

PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PARENTAL
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Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Effective Parental Involvement

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ABSTRACT

Tim Wright. PARENT AND TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF EFFECTIVE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT. (Under the direction of Dr. Kathie C. Morgan) School of Education, April 2009.

Parental involvement is a key factor in the success of students, but research shows differing perceptions on the definition of parent involvement. The purpose of this descriptive cross-sectional survey study was to compare and contrast the perceptions of parents and teachers about the parent involvement strategies they find most effective. This study also sought to find differences within each population based on demographic factors. Using a researcher generated survey based on Dr. Joyce Epstein's Six Types of Parental Involvement (2002), elementary school parents and teachers of a rural Georgia school district were asked to use a rating scale to indicate the level of effectiveness of 28 parent involvement activities. Field testing was conducted to enhance face validity, and content validity was strengthened through the use of a wide variety of parent involvement strategies. The responses of parents (N=478) and teachers (N=104) were compared using an independent samples *t*-test, and statistically significant differences were found in six of the seven parent involvement dimensions studied. Within the parent population, ANOVA and post-hoc analyses were used and found statistically significant differences within the parent population in three of the five demographic areas studied. Within the teacher population, two demographic areas were studied, and only one statistically significant difference was found. This study suggested that parents and teachers have

significant differences in their views of what defines effective parental involvement, and differences were apparent when some demographic factors were taken into consideration.

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John 15:5 (KJV) says, “I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” This work is the fruit of my labor, and I could have certainly not completed this undertaking without the grace given to me by my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Educators and parents believe parental involvement is essential in the education of children and leads to academic gains (Baker, 1997; Barge & Loges, 2003; Maynard & Howley, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). However, due to differing definitions of parental involvement, parents and teachers often harbor competing beliefs about involvement and what involvement practices are the most effective (Miretzky, 2004). How can this belief gap be bridged? Where are parents and teachers in agreement, and how can their differences be mediated? What factors might affect the perceptions of parents and teachers? This dissertation is a report of a descriptive survey study that sought to compare and contrast the perceptions of parents and teachers and discover factors which may affect their beliefs with regards to parent involvement.

Background of the Study

The idea of parent involvement is not a new concept. For decades paradigms have shifted with regards to involvement, and in the 21st century, active parents are considered to be a vital component of education by teachers and administrators alike. In the 1940s, attempts to involve parents focused on PTA attendance, homework monitoring, and signing homework and report cards to acknowledge the students had shown them to their parents. Parents were also called upon as fund raisers for the schools, helping to supplement government funding. In the mid to late 1960s, policy-makers began to turn their attention to ways to improve academic achievement, and parent involvement became a topic of concern, especially among low-achieving students. As the

accountability movement of the 1980s gained strength, parents were asked to help oversee not only the progress of their children but of their school as a whole (Posnick-Goodson, 2005). As schools have pushed into the 21st century, the idea of a reciprocal relationship between school and home has been championed by researchers, educators, and parents alike (Knopf and Swick, 2007).

Some researchers have studied parent involvement and its positive effects on education for many years. Joyce Epstein has championed the importance of parent involvement, but she went beyond normal ideas and discussed the premise stating involvement should go beyond school and home, inviting a partnership between homes, schools, and communities. With over 100 publications, many focusing on school and family relationships, her focus has been on schools, families, and communities partnering in reciprocal ways to raise academic achievement and student success. Her research findings led her to draw four conclusions about parental involvement: student success should drive involvement, involvement should be present throughout the entirety of a child's education, involvement is a process, not a single event, and parent involvement is not a substitute for quality education programs offered by schools (Epstein, 1990).

As researchers have struggled to definitively define the construct of parent involvement, the federal government has developed a definition as a part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This definition was included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) under the guidance of NCLB. In its 2004 publication, *Parental Involvement: Action Guide for Parents and Communities*, the federal government stated parental involvement is defined as a meaningful, two-way

communication involving student academic learning and other school activities including:

- Assisting in their child's learning;
- Being actively involved in their child's education at school;
- Serving as full partners in their child's education and being included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and
- The carrying out of other activities such as those described in section 1118 of the ESA Section 9101 (32).

With these guidelines in place by the federal government, the focus has shifted to local school districts. Each district and school that receives Title I money is required to develop a written parent involvement policy. As these policies have been developed, schools have searched for ways to carry out the government's wishes while building on already existing relationships within the school and the district. For this reason, school systems and individual schools have attempted to work closely with parents to develop strong involvement policies to help improve learning in the classroom.

However, problems still remain. While the government has a definition of parental involvement and educators have developed involvement policies, there often remains a disconnect between what educators and parents believe make up the actual practices which meet the criteria for effective parental involvement. This disconnect is not new, and researchers have used qualitative and quantitative studies to develop data and opinions from teachers and parents to study ways to bridge the existing gaps between

parent and teacher perceptions of effective parental involvement. However, more research needs to be done comparing parent and teacher beliefs so both sides can begin to focus on what is best for students.

Research Question & Null Hypotheses

After years of competing definitions of parental involvement, policymakers, researchers, and educators are beginning to agree on a set definition of what entails effective involvement. With a consensus definition, application must be the next step, and the application of this knowledge comes down to a few questions. The purpose of this study is to determine:

RQ1. What involvement activities do parents find most effective?

RQ2. What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?

RQ3. How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?

H₁ There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of parents and teachers with regards to effective parent involvement.

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

H₂ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing races/ethnicities with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

- H*₃ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing marital statuses with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₄ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing age ranges with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₅ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₆ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing annual income levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₇ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing years of experience with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₈ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

The answers to these questions will allow administrators and teachers to improve their policies with regards to parent involvement, and the answers will also allow parents to have a better understanding of what schools desire from them. Parents and teachers

want to do what is best for children, but often it is miscommunications and misunderstandings that drive wedges between schools and homes. It is vital that parents and teachers understand each other's points of view and use this understanding to build a more reciprocal relationship to improve parental involvement in order to help improve student achievement.

Significance of the Study

Parent involvement has been the topic of study for many researchers in the field of education. However, the more it is studied, the more it seems further research needs to be conducted. This paradox seems to exist due to the many different existing about parental involvement. Parent and community relationships have been inconsistently measured across various studies and research, thus not capturing a full perspective and picture of these relationships (Kohl et al, 2000). New ways need to be utilized in order to better understand the relationships existing between families and schools. The significance in this study lied in its study of the perceptions of those chiefly involved in the education of children: parents and teachers. In many cases, parents have had little say in what constitutes effective involvement because the schools have dominated the research field, and many agree that school-centered definitions do not fully express the wide variety of relationships and involvement methods considered effective (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). This study also provided an alternative view to an issue that has mostly been studied in purely qualitative manners such as field interviews and focus groups. Once survey results are found, schools can begin making changes and opening dialogues with parents about how to strengthen parent and school relationships. The research can later be conducted again to gauge changes. This study allows for a snapshot

of a large, diverse population, and other schools and school systems can benefit from the obtained results.

Overview of Methodology

A descriptive design using a cross-sectional survey instrument was employed to collect data among two populations. The targeted populations in this study were parents of elementary school students (1-5) currently enrolled in a public school system in Georgia and elementary school classroom teachers (K-5) employed by the school system. In order to sample the parent population, random sampling was employed by using a computer program to draw the desired 20% sample of all elementary parents based on student ID numbers. This random sample represented a variety of social, economic, and cultural backgrounds. The targeted population of teachers was all elementary school teachers in the school system. This sample included a variety of teachers with varying years of experience, professional degrees, and teaching backgrounds.

Both sampled populations received a survey asking for opinions on parental involvement methods. The parent population received the surveys (Appendix A) through letters sent home with their children while the teacher population (Appendix B) completed the surveys electronically via the school system's attendance program, Infinite Campus. The survey was created with permission (Appendix C) by the researcher and was based on Dr. Joyce Epstein's (2002) six categories of parental involvement with an additional category of parental expectations. The survey contained 28 examples of parental involvement strategies, with examples coming from each of Epstein's defined categories, three questions regarding parental expectations, and two questions to help gauge validity. To create the survey instrument, the researcher used examples taken from

each of Epstein's (2002) categories, and research was used to determine three determining behaviors and actions demonstrating high parental expectations. The examples were randomly ordered, and the participants had no knowledge of the categories from which each example is drawn. A rating scale was used to determine the perceptions of the effectiveness of each parental involvement example. The perceptions ranged from a high score of 5 (highly effective) to a low score of 1 (not effective). In addition, demographic information was included on the instrument in order to give the researcher the opportunity to further analyze the data. The instrument was field tested by parents and teachers to correct any ambiguities or other problems with the questions and the instrument as a whole.

Once the surveys were returned, the researcher tallied results by reordering the questions into their corresponding categories in order to determine an effectiveness score for each category. For example, the three questions created to test perceptions of parents with regards to expectations as a form of parental involvement were regrouped, and the scores of the questions were analyzed to determine a mean score for the category. All seven categories were tallied in a similar manner in order to determine mean values for parents and teachers with regards to each involvement dimension. The mean values were then analyzed using various statistical analyses to determine trends within each population, to find whether or not significant differences were found between parents and teachers for each category, and to search for differences between demographic factors and perceptions of effective parental involvement. The validity of the instrument was improved by using field tests and maintaining the anonymity of participants in order to obtain more truthful responses. The reliability of the survey was strengthened because

similar concepts were gauged in different ways using different parent involvement examples. In addition, some participants are available to retake the survey if a reliability concern arises. Further details regarding the methodology and the analysis of data will be discussed in chapter three.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The remainder of this study will be organized as follows: Chapter 2 will present a review of the literature surrounding teacher and parent perceptions of parental involvement. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology used in the study including the design of the instrument, gathering of the sample, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 will be a presentation of the data, and Chapter 5 will present a summary and discussion of the results.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Parental involvement has been shown to be a key indicator of academic success, and it is essential for teachers and parents have a similar understanding of what the term parental involvement truly means. The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a difference between parents' ideas of effective parental involvement and teachers' ideas of effective parental involvement and determine what factors may affect these perceptions.

For years, the impact of parental involvement on education has been studied, and while there are differences among some researchers, most conclude parental involvement plays a pivotal role in the education of students. Parental involvement can take numerous forms and vary in degree. Helping with homework, attending P.T.A. meetings, and holding high expectations are all examples of parental involvement strategies, and each demonstrates a differing theoretical perspective of involvement.

Research has shown most all families care about their children and want them to succeed. They are eager to obtain better information from schools about how to strengthen the partnership between school and home. Teachers and administrators feel the same way. They want to expand the role of parents in the education process, but they are not sure how to go about building positive and productive programs. This has created a fear of trying, thereby creating rhetoric that states educators want parental support without offering action to accomplish this goal. Students at all levels also have a desire to know more about how home and school can come together to improve the educational process. They want to see parents and teachers come together as partners, working to

actively communicate about school activities, homework, and school decisions (Epstein, 1995).

Parents and teachers share similarities and differences when it comes to defining effective parental involvement. If parents and teachers had a better understanding of each other's expectations for parental involvement, both groups could work better to ensure their collaboration positively influences student learning. Schools could become more responsive to the needs of parents, and parents would feel empowered, therefore more likely to take an active role in the education of their children. It is also important to understand what factors might affect these perceptions and plan ways to account for these issues and overcome them. The significance of this study lies in the need to discover how similar or dissimilar the views of parents and teachers are when it comes to the subject of how parents should be effectively involved in the educational process. Once the relationship between teacher and parent perceptions of parental involvement has been identified, educators and parents can begin working together to strengthen the relationship between the school and home, discussing misconceptions each group has about the other, and opening the door to a more collaborative process which will positively affect the education of children.

Definitions of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement is a conglomeration of definitions from a myriad of research, and the many definitions can make researching involvement more challenging. Parental involvement can be defined as any interaction between a parent with the child or school which enhances a child's development (Reynolds, 1996). Abe Feuerstein (2000) defined parent involvement as activity encompassing a wide range of behaviors, ranging

from discussing school with children to attending parent-teacher conferences. For researchers, teachers, and parents, competing ideas of what parent involvement truly is has brought confusion, so in order to come to a consensus opinion, it is important to compare and contrast differing definitions of involvement.

Competing Ideas of Parental Involvement

Ralph McNeal Jr. (2001) listed four elements of parent involvement. One key element was parent-child discussion. This involved how much conversation time was spent at home discussing education issues. This is an element often focused on by researchers. Parent involvement in parent teacher organizations (PTOs) was also listed by McNeal as an element of involvement. Another element of McNeal's model of parental involvement is monitoring. Monitoring involves parents keeping up with their child's progress on a regular basis. This element of parent involvement often affects adolescent behavior and development. Monitoring shows a child that the parent genuinely is concerned about his well being (Coleman, 1987). Direct involvement was McNeal's (2001) fourth element of parent involvement. This facet of parent involvement refers to the amount of time a parent spends at the school involved in activities. This aspect of parent involvement tends to be reactive due to the fact the child's bad behavior or poor academic work is often the reason the parent becomes involved.

Parent involvement can come in many forms including assisting with homework, volunteering at school, sending and replying to home-school communications about student progress, developing adult learning skills, and being involved in school government. Bracey (2001) also stated regardless of how parent involvement is defined, it is vital to a child's success at school.

In 2003, the U.S. Department of Education released an updated parent involvement study which yielded notable results. When asked about volunteerism, 38% of parents with children in assigned public schools indicated they had volunteered in their child's school. This compares to volunteerism rates of 70% and 63% respectively for parents of children in church based or non-church based private schools. Involvement rates were also tied to the level of education of the parents. With regards to attendance at school meetings, 93% of parents who had attended college, graduate schools, or professional schools indicated they had attended school meetings while only 70% of parents who had completed less than high school indicated attendance at school meetings. Of high school graduates surveyed, 84% indicated they had attended a school meeting.

The 2003 report went on to discuss the types of involvement in which parents were involved. In kindergarten through grade twelve, 95% of parents responded they had assisted with homework, and 85% of the parents reported an adult in the household was responsible for checking homework when it was complete. As with attendance at school meetings, education levels of parents also correlated with homework practices. While 90% of all responses indicated they had a place set aside in their homes for homework to be completed, there was a noteworthy gap between parents with less than a high school diploma (80%) and parents with high school diplomas (90%), college degrees (89%), and graduate school degrees (92%).

Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) stated student-parent discussion at home was the most powerful predictor of student academic success. They found this characteristic was not highly affected by schools, while communication, school activity attendance, and volunteerism were highly affected by schools. Kerbow and Bernhardt (1993) explained

schools were responsible for up to 18.5% of the variation in parent involvement, such as communications, volunteering, and PTO membership. These findings indicate schools do have the ability to improve parent involvement levels. According to the variety of definitions presented in the previous paragraphs, one can see parent involvement is a multi-dimensional construct.

Epstein's Framework for Six Types of Involvement

Perhaps the most comprehensive definition is Epstein's (1995) categories of parental involvement. She lists six types of involvement:

- Type 1: Parenting- Help all families establish home environments to support children as students.
- Type 2: Communicating- Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs.
- Type 3: Volunteering- Recruit and organize parent help and support.
- Type 4: Learning at Home- Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
- Type 5: Decision Making- Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
- Type 6: Collaborating with the Community- Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development. (p. 141)

As involvement moves from Type 1 to Type 6, the emphasis begins to shift away from communication towards multifaceted partnerships among parents, schools, and others in the community (Barge & Loges, 2003). Parents and teachers become involved as partners rather than two entities competing for influence in the lives of students.

While others have offered varying models of parental involvement, Epstein's is the only one that has undergone extensive review by the research community (Jordan, Orozco, & Averett, 2001). Her involvement model is based on an organizational method where influence overlaps between school and home. With the focus on the partnership

between the community, parents, and the school, Epstein's model provides well defined and useful guidelines for others to follow. Despite its wide acceptance, Epstein's model does have limitations. Some (Kohl, Lengua, & McMahon, 2000) have pointed out Epstein's model places the onus on school-initiated behaviors rather than parent-initiated behaviors, however, Epstein's work is highly regarded and cited throughout the sea of literature on parental involvement. Her Framework for Six Types of Parental Involvement have become gospel in many school systems across the country, and it is important to understand what these types of involvement are and the challenges that possibly stymie their implementation.

Involvement Type 1: Parenting. Schools can have a profound effect on how parents can support education at home. Epstein's (2002) *Parenting* dimension is defined as the method in which schools can help all families establish a supportive home environment. She lists sample practices such as suggestions to parents about home conditions foster improved learning, workshops, both formal and informal, addressing parenting and child rearing, implementing parent education courses, launching family support programs to aid in nutrition and health matters, and encouraging home visits at important developmental stages of a student's life.

Challenges are present when addressing this dimension of parent involvement. Cultural differences can have an effect on how parents perceive the school making parenting suggestions. Schools must also be mindful that they seek to involve all of their parents in these activities, not just those who can attend meetings at the school building. In addition, schools must make sure their intentions are clear, avoiding educational jargon that might intimidate some parents.

Epstein (2008) states the goal of the school when designing activities to encourage Type 1 involvement should be to “design parenting activities that help families understand adolescent development, strengthen parenting skills, and set home conditions for learning” (p.11). These types of activities can also help schools better understand families and their goals for their children.

Involvement Type 2: Communicating. Two-way communication between parents and teachers is vital in any parent involvement model. The *Communicating* dimension of Epstein’s (2002) framework involves designing effective forms of communication from schools and homes to help parents better understand their children’s progress and school programs available to help improve their children’s academic performance.

Communication should include conferences, annual student work folders to be reviewed at home, a regular schedule of notices, newsletters, or notes, and clear information regarding school policies and programs.

Any time communication is involved, challenges can abound. Communications must be clear, taking into account home factors possibly limiting readability such as different languages spoken in the household or parents who may not read well. Communication must also be thought of as a two way street where parents are not too intimidated to initiate communications when the need arises.

The ultimate goal of the communicating dimension of parent involvement is to keep families informed about what is happening at the school, keep them involved in school programs, and keep them up-to-date on the academic progress of their children (Epstein, 2008). Designing activities and practices with this goal in mind will help schools improve parent involvement levels.

Involvement Type 3: Volunteering. The third type of involvement encouraged in Epstein's (2002) model is volunteering. Volunteering in schools often helps the parents gain a measure of ownership in the school, and the school should work to recruit and organize parent help and support. Sample volunteering practices schools can implement include organizing volunteer programs, creating a parent room or family resource center that provides resources for families, communicating methods which help inform parents of when volunteer projects are available, and developing parent patrols to help keep school safe.

Encouraging volunteerism can be problematic if schools do not address some areas of concern. Schools must be sure they widely recruit volunteers so as to let all families know their help is desired. This might involve making flexible volunteer schedules so all families can have an opportunity to volunteer without upsetting work schedules. Schools should also work to organize work for volunteers to do, utilizing the resources parents and community members bring to the table. Volunteering means anyone who supports the school's goals can help, regardless of where and when the help may happen (Epstein, 2002).

Epstein (2008) stated the "activities that facilitate volunteerism improve the recruitment, training, and schedules of volunteer stakeholders to support student activities and school programs" (p.12). Schools should work to design programs involving as many people as possible to help the school improve academics in the classroom and relationships in the community.

Involvement Type 4: Learning at Home. Teachers play a large role in increasing parent involvement, and Epstein's (2002) Type 4 involvement dimension is where

teachers can take a hands-on approach to improving involvement. She defines the *Learning at Home* dimension as providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other activities. This begins with clear communication regarding homework policies, rules, and expectations. Teachers can do this by providing clear expectations, a regular homework schedule, and ensuring homework is practice and review, not an introduction of new, possibly frustrating, concepts. Homework should be about helping and practicing, not teaching school subjects. Schools can help encourage learning at home by sponsoring curriculum nights and developing summer learning packets encouraging home participation in the learning process.

Parents often want to help their children with homework, but unclear expectations can lead to problems in this involvement dimension. It is vital for teachers to be clear with parents when defining what the parental role in homework should be. Once this role is clear, teachers should work to design inviting and interactive homework activities, not just opportunities to monitor simple tasks. Homework should involve having parents help by “encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, monitoring, guiding, and discussing” (p.15).

The goal of providing learning-at-home activities designed by teachers and schools for their students and their families should be meaningful and coordinated with what is going on in the students’ classrooms and curricular work (Epstein, 2008). Parents want to help their children, and it is up to the school to design ways to allow this to happen.

Involvement Type 5: Decision Making. An often overlooked form of parental involvement is in the area of decision making. Epstein (2002) defined decision making as including parents in school decisions and developing parent leaders and representatives within the school. When thinking of decision making, most begin with PTA/PTO organizations, but with NCLB rules, many schools also have other bodies responsible for decision making. Parent advisory councils, school councils, safety patrols, and even student councils have a voice in what goes on in the school. Epstein also argued this type of involvement should go beyond the local school and move into the district level as well. These groups can aid in communicating information to the community at large, keeping the community informed of what is going on in their schools.

Challenges can arise when beginning partnerships with parents in the area of school decision making (Epstein, 2002). Schools must be careful to include parents from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds when designating leaders in the school. Training should also be offered to enable leaders to better understand what their role should be as decision makers. Decision making should be about a partnership between school and home that works under the umbrella of a shared vision and goals. It should not devolve into a power struggle between two competing groups.

In conclusion, decision making activities include the voices of families in helping to develop mission statements, designing, reviewing, and improving school policies, and helping to aid in creating policies which positively affect students and families (Epstein, 2008).

Involvement Type 6: Collaborating with the Community. Epstein's (2002) final involvement dimension seeks to involve the community as a whole, not necessarily just

parents. She encourages schools to identify and integrate resources and services from within the community to improve student learning by strengthening school programs and family practices. This practice involves first knowing what resources a community has to offer the school. The school should gather information for students and families about the health, social, recreational, and cultural resources found within the community. Once these resources are identified, the school can begin integrating these services by forming reciprocal partnerships to improve school programs. Schools can give back by allowing students to participate in service opportunities around the community, further strengthening the link between the community and the school.

Challenges can abound when inviting community entities into the school, and educators should be aware of them so they can overcome obstacles that might arise (Epstein, 2002). First, an avoidance of “turf problems” such as responsibilities, funding, and staffing needs is paramount. Next, the school should work to communicate when opportunities are available so equal opportunities are there for all parents and community stakeholders to be a part of the school’s mission. Resources should be paired with goals so efforts are maximized and resources are not wasted in areas where they will have little effect. Schools should also remember the idea of community is not limited to parents within the school. The community is all those who are interested in and affected by the quality of education provided by a school.

Schools would do well to draw upon and coordinate the resources available from local businesses, colleges and universities, government agencies, civic organizations, cultural organizations, and religious groups to help them meet the goal of providing a well-rounded, positive academic experience for all students (Epstein, 2008). This type of

community involvement enables students, families, teachers, administrators, and community members to become engaged in a meaningful relationship which contributes to the education offered at the school and the quality of life in the community.

Parental Expectations

Another aspect of parental involvement is parent expectations. Fan and Chen (2001) performed a meta-analysis of the quantitative literature available on parental involvement. Their study found a meaningful relationship between parent involvement and academic achievement, but they found the strongest relationship existed between parental expectations and achievement. The study mirrored others (Fan, 2001; Trivette & Anderson, 1995) that have shown parental aspirations and expectations have a stronger relationship with achievement than other indicators normally associated with parental involvement such as supervision at home. However, researchers emphasize these expectations must be communicated (Chen & Lan, 1998). Trivette and Anderson (1995) stated these expectations are often transmitted via verbal communications about school on a regular basis. Surprisingly, these high expectations did not translate into a direct effect on structural differences within the home with regards to school or higher participation rates in school activities. Higher expectations, however, did exert a meaningful indirect influence on these two aspects of parental involvement.

Parent expectations can powerfully influence a child's school performance. When parents have high expectations, children do better. This relationship holds up even when factors such as socioeconomic status are taken into consideration. Parents who have high expectations for their children are more likely than others to provide resources such as books and educational games, read to their children, and engage in enrichment activities

such as trips to the library. When families expect their children to do well in school, they are usually not left disappointed (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996). Research has also shown the most accurate predictor of a child's academic achievement is the extent to which the child's family creates an environment where learning is encouraged, communicates high, but reasonable expectations, and becomes involved in the school and the community (Ngeow, 1999).

Due to findings such as these, researchers must continue to study the effects of expectations as a form of parental involvement in order to add to the body of knowledge and definitions of parental involvement currently being studied.

Benefits of Parental Involvement

Researchers and educators tend to agree when parents get involved in education, children put forth more effort and improve achievement. A recent meta-analysis of 41 studies found a significant relationship between parental involvement and the academic success of urban school students (Jeynes, 2005). Parents who help and encourage their children at home contribute to the growth and academic success of their children (Maynard & Howley, 1997). Policymakers and educators also agree a family's involvement in their child's education is closely linked to his or her academic success (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Effective parental involvement in education requires a partnership between parents, teachers, students, and administrators (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Family and school represent the primary environments in which a child grows up and develops, both socially and cognitively. The link between home and school is taking on added significance, as a strong relationship tends to show higher achievement (Coleman, 1991a).

Parent involvement positively affects classroom learning as well as the school environment. Research has shown parent involvement in the school also contributes to the overall school-community relationship and teacher efficacy. The faculties and administrations of schools have more respect for parents who are involved in the school, and this increases parent and teacher support of the school and its programs (Pena, 2000). When parents regularly come to parent-teacher conferences and open houses, attend school events, and get involved with their children at home, children are more motivated, feel higher levels of competency, and adapt easier to school. These children also learn to read faster and do better academically throughout elementary school (Bee, 1997). Studies on parent involvement indicate the more extensively the parents are involved, the higher student achievement rises.

In contrast, some researchers have shown little or no relation between parental involvement and academic performance while others have found an unclear direction between the two concepts. Some have found previous achievement predicts involvement rather than the opposite, and others have reported mixed results, including no evidence of a direct relationship between involvement and achievement (Englund, Egeland, Luckner, & Whaley, 2004). However, the mixed findings could be attributed to the use of nonstandard operational definitions of involvement and achievement. For example, for some, parental involvement is an assessment of home and school communication while for others it revolves around volunteer activities (Griffith, 1996). The ambiguous ideas surrounding parental involvement give credence to the need for further studies to draw on research and consensus with regards to the operational definition of parental involvement

and this definition will draw heavily on the perceptions of involved stakeholders such as parents, teachers, and students.

Overall, most findings have shown parental involvement, whether at home or at school, have a moderately significant relationship with higher academic achievement, and this relationship has been found consistently across demographics (e.g., ethnicity, sex, or socioeconomic status) and measures of achievement (e.g., achievement tests, grades, and grade point averages). Research points to the conclusion that “parental involvement is an important predictor of children’s achievement in school” (Englund et al, 2004, p. 723).

Levels of Parental Involvement

Schools often try to make a concerted effort to involve parents. A U.S. Department of Education (1998) study yielded many interesting findings and statistics pertaining to parent involvement in education. Their research showed between 82% and 89% of all public elementary schools provided parents with information designed to promote learning at home. During the 1995-1996 school year, 84%-97% of schools held activities intended to encourage parent involvement. Contrastingly, only 25%-33% of schools included parents to a moderate extent in decision-making even though 79% of the schools reported having parents who served on some sort of advisory council. During the 1995-1996 school year, 90% of all elementary schools provided parents with an opportunity to volunteer in and out of the classroom. The schools were also asked to report on barriers parents might face preventing them from being actively involved in the schools. The report showed 87% of the schools reported a lack of time was the number one reason for a lack of parent involvement. Ironically, the schools also reported a lack of time was also a problem experienced by the schools themselves.

Other research has reported interesting results with regards to parent involvement. A 1999 survey of St. Louis kindergarten students revealed that while 95% of the parents rated reading as very highly important, only 16% of the parents were reading to their children each day. The same parents stated 83.3% of the children in the survey loved to be read to (Anderson, 2000). A 1993-1994 study indicated 28% of public school teachers reported a lack of parent involvement was a “major problem” in their schools. This was a 3% increase from the 25% who reported parent involvement as a “major problem” in a 1990-1991 survey (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). In 1996 and 1999, studies showed at least 90% of students had parents who participated in some form of school-parent event. However, parents in both years were less likely to participate in an activity requiring a lot of time, such as volunteering, studying, or serving on a committee (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Parental involvement tends to diminish as children move to higher grade levels. In 1996 and 1999 surveys, 86% of parents with children in grades K-5 reported attendance at a scheduled meeting with their child’s teacher. Contrastingly, among children in grades 6-8 and 9-12, only 70% and 50% respectively had parents who attended meetings involving their child’s teacher (U.S. Department of Education, 1994). This trend held true in the 2003 U.S. Department of Education report on parent involvement. The parent survey said 55% of parents with students in fourth or fifth grade had received a specific communication about their child while only 49% of parents with middle school children and 42% of parents with children in ninth or tenth grade received similar communications. Partnerships tend to decline across the grades, and it is up to schools

and teachers to develop and implement appropriate partnership practices at each grade level (Epstein, 1995).

Research has shown parent involvement is a key component in education, and parents and teachers seem to want home and school to be a place of learning and enrichment. Schools are making efforts to improve parent involvement, and parents report they are trying to actively participate in the educational process. Despite these earnest efforts, barriers to involvement are still evident.

Reasons for a Lack of Parent Involvement

As parent involvement definitions and perceptions are studied, it must be recognized barriers to involvement exist. These barriers are created by teachers and parents, and over the last few years many theories have been advanced regarding possible reasons for these barriers and how best to break them down. In order to understand perceptions of involvement by parents and teachers, a brief look must be given to research regarding reasons for a lack of involvement.

Teacher and Parent Relations

One reason for a lack of parent involvement can be attributed to how teachers relate to parents. Often teachers and administrators are guilty of using education jargon that is incomprehensible to parents or the public at large. The result of this type of speech is a failure to communicate what they are attempting to communicate. As a result of this miscommunication, many teachers have at times lost the respect and support of parents and the public (Baker, 2001). Some parents reported teachers often come across as “teacherish” because of the use of complicated educational lingo. This type of communication makes formal relationships difficult between teachers and parents (Rich,

1987). This idea was especially prevalent among minority parents. They are often times intimidated by school staffs and the institutional structure of many schools. Minority parents often feel apprehensive about approaching school personnel, especially if they have previously had a negative experience with school (Chavkin, 1989).

At times, barriers to involvement can be caused by the type of contact initiated by teachers. Strong conflict often arises when educators contact parents only when their child is exhibiting academic or behavior problems. Epstein (2001) linked this kind of reactionary parent contact to high rates of student absences, creation of negative attitudes towards schools, and low ratings of the school by the parents. Teachers should work to initiate positive contacts, not just negative contact. Positive contact shows good faith to parents, and this good faith opens communications lines available to be used when negative behaviors are occurring.

Another barrier schools sometimes face with regard to parent involvement is the idea a teacher's professional status is infringed upon by too much parent involvement. This idea of more parent participation in day-to-day school functions makes some teachers and staff members uncomfortable with increased parent involvement in their school (Berger, 1995). Schools should work to find ways to embrace increased involvement and utilize parents in an effective way which positively impacts student learning.

Parenting Style

Another barrier to parent involvement is the parenting style of the parents themselves. A study was conducted in the early 1990s on parenting style and student achievement. The study showed parents of the authoritative parenting style not only

created a warm family climate, but they also held more positive attitudes towards school. Authoritative parenting is often described as a parenting style combining discipline and love, thus providing a warm home where rules and limitations are known. This attitude led to more positive school involvement by the parents including attending school functions and talking to teachers. The most positive academic results were shown by children who had authoritative parents who were actively involved in their child's education (Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Narling 1992).

Cultural Differences

Often, another impediment to parent involvement is cultural differences between the family and the school. The culture of the parents often affects how parents wish to be involved in their child's education. Involvement also has to do with whether or not the school chooses to embrace the culture of the parents (Pena, 2000). Sometimes a lack of involvement by families of differing cultures is perceived as indifference, when in reality the lack of involvement is due to intimidation or a cultural difference (Chavkin, 1989). Many parents are reluctant to voice concerns due to their cultural belief that the teacher is the authoritative figure in their child's education. Some parents also fear questions or criticism might put their child at a disadvantage in the classroom.

The best cure for these misunderstandings is communication (Katz, 1996), but some educators take these differing cultural beliefs to mean something else. Many teachers tend to believe parents of different cultures are not savvy enough to become leaders within the school. They think poor parent attendance at school functions means parents are uninterested in their child's education, but this is often not the case. Carrasquillo and London (1993) provided an example to back up their claims. They

reported many Mexican-American families tend to view the academic development of their children as the responsibility of the schools. These parents are often respectful of the roles of teachers, and they are afraid to interfere with the teacher's classroom duties. However, some Mexican-American parents are not adequately prepared to involve themselves in education. These parents often have trouble with the language and feel they lack the education to get involved.

Education Level of Parents

Regardless of race or culture, a parent's lack of education and/or low literacy level has a negative effect on involvement in his child's education. Additionally, parents' literacy skills and attitudes about learning and formal education can have an immense impact on their children's education. These parents can still foster their children's education through non-traditional activities, but they may be unable to help them in traditional ways that enhance and support the school's education program (Taylor, 1993). Children with parents who have received a high school education or higher are more likely to have parents who are highly involved in their schools. Among families surveyed in one study, 31% had mothers who were highly involved in their schools if their mothers had less than a high school education, while 70% had highly involved mothers if their mothers had graduate or professional school experience. The report showed 10% of children whose fathers had less than a high school education had fathers who were actively involved in the school, while 41% of children whose fathers had graduate or professional school experience had highly involved fathers. Winquist (1998) also reported parents who have high expectations for their children's education were more likely to be parents with a high school education or better. A 1993 study reported children

whose parents lacked a high school diploma were more likely to do poorly in school and more likely to drop out before graduating (Anderson, 2000).

Social and Economic Reasons

In studies of the plethora of research regarding parental involvement, Epstein (1995) stated differences in social situations and economics can provide barriers to parental involvement. Unless the school specifically organizes opportunities to involve families in unique ways, single parents who are employed outside the home are less involved, on average, at the school building than married couples. This trend holds true for parents who live far from the school and fathers. Schools in affluent communities tend to have more positive family involvement. Positive involvement includes communications between school and home regarding positive accomplishments of students and events occurring at schools. On the other hand, schools in economically depressed communities make more negative parental contact. This type of contact includes discussions about problems and difficulties students are having. Social and economic issues have an effect on involvement, and schools must work past these issues to encourage increased involvement levels.

In conclusion, many factors can play a role in whether parental involvement levels are at the level teachers and parents desire. Teacher and parent relationships, cultural differences, parenting styles, and educational levels of parents all play a role in the discussion of why involvement does not happen at a desired level. Teachers and parents must move beyond these barriers and find ways to improve involvement levels and improve the relationship between home and school.

Improving Parent Involvement Levels

Schools have used various approaches to gain greater parent involvement. These approaches have many features in common. Many programs focus on parenting skills used at home, and many also focus on communication between school and home. There are other common factors including a discussion on how to use volunteers and getting parents involved in the governance of the school (Bauch, 1994; Davies, 1991).

School Initiated Training

One method suggested to increase parent involvement among parents of lower education levels is to train them in areas that will not only benefit the child, but the parents as well. For some parents education today is very different from what they experienced when they were in school. This sometimes causes a fear of the unknown which causes some parents to avoid the classroom (Coleman, 1991b). Many parents would be surprised to learn teachers are sometimes equally as anxious about meeting with parents. New teachers are often especially anxious because they have not been trained on how to deal with parents (Katz, 1996).

Other parents may be intimidated because it reminds them of struggles they might have had in school (Coleman, 1991b). Bad education memories are especially prevalent with parents of Title I students. Their parents are even less likely to be involved in their children's education, often due to personally-experienced learning problems in school. This negative association with schooling keeps the parents away from the schools and keeps them less involved in the education of their children (Anderson, 2000).

Many schools have found parent training combats these previously mentioned feelings of inadequacy or intimidation many parents feel when it comes to education.

When parents become more knowledgeable about their child's education, the child is the one who benefits. The parents who receive some form of direct training in teaching reading skills can be involved and help their children learn better even if the parents themselves have poor reading backgrounds (Anderson, 2000).

More recent studies have shown increases in rates of progress in reading can be expected if parents are taught instructional methods with the ability to move past the usual ideas of practice and reinforcement (Anderson, 2000). A study by Wilks and Clarke (1988) revealed direct reading instruction given to parents on how to help their children had a positive effect on the reading skills of the children. The study took mothers and placed them in one of three groups: a trained group, an encouraged group, and a control group. The trained group received one hour of training every week for a month. The training consisted of instruction in reading skills training and correction techniques. The encouraged group attended a seminar where they learned about basic reading skills and the best way to choose an appropriate book, and the control group received no training. All of the children of the three groups of mothers were tested. The children of the trained group of mothers made more significant gains in reading level than the children of the other groups of mothers.

Possible Barriers to School Initiated Training

Despite the facts about how training parents has a positive effect on parent involvement and student achievement, many schools have not put together well-organized methods to train parents (Chavkin, 1989). Few teachers receive any form of education on how to involve families in their children's education, and the training they do receive often results in attitudes that exclude parents rather than include them. Some

teachers believe parents cannot or will not follow through with involvement. This attitude sometimes leads to no initiation of parent contact from teachers (Epstein, 1985). Teachers often receive little help in developing collaboration skills with parents. Many teachers think they can rely on their own accumulated experience in dealing with parents. While a teacher's personality and ability to relate with others are a large part of effective collaboration between the school and home, more efforts need to be made in providing teachers with adequate training and professional development opportunities in the area of parent involvement.

Other factors can be identified as reasons schools choose not to train or involve parents. Many schools only pay lip service to strengthening school-family partnerships. The idea is to placate some parents and appear praiseworthy to the general public (Liontos, 1992). Some schools are reluctant to involve parents in decision making and curriculum issues because they feel those issues are best handled by educators. Tensions often arise between parents and schools with regard to parent involvement in making managerial and policy decisions (Pena, 2000). Many parents wish to be involved in all aspects of education, and it is incumbent upon schools to find common ground so as not to alienate parents and the community.

Having parents involved in education should not be thought of as merely a nice idea. Teachers need the help of parents to do their jobs. It is important for teachers and parents come together to get parents more involved in education. While barriers to exist, they can be overcome through hard work and diligence from everyone involved. As the perceptions of parents and teachers are better understood, common ground with regards to effective involvement can be reached.

Parent Perceptions of Parental Involvement

It is important to understand what parents believe about parent involvement. What involvement methods do parents value most? Which methods do they value the least? Teachers and parents need to have an understanding of the answers to these questions in order to move forward in a reciprocal, mutually beneficial relationship. Teachers and parents have much to learn about how parent perceptions of schools and involvement in education can shape parent involvement levels. Both sides have a role to play in improving involvement, and they can begin by coming to a better understanding about what types of involvement are valued as effective.

Schools Can Affect Parent Perceptions of Involvement

A stereotype often appears to exist among many educators that parents do not seem to care about education. However, this stereotype is often rooted in what teachers perceive parent involvement to be. Teachers often perceive a lack of attendance at school functions as a sign of uncaring parents, but this belief may only reflect the paradigm of thought in education with regards to what parent involvement should be (Knopf & Swick, 2003).

Parents often take their involvement cues directly from teachers. If they feel their child's teacher is trustworthy and cares about the students, they are more likely to be responsive to teacher-initiated interactions. When trust is built, parents feel more empowered to take an active role and become more involved themselves, therefore building a reciprocal relationship between home and school (Knopf & Swick, 2003).

Educators must be aware of the ideas parents have about parental involvement. Some parents view involvement as taking the lead in monitoring responsibilities at home

while others view involvement as being actively involved at the school itself. Other parents might see an active role in the school as disrespectful and a sign of a lack of confidence in the school itself. Lawson (as cited in Knopf & Swick, 2007) argued on the whole, teachers tend to be more school-based in their beliefs while parents have a wider community view of involvement and the role of parents.

Research on Parent Perceptions of Parental Involvement

A 2003 qualitative study by Barge & Loges on teacher and parent perceptions of involvement yielded some significant findings. Using focus groups, the researchers were able to interview parents and teachers to find their views on parental involvement. For parents, the strongest theme which emerged from the groups was the importance of monitoring academic progress. This involved activities such as checking homework and class work on a regular basis. In addition to checking work at home, their idea of monitoring also involved keeping up with academic progress in general, usually through report cards and progress reports.

A second theme emerged from the Barge and Loges (2003) study. It was a belief parents equated parental involvement with building a personal relationship with their child's teachers. Parents seemed to feel their child would receive better treatment if faculty members were aware of their active involvement with their child's education. Parents suggested ideas such as more frequent parent-teacher conferences, more teacher commentary on progress reports, and using technology to disseminate information.

Parents also believed extracurricular school programs could be a key form of parent involvement. The rationale behind this belief was extracurricular activities benefited children by providing more opportunities for academic support, bringing more

mentors and adult role models into the lives of children, and allowing for a different kind of communication between parents, students, and the school. While parents indicated they realized participation in extracurricular activities was not a direct form of involvement, the indirect benefits made it worthwhile.

A final theme emerged in the study. Parents had a strong desire for a collaborative relationship between home, school, and community, and they believed this type of relationship would foster a more family-like atmosphere between home and school that would offer more support for the academic needs of their children. The parents indicated they wanted to be involved in the creation of meaningful programs at the school. These beliefs mirror Epstein's (1995) Type 5 and Type 6 categories of parent involvement. The parents discussed the need for the school to become more familiar with the uniqueness of each child's home life, believing this knowledge could positively affect how teachers relate to the students.

A similar study was conducted in 1997 (Baker) and yielded results which paralleled those of Barge and Loges. Parents of ninth grade students were surveyed via telephone, questionnaire, and focus groups. The parents in this study indicated they wished to become more active as volunteers in the school, and many admitted they could attend more conferences and meetings. The study also indicated the parents wanted to be more involved in decision making regarding curriculum, procedures, and school policies. Specific ideas such as helping with weekend tutoring classes were mentioned as well. Some parents were hesitant to get more involved in the governance of the school for fear their voices would not be heard. The parents involved in the focus groups agreed two-way communication was the key to parental involvement.

A recent study (Mann, 2006) indicated parents do indeed have different understandings of involvement, suggesting a better dialogue needs to exist between school and home if parents and teachers are to be on the same page. The study went on to state the parents' ideas of parental involvement often stemmed from their previous schooling experiences, citing their own parents' lack of involvement due to a fear of getting in the way of what the teacher was trying to accomplish.. "They [parents] also commented on how their parents did not question their teacher's teaching style, nor did they assist in the classroom" (para. 17). Parents indicated a belief if their child was struggling, the teacher would contact them. This idea lends itself to the traditional way of viewing the home and school relationship in which the relationship is initiated and dominated by the teacher.

These findings, along with those of others, such as Knopf and Swick (2007), explain many parents are ready to move beyond normal ideas of parental involvement to a higher level that fosters a collaborative relationship between school and home. The next step is for parents and schools to work together in order to better understand how to build reciprocal relationships to improve involvement and open the door to true collaboration between parents, teachers, and students.

Teacher Perceptions of Parental Involvement

More than 80 percent of new teachers say in order to be effective, they must be able to work well with parents. However, they also indicate communicating with and involving parents is typically the greatest challenge they face (Jacobson, 2005). According to the same Met Life Survey of the American Teacher, many teachers, especially new teachers, say they lack guidance from their administrators on parent

involvement, and approximately a quarter of those responding said they felt unprepared to engage parents in a dialogue about their children's education. With schools and parents focusing more and more on ways to involve parents, findings like these truly show what is going on in schools. While having a desire to find new ways to involve parents, many teachers are unsure about how to best engage parents in a reciprocal, positive relationship.

Traditional Beliefs Affect Perceptions

Teachers, much like parents, often have their beliefs about parent involvement shaped by their past and present experiences. Many teachers fall into the trap of complacently using the historical, teacher-dominant family involvement paradigm where the teacher is in control of decisions being made instead of fostering a partnership with parents (Comer, 2001). The school culture also impacts teacher beliefs on involvement. If a school operates with a sense of isolationism, teachers may adopt this idea and operate on an island, avoiding parental contact. As parents respond by not being involved, a vicious cycle can ensue in which neither parents nor teachers take an active communication role (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). In some cases, teacher perceptions of involvement are also affected by ongoing experiences. Negative experiences can foster a stereotype of what parent involvement is, and this can lead to teachers being less enthusiastic about including parents in the educational process.

Researchers argue the traditional, teacher-dominated paradigm needs to change (Comer, 2001; Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). The traditional belief does not account for differences in parents and family contexts. A new belief system should be adopted which recognizes cultural differences existing within many communities, and as school

populations become more diverse, more attention must be given to ways in which involvement strategies can become more individualized to allow for more parents to be involved. Souto-Manning and Swick (2006) believe “employing a traditional definition of parent involvement serves to promote prejudices and further marginalize children and families as a whole” (p. 189). They also argue for several key elements of empowerment: focusing on family and child strengths, valuing different forms of involvement, and trust-building through collaborative home and school relationships.

Research on Teacher Perceptions of Parent Involvement

In their qualitative study of teacher perceptions on involvement, Barge and Loges (2003) found teacher responses tended to fall into one of four themes: “communication with teachers, participation in the child’s school and the child’s life in general, normal parenting duties including supervision of the child, and discipline, particularly support for punishment administered by the school” (p. 153). Teachers characterized the theme of communication as parents initiating contact with teachers and keeping an open line of communication with their child. They believed frequently asking about school and discussing school in general led to positive benefits for the students. Teachers also believed this type of communication leads to higher expectations, further enhancing the involvement. The theme of participation seemed similar to that of communication, but the teachers defined participation as being more about action, not just communication. This is the area where teachers discussed activities such as monitoring homework and academic progress. The theme of parenting revolved around normal parenting duties such as ensuring the children practice good nutrition habits, exhibit proper hygiene, and have access to needed materials and supplies. Lastly, the theme of discipline involved parental

support of discipline given at school, not punishment at home. The teachers wanted parents to help the students foster a respect for authority and responsible behaviors.

Baker (1997) conducted a similar qualitative study involving 87 teachers within 14 focus groups. Her findings indicated teachers were most concerned with support, communication, parental insight, homework help, and expectations. Baker reported, "At the most general level teachers wanted parents to support them in their efforts to educate their children. They spoke very strongly about how they asked parents to support them as professionals who have their child's best interest at heart" (p. 157). The teachers felt strongly in their belief the children and their education should be central to any involvement.

For the teachers who were surveyed, homework help was the most popular form of requested involvement. The teachers felt it was more important for parents to monitor to see the work was being completed rather than actually helping the students do the homework. There was concern that in an attempt to help the students, parents may be going too far and negatively impacting the intended purpose of the homework which was most often identified as practice. In a surprise, the act of parents reading to their children was not mentioned in several of the focus groups used for the research. However, some teacher responses fell into categories that could include reading at home, and the researcher believed the lack of direct discussion regarding reading to children at home occurred because either they were not asking parents to read with their children or because it was so obviously beneficial this activity was not mentioned.

Open communication was mentioned often by teachers as an important aspect of parental involvement. The idea of open communication was defined as communication

working in both directions. Teachers mentioned six different, yet overlapping forms of open communication: scheduled meetings, informal meetings, phone calls, home visits, written communication, and the dissemination of school documents. While many of these forms of communication would be considered typical, the idea of home visits stands out as atypical. Meyer and Mann (2006) agree home visits can be helpful, reporting teachers believe home visits were a promising way to enhance school and home relationships. Teachers believed home visits allowed the teachers to improve communication, learn more about the student, and gain a better understanding of how a child's home affects his academics.

In a longitudinal study conducted over 2 years, Reynolds (1992) collected data from parents, teachers, and students regarding perceptions of parental involvement. He also gathered data from reading and math test scores, primarily focusing on students from low-income or minority families. He found a low to moderate correlation between parental involvement and scores on the achievement tests. He also found teacher perceptions of parental involvement had the highest correlation with student achievement while parent and student perceptions were also correlated with achievement. Regardless of the source, perceptions of parental involvement significantly predicted student achievement in both years of the study.

Parental expectations were also discussed by teachers in the Baker (1997) study. Some teachers even indicated expectations should be the first form of parent involvement. The teachers tied high expectations with how the parent should relate to their children. They indicated it was important for parents to take time to talk to their children and emphasize how important education really is. One teacher stated it in this

manner: “You just have to convince some of the parents...that you know their children can do better than they have and that they should plant these seeds, not just the teachers” (Baker, 1997, p. 161).

Lastly, teachers gave insight as to how they try to encourage involvement. They indicated involvement was encouraged in several ways: special projects in the classroom, convenient scheduling of conferences, written notes, volunteer opportunities, creation of a positive relationship with the parents, phone calls, and joint problem solving. The teachers were especially interested in the idea of joint problem solving. They believed it was vitally important to have all stakeholders involved when problems arise. There was hope if parents were a part of the problem solving process, they would be more likely to be involved when there were no problems to discuss.

A 1995 study (Pryor) of ninth grade teachers demonstrated similar findings. Teachers were given a questionnaire which asked for agreement or disagreement on a variety of statements, and they were also allowed a chance to voice their opinions via open ended questions. Interestingly, over half of the teachers surveyed focused on what schools and teachers could do to better involve parents. Some felt more administrative support was needed to improve involvement. Ideas such as more time for communication, positive forms to send home with students, and improved leadership were mentioned as ways administrators could help increase positive parental involvement. The teachers also indicated parents should be more concerned about the after school activities, not just schoolwork. Despite contrary evidence, 69% of the teachers surveyed agreed the problem with most teenagers is the lack of concern shown by parents with regards to their education. Pryor summarized by stating, “Teachers are eager for greater involvement, but

feel frustrated by the effects of divorce on families and overwhelmed by the expectation that schools should initiate activities to solve students' problems with motivation and achievement" (p. 418). The report concluded by placing more onus on school administrators to help facilitate team work and mutual problem solving by all involved stakeholders, especially parents and teachers.

In conclusion, teachers from all levels indicated the need to improve parent involvement, and the idea of better communication appears to be paramount. The communication desired by teachers is reciprocal, not just teacher dominated. While barriers to involvement exist, some even created by teachers or educational bureaucracy, educators appear eager to find new ways to integrate parents into all aspects of education in an attempt to improve student learning.

The call is now for teachers to move beyond typical forms of involvement which tend to be one-way, teacher-led functions. Kinnaman (2002) argues in order for schools to foster meaningful involvement, educators need create an atmosphere where parents can move beyond being a supporter and become partners in their children's education. He advocated thinking of parent involvement in the same way educators use *Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* to design curriculum. Kinnaman envisions parents moving from the role of supporter to advocate, partner, and eventually to a position of developer, designing educational experiences at home to support the school curriculum.

Summary

Miretzky (2004) reported parents and teachers tend to have differing views on what it means to be effectively involved in education, but there is much common ground to be found between school and home. She performed a qualitative study utilizing parent

and teacher interviews and focus groups intended to search similarities and differences amongst teachers and parents with regard to the subject of parent involvement. Themes began to arise throughout the research as parents and teachers identified defensiveness and communication as barriers to the alliances both groups wished to form. Miretzky concluded it was of vital importance for teachers and parents to come together regularly to discuss ways in which schools and homes can better interact in order to improve the quality of education at the school and in the home. Both groups had a desire to be seen and heard, and they felt as if, at times, as if they were acting against each other instead of with each other. It is vital for teachers and parents to have a better grasp on how parent involvement is perceived by each other if they are to form partnerships and find the best way to positively affect education.

The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) sponsored a 1996 research project aimed to find out how schools worked to involve parents and to gauge if their efforts were effective. Using this data, Chen (2001) worked to discover the level of agreement between parents and teachers with regards to how well schools work to involve parents in the educational process. Chen found similarities in how parents and schools perceived some aspects of parent involvement. For example, parents and schools responded in similar fashion to questions about volunteer opportunities and feedback on children's school performance. However, wide discrepancies were found when both groups were questioned about how school convey their overall performance to parents and opportunities for parents to be involved in school decision making. For these results, as school sizes increased, the magnitude of the differences increased. Chen placed responsibility on parents and schools, indicating both groups must work harder to

effectively communicate each other's goals and wishes regarding parent involvement. The report indicated, in general, schools and parents were not often on the same page when it comes to parent involvement and better communication, from both groups, could improve the relationship and in turn improve parent involvement.

Parental involvement is generally accepted to have a positive impact on the academic achievement of students, but much debate surrounds agreement on the definition of parental involvement. Many studies have been performed on this topic, both qualitative and quantitative, but the lack of a true, working definition of involvement makes it more difficult for researchers to draw clear conclusions about the scope and effectiveness of parental involvement. This has led to research indicating parents and teachers have competing views on the definition of involvement. These differences often arise around the ideas of discipline and the initiation of communication. However, many similarities exist as well. Both parents and teachers seem to believe communication is crucial in building a relationship between parents and teachers. There is also agreement stating parental involvement entails the monitoring of progress through various means such as helping with homework and attending conferences. A review of the literature shows both parents and teachers want the best for children, but differences in perception can lead to a lack of understanding between school and home about the design and implementation of effective parental involvement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this descriptive, cross-sectional survey study was to compare the perceptions of parent involvement between parents and teachers and search for relationships between demographic categories and perceptions of effective involvement. It is hoped that through a renewed understanding between teachers and parents, positive relationships can be formed to improve student achievement by involving all stakeholders in a focused attempt to improve education. Reciprocity amongst school, parents, and community has been pursued by researchers, educators, and parents alike (Knopf and Swick, 2007), but differences in parent involvement perceptions can make the desired reciprocity hard to achieve. Varying definitions of parental involvement have caused troubles for all stakeholders involved. Relationships between the community and the school have been inconsistently measured by researchers, and more research needs to be conducted to more accurately gauge these relationships (Kohl et al, 2000). Joyce Epstein has studied the construct of parent involvement for years, and she has broken it down into six distinct categories in order to truly and fully define parent involvement. She defined her Six Dimensions of Parental Involvement as: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein et al, 2002). This study utilized these six dimensions as well as the dimension of parental expectations in order to gauge the perceptions of teachers and parents with regards to parental involvement.

Research Design

This descriptive study utilized a cross-sectional survey design to seek answers to the following research questions:

- RQ1.* What involvement activities do parents find most effective?
- RQ2.* What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?
- RQ3.* How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?
- RQ4.* Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

Before beginning to sample the populations, permission was requested from the school system to conduct the research. The request was granted (Appendix E), and the system even aided in developing a sample of the parent population and contacting the entire targeted teacher population. Once the parent and teacher populations were identified, the surveying process began.

For the parent surveys, the researcher delivered the surveys to each school to be sent home with the students to their parents. A collection box was placed at each school, and the students were informed they would receive a reward upon the return of the surveys. The parent surveys contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, and consent was implied once the parents completed and returned the surveys to the school. Each survey was placed in an envelope with the students' and parents' names

clearly marked on the outside. On the inside of the envelope, a return envelope was provided for the parents to seal their completed surveys so as to protect their anonymity. After the indicated time period had expired, the researcher collected the boxes from each school and began sorting the data.

For the teacher surveys, the researcher utilized the school system's attendance program to allow teachers to complete the survey electronically. This type of survey delivery was chosen because, as Dillman (2000) reported, e-surveys have advantages such as prompter returns, less non-response of items, and the opportunity for respondents to complete the surveys at their own pace. Ease of use was also a factor when the researcher chose this delivery method. The main drawback to e-surveys is a possible lack of technology by those surveyed, but in this case, each classroom teacher must have access and use the Infinite Campus software each day in order to complete classroom attendance. This placed the survey in front of them each day for the time period allotted.

The researcher made contact with the principal of each elementary school, and each principal agreed to contact every classroom teacher in their school to make them aware of the survey. In addition, upon logging in to Infinite Campus to complete their daily attendance, each classroom teacher received notification that a survey was available for them to complete. The teacher survey also contained a cover letter informing them of the purpose of the study, and consent was implied upon their completion and submission of the survey. A three week window was given for the teachers to complete the survey. Their submissions were made anonymously. While the researcher knew who had completed the survey, no data could be linked to any subject once their surveys were

submitted. When the three week time period was over, the researcher was able to access the raw data of each survey submitted by the teachers.

Research Question & Null Hypotheses

The purpose of this study is to determine:

RQ1. What involvement activities do parents find most effective?

RQ2. What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?

RQ3. How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?

H₁ There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of parents and teachers with regards to effective parent involvement.

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

H₂ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing races/ethnicities with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

H₃ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing marital statuses with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

- H*₄ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing age ranges with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₅ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₆ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing annual income levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₇ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing years of experience with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.
- H*₈ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Research Context

This study took place in Georgia, and the research activities covered a six week period from February 19, 2008, to April 1, 2008. The studied system is a large, growing, rural school district of 13,412 students in Georgia. The largest city in the system is home to approximately 28,000 people, and the town is known for its production of carpet and flooring. Many of the parents of students in the school system are employed in the manufacturing sector. The system itself consists of twelve elementary schools, five

middle schools, three high schools, and two special purpose schools. The system is the twenty-sixth largest school district in the state of Georgia and has experienced a continuing increase in student enrollment over the past several years. The population of the school system breaks down demographically in this manner: 60% Caucasian, 33% Hispanic, 4% multi-racial, 2% African-American, and 1% Asian. Out of the entire school system, 57% of the students qualify for a free or reduced lunch program. This study focused on the elementary school population. The demographic breakdown for these twelve schools is similar to the system as a whole: 55% Caucasian, 37% Hispanic, 5% multi-racial, 2% African-American, and 1% Asian. In the elementary school population, 64% of the students participate in the free and reduced lunch program. All twelve elementary schools are Title I schools.

Population

For the parent sample, the researcher chose a random sample population of 20 percent of the target population, all elementary parents of first through fifth grade students. The target population was 5,316 subjects. The final random sample size was 1,064 subjects. The system provided the random sample through the use of its attendance program, Infinite Campus. All first through fifth grade students were sorted, and the program randomly chose every fifth student, ensuring their parents would be designated as subjects for the research. The attendance program was also able to sort the subjects in a manner so as to prevent parents with multiple students attending elementary schools in the system from receiving more than one survey. Of the 1,064 subjects in the random sample population, 478 participated in the study, yielding a response rate of 45 percent.

The subject population reflects a wide variety of subjects in several demographic areas. These areas will be utilized further in Chapter 4 as part of the data analysis. Tables 1 through 4 provide the frequencies and percentages of the demographic areas studied in the parent population.

Table 1.

Parent Demographics: Race/Ethnicity (N=478)

	Frequency	Percent
Caucasian	285	59.6
Hispanic	152	31.8
African-American	12	2.5
Other	16	3.3
Total Responses	465	97.3
Missing	13	2.7
Total	478	100.0

Table 1 indicates that the majority of the parent population indicated they were Caucasian, and nearly a third of the parents reported they were Hispanic.

Table 2.

Parent Demographics: Marital Status (N=478)

	Frequency	Percent
Married (one time)	277	57.9
Remarried	66	13.8
Divorced/Separated	79	16.5
Widowed	4	.8
Never married	28	5.9
Total Responses	454	95.0
Missing	24	5.0
Total	478	100.0

Table 2 details the marital status of the surveyed parents. Over half of the parents indicated they were currently married for the first time, while almost a third of the parents reported they were either divorced or remarried.

Table 3 reports the demographic information dealing with the age of the parents. The majority of the parents surveyed were in their thirties, while a nearly equal amount indicated they were in their twenties or forties.

Table 3.

Parent Demographics: Age of Parent (N=478)

	Frequency	Percent
20-29	82	17.2
30-39	264	55.2
40-49	93	19.5
50 or over	27	5.6
Total Responses	466	97.5
Missing	12	2.5
Total Responses	478	100
Missing	24	5.0
Total	478	100.0

Table 4 offers the information dealing with the education level of the parents surveyed. Just over 17% of the parents surveyed indicated that they had earned a college degree, and 70% reported they had earned a high school diploma.

Table 4.

Parent Demographics: Education Level (N=478)

	Frequency	Percent
Some high school	105	22.0
High school graduate	100	20.9
Some college	139	29.1
Bachelor's degree	39	8.2
Graduate degree	44	9.2
Total Responses	427	89.3
Missing	51	10.7
Total	478	100.0

Table 5 reports the data regarding the income level of the surveyed parents. Just over one-third of the parents surveyed indicated their income was \$25,000 or less, while nearly the same amount indicated they earn over \$50,000 per year.

Table 5.

Parent Demographics: Income Level (N=478)

	Frequency	Percent
\$0-\$25,000	178	37.2
\$25,000-\$50,000	105	22.0
\$50,000-\$75,000	87	18.2
\$75,000-\$100,000	43	9.0
\$100,000 or more	36	7.5
Total	449	93.9
Missing	29	6.1
Total	478	100.0

For the teacher sample, the researcher was able to utilize the entire target population of 330 elementary teachers. The survey was conducted by utilizing the school system's attendance program, Infinite Campus. All classroom teachers have an Infinite Campus account, and the survey was sent to each classroom teacher in all county elementary schools via their Infinite Campus account. In addition, each principal notified the classroom teachers in their buildings to inform them they would have the opportunity to participate in this research study by using their Infinite Campus account. Of the 330 teachers in the targeted population, 104 teachers completed the instrument, yielding a 32 percent response rate.

The teachers surveyed represent a wide variety of years of experience and education levels. These areas will be discussed further in chapter 4 as part of the data analysis. The subjects were overwhelmingly female (91%), but in the areas of educational level and years of experience, there were a range of responses. Table 6 and Table 7 provide the frequencies of the demographic areas studied in the teacher population.

Table 6.

Teacher Demographics: Years of Experience (N=104)

	Frequency	Percent
0-3 years	22	21.2
4-10 years	32	30.8
10-20 years	30	28.8
20+ years	19	18.3
Total Responses	103	99.1
Missing	1	.9
Total	104	100.0

Table 7.

Teacher Demographics: Education Level (N=104)

	Frequency	Percent
Bachelor's degree	29	27.9
Master's degree	52	50.0
Specialist's degree	21	20.3
Doctorate degree	1	.9
Total Responses	103	99.1
Missing	1	.9
Total	104	100.0

Survey Instrument

The survey instruments were created by the researcher. One instrument was distributed to parents (Appendix A), and the other instrument was distributed to teachers (Appendix B). Due to the high Hispanic population in the surveyed school system, a Spanish translation of the instrument was also provided for Hispanic families (Appendix D). Both parent and teacher instruments consist of 28 statements to be valued using a rating scale in which the respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of each parent involvement strategy. The scale ranged from a high score of 5 (highly effective) to a low score of 1 (not effective). For each strategy, the highest possible response was a response of highly effective, and it received a value of five. The lowest possible response was a response of not effective, and it received a value of one. A response of two, three, or four indicated a response falling in between the lowest and highest response level.

Each involvement dimension was then given a raw score by totaling the values indicated in the questions mapped to each dimension, and a mean score was calculated for each dimension by dividing the raw score by the total number responses. The higher the mean score, the more effective the respondents found the particular parental involvement statement to be. Average rating scores were then tabulated for each category by dividing the mean score by the number of parent involvement statements listed for each category.

Twenty-four of the statements were adapted from Epstein's (2002) six types of parental involvement: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Each of the six involvement types was assigned statements that described a parental involvement activity designated by Epstein to represent that particular type of involvement. After a review of the literature surrounding parental expectations as a form of parent involvement, three additional involvement activities were generated and added to gauge the subjects' perceptions with regard to the effectiveness of high parental expectations as a form of parental involvement. These twenty-six statements were mapped to each of the seven involvement areas mentioned earlier, and the subjects were not informed the statements corresponded to a certain involvement type. A map of the items and their corresponding involvement dimensions can be found in Table 8.

Table 8.

Parent Involvement Survey Item Mappings

Dimension	Items
Parenting	1, 2, & 3
Communication	5, 6, 7, 8, & 9
Volunteering	11, 12, & 13
Learning at Home	15, 16, 17, & 18
Decision Making	19, 20, 22, & 23
Collaborating with the Community	24, 25, 26, & 28
High Expectations	4, 14, & 27

Two other statements (Items 10 & 21) were added to help determine the validity of the instrument. These strategies were designed to elicit an obvious answer range, one positive and one negative. The implications of the responses to these strategies will be further discussed in Chapter 5.

Both sets of subjects received the same survey instruments. The only difference between the surveys was the demographic questions included with each instrument. The demographic information was tailored specifically for each population in order to analyze factors within each population.

Field testing was used to strengthen the face validity of the instrument. A team of parents, teachers, and administrators were recruited to field test the instrument. Each group felt the survey measured what it intended to measure and the listed strategies were common and understood. However, suggestions were made with regards to the wording

of some of the items. The feedback given by the field testers was synthesized and changes to some of the survey items were made. Most involved removing terms or phrases that made the statements somewhat unclear. After the suggested changes were made, the instrument was field tested again. Respondents stated that the directions and strategies were clearly understandable and no further changes were made. Content validity was enhanced by using a wide variety of parent involvement activities in the survey to represent all facets of parental involvement. These strategies were developed by an expert in the field, Dr. Epstein, and they encompassed a myriad of parent involvement activities deemed by Epstein to fit within her six parent involvement dimensions. To also strengthen the validity of the instruments, the anonymity of the subjects was kept throughout the research process.

The reliability of the instruments was determined by utilizing Cronbach's alpha to find the internal consistency of the survey. The reliability of the survey was calculated as, $\alpha = .929$. Due to the values found using Cronbach's alpha, a measure of reliability, the results were deemed reliable.

Data Analysis

Once all the raw data were collected, the researcher began the process of sorting and coding the surveys. The teacher surveys were completed utilizing the school system's attendance program, Infinite Campus. Its survey designer program allowed for the data to be exported into Microsoft Excel. The results were then reviewed to search for any mistakes. Next, the raw numbers were imported into SPSS, a statistical analysis software program. The parent surveys were collected, and the data were coded and input into Microsoft Excel. From there, the parent results were imported into SPSS. Once both sets

of data were entered into SPSS, the surveys were merged into one data file in order to run a variety of statistical analyses.

With all of the information in one program, the analysis began. First, the researcher sought to find answers to the first two research questions:

RQ1. What involvement activities do parents find most effective?

RQ2. What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?

In order to answer these research questions, descriptive tests were conducted to calculate mean score ranges, totals, standard deviations, and distribution curves for each of the seven involvement categories queried by the surveys. Next, other statistical tests were used to answer the third research question:

RQ3. How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?

The researcher calculated means and standard deviations for each population. In order to determine whether the differences between the populations were statistically significant, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted.

Lastly, the researcher sought to answer the final research question:

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

In order to determine the answer to this question, ANOVA was used within each population to search for significant differences. For the parent population, marital status, race/ethnicity, annual income level, education level, and age were the demographic information used in the ANOVA tests. For the teacher population years of experience and education level were used. When significant differences were found using ANOVA, post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine exactly where the significant differences existed.

After all statistical tests had been run, the researcher created tables, charts, and graphs to allow for easy display. Narratives were also written in order to further explain the findings.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine what involvement strategies parents and teachers found most effective, to compare and contrast their perceptions of involvement, and discover how demographics might relate to the perceptions of parents and teachers. In this chapter, the methodology of the research was detailed. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was used to answer the research questions. The following chapter will discuss the results of the research.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Parent involvement has been a hard construct to define due to varying definitions and perceptions by all stakeholders involved in education, particularly teachers and parents, of what strategies demonstrate effective involvement. The study reported here examined teacher and parent perceptions of parental involvement as well as factors possibly having an effect on those perceptions. This chapter is organized in terms of the four research questions posed in Chapter 1:

- RQ1.* What involvement activities do parents find most effective?
- RQ2.* What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?
- RQ3.* How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?
- RQ4.* Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

Each question will be addressed by using the data obtained from the survey of teachers and parents with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Data Preparation and Analysis

As discussed in Chapter 3, the surveys sought to gauge the opinions of parents and teachers with regards to the effectiveness of seven categories of involvement. Six of the categories of involvement are based on the work of Joyce Epstein's (2002)

Framework of Six Types of Involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. The seventh category included dealt with parental expectations as a type of parental involvement. The surveys utilized a numeric rating scale in which the respondents were asked to indicate the effectiveness of each parent involvement strategy. For each strategy, the highest possible response was a response of highly effective, and it received a value of five. The lowest possible response was a response of not effective, and it received a value of one. A response of two, three, or four indicated a response falling in between the lowest and highest response level. Each category was then given a raw score by totaling the values indicated in the questions mapped to each category, and a mean score was calculated for each involvement dimension. Average rating scores were then tabulated for each category by dividing the mean by the total by the number of parent involvement statements listed for each category.

Research questions one and two were addressed by using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations. Histograms were also created to show how answers were distributed in each category throughout both populations. Research question three was addressed by using an independent samples *t*-test to search for the statistical significance of the responses to the survey by the two populations. The fourth research question was addressed by using ANOVA to look for significant differences between demographics and responses within each population. Post-hoc tests were run when significant results were found to show specifically where the significant differences were found within the demographic categories.

Research Question One

The first research question examined parent perceptions of effective parental involvement with regards to Epstein's six categories of parental involvement and the category of parent expectations as a form of parental involvement. Table 8 displays the descriptive statistics for parents sorted by categories of involvement.

Table 9.

Parent Perceptions of Parent Involvement Strategies

Involvement Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Avg. Score
Parenting	461	11.05	2.69	3.68
Communicating	458	22.10	2.84	4.42
Volunteering	458	11.87	2.60	3.96
Learning at Home	453	17.18	2.98	4.30
Decision Making	438	14.50	3.84	3.63
Collaborating with the Community	454	15.47	3.51	3.87
Parental Expectations	459	13.71	1.78	4.57

The results in Table 9 show parents provided the highest ratings (highly effective strategies) in the categories of Parental Expectations (4.57), Communicating (4.42), and Learning at Home (4.30). The category scoring the lowest was Decision Making (3.63). As a whole, parents rated all seven categories as being somewhat effective or higher, indicating a belief each category was an effective parental involvement strategy.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of parent responses to the survey when the statements came from the Parenting category.

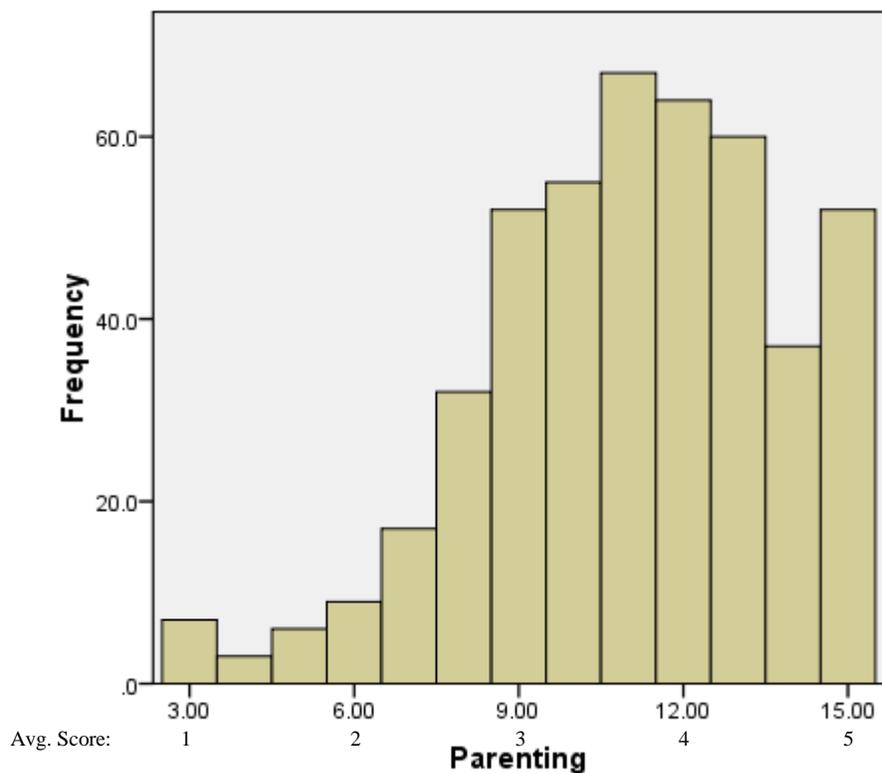


Figure 1. Parent Perceptions: Parenting Dimension

Most parents rated statements from the parenting dimension as being somewhat effective or better. The parenting dimension was the second lowest rated dimension surveyed, and Figure 1 shows a somewhat normal distribution of answers with a slightly positive skew, especially at the highly effective level. A high number of parents gave all of the statements in the parenting dimension a rating of five for a raw total of fifteen, indicating a belief all of the parenting strategies were highly effective. This trend will be seen throughout the parent ratings in all dimensions. Possible reasons for this trend will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Figure 2 displays the parents' ratings of statements in the dimension of Communicating.

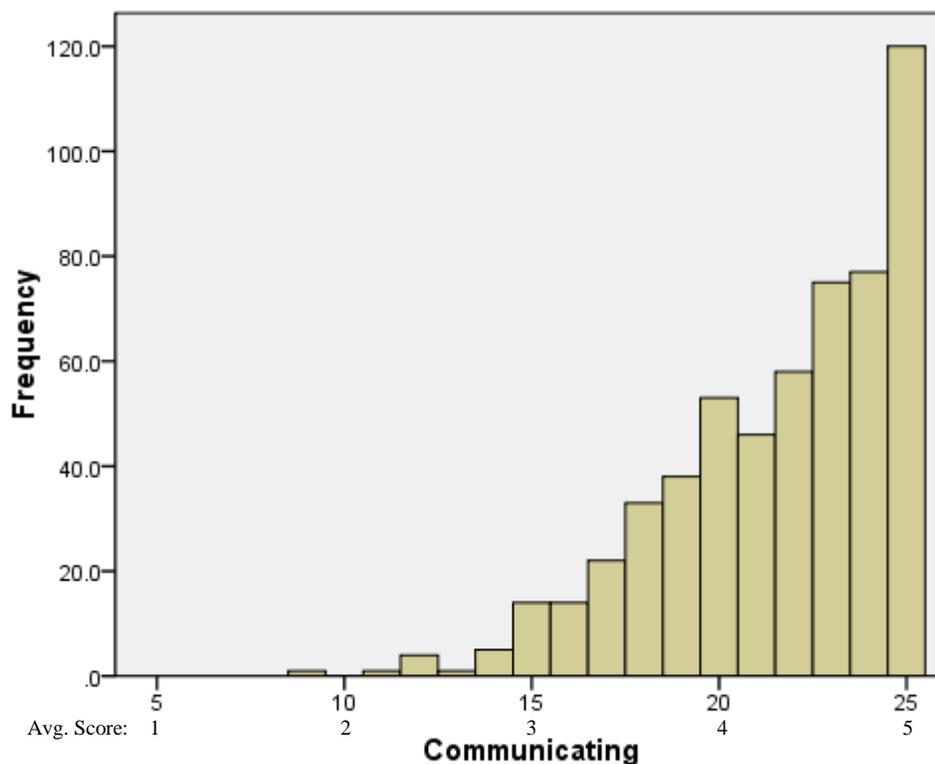


Figure 2. Parent Perceptions: Communicating Dimension

Figure 2 indicates most parents rated the items in the Communicating dimension as highly effective. In fact, a perfect score of twenty-five, indicating answers of five on each strategy in the Communicating category, was the answer most given by parents in this dimension.

Parent responses to statements in the category of Volunteering are displayed in Figure 3. Parent responses to statements in this category show most responses deemed the involvement strategies to be somewhat effective to highly effective. The distribution of answers was skewed positively toward the high end of the scale.

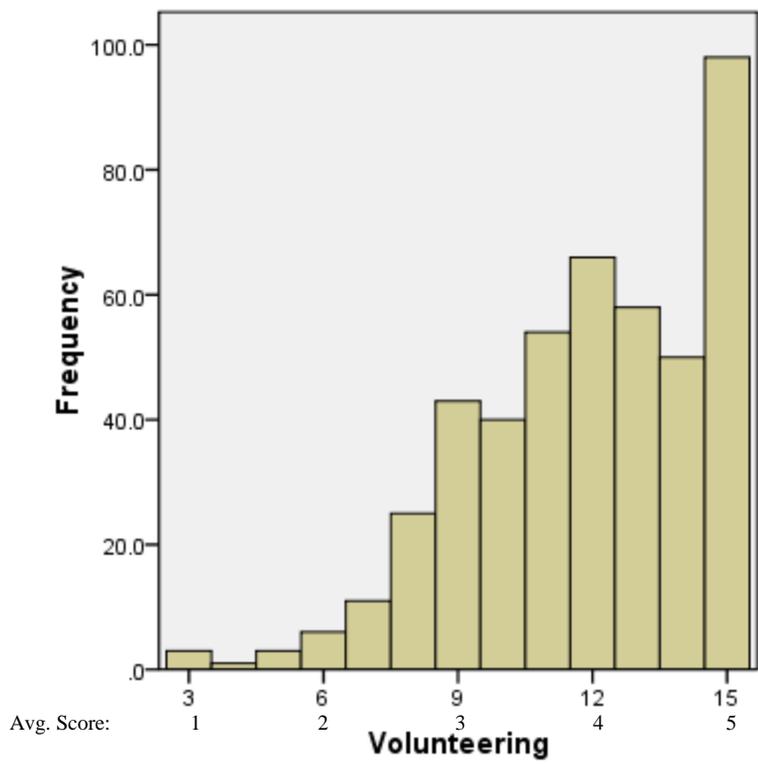


Figure 3. Parent Perceptions: Volunteering Dimension

Figure 4 presents the distribution of parent answers in the Learning at Home dimension. Responses to involvement strategies in the Learning at Home dimension yielded high scores. The majority of ratings were in the four or five range, with a high amount of perfect ratings. Most parents believed strategies such as holding family nights at school, developing a regular schedule of homework, and allowing families to participate in goal setting were highly effective involvement strategies.

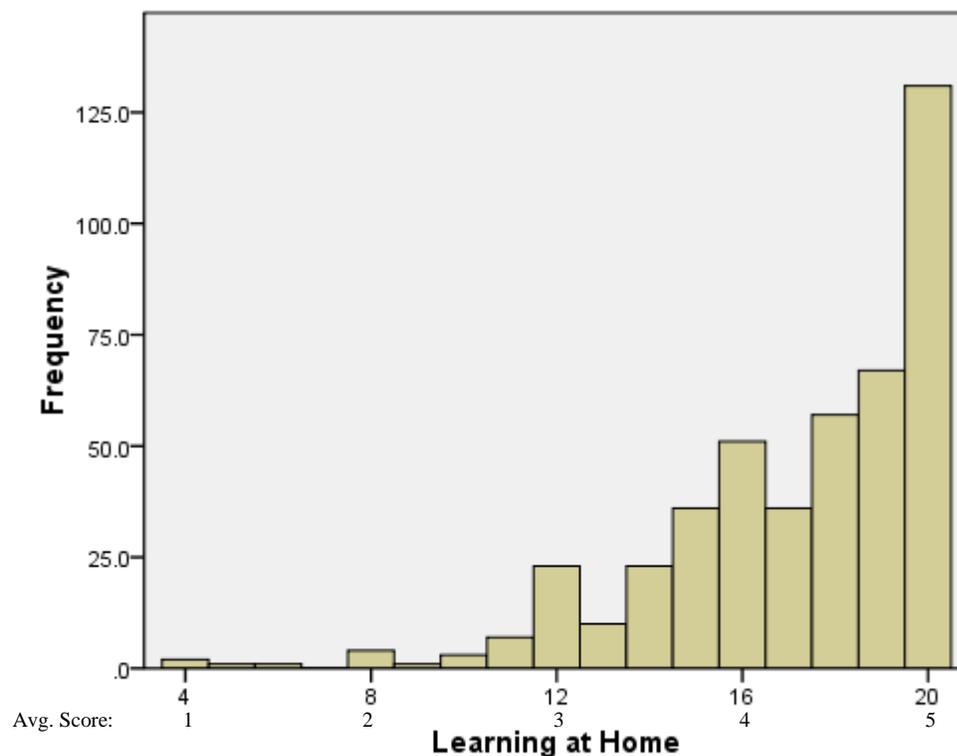


Figure 4. Parent Perceptions: Learning at Home Dimension

Parent responses to involvement strategies in the area of Decision Making are presented in Figure 5. While Decision Making was the lowest rated dimension, most parent answers indicated the strategies within the Decision Making category were at least somewhat effective. The distribution of answers followed a more normal distribution than answers in the Learning at Home and Volunteering dimensions, but again there were a high number of perfect scores throughout the category.

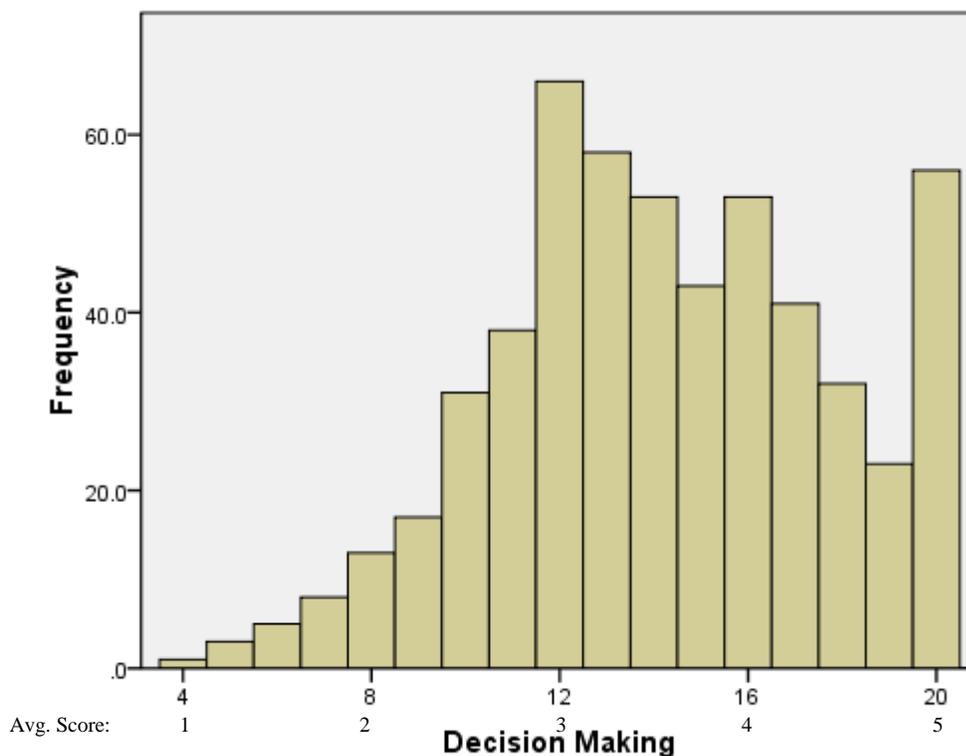


Figure 5. Parent Perceptions: Decision Making Dimension

The distribution of responses represented by the final dimension of Epstein's framework, Collaborating with the Community, is displayed in Figure 6. Distributions of responses in the Collaborating with the Community dimension demonstrate a normal distribution of answers with a skew towards the highly effective end. Most parents indicated the strategies aiming to bring the community and the school into a working relationship to be somewhat to highly effective parental involvement strategies.

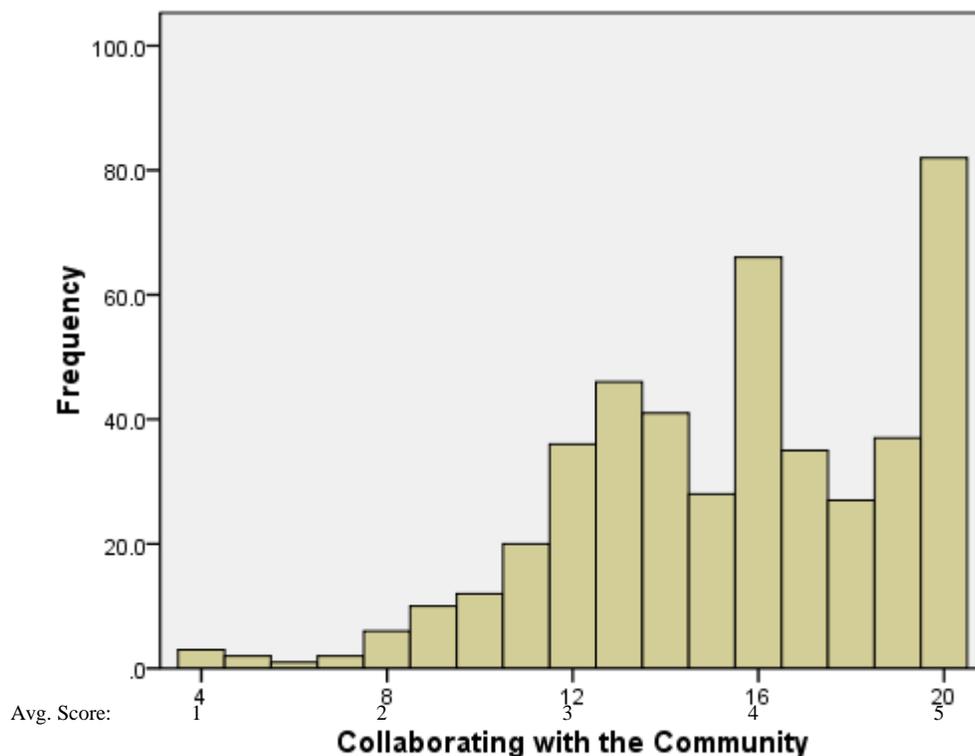


Figure 6. Parent Perceptions: Collaborating with the Community Dimension

The distribution results of the seventh dimension measured by the parent survey, Parental Expectations, are shown in Figure 7. By virtue of its average rating (4.57), parents rated the strategies within the dimension of Parental Expectations higher than any other involvement category. This is evident in the distribution of responses as well. Overwhelmingly, parents gave highly effective ratings to each of the three strategies listed in the Parental Expectations category, with nearly 232 parents giving all three strategies a score of five.

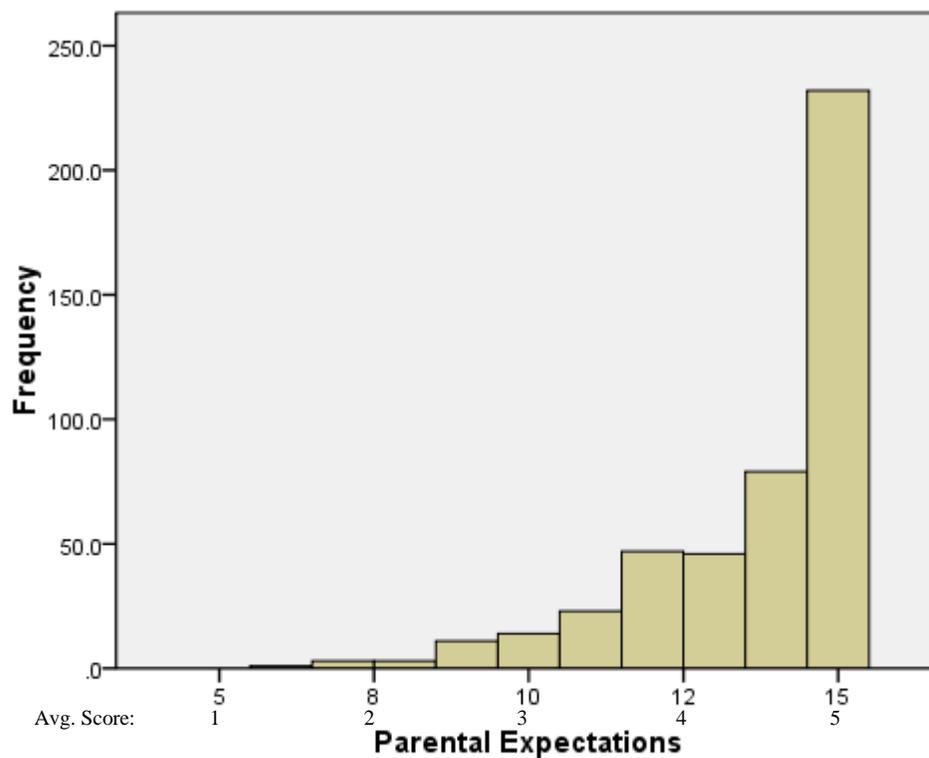


Figure 7. Parent Perceptions: Parental Expectations Dimension

Research Question Two

The second research question examined teacher perceptions of effective parental involvement with regards to Epstein's six categories of parental involvement and the category of parental expectations as a form of parental involvement. Table 10 displays the descriptive statistics for teachers sorted by the seven surveyed categories of parental involvement.

Table 10.

Teacher Perceptions of Parent Involvement Strategies

Involvement Dimension	N	Mean	SD	Avg. Score
Parenting	104	11.04	1.99	3.68
Communicating	104	19.50	3.24	3.90
Volunteering	104	11.14	2.16	3.71
Learning at Home	104	15.28	2.68	3.82
Decision Making	104	13.38	2.90	3.35
Collaborating with the Community	104	14.44	2.06	3.61
Parental Expectations	104	12.86	1.06	4.29

The only dimension totaling an average score over four was the Parental Expectations dimension (4.29). Of Epstein's six types of involvement, the teachers surveyed rated Communicating (3.90) as the most effective form of involvement, while the lowest scoring form of parental involvement was Decision Making (3.35). All seven surveyed dimensions yielded scores which indicate teachers believed the strategies attributed to each dimension to be at least somewhat effective.

Figure 8 displays the distribution of responses by teachers to strategies in the dimension of Parenting. The responses of teachers to the statements regarding involvement strategies from the Parenting dimension are normally distributed with a slight skew towards the highly effective end of the scale. Most parents indicated strategies from this category were at least somewhat effective. Unlike the parent perceptions, there were not a large number of teachers who rated the strategies perfectly, indicating a score of five on all questions within the Parenting dimension. More

discussion will be given to this in Chapter 5 as this trend holds true for each of the dimensions of the teacher survey, though not quite to the degree of the parent surveys.

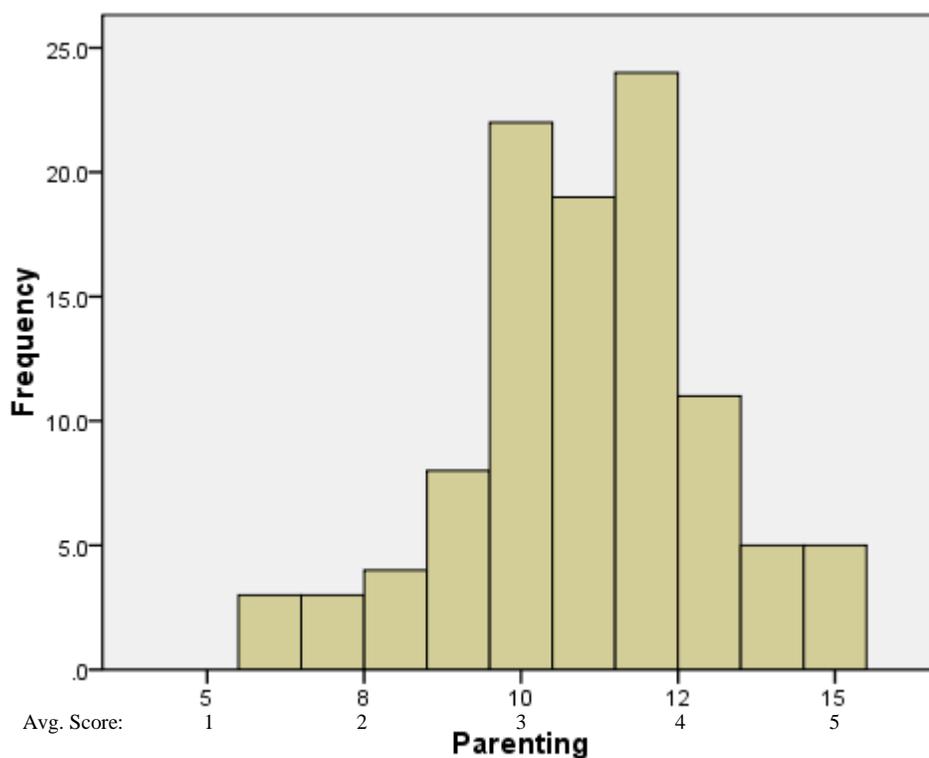


Figure 8. Teacher Perceptions: Parenting Dimension

The distribution of responses given by teachers in the dimension of Communicating is displayed in Figure 9. The distribution of responses for the Communicating dimension was quite skewed toward the highly effective end of the scale. While a normal distribution can be seen, an overwhelming majority of teachers found the strategies in the Communicating category to be at least somewhat effective.

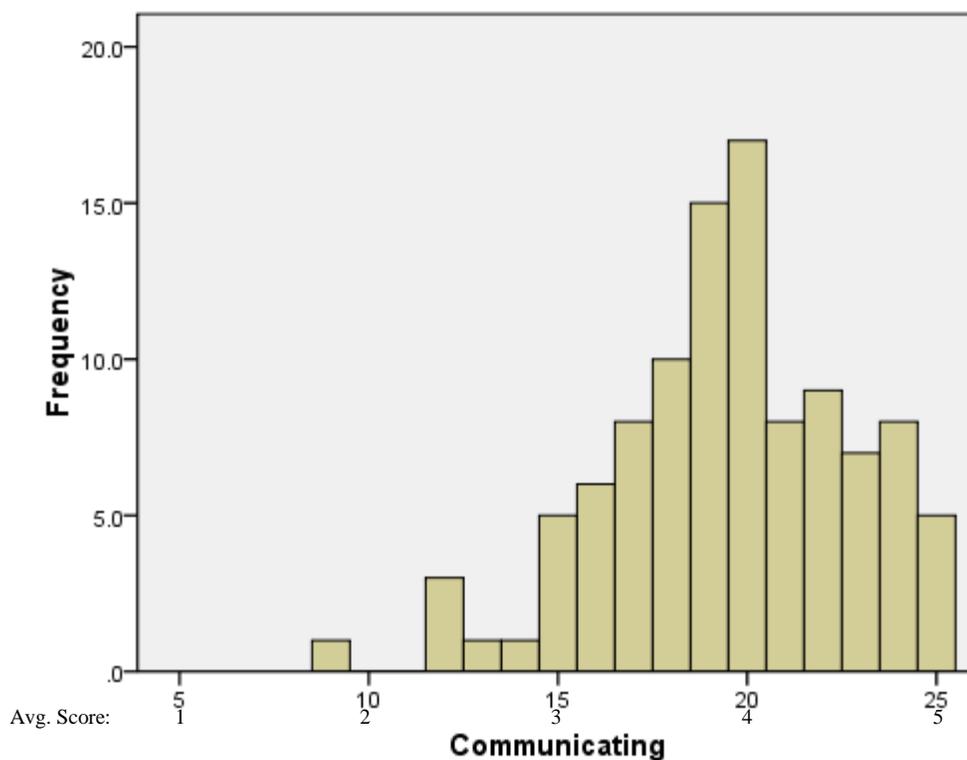


Figure 9. Teacher Perceptions: Communicating Dimension

Figure 10 displays the distribution pattern of the responses of teachers in the category of Volunteering. The dimension of Volunteering was the third lowest rated involvement type by teachers. While it is normally distributed with a slightly positive skew, many responses fell directly at the somewhat effective point on the scale, however, most teachers agreed the strategies within the dimension of Volunteering were at worst somewhat effective.

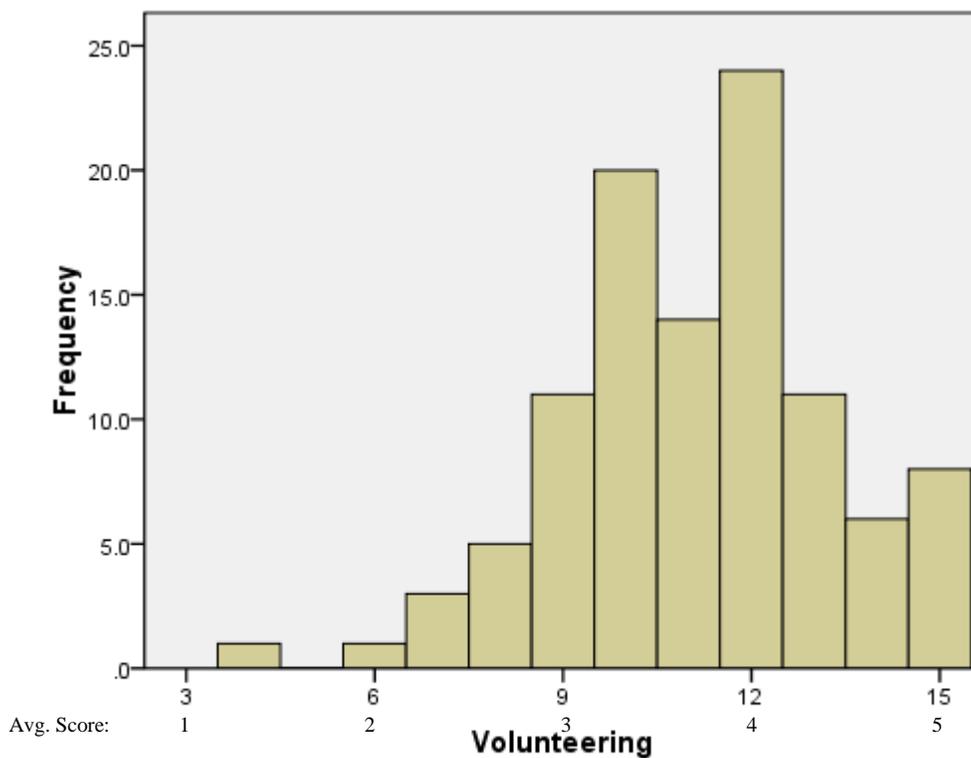


Figure 10. Teacher Perceptions: Volunteering Dimension

Figure 11 offers a display of teacher responses in the dimension of Learning at Home. Once again, teacher responses to the strategies in this category followed a normal distribution curve with a slight slant towards the response of highly effective. Most teachers rated the strategies near a four, indicating they believed the importance of these involvement strategies to lie somewhere in between being somewhat effective and highly effective.

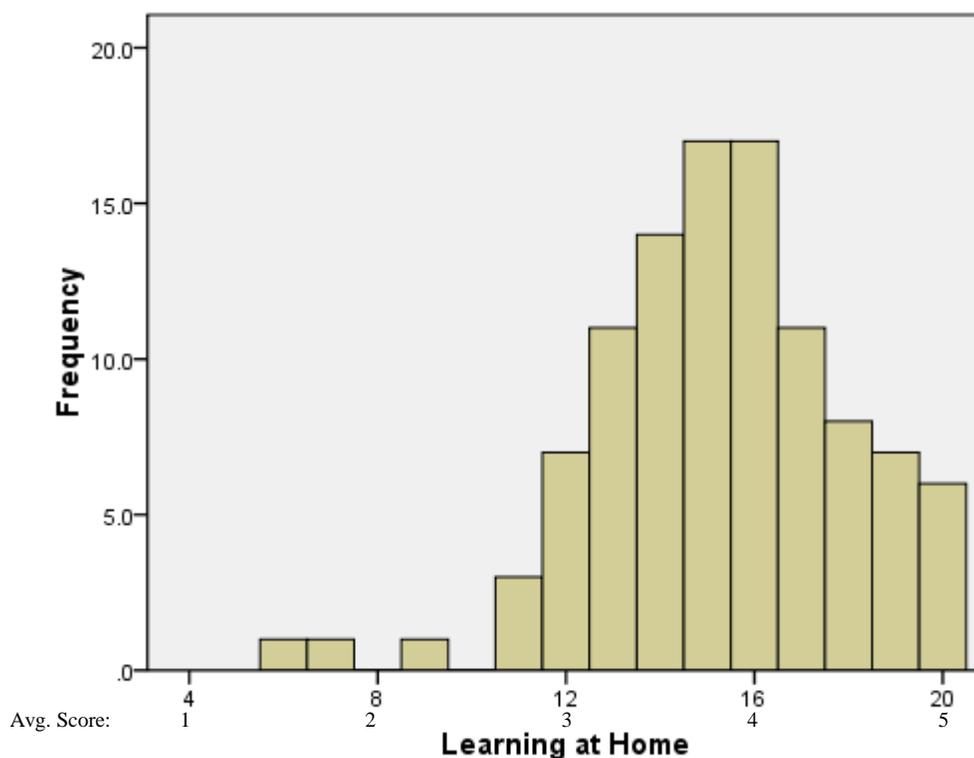


Figure 11. Teacher Perceptions: Learning at Home Dimension

Teacher responses to the dimension of Decision Making are displayed in Figure 12. The Decision Making category scored the lowest average among all seven categories surveyed (3.35), so it should not be surprising to see a wide range of responses in the distribution of the scores. While a normal distribution curve can be seen, responses are scattered in places indicating some disagreements among the teachers surveyed about the effectiveness of the strategies within the Decision Making dimension. However, most teachers still scored these strategies as somewhat effective.

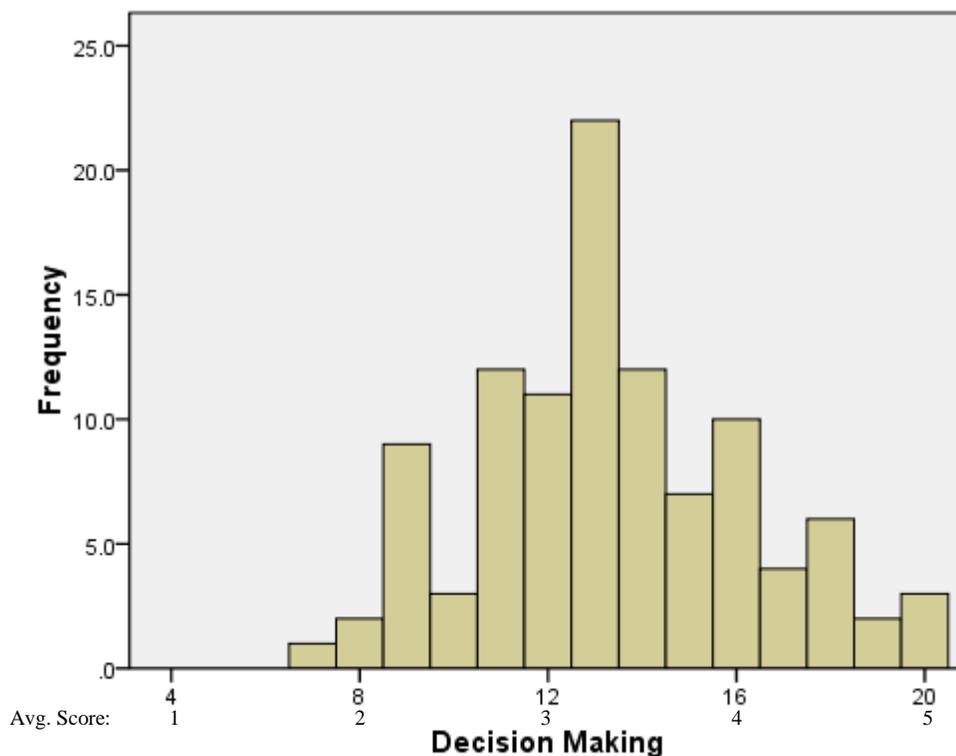


Figure 12. Teacher Perceptions: Decision Making Dimension

The distribution of responses in Collaborating with the Community, Epstein's sixth type of involvement, is displayed in Table 13. Collaborating with the Community was scored as the second lowest of the seven dimensions by teachers, however most teachers saw the strategies listed as being somewhat effective. A normal distribution curve with a slight skew towards the highly effective end of the scale can be seen in this involvement category.

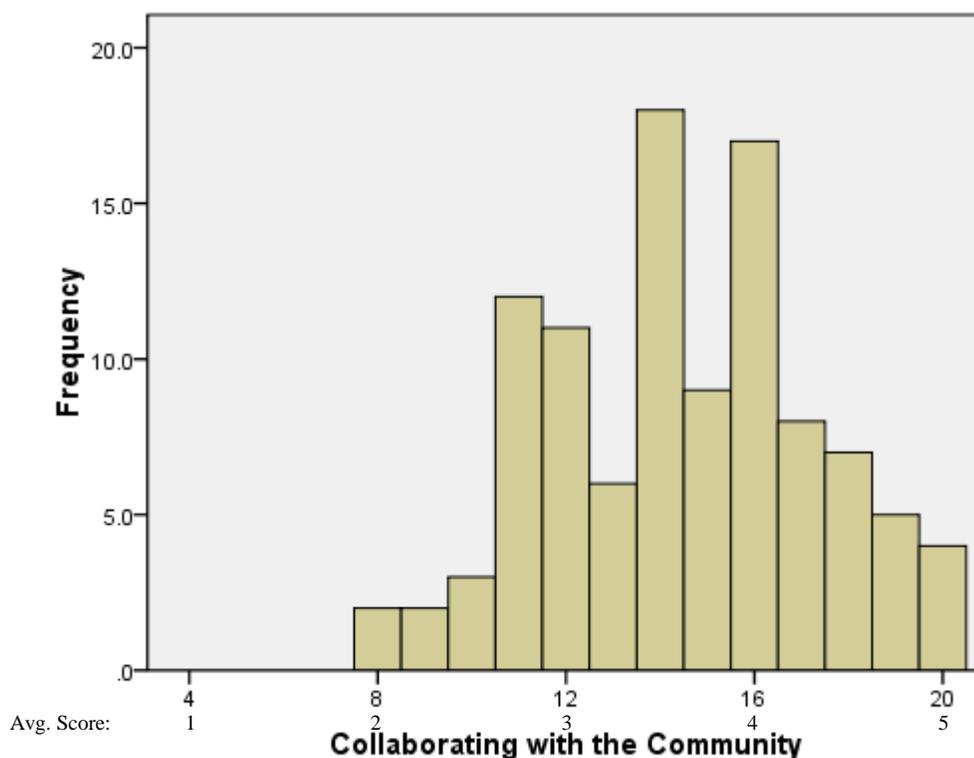


Figure 13. Teacher Perceptions: Collaborating with the Community Dimension

The final parent involvement dimension measured in the teacher survey was Parental Expectations. Figure 14 shows the distribution of the responses in the Parental Expectations category. Teachers rated the strategies within this category higher than any of the other six involvement categories. This is demonstrated in the distribution of the responses. A normal distribution curve is not seen. Instead, a steep incline can be seen towards the highly effective side of the scale. Most teachers rated the strategies involved with Parental Expectations as highly effective, with 31 teachers, nearly a third of respondents, scoring each of the three strategies with a score of five, the highest value possible.

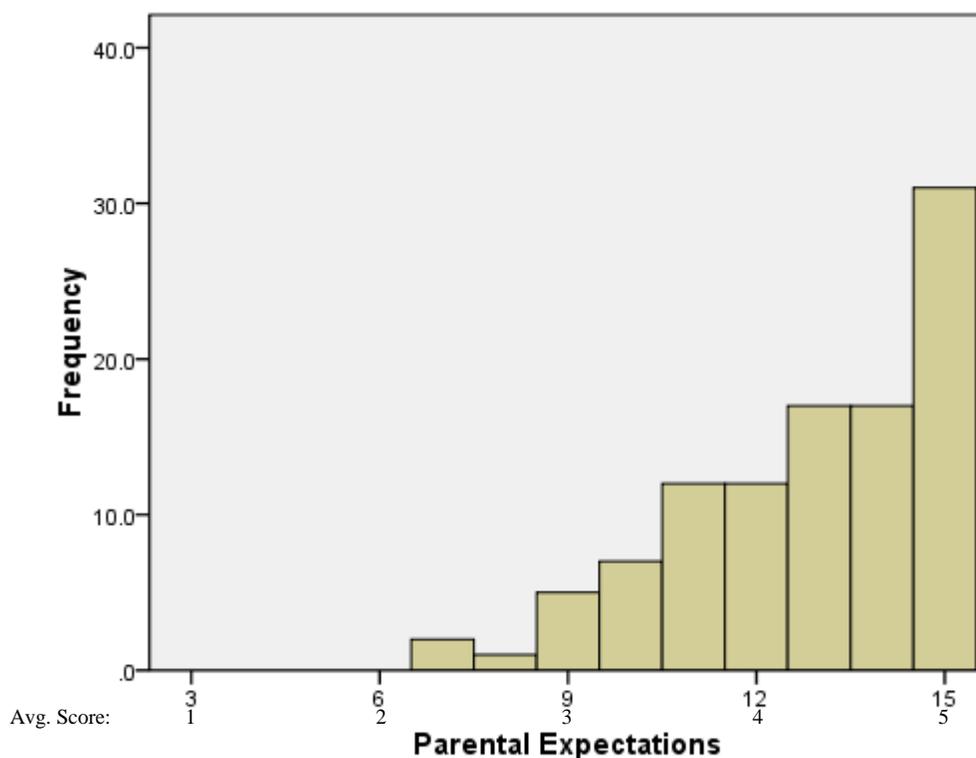


Figure 14. Teacher Perceptions: Parental Expectations Dimension

Research Question Three

The third research question explored the comparisons between the perceptions of teachers and parents with regards to the seven dimensions of parental involvement. The third research question and corresponding null hypothesis is as follows:

RQ3. How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?

H_1 There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of parents and teachers with regards to effective parent involvement.

The results in Table 11 compare the means of the raw scores and their standard deviations as well as the average scores of teachers and parents. In six of the seven categories, parents rated the involvement strategies higher than teachers. The only

category where parents did not give a higher rating was Parenting in which the teachers and parents rated it the same (3.60). The third most closely rated dimension between the teachers and parents was also the highest rated dimension in both populations. Both parents and teachers scored the category dealing with strategies demonstrating parental expectations as the most effective form of parental involvement.

Table 11.

Parent and Teacher Descriptive Statistics by Involvement Dimension

Involvement Dimension	Subject Group	N	Mean	SD	Avg. Score
Parenting	Teachers	104	11.04	1.99	3.68
	Parents	461	11.05	2.69	3.68
Communication	Teachers	104	19.50	3.24	3.90
	Parents	458	22.10	2.84	4.42
Volunteering	Teachers	104	11.14	2.16	3.71
	Parents	458	11.87	2.60	3.96
Learning at Home	Teachers	104	15.28	2.68	3.82
	Parents	453	17.18	2.98	4.30
Decision Making	Teachers	104	13.38	2.90	3.35
	Parents	438	14.50	3.84	3.63
Collaborating with the Community	Teachers	104	14.44	2.06	3.61
	Parents	454	15.47	3.51	3.87
Parental Expectations	Teachers	104	12.86	2.06	4.29
	Parents	459	13.71	1.78	4.57

While both categories were rated highly within their respective populations, the largest difference in scores was found in the Learning at Home dimension. Parents rated

the strategies in the Learning at Home dimension an average of .58 points higher than teachers. A similar gap was also found in the Communicating dimension. Parents rated the strategies in this dimension an average of .52 points higher than did teachers.

In order to determine whether or not the differences between the teacher and parent populations were statistically significant, an independent samples *t*-test was performed. The results displayed in Table 11 indicate the differences were statistically significant in six of the seven parent involvement dimensions: Communicating ($t = -8.21$, $p < .01$), Volunteering ($t = -2.66$, $p < .01$), Learning at Home ($t = -5.97$, $p < .01$), Decision Making ($t = -2.79$, $p < .01$), Collaborating with the Community ($t = -2.79$, $p < .01$), and Parental Expectations ($t = -4.27$, $p < .01$). Statistically significant results were not found in the dimension of Parenting ($t = -.03$, $p > .05$).

Table 12.

Parent Perceptions vs Teacher Perceptions: Independent Samples t-Test Results

Involvement Dimension	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Parenting	-0.03	563	.97	0.01
Communicating	-8.21	560	.00	-2.60
Volunteering	-2.66	560	.008	-0.73
Learning at Home	-5.97	555	.00	-1.90
Decision Making	-2.79	540	.005	-1.12
Collaborating with the Community	-2.79	556	.006	-1.03
Parental Expectations	-4.27	561	.00	-.85

Research question three asked how the perceptions of teachers and parents compared and contrasted with regards to parent involvement activities. Taking the figures from Table 12 into account, parents and teachers had statistically significantly different perceptions in six of the seven involvement dimensions included in the survey. Parents, with the exception of one dimension, scored the surveyed involvement strategies higher, deeming them more highly effective than teachers. Despite their differences, on the average, teachers and parents agreed all seven categories of involvement were somewhat to highly effective. The research findings for research question three allow for the rejection of the null hypothesis, H_1 .

Research Question Four

The final research question asked:

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

Within the parent population, race/ethnicity, marital status, education level, and annual income level were studied. For the teacher population, education level and years of experience were the demographic areas examined. Research question four included seven null hypotheses, one for each demographic area studied.

Parent population: Race/Ethnicity. The first null hypothesis for research question four states:

*H*₂ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing races/ethnicities with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Four different categories of race/ethnicity were utilized in the parent surveys: Caucasian, African-American, Hispanic, and Other. Table F-1 (Appendix F) displays each demographic group's descriptive statistical scores for the seven involvement categories. In every category, the Hispanic population rated the involvement levels higher than the entire group average and each individual race/ethnicity population average. The other race/ethnicity groups showed no marked tendencies.

When ANOVA was used to test for statistical significance between the means of the different race/ethnicity populations, the Hispanic population again stood out. Table 13 shows a statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) was found in the responses to the survey items in the dimensions of Parenting, Communicating, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community. The dimensions of Parental Expectations, Volunteering, and Learning at Home contained no statistical significance with regards to the race/ethnicity of the parents surveyed.

Table 13.

ANOVA for Parent Demographics: Race/Ethnicity (N=466)

Involvement Dimension	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting	3	177.20	59.07	8.59	.00
Communicating	3	95.42	31.82	4.07	.007
Volunteering	3	25.25	8.42	1.25	.29
Learning at Home	3	66.30	22.10	2.51	.06
Decision Making	3	304.39	101.46	7.15	.00
Collaborating with the Community	3	524.39	174.80	15.57	.00
Parental Expectations	3	7.07	2.36	.75	.53

When a post-hoc analysis using Least Significant Difference (LSD) was conducted to determine where the differences were, in each involvement dimension it was the Hispanic population where the significant differences occurred. Table F-2 (Appendix F) displays the data for the four involvement dimensions showing statistical significance. The Hispanic population differed significantly from the Caucasian ($p=.00$, $p<.01$) and African-American ($p=.02$, $p<.05$) populations in their responses to the strategies from the Parenting and Collaborating with the Community dimensions. In the dimensions of Parenting, Communicating, and Decision Making, the only statistically significant difference was found between the Hispanic and Caucasian populations ($p=.00$, $p<.01$). In each case, the difference in means suggests the Hispanic population scored the

items on the survey higher than parents from the other populations. These differences in these findings allow for the rejection of H_2 , the null hypothesis.

Parent population: Marital status. The null hypothesis for this demographic area states:

H_3 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing marital statuses with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

For the parent demographic of marital status, ANOVA was also performed to search for significant differences between the marital status of parents and their ratings of involvement strategies. The results are displayed in Table 14, and there were no areas of statistically significant differences found between parents of varying marital statuses and their perceptions of parental involvement, indicating an acceptance of H_3 .

Table 14.

ANOVA for Parent Demographics: Marital Status (N=454)

Involvement Dimension	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting	4	30.01	7.51	1.04	.39
Communicating	4	61.62	15.41	1.89	.11
Volunteering	4	13.67	3.42	.51	.73
Learning at Home	4	34.81	8.70	1.01	.40
Decision Making	4	28.63	7.16	.48	.75
Collaborating with the Community	4	66.68	16.67	1.36	.25
Parental Expectations	4	4.38	1.10	.34	.85

Parent population: Age of parent. The third null hypothesis for research question four states:

H_4 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing age ranges with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

ANOVA was again used to determine if there was a difference between parents' ratings and their age. The results in Table 15 show no involvement dimensions yielded a statistically significant difference in parents' perceptions of effective involvement, therefore H_4 is accepted.

Table 15.

ANOVA for Parent Demographics: Age of Parent (N=466)

Involvement Dimension	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting	3	11.66	3.89	.54	.66
Communicating	3	9.97	3.32	.41	.75
Volunteering	3	7.71	2.57	.38	.77
Learning at Home	3	63.21	21.07	2.39	.07
Decision Making	3	23.58	7.86	.53	.67
Collaborating with the Community	3	73.04	23.35	1.98	.12
Parental Expectations	3	4.92	1.64	.52	.67

Parent population: Education level. The null hypothesis for this demographic area states:

H_5 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Table 16 displays the results of ANOVA when comparing the results of parents from different educational backgrounds. Perceptions of three involvement dimensions demonstrated a statistically significant difference with the educational level of the parents surveyed: Parenting ($p=.02, p<.05$), Communicating ($p=.04, p<.05$), and Collaboration with the Community ($p=.00, p<.01$). No other dimensions demonstrated even a slightly significant difference. The differences in the means indicate older parents tended to give lower scores than other populations, indicating they found the strategies to be not as effective as other populations. The statistically significant differences lead to a rejection of H_5 , the null hypothesis.

A post-hoc analysis (LSD) was conducted to find where the differences were. Table F-3 (Appendix F) shows the results of the pos-hoc analysis in the Parenting dimension. Parents who have a bachelor's degree differed significantly from all other parent populations: completed some high school ($p=.00, p<.01$), completed high school ($p=.00, p<.01$), completed some college ($p=.00, p<.01$), and have a graduate degree ($p=.02, p<.05$). In all instances, the parents with a bachelor's degree rated the strategies in the Parenting dimension lower than parents in other education level populations.

Table 16.

ANOVA for Parent Demographics: Education Level (N=427)

Involvement Dimension	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting	4	83.65	20.76	3.08	.02
Communicating	4	82.26	20.57	2.57	.04
Volunteering	4	39.98	9.75	1.46	.21
Learning at Home	4	42.91	10.73	1.21	.31
Decision Making	4	54.19	13.55	.95	.44
Collaborating with the Community	4	290.89	72.72	6.57	.00
Parental Expectations	4	10.97	2.74	.87	.48

In the dimension of Communicating, Table F-3 shows the post-hoc (LSD) analysis results. The significant differences in this dimension were found among parents who had college degrees versus parents who had either graduated high school or not graduated high school. In both cases, parents with college degrees scored the items on the survey lower than did parents with only a high school degree or lower. As the discrepancy in education level grew, so did the level of significance. When comparing parents with a Bachelor's degree to parents without a high school diploma, the significance level was found to be at the $p < .01$ level, but when the same comparison was made to parents with a high school diploma, the significance was found only at the $p < .05$ level.

Table F-3 shows the post-hoc analysis (LSD) results in the Collaborating with the Community dimension. Parents who had not completed high school differed significantly ($p=.00, p<.01$) from all other parent populations, yielding higher mean scores than every other group. On the other end of the spectrum, according to the differences of the means, parents with a bachelor's degree scored collaboration strategies lower than every other group, yielding significant differences ($p<.05$) when compared to the other parent populations who had not obtained a college degree.

Parent population: Annual income. For the final parent demographic area researched, the null hypothesis stated:

H_6 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing annual income levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

To determine if a difference existed between how parents from differing income levels scored involvement strategies, ANOVA was conducted. The results in Table 17 show a statistically significant difference between parents of varying income levels in the dimensions of Parenting ($p=.00, p<.01$), Decision Making ($p=.008, p<.01$), and Collaborating with the Community ($p=.00, p<.01$). These findings lead to a rejection of the null hypothesis, H_6 , for this portion of research question four.

Table 17.

ANOVA for Parent Demographics: Annual Income Level (N=449)

Involvement Dimension	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting	4	136.52	34.13	4.81	.00
Communicating	4	46.61	11.65	1.42	.23
Volunteering	4	38.82	9.50	1.42	.23
Learning at Home	4	45.45	11.36	1.26	.29
Decision Making	4	206.36	51.59	3.51	.008
Collaborating with the Community	4	437.22	109.31	9.42	.00
Parental Expectations	4	15.96	4.00	1.27	.28

Post-hoc analyses (LSD) were conducted in the three dimensions where statistically significant results were found and displayed in Table F-4 which can be found in Appendix F. In the dimension of Parenting, the results showed parents making less than \$25,000 per year differed significantly from parents in three of the other four other income levels ($p=.00$, $p<.01$). Their mean scores were, on average, higher than the scores given by parents in the three other levels. In contrast, parents with an annual income of \$100,000 or more reported lower perception scores statistically ($p>.05$) different from the parents making less than \$25,000.

In the Decision Making category, similar results were found among parents making less than \$25,000 per year. Parents from this population differed significantly ($p<.05$) from parents making between \$25,000 and \$50,000 and parents making \$75,000

to \$100,000. They also differed significantly ($p < .01$) from parents making \$100,000 or more. Parents from the highest earning population also differed significantly ($p < .05$) from parents making between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per year, scoring the surveyed involvement strategies lower than other populations.

Scores in the Collaborating with the Community dimension yielded several statistically significant results. Parents from the two lowest annual income populations differed significantly from parents from the three highest income levels. The wider the gap in income, the greater the differences became, with parents from higher income levels scoring collaboration strategies lower than parents from lower income levels.

Teacher population: Years of experience and education level. For teacher demographic areas, the null hypotheses stated:

H_7 There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing years of experience with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

H_8 There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

To determine if significant differences existed between the responses teachers gave to the survey items and the teacher demographic areas of years of teaching experience and education level, ANOVA was again used. Table 18 shows only one statistically significant difference between the teacher demographic areas and the survey results.

Table 18.

ANOVA for Teacher Demographics: Years of Experience and Education Level (N=104)

	Df	SS	MS	f	Sig.
Parenting					
Years of Experience	3	8.54	2.85	.71	.55
Education Level	2	18.89	9.44	2.48	.09
Communicating					
Years of Experience	3	31.21	10.40	1.00	.40
Education Level	2	23.76	11.88	1.27	.29
Volunteering					
Years of Experience	3	39.49	13.16	3.07	.03
Education Level	2	4.64	2.32	.51	.60
Learning at Home					
Years of Experience	3	20.88	6.96	.99	.40
Education Level	2	.79	.40	.06	.94
Decision Making					
Years of Experience	3	21.35	7.12	.85	.47
Education Level	2	14.69	7.35	.88	.42
Collaborating with the Community					
Years of Experience	3	24.40	8.13	1.01	.39
Education Level	2	21.29	8.00	1.33	.27
Parental Expectations					
Years of Experience	3	11.73	3.91	.92	.44
Education Level	2	2.50	1.25	.29	.75

Table 19 shows the post-hoc analysis (LSD) indicated that in the dimension of Volunteering, teachers with more than twenty years of experience differed significantly with all other populations. The difference was most significant when compared to teachers with 0-3 years of teaching experience. The difference became less significant ($p < .05$) as the years of experience rose. Other than this area, these results show a teacher's years of experience and education level had no statistically significant effect on the perceptions of involvement strategies in each of the seven involvement dimensions. The findings in the teacher demographic area of years of experience lead to a rejection of H_7 . However, the findings in the teacher demographic area of education level require an acceptance of H_8 .

Table 19.

Post-Hoc Analysis (LSD) for Teacher Demographics: Years of Experience (N=104)

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
Volunteering	0-3 years	4-10 years	-.43	.57	.46
		10-20 years	.64	.58	.27
		20+ years	**1.88	.65	.005
	4-10 years	0-3 years	-.43	.57	.46
		10-20 years	.21	.53	.69
		20+ years	*1.45	.60	.02
	10-20 years	0-3 years	-.64	.58	.27
		4-10 years	-.21	.53	.69
		20+ years	*1.24	.61	.04
	20+ years	0-3 years	** -1.88	.65	.005
		4-10 years	* -1.45	.60	.02
		10-20 years	* -1.24	.61	.04

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *Summary*

The first three research questions dealt with perceptions of parent involvement and comparisons of perceptions between teachers and parents. The results of the study

indicate parents and teachers do indeed have different perceptions of highly effective parent involvement practices. On average, parents rated practices in six out of the seven involvement dimensions higher than teachers, but both groups agreed all of the strategies defining the dimensions were somewhat effective to highly effective. Statistically significant differences were found to exist between parents and teachers in six of the seven involvement dimensions. The only dimension in which parents and teachers shared similar scores was the dimension of Parenting.

The results for research question four indicated several demographic areas had statistically significant differences with perceptions of parent involvement, but no differences existed between teacher demographics and perceptions of effective involvement. For parents, strong differences existed between race/ethnicity and perceptions of involvement. Specifically, the Hispanic population tended to differ from the group the most, giving higher scores in all seven involvement areas. While the age of the parent demonstrated no statistical differences with rating scores, parents' education levels level did show statistically significant differences between the perceptions of involvement in the areas of Parenting and Collaborating with the Community. In both cases, parents with a higher educational level scored the involvement strategies lower than other parents. Parents' annual income levels also showed a strong difference with parent involvement perceptions in the areas of Parenting, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community.

The next chapter will contain a discussion of these results, implications of this study, and ideas for further areas of research based on the results found in this research.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Research states most every parent, teacher, and student desires to see the school and home work together to foster a collaborative, reciprocal relationship that will improve student education (Epstein, 1995). If this is the case, why do many schools report a lack of involvement, and why do many parents feel left out of the educational process? The answer lies in a lack of understanding, particularly an agreement between parents and teachers about the strategies used to create effective parent involvement. When parents and teachers are on the same page and each understands where the other is coming from, meaningful involvement can take place.

Research Questions & Null Hypotheses

The purpose of this study was to discover perceptions held by parents and teachers regarding activities they deemed to demonstrate highly effective parental involvement. The study also attempted to discover what effect certain demographic categories might have on the perceptions held by parents and teachers. The study was organized around the following four research questions and corresponding null hypotheses:

- RQ1.* What involvement activities do parents find most effective?
 - RQ2.* What parent involvement activities do teachers find most effective?
 - RQ3.* How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?
-

*H*₁ There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of parents and teachers with regards to effective parent involvement.

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

*H*₂ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing races/ethnicities with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₃ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing marital statuses with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₄ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing age ranges with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₅ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₆ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing annual income levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₇ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing years of experience with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

*H*₈ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Once these questions can be answered, parents and teachers can work to bridge gaps build on existing commonalities. Understanding each others' perceptions is the first step to building the desired reciprocal relationship that can truly benefit academic achievement in schools. The significance of this study was its study of perceptions and the comparisons between the two main stakeholders in the education of children: teachers and parents.

Review of the Methodology

This descriptive study utilized a survey to gauge teacher and parent perceptions of effective parent involvement strategies. The study focused on the responses of a random sample of 104 elementary school teachers and 478 parents of elementary school children. The researcher created survey instrument consisted of a total of 28 involvement activities which were to be scored with a five point rating scale to indicate how effective or ineffective the strategy might be. The survey contained 26 involvement strategies from seven distinct parent involvement types. Six of the involvement types were taken from Epstein's (2002) Six Types of Involvement. These types of involvement included parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. A seventh involvement strategy, parental expectations,

was added after a review of the literature showed the positive effects of high, but attainable parental expectations on student achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001). The survey was field tested, adjusted to account for ambiguities identified by the field testers, and field tested again to help strengthen the face validity of the instrument. Content validity was improved by using a wide variety of activities to measure effective parent involvement. The reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = .929$).

Once parents and teachers had completed and returned their surveys, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to compare means and average scores for each of the seven parental involvement dimensions. Raw scores and means were computed for each of the seven involvement dimensions, and score averages were computed on a scale from one to five with one being not effective and five being highly effective. Histograms were created to observe the distribution of parent and teacher responses within each of the seven categories of involvement. Next, independent samples *t*-tests were performed to look for statistical significance in the perception results given by teachers and parents in each of the involvement dimensions. Lastly, ANOVA and post-hoc analyses were used within both parent and teacher populations to search for significant differences between demographic information and perceptions of effective parental involvement.

Summary of the Results

The results of the study showed despite both groups rating strategies in the involvement dimensions as somewhat effective to highly effective, teachers and parents have differing ideas about the strategies defining effective parental involvement, and some demographic categories showed significant differences with regards to perception scores.

Research Question One

Research question one centered on finding what involvement strategies parents found highly effective. The results of the study showed, on average, parents rated the strategies of all seven involvement categories as ranging from somewhat effective to highly effective. Normal distribution curves were seen in the responses given to each of the seven types of involvement, but all of the curves were skewed positively towards the highly effective end. Parents rated the category of parental expectations the highest (4.57), followed by Communicating (4.42) and Learning at Home (4.30). The category of Decision Making received the lowest scores from parents (3.63) followed closely by Parenting (3.68).

Research Question Two

The second research question mirrored the first in its goal, finding what involvement strategies are preferred, but it focused on the survey results of the teacher population. Much like the parents, teachers also rated strategies in all seven categories as ranging from somewhat effective to highly effective. The response distributions from the teacher population more closely resembled the typical normal distribution curve. One definite exception to this was in the category of Parental Expectations where the distribution was highly skewed towards the highly effective end of the scale. With this in mind, it should come as no surprise teachers gave the highest marks to the involvement dimension of Parental Expectations (4.29). In the teacher population, it was the only dimension to score over a rating of four. The lowest score was given to the dimension of Decision Making (3.35). The other five dimensions were spaced evenly between these.

Research Question Three

Once teacher and parent perceptions were established, comparing and contrasting the results could begin. The most noticeable difference evident between the parent and teacher perceptions was parents rated the strategies with higher scores, indicating a belief the strategies were more highly effective in all categories except for Parenting in which they averaged the same score (3.60). The two largest differences were found in the Communication dimension (.52) and the Learning at Home dimension (.58).

After studying the means and searching for visual differences, independent samples *t*-tests were conducted to search for significant differences. The results were found to be statistically significant in six of the seven parent involvement dimensions: Communicating ($t = -8.21, p < .01$), Volunteering ($t = -2.66, p < .01$), Learning at Home ($t = -5.97, p < .01$), Decision Making ($t = -2.79, p < .01$), Collaborating with the Community ($t = -2.79, p < .01$), and Parental Expectations ($t = -4.27, p < .01$). Statistically significant results were not found in the dimension of Parenting ($t = -0.03, p > .05$). The results indicate a rejection of the null hypotheses corresponding with research question three.

RQ3. How do the perceptions of teachers and parents compare and contrast with regards to parent involvement activities?

H_1 There is no statistically significant difference between the perceptions of parents and teachers with regards to effective parent involvement.

(Rejected)

Despite these statistically significant differences, in all seven categories parents and teachers agreed the involvement strategies presented in the survey ranged from somewhat effective to highly effective strategies.

Research Question Four

Research question four was focused on looking within each population to find significant differences between demographic categories and perceptions of parental involvement indicated by teachers and parents. Within the teacher population, only one statistically significant difference was found between perceptions of highly effective involvement strategies and the demographic areas of years of experience and education level when ANOVA was performed on the data. The significant difference was found in the Volunteering dimension when taking into account the teachers' years of experience. The parent population, however, showed different results. ANOVA combined with post-hoc analyses (LSD) was used to search for significant differences between parent involvement perceptions and the demographic areas of race/ethnicity, education level, annual income level, marital status, and age of parent surveyed. Significant differences were observed in the areas of race/ethnicity, education level, and annual income level.

When ANOVA was performed using the parent demographic areas of marital status and age of parent, no statistically significant differences were found to exist. However, in the race/ethnicity category, significant differences were observed in the involvement dimension of Parenting ($p=.00, p<.01$), Communicating ($p=.00, p<.01$), Decision Making ($p=.00, p<.01$), and Collaborating with the Community ($p=.00, p<.01$). When a post-hoc analysis was performed to find the source of the significance, the determining factor in the differences was the Hispanic populations. In all categories, they rated items higher than parents of all other races, indicating the perception the given strategies were more effective compared to the ratings of other populations.

When ANOVA was conducted within the demographic area of annual income level, a statistically significant difference was found in the involvement categories of Parenting ($p=.00, p<.01$), Decision Making ($p=.00, p<.01$), and Collaborating with the Community ($p=.00, p<.01$). When a post-hoc analysis (LSD) was conducted, it showed parents from lower income levels tended to rate the involvement strategies higher on the effectiveness scale than parents from higher income levels. In each involvement category, parents making \$25,000 or less differed significantly from the other income categories, and parents from the highest income level, those earning \$100,000 per year or more, differed significantly from the two lowest income populations, rating the given involvement strategies as being less effective when compared to the two lower income populations.

When comparing ratings on the parent survey to the education level of the parents, two areas of statistical significance were found: Parenting ($p=.02, p<.05$), Communicating ($p=.04, p<.05$), and Collaboration with the Community ($p=.00, p<.01$). Post-hoc tests (LSD) in all three categories revealed parents with a bachelor's degree tended to rate the items on the survey lower than parents without a high school diploma. The levels of significance dropped as the parent education levels increased. In the Collaborating with the Community dimension, parents without a high school diploma differed significantly ($p<.01$) from all other populations, rating involvement strategies as being more effective than parents from other education levels. In the Communicating dimension, parents with college degrees scored the items on the survey lower than did parents with only a high school degree or lower. As the discrepancy in education level grew, so did the level of significance, moving from a significance of $p<.01$ when

comparing parents with a Bachelor's degree to parents who did not graduate high school to a significance of $p < .05$ when making the same comparison with parents who had graduate high school.

In the teacher population, when ANOVA was conducted, only one teacher demographic area demonstrated statistically significant results. In the dimension of Volunteering, teachers with twenty or more years of experience differed significantly when compared to teachers with less experience. Aside from this dimension, there were no significant differences found between teachers' years of experience and education levels and their perceptions of effective parent involvement.

The results indicate the rejection of four of the seven null hypotheses associated with research question four.

RQ4. Does a significant difference exist between certain demographic factors (age, race/ethnicity, income, marital status, education level, years of teaching experience, etc.) and perceptions of parent involvement within parent and teacher populations?

H_2 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing races/ethnicities with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Rejected)

H_3 There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing marital statuses with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Accepted)

- H*₄ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing age ranges with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Accepted)
- H*₅ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Rejected)
- H*₆ There are no statistically significant differences between parents of differing annual income levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Rejected)
- H*₇ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing years of experience with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Rejected)
- H*₈ There are no statistically significant differences between teachers of differing education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. (Accepted)

Discussion of the Results

The purpose of this study was to discover perceptions held by parents and teachers regarding parent involvement activities and gauge their thoughts about the effectiveness of these strategies. The study also attempted to discover if a difference existed between parent and teacher demographics and their perceptions of parent involvement. In researching parent involvement, it was found that due to the wide range of activities considered as involvement, defining parent involvement has been hard for

teacher, parents, and researchers (Feuerstein, 2000). While some find involvement to be confined to things done by parents at home, others define involvement as parents being active in the school. Most believe it takes a combination of both to achieve the kind of meaningful, reciprocal relationship that should exist between home and school. This type of relationship is what is behind Epstein's Framework for Six Types of Involvement (2002). The types of involvement move from school-centered, to home-centered, and community-centered, bridging the gap between all three arenas to positively impact students. While researchers work from different types of definitions, perception is really what counts. What do parents see as their role in being involved with their children's academics? What role do teachers think parents should play in the education of their children? This study attempted to study teacher and parent perceptions of involvement, find out where differences and similarities occurred, and look for factors affecting these perceptions.

Parent Perceptions of Parental Involvement

From a parent perspective, the findings of this study indicated they believed all of the surveyed involvement areas had merit. Their responses indicated they found all seven categories of involvement to be somewhat effective to highly effective. Often, teachers believe parents do not care about education (Knopf & Swick, 2003), but the results here seem to indicate the opposite. They do care, and they do have ideas about what types of involvement have merit and what types have less merit. Parents particularly felt strongly about the strategies within the Communicating and Learning at Home dimensions of the survey. These activities included a desire to have a closer relationship with the teacher in order to stay updated on what is going on at school, more formal and informal

conferences, and more participation in events at the school. These findings mirror the findings of others (Barge & Loges, 2003). Parents value relationships with teachers, believing these relationships will lead to better and more frequent communications including conferences, updates, newsletters, and informal discussions of progress. In many cases, these should be school initiated activities. This shows the importance of schools understanding what parents want and acting upon it. Epstein (1995) indicated schools can sometimes put more effort in their rhetoric than they do in their actual practices. Understanding parents want better parent/teacher relationships, more frequent communication, and more opportunities to help their children learn at home should lead schools to find new and improved ways to help these things happen.

Another striking result from this study was the importance parents placed on parental expectations as a form of involvement. While research shows parental expectations play a meaningful role in involvement and academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Trivette & Anderson, 1995; Fan, 2001), many do not often consider holding high expectations as a form of involvement. This idea may stem from the belief involvement means physically or academically doing something rather than merely conferring an ideal. In fact, it is the communication of this belief that is the act of involvement. Studies have shown without this communication, expectations will mean little or nothing at all (Chen & Lan, 1998; Trivette & Anderson, 1995).

Do these high expectations result in something tangible happening within the home besides telling a child how important education is? If a parent communicates to a child education should be paramount in their lives but fails to put this belief into action by structuring time at home accordingly or putting an effort to be active in school events

when possible, do the communicated expectations lose their power? It is not just enough to talk about expectations. Parents should be ready to act on those expectations. Research would say, in most cases, parents who hold higher expectations for their children are more likely than others to provide more resources to their children and engage in more enrichment activities in and out of the home (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996). However, this ideal does not hold true for all parents. If a child is expected to do well in school, parents should work to live up to this expectation by valuing education and demonstrating this to their children. By far, parents in this study demonstrated their perceptions by rating strategies dealing with holding high expectations for children and valuing education as a highly effective form of involvement. Will these same parents both communicate these expectations and demonstrate their beliefs by becoming more involved in the education of their children? If they choose, these expectations can be a powerful weapon in the arsenal of parental involvement strategies used by parents to make a difference in the lives of their children.

Teacher Perceptions of Parental Involvement

Continuing with the theme of expectations, teachers in this study also rated strategies involved with holding high parental expectations as a highly effective form of involvement. Baker (1997) stated in his qualitative study some teachers even indicated parental expectations are the first form of involvement. The discussion then must turn to whether or not teachers can have an effect on the expectations parents have for their children. On the surface, many would say teachers cannot affect the attitudes of parents towards the education of their children. However, teachers need to ask themselves where

these attitudes come from. Why do some parents seem to hold higher expectations for their children? What can teachers do to affect parental expectations?

The answer lies with the involvement dimension in which teachers scored as the second most highly effective form of involvement behind parental expectations: Communicating. Trivette and Anderson (1995) indicated parental expectations are transmitted through communicating with schools on a regular basis, reinforcing to their children the importance of education. The burden, however, does not just lie with parents. Teachers must communicate to parents their own high expectations for students and encourage parents to have an open dialogue with their children about the importance of school and the importance of becoming curious enough to want to learn more about the world around them (Baker, 1997). Teachers must also work to communicate with parents on a regular basis in order to confirm to the children their education is a partnership between home and school, a relationship founded on trust and care that is actively working to improve education for each and every child.

Most new teachers believe they cannot be effective unless they can work with parents (Jacobson, 2005), and open communication between school and home is the desire of many teachers (Baker, 1997). However, many teachers become trapped in old parent involvement paradigms placing the teacher at the center of the debate rather than working towards a partnership that places the child at the center of the debate (Comer, 2001). One way to escape the old mindset is to involve parents in the learning process. Teachers in this study scored the Learning at Home dimension highly compared to other dimensions. This implies they believe it is important for learning to extend beyond the school into the home. Teachers have direct control of this dimension in the way they

design work for their students. Engaging, meaningful work is what students want, and it is the type of work they will take home and involve their parents with. By planning curriculum nights that encourage parents to get involved in what is going on in the classroom or through allowing parents a voice in the goals being set for their children, teachers can make parental involvement an inviting, enjoyable task. Of course teachers cannot make parents become more involved. Teachers can set some conditions to improve parent involvement and hopefully build a bridge with parents in order to create the start of an open, valuable partnership. By taking a look at their own perceptions of parental involvement along with what parents believe about involvement, teachers can begin to seek out ways to form positive relationships with parents, thereby improving the chances of success for children.

Comparing and Contrasting Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Involvement

The crux of this study was to search for similarities and differences between what parents and teachers perceived to be effective parental involvement. The results of this study showed while there were differences in degree, the overall big picture showed parents and teachers agree strategies listed from all seven involvement categories were effective forms of involvement. This mirrors other research on perceptions of involvement (Miretsky, 2004), and it is a starting point to be built upon. If both groups believe these strategies to be effective, there should be action taken to begin putting these actions into practice. This will require action from both sides of the issue. Teachers have to be willing to allow parents to have a more active role in education, and parents have to be willing to accept and excel in this more active role.

This study indicated the differences between teachers and parents lied in their perceptions of the level of effectiveness of many of the involvement strategies mentioned in the survey. Parents tended to think of them as being more effective than teachers. This allows teachers the opportunity to reach out to parents more than ever before. If these parents truly believe what they said with their ratings, it stands to reason they would be eager to respond to overtures made by teachers to become more involved within the school. Communication will be the key. Communication is the foundation of all seven of the involvement dimensions. By consulting studies such as this one, teachers have the opportunity to share these types of results with parents and open a dialogue about why these perception differences exist and how more common ground can be found. It will give parents an opportunity to see things from a teacher's perspective, and it will allow teachers to openly discuss with parents how they want to be involved. This may lead to different involvement strategies for different people, but ultimately, this is the point. Every parent has a different schedule, a different background, and a different belief about how they can best be involved (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). Schools must recognize this and meet parents where they are, not expect parents to come to them.

The differences found in this research can also allow parents to see what types of involvement are more valued by teachers. Parents may believe they are doing the things to be involved their child's teacher wants them to do. They may believe their child's teacher simply wants them to be homework helpers, when in fact their teacher might have a desire to involve the parent more deeply in day-to-day classroom activities. If parents can better understand what teachers find effective, they may be more willing to change what they are doing to accommodate the desires of the teachers. Too often both sides

have expectations of the other and neither begins the dialogue to help them get on the same track. The research here indicates parents and teachers are close, but differences are present that need to be addressed.

Relationship of Demographics to Teacher and Parent Perceptions

People's perceptions of anything are shaped by their experiences, their cultures, and their situations. This study showed this idea was no different when looking for differences between demographic areas and perception scores on the parent involvement survey. Researchers have seen factors such as education levels, race/ethnicity, and socioeconomic issues can have an effect on how involved parents are in the education process of their children (Taylor, 1993; Anderson, 2000; Epstein, 1995; Carrasquillo & London, 1993). For this study, there were significant differences found between parents of some demographic populations with regards to their perceptions of effective involvement.

Parent education level and parent involvement perceptions. In practice, parents with high school diplomas are less likely to be involved in school activities (Taylor, 1993). Many reasons could account for this lack of action. In some cases, parents' work schedules do not allow them to be as involved as they like, or past educational experiences have soured parents on education as a whole, putting a hard to overcome wedge between them and the school. However, should these factors play a role in what parents perceive as effective involvement? Whereas most research indicates the more educated parents are, the more they are involved, this study showed an inverse relationship with regards to perceptions. Generally, the more educated the parents were, the lower they rated the involvement strategies on the survey, indicating less

effectiveness. It is possible these parents were more discerning and critical of the involvement statements, thereby making them less likely to rate the items as highly effective. It is also possible parents of lower education levels truly do find these strategies to be effective, even if they cannot always be as involved as they would like.

Teachers would do well to take this information and use it to actively court more parents to be involved. If these parents who are typically not as involved believe the given strategies are effective, contact by teachers could be the encouragement they need to become more active. Sometimes parents just want to be valued, and too often teachers can, intentionally or unintentionally, intimidate parents with lower education levels. Anderson (2000) indicated training programs designed to help parents see how they can be involved regardless of their schedules can help dissipate the underlying intimidation some parents may feel, especially those who had bad education experiences in their youth. Schools could take the lead in this area by customizing involvement training programs for parents which meet the needs of their students as well as their parents.

Socioeconomic levels and parent involvement perceptions. Economics do play a role in parent involvement levels (Epstein, 1995). In general, the lower the income level of parents, the less they will be involved (Benson & Martin, 2003). In this study, income levels also played a role in the perceptions of effective involvement, but the relationship did not follow the pattern of involvement levels. Parents from lower income levels surveyed for this study gave higher scores on the survey, indicating a belief the involvement strategies in the survey were more highly effective than parents from higher income levels. If these parents perceive these involvement activities are highly effective, why are many parents from this socioeconomic population not as involved? Work

schedules, inflexible job situations, and general fatigue from work plays a role in these parents not being as involved as parents from higher income levels (Benson & Martin, 2003). How can schools meet the needs of these parents who see the benefits of involvement but are having a hard time acting on their beliefs? It comes down to communication and opportunity. Schools must take the lead and offer more opportunities for involvement in non-traditional ways. Holding meetings at different hours or individualizing involvement opportunities so as to involve more parents are options to be utilized. Schools need to take the onus off of them and think of a more community-centered model of involvement. Lawson (2003) agrees, reporting parents desire a more community-centric frame of reference with regards to involvement, taking the focus off of the school and placing it on the families. Schools need to take the lead in helping parents put their positive perceptions into action.

Culture and parent involvement perceptions. Administrators and teachers in the studied school system have been thrust into a situation where there has to be an understanding of how cultural differences play a role in education. With a 33% Hispanic student population, it has been important for schools to look for ways to involve parents of other cultures in the educational process. Involving parents from other cultures can be problematic to school systems, but it cannot remain a barrier. These parents want to be involved as much as any other parent wants to be involved (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004).

Despite this desire, research has shown Hispanic parents are significantly less involved in the educational process than Caucasian and African-American parents. These parents also report more barriers to involvement than any other non-Hispanic groups. Interestingly enough, Hispanic parents who reported their children were making good

adjustments to their new school situations also indicated a higher level of parental involvement (Klimes-Dougan, Lopez, Nelson, & Adelman, 1992). With this in mind, it is imperative for all schools, especially schools like those surveyed here, to find ways to actively engage parents of Hispanic students.

This study showed Hispanic parents had the highest perceptions of effective involvement in all seven of the categories surveyed. In contrast, research has shown schools, knowingly or unknowingly, can marginalize parents from different cultures by designing involvement opportunities around specific majority based customs and knowledge (Delgado-Gaitan, 1991) or by sending out important memos in English to parents who speak little or no English (Delgado-Gaitan, 2004). With this in mind, schools should look to two areas to involve parents from other cultures, especially Hispanic parents: equity and access. Schools must work to involve parents of other cultures in equal ways, and they must make sure non-English speaking parents have the access they need to relevant materials. If Hispanic parents believe the involvement strategies from this study to be highly effective, this can be a starting place for schools. Teachers and administrators can find where these parents' perceptions were the highest and work to begin actively involving them in these activities, using them as a springboard to build trust and engage these families in a meaningful, reciprocal relationship.

Teacher demographics and parent involvement perceptions. This study showed only one significant difference between teachers' years of experience and education levels with regards to their perceptions of effective parental involvement. This is actually a positive result. According to this study, with the exception of one involvement area (Volunteering), first year teachers and teachers with twenty years of experience both

shared similar feelings with regards to what parent involvement strategies are most effective. If there are no to bridge, these teachers can begin working together to design involvement opportunities they believe will positively affect their classroom. Had significant gaps been present, more compromise or discussion would have had to have taken place in order to begin working toward designing involvement opportunities for parents. These types of discussions or compromises can sometimes lead to a watering down of ideas, but with consensus, teachers can focus on where their differences lie with parents rather than with themselves.

Limitations

One aspect of the results of this study showed a limitation of survey research as a whole and stood out to the researcher. When compared to teachers, a much higher percentage of parents scored the items within each involvement category of the survey a perfect score of five, indicating the belief the strategy was highly effective. While this belief could genuinely be the case, it is somewhat unlikely. With survey research, a researcher depends on the honesty of the subjects. While steps were taken to improve the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, ultimately the results rest in the hands of the subjects. The more open and honest the subjects are, the more meaningful the results will be.

The survey utilized two questions designed to help gauge how closely the respondents were looking at the statements. The teachers and parents surveyed were asked to rate the effectiveness of two extra involvement strategies that were not aligned with any involvement dimension studied. One was designed to yield a positive response, and the other was designed to yield a negative response. The statement designed to yield

a positive response did just that, showing a very positively skewed distribution amongst parents and teachers. However, the question designed to yield a negative response did not yield the same results. The teachers' response distribution indeed indicated most teachers found the parental response of "harsh discipline" to be a non-effective form of involvement. While many parents agreed, there was still a large group of respondents, nearly one-third of all parents, who indicated this was a highly effective form of involvement. This type of response could be explained by ambiguity with the statement, indicating the negative response question may need to be even more specific in order to elicit a higher percentage of desired responses. With so many parents giving perfect scores within each dimension, it could indicate some of the subjects gave an answer they believed to be desired by the researcher, some parents did not fully understand how they were supposed to score the strategies, or some simply scored things highly for no appreciable reason. Regardless of the reason, the higher than anticipated amount of "perfect" scores by parents in comparison to teachers stood out to the researcher.

Once the surveys were collected and compiled, other questions sometimes arise that beg to be answered. A limitation of this study was the lack of follow-up interviews to help gain a better understanding and allow for open-ended discussion about parental involvement. To help gain deeper insight into the reasons behind the answers given on the surveys, future research of this kind would benefit from the opportunity to allow for post-survey interviews and discussion groups to further clarify thoughts and feelings about parental involvement. Future research might also include a practice such as random qualitative validation to help validate the instrument and dig deeper into the reason why those surveyed responded in the manner they did.

Another limitation of this study was its population size. While a large sample was used, this study was conducted using only one school system's population of teachers and parents. Despite the system's wide variety of teachers and parents from all backgrounds, it may not be representative of other school districts in general. Also, the research focused only on elementary school parents and teachers, not considering the thoughts of parents and teachers of middle and high school students.

Recommendations for Further Study

The results of this study indicate further studies on parental involvement perceptions would have a positive impact in the available body of research. Previous research indicates parental expectations have a meaningful relationship with improved academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001). In this study, parents and teachers indicated involvement strategies involving high parental expectations for achievement were the most effective form of involvement when compared to strategies in the other involvement dimensions. These results from both parents and teachers suggest further research be conducted to identify more specific ways schools can influence parents' expectations for their children. Qualitative research with regards to parental expectations could also be conducted in order to get to the heart of how parents communicate expectations with their children and to better understand how these children perceive these expectations.

Another recommendation is the replication of this or similar studies utilizing different demographic groups. Further studies with other school districts would add to the body of research and give results that can then be compared and contrasted to those found in this study. Further studies could also be performed which focus on single schools in order to help those individual schools make decisions with regards to how to improve

parent involvement. Similar studies could be conducted using more grade levels than elementary grade levels in order to gauge attitudes of parents with students in middle and high school. Research suggests as students move into higher grade levels, parent involvement decreases (Epstein, 1995). If middle and high schools can better understand how perceptions of involvement differ between parents and teachers, new ideas and strategies can be implemented to increase parental involvement and aid in student achievement. With the results of this study showing significant differences when comparing perceptions of parents from different ethnicities, especially in the Hispanic population, further research could be conducted focusing on individual groups, to search for possible reasons for these differences.

A final recommendation of further study involves post-survey follow-ups with the surveyed populations. Follow-up interviews would allow the respondents to answer deeper questions and find more about the roots of their responses. It would also be very beneficial for the system or school involved in the study to have more input from parents and teachers as to how to improve the parent involvement opportunities for all students.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to gauge teacher and parent perceptions of effective parent involvement, compare and contrast their perceptions, and search for factors possibly affecting these perceptions. Results showed there were significant differences in their perceptions of effective involvement, and certain demographic factors did show differences when compared. The implications of this study lie in the idea if teachers and parents have differences when asked to rate the effectiveness of certain involvement strategies, a dialogue needs to be opened between parents and teachers to discuss these

differences and build a relationship based on ideas they have in common. This dialogue also needs to include discussions about their differences and how best to come together for the betterment of the children. If factors affect the perceptions of parents, schools need to be diligent in their efforts to take these factors into consideration and adjust accordingly. If parents and teachers do not know what they have in common and do not understand their differences, how can they work together in a meaningful manner to positively affect educational outcomes? Studies like this can be conducted within schools and school systems to gauge the attitudes of teachers and parents, and the results can lead to parents having an understanding of what teachers expect for them with regards to involvement and schools understanding what parents think the definition of involvement is. Once these understandings take place, schools can react accordingly, helping to design involvement opportunities and parent trainings aimed at improving involvement levels among all students, regardless of race, socioeconomics, education levels, and cultures. Teachers want their kids to succeed. Parents want their kids to succeed. Often, the only thing in the way of a true partnership is a simple lack of communication and true understanding. Studies like this can be the beginning of improving communication, improving involvement, improving education, and improving achievement.

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APPENDIX A
PARENT SURVEY AND COVER LETTER

Tim Wright
Graduate Program
Doctor of Education Candidate
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Dear Parent:

No one knows a child like his/her parent, and when it comes to education, parents have a lot to offer. Parent involvement is a key buzz phrase in education, and I would like to get some ideas from you about what you believe it means to be effectively involved in your child's education.

I am making this contact with you to ask for your brief participation in a research dissertation regarding perceptions of effective parent involvement. The purpose of this dissertation is to compare what teachers and parents think makes for effective parental involvement. Parents and teachers will be surveyed, and the results will be compared in the hopes of bringing teachers and parents together to improve the education of children.

Your participation is strictly voluntary and anonymous, and the demographic information included in the survey is strictly for the purposes of comparing responses from parents and teachers. Only the researcher will have access to any of the information given in the survey, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process. For questions about the survey or a brief synopsis of the research once the project is complete, contact Tim Wright at tim_wright@whitfield.k12.ga.us.

Thank you.

Tim Wright
Liberty University Ed.D. Candidate

Parent Survey

Effective Parent Involvement: Parent and Teacher Perceptions (adapted from Joyce Epstein, 2002)

This survey is designed for parents of students enrolled in the Whitfield County School System. While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is appreciated in order to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. The purpose of this survey is to gauge attitudes regarding effective parent involvement. The researcher is conducting this research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Survey Instructions:

Please respond to each of the following statements using the scale provided. Indicate to what degree you believe the listed activity is an effective form of parent involvement.

	Parent Involvement Activity	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
1	Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade level	1	2	3	4	5
2	Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy.)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families	1	2	3	4	5
4	Discussing with students the importance of giving their best effort in school and holding high expectations for their school effort	1	2	3	4	5
5	Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
6	Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments	1	2	3	4	5
7	Parent pickup of report card, with conferences on how to improve grades	1	2	3	4	5
8	Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, emails and other communications	1	2	3	4	5
9	Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions	1	2	3	4	5
10	Continually monitoring academic progress	1	2	3	4	5
11	School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents	1	2	3	4	5
12	Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families	1	2	3	4	5
13	Designated class parent, telephone tree, email lists or other structure to provide all families with needed information	1	2	3	4	5
14	Holding high expectations for student achievement	1	2	3	4	5
15	Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
16	Information on homework policies and suggestions on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home including a regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class	1	2	3	4	5
17	Calendars with activities for parents and students at home	1	2	3	4	5
18	Family math, science, reading, and/or social studies activities at school	1	2	3	4	5
19	Active PTA/PTO or other parent organization, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation	1	2	3	4	5
20	District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement	1	2	3	4	5
21	Using harsh discipline to make sure assignments are turned in on time	1	2	3	4	5
22	Information on school or local elections for school representatives	1	2	3	4	5
23	Network to link all families with parent representatives	1	2	3	4	5
24	Information for families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs of service	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
25	Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students	1	2	3	4	5
26	Service through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies; and businesses	1	2	3	4	5
27	Communicating the importance of education to children	1	2	3	4	5
28	Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others)	1	2	3	4	5

Parent Demographic Information (circle one):

Current Marital					
Status:	Married (one time)		Remarried		
	Divorced/Separated		Widowed	Never Married	
<hr/>					
Relationship to					
Child:	Mother/Father		Step-mother	Step-father	
	Other (please list relationship):				
<hr/>					
Number of					
Children in					
Elementary School:	1	2	3	4	5+
<hr/>					
Gender of Children					
(number of each):	Male: _____		Female: _____		
<hr/>					
Gender of Parent					
Surveyed:	Male		Female		
<hr/>					
Age:	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
<hr/>					
Education Level:					
	Some high school		High school graduate		
	Some college		Bachelor's degree	(B.A. or B.S.)	
	Graduate degree				
<hr/>					
Annual Household					
Income Level:	\$0-\$25,000		\$25,000-\$50,000		
	\$50,000-\$75,000		\$75,000-\$100,000		
	\$100,000 or more				
<hr/>					
Parent					
Race/Ethnicity:	Caucasian	African-American	Hispanic	Other	
<hr/>					

APPENDIX B
TEACHER SURVEY AND COVER LETTER

Tim Wright
Graduate Program
Doctor of Education Candidate
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Dear Educator:

No one knows a child like his/her parent, and when it comes to education, parents have a lot to offer. Parent involvement is a key buzz phrase in education, and I would like to get some ideas from you about what you believe it means for a parent to be effectively involved in education.

I am making this contact with you to ask for your brief participation in a research dissertation regarding perceptions of effective parent involvement. The purpose of this dissertation is to compare what teachers and parents think makes for effective parental involvement. Parents and teachers will be surveyed, and the results will be compared in the hopes of bringing teachers and parents together to improve the education of children.

Your participation is strictly voluntary and anonymous, and the demographic information included in the survey is strictly for the purposes of comparing responses from parents and teachers. Only the researcher will have access to any of the information given in the survey, and confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process. For questions about the survey or a brief synopsis of the research once the project is complete, contact Tim Wright at tim_wright@whitfield.k12.ga.us.

Thank you.

Tim Wright
Liberty University Ed.D. Candidate

Teacher Survey

Effective Parent Involvement: Parent and Teacher Perceptions (adapted from Joyce Epstein, 2002)

This survey is designed for teachers of students enrolled in the Whitfield County School System. While you are not required to respond, your cooperation is appreciated in order to make the results of this survey comprehensive, accurate, and timely. The purpose of this survey is to gauge attitudes regarding parent involvement and identify parent involvement activities that teachers find highly effective. The researcher is conducting this research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education.

Survey Instructions:

Please respond to each of the following statements using the scale provided. Indicate to what degree you believe the listed activity is an effective form of parent involvement.

	Parent Involvement Activity	Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
1	Workshops, videotapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade level	1	2	3	4	5
2	Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy.)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families	1	2	3	4	5
4	Discussing with students the importance of giving their best effort in school and holding high expectations for their school effort	1	2	3	4	5
5	Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
		1	2	3	4	5
6	Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments	1	2	3	4	5
7	Parent pickup of report card, with conferences on how to improve grades	1	2	3	4	5
8	Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, emails and other communications	1	2	3	4	5
9	Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions	1	2	3	4	5
10	Continually monitoring academic progress	1	2	3	4	5
11	School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents	1	2	3	4	5
12	Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, and resources for families	1	2	3	4	5
13	Designated class parent, telephone tree, email lists or other structure to provide all families with needed information	1	2	3	4	5
14	Holding high expectations for student achievement	1	2	3	4	5
15	Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade	1	2	3	4	5

		Not Effective		Somewhat Effective		Highly Effective
16	Information on homework policies and suggestions on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home including a regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class	1	2	3	4	5
17	Calendars with activities for parents and students at home	1	2	3	4	5
18	Family math, science, reading, and/or social studies activities at school	1	2	3	4	5
19	Active PTA/PTO or other parent organization, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation	1	2	3	4	5
20	District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement	1	2	3	4	5
21	Using harsh discipline to make sure assignments are turned in on time	1	2	3	4	5
22	Information on school or local elections for school representatives	1	2	3	4	5
23	Network to link all families with parent representatives	1	2	3	4	5
24	Information for families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs of service	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C
PERMISSION TO ADAPT SURVEY

11-17-08

To: Tim Wright

From: Joyce Epstein

Re: Permission to use and adapt surveys

This is to grant permission to you to use the adapted survey that you created based on my work and that of my colleagues. I understand you will use the adapted instrument in your dissertation at Liberty University in the area of educational leadership and administration.

We require only that you include an appropriate reference – in this case to our *Handbook* -- in your dissertation and any publications that follow so that readers can find the original work. That reference is:

Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Simon, B. S., Salinas, K. C., Jansorn, N. R., & Van Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action, second edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

When you complete your work, please send a copy of the chapter that presents the conclusions of your study.

In addition, when you complete your work, your collaborating district and schools may want to join the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University to develop and sustain a strong partnership program. See www.partnershipschools.org for information about NNPS.

Best of luck with your project.

Joyce L. Epstein, Ph.D.

Director, Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships
and the National Network of Partnership Schools
Research Professor of Sociology
Johns Hopkins University
3003 North Charles Street, Suite 200
Baltimore, MD 21218

tel: 410-516-8807

fax: 410-516-8890

jepstein@csos.jhu.edu
www.partnershipschools.org

APPENDIX D

SPANISH TRANSLATION OF PARENT SURVEY AND COVER LETTER

Tim Wright
Programa de Graduado
Candidato a Doctor en Educación
Liberty University
1971 University Blvd.
Lynchburg, VA 24502

Estimados Padres:

Nadie conoce a sus hijos como sus padres, y cuando es relacionado a la educación, los padres tienen mucho que ofrecer. La participación de los padres es una frase clave en la educación, y me gustaría obtener algunas ideas de lo que ustedes creen sobre lo que significa estar efectivamente envuelto en la educación de su hijo/a.

Estoy haciendo este contacto con ustedes para pedirles su participación en una tesis de investigación con respecto a las percepciones de la participación de los padres efectiva. El propósito de esta tesis es comparar lo que los maestros y los padres piensan que hace efectiva la participación de los padres. Los padres y maestros serán encuestados, y los resultados serán comparados con la esperanza de que esto una más a los maestros y padres para mejorar la educación de sus hijos.

Su participación es estrictamente voluntaria y anónima, y la información demográfica incluida en la encuesta es estrictamente para los propósitos de comparar respuestas de los padres y maestros. Solamente el investigador tendrá acceso a cualquier información dada en la encuesta, y mantendrá la confidencialidad durante el proceso de investigación. Para preguntas sobre la encuesta o un breve sinopsis de la investigación una vez se haya completado el proyecto, comuníquese con Tim Wright a su correo electrónico tim_wright@whitfield.k12.ga.us.

Gracias.

Tim Wright
Liberty University Ed.D. Candidate

Encuesta de Padres

Participación de los Padres Efectiva: Percepciones de los Padres y Maestros (adaptado de Joyce Epstein, 2002)

Esta encuesta esta designada para los padres de los estudiantes matriculados en el Sistema Escolar del Condado Whitfield. A pesar de que no se le requiere su respuesta, le agradecemos su cooperación para hacer de los resultados de esta encuesta comprensivos, exactos, y a tiempo. El propósito de esta encuesta es evaluar las actitudes con respecto a la participación de los padres efectiva. El investigador esta llevando a cabo esta investigación como un cumplimiento parcial de los requisitos de su grado de Doctor de Educación.

Instrucciones de la Encuesta:

Por favor responda a cada una de las siguientes declaraciones usando la escala provista. Indicando a que grado usted cree que la actividad presentada es una forma efectiva de participación de padres.

	Actividad de Participación de Padres	No Efectiva		Algo Efectiva		Muy Efectiva
1	Talleres, videocintas, mensajes por teléfono computarizados de ser padres y la crianza del niño en cada edad y nivel de grado.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Educación de padres y otros cursos o entrenamientos para padres (por ejemplo: GED/Preparatoria, colegio, literatura/ alfabetismo familiar.)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Juntas de vecindario para ayudar a las familias a entender a las escuelas y ayudar a las escuelas a entender las familias.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Hablar con los estudiantes de la importancia de hacer su mejor esfuerzo en la escuela y de tener altas expectativas de su esfuerzo escolar.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Juntas para padres por lo menos una vez al año, con seguimiento según sea necesario.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Folders de trabajo enviados a la casa semanal o mensualmente para ser revisados y hacer comentarios.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Padres reciben las calificaciones con juntas de cómo mejorar las calificaciones.	1	2	3	4	5

		No Efectiva		Algo Efectiva		Muy Efectiva
8	Información útil regularmente de avisos, memorandos, llamadas telefónicas, carta de noticias, e-mail y otras comunicaciones.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Información clara de todas las reglas de la escuela, programas, reformas, y transiciones.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Supervisión, verificación continúa del progreso académico.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Programa de voluntarios en los salones de clase y la escuela para ayudar a los maestros, administradores, estudiantes y otros padres.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Salón de padres o centro familiar para hacer el trabajo voluntario, juntas, y recursos para las familias.	1	2	3	4	5
13	Padres de clase designado, árbol de teléfono, listas de e-mail o otra estructura para proveer a todas las familias con la información necesaria.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Tienen altas expectativas para los logros de los estudiantes.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Información para las familias de las destrezas requeridas de los estudiantes en todas las asignaturas, materias en cada nivel de grado.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Información de las reglas y sugerencias de las tareas, de como supervisar y discutir el trabajo escolar en la casa incluyendo un horario regular de tareas que requiere que los estudiantes discutan y interactúen con las familias de lo que ellos están aprendiendo en clase.	1	2	3	4	5
17	Calendarios con las actividades para los padres y estudiantes en la casa.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Actividades familiares en la escuela de matemática, ciencia, lectura, y/o estudios sociales.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Activo en el PTA/PTO o en otras organizaciones de padres, consejos de asesoramiento, o comités (por ejemplo: currículo, seguridad, personal) para liderazgo y participación de los padres.	1	2	3	4	5

		No Efectiva		Algo Efectiva		Muy Efectiva
		1	2	3	4	5
20	Comités y consejos a nivel distrito para la participación familiar y la comunidad.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Uso de disciplina fuerte para asegurarse de que las tareas son entregadas a tiempo.	1	2	3	4	5
22	Información de la escuela o elecciones locales para escoger los representantes escolares.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Red del internet para conectarse todas las familias con los representantes de los padres.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Información para las familias de la comunidad de la salud, cultural, recreacional, apoyo social, y otros programas de servicios.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Información de las actividades de la comunidad que se conectan a las destrezas de aprendizaje y talentos, incluyendo programas de verano para los estudiantes.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Servicio a través de asociaciones participantes de la escuela; cívica, consejería, cultural, de salud, recreación, y otras agencias; y negocios.	1	2	3	4	5
27	Comunicación de la importancia de la educación de los niños.	1	2	3	4	5
28	Servicios de la comunidad para los estudiantes, familias y las escuelas (por ejemplo: reciclaje, arte, música, drama, y otras actividades para personas de edad avanzada o otros).	1	2	3	4	5

Información Demográfica de los Padres (Haga un círculo):

Estado Civil:	Casados (una vez)	Se ha vuelto a casar			
	Divorciado/Separado	Viuda	Nunca se ha casado		
Relación con el					
Niño/a:	Madre	Padre	Madrastra	Padrastro	
	Otro (por favor anote la relación):				
Número de Niños en Escuela Primaria:					
	1	2	3	4	5+
Sexo de los Niños (Número de cada uno):					
	Masculino: _____			Femenino: _____	
Sexo del Padre Encuestado:					
	Masculino			Femenino	
Edad:					
	16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50+
Nivel de Educación:					
	Algo de Preparatoria		Graduado de Preparatoria		
	Algo de Colegio		Graduado de Universidad (B.A. or B.S.)		
	Graduado (Asociado/Curso Técnico)				
Nivel de Ingreso Familiar Anual:					
	\$0-\$25,000		\$25,000-\$50,000		
	\$50,000-\$75,000		\$75,000-\$100,000		
	\$100,000 or more				
Padres Raza/Etnicidad:					
	Caucásico-Americano	Afroamericano	Hispano	Otro	

APPENDIX E
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

February 6, 2008

Dr. Brochu:

I have spoken with you on two occasions about conducting a parent involvement survey with elementary parents and elementary teachers to aid in the completion of my dissertation: Parent and Teacher Perceptions of Effective Parental Involvement. I would like to formally request your permission to conduct my survey. All surveys are anonymous, and the results will provide our school system with vital information about what strategies parents and teachers think truly results in effective parent involvement. We can then begin to build on common themes and bridge evident gaps in order to improve student achievement.

Thanks again for your support!

Tim Wright

Please indicate your permission by checking and signing below.

I grant permission for Tim Wright to complete this research study.

I do not grant permission for Tim Wright to complete this research study.



Dr. Katie Brochu

APPENDIX F

ADDITIONAL TABLES AND POST-HOC ANALYSIS (LSD) TABLES

Table F-1.

Involvement Dimensions Descriptive Statistics by Parent Race/Ethnicity

	N	Mean	SD	Avg. Score
Parenting	451	11.04	2.69	3.68
Caucasian	276	10.57	2.45	3.52
Hispanic	147	11.90	2.91	3.97
African-American	12	10.67	3.17	3.56
Other	16	11.50	2.25	3.83
Communicating	449	22.11	2.82	4.42
Caucasian	281	21.80	2.79	4.36
Hispanic	142	22.80	2.83	4.56
African-American	10	22.00	2.21	4.40
Other	16	21.94	2.87	4.39
Volunteering	449	11.87	2.59	3.96
Caucasian	278	11.72	2.43	3.91
Hispanic	144	12.22	2.83	4.07
African-American	12	11.58	2.39	3.86
Other	15	11.60	3.20	3.87
Learning at Home	445	17.17	2.98	4.29
Caucasian	279	16.93	2.85	4.23
Hispanic	138	17.75	3.16	4.44
African-American	12	16.75	3.42	4.19
Other	16	16.81	3.04	4.20

Table F-1. (Continued)

	N	Mean	SD	Avg. Score
Decision Making	428	14.48	3.89	3.82
Caucasian	266	13.85	3.73	3.46
Hispanic	134	15.69	3.97	3.92
African-American	12	14.33	2.96	3.59
Other	16	14.94	3.11	3.74
Collaborating with the Community	444	15.45	3.51	3.86
Caucasian	276	14.67	3.25	3.67
Hispanic	141	17.01	3.53	4.25
African-American	12	14.58	3.55	3.85
Other	15	15.87	3.36	3.97
Parental Expectations	450	13.70	1.78	4.57
Caucasian	281	13.65	1.70	4.55
Hispanic	141	13.87	1.86	4.62
African-American	12	13.42	2.39	4.47
Other	16	13.38	1.86	4.46

Note. Bolded figures represent dimension totals for all race/ethnicity populations.

Table F-2

Post-Hoc Analysis (LSD) of Involvement Types and Parent Race/Ethnicity

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
Parenting	Caucasian	African-American	.10	.77	.90
		Hispanic	** -1.34	.27	.00
		Other	-.94	.67	.17
	African-American	Caucasian	.10	.77	.90
		Hispanic	-1.24	.79	.12
		Other	-.83	1.00	.41
	Hispanic	Caucasian	** 1.34	.27	.00
		African-American	1.24	.79	.12
		Other	.41	.69	.56
	Other	Caucasian	.935	.67	.17
		African-American	.83	1.00	.41
		Hispanic	-.41	.69	.59
Communicating	Caucasian	African-American	-.21	.90	.81
		Hispanic	** -1.00	.29	.00
		Other	-.15	.72	.83
	African-American	Caucasian	.21	.90	.81
		Hispanic	.79	.91	.39
		Other	.06	1.13	.96
	Hispanic	Caucasian	** 1.00	.29	.00
		African-American	.79	.91	.39
		Other	.85	.74	.25
	Other	Caucasian	.15	.72	.83
		African-American	-.06	1.13	.96
		Hispanic	-.85	.74	.25
Decision Making	Caucasian	African-American	-.48	1.11	.66
		Hispanic	** -1.84	.40	.00
		Other	-1.09	.97	.26
	African-American	Caucasian	.48	1.11	.66
		Hispanic	-1.35	1.14	.23
		Other	-.60	1.44	.68
	Hispanic	Caucasian	** 1.84	.40	.00
		African-American	1.35	1.14	.23
		Other	.75	1.00	.45
	Other	Caucasian	1.09	.97	.26
		African-American	.60	1.44	.68
		Hispanic	-.75	1.00	.45

Table F-2. (Continued)

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
Collaborating	Caucasian	African-American	.09	.99	.93
		Hispanic	** -2.34	.35	.00
		Other	-1.20	.89	.18
	African-American	Caucasian	-.09	.99	.93
		Hispanic	* -2.43	1.01	.02
		Other	-1.28	1.30	.32
	Hispanic	Caucasian	** 2.34	.35	.00
		African-American	* 2.43	1.01	.02
		Other	1.15	.91	.21
	Other	Caucasian	1.20	.89	.18
		African-American	1.28	1.30	.32
		Hispanic	-1.15	.91	.21

*p<.05

**p<.01

Table F-3.

Post-Hoc Analysis (LSD): Parenting and Education Level

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
Parenting	Some high school	High school graduate	-.01	.37	.98
		Some college	.18	.34	.60
		Bachelor's degree	**1.60	.49	.00
		Graduate degree	.27	.47	.57
	High school graduate	Some high school	.01	.37	.98
		Some college	.19	.35	.59
		Bachelor's degree	**1.61	.50	.00
		Graduate degree	.28	.47	.56
	Some college	Some high school	-.18	.34	.60
		High school graduate	-.19	.35	.59
		Bachelor's degree	*1.43	.48	.00
		Graduate degree	.09	.45	.84
	Bachelor's degree	Some high school	** -1.60	.49	.00
		High school graduate	** -1.61	.50	.00
		Some college	** -1.43	.48	.00
		Graduate degree	* -1.33	.58	.02
Graduate degree	Some high school	-.27	.47	.57	
	High school graduate	-.28	.47	.57	
	Some college	-.09	.45	.84	
	Bachelor's degree	*1.33	.58	.02	
Communicating	Some high school	High school graduate	.27	.40	.50
		Some college	.43	.37	.25
		Bachelors degree	**1.38	.53	0.01
		Graduate degree	*1.22	.52	.02
	High school graduate	Some high school	-.27	.40	.50
		Some college	.16	.38	.67
		Bachelors degree	*1.11	.54	.04
		Graduate degree	.95	.52	.07
	Some college	Some high school	-.43	.37	.25
		High school graduate	-.16	.38	.67
		Bachelors degree	.95	.51	.06
		Graduate degree	.79	.50	.11
	Bachelors degree	Some high school	** -1.38	.53	.01
		High school graduate	* -1.11	.54	.04
		Some college	-.95	.51	.06
		Graduate degree	-.16	.63	.80

Table F-3. (Continued)

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
	Graduate degree	Some high school	*-1.22	.52	0.02
		High school graduate	-.95	.52	.07
		Some college	-.79	.50	.11
		Bachelors degree	.16	.63	.80
Collaborating	Some high school	High school graduate	**1.51	.48	.00
		Some college	**1.32	.44	.00
		Bachelors degree	**2.83	.63	.00
		Graduate degree	**2.16	.61	.00
	High school graduate	Some high school	** -1.51	.48	.00
		Some college	-.19	.45	.67
		Bachelors degree	*1.32	.63	.04
		Graduate degree	.64	.61	.29
	Some college	Some high school	** -1.32	.44	.00
		High school graduate	.19	.45	.67
		Bachelors degree	*1.51	.61	.014
		Graduate degree	.83	.58	.15
	Bachelors degree	Some high school	** -2.83	.63	.01
		High school graduate	* -1.32	.63	.04
		Some college	* -1.51	.61	.014
		Graduate degree	-.67	.74	.36
Graduate degree	Some high school	** -2.16	.61	.00	
	High school graduate	-.64	.61	.29	
	Some college	-.83	.58	.15	
	Bachelors degree	.67	.74	.36	

*p<.05

**p<.01

Table F-4.

Post-Hoc Analysis (LSD) of Involvement Types and Parent Income Level

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
Parenting	\$0-\$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	*.83	.33	.01
		\$50,000-\$75,000	.61	.35	.09
		\$75,000-\$100,000	**1.47	.46	.00
		\$100,000 or more	**1.65	.50	.00
	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$0-\$25,000	*-.83	.33	.01
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-.23	.39	.56
		\$75,000-\$100,000	.64	.49	.19
		\$100,000 or more	.81	.53	.12
	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$0-\$25,000	-.61	.35	.09
		\$25,000-\$50,000	.23	.39	.56
		\$75,000-\$100,000	.87	.50	.08
		\$100,000 or more	1.04	.54	.054
	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$0-\$25,000	**1.47	.46	.00
		\$25,000-\$50,000	-.64	.49	.19
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-.87	.50	.08
		\$100,000 or more	.17	.61	.78
\$100,000 or more	\$0-\$25,000	**1.65	.50	.00	
	\$25,000-\$50,000	-.81	.53	.12	
	\$50,000-\$75,000	-1.04	.54	.054	
	\$75,000-\$100,000	-.17	.61	.78	
Decision Making	\$0-\$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	*1.03	.49	.04
		\$50,000-\$75,000	.34	.52	.51
		\$75,000-\$100,000	*1.65	.66	.014
		\$100,000 or more	**2.16	.73	.00
	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$0-\$25,000	*-1.03	.49	.04
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-.69	.58	.23
		\$75,000-\$100,000	.62	.71	.38
		\$100,000 or more	1.12	.78	.15
	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$0-\$25,000	-.34	.52	.51
		\$25,000-\$50,000	.69	.58	.23
		\$75,000-\$100,000	1.31	.73	.07
		\$100,000 or more	*1.81	.79	.02
	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$0-\$25,000	*-1.65	.66	.014
		\$25,000-\$50,000	-1.12	.77	.15
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-1.30	.73	.07
		\$100,000 or more	.51	.89	.57

Table F-4. (Continued)

Involvement Dimension	Factor X	Factor Y	Mean Difference (X-Y)	Std. Error	Sig.
	\$100,000 or more	\$0-\$25,000	** -2.16	.73	.00
		\$25,000-\$50,000	-1.12	.77	.15
		\$50,000-\$75,000	* -1.81	.79	.02
		\$75,000-\$100,000	-.51	.89	.57
Collaborating	\$0-\$25,000	\$25,000-\$50,000	*.89	.43	.04
		\$50,000-\$75,000	**1.53	.45	.00
		\$75,000-\$100,000	**2.77	.59	.00
		\$100,000 or more	**2.79	.63	.00
	\$25,000-\$50,000	\$0-\$25,000	*.89	.43	.04
		\$50,000-\$75,000	.64	.50	.20
		\$75,000-\$100,000	**1.89	.63	.00
		\$100,000 or more	**1.90	.66	.00
	\$50,000-\$75,000	\$0-\$25,000	** -1.53	.45	.00
		\$25,000-\$50,000	-.64	.50	.20
		\$75,000-\$100,000	1.24	.64	.054
		\$100,000 or more	1.26	.68	.06
	\$75,000-\$100,000	\$0-\$25,000	** -2.77	.59	.00
		\$25,000-\$50,000	** -1.89	.63	.00
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-1.24	.64	.054
		\$100,000 or more	.02	.77	.98
	\$100,000 or more	\$0-\$25,000	** -2.79	.63	.00
		\$25,000-\$50,000	** -1.90	.66	.00
		\$50,000-\$75,000	-1.26	.68	.06
		\$75,000-\$100,000	-.02	.77	.98

*p<.05

**p<.01