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CHALLENGES ON THE ROAD TO SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND MINORITY STUDENTS SCHOOL DROPOUT AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

By

Rose A. Hall

A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Lynn University of Boca Raton in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of

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Boca Raton, Florida

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Educational Leadership

CHALLENGES ON THE ROAD TO SCHOOL SUCCESS FOR LOW SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND MINORITY STUDENTS SCHOOL DROPOUT AND PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Abstract

As the United States struggles to keep its students competitive in a global society, dropout rate reduction has been a priority for large urban school districts. Students have a less than a 50-50 chance of graduating from high school with their peers in big-city school districts like New York City and Chicago, where far fewer than half graduate each spring, according to a 2006 research study (Toppo, 2006). The promotion and implementation of parent involvement is a major key to confronting school dropout, especially low-income, minority students leaving school early without graduating. "Minority, low income families are repeatedly found to be greatly interested in their children's education and hold high expectations and goals of school success" (Patel and Stevens, 2010. p.120).

Students who drop out of school impact our entire society socially, politically and economically. The importance of designing programs to address students leaving school early without graduating is a priority for educators. The literature provides convincing evidence that parent involvement has a positive impact on students' attitudes about schooling (Griffiths-Prince. 2009). The literature maintains that early (elementary school) parent involvement and intervention is a necessary element to develop a mindset of respect and value for education (Williams-Jones.2012).

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the many families who struggle with finding a place at America's education table. This work is also dedicated to my mother, Maxine McDonald-Burnett, and sister, Jewel Pottinger, who taught me the value of hard work and caring for others.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many individuals who provided support and assistance in accomplishing this work. I am appreciative to my advisor and dissertation chair, Dr. Korynne Taylor-Dunlop for her constant encouragement, direction and challenging me to search for workable solutions to practice issues. I would like to give a heartfelt thanks to Dr. Suzanne King and Dr. William Leary for providing supportive feedback to stay the course. The Broward Public School's team provided encouragement and supported the importance of the work.

A very special "Thanks" to my husband Timothy Hall, for always being there and offering kind works of love and support in moments of frustration. I thank my three children, for always believing in me. Very special thanks, to my oldest son Brandon for always listening and giving meaningful feedback.

To the families I service every day, who struggle to share in the American educational dream for their children, I say thanks for sharing your strengths and weaknesses. The road maybe long, but the fight is a worthy pursuit.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine what relations exist between parent involvement (Epstein. 2009) and the school success of minority, low socio-economic students based on academic and behavioral guidelines established by the school district (Broward County Public School: Code of Conduct Manuel 2013). As part of this assessment, the study will explore what impediments (i.e. adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation), policies and procedures exist that may lead to students' disengagement and drop out (Wehlage. 1989).

"Schools continue to struggle with increasing parental involvement with students of color and students of low socio-economic status" (Bower and Griffin, 2011. p. 78). The purpose of this action research study was to determine in what ways increased parental involvement improved students' attitudes towards education, increased student achievement and decreased dropout among minorities and low socio-economic students. Studies reveal parental involvement reinforces the importance of education to the student, promotes favorable attitudes toward education, enhances effective communication of student needs between the parent and the teacher, and builds an additional layer of accountability (Fan & Chen, 2001: Hill & Taylor, 2004: Wong, 2008: McBride et. al. 2009:).

One of the most important preventative measures to reduce early school leaving is an intervention that occurs early in a student's school career (Lyche, 2010). Most

programs already in place are designed for middle and high school students. The study examined elementary school students who had been identified by the literature as possessing risk factors for dropping out, i.e. low socio-economic status, low grade point average and patterns of behavioral problems (Suh. 2007).

With these students, the study incorporated parental involvement strategies (Epstein. 1991) that the literature suggests would help them experience greater school success. "This focus on parental involvement has its roots in research demonstrating a positive association between parental involvement and academic achievement" (Englund & Luckner 2004. p.723).

The literature points to discourse on how to define parental involvement: traditional parent involvement included volunteering, attending school-sponsored activities and providing resources. Low socio-economic families are more likely to provide untraditional forms of parental involvement like nurturance, communication, and instilling cultural identity and values (Bower and Griffin, 2011). All forms of parent involvement, traditional and untraditional, were recognized in the study with an emphasis on the forms of parent involvement associated with low socio-economic and minority families' participation in the school engagement process (Bower and Griffin, 2011). The study's major focus was engaging teachers, students and parents in building meaningful productive relationships based on interventions that foster open communication as a way to improve student achievement. Wehlage (1989) asserts that schools play a role in students' disengagement due to the enforcement of outdated policies and procedures. Low performing students get caught in a cycle of failing grades, detention and suspension. Wehlage (1989) refers to these issues as impediments and reports that school environments lack extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, like school membership through social and cultural bonding. Students and their families require an

inclusive educational environment to enable school success. Researchers evaluating parent involvement found that simultaneous and systematic action need to take place inside and outside the school for any level of student success to occur (Lyche. 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The dropout rate continues to be alarming in the United States, especially among low socio-economic and minority students. It is incumbent on educators to seek input, develop programs and provide unconventional opportunities to engage all parents in the schooling of their children. "Because parental involvement is linked to improved student achievement, schools are often asked to increase their efforts to involve parents in children's education" (Walker 2002, p.2). "For young children, parent involvement is associated with early school success" (Hill and Taylor, 2004. p.161). The literature, (Gonzalez-Dehass, Willems, Holbein, & Doan, 2005: Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008), supports early parent involvement as an important element required to establish school expectations and develop lasting relationships throughout the student's school career.

Research Questions

The questions noted below will guide the study.

1) How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

2) How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

3) What are some forms of nontraditional parental involvement?

4) What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

Background

Noddings asserts, "… all children should have exactly the same education…" (2012. p. 2). The implementation of an ideal system that provides a quality education for all citizens continues to be a challenge for the United States. This is evident when examining the number of economically disadvantaged and/or minority students who perform poorly on standardized tests and fail to complete high school. American school standards and standardized tests are directed towards European American middle-class students, placing students from certain racial and ethnic groups and lower social classes at a distinct disadvantage (Gosa and Alexander 2007: Hunter and Bartee 2003: English 2002: Cammarota, 2006). One research study reported that minority students from several big-city school districts have less than a 50/50 chance of graduating from high school (Toppo. 2006).

The education challenge is not new and is rooted in the fabric of what makes the United States a great nation: its diversity. Individuals immigrate here from around the globe to pursue their dreams, regardless of religion, culture, race or other differences. Rumberger asserts, "Low expectations are associated with early high school dropout for students of all races and ethnicities" (2005. p. 1). The nation's fundamental principles, eloquently articulated by the founding fathers, have proven difficult to institute. Thomas Jefferson believed every citizen should be equipped with a certain level of education in order to preserve the nation's freedom and independence (Browne-Barbour, 2009). Today, education is viewed as the great social, political and economic equalizer. At the

time of Jefferson's statement, minorities and certain members of the lower class were not even considered "citizens".

The educational system struggles with engaging all students in meaningful relationships that lead to school success (Wehlage. 1989). The nation's school dropout rate continues to be of great concern for policy makers. Policy makers around the country are collaborating on programs aimed at improving the K-12 educational experience (Osgood, 2011). The dropout rate is a silent epidemic that has gained momentum among state and local governments as a major contributing factor responsible for the creation of laws, mandates and the distribution of education resources. "The regulation of education is not of the powers delegated to the federal government under the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution" (Browne-Barbour, 2009. p.362). The regulation of education rights is a duty reserved by state government. (Browne-Barbour, 2009). In recent years, local and state governments have garnered increasingly unfavorable attention regarding education decisions.

The need for continued resources is directly linked to dropout prevention. In order to address this need, increased parental involvement, continued public awareness through dialogue and the creation of programs with evidence-based, best practices and proven strategies, must be implemented to tackle the nation's dropout crisis. Parental involvement specifically is a vital component of school success. "Studies on the effects of parental involvement on students from elementary to high school show a beneficial intrinsic/extrinsic motivation, perceived competence, perceived control, self-regulation…" (Gonzalez-Dehass, Williams & Doan Holbein, 2005, p.99). Policy makers continue to develop legislation to improve access to quality education and improve school districts' efforts to increase parent involvement (Englund & Luckner. 2004).

Dropout prevention is not an issue isolated to the parents, students, and teachers. It has an impact on the school, the community, and society. In a 2010 report, the economy lost over $337 billion in additional revenue from students who dropped out (Alliance for Excellence Education, 2010). The seriousness of students' dropout is a "… hidden, national crisis" and "consigns nearly five million out-of-school and unemployed young adults to a future locked out of education and family supportive jobs" (Anonymous, 2004).

Ensuring all students have access to an education sounds simple in theory, but in reality, it is complex to operationalize. The difficulty is a result of the common assumption that a level playing field already exists, that those who want to exploit an education have the access and means. Researchers have found that among minority and economically disadvantaged students, parents believed that responsibility for their children's education rested solely on the school and that they, as parents, should provide the moral education (Bower and Griffin. 2011). The lack of resources to level the playing field is just one part of a greater issue; (Epstein. 2008) namely entrenched debilitating attitudes that devalue education within local communities. Family cultures, which differ across social and economic classes, impact feelings about schooling (Blasi, 2001).

Minority students and students who reside in socio-economically challenged homes and communities face hurdles in receiving a quality education. The reality of poverty often means the adults, and sometimes-older siblings, must work to keep food on the table to meet basic needs. DeVitis asserts that in order to keep the students from these households in school, we need a "…more concerted emphasis on socioeconomic structures and political neglects, especially in urban areas, that constrain progress on alleviating dropout problems" (2012, p.03). Typically, if parents and grandparents are under-educated, there is little to no schooling assistance offered at home. Through

parental involvement, parents can become aware of programs providing assistance with homework, while expressing graduation expectations to their students (Bower and Griffin, 2011).

Parental involvement yields improved academics outcomes, increased school attendance, reduced dropout rates and increased graduation (Epstein. 2005: Alvarez. 2009). In the absence of parent involvement, many impoverished students are at-risk for becoming the next generation of welfare recipients, convicted felons, and/or homeless who tax public dollars via the welfare, criminal justice/corrections, health, public safety, and social service systems. The cycle of poverty, crime and under-employment cannot be broken until lawmakers, educators and parents address school dropout (Obregon.1990).

"The influence parents have on their children's academic success has been acknowledged by researchers, policymakers, and educators alike. A significant body of research indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an improvement in student achievement" (McBride. et al.2009. p. 498).

The need for and value of parents becoming involved in their children's schooling is not a new concept. Project Head Start (1965) was founded with the mission to end poverty by providing low-income families with services to meet the emotional, social, health, nutritional, and psychological needs of pre-school children. "Head Start's parental involvement component has always been an important part of the program's operation" (Duch, 2003, p.23). Empirical research continues to support a positive correlation between parental involvement and student success, lending support to plans in Head Start programs to devote more resources to increasing parental involvement (Sparks. 2012).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA.1965) ensured the development and delivery of a national education curriculum and sought to ensure equal access to a quality education for all students. Through the ESEA, funding was provided

for "professional development, instructional materials, resources to support educational programs and for parental involvement promotion" (Brauer. 1982, p. 64). In 1981, President George W. Bush enacted the "No Child Left Behind Act" which was an extension of "ESEA" and provided parental involvement provisions in Title I, Part A, ensuring local development of parental involvement plans (Martin & Martin, 1996).

School systems around the country have developed programs to address the need for parent involvement. Parent involvement is so critical to academic success that it has been acknowledged across the country and written into school improvement plans as a predictor for student achievement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Empirical research continues to identify parent involvement as a worthy pursuit in effecting positive school success.

Significance of the Study

Students who drop out of school impact our entire society, socially, politically and economically. The importance of designing programs to address students leaving school early without graduating is a priority for educators. The literature provides convincing evidence that parent involvement has a positive impact on students' attitudes about schooling (Griffiths-Prince. 2009). The literature maintains that early (elementary school) parent involvement intervention is a necessary element to develop a mindset of respect and value for education (Williams-Jones.2012).

This study sought to inform educational professionals on the benefits of early parent involvement intervention that may impact student perceptions of education on future career goals, leading to increase in high school graduation. Brooks recommends, "...building an ongoing relationship between parents and schools could yield positive

results and, in addition, keep parents involved throughout the academic career of a student" (2009. p.14).

Therefore, this study focused on elementary school students who have displayed risk factors for dropping out of school and the development of parent involvement strategies that utilize proven teacher, student and parent engagement interventions and Epstein's (2009) Model of Parent Involvement and addressed Wehlage's (1989) learning impediments, i.e. social/culture conditions and lack of educational engagement. This study specifically targeted minority and economically disadvantaged students in urban elementary school settings.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be defined:

Parent: Parent is any adult, age eighteen (18) years or older, providing care (caregiver) for a minor child. This definition includes biological parents, grandparents, foster parents, aunts, uncles, and siblings. It is important to make this distinction to reflect today's (2013) varied combinations of related and non-related individuals caring for children. Therefore, there is no distinction made between a parent and a caregiver. "Whenever the term "parent" is used, it also refers to either or both parents, any guardian of a student, any person in a parental relationship to a student, or any person exercising supervisory authority over a student in place of a parent" (The Code Book for Student Conduct – Broward County Public Schools 2013-2016).

Parental Involvement: Parental involvement at a glance appears very clear; the literature suggests several viewpoints to consider. Epstein (2009) asserts that there are two types of parent involvement (traditional and non-traditional). The traditional

definition "requires the parent to spend time and money engaged in school sponsored or school related activities "(p.77). Epstein (2009) identified "non-traditional parental involvement and recognized the value in nurturing, instilling cultural values, and talking to the student" (p. 78). The Broward County Public School, definition for parental involvement is any person or persons bringing up and/or caring for a student who makes any attempt to participate in that student's schooling (Code of Conduct Handbook 2012-2013). As delineated by the United Code of Law (USCS 7801 (32)), parental involvement is defined as "the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication, involving student learning and other school activities" (Jeynes.2012. p.707). Therefore, individuals unable to participate at this level could and would be considered uninvolved. "New research and discourse on parental involvement state that schools may need to redefine parental involvement and develop broader framework that can make involvement more inclusive for families…" (Bower & Griffin 2011, p.78).

In recognition of the value of different types of involvement, the study embraced a combination of traditional and non-traditional forms of parental involvement to include all parental attempts to participate in the student's schooling. Parental involvement was measured by school attendance records in visitor's logs, phone contact logs, written correspondence and any parent communication noted in the district's database.

Elementary School Student: Elementary school student was defined as a young learner age 6-12 attending elementary school (Broward School District – Code of Conduct Handbook 2012-2013).

Academic Problem: Academic problem was defined as any student who fails to achieve a grade of more than 60 % in reading and or math, and is assessed at or below the 30th percentile on current versions of the Standardized Assessment Test and/or the

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). These standards are based on Broward County (Florida) School District elementary promotion criteria. (School Board of Broward County, Policy 6000.1: Student Progression Plan, p.4-6). The assessment data was obtained from quarterly report cards and student files found in an electronic database as compiled by teachers and other school personnel (Broward County Schools Data Base, Terms Panel L27, A10 and A13).

Behavior Problem: Behavioral problems were defined as any student who obtains three or more weekly behavioral referrals. Students who demonstrate a pattern of behavioral concerns evidenced by discipline matrix violations and were documentation in his/her electronic file in District database. The criteria used by the School District to identify students with behavioral problems are any student obtaining 60 behavioral referrals in a five-month period, or at a rate of three referrals per week (Broward School District – Behavior Change Program Manual/Handbook, p. 38-39).

Academic Success: Academic success will be defined as students whose academic records reflect improvement of a "C" grade or better. This researcher agrees that academic success should be defined as the ability of a student to maintain at least a "C" grade over one school year (Brooks. 2009).

Behavior Success: Behavioral success was defined as a decrease in behavioral referrals from three to one or none.

Therefore, the study 1) calculated the percentage of students who experienced an improved academic performance, and 2) evaluated the observed behavior of students who experience a decrease in weekly behavior referrals and correlated this data with the student's parent involvement data. The students were identified and monitored through their academic and behavioral district records (Broward School District – Behavior Change Program Manual/Handbook).

Impediments: Four common impediments are adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation (Wehlage. 1989). The school environment, culture, policies and procedures produce impediments to school membership and bonding.

School Membership: Belonging or being accepted as part of a peer group and receiving the support and approval of adults, which occurs through social bonding and generates attachment, commitment and belief in the institution (Wehlage. 1989).

Academic Engagement: Student involvement and engagement in the formal work teachers assign based on prescribed curriculum (Wehlage. 1989).

Figure 1 Below illustrates Epstein's (1997) typology of six (6) types of parent involvement and connections (Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at home, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community) that assist schools in developing meaningful partnerships leading to students experiencing school success.

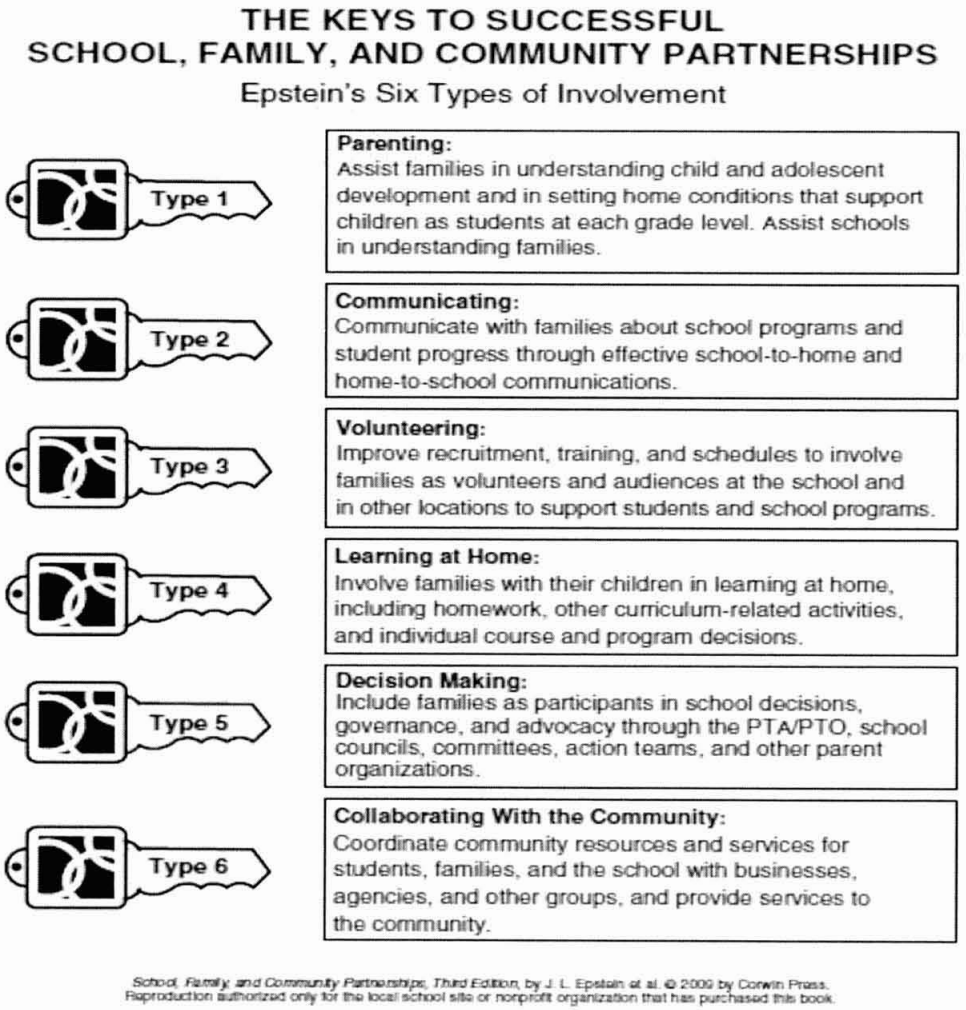

Figure 1: **Epstein's (2009) Model of Parent Involvement**

Figure 2 Below illustrates Epstein's (1997) typology of six (6) types of parent involvement and connections, as a system of equal parts working in concert with parent involvement. Parent involvement is at the center demonstrating its central impact on the development family school relationships.

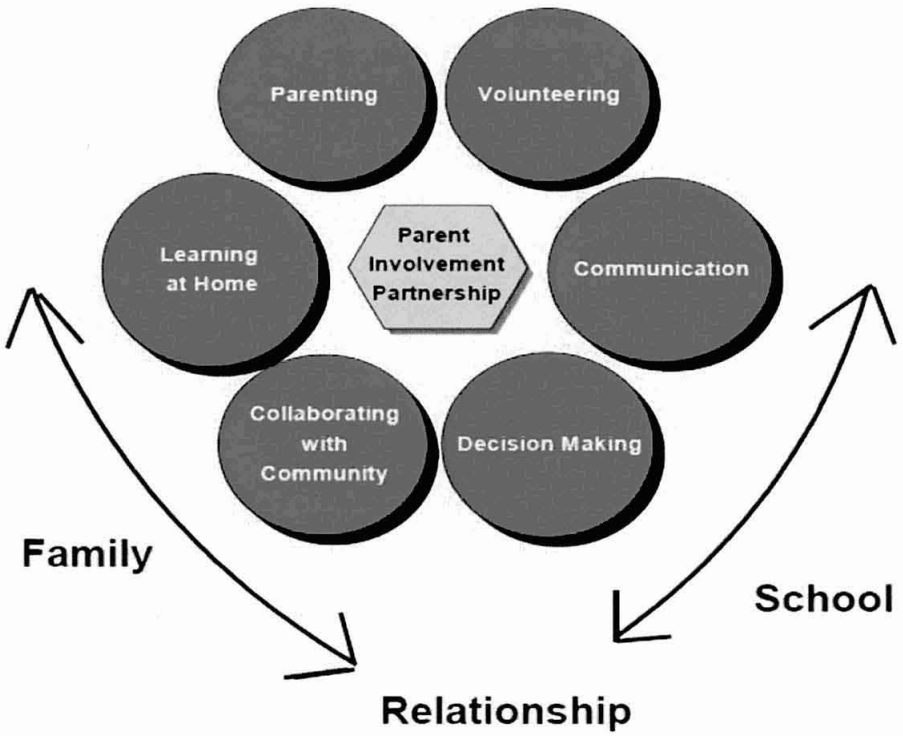

Figure 2: **Epstein's Parent Involvement Conceptual framework**

Figure 3 Wehlage (1989) asserts that schools contribute greatly to the dropout rate by producing impediments (adjustment, difficulty, incongruence, and isolation) through policies and practices that result in many suspensions, failing marks and grade retention.

School system policies label most low achieving students and create a cycle of work avoidance, acting out behaviors, detention, and suspension that result in lack of engagement and dropout.

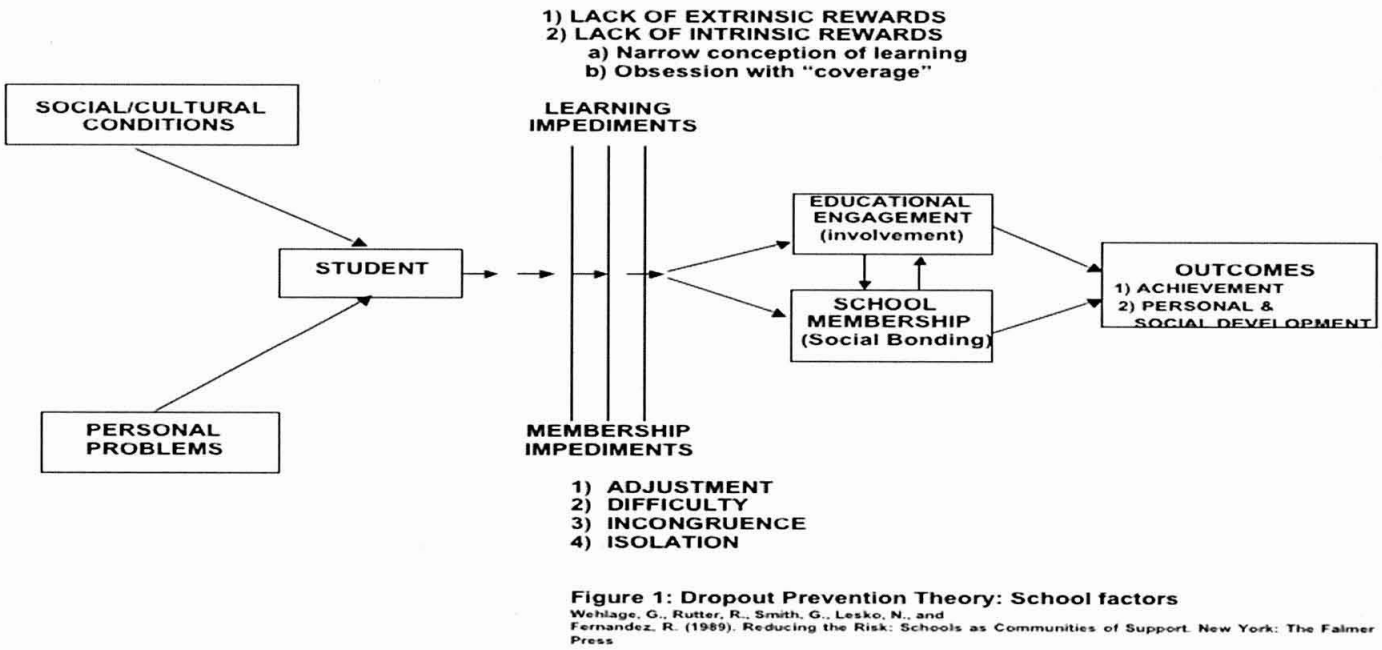

Figure 3: **Wehlage's (1989) Dropout Prevention Theory: School Factors**

Limitations/Delimitations

There are limitations regarding the development, implementation, replication, and assessment of this study. It is localized to a specific elementary school in a community with high poverty and unemployment, and low rates of education presenting factors that prevent duplication in other schools (elementary, middle or high schools) or other communities without similar socio-economic indicators. Deviations in the operational definition for parental involvement that vary by region of the country present consequent

limitations for replication of this study and its findings. Bower asserts, "Discourse on parental involvement demonstrates disagreement on how to define the topic..." (2005. p.78).

The challenges inherent in any action research study will be developing an environment where all participants understand the objectives, commit, take ownership and buy-in to the process. The adult participants may feel participating will place their ability to care for their students under additional scrutiny. As a result, buy-in on the part of the teacher was particularly important because the study relies on the teacher to report in a consistent and reliable manner. The teachers were selected based on her/his openness and willingness to examine her/his own practices.

The type of instrument utilized presented another limitation because the study requires a reliable instrument to rate traditional and non-traditional definitions of parental involvement. Ross cautions, "From a measurement perspective, that self-assessment introduces construct-irrelevant variances that threatens the validity of grading" (2006, p.1). A parent/teacher survey was utilized, covering (Epstein's Model) traditional and untraditional form of parent involvement (2009), in order to capture all attempts made by parents to participate in the schooling of their children.

In addition, participants were provided the definition of parental involvement "as either supporting student academic achievement or participating in school-initiated functions." (Bower & Griffin, 2011, p. 78) This definition allows for assessment through a traditional lens and was scored objectively based on attendance records. Evaluation of non-traditional parental involvement (nurturance, instilling cultural values and talking with children) (Bower and Griffin, 2011) is subjective and viewed as unreliable, but was evaluated using a rating scale or performance checklist of self-reporting. Bower and Griffin utilize "Epstein's Model" in their case study entitled "Can the Epstein Model of

Parental Involvement Work in a High-Minority, High-Poverty Elementary School? (2011) to provide relevance, credibility and a base for exploring the same population in a similar setting.

Interpreting research data was a complex task due to the number of variables that may have a possible influence on relationships or phenomena. The study's objective was to determine the strength of the possible relationships, not determine causation. Therefore, while examining the data, the researcher recognized that changes in academics and behavioral performance influenced by parent involvement might also reflect influence from other outside factors, such as peer pressure.

The researcher is an employee of the Broward County Public School, and had to remain objective in transcribing, coding and drawing inferences on data collected. Weiss (1998) cautions those researchers in a position of authority have to be careful to create an environment of neutrality with participants in an attempt to receive honest, reliable and valid responses (Ross. 2006). There is always a certain degree of subjectivity that all researchers bring to research, but being vigilantly conscious of this fact is the foundation of good research (Peshkin .1988).

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is organized into 5 chapters. Chapter I consists of the introduction and covers the purpose, background, significance, research questions and limitations of study. Chapter II gives an overview of the literature and research related to the study. Chapter III outlines the mixed method approach (qualitative/quantitative) and case study research design including population, methodology, collection techniques

(instruments), data and analysis. Chapter IV discusses the research findings and gives an interpretation of the data provided. Chapter V presents conclusions, interpretations and recommendations for educational professionals.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature review is a discussion of the state of dropout in America's education system and the implications for low socioeconomic and minority students. The literature also discusses prevention programs nationally and internationally for commonalities and differences. The literature review will conclude with a discussion of parent involvement legislation and the benefits of parent involvement.

Dropouts

Jones reports, "In 2006, the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) reported that approximately 3.5 million 16- to 24-year olds in the United States were not enrolled in high school and had not earned a high school diploma or alternative credential" (2009. p.77). John Hopkins University researchers found that many American high schools graduate less than 60 percent of their students in four years (Jones, 2009). "Dropout rates in certain schools, particularly high-poverty urban schools, can be as high as 50 percent or more in a single year" (Jozefowiez-Simbeni, 2008. p.49).

The term demographic imperative is used to state the rationale for taking action to alter the disparities in opportunities and outcomes deeply embedded in the American educational system (Banks et al., 2005). Minority and low socio-economic students dropping out of school is a demographic imperative affecting every aspect of American life. Henry, Knight & Thornberry (2012) report that school dropouts have very negative consequences not just for the student, but for his or her family and society at large.

Failure to graduate from high school results in a lifetime of lower wages, poorer health, dependency on public assistance, possible involvement in crime and incarceration (Henry, Knight & Thornberry, 2012).

Therefore, "The argument for the demographic imperative usually includes statistics about the increasingly diverse student population, the still relatively homogeneous teaching force and the demographic divide, especially the marked disparities in educational opportunities, resources, and achievement among student groups who differ from one another racially, culturally, and socioeconomically" (Banks et al., 2005. p. 236). Armstrong (2009) reports ill-education featuring high school dropout rates routinely soar past 50 percent in major urban areas where the underprivileged predominate.

Although the number of students 'leaving school early' has waxed and waned over the years (Wehlage, 1989. p.30), the issue of students in the U.S. dropping out is not a new phenomenon. Toppo (2006) asserts, "...that the nation's overall graduation rate is about 70% is not new" (p.1). Since the 1960s, the controversy regarding the cause and consequences of students dropping out of school surfaces periodically as a national crisis connected to the crisis of the day, like immigration, technology or economics (Wehlage, 1989).

There are many factors that impact students' decision to drop out of school. Kliebard (1986) and Wehlage (1989) discuss the impediments in schools that create an unbearable environment for students. Some students reported that school offers a curriculum void of diversity that can be un-engaging, humiliating and repetitive (Knesting, 2008). School policies and procedures identify and alienate low performing students in ways that foster a cycle of retention, detention and suspension (Wehlage, 1989). Students reported feeling no motivation or connection to the school, staff or peers.

Knesting (2008) states, "…. students must function in a climate where they think everything that is bad about themselves, this building represents that" (p.3). Therefore, schools need to pay attention to their influence, their organizational leadership and the teachers' role in students deciding to dropout (Knesting, 2008).

Many schools offer a rigid academic culture and atmosphere with generic curriculum lacking creativity, void of school membership through social bonds that create impediments, i.e. adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation (Wehlage. 1989), along with the lack of parent involvement. This study identified some of the impediments to learning and school membership that schools impose (Wehlage. 1989), while disregarding the benefits of parent involvement. All forms of parent involvement, (Epstein.2005) traditional and nontraditional were recognized with an emphasis on the forms of parent involvement associated with low socio-economic and minority families in the school engagement process (Bower and Griffin, 2011).

Epstein (2009) asserts that the traditional definition for parent involvement required parents to spend time and money engaged in activities that were school sponsored or school related. Therefore, individuals who are minorities or of low socio-economic status with little to no resources and are unable to participate at this level could and would be considered uninvolved. Lareau, "illustrates how white parents with differing cultural and social capital respond differently to school expectations for parent involvement" (2003. p.131).

Researchers have assisted schools in identifying risk factors for students dropping out. The research of Henry, Knight & Thornberry (2012) shows, "early indicators are valuable in identifying school disengagement trajectories for preventing dropout (p.157). The identification process typically relies on school record data, course failure, poor attendance and suspensions (Henry, et al.2012). Janosz, LeBlanc & Boulerice (1997)

asserts, that dropouts are more likely to come from low socio-economic families, single parent homes, households with low educational attainment, dropouts in the family and large family size.

Schools that have successfully identified low academic performing students report that the rigidity of the system's policies and procedure ties their hands. Jozefowiez-Simbeni cautions, "with increasing performance and accountability demands written into legislation like the No Child Left Behind Act and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), it is predicted that the dropout problem will worsen" (2008. P.49). Allensworth (2005) reports, those students who have been retained are more likely to dropout than students who have not been retained. Some schools are armed with this preventative identifying information, but due to policies and procedures continue to struggle with implementing workable strategies to engage these students.

The research also points to student/family challenges working in tandem with the lack of school engagement leading to dropping out. "Dropouts are not a homogenous group; the chance of dropping out is often a long process of disengagement that may begin before a child enters school (Jones, 2009. P.78) as a result of the family's attitude towards education. Most often, students who possessed risk factors for dropping out were racial minorities from poor families with parents who experienced low educational attainment (Jones, 2009). Furthermore, many of these students were exposed to violence and/or drugs at a very young age, impacting their academic performance (Jones, 2009), and the lack of stability and structure in the home. These students develop excessive absenteeism, low motivation and low self-expectations (Wehlage, 1989) that translate into unfavorable attitudes toward school and low value associated with obtaining a high school diploma.

Several studies support the premise of early identification and intervention being the most effective way to re-shape attitudes about school. Researchers found "...because older children have been in school longer, they may have a stronger defeatist attitude than younger students" (Suh, 2007). Many studies define the risks associated with academic under-achievement, yet devote no time to identifying the strategies and tactics necessary to re-shape the students' behaviors, attitudes, and performance.

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive view of the dropout epidemic, there are several controversial studies that offer different perspectives on how to identify students at-risk for dropping out. The literature suggests some students who dropout suffer from undiagnosed mental health issues. The Montague, Enders, Cavendish & Castro. (2011) article, Responding to the Mental Health Needs of Students found:

> When students experience mental health problems, they often struggle to attend school, have difficulty completing assignments, and have more frequent conflicts with peers and adults. These students usually display significantly higher levels of antisocial behaviors, attention problems, and lower social competency.

Teachers are not trained to differentiate between behavioral and attention deficit problems, therefore many children are labeled with behavioral problems stemming from issues outside the school environment (Montague, et. al. 2011). In certain instances, it is their mental health issue causing an emotional and maladaptive behavior that requires the attention of mental health professionals. One mental health issue that presents in this manner is depression. Depression among adolescents is a serious problem requiring the services of a mental health professional. Mental health services will prevent

disengagement from schools, not additional instruction from a teacher (Montague, et. al. 2011). Studies found these students require counseling and not necessarily tutoring or peer mentoring.

Dropout Prevention

Wehlage (1989) declares that studies offered evidence those students typically at risk for dropout can be kept in school through school membership or the development of meaningful relationships with peers and adults. Historically, dropout prevention programs were designed for the middle or high school student (Henry, et al.2012). Therefore, the literature on middle and high school prevention programs was reviewed to determine commonalities, differences and implications for elementary school students. Studies support the premise that early identification and intervention are the most effective way to re-shape attitudes about school. Henry, Knight & Thornberry (2012) affirm it is important to identify at-risk students early in their education, so effective intervention strategies can be employed.

The literature provides several national and international dropout prevention programs that are implementing effective strategies and yielding successful outcome measures. Researchers tracking dropout prevention and intervention programs in the United States and around the world identified early intervention as the first among categories that determine success (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson 2003). Many effective program designs also test for and rule out mental health concerns in identifying appropriate participants (Chene, Stage, Hawken, Lynass, Mielenz & Waugh 2009). It appears "...the key to a successful intervention program is to tie the intervention strategies to concrete and measurable goals and to monitor and track goal attainment (or lack

thereof) until the gains have stabilized into reliable and consistent patterns". (Daly, 2009. p.4).

The Check, Connect and Expect program is successful in identifying effective engagement strategies (developing relations through social bonding) that assist in monitoring risk factors (Cheney, et. al. 2009.p.227). A mentoring environment is created to foster peer relationships to monitor "... absenteeism, behaviors referrals, detention and suspension, course grades and credits". (Cheney. et. al. 2009). The thought was mentors would hold the at-risk student accountable for their behavior. Other programs offered supportive counseling with behavioral and academic contracting.

Cheney (2009) expressed that the Check, Connect and Expect program's success was predicated on the follow-up that spanned several years. In groups who received mentorship monitoring over 3 - 5 years, it was found that the longer the follow-up and monitoring lasted, the greater the likelihood for success (Cheney, et. al. 2009). The Check component of the program consists of the mentor employing daily monitoring procedures for school risk factors: tardiness, absenteeism, behavioral referrals, detention, suspension, course grades, and credits. The Connect component refers to the mentor forming positive relationships with students in order to implement two levels of intervention for student progress monitoring of risk factors (Cheney, et. al. 2009). The Expect component flows directly out of the accountability that is fostered by the positive relationships created in the Connect portion.

The program demonstrated effectiveness in engaging students in the schooling process leading to graduation. Hawken, MacLeod & Rawlings (2007) replicated the Check, Connect and Expect utilizing the 'Behavior Education Program' (BEP) portion with elementary school students and found a decrease in office referrals and an increase in academic engagement. "One of the most valuable interventions in the check-in, check-

out system is it provides increased daily feedback and positive adult attention" (Hawken, et. al. 2007 p.94). Structured intervention programs are achieving success with at-risk students from kindergarten to high school. "Results from Check, Connect and Expect suggest that it is a successful intervention for decreasing dropout rates, increasing school completion and attendance" (Cheney, et. al. 2009 p.227).

Researchers contend, the overarching principles of successful school engagement programs are continuity, consistency, monitoring, and pairing relationship and affiliation with problem solving skills (Lehr, Hansen, Sinclair, & Christenson 2003. p. 343 (1983). Wehlage (1983) identified five principles that school programs need to be effective at addressing at-risk students. The five principles are: (1) the need to have good information about students; (2) the need to have good information about the effects of school policies and practices on at-risk students; (3) the recognition that personal and smaller environments are more likely to produce school membership and educational engagement for at-risk students; (4) the recognition that more of the same kind of curriculum and teaching is not likely to succeed with at-risk students; and (5) the need to have a mechanism that will hold schools accountable for success with at-risk students (as cited in Dunlop-Taylor, 1995).

Other programs around the country have had success using the same rationale to develop relationships through school membership and social bonding (Wehlage, 1989). Wehlage studied 14 schools and found several components that positively affect engagement of at-risk students. The successful strategies included small groups, acceptance and appreciation of cultural identities (Wehlage, 1989), culturally based curriculum innovations with field experiences and projects aimed at personalizing teaching and learning (p. 251). The most important strategies echoed were building

school membership through open communication, conveying a caring attitude and the development of relationships with students/teachers (Wehlage, 1989).

Dropout International

The phenomenon of students failing to matriculate and dropping out of school is not specific to the U.S. The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) provides an opportunity to observe 'student dropout' and issues surrounding it on an international level. This French international economic organization of 34 countries has educational attainment and dropout prevention on their agenda (Lyche. 2010). The OECD completed a comparative study between France's dropout prevention strategies and the strategies used in other countries within the consortium. Cecilia S. Lyche published the findings in "Education Working Papers No.53, entitled Taking on the Completion Challenge". This study focused on looking at "Policies to Prevent Dropout and Early School Leaving" (Lyche. 2010).

The OECD study described dropping out as a "...highly complex and intertwined" (Lyche. 2010. p.2) issue with many causes and risk factors to be considered. Through an evaluation of pilot programs across several OECD countries, researchers found the risk factors were duplicable and required "simultaneous systematic action inside and outside the school environment" to achieve any level of success. (Lyche. 2010.p.6) The risk factors in the OECD were very similar to the risk factors associated with U.S. students. At-risk students performed poorly in school, displayed poor behavior, lacked motivation, and had a pattern of excessive absenteeism. Other common risk factors were low socio-economic status, poor parental involvement, and family size. The Check, Connect and Expect Intervention for Students At risk for Severe Behavior

Problems (Cheney, et. al. 2009) dropout prevention program found the same consistencies. In this two-year study, researchers focused on identifying early indicators in elementary school. In fact, this research found the risk factors remained constant through high school (Cheney, et. al. 2009).

The onset of risk factors exhibition varied between the OECD and those in the United States. OECD analyzed the timeline for when the students first displayed disengagement behaviors and used this data to develop strategies to implement inside and outside the school environment (Lyche. 2010). The study employed the same strategies utilized by programs in the United States - monitoring, tutoring, and parental engagement. OECD also determined the risk factors were present at a much earlier age but not addressed. Unlike programs in the United States that recognize the exhibition of risk factors at an early age, the OECD actually determined "Preventive measures to reduce early school leaving should start early" (Lyche. 2010. p.10); most programs in the United States are designed to provide intervention in middle and high school. The "Check, Connect" program is one of few designed to identify and provide dropout intervention services early. Programs like Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), New Chance, Accelerated Middle Schools, Twelve Together, and ALAS ("Wings" in Spanish) are designed to provide intervention and prevention in middle and high school (Cheney. et. al. 2009).

Intervention and implementation strategies used in the OECD and the United States also vary. The OECD implements interventions based on grade-level and examine cognitive functioning, provide social and educational support for child/family (Lyche. 2010), and provide opportunities for positive peer and adult bonding that promote positive attachment inside and outside the school. Most programs in the United States provide the services based on grade-level and student need. Programs in the United

States may recognize the need for parental engagement, but do not consider it a top priority. Anderson (1997) reported, "many dropout prevention programs that were proposed, implemented with inadequate support and commitment, and died quick deaths" (p.1505). This may be attributed to the difficulties found in attempts to engage parents which stem from a number of factors: unwillingness on the part of the parent, limited funding, or the belief that addressing family needs is not the role of the education system (Anderson. 1997).

The most successful strategy engages the parent(s). Programs with parental involvement, family counseling, and conflict resolution components often achieved greater success. Students demonstrated increased attendance, improved academic motivation, and improved performance and behavior (Cheney, et. al. 2009). Program success depends on, "interventions designed to promote increased parent involvement". (White. 2010) In the University of New Hampshire study, researchers found, "...parental effort has a strong positive direct effect on student achievement". (Wright. 2008)

A fundamental difference between the U.S. and OECD studies was the lack of consistency in terminology used to describe the problem. Some "OECD" countries preferred the term early school leaving to dropout (Lyche. 2010). This created a challenge in data collection and evaluation of outcomes, and a decision was made to use the term 'dropout' for data collection fidelity (Lyche. 2010).

Researchers in the United States found the use of terminology to be problematic when comparing study findings to support similar research questions. The term dropout carries a negative connotation and possible psychological ramifications; researchers coined the phrase school completion in papers supporting dropout prevention programs (Lehr. 2003). A research study completed from the University of Minnesota used, Moving Beyond Dropout Towards School Completion (Lehr. 2003) to support the

consistency of terminology. Fidelity stems from the evaluation of variables and risk factors that predict and cause dropout. In this study, the researcher will continue to use the term of dropout since most of the literature uses this term.

Parent Involvement legislation

In 1965, the United States government, through President Lyndon B. Johnson, declared "War on Poverty" and acknowledged the importance of educating the poor (Brauer. 1982). This major piece of legislation expanded the government's role in education and healthcare. These two areas, when left without assistance, greatly contribute to poverty (Brauer. 1982). This was the beginning of Project Head Start, a program created with the goal of providing low-income families services to meet the nutritional, emotional, health, social and psychological needs of pre-school children (Duch. 2003).

Involvement from parents and the community was penned into the legislation. "Head Start's parental involvement component has always been an important part of the program's operation" (Duch, 2003. p.23). The importance of parental involvement was recognized and required by law: parents were encouraged to become their children's advocate. "By law, Head Start programs must help parents and families support their children as they enter Early Head Start or Head Start…" (Duch. 2003. p.23). The Head Start Program is available in every state and has served over three million children and families since its inception.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 sought to ensure all students would have access to a quality education. The ESEA provided specific funds for instructional material, professional development, support educational programs and

parental involvement promotion (Brauer, 1982). President Bush enacted "No Child Left Behind Act" as an extension of ESEA, and provided provisions in Title I for parental involvement (Martin & Martin. 1996). For over 30 years, policy makers continue to make provisions in legislation for school districts to increase efforts to ensure parental involvement (Englund & Luckner, 2004). These provisions have provided the nation with a conscious display of policy making that recognizes the benefit of involving parents in the education of their children.

The legislation seen in Public Law (PL) 94-142 is another example of policy makers' continued support of parent involvement in their children's education. In 1975, U.S. Congress enacted PL 94-142 requiring all states and local school districts to educate all children with disabilities (Martin & Martin. 1996). The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included provisions to improve the educational experience for students with special needs with an emphasis on the need for inclusion. American society's attitudes towards students with special needs paralleled that of other minority groups, i.e. women and non-majority ethnic, cultural, racial and religious groups (Englund & Luckner, 2004). Public Law 94-142 also addressed the importance of parental involvement in the schooling of special needs students.

The law states that parents are to be active participants, notified in a timely manner and given adequate information regarding any meeting involving educational decisions regarding their child (Gartner & Lipsky, 2002). Although the law is clear, there are concerns about school professionals' treatment of parents being below par in directing exceptional student education (ESE) meetings. Parents are given little to no input, resulting in feelings of intimidation and inadequacy when reviewing previously discussed intervention decisions. Many parents report feeling ill equipped to challenge the

professionals' decision, so they acquiesce whether or not they are in agreement (Gartner & Lipsky, 2002).

Parent Involvement

The legitimacy and relevance of parent involvement in addressing the needs of elementary school students with academic and behavioral challenges is well documented through numerous studies and research. "This focus on parental involvement has its roots in research demonstrating a positive association between parental involvement and academic achievement" (Englund & Luckner 2004. p723). "Because parental involvement is linked to improved student achievement, schools are often asked to increase their efforts to involve parents in children's education" (Walker 2002, p.2). In fact, the importance of addressing the needs of young students is evidenced through research that led to federal legislation to ensure resources are available to educators, parents, and the student. Epstein (2010) declares, no topic regarding school improvement has received more attention that parent involvement. Therefore, researchers and policy makers around the nation spanning over two (2) decades have agreed that parental involvement positively effects student achievement (Brauer, 1982: McAllister, 1993: Henry, 1996: Mackenzie, 2010). Christenson & Sheridan asserted national educational goals embraced the notion of family-school relationships preventing school failure (2001). "For young children, parental school involvement is associated with early school success" (Hill & Taylor, 2004, p.161).

McAllister-Swap, 1993, wrote, "One element that we know contributes to more successful children and more successful schools across all populations is parental involvement in children's education" (p.1). Another study stated, "...there was a

significant interaction between parental support and activity involvement in the prediction of academic competence" (Lagace-Seguin, Case, 2010, p.459).

Parental involvement reinforces to the student the importance of education, promotes favorable attitudes to education, enhances effective communication of student needs between the parent and teacher, and builds an additional layer of accountability (Fan & Chen, 2001: Hill & Taylor, 2004: Wong, 2008: McBride et. al. 2009:). Parental involvement is so critical to academic success it has been linked across the country and written into school improvement plans as a predictor for student achievement (Bower & Griffin, 2011). "The influence parents have on their children's academic success has been acknowledged by researchers, policymakers, and educators alike. "A significant body of research indicates that when parents participate in their children's education, the result is an improvement in student achievement" (McBride, et. al. 2009. p. 498).

The majority of the literature focuses on parental involvement having a positive effect on academic achievement. In many studies, teachers, parents, administrators and students from elementary school through high school agree that parent involvement benefits students, assists teachers, improves schools and strengthens families (Epstein, 2010). Discrepancies exist regarding what types of parent involvement are important and which strategies engage all parents (Epstein, 2009).

The literature provides several ideologies and constructs of parent involvement to consider based on objective, goals, cultural, racial and class ramification. Sy (2006) reports that cultural differences challenge traditional definitions of parent involvement, which focus on participation in school activities. This approach is culturally insensitive and fails to recognize or support home-school connection. "Parent and school contact fail to account for the multiple of ways parents become involved, such as culture and ethnicity shapes parents' involvement practices" (Sy, 2006. p.108). Researchers have

found parents' involvement in school related activities at home had a strong effect on student's academic achievement (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

Brock & Edmunds (2010) assert that the notion of parent involvement has had many definitions and has been operationalized in many ways. Despite the lack of clarity, efforts to increase involvement have centered around two predominant approaches that involve increasing communication between school and home, and encouraging behaviors at home that promote learning (Brock & Edmunds, 2010).

Norton (2002) reports parents should be encouraged to determine their own definition of involvement, due to only eight percent of families matching the description meant for the original definition of parent involvement. The original definition consisted of two parent families where the father works and the mother stays at home and could afford to be a traditional school volunteer (Norton, 2002). "Until now, parent involvement generally has been limited to fund-raising or class volunteer roles" (Martin, 1995. p.1). The traditional definition of parent involvement (join PTA and provide items for bake sales, for example) has changed throughout the years from specific activities and roles to a more inclusive emphasis on all activities in and out of the school that supports learning (Ramirez, 2005). Abdul-Adil (2006) asserts that in the absence of a consensus definition, an inclusive parent involvement definition consists of parental attitudes, behaviors, styles or activities occurring within or outside the school that supports academic and behavioral school success.

Traditional forms of parent involvement consisting of parents joining the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), volunteering, attending field trips and other school-sponsored events (Bower & Griffin, 2010) are important and will not be overlooked. The primary participants in this type of involvement are non-minorities. Epstein (2009) asserts, "traditional definition for parent involvement requires the parent to spend time

and money engaged in school sponsored or school related activities" (p.77). Therefore, individuals unable to participate at this level could and would be considered uninvolved.

The non-traditional forms of parent involvement consist of providing encouragement, nurturing and academic expectations, instilling cultural pride and securing space at home for schoolwork. Epstein (2009) identified a form of non-traditional parental involvement and recognized the value in nurturing, instilling cultural values, and talking to the student (p. 78) "New research and discourse on parental involvement state that schools may need to redefine parental involvement and develop broader frameworks that can make involvement more inclusive for families..." (Bower & Griffin 2011, p.78).

The attitudes about parent involvement that a school possesses (teachers/administrators) are not new, but are a direct result of lack of training in working with families from diverse backgrounds. Most school staff around the country is ill equipped to work with students' families (Epstein, 2010). Educators are inadequately prepared to work with students' religion, culture, race and social class and other characteristics students and families bring to school (Epstein, 2010. p.5).

Summary

Schools based on federal policies have to find a way to service all the needs of their entire student population. There have been some changes in the school culture in response to federal policies recently imposed by No Child Left Behind (NCLB) (Epstein, 2010.p.9) and the continued influence of Head Start and other educational programs with parent involvement mandates. The federal government requires the school districts to have parent involvement programs and policies in place (Epstein, 2010).

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine what relations exist between parent involvement (Epstein. 2009) and school success of minority, low socio-economic students' success based on academic and behavioral guidelines established by the school district (Broward County Public School: Code of Conduct Manuel 2013) and identify impediments (i.e. adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation) as well as policies and procedures that may lead to students' disengagement and drop out (Wehlage. 1989).

The study's focus was engaging parents, teachers and students in building meaningful productive relationships based on interventions that foster open communication as a way to improve student achievement. Wehlage (1989) asserts that schools contribute greatly to the dropout rate by producing impediments, policies and practices that result in many suspensions, failing marks and grade retention. School systems' policies label most low achieving students and create a cycle of work avoidance, acting out behaviors, detention and suspension, resulting in lack of engagement and dropout. Schools have not developed mainstream programs to honor individual strengths or support and provide innovative initiative to address weaknesses in tackling dropout rate.

Research Questions

1) How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socio-economic students?
2) How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

3) What are some forms of nontraditional parental involvement?
4) What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

Research Method

For the purpose of the study, a qualitative research method was utilized. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2009) report that any methods of inquiry carry advantages and disadvantages. Shoe (2009), submits that any research method must be rigorous, consistent and well-reasoned.

Therefore, a qualitative action research case study was chosen for its focus on educational interventions that provides insight into practice issues in a real world context (Joseph, 2004). Yin (2003) states, qualitative case studies facilitate the development of theoretical propositions to direct the data collection and analysis in ways that seek to explain causality in real-life interventions that are too complex for survey and experimental strategies. The focus on taking research from theory to practical implementation seems to be a logical progression. Action Research case studies place actual interventions in the real world environment for testing (Joseph, 2004).

In the interest of conducting a balanced action research study, the researcher offers a conceptual framework utilizing Epstein's (1997) typology of six (6) types of parent involvement and connections (Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at home, Decision Making and Collaborating with the Community) and Wehlage's (1989) extrinsic/intrinsic construct of social and cultural conditions (school membership through social bonding) that fosters the building and maintenance of meaningful

relationships. The goal of both concepts was to ensure that all types of parent and student engagement lead to school success.

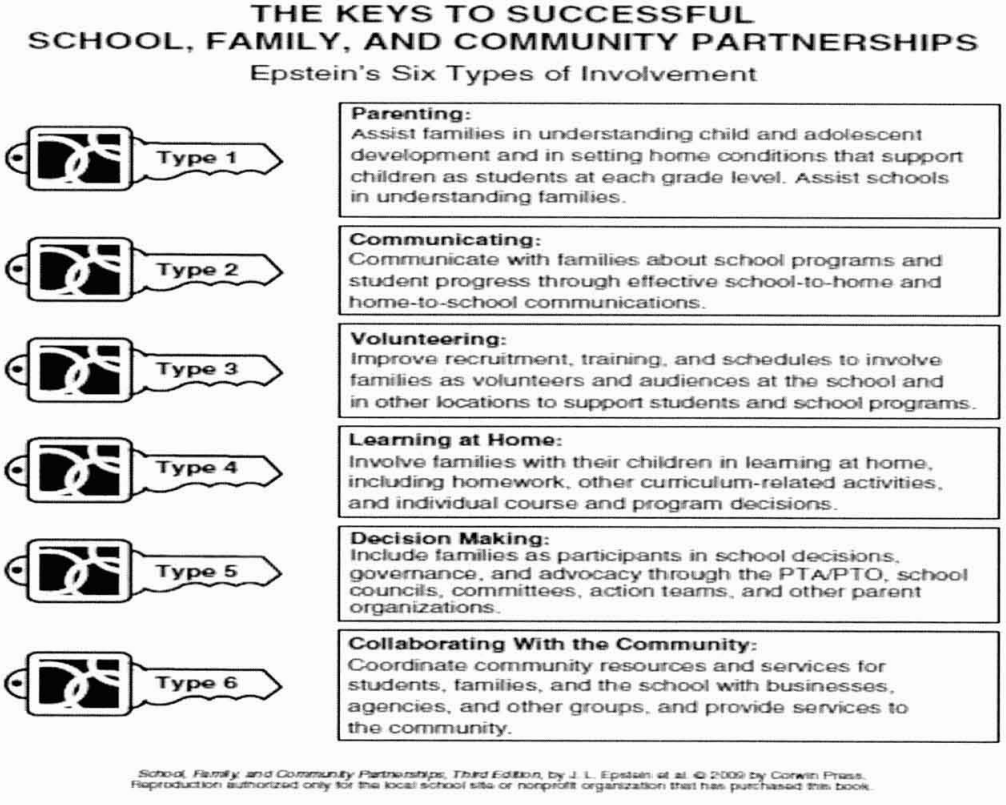

Figure 2: **Below Epstein's (1997) typology of (6) types of Parent Involvement and Connections**

Wehlage (1989) discusses the role schools play in the dropout problem for many minority and low socio-economic students. School policies and practices manifest as impediments in the form of grading, lack of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, and an environment lacking relationships that contribute in many ways to students leaving early. The lack of social and cultural educational engagement can be observed in the lack of diverse curriculum, retentions, suspensions, and inadequate school membership (social

bonding) to meet the needs of the entire student body. Wehlage (1989) reports that many students are unable to adjust and experience stages of disengagement leading to isolation and drop out.

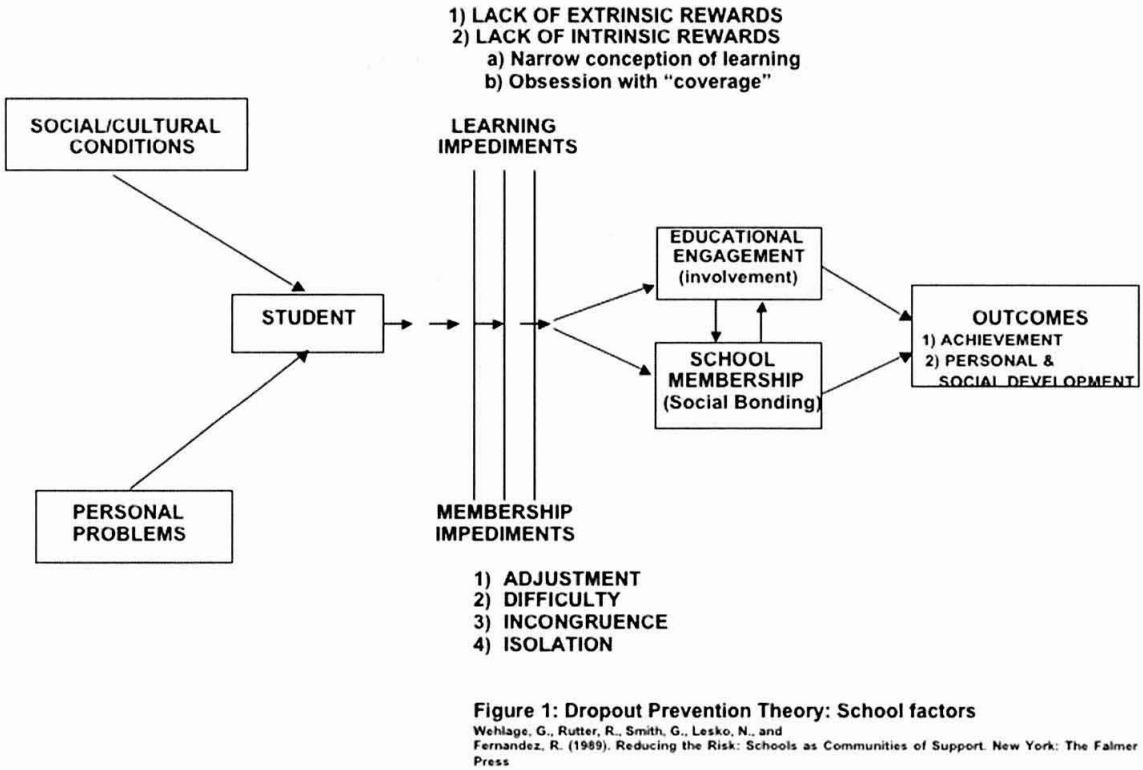

Figure 1: Dropout Prevention Theory: School factors
Wehlage, G., Rutter, R., Smith, G., Lesko, N., and Fernandez, R. (1989). Reducing the Risk: Schools as Communities of Support. New York: The Falmer Press

***Figure 3*: Wehlage's (1989) Dropout Prevention Theory: School Factors**

Subjects/Informants

The population for this study was a purposive sample of a heterogeneous group of boys and girls 20 (n = 20) 3rd grade elementary school students who have demonstrated academic and behavioral difficulties. Purposive sampling provides more than appropriate study participants (Yin. 2003); it provides relevance and depth. Third graders were chosen because third grade is an important developmental stage and

academic year (Graves, 2008). Graves confirms, "...measures of parental involvement will be examined to determine how they relate to academic achievement in the 3rd grade" (2008, p.263). The sample group of 3rd grade elementary school students consisted predominately of females, although 70% of students who drop out are minority males (Graves, 2008). The sample group was composed of representatives from a variety of races, cultures, and low socio-economic backgrounds. Demographic information will be gathered from student's registration packets in the school's database (Broward County Public School, Terms Database).

The study examined 20 students who experienced an increase in parental involvement (weekly) above what is required by school policy (quarterly) over the period of (3) months. The systematic, yet flexible and pragmatic approach of action research provided direction in assessing the effect of parental involvement on minority and low socio-economic students' academic and behavior performance, school membership, climate and cultural posture.

The study examined the students who experienced an increase or decrease in their academic and behavioral performance. In the study, academic improvement was defined as students whose academic records indicated improvement of one standard deviation or one letter grade (i.e. students improving from an "F" to a "D: or a "D" to a "C"). Improved behavioral performance was defined as a decrease in weekly behavioral referrals from three to two or one. This information was reflected in parents' and teachers' interviews and supported by district records (School Academic Improvement Plans. 2012).

Therefore, the study (1) examined the types of parent involvement, (2) reported the number of students who experienced an improved academic performance, and (3) reported the number of students who experienced a decrease in weekly behavior referrals,

as reported by teacher and parent. The students were identified and monitored through their academic and behavioral district records (Broward County Public Schools, Terms Database. Appendix B)

Setting

The study was conducted in the Broward County Public School District, Florida at the New Revolution Elementary School. The school is located in an urban community of minority and low socio-economic families of whom 87% are recipients of public assistance support services (Broward County Property and Census, 2012). The neighborhood residents consist of a high percentage of individuals who have left school early and dropped out (Broward County, Florida Census).

New Revolution Elementary campus is gated and designed in an open campus format, single floor buildings with doors leading directly outside. The colorful painted buildings are surrounded with several playgrounds hosting an atmosphere conducive for fun learning experiences for young children. The administrators and school staff's goals articulated are to provide a safe, clean environment and a positive school culture for young children to engage in meaningful relationships. Wehlage (1989) asserts a school's culture should cultivate a meaningful relationship between staff and students to motivate and ensure that a positive school engagement process takes place.

Data Collection

The demographic chart assisted researcher in gaining greater insight and perspective in working with participants.

Table 2.0: Elementary students with multiple risk factors for dropping out of school

RISK FACTORS	Student	Parent	TOTAL
Gender **Female** **Male** **Unidentified**			
Ethnicity **African American** **Hispanic** **Other**			
Family Structure **Couple – M/F** **Single – M/F**			
Primary Language **English** **Creole** **Spanish** **Other**			
Academic Concerns			
Behavior Concerns			
Absenteeism			
Retentions			
Suspensions			

Parent Educational Attainment **No High School** **Some High School** **High School Diploma**			
Poverty Level **Self-Reported** **(Epstein.2009)** **Above** **Below**			

The dissertation proposal was presented both to the Lynn University's Institution Review Board (IRB) and the Broward County Public School's Institution Review Board (IRB) and received approval to conduct the study (IRB Approval Letters, Lynn University and Broward County Public School, Appendix C & D).

The researcher followed Epstein's (2007) protocol for conducting a school based case study. Epstein's conceptual rationale was chosen for its effective treatment coverage of parent involvement strategies (i.e. parenting, learning at home, etc.) and its solid body of research developing school, family and community partnerships. Participants were made aware of Wehlage's (1989) disengagement impediments, which include school membership, grades, detention, suspension policies, and the lack of an environment supportive of diverse cultural needs as parents, teachers and students collaborated in a purposeful pursuit of students experiencing greater school success. Wehlage (1989) contributes to the conceptual rational by providing balance in identifying the school as an organization responsible and accountable to its students.

An introduction letter was sent to the school's administrator (Appendix E) and a meeting was scheduled with school administrators and teachers to introduce the purpose and objective of the study. Archival data was collected to identify students with high risk factors for future dropping out. Researcher met with parents to discuss the study purpose and objectives. Parents voluntarily signed participation permission forms (Appendix F).

The data collection instrument utilized was Epstein's (1993) Parent and Teacher Interview/Questionnaire (Appendix G) based on its reliability and validity among researchers. The interview questions cover perceptions of parent/teacher roles, parent/teacher participation, education, and resources (Wehlage. 1989) impediments of school membership through social/cultural bonding, and the use of policies (i.e. grading, detention, suspension) leading to school success. The instrument/questionnaire was administered to students, parents and teachers. The researcher secured approval to use and adapt Epstein's (1993) Parent, Teacher and Student Questionnaire/Survey from National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS), (Appendix H). Researcher adapted Epstein's Parent Questionnaire/ Survey Questions (Demographic Information, Q.1 (a) (b) (c) (d) (e) (h) (k) (o), Q.3 (f) (j) (n), Q.9, Q.10 (a) (b) (c) (d)), Teacher Questionnaire/Survey Questions (Demographic Information, Q.1 (a) (b) (c) (f) (j) (k) (r), Q.2 9c) (d) (o) and Student Questionnaire/Survey Questions (Demographic Information, Section1 A, (b) (d) (f) (g), Section 2.B, (a) (b) Section 3. (c) (q) utilizing an open-ended question path format. The parent demographic chart was adapted to identify school impediments, such as, absenteeism, detentions and suspensions.

Data Analysis

The qualitative analysis consisted of artifacts, demographic material, conducting interviews, transcribing, developing codeable units and creating domains to isolate patterns, themes and discrepancies in identifying parent, teacher and student attitudes and practices as it pertains to parent involvement and school impediments to school membership (cultural/climate).

Organization of Chapters

Chapter I was an introduction to the study. Chapter II was a review of the literature. Chapter III stated the methodology to be used in the study. The findings are presented in Chapter IV and the conclusions and recommendations are addressed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

Introduction

Parent involvement is a major force within school systems, necessary for the effective implementation of strategies to increase the number of students experiencing school success. When this study's ideology and researcher were presented, both received a warm welcome from the administrative team at New Revolution Elementary. After the information gathering sessions with administration and the third grade teachers, two teachers emerged who felt their students and families could benefit from participating in the research study. These teachers embraced the strategies that focused on increased parent involvement and engagement as tools for fostering student engagement, compliance and school success. They were enthusiastic about the theoretical framework of action research, applying theory to practice in a real world context. The study's focus employs Epstein's (2002) six typologies (parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaboration with the community) of parent involvement and Wehlage's (1989) theory on promoting school membership through developing a sense of bonding and academic membership and removing what he refers to as impediments to viewing the interaction between teacher, parents and students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine what relationships exist between parent involvement (Epstein. 2009) and the school success of minority, low socio-economic students based on academic and behavioral guidelines established by the school district (Broward County Public School: Code of Conduct Manuel 2013) and assess what

impediments (i.e. adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation) as well as policies and procedures exist that may lead to students' disengagement and drop out. School districts have policies and procedures that are impediments and contribute to students leaving early and not graduating (Wehlage, 1989).

Research Questions

The questions noted below guided the study.

1) How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

2) How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

3) What are some forms of nontraditional parent-involvement?

4) What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

The research process began with two teachers identifying ten (10) students from each of their class that they felt met the criteria for the study. Then the parents of the students' identified-were invited to attend an information gathering session that included dinner and was called "*Student Success Night*". Parents were called and flyers went home. The flyers and calls were provided in English, Spanish, French and Creole to ensure parents received a clear understanding of *Student Success Night* and the intent behind it. The calls and flyers were sent for a week until all the parents responded. The parents were instructed to sign the flyers confirming their attendance and note the number of family members attending for dinner. Students were instructed to return the signed

flyers to their teachers. During the calls, a number of parents and students expressed excitement about having dinner at the school.

Student Success Night brought out over fifty percent of the target group, 13 families participated and received an overview of the research study that included study goals and expectations for the participants. The information was interpreted and questions answered in several languages, Creole, French, English and Spanish. The teachers and parents committed to making time to communicate via phone call, note, or in-person weekly. Epstein (2002) identified the importance of establishing two-way communication between teacher and parent to facilitate relationship building and provide opportunities for information sharing. *Student Success Night* established an open consistent structure of communication between teachers and parents, where participation agreements were signed and current contact information shared. The event addressed a number of topics like parenting, communication, volunteering and learning at home (Epstein (2002) as well as impediments to school membership like adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation (Wehlage, 1989). The program concluded with teachers, parents and students renewing their commitments to the school success of the students through shared goals.

The study participants' demographics were diverse in ethnicity (African American, Arab, Bengali, Haitian, and South American Countries), languages (Arabic, Bengali, English, Creole, French, and Spanish), level of education and household income. Nevertheless, the teachers and parents shared the same goals and aspirations regarding the students' school success.

TABLE 4.0 below identifies participants by gender, ethnicity, primary language, etc. and depicts school functioning in three categories: academics, attendance, and behavior. The

purpose of the table is to show the different levels of participation the teachers, parents and students were engaged in during the study period. Please note that not all parents and students were interviewed for various reasons, i.e. family commitments, work hours constraints, absences.

TABLE 4.0: PARTICIPANTS DEMOGRAPHIC

- Ethnicity (African American, Hispanic, White, Other) * Language (English, Creole, Spanish, Other)

Teachers	Gender	Married(Y/N)	Ethnicity (A,H,W,O)	Language (E, C, S, O)	Education	Experience (Years)	At Location
	F	Y	H	S	BA	4	4
	M	Y	W	E	BA		

Students	Gender (M/F)	Ethnicity (A,H,W,O)	Language (E, C, S,O)	Academic Concern (Y/N)	Behavior Concern (Y/N)	Attendance (G/P)	Retention (#)	Suspensions (#)	Education Expectation
P101	F	A	C	Y	Y	G	0	0	
P102	F	H	S	Y	Y	G	0	0	
P103	F	O	O						

P104	F	A	E	Y	N	G	2	0	
P105	M	H	S						
P106	F	H	S						
P107	F	O	O						
P108	F	O	E	Y	N	P	0	0	
P109	F	A	E	Y	Y	P	1	0	
P1010	M	H	C						
P1011	M	A	S						
P1012	F	A	E						
P1013	F	A	C						
P1014	M	A	C	Y	Y	G	1	0	
P1015	M	H	E						
P1016	M	H	S						
P1017	M	H	S						
P1018	M			Y	N	G	1	0	
P101	F	A	C	Y	Y	G	0	1	

9									
P1020	M	A	C						

Parents	Gender (M/F)	Ethnicity (A,H,W,O)	Language (E, C, S,O)	Educational Attainment	Poverty Level (Above/Below)
P101	F	A	C	HG	Above
P102	F	H	S	SH	Below
P103					
P104	F	A	E	SH	Below
P105					
P106					
P107					
P108	F	A	E	HG	Below
P109	F	O	E	SH	Above
P1010					
P1011	F	H	S		
P1012					
P1013					
P1014	F	A	C	NH	Below
P1015	M	H	S		
P1016					
P1017					
P1018	F	A	C	HG	Above
P1019	F	A	C	CG	Above

P1020					

Research Question # 1

How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socioeconomic students?

The process of increasing parent involvement from the teachers and parents' perspectives was a challenging task that required consistency and vigilance. The teachers contacted parents at least once a week to share information on school events, academics and behaviors. Both positive developments and areas needing improvement were noted. Teachers had a number of options for contacting parents: a note sent home with the student; a phone call or conference; even one on one exchanges during drop-off and pick-up. One teacher reported that with the increased communication strategies, there had been a positive change in the students, regarding academic motivation, awareness and adherence to classroom rules. Parents also became more open to discussing difficult issues and the students displayed improved ownership of their behaviors.

Teacher:

"I left a message on a parent's phone regarding a toy brought from home that became a distraction and a violation of classroom rules. Since the message I left, the child never brought back the toy to school. Now that there is more communication with parents when students do something wrong, they look at me as if, 'Oh no, I'm going to be in trouble at home too', and when they contribute something positive to the class, they look and smile, saying, 'My mom/dad is going to be proud or happy with me'."

"Most of the time parents tell their children to do their homework and they say they don't have any or they know how to do it and they don't, and the parents never check it. Since making the calls weekly, the students are completing their homework and I'm finding that some parents don't know how to help the student. So I've been sending home more homework strategies to parents."

"Parent involvement is effective when parents are asking how to help their child at home and what they can do to simplify the work so their child can understand it."

Parents were required to respond to messages left by the teacher with a note, return phone call or school visit. Some parents described this process initially as time consuming and intimidating. A few of them even mentioned experiencing feelings of worry about appearing unsupportive if they didn't get back to the teacher. Parents reported that their initial fears did not materialize during their weekly teacher contact commitments. Some parents even reported that they speak with the teacher more than once per week.

Parent:

"The teacher contacts me sometimes two to three times a week and gives me strategies about that I can use to help my daughter. My daughter has been retained twice and since I've been talking to the teacher, I feel like she care and she's really helping her".

" The school and the teacher is good, but my child need a lot of help and I don't have money to pay for help, so the school should have someone to come to the house and help. The teacher said they can't do that and she will do her best to spend more time with my daughter, just not after school. She helps me now."

" We're new to this school. We've only been here for six months. I just you could say a half and she was already held back once, so we're worried about FCAT; her getting left back again. The teacher sent home some strategies for her to practice that I helped her with and this time I think it will be ok."

One teacher reported a decline in academic performance during the middle of the study due to a change in the curriculum to focus on prepping students for the FCAT (Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test) testing. Once testing concluded, the majority of students' grades improved along with the return of their interest in the subject matter and instructional strategies focusing on skills development.

Teacher:

"My students' motivation to achieve is impacted by anxiety and stress brought on by FCAT testing expectation and pressure."

"I contacted my parents about FCAT strategies that I went over and knew the student had not practiced, because I could tell they weren't using them. I called the parents and the next day I saw the students using the strategies. I saw that change immediately".

The majority of the students described getting help from the teacher when they needed to understand new and old concepts. They reported doing well regarding academic performance, which didn't match up with their teacher's report. The students appeared to want to impress the researcher and were less than honest in self-reporting academics performance. They expressed that the teacher calling their parents all the time wasn't always "cool" especially if the communication got them into "trouble". All students wanted to share the fun portion of attending school like playing soccer and other games with their friends.

Student:

"It's fun at this school because I get to play soccer with my friends and we have so much fun."

" No one at my house helps me with my homework. They can't because they're tired and they don't know how to do it. I can do it by myself".

"My mom and my dad help me with homework, but mostly my mom and big brother".

"I have to do my homework by myself first and then my parents check it".

"I do good in all the subjects: reading, math and science, but my favorite is math. It only takes me 20 minutes to do my homework".

"I do good. I get A's and B's. Well maybe, ok, some C's too".

TABLE 4.1 Below, depicts a sample of the student participants' grades in reading and math. The center column shows the students' grades at the beginning of the research study period and the third column shows their grades at the end of the study (February - May). 75% of the students experienced an increase in their reading grade, and 25% grade stayed the same. In math, only 25% of the students experienced an increase in their math grade, 69% stayed the same and 6% experienced a decrease in their math grade.

TABLE 4.1: SAMPLE GROUP GRADES

(3rd and 4th Quarters)

P1011	CAAAA	BBBBA
P1012	CBBCB	CBCCB
P1013	CCBBC	CCCCC
P1014	CCDCC	CCDCC
P1015	CCABB	CCBBB
P1016	CCBCC	BACCC
P1017	CCABB	CCCCC
P1018	CBBBB	BCCBB
P101	DCCCB	CCCCC
P102	CCCBB	BBBBB
P104	DDCCC	BBBBB
P108	DDCCC	BBBBB

The students were asked during the interview process about their academic aspirations regarding graduating from high school and going on to college. Every student

wanted to obtain a high school diploma, but the interest in going on to college for these students was approximately fifty percent.

Student:

"Why would I want to go to college? No one in my family went to college."

"People say college takes four (4) years. Why would I want to waste it? "

"I don't know. I think it may be hard. I don't know".

"My parents want me to go to school and get a high school, like finish high school".

Most of the students demonstrated some positive success from increased communication between teacher and parent. For a few students, it initially created a heightened sense of awareness and a little anxiety hinging on all the adults knowing and sharing information on school, classroom and home expectations. One student reported that he thought his teacher talking to his mom all the time wasn't a good thing, because his mother would know about everything he did in school.

Summary

There were several reoccurring themes that emerged from the teacher and parents' communications that impacted students' academic performance and functioning, attendance, positive expectation, and feelings of being cared for. The students'

attendance records were reviewed and indicated that 80% of the sample group maintained good school attendance. A student's attendance is one of the key elements to school membership and school success (Wehlage, 1989). Based on parents' reporting, 70% were clear about their role and the teacher's expectations regarding their child's education. Based on students' reporting, 90% knew their parents and teacher's expectations and could articulate them.

The students demonstrated a greater desire to focus on play and making friends. One student described that he and his parent were very happy with the school because they felt it was a safe place with good people. Both parents and students described that the teacher cared about them because academic help was provided at home with phone calls and when warranted, school conferences.

Overall, the teachers reported that most (75%) of the students' grades did improve gradually, not by leaps and bounds; greater improvement was displayed in students' attitudes toward school (i.e. motivation, engagement, academic effort and positive classroom interaction/atmosphere). Epstein (2009) asserts that communication with parents helps motivate students and encourages parents to become more involved in their child's education. A prominent reoccurring theme among parents regarding increased involvement contributing to school success was that reassurance of teacher investment for parent and student led to increased student motivation and attempts to take more academic risk and ownership of their classroom performance. Students becoming engaged in the school experience increased their awareness of and compliance to classroom rules and led them to develop feelings of school membership, which are important for school success (Wehlage, 1989).

This data suggests a positive connection between parent involvement and students experiencing school success that may not always be expressed in improved academic

functioning or grades. There were two discrepancies that occurred. The students' reading grades improved (75% of the group), while their math grades only improved for a portion of the group (25%). In math, the grade remained predominantly the same (69% of the group). There were no declines in reading grades, however, there was a 6% decline in math grades.

Research Question # 2

How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

Students' school attitudes and behaviors are positively affected by developing school partnerships with parents (Epstein, 2001). The teacher identified 35% of the initial sample group with behavioral concerns, i.e. being physical with other students, refusing to follow classroom instruction and goofing off in class. The teacher reported that most students were kind and considerate to each other. Only one student from the sample group had a serious infraction that warranted a suspension. The behavioral themes the teachers and parents focused on were lack of motivation and students' unwillingness to try to initiate or complete any task that appears difficult. Wehlage (1989) asserts that if students don't feel connected to an adult or that the school cares about them, it will cause them to struggle at school and feel isolated from the residual lack of connection and school membership.

Teacher:

"My students really never gave me any major behavioral problems in the first place. But calling and communicating with the parent weekly, I think contributed to not allowing negative behaviors to develop".

"The communication made the students feel more connected to me and wanting to not disappoint me or their parent. There was an increase in behavioral motivation displayed in the students' attitude toward me and each other".

The teachers and parents had similar responses to the increase of communication between home and school. They both felt this consistent communication had a positive effect on the students and their ability to connect home and school expectations.

Parents:

"My son would get in trouble sometimes, because he would listen sometimes. Now when I see him after school and say, 'were you good today?' He say, 'Didn't you already talk to the teacher?' I like that she calls about good and bad things too."

"… She like her teacher and school and wants to go to school and don't complain. I don't know if it's because we talk more about things she have trouble with or what?"

"The school is safe and my son likes it here. He seems more interested this year. I want him to do good."

The sample group had no significant behavioral problem students and viewed any aggressive behavior as a bad thing that they didn't want to be a part of. They described playing on the playground and how most of their peers were nice to them.

Students:

"I like the Mr. L (principal) because I got in trouble for throwing a pencil at another kid and my parents had to come to school for a meeting about and he was nice. Now he talk to me all the time. But I really never got in trouble at this school."

"I play with the students in my class and they are usually nice to me and…Sometimes they not."

Summary

There were behavioral concerns, notes and phone calls not being returned, for all participants at the onset of the research study, regarding time commitment that affected the willingness of the teachers, parents and students to actively participate by having meaningful interaction with each other. After a month of weekly communication between the teachers and parents, a pattern emerged and parents expressed looking forward to the weekly chats with the teacher. They reported getting more information from the teachers on how to assist their children at home with schoolwork and homework, which changed their attitudes and behavior towards the teacher and school.

The consistent communication with the teachers gave parents a sense that the school's goals and their goals for their children were congruent. An important theme parents reported was an improvement in social skills that positively impacted their child's overall behavior. Only one behavioral discrepancy was identified: one parent felt the teacher demonstrated care and concern toward her daughter, but the school was cold and impersonal toward her when she visited. There was no greeting or eye contact from staff unless she initiated it.

Research Question # 3:

What are some forms of nontraditional parental involvement?

In the sample group, 50% of the parents brought home an income that fell below the poverty level, which significantly affected their ability to participate in traditional forms of parent involvement, like finding time for PTO (Parent Teacher Organization), volunteering, attending fieldtrips and providing monetary support to the school (i.e. fundraisers). The low-income parents clearly stated that they were too busy with work and raising a family to join organizations or volunteer at the school. Several parents didn't know what the PTO was and report not remembering receiving any information from the school about PTO. Only one parent was a member of the PTO and volunteered at the school. She was African American, middle-class and married. This is in contrast to the majority of the group, where 75 percent of families involved were single parent households and the mother was the sole breadwinner and authority figure.

Approximately 90 percent of all parents, regardless of income level or marital status, reported their involvement in their child's school life in the following terms:

asking their children daily about their day and providing a cleared kitchen table, living room or bedroom space dedicated to completing homework. The parents initiated conversations with their children regarding future goals, doing their best in school and showing proper respect. The parents with challenging income levels reported offering their children monetary rewards as motivation to do well in school. Other parents shared that they motivated their children with offers to spend time with them, doing activities, like games, movies, and outings. The families in their own ways provided an environment supportive of learning in their homes.

Parent:

"She know we have a routine. The first thing is get a snack or a little something to eat, then start to her room to do her homework. Sometimes she brings it to be checked and I had to send her back to try again. Some night we go through this for 2 hours until she understand and get it right. She gets mad at me, but I know it's for her own good, because it takes her a long time to understand things sometimes."

"I don't always understand how to do help her with the homework, you know this new math, but I always make sure she gets help from her brother. He's in high school and he understands. He's the one who help her the most."

The sample group was comprised of 40% Haitian families with several unable to speak or understand English fluently. These families reported talking with their children about cultural pride to counteract the negative stereotypical images perpetrated about the culture in the media and their communities. One parent reported that her son gets angry

when she speaks Creole and prompts him to speak Creole also. He refuses and will only respond to her in English. Another Haitian student became angry with his mother for not understanding the researcher's instruction to enter interview area. After prompting the parent with a hand motion and signal, she was able to proceed in the right direction.

Parent:

"I don't know why he get so mad when I talk to him in Creole. He won't speak Creole, but I know he knows it because he answer me in English."

Student:

"Look, look, she wants you to come over there to that room."

The sample group also contained 40% Hispanic families from Puerto Rice and several South American countries. This group was more concerned with having their Hispanic identities acknowledged than identifying with a particular country. Only one Hispanic student, when given a choice between being Hispanic or White, chose White. There were also Hispanic parents who spoke no English. These parents reported in a strong proud tone that their children spoke both languages at home and in the community. One parent reported that she wasn't concerned if her daughter spoke English only, because that was the dominant language that she needed to be successful in school. They viewed being bi-lingual as a benefit to their children of which the parents took partial credit and ownership.

Summary

There were many forms of non-traditional parent involvement strategies employed by the parents in an attempt to stay connected to their child's schooling. Since this type of involvement for the most part takes place in the home, the school and teacher aren't always aware of it. In some cases being aware of a custom or practice doesn't create value until the benefits are understood. Like school personnel, some students considered their parents uninvolved with their schooling if the parent was unable to attend meetings, volunteer for field trips, help out in class or participate in fundraisers like Bingo Night, Valentine Party and Awards Night. This was an interesting theme of students sharing the view of educators on what parent behaviors constitute involvement. Both educators and students wanted a visual school display of involvement from parents. Educating school personnel on how various cultures instill pride and promote the importance of education benefits the school and the families.

Research Question # 4:

What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

The effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement were considered beneficial by 90 percent of the sample group. These families created structured routines and expectations by providing scheduled times and areas for completing homework, and regularly reinforcing the family's goals and expectations through discussion. In the study group, 10 percent of parents struggled with instilling cultural pride, due to constantly

being bombarded with negative cultural images by outside forces. The other 90 percent of the group also expressed their challenges with their children losing their cultural identify due to the child's desire to become or be considered an American. These parents struggled with their children to maintain native customs and language while functioning successfully in this diverse environment.

Parent:

"I am raising my niece and I went to nursing school and made a good life for myself. I am retired now and can afford to take care of myself. My health isn't always the best, but I take care of myself. I know school is hard for her because she has trouble learning. It take her a long time to understand her school work, but I want her to go all the way".

"I work hard and my child's only job is to work hard at school and do her best so she can go on to good schools in the future. Her dad and I talk to her about it all the time".

There was an interesting theme among the students' responses to future educational attainment. Many had not given much thought to their future education endeavors and resorted to echoing what their parents had told them about their educational future.

Student:

"I want to go to college some day."

"Yes! I'm going to college and more and more."

"That's what my mother said, 'Yes, I'm going'."

There are also negative effects to nontraditional forms of parent involvement. Cultural identity and language difference can make school difficult and make some children feel isolated. Both these factors can negatively impact a child's school experience and membership. Epstein (2009) reports that state mandates require schools to make a greater effort to create culturally sensitivity programs and write them into school improvement plans.

Another area of concern became evident when all the parents shared their level of educational attainment. In the sample group, 50% of the parents did not complete high school and have set high school graduation as the primary and sometimes major educational goal for their child. This scope of expectation and encouragement sometimes limits the students' expectations for themselves.

Parent:

"I came from Haiti and they couldn't afford to send me to school, so I think, not sure, but I think I went up to the third grade. My son has to do better than that and graduate from high school."

"I only went to the ninth grade in high school because I got pregnant and never had time to go back because I was a single mother. Now I'm a single mother of three and with no help, I can't go to school. I have to work all the time".

There was a pattern of limited educational advancement thinking among some students whose parents did not pursue higher education. One student shared that going to school for another four years after graduating high school was a waste of time, because he's going to have a job.

Students:

"I just want to get a high school diploma because they say college takes four years and that would be a waste of time."

"I want to graduate from high school, but that's it, because college is hard."

"They'll be proud of me when I get my high school diploma. I'm not sure if I want to go to college. I have a long time for that."

Summary

The effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement like instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation are positive contributions in connecting home and school. The discrepancy that emerged identified a small percentage of students who are not proud of their cultural identity. These students are reporting that embracing their culture may lead to isolation for them and not acceptance and inclusion into the larger cultural group of Americans. Educators have to address cultural pride and inclusion in elementary education where it already exists.

Chapter Summary

The study demonstrated that parent involvement could increase academic school success among low socioeconomic and minority students. There was a discrepancy identified between reading and math academic improvement. The students' reading grades showed the greatest increase (75%) and the math grades showed most of the students (69%) experienced no math grade movement. In reading, all students' grades maintained or improved with the majority (75%) experiencing grade increases. In math, 94 percent of students maintained or improved their grades. The majority (69%) of the students maintained their grades, while 25 percent increased. The teachers also reported a decline in all grades during (FCAT) testing when the instruction focus changed. The students' grades gradually improved after testing ended and instructional strategies returned to normal.

The study identified an important theme to involvement. There are many misconceptions held by teachers, parents and students about parent involvement. Teachers and parents thought that involvement would be time consuming and create additional work with minimal benefits. Both teachers and parents found involvement to be minimal work once incorporated into one's routine and parent involvement helped teachers reinforce old and new learning strategies and concepts. A pattern of parents receiving additional knowledge on teaching strategies, breaking down and simplifying homework/classwork for their child at home developed. Therefore, teachers, parents and students benefited in meaningful ways from increased parent involvement.

Parent interviews uncovered a connection between educational attainment and income level in the group. The families who had graduated from college or had some college experience earned a living that is considered above the poverty line. The families, who had some high school, did not graduate high school or did get a high school

diploma but no college, earned less and were considered below the poverty level. The two groups described accounted for all the families with an equal 50-50 split in representing education attainment and income level. There was not one outlier in the group when evaluating education and income. One significant event went against the trend: in the impoverished families, 70 percent of the students reported a desire for higher educational attainment in comparison to their parent's educational attainment.

The overall study results demonstrate the importance of parent involvement among low socioeconomic and minority students as a tool for positively effecting student school success. Parents developing relationships with their children's teachers is an important component in increasing their knowledge of and input in their children's educations. Teachers developing these relationships help in building trusting, respectful and caring relationships with their students. Parent involvement benefits all stakeholders.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

As the United States struggles to keep its students competitive in a global society, reducing dropout rates has become a major priority for large urban school districts. Students have less than a 50-50 chance of graduating from high school with their peers in big-city school districts like New York and Chicago, which graduate far fewer than half each spring, according to a 2006 research study (Toppo, 2006). The promotion and implementation of parent involvement is a major key to confronting students, especially low-income, minority students leaving school early without graduating. "Minority, low income families are repeatedly found to be greatly interested in their children's education and hold high expectations and goals of school success" (Patel and Stevens, 2010. p.120).

The Broward County Public Schools' investigation represents the results of a 3 month long action research study that examines the benefits of parent involvement on the school success of low socioeconomic, minority students in the third grade. During the interviews with parents, there was a common theme: all the parents wanted the best for their children. Most parents weren't sure how to achieve this goal, especially the parents of students who were struggling academically. The participating parents described the various interventions they utilized in an attempt to get their children help when they were unable to provide assistance themselves, i.e. requesting assistance from an older sibling, neighbor, or afterschool tutor.

The major focus of this study was to add to the body of knowledge already available on the importance of parents becoming involved in their children's education. The relationships developed during the study period demonstrated that teachers, parents

and students could form collaborative partnerships that benefited all stakeholders. The teachers wanted the students to be motivated and display greater effort. The parents wanted additional home instruction to assist their children in achieving greater academic growth. The students wanted to work in a safe, caring environment with a teacher who knew them personally and had a friendly relationship with their parents. The study provided a structure for participants to get their needs heard through the implementation of weekly dialogue.

These relationships opened doors to provide greater insight and develop new understanding on how to reach students with varying learning styles and abilities. It was clear in the interviews that teachers, parents and students were more motivated and connected. These connections fostered feelings of good will and thoughts that the school personnel cared. The continuation of these positive interactions with parents and students hindered the development of the elements that lead to student disengagement and dropout. "The most immediate and persisting issue for students and teachers is not low achievement, but student disengagement" (Newman, Wehlage and Lamborn, 1991. p.2).

The study identified many obstacles and limitations to engaging teachers, parents and students in meaningful, collaborative relationships. The most important aspect of developing relationships is the willingness of the parties to engage. It is evident that people only fully participate in endeavors in which they see value. The study created value from the onset with "*Student Success Night*", a dinner that welcomed whole families to school in order to meet with teachers and establish the value placed on their input. Value was also created by providing information (verbal and written) about the study in the native languages of the participants: information was provided in English, Bengali, Creole, French and Spanish. The study demonstrated from the beginning that we valued all participants and in turn they agreed to participate because they felt valued.

There were limitations with engaging teachers and creating value because the study required them to perform a task in addition to their regular workload that might expose practice weaknesses on their part. At the introductory meeting with researcher, the majority of the third grade teachers observed that they already provided additional parent engagement opportunities to their parents and their students were not demonstrating any significant academic deficiencies or major behavioral concerns and declined participation. From that discussion, two teachers emerged; one who came enthusiastically and the other who was drafted through encouragement from his peer. The teacher who volunteered with no prompting immediately saw value in developing meaningful relationships with parents through increased communication. She could see how meaningful teacher-parent partnerships would translate into positive student outcomes, academic and behavioral.

The district only requires teachers to contact parents once a quarter (45 days) and most teachers embrace this practice unless they need classroom behavior assistance from parents. The study results show the benefits of requiring teachers to contact parents weekly using a translator if needed. There will be reluctance regarding committing additional time to parent contact and there is even an argument that this will take away valuable student time, but this attitude stems from the lack of emphasis placed on parent involvement by schools. Schools who value parent relationships have administrators setting the tone. When school leaders articulate their parent involvement goals and embed them in teacher expectations, they become commonplace and effortless.

During interviews with teachers, parents and students, the difficulties that were once envisioned did not come to fruition. Teachers and parents can form relationships that lead to students experiencing school success. The teachers commented that the process became seamless and they were getting to know the parents. They also reported

that most parents looked forward to their interaction and the students seemed happy about the relationship being established with parents.

The teachers communicating weekly with parents facilitated the formation of stronger bonds between the students and their families, which translated into increased motivation to do well in school. Despite these positive changes, the reality about the teaching profession is that not all teachers are interested in examining their practice issues in an attempt to make improvements. One of the study teachers struggled to manage the task of weekly communication with parents, even when offered greater resources. Consequently, parents reported a lack of consistent weekly contacts and desired greater teacher input. This situation, where the parents bought into the benefits of regular communication with the teacher and even inconsistent contact resulted in improvements, highlights the importance of administrative buy-in to reinforce teacher efforts.

A limitation to establishing meaningful relationships is language. Difficulties communicating with non-English speaking parents were a recurring theme that teachers struggled to overcome. Near the end of the study period, one teacher eventually withdrew from the study due to a misunderstanding based on language proficiency. The remaining teacher was multilingual and confidently continued on, provided great feedback and shared wonderful experiences about parent encounters.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine what relations exist between parent involvement (Epstein. 2009) and the school success of minority, low socio-economic students' success based on academic and behavioral guidelines established by the school

district (Broward County Public School: Code of Conduct Manuel 2013) and assess impediments (i.e. adjustment, difficulty, incongruence and isolation) as well as policies and procedures that may lead to students' disengagement and drop out (Wehlage, 1989).

Research Questions

The questions noted below will guide the closing discussion.

1) How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

2) How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

3) What are some forms of nontraditional parental involvement?

4) What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

Research Question #1

How does parent involvement affect the academic school success of minority, low socioeconomic students?

The study demonstrated that parent involvement had a positive effect on students' desire and motivation to attend school and improved the academic performance (75% increase in reading grades and 25% increase in math grades) of the student participants. The students' grades did not necessarily improve as a result of only parent involvement. The increased involvement created an environment conducive for other variables to emerge, like positive relationships with teachers and peers. The environment also

produced an element of trust where parents and students could safely reveal their weaknesses and academic challenges. There were many variables to consider when looking specifically at grades, i.e. ability level, language barriers, curriculum presentation, grading system and timeframe for state mandated testing. The motivation and increased desire to learn resulting from parent involvement positively affected school membership in ways that can be seen in academic performance once tracked over time with the students who have the ability to learn (Wehlage, 1989).

Recommendations

This study's operational definition of academic success was tied to increases in grades and improved behavior, not increased motivation and desire to learn, which are both important parts of academic achievement and school success. Parent involvement studies should begin in elementary school and monitoring should continue into secondary schooling. Studies on secondary school students report having difficulty establishing goals and expectations with students and parents (Wehlage, 1989). Some secondary students have already developed negative attitudes towards schooling that requires greater effort to redirect them and their parents are used to providing little to no input.

Recommendations for future research include developing instruments (surveys) that measure motivation and desire and their impact on school functioning. The instrument should contain a pre and post evaluation in a longitudinal study (3-5 years) of parent involvement looking at the possible correlation over time that occurs between academic achievement based on grades, motivation and desire to learn. Studies focused on low socioeconomic minority children with language barriers should also examine how

involvement is related to "discrepancies in perceptions of children's ability between teachers, parents and students" (Patel and Stevens, 2010. p.115).

Research Question #2

How does parent involvement affect the behavioral school success of minority, low socio-economic students?

The study showed that parent involvement had a positive effect on the students' behaviors and communicated to students that parents and teachers had shared expectations and goals for them. The district's database revealed that 96% of the participating students did not display any level of aggression warranting suspensions before or during the study. The study had only one student who was involved in an incident of physical aggression that resulted in a suspension. This revelation surprised the researcher and allowed her to challenge her own perceptions about schools with a large number of low socioeconomic minorities with possible academic concerns. In the 20 plus years that the researcher worked in the district, low socioeconomic minority students with academic concerns inevitably came with behavioral concerns. This experience is valuable in reminding researchers to be cognizant of their own biases regardless of prior experiences. It is important for researchers to treat every new experience independently remaining conscious of previously held perceptions and biases.

Parent involvement increased positive classroom behavior between peers, i.e. students' willingness to follow classroom directions and students' desire to contribute to the learning environment. Students were also more willing to expose their lack of understanding to teachers and parents, having grown comfortable in the knowledge that

home and school were working together to help them learn especially new concepts. Parents remarked that due to the increased contact with the teacher, they also felt more comfortable asking the teacher for help in breaking down the lesson in ways that allowed them to be able to help their child at home. The teacher was happy to assist parents in helping their students reinforce lessons at home, but this interaction revealed new obstacles.

Teachers offering homework help will encounter parents with limited academic functioning, both among English speakers and non-English speakers, who are unable to participate with the teacher in the breaking down of the lesson, even with the help of a translator. These parents still possessed strengths that contributed to helping their children, because many parents in acknowledgement of their personal limitations sought other avenues of help like school sponsored tutoring, an older sibling or some other family member capable of assisting their child.

Recommendations

The district should conduct their own research study after requiring teachers to invest in building necessary relationships and a vital rapport with their students' families. The study should be a comparative study between elementary schools focusing on culture and economics. The research questions should include an in-depth look at teachers, parents and students' attitudes towards culture and parent involvement.

The requirement that teachers foster positive relationships with parents via open two-way communication is necessary to undo the apprehension and despondency created by the outdated practice of only contacting parents when the student has done something wrong to ask for help and implementation of home punishment. As a part of the human

condition, parents love their children and only want adults interacting with them who they feel are invested in the child's future. Reporting infractions alone does not paint a picture of a caring, invested teacher. This approach creates an adversarial relationship with parents whom sometimes feel the teacher believes their child's infractions are a reflection on the parent and a lack of parenting skills.

Teachers reporting positive events can be seen as paying a compliment to the parent for doing a good job parenting. Teachers who invest in reporting positive events build a strong foundation and create a bank of goodwill (positive relationship) with parents that can withstand an occasional withdrawal (infraction reporting). Students who have teachers with strong parent relationships are involved in fewer behavioral infractions. "When educators communicated effectively and involved families in activities focused on student behavior, schools reported fewer disciplinary actions with students from one year to the next" (Epstein, 2005. p. 3).

Other patterns of behavior surfaced among families struggling with their own issues of language and economic impoverishment. Some families purposefully stayed away from the school due to their visual presentation and their inability to articulate effectively and intelligibly. These families can benefit from their neighborhood schools opening their doors and providing supportive programs like GED, parenting, health, nutrition and budgeting classes to meet these challenges.

One parent asked about English classes for adults at the school, so she could walk in the evening to participate due to her transportation challenges. Schools must form partnerships with local libraries that offer English classes and other community supportive services in the evening. Once this information is available, school staff will be better aware of what outreach resources are available in their communities and can encourage parents and students to seek them out.

Research Question #3

What are some forms of nontraditional parental involvement?

The nontraditional forms of parent involvement employed by low socioeconomic minority students' families of instilling cultural pride, promoting family goals and expectations are still undervalued and, in some cases, devalued by educators. There are several things that contribute to this mindset. First, there is a notion held by some administrators that parents should make time and find a way to follow the guidelines of parent involvement established by the school. Second, some educators reported feeling that parents have the means and knowledge base to comply with the school guidelines, but are disinterested in their children's schooling. All invested parents are interested in their children's schooling. Third, other educators lack sensitivity training and feel they don't have time to seek this training due to their plates being already full with their assigned responsibility at school. There is also a pervasive undercurrent that others have tackled the same issues and were successful, so these parents must not care or be trying hard enough. School administrators expressing these sentiments fail to realize that a lack of resources does not equate a lack of interest on the part of the parents. Nontraditional forms of parent involvement provide clear evidence that parents often invest the resources they have available and their investments translate into quantifiable results in terms of student motivation, desire to learn and grades.

Recommendations

School districts have to provide mandatory sensitivity training for administrators, teachers and other school personnel. Payne, (2005) provides insightful training on addressing cultural diversity in school systems. This training tackles misconceptions held about low socioeconomic minorities, confronts stereotypes and shares rich historical customs and cultural data. Schools should train key personnel on their campus to provide ongoing cultural diversity training year round. Cultural sensitivity trainings build awareness, appreciation and respect for differences among people and allow participants to view these differences as strengths. School systems have to embrace best practices that are inclusive for all to thrive.

Research Question #4

What are the effects of nontraditional forms of parent involvement, i.e. instilling cultural pride, encouragement and school expectation?

There is a positive connection between non-traditional forms of parent involvement and school success. Instilling cultural pride provides structure and support to students, while allowing the articulation of family values, goals and expectations of high achievement. This form of involvement builds awareness and gives teachers insight into their students' family lives. When the teacher has this knowledge, it provides a foundation for building a relationship of mutual respect between teacher, parent and student.

In the study, some students were proud of their culture and shared this information freely, while others were uncomfortable about their cultural background. The Hispanic culture is more accepted in South Florida than the Haitian culture based on what students have reported and personal observation. The differences in the type of reception different cultural backgrounds receive affect our children whether or not we are aware of it. This mindset creates an environment of cultural preferences that is not based on income, but on race and cultural origin. This discriminatory attitude is and will continue to be damaging to our children's psyche and self-perceptions until it is directly addressed.

Recommendations

The importance of conducting research on strategies to involve parents in their children's school life and its connection to students experiencing school success cannot be underestimated. Building a bridge of meaningful partnerships is a two party process between schools and parents that requires participation from both sides. Partnerships are only successful when both parties are committed, share mutual respect, and are vigilant and dedicated to a common goal. Schools can sponsor quarterly town hall meetings and invite parents and the community to participate in discussions on issues that are relevant to their physical and mental well-being.

Future research should focus on the implementation of programs at the district level of certified professional training teams like "Schools and Parents Partnership" to train schools year round on how to develop relationships with parents. The schools can then create a position or give a stipend to a staff member to coordinate monthly parent activities, newsletters with a parent input column and monthly cultural celebration calendar that recognizes different cultures with native dishes and clothing. In one

elementary school, the students did the morning announcements in several different languages to celebrate cultural diversity daily.

Some schools in New York work with food pantries and provide bags of food for families once per week (Food Share Program). Teachers and parents should break bread occasionally, taking turns preparing and serving food. Schools and parents have a lot to lose if parent involvement does not become a priority. A school without parents involved is just like a bucket with a hole in it (Jackson. 2004).

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Lynn University IRB Approval Letter

LYNN UNIVERSITY
3601 North Military Trail
Boca Raton, FL 33431-5598

Rose Hall

Sent by email 11/22/13

IRB #2013-057

Dear Ms. Hall:

The proposal that you have submitted, "Challenges on the Road to School Success for Low Socioeconomic and Minority Students", has been granted for approval by the Lynn University's Institutional Review Board.

You are responsible for complying with all stipulations described under the Code of Federal Regulations 45 CFR 46 (Protection of Human Subjects). This document can be obtained from the following address:

http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.htm

Form 8 (Termination Form)
https://my.lynn.edu/ICS/Portlets/ICS/Handoutportlet/viewhandler.ashx?handout_id=b1e2f159-ce0f-4774-b727-3dd56c4bfb34 needs to be completed and returned to Macey Cooper ([redacted] when you fulfill your study. You are reminded that should you need an extension or report a change in the circumstances of your study, an additional document must be completed.

For further information, please click on the following
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/anprmchangetable.html
Good luck in all your future endeavors!

Warmest regards,

Dr. Jill Levenson

Jill Levenson, PhD, LCSW
IRB Chair

Cc: Dr. Gregg Cox
Dr. Katrina Carter-Tellison
File 2013-057

Appendix B: Broward Public Schools IRB Approval Letter

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
600 SOUTHEAST THIRD AVENUE • FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA 33301-3125 • TEL [redacted] FAX [redacted]

DEAN W. VAUGHAN
Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair
[redacted]

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ROBERT W. RUNCIE
Superintendent of Schools

February 5, 2014

Mrs. Rose Hall
3760 NW 79th Avenue
Coral Springs, FL 33065

Dear Mrs. Hall:

Thank you for submitting your research proposal #780 — ***Challenges on the Road to School Success for Low Socioeconomic and Minority Students*** — for consideration by Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). Staff has reviewed your research proposal and approval has been granted to contact *Mrs. Angeline Flowers at Drew, Charles, Mr. Ernie Lozano at Hunt, James S., and Dr. Frances Shaw at Coral Springs Elementary Schools* ***only***.

This approval means that we have found your proposed research methods to be compatible with a public school setting and your research questions of interest to the school district. The expiration date of your proposal is ***Thursday, February 5, 2015.*** The anticipated date for submitting an electronic copy of your research findings is ***Friday, June 5, 2015.*** If you are unable to complete your research by the expiration date, you must submit a *Request for Renewal*, (http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/sar/docs/IRB.pdf), to the Student Assessment & Research Department ***four weeks*** prior to the expiration date.

Implementing your research, however, is a decision to be reached by the affected school-based staff on **a strictly voluntary basis**. To assist the school-based staff in their decision to participate, please outline the operational steps to be performed at their school. Based upon this information, each school-based staff would then make a decision to participate or not. School-based staff have been instructed not to cooperate unless you provide this **District Approval Letter** and the **Principal Approval Memorandum**.

If additional assistance is needed from our staff, please contact at [redacted]

Sincerely,

Dean W. Vaughan

DWV/RWC:bt
Attachments

Appendix C: Epstein's Consent to Use and Adapt Survey Letter

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
Johns Hopkins University • 2701 North Charles Street, Suite 300 • Baltimore MD 21218
TEL: [redacted] • FAX: [redacted] • nnps@jhu.edu

September 23, 2013

To: Rose Hall

From: Joyce L. Epstein & Steven B. Sheldon

Re: Permission to use:

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

This letter grants you permission to use, adapt, or reprint the surveys noted above in your dissertation study.

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

Best of luck with your project.

Appendix D: Epstein's Parent/Teacher Interview/Questionnaire

PARENT SURVEY OF

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

IN THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE GRADES:

Steven B. Sheldon

&

Joyce L. Epstein

Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Johns Hopkins University

2007

DATE **ID#_____**

PARENT SURVEY
OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
IN THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE GRADES

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Our school is working to improve the ways that educators and families help each other to support children's learning and success in school. Your ideas will be used to help improve our programs and practices.

We are asking the parent who is most involved with the school in your child's education to answer the questions in this survey. If you have more than one child at this school, answer the following questions about the child in the highest grade level. Please note that this survey:

- Is voluntary. We hope that you answer every question, but you may skip any questions you feel are too personal.
- Is confidential. Please do not write your name anywhere on the survey.
- Has no right or wrong answers.
- Is not part of your child's schoolwork.
- Will not influence your child's learning or grades in any way.

Thank you very much for your participation!

Sincerely,

_____

Teacher/School Representative/Researcher

© Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2007). *Parent survey of family and community involvement in the elementary and middle grades.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships.

A. The School's Contact with You

1. How well has your child's teacher or someone at school done the following THIS SCHOOL YEAR? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if the school does this: Well (**1**), OK (**2**), Poorly (**3**), or Never (**4**).

	Does this…			
My child's teacher or someone at the school…	Well	OK	Poorly	Never
a. Helps me understand my child's stage of development.	1	2	3	4
b. Tells me how my child is doing in school.	1	2	3	4
c. Asks me to volunteer at the school.	1	2	3	4
d. Explains how to check my child's homework.	1	2	3	4
e. Sends home news about things happening at school.	1	2	3	4
f. Tells me what skills my child needs to learn in: math.	1	2	3	4
reading/language arts.	1	2	3	4
science.	1	2	3	4
g. Provides information on community services that I may want to use with my family.	1	2	3	4

h. Invites me to PTA/PTO meetings.	1	2	3	4
i. Assigns homework that requires my child to talk with me about things learned in class.	1	2	3	4
j. Invites me to a program at the school.	1	2	3	4
k. Asks me to help with fund raising.	1	2	3	4
l. Has a parent-teacher conference with me.	1	2	3	4
m. Includes parents on school committees, such as curriculum, budget, or improvement committees.	1	2	3	4
n. Provides information on community events that I may want to attend with my child.	1	2	3	4

2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your child's school and teachers? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (**1**), Agree (**2**), Disagree (**3**), or Strongly Disagree (**4**).

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
a. This is a very good school.	1	2	3	4
b. I feel welcome at the school.	1	2	3	4
c. I get along well with my child's teacher(s).	1	2	3	4

d. The teachers at this school care about my child.	1	2	3	4

B. Your Involvement

3. Families are involved in different ways at school and at home. How often do you do the following activities? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if this happens: Everyday or Most Days (**1**), Once a Week (**2**), Once in a While (**3**), or Never (**4**).

How often do you…	**Everyday/ Most Days**	**Once a Week**	**Once in a While**	**Never**
a. Read with your child?	1	2	3	4
b. Volunteer in the classroom or at the school?	1	2	3	4
c. Work with your child on science homework?	1	2	3	4
d. Review and discuss the schoolwork your child brings home?	1	2	3	4
e. Help your child with math?	1	2	3	4
f. Visit your child's school?	1	2	3	4
g. Go over spelling or vocabulary with your child?	1	2	3	4
h. Ask your child about what he/she is learning in science?	1	2	3	4
i. Talk to your child's teacher?	1	2	3	4

j. Ask your child about what he/she is learning in math?	1	2	3	4
k. Help your child with reading/language arts homework?	1	2	3	4
l. Help your child understand what he/she is learning in science?	1	2	3	4
m. Help your child prepare for math tests?	1	2	3	4
n. Ask your child how well he/she is doing in school?	1	2	3	4
o. Ask your child to read something he/she wrote?	1	2	3	4
p. Go to a school event (e.g., sports, music, drama) or meeting?	1	2	3	4
q. Check to see if your child finished his/her homework?	1	2	3	4

C. Your Ideas

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about what parents should do? Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (**1**), Agree (**2**), Disagree (**3**), or Strongly Disagree (**4**).

It is a parent's responsibility to…	**Strongly Agree**	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
	1	2	3	4

a. Make sure that their child learns at school.				
b. Teach their child to value schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
c. Show their child how to use things like a dictionary or encyclopedia.	1	2	3	4
d. Contact the teacher as soon as academic problems arise.	1	2	3	4
e. Test their child on subjects taught in school.	1	2	3	4
f. Keep track of their child's progress in school.	1	2	3	4
g. Contact the teacher if they think their child is struggling in school.	1	2	3	4
h. Show an interest in their child's schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
i. Help their child understand homework.	1	2	3	4
j. Know if their child is having trouble in school.	1	2	3	4

5. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Circle ONE answer on each line to tell if you Strongly Agree (**1**), Agree (**2**), Disagree (**3**), or Strongly Disagree (**4**).

	Strongly Agree	**Agree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly Disagree**
a. I know how to help my child do well in school.	1	2	3	4

b. I never know if I'm getting through to my child.	1	2	3	4
c. I know how to help my child make good grades in school.	1	2	3	4
d. I can motivate my child to do well in school.	1	2	3	4
e. I feel good about my efforts to help my child learn.	1	2	3	4
f. I don't know how to help my child on schoolwork.	1	2	3	4
g. My efforts to help my child learn are successful.	1	2	3	4
h. I make a difference in my child's school performance.	1	2	3	4

D. Connections with Other Parents

6. Sometimes parents talk with other parents about their children's education. Please think of up to five parents who have children in your child's school. Circle the number that best describes how often you talk with each parent. Refer to one person on each line.

If you **do not** speak with any other parents at your child's school, check this box ☐. (Skip to Q5, below.) **How often do you talk?**

Give the first name of each parent only	**Once a Day**	**Once a Week**	**Twice a month**	**Once a Month**	**A few times a year**

School Parent 1	_____	1	2	3	4	5
School Parent 2	_____	1	2	3	4	5
School Parent 3	_____	1	2	3	4	5
School Parent 4	_____	1	2	3	4	5
School Parent 5	_____	1	2	3	4	5

Please list some of the things you talk about with these parents.

A. _____ B. _____

C. _____ D. _____

7. Please think of <u>up to five other adults</u> (who do not have children in your child's school) with whom you talk about your child and his/her education. Refer to one person on each line.

If you **do not** speak with any <u>other adults</u> about your child's education, check this box ☐.

(Skip to Q6 on the next page.)

Give the <u>first name</u> of each adult only	**Do you speak with this person often?**	**Is this person a relative?**	**Does this person have a child at a different school?**

ADULT 1		yes no	yes no	yes no
ADULT 2		yes no	yes no	yes no
ADULT 3		yes no	yes no	yes no
ADULT 4		yes no	yes no	yes no
ADULT 5		yes no	yes no	yes no

Please list some of the things you talk about with these adults.

A. _____ B. _____

C. _____ D. _____

8. How often do you talk with <u>parents who have children at your child's school</u> about the topics listed below? Circle <u>ONE</u> answer on each line to tell if this happens:

Very often (**1**), Once in a while (**2**), A few times a year (**3**), or Never (**4**).

How often do you and parents at your child's school . .	**Very Often**	**Once in a while**	**A few times a year**	**Never**
a. Talk about activities at your children's school?	1	2	3	4
b. Talk about your children's teacher(s)?	1	2	3	4

c. Provide each other advice about parenting?	1	2	3	4
d. Share helpful information about your child's:				
reading/language arts?	1	2	3	4
math?	1	2	3	4
science?	1	2	3	4
e. Share books or book titles to read with your children?	1	2	3	4
f. Talk about your children's behavior or misbehavior?	1	2	3	4
g. Talk about where to send your children to school?	1	2	3	4
h. Share information about community events (e.g., museum exhibits, library readings, children's theater)?	1	2	3	4
i. Talk about the school's policies and rules?	1	2	3	4
j. Share information about extra-curricular activities (e.g., music teachers, arts and crafts, sports clubs/leagues)?	1	2	3	4
k. Talk about how to become involved at the school?	1	2	3	4
l. Share games, or the names of games, to play with your children?	1	2	3	4

m. Talk about how your children are changing (e.g., growth spurts, boyfriends/girlfriends, social or emotional changes)?	1	2	3	4
n. Provide each other with advice about helping your child with homework?	1	2	3	4
o. Talk about your children's accomplishments in school?	1	2	3	4

---

9. How have your connections with other parents helped you the most as a parent?

_____

_____

_____

E. YOUR FAMILY

10.The following questions will help us plan programs and activities to meet your family's needs. Please mark one answer for each item.

a. Is your child at this school a: _____ Girl _____ Boy

b. When was your child born: _____ Month _____ Year

c. What is your relationship to the child?

_____ Mother _____ Grandmother

_____ Father _____ Grandfather

_____ Stepmother _____ Stepfather

_____ Other (please describe)

_____

d. How much formal schooling have you completed?

_____ Some high school

_____ High school diploma

_____ Some college

_____ Vocational school/Technical college

_____ College degree

_____ Graduate degree or credits

e. How much schooling do you think your child will complete?

_____ Some high school

_____ High school diploma

_____ Some college

_____ Vocational school/Technical college

_____ College degree

_____ Graduate degree

f. How do you describe yourself?

_____ Asian-American

_____ Black or African-American

_____ White or Caucasian

_____ Hispanic or Latino(a)

_____ Other (describe)_____

g. What language do you speak at home?

_____ English

_____ Spanish

_____ Hmong

_____ Other

(describe)_____

h. Marital Status:

_____ Married _____ Divorced or separated

_____ Never married

i. Are you employed?

_____ Full-time _____ Part-time _____

Not employed

j. If applicable, is your spouse or partner employed?

_____ Full-time _____ Part-time _____

Not employed ____Not applicable

11. What other suggestions do you have about how the school could help you support your child's education or learning?

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix E: Parent Consent

PARENT INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research Study: Challenges on the Road to School Success for Low Socio-Economic and Minority Students: School Dropout, Parent Involvement and School Success

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rose Hall, a Broward County Public School Social Worker and Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate at Lynn University, Boca Raton. The study will examine the relationship of parent involvement and students' school success. The study results will contribute to the researcher's dissertation and assist schools in planning parent involvement and student activities. Your were selected for your valuable input because you have a third grader attending Charles Drew Elementary school and the study will be looking only at third grade.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine if structured, consistent forms of parent involvement (traditional and non-traditional) and school membership relates or impact student academic and behavioral school success. First, the study will look at the types and frequency of involvement by parent and school. Second, the study will share finding related to school membership.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Participate in an interview with the researcher, answering questions about parent involvement, family structure and school. This interview will take 30-40 minutes to complete and take place at your child's school during a time chosen by the school's administrator.

Your participation in the research study is voluntary. This means everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you agree to participate and no one will treat you any differently if you chose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you fell are too personal.

POTENTIAL RISKS and POTENTIAL BENEFITS

There are no known or expected risks. If the questions are considered sensitive you may stop at any time. The benefit of being in the research study is the opportunity to give feedback about parent involvement and schools that can assist in exploring ways to help parents and schools work together in the education of children.

COMPENSATION:

There will be no reward or compensation for your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any and all information associated with this study will remain confidential. Your name will not appear on any documents, each participant will be assigned a number code. The researcher will not use the data gathered for any reason other than research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and discontinue without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any question about participation you can contact the Lynn University, Department of Education.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. I confirm that I have read or had this document read to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this research study

Printed Name of Participant:_____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Parent Demographic Information

(Please circle one)

First Name_____	PARENT	STUDENT
Gender	Female Male Unidentified	Female Male Unidentified
Age	(16-19) (20-29) (30-39) (40-49) (50+)	
Ethnicity	African American Hispanic Other	African American Hispanic Other
Family Structure	Couple (Male/Female) Single (Male/Female)	
Primary Language	English Creole Spanish	English Creole Spanish

	Other	Other
Academic Concerns		Yes/No
Behavioral Concerns		Yes/No
Frequently Absent		Yes/No
Retentions		Yes/No
Suspension		Yes/No
Educational Attainment No high School Some High School High School Diploma	 Yes/ No Yes/No Yes/No	
Annual Household Income Level:	 $0 - $25,000 $25,000 - $50,000 $50,000 - $75,000 $100,000 +	

Appendix F: Adapted Parent Interview Protocol

PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. How many children in your family?

Probe: Tell me about your family?

Probe: How many girls and boy?

2. Is this a very good school?

Probe: Tell me about your school?

Probe: Tell about some things that make a good school?

Probe: How long has your child attended?

3. Do you feel welcomed at the school?

Probe: Please give examples

Probes: Tell me about your experiences at the school?

Probe: Do you look forward to your visits?

Probe: Are you familiar with the office staff?

4. Do you feel that the teachers care about your child?

Probe: Tell me about your child's teacher?

Probe: How does he/she help your child?

Probe: How does the he/she grade your child's work?

5. Does this school have an active parent organization (i.e. PTA)?

Probe: What parent activity program are you involved in at the school?

Probe: What programs would you like to see?

Probe: Would you like to join or start a PTA group at the school?

6. Do you talk with your child at home about school?

Probe: When your child get home from school, does you talk about his/her day?

Probe: What are some of the things your child shares about school?

Probe: Is there a place and scheduled time for completing homework?

7. Do you and the school has different goals for your child?

Probe: What are some of the goals you have for your child?

Probe: Does your goals for your child differ from the schools?

Probe: Are the goals for all your children the same or similar?

Probe: Do you talk with your child about these goals?

8. How much time do you spend at home doing homework with your child?

Probe: Does your child complete homework at home?

Probe: Who helps your child with homework?

Probe: Does your child enjoy doing homework?

Probe: What do think about your child's homework?

9. Would you like more ideas from the teacher on how to help you child at home with schoolwork?

Probe: What would you like the teacher to help you with regarding schoolwork?

Probe: What kind of information would help you in assisting your child with schoolwork?

Probe: What are some ideas the teacher has shared about your child's schoolwork?

Probe: Are there any ideas the teacher shared about schoolwork you liked?

10. Does this school view parents as important?

Probe: What are some of the things the school shares with parents?

Probe: What have the school done to make you feel important?

Probe: What are some things the school could do to make parents feel important?

11. Are parents at this school involved and volunteer?

Probe: Have you every volunteered at your child's school?

Probe: Do you want to volunteer at your child's school?

Probe: Are there opportunities to volunteer at your child's school?

Probe: What types of involvement have you participated in?

Probe: Do you know parents who volunteer at the school?

12. How often does the teacher contact you regarding your child?

Probe: Does the teacher contact you regarding your child?

Probe: How many times this year has the teacher contacted you regarding your child?

Probe: What are some of the things the teacher contacts you about?

13. What types of workshop would you like the school to sponsor for parents?

Probe: Does the school sponsor workshops for parents?

Probe: What workshops are you interested in?

Probe: Should the school sponsor workshops for parents?

14. How is your child doing in school?

Probe: What are your child's grades in school?

Probe: How do you think your child is doing in school?

Probe: What grades would like your child to get in school?

15. What is your greatest concern as a parent?

Probe: What are your concerns?

Probe: What concerns you as a parent?

16. What school practices to involve parents has helped you the most?

Probe: What types of things has the school done to help you?

Probe: Are there any things the school has done to help you?

Probe: How has the school involve parents?

Probe: What should the school do to involve parent more?

17. What is the one thing that you or your family could do to help this school?

Probe: Is there anything you could do to help the school?

Probe: Are you and your family helping he school?

Probe: What type of help could you give the school?

18. What is the best thing this school could do next year to help your child?

Probe: What are some things the school could do next year that would be helpful?

Probe: What could the school do next year that would help your child?

Probe: What is the single most important thing the school could do next year to help your

family?

Appendix G: Teacher Consent

TEACHER INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research Study: Challenges on the Road to School Success for Low Socio-Economic and Minority Students: School Dropout, Parent Involvement and School Success

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rose Hall, a Broward County Public School Social Worker and Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate at Lynn University, Boca Raton. The study will examine the relationship of parent involvement and students' school success. The study results will contribute to the researcher's dissertation and assist schools in planning parent involvement and student activities. Your were selected for your valuable input as a third grade teacher at Charles Drew Elementary school and the study will be looking only at third grade.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine if structured, consistent forms of parent involvement (traditional and non-traditional) and school membership relates or impact student academic and behavioral school success. First, the study will look at the types and frequency of involvement by parent and school. Second, the study will share finding related to school membership.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

- Participate in an interview with the researcher, answering questions about parent involvement, family structure and school. This interview will take 30-40 minutes to complete and take place at your school during a time chosen by the school's administrator.

Your participation in the research study is voluntary. This means everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you agree to participate and no one will treat you any differently if you chose not to participate. If you decide to participate, you can still change your mind during the study. If you feel stressed during the study you may stop at any time. You may skip any questions that you feel are too personal.

POTENTIAL RISKS and POTENTIAL BENEFITS

There are no known or expected risks. If the questions are considered sensitive you may stop at any time. The benefit of being in the research study is the opportunity to give feedback about parent involvement and schools that can assist in exploring ways to help parents and schools work together in the education of children.

COMPENSATION:

There will be no reward or compensation for your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any and all information associated with this study will remain confidential. Your name will not appear on any documents, each participant will be assigned a number code. The researcher will not use the data gathered for any reason other than research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and discontinue without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have any question about participation you can contact the Lynn University, Department of Education.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

I understand the procedures and conditions of my participation described above. I confirm that I have read or had this document read to me. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I have been given a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this research study

Printed Name of Participant:_____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Investigator: _____

Date: _____

Appendix H: Adapted Teacher Interview Protocol

School and Family Partnerships

Interview Protocol of Teachers in Elementary Grades

Date:_____

Dear Teachers:

Our school is working to learn more about how schools and families can assist each other to better understand and improve family and school connections. He interview questions were developed by teachers and administrators working with researchers at John Hopkins University. They also designed questions for families to learn about their ideas and needs. Many teachers and families have completed the process as a first step towards improving their schools' practices of partnerships.

The results from the study will be tabulated and shared with you in planning school family partnership projects for the future.

All information you provide is completely confidential. Responses will be grouped to give this school a "portrait" of present practices, opinion, and trends. No one is ever identified individually. Of course, your participation is voluntary and you leave any question unanswered. To make the results useful for our school, however, we need teachers' ideas and experiences. We are counting on you to help.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP!

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Interview Protocol for Teachers

Experience and Background:	
A. What is your experience? _____(a) Years in teaching _____(b) Years in this school	B. What is your gender? _____(a) Male _____(b) Female
C. What is your highest education? (a) Bachelor's (b) Bachelor's + credits (c) Master's (d) Master's + credits (e) Doctorate (f) Other _____	D. How do you describe yourself? (a) African American (b) Asian American (c) Hispanic American (d) White (e) Other _____

1. Is parent involvement important for a good school?

   Probe: What make a good school?

   Probe: Is having a good school important?

2. Do most parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home?

   Probe: Do you have parent who help their child with homework?

   Probe: Is it important for parents to be able to help their child with homework?

3. Does this school have an active and effective parent organization (i.e. PTA)?

Probe: What types of organizations does this school have for parents?

Probe: Does this school have a PTA?

4. Can parent involvement help teachers be more effective with more students?

Probe: Is parent involvement important?

Probe: How can parent involvement help teachers?

5. Do teachers have the time to involve parents in very useful ways?

Probe: Can teachers involve parents in useful ways?

Probe: Do teachers want to make the time to involve parent?

Probe: Can teachers benefit from involving parents?

6. Is parent involvement important for student success in school?

Probe: Can parent involvement benefit students?

Probe: In what ways can parent involvement benefit students?

Probe: Can parent involvement effect students' school success?

7. Compared to other schools, does this school have one of the best school climates for teachers,

students and parents?

Probe: What is a good school climate?

: What type of climate did you have at your last school?

8. How many of your class' families have been in to meet with you this year?

Probe: Have any of your students' family met with you this year?

Probe: Have you have family meetings this year?

Probe: Do you meet with families during the year?

9. How often do you contact parent?

Probe: Do you contact parents frequently?

Probe: Are you meeting with parents often?

10. For what reasons do you contact parents/families?

Probe: What are some of the reasons you contact families?

Probe: What has to happen when you contact families?

Probe: How do families react when you contact them?

Appendix I: Student Assent

PARENT CONSENT FOR CHILD TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Research Study: School Dropout, Parent Involvement and School Success: Challenges on the Road to School Success for Low Socio-Economic and Minority Students

Your child is asked to participate in a research study conducted by Rose Hall, a Broward County Public School Social Worker and Educational Leadership Doctoral Candidate at Lynn University, Boca Raton. The study will examine the relationship of parent involvement and students' school success. The study results will contribute to the researcher's dissertation and assist the school in planning parent involvement and student activities. Your child was selected because he or she is a third grader and the study will be looking only at the third grade.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine if structured, consistent forms of parent involvement (traditional and non-traditional) relates or impact student academic and behavioral school success. First, the study will look at the types and frequency of involvement by parent and school. Second, the study will share finding related to school membership.

PROCEDURES

If you child voluntarily participates in this study, your child will do the following things:

- Participate in an interview with the researcher, answering questions about parent involvement, family structure and school. This interview will take 30 minutes to complete and take place at your child's school during a time chosen by the school administrator.

Your child's participation in the research study is voluntary. He or she must assent before participating. This means everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you give permission for your child to participate. If you decide to let your child participate, you can still change your mind during the study. You understand that you are giving permission for the researcher to access your child's records, demographics, grades and test scores. The student identification will only be use by the researcher to link grades and test scores. Your child's participation in the study will not affect your relationship with Charles Drew Elementary in any way. The parental consent and student assent forms are due back to the school's front office in two weeks after distribution.

POTENTIAL RISKS

There are minimal risks involved with your child participating in this study. Your child may feel tired and irritated with being asked questions and the timeframe of interview. Secondly, this interview may allow your child to express feelings and thoughts about how he views parent involvement. If at any time your child decides to ship a question or feels stress during the interview, he or she may stop at any time. If you child would like to discuss his feeling about the interview a school counselor will be available.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Your child's participation in this study will help answer and give insight into the relationship between parent involvement, school structure and plan for future parent involvement activities. Meaning, your participation will guide effort to improve

procedure and increase programs, while reinforcing that school and family have to work together to ensure all student experience success.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information associated with this study will remain confidential. Your child name will not appear on any documents, each participant will be assigned a number code. The researcher will not use the data gathered for any reason other than research.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may decide whether or not to volunteer your child to participate in the study; you may withdraw your child at any time without consequences of any kind. Participation will or non-participation will not affect you or your child's relationship with Charles Drew Elementary and the District. Your child may choose to refuse to answer any questions he or she does not want to answer and still stay in the study. The researcher may withdraw your child from the study if circumstance warrant doing so.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You and your child may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and discontinue without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your child's participation in this research study. If you have any question about participation you can contact the Lynn University, Department of Education.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT/LEGAL GUARDIAN

I understand the procedures and conditions of my child's participation described above. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree for my child to participate in this research study. I have been given a copy of this form. My signature below signifies my consent for my child to participate in this study.

Name of Subject (CHILD):

_____

Printed Name of Parent or Guardian:

_____

Signature of Parent or Guardian:

_____

Date:

_____

Verbal Assent Script for Children Ages 5-12

Hi. My name is *Rose Hall.* I'm a school social worker and college student. Right now, I'm trying to learn about how parent and schools can help students do well in school. I would like to ask you to help me by being in a study, but before I do, I want to explain what will happen if you decide to help me.

I will ask you to answer some question for me about what you like and do not like about school, and if your parent visits your school. It should take me about 20-30 minutes to ask the question and you to answer them. It is very important to remember that there is no right or wrong answer to the questions. I will have a tape recorder to record the interview with you, so that I don't forget what you told me. If you feel sad during our talk and would like to talk with someone about feeling sad I will make sure the school counselor talks with you until you feel better. By being in the study (talking to me), you will help me understand *how parents and school can help student do well in school.*

Your *[parents, teacher, classmates]* will not know what you have *said.* When I tell other people about my study, I will not use your name, and no one will be able to tell whom I'm talking about.

Your *[mom/dad]* says it's okay for you to be in my study. But if you don't want to be in the study, you don't have to be. What you decide won't make any difference *with your grades, teacher or school.* I won't be upset, and no one else will be upset, if you don't want to be in the study. If you want to be in the study now but change your mind later, that's okay. You can stop at any time. If there is anything you don't understand you should tell me so I can explain it to you

You can ask me questions about the study. If you have a question later that you don't think of now, you can call me or ask *[your parents/teacher]* to call me or send me an email.

Do you have any questions for me now?

Would you like to be in my study and talk with me and answer some questions.

Name of Child: _____

Parental Permission on File: ☐ Yes ☐ No

(If "No," do not proceed with assent or research procedures.)

Child's Voluntary Response to Participation: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature of Researcher: _____

Date: _____

(Optional) Signature of Child: _____

Appendix J: Adapted Student Interview Protocol

Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary Grades
Student Interview Protocol

Dear Student:

Our school is working to learn more about how students, families, and teachers can work together. Your ideas will be used to improve school programs for you and your family.

Please answer each interview question. We hope that you answer each one, but you are free to skip nay question that you feel is too personal.

THIS IS NOT A TEST. There are no right or wrong answers. The interview is not part of your schoolwork and will not be marked by your teacher. Your name is not on the interview and will never be reported.

Please give honest answers. We really want to know YOUR ideas.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Sincerely,

_____

Researcher / Rose A. Hall

© Sheldon, S. B. & Epstein, J. L. (2007). *Parent survey of family and community involvement in the elementary and middle grades.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships.

Student Interview Protocol

Gender: Boy or Girl	Age: 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
How many adults live with you? 0 1 2 3 4 5 +	How do you describe yourself? 1.Asian 2. Black 3.White 4. Hispanic 5.Other
How far do you think you will go In school? 1.Some high school 2. Complete high school 3.Some college 4.College degree 5. More than college	Which Language does your family usually speak at home? 1.English 2. Spanish 3. Creole 4.Other

1. Are people at your school friendly?

   Probe: How do you feel about your school?

   Probe: What do you think about your school?

   Probe: Does the people at your school talk with you?

2. Is there someone at your school you can talk to if you had a problem?

   Probe: Whom do you talk to at your school?

   Probe: The people at your school talk with you?

   Probe: How do you talk with people at your school?

3. Do you feel like you're a part of the school?

   Probe: Are you apart of you school?

   Probe: Tell me about your school and you?

   Probe: How does your school make you feel?

4. Can you do the work in your class?

   Probe: Tell me about your schoolwork?

   Probe: What do you think about your schoolwork?

5. Do your parent help you with homework?

   Probe: Who helps you with homework at home?

   Probe: Tell me about homework once you get home?

6. Do you talk with your parent about school?

   Probe: Whom do you talk to about school?

   Probe: Who talk with you about school?

7. Does your parent volunteer in your classroom or school?

   Probe: Have your parent volunteered at your school?

   Probe: Do you want you parents to volunteer at your school or in your class?

8. Does your parent come to your school for meeting and other events?

   Probe: When does your parent come to school?

   Probe: Do they attend meetings?

   Probe: Do the come in for special events?

9. Is your school friendly to your parent?

   Probe: Is your school a place parents should visit?

   Probe: Is your school visitor friendly?

10. Does your teacher know your parent?

   Probe: Has your teacher met your parent?

   Probe; Are parent meeting teachers?

11. Does your parent talk with your teacher by phone?

   Probe: Does your parent communicate with your teacher?

   Probe: how does your parent talk with your teacher?

12. Does your parent feel welcomed at your school?

Probe: Does your parent like visiting your school?

Probe: Does your parent know the people at your school?

Probe: Does your parent want to visit your school?

13. Does your parent talk about school with other parents?

Probe: Does your parent talk with other parents from your school?

Probe: Does you parent know other parents from your class?

14. What does your parent think about your school?

Probe: Have your parent talk to you about your school?

Probe: Does your parent like your school?

15. What are some activities or events involving your parent at school that they enjoy?

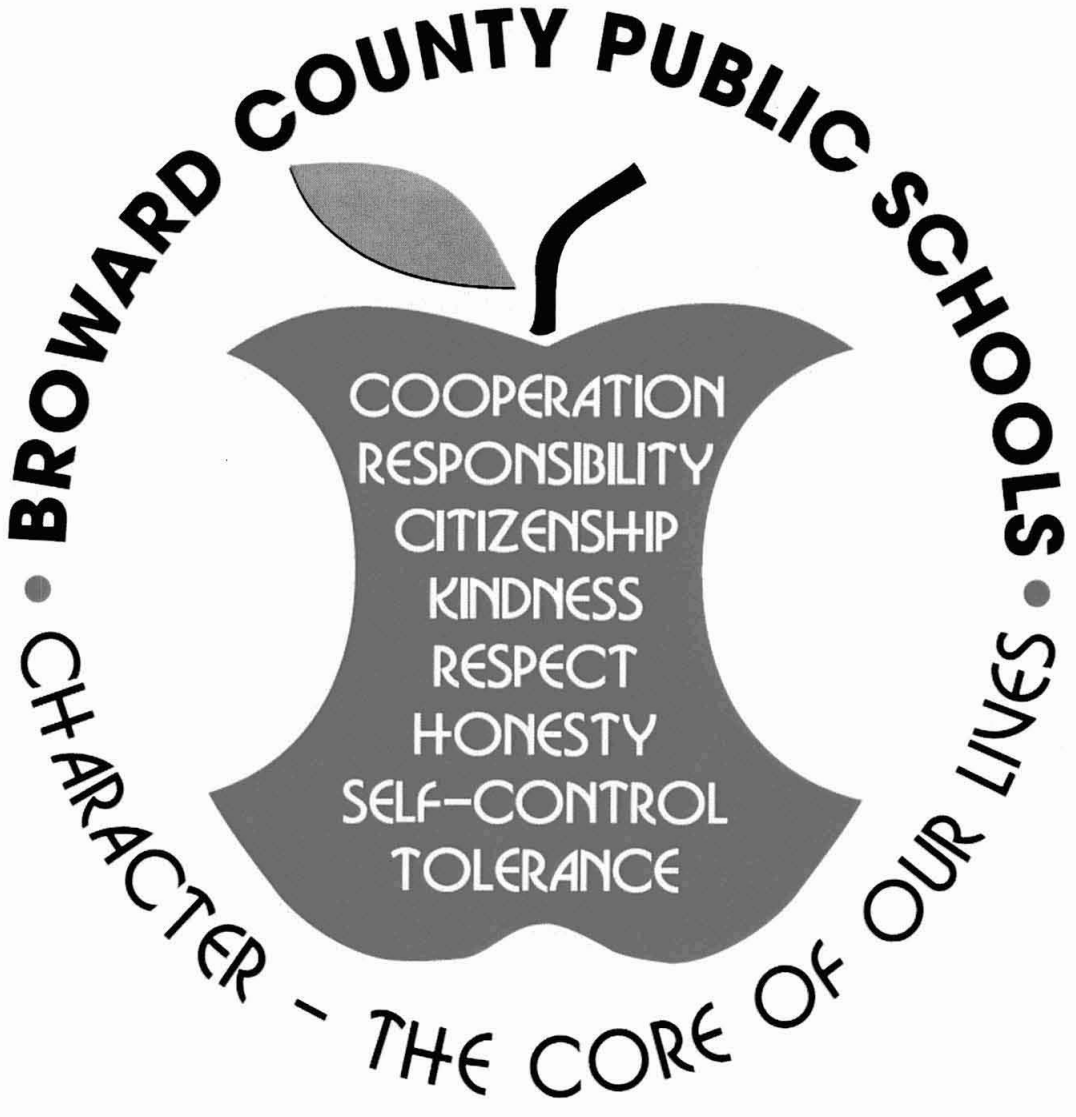
Probe: What activities has your parent worked on with your school?

Probe: What things has your parent done at your school?

Appendix K: Broward County Publix Schools: Code of Conduct Manual (2012-2013)

Broward County Public Schools

CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT



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