

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN
TITLE I VS. NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS

by

Carla Shevon Jackman

Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

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ABSTRACT

Carla Shevon Jackman. MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN TITLE I VS. NON-TITLE I SCHOOLS (under the direction of Dr. Leonard Parker) School of Education, July 2013.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of middle school teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools with regard to parental involvement. A causal-comparative design was used, and four null hypotheses were tested by the use of four 1-way analysis of variances (ANOVAs) with Bonferroni's adjustment method to correct for family-wise inflation of alpha error. A researcher generated survey, based on Epstein's (2002) Six Types of Parental Involvement, was conducted which consisted of responses in regard to the level of effectiveness of 28 parental involvement activities from 50 teachers in Title I Schools and 50 teachers in non-Title I schools to test whether there was a significant difference. This researcher found that there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$) between the Title I School teacher responses and the non-Title I teacher responses for one of the four research hypotheses. The researcher failed to reject the remaining three null hypotheses. The results indicated that parental involvement initiatives need to be clearer in Title I schools and non-Title I schools due to the differing perceptions of both groups of teachers as measured on the survey. In addition, the researcher found that it was important to have activities, which involved all parents; this finding was statistically significant with a ($p < .05$) between the two groups. Also, the resultant implications and recommendations are included.

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Dedication

First, I would like to thank the Lord for His grace and mercies that no doubt have been refreshed every morning. “I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7 KJV).

To my husband, Andrew Jackman, who has supported me through this long journey. Thank you for your understanding and words of encouragement.

To my daughter Blakeley and my son Cameron for your patience and sacrifices through the busy days. I appreciate your independence and work cooperatively together

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

In recent years, researchers have presented the argument that, consistently, school staff overlook the need for effective parental involvement (Epstein, 2008; Ferarar, 2009; Gardner & Miranda, 2001). In addition, the beliefs of teachers, who serve at schools designated as Title I as well as schools not designated as Title I, may diverge in regard to parental involvement. In the literature on this topic, no one has compared these two groups of teachers. The focus of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; 2013) is exclusively on increased parental involvement in schools, where the population of students is in the lower socioeconomic status (SES) and categorized as Title I schools.

This researcher investigated the with parental involvement in middle schools and how teacher perceptions differ between Title I and non-Title I schools. Parents generally voice a true aspiration for their children to prosper in school as well. Educators must reach out to parents with a clear message to encourage parental participation as an essential aspect of the education process. The presence of a teacher-parent partnership maximizes the benefits of both environments for the students; not only are parents important, but the community also plays an important role in the success or failure of children.

Problem Statement

Emphasis has been placed on the need to improve the academic achievement of all students, in order to close the achievement gap by the year 2014 (ESEA; 2013). Staff

of the U.S. Department of Education granted the waiver request from Congress for certain Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA; 2013) requirements in July 2012 which extended and modified the NCLB act of 2001. In an effort to do this, the federal government has several programs in place in order to achieve this goal. Although many states have applied for waivers to the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements in order to continue to receive federal funds for education, the requirement for the implementation of parental involvement policies remains the same. Parental involvement is a crucial factor to the success of all students as noted by the research in Chapter Two. This researcher investigated the problems associated with parental involvement in schools and the perceptions of teachers. The purpose of this research study was to compare the responses of middle school teachers at both Title I and non-Title schools.

Although there are federal government regulations, which mandate that Title I schools have policies in place to improve parental involvement, a distinct lack of focus has been noted in this area. Should the focus be placed on all middle schools regardless of their Title I status? Do teachers, who serve in schools with different populations and SES have differing views on what constitutes effective parental involvement? If these views are different, what should be done in order to provide the proper tools necessary for these teachers to be able to provide the best education for their students not only in academics but in their overall social development through parental involvement initiatives? How can effective parental involvement be defined, what is the standard or norm if teachers in both schools feel that the level is low? Is training needed to educate

teachers on how to better communicate with parents regardless of their SES status or based on their SES status? Should the way that parental involvement initiatives take place be handled differently depending on the type of school?

Marshall (2009) identified 15 interventions, which were provided in 44 published articles that leaders could use to help close the achievement gap even though it seems as if it is being widened. One intervention was based on the idea that parents and teachers should be on the same page, since teachers have the same ideals and expectations of a middle-class parent; however, all students in their classes may not be from middle class homes. This means teachers need to be able to understand that parents from lower SES may have different expectations than middle class parents, and this could cause a problem if the teacher and parents do not communicate and have the same expectations in order to aide in the academic achievement of students and overall parental involvement initiatives, activities, and programs. Also, Marshall discussed the need for understanding where the gap begins to widen and how the federal and state government mandates and life factors can affect the educational process. An awareness of all factors is necessary in order to close the achievement gap for all students.

The staff of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE; 2008) established policies that govern and address the guidelines for teachers. They focus on teacher's abilities to foster relationships with school colleagues, parents and families, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being. Unit assessments are given in the programs for teacher education to insure that teacher candidates are able to successfully complete teacher education programs with

proficiency. These may come from end-of-course evaluations, written essays, or topical papers, as well as from tasks used for instructional purposes (e.g., projects, journals, observations by faculty, comments by cooperating teachers, or videotapes) and from activities for teachers to facilitate the communication with parents, families, and members of school communities.

In contrast, Flanigan (2007) conducted focus groups with faculty members to analyze their opinions and experiences in several different areas. A total of 33 faculty members and pre-service teachers participated in the focus groups. The focus group attendance at each site ranged from 4-7 participants with an overall focus group participation total of 33 faculty and pre-service teachers at local universities. Therefore, the data collected from the members of the focus groups provided an excellent qualitative methodology to use for this study about the attitudes, concerns, and experiences of College of Education faculty in regard to the preparation of pre-service teachers to partner with parents and communities. The participants emphasized the need to include the ethical practices of involving parents in all of the courses that they taught. They found that, based on the responses of the participants, some pre-service teachers were overly judgmental and held preconceived negative viewpoints of parents. This was based on media and interactions with other teachers. Also, the pre-service teachers felt disconnected from the parents of their students, based on their own SES. The resistance to parent interaction, at the undergraduate and graduate level, was a result of low contact with parents during student teaching. Ultimately, war stories and personal biases seemed to be the consensus of pre-service teachers regardless of SES.

Also, there is a lack of focus on parental involvement in middle schools in the literature, regardless of the SES of the students. In addition, there are few studies in which the researchers addressed a comparison of the beliefs of Title I teachers and non-Title I teachers concerning parental involvement. There are many studies about schools, which are identified as Title I or lower SES. Therefore, in this current study, the author sought to determine if there was an association between the type of school at which a teacher serves and their perception of: (a) parental involvement, (b) the current level of parental involvement, and (c) their evaluation of activities deemed as important to parental involvement.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to provide educators, administrators, parents, legislators, and all stakeholders involved in the educational process of students with a clearer picture of how middle school teachers view parental involvement at their respective schools. As new federal mandates and reauthorizations occur, it is necessary to have valid research results based on educators' opinions of the effectiveness of policies in place to aid in closing the achievement gap for all students.

In a study conducted by Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, and Dixon (2010), student, parent, and teacher focus groups were conducted in three secondary schools in a large urban area. Focus groups were created that represented high, middle and low SES areas. Each focus group consisted of between 5-10 educators. Negative perceptions of parental values by teachers were mostly found when students came from low SES groups or belonged to an ethnic minority. A better understanding of the cause

for these negative perceptions among participants was noted as a distinct need for clarification. The study further showed that there did not appear to be a difference between parents of different SES groups in regard to the level of interest they had in their children's learning and the support they provided. However, teachers did perceive that the value parents placed on education was reflected in students' valuing of their own education.

The hypothesis from current researchers indicates that teacher perceptions of the level of parental involvement may have an influence on the ultimate academic performance of students. Many students do not have parents, who are actively involved in their academic wellbeing. Many teachers are not aware of how to effectively involve parents in their child's education. The goal of this research study was to identify the perceptions of teachers as related to parental involvement. The perception of the teacher can ultimately lead to the involvement or noninvolvement of the parent.

In different states and districts across the U.S., there are varying guidelines and approaches in dealing with increasing parental involvement (U.S., 2011). Parent and teacher compacts or agreements have also been put in place. It is reported in Title I, Part A Final Regulations, 34 CFR Section 200.36 (Title I Regulations; ESEA, 2013) that these compacts outline the requirements for increasing parental involvement and urge parents to sign an agree to these initiatives. However, are there follow ups that exist to insure that it is more than a matter of just signing an agreement but rather actions toward implementing specific tasks on the agreement to further increase parental involvement and communication between the school and home. School Improvement surveys are

given once a year to parents and are sent home with students; however, only a small percent of the surveys are returned. It is assumed that the parents, who return the surveys are the ones who are involved, and the teachers, who promote the surveys are those who value parental involvement and understand its importance and the importance of feedback from parents.

Though the federal government mandates that programs are in place to close the achievement gap, it is not always the main focus due to the academic requirements that schools must meet federal guidelines for free and appropriate education (FAPE) for all students. In this current study, the author examined the results from the teacher surveys to analyze the difference between their responses to questions about their opinions of parental involvement based on their current schools. If Title I schools are to provide the same level of education for students as compared to non-Title I schools, then the perceptions of teachers, in regard to parental involvement in both groups, should be similar if these initiatives have been in place since the authorization of the NCLB Act of 2001.

Hornby and Lafeale (2011) developed a model to further detail the Parental Involvement Dimensions of Epstein (2002). This model includes specific research based practices that could affect the four different noted areas: (a) individual parent and family factors, (b) child factors, (c) parent-teacher factors, and (d) societal factors. The middle class parent is typically more involved than the lower income parent due to class factor differences between teachers and parents and that the policies in place were designed for middle class parents (Reay & Ball, 1998). This could be an indication that the parental

involvement policies in place need to be geared toward the population served. Overall, they found a distinct difference between the rhetoric in research and policies and the reality of parental involvement impacts and issues by understanding the impact of the four factors listed above through training and understanding by educational professionals.

Significance of Study

There are notable issues, which surround parental involvement as it relates to student academic achievement. A prediction of a child's success cannot be determined by the parent, teacher, or administrator, but there are many factors that can lead to a child's success through the perception of the adults that nurture the child during their school age years. In many school districts, several factors can lead to the lower academic achievement and the relationship that parents have with their child's school and teachers can have an impact on this achievement.

The success of children in school is highly dependent upon the adults who are involved in their education. How can teachers and the local school aid parents in active parental involvement? How do parents see their role in parental involvement in their child's education as it relates to teacher perceptions?

In order for an educator to be able to assist these students, they must first understand them, and the students must understand themselves. These students may come from a background or home life where there is little attention focused on their individual needs and talents. They may also have a hidden talent or disorder, which has been masked by the environment in which they live and in which they are raised and educated. Often, parents overlook these issues or avoid these issues. Pajeras (2009) stated, "Clearly,

it is not simply a matter of how capable one is, but of how capable one believes oneself to be” (para. 35). The ability of any adult in a child's life to be able to recognize the child's gifts and shortcomings is essential to their academic future.

For example, teachers play a direct role when parents volunteer in classrooms or are employed as paid paraprofessionals; teachers play an indirect role when they motivate parents to participate in learning activities at home with their children (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). The maximum amount of parent involvement can occur when teachers have positive attitudes concerning parent involvement and preserve an open dialogue with parents and cooperate with them, and when administrators and teachers demonstrate that this positive parent involvement can be effective (Griffith, 1998). It is not about the type of students, but it is about the teacher, not the students or parents, and how they feel which in turn leads to a different level of self-efficacy for the teacher which can in turn affect the self-efficacy of the parent and student.

Research Questions

1. How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regard to attitudes about parent involvement?
2. How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regard to the importance of practices of parental involvement?
3. How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regard to parent responsibilities?

4. How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regards to support for parental involvement?

Null Hypotheses

H01₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H02₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices of parental involvement based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H03₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H04₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to support for parental involvement based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

Identification of Variables

In this casual comparative design, the author selected participants, who differed on an independent variable (i.e., cause), and she tried to determine the consequences (i.e., effect) of these differences. This design was chosen, based on the literature review which indicated that teachers at different schools can develop differing views of parental involvement based on their student population (e.g., Title I and non-Title I), which can lead to differing teacher perceptions of parental involvement. This study incorporates a causal comparative research design. Causal comparative research designs involve pre-existing groups and typically compare differences between the groups (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The independent variables are the school type. The dependent variables are the teacher perceptions. The responses from the two groups of teachers were compared for educators who work at Title I and non-Title I Schools. The dependent variables were identified by analysis of the responses to the four research questions to determine the statistical significance of the four dependent variables: (a) support for involving parents, (b) parent responsibilities, (c) importance of practices of parental involvement, and (d) attitudes about parental involvement. This author examined the data for the population of teachers in one county in a metropolitan area of Georgia.

Definitions

ESEA: An Act to close the achievement gap with accountability, flexibility, and choice, so that no child is left behind.

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Education

NCLB: Improving the academic achievement of the disadvantaged (NCLB, 2001).

NNPS: National Network of Partnership Schools

PTSA: Parent Teacher Student Association.

SES: Socioeconomic status; of, relating to, or involving a combination of social and economic factors.

Title I- Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA): Provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Federal funds are currently allocated through four statutory formulas that are based primarily on census poverty estimates and the cost of education in each state (ESEA, 2013).

Summary

The study is organized into five chapters. The study begins with Chapter One, a detailed introduction of the problem. The problem is whether or not there was a statistically significant difference between the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title schools with regard to parental involvement. Discussed in Chapter Two are the research and studies that have been completed by others in the field on parental involvement. Avowedly, the literature review indicated a deficiency of studies that addressed how the perceptions of teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools compare. The gap in literature is addressed through the remaining research chapters.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Presented in this chapter is a review of the literature, in order to explain the need for a study about the perceptions of teachers who serve at Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to parental involvement. A review of the literature is critical in order to determine the significance of this study. Chapter Two begins with an overview of the theoretical framework in regard to self-efficacy and the self-fulfilling prophecy. Then, the author discusses the: (a) history of parental involvement, (b) state and federal regulations, (c) parent and student related research as well as (c) current and potential effects of effective and ineffective parental involvement.

Subsequently, the author addresses how key factors influence parental involvement and factors that school officials may overlook. In the final sections of the chapter, there are discussions about the importance of determining the perceptions of teachers regarding parental involvement at the middle school level in both Title I and non-Title I schools and how these perceptions can affect overall parental involvement effectiveness.

Theoretical Framework

The chosen theory for this research study is the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986; Pajeras, 2009). Embodied in this theory is the idea that the way that humans learn is a direct result of the environment. In addition, cognitive and emotional

states are driven by the environment as well. Two major thinkers in regard to this theory are Albert Bandura and Frank Pajeres. The theory began with the publication *Toward a Psychology of Human Agency* (Bandura, 2006) and later followed with *Overview of Social Cognitive Theory and of Self-Efficacy* (Pajeres, (2009). In their publications, Bandura and Pajeras detailed the cognitive process involved with human adaption and change as it relates to self-reflection. Both teachers and parents can be driven by their environment; therefore; making decisions based upon preconceptions about parental involvement could be a direct result of the environment in which parental involvement manifests.

Pajeras (2009) studied how the environment and social systems influence human behavior through the psychological mechanisms of the self-system. Initially, this theory began with Bandura in 1963 and evolved during the 1970s and 1980s. Originally, Bandura's focus was on social learning, but later expanded it to include self-efficacy. In order to develop socially, one must have a desire to want to learn that can lead to a cause and effect relationship with the desire to learn and environmental factors. Bandura authored several books from 1971-2001 that described the Social Cognitive Theory, self-efficacy, and social processes associated with learning.

As stated by Bandura (2006), "Proprioceptive feedback from one's activities and self-referent information from visual and other modalities during transactions with the environment aid in the early perception of an experiential self" (p.169). Teachers can perceive parental involvement in one way if placed in a situation where their environment may place certain hindering factors that may prevent effective interaction with parents.

Teachers have perceptions of students, parents have perceptions of teachers, and students have perceptions of teachers; all of which can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy for either party (Rubie-Davies, Peterson, Irving, Widdowson, & Dixon, 2010). Rubie-Davies et al. further found that oftentimes the low self-efficacy is engineered by the community of factory and field workers who presume that the students will end up working in one of the two fields and they do not necessarily value education.

Keyes (2000) referred to the parent-teacher relationship as the nucleus of parental involvement. Several factors are involved:

1. the degree of match between teachers and parent's culture and values;
2. societal forces at work on family and school; and
3. how teachers and parents view their roles. (p.179)

Over time, many parents tend to develop a disconnect with the school due to a perceived lack of effort on the teachers part to involve the parent. The teacher in turn may feel like the parent just does not care or want to be involved. This is where the miscommunication occurs which can lead to poor parental involvement perceptions in both Title I and non-Title I classroom teachers relating to one or multiple factors. The model is Keyes hope for teachers to refer to as they continue to engage parents in the education and involvement of their child's education. Metacognitive thinking is essential in thinking about one's relationships with parents and not overthinking the external barriers that could be prevent effective involvement.

Students are a product of their parents, and their parents are a product of society; therefore, being placed in a social class system, meaning that the underprivileged are

expected to behave and learn a certain way because that is how they were brought up and the teachers who educate them will always see them that way (Bourdieu, 1967). The social class system continues to effect education where social capital is a thought to be a product of lower, middle or upper class rather than hard work. There would need to be changes within the individual and others around the individual, such as teacher, parents and other students, in order to create an influence on their educational outcome in life therefore ending the cycle.

Research on the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act (2001), as conducted by Levitt (2008), was done in order to determine the impact on student achievement. Teachers play a vital role in the motivation of students and have an impact on the self-images of students' achievement (Levitt). Levitt categorized teachers, students, and parents as agents of change toward education reform on the eve of the No Child Left Behind Act. A need for a shift in programs and focus on both students, teachers, parents, and the community are needed for a true change to occur. He also noted that teachers tend to follow agendas rather than create their own and that the individuality of each person involved in the education of children needs to not only be utilized but a commitment must lie within.

Bandura (2006) noted that people do not live their lives in individual autonomy, and he stated, "Many of the things they seek are achievable only by working together through interdependent effort" (p. 165). Bandura maintained that, "This is because the social influences operating in the select environments continue to promote certain competencies, values, and lifestyles" (p.170). Also," parents set challenges for their

infants just beyond the infants' existing competencies. They adjust their level of assistance as infants pass through phases of mastery, offering explicit guidance in earlier phases of skill acquisition but gradually withdrawing aid as infants become more competent in mastering tasks on their own," (p. 165). The agentic influence that Bandura refers to details the interpersonal relationships that people have and how their environments can affect their overall life outcome.

The findings from the Bakker, Dennesen, and Brus-Laeven (2007) study showed that a self-fulfilling prophecy can occur when teacher perceptions of parental involvement are less than accurate, as shown in their case study, which addressed the disparate teacher-pupil interactions that can occur when teacher perceptions are unfounded. In their research, they found that teachers' perceptions of parents play a major role in how they interact with the students. If a parent is involved at school, then the teachers perceived that the home involvement was just as equal. The educational level of the parent did not make a difference in whether the parent was more involved or not. Parents were contacted more for problems or issues rather than positive contact. Personal and environmental factors influence self-efficacy, for both students and parents. As noted by Vygotsky (1978) sociocultural backgrounds, experiences, and events impact learning and development.

Major Legislation: Title I

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was put in place to aid low performing schools that educate underprivileged and low income students to achieve at the same level as high performing middle to upper income schools, thus

closing the achievement gap. In Section 1001, it is clearly stated, “affording parents substantial and meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, para. 12). If parents are not provided with opportunities by the educators and educational systems that serve their students, then they may not know such opportunities do in fact exist.

The ESEA is also known as Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged. “The purpose of this title is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state academic assessments”(ESEA, 1965, Para 1). This policy was established to insure a fair and equitable education to all students, who attend school in the United States and those schools receive federal funds for the education of students. The twelfth item in the statement of purpose is focused on providing parents numerous opportunities to participate in the education of their children. This key component is essential for school and building personnel to attain this standard through parental involvement. Additional federal funds are allocated to schools where the SES is at or below the poverty level. The funds are distributed based on need,

Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards (ESEA, 2013, para.1).

The No Child Left Behind Act

As the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) continues in the reauthorization process, the main principles behind the act remain in place. Approximately 27 states have applied for waivers in regard to Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), but the parental involvement requirements remain in place. The impact that it has had on education is unknown. Have the initiatives been effective in or to curb the factors that affect disadvantaged students or will they continue to digress both academically and socially?

In January 2002, President G. W. Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act into law. This bill was designed to close the achievement gap between white upper class and middle class public schools and poor children of color (U.S. Department of Education, 2001b, as cited in Thompson, 2003). This act was is an indication that there is a notable problem in the public schools for children of color. Furthermore the NCLB Parental Involvement Non Regulatory Guidance Handbook (U.S. Department of Education, 2011) includes specific guidelines to define parental involvement and provide guidance for school staff in order to build and increase their home and school parent connections. The NCLB act provides parents with information needed to aid their school to close the achievement gap and provide them insight into their child's education and be informed about the accountability levels in their child's school. The members of President Barak Obama's administration continue to review the NCLB act and its effectiveness in all areas.

Often, educators lament about the lack of parent involvement and some even assign the cause of poor student achievement on parent indifference; there is clearly a need for educators to be meticulous in their efforts to increase parent involvement in their children's education. In Thompson's (2003) study, she found that parental involvement is not just the parent's responsibility, it is the teachers, who should not blame everything on the parents. Banner and Cannon (1997) stated:

The teachers whom we remember most vividly are those who knew their subjects best and transmitted them with the greatest intensity of love. They were confident in their knowledge, and not dogmatic; they acted out their own struggles to understand in front of us, joyfully when they understood something fresh, troubled when they did not or could not know. (p. 14)

This quote from the book, *The Elements of Teaching*, shows a different view of teachers than Thompson's. Both Thompson and Banner and Cannon researched the importance of parents and teachers in regards to student achievement they differed however on their findings on the role of each respective party in the education students.

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001) is a part of Elementary & Secondary Education Act Sub Part A-Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies Section 1118, and it gives specific guidelines for parental involvement. It is stated that:

A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs assisted under this part consistent with this section. Such programs,

activities, and procedures shall be planned and implemented with meaningful consultation with parents of participating children. (NCLB, 2001, para A.1)

Also, it was noted that 1% of the allocation of agency funds should go toward the funding of activities to increase parental involvement. Several key factors are required by the ESEA in regard to parental involvement such as: (a) policies being in place, (b) meetings to discuss further events and progress, (c) provision of timely information, and (d) shared responsibility.

Another key component is the education of teachers and staff. In the ESEA of 1965 (U.S. Department of Education, 2013), it is stated that the parental involvement policies

shall educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school. (para. E. 3)

National and State Standards

According to the National PTA Standards (2013), “PTAs serve as a type of forum where parents, teachers, administrators, and other concerned adults discuss ways to promote quality education, strive to expand the arts, encourage community involvement, and work for a healthy environment and safe neighborhoods” (para. 3). The National PTA has six main standards that serve as guidelines for their program. Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community, Standard 2: Communicating

Effectively, Standard 3: Supporting Student Success Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child Standard 5: Sharing Power and Standard 6: Collaborating with Community. Each standard encompasses a belief in increasing family school partnerships. The main goal of the National PTA is:

as the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) reminds our country of its obligations to children and provides parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child while providing the best tools for parents to help their children be successful students.

(para.1)

There are several organizations such as the National Middle School Association (2003) that believe in building strong bonds between home and school an included family involvement as one of its characteristics for successful middle schools. Also, at the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE; 2012), there are several parental involvement guidelines. “The Georgia Department of Education’s Parent Engagement Program ensures that Title I, Part A parental involvement regulations are met with meaningful and strategic actions to build parent capacity as mandated by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965” (para. 2). The GADOE also supports research on parental involvement by working with school districts to implement researched based strategies, delivering communications, creating partnerships, monitoring Title I Schools that receive Part A funds and collaborating with local PTA and PTSA groups to help improve the program and, in turn, aiding in student achievement.

Importance of the Middle Grades

Researchers, Sanders (1999) have found that early adolescence is a difficult time for children and their parents and teachers, and that both parents and teachers characterize adolescence as a period in which storm and stress issues are present. It is the truly responsibility of middle school staff to educate students during one of the most critical stages of development, early adolescence. For many students, early adolescence is a vulnerable period, when various indicators of academic motivation, behavior, and self-perception decline (Sanders, 1999). A sense of community needs more than good feelings and grows from a sense of purpose, which includes strong school leadership and productive family involvement (Epstein, 2001).

Sanders (1999) found that low parental and community involvement leads to: (a) vandalism, (b) poor achievement, and (c) high student attrition. Also, Sanders found that school-family-community partnerships and school improvement efforts must occur simultaneously through interviews with principals in a local school district. In recent years, more effort and attention has been given to communication and collaboration between leaders of each school parent-teacher organization and the Parent/Community Involvement coordinator. Business partnerships, community involvement and volunteers are stakeholders that teachers may not be aware of, who can aid in effective parental involvement. It is essential for the schools to work together with volunteers for satisfaction and to increase volunteer interaction (Yates & Campbell, 2003) through the variety of partnerships that exist in education between educational institutions and

businesses, state and local governments and industry and local universities and schools, which are willing to assist in this goal.

Leadership

In the research study conducted by Barnyak and McNelly (2009), it was found that the beliefs of principals also play an important role in adding to community and parental involvement. Principals must be able to work with: (a) a range of people, (b) issues and forces that are represented by individuals, (c) factions with single agenda interests, and (d) groups focused upon some specific cause that may be at cross-purposes with the school (Howe & Townsend, 2000). These researchers found that principals must have skills in political leadership in order to bring the parents, school, and community together and solve problems with appropriate resolutions. Fisher, Matthews, Nakagawa, and Stafford (2002) demonstrated that parental and community involvement was low in their study, but they went into depth as to why. Furthermore, school personnel should understand that the difficulty to establish partnerships might be because of discomfort on the part of these parents. They suggested that school staff need to realize financial differences among parents and to try and get them involved by encouragement.

There is an important need for community and parental involvement in the urban and inner city schools as well as rural area schools. In case studies about programs with parent centers, Johnson (1994) described what was offered at one center, which included: (a) visits from representatives of community agencies, (b) a bulletin board with job listings, (c) courses and contact information about community agencies, and (d) learning games created by teachers for parents to take home with them. In interviews with parents,

who used the centers, Johnson found that some parents reported that the centers provided information and experiences that helped them to better understand how to take an active role in their children's education. A key element in many of the most recent educational reform movements has been to increase parental involvement in the academic lives of children (Shepard, 1995).

It was demonstrated in the research study conducted by Orwig (1994) that increased community and parental involvement helped students, and there is a need to have a program in place in order to improve that involvement. She discussed a district, in which community and parental partnerships are encouraged. The school system is not urban but near a Navajo reservation. In this program, students are allowed to check computers; also, they have access to the integrated learning system of the police department and fire station, which is also housed at one of their elementary schools to help adults. In addition, she discussed programs implemented by the New Jersey School Board Association. The free programs take place in the evenings once a week for 6 weeks. Each child can bring one parent. Although not all the sessions are focused on technology, several do. In particular the Family Computers, program is used to introduce family members to computers, word processors, databases and spreadsheets, computer graphics, and multimedia applications (Orwig, 1994). Another program noted by Orwig (1994) was the Very Important Partners (VIP) mentoring program implemented by Nancy Gallagher, Teacher of the Year for Delaware. She put together a package to recruit community leaders and, also, information was provided about partnering weekly with

students, building self-esteem, and needs such as computers. Her program expanded from 50 volunteers to 130 through her recruitment efforts.

In research done by Colgan (2003) it is shown that principals also need to play a role in aiding community involvement. Boone's Principal, Karen Carlson, proposed that her school become a participant in the Chicago Public Schools community school campaign and offer an extended day program "designed to meet the academic, linguistic, physical, social, and emotional needs of our entire learning community" (p. 26) including students, parents, and neighborhood. Principals' involvements in the parental involvement efforts are essential to the success of parental involvement.

Barnyak and McNelly (2009) found that direction and support were necessary in order for parent involvement programs to work and succeed for the benefit of all stakeholders. Both teachers and administrators have strong beliefs regarding parental involvement in the educational system. However, their practices do not necessarily match their beliefs. For that reason, teachers need clear direction from building level administrators, and those administrators need direction from central office administrators regarding parent involvement best practices

Defining Effective Parental Involvement

While most practitioners and researchers support the policy direction of increased parent involvement, few agree about what constitutes effective involvement (Baker & Soden, 1998; Epstein, 2001; Sanders, 1999). Confusion persists regarding the activities, goals, and desired outcomes of various parent involvement activities and policies. A major source of this confusion is the lack of scientific rigor in the research findings,

which inform practice and policy. Because of this, less is known about parent involvement than commonly is assumed. In earlier studies conducted by Baker and Soden, they emphasized the importance of parent involvement. However, too often, it is perceived as a generalization, and the data were not used in order to distinguish the different types of parental involvement. It is important to determine each facets level of importance to both teachers and parents as it relates to students and the overall program.

Epstein (2010) described six types of parent involvement, which are essential for children's success in school. Parents can participate in the educational process when they: (a) enhance their parenting skills, (b) develop positive communication skills between home and school, (c) volunteer, (d) provide learning opportunities at home, (e) contribute to decisions that affect schooling, and (f) collaborate with the community in support of the school. No parent can predict a child's future, but the chances of supporting their child for success are greatly increased with the right mixture of loving support, open communication, and exposure to the scores of educational, artistic, and cultural events available in many communities (Whetstone, 1995).

In Epstein's (2008) article, she noted three main points based on previous research (Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Epstein, 2008). Parents want more and better information to guide their students through the middle and high school levels. For example,

1. students benefit from family and community involvement in high school, and middle school, and

2. educators in middle level and high schools must take responsibility for developing goal-linked partnership programs that reach all families and that help students succeed.

Epstein summarized the types of parental involvement based on research conducted for the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). The NNPS Framework helps school staff to identify ways that families and community partners can be involved without always having to meet at the school. In a recent survey by Epstein (2008) she found that 97% of teachers at the secondary level believe that parental involvement initiatives were very challenging. However, if the school staff focuses on the Six Types of Parental Involvement, then they may have a better understanding of effective parental involvement.

1. **Type 1: Parenting.** Parenting activities help families understand adolescent development, strengthen parenting skills and set home conditions for learning.
2. **Type 2: Communicating.** Two way communicating activities keep families informed about and involved in school programs and students' progress.
3. **Type 3: Volunteering.** Activities that facilitate volunteerism improve .the recruitment, training, and schedules of volunteer stakeholders to support student activities and school programs.

4. **Type 4: Learning at home.** Learning-at-home activities, designed for students and their families are coordinated with the students' classwork and curricula.
5. **Type 5: Decision making.** Decision-making activities include families' voices in developing mission statements and in designing, reviewing, and improving school policies that affect students and families.
6. **Type 6: Collaborating with the community.** Collaborating-with-the-community activities draw upon and coordinate the resources, of businesses; cultural, civic, and religious organizations; senior citizen groups; colleges and universities; government agencies; and other associations to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development (Epstein, 2008, p. 11-12).

Socioeconomic Status and Parental Involvement

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a strong determining factor in what types of parental involvement activities or initiative are deemed effective and necessary. A commonly mentioned form of parental participation involves the parent assisting their students with homework and out of class assignments (Barges & Lodge, 2003). Often, parents of lower SES do not have a high level of education and are not able to help their children with homework. A distinct difference is apparent in regard to monitoring students as they are doing homework vs. assisting students with homework. It is imperative for parents to understand which is more essential and considered actual involvement from the teachers' perspective.

Bakker, Dennesen, and Brus-Laeven (2007) conducted a study with a sample of 60 elementary school teachers and 216 parents. Two questionnaires were constructed; one to assess the level of parental involvement in the education of their children, and the other to assess teacher perceptions of the level of parental involvement in the education of their children. They conducted a correlation analysis of parent and teacher responses to the questionnaire. They found that, the assumption of an indirect relation between SES and academic performance, which was mediated by teacher perceptions of parental involvement, were accurate. Also, teacher perceptions of the involvement of lower SES parents in their children influenced the academic achievement of pupils as perceived by the teachers. Bakker, Dennesen, and Brus-Laeven (2007) also found that parents may be regarded as not highly interested in their children's school careers and tend to blame teachers for their students shortcomings.

School staff in a lower SES environment may have different opinions of what constitutes effective parental involvement for both teachers and students. The findings of Bakker et al. (2007) showed that parents with different levels of education do not report different levels of involvement in the education of their children. The following factors have been found to improve the quality of schools in low-SES neighborhoods," (a) a focus on improvement of teaching and learning, (b) creation of an information-rich environment, (c) build a learning community, (c) continuous professional development, (e) involvement of parents, and (f) increased funding and resources," (Cain, 2010, p. 3)

Howard and Reynolds (2008) examined African American parents in middle class schools, which were not necessarily low SES. The role of working parents in schools is

often overlooked. Some of these activities include campus volunteering as well as events and conferencing that were highly encouraged yet tightly constrained to teachers' and administrators' discretion. These researchers looked at the parents' view on what they felt were effective parental involvement activities from volunteering to giving input on school procedures. It was noted that, often, parents were not available for meetings and discussions or for volunteering due to the inconvenience of the times offered. Howard and Reynolds sought further indications that parents put their trust in the teachers or if they only wanted to go to the school if there was a problem. Public schools across all socio-economic levels remain politically charged sites, where parents position themselves and their children to ensure that they receive the best resources, unfettered access to vital information, and overall educational quality.

Title I and No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) regulations set forth regulations that require funds to be spent on certain activities when parents are in attendance. Bartel (2010) conducted parent interviews and teaching staff surveys, which involved standard cross-tabulations, or a frequency analysis among subgroups who rated the frequency and effectiveness of school practices related to parental involvement. This survey was based on an instrument from Epstein (2002). The first survey was used as baseline data to determine school practices that impact parental involvement, and the second survey administered was used to determine how school practices changed after teachers and parents were trained on the effectiveness of parental involvement and activities that would benefit their school as well as implemented those strategies.

Bartel (2010) argued that, “the perceptions of parents, that is, as a part of a lower socioeconomic group or Title I status, are valuable because less is known about this population than about the middle- and higher-income parents, which have been studied more often studied”, (p. 210). Also, it has been noted that, after resources were placed in the areas of need, such as summer camps, parent training, and programs and activities that were beneficial to both the teacher and parents the home school connection improved for Title I families. He concluded by including facts about Title I teachers’ understanding the needs of their parents and school cultures. When funds and resources should be allocated appropriately the Title I schools were getting the same results as higher-SES schools though not enough research has been done to compare the two groups. Social Capital is connecting people socially with each other and the community. If a teacher and parent know, trust, and respect one another, there is a greater likelihood that one will initiate contact with the other when needed to help the child. (Price-Mitchell, 2009).

In a study conducted by Barnyak and McNelly (2009), the researchers noted that the ESEA (1965) showed the need for stronger programs in Title I schools. Title I is a label, which has been placed on schools with student populations of lower SES. Title I schools are required to have a Title I Parent Compact, which lists the goals for increasing parental involvement in the building. Prior to 1997, this was placed on the district and a generic Parent Compact was in place. Efforts toward building parental involvement efforts is a tasks delegated to the local education agency such as school districts and systems (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Hornby and Lafeale (2011) suggested a model to further detail the Parental Involvement dimensions of Epstein (2002). This model includes specific research based practices that could affect the four different noted areas of: (a) individual parent and family factors, (b) child factors, (c) parent-teacher factors, and (d) societal factors. Also, their findings suggested that parent and teacher goals are different in their view of which activities are important to them. Overall, they showed a distinct difference between the rhetoric in research and policies and the reality of parental involvement impacts and issues by understanding the impact of the four factors listed above through training and understanding by educational professionals.

Possible Factors that Affect Parental Involvement

Parental involvement affects many areas including attendance and student participation based upon the parents' degree of caring. In a study conducted by Sheppard (2009), the researcher demonstrated that parents failed to attend parent meetings and activities due to outside factors such as work, younger children, or just being busy with other life issues. This shows how the priorities of parents can affect how their student's priorities are arranged toward school as well. The area of special education also seems to have concerns when it is related to parental involvement. Parents of students with disabilities tend to need to be more involved than parents without students with disabilities. The IDEA, parent advocacy, and other rights of students are all issues that parents and teachers need to be aware of. In a study conducted by Trainor (2010), the researcher detailed the interviews and responses of parents of students with disabilities, who emphasized that parent advocacy is important to the success of students regardless

of the educational level of the parent. A joint collaboration effort is essential to actively involved parents. In a similar study on how parents and teachers view school communities, Redding (2008) found that high stakes testing and academic achievement took precedence over social aspects of the learning environment, especially where parental involvement activities were concerned. Gardner and Miranda (2001) stated that, “Four areas must be considered if the educational challenges are to be overcome: (a) culturally sensitive assessment, (b) empirically based instruction, (c) positive behavior management, and (d) parent/community involvement” (p. 259).

Reilly (2008) provided several references and examples of how teachers felt about parental involvement at the middle school level. It was found that teachers have many tasks, and some would rather not make contact to the home unless there is a problem, which leads parents to expect that kind of communication vs. positive messages. Often, teachers are responsible for making the first contacts and then keeping the communication going throughout the school year. While many teachers feel they do not want to contact parents unless a child is failing or there is a major discipline problem, it may not be good practice to so limit initial contact with the home. Unfortunately, though, parents tend to visit schools mostly during students’ elementary years and not at the middle and senior high level. Reilly further found that many middle and high school parents were not as equipped to assist their students as they approached adolescence, because they needed guidance on how to best do this, while they insured that their students were independent and successful as well.

The early years in a child's education are the building blocks for his or her remaining school age year. A prediction can be made at this point as to the level of parental involvement a parent may have based on positive teacher interactions (Overstreet, Devine, Bevans, & Efreom, 2005). In the study conducted by McBride and Lin (1996) they referred to Epstein's Six Factors of Effective Parental Involvement, as it relates to at risk prekindergarten students, in order to examine the relationships between parent and teacher attitudes and student failure.

A major distinction occurs in the novice teacher population where the focus could be more on how parental involvement can help them as teachers rather than how it could help the parents and children (McBride & Lin, 1996). This shows that there may be an ulterior motive, as far as the teachers are concerned. If the goal was to truly involve parents for the sake of the students, rather than themselves, then the effectiveness of such parental involvement activities could possibly be curtailed. An argument to parental involvement views was reported by Ferrara (2009), who conducted a research panel to compare teacher views to parent views. She found that teachers were more vocal in their opinions, while the parents were less vocal and required more assistance from the school as to how they could improve themselves rather than provide suggestions about how the school staff could help them to better link school to home activities.

In a study conducted by McMahan (2011), which was an empirical mixed methods study, the purpose was to examine educators' understandings of student risk factors. The research was conducted in a Title I combination middle high school in the Florida panhandle that had been open for 3 years and had received a grade of F school in

each of these years. Data from the surveys were used to create questions for semi-structured interviews with 14 faculty members (31.11%), who represented a cross-section of school personnel, which consisted of administrators and teachers. Teachers reported that they were either unable to communicate with parents, due to differing education levels, or they were not supportive of the teacher, which meant that students were not invested in their educational process as well. Teachers sometimes have a misconception with parents and tend to give up on students and have lower expectations if they do not perform at or on grade level (Trainor, 2010).

Trainor (2010) conducted a recent study to further examine teachers' views of parents. She conducted a survey and interviewed 17 teachers. In this study, the teachers' view of capital and parent expectations was explored. The teacher participants were reluctant to participate and felt that a lot of the procedures in place were redundant; therefore, they had little motivation to participate in the research study and felt that parental involvement was not an issue. It was found that these teachers understood their role and responsibility, but not necessarily how to fulfill these for the best interest of the students and parents. The level of communication, based on the resources of the parents, included email which is not necessarily the best method for schools, which have a low SES population. Lack of trust, power, and status were also challenging areas that parents have, but teachers may stereotype or overlook. Trainor described teachers as researchers, who can aid in many school processes through their education and experiences. An understanding of the many obstacles that the parents in SES schools face would benefit from collaboration, she also noted.

Taliaferro (2009) conducted voluntary interviews of teachers about their views of effective parental involvement activities. According to this study school personnel's perceptions regarding parental involvement initiatives as well as implementation can affect the success or failure of a program. Teacher's attitudes can cause program to be effective or ineffective. "Meaningful accomplishments, inclusion, access, and facilitated methods promote self-efficacy," (p. 287). Problems also can arise between parents and teachers, the teacher beliefs about parent and family involvement and their actions toward promoting this involvement are oftentimes mismatched when parents show a desire to be involved (Souto-Manning & Swick, 2006). This indicates that teachers may not know how to actively involve families, but simply feel that the involvement is necessary and this holds true when parents come to the teacher for suggestions and the teacher does not appear as responsive to assisting with overall program improvement.

Perceptions of Parents and Students

A longitudinal study was conducted by Wenk, Hardesty, Morgan, and Lee Blair (1994), which was based on data from the National Survey of Children, Wave I, 1976 and Wave III, 1987. They examined the influence of parental involvement in school during childhood and adolescence. They studied students' perception of behavioral involvement and emotional involvement from their mothers and fathers with these data. The data represented the responses from approximately 800 female and male students, respectively. They found that parental involvement is essential in the opinion of the child, and based on the analysis of these researchers, to the successful development of adolescents, both emotionally and behaviorally.

In a regression analysis study conducted by Thompson (2003), she found that middle school African American parents had differing views on effective teachers, based on how their students performed in school. Parents of students, who failed courses in middle school, reported one of two perceptions of teachers. First, parents felt that their students failed because the curriculum was rigorous, and the teachers were harder on their students. Second parents may have felt that students did not try hard enough and deserved to fail. This is where the divide occurs. Parents of middle school students tend to give their student more independence and are not as involved as they try to guide their students to be productive adolescents and prepare them for the future. About 11% of these parents surveyed rated teachers low on the questionnaires. However, this indicated that the parents viewed teachers with a high regard, and their perception of teachers was higher than the teachers' perception of parents. Accordingly, it seems that these teachers felt that the parents could do more to prevent their students' failure, rather than place the sole responsibility on the student and teacher.

Sharon and Nimisha (2009) suggested that there is a need for improved instruments in order to more accurately measure parent involvement and teacher communication at grade levels beyond elementary school. The data used in the Sharon and Nimisha study was collected from parents and teachers in two Title I middle schools in an urban district. As parents respond to their children's changing developmental needs and various requests, their type and extent of involvement change. The findings from this study indicated that, in general, parental involvement is low in middle school, due to the psychological and social development of the adolescent child. Also, it is important to

recognize students' increased maturity and autonomy levels in relation to how and why teachers and parents collaborate in middle school. Sharon concluded that the perceptions were not significant predictors with regards to teachers and communicating with parents and the parents with regards to invitations to participate in school.

Parental involvement and perceptions affect student's motivation and performance. An understanding of why these perceptions occur is needed. An implicit assumption in the current research is that parents, students, and teachers hold similar conceptions of what counts as parental involvement (Barge & Loges, 2003). It is essential for all stakeholders to understand what is and what is not an effective parental involvement activity. Students did not need to be surveyed in order to see that parental involvement had a negative effect on their socialization as well as life skills. The daily life needs of students need to be taken in to consideration as well as their academics (Ghazi, Ali, Shahzad, & Khan, 2010).

Often, parents and teachers have differing views on individual student needs. Because each group sees students in two different environments and settings, opinions can be formed and stereotypes can occur with the opposing party being the possible culprit of the problem. The parent may blame the teacher, and the teacher will blame the parent for low parental involvement. Hines and Paulson (2006) studied factors that influence the stereotypes that teachers and parents have about students. She found that parents are more likely to understand issues, which revolve around their students than teachers, who have more exposure to a wide array of students with varying degrees of issues and concerns. This can prevent the teacher from having efficacy with parents who

are less involved because they feel other students have different home life situations than their own children. In addition, the teacher may feel that the parent could at least be involved to the degree that the teacher deems effective. The teacher's idea of effective and the parent's idea of effective are not the same.

In a recent research study conducted by Wanat (2010), approximately 20 parents were interviewed about their positive and negative views of effective parental involvement. Wanat suggested that school staff could be more welcoming to all parents. The study participants wanted collaborative relationships with teachers and had specific ideas about which strategies could be used to create parental involvement that would help parents support their children. Participants agreed that teachers needed training in order to better understand the families that they serve. The use of community groups and partners could also be used to support extracurricular activities to involve families.

In turn, parents with similar characteristics as the teachers were more pleased with the level of parental involvement as opposed to parents who were quite different from the teachers (Wanat, 2010). This indicated that the teachers may need to understand the parents better in order to better serve the children further explaining the fact that everyone does not learn the same. Wanat (2010) further showed that there were two categories; dissatisfied and satisfied parents. The dissatisfied parents were more focused on home issues and not involved in PTA or volunteering, while satisfied parents were more focused on the school and leadership itself. This indicated that all parents are not alike and have different needs as far as parental involvement for their children.

Assumptions by teachers are made earlier than parent's perceptions of the school/teacher, which leads leading to ineffective parental involvement on the parents' behalf. In a research study conducted to investigate parental perception of their student's school teacher, Knopf and Swick (2007) found that a common misconception also occurs when teachers think that they know the perceptions of parents but, often, they are wrong indicating that educators form stereotypes before even getting to know and understand their parents and students. Knopf and Swick (2007) further found that parents do have differing views than teachers and that it is the job of the teachers to "constructing avenues for parents to be involved and recognizing and valuing the ways that the parents are involved" (p. 291).

The community purpose and social well-being in the school can differ among parents and teachers. A research study to compare parents and teachers was conducted by Redding (2008); he found that teachers' perceptions of parents were lower than parents' perceptions of teachers. An obvious fallacy between family and school exists in most schools where parental involvement is low. Also, Redding (2008) noted that, "Further, teachers' low regard for parents' example and support for children's academic and social learning is problematic" (p. 282). He showed that teachers' responses to interview questions and surveys showed a negative view of parents overall and their ability to be involved effectively.

A qualitative research study was conducted by Urdan, Solek, and Schoenfelder (2007) in which they interviewed approximately 20 students. The data was then analyzed, and they developed a series of rationale or patterns for the student responses. The Family

Obligation pattern leads students to believe that they owed their parents something for the hard work they put in throughout their school years. The Family Pleasing patterns students felt that they wanted to make their parents happy. The Family Support patterns lead students to want to achieve in order to help support the family. The Adverse Influence pattern leads students to want to achieve so that they would not receive negative consequences. The final No Influence pattern leads students to feel that their parents did not care either way, had no influence, and were not involved at all. This pattern was reported by students in many SES. The overall motivation of the student was shown to be influenced by the parents.

Gibson and Jefferson (2006) addressed adolescent development and influence. They focused on parent and student perception of involvement in connection with the Gaining Early Awareness of Readiness for Undergraduate Programs, GEAR UP program, which is a federally funded grant program designed to prepare middle school students and their parents for the upcoming school years. In addition to program planning, more research on parents' and adolescents' perceptions of parental involvement is warranted in order to determine appropriate interventions to improve this influence on adolescent self-concept. The self-efficacy of the parents can lead to the same self-efficacy in the students if they both do not realize the impact has on the other creating a continued cycle of disconnect between home and school. Also, it was found that educators must consider the cultural of their parents and students as they attempt to delineate parental involvement while also being aware of other ways that parents are involved in their child's education and how they can be involved through this awareness (Field-Smith, 2005).

Gould (2011) analyzed the relationship between parental involvement in the education of middle school students and the student's satisfaction with school. It was found that there was a relationship between the two factors. He used quantitative, correlational study design. He surveyed 100 middle school students at one school and found that parental involvement was a motivating factor for middle school aged students.

Current and Potential Impacts of Ineffective Parental Involvement

Many researchers have elaborated on the impacts of ineffective parental involvement, which range from student academic performance, parent and student self-efficacy, and overall teacher motivation (Epstein, 2008; Wong, 2008; Barges & Lodge, 2003). The studies conducted by Bakker et al. (2007) on educational inequality supports the idea that teachers have a strong role in regard to the level of parental involvement and pupil achievement.

A cross sectional, causal comparative study was conducted by Wong (2008) to ascertain the effects of parental involvement and autonomy support on adolescent functioning. She examined the temporal relationships between parental involvement and disruptive behavior. It is likely that the two variables are related to one another for many different reasons such as the student perceptions as well parent perceptions. Wong found that it was helpful to determine whether disruptive behavior continued to decrease, as a result of parents being involved, as well as teacher's notification of parents about both positive and negative behaviors. The more involved the parent the less likely a student is to be disruptive, the more a teacher will contact the parent, and the more positive

perception that the student will have on their view of parental and teacher's involvements.

There were several factors identified by Barges and Lodge (2003), which indicated teachers had negative perceptions of parental involvement. These factors comprised of; bad parenting, negative communication and lack of support when students are having issues. Teachers made it clear that parents should contact the school often and avoid a pattern of communication where contact occurs only when there is a problem. Teacher perceptions of good communication was definitely skewed, based on interview responses which indicated that the teachers' emphasis was on the importance of parents taking an active role in contacting the teachers. However, the teachers did not emphasize actively contacting parents themselves. Barges and Lodge (2003) suggested in their study that in comparison to teachers, parents views controversially indicated that student success depended on parents, teachers, extracurricular programs, and volunteers working together to foster student achievement.

Also, Barges and Lodge (2003) found that parents, students, and teachers all held different beliefs about what effective parental involvement is. However, in the literature, there is no indication of how different group of intact groups of teachers compare in regard to their opinions about parental involvement. Barges and Lodge utilized middle school focus groups to determine the opinions of parents, teachers, and students about their view of parental involvement during the course of a school year.

The MetLife (2011) Survey of the American Teacher: Teachers, Parents and the Economy (2011) has been administered to teachers, parents, and students about the

teaching profession, parent and community engagement, and effects of the current economy on families and schools since 1984. The researchers used qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the responses. The survey respondents ($n = 1,001$ teachers) participated in telephone interviews, and their backgrounds ranged across different demographic areas. It was found that teachers with low job satisfaction believed there was a lack of parental involvement in place at their schools, and no more one-half of the teachers and fewer than 4 in 10 parents ($n = 1,086$) rated their school as excellent in regard to any of the six types of involvement (Epstein, 2008). The survey findings showed that parent engagement had increased over the past 25 years in 2011 compared to 1987, more parents rated relations between parents and teachers as excellent (34% vs. 25%) based on the survey (MetLife, 2011). Principals, home school communication, and the PTA were noted as important factors for low income schools. Also, it was clear that parent and community engagement in schools had increased, but there is still need for improvement.

General Results

The impact of parental involvement was researched by Richardson (2009), in her study of urban schools in Ohio. She found that teachers develop a more student oriented approach and parents develop positive attitudes when effective parental involvement initiatives are in place at schools. As stated by Taliaferro, DeCuir-Gunby, and Allen-Eckard (2009), “Other factors are more esoteric, such as the treatment parents receive when attempting to interact with the school system” (p. 280). They found that, often,

parents do not feel welcome in the school setting, because many teachers are unaware of how to help them become more involved in their child's education.

Over the years in the U.S., parental involvement has continued to be a clear and valid problem, which requires a solution. According to Price-Mitchell (2009), "This reductionist lens created boundaries between functions of learning, dissecting problems, and analyzing information to predict and manage outcomes" (p.14). In order to solve the problem of low parental involvement, first, there must first be a deeper assessment of what underlying reasons caused the gap and, then, a thorough analysis of what can be done to correct the issue in order to produce the desired outcomes.

In conclusion, researchers from many different areas of interest showed that teachers from all levels need guidance in the area of effective parental involvement. Many barriers and stereotypes exist, which range from: (a) teachers' ulterior motives, (b) the priorities of all stakeholders, (c) SES, (d) degree level, to (e) school goals. The most efficacious way to solve the issue of differing views of effective parental involvement is to train and educate all parties, who are involved with the education and raising students today. In order to assist parents as they help their students through their educational journey, teachers must be able to understand the needs and desires that parents have for their children in order for their involvement to ultimately be effective.

Ferrara (2009) asked several questions in regard to parental involvement, "What do you see as important aspects of parent involvement? What parents do you think would probably not want to be involved in parent involvement activities at the school? Do you know enough about parent involvement?" (p. 123). She conducted a research study,

which consisted of multiple disparate groups who play an integral role in parent involvement. Teachers are influenced by their backgrounds, internships, and peers on the idea of parental involvement and its effectiveness. According to Ferrara, there are many barriers to effective parent involvement, which can be affected by the environment of the school. Especially, if this environment and school personnel do not place high value on parents' role in active parental involvement other than the attendance at meetings and conferences rather than authentic involvement that is both meaningful and relevant.

Ferrara (2009) conducted a survey with approximately 14% of the teachers and 35% of the classified staff in the district. Of 5,580 individuals, a total of 1,200 completed the survey. Most of the respondents were from the elementary schools (57%), followed by the high schools (30%), and the middle schools (12%). The survey was developed after a pilot study was conducted the previous year and then the questions were given more specific language and were aligned with the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA;2013) standards.

According to Ferrara (2009), one major barrier for teachers was lack of time in their day to fit in parental involvement efforts, while a major barrier for parents was scheduling of the events and activities did not accommodate their work schedules. Also, teacher's commented that: (a) whose responsibility it was to contact parents, (b) accountability should be placed on parents vs. the teachers, (c) who was responsible to educate parents on how to be involved, and (d) both parties should participate in drafting the Parental Involvement Plan. The teachers had little input or desired little input in order to increase involvement. The overall perception was that teachers and administrators did

not highly value parental involvement, although according to the literature Epstein (2010), parental involvement is a key to academic success and the overall success of students. Once survey data was available, schools did not look at the data to determine how to fix the problem or help change the perception in order to operate the School Improvement Plan and Policies Ferrara (2009) therefore indicating that programs would not be aligned with the ESEA, 1965 and NCLB, 2001. Also, Ferrara concluded that teachers required training and professional development; in fact, there was a strong need for professional development on how to better serve the students and parent through parental involvement activities. This was evident in the researcher's comments, as well as the title of her article, "Broadening the Myopic Vision of Parent Involvement."

Epstein (1995) identified several steps, which are important in the development of collaborative relationships, for example, a focus on: (a) boundary dynamics, (b) systems theory, (c) complexity theory, and (d) organizational sciences. Basically, she encouraged a reframing of parent-school partnerships as it relates to individual school districts.

There was a consensus in the literature in regard to many areas of concern, including: (a) parent factors; (b) school and district leadership hurdles; (c) adolescence growth and development (Sharon, 2009); and (d) a clearer understanding of what constitutes effective parental involvement for all stakeholders. These factors are critical in order to insure that all parties are in agreement about the need to close the achievement gap for Title I schools. A clear understanding of the perceptions of teacher in non-Title I schools is essential as well in order to create a balance and provide solid parental

involvement programs which research has shown to aid in academic achievement and improving society overall

Summary

Parental involvement continues to be an important issue in education. The literature has provided an analysis of the effects of parental involvement as well as the perceptions of teachers as presented in previous research studies. Though there have been studies looking at parental involvement there was still a need to look at the perceptions of parental involvement in regards to Title I and non-Title I teachers. Presented in Chapter Three is the methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this causal comparative study was to compare the perceptions of parent involvement between teachers at Title I schools and a non-Title I Schools. This study was designed to determine whether the type of school (i.e., Title I or Non- Title I) has any association with the perceptions of the teachers at each respective school. The ultimate goal of the study is to shed light on the need for effective training of teachers in order to identify issues and analyze perceptions that they may have on parental involvement. Epstein (2008), a professor and researcher at John Hopkins University, developed a parental involvement program that is based on six factors of parental involvement: (a) parenting, (b) communication, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision making, and (f) collaborating with the community (Epstein, 2008). This researcher utilized the School and Family Partnerships Survey for Teachers in the Middle Grades (See Appendix B) developed by National Network of Partnership Schools in order to identify the teacher perceptions of parental involvement in both Title I and non-Title I schools. Parental involvement is the key to the academic success of all students. The use of effective training has led to improved relationships among teachers, parents, students and all stakeholders.

Research Design

The purpose of this current study was to examine the relationship between teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to their perceptions of parental

involvement. It incorporated a causal comparative research design in order to distinguish the differences between the two groups. This design was chosen, based on the literature review, which indicated that teachers at different schools can develop differing views of parental involvement based on their student population (i.e., Title I and non-Title I), which can lead to differing teacher perceptions of what constitutes parental involvement. A causal comparative study was utilized, because this researcher sought to test hypotheses concerning the relationship between the type of school and the perceptions of teachers on parental involvement. A critical aspect of this causal comparative design was to determine whether the groups differed on the dependent variable and could independent variable be measured in the form of categories (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007).

According to Epstein (2001), historically, parental involvement has been found to be low in Title I schools. A survey was given to teachers in both Title I and non-Title I schools as a measure of their perceptions of parental involvement. There are advantages if a pretest is not administered, when there is a differential attrition during the course of the experiment (Gall et al., 2007). The disadvantages include being able to see a difference over time from the beginning of NCLB (2001) and this current research study. This design was chosen for this reason in order to establish a cause and effect relationship.

Questions and Hypotheses

Research Question 1. How do the perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare in regard to attitudes about parental involvement?

H01: There is no statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

Research Question 2. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to the importance of all practices to involve parents?

H02: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices to involve parents based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

Research Question 3. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to parent responsibilities?

H03: There is a statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

Research Question 4. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to support for parental involvement?

H04: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to support for parental involvement

based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of teachers employed in a school district in the Metro Region of Georgia. The teachers were selected through purposeful sampling; one group was employed at a Title I location and the other at a non-Title I location. Demographic information was collected from teachers at both locations. There were approximately 100 teachers surveyed. The teachers reported various educational levels and years of experience. Participation in the study was voluntary. The goal was to develop information rich cases in order to present an in-depth understanding of the select groups (Gall et al., 2007). This researcher obtained contact information for the Georgia teachers from the school system website and NCES website where Title I and non-Title I schools are identified. Also, the contact information for teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools was also included on the list. The researcher contacted a total of 628 Title I school teachers and 630 non-Title I school teachers by email for participation in the study. A total of 50 Title I teachers and 50 non-Title I teachers responded to the survey for an approximate return rate of 10%. For the teacher sample, the researcher chose a random sample population of 10% of the target population of all middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools in the district. The target population was 1,300 teachers, and the final random sample size was 1,000. Of the 1,000 teachers in the random sample population, 100 participated in the study, yielding a response rate of 10%.

Setting

The setting for the study was middle schools within a metro area of Georgia. The researcher accomplished all communication with participants by use of email and online data collection services through teachers' professional email addresses.

Instrumentation

The instrument, the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades (See Appendix B) was used to adequately determine the perceptions of the educators in this study. This survey is a validated instrument based on Epstein's (2010) Six Types of Parental Involvement. The middle school teachers of a metro area Georgia school district were asked to use a Likert rating scale to indicate the level of effectiveness of 28 parent involvement activities.

Validity

The Epstein (2010) instrument has been used in research of schools on parent, teacher, and/or students attitudes about parental involvement. Previously, Epstein used this instrument in research studies conducted by the National Network of Partnership Schools in collaboration with John Hopkins University and created by the same body. The original research sample for the survey included 243 teachers from 15 elementary and middle schools in Baltimore, Maryland. Permission requesting use of the survey was requested by the researcher (See Appendix C); permission was then granted for use of the survey for research purposes by Dr. Joyce Epstein (See Appendix D).

The threat to validity was selecting participants for the various groups in the study. This was shown in determining if the teachers in the Title I group responded the

same if they taught at non-Title I schools. This was controlled because participants were asked to respond to survey questions based on their current teaching assignments. The threat to the population validity indicated that the sample was representative of the population. The researcher surveyed one metro county in Georgia. A generalization about all Title I and non-Title I school teacher perceptions was made.

Reliability

In order to use the collected data from a survey, it is essential the test outcome be reliable. In many cases, a reliability coefficient of at least 0.85 is desirable in order to assert that the test is reliable. The researcher assessed for reliability by the internal consistency of scores on items that support the same concept. The use of the Cronbach alpha formula was used on the original survey instrument since it included several Likert scale items. This alpha reliability formula reflects the inter correlation of a set of items, which account for the variations of responses to items. The reliability for teacher scales have a high percentage, an indication of their usefulness for research purposes. Also, low standards of error of measurement are used in the instrument, which suggest that the scales can be used with confidence. Several single item indicators are present, which were used to determine the statistical significance for the four research hypothesis and enabled the researcher to use descriptive analytical data. One of the most widely used tests for determining internal reliability is the Bonferonni Correction Method which is used for adjusting for inflating error keep testing same group without changing criteria.

Procedures

The researcher obtained permission from the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and received permission to conduct the study prior to data collection (See Appendix A). The purpose of the IRB at Liberty University is to present minimal risks to participants and to ensure that safeguards are in place as well. Purposeful sampling of the population was used to include teachers in a district of a metro area of Georgia who received the opportunity to participate in the survey. The researcher conducted the study with the use of an electronic survey to all teachers in the district. The researcher obtained the contact information for these teachers from public data from the websites of individual school systems. A brief introduction to explain the reason for data collection was included in the email, which requested their participation in the survey. Participants were then presented with the opportunity to access the link provided to the online survey. Due to the anonymity of the survey, informed consent was not necessary from the participants. Online surveys are readily accessible, low in cost, nearly free of missing data, the participants are more likely to provide responses, and they are easy to transfer and interactive for the participants (Gall et al., 2007). The participants were given 1 week to complete the survey; once the surveys were completed and returned, the researcher downloaded and securely stored the data from the survey site (See Appendix E).

Data Analysis

As detailed in the research questions and hypotheses, two population groups were examined. The collected data reflected the teachers' perceptions for each school based on

Likert scale responses from the survey. In order to address each research hypothesis, the data were analyzed as follows. Once all the raw data were collected, the researcher began to sort and code the survey responses. The teacher surveys were completed with the utilization of a digital survey program, which allowed the data to be exported into Microsoft Excel. The results were then examined for any errors. Next, the raw numbers were imported into the IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0; 2012) program for statistical analysis. The Title I and non-Title I teacher survey responses were collected, coded, and entered in Microsoft Excel. Once both sets of data were entered into SPSS, the surveys were merged into one data file in order to run a variety of statistical analyses to conduct descriptive statistics on the demographic data and on each survey question. The researcher then calculated frequency, percentages, means and standard deviations for the data.

Four 1-way ANOVAs were used in this study to determine if a significant association existed between perceptions of the two groups of teachers from Title I and non-Title schools. One-way ANOVA is used to assess the effect of a single factor on a single response variable (Wahed & Tang, 2010). This was used to compare the amount of between-groups variance in individuals' scores with the amount of within-groups variance. This author sought to estimate how different the means of the various samples or groups were from each other. The between-group variance estimate is influenced by both the effects of the different types of schools in relation to the four research hypotheses and the error variance.

To examine the research questions, descriptive statistics were calculated. The researcher used descriptive statistics to assess the responses of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement in four areas: (a) attitudes about parental involvement, (b) the importance of practices of parental involvement, (c) parental responsibilities, and (d) support for involving all families. Survey items 1, 5, 6, and 7 were analyzed in correlation with the four research questions. Responses came from Item 3, the null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership

H₁₁: There is a statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership

The survey question that applies to the first hypothesis, Survey Items 1a-1r, asked for teachers' professional judgment about parent involvement. They were asked to make one choice for each item that best represented their opinion experience; the choices ranged from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

H₀₂: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices of parental

involvement based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H₁₂₁.: There is a statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices of parental involvement based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

In the survey question that applies to the second hypothesis, Survey Items 6a-6r, teachers were asked to choose among many activities to assist their students and families, to make one choice, and report how important each of the choices was for them to conduct at their grade level. The responses ranged from Not Important to Very Important.

H₀₃₁.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H₁₃₁.: There is a statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

In the survey question that applies to the third hypothesis, Survey Items 7a-7n, teachers were asked for their opinions about the activities that they thought should be conducted by the parents of the children that they teach. They were asked to choose the best selection that described the importance of these activities for their grade level.

H041.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the support for involving parents based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H141.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the support for involving parents based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

In the survey question that applies to the third hypothesis, Survey Items 5a-5l, teachers were asked to consider the fact that schools serve diverse populations of families who have different needs and skills and to give their opinion or judgment about specific ways of involving families at their respective schools. They were asked to rate 12 questions, which ranged from Not Important to Strong.

Table 1

Survey Item Mapping

| Dimensions | Item |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Attitudes | 1 A –1R |
| Importance of Practices | 6A-6R |
| Parent Responsibilities | 7A-7N |
| Total Program | 5A-5L |

The alpha level for statistical significance was set at .05. The SPSS (2012) program was used to test for statistically differences on survey responses from both groups of teachers, in order to determine whether the null hypotheses were rejected and the alternative hypotheses retained. The assumptions associated with four 1-way

ANOVAs were that each participant contributed data to only one cell, and the sample size was sufficient. After all statistical tests had been run, the researcher created tables, charts, and graphs in order to explain the methods used to survey the teachers in the study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools with regards to parental involvement. In this chapter, the methodology of the research was detailed. A well validated survey was used to answer the research questions. In the following chapter, this author will present the analysis of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Introduction

As presented in Chapter One of this study, the general purpose of this causal comparative study was to determine the perceptions of Title I and non-Title I middle school teachers with regard to parental involvement. In addition, the author wanted to determine the differences between the two groups of teachers concerning their beliefs about parental involvement at their current schools. The results from this study are presented in the order of the research questions. The survey results are provided first and then the results of each analysis. The research questions were:

1. How do the perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to attitudes about parental involvement?
2. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to the importance of practices to involve parents?
3. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regards to parent responsibilities?
4. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regards to support for parental involvement?

Characteristics of the Sample

One hundred participants completed the School and Family Involvement Survey for Middle School Teachers (See Appendix B). For this study, the researcher wanted to test whether a statistically significant difference existed between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools with respect to their perceptions of parental involvement.

Frequencies and percentages for each group (i.e., Title I and non-Title I teachers), the highest level of academic achievement, and the type of school are displayed in Table 2.

There were 50 teachers from Title I schools and 50 teachers from non-Title I schools. The majority of teachers surveyed (60%) reported their highest level of education was a master's degree. While 36% reported their highest level of education as a bachelor's degree.

Table 2

Characteristics of Teachers

| Characteristic | N | % |
|-------------------------------------|----|------|
| School type | | |
| Title I | 50 | 50 |
| non-Title I | 50 | 50 |
| Highest level of education attained | | |
| less than Bachelor's | 3 | 3.0 |
| Bachelor | 36 | 36.0 |
| Masters | 60 | 60.0 |
| Doctorate | 1 | 1.0 |

Research Results

The instrument, The National Network of Partnership Schools, School and Family Partnerships Survey for Teachers in the Middle Grades (See Appendix B) was used, which consisted of 28 items, and some had multiple categories. Respondents were given options on the rating scale coded from a low of 1 (i.e., Not important) to a high of 4 (i.e., Very important), a low of 1 (i.e., Strongly disagree) to a high of 4 (i.e., Strongly agree) and/or from a low of 1 (i.e., Not improving) to a high of 4 (i.e., Strong). Four of the survey questions were used to answer Research Questions 1-4 in order to gain a deeper understanding of the present perceptions of teachers in both schools and to analyze the patterns, similarities, and differences between the responses from teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools.

Each question was addressed by use of the data obtained from the survey of both groups of teachers in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement at their present school. The research questions were analyzed with use of analysis of variance (ANOVA) to look for significant differences between the responses within each population. The Disaggregated Data procedure was used to conduct the statistical analysis. The Pearson Correlations to the research questions are presented in Table 3. The Pearson Correlations are used to show the correlation between variables as a measure of how well the variables are related. There were four independent variables measures using the ANOVA. In order for the dependent variables to be independent of one another the correlation value must be less than .70. Three of the survey items were moderately correlated. The moderate

correlations are represented by asterisks. The questions held the same general theme of parental involvement but each questions measured a different aspect.

Table 3

Survey Correlations

| | Attitudes about parental involvement | Importance of practices to involve parents | Parent Responsibilities | Support for parental involvement |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Attitudes about parental involvement | 1 | .128 | -.102 | .074 |
| Importance of all of the practices to involve parents | | 1 | .444(**) | .431(**) |
| Parent Responsibilities | | | 1 | .519(**) |
| Support for parental involvement | | | | 1 |

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Research Question 1. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to attitudes about parental involvement?

The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H₁₁: There is a statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

The researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to test if a statistically significant difference existed between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement. Use of the one-way ANOVA enables the researcher to test if an independent variable has an impact on the dependent variable (e.g., teachers' perceptions of parental involvement).

In Survey Item 1, teachers from Title I and non-Title Schools were asked about their opinions in regard to questions about their attitudes about parental involvement. The response options ranged from Strongly agree to Strongly disagree.

There were 50 respondents in each group. The information from the data was used to test a very important assumption in order for the ANOVA results to have significance. The researcher insured that the ANOVA assumptions had not been violated. The assumptions included continuous data and random sampling in order to adhere to the normality assumption. Levene's test was used to find the $p <$ value of greater than .05 in order to have homogeneity and not violate the assumption. The data did contain homogeneity of variance at .04; this indicated that there was no violation of assumption. Levene's test was performed prior to ANOVA. Displayed in Table 4 are the means and standard deviations for Survey Item 1 correlated to Research Question 1.

To examine research Question 1, the researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to assess whether a relationship existed between groups (i.e., Title I and non-Title I school teachers) and their responses to Survey Item 1 of the School and Family Involvement Survey for Middle School Teachers (See Appendix B).

Table 4

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Attitudes about Parent Involvement

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p-value |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| School Type | .218 | 1 | .218 | 2.733 | .102 |
| Error | 7.832 | 98 | .080 | | |
| Total | 946.491 | 100 | | | |

Note: ^aComputed with use of alpha = .05; ^bR Squared = .027 (Adjusted R Squared = .017)

In order to reject the null hypothesis, the data must have a $p <$ value of less than .05, the p value was .102 which means that the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis; this meant that the researcher could conclude that the perceptions were the same. Therefore, a statistically significant difference could not be determined between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in their perceptions of parental involvement. There were no differences in the perceptions of teachers at each type of school as noted in Table 4.

Research Question 2. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to importance of all of the practices to involve parents?

The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H₀2₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices to involve parents based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H₁2₁: There is a statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices to involve parents based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

The researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to test if a statistically significant difference existed between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to the importance of practices to involve parents based on this research hypothesis. In Survey Item 6, the teachers, from Title I and non-Title Schools, were queried about their opinions in regards to the importance of the practices to involve parents. The responses ranged from Not important to Very important.

To examine Research Question 2, a one-way ANOVA was used to assess whether a relationship existed between the groups (i.e., Title I and non-Title I school teachers) and the responses to Survey Item 6 of the School and Family Involvement Survey for Middle School Teachers (See Appendix B). Presented in Table 5 are the results of the between subjects effect.

Table 5

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Importance of Practices to Involve Parents

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p-value |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-------------|--------|---------|
| School Type | 6.787 | 1 | 6.787 | 18.017 | .000 |
| Error | 36.916 | 98 | .377 | | |
| Total | 883.277 | 100 | | | |

Note: ^aComputed with use of alpha = .05. ^bR Squared = .155 (Adjusted R Squared = .147)

This researcher found that there was a statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of all practices to involve parents. The p value was .000 as noted in Table 5 above. The researcher was able to reject the null hypothesis. The school typing variable (i.e., Title I or non-Title I) was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The empirical evidence indicates that teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools held different perceptions in regards to the importance of practices to involve parents.

Research Question 3: How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast with regards to parent responsibilities?

The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H₀₃₁.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H₁₃₁.: There is a statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their

responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

The researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to test if a statistically significant difference existed between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement based on this research hypothesis. Survey Item 7 was used to query teachers from Title I and non-Title Schools about their opinions in regard to parent responsibilities. The response choices ranged from Not important to Very important.

To examine Research Question 3, a one-way ANOVA was used to assess whether a relationship existed between the groups (i.e., Title I and non-Title I school teachers) and the responses to Survey Item 7 of the School and Family Involvement Survey for Middle School Teachers (See Appendix B). Presented in Table 6 are the results of the between subjects effect and Table 7 are the results of the Levene’s test.

Table 6

Test of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Parent Responsibilities

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p-value |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| School Type | 2.560 | 1 | 2.560 | 5.033 | .027 |
| Error | 49.851 | 98 | .509 | | |
| Total | 1295.787 | 100 | | | |

Note: ^a Computed using alpha = .05; ^b R Squared = .049 (Adjusted R Squared = .039)

Table 7

Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances(a)

| Dependent Variable: Parent Responsibilities | | | |
|---|-----|-----|---------|
| F | df1 | df2 | p-value |
| .359 | 1 | 98 | .550 |

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.
 a. Design: Intercept+Type

There was no violation of Levene's but the p value of .027 was reduced by a factor of 4; reducing the p value by a factor of 4 means that the threshold for statistical significance is $.05/4 = .0125$. This research hypothesis failed to reject because of the number of statistical test ran. When you have a sample and you test multiple times the researcher failed to reject because of the limitation of having to reduce the p value to run the study. The results for this research hypothesis are limited by the nature of the questions. The obtained differences in sample variances are improbable to have arisen based on random sampling from a population with equal variances and the null hypothesis of equal variances is rejected determining that there could be a difference between the variances in the population selected. The findings failed to reject the null hypothesis this meant that the researcher could conclude that the perceptions were the same. Therefore, a statistically significant difference could not be determined between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in their perceptions of parent responsibilities.

Research Question 4. How do the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to support for parental involvement?

The null and alternative hypotheses are as follows:

H04₁.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the support for involving parents based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H14₁.: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the support for involving parents based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

The researcher conducted a one-way ANOVA to determine whether a statistically significant difference existed between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement based on this research hypothesis. In Survey Item 5, teachers from Title I and non-Title Schools were queried about their opinions in regard to the support for parental involvement. The response choices ranged from Not improving to Strong. Displayed in Table 8 are the between-subjects effects.

Table 8

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects Dependent Variable: Dependent Variable: Support for Parent Involvement

| | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | p-value |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|---------|
| School Type | 1.183 | 1 | 1.183 | 1.446 | .232 |
| Error | 80.157 | 98 | .818 | | |
| Total | 998.672 | 100 | | | |

Note: ^aComputed using alpha = .05; ^bR Squared = .015 (Adjusted R Squared = .004).

The Levene's Test was sufficient with a p value of .323, which is greater than .025. This finding failed to reject the null hypothesis with a p value of .232 which is greater than .05. The stated null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to support for parental involvement was rejected.

Conclusion

In order to apply the ANOVA to the data, the Boferroni Procedure was used to apply the simplest and most common procedure for finding the appropriate alpha for each of several planned a priori comparisons; this is based on a formula for the maximum accumulation of probabilities in the comparison of a problem of multiple comparisons. The most well-known correction is called the Bonferroni correction; it consists of multiplying each probability by the total number of tests performed. (Cohen, Welkowitz, & Brooke, 2011).

The purpose of this adjustment was to reduce the probability of identifying significant results that do not exist, that is, to guard against making Type I errors (e.g., rejection of null hypotheses when they are true) in the testing process. This potential for error increases with an increase in the number of tests being performed in a given study and is due to the multiplication of probabilities across the multiple tests. The Bonferroni procedure is often used as an adjustment in multiple comparisons after a significant finding in an ANOVA or when constructing simultaneous confidence intervals for several population parameters (Perrett & Mundfrom, 2010).

The researcher shared the results of the demographic information for the survey as well as beliefs regarding parental involvement with regard to the hypotheses of this research study. Teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools disagreed on the importance of all practices to involve parents. The results could not determine whether teachers at each type of school had a statistically significant different belief in regard to attitudes about parental involvement, parent responsibilities, and support for parental involvement by failing to reject the null research hypothesis for Research Questions 1, 3, and 4. Presented in the final chapter of this dissertation are a detailed summary, a discussion of the results, and the implications for practice.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of middle school teachers in both Title I and non-Title I Schools in regard to parental involvement in four areas: (a) attitudes about the school and family program, (b) importance of practices of parental involvement, (c) parental responsibilities, and (d) the support for parental involvement. The researcher examined teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools about their beliefs on parental involvement, and the survey questionnaire results were analyzed. Presented in this chapter is: (a) a summary of the findings, (b) the discussion of those findings, (c) the implications, (d) the limitations, (e) recommendations for future research, and (f) the conclusion for this current research study.

Although the federal government has laws, which mandate parental involvement policies in place in order to insure Free and Appropriate Education (U.S. Department of Education, 2010) for all students in all schools, there is a distinct lack of a clear consensus of what defines parental involvement, as well as what training should be provided to teachers and administrators, in particular, middle school teachers who teach in both Title I and non-Title I Schools. There is a lack of clarification in regard to current programs and training available to teachers, parents, students, and all stakeholders. This researcher addressed the following questions: (a) How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to attitudes about parent involvement? (b) How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to the importance of practices of

parental involvement? (c) How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to parent responsibilities? (d) How do perceptions of middle school teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools compare and contrast in regard to the support for parental involvement?

In the literature, there is little research, which addresses the beliefs of middle school teachers in Title I in comparison to teachers in non-Title I schools concerning parental involvement. In turn, the perception of teachers in Title I schools may vary greatly depending on the perceptions they have of the parents themselves and overall parental involvement. The degree to which these teachers hold certain beliefs regarding parental involvement can play a large part in what programs and practices they implement with their students and parents. If these individuals' beliefs do not align, this could be detrimental to the success of initiatives that are implemented to improve parental involvement programs at the middle school level. In addition, misaligned beliefs could be damaging to the self-efficacy of both students' and parents' both now and in the future. This study addressed the beliefs that Title I and non-Title I middle school teachers have regarding parental involvement.

Review of Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the perceptions of teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to their attitudes about parent involvement based on their responses to Survey Items 1a-1r on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H02₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to the importance of practices of parental involvement based on their responses Survey Items 6a-6r the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H03₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to parent responsibilities based on their responses Survey Items 7a-7n, on the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

H04₁: There is no statistically significant difference among the teachers at Title I and non-Title I middle schools in regard to support for parental involvement based on their responses Survey Items 5a-5l the School and Family Partnership Surveys of Teachers in the Middle Grades.

The answers to these questions can assist policy makers and district leaders in their efforts to close the gaps in home- school communication in order to build stronger parental involvement programs. It is essential for policy leaders to be able to aide in changing these perceptions to be more positive through education and training. Likewise, building an education system that is both productive and successful in molding the generation of students through federal initiatives is important for the overall development of a productive society.

This researcher examined the perceptions of Title I and non-Title teachers in regard to parental involvement. The collected data were analyzed to determine whether

teachers at Title I schools and non-Title I schools had the same beliefs in regard to parental involvement based on the type of school categorized by its socioeconomic status (SES). Based on the analysis of the data, three of the four null hypotheses were rejected. These findings are summarized prior to a discussion of the study findings and implications

Research Question 1

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to assess whether there was a significant relationship between Title I and non-Title I middle school teachers in regard to their perceptions of parental involvement based on their responses to the National Network of Partnership Schools, School and Family Involvement Survey for Middle School Teachers (See Appendix B). The researcher found that there were no significant differences between the two groups of teachers in their attitudes about parental involvement. Although both groups of teachers chose similar ratings on the survey, there was no statistically significant difference.

Research Question 2

The second research question was used to address the importance of practices in parental involvement. These were analyzed based on the answers to Question 6 of the survey. It was found that teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools felt differently about the importance of all practices to involve parents, as demonstrated by the statistically significant ($p = .000$) difference in their responses to the survey. Also, the respondents were asked to respond to specific questions in order to rank their perceptions in certain areas of parental involvement; the response choices ranged from Not important to Very

important. There was a statistically significant ($p = .000$) difference between the responses of the two groups of teachers.

Research Question 3

The focus of this question was on teachers' perceptions in regard to parent responsibilities. Based on the data analysis, there was no statistically significant difference; therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. The difference arises from the proportions of each population that agreed with the statement and testing the same group repeatedly.

Research Question 4

In this question, the issue of teacher perception in regard to support for parental involvement was addressed. Based on the findings from the data analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected. Although the means and standard deviations were close in range, there was no mathematically statistically significant difference.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question 1. This researcher designed this study to compare the perceptions of teachers at the two different types of schools and their beliefs in regard to parental involvement. Based on the data analysis, there were no differences in attitudes about parent involvement between Title I and non-Title I teachers, nor were there any statistically significant differences. The data analysis revealed that a majority of teachers in both groups answered similarly on the survey. This finding does not support the current research (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Price-Mitchell, 2009; MacMahon, 2011). Although current researchers Bakker, Denessen, and Brus-Laeven

(2007) reported that staff at lower income schools may have different perceptions of parental involvement than in middle to higher level schools, these teachers scored approximately the same in regard to the means and standard deviations.

Research Question 2. The purpose of this research question was to determine the importance of practices of parental involvement. The responses indicated what this had found in the literature; that is, there is no formal training in place at the school level to determine what constitutes effective parental involvement. The findings show that the requirements at these teachers' schools or districts may not directly affect their beliefs or perceptions, because their students' families are from lower SES. Each survey question can be correlated to research related to the importance of practices of parental involvement. The responses ranged from 1 (i.e., Not important) to 4 (i.e., Very important). In the analysis of these responses, it was found that there was a statistically significant ($p = .000$) difference between the teachers in Title I and non-Title I Schools.

In Survey Question 6, the teachers were asked to rate several activities that they felt were important practices for involving families. A description of each activity and corresponding teacher views are listed below.

In Activity A, teachers rated the importance of having a conference with each of their students' parents. Of the Title I teachers, 63% reported that this was important, while 28% of the non-Title I teachers felt this was important.

For Activity B, which was about attendance at evening meetings, performances, and workshops at school, 46% of the Title I teachers reported that this was important,

while only 14% of non-Title I teachers reported it was important. In addition, 50% of the teachers rated this activity as Not important or of Little importance on the rating scale.

Activity C, contact with parents about their children's problems or failures. was rated: (a) 79% of Title I teachers believed that this was Very important, and (b) 90% of non-Title I teachers felt that this was Equally important. In regard to these teachers' opinions about this parental involvement practice, members of both groups agreed on this practice and the importance for involving families.

For Activity D, communication with parents when their children do something well, 79% of the Title I teachers and 53% of the non-Title I teachers responded that this was important.

For Activity E, involvement of some parents as volunteers in their classroom, 86% of the non-Title I teachers reported that this activity was Not important or had Very little importance. In comparison, 66% of the Title I teachers reported this as Very important or a Little important.

For Activity F, informing parents of the skills their children must attain in order pass each subject: (a) 96% of the Title I teachers reported that this was Important, and 94% of the non-Title I teachers reported the same. They agreed that parents needed to understand the skills needed for classroom success.

Activity G was related to academic success, and teachers were asked about their opinions on informing parents how report card grades are earned in their classes. Of the Title I and non-Title I teachers, 98% and 93%, respectively, responded that this was Somewhat important to Very important.

Activity H, in regard to the importance of providing specific activities for children and parents to do in order to improve students' grades, was rated at 94% by Title teachers and 86% of non-Title I teachers as Very important.

For Activity I, which was described as the provision of ideas for discussing TV shows, the responses were similar. Title I teachers rated this equally across the rating scale with approximately 25% as Not important, 25% a Little important, 25% Pretty important, and 25% Very important. In comparison, 88% of non-Title I teachers reported that this was Not important at all or had Very little importance, yet 22% felt that this was Important or a Little important

Activities J-K, the assignment of homework that requires children to interact with parents, was rated as Very important to Pretty important by 80% for Title I teachers and 60% as Not important to a Little important for non-Title I teachers. One of the activities was the suggestion for parents to practice spelling or other skills with their children at home before tests. Title I teachers rated this as Important to Very important at 86%, and 57% of non-Title I teachers rated this as Important to Very important; however, 43% reported that it was Not important to a Little important.

In Activities L-M, the suggestion that parents should listen to their children read, the 83% of the Title I teachers rated this as Important, and 42% as Not important to a Little important by non-Title I teachers and 58% as Pretty important to Important. In a related activity, teachers rated the importance of asking parents to listen to a story or paragraph that their children wrote. Of the Title I teachers, 86% reported that this activity was Pretty important to Very important. With non-Title I teachers, the responses were

nearly even from Not important to Very important. The opinions on this activity varied for this group.

Activities O-P were about the community and business partners. Teachers were asked to rate the importance of working with community members to arrange learning opportunities in their classes. Approximately 75% of Title I teachers reported that a community partnership was Important and 78% in the area of business partners collaboration, while 50% of these non-Title I teachers reported that these partnerships were Pretty important to Very important; 50% reported that these partnerships were Not important or had Very little importance in both the business and community partner collaborations.

For Activity Q, the respondents were asked about this opinion in regard to requesting information from parents about their children's talents, interests, or needs. For the Title I teachers, 77% reported that this was Very important, and 78% of non-Title I reported that this was Important, an indication that the members of the two groups agreed on this activity.

Activity R, the final activity was about parents serving on a PTA/PTO or other school committee, 82% of Title I teachers reported that this was Very important, while there was a 50% difference in the non-Title I teachers' responses. Overall, the three most important activities for the Title I school teachers were: (a) contact parents about their children's problems or failures, (b) inform parents how report card grades were earned in their class, and (c) provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' grades. The least important activity for Title I school teachers was to provide

ideas for to discuss TV shows. The three most important activities for non-Title I school teachers were: (a) contact parents about their children's problems or failures, (b) inform parents how report card grades were earned in their class, and (c) inform parents when their children do something well or improve. The least important activities for non-Title I school teachers were two different activities: (a) involve some parents as volunteers in their classroom and (b) provide ideas for to discuss TV shows. To conclude, the highest rated activity for both groups was: (a) contact parents about their children's problems or failures and (b) inform parents how report card grades were earned in their class.

Many researchers have detailed the need for elaboration on what constitutes effective parental involvement. In line with Epstein's (2002) parental involvement factors and Hornby and Lafeale's (2011) parent and family factors, child factors, parent-teacher factors, and societal factors, it is important that teachers' views are aligned with parent views. The data showed that the teachers' ideas of activities, which are important, may indicate the need for more research focused on the parents of the students taught by this same group of teachers to see if these views are consistent or not. The data analysis responses from the two groups may differ due to lack of knowledge about each area. In the area of help with study and with homework, a commonly mentioned form of parental participation involved the parent assisting their students with homework and out of class assignments (Barges & Lodge, 2003). When lines of communication are open between teachers and parents, it is essential that teachers are able to communicate with families about student achievement and how to aid students at home, because this provides a stronger sense of community (Epstein, 2001). Yates and Campbell (2003) discussed the

use of volunteers, who work together in order for stronger relationships to form and to increase parental involvement. However, according to Barnyak and McNelly, these efforts to increase this bond will not work be effective without direction and support. Nonetheless, they are necessary in order for parent involvement programs to work and succeed for the benefit of all stakeholders including local and district leadership. Finally, Baker and Soden (1998) established that the importance of parent involvement was been viewed as a generalization and that the data have not used in order to distinguish between the different types of parental involvement.

The research conducted by Weiss, Krieger Lopez, and Chatman (2005) showed that the perception that teachers have of parents is reflective of parents' SES backgrounds, and this can influence their parental interactions and parental involvement initiatives. This SES can be perceived as a negative factor than an opportunity to open lines of communication and build relationships with the parents. Weiss et al. (2005) focused on the theoretical prospects comprise parental involvement. Their results did not indicate that Title I school teachers have any less desire to interact with parents than non-Title I school teachers. In fact, the indication was reversed. Based on the research results, Title I school teachers rated responses to the activities, which have been shown to increase parental involvement, were higher than that of non-Title I teachers, an indication that they are willing to connect with parents and involve them in all the ways noted in previous research such as volunteering in the classroom, community and business partnerships, contacting parents for positive reasons (Epstein, 2002).

Research Question 3. The purpose of this research questions was to determine if a statistically significant difference existed between teachers at Title I and non-Title I schools in regard to perceptions about parent responsibilities. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was insufficient evidence in the data to support the null hypothesis. So, researcher retained the null hypothesis because it cannot be proven true beyond all doubt.

Research Question 4. For the fourth group of hypotheses, there was no significant relationship between teacher perceptions of support for parental involvement at Title and non-Title I schools. Based on the research by MacMahon (2011) historically, Title I schools have had low levels of parental involvement, and teachers at the schools may have low expectations about parents and students. Based on the findings from this study, there was no difference between teachers' their perceptions in regard to attitudes about parental involvement and support for parental involvement. There was, however, a difference between the importance of all practices to involve families. This is a noted difference because the activities, which are important at a Title I school, may be different than that of a non-Title I school. This means that there is a need to identify which activities should be deemed as important for both groups regardless of the SES and which activities have been shown to increase parental involvement.

Study Limitations

Sample. While the sample size was large enough to yield valid results, the survey researcher did not specify the number of schools surveyed only the number of participants in each group due to the anonymity of the survey (Gall, Gall, & Borg 2007). The researcher chose multiple schools within the metro area district. The participants

were anonymously invited to participate therefore; the researcher could not check the validation based on Title I middle school teachers and non-Title I middle school teachers completing the survey. Teachers may or may not have participated from the same school within the same district therefore creating a possible bias to one particular school over another. The researcher made some generalizations that assumed all teachers at both types of schools in Georgia would have responded in a similar manner. Another drawback is that the sample might be biased toward those who have strong feelings toward parental involvement and feel a greater desire to respond than those who might not feel as strongly.

An additional limitation to the sample was the fact that the largest percentage of the respondents (i.e., both Title I teachers and non-Title I middle school teachers) held a bachelor's degree, while some held masters degrees at their present school. This may have led to biased results that the researcher may not be able to generalize. The researcher is unsure whether teachers with higher degrees have the same feelings and opinions and perceptions about parental involvement. There has been a stronger mandate to increase parental involvement in the past 12 years with the ESEA and NCLB, 2001 policies, and recently graduated educators might have stronger opinions about parental involvement in comparison to educators who received more training and years of education that would have resulted in different outcomes to the study.

Instrument. The use of an anonymous survey is not without its limitations (Krosnick, 1999). The survey respondents were encouraged to respond honestly, but the researcher had no way to determine whether respondents told the truth about their

experiences with parental involvement practices or whether they responded in a manner in which they feel the researcher would like them to answer. Teachers may also respond in a way to further place themselves in anonymity by misguiding demographic information or answering questions in order to not make their respective school types look in a negative light. In addition, the Title I and non-Title I middle school teachers, who responded to this survey may have different ideas regarding definitions from the study in regard to what defines parental involvement. The researcher is unable to determine whether teachers, who responded to the individual survey items, generalized about their own classroom practices that impact parental involvement or whether they looked at the questions holistic in terms of how most teachers at their school generally feel about the responses to the questions.

Design. Another limitation of the survey design could be the format of the survey, which was presented to the participants. Respondents may have considered the online surveys as impersonal or *spam* and did not choose to open the link. In addition, teachers may have a heavy workload due to required meetings, planning periods, administrative duties and classroom responsibilities. Some respondents might have questioned the promise of anonymity, in the case that school and district leaders might have access to the respondent's personal information.

Implications

This researcher found that these Title I middle school teachers and non-Title I middle school teachers had more differing perceptions in regard to parental involvement in the area of the importance for involving families. Also, it was found that the activities

that these teachers deemed as important to them had similarities and differences. The question to pose now would be, are the parents' perceptions the same as the teachers' perceptions and do the teacher perceptions affect the parent perceptions. Consequently, these findings indicate the importance for Georgia school districts and schools in the United States to develop training programs and awareness for teachers in order to meet the needs of the teachers in regard to what constitutes parental involvement. The findings also suggest that NCLB goals for both Title I and non-Title I schools as a mandated practice for closing the achievement gap need to have a statewide standard or more monitored federal mandate for increasing parental involvement at the middle school level is the basis.

Epstein and Dauber (1991) conducted a study based on survey data from 171 teachers in eight Title I Schools. The researchers found that teachers who participated in parental involvement training and implement strategies, achieve higher parental involvement with parents with activities that are deemed as effective and appropriate. The survey concluded with a few points that were contradictory to the beliefs of the opposing view point holders.

1. teachers felt they had higher involvement attitudes than their peers
2. teachers felt parents were not involved
3. teachers wanted parents to fulfill all parental responsibilities though training was not in place
4. teachers held false beliefs about parents therefore leading to policy discrepancies.

Often, teachers in Title I schools view families in relation to their weaknesses rather than try to focus on programs to fit the needs of the school culture. It is important to not only to survey and question teachers on their beliefs and questions, but to generate further questions and implement changes in order to curtail negative perceptions of teachers, which will lead to positive perceptions of parents (Bourdieu, 1967). If teachers in this study believed that certain activities were important, then the parents should be aware of these beliefs if they are aligned with state mandates and federal guidelines for increasing parental involvement. If these beliefs that teachers have about the important practices of involving families are in fact not important for a solid parental involvement program, then the teachers must be educated on what is important because their beliefs will be directed toward the parents as a result.

The middle school years, as shown by previous research (Gould, 2011), are essential to the overall development of productive citizens in society. However, Knopf and Swick (2007) suggested that parental involvement issues can be present in early childhood education, which can result in a continued hindrance throughout the remaining school age years. In the study conducted by Turney and Kao (2009), the barriers to parental involvement were discussed for families. It was suggested that the issue of poor communication with parents may have begun at an earlier school age and, therefore, impact any future communications between the home and school. The activities deemed as important identified in research conducted by Epstein (2002) on the factors that promote effective parental involvement can be overlooked if not fully understood in the early school age years. In addition, research on low-income families has demonstrated

that increased involvement within families during the elementary school years predicts improved achievement outcomes for children (Dearing et al., 2006; Cooper, Lindsay, & Nye, 2000).

Typically, in Title I schools there are a majority of minority students from both native and non-native English speaking families. This language barrier could prevent parental involvement as well as the teachers' ability to communicate effectively. So if the teachers believe that students should be able to communicate to parents what they are doing in school by reading to them and sharing their writing, this could pose an issue if parents are non-native English speakers. Likewise, if teachers communicate with parents about the goals of the school, the language barrier could be an issue. According to Part C of Title III of the ESEA (2001) schools must provide the same information to the parents of students with limited English proficiency in a language that the parents can understand

Since schools across the nation have different criteria to determine English as a Second Language student populations, the exact percentage of students at schools across the U.S., who may have a language barrier at home, is not clear. It is important, however, for individual school staff to know the levels of non-native English speaking students in order to close the home-school communication for both Title I and non-Title I schools.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several factors that could be addressed further are the relationship between the middle school years and the effect of parental involvement as viewed by the students and parents. As students reach the middle grades, overall, student support from teacher,

administrators, and coaches tends to dwindle (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010); similarly, there may be less involvement from the parents.

Training for teachers is another factor that contributes to parental involvement effectiveness; a majority of teachers require more training opportunities that focus on educating them on important practices regarding parental involvement (Barges & Lodge, 2003). The teachers in this study may need more training on what constitutes effective parental involvement, and they may be unaware that the activities, which they believe are important, are in fact not important for a strong parental involvement program, but simple important to them. This could be due to the fact that they do not realize what parental involvement is and is not; therefore, they may not realize that they need training in order to gain clarification and a better understanding of what true parental involvement is and how their perception of it can affect its overall effectiveness. The perceptions of parents as a part of a lower SES group or Title I are important to understand, because relatively little is known about this population in comparison to the middle- and higher-income parents more often studied (Bartel, 2010). This will limit the assumptions made in literature about low-income schools.

Empirical studies pertaining to parent involvement in middle school may need to be conducted for further research. The decline in parent involvement in middle school could be because parents and teachers perceive the students as capable of being more autonomous in their education than they actually are. In a study conducted by Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye (2000), they surveyed 709 students, teachers, and parents and found that high achieving students benefited more from autonomous parental involvement than

low achieving students, an indication that parental involvement is not the same for every middle school child.

One suggested intervention that many schools use could be the parent liaison or parent facilitator to help bridge the home-school gap. Sanders (2008) conducted a study as part of an ongoing longitudinal qualitative study of district leadership for school, family, and community. Partnerships were taken in part by parent liaisons at several schools within the National Network of Partnership Schools program. The need for district leadership to employ parent liaisons with a given purpose and direction can help shape and form the parental involvement policies at the school level while assisting teachers with the process. Parent liaisons can help bridge the gap for professional educators who lack effective training and experience with parents.

The issue of parental involvement importance requires further research. LaRocque et al. (2011) asserted that parental involvement is an indicator for student academic achievement, but the promotion and adherence to policies as well as following set guidelines or programs for improvement are still unclear. Furthermore, LaRocque found that communication from the teachers, which is both positive and meaningful to parents from a range of ethnicities and backgrounds, is essential to break down barriers in order to shift what constitutes effective parental involvement for parents and teachers. There is a need for constant discourse due to the different varying levels between parents and teachers and even due to not understanding the family background and expectations regardless of SES.

MacMahon (2011) conducted an empirical mixed methods study to examine educators' understandings of student risk factors. It was found at one Title I school that the issue of parental involvement was overlooked due to other NCLB factors such as testing and attendance. The low teacher perceptions were attributed to the lack of dedication of teachers to focus on parental involvement due to turnover rate, ineffective administrators, and overall lack of district focus on other areas. Teachers seemed to have given up or perceived parents as uneducated and unable to assist students causing a continuing cycle of low self-esteem for the students. These issues continue to create students, who are *at risk*, if the teachers do not understand how many factors such as parental involvement can impact student achievement. Based on the results from this current study, Research Question 2, it is clear that the Title I teachers in the group surveyed had a clearer view of what activities constitute as effective based on Epstein's (2002) parental involvement guidelines and policies for a strong parental involvement program and home school collaboration.

Walker et al. (2010) discussed the theoretical model of the parental involvement process and the role of individuals other than teachers such as school counselors in order to improve home-school connections. An understanding of the backgrounds of the students and parents, if different than that of the teachers, is essential to parental involvement. A commitment by all stakeholders is necessary. Several examples of activities were provided that teachers need to be aware of in order to engage families through personal physiological variables and contextual motivators and that parent perceptions of how teacher offer such activities is essential as well.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it is essential for teachers to be accurately trained on how to effectively involve parents. A case in point is the study of the Bernardino schools in California. Through recent research by Campbell and Yates (2003), it was found that teachers felt a bond with parents and were able to assist the parents better in supporting their students through their program that was put in place. Therefore, the attitudes of both the teachers and parents were more positive. By adopting the programs, not only were funds placed into the hands of each school for parental involvement activities but also time for training for both teachers and parents through communication, and collaboration was provided.

The findings from a longitudinal study conducted by Dearing (2008) with K-5 low income students showed that added focus on family involvement would be beneficial in low-income schools and help promote societal changes for the children, who attend these schools. Teachers' perceptions of parental involvement have a direct effect on the student-teacher relationships. The perceptions that the adults have on their education as a whole can have a negative or positive impact on overall achievement and success in life. In addition, Dearing found that further research would need to be conducted on the nature of parent-teacher relationships in order to determine how this could also affect the students.

The nature of education policy today is constructed on the postulation that parent contribution will aid student achievement and increase the educational opportunities for children (Epstein, 2005). Trainor (2010) agreed that improvement of educators' attitudes

through training to work with families is perilous, due to the legislative mandates and the opportunity for home-school communication to be at an advantage rather than a disadvantage for teachers in schools currently.

An open dialogue between parents and teachers would need to occur in order for concerns to be expressed. This should occur only after both parents and teachers have been properly trained on what does and does not constitute parental involvement, based on a solid training program and not just a matter of signing agreements without follow up or follow through.

Family and community involvement plans and programs result in more parents from all backgrounds becoming involved with their adolescents in discussions and decisions about school and making plans for postsecondary education and training. (Epstein, 2008). This can include action plans, evaluation, frameworks, and research based approaches (Ferrara, 2009).

As stated earlier, another key component is education of teachers and staff. The ESEA (2001) has many foci on parental involvement policies, with requirements to educate teachers and other school personnel on how to communicate with and work with parents in order to coordinate parent programs and build ties between parents and, in turn, develop strong parental involvement programs. Based on the data analysis from this dissertation, it is clear that the perceptions of ways for involving families is different for teachers in Title I and non-Title I schools. This indicates that a lack of training may be the cause or a misconception of what does and does not constitute effective parental involvement for all stakeholders. Legislative policy should be based on solid research

practice; mandates from Federal, State and local governments would benefit from both a quantitative and qualitative in-depth look at the parental involvement policies in place as well a means for follow up on programs and initiative to insure that parental involvement continues to be one of the main focus in U.S. schools today.

The current research on lower SES schools and parental involvement lend to the fact that parental involvement is low because the teachers have low expectations of parents and students and do not feel the parents are capable of being involved effectively. The findings from this research study showed that non-Title I school teachers believed that different activities were deemed more important than that of Title I teachers; the question remains where do teacher perceptions about what is important come from. The Title I teachers seem to choose the activities that research shows are key to a strong parental involvement program, while non-Title I school teachers chose some similar activities as well but overall the activities that they rated as very important are not necessarily contribute to a strong parental involvement program based on Epstein's (2002) six parental involvement pieces. Necessary training on what is effective is needed for not only Title I schools but non-Title I schools because both also chose activities that were important to them but not necessarily important for a strong parental involvement program.

The research also shows that the perceptions of the teachers leads to the perceptions of parents and students so if the teachers perceive these activities as important their perceptions will go on to their students and parents and the students and parents will believe the same as important if those are the activities that the teacher tends

to focus on. More research on how the parents compare in both groups as well as the students. A qualitative study to include interviews as to why certain activities are important and if that importance related to the type of school that each groups of teachers works at or are those importance related to other factors, such as pre-service factors, self-efficacy, or perception that teachers have of parents and/or students.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB Approval

November 8, 2011

Carla Jackman

IRB Application 1206: Evaluating Parental Involvement Programs: A
Comparison of Teacher Perceptions of Effective Parental Involvement in
Two Elementary Schools

Dear Carla,

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study does not classify as human subjects research. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application.

Your study does not classify as human subjects research because you are not collecting identifiable, private information about your participants. The questions in the National Network for Partnership in Schools survey, which was included in your application materials, focus heavily on observations and opinions of parental involvement in the school and do not require participants to disclose private information.

Please note that this decision only applies to your current research application, and that any changes to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty IRB for verification of continued non-human subjects research status. You may report these changes by submitting a new application to the IRB and referencing the above IRB Application number.

If you have any questions about this determination, or need assistance in identifying whether possible changes to your protocol would change your application's status, please email us at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

Fernando Garzon, Psy.D.
IRB Chair, Associate Professor
Center for Counseling & Family Studies

Appendix B: Research Survey

Q -1. The first questions ask for your professional judgment about parent involvement. Please CIRCLE the one choice for each item that best represents your opinion and experience.

| | Strongly Disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|--|----------------------|----------|-------|-------------------|
| a. Parent involvement is important for a good school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| b. Most parents know how to help their children on schoolwork at home. | SD | D | A | SA |
| c. This school has an active and effective parent organization (e.g., PTA or PTO). | SD | D | A | SA |
| d. Every family has some strength that could be tapped to increase student success in school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| e. All parents could learn ways to assist their children on schoolwork at home, if shown how. | SD | D | A | SA |
| f. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students. | SD | D | A | SA |
| g. Teachers should receive recognition for time spent on parent involvement activities. | SD | D | A | SA |
| h. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are now at most grade levels. | SD - | D | A | SA |
| i. Teachers do not have the time to involve parents in very useful ways. | SD | D | A | SA |
| j. Teachers need in-service education to implement effective parent involvement practices. | SD | D | A | SA |
| k. Parent involvement is important for student success in school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| l. This school views parents as important partners. | SD | D | A | SA |
| m. The community values education for all students. | SD | D | A | SA |
| n. This school is known for trying new and unusual approaches to improve the school. | SD | D | A | SA |
| o. Mostly when I contact parents, it's about problems or trouble. | SD | D | A | SA |
| p. In this school, teachers play a large part in most decisions. | SD | D | A | SA |
| q. The community supports this school. | SD | D | A | SA |

| | | | | |
|--|----|---|---|----|
| r. Compared to other schools, this school has one of the best school climates for teachers, students, and parents. | SD | D | A | SA |
|--|----|---|---|----|

Q-2. Teachers contact their students' families in different ways. Please estimate the percent of your students families that you contacted this year in these ways:

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| a. Letter or memo | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| b. Telephone | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| c. Meeting at school | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| d. Scheduled parent-teacher conference | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| e. Home visit | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| f. Meeting in the community | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| g. Report card pick-up | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |
| h. Performances, sports, or other events | NA | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | All |

Q-3. Some teachers involve parents (or others) as volunteers at the school building. Please check the ways that you use volunteers in your classroom and in your school THIS YEAR. (CHECK all that apply in columns A and B.)

| A. In my CLASSROOM, volunteers... | B. In our SCHOOL, volunteers... |
|---|---|
| a) I do NOT use classroom volunteers | a) Are NOT USED in the school now |
| b) Listen to children read aloud | b) Monitor halls, cafeteria, or other areas |
| c) Read to the children | c) Work in the library, computer lab, or other area |
| d) Grade papers | d) Teach mini-courses |
| e) Tutor children in specific skills | e) Teach enrichment or other lessons |
| f) Help on trips or at parties | f) Lead clubs or activities |
| g) Give talks (e.g., on careers, hobbies, etc.) | g) Check attendance |
| h) Other ways (please specify) | h) Work in "parent room" |
| | i) Other ways (please specify) |

THIS YEAR, how many volunteers or aides help in your classroom or school?

C. Number of different volunteers who assist me in a typical week = _____

D. Do you have paid aides in your classroom? NO YES (how many? _____)

E. Number of different volunteers who work anywhere in the school in an average week = _____ (approximately)

Q-4. Please estimate the percent of your students' families who did the following! THIS YEAR:

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| a. Attend workshops regularly at school | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| b. Check daily that child's homework is done | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| c. Practice schoolwork in the summer | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| d. Attend PTA meetings regularly | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| e. Attend parent-teacher conferences with you Understand enough to help their child at home: | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| f. ...reading skills at your grade level | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| g. ...writing skills at your grade level | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |
| h. ...math skills at your grade level | 0% | 5% | 10% | 25% | 50% | 75% | 90% | 100% |

Q-5. Schools serve diverse populations of families who have different needs and skills. The next questions ask for your judgment about specific ways of involving families at your school. Please CIRCLE one choice to tell whether you think each type of involvement is:

| | |
|--|---|
| NOT IMPORTANT | (Means this IS NOT part of your school now, and SHOULD NOT BE.) |
| NEEDS TO BE DEVELOPED => DEV | (Means this IS NOT part of your school now, but SHOULD BE.) |
| NEEDS TO BE IMPROVED | (Means this IS part of your school, but NEEDS TO BE STRENGTHENED.) |

**A STRONG PROGRAM
NOW => STRONG**

(Means this IS a STRONG program for most parents AT ALL GRADE LEVELS at your school.)

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT

AT THIS SCHOOL...

| | | | | |
|---|----------------|------------|--------------|---------------|
| a. WORKSHOPS for parents to build skills in PARENTING and understanding their children in each grade level | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| b. WORKSHOPS for parents on creating HOME CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| c. COMMUNICATIONS from the school to the home that all families can understand and use. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| d. COMMUNICATIONS about report cards so that parents understand students' progress and needs | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| e. Parent-teacher CONFERENCES with all families. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| f. SURVEYING parents each year for their ideas about the school. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| g. VOLUNTEERS in classrooms to assist teachers and students. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| h. VOLUNTEERS to help in other (non-classroom) parts of the school. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| i. INFORMATION on how to MONITOR homework. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| j. INFORMATION for parents on HOW TO HELP their children with specific skills and subjects | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |

| | | | | |
|---|---------|-----|-------|--------|
| k. Involvement by families in PTA/PTO leadership other COMMITTEES, or other decision-making roles. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |
| l. Programs for AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES, recreation, and homework help. | NOT IMP | DEV | IMPRV | STRONG |

Q-.6 Teachers choose among many activities to assist their students and families. CIRCLE one choice to tell how important each of these is for you to conduct at your grade level

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS PRACTICE TO YOU?

| | Not Important | A Little Important | Pretty Important | Very Important |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Have a conference with each of my student's parents at least once a year. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| b. Attend evening meetings, performances and workshops at school. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| c. Contact parents about their children' problems or failures. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| d. Inform parents when their children do something well or improve. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| e. Involve some parents as volunteers in my classroom. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| f. Inform parents of the skills their children must pass in each subject I teach. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| g. Inform parents how report card grades are earned in my class. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| h. Provide specific activities for children and parents to do to improve students' | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |

| grades. | | | | |
|--|---------|--------------|------------|----------|
| i. Provide ideas for discussing TV shows. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| j. Assign homework that requires children to interact with parents. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| k. Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| l. Ask parents to listen to their children read. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| m. Ask parents to listen to a story or paragraph that their children write. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| n. Work with other teachers to develop parent involvement activities and materials. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| o. Work with community members to arrange learning opportunities in my class. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| p. Work with area businesses for volunteers to improve programs for my students. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| q. Request information from parents on their children's talents, interests, or needs. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| r. Serve on a PTA/PTO or other school committee. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |

Q-7 The next questions ask for your opinions about the activities that you think should be conducted by the parents of the children you teach. Circle the choice that best describes the importance of these activities at your grade level.

| Parent Responsibilities | Not Important | A Little Important | Pretty Important | Very Important |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. Send children to | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |

| school ready to learn | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------|------------|----------|
| b. Teach children to behave well. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| c. Set up a quiet place and time for studying at home. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| d. Encourage children to volunteer in class. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| e. Know what children are expected to learn each year. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| f. Check daily that homework is done. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| g. Talk to children about what they are learning in school. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| h. Ask teachers for specific ideas on how to help their children at home with classwork. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| i. Talk to teachers about problems the children are facing at home. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| j. Attend PTA/PTO meetings. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| k. Serve as a volunteer in the school or classroom. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| l. Attend assemblies and other special events at the school. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| m. Take children to special places or events in the community. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |
| n. Talk to children about the importance of school. | NOT IMP | A LITTLE IMP | PRETTY IMP | VERY IMP |

Q-8 The next question asks how you perceive other's support for parental involvement in your school. Please circle one choice on each line. How much support does each give now to parental involvement?

| a. Other teachers | Strong | Some | Weak | No |
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|

| | | Support | Support | Support | Support |
|----|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| b. | The principal | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| c. | Other administrators | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| d. | Parents | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| e. | Others in community | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| f. | The school board | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| g. | Other teachers | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |
| h. | The principal | STRONG | SOME | WEAK | NONE |

Q-9. Over the past two years, how much has the school involved parents at school and at home.

- (1) School involved parents less this year than last
- (2) School involved parents about the same in both years
- (3) School involved parents more this year than last
- (4) Don't know, I did not teach at this school last year

The last questions ask for general information about you, your students, and the classes you teach. This will help us understand how new practices can be developed to meet the needs of particular schools, teachers, and students

Q-10. YOUR STUDENTS AND TEACHING

A. (a) What grade(s) do you teach THIS YEAR? (Circle all that apply.)

PreK K I 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

(b) If you do not teach, give your position: _____

B. How many different students do you teach each day, on average?

Number of different students I teach on average day = _

C. Which best describes your teaching responsibility? (CHECK ONE)

1. I teach several subjects to ONE SELF-CONTAINED CLASS.
2. I teach ONE subject to SEVERAL DIFFERENT CLASSES of students in a departmentalized program.
3. I teach MORE THAN ONE subject to MORE THAN ONE CLASS in a semi-departmental or other arrangement.
4. _____ Other
(please describe): _____

D. Check the subject(s) you teach in an average week (PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY):

- (a) Reading (e) Social Studies (i) Advisory (m) Other (describe)
(b) Language Arts/English (f) Health (j) Physical Education
(c) Math (g) Art (k) Home Economics
(d) Science (h) Music (l) Industrial Arts

E. (a) Do you work with other teachers on a formal, interdisciplinary team? No Yes

(b) If YES, do you have a common planning time with all of the teachers on your team? No Yes

F. (a) On average, how many minutes of homework do you assign on most school days?

none 5-10 25-30 35-45 50-60 over 1 hour

(b) Do you typically assign homework on weekends?

yes no

G. About how many hours each week, on average, do you spend contacting parents?

(a) None

(b) Less than one hour

(c) One hour

(d) Two hours

(e) Three hours or more

H. About what percent of your students are:

% (a) African American

% (b) Asian American

% (c) Hispanic American

% (d) White

% (e) Other

I. About how many of your students are in (circle the estimate that comes closest):

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|----|-----|-----|--------|--------|---------|
| (a) Chapter 1 | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30-50% | 60-80% | 90-100% |
| (b) Special education | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30-50% | 60-80% | 90-100% |
| (c) Gifted and Talented | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30-50% | 60-80% | 90-100% |
| (d) Free or reduced lunch | 0% | 10% | 20% | 30-50% | 60-80% | 90-100% |

Appendix C: Request to Use Surveys

Carla Jackman
2076 E Lotus Point Drive
Lithia Springs, GA 30122
May 29, 2011

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

Dear Dr. Epstein:

Recently I ordered the surveys for elementary and middle grades through NNPS. After reviewing the surveys I am requesting permission to use or adapt the surveys for my doctoral dissertation study. Currently I am in the dissertation process at Liberty University located in Lynchburg, Virginia. I will be conducting research on schools located in Georgia. My dissertation topic involves evaluating parental involvement effectiveness at the elementary level through teacher surveys.

I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope for your return reply for your convenience. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me via email at csjackman@liberty.edu or by phone at 678-234-4837. Thank you for time.
Sincerely,

Carla Jackman
Liberty University, Doctoral Candidate

Appendix D: Survey Permission Approval Letter



June 27, 2011

To: Carla Jackman
From: Joyce L. Epstein & Steven B. Sheldon
Re: Permission to use:

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

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

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

Best of luck with your project in Georgia and your work at Liberty University.

Appendix E: Participant Letter/Teacher Consent Form

My signature below indicates that I have read the information provided and I have decided to participate in the study titled “**Middle School Teachers’ Perceptions of Effective Parental Involvement in Title I vs. non-Title I Schools**” to be conducted at my school between the **dates of February 2012 and January 2012** . I understand that my signature indicates that I have agreed to participate in this research project.

I understand the purpose of the research project will be to investigate the problem with low parental and community involvement in schools and the perceptions of teachers. The purpose of this research is to compare the responses of teachers at middle schools in my county.

1. Complete a 15 minute online survey on your opinion of effective parental involvement at your school.
2. Answer questions to the best of your knowledge.

Potential benefits of the study are: Awareness of effective parental involvement perceptions at the middle school level, an analysis of the opinions of educators at both Title I and non-Title I schools, and a clear view for the district on the effectiveness of the current state of parental involvement.

I agree to the following conditions with the understanding that I can withdraw from the study at any time should I choose to discontinue participation.

- The identity of participants will be protected via anonymous survey submission online.
- Information gathered during the course of the project will become part of the data analysis and may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
- There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved to my child participating in the study.
- Participation in the study is voluntary and will not affect employment status or annual evaluations. If I decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, I will notify the school of my decision.

If further information is needed regarding the research study, I can contact **Carla Jackman, 2076 E Lotus Point Drive, Lithia Springs, GA 30122, Phone: 678-234-4837, Email: csjackman@liberty.edu**

Signature _____
Teacher Date