolled in alternative schools that were eligible for Title One funding from the U.S. Department of Education.

Table 1

Participant Profiles

Participant	**Demographics**			**Sampling Criteria**		
	Gender		Race	Child Enrolled at an Alternative School	Licensed Teacher at an Alternative School	Located in Eastern North Carolina
	Male	*Female*				
Teacher A		✔	Caucasian		✔	✔
Teacher B	✔		African-American		✔	✔
Teacher C		✔	Caucasian		✔	✔
Teacher D	✔		African-American		✔	✔
Teacher E		✔	Caucasian		✔	✔
Teacher F		✔	Caucasian		✔	✔
Caregiver A		✔	African-American	✔		✔
Caregiver B		✔	African-American	✔		✔
Caregiver C		✔	African-American	✔		✔
Caregiver D		✔	African-American	✔		✔
Caregiver E		✔	Hispanic	✔		✔
Caregiver F		✔	African-American	✔		✔

Interview Findings

The researcher generated descriptive but summary statements that emerged from the themes. The statements by the participants were then compacted into more transitory statements wherein the main idea was compressed into even briefer thematic statements. The constant-

comparative method was utilized to expand data analysis further. The researcher developed concepts from the data by coding and analyzing simultaneously (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Four key themes developed from the data regarding:

- Perceptions of the caregivers concerning how they are engaged by alternative school personnel.
- The factors which facilitate parental involvement.
- Perceptions of alternative school instructors regarding parental involvement.
- The factors which facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers.

The themes that developed from the coding were:

- school dynamics valued by caregivers
- teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers
- caregiver scheduling conflicts
- caregiver-teacher relationships

School dynamics valued by caregivers as a theme was broken into three sub-themes: Academics, School Culture, and Menu of Services offered to students. School dynamics developed regarding research question three. Teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers was a theme that emerged from research question four. Caregiver scheduling conflict as a theme stemmed from research questions one and three. The final theme, caregiver teacher relationships, was about research questions one, two, and four.

Table 2

Participant - Theme Alignment

Participant	Themes: School dynamics valued by caregivers			Teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve parents	Caregiver scheduling	Caregiver-teacher relationships
	Academics	*School Culture*	*Menu of Services*			
Teacher A				✓		✓
Teacher B				✓		
Teacher C				✓		✓
Teacher D				✓		✓
Teacher E				✓		✓
Teacher F				✓		✓
Caregiver A	✓	✓			✓	✓
Caregiver B		✓	✓		✓	✓
Caregiver C	✓	✓			✓	✓
Caregiver D		✓			✓	✓
Caregiver E	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Caregiver F	✓		✓		✓	✓

Table 3

Research Question-Theme Alignment

RQ	Themes: School dynamics valued by caregivers			Teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers	Caregiver scheduling conflicts	Caregiver-teacher relationships
	Academics	*School Culture*	*Menu of Services*			
One						✓
Two						✓
Three	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Four				✓		✓

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships

Communication. During interviews, teachers were asked to describe their expectations of caregivers. All teachers stated they expect some form of involvement from parents, although it varied in degree and type. However, all teacher participants in this study said they expected communication. Teacher A stated:

> I expect parents to be responsive and approachable. I think parental involvement is reactive and gets us nowhere; whereas, if parents are proactive, our interactions are much friendlier. I hate that my interaction with parents is 90 percent negative, and the only time I can get them to the school is when their child has done something to be suspended out of school. That's a reactive response to my notes, emails, voicemails, and calls so that we can fix a small problem before it becomes a big one. Same with grades, I get upset with parents at report card time, but I send out grade reports at the halfway mark and no response. The reaction is come to the school when the report cards go home, and they are to their liking, and I expect more from parents. If you can come to the school when you are angry, then that means you are able to come to the school.

Teacher B said that he expects parents to be more involved with their children when it comes to academics and helping at home with assignments. He stated:

> I like for parents to be preemptive. From experience, the parent-teacher relationship is must better when issues are addressed beforehand. I'll speak to academics as opposed to behavior because many of our students who are already at-risk and behind academically fall through the cracks because parents are reactive to academic failure rather than

proactive. You can't effectively deal with a problem if you are always two steps behind it. I just wish parents would be more attentive to grades, mastery, assignments, homework, and things like that so that we can close the achievement gap. The only way to do that is to stay ahead of the game and proactivity. I like to hear from parents about academics more than I do about behavior because instruction is what I am here for – to teach students.

Teacher C stated:

> I expect parents to be involved in whatever ways work for them. I am not so concerned with specific actions more than I am concerned with inaction. I do not like telling parents how to get involved, but I just simply encourage them to get involved in a positive way. I expect parents to be receptive but also be assiduous about ensuring students succeed. Again, how they do that will be up to them, but I expect communication at the minimum. Communication, to me, is at the base of any type of involvement.

Teacher D stated:

> I expect parents to be involved in a way that is comfortable for them and beneficial for their child. That may be coming to sporting events, parent night, or volunteering in some form or fashion. I expect communication, but if I do not get it, I am fine. I've learned about how to communicate with parents even if I must initiate it first most of the time.

Teacher E stated:

> I expect parents to be supportive of the work we are doing with their children. Support for me means many things, but the main things are responding to our concerns, assisting with homework at home, and asking questions when they do not understand something.

Teacher F stated:

> My expectations for parental involvement are simple – communicate with me. I believe that any foundation of a school-home relationship is communication, so I am looking for parents to communicate with me. One of the issues that I run into is when parents do not return calls or e-mails, and at that point, I begin to feel that I am a bother, so I scale back unless it is urgent and something has transpired which should be brought to their attention.

Research Question 1 Summary

Alternative school instructor perceptions toward parental involvement revealed that having communication with parents was important to them. Alternative school instructors perceived their relationships with parents to be based on not just the frequency of communication but the cause of communication as well. All six teachers interviewed agreed that communication was a baseline expectation from caregivers. Yet, some teachers perceived that caregivers should be involved in the child's education in convenient ways. Overall, alternative school instructors believe that parental involvement, albeit in many forms, is vital to student success.

Research Question 2

What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships. During interviews, caregivers were asked to gauge between the numbers one and five concerning how important it was to have a relationship with the teacher(s) of their children and explain why they selected their number. All six caregivers reported that their relationship with the teacher of their child was significant in how the teacher engaged them as caregivers. Caregivers utilized wide-ranging expressions, for example –

“relationship,” “bond,” “accord,” “communication,” and “contact” to emphasize the relationship with the teachers at the alternative school where their children were enrolled.

Caregiver A stated:

> I would say a four because they’re with my child more than I am. I spend maybe four hours with him, but they spend eight with him. I think my relationship with them determines their [the teachers] relationship with him [the student]. If we have a positive relationship as adults, then hopefully, that will spill over into the classroom. I have a good relationship with my son’s teachers; we communicate and make sure that he’s on track. I get the normal report cards and progress reports from teachers, but I also get weekly emails and texts when matters are urgent. I feel comfortable talking to his teachers, and they are most friendly. The communication helps me build a positive relationship with the teacher and the school in general.

Caregiver B concurred on the importance of politeness between the teacher and caregiver. She stated:

> I would rate it a five because I think when we [caregivers and teachers] are on one accord, then the students benefit. It is important that I know who is teaching my child; we don’t have to be friends, but I would like to at least be friendly with one another. I have a decent relationship with [child’s name] teachers. Most of them stay in contact with me about the basics like grades and behavior. One of the teachers and I have bonded through our parent to teacher relationship, and that makes being involved easier. I know what they expect from me as a parent, and they know what I expect from them as my child’s teacher.

Caregiver C spoke about communication and her current relationship with teachers at the alternative school where her son is enrolled:

> I would say five because relationships are important. I like the relationship that I have with the teachers at [name of alternative school]. They constantly communicate with me, and honestly, there is not much that is happening at the school or in the classroom that I don't know about. I have a special bond with the EC [exceptional children] teacher at the school, and she goes beyond the call of duty. She changes nothing in the IEP [individualized education plan] without asking for my input and inviting me to the meeting to hear what I think. I know that they are required to involve me, but she [the EC teacher] goes above and beyond to keep me informed, which means the world to me. Now, if I can get that same bond with all the teachers, then we would be great, but we are on professional terms, at least.

Caregiver D also agreed that communication is important to the building of caregiver-teacher relationships. Caregiver D also emphasized her satisfaction with the level of communication coming from the teachers at the alternative school where her daughter is a student. She stated:

> Four, because I feel like I need to know you if you are going to be dealing with my child. When I think of relationships, I am thinking more along the lines of professionalism, not necessarily personal. Relationships are important for parents and teachers; we should maintain open lines of communication, and we do maintain them. I am satisfied with the open lines of communications from some of the teachers at [name of alternative school], but I think it could be improved too. As a parent, I am not caught by surprise on issues, so they communicate enough, but I think they should communicate about other things beyond their classroom. It would be nice to hear about games and other extracurricular

activities from the teachers. I see those as opportunities for me to get involved and potentially help out too.

Caregiver E described teachers as a part of the "village" and spoke about her comfortability in communicating with teachers. She stated:

> Five! It takes a village. I have a great relationship with most of the teachers, maybe three out of four. I feel like I can e-mail or call and ask questions, and they seem happy to help me when I do reach out. There are times when I do feel as if they downgrade or miscalculate my knowledge about certain things, but they are very involved with me as a parent. I would describe my relationship with the teachers as cordial for the most part. We touch base on normal things like schoolwork and occasionally behavior when there is a problem that needs to be addressed at home.

Caregiver F stated:

> Five. I think the relationship between teachers and students is only as good as the relationship between the parents and the teachers. Personally, I think [daughter's name] has a great relationship with her teachers and counselors because I try to model that behavior for her. When she sees mom relating with her teachers appropriately, then she can relate with them appropriately. I like the teachers at [name of alternative school] because they keep me engaged; whether it's asking me to proctor during testing or asking me to volunteer for career day, I get communication and news from them. I've even had a teacher at [name of alternative school] send a text message to me to ask how our family was doing after Hurricane Florence flooded our area.

Caregivers were asked about the improvements they felt teachers could make in involving them in the education of their children. Five out of six caregivers interviewed agreed that they were satisfied with the level of collaboration with the teacher. Caregiver C stated:

> I do not know if there is anything else that they can do at this point. They have been really communicative during the pandemic, and I will say they communicated during the school year prior to closing too. However, communication is more what's the word I'm looking for regular. If I had to grade communication from the teachers today, I would say an A-.

Caregiver F stated:

> They could not do a better job of communicating with me. I am well informed and much involved as my work schedule allows. I often say that I cannot help what I do not know, and the teachers do an excellent job of making sure I know about what's happening in the classroom.

Caregiver A spoke in terms of being invited to events and happenings at the school. She stated:

> I am always getting correspondence or messages about something that is due or a project coming up. I am involved because the school involves me and gives me that opportunity to be involved. I cannot make everything, but when informed, I do my best to make what I can.

Caregiver D stated, "teachers do communicate even though it can be one-sided or about one particular area more than another, but they do communicate and make me aware of issues, so I am satisfied with that." Caregiver E stated:

> I do not think they could do more than what they have and are already doing. They send home information weekly; I get report cards and calls to make sure I got the report card, I

get emails, texts, and calls. To be honest, it's overwhelming at times, but I understand that they want us in the loop, and they do a good job at it.

Research Question 2 Summary

Perceptions of caregivers about how teachers engage involve and or engage them in the educational process revealed some common themes. Through interviews and various questions, caregivers perceived that their relationship with the teacher of their child was significant in how the teacher engaged them as caregivers. Caregivers perceived that it is not the regularity of the communication with the teacher; it is the communication condition that serves as the foundation for establishing a quality caregiver-teacher relationship. The perception is that better communication between the two (caregivers and teachers) fosters strong parental involvement at the alternative school. Overall, strong communication was perceived as a baseline for positive caregiver-teacher relationships, which was the catalyst for better caregiver involvement.

Research Question 3

What factors facilitate parental involvement?

School Dynamics Valued by Caregivers

Academics. Academics in this study refers to studying and reasoning rather than practical or technical skills. Academics may include, but not be limited to content subjects such as Math, Reading, Language Arts, English, Social Studies, or Science. Assignments, grading, curriculum, instruction, credits for coursework, and testing are academics.

Of the six caregiver participants interviewed, five reported that they valued the alternative school's academic program where their child was enrolled. Caregivers utilized wide-ranging expressions, for example – "teaching," "learning," "credit recovery," and "assignments," to emphasize their prioritization of academics at their child's school. Caregiver E stated:

> I care more about credit recovery than anything else. I try to make sure that I am on top of [child's name] when it comes to his assignments and grades. I check PowerSchool regularly to see if he is completing his assignments and turning the work in. Grades are important to me because the main thing for us as his parents is making sure he graduates, and he can't do that if he does not have his credits and learning the curriculum.

Caregiver C likewise stated:

> I send my child to school to learn above everything else, so I try to do my part as a parent by learning what he is learning so that I can help him at home if need be. [Student's name] was placed [name of alternative school] because he was failing at [name of traditional public school], so now that this is his last chance at graduating, I want him to do well on every assignment and finish credit recovery.

Caregiver F indicated that her daughter was involved in extracurricular activities at her last school before enrolling at the alternative school. She explained:

> I've always tried to be a supportive parent, and her [the student] being at [name of alternative school] does not change that. When she was at [name of traditional public school], she was involved in band and cheerleading. I made every game and competition that I could, and if I could not, her father would go. At the same time, we neglected academics, and she got behind in her credits, so my focus has shifted from extracurricular to just curricular. I am on top of grades and communicating with her teachers about assignment details and due dates. I care more about her learning, graduating, and getting ready for college.

Caregiver A defined parental involvement as being heavily involved with what she perceived as the second most important school function – instruction. She stated:

> I am always at the school on my days off. I just want to make sure that my son is safe and learning in a safe place. Safety comes first for me. Once I know that he is safe, then I want him to get his work done. On days when I cannot visit the school because of scheduling conflicts, I e-mail his teachers about grades posted in Power School [student information system].

Caregiver B spoke about the benefits of a smaller student to teacher ratio and how she believes that enables the teacher to differentiate instruction and assess students more uniquely and creatively. She stated:

> The learning program seems to be much better at an alternative school because the class sizes are much smaller. My child has no more than 10 in each class, and I think that will allow the teacher to give more one on one attention to her students as opposed to having 20 or 30 kids in one room with one teacher. I have noticed a difference in his [the student] grades, and his motivation to do the work is there too. Every child learns differently, so the smaller class sizes are a plus for helping the teacher's scale assignments and how they break information down for each individual child as opposed to a cookie-cutter one size fits all type classroom. On top of that, children can ask more questions and get the help they need more freely as opposed to being embarrassed in the class of 20 of their friends. While I'm not happy about him being there [at the alternative school], I do like the smaller nurturing setting.

School Culture. When asked whether they felt welcome on the alternative school campus where their child is enrolled, four out of six caregivers said they did not feel welcome. Caregiver A stated:

I do not feel welcome at my son's school because the people at the front office are not friendly. I feel they do not greet me properly by saying hello nor with a smile; it's simply how may I help you as if I am disturbing them. Then the principal walks in the front office, looks at you, and does not say hello, good morning, or anything. I was raised to greet others who are in your presence, so it's an expectation of common courtesy to me. It's almost as if they are jailers, and we are coming to visit our children in jail; that's how cold they are at times.

Caregiver C did not have the same experience as Caregiver A, but she has had bad experiences with teachers who made her feel unwelcome instead of front office personnel. She stated:

When I do come to school, I am made to feel like I am stupid at times. During conferences, teachers talk to me as if I do not know basic knowledge or because my child has made some bad decisions to be placed there, I must be a bad parent, which is not the case by any means. I have had teachers grade papers during IEP meetings, which I think is disrespectful. If I am going to come to school, the least they can do is pay me some attention.

Caregiver E stated:

I do not always feel welcomed. The ladies in the front office do not show good customer service, and I know that customer service exists in retail, but it also exists when you are serving the public. They [front office staff] do not greet me, and I have had one of the ladies turn her back to work on something else as I was trying to ask questions. Other than front office crew members, teachers are professional when I do come in contact with them. I am not so sure as to whether it [the feeling] is a lack of welcoming as much as it is a lack of embrace. The staff makes me feel welcomed by the smiles and the greetings,

> but I do not feel that I am genuinely embraced. I can tell when people are genuine and when they are insincere.

Caregiver D shared, "I feel welcome until I actually meet with certain teachers. Everything [is] fine from the front office to the counselors. When I meet with certain teachers, the [negative] attitude starts." Unlike Caregivers D, E, A, B, and C, Caregiver F feels welcome at the alternative school where her child is enrolled. She stated:

> At first, when I noticed the metal detectors, I was worried about how the environment would be and whether staff members would be nice to my husband and me. I did not know if the kids were treated as prisoners because of the ramped-up security measures, so I was concerned about the atmosphere at the school. However, I must say that I am highly impressed with the lengths they [school personnel] go to make sure I am welcome when I do arrive on campus. I am greeted professionally, and my daughter has not had one teacher who has not made me feel that I belonged there.

Menu of Services. All caregiver participants interviewed reported that they valued the menu of services offered at the alternative school where their child was enrolled. When asked to reflect on their level of involvement and if there was more they could do, caregivers utilized wide-ranging expressions, for example – "counseling," "FAFSA," "college," and "mentoring program" to emphasize their value of student services at their child's school. Caregivers expressed an appreciation for such services being offered to their children.

Caregiver E stated:

> What I cannot do as a single parent because of me working long hours, I feel that [Counselors' Names and School Social Worker's Name] do and does well. I did not

> graduate college, so I know little about the process for going [to college]. It made me feel really good to know that [Child's Name] counselor was there to talk to her about college and even assisted with the FAFSA [*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*]. I also like the resources that [School Social Workers' Name] has offered me so that I could help my daughter outside of school. We recently started seeing a therapist to discuss some personal issues, and [School Social Workers' Name] pointed us in the right direction. She's graduating in a few days online, although I am disappointed we will not be able to have the traditional ceremony due to the coronavirus [pandemic], but I'm proud of her … she's headed to [name of the college] in the fall if they re-open … that's still in the air. This would not be possible without [Counselors' Names and School Social Worker's Name] or other student support people at the school who helped point her in the right direction on her worst days.

Caregiver F echoed similar sentiments about the menu of services offered to her daughter, a graduating senior at the alternative school she attended.

> I would've like to have been more involved in her schoolwork as much as I was in her pursuit to be athletic and musically talented. I did not know how valuable and important counselors were in these last four years of school no idea. I believe I talked to the counselors more than I did the principal during her time at [Name of Alternative School]. [Daughter's Name] opened up more to her counselors about issues than she did me, and I expected that to a degree. I am a familiar face to her and have been the past 17 years, so it is easier for her to share with her counselors, who in turn shared with me and her father. They [counselors] even helped her narrow down career choices and talked to her about majors, colleges, and different degrees for different occupations. What amazed me most

> was the college field trip that [Counselors' Names] planned. They took the seniors to [college name], and as a parent of a child who was written off and labeled at-risk, that gave me hope. I was rather surprised that an alternative school would be doing field trips of any kind, especially to a college. She's decided to go to college in the fall at [name of the community college] to get a two-year degree in Nursing and transfer to [name of university] for a four-year degree in nursing.

Caregiver B stated:

> The counselors are a great support system at school. They know my situation, and they do what they can to support my child and me. I was not happy about it [child's placement at an alternative school] at first, and I dealt with my own insecurities due to it. I was not in a good headspace, but the counselors told me they would keep him on track at school to allow me to focus on my situation with my husband. They did what I was not in the mind frame to do at that time, and that was there for [child's name]. The principals were involved too as black men. The counselors were black women, but they put together a mentoring program for the boys at the school to meet once a week with a mentor, and I found that to [be] beneficial as well. As a single parent of a black male, I do not have all the answers, so that was good to have a program in place at school teaching him how to dress for interviews, tie neckties, fill out applications for jobs, all the things a man should know out here in the real world.

Caregivers A, C, and D did not include counseling in their responses as they reflected upon their parental involvement. Still, A and D did mention Communities in Schools, a program that partners with select schools with high needs.

Caregiver A stated:

> I try to be visible at the school, and I probably go more than I should. I cannot think of anything else that I could do more of. I do like the CIS [Communities in Schools] program. She [the CIS coordinator] connected me to resources that would improve my parenting and help me help my child, which I thought was great. CIS is student-friendly but parent-friendly too.

Caregiver D responded:

> There is always room for improvement. I would like to be more proactive in homework and consistently communicating with teachers. I do communicate, but I communicate more with the school social worker and the CIS person because they reach out to me to keep me updated with things they are doing for the kids and stuff like that.

Caregiver C stated:

> I can do more by coming to more after-school events like sports. I think by doing that, I can have more casual conversations with teachers, and we can get to know each other better. I hate that we always meet at a table. I would like to see if they [teachers] can socialize in more relaxed environments like a game or afterschool event.

Caregiver Scheduling Conflicts

This theme is used to describe how the schedules of caregivers are, at times, conflicted with opportunities for parental involvement for various reasons. When asked about their level of parental involvement and their desire to do more concerning the education of their children, five out of six caregivers agreed that scheduling could be problematic. Caregiver B stated:

> I would like to be more involved, but that is not always possible. I am now a single mom, and the weight of parenting is on me. I want to be clear that when I say single, I am

not saying that I do not have financial help in raising my son, but my son lives with me and the day to day parenting on me. I work two jobs to make sure that he is dressed nice and that he can participate in the teenage things, all while trying to make sure he has the basics like shelter and food. Once I leave my eight to four, I work at Belk three to four days a week in the evenings for four hours.

Caregiver E, another parent with multiple jobs to provide for her household, also mentioned that time is a problem for her related to being more involved as a caregiver. She stated:

> I just cannot do it [be fully involved], and I hate it because I feel as if I am forced to choose between providing for my children and being involved. Do I go to work and keep a roof over their heads, lights on, food in their bellies, or do I quit a job and risk not being able to take care of them and possibly losing them to the state?

Caregiver F stated that while her schedule is tight, she does find some time to be involved, but she admitted that scheduling hampers the potential of her full involvement.

> I consider myself an involved parent, but I do work, and I am active in my church as well, so scheduling is sometimes a problem. We do not make every extracurricular activity, but we do not miss them all either. My husband works full time, and he is a pastor as well, so I try to go [to after-school events] when he cannot, and there are very few times when he has stepped in when I could not go because of schedule conflicts. If we are both busy, my mom and dad have stepped in to make sure there was some representation from our family.

Caregiver C concurred:

> I am active as a parent when it comes to responding, and I guess you could say I'm a responsive parent. Whenever a teacher or principal reaches out, I am on it. I asked my

> children about their day at school, and I check to see if assignments are done, and if I have questions, I will email the teachers. I just do not have time to do all of the after-school stuff because of my work schedule, and I hate that because I feel like I am missing out on important information like college applications, scholarships, and stuff that I need to know. My mom, the grandmother, does go to after-school programs, but I am the mother, so I feel like I need to be there, but I have to pay bills too, and he understands.

Caregiver D stated,

> I work six days a week and 12-hour shifts. I wish I could be more involved, but I am up before the school bus arrives and when I arrive home after the school building has closed. I cannot afford to take too many days off or get fired for being on the phone at work. As a single mom, I am forced to choose between providing and the extras like going to the school and being involved. Right now, providing and paying bills is my priority. Don't get me wrong, education is important too, but I have to balance things out and make sure we have the basics like water, food, electricity, clothes, and stuff to live; it's just me.

Research Question 3 Summary

Caregiver perception regarding the factors that facilitate parental involvement included scheduling conflicts, academics at the school, the school's culture and or climate, and the menu of student services available to students. Most caregivers interviewed perceived front office personnel and teachers to be impolite, making them feel unwelcome. Most caregivers interviewed agreed that scheduling conflicts exist for various reasons beyond their control, such as occupational or personal issues such as being the sole parent in the home. While many caregivers interviewed for this study expressed the desire to be involved, their disposable time for parental involvement was limited.

Research Question 4

What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Lack of Resources and Support to Involve Caregivers. When asked about the resources and support to engage caregivers, all six teachers stated that they do not have adequate resources to engage parents. In comparison, only two teachers stated that training on parental engagement was insufficient.

Teacher A responded:

> I have friends who work in other districts, and they use School Messenger in Power School [student information system] to communicate through text messaging and e-mails with parents and students. At [name of alternative school], I have do not have anything to communicate with parents. While the district has not provided us with the resources to engage parents, I do text certain parents from my personal cellphone, but that's not enough. If they want us to engage parents and guardians, then we need more resources to communicate and training on how to do it and do it effectively.

Teacher B responded:

> It depends on what you consider resources. I do have a phone and e-mail, but that is not enough. Many of our parents do not have an email address, but they do have cellphones with texting capabilities. I used Remind, which is an app that allows me to text teachers without them having my personal number. However, I am still using my personal resources, such as my cellphone. When it comes to engaging parents, I do not think that is enough. We need more, especially at [name of alternative school]. But, with the pandemic wiping out budgets, North Carolina is probably going to be deducting, not necessarily adding.

Teacher C responded:

> The resources for parent outreach are insufficient considering the day and age we currently live in. There are so many communicative technologies that exist, and we are still calling parents on a landline [teacher laughs]. We need more – more up-to-date resources, more administrative support, and more training on how to involve parents in 2020. Parents are not what they used to be. They are younger, more progressive in terms of technology, and we have to tap into tools like social media, apps, text, and whatever else is out there to reel them in.

Teacher D responded:

> I won't say there are no resources, but I will say there could be more at our disposal than what is now. I use the Remind app, which will allow me to text parents. I tell younger parents that I will call them, and they tell me that they prefer text as opposed to talking on the phone. I tell grandparents that I will text them, and they tell me that they prefer to speak on the phone. I would like to see more resources where parents can choose a preferred method of communication, and the computer will communicate what I input based on their preferred method. Unfortunately, right now, I communicate through texts and e-mails because it isn't as time-consuming as calling individual parents about happenings in my classroom. If I print up a bulletin or newsletter, it never makes it home. So, I think a phone tree for teachers to use that will call, email, and or text based on the parent's preference would bring things to a happy medium.

Teacher E responded, "I think the resources that are available such as Remind are good. I think we need more resources because parent engagement is at an all-time low."

Teacher F responded:

> I like what we have in regard to resources, but I would like to see more resources and more training on how to use them. Right now, I currently use Canvas, which is a virtual learning management system to communicate with parents, but that only works if they sign up, and about 50% have not signed up.

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships. Four out of six teachers interviewed indicated that relationships factor strongly in how well they engaged with caregivers.

Teacher C stated:

> When parents are nice and supportive, I am more inclined to reach out. I avoid unproductive encounters with parents who create conflict with me. I avoid meaningless confrontations and verbally combatant parents who can be rude and disrespectful. Some parents like us as long as they are hearing what they want to hear about their child, but the day you advise them differently, they become belligerent. To avoid that interaction, I don't interact at all unless the parents reach out to me. I know that is not necessarily right but working in the environment that we work in is already stressful enough. I would like to have better relationships with all parents, but it does not work out that way at times. As I said before, I personally believe that students do achieve socially and academically when their parents and the teacher have a productive relationship. When parents are willing to engage with me as the teacher, I capitalize and involve them as much as I can without being a nuisance.

Teacher A stated:

> I have some parents with who I interact more because I have a good relationship with them. I am more persuaded to engage with parents when I know I have their support, and

they understand that I am here for their child. I do not believe I had bad relationships with parents, but I think some of the relationships that I have with some parents aren't the relationship I would want to have with my son or daughter's teacher. Some parents are not as responsive as I would expect but never flat out rude.

Teacher F stated:

> I never want to feel like a burden to a parent. I involve parents who have displayed an interest by doing the simple, small things such as returning my calls, answering my e-mails, signing up for Canvas [learning management system] so they can see their child's progress at any time. My level of engagement is contingent upon their level of involvement and willingness to be involved. If we do not have any type of relationship from parent to teacher and vice versa, I do not bother trying to engage the un-engage-able.

Teacher E stated:

> I believe they [caregiver-teacher relationships] are extremely important in this environment. I don't make leeway with some kids until I get on board with their folks at home. Once I develop open lines of communication with a parent, and we support one another, and they know that I care about their child, then I know the child will be successful regardless of how bad they acted to get placed at [name of the alternative school]. Parents and sometimes grandparents are the key to getting [students] to learn and behave. I have had great success as a result of positive relationships with parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents. Parents and guardians tend to have your back when they can relate to you and the work you are trying to do. Relationships with parents and others

> have been key in getting improvements from students both academically and behaviorally.

While four teachers agreed that relationships factor heavily into caregiver involvement and engagement, two dissented.

Teacher B shared:

> We can manage without outside relationships. Our duty as educators is to the children, not their parents. I do acknowledge that relationships with their parents make things better at times, but when they do not work, it's best to do what you can with the student. I've found that relationships, whether good or bad, do not work in getting parents to become involved.

Teacher D shared:

> Relationships with parents are not as important to me as relationships with my students. The key to getting parents engaged is not the relationship you have with them; it's the relationship you have with their children. I build relationships with parents through their children. From my personal experience, parents care more about the relationships you have with their children more than the ones you have with them. I'll say it like this – the nature of your relationship with the parents in most cases is based on the nature of the one you have with their child. So, parents become engaged when their children are.

Five out of six teachers interviewed believe that a pre-existing relationship with caregivers makes communicating with them much easier.

Teacher A stated:

> I believe having that rapport with parents makes communication better. Aside from being a teacher, as a human being, I find it easier to communicate with people with who I have

established some type of positive relationship. Having a positive relationship with the parent rids the conversation of awkwardness.

Teacher C stated:

> I can communicate with almost anybody, but to your question, relationships and familiarity make the conversation easier and better. I communicate better and easier with parents with who I am familiar and with whom I have a good relationship. Having that background with a parent breaks the monotony and brings fluidity to the conversation.

Teacher D stated:

> I believe that knowing the parent helps, but I like to know my parents through the lens of their child, my student. I think once we establish a triangular relationship between myself, the student, and their parents, then communication comes naturally, and so does understanding.

Teacher E stated:

> Relationships are foundational for good communication. I feel as if I need to know the parents of the students I am teaching in order to communicate with them effectively. When I say know them, I do not mean personally, but professionally. I want to know what their expectations are, dislikes, likes, and all those things related to the vision they have for their son or daughter. I feel I communicate better when I know what angle they are coming from.

Teacher F stated:

> Relationships and not just any kind of relationship, but positive ones, are foundational for me. I communicate to build upon that foundation but having a positive relationship with a

parent or guardian makes communicating with them much easier for me, especially if our interaction in the past has been positive.

Personal Experience. All six teachers interviewed said their caregivers were involved in their education when they were enrolled in a K-12 school as students. Teacher A stated, “Yes, my parents were involved in our education up until college.” Teacher B concurred,

> Oh yes, my mom was very involved in my education, but that tapered off as I got older, but she still came to the school and talked to the teachers when I was in high school. I was raised in a single-parent household, so working was a must for my mom. That is why I know that it [parental involvement] can be done if parents will make time for their kids.

Teacher C answered, “Yes, they were very involved and active.” Teacher D said that his grandfather attended his sports games, and his mother was big on grades and communication. He stated:

> My grandfather was big into sports when I ran track. I cannot remember a track meet that he did not attend, but he was not into the academic side of things like my mom was. My mom was more concerned about me passing classes, so she would email my teachers and make herself available in a heartbeat. My mom was a single mom, so my grandfather was like my father, so they worked well together, and they were known on a first-name basis when I was in school. It was expected that they would be involved, and teachers knew that to answer your question, yes.

Teacher E stated that her parents were involved and that her mother served on the Parent-Teacher Organization at his elementary and middle schools. She stated:

> My mom was very involved in me and my siblings’ education. She was the mom that baked cookies and brought them to school on Fridays. I had no choice but to behave and

> do well on assignments because my mom was at the school once a week, and teachers knew who she was and how to contact her if necessary.

Teacher F stated, “yes, parental support is something that my parents believed in. They believed they were an extension of the school”.

Research Question 4 Summary

The factors which facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers included the necessity for resources, the relationship between the teacher and the caregiver, and personal experience with parental involvement. All teachers interviewed for this study indicated that they lacked the resources for outreach to caregivers. Those teachers also believed that relationship was an essential factor in their decision to involve caregivers in their children's education at the alternative school. In this study, the teachers stated that their parents or grandparents were involved in their education as children. As the researcher explored the findings, he found that those same teachers who expected caregivers to be involved also experienced or watched their caregivers get involved in their education as students.

Chapter Summary

This chapter contains 12 study participants' findings; four themes emerged because of the qualitative research interviews with those participants who were caregivers and alternative school instructors in Eastern North Carolina. The final and subsequent chapter includes summaries of these findings as they link overtly to the guiding research questions, including considering the implications of those findings, real-world recommendations for educational entities, and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion

The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to discover the perceptions of caregivers and teachers regarding parental involvement as well as the factors that facilitate parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. This chapter includes a discussion of significant findings related to themes that emerged through the meticulous analysis of data and what implications may be valuable for use by school leaders, caregivers of alternative-school students, and teachers who teach alternative school students. Likewise included is a discussion on connections to this study and other literature from similar studies. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations of the study, potential capacities for research in the future, and a summary.

This chapter contains dialogue and imminent research possibilities to help answer the research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?
2. What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?
3. What factors facilitate parental involvement?
4. What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

The researcher developed concepts from the data by coding and analyzing simultaneously (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Four key themes developed from the data regarding:

- Perceptions of the caregivers concerning how they are engaged by alternative school personnel and the factors which facilitate parental involvement.

- Perceptions of alternative school instructors regarding parental involvement and the factors which facilitate their involvement with caregivers.

The themes that developed from the coding were:

- school dynamics valued by caregivers
- teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers
- caregiver scheduling conflicts
- caregiver-teacher relationships

School dynamics valued by caregivers as a theme was broken into three sub-themes: Academics, School Culture, and Menu of Services offered to students. School dynamics developed regarding research question three. Teacher concerns about the lack of resources and support to involve caregivers was a theme that emerged from research question four. Caregiver scheduling conflict as a theme stemmed from research questions one and three. The final theme, caregiver teacher relationships, was about research questions one, two, and four.

Conclusions

Research Questions

One: What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?

Communication. This study concludes that communication is expected as parental involvement from alternative school instructors and perceived as the fundamental parental involvement indicator. All six participants in this study emphasized communication as a critical form of involvement for caregivers. While the degree and subject of communication varied among individual teacher participants, they were all obstinate about parents communicating with them.

According to Sheridan (2018), communication is one of the critical components of the caregiver-teacher relationship. “Frequent two-way communication is important to stay apprised of what is happening at school, and two let teachers know important thing about [the] child” (Sheridan, 2018). Sheridan (2018) specified that caregivers should discuss the best methods for communication with the teachers of their children (i.e., email, text, paper notes, etc.).

Individually, the findings align with the academic research found in Chapter Two, the Review of Literature. Communication is seen as vital to building positive caregiver-teacher relationships and helping alternative school students achieve socially and academically, based upon the responses from the teacher participants. Based on the data, it is concluded that teachers perceive parental involvement to be centered around communication.

Two: What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships. The coding of the qualitative data helped the researcher discover caregiver-teacher relationships as a theme. The Caregiver-teacher relationship is an expression used in this study to describe how well caregivers and parents work together. The Caregiver-teacher relationship describes the demonstrative nature of the relationship itself, an established, fond framework for interacting, consistent actions that mirror levels of collaboration, and an honest assessment of the contributions made to the relationship by both caregivers and teachers (Petrogiannis et al., 2013). All caregiver participants in this study stated the importance of having a significantly high relationship with their child’s teacher (minimum of 4 out of 5 scores).

Further, all six caregiver participants stated that their relationship with their child’s teacher was significant in how the teacher engaged them. One caregiver’s response summed up

how vital caregiver-teacher relationships were to her by calling teachers apart of “the village.” Rokel (2008) stated:

> It takes a village to raise a child is a popular proverb with a clear message: the whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of its young people. In addition to the vital role that parents and family members play in a child’s education, the broader community, too, has a responsibility to assure high-quality education for all students.

Communication. All caregivers who participated in this study emphasized how important it was to receive communication from alternative school instructors about their child’s academic and social progress in school. Unanimously, the caregivers agreed that communication was vital to them, helping their child succeed academically and socially. Five of the six caregiver participants in this study said they were satisfied with the level of collaboration with their child’s teacher. The method and frequency of communication varied individually among caregiver participant responses, but most spoke favorably regarding the instructors engaging them.

Three: What factors facilitate parental involvement?

School Dynamics Valued by Caregivers. School Dynamics valued by Caregivers emerged as a theme with three subthemes: Academics, School Culture, and the Menu of Services. In this study, the term school dynamics is used to describe the logistics of the school – the operational components. School dynamics involve interaction between students and teachers and between teachers and other staff members in the school community.

***Academics*.** A majority of the six caregivers interviewed in this study highly regarded the academic program at the alternative school where their child was enrolled. This majority favored the credit recovery program. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018):

> Credit recovery is a strategy that encourages at-risk students to re-take a previously failed course required for high school graduation and earn credit if the student completes the course requirements. The strategy was designed to provide a pathway for high school students who have a history of course failure and avoid falling further behind in school. Credit recovery courses may be available online or in alternative settings and can be scheduled at different times to suit the needs of the student.

Many of the caregivers in this study seemed to appreciate the credit recovery program and valued the program to help get their children back on track to graduate from high school.

In addition to credit recovery, most caregivers highlighted the importance of routine academics such as assignments and grades as additional academic influences for their participation. It is concluded that academia, as a school dynamic, is one of the features which succor parental involvement from caregivers. The researcher does not seek to generalize this investigatory finding to all alternative school caregivers, but such a finding does merit consideration.

School Culture. School culture is an inescapable component of schools; nevertheless, it is vague and perplexing to describe. Having knowledge and understanding of school culture is vital to any school's improvement initiative. According to "School Culture Definition" (2013):

> School culture generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions. A school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives,

values, interactions, and practices. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members all contribute to their school's culture, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located.

Four out of six caregivers stated that they did not feel welcome at their child's alternative school. Two caregivers perceived the front office staff members to be indifferent and unprofessional, which led to their reasons for feeling unwelcome. In contrast, the other two caregivers stated that teachers make them feel imprudent or unintelligent during an interaction between the caregiver and teacher. Two caregivers dissented and stated that they felt welcome at their child's alternative school. The researcher concluded that school culture is significant when examining the factors that facilitate parental involvement. The existence of relationships between caregivers and teachers is not as important as the quality of the relationship established between the two.

Literature in Chapter 2 supports this conclusion: the caregiver-teacher relationship describes the demonstrative nature of the relationship itself, an established, fond framework for interacting, consistent actions that mirror levels of collaboration, and honest assessment of the contributions made to the relationship by both caregivers and teachers (Petrogiannis et al., 2013). Thus, it is insufficient for caregivers and teachers to have a relationship with one another to simplify and empower the conditions favorable to increased parental involvement; the relationships must be of quality and include mutual respect.

Menu of Services. A menu of services in this research is described as "services [that] promote the academic functioning and well-being of all students while honoring their multiple and diverse identities [and supporting] the academic and social-emotional needs of all students and help each student prepare for their lives after school" (ETHS Student Services, 2019). All

the caregiver participants interviewed in this study stated that they valued the services offered to their children by the alternative school leadership. Two caregivers mentioned that counselors at the alternative school have helped them navigate personal issues with their children. Three caregivers praised counselors for helping their children explore post-secondary options, which resulted in college admission. Those three caregivers stated that they were in constant communication with counselors. An additional two caregivers mentioned Communities in Schools. According to Communities in Schools' (2020):

> [Communities in Schools works] directly inside more than 2,500 schools and community sites across the country, connects 1.62 million students to caring adults and community resources designed to help them succeed in school and life. With a proven mix of evidence-based practice and human capital, we do whatever it takes to empower kids to realize their full potential. At Communities In Schools (CIS), the majority of students we serve are children of color and children living in poverty. Our mission is to surround them with a community of support to empower them to succeed in school and life, despite immediate and systemic barriers.

Based on the favorable responses regarding the school's student services sector, it is concluded that the menu of services offered to families by the alternative school staff is a decisive factor in facilitating parental involvement at alternative schools in Eastern North Carolina. Once more, the researcher does not seek to generalize this investigatory finding to all alternative school caregivers in Eastern North Carolina. Still, such a conclusion does merit consideration of future research with a larger sample.

Caregiver Scheduling. This theme is used to describe how the schedules of caregivers are, at times, conflicted with opportunities for parental involvement for various reasons. Five out

of six of the caregivers interviewed indicated that scheduling hinders parental involvement at times. While caregivers can take advantage of learning opportunities at home, that is only one facet to being involved as a caregiver and run counter to the widely expressed view that parental involvement should include essential elements such as parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2009).

The researcher has concluded that caregiver scheduling is a factor that prohibits caregivers from being involved to the fullest; fullest, including all of the components in the Epstein (2009) framework for parental involvement. While this finding does not apply to all caregivers in Eastern North Carolina, it (the finding) has been substantiated through prior studies involving larger samples. As mentioned in the literature review, Okeke (2014) concluded that caregivers' evenings are less effective and efficient than other parental involvement strategies due to some limitations. Okeke (2014) observed that caregivers' evenings provide very little time for teacher-parent interactions. Some caregivers are often too committed to other activities and may not always fit into the school programs for a parental evening.

Four: What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Lack of Resources and Support to Involve Caregivers. Resources in this study is a broad term that includes not only capital resources such as tools, equipment, buildings, and machinery. Rather, it also includes human resources such as professional development coordinators, trainers, principals, superintendents, master teachers, and other leaders who hold the authority to initiate, train, and execute.

The researcher noted in his journal that while discussing parental engagement and resources that when these interviews took place, schools in North Carolina were closed by the Governor due to the COVID-19 global pandemic. Teachers were still required by their leadership

and state officials to teach through cybernetic means, granting school closure. Unfortunately, the nature of the data does not allow the researcher to determine whether the responses on the lack of resources stemmed from distance learning initiatives due to the pandemic. A prime example of such a response would be Teacher E, who stated, "I think the resources that are available such as Remind are good. I think we need more resources because parent engagement is at an all-time low."

There are so many unknown variables that are unknown based on the questions alone, such as technology resources available to caregivers and students during school closures resulting from the pandemic. This can be summed up with Teacher F's response:

> I like what we have concerning resources, but I would like to see more resources and more training on how to use them. I currently use Canvas, a virtual learning management system to communicate with parents, but that only works if they sign up, and about 50% have not signed up.

Based upon these unknown variables, the determination as to the lack of resources and support being a key factor in teachers engaging caregivers is inconclusive.

Caregiver-Teacher Relationships. The Caregiver-teacher relationship is an expression used in this study to describe how well caregivers and parents work together. The Caregiver-teacher relationship describes the demonstrative nature of the relationship itself, an established, fond framework for interacting, consistent actions that mirror levels of collaboration, and an honest assessment of the contributions made to the relationship by both caregivers and teachers (Petrogiannis, Konstantinos & Penderi, Efthymia, 2013).

Four out of six teachers interviewed indicated that their relationship with caregivers factored into their engagement efforts with them. One response that conceptualized the

importance of quality caregiver-teacher relationships was that of Teacher C. She stated, "When parents are nice and supportive, I am more inclined to reach out. I avoid meaningless confrontations and verbally combatant parents." This individual response supported previous research documented in Chapter 2, which encompassed the affectionate nature of caregiver-teacher relationships and establishing a fond framework for interactions between the two (Petrogiannis et al., 2013).

Five out of six teacher participants said that a pre-existing relationship with caregivers facilitates interacting with them. This supposition can be summed up with the response from Teacher A. Teacher A stated:

> I have some parents who I interact with more because I have a good relationship with them. I am more persuaded to engage with parents when I know I have their support, and they understand that I am here for their child.

Based on the data and a plethora of literature available, the researcher determined that caregiver-teacher relationships heavily influence how alternative school instructors involve caregivers.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations to increase opportunities for parental involvement and parental engagement in the alternative school setting are presented.

Recommendation One: Resources

First is providing resources, both capital, and human to assist alternative school instructors with parental engagement. Through data collected during this study, many teachers interviewed felt their resources were inadequate or antiquated. It is recommended that school leaders should research modern technological tools that teachers can utilize to engage parents other than through mere phone calls and emails. Endorsed is the idea of implementing trainers

on parental engagement and communication. Superintendents and local education agencies would not necessarily need to hire new people, rather utilize the curriculum coaches and teacher leaders who are already in place to mentor and coach teachers on effectively utilizing the resources.

Recommendation Two: Provide Unconventional Opportunities for Involvement

It is highly recommended that alternative school leaders provide varied opportunities for caregivers to get involved beyond normal activities such as homework help and parent night. Because the data collected in this study and other literature in Chapter 2 reflects caregiver scheduling conflicts as a hindrance to traditional opportunities for involvement, the researcher recommends creating flexible opportunities. Examples of some flexible opportunities may include a community day on a Saturday morning or Sunday afternoon instead of routine business days of the week. This opportunity may be a great time for alternative school leaders and teachers to involve the community (police department, fire department, local U.S. Armed Forces recruiting station, small businesses, churches, city council members, etc.)

The purpose of such an activity is not business or academics, but it is an opportunity for teachers to build relationships with caregivers. If relationships have already been established, it serves as an opportunity for teachers to strengthen the relationship and get to know the caregivers better. The idea is not to have parent conferences or meetings at the community day, but parents should be involved without feeling a sense of obligation. During this community day, organizers must ensure that three components are present: families, fun, and food.

Recommendation Three: Quality Staffing

School leaders must hire quality staffing in alternative schools. Nizolek (2015) stated, “teachers working in alternative schools may report a high level of stress based on their working

environment." It is recommended that teachers who display the fitness for high-level stress and patience for at-risk students be recruited to work in alternative schools. By onboarding personnel who want to positively impact alternative school students, school leaders can take the first steps toward creating a positive school culture. Quality staffing does not just apply to certified staff such as teachers and counselors, but classified staffing such as front office clerks, custodians, food service team members, and teacher assistants. These individuals should be assessed routinely for their professionalism with each other, their co-workers, students, and caregivers.

Recommendations for Further Research

Recommendation One: Quantitative Analysis

While the principal investigator selected a qualitative research method for this study, qualitative methods do not capture the pragmatisms of the research. Credibility could be increased if this study was linked with quantitative research. For instance, a deployed quantitative survey coupled with sequential statistical analysis may produce hard facts and numbers to substantiate the comprehensive points of this study. Perchance, a quantitative study to survey a broader sample.

Recommendation Two: A Broader Sample

Caregiver participants in this study indicated that they valued student services at their child's alternative school. The principal investigator recommends an additional qualitative study concerning parent involvement at an alternative school to examine the perceptions of student services personnel and administration. Sampling a different population within alternative schools will extend this study beyond teachers, one component of the workforce within a school. Besides, another sample will also give readers a holistic picture of parental involvement and the

perceptions thereof in the alternative school setting. Additionally, a study identifying the perceived working conditions of alternative school staff to include teachers, teacher assistants, counselors, front office clerks, and other student support personnel would supplement this qualitative study by providing insight into school culture and its effect on parental involvement.

Recommendation Three: A Study Involving Other Types of Schools

The principal investigator advises additional research on caregiver-teacher communication patterns between comprehensive schools, virtual schools, and alternative schools. The purpose of such a study would be to determine if there is any variance in caregiver-teacher communication between the three types of school and to ascertain if communication is categorically an issue for alternative schools.

Recommendation Four: A Study Exploring Alternative School Teacher Expectations

There is plenty of research based on the idea of self-fulling prophecy. Robert K. Merton defined self-fulfilling prophecy as "a false definition of the situation evoking a behavior which makes the originally false conception come true" (Merton, 1968, p. 477). A self-fulfilling prophecy is also denoted as the bootstrapped induction, the Barnesian performativity, or the Oedipus effect (Biggs, 2011). Adler et al. (2012) states that there are two categories of the self-fulfilling prophecy: self-imposed and other-imposed. Other-imposed self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when others' expectations concerning a person or persons affect the actions of those persons (Ackerman, 2020). The researcher believes that an additional qualitative study exploring alternative school teachers' expectations may add further insight into whether those expectations predict students' outcomes who are already deemed to be at risk of failure.

REFERENCES

Abel, Y. (2012). African American fathers' involvement in their children's school-based lives. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *81*(2), 162-172. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.2.0162.pdf

Ackerman, C. E. (2020, April 17). Self-Fulfilling Prophecy in Psychology: 10 Examples and Definition. *Positive Psychology*. https://positivepsychology.com/self-fulfilling-prophecy/

Adler, R. B., Rosenfeld, L. B., & Ii, R. P. F. (2012). *Interplay: The Process of Interpersonal Communication* (12th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Afolabi, O. E. (2014). Caregivers involvement in inclusive education: An empirical test for the psycho-educational development of learners with special educational needs (SENs). *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, *6*(10), 196-208. http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/IJEAPS/article-full-text-pdf/94A41DB49383

Al-Busaidi Z. Q. (2008). Qualitative research and its uses in health care. Sultan Qaboos University medical journal, 8(1), 11–19.

Allen, Q., & White-Smith, K. (2018). "That's why I say stay in school": Black mothers' parental Involvement, cultural wealth, and exclusion in their son's schooling. *Urban Education*, *53*(3), 409-435 https://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1190&context=education_articles

Al-Yateem N. (2012) The effect of interview recording on quality of data obtained: a methodological reflection. Nurse Researcher. 19, 4, 31-35.

Aslan, D. (2016). Primary school teachers' perception on parental involvement: a qualitative case study. *International Journal of Higher Education*, *5*(2). https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v5n2p131

Austin, Z., & Sutton, J. (2014). Qualitative research: getting started. *The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy*, *67*(6), 436–440. https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v67i6.1406

Baeck, Unn-Doris. (2010). Parental Involvement Practices in Formalized Home–School Cooperation. Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research. 54. 549-563. https://doi.org/10.1080/00313831.2010.522845

Baker, R., Berning, A., Gowda, S., Zhang, S. & Hawn, A. (2019): Predicting k-12 dropout, journal of education for students placed at risk (JESPAR), DOI: https://www.doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2019.1670065

Baquedano-López, P., Alexander, R. A., & Hernández, S. J. (2013). Equity issues in parental and community involvement in schools: What teacher educators need to know. *Review of Research in Education*, *37*(1), 149-182. https://tinyurl.com/wdnp5zq

Barge, J. K., & Loges, W. E. (2003). Parent, student, and teacher perceptions of parental involvement. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, *31*(2), 140-163. https://doi.org/10.1080/0090988032000064597

Bartel, V. B. (2010). Home and school factors impacting parental involvement in a title I elementary school. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *24*(3), 209-228.

Bascia, N., & Maton, R. (2016). Teachers' work and innovation in alternative schools. *Critical Studies in Education*, *57*(1), 131-141. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2016.1117004

Biggs, M. (2009). Self-fulfilling prophecies. *The Oxford handbook of analytical sociology*, 294-314.

Blackman, S., & Mahon, E. (2014). Understanding the perspective of teachers of factors that influence parental involvement practices in special education in Barbados. *Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs*, *16*(4), 264–271. https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-3802.12083

Bracke, D. & Corts, D. (2012). Parental involvement and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. Education. 133. 188-201.

Bridges, B.K., Awokoya, J.T., & Messano, F. (2012). Done to Us, Not With Us: African American Parent Perceptions of K-12 Education. Washington, DC: Frederick D. Patterson Research Institute, UNCF.

Brown, S. L., & Addison, H. (2012). Teachers' and caregivers' perceptions of an alternative school program. *Schooling*, *3*(1), 1-21. http://www.nationalforum.com/Electronic%20Journal%20Volumes/Brown,%20Sidney%20Teachers%20and%20Caregivers%20Perceptions%20of%20an%20Alternative%20School%20Program%20Schooling%20V3%20N1%202012.pdf

Burke, J. D., Mulvey, E. P., Schubert, C. A., & Garbin, S. R. (2014). The challenge and opportunity of parental involvement in juvenile justice services. *Children and youth services review*, *39*, 39-47. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3989100/

Carver, I. (2019, November 18). *Outreach Tips for Teachers*. https://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2008/05/12/08carvermentor.h19.html.

Caspe, M. S. (2003). How teachers come to understand families. *School Community Journal*, *13*(1), 115. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Margaret_Caspe/publication/228934635_How_teachers_come_to_understand_families/links/55c24d3b08aebc967defd9e9.pdf

Characteristics of Public-School Teachers. (2020). Retrieved July 05, 2020, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_clr.asp

Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory: practical guide through qualitative analysis. SAGE Publications.

Chen, G. (2020, October 10). Parental Involvement is Key to Student Success. Public School Review. https://www.publicschoolreview.com/blog/parental-involvement-is-key-to-student-success.

Chilisa, B. & Preece, J. (2005) Research Methods for Adult Educators in Africa. Pearson Education, Cape Town.

Chun Tie, Y., Birks, M., & Francis, K. (2019). Grounded theory research: A design framework for novice researchers. *SAGE open medicine*, *7*, 2050312118822927. https://doi.org/10.1177/2050312118822927

Compton, A. N. (2016). "Strategies for Increasing Parental Involvement for Elementary School Students". *Walden Dissertations and Doctoral Studies*. 2645. https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/2645

Cooper, C. W. (2005). School choice and the standpoint of African American mothers: Considering the power of positionality. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 174-189. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40034542.pdf

Cooper, C. E., Crosnoe, R., Suizzo, M.-A., & Pituch, K. A. (2010). Poverty, Race, and Parental Involvement During the Transition to Elementary School. Journal of Family Issues, 31(7), 859–883. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513X09351515

Coopersmith, J. (2009). Characteristics of Public, Private, and Bureau of Indian Education Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results from the 2007-08 Schools and Staffing Survey. First Look. NCES, 2009-324. *National Center for Education Statistics*. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED505837.pdf

Cordes, M. (2014). A transcendental phenomenological study development math students' experiences and perceptions (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Liberty University, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Cotton, K., & Wikelund, K. R. (1989). Parent involvement in education. *School improvement research series*, *6*(3), 17-23. http://multiculturaleducole.pbworks.com/w/file/fetch/55317746/ParentInvolvementiEducation.pdf

Creswell, J.W. (2013). Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among the Five Approaches. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc. (pp. 77-83)

Deal, T., & Peterson, K. (2009). Shaping School Culture: Pitfalls, Paradoxes, and Promises. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Dor, A. (2013). Israeli teachers' attitudes toward parental involvement in school: A qualitative study. *International Journal about Caregivers in Education*, *7*(1). http://www.ernape.net/ejournal/index.php/IJPE/article/download/199/132

Dor, A. & Rucker-Naidu, T.B. (2012). Teachers' attitudes toward parents' involvement in school: Comparing teachers in the USA and Israel. Issues in Educational Research. 22. 246-262.

Dudovskiy, J. (2019). *Simple random sampling*. https://research-methodology.net/sampling-in-primary-data-collection/random-sampling/

Duerden, M. D., Witt, P. A., & Harrist, C. J. (2013). The impact of parental involvement on a structured youth program experience: A qualitative inquiry. *Journal of Youth Development*, *8*(3), 106–123. https://doi.org/10.5195/jyd.2013.88

Duristic, M., & Bunijevac, M. (2017). Parental involvement is an important factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, *7*(3), 137-153. https://ojs.cepsj.si/index.php/cepsj/article/view/291

El Nokali, N. & Bachman, H. & Votruba-Drzal, E. (2010). Parent Involvement and Children's Academic and Social Development in Elementary School. Child development. 81. 988-1005. 10.1111/j.1467-8624.2010.01447.x.

Epstein, J.L. (2009). In School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (3rd ed.). USA: Corwin Press.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). S*chool, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools* (2nd edition), Philadelphia: Westview Press.

Epstein, J., & Sheldon, S.B. (2009). Moving Forward: Ideas for Research on School, Family, and Community Partnerships.

Erdener, M. A. (2016). Principals' and teachers' practices about parent involvement in schooling. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, *4*(12A), 151–159. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.041319

ETHS Student Services / About Student Services. (2019). https://www.eths.k12.il.us/domain/209

Friedman, B. A., Bobrowski, P. E., & Geraci, J. (2006). Parents' school satisfaction: Ethnic similarities and differences. Journal of Educational Administration, 44, 471-486.

Gadsden, V. L., Ford, M. A., & Breiner, H. (2016). Parenting matters: Supporting parents of children ages 0-8. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

Galdas, P. (2017). Revisiting bias in qualitative research: Reflections on its relationship with funding and impact. International Journal of Qualitative Methods. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917748992

Ghysens, L. (2009). Caregivers', teachers' and children's perception of parental involvement in relation with pupils' learning achievement and wellbeing. In *7 the International Conference of the European Research Network about Caregivers in Education*. http://www.pedag.umu.se/digitalAssets/56/56950_6.ghysens.doc

Gokturk, S., & Dinckal, S. (2017). Effective parental involvement in education: experiences and perceptions of Turkish teachers from private schools. *Teachers and Teaching*, *24*(2), 183–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2017.1388777

Gulevska, V. (2018). Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in primary education.

Hasnat, M. A. (2016). Caregivers' perception of their involvement in schooling activities: A case study from rural secondary schools in Bangladesh. *Studia Paedagogica*, *21*(4), 137–149. https://doi.org/10.5817/sp2016-4-7

Henderson, A. T., & Mapp, K. L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement.* Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Hendricks, C. (2006). Improving schools through action research. Boston: Allyn Bacon.

Herrell, P. O. (2011). Parental involvement: Parent perceptions and teacher perceptions (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from Proquest Dissertations and Theses. (UMI No. 3462048)

Herman, K. C., & Reinke, W. M. (2017). Improving teacher perceptions of parent involvement patterns: Findings from a group randomized trial. *School Psychology Quarterly, 32*(1), 89–104. https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000169

Hill, N. E., Witherspoon, D. P., & Bartz, D. (2016). Parental involvement in education during middle school: Perspectives of ethnically diverse caregivers, teachers, and students. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *111*(1), 12–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2016.1190910

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Battiato, A. C., Walker, J. M., Reed, R. P., DeJong, J. M., & Jones, K. P. (2001). Parental involvement in homework. *Educational psychologist*, *36*(3), 195-209. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.456.9721&rep=rep1&type=pdf

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2005). Final performance report for OERI Grant# R305T010673: The social context of parental involvement: A path to enhanced achievement.

Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Walker, J. M., Sandler, H. M., Whetsel, D., Green, C. L., Wilkins, A. S., & Closson, K. (2005). Why do caregivers become involved? Research findings and implications. *The elementary school journal*, *106*(2), 105-130. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/499194.pdf

Hornby, G., & Blackwell, I. (2018). Barriers to parental involvement in education: an update. *Educational Review*, *70*(1), 109-119. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00131911.2018.1388612

Hornby G. (2011) Parent involvement in elementary schools. in: parental involvement in childhood Education. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-8379-4_4

Hornby, G., & Lafaele, R. (2011). Barriers to parental involvement in education: An explanatory model. *Educational review*, *63*(1), 37-52. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fb4d/bfd73d99fa9bb17f68ae7b6d84e29414b83b.pdf

Howard, E. D., "African American Parents' Perceptions of Public School: African American Parents' Involvement in Their Childrens' Educations" (2015). Electronic Theses and Dissertations. Paper 2575. https://dc.etsu.edu/etd/2575

Jackman, C. (2013). Middle school teachers' perceptions of parental involvement in title one vs. non-title one schools.

Jacobs, G. M. (2013, April 1). Let your participants star in your Singapore trainings. Singapore Business Review. http://sbr.com.sg/hr-education/commentary/let-your-participantsstar-in-your-singapore-trainings

Jafarov, J. (2015). Factors Affecting Parental Involvement in Education: The Analysis of Literature. *Khazar Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences*, *18*(4). http://jhss-khazar.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/3.Javid-Jafarov.pdf

Jeynes, W. H. (2003). A Meta-Analysis: The Effects of Parental Involvement on Minority Children's Academic Achievement. Education and Urban Society - EDUC URBAN SOC. 35. 202-218.

Jeynes, W. H. (2011). Parental involvement research: Moving to the next level [Editorial]. The School Community Journal, 21(1), 9–18.

Jones, M. O. (2015). Program evaluation of alternative schools in North Carolina: A companion dissertation. *Journal of Organizational & Educational Leadership*, *1*(1), 4. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1131515.pdf

Koutrouba, K., Antonopoulou, E., Tsitsas, G., & Zenakou, E. (2009). An investigation of greek teachers' views on parental involvement in education. *School Psychology International*, *30*(3), 311–328. https://doi.org/10.1177/0143034309106497

Kochanska, G., & Kim, S. (2013). Early attachment organization with both parents and future behavior problems: from infancy to middle childhood. Child development, 84(1), 283–296. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8624.2012.01852.x

Kohl, G. O., Lengua, L. J., McMahon, R. J., & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group (2000). Parent Involvement in School Conceptualizing Multiple Dimensions and Their Relations with Family and Demographic Risk Factors. Journal of school psychology, 38(6), 501–523. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-4405(00)00050-9

Laird, R. D., Criss, M. M., Pettit, G. S., Bates, J. E., & Dodge, K. A. (2009). Developmental trajectories and antecedents of distal parental supervision. *The Journal of Early Adolescence, 29*(2), 258–284. https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431608320123

Lalvani, P. (2012). Caregivers' participation in special education in the context of implicit educational ideologies and socioeconomic status. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 474-486. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23879640.pdf

LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I., & Darling, S. M. (2011). Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure*, *55*(3), 115-122. http://parented.wdfiles.com/local--files/family-engagement/Parent%20Inv%20-%20Missing%20link.pdf

Latunde, Y. C. (2018). Expanding their Opportunities to Engage: A Case of the African American Parent Council. The Journal of Negro Education, 87(3), 270-284. doi:10.7709/jnegroeducation.87.3.0270

Leedy, P. & Ormrod, J. (2001) Practical Research: Planning and Design. 7th Edition, Merrill Prentice Hall and SAGE Publications, Upper Saddle River, NJ and Thousand Oaks, CA.

Lin, M., & Bates, A. B. (2010). Home visits: how do they affect teachers' beliefs about teaching and diversity? *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *38*(3), 179–185. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10643-010-0393-1

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Loughrey, D. & Woods, C. (2010). Sparking the imagination: Creative experts working collaboratively with children, teachers and parents to enhance educational opportunities. Support for Learning, 25(2), 81-90. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9604.2010.01444.x

Makgopa, M., & Mokhele, M. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement: A case study of two South African schools. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, *3*(3), 219. http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/jesr/article/view/560

McCoach, D. B., Goldstein, J., Behuniak, P., Reis, S. M., Black, A. C., Sullivan, E. E., & Rambo, K. (2010). Examining the unexpected: Outlier analyses of factors affecting student achievement. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, *21*(3), 426-468. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ906112.pdf

McCormick, M. P., Cappella, E., O'Connor, E. E., & McClowry, S. G. (2013). Parent involvement, emotional support, and behavior problems: An ecological approach. *The Elementary School Journal*, *114*(2), 277-300. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/673200.pdf

McGrady, P. B., & Reynolds, J. R. (2013). Racial mismatch in the classroom: Beyond black-white differences. *Sociology of Education*, *86*(1), 3-17. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0038040712444857

McKenna, M. K., & Millen, J. (2013). Look! Listen! Learn! Parent narratives and grounded theory models of parent voice, presence, and engagement in K–12 education. The School Community Journal, 23(1), 9–48.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2006). Research in education: evidence-based inquiry (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.

McNeal, Jr, R.B. (2014). Parent Involvement, Academic Achievement and the Role of Student Attitudes and Behaviors as Mediators. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 2(8), 564 - 576.

McQuiggan, M. & Megra, M. (2017). Parent and Family Involvement in Education: Results from the National Household Education Surveys Program of 2016 (NCES 2017-102). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2017102.

Merton, R. K. (1948). The self-fulfilling prophecy. *The Antioch Review, 8*(2), 193-210.

Murray, K. W., Finigan-Carr, N., Jones, V., Copeland-Linder, N., Haynie, D. L., & Cheng, T. L. (2014). Barriers and facilitators to school-based parent involvement for caregivers of urban public middle school students. *SAGE Open*, *4*(4), 215824401455803. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244014558030

Murray, T. (2012). Listening to Our Parents: A Family Listening Project to Explore the Untapped Potential to Bridge the Gap Between School and Home in Asheville City Schools. Asheville City Schools Foundation.

Newman, N., Northcutt, A., Farmer, A., & Black, B. (2019). Epstein's model of parental ınvolvement: Parent perceptions in urban schools. Language Teaching and Educational Research (LATER), 2(2), 81-100. DOI: https://doi.org/10.35207/later.559732

Nizolek, K. (2015). *Evaluating teacher stress and its effect on negative student behaviors in an alternative school* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Rowan University.

Noël, R. A. (2014). Income and spending patterns among Black households. *Beyond the Numbers: Prices &Spending, 3(*24), 1-8 https://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://scholar.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2354&context=key_workplace

Núñez, J. C., Suárez, N., Rosário, P., Vallejo, G., Valle, A., & Epstein, J. L. (2015). Relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviours, and academic achievement: differences among elementary, junior high, and high school students. *Metacognition and learning*, *10*(3), 375-406. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Pedro_Rosario3/publication/281393258_Does_homework_design_matter_The_role_of_homework's_purpose_in_student_mathematics_achievement/links/5666b7c008ae4931cd627df7.pdf

Okeke, C. I. (2014). Effective home-school partnership: Some strategies to help strengthen parental involvement. *South African Journal of Education*, *34*(3), 1–9. https://doi.org/10.15700/201409161044

Okeke, C. I., & Mazibuko, G. F. (2014). The experiences of caregivers of school children with special education needs an empirical study. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(15), 227. http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/3226

Palaganas, E.C., Sanchez, M.C., Molintas, M.V.P., & Caricativo, R.D. (2017). Reflexivity in qualitative research: A journey of learning. TQR: The Qualitative Report, 22(2), 426-438. https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tgr/vol22/iss2/5

Park, S., & Holloway, S. D. (2016). The effects of school-based parental involvement on academic achievement at the child and elementary school level: A longitudinal study. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *110*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2015.1016600

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Qualitative research & evaluation methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (2015). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Paylor, K. (2011) Volunteering and health: evidence of impact and implications for policy and practice. Institute for Volunteering Research. http://www.ivr.org.uk/Institute+of+Volunteering+Research%2fDoH+literature+review+October+2011.pdf

Pena, D. C. (2000). Parent involvement: Influencing factors and implications. *The Journal of Educational Research*, *94*(1), 42-54. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/27542302.pdf

Peterson, K. D., & Deal, T. E. (2002). *The shaping school culture fieldbook*. John Wiley & Sons. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED479930.pdf

Petrogiannis, K. & Penderi, E. (2013). Mothers and kindergarten teachers' beliefs about their relationship: The issues of Trust and Communication.

Pettit, G. S., Laird, R. D., Dodge, K. A., Bates, J. E., & Criss, M. M. (2009). Antecedents and behavior-problem outcomes of parental monitoring and psychological control in early adolescence. *Child development*, *72*(2), 583-598. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2766099/

Pinquart, M., & Ebeling, M. (2020). Parental educational expectations and academic achievement in children and adolescents – A meta-analysis. Educational Psychology Review, 32, 463-480.

Press Room. (2020). Retrieved July 05, 2020, from https://www.communitiesinschools.org/press-room/resource/communities-schools-cis-issues-statement-response-supreme-court-ruling-daca/

Schnee, E., & Bose, E. (2010). Parents don't do nothing: Reconceptualizing parental null actions as agency. School Community Journal, 20(2), 91–114.

School Culture Definition. (2013, May 15). Retrieved June 11, 2020, from The Glossary of Education Reform website: https://www.edglossary.org/school-culture/#:~:text=The%20term%20school%20culture%20generally

Sethusha, M. J. (2014). Teachers' Experiences Regarding Parental Involvement in Classroom Assessment. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(10), 472. http://www.mcser.org/journal/index.php/mjss/article/view/2915

Shepard, R., & Rose, H. (1995). The Power of Parents: An Empowerment Model for Increasing Parental Involvement. *Education 3-13, 115*, 373.

Sheridan, S. M. (2018, August 29). Establishing healthy parent-teacher relationships for early learning success. Retrieved July 05, 2020, from http://earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu/2018/08/29/parent-teacher-relationships/

Shirvanian, N., & Michael, T. (2017). Implementation of attachment theory into early childhood settings. International Education Journal: Comparison Perspectives, 16, 97115.

Smith, J. D., Dishion, T. J., Shaw, D. S., Wilson, M. N., Winter, C. C., & Patterson, G. R. (2014). Coercive family process and early-onset conduct problems from age 2 to school entry. *Development and psychopathology*, *26*(4 Pt 1), 917–932. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579414000169

Smith, J., Stern, K., & Shatrova, Z. (2008). Factors inhibiting Hispanic parent's school involvement. Rural Educator, 29(2), 8-13. http://www.ruraleducator.net/archive/29-2/29-2_Smith.pdf

Smith, J., & Wohlsetter, P. (2009). Parent involvement in urban charter schools: A new paradigm or the status quo. Prepared for School Choice and School Improvement: Research in State, Districe and Community Contexts, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN.

Stacer, M. J., & Perrucci, R. (2013). Parental involvement with children at school, home, and community. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues, 34*(3), 340–354. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10834-012-9335-y

Stanikzai, R. (2013). Parental Involvement in Children's Education: A Gendered Perspective. From https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:709331/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Stormont, M., Herman, K. C., Reinke, W. M., David, K. B., & Goel, N. (2013). Latent profile analysis of teacher perceptions of parent contact and comfort. *School Psychology Quarterly*, *28*(3), 195. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Carolyn_Webster-Stratton/publication/268084794_Latent_Profiles_of_Observed_Classroom_Management_Behaviors/links/56c0973608aeedba0564706d.pdf

Suizzo, M.-A., Pahlke, E., Yarnell, L., Chen, K.-Y., & Romero, S. (2012). Home-based parental involvement in young children's learning across U.S. ethnic groups. *Journal of Family Issues*, *35*(2), 254–287. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x12465730

Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: data collection, analysis, and management. The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy, 68(3), 226-231. https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456

Thomson, P., & Pennacchia, J. (2014). What's the alternative? Effective support for young people disengaging from mainstream education. https://alternativeducationresearch.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/literature-review-final-15-10-14.pdf

Toldson, I. A., & Lemmons, B. P. (2013). Social demographics, the school environment, and parenting practices associated with caregivers' participation in schools and academic success among Black, Hispanic, and White students. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *23*(2), 237-255. https://youngvoicesmatter.net/downloads/Parent_Involvement_in_Schools.pdf

Walker, J. M., Wilkins, A. S., Dallaire, J. R., Sandler, H. M., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. V. (2005). Parental involvement: Model revision through scale development. *The Elementary School Journal*, *106*(2), 85-104. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.1086/499193.pdf

Walker, J., Shenker, S., & Hoover-Dempsey, K. (2010). Why do caregivers become involved in their children's education? Implications for school counselors. *Professional School Counseling*, *14*(1), 27-41. https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/42732747.pdf

Wanat, C. L., &; Zieglowsky, L. T. (2010). Social Networks and Structural Holes: Parent–School Relationships as Loosely Coupled Systems. Leadership and Policy in Schools, 9(2), 131-160. https://www/doi.org/doi:10.1080/15700760903216182

What are the Primary Goals of Qualitative Research? (2016, January 20). Retrieved January 2, 2020, from https://interq-research.com/what-are-the-primary-goals-of-qualitative-research/.

Whitaker, M. C. (2018). The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model of the Parent Involvement Process. The Wiley Handbook of Family, School, and Community Relationships in Education, 419-443. doi:10.1002/9781119083054.ch20

Wilder, S. (2014). Effects of parental involvement on academic achievement: a meta-synthesis. *Educational Review*, *66*(3), 377-397. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00131911.2013.780009

Williams, D.L. & Chavkin, N.F. (1989). Essential elements of strong parent involvement programs. Educational Leadership, 47, 18-20

Wyrick, A. J., & Rudasill, K. M. (2009). Parent involvement as a predictor of teacher–child relationship quality in third grade. *Early Education and Development*, *20*(5), 845-864. https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1126&context=edpsychpapers

Young, C. Y., Austin, S. M., & Growe, R. (2013). Defining parental involvement: perception of school administrators. *Education*, *133*(3), 291–298.

Zhang, Q., & Hatcher, A. (2011). Cross-cultural comparison of blog use for parent-teacher communication in elementary schools. *Engineering Psychology and Cognitive Ergonomics*, 263–272. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-21741-8_29

Zhou, M. (2014). Teachers' and caregivers' perceptions of parental involvement on inner city children's academic success. *Georgia Educational Researcher*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.20429/ger.2014.110103

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Caregiver Interview Guide

PARENT /CAREGIVER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) How do you define parental involvement from your perspective?
2) What are things you do to involve yourself in your child's education?
3) What are the benefits of being an involved parent and or caregiver?
4) Is there more that you would like to do in terms of your involvement? If so, please do share. If not, please explain why not.
5) Do you feel welcome at your child's school? Why or why not?
6) On a scale of 1 to 5, how important is it to you to have a relationship with your child's teacher? Explain why you selected the number you selected.
7) Please share with me about the relationship that you have with your child's teachers.
8) What ways do teachers involve you in your child's education?
9) What more could teachers do to engage you as a parent?
10) Other than discipline, do you receive communication from your child's teachers?
    i. How frequent is the communication, if any?
    ii. How does the teacher communicate with you?
    iii. Do you think this communication is sufficient? Why or why not?

Appendix B: Teacher Interview Guide

TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1) How do you describe parental involvement?
2) As a child, were your parents and or caregivers involved in your education?
3) Please share with me your expectations of parents?
4) Do you believe parental involvement increases student success? Please explain.
5) Are caregivers capable of helping their children learn? Please give me some examples of how they can get involved in the education of their child(ren)?
6) What major challenges or barriers do (or did) you face when communicating with caregivers? How do (or did) you overcome them? What makes communicating with parents easier?
7) How important are relationships with caregivers in facilitating your involvement with them? Please explain.
8) How do you steer caregivers so they can assist their children in learning? Do you believe it supports student learning? Please explain.
9) Are there resources or support to assist you with engaging caregivers? If so, can you give me some examples? Please describe resources or support offered to you to assist with engaging caregivers.
10) What factors motivate you to engage parents?

Appendix C: Interview-Research Question Alignment

Interview Question	Research Question	
1	3	PARENT
2	3	
3	3	
4	3	
5	3	
6	2,3	
7	2,3	
8	2	
9	2	
10	2	
Interview Question	**Research Question**	**TEACHER**
1	1	
2	1,4	
3	1,4	
4	1,4	
5	1,4	
6	4	
7	4	
8	4	
9	4	
10	4	

Overarching Research Questions:
1. What are the perceptions of alternative school instructors toward parental involvement?
2. What are the perceptions of caregivers of alternative school students toward instructor involvement with them?

Supporting Sub-questions:
3. What factors facilitate parental involvement?
4. What factors facilitate instructor involvement with caregivers?

Appendix D: Researcher Flyer

Do You Want to Make a Difference?

If you are the parent, caregiver, or teacher of alternative school students, you may be eligible to participate in this IMPORTANT research study.

A Few Important Things …

Research is being conducted about parental involvement an alternative school in Eastern North Carolina and I am interested in your experiences as a caregiver or teacher. The purpose of this study is to discover the perceptions that parents and teachers hold regarding parental involvement and engagement at an alternative school.

Your participation will help school systems and leaders enhance parental involvement and engage parents better in the education of their children. Participating in this research will allow **YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD!**

Compensation

- No compensation for participating

Location

- Zoom (Online or with your cellphone)

Time Needed

- 30-45 minutes to answer 10 questions

Are you eligible?

- 18 years old by time of the interview
- Caregiver or parent to a child enrolled at an alternative school.
- Teacher at an alternative school

If you're unsure if you meet the requirements, call or email a member of the study team:

Irving Glenn, II, Ed.S.
Doctoral Candidate
East Tennessee State University
glenni@etsu.edu
336-459-0189

Approved by ETSU Campus IRB / Approval Date: May 11, 2020

Appendix E: Participant Letter

IRV GLENN, II

People-Focused ~ Child-Centered ~ Results-Driven

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University. In order to satisfy the degree requirements, set forth by the graduate school, I must conduct research. I am researching parental involvement and engagement in an alternative school. As a former alternative school student and administrator, I would like for you to participate in a research study by answering a few interview questions. The purpose of the interviews is to learn more about your perceptions concerning parental involvement and or engagement in an alternative school setting. If you would like to participate or want more information, please feel free to contact me by phone 336-459-0189 or email, glenni@etsu.edu

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Irving Glenn, II
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership
East Tennessee State University

Enclosure:

Flyer

Informed Consent Form

VITA

IRVING GREGORY GLENN, II

Education:	Ed.D. Educational Leadership, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee, 2021
	Dip. Funeral Service Education, Fayetteville Technical Community College, Fayetteville, North Carolina, 2019
	Ed.S. Instructional Leadership, Morehead State University, Morehead, Kentucky, 2015
	M.Ed. Elementary Education, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina, 2013
	B.S.Ed. Elementary Education, Fort Hays State University, Hays, Kansas, 2011
	A.S. Teacher Education, Mount Olive College, Mount Olive, North Carolina, 2008
Professional Experience:	Elementary School Teacher, Wake County Public Schools, Cary, North Carolina, 2011 - 2013
	Middle Grades Teacher, Durham Public Schools, Durham, North Carolina, 2013 - 2015
	High School Teacher, Nash County Public Schools, Nashville, North Carolina, 2015 - 2017
	Assistant Principal, Nash County Public Schools, Nashville, North Carolina, 2017 - 2019

Assistant Principal, Franklin County Schools,

Louisburg, North Carolina, 2019 - 2020

Assistant Principal, Dallas Independent School District

Dallas, Texas, 2020 - present