

Parental Involvement: Parent Perceptions and Teacher Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement with elementary students based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) 6 typologies of parental involvement. The population consisted of 77 teachers in a particular east Tennessee school district and the parents of 889 students enrolled in kindergarten through 6th grade. Parents and teachers were asked to indicate the effectiveness of 4 activities within each of the 6 parental involvement categories: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Parents and teachers were asked to rank each activity numerically with 1 indicating not effective and 5 indicating highly effective. A ranking of 2, 3, or 4 indicated an activity between not effective and highly effective. In a separate section, parents and teachers were asked to rank the 5 most important activities from a list of specific parental involvement activities.

Findings indicated that parents and teachers in this study have some similar views and some differing views regarding effective parental involvement. Parents and teachers in this study shared similar perspectives by ranking the top 5 specific parental involvement activities from a list of 10 specific activities. Parents and teachers used a Likert scale to indicate the effectiveness of

activities from Epstein et al.'s (2009) 6 typologies: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The *t*-test indicated significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement in 5 of the 6 typologies. ANOVA and post hoc analysis revealed significant differences among the parent population based on age, education level, gender, and race. No significant differences were identified among the teacher population based on the 4 demographic areas examined: age, education level, teaching experience, and gender. This study revealed that parents and teachers surveyed had some similar perceptions and some differing perceptions regarding effective parental involvement, but both groups identified communicating as the most important typology from Epstein et al.'s (2009) 6 major types of involvement.

DEDICATION

Phillipians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength”. Without the strength of Christ, my Lord and Savior, I could have never accomplished this long-time dream.

This study is dedicated to those who have greatly impacted my life and encouraged me. This study is dedicated to first and foremost God for giving me the ability to accomplish this great endeavor. This study is also dedicated to Rob, Trey, Ty, Trent, Dad, Mom, Robert, Bonnie, my sweet family, and dearest friends.

To my husband Rob and my sons Trey, Ty, and Trent thank you for your encouragement, patience, and prayers. I appreciate all your sacrifices in support of this endeavor. I love you and pray that this adventure has been an example of the importance of education to our children.

To my precious parents Calvin and Barbara Odum, thank you for never giving up on me. I appreciate your prayers and encouragement throughout life and along this journey. Without you both, I would have never made it this far! I love you both!

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life.”
(Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 1).

There is evidence that suggests parental involvement positively influences student achievement and overall well-being (Bauch, 1990; Epstein et al., 2009; Flaxman & Inger, 1991; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Myers & Monson, 1992; Shumow & Lomax, 2002; Shumox & Miller, 2001). Academic achievement of students has been of great interest in America for many years and higher student achievement provides hope for a brighter future for American students (Epstein et al., 2009). Several factors such as socioeconomic level, geographic location, family attitudes, education level of family members, and parent and community involvement have been identified that influence academic achievement and student success. Family involvement appears to be a better predictor of student achievement than any other factor (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Comer, 1986; Fan & Chen, 2001; Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Educators and parents play important roles in the educational success of students. Students need a positive learning experience to succeed in school: an experience providing support, motivation, and quality instruction. With the increasing demands on the family, parental support in the education of students extends beyond the school building. Many families are faced with overwhelming and unpredictable schedules and circumstances while juggling school, sports, family situations, family time, work schedules, and other responsibilities, allowing minimal time to provide support in any one given area (Swap, 1993).

Parental involvement and home-school partnerships have been researched and addressed at the national, state, and local levels. Despite the research of this topic, there is still concern

regarding parental involvement and what constitutes effective parental involvement in the education of students. Educators, parents, and community members may have different opinions regarding effective involvement practices and the ways each can contribute to the educational process. Definitions of parental involvement have been determined by schools, with little or no input from parents or members of the community. These school-centered definitions can be found in both research and practice, and many agree that they do not fully express the variety of parental involvement practices (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002).

Parental involvement in the education of students begins at home with the parent(s) providing a safe and healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support, and a positive attitude about school. Several studies indicate increased academic achievement with students having involved parents (Epstein et al., 2009; Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Dornbusch, 1990; Swap, 1993; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). Studies also indicate that parental involvement is most effective when viewed as a partnership between educators and parents (Comer, 1984; Davies, 1996; Emeagwali, 2009; Epstein et al., 2009; Williams & Chavkin, 1989). By examining parents' and teachers' perceptions, educators and parents should have a better understanding of effective parental involvement practices in promoting student achievement.

Numerous researchers such as Becker and Epstein (1982), Berger (2008), Comer (1986), Davies (1996), Epstein et al. (2009), and Henderson and Mapp (2002) have studied parental involvement and its effects on the educational process over the years. A leading researcher of parental involvement is Joyce Epstein, the founder and director of the National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. With numerous studies and work in over 100 publications, Epstein focuses on school, family, and community partnership programs that will

improve policy and practice in an effort to increase student academic achievement and student success. Epstein has identified six major types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein et al., 2009).

With great debate in the field of education regarding a clear definition of parental involvement, the federal government has identified parental involvement as part of the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In the 2004 publication of *NCLB*, Parental Involvement: Title I, Part A Non-Regulatory Guidance, the federal government defined parental involvement as parents' participation in regular and meaningful two-way communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including:

- Parents assisting their child's learning;
- Encouraging parents to be actively involved in the child's education at school;
- Parents as full partners in their child's education and appropriately being included in decision making and serving on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
- Carrying out other activities including those described in section 1118 of the ESEA Section 9101(32) (United States Department of Education, 2004).

It is the responsibility of local school districts to implement parental involvement as defined by the federal government. Local school districts and individual schools receiving Title I money are accountable for creating a written parental involvement plan and complying with the guidelines developed in *NCLB*. As part of the written parental involvement plan, schools have been directed to provide a more welcoming atmosphere to parents and to provide a variety of opportunities for parents to become involved while developing a partnership to assist students in improving their academic achievement and achieve the state's high standards. *NCLB* specifically states:

Each school must have a school-parent compact that shall:

(1) describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children served under this part to meet the State's student academic achievement standards, and the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time; and

(2) address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum

(A) parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement;

(B) frequent reports to parents on their child's progress; and

(C) reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities (United States Department of Education, 2004).

With the guidelines of *NCLB* in place, schools are continuously seeking ways to involve parents, as well as members of the community, in educating students.

While the federal government has defined parental involvement and schools have established parental involvement plans to promote parent participation in the educational process, there is still a discrepancy between educators and parents as to what constitutes effective parental involvement. Although parental involvement has been an issue of interest to researchers and there have been multiple strategies suggested for ways to involve parents in the education of students, there is a need for additional research as to what parents and teachers believe are effective practices of parental involvement that promote student achievement and effectively connect schools, families, and communities.

Epstein's model has been reviewed extensively by the research community and has been approved by numerous practitioners (Jordan et al., 2002). Epstein's work is cited throughout literature regarding parental involvement and used by schools across the country as a framework

for developing partnerships. Therefore, this study uses Epstein's parent involvement model in examining parent and teacher perceptions regarding parent involvement. Following are the six major types of parental involvement as defined by Epstein et al. (2009):

Parenting (Type 1). Parenting, assisting families with basic parenting skills and encouraging home conditions to support children in the educational process, and assisting schools to understand families.

Communicating (Type 2). Communicating refers to parent-initiated and school-initiated contact regarding school programs and student progress.

Volunteering (Type 3). Volunteering refers to organizing volunteers to support the school and students. Volunteering includes providing volunteer opportunities at school events or other community events related to education.

Learning at Home (Type 4). Learning at home refers to the involving families in learning activities at home including homework and extracurricular learning activities.

Decision Making (Type 5). Decision making refers to families participating in school decision making and possibly developing parent leaders and representatives.

Collaborating With the Community (Type 6). Collaborating with the community refers to coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school to support learning.

“When parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work” (Epstein et al., 2009, p. 9).

Parental involvement is essential to academic achievement of students and correlates to student success (Emeagwali, 2009). Not only do researchers and educational leaders believe that parental

involvement is significant, but parents and teachers also agree that it is essential. What is effective parental involvement? How do teachers and parents agree on effective parental involvement practices? What factors might affect the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have found that family and community involvement in the educational process can significantly impact schools and student success (Comer, 1984; Davies, 1996; Epstein et al., 2009; Gordon & Louis, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Shumow & Lomax, 2002). According to *NCLB* schools are to provide parental involvement opportunities in the schools (United States Department of Education, 2004). The purpose of this study was to compare and contrast parent and teacher perceptions regarding effective parental involvement based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement and to examine differences within the parent population and teacher population based on demographic factors.

Research Questions

To examine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement in educating elementary school students, the following research questions were posed:

Question 1: What constitutes parental involvement in a particular district?

Question 2: What involvement activities do parents consider most effective?

Question 3: What involvement activities do teachers consider most effective?

Question 4: Are there significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?

Question 5: Are there significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, gender, race)?

Question 6: Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, experience, gender)?

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement with elementary students based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement. This study may provide information for school districts when planning partnership programs. It may also provide a glimpse of parent and teacher perceptions regarding effective parental involvement practices. Results from this study may indicate to schools more effective ways of meeting parental involvement requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act*. Results may indicate ways to improve communication between parents and educators and encourage effective involvement by parents in an effort to achieve student academic success.

Definitions of Terms

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, is the main federal law influencing kindergarten through high school education. ESEA is built on four

principles: accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research (United States Department of Education, 2010).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 is the reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act. It is a federally mandated bill designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America's schools (United States Department of Education, 2004).

Parent. In addition to the natural parent, a parent is the legal guardian or other person standing in *loco parentis*, such as a grandparent or stepparent with whom the child lives, or a person who is legally responsible for the child (United States Department of Education, 2004).

Parental Involvement. The participation of parents in regular and meaningful two-way communication involving student academic learning and other school activities (United States Department of Education, 2004).

Pre-kindergarten. The school year immediately preceding Kindergarten.

Teacher. An individual who has obtained a certificate to teach school and is currently teaching.

Title I. A federal program to ensure that all children have an opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach proficiency on challenging state academic standards and assessments (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Title I School. A public school that receives funding from the federal Title I program based on the number of students receiving free or reduced-priced lunches (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Delimitation and Limitations

This study was delimited to parents and teachers of three elementary schools in an east Tennessee city school system during the 2010-2011 academic year. The researcher sampled the entire population of parents and teachers.

The perceptions of parents and teachers from three elementary schools are also a delimitation. Results of this study are only generalizable to the population used for this study and findings may or may not be applicable to other schools and school districts.

Limitations for this study include parents and teachers in an east Tennessee school district with varying demographic backgrounds. Based on the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, the city population was 9,332 (U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, 2000). The ethnicity of the city population consisted of 2.7% African American, 0.3% American Indian or Native Alaskan, 0.4% Asian, 95.5% White, 0.3% other, and 0.8% being two or more races (U.S. Census Bureau, American FactFinder, 2000). The ethnicity of the teacher population was 1.25% African American and 98.75% White.

This study was limited to parents and teachers who chose to participate by completing a survey. Lack of honesty when completing the survey may also be a limitation.

Summary

Chapter 1 presented an introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, definitions of terms, delimitations and limitations in the study, and a summary. Chapter 2 contains a review of the literature. Chapter 3 addresses the research methodology including data collection and data analysis. Chapter 4 presents the data analysis.

Chapter 5 contains the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations for practice and further research on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

“There is no program and no policy that can substitute for a parent who is involved in their child’s education from day one.”

– President Barack Obama

(United States Department of Education, 2010, p. 1)

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of parents and teachers regarding parental involvement in educating children. This literature review was organized into several sections. The history of parental involvement and issues regarding parental involvement have been discussed; benefits and barriers to parental involvement have been explored; the perspectives of parental involvement have been examined; and the theoretical framework used in this study has been discussed.

Garrett (2008) reported that educators’ and researchers’ greatest interest on the impact of parental involvement on student academic achievement was during the 1980s and 1990s. There is agreement in the field of education for the need of parent and community involvement (Epstein et al., 2009). Today’s concern for parental involvement in a child’s education is a result of building interest over several decades of the need for parental participation that was emphasized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Berger, 2008). “The importance of parental involvement in a child’s academic success is inarguable” (Flynn, 2007, p. 27).

History of Parental Involvement

From the beginning of time, parents have nurtured their children, modeled for their children, and educated their children. It has been stated that parents are the child's first teacher and that the home is a child's first classroom (Berger, 1991).

In the 14th century the earliest of the English private schools, better known as the public schools, began and were supported by donations and tuition fees from parents. These elite boarding schools were known as public schools in contrast to other primary means of early schooling known as the private tutor. The education of children was fully accommodated in the family and was a learning experience through the productive activities of the household and through learned trades in neighboring households (Coleman, 1987).

The private tutor was an addition to the family for upper class families, where instruction was given within the home and parental involvement was routine. The boarding school, however, created a disconnection for families as educational activities were transferred from the home environment to a setting that brought boys together from many families for instruction (Coleman, 1987). Until this time, parental involvement was fundamental and consisted of providing for their child's food, health, safety, shelter, clothing, and well-being (Epstein, 1987).

In Colonial America Pilgrims insisted that education be taken care of by parents. As early as 1642 the General Court of Massachusetts came to the conclusion that many parents were neglecting this responsibility; therefore, the court ordered every town to require all parents and masters assume the education of their children. Due to the lack of success of this provision, in 1647 the General Court passed the Old Deluder Satan Act that required every town to set up its own school or support a school in the next larger town (Pulliam & Patten, 2007).

Even though English private schools began in the 14th century and Colonial America's attempt to provide for education took place in the 1600s, mass state-supported schooling did not begin until the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Coleman, 1987). Children were schooled by, in, or near their families. In the United States this primarily remained the case through the 1940s (Comer, 1986).

The community and parents significantly controlled decisions regarding school in the early 19th century. Parents and the community were involved in decisions regarding the employment of teachers, the school calendar, and the school curriculum (Epstein, 1986). The church, home, and school generally supported the same instructional program and educational issues (Comer, 1986).

Several women's groups were formed during the 19th century. While formation of these groups was initially intended as a means for women to express political views, some of these groups became parent support groups, such as the Parent Teach Association (PTA), which was originally formed as Congress of Mothers in 1897 (Woysner, 2003).

During the period up to 1940, the relationship of parental involvement and the schooling process was possible because the United States was mostly made up of rural areas and small towns (Comer, 1986). Television was nonexistent and transportation was limited. Cultural uniformity prevailed, and trust and mutual respect between parents and schools were taken for granted (Fantini, 1980). The principal economic activities were within the household or neighboring households. The family was the basic building block for social and economic organization during this time (Coleman, 1987).

World War II produced technological and scientific changes that also brought about social changes including changes in the relationship between the home and the school (Comer,

1986). Economically productive activities moved outside the home and away from the family (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Transportation, communication, and technological opportunities encouraged men to leave the farm (Coleman, 1987). The typical American family was affected by women leaving home and entering the workplace, and this brought about an increase in the number of children enrolled in schools. Parents played a large role in educating children by volunteering and supporting but were leaving the basic teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic to the schools (Brim, 1965). By the late 1950s most teachers believed that they should teach and the parents should just be supportive (Berger, 2008).

The overall acceptance of teaching as a profession began to change the face of parental involvement in schools (Berger, 2008; Epstein, 1996; Zellman & Waterman, 1998). School staff members no longer had to live near their schools, and television presented visual information from around the world directly to children (Comer, 1986). These changes decreased the level of trust and agreement that had previously been present between the home and the school (Comer, 1986).

Throughout the history of education parental involvement has played a primary role in the schooling of children. As early as 1956, the Public Education Association, an advocacy group comprised of citizens, received a grant from the Ford Foundation, allowing the directors of school volunteer programs to recruit, train, and place volunteers in the classroom to help students with reading and language (Merenda, 1989). In 1964 the Public Education Association received another grant, allowing volunteer efforts to expand into 20 cities, and by 1982 an estimated 4.3 million parents and other interested citizens were regularly providing volunteer services in schools (Merenda, 1989). By 1965 the PTA had a membership of almost 12 million (National PTA, 2009).

Many changes affecting education took effect in 1965 as a result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Civil Rights Act of 1965, and the formation of Head Start (Berger, 2008). President Lyndon Johnson signed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965 as part of his War on Poverty. ESEA was a legislative act marking the beginning of federally funded legislation linking parental involvement and education, and the primary purpose was to ensure adequate materials to children from low-income families (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). This legislation was the basis for Title I that introduced the provision for funding to support educationally deprived children, emphasized the importance of involving parents of low-income children, and required parents to serve on school committees and participate in classroom activities (Pulliam & Patten, 2007).

The Civil Rights Act of 1965 influenced education in America and greatly affected the family. The demand of equal rights for minorities and women impacted the desire for equal opportunities, which directly affected family relationships (Berger, 2008).

Headstart began in the summer of 1965 as a part of the War on Poverty and provided early intervention that assisted many economically disadvantaged families learn about health, nutrition, and education. This intervention program gave many children a head start on formal schooling (Nedler & McAfee, 1979).

Families were greatly impacted by the Vietnam War and the 1970s were filled with uncertainty (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Inflation was high, the economy was weak, and families were frightened causing more than 20 million mothers to join the workforce in an effort to strengthen the family (Pulliam & Patten, 2007). Many families faced troubling issues during the 1970s with diverse values concerning drugs, war, and moral responsibilities (Berger, 2008).

Despite multiple social, political, and educational issues, educators and political leaders searched for ways to involve parents and improve education across the country (Berger, 2008).

A reported decline in student scores prompted the school reform movement during the 1980s (Education Week, 1985). The White House Conference on Families was held in Baltimore, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles, and sparked the interest of many American families by focusing on numerous issues such as child-care services, job schedules, and family support (Steiner, 1981). The 1983 Nation at Risk report, issued by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, reminded parents that the education of children begins at home and called on parents to actively participate in the schools and in their child's learning (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1983). By 1984, the PTA membership had declined to approximately 5.4 million (National Parent Teacher Association, 2009).

Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Public Law 103-227) was signed into law in March 1994 by President Bill Clinton (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). The act stated that America's parents were foremost to the plan's implementation and future success and stated that by the year 2000 "every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children" (U.S. Department of Education, 1996, p. 1). Years of research have indicated that schools cannot take the place of parents and lack of parental responsibility greatly hinders the teacher's ability to educate the child (Bennett, Finn, & Cribb, 1999).

In the 1990s parental involvement increased and was viewed by many as the most important factor in the education of children (Berger, 2008). PTA memberships had increased to approximately 7 million (National PTA, 2009). The Department of Education emphasized strong partnerships between families and schools and continued to encourage family participation

through federal programs such as Title I, Even Start, and the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (Berger, 2008). Choice was important during the 1990s as charter schools and home schooling became more popular, giving families additional options in the educational process (Berger, 2008).

In 1995 the National Network for Partnership Schools was established by Epstein to assist in connecting research, policy, and practices in education (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein et al. (2009) defined a framework of six major types of involvement and included different practices, challenges, redefinition of terms, and possible results for students, parents, and schools for each type. The six types of involvement identified by Epstein et al. (2009) are:

- Parenting (Type 1) – Assist families with basic parenting skills and encourage home conditions to support children in the educational process and assist schools in understanding families.
- Communicating (Type 2) – Parent-initiated and school-initiated contacts regarding school programs and student progress.
- Volunteering (Type 3) – Organize volunteers to support the school and the students. Provide volunteer opportunities at school events or other community events related to education.
- Learning at Home (Type 4) – Involve families in learning activities including homework and extracurricular learning activities at home.
- Decision Making (Type 5) – Include families as participants in school decision making and possibly develop parent leaders and representatives.
- Collaborating with the Community (Type 6) – Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school to support learning.

Increased diversity in the 21st century introduced greater challenges as emphasis on parental involvement and the education of children continued. The *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* was reauthorized when President George W. Bush signed the *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* into law in January 2002 in an effort to close the achievement gap among American students. With a focus on parental involvement, section 1118 of *NCLB* states:

A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents...build the schools' and parents' capacity for strong parental involvement...conduct, with the involvement of parents, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy in improving the academic quality of the schools served under this part, including identifying barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background), and use the findings of such evaluation to design strategies for more effective parental involvement, and to revise, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this section; and involve parents in the activities of the schools served under this part (United States Department of Education, 2004, p. 40).

NCLB requires school districts receiving Title I funding to implement programs, activities, and procedures for parental involvement. The Act required annual testing on all third through eighth grade students in math and reading and parents were to be well informed of their child's progress. Parents of children in schools not performing up to standards had other educational options, such as transferring to another traditional school or charter school (Berger, 2008). The law also required states and school districts to assume accountability and provide annual report cards (United States Department of Education, 2004). Despite the emphasis on family involvement, the 2009 PTA year-end report announced a decline in membership to 5 million (PTA, 2009).

President Obama has declared that parents are a child's first teacher and that shared partnerships are essential to improve schools in America (United States Department of Education, 2010). In March 2010 the Obama administration released its blueprint for the reauthorization of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Obama's blueprint supports state, district, and school efforts in engaging families by:

- Supporting comprehensive district approaches to family engagement
- Enhancing district capacity around family engagement
- Providing for a new Family Engagement and Responsibility Fund
- Identifying and supporting best practices

The blueprint calls for states to provide parents with a clear and understandable report card noting important information about their child's school, student achievement levels, graduation rates, school climate, and school funding. States and districts will be required to publish an annual report card including information on effectiveness of teachers and leaders, providing parents with information regarding the quality of educators working in their child's school. Families will still be notified of the accountability status of their district and school, which is a current Title I requirement (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Obama's proposal supports engaging families and community members more effectively by providing professional development programs to improve the skills of educators in working with families and community members. The importance of family literacy is recognized by allocating funds to support family literacy activities (United States Department of Education, 2010).

Benefits to Parental Involvement

Parents are considered key players in the process of student learning (Epstein, 2001).

Education begins before formal schooling, and parents are recognized as a child's first educator.

Lightfoot (1978) stressed the importance of building positive relationships between home and school, stating:

Productive collaborations between family and school will demand that parents and teachers recognize the critical importance of each other's participation in the life of a child. This mutuality of knowledge, understanding, and empathy comes not only with the recognition of the child as the central purpose of the collaboration, but also with a recognition of the need to maintain roles and relationships with children that are comprehensive, dynamic, and differentiated (p. 200-221).

Schools, families, and communities that work together and share the responsibility for educating children are more likely to provide better programs and opportunities for students (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies 2007). "When parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and begins its work" (Epstein et al., 2009, p. 9). Epstein et al. (2009) concluded that through frequent, meaningful interactions between families, schools, and communities, students are more likely to realize the importance of school, of working hard and helping others, and of staying in school to continue their education.

Epstein et al.'s (2009) six major types of involvement encourage positive outcomes for students, parents, and educators. Epstein et al. clearly explained that some types of involvement activities could influence students' skills, achievement, and test scores while other types of involvement may influence attitudes, attendance, and behavior. She also stated that poorly designed involvement activities could have a negative result; therefore, schools must carefully

choose practices that meet the needs of the students, families, and community (Epstein et al., 2009).

Parental involvement is documented as having a variety of positive results such as increased school attendance, increased sense of well-being among students, more positive perceptions of the school, and higher academic achievement (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Because most schools measure effectiveness by student achievement, parental involvement influencing student achievement requires recognition. One of the initial studies to examine school, teacher, and family variables dealing with achievement was the 1966 Coleman report. Nedler and McAfee (1979) reported Coleman's conclusion that the single most important factor in student achievement was the home background of the child, with an additional important variable being family attitude toward achievement and school. Though the conducting of program comparisons and the process of identifying the kinds of involvement that produce the most positive academic results are difficult, Henderson and Mapp (2002) reported that the most effective programs and practices when engaging families should focus on student learning.

Smith and Brache (1963) conducted a study in which parents attended discussion groups that emphasized the importance of parents setting examples for their children. Parents were asked to read daily to their children, to listen to their children read, and to provide a routine quiet time at home for reading and studying. They were also asked to be sure that their children had proper school supplies. Over the program's 5-month period, children showed overall gains of 5.4 months in reading compared to 2.7 months in a comparison school that did not communicate with parents on a daily basis. In 1975 Bittle reported daily communication with parents resulted in dramatically improved test scores in spelling.

Dorothy Rich, founder and director of the Home and School Institute in Washington, DC, wrote priority should be given to involving parents in their child's learning activities (Admundson, 1988). Rich indicated learning begins in the home and learning which takes place in the home directly impacts learning that occurs in the schools (Admundson, 1988). Rankin reported that children who are high achievers in school are much more likely to have interested and involved parents (as cited in Linney & Verberg, 1983). A study by Becher (as cited in Admundson, 1988) supports the positive effects on student achievement by concluding:

Children with higher scores on measures of achievement, competence, and intelligence had parents who held higher educational expectations and aspirations for them than did parents of children who did not score as high. Parents of the former children also exerted more pressure for achievement, provided more academic guidance, and exhibited a higher level of general interest in their children (p. 82).

Gillum, Schooley, and Novak conducted a study of three Michigan school districts that involved parents in performance contracts (as cited in Henderson & Berla, 1994). They found that the districts with the most comprehensive parent programs scored the greatest gain. Data gathered from 135 schools indicated a positive relationship between high reading and math scores and a supportive environment in which parents were involved (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

In a study of students in 14 elementary classrooms where teachers used a variety of techniques to involve parents in home learning activities, Epstein found a significantly positive effect on the reading achievement of students (Epstein, 1991). Epstein compared student achievement test scores in the fall and again in the spring and found that students made gains when parents were encouraged to help their children at home (Epstein, 1991). Epstein stated parents are a valuable, unused resource in educating children and wrote:

Parents are one available but untapped and undirected resource that teachers can mobilize to help more children master and maintain needed skills for school....this required

teachers' leadership in organizing, evaluating, and continually building their parent involvement practices (as cited in Henderson & Berla, 1994, p. 62).

In a study of factors relating to student achievement among high school students, Eagle (1989) examined the effects of socioeconomic status, family structure, and parental involvement. Eagle looked at family composition, parental involvement during high school, parents' reading to the student in early childhood, mother's employment status, and the family having a special place for the student to study in the home. She found parental involvement had the most impact on student achievement (Eagle, 1989). She defined parental involvement during high school as parents talking to teachers, parents involved in planning for postsecondary activities, and parents' monitoring of school work (Eagle, 1989).

Meaningful parental involvement significantly impacts achievement (Emeagwali 2009; Epstein, 2003; Griffith, 1996; National PTA, 2004). Olmsted and Rubin (1983) reported a significant relationship between parent behaviors and attitudes and student achievement in a study of the Parent Education Follow Through Program. It is demonstrated that parents' interest and support affect student achievement, attitudes, and aspirations (Epstein, 1987; Haynes, Comer, & Hamilton, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Parents may support schools by providing volunteer assistance, cooperating in home learning, acting as audience for programs, serving as members of governing bodies, and by participating in the decision making process by providing input on school policies (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). Parents in these roles may not only affect their own child, other children in the school may benefit from their involvement as well (Henderson & Berle, 1994). Teachers can greatly impact parents and encourage parental involvement in the educational process (Epstein, 1991; Sheldon, 2009).

Parents often develop more positive attitudes about school, become more involved with school activities, experience increased self-confidence, and enroll in other educational programs as a result of involvement in their child's education (Becher, 1984). Herman and Yeh (1983) surveyed parents and found those who participated in schools expressed higher levels of satisfaction with both the school and their own child's achievement. Studies have confirmed parent attitudes and behaviors change as a result of involvement with their child's learning experiences (Epstein, 1983; Henderson & Berle, 1994; Lightfoot, 1978).

Research clearly supports that parent attitudes and behaviors are influenced by involvement with schools (Epstein, 1991; Epstein et al., 2009; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Swap, 1993). Parents' positive attitudes get communicated to children and serve to shape a child's school performance (Comer, 1986; Herman & Yeh, 1983). Parental involvement produces changes in parents, and parents who are involved have a more positive view of schools than parents who are not involved (Epstein, 1986). Some programs involve parents directly in home-learning or as tutors, while other programs involve parents in a support role or in an audience role rather than a direct teaching role (Berger, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Shumow & Miller, 2001). Regardless of the role, a more informed and participatory parent largely benefits the school, the students, and the parents (Becher, 1984; Comer, 1986; Flaxman & Inger, 1991).

National organizations have also recognized the importance of parental involvement and have taken initiatives that encourage effective partnerships between the home, school, and community (National ParentNet Association, 2007). The National Education Association, the National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, the National Parent-Teacher Organization along with other groups, have also addressed the issue of parental involvement by publishing parenting guides, providing resources, and offering suggestions on how and why

involvement is important to education (Williams & Chavkin, 1989). There are many parent-community educational support and monitoring groups in different cities across the country that provide information and services to parents in attempt to promote public awareness and support public schools (Davies, 1991, National ParentNet, 2007).

The significance of parental involvement in education is based on years of study and research by Becker and Epstein (1982), Davies (1987), Epstein (1986, 1987, 1991, 1995), Henderson and Berla (1994), and others. The importance of parental involvement and the home-school-community connection has been recognized at all levels of government. Legislation and mandates have addressed the need for increased parental involvement and home support in education. Parental involvement in a child's education continues to be addressed at the national, state, and local levels. The federal government has included parental involvement elements in several compensatory education programs and made parental involvement mandatory in a number of programs such as Title I, Headstart, and P.L. 94-142 (the Education for All Handicapped Children Act).

With the strategic application of legislation, policies, and guidelines, states have expressed their concern for the importance of parental involvement and their commitment to it. Local school districts have required and encouraged the promotion of parental involvement. Parental involvement is recognized by researchers, educational leaders, teachers, and parents as significantly important to the educational achievement of children; therefore, many schools have experienced high levels of parental involvement, yet many are still attempting to overcome the obstacles and build bridges for effective partnerships (Flynn, 2007).

Barriers to Parental involvement

Although parental involvement is recognized as significantly important in the education of children, there remains great diversity concerning parental involvement. Some factors exist over which schools have little control, and these factors have become of great interest to educational decision makers (Feurstein, 2000).

Today's parents are often preoccupied with the distractions and demands of daily life (Brandt, 1989). Burdened by low-income, custodial care, inflexible work hours, and language barriers, some parents are unable to attend school activities or participate in the schooling of their children on a regular basis (Ascher, 1988; Lindle, 1989). A study in two Washington, DC high schools, conducted by Leitch and Tangri, found that employed parents were more involved than unemployed parents, yet the two main reasons for lack of participation were work and poor health (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). While these issues may not be easily affected, the barriers can be overcome (Feurstein, 2000). Research has indicated that great schools have effective partnerships with parents (Davies, 1996); therefore, school, family, and community partnerships are a critical component in educating students.

Davis (1989) found that many parents suffer from low self-esteem and others did not experience success in school themselves and therefore lack the knowledge and confidence to help their children. Parents who did not experience success in school may view the school negatively (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991; Whitaker & Fiore, 2001). Parents may be intimidated by the language, the curriculum, and the staff; consequently they avoid communication with the school (Flynn, 2007).

Boyer (1989) reported in a national survey that teachers in America are greatly concerned that children do not receive support from their parents. Ascher (1988) reported low-income urban

parents can and want to participate in the education of their children as much as middle class parents. She also went on to report that often, single-parent participation is hindered by inflexible leave policies and child-care responsibilities. Many school officials tend to decide in advance that single and low-income working parents cannot be approached or relied upon. They are not expected to participate in the classroom of their children, attend meetings, or provide assistance with home learning activities (Ascher, 1988).

Students are a critical component for successful school, family, and community involvement and can create a barrier for partnerships when they fail to fulfill their duty (Epstein, 1995). Students are often responsible for delivering information and communicating with their parents regarding school programs, activities, and events (Epstein, 1995). In strong involvement programs, teachers help students understand their role and the importance of actively participating in the family, school, and community partnership (Epstein, 1995).

Given decreased budgeted funds in education and increased expectations, school administrators and teachers must take the initiative to involve parents in an effort to assist the educational achievement of students (Wherry, 2009). Some school administrators and teachers may not know how to involve parents; therefore, educators lacking this knowledge could be taught techniques for involving parents and creating partnerships (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Administrators and teachers may not fully understand the importance of parental involvement and the effects of parental involvement on student achievement (Flynn, 2007). Often, teachers believe parents do not support the school and do not discipline children when there has been a problem at school (Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms, 1986). When teachers do not feel parental support, they often believe it is a waste of their time to contact parents (Flynn, 2007).

In an effort to overcome the barriers preventing parental involvement, schools need to provide a welcoming climate where the school staff is respectful and responsive to parents (Wherry, 2009). It is critical that administrators and teachers encourage respectful two-way communication between the school and home (Wherry, 2009). Bouie, an educational consultant stated, “The answer is to stop treating parents like ‘clients’ and start treating them like ‘partners’ in helping children learn” (as cited in Wherry, 2009, p. 7). A survey of parents in four school systems concluded that parents want to be treated with respect and do not want a professional-client relationship (Lindle, 1989).

Failure to sufficiently train preservice teachers is a significant obstacle in promoting parental involvement in the schools (Epstein, 1995). Preservice teachers could work with parents as part of their teacher education program and internship (Greenwood & Hickman, 1991). Classes could be incorporated into teacher education programs and advanced degree programs to assist in defining an educator’s role in school, family, and community partnerships (Epstein, 1995).

Some school systems have employed parent involvement coordinators to lead and coordinate parental involvement activities and programs within the system in an effort to overcome obstacles between the home and school (Epstein, 1991). Epstein (2001) described the role of parent involvement coordinators as a way to get more parents involved in a variety of aspects of the school. Parent involvement coordinators often conduct workshops for parents to inform them of the school curriculum and remind them that they are their child’s most important teacher (Epstein, 2001).

Perceptions Regarding Parental Involvement

Not only do researchers and educational leaders believe that parental involvement is significant, but parents and educators also agree that it is essential (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents want their children to succeed (Brandt, 1989; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). The majority of parents are concerned about their children and can contribute to their child's education, regardless of race, ethnic background, or socioeconomic status (Brandt, 1989; Davies, 1987; Mapp, 2002). A national poll examining the attitudes of U.S. residents toward their local public schools found that respondents valued involvement in the schools and were willing to become more involved themselves (Public Education Network, 2000).

Lindle (1989) reported educators are mistaken if they think parents do not care. Her researched showed that parents of all races and social classes want to help their children if they can, but many do not know how. Data from parents in economically depressed communities reported that they needed the school's assistance to know what to do to help their children (Epstein, 1995).

Feeling welcome and respected by educators is an important link with parents and their willingness to become involved (Henderson et al., 2007). Parents are more likely to become actively involved in their child's education if they are invited (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Invitations are powerful motivators and relay a message to parents that they are valued and important in their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parents want to feel trusted and comfortable with their child's teachers, the school setting, and the outcome of their effort (Finders & Lewis, 1994).

Phillips, Smith, and Witted (as cited in Henderson & Berla, 1994) reported that the majority of elementary and secondary teachers surveyed felt that school and family interaction

was necessary for maximum educational achievement. Phillips et al. (as cited in Henderson & Berla, 1994) later reported that teachers believe students do better if parents enrich the learning process and strengthen the home-school relationship. Henderson and Mapp (2002) recognizing the importance of the home and school relationship, stated:

When parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, help them plan for college, and make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive, their children do better in school. When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement (p. 8).

Communication between parents and teachers increases achievement and enhances the learning process (Epstein, 1986). Despite the attention given to the importance of parental involvement, teachers reported lack of parental involvement as a major obstacle (Langdon & Vesper, 2000). Finders and Lewis (1994) encouraged a review of our assumptions about parents and the absence of some parents from school related activities. They concluded that educators may find their interpretations of parents who are concerned about their child's education may simply be the parents who feel comfortable at school and who experienced success during their own schooling.

Lawson (2003) suggested that parents and teachers have different perceptions of parental involvement. Parents had a tendency to be community centric, focusing their attention on children as members in the community and in society. Teachers were more inclined to be school centric, focusing their attention on children within the school setting.

Rose and Gallop (2004) reported in the 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallop Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools that students' parents were most important in determining how well or how poorly students performed in schools. The poll revealed 97% of

the public favored encouraging more parental involvement as a way to close the achievement gap between racially diverse students.

The 42nd Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallop Poll of the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools included a question asking which was more important school or student's parents in determining whether students learn in school. The poll concluded that student's parents are the most important factor in determining whether students learn in school (Bushaw & Lopez, 2010).

Theoretical Framework

Parents, schools, and communities have a shared interest and responsibility in educating children (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein's school-family-community partnership model emphasized the roles of the school, the family, and the community in working collaboratively to influence the development and learning of children (Epstein et al., 2009). She referred to this partnership model as an overlapping influence between the school, family, and community in educating children in an effort of achieving academic success (Epstein, 1995).

The overlapping spheres of influence model demonstrates shared responsibility of the school, family, and community for a child's success in school (Epstein et al., 2009). The external structure of the overlapping spheres of influence model recognizes the child at the center as the focus within the family, school, and community (Figure 1). Various experiences, philosophies, practices, and other forces push the spheres together or pull the spheres apart resulting in the amount of overlap between the school, family, and community (Epstein et al., 2009). The amount of overlap change, yet there is never complete overlapping as families, schools, and communities conduct some practices separately (Epstein, 1995).

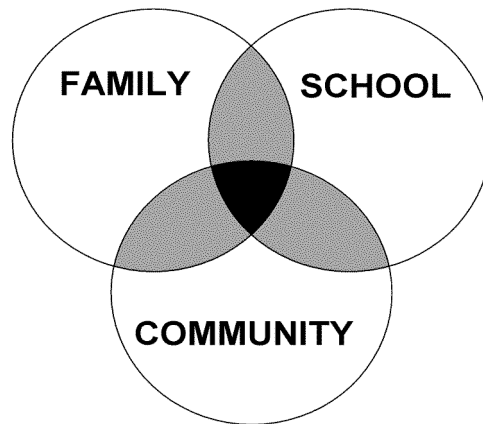
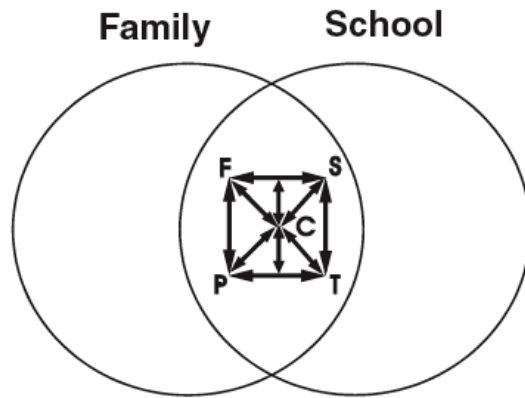


Figure 1. Overlapping Spheres of Influence - External Structure

Children interact with, influence, and are influenced by their families, their schools, and their communities (Epstein, 1995). The internal structure of the overlapping spheres of influence model demonstrates the interactions that may occur as a result of families, schools, and communities working together (Figure 2). These interactions may be at an institutional level involving all families, children, educators, and the entire community or at an individual level involving just one parent, child, teacher, or community partner (Epstein et al., 2009).

The theory of overlapping spheres of influence suggests that educators provide *family-like* schools, families create *school-like* homes, and community encourage *school-like* opportunities and *family-like* services. Educators create *family-like* schools by recognizing children as individuals and making them feel valuable (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents create *school-like* families by recognizing the importance of school and school-related activities while encouraging their child's educational success (Epstein et al., 2009). Communities provide *school-like* opportunities by reinforcing and recognizing the efforts and success of students. Communities also provide *family-like* settings and events by encouraging and assisting families



F=Family S=School T=Teacher P=Parent C=Child

Figure 2. Overlapping Spheres of Influence – Internal Structure

in supporting their child’s educational success (Epstein et al., 2009).

Epstein has identified six important types of involvement between schools, families, and the community (Epstein et al., 2009). The six types of involvement are based on the results of many studies over many years of work by educators on families in elementary, middle, and high school (Epstein et al., 2009).

Six Types of School-Family-Community Involvement

Parenting

The first type of involvement is parenting and includes helping families with basic parenting skills, encouraging home conditions to support children in the educational process, and assisting schools to understand families. Schools can assist families in meeting their responsibilities as parents of children at every age level by providing activities that increase their knowledge and strengthen their skills in an effort to influence their child’s growth and

development (Epstein et al., 2009). Activities that may strengthen parents' understanding of development, assist with parenting skills, and improve home conditions that may support learning may include but are not limited to family support programs, parent education workshops, and home visits (Epstein, 2001). Activities should include information *for* parents and *from* parents about their families (Epstein et al., 2009). It is critical to provide information to all families, not just the families who attend the workshops or meetings at school. Often families who do not attend or cannot attend are the families who really need the information (Epstein, 2001).

It is important for schools to gather information from families to help educators understand students and their families, including their backgrounds, goals, strengths, and needs (Epstein, 2001). When parents share this type of information with the school, it creates an awareness of challenges in parenting and builds a strong and trustworthy relationship between the family and the educators (Epstein, 2001). A challenge associated with parenting is ensuring that all information sent to families is clear, useful, and relevant regarding the success of each child in the school. This can be a difficult task as the abilities and needs within the school may be greatly diverse and varied (Epstein, 2001).

Students, parents, and schools can benefit with successful parenting practices in place. Student attendance can improve when families are informed of policies and are involved (Epstein, 2001). Students can have an increased awareness of the importance of school and respect for education (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents can benefit from successful parenting practices by increasing their knowledge of each development stage in their child's life, which can increase self-confidence about parenting (Epstein, 2001). With successful parenting practices in place, parents may have a greater feeling of support from the school and other parents

(Epstein, 2001). Educators and schools can also benefit from successful parenting practices by increasing their understanding of families and the goals and concerns families have for their children. Educators can gain respect for students' and their families' strengths, needs, and background (Epstein, 2001).

Communication

Communicating refers to parent-initiated and school-initiated contact regarding school programs and student progress. Communication is defined by Epstein (2001) as the ability to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and student progress. Useful and clear two-way communication encourages cooperation between the home and school and reveals to students that contact is being made between the home and school in an effort to monitor student success (Epstein et al., 2009).

There are multiple ways including conferences, PTA meetings, weekly or monthly folders of student work, handbooks, parent pick up of report cards, notes, emails, newsletters, phone calls, and websites to produce effective communication between the home and the school (Epstein, 2001). Any time communication is involved there will likely be challenges.

Communication must be clear and useful and schools need to be considerate of factors such as language barriers and literacy of families that could affect the understanding of the information being shared (Epstein, 2001). An increasing number of schools are using technological resources as a means of communication; however, it is important to remember that all families may not have access to these technological resources (Epstein et al., 2009).

Effective communication between the home and school yields numerous positive results. Students can benefit from an awareness of their progress in specific subjects and skills. When

students are involved in the communication process, they are more knowledgeable of the actions required to maintain or improve their grades (Epstein et al., 2009). Involvement in the communication process can also make students more aware of their role in the education process and give students more responsibility over their educational success (Epstein, 2001).

Parents can benefit from effective communication with the school by having increased knowledge of policies, procedures, and programs within the school, allowing the parents to provide additional support in the educational experience (Epstein, 2001). As parents communicate with the school they typically become more comfortable and satisfied with the school and the teachers (Epstein et al., 2009). As a result of effective and positive communication with staff, teachers, and administrators, parents are able to encourage a successful educational experience for their children and may become more actively involved (Epstein, 2001).

Schools may gain from clear and effective communication with families. Communication, whether written or oral, gives parents a better understanding of policies, procedures, and programs within the school, which allows for additional support of the school (Epstein, 2001). Clear communication between families and schools encourages the use of parents' networks to communicate with all families within the community (Epstein et al., 2009).

Volunteering

The third type of involvement is volunteering and is defined as recruiting and organizing people to assist and support the school and the students (Epstein, 2001). Volunteering is more than be present at the school and offering assistance during the day, but consists of supporting the goals of the school and the learning process in any way, in any place, and at any time

(Epstein et al., 2009). As the demands of families have increased with work hours, overwhelming schedules, and other responsibilities, some families have difficulty scheduling time to volunteer at the school during normal school hours (Epstein et al., 2009).

Volunteers can serve in many areas to support the school program and the student's work and activities, allowing educators and families to work together in the child's education. Volunteer activities include recruiting and training volunteers; arranging schedules, locations, and activities for volunteers; and recognizing parents who serve as an audience for student events and performances (Epstein et al., 2009). Volunteers can serve in schools or classrooms by assisting students, teachers, or administrators as aides, tutors, coaches, lecturers, chaperones, boosters, mentors, and in many other ways (Epstein, 2001). Volunteers may serve as an audience by attending assemblies, performances, sporting events, recognition events, award ceremonies, celebrations, and other student activities (Epstein, 2001). Volunteers can serve the schools or classrooms by assisting school programs and student activities in any location and at any time (Epstein et al., 2009).

Many schools have volunteers, but often there are a small number of people who continue to offer their time (Epstein, 2001). One of the many challenges to volunteer programs is to recruit a wide variety of people so that all families know they are valued as volunteers (Epstein et al., 2009). Schools need to provide volunteers with appropriate training, enabling the volunteers to successfully and effectively serve the school and the students (Epstein, 2001). With time being an issue in many families, schools need to create flexible schedules to provide training and allow volunteers to assist the school programs and the educational experience (Epstein et al., 2009).

There is much to be gained from effective volunteer programs. With volunteer programs in schools, students may be tutored or taught by volunteers, emphasizing the importance of educational success (Epstein, 2001). As a result of additional adult interaction, students may learn more effective communication skills with adults (Epstein, 2001).

As a result of having volunteers in classrooms and in schools, the role of the teacher may become evident and appreciated by parents and other volunteers (Epstein et al., 2009). Volunteer opportunities may give parents and community members increased self-confidence in their ability to work with children and the school setting. Enrollment in programs to improve their own education and to prepare for jobs in the field of education may be prompted through volunteer experiences with the school (Epstein et al., 2009).

When volunteers assist educators, adult-child ratios increase in the school, which allows educators to provide more individual attention to students. As parents become more involved, educators and parents may become more confident and comfortable with each other, which may encourage educators to involve families in many new ways, not just as volunteers (Epstein et al., 2009).

Learning at Home

Learning at home is the fourth type of involvement described by Epstein and refers to providing ideas to families on ways to assist their children in learning activities at home including homework and other curriculum related activities, decision-making, and planning (Epstein et al., 2009). Learning at home activities that encourage children to share and discuss assignments and ideas with family members support two-way connections between the home and the school regarding the curriculum and other school related activities (Epstein, 2001). When

families provide encouragement to their children, children are more likely to be actively involved in setting goals for educational success and in planning postsecondary educational experiences (Epstein, 2001).

Learning at home activities include information about how to help children with homework and improve skills in various subjects (Epstein, 2001). Students should be encouraged to discuss with their parents the activities they are involved in and demonstrate what they are learning in class. Students are more likely to complete their homework assignments and improve their skills, and parents may be more aware and involved in school curriculum, when learning at home activities are effectively designed and implemented (Epstein, 2001).

Learning at home activities can be extremely beneficial to the learning experience of students but can be difficult to design and implement (Epstein et al., 2009). Designing and implementing interactive homework on a regular basis in an attempt to allow students to discuss ideas and demonstrate skills with the family can be challenging and time consuming. Many parents are not involved and are unaware of activities and skills being taught in the classroom (Epstein, 2001). Many parents are uninformed of homework assignments and ways to assist their children with homework and other curriculum related activities (Epstein, 2001). Parents can be a significant tool in encouraging students to complete homework assignments and other activities, in setting personal goals for success in school and in preparing for postsecondary education or work (Epstein, 2001).

When learning at home activities are effectively designed and implemented, results can be expected among students, parents, and educators. With the encouragement of families at home, students' skills, abilities, and test scores can be expected to rise (Epstein et al., 2009). Parent awareness of homework policies and procedures can increase the completion of

homework assignments by students. As parents support the educational experience, children may view the parent as an advocate, resulting in increased self-confidence in personal ability and attitude towards school (Epstein, 2001).

When parents are involved in academic activities, there may be an increased appreciation for the teaching profession and the role of the teacher (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents may benefit from involvement in learning at home activities by having a better understanding of the curriculum and skills the children are learning, making it easier to assist children with curriculum related activities throughout the year (Epstein et al., 2009). Learning at home activities may escalate discussions within the home regarding school, classwork, homework, and future plans (Epstein, 2001).

Educators and schools may also profit from these types of activities by experiencing a boost in family involvement and support of the educational process (Epstein, 2001). Educators and schools may also recognize a rise in motivation of students from all racial and ethnic backgrounds from reinforcement in the home (Epstein et al., 2009).

Decision-Making

Epstein has identified decision making as including families in school decision making and developing parent leaders and representatives within the school (Epstein et al., 2009). By allowing parents to represent the school in leadership roles, parent leaders can assist families and the community in understanding and contributing ideas to support school programs (Epstein, 2001). Parents and educators have a shared interest in the educational experience of students, and collaboration between parents and educators regarding school issues can enhance the experiences of the children (Epstein et al., 2009).

Decision-making activities allow parents to contribute ideas regarding school plans and policies. Parents can serve as representatives on the school council, school improvement teams, PTA, PTO, advisory groups, and other committees. Many families want their opinions and ideas to be represented in the schools, but most families do not want to serve on committees or in leadership roles (Epstein, 2001).

As schools involve parents in decision making activities, it is important to include parents from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups from within the school population (Epstein et al., 2009). Parent leaders should be active participants and represent other families from the school, and it is imperative that parent leaders obtain ideas from families to share with the school and distribute information to the families they represent regarding school decisions, programs, and activities (Epstein, 2001). Schools need to offer appropriate training for the parent leaders to assist in developing their leadership skills and properly represent other families (Epstein et al., 2009). An important component in upper grades would be to include student representatives on committees and within organizations (Epstein et al., 2009).

With the involvement of families in the school decision making process, students become aware that families' views are valued and represented in the school. Students can benefit in multiple ways from the direct family influences of parents serving on committees and in organizations (Epstein et al., 2009). Families become more aware of policies, programs, and activities and gain a sense of respect within the school when involved in the decision-making process which can increase a parents' self-confidence, encouraging their ability to support their child's education (Epstein, 2001). When involving parents in decision making, educators may gain insight to families' perspectives regarding policies and school decisions (Epstein et al., 2009). As a result of educators and families collaborating in decision making, educators can gain

respect for families and their ability to represent the school in leadership roles (Epstein et al., 2009).

Collaborating with the Community

Collaborating with the community refers to coordinating resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school to support learning (Epstein et al., 2009).

Effectively collaborating with the community supports the school and also reinforces relations with businesses in the local community (Epstein, 2001).

Community is defined by Epstein (2001) as those interested in or influenced by the quality of education not just those families with children in the school. The community is comprised of everyone influencing the educational experiences of students not just those living in neighborhoods near or around the school (Epstein et al., 2009).

Community activities integrate additional resources, programs, and services with school programs to support learning (Epstein, 2001). The community can contribute to students, schools, and families by offering services through business partnerships, cultural organizations, health services, recreational centers, senior citizen programs, faith-based programs, governmental agencies, and other groups (Epstein et al., 2009). These community organizations and groups can provide mentoring, tutoring, after school care, and volunteer services to support schools and the development of children. Schools, students, and families can contribute to the community through service learning projects and other special projects while sharing their talents and working together on local issues (Epstein, 2001). A challenge for schools may be ensuring equal opportunities for everyone and informing all families of services offered within the community (Epstein et al., 2009).

When schools collaborate with the community, students can enrich their knowledge, skills, and talents from curricular and extracurricular experiences or explorations (Epstein et al., 2009). Often, students gain self-confidence and ownership of the community in which they live from collaborating in activities within the community (Epstein et al., 2009).

Families may benefit from schools collaborating with the community by experiencing increased knowledge and gaining the use of resources within the community to develop skills and obtain services for their family (Epstein, 2001). Community collaboration also allows families to work together to strengthen their relations and build a sense of ownership within the community (Epstein et al., 2009).

Because administrators and other educators may not live in or near the community where they work, collaboration may increase their knowledge of the community and make them aware of resources in the community that may enhance the curriculum and enrich students' experiences (Epstein et al., 2009). Collaborating with the community may be especially beneficial for educators in identifying local resources and services when assisting families having children with special needs (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres provides a model of the involvement of the family, school, and community in the education of children (Epstein et al., 2009).

Summary

The research and literature indicated that parental involvement could positively impact a child. Parents want their children to be successful in school, yet many parents do not know how to assist in their child's education. Educators are concerned about student achievement but often struggle in providing effective involvement opportunities. It is essential that parents and

educators accept the dual responsibility in striving for student academic achievement. “Parent-teacher collaboration will help provide avenues for children to find success both in and after school, but both parents and teachers must recognize their responsibilities” (Berger, 1991, p. 218).

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the perceptions of parents and teachers in elementary schools regarding parental involvement and search for relationships between demographic categories and perceptions of effective involvement. This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in this study to determine the perceptions of parents and teachers concerning effective parental involvement. This chapter is organized into the following sections: research questions and hypotheses, researcher's role, population, data collection, data analysis, validity and reliability, ethical consideration, and summary.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

1. What constitutes parental involvement in a particular district?
2. What involvement activities do parents consider most effective?
3. What involvement activities do teachers consider most effective?
4. Are there significant differences in the perceptions of parent and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?
5. Are there significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, gender, and race)?
6. Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, teaching experience, and gender)?

From research question 4, the following null hypothesis was tested:

Ho4₁: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement.

From research question 5, the following null hypotheses were tested.

Ho5₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the parenting typology.

Ho5₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the communicating typology.

Ho5₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the volunteering typology.

Ho5₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the learning at home typology.

Ho5₅: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the decision making typology.

Ho5₆: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the collaborating with the community typology.

Ho5₇: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the parenting typology.

Ho5₈: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the communicating typology.

Ho5₉: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the volunteering typology.

Ho5₁₀: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the learning at home typology.

Ho5₁₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the decision making typology.

Ho5₁₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the collaborating with the community typology.

Ho5₁₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the parenting typology.

Ho5₁₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the communicating typology.

Ho5₁₅: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the volunteering typology.

Ho5₁₆: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the learning at home typology.

Ho5₁₇: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the decision making typology.

Ho5₁₈: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the collaborating with the community typology.

Ho5₁₉: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the parenting typology.

Ho5₂₀: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the communicating typology.

Ho5₂₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the volunteering typology.

Ho5₂₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the learning at home typology.

Ho5₂₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the decision making typology.

Ho5₂₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the collaborating with the community typology.

From research question 6, the following null hypotheses were tested.

Ho6₁: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the parenting typology.

Ho6₂: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the communicating typology.

Ho6₃: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the volunteering typology.

Ho6₄: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the learning at home typology.

Ho6₅: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the decision making typology.

Ho6₆: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the collaborating with the community typology.

- Ho67: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the parenting typology.
- Ho68: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the communicating typology.
- Ho69: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the volunteering typology.
- Ho610: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the learning at home typology.
- Ho611: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the decision making typology.
- Ho612: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the collaborating with the community typology.
- Ho613: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the parenting typology.
- Ho614: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the communicating typology.
- Ho615: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the volunteering typology.
- Ho616: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the learning at home typology.
- Ho617: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the decision making typology.

- Ho6₁₈: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the collaborating with the community typology.
- Ho6₁₉: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the parenting typology.
- Ho6₂₀: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the communicating typology.
- Ho6₂₁: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the volunteering typology.
- Ho6₂₂: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the learning at home typology.
- Ho6₂₃: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the decision making typology.
- Ho6₂₄: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the collaborating with the community typology.

Researcher's Role

The role of the researcher was critical for administering quality surveys (Fink, 2003). The researcher adapted the *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership* instrument, designed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The researcher packaged the survey including a cover letter, a self-addressed envelope with instructions to return the completed survey to the collection box at school by the due date, and distributed the survey to the students of parents in the population. The researcher

also packaged the survey including a cover letter, a self-addressed envelope with instructions to return the completed survey to the collection box at school by the due date, and distributed the survey to the total population of teachers. The researcher collected the surveys from the collection boxes, entered the data into SPSS for data analysis, and reported the results of the study.

Population

The population involved in this study consisted of parents and teachers of public elementary schools in an east Tennessee school system during the 2010-2011 academic school year. There were three elementary schools represented in this data, consisting of 889 students in kindergarten through sixth grade and 77 teachers. The parent population consisted of the total population of parents, those who have children attending school in this particular district in grades kindergarten through sixth. The teacher population consisted of the total population of teachers, those who have obtained a certificate to teach and are currently teaching in this school system.

Data Collection

Before the study began the researcher followed several essential procedures (Fink, 2003). The researcher obtained authorization from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (ETSU-IRB). After approval from the ETSU-IRB, the researcher mailed a letter to the Director of Schools for the school system involved requesting permission to conduct research within that system. After approval at the system level, the researcher delivered letters to the three elementary principals within the school system explaining the intent of the study and

requesting participation in the study. Once the principals confirmed their willingness to participate, the researcher began the distribution of parent and teacher surveys.

Parent surveys were delivered to the school and sent home with students. A cover letter was included with the survey explaining the intent of the study and the importance of completion of the survey. Each survey was placed in an envelope. Parents were asked to complete the survey, seal the survey in the return envelope, and return the envelope to the school within 1 week. A collection box was placed outside the office at each school for parents to return the completed survey. The completed and returned survey served as evidence of informed consent for the parents (Fink, 2003).

Teacher surveys were delivered to the school and placed in each teacher's school mailbox. A cover letter was included with the survey explaining the intent of the study and the importance of completion of the survey. Each survey was placed in an envelope with the teacher's name written on the outside of the envelope. The researcher spoke with the principal, and the principal agreed to ensure that each teacher knew about the survey. Teachers were asked to complete the survey, seal the survey in the return envelope, and place the envelope in the collection box outside the office within 1 week. The completed and returned survey served as evidence of informed consent for the teachers (Fink, 2003).

After the surveys were collected, the researcher began the process of entering the information into the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

After the information was entered into the Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS), the researcher began the process of data analysis. Inferential and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data using SPSS.

For the first research question:

What constitutes parental involvement in a particular school district?

The researcher totaled the values for each parental involvement activity and ranked each activity from highest to lowest.

For the second and third research question:

What involvement activities do parents consider most effective?

What involvement activities do teachers consider most effective?

The researcher totaled the values for each category and ranked each of the six categories: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and communicating with the community.

For the fourth research question:

Are there significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?

The researcher calculated the means and standard deviations for the parent population and the teacher population. The researcher then conducted an independent sample *t*-test to determine if there was a significant difference between parent perceptions and teacher perceptions.

For the fifth research question:

Are there differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, gender, and race)?

The researcher used ANOVA to test the parent population based on age, education level, gender, and race. When significant differences were found, the researcher used post hoc analyses to determine the exact differences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

For the sixth research question:

Are there differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, teaching experience, and gender)?

The researcher used ANOVA to test the parent population based on age, education level, years teaching experience, and gender. When significant differences were found, the researcher used post hoc analyses to determine the exact differences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

Validity and Reliability

The survey instrument used was adapted from the *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships*, an instrument designed by researchers at Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and National Network of Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. The survey instrument was based on Epstein's parent involvement model that consisted of six major types of parent involvement, strengthening content validity. Field testing by parents and teachers who were not involved in this study was used to enhance face validity (Fink, 2003).

Internal consistency reliability is frequently used in educational research (Litwin, 2003). The Chronbach alpha is often the most appropriate test in measuring internal consistency of surveys and questionnaires in educational research (McMillian & Shumacher, 2006). The researcher used Chronbach's alpha to measure the internal consistency of the survey.

Ethical Considerations

Before the study began the researcher considered several ethical principles (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Authorization was obtained from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board. Permission was obtained from the director of schools of the system involved in the study. Permission was obtained from the principals of the three elementary schools involved in the study. The researcher assured the director of schools, the principals, and the participants that the name of the system, the names of the schools, and names of the participants would be confidential and anonymous. The surveys completed and returned by the parents and teachers served as evidence of informed consent (Fink, 2003). The participants were informed that their participation was voluntary.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the perceptions of parents and teachers in elementary schools regarding parental involvement and search for relationships between demographic categories and perceptions of effective involvement. The demographic variables were age, gender, race, education level, and years of teaching. This chapter included the research questions and hypotheses, the role of the researcher, a description of the population used in this study, the methods used in collecting and analyzing the data, the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, ethical considerations, and a summary. The results of this study and the analysis of the data are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4
DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Parent involvement has been a crucial component in educating children since the beginning of time. With parents being considered a child's first teacher and home being the first classroom (Berger, 1991), the importance of parental involvement remains an important factor in educating children. The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement with elementary students based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. By examining perceptions of parents and teachers, schools and families may have a better understanding of effective parental involvement practices.

This study's population consisted of 77 teachers in a particular east Tennessee school district and the parents of 889 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through sixth. Parents and teachers were asked to indicate the effectiveness of four activities within each of the six parental involvement typologies: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Parents and teachers in this study were asked to rank each activity numerically using a five-point Likert scale with one indicating not effective and five indicating highly effective. In a separate section parents and teachers were asked to rank the five most important activities from a list of parental involvement activities. Table 1 shows the participation of the population.

Table 1

Participation of Population

	Participants N	Total Surveyed N	Return Rate Percent
Parents	348	889	43%
Teachers	52	77	68%

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question #1

What constitutes parental involvement in a particular district?

To answer this question the value for each parental involvement activity listed on the survey was totaled and ranked from highest to lowest. A score of one for an activity was given five points; a score of two for an activity was given four points; a score of three for an activity was given three points; a score of four for an activity was given two points; and a score of five for an activity was given one point. The points of the activities were then totaled and ranked from most important to least important.

Parents and teachers in this study agreed on four of the top five parental involvement activities listed on the survey. While parents in this study indicated helping with homework was the most important activity and reading to or with the child was the second most important activity, teachers in this study indicated that reading to or with the child was the most important and helping with homework was the second most important. Parents and teachers in this study agreed that checking students' planner or folder was the third most important activity and making sure the student was at school on time was the fourth most important. Parents in this study indicated that tutoring students was the fifth most important activity while teachers in this study indicated that volunteering at school was the fifth most important. Table 2 shows parents'

ranking of the five most effective parental involvement activities. Table 3 shows teachers' ranking of the five most effective parental involvement activities.

Table 2

Parents' Ranking of the Most Effective Parental Involvement Activities

Parental Involvement Activity	Total Points
Helping with homework	1,309
Reading to/with child	1,266
Checking student folder/planner	1,008
Making sure the student is at school on time	991
Tutoring students	210

Table 3

Teachers' Ranking of the Most Effective Parental Involvement Activities

Parental Involvement Activity	Total Points
Reading with Child	209
Helping with homework	143
Checking student planner/folder	141
Making sure the child is at school on time	135
Volunteering at school	34

Research Question #2

What involvement activities do parents consider most effective?

To answer this question the researcher found the mean of the four questions in each typology for each parent survey and identified the typologies perceived as most effective by parents. The researcher identified effective typologies as those having a mean of 4.0 or higher.

The researcher ranked each of the six typologies: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Table 4 shows typologies ranked from highest to lowest, based on parents' perceptions.

Table 4

Parents' Perceptions of Most Effective Parental Involvement Typologies

Involvement Typology	Number of Parents
Communicating	345
Learning at Home	284
Collaborating with the Community	264
Volunteering	249
Decision Making	212
Parenting	210

Research Question #3

What involvement activities do teachers consider most effective?

To answer this question the researcher found the mean of the four questions in each typology for each teacher survey and identified the typologies perceived as most effective by teachers. The researcher identified effective typologies as those having a mean of 4.0 or higher. The researcher ranked each of the six typologies: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Table 5 shows typologies ranked from highest to lowest, based on teachers' perceptions.

Table 5

Teachers' Perceptions of Most Effective Parental Involvement Typologies

Involvement Typology	Number of Teachers
Communicating	42
Learning at Home	31
Collaborating with the Community	26
Volunteering	24
Parenting	21
Decision Making	15

Research Question #4

Are there significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?

To answer this question the means and standard deviations for the parent population and the teacher population were calculated. An independent sample *t*-test was run to determine if there was a significant difference between parent perceptions and teacher perceptions of effective parental involvement to test the following null hypothesis.

Ho4₁: There are no significant differences between the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement.

The means and standard deviations of parents and teachers in this study are represented in Table 6. The researcher performed an independent sample *t*-test to determine if there were significant differences between parent perceptions and teacher perceptions regarding effective parental involvement. Tests indicated the differences were significant in five of the six parental involvement typologies. Parenting ($t=2.35, p<0.05$), communicating ($t=1.97, p<0.05$), learning at

home ($t=3.08, p < 0.05$), decision making ($t=4.78, p < 0.05$), and collaborating with the community ($t=3.52, p < 0.05$) showed a significant difference. Volunteering ($t=1.81, p > 0.05$) was not significantly different. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Descriptive statistics for the differences in parent perceptions and teacher perceptions are displayed in Table 7.

Table 6

Perceptions of Parents and Teachers Regarding Effective Parental Involvement

Typology	Group	N	Mean	SD
Parenting	Parent*	384	3.87	0.80
	Teacher	52	3.60	0.77
Communicating	Parent*	384	4.56	0.52
	Teacher	52	4.40	0.61
Volunteering	Parent*	384	4.02	0.79
	Teacher	52	3.81	0.73
Learning at home	Parent*	384	4.30	0.69
	Teacher	52	3.99	0.82
Decision making	Parent*	384	3.87	0.78
	Teacher	52	3.32	0.72
Collaborating with the community	Parent*	384	4.11	0.81
	Teacher	52	3.69	0.85

*Highest mean

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for t-test: Parent and Teacher Perceptions

Typology	<i>t</i>	df	<i>p</i>	Mean Difference
Parenting*	2.345	434	0.019	0.275
Communicating*	1.968	434	0.050	0.154
Volunteering	1.812	434	0.071	0.211
Learning at home*	3.082	434	0.002	0.322
Decision making*	4.778	434	<0.001	0.547
Collaborating with the community*	3.519	434	<0.001	0.421

*Significant difference at .05 level

Research Question #5

Are there differences in parents’ perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, gender, and race)?

Research question 5 included 24 null hypotheses. The researcher explored four demographic factors within the parent population: age, education level, gender, and race.

To test the following null hypothesis the researcher used ANOVA to test the parent population based on age, education level, gender, and race. When significant differences were found, the researcher used post hoc analyses to determine the exact differences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The age of parents in this study was divided into five different categories: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+. Descriptive statistics for parents’ perceptions based on age are displayed in Table 8.

Table 8

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Parents' Perceptions Based on Age

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting*	4	7.404	1.851	2.988	0.019
Communicating	4	1.730	0.432	1.620	0.169
Volunteering	4	4.993	1.248	1.998	0.094
Learning at home	4	1.980	0.495	1.040	0.386
Decision making	4	2.727	0.682	1.118	0.348
Collaborating with the community	4	6.025	1.506	2.354	0.053

*Significant difference at .05 level

Ho5₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the parenting typology. The results indicated parents yielded a significant difference ($p < .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted to determine where the differences were within the parenting typology. The researcher used Tukey post hoc analysis to determine the significant difference was between the 20-29 age group and the 30-39 age group ($p = .02$) with the 20-29 age group having the higher mean.

Ho5₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the communicating typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the volunteering typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₅: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the decision making typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₆: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on age in the collaborating with the community typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

The education level of parents in this study was categorized by the following: some high school, high school graduate, some college, bachelor's degree, master's degree, and other. The other category consisted of numerous education levels such as: GED, trade school, associate's

degree, cosmetology, nursing, and law school. Descriptive statistics for parents' perceptions based on education level are displayed in Table 9.

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Parents' Perceptions Based on Education

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting*	5	12.236	2.447	4.022	0.001
Communicating	5	1.018	0.204	0.756	0.582
Volunteering*	5	10.797	2.159	3.534	0.004
Learning at home	5	3.495	0.699	1.477	0.196
Decision making	5	4.786	0.957	1.579	0.165
Collaborating with the community*	5	10.623	2.125	3.375	0.005

*Significant at .05 level

Ho57: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on level of education. Results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the parenting typology. The null hypothesis was rejected

A post hoc analysis was conducted using Tukey, to determine where the differences were within the parenting typology. Within the parenting typology the post hoc analysis showed a significant difference between some high school and a bachelor's degree ($p = .004$) and between some high school and a master's degree ($p = .005$). The mean for those parents with some high school was higher than the mean for those parents with a bachelor's degree or master's degree.

Ho58: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on education level in the communicating typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₉: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on level of education in the volunteering typology. Results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted using Tukey, to determine where the differences were within the volunteering typology. Within the volunteering typology, the significant difference was between some high school and a master's degree ($p = .010$) and high school graduate and a master's degree ($p < .01$). The mean for those parents with some high school and high school graduate was higher than the mean for those parents with a master's degree.

Ho5₁₀: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on education level in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₁₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on education level in the decision making typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₁₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on level of education in the collaborating with the community typology. Results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted using Tukey, to determine where the differences were within the collaborating with the community typology. The significant differences in collaborating with the community typology were between some high school and a master's degree ($p < .01$) and high school graduate and a master's degree ($p = .02$). The mean for those parents with some high school and high school graduate was higher than the mean for those parents with a master's degree.

Parents of this study were asked to indicate their gender by marking female or male. Descriptive statistics for parents' perceptions based on gender are displayed in Table 10.

Table 10

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Parents' Perceptions Based on Gender

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	1	0.004	0.004	0.006	0.936
Communicating*	1	2.066	2.066	7.826	0.005
Volunteering*	1	4.688	4.688	7.554	0.006
Learning at home	1	0.039	0.039	0.083	0.774
Decision making*	1	3.036	3.036	5.025	0.026
Collaborating with the community	1	2.538	2.538	3.941	0.048

*Significant at .05 level

Ho5₁₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on gender in the parenting typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₁₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on gender in the communicating typology. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the communicating typology, with females having a higher mean. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho5₁₅: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on gender in the volunteering typology. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$), with females having a higher mean. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho5₁₆: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on gender in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₁₇: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on gender in the decision making typology. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$), with females having a higher mean. The null hypothesis was rejected.

Ho5₁₈: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on gender in the communicating with the community typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Parents of this study were asked to indicate their race by marking one of the following: Caucasian, African American, Asian, Hispanic, or other. Descriptive statistics for parents' perceptions based on race are displayed in Table 11.

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Parents' Perceptions Based on Race

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	4	5.197	1.299	2.077	0.083
Communicating	4	1.213	0.303	1.130	0.342
Volunteering*	4	10.093	2.523	4.128	0.003
Learning at home	4	2.244	0.561	1.181	0.319
Decision making	4	5.245	1.311	2.174	0.071
Collaborating with the community*	4	6.640	1.660	2.600	0.036

*Significant at .05 level

Ho5₁₉: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on race in the parenting typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₂₀: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on race in the communicating typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₂₁: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the volunteering typology.

To test the hypothesis, an ANOVA was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on race in the volunteering typology. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted using Tukey, to determine where the differences were within the volunteering typology. Within the volunteering typology, the Hispanic population differed from the Caucasian ($p = .028$), African American ($p = .022$), and other ($p = .001$). Those parents who indicated they were Caucasian, African American, and other had a higher mean than those parents who indicated they were Hispanic.

Ho5₂₂: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on race in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₂₃: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in parents' perceptions based on race in the decision making typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho5₂₄: There are no significant differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on race in the collaborating with the community typology.

To test the hypothesis, an ANOVA was performed to determine if there was a significant difference between parents' perceptions based on race in the collaborating with the community typology. The results indicated a significant difference ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis was rejected.

A post hoc analysis was conducted using Tukey, to determine where the differences were within the collaborating with the community typology. The Tukey did not show a statistically significant difference within the collaborating with the community typology.

Research Question #6

Are there significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, teaching experience, and gender)?

Research question 6 included 24 null hypotheses. The researcher explored four demographic factors within the teacher sample: age, education level, years of experience, and gender. To test the following null hypotheses the researcher used ANOVA to test the teacher population based on age, education level, teaching experience, and gender. When significant differences were found, the researcher used post hoc analyses to determine the exact differences (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006).

The age of teachers in this study was divided into five different categories: 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+. Descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions based on age are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Teachers' Perceptions Based on Age

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	4	4.174	1.043	1.880	0.130
Communicating	4	2.238	0.559	1.567	0.199
Volunteering	4	3.335	0.834	1.623	0.184
Learning at home	4	5.247	1.312	2.100	0.096
Decision making	4	2.998	0.749	1.488	0.221
Collaborating with the community	4	1.851	0.463	0.624	0.648

Ho6₁: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the parenting typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the communicating typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₃: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the volunteering typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₄: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₅: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the decision making typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₆: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference in teachers' perceptions based on age in the collaborating with the community typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

The education level of teachers in this study was categorized by the following: bachelor's degree, master's degree, education specialist, and doctorate. Descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions based on education level are displayed in Table 13.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Teachers' Perceptions Based on Education

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	3	1.238	0.413	0.682	0.567
Communicating	3	0.088	0.029	0.075	0.973
Volunteering	3	3.639	1.213	2.442	0.076
Learning at home	3	2.200	0.733	1.086	0.364
Decision making	3	1.404	0.468	0.889	0.454
Collaborating with the community	3	1.673	0.558	0.764	0.520

Ho67: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the parenting typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained.

Ho68: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the communicating typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho69: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the volunteering typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₁₀: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the learning at home typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₁₁: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the decision making typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₁₂: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on education level in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on level of education in the collaborating with the community typology. Results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$). The null hypothesis was retained.

The experience of teachers in this study was categorized by the following: 0-3 years, 4-10 years, 10-15 years, 15-20 years, and 20+ years. Table 14 shows the descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions based on teaching experience.

Table 14

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Teachers' Perceptions Based on Teaching Experience

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	4	3.647	0.912	1.611	0.187
Communicating	4	3.379	0.845	2.538	0.052
Volunteering	4	4.839	1.210	2.511	0.054
Learning at home	4	4.343	1.086	1.686	0.169
Decision making	4	1.811	0.453	0.856	0.497
Collaborating with the community	4	4.829	1.207	1.780	0.149

Ho6₁₃: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on years of experience teaching in the parenting typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₁₄: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on years of experience teaching in the communicating typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₁₅: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on years of experience teaching in the volunteering typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho₆₁₆: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on year of experience teaching in the learning at home typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho₆₁₇: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on years of experience teaching in the decision making typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho₆₁₈: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on years of experience in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on years of experience teaching in the collaborating with the community typology. The results did not indicate a statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Teachers of this study were asked to indicate their gender by marking female or male.

Descriptive statistics for teachers' perceptions based on gender are displayed in Table 15.

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Teachers' Perceptions Based on Gender

Typology	df	SS	MS	F	<i>p</i>
Parenting	1	1.277	1.277	2.204	0.144
Communicating	1	0.019	0.019	0.051	0.823
Volunteering	1	0.008	0.008	0.015	0.904
Learning at home	1	0.001	0.001	0.001	0.974
Decision making	1	0.011	0.011	0.020	0.887
Collaborating with the community	1	0.069	0.069	0.95	0.759

Ho6₁₉: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the parenting typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the parenting typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂₀: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the communicating typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the communicating typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂₁: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the volunteering typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the volunteering typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂₂: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the learning at home typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the learning at home typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂₃: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the decision making typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the decision making typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Ho6₂₄: There are no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement based on gender in the collaborating with the community typology.

ANOVA was used to determine if there was a significant difference between teachers' perceptions based on gender in the collaborating with the community typology. Results indicated no statistically significant difference ($p > .05$); therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Summary

This chapter detailed the statistical results of the data analyzed. Chapter 5 provides a statement of the problem and a summary and interpretation of the findings for each research

question. Chapter 5 also provides recommendations for practice and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement with elementary students based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The analysis focused on perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. A statement of the problem, summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations for practice, and recommendations for future research are detailed in the following sections.

Statement of the Problem

Researchers have found that family and community involvement in the educational process can significantly impact schools and student success (Comer, 1984; Davies, 1996; Epstein et al., 2009; Gordon & Louis, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2002; Shumow & Lomax, 2002). According to *NCLB*, schools are to provide parental involvement opportunities in the schools (United States Department of Education, 2004). The purpose of this study was to examine parent and teacher perceptions regarding effective parental involvement based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement and to examine differences within the parent population and teacher population based on demographic factors.

Summary of the Findings

Parental involvement in the education of students has been a topic of concern for many years. While research suggests that parental involvement has a positive effect on the academic achievement of students, there is still concern regarding what constitutes effective parental involvement in the education of students. By examining the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement, a stronger, more unified approach may become apparent on ways to enhance parental involvement and assist families, educators, and members of the communities in working together to encourage student academic success.

Findings presented indicated that parents and teachers of this study have some similar views and some differing views regarding effective parental involvement. This research study examined the perceptions of parents and teachers based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of effective parental involvement in elementary schools using quantitative statistical methods and found that parents and teachers of this study share some of the same perceptions of effective parental involvement but also have some differing perceptions. Parents and teachers of this study agreed that the single most important type of involvement was communicating. The findings indicated that there were no statistically significant differences in the perceptions of effective parental involvement among teachers in this study based on age, education level, teaching experience, or gender. However, the findings did show significant differences among parents of this study in their perceptions of effective parental involvement based on age, education level, gender, and race.

Conclusions

The statistical analysis of this study focused on six research questions and 49 null hypotheses. The study focused on the perceptions of a population of 52 teachers and 384 parents from elementary schools in an east Tennessee school district. The survey instrument was adapted from the *Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership* instrument designed by researchers at Johns Hopkins University and Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. The survey consisted of four questions from each of Epstein et al.'s (2009) six major types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Using a Likert scale, parents and teachers of this study were asked to indicate the effectiveness of each involvement activity. The second section of the survey listed 10 specific parental involvement activities. Parent and teachers were asked to rank the top five most important activities, with one being the most important and five being the least important. The survey was field tested by parents and teachers not involved with this study. The reliability of this survey was measured using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = .894$). The following sections review each research question and provide conclusions based the findings of this study.

Research Question #1

What constitutes parental involvement in a particular district?

Parents and teachers of this study agreed on four of the top five parental involvement activities listed on the survey. While parents of this study indicated helping with homework was the most important activity and reading to or with the child was the second most important activity, teachers of this study indicated that reading to or with the child was the most important and helping with homework was the second most important. Parents and teachers of this study agreed that checking students' planner or folder was the third most important activity and

making sure the student was at school on time was the fourth most important. Parents of this study indicated that tutoring students was the fifth most important activity while teachers of this study indicated that volunteering at school was the fifth most important.

When reviewing results from parents and teachers as a combined set, collectively parents and teachers of this study ranked reading to or with the child as the most important parental involvement activity, closely followed by helping with homework as the second most important involvement activity. Collectively, they indicated the third and fourth most important activities were checking students' planners or folders and making sure the student was at school on time. Parents and teachers of this study combined indicated tutoring was the fifth most important activity.

Research Question #2

What involvement activities do parents consider most effective?

The findings of the *t*-test for each of Epstein's six typologies indicated that parents of this study perceived communication as the single most effective typology with 90% of the population ranking communication as more effective or very effective. The *t*-test indicated learning at home as second most effective, collaborating with the community as third most effective, volunteering as fourth most effective, decision making as fifth most effective, and parenting as sixth most effective.

Research Question #3

What involvement activities do teachers consider most effective?

The findings of the *t*-test for each of Epstein's six typologies indicated that teachers of this study perceived communication as the single most effective typology with 81% of the population ranking communication as more effective or very effective. The *t*-test indicated

learning at home as second most effective, collaborating with the community as third most effective, volunteering as fourth most effective, parenting as fifth most effective, and decision making as sixth most effective.

Research Question #4

Are there significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement?

Results from the *t*-test showed statistically significant differences in the perceptions of parents and teachers of this study regarding effective parental involvement in five of the six typologies. Volunteering was the only typology that did not indicate a statistically significant difference. The mean for parents of this study was higher than the mean for teachers of this study with parenting, communicating, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community.

Research Question #5

Are there differences in parents' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, gender, and race)?

Results of the ANOVA test revealed statistically significant differences in the mean of parents of this study based on age in the parenting typology. A post hoc analysis indicated the significant difference was between the 20-29 age group and 30-39 age group with the 20-29 age group having a higher mean.

The ANOVA indicated statistically significant differences in the mean of parents of this study based on education level in the parenting, volunteering, and collaborating with the community typologies. Within the parenting typology a post hoc analysis indicated the significant difference was between some high school and a bachelor's degree and between some

high school and a master's degree. The mean for those parents with some high school was higher than the mean for those parents with a bachelor's degree or master's degree. Within the volunteering typology a post hoc analysis indicated a significant difference between some high school and a master's degree and high school graduate and a master's degree. The mean for those parents with some high school and high school graduate was higher than the mean for those parents with a master's degree. Within the collaborating with the community typology a post hoc analysis indicated a significant difference between some high school and a master's degree and high school graduate and a master's degree. The mean for those parents with some high school and high school graduate was higher than the mean for those with a master's degree.

Results of the ANOVA test revealed statistically significant differences in the mean of parents in this study based on gender in the communicating, volunteering, and decision making typologies. The test indicated that females had a higher mean than males in the communicating, volunteering, and decision making typologies.

The ANOVA test indicated statistically significant differences in the mean of parents in this study based on race in the volunteering and collaborating with the community typologies. Within the volunteering typology a post hoc analysis indicated a significant difference between Hispanic parents and Caucasian, African American, and other parents of this study. The mean of the Caucasian, African American, and other parents was higher than the mean of the Hispanic parents. Within the collaborating with the community typology a post hoc analysis did not indicate a statistically significant difference.

Research Question #6

Are there differences in teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement activities based on demographic factors (age, education level, years teaching experience, and gender)?

The results of the ANOVA showed no statistically significant difference in the mean of teachers of this study in their perceptions of effective parental involvement based on the following demographic factors: age, education level, years teaching experience, and gender.

Recommendations for Practice

Results indicated that parents and teachers of this study share some similar perceptions yet have some differing perceptions regarding effective parental involvement. With great attention on academic achievement among our students and research indicating that parental involvement affects student achievement (Chavkin & Williams, 1988; Comer, 1986; Fan & Chen, 2001; and Henderson & Berla, 1994), the importance of parental involvement in the education of students cannot go unrecognized. As educators across the country strive for academic success among all students, it may be beneficial to give attention to strategies that could improve parental involvement and enhance communication to assist in promoting academic success among all students. The following suggestions are offered to administrators, educators, parents, family members, and community members who are concerned with promoting academic achievement among all students.

Parents and teachers in this study strongly perceived communication from Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies as the single most important type of involvement. Epstein et al. (2009) state, "Two-way communications increase understanding and cooperation between school and

home and show students that their teachers and parents are in contact to help them succeed in school” (p. 58). School administrators and educators may find that frequent communication between home and school may be beneficial. Multiple strategies such as conferences with families, PTA meetings, weekly folders of student work, handbooks, emails, newsletters, phone trees, and websites may be used to ensure effective communication between the home and school. While these are just a few examples of ways to promote communication between the home and school, it may be critical to develop two-way communication with all parents throughout the year, not just with the parents of struggling students.

With many families having one or both parents working outside the home, it may be more difficult to make contact with families today than it has been in years past. With these circumstances, it may be critical to make extra efforts to allow opportunities for all parents to be involved in their child’s education. Parental involvement is not confined to active participation at the school during school hours, but schools may find it beneficial to provide multiple opportunities for parents to become involved. While it may be impossible to require parental involvement at the school, it is imperative to provide multiple opportunities for parents to be involved in the educational process.

Epstein et al. (2009) referred to the school-family-community partnership model, emphasizing how the school, the family, and the community could work collaboratively to influence the development and learning of children as the overlapping spheres of influence. This theory suggested that educators provide *family-like* schools, families create *school-like* homes, and communities encourage *school-like* opportunities and *family-like* services. When schools, families, and communities work collaboratively to promote student academic success, they are conveying the importance of education and informing students of the importance of their success

not only within their school and their family but also within their community. Educational success should be emphasized throughout our schools and homes, as well as our communities.

To ensure effective parental involvement, schools may have partnership programs in place that continually develop, implement, evaluate, and improve plans and practices encouraging family and community involvement. There must be mutual trust and respect between the home, school, and community. Partnership programs within the school could train volunteers on specific ways and strategies to assist in the classroom or school. With this type of training, all volunteers would know the expectations and have a better understanding of the operations of the school. Schools need to attempt to involve numerous parents and community members in the education of students through effective partnership programs in an effort of expressing the importance of education.

Finally, schools may implement involvement activities that concentrate on involving all parents. Administrators and educators must provide a welcoming and inviting atmosphere to make the school less intimidating and more comfortable for those parents who have negative memories or have had negative experiences in the school. Interactions between the school and home need to be more positive, requiring teachers to make contact with families throughout the year and not just when problems arise. It may be beneficial for administrators and educators to attempt to involve all parents in the education of their children and make the educational experience more positive for everyone involved.

Recommendations for Further Research

Parental involvement has been recognized at the national, state, and local levels, and research suggests that it positively impacts student academic achievement; therefore, parents and

educators need to have a better understanding of effective parental involvement in the education of students. As this study indicated, communication is significant between the home and school; yet, effective communication is difficult to achieve. As schools or school systems work to improve parental involvement, they may consult studies such as this to gain understanding of perceptions among parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement. To assist with this challenge, research needs to be expanded to broaden the understanding of parental involvement for all families. Suggestions for future research include but are not limited to, the following:

1. This study provided a snapshot of teacher perceptions and parent perceptions of elementary students regarding parental involvement. A similar study including parents and teachers of middle and high schools students would provide a broader understanding of parental involvement in educating children.
2. This study was limited to data from one east Tennessee school system. The study should be expanded to multiple districts to gain broader data on perceptions of parents and teachers regarding parental involvement.
3. Although this study focused only on quantitative data, a mixed-methods approach would be beneficial to provide a more in-depth understanding of effective parental involvement in educating children. A study that includes interviews of students, parents, teachers, and administrators could provide a deeper insight to parental involvement.
4. This study focused on parents and teachers perceptions of effective parental involvement. Additional studies should be conducted to examine the effects of parental involvement on student academic achievement.

5. A similar study should be conducted to see how different types of involvement relate to specific student outcomes. With numerous types of parental involvement, it would be beneficial to examine which particular involvement activities have the most affect on student learning and development.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement with elementary students based on Epstein et al.'s (2009) six typologies of parental involvement. From these findings, it is obvious that parents and teachers of this study have some similar perceptions and some differing perceptions of effective parental involvement. Within this study teachers with varying demographic factors had similar perceptions while parents' perceptions varied depending on demographic factors. By being made aware of the similar and differing views among parents and teachers, the school system studied and others similar to it may develop more effective parental involvement practices, increasing effective communication between the home and the school in an effort of improving student academic achievement.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PERMISSION TO ADAPT SURVEY

12-28-10

To: Penelope Herrell

From: Joyce Epstein

Re: Survey

This is to grant you permission to use and adapt the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnership. I understand that the adapted survey will be used in your study of parents' and teachers' perceptions of involvement activities for your doctoral degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University.

All that we ask is that you include the full reference on the forms and in any reports that result from your study to show where the measure originated. The most up-to-date reference is:

Salinas, K. C., Epstein, J. L. , Sanders, M. G., Davis, D. & Alderhaes, I. (2009). Measure of school, family, and community partnerships. Pp. 324-329 in Epstein, et al., School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Please note that the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships in our Handbook for Action was designed as a “team activity” and annual assessment for schools’ Action Teams for Partnerships that are developing and improving their programs of family and community involvement using our framework of six types of involvement. It was not designed for individual reports in large samples. Thus, we do not have reliability statistics on this measure.

Others have used the Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships with individuals in their dissertations, but I do not have information on the results of these studies. Based on our other surveys, however, it is likely that the six scales in the Measure would have high internal reliability (Cronbach’s Alpha). The items are in the Measure because of the consistent patterns found in other surveys and in field studies on the six types of involvement. If you use the Measure in a study, you will have to use a statistical program (such as SPSS-Scale) to check the reliability statistics for your study sample.

Please note that parents and teachers may not agree with each other. Also, please know that in our field work, schools are not required to conduct every practice listed in the Measure. That is, more is not necessarily better. Therefore, your scale reliabilities will depend on the items that

you selected for each type of involvement. Thus, it is very important to check the measures you use and to select the most reliable items for your scales and analyses.

When your data collection is complete, the cooperating district and its schools are welcome to join NNPS for on-going assistance in strengthening and sustaining their programs of family and community involvement. See information on this on our website <http://www.partnershipschools.org> in the section NNPS Model and Join NNPS.

Best of luck with your study.

Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.
Director, Center on School, Family, and
Community Partnership
and the National Network of Partnership Schools
Research Professor of Sociology
Johns Hopkins University
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<http://www.partnershipschools.org>

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

December 7, 2010

Dear Dr. XXXX,

As part of the requirement for completing the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department at East Tennessee State University, I am conducting a research project on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. This letter is to request your permission for the parents and teachers of the elementary schools in your district to participate in my research study, Parental Involvement: Parent Perceptions and Teacher Perceptions.

I am interested in distributing surveys to parents and teachers within your school district during the spring 2011 semester. The purpose of this research is not to evaluate any particular parent, teacher, or school but to gain insight on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. The names of parents and teachers will be assigned a random number to prevent the identification of any individual. The names of parents, teachers, schools, and the school district will be kept confidential and anonymous. Although the rights and privacy of the parents, teachers, schools, and school district will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB (for non-medical research), and the committee members from the ETSU Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department assigned to this research study have access to the study records.

If you would be willing to allow me to distribute the surveys, please sign below and return to me in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you have any questions, you may contact me at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or by email at xxx@xxx.xxx. The results of this research will be available to you upon your request. Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Penelope O. Herrell
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

Permission is granted for Penelope O. Herrell to distribute surveys to parents and teachers within XXXX Schools during the spring of 2011.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX C

LETTER TO PRINCIPALS

December 13, 2010

Dear Principal,

As part of the requirement for completing the Doctor of Education degree in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department at East Tennessee State University, I am conducting a research project on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. This letter is to request your permission for the parents and teachers of your elementary school to participate in my research study, Parental Involvement: Parent Perceptions and Teacher Perceptions.

I am interested in distributing surveys to parents and teachers within your school during the spring 2011 semester. The purpose of this research is not to evaluate any particular parent, teacher, or school but to gain insight on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. The names of parents and teachers will be assigned a random number to prevent the identification of any individual. The names of parents, teachers, schools, and the school district will be kept confidential and anonymous. Although the rights and privacy of the parents, teachers, schools, and school district will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB (for non-medical research), and the committee members from the ETSU Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department assigned to this research study have access to the study records

If you would be willing to allow me to distribute the attached surveys, please sign below and return to me in the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope. If you have any questions, you may contact me at (xxx)xxx-xxxx or by email at xxxx@xxxx.xxx. The results of this research will be available to you upon your request. Thank you for your time and consideration of this project.

Sincerely,

Penelope O. Herrell
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

Permission is granted for Penelope O. Herrell to distribute surveys to parents and teachers within XXXX Elementary School during the spring of 2011.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D

LETTER AND SURVEY TO PARENTS

January 11, 2011

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in the program of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. As part of the requirements for completing the doctoral program, I am currently conducting a research study about the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. You have been chosen to participate in this study, and I need your help!

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. By completing the survey, you are indicating your willingness to participate in this study. Surveys will be completely confidential and anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB (for non-medical research), and the committee members from the ETSU Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department assigned to this research study have access to the study records.

Attached you will find a parent survey containing different parental involvement activities. If you are willing to participate, please mark how effective you believe each activity is in involving parents in educating children and complete the demographic section at the end of the survey. Would you please take time to complete the survey and return to school in the envelope I have provided by January 19th? Please place the survey in the collection box outside the office.

Your survey is very important to the success of this study! I appreciate your time and your willingness to participate in this survey! If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me at (xxx)xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Penelope O. Herrell
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

Parent Survey

Adapted from Salinas, K. C., Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Davis, D. & Alderhaes, I. (2009).
 Measure of school, family, and community partnerships. pp. 324-329 in Epstein, et al., School, family, and
 community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

The purpose of this survey is to examine the perspectives of parents regarding effective parental involvement activities. You are not required to participate in this survey, but your willingness to participate would be greatly appreciated and beneficial. The researcher is conducting this survey as part of a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Instructions:

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating how effective you believe each activity is in regards to effective parental involvement.

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
1 Conduct workshops or provide information for parents on child development	1	2	3	4	5
2 Provide information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building	1	2	3	4	5
3 Produce information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school	1	2	3	4	5
4 Sponsor home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families	1	2	3	4	5
5 Conduct a formal conference with every parent at least once a year	1	2	3	4	5
6 Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home	1	2	3	4	5
7 Send home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
8 Produce a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips	1	2	3	4	5
9 Provide a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children	1	2	3	4	5
10 Create flexible volunteering and school event schedules, enabling parents who work to participate	1	2	3	4	5
11 Recognize volunteers for their time and effort	1	2	3	4	5
12 Encourage families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classroom, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
13 Provide information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home	1	2	3	4	5
14 Provide ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve	1	2	3	4	5
15 Make parents aware of the importance of reading with their child at home	1	2	3	4	5
16 Schedule regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate what they are learning with a family member	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
17 Have an active PTA, PTO, or other parent organization	1	2	3	4	5
18 Have parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees	1	2	3	4	5
19 Develop ways to link all families with parent organizations	1	2	3	4	5
20 Involve parents in revising the school/district curricula	1	2	3	4	5
21 Provide a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies	1	2	3	4	5
22 Work with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning	1	2	3	4	5
23 Offer after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
24 Utilize community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment	1	2	3	4	5

Please rank the 5 most important parent involvement activities listed below, using 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Please rank the most important activity with a 1 and the least important activity with a 5.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| _____ Helping with homework | _____ Attending assemblies at school |
| _____ Helping with school fund raisers | _____ Checking student folders/planners |
| _____ Participating in PTO/PTA | _____ Volunteering at school |
| _____ Making sure the child is at school on time | _____ Reading to/with child |
| _____ Tutoring students | _____ Other: _____ |

Demographic Information of person completing this survey:

Please mark the appropriate response to the following questions.

What is your gender?

Female

Male

What is your age?

20 – 29

50 – 59

30 – 39

60+

40 – 49

Other (please list): _____

What is your race/ethnicity?

Caucasian/White

Hispanic

African-American

Other (please list): _____

Asian

What is your highest level of education?

Some high school

Bachelor's degree

High school graduate

Master's degree

Some college

Other (please list): _____

What is your relationship to the child?

Mother

Step-Mother

Father

Step-Father

Grandparent

Other (please list): _____

How many children do you have in school?

1

4

2

5+

3

APPENDIX E

LETTER AND SURVEY TO TEACHERS

January 11, 2011

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at East Tennessee State University in the program of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis. As part of the requirements for completing the doctoral program, I am currently conducting a research study about the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. You have been chosen to participate in this study, and I need your help!

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. By completing the survey, you are indicating your willingness to participate in this study. Surveys will be completely confidential and anonymous. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the ETSU IRB (for non-medical research), and the committee members from the ETSU Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis department assigned to this research study have access to the study records.

Attached you will find a teacher survey containing different parental involvement activities. If you are willing to participate, please mark how effective you believe each activity is in involving parents in educating children and complete the demographic section at the end of the survey. Would you please take time to complete the survey and return to school in the envelope I have provided by January 19th? Please place the survey in the collection box outside the office.

Your survey is very important to the success of this study! I appreciate your time and your willingness to participate in this survey! If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me at (xxx)xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

Penelope O. Herrell
Doctoral Student
East Tennessee State University

Teacher Survey

Adapted from Salinas, K. C., Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Davis, D. & Alderhaes, I. (2009).
 Measure of school, family, and community partnerships. pp. 324-329 in Epstein, et al., School, family, and
 community partnerships: Your handbook for action, third edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press

The purpose of this survey is to examine the perspectives of teachers regarding effective parental involvement activities. You are not required to participate in this survey, but your willingness to participate would be greatly appreciated and beneficial. The researcher is conducting this survey as part of a research project in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Instructions:

Please respond to each of the following statements by indicating how effective you believe each activity is in regards to effective parental involvement.

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
1 Conduct workshops or provide information for parents on child development	1	2	3	4	5
2 Provide information, training, and assistance to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building	1	2	3	4	5
3 Produce information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school	1	2	3	4	5
4 Sponsor home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families	1	2	3	4	5
5 Conduct a formal conference with every parent at least once a year	1	2	3	4	5
6 Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home	1	2	3	4	5
7 Send home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
8 Produce a regular school newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organizations, meetings, and parenting tips	1	2	3	4	5
9 Provide a parent/family room for volunteers and family members to work, meet, and access resources about parenting, childcare, tutoring, and other things that affect their children	1	2	3	4	5
10 Create flexible volunteering and school event schedules, enabling parents who work to participate	1	2	3	4	5
11 Recognize volunteers for their time and effort	1	2	3	4	5
12 Encourage families and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (assisting in classroom, giving talks, monitoring halls, leading activities, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
13 Provide information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home	1	2	3	4	5
14 Provide ongoing and specific information to parents on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve	1	2	3	4	5
15 Make parents aware of the importance of reading with their child at home	1	2	3	4	5
16 Schedule regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate what they are learning with a family member	1	2	3	4	5

	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
17 Have an active PTA, PTO, or other parent organization	1	2	3	4	5
18 Have parents represented on district-level advisory council and committees	1	2	3	4	5
19 Develop ways to link all families with parent organizations	1	2	3	4	5
20 Involve parents in revising the school/district curricula	1	2	3	4	5
21 Provide a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community services, programs, and agencies	1	2	3	4	5
22 Work with local businesses, industries, and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills and learning	1	2	3	4	5
23 Offer after-school programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
24 Utilize community resources, such as businesses, libraries, parks, and museums to enhance the learning environment	1	2	3	4	5

Please rank the 5 most important parent involvement activities listed below, using 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Please rank the most important activity with a 1 and the least important activity with a 5.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| _____ Helping with homework | _____ Attending assemblies at school |
| _____ Helping with school fund raisers | _____ Checking student folders/planners |
| _____ Participating in PTO/PTA | _____ Volunteering at school |
| _____ Making sure the child is at school on time | _____ Reading to/with child |
| _____ Tutoring students | _____ Other: _____
(Please Specify) |

Demographic Information of person completing this survey:

Please mark the appropriate response to the following questions.

What is your gender?

_____ Female

_____ Male

What is your age?

_____ 20 – 29

_____ 50 – 59

_____ 30 – 39

_____ 60+

_____ 40 – 49

_____ Other (please list): _____

What is your highest level of education?

_____ Bachelor's Degree

_____ Educational Specialist Degree

_____ Master's Degree

_____ Doctorate Degree

How many years experience do you have teaching?

_____ 0 – 3

_____ 15 – 20

_____ 4 – 10

_____ 20+

_____ 10 – 15

VITA

PENELOPE O. HERRELL

- Personal Data: Date of Birth: January 21, 1972
Place of Birth: Abingdon, Virginia
Marital Status: Married
- Education: Abingdon High School, Abingdon, Virginia
1990
- Virginia Highlands Community College, Abingdon, Virginia
1992
- University of Virginia's College at Wise, Wise, Virginia;
Business Administration, B.A., 1994
Early Childhood Education, B.A., 1994
- Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee
Administration and Supervision, M.S., 1997
- Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee
Instructional Leadership, Ed.S., 1998
- East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN
Educational Leadership, Ed.D., 2011
- Professional
Experience: Anderson County Schools, Clinton, Tennessee
Elementary Teacher, Norwood Elementary School; 1995 – 2000
Reading Recovery Teacher, Norwood Elementary School; 2000 – 2002
- Tennessee Infant Parent Services, Knoxville, Tennessee
Parent Advisor; 2002 – 2006
- Tennessee Early Intervention System, Knoxville, Tennessee
Developmental Evaluator; 2003 – 2006
- Tennessee Technological University, Cookeville, Tennessee
Instructor; 2007 – present