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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT
IN CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT SCHOOLS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

Jacqueline Estella Davis

July, 2018

Diana B. Hiatt-Michael, Ed. D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

Jacqueline Estella Davis

under the guidance of a Faculty Committee and approved by its members, has been submitted to and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Doctoral Committee:

Diana B. Hiatt-Michael, Ed.D., Chairperson

Paul D. Sullivan, Ed.D.

William A. Walner, Ed.D.

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DEDICATION

To my parents, James and Estella Lindsey, who inspired me to pursue a higher education, and to exceed my highest expectations, and yours. It is my heart's desire to make you proud, since you both only had a tenth-grade education. It was a hard choice to drop out of school to support your families. Thank you for your enormous sacrifices. You were my first teachers. Dad, you taught me to be strong, independent, and not to follow the crowd. Mom, you taught me to be soft spoken, prolific, compassionate, kind-hearted, and to have integrity. You instilled in me the faith to step out of my comfort zone and to reach beyond my grasp. You deposited in me a genuine love for God, the tenacity to press forward, the resilience to bounce back, the audacity to dream big, and the perseverance and fortitude to make my dream of becoming a doctor, a reality. Everything that I am, and ever hoped to be, I owe it all to you. Rest in heaven, Mom and Dad!

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In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy path. Proverbs 3:6 KJV

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To my loving husband, Samuel, thank you for supporting my dreams. Thank you for believing in me, and for always encouraging me to dream bigger, go further and accomplish more. I never could have achieved this without you. You are the wind beneath my wings. To my three talented, and beautiful daughters, Melanie, Lisa and Sara, you are my reasons why I became a first-generation college graduate, a higher education advocate, and decided to pursue my doctoral degree to demonstrate to you that, with God, all things are possible. To my four amazing grandchildren, Star, Diamond, Ezra and Mikah, you can go above and beyond your wildest dreams. You can accomplish anything that you set your mind to do, with hard work, determination, and passion. To my three remarkable siblings, Helen, Laura and James, thank you for being such great examples of faith, honor, and integrity. Thank you all for being a source of my strength, motivation, and encouragement throughout the years. You have taught me the importance of family, the meaning of love, and the distinct difference between what truly matters, and what never did.

VITA

EDUCATION

2017	Ed. D. Organizational Leadership Pepperdine University
2003	Master of Business Administration Emphasis in e-Business University of Phoenix
2000	Bachelor of Science Business Administration California State University, Bakersfield

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

2010–2013	Head of Staff	Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Div. Business & Financial Mgmt. Department
2007–2010	Administrative Officer	Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Div. Software Engineering Division0
2004–2010	Program Analyst	Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Div. H-1 Program Office
1983–2004	Financial Analyst	Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Div. Software Engineering Division
2003–2006	Business Owner of a Retail Establishment	

ABSTRACT

This study examined principals' perceptions of faith-based schools in Southern California. A 6-item survey was distributed by hard copy to 217 Catholic principals affiliated with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles and by e-mail to 218 Protestant school principals affiliated with the Association of Christian School International. The survey was completed by 148 principals (101 from Catholic schools and 47 from Protestant schools, 34% of population), suggesting that hand-delivered surveys yielded a higher return. However, the Protestant principals who responded exclusively online completed significantly more comprehensive written comments or transcripts to the survey.

Both groups of principals revealed high parent engagement in both types of schools and the selection by parents of a faith-based school was based upon personal values. However, highlights revealed that these administrators placed a high level of importance on open and consistent communication with parents and being visibly present on the campus. Principals were present at morning drop-off, visible on-site throughout the day, and at pick-up. In addition, the schools maintained a current website, frequent parent conferences by teachers and principals, and weekly or daily messages using various technological forms. Principals commented that they desired that every interaction with the school was positive and informative. Principals indicated that parent volunteer activity tended to be different in the two types of schools. Catholic school parents were expected to volunteer to work at the school, and participate in fund raising activities for the school. These parental expectations were vital to the school's financial base, as nuns continue to be replaced by lay teachers. In addition, Catholic school parents were required to supervise completion of a child's homework and support school rules, such as children wearing uniforms. Protestant school principals indicated that their parents were active in school-based

activities such as sports, the performing arts, classroom support, as well as in school-wide activities such as open houses and fundraisers. Although the Catholic and Protestant schools provided opportunities for parents to participate in the school decision-making process, few principals reported all parent school boards or parents making the primary decisions beyond participation in the selection of the school principal.

Chapter 1: Problem and Purpose

Statement of the Problem

Parent involvement is a major factor in increased student achievement and increased student motivation to achieve. Significant research has revealed numerous positive results, including improved student attendance, parent and student satisfaction with schools, student safety, and better student behavior at public elementary schools (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Hiatt-Michael, 2010a; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005; Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013). This significant amount of research on parent involvement occurred at public schools because a preponderance of American children attend public schools (90%), and inner-city research has been encouraged since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965. However, research on public school teachers and principals continue to report challenges regarding parent involvement at many public schools, especially inner-city schools (Horsford & Holmes-Sutton, 2012; Murray et al., 2014).

In contrast, although there is less research on parent involvement at faith-based schools, the research that does exist suggests that parent involvement in faith-based schools is higher than at public schools (Hiatt-Michael, 2012a; Hiatt-Michael, 2017). In an era in which policy makers are considering vouchers for faith-based schools, there is a need for in-depth knowledge of parent involvement at faith-based schools. At faith-based schools, parents become involved prior to school admission. These parents are seeking a school that will mirror and promote their values in child-rearing, personal ethics, and academic rigor (Lawrence, 2015). Thus, these parents are highly engaged in the process of school choice. In this process, parents become affiliated with the school from the beginning. Besides school choice, these parents provide the financial support to the school through tuition payments, assistance with fundraising, as well as occasional

donations (Crea, Reynold, & Degan, 2015). In addition to monetary support, other forms of parental involvement are evident through parents attending school events and participating in school activities, and at home, by parents showing an interest in what their child is learning and by providing oversight and assistance with homework (Bennett, 2007; Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy, & Nagengast, 2014; LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling, 2011).

President Donald Trump is an advocate of school choice and supports providing public funds for families to pay tuition and other educational expenses at private and faith-based schools (McLaren & Brown, 2017). School choice also includes charter schools, and research on charter schools has provided negative as well as positive findings. For example, Waitoller and Super (2017) study of charter schools in Chicago noted that Black and Latino students with special needs had lower test scores and graduation rates than public schools. For these students, Chicago charter schools were not better than public schools. Such findings may cast caution to legislators who make policy decisions regarding school choice. President Trump and Education Secretary Betsy DeVos have pledged to expand private-school choice, nationwide. These funds can be provided through the voucher system, tax credits and other educational funds. Strauss (2017) cited that the Trump Administration's 2018 proposed budget plans to expand school choice by funding the program with over \$1 billion. It is reported that President Trump is also considering other ways to promote school choice.

Donovan (1999) conducted a case study of one school that revealed a number of characteristics that differentiate a Christian education from a public-supported educational program. However, these characteristics have not been studied across Christian schools. For example, an analysis of 150 research studies on the topic of parent involvement, reported at the American Educational Research Associations' 2016 Annual Meeting, revealed none of these

studies were focused on faith-based schools (American Educational Research Association, 2016). This researcher's review revealed only six studies from 2016 that directly focused on parent involvement in elementary schools, and those were within the public-school system in the US.

According to the U. S. Department of Education (2016) based on the 2013–14 school year, there were 98,271 public schools in the US, in 2013/14. This was a decrease from 98,817, in 2010–11. The current total number of 98,271 was comprised of 67,034 elementary schools, 24,053 secondary schools, 6,205 combined schools, and 979 that were categorized as other.

In contrast, as of the 2013–14 school year, 33,619 schools in the U.S. responded to surveys that they were private schools. This number included 12,699 schools that indicated they are non-religious and enrolled 729,400 students. The remaining 20,920 religious schools, 21.1% of all schools, served 3.8 million students and were supported by 382,300 teachers. Thus, at present, about one in ten children attend a faith-based school in US (Hiatt-Michael, 2017). The two faith-based groups in the U.S. serving the greatest number of children were Catholic and Protestant groups, the largest group associated with the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI). 5,336 Catholic schools in the US, grades PreK–12, serve nearly 1.6 million students and employ 123,400 teachers. Comparably, there were 2,603 Protestant schools in the US, grades PreK–12. Of those, ACSI serves 516,300 students and is supported by 53,600 teachers.

This study selected the two largest faith-based groups in the US. Additional description is presented. Catholic PreK–8 schools across the U.S. serve approximately 1.5 million students and Protestant and other religious PreK–8 schools serve almost 2 million students (A. J. Galla, personal communication, October 4, 2016). According to the National Catholic Education

Association (NCEA), there were 6,429 Catholic schools in the U.S., during the 2016–2017 school year. This number consists of 5,224 elementary schools, and 1,205 secondary schools.

Because of access to schools within Southern California, this geographic region was the focus of this study. Within the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA), there are 217 Catholic schools, grades PreK–8. Of that number, 211 (96.3%) schools are affiliated with a parish and six are not affiliated with a parish. The ACSI is a Protestant, interdenominational organization that consists of 24,000 schools across 100 countries, serving 5.5 million students, worldwide. Currently, there are approximately 3,000-member schools within the U.S. and 218 schools in the Southern California region accredited by ACSI.

Principals play a key role in parent involvement at any type of school (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Bass and Bass (2008) asserted that a school's effectiveness is directly related to the school principal's leadership. Hiatt-Michael (2008) described principals as key components in connecting schools to the community. Goodlad (1984, 1975) and Hiatt-Michael (2008) supported this assertion, stating that principals serve as leaders and are cognizant of what was occurring in classrooms, during out-of-school time activities, and within the larger community. According to Heiss (1982) and Ahlstrom (2013), principals serve as the key source of parent communication and connection to the school. Therefore, principals were selected to be the target for information regarding parent involvement at faith-based schools in US.

Statement of Purpose

This study examined the degree of parent involvement in Catholic and Protestant schools according to the perception of the principal at each school site across selected counties in Southern California, Los Angeles County, which is the largest county. The investigator assumed that the principal would be most capable individual to provide the broad scope of parent

involvement at school and at home related to his or her school. Because these principals had significant workloads, demanding a long work day, the study's data were collected by a survey with space for added comments that could be completed within five minutes. The survey was administrated and data collected according to the preferred method of ADLA and ACSI leaders.

Research Questions

To frame the study regarding the perception of parent involvement in Catholic and Protestant schools for grades T/K–8, in Southern California, the following research questions were used:

- Research Question 1. What are the principals' perception of factors guiding parents' choice for Catholic and Protestant schools?
- Research Question 2. What are the principals' perception of parent involvement in four categories within Catholic and Protestant schools?
- Research Question 3. What promising practices do Catholic and Protestant school principals employ to encourage parent involvement?

These research questions were generated from the survey of the literature presented in Chapter Two.

Hypotheses

To understand the statistically significant difference between parent involvement in Catholic schools and parent involvement in Protestant schools grades T/K–8, the investigator raised the following hypothesis based on Epstein's Six Typologies:

Hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Catholic school and Protestant school principals regarding:

1. Parenting;
2. Communication;
3. Volunteering;
4. Learning at home;
5. Collaborating with the community; and
6. Decision-making.

Theoretical Basis

The theoretical basis of this study was based on two models from Dr. Joyce Epstein. They are Epstein's Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influences of Family, School, and Community on Children's Learning and Epstein's Six Typologies of Parent Involvement. The first model was Epstein's Model of Overlapping Spheres of Influences of Family, School, and Community on Children's Learning. This model was selected because the study focused on the ways principals perceive that schools and family connect for the benefit of the child. The model consists of three spheres. These spheres are interrelated with each other with the student in the center, where all three spheres overlap. This symbolizes that the student is influenced and impacted by all three spheres.

As early as 1987, Epstein (1987) identified and advocated the concept of parent-school partnerships that would overlap home and school. The teacher would create a home-like environment in the classroom, by making the room comfortable and welcoming for the students. This "family-like" environment was designed to increase learning and improve students' attitudes. Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Theoretical Model (Epstein et al., 2009), depicted in Figure 1, has been accepted as the central basis for research in parent involvement for approximately 30 years. It illustrates the overlapping influence of three spheres—family, school,

and community—in a child’s external environment. The child is located in the center area, where all three spheres overlap, indicating that the child is affected by all three spheres.

The spheres are impacted by four forces, labeled from A through D, as indicated below. Force A is time and includes the child’s age and grade level. Time is a controlling factor because the younger the child is, the more the parents are hands-on, involved with the child’s education, helping with homework and participating in school events. As the child grows older, a parent’s participation decreases, because the child is more independent, and need for a parent’s involvement decreases, accordingly. Time is independent, and is not controlled by, nor connected to any of the three spheres. Force B is family. Family culture and structure impacts this force. Family is directly associated with the family sphere, and consists of experience, philosophy, and practices of family. The third force, known as Force C is school. This force is associated with the school sphere, which consists of experience, philosophy, and practices of school. The fourth force, or Force D is community. Community is associated with the community sphere, which was comprised of experience, philosophy, and practices of community. Forces B through D each consist of experience, philosophy and practices that are specific to each sphere.

The second model was Epstein’s Six Typologies of Parental Involvement (Epstein et al., 2009). The six typologies present an effective way to organize and define the different types of parent involvement. For over 20 years, these typologies have been utilized widely in scholarly research on parent involvement. The following descriptors describe the six major types of parent involvement that have been used worldwide by researchers and educators: a) parenting, b) communicating, c) volunteering, d) learning at home, e) decision making, and f) collaborating with the community.

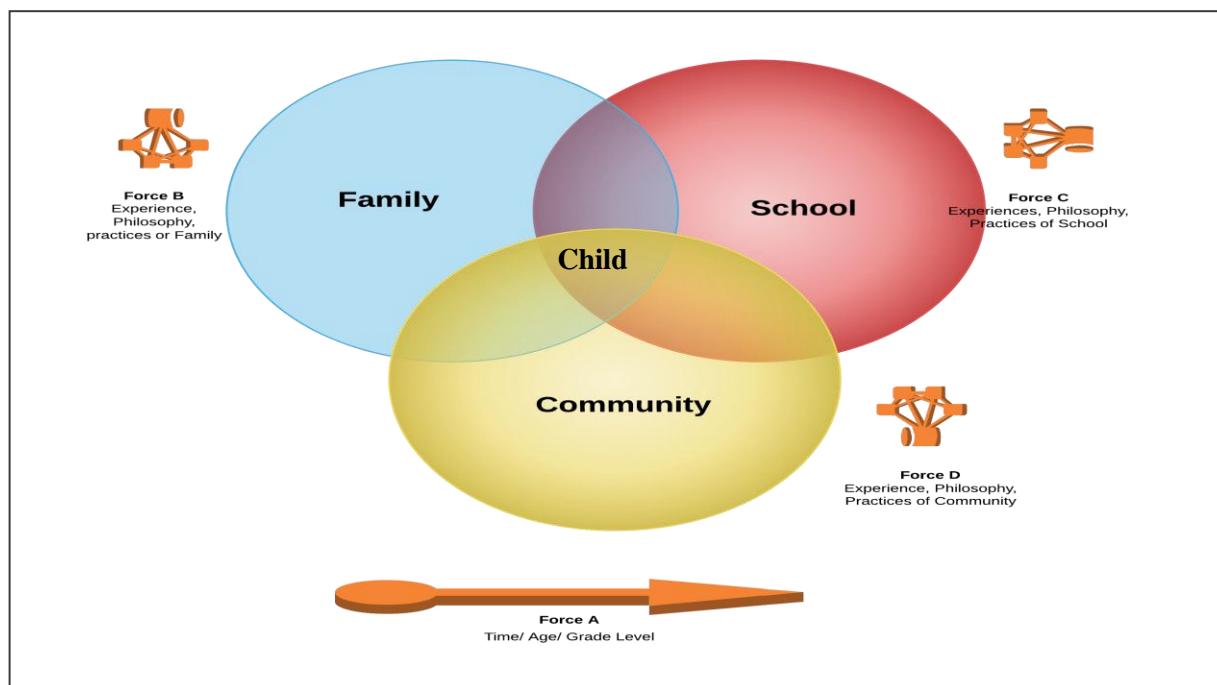


Figure 1. Epstein's overlapping spheres of influence of family, school, and community on children's learning. From *School, Family, and Community Partnerships* (3rd ed.) by J. L. Epstein et al., 2009, Thousand Oaks, CA: Crown Press. Copyright [2009] by Crown Press. (Permission to Reprint see Appendix E).

Epstein (2001) described each of the six typologies that constitute parent involvement.

The description of the six typologies, using Epstein's words, are as follows:

Type 1 – Parenting: Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to support children as students. Also, assist schools to understand families, with activities such as workshops on parenting and child-and-adolescent development, family support programs, like clothing swap shops, and parent-to-parent groups; and home visiting programs.

Type 2 – Communicating: Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and student progress. Conferences with every parent at least once a year with follow-ups as needed; folders of student work sent home regularly for parent review and comments; effective newsletters including information about school events, student activities, and parents' questions, reactions, and suggestions; and clear information on all school policies, academic programs, and transitions.

Type 3 - Volunteering: Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and students. Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times. For instance, conducting an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of volunteers; parent room (i.e., family center) for volunteer work and resources for families; class parents, telephone trees, and other ways to share information with families; and parent patrols to increase school safety.

Type 4 - Learning at home: Involve families with their children on homework and in other curriculum-related activities and decisions. For example, information on homework policies and monitoring and discussing schoolwork at home; information on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve; regular schedule of interactive homework; summer learning packets or activities; and involve families in students' academic goal setting and planning for college or work.

Type 5 - Decision-making: Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent, leaders and representatives (i.e., active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations), advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation; Action Team for Partnerships to develop the school's partnership program with practices for six types of involvement; and information on school or local elections for school representatives.

Type 6 - Collaborating with the community: Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community such as information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services; service to the community by students, families, and schools; school-business partnerships. (Epstein et al., 2001, pp. 7–19)

As will be noted in Chapter 3, these typologies have been modified by the creators of the selected survey. However, these typologies were the origins of the survey.

Significance of Study

Parent involvement is a critical aspect of student academic success and the viability of faith-based schools. Therefore, this study sought to understand how parent involvement attributed to the academic achievements of students from Catholic and Protestant schools. The study revealed areas of strength, made suggestions for school and staff development, and suggested new best practices for parent involvement. In addition, the purpose of this study was to identify and understand the difference in perceptions that principals of Catholic schools and Protestant schools may have regarding parent involvement. The findings will not only be beneficial to the lead policymakers of ACSI and ADLA but to other private, faith-based schools and for future researchers of this topic.

In Hall, Childs-Bowen, Cunningham-Morris, Pajardo, and Simeral (2016) and Haberman's study (as cited in Stafford & Hill-Jackson, 2016), effective leadership was recognized as being essential for successful principals. Furthermore, Stafford and Hill-Jackson stated that today's urban schools need star principals, describing star principals as school leaders who demonstrated the ability to succeed, regardless of difficulties and government constraints. The results of this study will be useful to Catholic and Protestant school principals as they plan, implement, and evaluate parent partnership programs. Teachers and principals need to be trained on how to establish and maintain effective communication with parents (Young et al., 2013). Such information should be helpful in improving communication with parents and in understanding the positive effects that parent involvement has on student academic achievement and success. The study will also add to the research applying Epstein's six typologies. The findings will be personally shared with researchers in parent involvement through conference presentations and articles.

Definition of Terms

- **After-school activities.** After-school activities are those school-affiliated activities that occur beyond the formal academic school day (Kreider & Westmoreland, 2011).
- **ACSI school.** ACSI schools are faith-based Christian schools that are formal members of American Christian School International (ACSI, n.d.).
- **Catholic school.** For this study, a Catholic school is a parochial school serving grades P-8 and affiliated with the education ministry of the Roman Catholic Church in the U.S., and in particular, the Catholic ADLA covering Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, and Ventura counties (Roman Catholic Archbishop of Los Angeles, 2016).

- **Church-affiliated school.** A church-affiliated school is a faith-based school that is directly affiliated with a parish or church (Walner, 2017).
- **Diverse curriculum.** For this study, diverse curriculum refers to classes being offered, i.e., music, art, etc. It does not pertain to cultural or ethnic diversity.
- **Formal curriculum.** Formal curriculum is the academic program that is planned, executed, and evaluated during the formal school day (Eisner, 1985).
- **Homework.** Homework is educational work that is assigned by the school, usually by a teacher, to be completed at home (Epstein, 2011).
- **Parent.** A parent is the legal guardian of the student, including a biological parent, step-parent, adoptive parent, and primary caregivers such as grandparents, an aunt or uncle, a brother or sister (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005).
- **Parent involvement.** Parent involvement is the shared engagement between the parents and the school staff for the educational benefit of the students (Epstein, 2011).
- **Principal.** A principal is the administrative head of the school, responsible for the daily operations of the school site (Evans & Hiatt-Michael, 2016).
- **Protestant school.** For this study, a Protestant school is a pre-kindergarten to 8 (PreK–8) school relating to or belonging to any of the Protestant churches (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.).
- **Teacher.** A teacher is a person who teaches, especially in school (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). For this study, a teacher is a person, usually with a State of California teaching credential, who was hired by a Catholic or Protestant school and assigned to teach a particular classroom of students or a particular academic content area.

Assumptions

The investigator made three assumptions regarding this study. The first assumption was that the school principal was the most knowledgeable individual regarding the level and type of parent involvement that occurred within his or her school. The principal should be aware of how parent involvement worked, whether there were any issues or difficulties in this area, and if involvement was increasing or declining. The second assumption was that participants of this study would answer the survey items honestly and fully, to accurately describe the type and to what extent parent involvement was occurring at their schools. Bryk and Schneider (2003) suggested that the principal sets the tone for the school and takes the lead in establishing an atmosphere of relational trust. The third assumption was that the findings would be reliable and valid, based on the considerations discussed in Chapter Three.

Delimitations

The research investigator noted the following delimitations that may have impacted the outcome of the research study:

1. The research was focused on parent involvement, and did not particularly address other members of the family, i.e., grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings.
2. The geographic location was delimited to Southern California.
3. The school type was delimited to Roman Catholic schools in the ADLA and to Protestant schools in the ACSI.
4. The target population was delimited to principals' perceptions, and not the educators' or the parents' perception.

5. The missing demographic data elements for the Protestant school participants made it impossible to know the school size for each participant, years of experience, and the educational level of the participants.
6. The date of the study was delimited to February through March 2017.
7. The research study would have been enhanced by a larger sample population size for Protestant school participants, since the actual response level was 21.6% (N= 47).

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the following:

- the statement of the problem;
- the purpose statement;
- the research questions;
- definitions, assumptions;
- delimitations.

Chapter 2 presents an academic review of the literature, which includes the history of parent involvement and how it has evolved through the years. It also identifies the different types of involvement, as well as a description of the benefits and barriers of parent involvement in education. This chapter highlights the similarities and contrasts described by the previous scholars who have researched the topic.

Chapter 3 describes the research methodology, which includes the hypotheses, the data analysis and design, the delimitations of the study, the data collection instruments, and the expected findings. In this chapter, the protection of human subjects is described. The reliability and validity of the data are also highlighted and discussed.

Chapter 4 describes this study under seven headings. They are the introduction, the research and sample population, data analysis process, quantitative data findings, qualitative data findings, survey findings by research questions and summary of significant findings.

Chapter 5 provides a restatement of the problem and purpose statement, methodology, summary of the significant findings, and interpretation of these findings in conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Parameters for Survey of Literature

This literature review spans decades of research and scholarly studies about parent involvement in schools. The researcher utilized the online Pepperdine library to access a plethora of education databases, peer-reviewed articles, e-books, and academic e-journals. The search included the following databases: Academic Search Complete, ERIC, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, Taylor and Francis Online, ProQuest, Education Full Text (H. W. Wilson), Primary Search, Sage Journals Online, Academic Search Complete, and Academic Search Alumni Edition. Other academic searches were conducted online, utilizing Google Scholar, Questia, Springer, and Wiley Online. The key search terms that were used included the following: *parent involvement, parent engagement, parent involvement in education, parent involvement in faith based schools, parent involvement in Christian schools, parent involvement in Catholic schools, parent involvement in preK–8 schools, parent–school partnerships, religious education and faith-based education*. The search term that was specifically not included was *higher education*, thereby limiting the search to elementary and secondary education. The search parameters were further limited to scholarly (peer reviewed) journals, and the publication date parameter was set to the range of 1979 through 2016.

To understand the history of parent involvement and to gain a clear perspective of the current research and scholarly studies on the subject, this literature review contains 88 studies that were published from 1979 to 2016, a span of 44 years. These studies can be divided into two categories: 51 studies (58%) published from 1979 to 2009, and 37 studies (42%) published from 2010 to 2016. Two of the studies published in 2016 were presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting (AERA).

Historical Background

Historically, parents were extremely involved in their children's education. In the early colonial days, they were directly involved in establishing the school, developing the formal curriculum, and selecting and hiring the teachers. Religion was a natural and integral part of the students' studies due to the parents' interest in cultivating religious understanding. Education was not compulsory, so attendance was not mandatory. Therefore, parents could remove their children from school as needed, to work on the farm and to perform other physical labor as required, for the survival of the family.

In 1982, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) created a Special Interest Group known as Families as Educators (De Carvalho, 2014). This concept was designed to encourage parents and family members to actively connect with educators and work together to ensure a cohesive school-home partnership. Educators and students need parents to participate, not just at home, but also at school.

President Barack Obama signed a new law on December 10, 2015 titled Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA). This was a bi-partisan measure that reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), which is the national education law, which was first signed into law in 1965, by President Lyndon Johnson. It replaces the No Child Left Behind Act, of 2002, which did not include college-and-career-ready standards, innovative local assessment pilot programs, and dedicated funding for the lowest performing schools, and measures that exposed achievement gaps in the nation's underserved youth.

ESSA includes provisions that aim to ensure success for students and schools. It:

- Advances equity by upholding critical protections for America's disadvantaged and high-need students.
- Requires—for the first time—that all students in America be taught to high academic standards that will prepare them to succeed in college and careers.

- Ensures that vital information is provided to educators, families, students, and communities through annual statewide assessments that measure students' progress toward those high standards.
- Helps to support and grow local innovations—including evidence-based and place-based interventions developed by local leaders and educators—consistent with our *Investing in Innovation and Promise Neighborhoods*.
- Sustains and expands this administration's historic investments in increasing access to high-quality preschool.
- Maintains an expectation that there will be accountability and action to effect positive change in our lowest-performing schools, where groups of students are not making progress, and where graduation rates are low over extended periods of time.
(<http://www.ed.gov/essa>)

Parents and members of the community have become more involved with schools (Cetron & Gayle, 1990). The members of the community include business owners who recognize the value of a quality education as an asset to the community and are willing to donate their resources to enhance the school. The combined efforts of home, school, and community partnerships contribute to the success of the children and create a win-win situation for everyone (Shepard, Trimberger, McClintock, & Lecklider, 1999).

The Nature of Parent Involvement

Parent involvement is defined by the California Department of Education (1992) as:

Parent involvement is the exchange of information (communication), purposeful interaction, and meaningful participation between parents and schools to support student learning and achievement (CA CC, 2008).

Parent involvement has long been recognized as a significant contributor to children's behavior and their academic performance (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012; Choi, Chang, Kim, & Reio, 2015). The definition of parent involvement has evolved over the years. However, there is one aspect of the definition that has not changed. Academic scholars and researchers agree that parent involvement is basically the participation of the parent in their children's education. Parent participation must not be limited to school activities and school interaction. To be effective, it must also extend beyond the school and classroom, and into the home. At school,

the parent's involvement may include volunteering, having discussions with teachers and school principals, participating on committees where policies are set and rules are created, establishing and maintaining a favorable parent-teacher relationship, and attending school activities.

In the context of this study, the term *educator* or *teacher* is defined to mean a person who teaches, usually with a State of California teaching credential, who is hired by a Catholic or Protestant school and assigned to teach a classroom of students or a particular academic content area. At home, the parents may demonstrate their involvement by assisting their child with his or her homework, showing an interest in what their child has learned, communicating with their child about school, and discussing their future educational goals (Hill & Taylor, 2004).

Parent involvement has a positive impact on children's attitude towards school, impacting their attendance, their behavior, and their academic success. Scholars and researchers have conducted numerous studies on the subject and have confirmed that student achievement has an overlapping connection between family and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Dikkers, 2013). Children whose parents were more involved in their education were more motivated to succeed, and had a greater propensity towards pursuing and achieving a higher education.

According to Ho and Willms (1996), there are four very simple but separate elements of parental involvement. They are home discussions, home supervision, school communication, and school participation. They are very similar to Epstein's (1992) six typologies. However, Epstein's sixth parent involvement type, "parental access to educational resources in the larger community," (Epstein and Connors, 1992, pp. 11-14) is not reflected in Ho and Willms' (1996) list of elements. Table 1 shows a comparison chart to highlight the similarities between Epstein's six parent involvement typologies and Ho and Willms' list of elements.

Table 1

Comparison Chart of Researcher Labels for Parent Involvement in Schools

Epstein and Connors	Ho and Willms
1. Parent behavior which creates a positive home learning environment	Home discussions and home supervision
2. Parent–school communications	School communication
3. Parent assistance and volunteerism at school	School participation
4. Parent–school communications about home learning activities	School communication
5. Parental involvement in the decision-making processes within the school	School participation
6. Parental access to educational resources in the larger community	Not used in this theory

Socioeconomic status. Epstein and Connors (1992) further detailed the six types of parent involvement by suggesting that they are dependent upon certain socioeconomic factors. These factors are characteristics of the child, the child’s household, the parents, the school, and the community. Other factors that could affect parent involvement are social and cultural factors. The concept that the parents’ socioeconomic status (SES) and their educational background can affect the quality and quantity of parent involvement that a child receives is supported by Epstein et al. (1992), Bartel (2010), and numerous other subject matter experts. Pertinent to the subject of parent involvement, SES refers to the combination of a parent’s education, income, and occupation, in order to measure the family’s social standing or status (Lawrence, 2015).

Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study–Kindergarten (ECLS–K), Lawrence (2015) conducted a study to identify and ascertain the connection, if any, between the racial and SES composition of the school and parental educational expectations, by exploring the

family and school relationship. Although Lawrence acknowledged that the child is influenced by family, school and community, the focus of Lawrence's study was limited to the family and school interactions. The study concluded that low SES parents had higher educational expectations, despite the odds being against them due to limited resources, and limited knowledge of the opportunities available to them. School composition made a difference to low SES parents, and it influenced their expectations of their child's academic success. Meanwhile, the educational expectations of high SES parents remained high, regardless of school composition. These parents had access to the resources that would ensure their child's academic success, so they remained ambivalent about the composition of the school.

Despite popular beliefs to the contrary, high SES parents and low SES parents both have high educational expectations for their children. This similarity exists even though Black students and Hispanic students earned lower achievement marks across different educational indicators. On their math assessments from 2012, Black eighth-graders received an average of 29 points lower scores than their White classmates. Hispanic eighth-graders received an average of 22 points lower. Asian students received scores that were similar or higher than their White classmates (U. S. Department of Education, 2013). Parental expectations for Asians seem to be similar to those of Blacks and Hispanics, even though Asians demonstrate higher levels of achievement.

Four forces impacting family-school involvement. In line with the concept of socio-economic status, Hiatt-Michael (2005, 2008) suggested that there are four major forces that impact family-school involvement. Figure 2 depicts these four primary forces and shows how they affect family involvement in schools. The first force is cultural beliefs of families. Cultural beliefs can have a major impact on the level of parent expectations on a child's academic

outcome. The first force, cultural values, can impact the parental expectations of a child's academic success. Cultural values are pervasive and can transcend or supersede the other three forces. The second force is the social structure of families, including roles of family members, especially if those roles are different from the norm. Since the nuclear family has become less common, this could include the unconventional family structure of the child being raised by two mothers, two fathers, an older sibling, grandparents, an aunt and uncle, etc. The third force is economic influences, and relates to the parent's financial standing, employment status, and the state of the economy. The fourth force is political pressures within the nation. Political pressures include laws, regulations, and governmental mandates, i.e. governmental power struggles that can occur throughout all levels of government. It can also include state and federal laws, and changes of power in the country.

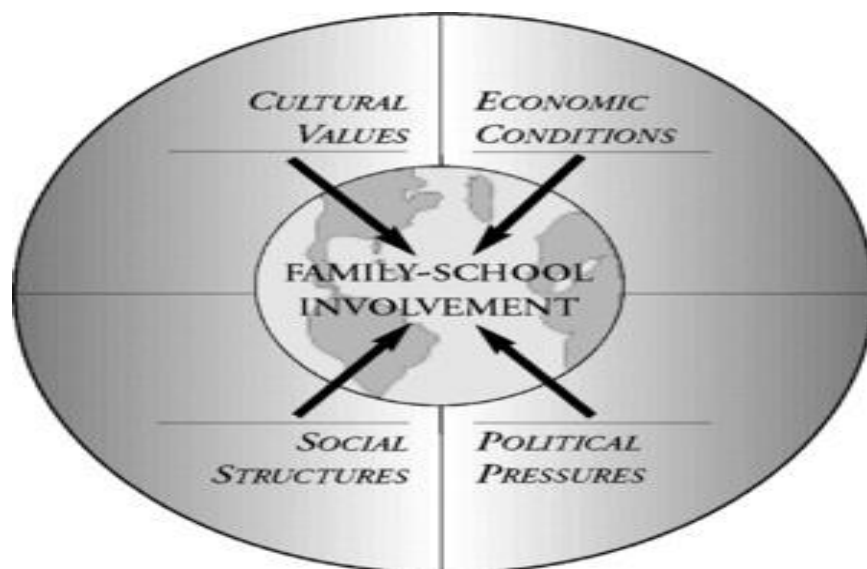


Figure 2. Four forces influencing family-school involvement. From "Families, their children's education, and the public school: An historical review," by D. B. Hiatt-Michael, 2008, *Marriage & Family Review*, 43(1/2), 39-66. Copyright by D. B. Hiatt-Michael . Reprinted with permission.

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence depict how three controlling forces or spheres affect and/or influence parent involvement. The three spheres are parent, school and community. However, unlike Hiatt-Michael's Four Forces, Epstein's three spheres overlap and

are connected to one another. The child is located in the center, where all three intersect. This indicates that the child is not influenced or impacted fully unless all three spheres are included.

The contemporary institutional and legal structure of schools tends to disconnect teachers and families, creating tension between parents and the school. Horvat, Curci, and Partlow's (2011) study focused on the challenge that principals face as they seek ways to encourage parent involvement and channel it into productive avenues at the same time. Horvat et al. (2011) studied three different principals of one school, over a 30-year period. To accomplish this, the principals were interviewed to ascertain how each of them discovered successful ways to promote and encourage parent involvement. Some educators believe that they alone are qualified to make complex decisions affecting the education of our nation's children. They are on opposite ends of the spectrum, where parents, on the other hand, believe that they should have a voice in their children's compulsory public education.

One relevant finding about cultural beliefs may help explain the different outcomes related to similar educational expectations of parents from various minority and ethnic groups, which was noted in the previous subsection. Although Latinos in their peer culture tend to applaud those with natural intellectual giftedness who excel with ease, they have less respect for those who excel through persistence and long study hours. This is seen in the derogatory term *machetero*, meaning those who are not gifted but persist at "hacking away" at a subject, so to speak, until they finally understand it. Asians, on the other hand, have a cultural tendency to see persistent work, rather than natural ability or giftedness, as the key to achievement (Castaneda, Broadbent, & Coleman, 2010).

Blair (2014) conducted a study to compare parent involvement as it relates to Filipino and U.S. parents. The parents' attitudes regarding parent involvement differed, depending on their

culture. It was observed that the American parents expected to be involved in their children's education and to share in their school experiences. They were not apprehensive about going to the school, communicating with the teachers, or the school principal. The Filipino parents, on the other hand, did not think that it was their place to interfere with their children's education. They would not consider going to the school to talk to the teacher about their child's poor performance. They would, instead, work at home with their children and help them improve their grades, one-on-one. These differences could lead teachers to assume that the Filipino parent's absence from the school indicates that they do not care about their child's performance (Blair, 2014).

Research on Parent Involvement in Public Schools

According to Epstein (2009), a study was conducted involving 71 Title 1 schools in 15 school districts. The schools used several types of involvement. One such involvement included providing the parents with materials instructing them on how to help the students at home. The students exhibited a substantial improvement in their reading achievement as they progressed from the third through the fifth grade. An additional observation, according to Epstein, was that students received higher test scores and demonstrated higher competence levels in reading and math, in the early grades, due to higher parent involvement.

Benefits of Parent Involvement

Improved test scores. Years of research overwhelmingly support the idea that parent involvement results in improved test scores (Choi et al., 2015; Epstein, Galindo, and Sheldon, 2011; Hiatt-Michael, 2001; Shepard and Rose, 1995). When moderate to high levels of parent involvement are exhibited, the child is enthusiastic about learning and works hard to achieve

higher levels of academic performance. The more interest the child takes in school, the more he/she tends to excel.

Increased achievement in reading and math. Sheldon and Epstein's (2005) study involved tracking the mathematics proficiency scores of students for two consecutive years. Substantial improvement to the student's math scores were noted when the parents and math teachers collaborated to devise a plan on how the parents could help the students at home.

Vukovic, Roberts, and Wright (2013) conducted a study to determine if parent involvement and children's mathematics achievement was somehow connected to children's anxiety pertaining to math. The participants consisted of 78 low-income, ethnic minority parents and their children, from a large urban community. The results of the study showed a strong connection between parent involvement and children's mathematics achievement, and that children's anxiety, in fact was reduced, especially when dealing with more difficult and complex mathematical problems. With the parents' help at home, the children could gain a better understanding, improve their math test scores, and demonstrate less mathematics anxiety.

Decreased absenteeism. School attendance is linked to student academic performance and can also prevent delinquent behavior (Sheldon, 2007). Frequent absenteeism can eventually lead to the child losing interest and dropping out of school. Gonzalez-DeHass, Willems, and Holhein (2005) observed that parent involvement at the elementary school and high school levels had a positive impact on the following motivational constructs: school engagement, intrinsic motivation, perceived competence, perceived control, self-regulation, mastery goal orientation, and motivation to read.

Improved student behavior. Besnard et al. (2013) conducted a study that examined the effects of maternal and paternal parent-child relationships on children's disruptive behavior

(CDB). The definition of CDB is any aggression, opposition, and hyperactive behavior, whether it is direct or indirect. The sample population of the study consisted of 644 children from kindergarten through second grade, across 40 schools in Montreal, Canada. Their objective was to determine the scope of the connection between the quality of parenting and CDB. They reviewed five dimensions of parenting patterns, within the mother-child and father-child relationship. They were parental involvement, positive reinforcement, inconsistency, hostile practices, and affective rejection. The results of the study supported the tenet that there is a direct correlation between CDB and parenting patterns, and there was a noted difference between the maternal and paternal relationships.

The parent-child relationship appeared predominately with the mother only, as the child entered kindergarten. The mother's involvement remained predominant in the early school years. Although the father's relationship was apparent, it was not as prominent as the mother's involvement (Besnard et al., 2013). The parenting patterns appeared to be more flexible for the younger child, ages five to six. However, by the age of seven, the parenting patterns became more rigid, as the parent became less tolerant of CDB.

Barriers to Parent Involvement

There are many different barriers to parent involvement. The following five subsections state the most prominent ones.

SES barriers. Low-income parents experience demographic and psychological barriers to parent involvement. According to Van Velsor and Orozco (2007), the demographic barrier that prevented low income parents from being involved in their child's education was work. Parents may have an inflexible work schedule, work more than one job, or are too tired from work to participate. It does not mean that they were less concerned about their child's education.

It simply means that they may have fewer options and less time, which prevented them from being more engaged. Other demographic barriers could be transportation problems, caring for other young children who live in the household, and/or caring for aging parents. Low-income immigrant parents who speak a language other than English may experience a language barrier, which could limit their ability to participate in volunteer opportunities at the school.

In agreement with Van Velsor and Orozco (2007), Montoya (2016) also cited work as the main barrier limiting parent involvement in schools. Montoya conducted a mixed methods study of evolving family structures and its impact on the decision of 567 families to be involved in their child's K–8 parochial school. The sample of the study consisted of 352 participants, representing a response rate of 62.1%. The participants were parents of children that attended two parochial K–8 schools, located in Deanery 13, in the Westside Pastoral Region, in Los Angeles, California. This school location was selected because of its diverse demographic and ethnographic mix. *Evolving families* was a term used for families headed by single mothers, single fathers, blended families (parent and step-parent), step-parents, and those not living with their biological parents, such as adopted or foster children. The instrument used for this study was a survey consisting of 14 questions. The results were that 90.3% of parents (318) indicated that their families were traditional, and not evolving; 58% of the parents (204) identified work as the main barrier limiting their involvement in their child's school life; and 76.9% of the parents (271) indicated that decision making was their main responsibility, as parents. Working parents must choose between being involved in their child's school community and facing potentially serious consequences of missing work commitments and demands placed on their time by work.

Psychological or mental health barriers. The psychological barriers to parent involvement include parent confidence. This barrier pertains to the parent's abilities to assist

with homework, which may be limited based on their own personal educational levels. Parents may have a lack of confidence in their own intellectual abilities or they may think that their level of education is inadequate (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). Parent's mental health is another issue. Lower family income is linked to higher levels of depression. Depressed parents are less involved in their children's early education (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). Davies (1997) noted there are some parents who are hesitant to come to the school because some of them have unpleasant memories of school. Some are intimidated by the principals and the teachers.

Language barriers. LaRocque et al. (2011) added that language barriers could also be the cause of lower parent involvement from culturally diverse parents, due to English not being the parents' first language. Lawson (2003) supported the concept that poor communication between parent and teacher is the main barrier to parent involvement. Stout (2009) concurred with Lawson and suggested that a difference of perspective between the parent and teacher can create communication problems.

Cultural barriers. Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) also identified an additional demographic barrier for low-income immigrant parents. They were not expected to be involved in their child's education in their original countries, and in some countries, it may be deemed disrespectful for parents to attempt to involve themselves in their child's schooling. They viewed the teachers as the expert and the parents preferred to limit their involvement to home learning activities. Teachers may tend to view this lack of parent involvement or participation in school activities as a lack of interest, when that is not necessarily the case.

Perception of unwelcoming school. Additional barriers to involvement that were cited included teacher attitudes and school climate. Colombo (2006), like other researchers mentioned, suggested that parents may have a combination of demographic and psychological

barriers to parent involvement in schools. Any of the barriers can lead to parents feeling that they will not be respected by school personnel. Perception of an unwelcoming school can include perceived teacher bias and perceived prejudice against the child or the parent.

This explains why in 1992, California's Department of Education created and implemented a written Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement in Education. This plan was designed to assist educators, by serving as a guideline for supporting parent engagement. An example is provided below.

California Strategic Plan for Parental Involvement

1. Help parents develop parenting skills and foster conditions at home that support children's efforts in learning.
2. Provide parents with knowledge of techniques designed to assist children in learning at home.
3. Provide access to and coordinate community and support services for children and families.
4. Promote clear, two-way communication between the school and the family regarding the school's programs and children's programs.
5. Involve parents, after appropriate training, in instructional and support roles at the school.
6. Support parents as decision makers and develop their leadership in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles. (*First Class: A Guide for Early Primary Education*)

Strategies to Overcoming Barriers

There are many ways to overcome the various barriers to parent involvement. The following subsections state several prominent ones.

Overcoming SES barriers. Schools can help point families to community resources which can help them to get the support they need to effectively care for their children. Regardless of SES, all families need support at one time or another. A successful partnership needs to ensure that all the needs of the child are met. These needs may include unmet medical care, and mental health care, for lower SES families, it could include food and safety.

Overcoming mental health or psychological barriers. These barriers can be addressed

in several ways, as described in adjacent subsections including overcoming SES barriers, overcoming language and other communication barriers, welcoming environment and outreach, and accommodating special needs.

Overcoming language and other communication barriers. Davies (1997) recommended smarter communication. This can be achieved by using multiple methods of communication, to ensure that all parents, and the community (if applicable) stay informed. A few suggestions are to employ the use of newsletters, written notices, newspaper articles, telephone calls, and radio announcements. These can be bilingual if needed. Also, when calling the parent, make sure that the communication is used to share good news about their child's progress and not just negative reports. It would also be helpful to ask parents how they would like to receive information and solicit their input about how to improve the parent-teacher conferences. Davies noted that some parents were embarrassed by their inability to articulate and dress in an accepted manner. They can be reached by sending messages home or by telephone, to open the lines of communication, to initiate the establishing of a parent-teacher relationship, and to extend a personal invitation to attend an event or program.

Cultural awareness. Malone (2015) advocated the belief that culture is a barrier to successful parent involvement when there is a lack of understanding between educators and culturally diverse parents. Parents will be more apt to participate in school activities and other parent involvement opportunities if they feel welcomed. Malone's study suggested three strategies that educators and school staff can implement to eliminate cultural barriers in school. Parents' motivational beliefs about what their role is, pertaining to their child's education, dictates how involved or not they will become, at school and at home (Green, Walker, Hoover-

Dempsey, & Sandler, 2007). They include creating a welcoming climate, promoting effective communication, and raising cultural awareness.

Schools should also implement ways to celebrate different cultures and should make a concerted effort to display culturally diverse student work throughout the school. Epstein (2016) agreed with Malone's (2015) assessment that cultural education for educators and school staff is needed, in order to overcome the cultural barriers that invariably exist in schools. Cultural diversity education could enable schools to be better equipped to embrace and celebrate diversity, creating an atmosphere of acceptance. This and similar actions will serve as a catalyst to eventually dispel cultural barriers and create better parent–school relationships.

Welcoming environment and outreach. Additional factors cited by Montoya (2016) that were influential in the parents' decision to be involved in their child's school, despite the barriers noted in the prior subsection, were related to the teacher taking the proactive approach to create activities that promote parent involvement and to personally invite the parents to participate. The parents indicated being influenced by teacher encouragement, teacher initiated involvement choices, and teacher outreach to families. Schools and teachers are a major source of influence with parents and students. Some parents look forward to actively participating at their child's school, but those should not be the only valued participants. Davies (1997) recommended reaching out to those who do not want to come to the school. Also, Davies recommended making the school or program more welcoming by parents and volunteers being greeted by teachers, school staff, and custodians in a friendly manner. Similarly, Sheldon (2007) suggested that the school should take a proactive approach and examine and assess the effectiveness of its parent partnership program. The key players needed to create a schoolwide partnership are teachers, parents, and community stakeholders. Walker, Shenker, and Hoover-

Dempsey (2010) suggested that although school counselors are in a valuable position to work with parents, students, teachers and administrators, it requires the leadership of the school principal to initiate an effective partnership program between these key players. According to Walker et al. (2010), the objective is to create a supportive environment that values and promotes parent involvement in children's education at school, and at home.

Partnership networks. To promote school, family and community partnerships, Dr. Joyce L. Epstein established the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) organization at John Hopkins University, in 1996. This national organization is open to all schools for membership and allows schools to work together to benefit from each other's best practices. Membership is renewed annually upon the completion of an updated survey at the end of each year. The schools affiliated with NNPS receive tools and guidelines for establishing or improving schoolwide partnership programs that reach out to families of all students. Table 2 provides examples of school and community partnership activities.

Table 2

Focuses of Partnership Activities and Examples of School-Community Partnership Activities

Student centered	Family centered	School centered	Community centered
Student awards, student incentives, scholarships, student trips, tutors, mentors, job shadowing, other services and products for students	Parent workshops, family fun-nights, GED and other adult education classes, parent incentives and awards, counseling and other forms of assistance to parents	Equipment and materials, beautification and repairs, teacher incentives and awards, funds for school events and programs, office and classroom assistance, and other school improvements	Community beautification, student exhibits and performances, charity, and other outreach

From "A study of the role of "community" in comprehensive school, family, and community partnership programs," by M. C. Sanders, 2001, *The Elementary School Journal*, 102(1), 19–34. Copyright by M. C. Sanders. Reprinted with permission.

Family and volunteer centers. In addition, numerous schools across the country have set up family centers. They utilize unused classrooms, the library, or the auditorium to accommodate family and community partnership activities and to make the school more hospitable to families. If an unused classroom is used, it can be furnished with comfortable chairs, a sofa, refrigerator, coffee pot, and a table for meetings or for completing projects.

Coaching on homework help. An important recommendation is to enlist parents and community agencies to help educate the children. Teachers can involve parents by providing them with home learning materials to work with their child, providing guidance on how to engage with their children at home, and by developing their own learning materials for parents to use at home. They can also use Epstein's (1995) Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) interactive homework.

Homework is an effective tool to encourage parent and child interaction at home. Several studies have been conducted about homework effectiveness as a tool to increase parent involvement after school hours and at home (Bennett, 2007). Researchers and scholars, from 1997 through 2015, have recognized the importance of the parent and child communicating, interacting, and working together during the completion of the child's homework. That equates to a timeframe of over 18 years that the topic of homework has been considered to be an essential form of parent involvement. It is important to note that each of these researchers agrees that the use of homework is an effective form of parent involvement (Cunha et al., 2015; Dumont et al., 2014; Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; O'Sullivan, Chen, & Fish, 2014; Tam & Chan, 2009).

Discovering a link between homework and classroom behavior, Epstein et al. (2011) suggested that parents spending more time with children on homework can help with discipline

in class. Some parents do not know exactly how to help their children at home, but are more than willing to do so, if they are shown what they need to do.

Accommodate special needs. Bennett (2007) suggested that parents and teachers should work together to form a parent–school partnership in which teachers and parents communicate about what they expect from each other. Parents expect certain things from teachers and, likewise, teachers expect certain things from parents. In some cases, an individual education plan (IEP) is helpful to allow them to share with each other what they expect and then decide together how those expectations will be met. For some students, this setup is better than the traditional setup in which teachers decide what will be taught and how it will be taught, what school work will be sent home, and the teacher simply assuming that the child is being supervised by a parent.

Focus on positive relationships. To build a strong sense of community within the classroom, Schaps (2003) advocated four approaches to encourage interactions between parents and the school. The first approach is to actively cultivate respectful, supportive relationships among students, teachers, and parents. Supportive relationships will enable students from diverse backgrounds to openly share their thoughts and ideas in the classroom. Additionally, supportive relationships enable parents and teachers to communicate openly to establish a healthy, working relationship. Parents may also be less intimidated by the school environment and more apt to participate and support school activities. The second approach is to emphasize common purposes and ideals. This is where the school helps to shape the student’s character and develop good citizenship. When the students know, and understand the school’s values, it helps to create and develop good behavior. The third approach is to provide regular opportunities for service and cooperation. These are opportunities for the students to work together, towards a

shared goal, and for the benefit of helping someone else. The fourth and final approach is to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for autonomy and influence.

Principal involvement. Principals have indicated an effort to increase student reading capabilities by encouraging teachers to use different parent involvement techniques. Epstein's (2011) responses received from principals show how the efforts of principals seem to correlate with and presumably encourage teachers in efforts to improve literacy skills (see Table 3).

Table 3

Correspondence of Principals' Active Encouragement and Teachers' Active Use of School Techniques of Parent Involvement

Techniques	Principals who encourage (%)	Teachers who use actively (%)
Read aloud or listen to reading	76	66
Informal games at home	45	24
Contract with parents on student projects	33	25
Loan books to parents	31	41
Teach parents techniques for tutoring & evaluation	24	21
Parent contracts to reward or punish behavior	12	13
Parent-led discussion of TV shows	12	2

Epstein et al. (2009) recommended and detailed a written partnership between four individuals, in the form of a parent, student, teacher and administrator pledge. These pledges convey, in detail, the school's expectations for each member of the partnership. Another positive aspect of these pledges is that they can be tailored and revised to meet the needs or preferences of each school.

Dugan's (2009) study at one ACSI school revealed that parents have high expectations from their children's school. Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, and Ortiz (2008) conducted a study to

better understand the relationship between parent involvement with preschool children and preliteracy.

Summary of overcoming barriers. Due to interest in the effects of school characteristics and other influences on parent involvement in schools, Feuerstein (2000) developed nine factors that categorize parent involvement activities. These factors are:

- Factor 1: Students talk with parents about school
- Factor 2: Parent contact with school
- Factor 3: Parent volunteerism
- Factor 4: Parent expectations
- Factor 5: Parent participation in PTO
- Factor 6: Parent talk with student about school
- Factor 7: Parents visit school
- Factor 8: Structure of home learning environment
- Factor 9: Parents involved in grade placement decisions

Student Attitudes Toward Parent Involvement

Xu (2002) conducted a study among adolescents to record the opinions of the students regarding parent involvement. Although the adolescent students preferred more autonomy, they did not mind having their parents' support with homework or showing an interest in their education. The study revealed that the students placed a higher importance on, and showed a preference for, family-initiated involvement over school-initiated involvement. Family-initiated involvement can be separated into two categories: direct and indirect. An example of direct involvement is helping with homework. An example of indirect involvement is showing an interest in their child's education and ensuring that there was a designated place in the home

where the child could study. From the student's perspective, family-initiated involvement best reflected the student's needs. The students did indicate a desire for school-initiated involvement in the creation of more after-school programs.

Effects of Parent Involvement on Preschoolers

Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2015) conducted a qualitative study among Black, low income mothers to see if their parent engagement with their preschoolers could be linked to how the mothers were raised. In other words, if the mother's parents were involved in their child's education, does that result in the current mothers providing that same level of involvement? The researchers were successful in linking the current mothers' engagement to be similar, if not equal to, the level of engagement that they experienced from their own mothers. The researchers further discovered that when compared to their White peers, the Black preschool children were disproportionately unready to proceed to kindergarten. The preschool children were in Head Start, and Jarrett and Coba-Rodriguez (2015) wanted to identify whether there were any parent involvement activities present, and if so, at what levels did they occur. The study participants were all mothers from a particular Head Start program where they were recruited and asked to participate in the study. The data were derived from a 60- to 90-minute open-ended interview process. The results were that all mothers in the study were actively engaged in their child's education, even though some of them were currently experiencing personal issues or had prior histories of disengagement.

Two Recent AERA Studies on Parent Involvement

There were 16 research papers related to parent involvement that were presented in Washington, D.C. at the 2016 American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting in April 2016. However, the studies were limited to public schools and did not include

private or faith-based schools. Two of those studies are described below. The first study was conducted by Cig (2016), titled *Father's Early Engagement: Contributions to Children's Cognitive Development in Preschool*. Cig emphasized how critical it is for a father to establish and maintain a prominent role in the involvement with their child's education. Although researchers agree that father involvement is a contributing factor to early childhood development and cognitive development of the child, studies on this subject are limited. Cig's study utilized data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECSL-B), which contains information from over 14,000 children born in 2001. The ages of the sampled children were from nine months until they started kindergarten. The results of this study were surprising. Fathers' engagement with their toddlers through caregiving, play, and literacy activities did not predict children's mathematics and literacy skills, after controlling for family, child, and father characteristics.

The second study was conducted by Prewitt and Whitney (2016), titled *High Expectations for Students' Educational Degree Attainment: The Pivotal Role of Parents for Their Eighth-Grade Students' Reading Achievement*. The purpose of this study was to determine how parents' educational expectations for their eighth-grade children's academic success could be predicted, despite contextual parent factors. These factors included parent education level; parental expectations of student degree attainment; parent knowledge of the child's grades; parents' communication about risks such as drugs, smoking, alcohol, and sex. These were expected to predict reading scores for the eighth graders, while controlling for the students' prior fifth grade reading scores, gender, and SES. Data were analyzed from the parent survey data that was obtained from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS-K), which collected its data from the National Center for Education Statistics (2009-2010). The study consisted of data

derived from parents of 9,725 students from across the U.S. The ECLS-K study followed the students from kindergarten (in 1998) through the eighth grade (in 2007). The gender of the students was 50.7% male and 49.3% female. The ethnicity of the students was 60% White, 10% Black, 17.5% Hispanic, 5% Asian, and 2% American Indian. The results of the study indicated that parent expectations of their children's academic degree are a predictor of the children's academic outcomes. Also, the strongest predictors for increased reading outcomes were parent's expectations, parents' knowledge of student's GPA, and the parents' own education levels.

Christian School Leadership

Christian school principals are a combination of instructional and servant leaders. Servant leadership theories are directly related to the Christian school's overall mission in education. A notable finding was that these principals had a servant leadership style. Black (2010) described servant leaders as those who put serving others ahead of themselves. They also work within teams as a team member and not as the focal point of the team. They provide resources and support without expecting to be acknowledged. A servant leader is a servant first.

Kuhn and Geis (1984) explained commitment in organizations such as schools as a type of knot that links personal meaning with mission. In response to the question, "How were you chosen for your role as an instructional leader," 11 of the 18 principals studied in this research used language that expressed their personal belief in a distinct "calling" by God to their vocation as a Christian school principal.

Parent Involvement in Catholic Schools

Coleman's (1981) study of 28,000 students attending 1,015 public and private schools brought national attention to the benefits and cost-effectiveness of Catholic schools. In this study, Coleman revealed that the *common school ideal* exists in Catholic schools. This ideal is

that the school, noted by academic achievement levels of students, does not discriminate between students from various socio-economic levels. In a Catholic school, students from lower socioeconomic parents could achieve as well as students from more financially advantaged families. The Catholic school integrated all students and did not track in the manner that many public schools do. The average student in a Catholic school would complete rigorous courses and could graduate and continue with higher education.

A cost-effective choice. In Coleman's thinking, the Catholic school built upon the social capital of the families that selected the school. When Coleman compared the cost per student in Catholic schools compared to average cost per student in public schools, Catholic education was less costly. He believed that the government should provide funds (i.e., vouchers) to parents that send a child to a Catholic school, as that would save the government money. This study and further studies by this highly respected sociologist initiated the school choice movement in the U.S. Stewart and Wolf (2014) also studied the subject of school choice as it relates to school vouchers, which provide government funds to low-income children to enable them to pay the tuition to attend private schools.

In Australia, Warren, Young, and Hanifin (2003) conducted a study involving six Queensland Catholic schools that had recently established effective parent-school partnerships. The purpose of the study was to address two questions. The first sought to determine what parents and teachers considered were the key characteristics for a successful parent-school partnership in the Catholic communities. The second was to determine what parents considered the key characteristics of a faith community. Data were gathered from parents and school personnel using questionnaires and follow-up interviews with small focus groups. Each questionnaire consisted of 92 items. The results were that parents tended to place a similar

amount of emphasis on communication and socio-emotional values as essential characteristics for good partnerships. The parents considered it important to have a good line of communication with the school principals. The socio-emotional values related to what parents wanted for their children and how they wanted to be treated within the school community. Surprisingly, many of the teachers and principals did not mention that communication was important. In all the interviews, the school newsletter was identified as the main form of communication between the teacher and the parent. The teachers felt that they needed to respect the parents' role in the parent-school partnership and that the parents needed to have respect for the teacher as well.

Six themes of Catholic parent involvement. Over 300 years of official church teaching and doctrines, the church has affirmed the importance of including the parents in their child's education. However, little systematic research has been done. The Congress for Catholic Education (1997), part of the official voice of the Vatican, remarked that because many Catholic children attend a Catholic school from young age until young adulthood, they perceive the school as an extension of the home. Frabutt, Holter, Nuzzi, Rocha, and Cassel (2010) reviewed 33 Catholic Church documents, which revealed six major themes of parent involvement. These themes created elements of their further study.

The six major themes were primacy of parental role in education, parents as witnesses in the world, continuing parental catechesis, parent-school-church collaboration, parent involvement, and school choice. The first theme regarding the primacy of parents was reaffirmed in 28 of 33 documents. In these documents, parents are entrusted with healthy development of their child and baptism of their child into the Catholic faith. The second theme regarding parents as witnesses addresses that parent's day-to-day actions should reflect their Christian faith. The third theme of continuing instruction in the Catholic faith was mentioned

because parents need to maintain their own growth in their faith in order to teach their children. The fourth theme focused on the importance of collaboration among the parents, the Catholic schools, and the wider church to benefit children's education. This theme stresses the importance that the parents should collaborate within the wider community of the Catholic church to assure the promise of a sound Catholic education for their children and future students.

The fifth theme addresses parent involvement. The documents specifically note the importance of parent involvement with teachers, school principals, and school activities. The sixth and final theme is evident in 15 of the documents going back to 1885, and refers to the importance of school choice. Regardless of the financial means of the family, Catholic children have a right to a Catholic education.

Parish priests' view of parental engagement. After identifying the six themes, Frabutt et al. (2010) performed a secondary analysis of 2008 national survey data that gathered the views of 1,047 U.S. priests. In their re-analysis, they focused only on priests' views of parent engagement in Catholic schools. The researchers were interested in the role of parish pastors because parish priests play a vital role as leaders of the parish. Priests have power to influence how parents may be engaged in the school. Despite changes in school governance, priests continue to serve as major decision-makers if the school is affiliated with the parish.

There is a preponderance of literature that supports parent involvement in their child's Catholic education, because of the positive effects that it has on academic achievement, as well as improved attendance and positive behavior. Donovan's (1999) study was of a small Catholic K-8 school in Pennsylvania with nine teachers and one principal. Donovan employed personal visits; interviews with the principal, six of nine teachers, and 18 parents of 170 students; a two-part questionnaire; and analysis of artifacts such as handbooks. Donovan reported that parental

involvement in some Catholic schools is still limited to the parent fulfilling the role of the teacher's helper.

In this role, the parent involvement is limited to extra-curricular events, such as chaperoning (at school dances, field trips, and class parties) and participating in school fundraising activities. Generally, the teachers did not believe that the parents had the experience or educational background to participate in educational activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, selecting textbooks, developing the formal curriculum, formulating the school budget, and other activities that had previously been reserved for the school principals and education professionals.

The findings were that the school administration and teachers made a concerted effort to develop a rapport with the parents. This effort resulted in the parents being actively involved in school activities, excluding decision-making activities. The teachers feared that once the line was crossed between the traditional responsibilities of the teacher and the parent, the parents would become aggressive and eventually take over in other areas that the parents were ill-equipped or unqualified. The parents who participated in the study were unanimously in agreement with their limited role and had no desire to become more involved than they were already. They were unwilling to intrude or invade into what the parents perceived as the teachers' responsibility, and what the teachers perceived as "their turf." This attitude supporting limited parent involvement seems to be outdated and obsolete according to the majority of researchers on parent involvement. This philosophy may eventually need to be updated to be more in-line with the majority of today's educators across the U.S. An update would result in expanding the role of parent involvement in their children's education to take advantage of the parents' talents, skills, life experiences, and expertise in numerous other areas. One parent

involvement model that would respect the culture Donovan (1999) noted, of maintaining respect of parents' and teachers' separate roles, would be to establish after-school activities in which parents' talent and expertise could be showcased and shared with students and other parents.

Crea et al. (2015) conducted a case study of a Catholic high school in Boston. The school principals were trying to meet the needs of an impoverished community. One of the primary missions of the school was ministry with the poor. This school had a diverse ethnic mix and recent immigrant population. One of the barriers that this school faced was determining how the teachers can communicate effectively with parents that are from a different ethnic background and speak a different language than the teachers. The students met with teachers four days a week for traditional classroom instruction, and students worked in the community one day a week, to defray the cost of tuition. School principals established workshops for the parents, to inform them of the school's expectations and of the parent's role in the improvement of their child's academic record. These principals wanted the parents to provide support at home by communicating with their children, showing an interest in what they were learning, and by reviewing and helping with the completion of their homework assignments.

This was a mixed methods study. The purpose was to assess the state of parent engagement strategies, and to identify the strengths and barriers that may dictate the school's parent involvement policies in the future. Two of the research questions that were addressed were (a) What are profiles of parent engagement? and (b) What are differences between immigrant and US-born parents in involvement activities? The participants of the study consisted of 30 parents, who were divided into four focus groups. The duration of each focus group was between 75 and 105 minutes. The topic for the focus groups was school outreach,

parent outreach, and parent trust. Immigrant parents reported greater trust in the school, but were less involved than the US-born parents.

The parents expressed that they were more active in homework and getting their children to school. The parents indicated that they felt free to reach out to teachers, and they noted that the teachers cared deeply about the children, but the parents would like for the teachers to reach out to them and to provide more communication. Parents wanted information about academic concerns as soon as they were noted, not after the problem was recurrent. Additionally, they liked being called by the school when their child was absent or tardy.

Shriberg et al. (2012) conducted a participatory action research (PAR) study of an urban Pre-8 Catholic school. The PAR approach includes four key steps that served as the framework for this study. The first step is to plan a research process. In order to accomplish this, the university faculty researcher needs to identify a principal that possessed a shared vision and understanding of social justice, family-social collaboration, and obtaining and valuing family input. Once this person is identified, the work team consisting of the researchers from a Catholic university and the P-12 school principal can be formed. Next, the plans regarding how to collect the data are created. The second step is building a picture. In this step, the research team identifies the research methodology for gathering data that will be used to propel the school towards the designated objectives. This leads to the third step, which is to interpret and analyze the data. During this step, the quantitative and qualitative data are analyzed using an iterative process, where the preliminary findings are presented to the stakeholders. Based on the combined inputs received from this process, a revised conclusion is derived. Finally, the fourth step is “resolving problems and implementing sustainable solutions” (Shriberg et al., 2012, p. 229). In this final step, the individuals that will be most affected by any solution should have the

opportunity to provide significant input into how the solution will be implemented and sustained.

The study focused on culturally responsive collaboration practices. Research indicates that cultural diversity in Catholic schools is increasing, due to more students from varying racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Although this aspect of the student body is changing, the school staff is predominately White, creating a cultural barrier between minority families and educators. This study took place in a particular P-12 Catholic school, based three specific factors. First and foremost was that the school was stable. At the time of the study, the school had been in operation for 80 years, even though the parish connected to the school has since been closed. Second, the school had a strong principal, who had a long history with the school. Finally, the principal and the university faculty researchers shared values and vision related to social justice and collaboration between family and school.

The research team met monthly for 18 months, and together they developed a research plan, consisting of two major phases. The first phase was the needs assessment. The second phase was the intervention, resulting from the information derived from the needs assessment. A specific problem needed to be identified before it could be resolved. The participants of the needs assessment process were the parents or grandparents of students that attended the school and the educators who taught at the school. The estimated age of the family participants ranged from 22 to 70 years. The estimated age of the educators who participated ranged from 24 to 70 years. There were 13 full-time educators at the school; 10 were White, two were African-American, and one was Latino. Based on the statistics of the school student population, 99% of the students were African American and 1% was Latino. During the study, four parent focus groups and two teacher focus groups were conducted. All 13 of the full-time educators participated in the teacher focus group. The research team used a survey of five closed-end

questions to collect the data. They also conducted interviews with the educators and the principal. The result of the study was the development of a new communication process that could be effective in addressing school-related issues and in advancing the core values of Catholic education.

Opportunities for parent involvement. Mulligan (2003) examined the number of opportunities for parent involvement being offered, based on four different types of schools. The types of schools that were included in this study were Catholic schools, other religious private schools, secular private schools, and public schools. The results were that the public schools offered more opportunities for parent involvement than the Catholic and private schools, but the levels of parent involvement were higher in the Catholic and private schools than they were in public schools. The public schools offered a large variety of opportunities for parents to be involved in all types of activities. Several differences were noted regarding the Catholic and private schools.

One distinction was that Catholic schools offered more fundraising events than the other private schools. Another distinction when comparing the Catholic schools with the private schools, was that the secular private schools offered a lower percentage of opportunities for parent involvement within the decision-making process of their schools. For example, there were fewer parent teacher organization (PTO) meetings each year. These meetings were held only twice a year.

Every school has a distinctive brand, based on its primary focus and reputation. According to Lee and Holland (1993), Catholic schools' primarily focus on academic excellence and a highly-disciplined environment. These characteristics are determining factors for Catholic and non-Catholic parents. Regardless of their religious beliefs, parents are generally interested

in choosing a school that is compatible with their family's values and that meets the needs of the child. Other distinctions of Catholic schools is their commitment to the common good and that they tend to have high expectations for every student to succeed, regardless of their socioeconomic or cultural background.

Religious charter schools and urban Catholic education. Horning (2013) assessed two trends in American education: the closing of urban Catholic elementary schools and the growth of charter schools. Horning defined a charter school as a publicly funded school that operates independently of the local school district, resulting in greater autonomy and accountability for the individual school. Horning cited that in 1965–1966 there were approximately 5.6 million students enrolled in 13,292 Catholic schools. For the 2011–2012 academic year, the NCEA reported that Catholic school enrollment had dropped to around 2 million students in 6,841 schools. Within 46 years, the number of Catholic schools had dropped by 6,451 (a decrease of 48.5%), and enrollment had dropped by 3.6 million (a decrease of 64.3%). Since charter schools are on the rise, Horning suggested that Catholic schools should not view charter schools as competitors, but to view them as an opportunity to possibly create religious charter schools, since they tend to serve similar populations. The creation of charter schools would allow for a public school that would accommodate traditions such as uniforms, strict behavioral guidelines, and deference to authority, even if specific religious beliefs and customs were not explicit due to regulations for publicly funded schools, and the school would need to allow non-Catholic students. Although this recommendation is potentially a viable option, there is little scholarly research available on this topic now as to the extent to which Catholic tradition might be explicitly incorporated.

Comparison between a Catholic and a Jewish school. Ross (2012) described parent involvement within a Jewish day school and a Catholic school by highlighting the similarities and the differences between them. The term “day school” refers to an all-day school that combines religious and secular subjects. It also distinguishes this type of school from Jewish boarding schools. In this study, the term “parent participation” was used instead of parent involvement. The purpose of the study was to identify how the schools created expectations and boundaries as they encouraged parents to participate. There was one thing that both types of schools had in common. They all wanted parents to participate in school and in their child’s education as it would help to reinforce and support the teacher’s role and objectives in the classroom. However, the extent of this participation varied. Inevitably, some teachers felt threatened by too much parent involvement, and viewed it as an interference and a hindrance, instead of a help.

In the areas of communication and volunteering, there was little or no difference between the two schools. However, in the area of decision making and governing, parents were allowed to participate at the Jewish school, but not at the Catholic school. The Catholic parents trusted the school to make all the governing decisions and did not play an active role in the daily decision-making activities. They viewed the school principal and the teachers as the professionals, and they did not want to interfere with the governance of the school. The Catholic school experienced a 70% parent participation rate and the parents referred to their involvement at the school as fun. The Jewish day school was founded by rabbis and community members who identified a need for a Jewish school to be located in their community. Many of these community members became members of the board of directors, parents of students, or both. Consequently, these parents had more of a sense of ownership of the school and wanted more of

an active role in the decision-making process and school governance. They viewed their participation as more of a requirement and a necessity.

Ognibene (2015) suggested that there is a growing commonality between Catholic schools and schools in the public sector. Ognibene noted that in 1948, a Catholic educator named Father Bernardine Myers, president of the Secondary School Department of the NCEA, was appointed to the first Life Adjustment Commission. The Life Adjustment Education concept was created by John Dewey to ensure that students received training on life skills as well as academics. Since Fr. Myers served on its first commission, it was important to him that he gain the support and the participation of other Catholic educators. He promoted participation by publicly endorsing the Life Adjustment Education curriculum and publicly asserting that Catholics have not been left out, as he was appointed to serve on this national commission.

At the NCEA conference, a colleague of Fr. Myers, Father Anselm Townsend stated that the Prosser Resolution forced Catholics to reexamine their secondary education system, claiming that it was on the wrong track. He agreed with Fr. Myers that their curriculum should be geared to prepare students for life, instead of the traditional college prep courses. Fr. Townsend's paper was later published in the *Catholic School Journal*, where it became accessible to a vast audience of Catholic educators. Sister Mary Janet Miller replaced Fr. Myers, after his death in 1948, and was in favor of continuing the support of the Life Adjustment Education for Youth, but updated it to a Catholic version that she called the Christian Life Adjustment. She liked that the program contained an emphasis on the dignity of all persons. Many other Catholic educators agreed, and by 1954, there were as many as 34 dioceses participating in school based life adjustment activities.

Eventually, Catholic educators who were responsible for developing curriculum, began following a similar pattern to that of public schools. The major change in Catholic education, based on life adjustment education, was an increase in home- and family living-related courses. In 2013, the National Catholic Educational Association drafted a position statement on the Common Core State Standards. It listed the reasons why Catholic schools could adopt the Common Core State Standards with whatever modifications necessary. Because of the increasing commonality between Catholic and public schools, 100 of the 195 diocesan school systems using the Common Core curriculum standards were recently adopted in 45 states, to qualify for federal grants.

Parental Involvement in Protestant Schools

Since the *Pierce v. The Society of Sisters* (1925), Christian parents have been legally supported to have a choice of faith-based schooling in the U.S. Thus, parents have an option supported by law to seek an alternative to public schooling for their child. ACSI encourages parents to work with legislators and other groups to maintain this freedom of choice in education for their children (John C. Holmes, ACSI Liaison to Congress, April 2010). ACSI representatives note that Protestant parents look for schools that teach all subjects from a biblical perspective (Walner, 2017). The number of Protestant schools has grown considerably in the U.S. since the 1950s and, exponentially, around the world. Many of these schools have organized into regional or national associations that serve to strengthen their collective missions while remaining private independent schools. The largest such organization is the ACSI, founded in 1978 with the merger of several regional associations. ACSI serves 3,000 Christian schools in the U.S. and over 20,000 Christian schools in 100 countries worldwide.

Parents choose to send their children to a faith-based school and devote additional financial resources to support their choice. In selecting Christian schools, parents trust first-hand sources, not the website or other electronic media (Hall, 2009). These parents tend to confer with friends and family regarding possible faith-based school choices. The reasons that parents send their child to a non-denominational school is based upon their personal beliefs of what is best for their child. Bempechat, Drago-Severson, and Dinndorf (1994) examined a 1991 study which described the reasons why parents chose to send their children to Catholic school. The study revealed that parents were concerned about public schools, in regard to weak student academic achievement, school safety, and students with negative behaviors such as bullying. These concerns are supported by Bushaw and Gallup's (2008) 40th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitudes toward the Public Schools. The Phi Delta Kappa 40th Annual Gallup Poll discussed parents' choice and cited parental concerns about low academic achievement, low student discipline, and school safety issues as major public school issues. Gangel (1988) cited the reasons parents should enroll their children in a Christian school: high academic performance and integration of the bible into daily instruction. He promoted the strong social relationships that occur in Christian schools, leading to lifelong friendships, acceptance of racial diversity, and an intolerance of drugs and alcohol use.

Blue (2004) conducted a study to identify the reasons parents selected Christian schools. He interviewed a group of parents for 30 to 60 minutes. His analysis revealed the following reasons: a quality learning environment, satisfaction that their children were in a safe learning environment, pleasant relationships with teachers and friends, and diversity of the students at the school. His findings support Ballweg's (1980) work from 56 Christian schools across 26 states

that reported parents from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and various socioeconomic levels selected a Christian school for the same reasons.

Holmes (1982) surveyed parents from 147 households (111 of which were Christian households), regarding their expectations for sending their children to elementary evangelical Christian schools in south Los Angeles County. The parents were from seven different schools: three of the schools were racially isolated and four were multicultural. Holmes documented that over two-thirds of each ethnic group indicated that Christ-centered academics was their primary reason for enrollment, and 15.5% of the total number of parents interviewed chose academics. The interview schedule was administered by three trained interviewers. The parents (65.7%) chose Christ-centered academics as the primary reason for re-enrollment, with one exception. When reviewing specific ethnic groups, 42.2% of Black parents preferred academics as the primary reason for re-enrollment. Out of the 111 evangelical Christian households included in the study, 80% preferred Christ-centered academics, and out of the remaining 36 non-evangelical households, 45.7% preferred academics. Over 94% of the parents included in the study took deliberate thought regarding school choice. Holmes (1982) cited four predominant reasons that the parents ultimately chose for their children to attend an evangelical Christian school: Christ-centered academics, academics, a disciplined environment, and caring staff members. Holmes further noted that most parents were products of the public-school system, and 51% of their children had attended public school in the past. On a scale of 1 to 9, with 9 being superior, the parents ranked their known public school at a mean of 4.16, and the evangelical Christian school at a mean of 8.08. Concerns about the academics and social standards of the public schools were experienced by 70% of the parents. Most of the Black and White parents tended to be middle-class, with at least two years of college. Most of the Hispanic parents were high school

graduates who were employed in lower-paid occupations, but they were most likely to be homeowners.

Christian parents value the development of spiritual maturity, along with academics (Clossen, 2002; Holmes, 1982). West (2001) studied a random set of parents in private and religious schools throughout Providence, Rhode Island. His interviews with 423 parents noted that religious school parents selected the school primarily because religious education was included in the school's daily instruction. Secondly, the parents selected Christian schools because the schools were safe and the teachers and staff openly responded to parents' communication and their children's needs (Hiatt-Michael, 2012b).

Classic and recent studies regarding parent satisfaction concur that Christian schools yield high parent satisfaction with the schools (Dugan, 2009, Krommendyk, 2007). Krommendyk's study revealed that parents believed the climate of the Christian school was more healthy and open than the school climate in charter and public schools. These Christian schools tended to have principals and staff who greeted incoming students, teachers who were readily available at the classroom door, and staff who knew the child and parents by name (Nwokorie-Anajemba, 2010). In addition, Christian schools appeared to communicate in multiple ways with parents. Bauch and Goldring (1995) noted that parents in Christian schools were highly satisfied with the multiple forms of communication between home and school.

Voogd (1996) examined parental involvement in Alberta, Canada. He credited the principal as the lead and key connection to parent involvement at the school. His study noted that parents were involved in numerous ways in the schools. Most significantly, these parents served as decision-makers on election of board members, school budgets, building plans, and direct service in governance.

Holmes (1982) conducted a study to identify parental expectations of Christian schools and to understand the differences, if any, between the expectations of three major ethnic groups within Los Angeles county (White, Black, and Hispanic). The findings indicated that there was not a significant difference between the expectations of the three groups, as depicted in Table 4. Most of the parents (71%) chose Christ-centered academics as the primary reason for school selection, from a list of 17 possible reasons. The second most important reason for enrolling their children in the evangelical Christian school, with a substantially lower percentage rate, was academics (17%).

Table 4

Parental Expectations for Education in the Christian School by Ethnic Group and Overall

	White	Black	Hispanic	Overall
Christ-centered	76%	67%	67%	71%
Academic	17%	18%	11%	16%
Other	7%	15%	22%	13%

From "Parental Expectations of the Christian School," by J. C. Holmes and D. B. Hiatt-Michael, 1984, ERIC Database at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED244363>. Copyright [1984] by J. C. Holmes and D. B. Hiatt-Michael. Reprinted with permission.

Table 5 depicts the difference between evangelical and non-evangelical households. The evangelical Christian households were the households where the parents indicated that they were born-again Christians. The non-evangelical households were the households where the parents indicated that they were not necessarily religious.

There was a significant difference within these households. It was very important within the evangelical households, as depicted by the 78.9% response, that schools offered a Christ-centered curriculum. However, within the non-evangelical households, the parents were not as interested in a Christ-centered curriculum as they were with the general academics being offered.

This is depicted by 38.9% of non-evangelical households being interested in academics, as compared to 38.2% of evangelical households.

Table 5

Percent of Evangelical, and Non-Evangelical Parent Responses to Primary Reason for Enrollment of Children in the Christian School

<u>Category</u>	<u>Evangelical</u>	<u>Non-evangelical</u>
Christ-centered academics	78.9 *	38.2
Academic	9.1	38.9*
Disciplined environment	5.5	5.6
Against local public school	2.8	9.1
Social contacts	0.0	6.3
Responsive to family needs	3.7	9.1

From "Parental Expectations of the Christian School," by J. C. Holmes and D. B. Hiatt-Michael, 1984, ERIC Database at <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED244363>. Copyright [1984] by J. C. Holmes and D. B. Hiatt-Michael. Reprinted with permission.

* Mode of each category. Totals do not equal 100% because some responses were missing.

Table 6 illustrates the enrollment of students attending Catholic school and Protestant schools within the U.S. from 1995 to 2011, from grades pre-kindergarten through 8th. There has been a significant decline in total Christian enrollment from 1995 through 2013, dropping from 3.8 million to 3.1 million. However, Catholic schools associated with a Diocese and Protestant schools that are unaffiliated with a church experienced an increase in attendance. The Conservative Christian schools experienced substantial growth during the timeframes of 1999 through 2005. Beginning in 2007, there has been a steady decline in enrollment. Like the Conservative Christian schools, the Catholic Diocesan schools had experienced steady growth from 1995 to 2007, until it reached its pinnacle, and enrollment took a downturn. The Catholic Parochial school has been on a steady downturn; however, the decrease has been in small increments, dropping from 1.4 million in 1995 to 680,300 in 2013.

Table 6

Christian School Enrollment in the United States

Year	Total	Catholic School Enrollment				Protestant School Enrollment				Non-Sectarian
	Christian Enrollment	Total	Parochial	Diocesan	Private (Independent)	Total	Conservative Christian	Affiliated	Unaffiliated	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1995	3,794,500	2,041,990	1,368,340	575,190	98,460	1,752,510	651,050	574,830	526,630	961,040
1997	3,791,120	2,046,620	1,352,620	598,380	95,620	1,744,500	678,660	529,050	536,790	967,940
1999	3,852,170	2,033,900	1,317,300	607,860	108,740	1,818,270	713,020	529,280	575,970	936,820
2001	3,958,950	2,032,080	1,226,960	687,540	117,580	1,926,870	765,080	535,850	625,940	1,064,210
2003	3,722,460	1,886,530	1,108,320	670,910	107,300	1,835,930	722,460	519,310	594,160	1,065,620
2005	3,645,260	1,779,830	993,390	673,110	113,330	1,865,430	764,920	561,320	539,190	1,079,050
2007	3,618,760	1,685,220	878,830	688,260	118,130	1,833,540	698,930	417,610	717,000	1,027,150
2009	3,207,490	1,541,820	782,050	642,720	117,050	1,665,670	579,190	401,430	685,050	971,550
2011	3,065,240	1,481,620	737,090	630,970	113,560	1,583,620	568,150	443,780	571,690	911,730
2013	3,081,690	1,466,560	680,370	666,260	119,930	1,615,130	544,610	446,050	624,470	1,002,180

Note. Includes enrollment in prekindergarten through grade 8, in schools that offer kindergarten, or higher grade. Ungraded students are prorated into prekindergarten through grade 8. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Source: U. S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2009-2010), Private School Universe Survey (PSS), 1995-96 through 2013-14. (This table was prepared December, 2013).
 \1\ Affiliated schools belong to associations of schools with a specific religious orientation other than Catholic or conservative Christian. Unaffiliated schools have a religious orientation or purpose but are not classified as Catholic, conservative Christian, or affiliated.

Summary

This literature review examined the history of parent involvement in education, the definition of parent involvement, and how it has evolved, over the years. It also identified the benefits of and the barriers to parent involvement. The lack of parent involvement can be linked to low student achievement in reading and math, school attendance problems, and student

behavioral problems. These issues can be improved by parents partnering with the school to work toward the shared goal of student academic success. In addition, other strategies identified to promote student success were for parents to spend more time doing homework, students receiving more help from parents, and students spending more time engaging in learning activities at home. The implementation of a written parental involvement plan distributed to every parent could be helpful in communicating to the parents the school's expectations.

The literature review also presented several concepts and typologies, including Epstein's (2001) six typologies of parent involvement, Ho and Willms' (1996) four elements of parent involvement, and Hiatt-Michael's (2008b) four forces that influence parent-school involvement. The literature review provided enough evidence for the assertion that there is a direct connection between parent involvement and a child's academic success. Although there has been extensive research and scholarly literature about parent involvement, there is limited research available on parent involvement in Catholic and Protestant schools, specifically. In addition, the literature supported the notion that the principal, teacher, and parent must form a partnership to support, establish, and sustain the success of parent involvement in schools.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Introduction

Chapter 3 begins with the qualifications of the investigator, an overview of the study design, a detailed description of the research design and description of the study. The investigator provides information regarding the characteristics of the target population, a re-statement of the research questions, identification of the target population, description of the data collection instruments, and an outline of the data collection procedures. This chapter also discusses the quantitative and qualitative methodologies that were used for this study. The investigator complied with the Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements, to protect the identity, personal information, and other ethical considerations of the human subjects. A summary of the study methodology is included at the end of the chapter.

Qualifications of the Researcher

The researcher was a member of a Protestant, faith-based church and had previous experience being affiliated with an ACSI Protestant school and several public-schools. Her children had attended both types of schools, in the past. Additionally, her grandchildren had previously attended several public-schools, and an ACSI Protestant school. Her passion and interest in this topic arose from her parent involvement experiences in these two school types. The researcher preferred a faith-based school education over a public school or other private schools because of the faith-based curriculum and the fact that these schools place a high priority on moral values. They focus on developing the child as a whole person, not just academically, but spiritually and morally to develop their character and integrity, as well.

Overview of Study Design

The researcher applied the mixed methods approach for this study, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) cited that by using mixed methods, the researcher gains the advantage of benefitting from the strengths of the qualitative and quantitative method. The mixed methodology approach was used to capture the widest range of effects of the participants' experience with parent involvement in their schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). A six-item survey instrument was used to collect the quantitative data. Each of the six items provided multiple selections to select. Data from 148 completed principal surveys was collected and entered into an Excel spreadsheet so that the data could be calculated. This data were entered into SPSS to be calculated and analyzed.

The qualitative portion of the data were derived from the 486 transcripts that were written in the comments section of the survey that was provided after each of the six items. The participants of the study were requested to write-in a description of their best practices if they desired to provide that information. After this data were collected, the data were coded for possible themes and further categorized into major themes by a trained group of coders.

Description of the Population

This study focused on the two largest groups of faith-based schools, namely Roman Catholic schools affiliated with ADLA and Protestant schools affiliated with ACSI, in Southern California. Christian school enrollment in the U.S. (pre-kindergarten through Grade 8) depicted in Table 1 shows the number of students enrolled from the Fall of 1995 through the Fall of 2011. This timeframe equates to a 16-year period and represents the most recent data that were reported at the time of this study. The non-sectarian category was not included in this table

because it was not considered to be a part of the Catholic or Protestant faith and did not identify with any particular religious belief. Therefore, this category is outside the scope of this study.

Thus, this study sent to principals a valid and reliable pilot-tested survey related to Epstein's six typologies at all T/K–8 Catholic school and Protestant schools, in the Southern California region of ACSI and ADLA to assess parent involvement. This pilot-tested survey was submitted and completed by the participating school's principal as that person was the key agent of connection with parents and school staff (Heiss, 1982; Hiatt-Michael, 2008, 2010). The survey was distributed to all principals throughout Southern California region of the ACSI during Fall 2016.

For the purpose of this study, the target population was limited to Catholic school and Protestant schools in Southern California, because the researcher has connections in the ADLA and ACSI. The target population for this study consists of all principals of Catholic K–8 schools within the Roman Catholic ADLA and principals of the ACSI schools in greater Los Angeles. The Catholic school participants worked at schools located in Los Angeles County and Ventura County.

The location of the ADLA is in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties. ACSI, headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado, is comprised of nearly 24,000-member Christian schools in more than 100 nations. ACSI is a leader in strengthening Christian schools and equipping Christian educators worldwide, providing services through a network of 28 regional offices. The organization accredits Protestant P–12 schools.

The Catholic schools are affiliated with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles. The researcher contacted Anthony J. Galla, Ed.D., Deputy Superintendent of Elementary Schools, and the ADLA via e-mail. He agreed to a personal meeting. Because of the researcher's distance from

his office, Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael agreed to meet with him on the researcher's behalf. To ensure that the survey criterion was met, Dr. Paul Sullivan provided a hard-copy of the survey to the ADLA Deanery, to be completed by hand, and Dr. William Walner emailed the link to the survey to ACSI principals, to be completed electronically via SurveyMonkey.

Criteria for the Sample Population

The criteria for inclusion for this sample were the following:

1. Person must be employed as the principal of a Catholic, ADLA T/K-8 school, or a Protestant, ACSI T/K-8 school.
2. The person must be currently employed in this role.
3. The school must be located within Southern California.

The survey was hand delivered or completed electronically via Survey Monkey.

Quantitative methodology. The quantitative questions in the survey focused on the school principals' perception of parent involvement at his or her school. Fowler (2013) described when and why surveys are used. Surveys can be used to assign human responses to a set of numerical values, which can then be converted to percentages and frequencies for analysis of the results. These results are descriptive. In addition, the survey results may be used to obtain differences between the two groups using inferential statistical analyses.

Qualitative methodology. Creswell (2007) described five approaches to qualitative inquiry and research design. They are narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. This study utilized the narrative research approach, because it used the direct quotes and terminology of the participants of the study to provide a clear understanding of their individual experiences. The qualitative research portion of this study followed the basic process of research as described by Creswell (2007) in four steps of analysis.

- Step 1: The relevant information was segmented into specific phrases or sentences so that each reflected a specific idea.
- Step 2: The statements were grouped into meaning units. The segments from step 1 were categorized according to these meaning units.
- Step 3: The researcher looked for divergent perspectives or varying ways that others experienced the same situation or phenomenon.
- Step 4: The meanings constructed from Step 1 through Step 3 were used to develop an overall description (i.e., constructing a composite) of parental involvement.

Themes were then derived from the common experiences.

Survey Instrument

The survey research method enables the investigator to use a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, and/or opinions (Creswell, 2007). This method also allows the participants to easily remain anonymous. Also, a survey eliminates the chance for the interviewer to introduce certain types of bias, such as leading questions, hostility or acceptance toward the interviewer, and sensitivity or social acceptance bias. In addition, the survey research method is usually less costly and less time consuming than other methods.

Creation of survey instrument. A six-question survey was created, and each question had added space for the participant to describe their best practices, if applicable. The survey items were developed from the literature, relying especially on Epstein's six types of parent involvement. The original survey was adopted from Hiatt-Michael (2010). The initial draft of the original survey was sent to a panel of experts in the field of parent involvement drawn from the membership of the American Educational Research Association in the Special Interest Group-Family-School-Community Partnerships. The survey items were modified according to

the suggestions of four members of the panel of experts. This survey was submitted to six faith-based principals, who recommended wording that was in the vernacular and understanding of the principals. The researcher revised the survey to make it more comprehensible to the responding principals in this study.

Pilot test of instrument. After the survey was approved, the survey was pilot tested during a Deanery Meeting with 13 Catholic school principals. The principal's participated voluntarily and as part of a normal school business meeting. Responses indicated that 11 principals reported that they headed Catholic private schools and two principals headed parish-related Catholic private schools. The participants indicated that they readily understood all the items on the six-item survey and completed the survey in five minutes. Eleven of the 13 principals responded to the request for comments. Six of these principals provided substantive comments to all the items, specifying their work with parents at the school.

Data Collection

Survey of ACSI principals. After this pilot test, the instrument was sent to ACSI for their approval. ACSI in Southern California was interested in approving this survey for their principals based on their interest in parent involvement. The researcher requested site approval from Dr. Derek Keenan, Executive Director of the ACSI Commission on Accreditation (see Appendix A), to use the survey within this study. Site approval was approved (see Appendix B). ACSI agreed to share the results of this survey with the researcher for inclusion in her study on Catholic and Protestant PreK–8 schools.

See Appendix F for the survey sent to ACSI school principals and Appendix G for the survey sent to ADLA school principals. The instrument was placed on Survey Monkey by ACSI, using their current email distribution list. Using this distribution list, the study was guaranteed

that the criterion of the target population would be met. The web link to the electronic survey was distributed via email to 217 ACSI principals located in Southern California. Within the first week, 21 out of 218 participants responded to the survey, and an additional 26 replied after the second request, for a total response of 47 principals. All 47 principals, who opted to participate in this study, completed and submitted their responses electronically, using SurveyMonkey. The completed surveys were collected by Dr. William Walner and provided to the researcher for the data analysis process to begin. All participants' identity remained unknown or anonymous.

Survey of ADLA principals. No changes were made to the survey from the pilot test, so the researcher included these 13 responses in this study. The researcher requested site approval from Dr. Anthony J. Galla, ADLA Deputy Superintendent of Elementary Schools, to distribute the principal survey to all the ADLA T/K–8 schools located in Southern California (see Appendix C). Site approval from ADLA was approved (see Appendix D). Dr. Galla, in conjunction with Dr. Paul Sullivan, distributed the survey at Deanery meetings and encouraged the T/K–8 school principals to complete it. This archdiocese covers the highly-populated and culturally diverse counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, and San Bernardino. This archdiocese covers the Greater Los Angeles area with the center as Our Lady of Angels Cathedral. The Archdiocese includes 364 schools, in which the majority are K–8 schools. A hard-copy of the survey was distributed to each Deanery, to be completed and collected during the Deanery leadership meetings, which are held monthly.

Hard copies of the survey were distributed to 20 deaneries, to be provided to the potential participants during their monthly Deanery meetings in February 2017. This allowed the survey to be provided to 218 ADLA potential participants, all located in Southern California. Of the 218 potential participants targeted, 101 participants completed and submitted their survey to the

Deanery chairperson. The chairperson placed the completed surveys in a pre-stamped envelope, and mailed it to the researcher. Based on the number of envelopes received by the researcher, 10 deaneries participated in this study, out of the 20 targeted deaneries. These responses include the responses of the Deanery that participated in the pilot study that involved 13 initial participants.

Protection of Human Subjects

The investigator considered possible ethical issues that could occur during this research process. To minimize or eliminate any risks that could potentially harm the human subjects, the investigator followed the Pepperdine University Institutional Review Board's (IRB) guidelines for the protection for human subjects. The investigator also completed the CTII certificate course, which is required for conducting research (see Appendix H). To ensure that the IRB research data collection procedures would be followed and that the human subjects would be protected, the research proposal was reviewed and approved by Pepperdine University's IRB department (see Appendix I). The Protestant school participants were required by ACSI to complete the electronic version of the survey. The Catholic school participants completed the hard copy version of the survey, during their monthly Deanery leadership meetings.

To ensure that the participant's rights were protected, each participant who received a hard copy version of the survey received and signed a Participant Consent Form (see Appendix J), which provided information about the study and participant consent information, as recommended by Creswell (2007). The purpose of the research project was provided in writing, to the potential research participants, as part of the Participant Consent Form. The human subjects who completed the electronic survey were verbally informed about the purpose of the study. They were also informed that completion and submission of the electronic survey constituted informed consent.

The investigator did not collect any personal information that could identify the human subjects. This included, but was not limited to, direct identifiers such as the subject's name, the subject's e-mail address, or the name of the school. Also, this included any indirect identifiers that could be used to determine a subjects' identity. The beginning of the hard copy survey contained a demographic portion, which requested: (a) the county where the school was located, (b) the number of students at the school, (c) the number of years of experience as a principal of the participant, and (e) the participant's gender. The electronic survey did not request any demographic information. Any demographic information received was limited to the county where the school is located and the participant's gender, and was provided by Dr. William Walner.

The survey was completed in one of two ways, either electronically through SurveyMonkey or face-to-face in a meeting. The electronic link to the survey was distributed to the Protestant school principals who were members of the ACSI, by a member of the researcher's dissertation committee and ACSI member, Dr. Bill Warner. For electronic participants, an invitational e-mail was sent to the potential participant, to explain the study and to request their participation (see Appendix K). The hard copy versions of the survey were distributed to the Catholic school principals who are members of ADLA, during their monthly Deanery leadership meetings, by Dr. Paul Sullivan, who is also a member of the researcher's dissertation committee and a member of the ADLA. Included with the hard copy survey and Participant Consent Form, was a self-addressed, stamped envelope, so that the Deanery leader could return the completed surveys from their Deanery, to the researcher through the mail. No return address from the Deanery leader or any identifying information pertaining to the

participant was included. By following this distribution process, it was impossible for the researcher to connect the surveys to any individual.

Confidentiality. The ethical code for researchers is to provide the protection of privacy to the participants of the study (Creswell, 2007). During the collection of data for this study, the researcher ensured the confidentiality of each participant. The names and other identifying data were not collected, thereby ensuring that the protection of the human subjects. Each school type was coded as “C” for Catholic and “P” for Protestant. To specifically identify each survey response, the hard-copy surveys were coded as “C-1”, “C-2”, “C-3”, and so on, for responses from Catholic school participants and “P-1”, “P-2”, “P-3”, and so on, for responses from Protestant school participants.

Creswell (2007) recommended that the data be retained for a period after it has been analyzed. To comply with this recommendation, after the study was completed and the data were analyzed, the signed, Participant Consent Forms, and the completed hard-copy surveys were filed and any electronic records were stored on a USB drive. The consent forms, hard copy surveys and USB drive will be retained in a locked file cabinet for three years. The researcher will be the only person with access to the locked file cabinet.

Creswell (2007) further specified that all data should be discarded, so that they cannot be used for other purposes. To comply with this specification, after the three-year retention period has transpired, the researcher will shred the paper copies, using a cross-cut shredder, and the data on the USB will be deleted. There was no monetary benefit for participating in this study.

Validity and Reliability

Bryman (2008) defined validity as the ability to determine whether an indicator or a set of indicators can measure a concept that the instrument was designed to measure. In addition to

Bryman's definition, Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) supplied further clarity by indicating that the researcher must confirm that the quality, results, and the interpretation of the data are accurate, in order to validate the data.

Validity in mixed methods research is somewhat more specific. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) defined validity in mixed method research as strategies that prevent the merging or compromise of the quantitative or qualitative results of a study, as it relates to the data collection, data analysis, and the interpretation of the findings of the study. For data collection, the researcher submitted the survey to two outside persons for distribution. To assure validity of quantitative data, the researcher hired a statistician to perform the data analyses. For the qualitative data, three trained coders reviewed, discussed, analyzed, and categorized the written comments. These two approaches removed researcher bias and focused on analyses of actual collected data. For data interpretation, the researcher frequently met with members of the committee to assure that her words reflected the actual meaning of the respondents in her study.

Bryman (2008) defined reliability as a concept that contains consistent measures. It is similar to replicability, which means a study can be repeated. The researcher had a team of experts review the instrument to determine its validity. The instrument was also pilot tested with a group of 13 principals of Catholic K-8 schools. These same procedures were followed for distribution to the other Deanery meetings for data collection from Catholic principals. The results of all the collected surveys of the ACSI California schools were reviewed by a panel from upper level ACSI administrators to note reliability of responses. These methods ensured that the study contained reliability and sufficient consistency to be replicated by future researchers or scholars.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the population that was studied, the development of the survey that was utilized and the methods to collect the data. The researcher provided her skills to handle this study and support from the two organizations. In addition, this chapter described protection of human subjects and approval by the IRB of Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. The results of this study should provide an assessment of the status of parent involvement within Southern California from faith-based principals' perceptions.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Data and Findings

Introduction

For this study of the perceptions of Catholic and Protestant principals' perceptions of parent involvement at their school site, this chapter reports the analysis of the study data under six headings. The headings focus on the research and sample population, data analysis procedures, demographic data of participants, findings by research question and for the hypothesis, and summary of findings.

Research and Sample Population

The research population for ADLA Catholic Pre/K–8 schools in Southern California consisted of 217 schools. The sample population consisted of 101 participants, which equates to 46.5% of the research population from ADLA. The research population for the ACSI Protestant Pre/K–8 schools in Southern California consisted of 218 schools. The sample population consisted of 47 participants, which represents 21.6% of the population from ACSI. The quantitative data were composed of survey responses from 101 Catholic elementary school principals and 47 Protestant elementary school principals. The total number of possible participants that could have completed the survey was 435 (consisting of 217 Catholic school principals and 218 Protestant school principals). The combined total response rate was 34%, adequate for substantive data analyses. In addition, such a rate to a survey indicates the commitment of the principals to the research topic of parent involvement.

Data Analysis Procedures

The quantitative data were recorded and categorized into data tables, using Excel software. The data were entered into SPSS predictive analytics software to be analyzed, using

descriptive statistics, including mean, mode, and median. These data were further analyzed to answer the hypotheses using chi-square and t-test data analyses.

The qualitative data were derived from the principals' written responses regarding best practices. The survey requested that the principals comment after each category regarding a best practice and provided a section for final comments on best practices. Prior to the work by the coders, the researcher had assigned a code number to each hard copy of the Catholic principals' responses. Code numbers ranged from 001 to 101 for these Catholic school principals. The comments from Protestant principals could not be distinguished by individual from their particular survey. SurveyMonkey presented all comments by category for all respondents. Thus, the researcher could only assign a P and another letter for the response category.

The researcher utilized three coders who were previously trained in the coding process. The investigator served as the facilitator of the process. The coders first worked independently and then collectively. To commence the process, each coder was given a set of transcripts, a copy of the research questions, and a blank copy of the survey. In addition, the coders were provided colored highlighters.

Their initial task was to identify themes that cut across the comments and the two groups of participants. Each coder was to read all transcripts and identify any recurring or frequently used words or phrases. At the end of this task, the coders identified and shared the major themes that emerged at the end of stage one of the coding process. This initial process revealed 20 themes.

As a collective, the coders worked closely with the researcher to further categorize the data into five major themes. During this coding session, the coders reported their findings

verbally while the researcher documented their inputs. In this process, the coders minimized any researcher bias pertaining to the analyzing of the qualitative data.

Demographic Data of Participants

The demographic variables for the school sites in the study are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

A Comparison of School Demographics for Catholic School and Protestant School Participants

Variables	Catholic ($N = 101$)	Protestant ($N = 47$)
Location by County		
Los Angeles	69.3%	21.3%
Orange	---	6.4%
San Bernardino	---	6.4%
San Diego	---	2.0%
Santa Barbara	---	4.3%
Ventura	8.9%	4.3%
Unknown	21.8%	55.3%
	100.0	100.0
Grade Level of School		
Pre/K–8	61.4%	---
K–8	16.8%	---
EE-12	0.0%	100%
Unknown	21.8%	
Faith-Based School Type		
Catholic (Private)	88.1%	0.0%
Church-related	9.9%	55.3%
Other (Parish Elementary)	2.0%	0.0%
Independent	0.0%	44.7%

The demographic section was inadvertently not included on the electronic version of the survey. However, Dr. William Walner of ACSI was able to provide some of the demographic information for the school sites. The Protestant school participants worked in Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Bernardino County, San Diego County, Santa Barbara County, and Ventura County. Of the 47 Protestant school participants, 21.3% ($N = 10$) worked in Los Angeles County; 6.4% ($N = 3$) worked in Orange County; 6.4% ($N = 3$) worked in San Bernardino County; 2.0% ($N = 1$) worked in San Diego County; 4.3% ($N = 2$) worked in Santa Barbara County; 4.3% ($N = 2$) worked in Ventura County, and 55.3% ($N = 26$) counties were unknown.

Of the 101 ADLA participants, 69.3% ($N = 70$) worked at schools in Los Angeles County, and 8.9% ($N = 9$) worked in Ventura County. A portion of the Catholic school participants that did not identify their school geographic location was 21.8% ($N = 22$).

The Catholic school participants grade levels of school were T/K–8 at 61.4% ($N = 62$), K–8 at 16.8% ($N = 17$), and 21.8% ($N = 22$) of the grade levels of school was unknown. The Protestant school participants grade levels of school was Early Education (EE)-12, at 100% ($N = 47$).

The faith-based school type for the Catholic schools was primarily reported to be a private school by the principals (88.1%; $N = 89$). The remaining principals indicated that the school was church-related (9.9%; $N = 10$) and other, being a Parish Elementary (2.0%; $N = 2$). The faith-based school type for the Protestant school participants was church-related (55.3%; $N = 26$) or an independent school (44.7%; $N = 21$).

In addition to the prior statistics, the survey requested the size of the student body of faith-based school that the participant represented. Results indicated that these schools had a

student body size between 69 and 700 students—a range of 631 students. The median number of students per school was 240 as five schools had 220 students and five schools had 260 students. The mean, or central tendency was 245.08 ($M = 245.08$). ACSI reported that the average student enrollment of K–8 schools in Southern California is 193 students. These are smaller schools compared to the average inner city (urban) school in the region.

The demographic data from the human subjects who participated in this study are presented in Table 8.

Table 8

A Comparison of Selected Attributes of the Two Types of Principals

Level of Education

Variables	Catholic ($N = 101$)	Protestant ($N = 47$)
Bachelor's	5.0%	---
Bachelor's, with credential		
Master's		
Master's, with credential		
Ed.D.	8.9%	--
Ph.D.	2.0%	---
Unknown	22.8%	89.1%

Gender

Male	18.8%	17.1%
Female	59.4%	25.5%
Unknown	21.8%	57.4%

The Catholic school participants' highest level of education was a Bachelor's degree, at 5.0% ($N = 5$); a Bachelor's degree with a teaching credential, at 1.0% ($N = 1$); a Master's degree, at 42.6% ($N = 43$); a Master's degree with a teaching credential, at 17.8% ($N = 18$); a Doctor of Education (Ed. D.) degree, at 8.9% ($N = 9$); a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) degree, at 2.0% ($N = 2$); and 22.8% ($N = 23$) were unknown. For the Protestant school participants, their highest

level of education should be a Master's degree and credential preferred, but actual education levels were unknown. Requirements for the position include a master's degree and five years of instructional experience. However, at least 10.9% ($N = 11$) of these Catholic school participants exceeded those requirements by possessing an earned doctorate degree.

The Catholic school participants gender was 59.4% ($N = 60$) female, 18.8% ($N = 19$) male, and 21.8% ($N = 22$) of the participant's gender was unknown. The Protestant school participants gender was 25.5% ($N = 12$) female, 17.1% ($N = 8$) male and 57.4% ($N = 27$) unknown.

Catholic school principals had between one and 45 years of experience. The mode is 9 and the mean, or central tendency, was 9.18 ($M = 9.18$), suggesting that the survey was primarily completed by *experienced principals*. The data for the Protestant school principals were not obtained through the survey but ACSI leaders indicated that ACSI would present similar years of experience.

Findings by Research Question and for the Hypothesis

Research question 1. The first research question addressed "What are the principals' perception of factors guiding parents' choice for Catholic and Protestant schools?" This research question was examined in Survey Item 4. Table 9 presents the Catholic school and Protestant school principal's responses to this item, which presents the principals' perception of parent's deciding factors for choosing a faith-based school for their children's education.

Table 9

A Comparison on Catholic and Protestant School Principals' Perception of Parents' Reasons Regarding School Choice

Reason	Catholic <i>N</i> = 101 Percentage	Protestant <i>N</i> = 47 Percentage
High academic quality	89.1%	87.2%
Faith-based education	44.6%	91.5%
Character education	68.3%	80.9%
Diverse Curriculum offerings	27.7%	38.3%
Small class size	53.5%	87.2%
Individual attention for the students	57.4%	63.8%
Bullying concerns	21.8%	53.2%

Catholic school principals. Catholic school principals perceived that the primary reason parents send their children to a faith-based school was for the *high academic quality*. Eighty-nine percent of Catholic school principals checked high academic quality as the primary reasons their parents selected their schools. According to these 89%, their parents appeared to discuss academic quality over faith-based or character reasons for having chosen their school. For example, comments by C002 and C066 highlighted the school's primary focus on academic rigor and secondly on faith-based reasons. Other principals reported that parents selected their Catholic school for academic quality over character education, which ranked at 68.3% (*N* = 69), for individual attention to students, at 57.4% (*N* = 58), small class size, at 53.5% (*N* = 54), and faith-based education, at 44.6% (*N* = 45). The sixth choice was diverse curriculum offerings, at 27.7% (*N* = 28); and the seventh and final reason for school choice was bullying concerns, at 21.8% (*N* = 22). C067 listed this order of reasons in this principal's comments: "small classroom size, individual attention, faith-based, and safe environment." C065 expanded, "Our

school forms children holistically. Parents who seek our service seek to enroll their children in an environment that fosters and facilitates the whole child.”

Fifty Catholic school participants out of 101 principals provided best practices transcripts regarding school choice. C066 summed up parents’ choice stating that they desire “high academic expectations and religion.” C067 added “small class size, individual attention, and a safe environment.” Of the 50 transcripts, 14 participants had bullying concerns because their child had a bad experience from previous schools and five indicated that parents were seeking a safe school environment. Catholic school participants C028, C060, and C075 added brief comments regarding bullying concerns and parents’ desire for a safe environment for their children. C045 stated that parents have confidence that school leaders will take action and be proactive regarding student behavior.

Additionally, 15 of the 101 of Catholic school participants believed that school choice was based on a Catholic identity and values. Participant C002 highlighted their focus on spiritual development and academic rigor, adding that “we promote a Catholic family environment.” C085 remarked “The school should have a very thorough and mission-related outreach program, that cultivates a growth-oriented school culture, including innovative and professional staff.”

Protestant school principals. ACSI principals shared that the primary reason parents selected their school was for Bible-based education for their children. However, the principals also noted that these parents questioned the school’s academic quality during onsite interviews and that both attributes were important qualities in parents’ decision-making. Protestant faith-based parents made their school choice for their children based on their desire for Bible-based education plus strong academic focus.

Thus, a different order of priority of parent reasons was provided by the Protestant school principals. The primary reason that Protestant school principals selected for parent selection of their schools was faith-based education ($N= 43$ or 91.5%). The second and third most frequently reported reasons were high academic quality and small class size ($N= 41$ or 87.2%). The third fourth reason—character education—was noted by 80.9% ($N=$) of the principals. The fourth highest score was individual attention for the students, checked by 63.8% ($N= 30$) and leading to the fifth choice, which was bullying concerns, at 53.2% ($N = 25$); followed by the sixth and final choice of diverse curriculum offerings, ranking at 38.3% ($N = 18$).

Protestant school participants perceived that parents' school choice is primarily based on their values of a Bible-based education; but, in addition, they valued a school that promoted academic achievement. Participant P1 noted that the parents in the school want a Biblical worldview as a foundation for students to deal with contemporary gender issues and continued with “many parents are opposed to the math program being taught in our local public schools.”

Participant P1 believed that by:

Offering families tours, giving shadow days, coming to Chapel services, and special events, parents can experience their faith-based school. By doing this, a partnership can be formed with the families before enrollment. In time, the school and parents work together to lead children to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, while providing a well-rounded distinguished education.

Other Protestant school participants commented as follows:

“Parents want nurturing teachers and high academics;”

“Godly, caring, and safe atmosphere;” and

“Personal connection, small classes and approach to character building and disciplining.”

In this category, two Protestant principals discussed branding and marketing. P1 described that:

Our parents are our best marketing tool. We understand that everyone on our faculty and staff are in the admissions recruitment business. We create raving fans by listening and

responding to our parents. Word of mouth is the best and we give parents great things to talk about personal tours which involve student ambassadors.

The other argued for “Concentrated marketing campaigns that target our specific audience.

Being clear about our school’s ‘brand’ and what we offer that differentiates us from other school options.”

One participant commented that current parents referred new parents to the school.

Therefore, a positive, word-of-mouth referral can be a powerful and beneficial recruitment tool.

This participant noted the following:

The development and admissions departments utilize a variety of methods to reach out and attract new families, such as press releases, social media, and personal contact with local preschools. We also have Community Connection (staff) who create social and spiritual interactive venues for new and current families to spend valuable time together. In turn, happy families promote the school. Positive word-of-mouth is imperative to attract new families.

Research question 2. The second research question raised was “What are the principals’ perception of parent involvement in four categories within Catholic and Protestant schools?”

These categories are methods of communicating with parents, desired parental support, encouragement of parental involvement, and parental decision-making at the school.

Methods of communication with parents. After school choice, principals responded to the category Methods of Communicating with Parents. Table 10 depicts the Catholic school and Protestant school principals’ responses to the items in this category. Both sets of principals selected face-to-face contact and using school websites as two of their preferred methods for communicating with parents

Table 10

A Comparison of Catholic and Protestant School Principals' Methods of Communicating with Parents

Methods of Communicating with Parents	Catholic	Protestant
	<i>N</i> = 101	<i>N</i> = 47
	Percentage	Percentage
Face-to-face meetings	90.1%	100.0%
School website	89.1%	95.7%
School newsletter	69.3%	78.7%
Emails and mobile messaging	85.1%	97.9%
Parent-Teacher conference	88.1%	91.5%
Letters from the principal-teacher	76.2%	80.9%
Social Media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	64.4%	100.0%

Note. The number of forms of communication used to connect to parents did not differ significantly across school types, $t(1.46) = -.83, p = .407$

Although Catholic school principals used multiple forms of communication, their survey responses indicated that they preferred face-to-face contact with parents by 90.1% ($N = 91$); followed by communicating via the school's website by 89.1% ($N = 90$); and their third preferred method of communicating with parents was through parent-teacher conferences, which was 88.1% ($N = 89$). The fourth preferred method of communicating was using emails and mobile messaging, which was 85.1% ($N = 86$); followed by the fifth selection, which was letters from the principal-teacher, at 76.2% ($N = 77$); then the sixth selection, which was the school newsletter, at 69.3% ($N = 70$); and the seventh and final selection was social media, at 64.4% ($N = 65$).

Twenty-two transcripts from 101 Catholic school principals included comments for this survey item. Many participants commented on face-to-face communication. Participant C068 preferred one-on-one communication, in the parking lot or private meetings called by the principal.

Catholic school participants had shared common responses to Survey Item 2, one of them indicating that they use a combination of emails and general meetings and not just one form of communication. Another participant indicated that emails are their best means of communicating with parents and one of their most common forms of communication.

For example, Catholic school participant C007 noted that the best method to communicate with parents is by phone, on Facebook and through School Speak—a tool to communicate with parents regarding homework, announcements, schoolwork, and grades. Participant C069 stated that Parent Square, which is a hub for all classroom, parent club, and school-related communications, works effectively.

Protestant school principals preferred two methods of communication equally. They unanimously selected face-to-face meetings with parents, and using social media, both at 100% ($N = 47$). These two selections were tied as their first choices and most preferred methods for communicating with parents. Their second preferred method of communicating with parents was via emails and mobile messaging, at 97.7%; followed communicating via their school website, at 95.7%. The fourth preferred method of communicating was using emails and mobile messaging, at 91.5%; followed by the fifth selection, which was letters from the principal-teacher, at 80.9%; then the sixth and final selection was the school newsletter, at 78.7%. There was no seventh selection, because the first method of communicating had two selections with the same score. For both types of schools, direct verbal contact with the parents was most preferred communication method.

One Protestant school participant highlighted parent–school relationships and multi-pronged communication as essential, stating: “Relationships are KEY! Day to day, face to face interaction is crucial for building those relationships and communicating one on one. In addition,

our weekly school eblast disseminates key information about upcoming events, activities, minimum days, etc.” Another Protestant principal, who also used the RenWeb electronic school management system, mentioned the following:

There are two very effective ways we communicate with parents. One is through regular emails. Most parents receive these on their phones, so the information is passed quickly and effectively. Another tool we use is Parent Alert through RenWeb. This alerting system sends texts to parents with short messages that can alert them to longer emails, or to provide instant information for their benefit.

A third Protestant school participant stated:

We have a dynamic website where most information is located. However, calling and meeting with parents is still the best means (New Parent Orientation, Back to School Nights and when requested parent conferences with teachers or administrators). Short and to the point communication. Use a variety of methods to communicate. Do not communicate information that is not important or parents will stop listening. Provide open communication that allows for feedback.

One Protestant school noted that the school so highly values communication that the school hired a person to handle the school’s communications to parents and the larger community. This participant noted:

We recognize the importance of accurate and timely information delivered in the format that most closely meets the needs and desires of our parents. Therefore, we employ social media, email and are implementing a school app specifically designed for parent communication. We have also employed a Communication Specialist to help filter and funnel all communications through one central person.

A fourth Protestant school participant provided information about the effectiveness of their electronic school management system in noting the following:

We primarily communicate through our RenWeb school management program. Teachers and administrators can send daily academic, behavioral, and merit notifications to our parents. Parents and students are also able to check their academic progress and communicate daily with their teachers.

And a final, lengthy quote from a Protestant school principal describes which methods of communication was preferred at his school in the following comment:

We are continually connecting with parents via newsletters, issue related emails, update emails, school website communication regarding academic/behavioral/calendar related info, school-family promotional social media, individual texts to parents, phone calls to parents, issue related face-to-face meetings and contacts at school events. Our approach can best be seen as three pronged; ongoing news through multiple sources, specific contacts and communication to individuals, and celebrating success through social media.

Support expected from parents. The Catholic school and Protestant school principals' responses to Survey Item 3, which presented the type of parent support that principals expect from parents, is depicted in Table 11.

Table 11

Catholic and Protestant School Principals' Perception of Support Expected from Parents

Support Expected from Parents	Catholic <i>N</i> = 101 Percentage	Protestant <i>N</i> = 47 Percentage
Volunteer time in the classroom	49.5%	48.9%
Help with fundraising	85.1%	78.7%
Volunteering time at the school	74.3%	63.8%
Help with class projects	43.6%	44.7%
Supervision of homework	47.5%	59.6%
Chaperoning field trips	n/a	78.7%
Other	n/a	21.3%

Note. The type of support expected from parents did not differ significantly across schools, $t(1.46) = -1.00, p = .319$

The categories for “chaperoning field trips” and “other” were inadvertently omitted from the Catholic school principal’s survey, so no data were received for that selection. However, follow-up informal interviews with a group of local Catholic principals indicated similar findings and that they perceive that Catholic schools expected parent participation in various types of school trips-class field trips, athletic events, after-school club events, and the like.

There were 46 transcripts from Catholic school principals for this survey item. Of that number, a total of 21 transcripts specifically mentioned that the parents were required to complete between 30–40 volunteer service hours per family, or pay a fee of \$200–300, per year.

Many of the participants also indicated that the parents were required to sign a service contract at the beginning of each school year, agreeing to volunteer a set number of volunteer service hours at school. This contractual agreement ensured that the parents were not only aware of the volunteer service hours' requirement but that they also expressed agreement to it.

Catholic school principals indicated that the support they expected from parents was first and foremost help with fundraising, which was 85.1% ($N = 86$); followed by the second type of support expected, which was volunteering time at the school, at 74.3% ($N = 75$). The third type of support expected is volunteer time in the classroom, at 49.5% ($N = 50$). Although volunteering time at the school and volunteer time in the classroom are closely related tasks, there is a significant gap between the two, which indicates that volunteering at school has a higher expectation than volunteering in the classroom. The fourth type of support expected was supervision of homework, at 47.5% ($N = 48$); and the fifth type of support expected was help with class projects, at 43.6% ($N = 44$). Chaperoning field trips and other types of support were not included on their survey, so there was no data collected from the Catholic school principals for these items.

In reference to type of parental support expected, Catholic school participant C065 stated that, "We emphasize that our school is an extension of the home. Therefore, parents work in partnership with educators. Parent involvement is a must in order to develop the child." All the ADLA schools required volunteer service hours from the parents, each year. Participant C073 noted that, "We have a very organized, and structured parent organization that advertises and provides sign-ups for volunteer opportunities."

The Protestant school principal's responses also indicate that the first type of parent support that is expected was help with fundraising (78.7% or $N = 37$) but parents were also

expected to chaperone field trips, at (78.7% or $N = 37$). The second type of support was volunteering time at the school, at 63.8% ($N = 30$), followed by the third type of support expected, which was supervision of homework, at 59.6% ($N = 28$). The fourth type of support expected is volunteer time in the classroom, at 48.9% ($N = 23$); the fifth type of support was help with class projects, at 44.7% ($N = 21$), and the sixth and final type of support expected was “other”, at 21.3% ($N = 10$).

The following comments reveal how Protestant school principals expected parents at their school to assist in the school. A Protestant school participant stated the following:

Parents aren't required to volunteer, but are asked at the beginning of the year if they would like to donate time using their talents and/or areas of expertise for the school. This includes a wide span of volunteering positions depending on the parent responses. We have found that we have a strong volunteer program and people are excited to come in and support when they are contributing in areas that are unique to their specific areas of strength. This method has brought our school parents who are volunteering beyond daily classroom activities, such as web design, fundraising, IRS support, grant writing, music classes, physical education classes, technology support, media, and other areas.

Some schools may apply an altruistic approach to parent recruitment to the school. A Protestant school principal provided a Biblical basis for parent service to the school as follows:

“Through our Matthew 19:14 program, parents are expected to assist in the school/church.”

Another Protestant school participant P-3as stated the following: “Communicating the vision and mission so that parents want to get involved because they believe it what we are doing.”

However, another Protestant school participant shared a more practical approach to obtain parental service, “They [the parents] get free lunches for their child if they serve lunch weekly.”

A third shared an interesting approach: “We have a tuition exchange program that offers volunteer parents tuition reduction for managing certain jobs and a tuition benefit for parent employees.” Like Catholic schools, some Protestant schools had a specified minimum number

of hours required of parents as part of enrollment. One Protestant school participant indicated that:

We require 15 hours of school service per family per year. If the family is not able to fulfill this requirement, they can buy them out at the end of the year. However, we have such a close school community that it is rarely difficult to get volunteers.

Another Protestant school participant presented the following information:

We have a very strong and supportive Parent Association. We require 20 hours per adult in the home to volunteer or you must pay a fee (\$300). We also use sign up genius to sign up volunteers. We also have strong support of our parents in organizing our Admissions events.

Encouragement of parental involvement. The Catholic school and Protestant school principal's responses to survey item 5, which addressed how principals encourage parents to become involved in their children's school, is presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Catholic and Protestant School Principals' Perception of Ways to Encourage Parent Involvement

Principals' Ways to Encourage Parent Involvement	Catholic <i>N</i> = 101 Percentage	Protestant <i>N</i> = 47 Percentage
Create a welcoming environment for the parents	90.1%	100.0%
Creating opportunities for parent participation	55.4%	87.2%
Engage parents/students in after-school events	61.4%	93.6%
Developing a plan to keep the parents motivated	51.5%	48.9%

In addition to answering this survey item, the Catholic school principals submitted 39 best practices transcripts. Catholic school principals encouraged parent involvement by first creating a welcoming environment for the parents (90.1%; *N* = 91). The second highest principals'

selection was to engage parents/students in after-school events (61.4%; $N= 62$); followed by the third selection which was creating opportunities for parent participation (55.4%; $N= 56$); and lastly developing a plan to keep the parents motivated (51.5%; $N= 52$). This data reveals that over half of the participants have used any or all of these options to engage parents to participate at their school.

Catholic school participants believed that socializing with parents and having get-togethers was an important aspect of motivating parents to become involved at school.

Participant C052 noted:

I have a BYOC (Bring Your Own Coffee) every 1st Friday for parents who would like to attend. It is after our morning assembly. I give a short presentation and entertain questions or concerns. Lots of good comes from these get-togethers.

Parents were welcome to participate as partners in the education of their child. Participant C063 stated:

As partners in education, parents are welcome to the principal's office to discuss anything involving their child's education. Every opinion is taken into consideration to help affect policy changes throughout the year.

Like the Catholic school principals, all the Protestant school principals also indicated that their first preference in encouraging parent involvement was to create a welcoming environment for the parents (100%; $N= 47$). The Protestant school principals' second preference was to engage parents/students in after-school events (93.6%; $N= 44$); followed by their third selection, creating opportunities for parent participation (87.2%; $N= 41$). The fourth and last selection was developing a plan to keep the parents motivated (48.9%; $N= 25$).

For the responses to this survey item, the Catholic school and Protestant school principals rated the four choices in identical order, indicating that, for this category, they preferred to use the same approaches. However, the percentage of participants for each item was higher among

the Protestant school participants. There is a large gap between creating a welcoming environment (100%) and opportunities for parent participation (87.2%) to the percent of principals (48.9%) who reported a plan to keep the parents motivated for the Protestant school participants. This indicates that although the option to develop a plan to keep the parents motivated was used, it is far less preferred than other options.

The Protestant school participants completed 31 transcripts, describing best practices for this survey item. To encourage parents to become involved, this Protestant school participant provided the school's approach:

As a principal, one of the most important things I can do is greet students and parents in the mornings, during drop-off or at the end of the day. I greet students with a smile and a handshake. Parents, too! I recently began sending short, 20-second video clips out about upcoming events or things that are happening on campus. Our marketing director posts photos on Facebook and Instagram. Parents respond better to personal invitations rather than "Volunteers Needed" emails.

Similarly, another participant suggested that a good time to "reach out and encourage parents to become involved is during drop-off and pick-up of the children." The participant stated that their "leadership team is out during drop-off and pick-up, engaging with parents, students, and teachers. This sets the tone early that we are a team who cares about relationships." Another principal supported this approach, indicating that it was "important to show up and be present." Another principal wrote that "It is important to have a personal relationship with each family."

A Protestant school principal summed the approach in these words:

I have an "open door policy" and will ask for parent support for my administrative team when needed. I greet the families as they arrive at the school every Monday. I am the liaison for our Parent Association.

Other comments included the following:

We secured the services of an outside agency to help us understand our specific niche in our community so we can more specifically attract families with our same mindset. This

was an excellent decision and has helped us focus our efforts at our target audience which has proved to be a success.

Engage parents. When they have concerns and questions take time to listen and then follow through with action when appropriate. Strategically plan events to maximize parent involvement.

One Protestant school participant stated:

As a principal, one of the most important things I can do is greet students and parents in the mornings, during drop-off or at the end of the day. I greet students with a smile and a handshake. Parents, too! I recently began sending short, 20-second video clips out about upcoming events or things that are happening on campus. Our marketing director posts photos on Facebook and Instagram. Parents respond better to personal invitations rather than “Volunteers Needed” emails.

Another Protestant school participant presumed the following:

Parent volunteer communication with teacher and principal. Keeping parents volunteering in their area of strength. Allowing for flexibility and affirming success and impact of volunteering on teachers and students through text and email. Volunteer appreciation at the end of the school year.

Parent involvement in decision-making. Figure 3 reflects responses to survey item 6, and presents the participants’ perception of parent involvement in decision-making at Catholic school and Protestant schools. The Catholic school principals indicated yes, at 88% ($N = 89$); no, at 8% ($N = 8$); sometimes, at 3% ($N = 3$); and no response, at 1% ($N = 1$). The participants ($N = 101$) completed 47 transcripts, describing their best practices.

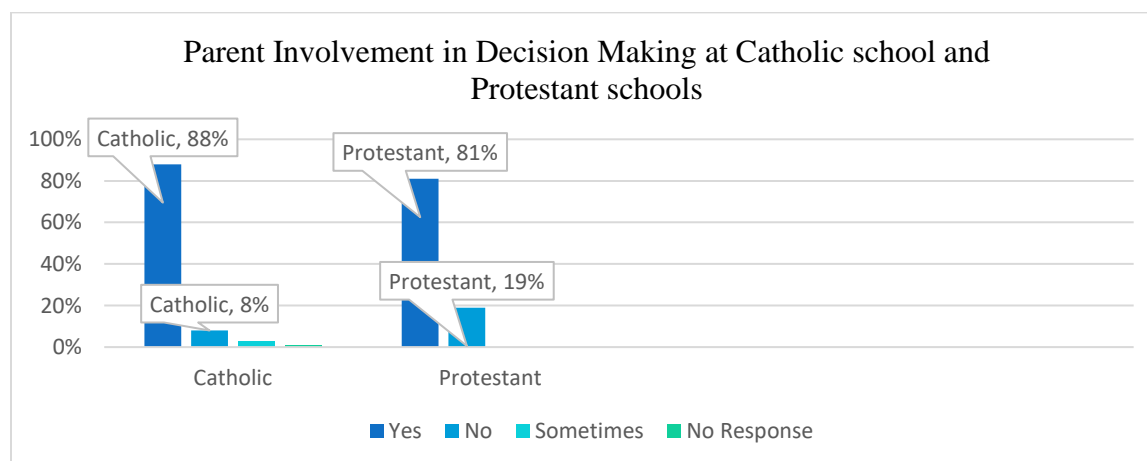


Figure 3. Parent involvement in decision making at Catholic school and Protestant schools.

Catholic school participant C-18 noted that parents participate in decision-making, except for curricular and personal decisions. Contrarily, participant C-07 indicated that parents served in an advisory role, but considered the advice and made the final decisions. Participants C-72 and C-78 indicated that the parents served on an advisory board and they completed parent surveys, periodically, to gauge their opinions, inputs, and suggestions.

The Protestant school principals' responses to survey item 6 was yes, at 81% ($N = 38$); and no, at 19% ($N = 9$). All the Protestant school participants answered either "Yes" or "No" to this survey item regarding parent involvement in decision-making at Protestant schools. Therefore, the response choice of "Sometimes", and "No Response" was zero (0%). The Protestant school participants completed 45 best practices transcripts. A few of them are listed below.

Protestant school participants believed that parents were included in the decision-making process; a principal stated the following:

We are continuously evaluating our entire program. We ask for parental input on decisions that are made regarding changes. We recently moved to a philosophy of mastery at the school and it is made up of a partnership with the school, the students, and the parents. We communicate often that we are working together for the full development of our students.

P6 indicated that parents served on the governance board. Similarly, a P6 commented:

We give parents the opportunity to give input on the revision of our Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR) and on what technology skills that they want their children to have. Parents can participate in the decision-making process through school committee membership.

Another observation from P6 was:

We have several committees which parents are on (Board level) Finance Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and the Advancement Committee, as well as the Parent Association, Friends of Maranatha Arts, and our Athletic Boosters club, all of which are asked for input.

A P6 agreed by noting the following:

We have several committees which parents are on (Board level) Finance Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, and the Advancement Committee, as well as the Parent Association, Friends of Maranatha Arts, and our Athletic Boosters club, all of which are asked for input.

Another P6 added:

Various parent surveys are sent out each year. I hold informal coffee and chat gatherings for each grade level throughout the year. New parents are given an opportunity to meet as a group about one month into school to continue to answer their questions. Focus groups based on various topics have been formed to hear from parents on issues of greatest concern to them. We also hold "family dinner" meetings several times during the year to discuss current and upcoming needs for the express purpose of hearing from the parents and to gain their involvement in the school.

Two principals noted limitations of parents' participation in the decision-making process.

Parents are involved through relationships and conversational input. Parents who understand mission and vision have great growth input. Parents don't vote or make decisions for the school. Parents may be a part of our board and then be part of the oversight of the school.

We give parents the opportunity to give input on the revision of our Expected School-wide Learning Results (ESLR) and on what technology skills that they want their children to have. Parents can participate in the decision-making process through school committee membership.

Research question 3. The third research question raised was "What are the principals' perception of parent involvement in four categories within Catholic and Protestant schools?"

Data analysis. The percentage of responses to the best practices portion of the Catholic school and Protestant school principal's surveys are presented in Table 13. The percentage calculations are based on 148 survey participants. The 101 Catholic school principals wrote 230 best practices that were transcribed by an independent transcriber. The 47 Protestant school principals provided 256 best practices responses, also transcribed by an independent transcriber. The Protestant principals responded at a significantly higher rate than the Catholic school principals ($p > .001$). The percentage of responses to the best practices portion of the Catholic

school and Protestant school principals' surveys are presented in Table 13 based on the 486 transcripts of principals' comments regarding their best practices to encourage parent involvement.

Table 13

A Comparison by Percentage of Catholic and Protestant School Principals' Who Provided Written Best-practices Responses by Survey Category

Principal's Rate of Survey Responses Regarding Best Practices	Catholic <i>N</i> = 101 Percent	Protestant <i>N</i> = 47 Percent
Communication with Parents	21.8%	100%
Parent Support Expected	45.5%	100%
Reasons for Parental School Choice	49.5%	89.4%
Encouragement to Parents	41.6%	66.0%
Parental Decision Making	43.6%	95.7%
Additional Comments	24.8%	93.6%

Note. The percentage was determined by the number of Catholic or Protestant principals that included responses in that category of the survey. *N* = 486 comments.

These written responses from the various principals were coded into themes by the researcher and the three trained coders. Twenty sub-themes emerged during the coding session, based on the number of times the theme was mentioned in the participants' transcripts. The investigator tallied the responses provided by the study's participants, and the count was entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet (see Appendix L). The investigator and the coding team further categorized the 20 initial sub-themes to discover five major categories—termed themes hereafter—from the participant's transcripts. These five themes were a) communication, b) volunteer service, c) parent surveys, d) parent–school organization, and e) family-friendly environment.

Communication. This garnered the largest number and length of responses of the five themes with a response percentage of 27.7% ($N = 41$) from the participants. Most of the Protestant principals' responses which were describing best practices centered on face-to-face contact, e-mails and utilizing the school website, if applicable. On Survey Item 2, which highlights methods of communication, Protestant school participant 2l noted:

We recognize the importance of accurate and timely information delivered in the format that most closely meets the needs and desires of our parents. Therefore, we employ social media, email and are implementing a school app specifically designed for parent communication. We have also employed a Communication Specialist to help filter and funnel all communications through one central person.

Protestant school participant 2ah provided information about the effectiveness of their electronic school management system in noting the following:

We primarily communicate through our RenWeb school management program. Teachers and administrators can send daily academic, behavioral, and merit notifications to our parents. Parents and students are also able to check their academic progress and communicate daily with their teachers.

Protestant school participant 2h, who also used the same electronic school management system, noted the following:

There are two very effective ways we communicate with parents. One is through regular emails. Most parents receive these on their phones, so the information is passed quickly and effectively. Another tool we use is Parent Alert through RenWeb. This alerting system sends texts to parents with short messages that can alert them to longer emails, or to provide instant information for their benefit.

Using emails to connect with parents to keep them informed was one of the most common forms of communication, according to participant C073. Thirteen Catholic school participants and 28 Protestant school participants utilized email communication as one method of communicating with parents. One Catholic school participant, C005, noted that their use of social media and their emails to parents were the best means for communicating with parents. The Protestant school participant P2 commented that the use of emails seemed to garner the most

response, and that their school sends them out weekly. Another, P2, stated that they also send out weekly emails and mobile messaging, which consisted of reminder information from teacher to parent. There were also a school-wide emails sent through Mail-Chimp.

Volunteer service. This theme ranked second of the five major themes with a response percentage of 25.0% ($N = 37$). Most of the Catholic schools required the parents to volunteer between 15–40 hours per family, each year. If the annual volunteer service hours were not met, the family would be required to pay a fine of \$200–300. The volunteer service consisted of serving on the Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO), the Parent Action Committee, finance council, Parish council, and in focus groups.

Per Catholic school participant C068, the parents were asked to sign a volunteer service contract, agreeing to volunteer at the school for 40 hours, Protestant school participant P-3am commented that parents were assigned a specific area of service each year. In contrast, participant P-3ae stated that it was not mandatory for parents to volunteer, but they were welcome to do so.

Parents aren't required to volunteer, but are asked at the beginning of the year if they would like to donate time using their talents and/or areas of expertise for the school. This includes a wide span of volunteering positions depending on the parent responses. We have found that we have a strong volunteer program and people are excited to come in and support when they are contributing in areas that are unique to their specific areas of strength. This method has brought our school parents who are volunteering beyond daily classroom activities such as: web design, fundraising, IRS support, grant writing, music classes, physical education classes, technology support, media, and other areas.

Another Protestant school participant, P3, indicated that they use incentives, i.e., if the parent volunteered to pass out lunches for the week, their children received their lunch free. Or, if the parent volunteered in any capacity, their children received the choice of an ice cream pass or a homework pass. P3 believed that their culture was what encourages parents to volunteer at the school, and parents would love to volunteer more, especially in the K–2 grade classrooms.

In addition, P6 stated that their school had a Parent Support Group, which was instrumental in planning, organizing, and executing various events and activities for students and their families. They were also instrumental in raising funds for the school. Their school had a tuition exchange program that offered volunteer parents a tuition discount for managing certain jobs, and a tuition benefit for parent employees. In regard to parents who volunteer, participant P5 added that their school would have to raise tuition, without their parent volunteers' countless hours of work and voluntary funding.

Parent surveys. Parent surveys had an individual response percentage of 23.0% ($N = 34$). There was an even number of transcripts from the Catholic and Protestant principals for this theme—seventeen transcripts for the Catholic school and Protestant school participants. Surveys were administered to obtain information from parents, to get their opinion, and to gain an idea of how the school is doing. P5 commented that in lieu of parents being involved in the decision-making process of the school, they were given an annual survey to provide their inputs, suggestions for improvement, and other constructive comments for the school to take into consideration. Three Protestant principals and C006 also indicated that they conducted annual parent surveys to obtain the parent's inputs on how well the school is doing and recommendations for improvement. A Protestant school participant noted the following:

Currently, we do not have a formal process for parents to participate in decision making at the school pick-up. We also do an annual parents' satisfaction and referral survey. We are working on implementing a process to embrace this as a school site similar to a school site council type process. We do have two parents who serve on the school board.

Catholic school participant C091 stated that one of their best practices was an on-going parent survey which was given every month through the Parent Organization president. In addition, participant C028 used multiple methods for connecting with parents, including surveys,

e-mail blasts, online forms, etc. Everyone was invited to the PTO meetings and the principal had an open-door policy.

Parent–school organization. The next theme is parent–school organization, which consisted of PTO/Committee involvement, received a response percentage of 23.0% ($N = 34$). Catholic participant C-15 commented that their school has parent representation on the PTO board and Parish council. Participant C072 commented that the school’s Advisory board, as well as parent surveys were used to provide input to the school. Participant C073 elaborated further by stating the following:

Parents are involved on the school board and the finance council, both of which are strong, consultative bodies that incorporate significant parental feedback. Our parent board (PWC) president and members are pipelines to our parent community, and they bring both concerns and opinions to our meetings. I have utilized parent community surveys to gauge parental interest in multiple policy decisions, including drop-offs, pick-ups, and student safety.

The PTO and PWC provided parents with an opportunity to become involved and share their inputs and suggestions for improvement at school. Although parents were not typically involved in the decision-making process, they had input into the process through their committee involvement and through periodic parent surveys.

Family-friendly environment. The fifth theme, family-friendly environment, consisted of a welcoming environment and open-door policy. This topic had a response percentage of 19.6% ($N = 29$). P6 replied:

I dismissed the front office secretary shortly after my employment as she was more focused on the task at hand rather than parents or staff. I hired the new secretary for her warmth, welcoming sense, and attention to parent/student needs.

C004 noted that parents choose their school due to its “loving, caring family environment. They are a family.” Participant C023 stated that their school promoted “a family atmosphere as parents are encouraged to be regularly present on campus for daily, informal, a sense of family

sporting, and other activities.” Another Catholic school principal also shared the connection between pick-up and drop-off times as a means to develop the message that “Our leadership team is out during drop-off and pick-up to engage parents, students, and teachers. This sets the tone early that we are a team that cares about relationships!”

One Catholic school participant, C006, stated that one of the methods they use to encourage parents was maintaining “an open-door policy, and on-going collaborations and communication.” Another participant, C007, agreed with the open-door policy, “as an effective way to communicate with parents is to promote an open-door communication policy with parents.” Participants C011 and C092 indicated that they used their open-door policy to “hear parent’s suggestions and input,” for decision making. Participant C092 further stated that, in addition to their open-door policy, they were actively doing the following:

Finding and identifying leadership among the parents and inviting them to participate in leadership. A benefit of having the open-door policy is that it provides an opportunity to listen to the parents and seeing to it that their ideas, if possible, are addressed so that the parents can see progress.

Protestant school participants also believed that parents preferred a school that had a family atmosphere. One comment noted that their school “is a family community. In every way, we are partners with parents in raising disciples of Christ and student leaders.” With the care and support of their parents, this Protestant principal noted that their school is “an institution that delivers a service to Christ.” Another principal considered his work was “a blessing to be a part of this caring, supportive, community institution that delivers a service to Jesus.” Another principal noted, “We are continually encouraging a ‘family’ attitude.” Another stated, “Our school promotes a warm, family because it works effectively.” This principal seemed to sum the groups perception:

We strive to move from transactional to relational interaction to hopefully see transformation in the lives of our families. We continually strive to be present and connected in the lives of our families across multiple life events. We want to see warm welcomes and pleasant goodbyes.

Pertaining to an open-door policy, a Protestant school participant stated that in addition to their known open-door policy, they also hosted parent coffee klatches where the participant spent time with small groups of parents. Another participant commented that their school had “open campus tours any time Monday through Friday. There is no scheduling needed.” Similarly, another principal had an “open-door policy and we ask for parent support from our administrative team when needed. Our liaison is the Parent Association. We greet the families as they arrive at the school every Monday.”

Protestant school principals share that although their parents are invited to participate in an annual parent survey that helps inform change, “parents are always welcome to share their concerns and opinions with me personally or with our staff. We have an “Open-Door” policy and host coffees with parents.” However, the survey further revealed school is not a parent run school. It is overseen by a School Board and School Session. The school readily accepts parent feedback but ultimately decisions are made by the governing body of the church and school.

Hypothesis. The researcher and a colleague created the Excel spreadsheet from the raw data, but the researcher employed an independent statistician for descriptive and inferential data analyses. The T-test and Chi-square analyses were selected for this study. The T-Test was used to analyze survey items that consisted of continuous data, and the Chi-square analysis was used for nominal data. The following describes the likenesses and differences between the two types of schools according to these statistical tests. The tests organized items from the survey into Epstein’s six typologies. Thus, the findings are presented as follows:

Parenting. Developing a plan to keep parents motivated and excited about their role in students' progress differed significantly across schools, $\chi^2(1) = 18.58, p < .001$. There was significantly greater involvement in Protestant schools (93.6%) than in Catholic schools (58.6%).

Communicating. The number of forms of communication used to communicate with parents did not differ significantly across type of school, $t(146) = -.83, p = .407$.

Volunteering. The number of volunteer opportunities for parents differed significantly across type of school, $t(146) = 3.80, p < .001$. There were significantly more opportunities for parents to volunteer at Catholic schools ($M = 2.96, SD = .95$) than there were at Protestant schools ($M = 2.34, SD = .87$).

Learning at home. Homework supervision efforts did not differ significantly across schools, $\chi^2(1) = 1.06, p = .303$.

Decision-making. Parent involvement in decision-making processes differed significantly across schools, $\chi^2(2) = 30.36, p < .001$. Parents could provide input into the decision-making process slightly more at Catholic schools (88%) than at Protestant schools (81%).

Collaborating with the community. The number of ways to involve parents did not differ significantly across type of school, $t(146) = -1.00, p = .319$.

These findings revealed that the two types of schools significantly differed on parenting, volunteering, and decision-making. Catholic school principals perceived that their parents were actively more involved in volunteering, especially fund-raising for the school. The Protestant school principals perceived that their parents received more school opportunities for parenting skills and had more opportunities for decision-making at the school.

Summary of Findings

Demographics and methodology. The respondents averaged nine years of experience as a principal and obtained a masters' degree or above. The PK–8 Catholic schools covered two major counties in Southern California whereas the Protestant schools covered the five Southern California counties. The mean student size of Catholic schools was 245 students, ranging from 69 to 700 students and for Protestant schools, 193 students.

A significant difference for completion of the survey occurred between the two groups of principals based upon how the survey data were administered. A comparison of the number of responses between the two groups of principals indicated that the Catholic principals ($n = 101$ from a possible 217) who were surveyed using a hand-delivered hard copy responded at a significantly higher rate than the Protestant principals who were surveyed via email using SurveyMonkey ($n = 47$ from a possible 218). However, the Protestant school principals (256 responses from 47 respondents) who were surveyed electronically, responded with significantly more comments on every item of the survey than the Catholic school principals (230 responses from 101 principals).

Research question 1 on school choice. Per the survey responses, the Catholic and Protestant school principals perceived through their many interactions with parents that their school parents selected a faith-based school for a different primary reason. Protestant school principals' perception was that their parents made their selection of their school primarily on the importance of *Bible-based education* for their child and secondly for quality academics. In contrast, the Catholic school principals perceived that their parents primarily selected their school on *academic quality* and then secondly on other characteristics, such as character education, faith-based education, and a safe environment.

Research question 2 on categories of parent involvement. The most important parent involvement category was communication—communication that occurred through daily and multiple forms of communication according to all Catholic and Protestant principals. Face-to-face communication was rated the most preferred and regularly used method to communicate with parents for Catholic school and Protestant schools by their principals (100%). All Protestant school principals also preferred using social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), equally with face-to-face meetings. The second most preferred method for Catholic schools to communicate with parents was through their school website, the school posting messages for parent access—one-way communication from school to the parents. For the Protestant schools, the second preferred type of communication was through emails and mobile messaging, a method that may also be considered one-way communication.

Both groups of principals reported that faith-based school parents were active volunteers at the school. They expected and encouraged parents to contribute their time and resources to the school. Some schools required the parents to sign a volunteer service agreement each year, so that the parents consciously made a renewed commitment to be engaged at the school or pay a pre-declared fee. However, the way that they volunteer is different. Protestant school parents were more involved by helping the school with on-site with classroom projects, PTO meetings, and after-school events. Catholic school parents were active volunteers at the school, serving not just in the classroom but also in the school office and on the playground. Catholic (85%) and Protestant principals (79%) reported significant parent participation fundraising activities, including personal donations to the school.

Research question 3 on best practices. The third research question secured the principals' perceptions of best practices for parent involvement. The comments ($n = 486$)

provided by both groups of principals led to the emergence of five prevalent themes for best practices:

1. daily communication;
2. extensive volunteer service;
3. regular use of parent surveys
4. active parent/school organizations; and
5. family-friendly environment.

The analysis of the comments revealed that the principals and staff focused on positive communication and active parent engagement at the school. This daily focus created the principals' perception that the school is family-friendly.

Results of hypothesis analyses. The tests for the hypothesis revealed that the two types of schools significantly differed on parenting, volunteering, and decision-making. Catholic school principals perceived that their parents were actively more involved in volunteering, especially fund-raising for the school. The Protestant school principals perceived that their parents received more school opportunities for parenting skills and had more opportunities for decision-making at the school. Regarding decision-making opportunities for parents at the school, Catholic school parents are significantly more involved with decision-making at the school; 88.1% ($N = 89$) for Catholic school parents and less than half, which was 48.9% ($N = 25$), for Protestant school parents.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Problem

According to Henderson and Mapp (2002), Hiatt-Michael (2010), Sheldon and Epstein, (2005), and Whitaker and Hoover-Dempsey (2013), significant research has directly linked parent involvement to increased student achievement and increased student motivation to achieve. Additional benefits mentioned by these authors included better student behavior, higher attendance, greater parent and student satisfaction with schools, and higher rates of academic success for school grades, high school graduation, and enrollment in postsecondary education. Although parent involvement is a critical aspect of a child's education regardless of the school type, there is less research on parent involvement in faith-based schools than in public schools (Hiatt-Michael, 2012b; 2017). This limited research may be attributed to limited interest as only one in 10 children in America attend a faith-based school and funds for research exist for public schools. However, research to date involving public school teachers and principals suggests that challenges regarding parent involvement continue to exist at many public schools, especially urban schools (Horsford & Holmes-Sutton, 2012; Murray et al., 2014). Furthermore, research suggests that the parent involvement in faith-based schools appears higher than parent involvement at public schools (Hiatt-Michael, 2017).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to assess the degree of parent involvement in Catholic schools and Protestant schools according to the perception of the principal at each school in Southern California. This was an important study because it highlighted the similarities and the differences between Catholic school and Protestant school principals' perceptions of parent involvement. In addition, the study secured principals' knowledge of their best practices to

promote a high level of parent engagement in their schools. This knowledge will benefit public and private school principals. In addition, this information may be used to support vouchers for compulsory schooling that includes faith-based schools.

The study raised three research questions and one hypothesis, as follows:

- Research Question 1. What are the principals' perception of factors guiding parents' choice for Catholic and Protestant schools?
- Research Question 2. What are the principals' perception of parent involvement in four categories within Catholic and Protestant schools?
- Research Question 3. What promising practices do Catholic and Protestant school principals employ to encourage parent involvement?
- Hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the perceptions of Catholic school and Protestant school principals regarding:
 - Parenting;
 - Communication;
 - Volunteering;
 - Learning at home;
 - Collaborating with the community; and
 - Decision-making.

Methodology. A six-item survey instrument was prepared based upon school choice literature as well as Epstein's and Hiatt-Michael's work on parent involvement. After a successful pilot test, this survey was distributed to 218 Protestant school principals whose schools were associated with ACSI and 217 Catholic school principals, whose school were associated with ADLA. ACSI requested that the survey be distributed electronically, via

SurveyMonkey. In contrast, the ADLA preferred to distribute a hard copy version of the surveys, and have the principals complete them by hand, at regional principal meetings. These completed surveys were collected by one central person at each regional meeting and mailed to the researcher. The response rate using the paper survey for Catholic school principals was 46.5% ($N = 101$), and the response rate using the electronic survey for Protestant school principals was 22% ($N = 47$). The overall combined response rate was 34% ($N = 148$), which was an adequate size for statistical analyses. The overall combined response rate was based on the total combined target population size of 435 principals (218 principals from ACSI and 217 principals from ADLA, in Southern California).

Summary of Findings

Demographics and methodology. The respondents averaged nine years of experience and obtained a masters' degree or above. The PK–8 Catholic schools covered two major counties in Southern California whereas the Protestant schools covered the five Southern California counties. The mean student size of Catholic schools was 245 students, ranging from 69 to 700 students, and of Protestant schools, 193 students.

A significant difference for completion of the survey occurred between the two groups of principals and was based on how the survey data were administered. A comparison of the number of responses between the two groups of principals indicated that the Catholic principals ($n = 101$ from a possible 217) who were surveyed using a hand-delivered hard copy responded at a significantly higher rate than the Protestant principals who were surveyed via email using SurveyMonkey ($n = 47$ from a possible 218). However, the Protestant school principals (256 responses from 47 respondents), who were surveyed electronically, responded with significantly

more comments on every item of the survey than that of the Catholic school principals (230 responses from 101 principals). The difference was statistically different ($p > .001$).

Research question 1 on school choice. Per the survey responses, through their early and many interactions with parents the Catholic and Protestant school principals perceived that their school parents primarily select a faith-based school for different reasons. Protestant school principals' perception was that their parents made their selection of their school primarily on the importance of *Bible-based education* for their child and secondly for quality academics. In contrast, the Catholic school principals perceived that their parents primarily selected their school on *academic quality* and then secondly on other characteristics, such as character education and faith-based education.

Research question 2 on categories of parent involvement. The most important parent-school involvement and interaction was through many different daily forms of communication according to all Catholic and Protestant principals. Face-to-face communication was rated the most preferred and regularly used method to communicate with parents for Catholic school and Protestant schools. All Protestant school principals also preferred using social media (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), equally with face-to-face meetings. The second most preferred method for Catholic schools to communicate with parents was through their school website, the school posting messages for parent access—one-way communication from school to the parents. For the Protestant schools, the second preferred type of communication was through emails and mobile messaging, a method that may also be seen as one-way communication.

Both groups of principals reported that faith-based school parents were active volunteers at the school. They expected and encouraged parents to contribute their time and resources to the school. Some schools required the parents to sign a volunteer service agreement each year, so

that the parents consciously made a renewed commitment to be engaged at the school or pay a pre-declared fee. However, the way that they volunteered was different. Protestant school parents were more involved by helping the school with on-site with classroom projects, PTO meetings, and after-school events. Catholic school parents were active volunteers at the school, serving not just in the classroom but also in the school office and on the playground. Catholic (85%) and Protestant principals (79%) reported significant parent participation fundraising activities, including personal donations to the school.

Research question 3 on best practices. The third research question secured the principals' perceptions of best practices for parent involvement. The comments (n= 486) provided by both groups of principals led to the emergence of five prevalent themes for best practices:

1. daily communication;
2. extensive volunteer service;
3. regular use of parent surveys;
4. active parent/school organizations; and
5. family-friendly environment.

With principals and staff focused on positive communication and active parent volunteering at the school, they perceived the school as family-friendly.

Results of hypothesis analyses. The tests for the hypothesis revealed that the two types of schools significantly differed on parenting, volunteering, and decision-making. Catholic school principals perceived that their parents were more actively involved in volunteering, especially fund-raising for the school. The Protestant school principals perceived that their parents received more school opportunities for parenting skills and had more opportunities for

decision-making at the school. Regarding decision-making opportunities for parents at the school, Catholic school parents were significantly more involved with decision-making at the school; 88.1% ($N = 89$) for Catholic school parents and only 48.9% ($N = 25$), for Protestant school parents.

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this study, the following seven conclusions were reached.

Conclusion 1. Catholic school and Protestant school principals value a high level of communication with parents. In their comments, all Catholic and Protestant principals in the study indicated that daily communication was essential to parent involvement. The survey data noted that these principals rated face-to-face meetings as the most preferred form of communication between parents and school (90.1% for Catholic schools and 100% for Protestant schools). These face-to-face meetings could be either formal or informal. Comments by the principals from both school types indicated that they were very visible to parents—before school, greeting parents during student drop-off and, after school, at student pick-up. In addition, these principals remained on-site during the school day and attended every school event. Their data reflected how visible and accessible these principals were to parents. For example C063 commented: “I find the best practice is visibility. Helping in the car line always brings the best communication.” C065 shared:

I spend a lot of time talking with parents. I listen to what they have to say and I always try to get back to them. If their ideas appear sound for the school, I act upon them. Regular communication relates to parent satisfaction with the school, the school climate, and student retention.

Furthermore, the two groups of principals strongly supported regular parent-teacher conferences, 88.1% for Catholic schools and 91.5% for Protestant schools. These principals indicated that face-to-face communication was beneficial for parents as well as the teachers. A

Protestant school principal stated “Relationships are KEY! Day to day, face to face interaction is crucial for building those relationships and communicating one on one.”

Principals used multiple forms of communication beyond face-to-face meeting. The following quote shares one principals’ point of view:

We have a dynamic website where most information is located. However, calling and meeting with parents is still the best means (New Parent Orientation, Back to School Nights and when requested parent conferences with teachers or administrators). Short and to the point communication. Use a variety of methods to communicate. Do not communicate information that is not important or parents will stop listening. Provide open communication that allows for feedback.

Thus, the second most preferred form of communicating with parents was using the school’s website, checked by 89.1% of Catholic and 100% of Protestant principals. Ninety-eight percent of Protestant and 88% of Catholic school principals also checked emails and mobile messaging.

These principals are tech-savvy and shared that:

We primarily communicate through our RenWeb school management program. Teachers and administrators can send daily academic, behavioral, and merit notifications to our parents. Parents and students are also able to check their academic progress and communicate daily with their teachers.

The Catholic (88%) and Protestant (92%) principals utilized parent-teacher conferences as home–school communication. Catholic (76%) and Protestant principals (81%) promoted written personal notes from the principal or teacher. A surprising finding was that these very busy principals found time to write letters to parents. The school newsletter was utilized less by both groups of principals; 69.3% of Catholic principals and 78.7% of Protestant principals noted the use of newsletters at their school.

All 47 Protestant school principals selected the use of social media; whereas 64.4% of Catholic school principals revealed that they utilized social media to connect with parents. A principal revealed the complexity of contemporary communication in the following:

We recognize the importance of accurate and timely information delivered in the format that most closely meets the needs and desires of our parents. Therefore, we employ social media, email and are implementing a school app specifically designed for parent communication. We have also employed a Communication Specialist to help filter and funnel all communications through one central person.

A final, lengthy quote from a Protestant school principal describes which methods of communication was preferred at his school:

We are continually connecting with parents via newsletters, issue related emails, update emails, school website communication regarding academic/behavioral/calendar related info, school-family promotional social media, individual texts to parents, phone calls to parents, issue related face-to-face meetings and contacts at school events. Our approach can best be seen as three pronged; ongoing news through multiple sources, specific contacts and communication to individuals, and celebrating success through social media.

The findings give credence to the viability of faith-based schools. Prior literature agrees that communication and transparency are critical to develop trust and to maintain a positive relationship. Heiss (1982) and Ahlstron (2013) stated that principals are the key source of parent communication and connection to the school. Furthermore, Ho and Willms (1996), Bauch and Goldring (1995), and Epstein (2010) stressed the importance of effective communication between school and parents. Similarly, Carden (2005) supported the premise that parents have higher expectations from faith-based schools. They required and expected regular communication from faculty. The schools surveyed in this study were actively communicating with parents in a variety of ways on a daily basis.

The findings of this contrast to many studies of communication with parents in public schools. Gonzalez-De Hass, Willems, and Holbein (2005) noted the need for better communication between parents and the school to improve student motivation in school. Lawson (2003) and Stout (2009) attributed poor communication and/or a language barrier as one of the main reasons many parents do not become involved in their child's school. LaRocque et al. (2011) also cited language as a barrier, and suggested ways to overcome this problem. Recent

research by Murray et al., (2014) remarked how public school principals and staff should be more welcoming to inner city parents and acquire skills to be effective in their communication with these parents.

Conclusion 2. Faith-based parents were actively engaged in selecting a school and their decisions were often based upon personal values. Both groups of principals commented on the active engagement of parents as they personally met with each new set of parents during the school choice process. These principals provided a private meeting with each set of parents, sometimes including grandparents, and tours of the schools. Several mentioned providing parents with invitations to school events so parents could view student outcomes. A quote from a Protestant principal explains the school's approach as follows:

Offering families tours, giving shadow days, coming to Chapel services, and special events, parents can experience their faith-based school. By doing this, a partnership can be formed with the families before enrollment. In time, the school and parents work together to lead children to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, while providing a well-rounded distinguished education.

These principals identified that parents chose a faith-based school due to high academic quality, faith-based education, character education, diverse curriculum offerings, and small class size. Protestant principals (91.5%) noted that Bible-based education was the primary value for their parents in selecting a faith-based school whereas Catholic school principals (89.1%) checked that academic quality was the primary reason parents selected their particular school. In addition, school safety and bullying concerns in public schools were factors for parents' school choice (21.8% by Catholic and 53.2% by Protestant principals). School safety and bullying concerns occurred in studies by Besnard et al. (2013), Gangel (1988), Lawrence (2015), and Lee and Holland (1993). Faith-based parents interested in character education for their child were

concerned about bullying and cyberbullying, desiring a safe, school environment for their child to focus on Biblical education with strong academic standards.

Prior literature supports that there are numerous reasons why parents chose Protestant schools for their children's education. Lawrence (2015) indicated that one reason was that parents were interested in choosing a school that promoted their values in child-rearing, personal ethics, and academic rigor. Holmes (1982), Hall (2009), and Walner (2017) identified why parents chose Protestant schools. Holmes (1982) revealed that parents chose Protestant schools for three reasons: the Christ-centered curriculum, the disciplined environment, and caring staff. West (2001) and Clossen (2012) added two additional reasons for parent's school choice, which were development of spiritual maturity and academic excellence. However, Krommendyk (2007) and Dugan (2009) indicated that parent school choice was based on high parent satisfaction, which was shared by word of mouth among parents. Bauch and Goldring (1995) reported that school choice was based on multiple forms of communication between school and home.

Nwokoric-Anajemba (2010) explained that parents preferred Protestant schools because the principal greeted the incoming students, teachers were readily available at the classroom door, and the staff knew the students and parents by name. Ballweg (1980) and Blue (2004) reported that school choice was based on quality learning environment, school safety, a pleasant relationship with teachers and classmates, and the cultural diversity of students at the school. In agreement with Ballweg and Blue, Hiatt-Michael (2012b) stated that school choice was based on school safety. In addition, Hiatt-Michael indicated another reason for school choice was teachers openly responding to parents' communications and their children's needs.

Prewitt and Whitney (2016) reviewed the Catholic schools' high expectations for students and parent's role with 8th grade students. Catholic schools are known for their commitment to academic excellence and for a highly disciplined school environment (Byrk & Holland, 1993). Bempechat et al. (1994) and Bushaw and Gallup (2008) agreed that parents sent their children to a faith-based school based on their personal beliefs of what was best for the child. These parents were also concerned about school safety in public schools, weak student academic achievement, and students with negative behaviors, such as bullying. Besnard et al. (2013) studied the correlation between Children's Disruptive Behavior (CDB) and the maternal and paternal parent-child relationship. The results confirmed the concept that the parent-child relationship is directly linked to improved student behavior and a decrease in CDB.

Additionally, Coleman (1981) and Warren et al. (2003) cited the cost effectiveness of a Catholic school education. Coleman (1981) conducted an extensive study pertaining to school choice. The study involved 28,000 students and 1,015 public and private schools, regarding the cost effectiveness of Catholic schools. Coleman (1981) and Stewart and Wolf (2014) supported the concept of public funds being issued to parents (in the form of vouchers), if they sent their children to a Catholic school. Archbishop J. Michael Miller and other church leaders supported the belief that all Catholic children have a right to a Catholic education whether their families have the financial ability to support it or not (Stewart & Wolf, 2014).

Conclusion 3. Faith-based principals regularly encouraged parents to be active at the school site. This conclusion is supported by the data that 100% of Protestant principals and 90% of Catholic principals created a welcoming environment that promoted parent involvement at the school. A Protestant school principal shared these insights:

As a principal, one of the most important things I can do is greet students and parents in the mornings, during drop-off or at the end of the day. I greet students with a smile and

a handshake. Parents, too! I recently began sending short, 20-second video clips out about upcoming events or things that are happening on campus. Our marketing director posts photos on Facebook and Instagram. Parents respond better to personal invitations rather than “Volunteers Needed” emails.

Principal comments to the various items in this study indicated that faith-based principals valued parent participation at school. C003 noted: “Parents need to be encouraged constantly to help, but there is a big portion of parents who see the need and love it.” C060 added “offering events and activities that involve their students draws them to attend and then they get hooked to do more.”

Furthermore, they utilized various methods to encourage and motivate parents to stay involved. This principal’s comment describes a particular approach that is effective at one school:

Parents aren’t required to volunteer, but are asked at the beginning of the year if they would like to donate time using their talents and/or areas of expertise for the school. This includes a wide span of volunteering positions depending on the parent responses. We have found that we have a strong volunteer program and people are excited to come in and support when they are contributing in areas that are unique to their specific areas of strength. This method has brought our school parents who are volunteering beyond daily classroom activities, such as web design, fundraising, IRS support, grant writing, music classes, physical education classes, technology support, media, and other areas.

Utilizing the various forms of communication previously discussed, Catholic and Protestant principals provided ways that their schools promoted a warm environment that was welcoming to parents. These principals and faculty were visible daily at student drop-off and pick-up and requested parent involvement at particular events or on-site school activities. C048 shared that the school had “monthly community events, i.e., soccer on Saturday, many fun informal family activities, as well as events just for the parents.”

Similarly, the Protestant school participants suggested that teachers and staff be warm and welcoming to parent volunteers. One participant stated as part of their best practices, they

have created a welcoming atmosphere towards parents and families who are on campus. Catholic school participants suggested that the school should be welcoming and inviting and that current and new parents should be invited to “come and see” how things are going at the school.

Epstein (2009) and U. S. Dept. of Education (2013) reported that high parent involvement resulted in student academic excellence, including high test scores, higher competence in reading and math in public schools, regardless of ethnic group. Ross (2012) performed a comparison between Catholic and Jewish schools, to understand how they differed. The purpose of the study was to identify how the schools encouraged parents to participate. Both types of schools wanted the parents to participate in school and in their children’s education, but at different levels of engagement. Some teachers viewed too much parent involvement from a negative perspective, considering it to be intrusive and distracting.

There was little or no difference between the two schools in the areas of communication and volunteering. However, in the area of decision making and governing, parents were allowed to participate at the Jewish school, but not at the Catholic school. Catholic parents were actively engaged in schools (The Congress for Catholic Education, 1997; Donovan, 1999; and Frabutt et al., 2010), but allowed the school to make all the governing decisions and did not play an active role in the daily decision-making activities. The Catholic school experienced a 70% parent participation rate and the parents referred to their involvement at the school as fun. Kuhn and Geis (1984) and Black (2010) stressed the importance of Christian school leadership to provide the direction of the school. Black further detailed the traits of a servant leader, who is a servant first, and who leads by serving. Similar to Voogd (1996), such principals viewed the principal as the key leader of the school but one that did not want to interfere with others’ decisions. At the Jewish school, the Board of Directors consisted of community members and parents of students.

These parents had a sense of ownership of the school and wanted to be active participants in the decision-making process and school governance. They viewed their participation as more of a requirement and a necessity.

Horning (2013) compared religious charter schools to an urban Catholic school education. With the increase of religious charter schools and the closing of many Catholic schools, Horning formulated a viable solution with the suggestion that Catholic schools should view this as an opportunity to create religious charter schools, since they both tend to serve similar populations. Ognibene (2015) supported the concept that Catholic school's diverse curriculum should prepare students for life experiences, in addition to academics. Ognibene noted that there was a growing commonality between Catholic schools and schools in the public sector. Eventually, Catholic educators who were responsible for developing curriculum began following a similar pattern of public schools. The major change in Catholic education, based on life adjustment education, was an increase in home and family living related courses.

Attitudes regarding parent involvement differ across cultures. To demonstrate this, Blair (2014) conducted a study to compare parent involvement as it relates to Filipino and American parents. There was a difference in attitudes and perceptions between the two cultures. The American parents expected to be involved in their children's education and to share in their school experiences. They were not reluctant or apprehensive about going to the school, communicating with the teachers, or conversing with the school principal. By contrast, the Filipino parents did not think that it was their place to interfere with their children's education. They would not consider going to the school to talk to the teacher about their child's poor performance. They would spend time with their children at home, working with them and helping them to improve their grades. Due to the changes in the cultural composition of

students, Hiatt-Michael (2005, 2008) developed four forces (cultural, economic, social, and political) to understand and categorize their possible impact to parent involvement. Shirberg (2012) conducted a PAR study and reported that cultural diversity is growing in Catholic schools. This change is a result of the diverse racial, ethnic and SES backgrounds of the students.

It is interesting to note that attitudes toward parent involvement differ between parents and students. Xu (2002) discovered that adolescents preferred more autonomy. Additionally, they did not mind having their parents helping homework and showing an interest in their education. The students preferred family-initiated involvement over school-initiated involvement. Family-initiated involvement can be direct, as in helping with homework, or indirect, as in showing an interest in their child's education and ensuring that there was a designated place in the home where the child could study. The students were also interested in the implementation of more after-school programs, which was a school-initiated involvement.

A special interest group was created in 1982 by the AERA, known as "Families as Educators." De Carvalho (2014) indicated that the purpose was to encourage parents and family members to actively connect, and work together with educators to ensure a cohesive school-home partnership. The research literature reminds us that school counselors are uniquely positioned to work with parents, students, teachers, and administrators. Counselors are typically concerned about the "whole child" but they cannot accomplish a comprehensive parent involvement program alone, that will motivate and positively impact the student's achievement.

Columbo (2006) reported that the perception of an unwelcoming school environment created a deterrent for parents to participate in their children's school. Van Velsler and Orozco (2007) and Castaneda et al. (2010) suggested that parent involvement and expectations for their

child's success are dictated by cultural differences and ethnicity. Castaneda et al. (2010) also asserted that Asians view the key to achievement as persistent work, and on the giftedness of the child. Additionally, Van Velsor and Orozco (2007) cited low SES and psychological or mental health issues as barriers that negatively affected academic success. Davies (1997), and Rapp and Duncan (2012) agreed that psychological or mental health factors play a strong role in a child's achievements in school.

It is important that the child receives support and encouragement from both parents. Cig (2016) described the academic success of children whose fathers demonstrated early engagement, as early as preschool. Besnard et al., (2013) and Stewart and Wolf (2014) described the benefits of maternal support. Maternal involvement was prominent in kindergarten and early school years, and the mother's involvement was more prominent than the father's, even though the father's involvement was evident. The mother's early involvement resulted in improved student behavior and CDB.

Conclusion 4. Principals actively encouraged parents to participate in fundraising. More than 85% of Catholic principals remarked that they actively involved all parents in fundraising, and almost 79% of Protestant principals stated parents were actively involved with school fundraising. C10 revealed that most Catholic schools in the ADLA require a minimum of service hours per year for parents, the number of hours ranging from 30–40 hours per year.

Principals' responses regarding fundraising revealed how that has become the most pressing request for parent involvement at Catholic schools. The change from nuns to lay teachers has required Catholic schools to raise tuition. Parents desire to improve their school with new offerings, technology and equipment has created a perceived need to raise funds to cover operational costs at each school. Principals' comments provided numerous examples of

this. One school formed a Parent Action Committee that was involved with strategic planning and fundraising. C002 shared that “Parents make decisions concerning fundraising and marketing these events. Our school has a Parent Fundraising Board that not only raises funds but they also provide insight and suggestions to me.” Another Catholic school (C005) utilized the members of the PTO to lead the fundraising activities. These funds are then used towards school development. Another school (C045) used fundraising to offset the cost of tuition as a marketing tool to attract new families. For many Catholic schools, the parents’ signed up at an early fall Open House for one or more of the fundraising activities.

Consistent with the Catholic schools, 79% of Protestant school principals felt the pressing need to raise funds outside of tuition. An approach was to involve the parents through some type of school parent support group. P4 shared that such a group “is instrumental in planning, organizing, and executing special events and activities for students and their families. They are also effective at raising funds for the school.”

Catholic and Protestant principals noted that parents seemed to enjoy the opportunities to serve the school through participating in fundraising and other events. These events become social and family gathering events for the school. Several principals mentioned that parents were ready to serve with enthusiasm whenever he asked and that they felt honored to serve the school in a requested capacity.

Prior literature supported these findings. One study suggested the importance of fundraising and how parents provided different forms of financial support to the school (Crea et al., 2015). This support was obtained through tuition payments, assisting with fundraising, as well as occasional donations. Although only six Catholic school participants specifically mentioned the importance of fundraising, it is an essential area where parent involvement was

necessary for the school's survival (Crea et al., 2015). Mulligan (2003) argued that in order for parents to become involved in their child's education, opportunities needed to be created by school staff for them to do so.

Conclusion 5. All principals emphasized the importance that parents become involved at home helping with homework, but this saw only moderate success. Survey data reported that parents were involved at home providing supervision of homework at 47.5% for Catholic school parents and 59.6% for Protestant school parents. According to these principals, although many parents supervise homework, the percentage of parent involvement in this area should be increased. One Catholic school participant commented that school is "an extension of the home," indicating that the parent and the teacher should be working together to provide the "best learning experience for the child." Consistent with the Catholic school perception, a Protestant school participant indicated that he/she tried to involve the parents in home activities through communication and parenting meetings. One shared a specific suggestion that "The students are asked to discuss a topic with their parents and report back their findings. It's known as 'home to school connection' homework and is one way to bring the classroom to the home."

Epstein (1997; 2009) argued that homework is a tangible way to show parents what their child is learning at school as well as an excellent way to allow parents to be involved with their child's learning experience. Other literature supports that parents should show an interest in what their child is learning and become involved at home, by providing oversight and assistance with homework (Bennett, 2007; Cunha et al., 2015; Dumont et al., 2014; Epstein et al., 1997; Gonida & Cortina, 2014; LaRocque et al., 2011; O'Sullivan et al., 2014; Tam & Chan, 2009). To further support this premise, Hill and Taylor (2004) suggested that parents can demonstrate their involvement at home, by assisting their child with his or her homework, by showing an

interest in what their child has learned by communicating with their child about school and discussing their future educational goals. Vukovic et al. (2013) reported that help at home with homework created a better understanding, improved math scores, and less mathematics anxiety. Cetron and Gayle (1990) and Shepard et al. (1999) advocated home, school and community partnerships, collaborating and working together.

Conclusion 6. Faith-based principals assessed parent opinion through various methods. Catholic school and Protestant school participants ($N = 34$) provided comments regarding obtaining feedback from parents using parent surveys. In comments, the Protestant and Catholic school participants indicated that they sent out various surveys throughout the year but not part of formal schoolwide assessment plans. Four participants had annual surveys, two participants reported monthly parent surveys that were initiated through the PTO, and one participant issued parent surveys twice a year.

The purpose of these parent surveys was to obtain parents' opinions about how the school was doing, suggestions regarding improvements, gauging interests for areas of expansion, facilitation of programs, and general inputs. Catholic school participant C006 indicated that parent surveys are used for parents to express concerns or ideas with the Parent Advisory Board, who then presents the results at the board meetings. These parent surveys represent a formal method for obtaining information from parents.

The data suggest that faith-based principals reported more feedback was obtained from parents in informal ways, such as face-to-face conversations and through emails or mobile messaging. In comments, principals noted semi-formal approaches to obtain parent perceptions. Three Protestant participants had monthly Principal/Parent receptions. Two Protestant participants had monthly open meetings with parents, and another participant had family dinners

several times a year. The Catholic school participants were equally creative. One participant had monthly events to regularly engage parents. Another participant held monthly parent social meetings. One participant hosted a semi-annual focus group that addressed parent issues and provided solutions to those issues.

Prior research literature indicates that surveys can be used to translate human responses to a set of numerical values, to then convert the numbers into percentages, and to determine the frequency and analyze the results (Fowler, 2013). But, the method of distributing surveys yielded different results in this study. The method employed in this study in which the researcher made personal requests at deanery meetings to complete the survey related to a higher return rate than the online survey. Thus, the response rate for ADLA participants was 46.5%, higher than that of ACSI principals. Protestant school participants were asked to participate in this survey and were provided with a link to the electronic copy of the survey. Their response rate was 21.6%. Personal requests obtain better participation and a higher rate of engagement. However, more comments were written online by the principals who had unlimited time to complete the survey.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Faith-based principals should continue to devote their time and energy to warm, regular, and open communication with parents. All of the participating principals reported open and consistent communication and that these principals supported an open-door policy. Such implemented activities will establish a strong and long-term relationship with the parents. A faith-based principal commented that “We make sure that everyone is welcome. Our goal is to make sure that every touchpoint anyone has with our school is a positive one.”

To accomplish this goal, faith-based principals in this study continually utilized a variety of informal communication as well as formal forms of communication. They reported daily face-to-face meetings, a tap on the shoulder in the parking lot, social media, school newsletter, school website, conversations with parents during drop-off or pick-up, or during PTO meetings. An example of formal communication would be a letter from the principal or teacher, conversations conducted during parent-teacher conferences, parent-principal conferences, and Advisory Board meetings.

Honest and open communication is a crucial key to any relationship. All persons on the school site should be warm and welcoming. The issue of communicating with parents is so important that Young et al. (2013) recommended that teachers and principals be trained on how to communicate effectively with parents. In the case of special needs, the school should implement an Individualized Education Program for the parents and teachers to communicate what each need from the other, creating a parent–school partnership (Bennett, 2007).

The findings from this study should be shared with public school principals, especially those leading inner city schools. This research provides concrete ways—best practices—that should be used to cultivate and improve communication with parents in any socio-economic area. The importance of being on-site, visible to parents, and readily open to face-to-face meetings cannot be understated.

The findings of the study reveal how principals must work with school staff to create a welcome environment for parents. Davis (1997), Sheldon (2007), Walker et al. (2010) and Montoya (2016) recommended that schools work to overcome an unwelcoming school environment by staff and faculty training and interacting more with parents through the implementation of morning coffee chats between the principal and parents, monthly potlucks,

and other fun events. Heiss (1982), Hiatt-Michael (2008, 2010), Walker et al. (2010), and Epstein et al. (2011) suggested that principals must take on a stronger leadership role in schools. This can be accomplished by orchestrating a schoolwide effort to partner with teachers, parents and community stakeholders. It takes all of these key players to create a supportive environment that values parent involvement in children's education at school and at home. Principals' recognized that educators and students need parents to participate, not just at home, but also at school. When parents arrive at the school, they should be made to feel welcome.

Davies (1997) and Horvat et al. (2011) recommended that schools should become more welcoming towards parents and volunteers by having teachers, school staff, and custodians greet them in a friendly manner. To understand how principals, encourage parent involvement, Horvat et al. (2011) based their recommendation on their study of three different principals of one school, over a 30-year period. Likewise, Montoya (2016) suggested some of the factors that were influential in the parent's decision to be involved in their child's school, despite the barriers noted in the prior subsection, were related to the teacher taking the proactive approach to create activities that promoted parent involvement and to personally invite the parents to participate. The parents indicated being influenced by teacher encouragement, teacher initiated involvement choices, and teacher outreach to families. Schools and teachers are a major source of influence with parents and students.

Recommendation 2. Catholic school and Protestant school principals should consider developing a plan to ensure that the school has a strong, authentic brand that represents who they are and what they believe. A school brand can be based on a variety of factors; some of which are the geographic location of the school, the socioeconomics of the parents, the quality of the teachers, school safety, or the school's diverse curriculum. Per McNally and Speak (2011),

branding is defined as a person's perception of who you are. A brand should be authentic, distinctive, relevant, and consistent (Sheldon, 2007). Consistency derives from dependable behavior.

Parents who opt to send their child to a faith-based school want the option to select a school that fits their beliefs, morals, and values. They are highly motivated and engaged in selecting a school and decide based upon their personal values and how those values align with their perception of the school. They want their child to receive the best education possible, in a safe school environment. Many parents believe that private schools have a zero tolerance for bullying and other forms of school violence. School safety is becoming a higher priority for parents. Parents should depend on the referrals from current parents, and word of mouth before deciding on a school choice.

Recommendation 3. Principals should continue to encourage parents to be active at the school site. To identify the different ways that parents can become involved in their child's education, Epstein (1992) developed six typologies of parent involvement. The six typologies are: a) parenting, b) communication, c) volunteering, d) learning at home, e) decision making, and f) collaborating with the community. In addition, Epstein (2009) recommended establishing a partnership network between parents, school and community, the NNPS, which includes a partnership pledge for the principal, teacher, parent and student to sign. Sanders (2001) supported the formulation of NNPS. Schaps (2001) advocated a positive and supportive relationship between parent-school. To further solidify the relationship and connection between parents and school, Ho and Willms (1996) cited four elements of parent involvement, where the parents and school interacted in support of each other. The four elements were home discussions, home supervision, school communication and school participation. Feuerstein

(2000) identified nine factors that integrated parent involvement activities. They were: a) students talk with parents about school, b) parent contact with school, c) parent volunteerism, d) parent expectations, e) parent participation in PTO, f) parent talk with student about school, g) parents visit school, h) structure of home-learning environment, and i) parents involved in grade-placement decisions. All of these activities are opportunities for parents to become active in their child's school.

Principals should create opportunities for inactive parents to become engaged and for active parents to remain engaged. One way to ensure that parents are motivated to remain engaged is to allow them to participate in strategic planning and decision-making. When parents are a part of the decision-making process, they have buy-in. They become stakeholders and have a strong desire to see that the implementation of the idea or program is a success. Catholic school participant C038 indicated that their school allowed parents to have input into the strategic plan of their school, and decision-making "within reason." Similarly, one of the Protestant school participants agreed, indicating that the best way to engage parents was to allow them to participate in the decision-making process. Additionally, when a parent has concerns, or questions, it is important to take time to listen and follow through with action. There are numerous ways to encourage parents to be more active at the school. The most obvious one is to invite them, interact with them and make them feel welcome.

Sheldon (2007) advocated that the school should take a proactive approach and examine the effectiveness of its parent partnership program. To create an effective schoolwide partnership between the teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, the individuals need a strategic plan. Walker et al. (2010) suggested that although school counselors are in a critical and advantageous position to work with parents, students, teachers, and administrators, it

requires the leadership of the school principal and the cooperation of all the key players to implement an effective partnership parent involvement program. This will result in a supportive environment that advocates and promotes parent involvement in children's education at school, and at home. Parents have high expectations for their child's school (Carden, 2005; Dugan, 2009).

In the technology age where invitations have become impersonal, being transmitted through e-mails and mobile messaging, a personal invitation is meaningful and is likely to obtain a more favorable response; and it can be verbal or in the form of a personal note.

Recommendation 4. Principals should employ multiple strategies to encourage parents to be active in fundraising activities of the school. Frequent fundraising events, such as sponsored walks/runs, raffles, charity breakfasts/barbecues/dinners, auctions and other events are a few ways that schools can work together with parents to involve the community to achieve a greater level of financial success. Because private, faith-based schools are not eligible for government funding, these schools solely depend on tuition, fundraisers, and personal donations to the school. When parents are active in fundraising efforts, the opportunity off-sets the cost of tuition, pays for school development and improvements, or enhances the academic offerings of the school. For instance, art and music classes are still being offered in most faith-based schools, although they have been omitted from many or all public school curricula.

Crea et al., (2015) stated that fund-raising is vital for the success of the school. Parents should be highly involved in the school's fund-raising events and develop innovative ways to raise funds to support the financial stability and operational expenses of the faith-based school. Such involvement reduces their tuition fees as well as actively serving the school. Fund-raising

activities bring together the various groups in the school working toward a common purpose and principals' comments indicated that they were also having fun, positive shared experiences.

Recommendation 5. Faith-based school principals should spearhead a plan at each school to connect parents, teachers and children regarding homework. This plan should be developed between parents and the school staff so that each is accountable for reasonable expectations. In the process, the school may conduct a parent assessment to determine if and how parents feel the need to increase their proficiency or skills to better help their child with homework. For example, math is often a challenge for some parents. These parents may have a lack of confidence in their own intellectual abilities or may have limited abilities to help their child with homework (O'Sullivan et al., 2014; Rapp & Duncan, 2012). Parents may indicate that they would like guidance via a parent meeting to acquire needed skills.

Emphasis on parenting issues was relegated to special meetings, as well as school standards on homework and student dress/codes. An important recommendation is to enlist parents and community agencies to help educate the children. Epstein (1995) and Rapp and Duncan (2012) recommended homework help and coaching for parents. ASA Superintendent of the Year in 2014 De Cavalho, supports the concept that that schools develop a special interest group called Families as Educators to assist parents working with their children at home and helping with homework. Epstein et al. (2011) supported the concept that parents spending more time with their children, helping them with homework, results in better behavior in the classroom. Teachers can also provide parents with home learning materials to work with their child, providing guidance on how to engage with their children at home, and by developing their own learning materials for parents to use at home. They can also use Epstein's (1995) TIPS interactive homework, as a reference. Based on Walker et al. (2010) recommendation, in order

to determine if an education deficit exists, a Needs Assessment should be conducted with the parents (Walker et al., 2010). If a deficit is identified, the school could assume the responsibility of developing a parent education program or parent group, specifically designed to educate the parents on subjects where they may be weak. Bronfenbrenner (1979), Cheung and Pomerantz (2012), Dikkers (2013), and Choi et al. (2015) suggested that this type of support will increase their skills and ability to assist their child at home, with homework, resulting in improved academic performance and better behavior. Additional benefits were specifically reported in the areas of improvements in reading and math (Epstein, 2005), and improved test scores (Choi et al., 2015; Epstein et al., 2011; Hiatt-Michael, 2007; Shepard & Rose, 1995).

Recommendation 6. Principals should create a strategic plan for school assessment from parents. To create an effective schoolwide partnership between the teachers, parents, and community stakeholders, the individuals need a strategic plan (Sheldon, 2007; Walker et al., 2010). Although, parents' opinions are already regularly assessed through various formal and informal methods, faith-based schools should develop and implement a school-wide strategy for school assessment. This strategy or plan of school assessment should be connected to the school's mission and focused on the school's purposes for education. For example, formal methods should be utilized to obtain the parents' opinions, suggestions, inputs, and to gauge parent satisfaction.

Out of a possible 148, 34 principals mentioned used a formal method such as parent surveys, as one of their best practices with successful results. There were ($N = 17$) Catholic school principals and ($N = 17$) Protestant school principals that talked about their successful and regular use of parent surveys. Informal methods that was primarily used to obtain inputs from parents was face-to-face communication, meeting in the school parking lot, during PTO

meetings, or during student drop-off and pick-up. These principals may serve as the nucleus to promote more formal parent assessment in other faith-based schools.

The school may request that parents complete the parent survey during a face-to-face meeting. Face-to-face meetings are a more personable setting and parents may feel more obligated to complete the survey. Based upon the return in this study, face-to-face interaction yields a higher return rate versus receiving an e-mail request to complete an online survey. However, a larger quantity of additional comments for best practices, were received from the online survey participants. Thus, parents should be provided more time to reflect on each survey item and encouragement to provide more written comments.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study will add to the ongoing research on parent involvement, applying Epstein's six typologies. The findings will be personally shared with Epstein, and other researchers in parent involvement, through conference presentations and articles.

The investigator would like to recommend potential areas for future research related to parent involvement in Christian schools. These are next steps in understanding family involvement in faith-based schools. Future investigators should consider the research methodology applied in this research project with different target populations, such as secondary school educators, other faiths, school counselors, parents, or students. Future studies may assess family involvement in faith-based schools to other groups, including but not limited to grandparents, aunts, uncles, and other family members.

First, investigators should consider the application of the research methodology applied to this project, on parents from culturally diverse groups, i.e., African American, Hispanic,

American Indian, and other groups. It would be interesting to compare the results of this study with the results of a research project which specifically targets an ethnic group.

A second suggestion that future investigators should consider is analyzing principals' perception from different geographic locations, to determine if school location results in different levels of parent involvement. Third, future investigators should consider using the research methodology from this study to assess the principals' perception of parent involvement at Catholic and Protestant high schools, grades 9–12. The objective would be to determine to what degree parent involvement differs from early grades to later grades. Fourth, the survey instrument should be revised to include more items regarding parent involvement in relation to fundraising activities and items related to other parenting activities. The fifth recommendation would be to conduct a larger scale study to consider researching family involvement in faith-based schools expanded beyond Catholic and Protestant schools to include Jewish schools, Muslim, and other religious schools.

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APPENDIX A

Request to Conduct Doctoral Study at ACSI

Dear Dr. Keenan,

My name is Jacqueline Davis, and I am the doctoral student at Pepperdine University, working on my doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership. I will be conducting a study on the topic: Principals' Perception of Parent Involvement in Catholic and Protestant Schools in Southern California. In August 2016, you signed a letter authorizing Dr. William Walner & Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael to conduct the research study on this topic.

In compliance with Pepperdine University's Internal Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects, I need to provide them with a copy of an approval letter from ACSI, which gives me permission to conduct the study. Would you please issue a revised letter that includes my name (Jacqueline Davis), so that I can provide that to IRB for their approval to conduct this study?

If you have any questions pertaining to this approval request or this study, please feel free to contact me by email at: Jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu, or by telephone at: 760.384.8408.

Dr. Keenan, thank you in advance, for your favorable response to this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline E. Davis

Doctoral student
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Doctor of Education in Org. Leadership

APPENDIX B

Site Approval Letter to Conduct Doctoral Study at ACSI



Derek J. Keenan Ed.D.
Executive Director
ACSI Commission on
Accreditation

ACSI Headquarters
PO Box 65130
Colorado Springs, CO
80962-5130

Phone
Office 719.528.6906
Fax 719.531.0631

Web

August, 2016

Office of Academic Affairs

Participation in Research Study for: Dr. William Walner, Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael, and doctoral candidate Jacqueline E. Davis

Topic: An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Protestant Schools in Southern California

Dear School Administrator,

This letter is to urge your positive response to the request to complete a research study on an important topic for Christian schools. Drs. Walner (former ACSI staff member), Hiatt-Michael as well as doctoral candidate Jacqueline E. Davis are conducting this study to assess the level of parent involvement and to identify promising practices. The results will benefit the Christian school movement in the challenging days in which we are serving.

I have documented the professional standards and confidential manner in which this research will be conducted. The collection of data and the privacy and reporting of such data will meet the standards for academic research.

I would encourage you to participate in this study as a value to your school; your own professional development, as well as making a significant contribution to the research base for the Christian school movement. ACSI heartily endorses this research project and we appreciate you giving it serious consideration.

Sincerely,

Derek J. Keenan EdD.
Executive Director, ACSI Commission on Accreditation
Doctoral Research Studies

APPENDIX C

Request to Conduct Doctoral Study at ADLA

Dear Dr. Galla,

My name is Jacqueline Davis, and I am the doctoral student at Pepperdine University. The school address is: 6100 Center Drive, Howard Hughes Pkwy, 5th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90045. I am working on my doctorate degree in Organizational Leadership. I will be conducting a study on the topic: An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Christian Schools in Southern California. I am writing to request your written approval to conduct the research study on this topic, with school principals that are affiliated with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA).

In compliance with Pepperdine University's Internal Review Board (IRB) requirements for the protection of human subjects, I need to provide them with a copy of an approval letter from ADLA, which gives me permission to conduct the study. I have reviewed the ADLA handbook, which stipulates the guidelines and policy on conducting doctoral research within ADLA schools. I will adhere to the guidelines provided in Chapter 13 of the ADLA handbook, to ensure the protection of human subjects and the confidentiality of information provided by participants of the study.

Would you please issue an approval letter to me, so that I can provide it to IRB for their approval to conduct this study?

If you have any questions pertaining to this approval request or this study, please feel free to contact me by email at: jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu, or by telephone at: 760.384.8408. Thank you in advance, for your favorable response to this request. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline E. Davis

Jacqueline E. Davis

Doctoral student

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

APPENDIX D

Site Approval Letter to Conduct Doctoral Study at ADLA



Mrs. Jacqueline E. Davis
533 W. Garis Ave.
Ridgecrest, CA. 93555
(760) 384-8408

RE: Request for Approval Letter to Conduct Doctoral Study

November 2, 2016

Dear Ms. Davis,

Thank you for your formal request to interview principals in our elementary schools as part of your doctoral studies in organizational leadership, specifically in the area of "An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Christian Schools in Southern California."

This letter serves as written approval to conduct the research study on this topic with school principals that are affiliated with the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA).

We wish you the very best in your work on this important area of study.

Sincerely,



Dr. Tony Galla
Deputy Superintendent of Elementary Schools
Archdiocese of Los Angeles

APPENDIX E

Copyright Permission Request and Approval from Corwin Press



Jacqueline Davis 'student'
<jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu>

Permission to Use Data from Joyce Epstein and Associates' Book

2 messages

Jacqueline Davis 'student' <jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu>

Wed, Jul 18,
2018 at 4:01 PM

To: permissions@sagepub.com
Bcc: drjada2@gmail.com

Dear Sir/Madam;

My name is Jacqueline E. Davis and I am writing to request permission to use some information for my doctoral dissertation, from Joyce Epstein and associates book, "School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action, 3rd Edition." Please see the attached letter which details exactly which information I am requesting permission to use. Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Abundant Blessings,

Jacqueline E. Davis
Ed. D. in Org. Leadership
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education & Psychology

"The future belongs to those who believe in
the beauty of their dreams."
--Eleanor Roosevelt

**Permission Letter from Corwin Press for Epstein et
al.docx**
16K

permissions (US) <permissions@sagepub.com>

Thu, Jul 19, 2018 at
9:36 AM

To: Jacqueline Davis 'student' <jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu>

Dear Jacqueline Davis,

Thank you for your email. Please consider this email as permission to use the material as detailed below in your upcoming thesis/dissertation and for availability by

ProQuest.

Theoretical Model Overlapping Spheres of Influence of Family, School, and Community on Children's Learning (External Structure) (p. 150) from *'School, Family, and Community Partnerships: A Handbook for Action. 3rd Ed.'*

Rights granted are non-exclusive, print and electronic formats, worldwide, in the English language, for the life of the current edition. Please note that this permission does not cover any 3rd party material that may be found within the work. You must properly credit the original source, SAGE Publications. Please contact us for any further usage of the material.

Unfortunately, after review, we must regretfully deny the republication of the four School-Family-Community Partnerships Pledges (for Parents, Students, Teachers, and Principals) due to the nature of these reproducibles, though you are welcome to direct readers to the SAGE title.

If you have any questions, or if we may be of further assistance, please let us know.

Best regards,

Craig Myles

Rights Coordinator
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USA

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APPENDIX F

Survey of Parent Involvement in Protestant Schools

As a member of the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI), you have been selected to participate in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about parent involvement at your school and other ACSI schools, located within Southern California.

The information collected through this survey will be kept confidential. Each participating school will be assigned a code number, and the information will be grouped with the other responding schools. As soon as the data is analyzed, you will receive the results for your school and how your school compares to the other schools, in the survey. In addition, this study will be published and shared at future ACSI conferences.

Thank you so much for participating in this survey. Please mail completed survey to:
 Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael, c/o Pepperdine University, 6100 Center Drive, 5th Floor,
 Los Angeles, CA. 90045
 Or FAX to: (310) 568-5755

Please record your information in the space after the request:

- A. California County in which school is located _____
- B. Approximate number of students in your school _____
- C. Check which applies T/K – 8 ___ K–8 ___ Other _____
- D. Number of years, any site, you have served as a principal _____
- E. Your highest educational degree _____ Administrative credential _____
- F. Male ___ or Female _____

DIRECTIONS: Please check all the boxes that apply to your school.

1. What type of faith-based school do you represent?
 - Protestant Private School
 - Church-related school
 - Independent school
 - Other, specify _____
2. How does your school communicate with parents?

- Face-to-face meetings
- School website
- School newsletter
- Emails and mobile messaging
- Parent-Teacher conference
- Letters from the principal or teacher
- Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

Describe your best practice in communicating with parents. (Use back of paper for additional comments)

3. What type of parental support is expected?

- Volunteer time in the classroom, helping the teacher
- Help with fundraising and other financial activities
- Volunteering time to work at the school, as needed
- Help with class projects
- Supervision of homework
- Chaperoning field trips, and/or class activities

Describe your best practice that encourages parents to work at the school.

4. What are some of the deciding factors for parents choosing a Christian school?

- High academic quality
- Bible-based education
- Character education
- Diverse curricular offerings

- Small class size
- Individual attention for the students
- Bullying concerns, please

specify _____

Describe your best practice that attracts parents to register their children in your school.

5. As the principal, how have you encouraged or supported parent involvement?

- Establishing and maintaining a welcoming environment for the parents
- Creating opportunities for the parent to participate in classroom activities
- Engaging with the parents and students in after-school activities
- Developing a plan to keep the parents motivated and excited about their role in the students' progress, i.e. reading or science contests.

Describe your best practice to support parent engagement throughout the year.

6. Pertinent to school leadership, are parents allowed to provide input into the decision-making processes made at the school?

- Yes
- No

Please describe best practices that involve parental decision-making during school year.

Additional comments regarding the importance of parent involvement in Christian schools.

APPENDIX G

Survey of Parent Involvement in Catholic Schools

As a member of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA), you have been selected to participate in this survey. The purpose of this survey is to gather information about parent involvement at your school and other ADLA schools, located within Southern California.

The information collected through this survey will be kept confidential. Each participating school will be assigned a code number, and the information will be grouped with the other responding schools. As soon as the data is analyzed, you will receive the results for your school and how your school compares to the other schools, in the survey. In addition, this study will be published and shared at future Association of Christian Schools, Int.l (ACSI) conferences.

Thank you so much for participating in this survey. Please mail completed survey to:
 Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael, c/o Pepperdine University, 6100 Center Drive, 5th Floor,
 Los Angeles, CA. 90045
 Or FAX to: (310) 568-5755

Please record your information in the space after the request:

- A. California County in which school is located _____
- B. Approximate number of students in your school _____
- C. Check which applies T/K – 8 ___ K–8 ___ Other _____
- D. Number of years that you have served as a school Principal _____
- E. Your highest educational degree _____ Administrative credential _____
- F. Male ___ or Female _____

DIRECTIONS: Please check all the boxes that apply to your school.

1. What type of faith-based school do you represent?

- Catholic Archdiocese School
- Parish church-affiliated school
- Independent school
- Other, specify
- _____

2. What are your school's means to communicate with parents?

- Face-to-face meetings
- School website
- School newsletter
- Emails and mobile messaging
- Parent-Teacher conference
- Letters from the principal or teacher
- Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

Describe your best practice in communicating with parents

3. What type of parental support is expected?

- Volunteer time in the classroom, helping the teacher
- Help with fundraising and other financial activities
- Volunteering time to work at the school, as needed
- Help with class projects
- Supervision of homework
- Chaperoning field trips, and/or class activities

Describe your best practice that encourages parents to work at the school.

4. What are some of the deciding factors for parents choosing a Catholic school?

- High academic quality
- Bible-based education
- Character education
- Diverse curricular offerings
- Small class size
- Individual attention for the students
- Bullying concerns, please specify _____

Describe your best practice that attracts parents to register their children in your school.

5. As the principal, how have you encouraged or supported parent involvement?
- Establishing and maintaining a welcoming environment for the parents
 - Creating opportunities for the parent to participate in classroom activities
 - Engaging with the parents and students in after-school activities
 - Developing a plan to keep the parents motivated and excited about their role in the students' progress, i.e. reading or science contests
 - (Use back of paper for additional comments)

Describe your best practice to support parent engagement throughout the year.

6. Pertinent to school leadership, are parents allowed to provide input into the decision-making processes made at the school?
- Yes
 - No

Please describe best practices that involve parental decision-making during school year.

Additional comments regarding the importance of parent involvement in Catholic schools.

APPENDIX H

IRB Training Completion Report

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (Citi Program) Completion Report - Part 1 of 2
Coursework Requirements*

* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details. See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- Name: Jacqueline Davis (ID: 5887383)
- Email: jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu
- Institution Affiliation: Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Unit: Education**
- Phone: 7603848408
- Curriculum Group: GSEP Education Division
- Course Learner Group: GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- Report ID: 21075244
- Completion Date: 15-Oct-2016
- Expiration Date: 14-Oct-2021
- Minimum Passing: 80
- Reported Score*: 88

REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY DATE COMPLETED SCORE Belmont Report and CITI Course
Introduction (ID: 1127) 15-Oct-2016 3/3 (100%) History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Defining
Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 15-Oct-2016
5/5 (100%) Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%)
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 15-Oct-2016 5/5 (100%)

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Completion Report - Part 2 Of 2

Coursework Transcript**

** NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- Name: Jacqueline Davis (ID: 5887383)
- Email: jacqueline.davis@pepperdine.edu
- Institution Affiliation: Pepperdine University (ID: 1729)
- **Institution Unit: Education**
- Phone: 7603848408
- Curriculum Group: GSEP Education Division
- Course Learner Group: GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE)
- Stage: Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Report ID: 21075244**
- **Report Date: 15-Oct-2016**
- **Current Score**: 88**

REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES MOST RECENT SCORE History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127) 15-Oct-2016 3/3 (100%) The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 15-Oct-2016 5/5 (100%) Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 15-Oct-2016 4/5 (80%) Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 15-Oct-2016 5/5 (100%)

For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.

Verify at: <https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?65831b82-1131-4438-84b7-caccc3aaeff4>

Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Email: support@citiprogram.org Phone: 888-529-5929
Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

APPENDIX I

IRB Approval for Research



Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 13, 2017

Protocol Investigator Name: Jacqueline Davis

Protocol #: 16-10-402

Project Title: An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Christian Schools in Southern California

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Jacqueline Davis:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

APPENDIX J

Information/Facts Sheet for Exempt Research

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
Graduate School of Education & Psychology

INFORMATION/FACTS SHEET FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH
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An Assessment of Parent Involvement in Christian Schools in Southern California

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Jacqueline Davis (Principal Investigator), and Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael (Faculty Advisor) at Pepperdine University, because you are a principal of an ADLA Catholic K–8 school or ACSI Protestant K–8 school, in Southern California, who has 5 years or more experience. Your participation is voluntary. You should read the information below, and ask questions about anything that you do not understand, before deciding whether to participate. Please take as much time as you need to read this document. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess the degree of parent involvement in Christian and Catholic schools according to the perception of the principals in Southern California.

PARTICIPANT INVOLVEMENT

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic survey in SurveyMonkey, containing 6 questions. It is anticipated to take about 5-10 minutes to complete.

The questions should take less than 10 minutes to complete, including the addition of the participants' comments. You will complete survey electronically. The completed survey will

then be retrieved by the researcher for the data collection and for the data analysis process to begin.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Your participation is voluntary. Your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

ALTERNATIVES TO FULL PARTICIPATION

The alternative to participation in the study is not participating or completing only the items which you feel comfortable.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study *anonymous* as far as permitted by law. However, if I am required to do so by law, I may be required to disclose information collected about you. Examples of the types of issues that would require me to break confidentiality are if you tell me about instances of child abuse and elder abuse. Pepperdine's University's Human Subjects Protection Program (HSPP) may also access the data collected. The HSPP occasionally reviews and monitors research studies to protect the rights and welfare of research subjects.

The data will be stored on a password protected computer in the principal investigators place of residence. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. The data will be analyzed in a statistical software program.

INVESTIGATOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

I understand that the investigator is willing to answer any inquiries I may have concerning the research herein described. I understand that I may contact the chairperson of this

research Dr. Diana Hiatt-Michael by phone at: (310) 663-1518, or by email at:

diana.michael@pepperdine.edu, if I have any other questions or concerns about this research.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT – IRB CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant or research in general please contact Dr. Judy Ho, Chairperson of the Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board at Pepperdine University 6100 Center Drive Suite 500

Los Angeles, CA 90045, 310-568-5753 or gpsirb@pepperdine.edu.

APPENDIX K

Recruitment E-Mail

Dear Principal,

My name is Jacqueline Davis, and I am working on my doctoral dissertation on “Parent Involvement in Christian Schools in Southern California”. I am very interested in learning about your experiences with parent involvement at your school.

I am requesting that principals from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles (ADLA) and the Association of Christian Schools Int’l. (ACSI) consider participating in this study. I am asking for 5 - 10 minutes of your time, to complete a brief, 6-question survey. The responses will be used to better understand the level of parent involvement in Christian schools. Your identity will remain anonymous, and participation is voluntary.

I have attached an Informed Consent form for your review, completion, and signature. If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete and sign the attached form, and return it to me via email reply. I will then send you the electronic link to the survey, which is located on SurveyMonkey.

Please complete the survey at your earliest convenience. Thank you in advance, for your time and for your favorable response to this request.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline E. Davis

Jacqueline Davis

APPENDIX L

Theme Matrix

Themes		Catholic School	Protestant School	Totals
1	Communication	13	28	41
2	Volunteer Service	23	14	37
3	Parent Surveys	17	17	34
4	Parent-school Organization	24	10	34
5	Family-Friendly Environment	14	15	29
6	Faith-Based Identity	12	17	29
7	Open Communication	13	14	27
8	Decision-Making	13	8	21
9	Face-to-face Meetings	2	17	19
10	Environment	9	8	17
11	Open-Door Policy	8	8	16
12	School Safety	11	5	16
13	Bullying Concern	13	0	13
14	Partnership	3	9	12
15	Classroom Involvement	3	9	12
16	Home Involvement	2	10	12
17	Focus Groups	5	3	8
18	Social Media	1	6	7
19	Parent Action Committee	1	3	4
20	Homework	2	1	3