EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ELEMENTARY PARENT INVOLVEMENT COORDINATORS IN A NORTH GEORGIA TITLE I CHARTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in a Northeast Georgia Title I Charter School District. EPICs were charged with facilitating programs designed to build social capital and network closure for families. This nested case study explored the experiences of five EPICs, each located in one of the five charter elementary schools, within the district of study. Data was collected through focus groups, interviews and related documents to identify emerging themes and shared experiences among the participants. Data sources were analyzed to develop an understanding of each EPIC program as well as an overall perspective on the cooperating school district. Insight gained through the study revealed common themes of practice including connecting schools and families, the need for comprehensive training and the importance of culture in forming a collaborative school environment. Results identified avenues of practice supporting lasting relationships through building social capital, resource network connections and the importance of understanding social justice while engaging families.

Keywords: network closure, networking, parent, parent involvement coordinator/parent liaison, second language family, social capital, social interest, social support, social justice
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to Bonnie Elrod, Annie Brown, Donald and Louise Elrod, Carol Payne, Terry “Doc” Elliott, Dr. Don Keller, Larry Abernathy and Karen Busha. Some of you have made the journey to a higher place at the time of this achievement for me. I thought of all of you and felt you close to me on the day I achieved this lifelong goal. Without your support I do not know if I would have earned this honor. You have all been an inspiration and a blessing to me.
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List of Abbreviations

Elementary Parent Involvement Coordinator - EPIC

Elementary Parent Involvement Coordinator Program – EPIC Program

English for Speakers of Other Languages – ESOL

English as Second Language – ESL
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

Research has identified the potential benefits of parent involvement in educational environments (Georgia Department of Education, 2014; United States Department of Education, 2014). As a response to Federal guidelines and population changes, Georgia Title I public school districts have received funding for school personnel positions called parent involvement coordinators. Often referred to as parent liaisons, they are charged with being a facilitator for developing social capital and network closure for families with children in schools (Alexander, 2009; Howland, Anderson, Smiley, & Abbott, 2006; Jacobson, 2003; Jeynes, 2012). However, little study has been completed to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in the unique educational environment of a Title I charter school district. This nested case study is an inquiry to gain perspectives on five unique elementary environments. Through this experience a district perspective will be developed on elementary parent involvement coordinators and methods in which they foster social capital and network closure while engaging families in the district of study.

Background

Federal education initiatives have deemed parent involvement as a critical factor when it comes to the academic success of children in public schools (United States Department of Education, 2014). The importance of this emphasis has trickled down to appeal to school districts in the states. Georgia has experienced population changes within the past twenty years and second language families are a consistent challenge for public school districts relying on English as a primary language (Georgia Department of
Family engagement and parent involvement have become an area of inquiry and concern because of the complexity of cultural diversity, acculturation factors and the traditional mindsets of engrained educational practices.

Some Georgia school districts have developed approved charter platforms of operations as a response to changes in culture and the economic factors that have emerged. Georgia charter school districts are granted waivers increasing flexibility for creativity in professional development, blended learning environments, and technology in exchange for increased achievement accountability. In the district of study, EPICs are charged with engaging families as a part of a comprehensive model of learning supports for academic and social growth. Prior studies (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008) call for further research examining the roles of school personnel involved in building relationships with parents. Crites (2008) indicated a need for further study on parent liaisons to define their role in implementing generalized best practices for increasing and sustaining parent participation in the elementary educational experience. Sanders (2008) suggested most parent liaison services are school or district based so inquiry is needed to focus leaders on how they can direct preparation to meet the needs of local families. Egger (2011) pointed out a need for the development of localized collaboration and communication services to fit particular environments and populations. Dalgleish (2000) called for research to identify ways schools can convey the importance of parent involvement and activities most valuable in benefiting the educational experience. The gap in the literature reveals a lack of common knowledge, understanding, preparation and administrative activities for EPICs to identify and address the diverse needs of specific local and situational cultures (Jacobson, 2003). Through exploring the experience of EPICs and associated stakeholders, transferable knowledge may
grow to benefit the research base for the development of best practices through unique considerations for preparatory and ongoing training.

The United States Government (2014) has deemed parent involvement as an important element in the educational experience of children. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004; P.L. No. 108-446) calls for a partnership between parents and educators to enhance the planning and implementation of student programming for success. There is little doubt that parent involvement can benefit students and schools (Staples & Diliberto, 2010; Jeynes, 2012; United States Government, 2014). The concept seems basic. A parent helps his or her child with home or schoolwork and/or volunteers at the child’s school. However, viewpoints on parent involvement can sometimes be difficult to define (Wright, 2009). Stakeholders differ in perspectives and opinions about behaviors constituting effective parent involvement. Therefore, defining and implementing programs can be a significant challenge for schools. Traditional parent involvement models often overlook and discount culture, educational limitations and practices at home that support education creating a family to school disconnect (Quiocho and Daoud, 2006). This may be especially true for families marginalized by acculturation issues and socioeconomic status. Wang (2009) indicated oppressive practice and policy, based on the inability to speak English, as a common practice among some states to oppress the language acquisition and educational achievement of immigrants. According to Osborn (2006) families are subjected to the effects of an unequal society where regionally traditional mindsets assume hidden rules of engagement. This creates an unbalanced power structure placing second language families in a position of social injustice. According to Wang and Phillion (2007) parent and community involvement play a crucial role in
identifying and taking action to fight against social injustice. Sanders (2008) indicated a need for culturally sensitive family advocacy programs based on the specific needs of the environment. Research revealed the importance of forming predictable lasting relationships with families and social support systems to guide them through the myriad of unknowns in educational systems (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Jacobson, 2003; Putnam, 1993; Wang & Phillion, 2007).

Efforts to mitigate social injustice led to many innovative ideologies for public schools. The concept of charter schools is not new and is aimed at adjusting to the needs of all students. Throughout its development, and ongoing implementation, it continues to grow to meet the needs of students and families (Corcoran & Stoddard 2008). The Charter Movement for public schools started around 1991 in Minnesota (Toch, 2010). Originally designed based on new and existing educational environments, charter schools were sponsored by non-profit and for profit organizations such as local school boards, the state, universities, and cities. They were granted increased flexibility pertaining to many rules required for standard public schools. Limitations pertained to safety, nondiscrimination, and statewide testing programs. The defining characteristic of charter schools is flexibility in exchange for improved student achievement. States amended charter legislation policy to meet the specific needs of student populations through increased screening of charter agreements with schools. (Pipho,1997). Stoddard & Corcoran (2008) suggested growing diversity, parent educational level, involvement and issues with standardized testing, and teacher unions as catalysts for charter growth. Gross (2011) indicated the distinguishing factor in charter schools is increased ability to adapt to changing family needs.
According to the Georgia Department of Education (2014) charter schools are public schools required to operate under the terms and conditions of an agreement, or charter, with an authorized state or local board of education. School systems agree to higher degrees of accountability for student achievement in exchange for increased affability from state and local rules. Charter schools often offer unique programming not typically found in traditional educational systems, designed to engage parents and students. Funding for charter schools and districts mimics provisions for standard public schools. The current study’s setting is designated as a charter district in Georgia and functions under a charter between the State Board of Education and the local school district. It is much like a solitary charter school with many branches of service focused on school-based leadership and decision-making. Unique to the district of study, each of the elementary schools in the system operate under a charter as well. Similar to state and federal conditions, the district has experienced the challenges of population changes, expanding cultural diversity, parent involvement, and standardized testing issues; thus, expanding the need for educational institutions to adapt for student success (Georgia Department of Education, 2014; Stoddard & Corcoran, 2008). Charter schools offer an alternative strategy for districts to adapt and increase the probability of student achievement and stakeholder satisfaction.

Parent involvement may be a method of providing increased resources to schools for the purpose of addressing perceived social injustice and achievement issues among marginalized families (Gross, 2011; Stoddard & Corcoran, 2008). However, the importance of building social capital and network closure with marginalized families remains a challenge for public schools (Fletcher, Newsome, Nickerson, & Bazley, 2001; Wheeler & Ladd, 1982). Federal policies, and the growth of interest in engaging minority populations
as a support for achievement, have driven legislation in Georgia to fund a program called the Parent Engagement Program. The program includes school personnel called parent involvement coordinators and is designed to build advocacy based relationships to support social capital and network closure in educational environments (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Georgia Department of Education, 2014; Jacobson, 2003; Jeynes, 2012). This follows Federal and state concerns over links between parent involvement and student academic achievement. Prior studies call for inquiry into standard methods of practice for personnel involved in building relationships with families; defining effective methods of engagement and sustainability of parent collaborative participation, and preparation and policy to support growth for improved service to the community (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Egger, 2011; Sanders, 2008).

Efforts at federal, state and local levels attempt to provide easy entry points into educational involvement for all parents with children in public schools. Parent involvement coordinator programs are designed to deliver neutral advocacy, to develop lasting relationships, social support, and to adapt to the changing needs of families in a setting respecting diversity (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). The gap in the literature reveals a lack of local knowledge and preparation activities for parent involvement coordinators to identify and address the diverse needs of specific cultures in school systems (Crites, 2008; Egger, 2011; Sanders, 2008). Families are directly impacted and marginalized when schools operate on traditional paradigms of ritualized parent involvement practices (Howland, Anderson, Smiley, & Abbott, 2006; Sanders, 2008; White & Kaufman, 1997). Charter schools have the ability to adapt to the changing needs of the populations they serve. In the district of study, parent involvement coordinators are on the front lines of a larger
network striving to meet the changing needs of families to increase the probability of involvement and success. However, little study has been completed to explore the role of EPICs in the unique environment of charter schools. Through research to gain understanding of parent involvement coordinators, information and insight may be extended to minimize marginalization of stakeholders and to navigate families through the educational process. Inquiry may guide preparation and ongoing development for standards of practice for EPICs and the research base may grow to aid school districts in administration of overall family engagement programs.

**Situation to Self**

The study is relevant to the researcher because of an association with the research setting through employment as a school guidance counselor in one of the elementary schools included in the study. Career choice background also plays a role in personal interest due to the social elements of the study. My background includes social work, welfare programs and health care as a practitioner and owner of a private counseling corporation. Knowledge of the individuals encountered throughout the years created interest in the potential gained through the examination of elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC) programs. The researcher works closely with the EPIC in my designated school and others throughout the district. Through our collaboration, we strive to form community partnerships with families, social and health agencies, and other stakeholders interested in the well-being of society. Educational parent seminars, family orientation, parent-teacher conferences, cultural awareness studies, and early literacy programs are created and delivered through our cooperation. This partnership seems to cross traditional boundaries where a clear authority figure remains in a one up position and presides over the
content of the interaction. Instead, equal communication between individuals is the norm and a lasting collaborative relationship is maintained between each participant and as a cohesive group. Through this experience my interest has grown to explore EPICs because they seem to be able to build lasting emotional and cultural bonds with stakeholders. This seems to be especially true for families who feel alienated by their financial and social status.

The researcher chose to engage in the exploration of the role of EPICs to gain an understanding of their activities focused on building social capital and network closure for families. They seem profoundly effective in building relationships with stakeholders. However, no required model for preparation or practice has been offered by state or local governance in Georgia. Each EPIC seems unique in philosophy and strategies used to serve individuals and groups in a particular educational environment. They are intriguing because they do not seem to strive for a governing organization to provide standards of practice. They appear to rely on their local knowledge and resourcefulness for meaningful engagement of diverse stakeholder populations. The desire is to better understand the balance of program elements and activities practiced by EPICs to gain a comprehensive understanding of functioning.

**Problem Statement**

Georgia schools experience difficulty in developing and providing support services for marginalized families (Crites, 2008, Georgia Department of Education, 2014). These families are usually minority second language families as well as of low socioeconomic status (Crites, 2008). Much of the literature supports parent involvement as a method for improvement in the academic performance and personal growth of students (Alexander,
According to Smith, Stern, and Shatrova (2008) schools must not associate silence to ignorance and must make consistent efforts to outreach because parents often have high aspirations for their child’s success. Educators must build lasting relationships with families if they are going to succeed in supporting students for a free and appropriate educational experience. Chang, Park, Singh and Sung, (2009) found higher levels of parent education and income were associated with more positive parent involvement. However, some cultures seem to display passive attitudes towards their child’s education due to a lack of familiarity with American education. In order to sustain parent involvement programs, some Georgia charter schools have funded personnel positions known as parent involvement coordinator programs or parent liaisons. These individuals are directed to engage and educate families, to encourage the building of social capital, and provide network closure for deficit areas in schools that could marginalize minority cultures (Alexander, 2009). Wang (2009) explained that difficulties lie in the unique cultural needs of localized communities.

The intent of this study was to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), their experiences and perceptions of associated stakeholders to address gaps identified throughout the literature (Alexander, 2009; Baharudin, Hong, Lim, & Zulkefly, 2010; Crites, 2008; Georgia Department of Education, 2014; Jacobson, 2003; Smith, Stern, and Shatrova, 2008). Identified gaps include: a) a need to explore and extend common knowledge of parent involvement coordinator preparation; b) methods for best practices in providing culturally diverse entry points into the educational environment for families; c) building and maintaining relationships to encourage continued parent involvement and support for schools; d) standard methods for professional development to
ensure ongoing growth and e) the ability to adapt to changing needs of stakeholders at local levels (Sanders, 2008).

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this nested case study was to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in a North Georgia Title I charter school district. The role of EPICs was defined as the activities performed for the purposes of building social capital and network closure for parent participation at their child’s school (Creswell, 2007). The setting includes five charter elementary schools, housing parent involvement coordinators, in a school district as described above.

**Significance of the Study**

The growing research base points toward parent involvement as a catalyst for positive growth in schools (Ainsworth, 2002; Alexander, 2009; Baharudin, Hong, Lim, & Zulkefly, 2010; Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Doucet, 2011). Former studies have revealed the unlimited and untapped human resource potential of collaboration with families as a pathway to improve the educational experience of the entire learning community (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Georgia Department of Education, 2014; Jacobson, 2003; Sanders, 2008). Exploring the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), charged with increasing family engagement, may add to the knowledge base for best practices to implement culturally sensitive activities, help create a welcoming school environment, and increase learning about culture to become informed about immersion process norms (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011). Research calls for further study to define applied activities or combinations of action for universal intervention (Alexander, 2009; Jeynes, 2012; Wright, 2009). However, the realization that each school environment
is unique adds local interests to the transferability of the study’s results (Sanders, 2008). With identified themes for practice, relationships with local families and community agencies may be strengthened and duplication of services may be minimized. EPIC service providers could be increasingly assured of their employment responsibilities and feel as if they could provide more efficient and effective activities for family wellbeing. Furthermore, results from charter schools may give public schools ideas to heighten the expectations and accountability of stakeholders to become increasingly aware of the cultural aspects of diversified systems of education and possibly rethink assumptions of norms instigating unintentional oppressive and discriminatory actions (Corcoran & Stoddard 2008). Wright (2009) outlined the formation of educational perception as a synthesis of an individual’s experiences, their cultures, and their situations. “Parents must express interest in what their child is doing at school and reiterate the importance of school in order for children to see the value” (p. 113). Effective management of parent involvement coordinator program services may increase the probability of stakeholder involvement and lessen the gaps in parent participation in marginalized populations.

This study may add to the growing research base investigating educational personnel charged with instigating family involvement and collaborative relationships in local communities (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008 Jacobson, 2003; Sanders, 2008). It may reveal a common theoretical system of operational parameters for participants and create a knowledge base for further investigation and growth of the program of study (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Wright, 2009). Overall insight into elementary parent involvement programs (EPIC) could add to the capabilities of school systems to increase stakeholder understanding of the educational environment and system to encourage social
cohesion, support, and collaborative contribution to maintain a sense of equity (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Hanifan, 1916; Putnam, 1993, Wang, 2009). The concepts of social capital and network closure could become elements of a vision for holistic approach to school success with specified initiatives to develop the skills of educational practitioners in supporting and maintaining increased equality in stakeholder relations.

Empirical implications for the exploration of parent involvement coordinator programs could offer rules for defining the process of implementing useful interventions with marginalized families, as well as generalized practices for assuring cultural sensitivity for stakeholders (Ainsworth, 2002; Baker, 2000; Epstein, 1995; Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007). Through data analysis, specific guidelines could pinpoint best practices encouraging continued development of parent involvement coordinator programs along with other services designed to initiate and maintain contact with populations at risk for marginalization (Alexander, 2009; Sanders, 2008, Wang, 2009). The overall integration of findings may lead to institutional change allowing adaptation to supersede tradition in the hierarchy of standards for practice (Morales, 2006; Sturtevant, & Kim, 2010; Toch, 2010). Through gaining knowledge into the perceptions of diverse stakeholders, common themes may emerge as components of an overall parent involvement coordinator program. This could allow understanding of the program from its beginnings to its current level of functioning and insight into future aspirations from a variety of sources (Heyneman, 1998).

**Research Question(s)**

The questions for this study are intended to explore and understand elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) and their significance in the educational environment (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008). They are focused on (a) how EPIC roles are
different and similar in each location in the study to better understand the overall concept of
the program’s goal (Alexander, 2009; Berkman, Glass, Brisette, & Seeman, 2000; Crites,
2008; Sanders, 2008); (b) perceptions of leadership, teachers, EPICs and parents about how
the EPIC program is accessed as part of school level, district and state wide initiatives
(Crites, 2008; Georgia Department of Education, 2014; Lizardo, 2011; Sanders, 2008;
United States Department of Education, 2014); (c) discerning the reality of EPIC positions
and the programs effects on school functioning to form and maintain positive social bonds
with families (Heyneman, 1998; Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1994); and (d) insight into ease
of access points for parents to become involved in their child’s educational journey
(Berkman, Glass, Brisette, & Seeman, 2000).

Sanders (2008) pointed out the importance of building trusting relationships between
parent involvement coordinator programs and families. The questions follow calls for
further research in previous studies asking for stakeholder input for parent involvement
coordinator services (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008). Heyneman (1998)
highlighted the importance of social capital and network closure, and how they are critical
byproducts of school-to-family relationships. The questions for this study are meant to illicit
responses concerning specific activities designed to build and maintain relationships with
families (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Heyneman, 1998).

**Research Question 1:** How do EPICs describe their role in Title I charter elementary
schools?
**Research Question 2:** How do stakeholders such as administrators, teacher, EPICS and parents view the role of EPICs in building social capital and network closure for all families?

**Research Plan**

This nested case study explored the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in a Title I North Georgia charter school system. This approach to case study allowed the exploration of EPIC programs in the five site-based elementary schools in the school district of study (Yin, 1993). Through data collection from each program, the researcher sought to understand the role of a district-wide collective (Creswell, 2007; Stake, 1995). Participants for interviews included five EPICs and five Head Principals from a participating elementary school. A focus group for parents, serving on school governance council in their child’s respective school, was facilitated at a location chosen for the convenience of the participants. In addition to parents, a focus group was facilitated for five lead teachers employed by the district of study, each serving in one of the elementary environments in the study. The study was based upon the data collected from semi-structured interviews and observational notes, focus groups, examination of archival and current documents, and the synthesis of beginning and ending vignettes to capture the researcher’s interpretation of the case (Creswell, 2007).

**Delimitations**

Delimitation procedures consisted of purposeful stratified sampling - choosing participants who are familiar with and frequently access elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) program services (Stake, 1995). The process extended to include one Title I charter school district in North Georgia and its five charter elementary schools.
containing EPIC programs. The setting was targeted to explore the gap in the literature pertaining to EPICs and charter schools. Prior studies called for further exploration of individuals with roles directly associated with forming relationships with families in public schools (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008). EPICs and Head Principals chosen for the study were selected to be in professional practice at an elementary school in the district of study. Teachers for focus groups were chosen based on designation as the Lead Teacher of their grade level at their respective school. Participating parents for focus groups included school governance council members who had been active for at least 2 years in the school where their child is registered to participate in K-5 instruction. Due to the migratory temperament of parents in the district of study, delimiting to parents who stayed in the district for two years offered current perspectives built upon accumulated retrospect to give a unique view of experiences with EPICs.

**Definitions**

Network closure - The extent to which a social network is interconnected through ties between social groups.

Networking - The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions to develop productive relationships.

Parent – Any individual assuming the role of caretaker of a child.

Parent/family involvement – When a parent or individual assuming the caretaker role of a child intentionally and consistently to improve academically in school.
Parent participation – When a parent or individual assuming the caretaker role of a child visits the child’s school of enrollment for social events or nonacademic activities.

Parent involvement coordinator/ Parent liaison – A paraprofessional funded through Title I programming, with the educational level of a high school diploma or GED, who assists in Title I with planning and implementation of parent involvement activities, data collection, volunteer programs, home visits and resource coordination.

Parent involvement management – When a school district or individual school plans and structures parent or family involvement activities without consideration for stakeholder input or collaboration.

Second language family – Families where English is not the native language spoken in the home.

Social capital - The network of social connections that exist between people, and their shared values and norms of behavior which enables and encourages mutually advantageous social cooperation.

Social interest – An Adlerian term used to describe the natural drive to cooperate and work with other people for the common good.

Social justice - Sharing power and benefits equitably in a social system (Osborn, 2006)

Social support - The providing of assistance or comfort to other people to help them cope with a variety of problems.
Summary

According to Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2007), nested case study design offers a strategy to compare two or more subgroups operating within an overall governing system. Prior research called for inquiry highlighting the behaviors of individuals connecting with families and parents (Crites, 2009; Sanders, 2008). Data analysis methods for the current study were designed to generate information relevant to previous studies and connections to EPIC professional practice through interviews, focus groups, documents and observations (Charmaz, 2000). Definitions for terms in the study were designed to reflect colloquial meanings. Overall, the goal is to explore the role of EPICs, gather insight into their practice as school based agents and add to the growing research base about parent involvement and the individuals who act as neutral advocates to aid educational environments in efforts to succeed.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This review of the literature synthesizes research associated with the development of parent involvement coordinator programs and perspectives on scope of practice. While many points of view follow parent participation in the developmental experience of students in schools, common themes in the research identify some typical roles for an implied outline of parent involvement coordinator programs. Barrientos (2012) proposed that research has attempted to capture the essence of the common difficulties experienced by some students and families. The complexity of the issues creates difficulty in a full understanding. Though each study uncovered clues to best practices, gaps remain in standards for training and adapting to the changing needs of diverse cultures and educational environments. A summary of the literature extended to state the need for further research to add to the growing knowledge base for guidelines to improve services for building relationships associated with social capital in schools.

Theoretical Framework

Research concerning parent involvement in schools often mentions the importance of building relationships with marginalized families to increase the probability of network closure and to improve efforts for building social capital. One element of educational intervention is the instigation of parent involvement coordinator programs. Sometimes referred to as parent liaisons, these individuals are housed in schools and serve as resource advocates to the local community. Many avenues of context have been applied to the concept of parent involvement coordinator programs to study a conceptualized view. However, much of the previous research calls for extended study to broaden the base of
knowledge for the benefit of specific training needed to ensure the development of roles for efficient and effective implementation.

The main idea encapsulating parent involvement literature is the idea of social capital (Jeynes, 2012). Though many definitions and subtopics seem to follow this term, a summary of the research indicated a basic meaning of the residual benefits experienced through building relationships to encourage trust, future actions and expectations (Putnam, 1993). Parent involvement coordinator programs are designed to provide a professional role addressing deficit areas in school personnel to support this effort through neutrality and advocacy (Sanders, 2008). The literature concerning parent involvement coordinator programs is channeled to recognize the primary importance of relationships if educational environments are to claim true success with student achievement and stakeholder buy-in. Prior studies (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Wright, 2009) called for further research in examining the roles of school personnel involved in building relationships with parents. Crites (2008) indicated a need for further study on parent liaisons to define their role in implementing generalized best practices for increasing and sustaining parent participation in the elementary educational experience. Most parent liaison services are school or district based; therefore inquiry is needed to focus leaders on how they can develop parent liaison preparation to meet the needs of families (Sanders, 2008). The guiding assumption throughout study is most stakeholders believe parent involvement is important factor in student achievement (Wright, 2009).

Few studies have pinpointed the specific roles of parent involvement coordinators in the context of charter elementary schools. In this study a Georgia charter school system is the chosen site. The Georgia Department of Education (2014) identifies these districts as
having increased flexibility for educational practice in exchange for higher accountability to increase student achievement. Through charter system ideology parent involvement coordinator programs obtain enhanced pliability to implement strategies for increasing exploration into methods for constructing social capital. The culminating philosophy points toward increased parent participation to enhance the emotional and academic growth of students. Most parent involvement coordinator programs are school or district based so inquiry is needed to inform leaders on how they can focus on parent involvement coordinator preparation and services to meet the needs of families (Sanders, 2008). This case study is focused on exploring the roles of parent involvement coordinators to gain insight concerning activities to build social capital for parent participation at school. The aim is to understand themes leading practice toward methods of enrichment for families to encourage growth and productivity for current and future members of society.

Related Literature

Throughout the literature the role of parent involvement coordinators can be viewed through unique lenses of perspective. However, difficulties faced by marginalized parents may be similar to the obstacles facing researchers and EPICs (Wang, 200). Difficulty in defining parent involvement and issues pertaining to cultural immersion are barriers arresting the development of universal attributes for parent involvement coordinator programs (Sanders, 2008). Though qualitative study continues to find positive outcomes for parent involvement initiatives, some quantitative economically based inquiry questions the cost benefit ratio of effort spent to accomplish limited outcomes. This literature review includes synthesis on the topics related to concept of parent involvement coordinator service parameters and programs.
Theory

Parent involvement coordinator programs focus on marginalized populations making efforts to reap the benefits of building social capital (Alexander, 2009). Understanding this point of view can yield a mental inference for influences effecting parent behavior. The concept of social capital is not new and can be traced back to similar ideologies of community governance including Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas (Gutek, 1972). Early sociological and psychological theorists used terms such as the social self or investment in the community to describe the outcomes derived from social cohesion (Hanifan, 1916). Adler’s (1964) concept of Gemeinschaftsgefühl, translated into social interest, cooperation or community feeling is often overlooked in the literature but contributes an overall basis for the philosophy guiding behavioral understanding. The concept implies all individuals have a desire to find a productive and useful place in society. If the individual does not feel as if they are contributing and serving a societal role, feelings of inferiority are developed. Though Adler’s concept is dated, this aspect of relational interaction is very similar to social capital theory due to the implication that both the individual and society benefit from collaboration producing a feelings of community. Social capital theory expands Adler’s idea as social cohesion and as an important element for the development of more global initiatives such as improving relationships through social expectations or norms, networking, understanding poverty, human resource potential and economic growth. Putnam (1993) found countries without social cohesion to be greatly effected economically while regions maintaining this element were healthier. The transferability of this idea can be a factor for understanding to the microcosm of society represented in schools. Parents need
to understand the educational environment and their role as a valued collaborative
contributor if they are to gain and maintain a sense of equality (Mora, 2009; Wang, 2009).

A common thread spanning theories is that current behavior is affected by past
experiences. The inferred paradigm is behavior patterns are built over time through
accumulated interaction. Social learning theories provide an ideology often used to explain
the behavior of individuals and groups. According to Vygotsky (1962) a child’s
development is affected by the culture of family environment. Bandura’s (1977) social
learning theory explains cognitive and behavioral development as a result of accumulating
experiences of observational modeling, creating a framework for cognitive behavioral
functioning. Chang, Park, Singh, & Sung, (2009) found, “Parent behavior provides a model
for children to mimic along with training and encouragement for appropriate goal setting”
(p. 321). To further a singular projection of social learning Lave, & Wenger (1991) referred
to social interaction and collaboration as essential components of situated learning and
include involvement in a “community of practice” which embodies the acquisition of social
dependence for directional growth. This indicates a theoretical bridge to connect social
learning with the ideas encompassing social capital theory. Bourdieu (1977) explained the
significance of social capital in the context of social positioning and expands the idea to
power positioning in relationships. Throughout Lave and Wagner’s (1991) community of
practice social cohesion and dependence grows throughout situated learning yielding social
positioning throughout the collaborative process. The literature often explains social capital
as a product of relational efforts. Putnam (1993) recognized social capital as a residual
benefit from the collaborative efforts of relational interactions. To educational environments
this philosophy can drive decisions supporting diverse factions of stakeholders by
recognizing the learned commonalities of the social positioning of families (Cheung, & Pomerantz, 2011; Mora, 2009, Wang & Rodgers, 2006).

The research indicates a need for relationships throughout the educational process. Parents’ heightened involvement predicted children’s enhanced engagement and achievement (Cheung, & Pomerantz, 2011). Complex explanations are offered to modernize abstract views of the behavioral patterns of parents. A view of past theory pinpoints the absolute minimization of behavior in the form of stimulus-response and reinforcement (Skinner, 1938). Skinner (1938) offered the notion of operant conditioning. For applied settings this would imply that a parent’s first interaction with the educational environment would determine the outcomes for future. Repeated desirable exchanges with school would increase the likelihood of involvement. This philosophy indicates that social capital and leaning occur as a result of reinforced behavior. Wang and Rodgers (2006) suggests that institutional consideration of social justice and culture, while engaging culturally diverse populations, could increase the likelihood of building social capital and increase the likelihood of continued meaningful interaction.

**Parent Involvement**

Viewpoints on parent involvement include opinions from stakeholders involved in the educational process and can sometimes be difficult to define (Jeynes, 2012; Wright, 2009). The concept of parent involvement seems basic. A parent helps his or her child with home or schoolwork and/or volunteers at their child’s school. There is little doubt that parent involvement can benefit students and schools. Banerjee, Harrell, and Johnson (2011) support parent involvement as a preventative measure in the development of student
cognitive ability and highlight evidence pointing toward early life activities and the resulting positive effects on later achievement. Baharudin, Hong, Lim, and Zulkefly (2010) reported a positive correlation between parenting practices and academic achievement of children. However, effective parent involvement is difficult to define and some families face unforeseen challenges creating barriers for their success (Wright, 2009). Stakeholders differ in their opinions about behaviors constituting effectiveness in parent involvement. Parents and teachers perceptions could vary based on demographics and accumulated biases.

Defining and implementing parent involvement can be a challenge for schools. Quiocho and Daoud (2006) examined programs that implement a traditional parent involvement model. Results indicated a possible burden on family members’ time, financial, or educational limitations. The study revealed family practices at home that support children’s education may be overlooked and underappreciated by schools. “These misperceptions of early childhood education programs may lead to disconnects in the partnership between families and programs” (p. 4-5). Parent involvement coordinator services are charged with acting as a neutral advocate for stakeholders to close network boundaries inhibiting families from participating in their child’s educational experience. The nature of this practice can create adversarial relationships with school personnel because the cultural needs of the family may not adhere to traditional values imposed by educational environment. Training and facilitation of dialog, based on equal sharing of power, is necessary to dispel assumptions of discrimination and bring stakeholders together in an equally valued community for the purpose of student achievement and growth (Wang, 2009).
Models

Theoretical implications are often accompanied by models for visual representation and organized explanation in the literature. Parent involvement coordinator programs in the literature are guided through inquiry-based models. Epstein (1995) proposed a model for parent involvement which includes: a) parenting; b) communicating; c) volunteering; d) learning at home; and e) collaborating and decision-making. This framework provides explanations of parent and school collaboration leading to effective involvement for parents.

The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement (2005) included progressive levels of collaboration to attain the goal of student learning and achievement. This model includes: (a) parental role construction for involvement; (b) parental efficacy for helping the student succeed; (c) family values, goals, expectations, aspirations, encouragement; and (d) student academic self-efficacy. The result is aimed at parent involvement as it relates to student achievement. Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez, (2006) included and outlined a model based on three integrated components. Three categories include parenting, home-School relationships and responsibility for learning Outcomes. Frameworks provide a basis for schools to work with parents to attain effectiveness. The benefits of model implementation are well documented. Georgiou and Tourva (2007) indicated a relationship between parent perception of involvement and their child’s achievement. Parent beliefs about getting involved seemed to motivate them to act in the interest of their child’s progress.”. (Sturtevant & Kim, 2010) Higher achieving English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students generally reported a strong interest in reading and writing, particularly outside of school, and a wide array of literacy activities within the family in which the students were both learners and teachers. Common ground among research based
models is tied to theories involving the development of a social identity for parents in the educational environment to create a state of expectants and trustful ownership of the learning community.

Throughout the literature models are employed to inform parents about school offerings and expectations without a collaboration factor involving parents. Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark, and Moodie, (2009) recognized this trend and stated, “Some models offer tasks as theoretical components and are often referred to as parent involvement”. These models place responsibility on parents and are culturally and socioeconomically insensitive” (p. 6). “Family engagement occurs when there is an on-going, reciprocal, strengths-based partnership between families and their children’s early childhood education programs” (p. 3). Modeling systems for engagement can be tied back to early theories such as Adlerian social interest or behaviorist approaches to learning. These theories provide basis for vision and can aid in structuring intentional efforts to provide the community feeling or the reinforcement reward needed to repeat interactions with parents to gain more complex benefits of social capital. Parent involvement coordinator programs could access past models of parent involvement to measure effectiveness and to increase intentional efforts to engage families.

**Social Capital**

Social capital is a term with historical roots in American society. Beginnings of the term can be viewed through the recognition of social cohesion to achieve or maintain civic interests (Hanifan, 1916). Jacobs (1961) recognized the energy embedded in the relationships between symbiotic components of natural interactions and projected this ideology onto society. An example would be the natural force or energy causing
interdependence, such as animal waste decomposing to feed vegetation necessary to sustain life in a forest, paralleled with an individual collaborating in a community to build relationships to sustain and maintain economic growth. Social capital became a modern sociological term to express the product maintained and created through interrelations. Narayan (1997) defined social capital as a support for individuals and communities to achieve and maintain objectives through forming reciprocity in relationships. Elements such as trust, norms and obligations are built through social interactions to form arrangements for maintaining institutional structures and expectations. (Bourdieu, 1977) identified social capital as being a member of a group and the relational exchanges which help to maintain them. Coleman (1988) pointed out the intellectual stream of self-interest fueling social contexts and effecting communities. “Just as physical capital is created by changes in materials to facilitate production, social capital is created when people change as a result of interactions with others” (p. 100). Putnam (1993) indicated social capital as the building of social fabric through individuals committing themselves to community interests. In civic systems, trustworthiness, a sense of belonging for individuals and reciprocal relations emerge from continuing social interaction. Boundaries for ongoing relationships are formed and maintained through social networks.

A recurring theme throughout the pontification about social capital is the expression of concern over its decline in the United States. Putnam (1995) stated, “A society of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital” (p. 67). Putnam (2002) pointed out concerns with shifts in the dynamics of life in the United States in the last 30 years. Civic engagement, informal social ties and tolerance and trust have declined as a result of passing generations who placed value on civic and political engagement as a
norm. More people living alone and choosing to remain childless. The growth of urban ideologies and expansion also contributes to available time to engage in social relations at home and the community. Individuals travel further for activities and have less time to interact. Activities designed for individuals such as electronic platforms for entertainment have led to declines in activities leading to social capital. Social engagement is designed to encourage interaction and discourage isolation. Aspects of modern culture contributing to interactional decline are recognized throughout the literature as well intended constructs with unintended realities. Putnam (2007) found issues of diversity and immigration to be a deterrent to building social capital. Families tended to withdraw from mainstream interaction through expecting the worst from community leaders, volunteering less, doubting their chances of making a difference and becoming increasingly mistrustful and less involved in the overall community. Modern religion has provided much of the opportunity for building social capital through creating easy entry points for network inclusion. As time passes in the groups increasingly complex commitments emerge.

Social capital is a critical component for educational environments and one of its valuable byproducts (Heyneman 1998). The elements of school curriculum give rise to social capital in communities because common knowledge builds bridges to communication and collaboration. Awareness encourages stakeholder self-governance in the forms of human contributions supporting the educational arena of engagement. In addition to strengthening the human capital needed for economic development, social development and state accountability, education fosters social capital-rich networks. Social capital is produced through students practicing skills, such as participation and reciprocity; schools providing forums for community activity; and through civil education students learn how to
participate responsibly in their society (Coleman, 1988). Education promotes societal cohesion; strengthen citizenship and a strong reliance on associational life when children with diverse backgrounds participate in public education systems (Putnam, 1993). Families who support and contribute to institutionalized educational efforts build capital and are more likely to engage communities to interact with lower socioeconomic and disadvantaged populations. Parent planning for designate areas of reading and homework for children contributes to academic achievement through building social capital through family and school interactions building expectations and positive relations for predictable home/school reciprocity. In low socioeconomic populations capital on levels pertaining to family, school and perceived cohesion to the community can affect policy, maintenance, security, enrollment and attendance (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1992). Building relations can encourage an overall acceptance of the importance of education. Stevenson, Chen, & Lee, (1993) found parents in the United States to be internationally superior in early grades experiences for their children. As time passed into later grades efforts for family interaction and at out of school experiences and academic achievement declined. Coleman (1988) revealed a relationship between social capital and school dropout rates. Levels of achievement remained more consistent if parents and other family members exhibited an appreciation for the value of education and projected this on the home environment.

Social capital is an overall concern for systems of social support. Cross sectional connections to civic immersion are far reaching on all levels of educational achievement, including private and public sectors of organization, because gainful employment and improved living standards are at the end of the engagement trail (Doucet, 2011; Putnam, 1993). Without an obvious benefit to efforts of interaction education may be devalued by
cultural and community groups (Fernandez-Kelly, 1995, Kindervater, 2010). Schools must place family and community involvement on the forefront of their efforts to educate stakeholders about their importance to children as positive influences. (White & Kaufman, 1997).

Social Justice

According to Osborn (2006) “Social justice can be described as sharing power and benefits equitably” (p. 3). The assumption is families are marginalized because of social status brought on by acculturation issues. Families are subjected to the effects of an unequal society where regionally traditional mindsets assume hidden rules of engagement. They are unaware of the boundaries of appropriateness or the unspoken rules. This creates an unbalanced power structure for functioning placing second language families in a position of social injustice (Heller, 2013; Osborn, 2006; Wang & Rodgers; 2006; Wang, 2009). Hooks (1997) indicated the fight against discrimination, exclusion, and oppression, is an ongoing struggle. Wang (2009) emphasized oppressive practice and policy, based on the inability to speak English, as a common practice among some states to oppress the language acquisition and educational achievement of immigrants. “Bilingual education, for example, which has been proved to be effective in helping immigrants learn subject matter and learn English at the same time, has been eliminated in several states” (p. 4). The Expiration of the Bilingual Education Act and English-only policies make it clear that English is the official language of schools in the United States. Georgia is a state adhering to the premise that all instruction is based on the English language (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Instruction is English-only based on research such as Mora (2009) indicating bilingual education is the reason for low levels of English proficiency among immigrant students.
English acquisition is slowed through this process and is attributed to Latino dropout rates. The purpose of the Georgia English to Speakers of Other Languages program (ESOL) is to assist second language students to develop proficiency in the English language, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, sufficient to perform effectively at the currently assigned grade level. Students qualifying for ESOL services are required to complete end of year, special education, gifted program and all other assessments in English. Sleeter (1997) supported bilingual education and emphasizes educational achievement, English acquisition, and bilingualism as potential benefits. “Monolingual Americans regard bilingual education as anti-English and anti-American” (p. 4). Krashen (1996) indicated no link between dropout rates and participation in bilingual education. “Well-designed bilingual programs produce better academic English and are part of the cure, not the disease” (p. 56). The dominant cultural group seems to determine what language or languages will be learned in schools (Bennett, 2007).

Parent involvement initiatives are often ritualized, with the mindset of a set procedure, limiting the ability of parents to volunteer and feel worthy of being a part of the child’s school environment. The connection of educational efforts to culture is undermined (Doucet, 2011). Baker (2000) found that dominant groups often try to take away the home language and culture of the minority students to assimilate them into mainstream society. Issues such as referring to the student by the culturally correct pronunciation of their name often had negative effects on self-esteem building trust with school. Immigration issues also cloud the connection between families and government agencies because they live in fear of being deported. This can limit their involvement in their child’s education. Advocacy is often left to the child who has acquired the most proficient English language skills and the
parent involvement coordinator can be the relational connection to culturally appropriate communication and support (Alexander, 2009). As the number of immigrant students increases, school administrators are continuously trying to develop programs and services that will help these students learn English and stay in school (Miller, 2009). According to The Georgia Department of Education (2014) parent involvement coordinator programs should be focused on learning more about the issues facing students and families. Opportunities encouraging understanding will help school representatives provide services that can enhance their education. Wang (2009) found that an unwillingness to recognize the importance of connecting portions of English as second language (ESL) family culture through educational practice and policy send a signal marginalizing the worth of individuals unable to speak English. This limits the ability of educational systems and students in Georgia from reaching their educational potential. (Georgia Department of Education, 2014)

Over 1900 teachers in Georgia are involved in at least one second language activity daily. According to Wang and Phillion (2007) parent and community involvement plays a crucial role in identifying injustices and taking action to fight against social injustice. The idea of social justice and resources to understand discriminatory practices could be a proposition fueling policy and preparatory education for parent involvement coordinators (Heller, 2013).

Parent involvement coordinator programs are charged with neutral advocacy for families. The literature indicates a need for culturally sensitive family advocacy based on the specific needs of the environment (Sanders, 2008).

**Second Language Families**

ESL families and students migrate from other countries and some are born in the United States. (Georgia Department of Education, 2014) Students are considered as English
as second language (ESL) after they are assessed through a home language survey. If their primary language is not English or if a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual’s level of English proficiency they are offered English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) services (The Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Georgia parent involvement coordinator services are designed to address the changing needs of families in Georgia. ESL students lack the literacy skills to perform in an English based academic setting. Part of the misconception associated with ESL families is the inclination that all can be grouped into one cultural group (Morales, 2006). The word Hispanic or Latino is the ethnic category the group is often referred to. The Georgia Department of Education (2014) indicates about 79% of all ESL students in the United States are considered to be from Spanish language backgrounds, this diverse group stretches far beyond Spanish to English acquisition. Many encounter English for the first time in public school environments while others have limited exposure (Morales, 2006). Issues of appropriate behavior are often seen because they have experienced rearing different from Americanized school culture. ESL students and their families experience factors of acculturation such as poverty, immigration and changing family system dynamics (Barrientos, 2012). When ESL families enter the United States they face challenges of immediate cultural expectations. Learning the customs and practices of their chosen state become imperative to surviving. This is very disruptive to the family structure and as the children in public school learn English familial patterns become difficult to maintain. The child is elevated to the level of an adult as they begin to learn English, leaving the parents in a dependent role (Heller, 2013; Wang, 2009). This shift in familial patterns diminishes the parental figure’s ability to regulate standards of behavior along with and their role in their
child’s school. Research indicates that the Hispanic population is the largest and least educated minority in the United States and that Hispanic immigrant students lack educational opportunities (Barrientos, 2009). Bell, Kwesiga, and Berry (2010) found clear differences in the experiences of native-born Hispanic-Americans and those who are immigrants, with the latter, both documented and undocumented, generally faring worse in wages, benefits, and interpersonal treatment when compared with those who are native-born. The unique needs of ESL families offer challenges to public schools and local communities (Heller, 2013). Parent involvement coordinators are charged with adapting to the family’s needs and offering support to offer resources to help alleviate the natural dissonance associated with acculturation.

**Social Support and Network Closure**

The ability to form and maintain positive social bonds has been linked to the psychological well-being of adults (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1994). Rogers (1951) recognized the value of social support in his model for client-centered therapy and included the concept of unconditional positive regard. Cobb (1976) defined social support through more than casual exchange of information. Emotional support, esteem support and sense of belonging conceptualized his model. The individual receiving support must believe they are cared for, valued and part of a network with mutual obligations and communication. The recognition of situational stressors was included in Cobb’s model. Social support seemed to be a moderator for stress through life events such as grief and loss, job related, relationship and educational issues. Other models for social support (Hirsh, 1979; House, 1981; Pines, Aronson, & Kafry, 1983) include elements of empathy or emotional support, caring and love, hope for resolution, information, advice and feedback, direct help with physical or
financial action or labor. Weiss (1973) identified social and emotional isolation as a factor in many life events and the critical role social support plays as an aid to coping with the dissonance associated with stressors brought on by the occurrences of daily life.

The benefits of social networking were primarily unknown in the literature until Barns (1954) recognized the importance of social relationships. Models of support for individuals can be expanded to larger populations yet there are many factors determining is effectiveness in any specific situation (Sarason, Sarason, & Pierce, 1990). Berkman, Glass, Brisette, & Seeman, (2000) recognized links between health education, behavior and the benefits of helping groups of people through social networking/support. Training individuals to implement interventions to increase social support through education can increase healthy decision making and coping mechanisms for groups with common life stressors. Social support/ networking can give groups a sense of mastery over fate and a broad sends of well-being in diverse situational environments. Many factors for individuals are experienced by groups such as work roles, parenting issues, perceived life opportunities, ability to build relationships, socioeconomic status, and geographic location. Perception concerning locus of control over living conditions contribute to networking possibilities.

Valentina, Maja, and Kogovšek (2009) indicated variability in the perceptions of support providers and receivers of social support when questioned about the effectiveness of services. In this study not every supportive behavior was equally perceived as helpful. Receivers tended to return to familiar individuals when seeking support. Their perception of helping greatly depended upon timing and the relationship with the support provider. The received support often depended on the availability of support, the individual coping skills and the degree of severity of stress others perceive to be experienced by a subject. Many
times the distress of forming new social ties outweighs the benefits of support/networking. Pines (1983) revealed that missing elements of support interactions may be stressful enough to render support unhelpful and cause fear and misperceptions of accepted social identities. This is especially true when interacting with unfamiliar sub populations. Lizardo, (2011) found larger groups without a sociodemographic theme tended to leave structural holes in the network where smaller groups with commonly specific cultural threads seemed to form lasting social bonds.

In public school, cultures diverge into one environment. Social support/networking is accessed as a method for improve achievement behavioral stability. Similarly to adults, children who have strong friendships and supportive parents grow into improved psychological and behavioral well-being (Fletcher, Newsome, Nickerson, & Bazley, 2001; Wheeler & Ladd, 1982). As relationships grow between families and school personnel intergenerational networks are formed. In families, members of the group fall into social roles. In educational settings this behavior is extended to include individuals outside the immediate family. As families enter the educational arena many factors determine the success of social support/networking (Heller, 2013). The flexibility of the staff to understand and adjust to the specific needs of diverse sub groups or cultures, previous networking efforts of families, and prior familiarity with school personnel and school or district environment can be determining factors for success. Allcott, Karlan, Mōbius, Rosenblat, & Szeidl, (2007) found that individuals within a large groups of people tend to be overwhelmed and make less of an effort to socialize. Coleman (1990) indicated the importance of specific intervention in changing aspects of a group, such as breaking the group down into smaller cohort sizes, changing the perception of social dynamics increasing
the probability of social sanctions and network closure. Increased opportunity for social interaction encourages the building of trust, common friendships and cooperation. Allcott, Karlan, Möbius, Rosenblat, & Szeidl, (2007) revealed findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Results included a strong negative relationship between grade size and network closure and prosocial behavior. Experiences of marginalized populations of stakeholders in public schools seem to fall victim to some elements associated with distress and the accumulated anticipation of the unknown. According to Alexander (2009) and Crites (2008) exploration of possible solutions to network closure issues with marginalized populations should be the focus of study. The guiding assumption is to provide intentional opportunity for interaction and familiarity while recognizing the importance of social justice and cultural differences (Wang, 2009). Lizardo, (2011) presented an argument indicting a stronger probability of deeper network closure when members of a group find common ground in esoteric cultural attributes. The basic premise is for public schools to provide network closure to families through personnel who can identify commonalities and provide an easy entry point for immersion into the educational environment.

United States Government Ideology

According to the United States Department of Education (2014) parent involvement is a critical component of student achievement. It is viewed as an issue to be addressed by educational systems as an element crucial in minimizing the achievement gap. Some ethnicities, more than others, seem to be more active and engaged in the educational experiences students. After three decades of study, federal initiatives for research have found that students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are
more likely to earn high grades and test scores, enroll in higher-level programs, pass their classes, earn credits, and be promoted. They attend school regularly, graduate and go on to postsecondary education (United States Department of Education, 2004). A definition is also rendered under the provisions of Title I. The statute defines parental involvement as the participation of parents in regular, two way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. School activities should encourage parents playing an integral role in assisting their child’s learning, to be actively involved in their child’s education at school, full partners in their child’s education and are included, as appropriate, in decision-making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child (United States Department of Education, 2004). For emphasis on parent involvement federal directives fund state and school based initiatives to maintain ritualized practices. Leadership is to maintain policy supporting and considering parents and continually review and create plans to address developing needs. Schools are to develop plans or refer parents to services offering literacy development to help them to understand and to help students through the educational process. Even Start, Head Start and other educational programs aimed at early literacy may be included. School districts will ensure full opportunities for the participation of parents with limited English proficiency or with disabilities and provide all information in a language and form such parents understand. Parent resource centers and information may be offered by schools to consistently attract and maintain the support of parents to guide them through the educational process. The basic premise is for educational systems to minimize life barriers and maximize opportunities for parents benefiting their child’s growth and enhancing the probability of educational success. Through planning parents are integrated into human resource potential
for their child’s school as an extension of educational process to encompass all levels of student engagement (Crites, 2009).

The guiding philosophy for the current federal administration is cradle to career. Parent involvement is outlined for schools. However, it is also outlined for parents and families. Steps include: (a) Be responsible, accept your role as the parent and make education a priority in your home; (b) Be committed. Once you have begun to work with your child, continue doing so throughout the year; (c) Be positive, praise goes a long way with children, especially with those who struggle in school; (d) Provide positive feedback, be patient, and show your child that you, care through your commitment and encouragement; (e) Be attentive, stop your child immediately when bad behavior appears; (f) Show him or her what to do and provide an opportunity to do it correctly; (g) Discipline should be appropriate and consistent; (h) Be precise, provide clear and direct instructions; (i) Be mindful of mistakes, record your child’s performance. Look over all the work your child brings home from school and keep it in a folder. Help him or her correct any errors; (j) Be results-oriented. Gather information on how your child is performing in school. Keep notes of conferences with teachers, request progress reports and carefully read report cards and achievement test results. Ask questions about these results; (k) Be diligent. Work from the beginning to the end of the year with your child and the teacher. Be innovative. Keep learning lively and dynamic. Be there. Just be there for your child—to answer questions, to listen, to give advice, to encourage and to speak positively about his or her life. Be there to support your child whenever needed. Every stage of childhood education is outlines from babies through graduating high school.
Georgia Parent Involvement Initiative

The Georgia Department of Education (2014) has developed and instigated a parental involvement policy based on federal requirements for the implementation of Title I funding, provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Model. The National PTA (2013) has developed a family and community engagement model containing six standards of care for establishing a school/family partnership. The standards include welcoming all families, communicating effectively, and supporting student success, speaking up for every child, sharing power, and collaborating with the community (Georgia PTA, 2015). The idea is to increase the effectiveness of educational and civic experiences through intentional engagement, collaboration and cooperation with students and families.

According to the Georgia Department of Education (2014) “Parent engagement is an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success” (p. 1). The policy follows the Title I statute and includes communication from school to home in a language understandable to the parents and parent resource centers. Schools are mandated to adapt policies and procedures to the changing needs of family in their community. Parents have the right to speak to the building administrator to amend plans if current policy does not address their specific needs. An annual meeting is required to inform parents about their rights and participation in Title I educational programs. Schools are mandated to involve parents in the planning, review, and improvement of Title I programs, including the school parental involvement policy and the Title I school wide program plan/school improvement plan. Parents are informed about how
they can help, as part of a learning community, and how they can help their child improve achievement. The school provides materials and training to help parents to work with their children to improve their children’s achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, as appropriate, to foster parental involvement. The school district coordinates and integrates parental involvement programs, activities and strategies with Head Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Even Start, and Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters. Other programs may include the Parents as Teachers Program, and public preschool. Parent involvement coordinator programs are housed in the parent resource centers in schools and are involved in many or all learning initiatives that encourage and support parents in participating in the education of their children. Synthesis of Georgia’s position on parent involvement seems to point toward collaborative efforts with families and community agencies to develop lasting relationships to aid in serving all students. Schools are encouraged to inform and interact with stakeholders to develop networks for consultation to create enhanced seamless service. Georgia’s Department of Education (2014) mandates all school districts to develop and implement strategies to involve parents/stakeholders in effective partnerships with schools. Required initiatives are meant to support high expectations and professional practice encouraging high student achievement. Parent involvement programs and legislation associated with Georgia schools are aimed at the goal of increasing student achievement and bridging the achievement gap through activities to instigate and maintain family-school partnerships.

**Parent Involvement Coordinators**

The use of liaison services is not a new idea. Agencies from international diplomacy to law enforcement systems have employed individuals as transitional entities seeking
support from families (Office of Educational Research, 1994). Parent involvement coordinators are sometimes referred to parent liaisons. In the simplest form they are known to serve as a connection between a school district and the local community. Sanders (2008) described 4 general roles played by parent liaisons in home–school partnerships: (a) Direct services to families at risk, (b) support for teacher outreach, (c) support for school-based partnership teams, and (d) data for partnership program improvement. Many times the parent liaison is the first point of contact for new families (Jacobson, 2003). Their work can be demanding and rewards for their efforts at forming relationships with marginalized families may be slow flowing. This is significant when working with those parents who have lost faith in the bureaucracy projected by public education. Lindeman (2002) identified a common recurring condition of individuals charged with advocating and building relationships with marginalized families as “torn between competing interests”. Research is incongruent when identifying skill requirements for parent liaisons. However, preparation for service is a common element of concern (Howland, Anderson, Smiley, & Abbott, 2006). Some systems define their activities more loosely than others. Most inquiry seems to agree on the importance of district leadership to ensure that liaisons are prepared to carry out their essential work and to document their influence in partnership program development (Crites, 2008; Howland, Anderson, Smiley, & Abbott, 2006; Jacobson, 2003; Sanders, 2008). Sanders, (2008) highlighted the importance of patiently building a reputation so families can gain understanding of the program’s mission and purpose. Parents are more likely to participate in a discussion about support for their child and family if they feel as if they have developed a trustworthy relationship with a person in their child’s school. The research
continues to call for further inquiry to identify leadership roles for liaison support, funding and preparation for program development (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008).

The Georgia Department of Education (2014) indicates a need for increased parent involvement and specifies the focus of parent involvement coordinators based on Title I funding mandates, Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Model. The basic premise is to address advocacy issues for the parents in schools offering a variety of informative workshops, community resources referral, and forming relationships with families to help with navigational information for their educational setting. This effort is aimed at developing student academic potential through developing social capital with families. Network closure is a goal of parent involvement coordinators through adapting to local educational environments and unique stakeholder needs. For example, second language migrant families sometimes need a local school contact to aid in seeking housing. The parent involvement coordinator could translate lease contract documents and accompany the family to meeting with the landlord offering interpreter services. This brings the marginalized family to a common contact point for their child’s educational needs. Policy mandates schools to address the changing needs of families. However, situational culture may create difficulty for school to identify needed areas of concern (Wang, 2009). Parent involvement coordinators seem to parallel a philosophy of flexibility much like charter schools. However, they also face difficulties similar to marginalized populations because uncertain parameters of operation and issues related to advocacy of families seem to create ambiguity as to set guiding principles for professional practice.
District level parent involvement coordinators maintain a job description through the state based on the requirements of Title I (The Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Planning, design and oversight of the school level parent involvement coordinator programs are primary functions. Federal, state and local policies and procedures are at the forefront of program obligations. Community partner recruitment is planned through the district parent involvement coordinator initiative. The job description of a school level parent involvement coordinator is equated to the position of a school level paraprofessional (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). Synopsis of activities indicated a strong link to support for the understanding of Title I policy and procedure. Activities include recruitment of school volunteers, home visits, and coordination of the parent resource center; language learning initiatives, assisting teachers with instructional activities, distribution of parent resource materials, maintaining confidentiality and other duties as assigned. Program parameters are interpreted as site based to address the needs of a specific educational culture to serve all families. Wang (2009) indicated minority parents may have difficulty in finding a connection to their child’s school based on past experiences. In prior research (Ainsworth, 2002; Crites, 2008; Banerjee; Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008; Smith, 2013) structured training and programming is suggested to encourage parents to become active participants in their child’s education. Parent involvement coordinator programs offer cultural connections to the community to provide network closure for families who find difficulty in associations and involvement at their child’s school (Alexander, 2009). The loosely defined role of the school level parent involvement coordinator provides a portion of the gap for the current study.
Summary

According to United States Department of Education (2010), President Barak Obama stated, “We can’t tell our kids to do well in school and then fail to support them when they get home. You can’t just contract out parenting. For our kids to excel, we have to accept our responsibility to help them learn” (p. 1). Legislative action has followed this philosophy with a cradle to career outlook and expectation for schools. Federal, state and local educational organizations have created standards for leadership practice to enhance the probability of parent participation. Each level of governance is meant to work hand in hand throughout levels of the educational experience of students. The essence of federal guidelines and funding is imposed to single out a cause so it becomes an important issue for states and local systems to interpret and add to strategic plans.

Research guiding Title I and parent involvement initiatives offers insight into common threads to guide development of parent involvement coordinator programs. It is well documented that families perceiving marginalization become disassociated with their child’s educational environment and experience (Wang, 2009). Families need diverse types of intentional support in order to feel as if they are welcome and a valued part of their child’s education. In this study charter schools will provide the flexibility to be able to meet the needs of marginalized families in varieties of arenas for engagement including home, school and the community. Theories provide insight into parent behavior and guide stones for basic understanding. Models advance the notion of a strategy for intentional action. Knowledge concerning issues with immersion and the maintenance of identity and culture through a discriminatory system can guide support mechanisms for parent involvement programs. The assumptions leading to this conclusion are connected to Adler’s (1964)
concept of social interest, Putnam’s (1995) ideas on building social capital and Wang’s (2009) philosophy of social justice in encouraging equal power sharing in relationships. Most individuals want to feel a connection to their community. Parents are no exception when it comes to participating in their child’s educational experience. If schools make the effort to connect with families, parent involvement coordinator programs are designed to direct families through the maze of educational hurdles left unexplained. Overall the literature calls for further research and recognizes the power of local knowledge to fill gaps for implementation. The ability of individuals to cooperate through genuine concern and equal collaboration seems to be the key to functional recognition and intervention.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

The purpose of this nested case study is to explore the role of Elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in a North Georgia Title I charter school district. In this chapter the design for the study will be explained. Guiding research questions will be listed and selection procedures for participants and setting will be discussed. The researcher’s background will be described in relation to effects on study outcomes. Data collection and analysis strategies will be conferred. Ethical consideration and trustworthiness will be summarized to clarify employed methods to increase credibility for the study.

Design

The qualitative approach to research is most appropriate for this study because it encourages the understanding of the context in which elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) perform professional practice and the perceptions of the individuals interacting with them throughout the educational environment (Yin, 2003). Exploring the roles of EPICs in a Title I charter school district is well suited for nested case study because data collection and thematic identification from each unique elementary educational environment, located within the larger educational system, may reveal a holistic understanding of each case leading to a district wide collective (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002). According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen (2006), case study will allow the investigation of an individual, group, site, program, or policy and permit an in-depth examination of factors that explain current status and possibly influence change over time. Through perspectives gained from this inquiry a unique view may emerge explaining the current functioning of the participating EPICs and an overall conclusive perception (Yin,
The researcher chose the nested case study approach for research with the intention of capturing one reality of the EPIC program through rich descriptions of the cognitive behavioral experience of the participants. Additional rationale included a desire to understand an overall view of the program of study through data analysis from five elementary environments, nested within a charter environment, to gain comprehensive conclusions on program processes and outcomes (Patton, 2002).

Boundaries for the study include a charter school district in North Georgia and the five charter elementary schools operating in the system. The implementation of this particular arrangement of elementary environments is unique to Georgia. Participants include five lead teachers, five EPICs, and five head principals and five parents. Participating principals will include only those who are considered heads of their respective school. Teachers will be designated as lead teacher of their K-5 grade level by the Principal. Parent participants will be chosen by the head principal from school governance council members at their respective school. Due to the transient nature of families in the district, participating parents will be required to have a child enrolled in the same elementary school and be part of school governance council for two years. Interviews and focus groups will take place at locations convenient to subjects to respect the time constraints of professionals and parents in the study. Boundaries established for this nested case study are meant to include individuals who have consistently observed, or accessed parent involvement coordinator services, at their respective school. Parents originating from migrant status, who have remained in the district, will be able to recall early experiences with parent involvement coordinators and compare progression of service through consistent experiences. See Figure 1 - Nested Case Diagram
Figure 3.1

*Nested Case Diagram*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School District</th>
<th>Elementary 1 (Case 1)</th>
<th>Elementary 2 (Case 2)</th>
<th>Elementary 3 (Case 3)</th>
<th>Elementary 4 (Case 4)</th>
<th>Elementary 5 (Case 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Common themes from cases cross analyzed for overall knowledge base and benefit

**Research Questions**

Gaps in the literature identify the role of parent involvement coordinators as a support for families and the role of administrators, teachers, and parents as elements effecting school direction in planning for program implementation (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008). The questions for this study address the perceptions of the individuals highlighted in the research as critical to the success of any program concerned with building and maintaining relationships within an educational environment such as administrators, teachers, parents and parent coordinators (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008).

**Research Question 1:** How do EPICs describe their role in Title I charter elementary schools?

**Research Question 2:** How do stakeholders such as administrators, teacher, EPICS and parents view the role of EPICs in building social capital and network closure for all families?

**Setting**

The study took place in Northeast Georgia County with a population of over 185,416 spanning 392 square miles (Georgia Department of Labor, 2013). It is ranked twelfth in the
state for population increases from 2010 to present. The unemployment rate is currently 7.5%. Many individuals commute to jobs from the surrounding rural counties. It is estimated that commuters increase the population by 69% each day. The research site is the largest city in the county with a population of over 34,786 and an average growth rate of 29.9% from years 2000-2010 (United States Census Bureau, 2013). The industry profile in the area is led by service-providing agencies such as health care, real estate, education and government employment, warehousing and utilities. Two universities, offering at least graduate level degree programs, are located near the city of study. The county also contains one technical college. Much of the industry gains skilled employees through internship opportunities and partners with the educational institutions. Income levels for the populous include a median household income of $52,050 with an average per capita income of $32,001 and a home ownership rate of 69.6%. Due to the continued growth from the 1990’s until present the city maintains a large foreign-born Hispanic population. Many of the elementary schools in this study were built as a result of their migration to the area (Georgia Department of Labor, 2013). The educational distribution can be viewed in Table 1: Educational Distribution of Research Site Chart below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
<th>18-24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-44</th>
<th>45-64</th>
<th>65+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Grad/GED</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Grad 2 Year</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Grad 4 Year</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Graduate Studies</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The county maintains a public school district. However, a separate school system operates within the city limits of its largest city (Georgia Department of Labor, 2013). The city school system was the district of study. It is a Title I charter school district and includes one high, middle, alternative and five elementary schools. The high school contained grades 9-12, the middle school consisted of 6-8 grades, elementary was based on K -5 instruction and the alternative school was available for grades 6-12 students. The Pre-kindergarten was located at Elementary 4. Demographics for the district included a student population of 7,116 students. Ethnic percentages include 54% Hispanic, 20% African American, 21% Caucasian, 2% Asian and 3% other ethnicities. The student body was additionally comprised of 11% students with disabilities, 38% English language learners, 13% gifted, 10% non-resident/ tuition students and 80% free-reduced lunch. The district’s vision
statement was based on the philosophy of thinking objectively, acting compassionately, working meaningfully, judging wisely, and living joyfully (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). This study focused on the five elementary schools located within the charter district. Each had its own charter and focus in which to filter through Georgia Performance Standards.

The setting was chosen for the study based on the unique educational environment of a Title I charter school district and the lack of research pertaining to elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in this arena (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). The district of study, based on its charter status, was granted waivers from many state educational requirements and is governed through a partnership with the Georgia State Board of Education. The current charter was granted from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2023. Innovative features are: a) use of technology for blended learning in K-12 classrooms, b) innovative professional learning, c) teacher/leader evaluation, and d) personalized student-centered learning through school of choice. The goal was to offer a culture of innovative instruction customized for populations of stakeholders in each educational environment. The district must meet or exceed state guidelines for charter school districts if they wish to continue charter status (Georgia Department of Education, 2013).

The district of study was active in learning initiatives. It was a member of LEAD Collaborative with UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools, and member of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). It maintained a partnership with Scholastic and the United Way Early Learning Collaborative. Initiatives included Positive Behavior Intervention and Support, school of choice for all students, and magnet programs for elementary schools. Part-time and full-time virtual learning were offered as a pathway to
graduation. Early literacy was the focus of many district initiatives and community collaboration is a substantial component of strategic decisions (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). The overall plan of the district was to provide a comprehensive system of learning supports in a strategic effort to educate the total child. The goal was to advocate for an educational approach designed to effect real change by addressing key factors that determine children’s academic achievement (The American Association of School Administrators, 2013). The school district was designated as Title I and receives free lunch and breakfast. Many students were from second language families and frequently of migrant status.

Parent involvement was emphasized and mandated by the district and state as a required initiative for strategic planning and Title I funding (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Georgia’s Parent Engagement Program emphasized the relationship between schools and families as a tool for attaining higher student achievement and for building supports for future generations. An element of the state initiative was the Parent Involvement Coordinator Network charged with a) parent advocacy in schools, b) implementing informative workshops, c) community resource development and referral, and to d) assist parents with understanding the educational process so their children can achieve their maximum academic potential (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). The academic, management and social support systems of the district were intended to work together to provide student-centered learning while lessening the negative effects of social barriers for families. The parent involvement coordinator program was a base level factor for initial accountability and contact with families as a directional guide for educational navigation.
The district’s five site-based charter elementary schools, housing elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), were targeted for participants. Every school was exclusive in vision and focus. All EPICs developed duties specific to the particular educational culture. In exploring the elementary schools (5 units) within the larger system (School district-8 units) the researcher focused on developing a better understanding of the overall role of the EPIC program and how it works toward building social capital and network closure throughout the district. Elementary sites were be referred to by number to preserve anonymity. See Table 1: Case Site Chart (Appendix G).

Sites

The Five Elementary Cases

Elementary 1.

Elementary 1 offered a charter environment based on fine arts. The K-5 curriculum and culture infuses Common Core curriculum with Bernstein’s Model of Arts Education. Dance, choral music, theater, and visual arts are offered to all students. Arts in schools, resident artists’ collaboration, and Reading Bowl were included as enrichment activities. A Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum was linked to arts infusion. A world language experience was emphasized to prepare students for consistently addressing acculturation transitions. Demographics included 38% Hispanic, 13% African American, 40% Caucasian, 5% Asian, and 4% other (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). It was located on the campus of the only high school in the district. The school housed one Hispanic, bi-literate elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), a principal and an
Elementary 2.

Elementary 2 was based on Common Core delivered through Dr. Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences. The K-5 Smartville school design was implemented as an overall theme. STEM programs, robotics, choral performance, and Reading Bowl were offered as enrichment activities throughout the year. Dual language acquisition was developed at all grade levels through world language experiences. A Multiple Intelligences fair was held annually through business partnerships. Demographics include 40% Hispanic, 34% African American, 20% Caucasian, 3% dual race, and 3% other (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). It was the second oldest school in the district. The building was 90 years old. The school housed one Hispanic, bi-literate elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), a principal and an assistant principal. It contained a total of 903 students, 45 teachers, and 12 parents on school governance council.

Elementary 3.

Elementary 3 was a NASA Explorer School focusing on STEM fields with real-world applications and Common Core curriculum. They offered a World Language Experience Program (L.E.T. - Language Exploration Together). Enrichment activities focused on Science, Math Olympiad, robotics, and special interest clubs. Demographics included 74% Hispanic, 13 % African American, 6% Caucasian, 7% Asian, and 3% other (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). The school housed one Hispanic, bi-literate elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), a principal and an assistant principal. It contained a
total of 871 students, 39 teachers, 4 part-time teachers, and 10 parents on school governance council.

**Elementary 4.**

Elementary 4 focused on interactive communication and literacy as foundational to life success. E. D. Hirsch Core Knowledge curriculum of cultural literacy is incorporated throughout the PreK-5 curriculum. The goal was to connect classical knowledge with literacy, critical thinking, and real-world applications. World language experiences were integrated into many activities throughout the year. Demographics included 68% Hispanic, 28% African American, 8% Caucasian, and 1% dual race (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). The school housed one Hispanic, bi-literate elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), a principal and an assistant principal. It contained a total of 895 students, 42 teachers and 6 parents on school governance council.

**Elementary 5.**

Elementary 5 was an authorized International Baccalaureate Program for Primary Years (IB-PYP). Internationalism was the focus of community and business partnerships. K-5 Common Core standards were incorporated throughout the curriculum. World Language experiences included daily instruction (Spanish) and experience (French, Chinese), and others in order to maintain students’ native language and culture. Technology and STEM integration were the focus of any programs. The goal was to develop responsibility to apply learning to service, both locally and globally. Students received the International Baccalaureate (IB) Seal on their school record upon completion of grade five. Demographics included 69% Hispanic, 24% African American, 4% Caucasian, 2% dual
race, and 1% other (Gainesville City Schools, 2013). It was the oldest school in the district (100 years) and was located next to government housing projects. Many of its students walked to school. The school housed one Hispanic, bi-literate elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC), a principal, and an assistant principal. It contained a total of 906 students, 45 teachers, and 13 parents on school governance council. Table 1: Case Site Chart (Appendix G).

Participants

The goal of this inquiry was to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) from the perspective of each of the five charter elementary schools in the district of study. The aim was to gain understanding leading to a view of the overall parent involvement coordinator program. See Tables 1-4 for descriptions of participants.
Table 3.3

**Elementary Principals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
<th>Elementary 3</th>
<th>Elementary 4</th>
<th>Elementary 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Literate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AA=African American, Bi-literate refers to fluency, peaking, writing and reading, in Spanish and English. Years of experience for principals refers to the number of years they have served in the field of education.
Table 3.4

*Elementary Parent Involvement Coordinators (EPIC)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPIC</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
<th>Elementary 3</th>
<th>Elementary 4</th>
<th>Elementary 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Literate</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Experience</td>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>Puerto Rico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AA=African American, Bi-literate refers to fluency,peaking, writing and reading, in Spanish and English. Years of experience for EPICs refers to the number of years they have served in the field of education.
Table 3.5

*Elementary Teachers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
<th>Elementary 3</th>
<th>Elementary 4</th>
<th>Elementary 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Literate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AA=African American, Bi-literate refers to fluency, speaking, writing and reading, in Spanish and English. Years of experience for teachers refers to the number of years they have served in the field of education.
### Table 3.6

*Elementary Parents*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
<th>Elementary 3</th>
<th>Elementary 4</th>
<th>Elementary 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>AA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bi-Literate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Origin</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>El Salvador</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: AA=African American, Bi-literate refers to fluency, peaking, writing and reading, in Spanish and English. Years of experience for parents refers to the number of years their child has been enrolled in the identified respective elementary school.

EPICs chosen for the study were four females and one male. All were Hispanic and bi-literate between the ages of 28-60. At the time of data collection they are all employed in the district of study and had earned at least a high school diploma. Participating principals had earned at least a graduate degree in educational leadership. None were bi-literate and require translation services for much of the parent interaction common to their assigned school. Principals included two Caucasian females, one African American female, one
Caucasian male and one African American male from ages 40-58. Teachers chosen for the study were designated by the Principal as one of the lead teachers in their respective school. Due to the migratory status of families in the district of study, parents were selected based on their child’s longevity of enrollment in their respective school. Selected parents had students with two years of consistent enrollment in their respective elementary school and consistent participation in school governance council. See Appendix Figure 1 – Parent Involvement Coordinator Job Description

**The Researcher's Role**

I will serve as a human instrument in the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and am currently employed as a school guidance counselor at one of the elementary schools in the school district chosen for this study. One individual, the elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC) at my school, will be interviewed for the study. Professional relationships have developed between some of the participants and the researcher. We have collaborated on many district initiatives to promote resource integration and the parent involvement coordinator program throughout the community. Past experiences have accumulated to familiarity including assumptions about professional behavior and opinions regarding normal scope of practice. Another area of our collaboration is aiding concerned parents with immigration issues. Many families are dismantled and hurled into poverty when parents are deported. It is unknown how this factor could affect the authenticity of data.

**Data Collection**

No data was collected until IRB and district site approvals were given. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were audio taped and transcribed by the researcher.
Documents, job descriptions, and archival artifacts were accessed through district archives and standard forms to view the directional development of parameters and the historical significance of the parent involvement coordinator program. Researcher observations and field notes were used to document impromptu observations and feelings associated with interviewing (Yin, 2009). All documents were secured in a locked filing cabinet or a password secured digital CPU system to ensure security.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2009) were conducted with the elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) as well as with the Head Principals of each elementary environment. Outlines for these interactions set clear guidelines for information gathering while allowing for drift of ideas that could remain relevant to the topic at hand (Creswell, 2007). Such ideas were meant to discern new meaning or different perspectives on the topic of study (Yin, 2009). Interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. See Interview Sheets (Appendix A and B).

Rationale of Interview Questions.

Questions for interviews were derived from calls for future research from prior studies concerning parent involvement including Alexander (2009), Crites (2008), Egger & Straumann (2011), Dalgleish (2000) and Sanders (2008),

1. (Elementary parent involvement coordinator -EPIC) How would you describe your role in parent involvement initiatives in your school?

(Principal) How would you describe the role of the EPIC in your school?
Questions regarding the description of the role of the EPIC were centered on identified gaps in the literature such as Alexander (2009) and Crites (2008) asking for research inquiring about the building transferable knowledge for program implementation for parent liaisons. Sanders (2008) and Jacobson (2003) identified gaps in leadership direction and called for research guiding preparation and continued training for parent liaison programs.

2. (EPIC) How would you describe your personal experience as an elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC) at your school?

(Principal) How would you describe your personal experiences with the EPIC in your school?

Inquiring about personal experience were used to gather specific perceptions of the EPIC program and the personal connections created through collaborative relationships.

3. (EPIC) How would you describe the training or education you received before and after you became an EPIC?

(Principal) How would you describe the training offered to EPICs to help them to advocate for families?

This question addressed suggestions for future research in the literature. Each study asked for further research on the standard duties of individuals involved in implementing parent involvement initiatives to build a knowledge base for best practices. Educational level and continuing education were addressed in this question. Prior literature (Alexander, 2009) called for more specific training to provide EPICs with the tools needed for family engagement. The research (Crites, 2008) also called for teacher and parent training to help them to understand the role of the EPIC and services offered. The question was aimed at
identifying training opportunities offered by the district and state to aid EPICs in building social capital and network closure for families. What training was offered to help them to identify marginalized populations to provide preventative care? The literature identified no set path for EPICs certification or prior knowledge requirements. This question addressed similarities in career path trajectory and identifies attributes of successful EPICs.

4. (EPIC) How would you describe the ways you build you develop relationships with parents and the benefits you see as result of your efforts?

(Principal) How would you describe ways in which your EPIC builds relationships with parents and the benefits you see as result at your school?

Question 4 was designed to measure understanding of social capital and to determine how interviewees place importance on forming relationships and supporting stakeholders. It was also designed to gather information on how EPICs conduct their positions at their specific job site and to gain insight into similarities and differences in applied practice. The question also addressed leadership and teacher influence over program expectations. Prior literature called for research focused on leadership and teacher role in directing parent involvement initiatives (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Sanders, 2008).

5. (EPIC) How would you describe your experiences with neutral advocacy for families in your school?

(Principal) How would you describe your experiences with your EPIC and neutral advocacy?

Neutral advocacy was addressed many times in the literature as a localized Elementary PIC activity (Jacobson, 2003; Sanders, 2008). Calls for further research asked for differing points of view based on the individual role of the stakeholder. In this study the
researcher sought to explore and understand the role of neutral advocacy and elements of localized implementation by EPICs.

6. (EPIC) How would you describe your future vision for the EPIC program in your school?

(Principal) How would you describe your vision for future EPIC program and personnel development?

This question focused on the identified gap in which research continuously calls for a focus on future ramifications for EPICs to project program development (Alexander, 2009; Sanders, 2008). It also addressed the perception of leadership to contemplate effective training for preventative maintenance of the program. The researcher attempted to anchor questions in the literature to address perceived gaps and calls for further research.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted including parents involved in school governance council at the child’s respective school and a group targeting a lead teacher from each school. Groups were facilitated to respect the time constraints on participants and to encourage shared ideas (Creswell, 2007). All groups were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The goal of the focus groups was to allow for exchange of ideas and shared experiences to grasp the most genuine and accurate collective perceptions of information (Yin, 2003).

The focus groups were derived from information gathered from the literature revealing patterns of behavior for marginalized populations (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011; Crites, 2008; Wang, 2009). Parents seemed to need a personal connection in the
school that understood their culture (Bennett, 2007). Jacobson (2003) and Sanders (2008) called for identification of patterns of parent needs as well as perceptions of families to guide future directions for parent involvement programs. Alexander (2009) and Crites (2008) called for teacher insight on the duties of parent liaisons and how their services affect the school environment. Crites (2008) identified a disconnect in teacher expectations of parent liaisons and the duties they consistently perform. Furthermore, the future development of parent liaison programs seemed to need direction to ensure effective collaboration with school staff and families because student needs were constantly changing (Bennett; 2007; Crites, 2008; Sanders; 2008). Guidelines for understanding practice seemed to be locally based with little standard for success. Sanders (2008) called for preparatory education for parent liaisons to inform them of research based norms for developing unique programs to fit their specific local environment. See Focus Group Guide Sheets (Appendix D and E)

**Documents**

Documents such as newspaper articles, archival artifacts, primary resources, and job descriptions were accessed from the last five years, in the district of study, to gain insight about the case for study. Archival documents included organizational records, and past survey data. Permission from the current superintendent and past parent involvement coordinators granted the researcher access to original documents outlining the development of the program of study. State documents detailing parent involvement initiatives were also available through the district’s human resource coordinator. Documents were employed to substantiate evidence from data sources. Current and passed elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC) initiatives were accessed to view the directional development of
parameters and the historical significance of the parent involvement coordinator program (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). See Parent Involvement Coordinator Job Description (Appendix A)

**Data Analysis**

A case file was constructed to organize data sources for each of the elementary cases. Following case study protocol, vignettes were created to provide rich, thick descriptions of the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data analysis began with collecting documents associated with the parent involvement coordinator program including job descriptions, Title I program parameter documents, past and present parent involvement coordinator meeting minutes, and historical artifacts of significance (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1988). Informal analysis began in the minutes before interactions with participants (Patton, 2002). Field notes were kept throughout the study documenting observations, feelings and reactions, and quotes and insights to allow a cognitive emotional return to the experiences in the study (Yin, 2003). Details of the physical and social environment were outlined along with a description of planned program activities, structured interactions, the participants’ special program language, and indigenous practices (Patton, 2002). Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were audiotaped and transcribed (Yin, 2003). The analysis began by developing case studies for each of the five elementary schools. After development of the nested cases a cross case pattern analysis began to code common threads between the individual nested cases and develop an overall understanding of elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC) programs (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2002).

Stake’s (1995) approach to case study data analysis was employed to ensure comprehensive inquiry. Categorical aggregation was implemented to find recurring themes,
patterns, and categories throughout the data. Direct interpretation was employed to view single instances for researcher interpretation and coding will be used to view connections between sources of data. Naturalistic generalizations were interpreted through insights emerging during data collection and analysis. The intent was to develop understanding of identified similarities, norms and concepts transferable to individuals, populations, or programs (Merriam, 1988; Patten, 2002). Throughout the study there was an in-depth audit trail to provide accurate and detailed descriptions of the steps taken from the start of a research project to the report of results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Steps included field and process notes, raw data, documented detailed descriptions of data analysis procedures, connections between existing literature and interpretations, methods for trustworthiness, and development of interview/focus group question guides. A closing vignette was completed to describe the case after data analysis is completed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

**Trustworthiness**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasize trustworthiness as an important element in evaluating the worth of a research study. Methods for establishing trustworthiness in the current study were derived from Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) strategies for credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability. The purpose of this is to support the argument that the study’s findings are worth paying attention to.

**Credibility**

Procedures were be implemented to establish credibility through the adoption of research methods well established and successful in previous qualitative work (Yin, 1994). Prolonged engagement in the field of study was implemented to gain early familiarity with the environment of engagement (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The goal was to build trust in the
environment, to rise above preconceived notions, to become oriented to the context, and to ultimately be able to identify incongruities in data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patten, 2002). Triangulation was used as a method to increase confirmability and credibility through cross referencing multiple sources of data to ensure comprehensive accuracy and deeper understanding of the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Participants were volunteers encouraged to be honest throughout the study. Emphasis was placed on informing participants of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without question or recourse. Raw data and analysis documents were provided for peer review so they could comment and provide feedback on narrative interpretations. The process was used to check transcriptions and coding for accuracy (Creswell, 2007). As data collection progresses participant member checks were accessed to recheck accuracy of participant interactions. Participants were asked to read a rough draft of narrative reports and to suggest interpretive accuracy feedback describing their experiences as a result of the data collected from them. Peer scrutiny was welcomed throughout the project to offer new perspectives and to challenge assumptions. This method also helped the researcher to refine study methods and develop a greater understanding of the employing the research design. Previous research findings were reviewed to compare the degree to which results are congruent with those of past studies (Silverman, 2001). To provide substance to the data derived from focus groups and interviews persistent observation was utilized, including detailed observational notes, to identify situational constructs relevant to the case to develop deeper understanding (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).
Transferability

A thick, rich description of the case context was provided so any reader could draw conclusions and transfer characteristics of the study to other times, settings, situations, and people. The methods used in the study were explained simply to increase generalization and the possibility of future replication (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The following information was clearly provided and explained to offer transferable information to the reader establishing predictable boundaries of study transferability (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003): a) the number of organizations taking part in the study and where they were based; b) restrictions in the type of people who contributed data; c) the number of participants; d) the data collection methods that were employed; e) the number and length of the data collection sessions; and f) the time period over which the data was collected.

Dependability

External audits were used to address dependability through outside interpretations of the process and findings of the study. Outside perspective could lead to unexplored sources of data through feedback resulting in more accurate results. Overlapping methods were implemented through focus groups and individual interviews as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The design, strategies, implementation, data gathering, and reflective appraisal in the study were explained in great detail so they may easily replicated and to increase the efficiency of research practices.

Confirmability

The researcher recognizes the potential of bias throughout the study (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Therefore, triangulation was employed to address investigator bias. An audit trail was used as a method of strengthening confirmability. Throughout the research
process, a data collection table was developed to organize step-by-step methods of
acquisition allowing for replication of the study, clarification of questions, procedures and a
map of operations (Creswell, 2007).

**Ethical Considerations**

No research was conducted until IRB and site of study approval was obtained.
Informed consent was signed while anonymity/pseudonyms were used for confidentiality of
site and participants. To insure safety and confidentiality all interviews were conducted at
the discretion of the participant in their location of choice. Focus groups met at one of the
elementary schools in the district of study according to the permission and comfort level of
group members. Groups for parents met at one of the participating elementary schools. The
focus group for elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) met at a venue agreed
upon by the group members at the time of scheduling. A case file was created for each of
the elementary cases in the study. Data remained separated until each case had been
analyzed and cross sectional inquiry was ready to begin. Data was stored in a secure area
with locked filing cabinets for documents and password protected digital information
(Creswell, 2007).

**Summary**

Parent involvement was an ongoing initiative trickling down from Federal to local
district programs. Population changes in Georgia and the local area fostered support
mechanisms and personnel to engage parents to encourage participation in the educational
experience (Georgia Department of Education, 2014). Each participating elementary
environment contained an EPIC program projecting an interpretation of the job description
provided by the school district and led by Title I policy.
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

Parent involvement is a critical factor in student success at school (Georgia Department of Education, 2014, United States Department of Education, 2014). The parent involvement coordinator program is an element supporting federal and state initiatives to increase the probability of school to home connections. Prior research has called for inquiry into individuals who engage the community to build a bridge between the school and families (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Evans, 2008). The purpose of this nested case study was to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) in a North Georgia Title I charter school district. The setting and educational system for this inquiry was unique because little study has been completed in this type school district using nested case study design including EPICs as a focal point of the research.

Five head principals, five EPICS, five parents and five teachers were chosen for the study. Principals and EPICs were targeted for individual interviews while teachers and parents were selected for focus groups. All interviews and groups were digitally recorded with the permission of the participants. Documents for the study were obtained through state and local archives. The following descriptions synthesize the themes rendered from the researcher’s experiences.

Results

For data collection purposes each participant was assigned an acronym as outlined for each site school. Descriptive vignettes were provided to offer stories about situations occurring during data collection, to reference important themes, and to reveal a vivid picture
including indigenous behavior, perceptions, beliefs, activities and attitudes in the targeted environment (Hughes, 1998). All explanations are intended to narratively describe answers to the research questions.

Data analysis identified prominent themes crossing all environments. In the elementary case descriptions in this chapter, subtle yet unique themes are explained displaying the interpretation of the role, the context and the natural strengths of the particular EPIC. After the nested cases are described, overall prominent themes are highlighted from different stakeholder perspectives to offer a more balanced view.

The Elementary Cases

Elementary 1

Principal (PRI1), Elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC1), Teacher (TEA1), Parent (PAR1)

*Tanisha is a new student coming to school for the first time in 1st grade. Her family brings her in to the front office to register. After the EPIC assists the family with completing registration forms and informs them of required documents, he takes them on a tour of the school to familiarize the family with the places the child will visit each day. He introduces the family to the child's teacher, gets vital contact information and asks the family about their needs. The EPIC uses this interaction as an opportunity for easy entry, a consistent contact point, community resource referral and to build an ongoing relationship with the family.*

Elementary 1 was in a transitional phase when data collection interviews were performed. EPIC1 was the newest and only male EPIC in the district of study and PRI1 was
retiring at the end of the year. The strong social work background of PRI1 was apparent in
the overall philosophy of the school. PRI1’s vision was to educate all stakeholders as an
important part of school success. Unique themes for Elementary 1 included the EPIC as a
mentor for male students while directly supporting discipline procedures. EPIC1 provided
large group activities as a motivational speaker to emphasize the importance of the family in
educating all stakeholders. TEA1 described the parent center and EPIC1 as a supporter of
teachers through his ability to help with technology as a communication tool. Teachers built
this component into lesson planning as a performance expectation. TEA1 stated, “She is
there to continually show parents the ropes to get them familiar with how school works and
make a parent feel as if the school cares about their family.” TEA1 recognized the
importance of the relationship between families and the EPIC. She realized that interaction
needed to go far beyond the limits of the building walls in order to be lasting and beneficial
to the student. She stated, “We need to make intentional efforts with this just like we do for
academics”. Opportunities for involvement were outlined so parents could choose preferred
activities. PAR1 relied on the EPIC as a resource for academic help with her child. PAR1
indicated, “He has helpful at giving us access to different games for kids learning”. All
participants in Elementary 1 viewed the role of the EPIC as a tool for school wide success as
a norm.

Elementary 2

Principal (PRI2), Elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC2), Teacher (TEA2),
Parent (PAR2)
Monte is a 4th grade student. His mother arrives with him at morning arrival in the front office. The EPIC is sitting at the front desk to meet with any parent that may come in. Monte’s mother tells the EPIC he is having difficulties with math. The EPIC directs the mother and child to the parent center. The EPIC schedules a parent conference with the teacher and gives resources for math practice to the mother in the native language of the family. The family is also directed to community resources for tutoring and basic math assessment.

Elementary 2 is led by the vision of PRI2 focusing on forming a cultural of loving, caring adults to lead kids in a way that will move them in a positive direction. He stated “I want to have a secure career, take care of my family and teach values that make a difference in the lives of children and families”. His vision coupled with EPIC2’s strong background in marketing and people skills training create an emphasis on school culture as a unique theme for Elementary 2. Strong ties to school governance, PTA and community agencies are unique to the setting because parent organizations play a significant role in the school climate. EPIC2 states, “I am part of a team, they help me and I help them in return.” TEA2 has designed her class structure to be welcoming to parents and includes them in home assignments for student enrichment. She views the EPIC’s role as a transitional care support. PAR2 described the EPIC as a partner to help with planning, fund raising and scheduling events that promote a positive school climate. PAR2 stated, “Since meeting we have worked on many projects together from PTA meetings to educational seminars for families to cultural after school events. She works hard to make things a success and translates things for all events”. EPIC2 initiated intentional opportunities for stakeholders to understand her role, to increase school spirit and to navigate families through transitions.
Reading and discussing research was a common occurrence for faculty and staff at Elementary 2. This created cohesiveness among norms and practices throughout the system of care. EPIC2 viewed this as part of her job to create high impact strategies that saved time and work. She said, “I want to work smarter and not harder”. She followed a customer service philosophy to use strategies that impact families and learning on more than one front of engagement to ensure maximum effects.

Elementary 3

Principal (PRI3), Elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC3), Teacher (TEA3), Parent (PAR3)

*Mya has missed the bus to the Boys and Girls Club at afternoon dismissal.*

The EPIC transports the child. She contacts the family and asks them about difficulties with transportation. The family has missed a car payment and their car has been electronically deactivated. The EPIC goes to the home and provides free public transportation tokens to the family. She gives them the number to a local taxi service that could possibly help with discount rates. She follows up by checking the student’s attendance and calling the family to monitor progress and to offer support.

Participants in Elementary 3 revealed a central theme in the role of EPIC3 from the very beginning of data collection. EPIC3 made intentional efforts to be in places where families and students gathered. PRI3 stated, “We are here for our families. We have a staff that communicates well and works hard to make our school work so kids succeed. I can’t say enough about EPIC3 because she pulls out all the stops to be everywhere all the time”. PRI3’s philosophy was centered on procedures and policy. Her intent was to help parents
understand the role of school. The parent center was a meeting place for all staff and families. Constant communication was sighted as an immense part of the EPIC program. EPIC3 communicated informally with everyone in her school and with the homes of students. She was known for connecting with families through after school events such as tutoring after school, sports activities and tutoring in academic areas. She stated, “At my school it is all about the communication between everyone. We all talk at random times throughout every day at school. We are always talking and we get things done. I am always there for my parents and they know that I’ll try to help. They know anyone at our school will do the same and we’ll find the answer.” She was viewed as a positive role model for all students and families, as a great resource and friend. PRI1 and TEA1 expressed the work ethic of EPIC1 and sighted her expression of a moral obligation to help families who didn’t have the resources or knowledge to get what they needed to succeed. PAR3 depended on the EPIC for help with basic necessities such as help with electricity bills and rent. PAR3 described the role of the EPIC as, “A person we can relate to who’ll help us with family things”. PAR3 was the first to mention surveys to help improve EPIC and school services. Through her constant networking new families were directed to her through stakeholders throughout the community and school. TEA3 summarized the role of EPIC3 by saying, “She takes a situation and solves it. She adapts to the family’s needs. There is no pattern…she just does it”.

Elementary 4

Principal (PRI4), Elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC4), Teacher (TEA4), Parent (PAR4)
Donna comes into the school to check her child out for a medical appointment. She asked the front receptionist to call her child from class but pronounces the child’s name with a heavy Spanish accent. The front desk receptionist asked the parent to repeat the name a few times so that she can understand what student she is trying to call. The receptionist calls the classroom trying to pronounce the child’s name but the teacher says, “There is no one here by that name”. The EPIC is called to the front office to talk with the parent. After a short conversation the EPIC calls the child to the front office using the correct pronunciation of her name. The child responds to the call and comes to the front office to leave with her mother.

EPIC4 was the most experienced and long standing parent coordinator in the school district and had trained all the other EPICs on standards of practice. She was a mentor who had experienced the beginning of the parent coordinator initiative by the state and the population changes that had occurred to instigate the need for EPICs. She was very insightful in talking about the issues that surround second language families in the district of study. The consistencies of her service matched the overall themes of the study with an emphasis on social justice and how it had played a part in the development of position in the schools. PRI4 and PAR4 expressed how EPIC4 was engrained in the Hispanic community and how families seemed to develop long lasting relationships with her and view her position as prestigious. EPIC4 stated, “I would like to think I have been a good mentor to all the other EPICs in the district. I was the first Spanish speaking EPIC and since then I have learned tremendous amounts about our families.” TEA4 expressed how EPIC4 was a skilled
translator, interpreter and communicator with families and students. All communication for
the district and school were translated and distributed through EPIC4.

EPIC4 expressed concern over racial issues in the district of study and a connection
between social justice and acculturation issues. She felt a moral obligation to help families
while educating them about the importance of sustaining their heritage. Families viewed the
parent center as a place to remain informed about immigration issues and would often come
to visit EPIC4 to talk about current issues facing the Hispanic community. PAR1 recognized
the efforts of EPIC4 and had attended her seminars on gangs and alcohol and drug
prevention. Solutions to deeper social issues seemed to be a centering focus in EPIC4’s
practice. He intent seemed to be sharing of equal power in relationships, teaching young
children about culture and education, and educating families about acculturation issues.

Elementary 4 participants wanted to see the parent center grow as a library of
resources for all families. They viewed the program as mostly Hispanic, second language
based. However, EPIC4 was concerned that race was an issue when it came to new families
being directed to her services. As a district, all participants wanted a common language and
knowledge about the parent involvement coordinator program as a whole including middle
and high school. Overall the role of EPIC4 highlighted the connection from school to
families, yet her interpretation of the role guided morally based decisions developed over
time with local knowledge. TEA4 stated, “Parents come to EPIC4 with all kinds of things.
They come from other schools in the district because she has a long standing reputation of
being good to people. Once they meet EPIC4 they come back to our school all the way
through high school and even after that. She is like a part of many families”.
Elementary 5

Principal (PRI5), Elementary parent involvement coordinator (EPIC5), Teacher (TEA5), Parent (PAR5)

_Jesus is in trouble on the school bus for being a bully and fighting. He is suspended off the bus for three days. The family speaks Spanish only and they need to know about providing transport to school without bus transportation. All telephone communication has failed because the family is not accepting calls. The EPIC translates a letter in the student’s agenda to go home along with a suspension letter from the assistant principal. She makes a home visit to make sure the family knows about the situation._

All the participants in Elementary 5 saw the need for integration of culture in school and saw the EPIC as a proponent of including all families. This theme was enhanced by the location of the school. Many students walked to school because it was located near a large government funded apartment complex with a direct walkway to the school’s entrance. Families’ native to the area felt a strong connection to Elementary 5 as a part of local history. A dichotomy existed between subcultures in the school. Throughout its history it had consisted of primarily African American students. Hispanic populations had entered the school in the nineties and racial tension increased. PRI5 saw education as a training opportunity for educators and as an element in helping schools to understand and access cultural strengths to aid in student success.

PAR5 accessed EPIC services for basic necessities for her family such as food and clothing. She saw EPIC5 as a personal friend who knew the culture and language. The
parent center was a central and accessible place to get help. EPIC5 was viewed as an individual who was at school to help Hispanic families with all types of issues. She explained volunteer activities to families and provided them with a schedule and list. PAR5 wanted to be connected with someone of her own race at her child’s school and expressed concern over issues of understanding from other races.

EPIC5 indicated a need to build relationships with community resources to help families with basic needs. She viewed her role as an EPIC as someone who does, “Whatever needs to be done to help the families and school.” She interacted with parent organizations and families at school to offer targeted seminars to parents. TEA5 indicated that the parent center was the hub of communication in the school and the importance of EPIC5 in interpreting at parent meetings. Instead of participating in large group activities EPIC5 preferred a small group setting. All the participants recognized the trusting and long term relationships between EPIC5 and families.

Cross Data Analysis

Cross data analysis for interviews, focus groups, field notes and documents revealed three centralized themes. Findings included (a) EPICs provide a connection between home and school, (b) connection to culture is important for success, (c) the parent involvement coordinator program needs recognition and training. Subthemes were prevalent throughout data analysis and are included in the explanation of the main topics. Main themes were revealed through triangulation of the data for a balanced view. Themes of practice for Elementary Parent Coordinators (EPIC) were also revealed providing insight into the guiding research questions for the study.
The obvious guiding question for this section is Research Question 1. However, the interpretation of EPIC role seemed to come from perspectives that included Research Question 2. EPIC role description seemed to be intertwined with assumed perceptions about stakeholder opinion. Many times a combination of the factors above seemed to guide EPIC decision making and feelings of success or failure. Accomplishment with families did not seem to be one in the same with job performance success. Direction of job duties seemed to be more of an indicator of job performance status than benefiting families.

**Research Question 1:** How do EPICs describe their role in Title I charter elementary schools?

**Research Question 2:** How do stakeholders such as administrators, teacher, EPICS and parents view the role of EPICs in building social capital and network closure for all families?

**EPICs Provide a Connection between Home and School**

The connection between home and school was overwhelmingly the strongest theme throughout data analysis. Data sources provided a wealth of information allowing insight into diverse levels of perspective. A summary of all the data seemed to point toward the surface theme of the role of the EPIC is to connect the school to families. As simple as it may sound, implementation of the idea seemed to twist and turn into a labyrinth of unpredictable directions and was best described as, the goal of the EPIC is to primarily connect with schools and families. Secondly, data sources indicated a goal of connecting schools to families. The other aspects of the data fell under the above definition and depended on contextual elements to define how the EPIC behaved to carry out the home-
school connection. The term connection consistently meant a continuum of activities based on the moral values of the EPIC, filtered through a loosely based job description.

**The elementary parent involvement coordinator role.** While collecting data is became increasingly apparent that EPICs viewed their role as facilitators of communication and collaboration. All data sources indicated liaison services from school to home were a primary role. Subthemes included the EPIC as being a norm of school culture, always being available and accessible for creating easy entry points for parent engagement and involvement, and a supportive resource for families. EPICs seem to feel a moral responsibility to the families they served and personal relationships were a priority. They were involved in parent organizations and make efforts to educate stakeholders about school policy and procedures. The EPIC aided in cultural transitions and exchanges throughout the school environment and adapted to context. EPIC services were for all families and crossed professional boundaries to remove barriers to family and student success.

**Resource referral.** Community resource referral and development was a major role activity throughout the data. EPICs constantly worked to build relationships with community agencies to support families in need. Through their collaboration they could help families with basic needs. Many times the role of the EPIC would lead to immigration and vital document aid resources. Deportation was also a frequent issue with the majority population in the district of study. EPICs would be left with children whose sole parent was deported. As part of their role, they would connect with support services for child placement.

**Collaboration with support agents.** Resource referral also included collaboration with support personnel at the school or district level. Working with counselors, nurses,
social workers and data entry clerks was common because the EPIC was the first contact for many families and involved in translating and interpreting. Home visits and calls were coordinated through the parent center and the EPIC’s schedule. Throughout the data all EPICs, teachers and principals talked about the importance of continuous casual conversation and how it guides daily transactions. All valued this exchange throughout the day and stated this part of the EPIC role was a very effective way to manage the unpredictability of student needs.

EPICs were also involved in special services planning such as special education referral, testing and placement as well as Section 504 planning and development. The language barrier often made it impossible to communicate with families. The EPIC was there to facilitate the meeting and explain educational concepts and terms so the parent would feel informed. EPICs were also involved in crisis and emotionally charged situations requiring de-escalation techniques.

**Title I management.** The role of the EPIC included the management of Title I activities yet this prohibited them from clerical work (Georgia Department of Education, 2015) and outlawed their ability to be translators or interpreters. This created a barrier to family and student success. EPICs adapted their role to greet parents as they enter the school and supported after school events to encourage families for future interaction. Through personal moral obligation they extended their role to include activities outside of the school environment to interact with families. This was sometimes the bonding agent in relationships that lead families to involvement in their child’s school. Church was a common thread in the community surrounding the district of study. The EPICs who mentioned religious experiences as a motivating factor viewed their work in church as an
extension of their professional practice at school. Each year the EPIC was required to invite parents to a Title I meeting where it is explained in detail so parents can understand what it means for their family at school. The EPICS are charged with detailing activities through a logbook of services to receive funding throughout and for the next year.

*It is the first open house of the school year. The parent coordinator provides information about Title I services to parents at an informational meeting. A presentation is accompanied by bilingual handout materials to ensure the majority population can understand Title I and the district’s association with this designation.*

**The EPIC environment.** The parent center at each of the participating schools was a hub of activity. This was primary housing for the EPIC and a meeting place for all parent coordinator activities. It was usually centrally located in the main office so that families had immediate access to services. All documents, posters and paraphernalia were communicated bilingually so families could understand the greeting they were receiving and the purpose of the parent center. Maps of common countries were posted on the walls and used as references for point of origin for families. Pictures of families of all races were on the bulletin board as a sign that everyone was welcome. Inspirational cards were drawn by students at the school to show how children felt about the EPIC and the parent center along with cards expressing gratitude for services. A sign outside the entrance to the parent center expressed a greeting to welcome parents and to create a friendly atmosphere. Academic and social support resources were offered through materials available for use by families, teachers and other staff. The Rosetta Stone program was offered to staff and families desiring to acquire a second language. Educational materials such a bilingual books were offered to encourage English acquisition while supporting the effort to increase reading
comprehension, vocabulary, and mathematics. Computers were available for staff and family use. Parent conferences were held for a variety of subjects and the EPIC served as a meeting facilitator and interpreter. Academic groups were held to support student English acquisition through technology and direct instruction. Community outreach planning and promotion were also centralized to the parent center including school/home communications. EPICs were often involved in the planning and development of cultural events and scheduling parent involvement activities. Overall the parent center was designed to help parents get involved in their child’s school. It supplied a common meeting place for social gatherings as well as teacher-parent conferences and served as communications center for all bilingual correspondence. Management of the parent center varied greatly and some were more organized depending on the personality of the presiding EPIC. This was the centralized education center for families and included parent seminars on a variety of topics to help families navigate through the educational system and student development.

Leo is at his first day at school. He moved from South America three days ago and does not know how to speak English. He seems to be a smart child and he is interested in school. In his home country he is on grade level in reading, math, science and social studies. Because of the language barrier he is placed in the ESOL program for English acquisition. The EPIC is called in to provide support services. She contacts the family, talks with the child and the teacher about support services that can be offered at school. Leo is given an opportunity to learn English through the Rosetta Stone program offered at the school. His family is offered the same program free of charge through the parent center. The parent involvement coordinator gives input to help form a plan for the child so that he is successful and
does not become disengaged. She follows up with the parents to see how things are going at home and check in with a child each day to monitor progress. She interprets for parent conferences and encourages the family to be involved in Leo’s education by offering bilingual learning resources. She informed the parents that reading with their child in their native language will be beneficial for Leo even in a pro English-speaking state and school system.

Connection to Culture is Important for Success

Participating in school culture. All participating school environments accessed the role of the EPIC as part of school governance and parent organizations to promote a positive and collaborative school climate. This area of the data was driven mostly by parent participants who appreciated the EPICs input into motivating the families to donate for fund raising and cultural events. Principals and teachers felt this was a very valuable aspect of the parent involvement program because parents wanted to help and it gave then an easy entry point into school involvement. All EPICs wanted to be part of the effort to promote collaboration among stakeholders. When they approached families they projected a collaborative stance and used language that encouraged an exchange to build social capital. Equal power sharing in the school environment was an area of concern for EPICs and they tried to constantly educate all stakeholders about the importance of this area of education exchanges. This was often an area where the needs of the dominant, traditional culture conflicted with the needs of less dominant populations. EPICs struggled with being a neutral advocate caught between tradition and removing barriers to a families success.
Understanding community language and culture. Four out of the five EPICs in the study understood immigration issues because they had firsthand experience. Participants employed by the participating schools appreciated their understanding of the majority Hispanic culture and that language was the primary appeal connecting families to the EPIC. Throughout the data in the district of study, EPIC services and the parent center seemed to hinge upon the EPIC’s ability to speak Spanish. This made translator/interpreter services invaluable in their role. This part of the role was extended through their knowledge of immigration services and issues. Principals accessed EPIC services if they had issues with employees who could not speak English. Many times the EPIC would be called into to translate a physician’s letter about illness, absence from work or interpret for a disciplinary hearing. Many times this was arranged through district level personnel. All bilingual transactions included the EPIC because they were a consistently trusted resource throughout the district.

Understanding social justice. In the district of study traditional educational practices were based on previous populations. The EPIC’s role was to locate and engage marginalization families and to provide support to re-engage them to become an active part in their child’s respective school. While in the school and community they served as a mentor and role model for students and families traveling through cultural immersion. Many times they would act as a neutral advocacy for the families they served and felt as if they were in the middle of a power struggle between the school and family. The principals, teachers and parents did not see this as part of the EPIC’s role. However, data from documents and EPICs viewed this as a large part of professional practice. EPICs also saw their role as promoting cultural preservation and bi-literacy among second language
families. Through outreach programs they educated families about the importance of
country of origin and parenting to uphold cultural and religious faith. They approached
stakeholders with the assumption of equally shared power (Wang & Rodgers, 2006). This
factor built strong and lasting bonds between the Hispanic community and the parent
coordinators. Families saw the EPIC as an advocate who understood their culture and
reality. Over time the assumptions given to the EPIC did not necessarily apply to the district
of study.

It is 11:35AM on November first in a third grade classroom. Students are reading a
book because their work is completed. The parent involvement coordinator has scheduled a
time with the teacher to come into the classroom and talk about Dia de Muertos (The Day of
the Dead) which is a holiday celebrated in Mexico and other countries. Most of the children
in the classroom are Hispanic and know about the holiday but say, “We never talk about
this in school here but it’s awesome.” The parent coordinator explains the activities
planned for celebration. She demonstrates and showed videos about the traditional
activities associated with this holiday in Mexico. Most of the kids in the class know what is
going on in our smiling, laughing and talking about the past experiences at home whether
they were living in Mexico or not. They talk about dressing up in the decorative skulls that
are associated with this holiday. They talk about dancing skeletons that are not scary but a
fun part of their cultural traditions. They began to talk about common songs that they never
hear unless there around the family or other individuals who speak Spanish. They are
excited that the parent coordinator has taken the time to come to their class to teach
everyone about the importance of their culture. The parent coordinator interprets all that is
said in Spanish to the English speakers in the classroom. Everyone laughs and celebrates and by the end of the class everyone wants to celebrate Dia de Muertos every day.

The Parent Involvement Coordinator Program Needs Recognition and Training

Throughout the data the changing needs of families continued to challenge the role of the EPIC to adapting to serve families efficiently and effectively. Data sources indicated that continuous training should be part of the EPICs role. EPIC participants extended this ideology to include training for daily activities. Evidence derived from combined data sources indicates a commonality of tenacity and mental fortitude for EPICs. They continue to find avenues of adaptation to context, resulting in benefits for all stakeholders, due to time acquired accumulation of local knowledge. Parent involvement targeting academic practice was specifically reported as being an area of need as a primary role for EPICs. A role element expressed by EPICs was continuous training to improve specific abilities to engage families of diverse backgrounds. Principals, teachers and EPICs provided data indicating that the role of the EPIC should include engaging the community on a daily basis and include supporting student attendance and parent accountability.

Georgia PIC Network. Georgia has formed a The Georgia PIC (Parent Involvement Coordinator) Network charged with facilitating conversations among parent involvement coordinators throughout the state at all levels of service. At the meetings training was offered on Georgia’s direction for parent involvement coordinators and professional programming. The district of study did not adhere to the guidance EPICs learned at the PIC Network training. However, EPICs networked to build a knowledge base of resources to help connect them with a wider range of families. The training highlighted high impact
strategies that seemed to engage multiple fronts of need to save time and energy duplicating services. The EPICs in the district of study met after the meeting to discuss common strategies they could use to reach more families. They viewed local meetings as a major part of their role so that consistency in service could be a growing part of programming across the district.

**EPICs job description.** The State’s description of the qualifications for the position of parent coordinator was quite different from the document outlining the job for the district of study. Georgia’s version communicated the importance of the understanding of Title I, academic achievement, public speaking and the ability to guide policy and organize parent involvement. Through data analysis this proved to be a more accurate view of what EPICs performed in schools. The district job description was loosely based and used Title I as a limiting and directional guide stone for services. The state broadened the parent coordinators role as a facilitator of educational information to all stakeholders so that families could better understand what they needed to do to help their child succeed. During the PIC meeting facilitators were quick to say that local jurisdiction superseded state direction. The EPICs, principals and teachers participating in this study viewed the role more along the lines of state expectations.

**Themes mimic current EPIC activities.** Documents collected for this study mimicked Georgia’s job description of parent involvement coordinators in the district and many other data sources from participants in the study. Common factors include (a) liaison services connecting families and school, (b) manage Title I, (manage parent involvement in the school, (d) develop and refer to community agencies, (e) educate on the importance of culture for school success, (f) teach students for academic growth and (g) collaborate with
all stakeholders to support school success. The one area mentioned by EPIC and parent participants was constant improvement through survey data. EPICs were constantly looking for feedback so they could focus training on ways to improvement services and education stakeholders. EPICs viewed constant outreach for community needs as a major part of their role.

**Credentialing and Skills.** Principals and EPIC participants viewed state credentialing as an avenue for legitimacy of programming for EPICs. Many times EPICs would talk about being left out of professional meetings at the district level and discontinued parent coordinator meetings. Consistency in service seemed to hinge upon communication between EPICs and the mentoring and training received by New EPICs from EPIC4 at the beginning of their employment service. School level participants recognized that part of the EPIC role should be continued professional development to maintain credentialing. Currently Georgia does not have an official credential for parent involvement coordinators. However, principal participants wanted to see higher qualifications placed on the position to guarantee highly qualified personnel. They saw this as an avenue to keep EPIC expectations high to provide standards in a level of quality of care and legitimacy and recognition of the role as a specialized profession. PRI4 stated, “We want to be able to guarantee a certain level of literacy and experience to serve our families”. EPICs were considered instructional paraprofessionals at the time of the study.

*It is a beautiful day in April and the parent coordinators from the state of Georgia have gathered to discuss plans for the upcoming school year. They share ideas and listen to guest speakers who share strategies for success. Throughout the conference EPICs meet a variety of parent coordinators from diverse cultural*
backgrounds and with different levels of education and experience. They exchange information to continue the networking throughout the year. The meeting provides a seminar on high impact strategies so parent coordinators can identify efficient activities affecting their school, the families and community to work smarter and manage time more effectively.

District of Study Perspective

Data analysis of the elementary environments participating in the study led to similarities in EPIC practices across the district of study. The district of study offered a job description in 2008 outlining 12 basic activities and responsibilities for parent involvement coordinators. They included: (a) regular attendance, (b) assist planning and implementation of parent involvement activities for Title I teachers, (c) assist Title I teachers with data collection, (d) assist with the oversight and implementation of the volunteer program, (e) conduct home visits and interact with Title I parents as needed, (f) coordinate the take home computer program, (g) assist Title I teachers in the preparation and implementation of instructional activities for students, (h) maintains and organizes the parent resource room, (i) assists in the distribution of parent resource materials, (j) maintains confidentiality, (k) works well with administrators, teachers and staff and (l) performs other duties as assigned.

There were slight differences in the practice activities in EPICs across the data. However, the job description provided by the district had provided enough information to plant a seed to begin the development of the parent coordinator program and set the tone for the role of the position. The district perspective seemed to view EPICs as a part of a system norm similarly to the school level environments. EPICs certainly carried out the job description
activities and expanded their role to include areas of interest and need. See Table of EPIC Activities and Parent Coordinator Job Description for District of Study in Appendix.

Participants seemed to desire a more structured job description for EPICs during data collection. Over the course of the analysis of the data this seemed to become a process with favorable and unfavorable consequences. Without the freedom to cross boundaries and adapt to family’s needs the EPIC program could not serve as many families or remain as an effective neutral advocate. A loosely based job description served EPICs and stakeholders well to solve problems. Instead of the job description dictating EPIC activities, it seemed more efficient to allow activities to accumulate according to local needs and then form a description of proven daily activities as an ever changing document to serve the needs of local stakeholders.

EPICs were involved in projecting the vision for the district to the communities around them and interpreted as a district agent as part of their everyday role. Acting as community engagement agents for district outreach programs was also common especially when the collaboration with community resource agencies was concerned. The role had progressed from simply following a job description to a daily adaptation of services on district, school, community, and individual family and student levels.

A second-grade teacher brings Mauricio to the parent center to talk with the EPIC. The child has already been to the nurse and has marks all over his neck in the side of his face. The EPIC calls the counselor so that both of them can look at the marks and asked the child about where they came from. The child says there are small bugs in the house where he lives and that they bite him constantly. The EPIC
contacts the mother and asks for permission to visit the home. The EPIC and counselor knock at the door and the mother answers and invites them in. Mattresses are all over the floor from the living room to the kitchen all the way back to the bathrooms. The dwelling is a two bedroom one story apartment made available through the city housing authority. The parent coordinator asked a small child who is jumping up and down on the mattresses about where she sleeps, eats and studies. The child responds by saying, “everything is done on the same mattress”. The child says that three families live in a two-bedroom apartment and that bugs bite her at night. After questioning the mother it is apparent that bedbugs have infested the mattresses. All the children have bite marks and need treatment. The apartment is dirty, dishes are piled up in the sink with mold is growing on the counters. The children are eating off paper plates and the trash is not been taken out for weeks. The parent coordinator talks to the mother in Spanish about the condition of the apartment and treating the children for the bites they have incurred from bedbugs. The mother says she needs help because she does not have transportation or the income to take care of the problems. The parent coordinator interprets a conversation between the school counselor and the mother about ways they can remedy the situation through community agency help. The EPIC, counselor and parent work together to come up with a plan to help as much as possible so that the family has input in their own solution. They contact the school system social work department as well as Department of Family and Children Services. As services visit the home the parent involvement coordinator stays in contact with all associated individuals including the family. She coordinates services so that there are no
misunderstandings while the conversations are going on in two different languages. She follows up frequently so the family is supported through the process. She reaches out to the children at school to check their medical condition while collaborating with the school nurse and counselor. The family is relocated, all her belongings are treated for bedbugs and the scars on the children are treated at home and school.

Summary

During the analysis of the data EPICs were informed their duties were going to change to half time parent coordination and half time academic paraprofessional support. While drafting the dissertation manuscript at the beginning of the 2015-2016 year they were told that local funding would allow them to work under the guidelines formed by their school based principal. They have all been assigned small groups of students at designated times each day. All the EPICs were encouraged by this change because they liked working more directly with students to help them to be successful at school. This role is somewhat related to educational therapy because they talk to students about acculturation factors as well as helping with reading and math. However, they all recognized time limitations on parent coordinating duties such as scheduling, facilitating and interpreting for conferences. They were concerned parents would not respond well to their inability to be available when traditionally parents could walk in and get services. They planned to take measures to inform the parents on the changes and explain so that everyone would understand. All hoped to be full time EPICs engaging the community at every opportunity. They hoped the district would train them so they could be equipped to succeed.
Every school year brings new challenges to the district of study. EPICs constantly adapt and overcome policies and procedures creating barriers to success. Throughout data analysis the participants expressed their concerns over policy and legislation creating barriers helping families through imposed professional restrictions. All came into their employment position with new objectives and found that they were unable to implement their ideas because of the ritualistic traditions engrained in the educational environment at state and local levels.

Coding throughout the data revealed patterns of indigenous behavior accumulated through years of localized interaction with stakeholders and seemingly unrelated sources. One of the district’s goals was to streamline and vertically align intervention strategies for academic intervention as well as behavioral and social support mechanisms. The diagram outlines the revolving and ongoing process EPICs display as part of an ever growing knowledge base of resources. See Figure 4.1 District Cycle of Services
Figure 4.1

District Cycle of Services

EPIC services offer consistent support to all fronts of engagement
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of elementary parent involvement coordinators in a Title I charter school district in North Georgia. In the preliminary plans for the proposal of this inquiry, case study designs were examined as an appropriate method for effectively exploring the role of the EPIC. As proposal development progressed, nested case design met the need for examining several unique environments within a larger system. Data collected throughout the study proved to be suited for nested case design because it produced a cornucopia of different perspectives from environments operating independently of each other, all falling under the direction of a centralized governing system. As the study proceeded it became increasingly apparent that layers of nested data could be extracted and examined as micro expressions of elements contributing to the role of the EPIC or other positions contributing to the one main data constant, a connection between families and the school. EPICs seemed to practice through accumulated local knowledge and this guided decisions. Data findings presented in Chapter 4 can be viewed as single duties, yet a view similar to a comprehensive treatment plan perspective better captures a more accurate essence of the EPIC’s role. This chapter includes a summary of results, implications, discussion of findings, limitations, recommendations for future research and assumptions sections.

Summary of Findings

Definitive answers to the research questions became increasingly connected and blurred throughout data analysis. It was hard to separate singular themes without connecting
them to elements from other viewpoints and contexts. Participants viewed the role of the EPIC through personal accumulated experience similarly to the way the parent coordinator program was developed over time.

**Research Question 1:** How do EPICs describe their role in Title I charter elementary schools?

EPICs viewed their role as a liaison to any stakeholder associated with the educational system they served. All services provided through their delivery model were meant to form lasting relationships. From this perspective the role included: (a) Easy accessibility and availability for families. EPICs made sure they were anywhere families gathered and made the parent center a common place for networking and education. (b) They were services as educational agents educating all stakeholders about culture and any factor within the educational environment seemed to be a primary focus. They provided parent seminars that outlined information helping navigate families through the educational system. (c) EPICs served as a neutral advocate for families. This placed them in a precarious position because family needs fell into areas uncomfortable to administrators. They viewed their role as a problem solver and would go outside the school to provide capable resources. (e) They provided mentoring/role model services to families and students modeling and promoting responsible behavior. (f) EPICs viewed their role as a morally based service obligated to help families. (g) EPICs engaged families and the community to build human capital and resources for schools. Understanding of the cultures, making up the constituency in the district of study, helped EPICs to understand the culture of the educational arena. They worked to improve the environment through social support and development of resources to close the network. (h) EPICs viewed their role as ever changing. Continuous
improvement and training were seen as a vital part of success. They continued to develop strategies and resources to build programming over time to help families. (i) The parent center and the parent involvement coordinator program was a norm in the participating schools and the district. It had developed into a necessity for daily functioning because the language barrier prevented effective communication. (j) EPICs offered translation and interpreter services to stakeholders. They were quick to say Title I prohibited this activity. However, it was a daily occurrence and necessary for general communication with students and families. (k) Title I was managed at each school through the EPIC. Original programming was designed around Title I policy, yet it was viewed as a barrier to service. (l) Collaboration with parent groups was a role the EPIC cherished. Throughout data collection parents praised the parent center and EPIC because the relationship had built over time to be beneficial for all parties. This was especially true for fundraising and school governance. (m) After all was data was examined for the role of the EPIC one factor stood out as the most important. The strongest component of the EPIC role was the ability to adapt to any context and become a positive resource to serve all stakeholders. The EPIC viewed their services and the parent center as a one stop shop for problem solving.

**Research Question 2:** How do stakeholders such as administrators, teacher, EPICS and parents view the role of EPICs in building social capital and network closure for all families?

Participants expressed the role of EPICs with positive comments and feelings about the parent involvement coordinator program. Stakeholders recognized similar elements about EPICs and primarily agreed that liaison services to families were the strongest component of the role. Question 2 included the elements of building social capital and
network closure for all families. The activities identified by stakeholders were: (a) The EPIC serves as the centralized communication agent of the school to home relationship; (b) They access accumulated knowledge to help stakeholders, (c) The EPIC role is to train others about education and culture and seek training as a part of a comprehensive system of care for families. (d) They promote a collaborative and positive school environment and (e) community resource referral. (f) EPICs engage families and community with unconditional positive regard. (g) They manage Title I requirements in their school and (h) are agents of developing and closing the resource network for schools. (i) They manage the parent center where staff and families are supported and (j) provide mandated reporter collaboration with support services such as counselors. (k) EPICs support parent - teacher conferences and (l) connect to academic achievement through teaching. (m) They teach self-efficacy to families and create easy entry points for parents to get involved. (n) EPICs are involved in supporting special services such as 504 facilitation and special education service development. Overall they help to build an environment of support and services for all families.

The factors above are the activities EPICs perform as their role to create social capital and network closure for families. However, their fortitude to serve families cannot be measured by naming behaviors because each family dynamic and situation brings a different degree of difficulty and risk. The culminating insight indicated through all data that answers both research questions can be summarized by recognizing the determination of EPICs to solve problems through accumulated knowledge, experience and a network of trusted resources committed to serve all stakeholders in the educational community.
Discussion

EPICs have been described in many ways in prior studies. Crites (2008) indicated the importance of the role in schools as a critical player in the effort to generate greater communications between parents and the school. Halford (1996) described parent coordinators as a “Two-way cultural conduit between teachers and families” (p. 36). Depending on context, connections to the literature point toward the EPIC as an agent for change and social justice in educational systems or a symptom of changing populations threatening traditional ritualized practices. The philosophy of United States Government (2015) seems to welcome diversity and encourage integration of cultural immersion and change. The State of Georgia projects the image of welcoming change, yet instigates legislation supporting acculturation into a traditional culture. Educational policy points in this direction through English only instruction and assessment, traditional hours for school, attendance policies and leadership reflective of educational rituals assuming a predominately Caucasian and African American majority. Assumptions seem to be made by stakeholders resulting in continued barriers preventing sustained and complete cultural integration. According to the literature concerning social justice, every individual seems to find different avenues of marketing their personality according to cultural context and as a normal part of the development of a consolidated identity, yet the dichotomy of maintaining native cultural behavior versus integration into the dominant culture consistently remains (Wang, 2009). This would indicate levels of self-imposed social integration according to individual preferences or immersion level of the individual. Through data synthesis it was apparent that EPICs viewed issues related to social justice as a constant barrier to educational and social success for families. They assumed the role of a personal advocate.
for stakeholders and experienced emotional difficulty when witnessing perceived injustice. Encouraging parents and explaining processes and procedures served as a connection point for EPIC to family relationships and teaching self-advocacy was a primary goal. In the same way they advocated for families they seemed to struggle with finding where appropriate boundaries for their work activities and a concrete identity. This was a benefit to stakeholders because lack of a stringent job description gave them the flexibility to adapt. While others were hiding behind professional limitations EPICs were problem solving and removing traditional barriers to help families succeed.

Prior studies offering models for parent involvement lean toward Epstein’s (1995) model as a guide stone to lead schools to implementation. The model has been used to serve as a tool to judge an environment’s integration of practices to include parents in strategic efforts. All other models seem to include some element of the Epstein Model. Throughout the data, participants consistently indicated a need for stakeholder education at all levels to help in understanding how school expectations were perceived by families and how family expectations and beliefs about school were perceived by school. Participants saw differences in stakeholder assumptions and expectations as a stumbling block continuing to create difficulty for teaching children. Many times a participant would stop and say, “I’m not just talking about second language kids, I mean everyone”. In this case EPICs interpreted their role as an educator to clarify expectations and assumptions so families could understand the role of school. Instead of focusing on racism and other negative aspects of uncontrollable factors they all wanted to concentrate on elements within their locus of control. Moreover, every participant saw the value of training EPICs to engage and collaborate with families of diverse cultures.
Training was highly suggested because participants attributed cultural differences as the key to success. EPICs were viewed as an agent capable of engaging the community to figure out avenues, including specific cultural factors, which would create easy entry points for families to become and remain involved in the success of students. Continued, equally powered dialogue was suggested as imperative to continuously improving the probability of developing a sustainable parent resource. The literature continued to try and pin down a definition for parent involvement and measure minute details to view its effects. Through data collection, the researcher experienced a dynamic, transitional process through EPICs, where any interaction could be viewed as involvement because the social capital element progressed to result in growing into levels of involvement. The researcher concluded that the limitation of a concrete definition of parent involvement was insufficient to cover the many aspects and variables in interactions experienced by stakeholders. This could be the reason for the loosely defined terms in the examined documents in the study. EPICs adapted to changing situations in all observations. Similarly, the expectations of families and all other stakeholders were not be limited to minute details. It seemed more plausible to concentrate on each individual situation and adapt to the neurological differences of the stakeholder to increase the odds of building social capital and the probability of success for everyone involved. This would be similar to a special education individual education plan for all stakeholders, with a collaborative effort to build partnerships to make benefiting decisions. Individualized treatment seemed to be the only avenue to succeed with each family by addressing their unique needs. This ideology trickled to every level of the educational environment.
Social cohesion theories offer explanations about why schools want to engage families and create an environment conducive to parent involvement. It was obvious that schools benefited from family involvement. Engagement by the school system was the equivalent of a child pulling on a mother’s apron strings. EPICs were called upon to be the proxy for schools. Liaison services, to build a bridge from school to home often resulted in parents volunteering to help the school in various ways. Adler’s (1964) theory of social interest came to mind because parents seemed to want to find a method of familiarity at their child’s school. They seemed to desire a connection with at least one relatable individual. Most often the EPIC filled the void fostering behavioral norms and projecting school norms. Lave and Wenger (1991) described EPIC behavior most accurately as a “community of practice”. EPICs often sponsored parent educational seminars on ways to help students succeed and to ask for stakeholder input. This followed the social cohesion literature by offering social support to families while indoctrinating them into practices that would foster progressive future success for students and the district. EPICs requested training to learn methods of building social capital (relationships), learning commonalities in the social positioning of families and how to provide a rewarding experience for families to increase the probability of continued involvement (Cheung, & Pomerantz, 2011; Mora, 2009; Putnam, 1993; Skinner, 1938). The points of view throughout the literature seemed to relabel original ideas of cognitive-behavioral philosophies and present them to encourage a contextually oriented buy in. EPICs seemed to practice methods of interacting that were unique. Every interaction was based on the sharing of equal power without the one up position of authority. Families built trust and respect for the EPICs through this connection and felt a moral obligation to reciprocate. Similarly, EPICs wanted to convince the district
to buy into differing educational aspects of the diverse culture of the stakeholders in the community. Unlike stakeholders associated with the EPIC, the district could not seem to yield itself to the idea of truly equal collaboration with families because the implication was that of a governing institution instead of a morally responsible individual with equal power and mutual interests (Wang & Rodgers. 2006).

The most direct literature reference to the district of study’s strategy seemed to come from Weiss, Caspe, and Lopez, (2006). This model included three integrated components including (a) parenting, (b) home-School relationships and (c) responsibility for learning outcomes. The bottom line was a desire for academic achievement to ensure the success of each school in the district. The model could be expanded to interpretively include any component from previous or more recent models to be more adequately adapted to the dynamic process of engagement. However, student self-monitoring and motivation seemed to be the one factor minimized as unpredictable and uncontrollable. The encouragement of social cohesion was often a method used as a behavioral control mechanism with the hopes that social learning would help students to learn appropriateness (Bandura, 1977; Vygotsky, 1962). Halgunseth, Peterson, Stark, and Moodie, (2009) recognized cultural insensitivity in parent involvement models. In the district of study, EPICs intended to provide a culturally sensitive system of care to all families. This proved to be difficult because every stakeholder seemed to have a different value base and needs structure. Though EPICs were resilient in their solutions they all hoped for training to build methodology and program philosophy. All participants seemed to view this as an opportunity for social growth for all stakeholders. In other words, educators viewed the challenge as an educational learning experience that would take time to develop. They thought it was worth the effort for the sake of the process
of learning instead of the product of immediate positive outcomes (Coleman, 1988; Hanifan, 1916; Huang, 2007). A summary of the literature indicated that the energy embedded in the relationships between symbiotic components of natural-interactions are valuable in the cognitive-emotional development of individuals resulting in a healthier society (Adler, 1964; Bourdieu, 1977; Coleman, 1988; Jacobs, 1961; Narayan, 1997; Putnam, 1993). Patience, the ability to adapt and accumulated trust seemed to be important factors in EPIC practice projecting unconditional positive regard for stakeholders. This factor was speculative because it seemed to be inconsistent, situationally oriented, intangible and immeasurable. Putnam (2007) expressed that society’s overabundance of variations and options sometimes unintentionally isolated outliers and impeded interactions. He also pointed out the difficulties with immigration and the acculturation process indicating residual assumptions assuming withdrawal from the mainstream into subcultures and the assumption of mistrust in civic cohesive groups. This was a recognized concern in the district of study and it was mentioned by all school personnel participating in this study. The EPIC program was designed to serve all families. However, subcultures within the district saw them as Hispanic only staff because they appeared to be Latino and their skin color did not match that of some stakeholders. Also, traditionalized family involvement patterns at the participating schools were designed to reach the majority of families. EPICs were charged with instigation of contacting unengaged and marginalized families. Through Putnam’s (2007) recognition, EPICs dispel assumptions naturally occurring through acculturation and the formation of subcultures to form a one-on-one relationship with families, promoting equally based communication and trust to increase the probability of network closure for their school and the district. They educated families about the unspoken rules of the
traditional culture through a partnership based on equal sharing of power (Heller, 2013; Osborn, 2006; Wang and Rodgers, 2006). EPICs operated outside the parameters of the unintended effects of the naturally oppressive ritualized culture of tradition (Wang, 2009; Sanders, 2008). Perspectives concerning this factor could stretch from views of neutral advocacy to the absence of professional boundaries. Families did not recognize either term. They appreciated the nature of their interaction with the EPIC at their child’s school and the reward of new knowledge and resources to remedy life circumstances. To EPICs all families were a priority deserving individual attention and service.

Many theorists offer models of parent involvement and imply the development of the family’s social identity as an avenue for building meaningful relationships throughout the educational journey. In the district of study, second language families are the majority and according to participants, symptomology of cultural immersion has been long standing. Overall, there has been much research conducted to identify what can be done about parent involvement in schools to improve relations between home and school, improve academic performance and to project a favorable image of educational systems. Young (2014) defines social capital through the identification of cognitive elements (norms and trust), structural elements (associations), and collective action (exchange). It is an asset that depends upon members of a network working in a partnership towards mutually beneficial collective action and the achievement of institutional goals (Granovetter, 1973). According to studies inquiring about increasing effectiveness of educational efforts on diverse cultures, social justice must be a primary concern included in the structure of instruction and behavioral expectations (Wang and Rodgers, 2006; Mora, 2009). For EPICs this was a normal part of daily activities. For the school district it seemed an arduous task.
This idea of individuals providing liaison services to the community is not new and previous studies have suggested the importance of individuals building relational bridges from school to the community. They have attempted to pinpoint behavioral and program attributes benefitting the process. Programs and models are offered to communicate the importance of district and school initiatives to improve relations (Epstein, 1995; Crites, 2008; Alexander, 2009). Data analysis in this study generated common patterns of behavior on different levels of engagement for family to school relations. Schools often address differentiation for academic delivery of lessons to students. However, the connection between the core values of diverse families and the development of a service model differentiated for their unique attributes seems to have eluded educational systems. This element does not translate from the classroom to the community. The literature seemed to omit elements that were consistent across interviews, observations and focus groups. The school district seemed to assume the position of parent resource management when making decisions about involvement by families. This translated into the perception of social injustice if the intention of the district initiative that did not match the traditional value paradigm of the stakeholder. EPICs were a buffer providing a filter of cultural expression and social equality. This seemed to be a contributing factor in a family’s relationship with the EPIC, yet traditions in the district help some populations at a distance. Families had a relationship with the EPIC but not with the school or district.

The district of study had recognized the importance of collaboration with families and the community. The former superintendent instigated and partnered with UCLA concerning barriers to learning and the implementation and integration of a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports. This system includes a mental health paradigm
aimed at approaching academic success though social intervention (Gainesville City Schools, 2014). A collaboration with Scholastic as a partner to educate the community and families about the importance of family interaction and literacy with children ages birth through three years of age was also instigated. The intention of the initiatives was to meet families in non-traditional environments and to create a system of care to treat any possible barrier to impeding student academic success. The district has adopted a philosophy for standard of care including management, instruction and learning supports. The current superintendent has followed suite with support for initiatives targeting the community and families. Currently, the district has included student forums in an initiative to include student leaders in the process of collaboration to grow future leaders. Lorensen (2002) indicates the importance of future planning to include youth in decisions and to mentor them in a way that will yield to the philosophy that they will be the future of our endeavors to care for us when we’re old. This follows much of the research on supporting family engagement through liaison services. EPICs follow this ideology by mentoring students and families, collaborating with institutions of higher education, industry and social support agencies such as county mental health, vocational rehabilitation, department of family and children services, law enforcement, department of juvenile justice and others. The district has formed parent and student advisory councils for each school in the district that meets on a monthly basis to talk about avenues for improvement. The superintendent asks questions to the groups to facilitate the structure of the meetings and stakeholders give input on their experiences and expectations for the future. Learning supports have been integrated into the response to intervention process in the district of study. Instead of limiting academic progress to teacher intervention the district has expanded to include engagement in the
family’s home, workplace or place of worship. This assertive effort is adaptable to state and federal initiatives and policy to enable educational agents to seize opportunities for furthering connections to families and the community. In the past the district has realized the value of the elementary parent coordinator (EPIC) program as part of a network of care.

In the district of study EPICs were flexible to the changing needs of families. They served on many committees and organizational groups for schools. Connections to the data and literature viewed them as facilitators of initial contact, trust (Fukuyama 1995; Newton, 2001; Putnam 2000), honesty and reliability to stakeholders. They were involved in navigational services for transactions with individuals and groups to build social capital through consistent non-threatening behavior to build partnerships and educate stakeholders. They served as a buffer to reduce the risk associated with foreignness, new experiences and feelings of isolation (Rodrigues & Child, 2012) and recognized their role in the development of program identity and image to function as a social credit rating that encourages and enables continued exchange (Putnam, 2007; Young, 2014). While interviewing participants, professional practice for EPICs seemed to point toward misinformation. Each participant expressed the position of the EPIC to be liaison services to connect home to school. However, methodology was mostly left to the discretion of the practitioner. As the study unfolded this factor seemed to benefit families because micromanagement of services and professional boundaries did not impede the progress of the relationship between the EPIC and the family. Personal connections to agencies in the area helped the EPIC to obtain resources for the stakeholders. Many times this had little connection to the school. The personal effort by the EPIC to engage the community created a network of reliable trusted individuals who helped one another and provided a great benefit to families. Though EPICs
did not seem to recognize their role as a set standard in their school, the identity of the EPIC had been developed over a period of time based on need. It was similar to the second language stakeholders surrounding them in their respective schools. The EPICs and stakeholders yielded to the majority culture at school and practiced their traditional culture at home. This was a factor recognized by some of the participants as a causal factor in marginalized families and saw it as an important topic of inquiry to help further district improvement. This pattern of tradition versus serving diverse cultures was viewed throughout stakeholders as an ongoing difficult dilemma containing many conflicting points of view.

Implications for practice include continued professional development for EPICs and other stakeholders to ensure integration and understanding of services. In the current educational arena in Georgia, change is always on the horizon and schools adapt to meet legislative mandates. Through it all EPIC services have remained a constant and the service model guiding them at state level outlines how operations take place throughout the school day. On a school level the parent center serves as a base for services including communication and training for all stakeholders, Title I compliance, family school liaison services, building school capacity for continuous improvement activities and program coordination and collaboration through outreach to stakeholders. In the district of study many of the duties outlined by the state are performed. However, the program does not seem to be fully implemented. The perception of focus for the program seems to rely on the Hispanic community for its worth. All participants saw multiple reasons why EPIC services should be comprehensively distributed throughout the district to meet state guidelines. However, the charter district aspect was mentioned as a factor causing speculation about
implementation. Local needs seemed to outweigh the direction of the state when it came to EPIC activities. On school level the program worked well to insure effective services to stakeholders choosing or being directed to the parent center. All participants wanted continuous training to develop more comprehensive strategies for improvement. They looked to the district for direction, yet planned independently through local knowledge and need. EPIC services were expanded to cover academic small groups during data collection. Participants indicated a need for consistency in district direction and saw the value of current efforts by EPICs to continue full services with the added responsibilities. EPICs and administrators saw program development as a continuous cycle of improvement through constant evaluation and collaboration for innovation. See Georgia Parent Coordinator Resources and Responsibilities Model in Appendix.

During data collection many of the participants made suggestions for future development of the parent coordinator program. The dilemma did not hinge upon the effort of the individuals currently working in EPIC positions. It came in the form of a dichotomy based on resources for service. Some stakeholders suggested that the district accept and yield to the preferences of stakeholders to be served individually by agents of a preferred skin color. Throughout the data, stakeholders seemed to want to be served and governed through culturally preference. This would include hiring interpreters and cross training individuals in strategic positions to be EPICs. Each school would have multiple, part time EPICs covering the major cultures in the region. Parents could choose a preferred EPIC and the parent center would be used as a universal resource center for the school. Other participants suggested taking a stance to force cultural immersion on the communities served in the district. This would entail forcing all families to be introduced and guided by
one EPIC to ensure a singular standard of care. Overall, the contextual perception of stakeholders seemed to guide their stance on how the EPIC program should grow. All agreed the district should develop EPIC services and train them to engage diverse cultures through continuous educational efforts. Tightening the network seemed to be the goal through training for faculty and the community. While participants hoped for development, they did not discount current services that had adapted to local needs since the beginning of the program. Credit was given to the EPICs for continued service as cultural brokers and their commitment to the stakeholders in the district. A summary of the research seemed to define cultural brokerage for schools as institutional agent(s) attempting to bridges between the dominant and diverse cultures (Jezewski & Sotnik, 2001). Martinez-Cosio & Iannacone, 2007 offer the term as, “The act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change”. EPICs seemed to view every interaction as an opportunity to build a cross-cultural bridge to benefit all stakeholders.

A model for EPIC service aspects emerged through implications from the literature review and data analysis. Many studies (Alexander, 2009; Crites, 2008; Martinez-Cosio, & Iannacone, 2007; Sanders, 2008) reference Epstein (1995) as a model for evaluating school immersion into parent involvement. Much of the literature failed to mention the marketing component of modern methods in promoting education and building program image. Practice for EPICs in the district of study had not experienced this type of promotion. They seemed to rely on local accumulated reputation for sustained program use. Many initiatives were created concerning Latino families because historical context exhibited a need. This connection did not seem be an asset for the district of study and seems to have caused
cultural division about appropriation of EPIC services in the community. While beneficial at the time of need, this factor also seems to have branded EPIC services as a Hispanic only program. Revitalization of a comprehensive service model was indicated as a need throughout the data. Participants hoped that EPIC services could be more community based for all families. Saleem & Hanan, 2014 indicate an international dilemma that mimics the district of study when it comes to cultural involvement and the balance between emerging and traditional subcultures. They suggest a continuous, purposeful and intentional effort to implement an integrated investigation to find avenues to build an ever changing delivery model. Furthermore, all socioeconomic and cultural points of view must be considered to develop a universal, transparent understanding of program intentions and services. The program must develop and operate without elements of ambiguity as a preventative measure for stakeholder misperception and apathy. See Figure EPIC Connections.
EPIC Connections

EPICs interact with all stakeholders for connections to resource development.

EPICs serve every stakeholder group as a facilitator/liaison of equal collaboration and consultation without the advantage of the district endowment of the one up authority position. They are unique because their activities engage and connect all sectors of the educational network.

In the participating schools, implementation of the EPIC program depended upon the level of understanding and perception of parent involvement by the administration. Most were at a point where the level of involvement fell between parent involvement management and fully integrated involvement. None of the participating schools were at a point where
full integration was present. However, all strived for improvement by continuously communicating with faculty and families through direct contact, impromptu meetings when parents came to school for various reasons and through surveys. The ongoing conversation seemed to be the most important growth tool. Parent involvement was a speculative term and seemed to be defined according to the participating location, the traditional level of family participation at the school level and the principal’s vision of home to school connections. The EPIC role was accessed for many types of engagement from discipline to calling families with positive news about students and the school. The level of parent involvement integration often determined the EPIC role in each context. See Table 5.1: Parent Involvement Management vs. Parent Involvement through EPIC Services table.
Table 5.1

*Parent Involvement Management vs. Parent Involvement through EPIC Services*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parent Involvement Management</th>
<th>Parent Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School to home communication when student problems arise</td>
<td>Collaborative compromise with families as a norm through constant school to home communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School tells parents what to do</td>
<td>School includes parent in conversations about school and student goals through forms of media and regularly scheduled meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School accepts unengaged families as an uncontrollable factor to be minimized</td>
<td>School accepts responsibility for engaging all families through assertive traditional and nontraditional strategic efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School expects families to speak English and offers this as the only solution to communication concerns</td>
<td>School provides liaison services for all families and offers initiatives to aid in life transitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School uses educational jargon as a norm in parent communication</td>
<td>School uses standard explanations of educational terms and explains the meaning to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School views employees as leadership</td>
<td>School seeks out and offers opportunities to develop parent leaders and includes them in school decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent coordinators are only considered for families who do not speak English or the perceived underserved</td>
<td>Parent coordinators/ liaisons serve all families and trains many individuals to engage families to provide support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School expects families and community to support services without question</td>
<td>School views talking with family groups as an opportunity for understanding, education and building of social capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School views professional boundaries as necessary for personal well-being of employees and families and expects families to understand</td>
<td>School understands professional boundaries are individually based and understands and accepts the strengths and weaknesses of employees and families to build partnerships through collaborative improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School views education beginning in Pre-K</td>
<td>School provides educational opportunities through outreach to grow connections with families from pre-conception through high school and beyond.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School requires appointments for all family to school interaction</td>
<td>School offers easy entry points for family school interaction in traditional and nontraditional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School uses parent coordinator/ liaison as a tool to satisfy family and community factions to present the image of parent engagement and collaboration</td>
<td>School employs parent coordinator/ liaison as a facilitator of assertive family engagement and as a cultural broker to navigate acculturation phases of life long educational and emotional development journey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications

The obvious assumption was for parent involvement coordinators to increase the probability of parent participation in the experience of students. However, the term parent involvement was loosely defined according to context throughout data collection. Defining the term was deemed difficult throughout the literature (Jeynes, 2012; Wright, 2009). However, exploring the role of EPICs made it clear that any act involving school personnel and stakeholders could be considered parent involvement according to the perception of each participant in the interaction and the level of accumulated social capital. The question remained, “Who is to say what benefits followed the interplay following a relational collaboration in the short, intermediate and long term aftermath?” The literature did not follow participants to explore the possible results of subconscious to conscious congruity. Any observer speculating about a school to family interaction could easily misinterpret stakeholder perceptions and emotional reactions. Participating schools who traditionally experienced difficulty in involving parents tended to view involvement as any interaction between school and home. Schools who traditionally had an abundance of family involvement viewed parent involvement as family help with academics and parent participation as attendance at school functions. Parent participants did not seem to view these terms as different. Many participants saw the value of implementing a parent engagement program at district level. Perspectives varied according to stakeholder standpoint.

Implications for Parent Involvement Coordinators

EPICs viewed their services as a moral obligation to serve families. Through documents, and observations this became an apparent norm of practice. This study added to
the knowledge base of practical applications for EPICs. Targeted communication and availability were elements that could be studied for future research. These elements appeared time after time throughout the data. All participants outlined availability and communication as major attributes for EPICs to build social capital. This is what made their services meaningful to schools.

The EPICs in the study were often like marginalized families due to the fact that ritualized traditions in the system of care became barriers to services. This study’s results suggest professional boundaries and the one up position of power may be a contributing factor in the marginalization of family cultures. The literature concerning social justice truly connected with the position of EPIC because their identity in schools had grown overtime to establish norms of practice and prestige of position. The position had become a norm in the Hispanic community in the district similar to other cultural stereotypes.

Though it was never mentioned by parent coordinator participants in the study, personal fortitude, willingness to adapt and determination to genuinely care for and help others drove EPICs to succeed on deeper levels with parents and students. Through replicating this study results could be broadened to identify individuals suited for the position of parent coordinator. Implications for EPICs are far reaching because the success of their practice may hinge upon the misunderstanding of stakeholders to hold them to a standard which could limit their ability to engage on more personal levels. Throughout their existence they have built a support system sustaining practice and success. Results seemed to reveal EPIC services were not as standardized as other professionals in the schools. This was a subtheme providing insight into the expectations of families and how traditionalized professional boundaries prohibit the success of other staff. Results from this study suggest
that boundaries may not be the best solution for EPICs because morally guided services, an accumulated network of resources based on long standing social capital could prove to be the best option.

**Implications for Administrators**

Interviewing administrators provided an overview of the needs of the participating schools. An umbrella of communication was identified as the key to success when it came to engaging families, students and staff. The EPIC was the center of connection sending messages and engaging stakeholders empowered through social capital. The element of communication was identified as constant casual conversation. However, no participants could identify the types of communication that was most effective at building relationships with parents for student success. EPICs had been trained by the Georgia PIC network to implement high impact strategies to make efficient interventions for families yet school level and district officials did not seem to be aware of the research based potential of this information. Every administrator emphasized training as a major element to improve EPIC services. However, none were trained or directed by the district to implement the strategies suggested through PIC network training. In Chapter 2 of this study, communication was a key element in the sharing of power in relationships. Minority families assumed Caucasian dominance in the conversations they had with school staff. Principals at school level could benefit from continuing the conversations included in this study to understand cultural elements affecting academic and relational success with families. Practical application through study results could also lead to a change in mindset when professional boundaries and policy become barriers to school success.
This study supported valuing accumulated local school based knowledge as an avenue for practice. Through the methods in this nested case study principals could add to the growing knowledge base by consistently communication and making efforts to collect qualitative data on the local needs of parents and helping them to understand the role of the school. Furthermore, parent groups could educate the school staff on culture and how their assumptions could lead to difficulties and solutions for school improvement. The component of communication repeatedly appeared throughout the data. Focused communication throughout the chain of administration in the district could offer insight on a direction to aim services to include more families in the educational process.

From the perspective of administrators results from this study could encourage the mapping of how staff positions are interconnected for standard procedures for collaboration. This could be expanded to the district to prevent duplication of services. This could possibly preventatively smooth the process for positive service and increase the chances of least intrusive resource intervention.

**Implications for Teachers**

Themes through teacher data exhibited a limited view of EPICs based on how their building level administrator had indoctrinated them into the educational setting. The results of this study could lead them to a better understanding of the wide spread potential of the parent center and EPICs. It could also give them insight on how to wield services for the best interest of their students and class success.

Communication was one of the main themes of teacher to EPIC collaboration. Consolidated school documents were often the result because of time restraints, a singular
EPIC and many teachers. Through translating information EPICs often combined information for a more consistent message to families. The methods in this study could be used to gather data to help schools send a message helping parents understand the role of the educational environment and their role as their child’s most important teacher.

Behavioral and academic intervention was a subtheme that was mentioned by some teachers. This was a direct connection between the EPIC and Spanish speaking children throughout the schools. When under stress they were more likely to converse with the EPIC and feel comfortable. This provided vital information to teachers to help the child in the classroom. This study’s results highlighted communication as one of the keys to engagement of stakeholders. This EPIC service helped teachers and could be extended to help non-second language educators to collaborate with liaisons for proactively planned consistent conversations with students as a method of gaging success.

**Implications for Parents**

Parents in this study felt a connection to the EPIC at their child’s school; however, they were not as dedicated to the districts success. Evidence from this study pointed toward parents not realizing the potential or magnitude of EPIC services. Many times they had met through the need for help and direction from friends. Results for this study implied families need to be trained by EPICs about services to help form a personal connection and to educate families about services and the role of education. A subtheme related to social justice is that public education is a tradition in the United States. Many families migrating to the area are not required to attend school in their home country. This basic assumption created power vacuum and automatic feelings of inferiority based on the dissonance brought
on by the acculturation. Families needed the EPIC to explain the norms of transition. Stakeholders seemed to feel this was a vital part of the school environment.

A theme implied throughout the data was the lack of services to all families due to the assumption that EPICs were only for Hispanic second language stakeholders. Throughout the literature the positive effects of parent involvement and the recognition of culture was prolific. To stakeholders this seemed to mean engagement of minorities only. There was no mention of the value of the current dominant traditional culture and the importance of its preservation.

Viewpoints varied from stakeholder point of view and all participants had engrained assumptions about the purpose for the educational environment in the same way they had developed about the parent coordinator program. This was most apparent through the parent focus group. Through parent organization in schools, conversations could be instigated to discuss assumptions from all possible points of view to guide stakeholder communications with school leadership. The EPIC could facilitate relational negotiations and education about assumed roles and expectations as a neutral based liaison.

**Limitations**

Limitations to the study include the interpretation of results through researcher bias because emotional attachments may form toward issues and individuals in the study (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 2003). Political correctness may slant answers from district employees to avoid culturally insensitive opinions. Charter schools may experience enhanced freedom to explore alternative methods not transferable to other school systems. Elementary parent involvement coordinators (EPIC) participants may have biased inclinations about intentional
discriminatory treatment based on the neutral position they share with minority communities. The researcher’s role in supporting EPIC services may also play a role because of accumulated knowledge about parent engagement activities. An overall limitation could include confidentiality of the research site because detailed information has been given to describe the environment of the study. Readers could identify the location based on demographic information or described geographic attributes.

At the time of data analysis EPICs received the news that their job duties would be changing to half time parent coordinator and half time academic support. Full implementation of this change will not be experienced until the 2015-2016 school year. This transition could have adverse effects on the family and community engagement aspects of the district’s learning supports framework and philosophy. The results of this study could be perceived as incomplete because there is no possible way to list every activity implemented by EPICs to serve clients. The combination of vignettes, interview, focus group and document data could be viewed as a global avenue for viewing activities that theoretically should be guided by data. In this case study the intent is to capture the essence of the role of the EPIC from different perspectives in schools. Though the data lead the study in many directions, the randomness of the activities described could also be viewed as unrealistic if a reader tends to cling to professional boundaries as a source of organization, security and the illusion of control.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

Ideologies leading recommendations for future research include topics sighted in prior studies and recognition of essential aspects throughout data analysis and collection. The first concerns social justice and the assumed power structure of educational systems
Further study could address how the one up position in school to home educational relationships effects student growth. Other inquiries could be aimed at how professional boundaries, in school to home relationships, truly affect the performance of students and what assumptions do individuals of each culture make that fuel social injustice and inequality in education and the community (Pines, 1983; Valentina, Maja, and Kogovšek, 2009)? What behaviors create the assumption of social injustice in diverse cultures? Do English acquisition requirements in Georgia public schools create automatic assumptions of social injustice (Morales, 2006)? Do majority cultures automatically assume ignorance in perceived minorities and vice versa? The second topic addresses the connection between school personnel and families. Research questions could look at the behaviors that create relational connections between individuals and how can they be extended to engage and build social capital with families and the community. What behaviors are universal and build capital across all cultures (Barrientos, 2012; Crites, 2009)? Why do these families feel a strong connection to the EPIC but not the school as a whole? Continued research is needed addressing parent coordinators and their bond with families of their same culture. Often overlooked is the development of the parent coordinator identity and how personal growth effects adaptability to become an effective social agent in a schools.

The third topic recurring in the study indicated racial boundaries and effects on school to family connections. Future studies could be aimed to gain insight into what makes individuals socially connect with others based on the assumptions seemingly instigated by skin color? Is regionally based traditional majority culture wrong to try and preserve their culture? Are minority cultures wrong to try and change the majority culture to fit their needs and to preserve their traditional culture? Which culture should sacrifice their culture for the
benefit of the common good? Education and training for parent coordinators and administration could be an area for research. Should parent coordinators/liaison positions require an undergraduate degree be licensed to operate as contracted private practitioner in public school? Should services be covered under public health benefits such as Medicaid and do school districts in the United States ignore international research concerning school to parent relationships?

At an overall level inquiry is need to address very basic behavioral appropriateness such as what constitutes respect in a parent to school relationship? Can the power structure ever be equal in school to family relations? Are political power structures necessary for public schools to be successful? What school policies create automatic assumptions of a welcoming environment across cultures? Is parent involvement really worth instigating and managing in public school? Also, due to the population changes in the region where this study was completed, future research is needed to study emerging cultural norms based on the merging of ethnic subcultures populating and entering regions within the southern United States. Further study is critical concerning future generations because much of the research is valuable only for the current political environment legislating public education.

**Summary**

This study offers empirical contributions to a comprehensive view of the role of the EPIC. Views from stakeholders provided connections to the literature concerning the stance of Georgia’s legislature, social justice and parent involvement in schools.

The study of parent coordinators/ liaisons is not prolific. Research resources including Sanders (2008) and Martinez-Cosio, Iannacone, (2007) summarized the state of
many parent coordinator/liaison services in schools. These studies called for a) legislative support and action on the district level of educational systems to provide direction, b) education and intentional consistent maintenance to liaison type programs, c) sufficient funding, d) data based decisions for direct engagement focusing on specific students and families, e) assistance with teacher and school outreach, f) monthly family progress reports included in academic planning, g) ongoing professional development and h) a detailed job description outlining activities included as a valued part of the standard of care. The identification of personnel to fit the liaison position should include careful consideration and support for the position should include training for all stakeholders. Without continuous effort and patience to allow the liaison to build trust with stakeholders and a positive image and reputation, the program and the practitioner will become disheveled and struggle. Sanders (2008) noted that it took a parent liaison about 4 years to develop a client base and a trusted reputation in the community. Commitment over time was the common consistent in the development and sustainability of an effective program. Enhanced detail was offered by Martinez-Cosio, & Iannacone, (2007) with connections to literature concerning social justice, sharing of power, institutional policy and building social capital. This study identified similar needs in the district of study.

The dichotomy of change versus maintaining ritualized practice seemed to be as consistent as interest in engaging and including families in the educational process. It continued with perceptions of parent involvement with differences in practitioner intent. Some participants viewed parent involvement as a management activity and others took an approach to form true partnerships with families. This study seemed to reveal themes for engaging minority families through an accumulated knowledge base. EPICs did not see their
strategy of adapting to individual needs as a traditional practice though it had been an ongoing process from the beginning of the program. They constantly wanted to see district training and change to consider social justice and culture in school policy and procedures. All participants wanted to see the activities of EPICs to be standardized in the district. However, the district allowed them to continue with current practices to maintain their ability to cross professional boundaries and adapt to individual needs. This seemed to come from the knowledge that a regimented job description could limit program effectiveness.

Similar studies mimicking this method could be used in regions with different demographics to guide local resources and training. Participants seemed to use context as a reference for deciding practitioner position. This was reflected in some interpretation of school policy and in the methods implemented to engage parents. All participants agreed that as the district grows in diversity, adaptation of services will be required to maintain a quality system of care.
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## APPENDIX

### Appendix A: Case Site Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Site</th>
<th>Elementary 1</th>
<th>Elementary 2</th>
<th>Elementary 3</th>
<th>Elementary 4</th>
<th>Elementary 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charter</td>
<td>Bernstein’s Model of Arts Education</td>
<td>Dr. Howard Gardner’s theory of Multiple Intelligences</td>
<td>NASA Explorer School</td>
<td>E. D. Hirsch Core Knowledge Curriculum</td>
<td>International Baccalaureate Program for Primary Years (IB-PYP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographics</td>
<td>38% Hispanic, 13% African American, 40% Caucasian, 5% Asian, and 4% other</td>
<td>40% Hispanic, 34% African American, 20% Caucasian, 3% dual race, and 3% other</td>
<td>74% Hispanic, 13% African American, 6% Caucasian, 7% Asian and 3% other</td>
<td>68% Hispanic, 28% African American, 8% Caucasian and 1% dual race</td>
<td>69% Hispanic, 24% African American, 4% Caucasian, 2% dual race, and 1% other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy to integrate into Georgia Standards</td>
<td>Infused with art education</td>
<td>Presented through multiple intelligence model</td>
<td>Infused with science technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM)</td>
<td>Infused with Core Knowledge Curriculum focusing on cultural literacy</td>
<td>Focus on internationalism and World Language Experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal Demographics</td>
<td>African American Female</td>
<td>Caucasian Male</td>
<td>Caucasian Female</td>
<td>Caucasian Female</td>
<td>African American Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title I Elementary PIC Demographics</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Bi-Literate</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Bi-Literate</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Bi-Literate</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Bi-Literate</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Bi-Literate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Interview Sheet for Parent Involvement Coordinators

Interview Sheet 1

Interview Sheet
(Template adapted from Creswell, 2007)

Time of Interview:
Date: Place:
Interviewer: Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Description of Project:

Questions: (EPIC only)

1. Please describe your role in parent involvement initiatives in your school.
   
   How do you like your job?
   
   What influenced you to become an EPIC?
   
   What do you see as the most important part of your job?
   
   Please describe your professional background

2. Please describe your personal experience as an elementary parent involvement coordinator at your school.

   How would you describe your relationship with the families at your school?
   
   How would you describe your relationship with the teachers, administrators and staff?
   
   How would you describe your relationship with the students?
   
   How would you describe your relationship with the other EPICs?

3. Please describe the training or education you received before and after you became an Elementary PIC.

   What educational experience did you have that you feel prepared you for your position as a EPIC?

   What credentials do you hold?
4. Please describe ways you build social capital with parents.
   What do you do to form relationships with parents and families?
   What are the steps you go through with each family?
   Do you think they appreciate your efforts?
   Do you think others understand what you do for a living?

5. Please describe your experiences with neutral advocacy for families in your school.
   How do you advocate for families in your school?
   How would you describe your methods
   How do you choose what to do?

6. Please describe your future vision for the EPIC program in your school.
   What would you like to see happen in the future at your district when it comes to
   parent involvement coordinators?
   What would you like to see for your school?
   What about your particular program?
Appendix C: Interview Sheet for Principals

Interview Sheet 2

Interview Sheet
(Template adapted from Creswell, 2007)

Time of Interview:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee:
Position of Interviewee:

Description of Project:

Questions: (Principal only)

1. Please describe the role of the EPIC in your school.
   Please describe your professional background
   What made you want to be an administrator?
   What do you see as the most important part of the parent involvement coordinator program at your school?

2. Please describe your personal experiences with the EPIC in your school.
   How do you see your EPIC working with families?
   How do you collaborate with your EPIC?

3. Please describe the training offered to EPICs to help them to advocate for families.
   What training have you or your district offered to help EPICs be successful at their job?
   What types of preparation or professional development would you like to see?

4. Please describe ways in which your EPIC builds social capital with families at your school.
   How do you see your EPIC, specific behaviors, forming relationships with families?
   How does culture play a role in what your EPIC?
5. Please describe your experiences with EPICs and neutral advocacy.

Does your EPIC advocate for families, students and parents?

How do you see this role? As beneficial, detrimental or both? Please explain.

What effects do you see on families?

Does the PIC have a role in academic achievement?

6. Describe your vision for future EPIC program and personnel development.

Where do you see the parent involvement coordinator program going in the future for:

Your school and the district?
## Focus Group Interview Sheet 1

**Focus Group Guide - Parents**  
*(Template adapted from Creswell, 2007)*

**Time of Focus Group:**  
**Date:**  
**Place:**  
**Interviewer:**  
**Interviewee Group:**  
**Position of Interviewee:**

**Description of Project:**

**Questions: (Parents only)**

1. Do you know the EPIC in your child’s school?
2. How often do you use his/her services?
3. What brought you to the EPIC at your child’s school?
4. What would you say is the most common reason for you to use parent involvement services?
5. What is most helpful when you access his/her services?
6. What services would you like to see from the EPIC that would help you improve your participation in your child’s educational experience?
7. How can I learn more about how families feel about EPIC services?
Appendix E: Focus Group Guide Sheet for Teachers

Focus Group Interview Sheet 2

Focus Group Guide - Teachers
(Template adapted from Creswell, 2007)

Time of Focus Group:
Date:
Place:
Interviewer:
Interviewee Group:
Position of Interviewee:

Description of Project:

Questions: (Teachers only)

1. Please describe the role of the EPIC in your school.

2. Please describe your personal experiences with the EPIC in your school.

3. Please describe any training you have experienced to help you understand the role of the EPIC.

4. Please describe ways in which your EPIC develops relationships with families at your school.

5. Please describe your experiences with your EPIC and advocacy for students and families.

6. Describe your vision for future EPIC program and personnel development.

7. Where do you see the PIC program going in the future for your school and the district?

8. How can the EPIC at your school help and collaborate with you to help you as a teacher and your students?
### Appendix F

**EPIC – Elementary Parent Involvement Coordinator Interview Data Coding**

#### Level I EPIC I Coding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>I have been a parent coordinator in the district since September 2014.</strong></td>
<td>I’ve been here about six months. I am the newest and I’m the only male parent coordinator in the district. My role technically is just to be a liaison between the parents and the school. But outside of that service an interpreter to translate documents I’m calling parent when there’s a child is sick when there’s a behavior issue I tutor children in many times I will take a child of the classroom if they are behavior problem. A job seems to be all encompassing but technically I’m supposed to be the liaison between the school and the parents. I have a lot of other duties as assigned. I do enjoy my job it is very enjoyable the need to have so many things to do is very enjoyable and ideal with the children. I have had no problems with teachers to see how hard they work. No day is the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I heard of the position and I applied for. I really had no idea as to what was involved with this at all. I read the job description but going into I really had no idea about what the job was all about. So there was no yearning inside me for this particular job though I wanted to be in a school because always like the environment. My sister works in the migrant program in Gainesville city schools and this opportunity came over and I decided to try it. I was thinking of taking a paraprofessional position within this job opened and it seemed like the right thing to do. I gave it a try and I’m glad I did.</strong></td>
<td>People don’t know what EPIC's do; school environment important;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My main professional background is based in office and clerical work if I want to generalize it. I worked in an office customer service an airport for Delta Airlines for some years. In many business administration positions. However, on a non-secular level of involvement church and missionary work along those lines. So teaching and being in the school is not really part of my background.</strong></td>
<td>Clerical skills; religion and moral guidance; teaching is part of job;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At times I’ll be stressed out because there’s so much to do. There’s just an overload work and I’m overwhelmed but at the end of the day I feel pretty good because I know that I’ve done everything I can to help. I’ve made a child smile, a parent seems happy, maybe a parent who calls kind of angered and was upset about something and I’m able to calm him down help them out or give them a follow-up call because they really appreciate that. This makes me feel really good to simply help people and I think at the end of the day that’s kind of what I do just help other people. Whether it’s translating interpreting help and the nurse out anything I enjoy that.</strong></td>
<td>Overwhelming; no real direction; moral; genuine care for families; translate and interpret;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I think at first because they were used to the old parent involvement coordinator and because I’m male there was kind of an adjustment. Everybody was just asking for the old coordinator. But now I feel like I feel comfortable because they call me with everything. They’re not</strong></td>
<td>Accumulated knowledge; moral obligation to families;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

- Comment [PE1]: EPIC liaison to families from school
- Comment [PE2]: Interpret and translate language connects EPIC to families; job all-encompassing service enjoys work; no day is the same
- Comment [PE3]: Language connects to culture
- Comment [PE4]: Whatever it takes to help
- Comment [PE5]: Unpredictable work situations
- Comment [PE6]: Training needed
- Comment [PE7]: Recognize school environment as important to school success
- Comment [PE8]: Organized program
- Comment [PE9]: Morality guides program
- Comment [PE10]: Educating families
- Comment [PE11]: Time constraints
- Comment [PE12]: No standard of practice
- Comment [PE13]: Moral obligation
- Comment [PE14]: Translate and interpret
- Comment [PE15]: Build program through accumulated knowledge
afraid to call and I hope to transmit that to everyone out there that they can call me when they need help the matter what the issue. I always say it does not matter if something is very little or be if it’s a concern please contact me. I really enjoy that part and I think I have a really good relationship with the family. I hear comments from the kids and from the staff from the families and they say they like you and we’re glad you’re here. I’ve got some feedback from the parent saying that the children really like you.

I think my relationship with the staff teachers and administrators is professional. I feel that there is a lot of mutual respect. And I definitely expect them for all they do. I know teachers worked hard and now I know for sure. When you see them every day in all things they have to deal with it tremendous. It is not a relationship and there are times that you can tell that there are different personalities but I try to work with. I’m not going to expect apples from an orange tree. I take what I can get and I give all I can and I try to treat everyone with respect and be as helpful as I can and I think they know that about me.

I think they do not quite know what I am they asked him a teacher, principal, counselor and sometimes I wonder if they actually know what I’m doing here. Try to get along with everyone they seem to get along with me because they come to me over and over again. Just come to say hello sometimes. I think I have a really good rapport with them.

I think I have a good relationship with the other parent involvement coordinators especially with María Ramirez she has been such a great help to me. She is the one I talked to the most. She is great and totally helpful she knows exactly what’s going on. Have been a few meetings with all of them and I think I have a great relationship with them I think I have a great team to work with. I like them all and they all have their strengths.

The training part is where I have a little bit of an issue because I got no training at all. There was no training at all. I did not know what was going on people expected me to know a lot of information that I did not know. And that really kind of set me up in a way because I felt like I didn’t know any of the answers and that people thought I was going to give them a run around instead of trying to help. They spanned a lot of details about what was expected but nobody teaches you how about going about it. The parent involvement coordinator meetings that we did have for the state did help a little because it kind of showed me what was normal among my peers but it never gave any specifics about what I was supposed to do. They give you a lot of instructions but we need a lot more practical information to help us to do our jobs. How can we use this in a real-world setting? There’s no way to know everything.

The work I did overseas, I lived in Honduras and Mexico, and that helped me to understand the culture a lot. I grew up in the United States pretty much did things the way is done here but when you go to other

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professionalism; mutual respect;</th>
<th>Comment [PE16]: No one up position, mutual, equal respect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EPIC role unknown;</td>
<td>Comment [PE17]: Connecting to other EPICs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to other EPICs for training;</td>
<td>Need training: no real way to train for every situation; resourcefulness; accumulated knowledge; Comment [PE18]: EPIC-resourcefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand culture; Important to families to have connection</td>
<td>Comment [PE19]: Connect family culture with school culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
countries you see they do a totally differently and it worked for them, then you understand when you’re talking to a parent and why the way they feel they do and what they’re thinking. Why do the children act this way is because of their upbringing and is because of the culture. So travel overseas really did broaden my horizons. An example would be I have a family from Guatemala and they speak Spanish but their maternal language is chunk from Guatemala. So when the teachers explain something to them and I’m interpreting in Spanish you get the deer in headlights look. It’s because they really don’t understand Spanish 100%. So I tried to do is learn short phrases in their native language try to at least break off a little bit and make them feel good like I was trying. And I think being in those countries really opened my eyes to see that I should not be just black and white Spanish and English but there’s much more out there. Because just in the Latino culture there’s so many different accents and sayings and nuances to the language. Also the work that I did with the church and mission work, I had some college and it’s all help me to bridge the gap in trying my best here.

I have some college though I never finish. I do have a diploma in my missionary work I’m actually working out toward getting a degree. I was looking into a business degree but now I’m like in the education field. Right now I’m taking basic classes here at North Georgia.

I think the first step sounds pretty basic is just given a smile to the parents and have a good sense of humor. When parent comes and especially not knowing the language here little timid and afraid to even come in the building where everyone speaks English, a smile have a sense of humor and try to joke with them a little in that kind of melt the ice a little. Also try to be open with them I don’t know an answer I will tell them I don’t know but I find the and just being honest with them is key. I try not to give them some sort of runaround answer because the note in the middle of my life. Even with the English-speaking parents and try to do the exact same thing. I think with the Hispanic people you see it more as for being uncomfortable because there is out of their environment. Travis really on the phone and understanding even if I disagree with telling me to sometimes they tell me all kinds of things that I might not agree with. I tried to put myself in their shoes. I tried to understand this is how they are seeing it even though the evidence shows otherwise. So basically listening and smiling and tried to help them out the best I can.

The steps are all basically the same plus respect. I try to treat everyone the same. Someone comes then there have more money than someone else I think they respond much the same as someone who’s a working-class guy. I try to treat everyone as if they were the head honcho.

I really hope that parents appreciate my efforts and I’d like to think they do. I get phone calls of appreciation and there are very appreciative when I can answer the question and when I can calm him.
an answer questions about their child. I think they do. They don’t give me anything in writing but they do give me a big thank you and maybe a little candy or something maybe a card.

I don’t really understand what I do for a living. They think I’m an interpreter for some kind of teacher they call me teacher, Professor, or something else. I think that it would help for the school system to explain to parents what is going on there so they can understand. Sometimes parents come in thinking that I have a authority over them that I don’t have. I think a clear understanding would alleviate some of the stress because the parents come at me and say all these things thinking that I’m an authority figure. They talk about their kids and their education and they understand that I’m just sort out the middleman that would help a lot.

Would be nice if the district would advertise the services that I offer and let the parents know exactly what I do for living. I believe parents probably believe that there are some type of clerk that is a Spanish speaker at the school that can help them sometimes. I don’t believe they know the depth of our job in all things that we offer and that we can do around the school for them in the community.

I am heavily involved in our PTA at our school and there’s a lot of white people in the PTA and I want everyone to know that I’m here to support them in all races not just the Hispanic culture. I want to be a parent coordinator to serve all families are school and in the district. Not just Hispanic people because I speak Spanish.

It’s difficult when the school has a hard fast policy about something and parent need something that is far beyond what the school is willing to offer. If this happens the family is quick not to see you as their advocate. Most of the time it is a blurred line anyway. However, I try to be as empathetic and as nice as possible to relay information to the family. A great example is when a parent needs to leave and take their family for at least 10 days to Mexico that they’ll get withdrawn from school if they do this with a child. I try to advocate and I say hey just leave your child here with someone so they won’t get withdrawn from school. I did talk to the principal and see if I can advocate to help them to come back to the same school after they leave the country for 10 days to go Mexico. The rule is that we can’t guarantee this but I try to work with them through my administration anyway to see if it can be possible. But I’m also truthful with the family and say there is a possibility that you might not get the same school when you return. It’s a hard thing. I know steadfast policies look good for the school and make everything seem concrete. But each family has its own special needs and I think we do a good job at our school in serving those families to the best of our ability. We try to balance out what needs to go on so that everyone wins and there’s no adversarial relationship. Sometimes we don’t have to make the choice in black and white. I explained the reasons for the rules and help the parents understand

Understand social justice; misunderstood
EPIC role; Role model/ Mentor; connection to school for families

Advertise EPIC role and services; language connects to culture; parents assume understanding based on color of skin;

Family organizations; EPIC not just for Hispanics

Advocate for families; help families understand; provide resources; help staff understand; professional boundaries barrier to success; promote family responsibility
what is going on they can do everything a lot better. But I try to tell
him that at the end of the day it’s your family and you are making
decisions.

Training for day to day
ing gruesome; EPICs in
community; alone and
time limited;
discrepancies in
general EPIC
activities; need balance
of practice

I would love to see training for the future at a more defined vision for
day-to-day activities for the parent involvement coordinators. To
transmit this information to the teachers and administration the
community the parents he is everyone. If the school district would like
to hire interpreters they should hire interpreters and allow parent
coordinators to do their job to support everyone as needed. If we can
focus more on our job that we could do a whole lot better job because
it’s broken up into 100 different undefined things we have a problem
with that were so fragmented. I love doing these hundred different
things but I think you were trained and is on the same page I think it
would be awesome. I think of our job more defined than everyone
would get the same treatment and if the district level administration
would sort of define our job for us even for a principal. Right now
believe that they really tell the principals what we can’t do instead of
telling them all things that we can do in this is kind of muddy the water
little. When we our meetings you can tell there are discrepancies in the
things each of us do. They’re asking this of one of us a whole different
set of things the rest of. It’s not balance.

I would like to see more parents actually being involved and to know
that were they were doing is actually getting to them. But depending on
other people and all their circumstances their beliefs and their desires to
get difficult. But I like to see more of the fruits of my labor when it
comes to parent involvement. I think it’s more than just sending
newsletters and just reminders.

I would like to see more technology integrated into the parent
involvement coordinator program. We’re moving at a fast pace with
technology and if it’s policy to have more and better computers for the
parents with children for everyone, or iPads and more room for a
progressive approach to train parents. We have a library with a few
computers for parents. I had a little room for the parents but they
needed it for special education so they gave it to them. I didn’t know
about peters I have in the library until this week and I’ve been here six
months. If anything just more tools to help parents.

Encourages parent
involvement; assertive
parent involvement;

Technology
integration: more tools
and more resources for
families; researching
resources to help
families

Comment [PE37]: Need for training
Comment [PE38]: Hire interpreters for improved EPIC services
Comment [PE39]: EPICs need to engage community
Comment [PE40]: Overwhelming job
Comment [PE41]: No standard for practice
Comment [PE42]: Need balance of activities

Comment [PE43]: Encourage parents to get involved
Comment [PE44]: Need more technology integration
Comment [PE45]: Refine resources
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 1 EPIC 2 Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love my job. I love my parents and I love the kids. Someone lived the...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with families; family success; student success; school success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important part of my job is to inform parents and give them to understand how important it is that they participate in becoming involved in their child’s education. I want the parents to know that they need to step up and help her child if you’re going to be successful. If they don’t, there’s a piece of the child’s educational experience that is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate families; parent involvement important; parents are often missing piece in students education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My relationship with the family the school is very good. We have a very diverse community and is very rewarding when all parents come back and tell me how much I help them and how much they care. They care a lot about our school and our successes school and that means a lot. They also mention a lot of the things that they have learned from me as a parent involvement coordinator. Many times it will come from the parent workshops I offer or counselor meeting that I’m sitting in trying to help translate the community resource referral. Also the newsletter really changes the way they look at things sometimes. It really gives them ideas about ways they can participate in school and be involved in their child’s education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships important; Diversity healthy for school; All learn together; Educate families; Communication from school to home and vice versa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My relationship with all the other staff is very good because they always asked me to help with all kinds of situations and always take time to help. Many times I will do crisis intervention with the counselor or teacher, administrator or family. And since I support them I believe that’s why they support me so much. It is really a team effort and a lot of collaboration happens every single day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff works together; Crisis intervention; support other services through relationship with family; collaborate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students love me and I love them. I get thousands of hugs every day. Many kids look for me everyday to for encouragement and help with work and I love that about my job. The kids seem to respond anything I want them to respond to as far as lessons of things I asked them to do with their family. I make it a point to be at lunch every day in it other convenient times so the kids can be a part of my job and I can be a part of their life. Hopefully I’ll be a great part of their life to be a positive influence on them. I take great pride in mentoring kids all the time. Many times the kids help me and I help them and it’s good to know that some of the things that I have said it really help students. I really work on behavior a lot of kids and when you see it working is very rewarding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward is student success; teach students social responsibility; mentor; role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the beginning none of us really work together to everyone did their own thing. Then we started all work together and talking amongst...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC connecting to school; EPIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE1]: Connection with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE2]: If family succeeds, student and school succeeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE3]: Educate families not to be missing piece of students education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE4]: Relationship with family important to success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE5]: Diversity is good for seeing different perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE6]: Equal collaboration with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE7]: Translated communication from school to home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE8]: EPIC collaborates with support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE9]: Rewards are appreciated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE10]: EPIC teaches others how to behave for success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE11]: EPIC first has to connect with school</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ourselves to help each other. After a while we started having support for our central office through the 360 program. This brought us a little closer together and trained us in a way that helped us. State offered the 360 degree parent engagement program as a way for all the parent involvement coordinators in our region to get together and talk about things. Also information from the parent involvement coordinator network of Georgia kind of helped us get in line what everyone was doing. We really got trained on many of the title I aspects of our job in our district office helped us a little by allowing us to meet monthly so that we could discuss these things. The main things that we all got to know each other better and form relationships. Just like with the parents we have to take time to get to know each other if we’re going to work together. This seems to be overlooked sometimes. It is always a lot better when all of us can work together. When we presented for the state conference at Francis Meadows aquatic Center it was very rewarding because we get together. The time we spent planning was well worth it in the end of the presentation was a big success. The one thing we’re missing is one big goal. I think we’re kind of wandering around a little bit wondering what that is. All of us know were supposed to engage parents and families and students but what is the main goal in our district? This is kind of one of those ongoing processes that you can get involved in the just keep going without an end. We all need to work together for goal.

I was the director of a public relations office in an embassy before I began parent involvement coordinator and they use to train all kinds of people for all kinds of different things. This really helped me when I became a parent coordinator because it really showed me how to advocate for my program, advertise to the community and families. This is been a big asset for me because I have ongoing groups. I am a people person that my main skill. Have many groups for parents and families in the school.

I think the best skill that I learned that prepared me to be a parent involvement coordinator is the ability to simply listen. I think it is very important to allow the person to tell you how they feel without interrupting and without telling your opinion. Even if they are wrong and what they’re saying you have to sit and listen and let them release their problem by talking about it. Then I believe parents are willing to listen to you. Whenever I go on a home visit I always use the strategy for this seems to work with all families.

I’m certified as a parent involvement coordinator from the Georgia professional standards commission.

To me, what I do as a parent coordinator is, if I don’t know the parents, is I try to meet them in a familiar place in the school if there visiting such as lunchroom. If I see them in the office or in the hall I will always greet them, introduce myself and then tell them about my services. What people often forget is that greetings and introduction should be friendly, I always get my name and my number and welcome them to the parents

communication strengthens all programs: Title I management.
District meetings and training:
Educating community on EPIC program:
Need district direction on program goal:

Educating public, families about EPIC services, Work with parent groups:

Meet families where they are; Listen respectfully; no one up position; equal power/social justice

Credentialing

To easy accessibility and availability; communication from school to home

Comment [PE12]: EPIC services supports other district programs
Comment [PE13]: Need continued training
Comment [PE14]: Promote EPIC program
Comment [PE15]: District directed goals
Comment [PE16]: Involved with Parent Groups and education
Comment [PE17]: Understands social justice and equal collaboration
Comment [PE18]: Standard credentialing
Comment [PE19]: Easy access and availability
Comment [PE20]: Translate and interpret
and I invite them to come anytime. If it is a family already know I just give them a friendly reminder. I always remind them they can come anytime they need me to do not need to make an appointment and I will help them in any way that I can.

Many times parents come in and tell me about the need. But the parent really does not know what they need so it is my job to direct them in the right way to get what they need from whatever service they need. One thing that I always do is ask my parents to pass on good information to all the families they know. Hopefully this will help them to build relationships with each other and to help each other.

I do not think people completely understand what a parent coordinator does. I think if we’re going to take parent coordinators seriously we need more support from the district office in ways such as having more contact with parents in the community and in homes, more opportunities to engage parents at school and in the community, and to be recognized as the professionals that we are because many times parents would not have a relationship with the school at all if the parent coordinator had not made the effort. Many times academics override everything that we tend to forget the family and parent component that can make learning so much more fun make kids more successful.

I love to go to any training they sent me to. I’m usually fine but what most people need is to use people skills and to be trained in how to deal with different cultures when it comes to people skills. Many times you’ll hear teachers saying kids do not have the correct people skills but have we really train the kids and we set the expectation for the kids in schools. The same is true for parent involvement coordinators or any professional. They need to be trained. Listening training and training on how to be patient with people would not hurt. I would like to see training that would help to support us to form better relationships. I would like to see specific skills instead of just broad ideas thrown at us.

Many times I have found myself in a situation where I believed that people thought I was here only for the Hispanic families. What I did to solve this problem is to promote myself at the parent involvement coordinator for all families through the PTA-I’m on the board. Governance Council, and it all extracurricular events at my school. I also talked to the administrators and let them know that I’m here for all families and they directed the front office to send all families through my office or at least offer my services. This happens when the family is first enrolling, at any point during the educational process, and if there withdrawn and going to another school. This really helped me to help people understand my job though I do not think they fully understand even now. I also use PTA to promote my parent center and all my services so that people know. The PTA really helped me promote things by putting my services in their newsletters and communications. I also put my information and all the newsletters that go home so that people know where I am, what I do and who I am in the school. Now I have all

- Resources for families
- Misconceptions about EPIC program by community; include parents in process even though more difficult
- Training is needed on people skills; training forming relationships with diverse cultures
- Not Hispanic only; EPIC work with parent organizations; Fund raising; Communication translated; Networking to community for fund raisers; Marketing school as a fun and exciting place
- For all families
- Collaborate for parent/community organizations
- Fund raising
- Promote positive school culture
races of people coming to me and sometimes I have to call in an interpreter or translator. But they know I'm here for them. Networking has been a big part of my program because if I don't promote myself I will people ever know? With the networking always help organize events with the PTA and others. I help them and they help me. It's all about building that relationship. My specialty is marketing and people skills and it has paid off for my program.
**Level 1 EPIC3 Coding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My role as an EPIC is to build a bridge and to build relationships with the families that come to our school. A lot of times they come from other counties and do not know about education in the US. I feel like I am here to help them understand what we're trying to do here at our school. I'm Hispanic and bilingual so I can speak their language most of the time unless they speak some kind of dialect. This makes them feel better to see somebody like them entering the school and then keep it being here at the school to help them with what they need.</th>
<th>Connection to school and families; Acculturation; hidden rules; Language connects relationships; Accessible and available; Explain school processes; communicate with families from school; culture matters for school, student, family success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I love my job because every day is different. I like the families I meet and it helps me to work harder to help them. When I see families that have students who are trying their best to make good grades and decisions about their child's life I am encouraged.</td>
<td>Moral obligation to help; commitment to families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most important thing about my job is being visible to the parents. I try to be everywhere they are in our school. I stay after school to play with the kids and to help with homework. I am at all the afterschool events. I am the first one to greet visiting parents. Being the first contact helps me get to the word out that I'm here and willing to help.</td>
<td>Accessible and available; easy entry point for parents,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My personal experiences have been really great for the most part. Even when parents come in and they're mad I still try to help as much as possible. I also try to let them know why things are the way they are in our school. The rules and policies are there for a reason and I let the parents know. After I explain they seem to get it.</td>
<td>Navigate through the educational process; Explain school policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get along really well with the teachers and administrators here. We're always talking about everything every day. This keeps us all on the same page and we can really work together to help our families. We seem to respect each other and work well together.</td>
<td>Continuous conversation with staff; Collaboration with families and staff; equal power base, no one up position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I love our students and they know it. They know I'll bend over backwards to help them in any way I can. They respond to me when I ask questions and we have great talks about all kinds of things. It is great to get hugs from the kids all the time. When they know you care they will show you by giving you a smile or hug when they see you. I think they know I care. They ask me to help them with all kinds of things and they know I'll be there.</td>
<td>Moral obligation to help; All learn together as school culture; Resourceful to help students and families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All the PICs usually work together pretty well. I know you’re study is about only elementary level but we have PICs at high and middle school. We all claim to be different but I think we just all pretty much form good relationships with families and then depend on our principal to set the expectation of what we do at our particular school. We used to get together about every month at the district office and generally plan but we kind of stopped doing that at the first of this year. Our jobs have changed to part time instruction and part time PIC. This has pushed our time to the point where we have to be great planners. I’m staying after school to meet the needs of my families.

As far as formal training we really had none. I was mentored by EPIC4 and she kind of told me what she thought I should do. It is all based on getting to know parents and forming that relationship. I’d like to have more training. We go to the Georgia PIC conference twice per year for our region. They have a lot of information but not really actual specific training. We need training that teaches us specific things to kind of lead our activities at school. We really have never had that kind of thing.

Working with the public has kind of got me ready for this job. Basically you have to be nice to people. If you’re not nice long enough…people will not like you and they will not want to be around you. I’m glad they seem to like me…

Steps that I take to build relationships are first…being seen…they have to know you’re there. I also put little reminders about my services in newsletters sent home. When the parents come in I help out at the front desk to greet them. My office is near the front so I’m easy to find. When parents come in they are directed to me before admin or the counselor. We all work together to solve their issues. I try to listen to their story and let them know how to solve their problem.

| Collaboration with EPICs: connections from school to families; morally driven services; lead through collaboration; Academic support from EPIC | Need for training: Mentoring EPICs to train; Accumulated knowledge builds program; District direction needed; continues training needed; PIC network gives ideas from state level |
| Comment [PE16]: Work together to develop program | Comment [PE17]: Constant collaboration |
| Comment [PE18]: Academic support by EPICs | Comment [PE19]: Need for training |
| Comment [PE20]: Accumulation of knowledge strengthens program | Comment [PE21]: District direction for program |
| Comment [PE22]: PIC network | Comment [PE23]: Promote positive school environment |
| Comment [PE24]: Promote EPIC services | Comment [PE25]: EPIC parent center for networking and centralized objection point for families |
Instead of collaboration I don’t think there’s initiative in my school. They want parents involved in our school but at same time they don’t so I really don’t understand the question.

I love my job I love what I do. I am Mexican American but in Mexico I did a major in social work and I think it is very similar to what I love, my passion which is social work. I really didn’t know this is going to be my profession. The profession chose me because what happened is that my life is kind of guided me toward this.

The most important thing about my job is that I can do a lot for my community and the parents are school. Especially the kids, I feel that they have kind of a connection with me. They may see me as a grandmother or something but I think they’re very open to tell me what is going on in their lives. I have been a parent coordinator for about 18 years.

I was the first parent involvement coordinator bilingual in our school system. My dad immigrated us to California when I was around six years old and that’s I learned a little bit of English. We went back and forth between California and Mexico and I got married in Mexico. I did study a career in Mexico. In the United States it is hard for someone from Mexico to get an education because it’s so expensive. Study to be a social worker and I did a specialty in Down syndrome children. I do what I do because I love it. Here in our school I have the chance to go into home visits to see how the kids really live. I understand where they came from because I feel like I was in the same situation they are because when my dad immigrated us to the United States I do not like it. I didn’t like the water I didn’t like the people and we did not asked to come here. When you’re so little you don’t have a choice. I know a lot of people don’t agree with me because they asked the question to themselves all the time what are we, all the Mexicans, doing here. I tried to go back to my country but things happen and I didn’t feel like I belonged over there anymore because I was a stranger. So it’s very hard to live between two worlds that I felt. Later on my husband immigrated to the United States first and then we followed him here to Georgia. I really started seeing the need to help the people who are immigrating to the United States. I have friends that help me get into the school system and that’s how I started.

| Comment [PE1]: Social Justice/Traditions discriminate/marginalize families |
| Comment [PE2]: Need equal power sharing |
| Comment [PE3]: Accumulated knowledge builds program |
| Comment [PE4]: Moral driven decisions |
| Comment [PE5]: Equal communication with families |
| Comment [PE6]: Overcome barriers to success through collaborating and connecting with families |
| Comment [PE7]: Develop EPIC identity/Social Justice |
| Comment [PE8]: Importance of home-school connection |
| Comment [PE9]: Not limited by professional boundaries |
| Comment [PE10]: Relationships with families reach beyond school |
| Comment [PE11]: Language connects culture |
| Comment [PE12]: EPIC program not for Hispanic only |
| Comment [PE13]: Understanding culture helps to engage community |
| Comment [PE14]: EPIC helps navigate and educate families |
| Comment [PE15]: EPIC accumulate knowledge to build program |

Langage connections: Social justice; Hispanic only program; barriers to learning: connection to the community; Acculturation issues.

| Comment [PE1]: Social Justice/Traditions discriminate/marginalize families |
| Comment [PE2]: Need equal power sharing |
| Comment [PE3]: Accumulated knowledge builds program |
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| Comment [PE14]: EPIC helps navigate and educate families |
| Comment [PE15]: EPIC accumulate knowledge to build program |

Accumulated knowledge; language connects culture;
| **Color of skin:** Morality based decisions; Language and race build clientele. |
| Connection with school: Connection with family; Connecting schools to family; EPIC Liaison; Connection to Epic not school. |
| **Comment [PE16]:** Stakeholders want to be served by same race or color of skin. |
| **Comment [PE17]:** EPIC race and language connections build Hispanic only service. |
| **Comment [PE18]:** EPIC builds connection with school. |
| **Comment [PE19]:** EPIC builds connection with family. |
| **Comment [PE20]:** EPIC serves family and school. |
| **Comment [PE21]:** EPIC connects school to family. |
| **Comment [PE22]:** Families are connected to EPIC not school. |
| **Comment [PE23]:** Need to understand culture to be effective at intervention. |
| **Comment [PE24]:** Need training on engaging diverse cultures. |
| **Comment [PE25]:** Use cultures to improve school w/ parent involvement. |
| **Comment [PE26]:** EPIC mentor/trainer / role model for students, parents and other EPICs. |
| **Comment [PE27]:** Program builds overtime. |
| **Comment [PE28]:** Many times only connection between family and school. |
| **Comment [PE29]:** Inform families of hidden rules of dominant culture and advise. |
| **Comment [PE30]:** Language directs families to EPIC. |
| **Comment [PE31]:** Language directs families to EPIC. |
| **Comment [PE32]:** Language directs families to EPIC. |
| **Comment [PE33]:** Equal power base: No one up position; Equal engagement; Interpreters; Collaborate with support services; Not bound by professional boundaries: Title 1. |
| **Comment [PE34]:** Equal power base: No one up position; Equal engagement; Interpreters; Collaborate with support services; Not bound by professional boundaries: Title 1. |
| **Comment [PE35]:** Communication to/from home/school. |
| **Comment [PE36]:** We all learn together. |
| **Comment [PE37]:** Not limited to professional boundaries. |
| **Comment [PE38]:** Manage Title 1. |

coming into the building. I was the first and only bilingual person there so when they did see that I was there a lot of people started coming in who spoke Spanish. So the district started hiring more Hispanic and bilingual people. I believe that you not only need to be bilingual to be a parent coordinator but you’re here for all families. We are here for the entire school and all the families not just for the Hispanic community sometimes it does not work out that way but that is what it is supposed to be. It helps to be bilingual.

My relationship with the family that our school is very strong. I don’t live in the district I live a little far out. Many people know me and I know most of the people from church or shopping. Walmart and things like that. Invite me to the parties in their homes, their events they want me to be part of all that.

A relationship with everyone at school is very good. They know they need me.

Have a fabulous relationship with the students regardless of their nationality or race.

The other parent coordinators in the district really respect me. I have been here longer than any of them and they always call me a sort of a mentor to them to help out in situations that they don’t know what to do.

Most of the time people come to me because they need me for some reason. A lot of people come to me because they know that I know the families and they want to know what’s going on in the family before they proceed with any types of parents, medication, student intervention or other things. They’re always in need for information.

All the parent coordinators exchange ideas. I’m pretty much the one who translates for the entire district. I don’t know why the district categorizes us as translators. We are much more than that and were not supposed to be pigeonholed as translators. I tried to help all parent coordinators with translating and interpreting because there are so many aspects to the Hispanic culture and the Spanish language. We should be wasting time translating things that have already been translated. So we all try to work together to combine the documents so we don’t have to do it over and over again. I don’t mind doing it but not on a regular basis.

We were never formally trained for this job. Each year we have a parent involvement coordinator meeting is kind of a training. We
have two or three during the year sponsored by the state. But they are not focused on specific skills that we can use every day only big ideas. It is still up to the principal and the title I coordinator to tell us what we need to do. What we can do and what we can’t do.

Instead of them training as many times they ask us about what we do and I think that’s how they get our job description. I think that’s how the state decides what we do and how we do it. They don’t really know what we do. Since they don’t know what we do from day to day many times I think they are doing nothing. This is not true they need to follow me in my footsteps for a few days to really find out how important what we do is to the families the kids in the community. Each school in our district is very different. We all get together we try to share what we do to help each other.

I’m not certified as a social worker here in the United States I would have to go back through a lot of college to do that. At this point in my career I do not feel it’s necessary. Just because a degree is from another country does not really give anyone the right to say what I am or what I’m not. To me that is just ignorance. However, I love my job because I get to do the things that I see are helping parents and children. Also see it helping our school. In Georgia there is no certification process for parent involvement coordinator. They considered paraprofessionals. Sometimes I find contradictions in what the state thinks we are and what the district believes. The district viewed this as a paraprofessional and the state views us as something way beyond that. The district believed we are very limited in the state believes we’re unlimited.

Right now our job has changed quite a bit they want us to be part-time paraprofessionals and part-time parent coordinators. I enjoy the teaching kids and spending time with them. However, it is taking away time that I could be connecting with the community for families and getting them involved in their child’s education through educating them about the expectations of school. That is taking away a vital element in the educational experience of child and family. If I want to be a teacher I would’ve been a teacher. We’re not trained to do that because were more like social workers.

We sit down the family listen and try to understand and try to help them with whatever needs they have. First we get in contact with them, set up an appointment right after that, maybe a teacher will contact me or I’ll contact the teacher and ask them about the child good and bad. Teacher doesn’t have time for we can have it because of scheduling I’ll have the parent meeting myself. I don’t want them to feel that they don’t have to be saying so as to come and I’ll sit with him and talk about strategies for giving tips and information that would help them. I run a parent Center with all kinds of resources for parents. That’s where I have my meetings. After a parent meeting I build personal relationships with families. Connection to families; Connection to school; easy entry level for parent involvement; Training for families; Morality guides decisions; Explain school to
remain with the parent throughout the process of whatever they need so they don’t feel like they’ve been abandoned by the school. This takes up loads of time. I do not feel that our district values this process because they don’t understand it. There are not social workers. Even after care is part of what I do for parents after the process is over and have developed a relationship I continue relationship with making an effort to call the parent to make sure everything is going smoothly and often continue support after care. We’re here for all families and we want to help. We rarely see non-Hispanic families of other cultures or affluent locals. Sometimes I believe people only want to see someone who is the same color that they are. We need to take measures to build trust between the races in our community. By channeling all new families through the EPIC we set a precedence that our school community is united by our goals, which is to educate our students so we’ll all succeed. Without all of this we are not navigating our children to the educational system effectively. We are not navigating our families in the correct way because were not supporting them in the way they need to be supported. Academics are important and I do not deny that. However the caring and compassion that we show for all the people around us far outweighs any academic success that anyone could claim.

| Comment [PE62]: Navigate families through school system |
| Comment [PE63]: Navigate families through district direction |
| Comment [PE64]: EPIC for all families |
| Comment [PE65]: Training for engage diverse families |
| Comment [PE66]: Families want same race service |
| Comment [PE67]: District direction needed |
| Comment [PE68]: Connection for networking and resources |
| Comment [PE69]: Connection between family and school success |
| Comment [PE70]: Promote positive culture at school |
| Comment [PE71]: EPIC promotes culture of working and learning together |
| Comment [PE72]: Training on how to help parents help students w/ academics |
| Comment [PE73]: Acculturation guidance and education |
| Comment [PE74]: Advocate for families |
| Comment [PE75]: Explain school policy |
| Comment [PE76]: Culture important to success |
| Comment [PE77]: Access cultures as assets to school |
| Comment [PE78]: Families connected to EPIC |
| Comment [PE79]: EPIC valuable to school success |
| Comment [PE80]: Traditional practice marginalizes families |
| Comment [PE81]: Educate Social Justice |
| Comment [PE82]: Training to engage diverse families |

Often parents feel intimidated to see a lot of professional people sitting around them and I’m the advocate for the parent. The feel more supported if I continue the process during and after the meeting. They feel they have an important person on their side and I tried to make them feel as if they matter and that there an important person to. People who don’t understand the culture do not understand this or how important it is in the success of our children in school now and for the future. It means something to parents for me to be there that’s why stay in this job and that’s why I’m always there.

Parents really appreciate my efforts. They bring me gifts all the time. I don’t think people outside of this building or even inside the building understand exactly what I do. Sometimes I forget to take my tag off and when people read what I am they say a parent coordinator, what is that? It’s like they think I’m from another planet because I’m not a teacher or principal. Sometimes I feel like they think I’m from another planet because I’m Hispanic and most of our kids here at our school are Hispanic also.

| Social justice/ acculturation hidden rules: Available and accessible; Advocacy for families; Explaining school policy; Culture links families and EPIC; Understand culture to help school; Moral obligation to families |
| Appreciation is needed; Personal connection to EPIC not school; Connection to EPIC helps school; Serve majority culture; majority culture is not dominant; Social justice; Hispanic parent involvement; Training to serve marginalized families |
| Neutral advocacy vs. moral obligation; Explain to parents policy; Project |

Sometimes I feel as if I’m betraying the parents by doing things that I do. That’s why I tried to be as clear as I possibly can when I explained the things that happen at school to parents and families.
I feel like I'm really in the middle of the school and the parents. Often I have to explain to the school why parents doing what they're doing because I understand the culture and the school does not. I tried to explain to the parent why were doing it a certain way. I've been called many names over the years because of that. But I think I'm against them but it's really not true because there a lot of school procedures that we cannot break because we have to keep everyone safe.

I try to treat everyone with respect and no matter what the parent comes in here with I still try to be an advocate for that parent to try to get them the best outcome that I possibly can. I tried to balance out what is going on at school and what is going on with the parent so that it does not have to be a school versus parent type of situation. Everyone can win if we work together. I tried to be unemotional about the things that I do and the connections I make during stressful situations because if I get very emotional it could affect the relationship between the parent and school in a negative way. I wanted to know I can help them in it may seem that I'm tough sometimes but after the interaction I think they all know I'm here to help. There has to be a boundary between me and the client or the family this does not mean that I do not care and I believe our families know this. It makes me feel bad when I go to my administrators and they do not understand what is going on. I feel like I'm caught in the middle and I don't like that feeling. I tried to warn him is something that is going on is going to bring bad consequences. Sometimes they take me seriously and sometimes they don't. Something inside me guides my behavior at work. I have to live with what I do.

I would like to be considered the parent involvement coordinator for all families and not just the Hispanic community. I would like for all families to be channeled through my office for resource referral and support. Many times I feel as if different races of people in our building only want to deal with people of the same color. I think this is a big handicap for us as a district and I know we try different things to do with the situation. I don't want to be just a translator. I don't want to feel like I'm always in the middle and I want to be able to be an advocate for all parents and all things in all students even if it goes against school policy. I don't want to be judged for this because it is my job and it's what I'm supposed to do. I've been here for a long time and I've seen many things come and go. Some things don't change like the importance of being fair, caring about other people, reaching out to our community, taking family circumstances into consideration when making decisions about children, and to make efforts to fight things that are keeping us all from growing as a school and as people. I want to see the kids feel, all the kids feel secure and loved. I want to be a parent.
coordinator for all families. I don't want them to see me as a
Hispanic woman but as a parent coordinator advocate for everyone,
with no color with no accent, with no religion or nationality. I want
to be treated equal just like everyone else wants to be treated. I
don't feel that some of the time. I feel like academics and race
sometimes get in the way of having an honest conversation with
people. This hurts her children and the relationship between
everyone. They usually do it out of convenience because they want
something.

I would like the district to support us and give us a place through
training, but describe her job give us some boundaries to work with
and let us do our job on a full-time basis the way supposed to be
done instead of tying her hands with policy that turns out to be a
barrier for learning for the children. I started 18 years ago as a
parent involvement coordinator but I have never felt like one. I
always feel like may be glorified translator because our salaries are
terrible. It's not that it's bad to be a paraprofessional but parent
coordinators have a lot of responsibilities that sometimes were
treated like paraprofessionals and that's not what we do. We have
responsibility that reaches far beyond the classroom. We have a one
in 900 parent coordinator to student ratio. We are not translators or
interpreters.

I would like to say respect for my position at my school. That it
really value what I do in my whole program instead of me being a
translator or interpreter. I would really like to think and feel that my
school believes I'm really an asset to them. I think my job is really
highly misunderstood so they don't value it the way they should.
They asked me to cover classes and postpone my duties to do other
things like answer the phone and be a secretary when I should be
meeting with parents and engaging the community to get them
involved in all that were doing. I don't think people really
understand what I do because we've never made an effort in our
district to get the word out and to create those boundaries. Many
times people talk about what we can't do instead of all the things
we can do. I struggle a lot with myself sometimes and say what
keeps you here. And the answer is always the same the parents and
the kids... I can make a lot more money somewhere else like a
bank. I choose to be here because I love what I do.

We need to overcome a lot of race issues before the parent
involvement coordinator program can really flourish. People are
going to have to trust each other throughout our district and
intentionally make an effort to break down the walls of race. It is
nobody's fault is just something we need work on. In order for my
program to be the way I wanted to be race cannot be an issue. I
want them to do my job full-time like I've been doing it until this
year. Allow parents to be here for more hours so we can offer more

Need district direction: Need for training and
goals; Need supporting
policy; Need job activity
definitions; want to be
treated as equals in work
like minorities; Social
justice: EPICs like
affirmation; student EPIC
ratio: Hire interpreters so
EPICs in community;
EPIC job misunderstood;
Feel like EPIC job not a
priority; Engage
community for parent
collection to school;
Moral obligation to
families

Race is an issue: Working
and learning together as
equals; no one up
position; give choices to
value culture; promote
EPIC services and
tolerance of cultures;
Promote positive and fun

Comment [PE94]: Training needed
Comment [PE95]: Stakes needed
Comment [PE96]: Supporting policy
Comment [PE97]: Building EPIC identity/
advocate for social justice
Comment [PE98]: Serve all families
Comment [PE99]: Hire interpreters/Translators
EPIC go into community
Comment [PE100]: Promote EPIC services
Comment [PE101]: Teach families about
acculturation and navigate through school
Comment [PE102]: Service from same race
Comment [PE103]: Promote choice for parents
to collaborate with who they want
services. We need to be advertised because parents don't really know exactly what to expect when they come in our schools. I would like for them to feel welcome and know what to expect.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment [PE1]:</th>
<th>Home/school connection; educates parents about school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE2]:</td>
<td>Moral responsibility to families and school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE3]:</td>
<td>Connection between family success and student success at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE4]:</td>
<td>Communication and connection between home and school; EPIC is critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE5]:</td>
<td>Promoting school as a positive and fun place for families; Education is important; helping students with academics; teaching parents how to help children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE6]:</td>
<td>EPIC mentoring other EPICs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment [PE7]:</td>
<td>EPIC role model, mentor, teacher for students and families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE8]:</td>
<td>Language and race is connecting factor for families and EPIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE9]:</td>
<td>Build trust and help with social justice; EPIC identity development; Build program over time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| My role in parent involvement initiatives is to get the parents more involved in their child’s education to have them partner with the school so that it helps their child succeed open the doors of communication. To inform the parents of changes and policies |
| I enjoy my job very much. Helping families is what my goal is. The kids and parents form a personal connection to me and I try to help in any way I can. I was always taught that helping others is right. |
| I love to help the parents as well as the children, especially the opportunity to bridge the parents to the school to be able to help the children succeed. We all know we should work together to help our community and school. If a family succeeds we all get the benefits. |
| Bridging the gap between parents and the school we are in the end both here for the best interest of the children. |
| Really just working with the public before here I was in a hospital setting probably even seen a lot of these kids when they were first born. Prior to working as an EPIC I worked in the migrant program and that really helped out because in that program it was about meeting with parents and tutoring students. |
| My experience has been great I have also learned so much being on the inside of education. I can look at it from the parent’s point of view as well, because what seems natural may not always be. I am a parent of 2 elementary children and I put myself on that side and ask myself what may need further explanation. Being of the Hispanic community I have also can help in a different way understanding the culture. |
| It can be a slow start but once the trust is developed the parents are turn to me as the representative of the school to hear them out and give them resources to help their children. Families now look to me to get help when they need it. In the same way they want to give back but they do not know how. |
| Comment [PE15]: EPIC builds identity through networking and accumulated knowledge |
| Comment [PE16]: Reexamine traditionalized family involvement to include all cultures |
| Comment [PE17]: Each element of stakeholder is connected and valuable to school success |
| Comment [PE18]: Moral obligation to families and community drives EPIC decisions |
| Comment [PE19]: Understanding culture of majority culture helps relations between home and school |
| Comment [PE20]: Need training to include all cultures |
| Comment [PE21]: EPIC mentor each other |
| Comment [PE22]: EPIC need training |
| Comment [PE23]: EPIC build program over time |
| Comment [PE24]: EPIC help each other |
| Comment [PE25]: Familiar with culture of migrants, connected by language |
| Comment [PE26]: Teach families about acculturation and hidden rules of dominant culture |

| We depend on each other and work as a team all for the good of the students. |

| All learn together; Equal power sharing; Social justice; Equal collaboration and conversations |

| Great, the majority of the time, they are very precious jewels that need to be molded into the best citizens of the future. I most enjoy seeing their smiles and hearing them greet me in the halls. They also know that I can communicate with their parents and that their parents can communicate to me if there is an issue. |

| Moral obligation to help families and community drives EPIC decisions; Connections to school and students; Build personal relationships with families based on language and culture; EPIC program not Hispanic only |

| Sometimes they are very territorial but we are a team and most of the time they come around. We depend on each other when needed. |

| EPIC network; Mentoring and role model for EPICs |

| There really wasn’t much training most of it is if you have it you have it common sense that is and well the rest came with some training. You are given the info you need to do but you have to come up with the strategy that best fits your school what works with some parents doesn’t work with all. We attend 2 meetings a school year with other PIC’s and that is helpful to get more ideas of what might be working in other schools that could work in ours. |

| EPICS need training and goals by district; EPICS resourceful, and build program overtime; accumulated local needs and knowledge; EPICS learn together by communicating when needed |

| Prior to working as an EPIC I worked in the migrant program and that really helped out because in that program it was about meeting with parents and tutoring students. |

<p>| Connection to migrant community based on language and race; Knowledge of second language and families and acculturation |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Para professional certificate</th>
<th>Forming EPIC identity, separate from paraprofessionals; Need district recognition and support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great customer service, I have to be able to take the time listen and hear them out. Try to help and never say I don’t know and leave it at that I will always try to find out for them or communicate other resources for our parents. As well always let them know that if they do not hear back from the school or myself to please call back in a day or 2 for follow up. Not sure if I understand the question.</td>
<td>Accessible and available; Accept family where they are; Community resource referral; constant communication with parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I greet each parent with a smile and ask what I can do for them and always thank them no matter what. Each case is different but I stay to the facts and get answers for them if I do not have it right away. I always try to be understanding.</td>
<td>Moral obligation to help; Adapting to family needs based on accumulated knowledge; Explain and educate families on education process; EPIC program sometimes misunderstood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I do believe they do they know that we will try very hard to help them help their child or children succeed.</td>
<td>Connection between family success and school success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the title says it all but there are times I do have to explain what I do.</td>
<td>EPIC services need promotion by district and school; EPIC job often not known</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have to stay neutral because you do help the parent voice their concern but at the same time you have to help explain and understand policies and education. We the schools are public servants to their kids and have all kinds of different future citizens.</td>
<td>EPIC mediates between school and family; Feels caught in middle; EPIC educates both school and families about each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same as above you help parents voice their concern to the school in a way like a middle man. They feel comfortable coming to you with their concern because it is never taken personally we are there for them.</td>
<td>EPIC middle man; Professional boundaries does not limit services; Family connected to EPIC not school; EPIC form personal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I really just try to be available for parents when they come in. My parent center is near the front door across from the office so many times they come to the parent center before they go and check in the office. I make many friends by talking to families about all kinds of issues. I try to keep up with laws on immigration and many come to talk with me about it. They know I am trying to help and we just start off talking and do whatever we can to help them to tell what they need or want. It is different for every family. Administrators need to face it because you can’t put the EPIC in a box. We just do what we have to help and families appreciate it.

When it comes to workshops yes I see the need we have in the school and with parents and develop a workshop that will be worth their while.

I would like to get more parent participation (involvement) a lot of our parents have many reasons as to why do not come at times it is because of work, transportation, and child care. We have been very fortunate to have transportation for some of our workshops. Child care is essential as well.

For all the schools to be more inviting to the parents as a whole. We need to help our families understand we are there for them. The school should be the hub of working and learning together.

Parents getting more involved with the school and for the schools to embrace the parents more. We say we want to get them involved but do we really, I think that they want for the parents to get involved from a distance.

For the school to see the importance of parent involvement and that the PIC’s are needed full time to be able to better help our parents and their kids. Although not mandatory for the PIC’s to be bilingual our system PIC’s are and this helps our parents understand things when they have relationships with families that last beyond school.

Available and accessible; EPIC forms personal relationships based on language and race; EPIC guides on immigration; Accept family where they are and help; Community resource referral; EPIC’s adapt based on moral obligation instead of professional boundaries

EPIC educates parents; Works with parent organizations; Offers parent seminars

Educes parents on how they can be involved; need training on including all cultures in school success; promotes welcoming school environment; culture of collaboration for school and families

Promotes school as fun and inviting place to be

Need true parent involvement instead of parent management; social justice; equal power sharing

EPICs need to be full time so they can engage community daily; EPICs should

Comment [PE41]: EPIC forms lifet ime relationships with families

Comment [PE42]: EPIC forms personal relationships with families that last

Comment [PE43]: EPIC adapts to family needs and provides resources

Comment [PE44]: Acts on moral obligation instead of policy

Comment [PE45]: EPIC offers parent education and equal power base collaboration

Comment [PE46]: Educes parents on how they can participate

Comment [PE47]: EPIC promotes positive and welcoming school environment

Comment [PE48]: Promotes parents helping students to succeed academically

Comment [PE49]: Promotes parents as a guiding force for school

Comment [PE50]: EPICs need training on how to form relationships with diverse cultures
| someone to go to ask as well as our English speaking parents it is necessary to be able to be there for them especially since we do not have voice mail. | be there for all families, not just Hispanic. EPICs educate all about culture. |

Comment [PE51]: EPICs not serve just Hispanic but all families

Comment [PE52]: EPIC educates on culture to be a part of schools so we can all help our students succeed.
**Level 2 Coding for EPICs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liaison services to families</th>
<th>Interpret and translate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language connects EPIC to families</td>
<td>Job all-encompassing service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoys work</td>
<td>No day is the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School environment important</td>
<td>Clerical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>No real direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genuine care for families</td>
<td>Accumulated knowledge builds program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral obligation to families</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected to other EPICs for training</td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need training but no real way to train for every situation</td>
<td>Understands culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important to families to have connection with school</td>
<td>Need continuing education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personable, accessible and available</td>
<td>Meet family’s needs where they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect culture</td>
<td>Being appreciated by families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role model/ Mentor</td>
<td>Advertise EPIC role and services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language connects culture to EPIC</td>
<td>Family organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents assume understanding based on color of skin</td>
<td>EPIC not just for Hispanics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for families</td>
<td>Help families understand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional boundaries barrier to success</td>
<td>Promote family responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPICs in community</td>
<td>Alone and time is limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourages parent involvement</td>
<td>Assertive parent involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology integration</td>
<td>Researching resources to help families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity healthy for school</td>
<td>Family success/Student success/School success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are often missing piece in student’s education</td>
<td>Educate families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships important</td>
<td>All learn together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication from school to home and vice versa</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff works together  Crisis intervention  Reward is student success
Teach students social responsibility  EPIC communication strengthens all programs
Title I management  District meetings and training  Work with parent groups
Educating community on EPIC program  Need district direction on program goal
Listen respectfully/ no one up position/ equal power/social justice
Credentialing  Include parents in process even though more difficult
Training is needed on people skills  Not Hispanic only
Training forming relationships with diverse cultures  Fund raising
Acculturation  Hidden rules/ dominant culture  Accessible and available
Culture matters for school  Commitment to families  Easy entry point for parents
Navigate through the educational process  Explain school policy
All learn together as school culture  Academic support from EPIC
Accumulated knowledge builds program  PIC network gives ideas from state level
Help families find solutions to barriers to success
Ties to learning supports district plan  Life experience to make decisions on career
Schools wants parent managed involvement and not equal power
Learning supports, social work mentality  Development of EPIC identity
Connection to families and school  Equal relationships with families
No barrier from professional boundaries  Lasting relations between EPIC and families
Language connections  Social justice  Hispanic only program
Barriers to learning  Connection to the community  Acculturation issues
Accumulated knowledge  Language connects culture
Color of skin assumptions about culture  Morality based decisions
Language and race build clientele  Connection with school  Connection with family
Connecting schools to family  EPIC Liaison  Connection to Epic not school
Connection to community
Need for culture based intervention

Need training for engage different cultures
Valuable to school and family

Promote cultural diversity not Hispanic only services
Navigate through education

Mentoring/role model/training/education EPICs
No formal training

Accumulated knowledge builds activities for program
Changing job description

Culture directs who family seeks/connects/race directs families and service

Collaborate with support services
Uncertainty of duties projects inefficiency

The distinct limits services /State views as unlimited
Parent center for everyone

Form personal relationships w families
Cultural collaboration

Connection to family/ Connection to school/ connect family and school

Build expectations for future interactions
Personal connection to EPIC not school

Family success equals school success/ student success

Recognize differences as strengths for school
Connection to EPIC helps school

Recognize importance of EPIC /Appreciation is needed

Neutral advocacy vs. moral obligation
Caught in middle of school and family’s needs

Balance of school and family needs
Traditionalized rituals at schools

Building social support/trust
Not just translator

Cultural misconceptions cause misunderstandings and conflict

Need supporting policy
Want to be treated as equals in work like minorities

EPIC-student ratio
Feel like EPIC job not a priority
Race is an issue

Working and learning together as equals
Give choices to show value culture

Promote EPIC services and tolerance of cultures

EPIC educates staff to guide policy to help school and family understand culture

Build program overtime through accumulated knowledge and local need

Connection to migrant community based on language and race
Knowledge of second language families and acculturation

EPIC mediates between school and family  Offers parent seminars

EPIC educates both school and families about each other

Family connected to EPIC not school  EPIC guides on immigration

EPIC form personal relationships with families that last beyond school

EPICs adapt based on moral obligation instead of professional boundaries

Educates parents on how they can be involved

Need training on including all cultures in school success

Need true parent involvement instead of parent management

EPICs need to be full time so they can engage community daily
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Level 3 EPIC Coding</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liaison services from school to home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Available and Accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing personal relationships with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral Responsibility and Family Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating families about school policy and procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educating about Cultural Preservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC Adapts to Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source for community resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPICs Seek Vital Information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translator/interpreter services to family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC as Mentor and Role Model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC as Neutral Advocate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accepting families with unconditional positive regard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center for families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training for Daily Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC Program Built over Accumulated Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Involvement Coordinator Program Needs Direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for ongoing training</td>
</tr>
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Appendix G

PRI - Principal Interview Data Coding

### Level 1 PRII Coding

- Our parent coordinator greets parents as they come in the front door. His office is located in our front area so he can assist prayers with anything they need. He sets up appointment with teachers, lets them know about community resources, mainly to be a liaison between the parents and the school. One of his main roles is to set up meetings between the teachers and parents. We have a large population of Hispanic families in our district. They second language families. They do not speak English and he is bilingual so he helps them adjust to our culture and navigates them through the educational process. It is an interpreter in our meetings he finds out the needs of the families and points them to the resources they need whether it be at school were in the community. It is surveyed with our families and provides professional development for them. They also find resources for teachers to help students and families in academic areas that may be struggling in. It also sets up practice for teachers to learn different languages on the Rosetta Stone. Our language is basically Spanish. Our parent coordinator assist in any way he possibly can with any situation especially in forming relationships with parents and students. We have the only male parent coordinator in the entire school district. I feel like I won the lottery when a fountain is absolutely wonderful he has loads of experience in public speaking and presenting in several front of several thousand people is very smart articulate and the students we love him. He has a very calm demeanor and is very professional and great sense of humor and a vast knowledge of what needs to be done to mentor kids will success. He is from Latino origin and this helps them to understand exactly what the parents and students need because you have a lot of experience with his parents in the family surrounding when he was growing up. He is the perfect person for the position.

- I started out working with the Department of family and children services in Georgia. I was doing eligibility and back then it was food stamps and Medicaid. Then I went on to the Medicaid for the pregnant women. What I saw was every six months people came in for the reviews. I always wanted to help people and from what I saw I was helping anyone. In talking with the clients I realize that education was what was really needed because it could help them. A group of us got together and decided were going back to school. And we all went back to start teaching. I started out as a family services coordinator and I really got to know the role and importance of the role. I worked a lot with parent coordinators in our importance of their role. I worked with Georgia pre-K program for one year. That was in Fulton County and I thought there. In the next year I got a teaching position teaching also and I want to come back and teach in my hometown so I came back until seven grade math example middle school for four years. I thought I

| Comment [PE1]: Accessible and available | Comment [PE2]: Community resource knowledge referral |
| Comment [PE3]: Connects school to families | Comment [PE4]: Translator and interpreter |
| Comment [PE5]: Navigates families through education | Comment [PE6]: Helps with acculturation |
| Comment [PE7]: The only one in school | Comment [PE8]: Parent education |
| Comment [PE9]: Student Mentor | Comment [PE10]: Recognizes and understands culture |
| Social work background | Education importance can’t implement all the changes you’d like to see |
| Comment [PE11]: Engage the community | Comment [PE12]: Proponents of education |
| Comment [PE13]: Hindered by law and policy |
could do some things different as administrator in the middle, and instead of complaining I would do what needed to be done to get that position. I became assistant principal at Centennial and the principal this is my sixth and final year. I'll be retiring this year. As a teacher always look at what my administrators did and said, “I would’ve done it differently”. So instead of complaining thought I could do better so I figured I better be quiet get what I need to be a principal. I want to implement changes and that's just basically why I did what I did. I found out quickly after I got certified you may know what you want to do that you can’t implement everything you want to do. There are a lot of rules so you really can’t do everything you want to do as administrator.

Providing our students with services communicating to the parents what the student's needs are. Apparent corner and a get together and talk about all kinds of things such as things that he may need to do his job all the way to difficulties he might be having with students and families. We really don’t have a structured meeting which is talk all the time. We look at all the requests from all the stakeholders in our school including parents and families and we see what types of resources we need to provide to help. Then he looks for resources that might help us. We talk about it in the process goes on all. It's not really an official meeting is a day-to-day process. For example we just have the big holiday season and he coordinated her Christmas program for the families in our school. Language is the biggest barrier we have especially the families who are new to the country it makes them feel possible to see someone who speaks their language. Another reason I'm very excited to have a man in the row to provide another real role model for our boys. His great male role model and mentor for the boys in our school. He was helping a student that was new to the country who was really struggling with acculturation. The child honestly did not understand what was going on around him in our school. So our parent coordinator started mentoring the child to help them to navigate the processes in our school. We talk daily about the student’s progress and as we moved all got a lot better at helping the student to do the things he needs to do to be a success. We were just as a child schedule to accommodate any guidelines needed. We don’t use our parent coordinator for just an interpreter. He is a very important part of our school. I think it would be beneficial if we could hire interpreters for meetings and transcription and keep our parent coordinators as resources to form relationships with parents and to help them navigate their children through the educational process. They become such a wealth of knowledge that it is a pity that they are sometimes thought is only translator.

Communicating with families; constantly talking with staff and administration; looks for resources; speaks the language of dominant culture; helps work through acculturation issues; hire interpreters; EPIC more community oriented; knowledge of culture helps

To provide whatever is needed to her students and families to help. Bridging the gap between the parents and teachers so that everyone can be successful. Teachers often don’t have the opportunity to communicate directly with their parents as much as they would like simply because the language barrier. They provide workshop for parents

One stop shop for answers to parent questions; workshops for parents; educate second language
is very instrumental in letting the parents know about resources in our community and in our school to help. His demeanor is an incredible asset to our school because we have very few Latino males in our school system. His experience outside of school and coming from a background experiencing some of the same things that our current students are experiencing gives him a lot of knowledge on how to help. Mentoring students even in academic areas really helps our kids. We may have him to instruct some math classes and also have him to instruct the students on the history of Latinos. We also would like them to instruct second language students on their native cultures and the value that that culture brings to our life. Social areas are also included in what he does to help our students learn how to act to be a success. He just personifies a good role model. Parents feel comfortable coming in to talk with. He interprets our parent meetings and he is very active in our PTA. I believe some of our parents were very surprised to see his level of professionalism and how articulate he was. He is also very comfortable speaking in front of people.

We have our parent coordinator housed in our front office it makes it very easy for us to communicate all the time all day so we don’t have to have official meeting to discuss cases. The only official meetings we have having there is a specific need at grade level or student needs something that we have not discussed before. Parent coordinators have just been deemed half time by our district so we will have to amend his schedule to reflect the changes.

Training I don’t know I do know that when it came district office, especially the social workers, had a talk with him to tell him about his duties. As for the official training goes I don’t know. Director of social work used to have meetings with the parent coordinators before our district office meeting for training. Gerard just gave him an overview of our system and what the roles of the other parent coordinators in the system were. They used to have meetings but I’m not sure if they still have the. They used to meet once per month.

I would like to see them trained in some of the academic areas that are para pros are trained in. They need to be trained in the basics of instruction to help any school in any area of need. They could come into a grade level and be directed by the teachers to help in any way. They need specific strategies that work. Many times we could use them to help our ESOL students especially if they are new to the country any targeted instruction or intervention. Basically math and reading training so they can help. We are fortunate because our parent coordinator can already do these things. Some of the others I don’t know. When parent coordinators started the requirements were different for the job and most of them get the job based on the fact that they can speak Spanish. At that time that is really what we needed. Now we’re going to a more academic focus when it comes to student learning. Again we are very fortunate that our parent coordinator has a strong background in students about valuing their culture and work with PTA.

Easy access and available;

Need continuous training on culture and school success; need to communicate more with each other.

Training in academics; strategies to include cultures in school; good communicator; public speaking and teaching; uses technology;

Comment [PE20]: Cultural education
Comment [PE21]: Work with parent organizations
Comment [PE22]: Needs continued training
Comment [PE23]: Organized communication and planning
Comment [PE24]: Training in engaging culture
Comment [PE25]: Uses technology
communication, professionalism and relationship building. He is also smart enough to teach any reading or math that we need him to. He has a great educational background and he is very technologically savvy. His very good public speaker.

Number one is always open and willing to meet with any family to help. He greets them out the door and helps in any way he can. He is examining the parent surveys that were sent out last year and he is getting a lot of information. He also gives a lot of information but talking to teachers and others in the building all the time. For instance he sees things that need to be done without being told and begin work. You can help with discipline problems and frequently mentor students to make them successful in the classroom. After school every day he is helping students. Many times we cannot talk to our parents as much as we live we simply can’t reach them because they’re at work or they’re not home. I’m comfortable enough with him to allow him to call home anytime and I know he will say the right thing. If he has a question becomes to me and asked me what is appropriate. He is not afraid to say that his made a mistake. Many times he communicates with parents and sibling because he can articulate the problem in the native language of the family the child difficulty seems to go away overnight. It’s definitely a benefit to have the family on board. Being bilingual is a huge asset for him but his personality and resourcefulness makes him useful at all kinds of areas. It is very organized and very professional and sometimes this surprises people. It also makes parents feel at ease and helps them to know that he cares and only wants the best for the family. He is always available to new ideas and he is a go-getter.

Culture plays a role in everything we do because we have such a large Latino population so our parent coordinator perhaps understands some of the experiences they may have come in from different countries. He has lived this. These families have to adjust our culture while trying to cling to their own culture and sometimes this causes problems. I think because he worked in different areas that he also has the background and the Spanish culture he understands the family and the religion. For the mainstream his wonderful and for students who may not celebrate holidays is also supportive and helped us to form activity for some of these children so they didn’t feel left out. I think that some of our mainstream prayer for quite surprised when I saw our parent coordinator at his level of articulation and professionalism. We just don’t get to see many Latino males with this type of life experience and education in a position such as this. He got up to speak and like all of us were very surprised and proud to have someone like him in our building. Even the teachers are proud to work with him. Now we only have three Latinos working in our building has professionals. The whole experience has been good for our parents and our entire staff to be able to interact with someone of his caliber. He is very careful speaking in English and Spanish were mostly of the prayer coordinators are saying are kind of
uncomfortable. He brings a presence with him wherever he goes back impresses other people. It is not afraid to get up in front of a bunch of people and interpret or run the meeting. His great representation of what a great male Hispanic role model should be. We need this desperately in our school system.

| One thing about our parent coordinator is he keeps everything on a professional level. When it comes to neutral advocacy we are always in communication to make sure we offer the families anything they need. We cannot offer here at the school he finds outside resources that might be able to help. He mostly sticks to the guidelines we have in our school. The parents appreciate this because you know where you stand with our parent coordinator. Also see him coming to me asking questions making sure he is everything right. When he translates or interprets it does not include his input into the conversation. Many times are prayerful for someone who looks like the he knows this and uses this to his advantage. He does not get emotionally involved is a cool demeanor and simply tries to help as much as he can. If you needs help defined resources in the school for himself in the same way find resources in the community for families to get an answer. He does not take sides and he always tried to see both sides of a problem. It is very professional and has a great sense of humor. | Professional; neutral advocate wants to make things right; |

| When school policy ties our hands and were not allowed helping a parent and the way they need helping we would talk about the needs of the student family. They would come to me and we would discuss the resources that were built to do that for the family. I don’t see him trying to go behind anyone’s back. They would find a way to work it out and that is generally when we operate all the time. | Community resources; helps family understand school; |

| Some of our more affluent parents were very surprised in a good way when they met our parent coordinator for the first time. We’re all very impressed in our families have been very impressed. They constantly mention how professional use and how sensitive he is to their needs. They also notice how effective he is a solid problem. So whether it’s an individual student, a family or group of individuals that we have noticed are having difficulty he’s always trying to. I have seen him many times solve problems for relationships and our entire staff has noticed this about him. He’s very good at this. | Help socioeconomic levels understand; sensitive to family needs; |

| For academic achievement one thing that he has done his or tools for himself so that he can be successful with the students. He worked many materials for parents and students can check out we have made this part of our school improvement plan. He is great at showing people what the devices are how they work and how to operate them. Often times I will send teachers to him to get recommendations for technology tools to | Directs students toward success; technology; make parent familiar with school processes; |
help students. He also recommends to the parents and students. After conferences he will recommend resources. In some of his new roles will be working with math and reading use of these tools to get the job done.

I would like for them to provide community support and resource direction. I would like to see them go into the community and look for sponsors to come in and work with families. I would like to see the work more with parent nights to train parents and getting stuck together to get our families more involved in academic achievement. Even to coordinate teachers coming into the meetings to train our parents on how to help with homework and other academic needs. They need to be trained and parent meetings and how to appropriately translate and interpret. You need to plan more engaging activities for parents to help them understand and support their students better at home, they could do more home visits to view the living conditions of the families. This could be another way we could help her family. Attendance could be helped and they could be a liaison to help families to help their kids even with homework.

| **EPICs engage the community; trained for diverse cultures; Go to homes to connect school to home; work on attendance:** |
| **Information to homes; prepare families and students for school; more leadership role; hold parents accountable; for student success:** |

1. **Comment [PE34]:** Instigate assertive parent involvement
2. **Comment [PE35]:** Training on engaging diverse cultures
3. **Comment [PE36]:** School to home communication
4. **Comment [PE37]:** Help parents understand attendance laws
5. **Comment [PE38]:** Assertive leadership for program practice
6. **Comment [PE39]:** Educate parents on their role in child’s education
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td><strong>When I think about engaging parents across school I went to the on</strong> some misconceptions on EPIC2’s role as she is Hispanic and bilingual. Been Hispanic and bilingual server parents will have large population of Hispanic kids in our schools. But I think there’s misconception about her being here only to help the Hispanic community future for all families. Certainly we want to engage Hispanic community but we also all of the including African-American, Caucasian, and Asian and all communities within our district. Her role is to engage parents across the board. Research shows that if parents are involved in their child’s education and involved in the school it increases the likelihood that the children perform better in school. This seems to be the rationale on having a parent involvement coordinator in each of our elementary schools, middle and high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross training important; education important for success in life; See things from different perspectives; The love of helping others; School culture important and connected to student and school success; Work background important; different professional roles support student success; teach student social responsibility; loving and caring adults to guide students; teach students why we do what we do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I was not always a principal. I have been paraprofessional in the psycho</strong> educational division of Gwinnett County for they called it GNET for one year. Then I went back to school full-time to get a teaching certificate. I also have a CDL commercial driver license. I have never been a regular route driver but as a coach I found my commercial driver license quite useful. I have been a school bus driver. I have worked in public and private schools. I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to have been presented with. I originally went to school to be a high school science teacher. Straight out of college I and talked ninth-grade physics. From there I ended up in a private Christian school for four years in Dalton where I taught high school science and work as an administrator. After four years in Dalton I came back to Calhoun Georgia and work for them for eight years. I was hired as a middle school science teacher and ended up as a middle school assistant principal. I then took an elementary job in that district for three years and then left there to go to a private Christian school where I was principal for three years. Then I was brought to Gainesville as of this year and this will be my first year as an elementary principal in Gainesville City Schools. So I’ve been many different things. I have been an assistant principal, a principal, a bus driver, a teacher, a paraprofessional, a coach and I’m a parent. To be honest with you, I did not go into teaching to be an administrator. It really was not part of my process of thinking at the time. My initial experience in a school was a substitute teacher. I was 19 when I first started so to teaching and I did that in high school. I was near the age of the students and I was frequently asked for hall passes to indicate where I was going in the hall by teachers and other adults. That was when I first became intrigued with the school setting and I’m not want to be there for job. I did not go into the educational setting to be a principal. It is almost like the opportunity presented themselves to put me in a position I’m in now. When the opportunity came around I said okay I can do it. I actually had the experience to work at a tiny private school as when I was 21 years old. We have probably 15 children overall. I served two years in and every time</td>
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<td><strong>Misconception of EPIC role; Hispanic only EPIC program; EPIC for all families; Engages families; Connects parent involvement with student success;</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment [PE1]:</strong> Misunderstand EPIC role/ promote services</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment [PE2]:</strong> EPIC not Hispanic only</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment [PE3]:</strong> For all families</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE4]:</strong> Connect family culture with student/ school success</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE5]:</strong> Cross train EPICs</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE6]:</strong> Educate students for success</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE7]:</strong> Different perspectives important to understanding</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE8]:</strong> Moral obligation to help others</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE9]:</strong> School culture important</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE10]:</strong> Bring different strengths from past work</td>
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<td><strong>Comment [PE11]:</strong> Different roles support students and families</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment [PE12]:</strong> Guide families to success</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Comment [PE13]:</strong> Help understanding</td>
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I'll seem to go into administration the door opened. When I went back to get my Masters degree got it in leadership. And that pointed me in the direction maybe wanting to do some work in administration. Then when I was asked to consider the principal position I was ready to do that. What made me want to do it? Probably just a challenge associated with leadership. Asked sometimes, "do you like it a lot better now that you're out of the classroom". That is like asking me if I love my son or daughter more. It's not that I love administration more than teaching or less is not harder is not easier it's a different set of hard. It is a different set of fulfillment. I want to have a secure career take care of my family also just the thought of being a school setting will my kids will be a what I'm doing. I can go to work in the office my kids and as I got older and more mature perspective on has changed. I do value to make a difference in the lives of children and families and I am concerned that our culture depends on loving caring adults to lead kids in a way that will move them in a positive direction for their own lives so that is the meaning of why did what I do.

Clearly were trying to help students to achieve. I opened a Twitter account finally. I thought I wait until I had something or say for my first tweet. I was riding my newsletter and all my idea was worth tweeting. My nonverbal tweet was the education that we give kids in our classrooms is the foundation on which they can build a lifetime of success and satisfaction. Therefore it is one that is to help establish the foundation. So was the primary role of parent involvement coordinator... It better hook up to establishing the foundation for students for success and satisfaction in life. On this foundation build all kinds of things that will help children. There are all kinds of areas that the parent involvement coordinator to get into. But whatever we're do help in that child to build the foundation successful and satisfied with their life. Are you getting the most bang for the buck out of their role?

This is my first year as principal this elementary school and I have gotten to know my parent involvement coordinator pretty well. Everyone is new to me. I met my parent coordinator during the summer she came and introduce herself to me. I've gotten to know her more and more throughout the course of use. She is someone who loves his job. She response to the needs everybody in the school. She is very respectful and she has strong opinions about how she can be most effective with her work. So my personal experiences with her we communicate on a fairly regular basis. We may not communicate every day but almost. We really don't schedule meetings together we talk about things as needed.

Our parent coordinator seems to focus her attention mostly on setting up workshop for parents and going out in the community center workshops such as read and rise to help parents prepare children for school. She is very attentive to title I requirements for school. She sets up title I informational meeting parents. She is bilingual rely on her for translation and interpreting but she is not our only source of this through our school. You basically been told that cannot use of parent involvement coordinator just as an interpreter. That cannot be the primary translator. This to me should fall on one of the primary duties of parent involvement coordinator.
is going to get parents involved you need to speak the language. Everyone
talks about barriers to learning and language barriers definitely one for us
that we have to overcome if we want to reach these kids and families.

We have a good working relationship where I never feel like I have a
problem if I need to go to her to ask for help after about was. I think if
there anything in our collaboration that gets in the way it is probably us
trying to use her inappropriate ways according to title I. Want to continue
to get funding for her so we must abide by the parameters set by title I or
job description duties. One of my previous schools with my experience
with our parent involvement coordinator, actually the school system
changed parent coordinators title to FSPIC. This meant family services
parent involvement coordinator and at the school pay for an insurance
rider so she could take families and students home or to and from school
and provide parent date for families is needed. This is very helpful to us at
school because it takes the excuses away for kids not to be at school. If a
child missed the bus our parent involvement coordinator go and get the
kids bring him to school so the child not to miss an entire day at school
because of parent allow the child to miss the bus. We do not have that
option here but I wish that we had someone here to help with that
problem. I would like to see the parent involvement coordinators become
more of a community engagement type position because a lot of this is
falling on my counselor right now. Everyone’s plate a very full. I do think
we could have our parent involvement coordinators involved in more ways
to engage the community through community services. They also need to
help parents learn how to access the services.

Can think of no training for parent involvement coordinator out of my
head. Available did go to the parent involvement coordinator training at
first year. I said there was professional settlement at that time. Hopefully
it will be a family services aspect.

Anything to help parent involvement coordinators to lead parents to
resources anything that we can do to help her to encourage attendance
would be a great help to us. Any family services to help parents navigate
their way through the educational system here in our district would help.
Again, the title I requirements for roadblocks for parent involvement
coordinators that were not supposed to try to get around. This is definitely
a happen parent involvement coordinators. It seems that title I can tell us
what they can’t do but there is no standard for what they can do. I can
think of many things that I would like to see them do at school and in the
community.

Parent seminars that she offered for parents helps her to build
relationships. She has played a major role in putting on a Hispanic heritage
program for our school. It was a wonderful cultural appreciation event at
our school. We were able to get a lot of parents in here for that. February
is Black history month so we hope the same effort into that program. With
all that being said the implication is throughout our school and our district
that parent involvement coordinators, because they are bilingual Hispanic
women, are here only to work with the Hispanic population. I find this to
be tragic because they’re supposed to be working with all families. Any
efforts we do in our school are there to build that relationship and trust of their parents. They have to know that you are there for them and what they can expect the future. EPIC2 deals with individual families but hasn't mindset of conducting programs that deal with the larger aspect of parent involvement in our school.

Part of culture is how we relate to one another as far as race goes. I do think our parent involvement coordinator, being Hispanic, certainly helps opens the door for us throughout the Hispanic community. There are some who say that a black family to see the Hispanic lady coming to the door to invite them to come to read and rise, that race may be an obstacle. They can perhaps relate better if it were an African-American coming to the door. We know that it shouldn't be that way I'm told that is sometimes response to find. So how does culture play a role in what we do? I think it is necessary for someone in the role of parent involvement coordinator to figure out how do you not let race be a barrier for stumbling block? An example would be our community had an MLK event this past weekend. I visited event. I was a little bit surprised about how few white people were there. A felt like that was an important event for us to build relationships. I think it is an opportunity to not let race be an obstacle. I think if we look for ways to show that race is not going to stop us from reaching out to people, then it's important for us to do that but if we let this happen cultural things do become stumbling blocks. We have to be able to show people that race is not a factor that we are certainly we need to you those children that foundation for success and satisfaction throughout the life. All programs but is not being and how many years later it is still being felt. Bigotry and racism are not genetic predisposition. They are taught at home we have an opportunity to help. Many of our children elementary school and not been enough yet. They have not ripened in those contaminants. I can't tell you how great it was to go to the MLK presentation and have African-American children run up to me and give me a big hug to tell me how much they love me.

Have not heard the term neutral advocacy. We work it out in a case-by-case basis and if the school cannot serve family to go outside school to find resources from them. I've never felt like our parent involvement coordinator has not been aware of the policy and things that we do. Our help support our school and parents in a balance type way. She tried to educate and to navigate them through policy in the educational process in our school. Work and advocate conjures up an image of an adversarial relationship between schools and families. This implies that if the parent involvement coordinator was not there the family would somehow be taken advantage of by the school. In our school we talk a lot about partnerships between the school and families and so we have had no issues with this type of thing. We all work together to solve the problem on a case-by-case basis. Many times the parents need goes against school policy then it would be parent involvement coordinators job to educate parents and to cure ignorance and then go to the community answer to the family problem. But it also the parents know how policy the rationale behind policy. To be a true liaison to the community. The advocacy aspect

| School environment important; Relationships are important; Culture connected with school for success; Race not a barrier to success; Help educate students and families to help race issues. |
| Case by case basis; educate families on policy and law; immigration issues important; Partnerships between families and school; EPIC liaison services; Help families be allies for school; bridge to families from school |

Comments:
- [PE34]: Not letting race be a barrier to success
- [PE35]: Educate about race
- [PE36]: Individual family services
- [PE37]: Educate staff and families about the law and policy
- [PE38]: Enhance partnership between family and school
- [PE39]: No one up position/equal shared power/social justice
<table>
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<tr>
<th>of parent involvement coordinators job to build a bridge and a partnership instead of looking at it like adversarial relationship. If the parent coordinator chose to advocate in a direction that would stir up an adversarial relationship with the school then they don’t need to be on our team because they would not be fulfilling their in a bargain. We want to build partnerships, relationships and a bridge to the community and families.</th>
<th>Communication from school to home; EPIC to engage community for attendance and discipline; assertive parent involvement; EPIC training in methods to engage community proactively</th>
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<td>The reason that parent involvement coordinators research shows that family’s involvement child’s education that will help them to succeed. What we do get parents here he would not have otherwise showed up? Some parents you don’t need anything involved. They are already involved enough. When I have to addressing a discipline problem many times I will try to communicate with parents unsuccessfully. Many times I sent home notes and parents do not respond. That is the thing that I would like to see parent involvement coordinators do. Go into the community and engage the families where they live for any reason we may see fit. We need to be very assertive when it comes to parent involvement by going to their home, work or any other place that we need to go to get them involved. We do not need to be aggressive however we need to be seen and heard from so the parent knows be there. Parents need to know that we are not going to settle for them being disengaged in their child’s education. In the same way we should not settle children being disengaged in their education. We will not accept failure. You get work done no matter what, for parents you think you’re not going to be involved we will not settle for that answer. What can they do that is assertive and parents and students know that will not accept failure on their part and not accept disengagement. So parent involvement coordinators need to be trained in methods to engage the community in assertive ways that we can ask instead of react.</td>
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<td>A training or professional development would be good in people skills. Dealing and engaging people, knowing how to communicate effectively. I have experience as a door-to-door book sales and nonverbal behavior is very important. Our parent coordinators need to know about these factors and engaging the community. You not want to be aggressive but friendly and assertive. Have we trained our parent involvement coordinators on behavior that will be perceived by our community as friendly and engaging instead of aggressive and adversarial? They do not need to be intimidating. One of the things that I believe that action creates action and so if I go away that comes across as intimidating then you’re likely to have a confrontation. But, as Proverbs says, a soft answer will evoke a soft response. You can catch more flies with honey. The way you approach people, they are all skills that you can learn, and all of our lines of work required those people skills if we’re going to be successful.</td>
<td>Training people skills; Training effective communication; Train parents in communication with school; EPIC work on educating about assumptions from families about school</td>
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Level 1 PRI3 Coding

She greets parents as they come in and talk to them about any issues they may have... personal or otherwise. If there any issues that our school that she may help them with and finding instructional games for avenues that they can explore the home to help your child. As well as helping us talk to children and in calling parents for us... And in talking to the parents for a three or four way communication with parents... She is basely a facilitator.

I was a classroom teacher for 11 years in first grade and when I came to Gainesville Georgia I became a second-grade teacher for one year and then I went home to become an EIP teacher for a year moved into the AP realm at gainful exploration Academy and now as a principal I do have a degree in early childhood leadership reading specialist in curriculum and instruction. Just in case I ever need it... ha ha... I think it's because when I was a teacher I saw ways that I think and always work with other teachers and with children struggled a little bit with their academics... And I thought that I could possibly help other teachers learn how to come up with more strategies... be more effective as the teacher... So that's when I started moving into more leadership roles at the school and then as an AP I defiantly went and classrooms more and talk to you more about strategies to use with the students. It is such an opportunity because I can learn about and teach more strategies and make everyone better.

I think it is being the liaison between the parents and with the teachers and the school itself so there the bonding glue for us. My parent coordinator is very friendly and very helpful so as soon as parents walk in the door just talk to them and learning about what is going on with them and their family. So she knows that personally which of course helps us with the children and calling parents and talking to them... That personal relationship that she bills the most important.

I know that whatever we do what we call our ILP meetings about children who are struggling we call the parents and she is very helpful coming in talking to them... The parents about... Our parent coordinator is Hispanic like many of our families... And she is very helpful to them in talking about the needs of the child, how the parent can help the child at home and that she is to know them personally... They open up to her... So she can tell them things that they can use at home to help too... It is all about relationship building...

If a parent comes in they have a problem I see her finding resources and ways to help that family... She’s just in the middle of talking to them saying hi how are you... And talking to them about how their child is doing at school... Like she will say I talked to the teacher and he needs a little help with reading and... By then she is already taking them to the parents in our school to find reasons for them to help your child. Automatically she is asking if there struggling financially at

Accessible and available; Academic support for families; Connecting school to families; Facilitates communication

Value education; Not always able to do what you want as a leader; desire to help others; Goal related strategies;

EPIC provides liaison services; Easy form relationships; accessible and available; Communication from school to home

Academic support; parent involvement in academics; assumption of trust built on color of skin; trust built on language; assumption of social justice; Equal, no one up position, sharing of power

Resources for families; community resource referral; Feedback on student performance; Accept family where they

Comment [WU1]: Easy access
Comment [WU2]: Academic support
Comment [WU3]: Connection to home and school
Comment [WU4]: Promotes school as positive environment
Comment [WU5]: Goal is family success
Comment [WU6]: Policy and law barrier to success
Comment [WU7]: Personal moral values based decisions
Comment [WU8]: Need direction and goals for EPIC
Comment [WU9]: Connection between home and school
Comment [WU10]: Relationships with family connected to student success
Comment [WU11]: Help students with school work
Comment [WU12]: Trains parents on helping their child academically
Comment [WU13]: Assumed social justice based on perceived race
Comment [WU14]: Common language is key to relationship with Hispanic family
Comment [WU15]: Equal power sharing w EPIC and families
Comment [WU16]: Accumulated community knowledge
Comment [WU17]: EPIC referral to resources for help
Comment [WU18]: EPIC communicates between teacher and family
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Home and about situations that could be challenges for them. Such as a need for food or clothing at home... She's always talk to them about needs and challenges they have and if she sees me she is trying to help them solve it and getting them what they need. She's even jumped in to help with the Boys and Girls Club in the afternoon and played basketball with kids to develop that relationship... Again building that relationship with the kids so that when the parents come in you can talk to them. She's constantly calling them on the phone and letting them know what's going on... She is one of those go-getters who i never have to say, &quot;Here's what you need to be doing&quot;. Our prior coronaries right there as soon as they walk in the door.</th>
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<td>I'm constantly asking her about what her needs might be... Such as if she comes in and says we have a lot of parents who are struggling this year with needing food... Then we get together with her counselor and we talk about ways to get food out the parent. Any topic and/or need, children who are going through medical problems or therapy she is always talking to the parent about it and informing us about all that is going on... We've got together fundraisers for families and children the so that we can help a parent out the traveling expenses and food on the road while the going through the doctors... Anytime she sees me she's in her telling me about it and will try to figure it out. It is not a formal meeting like a once a month meeting every day all day...</td>
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<td>The training piece that we do... Since I have been here... is in a specific training for only parent coordinators. They have training through learning supports and goal 2. They do talk about things they should be doing from the district level. I consider that training would not call it professional development... Teacher schools are different in each principal different things... We all have different needs... I think the specific principle is in charge of training and letting the prayer coordinator know what they want and need for their school. We're here to help families. One of the most important things that I have developed a personal relationship with my parent involvement coordinator. Not just that, but I have developed this type relationship with my whole staff and we all work together very well. We talk to each other and communicate all the time... We don't sit down have monthly meetings all the time and say what pager you will because were constantly talking every day.</td>
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<td>Not only do they have the parent coordinator meetings but we have learning support meetings in the parent coordinators are heavily involved in this along with individual meetings they have with a learning supports coordinator. In these meetings they talk to each other and come up with ideas about how they can help our families and children from different perspectives.</td>
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<td>As for professional development goes I think the only one they would need would be to include parents at your school for training of the parent... We have parent workshops in the evenings... But how to make those workshops more engaging... I think we do a good job but... Make the trainings for parents on how to take the things were teaching here and train the parents how to do it at home to help your kids... We already do those things that we need help and how to do it better and maybe more ideas for training on how to teach those prayers in a better way. Many times... Maybe... The parent coordinator does not know how to teach fifth grade math... And the parents don't either. Of course</td>
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<td>are; show hidden rules of dominant culture; Accessible and available; EPIC explains school processes and the law; EPIC helps with Immigration concerns;</td>
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<td>Constant casual communication administration and EPIC; Community resources; Collaboration with administration, families and staff;</td>
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<td>EPICs need training beyond current and ongoing; Need district direction; Personal relationships with staff; All staff communicate and collaborate</td>
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<td>EPIC part of learning supports; Remove barriers to learning; All learn together, families &amp; school</td>
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<td>EPIC educate parents and families; Parent workshops; Training on how to engage diverse cultures; How to help students with homework;</td>
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<td>Comment [WU19]: Genuine concern acceptance</td>
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<td>Comment [WU20]: Navigate families throughout educational process</td>
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<td>Comment [WU21]: Communicate law to families</td>
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<td>Comment [WU22]: Constant communication with staff</td>
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<td>Comment [WU23]: All learn together mentality</td>
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<td>Comment [WU24]: Need training to help EPICs in community</td>
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<td>Comment [WU25]: Need district direction and guidance</td>
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<td>Comment [WU26]: Professional boundaries no a barrier for EPICs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment [WU27]: EPIC part of district plan</td>
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<td>Comment [WU28]: EPIC investigate deeper than surface</td>
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<td>Comment [WU29]: Teach parents about educational process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment [WU30]: EPIC need training and pro-development on diverse cultures</td>
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<td>Comment [WU31]: Teaches academic skills</td>
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we involve teachers and all this. I think parent coordinators need more specific training on how to get things like this together.

I think her personality is such a bubbly happy and positive element that whenever people come in there actually drawn to that type of personality anyway and she relates so well... Again our population is 85% Hispanic... So when our parents come in she is talking to them welcoming them in our school. She is very welcoming to very positive and things like that and she truly makes the extra effort to build a relationship.

Most of our culture here at our school... Mostly Hispanic... Although that she does a great job and knows the Hispanic culture... She knows the culture she knows the ins and out of the Hispanic culture and people are going on by the community soccer games... She knows the things that are going on... But not only does she know the Hispanic culture and can relate well with those parents she does that well with all the other families in our school... Because she knows Gainesville and she bills that trust very quickly with their families and it is not only go by the ethic and racial cultures but by that trusting community culture that we have here... What parents coming into our music programs 2 to 800 parents show up... Packed out... She’s rather welcoming them come in and so they know her face and it really bonds our parents and our school family together.

If there’s something that parents need and parents talk with her about it would always go back to these are the procedures this is the need would father procedures that we have but let’s see if we can find someone who can help out... Such as needing more food than we can definitely help out... Not be able to do it at our school but we might be able to find another organization who can help... A resource... I believe our efforts at learning support is really build that type of community and I think that’s helped our parent coordinators out a lot. I think her being neutral is beneficial although the relationship to my administrative team has its we’re going to discuss whatever the issues are that even though I know she has a neutral stance... And a lot of our meetings the parents don’t speak English so she is telling them exactly what I’m saying... And she is telling me exactly what they’re saying so we can talk about it and if there’s an issue she will state the side of the story... And I can give my perspective and the policy so we can try to work is something else out with another agency outside of school over somebody else and try to get them the help they need either way... I think the families understand what is going on and they know were going to try to help... Even though the family knows that our parent coordinator work for the school they know that she is going to do everything possible to help them. She is more neutral but she is going to try to get the parents and the children’s needs met... Policy will come first but we will go outside the school to find the reasons they need. So the book does not just stop here, she continues looking for resources outside the school. She is neutral this but she carry it a step further than the school can to get the job done.

I think for what we have here at our school I would say... We have a model parent coordinator and I think what we do here is most beneficial in the realm of... We have a high population of Hispanics... My parent coordination Hispanic she can build that relationship she does translations when needed she is in all Positive environment; Language is catalyst for relationship w EPIC; EPIC takes initiative; Culture connected to success; accumulated knowledge builds program; EPIC knows community; Collaborated with parent organizations; Role model and mentor to students and families

Explain school to families; Navigates families through education system; educates about acculturation; EPIC communication tool; translate and interpret; EPIC helps families find a way; Mediator between school and family.

EPIC not for Hispanic only, offers parent conference meeting place; central parent

Comment [WU32]: EPIC promotes school as positive environment

Comment [WU33]: Language connected to relationships and success

Comment [WU34]: EPIC understands value of culture to school success

Comment [WU35]: Role model to families and students

Comment [WU36]: Educates about acculturation to family and school

Comment [WU37]: Helps families find their way

Comment [WU38]: Translates/interprets

Comment [WU39]: Not Hispanic only program
| my parent conferences if there’s a problem she can talk to the parents about it she has that relationship with them she helps us with workshops and again she’s playing basketball with the kids she knows community. I think we have the perfect model here at our school. I mean I can’t say I wish my parent coordinator would do this... Or see her doing something different... Because every time there’s an academic need for a child her family she is in there asking me what she can do to serve that family better. She goes to teachers to ask what else can I give the family. Were always looking for better ways to serve our families as a team and she is a valuable part of the team. She’s on top of everything. We’re pretty involved in where we need to be.

| meeting place;
continuous growth through communication;

| I think the piece that I wish we could do more with is like having that parent training... We do it after school during a workshop... 60 to 80 parents show up... I wish there was more training for parents that we could do... However I think that our parents worked a lot and for the time and they have a think we do a good job... A lot of them worked two jobs and have two kids and we try to involve kids in every parent training we do... Can we get better... Of course we can... But I think the pieces that we have a need to be made a little bit better but we have good pieces in place already. As parent coordinator job descriptions change we have to change and we have already made changes so that are part of on coordinator working with her newcomer students who speak absolutely no English using Rosetta Stone. She is actually pulling children and working with them on strategies on how to become better with her English. It’s really not academics is billing that vocabulary that she’s working with our students on. We realized this early on and went ahead and made the adjustment. Vocabulary is very difficult for kids because they may know how to pronounce the word but that does not mean they know what the word means... Very hard for kids learning to speak English.

| Need parent training;
EPI teaches
language acquisition;
Parent center
available for families
to learn and network

| Comment [WU40]: Parent center used as
collection point for families

| Comment [WU41]: Parent center offers training
and language acquisition

| Comment [WU42]: Family networking
Level 1 PRI4 Coding

I did not intentionally seek to become an administrator. I came into being administrator sort of back. I was a sixth-grade teacher and in my Master's program I was working with a teacher who got her specialist degree and questioning her I found out about a leadership certification at on in an educational Specialist program. I accidentally learned how much more money administrators make the teachers. So I did what I had to do to become an administrator. That was a motivating factor. Went back to school and got my specialist degree got out of the classroom when I was offered assistant principal job in Dawson County. I applied for the job and got the job. So I went from being a classroom teacher with no intention of becoming administrator to assistant principal. I was in Dawson County middle school for four years left there and was offered a job in Gainesville city schools in what was supposed to be the ninth grade Academy. It did not come to fruition and it turned into basically an AP position. Then I was offered an elementary school position here at New Holland and the rest is history. So I have been principal of New Holland elementary for the last six years.

The most important part if it were done the way it's supposed to be done is the parent coordinator would bring parents together, into the school, and the parent coordinator would actively seek out parent participation in activities along with involvement. Possibly consistently communicate and advertise what her role is. She would constantly say, "these are my services want you in the school we have all these things that can make a seamless transition throughout home and school every single day."

The parent coordinator at our school is very amicable and willing to do anything I want her to do. However if I do not ask and I'm not very specific, and I feel like I have to explain everything in great detail, she will not initiate activities.

I would like to see her more bringing families and going out to the families and offering more opportunities for them together as a group to talk about and navigating them through the needs that they have. Like see them navigate through the educational system. I think my parent coordinator should explain her job all the time and have specific goals for program. At some point I don't know if any of the parent coordinators have been trained to know what type of goal they should have. I think they were probably hired as glorified translators and interpreters a long time ago and now they don't have a direction or vision.

The collaboration between my parent coordinator and me usually consist of ideas that I present in great detail. Then she followed my orders and does not

Reluctant leader; Education important; Can't make all changes wanted

Comment [PE1]: Educational outlook
Comment [PE2]: Need training

Connection between school and families; accessible and available; Bring parents in school and organize efforts; EPIC works with parents on how to be involved

Comment [PE3]: Liaison Services
Comment [PE4]: Available and accessible

EPIC critical to school communication; EPIC needs training to expand services according to school needs; EPIC needs district direction

Comment [PE5]: Organizes facets of parent involvement
Comment [PE6]: Communication central

EPIC belongs in community to engage; Training parents to help school; Needs district goals and training; Translate/interpret; Not for Hispanic only; For all families; Families connected to language and culture/race; Need vision for program; EPIC helps educate on culture and guide

Comment [PE7]: Develop resources
Comment [PE8]: Recognition and training

Comment [PE9]: Need to engage community and families
Comment [PE10]: Educate district and families about services

Comment [PE11]: Not just interpreters, engage community
Comment [PE12]: EPIC knows culture, language connects families to EPIC
Comment [PE13]: Needs district direction
<table>
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<th>have an opinion. I kind of follow the district for this though because preparation and training for EPICs is nonexistent. They do not have a college degree or any type of credentials to support what we want them to do. And in the state is not report paying them enough to do what we want them to do. They are really supposed to be a type of social worker that includes a lot of parent information, education and professional development for parent. Now were expecting them to train children on academic level and I do not know if they have the skills to do this. I came from a school system that did not have parent coordinators. I came here to city I was not told what to ask the parent coordinator and what the role was. I was also not told how I should utilize my parent involvement coordinator completely left up to me. I was not indoctrinated into the tradition of the district and having parent coordinators as a normal part of the school day. So it's hard for me to train my staff on exactly what she does without having prior knowledge and training myself as administrator. In the beginning I had to rely on my parent coordinator herself to tell me what she was supposed to be doing. There are no guidelines, the district has a different job description that the state and the state is changing what they're talking about when it comes to parent involvement parent involvement coordinators. I don't know she's exactly clear on what she supposed to be doing.</th>
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<tr>
<td>I do not know if there is training for parent coordinators to help them advocate for family. They usually depend on what they've done in the past and the future when it comes to family engagement. Sometimes this works and sometimes it does not. A lot of factors have much to do with the success or failure of parent engagement efforts. In our school, factors such as race and culture have a lot to do with our success or failure. There used to be training at the district office for parent involvement coordinators but I don't know if that's going on now or not. And even in the district I do not know they were actually training the parent coordinator. I think it might have been a time for them to get together and discuss what was going on at the school and maybe it's an individual from social work.</td>
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<td>I do not own any training that the district or schools of offer for the parent coordinators to be successful at the job. There's been no specific training in the past six years that I know of.</td>
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<td>I would like to see parent involvement coordinators go through training they give this specific strategies on how to include parents in their child's educational experience and specific strategies on how to train parents to help her children do better academically. Professional development days and days before and after school start is used for training. Training should be about community engagement and how parent can be more effective at home when it comes to teaching their children. Parent seminars are good way to teach parents still does not teach parents how to go home and teach the child how to do math read more effective. It should directly help our school academically.</td>
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<td>Though it has declined over the last two years, I've seen it time we had many parents coming in the building to interact with the parent coordinator. They would come into use Rosetta Stone and other training tools that she had. They would come to learn English. That I felt was great advertising and</td>
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<tr>
<td>policy, EPICs need training; Need training and credentialing; Offer parent education; Title one directs program; Administration needs training on EPICs to direct program; Need district direction for EPICs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training is needed for EPICs; Accumulated knowledge guides services; Race, culture factors in success; Continuous program development for EPICs</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPICs need basic training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Need specific strategies on how to include parents in their child's educational; Training on engage diverse cultures; EPIC tied to academics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent connected to EPIC not school; Parent center meeting place for network and</td>
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because she told parents about the service they came to use it. It was very
effective and use this as a tool to build relationships with parents. She would
advertise a lot and tell them how wonderful it was and they would come for a
visit each day to learn English. She advertiser services a lot and even the
custodial staff used it. Beyond that I asked her to be more involved in teacher
appreciation activities. And she did coordinate the parents coming into
cooking appreciation lunch with teachers. She worked very diligently to
organize this. I would like to see her tap into all our families and not just the
Hispanic families in our district. It seems like a very select few Hispanic
families because she is of Hispanic descent and all. She communicated with
and has a strong relationship with our also Hispanic. The parent coordinator
should not be specifically for Hispanic families they should serve all families
no matter what race. On one hand I think the parent coordinators may think
that’s who they’re here for but on the other hand I believe that sometimes
people of other races do not direct parents to the parent involvement
coordinator because they’re not the same color as the parent. It is said that
we use them as translator interpreters most of the time. I would like to see
her form relationships with more of our subgroups instead of the majority of
her students there Hispanic.

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<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Offer language acquisition; Need promote EPIC services; Involved with parent organizations; EPIC should include all families; Culture/language connects families to EPIC; Connection to EPIC services based on race; Translate/interpret; EPIC mainly connected with Hispanics because they choose her most</th>
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As far as culture goes I don’t think our parent coordinators are trained or
qualified to do what they need to do when it comes to understanding and
using culture to our advantage. They are not really qualified to work with
groups of people who are not like them. And until we understand and use the
culture to our advantage we are at a disadvantage academically. If the parent
coordinators are going to work with all families they need to be trained and
skilled at strategies to help all families. I would like to see the program
expanded to include all families and engaging the community. I would like to
see advertising and promotion of the program to make sure that our
community knows what it’s all about and the parameters of its service. I think
principles would be glad to say this is what I would like my parent coordinator
to do but when the parent coordinators have a director above them that is
saying one thing and limiting their practice by saying you can’t do this, and
you can’t do that, and there’s no communication between the principal and
the director, there is no way for all of us to know what is supposed to be
going on. There are no parameters for performance and little accountability.
They don’t tell me what is the role and what’s it all supposed to be about. It
all goes back to very specifically a job description with specific duties.
Currently the position and its duties are so vague until they could be
interpreted as almost anything. Very generic. I don’t think that we have
distinguished what parent coordinators are actually supposed to be
coordinating. Is it parent involvement? Is it parent participation? Does
anyone really know? And I believe it should be all parent involvement
throughout the entire school doing a lot of promotional things, and
engagement in the community... I don’t think that parameter for
performance have been drawn specific enough to let the parent involvement
coordinators know where they stand or what they’re really supposed to do...
Where are the limits? What am I allowed to do?

| EPICs need training and proper credentialing; Need to use culture to our advantage; EPICs need training to teach strategies to families for academics; Administration needs training on EPIC duties; EPIC need goal from district; Needs training on the connection between EPICs and school personnel/ how administration interacts with EPICs |
I believe that our parent coordinator advocate for the Hispanic community neutrally. Mostly because all the relationships that she has with families are with Hispanic families. They call her and say, "I want my child moved out of this teacher’s class", "my child is being bullied", "my child teachers not sending home homework for my child". They go to the parent coordinator instead of administration and expect her to solve their problems. Our parent letter then comes to me and says this parent is not happy. I think there Hispanic parents are more comfortable speaking to our parent coordinator because she is Hispanic. On the other hand if our parent coordinator was an African-American the African-American parents would be more apt to talk to that individual. People like to talk to people who look like them in our school. I have heard parents say they simply do not want to deal with my parent involvement coordinators because she is Hispanic and they would rather talk to someone is an African-American. They do not believe anyone can understand them except for someone who looks like the.

Parents seem to believe anyone can understand them except for someone who does not look like them. If our parent coordinator adhered to always being neutral, for us, and where we are here... Knowing that 80% of our population is Hispanic it would be detrimental. Because I feel like our parent coordinator, her scope is extremely narrow, the trust that that narrow field parents has in her fabulous. I would love to see a broadened into a schoolwide initiative. In the end goal I would like to see our parent coordinator parent involvement opportunities that she would head that advertise that make it and make it happen while also being true to the parents to go to her on a regular basis and trust her and confide in her to use her as a liaison between the school and the families. I would like her to gauge where we are as taking parents happy not happy etc... Parents could give us specific ideas like I want to see this but I do not want to see this for my child. This might not work for us at this point in history. I would love to see her broader scope to affect all families instead of just the Hispanic families that have grown stressed or over the years. I don’t see as ever having groups of parents other than the Hispanic community fully utilizing her in the capacity that needs to be. Our African-Americans are not going to go to a Hispanic parent coordinator and voice their concerns. I have not seen in the six years I’ve been here. Very marginal. Maybe it could happen if the parent coordinator would advertise self as working for all families so our African-Americans and other families would know they could go to her with her issues. They come to the counselor why don’t they go to the parent coordinator? As it stands right now we really don’t know what parent coordinators limits are and I would like to see that outlined in the job description. I think our parent coordinators need to be hired with a specific expectation much like teachers and counselors administrators etc... Because without that expectation and clear guidelines how can we expect them to know anything about the job?

I think parent coordinator does have a role in academic achievement not so much a direct instruction but she is vitally important to us when a child is not achieving to him the contact us parents and for us to be able to have communication. Without her doing the translating there will be no

Connect EPIC program with academic achievement; EPIC is critical to
Communication about what is happening with the child in the classroom and so she is vitally important to us and she's a link to the family. All this is based on just language barriers.

I would like to see parent coordinators trained, would like to see the roles identified and not just a job description, but here's your role and you accomplish this goal. I don't see it is just being mono faceted but I would hope they would be like everyone else and wear a lot of hats. I do not want to see them pigeonholed into very specific duties if it limits their practice. I would like to see them trained on how to adapt and thrive or needing parents through figuring out what is best for their specific environment at school. I would also like to see them trained on how to train parents with specific strategies on how parents can help children learn to do their school work at home. Translating information and interpreting is vital to the program so I would like to see them have more training in that area. We might consider hiring translators for that specific purpose and having a hold of the position as parent involvement coordinators so they could be more liaisons to families in the community. This way they could spend more time forming the relationships with parents and going on home visits etc... The parent coordinator of the future should spend a lot more time coordinating all parent activities involvement throughout the school. They should also offer professional development for parents in school and in the home on subjects that would help the child achieve academically and grow emotionally and behaviorally. We need a lot of guidance from our district setting the boundaries about what these individuals can do what they can't do. We need guidance on whether all of us should do the same thing just adapter on educational environment. When things are unclear it creates ambiguity and frustration on the part of everyone. We need to build the program and advertise to all the parents and the community so they know what services we offer. I don't think we do a good job of that but I do believe we can improve. In the parent involvement coordinators defense I don't know that we've ever been trained or told about the extent of their duties. So far the director of parent involvement coordinators has said your practice is limited to this and this, and you can't do this and this... But what if that is something our school really needs our parent coordinator to do to be successful? There's not good communication between the director the district parent coordinator and the principal to say this is really what should look like. I think that the district should set a basic boundary and then we should yield to the local need in the local knowledge of the community in which our school is in an our specific needs is an educational environment.
I do think the relationship between you, our counselor and our parent coordinator is very unique in our district. You work very closely together and all that you do. I don't think this happened to the other schools. Sometimes the policy that governs a position such as parent coordinator is the barrier to success in our school for students and for our staff. You two seem to have worked your way around this and you have tried to adapt to our specific needs in our school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPIC works with support services to strengthen all programs. Parent center used as a place for parent conferences, meetings, resource center; EPIC should adapt to local school needs and build from there.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment [PE47]: EPIC critical to school communication and parent meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment [PE48]: Scheduling parent meetings and providing resources for all</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comment [PE49]: EPIC has valuable local knowledge</td>
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<td>Her primary role in our school is to coordinate parent involvement activities. For example: every Wednesday we have parents come to clean up our playground. Parents also come to help with a loss to unsellect. Also pairs come to distribute the fruit and vegetable program that we have a Fair Street. She also coordinates 6 to 8 parent training sessions throughout the year. They are sometimes held during the day and sometimes during the evening. She has done sessions to help parents understand math. She has else's with parents for example our Title I night. This session involves informing players about title I and all that involves. So she is like our liaison between...she is the mediator between home and the school.</td>
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<td>This is my 17th year in the business of education. I was a teacher for 5 to 6 years in elementary school. I also worked two years in the middle school. I taught third grade 5th grade and seventh grade. I coached girl's basketball for a couple of years at the middle school and it was a lot of fun. Then I want to be an administrator when I grew up. The first opportunity was in Gainesville Georgia. I was the assistant principal at Gainesville Elementary for about eight months and then got transferred to Fair Street. I was in AP at Fair Street for two years and then in 08 Dr. Dyer became a superintendent I became interim principal for a few months and the school governance Council nominated me to be principal. So I have been the permanent principal of Fair Street since 08. And that is a quick professional background and I am currently pursuing my EDD like you are Liberty University. Hopefully...shortly... I will soon be doing my Dissertation.</td>
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<td>I want to be an administrator because all the other administrators ran their school and I thought I could be as good or better than them... And that's why wanted to be an administrator because I thought I could do it as good or better than anybody that I had seen in my career. The one thing that I found out quickly is that once you get into the position you cannot do all your ideas...just because role of the job... So that's why I want to become an administrator. So I've been doing it for about 10 years now. Almost a decade yes sir. When I think about it I say &quot;oh my gosh&quot; I've been in this district for around nine years and it does not seem like that long... A lot of change...</td>
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<tr>
<td>The most important part of the parent involvement coordinator program at my school is letting the parents know that we need them here... That we need them here to help our school and that's why we have been doing things</td>
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like lost and found cleaning of the playground etc. We have 700 kids and we need the parents in a lot of ways. We need them to help keep our playground claim because our playground is a public playground. People use it over the weekend and all the time and we want to support our community through this. We want in our building to help distribute the fruits and vegetable program. Want them to be in our building not only for their children but to help us to get the word out in the community about what we're doing in math and other subjects in our school. We'll show them how to help a child read and make sure they're helping their children read when they get home at night for 20 minutes. One of our main messages is that we don't just want you here that we need to hear. The thing that EPICS helps with the most is still with the idea about a DUDES day. The word DUDE means daddy's uncles dudes and everyone else. So we do that to three times a year we invite all the men into our building and have lunch or breakfast for them. We need men in our building because we're not sure if kids know their fathers are not. Like last time we had a child who did not recognize her father... she had I seen him in three years. But he came to DUDES day. So that once again is letting parents know that we need you here. We try to let them know that the most important part of our job is letting parents know that we don't want to hear... we need you here. We need you here.

The EPIC in our school's first off... a parent. She is a parent of one of our kids and I think that... So after our original parent coordinator left we had a list of candidates who applied and I thought not only is she qualified for the job but she had a special interest in our school because her kids are here. So um... my personal experience with her has been great she does whatever it takes because like yesterday there was a bus accident with some kids and I got a call about it they need a translator as I walked to the front door she's coming in from another meeting and I said we need you over Atlanta Street and Summit and I want to go there with my kids and by the time I got there she was already on the bus helping the kids understand what was going on... She was translating to kids who did not speak English and made it a lot easier in contacting moms. So she has whatever it takes attitude and it's so helpful to have a parent coordinator that you get to have that experience with to do whatever it takes. Right now currently she is leading small groups with kids who are new to the country and because she's bilingual she understands and she can put them on Rosetta Stone and that's another way we use her. She is an inspirational person who is a very positive and she does whatever needs to be done to involve the parents and help our kids.

Inviting families and for any involvement we can afford to reading events, school events and helping to coordinate any opportunity that would allow Paris to be part of our school. She is a great relationship with our community our kids our families and our teachers. The one relationship I would like to see improvement in and is not necessarily her fault... But sometimes the perception is their job is only to work with Spanish-speaking families and children. This is not true she is there for all families. She is her prayer involvement coordinator that is there to speak to all families and all students not just Hispanic families. So that is the um... That is the one area that as a district we really need work on... Is that our prior coordinators are there for

| Comment [PE17]: Available and accessible |
| Comment [PE18]: EPIC engages marginalized populations |
| Comment [PE19]: EPIC need to train parents how to help students |
| Comment [PE20]: Personal/moral connections to serve families |
| Comment [PE21]: Constant communication and feedback to serve families and school |
| Comment [PE22]: Translate and interpret |
| Comment [PE23]: Personal lasting relationships with families/parent connected to EPIC not school |
| Comment [PE24]: Language connects families to EPIC |
| Comment [PE25]: Parent center for networking and educating parents and students |
| Comment [PE26]: Moral guided decisions |
| Comment [PE27]: Promote culture of equal collaboration for student success/social justice/hidden rules of acculturation into dominant culture |
| Comment [PE28]: Educates families includes marginalized families |
| Comment [PE29]: Time in program reveals needs |

for parent involvement; Accessible/ available; EPIC engages community; Train parents on teaching academics to students; Engage parents;
all families not just the ones who speak Spanish. Not just Latino families who need interpreting services or translation but all families. Every school has a bilingual parent coordinator in our district.

We may not have formal meetings but we talked frequently every day about ideas what's going on with our families and children. We really don’t have a formal schedule or set time that we meet every week but she is a member of our school governance Council so she is at least in that meeting. Additional times when we are together we communicate. Like she came to me today... My office is right across from hers and she knows I have an open door policy... So she knows this means we can sit and chat about ideas anytime she would like... She is very accommodating we collaborate on many issues facing our school, families, students in our community. A lot of times you'll come in after my advice and or guidance about the things she does or thinks you want to do.

I believe that we have sent the parent coordinators to training at Pioneer RESA about two times this year. I know also last year and this year we send them to a conference for parent involvement coordinators I believe that we need to find the money to send them to trainings. I know ours is participating some of the training for the district is offered. I'm not sure if they still have the periodic parent involvement coordinator meetings with goal two.

I love to see the district connect parent coordinator involvement to goal two learning supports meetings. I do know that we get money from district office through title one to train parent involvement coordinators. Some is used for supplies and some is usual professional development. So we definitely get different support in that.

I would like to see additional training on strategically involving parents. Because some of the things I mentioned earlier like picking up trash and delivering fruits and vegetables... I want training to be deeper than that. We know there's a language barrier because half the kids are second-language kids that only speak Spanish and a lot of their parents do... So I can understand some parents may not be able to communicate and help with reading and all those other things. But I think we need additional preparation for parent involvement coordinators in the area of how to involve the parents in academic stuff and expect them to be involved in that. That would be my number one recommendation.

I think that one of the key things that I see is the fact that our parent coordinator tries to learn about families on the personal level. I think one of the things we have to do is embrace the cultures we have... meaning... I'm learning that the Latino families do almost everything together. So instead of fighting that we need to recognize and embrace that and learn how can we take advantage of that social norm and use that to build social capital among the community. How can we use this to help kids achieve and become involved for the families and our school. So for the non-Latino families their cultural norms as a part of the culture. How do we use all those things to benefit us? Instead of fighting it... again I'm not saying that we don't have good intentions... I think sometimes we don't understand it we don't
embrace it and we can embrace what we don’t understand. So we can embrace that and make it more of an effort to understanding that I believe we can build social capital with the families or school when we understand where they are coming from and their talents and strengths because there are some intelligent and very smart people... They open at restaurants and other businesses so they have to be intelligent... And how do we take advantage of this and encourage their involvement when we consistently do that... Then will be more effective in building social capital families...

We have to embrace the culture and we can’t fight it. If our school... Fair Street is 67% Latino... If our practices and behaviors do not support the culture...like during Hispanic Heritage week/ month... If we’re not doing anything for Hispanic Heritage month it is a crime. But now will do something for Black history month... But it’s only 20% of our kids. We’re ignoring a big part of our culture and our school... We have to understand and embrace the culture because it would benefit us and our families... we can learn so much from each other... Like one thing we do every year during a harvest festival...

We learned that in Mexico during the harvest... they harvest corn... This is one of the biggest hits in a harvest festival every year because it recognizes that part of the Latino culture. If the things we do don’t support the culture and were not supporting our community our kids or families. The culture then will not play a role in our school or district. We may never understand it but do we need to embrace it and accepted as part of our culture if are going to succeed. We do not need to fight it we need to let it do what naturally does.

Neutral advocacy means she’s in the middle. I think that for the role generally is to be neutral and title funds pay them to do this. It is really an opportunity for school to have a parent coordinator who advocate for families to be that neutral advocate for children...because again when we’re having meetings with parents we deal with consequences, you know, so I want to see more than one side of the story and hope that our parent coordinator can be neutral on the side of the family to show us all perspectives.

I like to think that our parent coordinator is very beneficial to families and again I like to see that role of advocate for all families and not just Latino families. Sometimes I do see an adverse effect on families like when the parent coordinator makes a decision based on neutrality she has been accusing some Hispanic families of kind of being a turncoat or a Benedict Arnold. Even some of the Hispanic families have said to her. As black people have said to me. I thought you were one of us... I think I got use of that a couple of days ago and it usually happens on a weekly basis where a black person or black family will say I thought you were for us... And I will tell them out for children all children all families in your child did this therefore the consequences are this... Our EPIC has experienced the same thing. And she is expressed to the parent that your child was seen on video doing this or this at school or on the bus and the consequences is it does not matter what race or color you are. It does not matter if you’re Hispanic or black their consequences either way. So maybe that neutrality gets her accused of not being Latino or Hispanic enough. You know... For the people you know...?

| Find ways to get parents to work for school; Build lasting relationships with families | EPIC embraces majority culture in district; Dominant culture hidden rules; Social justice; Celebrate all cultures; EPIC educate families on hidden rules of acculturation; Research cultures in district and train EPICs to incorporate in school; Expect conflict and offer choices |
| Comment [PE45]: How can parents help in their own way according to cultural / cultural norms integrated into school through EPIC |
| Comment [PE46]: Social justice/ equal power sharing |
| Comment [PE47]: Traditions engrained with hidden rules |
| Comment [PE48]: EPIC educates about hidden rules/ acculturation |
| Comment [PE49]: Educate about all cultures |
| Comment [PE50]: Training needed to integrate culture into school culture |
| Comment [PE51]: EPIC mediate between families and school |
| Comment [PE52]: Easy access to EPIC |
| Comment [PE53]: Liaison services between school and family |
| Comment [PE54]: EPIC only real consistent connection from school to home for second language families |
| Comment [PE55]: EPIC is center of communication for school and parents |
Um... I would like to think so because she is on school governance Council and because our school governance Council is aware of our challenges in academic achievement action plans and all those things. And I think she does because she is tied to our strategic plan at our school into any plans we have for improvement. Her role in school governance Council involved in a lot of different aspects that are the parent coordinators may not be a part of because she is a parent representative. She has a vested interest in our school because she has children enrolled in our school. I think that makes a difference.

I see the parent involvement coordinator program is a program that tells parents we need you. I feel like I’m like summarizing. We want to tell parents we need you here and there some opportunities for us to show them that we need them here to help us maintain control of our playground and carry out programs... To be in our school and in the classrooms... So we can show you what’s important in math and reading and how to support your kids at home. We need you to give us feedback on how were doing. So my vision for the future parent coordinator program. Letting the parents know we need you and we expect you to be here. You may not be able to be here physically because you’re working but you can contribute in other ways. You know, because parent involvement. What part of all it looks like. It doesn’t look like it used to look. So prayer could be involved with outcome in the building is a working during the day so um... So my vision is we need you here one way or another.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EPIC part of parent organizations; EPIC part of academic success; EPICS has children enrolled in Elementary 5/ has vested interest; Moral responsibility based decisions</th>
<th>Family/ school connection is important for success; EPIC teach parents how to teach students from home; Navigate families through acculturation and school process;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comment [PE56]: EPIC help parent organizations
Comment [PE57]: EPIC trains students
Comment [PE58]: EPIC has moral responsibility to have vested interest in school
Comment [PE59]: EPIC works to close school to home network
Comment [PE60]: Teach families about educational process
**Level 2 Coding for PRI (Principals)**

| Accessible and available to families and faculty | Translator-interpreter |
| Community resource referral and knowledge | Connects school to families |
| Navigates families through the school system | Help second language families |
| Limited time because they are alone | Teaching parents |
| Importance of culture | Social work background | Education importance |
| Can’t implement all the changes you’d like to see | Communicating with families |
| Constantly talking with staff and administration | Looks for resources |
| Speaks the language of dominant culture | Helps work through acculturation issues |
| Hire interpreters | EPIC more community oriented | Knowledge of culture helps |
| One stop shop for answers to parent questions | Workshops for parents |
| Educate second language students about valuing their culture | Work with PTA |
| Need continuous training on culture and school success | Training in academics |
| Need to communicate more with each other | Strategies to include cultures in school |
| Public speaking and teaching | Uses technology |
| Meet the family where they are | Admits mistakes/works to improve |
| Family as part of school process | Shows initiative |
| Recognize importance of culture | Role model /mentor | Professionalism |
| Neutral advocate | Morally based decisions | Help socioeconomic levels understand |
| Sensitive to family needs | Directs students toward success |
| EPICs engage the community | Training for diverse cultures | Home Visits |
| More leadership role | Hold parents accountable for student success |
| Misconception of EPIC role | Hispanic only EPIC program | EPIC for all families |
| Connects parent involvement with student success | Cross training important |
Education important for success in life  
See things from different perspectives

Work background important  
Title I

School culture important and connected to student and school success

Different professional roles support student success  
Achievement based goals

Teach student social responsibility  
Loving and caring adults to guide students

Teach students why we do what we do  
EPICs accumulate knowledge of resources

EPIC role needs to be targeted  
Enjoys her job  
Responds to everyone’s needs

Communicate informally often with administration and staff  
Parent education

Interpreter/translator  
Connection between language and family involvement

Good relationships  
Communication important  
Promote EPIC services

Funding through Title I limits services with job duty restrictions  
Training is important

Family resources and services needed  
Attendance support for families

Navigate families through educational system  
Parent education

Title I management; No limit to EPIC services  
EPIC services should be for all families

Not just Hispanic  
School environment important  
Relationships are important

Culture connected with school for success  
Race not a barrier to success

Help educate students and families to help race issues  
Case by case basis

Educate families on policy and law  
Immigration issues important

Partnerships between families and school  
EPIC liaison services

Help families be allies for school  
Bridge to families from school

Communication from school to home  
Assertive parent involvement

EPIC to engage community for attendance and discipline

EPIC training in methods to engage community proactively  
Training people skills

Training effective communication  
Train parents in communication with school

EPIC work on educating about assumptions from families about school
Academic support for families  Facilitates communication  Value education
Goal related strategies  EPIC provides liaison services  Easy form relationships
Assumption of trust built on color of skin  Trust built on language
Assumption of social justice  Equal, no one up position, sharing of power
Resources for families  Community resource referral
Accept family where they are  Feedback on student performance
Show hidden rules of dominant culture  EPIC explains school processes and the law
EPIC helps with Immigration concerns  Need district direction
Constant casual communication administration and EPIC
Personal relationships with staff  Collaboration with administration, families and staff
EPICs need training beyond current and ongoing  All staff communicate and collaborate
EPIC part of learning supports  Remove barriers to learning
All learn together, families & school  EPIC educate parents and families
Parent workshops  Training on how to engage diverse cultures
How to help students with homework  Positive environment
Language is catalyst for relationship w EPIC  EPIC takes initiative
Culture connected to success  Accumulated knowledge builds program
EPIC knows community  Collaborated with parent organizations
Role model and mentor to students and families  Explains school to families
Navigates families through education system  Educates about acculturation
EPIC communication tool  Translate and interpret  EPIC helps families find a way
Mediator between school and family  EPIC not for Hispanic only
Offers parent conference meeting place  Central parent meeting place
Continuous growth through communication  Need parent training
EPIC teaches language acquisition  Reluctant leader  Education important
Parent center available for families to learn and network  Translate/interpret

Can’t make all changes wanted  For all families

Bring parents in school and organize efforts  Not for Hispanic only

EPIC works with parents on how to be involved  Need vision for program

EPIC critical to school communication  EPICs need training

EPIC needs training to expand services according to school needs

EPIC needs district direction  EPIC belongs in community to engage

Training parents to help school  Needs district goals and training

Families connected to language and culture/race  Offer parent education

EPIC helps educate on culture and guide policy

Need training and credentialing  Title one directs program

Administration needs training on EPICs to direct program  Training is needed for EPICs

Need district direction for EPICs  Accumulated knowledge guides services

Race, culture factors in success  Continuous program development for EPICs

EPICs need basic training  Training on engage diverse cultures

Need specific strategies on how to include parents in their child’s educational

EPIC tied to academics  Parent connected to EPIC not school

Parent center meeting place for network and education  Offer language acquisition

Need promote EPIC services  Involved with parent organizations

EPIC should include all families  Culture/ language connects families to EPIC

Connection to EPIC services based on race  Translate/ interpret

EPIC mainly connected with Hispanics because they choose most

EPICs need training and proper training and credentialing  EPIC need goal from district

Need to use culture to our advantage Morality based obligation to serve families

EPICs need training to teach strategies to families for academics
Administration needs training on EPIC duties  Language encourages connection
Family feels connected to EPIC not school  EPIC builds trust
Needs training on the connection between EPICs and school personnel/ how administration interacts with EPICs
EPIC forms personal relationships with families  EPIC needs district direction
Races choose who they want to work with in schools  Title I limits services
Hispanic naturally wants to speak to an EPIC who is Hispanic
People want same race for service in schools  District needs to set boundary
EPIC need training on school wide initiatives
EPIC forms lasting relationships with families  Need training on including all cultures
Other races do not use EPIC because they want to be served by same race
Connect EPIC program with academic achievement  EPICs should be in community
EPIC is critical to communication; translate/interpret  Local experience important
Language is factor in achievement and school success  Want to improve school
EPICs need direction and training to achieve program goals  Change is constant
Critical in promoting and organizing parent involvement
District should hire translators/interpreters  Limited ability to change things
EPICs need training on how to coordinate all parent activities in schools
Need clear guidelines and goals on how they should proceed with work everyday
Continuous conversation and evaluation needed to improve EPIC services
EPIC not bound by professional boundaries  Promote positive school environment
EPIC need training to meet needs of schools  Traditionalized parent involvement
District needs to decide on what we need  Education important
EPIC works with support services to strengthen all programs
Parent center used as a place for parent conferences, meetings, resource center
EPIC should adapt to local school needs and build from there
Parent involvement important to school success  Families connected to EPIC not school
Parent involvement management vs. parent involvement
Teaching parents to help students academically  Title I and local needs guides services
School to home connection important for success  Accessible/ available
Accumulated knowledge builds program  EPIC communicate between home and school
Easy entry point for parent involvement  EPIC engage community
Train parents on teaching academics to students  Engage parents
EPIC connected to district through her children  Translate/interpret
Constant casual communication and collaboration  Not bound by professional boundaries
Language connects culture  Parent education  EPIC engages the community
Parent center meeting place for family education and networking
EPIC supports parent involvement connections to student success
Accumulated knowledge creates resources and program activities
EPIC not just for Hispanics  Want to serve all families  Communicate constantly
Involved in parent organizations  Educate parent on school policy
Cultural education to guide policy  EPIC moral responsibility to help
Importance of culture in school improvement and success
EPIC need training; Need district direction  EPIC important to district success
No standard of practice/ driven by local knowledge  Title I managed in schools by EPICs
Need training on methods to involve parents in schools
Language connects relationships  Need preliminary training for EPICs
Train parents to help students with academics  Train EPICs to engage diverse cultures
No limited by professional boundaries  Form lasting relationships
Family connected to EPIC not school  Explore cultural norms to help school
Traditionalized practices for parent involvement do not work for all cultures

Find ways to get parents to work for school Build lasting relationships with families

EPIC embraces majority culture in district Dominant culture hidden rules

Social justice Celebrate all cultures Mediator for family/school

EPIC educate families on hidden rules of acculturation

Research cultures in district and train EPICs to incorporate in school

Expect conflict and offer choices EPIC part of academic success

EPIC mediator between school and home EPIC accessible and available

Advocate for families Value of EPIC critical to school

EPIC part of parent organizations Not only for Hispanics

EPIC part of every area of school Caught between school, family and home culture

Moral responsibility based decisions

Family/ school connection is important for success

EPIC teach parents how to teach students from home

Navigate families through acculturation and school process
Level 3 PRI Coding

Centralized communication throughout school
Continuous casual conversation guides daily transactions
Parent involvement coordinator program valuable to school success
Promoting collaborative and welcoming school environment
EPIC promotes positive school environment
EPIC part of school governance
EPIC supports staff, the community and families
### Appendix H

**Teacher Focus Group Data Chart**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEA – Level 1 Coding</th>
<th>1. Please describe the role of the EPIC in your school</th>
<th>2. Please describe your personal experiences with the EPIC in your school.</th>
<th>3. Please describe any training you have experienced to help you understand the role of the EPIC.</th>
<th>4. Please describe ways in which your EPIC develops relationships with families at your school.</th>
<th>5. Please describe your experiences with your EPIC and advocacy for students and families.</th>
<th>6. Describe your vision for future EPIC program and personnel development.</th>
<th>7. Where do you see the EPIC program going in the future for your school and the district?</th>
<th>8. How can the EPIC at your school help and collaborate with you to help you as a teacher and your students?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TEA1 Available, approachable and accessible; Need training to know about EPIC services; Offers resources to families; Translator/Interprets;</td>
<td>He tries to help no matter what. He has a great sense of humor and makes everyone feel comfortable. He is a parent conference facilitator, an interpreter, translator of parent</td>
<td>I have had a good experience with him so far. He has only been here since the first of the year. We’re all getting to know him and he seems nice. He seems to care.</td>
<td>I was trained my first year as a new teacher on what the parent center was for. Since then I use it to check out materials for my classes, for parent conferences and refer my parents there for guidance on community help.</td>
<td>He is new but seems to be getting to know everyone pretty well. I have only talked with him on a couple of occasions but he seems to be sincere and wants to help our school. The parent center is right in the</td>
<td>I have talked with him and he seems like he wants to help. Sometimes I think he’s kind of overwhelmed by all the things he supposed to be doing for families and our faculty. I can imagine it must be hard for him at times. He just has to find a way to help while he is trying to find his way through.</td>
<td>I would like to see the parent center expanded like a library and EPIC services promoted more. If parents don’t know about what is offered they do not even know what questions to ask. We need to tell them about the</td>
<td>I hope he gets training from the district or from another EPIC that has been here a long time. I think it’ll help him. I would like to see a close association with the PTA and other groups that include parent leadership. He could be there</td>
<td>He seems to be taking a lot on his shoulders right now but we’re all trying to go by and check on him. He is calling other EPICs now and I think they are helping him know what he needs to be doing and what he needs to be letting us know to help the kids. I do know he asks us about kids needing school supplies and coats.</td>
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<td><strong>Needs to promote EPIC services; Teacher/mentor; Not just Hispanics; All families; Academic help to students and families; Involved in parent organizations; Approachable</strong></td>
<td><strong>involvement materials, a provider of resources for academics in the parent center and a source for community resource referral.</strong></td>
<td><strong>front office so he just being there will get parents to talk with him. Many times I have seen EPIC1 call to follow up with families after their child has been in school for a couple of months just to make sure things are okay. This surely makes a parent feel as if the school cares about their family.</strong></td>
<td><strong>good things he offers. We need to make intentional efforts with this just like we do for academics. There should not be limits that keep us from getting students where they need to be. EPIC1 should be trained to teach parents how to help their kids at home.</strong></td>
<td><strong>We sent him a list.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>TEA2 Available and approachable; Hispanic</strong></td>
<td><strong>She is really nice and she is always there for me if I come and need</strong></td>
<td><strong>She is great. She introduced herself to me my first day teaching</strong></td>
<td><strong>She’s involved with our PTA and governance council. This puts her in places where she can meet Training is always important for all the people are affected by going to</strong></td>
<td><strong>She stays in contact with us all the time about families and we talk every day without having formal meetings. I can’t imagine not having her. I would like them and their services to be more well-</strong></td>
<td><strong>I have never been trained officially. I have just learned how to use her First she meets and greets, then she starts talking about our school,</strong></td>
<td><strong>I can’t imagine not having her. I would like them and their services to be more well-</strong></td>
<td><strong>We sent him a list.</strong></td>
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<td>Help</td>
<td>I don’t use her very much but I need her when I need her. She is the person I go to if I need to call families that don’t speak English. When I need an interpreter she is the very best and she knows the families better than any of us. And then she sits down to build that lasting relationship. It shows because so many families come to see her each day. She is always where parents and students gather. Spanish speakers want to talk with others who speak the language. In our district people seem to want to be served by school personnel of their same race. Our people and help families in many ways. Just her role in fundraising helps every student participate. They may not know she helped but often times she was very involved. Over time. I know she probably offers more but we all use her for communication to home and for conferences. She’s an incredible translator in parent conferences and she really knows how to talk to kids to get them to listen and do their work. She knows the families better than any of us.</td>
<td>Language connects EPIC to families; Interpreter / Translate; Offers resources to families in need; EPIC has moral obligation to families; Forms lasting personal relationships with families; Families not connected to school but EPIC; Need to help.</td>
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<td>TEA3</td>
<td>Home-school connection important to school; Promotes school positive environment; EPIC</td>
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<td>The connection between the teachers and the families is important and she makes sure we’re connected with situations</td>
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<td>She always helps with family needs and supports teachers. She works with our counselor to go to homes sometimes and that</td>
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<td>I remember vaguely we talked about training in the past but it never came to pass. New teachers really need to know about her services and the parent</td>
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<td>She is constantly calling the families at home and sending communications. They seem to respond better to her than anyone</td>
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<td>It is all about being where they are. Even at after school events she is always there talking and taking parent comments and suggestions on how we can make our school better. She calls and checks in with</td>
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<td>Our EPIC is so nice and we all love her. I want to see her services promoted so everyone can see the great things she’s doing. She needs to be</td>
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<td>I can say that I would like to see it grow into having everyone at the front desk trained direct people to the parent center no matter what their race. The EPIC can help</td>
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| Epics tries to interact with all families but the assumption is that she’s here to serve Hispanics. |

| have to learn from other teachers. |

| EPIC tries to interact with all families but the assumption is that she’s here to serve Hispanics. |

| constant casual communication; collaboration; All learn together; Parent involvement helps school environment; |

| promote EPIC services; Promotes positive school environment; |

<p>| promote EPIC services; Promotes positive school environment; Constant casual communication; collaboration; All learn together; Parent involvement helps school environment; |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>collaborat e with everyone; EPIC forms personal relationship with family; Family connected to EPIC not school; Parent center central meeting place for networking and education; Offers resources to families; collaborate with support services; We all learn that might help us to understand a student. I can’t imagine how she could be better at her job. She is someone who creates a welcoming atmosphere for everyone. Teachers respect her and collaborate with her in all their communication home. The parent center was a hub for all communication in the school. Parent center. All new teachers should be trained and new families should be sent through the parent center for orientation. The parent coordinator could tour the school with them, make them feel welcome and talk about expectations. Everyone needs to hear the same message if they’re going to know what to expect from teachers and our school in general. Families that have been with us for a while. I love my families but I can’t speak Spanish. This makes it hard without a translator. Students and families when they are absent from school or from an event. She sees them in Walmart and the community and spends time trying to get to know people. The families love her because she makes the effort to listen and interact. She takes a situation and solves it. She adapts to the family’s needs. There is no pattern she just does it trained on teaching parents how to help their kids with homework, how parents can help our school and how to manage parent activities. All these things change as the culture of school changes. Teaching changes a lot and I am sure the State changes things for EPICs. We need to know so we can help families and our school as much as possible. with most things if they just talk with her.</th>
<th>reveals issues that we don’t know about that students bring to school. I have never asked her to help and had her refuse. I look to her for resources and she looks to teachers to see what we need. In the end we all work together by talking and sharing.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>together; Available, accessible and approachable; Engages community; Need training for teachers about EPIC; Promote EPIC services; Educate families about EPICs; Offers centralized communication in from school to home; Interpret/translate; Collaborate</td>
<td>conferences are facilitated in the parent center and our families know where to go. They like interacting with EPIC3 and sometimes come in to sit and just talk.</td>
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</table>
es on equal level with families/ no one up position;
Needs training to teach parents how to help with homework; Need district direction; Culture is important for school to succeed with family involvement; Need training on engaging and including marginalized population
| TEA4 Liaison services; Resources for educators; Parent center of communication and education; Coordinates parent involvement; Organizes parent events; Works with parent/community organizations; | We go way back a long time and we’ve been living in the same subdivision for 7 years. We’re on the homeowner association and know each other well. We have seen many changes in our school district and mostly we work together on cultural events. I go way back a long time and we’ve been living in the same subdivision for 7 years. We’re on the homeowner association and know each other well. We have seen many changes in our school district and mostly we work together on cultural events. | She is a liaison to the families and provides information for teachers in the classroom. She has a library of information that helps in the parent center. She gets teachers to teach parents at school and in the community. She helps to organize and promote. She comes to classes one on one and tries to help with all situations. She has no formal training but works hard to get out information to staff and families. Maybe she could tell us how we can help her as well and vice versa. The district has not given the EPIC the opportunity to give them the floor to. She gives a voice to families. She helps them learn English with Rosetta Stone. She gives information about how families can get help and how they can help their child. I’m not aware of all she does but I know she helps them to complete documents and answered questions about daily. She really works hard together to come up with solutions no matter what it takes. When I need an interpreter she is the very best and she helps parents to understand what I need. EPIC4 is such a good resource and not everyone uses her like they should. Sometimes she speaks for the teacher and sometimes for student. If she can’t come up with help then she calls people she knows in the community. I would like to see more opportunity to expand her program. She has great ideas. Sometimes I feel like EPIC4 is pigeon holed into working with only Hispanic families. This is a pity because she has something to offer everyone. Teachers need to be trained on her services and parents need. I hope it will stay with us but I hope it will be expanded. I would love to see all EPICs model their program after Elementary 4. Maybe media center training would help her to organize the parent center. It is like a whole extra library in the school. Teachers check our materials as well as parents. She is well respected around here. The district could do new teacher training and get the word out about her services as part of a normal part of our schools. Parent coordinators need a place at the table and a voice. |
| Approach able and available; All work/learn together; Needs district direction; Staff needs training; Acculturation guidance; language acquisition; social justice; Offers resources to families; Easy entry point for families; Builds community network of resources; Not | cultural events at our school. She really helps in building a community in our school that welcomes parents. She gives families a voice that may not speak up otherwise | think we have a great relationship with each other. | express their needs to be successful or to just do their job. | things that directly affect them. I mean families in need. Parents come to EPIC4 with all kinds of things. They come from other schools in the district because she has a long standing reputation of being good to people. Once they meet EPIC4 they come back to our school all the way through high school and even after that. She is like a part of many families. She | to be funneled through the parent center when they register as a requirement. This would teach our families that we will not put up with selective services based on the color of a person’s skin. |
Hispanic only/ for all families; New teacher training would help educate about WPIC; EPIC collaborates and communicates constantly with everyone; We all learn together; Promotes a positive and supportive environment at school for families; Need

never gives up on people and they sense that at every visit. The families need may not be something the school can provide so she goes to the community to find the solution. EPIC4 has always been a resource for faculty and families’ and she works with us to facilitate the dialog we need to get students and parents motivated to work toward academic and
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training to help parents help their child with homework; Needs to spend more time engaging the community</th>
<th>TEA5 Offers resources for families; Translate/interpret; Center of communication for school to home; New teachers need training; EPIC forms personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She offers resources for families at our school. If a student is in need of clothes, food, shelter or money she tries to get help for them through the community. Parents love the parent center and they come.</td>
<td>I only use her for Spanish translation and parent conferences. She is a good translator and interpreter and she seems supportive. She talks with the families before teacher-</td>
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<tr>
<td>I wish they would train new teachers and retrain older ones of us. We need to meet about the parent center and find out what is offered. We need faculty training on community resources, the EPIC program in all the schools and program.</td>
<td>She has known these families forever because she’s been here for a long time. She goes to homes and talks to families with our counselor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>She knows the families and helps them out when they need clothes or food. She helps them understand school. EPIC5 is efficient and has to facilitate conferences for every teacher in the entire school. There is no backup for her and all of us depend on her as the connection between the school and the home of the students.</td>
<td>I would like to have official training because I am sure she offers more than I know. I think she needs training to go out in the community and get parents to help the kids with homework.</td>
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<td>She’s a parent here so I think that helps her to understand out families better. I would like to see her trained to be a social worker and to go into the community to help with giving rides to school for kids who miss the bus. Also some families need help and will never come to her office.</td>
<td>She already helps with calling parents and translating stuff we send home. I would like to see all families sent through her office instead of just Spanish speakers.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
relationships with families; Not bound by personal boundaries; Family connected to EPIC not school; Need faculty training; Coordinates teacher-parent conferences; Culture is important to school success; Engages the community; Coordinates parent involvement;

to see her every day. She knows what is going on in the Hispanic community and that is most of our students. They trust her more every time she works with them. They’ll start to volunteer and try to reciprocate for her help. Our EPIC helps teachers in many ways including scheduling parent conferences, interpreting, translating documents, consulting parent conferences and helps us to facilitate meetings.

development for EPICs to help them to engage families of different cultures and learn how to use the cultures to help the school’s academic success. We need to make our diversity work for us.

Simple things like bus and car rider line are much easier if we have a bilingual individual calling parents. Our EPIC forms relationships really easily and helps families to trust her. They return many times throughout the year with all types of issues such as financial problems and immigration questions. She has to stay informed about all the community resources and immigration laws. They look to her for guidance. I have seen her disagree with parents and try to explain the reality of their child’s behavior. She expresses herself the school. She needs to be trained in forming relationships with families who don’t come in. Again, we need to make our diversity work for us. We have been somewhat successful but if we hired translators and let the EPIC go into homes we’d do a lot better.
Available/approachable/accessible; Parent and student education; EPIC needs training on how to train parents on how to help students with homework; Language connects EPIC to families and culture; Not Hispanic only/for all families; Navigate families in conferences and she supplies us with bilingual materials to help our students well and they usually get it.
<p>| through educational experience; Needs training on forming relationships with marginalized stakeholders and how to get them involved |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TEA – Teacher Level 2 Coding</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Available, approachable and accessible EPIC services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Offers resources to families</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher/mentor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic help to students and families</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EPIC has moral obligation to families</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promotes positive school environment</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent involvement helps school</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parent center central meeting place for networking and education</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collaborates on equal level with families/ no one up position</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Need training on engaging and including marginalized population; social justice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture is important for school to succeed with family involvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Resources for educators</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coordinates parent involvement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizes parent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Works with</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provides acculturation guidance</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Easy entry point for family involvement  
Builds community network of resources

Promotes a positive and supportive environment at school for families  
Needs to spend more time engaging the community

Not bound by personal boundaries  
Coordinates teacher-parent conference

Coordinate parent involvement

EPIC needs training on how to train parents on how to help students with homework

Language connects EPIC to families and culture  
Navigate families through educational experience
Level 3 Teacher Coding

Support for parent to teacher communication

EPICs Engage Families through Communication

EPICs Involved in Academic Achievement

EPIC as Student Mentor

Promotion of Social Justice and Staff Education

Teachers Want Training
## Appendix I

### Parent Focus Group Data Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you know the EPIC in your child’s school?</td>
<td>Yes, I know of him and the lady before him. I have needed services once when the old EPIC was here and she was great.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How often do you use his/her services?</td>
<td>I think EPIC services should be used sparingly and only when families really need help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What brought you to the EPIC at your child’s school?</td>
<td>I wanted to check out take home materials to help my child learn math. It is not like it used to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What would you say is the most common reason for you to use parent involvement services?</td>
<td>I think the most common activity for the EPIC as for checking out different material to help academics at home to reinforce classroom learning. People come in for all kinds of things but I think that is what he’s for.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is most helpful when you access his/her services?</td>
<td>I see a lot of Hispanic parents in his office every time I visit the school so he must be a pretty good person. I don’t know anyone who doesn’t feel welcome. He’s right there in the front office and he is fun to talk with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What services would you like to see from the EPIC that would help you improve your participation in your child’s educational experience?</td>
<td>More computer classes in helping Spanish speakers to learn English. Knowing English is important but kids need to keep reading, writing and speaking Spanish if they knew it when they came to school. Help with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How can I learn more about how families feel about EPIC services?</td>
<td>We should send home a survey and ask parents what they know about the EPIC at their school. What are some ways they could benefit from the program, and also how would they like for Epic to help them. After that we would know a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>input to improve</td>
<td>helped teach me and my child math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAR2 EPIC develops personal relationships; Families connected to EPIC not school; Involved in parent organizations; Promotes positive school environment; Collaborates with everyone so all learn together; Translates/interprets; Offers resources to families; Connected</td>
<td>I have used her services about 3 times this year for resources for my child’s math practice. She has contacted me to recruit volunteers in some capacity about 3 times this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know her. We became friends when she contacted EPIC2 with a volunteer idea and wanted to see if she could help me recruit others to get involved. Since then we have worked on many projects together from PTA meetings to educational seminars for families to cultural after school events. She works hard to make things a success and translates things for all</td>
<td>Help with academics like math. She helped with resources like worksheets and games.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help with academics like math. She helped with resources like worksheets and games.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to fundraising; Approachable and available; Easy entry point for parents to get involved; Need to promote EPIC services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PAR3</th>
<th>I know her</th>
<th>I only use her</th>
<th>I originally</th>
<th>Clothes, heat,</th>
<th>EPIC3 is</th>
<th>I would like to</th>
<th>I agree with</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

opportunities for families so it takes the fear and doubt out of getting involved. They help the media center or at lunch. Organizing things saves the parent volunteer time and they like coming. I honestly wonder if our parents know that we have an EPIC at our school or what her role is. I know they work with our EPIC all the time but I think they view her as a friend and may not know the details of her job.
| Forms personal relationship with families; Not bound by professional boundaries; Parent center is meeting place for networking and education; Offers community resources; Mentor to families/role model; Not Hispanic only; There for all families; Need training on | and she is a friend to everyone at school that is super nice and understanding. She is a person we can relate to who’ll help us with family things. | services when I need help. I go into the parent center a lot just to talk and get to know other parents. It is a meeting place with the EPIC and we kind of got to know each other through her office. I’ve met a lot of parents through coming to parent meetings to learn about things we need to know. Sometimes she uses students in the meetings. | came for help with electricity and heat for my home. I just didn’t have the money to pay. She sent me to First Methodist to get help. I have also been to the parent center when we have parent meetings. | electric, book bags, school supplies, you name it and people come to get it. I only come when I need help or to parent meetings. | always there greeting us in Spanish and English. She is always positive and the kids love her. She spends time with them as a mentor and a friend and plays basketball after school. She mentors parents who have just moved to the U.S. We have immigration issues all the time and she knows how things are. | see them pay EPICs more money. They need training to help them help more families. I see Hispanic families in the parent center mostly, but other families’ should know they are welcome. | everyone. We should send out surveys. That is the only way we can get input. I guess we could just ask a bunch of people. |
| PAR4 Involved in parent groups; Offers resources; Available, accessible and approachable; Forms personal | I know her because of PTA and the parent center. She helped my family when my house burned and some other times. She never judged me. | I go to EPIC4 with all kinds of things. One major thing I like is that she is personable, not overly positive and not overly negative. I feel welcome and she | People come for all kinds of reasons mostly because they have a life need that they can’t provide for their children. Immigration seems to be a big deal and | Once you meet her you’ll always go back. She is personable and nice to everyone. She’ll help you if you need her. I just come around to talk about my | She is nice and she’s here when we need her. Just having her to talk to makes us appreciate her. We cook dinner for the teachers every 6 months and she organizes | She already does training for parents and helps kids do homework. She knows all the families and is interested in our students and families. She looks out | I agree with the other parents. Probably surveys but we’re all kind of tired of having to fill out forms and paperwork. I think we’re okay now. |
| PAR5 | EPIC connected to family | Yes I know her through my church first and then school. I was in PTA and governance council here at school. I like coming in and catching up on things going on but usually I’m in | I think people come in for help the first time and then they keep | I don’t think people know the extent of these services and how great | I like it that she’s teaching kids at school. I hope she can teach in | I guess call people or do surveys. |
surprised to see her here. I’m a single parent and I need help a lot with bills and stuff for my kids.

use her when I need her. She helps as much as she can. Sometimes the community is out of money so we call around until I get help.

trouble financially and need help to get things for my children. EPIC5 is always warm and nonjudgmental. I think all parents need to know about these services. They don’t know what is out there for them. EPIC5 can help if you give her the chance.

returning. They have come in for clothes and school supplies. I always come when I need help with rent, electric or gas, or for food for my kids. It is always something going on in her office when I get there.

EPIC5 helps. Now she is helping kids out with school work during the day and I think that is good. Now I have to schedule a time to see her and I have to wait. She speaks Spanish and I like talking with her so I wait. If nobody else speaks your language what are you supposed to do?

Spanish. I don’t know why they don’t do that in all classes. There are more Hispanic kids here than anything. I like it that there is a Hispanic person here that I can talk to. Someone who knows how it is for us.
between parent involvement and school success; promotes positive environment at school; Stakeholders like to be served by own race or culture; Hispanic only services; EPIC for all families
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Level 2 Parent Coding</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible, approachable and available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helps families with academics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need stakeholder input to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families connected to EPIC not school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotes positive school environment together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translates/interprets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy entry point for parents to get involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forms personal relationships with families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent center is meeting place for networking and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor to families/ role model families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need training on diverse cultures environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need feedback from parents and training to grow EPIC program families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language connects EPIC to family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC connected to family through culture/language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC involved with parent organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection between parent involvement and school success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stakeholders like to be served by own race or culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level 3 Parent Coding

EPIC Approachable to Families

EPIC Collaborates with Parent Organizations

Creating Easy Entry Point for Parent Involvement

EPIC organizes parent involvement activities

Encouraging Parent Involvement

EPIC Needs Training to Improve Services
Appendix J

Documents Coding
**COMPLIANCE**

Maintain excellent records of all parent involvement activities, reports, surveys, evaluations, funding, annual program evaluations, and communications to parents; ensure the school or district's parent involvement program remains in compliance with all state and federal guidelines; stay informed of the most current parental involvement requirements and guidance.

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Take part in professional learning opportunities at the local, regional, and/or state level with proper authorization; attend all local meetings and trainings for Parent Involvement Coordinators; share ideas and experiences with school or district staff, leadership team, and/or other parent professionals.

**QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS**

- Experience serving as an advocate for children and parents
- Excellent communication and organizational skills
- Strong public speaking and presentation skills
- Self-motivated leader who can work independently as well as part of a team
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Knowledge of family engagement research and literature
- Strong knowledge of computers and fundamental technology (i.e. e-learning software, digital and social media)
- Understands and respects the diversity of families' economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds and situations
- Ability to host parent meetings off school sites and in the local community and/or neighborhoods
- Experience with developing collaborative partners and building relationships with constituents in the community
- Experience working in Title I schools
- Strong understanding of student achievement data
- Ability to speak eloquently to school and/or district leaders
- Ability to work flexible hours including some nights and weekends

- Knowledge of culture
- Program built over time

Adaptable

Education requirements vary based on the position, title and/or division. Please consult with your local school(s) and/or district to determine the required level of education for the specific position for which you are applying.
SCHOOL SYSTEM OF STUDY
JOB DESCRIPTION

Position: Paraprofessional – Title I Parent Coordinator
Reports To: Principal
Qualifications:
- High School Diploma or GED
- Communication skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>DUTIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Demonstrates prompt and regular attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assists Title I Teachers with planning and implementation of parent involvement activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assists Title I Teachers with Title I evaluation data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Assists with the implementation and oversight of volunteer program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Conducts home visits as requested by supervisor and interacts with Title I parents as needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>coordinates the take-home computer program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Assists Title I Teachers with preparation and implementation of instructional activities with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Maintains and coordinates the parent resource room, if appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Assists with the distribution of parent resource materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Maintains confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Works well with administrators, teachers and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Performs other duties as assigned.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised: December 2008
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Level 2 Documents Coding</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with support services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC enjoy helping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPICs build relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC for Hispanic only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race is an issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC facilitate parent teacher conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture viewed as important to success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPIC manages Title I activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Level 3 Documents Coding

Liaison services connecting families and school

Manage Title I

Manage parent involvement in the school

Develop and refer to community agencies

Educate on the importance of culture for school success

Teach students for academic growth

Collaborate with all stakeholders to support school success
Appendix K

Field Notes Examples

1-12-15 @ 11:36 AM

Field Note - EPIC 4 - Elementary 4

- EPIC at front desk at arrival
- She was talking to a family moving to the area
- Speaking Spanish
- Move to Parent Center for privacy
- Parent Center close to front reception desk
- Talked to family for half hour - They felt comfortable at a very full of resources

[Diagram of school layout]
Field Notes EPIC 4 - Elementary 4

EPIC office (Parent Center) Front Door

Welcome / bienvenidos

Title I / Título I
Parent opportunities

natie es libre
hasta que todo el mundo es libre

English - No one is free until everyone is free
Field Notes - EPIC 5 - Elementary 5
(Elementary 5 newest school in district)
- EPIC office as you come in front door. Do not have to go through main office to get to Parent Center.

Front Doors (Double Doors)

- Parents bypass office to talk to EPIC
- 4 families in parent center at arrival

- Very social atmosphere
- embryo + falling stories

Date: 1-12-15  Time: 10:15am
Appendix L

Cross Data Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liaison services to Families</th>
<th>Interpret and Translate</th>
<th>Teaching is part of job</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moral Base Decisions</td>
<td>Moral obligation to families</td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personable, Accessible and Available</td>
<td>Family Organizations</td>
<td>Educate Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researching Resources to Help Families</td>
<td>Staff Works Together</td>
<td>Title I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Parent Groups</td>
<td>Fund Raising</td>
<td>Not Hispanic Only-For All Families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Mentality</td>
<td>Connection to Families and School</td>
<td>Navigate through Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral Advocacy and Moral Obligation</td>
<td>Accessible, Approachable, Available</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Understanding of Culture is Important for School Success

Language Connects EPIC to Families | Genuine Care for Families | Mutual Respect |
Meet family’s needs where they are families | Respect culture | Being appreciated by families |
Understand social justice | Role model/ Mentor | Language connects to culture to EPIC |
EPIC not just for Hispanics | Advocate for families | Promote family responsibility |
Encourages parent involvement | Diversity healthy for school | All learn together |
Family success/Student success/School success | Relationships important |
Parents often missing piece in student’s education  Development of EPIC identity

EPIC communication strengthens all programs  Acculturation issues

Teach students social responsibility  Language connections

Include parents in process even though more difficult  Hidden rules/ dominant culture

Connection to Epic not school  Social justice  Want to be treated as equals

Form personal relationships w families  Working and learning together as equals

Culture directs who family seeks/connects/Race directs families and service

EPIC develops personal relationships  Forms personal relationships with families

Not bound by professional boundaries  Accepts family where they are

Hispanic only services  Connection between parent involvement and school success

EPIC for all families  EPIC connected to family through culture/ language

Forms lasting relationships with families  Language connects EPIC to family

Understands Hispanic culture  Involved with immigration issues

Mentor to families/ role model  Parent education  Offers resources to families

Translates/interprets  Families connected to EPIC not school

Hispanic only EPIC; Parent education  Offers resources to families

| The parent involvement coordinator program needs recognition |

Job all-encompassing service  Enjoys work  School environment important

Understand culture  Credentialing  No barrier from professional boundaries

Barriers to learning  Valuable to school and family  No formal training

EPICs need full time Status  Feel like EPIC job not a priority  EPIC-student ratio

Not just translator  Changing job description  Uncertainty of duties  projects inefficiency
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People don’t know what EPICs do</th>
<th>Overwhelming Job</th>
<th>No real district direction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Need training but no real way to train for every situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need continuing education</td>
<td>Connected to other EPICs for training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertise EPIC role and services</td>
<td>Alone and time is limited</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertive parent involvement</td>
<td>Crisis intervention</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology integration</td>
<td>EPICs need community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating community on EPIC program</td>
<td>Training is needed on people skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training forming relationships with diverse cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life experience to make decisions on career</td>
<td>Color of skin assumptions about culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and race build clientele</td>
<td>Guide policy to help everyone understand culture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need training for engage different cultures</td>
<td>Promote tolerance of cultures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accumulated knowledge builds activities for program</td>
<td>EPIC educates staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix M

**EPIC Program Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instructional</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Learning Supports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic small groups for students</td>
<td>Consult administration on cultural/ community services</td>
<td>Welcome families at school and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Center management</td>
<td>Home/school communication</td>
<td>Mentor students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional materials for teachers and families</td>
<td>Coordinate parent organizations</td>
<td>Community agency referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent seminars as needed throughout the school year</td>
<td>Consult administration on cultural/ community services</td>
<td>Home visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually updated resource for teachers through technology</td>
<td>Home/school communication</td>
<td>Translating/ interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent consultation</td>
<td>Collaborate for fund raising</td>
<td>Welcome families at school and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Center management</td>
<td>Consult for school business partners</td>
<td>Promote community learning through learning styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional materials for families</td>
<td>Consult administration on cultural/ community services</td>
<td>Community agency referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent seminars as needed throughout the school year</td>
<td>Home/school communication</td>
<td>Home visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually updated resource for families throughout the year</td>
<td>Coordinate parent organizations</td>
<td>Translating/ interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutor after school for Boys and Girls Club</td>
<td>Consult with administration about vertically aligning parent activities with overall school goals</td>
<td>Volunteer for community work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic small groups for students</td>
<td>Volunteer coordinator</td>
<td>Welcome families at school and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Center management</td>
<td>Consult administration on cultural/ community services</td>
<td>Mentor students in and after school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional materials for teachers and families</td>
<td>Home/school communication</td>
<td>Community agency referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent seminars planned with staff to vertically align lessons with school curriculum</td>
<td>Consult administration on cultural/ community services</td>
<td>Home visits for attendance and academic parent conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continually updated resource for teachers through technology</td>
<td>Home/school communication</td>
<td>Translating/ interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic small groups for second language students</td>
<td>Plan after school events and coordinate tutoring</td>
<td>Welcome families at school and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Center management</td>
<td>Coordinate after school tutoring for students and transport home.</td>
<td>Mentor students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional materials for families</td>
<td>Community agency referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent seminars/ governance meetings as needed throughout the school year</td>
<td>Mentor students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitate parent/ teacher conferences</td>
<td>Translating/ interpreting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinates Rosetta Stone language acquisition software</td>
<td>Collaborates with counselor for individual and group counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic small groups for second language students</td>
<td>Welcome families at school and events</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Center management</td>
<td>Community agency referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instructional materials for families</td>
<td>Home visits – attendance and academic behavioral deficits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent seminars as needed throughout the school year</td>
<td>Translating/ interpreting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix N

Audit Trail

Research Proposal Development - Prior to December 11, 2014

Research Site Approval – October 16, 2014

Proposal Defense - October 28, 2014

Permission to submit proposal to IRB - October 29, 2014

IRB application preliminary review - November 11, 2014

IRB request for revisions – November 13, 2014

IRB Conditional Approval – December 8, 2014

IRB Approval – December 11, 2014

Dissertation Chair permission to begin data collection - December 17, 2014

Recruited and informed participants – December 17, 2014

PRI3 – Interviewed December 18, 2014

EPIC3 Observed Field Note – December 18, 2014 (8:35AM)

PRI5 – Interviewed – January 5, 2015

EPIC5 Observed Field Note – January 5, 2015 (1:20PM)

PRI1 – Interviewed January 7, 2015

EPIC1 Observed Field Note – January 7, 2015 (1:37PM)

EPIC5 – Interviewed January 8, 2015

PRI4 – Interviewed January 12, 2015

EPIC4 Observed Field Note – January 12, 2015 (11:36AM)

EPIC1 – Interviewed January 29, 2015

EPIC3 – Interviewed January 14, 2015

EPIC4 – Interviewed January 18, 2015
PRI2 – Interviewed January 21, 2015

EPIC2 Observed Field Note – January 21-15 (9:00AM)

EPIC2 – Interviewed January 22, 2015

Teacher focus group - February 5, 2015

Parent focus group - February 18, 2015

Beginning data analysis - February 21, 2015

Chapter 4 approval from Dissertation Chair - April 28, 2015

First dissertation draft review – July 1, 2015

Final dissertation draft review before sending to research consultant - July 28, 2015

Response from research consultant - August 18, 2015

Submit manuscript to dissertation chair - October 12, 2015

Teleconference with Chair and Research Consultant – November 6, 2015

Begin revisions Chapters 4 and 5 – November 6, 2015

Dissertation Defense Approval Form – November 9, 2015

Teleconference with Chair – November 16, 2015

Mock Defense – November 17, 2015

Dissertation Defense – November 19, 2015