AN ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SECONDARY STUDENTS'

EDUCATION: THE RELATIONSHIP TO SELECTIVE EDUCATIONAL

LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS

by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' involvement in secondary student education. In addition, the relationship between school leaders use of selective educational leadership theories to enhance parental involvement were explored. The participants consisted of 200 parents of freshmen students at two different high schools in Southern Arizona. The participants completed a survey instrument.

Pearson Product Correlations were used to investigate the effects of gender of the student, grades of the student, and educational level of the parent on the parent perception of the school, parental involvement at home, and parental involvement at school. The results were disaggregated by ethnicity.

There was significance found with the parents of Hispanic students. These parents were significantly more involved with their sons at the school and the higher educated the parents were, the more significantly they were involved at the school. Data from the open-ended question section of the survey instrument revealed the need for communication between parents and school.

The overall findings from this study suggest the importance of building partnerships between parents and school and the manner in which education leaders can employ various educational theories to support the implementation of successful home/school partnerships.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

This dissertation presents a research study of parental involvement in secondary students' education in relationship to selective educational leadership theories and implications for school leaders. To conduct the study, a survey was administered to parents of freshmen students at two high schools in Southern Arizona. Chapter 1 presents the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and research questions. It concludes with the limitations of the study a definition of parental involvement and leadership theories pertinent to forming relationships with parents.

Statement of the Problem

Parental involvement is a critical component of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001. NCLB urges parents to meet with their children's teachers, help their children with homework, read with them, and talk with them about school. The importance of parental involvement in a child's education at the elementary and secondary levels is evident in the NCLB Act. Knowledge of parents' perceptions of their child's initial secondary school experiences is a topic of interest not fully explored since the passage of NCLB. Furthermore, understanding parents' perceptions of school leaders' practices could serve to address two problems: ways to improve parent and school relationships that address student learning and reasons to employ leadership theories in support of leadership practices with parents.

Secondary Schools

Parental involvement at the elementary level has been the focus of most research studies over the years. Yet, research studies on parents of secondary students have demonstrated the importance of parental involvement in improving their child's educational achievements (Fan & Chen, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999; Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Two large-scale studies on parents' involvement in secondary schools provided mixed results about parental views regarding involvement in their child's schools. In a nationwide study, Zill and Nord (1994) found that 50% of parents with children 16 years or older were not involved in their children's schools. Dornbusch and Ritter (1988) found that parents "want to be involved" (p. 76). They surveyed 7,836 high school students and 3,746 parents in the San Francisco area and discovered that more than 80% of parents "believed that it was still appropriate" (p. 76) to be involved in their child's education. These studies, and the advent of NCLB (2001) high stakes testing, such as Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS) (CTB McGraw Hill, 2001), suggested that school leaders create an environment where parental involvement is invited and fostered. Nonetheless, these studies did not differentiate between parent involvement with boys versus girls to understand any differences or the effectiveness of such actions.

Nationally, secondary students and high school reform are a focus of concern and research (American Institute for Research, 2003; National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2004; National Governors Association, 2005; The Education Trust,

2005; CTB McGraw Hill, 2007). The focus on parental involvement is minimal in comparison to macro efforts to change conventional high schools into smaller learning communities, improve student achievement, and increase graduation rates, among other efforts.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation have funded research projects related to high school reform. This foundation has a National School District and Network Grants Program, and the vision behind the program is to transform American high schools. The intention of this initiative is to change large traditional high schools into smaller learning communities that focus on rigor, relevance, and relationships. The foundation committed $350 million dollars to organizations across the country to support high school reform (American Institutes for Research, 2003).

The American Institutes for Research (2003) collected data from 20 schools in the second year of the Gate's grant program. They found student-teacher relationships in the small schools to be more supportive academically and personally. There was also strong evidence of shared leadership and collegial work environments in the smaller learning communities. This particular study did not specifically mention that parental involvement would be a type of shared leadership and collegial work; however, schools can practice shared leadership and collaborative relationships with parents.

Similar to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) has made high school reform a priority. They published *Breaking Ranks II* (2004), which focused on high school reform. According to *Breaking Ranks II*, public high schools in the United States are at a crossroad with the

legislation that has been established to improve student achievement. Additionally, there is an emphasis on increasing achievement in subgroups of students such as English language learners and special education students. *Breaking Ranks II* stated, "The high school of the 21st century must be much more student-centered and above all much more personalized in programs, support services, and intellectual rigor" (p. 1). *Breaking Ranks II* also offered seven strategies to help all students achieve.

1. Establish essential learnings and adjust the curriculum and teaching strategies in order for all students to master the learning objectives.

2. Increase the quality and improve the quantity of interactions among students, teachers, and other school personnel by decreasing the ratio of students to adults.

3. Implement a comprehensive counseling program that ensures all students plan and assess their academic and social progress.

4. Ensure that teachers use a variety of instructional strategies and assessments to accommodate individual learning styles.

5. Implement flexible schedules to accommodate the use of teaching strategies consistent with the ways students learn most effectively and that allow for effective teacher teaming and lesson planning.

6. Institute structural changes to increase communication and involvement in decision making by students, teachers, family members, and the community.

7. Align the school-wide professional development program with the

content knowledge and instructional strategies required to prepare

students for graduation.

Only item six above refers to a strategy that includes family involvement. This strategy focuses on the need for communication and involvement by families. Communication is an important component when building home/school partnerships.

Similar to *Breaking Ranks II* NASSP, (2004), the National Governors Association (The Education Trust, 2005) has put high school reform at the top of its agendas. The National Governors Association is promoting a multi-year effort to reconstruct high schools. They identified five steps states could follow to raise graduation rates.

1.   Make all students proficient and prepared; states need to guarantee that students enter high school prepared to succeed and leave ready for the demands of college and the workplace.

2.   Redesign the American high school; make high schools more flexible, supportive, and successful in helping low-performing students perform at the same level as their peers.

3.   Give high schools the excellent teachers and principals they need; effective teachers and principals are critical to the success of their students.

4.   Hold high schools and colleges accountable for student success; states should set goals and track progress in improving high school graduation rates, percentages of students who are ready for college and work, and postsecondary enrollment and completion rates.

5.   Streamline and improve education governance; states should move

toward a more consistent system with a single board responsible for

Pre-K through college education.

Parent involvement is not included in these five steps to raise graduation rates. As

stated earlier, research has shown that parental involvement increases student

achievement. Educational leaders are instrumental in increasing parental involvement;

therefore, they should be included in the five steps and home/school partnerships should

be recommended.

The Education Trust (2005) is another organization that has concentrated on high

school reform. With funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Education

Trust researched high schools that were producing extraordinary results for all students.

They found three high schools comprised of mostly minority and low-income students

succeeding at unusually high rates. At one of the schools, all sophomores passed the high

school exit test the first time taken. At another high school in New York, most students

attained senior status, all seniors graduated, and 69% of graduates received a rigorous

Regents diploma. The third high school achieving uncommon results was in Washington

State. In this high school only 20% of the sophomores met state standards and fewer than

half met writing and math standards just six years ago. Today, this school is one of the

fastest improving high schools, and students are scoring close to the state achievement

averages.

These three high schools, which enrolled mostly minorities and low-income

students, produced amazing results. Each school was unique in the way it approached

struggles; however, common reform themes emerged. First, all three schools began with data. The data helped them to identify the struggling learners, and in response, these schools tailored instruction for each learner. The three successful schools also focused on instruction. The teachers paid attention to what they taught and how they taught it. Another unique feature of these three high schools was that they found ways to link each student to adults in the school who cared about them and the progress they were making. Finally, the three high schools in the research conducted by the Education Trust (2005) "organized themselves around the belief that all students can and will learn" (p. 24).

Breaking Ranks II (NASSP, 2004), *Power to Change* (The Education Trust, 2005), and the National Governors Association (2005) only suggested family and adult participation with high school students; thus, parental involvement was tangential to the problem under discussion. The reports lacked specificity of parental involvement emphases, and similar strategies were discussed in studies by Fan and Chen (2001), Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994), Sanders et al. (1999), Steinberg et al. (1996), Stevenson and Baker (1987), Zill and Nord (1994), and Dornbusch and Ritter (1988).

Student Gender and Parent Involvement in Secondary Schools

As stated earlier, the importance of parental involvement in a child's education to improve student achievement was a focus of some research studies. Reports and studies regarding high school reform, as well as the research studies concerning parental involvement and student achievement, did not address how gender affected high school reform or the involvement of parents in a child's education owing to gender differences.

Clearly, there are important and growing gender issues in American high schools today. First, females are outperforming their male counterparts academically. For example, the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina analyzed their academic achievement results for 1993-94 and found that females were more frequently identified as academically gifted and more consistently scored in the highest level on reading tests. In addition, half as many females failed high school English in comparison to males, and 5% more males dropped out of school versus females. Finally, 15% more male students failed one or more high school courses than female students. In addition to academic performance, more males were placed in special education programs. Males were identified 5.3% more than females as needing special education services (Dulaney & Bethune, 1995). This same statistic is seen nationally. The U.S. Department of Education (1998) found that males comprised approximately two-thirds of all students who received special education services. Not only were males identified as having special needs more frequently than females, they also did not perform as well in school as the females in special education.

Another gender issue facing our high schools today is violence. In American high schools, some males and females bring what they have learned about violence through media and their home environments to school. The expression *boys will be boys* is often heard in schools with regard to aggressive behaviors in boys. Zero tolerance is usually the way these issues are handled, and boys are suspended from school versus actually getting to the root of the problem. Girls react to violence differently than boys. They usually learn coping skills to deal with violence in schools. Unfortunately, as a result girls often

disengage from school activities, become depressed, drop out of school, or possibly

contemplate suicide (Barquet, 1999).

Ethnic Minority Students and Parental Involvement in Secondary Schools

Another challenge for secondary school leaders is the changing student

demographics. The increase in ethnic minority students and their parents' involvement in

schools require the attention of school leaders. In Chapter 2 of this paper, various ethnic

minority groups are discussed. Different ethnic groups do share some commonalities. For

example, Chinese Americans, Latino Americans, and African Americans all have high

expectations for their children, but African Americans and Latinos mistrust the public

school system, more so than Chinese Americans.

Secondary School Students' Graduation, Academic Achievement, and Parent Involvement

The concerns and challenges about high schools became an initiative of the

Institute of Education Sciences (IES, 2006). The major emphasis of the initiative was to

improve high school students' graduation rates and academic achievement. The IES

created the education research program on High School Reform to support studies on

approaches, programs, and practices that might enhance the potential of at-risk students

to complete high school with the skills necessary for success in college, the workplace, or

the military. The long-term goal of this research was to examine the effectiveness of

different high school reform practices on student outcomes. Furthermore, those involved

in the initiative were interested in new approaches to mentoring and structural reforms to

augment current reforms such as NCLB (2001). The role of parents should play a major

part in the research. Five grant awards were made under the High School Reform

initiative for 2006 (Research, 2006).

To understand the role parents' play in their high school student's education, the principal investigator conducted a pilot study on parental involvement in secondary schools. One of the key findings was that gender was an important moderator variable in parents' involvement. This finding has implications for high school reform efforts. The pilot study, which is detailed in Chapter 2 of this proposal, found gender differences with regard to parental involvement. Murphy (2006) discovered that parents of male students were more involved in the education process at home versus parents of female students, who were more involved with the school. Moreover, the study revealed that parents of female students had a more positive perception of their child's high school. These results, although preliminary in nature, went beyond earlier studies on parental involvement with students in high schools.

The results of the pilot study, along with the research regarding importance of parental involvement to improve achievement, the national focus on high school reform, and the gender issues facing our high schools today, identified a need for further research in this area.

Conceptual Framework

Research has indicated that parent involvement with children's schools supports their achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Murphy, 2006; Sanders et al., 1999; Steinberg et al., 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Additionally, research demonstrated that parent involvement takes distinct forms for different ethnic communities (Auerbach, 2002; Hidalgo, Siu, Bright, Swap, &

Epstein, 1995; Hidalgo, Siu, & Epstein, 2004; Louie, 2001; Ogbu, 2003) due to varied understandings of the roles that parents play in school and the expectation for "involvement" as understood by school leaders.

More research has been conducted on parent involvement in elementary schools than in high schools. Research at both levels provides little in terms of the implications for school leaders. For that reason, it is important to conduct the research on secondary school parents' perceptions of schooling and probe into its implications on secondary leaders practices.

Inasmuch as it is important to understand relationships between families and teachers in their children's schools, it is equally important to understand relationships between parents and school leaders. This study investigated secondary parents' perceptions of school, explored and critiqued leadership theories applicable to school leaders working with parents, and made suggestions for increasing effective home/school partnerships. The organizational structure for the conceptual framework is included in Appendix A. Appendix B is the modification of the organizational structure in Appendix A after inserting results from the dissertation.

<div align="center">Purpose of the Study</div>

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' involvement in secondary student education. This research is significant for the following reasons:

1.   It described and analyzed parental involvement in secondary students' education.

a. It described and analyzed ethnic parental involvement in the secondary students' education

2. It advanced knowledge important for school leaders to utilize when developing home/school partnerships.

3. It provided information regarding gender and parental involvement.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

2. How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

3. How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

Limitations of the Study

The following were limitations of the study:

1. The study was limited by the return rate of the surveys.

2. The study was limited to freshmen parents and may not have generalized applicability.

3. All respondents may not have interpreted items in the survey in the same manner.

Definitions of Parental Involvement and Selective Educational Leadership Theories

Parental involvement is defined differently depending on the research being conducted. This is explained for each study on parental involvement and student achievement in Chapter 2. In general, parental involvement is involvement at home and/or school, for example, attending an open house or helping children at home with their schoolwork. The survey used has a section with questions regarding parental involvement at home and a section pertaining to parental involvement at school. The questions of the survey have an academic focus.

In this study, education leadership theories refer to selective education leadership theories from literature and research that support leaders' effective practices in managing and administering school organizations. Moreover, it refers to leading people within and outside of the organization through effective practices in interaction with teachers, staff, administrators, the community, students, and parents of secondary school students.

Organization of Study

Chapter 1 includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 begins with a section on the research that informs the effectiveness of parental involvement in schools on student achievement, and it follows with a section discussing the social and cultural environment in schools. Finally, it relates ways in which secondary school leaders influence parental involvement through four leadership domains: personal/interpersonal, contextual, curricular, and organizational. Within these domains, multiple theories and perspectives are detailed that provide the school leader with a wide variety of concepts and strategies applicable to

leadership enactment. Chapter 3 addresses the research design, chapter 4 presents and

analyzes the data, and chapter 5 discusses the findings, implications, and

recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Relationship of Parental Involvement to Secondary

Students' Academic Achievement

The first section of this chapter reviews the relationship between parental

involvement and secondary school academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Grolnick

& Slowiaczek, 1994; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Murphy, 2006; Sanders et al., 1999; Steinberg

et al., 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987).

Stevenson and Baker (1987) used a random longitudinal sample of United States

households. This subset included 179 children, ranging from 5 to 17 years old, and their

teachers. Three hypotheses were tested.

1. The higher the education status of the mother, the greater the degree of

parental involvement in school activities.

2. The younger the age of the child, the greater the degree of parental

involvement.

3. Children of parents who are more involved in school activities do better

in school than children whose parents are less involved.

To test the first hypothesis, a seven-point scale was used with one indicating an eighth

grade education or less and seven representing completion of a graduate degree. The

measure of parental involvement was taken from the results of a teacher questionnaire.

The questions centered on the extent to which the parents were involved in school

activities, for example attending parent teacher organization (PTO) meetings and

conferences. The questionnaire rated the involvement on a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being the lowest. Two factors identified from the questionnaire were used to define student achievement. The teachers rated the children's performance in school and indicated whether they were achieving to their ability. Stevenson and Baker found a significant positive correlation between student achievement and parental involvement. This finding validated the hypothesis that the more parents were involved in school activities, the better the child performed in school.

Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) also researched parental involvement in children's schooling. They categorized parent involvement into three types. The first was involvement through behavior such as participating in school activities, for example, an open house or parent/teacher conferences. The second type was through personal involvement such as talking with the student about school and showing that they cared about what occurred at school. The final type of involvement was cognitive/intellectual involvement, which exposed the child to cognitively motivating activities such as books or current events. The sample was 302 sixth through eighth graders in a middle-class, mostly Caucasian, New Jersey school district. Year-end school grades were used to indicate student achievement. The three types of involvement were measured through questionnaires. The researchers found that all three involvement factors were significantly correlated with better grades.

Steinberg et al. (1996) conducted a research study of school reform. In this study, conducted over a 10-year period, they surveyed more than 20,000 teenagers from nine high schools and spoke with hundreds of teachers and many parents. The high schools

were located in Wisconsin and Northern California. The schools were selected to obtain a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds, ethnicity, family structures, and communities. This project involved three universities and research teams. The study sample was equally divided between females and males as well as grade level. More than 40% of the sample were minorities, 33% were from single-parent homes or stepfamilies, and 33% had parents who had not attended school after the 12th grade.

Steinberg et al. (1996) found that the type of involvement that most impacted student achievement was physically getting the parents to the schools. Attending school programs, extracurricular activities, teacher conferences, and open houses were activities that drew parents to the school. Attending school functions regularly required a lot of effort, more so than helping with homework, and was noticed by school personnel and the child. The researchers noted that this type of commitment sent a strong message about how important school was to them and how important it should be to their child. This type of involvement reinforced the interconnectedness of the two worlds of home and school.

Sanders et al. (1999) also found positive correlations between parental involvement and student achievement. The researchers analyzed data from parent surveys in six Maryland high schools. Two of the schools were rural, two suburban, and two urban. Researchers studied the effects of high schools' parent programs on parents' attitude toward school and reports regarding parent involvement at home and school with their teenagers. The data were collected from 423 parents or guardians who had most frequently contacted the school regarding their high school student. Mothers,

grandmothers, or aunts completed a majority of the surveys, but fathers and grandfathers completed 15%. The survey also included variables such as work status, race, and educational background. The parent attitude scale consisted of 14 items with an internal reliability coefficient of .86. The questions measured the perceptions of parents regarding their child's learning environment at school. The parent involvement at home portion of the survey also had 14 items with an internal reliability of .82. These questions referred to the learning environment and support at home. The parental involvement at school section of the survey consisted of eight questions with an internal reliability of .81. These questions addressed the degree to which parents participated in school activities. Student achievement was reported through the survey. Grades of mostly Fs were coded as a 0 and mostly As as a 5. Sanders et al. (1999) found a positive correlation at 0.272 between parental involvement and student achievement.

Fan and Chen (2001) conducted a meta-analysis meant to incorporate the quantitative studies regarding parental involvement and student achievement. The range of the study was from 1977 to 1997. Initially, 2,000 studies were found reporting a relationship. The 2,000 studies reduced to 25 when only studies with empirical findings, including Pearson correlations relating parental involvement and achievement outcomes, were accepted. Student achievement was recorded by grade point average and content-area grades. Fan and Chen found an average correlation coefficient of 0.25 between parental involvement and student achievement. These correlations were based on 92 coefficients collected from a sample size of 133,577. This was considered a medium effect with a small effect being a 0.10 and a large effect 0.50, according to Cohen (Fan &

Chen, 2001). The strongest relationship between parental involvement and student achievement, with a correlation of r = 0.40, was the educational aspiration for children. Educational expectations and value of academic achievement affected student achievement in these 25 studies. The weakest relationship between parental involvement and student achievement was the home supervision dimension. Time spent doing homework, watching television, a healthy study environment, and children coming home after school had a small effect with r = 0.09.

The next study examined the level and effect of parental involvement on students' academic achievement by ethnicity, poverty, and parent educational attainment (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Their sample consisted of 415 students in an urban secondary school in the Southeastern United States. The participants were 34% African American, 15% Latino, and 51% European American, and 40% received free or reduced- price lunches.

In this study, (Lee & Bowen, 2006) teachers reported higher achievement among European American children than among Latino and African American children. African American students had higher academic achievement than Latino students. Additionally, students whose parents had higher education levels also performed better than their counterparts. The researchers also found that European American parents were more involved in school and discussed education with their children more than African American and Latino parents. Parents whose children were eligible for the free or reduced-lunch program were less involved at school, did not discuss education at home frequently, and had lower educational aspirations for their children; however, they did

monitor their children's after-school time more frequently than non-free or reduced lunch parents.

There were also differences between parents who had attained higher education levels. Parents who had received a two-year college degree or higher were more frequently involved at their child's secondary school, had more educational discussions at home, and had higher educational expectations for their children (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

The researcher conducted a pilot study that investigated the research questions and tested the questionnaire and methodology (Murphy, 2006). Parental involvement at the secondary school level was the focus of the study. A survey instrument by Sanders et al. (1999) was used after obtaining permission.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the education level of the parent?

2. How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent?

3. How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent?

The setting chosen for the pilot study was a small public high school in Southern Arizona. Forty-five freshmen parents participated in the pilot study. Eighty- nine percent of the participants were mothers and 9% were fathers. Sixty-seven percent of the parents' children were boys and 33% were girls. Ninety- three percent of the participants were

White, 4% were Hispanic, and 3% were African American. The survey instrument

consisted of seven sections. The survey is described in detail in the methods portion of

this study.

The first set of Pearson correlations examined the parents' perception of school

and the gender of the child, the grades of the child, and the education level of the parent

filling out the survey. Results indicated that a positive correlation of .21 was found

between the gender of the student and the perception of the school (see Table 1).

Question 1 of the survey represented the parent perception of the school. The higher the

number selected by the parent (for example, 4 = strongly agree), the better the parent's

perception of the school. Parents of female students reported a more positive perception

of the school. There was also a positive correlation of .22 between the perception of

school and grades. The parents that reported poor grades (the higher number chosen on

the survey, 5 = mostly Fs) also reported a negative perception of the school. The last

correlation was also positive at .24, which demonstrated that the parents who reported a

higher education (the higher the number chosen on the survey, the more educated the

parents were, 6 = advanced degree) also reported a negative perception of the school.

None of the correlations were significant.

The second set of correlations included parental home involvement, the gender of

the child, the grades of the child, and the education level of the parent filling out the

survey. As seen from Table 1, there was a preference for males with regard to home

involvement (- .28). Question 2 of the survey represented the parental involvement at

home. The higher the number chosen, the more involved the parent was at home (5 =

every day). Question 8 referred to the gender of the child (1 = male, 2 = female). This

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Table 1

Pearson Correlation (r) of Parent Involvement in Secondary Students' Education

n = 45

	Parent perception of school	Parental home involvement	Parental school involvement
Student gender	.211	- .282	.194
Student grades	.219	.024	- .238
Educational level of parent	.242	.136	- .237

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negative correlation meant that parents were involved at home less with their daughters

than with their sons. Almost no relationship (.02) was found between home involvement

and grades. Another positive correlation of .14 was found between the education level of

the parent and home involvement. The parents who reported higher education also

reported more involvement at home. None of the correlations in this section was

significant.

The last set of correlations included the level of the parental school involvement and the gender of the child, the grades of the child, and the education level of the parent filling out the survey. As seen in Table 1, a positive correlation of .19 was found between the gender of the child and the level of school involvement. Question 3 of the survey referred to parental school involvement. The higher the number chosen, the more the parents were involved at the school (5 = many times). This meant that parents of girls reported a more involvement in school than parents of boys. There was a negative correlation of - .24 found between grades and level of involvement. The parents who reported poor student grades (the higher the number chosen, the worse the grades) also reported less involvement at school. Finally, a negative correlation of - .24 was found between the education level of the parent and school involvement. The parents who reported higher education also reported less involvement at the school.

School contact with the family comprised another portion of the survey. One of the questions asked how often the school had contacted the parent (letters, phone calls, conferences, etc.). The results indicated that 47% of the parents said they had never received a letter, and 44% said they had never received a phone call. Parent-teacher conferences were a successful mode of communication because 44% of the parents reported having two or three formal parent-teacher conferences. Communication was a theme that emerged from the open-ended response section of the survey. Many of the parents wanted more "school-initiated communication" and "better teacher involvement in advising parent of failing grades." Quite a few of the parents wanted grades entered faster on the on-line grade-book program. They wanted "grades updated ideally on a

weekly or bi-weekly basis." The parents stated that their children did not "have a good enough grasp of their grades and why they may be failing," and having the grades updated regularly would help them keep track of their children. Another common response was a request for more teachers to be involved in parent/teacher conferences. "Parent/teacher conferences should involve more teachers other than advisor base" or "Have teachers fill out a questionnaire on students that the advisor base teacher can go over with the parents."

Through the experience and feedback of the pilot study, the researcher refined the instrument (see Appendix C for the refined instrument). The methods are discussed in Chapter 3.

<div align="center">Social/Cultural Environment and Schools</div>

The purpose of this section is to add sensitivity and understanding of the diverse parent populations, particularly those associated with demographics of the schools in the study. All ethnic groups in the study did not participate at high rates. Thirty-three Hispanic Americans, four African Americans, one Asian American, and two Native Americans participated in this study. When researchers and educational leaders study the demography of schools and parental involvement in schools, they emphasize understanding parents' diverse range of ethnicity, culture, interest, experience, and expectations. To expound on these points in multicultural environments of schools, a discussion follows on three ethnic group parents' involvement in schools: Chinese immigrant parents, Latino parents, and African American parents. These parent groups were chosen because they represented the largest minority groups in the two participating

schools. In addition, a brief overview of multicultural education is included in this section.

Chinese Immigrant Parents

According to the 2000 census (as cited in Louie, 2001), 2.4 million Chinese Americans live in the United States. Louie conducted a research study examining how social class influenced Chinese immigrant parents' expectations and involvement strategies. Louie interviewed 68 undergraduates from Columbia University and Hunter College in New York City. The two four-year colleges represented a range of class backgrounds. Interviews were conducted with the students, as well as with seven parents and two adult siblings. The participants were evenly divided between the two institutions. Seventy-four percent of the participants were female. Sixty percent were second-generation Chinese Americans.

The first question Louie (2001) sought to answer was whether all Chinese immigrant parents had high expectations for their children. He found that regardless of social class background, all Chinese immigrant parents had high expectations. Regardless of socioeconomic status, diverse homelands, or the patterns of settlement, the children heard the same message. All children were expected to obtain at least a college education. One of the students in the study stated, "I think immigrants from Asia, they are very hard working, trying to establish themselves. And so. Then they teach their kids to be hard working" (p. 449). Another student reflected on what her father had told her; he always says, "I have to work so hard. But if you get a good education, you can find a better job. You won't have to work like me in the restaurant sweating" (p. 449).

The second question Louie (2001) asked was whether the types of educational strategies developed to help their child's education were different between social classes. He found that suburban middle-class parents working in the mainstream economy had the resources to explore many options. They chose their children's schools carefully. Private school was a popular choice, and parents who couldn't afford the private schools moved into the best public school districts they could find. In addition, they monitored their children's free time closely. Many of the participants were involved in supplemental homework assignments, after-school tutoring, music lessons, and summer programs. Immigrant parents from the middle class were also very involved in the college application process by visiting many schools and choosing the best one.

The educational strategies used by urban parents in the ethnic and mainstream economy were different from those of middle-class parents. Some parents could not afford the private schools or to move their families into a neighborhood that had the best schools. Therefore, they relied on informal ethnic communication networks. They learned about school's high rankings from friends. In some cases, this led to registering their children in these schools using the addresses of friends. Similar to middle-class immigrant parents, urban parents also monitored their child's free time closely. They couldn't afford the private lessons for music and tutoring; therefore, they relied on the public school system to provide the tutoring and music lessons (Louie, 2001).

Pearce (2006) also conducted research related to Chinese American students. He specifically tried to identify cultural factors that helped Chinese Americans attain

educational achievement. The researcher utilized data from a national study in 2000. The sample included 8,320 White and 202 Chinese participants.

Pearce (2006) found that 65% of Chinese Americans had a bachelor's degree or higher while 42.7% of White Americans held the same degree. For both White and Chinese Americans, the higher the family income, the higher the standardized test scores. The researcher also found that 35% of Chinese American students reported that their parents often checked on their homework in comparison to 44.2% of White Americans. With regard to parents helping their children with homework, 44.9% of Chinese Americans reported that their parents never offered help in comparison to 18.4% of White Americans. Finally, the researcher stated that the most significant evidence from this research was that parental expectations had a strong impact on achievement.

Latino Parents

Latino parents comprised another group whose culture and/or social class affected the level and type of parental involvement. Auerbach (2002) examined personal stories of struggle with schools from working-class Latino parents. Latinos are one of the fastest growing ethnic groups according to the U.S. Census Bureau. The 2001 U.S. Census (as cited in Hidalgo et al., 2004) showed that Latinos numbered 35 million or 12.5 % of the total U.S. population. The participants had a variety of immigrant experiences. One of the parents had immigrated as an adult, two of the parents were Mexican natives who immigrated when they were young, and one was a U.S. born child of immigrants. The main method of data collection was continuous semi-structured parent interviews of 10th through 12th graders.

The parents in this study (Auerbach, 2002) reflected on their own limited schooling and encouraged their children not to follow their example. The parents believed in participating proactively by pushing their children to succeed, monitoring their homework, encouraging better grades, regulating outside activities, and making decisions to ensure that their children go the *right way* in life. Many of the parents had experienced negative encounters with school staff. No matter how diligently they tried to get involved, they felt that the counselors would not listen to them or their children. The parents described situations in which counselors would not return their calls. They visited the school but never had an opportunity to talk to a counselor. Parents were also denied schedule changes that would have enabled their child to enroll in honors classes or switch teachers in whose classes they were clearly struggling.

Hidalgo et al. (2004) compiled information from various studies of Latino Americans and found various factors that influenced parental involvement. First, Latinos believed strongly in an extended family. This extended family was a source of support, care, and affection. Latinos had a very strong family unity, and interdependency was valued. Educators may have overlooked activities in which these parents engaged, such as reading the Spanish Bible, as a form of parental involvement. Latino's parent-teacher interactions were affected by how the school staff approached the parents. The school should establish personal rapport with parents. When communicating with Latino parents, a school leader should provide useful information consisting of specific details that the parent could use to help his/her child. For successful outreach to occur, a school leader should personally reach out to Latino parents, communicate in a non-judgmental way,

and respect their culture. According to Sanchez (2002), outreach from the school and intimidation that Latino parents felt kept them from getting involved in the school system. Sanchez urged Latino parents to work with schools to change perceptions about why some children were not meeting standards, change polices to ensure that schools were focused on having 100% of students reach high standards, and change practices to guarantee that Latino children were given fair opportunities to learn.

The challenges experienced by families described in this paper should lead to changes by school leaders. According to Sanchez (2002), a school leader should learn more about families including their history, strategies for support, and dreams for their children. Schools should provide a safe place where parents can share stories and learn from one another. Counseling departments could be transformed into sites for communication rather than alienation. Counselors should know their students as individuals and help guide them in their post-high school decisions. A school leader should also seek to understand and remove the barriers of access for minority families. Hidalgo et al. (2004) also made recommendations regarding Latino parents and schools. They suggested having a bilingual staff available for parents and information packets in multiple languages. Also, schools need to understand that many Latino parents have little flexibility in their work schedules to attend school meetings.

African American Parents

African American parents represented another group whose cultural/social differences affect the level and type of parental involvement. According to the 1990 U.S. Census Bureau (as cited in Hidalgo et al., 1995), African Americans made up 12% of the

total U.S. population. Certain community and family influences shaped African American children's achievement. African American parents identified certain key ingredients in child rearing: encouragement, trust, respect for independence, educational interaction, and love. African American parents also informally integrated school-related activities into play activities. Extended family and close ties to the church community were other influences that benefited African American students.

African American parents feel very strongly about the value of education. They want to be involved and feel empowered in their relationships with schools. One inner-city principal noted that many parents felt unwelcome or intimidated when they visited a school (Hidalgo et al., 1995). Ogbu (2003) studied African American students in an affluent suburb in Ohio to discover why they were performing poorly in school. He found that most African American parents in this Ohio district had high expectations for their children; however, they were not involved at the school site. In his study, he found that very few African American parents attended PTO meetings, open houses, or any organized academic programs for their children. This lack of parent involvement at the school was due to mistrust of the *White institution*, little knowledge of how the school system worked, and employment commitments. Ogbu also found that home involvement was limited. Parents of African American students were often not at home to help with homework or to monitor their child's use of time after school. Parents also stated that they were often unaware of their child's academic problems.

The researcher has discussed how the social/cultural differences of Chinese, Latino, and African Americans affected their levels and types of parental involvement.

There were commonalities that the groups shared. For example, the Chinese, Latino, and African Americans all had high expectations for their children. African Americans and Latinos both mistrusted the public school system and had negative experiences. The Latino and Chinese Americans monitored homework and free time closely, but African Americans did not. In addition, African and Latino Americans believed strongly in extended family, which was not evident with Chinese Americans. This discussion leads to arguments for more effective multi-cultural education in schools. Gay (1994) stated, "Multicultural education means learning about, preparing for and celebrating cultural diversity, or learning to be bicultural. And it requires changes in school programs, policies, and practices" (p. 3). Four important changes that need to occur in school programs for partnerships are offering many activities, building a partnership in multicultural education, incorporating multicultural education, and encouraging partnerships in educational programs. Offering many activities that meet the similar and diverse needs of families makes everyone feel welcome. A partnership with the community and home, where parents of different cultural groups work together for a common good, sends powerful messages to children. This can be accomplished by families sharing their culture with their children's schools, translating all communication into parents' first language, setting up opportunities for all parents to volunteer, incorporating learning-at-home activities to allow parents to encourage and assist their children with their school work, ensuring parent representation on committees that decide the school's direction, and providing information to parents regarding the community organizations that can help support them (Hidalgo et al., 2004).

I have discussed diverse cultures and social class of some families in addition to factors influencing parental participation in their children's education at home and in schools. It is evident that changing demographics in our society and schools make it important for a school leader to support effective parental involvement programs for all families. It is also clear that shifts in gender ratios and minorities now representing one-third of the nation's population suggest a need for further research on the gender of the student and how that relates to parental involvement.

<div align="center">Personal/Interpersonal Leadership</div>

The secondary school leader plays a crucial role in influencing successful partnership practices between parents and school. To build these partnership practices, it is vital that the leader possess the personal and interpersonal skills necessary to provide the vision and build a school community that welcomes and fosters parental involvement. Bennis (2003) identified three reasons a leader is important. He/she is liable for the effectiveness of the organization, serves as an anchor, and brings integrity to organizations. He also noted key characteristics that every leader must have to build a strong partnership between home and school: guiding vision, passion, integrity, trust, and curiosity/daring.

Guiding Vision

A leader must have a clear idea about what he/she wants to accomplish and why. Without this, he/she cannot reach the destination (Bennis, 2003). Leithwood, Jantzi, and Steinbach (1999) maintained that the intention of vision building is to create a fundamental sense of purpose and aid colleagues in recognizing new opportunities for the

organization. Pree (1997) said "Only with vision we begin to see things the way they can be" (p. 117). A school leader must first envision parents and the school working together to improve the achievement of their students. In addition to having a vision of parental involvement, a leader must have the persistence to endure even during difficult times.

Passion

The second characteristic of an effective leader, according to Bennis (2003), is passion. When a leader communicates passion, he/she provides hope and inspiration to fellow colleagues. Passion is evident when one believes in the importance of his/her goals. It is displayed in daily actions that exhibit a commitment to those goals (Sergiovanni, 1999). When school leaders demonstrate dedication and passion to improving home and school partnerships, it may serve as an inspiration for the entire school community.

Integrity

Integrity is the third characteristic every leader must have. According to Bennis (2003), there are three elements of integrity: self-knowledge, candor, and maturity. A leader cannot succeed with any vision or goals without knowledge of self. He/she must know his/her strengths and weaknesses, know what he/she wants to do, and know why he/she wants to do it. Candor is crucial to knowing oneself. One must be honest in thought and action and devoted to principles and a fundamental wholeness. Maturity is the last element of integrity. Every leader needs to have experienced growth through dedication, observance, working and learning through others, and always being truthful.

A school leader who exhibits integrity is comforting for parents and may increase their willingness to be involved at the school site.

Trust

Integrity is the foundation of trust. Trust cannot be attained. It must be earned. Pree (1997) stated that followers long for trust. They want to believe in the leader and trust what he/she says. Trust begins with a commitment to personally respect and acknowledge all members of the organization, and it grows when people see the leader applying his/her personal integrity into organizational loyalty. Bennis (2003) expressed four components of generating and sustaining trust: constancy, congruity, reliability, and integrity. A leader must stay the course, walk the talk, be there when it matters, and honor the commitments to create and maintain trust in his/her organization. It is crucial for parents to trust their school leaders to build home and school partnerships.

Curiosity/Daring

The final characteristics every leader must have are curiosity and daring. A leader must want to learn about everything, experiment, and take risks. The success of an organization depends on the amount of risk the leader is willing to take. *Nothing ventured, nothing gained* (Pree, 1997). In my experience, partnership practices between school and home are uncommon at the secondary level and can be risky. A school leader needs to be willing to take that risk to influence parental involvement in order to benefit the students. The leader does not worry about failure but embraces it knowing that he/she will learn from it.

Successful personal/interpersonal leadership skills are vital to building and maintaining home and school partnerships. The key traits of a leader that Bennis (2003) described are not the only ingredients to successful personal/interpersonal leadership. Decision making, communication, and conflict management skills are also important.

Decision Making

The ability to make effective decisions is vital to the success of a school leader. Hoy and Miskel (1978) described a research study that was performed by the Educational Testing Service, Teacher's College, and Columbia University. In this study, 232 elementary school principals compared the performance and decision making of various principals. They found that effective decision makers engaged in a great deal of preliminary work. This work entailed seeking information, distinguishing between opinion and fact, and constantly obtaining others' views. Conversely, less-effective decision makers made quick *yes* or *no* decisions. Before making a decision, a leader typically defines the problem, identifies alternatives, predicts consequences of the alternatives, and then selects one of the alternatives. Involving subordinates in decision making is not always beneficial, and the zone-of-acceptance concept aids in determining when to involve subordinates in the decision-making process (Hoy & Miskel, 1978).

One of the subordinates Hoy and Miskel (1978) mentioned may be a parent. Sanders et al. (1999) conducted a study that found participation in school decision making positively influenced parental reports of involvement in their child's school. Davies (1987) stated that participation in decision making provides an opportunity for parents to make decisions about their own child. One example of participation in

decision-making is through Individual Education Plans (IEPs). IEPs are required for students with disabilities, and federal law empowers parents to approve or disapprove of their child's education plan and placement. Parents are a member of the IEP team and provide valuable input into the creation and implementation of the plan. Other suggestions for parental involvement in decision making included parent advisory committees, district-wide planning groups, participation on superintendent or principal search committees, and involvement in school policy boards (Davies, 1987).

Effective Communication

The importance of effective communication to a school leader cannot be overemphasized. According to Snowden and Gorton (2002), many school administrators tend to see their primary role as a communicator. As a communicator, an administrator needs to be conscious of six aspects of communication: the purpose of the message, the intended audience, the sender of the message, the content, the appropriate channel to communicate the message, and feedback. Other essential roles exist for a leader to be an effective communicator. The leader is also a recipient of communication. Snowden and Gorton asserted that the messages the school leader receives need to be assessed for their relevance, content, importance, and implications. In addition, a leader must be empathetic and listen carefully to fully understand what is being communicated. Finally, the leader must invite and foster accurate and full communication through the entire school community.

Parents are members of the school community. Sanders et al. (1999) found that communication was crucial for improving other types of involvement. Epstein (1987)

stated that administrators have an obligation to inform parents about their child's progress and school programs. The school leader can influence dissemination of information through various avenues. He/she can ensure that the information can be read by all; alert parents to check with their child frequently regarding important messages; invite involvement in various capacities; and inform the parents about how they can work with the school to improve the attendance, grades, conduct, and course work of their child. Many high school partnership programs begin by increasing communication about school programs and addressing the needs and progress of the students. Parents favor receiving timely newsletters containing information regarding the school's programs and extracurricular activities. In addition, families want to be notified early when their teenager is experiencing difficulty in school and receive information on how to address problems.

One example of how communication can affect parental involvement is found in a study by Valden-Kiernan (2005). Valden-Kiernan conducted a study for the National Center for Education Statistics regarding school practices to provide information to families. The study included parents of kindergarten through 12th graders. Results demonstrated that parents who were involved at the school site reported school information practices as being done *very well*. The researcher also found that the two highest percentages where the school did *very well* regarding school practices to provide information were letting the parents know between report cards how their child was performing and making them aware of how they could volunteer. Some school information practices were not frequently reported by parents as being performed *very*

well. One of those practices was providing information about how to help their children at home. Only 37% reported that their school did *very well.*

Conflict Management

Another vital skill that a leader must possess is conflict management. Conflict occurs in all organizations, and the leader must be able to resolve these conflicts. Snowden and Gorton (2002) cited four sources of conflict: poor communication, the organizational structure, human factors, and competition over limited resources. If the organization encourages shared decision making and empowerment, more people will be involved in sharing their opinions and desires, which may cause conflict. Other causes of conflict are the various personalities and values that exist in each organization, which compete for resources. There are four different ways to deal with conflict. The first is the cooperative approach, which stresses mutual group goals, the understanding of everyone's views, and compromising to find a solution for everyone. The confirming approach emphasizes the significance of validating group members' competence, and the competitive approach will have a winner and loser with the loser submitting to the winner's authority. The final approach, avoidance, transpires when people walk away from problems or smooth over differences without finding solutions. A leader needs to facilitate a resolution that benefits all parties rather than having a winner or loser (Snowden & Gorton, 2002).

It is critical that the school leader utilizes personal and interpersonal skills to provide the vision that will build a school community where the partnership practices between school and parents are strong. It is equally important that the school leader

understands the function of leadership in the context of the organization. There are many internal and external factors that affect implementation of partnership practices between home and school.

<div align="center">Contextual Leadership</div>

One theory for framing the context in which organizations exist was forwarded by Bolman and Deal (2003). Their theory identified a topic and used multiple perspectives to analyze and understand it. Bolman and Deal referred to these perspectives as four frames: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic. Each is unique, logical, and powerful in its own way. Utilizing the four frames together paints a comprehensive picture of what the issue is and what can be done about it.

Structural Frame

"The structural frame looks beyond individuals to examine the social architecture of work" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 66). It focuses on the significance of formal roles and relationships. The structural frame has six underlying assumptions: (1) organizations exist to accomplish goals; (2) frameworks increase productivity through a division of labor; (3) lateral and vertical coordination ensure that individuals and groups work together; (4) structures are most effective when rational decisions are made regardless of the outside pressures; (5) frameworks must be created to fit the organization; and (6) when problems arise in the structure, then it must be reorganized (Bolman & Deal, 2003). There is not one right way to structure an organization. It depends on the circumstances, goals, technology, and environment of the organization.

Benson and Martin (2003) studied successful parent involvement programs that engaged parents of at-risk students in urban schools. They found several Buffalo Public Schools that frequently involved a large number of parents in urban schools. These schools implemented a specific seven-step structure, and to succeed, the school leader was responsible for ensuring that each step was implemented. The first step focused on student success in the classroom through school projects and extra-curricular activities to bring parents to the school. Once the parents were in the building, they were encouraged to participate through displays, programs, or ceremonies. The next step was to send personalized invitations. Students created the invitations, and teachers and members of the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) called parents to follow up on the invitation. Next, these schools used the extended family to support the students. Extended family members such as grandmas, uncles, and aunts were invited to celebrate the students' successes. The next step extended frequent invitations to visit the school, which increased the parent comfort level to be more involved in a variety of ways. The fifth step in this program involved using school staff and volunteers effectively to maintain parent contact throughout the year. These schools also coordinated planning among the entire staff to obtain an agreement on the desire to support an event. The final step in the successful parental involvement programs in these Buffalo schools included providing refreshments, name tags, and reimbursement for transportation or childcare; meeting in easily accessible rooms; using students to host; and recognizing parents and staff for their efforts.

Epstein (1995) also offered an organized structure for developing more positive school/family/community partnerships. Step number one was to create an action team, which was responsible for assessing current practices, exploring options for new partnerships, implementing activities, evaluating progress, and continuing to improve practices. The next step was to secure funds and support for the program. Identifying starting points was the next step, followed by developing a three-year plan. The final step was to continue planning and working toward identified goals.

Human Resource Frame

"The human resource frame centers on how characteristics of organizations and people shape what they do for one another" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 111). This frame focuses on the relationship between people and the organization. The human resource frame also has core assumptions. These core assumptions are that structures exist to serve the needs of people, organizations and humans need one another, suffering will occur when the fit between the structure and the person is an unsatisfactory one, and both parties benefit when the fit between the organization and person is good.

Looking through the lens of the human resource frame, one can say that the school leader serves his/her community. Sergiovanni (2000) stated, "The great leader is a servant first" (p. 58). He continued with the most important thing a school leader needs to do: serve the values and ideas that shape a school community. Servant leadership styles have stewardship responsibilities at the heart of the school leader's roles. When this occurs, attention is focused on duty to others and the school community. Stewardship represents an act of trust. The public entrusts the schools to the school board, the school

board entrust the principals with their schools, and parents entrust teachers with their children. When stewardship leadership is practiced, school leaders can develop a powerful source to increase parental involvement at the secondary level.

Another way to send powerful messages to children is to have teachers become researchers and study household knowledge. The knowledge that they gain from their student families may help them develop participatory pedagogy (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992).When teachers visit the home, they assume the role of the learner. The teacher can exchange knowledge about family or school, reduce the narrow view that they may have regarding their students and their families, and apply the knowledge to their classroom content (Moll et al., 1992).

Political Frame

"The political frame views organizations as living, screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 186). This framework consists of basic assumptions. These assumptions state that organizations are communities of varying individuals and groups and that there are continuing differences among these individuals and groups. Scarce resources are often allocated, which creates conflict and power struggles. The final assumption is that decisions are made by negotiation.

Power is an important piece of the political frame. Most people believe that if you have the power, you can do anything you want. Sergiovanni (2000) discussed *power over* versus *power to*. *Power over* emphasizes controlling people, whereas *power to* regards power as an energy source for achieving common goals. To achieve successful

partnership practices, the school leader must practice *power to* in order for the school community to work toward a common goal of increased parental involvement. When *power to* is practiced, schools utilize strategies to increase the involvement of the community and parents to benefit children. Examples of this are community businesses and organizations providing resources, internships, and jobs for students in addition to parents being involved in decision making and curriculum.

Symbolic Frame

"The symbolic frame seeks to interpret and illuminate basic issues of meaning and belief that make symbols so powerful" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 242). This last frame also entails basic assumptions. What is important is not the event but the meaning behind it, events have numerous meanings because of the diverse interpretations, people create symbols to help them find direction when they are lost and hopeless, rituals and ceremonies help people find purpose, and culture is what holds organizations together. Every group has a culture, which results from shared experiences.

Schien (1997) described culture as existing at several different levels, where the term *level* refers to the degree to which the culture is visible to the observer. The levels are artifacts, espoused values, and basic assumptions. Artifacts embody the visible behavior of the group such as language, emotional displays, myths and stories, and observable rituals. Espoused values are philosophies, strategies, and goals that become embedded in the philosophy of an organization and help to serve as a guide in decision making. Basic underlying assumptions guide behavior and tell group members how to

perceive and feel about situations. These assumptions are unconscious thoughts and feelings.

A school leader can influence parental involvement through the culture of the school. It is important to understand all of the layers of a culture that exist in a school organization. Only then can a school leader begin to change that culture to empower the parents to become more involved in their child's education. For example, Epstein (1987) conducted a study with 423 parents at six high schools in Maryland. She found that many high schools did not supply information to parents on how they could help their child's learning at home. Often, homework was designed to be completed alone without interactions with families. In addition, parents were often not informed of course offerings, the consequences of special school programs, graduation requirements, or post-secondary education. This lack of information affected parents' abilities to be involved in their child's education, especially for those parents who had less formal education. In fact, Epstein showed that there was a significant correlation between parent education and home learning involvement. Parents who had more formal education were more likely to be involved in their child's learning at home. The school leader can influence practices that provide this information through conducting workshops and information sessions. School leaders can also encourage parents to keep the lines of communication open with their teens through family time, teaching responsibility by enforcing consistent expectations, encouraging homework and reading, and helping with post-secondary planning (Patrikakou, 2004).

The U.S. Department of Education (1994) had many recommendations to create a culture of school/family partnerships, including encouraging family learning with homework assignments, encouraging parent input in school decisions, addressing language and cultural barriers, using homework hotlines, providing mentoring programs, and encouraging parent and school involvement in community councils.

As discussed, internal and external environments influence the school setting and the involvement of parents in school. The classroom can also affect the degree of parental involvement in a school. The leader plays a crucial role in fostering involvement in this area as well.

Curriculum Leadership

Cornbleth (1990) offered two themes regarding curriculum. The first theme was that curriculum be considered for what it truly is, a social process including interactions among teachers, students, knowledge, and the classroom environment. This theme is in contrast to the dominant conception that curriculum is a document or plan. The second theme that Cornbleth offered was that curriculum cannot be changed without paying attention to the setting and context of the curriculum. Curriculum is shaped through established roles, operating procedures, shared beliefs, and norms.

At the secondary level, school leaders can influence parental involvement in curriculum. They can encourage building relationships with parents as well as establishing roles, procedures, and beliefs that support the practice of learning activities at home. One example of a learning activity at home is a program called TIPS, Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (Voorhis, 2003).

Voorhis (2003) conducted research on homework and its effects on family involvement and science achievement, looking at a specific type of homework practice called TIPS. Schools employing this type of homework structure found success. Voorhis' study was conducted at Clearview Middle School in a mid-Atlantic state. Two sixth and two eighth grade science teachers used TIPS for 18 weeks during the 1999-2000 school year. A total number of 253 students used TIPS. Fifty-three percent were White, 36% African-American, and 11% multiracial. Six science classes were assigned TIPS homework, and four were assigned regular homework. TIPS homework assignments were interactive and consisted of a letter sent home to the parents explaining the skill, the objective, and the learning activity. Materials were provided by the teacher or could be easily found at home. A hands-on activity that required a parent to participate was assigned, and the child and his/her parents discussed the results. Parents were asked to comment or ask questions about the activity and to sign the final paper.

The results of the survey (Voorhis, 2003) indicated that over 80% of the students said the parents were involved in the TIPS homework assignment, whereas 80% of the regular homework students said their parents were rarely or never involved. Ninety percent of the TIPS parents said they were involved with the homework, and 80% of the regular homework parents said they were seldom or never involved. Additionally, students with the TIPS homework earned higher grades in the science class in comparison to non-TIPS students. Balli, Wedman, and Demo (1997) conducted research on TIPS homework with 74 sixth-grade students in mathematics classes and found that all 74 students completed the TIPS homework assignments. Additionally, Pearson

correlations between post-test scores and prior mathematics achievement scores indicated a positively significant correlation. In conclusion, TIPS homework practice did increase student achievement.

TIPS homework is just one way that parents can be involved in their child's curriculum. Epstein (1995) stated that a program of school/family/community partnerships that emphasized student learning was a crucial part of curricular reform. TIPS is an example of instruction extension, which helps families comprehend, monitor, and participate with students on their homework. Another example of curriculum reform to improve partnerships between home and school consists of improving the content and structure of parent/teacher/student conferences. Improving volunteer programs, which expand student skills and interests, is another way to build partnerships through curriculum. Finally, Epstein stated that the connection of partnerships between home and school curriculum puts the focus on student learning and development.

<div align="center">Organizational Leadership</div>

A school leader must be able to address the broad issues associated with implementing partnership practices between school and home within the school organization. Bolman and Deal (2003) stated that often managers of organizations depend on narrow models that reflect only a part of the reality of the organization. The school leader must not fall into this trap of looking only through the lens of the traditional school setting. Carlson (1996) offered four lenses through which to view organizational theory: cultural perspective, political perspective, theatrical perspective, and brain perspective.

Cultural Perspective

Culture is typically depicted through shared values and understandings as well as the consistencies of beliefs that hold an organization together. It is difficult, at times, to create change in an organization. "If the proposed changes can be linked to the culture of the organization or total system then the culture can serve as the silent supervisor" (Carlson, 1996, p. 32). The norms of a culture give people an opportunity to commit themselves to a common good.

The school leader can influence parental involvement through a cultural perspective by fostering an environment of community. If the culture of the school is one where parents are a part of the school community and working with them is vital to student success, then parental involvement will increase.

Political Perspective

Carlson (1996) pointed out that limited resources and conflict underlie political activity in an organization. Politics can be used to create involvement opportunities, to help people understand sources of power, or to learn how to resolve conflicts. As a political leader in a school organization, one must be ethically clear about the clients' needs and their goals.

One of these clients in the school community is the parent. It is crucial for the school leader to understand the needs of parents. Also, the leader needs to know he/she can aid parents in accomplishing goals for children.

Theatrical Perspective

If culture exists in an organization, politics also exist. When politics and culture are both present in an organization, then there must be a theater (Carlson, 1996). Carlson noted that theater supplies us with a metaphor to understand the need for members of organizations to play their individual roles. In addition, the theater metaphor helps to explain the many layers of human action within organizations. Utilizing the theater perspective allows the leader to decide who the audience and the director are and what script is being enacted. In the theater, the director organizes the play for the stage, coaches the actors, and critiques the performance of the players. The audiences in the theater share common characteristics. They just sit and watch unless they are drawn into being active participants. Audiences support and may change the behavior of the actors by the way they react to the play. This exemplifies how change in organizations works. As the audience or members of the organization watch occurrences unfold, they are either drawn to the change process or repelled from it. The performance is where an organizational member is self-interacting on a stage with a script while the director guides him/her in front of an audience.

Using the theater perspective, parents can be compared to audience members. They watch the performance and sometimes support or change the way the actors do their job by their reaction. A school leader can support parents to be active participants in the play. As the school leader draws the parents in, he/she can motivate them to become active participants in their child's education.

Brain Perspective

Under the culture, politics, and theater of organizations are brains that establish the behaviors of their members. Viewing an organization through the brain metaphor reminds leaders of the power of logical thinking, reasoning, and emotion. In addition, people observe, think, do, and reflect just as organizations have the capacity to do. One of the main functions of a brain is to learn. When organizations synthesize independent learning over a period of time, they may lead to a new course of action, which is similar to how brains work (Carlson, 1996). School leaders need to look at home and school partnerships through this perspective. It is logical to include parents in the education of their children, and steps need to be taken to begin those partnerships.

The researcher has discussed diverse cultures and social class of some families in addition to factors influencing parental participation in their children's education at home and in school. It is evident that changing demographics in our society and schools make it important for a school leader to support effective parental involvement programs for all families. It is also clear that shifts in gender ratios and minorities now representing one-third of the nation's population suggest a need for further research on the gender of the student and how that relates to parental involvement.

In Appendix A, included is a Conceptual Organization of Parent Involvement in Relationship to Selected Educational Theories. In this chart, the researcher included parental involvement research, selected educational leadership theories, conception of parental involvement research and its implications for leadership theories, and finally the principal investigator's research from the pilot study and possible areas that the

dissertation may inform. For example, the first column refers to parental involvement research related to selected theorists. In Row 2, Fan and Chen (2001) are included, and they found that educational aspirations have a strong correlation between parent involvement and student achievement. The educational leadership theories are the second column in the chart. The educational theory that relates to Fan and Chen is Sergiovanni's (1999) theory, where passion is important in servant leadership. The principal investigator's conception of the parental involvement research and how it relates to leadership theories is in Column 3. The principal investigator's conception for Fan and Chen and how they relate to Sergiovanni is that school leaders must be passionate and dedicated to parents. The final column in this chart results from the principal investigator's pilot study and results from the dissertation. Continuing with the example, the last column explains what research the Principal Investigator has conducted that relates to the particular parental involvement research and selected educational leadership theories. In Row 2, a finding from the pilot study, which connects with Sergiovanni and Fan and Chen, is that parent perception of the school is more negative with parents whose students are performing poorly. If school leaders are passionate and dedicated to parents, the more likely they are to build positive home/school connections. These home/school partnerships may lead to a more positive parent perception of the school. All of the parental involvement research, selected educational leadership theories, and pilot study results are included in this table.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of this study was to investigate parental involvement in secondary

student education. This chapter outlines the process and procedures for the research. The

first section provides an outline of the research design. The participants' section follows

with a discussion of instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

A questionnaire by Sanders et al. (1999) was used to survey approximately 850

parents of freshmen students in two high schools in Southern Arizona. Permission was

obtained from the researchers to use the survey. The surveys were mailed to each parent

of a freshman student at both high schools. Parents at one of the high schools also

received a Spanish version of the survey because the population of Hispanic students was

high. Authorization was secured for both sites through the school's administration. The

participants were informed that their school was identified in order to learn more about

how schools and families worked together to assist students through their high school

years. Each participant's response on the survey was anonymous, and they were notified

in writing that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the

study at any time. After the participants completed the surveys, the survey was placed in

an envelope provided by the researcher and sealed. The participant either mailed the

envelope to the researcher or dropped it off in a box at the high school. The surveys were

maintained in a locked cabinet inside the researcher's office. The parents were asked to

reflect on their child's freshman year with regard to their perception of the school, their

involvement at home with their child's education, and their participation at school. The following research questions guided the study:

1.   How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

2.   How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the education level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

3.   How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the education level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

Participants

The principal investigator used two high schools in Southern Arizona. Both had suburban and rural students and were similar in size. As of July 2006 one of the high schools had 1,737 students and the other had 1,587 students. One school had 48% Caucasian students, 46% Hispanic, and 2% African American, whereas the other had 71% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic, and 7% African American students. Free and reduced-lunch rates differed with one school having 45% in the program and the other with 6%.

The survey was mailed to parents of freshmen students, approximately 950 homes, at both high schools. Of the 950 surveys mailed, 200 (21%) were returned. Three of the Spanish versions of the survey were returned.

Instrumentation

Sanders et al. (1999) developed the survey instrument. This instrument was used

in the pilot study conducted by the principal investigator and is outlined in Chapter 2

(see Appendix C for a copy of the instrument). This survey consists of five sections.

The first part of the survey addressed the parents' perception of the school, which

produced data that had an internal reliability coefficient of .86. The reliability tables for

all three questions are included in the Appendix D. This section consisted of eight

questions, for example, *The teachers here care about my freshman, I feel welcomed at*

this high school, and *This high school is a good place for students and parents.* The

parents were asked to select a response on a four-point scale from strongly agree to

strongly disagree. Home involvement comprised the next section of the survey and

produced data that had an internal reliability coefficient of .79. It consisted of ten

questions, for example, *How often do you help your freshman with homework, Talk to*

your freshman about school, and *Tell your freshman how important school is.* The

parents were asked to select from a five-point scale from never to every day. The next

section of the survey asked questions regarding the parents' involvement in school, which

produced data that had an internal reliability coefficient of .79. It contained nine

questions, for example, *How often do you go to high school Parent Forum meetings,*

Attend a committee meeting at school, and *Work as a volunteer at the high school.* This

was a four-point scale ranging from never to many times.

The next section of the survey asked parents to respond to some general

questions, for instance, the gender of their child, their child's grades, what their level of

education was, and their child's ethnicity. The survey concluded with open-ended questions about home and school partnerships.

Data Collection

This questionnaire was mailed to each parent of a freshman at both high schools. A letter explaining the purpose of the survey and a request for participation was included in a manila envelope along with the survey. To ensure confidentiality, the participants were asked not to put their name on the survey and to place the completed survey in a sealed envelope. For one of the highs schools, the surveys were returned to the school, where they were picked up. For the other high school, the surveys were mailed directly to the principal investigator.

Data Analysis

Research Question 1: How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent?

To analyze these data, the responses were given values. For example, 1 = strongly agree and 4 = strongly disagree. For this research question, there were eight columns of entries corresponded to the eight questions in this section of the survey. Each participant had a row with the responses entered. The gender of the student was also given a value, 1 = male and 2 = female, as well as the grades of the student, with values of 1 = mostly As and 5 = mostly Fs, along with education level having values of 1 = did not complete high school and 6 = advanced degree. An average of the responses in this section were calculated, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between parent perception of high school (the average calculated

for that section) and the gender of the student, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent. The statistical significance (alpha = .05) was examined.

Research Question 2: How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the education level of the parent?

To analyze these data, the responses were again given values, 1 = never and 5 = every day. For this research question, 10 columns of entries corresponded with the 10 questions in this section of the survey. Each participant had a row with the responses entered. An average on the responses in this section were calculated, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between home involvement (the average calculated for that section) and the gender of the student, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent. The statistical significance (alpha = .05) was examined.

Research Question 3: How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, and the education level of the parent?

To analyze these data, the responses were given values, 1 = never and 4 = many times. For this research question, nine columns of entries corresponded with the nine questions in this section of the survey. Each participant had a row with the responses entered. An average of the responses in this section were calculated, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between school involvement (the average calculated for that section) and the gender of the student, the grades of the student, and the educational level of the parent. The statistical significance (alpha = .05) was examined.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' perception and involvement in their child's freshman year experiences in high school. The study was based on the results of a questionnaire completed by parents of freshmen students in two high schools in Southern Arizona. The chapter is organized in terms of three research questions and the findings:

1. How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

2. How does parent home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

3. How does parent school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

The chapter concludes with results from disaggregated data by parent ethnicity and parent responses to open-ended questions at the end of the survey.

Sample Description

The participants were parents with freshmen students at two high schools in Southern Arizona identified as being a combination of both suburban and rural. They were also similar in number of students enrolled. The demographics varied with one school having 48% Caucasian students, 46% Hispanic, and 2% African American, whereas the other had 71% Caucasian, 18% Hispanic, and 7% African American students. Nine hundred fifty surveys were distributed and 200 parents from different households returned the surveys for a 21% return rate. Of the 33 Hispanic parents who participated, only three of the Spanish versions of the survey were returned. After thoroughly reviewing the Spanish responses, it was determined that the information gathered was aligned with the English survey returns, and it served no purpose to separate the analysis. Eighty percent of the parents who responded were mothers, and 14% were fathers (see Table 2). Fifty percent of the respondents were parents of male students while 50% had female students. Two percent of the participants did not complete high school, and 10% received a high school diploma. Twelve percent of the parents had technical training after high school, and 29% had some college. Finally, 37% of the participants had a college degree and 10% had an advanced degree. Sixty three percent of the participants' children received mostly As, 20% mostly Bs, 15% mostly Cs, and 2% had mostly Ds.

Findings

Table 2

Frequencies (N = 200) of Parent or Legal Guardian who completed survey

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	Frequency	Percent
Mother	160	80.0%
Aunt	2	1.0%
Stepmother	5	2.5%
Grandmother	2	1.0%
Father	28	14.0%
Stepfather	2	1.0%
Legal Guardian	1	.5%

Research Question 1

How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

An average of the responses for Question 1 was calculated and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between parental perception of the school and the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent. For the total parent population, significance was not found (see Table 3). The total population of parents who

reported having female students also reported a more positive perception of the school. In addition, parents who reported their students receiving good grades also reported a more negative perception. Finally, parents who reported higher education levels also reported a more positive perception of the school.

When the data was broken down by ethnicity, significance was not found, however similarities were. Parents of Hispanic American, Native American, and White students who reported having daughters also reported a more positive perception of the school. Parents of African American, Hispanic American, and White students who reported good grades also reported a more negative perception of the school. Finally, parents of African American, Native American, and White students who reported higher educational levels also reported a more negative perception of the school.

Research Question 2

How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

An average of the responses for Questions 2 was calculated, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between parental home involvement and the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent. For the total population, positive correlations were found; however, they were not significant (see Table 3). Parents of female students reported being more involved at home. Parents who reported poor student grades also reported more involvement at home. Finally, parents who reported higher education levels also reported more home involvement.

Table 3

Correlations of Demographic Characteristics and Parent Perception of School, Parental Home Involvement, and Parental School Involvement.

Questions	Parental Perception of School	Parental Home Inv.	Parental School Inv.
A. Total Group (N = 200)			
Gender of Student	.07	.03	- .07
Student Grades	- .10	.02	- .04
Educational Level of Parent	- .05	.06	.12
B. Hispanic American (N = 33)			
Gender of Student	.18	- .05	- .37*
Student Grades	- .10	.07	.00
Educational Level of Parent	- .33	.12	.39*
C. White (N = 153)			
Gender of Student	.07	.04	- .05
Student Grades	- .14	.03	- .13
Educational Level of Parent	.01	.05	.07

NOTE: African, Asian and Native American data is not included due to small sample size.

When the data was broken down by ethnicity, significance was not found however similarities were. Parents of Hispanic and Native American male students reported more home involvement. Parents of Hispanic American and White students who reported poor student grades also reported more home involvement. Finally, parents of African American, Hispanic American, and White students who reported higher education levels also reported more home involvement.

Research Question 3

How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

An average of the responses for Question 3 was calculated, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to examine the correlation between parental school involvement and the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent. For the total population, one positive and two negative correlations were found; however, they were not significant (see Table 3). Parents of male students reported a higher level of school involvement. Parents who reported poor students grades also reported more school involvement. Finally, parents who reported higher education levels reported more frequent involvement at school.

When the total population was disaggregated by ethnicity, significance was found in the Hispanic American population. Parents of Hispanic American male students reported a higher degree of involvement at school ($p < .05$). Parents who reported higher levels of education also reported more involvement at school ($p < .05$).

For the remainder of the ethnicities, some similarities were found. Parents of Native American and White male students reported a higher degree of school involvement. Parents of African American and White students who reported poor students grades also reported less frequent school involvement. Finally, parents of Native American and African American students who reported higher education levels also reported less school involvement.

Disaggregated Data by Ethnicity

The data were disaggregated by ethnicity. As seen in Table 4, each set of questions was based on the research questions and was broken down by ethnicity. A mean was calculated for each set of questions on parents' perceptions of the school, parental home involvement, and parental school involvement. Question 1, parent perception of school, was based on a four-point rating scale with possible choices being strongly agree (value of 1), agree (value of 2), disagree (value of 3), and strongly disagree (value of 4). Question 2, parental home involvement, was based on a five-point rating scale with the possible choices being never (value of 1), once or twice (value of 2), monthly (value of 3), weekly (value of 4), and every day (value of 5). Question 3, parental school involvement, was based on a four-point rating scale with possible choices being never (value of 1), once or twice (value of 2), a few times (value of 3), and many times (value of 4). For example, African Americans and Whites had a mean of 1.94 for the parent perception of the school, which meant that on average, parents agreed that the high school was a good school. Native Americans were also close to that mean with a 1.50. Hispanic Americans had a mean of 2.88, which meant they were in between agree

and disagree with regard to perception of the school. The results for the remainder of the

questionnaire, Questions 2 and 3, are included in the Table 4.

Open-ended Questions

At the end of the survey, parents were asked to respond to six questions regarding

what the high school could do to help their freshman student be more successful. Of

the 200 survey respondents, 82 parents (41%) responded to the open-ended questions

(see Table 5). *The first question asked what the parents' greatest concerns were as a*

parent of a freshman. The top three concerns were to obtain a good education (37%), the

safety of their student (24%), and preparedness for post high school education (23%).

Other concerns consisted of negative peer influences (18%), and drugs (13%). *The*

questionnaire also asked what school activity involving parents helped them most. The

_____

Table 4

Disaggregated Data by Ethnicity

	Parental Perception of School (4-point scale)			Parental Home Involvement (5-point scale)			Parental School Involvement (4-point scale)		
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	M	SD
African American	4	1.94	.07	4	3.60	.23	4	1.83	.06
Asian American	1	2.13	--	1	3.80	--	1	1.67	--
Hispanic American	33	2.88	.40	33	4.12	.76	33	1.87	.65

Native American	2	1.50	.71	2	4.65	.07	2	2.06	.86
White	153	1.94	.52	151	4.02	.55	152	2.16	.59

top two responses were Freshman Orientation (10%) and Open House (28%).

Another question asked what the school could do to help the parents with their

student. The overwhelming response, 49% of parents, was better communication. The

parents wanted more communication from the schools. Thirteen percent of parents

expressed frustration because e-mails and phone calls were not returned in a timely

manner. Seventeen percent wanted to know about issues with their student immediately

so they could address them quickly. Thirty-three percent of parents mentioned more

information on the websites regarding important dates/upcoming events and to update the

information frequently. Another suggestion by 6% of parents was newsletters being sent

home regularly with upcoming events and other important information. One parent

stated, "You have to go to square zero and assume new students and parents know

absolutely nothing. The school tends to assume parents and students know a lot of things

because you are used to them but we are not." Another participant wrote, "We need more

information about day to day happenings in class that teenagers don't like to talk about."

The next question on the survey asked what the high school could do to help the

parents be more involved. There were various suggestions for this question. Two of the

parents (2%) wanted the school to encourage students to share more with parents and

have parents sign off on homework. One parent suggested student/parent goal setting and

to evaluate these goals regularly. She continued, "It would work better if it was an assignment where we have deadlines to work on together." Other suggestions included knowing the students individually. One parent stated, "Know him by name. Know his interests. Encourage him to pursue his academics". Thirteen parents (16%) also emphasized the importance of inviting them to be involved. They wanted more open houses, parent teacher conferences, and freshmen parent nights. Posting homework assignments and syllabi on the Internet as well as missing assignments and grades was another common suggestion. One of the parents stated she was desperate to be involved with her student; however, she struggled with her daily life trying to make ends meet. She wrote, "Just because I can't go in person doesn't mean I don't want to know what is going on with my child, it just means the school need to be more creative in being able to communicate with me."

One last suggestion was to start a parent/teacher organization. One mother stated, "Start a PTO. When my child was in elementary school we got to know the parents of my child friends through school functions i.e. picnics and fundraisers."

The survey also asked parents what they could do to help the school. The majority of the responses, 38%, said to volunteer. One parent stated that they "are involved on the athletic side but nothing on the academic side." Another parent stated that she is "willing and able to lend a hand, but at the elementary and junior high I knew what was needed and in high school, I don't." Finally, 5% of parents stated they donated tax credit money to help the school.

Table 5

Frequencies (N = 82) of Open-ended Responses at the End of the Survey

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Concern of good education	30	37.0%
Concern of safety	20	24.0%
Concern of posted high school preparedness	19	23.0%
Concern of negative peer influence	15	18.0%
Concern of drugs	11	13.0%
Desiring better communication	40	49.0%
Open house was a helpful activity	23	28.0%
Freshmen orientation was a helpful activity	8	10.0%
Opinion that e-mails and phone calls are not answered quickly enough	11	13.0%
Believe that website and information going home should be updated frequently and include upcoming events	27	33.0%
Newsletters need to be sent home frequently	5	6.0%
Parents want to know about issues right away before it becomes an issue	14	17.0%
Important to invite parents to come to school	13	16.0%
Desire to volunteer at the school	31	38.0%
Encourage students to talk to parents	2	2.0%
Donate tax credit money	4	5.0%

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS,

IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study presents research on parents' involvement in their secondary students' education and ties results to selective educational leadership theories associated with and applicable to school leaders' useful practices with parents. This final chapter restates the research problem and reviews the methodology used. It continues with a summarization of results from the study and their implications on leadership practices.

Research Problem and Methodology Used

Parental involvement at the elementary level has been the focus of most research studies over the years. Yet, as students grow up, parental involvement in their education continues to be important (Sanders et al., 1999). Some research studies on parents of secondary students have demonstrated the importance of parental involvement in improving their child's educational achievements (Fan & Chen, 2001; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Murphy, 2006; Sanders et al., 1999; Steinberg et al., 1996; Stevenson & Baker, 1987). To understand the relationship between parent involvement at the high school level and home/school partnership programs, this study investigated the effects of various home/school partnership practices on parental perceptions toward school, parental involvement at home, and parental involvement at school. Sanders et al. (1999) found that when high schools develop programs of home/school partnerships, parents have a more positive perception of the school,

enabling more families to become involved in their child's learning at school and home.

Parent involvement is an important component of NCLB (2001), which urges

parents to be involved with their children at home and at school. In addition, there is a

national focus of concern and research on secondary students and high school reform

(American Institute for Research, 2003; National Association of Secondary School

Principals, 2004; National Governors Association, 2005; The Education Trust, 2005).

One example of research concerning high school reform and parental involvement is

Breaking Ranks II NASSP, (2004). *Breaking Ranks II* recommended structural changes

to increase communication and involvement in decision-making by students, teachers,

family members, and the community. The principal investigator examined these and

other concerns by surveying secondary school parents' perceptions of involvement with

their children in secondary schools. The following research questions guided the study:

1.	How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the
child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and
the ethnicity of the parent?

2.	How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the
grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the
ethnicity of the parent?

3.	How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the
grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the
ethnicity of the parent?

The study was based on the results of a survey administered to 200 parents of freshmen students in two different high schools in Southern Arizona to gather information about the parents' involvement and perceptions of the students' freshman year. The survey consisted of three sections of questions relating to the principal investigator's research questions. Pearson Product Moment Correlations were calculated for the three sets of questions with the gender of the student, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent. In addition, there was an open-ended response section at the end of the survey that asked parents to respond to six questions regarding their involvement at the school, describe their experiences, and make suggestions for educational leaders. This was a critical section because it provided valuable information in the form of specific strategies and information that school leaders could use when building home/school partnerships. The open-ended response section gave life to the data. For example one parent said, "You have to go to square zero and assume new students and parents know absolutely nothing. The school tends to assume parents and students know a lot of things because you are used to them but we are not."

<div align="center">Discussion of Findings</div>

The findings presented are related to each research question. Each question is restated along with the key findings, connections to the literature review, and implications for school leaders. Appendix A outlines the conceptual organization of parental involvement in relationship to selected educational theories, including parental involvement research, educational leadership theories, implications for leadership theories, and findings from this study. For example, Epstein (1987) and Valden-Keiman

(2005) both talked about how important it is to communicate with parents. Likewise, educational theorists Snowden and Gorton (2002) wrote about how to develop effective communication skills and how to handle conflict. Of the parents who participated in this study, 49% indicated a need for better communication. The implication for school leaders is that effective communication and conflict management skills are crucial to developing and maintaining home/school partnerships practices.

Research Question 1

How does parent perception of the school relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

There were no significant findings for the total group of parents (n = 200) with regard to parent perception and the gender of the student, grades of the student, or the educational level of the parents. For the total population, the parents of female students reported a better perception of the school. This may be due to the fact that females outperform boys in school (Dulaney & Bethune, 1995) therefore they would possibly perceive the school in a more positive manner. In addition, it was found that the parents who reported better student grades also reported a more negative perception of the school I believe this negative perception with students who earn good grades may be because parents of good students often feel that the schools aren't meeting their child's needs. Many of these parents feel that schools *teach to the test* and don't challenge their type of child. Finally, the parents who reported higher educational levels also reported a better perception of the school.

There were some similarities within ethnic groups with regard to perception of the school. The possible choices for this question were strongly agree (value of 1), agree (value of 2), disagree (value of 3), and strongly disagree (value of 4). As shown in Table 4 the average response for the African American and White parents was 1.94; therefore, they agreed that the school was a positive place for their children. The Native and Asian Americans also had a positive perception of the school with their averages being 1.50 and 2.13 respectively. The Hispanic Americans had an average of 2.88, which was closer to a negative perception of the school.

The Hispanic American population was the only ethnicity in this study that was close to a negative perception of school. Sanchez (2002) discussed the perception that Hispanic Americans have regarding school. The researcher stated that Latino parents felt intimidated by the school system. Sanchez advised Latino parents to change their perception of why their children were not meeting standards, be involved in changing policies to focus on 100% of the students meeting the standards, and provide equal opportunities for Latino students to learn. One of the questions in the open-ended section of the survey asked what the school could do to help parents with their children. One of the Hispanic parents wrote, the school should "understand that many students come from problem or broken, single parent homes, but are still doing their best and their children want to be successful." This is important information for school leaders.

Hidalgo et al. (1995) talked about African American parents' perception of the school system. An inner-city principal in their study stated that African American parents felt unwelcome and intimidated when they visit the school. Ogbu (2003) found that

African American parents mistrusted the *White institution,* and this perception explained the lack of involvement. One of the White parents in my study related an incident that occurred when her son was walking with a group of African American students:

An incident occurred where my child was walking with a group of African American students, and one White child was present. The teacher told the White child to continue on to class and stopped the remainder of the group for questioning. The white student replied, "That is disrespectful to tell me to leave and question them." This incident indicates an environment lacking in equal treatment and a need for staff training.

The two proceeding examples demonstrate how powerful perceptions can be. The first example addressed the perception Hispanic Americans have regarding schools. They are negative and feel intimidated. School leaders cannot assume that lack of parental involvement at the school site means parents don't care and are not doing everything in their power to help their child succeed. Some parents simply have extreme circumstances that inhibit them from being involved. The second example discussed the mistrust African American parents may feel for the school system. Ironically, it was a White parent who described an incident where she believed African American students were treated poorly.

These examples tell school leaders that partnership practices need to foster a welcoming and caring environment for all parents regardless of their ethnicity. Many suggestions were made throughout the study on how schools can build these partnerships with minority families. According to Sanchez (2002), a school leader should learn more

about families including their history, strategies for support, and dreams for their

children. Counseling departments could be transformed into sites for communication

rather than alienation. Finally, school leaders should remove the barriers of access for

minority families.

Sanders et al. (1999) concluded in their study that high schools that develop

home/school partnerships are likely to improve the parental perception of the school and

enable more parents to become involved in their children's education at home and school.

The more parents are involved in their child's education, the higher the aspirations will

be for their children. Fan and Chen (2001) found that educational aspiration had a strong

correlation with parental involvement and student achievement. Pearce (2006) also found

that student expectation had a strong impact on student achievement. Lee and Bowen

(2006) conducted a study with 415 secondary students in the Southeastern United States.

The researcher's sample consisted of 51% European Americans, 34% African Americans,

and 15% Latinos. They found that European American parents spent more time

discussing education with their children and had higher aspirations for their children than

the participating minorities.

Schools need to make it a priority to develop home/school partnerships. School

leaders need to be passionate about partnering with parents to increase student

achievement. Sergiovanni (1999) said that when school leaders believe in their goals,

passion is evident. If school leaders create a goal to build partnership programs and

believe in that goal, then the passion will develop while the partnerships build. These

partnerships may increase the likelihood that parents will be involved with their child's

education at home and school. This involvement may lead to a better perception of the school.

Research Question 2

How does home involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

There were no significant findings for the total group of parents with regard to the parent home involvement and the gender of the student, grades of the students, or the educational level of the parents. For the total population, parents of female students reported more involvement at home. Parents who reported poor student grades also reported more involvement at home. This may be due to standards and high stake testing, which has caused a great deal of concern for parents. These parents may be getting more involved at home trying to get their students ready for AIMS testing and ensuring they are going to pass their classes so they may also pass the test. The parents who reported higher education levels also reported more home involvement.

Some similarities were found within the ethnic groups with regard to the parental home involvement. The possible choices for this question were never (value of 1), one or two times (value of 2), monthly (value of 3), weekly (value of 4), and every day (value of 5). Referring to Table 4 the average for African American parent home involvement was 3.60 and Asian American was 3.80, indicating they were involved weekly to monthly with their students at home. The Hispanic and Native Americans as well as the White population were involved at home weekly to every day with averages of 4.12, 4.65, and 4.02 respectively.

According to the findings above, African American parents were involved in a weekly-monthly status. Higalgo et al. (1995) stated that African American parents valued education a great deal. They were involved at home through integrating school-related activities into play activities. In contrast, Ogbu (2003) found that home involvement was limited. African American parents were often not home to check on their children after school or help them with their homework. Parents also said they were often unaware of their child's academic problems. At the end of the survey were open-ended questions. One of the African American parents made a suggestion regarding what the school could do to involve her at home in her child's education. She stated she wanted the school to "encourage students to share more with parents and have parents sign off on homework." This parent expressed the need for the school to "be honest and communicate the weakness or the need for improvement for her student."

Another parent suggested student/parent goal setting and evaluating these goals regularly. She continued, "It would work better if it was an assignment where we have deadlines to work on together." Involving parents in homework is a great way to increase parental home involvement. Other suggestions parents made to increase home involvement were for the school to post homework assignments and syllabi on the Internet, as well as missing assignments and grades in order for the parents to help their children at home.

One example of a learning activity at home is a program called TIPS, Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (Voorhis, 2003). TIPS helps families comprehend, monitor, and participate with students on their homework. Parental home involvement

helps students be successful in school. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) found that home involvement in the form of talking with the student about school and showing that they cared about what occurred at school had a significant affect on student achievement. Cognitive/intellectual involvement, which exposes the child to cognitively motivating activities such as books or current events, also had a significant effect on student grades.

Epstein (1995) stated that a program of school/family/community partnerships that emphasized student learning was a crucial part of curricular reform. The connection of partnerships between home and school curriculum puts the focus on student learning and development (Epstein, 1995). School leaders can influence parental involvement in curriculum by establishing roles, procedures, and beliefs that support the practice of learning activities at home. Through strategies such as encouraging students to talk with their parents, involving parents in homework and goal setting, posting homework and course syllabi on the Internet, and communicating progress to parents, home involvement may increase, thereby increasing student achievement.

Research Question 3

How does school involvement relate to the gender of the child, the grades of the student, the educational level of the parent, and the ethnicity of the parent?

There were no significant findings for the total group with regard to parental school involvement and the gender of the student, grades of the student, or the educational level of the parent. For the total population, parents of male students reported more involvement at the school. Involvement with boys may be due to their underachievement compared to girls (Dulaney & Bethune, 1995). Parents who reported

better student grades also reported more involvement at the school site. Finally, parents

who reported higher education levels also reported more involvement at the school. This

involvement may be because typically people who are more educated have more

confidence and this helps when meeting with teachers and visiting schools.

When the responses were broken down by ethnicity, there were significant results.

The Hispanic American population showed significance in two areas, the gender of the

student and the educational level of the parent. The parents of Hispanic American male

students reported more involvement at the school. This focus on males may be due to the

poor performance of their boys so parents become more involved at the school to help

their sons. The literature and my research is clear, parents who reported a higher

educational level reported more involvement at the school. According to Sanchez (2002)

many higher educated Latino parents may feel more confident going to the schools and

expressing their concerns.

There were some similarities within ethnic groups with regard to the parental

school involvement. The possible choices for this question were never (value of 1), one

or two times (value of 2), a few times (value of 3), and many times (value of 4). All the

ethnicities had close to the same averages on this question. African American responses

averaged 1.83, Asian Americans 1.67, Hispanic Americans 1.87, Native Americans 2.06,

and White 2.16. All the ethnicities attended school events/conferences approximately one

or two times during the school year.

Hildalgo et al. (2004) studied parental involvement with Latino parents and found

various factors that influenced parental involvement at school. One of those factors was

how the school staff treated the parents. School leaders should have personal rapport with Latino parents and provide specific information on how they can help their child. School leaders should also personally reach out to Latino parents and not be judgmental. The researchers also suggested that schools employ a bilingual staff and provide information in multiple languages. In addition, schools need to understand the work schedules of Latinos and be flexible when planning school meetings. Ogbu's (2003) study of parental involvement focused on African Americans. He found that African American parents attended very few PTO meetings, open houses, or any other school event.

Steinberg et al. (1996) found that parental involvement at the school site sent a strong message about how important school was to them and how important it should be to their child. Being involved at the school site creates interconnectedness of the two worlds of home and school. The U.S. Department of Education (1994) also suggested building a culture for community through structures such as family learning and parent involvement in decision making, curriculum, etc. Schein (1997) talked about levels of culture. He described *levels* as the degree to which the culture was visible to the observer. The highest level of culture is basic underlying assumptions. Basic underlying assumptions guide behavior and tell group members how to perceive and feel about situations. Home/school partnerships need to be at the stage where it is assumed that parents are involved, and our job as school leaders is to ensure involvement of the parents.

A school leader can influence parental involvement through the culture of the school. It is important to understand all of the layers of a culture that exist in a school

organization. Only then can a school leader begin to change that culture to empower the parents to become more involved in their child's education.

One way school leaders can influence school involvement is through communication. *Breaking Ranks II* NASSP, (2004) recommend structural changes to increase communication and involvement in decision making by students, teachers, family members, and the community. Communication was an overwhelming theme of the open-ended question section of the survey. Many parents wanted more information on the website or through newsletters sent home regarding important dates/upcoming events and to update the information frequently. The parents also noted the importance of inviting them to be involved, and they wanted more open houses, parent teacher conferences, and freshmen parent nights. For some parents, it is difficult to be involved at school for various reasons, and school leaders need to remember this when planning home/school partnerships. For example, one of the parents stated in the open-ended section of the survey that she was desperate to be involved with her child; however, she struggled with her daily life trying to make ends meet. She wrote, "Just because I can't go in person doesn't mean I don't want to know what is going on with my child, it just means the school needs to be more creative in being able to communicate with me."

According to Snowden and Gorton (2002), many school administrators tend to see their primary role as a communicator. As a communicator, a school leader must be an excellent listener and understand what is being communicated. School leaders must also invite and foster accurate and full communication through the entire school community, which includes parents. One way to communicate to parents is to inform them of their

child's progress and provide information regarding grades, attendance, and homework. Epstein (1987) stated that administrators have an obligation to inform parents about their child's progress and school programs. Many high school partnership programs begin by increasing communication about school programs and addressing the needs and progress of the students.

Parental involvement at the school site is a challenge for school leaders. Many factors influence this type of involvement. There are strategies school leaders can use to improve school involvement. School leaders can ensure that all parents are treated respectfully, provided information they can read and understand, invited to participate in decision making, and communicated with effectively. Utilizing these strategies may increase school involvement by parents and ultimately increase student achievement.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings in this study suggest the following recommendations for further research.

1. Communication was a key finding in this study. Additional insight might be gained if focus groups including parents, teachers, administrators, and community members were a component of the study. Through these focus groups, schools could gain more knowledge about how to increase communication between school and home.

2. In this study, the sample size for minorities was small. Four African Americans, 1 Asian American, 33 Hispanic Americans, and 2 Native Americans responded. Schools could gain a better understanding of

minority parental involvement with a larger sample of minority parents.

3.   In future studies, educational leaders' roles in encouraging parent involvement with students' extracurricular activities could be considered in relationship to academic activities. Exploring areas such as the arts and athletics may be informative.

4.   In future studies, exploration of ways educational leaders can encourage parents of low-performing students to participate in schools may be helpful when building home/school partnerships.

5.   To investigate parental perceptions specifically related to high stakes testing and their perceived impact on their freshmen children.

6.   To obtain the perceptions of parents whose children take the AIMS test in 10th, 11th, or 12th grade. This would be an intriguing study owing to studying the differences of those parents' perceptions based on passing and failing rates of AIMS.

7.   To study parent's views on ways to contribute to schools similar to the work of Luis Moll's, *Funds of Knowledge*.

This dissertation study presented research on parental involvement with secondary students as well as selective educational leadership theories associated with school leaders' practices with home/school partnerships. There are specific leadership characteristics needed to build home/school partnerships. Bennis (2003) states that there are five characteristics that successful leaders possess: guiding vision, passion, integrity, trust, and curiosity/daring. School leaders must have a vision for home/school

partnerships. They must have the passion to inspire the school community to build these partnerships, demonstrate integrity through thought and action, and be trustworthy. Finally, a school leader must be willing to take risks in building these partnerships.

Many home/school partnership programs begin with increasing communication (Epstein, 1987). Epstein (1987) states that communication is crucial for increasing parental involvement at the school and home. Results of this study indicate the need for increased communication. Forty-nine percent of parents want better communication from the school to home. School leaders can influence dissemination of information in a multitude of ways. They can ensure that all parents can read the information through bilingual correspondence, send home information regarding upcoming events, programs, extracurricular activities, and coursework, invite parents to volunteer, and update websites frequently.

The passage of No Child Left Behind Act (2001) and secondary high stakes testing heightens the type of parent/school leader relationships. The findings from this study suggest the importance of building partnerships between parents and school and the strategies that educational leaders utilize to support the successful implementation of home/school partnerships.

APPENDIX A: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK BEFORE DISSERTATION

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Initial Conceptual Organization of Parent Involvement in Relationship to Selected Educational Theories, Leaders' Practices, and Research Results

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Parental Involvement Research	Educational Leadership Theories	Parent & Theorists Literature Related to Practice	Pilot Study Results
NONE IDENTIFIED (N.I.)	Pree (1997) Organizations as communities of free people.	Envision home/school partnership, be persistent, and take risks.	
Fan & Chen (2001) Found that educational aspirations had a strong correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. Lee & Bowen (2006) Found that European American parents were more involved in school and discussed education with their children more.	Sergiovanni (1999) Passion is important in servant leadership.	Be passionate and dedicated to parents.	Pilot Study Findings: Parent perception of school is more positive with female students; the worse the grades, the more negative the parent perception of the school; and the more educated the parent, the more negative the perception of the school.

Pearce (2006) Found that parent expectation had strong impact on student achievement. Hidalgo et al. (2004) School leaders should personally reach out to Latino parents and communicate in a non-judgmental way			
None Indicated (N.I.)	Bennis (2003) Key ingredients for leadership.	Demonstrate integrity, constancy, congruity, and reliability.	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.
Hidalgo et al. (2004) Ensure multicultural parents representation on decision-making committees.	Hoy & Miskel (1978) Shared decision making. Davies (1987) Opportunities for administrators to	Involve parents in decision making.	

	involve parents.		
Epstein (1987) Valden-Keiman (2005) Communication with parents is very important.	Snowden & Gorton (2002) Major concepts in administration.	Communication and conflict management with regard to parents.	Pilot Study Finding: 47% of parents said they never received a letter from the pilot high school, and 44% said they never received a phone call. Many of the parents wanted more school-initiated contact Dissertation study will investigate these findings with larger sample of parents.
Benson & Martin (2003) A successful structure of parental involvement with school. Stevenson & Baker (1987) Sanders et al. (1999) Found that the more parents are involved in school, the better the child performs in school. Hidalgo et al. (2004) Transform counseling	Bolman & Deal (2003) Four frames in which to view leadership: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frame.	Structural frame. Formal roles and relationships (More information or description needed – unclear as presented).	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.

departments into sites for communication for Latino parents. Epstein (1995) Developed a five-step process for strong home/school partnerships.			
Moll et al. (1992) Found that when teachers become researchers and visit the community, they develop funds of knowledge which help them build a more successful pedagogy.	Bolman & Deal (2003) Sergiovanni (2000) Servant leadership.	Human resource frame Focuses on the relationship between people and organizations. Serving and valuing home and your school community.	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.
N.I.	Bolman & Deal (2003) Sergiovanni (2000) Power over versus power to.	Political Frame. Organizations are political arenas which have conflict and power struggles. To increase parental involvement, leaders	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.

		must practice *power to* with parents.	
Steinberg et al. (1996) Found that getting parents into the schools affects student achievement the most. Ogbu (2003) African-American parents mistrust the "white institution". Department of Education (1994) Build culture for community through structures such as family learning and parent involvement in decision making, etc.	Bolman & Deal (2003) Schien (1997) Levels of culture.	Symbolic Frame. Beliefs in organizations that make symbols so powerful. Influence parental involvement through culture.	Pilot Study Findings: Parents of female students were more involved at the school site; the worse the grades, the less likely parents were involved at home; and the more educated the parent was, the less likely they would be involved at the school site. Dissertation study will investigate these findings with larger sample of parents.
Epstein (1987) Provide information to parents for learning at home.	Cornbleth (1990) Curriculum is a social process and depends on the	Include parents in the curriculum process.	Pilot Study Findings: Parents were more involved with their sons at home; there was not a correlation between home

Voorhis (2003) Teachers Involve Parents in Homework. Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) Students receive better grades when parents involve them intellectually at home. Louie (2001) Chinese immigrant parents use supplemental homework assignments, music lessons etc. Patrikakou (2004) Encourage homework, reading, and be involved in post-secondary planning.	context.		involvement and grades; and the more educated the parents were, the more they were involved at home. Dissertation study will investigate these findings with larger sample of parents.
N.I.	Carlson (1996)	Political Perspective: Understanding the needs of parents.	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.
N.I.	Carlson (1996)	Theoretical Perspective:	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.

		Parents need to be active participants in the "play".	
N.I.	Carlson (1996)	Brain Perspective: Logically involving parents.	May or may not be revealed in dissertation study.

APPENDIX B: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AFTER DISSERTATION

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Conceptual Organization of Parent Involvement in Relationship to Selected Educational Theories, Leaders' Practices, and Research Results

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Parental Involvement Research	Educational Leadership Theories	Parent & Theorists Literature Related to Practice	Dissertation Results
Fan & Chen (2001) Found that educational aspirations had a strong correlation between parental involvement and student achievement. Lee & Bowen (2006) Found that European American parents were more involved in school and discussed education with their children more. Pearce (2006) Found that parent expectation had strong impact on student	Sergiovanni (1999) Passion is important in servant leadership.	Be passionate & dedicated to parents.	Dissertation Findings: Parent perception was significant with the Native & African American population. For the African American population, the perception of the school was most positive with female students. In addition, the higher educated the parent, the worse the perception of the school. For the Native American parents, the perception was better with male students, and the higher educated the parent, the more negative the perception of the school.

achievement. Hidalgo et al. (2004) School leaders should personally reach out to Latino parents and communicate in a non-judgmental way			
Hidalgo et al. (2004) Ensure multicultural parents representation on decision-making committees.	Hoy & Miskel (1978) Shared decision making. Davies (1987) Opportunities for administrators to involve parents.	Involve parents in decision making.	.
Epstein (1987) Valden-Keiman (2005) Communication with parents is very important.	Snowden & Gorton (2002) Major concepts in administration.	Communication and conflict management with regard to parents.	Dissertation Findings: Communication was an overwhelming theme with the open-ended responses; 49% of parents want more communication and more information.
Benson & Martin (2003) A successful structure	Bolman & Deal (2003) Four frames in	Structural frame. Formal roles and relationships.	Dissertation Finding: Parents want home/school partnerships. One parent suggested

of parental involvement with school. Stevenson & Baker (1987) Sanders et al. (1999). Found that the more parents are involved in school, the better the child performs in school. Hidalgo et al. (2004) Transform counseling departments into sites for communication for Latino parents Epstein (1995) Developed a five-step process for strong home/school partnerships.	which to view leadership: structural, human resource, political, and symbolic frame.		starting a PTO. Also, parents want to be involved, they just don't know how. Schools need to initiate that contact.
Steinberg et al. (1996) Found that getting parents into the schools affects student achievement the most.	Bolman & Deal (2003) Schien (1997) Levels of culture.	Symbolic Frame. Beliefs in organizations that make symbols so powerful.	Dissertation Findings: There was significance found with parental involvement at the school site with the African, Native, and Hispanic American samples. For the African

Ogbu (2003) African-American parents mistrust the "white institution." The U.S. Department of Education (1994) Build culture for community through structures such as family learning and parent involvement in decision making etc.		Influence parental involvement through culture.	American population, the better the student grades, the more parents were involved at the school site. For the African, Hispanic, and Native American population, significance was found regarding educational level of the parent. For the Hispanic population, the more educated the parent, the more they were involved at school. For the African and Native American populations the more educated the parent, the less likely they would be involved at school. Gender was also an area that was significant with regard to school involvement. The Native and Hispanic American populations were more involved at home with their male students.
Epstein (1987) Provide information to parents for learning at home. Voorhis (2003) Teachers Involve	Cornbleth (1990) Curriculum is a social process and depends on the context.	Include parents in the curriculum process.	Dissertation Findings: There was significance found in the African American population with regard to home involvement and grades and educational level of the parent. The more they were involved at home, the

Parents in Homework. Grolnick & Slowiaczek (1994) Students receive better grades when parents involve them intellectually at home.	higher the grades were. There was also significance found regarding the educational level of the parent and the home involvement of the parent. For the African American population, the more educated the parent, the more they were involved at home. For the Native Americans, the more educated the parent, the less they were involved at home with their child. Also for Native Americans, they were more involved at home with their male students.
Louie (2001) Chinese immigrant parents use supplemental homework assignments, music lessons etc.	
Patrikakou (2004) Encourage homework, reading, and be involved in post-secondary planning.	Parents expressed a desire to be involved with schoolwork at home. One parent suggested having parents sign off on homework. Another parent suggested goal setting with their child and having the teacher and parent check on progress together.

APPENDIX C: PARENT INVOLVEMENT SURVEY

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In conjunction with the University of Arizona, your high school has agreed to participate in a study of high school and family partnerships. The study will provide you with the opportunity to express your opinions about the partnership practices at your child's high school.

The researcher will use the data collected in this research study for academic purposes and to help improve partnership practices at your high school. You will not be personally identified as a participant in this study. It is imperative that you not place your name on the questionnaire. Your anonymity will be assured. There are no right or wrong answers, so please do not hesitate to respond frankly.

As you complete this survey, think about your experiences with the school and your **FRESHMAN STUDENT.** This study is being conducted to inform your child's high school regarding partnership practices and how they can improve these practices. It is important that you answer the questions honestly, frankly, and from your perspective. All requested information in the questionnaire must be completed. After completion of the questionnaire, please place it in the envelope provided, **<u>seal the envelope</u>**, and have your child return it to their school or mail it to me.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. It is estimated that it will take approximately 10 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Once you have returned the questionnaire, your participation in this study is complete. By returning the questionnaire you are giving permission for use of the data.

Your opinion is important and essential to the success of this study. Thank you in advance for your time.

Allison Murphy

Principal Investigator

HIGH SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS SURVEY

(Epstein, Connors, & Clark Silinas, 1993)

NOTE:
This survey should be answered by the PARENT or LEGAL GUARDIAN who has the most contact with the high school regarding your ninth grade student.
A. Who is filling in the survey? Please CHECK (x) if you are...

_____(1) mother   ____(5) father   _____(9) legal guardian

_____(2) aunt   ____(6) uncle   _____(10) other relative

_____(3) stepmother   ____(7) stepfather   _____(11) other(describe)

_____(4) grandmother   ____(8) grandfather

Question One: We would like to know how you feel about this high school right now. Your ideas will help us plan for the future. Please circle one choice for each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. This is a very good high school.	SA	A	D	SD
b. The teachers here care about my freshman.	SA	A	D	SD
c. I feel welcome at this high school.	SA	A	D	SD
d. This school works hard to get parents involved.	SA	A	D	SD
e. I only hear from the high school when there are problems.	SA	A	D	SD
f. This school and I have different goals for my freshman.	SA	A	D	SD
g. This school wants to learn what I know about my freshman.	SA	A	D	SD
h. This high school is a good place for students and parents.	SA	A	D	SD

Question 2: Parents are involved in different ways with their high school students **at home**. About how often have you done the following with your ninth grader **last year?** Please circle one choice for each statement.

a. Talk to my freshman about school. Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day

b. Listen to my freshman read something Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day
   he/she wrote.

c. Talk about a homework assignment. Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day

d. Help my freshman with homework. Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day

e. Discuss grades on tests and schoolwork. Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day

f. Check that my freshman goes to school. Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day

g. Help my freshman plan for homework, Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day
   chores, and other responsibilities.

h. Talk with my freshman about next Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day
   year's courses.

i. Talk with my freshman about future Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day
   plans for college or work.

j. Tell my freshman how important Never 1-2 Times Monthly Weekly Every Day
   school is.

Question 3: Parents participate at high schools in different ways. How often have you done the following **at your freshman's school last year?** Please circle one choice for each statement.

This year how often did you…..

a. Go to a high school Parent Forum. Never 1-2 times A few times Many times

b. Help with fund raising for the high school. Never 1-2 times A few times Many times

c. Attend an open house. Never 1-2 times A few times Many times

d. Attend a parent-teacher conference. Never 1-2 times A few times Many times

e. Work as a volunteer at the high school.	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times
f. Attend a committee meeting at this high school.	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times
g. Give the school information about special circumstances at home.	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times
h. Thank someone at school for something he/she did for your freshman.	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times
i. Attend a high school sports event, play, concert, or other student performance	Never	1-2 times	A few times	Many times

The last few questions will help us plan new programs to better serve your family and families like yours at this high school.

Question 4: About your freshman last year……

    a. Is your student a male or female? _____

    b. How did your freshman do in school last year?

        (1) Mostly As
        (2) Mostly Bs
        (3) Mostly Cs
        (4) Mostly Ds
        (5) Mostly Fs

Question 5: About your family…….

    a. How many adults live in your home (include yourself)?   #_____

    b. How many children live at home (include your freshman)?   #_____

    c. What is your education?

        (1) Did not complete high school
        (2) High school diploma
        (3) Technical training after high school
        (4) Some college
        (5) College degree
        (6) Advanced degree

d. How would you describe yourself?

    (1) African American
    (2) Asian American
    (3) Hispanic American
    (4) Native American
    (5) White
    (6) Other _____

To conclude, we would like your opinions on a few questions:

a. What are your two greatest concerns as a parent of a freshman?

    1.

    2.

b. What school activity to involve parents has helped you most and why?

c. Thinking of your freshman, what can the school do to help you with your student?

d. Looking ahead to **THIS YEAR,** what is the best thing this high school could do to help you become more involved in your freshman's education?

e. What is the **one thing** your family could do to help this school next year?

f. Any other suggestions or ideas you would like to add?

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS SURVEY AND EITHER MAIL IT BACK TO ME OR RETURN IT TO YOUR SCHOOL IN THE FRONT OFFICE.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

APPENDIX D: RELIABILITY ANAYLSIS

Reliability Analysis for Question 1: Parent Perception of School

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	Mean	Standard Deviation	Corrected Item Total Correlation
X1A	1.56	.595	.634
X1B	1.77	.625	.733
X1C	1.73	.632	.693
X1D	2.00	.781	.721
X1E	2.32	.916	.310
X1F	1.87	.720	.585
X1G	2.42	.738	.558
X1H	1.79	.660	.744

Statistics for Scale   Mean = 15.47   Std Dev = 4.05   Alpha = 0.86

Reliability Analysis for Question 2: Parent Home Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Corrected Item Total Correlation
X2A	4.91	.422	.459
X2B	3.45	1.11	.454
X2C	4.67	.634	.601
X2D	3.34	1.35	.517
X2E	4.47	.620	.581
X2F	4.14	1.54	.368
X2G	4.52	.783	.493
X2H	2.87	1.17	.570
X2I	3.41	.968	.509
X2J	4.55	.789	.534

Statistics for Scale   Mean = 40.33   Std Dev = 5.89   Alpha = 0.79

Reliability Analysis for Question 3: Parent School Involvement

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Corrected Item Total Correlation
X3A	1.92	.994	.468
X3B	2.12	1.06	.519
X3C	2.42	1.06	.514
X3D	2.15	1.05	.469
X3E	1.58	.940	.534
X3F	1.36	.705	.471
X3G	1.64	.822	.494
X3H	2.38	1.04	.485
X3I	3.21	1.06	.382

Statistics for Scale   Mean = 18.79   Std Dev = 5.37   Alpha = 0.79

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