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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

IDENTIFYING THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE PARENTS IN THEIR
CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC CAREERS IN K-8 EDUCATION

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

by

Amera Hussain

April, 2019

Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. – Dissertation Chairperson

This dissertation, written by

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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

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Mohamed and Faten Mahmoud. Mama and baba you are the reason I am now a Doctor of Education. You are my purpose for living and the source of my success for every milestone and accomplishment that I have received in life thus far. I thank Allah for you each and every day, for the parents that He bestowed on me. You make my life sweeter and full of purpose. Thank you for always being there for me, through the smallest and biggest of milestone, through the ups and downs of this wonderful journey we call life. You both are the most selfless beings I know, and I can only dream that I carry half of your characteristics as the parents and human beings that you both embody. I love you, I love you, I love you. Thank you for being my role models, my confidants, and my best friends. I am because you are.

Love,

Simba

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I want to acknowledge my husband and family without which this accomplishment would not be possible. My husband is the most patient and kind person I have ever met; he has held my hand through this entire process and when I gave up on myself, he didn't. My parents are the reason I have been able to succeed in this life. They instill in me each day more love and support that I ever thought possible. My siblings have always lifted me up and believed in me and have been by my side through this academic journey and every journey my life has been on thus far. To my committee, you never had any doubt in my capability as a student, even when I did. Thank you for continuously pushing me and believing in me. This achievement was not possible without you. It is educators like you that have inspired me to keep challenging myself and that there is nothing one can't reach; you can do anything and everything you put your mind to. I have learned that the key to any success is belief in yourself and your capabilities and don't be afraid to reach out for guidance...you will eventually make your own way and continuously grow and flourish in every category of life, academically, professionally, and personally.

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ABSTRACT

The advocacy of parent involvement, specifically by k-8 (elementary and middle school) administrators will be examined through the use of qualitative research method which will entail a thorough and immense review of the body of literature on this subject matter. The body of literature will cover the significance of parent involvement in various settings, such as in the home and in the classroom, and the significance to teachers, administrators, and students. The political components of parent involvement advocacy will be introduced and discussed in detail and additionally, the relationships between administrators, teachers, parents, and students will be examined and discussed. The data collection for this study will be conducted through the lens of a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect and impact that k-8 school administrators have on the implementation of parent engagement programs.

Therefore, this will determine the success of parent involvement initiatives to promote parents as leaders in children's academic careers. explained. It will be explained through the examination of administrators who are or are not advocating for the implementation of parent engagement programs that will essentially allow parents to be involved in their children's academic careers in and outside of the classroom environment. The study will seek to discover the strategies used by administrators, challenges they face, and how success is measured. Administrators will also be asked for anecdotal recommendations for others in the field looking to implement similar programs.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

Parent engagement is the act of parents being involved in their children's academic pursuits (Portwood, Brooks-Nelson, & Schoeneberger, 2015). The relationships between parents and children, in the context of education has grown and evolved in response to the positive effects parent engagement programs have had on parents and their respective school communities (Portwood et al., 2015). Administrators influence the amount of access that parents have to parent engagement programs. This access hinders and/or promotes the amount of parent involvement, specifically in primary education. Access to parent engagement programs has not always been supported by school districts and the administrators within them (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012).

The access to parent engagement programs depends on school regions. There are certain school districts and the administrators within them that are strong advocates for parent engagement and support parent and child academic interaction (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). There are also school districts, mostly found in the urban demographic that are not strong advocates of parent and child academic interaction due to not having adequate resources and support. The support is acquired from school policy makers and stakeholders. The administrators of these urban school districts are the voice for their respective schools. If they do not advocate for the parents and children of their schools, policy makers and stakeholders will not offer them the support they need to enhance parent involvement (Portwood et al., 2015). Figure 1 below acknowledges the steps that should be taken if parent involvement initiatives thrive to be successful.

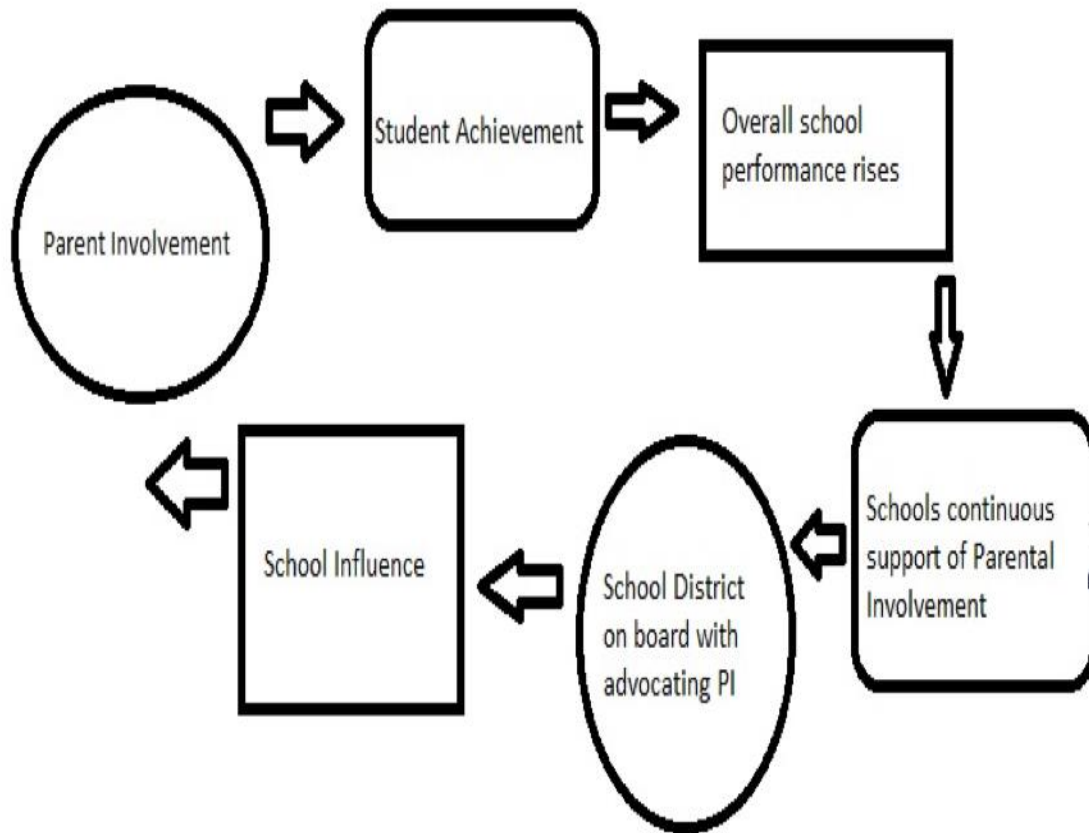


Figure 1. How to evolve and strengthen parent involvement.

Parent and child academic interaction refers to the relationship between a parent and child regarding a child’s academic pursuits. If and when parents are given the opportunity to be a part of their children’s academic lives, children gain access to support in the school and home environments (Lawson & Alameda-Lawson, 2012). Parent involvement and access to more parent engagement programs has become a relevant topic due to the lack of programs being implemented and supported in schools.

Background

For children, their academic careers are just beginning. There are several leaders in their academic journeys that will have an impact on them, both positively and negatively.

Administrators hold the power to research, create, and sustain certain educational policies that will allow children to reach or not reach their utmost potential (Mitra, 2007). Administrators have strategized to exceed parental expectations. Parents have been perceived as leaders in children's educational endeavors (Swanepoel, 2008). Parent engagement policies have been on the rise. These policies have impacted parent presence and involvement in children's academics.

It has been demonstrated that children with highly engaged parents who are involved in their academic careers have enhanced social functioning and acquire fewer behavioral problems. El Nokali, Bachman, and Votruba-Drzal (2010) discuss the development of children's social behavior. Highly engaged parents are parents that are given the resources necessary to be engaged and involved in their children's academic careers. Engaged and involved parents help children fulfill their highest academic potential. The authors contend that academic development occurs in the classroom and at home. In addition, children who gain support inside and outside of the classroom will thrive academically and socially. El Nokali et al., (2010) further claim that children's behavior, attendance, attention to detail, and motivation improve with the support of parents in the classroom and at home.

When supporting children in reaching their highest academic potential, it is important to look at what can be done within the home environment. The home environment will determine whether or not children are receiving the necessary academic support after school hours (Warin & Edwards, 1999). In regard to children's education and academic needs, the parent-child dynamic inside the home is important (Warin & Edwards, 1999). The authors focus on several

key factors that contribute to the success of the relationship between parents and children, particularly that children need a positive home environment.

While many parents may find they need help understanding the curriculum, it is important that parents seek guidance from teachers and the school. “Strong home-school links are a vital ingredient in the educational life of communities,” (p.4) state Warin and Edwards (1999).

“Parent involvement at home and at school has a measurable impact on student performance in school and is particularly important for English learners and students from low-income families” (Thigpen & Freedberg, 2014, p. 3). Parents can be active participants inside and outside of their children’s classrooms. It is most important for this process of parent involvement to occur with lower income families as there may be additional challenges these families are faced with.

Statement of the Problem

Various forms of parent engagement can result in improved academic success. Parent engagement can be demonstrated in and outside of the classroom with the support of children’s respective schools (Pena, 2000). Additionally, children’s social behavior changes in a positive way with parent involvement (Pena, 2000). Children who have engaged parents have also been perceived to have fewer behavioral problems (El Nokali et al., 2010). Improved social behavior is important in both the classroom and at home. Parents and teachers benefit from parent involvement in the classroom (Warin & Edwards, 1999) therefore the problem arises in the lack of parent involvement and engagement programs in school communities in the U.S. (Myers, 2007).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate (a) the strategies that administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs; (b) the challenges do administrators face in

implementing parent engagement programs; (c) how administrators measure successful parent engagement programs; and (d) the recommendations administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs. This study addresses the attention and action given to enhance parent engagement specifically in k-8 education institutions and look mostly into multiple demographics and social classes of families.

There are families that have children who attend schools that arguably do not maintain effective advocacy of parent involvement (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). There is a high percentage of children that view their parents as academic leaders and in the context of this research study, academic leaders are individuals that children look up to as their role models (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). These role models can consist of teachers and administrators of children's respective schools.

Although parents primarily hold the role in their children's lives as their caretakers and providers, school administrators can give parents the opportunity to acquire stronger role in their children's education by providing positive encouragement and support in their academic studies (Gordon & Louis, 2009). Children's academic success and social behavior can be improved with the presence of positive encouragement in the classroom (DeLoatche, Bradley-Klug, Ogg, Kromrey, & Sudman-Wheat, 2015). Parents are not able a leadership role in their children's education without the support and encouragement from their children's schools and school communities (Gordon & Louis, 2009). School administrators, as leaders of school communities, may enact certain rules and regulations that hinder parents from being more involved with their children's academic careers.

Research Questions

The following research questions (RQ) are addressed in this study:

RQ1: What strategies do administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?

RQ4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?

Significance of the Study

Griffith (2001) shares that parents should be influenced and motivated to be active participants in their children's education. Not all demographics of parents are given the opportunity or the necessary resources to be more actively involved in their children's educational journeys. Henderson and Mapp (2007) claim that when families and their respective school communities support each other in their pursuits of empowering the child academically, children are proven to stay in school longer, thus increasing their academic success (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Thigpen and Freedberg (2014) explain that students who get support from both their home and school environments gain more self-confidence and want to do better in school.

The parents' presence in the classroom has been proven to be of significance due to the positive effect it has on children's academic progress and social behavior in the classroom (Sheridan, Knoche, Edwards, Boyaird, & Kupzyk, 2010). There are parents already active and present in their children's academics, however, Sheridan et al. (2010) have identified through studies of school districts that not all districts provide ample opportunity for parents to be involved.

Significance for Parents

A parent's role in their children's personal lives is known to most of society, as their caretakers, the person or persons that raise them. The interest in their level of involvement has recently increased. It has increased in the academic achievement ratings of school-aged children. Although there are parents that are knowledgeable about parent engagement programs offered at their children's respective schools, not all parents are equally exposed to such opportunities. Liu, Chao, Huang, Wei, and Chien (2010) explain that parents that fall into low-income demographics are not always provided with the support, opportunity, and or knowledge needed to be active participants/leaders in their children's education. When parents are given this opportunity, research has shown that parents thrive as leaders in their children's academic careers. In order to continue this role as parent leaders, parents will need continuous support from those that can keep parent initiatives present and those individuals are school administrators. Parents can serve in various roles to their children in the home, community, and in their children's school (see Figure 2).

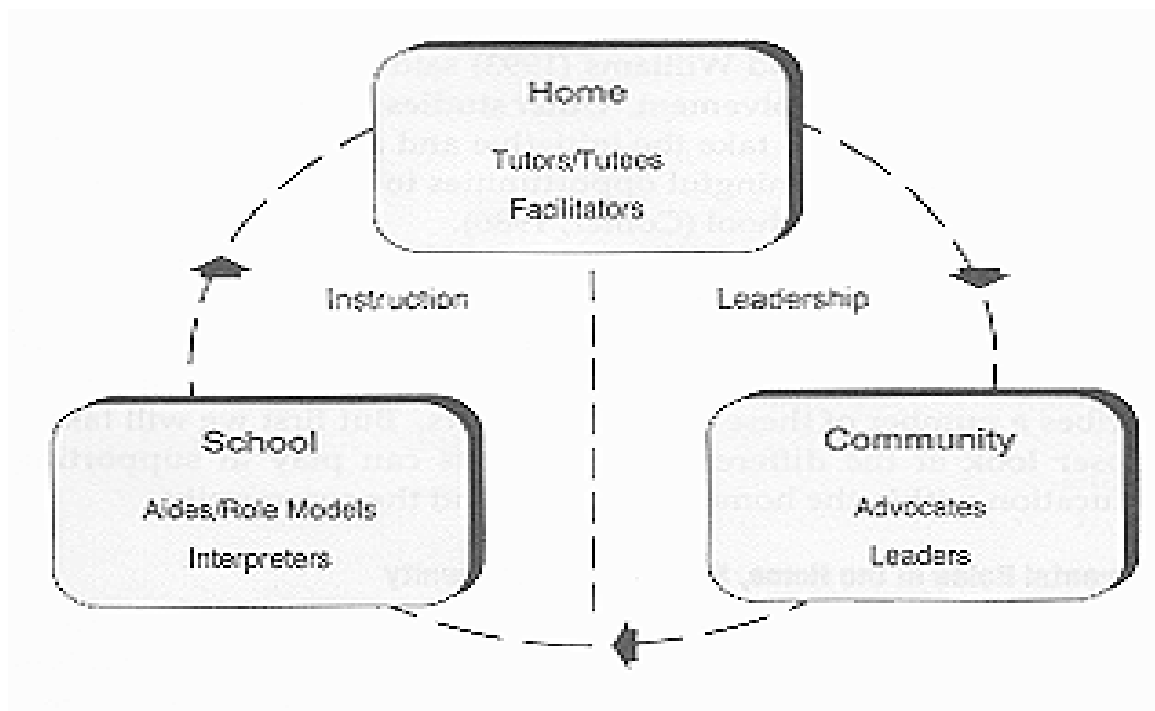


Figure 2. Parental roles in leadership and instruction. From “How Schools can Engage Hispanic Communities,” by A.B. Bermudez, 1994 (<http://www.clas.uiuc.edu/fulltext/c100136/chapter4.html>). Copyright 1994 by CLAS. Used with permission.

Significance for Teachers

Teachers could advise administrators on the potential of parents, parent insights, and parent-child dynamics. Some teachers are open to parental support in the classroom if parents are consistently present (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Parents actively seeking to be a part of their children’s academic endeavors, however, may not always be available to do so due to work schedules. Parents are seeking after school opportunities and getting trained in how to support teachers in continuing the education from the classroom environment to the home environment (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010). With continuous support in and out of the classroom, children achieve greater academic success (Holcomb-McCoy & Bryan, 2010).

Parental involvement training may be available to parents by their children’s schools. Goodson and Hess (1975) introduce the ways in which parents are seen as leaders in their own

children's education. This leadership is possible when parents are given the tools required from their children's schools. When parents are provided with training, understanding the number of hours to be put in, and how they can make a difference in the school and at home, parents can begin to develop into leaders for their children's academic success.

Significance of Helicopter Parenting and Millennial Parents

In addition to providing parents with the outlet and resources to become more active participants of their children's academic careers, there are boundaries to be implemented in the levels of their involvement. In recent times, the term "helicopter parenting" has surfaced, specifically in the realm of millennial parenting. Millennial parents feel an immense pressure today to be great parents, to be active parents in all dimensions of their children's lives (Shoshani & Steinmentz, 2014). There are levels of parent involvement and the roles parents play when given the opportunity to be involved in their children's academics (Shoshani & Steinmentz, 2014). Due to the pressure millennial parents are feeling today, their presence is at times overwhelming to the school communities, thus crossing certain teacher and parent boundaries (Shoshani & Steinmentz, 2014).

Today's millennial parents have a wealth of information at their fingertips, therefore they can challenge decisions made by administrators and teachers (Cooper, Hseih, Kiss, & Huang, 2017). Caeser (2016) explains that with the access to information and social media outlets, millennial parents are exposed to the idea of obsession, obsession of being involved in every aspect of their children's lives, especially in the lives of their children and their academic success. Fromm (2017) has found that due to millennial parents having access to an abundance of information, they are now privy to the politics of education and know how to gain a voice in

their children's communities verses an older generation of parents whose children are accompanying the children of millennial parents.

Significance for Children

Children succeed with the influences and guidance of the individuals in their school communities. These individuals can range from parents, teachers and school administrators. These individuals can be looked at as academic leaders. That being said, this is one group that stands out more than the others and that is the administrators. Administrators tend to hold the most position power since they have access and control over policies that affect parents' rights and operational requirements (Buehler, 2016). They have more access to the power needed and more significantly the voice needed to attain certain parent rights that will in turn gain more opportunity for parent involvement. Children benefit from parent involvement. Buehler (2016) discusses that children with parents that take advantage of parent engagement and involvement opportunities are more inclined to succeed academically. Children who have academically engaged parents are also more likely to have increased behavioral skills. The impact that parent engagement has on children in regard to their academic careers is significant (Sheridan et al., 2010).

Significance for Administrators

School administrators essentially are the voice for parents and teachers. It is through administrators that the wants and needs of parents and teachers are acknowledged and perhaps, accommodated. This study will provide administrators with a road map of engagement and application. The anecdotal recommendations section can serve as a resource for those administrators looking to enhance or expand on their own parent engagement endeavors. Policies and proceedings are determined by school administrators of certain programs such as parent

engagement programs are proven to be sufficient and of benefit to children's academic progress and futures (Zaretsky, 2004). Administrators have been proven to be the voice parents need if they are open and willing to face the challenge (Zaretsky, 2004). Administrators face a difficult challenge in the which is attaining the advocacy of parents and proving to their stakeholders that parent engagement programs are worthy of being acknowledged, funded, and fought for. Therefore, having access to this information can strengthen their position and ability to push the parent engagement agenda forward.

Significance of Classroom Support

The support that children seek and receive at school differs from that which they receive from their parents. According to Griffith (2001), each child receives support from teachers, faculty, administrators, and most importantly from their parents. Griffith (2001) elaborates that children may tell their parents what they need from their teachers and children may tell their teachers what they need at home in terms of academic support. If teachers and parents were to collaborate with one another, they could solve many of the more prevalent problems that may occur.

Each role is different, yet the same in impact on student's academic achievement. Administrators and teachers also reap the benefits of quality parent engagement. As research has found, children improve in various components academically and socially, creating a benefit for teachers and administrators. This will also lead to goal achievement of the highest academic potential for their students (Boviard, 2007). If the power of leadership is distributed equally among the academic leaders in children's academic careers (identified in this study as parents, teachers, and administrators), the benefits of these leaders' presence will be reflected in children's academic success.

Current Parent Engagement Strategies

As discussed throughout this paper, many strategies for the creation of parent engagement programs occur within a school district and are led by school administrators. However, many parent engagement strategies are led by outside agencies and organizations whose mission it is to help increase the engagement of parents in their children's academic careers. Organizations such as Child 360, located in Los Angeles, CA, provide several services that increase the success of 0-5 age children. One of these services include contracting with schools within Los Angeles county and surrounding counties, offering the assistance of parent engagement professionals that provide school programs with tools in how to increase the engagement of parents within school communities even with minimal access of resources such as money and time.

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

The following sections provide a description and explanation of the projected limitations and assumptions of this study.

Limitations. The following are limitations of the study.

- This study is limited to principals, and does not include teachers, who are primarily in contact with students and therefore have more contact with parents if and when they are assisting in the classroom (Vuorenmaa, 2016).
- This study is limited to principals and does not include parents. Parents might have different concerns or reasons around lack of parent engagement.
- There is limited documentation about teacher and administrator initiative, working together to support teachers in and out of the classroom.

Assumptions. The following are assumptions for this study:

- Parents with the support of school administrators can become important leaders in their children's academic careers alongside teachers.
- If school administrators implemented more programs that empowered parent and community engagement, parents along with administrators can improve student academic achievement.
- Programs that are created to involve parents with consideration to language barriers, economic status, and education levels will increase the effectiveness of parent engagement inside the classroom of k-8 institutions.
- Children's behavior and academic achievement will benefit from positive and consistent support from their parents inside the classroom.
- Parent want to be fully engaged in their children's academic careers.

Key Terms and Definition of Terms

For purposes of this research study, the following terms have been defined in context of this study.

Leadership: In the context of this paper, leadership will be viewed in the roles of mainly parents and administrators and what leadership styles parents and administrators hold or are encouraged to hold in their children's academic careers. Administrators will be viewed in this study as the transformational leaders that are the main advocates and voices for parents. Giles, C. (2006) confirms that in order for transformation leadership to occur, parent involvement to be viewed as an integral part of the leadership practices of parents and administrators.

Parent Leader: The initial understanding is that a parent leader is a parent that is consistently present in their child's academic career. This parent helps lead their children with the assistance of staff and faculty to increase their academic success (Redmond & Griffith,

2005). Parents will be viewed as the leaders in their children's academic pursuits if given the opportunity and resources to do so.

Administrator: An individual who has the authority to create and enforce school policies which can affect an academic institution both positively and negatively. Administrators have access to certain resources that allow for parents to attain leadership skills and become leaders in students' academic careers in and outside of the classroom (Gordon & Louis, 2009).

Administration: The processes and procedures of managing responsibilities and rules. In a scholastic environment, the principal's management of the faculty and staff, and overseeing of the school system's rules, are examples of administration (retrieved from <http://www.teachers.org>).

School Community: The student body, administrators, teachers and parents (Tangri & Moles, 1987).

Summary

A brief introduction has been given on parent engagement/involvement and the advocacy of parents as leaders in primary education. It has been postulated that the advocacy of parents is among one of the responsibilities of administrators and policy makers. The research questions that have been introduced are created to gain a better understanding of the role administrators play in advocating on behalf of parents. The questions therefore will examine administrators' intentions to assist parents in accessing parent engagement programs and resources intended to make parents take on stronger roles in their children's academic careers. Lastly, the research questions examine the processes through which administrators implement parental involvement in their respective school communities.

This chapter has given a brief introduction on the topic of parent engagement and involvement and the advocacy taken by administrators and school communities to improve and sustain parent involvement in primary education. Chapter 2 will provide a rich and complex understanding of the body of literature that has been produced in the past and present years on this topic. Below is a comprehensive and extensive review of the literature found on the topic at hand.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Parental involvement is a topic that has been highly researched by specifically focusing on primary education. Parental involvement specifically within early childhood education has been a prevalent topic for many years and continues to be across U.S. elementary schools and their respective districts (Buehler, 2016). There has not been much movement in recent years to increase parental involvement, specifically within lower-income families. Early childhood education is constantly evolving and the opportunities to strengthen it is to evolve the relationships between parents, administrators, teachers, and students. If these opportunities are taken and supported by district initiatives, parents will be given the opportunity to have a deeper presence in their children's academic pursuits and endeavors. The following review of literature is to examine some of the most important findings regarding the implementation of programs and curriculum that help support the idea of parental involvement in primary education.

Policy makers and administrators have been linked giving a platform for parents to have a voice to parents as a voice that allows for parents to gain more access to parent engagement programs and resources (Boviard, 2007). Parent engagement and the advocacy taken by administrators and school communities improves and sustains parent involvement in primary education (Boviard, 2007). The access to resources necessary for parents to support children in and out of the classroom enables teachers to gain access to more support from parents. With the support of parents, teachers are able to benefit from the help and support parents provide during class instruction (Griffith, 2007).

Historical Practices

Parent engagement is currently coming to the forefront (Hiatt-Michael, 2000). A lack of resources, in combination with the awareness of its importance, could explain why it was not deemed relevant in the past. Parents who were aware of its importance did the best they could with the tools they had. A number of concerned mothers who understood the importance of parental involvement rallied together and created a group by the name of National Congress of Mothers (Hiatt-Michael, 2000). They came together in an effort to create a voice within local schools and abroad, in hopes that their message would become universal. These mothers would go from one school to another speaking with principals and educating them on the value of having parents present in the classroom. The influence of this group generated much attention. Students then became involved in an effort to recognize if they were being supported academically when their parents were more involved. The majority of students shared that they were in fact in favor of this change, even sharing that they believed grades would improve if their parents were more involved in their studies. The Parent and Teacher Association (PTA) worked alongside the National Congress of Mothers to raise educational awareness into the home as well as throughout the community. Hiatt-Michael (2000) discusses in further detail the creation and sustainability of the PTA:

Parent-Teacher Associations grew by leaps and bounds, and in a few communities even the student began to be listened to with more appreciation and respect as the notion of a ‘community school’ began to capture the imagination and loyalty of those members of the professional and the public who were genuinely devoted to improving the school.

Hiatt-Michael (2000) goes on to explain that the PTA was the predominant tool and resource in providing parents the information and education they needed to help their children

both at school and within the home. The PTA, ranging from just a few to many parents, continues to be a program present in many schools today.

Parent-Child Relationships

In an effort to help children to reach their highest academic potential, there has been research done on what can be done within the home environment to determine whether or not children are receiving the necessary support from their parents. There is a significance in the parent-child dynamic at home, pertaining to the children's education and academic needs (Warin & Edwards, 1999). The authors hone in on several key factors that contribute to the success of this relationship between parents and children. There must be good home relations, as well as a positive environment for children to come home to. Parents must be willing to involve themselves in their children's education. While many parents may find themselves in need of help with the materials being taught in school, Warin and Edwards (1999) find it imperative that parents seek guidance from both teachers and administrators. "Strong home-school links are a vital ingredient in the educational life of communities" (Warin & Edwards, 1999, p. 8). "Parent involvement at home and at school has a measurable impact on student performance in school and is particularly important for English learners and students from low-income families" (Thigpen & Freedberg, 2014, p.10). Parents can be active participants inside and outside of their children's classrooms. According to Thigpen and Freedberg (2014), parental involvement is most important for lower-income families as these families may face additional challenges.

Parent-Teacher Relationships

Children have many forms of role models throughout their lives (Lalayants, 2012). At school, children may look at their teachers as role models, as they often provide academic inspiration, guidance, and comfort. At home, children may look at their parents as role models,

often turning to them for help and comfort in their personal lives and for future endeavors. If parents and teachers were to join forces and come together, children would be receiving two forms of support that would significantly guide them towards reaching and exceeding their greatest potential (Layalants, 2012). With this team effort between teachers and parents, the support of a child is strengthened.

When families and their respective school communities come together to support learning, children's academic success increases (Henderson & Mapp, 2007). Henderson and Mapp (2007) insist that when families are given the opportunity to have an influence on their children's academia, their children's achievement will be abundant and successful. Both teachers and parents play a crucial and important role in a student's academic life (Li & Hung, 2012). Thigpen and Freedberg (2014) explain that students feel supported when receiving academic assistance within the home and at school. This support leads students to gain more self-confidence in their academics and hold school as a higher priority (Thigpen & Freedberg, 2014). Children are able to communicate to their parents what they need from their teachers, and teachers communicate to the parents what they can work on with their children to improve. If teachers and parents were to collaborate, they could work together to try and solve any and all problems that may occur (Faires, Nichols, and Rickleman, 2000). While each takes on a different role, they both have equal impact on student's academic achievement.

For administrators to go through with the support of parental involvement, teacher satisfaction is a contributing factor of that support. Li and Hung (2012) discuss the significance of teacher and parent relationships and the importance of teacher satisfaction. The authors explain that it is important for teachers to create and maintain relationships with parents in order to create a healthy and productive environment for children inside the classroom. Li and Hung

(2012) tested this theory and conducted a questionnaire on more than 500 elementary school teachers. The results of this study found that when parental involvement is achieved in the home, this was the most effective factor that contributed to teachers' willingness to maintain relationships with parents. The study also concluded that parental involvement inside of the classroom was less effective, students benefited more so with the support of parents inside the home.

District-Parent Relationships

In an article written about the strategic plan of Riverside County Office of Education, one of the many predictions presented was that "schools would need to increase per pupil spending by more than \$1,000 in order to achieve the same results that are gained with parental involvement" (Houtenville & Conway, 2008, p. 10). If every school were to be educated on this key piece of information, the way in which schools were conducted would improve. If schools were to involve more parents, a great cause would be served. Parents would save money for the district, which in turn could be used toward other important school programs and resources. In addition, parents would be given the more important task of being at the forefront of their children's education. The authors suggest that if given the opportunity to work closely with faculty, parents will be able to learn the tools needed to help their children succeed when schoolwork is taken home, providing parents with the tools and resources to help their children succeed.

The article explains that although parent-teacher relationships are imperative for parent involvement to be successful, it is just as important for school districts to realize the need to implement parent involvement into school curriculum (Moore et al., 2016). If teachers and faculty are made aware of the benefits and importance of involvement and they are receiving

either resources or instruction to support it, schools will more readily be able to build, improve, and sustain parent involvement. This can take place by offering programs to better educate parents on how to be present and involved in their children's academic journeys, both at school and at home.

It has been demonstrated that children with highly involved parents have enhanced social functioning and fewer behavior problems (El Nokali et al., 2010). When children develop better social behavior, it is reflected both inside the classroom and at home. Parents and teachers benefit. Children will not only gain support inside and outside of the classroom, they will also thrive from this support both academically and socially. Behavior, student attendance, attention to detail, and motivation all improve due to the support of parents in the classroom and at home (El Nokali et al., 2010).

Data/Studies Conducted

The qualitative method is the manner in which data is normally collected for studies reflecting the benefits of parent engagement and parent engagement programs in primary education. While some studies use the quantitative method, the majority of cases follows the qualitative approach, which provides accurate findings through in-person interviews with parents, students, staff, and faculty.

Studies have been conducted to test parents, teachers, and children on their social and behavioral skills, further testing whether each of these groups of individuals have benefited from parents being a part of the classroom routine. El Nokali et al. (2010) conducted a series of studies to determine the benefit of parent involvement in elementary school education. El Nokali et al. (2010), determined these results through a number of exams that were administered first, third, and fifth grade students, their parents, and teachers. More than 1,300 students were involved in

this study, taken over a 54-month period. Interviews were conducted with the parents of these selected children, with the intention of pursuing information about the parents' family characteristics, including demographic data. To determine these families' economic background, researchers examined the families' income, paying close attention to how each family budgeted on children's needs as well as household expenses. Teachers were given a questionnaire in the fall, reporting their own experiences. This allowed for the researchers to gain knowledge of the teachers' background characteristics, ultimately helping them measure parent involvement, children's behavior problems and social skills. They were able to conclude that parent involvement in the classroom and in the home did in fact result in improved student behavior and increased academic results. It has also benefited teachers in the classroom. When parents are more present, it allows for an otherwise overwhelmed teacher trying to balance multiple aspects of the classroom, to be able to focus more on the children and tend to their needs in a more efficient manner (Moore et al., 2016).

Administrators are a key instrument in implementing parent engagement programs that will allow teachers to receive more parental support in the classroom. DeLoatche et al. (2015) conducted a study on twenty-four sets of parents and their preschool-aged children. This study was an intervention and this selected group were tested on different dimensions, including the importance of academic home interaction. The author found that during the before and after of this intervention, the effectiveness of parent-directed academic intervention in the home was increased due to the tools. parents learned inside the classroom with the guidance of their respective children's teachers. Halsey (2005) conducted a study in a west Texas school district where a parent engagement initiative program launched, with the goal of increasing parent involvement and community support in k-12 classrooms. When implementing this program, this

district's goal was to encourage district teachers and staff to involve parents more in school activities and classroom interactions with children. In order to achieve the hoped-for outcome, an analysis looked into two teachers who fostered parent engagement programs for 400 students and their parents. Teachers, administrators, and the parents of the selected 400 students collectively felt that the initiative and efforts to include and enable parents the access to various skills in achieving success for their children in and outside of the classroom (Halsey, 2005).

Parent engagement programs are most effective if offered across the board, to families of all social class and cultural differences, including language barriers. Lee (2012) explored the effect of language barriers in schools that offered parent engagement or involvement programs. The author wanted to explore whether classrooms that only provided programs delivered in English were also offering other primary languages such as Spanish. The study analyzed variables that tested the effectiveness of offering parent programs to Caucasian and Latino families in both the English and Spanish languages. Findings showed that more Latino families were becoming involved in their children's academic pursuits due to language no longer being a hindering factor in their involvement. Hilado, Kallemeyn, Leow, Lundy, and Israel (2011) share the findings from a mixed-method study that was created to prove that an increase in the amount of resources to support parent engagement programs in preschool programs will enhance the level and quality of parent engagement in the classroom throughout a child's academic career.

Halsey (2005) demonstrates that by administrators being behind school board initiatives to increase parent support resources, parent engagement will increase in numbers inside and outside the classroom. Widening the opportunities for Caucasian, Latino, and families of various other cultures, the amount of parent engagement in each school institution would increase. Ryan, Casas, Kelly-Vance, Ryalls, and Nero (2010) demonstrates this statement by creating a

questionnaire that assessed non-Latino and Latino parents and the importance of children's academic, social, and behavioral success. In receiving the results of this questionnaire which was given to a total of 17 non-Latino parents and 13 Latino parents, Latino parents were equally if not more driven to be a part of their children's academic careers.

Advocacy for parents is crucial to achieve ultimate success in the implementation and support of parent engagement programs in primary k-8 education institutions (Zaretsky, 2004). This growth will only stem from the support of those individuals who create and sustain such policies. Leaders in the primary education institutions are mostly principals and individuals involved in school board committees. Through several interviews and group discussions with principals, teachers, and parents who are advocates, Zaretsky (2004) found that there were imbalances of power in the decision making of policies concerning parent engagement and involvement initiatives. From this finding, it can be determined that leadership in the context of primary education initiatives is not always shared. Gordon and Louis (2009) set out to find the perceptions of teachers, principals, and stakeholders and if there is a shared style of leadership that is implemented when making certain decisions that impact the success of parent and child success in the classroom. The findings after distributing and collecting surveys found that for a diverse group of principals of various racial and ethnic backgrounds, their leadership styles when combined are more geared toward community and parent involvement. The results for parents and teachers were very similar. The overall finding from this study was when the above mentioned three groups of individuals come together, their efforts to portray the importance of parent and community involvement to outside stakeholders to increase student achievement, is more successful. The figure below is an example of a framework that has been implemented in

elementary schools that has identified the challenges, opportunities, and benefits of parent engagement initiatives.

Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) explain the different sets of skills leaders and managers within the field of primary education hold, value, and practice. The authors suggest that not everyone in the field of primary education holds a title of leader or manager. In order to be considered a leader, one must have followers. A leader must possess the skill of being influential and must want to transform the motivation and academic performance of the group of individuals being led. An orderly and supportive environment is the root for creating transformational leadership (Robinson et al., 2008).

The Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships



Reprinted from Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family–school partnerships*. Austin, TX: SEDL

Figure 3. The Dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships. From a publication of SEDL in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education (<https://www.ed.gov/parent-and-family-engagement>. Reprinted with permission). Copyright 2013 by U.S. Department of Education. Used with permission.

Amey and Brown (2006) questions how leaders find their motivation, where they receive inspiration, and most significantly, how they learn to lead. The author covers the main

characteristics that leaders should have in any type of position within the university environment, adding that leadership should be viewed as “leadership as learning and doing” (p. 3). This terminology is explained and examined for all roles that entail all types of skills and those who hold these skills are individuals who challenge, embrace, and create change. Avolio (2010) agrees with Amey et al. (2006), both stating that leaders who create change can then create cultural awareness and can collaborate with other leaders to benefit the success of students and faculty. The decisions leaders make depend on the knowledge and experience they have acquired throughout their lifetime.

Challenges in Developing Parent Involvement Programs

If leadership is lacking, where it lacks (whether in the school or home environment) and how parental involvement coincides with leadership are all concerns that are still in the process of being answered. Challenges rise when beginning to develop parent involvement programs and or the understanding that parent involvement is beneficial to the continued and growing success of school-aged children (Kennedy, 2009). The authors’ discussion includes the hesitation that schools and their school districts have about spending money to educate parents on how to be better participants in the home, school, and classroom. There are still school districts that would rather accept additional funding, and put it to other uses, rather than investing it into their resources aimed at working more closely with parents.

Early intervention has been known to be an important factor in the start of children’s academic success (Houtenville & Conway, 2008). There has been research to indicate and seek answers as to why perhaps parents of school-aged children do not attain the support needed to effectively help their children academically. One of the main reasons to the above stated concern is the lack of policy written to give parents and their children’s respective schools’ leaders more

opportunities to create and be more involved in early intervention (Belcher, Hairston-Fuller, & McFadden, 2011). Belcher et al., (2011) explains that in order for parents and administrators to work effectively together in the school context, policies need to be made to ensure that schools receive the advocacy and resources needed to supplement such work. This work entails the creation and sustainability of parent engagement and community programs. The role of administrators then comes to the forefront to create parent programs that will enable the interaction between children and parents in the classroom. This initiative will then increase parent-teacher relationships. They will learn from one another as to how to create a better and more effective learning environment for their children (Mitra, 2007).

Positive Effects of Parent Involvement

Studies on 28 parent-involvement programs throughout many major American cities investigated the positive benefits of parent involvement (Jeynes, 2005). These studies used the qualitative method, in which several parents and teachers were interviewed, to learn of the progress of student achievement, in correlation with parental involvement. The results were positive all around. By involving parents in their children's education, improvement was shown academically and behaviorally within the 28 programs examined (Jeynes, 2005). Parents were also described as grateful that they were given the opportunity to be a part of their children's academic success.

When parents are given the opportunity to be a part of their children's academic growth, it helps not only the children, but also schools. Cotton and Savard (1982) created or discussed the results of 18 studies on the effects of parent involvement. These studies focused on the curriculum and instruction taught to parents to help them successfully guide children to realize their greatest potential. The studies that produced interviews between parents and researchers,

found that when parents were given the tools to be active participants in their children's education, they were better able to help their children at home with their academic needs. Tangri and Moles (1987) research the effects of parent involvement, specifically examining students' behavioral change. The authors compile enough research to conclude that several studies prove that parent involvement indefinitely is an effective strategy to get children to want to do better in school and after school. The figure below displays the ways in which parents are involved in children's academic endeavors when given the opportunity.

Parents should be considered an integral part of a school's community (Watson, Brown, & Swick, 1983). When parents become involved in the school's activities, events, and programs, they are given the opportunity to be productive and active participants in their children's academic accomplishments. Watson et al. (1983) investigate the outcomes of various other studies that make evident the positive relationships among education and parent support in the home and in school, all being linked to increased student achievement. The authors discuss studies on 362 first graders, all analyzed through a series of achievement tests. The children that had supportive parents that were actively present in their academic lives at home and in school scored higher than children whose parents were not as involved (p.263).

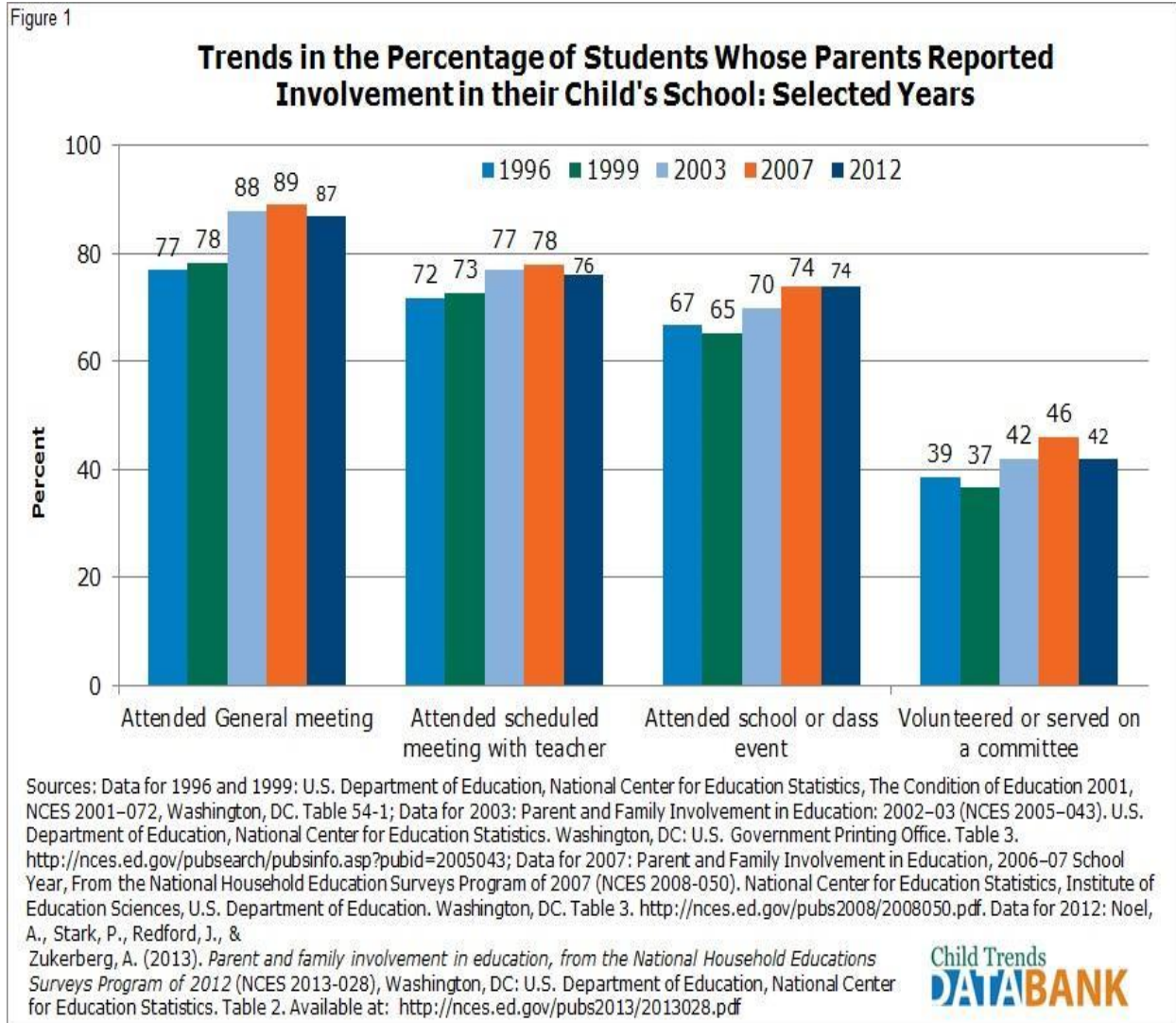


Figure 4. Trend in the percentage of students whose parents reported involvement in their child's school: selected years. From "National Household Education Surveys," by Child Trends Data Bank (<https://www.childtrends.org/databank-indicators>). Copyright 2018. Used with permission.

Parent Training

A study conducted by Communities, U.S. Department of Education (2010) was directed toward 20 different school-aged programs. The faculty of each of these school programs was asked about the level of communication they have with the students' parents. Many faculties concluded that without clear communication skills, there could be a lack of understanding between the goals that both parties have for the students. Teachers and faculty have certain tasks

to follow to make sure their students are attaining the education that is necessary for them to succeed academically. Parents take this task on after hours, and if they are not given the proper tools on how to do so within the home, both parties will lose the momentum they need to be the best role models for their students.

Thriving childhood programs are created from a strong foundation and it turn strengthen school communities. Conner (2009) explains that childhood programs that are thriving enable all members of a community to come together. The author states that when teachers, administrators, parents, and community members come together with the understanding of heightening children's academic success. The promotion of children's learning outside of the classroom will enhance children's success inside the classroom (Conner, 2009). The author continues to explain that the promotion of children's learning in and outside of the classroom can only be sustained when given continuous training on how to do so.

When this training is received, students should be taught by leaders who foster the experience and knowledge that these students can look up to. The authors of *Engaging Millennial Students in Leadership Education* (Arensdorf & Andenoro, 2009) explain that millennial students need to be taught through discussion and given activities that will allow them to collaborate in and outside of the classroom. Coomes and DeBard (2004) agrees that millennial students need to be guided into becoming exceptional leaders. The only way in which these students will become exceptional leaders is if they are guided by leaders who hold high expectations of them. Millennial students in today's society foster characteristics such as motivation, the need to achieve, and a special craving for learning. Millennial students are increasingly diverse and ready to take on leadership positions in the future and if prepared, will

succeed. Broido (2004) agrees that millennial students need the proper guidance in order to succeed.

Training is an important factor in making parents exceptional leaders (Sommer et al., 2017) examined 39 sets of parents and determined whether parents needed additional training to improve the skills they already had or to learn new skills in addressing children's academic needs. Parents expressed their challenges in controlling the behaviors of their children, needing the tools necessary to proactively deal with them. Addressing these issues in the home will decrease the chances of these behaviors from occurring inside of the classroom (Sommer et al., 2017). Primary schools need to implement a leadership model such as Figure 5 displayed below that will allow parents, administrators, and educators to identify their individual responsibilities in the school setting.

Parents and Administrators as Leaders

Through transformational leadership, a leader is able to collaborate with a group of individuals to identify the change needed and to then create a vision to make that change a reality. According to Owens & Owens (1995), in the article titled *Organizational Behavior in Education*, the author explains the importance of transformational leadership. Owens & Owens (1995) discusses that a transformational leader looks for purpose within followers and finds way to motivate that purpose into action, creating followers into potential and prospective leaders. The author also identifies the importance of relationships, and of leaders being able to be relational and intentional about the relationships they create with their employees. He explains that a relationship between a leader and those being led should not be viewed as a relationship of power; it should be viewed as a sincere bond that embodies the lead and followers' same values, needs, and aspirations for the goals that are set to be achieved within an organization.

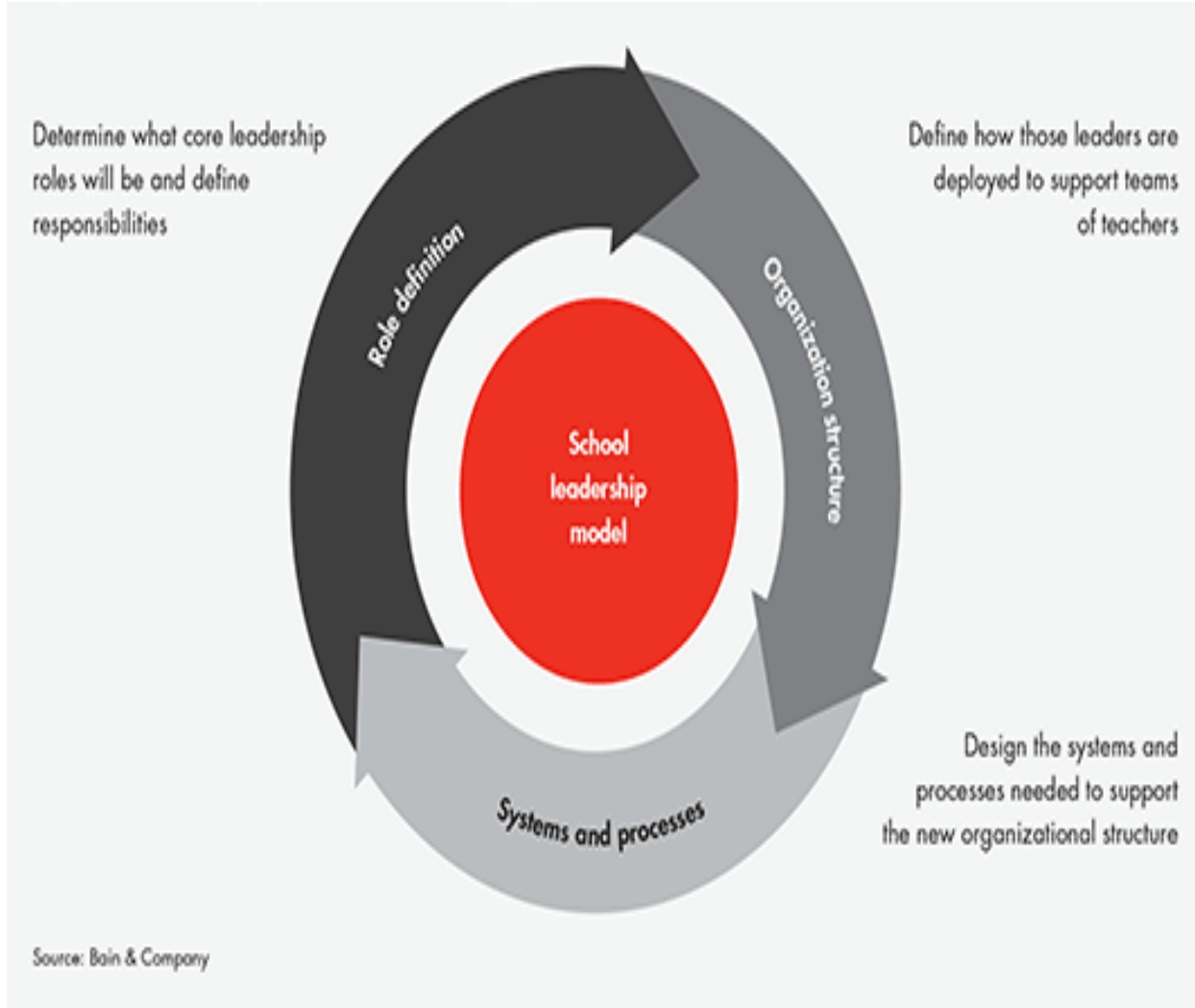


Figure 5. A distributed leadership defines leadership roles, how they will work together, and the systems need to support them. From Bain and Company by Spillane and Diamond, 2007. (<http://www.bain.com/publications/articles/transforming-schools.aspx>). Copyright 2016. Used with permission.

In the context of this study, the transformational leaders are school administrators and those being led are parents. Blythe and Gardner (1990) notes that leadership is essentially about influencing and teaching people how to adapt to change. Change is an agent that will forever be present in a field such as higher education. A leader needs to set a foundation of effective leadership through making clear the organization's mission statement. The leader is responsible

for making this mission clear to followers, by creating a vision for a particular mission and sustaining this vision through clarity and support.

Rich (2006) explains the politics occurring within primary education institutions and how the leadership of school administrators is affected. Resources available to postsecondary institutions change constantly, tuition costs rise, and faculty and staff must comply with education policies and standards. The leaders within these institutions face challenges that are essentially business problems, and these require business solutions. Portney (2011) argues that leaders in education institutions are not succeeding to their utmost potential due to the lack of leadership training. Without employees understanding that there are parts of the education environment that need to be run like a business, transactional leadership must be learned and conducted successfully. The author also explains that leaders need to be able to adapt to different styles of leadership, in order to conform to changes that happen consistently within primary education institutions. Goleman (2000) claims that there is a different type of leadership for each type of situation, known as situational leadership. The author expresses the importance behind situational leadership and how each leader should be comfortable with change and be able to adapt to different styles of leadership, considering the situation at hand.

With the discussion of leadership and primary education, there has been research conducted that focuses on leadership and its importance in the creation and implementation of parent involvement programs. Ayman, Korabik, and Morris (2009) reveals that in order to be an effective leader, a leader must have intentionality. A leader within the field of primary education must have the intention to serve their community well. This community is the school they are leading within. The intention must be to serve students with passion and the goal to make changes in public policy that will benefit students, staff, and faculty. *Promoting Diversity in*

Academic Leadership (Page, 2003) agrees that leaders should support one another within their leadership roles to attain one important goal, to encourage social justice.

In a majority of higher education institutions, fostered within these institutions are underrepresented groups of people. Within these groups are individuals faced with challenges that at times do not allow their leadership skills to develop and or be valued and appreciated. Gurin, Dey, Hurtado and Gurin (2002), explains the importance of diversity being at the forefront of higher education situations. The author explains that too much time has gone by with diversity being ignored instead of praised, given value, and given representation. The author attended a conference which emphasized the importance of political parties encouraging to the government and state officials across the country, to implement strategies that encourage social justice, in the policies and practices of higher education institutions. Page (2003) agrees that leaders should support one another within their leadership roles to attain one important goal, to encourage social justice. The author explains that leaders should follow the style of servant leadership. Leaders within higher education, need to support and serve students they are working for.

Bianchini and Maffei (2012) present the term institutional leadership: essentially the need for chairs, deans, presidents and the higher-ups of higher education advocating for minorities and their participation. This participation will allow minorities to share their efforts and hard work, to be represented as role models to the students they serve. In serving students of all races, the faculties that serve these races, should embody diversity to essentially promote diversity.

Parent Involvement in Urban School Communities

The research conducted identifies the problems that have occurred when trying to create a space for parent involvement in certain schools and respective districts, specifically in urban

school communities. A critical part of the success of parent involvement can be seen in the academic progress of students. MacLeod (2009) reiterates the trend in this paper that family plays an important role in the potential success of a student's academic achievement. Student productivity and motivation is in closer reach when families are behind their children's academia. The process and initiation of student productivity can be seen as a form of social reproduction. A family is the root and first step in the process of social reproduction of school-aged children (MacLeod, 2009). Students will reproduce that involvement and support in children's academic success is a responsibility a parent has the choice to fulfill. Chang, Park, Singh, and Sung (2008) conclude with the above authors research that for disadvantaged communities, the concept of social capital can be seen a form of parental involvement.

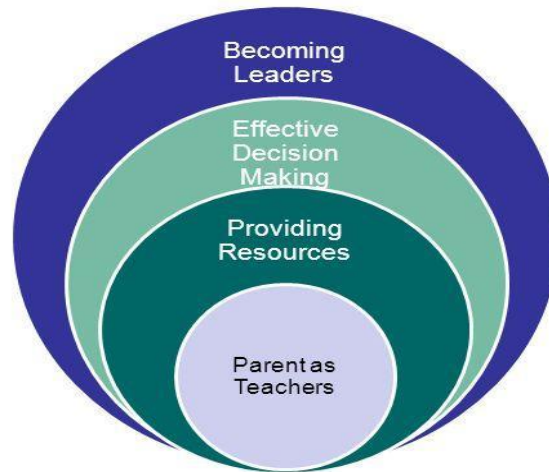
Political policies on student diversity needs that are implemented in most inner-city schools and surroundings are not beneficial to the needs of the communities, academically speaking (MacLeod, 2009). The proper policies are not being created to help inner city schools and its students prosper in their academics and receive a quality education. MacLeod (2009) shows that if one strives for something hard enough, it will be achieved, but poorly made policies hinder that progress. A large number of underprivileged and minority students have access to fewer state and local monies to be spent on them (Chang, Park, Singh, & Sung, 2008). In contrast, school districts that have access to more resources are prone to spend more on each student and these are districts with the least number of poor and minority students (Edelman, 1977). The problem is the people, the actors, as claims that are acting as policy makers and creating policies that are fit for one type of school district (Edelman, 1977). These policies are not accounting for how many students attend each district and for the funding necessary to provide a quality education to each student. The author goes on to say that what gets studied, and

what policies get chosen as important to look at, as well as the decisions that are made “depend on who controls power and resources” (Anyon, 2005, p. 176). Therefore, policies for the economically destitute are almost always declined or overlooked and neglected. This cycle will continue unless the actors that are making decisions for the state on behalf of public education are replaced or relieved of their false duty to the progress of education.

In the creation of a strong parental involvement movement, a strong community with enough resources supporting its strength, is essential. Hill and Tyson (2009) discuss that when children are comfortable in their school communities, change is less of a challenge, it is not considered a task. Low-income neighborhoods and the schools that are fostered within them are often lacking the fundamental resources needed to fully lend a quality education to their students. Social reproduction is then created a positive connotation, and this is possible when relationships are built between school and neighborhood community members. The gap of social reproduction will continue to close if the advocacy for parental involvement is continuously implemented in educational policies. Furthermore, the chances that their children do not succeed are significantly decreased. “Indeed, family-school relations and parental involvement in education have been identified as a way to close demographic gaps in achievement and maximize students’ potential” (Hill & Tyson, 2009, p.750). The authors further mention that the academic success of parents and their children lays within the authority and decision making of school administrators. Hill and Tyson (2009) explains that children are most motivated when they perceive their parents as leaders in their academic activities. With this perception, children will have a greater push to succeed in their academic careers as the below figure displays.

Parent Engagement: Engagement Model

The Parent Engagement Model



17

Figure 6. Parent engagement: engagement model. From NYC Department of Education (<http://slideplayer.com/slide/6981490>). Copyright 2007. Used with permission.

Low-income families have a unique culture, and within that culture they have built their own customs and traditions (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Their culture includes what they know is and is not of access to them, in terms of academic resources. Parents of this demographic would be exceptionally open to be a part of their children's academic journey if given the opportunity. Parents will prosper by educating themselves to better their futures (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The success of children's studies and academic pursuits lies within the opportunities parents have to assist them. In addition, with the support of their family and school communities, children's academic success becomes more feasible and less challenging.

Duncan and Morell (2008) suggests that communities use the concept of praxis created by the late theorist Paulo Freire. What this concept essentially encompasses is a method that a community can embrace, to create and hopefully be able to implement change in an area of their

community that needs reform. Without a plan and a secure idea, a structured course of action cannot be created to bring forth the advancements a community may need to establish itself (Duncan & Morell, 2008). Below is a figure that captures the changes in levels of parental involvement when lower-income families are given access to resources they need to be more active in their children's school activities.

There have been schools in the lower-income area of California that have identified the lack of parental involvement and have begun to create and implement a strategic plan in efforts to increase their rate of parental involvement. For example, in the strategic plan of Riverside County of Education, one of the many predictions that was presented was that "schools would need to increase per pupil spending by more than \$1,000 in order to achieve the same results that are gained with parental involvement" (Houtenville & Conway, 2008, p.9). Houtenville and Conway (2008) explain the need and importance of parental involvement, even more so than funding. Through research, the authors show that funding is important and crucial to the improvement of schools and its programs and if proper funding was given to each school, the quality and growth of parental involvement would improve.

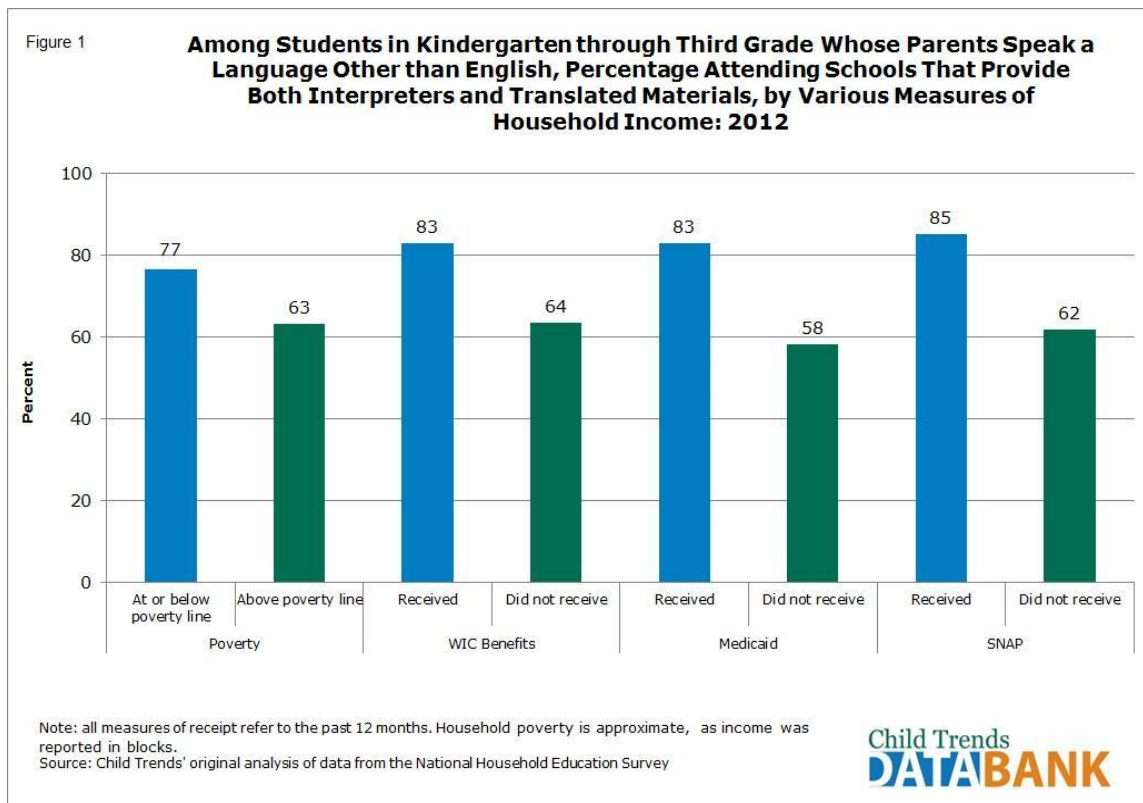


Figure 7. Among Students in Kindergarten through Third Grade Whose Parents Speak a Language Other than English, Percentage Attending Schools That Provide Both Interpreters and Translated Materials. From by “Various Measure of Household Income” (<https://www.childtrends.org/databank-indicators>). Copyright 2012. Use with permission.

Creating policies in the public domain can be complicated and taxing, specifically in the context of primary education. According to Boyaird (2007), the creation of policies takes multiple levels of individuals to create and sustain them. Boyaird (2007) defines different levels of individuals as different levels of leaders. Teachers, administrators, parents, and government level policy makers are examples of such leaders. No longer does the voice of a government leader trump the voices of the other individuals that are coming together to maintain a successful education and academic experience for school-aged children (Boyaird, 2007).

In creating a successful school structure, according to Mitchell, Mendiola, Schumacker, and Lowery (2016) an “academic optimism” is enabled. This academic optimism is created by enabling and strengthening the relationships between parents and school administrators to ensure

the optimum school achievement. The authors above conducted a study on 58 low-income and urban schools in the southern United States, in which 16 were middle schools and 42 were elementary schools. The study conducted to test the effects of two main variables that are elementary status and socio-economic status through a questionnaire. The findings indicated that the role of administrators and their flexibility in establishing certain policies, rules, and regulations that pertain to parent engagement efforts and helping parents attain a leadership role in pursuit of children's academic success (Mitchell et al., 2016). Giles (2006) conducted a similar study that included a number of urban schools in the northern part of U.S.A. This study was achieved by questionnaires to determine if administrators were taking the task to involve parents and teach parents how to be effective leaders and role-models in children's academic pursuits. Some of the principals of the selected schools had difficulties with distributing and sharing some of their leadership skills and roles to parents. These challenges stem from lack of attention given to community and parental involvement in specifically urban public schools at the k-8 grade level (Watson & Bogotch, 2015). The author explains that a strong sense of power in school communities is present when parents are given a significant voice for their educational institutions and its importance. Communities of concern here are of lower-class economic status (Watson & Bogotch, 2015). An additional concern is the lack of the fundamental and essential resources needed to strengthen school communities and the quality of education that is administered in their respective classrooms. Mitchell et al. (2016) agrees that the point is to create social and educational justice through the strengthening of community involvement and social reproduction.

Years of quantitative and qualitative research have been produced on the importance of school and community and the role it plays in students' lives. The lack of resources communities

and their educational institutions attain is also a fundamental cause of the inequality of education a lower-class student receives (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009). Cucchiara and Horvat (2009) conclude that resources and community involvement are interrelated when discussing the success or failure of students and their potential educational success.

In order to develop strong community involvement in inner-city schools, Power, et al. (2010) explain and discuss the importance of community involvement and its role in inner-city schools. When a community is built into a reliable and strong community, strength and power are created for that community and its schools. The more a community comes together, the more knowledge is created and validated which births knowledge power. Knowledge power gives a community voice to create or at least try to implement change for better resources and a better education for its community and their education. When community members are given the chance to partake in their local school affairs and daily agendas, they become valid and reliable members of their school communities. “Paraprofessionals often live within the neighborhoods surrounding the schools and therefore, are likely to represent the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and families” (Power et al., 2010, p. 57). When persons are taken from within a community and placed into the schools that surround them, they represent the community and its historical background.

Community members that are also Para educators are experienced in the language and culture and care about how their community is ran and what their community represents; when Para educators are placed inside their surrounding schools, they are able to communicate with students and their families in the same language and understand one another’s culture and upbringing (Valenzuela, 1999). Valenzuela (1999) continues to explain how Para educators are essential to schools because they promote the politics of caring, it is not represented or

demonstrated in a classroom setting, the students and their families will feel no connection to their school and its educators. This act of caring is especially looked out for in minority and urban school communities. “Moreover, teachers see the differences in culture and language between themselves and their students from a culturally chauvinistic perspective that permits them to dismiss the possibility of a more culturally relevant approach in dealing with this population” (Valenzuela, 1999). When teachers, educators, and school faculty as a whole do not recognize the differences of their students and themselves and do not try to create an environment suitable to their learning needs, students’ education and comfort is at risk. When educators do not comply with necessary change to fit the needs of their students and their demographic, the politics of caring about these becomes complex.

Branham and Collins (1999) suggest that with the access of certain resources, the attainment of leadership in a community will lead to the creation of a strong agency. With the creation of a strong agency, the community will then have the tools necessary to help assist the students and families in pursuits of a quality education. A strong agency is essential on the road to success, particularly in academic achievement and for lower-income and urban communities. Whether it is social or cultural capital in a community, Griffin (2006) and Branham and Collins (1999) agree that the right targeted resources are needed in order to achieve different levels of academic success. Access to outside funding and information is crucial in facing the challenges that most urban communities face, in terms of receiving outside funding and information. Cucchiara (2008) discusses that by advertising and marketing school initiatives and the push for parental involvement, education will be viewed as vehicle that will act as an additional tool for urban renewal. If certain strengths such as strong advocacy through marketing and advertising parent programs and accessing resources needed to successfully implement such programs, the

goal will be to achieve proper academic acknowledgement through these strengths (Cucchiara & Horvat, 2009). By reaching for this goal, urban schools within its communities, will have an equal opportunity at gaining social and cultural capital.

In contrast, Frey and Wilson (2009) adapted an educational approach, examining racially segregated public schools. The research was directed to expand knowledge on present-day schools that are still affected by students of different races integrating with one another and the potential for urban communities coming together to begin peaceful and strategic radical movements of change in educational institutions. The authors continued to explain that strategically placing the right public policies in place will shed light on the racial identity struggle within the education sector. The right policies will help lessen such segregation and confusion that is currently present and academic success has been more of a challenge to attain for most minorities which then enables social inequality (Frey & Wilson, 2009).

Regardless of the demographic of a community, a strong community is not determined by the race, social class, and power its members hold. The struggles of certain urban demographics are mostly due to the lack of academic resources shared upon such a community (Williams, 2005). The author explains that due to certain urban areas being populated with people of color, this unfortunately affects the level of quality in education that students there will receive. Ultimately, these communities do not receive an equal chance at the power it takes to reach a level that invites change. In order for a community to reach its most potential in terms of academic success, a voice must be given to create power and change and this access to a quality education fuels power. Moose (2008) agrees with Williams (2005); the authors equally demonstrate an understanding of the roles of people in power and policy. John Dewey, the late American philosopher, was an advocate for school policy and reform, however he was not a

radical reformer and did not believe that school-aged children should be free to make academic decisions on their own (Rury, 2009). Rury (2009) explained that Dewey believed “education was a process of interaction between the child and the curriculum, and between the school and society” (p. 147).

When one is educated, Rury (2009) suggests that he or she is able to interact with their surroundings in a different way than when one is not educated. It is further explained that education gives a person a diverse world of knowledge that implants in them a voice that allows them to interact within their social surroundings with an intellectual perspective. Dewey believed that education was essential. It was the school institution he argued that “afforded citizens the skills and knowledge necessary for political participation” (Rury, 2009, p.147). If our school institutions do not secure a quality education for our citizens, Rury (2009) argues, then how can we assure our citizens a fair chance and the right to receive a quality education?

Many adult community members of lower-income urban neighborhoods are reproducing the product of their own living. Unfortunately, this reproduction is not always positive when it comes to the attainment of a quality education for the younger children of their communities, due to the lack of resources that they often receive. MacLeod (2009) points out the “social class into which one is born has a massive influence on where one will end up” (p. 4). Macleod (2009) suggests that there are strategies to help turn around social reproduction, to help mold it into a positive construct for lower-income people. Urban political economy is interrelated to social reproduction in many ways, one being school districts in urban class neighborhoods are underfunded, regardless of the budget cuts that have been implemented most recently in most educational institutions (MacLeod, 2009).

Through the academic support of family, student productivity increases and motivation for success in their academic work grows. MacLeod (2009) stresses on the concept of family and how this is known as a “focalizing social agency” that shapes a child into a successful and productive human being of society. “For those educationally and socially disadvantaged groups, parental involvement is a form of social capital” (Chang et al., 2008, p.10). Chang et al. (2008) discuss and explain urban political economy is essentially the relationship between the political and economic in urban settings. “For those educationally and socially disadvantaged groups, parental involvement is a form of social capital” (Chang et al., 2008, p.10).

Politics and Parent Involvement

Chang et al. (2008) discuss and explain urban political economy as essentially the relationship between the political and economic in urban settings. Politically, policies that are implemented in most inner-city schools and their surroundings are not beneficial to the needs of the communities. Academically, city schools and their surroundings are not beneficial to the needs of the communities. According to Anyon (2005), the right policies are not being created to help inner city schools and its students prosper in their academics and receive a quality education. School districts that educate the largest numbers of poor and minority students have fewer state and local monies to spend on each student than do districts with the least number of poor and minority students (Anyon, 2005). The problem is the people, the actors, as Smith (2004) views policy makers as creating policies that are fit for one type of school district, not accounting for how many students attend each district, the funding necessary to provide a quality education and so forth. Anyon (2005) goes on to say that what gets studied and or what policies get chosen as important to look and the decisions that are made “depend on who controls power and resources” (Anyon, 2005, p.176). Therefore, policies for the economically destitute are

almost always declined, overlooked, or abandoned by government and school officials such as administrators. This cycle will continue unless the actors that are making decisions for the state on behalf of public education are replaced and or relieved of their false duty to the progress of education.

For most community members of lower-class urban neighborhoods, they come from families that have lived in such surroundings for generations. Through this process, they are reproducing the product of their own living. And, unfortunately, this reproduction is not always positive when it comes to the attainment of a quality education due to the lack of resources that are given to lower class members, minorities in particular. MacLeod (2009) notes that the “social class into which one is born has a massive influence on where one will end up” (MacLeod, 2009, p. 4).

MacLeod (2009) ask how members of such communities rise out of this stigma. How can they create change for themselves if resources are not given to them to do so? What can be done to implement success into their futures? Strategies to help turn around social reproduction, to help mold it into a positive construct for lower class peoples will be discussed shortly. Urban political economy is related to social reproduction in many ways. For example, school districts in urban class neighborhoods are hit hard by insufficient school funds, regardless of the budget cuts that have been implemented most recently in most educational institutions (MacLeod, 2009). Family is an important factor in the process of gaining academic success for students. “As the focalizing social agency, especially in the early years of a child’s life, the family plays a crucial role in the process of social reproduction” (MacLeod, 2009, p.51).

Due to federal policies that have been created in the past and present across many urban school districts, these urban settings have been suffering poverty and have found it complex to

repair such economic demises (Anyon, 2005). The theory of the urban political economy looks at the way that people occupy and use space. Space can be defined as the room, liberty, and or freedom the urban settings are given to create sufficient school institutions for its neighborhoods and community members within them. Without the proper space and funding mainly given by political superiors, the poor will only become poorer. Those in low-income urban settings will never be given the chance to rise into a different environment (Anyon, 2005). Public officials who choose which policies will prosper and which policies will be disregarded are essentially the root of why a vast many of urban community members are socially reproducing poverty and lack of academic success (Anyon, 2005).

Rury (2009) “consider the political and economic forces that have shaped urban schools” (p.49); the authors believe that a society must realize and recognize that there are outside factors that influence and shape school performance. These factors stem from economic, political, and social issues that need reform. With the theory of the urban political economy arrives the notion of capitalism. If the oppressed never get the chance to rise out of the hole they are in because of the oppressive tendencies of policy makers in this case in educational institutions, then the oppressed will never succeed (Mirel & Rury, 1997). This is why it is crucial to note that “both political and economic dimensions of critical social problems must be considered simultaneously” (Mirel & Rury, 1997, p.49) to understand how these dilemmas have evolved. The lack of progress our society is seeing today as far as the success of academics in urban school institutions. Due to the lack of funding and the lack of power needed to pass public policy that will help shape the production of sufficient schools, urban communities need help and proper guidance (Mirel & Rury, 1997).

With fundamental knowledge given to low-income urban settings and their communities, community members will have at least the mental ability to achieve political success. Matthews, Georgiades, and Smith (2011) explain that political success is established once community members are given the necessary knowledge and resources. Once established, they can begin to configure ways to create a voice that will potentially create change. The reproduction of society and its members is the creation that is essential to produce positive change for the political and economic outcomes of education. Knowledge is what can keep communities at a steady balance and can help the people find a way out of what they find themselves in. Matthews et al. (2011) finds that when the economy and political officials are not by a community's side, rough times are ahead. Without a fair and partial system of the economic and political in urban settings, education will not be created at its highest quality.

A strong community is a main component in the successful creation of parental involvement in school communities (Gordon & Louis, 2009). change is less of a challenge to create and maintain when students and their parents are comfortable in their school communities. MacLeod (2009) suggests that by attaining a relationship with school communities, social reproduction can produce a positive connotation. It has been argued that the reproduction of non-achievement based on one's surroundings and the resources they have access to is a major reason to the demise of their wanted success (MacLeod, 2009). If urban settings and its people were given the essential resources needed for one to potentially help better themselves and their community, these settings without a doubt would be able to prosper academically, and socially (Keys, 2015). In the No Child Left Behind act of 2001, in Section 1118 of School Parental Involvement Policies, there are certain ways in which schools need to write particular policies that are to include parents in child academia. This act also provides

reasoning behind promoting parental involvement.



Title I School-Parent Compact

- **The School-Parent Compact describes:**
 - **School's responsibility to meet the state's student academic achievement standards**
 - **Ways in which parents will be responsible for supporting their children's learning**
 - **monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching**
 - **volunteering in their children's classrooms**
 - **participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time**

Figure 8. Title I school-parent compact. From Virginia Department of Education. (<https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>). Used with permission.

Title I School-Parent Compact

(continued)

■ **The School-Parent Compact addresses the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through:**

- **Parent/teacher conferences (discuss compact)**
- **Frequent reports to parents on children's progress**
- **Reasonable access to staff**
- **Opportunities to volunteer/participate in children's classes**
- **Observational classroom activities**

Virginia Department of
Education

School Parental Involvement Policy



Figure 9. Title I school-parent compact. From Virginia Department of Education. (<https://www2.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml>). Used with permission.

Strategies need to be created to improve social reproduction into a positive process for the elite as well as the working class, minority peoples. The right strategies will be beneficial for the achievement of students of minority and low-class status. The right strategies are those created by the people of urban settings and implemented by government and policy officials; the right

strategies are the strategies that will get the job done (Hilado et al., 2011). The job, the ultimate goal, is to provide the low-income urban settings and their communities with enough funding and space to be able to provide quality education to its citizens.

Many individuals such as a community that embodies administrators, teachers, and parents can help with establishing the change and motivating the right people to promote the change (Simons-Morton & Crump, 2003). Involving parents' voices is one step towards achieving fair and equal access to resources. To implement this suggested change unless public policy is created in that particular area by a government official (Moose, 2008). The first step is to create the strategy that will help put into practice change and the second step is to fight for public and political acceptance (Moose, 2008). This type of power will help them gain a quality education and a school environment that will enable students to create something of themselves and to attain brighter futures; this power will allow them to achieve social movements that will allow them access to the rights they deserve to gain quality education (Moose, 2008).

Power can be perceived in the form of a successful strategy and it holds many forms. Power can be seen as a political tool, given to those who have access to many resources and have a higher class and economic status (Pena, 2000). One strategy that can be created is to build a grassroots organization to build awareness of students and their struggles to break through their cycle of social reproduction in the areas they come from (Pena, 2000). Pena (2000) explains that this movement will imply that power needs to be distributed in an equal manner. Those who need power the most do not gain it. With power comes change, and change will create a disruption in the reproduction of inequality and lack of success in low-income and minority communities and the schools within them. Shaked and Schechter (2014) explain that with families coming together to gain power within their school communities, schools will see

that both parents and students are reaching for the same goals. Power, when and if it is gained, should be shared within the community. The author discusses that the idea here is to produce equality. If power is shared unequally to the people within a community, an unequal class system would evolve and that would reproduce social inequality. Shaked and Schechter (2014) concludes that the goal is to move forward and leave behind oppressive tendencies that power can stem when created. Within urban communities, it is important to remember that parents' role in its school institutions weigh heavily on the success of their children.

Research on parental involvement in education has shown that the more parents are involved in their children's education, the chances that their children do not succeed are significantly decreased (Hill & Tyson, 2009). "Indeed, family-school relations and parental involvement in education have been identified as a way to close demographic gaps in achievement and maximize students' potential" (Hill & Tyson, 2009). If schools and their communities came together to create programs that enable students and parents to interact with one another in school activities and meetings, both parents and students will achieve success together. When children are motivated and see that their parents are including themselves in the process of their academic careers, students will know that they can succeed. Children will have a great sense of hope and will be driven to break the cycle they find the people in their communities are a part of (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Communities in the lower-income demographic often have a culture and way of living their own customs and traditions. The culture that is created from this particular demographic includes what they know, what they have seen, what is and is not of access to them (Brown & Beckett, 2017). Brown and Beckett (2017) explain that if schools within these communities implemented after school or weekend programs that involved parents and families to learn

certain curriculum, parents and family members will significantly benefit. They will benefit by not only educating themselves to better their futures, as discussed earlier in this paper, parents and community members will be also being able to better communicate with their children on their school studies and activities. Brown and Beckett (2017) conclude that when parents are knowledgeable of their children's studies, they can be a part of their success. When students have the right support from their family and school community, the road to success becomes significantly less of a taxing challenge.

When given a task that will help create positive change, it has been researched that urban communities and the people within them will embrace that task and be motivated to help relieve and/or abolish their community's economic and political oppression. Duncan and Morell (2008) suggest that communities use the concept of praxis created by the late theorist Paulo Freire. What this concept essentially entails is a method a community can embrace to create and hopefully be able to implement change in an area of their community that needs change. Without a secure idea, a solid plan cannot be created. Without a solid plan or project to work on, a community and or individual has nothing to present for the change to have a chance to be established.

Freire (1970) explains in the depth of his publications that education is in actual fact the practice of freedom. Education is the means in which men and women of society are able to deal with life and its obstacles critically and with creativity and imagination. With education as the main means to achieve freedom of their minds and capability, they realize how to become active members and creators of change in their world. Freire (1970) discusses that for men and women of working-class communities, if a quality education is given to them, their futures can be promising. Education cannot guarantee success, but the opening of the mind can guarantee

freedom and abolish the oppressive tendencies the political and economic issues of society tend to cover societies with (Freire, 1970).

Freire (1996) created a system to implement and sustain change. He explains that (a) a problem needs to be identified, (b) the problem needs to be analyzed, (c) a plan of action needs to be created to address the problem, (d) the plan of action from step one should be implemented and lastly, (e) the action chosen should be analyzed and evaluated. These five steps are essential for the creation of a strong and stable solution to the problem of inequality of resources that exists in many urban school institutions to date. If these steps are followed, according to Freire, the change is sustainable, creating platforms of freedom expression. The below figure displays these five steps and how they revolve.

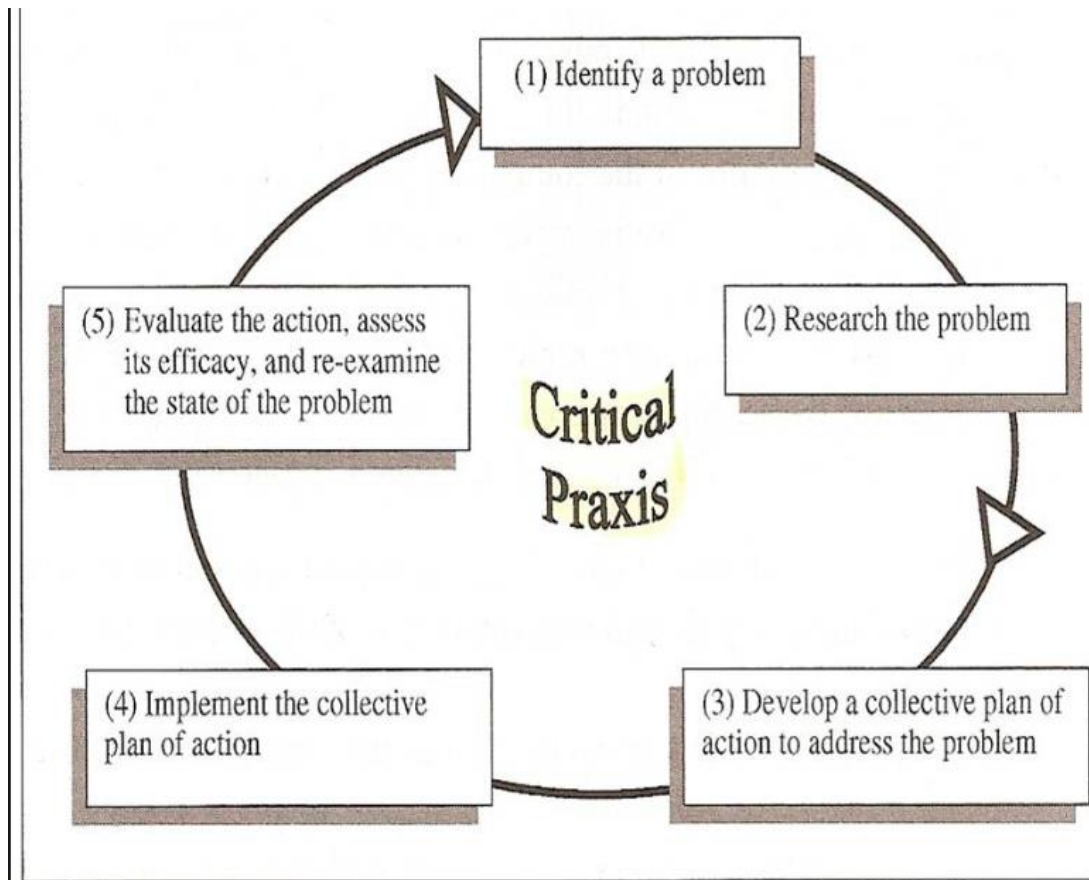


Figure 10. Critical Praxis (<https://criticalhhpedagogy.wordpress.com>). From “Encyclopedia of Curriculum Studies”. Copyright 2010. Used with permission.

Teacher-Principal Relationships

The relationships between teachers and principals are crucial in the development and implementation of strong parent engagement and or involvement programs (Swanepoel, 2008). These two groups must learn to work well together, as they are the primary advocates for their students' parents and family communities (Swanepoel, 2008). Swanepoel (2008) explains in further detail that although there has been a worldwide stigma against the decisions made at the school district level, the shift of power mostly arrives in the hands of administrators. They have the most power and influence to make decisions that shape and impact potential parent engagement programs.

Parents Seeking Resources

A component of this study is geared towards seeking insight about the parent population seeking the necessary resources to succeed in engaging in their children's academic pursuits. This information will help identify the demographic that administrators and policy makers will be keeping in mind when creating and sustaining certain parent engagement resources and policies. Redmond and Griffith (2005) conducted a study to help with the understanding of certain influences and factors that affect family and community demographics. A study was conducted on more than 1,000 pairs of parents of various sixth grade classrooms across rural Iowa communities. More than 50% of the parent participants were influenced by the candidness that teachers and administrators could offer them. This candidness allows parents to know what the process is in attaining certain resources that will allow them to be more supportive and involved in their children's academics. Redmond and Griffith (2005) concluded that if parents are aware of the actions and the process that administrators and teachers are taking, parents will be more at ease.

Family structure and family community is an integral part of strong parental involvement. If the structure at home is conducive to supporting a child's academic success, the child will exceed academically (Myers, 2007). Myers (2007) explains that there has not been much research conducted on the influence that family structure has on parental involvement in the school-based setting. Due to the lack of research done in specific area of parental involvement, the author interviewed several families and concluded found that families with a two-parent home had children that had an increased academic standing inside their respective classrooms. What considerably helped these families with two-parent homes was the access to certain resources that are not of easy access to single-parent homes. These resources include access to more time to invest in parent-child interaction in the home and in the classroom. Below is a figure that represents the differences in levels of parental involvement in regard to one-parent and two-parent homes.

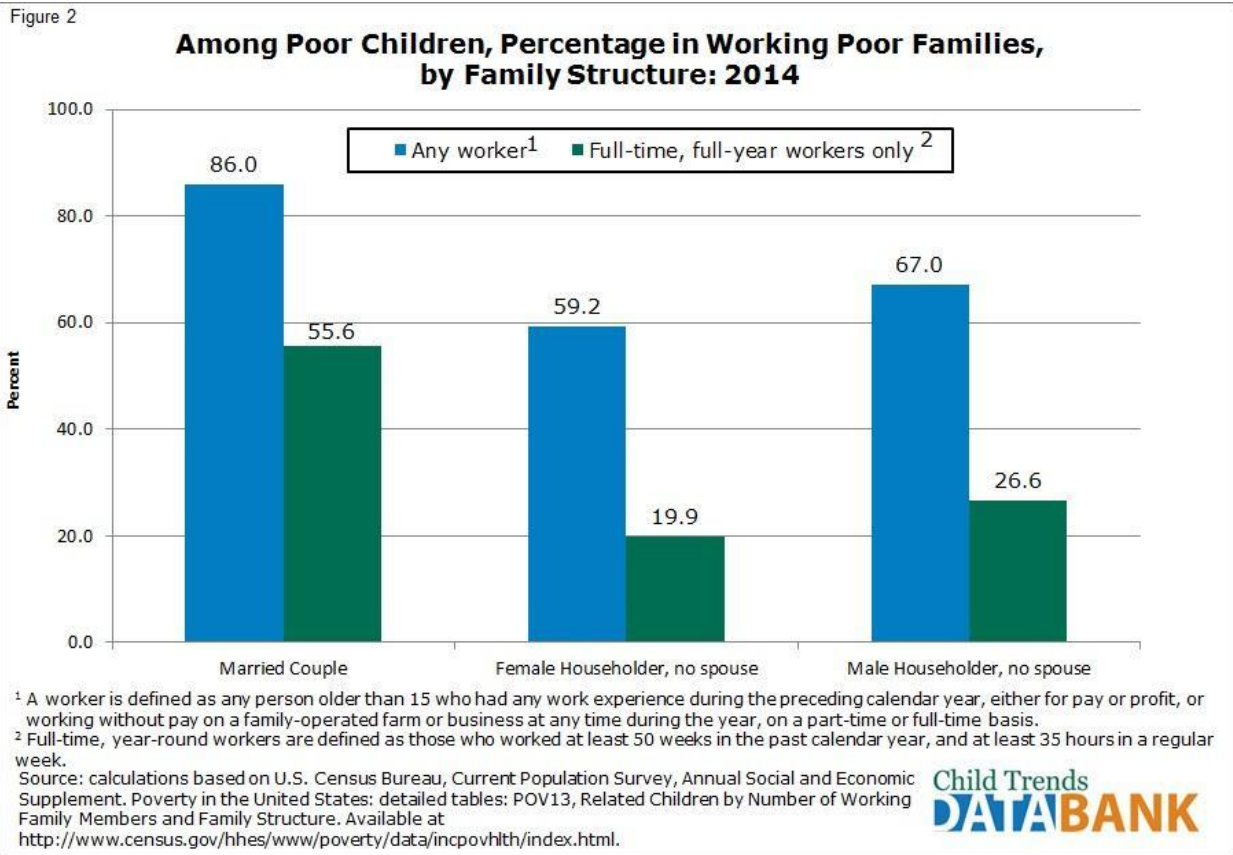


Figure 11. Among poor children, percentage in working poor families, by family structure. From by “Various Measure of Household Income” from <https://www.childtrends.org/databank-indicators>. Copyright 2012. Use with permission.

Resources are more accessible to administrators and once those resources are retrieved, they can be offered to parents. Administrators can offer training for parents to be more successful outside of the classroom (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Young et al. (2013) explains that the question of how to get parents more involved with their children’s education should be investigated further, emphasizing the need for strengthening the communication between parents and administrators. Young et al. (2013) found through interviews with parents and administrators that parents view parental involvement as clothing, feeding, and getting their children ready for school. Administrators view parental involvement as being integral to a child’s education process, and this is done by supporting children in and outside of the

classroom. With bridging this communication and for parents and administrators to communicate their needs to one another, the authors conclude that both parties can support one another in supporting children's academic endeavors.

The area in which a family resides contributes to the level of family and parent engagement. Urban areas and the schools within them do not always offer the necessary support for families to support their children successfully. Keys (2015) conducted a survey on over 400 parents and found that the independent variable to the lack of parental involvement is community location. The author found that the dependent variable in her study was the lack of support parents were receiving in the schools of these urban areas. Administrators were supportive of parental involvement however did not receive the opportunities from the school districts of these schools to advocate for parents and their place in the classroom.

Characteristics of Engagement

In order for parents to fully invest their time and efforts in involving themselves in their children's academic endeavors, it is important for them to understand the characteristics of engagement. Administrators and teachers must also understand the characteristics of engagement. Administrators and teachers can set out to create and fight for certain policies and initiatives that will create opportunity for parental involvement with this understanding of the characteristics of engagement (Toren & Seginer, 2015). Toren and Seginer (2015) examined the different routes that were taken to educate parents and school administrators on the various ways of parental involvement. The study was conducted on 198 seventh graders and their respective parents. The students were asked questions that pertained to their interactions with their parents in context of their education. Parents were asked questions that pertained to the ways in which they were involved in their children's academics. The study concluded that the

most effective route of involvement for both students and parents is home-based parental educational involvement. The author defines home-based parental educational involvement as involvement inside the home, after school hours. This help includes homework assistance specifically in the improvement of reading, writing, and math skills. Toren and Seginer (2015) found that this route of involvement was the most effective in terms of primary education and academic achievement for students.

The relationships between educators, parents, and administrators play a role in the effectiveness of parent engagement practices (Garbacz, McDowal, Schaughency, Sheridan, & Welch, 2015). Garbacz et al. (2015) examined the relationships between elementary teachers and principals, specifically the way in which teachers and principals work together with parents in their efforts to be more involved in children's schooling. It was determined that the views and beliefs of parents, teachers, and principals are different. Each group holds a different set of priorities and responsibilities in regard to children's success. Parents identified themselves as the providers for children in regard to their health and well-being. Teachers and administrators collectively agreed that their role was to educate parents on how to be supportive of their children's academic success in and outside of the classroom (Garbacz, et al., 2015).

There have been initiatives made by educators and administrators to create and or increase parent engagement practices. These engagement practices are increased by implementing "evidence-based interventions" (McLeod et al., 2017). The evidence needed to implement such programs included 45 publications that indicated the need for intervention programs. These intervention programs assisted children in modifying or adjusting their behavioral issues and challenges. The author (McLeod et al., 2017) indicates that if parents are

trained on how to help educators in and outside of the classroom with children's behavioral issues, the focus will be shifted and will be more on children's academic needs.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

For the Methodology portion of this paper which is defined as Chapter 3, the research approach was a qualitative approach. This approach will allow for the subjects that will be used as this study's unit of analysis to be interacted with via face to face interaction through the implementation of interviews however due to the time constraints of the eleven individuals interviewed, the interviews were conducted via telephone. This chapter begins by re-introducing the research questions and explaining the nature of this study including the strengths and weaknesses of utilizing the qualitative approach for purposes of this research study. The explanation of this approach will be followed by a detailed analysis of the research design and its several components. The protection of the human subjects that will be interviewed for this study will be reviewed in association with the IRB process. The data collection process in its entirety will include review of the several processes that will be taken to retrieve the data for this study. This will be followed by specific interview protocols and techniques that will be discussed in further detail and in conclusion, different principles of the reliability and validity of this study will be discussed in detail.

Re-Statement of Research Questions

This chapter describes the research methods that were applied to achieve the objectives of this study, which is to primarily answer these four research questions:

RQ1: What strategies do k-8 administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?

RQ4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?

Nature of the Study

The type of methodology that is chosen for a particular study correlates to the type of research and analysis that is intended to be produced (Creswell, 2002). There are various approaches to qualitative research and the research for this study is designed with a qualitative approach. Maxwell (2012) states that the “qualitative paradigm” that encompasses the tools of qualitative research allows a researcher to obtain the research needed to successfully complete a study. Some of those approaches include using methods such as conducting a case study, phenomenological study, grounded theory, and content analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Qualitative research primarily focuses on how individuals or groups view their own reality and the reality of life in general. This method of research allows for these individuals or groups of people’s perspectives to come alive (Hancock, Ockleford, & Windridge, 2007). These raw interpretations are attained by face-to-face interaction, through the interviewing process discussed later in this chapter. The raw responses received from the human participants allows the human subjects’ perceptions of the topic at hand to be brought to light, instead of just the opinion and perspective of the researcher conducting the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). This example shows one of the strengths of qualitative research. A more thorough look into the collective strengths of adapting this method follows.

Strengths. Using this method provides the researcher insight to the human subject’s characteristics of behavior, emotion, and personality (Creswell, 2013). It is a naturalistic observation of one or more persons to receive answers and or explanations as to why people

behave the way they do. Within these answers, the researcher will understand the history of how their attitudes and opinions have been formed. Once this has been indicated, this will allow the researcher to acknowledge how certain events that go on around them, affect them and further shape their attitudes and opinions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010).

Weaknesses. One of the weaknesses that is connected with conducting qualitative research is human subject availability and vulnerability. To receive an authentic response from a human participant is very valuable to a study, whether or not the answer is reflective to the hypothesis or purpose of the study (Creswell, 2013). To rely on the participation of these human participants does not allow for much flexibility for the researcher in trying to conduct their study in accordance to a specific timeline.

Methodology

Lester (1999) elaborates that “the purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation” (p.1). The design that best fits the phenomenological approach is the qualitative research method. The methods in which are taken to develop these human experiences are through interviews, discussions, and observing the participants (Creswell, 2013). For purposes of this study, adapting this phenomenological approach is appropriate.

Appropriateness of phenomenology. This approach and design will allow for the highest quality results possible. This approach will allow for a deeper insight on parent involvement and the different processes and strategies that administrators practice in regards to the implementations of parent engagement and involvement programs in k-8 schools. This choice to use a phenomenological approach

Research Design

One of the main purposes of this study is to identify the initiatives being made by school administrators in the advocating of parent engagement programs in k-8 education. The following characteristics of school administrators which are identified as the analysis unit is as follows.

Analysis unit. The analysis unit is composed of K-6/K-8 principals. In order to gather the data needed to support this study's hypothesis, the participants need to have the following characteristics.

- Must be a full-time k-8 school principal.
- Must have at least 5 years of administrative level experience.
- Must have experience with the development of parent involvement initiatives.

Population. The population of this study will be composed of elementary and middle school administrators also known as school principals. The selected principals will have had at least 5 years of administrative-level experience. The selected principals must have experience leading or sustaining parent involvement initiatives that include the creation of parent engagement programs. The schools and the human subjects that will be selected will embody various levels of social class to reflect the differences in resources and power of schools throughout Los Angeles county.

Sample size. The target sample size for this study would be approximately 15 school principals. Twenty-five school principals will be sought out to interview. If all 25 school principals choose to participate in the study, 15 of those 25 will be selected using the criteria of inclusion and exclusion explained in detail below. Creswell (2000) indicated that the recruitment of 25 human subjects would be acceptable and it would suffice when 15 of those human subjects will embody the size of the population being questioned and observed (Creswell, 2013). This

sample size will ensure that administrators from various schools that are nestled in various social class environments are being sampled and examined. Charmaz (2006) suggests that the sample size is dictated by the aim and focus of the study.

Purposive sampling. A sample is selected for the needs of a particular study and for this particular study (Boeije, 2010). Purposive sampling is a form of sampling that is commonly used in qualitative research when a sample population is purposefully selected to favor the needs of the study at hand. For purposes of this study, the population of the study has been identified as school administrators. This population has been selected as this is the population that will answer the interview questions that will in turn answer the overall research questions of this study.

Participation selection: Sampling frame to create the master list. The sampling frame will be created as follows:

1. Access the publicly available website for the Los Angeles Unified School District at <http://lausd.net>.
2. Browse to “Find a School” to access to the school’s directory.
3. Go to “School Types”, then view the Type “Elementary schools and middle schools” which generated 126 matches.
4. The researcher will then select appropriate schools from the generated Type results, categorized in alphabetical order starting from the top of the list, until it yields a sufficient number of prospective participants.
 - a. Once a school is selected, review school profile.
 - b. Obtain Principal name and contact information.
 - c. Copy and paste the contact information in a spreadsheet to begin the master list.

- d. Repeat each step until it yields 20 prospective participants.
5. The spreadsheet will contain the prospective participant's school, name, contact information
6. The criteria of inclusion and exclusion will be applied.

Criteria for inclusion. The selection process for this study will include an extensive search for individuals who fit the below criteria:

- Subjects must be in their current position as an elementary school principal for more than five consecutive years.
- Subjects must have experience with parent engagement initiatives.
- Subjects must be willing and able to meet for an in-person interview for up to one hour.

Criteria for exclusion. The criteria for exclusion include:

- Participant who is unwilling to have the interview recorded.
- Unwillingness of participants to acknowledge that they meet all components of criteria of inclusion.
- Refusal of participant to sign consent form.

Purposive sampling maximum variation. Maximum variation within the context of purposive sampling allows the researcher to create a master list of at least 20 participants to ensure a wide range of diversity of participants. If any number of the initial 20 participants do not respond, more contacts will be added to the list, once again utilizing a purposive sampling model (Creswell, 2002). The criteria for maximum variation for this study includes the following:

- Representation of both genders reflected in the study.
- Representation of varied ethnicities in the study.

- Varied geographical representation of principals throughout Los Angeles County and Orange County elementary schools in California.

Protection of Human Subjects

This study will comply with the processes and procedures to comply with IRB standards and protocols. The participants that can also be referred to as the human subjects of this study will be protected and there will no ethical issues that are encountered. The ethical and legal status of the research conducted will be taken into consideration. Any and all research will go through the IRB committee, the Institutional Review Board.

Upon IRB approval, the procedural steps before data collection include the following:

- The recruitment form (see Appendix C) will be sent to each participant that is purposefully selected from the master list that has been created.
- If at least fifteen responses are not received, the researcher will proceed to send out additional emails that include the recruitment script.
- Once responses are received and the participant has voluntarily accepted to be a part of the study, the participant will receive a thank you email and an email that includes more information about the interview process, the interview questions that will be asked, time, and place of the location the interview will occur, and all other logistical information.

The Institutional Board of Research (IRB) will be informed of the master list which is the potential list of possible contacts and the final list of contacts, the contact information, etc.

Data Collection

When the study has been approved by IRB, the data collection process can ensue. A recruitment script to participate in this study will be sent to the initial 20 potential participants.

This recruitment script (Appendix C) is an outlet of communication between the researcher and selected individual. This script entails the following details:

1. purpose of the study
2. brief background information on the researcher
3. the role of the participant
4. the value of being a participant
5. consent procedures
6. a warm statement of gratitude for the individual's time and for considering to be a volunteer

Each of the 20 participants that have been approved by IRB will be contacted and an interview for each participant will be set up. The individuals selected will be given a consent form (Appendix B) to acknowledge and sign before the data collection process begins. The participant's availability will be considered as a priority to ensure that their time is being valued and appreciated. Once there are individuals who have volunteered to participate in the study, they will receive a confirmation email of the time and place the interview will be conducted and attached to the email will be a copy of the consent form. The participants will be asked to read the consent form prior to the meeting and will sign a copy of the consent form prior to the start of the interview. This process will continue until 15 participants have been solidified.

Interview Techniques

The sole instrument that will be used to collect the data for this specific study will be in-person interviews, which enable the researcher to catch more than just answers. It allows for the researcher to observe body language and nonverbal elements (Oltmann, 2016). Boeije (2010) also states that when an interview is preplanned, the direction of the interview will be set and

ready to be conducted. With direction, the flow of the interview tends to develop more fluidly. Interview planning involves the following making an appointment with the participant who has consented to be part of your study, picking a nice/appropriate location with a lot of open space, developing a relationship with the human subjects. Once the relationship has been developed, the researcher will ask the participant if the interview can be recorded and the interview will begin with ice-breaker questions to ease into the more rigorous questions. The researcher should plan for follow-up questions should it the conversation deem it necessary. The researcher will stick to the questions that they have been prepared and practice active listening to be sure the participant is thoroughly listened to. The researcher should not talk or express opinions with the participant; the interview is solely geared towards receiving authentic answers and it is important for the researcher to create an open communication environment.

Interview Protocol

The semi-structured type of interview question was selected as the framework for the way in which the questions were created. These are specific questions asked without a predetermined set of responses. Semi-structured questions allow for a question to be structured and the answer to be authentic and unstructured (Barribal & White, 1994).

Interview questions. The following interview questions guides this study:

IQ1: What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs?

IQ2: Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why

IQ3: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs?

IQ4: What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?

IQ5: What were some of the successful elements of that program? How did you measure and track that success?

IQ6: Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?

IQ7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?

Relationship between research and interview questions. The research questions for this study were created to examine the topic of parent engagement programs and the roles school administrators play in the creation and implementation of such programs. Below is the list of research questions and the corresponding interview questions that will be used for the purposes of this study (Table 1).

Table 1

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1: What strategies do k-8 administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?	IQ 1: What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs? IQ 2: Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why? (continued)

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?	IQ 3: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs?
RQ3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?	<p data-bbox="802 554 1403 667">IQ 4: What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?</p> <p data-bbox="802 779 1317 957">IQ 5: What were some of the successful elements of that program? How did you measure and track that success?</p> <p data-bbox="802 1068 1370 1182">IQ 6: Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?</p>
RQ4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?	IQ 7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?

Reliability and validity of the study. The instruments that have been collected for purposes of collecting data are not always assumed as being valid data instruments. An interview is an instrument that falls under the data collection of a qualitative method approach and has been confirmed as a valid instrument if used via sampling that does not create question or

suspicion of bias (Boeije, 2010). For instance, in this particular study, the data that will be recorded from interviews and samples will be collected through a purposive data sample. The sites will be predetermined, and the participants of the study will be purposively selected and will be conducted with individuals who consent to be part of the study.

Butin (2010) suggests that by setting the theoretical framework and having a clear lens through which to look. The validity and reliability of the study will not be unclear and will not be subject to questioning by the readers of this study. The data collected from this study will not be collected from sites that the author has no connection and/or relationship with, this process will also ensure that bias and or ethical issues will be absent to ensure the validity and reliability of data received, (Butin, 2010).

Prima-facie and content validity. Prima-facie validity is an obvious face value of what is being observed (Kulakowski & Cronister, 2008). The assumption in the creation of these questions is to assume that at face value, the answers that will be accrued from the participants will be the answers the researcher is hoping to attain (Boeije, 2010). To ensure that the researcher gets the most accurate answers possible, the content of these questions will be determined as valid or not when the answers are received, and the data is coded accordingly. This process will be examined and explained in detail and in Chapter 4 of this study.

Peer-review validity. One of the steps to secure the validity of the interview questions is to ensure that the research questions have corresponding interview questions. This process will allow the questions to be reviewed by individuals other than the author and creator of the questions, ensuring the validity in the strength and authenticity of the questions being asked. Creswell and Miller (2000) explain that implementing the process of peer review provides benefits such as support of the researcher's questions and the peer reviewers have the platform to

also challenge the assumptions of the researcher. This process includes for questions to be examined, reviewed, and validated. Three colleagues of the researcher were asked to review these questions. Each of these three colleagues answered the below set of options that correlated with each set of interview questions (Table 2).

Table 2

Peer-Review Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions.

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
<p>RQ1: What strategies do k-8 administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 1: What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs?</p> <p>Accept</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Suggestions for modifications</p> <p>IQ 2: Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why?</p> <p>Accept</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Suggestions for modifications</p>
<p>RQ2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 3: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs? (continued)</p>

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
	<p>Accept</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Suggestions for modifications</p>
<p>RQ3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 4: What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?</p> <p>Accept</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Suggestions for modifications</p> <p>IQ 5: What were some of the successful elements of that program? How did you measure and track that success?</p> <p>Accept</p> <p>Decline</p> <p>Suggestions for modifications</p> <p>IQ 6: Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
	Accept Decline Suggestions for modifications
RQ4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?	IQ 7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs? Accept Decline Suggestions for modifications

With the careful review of each colleagues' suggestions, the following revised corresponding interview questions are in Table 3.

Table 3

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions (revised).

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question (Revised)
RQ 1: What strategies do k-8 administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?	IQ 1: What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs? (continued)

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question (Revised)
	<p>IQ 2: Is strategy development for parent engagement a collaborative process?</p>
<p>RQ 2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 3: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs?</p>
<p>RQ 3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 4: What factors contribute to a successful parent engagement program? What are common causes/reasons for a program that is unsuccessful?</p> <p>IQ 5: What were some of the successful elements of that program? How did you measure and track that success?</p> <p>IQ 6: How do you determine whether or not parents felt the program was/is successful?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question (Revised)
RQ 4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?	IQ 7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?

Reliability of the study and pilot interview. Similar to the processes of validity above that assisted in testing the reliability and validity of the interview questions being asked of the human subjects that will be observed, the reliability of the process in asking these interview questions must also be tested in assuring its reliability. This process will be executed by conducting a mock interview session with a colleague to test the wording of each question, if each question being asked is delivered clearly, and if the mock participant is able to identify what exactly is being asked of them. Lastly, to ensure the reliability of a study, any study conducted that utilizes a qualitative research method should be able to be duplicated by another researcher should they choose to duplicate or use elements of this study (Merriam, 1998).

Expert review validity. If there is no consensus in the proposed changes submitted by peer reviewers, an expert review panel consisting of the dissertation committee will review for refinements. Table 4 below captures the final interview questions.

Table 4

Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions (final).

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question (Final)
<p>RQ 1: What strategies do k-8 administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 1: Can you share with me the process you used to create and implement your parent engagement program?</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I. Is strategy development for parent engagement a collaborative process?</p> <p>IQ 2: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs</p>
<p>RQ 2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 3: How did you overcome these challenges?</p>
<p>RQ 3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?</p>	<p>IQ 4: What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(continued)</p>

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question (Final)
	<p data-bbox="797 310 1373 562">IQ 5: What were some of the successful/unsuccessful elements of that program and how did you measure and track that success?</p> <p data-bbox="797 678 1357 783">IQ6: Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?</p>
<p data-bbox="219 850 695 1102">RQ 4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?</p>	<p data-bbox="797 850 1382 1031">IQ 7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?</p>

Statement of Personal Bias

Creswell (2013) discusses the importance of a researcher indicating their personal biases to let the readers of this study in on the researcher’s experiences and knowledge. The following are the potential biases the researcher brings to this study:

- The researcher has more than 10 years of experience in the k-12 sector of education
- The researcher has her own opinion on the topic of parent involvement and the access to parent engagement programs and resources; the researcher is not a parent.

- The researcher holds a bachelor of arts degree in Sociology and master of arts degree in social and cultural analysis of education that affects her views of on urban education learning.

Bracketing and Epoche. In order to ensure that the researcher's biases are not connected to the data that is collected, Creswell (2013) suggests that by adopting the process of bracketing also known as epoche, allows the researcher to acknowledge and identify to the readers of the study, the potential biases that can be seen when interpreting the data that is collected and analyzed through the coding process. Bracketing is a process that allows the literature that has been compiled and analyzed for purposes of a research study to be put aside to focus on field work such as data collection (Boeije, 2010). This process is in connection with the phenomenological approach to this study and will be utilized when bracketing the data that is collected.

Data Analysis

The data coding process will include a coding process and then analyzing the codes that are found from the data that is collected. The data will be organized into two or more categories and within those sections will be the various concepts and themes that will be extracted within the process of coding the data. The purpose of this process is to ensure validity and reliability. According to Boeije (2010), "with facts broken down into manageable pieces, the researcher sorts and sifts them, searching for types, classes, sequences, processes, patterns, or wholes" (p.76). The categories are determined naturally and cannot be assumed or predicted ahead of time. They will be created when analyzing the data, a part of the qualitative data process. With this process, the data collected will be formulated in a way that is credible, organized, and can be used to strengthen this study's purpose and validity.

The researcher of this study is responsible for the coding of all data collected. To ensure the reliability of the coding, the researcher must select two “co-raters” to participate in this inter-rater reliability process. These two co-raters are fellow doctoral students and are experienced in qualitative research as they too are conducting their own dissertation research using the qualitative method and a phenomenological approach. Within this process, the inter-rater reliability process includes the following three steps:

1. The researcher will be coding the first three interviews that are conducted.
2. The coding results and interview transcripts of these first three interviews will then be given to the selected panel to inform the researcher if they agree or disagree with the coding and if they suggest any modifications.
 - a. If the two panelists do not come to a consensus, the expert reviewer(s) mentioned briefly in this paper under reliability and validity will step in and make the final decision.
3. When step two has concluded, the researcher will use the results and continue with the rest of the projected 15 interviews and complete the coding for these interviews. Included in this step is that the researcher will also take into consideration the feedback received from their two panelists.

Once the above three steps are completed, the results will be calculated. The results will then be displayed and categorized in various bar charts that can be found in Chapter 4 of this study.

Interrater reliability and validity. Validity will be conceptualized through the sampling strategies and statistical manipulations of this study (Maxwell, 2012). Validity refers to the “correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation, or other sort

of account” (Maxwell, 2012, p. 122). According to Boeije (2010), if the data that is collected is not checked for errors, flaws, or strategic characteristics in the questions or methods of coding, it has not successfully been tested for reliability and validity. For purposes of this study, the validity will be displayed through the interactions with the subjects of this study, and the interpretation and coding of the interviews that will be displayed in Chapter 4 of this study.

Summary

Chapter 3 entailed in detail the research methodology and approach for this particular study. The research methodology was defined as a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach, both being chosen as the best choice for the purposes of this study. The factors for inclusion and exclusion were described in detail under the unit of analysis and the population and sample of the study. The chapter further explains the steps that will be taken in the protection of human subjects by using the IRB protocols. The interview portion of this chapter was explained in detail by detailing the steps taken to provide and follow interview protocols and interview techniques that outlined the steps taken to implement best practices of conducting a successful interview. The validity of the research methodology, approach, and interview questions was further explained in detail. The data analysis procedures of this study were reviewed through the reliability and validity of the data analysis process. In conclusion to Chapter 3, Chapter 4 is briefly introduced.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to identify the strategies that identifies administrators' roles in the success of parent involvement programs. To accomplish the proposed task, the following research questions were created to guide this study:

RQ1: What strategies do administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ2: What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?

RQ3: How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?

RQ4: What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?

To answer the above four questions, an interview protocol composed of seven open-ended questions was created. Each interview question was created in connection with each research question. To ensure the validity and reliability of the interview protocol, the interview questions were validated through an inter-rater reliability and validity procedure. Through this procedure, the below seven interview questions were approved and used to interview participants for the purposes of this study:

IQ1: What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs?

IQ2: Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why?

IQ3: What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs?

IQ4: What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?

IQ5: What were some of the successful elements of that program and how did you measure and track that success?

IQ6: How do you determine whether or not parents felt the program was/is successful?

IQ7: What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?

The interview participants in this study were asked to provide responses to the seven open-ended questions and to provide as authentic answers and information they were willing to share. All responses received, contributed to an enriched understanding of the strategies implemented to create successful parent engagement programs. This chapter will provide information on the participants, a thorough overview of the data collection and data analysis processes, and the inter-rater review process that took place to validate the data analysis process. This chapter will also include an in-depth analysis of the data collected for each interview question through discussion and graph charts.

Participants

There were a total number of eleven participants that were interviewed for this study. The participants ranged in several years of experience. Of the eleven participants, five of those participants which indicates 45% of the total number of participants were female. The remaining six participants which indicates 50% of the total number of participants were male. One hundred % of the participants have more than the five years of administrative experience in the development and maintenance of parent engagement programs. that was part of the criteria for each participant. Six of the interviewed participants are elementary school or k-6 principals and 5 principals are junior high school (7-8) principals.

Table 5

Interview Participant Details

Participant	Years of Experience	Gender	Interview Date
P1	10	M	February 14, 2018
P2	10	M	February 20, 2018
P3	10	M	February 20, 2018
P4	15	F	February 26, 2018
P5	5	F	February 27, 2018
P6	6	M	February 28, 2018
P7	7	F	February 28, 2018
P8	20	F	March 1, 2018
P9	15	F	March 1, 2018
P10	10	M	March 1, 2018
P11	30	F	March 7, 2018

Data Collection

The data collection process started by searching for participants on the publicly available district websites for Los Angeles Unified District and Orange County Unified School District, of which are lausd.net and orangeusd.org. Each site that was visited, the option that was first chosen was find-a-school and when this option was selected, the school types option was selected, and a list was provided of several different school types such as adult school, elementary, middle school, and so on. The types of school selected that is conducive to this particular study were the elementary school and middle school options. The criteria for inclusion was verified after reaching out to the first 20 principals on each district website. When a response was received that indicated voluntary participation, before scheduling an interview with the participant, the question was asked “do you have at least five years of experience of being an administrator and do you have experience with the development of parent engagement programs?” After applying all of the factors that have been indicated for inclusion that included several participants that

were reached out to and grew in number until the total of 15 participants ensuring maximum variation.

The data collection process took place over the span of three and a half weeks beginning mid-February 2018 after receiving IRB approval in mid-February 2018 from Pepperdine University. During the first week of data collecting, 30 recruitment emails were sent and after allowing one week to receive responses, three responses were received, one of which was to decline the opportunity of an interview, and two agreeing to be a participant, assuming they fulfill the criteria expectations. The second batch of recruitment emails ensued with another 30 emails that were sent and again, one week was allotted to receive responses. The second batch of recruitment emails provided yielded five participants that agreed to voluntarily participate in the study. A third batch of recruitment emails was sent in the third week of data collection and this included a total of 15 more emails, in addition to the initial 60 emails that were sent in the first two weeks of data collection. The third round of recruitment yielded six more willing participants and two responses declining participation. Of the 13 responses that included individuals who agreed to participate, eleven of those individuals met the criteria and followed through with their participation. In conclusion, this data collection process yielded a total of 11 completed interviews.

The 11 participants that did agree to be active participants in this study were given a detailed and informed consent form. This consent included information such as the purpose of the study and the role they will play when they consent to their participation. All participants were made aware in the consent form that the conversation in its entirety was recorded. Participants were also ensured that their information would be kept anonymous. The interviews

were estimated to be one hour each. The longest interview took 40 minutes and the shortest was 25 minutes.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this study began with recording all phone interviews using a phone application that accurately records all conversations. To ensure that the conversations are recorded, a back-up device was used in the form of a tablet device and the same phone application was used on this device to record the phone conversations that were conducted. After all interviews were completed and all were recorded, the first device successfully recorded all 11 interviews thus not needing to use the tablet device that was used as a backup device. The first phone device was used to listen to all recorded interviews and to complete the next step of transcribing.

Each response that was recorded was transcribed manually by the researcher and typed into individual word documents. After each document was created for each of the 11 interviews, an excel spreadsheet was created to code all data for each interview question. Each interview question was coded separately, and all responses were individualized into brackets and coded into the themes that were derived from the data. Each theme was created when the data was analyzed. If there were several responses that were similar, a theme was created and color coded accordingly. Once the themes were identified, the frequency in the number of responses that were coded under each theme was ranked from highest to lowest. Once this process was completed, the data needed to be validated by implementing the inter-rater review process.

Inter-rater Review Process

To assist in the inter-rater review process, two doctoral students from Pepperdine University's Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program. Each doctoral student

has had experience with the coding and analyzing of data and have had training in qualitative research methods and data analysis. Each reviewer was given a copy of the spreadsheet that the researcher created that included the coding and data analysis of each interview question. The reviewers provided the following information and assistance:

- 1) Review all responses that were coded and categorized under a specific theme
- 2) Ensure that the data coded was represented under the correct theme

This process provided a total of 10 suggested edits to the data analysis. All suggested edits were discussed, and a conclusion was made as to the final edits that were made which included five total edits.

Data Display

The following data displays will be presented in the form of graph charts that will portray the frequency of responses from high to low. The data is organized and presented by each research question being followed by its corresponding interview question or questions. To validate the themes that will be shared throughout these displays, verbatim quotes will be shared from the participants themselves however to protect their identity, all participants have been coded with a number as indicated above under interview participant details.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked, “What strategies do administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?” The two interview questions that were asked in order to answer RQ1 are:

1. What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs?

2. Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why?

The responses from all 11 interviews that were completed pertaining to the above two interview questions were analyzed and coded for similar themes that answered research question one.

Interview question 1. What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs? Through analyzing all data retrieved from interview question 1, there were a total of 26 key phrases that was conducive in representing the planning and communication processes taken to implement or create parent engagement programs. The themes that emerged from these responses are as follow: (a) Community involvement which includes parents, teachers, and administrators, (b) Leadership, and (c) Setting short term and long-term goals (see Figure 12).

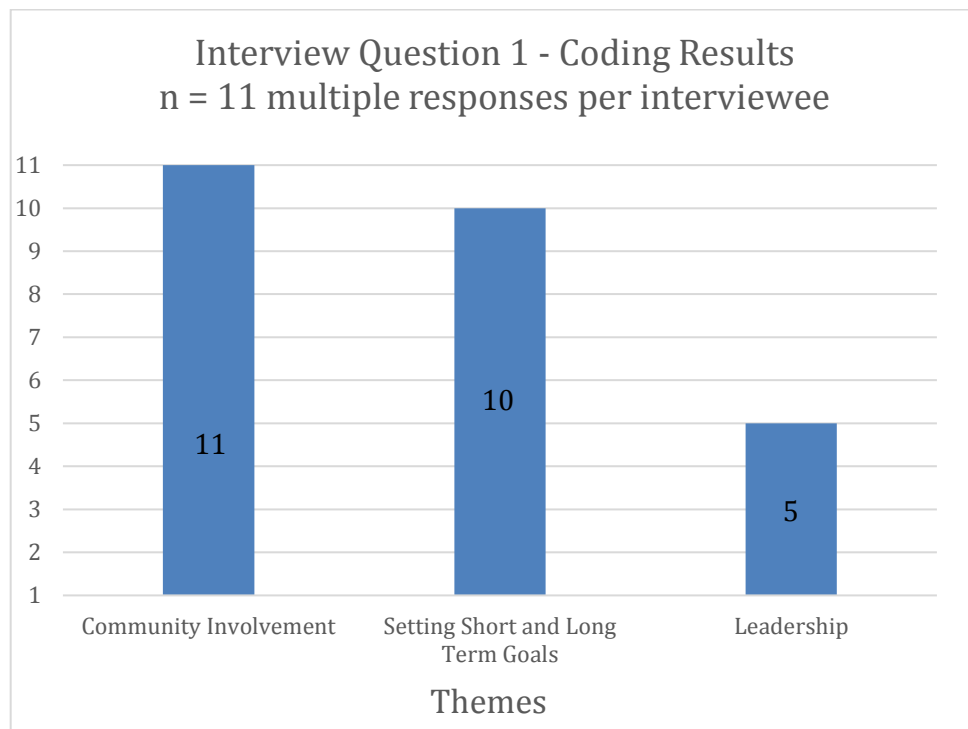


Figure 12. Interview Question 1 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question one. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Community involvement. The first label and or theme that was consistently revealed in the data responses of IQ1; 11 (42%) multiple responses were directly or indirectly related to the topic of community involvement. The theme of community involvement surfaced with key phrases such as:

And you know, as you can imagine, school is not a one-man show. It's a team work and then you have to have a parent involved, you have to have staff, you have to have students. Everyone, everyone has to get involved. Um, you know, we don't make any decisions by ourselves, as an admin team. (P1)

Leadership. The second theme that was created in relation to the data responses of IQ1; five (19%) multiple of the responses directly or indirectly related to leadership, leadership as a strategy to implement in creating successful parent engagement programs. This theme was created in correlation with responses such as:

There are many forms of leadership that need to be implemented in the success of a parent engagement program. There is my own leadership team, at time we have a grade-level chairs, grade level representatives, teachers. We also have some parent committees, those are places too where conversations come up related to this topic. We also have our district and local district that have personnel that support the schools that build relationships with parents and the community, so I have had conversations with them in the past as well. (P2)

Setting short term and long-term goals. The third and final theme that was derived in relation to IQ1 was setting short term and long-term goals. There were 10 (38%) multiple responses that directly or indirectly related to the theme of setting short term and long-term goals as a strategy for the implementation of parent engagement programs. For example, this response

was taken as a key response “At the beginning of every term, our leadership team that includes our parent population create short term and long-term goals to be sure that we are creating a plan that is realistic and create actions to sustain those plans depending on the resources we have to work with and so on” (P3, February 20, 2018).

Interview question 1 follow-up. Is strategy development for parent engagement a collaborative process? The response for this follow-up question was 100%. All 11 participants collectively revealed in their responses that having set strategies in place and discussing them with their leadership teams was a crucial component in the success of a parent engagement program on any school campus. For example, P8 indicated “What I've done is create a survey to staff members, parents, and students at each site and it can give us a better idea of what the site's needs are. Um, and then within that, my next step is to work with my parents and see when they are available and what works best for them. So, we have topics they want to talk about and are relevant and then we have the times that work better for our families. These are the types of steps we have to take to implement strong strategies to keep our programs going and running successfully” (P8, February 28, 2018).

Interview question 2. Is strategy development for parent engagement a collaborative process? This interview question presented a total of 42 key phrases of the responses taken to identify the individuals that are included in the process of creating the strategies to develop parent engagement programs. The 42 key phrases of the responses received yielded three common themes with multiple responses for the 11 interviewee responses. The themes that emerged are as follow: (a) Parents and community members, (b) Executive based team, and (c) Parent liaisons (see Figure 13).

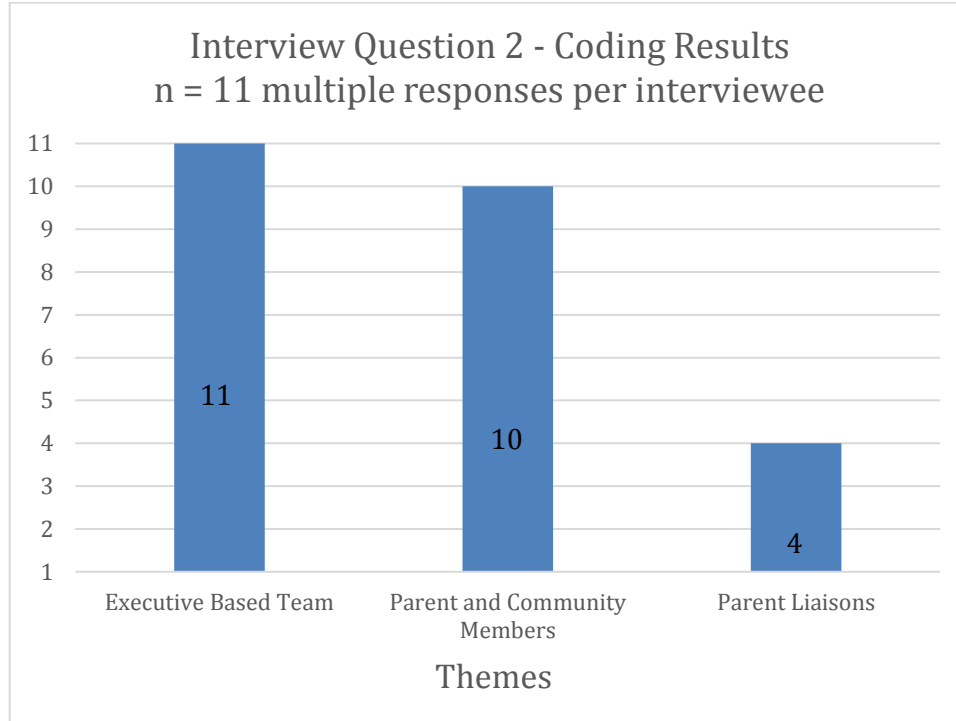


Figure 13. Interview Question 2 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question two. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Parents and community members. The first label and or theme that was consistently revealed in the data responses of IQ2; 10 (40%) of the responses were directly or indirectly related to the topic of parents and community members. The responses received showed that parents and community members are amongst the individuals in a parent engagement leadership team that drive certain strategies to be implemented. For example, P6 shared, “So we ask the stakeholders which are the parents and teachers and figure out ways in how they can be part of the student culture more. We have a volunteer database, so they can come in and volunteer and

strategize ways to keep the parent initiative, in how to be active with need of the students and the school.”

Executive based team. The second theme that arose from the data responses of IQ2 yielded that 11 (44%) multiple responses were directly or indirectly related to including an executive based team when identifying individuals that are included in the process of creating the strategies to develop parent engagement programs. This theme indicated that an executive leadership team which includes the principal of the school, district personnel, and faculty are included in creating the strategies needed to create a parent engagement program. For example, P7 shared, “Parents, guardians, grandparents, staff members, faculty, and even district personnel and community members. This way, you get every point of view that has a stake in your school in order to make the most educated, impactful decision and (ultimately) positive change” (P7).

Parent liaisons. The third and final theme that was yielded from the data responses of IQ2 presented that 4 (16%) multiple responses accounted for parent liaisons as being a part of the individuals included in the strategy procedures. The reason for this low representation in data was due to 100% of the principals not being able to afford or accommodate the need for more parent liaisons who are temporarily or permanently staffed to advocate for parent engagement initiatives and to support the various needs and advertising of such programs. For example, P6 shared, “We had a dean of culture that was the parent liaison for our school and that increasingly helped our program’s success that would keep in contact with the parents consistently however I not take that responsibility due to budget constraints from the district” (P6, February 28, 2018).

Research Question 2.

What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs? There was one interview question that was asked in order to answer RQ2:

1. How did you overcome these challenges?

The responses from all 11 interviews that were completed pertaining to the above interview question was analyzed and coded for similar themes that answered research question two.

Interview question 3. How did you overcome these challenges? Through analyzing all data retrieved from interview question three, there were a total of 48 key phrases that was conducive in representing how administrators overcome challenges that they are faced with when implementing parent engagement programs. The themes that emerged from the key phrases that were identified when analyzing the data are as follow: (a) Economic challenges, (b) Reaching parent satisfaction, and (d) Lack of parent engagement/participation (see Figure 14).

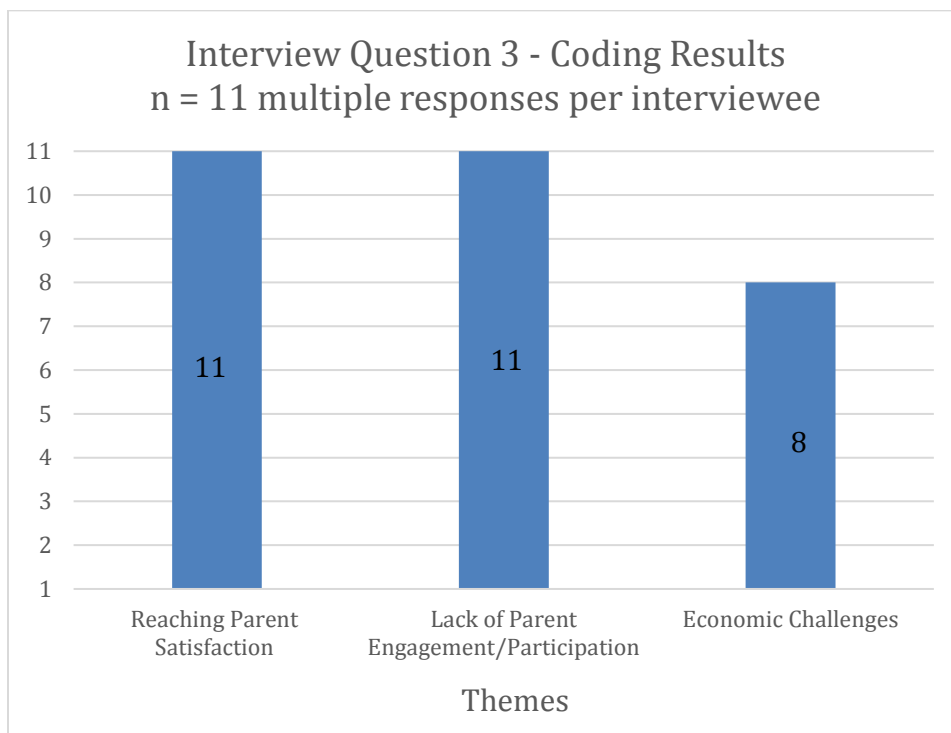


Figure 14. Interview Question 3 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question three. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Economic challenges. Interview question three identified that facing economic challenges was one of the most difficult challenges faced when trying to move along parent initiatives and build a strong parent engagement program. This theme yielded eight (26%) multiple responses that were directly or indirectly related economic challenges. For example, P11 shared, “Unfortunately due to budget cuts that have been faced within our school district, there has not been a lot of money that has been allocated in financially supporting the resources we need to effectively support our parent engagement program and so we have to get creative with the money we do and hold fundraising events and so on (P11).

Reaching Parent Satisfaction. Interview question three identified that facing economic challenges was one of the most difficult challenges faced when trying to move along parent initiatives and build a strong parent engagement program. This theme yielded the majority of responses which was 11 (37%) multiple responses that were directly or indirectly related to reaching parent satisfaction. For example, P1 shared, “Of course, you know, as I mentioned, we have 90% free/reduced and 88% Hispanic/Latino population and... most of our parents speak Spanish and some you know they don’t. You know when we have a meeting, you to have, we have to have someone to translate and then it would add more time because you know, we are doubling the time we are spending um and then one of our parents suggested that we purchase, you know that translation unit, the kind of radio. So yeah, we purchased that and it’s been very helpful so that was one challenge. We tried different options, different ways to kind of to be able to meet our parent’s needs (P1).

Lack of parent engagement/participation. Interview question three identified that the lack of parent engagement and participation is a challenge that is faced when trying to move along parent initiatives and build a strong parent engagement program. This theme yielded the

majority of responses which was 11 (37%) responses that were directly or indirectly related to reaching parent satisfaction. For example, P3 shared, “So, what I would like to have more of is parents who think we are doing a pretty good job and parents whose children are doing well. I would like those parents to play a little more active role... doing things that contribute to children’s progress. I would just like to continue to build ways in which parents feel as if the school is a community resource, a multi-dimensional community resource rather than just a school in which they can put their trust and their kids will move along from middle school to high school and then be college ready” (P3).

Research Question 3.

Research question 3 asked, “How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?” The three interview questions that were asked in order to answer RQ3 are:

1. What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?
2. What were some of the successful elements of that program? How did you measure and track that success?
3. Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?

Interview question 4. What were the top three reasons why a program is successful or unsuccessful? This interview question presented a total of 50 key phrases of the responses taken to identify the top three reason why a parent engagement program is or isn’t successful. The 50 key phrases of the responses received yielded three common themes. The themes that emerged are as follow: (a) Challenges faced, (b) Collaborative leadership amongst parents and administrators, and (c) Lack or resources (see Figure 15).

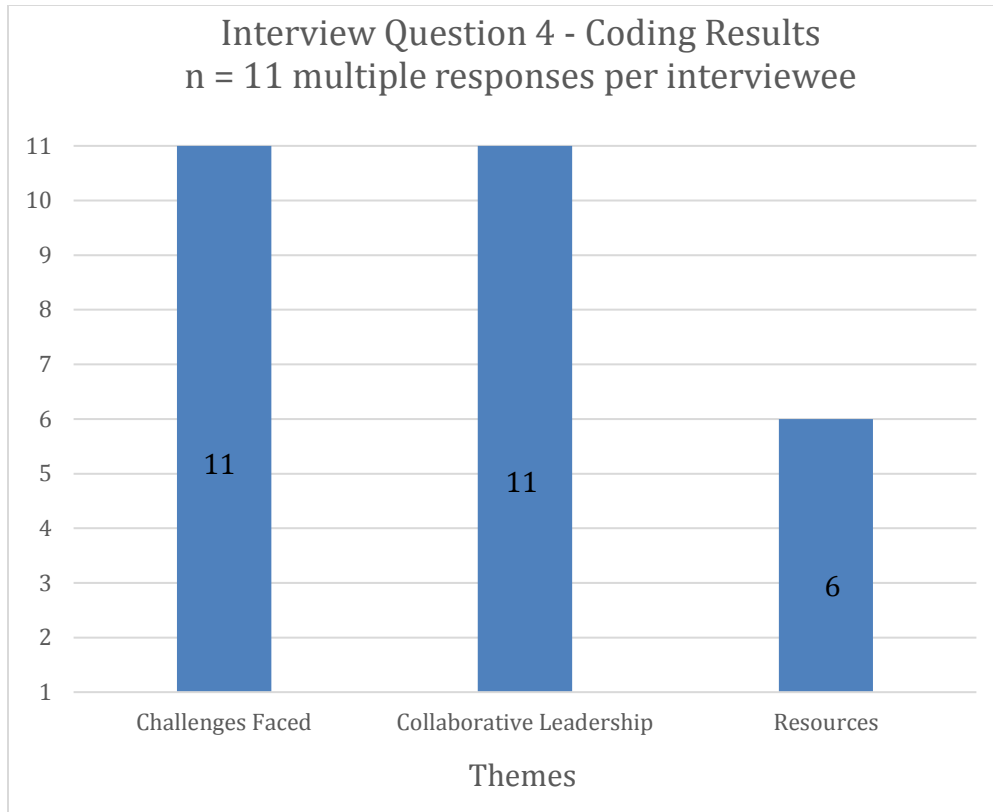


Figure 15. Interview Question 4 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question four. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Challenges faced. Interview question four identified that the challenges faced can be a reason or is a reason of failure when building a successful program. This theme yielded one of a majority of responses which was 11 (39%) multiple responses that were directly or indirectly related to creating a successful or unsuccessful parent engagement program. For example, P5 shared: “The challenges faced when trying to actively engage parents, staff, and administration includes recruiting enough parents and community members to have an effective program that will create the type of involvement we need to support our efforts in helping student needs as much as possible” (P5).

Collaborative leadership. Interview question four identified that collaborative leadership can be a reason or is a reason of success in creating a successful parent engagement program. This theme yielded one of a majority of responses which was 11 (39%) responses that were directly or indirectly related to having a successful or unsuccessful parent engagement program. For example, P11 shared, “The success of a program is in the leadership team and if you include individuals that have different perspectives and ideas however have the same intention which is to serve their student population, the rest falls into place” (P11).

Resources. The last theme that was identified in the data for interview question four, indicated that resources was a reason for the success or failure of parent engagement program. This theme yielded six responses (12%) that were directly or indirectly related the success or failure of a parent engagement program. For example, P9 stated “One of the reasons why we are not able to succeed to our potential at times is the lack of resources that encompasses budget constraints, low staff support, parent incentives...” (P9, March 1, 2018).

Interview question 5. What were some of the successful/unsuccessful elements of that program and how did you measure and track that success? Interview question 5 presented a total of 28 key phrases of the responses that were identified to assist in answering what some of the successful elements are of parent engagement program and how these successful elements are measured. The 28 key phrases of the responses received yielded four common themes. The themes that emerged are as follow: (a) Relevant/irrelevant topics, (b) Not having a voice/being dictated to, (c) Having a voice/platform; collaborative leadership with administration, and (d) Time and efforts not being considered (see Figure 16).

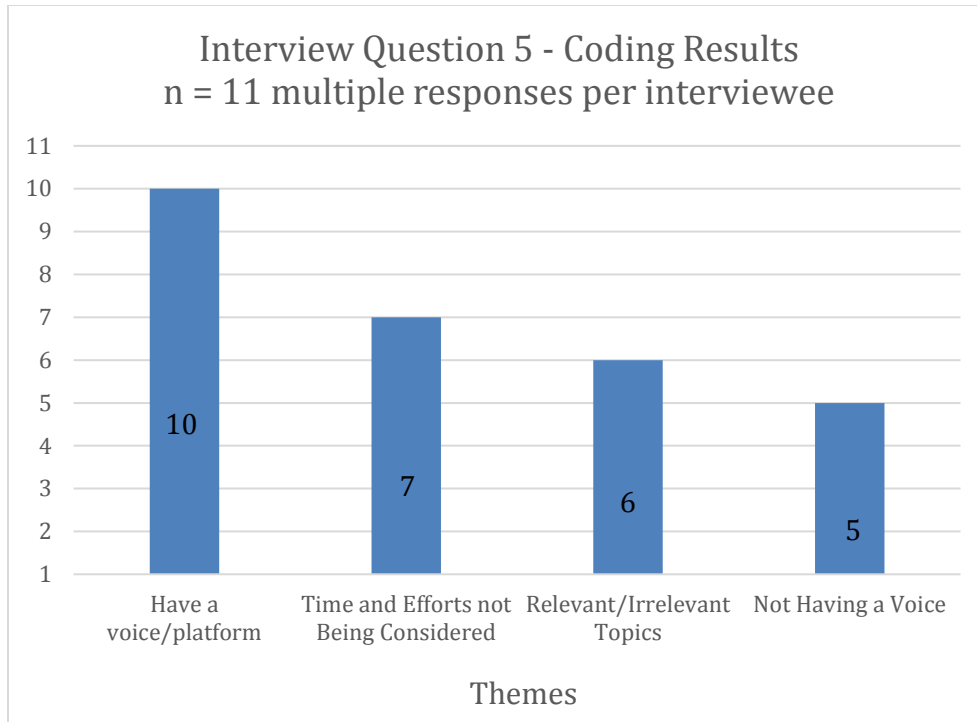


Figure 16. Interview question 5 - coding results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question five. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Having a voice/platform. Interview question five identified that a successful element in achieving a successful parent engagement program is giving a voice and or platform for parents to speak on. This theme yielded one of the majority of responses which was 10 (36%) multiple responses that were directly or indirectly related to this interview question. For example, P2 shared:

I mean I think it just comes down to, just because administrators these days have so much on their plates, I think administrators just really have to dedicated time and effort to nourish and foster healthy relationships with parents. It doesn't happen on its own. It really takes time and you have to be deliberate. Think of ways and strategies and ways to engage parents. You can sit behind your desk and do a hundred different things, but you

have to think of ways of how to engage parents and allow them to take charge and have a voice and sometimes drive certain ideas and implement them, creating something. (P2)

Relevant/irrelevant topics. The data that was derived for interview question five implied that another successful element of a successful parent engagement program was for an executive leadership team to implement relevant topics that will engage parents at meetings. Seven (25%) of responses indicated that not having relevant issues and or topics to discuss at parent meetings disengages parents and therefore will not hold their attention. For example, P8 shared, “We search to find topics that are relevant to our families, to our communities. If it's not relevant, no one is going to want to come and participate” (P8, March 1, 2018).

Not having a voice/being dictated to. An unsuccessful element that was derived from the responses of the data retrieved was administrators not giving parents a voice, thus parents being dictated to as to how initiate or run certain student events. Six (21%) of responses indicated that parents who do not have a voice and feel as though they are dictated to is a contributing factor to the failure of a parent engagement program. For example, P2 shared, “So making sure that they see that their voices are being heard and that way when you have another meeting, it guarantees a high chance that they will come back again. I never want parents to feel as though they are being dictated to; they are volunteering their precious time and we want them to feel appreciated for that” (P2, February 20, 2018).

Time and efforts being considered. The last key that was identified from the data that was pulled for this research question was directly or indirectly related to time and efforts being considered as a successful element. Five (18%) of responses indicated that parents whose efforts and time was being considered were more inclined to be active and helpful parent participants and or volunteers. For example, P6 shared, “When parents are given gratitude by the

administrative staff, this is crucial to the return of parents. When they feel that that their time is being considered and you value their efforts, this goes a long way for parents. Not all parents have the time or resources to help us create a successful academic environment for students, so when they show up, we want them to feel appreciated to that we can get them to return and be happy about it” (P6, February 28, 2018).

Interview question 6. How do you determine whether or not parents felt the program was/is successful? Interview question 6 presented a total of 28 key phrases of the responses that were identified to assist in answering what some of the successful elements are of parent engagement program and how these successful elements are measured. The 46 key phrases of the responses received yielded three common themes. The themes that emerged are as follow: (a) High number of attendance and equal collaboration, (b) Enough resources and parent presence, and (c) Administration working to gain support; follow-through (see Figure 17).

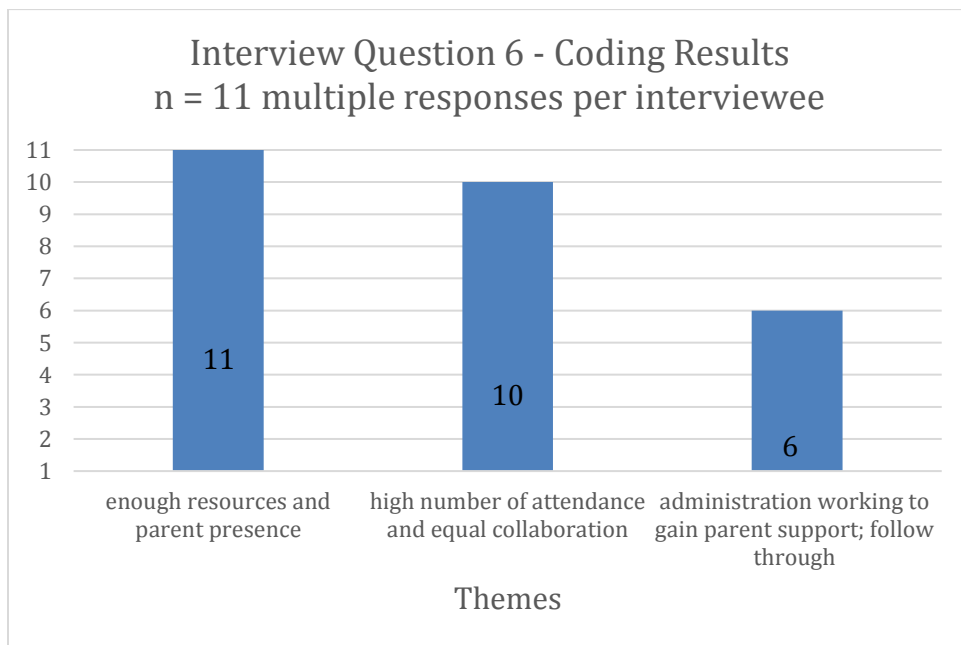


Figure 17. Interview Question 6 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question six. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

High number of attendance and equal collaboration. The data that was derived for interview question six implied that another successful element of a successful parent engagement program was for an executive leadership team to implement relevant topics that will engage parents at meetings. Twenty-one (21%) of the 46 responses indicated that a key measure of the success of a program is indicated by attendance. The lack or abundance in the number of parents and or community members that are present in parent engagement programs is how many principals measure the success of their programs. For example, P8 shared,,: “We search to find topics that are relevant to our families, to our communities. If it's not relevant, no one is going to want to come and participate”.

Enough resources and parent presence. The second theme under interview question six that was derived from the data was having enough resources and parent presence as a type of measure in indicating the success of a parent engagement program. There were 16 responses (35%) that were collected from the data that identified these two measures. For example, P4 shared,,: “Usually, it becomes a funding and participation challenge. Another likely challenge may be to get a program with enough buy-in to make the change you are anticipating” (P4, February 26, 2018).

Administration working to gain parent support and follow through. The third theme that was collected as a measure of a successful parent engagement program was administration working towards gaining parent support and following through with parent needs and concerns. Nine (20%) of responses indicated that this them was a trend in administrator’s measurement of their team’s success in effectively working towards the success of parent engagement initiatives.

For example, P1 shared,,:

“... I kind of started talking to the parents and I asked some and um and I said okay, what is the best time for you guys to be able to come to school and...they said morning time, morning time is great. Then, that was it, you know, last you know last six, seven years we always have 30 to 40 parents every Monday and we continuously provide parents with support outside of meetings; I have an open-door policy and I follow-up within 24 hours of their concerns or comments.”

Research Question 4.

Research question 4 asked, “What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?” There was one interview question that was asked in order to answer RQ4:

Interview question 7. What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs? Interview question 7 presented a total of 55 key phrases of the responses that were identified to assist in answering what lessons administrators have learned that they would pass on to other administrators. The 55 key phrases of the responses received yielded four common themes. The themes that emerged are as follow: (a) Patience, (b) Provide parent incentives, (c) Continuous outreach for parents to be involved and giving parents a voice, and (d) Have a strong leadership team (see Figure 18).

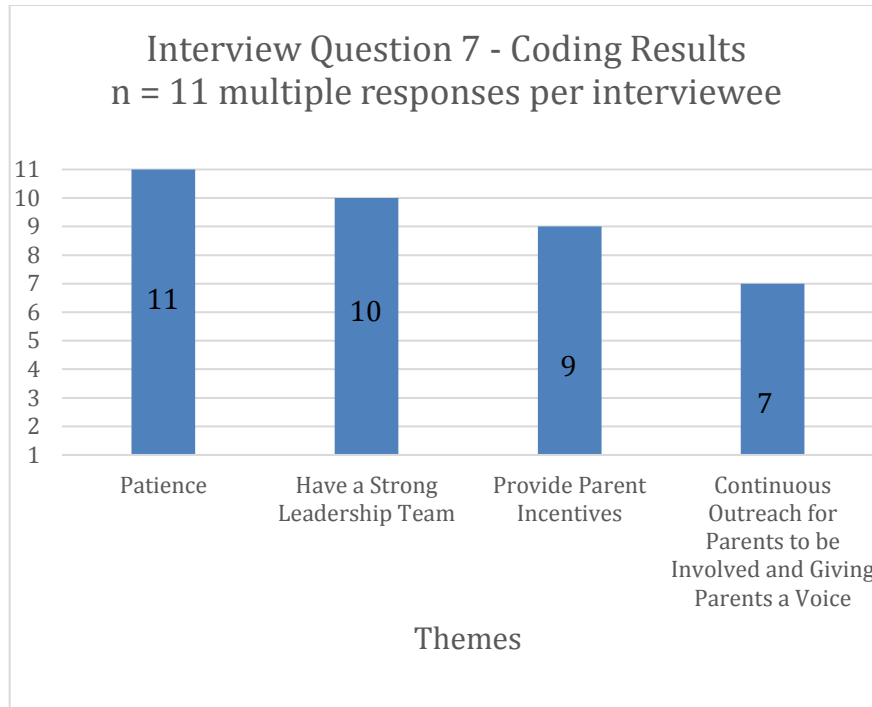


Figure 18. Interview Question 7 - Coding Results. The figure demonstrates the three themes that emerged from the responses derived from interview question seven. The data presented is in frequency from high to low. The numbers that are represented in each theme indicate the number of times a participant responded with a similar key response.

Patience. The key responses that were derived from interview question seven determined that patience was a key factor in the process of developing and maintaining parent support initiatives. Out of 55 total responses, there were 11 (30%) multiple responses that indicated patience was a contributing factor. For example, P5 shared,:

“Don't always count success by the number of people that show up, that's one. Maybe have a contingency plan and ask what way am I going to try again next week and also presentation to parents is also key in a sense of I'm really busy as a parent and you really want me to come to this meeting, why is it so important that I'm at this meeting. They need to see how it relates to their child because they love to help other children, but it really comes down to their

child and if you can show how this will benefit or if they don't come how it can be a hindrance to their child then they'll be more apt to come and that's all" (P5).

Provide parent incentives. There were nine responses in the data that represented 24% of responses that indicated when administrators provided parent incentives such as food, open door policy, and different meeting times for parents to attend, parents were proven to consistently participate in school events and programs. For example, P7 shared, "Whenever you have a meeting, have food or refreshments available for parents. It always makes parents happy when there are food and beverages available. That's why we have meetings every month titled coffee with the principal. Those types of incentives bring parents together to socialize and talk with one another".

Continuous outreach for parents to be involved and giving parents a voice. 19 % (7) responses that were derived from the data, identified that administrators learned through experience, outreach to parents is key. The data collected has shown that administrators who take the time to build and have a strong leadership team that works as an outreach committee to influence parent participation, schools will have the assistance they need to support their goals for their students' success. For example, P3 shared, "I think ways to incentivize parents and reach out to them are some of the things that parents really appreciate but I can't do that single handedly. I got very little time to do anything else but me doing this recently has shown me the appreciation that parents have had tells me that a school is a place that advocates for everyone in the community. It's not an isolated and sort of a silo just where 10, 11, 12, and 13-year-olds pass through on their way to high school. It's more than that" (P3).

Summary of Findings

Table 6

Summary of Themes for Research Questions on the Advocacy of Parents' Involvement

RQ1. Strategies	RQ2. Challenges	RQ3. Measurement of Success	RQ4. Recommendations
<p>Community involvement which includes parents, teachers, and administrators</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Setting short term and long-term goals</p> <p>Parents and community members</p> <p>Executive based team</p> <p>Parent liaisons</p>	<p>Economic challenges</p> <p>Reaching parent satisfaction</p> <p>Lack of parent engagement/participation</p>	<p>Challenges faced</p> <p>Collaborative leadership amongst parents and administrators</p> <p>Lack of resources</p> <p>Relevant/irrelevant topics</p> <p>Not having a voice/being dictated to</p> <p>Having a voice/platform; collaborative leadership with administration</p> <p>Time and efforts not being considered</p>	<p>Patience</p> <p>Provide parent incentives</p> <p>Continuous outreach for parents to be involved and giving parents a voice</p> <p>Have a strong leadership team</p>

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The findings of this study validate the notion that administrators' openness to parent and community involvement is in fact conducive to the success of parent engagement programs which in turn effectively promotes student achievement (Gordon and Louis, 2009). Further, the findings of this study show that with the collaborative leadership of k-8 school principals, faculty, staff, and parent and community involvement, parent engagement is excelled and therefore the student populations benefits. This chapter provides a discussion on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The chapter begins by restating the initial proposed purpose of the study and is then followed by the researcher's final thoughts on the study and any recommendations for future research.

Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to verify if in fact the role of administrators has an effect on the success of parent engagement programs and if so, how and to what extent. The literature review, four research questions, and seven open ended-interview questions is what guided the development of this study. The design of this study followed a phenomenological approach and Creswell (2003) identifies the phenomenological approach as conducive to a qualitative study. This study is a qualitative study that was supported by qualitative data in the form of eleven interviews with 11 human participants.

The participants that were involved in this study were identified through the publicly available school district websites of Los Angeles County and Orange County. The type of sampling used for this study was purposive sampling and this yielded 11 participants. Participants included male and female administrators that ranged experience five to 30 years of experience as being a k-6 and or 7-8 grade school principal. The criteria for maximum variation

was used and included in the process of participation selection that included (a) representation of both genders reflected, (b) representation of varied ethnicities, and (c) varied geographical representation of principals throughout Los Angeles County Orange County elementary schools in California.

Data collection for this study was completed by conducting semi-structured interviews with 11 participants. All participants were individually interviewed and asked seven open-ended questions that were validated through the interrater and validity procedure that included the following measures, prima facie validity, peer review validity, and expert review. The data collected was through phone call interviews and each interview that was recorded using a recording device. The recordings were then transcribed and typed each interview transcription in word documents.

Once that data was transcribed, each interview was analyzed for key phrases and responses. The key phrases and responses were then coded into different themes. Once all codes and themes were created for each interview question, two doctoral students reviewed the data and they served as the interrater reviewers who validated the coded data. Through this process five edits were made to the coding and this is shared more in detail in Chapter 4. All coding and themes were displayed and presented in Chapter 4 via graph charts.

Discussion of the Findings

The data from this study represents the findings to identify and essentially validate the roles of administrators in actively supporting parent engagement programs. The following section will describe the findings of each research question and the themes that were created from analyzing the data. The findings that will be shared will also include literature on the topic

of this study, to validate if the results found are in agreement with the literature or discredit what the literature says.

Results for research question one. Research question one asked, “What strategies do administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs?” The following section provides further insight and discussion of the finding and themes that were collected from the interview responses of interview question one and two, “What was the planning and communication process like in developing strategies for implementing and or creating parent engagement programs” and “Do you include any other individuals to be a part of creating such strategies? If so, whom and why?” There are a total of six themes that were collected and categorized the most notable processes and individuals involved in the strategy process of implementing parent engagement programs. The areas that these themes derived are the following:

- How to achieve community involvement that includes involvement of parents, administrators, family members, staff, faculty, district personnel, etc.
- The type of leadership that is used to lead a successful program.
- The need to set short term and long-term goals.

Discussion of research question one. The findings to research question one indicate that administrators strategize with many individuals, including the administrative team. A notable strategy was to set goals with the team of individuals working on the common goal which is to create and sustain a successful parent engagement program. In order to communicate such strategies, parents and community members have to be reached out to and that is a strategy worked on by the executive leadership team. The executive leadership team is comprised of a k-6 or 7-8 grade principal, the vice principal, a parent liaison if school budget permits, and volunteer

staff and district personnel. Toren and Seginer (2015) identify that different routes are were taken to educate parents and school administrators on the various ways of parental involvement such as involving parents and community members, implementing parent-centered staff such as parent liaisons, and build a strong parent advocacy team that includes parents, staff, and administrators.

It was collectively derived from the data that to develop strategies as to how to elevate or increase parent support and involvement, the executive team needs to be in place. In addition, the data consistently presented that the principles did not make decisions without a unanimous consensus; all members of the executive team collaboratively meet to strategize about long and short-term goals such as the time and dates of meetings, trying to accommodate parents' schedules. Each person has a responsibility; the role that came to surface that was of importance was a parent liaison, as this individual focuses on the needs of parents. The parent liaison role is to develop ways in which to recruit parents to be active participants, growing the amount of attendance, advertising school events that need support, and so on. Due to budget constraints, this position is usually filled by the principal, a staff member, a parent volunteer unless there is enough money to hire a part or full-time parent liaison.

Results for research question two. Research question two asked, “What challenges do administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs?” The following section provides further insight and discussion of the findings and themes that were collected from the interview responses interview question three that is “What challenges did you face in the planning phase of the implementation of parent engagement programs?” An analysis of the themes and responses that were collected from this interview question derived the below areas:

- Facing economic challenges and resources.

- How to increase the number of parents that participate and are consistently involved in parent engagement initiatives.
- Achieving consistent parent attendance and parent volunteers.

Existing literature has shown that there has been a consistent hesitation by school administration about spending government funded money to educate parents on how to be better participants in the home, school, and classroom. There are still existing school districts that would rather accept additional funding towards various academic endeavors than to provide some of that funding and or resources to work more closely with parents (Warin & Edwards, 1999). The data for this study did not capture administrators' hesitation on providing parents with more resources that connected to funding challenges. The data did show that administrators were struggling with budget constraints and if in the budget, parent incentives are favored.

Discussion of research question two. The consensus of responses from interview question three noted above was that one of the main challenges faced when implementing a parent engagement program are the economic challenges and lack of resources. An economic challenge that was of precedence was to accommodate parents with language barriers. In order to accommodate parent's needs, one of those needs that was collectively derived from principal responses was to purchase a school translator or translator device in order to accommodate parents who have a primary language other than English. Some of the principals that were participants in this study acknowledged that by accommodating the needs of parents' language has heavily increased the number of parent participants. However, a majority of the principals that shared the challenges faced, explained that with budget constraints, it is not always feasible to accommodate a permanent translator to accommodate parent needs.

The responses also collectively presented that also due to budget constraints, the executive team such as the principal may need to fill in as a parent liaison that if budget permitted would be hired on as a separate party. This parent liaison is responsible for the outreach of parent support such as holding fundraising events to assist with bringing in money to help with this outreach. Essentially, the help of this parent liaison in addition to the other members of the executive leadership team will achieve the main purpose of supporting student initiatives such as after school program teachers, additional academic support, student materials, and so forth. Lack of resources such as the funds to hire parent support can hinder the progress of parent involvement in school institutions (Portwood et al., 2016).

Results for research question three. Research question three asked, “How do administrators measure successful parent engagement programs?” The following section provides further insight and discussion of the findings and themes that were collected from the interview responses of interview questions four, five, and six. These questions were as follows: “What were the top three reasons why the program was successful or unsuccessful?” and “What were some of the successful elements of that program?” as well as “How did you measure and track that success?” and lastly “Do parents feel as though the program was/is successful?” An analysis of the themes and responses of the research question and the interview questions asked to answer this research question derived the below areas:

- How to reach parent satisfaction, attain their support while reaching their individual needs.
- The ability to engage parents and keep them consistently volunteering and actively engaged in student activities and initiatives.

- Providing parents with the skills needed to evolve as leaders in their children's academic pursuits.
- Giving parents a voice, giving them the opportunity to help assist in creating strategies around how to better support students academically in and outside of the classroom.

In support of the areas above that were derived from the data, data showed that if given the opportunity to work closely with faculty, parents will learn the tools needed to help their children succeed when school is out and when work is taken home. Parents will have the tools and resources to help their children succeed to their utmost capability (Houtenville & Conway, 2008). Providing parent classes was a response identified in the data however this response was not found as a repetitive occurrence in the data findings. The participant that did share this key response shared that parent classes can include an array of subjects ranging from how to support students with their homework. These classes teach parents the basic fundamental knowledge needed in order to help their children when and if needed, to better help parents understand what is expected of their children.

While existing literature notes that parents have been collectively given more opportunities to be involved in their children's education within the school community, they have not yet been given enough power to be involved in decision making. Although parents have been given more access to ways in which they can be more involved and hands on with their children's education, most schools do not give parents the leverage or consent of voicing their opinions on what is taught, implemented, or practiced in their children's curriculum agenda (Tangri & Moles, 1987). Data from this study presented the importance of supporting parents and motivating parents to be active leaders in their children's academics.

Discussion of research question three. The key responses and themes that were derived from the three interview questions that answered this research question collected information primarily on how to engage parents effectively. The ways in which to engage parents was consistently verified through creating an environment that parents are comfortable in speaking their voice, having an opinion. The data presented that parents having a say in the initiatives that are created when supporting student needs is important to parents and their needs. By allowing parents to share their own voice within the executive leadership team, gives parents the opportunity to input their ideas when assisting student initiatives. Henderson and Mapp (2007) derived from their own data the significance of parent involvement and the role of administrators in influencing parents to be parent leaders in their children's academics.

By satisfying parents and their needs such as giving them their individual platforms to speak and share their ideas, the data consistently indicated that parents perceived administrator's efforts, positively. One hundred % of the participants indicated that when allowing parents to have their own individual role and or responsibility within the parent group, parents are very much more susceptible to helping in any way they can, to support school initiatives thus supporting students. When administrators do not support parents and their needs, there is a disconnect in the efforts taken by parents and the parent engagement program is not as strong as it can be. When the program suffers, the participants shared that the initiatives to help students then becomes much more challenging and less feasible to attain. When trust is gained within a community, the members of that community can move forward in sharing with their neighboring school communities and its administrators what kind of strategies to take to create a community support group (Moose, 2008).

In a majority of the responses that were retrieved to answer research question three, the data readily showed that principals measure the success of their program by the number of individuals that ‘show up’. However, in talking with the participants, they added to that response that the number of parents and community members that are present at a meeting does mean that parents are really present. It is those parents that consistently participate and provide ideas and are physically and mentally invested in helping student initiatives is how principals gauge the success of a parent engagement program.

Results for research question four. Research question four asked, “What recommendations do administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs?” The following section provides further insight and discussion of the findings and themes that were collected from the interview responses of final interview question, seven. These question was as follows: “What lessons have you learned that you will pass on to other administrators trying to implement parent engagement programs?” An analysis of the themes and responses of the research question and the interview questions asked to answer this research question derived the below areas:

- Continuous outreach for parents to be involved and giving parents a voice.
- Having patience with the process of implementing and sustaining a successful parent engagement program.
- Having a strong leadership team.
- Provide parent incentives.

Discussion of research question four. The key responses and themes that were derived from the final interview question that was asked to answer this research question collected information on the above themes that were collected from the data. The ways in which to retain

parents and their efforts was consistently verified through the consistent maintenance of an environment that is conducive to parent voice. As mentioned in the discussion in research question three, the data presented that parents having a say in the initiatives that are created when supporting student needs is important to parents and their needs.

Having a strong leadership was also another key response that was consistently found in the data as being an important message to other administrators needing advice to strengthen and or improve a parent engagement program. Griffith (2001) identifies that having a strong leadership team is one of the main key components in the success of any program or organizational structure, especially when working towards positively involving parent participation. Administrators need the assistance of the school community to successfully achieve the goals for students and their success.

Almost one hundred % of the principals shared that by providing parent incentives such as offering food at parent meetings, for example coffee with the principal was a meeting that was consistently shared amongst all principals. The data determined that when parents are provided with incentives such as food, having their time considered, and an open-door policy with the principals, that this is a significant component of a successful parent engagement program. When principals put in the extra effort to accommodate parent needs, these efforts usually do not go unseen. These efforts signifies to parents that they are working together with school administrators to collectively help benefit students and their needs which is the main reason for a successful parent engagement program.

Implications of the Study

The goal of this study was to identify the roles administrators play in supporting parents to actively be engaged in their children's academic careers. As a review of the initial purpose of

the study the areas this study aimed to answer through the analysis that was discussed earlier in this chapter is below:

1. Examine the effect and impact that k-8 school administrators have on the implementation of parent engagement programs.
 - a. This will determine the success of parent involvement initiatives to promote parents as leaders in children's academic careers. explained.
 - b. It will be explained through the examination of administrators who are or are not advocating for the implementation of parent engagement programs that will essentially allow parents to be involved in their children's academic careers in and outside of the classroom environment.
 - c. The study will seek to discover the strategies used by administrators, challenges they face, and how success is measured.
 - d. Administrators will also be asked for anecdotal recommendations for others in the field looking to implement similar programs.

Primary education is the foundation and essentially the start of a child's academic career. When children are supported by a number of individuals in and outside of the classroom, their success is deemed to be more feasible. The study's aim was to identify the efforts of administrators in successfully engaging parents to be active participants in their children's academic careers. The findings of this study can be used as a guide for administrators. It can be beneficial for administrators that are looking for a way to improve the current standing of their parent engagement programs, establish a parent engagement, and maintain its success. Parents of k-8 children can also use the findings of this study as beneficial to provide insight to the programs they are a part of or the programs they want to be a part of. One of the main purposes

of this study was to assist in promoting the importance of parent engagement programs and the collaboration of the administrative and parent populations.

The data that was received achieved the purposes of this study and identified the lessons that administrators have found as imperative reasoning behind the success or failure of their current programs. The below figure that was initially created by the author of this study displays the effective lessons learned to have a successful parent engagement program that values its parent participants and strengthen the point of a successful program which is to help students achieve their utmost academic potentials. The data that was received from this study in fact verifies the author's assumptions of the components needed to successfully build a parent engagement program. This figure supports the data that identifies the efforts of parents and essentially creates a platform for parents to be leaders in their children's academic pursuits.

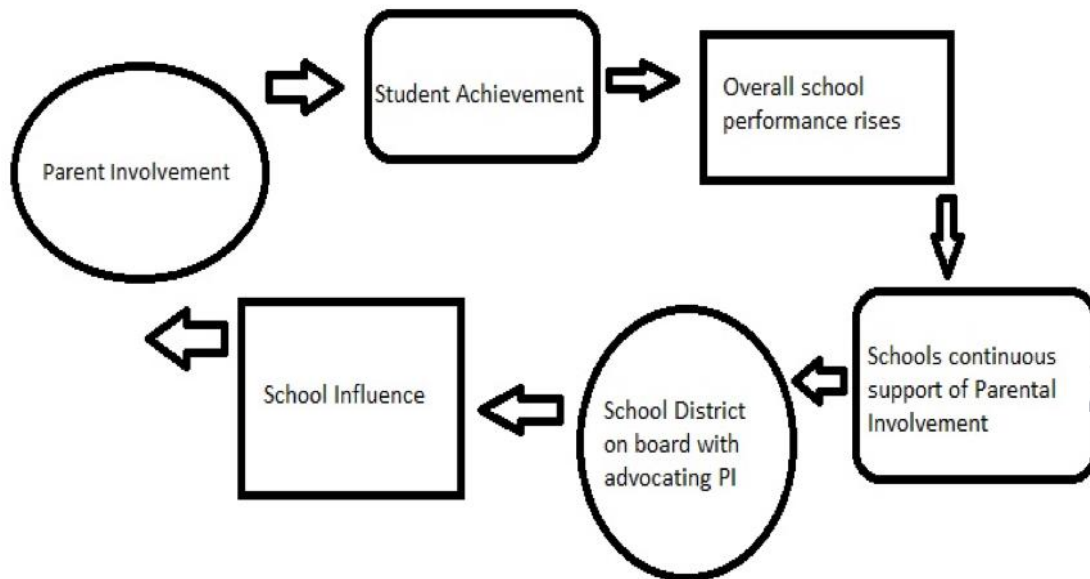


Figure 19. How to evolve and strengthen parent involvement.

Study Conclusion

The researcher began this study with the goal to help identify the efforts taken by administrators to support parents and provide them with the resources needed for them to be active participants in their children's academic careers. The data was achieved by conducting a total of 11 interviews with k-8 administrators that have had more than five years of administrative experience. In addition to the participants' professional experience, the participants had past experience in the development process of parent engagement initiatives such as parent engagement programs. When the data was collected, the researcher bracketed all key phrases from the interview transcriptions. Those key responses were then grouped into themes and the following key findings were identified:

1. The majority of challenges faced by administrators in trying to support parent initiatives is maintaining a consistent number of parent and community member participants.
2. Creating an environment and a leadership team that is conducive to successfully promoting parents and supporting parents to be active participants in children's academics.
3. Giving parents a voice to share their insights on what they want to achieve to successfully influence their children's academic success in and outside of the home.
 - a. Acknowledging parents as leaders and allowing them to lead collaboratively with the administrative team.
4. It takes effort from a number of individuals to successfully engage parents with the end goal of keeping students' success as the main goal.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to help identify the roles that administrators take or fail to take when collaborating with their parents and school community members. In the process of answering and discussing the purpose of this study, the following ideas and or recommendations for future research on this topic are as follow:

1. A study that seeks to understand the different challenges that schools and their surrounding demographics face such as differences in economic resources, family support, and family influence.
2. A study that examines the foundation of the districts that are active participants in making sure that parents play a role in every school, examining the resources that are given by the state to encourage parent support.
3. A study that seeks to better understand the types of achievements and incentives students attain from have active parents in their academic careers and also identifying the negative effects had when parents aren't involved and why.

A study that examines the different relationships between parents and teachers; how teachers perceive parents as leaders in student's academic endeavors. In addition, to capture any disconnect between the needs of teachers and parents, how and if they work together to benefit the academic needs of children.

When children witness their parents in their school setting as well as the home setting, they understand that their parents and teachers are helping them with their academic journey and are subsequently present for their successes (Tangri & Moles, 1987). By administrators playing a role in creating that presence for parents, they are essentially giving students another opportunity

to succeed academically. The data that has been captured the importance of administrators' roles in providing such opportunities for parents.

Final Thoughts

Education is an opportunity to grow. When education is supported by positive leadership such as staff, educators, parents, and community members, education becomes richer and of more value. To be educated is to be liberated. To be challenged is to be motivated, and to inspire is to believe. When parents are given the opportunity to support the individuals that help support their children, children are given more opportunities to succeed. Hara and Burke (1998) states that when parents and educators work together, they improve the chances of children's success. Children are essentially our future and to invest in them academically takes a village. It took a village for the researcher and author of this paper to be where they are academically, and professionally and it is the researcher's hope to identify the need for support in a school environment. I, the author and researcher of this paper could not have done it without the path of education that I have taken and the lessons taught through my academic career. My family did everything they could to ensure my academic success including my brother attending school meetings to help my parents understand the American school system better. Their continuous belief in me has strengthened the belief I have in myself to accomplish all of the goals I have in life. My future goals include being an advocate for those needing mentorship and assistance in accessing the resources needed to overcome any goal such as succeeding academically, professionally, and personally.

The lessons that were derived from this study and through the analysis of the data is that leadership for purposes of this study is best when practiced collaboratively. Administrators in this study have indicated that parents are less receptive when dictated to. They added that parents

are most receptive when they notice that their efforts are being appreciated, their voices are being heard, and their time spent is being acknowledged. The administrators of this study were open to sharing their trials and tribulations in seeking success for their parent engagement programs. They were willing to share their own leadership successes and failures. With every failure, a success follows.

The findings of this study supported the literature and added to the importance of parent involvement and the support of parent engagement initiatives in k-8 school institutions. The data that was shared identified that behind the success of k-8 school administrators is a team of individuals that include parents and members of each school community. The intentions of school administrators can be positive in elevating parent support and activity however if district personnel and community members do not support these intentions, parent engagement initiatives will not have the chance to succeed or improve.

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APPENDIX A

IRB Approval Letter



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

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: February 12, 2018

Protocol Investigator Name: Amera Hussain

Protocol #: 18-01-704

Project Title: IDENTIFYING THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE PARENTS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC CAREERS, IN K-8 EDUCATION

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Amera Hussain:

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

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APPENDIX B

Consent Form

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY

(Graduate School of Education and Psychology)

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Amera Hussain, M.A. and Farzin Madjidi, Ed.D. at Pepperdine University, because you are a k-8 school principal. 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 the consent form. You may also decide to discuss participation with your family or friends. If you decide to participate, you will be asked to sign this form. You will also be given a copy of this form for you records.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to investigate (1) the strategies that administrators employ in implementing parent engagement programs, (2) the challenges administrators face in implementing parent engagement programs, (3) how administrators measure successful parent engagement programs, and (4) the recommendations administrators have for other administrators wanting to implement parent engagement programs. This study addresses the attention and action given to enhance parent engagement specifically in k-8 education institutions and look mostly into multiple demographics and social classes of families.

STUDY PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that will last for approximately 60 minutes. The semi-structured interview includes the use of 6 to 10 open-ended questions that are designed in advance, with follow-up that are either planned or unplanned to clarify your responses. The types of questions will elicit valuable information on the strategies of k-8 principals in the development and success of parent engagement programs. During this interview your answers will be recorded. If you choose not to have your answers recorded, you will not be eligible to participate in this study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential and foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study include feeling discomfort with questions, concerns or issues with self-esteem, boredom, and fatigue from sitting for a long period for the interview.

IDENTIFYING THE ACTIONS TAKEN TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE PARENTS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC CAREERS, IN K-8 EDUCATION

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB)
Informed Consent

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

While there are no direct benefits to the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to society which include: 1. The compilation of results of the study will be beneficial to k-8 institutions will benefit from this study by learning from the trials and tribulations of k-8 school administrators in their pursuits of creating successful parent engagement programs.

CONFIDENTIALITY

I will keep your records for this study confidential 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.

To protect the identity of your responses, the recordings will be saved under a pseudonym and transferred to a USB flash drive, which will be kept in a safe, locked drawer within the researcher's residence for three years, after which it will be destroyed. A backup copy of the recording saved under a pseudonym will also be stored on a secured, password-protected cloud server and then permanently deleted and destroyed after three years. The researcher will be transcribing and coding the interviews herself. The documents containing the transcribed interviews and coding analysis will also be transferred to the same USB flash drive and maintained in the same locked drawer at the researcher's residence, which will be destroyed after three years. Your name, affiliated organization, or any personal identifiable information will not be reported. Instead a pseudonym with a generic organization name will be used to protect your confidentiality.

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. Your relationship with your organization or employer will not be affected whether you participate or not in this study.

EMERGENCY CARE AND COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB)
Informed Consent

If you are injured as a direct result of research procedures you will receive medical treatment; however, you or your insurance will be responsible for the cost. Pepperdine University does not provide any monetary compensation for injury.

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 Amara Hussain at XXXXX@pepperdine.edu or Dr. Farzin Madjidi at XXXXX@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-XXXX or XXXX@pepperdine.edu.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

AUDIO/VIDEO/PHOTOGRAPHS

I agree to be audio/video-recorded *I do not want to be audio/video-recorded*

Name of Participant

Signature of Participant Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB)
Informed Consent

I have explained the research to the participants and answered all of his/her questions. In my judgment the participants are knowingly, willingly and intelligently agreeing to participate in this study. They have the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study and all of the various components. They also have been informed participation is voluntarily and that they may discontinue their participation in the study at any time, for any reason.

Name of Person Obtaining Consent

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent Date

Pepperdine University Graduate & Professional Schools Institutional Review Board (GPS IRB)
Informed Consent.

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Hello. My name is _____. I am a doctoral student in the Organizational Leadership doctoral program at Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology.

As part of fulfilling my degree requirements, I am conducting a study on the importance of Parent involvement in k-8 education.

Participation in the study is voluntary and confidentiality and anonymity are maintained to your satisfaction. Participation entails a no longer than 60 minutes interview. Questions asked in the interview and an informed consent form will be sent to you in advance of the interview. There will also be a brief survey that will be given to you to complete upon your discretion. Your participation in this study will be extremely valuable in the research journey of the importance of parent involvement and can help improve the parent involvement programs in your school and various other schools nationwide.

I would like to ask if you would be willing to be interviewed and take a short survey as part of this study.

Thank you for your participation,

Amera Hussain
Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology
Status: Doctoral Student